

THE SYMBOLOGY OF ABOVE.

There is obviously a considerable amount of mediæval symbolism or picture writing in the Vignette depicting the martyrdom of St. Robert although at that date pure symbols were being wrenched to afford those decorative effects which are now conventional.

The Vignette is divided into four compartments and this division into four must have been premeditated as the number four represents the Divine essence which gives the soul its eternal nature and therefore tells us that the artist deals with the "passing" of St. Robert's soul.

The first compartment shows St. Robert re-born. The Well represents to Christians the Well of Life but in earlier days symbolised the Womb—Water being the mother of all.

The second compartment is almost entirely Solar as shown by the left-handed archer and the Sun with rays.

The archer directs and assists with his arrow the flight of the soul to the Sun—Solar motion being from left to right. The exaggerated rays of the Sun are to impress its life-giving power, for when without rays it is powerless, a bald old man whose vigour is as the setting sun conquered by night. The Tree of Life with its roots in the Pit in which lie the earthly remains of the dead body of Robert has its leaves reaching to heaven (the Sun) and is the means by which body and soul shall meet when the graves give up their dead.

The third compartment shows the means employed to guard the soul in its passing, evil spirits being driven off with Bell and Prayer.

The fourth compartment shows Robert's name sealed in the Lamb's Book of Life contained in a scroll.

The Robin, as a Rebus for Robert, confirms the opinion that these illustrations must be read symbolically.

The four animals at the foot of the MSS. can hardly be an artistic fancy as they include the rarely found symbol of the Panther standing on the orb of the world, and this must allude to Christ, Who, as symbolised by a Panther, from the first syllable of its name being Pan or All, and it represented all the world that Christ came to redeem. The collared Bear is a type of Satan bound and the other two beasts would represent unregenerate, animal-man outside the pale.

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