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## RELICS OF DECORATIVE PAINTING

NOW OR FORMERLY IN

## CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL.

BY CANON SCOTT ROBERTSON.

FIFTY years ago, or more, the late Mr. George Austin, senior, Architect and Surveyor to the Dean and Chapter, made careful sketches of various frescoes and paintings on wood in Canterbury Cathedral, which have since become wholly or partially defaced. By the kindly courtesy of Miss Austin and her brother Captain Geoffry Austin I have been permitted to reproduce, for *Archæologia Cantiana*, some of the drawings made by their father, and also a drawing and a photograph made by their late brother Captain George Austin.

## MURAL PAINTINGS IN THE "CORONA" OR "BECKET'S CROWN."

On the interior, the circular building called "Becket's Crown" has its outer, or eastern, wall divided into seven compartments. Five of these contain windows; two others at the western portion of the "corona" are now blank walls, one on the north and the other on the south of the arch of entrance from the main building. In each of these compartments the wall, now blank, was formerly decorated with frescoes, which Mr. George Austin's sketches enable us to illustrate.

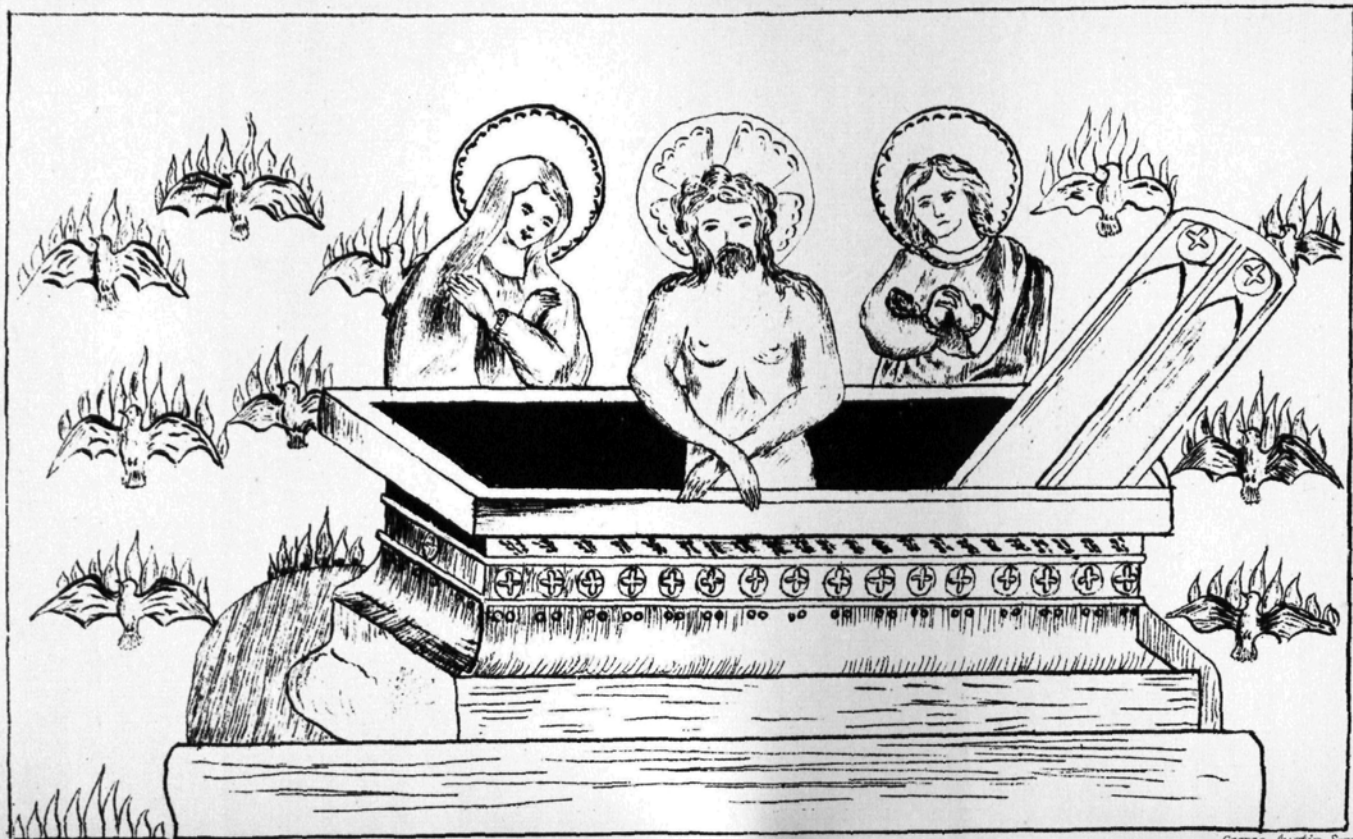
Edward Wedlake Brayley published, in 1808, his *Beauties of England and Wales*. In vol. viii., on p. 850, he says, of the *Corona*, "The walls have been ornamented with paintings of which the legends of St. Christopher and St. George are yet visible; and beneath the latter has been a repre-



George Austin, Senior.

C.F. KELL, PHOTO-PROCESS, 8 FURNIAL ST. HOLBORN E.C.

ST. GEORGE. (FROM CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL).  
FROM A PAINTING FORMERLY EXISTING ON THE SOUTH WEST WALL OF THE CORONA.



G. F. KELL, PHOTO-LITHO. & FURNIVAL ST HOLBORN, E. C.

### THE RESURRECTION

A FRESCO FORMERLY EXISTING UPON THE SOUTH WEST WALL OF THE CORONA IN CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL,  
BELOW A REPRESENTATION OF ST GEORGE & THE DRAGON.

*George Austin, Scr.*



sentation of the Saviour rising from his sepulchre." Both the figure of St. George and the picture of our Lord's Resurrection were sketched, in colour, by Mr. George Austin, senior, and by the courtesy of his surviving children they are here reproduced, but without colour. These mural decorations adorned the southern compartment at the west side of the "corona." Upon the representation of the Resurrection (copied for us from Mr. Austin's drawing, by Miss Mercy Beauchamp) are seen, diapering the background, small figures of Phoenixes rising from the flames—symbols of the Resurrection. These symbols have been alluded to by the Rev. J. Dart, in his *History of the Cathedral Church of Canterbury* (published in 1726), on p. 33. He says, "One thing before I leave this place [Becket's crown] is worthy of notice, that the walls are painted with Phoenixes rising from the flames; which device, whether it relates to the glory Becket received from his troubles and murder, and not rather to the magnificent rebuilding of this church, after it was consumed by fire, I know not." Those who examine critically the representation of St. George and the Dragon, will not fail to observe that in the distance, the Princess who leads a lamb by a cord, wears the mitre head-dress which was in fashion during the middle of the fifteenth century. This head-dress appears upon monumental brasses at Ash by Sandwich (A.D. 1440) and Herne (A.D. 1470). This mural decoration of the "corona" may therefore well be ascribed to that period, probably it was not executed before the reign of Henry VI., nor after that of Edward IV. The date A.D. 1475 has been assigned to this fresco in Mr. G. Smith's *Chronological History of Canterbury Cathedral*.

Brayley, in 1808, testifies that the legend of St. Christopher was then visible as well as that of St. George. Hasted in his *History of Kent*, vol. xi., p. 414, says that these "beautiful paintings in fresco are sadly gone to decay;" and he wrote eight or ten years earlier than Brayley. He describes the painting of St. Christopher\* carrying our Saviour over a river as standing over the tomb of Archbishop Pole, which

\* By a slip of the pen, Hasted calls him St. Chrysostom.

still remains on the north side of the corona, against a wall, now devoid of any ornament, which occupies the north-west compartment of that building. Gostling, writing in 1774, also states (p. 162) that "the paintings on the walls are sadly gone to decay, and little remains to be seen of them." The Rev. J. Dart inserts in his *History of the Cathedral Church of Canterbury*, at p. 170, James Cole's engraving of Cardinal Pole's tomb, and of the paintings above it. Oddly enough, this engraving shews only the upper portion of the figure of St. Christopher. The Saint's feet and legs do not appear in it. Yet Mr. Austin, who must have copied the fresco fully one hundred years after J. Cole had engraved it (in A.D. 1726), saw and depicted, not only the feet and legs of St. Christopher, but many figures of fishes swimming in the water around the feet of the Saint. It seems to me probable that the Elizabethan artist who painted upon the wall (above the tomb of Cardinal Pole) a representation of an altar-tomb over which flew two cherubs in a heavenly atmosphere permeated by rays of glory radiating from the Hebrew name Jehovah, must have encroached upon and hidden the lower part of the painting of St. Christopher.

On the plinth of the Elizabethan artist's pictured tomb, Cole's engraving shews a long fish, as if it were swimming in water. May it not be the fact that, during 160 years, the colour used by the Elizabethan artist had begun to decay, and thus in the year 1726 the original base of the picture of St. Christopher was becoming visible, through the later work by which it had been overlaid? Certainly the work of decay in the Elizabethan colouring had progressed very considerably before Mr. Austin made his sketch. Otherwise he could not have filled in all the details of fishes and water which appear in that sketch.

In the Elizabethan picture, as engraved by Cole for Mr. Dart's *History of the Cathedral Church*, above the Divine name in its Hebrew characters we read the text, "*Beati mortui qui in Domino moriuntur.*" These words of the Vulgate version of the Bible run in a straight line, at about the level of the waist of St. Christopher in the ancient fresco, of the fifteenth century. In the Elizabethan picture painted after the



George Austin, Sen. (died in 1848)

C. F. NELL, PHOTO PROCESSOR, 6, FURNIVAL ST. HO. BORN. E.C.

**ST CHRISTOPHER.**

FORMERLY ON THE NORTH WEST WALL OF THE CORONO IN CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL.

death of Cardinal Pole, we see a ceiled room, the ceiling whereof is divided into many rectangular panels with a rose in the centre of each panel. From the centre of the ceiling hangs a light burning within a glass lantern. In the wall of the room are two rectangular windows, each glazed with fifteen rectangular panes. Beneath the hanging lamp, within a roundel supported, in mid air, by two cherubs,\* is Cardinal Pole's symbol or badge and his motto:—a globe, around which is coiled a serpent on the head of which a dove is perched, around the whole, as a roundel, is the motto, *Estote prudentes sicuti serpentes et simplices sicut columbæ*.\* At each end of the room, as in a doorway, stands a figure (perhaps female). One of these figures supports a kite-shaped shield bearing the arms of the See of Canterbury; the other bears a similar shield on which appear the eight quarterings† of Cardinal Pole's family coat. This (easternmost) figure swings forward some object which I cannot clearly describe.

In what year these paintings, descriptive of Cardinal Pole's burial here, were obliterated, we cannot ascertain exactly—but I am inclined to believe that they had disappeared probably before 1840, certainly before 1863. It is interesting to learn that in 1863 Cardinal Wiseman drove over to Canterbury from Broadstairs where he was staying, after a severe illness, and that on the following day he wrote to Monsignor Manning (later created Cardinal), "I was able to perambulate the Cathedral and venerate its holy places, unknown and unsuspected. I leaned for rest against Cardinal Pole's tomb, the first Cardinal who has entered that Cathedral since his remains were borne to their resting place."‡ Over the apex of the central arch by which one enters the *Corona* we can still see the name "*S. Maria*."

#### FRESCO REPRESENTING THE LEGEND OF ST. EUSTACE.

The Legends of St. Hubert and St. Eustace are both based upon the strange story of a hunter pursuing the chase

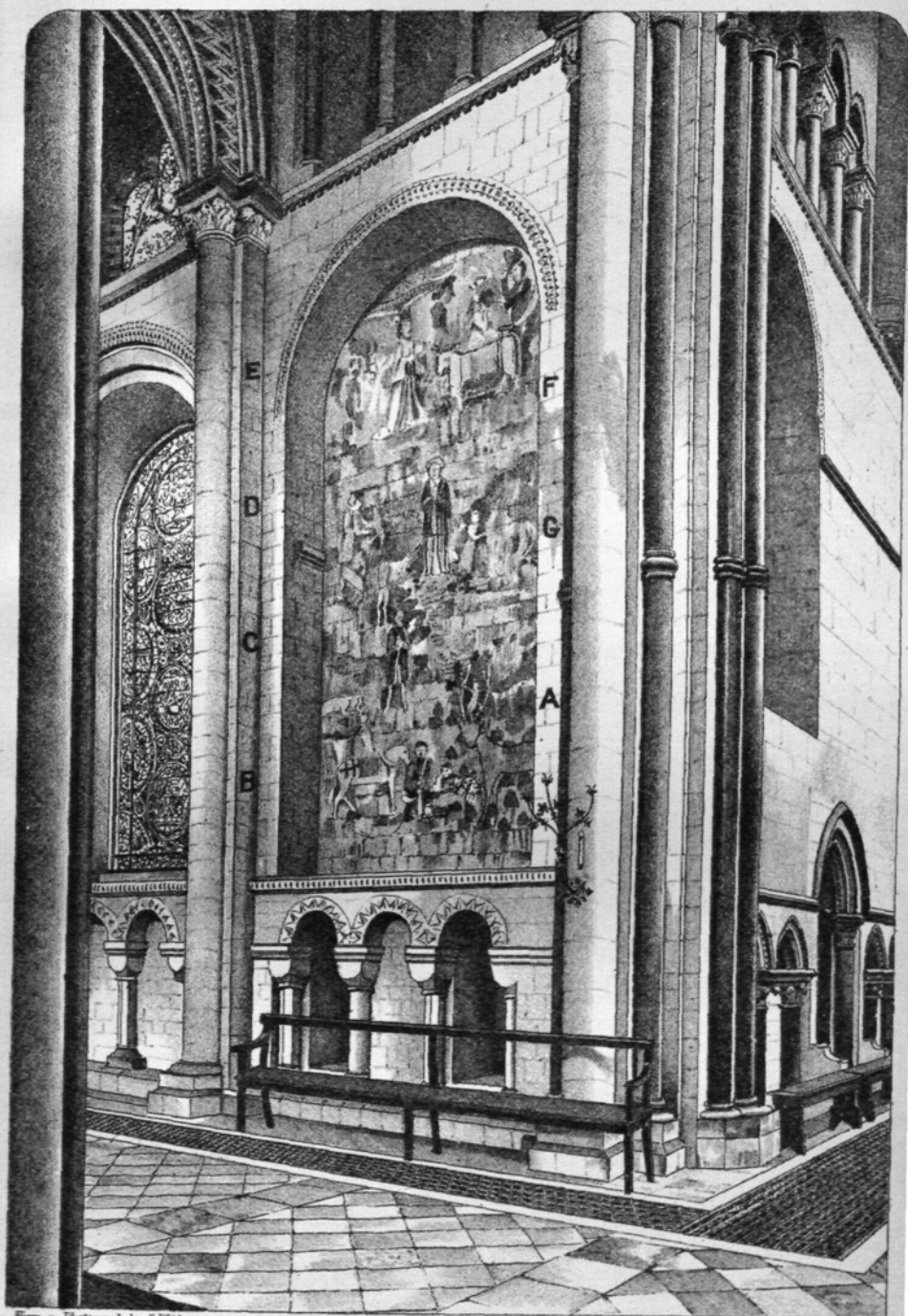
\* Hasted, xi., 414, describes this as "two cherubims holding a cardinal's hat."

† Clarence, Pole, Nevil, Beauchamp, Warwick, Montague, Mounthermer, Clare, and Le Despencer, quarterly.

‡ Purcell's *Life of Cardinal Manning*, vol. i., p. 690.

on a Holy Day or on a day in Holy Week. During the chase he encounters a milk-white stag, which flies to a small rocky mount in the forest, and when the hunter looks up at him, at once, he sees between the horns of the stag a cross of radiant light, upon which hangs a figure of Christ crucified, who by speaking to the hunter converts him, so that he cries, "Lord, I believe." This portion of both legends is represented at the base of the fresco, at the eastern end of the north aisle of the Choir of Canterbury Cathedral, close to the junction of that aisle with the north-eastern transept. The fresco has been purposely obliterated, probably at the time of the Reformation, but the stag with a crucifix between its horns is still visible (beside and beneath the point marked *A* in the illustration). The stag stands in a forest of small trees which the artist has drawn in such a way as to remind us of the trees in a child's toy "Noah's ark." The white horse of the hunter, duly caparisoned, can be discerned near a horizontal line which might be drawn through the point marked *B*. The hunter has dismounted, and is seen kneeling in front of the horse's head, in the centre of the fresco's base. At his feet are dogs. The shoes of the horse are not affixed by means of nails. This portion of the legend is common both to St. Hubert's story and to that of St. Eustace, and it seems probable that the artist who executed this fresco was not aware that there was a second legend with similar incidents. Mrs. Jameson, in her *Sacred and Legendary Art*, p. 467, says: "The conversion of St. Eustace is only distinguished from the legend of St. Hubert by the classical or warrior costume." St. Eustace was a Roman soldier (captain of the Guards of the Emperor Trajan), who with his wife and two children were martyred in the reign of Hadrian, by being boiled in oil within a brazen bull. St. Hubert was a noble hunter in the forest of Ardennes, who subsequently became Bishop of Liège, and died in A.D. 727. He is the patron saint of dogs and of the chase. St. Eustace's legend is seldom seen depicted in English, French, or German works of art, but is more often a subject of Italian art.

In the Canterbury fresco, the figure of the hunter evi-



From a Photograph by G. Webber

C. F. KELL PHOTO. PROCESS B. FURNIVAL ST. HOLBORN E.C.

OBLITERATED FRESKO IN CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL  
"SHOWING THE LIFE OF ST. EUSTACE"





*George Austin, Senior.*

C.F. KELL. PHOTO. PROCESS. B. FURNIVAL ST HOLBORN E.C.

**MARTYRDOM OF ST EUSTACE, HIS WIFE AND TWO CHILDREN,  
IN A FURNACE OF OIL SHAPED LIKE AN OX.  
FROM A FRESCO IN THE NORTH AISLE OF THE CHOIR OF CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL.**

dently does not represent a Roman soldier. His small hunting horn of white metal (perhaps of silver) is clearly to be discerned hanging from his girdle. The figure is therefore more like that of Hubert than that of Eustace.

Nevertheless, at the apex of the fresco the martyrdom of St. Eustace is very graphically shewn. Not only is the brazen bull very prominent, but, in the drawing made, more than fifty years ago, by Mr. George Austin, senior, we observe the figures of St. Eustace and his wife and their two children within the brazen bull. Two attendants with ladles are pouring boiling oil upon the wife and on one of the children. Both Eustace and his wife are held in position by men with huge forks. Beneath the brazen ox a fire is burning, the flames of which are being fed with fresh logs by one attendant, while another fans the flames with wind blown from bellows exactly like the implement still in use for that purpose. The Emperor is depicted as sitting on a throne, watching the martyrdom. A jester, or court fool, is twisting himself between the feet of the Emperor to give, with his finger, a poke in the back to the bellows-blower. This incident and the figure of a monkey in the foreground were made out also by Dr. Sheppard and Mr. Neale when they examined the fresco in 1879.

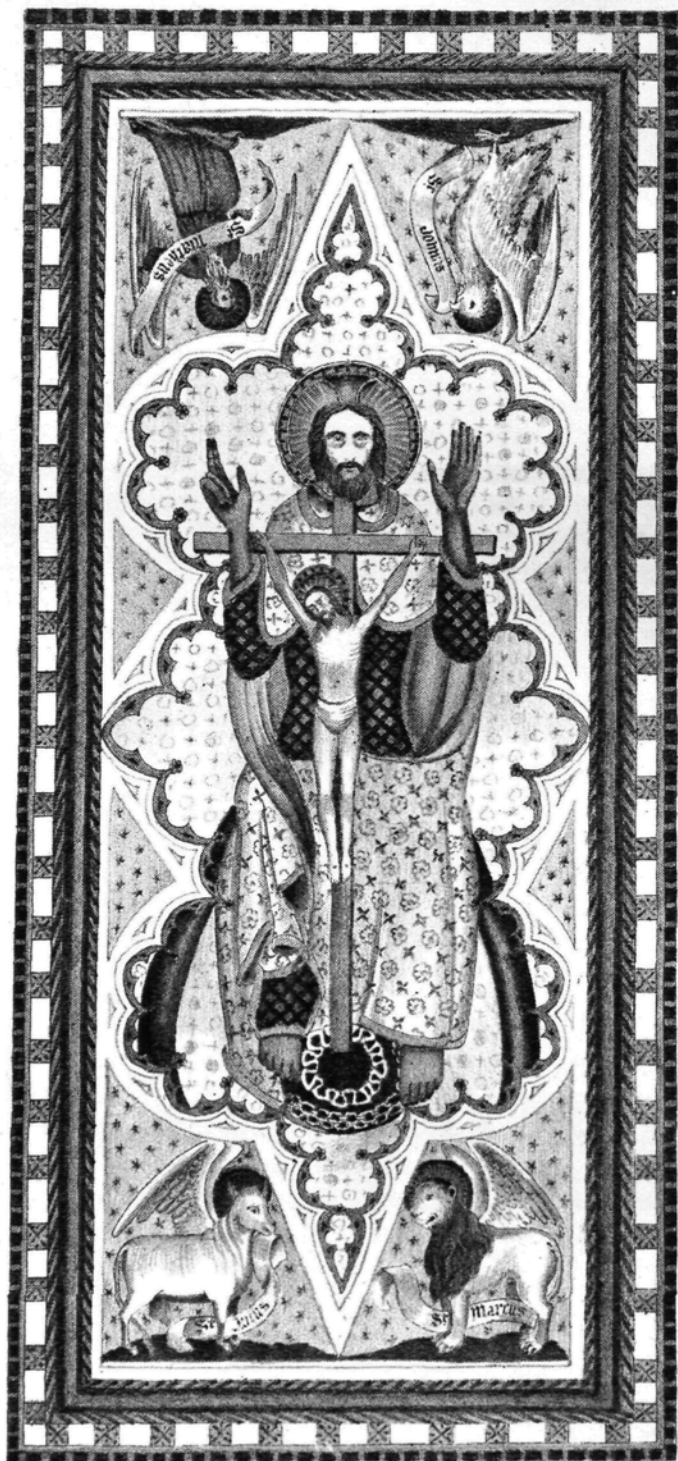
Above, in the apex of the fresco, we see angels carrying into heaven (in a sheet) the four souls of the martyrs. Above the figures of the souls, we see as an emblem of the Resurrection a Phoenix rising from flames. It is therefore quite certain that the artist intended to depict the Legend of St. Eustace, not that of St. Hubert. His knowledge of the special points of distinction between the two legends was evidently small, if any.

Throughout the length of the obliterated fresco traces of a swollen river, or stream of water, are still clearly seen. This feature belongs solely to the Legend of St. Eustace, which represents that his wife was carried off by pirates, and that when upon a journey with his two sons he had to cross a swollen river, carrying over a child to one bank while leaving the other alone upon the opposite bank. When in midstream, on his return to fetch the second child, he

sees both carried off by wild beasts ;—a wolf seizes one, and a lion the other. The children however are, in some way, rescued ; and the wife survives to meet Eustace and her sons about fifteen years later. When the four are happily reunited the Emperor Hadrian requires them to offer incense on the altar of some heathen deity. Their refusal to comply causes them to be condemned to death in the ox-shaped brazen cauldron.

On the obliterated fresco we can still discern the kneeling figure of St. Eustace at *A*. The white hose on the legs of the kneeling figure are clearly seen—the face is turned to the east, and in our illustration it cannot be discerned. His two children are beside him, one on either hand. His wife also is with them. But these figures are not easily traced. On a horizontal line through the letter *G* we see the figure of Eustace standing, apparently in midstream. On his right hand are traces of a small ship of ancient form. The incidents of wild beasts carrying off the children were probably depicted one on the right and the other on the left of Eustace's figure in midstream, but the details cannot now be deciphered.

The arched space, upon which the fresco was painted, is round-headed, and was prepared by Prior Ernulf, between A.D. 1100 and 1135, for a window. When William of Sens rebuilt the choir in A.D. 1177 he left standing the outer walls which Ernulf had built ; but in order that their height might accord with that of his own work, he raised Ernulf's round arches to higher elevations. In our illustration of this obliterated fresco, we can see, a little lower than the point marked *D*, and somewhat towards the right hand thereof, the original western springing of the arch as erected by Ernulf. William of Sens raised it to a point just below that marked *E*—that is to say, he raised Ernulf's Norman arch through a vertical height as great as the distance between the points marked *D* and *E*. The date of this fresco cannot be accurately fixed, but I think we may well attribute it to a period *circa* 1450 to 1480. The date 1475 has been assigned to it with some degree of probability in Mr. G. Smith's *Chronological History of Canterbury Cathedral*, p. 188.



From a Photograph by George Austin Junr.

C. F. KELL, PHOTO. PROCESS. B. FURNIVAL ST. HOLBORN, E. C.

ANTHROPOMORPHIC REPRESENTATION OF THE 1ST & 2ND PERSONS  
OF THE BLESSED TRINITY  
ON THE CANOPY ABOVE THE TOMB OF EDWARD THE BLACK PRINCE.

The sides of the window-like recess have been painted, with parts of the story. On the western surface, we see horsemen and dogs; and, above them, we discern a monkey taking fruit off a tree.

On the eastern side, or jamb, we can discern, at base, a greyhound, similar to one that sits in front of the stag.

#### ANTHROPOMORPHIC REPRESENTATION OF TWO PERSONS OF THE HOLY TRINITY.

Upon a flat canopy, or tester, above the tomb of Edward the Black Prince, we can still discern a representation, much faded and defaced, of the First Person in the Blessed Trinity supporting a huge crucifix on which hangs the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. Our illustration is based upon a photograph taken by Captain George Austin (a son of Mr. George Austin, senior). The peculiarity of this painting is the lack of any appearance of the Dove which usually symbolizes the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity. At the four corners of the rectangular flat canopy are depicted the Evangelistic symbols. Those of St. Matthew and St. John appear above the head of the First Person of the Trinity; those of St. Mark and St. Luke at His feet. The right hand of the First Person is uplifted in the attitude of benediction; from His two wrists depend the arms of the long Latin cross on which hangs the dead Christ. The base of the cross stands in a circular hollow vessel (of green colour), the neck and base of which are shaped like frills or in the manner in which clouds are often conventionally represented. This vessel has been called the Holy Graal or San Gréal. From its position, it would receive any drops of the blood, of the Crucified Saviour, which trickled down the central limb of the cross. Some accounts of the Holy Graal describe it as a miraculous chalice made of a single precious stone, said to be an emerald. The stories of the adventures of the Knights of the Round Table, in their search for the Holy Vessel (san gréal), are well known. This introduction of the San Gréal into an anthropomorphic representation of the several Persons of the Holy Trinity is unusual. Upon

the Kentish monumental brasses which shew such representation of the Trinity we do not find this vessel. On the older brasses at Faversham (A.D. 1414) and Cobham (1405 and 1407) the foot of the cross rests on the ground. Upon two late brasses, one at Goodnestone of A.D. 1507, and one at Cobham (A.D. 1506), the cross stands upon a globe. In the mural painting which was discovered in 1893 within the north transept of the Church of Boughton Aluph I am inclined to believe that there is a rough suggestion of the *san gréal* at the foot of the cross—but from defacement we could not at first trace the connection of the cross-foot with the curious vessel which is seen beneath it.

In Cheriton Church, an anthropomorphic picture of the Blessed Trinity is found in coloured glass at the apex of the east window of the north aisle. There is another such picture in the tracery of a coloured glass window in the north side of the Church of Trottescliffe, near Maidstone. Upon Cardinal Pole's Archiepiscopal Seal\* there is a similar picture of the Holy Trinity, but the foot of the cross rests on the ground, and there is no suggestion of the *san gréal*. The date of the painting which we here reproduce is fixed by that of the death of the Black Prince in 1376. We may well believe that this painting on the wooden canopy was executed before the end of the following year 1377. Probably, for many, its chief interest will be found in its representation of the emerald *san gréal*. The anthropomorphic method of representing the Holy Trinity was much used during the fifteenth century. Archbishop Bourghchier, who died in 1486, bequeathed, by his will, to the Prior and Chapter of Christ Church, Canterbury, such an "image of the Holy Trinity," made "of pure gold."

#### A PAINTING ON WOOD, OF THE MURDER OF BECKET.

At the foot of the tomb of King Henry IV. (ob. 1413) and his Queen, Joane of Navarre (ob. 1437), stands a vertical screen of wood, upon which was depicted a scene which

\* Vide *Archæologia Cantiana*, III., 141.





George Austin Jan. 1853.

C. F. KELL, PHOTO-PROCESS, 6, FURNIVAL ST. HOLBORN, E.C.

**MURDER OF ARCHBISHOP THOMAS BECKET.**  
FROM A SKETCH AT THE HEAD OF THE TOMB OF KING HENRY IV.

purports to be the murder of Archbishop Thomas Becket. The paint and gilding have become so defaced that at present it is difficult to make out any subject whatever. Forty-three years ago Captain George Austin, junior, made a careful sketch of this panel-painting, and from that sketch we have been permitted to reproduce the annexed illustration. The artist's idea is purely an imaginary one. He represents the Archbishop as standing in front or westward of a small altar, which is elevated upon three steps. Becket stands (or kneels?) upon the uppermost step; and south of the primate stands a knight (Fitzurse?) who with his sword held in a vertical position is as it were digging the brains out of the wounded head of his victim, whose tonsured corona (cut off) is lying upon the second step, at the Archbishop's feet. Blood is seen upon the primate's fringe of hair, and upon his robe, and a pool of blood lies on the edge of the top step. A second knight, probably Le Breton (standing partly on the second and partly on the top step) has just made a downward stroke, with his sword, upon the Archbishop's head; this knight bears on his surcoat as armorial charges three bears' heads coupéd and muzzled. In front on the lowest step stands a third knight (probably Tracy) advancing to the second step, and aiming, with his sword, a blow at the victim's head. His shield and his surcoat bear armorials which may be described as barry of 5. The fourth knight stands on the lowest step with his back to Archbishop Becket. He is drawing his sword or restoring it to its sheath. His armorials "*azure semée of fleurs de lis or, a fret of the last,*" shew that he represents Hugh de Morville. This is the only case in which the armorial bearings in this picture are correctly given. Behind or east of the little altar stands Grim the Archbishop's chaplain holding in his left hand the primate's cross, with the long staff of which he strives to ward off the knights' swords from Becket's head. The whole picture is the work of imagination, not the accurate portrayal of any one incident. In the actual process of the murder the first blow of Tracy's sword almost severed Grim's arm, before it reached the Archbishop's head and cut off the tonsured part of his crown. Yet, in this

picture, Grim appears without sign of any wound. In the foreground we see the barry shield of one of the murderers (probably intended for Tracy). Between his left knee and the point of his shield is seen an object that is probably intended for the Archbishop's cap, which had been dashed off, by Fitzurse, before any wound was inflicted.

The whole background of the picture is powdered with estoiles or stars of six points, over which are diagonal lines of words in black-letter text. One line is formed of the word "*soverayn*" repeated again and again. The other line is composed of similar repetitions of the word *atemperance* (atempance), the letters *per* being represented by the letter *p* with a mark of contraction across the base of its downstroke. These words occur upon the edges, and upon the flat under-surface of the canopy over the effigies of King Henry IV. and his wife. *Soverayne* on the south edge, on her side; *atemperance* on the north edge above the King's body.

This panel-painting is inaccurate in so many points that it is merely a decorative object, of no historical value, as was pointed out long ago by Dean Stanley in his *Historical Memorials of Canterbury Cathedral*, second edition, p. 85.