

SOME REMARKS ON A CASKET AT GOODRICH COURT.

IN the collection of the late Sir Samuel Meyrick, still preserved at Goodrich Court, is a small casket of silver-gilt, which formerly belonged to Mr. Astle, and afterwards to Mr. Douce. By the kind permission of Colonel Meyrick squeezes were taken from it a few months ago by Mr. A. Nesbitt, from which a remarkably good electrotpe in copper has been executed, that was exhibited by him at a recent meeting of the Institute.

The present gilding of the casket is modern, but there is no good reason to doubt that it was originally gilt. It is $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches long, $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch wide, and $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches high, and resembles a rectangular Gothic building, with a pitched roof, that forms the lid. On each slope of the lid are three quatrefoils; and in each quatrefoil, on one side, are the arms of England dimidiated with France semée, entire; and in each quatrefoil, on the other side, are the same arms with a plain label of 3 points over all. A woodcut of each coat is given below. The last-mentioned arms



are in *front*. The former must be those of some queen of England, who was a daughter of a king of France. There were only two queens of England answering this description before Edward III. quartered the arms of France in 1339 or 1340; namely, Margaret, the second queen of Edward I., and Isabella, the queen of Edward II. It will presently appear, that while the latter was queen, there was no one

who bore the other coat ; and, therefore, the arms without the label must be Queen Margaret's.

The other coat is probably, to some extent, incorrect as regards the label ; for no such arms, as England dimidiated with France, and a label over all, were borne by any one while either of these two princesses was Queen of England, unless it were by Isabella herself as the betrothed of Prince Edward while his father was living. This coat was once supposed to be that of Edmund Crouchback, Earl of Lancaster, brother of Edward I. He bore England with a label of France, having married for his second wife Queen Blanche, the widow of Henry I. of Navarre. Her father was Robert Count of Artois, whose arms were France with a label *gules* charged with castles *or*. But, beside that the label would not be correct, the earl would not have used either a dimidiated or an impaled coat ; and in fact he was dead before Margaret became Queen of England.

If we suppose the label to have been meant for two labels, or for parts of two labels, there was no one that bore such a coat while Isabella was queen ; but in that case it might possibly have been intended for the arms of Blanche herself after the death of her second husband, the Earl of Lancaster, in 1296 ; for she survived him, and did not die till 1302, which was three years after Queen Margaret's marriage. There are, however, considerable difficulties to be overcome in order to arrive satisfactorily at that conclusion. For the label is quite plain, and to all appearance but one and uncompounded ; whereas, for this Blanche the dexter part of the label ought to have been charged with fleurs-de-lis, and the sinister with castles ; and even granting that the space is too small for such charges, there should, and most likely would, have been some means resorted to in order to distinguish the two parts, and show that it was not a single label. It may be noticed too, that, as France, in these arms, is entire, the label for Artois ought not to have been dimidiated, but to have been entire also. It may be thought difficult to distinguish between France dimidiated and France entire, because the coat was *semée* ; but I think, if a few seals in which those arms are dimidiated be compared with the arms on this casket, any one will be soon satisfied that such is not the case. I need hardly mention, that instances of half of one coat being impaled with the entirety of

another about that date are not very rare.¹ Add to these considerations, that there is no reference to Navarre ; yet Blanche was Queen consort of Henry I. of Navarre for nearly four years, and was generally styled Queen of Navarre until her death, notwithstanding her second marriage. Since the coat in question occurs three times on the same side of this casket, the omission of Navarre could not have been for want of room. According to the heraldic usage of that age, her arms would most likely have been placed between Navarre on the dexter and Lancaster on the sinister. Should it be objected that Navarre was not on Crouchback's monument at Westminster, though Artois was, I grant it, and reply, that neither was the coat of Blanche herself there ; which would have been a dimidiation or impalement of Lancaster and Artois, most likely with Navarre introduced in some manner. The coat of Artois on that monument had reference to her father to show the alliance, and not to herself. With Navarre Crouchback himself was unconnected. Therefore, there was no reason why Navarre should have appeared on his tomb, unless her arms had been there, and then only as part of them. I am thus brought to a conviction, that it is improbable that the arms in question on this casket should have been intended for those of Blanche Queen of Navarre and Countess of Lancaster.

If they were not meant for *her* arms, I think they *must* be those of Isabella, while she was the betrothed of Prince Edward, afterwards Edward II. ; for I can discover no other person to whom they can with any show of reason be attributed ; since they must have belonged to some princess of France who married, or was affianced to, an English Prince that bore a label as a mark of cadency, while either Margaret or Isabella was Queen of England. There was a usage, which those who have read Mrs. Green's Lives of the Princesses of England may recollect, of a Princess after her betrothal assuming the same title that she would have borne had she been actually married to her betrothed ; and there is no reason to doubt, that with the title she assumed the corresponding arms. Now had Isabella been married to Prince Edward in his father's lifetime, she would have borne England with a label *azure* dimidiated with France *semée*,

¹ One of the seals of Margaret, Countess of Artois, Blanche's sister-in-law, is a contemporaneous example, as appears by an engraving of it in Vredius, pl. 48.

either dimidiated also or entire. There was a treaty between Edward I. and Philip the Fair in 1299, by which it was agreed, not only that Edward should marry Philip's half-sister Margaret, but that Prince Edward should marry his daughter Isabella, who was then not quite seven years old. The betrothal of the Prince and Isabella did not take place till May 1303. Their marriage was deferred till January 1308, which was about six months after Prince Edward had succeeded to the throne of England. It is possible the label may have been designedly placed over both England and France, but that would, I conceive, have been anomalous ; for ladies' seals of corresponding date occur, in which the label is confined to the arms to which it properly belonged.² I am therefore inclined to believe, that the extension of it over France was an error of the artist ; and in this opinion I am confirmed by observing, that it appears to have been treated as an error ; for though that part of the label was not removed, the engraving of the arms of France is in each case carried through it. I think, therefore, we may upon the whole conclude, that the arms with the label are those of Isabella as the betrothed of Prince Edward between May 1303 and the death of Edward I. in July 1307 ; and if so, they are a coat which had long become unknown ; for I am not aware of any other example of her arms during that period being in existence or even recorded.

The form and size of the casket have been mentioned, and also the material, and that it was in all probability originally gilt. It has all the appearance of being of English workmanship. The arms are too slightly engraved to lead me to think they were ever enamelled. Its form may have been intended to represent a house, a chapel, a shrine, or a chasse. There is no saint, symbol, name, or other peculiarity to mark it as ecclesiastical, unless the form suffices for that purpose. Chrismatories are to be found of a similar shape : one such was discovered a few years ago in St. Martin's church, Canterbury ; and I have been informed of another, in which the three compartments for the different kinds of chrism or holy oil were marked with the letters used to distinguish them ;³ and I am told by Mr. A. Way, who

² As an example, it may be sufficient to mention the seal of Margaret, Countess of Artois, before noticed.

³ The chrisms or holy oils were of three

kinds : 1. The Chrisma properly so called, which was made of oil and balsam, and was used at the blessing of fonts, chalices, and patens, at the consecration of churches

had examined this casket before it was regilt, that there were then traces of two partitions, which divided it into three compartments, as if for the small vessels, probably of glass, that held the chrisms. This, therefore, may have been a chrismatory. If it were not that, it may have been a box for trinkets or the like, such as might have been a very suitable present from Queen Margaret to her niece, a child of ten or eleven years of age, and indeed more appropriate for her than for Isabella's grandmother, as Queen Blanche really was, having been the mother of Joan Queen of Philip the Fair. That it was a present from Queen Margaret is highly probable ; for the arms with the label being on the front, the *more* honourable place, would seem to indicate the donee, and those at the back the donor. Had it been a joint gift by those whose arms are upon it, the differenced coat would, no doubt, have been in the *less* honourable place. Therefore, whether ecclesiastical or not, I think we may safely assume this casket was presented by Queen Margaret to some one, and most likely to her niece Isabella on or soon after her betrothal ; and if it be ecclesiastical, it may have been intended to form part of the furniture of her chapel. We find, for example, a chrismatory in the Inventory of the effects of the Duke of Berry, in 1417, "un crespier d'argent, veré, a trois estuis pour mettre le saint cresse ;"⁴ and there was also one of silver gilt among the jewels, &c., of King Henry V.⁵

At any rate, whatever may have been its object, and whether a present or not, one thing seems morally certain, viz., that the date of it must be between September 1299, when Margaret married, or very shortly before, and January 1308, when Isabella became Queen of England ; and with this inference derived from the heraldry upon it, all, I think, who examine the electrotype, will agree that the design and workmanship accord. It is not often that an undated work of art can have the time of its execution so clearly ascertained.

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and altars, at baptisms and confirmations, and at the consecration of bishops ;
2. Oleum Catechumenorum, used also at baptisms and the consecration of churches and altars, and at the ordination of priests, and the coronation of sovereigns ;
3. Oleum Infirmorum for the extreme unction of the sick. See Supplementum Nicolai de Ausmo, voce Oleum, and

Decretales, Lib. 1, tit. xv. de sacra unctione. These different kinds were generally distinguished on the respective vessels containing them by the abbreviations CHR. CATH. and INFIR.

⁴ Laborde's Emaux du Louvre, Glosaire, p. 233.

⁵ Rot. Parl. IV. p. 225.