

WEST

NORTH

SOUTH

EAST

GOSFORTH CROSSES

DANGERFIELD, LITH. 22 BEDFORD ST. COVENT GARDEN. 4481.

Chas. A. Parker. Gosforth 1882.

ART. XXXVIII.—*The Sculptured Cross at Gosforth W. Cumberland.*—By the Rev. W. S. CALVERLEY, Vicar of Dearham.* Drawings, Measurements, and some details by C. A. PARKER, M.D., Gosforth. Engravings by Prof. MAGNUS PETERSEN of Copenhagen.

ON the 8th of July, 1881, the Cumberland and Westmorland Archæological and Antiquarian Society inspected the famous cross in Gosforth Churchyard; remarks as to its age and the probable meaning of the figures carved upon it were made by several of the party. Dr. Parker mentioned a tradition of the place that the cross had been erected by Danes who had been converted to Christianity. I expressed the thought that the sculptures on the panel on the west face indicated the binding to a rock of Loki, the Scandinavian Evil One, and that other sculptures represented the Crucified One overcoming Death and Hell.

Further study of the subject, with the help of Dr. Stephens of Copenhagen, and others, has resulted in "one of the most important discoveries of recent years in this district,"† concerning which the Rev. G. F. Browne says, in a lecture delivered by him before the Cambridge Antiquarian Society, Nov. 20th, 1882:—"With regard to which (*i.e.*, the Gosforth cross) it is not too much to say that this year has seen a *revelation* of the language of these stones which no one had dreamed of before."‡

Dr. Parker offered his help towards cleaning the stone in order that photographs might be taken, and "the story of the cross" made plain, if possible, and we agreed to

* A preliminary paper on the cross was read before the Royal Archæological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, at their meeting at Carlisle, Aug. 3rd, 1882. Drawings were exhibited by Dr. Parker. Full-size drawings and a second paper were also laid before the Royal Archæological Institute at their meeting in Oxford Street, Dec. 2nd, 1882. See *Archæological Journal* for March, 1883.

† *Carlisle Patriot*, Aug. 4th, 1881.

‡ *Cambridge University Reporter*, Nov. 28th, 1882.

work

work together to this end. I had thought that I recognized, on the head of the cross, and in some of its ornamentation, the symbol of the Holy Trinity and designs similar to those in the early Irish MSS. besides the sculptures which referred to the northern or Scandinavian mythology; in this I was not supported by the members present, and many and strange were the suggestions offered as to the interpretation of the figures; nevertheless, I have a very vivid recollection of going to Gosforth one dull wet day in the late autumn of 1881, when I thought that the continuous damp and rain of the previous weeks would have softened the lichens which had filled every sculptured hollow on the cross head, and of standing with Dr. Parker beneath the cross, whilst his coachman, up aloft, with a dash of a wet brush to the right and to the left hand scattered the softened mosses and revealed—what none had seen clearly perhaps for centuries—the sign of the everliving Trinity, the Triquetra of the Book of Kells and other MSS. of the early Christian Church:—(See the arms of the cross head, east side.) Most of the devices were made pretty clear on this visit.

In course of time Messrs. Green of Grasmere, succeeded in taking some excellent photographs, and by careful comparison of these with the original, Dr. Parker was enabled to make the accompanying drawing.

The fragments, lithographed on this sheet do not belong to the cross, the four sides of which are shewn here.

Professor Dr. George Stephens of Copenhagen, wrote to me concerning the cross, and I sent to him photographs and drawings with such descriptions as I was able to give and such opinions as I could form. The result of this correspondence (which has been of untold pleasure to me), will be embodied in the remarks which follow. The professor made a pilgrimage to the cross, and pronounced it to be “one of the costliest olden Roods in Europe”—unique in all his experience, and probably of seventh century date.

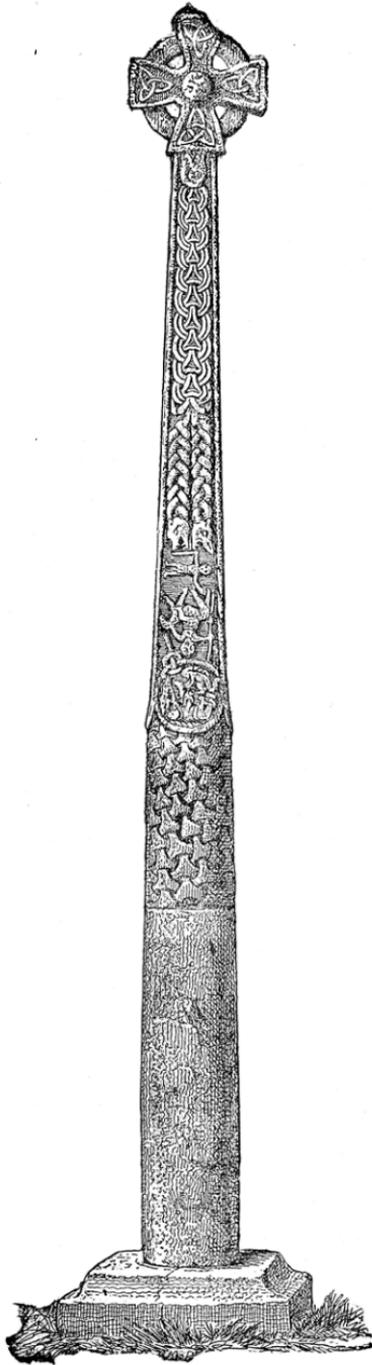
It

It is necessary to get a correct idea of the cross *as a whole* before beginning to study its *details*. This slim pillar, most elegant in design and marvellous in the conception of its art stories, is a red sandstone Christian monument, and it is a monolith. It is not a heathen pillar surmounted by a cross. The surface of the lower part of the shaft is circular and measures 40 inches round the bottom. The surface of the upper part of the shaft is squared off and measures at the top, on the east and west faces six inches, on the north and south faces five inches. The head is 20 inches across. The cross is $14\frac{1}{2}$ feet high, and it stands in a rectangular socket of *three* steps, plain, and a foot high. It is believed to be the tallest ancient cross in Britain. Rather more than the lower half of the rounded surface of the shaft is uncarved, the upper part (of this circular surface) is ornamented with a design found on the Dearham cross, on a "hog back" at Crosscanonby, &c.; curvilinear mouldings divide this part of the shaft from the four plane surfaces above, which contain the sculptures: above all are the four arms of the cross joined by a circle ornamented with plait work and having a boss in the centre projecting more than two inches.

The general appearance of the cross, at a little distance, is that of a gigantic Thor's hammer, the lower part of the shaft being polished. A closer inspection shews the whole to be an elaborately carved Christian cross set in a socket of three calvary steps.* This parallel between northern myths and Christian doctrines, traditions and signs, continues throughout and must be kept well in view, for as the four planes carrying the world-stories taper upwards towards the perfect circle with its centre and Holy Symbols, so the truths displayed thereon—Christian and Heathen—run side by side towards one Infinite Truth.

* The engraving only shows *one step*, the photograph from which it was drawn not shewing the lowest step very clearly.

Some



THE SCULPTURED CROSS AT GOSFORTH WEST SIDE.

Some years ago I came to the conclusion that the design carved in relief on the east face of the cross at Dearham represented the World Ash Yggdrasil (See Part I., Vol. v., p. 153). Shortly afterwards my attention was drawn by Canon Knowles to a cross socket at Brigham, almost unknown (See Part I., Vol. vi., p. 211, &c.). A study of this socket convinced me that the true meaning of sculptures of this class was to be sought amongst the songs and beliefs of the Anglian or Scandinavian peoples who must have settled here at a very early period. I am now able to prove the truth and value of this conviction, and to this end I ask the reader to refer to my drawings which illustrate the two short papers I have mentioned. The three monsters whose father was Loki, and whose mother was the witch of Jotunheim (the land of giants), were the Fenris-wolf, Jormungandr the monster of the universe, also called Midgardsworm the huge snake that lay in the great sea coiled round the earth, and a daughter of Hel.

Now when the gods heard that this kindred was being bred up in Jotunheim, and knowing that from such a stock all evil was to be expected on both father and mother's side, Alfadir bade the children be brought to him, and the worm or snake he cast into the deep sea that lay round all lands, where it grew so that it coiled itself round all the earth and bit its tail with its *teeth*.

Any one who looks at the huge monster on the top of the Brigham cross socket, coiled round the hollow (in which, at one time was the cross,) and biting its tail with its teeth, must at once identify the Midgardsworm. Now the socket of the Gosforth cross has no carving but simply *three* steps. Nevertheless from the centre rises up the Mundane tree, the World Ash Yggdrasil, the tree of the universe, of time and of life; you may see its closely intertwined branches shooting out from the smooth bole or trunk:—

I know an ash standing
Yggdrasil hight,
a lofty tree, laved
with limpid water :

thence

thence come the dews
 into the dales that fall ;
 ever stands it green
 over Urd's fountain.

The stag Eikthynir browses upon its leaf-buds ; its roots below (not seen on this cross) are gnawed by the Hel dragon Nid-hogg. Still the ash cannot wither until the last battle shall be fought. Its highest point, Läräd (peace-giver) overshadows Walhalla. There are the twelve halls of the twelve gods, and the plain Idavollr where the champions combat ; in the centre, on the summit, is Odin's throne. So you may see the cross head with its threefold divisions in the four arms around the central boss, and connected by the circular band—to the followers of Odin typical of the twelve halls of the gods in Walhalla,—to the Christian the sacred symbols of the Trinity, the Triquetra. The great snake does not here lie coiled round the tree, because the monster has to take part in the events sculptured above, for the scenes portrayed are from the *Vala's prophecy in the Voluspa*, and deal with that last battle which I have named, Ragnarök, the twilight of the gods when Jormungandr and all Hel's kith and kin are arrayed against the Æsir.

In considering the episodes we have now chiefly to deal with the four plane surfaces on the sides of the cross, and we will begin with the *west* face thereof.

From the Ægisdrekka we learn that after Loki had disgusted the gods with his many treacheries and upbraidings, he, in the likeness of a salmon, cast himself into the waterfalls of Frânângr, where the Æsir (the gods) caught him, and bound him with the entrails of his son Nari, according to the words which Skadi, the wife of Niord, at Ægir's feast, had spoken to the taunting traitor :—

“ Thou art merry, Loki !
 Not long wilt thou
 frisk with an unbound tail ;
 For thee, on a rock's point,

with

with the entrails of thy ice-cold son,
the gods will bind."

And the words of Thor who replied to his scoffing:—

" Silence, thou impure being !
My mighty hammer Miöllnir,
shall stop thy prating.
Hrúngnir's bane
shall cast thee down to Hel,
beneath the gratings of the dead."

but his other son, Narfi, was changed into a wolf.

Skadi took a venomous serpent and fastened it up over Loki's face. The venom trickled down from it. *Sigún*, Loki's wife, sat by, and held a basin under the venom; and when the basin was full carried the poison out. Meanwhile the venom dropped on Loki, who shrank from it so violently that the whole earth trembled. This causes what are now called earthquakes. [See Loki panel p. 380.]

Bound she saw lying,
under Hveralund, (the hot spring's grove)
a monstrous form,
to Loki like.
There sits *Sigún*,
for her consort's sake,
not right glad.
Then the Vala knew
the fatal bonds were twisting,
most rigid,
bonds from entrails made.

Thus the false one lies bound in Hel's dark home beneath the gratings of the dead until Ragnarök. In the very faithful engraving of the panel at the *bottom* of the plain on the *west* face of the cross, here shewn, every particular is clear. The gyves round hands and feet, the bond round the neck, the head of the adder to the left, its body twisted and made fast by a ring above. *Sigún* with her woman's hair plaited and her long gown, kneeling with poison-cup in hand, but the cup is removed to empty the venom, and the



LOKI PANEL.

the horrid slime eats into the monster's flesh, he wreaths in agony, every bond is stretched to its utmost strain, the gyves are bent awry, the last great struggle soon will set the giant free.

Let us now look at the upper part of this western face of the cross :—The first figure beneath the Triquetra, (which is on *this* side formed by a *double* band) has its wolfish head upwards, open-mouthed, a single large tooth in either jaw, eye and ear conspicuous ; its body consists of eleven vertebrae with *double* pairs of ribs :— [See outline drawing.]

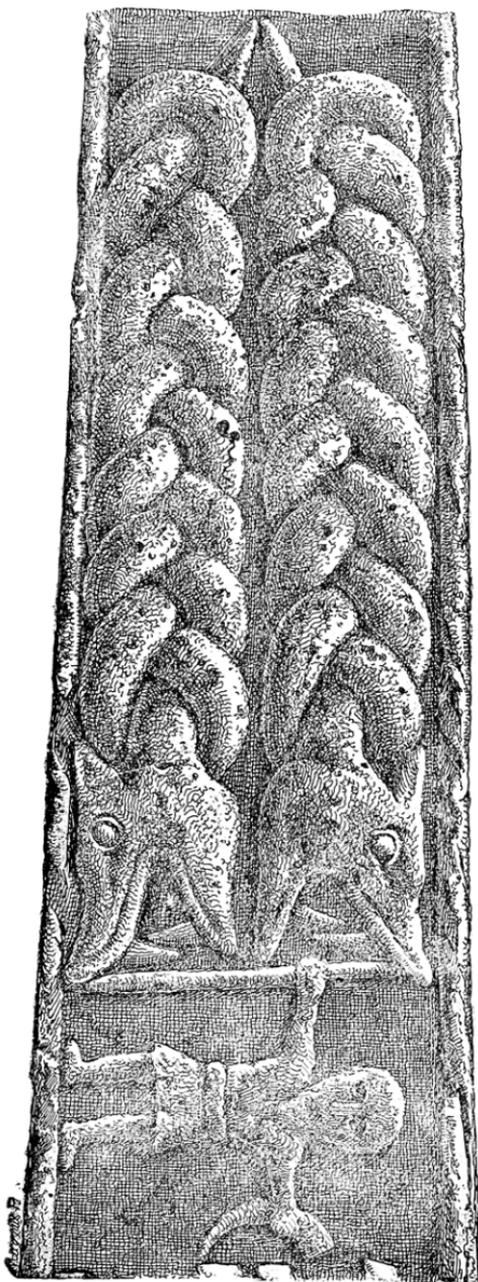
Loki begat the wolf
with Angrboda (Hdl. 38).

and his (Fenris's) children grew into horrible monsters, being fed by the old giantess on the marrow, bones, and blood, of murderers and evil-doers, in the last age when the bonds of laws were broken, and the destruction of the world drew near :—

East sat the crone,
in Járnvidir, (ironwood)
and there reared up
Fenris's progeny:
of all shall be
one specially
the moon's devourer,
in a trolls semblance.
He is sated with the last breath
of dying men ;
the *god's seat* he
with red gore defiles.

Here then we see the monster attacking the seat of the gods, ready to gulp down sun or moon ; in the eyes of Christians gaping with wide jaws to swallow the Triquetra.

Beneath are two other of the horrid monster kin parallel to each other, having knotted worm-like bodies and tails, lower jaw to lower jaw, with open mouths, fierce staring eyes, powerful tusk-like teeth, (one in either jaw) head
downwards,



HEIMDALL EPISODE.

downwards, eager to attack the belted, bearded man clad in a tunic, who stands athwart the cross, and calmly with his staff, as tho' with the staff of omnipotence, in his right hand, keeps the Hel worms back. In his left hand the man holds a horn.

The accompanying engraving of this episode must be studied with the engraving of the Loki episode preceding. Thus will be seen, between the man with the staff who holds the horn in his left hand, and the bound fiend, *a man mounted on horseback*, belted and armed with a javelin or dart—man and horse upside down. A few strophes from the Vala's prophecy makes all plain; *above*, towards the top of the cross stem, on this and on the south side, the great wolves Skiöll and Hati rush up to attack the sun and moon; *beneath*, on this west side, Loki struggles in his final effort to be free; *in the midst*, Heimdall, the warder of Asgard, restrains the monsters eager for the fray when all bonds shall be loosed, he has blown a mighty blast on the Giallahorn to awaken the Ases and Einheriar, and to warn them to prepare for the last battle. Odin has armed himself and mounted his horse Sleipnir, and now rides away down to Mimir's well to consult the fates.

Further forward I see,
 much can I say
 of Ragnarök
 and the gods' conflict.
 an axe age, a sword age,
 shields shall be cloven,
 a wind age, a wolf age,
 ere the world sinks.
 Mim's sons dance,
 but the central tree takes fire,
 at the resounding
 Giallar horn.
 Loud blows Heimdall,
 his horn is raised;
 Odin speaks
 with Mim's head.

Having

Having clearly before us the idea of the impending Ragnarök, let us pass from the west face of this "column of the universe," with its Odin and Heimdall, its Loki and the wolf's progeny, to the south face.

I regret that we cannot here introduce a large engraving of the lower part of the plane surface of the south side.* A reference to the lithograph will, however, at once show the belted horseman, armed with javelin point downwards in his right hand, and holding the loose bridle in his left, in an attitude of living motion. Below this horseman is the coiled body of an adder which separates the home of the living from Nâströnd the strand or shore of corpses:—

" She saw a hall standing,
far from the sun,
in Nâströnd ;
entwined is that hall
with serpent's backs."

Underneath the adder's body is an embryo-like human figure, with limbs interlaced and one great eye.

Odin has sought of coming things the knowledge which lies hid in Mimir's well, the ocean, the womb of the future, whose sons are the restless billows the offspring of the past and the present, where the god left his eye in pledge once when he craved a draught of its water, as says the Vala, replying, when Odin enquires concerning the fate of Baldr:—

" Of what would'st thou ask me ?
Why temptest thou me ?
Odin ! I know all,
Where thou thine eye did'st sink
in the pure well of Mim."

Such a ride as is sculptured here is well described in the Lay of Vegtam, which tells us that after the mighty gods,

* The cross is perfect save that a small piece has been chipped off the top towards the south. On the ends of the arms are interlaced patterns; round the circle, plait work.

in

in conference, had consulted "why Baldr had oppressive dreams," and after that "all species swore oaths to spare him," still fearing some coming great calamity :—

"Up rose Odin
 lord of men,
 and on Sleipnir he
 the saddle laid ;
 rode thence down
 to Niflhel.
 A dog he met,
 from Hel coming.
 It was blood-stained
 on its breast,
 on its slaughter-craving throat,
 and nether jaw.
 It bayed
 and widely gaped
 at the sire of magic song,
 long it howled.
 Forth rode Odin—
 the ground rattled—
 till to Hel's lofty
 house he came.
 Then rode Ygg
 to the eastern gate,
 where he knew there was
 a Vala's grave.
 * * * * *
 To the prophetess he began
 A magic song to chant, &c.,
 until, compelled, she rose.

What questions Odin asked, and what were her answers, will be shewn further on ; the last words of the prophetess are :—

"Home ride thou Odin !
 and exult.
 Thus shall never more
 man again visit me
 until Loki free
 from his bonds escapes,
 and Ragnarök
 all destroying comes."

Now

Now above the armed horseman (Odin) is the figure of a dog or wolf and the coils of a serpent or knotted bonds—see the engraving beneath the hart and above the head of the horseman—this engraving does not shew the long bushy wolfish tail of the beast, which is plainly to be seen on the stone itself, now it has been cleaned; also the coils or knots have, in the engraving, much the appearance of adders or serpents, the heads spitting venom on him who rides below, and they are faithful reproductions of the photograph, though a close inspection of the stone leaves one in doubt whether they were intended to represent anything else than the loosened bonds* (See the outline drawing). Be this as it may:—The chief of the Æsir has made that *last* visit to the home “beneath the gratings of the dead.” He has passed the howling dog; he has looked into the *well of the future*, and—behold—it is Ragnarök:—

“Trembles Yggdrasil’s
Ash yet standing;
groans that aged tree,
and the jotün (Loki) is loosed.
Loud bays Garm (Hel’s dog)
before the Gnupa-cave,
*his bonds he rends asunder
and the wolf runs.*”

This episode, from the Voluspa, is quite clear: the strophe (48) follows that in which Heimdall blows the horn, and “Odin speaks with Mim’s head,” “the wolf runs” vigorously enough as the loosened knots of his bonds fall from him.

As on the western face the central figure was Heimdall “the gods’ watchman” at whose right hand (above) we saw the evil powers restrained, but at whose left (below) were those powers in the very act of breaking loose, whilst

* At the last great battle the wolf breaks loose, the waves of the sea overflow the land, and the great snake joins in the struggle alongside the wolf: the wolf howls, and the snake hisses and spits out poison which fills the air.

the

the ever-watchful, the fellow-worker with gods and men sounded the alarm, and the all powerful Father himself prepared for the conflict, so on this southern face the central object is the hart*—the divine hart—the fountain of living waters :—

“ Eikthyrnir the hart is called,
that stands o'er Odin's Hall,
and bites from Lærad's branches ;
from his horns fall
drops into Hvergelmir,
whence all waters rise.”



Next to the hart, above, that is, at the *spring head* of the “ Holy waters ” lies a monster, here engraved most truthfully, much like the uppermost figure on the west face,

* Yggdrasil's Ash
hardships suffers
greater than men know of ;
a hart bites it above,
and in its sides it rots,
Nidhogg beneath tears it.

consisting

consisting of eight vertebræ, and eight pairs of ribs, but these are single, and the beast is gagged and does not shew his teeth, nevertheless the life in his full round eye and in his jaws, indeed in the whole design, forcibly reminds us that the wolf is only bound and gagged, not killed, as



Frey pictured him to Loki whom she threatened with a like fate at \mathcal{A} gir's feast :—

“ I the wolf see lying
at the river's mouth,
until the powers are swept away.
So shalt thou be bound.”

When

When the gods had bound the wolf, with a sword they gagged him, the hilt in the lower, the point in the upper jaw; here the iron passes through the lower jaw, round the cheek bone and behind the ear, then round the front of the snout and again into the lower jaw. Above, with toothed mouth* wide open, gaping upwards, is a serpent form knotted upon itself, the curled tail† of which is shewn in the engraving; another form of the old serpent no longer “frisking with unbound tail,” but still struggling in his bonds and menacing the Holy powers above.

On the lower part of the plane, beneath the hart who walks calm and unhurt, we have seen the wolf escaping from his bonds, and possibly the serpent writhing with a giant’s strength eager for the fray, whilst Odin, armed, rides up from the sacred well or the Vala’s grave, to lead his brave Ases in this last and most terrible encounter. The battle rages—read we the story and its parallels on the eastern plane of this wonderful cross—a churchyard picture Bible at once to the Pagan and to the Christian.

A glance at the outline of this east face will shew that the artist is faithful to the plan of his design—a central figure calm and majestic, though below the powers of Hel rage terribly, and above those powers are conquered or brought into subjection.

But who is *this* central figure on the *east side* of the cross? who with stretched out arms grasps the rope-like border of the oblong panel, whose side is pierced with the spear:—It may be that same Odin whom we have already twice seen, for does not Odin’s Rune-song say:—

“ I know that I hung,
on a wind rocked tree,
nine whole nights,
with a spear wounded,
and to Odin offered,

* Though not shewn in the lithograph, this monster, has, like *all the others* on the cross, save the gagged one, *one* huge tooth in either jaw; the drawing was made before the cross was thoroughly cleaned, hence the mistake.

† Such a curled tail is also seen on the cross socket at Brigham.

myself

myself to myself;
 on that tree,
 of which no one knows
 from what root it springs."

or it may be Baldr the beautiful, the peace-giver, the bright son of the Father, who by the treachery of Loki was slain, pierced by a dart sent forth by blind Hödr, and made of the mistletoe which had been overlooked when Frigg, his mother, took vows of all things else that they would not harm her son :—

" I saw of Baldr,
 the blood-stained god,
 Odin's son,
 the hidden fate.
 There stood grown up,
 high on the plain,
 slender and passing fair,
 the mistletoe.
 From that shrub was made,
 as to me it seemed
 a deadly, noxious dart,
 Hödr shot it forth."

As the Vala had prophecied :—

" Hödr will hither
 his glorious brother send,
 he of Baldr will
 the slayer be,
 and Odin's son
 of life bereave."

And so the beardless man to the left, holding the spear, may be blind Hödr, who, with the fatal mistletoe shaft, has, unwittingly (for it was false Loki who, unseen, guided the blind god's aim) done the deadly deed ; and the woman to the right may well be Nanna the wife of Baldr :— " Nanna sorrowing in earth's deep sanctuaries " as the gods saw her when Baldr was no more, and Nanna had fallen from her high place, fallen down beneath the tree, and peace had departed from Valhall ;—or Frigg who should grieve a second time over the death of Odin her beloved.

Whether



BALDR-ODIN OR CRUCIFIXION PANEL.

Whether here, in the panel, we see Odin, or Baldr, or Heimdall, or all the *three in one*, and so each impersonation or incarnation of the god confronting his fate in the general struggle "with the dark followers of the goddess" (Hel), or Thor himself, the father of victories, the scene as a whole is the same, it is "The twilight of the gods." Baldr has been slain: the battle begins: "Odin goes to meet the wolf:" at the foot of the plane (see the engraving) "The mundane snake is coiled in jötun rage," he is the bane of Thor, who, in the final hurly, shall bruise his head and kill him, though he himself shall die nine paces off poisoned by the monster's venom-breath and slime:—

"Midgard's Veor (Thor) in his rage
Will slay the worm
Nine feet will go
Fiörgyn's son,*
bowed by the serpent,
who feared no foe."

Heimdall and Loki fight hand to hand and each the other slays: and so above the panel lies the headless creature, the incarnation of all evil, slain. Before the battle, when the ship fares from the east bringing Muspell's people o'er the sea and Loki steers:—

"The monster's kin
goes all with the wolf."

Against Odin (who rides foremost in the fight, with quivering spear in hand), comes on the wolf rushing with gaping maw; his upper jaw touches heaven, and his lower sweeps the earth, as is shewn in the figure at the top of this east plane of which, one great open mouth, upwards, appears to attack the holy place and the Triquetra; the other, downwards, in vain opposes and is opposed by the belted, bearded man, with staff. Here Odin is not seen, nor his

* Mother Earth; mother of Veor-Thor "who feared no foe," and of Frigg, Odin's wife.

horse

horse, for the wolf swallows him at one gulp, as Loki fore-
threatened at the *Ægisdrekka* :—

“ Why dost thou chafe so, Thor ?
Thou wilt not dare do so,
when with the wolf thou hast to fight,
and he *the all-powerful Father* swallows whole.”

And as the Vala prophecied :—

“ Then arises
Hlin's second grief,*
when Odin goes
with the wolf to fight,
and the bright slayer
of Beli with Surt.
Then will Frigg's
beloved fall.”

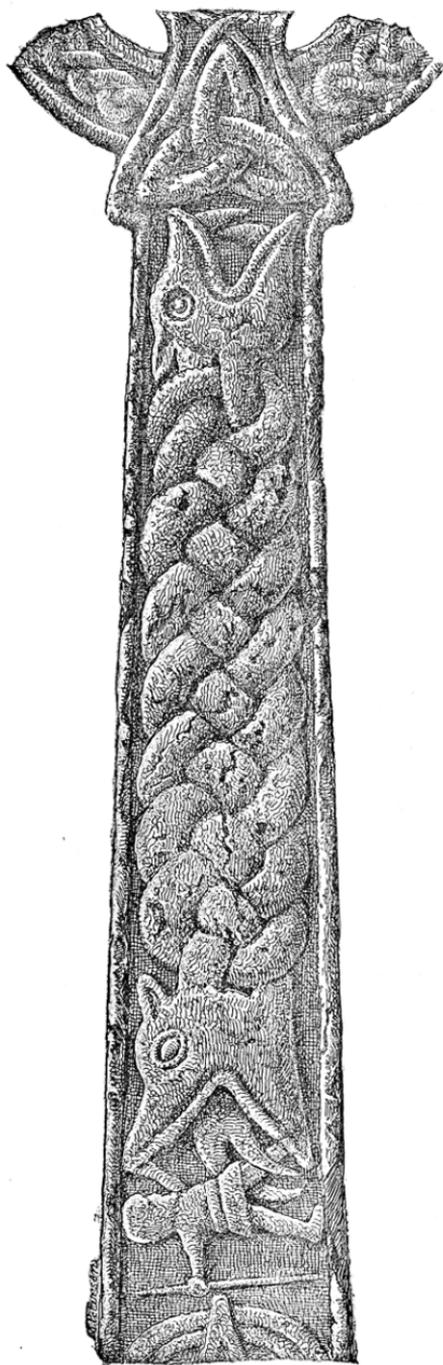
But no sooner has the wolf swallowed Odin, than Vidar,
the silent god, another son of Odin, or another incarnation
of Odin, the avenger, confronts him, and placing his heavy
iron shoe on the nether jaw of the beast, with one hand he
seizes the upper jaw, rends his maw asunder and slays
him, as in the *Voluspa* :—

“ Then comes the great
victor—sire's son,
Vidar, to fight
with the deadly beast.
* * * * *
Then avenges he his father.

And again in the lay of *Vafthrúdnir* :—

“ The wolf will
the father of men devour ;
him Vidar will avenge :
He his cold jaws
will cleave,
in conflict with the wolf.”

* Hlin, another name of Frigg, Odin's wife, whose first grief was the death of Baldr, her son ; her second, that of Odin himself when he went to meet the wolf, and when Frey, the slayer of Beli (the giant), went to fight with Surtur and be slain at Ragnarok.



VIDAR EPISODE.

How vigorously this episode is here sculptured, the engraving will shew. The attack of the wolf upon the holy forces, and his punishment are shewn by doubling his form ; his fiendish nature by giving his body the form of a serpent (each double worm being plaited with the other making a fourfold plait), the upper head attacking the Triquetra, with full round living eye, and powerful teeth and jaws great in strength ; the lower head, in the very action of defeat and death, being wrenched open by the mighty Vidar—his left arm forcing upwards, and his right foot crushing downwards, as he throws all his weight and god-like energy into the mortal fight by firmly pressing backwards on his staff which his hand grasps well up—until the monster's fangs drop powerless and his eye dims.

“ Then shall another come,
 yet mightier,
 although I dare not
 his name declare.
 Few may see
 further forth
 than when Odin
 meets the wolf.”

As Prof. J. F. Hodgetts writes in his article in the *Antiquary*, Dec. 1882 :—“ It would seem as if in all mythology there were a sort of prophetic perception of what had to be completed in a holier, higher form in the mighty works which Christianity has taught us to contemplate. Let us not be accused of irreverence when we fancy that there are such traces of prophetic truth in these wild poetic teachings ! But when Odin, in a wondrous weird song, tells his worshippers that he hung from a cursed tree three times three days, and saw the bitter evil of man ! When the God-principle (under another name) descends into Jotunheim to combat the Giants, we are rather awestruck at the evident harmony in some parts of what we know to be true, and what we have long ago rejected as false.”

Let

Let any one look upon the Baldr-Odin or Crucifixion scene engraved from our miraculously preserved cross. Is what the cross says true in every point to the Eddaic stories! and is it not wondrously true also to the very circumstance and event of the great Christian sacrifice:—"But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water," St. John xix., v. 34; and as the arms of Jesus are stretched out wide do we not see that double stream, that sacred fountain for *all* men opened!

There is an old tradition, embodied in Chaucer's "Lamentations of Mary Madgalene" and taken from Origen, and afterwards represented in the miracle plays of Chester, Townley and Coventry, that the soldier (not centurion), who pierced our Lord's side, was a *blind** knight named Longias or Longinus; that

"The purple flood eke from the harts vain,"

which:—

"Doune railed right fast in most ruful wise,
with Christal water brought out of Paradise,"

imbrued his hands as it flowed along the shaft of the spear and that upon accidentally rubbing his eyes his

* See also Chaucer's A.B.C. "La priere de nostre Dame," x.; also Townley's *Mysteries, Surtees Society*, 1836, p. 231.

Primus Tortor.—Let oone pryke him with a spere,
And if that it do him no dere
Then is his lyfe nere past.

Secundus Tortor.—This blynde knight may best do that.

Longeus.—Gar me not do bot I wote what.

Tercius Tortus.—Not but put up fast.

Longeus.—A, Lord, what may this be?
Ere was I blynde, now may I see;
Godes son, here me, Jesu!
For this trespas on me thou rew.
For, Lord, other men me gart,
That I the stroke unto the hart,
I see thou hynge here on hy
And dyse to fulfille the prophecy.

There is a representation of Blind Longinus at Naworth Castle, in the oratory. (See *Transactions*, Part ii., Vol. iv., p. 514.) The same painting shews, amongst other figures of those present at the crucifixion, Mary Magdalene with long hair flowing down, and in front of her, with lid open, the box of precious ointment.

sight

sight was restored. One of the soldiers, fearing to do the deed himself, guided the blind man's hand.

How close a parallel is here seen between Höder and Longias:—if the pagan Northern colonists of this coast saw the *blind* god piercing unwittingly with fatal spear their heroes side, no less clearly did the native British Christian see that he whose spear opened the fountain in the side of their Christ was a *Roman soldier** with shaven face who knew not what he did.

If the Angle saw Nanna weeping for her beloved, or the mother of Baldr holding forth the mistletoe branch on which she collected the tear drops of all who lamented her dear son, and fain would have him return from the halls of Hel to gladden the hearts of men, the Briton might see Mary Magdalene with her wealth of hair standing by her dead lord sorrowing, holding in her hand the Alabastron† filled with precious ointment for his burial, waiting till the body shall be taken down from the cross and the last sad honours done to Him she so much loved. St. Mark xv., v. 47; St. Luke xxiii., v. 55; St. Matthew xxvii., v. 61.

If *one* saw beneath this death scene the great serpent coiled which Thor should slay and be by its venom slain, the *other* saw that the seed of the woman should *bruise the*

* The face of the soldier is the only one on the cross which is shaven after the fashion of the Romans, between B.C. 300, and the time of Hadrian. Heimdal, all the horsemen, the Christ, Vidar, each one has a pointed beard distinctly seen. "The censors compelled Marcus Livius, who had been banished, on his restoration to the city, to be shaved before he came to the senate." (Smith's Gk. and Rn. Antiquities.)

† The Alabastron was a vessel used for containing perfumes or ointments; it was usually made of the Onyx Alabaster, which was considered to be better adapted than any other stone for the preservation of perfumes. (Plin. xiii., 3.) Hence the name. "These vessels were of a tapering shape, and very often had a long narrow neck, which was sealed; so that when Mary, the sister of Lazarus, is said by St. Mark (xiv. 3) to break the alabaster-box of ointment for the purpose of anointing our Saviour, it appears probable that she only broke the extremity of the neck which was thus closed." (Smith's Gk. and Rn. Antiquities.) The figure of Mary Magdalene holding this tapering Alabastron in her left hand is very faithfully engraved. I took a rubbing of the whole cross, after the South Kensington moulds had been taken, and when the stone was most free from lichens, and from this rubbing and the photographs Prof. Petersen has been able to give us absolutely correct representations of this and the Heimdal, Vidar, and gagged wolf episodes.

serpent's

serpent's head, tho' that serpent should bruise his heel ; if the jaws of the great wolf swallowed Odin, the sepulchre was opened for Jesus and he entered the jaws of Hel ; if Vidar wrenched asunder the maw of the monster and overcame him, God the Son, after the "harrowinge of Helle," after he had visited the spirits in prison, rose again victorious over death and the grave, heralding a new era, a new kingdom of brightness and beauty, purity and love.

" There shall the righteous
people dwell
and for evermore
happiness enjoy."

So says the Voluspa, so teaches the Christian.

And now we come to the last, the north side of the cross, of which the drawing is beautifully clear. There is again a central figure, in this case a horseman armed with a spear as we saw the horseman on the south side ; *beneath* him is a like armed horseman upside down as we saw on the west side ; above him is a strange uncommon figure taking up fully half the sculptured space ; its head is downwards having mighty teeth and fiery eye ; its tail above is the sign of the Blessed Trinity ; its body has eight pairs of wings attached to it by eight rings, the rings passing alternately over the wing bone and under the vertebræ, and under the wing bone and over the vertebræ, the lowest ring passing under the wing.

Surtur has come from the south

" On the wings of tempest riding
Surtur spreads his fiery spell."

and he and his warriors have cast their flames over all the earth, the dynasty of Odin is overthrown ; but there is to arise from the conflagration a new heaven and a new earth purified by fire—hither Baldr shall return from Hel :—

" unsown shall
the fields bring forth,
all evil be amended

Baldr

Baldr shall come ;
 Hödr and Baldr,
 the heavenly gods,
 Hropts glorious dwellings shall inhabit."

So the eight winged orbs, the perfect number in one creature, rushing down over all things, restrained or held in order by the "three in one," and so the Baldr-Christ returning from Hel and riding up the rainbow in majesty after Æstra has opened the gate at the glorious resurrection.

Thus we may either see in the central figure Surtur riding at the head of the fiery flying sons of Muspell (the personification of fire), whilst the horseman beneath tells of the fall of Odin and the power taken from Gungnir, the death spear in Odin's hand, or (which is better, for the lower horseman is in active motion, not overthrown, and is exactly like the upper one in every detail and even attitude) we may see in the lower horseman, on this plane, another representation of that Odin who, on the west side, rode down to Hel's dark home, and who as Baldr, and Odin, and Thor, each, and all in one, was fated to go thither at the last battle ; and in the central figure, the upper horseman, we may see the same personification of the Deity riding back in majesty to rule and dwell in peace in

"Gimill-gold-bedecked than the sun brighter."

The same figure being doubled and two positions shewn on the same plane, as is often the case in ancient art, Pagan and Christian. Below the horsemen is the eternal endless knot the last home from which none return until Christ or Baldr leads the way.

As on the Ruthwell Cross the song of Cæd-mon was written in Runes, so on the Gosforth Cross is "The Vala's Prophecy," and much of the god-lore gathered together in Sæmund's Edda carved in stone, sculptured in relief,—parallels are drawn and contrasts shewn between the heathen and the Christian faiths:—Ragnarök, "the twilight of
 of

of the Gods" is graven in stone—a miracle of art—and the new heaven and new earth are shewn to be those in which Christ takes the place of Odin, and Thor, and Heimdall, and Vidar, and Baldr, and even of the great Surtur himself.

Much more might be written. Many deep truths lie hid in this "sermon stone."

These episodes have never before been recognized, and I rejoice that I have thus been made an humble pioneer in a cause worthy of the efforts of the more learned. How successfully *pure heathendom* is used on this monument as a means of teaching the Gospel, may be clearly seen by comparing it, beginning at the west, the Loki side, with the prayer of the priest and people in the Baptismal service when the child is grafted into Christ's body—"that he may have power and strength to have victory and to triumph, against *the devil, the world, and the flesh.*"

On the west face we have a *central Hemidall-Christ*,* the incarnation of the Deity, holding at bay the dread offspring of Satan, whilst Loki† himself lies bound beneath, and

* Heimdall was he who brought day to the world, whose path from Asgard to the outer worlds is by the rainbow or the milky way, he is the watchman who can hear the faintest sound afar off, even the grass growing on the mountain tops; who summons the gods by the blast of his horn, kept under the sacred tree; in the hour of danger he himself assists the mild ones in their struggle with the giants. Thus the sculptured planes have the central figure as it were on the top of the rainbow whose one end joins Valhalla the other Hel's domain, and thus on the south side the divine hart from whose horns the dew drops fall into the rivers which water the dales, stands upon the arch of the bow; the wolf bound lying at the *waters head* towards Asgard; the howling wolf and hissing snake below coming up from Hel.

† There are known to the world only *two other* representations in stone of Loki bound, one is at Kirkby Stephen Church, Westmorland. (See Part i., Vol. iv., of the Transactions of this Society, opposite page 187. The other at Vinding Church, Veile Amt, Jutland, Denmark, which will be published in Professor Stephen's lecture on Northern Mythology early this year. I saw the Kirkby Stephen stone on the visit of the Society to that place, and from it I was led to the discovery of the bound traitor on the Gosforth Cross. Since this discovery the Vinding Loki has been found and communicated to Professor Stephens who has kindly sent me a woodcut which shews the binding—by the wrists and ankles, and round the neck by a twisted cable—of the giant, but in this case apparently to a horizontal bar which he clutches with his hands. In "Asgard and the Gods" published by Sonnenschein and Allen, 1880, opposite page 293, the modern artist has pictured Sigun with her poison cup in an attitude much resembling the Gosforth panel, this I had not seen when I first detected the figure kneeling by Loki's side; I thought the figure might be that of him who fastened the gyves to

Odin

Odin the father, approaches the future. The *devil* overcome.

On the south side we have a *central divine Hart* triumphantly walking through the world unhurt by the slime and venom of the great worm of the middle earth, or by the howling dog ;—the Christ, the fountain of living waters, the incarnation of the deity who below rides armed to battle with and to “overcome the world.”

On the east side we have a *central Thor*,* *Odin*, or *Baldr-Christ* who fights the last great battle and overcomes the *flesh* which is crucified and pierced with the spear ; who, though the jaws of Hel gape wide and swallow him, in another personification—Vidar the Silent†—he who opened not his mouth before his foes—rends asunder those very gates, victorious over death and the grave, and as we see on the north side‡ rides on the everlasting conqueror through His glorious resurrection.

the rock, and that he held the bolt with his left hand whilst with the other he hammered it home. After the stone had been cleaned, it was plainly seen that the left hand held a hollow bowl and that the figure was that of a woman with abundant hair ; from photographs sent to Professor Stephens he recognized this beautiful story of woman's love and faithfulness before I had again been able to visit the cross. He also at the same time recognized Heimdall with his horn.

* As an example of the way in which the early Christian teachers made use of the traditions and beliefs concerning the Pagan deities, and like St. Paul continually announced “whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you,” and especially as shewing an illustration of how thoroughly St. Michael and his host who fought against the dragon and his host, took the place of Thor, the dragon-slayer, my attention has been drawn by the Rev. T. Lees to the fact that the church of *Kirkby-Thor*, in Westmorland, is dedicated to St. Michael. What an interesting chapter in the history of the district is opened up by the simple mention of the place name and the church dedication, Kirkby-Thor, St. Michael's Church !

† Writing concerning the Vidar episode above the crucifixion, I learned from Professor Stephens that he “had already forestalled me,” each having independently come to the same conclusion by different modes.

‡ My first formed opinion (expressed at our Egremont meeting) concerning the horsemen was that the upper one represented the triumphant Christ, or the Christian Faith. The lower one, the heathen faith, or death, overcome. Odin with his spear of death, man and horse upside down, may well by some be taken to be death on the pale horse carrying his dart, here overthrown and conquered—cast down to his final perdition by the entrance into the world, the life, the death and the resurrection of Christ. Still, I think that the horseman is always the same—twice doubly shewn even as Odin's horse Sleipnir had eight legs—*once* seen (west side) going down to the place where Utgard Loki lay bound, and (the same figure turned round on south side) coming back from the tomb of prophecy to the world's battle. *Again* seen (North side, lower horseman) coming up from Hel, and (upper horseman) riding in majesty, the conqueror ; for Heimdal, and Baldr, and Odin, are the same god-principle in three persons.

Notes,

NOTES.

In examining the fac-similies of the Irish MSS., Part I., published by command of Her Majesty, 1874. I was struck by the similarity of one figure in illustration xi. to the head of the winged creature on the north side of this cross. The illuminated page is from the Book of Kells, St. Matthew xxvii., 38. "Tunc crucifixerant X R I cum eo duos latrones," and the figure is to the left of the page; it is a monster, head downwards with full eye, dilated nostril and fierce teeth, one in either jaw, trying to swallow the Holy Shamrock, whose stem below buds out into palm fronds which curve upwards and inwards around the sacred symbol's stem, like flames of fire. Around the neck of the creature, and behind his up-pricked ears, is a sort of ornamental collar at the throat having the Triquetra, in shape like those upon our cross, not the shamrock.

Again, in illustration viii. on the illuminated Z of Zachariae sacerdotiis apparuit Angelus, &c., from St. John's Gospel, I noticed the dog with the red lolling tongue, and action so like to the dog on the south side of our cross, having under his feet lacertine interlacing. Other similarities in design made a strong impression on my mind. I then wrote again to Dr. Stephens with the result that he cordially accepted my suggestions, and declared in a letter to me that the style of the work, and the character of the symbols, shewed the deep influence of Keltic art on the Northumbrian through the great Irish-Scotic missions.

At the Carlisle meeting of the Royal Archæological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, the Professor, after having seen the cross and heard the paper read by me, and prepared with the valuable assistance of Dr. Parker as to details (without whose labour and care it would have been difficult to have obtained those details so absolutely correctly), gave it as his opinion that the date of this cross could not be later than that of the equally grand Ruthwell Cross (7th century), on which Christ is "Baldor;" and of the Kirkby Stephen stone, and he said that these two representations (the only ones then known) of the Devil as Loki must be exceedingly early, as they were *survivals* in the same way that the word *Baldor-Christ* on the Ruthwell Cross was a survival. That the oldest purely Christian art represented the evil one by a serpent or dragon, or (as at Bewcastle and Ruthwell) by a couple of swine—not by a *bound* man-fiend or *human* chief devil—but that Cædmon (7th century) and other old English poets, following Scandinavian traditions, represented the
man-foe

man-foe as bound, and that out of the fifty drawings in the unique Cædmon Codex, five shewed the devil as bound, but variously treated according to the fancy of the artist.

At the same meeting Dr. Parker quoted from Giraldus Cambrensis (1185) to shew that sculptured crosses were sufficiently ancient to be forgotten and despised in the twelfth century, there being at that time, at a place called Margan, a cross used as a bridge over a rivulet, and also other fragments of crosses beautifully ornamented with fretwork.

A cast of the cross has been taken for the South Kensington Museum, and the cross has been protected by an iron railing.

The quotations from the Edda are taken from Thorpe's translation published by Trubner & Co., 1866.

I desire to thank most heartily for their kind help in many ways, the President of our Society, the Rev. Dr. Simpson; the Rev. T. Lees; our learned editor, the Mayor of Carlisle, whose libraries have been open to me; the Rev. H. D. Rawnsley, who allows me here to reproduce his sonnet composed after hearing the paper read at Carlisle, and the remarks of Dr. Stephens.

We are not wiser than the seems of old,
 Our fathers—they twelve hundred years ago
 Hewed from its silent place this prophet stone,
 And bade the sacred Yggdrasil uphold
 A Baldr-Christ whose triumphs should be told
 In Pagan picture,—here the battle won
 By Horn's blast,—there the Horse with Death thereon
 Cast down for years whose coil is endless rolled,
 Preacher of Christ, stone-lipped, and not in vain,
 Preacher of Woman's love to help her Lord
 By faithful tendance, yea, though earth should quake;
 For lo! her feet upon the bruised snake,
 Here Mary stands beside the Christ in pain!
 There Loki's queen prevents with cup the poison pour'd!

Largest Fragment.—The fragment (probably of another cross) has the divine hart trampling on the worm above the plaited body of the adder, and beneath what Dr. Stephen recognizes as the fishing scene thus represented in the lay of Hymir;—

- 21.—The mighty Hymir drew,
 he alone,
 two whales up
 with his hook;
 but at the stern abaft
 Veor (Thor) cunningly
 made him a line.
- 22.—Fixed on the hook
 the shield of men,
 the serpent's slayer,
 the ox's head.
 Gaped at the bait
 the foe of gods,
 the encircler beneath
 of every land.

- 23.—Drew up boldly
the mighty Thor
the worm with venom glistening,
up to the side ;
with his hammer struck,
on his foul head's summit,
like a rock towering,
the wolf's own brother.
- 24.—The icebergs resounded,
the caverns howled,
the old earth
shrank together :
At length the fish
back into ocean sank.*

* In the prose, Edda (p. 445) the giant, took out his knife and cut Thor's line