

IX.—*On a Runic Door from Iceland.*

By GEORGE STEPHENS, Esq., F.S.A., Hon. Mem. S.A. Scot., Professor
of the English Language and Literature, University of Copenhagen.
(Plate XXIX.)

[*Read before the Society March 14, 1872.*]

Among the most precious "finds" of later years are those SCULPTURED OBJECTS which modern folk-lore has triumphantly recognised as echoes of heathen ages, as telling the tales of our Scando-Gothic fore-elders, as handling those grand and striking mythical Sagas which relate to the gods and heroes of our noble "barbarian" folkships. Ideas and legends so ancient as to run from the cradle of our races, following them from the far East to the far West, they were so intertwined with the mother-tongue and the whole intelligent life of the peoples, that they were almost imperishable, living on in spite of the new and better faith, so that even Christian poems bud and bloom with pagan imagery.¹ And all these written and carved reminiscences of pagan song are quite independent of, and much older than, the merely local Norse-Icelandic Eddas. They are equally original, though only broken outstreamings and variations from common Scando-Gothic traditions, and show how many such "Eddas" we and others might have had if time and fanaticism had not destroyed the great mass of our oldest skin-books and hand-made works of art.

It is true that these carved old-laves are very few. But we must not be impatient. Only a score of years ago *none* such existed. And, now that our eyes are open to the subject, and we *destroy* less than once was the fashion, the tiny roll is continually lengthening. Who can tell how soon

¹ As one example among many, see the death of Christ treated in words applicable only to the killing of BALDOR, the White Os of Walhall, by the blind kemp HADO, pointed out by me in the glorious rune-carved stave-rime verses on the Ruthwell Cross, the noblest monument of its kind in all Europe. I have shown that these lines are by the Northumbrian bard Cædmon, the Christian Milton of the seventh century, and that the date of this runic pillar is about A.D. 680. (Old Northern Runic Monuments of England and Scandinavia, p. 431, and in the separately printed "The Ruthwell Cross, Northumbria," folio. London: J. R. Smith, 1866, p. 29).

others may be added to the number? As I am not aware that these scarce remains have ever been brought together, I will here mention *all* the pieces thus as yet discovered and identified, *in so far as they are known to me*. But this little list does not touch similar sculptures and decorations, &c., mentioned in ancient Northern writings, and which have long since perished, and is also exclusive of several of the remarkable Bild-stones (figured stones in relief, with or without runes) found in the Swedish island of Gotland, where some of the cuttings—for instance, the 8-footed horse (?Woden's steed Sleipner)—are apparently taken from the local folk-trow at the close of the heathen period, but which we as yet *cannot absolutely prove* to be the case.¹

The tall groups, then, illustrated by actual fragments of early art, are:—

I.—THE WELAND AND ÆGIL SAGA.

Weland, the Völund of Iceland, is the northern counterpart to Dædalus and Vulcan, and to so many other still farther off symbols or folk-pictures. To this legend belongs the fonest (oldest) such mythical Scando-Gothic carving left to us. Two cuttings from this hero-lay are found on *the Franks Casket*, or whalebone box, covered with Old English runes and bold sculptures—of subjects pagan, Christian, and historical—of about the year eight hundred. The work and dialect are Old Northumbrian.²

¹ See the engraving of the Tjängvide stone, Gotland, at p. 224 of my "Old Northern Runic Monuments." But this block, which I had never myself seen, has since come to the Stockholm Museum; and personal inspection, as well as a paper cast of the runes, obligingly forwarded to me by the assistant keeper, Dr O. Montelius, have shown me that *none* of the staves is Old Northern. It therefore goes out as an O. N. runic piece. The inscription states that the stone was raised by SIKUI to his brother URULF, and it probably dates from about the year 900 after Christ. See also the Habblingbo stone, as figured at my p. 708; the Laivide stone, at p. 743; and the Sanda stone, at p. 778.

² See beautiful chemitypes, full size, and a careful description, in my "Old Northern Run. Mon." pp. 470-476, D., and pp. lxx., lxx. This costly piece is now in the British Museum, to which it has been presented by its late owner, our accomplished and noble minded old Iorist, Augustus Wollaston Franks, Esq., F.S.A. Reduced Photo-lithographs of this casket (doubtless taken from my chemitypes, which were executed by J. Magnus Petersen) have lately been given by the Rev. Dan. H. Haigh, in his paper on "Yorkshire Runic Monuments," in the Yorkshire Archæological Journal for 1872, 8vo.

II.—THE VOLSUNGS.—A.

SIGURD FAFNE'S BANE.

The wide-spread folk-lays hereon have found outward shape on—

1. *The Ramsunds-berg*, Södermanland, Sweden, a runic grave-wording cut on the surface of a large rock table, together with many figures telling the story of Sigurd, the Dragon and the Gold. The whole carving measures about 16^f, by from 4^f to 6^f in breadth.¹

2. *The Gök Stone*, a few miles from the above and in the same folk-land, a runic grave-wording on a large stone block, with very similar but coarser carvings from the same cyclus; the whole nearly equal in size.²

The true character of these two wonderful stone-pictures was first recognised by Prof. Carl Säve, of Upsala, Sweden; and his essay hereon³ is a masterpiece of research. These colossal carvings must date from about the year 1000, or a little later.

3. *Hyllestad Church* door pillars,⁴ Setersdal, Norway, now in the Christiania Museum. Date about 1150.

¹ First engraved in "Rudbeck's *Atlantica*," fol., vol. iii., Upsala, 1698, p. 22; then in R. Dybeck's "Svenska Run-Urkunder," 8vo, vol. ii., Stockholm, 1857, p. 13, fig. 63; last and best in Carl Säve, "Sigurds-Ristningarna," pl. i.; J. Mestorf, "Zur Nibelungensage," pl. i.; and O. Montelius, "Sigurds-Ristningarne," Södermanland, in "Ny Illustrerad Tidning," fol., April 8, 1871, Stockholm, pp. 110, 112; Worsaae, "Om Forestillingerne," in "Aarbøgerne," Kjöb., 1870, pl. xv.; Worsaae, "Les Empreintes des Bracteates en Or," in "Mémoires de la Société Roy. des Ant. du Nord," 8vo, Copenhagen, 1870, pl. xv. (xviii.)

² Engraved in Rudbeck's "Atlantica," vol. iii., p. 21; in C. Säve, pl. ii.; J. Mestorf, pl. ii.; O. Montelius, pp. 110, 112.

³ "Sigurds-Ristningarna å Ramsunds-berget och Göks-stenen, Tvänne Fornsvenska Minnesmärken om Sigurd Fafnesbane," pp. 321–364 of "Kgl. Vitterhets, Historie och Antiquitets Akademiens Handlingar," 8vo, vol. xxvi., Ny Följd, vol. vi., Stockholm, 1869. Translated into German, with some additions, by J. Mestorf, "Zur Nibelungensage," 8vo. Hamburg, 1870.

⁴ Woodcut in "Skilling Magasin," 4to, No. 5, Feb. 4, 1865, Kristiania; Chemitype, by J. M. Petersen (from a large photograph), illustrating Worsaae's paper, "Om Forestillingerne paa Guldbracteaterne," in "Aarbøgerne for Nordisk Oldkyndighed og Historie," 8vo, Kjöbenhavn, 1870, pp. 382–419, plate xiv.; copied by J. Mestorf, pl. iii.

4. *Veigus Church* door, Robygdelaag, Norway. Nicolaysen¹ says, date about 1200–1250.

5. *Gaulstad* door pillars,² Jarlsberg, Norway.

6. As probably identified by the Tree (Birds gone), this legend may, perhaps, exist on a Miserere (date first quarter of the 16th century) now in the chapel of Durham Castle. See the list in "Notes and Queries," June 7, 1873.—"6. Winged and long-eared dragon, with clawed feet. A human figure has been broken away, but a hand pushing a shield against the dragon's nose, and a bare foot broken off at the instep, remain. In background a cabbage-like tree. On either side a mask, one with tongue out."

III.—THE VOLSUNGS.—B.

GUDRUN WARNS HER BROTHERS AGAINST ATLE.

Gunnar and Hogne were brothers of Gudrun, Sigurd Fafne's-bane's wife. Gudrun's second husband, Atle, sends two bodesmen to the princes, bidding them visit him, with intent to slay them. Gudrun warns them with runes, and with a golden ring into which a wolf's hair was twisted.

This episode is found on one of the two *Hiterdal Church* chairs,³ Thelemark, Norway.

IV.—THE VOLSUNGS.—C.

GUNNAR HARPING IN THE WORM-PIT.

Gunnar Giuking had married Sigurd's first love, Brynhild. When Gunnar would not betray the hiding-place of Fafne's and Sigurd's gold-hoard, he was cast into a snake-den with his hands fast tied. Gudrun sent him a harp, and on this he played so sweetly with his toes that he

¹ N. Nicolaysen, "Norske Fornlevninger," 8vo. Kristiania, 1862–6, p. 252.

² Engraved in "Foreningen til Norske Fortidsmindemerkens Bevaring. Aarsberetning for 1855," 8vo, Christiania, 1856, pl. vii.

³ Engraved in "Foreningen til Norske Fortidsmindemerkens Bevaring. Aarsberetning for 1854," pl. iv., 8vo, Christiania, 1855; Worsaae, "Om Forestillingerne paa Guldbracteaterne," pl. xviii., xix.; J. Mestorf, pl. iii.

lulled the serpents to sleep, all but one fierce viper, which gnawed through his breast and tore his heart asunder.

1. *Hyllestad Church* door pillars.¹

2. One of the two *Hiterdal Church* chairs, Thelemarken, Norway.²

3. Door-plank in *Opdal Church*, Numedal, Norway.³

4. Stone *Font* (now in the Swedish Museum, Stockholm) from *Norum Church* in Bohus-tän, Sweden. Each of the four sides is decorated, that with the Gunnar scene also bearing a runic inscription and runic date, which I read: SUÆNN KÆRDE CCCXX. (*suænn gared = made me* [1]320). All the sides are engraved in the elegant work of G. Brusewitz on the Antiquities of South Bohus-tän ("Elfsyssel," 4to, Göteborg, 1864, p. 120-21.)

V.—THE KING AND THE DRAKE.

The commonest variation of this ancient theme in our lands is that best known under the title of KING THEODORIK AND THE DRAGON.

The Icelandic church-door carved with this story dates from about 1150, or a little later. It was first made public by Worsaae, from a chemitype by J. Magnus Petersen, in his "Nordiske Oldsager," 8vo, Kjöbenhavn, 1854, No. 388 (No. 505 in the 2d ed., Kjöbenhavn, 1859). It was first handled and its runes deciphered by myself in "The Runic Hall in the Danish Old Northern Museum," 4to, Cheapinghaven (Köbenhavn), 1868, p. 17; (also p. 17, in the Danish edition of this same work, "Runehallen i det Danske Oldnordiske Museum," 4to. Köbenhavn, 1868). Thereafter I treated it more at large, and illustrated it with a new and still more exact and delicate, and one-third larger chemitype, by the same first-rate artist, in the Danish illustrated paper "Illustreret Tidende" for June 20, 1869, folio.

But this splendid carving is of great interest to all the Northern races, and throws light on several of the olden remains of Britain, as so carefully and magnificently collected for us by Dr Stuart, in his "Inscribed Stones of Scotland." I have, therefore, great pleasure in forwarding these lines to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, offering them to their Transactions. My

¹ For engravings, see note to II. A., 3.

² Engraved, as in note to II. B.

³ Engraved in "Norske Bygninger fra Fortiden," folio, part 6, Kristiania, 1866, pl. iii.

readers can at the same time study the door itself, the Society having consented to add impressions from my characteristic plate, as executed by J. Magnus Petersen.

This beautiful and costly door, of pine-wood (drift timber), one of the finest specimens of Middle Age carving in Europe, was formerly in the head entrance to the ancient church at Valthjófstad, Nordrmúlasysla, in East Iceland. But as it began to fall in pieces, and the parishioners wished one much stronger in its place, they agreed it should be taken care of in the Danish Old Northern Museum, in exchange for a new oaken door and two altar candlesticks. The venerable relic was forwarded to Denmark in 1851, by Pastor Arneson, the priest of Valthjófstad. It was, however, found to be covered over with several coats of paint, given to it in later years, and all this smearing had to be taken off, while at the same time the whole was restored. This masterpiece is now No. 12,195 in the Museum collections, and is about 6 feet and 9½ inches high, by 3 feet and 2½ broad.

Our Northern lands can yet show many art-famous doors from the early and later middle age, but it is only in Scandinavia that some few bear scenes from our oldest legends. One such is that now before us (as was first hinted by Prof. Svend Grundtvig¹), for there can be no doubt that it is a free and fresh wood-rising of the tale how a king—usually called THEODORIK—freed a lion in danger of death from a savage dragon, slaying the monster, and how the grateful wood-king thereafter followed the kemp as his friend and protector.

The whole field of the door is taken up with two large roundels, cut in relief. The lower shows us a large nondescript winding, twisting, writhing, intertwined cluster of four winged worms. One dragon-head bites another's tail at the top of the circle, another at the bottom, a third at the right, and a fourth at the left.

Midway between this cartouche and the circle above is the finely wrought iron ring, which, as well as its staple, is delicately and decoratively inlaid with silver—a wonderful proof of what the art-smith then could do.






The upper roundel is divided by a narrow band into two equal halves. The bottom section shows a warrior, armed with helm and a three-pointed shield, dashing at full speed on horseback against a winged drake, into whose

¹ S. Grundtvig, *Danmarks Gamle Folkeviser*, vol. i. 8vo. Kjöbenhavn, 1853, p. 130, "Kong Diderik og Löven."



CARVED CHURCH DOOR, WITH RUNIC INSCRIPTION, FROM ICELAND.

body he plunges his sword. The tail of the worm grasps a struggling lion. The top half represents the same hero, triumphant and still on horseback, followed by the thankful animal, and advancing towards a small building (doubtless a church), at whose gate crouches another or the same creature, who rests on a broadish band, or slab, or tombstone, *whose edge bears a line of runes*, and at the head of which stands a small cross. This second lion may show that his gallant deliverer is in the church thanking God for his victory, while the faithful king of beasts awaits and guards him without. It may also be a general symbol of the homage paid by heathen strength to the mild lore of Christ. But most likely it shadows forth the last scene of all, telling us that at his master's fall the true and great-hearted forest-lord lays him down to mourn and die on his grave.

At the base of and inside the top roundel is the mark of the carver, ; so old is "the artist's monogram." Below this roundel on the left is another mark or bindrune, perhaps that of the maker of the door, the mere carpenter; it is . And below this again, still farther to the left, is a worn , which, perhaps, was originally  or . There is also a scratch or two of later date.



The whole carving shows a surprisingly bold and free and elegant handling, and must have been the work of a master, a true "wood-smith." The costume and armour agree in all essentials with the well-known historical needle-bilds which meet us on the Bayeux tapestry, and in miniatures of that age; and the style and work are evidently from about the middle of the twelfth century, or maybe a little later. The shield is kite-shaped or oblong and three-cornered, but cut off square at the top; the helm has both nasal and backpiece; the sword is large, with a massy guard; the stirrups are fastened to the saddle-bow, are apparently of leather, and seem to end in a large roundish opening for the foot, so that there is perhaps no iron flat-bottomed stirrup-shoe as on the Bayeux tapestry. The spurs are either wanting, or have been broken away, but were probably never carved at all. They were most likely *understood*; the artist thinking such a minute feature would soon crumble if cut in this soft wood. As might be expected, the king is attended by his hawk, which flies near him during the combat, but has approvingly settled on the horse's mane after his lord's sigor ("victory"). Very curious in the after scene is the hawk-staff or perch borne upright by the sigor-winner. That helt holds it in his right hand, for the falcon to fly

to when he needs him. It is clearly not a leash wound round the hand, but a stout leathern or wooden pin with a broad and indented top. We must also note that the lion following the sigor-lord is ornamented with a double collar or neckchain, doubtless of precious metal, while the sorrowing woodland-king, who bows his head before the church, has no such triumphal ornament.

The large lock which once belonged to this piece is gone; it has been cut out, and its place filled with a bit of wood. Maybe this was done (whether in Iceland or Denmark I cannot learn) when the door was otherwise repaired.

We now come to the runes. But we must first remark, that at some time when the door was in Iceland, perhaps long before it was taken out to be sent to Denmark, a slip about 1 inch and a quarter wide was split off the third, or rightmost, or lock-deal (for the whole consists of three such boards nicely fitted together), all the way along the inner side of the plank from top to bottom. This breakage, of course, spoiled the whole, for what was left would no longer fit in with the carvings of the next or second board. It was therefore determined to replace it. A piece of new wood, of exactly the same width ($1\frac{1}{4}$ inch), was obtained, carefully planed, and glued on to the broken side, and some clever hand carved in all those parts of the design and figures which had stood on the lost strip. By a lighter shade-play, my artist has admirably enabled us to trace this narrow mending-lath all the way up. In so doing, however, the old workman *forgot to cut the runes* on that bit, or else they may have suffered, and *he knew not how to restore them*. If this mending was done in Denmark the carpenter could know nothing about the missing letters. The damaged slice had contained at this spot *the beginning of the runic inscription*. As I have said, the width of this splinter is only $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch. That part of the narrow slab, or band, or gravestone still farther to the left *never had* any staves, as a glance at the engraving will show us. We are therefore *sure* that the runes which *want* were *not many*, how many we cannot know, as one or two of them *may* have been bind-runes (monograms, clasped-letters), for two such occur elsewhere in this rune-line. But these—say five to seven—missing staves—or five to six staves if one of the marks was a dividing point—*must be supplied* in any reading of the risting.

We must also remember that the carving of small runish characters in so narrow a space, and on so soft a material as timber, and this wood so nesh

and loose as *the pine*, must be carefully managed, and the shape of each letter adapted to the kind of tree, for else the runes will assuredly *chip out in the cutting*. Hence on any such monument we must be prepared to grapple with any modification in the shape of a letter or two. Add to this, that where the threads and grain are often so very coarse (so that *here*, for instance, the deep fibre-marks in some places run like broad wires down the whole board, thus , and in the inscribed parts may often at first sight be mistaken for the rune , or for part of a letter), and where such a thing as a *door* has been exposed for at least 700 years to wind and weather, and rubs and dints, and scathes manifold, we may expect the runic risting to offer doubts and difficulties.

This is the case here. The runes are very hard to make out, and have never yet been read. (This was written before the publication of my "Runic Hall" and "Runehallen," whose short text contained my reading.) They have become comparatively faint; there are several damages and doleful spots on the surface; wee bits have here and there fallen away, and in one place (the E in the word ER) *a whole* letter has mouldered out bodily, so that there is a deep chink. As so often also, particularly on wood, it is not always easy to decide whether a rune is "stung" (dotted) or no; and where dividing points occur, we cannot always clearly see their exact number. Still, by the help of *many and long and careful* examinations of the original and *good paper casts*, and an inexhaustible stock of *patience*, we may do wonders. I believe I have succeeded in deciphering the whole.¹

The staves are 1 inch high, very nearly. The whole rune-row was at first $10\frac{1}{4}$ inches long, of which almost 9 inches remain. For better control, and to ensure perfect accuracy, and that the reader may minutely follow them, I have had the staves carefully chemityped *separately* on a large scale, by J. Magnus Petersen, from my drawings from the door itself, and from paper casts, and give them here one-half the full size:—



For a long time I was hampered in trying to make this out by the plain

¹ As I have said, my translation was first made public in 1868, and I have not seen or heard of any adverse criticism.

rune \mathbb{K} , a mark often found as one of the many shapes in latter times for P. But this value would here be quite inadmissible. It might also be taken as a modification of one of the later types for G, and this long misled me. At last I saw that it could here be neither P nor G, but must be F, which the context, and indeed the whole reading, absolutely demand. My explanation of this F is simply, as I have remarked, that the stuff on which the rune-cutter worked was a soft, coarse-fibred wood, and he had to act accordingly. Living in a late runic age, he used a late and therefore a "stung" alphabet. Therefore, wanting the stung letter D (as modified from his \mathbb{A} , T), he would have to carve \mathbb{A} , or \mathbb{H} or \mathbb{M} , &c. But he was risting this nesh wood, and close-crossed lines so near as in such T's would *certainly* soon *chip out* and spoil his stave; so (in saving his space when cutting the bind-rune DR) he scored the scarce mark \mathbb{D} for D. In the same way, I take it, with the F. The common stave for this letter is \mathbb{F} ; but, so risted, the top or inner arm would *loosen and fall out*; so he made the rare character \mathbb{K} for F, *the two arms being still there*, but so placed as not to mince the fibre of the tree.

Should my copy and my reading be correct, we have here two bind-runes, DR and Ap; \mathbb{D} (D) and \mathbb{R} (R) in \mathbb{R} , and \mathbb{A} (A) and \mathbb{D} (p, TH) in \mathbb{D} . The A in Ap belongs to the foregoing word DREKA, the p to the following word pÆNA, a fresh instance of this not common peculiarity thus added to the many already known to us. The stung or dotted letters are the usual \mathbb{A} for Ü or Y (\mathbb{N} being U), \mathbb{F} for G (\mathbb{Y} being K), and \mathbb{I} for E (\mathbb{I} being I). The D has been already spoken of.

If I be right in all this, there can be no objection to my reading and translation. The *missing letters* I supply in harmony with the rest, *in small staves and in a parenthesis*.

(SE HIN) RIKIA KÜNÜNG HER GRAFIN (E)R UA DREKA pÆNA.

[SEE YON (*that*)] RICH (*mighty*) KING HERE GRAVEN (*buried*) AS (*who*) WOOG (*slew*) DRAKE (*dragon*) THÆN (*this*).

All is here quite simple and natural, and is paralleled by similar mottoes on objects bearing Roman letters. The wordfall RICH KING, RICH EARL,

&c., is a standing phrase in our older writings. Here RIKIA is a form (ancient) form, instead of the usual Norse-Icelandic RIKA (acc. s. m. def.); nom. s. masc. M. Goth. REIKS, O. Engl. RICE, Norse-Icel. RIKR, mighty, potent, strong, far-ruling, splendid (*rich = wealthy* being later or by implication); and this epithet, formerly often given even to God himself, shows that the whole *cannot* refer to any petty later and local prince or kinglet, as the learned Iceland,er, Gisli Brynjulfsson, has suggested. KÜNÜNG, for the common N. I. KONUNG, reminds us of the Old English KUNUNG, CÜNÜNG, CÜNING, CYNUNG, CYNING, &c.

I take it, therefore, to be plain enough that the RICH (= GREAT) KING here spoken of is the far-and-wide known and famous THEODRIK (DIDRIK) WITH THE LION, or the antique mythic folk-king whose symbol he had grown to be. But the legend as here sculptured is not exactly the same as in the commoner and later traditions about king Theodrik, best left to us in the *Vilkina Saga*. In the story as found in that charming tale-book, we have the episode of the king killing all the young dragons also, and he fought *on foot*. On the door (where we, perhaps, have them in the great lower roundel, but at all events we see three of them carved in their den at the right-top corner of the lower half in the upper roundel), the wormlet slaughter is seemingly unknown, and the champion fights *on horseback*.

This is, therefore, the simplest and oldest sculpture-tablet of KING THEODRIK AND THE LION now left to us. But it is also of great value as a work of high art, and is one of the very few specimens of *figure-carving in relief on wood* now found in our North, and dating so far back as about the stirring days of Thomas à Becket in England, Erik the Holy in Sweden, and Valdemar the Sigor-rich (Victorious) in Denmark.

Since the substance of the above was printed, and attention thus drawn hereto, a distinguished Danish archæologist—one especially so in all that relates to the arms and costume of the olden time, Otto Blom, Danish Artillery Captain—has submitted this door to a minute and searching examination at a sitting of the Society of Northern Antiquaries in Cheapinghaven, April 19, 1870. The paper he read on this occasion has since been published, with some additions.¹ As might be expected, it is full of instruction as to the dress and weapons borne in the twelfth year-hundred by

¹ "De udskaarne Kirkedøre fra Valthjofstad og Hyllestad," pp. 229-248 of "Aarbøger for Nordisk Oldkyndighed og Historie," 8vo. Kjöbenhavn, 1871.

man and horse, and will well repay our attentive study. The accomplished critic comes to the conclusion that this relief was carved by a native Scandinavian artist, about the year 1150, and that the Norse Hyllestad door is of about the same age. An Icelandic scholar, Hr. Gisli Brynjulfsson, observed at the meeting that the church at Valthjofstad was not built so early, old documents showing that it was raised about 1190, or some years after. To this Captain Blom replies,—that his proofs do not admit this difference of about fifty years, that the forms of the helm (with its nasal and backpiece) and of the saddle are decisive against so low an era; that the door may have first belonged to an older building, and may then have been used for the new one, or that it perhaps was brought from Norway, or that there may have been some other reason for the style being older than 1190–1200, but that it is certainly not much younger than about 1150. At all events, the difference is not very great. All agree that this fine wood-carving cannot be *later* than *about* 1190. It is thus one of the most precious art monuments left us by our forefathers. If I am rightly informed, this northern heirloom has, as it were, its double in the South Kensington Museum. At least it is said (I hope truly) that one of its officers has made a paper mould of the door, whence to take a cast for that rich institution.