

THE CARVINGS OF THE STALLS,
ST. KATHERINE'S CHAPEL,
REGENT'S PARK.*

BY

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AMONG the various fittings removed from the old Church of St. Katherine by the Tower, when it was pulled down to make way for the London and St. Katherine's Docks, were the stalls of the choir. These have been re-erected in the modern Free Chapel of St. Katherine, Regent's Park, which was completed in 1829 under the scheme for the removal of the Hospital and Church to that site. Six of them are in the chapel itself and seven in the chapter-room; and some further portions are lying in one of the houses in the Precincts. Other articles of church furniture transferred include the pulpit,¹ on the panels of which are representations of buildings which, if they portray the Tower of London and the buildings of the Hospital and Church, are of a conventional character; the richly carved font; a sculpture in wood of a choir of five angels, probably a Te Deum; and some panelling with charming little figures and heads. There is also the magnificent canopied tomb of John Holland, Duke of Exeter, Admiral of England (d. 1447), and his two wives, both

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¹ The gift of Sir Julius Cæsar, who was appointed Master by Queen Elizabeth in 1596.

of whom were named Anne, and whose head-dresses are worthy of study.

The History of St. Katherine's Hospital and Church is recorded in Dr. A. C. Ducarel's book (1782). Founded originally by Queen Matilda, wife of King Stephen, in the year 1148, for the repose of the souls of her son Baldwin and her daughter Matilda, who, dying in her lifetime, were both buried in the church, and re-founded by Alienore, widow of King Henry III in 1273, a feature of the charity is that the Queen consort has always been its patroness. In 1340, in the reign of Edward III, a new church was begun by William de Erldesby, the Master, and in 1351 Queen Philippa gave the Hospital a new charter or set of Ordinances in which, among other matters, she directs that all savings made out of the revenues of the Hospital, and all future benefactions received, shall be laid out towards the finishing of the Church, to which she had liberally contributed; but departing this life in 1369 she had not the satisfaction of seeing it finished.²

The new choir, begun by William de Erldesby, was finished by John de Hermesthorp, who was master at the time of Philippa's death, and who died in 1412 and was buried in the choir.³ King Edward died in 1377, and it was probably about that time that the stalls were put into the choir.

Pl. XVI in Ducarel shows them with their canopies in position in 1780. According to the plan on Pl. VI there were twenty-three stalls, part of the space on the north side having been taken for a doorway. It is

² Ducarel, p. 12.

³ He was not Master at the time of his death.

probable that in 1780 some of the misericords were already lost, for Ducarel illustrates only fifteen. One of those in the chapter-room does not appear in his plate, and three which he illustrates are not now at St. Katherine's. In remounting them at the time of removal, some of the carvings were transposed, and are not now in the same relation as shown in Ducarel's plate. That their date cannot well be earlier than about 1375 is shown by the foliage, as may be seen in the illustration of the elephant (Pl. II). The heads of Edward and Philippa (Pl. I), who are both crowned, may be compared with their effigies in Westminster Abbey. The treatment of the King's head at St. Katherine's differs from his effigy (which is in bronze), as he is represented in life, and the hair is not so conventionally arranged; but the two heads of Philippa are more alike. On her effigy (in marble) the head is partly broken; she has the reticulated head-dress with the hair arranged in straight cauls at the sides of her face and a jewelled fillet across the forehead. The net covers the top of her head, at the back of which is a small veil. The face is said to be a portrait, finished by De Liège in 1367, two years before her death. At St. Katherine's her crown obscures the upper part of her head, but the cauls are exactly the same, the net only being coarser and without visible knots. This carving may have been copied from the effigy in the Abbey.⁴

⁴ Cuts of the heads of Edward and Philippa in the Abbey are given in the Companion to the Glossary, p. 113 (1846). It also mentions similar heads used as ornaments in the Church of St. Nicholas, King's Lynn, built 1371-9.

The carvings on the misericords and elbows will now be described, those in the chapter-room being taken first. The subjects are as follows, left and right being as viewed by the spectator:

1. In the centre a man's head in cap, with beard and curly hair falling on both sides of his face. Left and right: A conventional leaf.

2. In the centre a human face with foliage issuing from the mouth and springing from the forehead. Left and right: A conventional leaf.

The principal subject here is a very common one on misericords, and at present the motif underlying it is unknown to us.

3. In the centre a pelican striking her breast with her beak over her young ones in a nest set within conventionally arranged foliage. The nest is of the usual plait or basket-work. Left and right: A swan swimming to left and right respectively; that on the left is gorged with a crown. (Pl. II.)

The pelican is a well-known symbolic subject, and it seems almost superfluous to give an account of it. The majority of carvings are of the 15th century. We learn about the symbolism of such birds and animals from the mediæval Bestiaries of the 12th and 13th centuries. The carvers of that time made full use of the illustrations in these books as models, and were no doubt acquainted with their significance; but by the 15th century other subjects, both dogmatic and satirical, had become popular, and animal symbolism was less regarded. Animals and birds, however, continued to be represented in great numbers, partly, no doubt, because they had been used before, and partly because the Bestiaries were so convenient to work from. For

early examples of animals with titles the 12th century doorway at Alne (Yorks) is most important. In carving details are much curtailed, a single figure being often considered sufficient to indicate the subject.

The illustrations of the pelican in both Bestiaries and carving are usually on the same lines as those at St. Katherine's, although in MS. Harl. 3244 (B.M.) the nest is plain (Pl. IV). There are many excellent examples on Misericords and bench-ends, and a few also in window-glass. Here and there the nest is set on a tree; there is a charming composition of this kind at South Brent (Som.), where a bench end is filled from top to bottom with the tree, the pelican and its nest being lodged in a fork at the top. The tree in this case may represent the "lignum vitæ."

The symbolism of the Pelican, as explained in the Bestiaries, does not vary very much. "It is a bird which lives in the deserts of the Nile and is exceedingly fond of its children. When they have begun to grow up they strike their parents in the face, and their parents, being angered, strike them back and kill them. And on the third day the mother⁵ striking her breast opens her side, and bending over her young ones pours out her blood upon their bodies and brings them to life again. So too our Lord Jesus Christ the author and founder of every creature created us, and when we were not, he made us. We, however, struck him in the face when we served the creature rather than the Creator. For that reason he ascended on the Cross, and his side being pierced there came out blood and water for our Salvation and life Eternal. The water is the Grace of

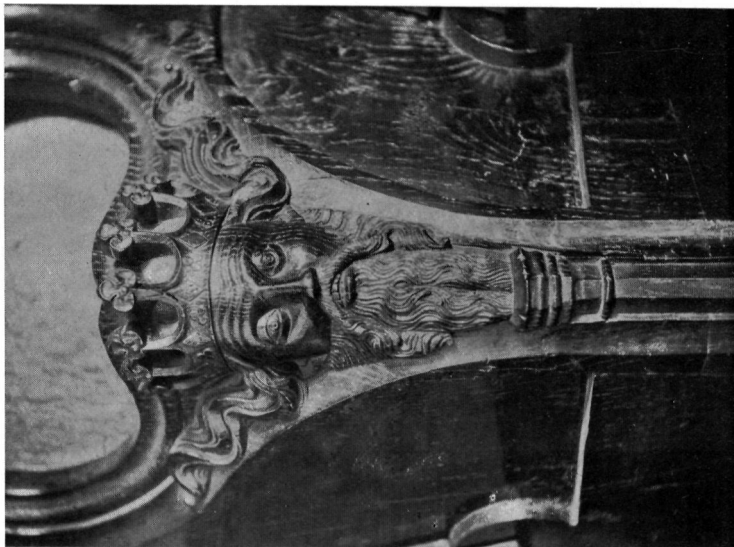
⁵ Sometimes the father.

Baptism, but the blood is the cup of the New and everlasting Testament."

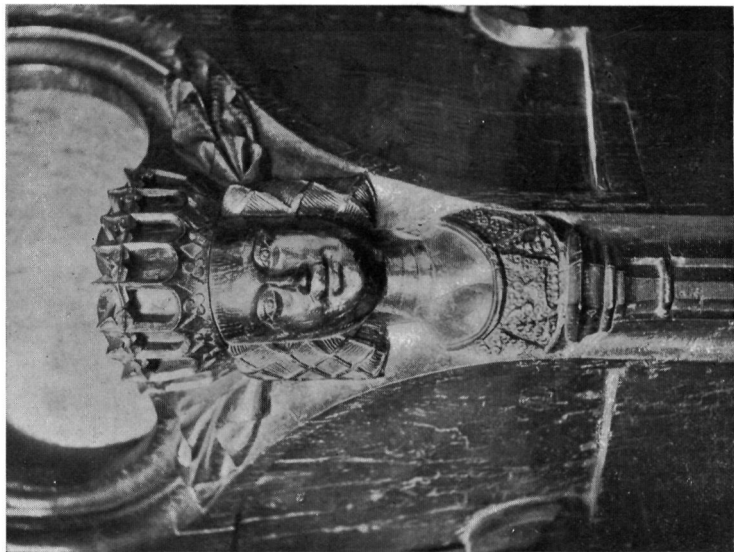
In some MSS. as in 12 C xix (B.M.) and add. 11283 (B.M.) all the incidents are illustrated, but this is very rare in the carvings. Upon a misericord at Manchester Cathedral, however, the young birds are striking their parent in the face. There is a variation of the symbolism in MS. 12 F xiii (B.M.), which occurs in the account of the Hedgehog. The Pelican is there mentioned under its name of "onocrotalus," the reference being to Isaiah xxxiv, 11. It says that there are two kinds, one a water bird, the other a bird of the wilderness. They have long beaks, and so are a type of Christ's preachers spreading forth his words to the uttermost parts of the earth, as much in Judea as in the wilderness of the Gentiles. The bird of the wilderness is also a type of the hermit who retires to the solitudes of the desert. Much of this symbolism was inspired by the writings of Rabanus Maurus, Archbishop of Mainz, in the 9th century, and was elaborated by Hugo de Folieto in the 12th century, every little detail of the pelican's actions being employed to teach a religious or moral lesson.⁶

There are also carvings of the Pelican and young on the sides of one of the elbows in the chapter-room, and in one of the scenes a serpent appears (Pl. III). This occurs also in a panel of the stalls at Lincoln Cathedral. There is no mention of a Serpent in the Bestiaries, beyond that the Pelican feeds on lizards,

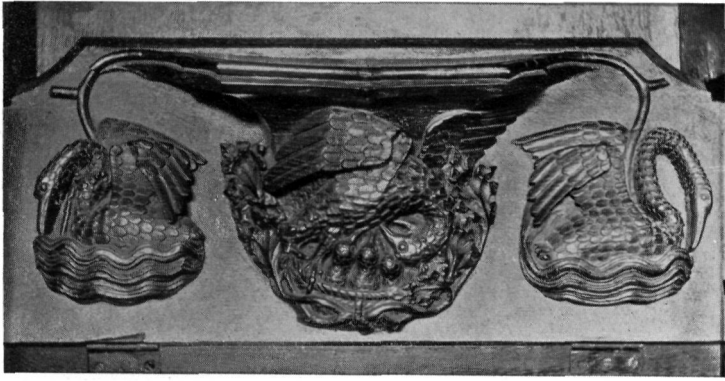
⁶ Vide Rabanus: "De Universo" Lib. VIII; text in Migne's Patrology, Vol. CXI, 250; and under Hugo de Sancto Victore: "De bestiiis et aliis rebus" Lib. I, ch. XXXIII; text in Migne, Vol. CLXXVII, 29.



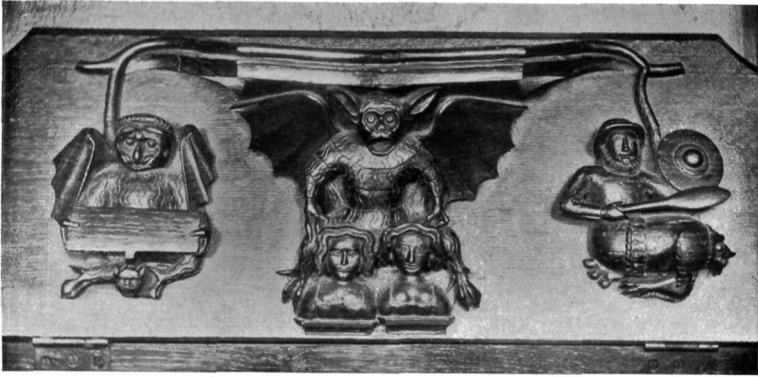
KING EDWARD III.



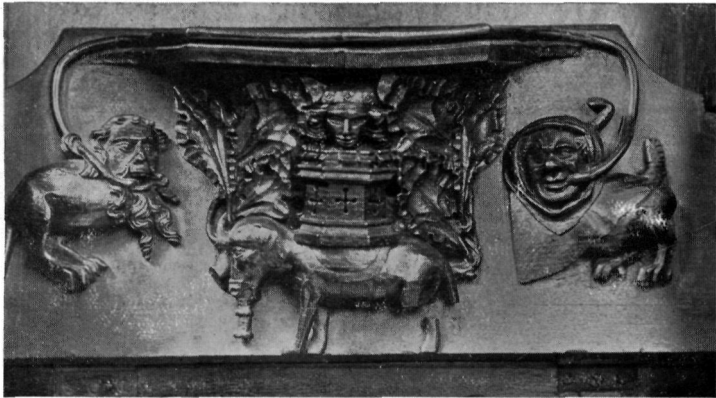
QUEEN PHILIPPA.



PELICAN AND YOUNG. SWANS.



DEMONS AND WOMEN. CENTAUR.



ELEPHANT AND CASTLE. GROTESQUES.

serpents and crocodiles. There is, however, a version of the story, given by Albertus Magnus, a prominent theologian and writer of the 13th century, which says that when the Pelican leaves her nest to procure food for her young, a serpent comes and kills them, and adds that the parent is so weakened by her sacrifices for her children that she remains in the nest, and they have to go and get food for her. This incident is mentioned by Hippeau⁷ as appearing in the 13th century poem of Gautier de Metz, "L'Image du Monde"; but we have not found it in MSS. at the British Museum.

Of the two swans on this misericord one is in heraldic form, being gorged with a crown (Pl. II). There are other instances of this at Norwich Cathedral and Boston, and we find the same in the Shrewsbury Book (MS. 15 E VI., B.M.) of the 15th century in a miniature of the Chevalier au Cigne. Where this occurs, it may be due to the popularity of the De Bohun badge.

The swan occurs in most of the Bestiaries, and the architectural examples accord well with the illustrations, both as a rule approximating to nature as we should expect. It is usually swimming alone or with cygnets. Good instances may be seen on misericords at Higham Ferrers, New College Oxford, and Stratford-on-Avon, where it is alone; at St. George's Chapel, where it has cygnets, and in other positions at Barking and Mildenhall (Suff.) and Forrabury (Cornwall). It is a favourite subject in the small spandrils of screens. In the MSS. it occasionally has a fish in its beak.⁸

The information about the swan given in the Bes-

⁷ "Le Bestiaire Divin," p. 95.

⁸ MS. Harl. 475t.

tiaries is interesting, and commences with the usual Etymological juggle, its Latin name "olor" being derived from the Greek ὄλον = totum, because the Swan is all white, "for no one recollects a black swan." It is called "cignus" from its singing, because it pours forth the sweetness of its song in measured tones. They say also that it sings so sweetly, because it has a long and curved neck, and that its throbbing voice must pass by a long and tortuous way to render the different modulations." Among other items there is an interesting account, adopted from Ælian (Bk. XI, ch. 1), of how in Northern regions swans fly up in large numbers to people who play before them on the cythara, and sing in perfect harmony with them. Illustrations of this are given in MS. 3516 in the Arsenal Library, Paris, of the late 13th century, and in MSS. at the British Museum, but we know of no sculptured examples. Such swans are a type of those persons "who are agape for pleasures as their sole desires, and who fly up, as it were, and are in unison with the votaries of pleasure." As to its general interpretation, "the swan with its snow-white plumage indicates an assumption of pretence. For as its black flesh is concealed by its white feathers, so the sin of the flesh is concealed by dissimulation. And as the swan while swimming bears its head and neck erect, so the proud man is drawn away by transitory

⁹ Ambrose in his Hexameron (Lib. V, ch. XXII), written about 389, says that the reason why the swan has such a long neck is because it cannot plunge to get its food, and adds that "by reason of their long necks the rhythm (of their song) is marked in a sweeter and more musical way, and resounds so much the purer from the longer course" (that it has passed through).

things, and glories for a time in the possession of things that pass away." The swan is also said to sing "right sweetly when dying. Likewise when the proud man departs out of this life, he is still charmed by the sweetness of this present time, and what evil he has done comes back to his memory when dying. But when the swan is stripped of its white plumage, it is put upon a spit and is roasted at the fire; so, when the rich and proud man dies, he is stripped of his earthly glories, and descending to the flames of hell he will be tortured and tormented; and as he was accustomed when alive to desire food, so when going down into the pit he becomes food for fire."¹⁰

4. In the centre is a hairy, winged, eared and clawed demon seated with legs outspread. In the space between are the heads and shoulders of two women side by side who are in vests open below the neck. Left: A somewhat similar demon seated holding a deed in front of him to which is attached a seal in the form of a small demon's head. Right: A grotesque form of centaur with spear and shield. Its human head has cap, beard, and protruding tongue. It has hooped forefeet and clawed hind feet. From its hind quarters projects a kind of boss composed of a beast's face with open mouth and a ball-like object in it. This centaur is misplaced; it was formerly on the left of the dragon in No. 3 *misericord* in the chapel, the subject on the right hand having been a syren as illustrated in Ducarel. Placing it on the right here has resulted in an ugly join with the moulding of the ledge. (Pl. II.)

¹⁰ The swan is alluded to here as a table delicacy. See Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, Prologue, 206, where he says of the Monk: "A fat swan loved he best of any roste."

The central subject apparently shows a couple of women in the power of a demon. What their particular shortcomings are we do not know, but there must have been a contract made with the devil, of which the deed which the demon on the left is displaying is evidence. It is likely that there was another demon on the right, as part of a wing shows in Ducarel's plate. The same combination of subjects appears on a misericord of the 14th century at Ely. The two women¹¹ there are full length figures in long gowns and wimples, seated on a bench; one holds a book, the other a rosary. The ugly head of the demon behind them appears between their heads, and he clutches them both round the neck with his claws. The two side subjects are likewise demons holding scrolls.

The syren and centaur were associated together in the Bestiaries as a result of the Septuagint translation of Isaiah xiii, 22, the descriptions and illustrations given being derived from classical sources.¹² Both the Onocentaur and the Hippocentaur are mentioned, but their symbolism differs. There is an interesting account of such composite creatures in the Westminster Bestiary of the 13th century, adopted from Rabanus and Isidore. After describing the Hippocentaur and Minotaur it says: "There is also what is called the Onocentaur because it is said to be partly man and partly ass as the Hippocentaur, because the nature of both horses and men is thought to be combined in them." And then follows an

¹¹ It is possible that one of them is a man, but the heads and costumes are very much alike.

¹² Ælian gives an interesting account of the Onocentaur in Bk. XVII, 9, which shows it to have been a great ape.

account of monstrous transformations, such as the companions of Ulysses being changed into beasts by Circe, the Arcadians into wolves, and the companions of Diomedes into birds, which we are told is "no lying fable but incontrovertible history." And after further instances of human transformations it describes the natural change which things undergo in putrefaction; for example, bees are created out of the putrefying flesh of calves, beetles from horses, locusts from mules, and scorpions from crabs; and a quotation from Ovid (*Met.* XV, 371) is added: "If you pull off the curved claws of the crab of the seashore, a scorpion will come out and threaten you with its barbed tail."

There are good illustrations of the Syren and Onocentaur in MSS. 10,074 at Bibl. Roy. Brussels, Sloane 278 (B.M.), and Bodl. 602. The Brussels MS. appears to be as early as the 10th century; in the upper part of the illustration two syrens of semi-bird form are tearing a man to pieces, while a third plays a citterne, and the legends "Ubi (syrene) musica sonant ad decipiendos homines," and "Ubi dilaniant eos jam mortuos," appear on the ground of the picture. Below is the Onocentaur as half man, half ass, holding up a hare by the hind legs and transfixing it with a spear, with the legend "Onocentaur."¹³ On the right are two men talking together and gesticulating; between them is the word "Potestas," and above the legend "Ubi bilinguis diversis modis fallitur." The double nature of the centaur is used to typify foolish and double-tongued

¹³ The hare is here borrowed from a classical source, and is used as a symbol of sensuality, being thought to be double-sexed, and capable of superfœtation. Vide Pliny Bk. VIII, 81 (55).

men who in their morals are double also, and passages from Timothy and the Psalms bearing on it are introduced. In MS. Nero A.V. (B.M.), the early 12th century bestiary of Philip de Thau, the heading runs: "Hic Onoscentaurus pingitur semi homo et asinus; pars quoque hominis rationabilem creaturam significat et pars homini [scribe's error for asini] rusticitatem designat, quod ita intelligitur." This is based on the commentaries of Jerome and Gregory, and in Hugo's version it is further explained that the Onocentaur is compounded of Onager, the wild ass. The Bestiaries, following Pliny and Solinus, say that the old males mutilate the young ones to prevent them becoming their rivals; hence it is a symbol of boorishness and immorality. The Onocentaur is retained in Isaiah xxxiv, 14, in the Vulgate.

The weapon which the centaur holds varies; he more often has a bow, as in Sloane 278 and the Westminster Bestiary; in MS. Bodl. 602 he has a sword with which he has cut a man in two, but is being himself pierced by a man with a spear. In MS. 3516 at Paris the Savage Man, armed with a spear, faces the Onocentaur with a bow (here called Sagittarius); he symbolises the human soul contending with the flesh. This scene is illustrated in an abbreviated form on the 12th century font at West Rounton (Yorks).

The symbolism of the Hippocentaur is entirely different, and arises out of its appearance as a sign of the Zodiac. In the "Livre des Creatures" of Philip de Thau, of the early 12th century, Sagittarius shooting his arrow is used as a type of the Passion of Christ and the departure of his Spirit to the souls in hell, who awaited his help. He is often seen shooting his arrow

down the throats of monsters, as at Kencot (Oxon), or at a dragon, as on a 13th century misericord at Exeter Cathedral. On a recently discovered sculptured capital of the 12th century at Winchester Cathedral, two centaurs are shooting arrows at a dragon and griffin.

Centaurs are scarce in late woodwork. It is usually impossible to distinguish between the Hippo- and Onocentaur, but where it fights with another beast it is likely to be the former and used in a good sense. The occurrence of the beast face on its hind quarters and association with the Syren at St. Katherine's would rather indicate the Onocentaur; similar features may be seen on misericords at Chichester Cathedral.

5. In the centre is the half figure of an angel in clouds with fillet across the forehead and hair falling at the sides, playing bagpipes. Left and right: A lion's head, one with protruding tongue.

6. In the centre a man's head, bearded and with much curly hair falling at sides. Left and right: A double rose.

7. All three carvings display conventional leaves.

The elbows of the stalls in the chapter-room show the usual variety. Beginning on the left the subjects are:

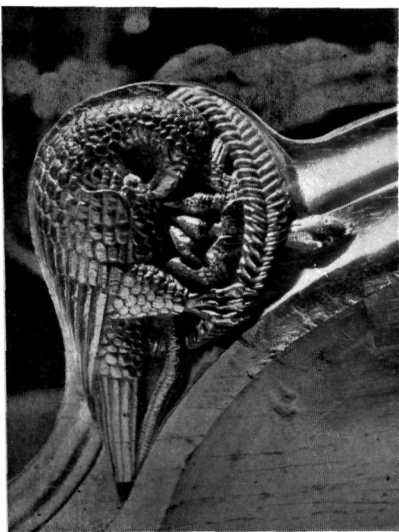
1. Foliage and flower.
2. Head of Queen Philippa at the angle.
3. Pelican and young on both sides.
4. Two dragons.
5. Foliage on both sides.
6. Two dragons.
7. Head of Edward III at the angle.
8. Double rose on both sides.

The six stalls in the chapel are ranged along the

west wall, three on either side of the doorway. From North to South the subjects are :

1. In the centre, a hawk striking a wild duck (Plate III). Left and right: A conventional leaf. This scene also occurs on a misericord at Chester Cathedral. There are many carvings of hawks in churches; they can usually only be distinguished from other birds by their hooked beaks. In the Bestiaries the hawk is either alone or with a smaller bird in its claws, as in MS. 12, C. xix, but occasionally there is a hawking scene, as in MS. Bodl. 764, where a lady is hawking wild duck, with two men beating drums to rouse the birds. A somewhat similar miniature occurs in MS. Harl. 4751 (Pl. IV). In this a hawk is perched upon the sportsman's left hand, while another has brought down a duck. A second man is beating a drum to rouse the birds. The quaint way in which the artist has drawn the duck and the water "on end" will be noticed.

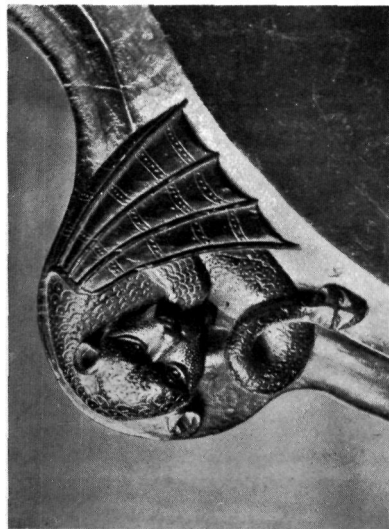
Rabanus ("De Universo" Lib. VIII) says that as the hawk is a bird of prey and one of the unclean birds of the Law, its actions are not to be imitated. "As it can be tamed and used for the purpose of robbery, it is a type of those persons who appear to be domesticated and of a quiet nature, but who are really associated with greedy and cruel men." There is a full account in MS. Harl. 4751, taken from the Hexameron of Ambrose, the *Moralia* of Gregory, and from Rabanus. It describes the hawk as being very cruel in the treatment of its young ones, for when they first try to fly, it refuses them food and turns them out of the nest to compel them to practise hunt-



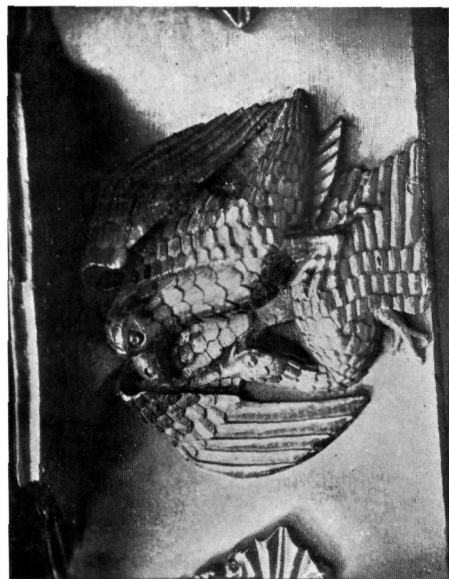
PELICAN AND YOUNG, WITH SERPENT.



? LAI D'ARISTOTE.




AMPHIBENA.



HAWK AND DUCK.

hominibus parentum suorum nutrimenta mutua redde debent. quia lex dicit. Quod male
 dicitur propter matrem. morte moriatur. et est quod punita vel miranda.
 De pellicano pullos suos suo sanguine unificante.


pellicanus avis egypti
 habitans in solitudine
 nisi fluminis. unde et
 notum sumpsit nam anno
 ipse egypti dicitur. Amator est
 nimis filiorum. Quod cum genuerit
 natos et cepit auferre. par-
 tium parentes suos in fan-
 tem. sed parentes repaierunt
 eos occiderunt. Tertia uero die
 mater eorum parentis vitam su-
 am aperit lacu suum. et unxit
 super pullos suos et effudit
 sanguinem super corpora mortuorum. et sic suscitavit eos a mortuis. Ita dicitur in iherosolymis. christus
 dicitur. et conditor uera creatura genuit nos. et cum uero etiam fecit nos. Hos uero etiam
 passim cum in fatem. sunt per ipsam dicit. Filios genuit et creauit. ipsi uero
 sperauerunt me. Tunc passim eum in facie. cum seruauit per aetate. et creauit. Quod
 eo ascendit ipse in altitudinem cuius. pullosque lacu ei genuit sanguis. et ad
 in salute uiam. et uitam sempiternam. Deinde quod dicitur. et sic uel uel. et sic



et sic suscitavit eos a mortuis. Ita dicitur in iherosolymis. christus
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 in salute uiam. et uitam sempiternam. Deinde quod dicitur. et sic uel uel. et sic

PELICAN AND YOUNG. MS. HARL. 3244 (B.M.).

endo no
 utē aut
 auida.
 hoc. ē.
 ut dicit
 accipit.
 cura pul
 am dū
 re uola
 ut. s. liberat pennas. et a nido papi
 lit ad pdam. ne adulta pigrescant.



endo no
 utē aut
 auida.
 hoc. ē.
 ut dicit
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 re uola
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HAWKING SCENE. MS. HARL. 4751 (B.M.).

ing, and so to avoid laziness when full grown. The hawk is a type of the holy man or monk "who lays hold of the Kingdom of God," and the passage in Job xxxix, 26, is introduced to illustrate that as the hawk moults its old feathers and gains new plumage, so the religious man has thrown off the burdens of his old way of living and has put on the new wings of virtue. The hawk's quarters, which it says should be enclosed and warm, is the cloister. As the bird, when let out, comes to the hand to be flown, so the monk, leaving his cell for good works, when sent out seeks to raise himself to the things of heaven. As it is held on the left hand and flies to the right, so it is a type of men who care for the good things of this world and the things of eternity respectively, and when it captures the dove, it is the man who, being changed for the better, receives the grace of the Holy Spirit. The hawk sits upon its perch, which is raised well above the ground between the two walls which support it. It is the man who, raised above earthly things, holds firmly to the rules of a well-ordered life, the walls being the Active Life and Contemplative Life which sustain the uprightness of those who live in religion." The hawk's fetters again mean the repression of the impulses of the mind through fear of punishment, and the jesses, particularly if made of the hide of a dead animal, the mortifying of the flesh through which any brother is held to a well ordered life. As they are not broken, but only undone, so the brother when leaving the cloister for any temporary object, does not break his purpose in life, but returns ready to be bound more firmly than before.

¹¹ On the North Porch at Chartres are figures symbolising the Active Life and Contemplative Life.

Hawking is also used to indicate the month of May in the Calendars, and so appears in the series of months on the 12th century lead font at Brookland in Kent, and on a misericord at Ripple (Glos.). There is a good hawking scene on the font at Lostwithiel.

2. In the centre is an elephant with castle strapped upon its back, in the top of which appears the head of a man with ornamental fillet across his forehead and hair falling at sides.¹⁵ The elephant is crude; it has no tusks, and the trunk, which is round and banded like a mediæval cannon, projects from its mouth. A large spray of foliage on either side completes the picture. Left: A grotesque creature with human head bearded and animal's body. Right: A somewhat similar creature in tippet or cape, with human head in hood with liripipe. (Pl. II.)

The elephant with the castle occurs frequently on misericords, as at Gloucester Cathedral, where it has horse's feet and tail, at Beverley Minster and St. Mary's, where it is fairly well drawn, at Cartmel, and at Manchester Cathedral and St. George's Chapel, both with fine castles. Also on stalls at Chester and Ripon, on the cornices at Burwell (Cambs) several times, and on bench ends at Fressingfield (Suffolk), and South Lopham (Norfolk), the latter being very curious, as the trunk is a kind of elongated snout slit right up. The elephant with bands round its body as if carrying a castle occurs on a brass at Tong (Ches.) at the feet of Margaret Vernon (1467). It has horse's hoofs and is lying down.

¹⁵ Fillets of this kind on men's heads may be seen on misericords at Winchester Cathedral. Figures in the castles on elephants are infrequent in carving

Few of the artists could have seen a live elephant, and there are many mistakes in anatomy.

There are three or four scenes in which the elephant appears in the Bestiaries. It fights with the dragon, which tries to suffocate it: this comes in the account of Draco, the details in the text being drawn largely from Pliny and Solinus. There is a misericord at Carlisle Cathedral with the corresponding scene, but the elephant's trunk is very crude. The others are where the adult elephant guards the young one from the dragon who would destroy it, as in MS. Douce 167 (Bodl.), the young elephant trying to raise the fallen elephant as in MS. 12 F XIII (B.M.); and the elephant and castle. The artists seem to have preferred the last, for the illustrations are numerous and show splendid but inaccurately drawn elephants with castles full of armed knights strapped to their backs. Incidentally it may be noticed how little a strap and buckle has changed in the course of 700 years. (Pl. V.)

The texts of the Bestiaries tell us about the great size of the elephant, and that "the Greeks think it got its name because the form of its body resembled a mountain. For in Greek a mountain is called Eliphio. No bigger animal is to be seen, and the Persians and Indians, stationed in wooden towers placed on them, fight with darts as if from a wall. They break what they roll up in their trunks, and what they tread upon is crushed as it were like a house falling down." Its trumpeting is mentioned, and "its snout is called a trunk because it puts food into its mouth with it, and it is like a snake and is guarded by a wall of ivory." They are slow to breed. "If the elephant wishes for children it goes to the East where Paradise is; and

there is a tree there which is called Mandragora, and it goes with its female, who first takes the fruit from the tree and gives it to the male. And she beguiles him until he eats, and immediately she conceives, and when the time for bringing forth has come she goes into a pool so deep that the water comes up to her udders. But the male elephant guards her while bringing forth, because the dragon is hostile to the elephant. For if it finds a serpent, it kills it with its feet."

"If the elephant falls down, it cannot get up, for it has no joints in its knees. It sleeps, therefore, leaning against a tree, but the hunter, aware of this habit, cuts a slit in the tree, so that the elephant when it leans against it may fall down with it. But as it falls it calls out loudly, and at once a great elephant comes, but is not able to lift it up. Then both of them cry out and there come twelve elephants, but neither are they able to raise it up. Thereupon they all cry out, and immediately there comes a little elephant which places its mouth with its trunk under the big elephant and lifts it up."

The symbolism is mainly based on these two episodes: the great elephant and his wife represent Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. "They partook of the tree, that is the mandragora, the tree of knowledge, and fell. When the elephant was fallen, that is man, there came the great elephant, that is the law, and did not raise him up, as the priest did not raise up him that fell among thieves. Neither could the twelve elephants, that is, the prophets, as neither did the Levite him that was wounded; but the wise elephant, Jesus Christ, since he is greater than all, is made the smallest of all, because he humbled himself and became obedient unto death that he might raise mankind, as did the wise Samaritan

who placed him on his beast, etc." In MS. Harl. 3244 the symbolism is further elaborated and appeals more directly to the reader.

In MS. Sloane 278 the mandrake is included in the picture. It is shaped like a man with beard and hair standing on end like roots. The mandrake is illustrated in herbals, and there are some curious stories connected with it. We know of no carvings of the elephant protecting its young one from the dragon or of the young elephant raising the fallen elephant. This may be due to the fact that the Fall of Man was usually directly represented.

3. The central subject shows the contest between the lion and the dragon; the lion has overcome the dragon, which lies on its back. Its tail is broken away, but ended in a small head, which may be seen biting the lion's hind foot. This is incorrectly drawn in Ducarel. The two side subjects are winged dragons.

The fight between the lion and dragon is very common on misericords, and is usually regarded as a type of the victory of Christ over Satan, or Good over Evil.¹⁶

4. In the centre is a winged dragon in an erect attitude. Left and right: A conventional leaf. Ducarel's plate shows the centaur on the left of this dragon and the syren (now lost) on the right.

5. In the centre is a man's head in profile, bearded, with fillet across his forehead and sash tied in a bunch at the back of his head. Left and right: A grotesque composite with human head and winged dragon body and tail.

¹⁶ It is perhaps worth noting that in one of the Round Table legends, Yvain rescues a lion from the coils of a dragon, and it follows him about like a faithful spaniel.

6. This is a difficult subject. In the centre is a composite creature with the body of a goat, and a human head with curly hair, beard and open mouth, all so large as to be quite out of proportion to its body. Upon its back rides a woman clad in a drapery lightly thrown round her, one end being passed across her breast and brought over her right shoulder. She grasps the hair of the animal's head with her left hand, while her right is bent back as if brandishing a whip, which is wanting. (Pl. III.) Left and right: A grotesque lion face with protruding tongue.

With regard to the main subject we can only make a suggestion. It may be a variant of the *Lai d'Aristote*, and that implies that the rider is a female. The drapery and wrist ornaments point to this. The *Lai d'Aristote* was not so popular here as on the Continent, and was probably employed in not quite the same way, as our representations differ. In the foreign examples, as in the cloisters at Cadouin, Aristotle is cloaked and down on his hands and knees with bit in his mouth, and the girl rides upon his back holding reins and whip. On the misericord at Dordrecht Cathedral (1540) he is in the garb of a Roman soldier and the girl is in a light tunic. On the French ivory caskets of the 14th century, several events of the story are shown, and they suggest a chivalrous rather than a directly moral interpretation, teaching the lesson of the irresistible attraction of female beauty and the power of human love.¹⁷ In this country the carvings are reduced to their simplest elements, as upon the 13th century misericord at Exeter Cathedral, where Aristotle appears as half man, half horse,

¹⁷ Vide Ivory Caskets in Maskell Collection at B.M.

saddled but without a rider; and at Chichester Cathedral, where he has not even a saddle. At Exeter the carving seems to be a satire on the "devilish" teachings of Aristotle, as they were then regarded in the eyes of the Church, as he has a serpent's head on his tail. Putting Aristotle into the form of a goat, an old symbol of wantonness, at St. Katherine's, would point to a directly moral signification; it will be remembered that the girl tempted Aristotle to come out and make love to her after he had prevailed on Alexander to discard her, and then proceeded to humiliate him by making him serve as a horse for her to ride upon. The philosopher's head is placed upon the goat, and instead of bit and reins she guides him by a lock of his hair.¹⁸

The subjects on the elbows in the chapel from north to south are:

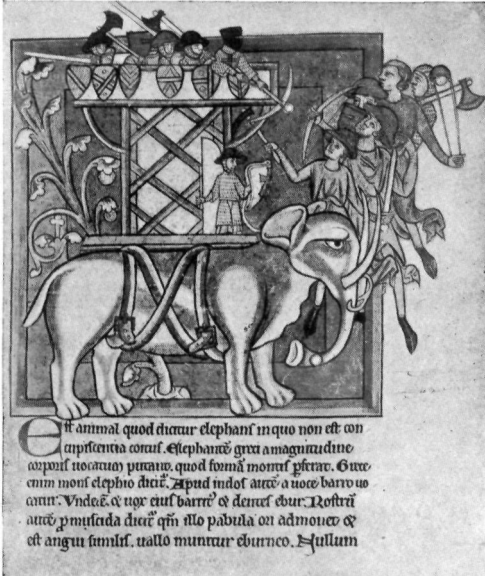
1. Two heads in mitres with ribbons.
2. Foliage on both sides.
3. Two dragons.
4. Lion's face, and owl.
5. Two dragons.
6. Foliage on both sides.
7. Two dragons, one having another head on its tail.
8. Foliage.

¹⁸ Alfred Maskell in his book on "Wood Sculpture" (The Connoisseur's Library), p. 361, notices a sculpture of this kind at Lyons Cathedral, and is disposed to connect it with the legend of the "Clever Lass," but says: "Here the woman has not one foot on the ground, the goat has a human face, and she is whirling a dog or a cat with one hand." It may be the same subject as at St. Katherine's, but the details hardly fulfil the requirements of the "Clever Lass."

Although the owl is mainly used decoratively, and there are not many early examples, it is a highly symbolic subject, and we are able to ascertain from the Bestiaries what it signified. Carvings are numerous in churches. It sometimes appears alone, with or without a rat in its claws or beak, as at Norwich Cathedral, Ripon and Edlesborough; or being teased by other birds, as at Norwich, Beverley Minster, St. George's Chapel and elsewhere. Both illustrations and carvings are fairly well drawn as a rule and approximate to nature. The Bestiaries, following Pliny, give particulars of three different kinds of owls, viz., Noctua or Nicticorax, Bubo, and Ulula, but neither in MSS. nor carvings can they be distinguished with any certainty, except that it is Bubo that is teased by other birds. This scene is illustrated in Harl. 4751 and Bodl. 764. It is a bird of ill-omen, and its slothful and dirty habits are described and made use of to denote the various misdeeds of wicked men. "It lingers by day and night in the tombs, and by that we understand that sinners delight in committing sins, which is the corruption of human flesh. When seen by other birds it is greeted by a great clamour, and it is harassed by their attacks. For if the sinner comes into the light of day he affords a great opportunity for mockery to well-doers and wherever he is caught openly in ill-doing by others he has to bear their reproofs. They tear out its feathers and wound it with their beaks; even so good people both reprove the carnal actions of sinners and condemn their extravagances."

Ulula, the screech owl, by its cries similarly typifies the shrieking of sinners in hell.¹⁹

¹⁹ MS. Harl. 4751.



Est animal quod dicitur elephans in quo non est con-
 capiscencia carnis. Elephantes graeci a magnitudine
 corporis uocantur putant. quod forma mortis pferat. Sicut
 enim mors elepho dicit. Apud indos autem a uoce barro us-
 cant. Unde et uox eius barro et dicitur ebur. Rostrum
 autem pnylada dicit quoniam illo pabula omnia admoveat &
 est angui similis. uallo muratur eburneo. Nullum

ELEPHANT AND CASTLE. MS. HARL. 4751.



etiam nec sola primis. ex miras postura suas. Amphibæna.

Amphibæna dicta. eo
 quod duo capita ha-
 beat. unum in loco suo.
 alterum in cauda. currit
 ex utroque capite tractu cor-
 poris circūlato. Hec sola
 serpentium frangit se comit-
 ut. prima omnium procedit.
 De qua idem lucianus. Et quoniam
 ingemum uigent capite
 amphibæna. cuius oculi lucent uelut lucerne.

AMPHISBÆNA. MS. HARL. 4751.

Noctua or Nicticorax, the little owl or night raven, is described as being different from and smaller than Bubo. Being a night bird it shuns the light and cannot bear to see the sun. It is therefore a symbol of the Jews, who loved spiritual darkness more than light, and who, when Christ came to bring salvation to them, rejected him and said: "We will have no king but Cæsar." It is shown with ears in MS. Harl. 3244.

In another version²⁰ Noctua is referred to as one of the unclean birds of Leviticus, which no one is to imitate in its deeds of darkness. "These night birds are also used as a type of those who study the stars at night time and the shadowy realms of spirits, who believe that they can see to the very topmost height of heaven, describing the world by a circle. But they cannot see the light, which is Christ, nor faith in him which is close to them, because they are blind and leaders of the blind."

There are parts of some stalls in a house in the Precincts, but the misericords are gone. Four good elbows however remain, with the following subjects upon them:

1. A winged dragon with a head upon its tail (Pl. III) and vine foliage with grapes.

2. A pair of two-legged grotesque creatures, one having a semi-lion-like face and a small shield with a chevron on its breast, and the other a semi-human face and spots on its breast.

3. Foliage on both sides.

4. Foliage, and a growing plant.

Carvings of dragons are numberless. These have acquired the generic name of "dragon," but it is probable that they represent a variety of serpents,

²⁰ MS. Harl. 4751.

for it was the custom of the mediæval artists to put nearly all serpents into dragon form. There are about twenty serpents and lizards described and illustrated in the Bestiaries, and the serpent with the second head upon its tail is one of them. It is the amphibæna. The text says that "it is so called because it has two heads, one in its (proper) place, the other on its tail, running with either head first, and its trailing body bent round," and a quotation from Lucan is introduced, which describes it as "dangerous." It is mentioned as far back as the 5th century B.C. in the *Agamemnon* of Æschylus, in the scene where Cassandra exclaims about Clytemnestra: "What hateful biting creature shall I rightly call her? An amphibæna, or some Scylla dwelling among the rocks, a curse to sailors." It is also described by Nicander and Pliny. The head and tail of the natural amphibæna are certainly very much alike, and if it is the same creature that the ancients knew there was some basis for the belief that it had a head at each end; at any rate, there was a great controversy always going on about it in the Middle Ages. It had a great influence on ecclesiastical art, and owing to its evil reputation, its tail-head was applied to the *Great Red Dragon of the Apocalypse* as a special mark of his power to deceive mankind. The illustrations in the Bestiaries and the carvings alike show it as a winged dragon, the tail-head being often turned up towards the main head in a menacing attitude. (Pl. V.) This may be well seen on the 12th century font at Hook Norton (Oxon); and there are good examples in woodwork at Limerick, Halsall (Lancs), Hemington (Northants), Stonham Aspall (Suffolk), and St. George's Chapel. The Bestiaries give no symbolism, but in Alexander

Neckam's work "De naturis rerum," of the 13th century, it is used to typify a man of double intentions, one who plans to lead a life of vice when young and to reform in later years. Its symbolic meaning is greatly elaborated by Aldrovandus in his great work on the History of Serpents and Dragons (16th century), where he uses it as a type of deceivers and immoral persons generally.²¹

Illustrations of the Great Red Dragon with the tail-head may be seen in MSS. of the Apocalypse, and it is also applied to the dragon which swallows St. Margaret in Margaritone's picture at the National Gallery; we find it too as an addition to the tails of demons.

The stalls at St. Katherine's have been a good deal renewed in parts, and the misericord carvings mounted on new boards, otherwise they are in fair condition.

My acknowledgments are due to the Rev. Severne Majendie, Master of St. Katherine's, who has kindly given me every facility for photographing the carvings and much help in other ways.

²¹ For a full account of the Amphisbæna, see the Archæological Journal, Vol. LXVII, 285.