

THE COLLINGHAM RUNIC INSCRIPTION.

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES.

SIRS:—In accordance with your request, I have cut types for the runes in Professor Vietor's article, and would here add a few words as to the matter. Professor Vietor has written in a similar vein to the *Academy* (July 7, '96), and to me personally, enclosing a photograph of a rubbing of the stone.

In general, I would say that I very much regret that my words have impressed Professor Vietor unpleasantly, and I assure him that, far from intending to do anything that might give offense, I was quite unconscious of being in danger of doing so. I should judge this would be the last thing a student of runes would be tempted to do to one who makes such a contribution to runic studies as Professor Vietor has in his book. My remarks were added to my article long after it was written, and the necessities of printing did not permit me to give Professor Vietor's treatment of the subject such full consideration as I should have given it, if the note had been a part of the original MS. This is also the cause of the misprint to which he refers: the printer had set *p* for *þ* and when I corrected this in the proof, he put the new type in the wrong place.

I must plead guilty, too, to having only inferred that *æfter auswini* was due to Stephens' misreading Haigh's written *æftar answini*; for I did not feel like charging even Haigh with thinking *Oswin* could have been written with *au* in Old English.

It is also true that instead of saying "since seen by Stephens, Haigh, etc.," it would have been more accurate to say

"since Haigh, Eamonson, Denny, O'Callaghan, etc. saw it and Stephens studied the photographs and rubbings sent him by Denny and Eamonson."

Now that I have the photograph of the rubbing, I can much better understand and appreciate Professor Vietor's reading, and my only regret is that he did not publish the rubbing in his book by the side of the less successful photographs of the cross. It is evident that the stone is badly weathered; just how much of this has taken place in the last

quarter of a century we need not dispute about. That the inscription contained the name *Oswin* I now seriously doubt, but my doubts extend to other matters too. To judge only from the present condition of the stone as shown in Vietor's photographs, I should feel pretty sure about the following only: 1 \mathfrak{F} 3 4 5; 6 7 \mathfrak{S} 9 | \mathfrak{P} 12 etc. 4 is more likely to be \mathfrak{K} than anything else, the \mathfrak{M} is as distinct as anything in the photograph of the rubbing (Professor Vietor regards the right-hand upper stroke as accidental); 3 is probably | or \uparrow ; 6 \mathfrak{F} ; 7 \mathfrak{B} or \mathfrak{R} ; 9 \mathfrak{F} or \mathfrak{P} ; 12 | or the first bar of some other rune, it looks much like \mathfrak{B} (*Swiðberi[ht?]*); 1 and 5 are quite illegible, though we are doubtless justified in reading the word as some form of *æfter*. In attempting to find more in the inscription we can be guided only by the reports of earlier observers.

The remark that seems particularly to have offended Professor Vietor is that as to "the two distinct black strokes of the first rune on the right." Any one accustomed to study photographs will justify me in supposing these to have been made by the re-toucher's pencil; they look exactly so. But, of course, that does not imply any intention to deceive: a photograph frequently fails to "show up" all that can be seen in the original, and the best scholars have not hesitated to make more distinct by re-touching what they and those with them thought they saw in the original. From the photograph of the rubbing it is evident that the black strokes correspond to distinct cuts in the stone; but the way these appear in the photograph of the rubbing leads one to wonder how they are in the stone, and I hope Professor Vietor or one of his friends in England will take the trouble to observe whether they show the same amount of weathering that the rest of the inscription does. They (especially the lower one) look as though they were deeper and more sharply cut than the rest of the letter and of the inscription. Now that I have written this, I perceive that it might be misunderstood, but I am sure I can trust Professor Vietor not to suspect me again of insinuating anything unkind with reference to him.

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