

# ANIMAL SYMBOLISM IN ECCLESIASTICAL ARCHITECTURE

BY E. P. EVANS

*WITH A BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SEVENTY-EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS*



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**Author:** E. P. (Edward Payson) Evans was “a member of that extinct Victorian species whose scholarly interests were seemingly encyclopedic and which, in his case, encompassed intellectual history, the study of languages, German literature, oriental studies, animal psychology and, surprisingly, animal rights, a subject which will require attention later.” He was a professor at the University of Michigan and later at the University of Munich. He is also the author of *The Criminal Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals*.

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# CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....p. 1

## CHAPTER I: ALLEGORICAL AND ANAGOGICAL INTERPRETATIONS OF NATURE

Impulse given to the study of natural history by Alexander the Great—Scientific spirit fostered by Aristotle—Lack of this spirit among the Romans—Alexandria as a centre of learning under the Ptolemies—The Christian theory of the relation of the Book of Revelation to the Book of Nature—The patristic conception of the visible creation as an image of the invisible world and a mirror of spiritual truth—Animals as religious emblems in Oriental, and especially in Buddhistic, literature—Mineralogical symbolism—Magical and medical properties and religious significance of precious stones—Legends of Solomon’s wisdom, and his method of building the Temple—Ceremony of blessing jewels—Speculations of Justinus Kerner and Schubert concerning the occult affinities of the mineral kingdom to man—The typology of precious stones according to the *Physiologus*—Spiritual meaning of the diamond, the pearl, and the Indian stone—Terrobuli in Christian symbolism and architecture .....p. 18

## CHAPTER II: ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF THE ‘PHYSIOLOGUS’

Plastic and pictorial representations of animals in Christian art—Literary sources of these representations—*Clavis* of [vi] St. Melito—Epistle of Barnabas—The *Physiologus* compiled by an Alexandrian Greek—The *Hexahemera* of the Fathers—Adam as the author of a natural history—Popular character of the *Physiologus*—Origen as an exegetist—Roger Bacon’s views of the place of animals in Scripture—Expositions and amplifications of the *Physiologus* by Epiphanius, St. Isidore, Petrus Damiani, and others—Anastasius Sinaita’s *Anagogical Contemplations*—Latin poem on beasts and their mystical meaning by Theobald of Plaisance, and the English paraphrase—The *Physiologus* translated into Latin, Ethiopic, Arabic, Armenian, Syriac, Anglo-Saxon, Icelandic, and all the principal modern languages of Europe—Brief descriptions of these versions—Prudentius’ poems *Hamartigenia* and *Psychomachia*—The phoenix a symbol of solar worship used to illustrate the Christian doctrine of the Resurrection—French bestiaries: Philippe de Thau’s *Le Livre des Creatures*, Peter of Picardy’s prose version of the *Physiologus*, and *Le Bestiaire Divin* of William, a priest of Normandy—Encyclopædias of natural history based on the *Physiologus*: Thomas de Cantimpré’s *Liber de Naturis Rerum*, the *Speculum Naturale* of Vincent de Beauvais, *Liber de Proprietatibus Rerum* of Bartholomæus Anglicus, *Hortus Deliciarum* of Herrade de Landsberg, and other compilations—The church edifice an emblem of the human soul—Symbolism of the raven and the dove—Albertus Magnus’ criticism of the *Physiologus* .....p. 32

## CHAPTER III: THE ‘PHYSIOLOGUS’ IN ART AND LITERATURE

The three characteristics of the lion—Representations of the lion as a symbol of the Resurrection in architecture—Beasts often have a twofold signification—The lion and bear as types of Satan—Diabolification of the dog [vii]—Strange misconception of the canine character—Lions as pedestals—Metaphorical use of the lion in poetry—The lizard in architecture—Artistic delineations of the unicorn as a type of Christ’s Incarnation—Auricular conception of Christ as the Logos—Supposed anti-toxical virtue of the unicorn’s horn and that of the African viper—The unicorn in legend and poetry—Characteristics of the elephant—Symbol of the fall of man—Julius Cæsar’s queer account of the elk—Elephants embroidered on chasubles—Four characteristics of the serpent—Artistic and poetic uses of its fabled attributes—The eagle as a symbol of spiritual aspiration and baptismal regeneration—Allusions to it by Dante and other poets—The fish in sacred iconology—Significance of the whale in ecclesiastical architecture—Symbolism of the remora and serra—Importance of the phoenix and the pelican as emblems of Christian doctrine—Their prominent place in Church architecture—Import of the fabulous exploits of the otter and the ichneumon—Panther and dragon typical of Christ and Belial—

Healing power of the “heavenly panther”—Lesson of self-renunciation taught by the beaver—Characteristic of the hyena—Symbolism of the salamander—The partridge a type of the devil—Examples of the charadrius in art—Mystical meaning of the crow, turtle-dove, ousel, merl, fulica, and hoopoe—Curious statement of Luther concerning swallows—Why God feeds the young ravens—Peculiarities of the wolf—The *Physiologus* condemned as heretical—Freely used by Gregory the Great in his scriptural exposition—Virtues and vices portrayed as women mounted on various animals—Disputatious scholastics satirized—Tetramorph—Gospel mills—The ark of the covenant as the triumphal chariot of the Cross—Cock and clergy—Origin of the basilisk and its significance—Its prominence in religious symbology and sacred architecture—Cautious scepticism of Albertus Magnus—The *Physiologus* from a psychological point of view, as illustrating the credulity of the [viii] Fathers of the Church—Why “the hart panteth after the water-brooks”—Story of the antelope—Barnacle geese—”Credo quia absurdum”—Modern counterparts of early Christian apologists and exegetists. .... p. 45

#### CHAPTER IV: SYMBOLISM SUPERSEDED BY SATIRE

Excess of animal symbolism in sacred edifices of the eleventh and twelfth centuries—Earnest but fruitless protest of St. Bernard—Image-worship authorized and enjoined by the Council held at Nice in 787—Images not to be inventions of artists, but to be fashioned according to ecclesiastical traditions and ecclesiologial prescriptions—Views of St. Nilus—Paintings and sculptures for the instruction of the ignorant—Gautier de Coinsi renews the protest against “wild cats and lions” in the house of God—Angelus Rumpfer makes the same complaint—Warnings by the Councils of Milan and Bordeaux—Introductions of episodes from the beast-epos with satirical tendencies—Secular guilds supplant religious orders as architects—Caricature of sacred rites—Fox preaching to geese in St. Martin’s Church in Leicester—Sculptures in Strasburg Minster—Reliefs of the wolf’s novitiate in Freiburg Minster—Poem by Marie de France—Samson and the lion—Provost’s cushion in St. Michael’s at Pforzheim—Burlesque of Calvin in St. Sernin at Toulouse—Luther satirized in St. Victor’s Church at Xanten—Foolscap paper—Origin and character of the Papstesel—Monstrosities as portents—Bishop-fish—The Papal Ass in religious polemics—The Monk-calf of Freiburg and its interpretation—Miniatures illustrating the “Woes of France”—The fox of the *Physiologus* and of the beast-epos—Reliefs of the wiles of the fox and the woes of drunkenness in St. Fiacre—Execution of the cat in the cathedral at Tarragona—Significance of the crane extracting a bone from the fox’s throat in Autun Cathedral [ix] —Burrowing foxes types of devils in Worcester Cathedral—Scenes from the Reynardine and other poems in the church of the Templars, St. Denis, Amiens Cathedral, Sherborne Minster, and other sacred edifices, but most fully represented in Bristol Cathedral and Beverly Minster—Heraldic rebuses and canting devices—Satire on the election of a pope in Lincoln Cathedral—Mendicant friars caricatured as foxes in Ely, Gloucester, Winchester, and other cathedrals—Odo of Sherington’s opinion of these orders—Similar delineations in the churches and cloisters of continental Europe; Kempen, Emmerick, Calcar, and Cleves—The *Lay of Aristotle* and Vergil’s affair of gallantry—The *Vision of Piers Plowman*—Animals as musicians—Grotesques, burlesques, and riddles—Funeral banquet at the burial of the fox at Marienhafen—The frog as a symbol of regeneration—Carvings of individual fancies and conceits and illustrations of proverbs—Episodes from the *Roman de Renart*—Many of these sculptures, especially in Northern France and the Netherlands, destroyed by iconoclasts and revolutionists. .... p. 92

#### CHAPTER V: WHIMSEYS OF ECCLESIOLOGY AND SYMBOLOGY

Universality of the symbolism of the cross—Cruciform phenomena in nature—The sign of the cross in the Old Testament, and its prefigurative significance—Wonderworking power of the cross in Jewish history—Its presence in the Garden of Eden and in the Hebrew alphabet—The cosmos has the form of a cross—Influence of the doctrine of the Trinity upon art—Trinitarian suggestions in the material creation—Mystic meanings in sacred architecture—Symbolism of bells and significance of

orientation—Superstitious regard for the points of the compass—Transition from christolatry to hagiolatry [x] —Subtilities of ecclesiology—Meagreness of Hebrew mythology—Exercise of the mythopœic faculty by the Rabbis—Early Christian opposition to the theatre—Theatrical rites and indecent amusements in churches and cloisters—Feast of Fools, etc.—Analogy between the anatomy of the ass and the architecture of a cathedral—Jewish and Christian reverence for the ass—Feast of the Ass—Symbolism swallowed up in buffoonery—Traffic in holy relics—Satirized in Heywood’s play of *The Four P.P.*—Anatomical peculiarities of saints—Queer freaks in sacred osteology—Specimens of relics in Catholic churches—Miraculous power of self-multiplication—Choice collection of Frederic the Wise—Anti-Semitic sculptures in Christian churches—Coarse relief ridiculing the Jews at Wittenberg, and its interpretation by Luther—Similar carvings in other cities—Decrees of John the Good and Frederic the Hohenstaufe concerning usury—Classical myths in Christian art—Orpheus a prototype of Christ—Bacchus and the Lord’s vineyard—Greek comic poets adored as Christian saints—Isis as the Virgin Mary—Crude symbolism of early Christian art—Influence of Pagan antiquity—The peacock as a Christian emblem—Moralization of the myth of Argus and Io—Sirens and centaurs in architecture—The Sigurd Saga—Weighing of souls—Recording angels and devils—Woman as an emissary of Satan—The devil in Christian art—Dance of death—Oldest representation of it—Its democratic character and popularity—Manuscripts with miniatures—Holbein’s drawings—Sensational sermons of Honoré de Sainte Marie—Modern delineation of the theme by Rethel, Seitz, Lührig, and others.....p. 125

BIBLIOGRAPHY .....p. 169

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Central Section of a Window in the Cathedral of Bourges.....	Frontispiece
Terrobuli. ( <i>Bestiary</i> ).....	30
Sculpture on Arch of Doorway of old Norman Church at Alne, Yorkshire.....	31
Lion howling over Whelps. ( <i>Relief in Munich</i> ).....	46
Lion howling over Whelps. ( <i>Relief in Strasburg</i> ).....	47
Capture of the Unicorn. ( <i>Bestiary</i> ).....	52
Hunting the Unicorn. ( <i>Old German Engraving</i> ).....	53
Annunciation. ( <i>Parish Church of Eltenberg</i> ).....	54
Eagle renewing its Youth. ( <i>Bestiary</i> ).....	62
Eaglets gazing at the Sun. ( <i>Cathedral Lyons</i> ).....	62
Whale and Mariners. ( <i>Psalter of Isabella of France</i> ).....	65
Pelican. ( <i>Bestiary</i> ).....	67
Phoenix. ( <i>Bestiary</i> ).....	67
Otter (Water-snake) and Crocodile (Sea-monster). ( <i>Psalter of Isabella of France</i> ).....	69
Panther and Dragon. ( <i>Bestiary</i> ).....	70
Beaver. ( <i>Bestiary</i> ).....	72
Hyena. ( <i>Bestiary</i> ).....	74
Partridge and her Fosterlings. ( <i>Bestiary</i> ).....	75
Charadrius. ( <i>Bestiary</i> ).....	76
Turtle-doves. ( <i>Psalter of Isabella of France</i> ).....	77
Raven. ( <i>Bestiary</i> ).....	77
Wolf. ( <i>Bestiary</i> ).....	78
The Gospel and the Law. ( <i>Hortus Deliciarum</i> ).....	80
Beasts of the Apocalypse. ( <i>Saint-Nizier of Troyes</i> ).....	81
Gospel-Mill. ( <i>Abbey of Vézelay in Burgundy</i> ).....	82
Cock calling Hens. ( <i>Psalter of Isabella of France</i> ).....	84
Liberality and Avarice. ( <i>Manuscript in Musée de Cluny</i> ).....	84
Fighting the Basilisk. ( <i>Abbey of Vézelay in Burgundy</i> ).....	85
Sphinx subduing the Basilisk. ( <i>Abbey of Vézelay in Burgundy</i> ).....	87
[xii]	
Hart and Dragon. ( <i>Bestiary</i> ).....	89
Antelope. ( <i>Bestiary</i> ).....	89
Antelope on the Euphrates. ( <i>Psalter of Isabella of France</i> ).....	90
Barnacle Geese. ( <i>Bestiary</i> ).....	90
Burial of the Fox. ( <i>Strasburg Minster</i> ).....	97
Novitiate of the Wolf. ( <i>Freiburg Minster</i> ).....	98
Sea-Bishop. ( <i>Gessner's Fischbuch</i> ).....	101
Papal Ass. ( <i>Cathedral of Como</i> ).....	103

Wiles of the Fox. ( <i>Bestiary</i> ) .....	105
Execution of the Cat. ( <i>Cathedral of Tarragona in Spain</i> ) .....	106
Artifices of the Fox in ensnaring Fowls. ( <i>St. Fiacre, near Le Faouet</i> ) .....	106
Flaying the Fox. ( <i>St. Fiacre, near Le Faouet</i> ).....	107
Cock and Hen drawing Fox to Execution. ( <i>St. Ursin, near Bruges</i> ) .....	109
The “Lay of Aristotle.” ( <i>Church of Saint Jean in Lyons</i> ) .....	116
Carvings on Stalls in the Parish Church of Kempen ( <i>Rhineland</i> ):	
Threshing Eggs—Looking through an Egg—Feeling of a Hen—	
Hatching Eggs—Weeping over a fallen Basket of Eggs—	
Eel-pot—Crane and Fox dining—Fox preaching to Fowls—Dogs	
fighting for a Bone—Fox swimming after Ducks—Ass with Rosary—	
Casting Daisies before Swine—Ass playing the Lyre—Pig playing	
the Bagpipe -Reynard as Confessor eating the Kite his Confessant —	
Bear eating Honey—Belling the Cat—Shearing Swine .....	121-122
Jolly Friar and Tinker. ( <i>Minorite Cloister in Cleves</i> ).....	123
Satire on the Jews. ( <i>Parish Church of Wittenberg</i> ).....	144
Satire on the Jews. ( <i>Tower of Bridge in Frankfort</i> ) .....	146
Pyramus and Thisbe. ( <i>Cathedral</i> ) .....	150, 151
Peacocks. (Psalter of Isabella of France) .....	154
Myth of Argus. ( <i>Bestiary</i> ) .....	155
Sirens. (Psalter of Isabella of France) .....	155
Siren presenting a Fish to a Man. ( <i>Church at Cunault-sur-Loire</i> ).....	156
Siegfried (Sigurd) Saga. ( <i>Cathedral of Freising, near Munich</i> ).	
Four views of the pillar in the crypt.....	159
Sigurd Saga. ( <i>Church of Hyllestad in Norway</i> ).....	160
Weighing Souls. ( <i>Cathedral of Bourges</i> ).....	162

## INTRODUCTION

ONE of the most charming passages in the idyls of Theocritus is that in which Eros complains to Aphrodite of the bees that stung his hand as he was stealing honey from their hive, and expresses his astonishment that such very small creatures could cause so severe pain. Thereupon the Cyprian goddess laughingly replies: "Thou too art like the bee, for although a tiny child, yet how terrible are the wounds thou dost inflict." This witty retort and pat allusion to the pangs produced by the arrows from Cupid's quiver greatly pleased the fancy of the elder Lucas Cranach, who depicted the scene in no less than five different paintings, the most celebrated of which is now in the Royal Museum of Berlin. The same conceit was embodied, at a still earlier period, in one of the poems of Anacreon, who, however, represents Eros as having been stung while plucking a rose in which a bee was sleeping. A Spanish poet of the seventeenth century, Estevan [2] Manuel de Villegas, famous in Old Castile as the translator and imitator of Anacreon, gives in *Las Eroticas* a vivid description of a duel between Amor and a bee, the two ravishers of hearts and flowers. The combat ended with the painful wounding of the god and the death of the insect, and thus ravaged hearts and pillaged flowers were both avenged. In a madrigal of the Roman "Arcadian," Felice Zappi, Cupids swarm like bees round the head of the loved one, clinging to her hair, nestling in her bosom, gathering honey from her lips, and waving their torches out of her eyes. In his charming lyric *Die Biene*, Lessing gives a didactic turn to Anacreon's poem already referred to, and makes Amor learn a lesson of strategy from his misfortune: henceforth he was wont to lurk in roses and violets, and, when a maiden came to pluck them, "flew forth as a bee and stung." A kiss is also personified as a bee, which extracts honey from the lips, and, at the same time, pierces the heart with its sting.

Curiously enough this simple, sensuous, and suggestive imagery, which plays such a prominent part in Greek, and especially in Oriental, erotics, is wholly foreign to those of the Germanic and Slavonic races; it is not native to the poetry of these nations, and blooms in their literature only as an exotic. For the delineation of the tender passion they preferred a symbolism drawn from the vegetable kingdom, and the real or fictitious qualities of fruits and flowers; the apple, the [3] peach, the fig, the rose, the lily, the narcissus, the anemone, the violet, and the pink are used to illustrate the attractions of female beauty and the attributes of connubial love. Into Germany, whose pagan tribes seem to have been acquainted with bees, chiefly if not exclusively in their wild state, the art of rearing these insects was introduced with Christianity, and carried on for the most part by the various monastic orders. There was hardly a cloister without its hive, which not only supplied honey and wax for culinary and cultic purposes, but also served as an example to the friars of an ideal life of communistic industry and cenobitic chastity. The superiors of the convents were fond of emphasizing this analogy in their exhortations to the recluses under their charge, and of enforcing it in their religious poetry. Peter of Capua calls the risen and ascended Saviour "apis ætherea"; the saints

famous for good works are compared to bees; eloquent Fathers of the Church and expounders of the faith—Chrysostom, Ambrose, Isidore of Spain, and Bernard of Clairvaux—are said to have lips flowing with honey (*mellifluus*); and the virgin queen of the hive is, in the hymns of mediaeval mariolaters, a favourite type of the Virgin Queen of Heaven. But notwithstanding the frequency of these allusions in Christian literature, and the consecration of honey and wax to ritual purposes, the bee figures rarely in Christian art. It is found occasionally carved on tombs in the catacombs as a symbol of immortality; in this case, however, it [4] does not express a specifically Christian conception, but is a survival of paganism. In ancient times honey was supposed to be an effective antiseptic, and it was customary to smear with it the bodies of the dead in order to preserve them from putrefaction. Alexander the Great is said to have been thus embalmed, and the same usage formed an integral part of the Mithras-cult, and can be traced still farther back to the solar worship of the Assyrians and Babylonians. Under the Roman empire the mysteries of the Mithras-cult became widely diffused throughout Western Europe; Christian churches were erected over altars dedicated to the old Persian sun-god, as in S. Clemente at Rome, and the gilded bull's head and three hundred golden bees, discovered at Tournay in 1653, in the tomb of the Merovingian king, Childeric III., had their origin in the same system of worship. These bees, which decorated the royal mantle of the living monarch, and embellished his shroud after death, were invested with a traditional sacredness in France as emblems of sovereignty, and therefore adopted by the first Napoleon, in order to give a seeming shimmer of ancient lustre to an upstart dynasty.

Christ, as we have seen, was called the “æthereal bee,” and it is an interesting coincidence that Vishnu, incarnate in the form of Krishna, should be represented with a blue bee hovering over his head as a symbol of the æther. It is not probable that this similarity is to be explained on the theory [5] of an historical transmission of ideas, or that there is any genetic connection between these conceptions, except so far as they might grow naturally and independently out of the solar character of both religions. There is no doubt, however, that the Orient is the chief source of our symbolisms, which in migrating westward have undergone such a variety of transformations and adaptations as in many cases greatly to obscure their original significance. In the *Brihat-Kathâ-Sarit-Sâgara* (“Great Ocean of the Rivers of Stories”) of Somadeva, there is the tale of a traveller, who fell asleep on a forest tree, and when he awoke saw a tiger lying in wait for him below, and an enormous serpent coiled above his head and ready to spring upon him. At the same time he discovered on a branch by his side some drops of honey from a swarm of bees in the hollow trunk, and in the enjoyment of its sweetness forgot all about the perils by which he was surrounded. Long before the age of Somadeva this allegory of human life was current in India, whence it passed into the legendary literature of Europe, subject to the modifications of an Occidental environment (for example in Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda Aurea*, and the *Barlaam and Josaphat of Rudolf von Ems*), and is the theme of an elaborate bas-relief on the south door of the baptistery of Parma, where we see a man sitting on the limb of a tree

eagerly eating the honey that trickles from the leaves; at the foot of the tree is a dragon, and gnawing at its roots are two mice, [6] white and black, symbols of day and night, the chief divisions of all-devouring time, which ultimately cause every tree of life to fall. M. Henri Gaidoz has shown by strongly presumptive, if not wholly conclusive, evidence, that the Virgin of the Seven Swords is a Christian appropriation and adaptation of the Babylonian-Assyrian war-goddess Istar, who is represented on ancient monuments with seven darts in her shoulders, so arranged as to form with their shafts a halo encircling her head. Pictures of this goddess, brought by mediæval Italian merchants from the East, were supposed to refer to the Virgin Mary, and to the fulfilment of the prophecy of Simeon that a sword should pierce through her soul; and it was not until the fifteenth century that it was slightly modified to suit the Gospel record, and received a permanent place in Christian iconography. The existence of a revered image of the Holy Virgin in remote regions of the East was easily accounted for by the clergy, like many other startling resemblances in religious rites and symbols, as the marvellous and quite miraculous results of the mythical mission of the apostle Thomas.

Indeed, nothing was more common in the middle ages than this Christianization of pagan deities. Thus the eagle as an emblem of Jupiter caused the son of Kronos and sovereign of Olympus to be mistaken for John the Evangelist; Poseidon and Pallas were regarded as Adam and Eve; Hercules with his club passed for Samson with the jawbone [7] of an ass; and representations of Venus were ingeniously construed into those of the Virgin Mary. Under the influence of the Renaissance the newly-awakened æsthetic sense proved strong enough to overrule the scruples of religious sentiment, and the monuments of classical antiquity became models for imitation in the productions of Christian art. We have a striking example of this tendency in a marble relief of the Assumption of the Virgin, which belonged originally to Saint-Jacques-la-Boucherie, and is now in the abbatial church of Saint-Denis. Her graceful figure is almost wholly nude, and resembles Venus rising from the sea rather than the Virgin Mary ascending into heaven; she folds her hands in the attitude of prayer, and stands with one foot on a cloud and the other on the head of a cherub, while four pagan genii as angels accompany her, playing on musical instruments.

It was in the Orient, too, that mythical and symbolical zoölogy, as the natural outgrowth of the doctrine of metempsychosis, attained its most exuberant development. The monstrosities of Indian, Assyrian, Egyptian, and archaic Greek art, sphinxes, centaurs, minotaurs, human-headed bulls, lion-headed kings, horse-headed goddesses, and sparrow-headed gods, are all the plastic embodiments of this metaphysical tenet. The same notion finds expression in heraldry, where real and fabulous animals are blazoned in whimsical devices on coats-of-arms and ensigns as emblems [8] of qualities supposed to be peculiar to individuals or hereditary in families. The man adorned his escutcheon with the bird or the beast which he was proud of resembling or wished to rival, whose rapidity of flight he coveted, or whose ferocity he feared. By this naive symbolism the primitive chieftain thought to strike terror in his foes, or to strengthen the courage and confidence of his friends and confederates. Out of the same

circumstances arose also an uncanny feeling of awe as regards the lower animals, and a superstitious dread of provoking their enmity. Grimm, in his exhaustive discussion of this topic, has called attention to that early stage of society, when the ravenous wolf and the shaggy bear, prowling through the dark glens and sunny glades of the interminable forest, were looked upon, not merely as rapacious brutes, whose physical strength and voracity were to be feared, but rather as incarnations of mysterious and malignant forces capable of inflicting injuries by occult and magical influences, and therefore not to be enraged or irritated in any manner. For this reason they were not called by their real names, but were propitiated by flattering epithets, such as black-foot, blue-foot, gold-foot, sweet-foot, grey-beard, broad-brow, flash-eye, forest-brother, and a variety of similar appellations. The demon-soul revealed itself in the fierce glare of the eye and the long, weird howl, which broke like the voice of an imprisoned fiend on the midnight air, as the beasts were [9] supposed to be holding conference concerning the affairs and destinies of men, into which the immense age many of them were thought to attain would in itself give them more than Rosicrucian insight. This sacred and supernatural character invested all their movements with extraordinary interest and portentous significance. They directed the emigrations of tribes, and determined the places in which colonies were to be planted, watched over the infancy of heroes and suckled the founders of nations, indicated the sites of future cities, showed where temples were to be erected or saints buried, and were selected with the most scrupulous care and circumspection for purposes of sacrifice and vaticination. The presence or sudden approach of certain quadrupeds was an omen of good or evil, and auguries were drawn from the movements or cries of birds. A hare crossing the line of march of an army has sufficed to fill the troops with terror, and cause them to flee in a panic. Among the reliefs in the south porch of the cathedral of Chartres is that of a warrior dropping his sword and running away from this timid quadruped. Finally, animals were transferred to the sky and identified with the constellations, in which form they continued to look down upon the earth with auspicious or malign aspect, and to forecast the fate of mankind.

A natural consequence of this enigmatical and mystical relation of the world of men to the world of beasts was that the latter became at a very [10] early period objects of worship and mythopoetic speculation. Zoölatry has existed among all nations, but this cult reached its highest development among the Egyptians, who adored a vast Pantheon of deified bulls, rams, cats, mice, ibises, sparrows, hawks, crocodiles, and a multitude of mongrel creations of the imagination. Even insects, flies, bees, beetles, were exalted to divinities. Monstrosities were held in peculiar veneration. The union of human bodies with the heads of beasts or birds is especially characteristic of the Egyptian religion; similar incongruities are met with among the most ancient deities of Greece, and were doubtless of Asiatic origin. Thus the Arcadian Demeter was represented with a horse's head, and the Cretan Minotaur with the head of a bull, not to mention the hosts of gorgons, harpies, centaurs, tritons, nereids, sirens, and satyrs formed by uniting a human head with the body of a beast or bird or fish. The Greek alone, with his superior

æsthetic sense, chaste imagination, and unsurpassable plastic skill, knew how to give organic unity to these heterogeneous combinations, pruning them of excrescences, purging them of superfluities, and rendering the boldest violations of the laws of nature beautiful and harmonious as works of art. These hybrid creatures of the fancy, like the sphinxes which guarded the portals of the temples of Thebes, and the colossal winged lions of Nineveh and Persepolis, originated in the priestly proclivity to symbolize and to express mystical [11] ideas in material forms; but their primitive crudeness, refined and transmuted in the crucible of the Hellenic intellect, emerged as the pure gold of artistic perfection. As the result of this process of transformation or evolution, if we may regard symbols as species and apply to them the catchword of modern science, the Greek embodiments of these conceptions have survived as the fittest in the struggle for existence, and secured a permanent place in the art and literature of the civilized world. The fact that they are universally accepted as “classical” is conclusive proof of their absolute ascendancy.

Alexandria was for several centuries, under the Ptolemies and the Roman prefects, the principal channel of commercial intercourse between the East and the West, and consequently the point at which Oriental and Occidental ideas came into constant contact and often into sharp conflict, but by mutual concession and compromise gradually developed a certain eclecticism and syncretism of philosophical speculations and religious systems. Thus arose the so-called Alexandrian School, in which the achievements of Egyptian, Hellenic, and Hebrew culture were commingled and mutually supplemented. Christianity, however, was too aggressive in its spirit and too exclusive in its claims to accept any compromise, or to enter into any amicable *modus vivendi* with other cults. Its mission was to put all things under its feet, and to assert its universal supremacy, and for this reason [12] it recognized the validity of older forms of worship and admitted their *raison d'être* only so far as they could be shown to have a specifically propædeutic relation to itself as the only true religion. Partly in application of this principle, and partly as a matter of policy in order to facilitate its propagation, it appropriated so far as possible the rites and symbols and ancient traditions of antecedent religions, interpreting them as anticipations, allegories, prophecies, and prefigurations which had now been fully accomplished and thereby abrogated. Christian proselytes of different races were eager and adept in making all available currents of their ancestral mythology tributary to the stream, whose waters were for the healing of the nations. Egyptian converts, known as Copts (Copt, Gyptios, Kyptaios, like Gypsy, is a corruption of Αἰγύπτιος), found in the sacred records of their progenitors, as preserved in picture-writing and plastic art, no lack of ideographic and other symbolical material which could be easily converted to Christian uses. Thus the hieroglyphic sign , pronounced *onk*, and signifying “life,” would be readily accepted as an ansated cross , and naturally give rise to the simpler form  so often represented on Coptic monuments; by a slight change it might be metamorphosed into the monogrammatic name of Christ . In like manner an ancient Coptic relief of the Virgin and Child, described by M. Gayet (*Les Monuments Coptes du Musée de Boulaq*, Paris, 1889), and

by Georg Ebers (*Sinnbildliches*, [13] Leipzig, 1892), is a servile imitation of the traditional Egyptian representations of Isis suckling Horus. The necklace of the Madonna is the same as that worn by goddesses on the monuments, and by ladies of royal rank in the age of the Pharaohs. The chair, on which she is seated, with its back shaped like the hieroglyphic  (s), is an exact copy of that on which Egyptian deities were wont to be enthroned and Egyptian sovereigns used to sit in state. The stiff and angular infant is the very image of Horus; near by stands Joseph, rather rigidly draped, and holding in his right hand a tree and an instrument resembling a chisel, which may be intended to indicate the occupation of a carpenter. Above their heads extends the ideogram  (pt), signifying the sky or heavens, and suggesting either the place of their abode or their divine character. Over all hovers a female gyrfalcon with outspread wings, the Nechebt-Ilithyia (*Είλειθυια*), which presides over births and renders parturition easy, as is stated in the *Physiologus*, by means of the Indian stone eutokios (*εὐτόκιος*).

Another striking example of this tendency is the transformation of Horus slaying Seth-Typhon into St. George and the Dragon. An Egyptian bas-relief of bronze in the Louvre, and a similar one in clay in the British Museum, represent the sparrow-headed god equipped as a mounted warrior, and thrusting his spear into the neck of a crocodile, the emblem and incarnation of his demonic foe. In [14] Egyptian mythology Horus symbolized the vital energy and reproductive power of nature; he derived his name from the Semitic *Hur*, signifying light, and was therefore properly regarded by Herodotus as identical with Apollo; hence the double name of the Greco-Egyptian priest Horapollo, whose *Hieroglyphica* (edited by C. Leemans, Amsterdam, 1835) is

an early and important contribution to symbolical zoölogy. Horus personified not only the vivifying and fertilizing forces of the physical world, and the triumph of life over death, but also the victory of good over evil; his feast was therefore a vernal festival celebrated on the twenty-third of April. Typhon, on the other hand, was the demon of the desert, the producer of drought and sterility and famine. As the counterpart to this delineation we have a rude Coptic relief of St. George and the Dragon, which was discovered at Luxor, and is so thoroughly Egyptian in character that it might be easily mistaken for Horus and Seth-Typhon. Over the haloed head of the Christian hero is an equilateral triangle, a symbol of the Trinity of frequent occurrence on Egyptian monuments; indeed, according to Plutarch, the fact that the ibis was wont to stand with straddled legs so as to form such a figure greatly added to its sacredness. In the background is the bull Apis, with what seems to be a decrescent moon (Ebers calls it a disc of the sun, *Sonnenscheibe*) over its back. The Egyptians worshipped two bulls, both sacred to Osiris, namely Mneuis at Heliopolis, and Apis at Memphis; the sign of the former was [15] the sun, and that of the latter the moon. Above the gateway, through which St. George is riding with the dragon squirming beneath his horse, are two birds having tails resembling the chrysalis of an insect, and it may be, as Ebers suggests, that they are the larva out of which the rejuvenated phoenix was supposed to emerge. It is possible, however, that these queer tails are merely the result of an

awkward attempt to draw feathers. The anniversary of St. George, like that of Horus, is on the twenty-third of April, and there is not the slightest doubt that this canonized knight, who figures in hagiology as a Cappadocian prince and blessed martyr, owes his existence to the Christianization of an old Egyptian myth, which, after undergoing this metamorphosis, migrated to Syria, where the saint is reputed to have been born in the city of Lydda, and thence gradually spread over all Asia Minor. Here the crusaders became familiar with the legend, adopted St. George as their patron and pattern in waging the holy war against the Mussulmanic dragon, and brought him to Europe emblazoned on their banners.

It is highly probable, and indeed quite certain, that many ornamentations of Christian architecture, which are now merely traditional and conventional forms and perform a purely decorative function, might be traced to Egyptian and other Oriental sources, where they had distinct significance as signs and symbols. But it is not the purpose of the writer to undertake such a study in comparative [16] symbology, nor are the materials necessary to its successful prosecution as yet available, notwithstanding the rapidly accumulating and extremely valuable results of recent researches in archæology, ethnography, philology, and the critical comparison of religions. The aim of the present volume is a much simpler one, being an attempt to explain the meaning of the real or fabulous animals, which have been put to decorative uses in ecclesiastical architecture, and thus to account for their admittance to sacred edifices. The book is intended to be suggestive rather than exhaustive, showing the origin and signification of the most prominent of these types and symbols, and indicating the direction in which further investigations are to be pursued. The founder or at least the most eminent representative of the Alexandrian School of allegorists was the Jewish philosopher Philo, who, as a mediator between Hebrew and Hellenic culture, endeavoured to discover the teachings of Pythagoras, Plato, and Aristotle esoterically concealed in the Mosaic records, by giving to the latter a far-fetched, figurative interpretation. This hermeneutical principle was adopted by Christian exegetists and apologists, especially by Clemens Alexandrinus in his *Stromateus* (patchwork or miscellany of Greek and Christian literature), and by Origen, who recognized in the Scriptures a threefold sense: literal or historical, moral or psychical, and mystical or pneumatic. Cassian, in the fifth century, wrote a work entitled *Collationes Patrum Sceticorum*, in which he [17] states that there are four kinds of knowledge to be derived from Biblical study: historical, tropological, allegorical, and anagogical. The first of these, being for the most part perfectly plain, was of no importance; only the last three deserve the name of spiritual knowledge (*intelligentiam spiritualem*); or, as Hrabanus Maurus expressed it four centuries later, the historical sense is milk for babes; the tropological sense is nutriment suited to those more advanced in wisdom; the allegorical sense is the strong meat adapted to the robust souls whose faith is revealed in good works; while the saintly persons, who despise all earthly joys and have fixed their affections wholly on heavenly things, are alone fit to receive the “wine of anagogical interpretation” and to be edified thereby. This last and highest degree of spiritual discernment is beyond the reach of “the higher criticism,”

and, as Cassian observes, is not attainable by severe study and deep erudition, but comes from divine illumination produced by fasting, prayer, and holy meditation. It is an enlightenment of the understanding proceeding from the purification of the heart, and not from poring over commentaries; a lifting of the veil of the passions that obscure the mental vision.

Not only was the Hebrew cosmogony allegorized and spiritualized, but the same method of exposition was applied to the whole system of nature. Origen, in describing the process of creation, explains the creatures that fill the waters, the fowls of the air, and the creeping things as signifying good or evil [18] thoughts and feelings, and calls special attention to the great whales as symbolizing violent passions and criminal impulses. In the hermeneutical *Hexahemera* of Basil the Great and his brother Gregory of Nyssa this zoölogical typology is still more fully developed, and the various characteristics, popularly attributed to animals, served to enforce moral teachings or to illustrate theological tenets. More important in this respect are the so-called *Claves Scripturæ Sacræ*, which were to be used as keys not only for unlocking the spiritual treasures of Holy Writ, but also for disclosing the mystical meaning of all natural things, the Greek *Physiologus*, and the numerous mediæval compilations and poetical productions based upon it, of which an account is given in the second and third chapters of this volume. These works contain an epitome of the mythical and symbolical zoölogy, botany, ornithology, and mineralogy gathered from many nations, and transmitted from the remotest times. Very early in the Christian era this traditional material infused itself into patristic literature, and thus gradually passed from rhetorical decoration in Christian homilies to artistic decoration in Christian architecture, where it found expression in fantastic and often monstrous forms, which can be understood only by tracing them to their sources in the superstitious notions of ancient and especially Oriental peoples. With the growth of religious scepticism and schism this symbolism gradually and almost imperceptibly merged into satire, so [19] that it is often difficult to draw a line of demarcation between them. Mediæval humour was coarse rather than keen, and better skilled in wielding bludgeons than in brandishing rapiers. Even the genius of Rabelais hardly suffices to relieve it of a certain boorish grossness and brutality, and render it thoroughly enjoyable to the refined and fastidious modern reader. The satire of the period of the Reformation was of the same bitter and abusive style. Luther's wit was notoriously nasty, and even the gentle Melancthon was capable of indulging in a strain of sarcasm which any cultivated man of to-day would reprobate as extremely vulgar. It must be remembered, however, that this coarseness was a characteristic of the age, and is not to be regarded as a mark of intrinsic vileness or individual depravity. It was something wholly external, a mode of expression by no means inconsistent with a robust virtue, as far removed from prudishness as from pruriency. In our time the fiercest theological polemic would hardly venture to lampoon and caricature his opponents as the reformers of the sixteenth century did the see of Rome, nor would the most rabid apostle of Anti-Semitism seek to propagate his views

by adorning Christian churches and other public edifices with filthy sculptures derisive of the Jews.

In the volume now offered to the public the author has endeavoured to show the rise and evolution of this symbolism, and its transition to satire as seen in [20] Christian art, although, as already stated, he is very far from claiming to have exhausted the subject. The illustrations are derived partly from the bestiaries printed by Cahier in the second volume of his *Mélanges d'Archéologie*, partly from a parchment manuscript psalter of Isabella of France in the Royal Library of Munich, and partly from ecclesiastical edifices. The appended bibliography, taken in connection with the references given in the body of the work, will be found to contain the principal sources of information.

In conclusion, I wish to express my hearty thanks to Hrn. Dr. Laubmann, Director of the K. Hof- und Staatsbibliothek in Munich, Bavaria, as well as to the other custodians of that library, for the uniform kindness and cordiality shown in admitting me to the privileges and in facilitating the use of that magnificent collection of printed books and manuscripts. [21]

## CHAPTER I

### ALLEGORICAL AND ANAGOGICAL INTERPRETATIONS OF NATURE

Impulse given to the study of natural history by Alexander the Great—Scientific spirit fostered by Aristotle—Lack of this spirit among the Romans—Alexandria as a centre of learning under the Ptolemies—The Christian theory of the relation of the Book of Revelation to the Book of Nature—The patristic conception of the visible creation as an image of the invisible world and a mirror of spiritual truth—Animals as religious emblems in Oriental, and especially in Buddhistic, literature—Mineralogical symbolism—Magical and medical properties and religious significance of precious stones—Legends of Solomon's wisdom, and his method of building the Temple—Ceremony of blessing jewels—Speculations of Justinus Kerner and Schubert concerning the occult affinities of the mineral kingdom to man—The typology of precious stones according to the Physiologus—Spiritual meaning of the diamond, the pearl, and the Indian stone—Terrobuli in Christian symbolism and architecture.

ALEXANDER THE GREAT, in addition to his military exploits and political achievements, also gave a new impulse and direction to the development of natural history in Greece by supplying his tutor, Aristotle, with specimens and more or less accurate descriptions of animals native to the lands he had conquered. By means of the material thus obtained [22] the peripatetic philosopher was enabled to extend his researches beyond the confines of his own country, and to correct many false and fantastic notions that had hitherto prevailed concerning exotic, and especially Oriental, fauna, and thus became—at least in a relative and restricted sense—the founder of systematic zoölogy in the modern signification of the term. His predecessors, as well as his contemporaries, had been wont to speculate about animals chiefly from moral, religious, poetic, artistic, didactic, humoristic, satirical, sentimental, and superstitious points of view, and to prize the lessons of prudence and piety and wisdom which they were supposed to inculcate; but the Stagirite was the first to study them from a strictly scientific point of view.

Still, the scientific field, which Aristotle cultivated with such assiduous care and with so fruitful results, formed only a small evergreen spot, standing oasis-like in the midst of a wide waste of wild conjectures and sterile speculations. Tyrtamus of Lesbos, surnamed Theophrastus, his favourite pupil and chosen successor as head of the peripatetic school, followed in the footsteps of the great master in this field of investigation, and aimed at the acquisition of positive knowledge by means of exact methods in the study of nature. Unfortunately, however, the fabulous stories related by Ktesias and Megasthenes in their voluminous descriptions of India and Persia appealed more powerfully to the imagination, and gratified in a [23] higher degree the popular love of the marvellous, than the sober records of accurate observation, and therefore acquired far greater currency.

The Romans brought beasts from the remotest provinces of the empire, not because they felt any rational or scientific interest in them, but solely in order to increase the pomp and splendour of military triumphs, or to minister to the barbarous and bloody

sports of the amphitheatre. According to Petronius, the Marmaric deserts and the Moorish forests were scoured for the purpose of procuring ferocious animals to fight in the arena with each other, or with trained gladiators in horrible combat. “The ships from foreign shores,” he says, “are crowded with fierce tigers confined in gilded cages, and destined to drink human blood to the frantic plaudits of the populace.”

When Cicero was proconsul in Cilicia, he received an urgent letter from the ædile Cœlius, imploring him to send as speedily as possible a cargo of panthers, which were to be used as a “campaign fund” for electioneering purposes. As a means of winning the suffrages of the rabble this sort of expenditure was probably more efficient, and certainly more open and exciting than the modern system of distributing “bunched” ballots, or of purchasing venal voters “in blocks of five.” To this entreaty Cicero replied that he would do his best to comply with the request of his friend, and thus contribute to the success of his candidacy, but that owing to the energy and skill of many lovers of the chase, [24] and especially of a certain Patiscus, these beasts of venery were very scarce, having fled for safety from his consular province into Caria. If we may believe their own statements, the Romans accomplished wonders in training beasts and birds for private amusement or for spectacular entertainments. Their passion for pet animals was a matter of fashion, a mere “fad”; and Cato bitterly censured the degeneracy of the times, when ladies frequented the market-place fondling lap-dogs, and dandies strutted about with parrots perched on their wrists. These birds were kept in cages of gold and silver and tortoise-shell, and taught to shout the name of the reigning emperor. The lion learned to play with hares, catching them in frolic and letting them go, and rabbits ran and took refuge in its jaws as in their burrow. Martial, who describes these performances, adds, in obsequious flattery of Domitian, that this gentleness and docility of savage beasts are due less to the art of the tamer (*domator*) than to awe of the emperor (*imperator*), “for the lions know whom they serve.” The same poet informs us that eagles were made to act on the stage, taking a boy up into the air without doing him any harm, in realistic representation of the rape of Ganymede on Mount Ida—

“Æthereas aquila puerum portante per auras,  
Illæsum timidis unquibus hæsit onus.”

*Ep. Lib. i. 7.*

In view of this almost exclusively amphitheatrical [25] and utterly brutalizing relation of the Romans to the animal world, it is not surprising to find in the Natural History of Pliny an encyclopædic compilation of current traditions and popular superstitions, instead of a record of actual observations and scientific conclusions. In short, the Romans do not appear to have made any contributions whatever to natural science, although the vast extent of their dominions afforded them an excellent opportunity for such investigations. Not even in the great didactic poem of the keen-witted Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, do we discover any distinct traces of the Aristotelian method of inquiry. The achievements of Roman thought were in politics, and the cognate department of jurisprudence.

During the reign of the Ptolemies, as well as under the rule of Roman prefects, Alexandria was celebrated, not only as the chief commercial centre of the world, but also as a cosmopolitan seat of learning, and the principal avenue of intellectual communication between the East and the West. Indeed, Egyptian monarchs—at least from the accession of the Nineteenth Dynasty, sixteen centuries before the Christian era—seem to have had a peculiar passion for establishing museums of curiosities, menageries of exotic beasts and birds, and other collections of rare and abnormal productions of nature. The ninth Ptolemy, Euergetes II., surnamed Physkon (Gorbelly), wrote a book full of curious information about such things. His great aim, however, was not to discover and record facts, [26] but to recount wonders, and he is therefore well characterized by Pitra in his *Spicilegium Solesmense* as a “rerum mirabilium curiosissimus investigator.” It was the *mirabilia*, or marvels of nature, that attracted his attention and stimulated his researches. This sovereign was so zealous in procuring works for the Alexandrian libraries (the Bruchium Museum and the Serapeum) that he not only sent special emissaries into foreign countries to purchase them at high prices, but was also accustomed to take away from travellers any valuable manuscripts in their possession and add them to the public collections, giving in return a copy of the book thus arbitrarily appropriated.

Alexandrian learning embraced unquestionably a wide range of topics, among which medicine, anatomy, mathematics, astronomy, and geography held a prominent place, but the study of botany, mineralogy, and zoölogy were carried on in an extremely superficial and desultory manner, and chiefly for the purpose of discovering in plants, stones, and animals the occult and magical properties and “strange and vigorous faculties” with which they were supposed to be endowed. Of the cautious and critical study and scrutiny of nature, and the essentially scientific spirit which characterized the Aristotelian method of research, these scholars appear to have had little or no conception.

It was also in the Greco-Judaic schools of Alexandria that Christian theology was developed as the resultant of the contact and conflict of the [27] Hebrew with the Hellenic intellect. From the Christian point of view, the Bible was recognized as the only true source of knowledge. The sacred volume was assumed to contain unerring information on all subjects whatsoever, provided one could ascertain its real meaning, which was often wrapped up and hidden in allegories and obscure similitudes and symbolisms, like precious treasures kept in caskets under intricate locks, and concealed in dark places. Hence the supreme importance of hermeneutics as the science of sciences, the master-key, which opens all the secrets of the universe, and reveals all the mysteries of nature.

It is said of Solomon that “he spake of trees from the cedar that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall; he spake also of beasts and of fowl, and of creeping things and of fishes.” We are not justified, however, in assuming that he discoursed of natural history in the modern sense of the term, or that he was familiar with botany, zoölogy, ornithology, entomology, and ichthyology, as we understand

these sciences. His knowledge of plants and of animals did not differ in kind from that of his contemporaries and of the age in which he lived; he was superior to others only in possessing a sturdier common-sense and shrewder skill, in applying this current lore to human life and conduct, in apothegmatic illustration of the folly or wisdom of mankind. What we call the book of nature was to him a vast and many-volumed treatise on all phases and features of [28] human nature, in which the world of lower creatures was held up to man as a moral mirror, in order that he might see therein the reflections of his own vices and virtues.

In the development and enforcement of this idea patristic theologians surpassed the prophets and sages of the Old Testament, and even the subtle scribes and quibbling rabbis, resolving the external universe into a mere body of divinity or system of Christian doctrine, written in cipher, which it was the function of the exegetist to interpret so as to bring it into harmony with divine revelation, and make it illustrative and confirmatory of Holy Writ. According to Origen “the visible world teaches us concerning the invisible; the earth contains images of heavenly things, in order that by means of these lower objects we may mount up to that which is above. ... As God made man in His own image and after His own likeness, so He created the lower animals after the likeness of heavenly prototypes.”

This conception of the physical world as a symbol of spiritual truth is only one form in which the ascetic contempt of the body, as a clog and cumbrance to the soul and a hindrance of holy aspirations, took expression. The cosmos or material body of the universe, like the carnal body of the individual, must be sanctified by its spiritualization and virtual expression. Paul’s statement that “the invisible things of Him (God) from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the [29] things that are made,” was thought to be a distinct assertion and ample justification of this theory, which rendered even the heathen, to whom the gospel had not been revealed, “without excuse.”

The Talmud declares that “he who interprets the scripture literally is a liar and a blasphemer.” This exegetical principle is, however, not exclusively Talmudic, but underlies and pervades more or less completely all hermeneutical literature. This attitude of mind arises from the fact that sacred books, which are accepted and transmitted from generation to generation as infallible and therefore unchangeable records and repositories of truth, can keep pace with the progress of human thought, and adapt themselves to the growth of knowledge, so as to maintain their hold upon the morally and intellectually advancing races of mankind, only by voluntarily laying aside all claims to strict and literal accuracy, and taking refuge in allegorical and symbolical interpretations.

According to the biblical story the fall of man involved the alteration and corruption of the whole creation, including all forms of animal and vegetable life, and extending even to the soil itself, which thenceforth showed a perverse prolificacy in bringing forth thorns and brambles and every species of noxious weed. These lower organisms were also embraced in the Christian scheme of redemption, and are represented as looking

forward with painful longing to its completion, and their [30] consequent release from the degrading penalties of human transgression.

Indeed, one of the most conspicuous signs of the successful issue and perfect consummation of the Atonement is to be the disappearance of all antipathies between savage beasts and their natural prey: the lion will lay aside his fierce animosities and carnivorous appetites, lying down with the lamb, and eating straw like the bullock in token of his regeneration, and universal peace will be restored. Satan will be dethroned as the prince of this world, and the earth resume its pristine state of Edenic innocence and paradisaean purity.

Thus the present condition and ultimate destiny of mankind were supposed to be reflected fragmentarily in the lower animals as in a shattered mirror; and it was from this source that the early Christian evangelists and patristic theologians were especially fond of drawing illustrations of spiritual truths and elucidations of scriptural texts. The words of Job: "Ask the beast and it will teach thee, and the birds of heaven and they will tell thee," were assumed to furnish sufficient ground for regarding the entire animal kingdom as a mere collection of types and symbols of religious dogmas and Christian virtues. The apocalyptic monsters of St. John the Divine were also cited as a precedent warranting the wildest vagaries of zoölogical exegesis.

In Oriental literature, and especially in the sacred books of the East, nothing is more common than [31] to put animals to rhetorical, metaphorical, and emblematical uses, and to hold them up to the religious man as models for imitation. Comparisons and correspondencies of this kind were naturally suggested by the doctrine of metempsychosis, in which they have a psychological basis, and from which they derive a peculiar force and cogency, wholly foreign to Occidental habits of thought and feeling.

Thus the Buddhist ascetic is told to pattern in austerity and humility after the ass, which is content to sleep by the roadside in the outskirts of the village, on a dust-heap, a bed of chaff, or a layer of leaves. He is also enjoined to take heed to the squirrel, which, when assailed, uses its tail as a cudgel against its enemies, and to ward off carnal affections and spiritual foes with the staff of steady and earnest meditation. When he goes forth with his begging bowl, he should wrap himself in the vesture of meekness and moral restraint, that he may be free from fear and from worldly contamination, as the white ant covers itself with a leaf when it goes in quest of food. The scorpion has a sting in its tail, which it bears erect; in like manner the religious man should wield the sword of knowledge, and thereby render himself invincible. In the burning heat of summer the pig betakes itself to a pond; so the devotee, when his soul is scorched and inflamed by evil passions, should have recourse to the cool, refreshing, and ambrosial exercise of universal kindness. Again, [32] the hog, having gone to a marsh or swamp, digs a trough in the earth and lies therein; so the yogi should bury his body in the trough of his mind by means of profound and passionless meditation. The owl is the mortal enemy of crows, and is wont to repair to their nests at night and kill their young; in like manner the religious mendicant is the foe of ignorance, and plucks it out of his mind

and destroys it before it has become inveterate. Like the owl, too, he loves seclusion and the quiet favourable to calm reflection. The leech sucks itself fast to whatever it touches, and gorges itself with blood; so the yogi holds firmly to whatever he fixes his thoughts upon, and drinks in the never-cloying fulness of Nirvâna. The spider spins its web to catch flies; the yogi spreads the net of unbroken contemplation before the six avenues of the senses, and takes captive and destroys every lust that seeks to enter into the mind. Those who have become the slaves of the passions live wholly in them, moving about in a world of illusions, the creation of their own desires, as the spider runs to and fro on the filaments of the web, which it has spun out of its own bowels. The process of regeneration and emancipation from the allurements of the senses and the trammels of the flesh is compared to the action of the snake in casting its skin. He who is content with sensual pleasures is like a hog wallowing in the mire and glutted with wash. The elephant is the type of patient endurance, self-restraint. Buddha himself [33] is likened to a well-tamed (*sudânta*) elephant, and is often spoken of as the great elephant (*mahânâga*). Another symbol of the pious recluse, who has renounced the world, is the rhinoceros, because it loves to dwell alone and remote from its kind.

Even inanimate things are moralized and made to represent spiritual states. Thus the jug (*kumbhto*), which emits no sound when it is full, emblemizes the man who is full of knowledge, and walks humbly and soberly in the “path” (*dharmapatha*), avoiding vain boastings and garrulousness and noisy ostentation. This idea is expressed in the following lines from the *Suttanipata*:

“Loudly brawls the shallow run,  
But the stream that's deep is dumb.  
Noise betrays the empty tun;  
From the full no sound doth come.  
Empty pitchers like are fools;  
Wise men are the full, clear pools.”

The same figure of speech occurs in The Lover of Sir Walter Raleigh:

“Passions are likened best to floods and streams,  
The shallow murmurs, while the deeps are dumb.”

In these comparisons and injunctions the common qualities and most conspicuous characteristics of the animals, which the holy man is admonished to imitate, are lost sight of, and only certain fanciful attributes considered. In common parlance it would not be flattering to speak of a saint metaphorically as an ass, a hog, a leech, or a scorpion. [34] This comical disregard of the prominent points of resemblance, which would be most naturally suggested by the simile, is not confined to Buddhist writings, but, as we shall see hereafter, constantly occurs in Christian hermeneutical and homiletical literature, and often renders it very funny reading.

It was also in the Orient that a sort of mineralogical symbolism, based upon certain magical and magnetic qualities supposed to be peculiar to precious stones, was first and most fully developed. Jewels were worn originally, and are still worn in Eastern countries, as prophylactics and talismans rather than as mere ornaments. Their purpose

was not so much to adorn as to protect the person, preventing disease and warding off malign influences, and they were therefore prized more for their occult virtue than for their brilliancy and beauty. In Europe, too, they constituted an important part of mediæval pharmacopœias, and were to be found side by side with mummy dust, “eye of newt and toe of frog,” and many nasty and nauseous compounds in every well-regulated apothecary’s shop. Popular superstition has not yet ceased to endow bufonite or toadstone with wonderful medical and necromantic properties.

The urim and thummim (light and perfection) in the breastplate of the Jewish high-priest were precious stones remarkable for their luminousness and purity, and, like the sacred scarabæus worn by the Egyptian hierophant, had a mystical meaning and were consulted as oracles. In what manner [35] the divine will was communicated through them is not known; it is probable that the priest by steadfastly gazing on them was thrown into an ecstatic or hypnotic state, in which he saw visions, and uttered words that were interpreted as divine inspirations and supernatural illuminations.

It is curious to note to what extent the once universal belief in the amuletic efficacy of gems still survives in modern life and literature. Thus the amethyst, as its name implies, neutralized the intoxicating properties of alcohol, and was therefore wrought into cups, from which one could quaff the strongest liquors in the largest draughts without getting drunk. It was also supposed, perhaps in consequence of this anti-inebriant quality, to render a man energetic and diligent in business and to insure peace of mind. The agate disenvenomed the sting of serpents and scorpions, and when worn on the left hand made its possessor winsome and wise; if placed under the pillow it produced pleasant dreams.

Boccaccio says in the *Decameron*, that “the heliotrope is a stone of such strange virtue that it causes the bearer of it to be completely concealed from the sight of all present.” This power was also ascribed to the plant of the same name. Dante describes the spirits of the damned in the seventh circle of hell as running to and fro naked and affrighted without hope of hole or heliotrope:

“Senza sperar pertugio o elitropia.”

[36] In other words, they found no cleft in which to hide, and had no heliotrope to render them invisible. The reference here is not to the plant, but to the mineral. The ruby absorbed morbid humours, and was an antidote for catarrh and unrequited love; no wonder then that it also made a man socially attractive and companionable. The carbuncle protected the wearer against the fatal look of the basilisk and the fascinations of the evil eye, counteracted the virulence of poisons, purified the air from pestilential vapours, and, when worn as a necklace, was preventive of epilepsy. Chalcedony imparted moral strength and courage to resist all evil enticements; the variety of it known as carnelian was believed to be effective in cheering the heart by its soothing action on the bile and the blood. The topaz kept the soul pure and chaste, and is etymologically related to the Sanskrit *tapas*, a general term for the purifying process by which the Indian ascetic purges his spirit and frees himself from sensual desires and

worldly affections. It was thought to exert a calming influence upon lunatics, and, if thrown into a boiling pot, to stop ebullition. With a topaz in his armpit, a person was deemed capable of passing unsinged through the hottest flames, and undergoing with safety the severest ordeal of fire; for this reason witches were carefully examined before being burned, lest they might have recourse to this means of impunity. This stone was often given as a mark of friendship, and especially as a pledge of troth, since it was [37] supposed to promote fidelity. The lapis lazuli was used as a necklace for children, because it made them fearless and truthful; corals were employed in the same manner, because they warded off sorcerous arts and withstood the powers of witchcraft. Jasper produced clearness and keenness of vision, stanchd blood, healed dropsy and dyspepsia, and was an effective febrifuge. Chrysoprase cured heart-affections both physical and mental. Beryl acted as a cholagogue, and as a natural result of its cathartic and tonic qualities developed a cheerful and courageous spirit. Rock-crystal or “ice-stone,” as it was popularly called, quenched thirst, prevented vertigo, and enabled women to suckle their children. The necklace of clear rock-crystal, still commonly worn by wet-nurses, is a survival of the belief in the lactific virtue of this variety of limpid quartz.

The association of precious stones with the months of the year as amulets and promoters of good fortune seems to have originated at an early date in Arabia. In accordance with this notion the hyacinth or red zircon was worn in January, the amethyst in February, the heliotrope or bloodstone in March, the sapphire and diamond in April, the emerald in May, the agate in June, the carnelian in July, the onyx in August, the chrysolite in September, the aqua marine and opal in October, the topaz in November, and the chrysoprase and turquoise in December. Thus the magic power of the stones serve to protect their wearers, and to [38] communicate to them the hidden properties with which these gems were supposed to be endowed. In modern literature this theme has been treated most fully and suggestively, perhaps, by Theodor Körner in his poem *Die Monatssteine*, written in 1810.

Far more important for our present purpose than the magical and medical properties of precious stones is their significance as symbols of theological doctrines and Christian graces. In a mediæval German poem “Concerning the Heavenly Jerusalem” (Diemer: *Deutsche Gedichte*, pp. 361-372), based on the treatise *De Lapidibus* of Marbodius, and on the twenty-first chapter of Revelation, we have a theological mineralogy corresponding to the theological zoölogy of the *Physiologus*. The two verses (Rev. xxi. 19, 20) that make mention of the twelve stones with which the foundations of the wall of the mystical city were garnished, are expanded into more than two hundred lines of the poem, consisting chiefly of extremely far-fetched allegory. Thus jasper is the foundation of the Church, and acts as a preservative against hurtful phantasms and devilish wiles; it is of a green colour, and signifies those who foster the faith, never letting it wither away and grow dry and dead, but always keeping it alive. Sapphire has a heavenly hue, and symbolizes those who, although on the earth, have their thoughts fixed on heavenly things. Chalcedony shows its lustre only in the open air, and typifies

those who fast and pray in [39] secret, but whose righteousness shines forth among men. Emerald is native to a cold and arid region, inhabited only by griffins and one-eyed men (*monoculi*), who are constantly fighting for the possession of this stone. It surpasses all gems and herbs in greenness, and symbolizes the freshness and vigour of Christian piety as opposed to the coldness and barrenness of infidelity. The griffins are the demons that, in the form of winged lions, flew aloft on the pinions of pride and fell from heaven into the abyss of hell for their misdeeds. Their monoculous antagonists are those who do not walk in two ways, are not double-dealing, do not serve two masters, are not given to duplicity, but who have an eye single to the glory of God, are single-minded, seeking with oneness of purpose to hold fast the jewel of faith, which the demons would wrest from them. Sardonyx has three colours, black below, white in the middle, and red above; it is a type of those who suffer for Christ's sake, and, although pure and spotless, are vile and sinful in their own eyes. Sardius is deep red, and signifies the blood of the martyrs. Chrysolite glistens like gold and emits scintillations, and is an emblem of those who let their light shine in word and deed. Beryl glitters like the sea in the sunlight, and illustrates the illuminating power of the divine spirit. After interpreting in this manner the symbolism of the other stones, topaz, chrysoprasus, jacinth, and amethyst, on which the New Jerusalem is built, the poet turns homilist, and [40] warns his readers that they can enter the heavenly city only by practising the virtues which the stones shadow forth:

“Nu habent ir alle wol uernomen,  
Wi ir in di burch sculet chomen.”

No doubt this symbolism is utterly fantastic and absurd, and would be hardly worthy of notice were it not for the fact that it holds a prominent place in sacred art, and determines, to a considerable degree, the kinds of stones used in ecclesiastical architecture, as well as in ornamenting sacerdotal vestments, crucifixes, rosaries, chalices, and other sacramental utensils.

Speculations of this sort began to pervade Christian hermeneutic theology at a very early period, and are traceable in the oldest apocryphal literature of the New Testament. In the latter half of the fourth century Epiphanius, Bishop of Cyprus, wrote a book “On the Twelve Stones in Aaron's Robes,” and another “On the Twelve Stones set in the Priest's Breastplate.” The same allegorical spirit of interpretation is shown by Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, and by Ambrosius, in their commentaries on the Apocalypse.

A similar tendency manifests itself in the symbolical and analogical use of numbers, which sought to trace a recondite relation between the seven seals of the Apocalypse, the seven petitions of the Pater Noster, the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, the seven beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount, the seven [41] sacraments, the seven prototypes in the Old Testament, the seven heavens, the seven days of creation, the seven ages of man, the seven liberal arts, the seven signs marking the birth of Christ, and many other

sevenfold things. This subject is fully treated in an old poem entitled *Deus Septiformis*, or the Septiform God.

A curious specimen of biblical exegesis in a poem of the eleventh century, called *Praise of Solomon* (Diemer, pp. 107-114), explains how it was possible to construct the Temple so that “there was neither hammer nor axe, nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was building.” A dragon, which had caused a severe drought by drinking all the water in the springs and wells of Jerusalem, evaded every effort to capture it until Solomon ordered the empty wells and cisterns to be filled with a mixture of wine and mead. As the result of this stratagem the beast became so intoxicated that it was easily taken and fettered. On recovering from its drunkenness it promised the king that if he would set it free, it would tell him how he could complete the Temple without the unpleasant din and clatter of masons and carpenters. The wise sovereign accepted this proposal, and learned that there was an animal on Mount Lebanon, with the entrails of which one could cut the hardest stones. Hunters were sent out, who succeeded in killing this wonderful creature, and by means of its intestines the workmen were able to construct the edifice as by enchantment. [42] The poet then describes the splendours of Solomon’s court, to which an allegorical interpretation is given: Solomon is God, who created the world noiselessly, and in a breath, the Queen of Sheba is the Church, and the courtiers and nobles are priests and bishops. The author gives as his authority for this exegesis a gentleman called Hieronymus (*ein herro hiz heronimus*), evidently referring to the famous ascetic and saint of the fourth century. Indeed, the term “herro” is admirably suited to the character of this remarkable man, who combined the austerity of the monk with the elegance of the man of the world, and thereby rendered himself so attractive to the fine ladies of Roman society that many of them exchanged their rich apparel and luxurious homes for a hair-shirt and an anchoritic life in the desert.

Pineda, in his *Salomon Prævius*, published in eight books at Mayence in 1813, describes a worm called samir, whose blood had the property of softening stones and glass, so that they could be cut and carved like wax. This discovery, we are told, was made accidentally by Solomon, who kept a young ostrich in a glass cage; but the parent bird brought the samir from the desert, and by means of its blood cut the glass and set the captive free. This circumstance was reported to Solomon, who made further experiments with this substance, and invented a new process of working in marble and engraving gems. According to another account, Solomon had a plant which had been brought to him by a foreign [43] embassy, the juice of which possessed the same lithotomic qualities. These legends arose evidently as inferences from the passages already quoted concerning the wise king’s vast knowledge of natural history and his method of building the Temple. The Hebrew monarch got the credit of all the marvellous stories of this kind which were current in the middle ages, for the same reason that mediæval chronicles made Charlemagne the hero of all feats of valour and deeds of chivalry; and American newspapers ascribe all good jokes afloat to Abraham Lincoln.

The ceremony of blessing jewels used to be performed by the kings of England in Westminster Abbey on Good Friday, and was supposed to impart to these precious stones a still greater healing power peculiarly efficacious in curing cramps and epilepsy. But long before this custom came to be observed, jewels, as we have already seen, played an important part in ancient and mediæval materia medica as antidotes and amulets, and especially as antitoxicons. In a didactic poem entitled *De Gemmis*, and written by Marbodius, Bishop of Rennes, in the latter half of the eleventh century, more than sixty precious stones are mentioned, and their properties described; the work is, however, chiefly a compilation and Christianization of the opinions of Aristotle, Pliny, Galen, Isidore, Dioscorides, Avicenna, and other authorities on this subject, since his sole aim is religious instruction and edification.

[44] A German poet of the thirteenth century, Der Stricker, ridicules the popular belief in the magical and medicinal virtues of precious stones as a foolish superstition, and thus shows himself to have been far in advance not only of the ignorant masses, but also of the cultured classes and scholars of his day.

Among modern writers Justinus Kerner has devoted himself most earnestly to this province of investigation and speculation. He maintains that in primitive times, when man lived under simpler conditions and nearer to nature than at present, he was far more susceptible to her subtle influences, so that “even the spirit of the stone, now grown dull and sluggish, was capable of affecting him.” Modern culture, he adds, has materialized man, and “swathed his soul in a threefold girdle of grossness, so that only mechanical and chemical forces can act upon it; for this reason he is now driven to the use of poisons, the strongest elements in the three realms of nature, as medicaments and healing remedies, they alone being able to penetrate the insulating earthy mass which prevents spirit from operating directly upon spirit.” If stones, he continues, do not manifest the same virtues now as formerly, the fault is in ourselves. In our present vitiated state they exert their real and inherent powers only when we are under the influence of magnetism, which corresponds, in a certain degree, to the original and normal condition of mankind, since it renders the soul more free from [45] the bondage of the body. Stones nowadays produce upon magnetized persons the same effects that were ascribed to them in ancient times, for example in the *Orphic Lithiaka*, where it is said that nature has endued them with greater virtues than roots or herbs. The same view is expressed by Schubert in his Natural History, where the mineral kingdom is represented as a realm full of occult affinities and spiritual suggestions, and mystical relations to the microcosm, man. Schubert also declares that the secret and subtle properties of stones affect the human organism most powerfully when it is in a magnetic or somnambulant state.

In the *Physiologus* (the character and contents of which will be fully considered in a subsequent chapter), as well as in mediæval bestiaries, we find the queerest exegetical applications of these superstitious notions intermingled with utterly irrelevant citations of Holy Writ, such as one would now hear only from the lips of a Hard-Shell Baptist preacher or an old plantation negro exhorter. Thus the diamond, or adamant as it is

called, is taken as the type of Christ, because it shines in the dark, as it is written in Isaiah: "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." Again, we are told that the diamond is so hard that neither iron nor stone can penetrate it, but it penetrates all substances, "for all things were made by Him, and [46] without Him was not anything made that was made." Likewise the apostles have said of it : "I saw a man upon a wall of adamant, and in his hand a stone of adamant." (Here the apostles are confounded with the prophets, as the quotation is from the Septuagint version of Amos vii. 7.) We are furthermore informed that "the diamond can be cut and polished only after it has been soaked in the warm blood of a he-goat." In this case the he-goat is typical of the crucified Christ, and the diamond represents the hardness of a world stubborn in sin, which nothing but the warm blood of the Saviour can render tractable and reformable. As early as the third century St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, in his *Liber de Duplici Martyrio*, accepts this notion on the authority of the naturalists of his day, and uses it to illustrate the efficacy of the Atonement. "Those who are versed in the knowledge of natural things tell us that adamant does not yield to the hardness of steel, and can be malleated only after being macerated in the blood of a he-goat. But no adamant is harder than the stony heart of the sinner; nevertheless the blood of Christ softens this stony heart, this iron heart, this heart harder than adamant." In this way the marvels of the material creation were made to elucidate the mysteries of the spiritual world, and to confirm the truths of divine revelation. The *Physiologus* also asserts that no demon can enter a house or habitation of man in which there is a diamond, and adds : "So it is with the heart [47] wherein Christ dwells, whose presence protects it against all approaches and assaults of the devil."

It is said of the pearl-fishers, that they attach an agate to a cord and let it down into the sea, where it is drawn towards the pearls by a mysterious attraction, so that by following the cord the fishers discover them and remove them from their shells. Here the agate typifies John the Baptist, who pointed the way to the pearl of great price, saying: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." The author then tells how the pearl is produced. The sea-creature, which contains this precious substance, is described as having two appendages like wings, and has therefore been mistaken for a bird; it is evident, however, that a bivalve is meant. Just before the dawn this oyster comes out of the deep water to the shore, and, opening its shell, receives a drop of dew from heaven, which the rays of the rising sun change into a pearl. The reader would naturally expect this story to be a symbolism of the Incarnation or the Immaculate Conception; but the writer indulges in an elaborate theological, or rather ecclesiastical, interpretation, in which the sea is the world, the fishers are the saints and doctors of the Church, and the bivalve stands for the Old and New Testaments joined together into one Bible or Book of Revelation, and containing the pure pearls of divine truth. As we shall have occasion to observe, the similitudes of the *Physiologus* are not [48] only hopelessly and often ludicrously mixed, but readily shift at every turn of thought like the figures of a kaleidoscope.

Dante in one of his sonnets (xxxv.) uses a metaphor based on this theory of the genesis of the pearl in a modified form, and implying that it is an emanation of the stars: *come de stella margherita*. A mediæval Spanish poet also speaks of the pearl as having its origin in a dew-drop, and refers to St. Isidore of Seville as his authority, who, he says, was well informed in such matters:

“Ca assi lo diz Sant Esidro que sopo la materia.”

Another type of Christ is the Indian stone (*λίθος ἰνδικός*), which was supposed to cure dropsy by absorbing morbid humours and serous fluids in the body; “so, too, Christ heals us who are spiritually dropsical, having the waters of the devil collected in our hearts.” There is also an Indian stone called *eutokios* or birth-easing, which is round like a nut and rings like a bell. When the female vulture is with young, she sits on this stone, as soon as she begins to feel the pangs of parturition, and its virtue is such as to enable her to bring forth without the pains of travail. In like manner Christ was born of the Virgin unbegotten and without suffering. And as the *eutokios* is hollow and has within it another stone, which gives out a pleasant sound, so the Godhead of our Lord was hidden in His body and yet made itself [49] manifest. In this connection the expositor quotes several passages of the Scriptures, such as Matthew xxi. 42, and Isaiah xxvi. 18, which do not bear the slightest relevancy to the doctrine he wishes to enforce.

What the *Physiologus* relates of the vulture is reported by Pliny of the eagle, and the stone is called *aëtites* or eagle-stone, and is said to have been found frequently in the aerie of the king of birds. We may add that in the mediæval Waldensian bestiary a more edifying interpretation of the fable is given, which is explained as symbolizing the help of the Holy Spirit in bringing forth good works.

It is a noteworthy mark of ignorance that both Pliny and the *Physiologus* speak of these accipitrine birds as though they were viviparous instead of oviparous animals, and were to be classed with mammals rather than with fowls.

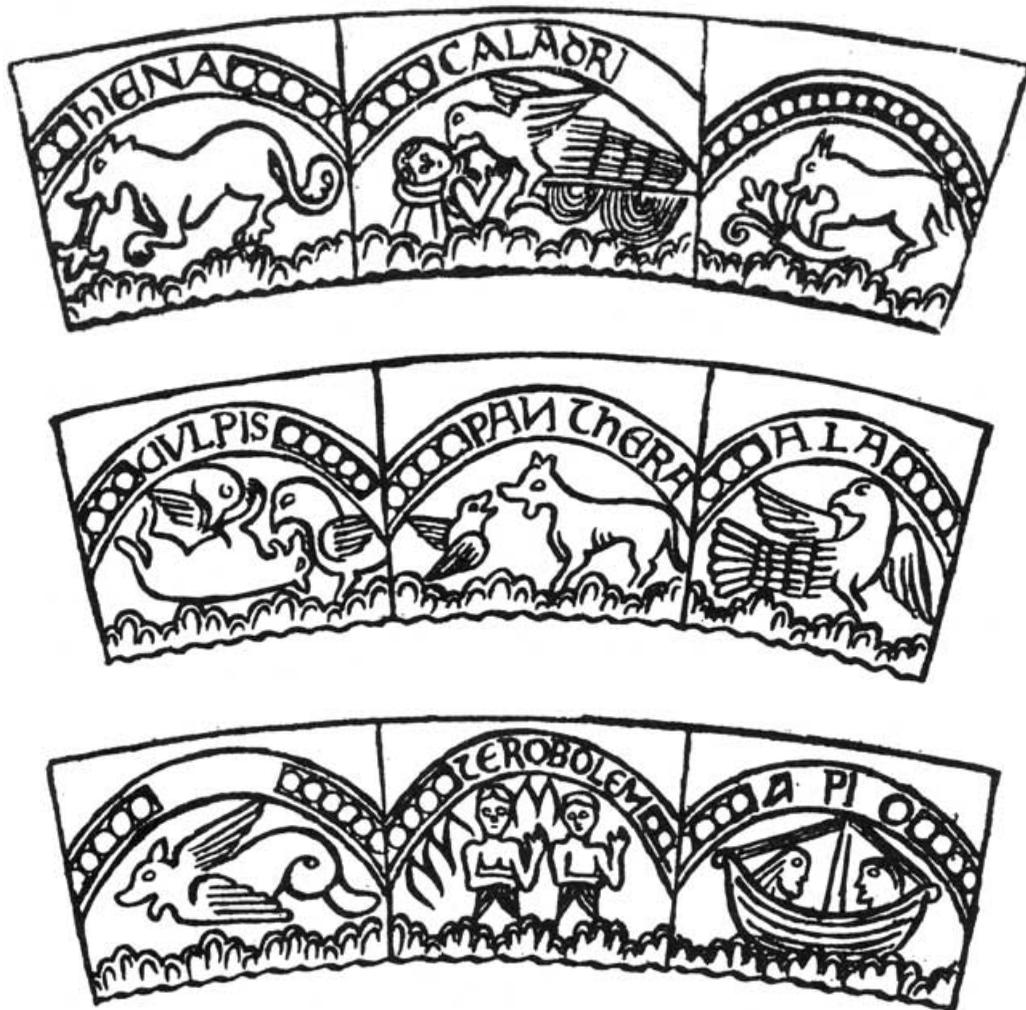
Among fabulous stones the so-called *terrobuli*, more properly *pyroboli* (*πυροβόλοι λίθοι*) or firestones, play a very prominent part in Christian symbolism and art. They are said to be found on a certain mountain of the Orient, and to be male and female. So long as they are far apart there is no perceptible heat in them, but if they are brought near to each other, fierce flames burst forth and the whole mountain is set on fire. Then comes the moralization designed to inculcate the virtue of monasticism. “Therefore, ye men of God, who would lead a pure life, separate yourselves [50] far from women, in order that the fires of lust may not be kindled in your hearts; for these carnal passions are emissaries of Satan, sent to assail not only holy men, but also chaste women.” Adam, Joseph, Samson, Solomon, Eve, and Susanna are then adduced as examples of the wiles and witchery of women.



Terrobuli. (*Bestiary*.)

The *terrobuli* are usually represented in art as the naked or scantily-draped figures of a man

and a woman, often in the rude form of a hermes, standing near each other and enveloped in flames. They occur in miniature illustrations of mediæval bestiaries, as for example in a manuscript of the tenth century in the Arsenal Library, and one of the thirteenth century in the National Library of Paris, and a third of the fourteenth century in the Royal Library of Brussels. Representations of them in ecclesiastical architecture are comparatively rare; there is, however, a fine specimen of the terrobuli sculptured on [51] one of the voussoirs or arch-stones over the south entrance to an old Norman church at Alne in Yorkshire.



Sculpture on arch of doorway of old Norman church at Alne.

## CHAPTER II

### ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF THE 'PHYSIOLOGUS'

[52] Plastic and pictorial representations of animals in Christian art—Literary sources of these representations—*Clavis* of St. Melito—Epistle of Barnabas—The *Physiologus* compiled by an Alexandrian Greek—The *Hexahemera* of the Fathers—Adam as the author of a natural history—Popular character of the *Physiologus*—Origen as an exegetist—Roger Bacon's views of the place of animals in Scripture—Expositions and amplifications of the *Physiologus* by Epiphanius, St. Isidore, Petrus Damiani, and others—Anastasius Sinaita's *Anagogical Contemplation*—Latin poem on beasts and their mystical meaning by Theobald of Plaisance, and the English paraphrase—The *Physiologus* translated into Latin, Ethiopic, Arabic, Armenian, Syriac, Anglo-Saxon, Icelandic, and all the principal modern languages of Europe—Brief descriptions of these versions—Prudentius' poems *Hamartigenia* and *Psychomachia*—The phoenix, a symbol of solar worship used to illustrate the Christian doctrine of the Resurrection—French bestiaries: Philippe de Thaur's *Le Livre des Créatures*, Peter of Picardy's prose version of the *Physiologus*, and *Le Bestiaire Divin* of William, a priest of Normandy—Encyclopædias of natural history based on the *Physiologus*: Thomas de Cantimpré's *Liber de Naturis Rerum*, the *Speculum Naturale* of Vincent de Beauvais, *Liber de Proprietatibus Rerum* of Bartholomæus Anglicus, *Hortus Deliciarum* of Herrade de Landsberg, and other compilations—The church edifice an emblem of the human soul—Symbolism of the raven and the dove—Albertus Magnus' criticism of the *Physiologus*.

[53] STILL more important than the emblematic significance of precious stones is the place assigned to animals in physico-theology. Christian art, from the fourth century, furnishes numerous examples of this sort of symbolism, as may be seen in the oldest churches of Rome and Ravenna, and in the remains of early sacred monuments now preserved in the Museum of the Lateran and in similar archæological collections.

The literary sources, however, from which the conceptions embodied in these plastic and pictorial representations were derived, are of much earlier date. A celebrated work of this kind was the *Clavis* of St. Melito, Bishop of Sardis in Asia Minor, who lived in the latter half of the second century, under the reign of Marcus Aurelius. It was written in Greek, but now exists only in a Latin translation, or rather a Latin revision and redigest of the original, since the text published by Pitra in his *Spicilegium Solesmense* is unquestionably a mere re-hash of the bishop's book, dating probably from the eleventh century.

Still earlier is the epistle ascribed to Barnabas, which, although not composed by him, belongs probably to the latter half of the first century. The ninth chapter of this curious allegorization of the Jewish ceremonial contains a list of the unclean beasts enumerated in the Levitical law (Deut. xiv.), with an explanation of their spiritual significance. The chief purpose of the apocryphal epistle was to counteract the Judaizing tendency [54] in primitive Christianity, and to this end the author endeavoured to resolve the legal and ritual prescriptions of the Old Testament into mere prefigurations and prophecies of Christian doctrines and institutions, and thus virtually abolished them by spiritualizing them. Judaism is thereby reduced to a foreshadowing

symbolism of the new religion, by which it is destined to be superseded and ultimately set aside.

The most complete and systematic, as well as the most popular and probably the oldest, of this class of exegetical expositions is the *Physiologus* or “Naturalist,” as we would call it, which was compiled by an Alexandrian Greek from a great variety of sources, and doubtless embodied much of the priestly wisdom and esoteric science of ancient Egypt. The early Christian apologists and hermeneutists seem to have been extraordinarily fond of this kind of literature, which served their purpose as an application of the supposed facts of natural history to the illustration and enforcement of moral precepts and theological dogmas. In their frequent references to this work they evidently assume a general knowledge of it on the part of their readers, and it is probable that the *Physiologus* in its present form is made up of fragments of several books of a similar character, which were not only used as textbooks in schools, but were intended for the edification of old and young, and were therefore more simple and attractive in style than the heavy *Hexahemera* or expositions of the six days’ work [55] of creation, in which Papias, Justin the Martyr, St. Theophilus, St. Basil of Cesarea, Eustathius, and other patristic theologians delighted to display their ponderous and perverse erudition. In these elaborate commentaries the fable often serves as the text for a sermon, or suggests the theme of a dissertation. Thus in the *Hexahemeron* of Ambrosius the story of the copulation of the viper with the lamprey furnishes the subject of a treatise on conjugal love. In like manner the crow is chosen as the type and pattern of hospitality, the stork is an example of filial piety, the swallow of maternal care and domestic content even in poverty, while the fish, which devour each other, are emblems of greediness.<sup>1</sup>

The Jews claim to have had a natural history by [56] Adam, who as the man first created and especially commissioned by God to give to the animals names corresponding to their qualities, was supposed to have been intimately acquainted with them, and might therefore be regarded as an original and infallible authority on the subject.

The fact that the *Physiologus* is usually cited in the singular number (*ὁ Φυσιολόγος*) has been thought to imply that the work was the production of a single author; but this inference is wholly unwarranted, since the word may be used generically to denote naturalists as a class. Indeed, some of the Fathers use the plural form, as, for example,

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<sup>1</sup> According to Luther the wisdom of the Magi was of this kind. In his sermon on Matthew ii. i-12, he says: “Denn die hohen Schulen rühmen sich auch wie sie die natürliche Kunst lehren, die sie nennen Philosophia, und lehren doch nicht Affenspiel, sondern vergiftig Irrthum und eitel Traum. Denn natürliche Kunst, die vorzeiten Magia hiess, and jetzt Physiologia, ist die, so man lernet der Natur Kräfte und Werk erkennen; als dass ein Hirsch die Schlangen mit seinem Athem durch die Nasen aus der Steinritzen reisst and tödet und frisset, und darnach vor grosser Hitze der Gift nach einem frischen Born dürstet, wie solches der 42 Ps. V. 2 anzeigt. Item, wie ein Wiesel die Schlange heraus-locket, wenn es vor der Schlangen Loch wiebelt mit seinem Schwänzlein, und dann die Schlange erzürnet heraus kreucht so lauret das Wieslein oben über dem Loche, und die Schlange über sich siehet nach ihrem Feind, so schlägt das Wieslein seine Zähne der Schlangen in den Hals neben die Vergift und erwürgt also seinen Feind in seinem eigenen Loche. In solchen Künsten haben die Magier studiret.”

Epiphanius in his commentary on the injunction “Be ye, therefore, wise as serpents,” cited in his *Panarion* or “Bread Basket,” a description and refutation of the heresies of his time, in which he quotes what the Physiologists say (ὡς φασιν οἱ φυσιολόγοι) concerning the habits of this sagacious reptile.

The Physiologus may therefore be regarded as a convenient compendium of current opinions and ancient traditions touching the characteristics of animals and plants, which served as a manual of instruction in zoölogy and botany with moral reflections, so as to include also the province of ethics. In the hands of Christian teachers it was made wholly subordinate to hermeneutical and homiletical purposes, and became a mere treatise on theology, interspersed with pious exhortation. Whether the statements it contained were authentic [57] or not was something which the expositor did not bother himself about. It was not for him to question the assertion of the naturalist, but to accept it as one accepts an apologue for the sake of the lesson it teaches, without any thought of the actuality or probability of the occurrence. Indeed, St. Basil expressly declares it to be a matter of less moment to ascertain whether such creatures as griffins and unicorns really exist, than to discover what religious tenets they inculcate and confirm; and St. Augustine affirms that it is not for us to find out whether these marvellous stories are true or false, but rather to give heed to their spiritual significance. Thus he says, as regards the statement that the eagle breaks off its beak against a stone when it gets too long: “Sive illa vera sunt quæ dicuntur de aquila, sive sit fama potius hominum quam verit, veritas est tamen in scripturis, et non sine causa hoc dixerunt scripturæ. Nos quidquid illud significat faciamus et quam sit verum non laboremus.”—*In Psal. CII.*

Origen was inclined to treat in a similar manner all the events recorded in the Old Testament, regarding them, not as historical facts, but as religious types and symbols. Thus he characterizes the idyl of Rebecca as “not a relation of actual occurrences, but a concoction of mysteries.” This “adamantine” expositor and “Father of biblical exegesis,” as he has been called, appears in his youthful ardour and enthusiasm to have interpreted the words of Holy Writ with strict and uncompromising [58] literalness, and to have practised its teachings in this spirit with a blind fanaticism that is said to have led to self-mutilation for the sake of the kingdom of heaven (Matt. xix. 12). The cooling of his ascetic zeal and the consequent repentance of his rash act naturally produced in his mind a powerful reaction against the bondage of the letter of the Scriptures in favour of a spiritual and symbolical system of exegesis, of which he became the most ingenious and daring exponent.

The same views were expressed by the most eminent and sober-minded physicist of the middle ages, the Franciscan friar Roger Bacon, who, in his *Opus Majus* (ed. Jebb, p. 39), remarks: “All ancient saints and sages gather in their expositions the literal sense from the nature and properties of things, in order that they may educe therefrom the spiritual sense by suitable adaptations and similitudes. Thus Augustine in quoting the admonition ‘Be wise as serpents,’ says that our Lord meant by these words that as the serpent exposes its whole body for the protection of its head, so the apostles were to suffer persecution for the sake of Christ, who is their head. Every creature, individually

and generically, from the heights of heaven to the end of the same, has its place in Scripture (*'ponitur in scriptura'*). The former are facts in nature designed to illustrate the truths contained in the latter; and the words of revelation bring out these truths more clearly and correctly than any philosophic toil can do." [59]

According to this theory, which still represents the official attitude of the Catholic Church and of many orthodox divines among Protestants, there is a sort of pre-established harmony between science and theology, which can be disturbed only by the aberrations of "science falsely so called." True science, on the contrary, does not aspire to any higher position than that of a handmaid to theology, and should never forget her essentially servile and ancillary functions, or think of questioning the supreme and infallible authority of her mistress, however arrogantly it may be exercised.

Towards the end of the fourth century, the bigoted polemic and bitter persecutor of Origen's disciples, Epiphanius, Bishop of Constantia in Cyprus, is said to have written an exposition of the *Physiologus* in twenty-six chapters, and a work of this kind attributed to him was printed about the middle of the sixteenth century by the learned Augustine friar and famous poet Ponce de Leon. The same subject was treated early in the seventh century by St. Isidore, Bishop of Seville, in his great work on etymology (*Originum seu etymologiarum*, lib. xx.), which became the popular encyclopædia of the middle ages, and the chief source from which the authors of the numerous mediæval bestiaries derived their information. The twelfth book treats of beasts, quadrupeds, birds, reptiles, and insects; the sixteenth of precious stones, and the seventh of plants. In this survey of the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms the author generally confines [60] himself to statements of what was regarded in his day as the facts of natural history; the mystical and moral application of these things was made by his younger contemporary, St. Hildefonse, Bishop of Toledo, who discusses at considerable length their spiritual significance.

Petrus Damiani, Abbot of Fonte Avellana and Cardinal-Bishop of Ostia, wrote in the eleventh century a treatise on the excellence of the monastic state as exemplified by divers living creatures (*De bono religiosi status et variarum animantium*), mentioning about forty marine and terrestrial animals, from the oyster to the elephant, and adducing their real or fabulous qualities in illustration of the desirableness of a cenobitic life. About the year 1215 an Englishman, Alexander Neckam, composed a volume "On the Nature of Things" (*De Naturis Rerum*), in which he discoursed of animals from ethical and doctrinal points of view. In 1498 there was published at Cologne a duodecimo entitled "Dialogue of Creatures excellently moralized and applicable to every Moral Matter in a pleasing and edifying manner, to the Praise of God and the Edification of Men" (*Dyalogus creaturarum optime moralisatus omni materie moralo iocundo et edificativo modo applicabilis, ad laudem Dei et hominum edificationem*). It contains a hundred and twenty two dialogues, some in the style of Æsop's fables, and others modelled after the *Physiologus*, with coarse woodcuts in elucidation of the text, and is altogether a pretentious but rather inferior production. [61] Anastasius Sinaita, a monk of the famous cloister on Mount Sinai, wrote during the latter half of the seventh century

his elaborate “Anagogical Contemplations on the Six Days’ Divine Work” in eleven books (*Anagogicarum contemplationum in divini opificii Hexaëmeron*), in which this sort of hermeneutic theology is pushed to the absurdest conclusions. The author's endeavour, as he states it, is “to thresh the ears of Scripture in order to get out the pure kernel, which is Christ.” In other words, his work is a contribution to that “science of mystic Christology” which the early Church so assiduously cultivated, and of which Bishop Alexander in his Bampton Lectures deplores the decline. As regards the story of Eden, Anastasius remarks “Woe be to us if we take it literally, for then we rush constantly from Scylla to Charybdis.” This is quite true, and with the advancement of science and the comparative study of religions it is becoming increasingly difficult to sail with safety on this line between the whirlpool and the rock.

In Beaugendre’s edition of the works of Hildebert of Lavardin, Archbishop of Tours, who lived during the latter half of the eleventh century, is included a Latin poem on beasts and their mystical meaning, composed, as the title states, by Theobald of Plaisance, whoever he may have been. It has been suggested with some degree of probability that he was the Theobald who held the office of abbot of Monte Cassino from 1022 to 1035; there is, however, no confirmation of this conjecture in [62] the manuscripts, where the author is called Theobaldus Senensis Theobaldus Placentinus episcopus, or simply Theobaldus Italicus.

This version of the *Physiologus* was exceedingly popular in the middle ages, as is evident from the many manuscripts in which it has been transmitted to us, and from the number of annotated editions of it which were printed during the fifteenth century. It was published in 1872 by Dr. Richard Morris from a Harleian manuscript (Early English Text Society, vol. xlix., Appendix I., pp. 201-209). The English bestiary printed in the same volume (pp. 1-25) from a manuscript of the thirteenth century, belonging to the library of the British Museum, is a free translation of Theobald’s work. It was first edited by Wright (Haupt and Hoffmann’s *Altdeutsche Blätter*, ii., and Wright and Halliwell’s *Reliquæ Antiquæ*, i.), and is also found in Mätzner’s *Altenglische Sprachproben*, i. Thierfelder mentions in Naumann’s *Serapeum* (1862, Nos. 15 and 16) two metrical versions of the *Physiologus* in Latin as extant in manuscript; one dated 1493 and written in elegiac verse by a certain Florinus, and preserved in the University Library of Leipsic, and the other in Leonine verse by an unknown author, and now in the University Library of Breslau.

Perhaps no book, except the Bible, has ever been so widely diffused among so many peoples and for so many centuries as the *Physiologus*. It has been translated into Latin, Ethiopic, Arabic, Armenian, [63] Syriac, Anglo-Saxon, Icelandic, Spanish, Italian, Provençal, and all the principal dialects of the Germanic and Romanic languages.

One of the oldest and most interesting of these versions is the Ethiopic, which belongs to the first half of the fifth century, and forms, with the translation of the Septuagint, the basis of Ethiopic or Ge’ez literature. It adheres very closely to the original, but contains numerous errors, owing to the translator's imperfect knowledge of Greek. It has been carefully edited from London, Paris, and Vienna manuscripts, with

ample annotations, a German translation, and an admirable introduction by Dr. Fritz Hommel, Professor of Arabic in the University of Munich (Leipsic, 1877). As the work is written in classical Ge'ez, it can be recommended as an excellent text-book for beginners in Ethiopic.

Of a somewhat later date is the Armenian translation, which follows the Greek original in the descriptions of the animals and their habits, but deviates from it considerably in the moralizations and religious applications of their characteristics. It has been published by Pitra in his *Spicilegium Solesmense*, iii., and translated into French by Cahier (Nouveaux Mélanges d'Archéologie, 1874).

The oldest Syriac version, published by Tychsen (*Physiologus Syrus*, Rostock, 1795), is, in the opinion of Dr. Lauchert, "at least as old as the Ethiopic and more important than the Armenian."<sup>2</sup> It gives [64] the natural history of thirty-two animals, each section being introduced by passages of Scripture in which the animal under discussion is mentioned, but without any moral or religious reflections, or any attempt at exegetical exposition. It thus constitutes a sort of biblical beast-book free from hermeneutical tendencies. There are also several later Syriac translations, some of which have been printed, with Latin metaphrases, by Land in his *Anecdota Syriaca*, iv. The Arabic version, edited by Land in his *Otia Syriaca*, iv., observes pretty much the same order as the Greek original, the authorship of which is ascribed by the Arabic translator to Gregory surnamed the Theologian, better known as Gregory of Nazianz. This statement, however, seems to be a personal conjecture or vague tradition of no real value.

The Latin version of the *Physiologus* is first mentioned in the so-called *Decretum Gelasianum* or *Index Prohibitorum* attributed to Pope Gelasius I., and supposed to have been issued by him A.D. 496. In this catalogue of forbidden books it is characterized as *Liber Physiologus, qui ab hæreticis conscriptus est, et beati Ambrosii nomine signatus, apocryphus*. As Ambrosius died A.D. 397, and it is hardly probable that a work which he did not write would be ascribed to him until at least a few years after his death, we are justified in assuming [65] that the Latin *Physiologus* was not composed before the beginning of the fifth century. Professor Friedrich of Munich has shown, in a paper read before the Royal Bavarian Academy of Sciences, Jan. 7, 1888, that the above-mentioned Gelasian Decree was not issued by Pope Gelasius I., but was a private document with no official character whatever, and that it did not exist before A.D. 533. An additional circumstance, which enables us to fix the probable date of the work within still narrower limits, is the fact that in connection with the exposition of the third quality of the ant a list of heretics is given whose teachings are to be avoided, but among them Nestorius, whose doctrine was condemned by the third Ecumenical Council at Ephesus, A.D. 431, is not mentioned. As so prominent a heretic would not have been passed over, we may fitly infer that this Latin version was made before his

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<sup>2</sup> *Geschichte des Physiologus*, von Dr. Friedrich Lauchert. Strasburg, Trübner, 1889. This is the most complete and critical history of the *Physiologus* hitherto published, and is especially rich in bibliographical information.

condemnation, namely during the first three decades of the fifth century. The existing manuscripts of the Latin *Physiologus* belong to the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries; they do not present a uniform text with variants, and are therefore not copies of the same translation, but rather independent versions, to which each translator has added interpretations of his own; at least they contain expositions not found in any Greek manuscripts now extant. The Latin *Physiologus* has been published by Cahier in his *Mélanges d'Archéologie*, ii.-iv. Another shorter Latin version, known as *Dicta Johannis Chrysostomi de Naturis* [66] *Bestiarum*, has been printed by Heider in *Archiv für die Kunde oesterreichischer Geschichtsquellen*, ii. (1850), from a manuscript of the eleventh century belonging to the cloister of Gottweih. It is simply an abbreviation and re-arrangement of the text edited by Cahier.

Cassiodorus in his commentary on Psalm cii. 6 says, that the holy man loves solitude like the pelican, and withdraws from human society like the nycticorax or night-raven, and tells the old story of the renewal of the eagle's youth in illustration of Psalm ciii. 5. Gregory I., surnamed the Great, was especially fond of symbolisms of this sort, and made very free use of them in his expositions of Job. So, too, in the beginning of the eighth century, Aldhelm, Abbot of Malmesbury, draws illustrations of his parables from the same source, as does also the Venerable Beda, a generation later, in his interpretation of Job xxix. 18, which he renders: "I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days like the phoenix;" the Hebrew word *chul* meaning phoenix as well as sand. It also signifies palm-tree; St. Jerome took it in this sense: "sicut palma multiplicabo dies," and the same interpretation is given in the Septuagint: ὡσπερ στέλεγος φοίγκο πολυν χρονον βίωσω: "like the stem of the palm-tree I shall live a long time."

One of the early Christian poets, Aurelius Clemens Prudentius (A.D. 348-410), in his *Hamartigenia* or Genesis of Sin (v. 518 sqq.), gives a detailed description of the birth of the viper in [67] illustration of his theme. Prudentius is also the author of *Psychomachia*, or the "Battle of the Soul," which is one of the first examples of a purely allegorical poem in Occidental literature, and the model of all similar productions in the middle ages. In the proem we have a characteristic specimen of typological hermeneutics, in which Abraham represents Faith, his three hundred and eighteen servants signify Christ (the Greek numerical letters T (300) I (10) H (8) were for this reason a monogrammatic expression for Christ), the heathen kings of Sodom and Gomorrah are types of carnal vices, and Lot, a sojourner in Sodom, is the soul of the pious man beset by the seductions of the flesh. This interpretation was not original with the Spanish Latin poet, but borrowed from the supposititious Epistle of Barnabas, where in the ninth chapter the following passage occurs: "The scripture saith, 'Abraham circumcised three hundred and eighteen men of his household.'<sup>3</sup> Hear the meaning first of the eighteen, then of the three hundred. The ten and eight are represented, the ten by I, and the eight by H. There thou hast the beginning of the name *IΗΣΟΥΣ*. But because the Cross, in the form of the letter T, was to carry the grace of salvation, therefore he adds three hundred, which is

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<sup>3</sup> This statement is not strictly correct, but is derived from a combination of Gen. xiv. 14 and xvii. 26, 27.

represented by T in Greek. So he shows forth Jesus in the first two letters, and the Cross in the third.” Evidently the Jewish patriarch did not [68] dream of the profound significance which Christian expositors would attach to the simple act of circumcising the members of his tribal family.

A still more elaborate allegorical production of this class is the hexameter poem *De Phœnice*, ascribed to Lactantius, but probably of a somewhat later date. It bears the stamp of paganism rather than of Christianity, the phoenix being glorified as a satellite of the sun and a symbol of solar worship. It begins with a florid description of the home of the phoenix in the remotest region of the East, in a grove consecrated to the sun and situated far above the reach of Phæton’s fire or Deucalion’s deluge, where there is neither disease nor death, and where old age, crime, passion, care, and poverty never come, and storm, rain, and frost are all unknown. In this retreat, which is rendered perpetually fresh and green by a living spring, the phoenix dwells and greets the dawn with a sacred song.<sup>4</sup> The peroration is a rapturous apostrophe to the phoenix: “Oh, bird of happy fortune and fate, to whom the god himself has granted the gift of self-regeneration. Whether male or female, or neither, or both, happy is she who enters into no compact with Venus. Death is Venus to her; her only pleasure is in death; she desires to die that she may be born again. She is her own offspring, her own father and heir, her own mother and nurse, a foster child of herself. She is herself indeed, but not the [69] same, since she is herself and not herself, having gained eternal life by the boon and blessing of death.”<sup>5</sup>

It is easy to see what a prolific source of doctrinal interpretation and illustration the supposed characteristics of this mystic bird would supply to Christian exegetists and homilists. It is well known, too, that the chief features of sun-worship colour the ideas and crop out in the ecclesiastical institutions of Christendom. Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, Whitsuntide, the midsummer feast of St. John, and all the principal holy-days and festivals of the Church are survivals of a solar or stellar cult, and were determined, not by historical facts or traditions, but by astronomical considerations corresponding to the waxing or waning power of the sun, or coinciding with the position of the constellations in the heavens and the influence they were supposed to exert upon the course of the seasons and other sublunary affairs. Constantine remained a sun-worshipper till the day of his death, and the coins of early Christian emperors were often stamped with the image of the phœnix as an emblem of this ancient and once universal cult.

An Anglo-Saxon paraphrase of this poem, supposed to have been made by Cynewulf, has been published by Thorpe (*Codex Exoniensis*, pp. 197-242), together with the Latin text, and also by Grein (*Bibliothek der angelsächsischen Poesie*, i. 215-233). The first part is a description of the phœnix, and [70] the second part an application of its fabulous qualities to the Christian doctrine of the Resurrection.

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<sup>4</sup> For a full analysis of the poem see Adolf Ebert’s *Geschichte der Christlich-Lateinischen Literatur*, i. 95.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Lactantius, *Opera*, ii. 214-219.

It was from the Latin *Physiologus* that all the translations of the work existing in the vulgar tongues of Europe were made. Thus it became the common property of the people; its similitudes were no longer confined to hermeneutic theology, but passed into general literature, and into ecclesiastical architecture. The oldest of these versions is the Anglo-Saxon, which dates from the end of the eighth century. It has been edited by Thorpe with an English translation (*Codex Exoniensis*, pp. 355-367), and by Grein (*Bibl. der angels. Poesie*, i. 233-238); and although only a fragment of it has been preserved, enough remains to show that it must have been superior to all other versions in poetic beauty and compact vigour of expression.

There are two German versions of the *Physiologus*, belonging respectively to the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The older one is a fragment, and has been printed several times from a Vienna manuscript, best perhaps by Müllenhoff and Scherer (*Denkmäler*, No. 81); the other is complete, and has been printed last by Lauchert in the Appendix to his *Geschichte des Physiologus*, pp. 280-299. Both versions correspond to the *Dicta* of Chrysostom with only slight variations.

The Icelandic version, which has been transmitted to us in a very fragmentary condition, dates from the beginning of the thirteenth century, and follows the Latin text with occasional additions [71] and deviations. It was edited in 1877 by Mœbius (*Analecta Norrœna*, pp. 246-251), who also gave a German translation of it in Hommel's *Ethiopic Physiologus*, pp. 99-104; but the most complete text of these fragments has been printed, together with the crude and quaint drawings illustrating the original manuscripts, by Verner Dahlerup, in his exhaustive critical bibliography of the *Physiologus*, which appeared in *Aarboger for Nordisk Oldkyndighed og Historie udgivene of Det kogelige Nordiske Oldskrift-Selskab* in 1889 (ii. 4, 3, 199-290).

The French bestiaries are also based upon the *Physiologus*, but have been greatly amplified, not so much by the introduction of other animals, as by fuller descriptions and more extended expositions. The oldest of these productions is the Anglo-Norman *Le Livre des Créatures*, by Philippe de Thaun, written about the year 1121 and dedicated to Queen Adelheid of Louvaine, and doubtless intended to celebrate her nuptials with Henry I. of England, which took place at this time. It has been published from a manuscript in the British Museum, with an English translation by Wright in his *Popular Treatises on Science during the Middle Ages*. Another French translation in prose was made by a priest, Peter of Picardy, who states that he undertook the task at the request of Philippe de Dreux, Bishop of Beauvais (1175—1217), an item of information which enables us to assign the work approximately to the end of the twelfth century. The translator adds that the [72] Bishop, having little confidence in the fidelity of poetic versions, wished him to avoid metre in order to adhere as closely as possible to "the Latin which Physiologus, one of the good clerks of Athens, has used." It has been published by Cahier in his *Mélanges d'Archéologie*, ii.-iv. About the same time, or perhaps a little later, William, a priest of Normandy, wrote *Le Bestiaire Divin* in rhyme. Inasmuch as the author refers twice to the interdict which Pope Innocent III. laid upon England, "at the time when Philippe reigned in France," as still in force, the poem must

have been written between 1208 and 1212. It has been published by Cahier (*ibid.*), by Hippeau (*Le Bestiaire Divin de Guillaume, clerc de Normandie*, Caen, 1852), and lastly and most satisfactorily by Reisch (Leipsic, 1890).

There is also a Greek metrical version of the *Physiologus* in two manuscripts of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, both of which are in Paris. It is probably a production of the twelfth century, and has been printed by Lefrange (*Le Physiologus en grec vulgaire et en vers politiques*, Paris, 1873) The fragment of a Spanish *Physiologus* of the fourteenth century has been published under the title *Libro de los Gatos*, from a manuscript of the National Library of Madrid by Pascual de Gayangos, in his collection of prose writers anterior to the fifteenth century (*Biblioteca de Autores Espanoles*, lii., Madrid, 1859) We have also the somewhat scanty remains of a Rumanian version, supposed to belong to the sixteenth century, although the [73] only manuscript of it extant bears the date 1717. It has been printed with an Italian translation by Gaster (*Archivio Glottologico Italian*, x.). Lauchert mentions a Waldensian *Physiologus* existing in a single Dublin manuscript, and entitled *De las Proprietas de las Animanças*. The author calls himself Jaco, and states in the introduction that the book is designed for use as a manual of instruction, and in accordance with this purpose, the exposition is ethical rather than theological, and aims to inculcate, not so much soundness of doctrine as correct moral conduct in the common relations of life.

Barth has edited from a Paris manuscript in his *Chrestomathie Provençale* some excerpts of a Provençal *Physiologus* under the title *Aiso son las Naturas d'alcus Auzels e d'alcunas Bestias*, treating of the nature of birds and beasts, but with no attempt at exposition of any kind. There is also a bestiary in the Tusco-Venetian dialect, recently published and annotated by Max Goldstaub and Richard Wendorfer (Halle, 1892) from a manuscript in the Biblioteca Comunale of Padua. It discusses some forty beasts, several of which (as the horse) are not mentioned in the *Physiologus*, and explains their qualities in a moral rather than in a dogmatic sense. Thus the unicorn is a symbol of violent and cruel persons, who can be subdued and rendered gentle only by the grace of God. Saul is adduced as an example of this sort of person. The Biblioteca Ricciardiana and the [74] Biblioteca Laurenziana of Florence, as well as other Italian libraries, contain numerous codices of bestiaries which have never been printed.

Besides being so frequently translated, the *Physiologus* is constantly cited by mediæval writers, and forms the basis of many bulky tomes, such as Thomas de Cantimpré's *Liber de Naturis Rerum*, written between 1233 and 1248. This work was one of the earliest and most celebrated encyclopædias of natural history, and was freely translated into Dutch about 1280 by Jacob van Maerlant, under the title *Der Naturen Bloeme*, and in 1350 into German by Konrad von Megenberg as *Das Buch der Natur*. Like in character, and hardly less important, are the *Speculum Naturale* of Vincent de Beauvais, completed about 1250, the *Liber de Proprietatibus Rerum* of Bartholomæus Anglicus, dating from the latter half of the thirteenth century, Brunetto Latino's *Li Tresors*, the French translation of a Latin original belonging to the same period, the *Acerba*, a didactic poem by Cecco d'Ascoli, who was burned at the stake in 1327, and

other volumes, which treated in a popular style of the occult properties and symbolical significance of birds, beasts, plants, and stones.

An elaborate compilation of this kind was the *Hortus Deliciarum* of Herrade de Landsberg, Abbess of St. Odile, who turned the facts and fables of natural science into the channel of moral instruction and religious edification. It was written during the latter half of the twelfth century, and preserved [75] in a unique vellum manuscript of 648 folio pages, with numerous illuminations and miniatures, in the Strasburg Library, where it perished, with so many other literary and artistic treasures, during the bombardment of that city by the Germans in 1870.

There was also a treatise on beasts and other things (*Institutions Monasticæ de Bestiis et aliis Rebus*), commonly, though in all probability falsely, ascribed to Hugo de Saint-Victor, in which these symbolisms were wonderfully wrought out, and every feature, member, hue, and habit of the creatures thus allegorized was made to yield a secret and subtle significance. "What Holy Writ inculcates on the learned," says the author of this work in reference to the pictorial representations of such ideas, "pictures impress upon the ignorant; for as the scholar delights in the subtlety of Scripture, so the soul of the simple is pleased with the simplicity of pictures." But this simplicity was often lost in a puzzling maze and winding labyrinth of allegorical and mystical interpretation, which it would be impossible for the wayfaring man, even though he were not a fool, to thread without the *Physiologus* or some later elaboration of it as a clue. Indeed, without such guidance it would be equally difficult for us at the present day to understand what the builder of a mediæval church or an embroiderer of sacerdotal vestments meant by adorning them with seemingly incongruous representations of lions, eagles, phoenixes, pelicans, ravens, doves, partridges, panthers, harts, foxes, hedgehogs, [76] ferrets, ichneumons, lizards, serpents, tortoises, whales, elephants, ibises, crocodiles, unicorns, salamanders, and other real and mythical animals, or to conjecture what conceivable relation they could bear to Christian theology or Christian worship.

The sacred edifice as a whole was regarded as an emblem of the human soul, of which the creatures carved on the pillars and portals were the desirable or undesirable attributes and affections. Thus an ox typified patience and gentleness, a lion sternness and majesty, a turtle-dove constancy and chastity, a ram spiritual leadership, a lily purity, and a rose martyrdom. We have a modern survival of this symbolism in Gabriel Max's celebrated painting, *The Last Greeting*, in which a rose falls to the feet of a young woman as she stands exposed to wild beasts in the amphitheatre.

So, too, the raven and the dove are not mere reminiscences of the Deluge, but emblems—the former of the carnal-minded Jews, who live on the carrion of the Law, the latter of the new principle of Christianity, that finds no abiding-place outside of the ark of safety, but returns to it bringing the olive branch of peace and reconciliation. There is also a distinction between the dove of Noah, the dove of David, and the dove of Christ; the first signifies rest, the second peace, and the third salvation. As the dove separates with its beak the choicest kernels of wheat from the chaff, so it is the office of the preacher to separate the pure grain of Christian doctrine from the husks of [77]

Judaism. Its two wings are love of man and love of God, compassion and contemplation, the active and the meditative life; the ring round its neck is the encircling sweetness of the Divine Word; the gold and silver of its plumage are the precious treasures of purity and innocence; its whiteness intermingled with changeable tints is the spirit of chastity in conflict with fickle and rebellious passions; its red feet are the feet of the Church stained with the blood of the martyrs; its two eyes survey the past and discern the future, looking in upon the soul and up to God; their yellowish lustre indicates maturity of thought and reflection, for yellow is the colour of ripe fruit.

In the middle ages these symbolisms, which seem to us so far-fetched and obscure, were constantly referred to in sermons and in sacred and profane literature, as well as in common discourse, and appear, therefore, to have been generally understood, so that a passing allusion to them in a book or address was assumed to be intelligible without further comment. Thus we find in a Latin poem published by Du Meril in his *Poésies populaires latines antérieures au XII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, p. 191, a line in which Christ is said to have been put to death by owls—

“Christus a noctuis datur supplicio.”

This is, however, a figurative expression for the Jews, who, in the *Physiologus*, are compared to the nycticorax, night-raven or owl, which cannot endure the presence of the sun, as the Jews could [78] not endure the coming of “the dayspring from on high,” and the brightness of the sun of righteousness, loving darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. Thus we read in the *Bestiaire Divin* of Guillaume—

“En cest oisel sunt figuré  
Li fols Gieu maléuré,  
Qui ne voldrent Deu entendre  
Quant it vint ça per nus raendre,  
De Deu, qui est verrai soleil,  
Ne voleient creire le conseil.”

About the middle of the thirteenth century Albertus Magnus wrote a book on animals (*De Animalibus*), in which he attempted some criticism of the *Physiologus*, but the narrations he accepts as true are for the most part quite as incredible and absurd as those he rejects, so that it is difficult to determine by what criterion he tests their authenticity. Thus, for example, he is sceptical as regards the self-mutilation of the beaver when pursued by hunters, but puts implicit faith in the fable of the unicorn and the virgin.

With the translation of the *Physiologus* into the vulgar tongues of Europe it ceased to be the exclusive possession of theologians and exegetists, and was no longer confined to the purposes of homiletical and hermeneutical illustration, but became the common property of the people, and passed into the general literature of Christendom as an inexhaustible source of quaint and often forced metaphor, and sometimes apt, though more frequently lame and lopsided, simile. [79]

Allusions to it occur henceforth not only in sermons and sacred songs, in devotional works and doctrinal treatises, and in the encyclopædic compilations of natural science, which professed to give information “concerning all things and some things besides”

*(de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis)*, but also in the secular, and especially the erotic poetry of the period. Indeed, without a knowledge of the *Physiologus*, these allusions would be wholly unintelligible. The citations contained in Lauchert's exhaustive chapter on this subject (pp. 185-207) suffice to show how widely extended and wellnigh universal was the popularity which the work enjoyed.

## CHAPTER III

### THE 'PHYSIOLOGUS' IN ART AND LITERATURE

[80] The three characteristics of the lion—Representations of the lion as a symbol of the Resurrection in architecture—Beasts often have a twofold signification—The lion and bear as types of Satan—Diabolification of the dog—Strange misconception of the canine character—Lions as pedestals—Metaphorical use of the lion in poetry—The lizard in architecture—Artistic delineations of the unicorn as a type of Christ's Incarnation—Auricular conception of Christ as the Logos—Supposed anti-toxical virtue of the unicorn's horn and that of the African viper—The unicorn in legend and poetry—Characteristics of the elephant—Symbol of the fall of man—Julius Cæsar's queer account of the elk—Elephants embroidered on chasubles—Four characteristics of the serpent—Artistic and poetic uses of its fabled attributes—The eagle as a symbol of spiritual aspiration and baptismal regeneration—Allusions to it by Dante and other poets—The fish in sacred iconology—Significance of the whale in ecclesiastical architecture—Symbolism of the remora and serra—Importance of the phoenix and the pelican as emblems of Christian doctrine—Their prominent place in Church architecture—Import of the fabulous exploits of the otter and the ichneumon—Panther and dragon typical of Christ and Belial—Healing power of the "heavenly panther"—Lesson of self-renunciation taught by the beaver—Characteristic of the hyena—Symbolism of the salamander—The partridge a type of the devil—Examples of the charadrius in art—Mystical meaning of the crow, turtle-dove, ousel, merl, fulica, and hoopoe—Curious statement of Luther concerning swallows—Why God [81] feeds the young ravens—Peculiarities of the wolf—The *Physiologus* condemned as heretical—Freely used by Gregory the Great in his scriptural exposition—Virtues and vices portrayed as women mounted on various animals—Disputatious scholastics satirized—Tetramorph —Gospel mills—The ark of the covenant as the triumphal chariot of the Cross—Cock and clergy—Origin of the basilisk and its significance—Its prominence in religious symbology and sacred architecture—Cautious scepticism of Albertus Magnus—The *Physiologus* from a psycho- logical point of view, as illustrating the credulity of the Fathers of the Church—Why "the hart panteth after the water-brooks"—Story of the antelope—Barnacle geese —"Credo quia absurdum"—Modern counterparts of early Christian apologists and exegetists.

THE *Physiologus* begins with the lion, and adduces three characteristics of the king of beasts. "First, when he perceives that the hunters are pursuing him, he erases his foot-prints with his tail, so that he cannot be traced to his lair. In like manner our Saviour, the lion of the tribe of Judah, concealed all traces of His Godhead, when He descended to the earth and entered into the womb of the Virgin Mary. Secondly, the lion always sleeps with his eyes open; so our Lord slept with His body on the Cross, but awoke at the right hand of the Father. Thirdly, the lioness brings forth her whelps dead and watches over them until, after three days, the lion comes and howls over them and vivifies them by his breath; so the Almighty Father recalled to life His only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who on the third day was thus raised from the dead, and will likewise raise us all up to eternal life."

[82] This comparison of the risen Christ to a lion's whelp is also used by Abélard in the following lines—

“Ut leonis catulus  
Resurrexit Dominus,  
Quem rugitus patrius  
Die tertia  
Suscitavit vivificus  
Teste physica.”

The appeal of the illustrious schoolman to physics in proof of his statement is clearly a reference to the *Physiologus*.

This last supposed characteristic of the lion appears to have been a favourite symbol of the resurrection of Christ as well as of the general resurrection, and holds a prominent place in mediæval architecture. Representations of it are frequently found in



Relief of a Lion. (*Munich*)

various parts of ecclesiastical edifices, as, for example, on the principal portal of St. Laurence in Nuremberg, in the choir of Augsburg Cathedral, at the foot of a colossal [83] crucifix in St. Nicholas of Stralsund, in the Würtemberg cloisters Maulbronn and Bebenhausen, and in a large relief, which dates from the latter half of the thirteenth century, and doubtless belonged originally to some church or cloister, probably to the old chapel and hospital of the Holy Ghost (built 1251-66 and burned 1327), but which now adorns the façade of a house Im Thal near the Marienplatz in Munich, and the origin and signification of which have excited no little discussion among Bavarian antiquarians and ecclesiologists. So, too, a stained window of the minster of Freiburg in the Breisgau contains a painting of the Crucifixion, at the top of which is a pelican feeding its young with its own blood; above the pelican stands a lion breathing upon three whelps, which are just beginning to show signs of life. Underneath the lion is the inscription: *Hi[c] Leo Forma S[alvatoris]*, showing it to be a type of the quickening power of the voice of Christ. A stained window of the thirteenth century in the cathedral of St. Etienne at Bourges represents the pelican below on the left and the lion and

whelps on the right of the Crucified; above, on the corresponding sides, are Jonah delivered from the whale and Elijah restoring to life the son of the widow of Zerephath (see Frontispiece). In the central lancet window of the chapels dedicated to the Virgin in the cathedrals of Le Mans and Tours are similar symbols of the death and resurrection of Christ, in which the phoenix rising from its ashes takes [84] the place of the pelican. Also the central lancet window in the apsis of the cathedral of Lyons has a border of medallion paintings referring to the same subject, among which are a lion and his whelp running at full speed, the latter having evidently been just resuscitated. It was often carved on sacramental vessels, as, for example, on a ciborium belonging to the monastery Klosterneuburg, near Vienna, a fine specimen of goldsmith's work dating from the beginning of the fourteenth century.



Lion howling over his whelps (*Strasburg Minster.*).

A lion howling over three whelps is one of the series of reliefs representing biblical and mythical subjects that ornament a frieze on the exterior of Strasburg Minster. Besides scenes from the Jewish Scriptures, such as Abraham preparing to sacrifice Isaac, but arrested by an angel, who points to a ram entangled in a bush, Jonah cast up by the whale near one of the towers of Nineveh, the brazen serpent, etc., we may mention in this connection several reliefs which are based upon the legends of the *Physiologus*, and the meaning of which will be explained hereafter: a phoenix in the flames, a pelican piercing her breast and feeding her young with her blood, an eagle taking eaglets from the nest to make them look at the sun, and a unicorn with its head in the lap of a virgin, while a man is thrusting a spear into its [85] side. This last sculpture resembles very closely the illustration from the bestiary which we have given in discussing the symbolism of the unicorn.

In connection with scenes from the life of Christ on the bronze doors of the cathedral of Pisa are reliefs of a lion howling over two whelps, an eagle mounting up towards the sun, a unicorn, a hart by a stream of water, a serpent, and an old rhinoceros with two young ones playing in the background, evidently intended to represent the leviathan of the Bible.

At a somewhat later period the lion, as a symbol of the Resurrection, was sculptured on public buildings of a secular character and on private dwellings; it was also engraved on pieces of armour and especially on helmets, often with the legend, *Domine vivifca me secundum verbum tuum*, or some other appropriate device, expressive of the hope of the warrior that, if slain in battle, he might be raised up on the last day.

Durand, in his *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*, lib. vii., has a chapter on the rubric of the Evangelists (*Rubrica de Evangelistis*), in which he says that Mark's type is a roaring lion, "because his aim is chiefly to give a description of the resurrection of Christ, and that for this reason his gospel is read at Easter. For it is stated that the lion

by its tremendous roar calls to life its whelps on the third day, and thus God the Father by His immense power called to life His Son on the third day.” Origen has a similar explanation [86] of this symbolism in his discourse on Genesis.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, the allusions to this zoölogical myth in homiletical and hermeneutical literature are so numerous and unequivocal, and the symbolical interpretation of it so obvious and uniform, that one marvels that Bavarian archæologists should have expended so much rare and recondite erudition and ingenuity of conjecture, and have gone so far afield historically in search of the origin and meaning of the Munich bas-relief already mentioned.

A sleeping lion is often brought into typological relation to the infant Jesus, as, for example, on the western portal of Notre-Dame de Paris, and in a fresco in the church of the convent Philotheos on Mount Athos, where the connection is made clear by the words of Jacob concerning Judah: "He stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?"-Gen. xlix. 9 (Didron, *Histoire de Dieu*, p. 348).

The belief that the lion never closes its eyes in sleep caused this animal to be placed at the doors of churches as a guardian of the sanctuary. This custom, which was observed for the same reason by the ancient Egyptians, is thus referred to by a mediaeval poet—

“Est leo, sed custos, oculis quia dormit apertis  
Templorum idcirco, ponitus ante foras.”

[87] This type of spiritual vigilance is found most frequently in Romanic and early Gothic architecture, from the beginning of the ninth to the end of the thirteenth century. Usually the lions repose on either side of the principal entrance, or stand on pillars in the portico of the edifice, or serve, especially in Italian churches, as pedestals to support the columns of the doorway. Examples of this kind may be seen in the cathedral of Mayence, the oldest churches of Cologne, the so-called Schottenkirche (former church of Scotch Benedictines) in Ratisbon, St. Stephen’s in Vienna, and in various structures of an ecclesiastical character at Ancona, Monza, Padua, Parma, Ravenna, Rome, Siponto, and other Italian cities.

In some instances the same beast may symbolize utterly opposing principles, since it embodies antagonistic qualities.<sup>7</sup> The lion, for example, is not only typical of Christ triumphing over death and hell and loosing the seven seals from the book of life (Rev. v. 5), but also signifies the great adversary, the devil, which, “as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter v. 8). This is the lion from whose mouth the Psalmist prays to be saved (Ps. xxii. 21), and to which St. Augustine refers when he exclaims in his *Sermo de Tempore* (clxxiv.), “who would not [88] rush into the jaws of this lion, if the lion of the tribe of Judah should not prevail! It is lion against lion, and

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<sup>6</sup> “Nam Physiologus de catulo Leonis scribit, quod quum fuerit natus, tribus diebus et tribus noctibus dormiat, quod valde convenientur aptatur in Christo, qui tribus diebus et tribus noctibus in corde terræ sepultus, somnium mortis implevit.”—*In Genesim*, Hom. xvii.

<sup>7</sup> “Secundum regnum ergo Christo adsimilata sunt. Et alia multa sunt in creaturis habentia duplicem intellectum; alia quædam laudabilia, alia vero vituperabilia; et differentiam habent inter se atque discretionem, sive moribus sive naturis.”

lamb against wolf.” The lion of the tribe of Judah is opposed to the devouring lion, and the lamb as the type of the meek and lowly Saviour is opposed to the fierce and insatiable wolf as the type of Satan. Christ, he adds, “is a lion in fortitude, a lamb in innocence; a lion because He is invincible, a lamb because He is meek and gentle.” In another discourse (Hom. xxxiv.) St. Augustine says the devil is impetuous as the lion and insidious as the dragon, raging openly like the former and lying in wait secretly like the latter. In former times the Church fought against the lion as it now fights against the dragon. In Sermo clxxix. the lion and the bear typify the devil, “who is figured in these two beasts, because the bear's strength is in its paw and the lion's in its mouth.” In Sermo cxcvii. he says that as David throttled the lion and the bear, which took a lamb out of the flock, so Jesus Christ, whom David prefigured, throttled the lion and the bear, when He descended into hell and delivered the captive spirits out of their jaws. Thus both these animals are different embodiments of the Protean prince of darkness. On the bronze doors of the cathedral in Hildesheim are reliefs which date from 1015, and represent the history of sin and redemption; in one of them a bear stands behind Pilate, whispering into his ear and filling his mind with diabolical suggestions. The bear as the type [89] of Satan is found less frequently in architecture than in illuminated manuscripts and missals, and in carvings on caskets, crosiers, shrines, and other minor objects of art.

Christ trampling on a lion, an adder, or a dragon (Ps. xci. 13) is often used to indicate His triumph over the powers of hell. The same idea was intended to be expressed by sculpturing figures of deceased persons reclining on tombs with their feet resting on a lion, a dragon, or a dog, which was likewise regarded as an incarnation of the evil principle, in conformity with the apostle's assertion, “For without are dogs.” At a later period the lion at the feet of a man symbolized manly strength and courage, and the dog at the feet of a woman signified undying love and fidelity. It was the substitution of the Aryan for the Semitic point of view that reversed the meaning of the symbolism.

The diabolification of the dog was due to the Hebrew misconception of its character; and it is a curious fact that the Jews, who endowed a rapacious and offensive creature like the vulture with fictitious virtues, should have had no proper appreciation of one of the noblest and most useful of their domestic animals. The affection and fidelity of the dog seem to have made hardly any impression upon them. This oldest and most trusty companion of man is rarely referred to by them except in terms of contempt, and it is from this source that many derogatory expressions concerning [90] dogs have passed into the common speech of today. When Elisha foretells the cruel conduct of Hazael, the latter exclaims: “Is thy servant a dog that he should do this great thing?” Job expresses the same scornful feeling when he says “Now they that are younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock.” Only in the apocryphal Tobit (v. 16; x. 14) is the dog treated in some degree as the friend and associate of man. Thus when Tobias and his companion set out on their journey to Media to collect a debt, it is said “So they went forth both, and the young man's dog with them”—a simple touch that adds immensely to the beauty and realism of the picture. In the New Testament dogs are pariah beasts completely out of

the pale of human interest and sympathy. There is an old legend that Jesus once saw a crowd of persons gathered round the carcass of a dog, and giving utterance to their disgust at the sight of such a loathsome beast. But as Jesus looked upon it He said: "How white its teeth are!" The story is intended to illustrate, not His higher and truer estimation of the worth of the animal, but His own nobility of character, and the generous optimism which avoided evil-speaking, and could discover admirable qualities even in so hideous a creature as a dead dog. Indeed there is nothing in Hebrew or early Christian literature to be compared with Homer's sympathetic description of Ulysses' dog Argus, or Arrian's characterization [91] of the greyhound Hormê (ὄρμη, "impetuous"), "the swiftest, sagest, and divinest" of beasts. With what fine appreciation he dwells upon her cunning and cleverness, and other excellent traits! Ælian relates (*De Nat. Animal.*, vii. 38) that a Magnesian war-hound, which distinguished itself at Marathon, was honoured with an effigy on the same tablet that recorded the valour of its master. The Avesta and other sacred books of the Parsis enjoin the greatest kindness and reverence towards the dog, whose sagacity, vigilance, and fidelity are regarded as the pillars of pastoral society; and in the Indian epic, the *Mahâbhârata*, the hero Yudhishtira refuses to enter Indra's heaven unless "his faithful dog shall bear him company."

In the porch of Freiburg Minster are delineations of the deeds of Samson in carrying off the gates of Gaza, tearing open the lion's jaws, and performing other exploits supposed to foreshadow the redeeming power of Christ. In this work the artist embodies the ideas of patristic exegetists, who show a vast amount of misapplied ingenuity in tracing analogies between the career of the Hebrew solar hero and that of the Sun of righteousness. (Cf. St. Augustine's *De Samson*, Sermo I.)

The column-sustaining lions, so often placed at the entrance of the churches, or used to support pulpits, as in Pisa, Sienna, Lucca, Chiusi, and elsewhere in Italy, and especially in Tuscany, represent Satan subdued and subjected to the [92] service of Christianity. The same is true of the lion's head on the doors of the baptistery at Florence, and the cathedrals of Mayence and Hildesheim. In the vestibule of the cathedral of Piacenza, dating from the first half of the twelfth century, as well as in many ecclesiastical edifices in Ferrara, Modena, and Rome, the columns rest upon the shoulders of men with lions underneath them, which have seized other men as their prey. They symbolize heretics, whom the devil has got possession of, but who are overcome by the power of truth, and made to uphold the orthodox faith. Among other sculptures on the doors of a church in Novgorod, is the head of a lion with open jaws, in which are seen the faces of the damned writhing with agony, and above it the inscription: "Hell consuming sinners." St. Augustine, in his *Sermo de Tempore* (lxv.), compares Daniel in the lions' den with the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness; but it is more commonly interpreted as typical of Christ's descent into hell, as, for example, at the entrance of the church of St. Porchaire in France.

The characteristics attributed to the lion in the *Physiologus* were familiar to mediæval poets, and furnished them with an ample fund of metaphorical material. Thus Wolfram

von Eschenbach, in his most celebrated poem, compares the hero Parzival and his half-brother Feirefiz to two lion's whelps roused to life and energy by the roar of battle. Again, in his epic *Willehalm*, he declares that in the fierce combat between Christians and paynims [93] at Alischanz the noise produced by the blare of trumpets, the roll of drums, and the shouts of contending hosts was loud enough to call to life a lion's whelps.

Thomasin von Zirecläre, in the *Welscher Gast*, which describes court-life in Italy, and lays down general rules of conduct for princes, says that when sovereigns have done wrong, they should blot out all traces of it by humble repentance and increased beneficence, as the lion escapes pursuit by obliterating its foot-prints with its tail. Elsewhere he advises monarchs never to act on the impulse of the moment, but to give heed to three things before putting any project into practice: listen to counsellors, compare their views, and adopt the best advice, as the lion's whelps lie three days dormant after they are born. The simile, in this case, is ridiculously inapt, but the *Physiologus* gives the key to it, and renders it at least intelligible. The same zoölogical myth was evidently in the mind of the old Spanish poet, Juan de Mena, when he described the mother of Lorenço d'Avalos as lamenting like a lioness ("como al que pare haze la leona") over her dead son. Amorozzo da Firenze expresses the intensity of his susceptibility to the tender passion by asserting that the voice of his lady-love would suffice to revive him from death, as the voice of the lion reanimates its young. A Provençal erotic poet, Richard de Berbezilh, uses the same imagery to illustrate the same sentiment. Another old French poet, Guirant de Calanson, [94] says: "As the lion sleeps with open eyes (*huelks ubertz*), so my spirit, even in slumber, beholds thee, O lady."

Meister Stolle, in the Wartburgkrieg, would endow princes with the voice of the lion and the eyes of the ostrich, which hatches its eggs by gazing at them, so that they might rouse and animate their followers by word and look, inciting them to noble and knightly achievements. Reinmar von Zweter praises the "ostrich eyes" of the Emperor Friedrich II., as inspiriting and life-giving; and Pierre Espagnol informs us that the eyes of his lady-love are incubatory like those of the ostrich, causing sighs to germinate and spring up in his heart whenever she turns upon him an ardent glance.

The next animal mentioned in the *Physiologus* is the lizard, which, when it gets blind in its old age, creeps into the crevice of a wall looking towards the east, and stretches out its head to the rising sun, whose rays restore its sight. "In like manner, O man, thou who hast on the old garment, and the eyes of whose heart are obscured, seek the wall of help, and watch there until the sun of righteousness, which the prophet calls the dayspring, rises with healing power and removes thy spiritual blindness."

Representations of a lizard running along a wall or peeping out off some chink in it, either sculptured in stone or carved in wood, are not uncommon in mediæval churches, especially among the decorations [95] of the chancel. It was not the mere caprice of the architect that put the reptile there, but its presence is due to its significance as a symbol of the regenerating and illuminating influence of the gospel.

The unicorn is another favourite type, and is thus described by the *Physiologus*: “It is a small animal, but exceeding strong and fleet, with a single horn in the centre of its forehead. The only means of capturing it is by stratagem, namely, by decking a chaste virgin with beautiful ornaments and seating her in a solitary place in the forest frequented by the unicorn, which no sooner perceives her than it runs to her and, laying its head gently in her lap, falls asleep. Then the hunters come and take it captive to the king's palace and receive for it much treasure.”



Capture of the Unicorn (*Bestiary*)

Herein the unicorn resembles our Saviour, who “hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David”; and the work of redemption, which neither thrones, nor dominations,

nor heavenly powers could accomplish, He brought to pass. The mighty ones of this world were unable to approach Him or to lay hold of Him, until He abode in the womb of the Virgin Mary. As it is written: “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of [96] grace and truth;” or as this passage is paraphrased in *Le Bestiaire Divin*—

“Sul por la volontà de Dieu,  
Passa Deu por la Virgne mère;  
Et la Parole fut char faite,  
Que virgineté n’i of fraite.”

In the border of the central lancet window in the apsis of the cathedral at Lyons is a representation of this fable of the unicorn and the Virgin as a symbol of Christ’s incarnation. It is rather awkwardly drawn, and the Virgin seems to sit astride of the unicorn’s neck, but it was evidently the intention of the artist to have the animal’s head lying in her lap. There is a carving of the same kind in St. Botolph’s Church at Boston, Lincolnshire, and a series of reliefs of a similar character may be seen in the cathedral at Toledo, in Spain. A curious German engraving of the fifteenth century, entitled “Von der menschwerdong gottes nach geistlicher auszlegong der hystori von dem einhorn,” pictures the Annunciation and Incarnation as the chase of the unicorn. The archangel Gabriel, the leader of the hunt, winds his horn, from which is supposed to proceed the melodious greeting: “Hail, highly-favoured one, the Lord is with thee, thou blessed among women!” The unicorn, pursued by hounds, is running rapidly towards the Virgin, who sits with upturned eyes and hands folded across her breast in a state of ecstasy, while the horn of the animal is in perilous proximity to her lap. On her right are an altar [97] with burning candles and a flowing fountain, a symbol of the waters of eternal life. In the background God the Father holds a globe surmounted with a cross in



Hunting the Unicorn. (Old German Engraving)

one hand, and gives His benediction with the other. The three dogs are Mercy, Truth, and Justice, and denote the attributes of the Saviour and the feelings which impelled Him to become incarnate, and to redeem the world from the dominion of Satan.<sup>8</sup> This symbolism is more fully and clearly expressed in a German painting of the fifteenth or perhaps the beginning of the [98] sixteenth century, now belonging to the Grand Ducal Library of Weimar. In this extremely elaborate and highly-finished work of art there are four dogs held in leash and barking at the unicorn, which is already in the lap of the Virgin; their collars are labelled respectively Veritas, Justitia, Misericordia, and Pax; the first two are dark-brown, the third light-brown, and the fourth white. The Virgin wears a greenish-brown dress studded with golden flowers, and a green mantle. Gabriel is arrayed in scarlet, and has wings of many brilliant hues. Gideon kneels behind her on his fleece of wool (Judges vi. 36-40). In the background is a city representing Zion. To the right of the Virgin in the sky appears God the Father, with a large wreath of oak-leaves encircling His neck and resting on His shoulders, His hands upraised in the act of blessing, and the Christ-child descending on a beam of light and bearing a cross. At the

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Dr. Ulrich Pinder: *Der beschlossenen gart des rosenkrants Marie*, Nürnberg, 1505, Band II., Blatt ix. Also Cahier: *Caractéristiques des Saints dans l'Art populaire*, Paris, 1844.

lower end of the beam of light is a dove hovering over the Virgin's head and its beak directed towards her ear. This attitude of the dove, which is quite common, and indeed almost universal, in mediæval and early modern pictures of the Annunciation, is intended to indicate the naïve notion entertained by patristic writers and later theologians, that the conception of Christ was effected supernaturally through the Virgin's ear, so that she remained perfectly pure and immaculate, and her maidenhood intact. This queer theory had its origin probably in Gnostic speculations and [99] the Greco-Judaic religious philosophy current in Alexandria, and was the result of a too literal interpretation of the doctrine of the Logos. As God spoke the world into existence, so the voice of the Most High uttering salutation through the mouth of the angel caused the Virgin to conceive, "and the Word was made flesh." But as spoken words are addressed to the ear, and through this organ find lodgment in the mind and thus bear fruit, it was assumed that the incarnation of the Logos was accomplished in the same manner "Deus per angelum loquebatur et Virgo per aurem impregnabatur," says St. Augustine (*Sermo de Tempore*, xxii.); and this view, which was generally accepted by the Apostolic Fathers, is expressed eight centuries later in a verse attributed to Thomas à Becket—

"Gaude Virgo, mater Christi,  
Quae per aurem concepisti."

The same description of the miraculous event is given by the German mediæval poet, Walther von der Vogelweide: "dur ir ore enphinc si den vil suezen." In the parish church (formerly belonging to the abbey) of Eltenberg on the Rhine, is an Annunciation



The Annunciation. (*Parish Church of Eltenberg.*)

moulded in clay, baked and painted, in which the infant Jesus, attended by the Holy Spirit, descends from heaven on the breath of God the Father, and enters the ear of the Virgin. Similar representations are to be seen (so far as they have not been destroyed) at Oppenheim, on the portal of the cathedral at Würzburg, and elsewhere. The [100] blast of Gabriel's bugle in the Weimar painting is no uncertain sound, but becomes articulate as "Ave gratia plena, Dominus tecum," to which the Virgin responds: "Ecce ancilla Domini, fiat mihi secundum Verbum tuum." Indeed the air is full of floating legends taken chiefly from the Song [101] of Solomon, such as "Sicut lilium inter spinas, sic amica mea inter filias" (As the lily among thorns, so my love among the daughters); "Fons hortorum, puteus aquarum viventium quæ fluunt impetu de Libano" (A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon); "Veni Auster, perfla hortum et fluant aromata" (Come, thou south, blow upon my garden that the spices may flow out); "Turris eburnea" (Tower of ivory), etc. The Virgin sits behind a wicker fence or palisade in illustration of the passage: "A garden enclosed is my sister." Engravings of this painting have been frequently published; as, for example, in the sixth volume of *Curiositäten der physch- literarischartistisch- historischen Vor- und Mitwelt* (Weimar, 1817, p. 133); *Revue Archéologique* (Paris, 1844-45, p. 462); *Das Evangelische Jahrbuch*, issued at Berlin; and in a recent Christmas number of *Harper's Magazine*. There is another picture of a similar character at Weimar; a third was formerly in the Hospital Church at Grimmenthal on the Werra; and a fourth is in the cathedral at Brunswick, painted on one of the folding compartments of a triptych or altar-piece. The Virgin with the unicorn in her lap is on the outside, and the angel as huntsman with horn, spear, and dogs on the inside. Out of the mouth of the animal proceed the words: "Quia quem Cœli capere non possunt, in tuo gremio contulisti,"—a punning form of expression, which may refer either to the incarnation of Christ, or to the hunting of the unicorn: "Whom [102] the heavens (highest powers) could not contain (capture), thou didst hold (take) in thy womb (lap)." The Virgin has a blue robe, the lower part of which is reddish; a basket of manna is at her feet, and near her the legend: "Fons signatus" (a fountain sealed). The angel is dressed in white with a red mantle floating in the wind, and has four dogs in the leash.<sup>9</sup> In the Grimmenthal picture the symbolism is still more striking. On the left of the tall and majestic angel is a lion howling over two motionless whelps, with the legend "Maria Leo," and just before him the eternal city or perennity of God (*Perennitas Dei*); above the gate of heaven (*Porta Cœli*) God the Father appears in the clouds between the sun and the moon; across the disc of the former are the words "clara ut sol" (clear as the sun), and issuing from the mouth of the human face defined in the crescent of the latter the words, "Pulchra ut luna" (fair as the moon). On the left of the painting is a star (*stella maris*), and on the right a pelican feeding its young with its blood, and Moses talking with Jehovah in the burning bush. In the centre is Gideon kneeling on his fleece; behind him is the flowing fountain of the

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. Ribbentrop: *Beschreibung der Stadt Braunschweig*, where this work of art is ascribed, but without sufficient reason, to Lucas Cranach.

waters of eternal life; above it a mirror with the inscription, “speculum sine macula” (a mirror without spot). An engraving of this picture, but without any interpretation of its symbolism, was [103] published in Friedrich Rudolphi’s *Gotha Diplomatica oder Ausführliche Historische Beschreibung des Fürstenthums Sachsen-Gotha* (Frankfurt am Main and Leipzig, 1717, p. 310). It was an altar piece, and was probably the work of Paul Lautensack, better known as Meister Paul of Bamberg, who was born in that city in 1478, and died in 1558 at Nuremberg, as an ardent and rather fanatical Protestant. In the latter half of the fifteenth and the early part of the sixteenth century, Grimmenthal was a noted place of pilgrimage, where many miraculous cures were said to have been effected through the agency of the Holy Virgin. The ruling prince, Wilhelm, of the House of Henneberg, a zealous Catholic, employed Meister Paul to decorate the interior of the church, and the artist devoted himself for ten years to the task, and received twelve thousand florins for his services, a sum regarded at that time as an exceedingly munificent remuneration. People flocked to this wonder-working shrine from all the countries of Europe, and no less than forty-four thousand persons are reported to have visited it in a single year. The maimed, the halt, and the blind were healed of their infirmities, but the medical virtue of the Madonna manifested itself most strikingly as a specific for syphilis, or the Venusseuche, as it was commonly termed. According to an old Latin chronicler, there was in 1503 “a grand peregrination to the Blessed Virgin at Grimmenthal, where an immense concourse gathered, chiefly on [104] account of the French malady, otherwise called acute and burning leprosy (‘principaliter propter malum Franzosiæ, alias acutam lepram ac ardentem dictam’), that raged for a period of more than ten years, during which time some three hundred Moorish knights or Ethiops (‘quasi 300 Mauri equites sive Aethyopes’) passed through Silesia journeying thither.”<sup>10</sup> The Reformation naturally tended to check these pilgrimages, and finally put a stop to them altogether. Luther himself felt a strong antipathy to this holy shrine, which he denounced as “ein rechtes Grimmenthal, Vallem furoris.” In 1525 the revenues derived from pious offerings were so small that they hardly sufficed to defray current expenses, and in 1547 the buildings, which formerly served to lodge pilgrims, were converted into a hospital, and the church was henceforth used merely for the cure of souls. But, although the method of healing had been officially secularized, the sacred place preserved to a certain degree its traditional reputation in the minds of the people, until in 1767 the church, with all of Meister Paul’s paintings, was destroyed by fire. The Virgin with a unicorn resting its head in her lap is quite common in ecclesiastical architecture, especially in stained windows, as for example in St. Redegonde, at Caen. Again, in an Italian engraving of the six triumphs of Petrarch, dating from the fifteenth [105] century, and belonging to the Albertine collection in Vienna, the triumph of chastity is symbolized by a virgin seated and a unicorn with its head in her lap. In the background is a hunter blowing a horn, and rapidly approaching with a pack of dogs. In another engraving illustrating the same triumph the car of chastity is drawn by unicorns.

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<sup>10</sup> *Licurii Append. ad Fascicul. Tempor. ap. Pistorii Script. Rerum Germanicarum Vet.*, Francof., 1707, tom. ii., p. 600.

Superstitious notions about the peculiar virtue inherent in the unicorn's horn were quite current in the middle ages. Thus John of Herse, who made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 1389, records his observations on this point. "Near the field Helyon in the Holy Land," he says, "is the river Mara, whose bitter waters Moses struck with his staff and made sweet, so that the children of Israel could drink thereof. Even now, evil and unclean beasts poison it after the going down of the sun; but in the morning, after the powers of darkness have disappeared, the unicorn comes from the sea and dips its horn into the stream, and thereby expels and neutralizes the poison, so that the other animals can drink of it during the day. The fact, which I describe, I have seen with my own eyes." This story furnishes an excellent illustration of the value of human testimony, and the conclusiveness of ocular evidence, showing the little confidence to which the report of an extraordinary event is entitled, even when it rests, not upon hearsay, but upon the positive statement of an honest eyewitness. That John of Herse meant to tell the [106] truth, and thought he observed what he records, there is not the slightest reason to doubt.

On account of this supposed anti-toxical property, the unicorn's horn was used for making spoons (so-called test-spoons), salt-cellars, and especially drinking-cups. Articles manufactured of this material held a prominent or rather an important place in the table-service of mediaeval nobles and princes, and were prized as a sure protection against all sorts of poison, as well as a specific for epilepsy and other forms of convulsion. A closer examination of these objects, which are now preserved as curiosities in museums, proves them to have been fabricated from the tusks of the narwal.

Equally spurious are the so-called griffin's claws now preserved as relics in churches or as curiosities in museums, as for example in the churches of Hildesheim, Weimar, Cologne, and Gran on the Danube, and in the museums of Dresden, Vienna, and other European cities. They are simply horns of the Caffrarian buffalo. An interesting specimen of this kind is in the old abbey on the Inde, founded by Lewis the Debonair in the ninth century, and now known as Cornelimünster, because it contains the relics of the canonized Pope Cornelius, among which the saint's horn or drinking-cup, styled the griffin's claw, holds the most conspicuous place. Hagiologists even tell us that a griffin gave it to the holy man out of gratitude for having been miraculously healed of epilepsy. This legend [107] is related as an historical fact as late as 1755 in the *Heiligthumsbüchlein*, issued for the guidance and edification of pilgrims to the sacred shrine. On such occasions wonderful cures are believed to be wrought by pouring holy water from this horn on the sick and infirm. It has been customary for the last five centuries to exhibit these relics once in seven years for healing purposes.

Samuel Bochart, in his *Hierozoicon*, written about the middle of the seventeenth century, cites a number of Arabian authors, who enlarge upon the marvellous peculiarities of the unicorn's horn. Among other curious statements, it is said that if the horn be cut lengthwise, it will be found to contain the figure of a man, a beast, a bird, or

a flower, beautifully designed in white, and filling the whole shape from the tip to the base.

In the *Parzival* of Wolfram von Eschenbach, among various remedies employed to heal the wound of Anfortas, king of the Grail, the heart of a unicorn and the carbuncle growing under its horn are mentioned. In the same poem Queen Orgeluse's lover, Cidegast, whom Gramoflanz has slain in combat, is extolled as "a unicorn in fidelity." In Heinrich Frauenlob's *Kreuzleich* (Lay of the Cross), Konrad von Würzburg's *Goldene Schmiede* (Golden Smithy), and other poems of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in praise of the Virgin, God the Father is represented as a huntsman, pursuing the unicorn until it takes refuge in [108] the womb of the immaculate Mary. Reinmar von Zweter lauds the power of chastity, which was stronger than the Almighty; and Hugo von Langenstein celebrates in florid and somewhat motley allegory the majesty of the maid whose loveliness and purity captivated and conciliated heaven's unicorn, and thus averted the Divine wrath from our sinful world. In a German hymn of the fifteenth century addressed to the Virgin, she is said to have "tamed the unicorn and the hind"; and in a hunting-song, quoted by Lauchert from Uhland's collection (No. 339), the whole scheme of redemption is set forth as the outcome of the fascinations of "ein seuberlichs junkfrewelin."

Metaphors drawn from the fabled habits of the unicorn, or allusions to them, are frequently met with in the effusions of mediaeval erotic poets, who, like the unicorn, would fain lay their heads in the laps of their ladies and be enslaved by their charms. The Suabian knight and minnesinger, Burkhart von Hohenfels, likens himself to the unicorn, because a fair woman has allured him to his destruction; and Guido Cavalcanti, the contemporary and friend of Dante, makes use of the same imagery in a sonnet addressed to Guido Orlandi, who was languishing in fatal thralldom to the all-subduing passion. Thibault, Count of Champagne and King of Navarre, describes in one of his lyrics, the treachery of the hunters, who catch and kill the unicorn while lying faint and languishing in the virgin's lap, and adds [109]—

"Thus Love and my Lady have done to me,  
And my heart can never again be free."<sup>11</sup>

The unicorn, like the lion, has a twofold signification, and in the Waldensian *Physiologus* stands for Satan, who can be overcome only by purity and innocence. The enmity of the unicorn to the elephant, described by Isidore, and enlarged upon by the author of *Le Bestiaire Divin*, tends also to confuse the spiritual meaning, since both of these animals are types of Christ. The elephant is, however, in this case, as we shall see hereafter, a symbol of fallen humanity. The Latin texts and the later popular versions of the *Physiologus* carry out the religious symbolism of the unicorn into the minutest doctrinal detail. Thus the single horn signifies the oneness of the Father and the Son, while the smallness of the animal and its similarity to the he-goat express the exceeding

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<sup>11</sup> "Et moi ont fait de tel semblant / Amors et ma Dame, por voir; / Mon cuer n'en puis point ravoïr."

humility and condescension of Christ in consenting to become incarnate in the likeness of sinful man.

According to Albertus Magnus, the horn of the African viper was said to rival that of the unicorn in its sensitiveness to poisons, and to show their presence by emitting perspiration; for this reason, he adds, it was used for the handles of table-knives. This statement, however, he gives with reserve, as not sufficiently proven: “sed hoc non satis probatum est” (*De Animal.*, lib. XXV. vi. 667). Of the [110] antidotal and prophylactic virtue of the unicorn’s horn in such cases the erudite Dominican and “doctor universalis” does not seem to have entertained the slightest doubt.

In the *Alexanderlied* of Pfaffen Lamprecht we are told that Queen Candace—whose kingdom was “on the edge of the earth’s abyss, where the sky revolves round it like a wheel on its axis”—presented the Macedonian conqueror with a live unicorn, which had been captured by means of a decoy virgin. The animal is described by the poet as a highly heterogeneous and utterly impossible creature, having the body of a horse, the tail of a pig, the head of a stag, the feet of an elephant, and a long horn projecting from its forehead. The carbuncle concealed at the root of this horn is also mentioned, and its medicinal properties, so often described in mediæval pharmacopœias, are extolled.

The elephant, says the Physiologus, is a very intelligent animal, but has an exceedingly cold and passionless temperament. Therefore, when the time for copulation comes, the male and female betake themselves to a region in the neighbourhood of Paradise, where the mandrake grows, and eat of this aphrodisiac plant, and thereupon beget young.<sup>12</sup> Now when the period of parturition arrives, [111] the female elephant goes into a pond until the water touches her breast, and there brings forth her young, as the Psalmist says: “Save me, O God, for the waters are come into my soul.” But the male keeps watch in order to ward off the dragon, which dwells in the pond, and seeks to devour the new-born elephant.

The two elephants signify Adam and Eve, who ate of the forbidden fruit of the tree of life, and yielding to the power of sensual passion excited by it, begat children, and brought death and woe into the world.

Another characteristic of the elephant is that when it falls down it cannot get up again, since it is unable to bend its knees. For this reason it always sleeps standing, and leans for support against a tree. The hunters take advantage of this bodily defect and, having discovered its sleeping-place, saw the tree almost asunder, so that when the huge beast leans against it the tree gives way, and the elephant falls to the ground, and there lies roaring helplessly. Then the other elephants hasten to its assistance, but all their efforts to raise it up are in vain; at length a small young elephant comes, and, thrusting its trunk under the fallen animal, lifts it to its feet again. Now the first elephant

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<sup>12</sup> The mandrakes which Reuben found in the field were used by his mother Leah for venereal purposes (Gen. xxx. 14-16), and this precious peculiarity is enlarged upon in rabbinical literature. The Greeks spoke of them as anthropomorphic; and according to popular superstition they spring from human sperm spilled on the ground, and are so full of animal life and consciousness that they shriek when torn out of the earth, so “that living mortals, hearing them, run mad.”

symbolizes Adam, who fell “through a tree,” as an old English bestiary puts it, towards the fruit of which he had stretched out his hand. And all the [112] great prophets and the lesser prophets essayed in vain to restore him to his first estate; but “the new elephant, our Saviour,” though accounted the least of all the prophets, was able to accomplish it, becoming a servant and abasing Himself that we might be exalted.

Julius Cæsar, in his commentary on the Gallic War (vi. 27), in speaking of the fauna of the country, describes an animal something like the unicorn as follows: “There is an ox having the form of a deer, from the middle of whose forehead, between the ears, there rises a single horn, longer and straighter than the horns of any other animal known to us, and spreading widely at the top in palm-like branches. The appearance of the male and the female is the same, and the shape and size of the horns are similar.” He then adds: “There are also animals called *alces* [elks], like a deer in form and colour, but larger in size. They shed their horns, and their legs are without joints or articulations. They do not lie down to rest, and if they happen to fall to the ground they are unable to rise. The trees serve them for beds, against which they lean, and thus, slightly reclining, take their repose. When the hunters discover these places of resort, they either undermine the trees at the roots or cut them so far that the trunk has only the appearance of standing firmly, so that when the animals lean against them, according to their habit, the weakened trees give way and they fall together to the earth.” The stiff and stilty [113] manner in which the elk holds its legs in running and leaping, seems to have led Cæsar to infer that they were without joints, and from this queer mistake for such a sober and accurate observer to make the fabulous account of its method of sleeping could have easily arisen, especially as this was supposed to be the case with the elephant, the method of capturing which is also described in the Spanish *Poema de Alexandro* by Juan Lorenzo de Segura.

Mediæval poets use the statement that the elephant gives birth in the water as a symbol of baptismal regeneration, but the animal seldom figures metaphorically in madrigals or lays of love. The inditer of an amorous sonnet or soft ditty would hardly venture to compare himself or his sweetheart to the hugest and most unwieldy of pachyderms. It is rarely represented in sacred architecture, but is often found embroidered on sacerdotal vestments, and especially on chasubles, as a symbol of priestly chastity. Häufner (*Archiv für Kunde österreichischer Geschichtsquellen.*, 1850, ii. 593) mentions a chasuble of the eleventh century at Gös near Loeben adorned with various animals, and among them elephants with towers on their backs, which he thinks typify prudence and virtue equipped to resist the powers of evil. It may be, however, that, after the original symbolism was forgotten, the elephant continued to be used merely as a traditional decoration, in which case the howdah and other trappings would naturally be [114] added without attaching to them any special signification.

The serpent has four characteristics: (1) When it has grown old and its eyes are dim, it fasts forty days and forty nights until its skin shrivels and loosens. Thereupon it squeezes itself through a narrow crevice in the rocks, and thus casts its skin and renews its youth. And thou, O son of man, if thou desirest to put off the old Adam and be

regenerated, must pass through the strait gate and walk in the narrow way, which leadeth unto life. (2) When the serpent goes to a spring to drink water, it leaves its venom in its hole; so he, who would refresh his soul with the waters of eternal life, must leave behind him every sin of his carnal heart. (3) The serpent fears a naked man and flees from him, but assails him when he is clothed. Those who are acquainted with this characteristic of the serpent throw off their garments, when pursued by it, and thus save their lives. So, too, when Adam was naked in the garden and had no desire for raiment, the serpent could do him no harm. In like manner, if we do not trouble ourselves about the vanities of this world, we need not fear the assaults of the wily serpent, the devil. According to this doctrine nudity is a sign of innocence and the sanctified should dispense with clothing, which originated in the fall of man and is a covering of sin, that may find a lurking-place even under the scanty vesture of a fig-leaf. The Adamites of the second, and the Picards of the fifteenth century [115] held that those whom Christ had redeemed were restored to the original purity of our first parents in Eden, and should return to the primitive habits of the race, including nudity and sexual promiscuity. (4) When one seeks to kill the serpent, it exposes its whole body, in order to shield its head from the blows of its assailant. The application of this characteristic to Christians, who should endure every trial and affliction for the sake of Christ, their head, has already been noticed. The serpent shows its wisdom also in this, that it stops its ears to the charmer and refuses to listen to his spell, thus teaching us to shut our ears to Satanic suggestions. The notion that poisonous reptiles could be charmed so as to prevent them from stinging or to render their bite harmless, was based on such passages as Jer. viii. 17 and Ps. lviii. 5, and seemed to be confirmed by the wonderful feats of Oriental fakirs and magicians.

These imaginary attributes of the serpent are occasionally represented as religious symbols in churches among the wood-carvings of the chancel and the reliefs adorning the doorways or the capitals of columns, but more frequently in the illuminations of mediæval manuscripts. Still more common is the metaphorical use of them by the poets of the middle ages in illustration of both sacred and secular subjects. Thus in one of the mystic spiritual songs of the Minorite Jacopone da Todi, the reputed and probable author of the *Stabat Mater*, the first characteristic of the serpent [116] figures the love of Jesus, which purifies and renews the soul. The third characteristic is applied in a queer way by a troubadour, Bertolome Zorgi (quoted by Lauchert, p. 186, from Diez: *Leben und Werke der Troubadours*), who says of his lady-love that, like the serpent, she flees from him when he is naked, and is fearless in his presence only when he is clothed, surely no unusual display of timidity in a modest dame. It is also related in the *Poema de Alexandro* already cited, that as the army of the Macedonian monarch was passing through a desert and suffering intensely from thirst, the soldiers found a spring, which, however, was so surrounded by serpents that all who approached it were in danger of being bitten. But Alexander, who was not less distinguished for wisdom than for valour, ordered the men to strip, so that they went to the water unharmed by the serpents, which fled from them as from moving pillars of fire. The author tells many other marvellous

stories of animals, and assures the reader that they are all true “esto es cosa vera.” The serpent was likewise revered by the Egyptians as a symbol of regeneration and the renewal of life.

The *Physiologus* states that when the eagle has grown old and its eyes have become dim and darkened, it flies upward towards the sun until it has scorched its wings and purged away the film from its eyes; then it descends to the earth and plunges three times into a spring of pure water. Thus it recovers its sight and renews its youth. In [117] like manner, when we have grown old in the sinful love of this world, and the eyes of the heart are obscured thereby, then should we seek the day-star of the divine word, and fly aloft on the wings of the spirit to the sun of righteousness, Christ, our Saviour, who will draw out of us the old man with all his works. And when we dip ourselves thrice in the new well-spring of salvation in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, then will the old garment of the devil be taken away, and we shall be clothed in the new and shining raiment which God hath made ready for us.



Eagle renewing its youth. (*Bestiary*.)

The eagle can gaze at the bright sun without blinking, and is accustomed to carry its unfledged young on its wings upward and compel them to look upon the shining orb; those which can do so with open and steadfast eyes it rears, but discards the others and lets them fall to the ground. Here the sun represents God the Father, upon whose face Christ can gaze undazzled by His glory, and to whom He presents the children of men who claim to have been born of Him; those who are able to stand before God and to look upon the light of His countenance are accepted, while the others are rejected.



Eaglets gazing at the sun.  
(*Lyons Cathedral*)

Again, we are told that the eagle looks from the [118] uppermost region of the air into the depths of the sea, and when it perceives a fish swimming about, plunges into the water and seizing the fish bears it away to its aerie. Here the eagle typifies Christ, the sea the world, and the fish the elect whom He saves and takes to Himself.

The eagle renewing its youth by plunging into a fountain is the symbol of regeneration by baptism, and is therefore sometimes sculptured on fountains and baptisteries. In ecclesiastical architecture the eagle is often found perching alone, as, for example, in the church at Alne; in the miniatures of the manuscript bestiaries belonging to the Arsenal Library and to the Royal Library of Brussels it is seen flying with its newly-fledged young up towards the sun; in a stained window in the cathedral at Lyons three eaglets are looking unflinchingly at the blazing sun, while a fourth is falling to the

earth; a mosaic in the baptistery of Santa Maria di Capua represents an eagle taking a fish out of the water, and the same scene is carved on a Celtic cross at St. Vigean's in Forfarshire, and on the jamb of a Norman doorway at Ribbesford in Worcestershire; it is also found on a metal plate in the British Museum, and among the illuminations of a Celtic manuscript of the Book of Armagh at Trinity College, Dublin.

[119] The fable of the rejuvenation of the eagle grew naturally enough out of the fact of the renewal of its plumage after moulting; but the Apostolic Fathers were not satisfied with this simple explanation of the words of the Psalmist (ciii. 5), and transformed an ordinary phenomenon into a supernatural and miraculous event, which would be more effective for exegetical purposes.

Aristotle (*Hist. Animal.*, cx. 32) relates that the upper beak of very old eagles grows so long as to prevent them from eating and to cause them to die of hunger. In the Greek version of the *Physiologus* of the twelfth century the author adds that in order to remedy this evil and to avert this danger the eagle breaks off the superfluity of its beak against a stone, a statement which is adduced by homilists and exegetists to prove that the rock of salvation is the only cure for the growth of carnal-mindedness, and the sole means of preventing spiritual starvation.

In Dante's *Divina Commedia* (Pt. I. 47-48) Beatrice is said to fix her eyes on the sun as steadfastly as never eagle did—

“Aquila si non gli s'affisse unquanco.”

It was a test of Dante's fitness to visit the celestial spheres that he could do the same—

“E fissi gli occhi al sole oltre a nostr'uso.”

Allusions to this notion occur in other parts of the poem. Ariosto uses the same imagery in one of his sonnets: “Although the young of the eagle [120] may resemble the parent in its claws, head, breast, and plumage, but are not like it in keenness and strength of vision to endure the light, the eagle will not recognize them as its offspring. So the thoughts and desires of lovers should be in perfect conformity . . . Be not then different from me in any respect,” he concludes, addressing his lady-love, “for you must accord with me wholly or not be mine at all”—

“Non siete dunque in un da me difforme,  
Perchè mi si confaccia it più di voi;  
Che o nulla, o vi convien tutta esser mia.”

A German poet, Wachsmut von Mühlhausen, declares that he will renew himself like the eagle and mount up joyously into the æther, “if thou, O lady, wilt console me in my sadness and my longing.” Warriors, too, are praised or censured for possessing or not possessing the firm and unflinching eye of the eagle, when in the heat of battle. Thomasin von Zircläre says, in the *Welscher Gast*, that sovereigns should not be blinded by bribes, but should keep their sight unclouded, so as to be able to look clearly and fixedly at the truth in the light of justice, as eagles look at the sun, and that they should renew their strength for righteousness and ruling in equity by seeking

communion with the Most High. They are likewise to imitate the eagle, which breaks off portions of its beak, when it has grown so long and crooked as to be an impediment, an admonition which might be taken as a warning against the circumlocutions of court [121] etiquette and the trammels of red tape. In the literature of a later day one of the most splendidly rhetorical passages in the peroration of Milton's *Areopagitica* is borrowed from this superstition of the eaglet renewing its youth and purging its sight at the source of all life and illumination.

Strangely enough the fish is not especially mentioned by the *Physiologus*, although in sacred iconology it occurs most frequently as a symbol of Christ, the Greek word ΙΧΘΥΣ being the initial letters of the Greek phrase signifying Jesus Christ God's Son Saviour, *Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς Θεοῦ Υἱὸς Σωτήρ*. But the fish, although proverbial among the Greeks for its stupidity, was carved on ancient tombs, because it was supposed to bear the soul of the deceased across the sea to the islands of the blest. This was especially the case with the dolphin, the strongest and swiftest of fishes, or, as Gregory of Nyssa calls it, the most royal of swimmers: *ὁ δελφίς ἐστὶ τῶν νηκτῶν ὁ βασιλιώτατος*. It is possible that the dolphin was at first, for the same reason, sculptured on Christian tombs, and that the fish was afterwards substituted for it on account of the monogrammatic meaning of the word.

The early Christians were accustomed to eat a roasted fish in commemoration of Christ's Passion, and a survival of this ceremony is the use of fish as an article of food on Friday. The fish was also sacred to Venus on account of its extraordinary fecundity; for the same reason April, the opening (*aperilis*) or germinating month, was consecrated to this goddess; [122] whose appropriate day (*dies Veneris, venerdi, vendredi*) was Friday, corresponding to Friatac, the day of Fria, the old German goddess of love. Patristic theologians were fond of seeking similitudes and discovering analogies between a baked fish and the suffering Christ: "inter piscem assum et Christum passum." Christian sepulchres are often adorned with frescoes or sculptures, in which the disciples are seated at a table furnished with a loaf of bread (the bread of life) and a baked fish. This is a sacramental or eucharistic meal.

Of sea-creatures only the whale and the fabulous remora and serra or winged saw-fish are discussed in the *Physiologus* and in the bestiaries. The whale has two characteristics. First, when he is hungry and lusts after food, he opens his wide mouth seaward and a pleasant odour issues from his maw, so that other fishes are deceived and swim eagerly towards the place whence the sweet odour comes. In heedless shoals they enter into his extended jaws; then suddenly the grim gums close and crush their prey. Thus the devil allures men to their destruction and closes upon them the barred gates of hell, from which they can no more escape than the fishes sporting in the ocean can return from the mouth of the whale.

Secondly, the mariners often mistake the whale, as it rests on the surface of the sea, for an island, on which they land and build a fire to cook their dinner, but when the whale begins to feel the heat through its thick hide, it plunges under the waves [123] and

engulphs all the brave seafarers with their high-prowed ships. In the old English bestiary this disaster is described in the succinct and graphic style of the old German epics. Here, too, the whale is the devil, the sea is the world, and the ship represents the human race.

Brunetto Latino states that the whale often remains stationary on the surface of the ocean, until it becomes incrustated with earth. From the seeds dropped by birds in this soil trees and shrubs spring up and grow to large forests, so that sailors are easily deceived and mistake the animal for an island. In the Book of Esdras (vi. 6) it is said that Behemoth and Leviathan, when they were created, covered each a seventh part of the earth. The Talmud adds that it would take a ship three days to sail from the head to the tail of one of these monsters; and some of the rabbis speak of whales fifteen stadia in length, which is a relatively sober estimate. An Arab writer maintains that the earth rests on the back of a whale, which performs the all-sustaining office of the turtle in Indian cosmogony, and that earthquakes and other convulsions of nature are caused by its occasional movements from one side to the other. The devil is constantly at work trying to persuade the whale to dive and thus destroy the world. Once the whale was just on the point of yielding to these Satanic solicitations, but was prevented by the merciful intervention of the Almighty, whereby the globe and its inhabitants were saved from such a catastrophe.

[124] In architecture sometimes only the ship is represented, and the whale left to the imagination of the beholder, as for example in the old Norman church at Alne, or the whale is given and the ship omitted, one object being deemed sufficient to suggest the



Whale and ship.

other. In the miniatures of the bestiaries the whole scene is usually depicted in such a manner as to illustrate both characteristics: the ship lies at anchor, the mariners are cooking their dinner under the shadow of trees on the back of the whale, into whose extended jaws shoals of little fish are swimming. A parchment codex of the Icelandic version of the Physiologus, dating from the thirteenth century, and now

preserved in the Arna-Magnæan collection of the University Library of Copenhagen, has two crude drawings, in which these characteristics of the whale are portrayed.

The remora, called *essinus* (*ἔχενηΐς*) in the bestiaries, and confounded with the sea-urchin, is a fish about a foot long and a native of the Indian Ocean, but so strong that it can keep a ship from moving by fastening itself to the keel. In storms it holds the vessel steady, and prevents it from capsizing when tossed by the tempest, and is therefore a type of the Saviour, the sea symbolizing the world, and the ship man buffeted by the waves of temptation, which threaten to engulph him. [125] Pliny (ix. 25 ; xxxii. i) extols the immense strength of this little fish, which, he says, decided the battle of Actium and the fate of the world by clinging to Anthony's galley and preventing it from going into

action. Similar statements are made by Ælian (ii. 17) and Suetonius (*In Caio*, xlix.), from whom the authors of the bestiaries seem to have derived their information. Thus we are told that, when Caligula was returning from Astura to Antium, a remora sucked itself fast to the imperial five-decker, and neutralized the efforts of four hundred oarsmen. Again, as Periander was about to send a galley from Corinth to Corcyra to murder three hundred children, a great number of these fish fastened themselves to the vessel and kept it from sailing, although the wind was favourable. Out of gratitude for this good deed the echeneis (ship-detainer) was fostered and revered in the temple of Venus at Cnidus. Oppianus, in his didactic poem on fishing (τὰ Ἀλιευτικά), describes the astonishment and anger of the fishermen, when their boats are kept stationary by the force of these sea-creatures. The marvels of this sort recounted by ancient writers are repeated and magnified in German mediæval poems of heroic adventure and achievement, like Graf Rudolf, Herzog Ernst, and the *Alexander* of Pfaffen Lamprecht. The remora is sometimes called serra, but the latter is usually described as a sea-dragon, a fire-breathing monster with wings like a griffin, the tail of a goose, and the feet of a swan. When it sees a ship it [126] flies after it for thirty or forty leagues, but finally grows weary and turns back to disport in the sea. It symbolizes those who follow for a season in the wake of the Church, but through lack of perseverance never reach the ark of safety.

According to the Physiologus, the phoenix is a native of India and Arabia. When it is five hundred years old, it flies to Lebanon, and fills its wings with the fragrant gum of a tree growing there, and thence hastens to Heliopolis in Egypt, where it burns itself upon the high altar in the temple of the sun. When the priest comes on the next day to offer sacrifice, he removes the ashes from the altar, and finds therein a small worm of exceedingly sweet odour, which in three days develops into a young bird, and on the fourth day attains its full size and plumage, and greeting the priest with reverence returns to its home. But if the phœnix, adds the exegetist, is able to destroy itself and to come to life again, why should the Jews murmur at the words of our Saviour, when He said: "I have power to lay down My life, and I have power to take it again"?

The perfume which fills the two wings of the phœnix symbolizes the sweetness of divine grace, as diffused through the books of the Old and New Testaments. Other expositors of Pelagian tendencies discern in these perfumes the good works which the righteous man accumulates, and by which he earns eternal life; and as the phœnix kindles the fire which consumes it by the fanning [127] motion of its own wings, so the saint, mounting up on the wings of heavenly meditation, has his soul enkindled and renewed by the flames of the Holy Spirit.

Cremation as practised by the Romans would naturally serve to make the phœnix still more suitable and striking as a symbol of the Resurrection and of immortality; in this sense the bird in the act of burning itself was often sculptured on cinerary urns with the inscription *D[is] M[anibus]*, and is also mentioned in Jewish writings as an emblem of the renewal of life and vigour. The Greek word for date-palm and phoenix is the same (φοῖνιξ), and the tree was fabled to die and then to spring up anew like the fowl. The

passage in Psalm xcii. 12, “The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree” (ὡς φοῖνιξ), may mean in the Septuagint like the phoenix, and was so understood by Tertullian and the *Physiologus*.

The phœnix, like so many other symbols, passed from the old to the new religion, and was transferred from the pagan urn to the Christian sarcophagus. Sometimes a date-palm is used to express the same idea; and very frequently the tree and the bird appear together. Mosaics in many early Christian churches, as for example in SS. Cosma e Damiano, St. Prassede, and St. Cecilia in Trastevere, represent the phœnix with a nimbus. Among the mosaics adorning the tribune of the Lateran is a large cross, and beneath it the New Jerusalem, out of the midst of which rises a stately palm-tree with a phoenix perched on its top.

[128] A similar type of the atoning Christ is the pelican, tearing open its breast and feeding its young with its own blood. When they are partly grown they smite their parents in the face and the old birds kill them ; but no sooner do the parents perceive what they have done than they repent of their rashness and have compassion on their dead offspring, and, sprinkling them with their own blood, restore them to life. In like manner, Christ was beaten and buffeted by the children of men, and yet shed His blood in order to give them eternal life. St. Augustine refers to this fable in his commentary on Psalm cii. 5 : “I am like a pelican in the wilderness,” and says : “The males of these birds are wont to kill their young by blows of their beaks, and then to bewail their death for the space of three days. At length, however, the female inflicts a severe wound on herself, and letting her blood flow over the dead ones, brings them to life again.” This



Pelican. (*Bestiary*.)

supposed fact of natural history is often adduced by patristic theologians in illustration and confirmation of the doctrine of the Atonement. In some old books of emblems, as well as in architecture, the same conduct is ascribed to the eagle and the vulture. The Egyptian Horapollo says : “The vulture is the type of the merciful man, because, if food cannot be obtained for its [129] young, it opens its own thigh and permits them to partake of its blood, so that they may not perish from want.” The Hebrew word for vulture, *râchâm*, meaning a compassionate creature, was doubtless a recognition of this supposititious virtue. On a gold coin of the time of Hadrian the phœnix appears with the inscription *sæc. aur.*, as indicating the restoration of the golden age under his reign; it occurs later on the coins and medals issued by Constantine and other Christian emperors.



Phoenix. (*Bestiary*.)

On the principal door of St. Laurence in Nuremberg a burning phoenix is sculptured under the lintel on the right, and a pelican, in the act of piercing its breast to feed its young, under the lintel on the left. There are similar representations on the doorway, as well as on the capitals, of some columns in the Ernestine Chapel of Magdeburg Cathedral, and probably date from the thirteenth century. Phoenix and pelican are carved on the stalls of Bâle Minster, belonging to the latter half of the fifteenth century. In the northern transept of the cathedral at Lund in Sweden, over the window, is a pelican rending its breast with its beak, and on the western wall a phoenix burning in its nest; on the eastern wall is a crucifix, and over an arch to the south a lion tearing a man, showing how the devil deals with heretics. There are in the same church [130] some curious carvings of animals on the stalls of the choir, symbolizing the conflict between Christianity and paganism. The phoenix and pelican are frequently associated with other creatures having a like spiritual significance. Thus in a picture with a Latin inscription in the church of St. Laurence, and one with a German inscription in St. Sebald's church in Nuremberg, the phoenix and the unicorn are on one side, and the pelican and the lion on the other side, emphasizing and enforcing by an accumulation of types the doctrines of the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ, and the redemption of mankind through His sufferings. A painting of a similar character, belonging to the Cologne school of the fourteenth century, was formerly in the possession of Dr. Bessel, president of the provincial court of Saarbrücken.

In the Florentine Galleria degli Uffizi, in the cabinet of gems, is a shrine of mountain crystal containing a golden casket adorned with a phoenix in enamel, and bearing the inscription "sic moriendo vita perennis." It is a masterpiece of one of the most celebrated lithoglyphic artists of the sixteenth century, Valerio Belli of Vicenza, better known as Valerio Vicentino, who made it for Pope Clement VII. (1523-34) as a pyx or receptacle for the host. The outer case is of rock crystal, and embellished with scenes from the life and Passion of Christ.

Both the phoenix and the pelican are used by sacred and secular poets of the middle ages and of modern times to illustrate the power of heavenly [131] and earthly love. Dante makes an original application of the fable in the *Inferno* (xxiv. 97-108), where he describes the damned in the seventh circle of hell as being burned and born again from their ashes to suffer an endless repetition of their torments, as the phoenix dies and renews its life every five hundred years. Elsewhere (Pt. xxv., 112) he speaks of Christ as "our pelican." The Sicilian lyrical poet, Inghilfredi, who flourished in the thirteenth century, confesses in one of his *canzoni* that he is at once consumed and rejuvenated by the fires of love, like the phoenix; and the Provençal poet, Aimeric de Pregulhan, is affected by the tender passion in the same way, and expresses himself in identical language. Giovanni dall' Orto, in *La Notte Gioconda*, praises the breath of the loved one as sweeter than the spices brought by the phoenix from India and Sheba for its funeral pyre. In another passage he entreats the fair dame, who has slain him in her anger, to take pity on him and, like the pelican, restore him to life by the manifestations of her affection. Reinmar von Zweter expresses the hope that the good may be self-

renewed like the phoenix, but that the bad may remain without issue like the same mythical fowl. Similes of this sort, in which diverse characteristics of a single animal serve to illustrate opposite qualities, were deemed especially clever.

The otter is described as a small animal resembling a dog, and an enemy of the crocodile. When the latter sleeps it keeps its mouth open; [132] but the otter wallows in the mire until it becomes thickly coated with mud, which dries and hardens and forms a sort of armour, thus enabling it to run securely into the jaws and down the throat of the sleeping crocodile, and to kill it by devouring its bowels. So our Saviour, after having put on flesh, descended into hell and carried away the souls dwelling therein; and as the otter comes forth unharmed from the belly of the crocodile, so our Lord rose from the grave on the third day, alive and uninjured. The ichneumon is fabled to slay the dragon in the same manner, and both animals are symbols of the triumph of the incarnate God over Satan.

Strabo states that the ichneumon attacks poisonous serpents, but never single-handed. It was therefore used in Egyptian hieroglyphics as an ideograph, signifying that union is strength. Ælian, Plutarch, and Pliny relate its feats of heroic audacity in entering the maw and eating the entrails of the crocodile; it was said to hunt up and destroy the eggs of this reptile, and was therefore cherished and revered as a public benefactor; hence, too, its name, the “tracker.” As a matter of fact, however, it not only devours insects and small quadrupeds, but also destroys doves, domestic fowls and their eggs, and all kinds of fruits, and does immense harm to the husbandman. The fellahin have no greater foe. The Greek word for otter, xxxxx, signifies also water-snake, and this ambiguity has caused it to be confounded with the hydra, whose [133] many heads, growing again as soon as they are lopped off, symbolize the fearfully prolific and ineradicable nature of original sin. For this reason the otter in the Waldensian Physiologus becomes the type of the devil, who puts on cunning disguises in order to insinuate himself into the heart of man and to compass his destruction. Owing to this confusion of terms the otter most frequently appears in the delineations of the artist as a serpent eating its way through the bowels of a nondescript monster supposed to be a crocodile.



Otter and Water-snake. (Psalter of Isabella of France.)

It is the nature of the panther to live in friendship with all animals except the dragon. It has a beautiful skin of many colours, like Joseph's coat, and is an exceedingly beautiful beast, tame and gentle. When it has eaten a little it is satisfied, and goes to sleep in its lair, and after three days it awakes and roars with a loud voice, and out of its

mouth proceeds a sweet smell. Then all the beasts of the forest far and near follow after it, attracted by this odour, which, according to an old English bestiary, is

“A steam more grateful,  
Sweeter and stronger  
Than every perfume,  
Than blooms of plants [134]  
And forest-leaves,  
Nobler than all Earth's ornaments.”

This rare scent is offensive only to the dragon, which hastens to flee as soon as it gets a sniff of it. In like manner our Lord Jesus Christ arose out of the sleep of death, and drew all nations unto Him through His “sweet savour.” As the Psalmist says: “The king’s daughter is all glorious within; her clothing is of wrought gold”; so the adornment of our Saviour is variegated through chastity, purity, meekness, kindness, peace, temperance, and every excellence. Again, in the words of the wise man: “Because of the savour of thy good ointments, thy name is as an ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee.” “Draw me, we will run after thee.” “The smell of thine ointments” he declares to be “better than all spices.” Also the passage in Hosea (v. 14), which reads in the Septuagint, “I will be unto Ephraim as a panther and as a lion to the house of Judah,” is cited as pertinent. Finally Christ, like the panther, discomfits “the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil.”

A German poet of the twelfth century attributes the perfume of the panther’s breath to its diet, consisting of aromatic roots and herbs that impart to it a balmy quality, which is not only grateful to the senses, but also healing to the beasts that inhale it. According to this view, the creature is a sort of peripatetic sanitarium, and is for this reason attended by a large concourse of animals [135] which seek to be cured of their ailments. The attraction is not so much æsthetic and sentimental as medical or veterinary. The hygienic influence of the panther is prophylactic as well as remedial, so that, if one were disposed to carry the quibbling spirit of patristic theologians into the province of paranomasia, the beast might be called “an *ounce* of prevention.” The breath of the panther is often likened to the virtue which went out of Christ and healed the woman who touched the hem of His garment.

In ecclesiastical architecture the panther is sometimes represented as facing the dragon, as, for example, on the doorway of the church at Alne, in Yorkshire. More frequently, however, the dragon is fleeing from the panther, which is followed by numerous beasts, usually divided into two groups, those nearest the panther typifying the Jews, and those farther off the Gentiles; as the Apostle



Panther and Dragon. (Bestiary.)

Paul says of Christ, He “came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.”

In Hugo von Langenstein’s poem, *The Martyrdom of St. Martina*, written in 1293, a very elaborate allegory of the panther is introduced to illustrate the sufferings and virtues of his holy heroine. He characterizes Christ as the “heavenly panther,” and the variegated skin of the animal is [136] minutely interpreted in a mystical sense as symbolizing the wisdom, love, humility, mercy, justice, and other attributes of the Redeemer, about twenty of which are specially mentioned. Lauchert gives numerous examples of rhetorical and metaphorical allusions to this fable in profane literature. Thus an anonymous troubadour of the thirteenth century compares the power of Amor to that of the panther, whose sweet breath and beautiful colour attract all beasts with so irresistible force that they would rather die than not to follow in its footsteps. The Sicilian lyric poet Inghilfredi, already mentioned, expresses the fascination he feels by the same simile. Guido delle Colonne and Messer Polo celebrate the modesty of their mistresses, who are as unconscious of their sweetness and beauty as the panther. The same imagery is employed by poet laureates and royal panegyrists. Frauenlob likens the persuasive voice of Count Ludwig of Oettingen to the sweet breath of the panther; and another Meissen poet uses this comparison with reference to Albrecht II. of Brandenburg, the founder of Berlin. Master Rumeland of Saxony, a wandering minstrel, who sang the praises of many princes, extols Duke Ludwig of Bavaria as an eagle, a leopard, a panther, and indeed a whole menagerie of typical beasts and birds. Konrad von Würzburg turns the point of the trope against low-minded sovereigns, and says that a mean prince shuns the society of the pure and noble as the dragon flees from the panther.

[137] In the *Lay of the Nibelungen*, Siegfrid bears a large quiver covered with panther’s skin, which emits a pleasant odour, and emblemizes the irresistible charm of the youthful hero; and in Pfaffen Lamprecht’s *Alexander*, a curious work of the goldsmith’s art belonging to Queen Candace is described, namely, an automatic panther, which not only howled, but also exhaled sweet perfumes. The account is too realistic to be a mere product of the fancy, and is probably the description of something which the poet had seen, and, if so, proves to what perfection this kind of artistic handicraft was carried in the twelfth century. The characteristics of the panther are likewise set forth in *Reinaert de Vos* (Martin’s ed., pp. 54-55 sqq.).

The later bestiaries derive the word panther from  $\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu$ , signifying all, and implying that it was the whole world which Christ came to redeem. This idea of the universality of the Atonement is expressed by the Norman clerk in *Le Bestiaire Divin* as follows—

“Pantiere dit, qui bien entent,  
Tant comme chose qui tot prent,  
Et senefie, sanz error,  
Jhesu Crist nostre Sauveor,  
Qui par sa grant humilité  
Vesti nostre charnalité,  
Et trest toz les siecles a sei.”

In this connection it may be mentioned as a singular coincidence that, according to an ancient tradition, the real father of Jesus was a Roman soldier named Panthera. [138]

The three beasts that obstructed Dante's path as he found himself at the midway of life erring in a dark and savage wood, were a panther, a lion, and a wolf, supposed to be the types of luxury, pride, and greed; but they have nothing in common with the animal symbolism of the *Physiologus*.

The testicles of the beaver, we are told, contain a precious substance, which heals divers diseases, and especially convulsions, once regarded as a sure sign of diabolical possession. When the animal is pursued by the hunters, and is in danger of being caught, it bites off its private parts and thus saves its life; for it is a sagacious creature,



Beaver. (*Bestiary*.)

and knows why it is hunted. Afterwards, when it is chased, it throws itself on its back, so that the hunter may see that what he seeks is no longer there, and go his way. But thou, O man, separate from thyself the works of the flesh, which are adulteries, fornications, revellings, and envyings, and throw them to the devil, who hunteth after thy soul, saying: "I will pursue my enemies and overtake them." Then canst thou exclaim with the Psalmist: "Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler; the snare is broken, and we are escaped."

It is well known that the beaver secretes in two inguinal sacs a caseous substance with a pungent perfume called castoreum. The fable related by [139] the *Physiologus* is of very ancient date, and is recorded by the Egyptian priest Horapollo, as well as by Apuleius, Pliny, Ælian, and Juvenal, and was generally accepted as true by mediæval writers. Albertus Magnus, as we have seen, rejects it as "false, although frequently reported in parts of our land." In art, the beaver is commonly represented in the act of self-mutilation, which suffices to tell the whole story, the hunters being left to the imagination. Konrad von Würzburg chooses an odd and rather far-fetched comparison, when he commends to princes the prudence of the beaver, which saves its life by voluntarily depriving itself of what is dearest to it; he thereby intends to inculcate the virtue of liberality freely exercised for the public weal, and without stint of self-sacrifice.

Still more marvellous is the account which the *Physiologus* gives of the hyena. This filthy beast, he says, haunts cemeteries and feeds on corpses. It has also the power of changing its sex, the same individual being sometimes male and sometimes female. This characteristic is used to illustrate the vice censured by Paul in his epistle to the Romans (i. 2., 27). In the Latin version of the *Physiologus* the hyena is made a type of the Jews, who at first had a knowledge of the true and living God, but now subsist on dry bones and dead ceremonials. They were the prophets of the Messiah and foretold

His advent, but rejected Him when He appeared. As Jeremiah says (xii. 9, Septuagint) “The lair of the hyena has become my heritage.” [140] In the bestiaries the words of James (i. 8, curiously enough attributed to Solomon), “A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways,” and the saying of Christ, “No man can serve two masters,” are cited as texts, the truth of which the habits of the hyena exemplify and establish.

In the apocryphal epistle of Barnabas (ix. 8) it is said: “Neither shalt thou eat of the hyena; that is, again, be not an adulterer, nor a corrupter of others; neither be like to such. And wherefore so? Because that creature every year changes its kind, and is sometimes male and sometimes female.” Philippe de Thauin, in his *Book of Creatures*, speaks of the hyena as “une beste mauvaise et orde,” a foul and ugly beast, stinking and very fierce, digging into graves and devouring carrion. He begins his account of this animal with the following general observations—

“Moult est a dire et a retraire  
Es essamples del Bestiaire,  
Qui sunt de bestes et de oiseaus,  
Moult profitables, boens et beaus.  
Et le livre si nos enseigne  
En quel guise le mal remaigne,  
Et la veie que deit tenir  
Cil qui a Deu veult revertir.”

Sir Walter Raleigh, in his *History of the World* (London, 1614), excludes hybrids from Noah’s ark, and mentions hyenas as belonging to this class. He asserts that only pure species were saved, and not mongrels. After the Deluge, hyenas, he says, were reproduced by a cross between the dog and [141] the cat. This notion is about as correct as his belief that before the Deluge there were mountains thirty miles high, which were reduced to their present elevation by the abrasive action of the water.

The eyes of the hyena are fabled to turn into jewels when it dies; and the *Physiologus* asserts that it has in its eye a stone which, if it be placed under the tongue, enables a man to foretell future events. In the East the hyena is universally regarded as an incarnation of the sorcerer, and Arabian folk-lore is especially full of fearful stories of the doings of wizards and witches, who assume this form for diabolical purposes. The fact that the hyena is seldom seen by day, but begins to make night hideous with its cries as soon as it grows dark, tends to confirm the popular superstition that the creature is a man who has transformed himself into this filthy beast with the going down of the sun. For this reason a dread of the hyena as uncanny and capable of inflicting injury by malign and magical influences, prevails among all African and Asiatic peoples, where this animal has its habitat. Dogs, it is believed, lose their bark and scent if the shadow of a hyena falls upon them; he who tastes of its brain goes mad, and the hunter who kills it is sure to be pursued by its vindictive ghost.

In architecture the hyena is usually represented as preying upon the prostrate form of a man, probably a corpse, which it has dug out of a [142] grave; it symbolizes vice battenning on corruption. Sometimes, as among the sculptures on the church at Alne, we find the



Hyena (*Bestiary*.)

figure of the hyena standing alone, an embodiment of the evil principle in its most offensive form. The salamander is a large lizard, which does not fear the fire, but puts it out by passing into it, and typifies the righteous man, who is not consumed by the fires of luxury and lust, but extinguishes them. As the Apostle Paul states: “Through faith they stopped the mouths of lions and quenched the violence of fire”; and the prophet Isaiah says of the just man: “When thou walkest through fire thou shalt not be burned.” This was the case with the three Hebrew youths Ananias, Azarias, and Misael (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego), who were cast into the burning fiery furnace, and came forth

unharmd, with no smell of fire on their garments.

The incombustible mineral substance known as amianthus was once supposed to be salamander’s skin. In *Les Proprietes des Bestes* it is related that the Emperor of India had a full suit of clothes made of a thousand skins of salamanders, which he wore as a coat of mail in battle; and Vincent de Beauvais in his *Speculum Naturale* asserts that Pope Alexander III. had a tunic made of the same stuff, which was palish white [143] in colour, and, when dirty, was cleansed by being thrown into the fire instead of being put into the wash-tub. There is no reason for regarding these stories as mere inventions, except in respect to the nature and origin of the material, since this method of cleaning asbestos garments by heating them red-hot is still practised by some tribes of Western China.

This fabulous and formidable lizard has been reduced by more careful observation to a small frog-like reptile with rows of tubercles on its sides, which secrete a milky poisonous fluid in sufficient quantities to extinguish a live coal and slightly to retard the action of fire.

Italian erotic poets are fond of referring to the salamander as typical of the lover, who either rejoices in the amorous fire (“il fuoco amoroso”) as his native element, or regrets that he does not possess the nature of this reptile in order that he may not be utterly consumed by his passion.

“As the partridge gathereth young which she hath not brought forth, so he that getteth riches and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be as a fool.” This passage from Jeremiah is quoted by the Physiologus as referring to the thievish propensity of the partridge in stealing the eggs of other birds and hatching them, but when the young are grown, they recognize their real parents and fly to them, leaving their self-constituted foster-mother standing alone like a fool. This bird is the type of the [144] devil, who seeks to gather to himself the children of men, but when they

grow in wisdom and are come to a knowledge of the truth, they forsake the devil and his works, and flee to their natural mother, the Church.

The habit here ascribed to the partridge does not seem to have been known to any Greek or Roman naturalist; but in the *Institutes* of Manu it is said that persons who steal raiment are destined to be reborn as grey or speckled partridges, according to the colour of the vestments stolen. The penalty thus inflicted by the strictly retributive laws of metempsychosis would imply certain pilfering propensities on the part of the bird, and may be based upon a supposed tendency to steal eggs originating in a desire for numerous offspring.



Partridge and her Fosterlings. (*Bestiary*.)

The partridge is monogamous in its domestic habits, and has the feeling of conjugal attachment and parental affection very strongly developed. It possesses a remarkably benevolent disposition, and is distinguished in a high degree for the sentiment corresponding to philanthropy or altruism in man, adopting the orphans of other partridges and treating them with the same tenderness as its own young; but there is no evidence that its philo-progenitiveness ever manifests itself in thievery of any sort. That

such an exceptionally noble and virtuous fowl [145] should be condemned to figure the devil in Christian typology is only an additional proof of the perversions of hermeneutical theology.

Artistic delineations of this supposed characteristic in bestiaries, missals, and other books of devotion, as well as in sacred edifices, usually show the partridge sitting alone in her nest, while her fosterlings are hastening to join their real mother in the air above.

The charadrius (a species of plover) is a white bird without a dark spot on it; and when a person is sick it is brought to his bedside in order to determine whether he will recover or not. If the sickness is unto death, then the bird turns away from him; but if he is predestined to live, then the charadrius looks steadfastly into his face and draws the malady out of him, and, flying up towards the sun, causes the disease to be consumed by the solar heat, so that the sick man is restored to health. In like manner Jesus Christ, on whom there was neither spot nor wrinkle, came down from heaven and turned his face away from the Jews, but looked with favour upon the Gentiles and healed them of their spiritual infirmities. Only those upon whom the Lord lifts up the light of His countenance are sure of eternal life.

In architecture, and in the formative arts generally, the charadrius is represented as looking at the sick person or turning away its head, or quite frequently as flying up into the air. The last-mentioned movement of the bird is also a sign [146] of restoration to health, since it is carrying off the malady or, more scientifically speaking, the bacteria of disease to be burned and destroyed by the intense heat of the sun. This scene is carved in stone on the doorway of the church at Alne; and in the border of a lancet

window in the apsis of the cathedral at Lyons is the picture of a woman half-reclining on a couch, while a bird is stretching out its beak close to her left hand, which lies in her lap, and another bird is flying towards her with its head slightly averted. Such delineations are often found in missals, prayer-books, and similar aids to devotion, as, for example, in the profusely and curiously illustrated manuscript psalter of Isabella of France, now in the Royal Library at Munich.



Charadrius. (*Bestiary.*)

The marrow of the thigh-bone and the lungs of this bird, which were believed to be a sure cure for blindness, are compared to the chrism, and signify the supernatural power that opens the eyes of the spiritually blind and causes them to perceive the truth, as in the case of Saul.

A minnesinger likens his lady-love to the charadrius, and declares that it is a question of life or [147] death whether her face is turned from or towards him. Another poet wishes that he possessed this fatal faculty in order that he might turn his eyes from mean and sordid mortals and thus destroy them, and insure long life to the noble and liberal-minded by looking benignantly upon them.

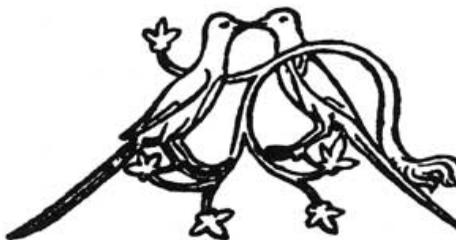
Both the crow and the turtle-dove are typical of Christian constancy and devotion. If either of these birds loses its mate, it never takes another, but lives a life of solitude. As our Lord went with only three disciples to the Mount of Olives, where He was transfigured before them and heard an approving voice from heaven, so His followers should withdraw from the world and devote themselves to religious meditation.

The turtle-dove is often referred to in poetry as a symbol of fidelity; thus Gottfried von Strasburg calls the Virgin Mary a turtle-dove in faithfulness. When it loses its mate it renounces all the pleasures of life, never again perches on a green bough, but sits disconsolate on a dry branch, and never drinks clear water, but first muddies the stream with its feet, and drinks the foul water as evidence of its sorrow.

A celebrated Spanish lyric poet and doctor of theology of the sixteenth century, Fray Luis Ponce de Leon, in his famous version of Solomon's Song, which caused him to be imprisoned for five years in the dungeons of the Inquisition, translates the eleventh verse of the first chapter thus: "We will make thee turtle-doves of gold with tips of silver." [148] The Hebrew word *thor* (necklace) meant in his opinion an ornament in the form of a turtle-dove, such as lovers were wont to present to their ladies in token of

enduring affection, and the bridegroom in the Song of Songs promises his bride to give her one of gold, with its beak, tail, and claws tipped with silver.

In architectural decoration and works of art, two turtle-doves are represented sitting together on a green bough, or a single one perched on a dead branch mourning its mate. The latter is a symbol of the man who is steadfast under tribulation, and of whom it is said, “he that endureth to the end shall be saved.”



Turtle-doves. (*Psalter of Isabella of France.*)

suitable food. So the righteous do not care for the corrupt things of this world and the offal of evil-mindedness, neither do they wander hither and thither after false doctrines, but abide in the simplicity of the faith in the bosom of the Church, where they are nourished with the pure bread of life. The ousel and the merl, on account of the sweetness of their song, are typical of the grace of God, and the hoopoe of filial affection.

[149] The swallow, says the *Physiologus*, sleeps all winter, and wakes to new and vigorous life in the spring, as it is written: “Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” Luther, in his Latin commentary on the passage in Genesis (i. 20), in which it is said that the waters brought forth the fowl that fly above the earth and in the open firmament of heaven, states, in confirmation of the aqueous origin of birds, that even now swallows lie dormant all winter in the water, and issue from it in the vernal season, rising into the air and thus repeating annually the process of creation, and proving the truth of Holy Writ.

Ravens, according to the *Physiologus*, are hatched featherless, and remain callow for a long time, and are therefore not recognized by their parents, who take no care of them. In their distress they cry to God, who sends them manna in the form of dew for nourishment, as the Psalmist says : “He giveth food to the young ravens which cry.” After twelve days, when the feathers begin to grow, the old birds recognize their offspring and feed them. Thus man, although made in the image of God, has lost all resemblance to his Creator; but when he has grown through grace into the divine likeness, then God recognizes him as His child, and nurtures him through the sacraments of the Church, and does not let him perish. Another characteristic of the raven is that, when it finds a



Raven. (*Bestiary.*)

carcass, it first eats the eye. The great religious truth drawn [150] from this fact of natural history is that “confession and penance are the ravens which pull out the eyes of covetousness from the soul dead in trespasses and sins.” In our illustration both of these symbolisms of the raven are set forth.

Concerning the wolf, the bestiaries inform us that the word means ravisher, and this is, in fact, the signification of the Sanskrit name of the animal, *vrika*, seizer. For this reason, they add, the term is applied to lewd women.<sup>13</sup> A peculiarity of the wolf is that it cannot turn its head, because there is no joint in its neck, but must turn its whole body when it wishes to look behind, thus symbolizing people stiff-necked and stubborn in sin. The female whelps in the month of May, when it thunders, and at no other time. She seeks food by night, approaching the sheepfold noiselessly and against the wind, in order that the dogs may not scent her; and if she steps on a dry twig, so that it breaks and crackles, she bites her foot severely as a punishment for her carelessness. Her nature is such that if she is seen by a man with her mouth shut, then she loses the power of opening [151] it, but if a man is seen by her with his mouth open, then he loses his voice. When she is hungry, she fills her stomach with clay, but when she has taken prey, she puts her paw into her gullet and vomits the clay, and sates herself with flesh. Albertus Magnus, who gives this account of the wolf's method of stilling the pangs of hunger, states likewise that the wolf is in the habit of lubricating its paws with spittle in order to render its footsteps inaudible.<sup>14</sup> Brunetto Latino relates in his *Thesaurus*, that the wolf often presses its paw to its mouth in order to falsify or magnify its voice, and thus frighten the shepherds by making them think a whole pack is coming. In an engraving published by Cahier (*Mel. d'Arch.*, ii., pl. xxii., BM) a wolf is approaching a sheepcote, and holding its paw to its mouth. It may be biting or lubricating its paw, keeping its mouth open, disgorging clay with the prospect of filling its maw with tender and succulent mutton, magnifying its voice, or practising any of the tricks which symbolize the many ruses of the devil in his dealings with mankind.



Wolf. (*Bestiary.*)

It is superfluous and would be tedious to make further citations from the Physiologus, since the specimens already given suffice to illustrate the [152] character and purpose of the work. It enjoyed a high reputation among the early Christians, and, as we have seen, has

<sup>13</sup> *Lupa* means she-wolf and prostitute, and *lupanar*, wolf's lair and brothel. *Ovis*, sheep, signifies ninny or simpleton, and the English word is used as a term of contempt. Plautus in his comedies ridicules the fast young men of his time as sheep that cannot keep away from the wolves and their dens.

<sup>14</sup> “Vadens lupus per frondes lambit et lubricas facit pedes, ne incessus audiat.”—*De Animal.* xxii., Tract. II.

been translated into a score or more of Oriental and Occidental languages. At an early period in the history of the Church it was condemned as heretical, and forbidden to the faithful by the apocryphal decree of Gelasius, but found not long afterwards a powerful patron in Gregory the Great, who made very free use of it in scriptural exposition. From the seventh to the twelfth century it was universally esteemed as a Christian compendium of natural history, and a popular epitome of moral and theological instruction. During this period most of the translations and paraphrases of it were made, now kept as curiosities in old libraries, to which they have been transmitted as the musty heirlooms of mediæval monasteries, secularized and suppressed by the progress of modern civilization.

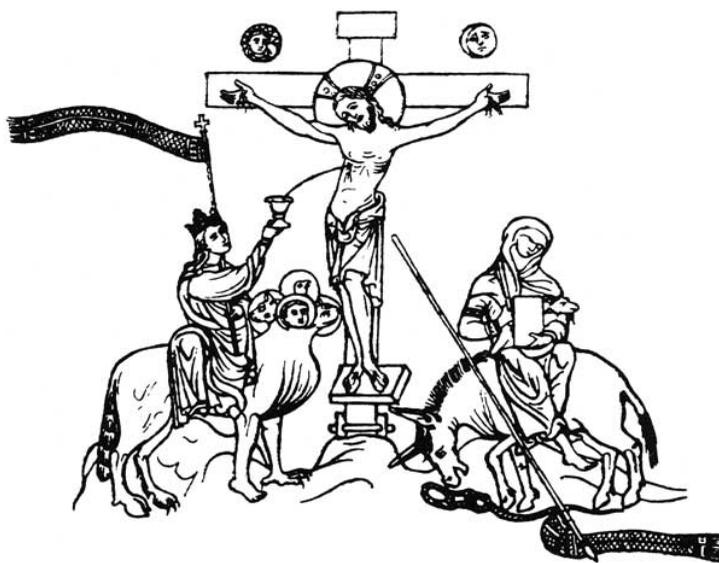
The invention of printing naturally gave the work a wider diffusion as a folk-book; but long before the birth of Gutenberg and the age of movable types, it was cited by preachers and theologians, and used by artists for the illustration of sacred themes, as may be seen in illuminated manuscripts of the Bible, and in mediæval missals and similar books of devotion. Thus, in a codex of the Vulgate of the seventh century, the initials and capitals are composed of doves, fishes, eagles, and other symbolical creatures; and an Evangelium, once the property of Charlemagne, and now [153] belonging to the National Library of Paris, contains a miniature representing the gospel fountain in the form of a Byzantine baptistery, to which all beasts and birds are flocking for refreshment. The beautifully-illuminated parchment psalter of Isabella of France, dating from the middle of the fourteenth century, and already mentioned as one of the treasures of the Royal Library of Munich, has the margins adorned with drawings of animals, which have no direct relation to the text, but only a far-fetched symbolical significance, inasmuch as they elucidate the teachings of the Physiologus, and represent scenes from Jewish history and mythology supposed to have a prefigurative character.

Virtues and vices are often figured by women contending for victory, and bearing shields on which are inscribed their names or emblems, as, for example, the twelve virtues and twelve vices in the cathedral at Amiens; sometimes they are riding on animals, as in the miniatures of a manuscript in the Musée de Cluny dating from the fourteenth century. Here Humility is mounted on a panther, Chastity on a unicorn; Patience or Christian Resignation wears a helmet adorned with a swan, because this fowl sings with its dying breath like the martyrs; Love bears a pelican on her shield; Devotion rides an ibex, the symbol of aspiration and perseverance, owing to its fondness for high altitudes and its climbing power, and has a phoenix on her shield to signify the renewing [154] virtue of fervid piety; Pride has an eagle on her shield, because this bird discards those of her young which cannot endure the fierce light of the sun, as a haughty spirit despises the meek and lowly; on the shield of Lust is a siren, whose sweet song allures men to their destruction.

In the cloister connected with the cathedral of Le-Puy-en-Velay are mural paintings personifying Grammar, Logic, Rhetoric (the trivium), and Music. Logic is a female figure in a stately cathedra, and at her feet is Aristotle sitting on a stool and earnestly carrying on a discussion, and noting the points of his argument on his fingers.

Underneath is the motto: “Me sine doctores frustra coluere sorores”; implying that the sister arts cultivate dialectics in vain without the aid of the doctors or men of learning. Logic has a rather amused expression, and holds in her hands a lizard and a scorpion engaged in fierce combat, a parody of scholastic disputations and the proverbial venom of *odium theologicum*.

In the Bibles of the tenth century the evangelists are pictured as men with the heads of beasts; and the four gospels are summed up symbolically in the form of the so-called “Tetramorph,” a four-bodied and four-headed monster composed of man, ox, eagle, and lion, with wings covered with eyes like a peacock’s tail, a combination of incongruities surpassing in whimsicalness the famous Florentine bronze of the Etruscan chimera, or the marvellous creations of Indian and Egyptian mythology. A [155] mosaic of the thirteenth century in the monastery of Vatopedi on Mt. Athos shows the four heads enveloped by six wings, and the feet of the man resting on two-winged wheels, as described in the visions of Ezekiel and of St. John the Divine. A tetramorph sculptured out of stone, ridden by a woman with a crown on her head, and dating from the year 1300, adorns the south portal of the cathedral at Worms, and is exhibited in a plaster cast in the Germanic Museum at Nuremberg. It typifies the rapid triumph of the gospel.



The Gospel and the Law. (*Hortus Deliciarum*.)

A miniature in the *Hortus Deliciarum*, formerly in the [156] Strasburg Library, represents a similar monster, on which is seated a woman wearing a crown, bearing a banner, holding a goblet in her hand, and catching the blood from the side of the crucified Saviour; another woman mounted on an ass, and partially blindfolded, holds in her right hand a knife, and in her left hand the tables of the law and a ram for sacrifice. They signify respectively the New and the Old Dispensation. Above the cross

on the gospel side is a radiant sun, and on the opposite side a waning moon. The standard of Judaism, instead of floating in the breeze, has fallen to the ground; the attitude of the ass and the noose at its feet are intended to illustrate the passage referring to the cross as “a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling-block” to Israel.

On the cover of an Evangelarium in the cathedral library of Trier is a plate of copper enamel engraved with biblical scenes; in the centre is the Crucifixion, and standing round the cross are Mary and John and the symbolical figures of the Church and the Synagogue; above are the sun and moon in eclipse, indicating that “there was darkness over all the earth.”

The church of Saint-Nizier at Troyes has a stained window of the sixteenth century with a representation of the apocalyptic beast which rose out of the sea having seven heads and ten horns, as well as of the other beast, which came up out of the earth and had two horns like a lamb; the artist appears, however, to have been over-liberal in [157] endowing the monster with eleven horns, counting that of the snail.



Beasts of the Apocalypse. (*Saint-Nizier of Troyes.*)

In the church of St. Nicholas at Göttingen is a picture dating from 1424, and symbolizing the origin and formation, or rather the fabrication, of Christian theology. God the Father appears in the sky with the four evangelists as man, ox, eagle, and lion, hovering like angels beneath Him and holding Him up. Each has in his hand a vessel from which he pours the contents of his gospel, [158] indicated by a label containing the first words of it, into two mills turned by the twelve apostles by means of long bars. The

several gospels, thus reduced to homogeneous pulp by passing through the mills of the epistles, run out into a large goblet held by a pope, an archbishop, a bishop, and a cardinal. It is designed to show that the evangelists were inspired by God to write the gospels, which were then elaborated by the apostles into doctrinal consistency as the expressed juice of Scripture or essence of theology, and that this product is in the keeping of the Church and to be dispensed by the sacerdotal order. On two labels issuing from the lower part of the mill are inscribed the words *et deus erat vbm* (“and the Word was God”) and *et vbm caro fctm. e.* (“and the Word was made flesh”). Here we have the crude symbolism of the divine Incarnation, as it is ground out of Holy Writ by apostolic theologians and presented in potable form to believers by ecclesiastical dignitaries. We may add, as an interesting coincidence, that this conception of our sacred writings corresponds to that entertained by the Brahmans, who speak of the magical and supernatural virtue inherent in the Vedic hymns or mantras as the juice (*rasa*) of the metres, which is expressed and utilized by the ritual machinery of song and sacrifice. This essence is the wonderworking *brahma*, the monopoly of which by the priests is the chief source of their power.

On the capital of a column in the abbey of Vézelay in Burgundy is a relief representing two [159] men working at a mill, one pouring corn into the hopper, and the other turning the crank and holding a sack to receive the flour. St. Jerome, in his exposition of Matthew xxiv. 41, says the two women, there said to be grinding at the



Gospel-mill. (Abbey of Vézelay in Burgundy.)

mill, signify the Synagogue and the Church; the former brings the wheat of the law, and the latter separates from it the fine flour of the gospel, leaving only the bran of empty ceremonialism as the portion of Judaism. This forced interpretation was not original

with the learned and ingenious anchorite, but seems to have been traditional in the primitive Church, and is frequently met with in patristic theology.

[160] The two men in the relief just mentioned are a Hebrew prophet and the Apostle Paul. The latter, who was educated as a disciple of Gamaliel and became the first systematic theologian of the Church and the real founder of dogmatic and historical Christianity, dwells in his epistles with peculiar emphasis on the relations of Judaic rites and ceremonies to the New Dispensation, and might therefore be fitly portrayed as an assiduous toiler at the typological mill, by which, in the words of a Father, the precious grain of the Old Testament Scriptures is ground and bolted and converted into the flour of gospel truth. In a mediæval Latin verse descriptive of this process the apostle of the Gentiles is expressly mentioned—

“Tollis, agendo molam, de furfure Paule farinam;  
Mosaicæ legis intima nota facis.  
Fit de tot granis verus sine furfure panis  
Perpetuusque cibus poster et angelicus.”

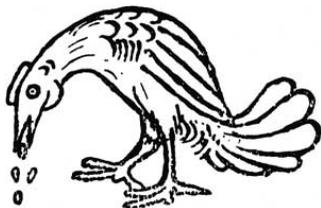
“Turning the mill, O Paul, thou takest the flour from the bran;  
The hidden things of the Mosaic law thou makest known.  
Of so many grains is made true bread without bran,  
Eternal food for us and food for the angels.”

The symbolism of the mill is often delineated on painted windows, as, for example, in the cathedral of St. Etienne in Bourges and in Canterbury Cathedral. According to a description of the Benedictine Abbey of Saint-Denis written by the celebrated Abbot Suger in the twelfth century (*de rebus administration sua gestis*), one of the [161] stained windows contained a representation of the prophets pouring grain into the hopper of a mill, while Paul turns the crank and bags the grist. The same idea of the propædeutic and prefigurative relation of Judaism to Christianity is expressed on another gorgeously-stained window in the cathedral of Bourges by the ark of the covenant surmounted by a crucifix and drawn by a man, an ox, an eagle, and a lion, the four beasts of the evangelists, thus transforming the sacred repository of the tables of the law into the triumphal chariot of the cross, as intimated in the accompanying inscription

“Fœderis ex arca cruce Christi sistitur ara,  
Fœdere majori vult ibi Vita mori ...”

In a window of the church at Bron in France, belonging to the sixteenth century, there is a painting of Christ seated on a globe in a four-wheeled chariot drawn by an angel, an ox, a lion, and an eagle, and attended by a pope and a cardinal at the fore wheels and two bishops at the hind wheels, pushing it along. An ivory carving of the eleventh century in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, shows the Virgin with a cross on her shoulder, a book in her hand, and her feet on a lion, a dragon, a crocodile, and wolf, and in a manuscript of the same period in the National Library at Paris the Virgin holds a palm branch and tramples on a skeleton and a dragon, signifying the victory of the gospel over death and the powers of darkness.

It is rather strange that the cock, which is so [162] frequently mentioned in the Scriptures, and which plays so important and honourable a part as the monitor and reprover of the cowardly and recreant Peter, should be entirely passed over by the *Physiologus* and the bestiaries. On ancient pagan and early Christian sarcophagi two fighting-cocks are often sculptured, one of which has already succumbed to the onsets of its adversary, and were probably intended to represent the battle of life. The cock typifies both vigilance and liberality, because it is always on the watch, and when it finds anything, it does not eat it, but calls the hens



Cock calling hens.  
(*Psalter of Isabella of France.*)

together and divides it among them. In like manner the preacher should distribute among his flock the kernels of divine truth which he discovers in Holy Writ, picking them into pieces in order that they may be more readily taken in and digested, as a mediæval poet declares—

“Gallus granum reperit, convocat uxores  
Et illud distribuit inter cariores.  
Tales discant clerici pietatis mores,  
Dando suis subditis scripturarum flores;  
Sic sua distribuere cunctis derelictis,  
Atque curam gerere nudis stafflictis.”

It might be added that the preacher should not be a weather-cock, blown about by every wind of doctrine. In the Musée de Cluny is a manuscript of roundelays addressed to Louise of Savoy, [163] Countess of Angoulême and mother of Francis I. of France, with illustrations of the seven Virtues subduing their opposite Vices; among them is Liberality mounted on a cock pouring gold coins out of a vessel with one hand and holding a large platter or salver in the other; at her feet is Avarice bestriding an ape.

The cockatrice or basilisk, on the other hand, holds a prominent place in mediæval symbology and ecclesiastical architecture. This little king (*βασιλίσκος*) of reptiles, so called because the wart on its head resembles a crown, had the reputation of being a terror to all its subjects, the most venomous serpents fleeing affrighted when they hear its hiss. It is hatched from the egg laid by a cock in the seventh year of its age, and it happens in this wise. When the egg has grown large, it produces an intense griping in the bowels of the cock, which seeks a warm place in a stable or on a dung-heap, and there lays the egg. A serpent or toad then comes and sits on it, and



Liberality and Avarice.  
(*Manuscript in Musée de Cluny.*)

hatches a creature with the head of a cock and the body of a reptile. No [164] sooner is it born than it hides itself in a crevice or cistern, or in the rafters of a house, so as not to be seen by any one; for such is its nature that if a man sees it before it sees him, it will die, but if it sees him first, he will fall down dead. It has also the power of darting poison from its eyes, so deadly that it kills birds flying over the spot where it lies hidden; even herbs and shrubs, which it touches in passing, wither away. This baneful reptile is beautiful in form and colour, having a skin of variegated hues spotted with white; but, adds the author in a moralizing strain, beauty is often associated with badness. Whoever wishes to slay the basilisk, holds before his face a vessel of crystal through which he looks at the beast; and the crystal not only arrests the venom issuing from its eyes, but even causes it to be reflected and hurled back upon the animal, which is killed by the fatal recoil.

The basilisk signifies the devil, who entered into Paradise and enticed our first parents to eat of the forbidden fruit. For this transgression they were driven forth from Eden, and when they had passed away from the earth, which they had corrupted, they were cast into the burning pit with the basilisk. Then the merciful Son of the King of Heaven took pity on the many people poisoned by this old serpent, which no one had been able to destroy; and He chose a vessel clearer than crystal, the blessed body of our Lady, the purest of virgins, in which to encounter the direful foe. And when the basilisk [165] darted the venom from its eyes, the vessel caught it and threw it back upon the reptile, which languished during the thirty years of Christ's incarnation, until the victory was fully won by the crucifixion. And after He had been placed in the tomb, He rose again on the third day and descended into the pit, where the basilisk had concealed itself, and rescued all those who had been infected with its poison from the time of Adam, and restored them to everlasting life.



Fighting the Basilisk. (Abbey of Vézelay.)

Jacopo da Lentino in his erotics makes the fable illustrate the perils of love; and a Provençal poet, Aimeric de Pregulhan, compares himself to a basilisk and his mistress to a mirror, which he cannot look upon without being smitten to death.

The basilisk figures frequently in illustrations of devotional works and in sacred architecture, as, for [166] example, on the capital of a column in the church of the Abbey of Vézelay, where a man approaches the hissing reptile, holding a conical vessel as a shield before his face; near him is an enormous locust with a human head. This sculpture symbolizes the redemption of the Gentile world from the thralls of Satan by the atonement of Christ. Beda, in his commentary on the thirtieth chapter of Proverbs, says: “Locusts refer to the nations formerly without Christ for their king, without prophets, without teachers; but now gathered together in the unity of the faith, they hasten to the spiritual combat against the devil.” This is a spiritualization of the passage: “The locusts have no king, yet they go forth all of them in bands” (xxx. 27), or, as it reads in the Vulgate: “Regem locusta non habet, et egreditur universa per suas turmas,” a rendering which facilitates the symbolical interpretation given by the venerable Anglo-Saxon presbyter.

Gregory the Great, in his exposition of Job (*Moralia, sine Expositiones in Jobum*), states, in explanation of the verse “Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper?” that grasshopper or locust signifies converted paganism (“conversa gentilitas”). This, he adds, is what Solomon means when he says, “The almond tree shall flourish, the locust shall grow fat, and the caper bush shall waste away.”<sup>15</sup> “Now the almond flowers before all other [167] trees; and what is meant by the flowering almond, unless it be the beginning of the holy Church, which put forth in its preachers the first blossoms of virtue and bore the earliest fruits of holiness? ‘The locust shall grow fat’ signifies that the unction and richness of heavenly grace shall be infused into the leanness and barrenness of heathenism. ‘The caper bush shall waste away,’ because, when the Gentiles are called and attain the gift of faith, the Jews shall be left desolate, and shall remain sterile.” In this connection Gregory quotes the passage from Proverbs (xxx. 27), already mentioned, and interprets it as referring to the Gentiles, who, when they were left to themselves, were alien to the Divine law, but, when they were gathered and arrayed together, went forward to fight the fight of faith against spiritual adversaries.

The locust with a human head signifies the Gentile nations united under Christ as their head to war against Satan. “The basilisk is the king of serpents,” says Gregory, “but who is the head of the reprobates, unless it be Antichrist?” Essentially the same exegesis is given by St. Hilarius in his commentary on Matthew iii. 4, where locusts are mentioned as the principal articles of food of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Him who was to gather in the Gentiles, and also by St. Ambrosius in his remarks on the third chapter of Luke, so that Gregory cannot claim to be the originator of this brilliant feat of hermeneutics. Odo, the second Abbot of Cluny, in the fourth [168] decade of the tenth century, abridged the *Moralia* of Gregory, and it was probably to this work that the

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<sup>15</sup> This is the Vulgate version of Eccl. xii. 5 : “Florebit amygdalus, impinguabitur locusta, dissipabitur capparitis.”

sculpture in the church at Vézelay owes its origin, since Vézelay stood for a long time in intimate relations to Cluny, and, indeed, seems at this time to have been to some extent under the jurisdiction of the rich and powerful Benedictine abbey on the Grône.



Sphinx and Basilisk. (Abbey of Vézelay.)

Another capital in the abbey of Vézelay represents in relief a man in a Phrygian cap mounted on a basilisk and holding a round missile in his right hand. His arm is drawn back as if in the act of hurling this weapon at a sphinx-like creature, that has the head of a woman and the feet of an ox, and wards off the attack by means of a crystal vessel, as already described. The basilisk begins to show signs of succumbing to the retroflex action of its own venom. The sphinx, if we may regard the cloven-hoofed monster as such, wears a crown, and is partially clad in armour, and is probably a symbol of spiritual knowledge and strength overcoming evil.

[169] Albertus Magnus, the most circumspect and critical of mediæval scholars touching the marvellous tales which constituted the natural history of his day, remarks : “What is related about an old cock (‘decrepitum gallum’) laying an egg, and putting it in the dung, and about a basilisk being hatched out of it, and looking like a cock in all respects except that it has the long tail of a serpent, I do not think is true; yet it is reported as a fact by Hermes, and is accepted by many persons” (*De Animal.*, xxiii.).

In the same treatise (xxv.) he adds: “It is said that the weasel kills the basilisk, and that the troglodytes of Nubia send weasels into their caves for this purpose before entering these habitations themselves. And if this be true, it seems indeed wonderful. ... Hermes also asserts that if silver be rubbed with its ashes, it receives the splendour, weight, and solidity of gold. Some aver, furthermore, that there is a sort of basilisk that flies, but I have not read of this kind in the books of sages and philosophers.”

Evidently the basilisk was a riddle to the great Dominican, Aristotelian, and Doctor Universalis, of which he could find no satisfactory solution—a creature which excited his wonder, and made excessive demands on his credulity, but which he could not dismiss as a mere figment of superstitious fancy, owing to the weight of testimony in its favour, and especially on account of the deference due to the almost supernatural and semi-divine [170] authority of Hermes Trismegistus. The mythical cock’s egg, however, continued during the middle ages, and even into modern times, to furnish the principal

ingredient for the fabrication of witches' ointment, the devil's chrism, with which he anointed his elect, and thereby enabled old hags to transform themselves into beasts, ride through the air on broomsticks, and work divers kinds of fiendish mischief. How this belief compromised our innocent but ostentatious knight of the barnyard, and led to his criminal prosecution and punishment as a satellite of Satan and pharmaceutical purveyor to his infernal majesty, has been shown by the author in a work entitled *The Criminal Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals*.

Modern science, which, in its mission of abolishing mysteries, has relegated so many ancient fables and venerable traditions to that

"limbo large and broad, since called  
The paradise of fools,"

and which tends more and more to circumscribe and gradually eliminate the sphere of the miraculous in nature, has now stripped the dread basilisk of its fatal qualities. The sole residuum which sober research has left us is a harmless species of hooded lizard, whose only peculiarity is the power of blowing up its conical crest with wind. The cockatrice, with its "death-darting" eye, has been curtailed of its formidable proportions and [171] degraded to a funny little saurian, which might serve to amuse children, but has lost all the terrors with which mythical zoölogy once invested it even in the minds of the most intelligent men and greatest thinkers of their day. The transformation, too, which scholarly opinion and popular belief have undergone on this point is typical of the functions and efficiency of science in subverting superstition.

Besides its value as a key to zoölogical symbolism as expressed in art and literature, and especially in hermeneutical theology and ecclesiastical architecture, the *Physiologus* is psychologically interesting as an index to the intellectual condition of an age which could accept its absurd statements as scientific facts, and seriously apply them to biblical exegesis and Christian dogmatics.

In addition to the Scriptural expositions already cited, the following may serve as specimens of the wretched twaddle which men now revered as the lights of the Church, and quoted as infallible authorities in questions of divinity, were capable of uttering. "David said: 'As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.' The *Physiologus* tells us that the hart is the foe of the dragon, which, when it sees its enemy, runs away and creeps into a cleft of the rocks. Then the hart goes to a stream and fills his belly with water, and spews it into the cleft, and, having thus drowned out the dragon, tramples it under his feet and kills it; as the prophet Isaiah [172] predicts that at the coming of Christ a man shall 'go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the Lord.' Thus our Saviour slew with the water and blood flowing from His side the great dragon that was once a partaker of Divine wisdom in heaven, and redeemed us thereby, and taught us to contend against the hidden designs of the devil. Hearken then to the voice within thee, which bids thee not to commit whoredom, nor to steal, nor to go after another man's wife; but, when thou hast drunken of the water of the New Law, kill all idle words and vain works. The hart



Hart and Dragon. (*Bestiary.*)

loves to dwell in hilly regions; hills are types of the contemplative life of prophets and saints, and the sources of spiritual strength; as the Psalmist says: ‘I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.’ ” According to the exegetist the hart longs for water not in order to quench thirst, but for the purpose of expelling dragons from their holes. Others assert that the hart, in killing the dragon, inhales its poisonous breath, which produces intense thirst and consequent longing for the water-brooks. Either interpretation shows the tendency of the expositor to seek extravagant

and far-fetched explanations of the simplest texts, thus violating one of the most elementary principles of scientific investigation.

[173] The hart was also fabled to renew its antlers and become rejuvenated by eating serpents and drinking from a pure spring, and this characteristic is used by Æmilius Dracontius in his poem *De Deo* to symbolize the regeneration of the human soul and its purification from evil by the waters of salvation. Representations of the hostility of the hart to the dragon occur occasionally in ecclesiastical architecture, but very frequently in illustrated bestiaries, breviaries, psalters, and other devotional works.

Again, we are informed that “the antelope is a wild animal with two powerful horns, with which it saws trees asunder and fells them. When it is thirsty it goes down to the Euphrates to drink. Growing on the banks of this river are certain shrubs of pleasant savour, which the antelope attempts to eat, and thereby gets its horns entangled in the branches, so that it cannot free itself again. Then it cries out with a loud voice, and the hunters hearing it hasten to take it, or it is killed by beasts of prey. The two horns are the Books of the Old and New Testaments, with which the believer can resist the adversary and push him to the ground, and can cut down all growing sins and vices; but he who allows himself to be drawn aside from the waters of salvation by the pleasures of the world, [174] and gets entangled in the thickets of lust and pride and evil passions, falls an easy prey to the devil.” The author then quotes as a passage from Holy Writ the words “Wine and women separate a man from God,” evidently an inference from the admonitions contained in Prov. xxxi. 3-5.



Antelope. (*Bestiary.*)

The fiction of the antelope is alluded to by minnesingers in illustration of the fate of malicious and meddlesome courtiers, who are finally taken and destroyed in the web of

their own devices. A Venetian marble relief of the tenth century, now in the Berlin Museum, represents a lion attacking an antelope; it symbolizes Satan assaulting the soul, and is based upon the fable of the *Physiologus*.



Antelope on the Euphrates. (Psalter of Isabella of France.)

The mishap of the antelope was a favourite theme of mediæval artists, who usually gave only the final scene, in which the entangled beast is killed; in the engraving, taken from the illuminated psalter of Isabella of France, the whole story is told. It is also one of the beasts on the arch of the doorway at Alne.

In the bestiaries barnacle geese are described as growing on trees by the sea-side, and hanging from the boughs by their beaks until they are covered [175] with feathers and fall like ripe fruit. If they reach the water they swim and live, but if they remain on the dry ground they perish. They illustrate the saving efficacy of baptism. Gerard of Wales,<sup>16</sup> cites this legend as a fact designed to prove the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, as these birds are born without procreation.

It must be remembered that the men who wrote such hermeneutical stuff as this, and took such childish tales seriously as the testimony of nature to the truth of revelation, were not obscure and ignorant persons, but the most learned divines and eminent representatives of the early Church, the creators of patristic theology, the great exegetists and eloquent apologists, who were deemed worthy of canonization and adoration as saints. But what preacher of to-day, if we except perhaps an American backwoods evangelist, or illiterate Capuchin discoursing to rude peasants in the remote districts of Southern Italy, would risk his reputation for sanity by expatiating from the pulpit or expounding the Bible in this style? And yet it was by this credulous and utterly uncritical class [176] of minds that the foundations of historical and dogmatic Christianity were laid, and the constitution and canonicity of our sacred Scriptures determined. It was they who framed the accepted creed of Christendom, and settled *ex cathedrâ* what doctrines were to be received as orthodox, and what opinions were to be rejected as heretical. Persons more incompetent to decide any of the difficult and



Barnacle Geese. (*Bestiary*.)

<sup>16</sup> Gerald. Top. Hibern. v. 47. Cf. Jacobs: The Jews of Angeviy, England, p. 54.

delicate questions thus submitted to their judgment can hardly be imagined. Their belief in any event was in direct proportion to its marvellousness and incredibility, and the highest law of evidence which they recognized and applied as the test of divine truth was Tertullian's famous criterion: "Credo quia absurdum." The queer and often comical irrelevancy of their citations of biblical texts to the matter under discussion betrays their lack of logical faculty, and their incapacity for close and consecutive thinking. They do not show the slightest ability to sift testimony and to separate the true from the false in any statement; on the principle of *omne mirabile pro probabili* they were ready to accept as indubitable whatever was sufficiently wonderful, and to regard as conclusive demonstration a *petitio principii* which a modern school-boy of ordinary acumen would easily detect. It is evident that minds so implicitly credulous could have had no proper appreciation of the problems which the rise and growth of Christianity during the early period of its dogmatic evolution presented for solution, nor is it hardly possible that [177] they should not have been deceived in any investigations they undertook, or in any conclusions they reached concerning the authenticity of the events recorded in the gospels and other scriptures of the New Testament, and the genuineness of these records. Under such circumstances it is not surprising that our sacred canon should begin with an astrological legend related as an historical fact in connection with the birth of Jesus, and end with a wild and weird apocalyptic vision, giving an autoptic description of the Last Judgment and the glories of the heavenly Jerusalem. In the same mental category to-day are the men and women who receive the Book of Mormon as a revelation from on high, who believe in the immaculate conception of Anna Lee, and accept George Jacob Schweinfurth as the incarnation of the Son of God, who listen to the sounds produced by the voluntary dislocation of the toe-joints of two tricky girls as rappings from the spirit-world, and who put their faith in the healing waters of the grotto of Lourdes and the panacea of "Christian science" as expounded by Mrs. Eddy.

## CHAPTER IV

### SYMBOLISM SUPERSEDED BY SATIRE

[178] Excess of animal symbolism in sacred edifices of the eleventh and twelfth centuries—Earnest but fruitless protest of St. Bernard—Image-worship authorized and enjoined by the Council held at Nice in 787—Images not to inventions of artists, but to be fashioned according to ecclesiastical traditions and ecclesiastical prescriptions—Views of St. Nilus—Paintings and sculptures for the instruction of the ignorant—Gautier de Comsi renews the protest against “wild cats and lions” in the house of God—Angelus Rumpler makes the same complaint—Warnings by the Councils of Milan and Bordeaux—Introductions of episodes from the beast-epos with satirical tendencies—Secular guilds supplant religious orders as architects—Caricature of sacred rites—Fox preaching to geese in St. Martin’s Church in Leicester—Sculptures in Strasburg Minster—Reliefs of the wolf’s novitiate in Freiburg Minster—Poem by Marie de France—Samson and the lion—Provost’s cushion in St. Michael’s at Pforzheim—Burlesque of Calvin in St. Sernin at Toulouse—Luther satirized in St. Victor’s Church at Xanten—Foolscap paper—Origin and character of the Papstesel—Monstrosities as portents—Bishop-fish—The Papal Ass in religious polemics—The Monk-calf of Freiburg and its interpretation—Miniatures illustrating the “Woes of France”—The fox of the Physiologus and of the beast-epos—Reliefs of the wiles of the fox and the woes of drunkenness in St. Fiacre—Execution of the cat in the cathedral at Tarragona—Significance of the crane extracting a bone from the fox’s throat in Autun Cathedral—Burrowing foxes types of devils in Worcester [179] Cathedral—Scenes from the Reynardine and other poems in the church of the Templars, St. Denis, Amiens Cathedral, Sherborne Minster, and other sacred edifices, but most fully represented in Bristol Cathedral and Beverly Minster—Heraldic rebuses and canting devices—Satire on the election of a pope in Lincoln Cathedral—Mendicant friars caricatured as foxes in Ely, Gloucester, Winchester, and other cathedrals—Odo of Sherington’s opinion of these orders—Similar delineations in the churches and cloisters of continental Europe: Kempen, Emmerick, Calcar, and Cleves—The Lay of Aristotle and Vergil’s affair of gallantry—The Vision of Piers Plowman—Animals as musicians—Grotesques, burlesques, and riddles—Funeral banquet at the burial of the fox at Marienhafen—The frog as a symbol of regeneration—Carvings of individual fancies and conceits and illustrations of proverbs—Episodes from the Roman de Renart—Many of these sculptures, especially in Northern France and the Netherlands, destroyed by iconoclasts and revolutionists.

IT was in the eleventh and especially in the twelfth century that symbolical animals played a most conspicuous and very peculiar part in the ornamentation of church furniture and in ecclesiastical architecture. Lamps, censers, pyxes, aspergills, chrismatories, reliquaries, and sacramental vessels were wrought in the form of griffins, ostriches, pelicans, cranes, dolphins, doves, dragons, lions, or some other real or fabulous creature, or had these animals carved on them. It was deemed a hard hit at the devil, and a masterly stroke of pious policy, to press beasts of evil omen and Satanic significance into the service of the Church, and force them to assist at the celebration of holy offices. They were therefore embroidered on sacerdotal vestments and sculptured in the chancel and the chapels and [180] around the altars of the sanctuary, where religious rites were usually performed. Later, towards the close of the twelfth century, they began to take possession of the windows, portals, arches, and pinnacles, and finally extended to the whole exterior of the edifice, no part of which was safe from their

encroachments. It was especially in cloisters that these beasts ran riot, but not without provoking the indignation and opposition of many ecclesiastics.

One of the earliest of these protests was that of St. Bernard of Clairvaux, who about the year 1125 wrote a letter on the subject to William, Abbot of St. Thierry, sharply censuring what he regarded as a profanation of sacred places. "What business," he exclaims, "have those ridiculous monstrosities, those creatures of wonderfully deformed beauty and beautiful deformity, before the eyes of studious friars in the courts of cloisters? What mean those filthy apes, those fierce lions, those monstrous centaurs, those half-men, those spotted tigers, those fighting soldiers and horn-blowing hunters? Thou seest many bodies under one head, and again many heads on one body. Here is a serpent's tail attached to a quadruped, there a quadruped's head on a fish. There a beast presents the fore-parts of a horse and drags after it the rear of a goat; here a horned animal has the hind parts of a horse. In short, there is seen everywhere such a marvellous diversity of forms, that one reads with more pleasure what is carved in stones than what is written in books, and would rather gaze all day [181] upon these singular creations than to meditate on the divine word. O God! if one is not ashamed of these puerilities, why does one not at least spare the expense?"

That the famous "doctor mellifluus" should have been ignorant of the meaning of the artistic representations he condemns is scarcely credible; naturally enough, however, the coarse symbolism which they sought to express could hardly fail of being offensive to the refined and subtle mysticism of the saintly Cistercian, who rejected the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary as a too gross and sensual suggestion and emblematic expression of her spiritual purity. He was indignant that the Christian mysteries should be degraded and vulgarized by being clothed in what he deemed the foul and tattered vesture of pagan allegory. This attitude was perfectly consistent with his character as a reformer of the Church, and especially of the cloisters, and a zealous promoter of stricter monastic discipline. As ecclesiastical architecture was at that time still in the hands of the religious orders and the secular clergy, he held them responsible for these exhibitions, which he regarded as an evidence of their frivolity and dissoluteness.

Suger, the celebrated abbot of St. Denis and minister of state of Louis VII., was less fastidious and austere than St. Bernard, and in rebuilding the famous Benedictine abbey in 1144 did not hesitate to have the stained windows adorned with symbolical animals, which he appears to [182] have prized both as decorations and sources of edification.

The seventh Œcumenical Council, which was held at Nice in 787, and which authorized iconolatry and enjoined this cult as a religious duty upon believers, decided that the images were not to be the invention of the artist, but were to be fashioned according to the traditions and prescriptions of the Catholic Church. The artist was not permitted to follow his own fancies or to work out his own devices, but his sole function was to execute the intentions and embody the ideas and suggestions of the official ecclesiologists as derived from the writings of the Fathers: "Non est imaginum structura pictorum inventio, sed ecclesiæ catholicæ probata legislatio atque traditio." In

the fifth century St. Nilus wrote to Olympiodorus: “You ask me whether it is proper to burden the walls of the sanctuary with representations of divers animals, hares, goats, and other beasts seeking safety in flight from the snares which cover the ground, and from the hunters, who with their dogs are eagerly pursuing them. Elsewhere, on the shore, we see all sorts of fish gathered by fishermen. I reply that it is puerile to amuse the eyes of the faithful in this manner.”<sup>17</sup>

Evidently the censorious saint did not take the symbolical significance of such pictures into consideration, but looked upon them as purely [183] ornamental and designed to please the eye. As a matter of fact, there was a large class of persons in the early and mediæval Church who relied upon such paintings and sculptures for their religious instruction and edification, like the old woman into whose mouth François Villon puts these words—

“Femme je suis, pauverette et ancienne,  
Qui riens ne sçay, onques lettres ne leuz,  
Au moustier voy, dont je suis paroissienne,  
Paradis painct où sont harpes et luz  
Et un enfer où dampnés sont boulluz,  
Lung me fait pour, l’autre joye et liesse.”

Symbolical representations of beasts and other delineations of this kind, however grotesque, are the records of human thoughts and beliefs in certain stages of civilization, and deserve to be deciphered with as much care as Runic signs or hieroglyphic and cuneiform inscriptions.

A hundred years after St. Bernard, Gautier de Coinsi, Prior of Vie sur Aisne, found it necessary again to censure the clergy for permitting “wild cats and lions” to rank with saints in the house of God, and for preferring to adorn their chambers with the lewd exploits of Isegrim and his spouse rather than to decorate the minsters with the miracles of the Virgin—

“En leur moustiers ne font pas faire  
Sitost l’image Nostre Dame,  
Com font Isangrin et sa fame  
En leurs chambres où ils reponnent.”

Again, in the beginning of the sixteenth century the pious abbot of Formbach, Angelus Rumpler, [184] renewed St Bernard’s query as to the purpose and fitness of putting lions, dragons, and the like in the churches, which ought, he says, to be simply and suitably adorned, and not so conspicuously as to furnish occasion for gazing instead of praying. “Not that I censure proper ornament,” he adds, “but only what is fantastical and superfluous. For pictures are the books of the laity or unlearned; but by pictures I mean such as portray the Passion of Christ and the sufferings of the saints.” He wishes to have representations that will incite to devotion, and not merely gratify curiosity or engender evil propensities. What he expressly reprehends are scenes which a young girl

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<sup>17</sup> *Maxima Bibliotheca Patrum*, xxvii. 325.

cannot look at without having her mind corrupted and lascivious desires excited in her heart; and the manner in which he refers to them proves that they must have existed in places of worship. What we should expend for the relief of the poor, he concludes, we squander on sumptuous and needless edifices; but enough of this: *sed de hac re hactenus*.

The first Council of Milan in 1565 warned the bishops not to permit in the churches any paintings or sculptures opposed to the truth of Scripture, or of tradition or ecclesiastical history: "Caveant episcopi, ne quid pingatur aut sculpatur, quod veritati scripturarum, traditionum aut ecclesiasticarum historiarum adversetur." Twenty years later (1585) the Council of Bordeaux forbade preachers to introduce fables into their sermons, and thus [185] move their hearers to laughter, instead of drawing tears of contrition from their eyes, as they ought to do: "Concionatoris enim est, non risum movere, sed lacrymas auditoribus excutere."

The symbolical meaning which Clemens Alexandrinus, Augustine, Origen, Chrysostom, Epiphanius, Jerome, Bonaventura, Ambrosius, Isidorus, and other great interpreters of Holy Writ had discovered in these real or fabulous creatures was now forgotten or discarded. The gross and beastly types had been superseded by the finer mysticism of expositors like the abbot of Clairvaux, whose æsthetic sense as well as religious feeling was deeply offended by these crude and whimsical illustrations of spiritual truths.

Meanwhile other fables, derived partly from hagiological sources and partly from old Germanic sagas and the marvels related of foreign lands by mediæval travellers, had become gradually mixed up with the *Physiologus*, and under its shelter and sanction as a precedent succeeded in creeping into holy places. Scenes from the beast-epos, especially the adventures of the fox and the wolf, carved on wood, cut in stone, painted in fresco, or more frequently pictured in glass, began to make themselves conspicuous on the stalls of the chancel, and on the pulpits and portals and stained windows of cathedrals. At first they were designed to enforce moral precepts and to illustrate ethical principles, but in seeking these ends they found it necessary to satirize the vices of the clergy, [186] and to censure with deserved severity the greed and gluttony and general dissoluteness of the monastic orders.

During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the religious fraternities were in a great degree supplanted as builders by associations of secular architects, and, as the influence of the laity became predominant in church ornamentation, and the spirit which resulted in the Reformation grew bolder and more aggressive, this satirical tendency increased, and did not confine itself to the exposure of religious hypocrisy and pseudo-sanctity, but soon delighted in ridiculing and caricaturing sacramental rites and sacred observances. Apes in choristers' robes, swine in monks' hoods, asses in cowls chanting and playing the organ, sirens in the costume of nuns with their faces carefully veiled and the rest of their persons exposed, stags in chasubles ministering at the altar, and wolves in the confessional giving absolution to lambs, were some of the means employed to burlesque the principal ceremonies and fundamental institutions of the

Church, and to turn them into ridicule. On one of the painted windows of St. Martin's Church, in Leicester, was the picture of a fox in surplice preaching to a flock of geese from the text: "Testis est mihi Deus quam cupiam vos omnes visceribus meis" ("God is my witness how I long for you all in my bowels"). One of the wood-carvings in Ely Cathedral represents the fox arrayed in episcopal robes, with almuce and stole [187] and crosier, discoursing to a similar audience from the same passage of Scripture; in the next scene he has made a practical application of the text by throwing off his holy vestments and hurrying away with a goose, pursued by an old woman with a distaff.<sup>18</sup> Here we have not merely an exposure of the begging friars, but a hard hit at the highest dignitaries of the Church.

The obscenity of many of these delineations resulted naturally and inevitably from the fact that they satirized obscene things. Thus the abbot Grandidier, in describing the grotesque figures sculptured on the pulpit staircase in Strasburg Minster, says: "On y remarquait entr' autres celle d'un moine couché au dessous et aux pieds d'une béguine, dont it soulevait les juppes." This pulpit was constructed in 1486 under the supervision of the famous preacher, Johannes Geiler von Kaisersberg, in whose sermons the licentiousness of the monks and particularly the unchastity of the vagabond béguines were severely scourged. Indeed, béguinage came to be synonymous with spurious piety or lust in the disguise of sanctity. But however coarsely such scenes may have been depicted, they originated in a high moral purpose, and had a pure aim, which, as the old *plattdeutsch* poet Lauremberg, in his *Schertzgedichte*, says of the hidden wisdom in Reincke Vos, shone forth like a glowing coal in the ashes, or a gold penny in a greasy pocket— [188]

"Glyck als dat Führ schulet in der Asche,  
Un güldne Penninge in eener schmierigen Tasche."

With the progress of the Reformation these representations were drawn into the great religious movement and put to polemical uses, and proved to be more effective in influencing the mass of public opinion than any doctrinal discussion. Thus Fischart published woodcuts of the sculptures near the choir of Strasburg Minster with explanatory doggerels, in which he interpreted them as an allegorical derision of the Romish clergy; and this view seems to have been accepted by the Catholics themselves, although a zealous Protestant, Oscar Schad, in his description of the cathedral, printed in 1617, vents his indignation against the Franciscan, Friedrich Johann Nass, who, he says, "had the effrontery to thrust his nose into this matter, beslaving with his venom the sound expositions of Fischart, and absurdly affirming these beasts to be types of pious and faithful evangelical preachers and godly servants of the Word." As these sculptures date from the end of the thirteenth century, and are therefore much older than Protestantism, which dates from the Diet held by the evangelical estates at Spire, in 1529, the interpretation of them given by Nass is grossly anachronistic. Besides, they caricature, not a Protestant, but a Catholic rite, namely, the burial of the fox, as

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<sup>18</sup> Herrig's *Archiv*, lviii. 255.

prescribed by the Romish ceremonial. First comes the bear with an aspergill and a vessel of holy water; the wolf carries a crucifix, and the hare holds a burning [189] taper; the bier, on which lies the fox simulating death and plotting revenge, is borne by a sow and a he-goat. An ape is seated on the ground near the bier, apparently as spectator. A stag is chanting the office at an altar, while a cat serves as lectern to support the epistles, which are read by an ass. At the feet of the bear is a globe with a cross on it forming a reichsapfel or tut, and indicating, perhaps, that the officiating priests are Carthusians, since the tut was the badge of their order (Herrig's Archiv, lxvi. 269-70). It is possible, however, that the cross is intended to indicate a grave in the cemetery, to which the fox is being borne.



Burial of the Fox. (Choir of Strasburg Minster.)

The fact that the chapter of the cathedral caused these sculptures to be chiseled off in 1685 is a confession that they were thought to be directed, or might, at least, be easily turned, against the papal hierarchy. Also a Lutheran bookseller, who kept woodcuts of them on sale, was condemned to stand in his shirt and do penance for his offence in front of the minster, and was then banished from the city.

Again, in Freiburg Minster (Breisgau), in a narrow passage leading from the south transept to the choir, are reliefs belonging to the first half of [190] the twelfth century, and representing the wolf's novitiate. The lupine candidate for a cloistral life or for the clerical office is learning his letters from a monk, who is seated on a faldstool with a pedagogue's baton consisting of a bundle of rods in his hand. The dull pupil, who holds a pointer awkwardly in his right paw, has already reached the third letter of the alphabet in his pursuit of knowledge, when the longing for lamb gets the better of his love of learning, and he seizes a sheep of the pastoral flock and endeavours to devour it. The



Novitiate of the Wolf. (Freiburg Minster.)

tonsured teacher applies the rod vigorously to the back of the recreant novice, whose natural appetites assert themselves and are not to be extinguished by the capoch. These works of art delineate episodes of the beast-epos, and correspond to the description given by Marie de France of the wolf's attempt to become a monk, being drawn to this pious vocation by merry thoughts of fat living. Her poem might be rendered into English as follows— [191]

“There was once a priest who wished to see  
 If he could teach the wolf his A B C.  
 ‘A,’ said the priest ; the wolf said ‘A,’  
 And grinned in a grim and guileful way.  
 ‘B,’ said the priest, ‘and say it with me.’  
 ‘B,’ said the wolf, ‘the letter I see.’  
 ‘C,’ said the priest, ‘keep on just so.’  
 ‘C,’ said the wolf. ‘Don’t be so slow,’  
 Remarked the priest; ‘come, go on now.’  
 And the wolf replied: ‘I don’t know how.’  
 ‘Then see how it looks and spell it out.’  
 ‘Lamb, lamb, it means without a doubt.’  
 ‘Beware,’ said the priest, ‘or you’ll get a blow,  
 For your mouth with your thoughts doth overflow.’  
 And thus it haps oftentimes to each,  
 That his secret thought is by his speech  
 Revealed, and, ere he is aware,  
 Is out of his lips and in the air.”<sup>19</sup>

Near the wolf seizing the lamb is Samson in the act of tearing open the jaws of a lion. The long [192] hair of the Hebrew solar hero, which in the myth is said to be the source of his strength, as the force of the sun is in its rays, has caused this figure to be mistaken for a woman, and interpreted as a symbol of spiritual power overcoming brute force. A similar sculpture adorns a console in the Stiftskirche at Stuttgart, a capital in the church of Remagen in the Rhineland, and the outside of the apsis of the old Romanic church at Schöngrabern in Lower Austria. Here Samson wears his hair in a long braid. It may be found also on the portal of the cathedral of St. Stephen's in Vienna, on an altar in the monastery Klosterneuberg, on a stall in the cathedral of Amiens, and on the capital of a column in the church of St. Sauveur-de-Nevres, where it bears the inscription: “Samson adest, heros fortis.” Indeed, it is very common in mediæval church edifices and on consecrated vessels, and is sometimes associated with representations of Christ's

<sup>19</sup> “Fable 80.—*D'un prestre et d'un lou.*

“Une prestres volt jadis aprendre  
 I lou a letres fere entendre.  
 A dist li prestres.—A dist li leus  
 Qui mult est fel et engingneux.  
 B dist li prestres, di o moi.  
 B dist li leux, la lettre voi.  
 C dist li prestres, di avant.

C dist li leus. Ail dont tant,  
 Respont li prestres, or di par toi.  
 Li leu respont: je ne sai coi.  
 Di que te semble, si espel.  
 Respont li leus: Aignel, aignel.  
 Li prestres dist: que verte touche;  
 Tel on penser, tel en la bouche.

De pensons, le voit l'en souvent;  
 Ce dont il pensent durement,  
 Est par la bouche conneu.  
 Aînçois que d'autre soit seu,  
 La bouche monstre lepenser;  
 Tout doit ele de li parler.”

deliverance of the captive spirits from hell, as in a painting in the vestibule of Freiburg Minster. Another sculpture in this minster shows a man contending against a griffin, which signifies the effort to overcome carnal passion. So, too, the centaur, which will be more fully considered hereafter, is the symbol of what Paul calls the natural man, or homo animal, as it is rendered in the Vulgate.

Flögel (*Geschichte der komischen Literatur*, iii. 358) mentions a beautifully-embroidered cushion of the provost's chair in the collegiate church of [193] St. Michael at Pforzheim. The embroidery represents a wolf in monastic garb standing in a pulpit and discoursing from an open book to a flock of geese, which are devoutly listening and holding each a rosary in its beak. The sacristan, who performs the duties of goose-herd, is dressed in motley. Out of the hood of the preacher projects the head of a goose. A fox is lying in wait under the pulpit, and round the wolf is embroidered the verse—

“Ich will euch wohl viel Fabeln sagen,  
Bis ich fühle alln<sup>20</sup> mein Kragen.”

“Of fables to you I'll tell a deal,  
Till in my maw I all may feel.”

This cushion was purchased in 1540 by Jacob Heerbrand, Chancellor of the University of Tübingen, when he was sent with other theologians to promote the cause of the Reformation in the Margravate of Baden-Durlach, and was used by him against the papacy in his polemical treatise, *Refutatio defensionis assertionum Jesuiticarum*.

In this manner the whole beast-epos was diverted from its original course, as a purely narrative poem, into the turbulent and more or less filthy channel of religious controversy. Thus a zealous champion of Protestantism, John Bale, published at Zurich in 1542, under the pseudonym of John Harryson, a book entitled: “Yet a Course at the Romysche foxe, a dysclosynge or openynge of the Manne of Synne.” Catholic defenders of the faith, too, were [194] not slow in filling their quivers with arrows drawn from the same exhaustless source. Not only the printing-press, but also the walls and other parts of sacred edifices were put to polemical purposes, as, for example, in the chancel of St. Sernin at Toulouse, where a fat hog in gown and bands discoursing from a pulpit is styled *Calvin le porc preschant* (“Calvin the pig preaching”). This is the interpretation given to the carving and its legend by M. de Montalembert; but the clerical animal is not cloven-hoofed, and resembles an ass rather than a pig, and the inscription may read *Calvin le père*, since a nail driven into the second letter of the third word has so defaced it as to render it difficult to decipher. This work of art may, therefore, portray “Father Calvin” in the form of an ass preaching heresies to his deluded disciples, one of whom is kneeling before the sacred desk with eyes devout and the palm of his hand on an open book, as if appealing to Holy Writ in confirmation of the doctrines proclaimed from the sacred desk. In St. Victor's Church at Xanten on the Rhine is an *Ecce Homo*, dating from 1536, representing Christ followed by a great

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<sup>20</sup> *Alln* = *alle in*. The sense is the same whether we read Kragen (craw) or Mages (maw).

rabble crying, "Crucify Him!" The leader of this bloodthirsty mob is Martin Luther, who wears a pilgrim's scrip, on which the head of a beast of prey takes the place of the conventional cross and shell. Near him is a man making grimaces by thrusting his finger into his cheek, while another is throwing filth.

The reformers of the sixteenth century indulged [195] very freely in coarse caricatures of this sort, and often outdid their adversaries in such expressions of scorn. Thus Henry VIII. showed his contempt of the Roman See by using for official purposes a paper with the water-mark of a hog wearing a tiara, just as the Republican parliament substituted a fool's cap and bells for the King's arms on the official paper of the realm; hence the name which the large folio paper used in law-offices and courts of justice still bears.

One of the most noted of this class of productions was the so-called Papstesel, or Papal Ass. This monster has the form of a woman with the head of an ass; the left hand is that of a human being, the right hand is an elephant's trunk, the rump is the mask-like face of a man with long beard and horns, and a serpentine neck ending in a dragon's head; one of the feet is an eagle's claw, and the other an ox's hoof, and the body is covered with scales like a fish.

This drawing has been commonly, but erroneously, attributed to the elder Lucas Cranach, who may have copied, but certainly did not create it. It is also a mistake to suppose that it was intended originally to ridicule the papacy. In December 1445 the city of Rome was devastated by an inundation of the Tiber, followed by famine and pestilence. After the waters had subsided, this strange carcass is said to have been found in the deposit of the flood on the banks of the river, and a full description of it is given in Malipiero's [196] Venetian annals.<sup>21</sup> No contemporary writer seems to have entertained the slightest doubt that the remains of such an abnormal creature were actually discovered; the only difference of opinion that could possibly arise would be in regard to its origin and significance, whether it was a work of God or of Satan, and what it might forebode.

In the middle ages monstrosities and freaks of nature were looked upon as dire portents, and every marvellous phenomenon was deemed a sure sign of the impending wrath of God. Not only comets, eclipses, and other remarkable appearances in the sky, but even any uncommon occurrence on the earth, such as a fall of red snow, sufficed to fill the hearts of men with chilling fear, and to freeze the blood in their veins; and the birth of a double-headed calf or a deformed pig was a source of terror to whole nations. The intellectual awakening, known as the revival of letters, tended to confirm rather than to undermine the belief in the existence of monstrosities, inasmuch as it cultivated and diffused a literature all alive with centaurs, fauns, satyrs, hippocamps, tritons, sirens, nereids, sphinxes, griffins, dragons, minotaurs, and chimeras, the reality of which no true humanist would think [197] of calling in question, and the renaissance of

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<sup>21</sup> *Archive Storico*, vii. 422. Cf. *Der Papstesel, ein Beitrag zur Kultur- und Kunstgeschichte des Reformationszeitalters*, von Konrad Lange, Göttingen, 1891. This monograph contains the most thorough discussion of the subject hitherto published, including a clear and consistent account of the origin and character of this monstrous figment of the imagination, and the symbolical and satirical purposes which it was made to subserve.

which soon exerted a marked influence upon the decorative arts. With a like faith begotten of enthusiasm, scholars accepted the reports of Herodotus, the father of history, and of Ktesias, the Münchhausen of classical antiquity, concerning goat-hoofed and dog-headed men, one-legged giants, men with one eye (monoculi—perhaps a primitive race of dudes), men with eyes in their breasts, and others with their heads beneath their shoulders, or without any heads at all. It is not surprising, therefore, that the sixteenth century, notwithstanding its superior enlightenment and reputation for learning, should have produced numerous and ponderous tomes devoted to the description and exposition of marvels and monstrosities. Perhaps the most exhaustive repertory of this kind is the *Prodigiorum ac ostentorum Chronicon* of Lycosthenes (Wolfhart), published at Bâle in 1557. The author begins with the serpent in Eden, “ante Christum 3959,” and gives a brief account, with rough woodcuts, of every wonderful thing he had ever heard or read of down to A.D. 1557, in a volume of six hundred and seventy pages. In the Royal Library of Munich there are two copies of this work, one of which has a manuscript continuation of more than fifty pages, bringing it down to 1677, with many drawings in the style of the illustrations contained in the printed book. To this is added by a third chronicler, in French, the queer description of a spectral battle between three armies, said [198] to have been fought in the clouds on February 25, 1696, and witnessed by more than two hundred persons. In accordance with the current opinion of their time, both Lycosthenes and the author of the continuation interpret these phenomena as tokens of the divine anger, and endeavour to connect them with great physical disasters and noteworthy historical events.



Sea-bishop.  
(Gessner's *Fischbuch*.)

Shakespeare indicates the fascination which such vulgar superstitions and tales of prodigies had for the most refined and sensitive persons of an earlier day, when he makes Othello beguile the gentle Desdemona of her tears and win her heart by discoursing about them. Not only the outlying and unexplored regions of the earth, but the sea also was prolific of wonders, the most remarkable of which was the so called bishop-fish (*Episcopus marinus*) or sea-bishop (*Meerbischof*), a specimen of which is said to have been caught in the Baltic in 1433. It had a mitre on its head, a crosier in its hand, and wore a dalmatica. The king of Poland wished to confine it in a tower, but it stubbornly resisted this attempt on its freedom, and by mute gestures entreated its fellow-prelates, the bishops of the realm, to whom it showed [199] special reverence, to let it return to its

native element. This request was finally granted, and, in token of joy and gratitude, it made the sign of the cross, and gave the episcopal benediction with its fin, as it

disappeared under the waves. Engravings of this marine marvel were published in Gessner's *Fischbuch* in 1575, in Schott's *Physica Curiosa*, and in other works of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In 1531, according to Dutch chroniclers, another bishop-fish was taken in the German Ocean, and sent to the king of Poland, but it obstinately refused to eat anything, and died on the third day of its captivity. Gessner describes also the merman (*Homus marinus*) and the mermonk (*Monachus marinus*), said to have been taken in the Baltic, the British Channel, in the Red Sea, and on the coast of Dalmatia. Evidently we have here to do with some of the numerous species of seals seen through the magnifying and distorting medium of religious superstition. The Jesuit Gaspar Schott, in the above-mentioned work, a volume of nearly fourteen hundred pages, discusses all sorts of monsters and marvels real and imaginary, demons, spooks, deformed men, energumens, birds, abnormities of land and sea, and portents of earth and sky, showing the material, efficient, and final causes of such phenomena. All these strange forms were supposed to be special creations or manifestations having a profound spiritual significance, and bearing peculiar relations to the Church, which drew them into its pale, and put them to decorative and [200] didactic uses in ecclesiastical architecture, as, for example, in the rose-window of the south transept of the cathedral of Lausanne, dating from the thirteenth century.

Whatever may have been the origin of the Roman monster, whether the story arose from the fortuitous concurrence of parts of men and of beasts that had perished in the flood, or was the trick of some wag, whose love of a joke could not be repressed by the horrors of the situation, or was a mere invention of the imagination excited by fear, there is no doubt that drawings of it were made soon after its supposed discovery. The earliest known representation of it in art is a relief on the north door of the cathedral of Como, sculptured by the brothers Jacob and Thomas Rodari about the year 1497.<sup>22</sup> As a satire on the see of Rome it would certainly not have found a place in a Catholic church at that time; but as a divine admonition and warning, and especially as a symbol of the woes of inundation, foreign invasion, famine, and pestilence, by which the States of the Church and Italy were then sorely afflicted, such a carving, however offensive to the taste of the present day, would have been considered perfectly appropriate and even highly edifying.

If, as Lange assumes, the strange figure was [201] simply an allegory of the city of Rome, it would naturally be portrayed as a female; the ass's head would signify subjugation and servitude; the elephant's proboscis would indicate the pest of syphilis, then confounded with elephantiasis, which the Spaniards had introduced into Naples from the New World, and the French troops had brought with them to Rome; the eagle's claw would represent the rapacity of Charles VIII.; the ox's hoof would refer to Alexander VI., whose coat-of-arms was an ox, and who kept his footing in the Vatican

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<sup>22</sup> This door is popularly known as *porta della rana*, from the carving of a frog snapping at an insect. The frog, according to the *Physiologus*, is a type of those who snatch at the fleeting pleasures of this world.



Papal Ass. (Cathedral of Como.)

[202] only by sharing his power with the French king, while the scaly skin would suggest the devastating overflow of the Tiber.

About this time, however, the dissoluteness of the Roman pontiff, and the scandalous conduct of his mistresses and his children, began to excite the attention and to provoke the censure of the public to such a degree, that there would be a general tendency to interpret the monster, not perhaps as a symbol of the institution of the papacy, but as a satire on the licentious occupant of the apostolic see, and a warning from God against the evil doings of the Vicar of Christ.

Somewhat later, probably about the year 1500, it was engraved on copper by the goldsmith Wenzel of Olmutz, and seems to have been accepted by the Moravians as emblematic of the Romish hierarchy, and used as a means of anti-papal agitation. It next appears as a woodcut in Melanchthon's *Figur des Antichristlichen Bapsts vnd seiner Synagog*, published in 1523, and again in the same year in his and Luther's joint work entitled, *Deutung der czwo grewlichen Figuren Bapstesels czu Rom, vnd Munchkalbs zu Freyberg ynn Meysszen funden*. A new and improved edition of Melanchthon's exposition of the Papstesel was printed at Wittenberg in 1535, and endorsed with Luther's "Amen." It also appears as Plate II. in Luther's *Abbildung des Bapstum* (Wittenberg, 1545), a series of coarse and positively indecent woodcuts, probably the work of Lucas Cranach, with explanatory doggerel [203] verses. In a letter of June 3, 1545, to Nicholas von Amsdorf, first Protestant bishop of Raumburg, the Reformer writes: "Your nephew George showed me a picture of the pope," adding by way of comment, and evidently with a chuckle of delight, "but Master Lucas is *ein grober Maler*;" and in a letter of June 15 to the same friend he remarks "I shall endeavour to have Lucas the painter exchange this foul picture for a more proper one." The reference here is not to the Papstesel, but to Plate I., entitled, *Ortus et origo Papæ*

(“Rise and Origin of the Pope”), and representing his Holiness as the excrements of a ghastly, grinning monster. The infant pontiff, thus born in corruption, is reared by the Furies, Alecto rocking his cradle, Megæra acting as his wet-nurse, and Tisiphone holding him in leading strings. It is evident from the descriptive rhymes accompanying these drawings that Luther fully entered into the spirit of the artist’s conceptions, and heartily enjoyed their coarse humour. His seeming censure of the “gross painter” and the “foul picture,” and the expression of his intention of having a more decent delineation substituted for it, must be taken ironically, and may have been called forth by some criticism of his correspondent.

The “Münchkalb” (monk-calf), the second of the monsters delineated and discussed in the *Interpretation of two grewsome Figures* already cited, was reported to have been taken from a cow in a public slaughter-house at Freiburg, December 12, 1522, and to have had a round, flabby, and mis-shapen [204] head with a tonsure, on which were two large warts or wens. The chin was that of a man; the nose, ears, and upper jaw were those of a calf; the hide hung in folds between the shoulders, like a monk’s cowl, and had slits in the hind legs, like the slashes in old costumes. This hideous creature was interpreted by Luther as a symbol of the stupidity and beastliness of the monastic orders, although Melancthon afterwards discovered in it a different signification, explaining it as portending the excesses of the reformatory movement that revealed themselves in iconoclastic outrages and the horrors of the Peasants’ War, which broke out three years later. It is an interesting fact that one of the earliest explications of it was given by a Bohemian astrologer in Prague, who saw in it a condemnation of the heresy and apostasy of Luther, the renegade monk. A similar view is taken by Cochlæus, Emser, and other Catholic controversialists, and in a treatise on monsters from the time of Constantine to the year 1570 by the French theologian Sorbinus,<sup>23</sup> the causal connection between the birth of such creatures and some form of schism in the body of Christ, or some sacrilegious assault upon the orthodox faith, is shown to the satisfaction of every true believer.

In the City Library of Lyons is the manuscript of a poem entitled *De Tristibus Galliae* (“Woes of France”), with miniature paintings of a satirical [205] character directed against the sectaries and schismatics, who are represented as abasing and pillaging the land. A lion, the symbol of France, is ridden by an ape, which bears a sack full of spoils, probably taken from churches and cloisters; another ape has tied a priest’s vestment to the lion’s hind leg; a third holds the king of beasts ignominiously by the tail, while a fourth confronts the lion with a halberd. Several apes are listening to a sermon delivered by a field-preacher; others are evidently applying the teachings of the itinerant evangelist by plundering consecrated places and insulting a crucifix.

The woes of France, resulting from Panama scandals, which in our day are the sensational theme of the journalist’s pen, would have been delineated in the middle ages quite as vividly and truthfully, and far more pleasingly, by the artist’s pencil.

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<sup>23</sup> *Arnoldi Sorbini Tholosanorum theologi et regii ecclesiasta Tractatus de monstris*, etc. Paris, 1570.

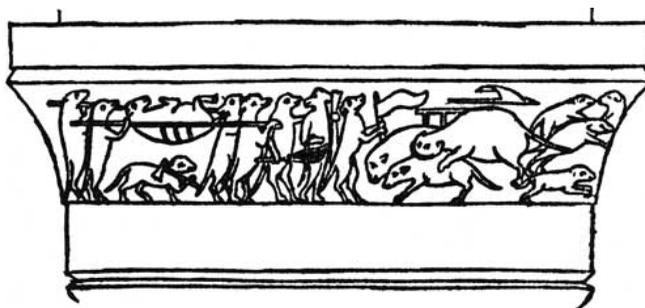
As the fox not only holds a prominent place in the *Physiologus*, but is also the protagonist of the beast-epos, it is natural that this animal should figure conspicuously in pictorial and plastic art, and become, from the very nature of its characteristics, a favourite vehicle of satire. The oldest of these representations are based upon the *Physiologus*, in which it is stated that “when the fox is hungry, it lies down in a furrow of the field and covers itself partly with [206] earth, as though it had been long dead. Then the ravens and other rapacious birds come to devour it, when it suddenly leaps up and tears them in pieces. Thus the devil deceives those who love the corrupt things of this world and obey the lusts of the flesh, and entices them to their own destruction.” “He who tells idle tales and indulges in carnal pleasures,” adds an old English bestiary, “pecks at the skin of the fox and tears its flesh, but the devil requites the sinner by seizing him and dragging him down to murky hell. The devil and the reprobate are crafty like the fox, and deserve shame. He who speaks fair words and meditates evil is a fox; such a one was Herod, for he said that he would believe on Christ, when he really meant to kill Him.”



The wiles of the Fox. (*Bestiary*)

In the church of St Fiacre, near Le Faouet, in the department of Morbihan, formerly a portion of Brittany, are wood-carvings on the richly-ornamented rood-loft portraying these wiles of the fox, which in the first scene is lying on its back with protruding tongue and apparently dead; instead of carrion-crows, as elsewhere, a cock and several inquisitive hens are pecking at different parts of its body. In the second scene the fox has sprung up and caught one of them by the neck.

There are similar reliefs on the abacus of a column in the cathedral of Tarragona in Spain. On the opposite side of the abacus are sculptures of what Meissner (*Herrig's Archiv*, lxxv. 214) calls the burial of the cat, but which would seem rather [207] to represent the carrying of the cat to execution. Tabby lies on a litter, which might be mistaken for a bier, but is really a stretcher used instead of a hangman's cart, borne



Execution of the Cat. (Cathedral of Tarragona, Spain.)

by rats and mice, and preceded by a long procession of these rodents with banners, vessels of holy water, aspergills, crosiers, censers. The executioner, a rat bearing an axe, marches with the full consciousness of his official dignity under the litter. This stately pageant is followed by a more lively spectacle: the cat springs up and catches a rat, while the rest of the solemn assembly disperse in all directions, leaving the sacred utensils and the pompous paraphernalia of the panic-stricken procession scattered on the ground. The presence of the rat as headsman indicates that the execution is about to take place; if it had already occurred and the “master of high works” (*maître des hautes-œuvres*, as the French were wont to style this important functionary) had [208] done his duty, it would be hard to imagine the decapitated culprit coming to life again.<sup>24</sup>



Fox ensnaring Fowls. (Church of St. Fiacre, Le Faouet.)

Returning to St. Fiacre, we find in that quaint church a third relief of a fox lurking behind some bushes, from which a cock and three hens are picking snails. Still farther in the background is a second fox wearing a cowl and standing in a sort of framework or enclosure, which Champfleury calls a donjon, but Meissner with greater probability assumes to be a pulpit. Here we have, instead of the fox of the *Physiologus*, the chicken-stealing and sanctimonious Reynard of the mediæval epic.

Another relief in the same church represents a man seated on a bench and steadying with his left hand a wine-cask, which rests on his knee. In his teeth he holds a fox by the tip of the tail, the half-flayed body of which hangs between his legs. Champfleury explains this sculpture as a figurative illustration of the phrase *écorcher le renard* (“flay the fox”), i. e. suffer from what the Germans call [209] *Katzenjammer*, or the after-effects of a drunken debauch. In a word, it teaches a moral lesson by a drastic exhibition of the woes of inebriety. Rabelais describes Gargantua as a person who was wont to “flay the fox,” and the common people of France still use the phrase *piquer un renard* (“prick a fox”) in the same sense. Pepys records in his Diary on one occasion: “I drank so much wine that I was even almost foxed.” Wine or beer that sours in fermenting is said “to fox” or to be “foxy,” because it goes to the head, and by deranging the stomach acts as an emetic.



Flaying the Fox.  
(St. Fiacre, Le Faouet.)

On the capital of a column in the cathedral at Autun is

<sup>24</sup> Vide article on “Odo de Ceringtonia” in Herrig's *Archiv*, lxiv. In a work entitled *Gothic Architecture in Spain*, by George Edmond Street, is an engraving of this piece of sculpture. Odo of Sherington's *Book of Fables* was translated into Spanish under the title of *Libro de los Gatos*, of which a German version by Kunst has been published in Lemcke's *Jahrbuch*, vi. Cf. Voight's *Kleinere Denkmäler der Thiersage*.

chiselled the scene in which the crane extracts a bone from the fox's throat. Here the artist clothes the fable with a symbolical significance derived from the *Physiologus* and the bestiaries, in which the fox typifies the devil, and the crane is an emblem of Christian care and vigilance, ever active in saving souls from the jaws of hell. In this case, the crane must be imagined as coming to the rescue, not of the fox, but of the bone.

“The fox,” says the *Physiologus*, “injures the earth by burrowing in it; the earth signifies man, who should bring forth the fruits of righteousness; sin is the hole, which the devil digs and thereby [210] causes these fruits to wither away. As the wise king saith: ‘Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines; for our vines have tender grapes.’ David also spoke of becoming ‘a portion of foxes’; and our Saviour bore the same testimony when He said: ‘The foxes have holes.’”

This teaching is embodied in a carving on a miserere in the celebrated Worcester Cathedral, which shows foxes running in and out of holes; opposite this populous kennel stands John the Evangelist with his gospel in his hand and an eagle at his feet. Here the foxes are types of the devil, and the beholder is called upon to choose between the wily adversary and the herald of divine truth. Sometimes all four evangelists, or Christ alone, are thus set in opposition to the vulpine devils. Foxes in cowls are the itinerant friars, who were feared and hated by the secular clergy on account of their restless and innovating spirit and propensity to religious agitation, which disturbed the peace of the Church, and the comfort of the holders of high dignities, and the incumbents of fat benefices. The privileges conferred upon the mendicant orders by Innocent III. and his successors, the reputation which many of their members justly acquired for scholarship, and the eminence they attained as professors at the universities, excited the envy of the great body of ecclesiastics. It was their severely reformatory aim and exposure of established abuses, not less than their arrogance in the garb of poverty, that [211] made them the objects of hatred and the subjects of satire.

The following may serve as fair specimens of the manner in which the exploits of the fox are delineated in various European churches, and the spiritual or satirical uses to which they are put.<sup>25</sup> In the Maison des Templiers, formerly connected with the neighbouring church of the Templars in Metz, and probably used as a refectory, are traces of a painting of the thirteenth century portraying about thirty animals, to which the fox is preaching from a pulpit. Among Reynard's auditors are the bear, the ape, the he-goat, the griffin, the cock, the hare, the stork, the sow, and the cat, which are either holding prayer-books or psalters, or singing hymns from sheets of music, while the unicorn plays the bagpipe, and the ass performs on the harp. A little apart, with its back turned towards these worshippers, is another fox, in the act of receiving the chalice from a stag, while a third fox, dressed as a pilgrim, greets a leopard in passing. In the background stands a tent, in which a dead animal, probably a calf, is lying.

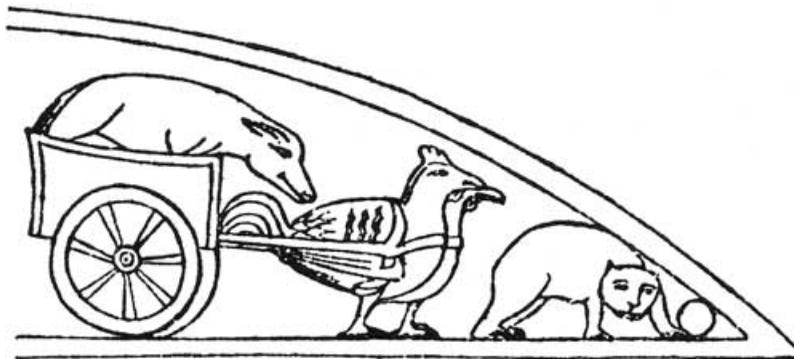
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<sup>25</sup> Cf. Meissner's contributions to Herrig's *Archiv*, lxx., *et alias*.

In the church of St. Denis at Amboise, two foxes with pilgrim's staff and scrip are witnessing the slaughter of the innocents, doubtless in allusion to Herod, whom Christ called "that fox." The frequency with which the fox appears in the garb [212] of a pilgrim is a satire on the craftiness and deceitfulness of this class of pious vagrants, who were morally about on a level with the modern tramp. This is especially true of the professional pilgrim or palmer, who passed his life in perpetual vagabondage, and was to all intents and purposes a mediæval tramp. It is not merely an accidental coincidence that palmer became a synonym for swindler, and that the most voracious and devastating of caterpillars was called palmer-worm, but showed the popular appreciation of the "votarist in palmer's weed."

On a stall in the cathedral of Amiens is carved a fox preaching to a flock of domestic fowls. The pulpit is in the form of a tray, and the preacher is reaching over the edge, as if zealously expounding the Scriptures, but really for the purpose of seizing a hen, whose devout interest in the sermon has brought her into dangerous proximity to the eager-eyed and rapacious gospeller. Again, on the exterior of Canterbury Cathedral are bas-reliefs representing a fox in monastic habit discoursing to a solemn assembly of geese.

On the underside of the seat of a faldstool in the choir of Sherborne Minster is a carving of the fox on the gallows, with four geese acting as hangmen, and a monk standing on either side of it with a book in his hand. Also on the church of St. Michael in Bruges is a stone sculpture, formerly the tympanum or facing of a pediment over the portal of the collegiate church of St. Ursin, [213] representing a cock and hen hauling a



Cock and Hen drawing Fox to execution. (*St. Ursin, Bruges.*)

fox on a cart to the place of execution, and preceded by a bear with a ball or globe at his feet, evidently the priest who is to minister spiritual comfort to the culprit in his last moments. The fox has anything but a penitent air; on the contrary, he seems to take quite a cheerful view of the situation, and his sly look implies an intention to play his executioners some trick before reaching the scaffold. He tries to assume a long face as he journeys towards his long home, but the real state of his mind is betrayed by the

merry twinkle of his eye. It is the incident so humorously described by the poet of Champagne—

“Renard s’en allait tristement  
S’emparer de son dernier gîte;  
Canteclair s’en allait gaiement  
Enterrer son mort au plus vite.  
Notre défunt était en carrosse porté,  
Bien et dument empaqueté  
Et vêtu d’une robe, hélas! qu’on nomme biere:  
Robe d’hiver, robe d’été,  
Que les morts ne dépouillent guère.”

The stalls of Bristol Cathedral are adorned with a series of grotesques, which depict the trial of [214] the fox as described in the beast-epos. First we have a man riding on a bear towards the fox, who is peeping from behind a tree; this is Bruin, the royal messenger, coming to summon Reynard to appear before the king and answer for his crimes. In the next scene Bruin is caught in the cleft of the log through his greediness for honey, and severely beaten by boors with cudgels. Thirdly, Reynard is sentenced to be hanged, and the necessary preparations are made for the imposing execution of the death-warrant. King Noble and his royal spouse are seated on their respective thrones; the bear, the wolf, and the goose are helping the condemned up the fatal ladder with undisguised pleasure, while the squirrel sits on the top of the gallows-tree and pulls a rope attached to the poor sinner's neck. Then follows the mousing adventure of Tybert, the cat in the house of the priest, in portraying which the artist has adhered quite closely to the description of the exciting incident given by the poet, so that his work bears a striking resemblance to Kaulbach's well-known sketch. The cat, in desperate self-defence, scratches the priest in a very sensitive part of his body, to the great horror of his housekeeper, or, maybe, his wife (for at that time sacerdotal celibacy had not become imperative, and was by no means universal in the Catholic Church), who pulls the sacrilegious depredator violently by the tail, while the malicious instigator of all this trouble stands in a corner and laughs. Reynard [215] appears next in a monk's hood, standing in a pulpit and preaching to several geese, that stretch out their long necks and listen with a peculiar expression of mingled solemnity and sentimentality to the seductive orator. Again the irrepressible proclivity of the hypocritical homilist to overreach some tender member of his flock brings him from the sacred desk to the scaffold, where he is seen dangling from the cross-beam of a gallows, a number of his former auditors holding the rope, and one of them tugging at the scoundrel's tail in order to hasten the process of strangulation, while another is perched on the top of the gallows, cackling for joy and flapping her wings in triumph. A woman, doubtless Reynard's wife, Dame Hermelin, riding on a mule and probably returning from her husband's trial, is the subject of the seventh carving; on one side is a house, evidently Malepartus, with Reynard looking warily out of the door, and a dove-cot with several doves in it. In the eighth scene the bear and the wolf are dancing to the music of a drum

beaten by an ape, thus showing their gladness at the condemnation of their common enemy. There were originally other carvings of incidents mentioned in the poem, but they have been partially destroyed, and those still preserved have been renovated and re-arranged without the slightest regard to their logical or chronological sequence. The general resemblance to Kaulbach's illustrations of *Reineke Fuchs* is due, as already intimated, to the fact that [216] they both faithfully depict episodes of the same epos.

In this cathedral are also comical carvings of incidents derived from other poems and popular tales, as, for example, that of an abbot riding backward on an ass and holding the tail of his steed in his hand in the manner described in Burger's ballad, where the emperor says to the round, fat, oily abbot of St. Gall—

“So lass' ich Euch führen zu Esel durch's Land,  
Verkehrt, statt des Zaumes den Schwanz in der Hand.”

“Bstriding an ass you shall ride through the land,  
With the tail instead of the reins in your hand.”

Another series of wood-carvings are the following more or less fanciful delineations of the artist, although some represent scenes from the French versions of the beast-epos:—

I. A chained and muzzled bear with a ring in its nose; on either side a fox looking out slyly from behind a tree, and two labourers with wheel-barrow.

II. A naked man armed with a sword, and attacked by two animals resembling a bear and a wolf; on the right side the nude buttocks of a man, recalling the episode in the fourteenth branch of the *Roman de Renart*: “De l'ours et du lou et du Vilains, qui monstrent lor cus”—

“Trestuit trois nos cus mostrerrons,  
Et cil qui graignor cul aura  
Le bacon tout emportera.”—(xiv. 7087 sqq.)

III. A snail creeping up a mountain and driven [217] by a monk; at a little distance a knight watching the performance. In the *Roman de Renart* the snail holds the responsible office of gonfalonier, and bears the royal standard—

“Le Rois Tardins le limaçon  
Bailla le roial gonfanon,  
Et li commanda l'avant-garde,  
Et le lupart l'arrière-garde.”—(3511-14.)

But there is no such incident in the Reynardine poems as that portrayed here; Gautier de Coinsi, however, mentions the snail as one of the animals which served to adorn consecrated edifices—

“Plus delitont sont si fait conte  
As bones gens par Saint-Omer,  
Que de Renart ne de Roumer,  
Ne de Tardin le limaçon.”

In *Renart le Nouvel* it is the snail, as chief ensign bearer, that scales the walls of Malepartus, after Reynard has escaped by a secret passage, and plants the banner of the king upon the battlements—

“Es-vous Tardins le limaçon  
Ki dist que par tans le sara,  
As Murs s’ahiert, amont rampa  
Nului n’i vit, jus descendi,  
A le porte vint, si l’ouvri;  
Mais ains mist le roial baniere  
Ens en le maistre tour de pierre  
En signe pris est li castiaus.  
Au Roi Noble est cis signes briaus.”—(4214-22.)

In a Roman Catholic prayer-book (*Livre d’Heures*) of the thirteenth century there is a [218] miniature painting of a man in the act of shooting a snail with an arbalest or cross-bow. The snail is sitting erect on an arabesque resembling a vine. M. de Bastard thinks the snail is a symbol of Christ and the resurrection; but if this interpretation be correct, it is difficult to understand the signification of the cross-bowman. In another large picture of the fifteenth century we see a crowd of people, among them one woman, attacking a snail with swords and staves, and crying out in the words of the inscription—

“Vuide ce lieu, tres orde beste,  
Qui des vignes les bourgeons mange.”

“Quit this place, you filthy beast,  
That eats the fresh buds of the vine.”

The Church, as we have shown in a volume entitled *The Criminal Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals*, claimed and exercised the power of expelling bugs and slugs and noxious insects from the vineyards and cultivated fields by anathematizing them, after they had been formally tried and condemned; and it is this function of the papal hierarchy that the two delineations abovementioned are intended to illustrate. It is not necessary to seek in them a more recondite symbolism or theological meaning.

IV. Two men mounted, one on a goose and the other on a hog, and each armed with a spear; probably the caricature of a tournament.

V. A pedlar thrown down and plundered by apes, which are taking the wares out of his pack. [219]

VI. An ape as doctor examining a bottle of urine.

VII. An ape playing on a lute, an instrument whose “lascivious pleasing” was associated with amorous delights and gallant intrigues.

VIII. An ape sitting astride an ass, which a boor is holding by the tail and belabouring with a cudgel.

These carvings belong probably to the end of the fifteenth century. The stone sculptures in the “Elder Lady Chapel” are much older, and date from the early part of the thirteenth century; the fox, as was its wont, is running off with a goose; an ape and a

ram are performing on sylvan pipes; another ape is playing on a syrinx and carrying a hare on its back.

Although such representations may have been inventions of the artist, it is hardly possible that they should have been placed in the church without the will and consent of the ecclesiastical authorities, whose intention was evidently to censure by burlesquing the vices and foibles of their day. But what must be regarded as most curious and characteristic is, that satirical and often necessarily obscene delineations of this kind, although designed for moral reproof and correction, should have been deemed suitable decorations of sacred architecture. That they sometimes made “the judicious grieve” we have already seen; but it is plain that they must have been sanctioned by the majority of the clergy and generally approved by the devout laity.

[220] In Beverly Minster the misereres of the stalls in the choir are adorned with carvings of animals, in which the adventures of the fox as an itinerant preacher are more fully delineated than in any other ecclesiastical edifice. During the middle ages, Beverly or Inderawood, as it was originally called, was a popular place of pilgrimage, where the bones of St. John of Beverly, who was Archbishop of York in the eighth century, and canonized by Benedict IX. in 1037, were revered by pious multitudes of all classes, that thronged to this shrine from every part of England. Even after the Reformation Beverly remained a stronghold of Catholicism, and the chief centre of reactionary movements.

The carvings in question were the work of “Johannes Wake clericus,” whose escutcheon was a crowing cock (Wake!); this chanticleer may have been, however, a pictorial pun or heraldic rebus, a mere canting device, and not necessarily a family coat-of-arms. They were made in the very year (1520) in which Luther burned the papal bull at Wittenberg, and were directed, not against the secular clergy, to which Wake himself belonged, but against the mendicant orders, and especially against the Black Friars (Dominicans) and Gray Friars (Franciscans), then exceedingly active as predicants in Beverly. These restless and irritating elements in the sleek and comfortable sacerdotal body were perpetual thorns in the flesh to the conservative dignitaries of the Church, who regarded [221] them with quite as deep aversion as they did the heretical Protestants themselves. The following are the subjects of the carvings:—

I. A fox running away with a goose and pursued by a man.

II. A fox in a monk’s habit preaching to a flock of geese; behind the exhorter is an ape that seizes every goose within his reach, throwing it over his shoulder and holding it by the neck; several of them are already hanging in this position.

III. The fox is being hanged by geese, six of them tugging at the rope as executioners, and two standing by as spectators. To this carving there are two pendants or side-views; in one the fox is lying apparently dead under the gallows, and an ape is removing the noose from the culprit’s neck; in the other the resuscitated rascal has fallen upon the sleeping geese and carried off two of them.

IV. The fox steals a goose; the cries of the other geese attract the attention of an old woman, who rushes out of the house, but comes too late to prevent the robbery.

V. A man pursues a fox with dogs, but the wily quarry is already safe in its hole and peeping out with a crafty look. A side-scene shows Reynard in bed, suffering doubtless from indigestion caused by over-indulgence in fat poultry.

VI. A fox-hunt with hounds.

VII. Three peasants are hauling a cart with a fox lying on it, evidently a representation of Reynard's trick of pretending to be dead, and being [222] picked up and thrown on the cart, where the fish, with which it is laden, can be eaten at leisure.

Besides these episodes from the beast-epos, there are many purely grotesque carvings or scenes intended to enforce moral lessons or to illustrate the wisdom of homely proverbs; a cat playing the fiddle for dancing mice, which she sports with and finally eats; an elephant with a howdah; a dance of death with two men in motley; a man putting his cart before the horse, and another threshing eggs with a flail; a woman pulling a man by the hair; an animal eating out of a narrow-necked vessel, in which its head is stuck fast; a boar-hunt; a stag-hunt; an owl surrounded by small birds; a lion with its paw on a woman's head; a boar playing the bagpipe and another the harp, young pigs, dancing, and an ape on horseback leading three muzzled bears by chains; a pedlar plundered by apes; an ape as doctor examining a flask of urine; an ape dandling an infant; a miser hoarding his money, while the devil seizes him from behind; a drunkard holding a goblet and clutched by a demon, and finally several canting arms of canons, such as cocks fighting on a tun (Cockton), persons placing weights on scales (Witton, i. e. Weight on), a crowing cock (Wake), and other equally far-fetched rebuses.

In the church of St. Mary in Beverly are still older carvings of a like character: two capoched foxes at a lectern reading scripture-lessons; a fox as friar preaching; a fox engaged in a medical [223] diagnosis as above; foxes with crosiers, and each with a goose in its hood; and a man riding a goat with a rabbit under his arm. The dress of the foxes shows them to be Cistercians.

On the stalls of the choir in Lincoln Cathedral are somewhat similar wood-carvings dating from the fourteenth century: two apes bearing a young ape on a bier, and stopping to pray before a chapel or shrine; a crane dropping stones into a bottle in order to make the water rise within reach; and the devil blowing a fire with a bellows and boiling a kettle, out of which emerges a man wearing a tiara. This is probably a satire on the election of a pope.

In Ely Cathedral we find a fox preaching to geese; the vulpine divine wears an almuce and stole, and holds a bishop's crook in the left hand; in the right hand is a scroll, with the words already quoted from a similar representation on the window of St. Martin's Church in Leicester: "Testis est mihi Deus quam cupiam vos visceribus meis." Another fox is running off with a goose, and is pursued by an old woman with a distaff. There are also carvings of squirrels, symbols of the constant strivings of the Holy Spirit; apes; a hunt; a hart trampling on a serpent, typifying Christ subduing Satan by the waters of salvation; two men playing dice and drinking, and a woman standing near and weeping over a broken bee-hive fallen to the ground, a moral discourse on drunkenness as subversive of domestic happiness and thrift.

Carvings of a like character decorate the [224] cathedrals of Gloucester and Winchester, and satirize the same religious fraternities. Indeed they existed formerly in nearly all the principal English churches and priories, adorning usually the stalls of the choir, the lectern, or the organ-loft. At a later period, when the Reformation began to be an earnest movement intensively and extensively, and interpreted these works as deriding the offices of the Church and scoffing at the clergy, the very persons to whom they owed their origin, they were in many cases destroyed, as, for example, in the fine old Gothic cathedral at Chester.

In the collegiate church of St. Victor, at Xanten on the Rhine, are carvings on the backs of the stalls of the choir, in which the begging friars are figured as a monster with the body and feet of a pig, the tail of a fox, and the head of a cowled monk. It is a piece of symbolism recalling the portentous *porco sacerdos* mentioned by Lycosthenes (p. 529), and embodying in plastic form the opinion expressed by Innocent III., who, as a man of learning and lover of the nicer elegancies of life, at first refused to confirm the rules of the order of St. Francis, saying that they were more fit for swine than for human beings.

The Benedictine Odo of Sherington, who lived in the twelfth century, in his fable of the wolf in sheep's clothing denounces the rapacity and hypocrisy of the Cistercians, stigmatizing them as renegades and legacy-hunters, and declaring that he would rather associate with a pagan or a Jew than [225] with such a monk. Many of the carvings already described derive their inspiration directly from Odo's fables, and inculcate his teachings.

An American bishop and High-Churchman was wont to call out to his servant, whenever a dissenting orthodox minister visited him: "John, count the spoons; there is an evangelical in the house!" This warning, although not intended by the corpulent and otherwise good-humoured prelate to be taken seriously, expresses the real antipathy of mediæval bishops and other secular clergy towards the mendicant and predicant orders.

The embodiment of this feeling in works of art was by no means confined to the ecclesiastical edifices of England, although more frequently met with there than on the Continent, especially in the churches and monasteries belonging to the Benedictines. Foxes in the disguise of begging friars are found in the cathedral of St. Etienne at Limoges, in St. Jaurin of Evreux, in the cathedral of Le Mans, and were formerly on the arms of the seats in the chancel of the cathedral Notre Dame at Rouen, but were hewn off by an over-zealous iconoclastic canon.

On the frieze of a column in St. Peter's Church at Aulnay is the sculpture of an ass standing on its hind legs and invested with a dalmatica. It is evidently "Bernard li arciprestres," as the ass is called in the Roman de Renart, and may be regarded as a scoffing allusion to the noble and saintly reformer of the Bernardines and Cistercians.

[226] In the magnificent cathedral of Toledo in Spain are reliefs carved towards the close of the fifteenth century, and representing a bear near a beehive in search of honey; a fox strangling a cock; a woman riding on a mule to market with two geese in a basket, and a fox creeping up behind her in order to steal them; an ape feeding a duck with a

spoon, and a young ape catching hold of the old one and evidently soliciting a share of the food; a pig with a girdle and a knife (the pig turned butcher); the story of Aristotle as related in the *Lai d'Aristote*; a man in motley approaching a tent, where he is received by a naked woman, who draws aside the curtain in order to admit him.

The *Lay of Aristotle* is a satire on the power of love and the irresistible fascination of female beauty, against which neither philosophic wisdom nor old age is proof. The poem, based upon an old tradition, was written by Henri d'Andely, a canon of the cathedral of Notre-Dame of Rouen at the end of the twelfth century, and is contained in Etienne Barbazan's collection of *Fabliaux et Contes François des XII<sup>e</sup>.—XV<sup>e</sup>. Siècles* (Paris, 1756). The fable is briefly as follows. Whilst Alexander was pursuing his career of conquest in the Orient, he became so deeply enamoured of an East Indian girl as, in the opinion of his soldiers, to imperil the success of the campaign by giving to dalliance too much rein. Aristotle was thereupon deputed by the army to remonstrate with the young monarch, who confessed his fault and [227] promised to have no further intercourse with the dangerous beauty. Naturally the young lady was quick to observe the change, and on reproaching her lover with neglect and learning the cause of it, vowed to avenge herself on the officious philosopher. Accordingly the next day she went into the orchard wearing only a long chemise of finest muslin, and walked to and fro under Aristotle's windows, singing to herself and culling flowers. Aristotle looked out and at first feigned indifference, but soon had his wise head turned, and descending to the orchard made an ardent declaration of love, and expressed his willingness to do anything to win her favour. As a test of the sincerity of his affection she demanded that he should condescend to be her palfrey. After some hesitation he acceded to this humiliating proposal, permitted himself to be saddled and bridled, and began to creep over the grass on all fours with the exultant girl seated on his back, holding the reins in one hand and a riding-whip in the other. Alexander, who had watched the progress of this gallant adventure from a window of the palace, now drew near and derided the absurd infatuation of his grave preceptor, who candidly confessed his folly, but could not refrain from the pedagogical habit of drawing a moral lesson from it for the benefit

of others. "Beware," he said, "for if love can make such a fool of an old man, how much more dangerous must it be to youth!"

The Lay of Aristotle seems to have been often [228] delineated in Christian art, especially in cloisters, where it was designed to glorify asceticism and celibacy. One of the finest representations of it is a bas-relief underneath a console on the façade of the cathedral church of Saint-Jean in Lyons, dating from the fifteenth century. Behind the philosopher, degraded to a lady's palfrey, is a hare, the symbol of libidinousness; in the two corners above are



The "Lay of Aristotle."  
(Saint Jean, Lyons.)

persons generally supposed to be Alexander and his mistress; it is probable, however, that the scene on the right, slightly mutilated, represents Aristotle declaring his love, and the one on the left the young lady imposing the conditions on which her favour may be secured. There is also a sculpture of the story of Aristotle on a capital in the church of Saint-Pierre in Caen, as well as one in the apex of an arch and another on the base of a column in the cloister of Cadouin. They used to be interpreted as portraying the conjugal relations of Samson and Delilah, but really have a broader application in illustration of the concluding lines of Henri d'Andely's poem—

“Veritez est, et je le di,  
Qu' amors vainc tout et tout vaincra  
Tant com cis siècles durera.”

[229] Mediæval legend makes Vergil the hero of an equally farcical affair of gallantry with the daughter of the Emperor of Rome, who invited him to a rendezvous at the foot of a tower in which she dwelt. She then ordered her attendants to let down from her window a basket by a rope, for the ostensible purpose of drawing him up; but instead of being lifted to the goal of his lofty hopes he was left suspended in the midway air, and became an object of scoffing to every passer-by. This episode was also sculptured on a pillar in the cloister of Cadouin, but has been gradually destroyed, so that only few traces of it are now left. It was commonly supposed to represent the manner in which Saul of Tarsus after his conversion escaped the fury of the Jews by being let down in a basket from the wall of Damascus. The monks were extremely fond of selecting the wisest and most illustrious men of pagan antiquity, and thus satirizing their frailty in their relations to women in order to exalt their own cloistered virtue and saintly chastity.

These cynical, satirical, moral, and sometimes perhaps purely fanciful delineations, with the description of which it would be easy to fill a large volume, were derived almost exclusively from the cycle of Reynard's adventures, as recorded in different versions of the beast-epos, and have rarely any relation to the *Physiologus*. But it is not probable that they would have ever found [230] admission to church edifices or have served to decorate ecclesiastical architecture, if the *Physiologus* had not furnished a precedent and thus justified the intrusion. In the footsteps of the fabulous fauna and mythical monstrosities of the *Physiologus* and the bestiaries, as they were led along by exegetical threads of the slenderest and flimsiest sort into the innermost sanctuary, followed the whole lively and noisy pack of Reynard and his companions, who soon took possession of the chancel, the chapels, and the pulpit, and finally overran the entire building, nestling in capitals, creeping along cornices, squatting on balustrades, peeping out of illuminated windows, peering over portals, and grimacing as gargoyles from the roof. The beasts, which gained admittance as symbols of divine mysteries and illustrations of theological dogmas, were succeeded and superseded by other beasts, which were at first intended to caricature the preaching friars and to censure their vices, but at last came to be regarded as a parody of the sacred rites themselves, and a satire on those who celebrate them.

The *Romance of Reynard* was diverted to polemical purposes, just as the *Vision of Piers Plowman* was at the time of the Reformation. William Langland did not write his poem with any intention of assailing the Catholic religion, although he did not hesitate to expose ecclesiastical abuses, and thus supplied the Reformers of the sixteenth century with a full quiver, from [231] which they drew many keen-pointed darts to hurl against the hated hierarchy. As is well known, the writings of Chaucer and Petrarch were used very effectively in the same way. The author of *Piers Plowman* is extremely severe in his strictures on the “four ordres” of begging friars, namely, Franciscans, Dominicans, Carmelites, and Augustines; especially the first two seem to have been the peculiar objects of his aversion. The Benedictines hated these orders, and not only warned the people against them in sermons, but also burlesqued them in the carvings, paintings, and sculptures of their cloisters and churches, portraying them as wily foxes, ravenous wolves, asses, hogs, and stinking and salacious goats; and there is no doubt that the obnoxious *frères*, however worthy may have been the original objects of the brotherhoods, soon degenerated into persons who made a profession of poverty, but practised all sorts of fraud to enrich their convents, which became in a short time the grandest and wealthiest in England. They succeeded in acquiring immense influence over the masses, and thereby excited the envy and jealousy of the secular clergy, and made themselves odious to the better classes by reason of their intrigues and arrogance, and their success in extorting rich bequests from the dying. They were the sensational preachers of their day, and sought to attract crowds by novel doctrines, eccentric manners, coarse wit, funny stories, rhetorical pyrotechnics, and other astounding feats of pulpit [232] prestidigitation, so that Langland was wholly justified in denouncing them as

“but jugulers and iapers, of kynde,  
Lorels and lechures and lemmans holden,”

who

“ryht as Robertes men raken aboute  
At feires and at ful ales and fyllen the cuppe,  
And precheth all of pardon to plesen the puple.”

In the frequent representations of animals performing on musical instruments and like whimsical conceits the artist did not take his subjects either from the *Physiologus* or the beast-epos, but was permitted to give line and scope to the sarcastic suggestions of his own fancy in censure of public folly and iniquity. On the stalls of the choir in Boston Minster, St. Botolph’s in Lincolnshire, and on a churchwarden’s pew now in the Hôtel de Cluny, are carvings of pigs playing on the organ or on the harp. The hog and also the dog as harpist occur in St. Peter’s Cathedral, Poitiers, and date from the first half of the thirteenth century. In the cathedral of Burgos, a splendid monument of pure Gothic style erected by German architects in the thirteenth century, are carvings of a bishop carried off by a bull-headed devil; two knights and their ladies dancing to the dulcet tones of a lute; pigs seated on stools and eating pap out of pots; wine-skins as knights

on horseback, with lances in the rest and ready to tilt, evidently a caricature of tournaments and persiflage of theological polemics; a sow spinning [233] while giving suck to her farrow, and a boar causing the organ to peal for the entertainment and edification of his family; a sow playing on the bagpipe, and her pigs dancing round an overturned trough; a man assailed and knocked down by apes, whose young he had captured; a fox as hunter riding on a dog, and carrying on his shoulders another dog tied by its hind legs to a stick, showing how the tables may be turned. As it was the assumed and generally acknowledged function of the Church to correct and reprove all forms of vice and folly, and to do what Hamlet asserted to be “the purpose of playing,” namely, “to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure,” perhaps we have in these beastly musicians a satire on the numerous wandering minstrels, mediæval Bohemians, and vagabond Beghards, whose morals were not of the best. Some such motive would explain their admission into the Church more satisfactorily than to regard them as mere caprices of the artist, which the ecclesiastical authorities tolerated simply because they amused the public. Besides, the repetition of them in so many churches in different countries would imply a general scheme of reform and systematic crusade against the prevailing iniquities.

The collegiate church at Manchester, in which many grotesque designs of this sort are found, contains also hunting-scenes with tuns, evidently [234] allusions in rebus to Huntington, the first warden. In numerous instances it is impossible to solve these artistic puzzles, as neither history nor local tradition has preserved the key to them. An eagle flying away with a child to its aerie is the memorial of an incident said to have occurred in the house of Stanley, one of whose members, James Stanley, was the warden of Manchester College from 1506 to 1515.<sup>26</sup> The same family tradition is carved on a stool in the chancel of Salisbury Cathedral, and might easily be mistaken for an eagle mounting up with an eaglet to the sun.

Rats hanging a cat in the presence of owls, that are looking on with judicial gravity and an air of profound legal wisdom, are depicted in Great Malvern Abbey, and may illustrate the doctrine of final retribution.

Beside excellent specimens of the commoner symbols founded on the *Physiologus*, such as the unicorn asleep in the lap of a virgin, the pelican feeding her young with blood from her breast, and others of a similar character, there is, on one of the stalls in the chancel of Boston Minster, the carving of an armed knight on a steed in harness. While the horse is in full gallop one of its shoes is flung off, but the rider, without stopping, turns round in his saddle and catches the shoe in his hand as it flies through the air. Meissner suggests that this may be mythological, and celebrate the [235] exploit of some Scandinavian god or hero. More probably, however, it immortalizes the marvellous feat of some Lincolnshire chevalier, and has only a local importance.

On the old church of Marienhafen, in East Friesland, were numerous animals cut in stone, which adorned the portal and extended on the frieze entirely round the building.

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<sup>26</sup> Cf. Herrig's *Archiv*, lxxv. 217-222.

The edifice was demolished in 1829, but the city architect of Emden, Marten, made drawings of the sculptures as they lay scattered about in the churchyard, and they were subsequently published by the “Gesellschaft für bildende Kunst und vaterländische Alterthümer zu Emden.”<sup>27</sup> One series of these works of art tells the story of the wolf at school, and does not differ essentially from the reliefs at Freiburg already described. Another series portrays the burial of the fox, and follows quite closely the text of the last branch of the Roman de Renart. An animal in a cowl is reading the Gospel, another is celebrating mass at an altar, while an ape, as acolyte, rings the sacring-bell; a fourth animal is standing on its hind legs and reading the lections.

The next scene is a funeral banquet: one of the animals is sweeping the dining-hall, another drawing wine, a third carrying a bowl or pitcher, and others bringing food into the hall, where numerous animals are feasting. At the table three apes are carving a joint, a fourth is eating a piece of bread, [236] and a fifth is holding an empty glass to be filled. Then comes the funeral procession: one animal with a censer, another with a cross, a hog with an aspergill and a basin of holy water, an ass in priestly robes, a horse as sexton with a spade, a camel with a tabor, a goat with a bell, a wolf bearing a crucifix, a pig with a shovel, and a fox lying on a bier. In another scene at the grave two horned animals seize the deceased by the head and feet and lay him in the pit. These are the undertakers, Brichemer the stag and Belin the ram, as described in the French poem—

“Li Cors ont iluec descendu  
 Qui covert iert d’un paile vert,  
 Et quant il l’orent descovert  
 Brichemer par le chief le prist,  
 Ainsi con Bernart li aprist,  
 Qui maint mis en terre en avoit;  
 A Belin que devant lui voit  
 A fet Renart par les piez prendre.  
 En la fosse sanz plus attendre  
 L’ont mis et couchie doucement,  
 Et l’Arciprestre innelement  
 Geta sus l’eue beneoite.”

In the sculptures a priest, standing behind the stag, gives the benediction, an animal resembling a pig sprinkles holy water with an aspergill, and an ape gazes sorrowfully into the grave, by which two shovels are lying. The animals are much defaced, so that it is impossible sometimes to determine what kind of creatures they are intended to represent. Another group tells the story of the goat in the well.

[237] The western portal of the cathedral of Brandenburg on the Havel is adorned with reliefs similar to those already described. In the first scene a fox as friar is reading scripture-lessons to some geese; in the second he is preaching to them from a pulpit, but before the sermon is ended rushes into the devout flock and seizes a plump auditrust by

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<sup>27</sup> Cf. *Das Ostfriesische Monatsblatt*, June, 1878.

the neck. Then follows the trial, with geese as witnesses, the judge sitting on a chair and an executioner at his side with a drawn sword; finally the culprit makes confession and saves his life. Among the sculptures, all of which are seriously injured, is one of a man fighting a basilisk with a venom-repelling cone of crystal as described in the *Physiologus*.

The cornice of the cathedral of Paderborn is decorated with delineations of scenes from the fables. In the first, the fox and the crane are dining together, the latter eating with relish out of a tall and narrow-necked vase in which the food is contained, while the former must be content with what can be got by licking the outside of the vessel; in the second, a crane is extracting a bone from the throat of a fox, doubtless in this connection simply a representation of the incident described in the fable, without any reference to the symbolism of saving souls from the jaws of hell, as is elsewhere the case. Thirdly, an old woman sitting on a bench and spinning strikes with her distaff an ape, which is trying to steal a dish of food. Finally, there are sculptures of a frog and a swan, whose [238] aquatic habits may have some relation to the reviving and transforming virtue of the baptismal rite and the waters of salvation. Perhaps the change of the batrachian from tadpole to frog may furnish the basis of this symbolism of regeneration. In the Egyptian Museum at Turin is a lamp of terra-cotta in the shape of a frog, with the inscription ΕΓΩ ΕΙΜΙ ΑΝΑΤΑΚΙΣ: "I am the resurrection." The Vedic poet Vasishtha (*Rigveda*, vii. 103) invokes the frogs as deities, and compares their croaking to the chanting of Brahmans, who are performing sacrificial rites, and praying to the cloud-compelling Parjanya for rain in time of drought. The frog that lows like a cow, and bleats like a goat, the speckled and the green frog are entreated jointly and severally to refresh and enrich and renew the earth. In the *Liber de Hærisibus* (xi.) of Philaster, Bishop of Brescia, the frog-worshippers (*ranarum cultores*) are mentioned as an heretical Christian sect; and a law of the year 428 forbade Arians, Macedonians, and Batrachitians to reside within the limits of the Roman Empire. It may have been due to this tendency to worship frogs that their entrails were used as charms in ancient times (Juvenal, iii. 44), and prescribed as a potent medicament by mediæval quacksalvers. Although the swan is not mentioned in the *Physiologus*, the melancholy musical tones which it is supposed to utter when dying, and especially after having been mortally wounded, are often compared by early Christian poets to [239] the last utterances of the crucified Saviour and the sweet resignation of the blessed martyrs. This figurative application of the fabled characteristic of the bird would account for its presence in ecclesiastical architecture.

In the window-frame of an outside corridor of the same church are three hares hewn in stone, and having altogether only three ears, but so arranged that each hare seems to have two ears. This sculpture may have symbolized originally the doctrine of the Trinity, but in the present instance has no religious significance, since it was placed there probably as a votive offering by the travelling handicraftsmen of Paderborn as the badge or ensign of their guild. In the cloister of the Franciscan nuns at Muotta, in

Switzerland, is a woodcarving of three hares similarly arranged; in this case it was doubtless intended to be an emblem of Trinitarianism.



Carvings on Stalls in Parish Church of Kempen.

In the parish church of Kempen on the Rhine the misericords are adorned with nearly thirty carvings illustrating fables and proverbs. Here we have not only the crane eating out of a tall and [240] slender vessel, as at Paderborn, but also the counterplot of the fox who turns the tables on the crane by inviting the latter to dinner and serving the food as thin soup in a shallow dish, from which he easily and eagerly laps it up, while his long-billed guest gets scarcely a drop. A man threshing eggs with a flail would be interpreted in general as an example of energy misapplied; but in this case it has a special censorious significance not commonly understood. It was one of the privileges of the



Carvings on Stalls in Parish Church of Kempen.

clergy to collect eggs from parishioners during Lent, and the exercise of this right was popularly known as *Eierdreschen* (egg-threshing), owing to the diligence and zeal with which these ovarious contributions were levied. The man beating eggs with a flail satirizes this odious exaction, and is carved on the stalls of many churches in the Rhinelands, as, for example, at Calcar, Cleves, and Emmerich.<sup>28</sup> Other carvings at Kempen refer to the [241] same custom, and are evidently intended to deride the egg-hunting parson; such as a man holding an egg up to the light to see if it is fresh, a man feeling of a hen in order to ascertain the prospect of eggs, so as not to be deceived by any excusatory plea of the peasant that the hens don't lay, a man sitting on eggs to hatch

<sup>28</sup> In connection with this form of tribute it may be mentioned as a parody on trial by ordeal, that if any person's contribution amounted to half an egg and he refused to give a whole one, it was customary to lay the egg on the threshold of the house and strike it in two with a knife; if the yolk flowed towards the house, the tributary was declared to be free, but if it flowed outwards, he was condemned to pay a fine.



Carvings on Stalls in Parish Church of Kempen.

them, and a man weeping over a basket full of eggs fallen to the ground. Of the other representations, more or less sarcastic in their purpose, are a fisherman drawing an eel-pot out of the water; another hauling in a net; a fox preaching to fowls, while a cowled confederate lies [242] in wait for them behind the pulpit; two dogs fighting over a bone; a



Carvings on Stalls in Parish Church of Kempen.

fox swimming after ducks in a pond; an ass kneeling with a pack on its back and a rosette in its mouth; a man casting daisies before swine (*margaritas ante porcos*), a

confusion of the pearl (*margarite*) with the flower (*marguerite*); an ass playing the lyre (*asinus ad lyram*); a pig playing the bagpipe; a fox confessing a bird, as it is usually explained, but more probably a delineation of the incident related in the *Roman de Renart*, in which Hubert the kite officiates as confessor to Reynard and is suddenly seized and eaten by the crafty confessant; a bear getting honey out of a hive; a cat sitting near a bell, to which a strap is attached, and surrounded by four mice, who are [243] evidently trying to devise the best means of putting it round her neck. Ernst aus'm Weerth thinks the cat rings the bell to entice the mice, perhaps to a supper, "not where they eat, but where they are eaten," as Hamlet would say; this interpretation is far-fetched and absurd; the intention of the artist was simply to illustrate the phrase "to bell the cat." The ass with a rosary is also carved on a stall in the Minorite cloister of Cleves, and dates from the year 1474; it was designed to throw ridicule on the Dominicans, whose founder, in the second decade of the thirteenth century, introduced the rosary as a means of keeping a proper tale of prayers, and who were held in derision on this account, especially by their rivals the Franciscans. The idea of performing devotions by counting beads was not original with Domingo de Guzman, but was borrowed from the Mohammedans. The pack is the heavy burden of sin, which the new and improved system of supplication by machinery is expected to lighten. At Kempen there are also carvings of a man shearing swine, great cry and little wool, a general illustration of the proverb, and perhaps a special satire on preaching friars; a mermaid with comb and mirror, probably the German siren of the Lorelei; a pig putting on trousers; an ape carrying a young donkey in a dosser, or maybe one of her own young, although the creature in the pannier has a decidedly asinine look; an owl viewing its face in a mirror, a rebus of the typical mediæval wag Tyll Eulenspiegel; a pelican feeding her [244] brood with her blood, and other more common or less striking delineations, all of which are remarkable for their fidelity to nature, and show in the main, a wonderful degree of technical skill in their execution. This realistic and



Jolly Friar and Tinker.  
(*Minorite cloister in Cleves.*)

individualizing tendency reveals itself in the care and exactness with which the minutest characteristics are observed and reproduced. They are the works of the Flemish school of wood-carving, which flourished during the fifteenth century at many places in the Rhinelands, and especially at Calcar.

As has been already stated, the same subjects with some additions and slight variations are treated in St. Martin's Church at Emmerich, in the church of St. Nicholas at Calcar, and in the Minorite cloister of Cleves, although the carvings are inferior in artistic execution to those of Kempen. At Cleves are also representations of a man riding backwards on a pig; a man stroking a cat; two mendicant monks, one holding a fire-pot and the other a bellows; the same monks fighting; a friar and a tinker having a jollification together; and a cloven-hoofed animal reading a breviary and

supposed to be the devil; unfortunately for this interpretation the German devil is not cloven-footed, but solipedous, having a hoof like that of a horse. The creature is evidently meant to be a stag, which [245] in the beast-epos discharges the grave functions of an ecclesiastic. At Calcar the hare plays the bagpipe, and on the back of one of the stalls reclines a queer man-monster with the breasts of a woman, the feet of a goat, fins on his legs, faces on his shoulders and knees, and eyes in his hips, reading a book. At Emmerich a goat nibbling a grape vine exemplifies the fable of the goat as gardener, and a man sitting between two stools illustrates the vice of indecision and the danger of playing fast and loose with principles.

It may be added, in concluding this portion of the subject, that the church edifices of the Netherlands were formerly richly adorned with paintings and sculptures of a symbolical, satirical, and didactic character, but that they have been nearly all destroyed. The work of demolition, begun by Catholic iconoclasts, was continued by Calvinistic reformers, and completed by French radicals and revolutionists.

## CHAPTER V

### WHIMSEYS OF ECCLESIOLOGY AND SYMBOLOLOGY

[246] Universality of the symbolism of the cross—Cruciform phenomena in nature—The sign of the cross in the Old Testament, and its prefigurative significance—Wonderworking power of the cross in Jewish history—Its presence in the Garden of Eden and in the Hebrew alphabet—The cosmos has the form of a cross—Influence of the doctrine of the Trinity upon art—Trinitarian suggestions in the material creation—Mystic meanings in sacred architecture—Symbolism of bells and significance of orientation—Superstitious regard for the points of the compass—Transition from christolatry to hagiolatry—Subtilties of ecclesiology—Meagreness of Hebrew mythology—Exercise of the mythopœic faculty by the Rabbis—Early Christian opposition to the theatre—Theatrical rites and indecent amusements in churches and cloisters—Feast of Fools, etc.—Analogy between the anatomy of the ass and the architecture of a cathedral—Jewish and Christian reverence for the ass—Feast of the Ass—Symbolism swallowed up in buffoonery—Traffic in holy relics—Satirized in Heywood's play of *The Four P.P.*—Anatomical peculiarities of saints—Queer freaks in sacred osteology—Specimens of relics in Catholic churches—Miraculous power of self-multiplication—Choice collection of Frederic the Wise—Anti-Semitic sculptures in Christian churches—Coarse relief ridiculing the Jews at Wittenberg, and its interpretation by Luther—Similar carvings in other cities—Decrees of John the Good and Frederic the Hohenstaufe concerning usury—Classical myths in Christian art—Orpheus a prototype [247] of Christ—Bacchus and the Lord's vineyard—Greek comic poets adored as Christian saints—Isis as the Virgin Mary—Crude symbolism of early Christian art—Influence of Pagan antiquity—The peacock as a Christian emblem—Moralization of the myth of Argus and Io—Sirens and centaurs in architecture—The Sigurd Saga—Weighing of souls—Recording angels and devils—Woman as an emissary of Satan—The devil in Christian art—Dance of death—Oldest representation of it—Its democratic character and popularity—Manuscripts with miniatures—Holbein's drawings—Sensational sermons of Honoré de Sainte Marie—Modern delineations of the theme by Rethel, Seitz, Lührig, and others.

As the cross was the symbol of human redemption, and the whole creation since the Fall was supposed to have been groaning and travailing together in longing for the advent of the Messiah and the consummation of the Atonement, the Fathers of the Church and the later defendants of the faith, Tertullian, Justin Martyr, Jerome, Origen, Jacobus de Voragine, and Hrabanus Maurus, imagined they discovered cruciform and cruciferous phenomena everywhere in animate and inanimate nature, and laid great stress upon this fancy as an incontestable proof of the divine origin of Christianity. Furthermore, as the Jewish people was the special channel through which this salvation was to be received, the literary and historical records of the Jews were assumed to be full of allusions to the cross, and their religious rites were interpreted as having no purpose or validity except as prophecies and prefigurations of it. We are told that man was created in the form of a cross, a curious and characteristic example of what logicians call *hysteron-proteron*, [248] or what in common parlance is said to be putting the cart before the horse, since the cross took this shape because, as an instrument of human punishment and torture, it was made to fit the man. Again, as a primitive physico-psychology resolved man into seven elements, four of the body and three of the soul, so the cross is composed of four notches and three pieces of wood. Three

multiplied by four makes twelve, and this number corresponds to the sum of the commandments of the Old (ten) and New (two) Testaments. Four and three form respectively the basis of the quadrivium and the trivium, which together constitute the seven liberal arts, and comprise the whole cycle of human knowledge. The cross was made of wood, because it was through a tree that man fell, and by a tree he must be raised up and redeemed. Indeed some typologists are sufficiently strenuous to maintain that the cross was originally a tree in the Garden of Eden, where it grew in the form of the Hebrew letter Tau (T), that Adam and Eve hid themselves behind it, after they had sinned and when they heard the voice of God, and that the blood of the murdered Abel cried out from under it, thus prefiguring the expiatory blood of Christ. It was a branch of this tree that Moses cast into the waters of Marah to make them sweet, and the great lawgiver's wonder-working wand was a piece of the same wood. The world itself is constructed in the shape of a cross, whose four points correspond to the four cardinal points or intersections of the [249] horizon with the meridian. Birds cannot rise in the air and fly unless their wings are extended in the form of a cross; men assume this attitude in prayer and in swimming; a ship cannot sail without making the sign of the cross with the mast and the yard-arms; and the spade with which man tills the ground, toiling in the sweat of his brow as the penalty of his transgression, is cruciform. A poet and divine of the seventeenth century has put these forced conceits into a verse quite worthy of the theme—

“Who can blot out the cross, which th’ instrument  
Of God dewed on me in the sacrament?  
Who can deny me power and liberty  
To stretch mine arms, and mine own cross to be?  
Swim, and at every stroke thou art thy cross!  
The mast and yard make one when seas do toss.  
Look down, thou spy’st ever crosses in small things;  
Look up, thou seest birds raised on crossed wings.  
All the globe’s frame and sphere is nothing else  
But the meridian’s crossing parallels.”

In the twelfth chapter of the Epistle of Barnabas, the act of Moses in stretching out his hands, in order that Israel might overcome Amalek in battle, is said to signify the power of the cross. The same interpretation is given to the words of Isaiah “I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people,” which mystic christology explains as the rejection of the crucified Saviour by the Jews. The youthful David prevailed over Goliath because he had a cross-shaped staff in his hand, to which alone he owed his victory. The [250] two sticks which the widow of Zarephath gathered to cook a cake with, she held in the form of a cross, and it was the wonder-working virtue of this sign that caused the barrel of meal to waste not, and the cruse of oil not to fail; afterwards the prophet Elijah restored her son to life by stretching himself three times upon the child in the form of a cross and in adoration of the Trinity. The faggot which Isaac bore on his shoulders to the place of sacrifice took the same shape, and it was for

this reason that God sent an angel to arrest the hand of Abraham, and accepted a ram for a burnt-offering instead of his son. That the brazen serpent which Moses put upon a pole prefigured the Crucifixion is not a matter of the slightest doubt, even to the most enlightened orthodox hermeneutician of the present day. St. Jerome was so sure of this that he did not scruple to translate “in cruce” the phrase which means simply “upon a pole,” and is so rendered in the Septuagint (ἐν δοκῶ); and an eminent American divine recently declared that the efficacy of the brazen serpent in healing the children of Israel was due solely to its typical connection with the atoning death of Christ. The fact that Tau, the imaginary symbol of the cross, is the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet, was adduced as conclusive proof that Judaism, in reality the most intensely tribal of all religions, and reflecting more fully than any other the life and character of the race that originated it, existed merely as a system of [251] shadowy types, having for its whole end and aim the gospel of the cross.<sup>29</sup> The same sort of reasoning has discovered a profound significance in the accidental resemblance of the Roman numeral X to St. Andrew’s cross (*crux decussata*), which must therefore bear some mystic relation to the decalogue.

The pascha, according to Justin Martyr, was a symbolic adumbration of the Crucifixion. “For the lamb which was roasted was so placed as to resemble the figure of a cross; with one spit it was pierced longitudinally, from the tail to the head; with another it was transfixed through the shoulders, so that the fore legs became extended.” However natural it may have been for Paul, as a Jew, to speak of Christ metaphorically as “our Passover,” it is little creditable to the critical acumen and logical perception of later theologians that they should have taken this figure of speech literally, and reared an imposing christological superstructure on the unsubstantial basis of a trope. The smearing of the door-posts with blood in the celebration of the Jewish feast, says Justin Martyr, has direct reference to the death of the Redeemer, “because the Greek word to smear, *χρίσθαι*, and the word Christ are the same.” As smearing is only another term for anointing, and Christ means anointed, and is the Greek synonym [252] of the Hebrew Messiah (*māshiah*), there is nothing very startling in such an etymological coincidence.

Before the twelfth century Christ was represented as fastened to the cross with four nails, one in each hand and foot; but out of deference to the doctrine of the Trinity it was deemed necessary to use only three nails; the feet were therefore made to rest upon a wooden support, held to the upright beam by a single nail. Soon afterwards the simpler method was devised of placing one foot upon the other with a spike driven through both of them. Cimabue was the first to adopt this mode of arranging the feet in painting; and it was in the twentieth year of his age that the celebration of the Feast of the Holy Trinity in the Romish Church was authorized and enjoined by the Synod of Arles (1260). This is but one example of the far-reaching and permanent influence of ecclesiastical decrees and the promulgation of dogmas upon art.

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<sup>29</sup> “Unde non inconvenienter reor quod sicut omnium elementorum finis est, ita totidem librorum veteris Testa menti finis est crux.” --Paschasius Radbert, *In Lam. Jer. Bibl. Patrum*, xiv. 773.

The legends of the Holy Rood surpass in extravagance and absurdity all that pagan Germans ever fabled of the sacred ash Yggdrasil, or Brahmans of their sacrificial post, the Yupa, or Buddhists of the Bôdhitree. With what persistence and apparent pleasure the theological mind still continues to run in this old and abandoned rut, is startlingly and depressingly revealed in a paper on “Vestiges of the Blessed Trinity in the Material Creation,” published in *The Dublin Review* for January 1893 by the Rev. John S. Vaughan, who finds traces of [253] this doctrine “written large across the whole face of nature,” and everywhere suggested by “such familiar things as rocks, mountains, seas, and lakes.” He discovers “the mystery of the Trinity” in the fact that every object has three dimensions, that a plant is composed of seed, stalk, and flower; that life is “vegetative, sensitive, and rational”; that matter is solid, fluid, and gaseous; that time is past, present, and future; and above all, that there are “three fundamental colours,” which “dissolve in the unity of white light.” Red, he says, is the caloric ray, and corresponds to the Father, the source of vital warmth and energy; the yellow is the luminous ray, and corresponds to the Son, “the Light of the world”; the blue is the chemical or actinic ray, and corresponds to the Holy Spirit. If cucumbers or melons, he adds, be placed under glass absorbing the blue ray, they will grow rapidly and put forth luxuriant blossoms, but soon fade away without bearing fruit, and this phenomenon he calls “a physical reflection of the Christian precept, ‘Quench not the Spirit.’” Only an intellect that had been wont to feed upon the husks of hermeneutic theology, to the exclusion of all wholesomer nutriment, could conceive of such twaddle, and offer it to an enlightened public as an argument from analogy. The wonder is that he did not go more deeply into the exact and natural sciences, and make the triangle, the trefoil, and the trilobite a three-fold confirmation of Trinitarianism. The investigator who puts Nature to [254] the rack, and questions her like an inquisitor with the boot and the thumbkin, can easily extort from her a confession of the truth of any whimsey he may choose to entertain.

William Durand, in his *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*, printed in 1459 by Gutenberg and Fust at Mayence, makes every portion of the church edifice full of symbolic significance. The erudite and ingenious ecclesiologist gives free rein to his fancy, and discovers mystic meanings in the structure, of which the architect had not the faintest presentiment. The latter seems, therefore, to have “builded better than he knew,” and to have put unconsciously into his work more things than he ever dreamed of in draughting his designs, just as the great poets, Dante, Shakespeare, and Goethe, have embodied in their writings many deep thoughts of which they themselves were utterly ignorant, and which would have been wholly lost to the world if some learned and acute commentator had not taken pains to point them out. Thus, according to Durand, the stones represent the faithful; the lime, which binds the stones together, is fervent love and charity; its mixture with sand refers to “actions performed for the temporal good of our brethren”; the water, that serves to mix the lime and sand, is an emblem of the Holy Spirit; and “as stones cannot adhere without mortar, so man

without charity cannot enter as an element into the construction of the heavenly Jerusalem.”

Also bells, being made of brass, are shriller and [255] louder than the trumpets of the law, and denote that God, who under the old dispensation was known only to the Jews, is now proclaimed to the whole world; the durable material out of which they are formed indicates that the truths of the Gospel are not to be superseded, but will endure to the end of time; the hardness of this material signifies the fortitude of the Christian apostle, to whom it is said: “I have given thee a forehead more hard than their forehead.” Paul’s assertion “I am become as sounding brass,” proves that the bell typifies the mouth of the preacher, whose tongue, like that of the bell, strikes both sides, expounding and proclaiming both Testaments; it shows also that the preacher should, on one side, correct vice in himself, and, on the other side, reprove it in his hearers. The wooden frame on which the bell is suspended stands for the cross; the iron fastening it to the wood is the binding force of moral duty, which is inseparable from the cross. The wheel by which the bell is rung is the preacher’s mind, through which the knowledge of the divine law passes into the understanding of the people; and the three cords or strands of the bell-rope denote the threefold character of Scripture, consisting of history, allegory, and morality. As the rope descends from the wooden trestle to the hand, so the mystery of the cross descends to the hand and produces good works; while the upward and downward motion of the rope shows that Scripture speaks of high things and low things, or, [256] in other words, is to be interpreted literally and mystically.

Curiously enough, there are still educated persons who earnestly pursue researches and fondly indulge in speculations of this sort, and seem to be edified thereby. In a book on *Symbolisms in the Churches of the Middle Ages*, written by J. Mason Neale and Benjamin Webb, and translated into French with an introduction by the Abbé Bourassée (Tours, 1857), the authors, as staunch Catholics, regard the use of the ogive in Protestant churches as a desecration of this symbol of the Holy Trinity. No Catholic architect, they declare, should design a triple window for a dissenting or heretical sect (including the Established Church of England), or introduce the trefoil into such building, since this use of them would be a “sacrilegious prostitution of sacred architecture, which is the voice of the Church.” The only wonder is, from this point of view, that the Creator should permit clover and other trifoliate plants to grow in Protestant cemeteries or tricuspid molars in a heretic’s mouth, and that an angry and outraged Deity does not strike the impious Unitarian dead who dares to sit on a three-legged stool, or presumes to steep his tea on a tripod.

Touching the signification of orientation in ecclesiastical architecture, Gregory the Great, in his exposition of Ezekiel xl. 6, says the east gate of the temple in the prophet’s vision designates Jesus Christ. “Who else can be meant by this gate [257] but our Lord and Redeemer, who is to us the gate of heaven, as, it is written, ‘No man cometh unto the Father but by Me’; and again, ‘He that entereth not in by the door ... the same is a thief and a robber’; and then soon afterwards, ‘I am the door.’ He it is of whom

Zechariah said, ‘Behold the man, whose name is the East.’<sup>30</sup> The gate looking toward the East refers, therefore, to Him who has shown us the way to the source of light.” One cannot but admire the cogency of the illustrious pope's reasoning, and the peculiar pertinence of his scriptural citations.

According to the Talmud, the manifestations of God are revealed in the West in distinction from the East, toward which the heathen and the heretics (Essenes) turn their faces in their devotions. Patristic superstition, on the contrary, looked upon the West as the seat of darkness, and the abode of demons; for this reason, the rose-window was placed high up in the western wall of the church, as the light of the Gospel that is thus made visible to those sitting in darkness, and “turneth the shadow of death into the morning.”<sup>31</sup> The towers at the western end of the edifice, with their bells, were intended to terrify and discomfit the demons, and, at the same time, to summon the [258] nations to Christ, who in the earliest churches was seated over the western entrance to receive them. After the twelfth century, when the dread of the last judgment, which it was supposed would take place at the end of the eleventh century and introduce the millennium, had completely passed away, the space above the doorway was usually occupied by the image of the saint to whom the church was dedicated, thus marking a transition from christolatry to hagiolatry. The sculptures of the doorway plane, and the paintings of the Catharine-wheel windows, very frequently represented the revolt of the angels, as may be seen in Freiburg Minster, and in the cathedral of St. John in Lyons. The North is the region of meteorological devils, which, under the dominion and leadership of the “Prince of the power of the air,” produce storms and convulsions in nature, and foster unruly passions and deeds of violence in man. The evil principle, as embodied in unclean beasts and exhibited in obscene and lascivious actions, was properly portrayed in the sculptures and paintings on the north side of the church, which was assigned to Satan and his satellites, and known as “the black side.” On the other hand, the South shared the sacred character of the East, and was consecrated to saints and martyrs and the famous doctors of theology and sturdy defenders of the faith. On the walls and in the windows toward the south are depicted the triumphs of Christianity, [259] the millennial reign of Christ, the worship of the Lamb, and similar scenes. Does not the prophet Habakkuk say that God came from Teman, and does not Teman mean South? What more conclusive proof could any rational and not utterly carnal mind desire?

In the first half of the fifth century, Eucherius, Bishop of Lyons, wrote a book of formulas of spiritual knowledge (*Liber Formularum Spiritualis Intelligentiæ*), modelled after the *Clavis* of Melito, in which this symbolism of the points of the compass is elaborately amplified and explained. The south signifies the “fervour of faith”; “the streams in the south,” spoken of by the Psalmist (cxxvi. 4), refer to the effluence of the

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<sup>30</sup> The passage (Zech. vi. 12) reads in the Vulgate: “Ecce vir, oriens nomen ejus.” In the original, the word here translated “oriens” means “springing up,” and in our English version is rendered “the Branch.”

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Lactantius, *Divin. Instit.*, ii. 10 ; Hieronym, *In Amos* and *In Ezech.*

Holy Spirit; the ardently erotic and highly poetic passage in Solomon's Song (iv. 16), "Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south," is interpreted as equivalent to the words, "Get thee behind me, Satan; and draw near to me, O divine Spirit."

Durand finds some esoteric meaning, known only to ecclesiologists, in every part and proportion of the sacred structure. "Its length indicates long-suffering, which patiently endures adversity and affliction, waiting to reach the heavenly home. Its breadth is the largeness of Christian charity, which embraces friends and foes. Its height is the measure of the lofty hope of eternal happiness." Every joist and buttress, every stone and timber from the crypt to the corona of the cornice, every arch and pinnacle, the lantern of the dome, and the [260] weather-cock on the steeple, is made to yield some mystic quality, or convey some moral lesson. "The panes of the windows," according to Claude Villette (*Raisons de l'Office*, Paris, 1601), "are the Scriptures, which communicate the light of truth coming from above and ward off the wind, snow, and hail of heresies, false doctrines, and schisms, sent by the father of lies. The frames, in which the panes of glass are firmly set, signify the Œcumenical Councils by which the Scriptures are interpreted and upheld, and the doctrines they teach made manifest. The size of the windows shows the depth and magnitude of Holy Writ, incomprehensible to the natural man; their circular form denotes that the Church is complete in herself, and consistent in all her doctrines."

Such are a few specimens of the subtleties and trivialities of mediæval and modern symbologists, which suffice to illustrate the general tendency of their speculations, and the excess of abstrusity and absurdity to which they carried their queer conceits.

Hebrew literature has only a very meagre mythology, compared with the literature of India or Greece or any ancient people of Aryan blood. The jealously vindictive and supreme ascendancy of the Jewish tribal god did not favour the growth and exercise of the mythopœic faculty, but made every attempt to foster it fatal alike to the safety and comfort of the individual, and to the consolidation and continuity of the national life. But the [261] Hebrew imagination, although debarred from the populous regions of Olympus and Tartarus by the stern command of Jehovah, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me," would not be cheated of its rights, and mythologized in less inviting but unforbidden directions, grazing and ruminating on the stubbled fields of scholia, and getting what nutriment could be extracted from such dry and sapless fodder. In this wise, the Rabbis succeeded in evolving a whole system of myths and fables out of their sacred books and ceremonial institutions. Noah's dove, which returned to the ark with an olive branch, had received it, according to the Talmudists, from the hand of God; and out of this assumption was developed a most luxuriant and wide-spreading banyan forest of allegory. The Sabbath was also personified and made to appear before the seat of God, like Schiller's poet before the throne of Zeus, and to complain of its isolation in being set apart as a holy day. Jehovah regretted that he could not change this condition of things without destroying the consecrated character of the seventh day, but he conferred upon it, in compensation for its loneliness, the privilege of being for ever united with the chosen people in nuptial ties, and of fostering as the fruit of this union

the so-called Sabbath-soul of Israel. And the Lord blessed this marriage, and declared it to be sacred and indissoluble, and absolutely essential to the happiness and prosperity of the Jewish nation. When the Roman government forbade [262] the observance of the Sabbath by severe penalties, Rabbi Simon Ben Jochai went to Rome and succeeded in having the prohibition removed, using this fable in his interview with the emperor in order to enforce the claims of the Sabbath as a divine institution, indispensable to the welfare of Israel. There is an apologue by Rabbi Jehuda Bar Shalom, in which the rite of circumcision is the chief actor, and the Sabbath plays a subordinate and less commendable part, being too much given up to convivial pleasures.

The Rabbis mythologized even with the letters of the alphabet, all of which, from Aleph to Tau, appear in person before Jehovah to present their respective claims to consideration, and indulge in the most wearisome and nonsensical harangues. This sort of apologue arose from the peculiar sacredness attached to the text of the law or Thora, which was identified with the wisdom personified in the eighth chapter of Proverbs, and with the uncreated Word, which was with God before the creation of the world, and afterwards became the incarnate Logos of the Gnostics and the synonym of Christ.<sup>32</sup>

This superstitious reverence for the letter of the law was transmitted too the early Christians, who naturally applied it to their own sacred records, declaring them to be theopneustic, or “given by [263] inspiration of God.” Out of this feeling, dogmatic theology easily developed the doctrine of plenary inspiration, which the Reformers and later Protestants used as an effective weapon, opposing the infallible authority of Holy Writ to the infallible authority of the Holy See, and which was finally carried to that extreme of fetichistic bibliolatry that has been such a serious obstacle to the spread of knowledge and to the progress of the race, and is now just beginning to be set aside by scientific research and sound criticism.

At the beginning of the Christian era the theatre had fallen into decay, and hardly anything remained of it except the brutal butcheries of the amphitheatre, and the noisy and turbulent diversions of the circus. It was natural enough that the early Christians should have detested and denounced such performances. Actors as a class were anathematized and declared accursed by ecclesiastical authorities. A capitulary of Charlemagne, inspired and dictated by the Church, declared all players (*histriones*) to be infamous and incompetent to testify in courts of justice. The Provincial Councils of Mayence, Tours, and Chalons in 813 decreed the histrionic profession ignominious, and excommunicated all clergymen who countenanced theatrical representations. In 1186, Philippe Auguste issued an edict banishing actors from his realm.

But the passion for the theatre is too deeply rooted in human nature to be easily eradicated; [264] and the Church, finding all efforts to suppress it unavailing, determined to direct and utilize it. Accordingly theatrical elements were introduced into the celebration of Christian festivals, which were mostly of pagan origin. The old Roman

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<sup>32</sup> Cf. *Die Fabel im Talmud and Midrasch*, von Dr. Samuel Back, in *Monatsschrift für Geschichte and Wissenschaft des Judenthums*. Krotoschin, 1880-81.

Lupercalia became the feast of the Purification; the Saturnalia survived in the Carnival; the Robigalia, consisting of offerings in the fields to the god Robigus (or according to Ovid, *Fast.*, iv. 905-35, the goddess Robigo) to avert mildew, gave rise to the processions of Rogation week; the pagan feast of the dead is celebrated as All Souls' Day; and St. John's Day and Christmas are relics of solstitial worship and fulfilments of the Baptist's prophecy: "He must increase, but I must decrease."

At a very early period the Church began to invest her solemn rites with a theatrical character. At Christmas, children robed as angels sang songs in different parts of the sacred edifice above the choir, a group of shepherds passed through the transept towards a stable built behind the altar, and were met by two priests costumed as midwives, who inquired: "What seek ye?" The shepherds replied: "Our Saviour, the Christ" "The child is here," was the response, and all knelt before the crib in the presence of the mother, and chanted the *Salve Virgo*. On the feast of the Epiphany the three kings entered through the chief portal and advanced in gorgeous array to the place where the infant lay and worshipped Him, presenting their gifts. They then went out through the door of [265] the transept in accordance with the statement that the wise men "departed into their own country another way." Priests in albs mounted up on towers to represent the Ascension; and at Pentecost a dove descended from the arched ceiling of the church to denote the Holy Spirit coming down from heaven. On Palm Sunday an immense crowd of people approached the city from the country, strewing branches in the way of a man riding on an ass; as the procession drew near, the priests and choristers sang: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates."

Such are a few examples of the childish and clumsy manner in which the Church sought to render her ceremonies more vivid and impressive as well as more entertaining. This rude dramatization of the principal incidents of the Gospel story was gradually extended to religious legends, thus giving rise to semi-liturgic mysteries, miracle-plays, and moralities, and leading to a revival of the secular drama. The clergy encouraged hilarity and gaiety, because they wished to attract the vulgar throng, and to keep their hold on the masses by providing for their amusement. In this desire originated such festivals as the Feast of Fools and of Innocents, and the Ass's Feast.

At Rouen at Christmas, twelve of the clergy, dressed to represent six Jews and six Gentiles, were placed respectively on the right and the left of a pyre burning in the centre of the choir. Two young priests then call upon them to recognize and [266] revere the mystery of the divine Incarnation. They refuse to do so, and in order to convince them of the truth, the principal personages of the Bible are made to appear: Moses with long beard and horns, the greater and lesser prophets, Balaam on his ass with the messengers of Balak and the angel standing in the way, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace, apostles, sibyls, and Vergil, who had foretold the advent of Christ, and many other witnesses of the true God. This overwhelming testimony admits of no contradiction, and the stubborn Jews and ignorant Gentiles are converted from the error of their ways. Whether the burning pyre was reserved as an *ultima ratio* in case of final obduracy is not stated, but would seem to be suggested. These spectacles were first given in the nave of

the church, but, as the throng increased, they were transferred to the open air, and scaffoldings were erected for the purpose in front of the cathedral.

In 1212, the Council of Paris forbade the nuns to celebrate the Feast of Fools, on account of the excesses and scandals which it occasioned. In 1245, Archbishop Odon found it necessary to suppress the licentious amusements of the nuns in the convents of Rouen, and mentions especially their accustomed dissolute sports (“*ludibria consueta*”), and their dances either among themselves or with secular priests (“*aut inter vos seu cum secularibus choreas ducendo*”). These dances, which were performed on the great ecclesiastical feast [267] days, were accompanied by comical and scurrilous songs and other unseemly exhibitions. The chapter of the cathedral of Senlis issued in 1497 an order permitting the lower clergy to “enjoy their diversions before the principal portal of the church on the eve of the Epiphany, provided they do not sing infamous songs, with ribald and obscene words, or dance in a lewd manner, all of which things,” they add, “took place on last Innocents’ Day.” In an old collection of forty sermons on the destruction of Nineveh (*Sermones quadraginta de destructione Ninvæ*, Paris, 1525), the author asserts that priests and monks were wont to visit nunneries both by night and by day, and to perform indecent dances with the inmates; “as to the rest,” he concludes, “I keep silent, lest perchance I may offend pious ears.”

Even within the memory of persons still living, the midnight masses, especially in France, were attended by all sorts of rude horse-play, such as strewing the pavement of the church with “fulminating peas,” which exploded when trodden upon, barricading the aisles with chairs or cords, filling the stoups with ink, and embracing young girls in “the dim religious light” of the chapels.

A very queer notion was entertained and inculcated in the middle ages, and seems still to prevail in some less enlightened portions of Christendom, that there is a mysterious and far-reaching analogy between the anatomy of an ass and the architecture of a cathedral. Thus [268] M. Jérôme Bugeau, in his *Chansons Populaires des Provinces de l’Ouest* (Niort, 1866), gives the following catechism taken down from the lips of children in Angoumois (now in the department of Charente), and evidently forming an important part of their religious instruction—

“*Priest*. What do the two ears of the ass signify?

“*Children*. The two ears of the ass signify the two great patron saints of our city.

“*Priest*. What does the head of the ass signify?

“*Children*. The head of the ass signifies the great bell, and the rein is the clapper of the great bell in the tower of the cathedral dedicated to the patron saints of our city.

“*Priest*. What does the throat of the ass signify?

“*Children*. The throat of the ass signifies the chief portal of the cathedral dedicated to the patron saints of our city.

“*Priest*. What does the body of the ass signify?

“*Children*. The body of the ass signifies the whole structure of the cathedral dedicated to the patron saints of our city.”

In this style the catechism goes on, showing the analogies or rather the homologies between the animal and the edifice; the four legs of the ass are the four principal pillars of the building; the heart, liver, kidneys, and other internal organs are the lamps; the paunch is the poor-box, in which the pious put their offerings; the skin is the cope worn by the clergy during divine service; the tail is the aspergill for sprinkling holy water [269] on the people; even the buttocks are not omitted, but stand for “the beautiful stoup, which holds the holy water in the cathedral dedicated to the patron saints of our city.”

The Angoumois catechism offers a fair specimen of the weak and vapid pap with which the youthful mind is usually fed in clerical schools, and especially in those conducted by the Jesuits. The late Dr. Döllinger of Munich relates his experience with a student, who had received his preparatory training at such an institute. In answer to the question, “What is that branch of knowledge which we call theology?” the candidate for holy orders replied with the perfunctory promptness of a parrot: “Theology is that branch of knowledge which has St. Catherine for its patroness.” “But what is the branch of knowledge of which St. Catherine is the patroness?” asked the doctor, and received the ready response: “St. Catherine is the patroness of theology;” and no ingenuity of interrogation availed to get the young man out of this vicious hagiological circle. It is by the stupefying effects of such teaching that the supreme goal of Jesuitical discipline, namely, the sacrifice of the intellect (“il sacrificio dell’ intelletto”), can be most perfectly attained.

It may seem strange that the ass should have been chosen as the homologue of the cathedral; but it must be remembered that in the Orient this animal is noted for its beauty, strength, and intelligence, and that our domestic donkey is the [270] degenerate scion of a noble stock. There is also reason to believe that this creature was an object of peculiar reverence to the early Christians, owing probably to the fact that Christ made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem sitting upon an ass, and that the animal still bears the sign of the cross formed by a black bar across the shoulders intersecting the line of the back. Plutarch (*Sympos.*, lib. iv. 5) and Tacitus (*Hist.*, lib. v.) assert that the ass was adored by the Jews because it discovered springs of water in the desert during the exodus, and this tradition might have easily been accepted by the Christians as typical of the Saviour, the well-spring of eternal life. Tertullian says: “There are some who imagine that our God has the head of an ass,” and indignantly denies the truth of this statement, which, nevertheless, seems to have been quite generally entertained. Indeed, this ardent and eloquent apologist himself declares that the enemies of the Gospel exposed publicly a picture representing a person with a book in his hand and wearing a long robe, but with the ears and legs of an ass, and under it the inscription: “The Christian God with the ass’s hoof.” Again, Cecilius Felix remarks in the Dialogue of Minutius Felix: “I hear that this basest of creatures is worshipped by the Christians, though I know not upon what inane persuasion.” In a rude drawing scrawled on the walls of the barracks or guard-room on the Palatine, is a man kneeling before a crucifix, on which is a human being with an ass’s head, and a [271] legend informs us that this

person is “Anaxomenos worshipping his God.” Epiphanius affirms that the Gnostics believed that the Lord of Sabaoth had an ass’s head.<sup>33</sup>

In the church of Saint-Espirit, a suburb of Bayonne, is the wooden effigy of an ass bearing the Virgin and the infant Jesus; the latter is holding a bird in His hand. It was originally in the convent of St. Bernard, built in the thirteenth century and now demolished, and is still known as the ass of St. Bernard. One belonged to each of the cathedrals of Rheims and Paris; there is one in Santa Maria in Organo at Verona, and formerly nearly every church was provided with such an image, of which a good specimen is now preserved in the Germanic Museum at Nuremberg. It was not an object of worship, but was used sometimes instead of the living animal in celebrating the Feast of the Ass, which took place at Christmas in honour of Christ’s entry into Jerusalem, and likewise on the fourteenth of January, as a memorial of the flight into Egypt, and was one of the most popular of Church festivals.

There is an old tradition that the ass on which Christ made His entry into Jerusalem left Judea immediately after the Crucifixion, and passing over the sea dry-shod to Rhodes, Cyprus, Malta, Sicily, and Aquileia, finally reached Verona, where it lived to a very old age. After its death its bones were collected and deposited in the belly of the wooden ass of Santa Maria in Organo, which was made as [272] a memorial of it and in its exact image. It was once a popular belief, which may yet linger among the lower class of Veronese, that all the asses of that region are scions of this sacred stock; but their supposed origin does not appear to insure them less cruel treatment than low-born donkeys are subjected to in all parts of Italy.

An ass caparisoned with a cope and other sacerdotal apparel, and sometimes ridden by a young girl with an infant in her arms, was met at the principal entrance of the church by the canons and other clergy, and conducted up the nave into the chancel. The officiating priests held in their hands urns or pitchers full of wine, and goblets of glass or pewter. The censer contained, instead of the usual fragrant gums and spices, fat black-pudding and sausage, which in burning exhaled anything but a pleasant perfume. The Introit, the Kyrie, the Gloria, and the Credo were sung in a harsh braying tone, after which the following ass’s litany in Latin was chanted, the whole body of the clergy and the congregation joining vociferously as a chorus in the refrain, which was French. This remarkable hymn may be rendered into English as follows—<sup>34</sup>

“Orientis partibus  
Adventavit asinus,  
Pulcher et fortissimus,  
Sarcinis aptissimus.

Hez, sire asne, car chantez  
Belle bouche réchignez

[274] “From the regions of the East  
Came the ass, the worthy beast,  
Strong and fair beyond compare,  
Heavy burdens fit to bear.

Huzza, Sir Ass, because you chant,  
Fair mouth, because you bray,

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<sup>33</sup> Cf. *Annales Archéologiques*, xv. p. 383.

<sup>34</sup> Note to the digital edition: In the original print edition, the following poem was arranged with the Latin text first, followed by the English translation, on separate pages. For ease of reading, it has been formatted in two columns in the digital edition.

Vous aurez de foin assez,  
 Et de l'avoine à plante.  
  
 "Lentus erat pedibus,  
 Nisi foret baculus, [273]  
 Et cum in clunibus,  
 Pungeret aculeus.  
 Hez, sire asne, etc.  
  
 "Ecce magnis auribus,  
 Subjugalis filius,  
 Asinus egregius,  
 Asinorum dominus.  
 Hez, sire asne, etc.  
  
 "Hic, in collibus Sichem  
 Enutritus sub Rubem  
 Transiit per Jordanem,  
 Salut in Bethlehem.  
 Hez, sire asne, etc.  
  
 "Saltu vincit hinnulos,  
 Dagmas et capreolos,  
 Super dromedaries  
 Velox madianeos.  
 Hez, sire asne, etc.  
  
 "Aurum de Arabia  
 Thus et myrrham de Saba,  
 Tulit in ecclesia  
 Virtus asinaria.  
 Hez, sire asne, etc.  
  
 "Dum trahit vehicula,  
 Multa cum sarcinula  
 Illius mandibula  
 Dura tent pabula.  
 Hez, sire asne, etc.  
  
 "Cum aristis hordeum  
 Comedit et carduum  
 Triticum a palea  
 Segregant in area.  
 Hez, sire asne, etc.  
  
 "Amen dicas, asine,  
 Jam satur ex gramine,  
 Amen, amen, itera;  
 Aspernare vetera.  
 Hez, sire acne, etc."

You shall have enough of hay,  
 And also oats to plant.  
  
 "Slow of foot the beast would fare,  
 Should the staff you on him spare,  
 Or should fail with many a thump  
 To goad him on and prod his rump.  
 Huzza, Sir Ass, etc.  
  
 "Lo, with what enormous ears  
 This subjugal son appears,  
 Most egregious ass, we see  
 Lord of asses all in thee.  
 Huzza, Sir Ass, etc.  
  
 "He in Sichem's hills was bred,  
 Under Reuben's care was fed,  
 Passed through Jordan's sacred stream,  
 Skipped about in Bethlehem.  
 Huzza, Sir Ass, etc.  
  
 "Leaping he outruns the hind,  
 Hart and he-goat leaves behind,  
 Dromedaries doth surpass  
 This our swift and sturdy ass.  
 Huzza, Sir Ass, etc.  
  
 "Gold from Araby the blest,  
 Frankincense that's much in quest,  
 To the church a precious fraught  
 Asinary strength hath brought.  
 Huzza, Sir Ass, etc. [275]  
  
 "As he draws along the cart  
 Heavy-laden to the mart,  
 He his jaws doth ever ply,  
 Grinding fodder hard and dry.  
 Huzza, Sir Ass, etc.  
  
 "Barley with the awn he eats,  
 And himself to thistles treats;  
 While on threshing-floors are beat  
 From the chaff the grains of wheat.  
 Huzza, Sir Ass, etc.  
  
 "Amen thou now mayst bray, O ass,  
 Satiated with corn and grass;  
 Amen repeat, amen reply,  
 And antiquity defy.  
 Huzza, Sir Ass, etc."

Sometimes the refrain was simply “Hez, sire ass, hez”; in fact, the service as well as the song varied slightly in different places, and was modified somewhat by circumstances, but the essential character of the performance remained everywhere the same. The music of this chant, which was of a grave and solemn character, befitting a religious service, has been published by M. Félix Clément in his *Choix des principales Séquences des Moyen Age tirées des Manuscrits*. With a courage born of enthusiasm, M. Clément had this music of the thirteenth century actually performed at the College Stanislas, April 29, 1847, before a select audience, composed chiefly of musicians of the Opera and Conservatoire of Paris, who are said to have received it with applause.<sup>35</sup>

[276] Not unfrequently this festival began in the morning, and continued without interruption all night till the evening of the following day. The singing of the anthem, *Conductus ad Poculum* (“Brought to the Cup”), was the signal for the distribution of wine among the choristers, who drank very freely, and often got fuddled. While they were thus refreshing themselves with bottles of wine, the ass was regaled with what the transmogrified Bottom so greatly desired, “a bottle of hay” and a bucket of water. With the intonation of the second anthem, *Conductus ad Ludos* (“Brought to the Sports”), the ass was led into the nave of the church, and danced round by the priests and the people, who imitated its bray. After the dance the ass was reconducted into the chancel and provided with fresh rations of provender. The feast ended with the anthem, *Conductus ad Prandium* (“Brought to the Banquet”), which was sung after vespers on the second day, and was an invitation to the final repast.<sup>36</sup> At the close of the service the priest, instead of uttering the usual formula of dismissal, “Ite, missa est,” broke forth into a loud “Hee-haw,” which he repeated three times as a parting benediction to the worshippers, and a trinal tribute to the animal which formed the centre of interest and of homage in this strange religious ceremony.

There was also a preparatory meeting or [277] convocation held on the eve of the feast, when the clergy in full canonicals went in procession to meet the ass at the door of the cathedral, accompanied by two choristers, who chanted the following invocation—

“Lux hodie, lux letitiæ me judice tristis  
Quisquis erit, removendus erit, solemnibus istis,  
Sicut hodie, procul invidia, procul omnia moesta,  
Læta volunt, quiscumque celebret asinaria festa.”

“O light to-day, O light of joy, I banish every sorrow;  
Wherever found, be it expelled from our solemnities to-morrow.  
Away with strife and grief and care from every anxious heart,  
And all be filled with mirth who in the Ass’s Feast take part.”

The ass was then conducted to a table, usually in the vestry, at which the dean sat with two prebendaries, who read the order of proceedings as arranged for the following day, and the names and offices of the participants. The ass, offering no objections, was supposed to give silent consent to the programme, which was accordingly approved.

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<sup>35</sup> Cf. Didron, *An. Arch.*, vii. et al.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. William Hone, *Ancient Mysteries*, p. 165; London, 1823.

M. Pierre Louvret, in his *Histoire du Diocèse de Beauvais*, published in 1635, gives an account of the manner in which this feast was celebrated in the cathedral of that city, whose bishops bore the rank and title of princes, and held the highest place among the civil and ecclesiastical dignitaries of the realm. The ass in a cope, sculptured on an archivolt in St. Peter's Church in Aulnay, and dating from the twelfth century, is a survival of the festive [278] observance just described; indeed, the ass in sacerdotal vestments, painted in fresco, or more frequently carved in relief, may be seen in many sacred edifices.

In an essay entitled *L'Âne au Moyen-Âge*, printed in Didron's *Annales Archéologiques* (vols. vii., xv., and xvi.), M. Félix Clément interprets the ass as a symbol of the Saviour, and thus comments on the first verse of the ass's litany: "It is from the Orient that the light comes to us; the Orient is the cradle of the human race; from the Orient came the wise men, the Magi, with whose gifts the ass was laden; in the Orient appeared the star which guided them to Bethlehem." He also quotes St. Bernard, who calls Jesus Christ *Oriens in vespere*. *Pulcher* refers to the moral beauty of Christ, *fortissimus* to His strength in overcoming the great adversary, the prince of darkness, and in conquering death and hell, and *sarcinis aptissimus* to His fitness to bear the burden of a sinful world, symbolized by the heavy weight of the Cross. In the fourth verse Sichem is mentioned because it was the ancient capital of Israel and the chief place of worship of the Samaritans, and Bethlehem because Christianity began there. The superiority of the ass to the other animals enumerated in the fifth verse signifies that Christ surpassed in excellence all the Hebrew prophets. The eighth verse indicates the office of Christ as winnowing, who with His fan in His hand will purge the floor, gathering the wheat into the garner, but burning [279] the chaff with unquenchable fire. *Aspernare vetera* implies that old things have passed away, and that the Synagogue has been supplanted by the Church. Even the refrain of the hymn, "Hez, sire asne," is interpreted as an abbreviation of "Hatez vos pas, divin Messie," and an earnest injunction to the Lord Jesus to come quickly and complete the work of human redemption. Nevertheless, M. Clément does not seem to have full confidence in the correctness of this explanation, since he afterwards proposes another theory, by which the ass from the East, so full of strength and courage, becomes a type of the Jewish people, the "depository and transmitter of the belief in the true God."

But whatever symbolism there may have been originally, or is still discernible to the ecclesiological eye in this feast, was soon swallowed up and lost sight of in gross buffoonery, and the religious service degenerated into a sort of Saturnalian amusement, which suited the coarse tastes of the time, and is not to be judged by our modern sense of the sacredness of things, or by the standards of delicate and even fastidious feeling developed by centuries of intellectual culture and inherited refinement. The age of faith, as it is called, was not at all squeamish, and did not suffer itself to be shocked in the slightest degree by grotesque and farcical exhibitions in sacred places. Mediæval monks and ecclesiastics were neither thin-skinned nor dainty-minded, and, like the lower classes of the people, from which the great majority of them [280] sprung, they indulged in the coarsest jokes, appreciating and enjoying them all the more when they were at the

expense of their cloth. The Church aimed to take everything under her control, and to direct the pleasures as well as to dictate the penances of the masses. The bishops, as Viollet-le-Duc observes, preferred to throw open their cathedrals to the crowd, and to permit such jollities within the consecrated walls, rather than to run the risk of dangerous fermentations of popular ideas outside. It was especially necessary to maintain ecclesiastical jurisdiction and supremacy, and not let men get the fatal notion into their heads that they could even indulge in merrimakes and pastimes otherwise than under the auspices of the indulgent Mother Church. Such a presumption and precedent would have been as perilous to hierarchical authority as it would be prejudicial to medical prestige to let a man die without the prescription of a doctor. Whatever concerned the moral or material interests of the community, whether it was to rebuke the vicious habits of mendicant monks and wandering minstrels, or to exterminate locusts, weevils, and other destructive vermin by anathematisms, the Church did not deem it alien to her office or injurious to her sanctity to draw within her pale, and to make contributory to her power and glory.

The capitals of the columns on the doorway leading to the south aisle of St. Sebald's Church in Nuremberg are adorned with quaint forms of [281] beasts which are to be interpreted in part as ministering spirits outside of the precincts of the sanctuary, and in part as types of human weakness under temptation, and especially of priestly frailties. Guy de Munois, Abbot of St. Germain d'Auxerre (1285-1309), had for his official seal the figure of a cowed ape with an abbot's staff in its hand, and the legend, "Abbé de singe air main d'os serre." The seal of the Bishop of Pinon in Picardie was an ape in episcopal robes, with crosier and mitre. Ecclesiastical dignitaries, who took delight in satirizing the infirmities of their order and in caricaturing themselves and their sacred office, would not find anything offensive in celebrating the Feast of the Ass, and would not scruple to permit animals in copes and stoles to be carved on the stalls and portals of consecrated edifices, or to be represented in painting and sculpture in the act of burlesquing the holy Mass and the burial service.

Sincere and even ardent Catholics did not hesitate to ridicule many practices which were authorized and encouraged by the see of Rome. Such was the sale of relics, a scandalous abuse sanctioned by the Church, but satirized by John Heywood, a graduate of Oxford and favourite of the bigoted Queen Mary, a zealous papist, whom the accession of Elizabeth in 1558 forced to take refuge on the Continent at Mechlin, where he died towards the close of the sixteenth century. In a play called "The Four P. P., a very merry Enterlude of a Palmer, a Pardoner, a Potheary, and a Pedler," [282] this sturdy and scholarly Romanist exposes the frauds perpetrated by preaching friars as itinerant vendors of saints' bones. Pardoner exhibits and extols the wonder-working virtues of his wares, and bids his hearers kiss with devotion

"Of All-Hallows the blessed jaw-bone."

Potheary, who claims to be an expert in antiquities of this sort, declares that the relic is in bad odour, and enough to turn the strongest stomach—

“For by All-Hallows, yet methinketh  
That All-Hallows’ breath stinketh.”

Pardoner replies that Potheccary must have caught a sniff of his own foul breath, and proceeds to cry his merchandise with the impudence and volubility of a mountebank—

“Nay, sirs, behold, here may ye see  
The great toe of the Trinitie.  
Who to this toe any money vowth,  
And once may role it in his mouth,  
All his life after, I undertake,  
He shall never be vext with toothake.”

To this assurance Potheccary retorts sarcastically—

“I pray you turn that relique about  
Either the Trinity had the gout,  
Or else, because it is three toes in one,  
God made it as much as three toes alone.”

Pardoner, who has a large assortment of “holy particles,” and is not to be bluffed by having a seeming blur cast upon any one of them, brings out another specimen and says— [283]

“Well, let that pass, and look at this.  
Here is a relique that doth not miss  
To help the least as well as the most:  
This is a buttock-bone of Pentecost.”

He has also “a slipper of one of the seven sleepers,” “an eye-tooth of the Great Turk,” and

“a box full of the humblebees  
That stang Eve as she sat on her knees,  
Tasting the fruit to her forbidden.”

Again, in *The Pardoner and the Friar* a similar assortment of relics is exposed for sale: “the great toe of the Trinity”; “All-Hallows’ jaw-bone,” an infallible antidote for poisons; “of Saint Michael eke the brain-pan,” commended as a specific for headache; the “bongrace of our gracious lady, which she wore with her French hood when she went out as a protection gainst sun-burning”; “a holy Jew’s hip-bone,” which, if cooked in the pottage, will cure a man of jealousy, and inspire him with perfect confidence in the virtue of his wife, even “had she been taken with friars two or three.” As the pardoner is about to show the pope’s bull and other credentials from Rome, the friar begins his sermon, and the preaching and peddling go on simultaneously, until the two competitors for popular favour fall to blackguarding each other, and finally come to blows. The village parson, with the help of “neighbour Prat,” who acts as constable, tries to separate them; but his reverence is no match for the burly friar, and soon finds, to use his own expression, that he has more tow on his distaff than he [284] can spin, while the pardoner, who proves to be as adroit in pugilism as in pious mendacity, quickly “punishes” the officious Prat.

The authors of coarse satires like these were not heretics or infidels, but staunch adherents of the Romish Church, who were ready to endure exile or to suffer death for

the faith that was in them.<sup>37</sup> That their descriptions of this traffic are scarcely exaggerated is proved by the kind and quantity of relics still preserved and exposed to adoration in Catholic churches. In the middle ages, when such articles were in great request, and the bones of saints, in the jargon of the exchange, were “lively” and often became “excited,” the economical law of demand and supply, which is as universal and unescapable as that of gravitation, worked in a marvellous and quite miraculous way, and produced some astounding results.

Some years ago a distinguished anatomist, who visited an old church on the Hradshin in Prague, observed that a skeleton in one of the shrines had two right thigh-bones. It was suggested that this idiosyncrasy might be due to the transforming effect of canonization, and some devotees were inclined to regard it as a sign of peculiar sanctity; but only the most credulous of the faithful accepted this view as an adequate explanation of the phenomenon. It was generally admitted that such abnormalities [285] of structure were unbecoming in persons whom the public had been taught to revere as patterns of piety, and to imitate as models of perfection; and although they may have despised the vanities and seductions of the flesh during their lives, they ought not to give offence or occasion for scoffing by any conspicuous irregularity in the arrangement of their bones after death. Accordingly an inquest was held; the worshipful relics were “sat upon” by a jury of experts, who, as the result of their investigations, recommended a general overhauling and reparation of the remains of the saints kept in the churches of the Bohemian capital. The celebrated anatomist, Professor Joseph Hyrtl, was induced to undertake the task, which had to be performed with the greatest secrecy and circumspection, and he finally succeeded in ridding the enshrined skeletons of their most obtrusive deviations from the organism of the natural man, and establishing a certain degree of harmony between the provinces of sacred and scientific osteology.

It must not be inferred, however, that the saints of Prague were exceptional in their variations from the common sinful human type. The critical examination of all the treasuries of relics in Christendom would disclose the remains of holy men and of godly women not a few, who seem to have had as many arms as Briareus, and as many legs as a centipede. It is well known that St. Anna had three arms, only one less than Vishnu; and this tribrachial characteristic appears to have been [286] hereditary in her family, otherwise it would be difficult to account for the fact that one arm of the Virgin Mary is revered in Rome, another in Nuremberg, and a third in Cologne. St. Vitus was unquestionably quadrumanous; one of his hands is in Sienna and another in Bamberg, whilst his entire skeleton, including both hands, is shown in the cathedral at Prague. Perhaps the anthropologist, who has hitherto searched for “the missing link” among chimpanzees, orang-outangs, and other simian tribes, will at last come upon the object of his quest in the voluminous and wondrous annals of hagiology. Some saints were evidently in the habit of shedding their skulls at different periods of their growth, just as

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<sup>37</sup> Cf. Dodsley's *Old Plays*, 1. 88, 101, etc.; William Hone's *Ancient Mysteries*, 87-88; Hazlitt's edition of *The Four P.P.*, with modernized orthography. London, 1874.

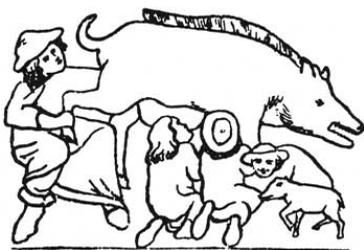
stags throw off their antlers and serpents cast their skins. This was the case with St. Peter, whose skull as a child may be seen in one shrine, while his fully-developed cranium as an adult is kept in another. As a matter of convenience for future collectors, and kind consideration for a devout posterity, such forethought is most remarkable, and cannot be too highly praised. When the abbot Marolles of Amiens was shown a head of John the Baptist, he exclaimed: "Glory be to God, that is the sixth head of the Redeemer's forerunner I have had the good fortune to adore!"

The miraculous power of self-multiplication with which the "particles" of the saints are endowed extends also to their personal effects. There are now in existence about a dozen equally well [287] authenticated originals of the seamless vesture, upon which the Roman soldiers cast lots. The most celebrated specimen of this garment is the "holy coat" in the cathedral of Trier, where it has been repeatedly exhibited as an object of worship and a source of revenue, and even as recently as 1891 attracted crowds of fetichistic pilgrims. Its history, as recorded in a German poem of the twelfth century entitled *Orendel*, surpasses in extravagance the wildest inventions of classical and Oriental mythology. Scores of churches possess pieces of the true cross, which nevertheless may be seen intact in Paris; the same is the case with Aaron's rod, a portion of which is at Bamberg, although the whole is in an excellent state of preservation at Milan.

The superstitious fondness for sacred relics in the middle ages, like the modern enthusiasm for antiques and masterpieces of the Renaissance, incited the dealers in such wares to wholesale perpetrations of fraud. The skeleton of many a malefactor, whose head was deservedly severed from his body by the executioner's axe, is now revered as the remains of a blessed martyr; and countless bones, set with jewels and deposited in costly shrines, were originally taken from the gallows-pit. That the author of *The Four P.P.* gave a true picture of the extent to which this fraudulent traffic was carried on, can be clearly shown, as we have already suggested, by examining the lists of relics in the older Catholic churches. [288] Thus, for example, in Santa Prassede at Rome, among other queer things of this kind, are a tooth of St. Peter and one of St. Paul, as well as bits of their respective skulls, a scrap of the Virgin's chemise, a bottle of her milk, and a piece of her sepulchre, fragments of the Saviour's girdle and of His swaddling-clout, the pillar at which He was scourged, some of the earth on which He kneeled in prayer before the Passion, the reed and sponge with which He was given vinegar to drink on the cross, parts of His vesture for which the Roman soldiers cast lots, and three thorns from the crown of thorns; near by, in Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, are the superscription which Pilate put on the cross, one of the thirty pieces of silver paid to Judas, and the finger with which the doubting Thomas was told to touch the print of the nails in the hands of the risen Lord; in the cloister of St. Barbara in Coblenz is the fore-skin of the infant Jesus, which in the last century is said to have wrought a startling and somewhat unseemly miracle on one of the nuns. Before the Reformation, Schaffhausen was proud of possessing some of the breath of St. Joseph enclosed in one of the gloves of Nicodemus; Halle boasted of having fragments of Noah's ark, and of the chemise worn by the Virgin during her confinement; and the church of Notre-Dame-en-Vaux at Chalons guarded as a

rare treasure the navel of Jesus Christ until 1707, when the rationalistic bishop Noailles had it removed. An additional and [289] exceedingly strong evidence of the extent to which this utterly absurd “fad” prevailed, and duped with vile counterfeits even the shrewdest and most sensible men, is the fact that Duke Frederic III., surnamed the Wise, the Elector of Saxony and the protector of Luther, had a collection of nearly four thousand relics, among which were such choice specimens as milk of the Virgin, yarn which she spun—the yarn we suspect was of the nautical sort, and spun at a much later period—remains of the children slain in Bethlehem, straw and hay from the manger in which Jesus was born, teeth and hair of Christ, and portions of His raiment. Boccaccio, in the *Decameron* (Giorn. vi., Nov. 10), gives some specimens of Fra Cipolla’s sacred collection: the jaw-bone of Lazarus, a feather of the angel Gabriel, the hood of the seraph which appeared to St. Francis, the toe-nail of a cherub, some vestments of the Holy Catholic Faith, a finger of the Holy Ghost, a few rays of the star of Bethlehem, and a vial containing tones of the bells of Solomon’s temple. Curiously enough, the scoffing poet took a religious turn in the fiftieth year of his age, and became himself a diligent and devout collector of religious relics.

Coarse caricatures and obscene characterizations of the Jews are quite common in Christian churches. Thus on the north-east corner of the lofty choir near the roof in the parish church at Wittenberg is a rude high-relief, hewn in stone, of a sow with a litter of pigs, and among them a lot [290] of Jews, who are assiduously sucking her dugs to the dispossession and great discomfort of her own young. Behind the sow stands a rabbi, who, lifting her right leg with one hand, and holding her by the tail with the other, earnestly endeavours to peer into her insides, as though he saw something there worthy of his closest and keenest scrutiny. According to Luther's interpretation of this remarkable



Satire on the Jews.  
(Wittenberg Parish Church.)

work of art, the Jewish doctor of the law is engaged in searching into the mysteries of the Talmud.<sup>38</sup>

Above this sculpture stood originally a semi-Hebrew inscription in Latin characters: “Rabini Schemhamphoras,” which seems to have accidentally disappeared or been purposely removed during the restoration of the church in 1570. Schemhamphoras is the hidden name of God, which, if spoken or written, works magically and is used for [291] conjuration. Also the passage describing the miracle of the pillar of the

cloud and the division of the waters (Ex. xiv. 19-21) consists in the original of two hundred and sixteen letters, out of which the cabalists form seventy-two words of three letters each. They pronounce these words as numbers, and understand by them the names of seventy-two

<sup>38</sup> “Es ist hie zu Witttemberg an vnser Pfarrkirchen eine Saw in Stein gehawen, da ligen junge Ferckel vnnd Jüden vnter, die saugen. Hinder der Saw stehet eyn Rabin, der hebt der Saw das rechte bein empor, and mit seiner lincken hand zeucht er den pirtzel vber sich, bückt vnnd kuckt mit grossem vleis der Saw unter dem pirtzel inn den Thalmud hinein, als wolt er etwas scharffes vnd sonderliches lessen and ersehen.”--Dr. Mar. Luther, *Von Schemhamphoras vnnd Geschlecht Christi*. Wittenberg, 1543, 4to.

angels, which correspond to as many special powers and attributes of God, and are exceedingly potent as charms.<sup>39</sup>

A rhymed chronicle preserved in the city archives of Wittenberg states that the aforesaid relief was intended to deride and vex the Jews, who, by their chafferings and bickerings on Sunday near the sanctuary, disturbed and scandalized all good Christians. After due deliberation, it was resolved to have this work made in order to heap contempt upon the Jews, and to compel them to seek some other place of barter. The ingenious plan, the chronicler informs us, was crowned with complete success, and the Hebrew traffickers felt so insulted that they not only ceased to transact their business in the vicinity of the church, but gradually withdrew wholly from the city.

This explanation is a mere afterthought and pure invention, and is not sustained by any historical records, nor is it at all probable that the Christians of Wittenberg would have been obliged to resort to such indirect means of suppressing [292] the alleged abuse. In cases of this kind, they were not wont to deal in innuendoes, but to take more summary measures. Besides, similar representations exist elsewhere. Thus, on one of the buttresses on the north side of the church of St. Nicholas in Zerbst, the former capital of the principality of Anhalt, is the relief of a sow with two Jews sucking her teats, while two others are holding her fast by the head and tail. It was carved there as a memorial of the banishment of the Jews from that city, as can be proved by existing documents; and the Wittenberg sculpture had undoubtedly the same origin, and was intended to satirize Jewish extortion and greed of gain. It is well known that a pretty general persecution and banishment of the Jews took place in 1348 and 1349 under divers pretexts; among other accusations was that of producing pestilence by poisoning the wells, the pollution of the water caused by the common filthiness of the inhabitants being ascribed to the wickedness of one class of the population.

There is no doubt that the position to which Christian intolerance condemned the Jews for many centuries, closing to them all branches of industry except usury, developed in them a peculiar talent for finance, together with certain hard and offensive traits of character naturally growing out of money brokerage, and finally becoming almost innate and hereditary. In the middle ages they were made to serve as sponges to suck up the [293] people's substance in order that it might be squeezed out of them at the convenience of the rulers. King John II., surnamed the Good, issued in 1360 a decree permitting the Jews in his realm to take, as a compensation for loaning money, "quatre deniers par livre par semaine," equivalent to ninety per cent. per annum, not from any feeling of favouritism for the Israelites, but, as he expressly stated, because "the greater the privileges enjoyed by the Jews in this respect, the better they will be able to pay the taxes levied on them by the king." This "good" monarch was wont to confiscate periodically a large portion of the pillage thus obtained, in order to replenish his exhausted exchequer, and was actually praised by his deluded subjects for punishing Jewish rapacity. It was a crafty system of indirect taxation worthy of modern tariff

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<sup>39</sup> Cf. *Zeitschrift für deutsche Kulturgeschichte*, i. 463 sqq.

legislators. Also in the early part of the thirteenth century, Frederic II., the Hohenstaufe, ordained that the Jews should be permitted to dwell in Nuremberg and to lend money on interest, stating that, "inasmuch as this sinful business is essential to trade and to the commerical prosperity of the city, it would be a lesser evil to let the Jews carry it on, than that Christians should imperil the salvation of their souls by such iniquitous practices, since the former, owing to their notorious obduracy, will doubtless persist in their religious perversity and be damned anyhow." If the children of Israel now "take a breed of barren metal," as naturally as a pointer takes to pointing, or a hound to the [294] trail of a fox, this tendency is due in part at least to circumstances which they did not create and could not control. The chief accusation brought against the modern representatives of this race by Anti-Semitic agitators, is that they are unwilling to follow industrial and especially agricultural pursuits, in utter forgetfulness of the fact that, until a comparatively recent date, they were forbidden by Christian legislation either to engage in mechanical occupations or to own land, a condition of things still existing in portions of Russia and other half-civilized countries.

The gross method of outraging the feelings just described had not even the merit of being original with those who employed it. The Emperor Hadrian, after having suppressed the revolt of Bar-Cochba and recaptured Jerusalem, A.D. 135, caused images of swine to be sculptured over the gates of the city as a sign of the exclusion of the Jews, who were forbidden to dwell within the walls. He then restored it as a Roman city under the name of *Ælia Capitolina*, and converted the tabernacle of Jehovah into a temple dedicated to Jupiter.<sup>40</sup>

On the synagogue in Heidingsfeld is an armorial shield, on which are emblazoned two swine. It is the escutcheon of the Prince Bishop of Würzburg, Adam Friedrich von Seinsheim, who had it placed there instead of the arms of Heidingsfeld, which the Jews wished to adorn their sanctuary with, but [295] were forbidden by the magistracy to use for this purpose. The Rabbis were obliged to accept these heraldic porkers as *gosh* or ceremonially clean in consecrating the edifice.

A painting formerly on the lower part of the tower of the bridge across the Main in Frankfort represented an old Jew with spectacles on his nose sitting backwards on an enormous sow, and holding her tail in his right hand. A young Jew is lying on his back under the sow and eagerly sucking her [296] dugs; another old Jew is kneeling



Satire on the Jews.  
(Tower of Bridge at Frankfort.)

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Adrichomius, *Descriptio urbis Hierosolymorum*.

on the ground and receiving the sow's excrement into his mouth, while Satan with hoofs and horns steals up behind him and seizes him by the shoulder. Standing a little to one side is a Jewess arrayed in fine attire, holding a goat (the symbol of lechery) by the horns and looking the devil boldly in the face; underneath the picture is the following verse:

“Sauf du die Milch, friss du den Dreck,  
Das ist doch euer bestes Geschleck.”

“Drink the milk and eat the dung,  
That's a dainty for your tongue.”

Above is the naked and scarred body of a Christian child, reputed to be the victim of a ritual murder committed by the Jews in the year 1275. This is the description of the painting in its original form. Other accounts differ somewhat from this one, probably owing to the disappearance of portions of it in the lapse of time, and to the introduction of slight changes by later renovators. The Jews of Frankfort offered large sums of money to have it removed, but in vain; only a finer sense of propriety, and a higher standard of public decency, resulting from the progress of civilization, availed to do away with the scandalous libel.<sup>41</sup>

[297] A sow with two Jews as sucklings is carved on one of the stalls of the choir in Bâle Minster; and in the cathedral of Magdeburg a chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary contains a similar representation, dating from the fifteenth century. It is a strange irony of fate that the Jewish race should be thus held up to derision in a place especially devoted to the worship of a Jewish maiden. Among the gargoyles on the collegiate church (Stiftskirche) of Wimpfen im Thal, a fine Gothic edifice of the thirteenth century, is the figure of a Jew sucking a sow and pushing aside a little pig, which is anxious to have its turn at the maternal breast. Sculptures of a like character are found on the city hall (Rathhaus) of Salzburg, on the chapel of St. Anna in Heiligenstadt on the Leine, and among the grotesque carvings with which a monk adorned the high altar and the stalls of the chancel in the church at Heilbrunn, founded in 1132, and once famous as a place of pilgrimage.

The Jew suckled by a sow seems to have been the one great Anti-Semitic joke of the middle ages, and, judging from its frequent repetition and wide diffusion, must have been regarded as a wonderfully clever and altogether matchless stroke of Christian wit and satire. It was chiselled on the cathedral of Ratisbon, probably at the time of the expulsion of the Jews from that city in 1519, an event of sufficient importance to be deemed worthy of commemoration by an inscription on an apothecary's shop in Kelheim: “Anno Dom. 1519 jar [298] wurden die juden zu Rengsburg ausgeschafft.” It occurs again in the cathedral of Freising on the Isar with the following distich, which

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<sup>41</sup> Engravings of this painting are published in *Der Antiquarius des Neckar- Main- Lahn- and Moselstroms*, Frankfurt a. M., 1740, p. 342; and in Scheible's *Schaltjahr*, iii. P. 212. The former corresponds to the description just given; in the latter a tree stands in the place of the Jewess. Cf. also Schmidt, *Jüdische Merkwürdigkeiten*, 1741, ii. 256 sqq.

takes a rather discouraging view of the missionary work undertaken by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Jews—

“So wahr die Maus die Katz nit frisst,  
Wird der Jud kein wahrer Christ.”

“Sure as the mouse the cat won’t chew,  
No Jew ’ll become a Christian true.”

The promoters of such proselytism may derive some consolation from the fact that the ambiguity caused by the feminine gender of “Maus” and “Katz,” either of which may be the subject or the object of the verb, render it possible for this rather clumsy verse to be so construed as to express the very opposite of the sentiment intended by the rhymster.

Jews formerly complained of being obliged to take an oath standing on a swine’s skin, but this method of swearing may have been a survival of the old German custom of solemnly affirming the truth of any statement by the golden-bristled boar, Gullinbursti, sacred to the sun-god Freyr, which the Jews would naturally look upon as a particular grievance and intentional persecution. The Romans sacrificed a swine in forming treaties and making alliances, and the animal was also in this case a symbol of the sun, the great revealer of secrets and detector of falsehood. In the Eumenides [299] of Æschylus, Apollo the purger (*Ἀπόλλων καθάρσιος*) cleanses Orestes from the stains of matricidal pollution with swine’s blood, and Circe purifies the Argonauts, the abettors of the murder of Absyrtus, in the same manner.

It would be foreign to the purpose of the present work to describe the various means devised to throw derision upon the Jews; only such satirical delineations as are conspicuously connected with ecclesiastical architecture come within its scope.<sup>42</sup> It would be unjust, however, not to mention the heroic spirit of self-sacrifice which such trials tended to develop, and of which the following is a noteworthy instance. During a religious procession in Worms, a report was spread abroad that a crucifix had been mutilated. Of course the Jews, who served as scapegoats for all such offences, were accused of the sacrilege, and a mob of Christian zealots, hastening to the Jews’ quarter, demanded with loud cries the surrender of the culprits, and threatened, in case of refusal, to wreak vengeance on the whole Jewish population. A three days’ respite was granted in order to discover the persons who had committed the outrage. Towards evening two Hebrew strangers appeared at the closed entrance to the Jewry and [300] begged for admittance. They were informed of the terrible fate impending over the whole Israelitic community, but insisted in sharing the lot of their brethren, whatever it might be. At the expiration of the three days’ grace the infuriated and fanatical rabble assembled again at the gate of the ghetto and clamoured for the punishment of the sacrilegists. Then the two stranger guests gave themselves up as the guilty ones, and

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<sup>42</sup> The reader who is interested in the general subject is referred to F. L. Bösiggk’s essay “Ueber die Judenspottbilder des Mittelalters” in *Zeitschrift für deutsche Kulturgeschichte*, i. 463-469; and to Strobel’s *Geistliches deutsches Kartenspiel*, published in 1691 at Sulzbach, and containing an account of Schellensau, a game of cards designed to ridicule the Jews.

were put to death. In the old synagogue at Worms are two ever-burning lamps, which, as a Hebrew inscription informs us, were lighted in memory of two unknown men, who innocently suffered a cruel death for the sake of their brethren.

Classical mythology was another source from which Christian symbolism derived many conceptions and forms subsequently embodied in ecclesiastical architecture. It could hardly be expected that the first Gentile converts, however sincere in their profession of the new faith, would be able to break away entirely from the teachings and traditions of their early life and education. They were also told that the pagan religions were not merely old wives' fables, but had a certain heavenly origin and historical justification as preparatory to Christianity, which they foreshadowed. The real significance and *raison d'être* of the deities of Olympus were to be sought in their prototypical relation to the expiatory sacrifice on Mount Calvary. Hermes, who was represented in heathen works of art as the protector of the herds, the [301] conductor of souls, and the reviver of the dead, would be readily accepted as prefigurative of the Saviour of mankind, and Perseus rescuing Andromeda as signifying Christ redeeming the human soul. On a sarcophagus in the Museo Pio-Clementino at Rome is the relief of a satyr bearing a lamb, and having features strongly resembling those of the traditional good shepherd. There is no doubt, too, that the fear of persecution led the Christians of the first century to make this symbolical use of the old mythology; and it may have been the same dictate of prudence that prevented them from encircling the head of Christ with a nimbus, the earliest example of which, in the catacomb of St. Domitilla, belongs to the beginning of the second century.

Some of the Fathers held the views still entertained by Mr. Gladstone, that all mythologies are corruptions and distortions of a primitive revelation supernaturally communicated to "the chosen people." The applications of this theory are sometimes very odd. Thus it was affirmed that the ass's colt bound to the vine mentioned by the patriarch Jacob in blessing Judah (Gen. xlix. ii) is not only a prefiguration of Christ's entry into Jerusalem, but also the original source of the myths of Bacchus, Bellerophon, and Pegasus. The asininity of many a one who essays to bestride the winged horse of the Muses is lamentably true; but that the fiery steed itself is the foal of Shiloh's ass may be reasonably questioned. Isaiah prophesies [302] that a virgin shall conceive and bear a son; and nothing is more common than for Orientals to speak of the first-born as the child of a virgin; but the patristic exegetist maintains that this passage, besides being a prediction of the birth of Christ, suggested to the Greeks the legend of Danaë, the mother of Perseus. In like manner the labours and wanderings of Hercules are based upon the Psalmist's description of the bridegroom, who rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race, and whose going forth is from the end of the heaven. Whimseys of this kind have been long since relegated to the waste-garret of mythological curiosities; but they are not a whit more extravagant than many hermeneutical expositions still in vogue.

The magic power ascribed to the music of Orpheus, which tamed wild beasts and even moved trees and stones, was applied to the miraculous power of Christ, who declared, on His entry into Jerusalem, in reply to the protests of the Pharisees against

the noisy enthusiasm of the people, that, if the multitude should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out. The descent of the mythical Greek poet and minstrel into the lower world, and his success in rescuing his spouse Eurydice from the dominion of Pluto, rendered the analogy more complete, and may have given rise to the legend of Christ's descent into hell for the purpose of delivering the imprisoned spirits. Orpheus thus became a prototype of the Saviour, and as such found a place in the Christian pantheon [303] at a very early period. In the centre of the ceiling of a cubiculum in the catacomb of St. Domitilla near Rome, we see him seated on a rock and playing on his lyre, surrounded by beasts and birds, which his music has attracted to the spot. He figures frequently on Christian sarcophagi and in the frescoes of old churches.

The Bacchanal scenes which adorned the temples of the son of Semele were copied or imitated by the early Christians in order to illustrate the conception of the Church as a vineyard, which is expressed in the parables of the householder and his husbandmen, and of the labourers. An interesting example of this adaptation is seen in the mosaics of the fourth century in the cupola of St. Costanza in Rome, representing the genii of the vintage.

In the Gothic choir of the minster at Aix-la-Chapelle is an ambo, dating from the early part of the eleventh century, with ivory reliefs of a similar but still more elaborate character: Bacchus with the symbols of his cult, the vine, the lion, the panther, and the dog, Pan and the satyrs, the triumph of Galatea, centaurs, sirens, tritons, nereids, dolphins, the sea-born Venus, Cupids blowing shells as trumpets, and the myths of Demeter and Isis and Horus in their assumed prefigurative relation to the Virgin Mary.

Scenes from the pagan poets were occasionally portrayed, as, for example, in the curious sculptures of the twelfth century on a column in the choir of [304] the cathedral church of Bâle, giving in four reliefs the old Babylonian tale of the tragic fate of "a pair of star-crossed lovers," Pyramus and Thisbe as related by Ovid in the fourth book of the *Metamorphoses*. In the first scene Thisbe has taken refuge in a tree, at the foot of which



Pyramus and Thisbe. (*Cathedral of Bâle.*)

a lion is rending her mantle, while Pyramus approaches with an uplifted sword to slay the lion, which has a bit of Thisbe's mantle in its mouth. In the second scene Pyramus is

smiting the lion. He then goes in search of Thisbe, but, not finding her, is convinced that she has been devoured by the savage beast, and in a fit of despair falls on his own sword. Thisbe now returns to the place of rendezvous, and seeing her lover dead throws herself upon his sword. The final relief shows them both pierced through by the same weapon. This story of youthful passion thwarted by cruel parents was exceedingly popular in the middle ages, and [305] was therefore fitly chosen by Shakespeare to be theatrically caricatured by Nick Bottom the weaver, Peter Quince the carpenter, and other “rude mechanicals,” as An episode of *A Midsummer-Night’s Dream*, from which it was taken by Andreas Gryphius in his *Absurda Comica oder Herr Peter Squenz*. What religious significance the reliefs in Bâle Minster may have it would be difficult to determine. The lion which disturbs the meeting of the lovers, and eventually causes them to commit suicide, probably denotes the snares and terrors of Satan.



Pyramus and Thisbe. (Cathedral of Bâle.)

After the conversion and accession of Constantine, it was the settled policy of the Christians to erect their churches on the sites of demolished pagan temples, in order that the people might the more readily assemble for the worship of the true God in the places where they had been wont [306] to pay their devotions to idols. Gregory the Great, towards the end of the sixth century, wrote a letter of instructions to the missionaries to the Anglo-Saxons directing them to pursue this plan. Sometimes the ancient edifice was simply transformed and reconsecrated to the new cult, in which case the statues and symbols of the heathen deities remained and received a Christian signification as objects of worship. Thus the Florentine Baptistery superseded a temple dedicated to Mars, and John the Baptist succeeded the Roman god of war as the patron and protector of the city. The statue of Mars, which once adorned the temple, was placed on a tower, but was taken down when Attila sacked the city in 452, and thrown into the Arno, from which it was subsequently recovered and set up on a bridge, where it was still standing in the fourteenth century, as is evident from the references to it by Dante.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Cf. *Inf.*, xiii. 143-150; *Par.*, xvi. 49, 145.

In the gallery of the Vatican are two portrait statues of the Greek comic poets, Posidippus and Menander, made of Pentelican marble probably by Kephisodotos, the son of Praxiteles, for the theatre at Athens. After their discovery in Paneperna towards the end of the sixteenth century they were for a long time adored as saints. Under the church of S. Clemente in Rome is a temple dedicated to the worship of Mithras, with the ancient altar still standing. In a village church on the [307] Danube, not far from Linz, is a statue of Isis made of black basalt, to which pious Catholics pay their devotions, regarding it as an image of the Virgin Mary. A statue of the same goddess was worshipped in the church of St. Germain des Près in Paris for nearly ten centuries. This church was originally built by Childebert I. about the middle of the sixth century on the ruins of a temple of Isis, whose image was transferred to the new edifice, where it was an object of adoration till 1514, when it was destroyed. Three gilded bronze statues of Alemannic gods were revered in the chapel of St. Aurelia at Bregenz, until St. Gallus in his proselytic zeal broke them in pieces and threw them into the lake in order to put an end to this idolatry. Underneath the church of the Benedictine cloister of St. Martin near Trier was found, at the time of its demolition in 1802, an altar with reliefs of Bellona, Minerva, Mercury, and Hercules. As late as the sixteenth century a marble statue of Hercules slaying the Nemean lion stood in the vestibule of St. Ambrosius in Milan; and in St. Pietro in Cora the marble altar of a temple of Hercules served as a font, on the front of which was carved the head of Apollo encircled with a halo as a solar deity. Antique sarcophagi and cinerary urns were often used as Christian fonts and stoups. This origin accounts for the reliefs representing the myth of Hippolytus on the font, or what was formerly the font, in the cathedral of Girgenti, and for the scenes from the infancy of [308] Bacchus on a vessel which once served as a baptismal ewer in the cathedral of Gaeta, but is now in the Neapolitan Museum.

Cameos and other carved stones representing mythological personages or narrations were prized merely as jewels, and set as ornaments in crosiers, crosses, and the shrines of saints, without regard to the subjects engraved upon them. In the so-called cross of Lothair in the minster of Aix-la-Chapelle is an amethyst, on which the three Graces are carved in relief; the story of Leda and the swan is cut on a canonical seal of the twelfth century; and an ivory reliquary in the Schlosskirche of Quedlinburg is studded with precious stones, among which is an amethyst wrought into the head of Bacchus.<sup>44</sup>

The earliest Christian art was purely symbolical, rudely indicating instead of fully expressing the idea it was intended to convey. Thus a simple cross symbolized the doctrine of the Atonement, and it was not until a later period that the figure of Christ was affixed to the cross, which thus became a crucifix, and gradually acquired an artistic character. So, too, the cross-bearing lamb or Agnus Dei, the Good Shepherd, and similar emblems, have no claim to be regarded as works of art, but were nothing more than hieroglyphics or monograms. This was due not so much to the inwardness or spirituality of the new religion [309] doctrinally, as to its crudeness and incapacity

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<sup>44</sup> Cf. Piper, *Myth. der christl. Kunst*, i. 59-63, for numerous examples of this kind.

artistically. The best productions of early Christian art are copies or close imitations of contemporary pagan art, such as tutelar genii, victories, Amor and Psyche taken as emblems of the love of God and the human soul, the golden apples guarded by a dragon in the garden of the Hesperides interpreted as a tradition of the tree of knowledge and the subtle serpent in the garden of Eden, Apollo on the chariot of the sun transformed into Elias borne to heaven on a fiery chariot, and Mercury or Hermes with a ram on his shoulder expressive of the Christian conception of the Saviour as the Good Shepherd.

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries this servile imitation is followed by a conscious appropriation and independent elaboration of pagan myths by Christian artists, as the result of a better appreciation of the antique. Sibyls as well as saints and prophets stand in the niches of Giotto's tower, and are sculptured in relief on the bronze doors of Ghiberti in Florence, and on the Casa Santa of Loreto. A mosaic in San Michele at Pavia celebrates the humane and heroic feat of Theseus in slaying the Minotaur; on one side of the entrance to the labyrinth is a dragon, and on the other side a Pegasus; on the left hand, as the biblical counterpart of the classical myth, is David fighting Goliath. It is probably a work of the eleventh century.

Petrarch calls God "living Jove" and "eternal [310] Jove"; and Dante apostrophizes Christ as "supreme Jove, who for us on earth was crucified"—

"O sommo Giove,  
Chi fosti'n terra per noi crocifisso."

Indeed, Jupiter was used as synonymous with Jesus in poetry long before the features of the sovereign of Olympus were borrowed by painters and sculptors to lend dignity and majesty to the portraiture of Christ, especially in His character as stern and avenging judge on the last day.

Giotto, whose pencil wrought in the spirit of the Divine Comedy, and whose pictures are often mere embodiments and illustrations of Dante's ideas, introduced similar elements of ancient mythology into Christian art by way of allegory. So, too, in the famous frescoes of the triumph of death and the last judgment by Andrea and Bernardo Orcagno in the Campo Santo at Pisa, and in the Strozzi chapel of Santa Maria Novella at Florence, we find Charon the grim ferryman of souls, a triple-necked Pluto as the personification of hell swallowing the damned, Cerberus devouring the envious, the morasses of the Styx, the bull-headed anthropophagous Minotaur, in short the whole scenery of the lower world as conceived by the poets of classical antiquity and seen through mediæval eyes.

The peacock, being sacred to Juno, became a symbol of the apotheosis of Roman empresses, as Jupiter's eagle was of Roman emperors. For this reason these birds were carved on the tombs of the [311] apotheosized, and on funeral lamps. From pagan monuments of the dead they passed to Christian sepulchres, on which they signified the Christian's conception of apotheosis, the ascension of the sanctified soul and its union with God. Owing to the belief that the flesh of the peacock was incorruptible, this fowl was made an emblem of the resurrection of the dead, sown in corruption, but raised in

incorruption. On this point Augustine says (*De Civ. Dei*, xxi. 4) : “Quis enim nisi Deus creator omnium dedit carni pavonis mortui ne putrescerent?” “For who except God, the Creator of all things, endowed the flesh of the dead peacock with the power of never decaying?” There is a tradition that the acute and inquisitive suffragan of Hippo experimented with the flesh of this fowl, and found the popular superstition to be correct.



Peacocks (*Psalter of Isabella of France*.)

The splendour of its plumage made it also an emblem of the glories of heaven. In many mediæval paintings, for example, in Hans Memling’s picture of the Last Judgment in the Dorothy Chapel of St. Mary’s Church in Dantzic, the angels have peacocks’ feathers in their wings. The Christian moralist, however, in his condemnation of all sensual beauty as diabolical in its origin and influence, prefers in general to indicate and emphasize the imperfections and less attractive [312] features of the bird, which it endeavours to conceal under its showy qualities. Thus, in Freidank’s *Bescheidenheit* (p. 43), the peacock is said to have the slinking gait of a thief, the voice of the devil, and an angel’s garb—

“der phâwe diebes sliche hât,  
tiuvels stimme, and engels wât.”

On account of this peculiarity of its walk it is called *Petitpas* (“Mincing-step”) in the *Roman de Renart*. The striking contrast between the ugly feet, the awkward movement, the harsh strident cry of the peacock, and its brilliant hues furnished material for moralization exceedingly welcome to didactic poets and homilists.<sup>45</sup>

The *Physiologus* says that when the peacock wakes suddenly in the night, it cries out as if in distress, because it dreams that it has lost its beauty, thus typifying the soul, which in the night of this sinful world is constantly fearing to lose the good gifts and graces with which God has endowed it. In the bestiaries a man devoid of prudence is likened to a peacock that has lost its tail; because, as the author argues, the tail of the peacock denotes foresight, since the tail being behind is that which is to come; and foresight is the faculty of taking heed to that which is to come. As a burlesque on all reasoning from analogy, nothing could be better than this.

[313] The Christian version of the story of Argus and Io is an excellent example of the naïve manner in which classical myths were diverted from their natural course into the channel of moral and religious instruction. “There was once a lady who had a very beautiful cow. In order that it might not be stolen, she hired a herdsman named Argus, who had a hundred eyes, but slept with only two at a time, and kept watch with all the others. Nevertheless her precaution was of no avail, and she lost her cow. For a certain man, who coveted the animal, had a son called Mercurius, who was very skilful in playing on a long, hollow reed. This clever young man took occasion to visit Argus, and began to talk about one thing and another and to play on his pipe; and as he went on

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Victor Hehn, *Kulturpflanzen and Haustihere*, Berlin, 1874, p. 311.

talking and playing, Argus fell asleep at first with two eyes, then with four, and so on until finally the hundred eyes were all closed in slumber. Thereupon Mercurius cut off the head of the herdsman, and drove away the cow to his father. This incident is an admonition and a warning for us. We are Argus, and the cow is our precious soul, which we are set to keep with vigilance, and the hundred eyes are the good deeds and pious services by which the safety of the soul is secured. The man who wished to steal the cow is the devil; and his son and emissary lulls us to sleep by luxury, pride, vicious habits, and worldly pleasures, and at last carries away the soul captive, and delivers it to his father, the author of all evil.” [314] A miniature of this scene from the Arsenal



Myth of Argus. (*Bestiary*.)

manuscript has been published by Cahier (*Mél. d'Arch.*, II. xx. AB), and it is easy to conceive how by such a process of transformation all the fables of pagan mythology might serve as apt illustrations of Christian teachings, and appropriate decorations of Christian architecture.

In the Septuagint the word *σειρῆνες* occurs frequently where owls and ostriches are spoken of in the English version. Thus the prophet Isaiah (xiii. 21-22) is made to declare that “sirens and satyrs shall dance in Babylon, and onocentaurs and demons shall dwell in their habitations.” The sirens are said to be of three kinds: half woman and half fish, half woman and half bird, and half woman and half ass. Some play on flutes, others on harps, and others sing, attracting men by the sweetness of their music,



Sirens. (*Psalter of Isabella of France*.)

lulling them to sleep and rending them in pieces. They symbolize the power of female blandishment, and the allurements of the [315] flesh, and are often portrayed in missals and on different parts of ecclesiastical edifices. The ship of Ulysses sailing by the island of the sirens, himself bound to the mast, and the ears of the mariners stopped with wax, was a favourite subject with ancient artists, who delineated the scene on gems, mosaics, urns, and vases. In Christian art the ship of the wandering king of Ithaca was transformed into the ship of the Church, which bears those who entrust themselves to its care and keeping safely through the temptations of the world. Thus in the crypt of Santa Lucia, in the catacombs of Callistus, is a representation of Ulysses and the sirens, which St. Maximus of Turin interprets as a Christian allegory. “This ship,” he says, “is the Church, and the mast symbolizes the cross of Christ, to which the faithful must

cling in order to escape the seductions of the senses. As our Lord Jesus Christ was nailed to the cross, and remained sinless among temptations, so let us navigate the perilous sea of life as if our ears were stopped.”

As servants and messengers of Proserpina the sirens, like the Scandinavian Valkyrias, carried the souls of the departed to Hades, and were therefore often sculptured on tombs and cinerary urns, usually playing musical instruments. On the sepulchres of illustrious orators like Isocrates or eminent poets like Sophocles, the sirens personified the magic power and irresistible persuasiveness of eloquence and the charms of poetry, which captivate [316] the souls of men. Patristic theologians and exegetists confounded sirens and mermaids, and believed them to be real creatures expressly intended to serve as deterrent types of carnal appetites and sensual enticements. In mediæval poetry the siren symbolizes the delusive fascinations of this world, which Konrad von Würzburg by a bold metaphor calls “die syrene trügesam” (“the deceitful siren”), from whose allurements the holy Virgin rescues us on the voyage of life, and brings us safely to the haven of eternal rest.



Siren presenting a Fish to a man. (Church at Cunault-sur-Loire.)

The siren is often represented in sacred art with a fish in her hand, signifying the soul held in the grip of libidinous passion, as for example on the capitals of some of the columns in St. Germain des Près, the oldest of the Parisian churches; in the arcades of the cloister of St. Aubin, where the siren has a fish in one hand and a knife in the other; on capitals in the churches at Civaux, where the siren is handing the fish to a man in a boat, while another is plunging from the opposite side [317] of the boat into the sea, as though he feared the seductress even when bringing gifts, and risked his life to save his soul; and at Cunault-sur-Loire, where a similar scene is represented, the man in the boat receiving the fish with an affrighted mien, and his companion standing in a deprecating attitude on the shore. This sculpture dates from the twelfth century. Sirens are carved on the stalls of the chancel in the cathedral of Poitiers and in Notre Dame of Rouen, in the church of St. Nicholas at Anclam, and on the portal of the Schottenkirche in Ratisbon; also winged virgins with birds' legs and tails adorn the four corner pillars which support the candelabra wrought in bronze by Peter Vischer.

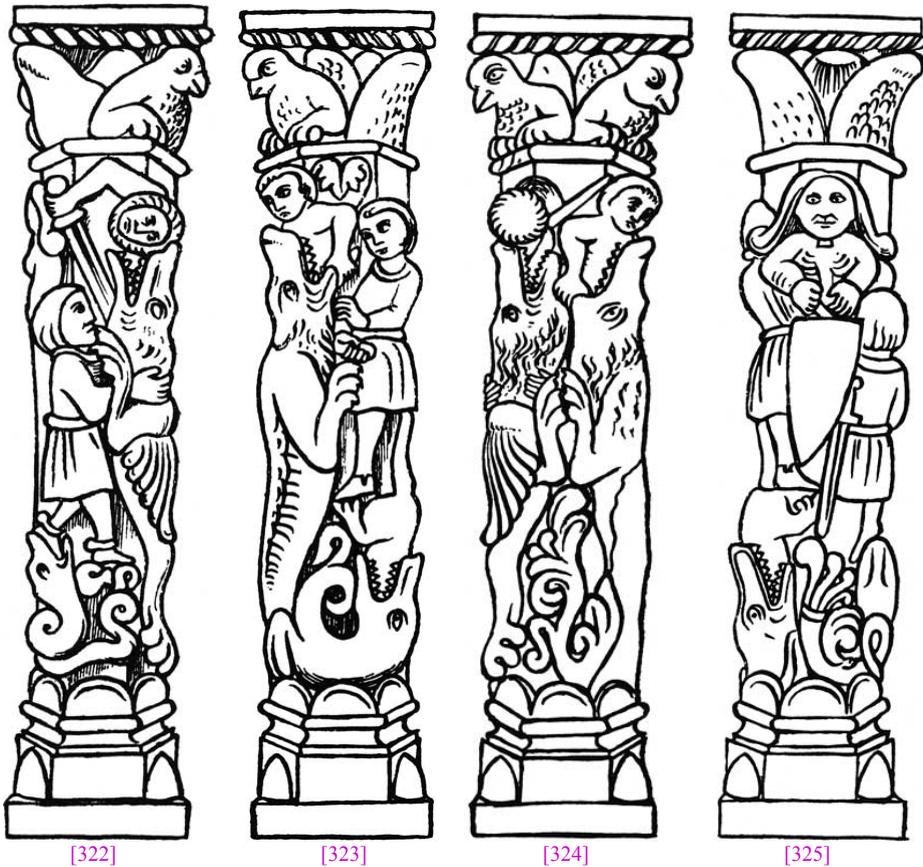
In classical mythology centaurs were associated with sirens in Bacchanal processions and orgies, because they both embodied and symbolized overruling animal impulses and passions. They discharged similar functions as agents of the gods of the lower world, and for this reason were sculptured on pagan sarcophagi and other funeral monuments, from which they were borrowed by Christians, who conceived of them as demons armed with bows and arrows, and going about annoying believers and assailing them with what Paul calls “the fiery darts of the wicked.”

St. Jerome records that when St. Anthony, in the ninetieth year of his age, went to visit Paul the Hermit in the desert, he met a creature half man and half horse. The saint made the sign of the [318] cross, as a protection against diabolical influences, and then inquired the way to Paul’s hermitage. Thereupon the strange hybrid uttered some harsh semi-articulate whinnying sounds, and, pointing with his right hand in the proper direction, galloped off. Jerome maintains that this apparition was an emissary of Satan sent to frighten St. Anthony, and to deter him from his purpose; but if this theory be correct, the willingness with which the devil’s agent acted as a guide-post and helped the holy man on his way is rather remarkable. The monks were wont to people the desert, and other lonely places in which they dwelt, with monstrous shapes or entrancing visions, like those which so sorely tempted St. Anthony, products of their own suppressed but ineradicable passions, and abortions of an imagination morbidly excited by asceticism and solitude.

The centaur figures very frequently in architecture from the tenth to the sixteenth century, especially on the doors of churches. Thus, in the reliefs on the bronze doors of Augsburg Cathedral one centaur is shooting at a man and another at a lion; on a frieze in the church at Brenz are reliefs of centaurs shooting arrows, and the same subject is on the bronze doors of St. Sophia in Novgorod; on the west side of St. John’s, in Gmünd, is a centaur with a knife; on the portal of St. Gilles are two centaurs, one shooting at a stag and another pursuing a lion; on the portal of St. Trophine at Arles we find seven reliefs of centaurs shooting at [319] lions, and of men fighting with divers wild beasts, illustrating the conflict of fierce passions, or men contending against their own lower natures, and trying to subdue them. In the cloister of Zurich Minster are two female centaurs, one shooting an arrow at a dragon, and the other thrusting a spear down its throat; in the former cloister-church at Ibbenstadt in Wetterau, on the base of a pillar surmounted by a cross, is a centaur discharging an arrow into the extended jaws of a dragon; in the Liebfrauenkirche (Church of our dear Lady) at Halberstadt are reliefs on the frieze of the stone enclosure of the chancel, representing female centaurs nursing their young, and male centaurs tearing each other’s hair; and in Freiburg Minster a man fighting a winged centaur with sword and shield, and a couple of female centaurs contending with similar weapons. It is not easy in every case to determine the precise spiritual significance of such scenes, and in some instances they are doubtless purely decorative, although a lingering tradition of the original symbolism of the centaur underlies them all, and accounts for the introduction of these fabulous monsters even as merely ornamental forms.

Dante (*Inf.*, xii.) condemns those who have been guilty of deeds of violence against life and property, Alexander, Attila, and other great conquerors and ravagers of the earth, to suffer for their crimes in a turbulent stream of boiling blood, guarded by centaurs armed with darts, and running [320] along the shore; and Vergil (*Æn.*, vi. 286) is met by them as he is about to enter the lower world, where they seem to have acted as warders of the gate to the nether regions. In Bernardo Orcagna's famous fresco of the Last Judgment in the Strozzi Chapel of Santa Maria Novella, in Florence, which is essentially a pictorial illustration of Dante's description of Inferno, the damned are pursued by centaurs. In the church of the Franciscan cloister at Assisi, on the groined arch over the grave of St. Francis, is a centaur painted by Giotto as a symbol of self-will, together with other frescoes by the same master, representing allegorical figures of poverty, chastity, obedience, prudence, humility, and kindred virtues with which the saint was supposed to have been pre-eminently endowed. In a painting by Andrea Mantegna in the gallery of the Louvre the vices are delineated as satyrs and centaurs; and on a stoup by Jacopo della Quercia in the cathedral of Sienna are reliefs of David rending the jaws of a lion and Hercules slaying a centaur, forming a part of a series of sculptures giving the history of creation from the birth of light to the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden. In older works of Christian art, which have for their subject the fall of man, centaurs often appear as personifications of criminal impulses rashly and recklessly obeyed. At a later period, like other real or fabulous creatures, they gradually lost their symbolical meaning, and were used for satirical purposes in accordance with the general [321] law of degeneracy that governs this hieroglyphic mode of expression. Thus, on some of the seats of the stalls in the choir of Bâle Minster, belonging to the end of the fifteenth century, are carvings of centaurs with the heads of bishops and of merrymaking monks and nuns, and other caricatures of the clergy.

In the crypt of the cathedral at Freising, near Munich in Bavaria, is a column adorned on all sides with sculptures of the eleventh century, representing the chief incidents of the old German myth of Sigurd (Siegfried). In the first group two persons—one in armour, and wearing spurs (Sigurd), and the other in a kirtle (Regino)—are slaying the dragon. Next we see a naked man letting himself down into the jaws of the dead dragon; it is Sigurd bathing himself in the dragon's blood, which would render him invulnerable. A branch of leaves hanging down covers a part of his shoulder, and indicates the fatal spot which remained unwashed by the monster's blood, and therefore capable of being wounded. Two birds are perched on the capital of the column. An animal, probably an ichneumon (also a legendary killer of monsters in the form of crocodiles), is rushing into the jaws of another dragon resembling an alligator. On the fourth side is a woman with long hair, a valkyrie, or perhaps Brunhild. The legend of Sigurd symbolized the vernal freshness and vigour of the sun slaying the demon of winter, and freeing earth's treasures from its icy grasp, and was therefore easily [322] turned into the channel of Christian ethics and theology, and made to signify the redeeming power of the Sun of Righteousness. For this reason scenes from it are frequently found depicted on monuments of Christian art. In Norway the Sigurd Saga



Siegfried Saga (*Freising*).<sup>46</sup>

seems to have been a favourite theme of Christian architects, and the adventures of this old Scandinavian ideal of heroic valour and strength were frequently carved on the doorposts and stalls of sacred edifices, especially in the southern provinces. The most complete of these delineations are the curious wood-carvings from the portal of the church at Hyllestad, in Saetersdal, now in the University collection of Northern Antiquities at Christiania, and dating probably from the thirteenth century. The scenes represented are as follows: 1. The smith, Regino, forges the sword “Nothung,” while Sigurd blows the bellows. [323] 2. Sigurd tests the sword by smiting the anvil in twain. 3. Sigurd slays Fafnir the dragon. 4. Sigurd cuts Fafnir’s heart in three pieces and roasts them on a spit; while Regino is asleep Sigurd touches one of the pieces with his finger to see if it is done; as the juice of the roast is hot he licks his finger, and thus gets a taste

<sup>46</sup> Digital edition note: in the print edition, these images were on four consecutive pages (322-325), with one image at the inside margin on each page.



[326]



[327]

Sigurd Saga (*Hyllestad*).<sup>47</sup>

of it, and is able to understand the language of the birds which are singing in the branches above his head. The steed Grane is also visible, laden with the Andvaregold, known as the Rhinegold or Nibelungen Hort (treasure). 5. Sigurd kills Regino, whose meditated treachery has been revealed to him by the birds. 6. Gunnar is lying in a pit of serpents with his hands bound, and playing a harp with his feet in order to charm the venomous reptiles and render them innoxious; one of them, however, is of the kind mentioned by the Psalmist, “which will not hearken to the voice of [324] charmers,

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<sup>47</sup> Digital edition note: in the print edition, these images were on two consecutive pages (326-327), with one image at the inside margin on each page.

charming never so wisely,” and has bitten him. This last legend is more fully rendered on two carved planks from the portal of the church at Austad (Saetersdal), where we find two scenes from the Gjukungasaga: Hogue’s heart is cut out of his breast by Atle and shown to the brother of the slain, Gunnar, who is exposed to serpents, and plays the harp with his feet. The portal of the church at Vegusdal, also in Saetersdal, is adorned with delineations of Sigurd’s exploits similar in character, but less fully represented. Indeed, as we have already stated, more or less fragmentary episodes of old Norse Saga-cycles are found in a great number of churches, as, for example, at Nesland in Thalemarken, at Hemsedal in Hallingdal, at Lardal in Jarlsberg, at Opdal in Numedal, and elsewhere. A carving at Lardal represents the [325] expiation made for the death of the otter by heaping up gold sufficient to cover its skin; round its neck is the fatal Andvare ring. In the church of Hitterdal, a remarkably interesting specimen of the Norwegian “stavekirker” of the twelfth century, are decorative carvings of Sigurd and Gunnar riding up the mountain towards the spot where Brynhildr (Brunhild) is asleep, encircled with a barrier of fire, and, as they return, Sigurd holds the ring of Andvare in his hand. Doubtless many monuments of this kind, formerly existing in Scandinavia and in other northern countries, have perished. Fragments of sculptures treating the Sigurd Saga in the manner already described may be seen still, although in a very mutilated condition, on a cross-shaft at Kirk Andreas, in the Isle of Man.<sup>48</sup>

[326] Christianity, it must be remembered, was forced upon the Norwegians by sovereigns who, like King Olaf Tryggvason, had been converted in foreign lands, and endeavoured to introduce the new religion in a summary manner by royal decree. There was no change, however, in the religious beliefs of the masses of the people, who continued to worship the ancestral gods and to revere the mythical and semi-mythical heroes whose deeds, as celebrated in ancient songs and sagas, were anything but illustrations of Christian virtues. Chief of these popular demi-gods was Sigurd, the most perfect embodiment of the Norseman’s conception of manly force and fearlessness. Even Christian priests themselves were not wholly free from this feeling, and [327] cherished a lingering fondness for the outworn creeds and discarded superstitions of their fathers. Partly as an expression of this sentiment, and partly as a matter of policy, Sigurd, the slayer of Fafnir, was made to symbolize Christ, the subduer of Satan, or was regarded as the pagan prototype of the Christian dragon-killers, St. George and St. Michael, and placed at the portal of the church as its protector. By the same process of adaptation and assimilation Gunnar in the serpents’ pit came to typify man in the bondage of sin, trying to comfort himself and to calm his conscience by resorting to worldly pleasures, but doomed to spiritual death.

Another favourite theme of mediæval art was the weighing of souls, which plays such a prominent and decisive part in the eschatology of the ancient Egyptians, on whose sepulchral [328] monuments the Supreme judge is seen determining the worth of

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<sup>48</sup> Cf. Dr. L. Dietrichson and H. Munthe, *Die Holzbaukunst Norwegens in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart*, Berlin, 1893, pp. 25-27; *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, vol. xliii., p. 260.

souls by weight, and condemning each to be reembodyed in the animal form to which the habits of life cultivated in a previous existence rendered it best suited. Thus a glutton is scourged with rods by cynocephali, who are reconducting his spirit to the earth, where it is doomed to pass its next period of incarnation as a hog. Most probably, however, the mediæval artist knew nothing of the Egyptian method of procedure in determining the destiny of souls, but simply intended to illustrate the words of Daniel to King Belshazzar: "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting;" although this metaphorical phrase is evidently based upon the Oriental conception of the method by which retributive justice is meted out in accordance with the theory of metempsychosis.

In a bas-relief on a church at Velay an angel is engaged in weighing souls; the devil in the shape of a pig is carrying off a woman, whose virtues have been found of too light a quality, and keeping one eye on the scales to see that the angel does not cheat him out of the rest of the ponderable wares. It is a competition in which neither will bate the other even one poor scruple. In a sculpture of the thirteenth century on the portal of the church at Louques, in the province of Aveyron, the devil is slyly touching the beam with his finger in order to make it incline in his favour; and in a stained window of the cathedral of Bourges we see the [329] arch-fiend putting his foot on the scale and pressing the lever with his hand, while one of his imps is pulling at it from below so as to make the side of virtue kick the beam. Here the good and evil qualities are incarnate as heads. A relief on the pediment over a doorway of the cathedral of Autun represents a crowd of naked and clawfooted devils eagerly watching a balance, in one scale of which are the vices of the soul incorporate in a hideously-deformed creature, and in the other scale its virtues personified by a young child under the protection of a lean and lank angel in exceedingly stiff and angular drapery. Here,



Weighing Souls. (Bourges Cathedral.)

too, the devil in charge tries to push the doubtful beam, but is caught in the act and thwarted by the vigilant angel. Behind the devil stands a long procession of trembling souls, and in the background a fiery furnace, into which a serpent-headed imp as stoker is vigorously thrusting those who have been found deficient in saving qualities. In Egyptian eschatology the office of weighing souls was performed by Osiris and Typhon; in Christian art the function of balancing good and evil deeds and thus determining the future destiny of men is commonly assigned to the archangel Michael and Satan. [330] Sometimes the scales are held by the hand of God reaching out of the clouds, as, for example, on the arch of the principal doorway of the cathedral of Autun, and on a capital in the church of Saint-Croix in Saint-Lô; usually, however, it is St.

Michael who superintends this weighty business, and prevents any cheating on the part of the great deceiver. There is a vivid representation of this scene on the portal of St. Trophine in Arles-sur-Rhone (eleventh century), where the good souls under the care of the tutelar archangel mount upwards and join the assembly of the elect in heaven, while the bad ones are seized by a gigantic demon, who already has two in his clutch, holding them with their heads downward. Essentially similar scenes are sculptured on the portals of the cathedral St. Nicholas at Fribourg in Switzerland, the metropolitan church Notre-Dame-de-Paris, the old cathedral church of Bazas in Gironde, and in many other ecclesiastical edifices.

On the portal of the minster at Bonn are sculptured an angel and a devil, each diligently writing in a scroll held on the knee; and cowering between the ribs of the arch of the famous pulpit in Bâle Minster (hewn in 1486 in the form of a Gothic chalice out of a single stone) is a devil busily engaged in taking notes, not probably of the sermon, but of the conduct of the congregation; underneath is the inscription *Prope est dies Domini* (“the day of the Lord is near”). In a fresco painting of the thirteenth century in the cathedral of Freising [331] depicting the Last judgment the archangel Michael and Satan are each presenting their books to Christ; this picture might serve as an illustration to the fine Latin hymn also of the thirteenth century, and ascribed to the Franciscan monk Thomas of Celano—

“Liber scriptus proferetur,  
In quo totum continetur,  
Ex quo mundus judicetur.

Judex ergo cum sedebit,  
Quidquid latet apparebit,  
Nil inultum remanebit ”

In Indian mythology of the Post-Vedic period it is Yama who fixes the fate of the soul after hearing the report of his secretary Chitragupta, who keeps a strict record of human actions in a book called Agrasandhâni. Sometimes, however, in works of art this clerk is represented as weighing a person with a steelyard in the presence of the Judge of the Dead.

Characteristically enough, the procession waiting for judgment in Christian delineations of the scene consists almost entirely of women. The notion that woman is, in an emphatic and peculiar sense, the ally and satellite of Satan originated in the legend of the fall of man, and was strengthened by the institution of sacerdotal celibacy. By yielding to the suggestions of the devil she brought ruin upon the human race, and is still the most efficient agent of the evil one in disturbing the meditations of pious men. From her first appearance on the [332] stage of history her seductive influence has been the cause of all the social, political, and domestic intrigues that have disturbed the peace and happiness of the world. “Cherchez la femme” is always a pertinent mandate in the presence of any such calamity. This prejudice was firmly rooted in the mediæval mind, and finds drastic expression in the painting and sculpture as well as in the poetry and

theology of that period. A troubadour of the thirteenth century, in a poem entitled *Les Blasme des Fames*, compares woman to various animals, each of which is distinguished for some undesirable quality: she stings like a serpent, is fiery like a horse, double-natured like a dragon, deceitful like a fox, greedy like a bear, and loves darkness like a bat; she is not even admitted to have that “excellent thing in woman,” a “voice ever soft, gentle, and low,” but hoots and screeches like an owl—

“Fame est huans, fame est fressaie.”

A picture in *Notre Dame de Recouvrance* in Brest portrays the devil noting down the idle words of two women, who are gossiping during mass. This subject is often treated in sculpture in the miniatures of manuscript missals and in the designs of tapestries, and is thus referred to in a poem written by Pierre de Grosnet in 1553—

“Notez en l’ecclise de Dieu,  
Femmes ensemble caquetoyent.  
Le diable y estoit en ung lieu  
Escripvant ce qu’elles disoyent. [333]  
Son rollet plain de poinct en poinct,  
Tyre aux deus pour le faire croistre  
Sa prinse eschappe et ne tient poinct,  
Au pillier s’en cobby la teste.”

On a gable-window of the Château de Villeneuve in Auvergne, dating from the sixteenth century, is a painting of three frightful devils forging the head of a woman, and three angels moulding the head of a man—the female head, being of diabolical workmanship, is full of diabolical propensities. The artists who conceived and executed such things, it must be remembered, were in the service of a Mariolatrous and yet misogynistic religion. In a carving in the church of Saint-Spire, in Corbeil, a woman has got the better of the devil, and is sawing off his infernal majesty’s right ear.

The devil is by no means a prominent figure in the oldest monuments of Christian art, and it is difficult to determine with precision when he began to claim the attention of painters and sculptors. The general panic produced by the belief that the end of the world was at hand, and that Christ would come to judge the quick and the dead in the year 1000, caused the thoughts of men to turn more and more anxiously to the person of his satanic majesty, who was expected to play a prominent and fatal part in that final scene. In consequence of this state of fearful anticipation, we find the devil and his acolytes making their appearance in the latter half of the tenth and the beginning of the eleventh century on the capitals [334] and friezes, the doorways and pediments of churches, frequently as human monsters with jagged wings and forked tail, or that hideous abortion of an affrighted imagination, the dragon. The object of such creations was to exert a religious influence by inspiring terror. But after the period so painfully looked forward to had passed, and the day of vengeance seemed to be indefinitely postponed, a reaction of feeling set in, and men began to treat the devil as a bugaboo to be ridiculed rather than to be dreaded. The imps which are sculptured in bas-relief on the churches of the fifteenth century are far more comical than terrible forms. They are

devils who are fallen into dotage and visible decay, and with whom the artist can take all sorts of liberties, turning them into clowns and buffoons for the amusement of the populace.

This tendency was intensified by the scepticism which attended the Renaissance movement and led to the Reformation, and was naturally and inevitably fostered by the success of these intellectual and ecclesiastical revolts. Luther's devil was a poor discrowned potentate, whom it was perfectly safe to deride and vilify. No hurling of inkstands would have sufficed to discomfit the devils of the tenth and eleventh centuries, nor would any good Christian of that day have ventured to address them in such offensive terms as Luther employs in his *Table Talk*, lest they should take him at his word and effect an anal possession of his person that would defy the most vigorous crepitus as a [335] means of expulsion. Luther's attitude towards the prince of darkness, however bold and reckless it may seem, was in reality nothing but the cheapest and coarsest sort of swagger. The great devil in the pediment over the portal of the cathedral of Autun, belonging to the twelfth century, would have "grinned horribly a ghastly smile" at the scurrile scoffings and obscene jocularities in which the Wittenberg Reformer was so fond of indulging at the expense of the arch-fiend.

As Maupertuis was passing through a cemetery, a friend, pointing to a heap of skulls, said, "What are they grinning at?" "At us who are living," was the reply. This is the moral of the Dance of Death. A Tyrolese priest, preaching to a congregation of peasants, naïvely remarked, "All men must die, even I myself." The grim skeleton is no respecter of persons, so far as riches and rank are concerned; the crown, the mitre, the tiara, the surplice, and the stole do not avail to ward off the inevitable fate. Death's touch paralyzes the strongest arm, and his scythe strikes through the heaviest helmet and pierces the network of the most impenetrable coat of mail. The artists who delineated such scenes enforced in the most emphatic manner the doctrine of human equality so impressively taught by Hamlet in his churchyard soliloquy: "Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favour must she come." The lawyer with "his quiddits, his quilllets, his cases, his tenures, and [336] his tricks," the jester with his gibes, his gambols, his songs, his "flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar," pope, emperor, courtier, beggar, miser, spendthrift, knight, peasant, soldier, judge, and criminal—all join in the measured movement directed by the untiring and unrelenting corypheus.

The oldest Dance of Death of which we have any knowledge dates from 1312, and was a fresco-painting in the cloister of Klingenthal at Little Bâle, consisting of forty representations of the manner in which death arrests the activity and cuts short the career of all classes and conditions of men, and accompanied with explanatory verses. More than a hundred years later the churchyard of the Minorite cloister of the Innocents at Paris was adorned with similar scenes, "begun," as a contemporary record states, "in the month of August, 1424, and finished in the following Lent." It was called *La Dance Macabre*, and woodcuts of it were published in a volume printed at Paris in 1485, and bearing the title: *Chorea ab eximio Macabro versibus alemanicis edita*, etc., from

which it appears that the word Macabre was then supposed to be derived from a distinguished German poet, Macabrus, who composed the rhymes. Unfortunately for this theory, no poet of this name ever existed in Germany, although he may have owed his origin to a confusion with Marcabrus, a Provençal poet of the fourteenth century, who, however, sang wholly different themes. Nearly a dozen [337] more or less ingenious interpretations have been given of this phrase, which is probably a translation and corruption of the mediæval Latin *Chorea Machabæorum*, so called because the seven Maccabean brothers with their mother were originally the principal characters in it, or because it was first celebrated in their honour on the day (August 1 ) devoted by the Church to their memory as martyrs; for the Dance of Death was represented dramatically as well as pictorially, and was doubtless acted in cloisters and in public places long before it became the subject of artistic delineation. The verses explanatory of the oldest paintings are always in the form of a dialogue between the inexorable destroyer and his victims, and may be regarded as fragments of the original play.

In England, France, Germany, and Switzerland some fifty cities are mentioned as having had paintings of the Dance of Death, the most famous of which was that on the outer wall of the churchyard of the Dominican cloister in Great Bâle, made in free imitation of the Klingenthal fresco about the middle of the fifteenth century, renovated by Hans Hugo Klauber in 1568, and ruthlessly destroyed by order of an over-zealous iconoclastic municipal council on account of its being “a terror to children and a bugaboo to the people”—“ein Kinderschreck and eine Leutescheuche.”

The libraries of Heidelberg, Munich, and Paris contain quite a number of manuscripts with miniatures of the Dance of Death, some of which are [338] really superb in execution, while others are crude in form, but not without a certain vigour of movement and vividness of expression. By far the finest delineation of this subject is Hans Holbein's *Imago Mortis*, the original drawings of which, now in St. Petersburg, are artistically as superior to all former productions of the kind as Goethe's *Faust* is to the folk-books and puppet-plays that describe the uncanny career of the mediæval master of the black art. Holbein's drawings were engraved on wood by Hans Lützelburger. These cuts, the proof-impressions of which, published at Lyons and Bâle, resemble the best work of the artist's pencil, and to which several posthumous sheets were added in the early part of the present century, have passed through more than a hundred editions, to say nothing of copies on copper and lithographic reproductions.

In the *Book of Hours* of Geoffroy Tory are miniatures of a like character: the grim skeleton is mounted on a black horse, with a scythe on his shoulder, a folded letter in his hand, a raven, the ominous bird of Odin, flying over his head, and his pathway strewn with corpses. In a copper-plate by the Nuremberger Hans Sebastian Beham, dated 1541, and bearing the inscription, *Omnem in homine venvstatem Mors abolet* (“Death does away with all beauty in man”), Death in the guise of a court-fool surprises a richly-dressed maiden of patrician birth, while gathering a bouquet of flowers. Beham was a genial artist, but a lewd fellow. In [339] the Berlin Museum is an engraving of Death looking with lustful emotions on a lascivious pair, on the margin of which are

written these words “propter quam picturam ex civitate ejectus est.” His fellow-burghers were so outraged by this superfluity of obscenity that they compelled him to quit the city. After his exile he went rapidly from bad to worse, kept a brothel in Frankfort, and, in 1550, was drowned in the Main. Well-preserved representations of Death’s triumphs, painted by Meglinger in the sixteenth century, may still be seen in the pediments under the roof of the long wooden bridge (Spreuer Brücke) over the Reuss at Lucerne.

The spirit of the Dance of Death is thoroughly democratic, and inculcates the doctrine of human equality in the most emphatic and impressive manner. The great leveller shows no consideration for rank or dignity; the lowest is not beneath, nor the highest above his notice; neither emperor nor pope can escape his dominion or refuse to obey his behest. He clutches the rich and powerful with a rude hand, gently lulls the infant to sleep, and closes the weary eyes of the poor and oppressed with a touch of tenderness and compassion. He delights to turn the tables on his victims, to make a mockery of human faculty and function, and

“to have the engineer  
Hoist with his own petard.”

Thus he presents the monarch a fatal potion in a goblet set with jewels, capers with the king’s jester [340] towards an open grave, breaks the judge’s staff of office over his head, strikes down the miser with his heavy bag of hoarded wealth, pierces the cook through with a spit, combats the cavalier on horseback, tilts with a lance against the knight in the lists, plays the gallant with coquettes, catches the fowler in a snare, points to the doctor’s pills and tinctures and bids him heal himself, seizes the apothecary in the midst of his drugs, snatches the priest from the altar as he is praying souls out of purgatory, gives the astronomer a skull in the form of a globe, and says to the astrologer, who casts the horoscope of others, but is ignorant of his own fate—

“Tu dis par amphibologie  
Ce qu’aux autres doit advenir;  
Dys-moy donc par astrologie  
Quand du devras a moy venir.”

“You tell by amphibology  
What unto others is to be;  
Now tell me by astrology  
When are you to come to me.”

Honoré de Sainte Marie, a popular and sensational preacher of the latter half of the seventeenth century, was wont to take skulls into the pulpit and address them in the sarcastic moralizing style of Hamlet. To the skull of a judge he would say “Speak now, hast thou not sold justice for gold, and refused to listen to the pleadings of the poor?” The skull of a flirt he would apostrophize in the following strain: “Art thou not the head of one of those fair dames whose chief occupation was to [341] lay snares for human hearts, and to catch them with honeyed words as birds are taken with lime? Well then, empty and musty sconce, where are those fine eyes, with their fond and furtive glances?”

Where are those beautiful teeth, which bit so many hearts, and made them more easily devoured by the devil? Where those delicate ears, into which fops have so lovingly whispered, seeking through these avenues easy access to the heart? What has become of those lilies and roses, which thou didst suffer to be plucked by unchaste kisses?" It would be interesting to know whether the idea of delivering such discourses was original with the French divine, or borrowed from Hamlet's meditations in the churchyard. The most probable supposition is that these sermons were suggested by the Dance of Death, inasmuch as the Shakesperian dramas were little read and indeed hardly known in France at that time, and it was not until a much later period that they began to be generally appreciated even in England.

It would be wholly foreign to the scope of the present work to consider at length the different forms in which death has been represented in art. To the poetic imagination and fine æsthetic sense of the Greeks the genius of death was not a grim monster, but a graceful youth leaning on an inverted torch, the twin brother of sleep, as Homer calls him, and it was not till the twelfth century of the Christian era that he began to be personified and portrayed as a mummy or a skeleton. The Dance of [342] Death doubtless originated in the Dance of the Dead (Todtentanz, Danse des Morts), which according to popular superstition took place in churchyards at the ghostly hour of midnight. The remarkable fascination of the theme is evident from the frequency with which it has been portrayed by modern artists, as, for example, by Alfred Rethel in six admirable xylographs of Death on the barricades and in revolutionary and reactionary contests suggested by the political events of 1848, in the woodcuts of Ille, Poggi, and Barth, the excellent series of India-ink drawings by Otto Seitz, and the more recent and uncommonly clever sketches by Lührig. In these and similar works Death figures as a working-man in a blouse preaching insurrection, as the "walking delegate" of a labour union organizing a general strike, as a Jesuit urging a monarch to resist by force of arms the will of the people, as a diplomatist seated at a table and kindling war by a single stroke of his pen, as a Swiss guide leading a company of tourists through a mist over a precipice, as a careless switchman plunging an express train into an abyss, and finally in the newest and most destructive rôle of an anarchist and dynamiter.

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[348]

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