



R. KEENE, PHOTO.

AMPTON
DERBY.

MEDIEVAL PATEN AT SHIRLEY.

On a Medieval Paten at Shirley, Derbyshire.

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SOME time ago the question was brought before the Council of our Society of making a descriptive inventory of all the Church Plate in the county; but, for some reason or other, the project was not carried out, and it was not until the appearance, in 1882, of the valuable volume on the Church Plate in the Diocese of Carlisle, published by the Cumberland and Westmoreland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, that the matter was taken up again in earnest. A form of return has been issued to every parish in the county, and we are already able to say what plate about half the churches in Derbyshire possess. Numerous beautiful specimens of Elizabethan chalices, and other interesting examples of the silversmith's craft, have turned up; but, so far, only one piece of pre-Reformation plate. How this escaped the general confiscation of church plate in the reign of Edward VI., cannot be explained.

The article in question is a paten of silver now preserved at Shirley.

It is five inches in diameter, and, as may be seen from the illustration, is of the usual type, consisting of a circular plate with a narrow molded edge and plain brim, within which is sunk a circular depression, and this again has a six-lobed depression with central device. The spandrels are filled with the common rayed ornament, which has two lines. The central device has a

representation of the Vernicle, or face of our Lord, surrounded by a cruciform nimbus, and set in a glory of twelve rays. It is not enamelled, as in the Nettlecombe example.

There are two hall marks: (1) the maker's, a cross fleury in a shield; (2) the date letter, a double-cusped Q, being that for the year 1493-4.

Mr. Cripps writes:—"I am almost sure the letter on the Shirley paten is the double-cusped Q for 1493-4. Why there is no leopard's head I cannot say. It is usually present, but not always, on pieces of that date. We have now a number of patens of that exact period; indeed, the number is remarkable, and gives colour to the tradition that K. Henry VII. gave a paten to every church in England. I forget, for the moment, what this is based upon, but there are now several known of his reign."

The Shirley paten is in a remarkably good state of preservation, but the chalice to which it once belonged has disappeared, and been replaced by one of early seventeenth century date. It should be compared with a paten of very similar design at Hamsterley, Durham, engraved in Vol. XXXIX. of the *Archæological Journal*.

The paten, so named from its shape, *quia patet est et ampla*, was always used as a cover to the chalice, into whose bowl it fitted, so that the Shirley example must have belonged to a chalice almost identical in size with the Nettlecombe one, that is, 6 inches high and 3½ inches across the bowl.

The device of the Vernicle was no uncommon one. It occurs on the patens at both Nettlecombe and Hamsterley. Another common device, was a hand in the act of benediction, of which we have examples at Chichester, Hereford, and York. St. Paul's also possessed one, with the addition of stars impressed round the rim; another with a demi figure of the Saviour, and another with an image of the Majesty. At Lincoln, one had the coronation of our Lady, and another the *Agnus Dei* and the four Evangelists.

The accompanying plate has been executed by the Autotype Company, from a photograph by Mr. Keene, of Derby.