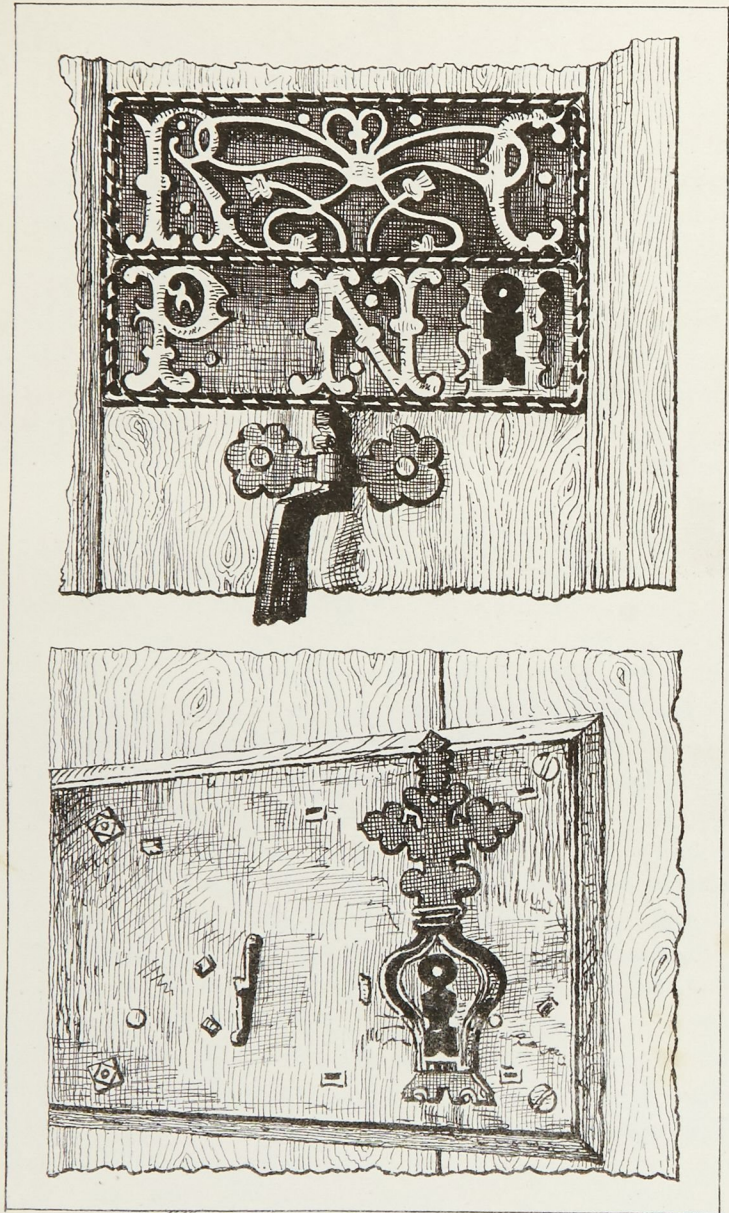


NOTICE
OF
An Ancient Lock in Norwich Cathedral.

COMMUNICATED BY
MR. JOHN L'ESTRANGE.

THE following note, and the accompanying illustration from a drawing by the Rev. G. W. W. Minns, may throw light upon a point connected with the architectural history of the Cathedral, concerning which some misapprehension has existed. On the western side of the door opening from the south transept into the chancel aisle is an ornamental lock-plate of wrought iron, containing the initials, R. C., connected by a knot, and below them the letters, P. N. The engraving, showing this plate and the reverse side of the lock, will save further description; but there is a peculiarity in the construction which may be observed. The key-holes are not opposite each other, the bolt being furnished with two catches. The present fastenings are modern, and the lock could easily be taken off from the inside, but originally iron bands passed through square holes, shown in the engraving, on each side of the keyhole, and were secured on the outside.

Britton, in his *Norwich Cathedral*, gives a plate of the doorway and screen above, and remarks that, from the initials on the lock, "it is generally supposed that the whole was erected by the last Prior and first Dean, William Castleton." He however rightly observes, that, "although P. N. may



Lock-Plate and Reverse Norwich-Cathedral.

stand for Prior of Norwich, it is not so easy to make R. C. stand for *William* Castleton."

The editor of Murray's "Hand-book" to the Cathedral draws attention to this ironwork, and arbitrarily assigns the screen to Prior *Robert* Castleton. The Christian name of Castleton was certainly William, but the prior immediately preceding him, Robert Bronde, adopting the name of his birth-place, as was usual with ecclesiastics of the period, was called Robert Catton. In the printed lists he occurs as Robert Bronde, but when mentioned in documents he is called Catton.¹ To the period of his priorate, 1504—29, the erection of this screen may therefore reasonably be referred.²

The present notice serves to add an item to the slender stock of information on record concerning Prior Catton. In 1519, he obtained a bull from Pope Leo X., and license from Bishop Nix, his diocesan, to assume the mitre, pastoral staff, and other pontificals: ³ an unusual privilege, and one not known to have been granted to any other prior of Norwich.

In the east window of the chancel of Catton church, glazed by Prior Bronde, he placed his own effigy, holding a mitre in his hands, and supporting his pastoral staff on his shoulder, with these arms:—"Gul. an Ounce or Cat of Mountain Arg., spotted Sab., between 3 Annulets Arg. on a Chief Or, 3 Cinquefoils pierced Sab., and on the Chief a *pale* Az. on which a *Mitre Or.*"⁴ Blomefield supposes the mitre on the pale to refer to the arms of the See; but the mitre is more likely an augmentation adopted in consequence of the privilege granted by Leo X. and mentioned above.

¹ "Compōus dñi Roberti Catton, Prioris," &c. : 1504, 5, 11, 17, 22, 25, &c.

² The following item occurs in Comp. ffris. Hen. Langrake, 1516: "In seris, clauibus, et aliis ferramentis ad noua ostia juxta vestiariū." If this entry refer, as it may, to the ironwork of this door, the date of the screen would be prior to 1516.

³ Reg. 1, Eccles. Cath. N. f. 91.

⁴ Blomefield, vol. ii. p. 435, fo. edit.