

ART. XVIII.—*On a Stone Coffin and Chalice found at St. Nicholas, Carlisle.* By HENRY BARNES, M.D., LL.D., F.R.S.E.

Read at Conishead, June 29th, 1905.

WHEN enquiring into the history of the sculptured stone trough described in the last volume of these *Transactions* (vol. v., n.s., p. 202), which had been entered by the late Chancellor Ferguson in the catalogue of the Tullie House Museum as "391, Stone Coffin, Roman, from near Carlisle," I directed some attention to the practice of burial in stone coffins, and endeavoured to trace the history of such coffins as had been found in the district.

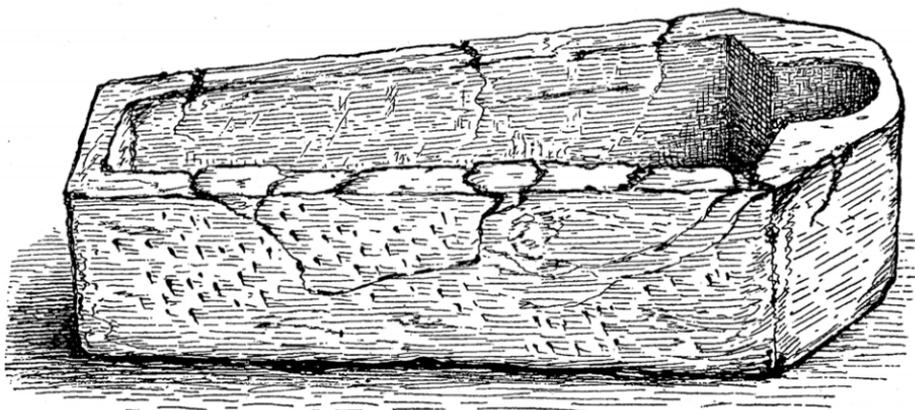
Of local stone coffins there are several of interest. In 1829, when a new bridge was being made across the Petterill near Harraby Hill, a deep cutting was made on the east side of Gallows Hill, as it was locally called, and in the course of the excavations a leaden coffin was discovered (*Carlisle Patriot*, July 4th, 1829). The leaden coffin was broken by the weight into three or four pieces. The contents were lost in the fall, and no vestige remained but a small part of a skull and some hair of a reddish colour. The length of the coffin was about 3 feet 7 inches, the height 22 inches, and the width 22 inches. In the report of this discovery published in the local paper at the time, it is suggested that as the length of the coffin could not contain the remains of a person of ordinary size, and as Gallows Hill was the place of public execution in former times, it is probable that the person had first been executed and then quartered. A few days later a stone coffin was discovered near the same place. I can find no further trace of these coffins. Mr. George Dawson tells

me that some years ago a stone coffin was discovered near Cobble Hall, on the side of the road leading from the Moorhouse Road to Grinsdale Bridge, and not far from the probable site of Kirksteads. He states that the late Chancellor Ferguson inspected the stone coffin, but I cannot find that he has left any description of it. Subsequently it was moved to Hosket Hill, and has, I am sorry to say, been broken up into fragments.

The most interesting local stone coffin which still remains to us is that mentioned in Jefferson's *History of Carlisle** (p. 148), as having been found near the site of the Leper Hospital at St. Nicholas, Carlisle. Through the kindness of Mrs. Isaac Cartmell, of St. Nicholas View, I have been able to trace the history of this coffin. The exact date when the coffin was dug up is not known. Jefferson says, in his *History*, published in 1838, that it was dug up "some years since." Mrs. Cartmell says that it was on the premises when her grandfather—Joseph Studholme, Esq.—first occupied them, which was before 1770; and the pewter chalice, which according to family tradition was found in the coffin, is still in her possession.† The coffin was used in her grandfather's time as a watering-trough for the horses and cattle. It was in the field, and was separated from the yard by a light paling. It was supplied with water from a pump, which had two leaden spouts—one over the coffin, and the other over a square trough in the yard. The lid of the coffin was a plain, oblong, thick, gray stone. It was used as a stone table. About five and twenty years ago the coffin was purchased by the late Mr. John Thomlinson from the railway company, and removed to his residence at Englethwaite, near Cotehill, and it is still there. I visited

* *The History and Antiquities of Carlisle*, published by Samuel Jefferson, 1838.

† It will be satisfaction to antiquaries to know that since this was written Mrs. Cartmell has very kindly presented this interesting relic to the Tullie House Museum.



STONE COFFIN AND LID AT ENGLETHWAITE.

Englethwaite recently, and through the kindness of Miss Nairn, the present owner, I had the opportunity of making a careful examination of the coffin and the lid.* The coffin has been broken, but has been roughly repaired. It is of red sandstone, similar to that which is found on the Gelt, a few miles east of Carlisle. It is 78 inches long, 27 inches across the widest part, 18 inches across the narrowest part, and $16\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep. The width of the inside is $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches at the head, 19 inches at the shoulder, and 13 inches at the feet. The depth of the interior of the coffin is 11 inches. There is a deep furrow running down the middle from the shoulders, terminating in a hole in the bottom of the coffin. The lid is of grey sandstone, but I am assured it may have come from the same quarry. It is 77 inches long, 21 inches wide at the top end, 16 inches at the bottom, and about 6 inches in thickness. On its upper surface it has bevelled edges all round. There is no carving on the coffin, but there are a few linear chisel marks on the lid. I cannot make out any inscription. Mr. Linnæus E. Hope has kindly made the sketches which are here submitted. They are not drawn to scale. It will be seen that the measurements of the lid and the coffin do not correspond, and it is possible it may have belonged to some other coffin, but I can find no record of any other coffin having been found in the district.

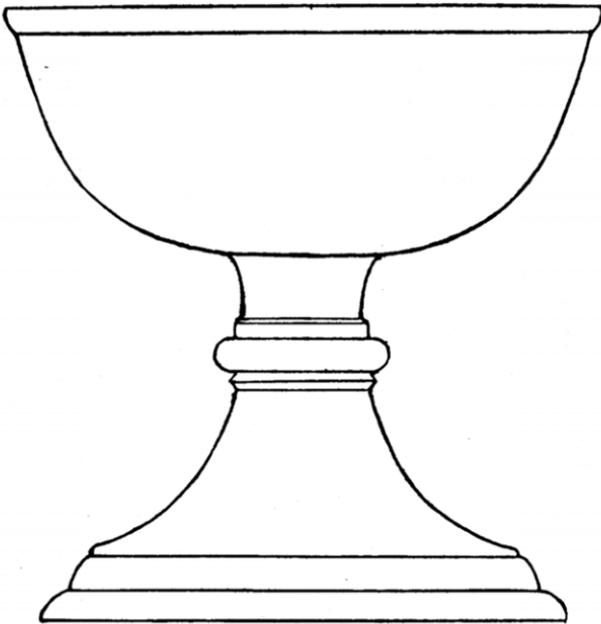
The chalice said to have been found in the coffin is of pewter; the interior of the bowl bears traces of having been silver-plated. It has unfortunately become broken. It has been frequently exhibited, and it is briefly referred to in a footnote, p. 234, of "The Old Church Plate in the Diocese of Carlisle." Through the kindness of Mr. Joseph Cartmell, a member of this Society, I have had a drawing made representing the chalice restored. The height of

* Miss Nairn has since presented these interesting relics to the Tullie House Museum, and they have been placed in the mediæval room.

the chalice has been $4\frac{3}{4}$ inches, the diameter of the top $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and of the foot 4 inches. It belongs to the early type of pre-Reformation chalices, and closely resembles some of the earliest known chalices which have been found in the tombs of the ecclesiastics. A few have been found in the tombs of bishops and priests of the eleventh and following century.* In a paper by Mr. M. H. Bloxam published in the *Archæological Journal*, vol. xxxviii., p. 109, it is stated that "by the constitutions of William de Blois, Bishop of Worcester, 1229, two chalices were required for every church, one of silver to be used at mass, the other unconsecrated and made of tin, with which the priest was to be buried." Occasionally a chalice of more precious metal was deposited, but such as have been found have usually been of pewter.

In describing the form of pre-Reformation chalice, Mr. Octavius Morgan says:—"The chalice consists of three parts—the cup or bowl, the stem which in its middle swelled into a bulb called the knop; and the foot. The bowl itself was usually quite plain in order that it might be more easily kept pure and clean. The stem, knop and foot were ornamented with enamels or chased work, representing the emblems of the Passion or other sacred subjects." Chalices of this period may be broadly classified into three types—the Norman, the Gothic, and the Tudor; and although these are chronologically as well as in point of fashion distinct, the first type corresponds with the late Romanesque or Norman epoch of architecture, the Gothic covers almost exactly the Perpendicular period, and the third coincides with the reign of Henry VIII.

* Mr. Collingwood has brought under my notice a paper read before the Society of Antiquaries by Mr. Reginald A. Smith, F.S.A., on February 18th, 1904, in which he describes a silver chalice found at Trehiddle, Cornwall, and now in the British Museum. The chalice was found in 1774 about seventeen feet below the surface, covered by a slate, in a heap of loose stones. It contained gold and silver objects, and coins of dates before 875. The ornament of the objects dates about the ninth century. The chalice seems to be about the same period. It is about 5 inches high, $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter. In shape it resembles the St. Nicholas chalice.



CHALICE FOUND IN THE STONE COFFIN AT ST. NICHOLAS,
CARLISLE, RESTORED.

The first group includes chalices of the Norman type. The period is from 1170 to 1350. The chalice under consideration belongs to this period, and to the earlier part of it. There are two sub-divisions in this period. In the first the chalices seem to have been short and low, and the bowls wide and shallow, and the feet circular. Such chalices have been found at Chichester, Canterbury (1205), Berwick St. James (now in the British Museum), and Lincoln (1253). They all have a slight lip. Later examples are those at Lincoln (1279), Bishop Gravesend; Salisbury (1279), Bishop Longespée; Lincoln (1279), Bishop Sutton; Exeter (1307), Bishop Bilton; Hereford (1316), Bishop Swinfield. In the second sub-division of this type the chalices were taller, and assumed a distinctly conical type. They belonged to the early fourteenth century. An example was found in the tomb of Archbishop Melton, York, 1340.

The Gothic type of chalices was characterised by hexagonal feet. The period runs from 1350 to 1510. The bowls were conical at first, and then less so. Examples have been found at Hamstall Ridware, Staffordshire, and Goathland, Yorkshire. In the later part of this period the bowls were of the same conical shape, but the feet had toes. Examples have been found at West Drayton (1507) and Leominster (1510).

There are two divisions also in the Tudor type. The first has six lobed and flowing feet, and bowls often less conical as at C.C.C., Oxford. The second division had bowls nearly hemispherical and feet with flowing outline, as at Trinity College, Oxford.

The fact that the chalice and coffin which I have been describing were found near the site of the ancient hospital of St. Nicholas at Carlisle raises a strong presumption that the coffin contained the remains of some former master of the hospital. We know that the hospital had a very ancient foundation. In *Transactions*, o.s., vol. x., I have given some account of its early history, and the names of

some of its masters. It was founded and endowed for thirteen lepers; one master chaplain to reside, and sing mass at his discretion. There is nothing now to mark the hospital. Mrs. Cartmell tells me that there were some large blocks of stone in the field near the old buildings, which are now known as "Old St. Nicholas," but that these blocks were removed at the time the railway was made. At this time seven skeletons were found lying side by side; a number of broken pots, and some coins; but it is not known whether they were the remains of lepers or rebels. In the case of King Robert the Bruce, who is mentioned in the *Chronicle of Lanercost* as being a leper, the fact of his leprosy was attested by the condition of the bones of his skeleton when these were found some years ago in Dunfermline. The history of the discovery of these skeletons is worth further enquiry, but in a search of the local papers of the period no account has been found. Mrs. Cartmell also tells me that in the field above mentioned there was a well which had a great reputation, its water being considered a valuable remedy for sore legs, or sores on any part of the body. There was also a fish-pond in three divisions, separated by stone walls, with sluice doors between them, and different kinds of fish in them. The pond, which was regularly cleaned out, usually had water-lilies on its surface, and there were pollard willows at the edges and flowering rush growing on the stone walls. The fish-pond was filled up at the time the railway was made.

In connection with this chalice it may be of interest to members to recall the fact that the only known silver pre-Reformation chalice in the diocese hitherto described is the one at Old Hutton in Westmorland. It was discovered by Mrs. Ware in the course of examining the church plate of the Deanery of Kendal for publication in our *Transactions*. It is a remarkably beautiful mediæval chalice of the Gothic type, and belongs to about the middle of the fifteenth century. According to Cripps

(*Old English Plate*), excluding coffin chalices, there are only 33 pre-Reformation chalices known to exist; and of these two belong to the Norman type, twenty-one to the Gothic type, and ten to the Tudor type.

I have notes of three other coffin chalices which have been found in the diocese, and I hope in a subsequent paper to give some account of them; and if any others are known to exist, I shall be glad to hear of them.