

ART. VI.—*Case of Cuir-bouilli, from Uldale Church, Cumberland.* By ELLEN K. GOODWIN.

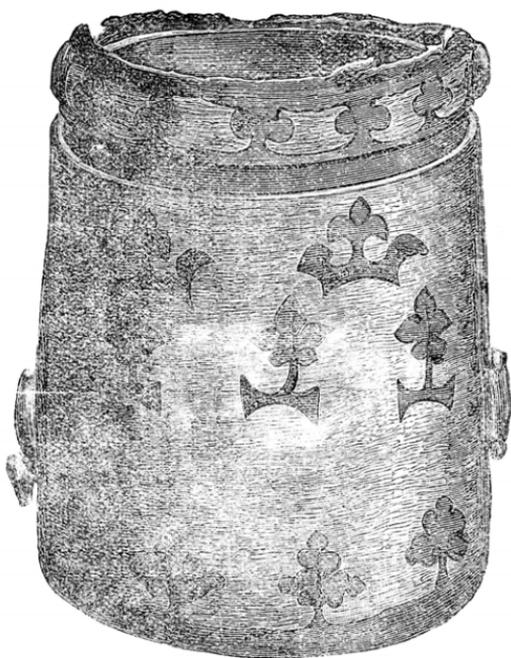
Exhibited at Kirkby Lonsdale, June 27th, 1883.

BISHOP NICOLSON, in his account of his primary Visitation of his Diocese, writes of Uldale—

“The Cup for y^e Communion is thin old and little, kept in a fair old leathern case bearing the date of 1571.”

During the compilation of “Old Church Plate in the Diocese of Carlisle,” enquiry was made for this case, but for some time without any success, and it was not until Christmas, 1882, that it was found by the Vicar in the vestry-cupboard doing duty as a vessel for black lead. It has since been carefully cleaned, and is found to be a case of *cuir-bouilli* in a good state of preservation. The top of the lid only is missing, but the rim remains. It is round in form, 7 inches high, and varying in diameter from $4\frac{1}{4}$ to $4\frac{3}{4}$ inches (in consequence of being a little bent out of shape). It is made entirely of leather, of which there are four thicknesses. The innermost of these is formed of two pieces, of which the edges just meet, and which seem to have been sewn or laced together. The outside coating is in one piece, and the join has been so carefully managed that it can only be detected upon close examination; each end has been gradually pared down and over-lapped, and the two parts stuck firmly together. The inside was probably lined with velvet, though nothing remains to shew that this was so. The outside is ornamented with patterns of crowns and leaves, formed by tooling the whole surface, except the desired pattern. For this purpose the case has been divided vertically by bands of plain (untooled) leather $1\frac{1}{8}$ inch wide into two parts, and, though the division is unequal (one side being much larger than the other), the artist has bestowed exactly the same amount of ornament
on

on each part, *e.g.*, two crowns fill the upper portion of the smaller side, and only two are figured on the larger, though there is more than room for a third, and the same applies



CASE OF CUIR-BOUILLI FROM ULDALE.

to the other decorations. The rim of the lid and the bottom of the case are ornamented with a row of leaves springing from a plain band. The surface leather in the two side bands has been twice pierced about two inches from the base to admit a thong of leather, which, after passing through similar holes in the rim of the lid, formed a handle. Portions of this thong and one of the original knots remain.

It is difficult to assign a precise date to this case; it is certainly older than 1571 (the date of the present cup), and may

may therefore have been made for the mediæval chalice. The form of the crown and other decorations point to the 14th century.

Two somewhat similar cases, but formed of a thin wooden frame covered with leather, are engraved and described in the *Archæological Journal*, Vol. xviii, p. 137, one of which is in the Public Record Office, and the other belongs to a church in Cornwall; they were used for containing valuable records or plate and date from Henry VI. and Henry VII.; another specimen, richly decorated, and still in use as a chalice case is to be found (I am told) at Cawston in Norfolk. So far as I know there is only one other example in this Diocese, which is at Whitbeck in Cumberland; it is about the same size, but not so carefully made as that at Uldale; it is formed entirely of leather; the exterior is formed of two very unequally sized pieces of leather sewn together, its ornamentation consists of eight vertical stripes roughly cross hatched, and varying in breadth from a quarter of an inch to an inch and a half; round the upper part of the side and the rim of the lid are small loops or arches; and on the top of the lid, which is flat, is an ornament rather like a star fish. It is complete with a lid: the handle consists of a strap of leather, which, after passing through holes in the rim of the lid, is roughly sewn on to the case. It dates probably from Henry VII.
