

ART. V.—*The Rumney Cup*. By A. W. RUMNEY, M.A.  
 Read at Penrith, July 13th, 1911.

THIS cup is of silver gilt, and in its present form stands  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches in height, but originally was probably an inch lower; its diameter is  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches and its weight 24 ounces.

The maple base of the bowl, the scalloped metal fringe overlapping the same and the design of the foot, all point to its being a "mazer" or cup in common domestic use between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries, though according to the British Museum catalogue only some fifty are known to survive and few of these have feet at all. Indeed all the five in the British Museum are without feet and the only illustration Dr. Read, the keeper of its Mediaeval Room, was able to show me of a footed one is that mentioned in his note herewith. Unfortunately the specimen produced has suffered much from bad usage or lapse of time and still more from the well meant attempt at restoration by Thomas Rumney of Mellfell in 1800, when the typical spreading character of the mazer was completely lost and exchanged for the present deeper and more upright bowl. Possibly the original rim had already disappeared and the restorer (Blake) had nothing to go by.

The inscription on the upper flange runs as follows:—

This Cup, together with a couple of Silver Salts, was given by the Honourable Family of Howards of Greystoke, in the County of Cumberland, to the Ancient Family of Rumneys, formerly of Gowbarrow Hall, but now of Mellfell in said parish and county. Thomas Rumney, of the ninth generation since this Cup came into his Family, had it repaired and this Inscription put upon it. A.D. 1800.



THE RUMNEY CUP.

*Photo. by Mr. W. H. Robinson.*

TO FACE P, 76.

The following note has been kindly supplied by Dr. C. H. Read, president of the Society of Antiquaries:—

British Museum,  
8th July, 1911.

The Rumney cup reminds me of an ancient village church which has survived for four or five centuries and has undergone changes from time to time during its existence.

Originally the cup was the somewhat luxurious successor of the wooden drinking bowl that doubtless stood beside every man's platter in mediæval times. In order to make such a bowl more worthy of the wealthy merchant or burgher, a broad silver rim was added, and to enable it to serve in addition as an ornament to the table, a tall foot.

In the Rumney cup the tall foot survives, more or less in its integrity, but alas, the original rim has gone and has been replaced by another which has effectually changed the entire character of the cup. To understand how it looked originally we must go to Pembroke College, Cambridge, and see the "Foundress' Cup" (figured in *Illust. Catalogue of the Loan Collection of Plate exhibited in the Fitzwilliam Museum, 1895*. By J. E. Foster and T. D. Atkinson, pl. IV.).

This cup was given to the College by Dr. Richard Sokborn, who was elected a Fellow in 1470 and resigned in 1478. It is not unreasonable to assume that the cup was given between these two dates, and probably in or about 1470, and further that the cup was then new or of recent make.\*

The similarity between this and the Rumney cup is very great and there can be no reasonable doubt that they were both made about the same time. How far this date accords with the Rumney family story may be seen by Mr. Rumney's account.

In 1800 the new rim was added to the Rumney cup, and it is much to be regretted that the silversmith who made it was not

\* According to "Cantabrigia Depicta" (1811), Pembroke College was founded in 1343 by the Countess of Pembroke, who died considerably later, and "her cup is still preserved among the college plate. It is of silver, gilt; and is brought out on extraordinary occasions. It has this singular inscription round it—

"Sayn Denes y<sup>t</sup> es me dere for hes lof drink and mak gud cher.  
M.V. God help at ned.  
Saint Dionyse is my dear;  
Wherefore be merry and make good cheer."

A. W. R.

instructed to preserve the original outline, but instead made a rim twice as high as the original one and failed to maintain the original contour.

Inside the bowl is a raised medallion or "print" as it is called, within a moulded frame. Here again the silversmith has added his own work, an eagle displayed on a blue ground, in place of the original print, which may have been lost. But in my judgment the moulded frame of this medallion is the original one.

C. H. READ.

As to the history of the cup, it is limited to the afore-said inscription and tradition. Allowing the customary thirty years to a generation, the date of the gift would seem to be about 1530, at which time the Howards had not come into possession of Greystoke and its manors, in succession to the Dacres and Graystokes. Certainly the latter were still in possession at the date attributed to the cup by Dr. Read. It may be only a coincidence, but the device given on an old seal of a crusader of this family, illustrated in Hutchinson's *History of Cumberland*, is a spread eagle, though not so spread as this one.

It will be noticed, however, that Dr. Read thinks that this enamel could not be made at that date and it is possible that the restorer had his own ideas in copying the original. There is a family tradition that the cup changed hands as a kind of give-back either after a gaming transaction—which we may dismiss as improbable between a lord and his customary tenant—or after a lawsuit, in which Gowbarrow Hall and Old Church were lost by the Rumneys to the Howards. This lawsuit was, however, decided in or about 1695, or only 105 years before the restoration of the cup, so that nine generations could hardly have passed away. It is also an unlikely transaction between litigants.

The suit in itself was a peculiar one, and of interest to lawyers according to the briefs, which still survive in a tattered form. The Rumney of that day happened also to be bailiff of the manor and for some reason accepted



THE RUMNEY CUP : the "print."

*Photo. by Mr. W. H. Robinson.*

TO FACE P. 78.

at the hands of the lady of the manor a lease for years of the estate, which he already owned as a customary freehold estate. By thus doing he changed the tenure of his holding and at the termination of the lease found himself bereft of his ancient acres and had to betake himself to Mellfell, a property of secondary importance already in his possession which I inherited from my father this year.

The following is the quaint petition, which was of no avail :—

To the most noble Prince Henry Duke  
of Norfolk Earl Marshall of England.

The humble petition of William Rumney of Gowberry Hall in  
the County of Cumberland.

Sheweth That your petitioners ancestors have time beyond memory of man been servts to your noble ancestors and your noble family (to wit) Mr Anthony Rumney who served the Earle of Arundell in the time of his confinement in the tower, Edward Rumney, Oswald Rumney, William Rumney and Thomas Rumney who all were either servants or bayliffs of the Manor of Wethermeallock within the Barony of Greystocke and duly performed their said service and office And also held of your noble ancestors two tenements called Gowberry Hall and the Old Church within the sd manor in Tenant right by the payment of one pound six shillings and eight pence rent and an arbitrary fine at the death of the Lord and change of the Tenant by death or alienation.

That your petitioner and his ancestors have been admitted Tenants of the said premises time out of mind and have had a continued possession of a Tenant Right estate from Ancestors to heirs for above 100 years and that your petitioner and his father since the death of Willm his grandfather who died about 29 years ago have paid in fines to your Grace and noble ancestors upon death and . . . for the said premises above 170 [pounds ?] as will appear by several admittances ready to be produced to your grace.

That your Grace . . . . . upon payment of his fines to hold during . . . . . the admittance will appear . . . . .

That the Right Honble the Earle of Arundell your grace's son, having been informed that there had been some lease granted or made of the premises to Willm Rumney your petitioner's.

grandfather who was then Bayliffe to Anne Countess of Arundell which if such lease was taken it was done only to bring other Tenants in and the Tenants never submitting but continuing their Tenant Right Estates still the said Willm Rumney never held nor enjoyed the said premises under the said lease but always as a Tenant Right estate, caused an ejection to be brought against your petitioner and brought down a trial at Carlisle the last Assizes and had a verdict against your petitioner for the said premises notwithstanding your petitioner had been lately admitted Tenant by your Grace of wh trial the Reverend Dr Browne can inform your grace of the the hardship hereof against your petitioner And now your petitioner is likely to be thrown out of possession and totally ruined And it being all that he had in the world will be taken from him and must be forced to fly his country to get a poor living.

May it therefore please your noble Grace to look upon your poor petitioners misery and to consider his poor distressed and miserable condition and to move the Right Honble the Earl of Arundell to comiserate your petitioners case and condition and to admit him Tenant to the premises again upon some reasonable consideration or to grant him some other relief therein as to your Grace and Lordship's wisdom and judgement shall think fit And your petitioner shall ever pray &c.

It will be noticed that in this petition mention was made of an Anthony Rumney, an attendant of the Earl of Arundell in the Tower. Now this earl, who by his marriage with Anne Dacre acquired the Greystoke property, was incarcerated by Elizabeth in 1588 and died there in 1596, and it would seem to be not unlikely that the cup might then be given by the noble prisoner to his humble attendant; this would give something like twenty-two years to a generation if the inscription is to be taken as correct. The Watermillock registers have considerable imperfections, and it is not possible to make out a pedigree accurately and count up the generations, but the earliest Rumney mentioned in them was an Anthony, christened in 1581.\*

---

\* Son of an Oswald, who died in 1619, "Bailif of the To'nship who lived 95 years in gt honesty true dealing with all men and in love with his neighbours."

Anthony has always been a common name in the family, one being admitted to Gowbarrow and Old Church in the time of Edward IV., 1474. The great-granddaughter of George Romney, the artist, has come across the following letter in her researches :—

Sir Owyn Hopkin to Walsyngham.

The E of Arundel had made a choice of Edward Handlyn an Irishman to attend on him in the place of Anthony Rumneye.

I have made considerable search in the Jackson library amongst the books relating to the Howards, but can find no reference to any Rumney or to Gowbarrow Hall.

The silver salts mentioned as having accompanied the gift of the cup are said to have returned to Greystoke as a heriot, but Mr. H. C. Howard can give me no information about them.

In his will, dated 1662, William Rumney bequeathed to his son William “ the long table standing in the hall, and the ancient cupp, one silver salt, five silver spoones, and half of Sparket Milne.” The table is presumably the rough unwieldy article still at Mellfell, whose top is one solid plank 3 feet by 9 feet and 2 inches thick.