

CELTIC SPOONS.

By the VERY REV. CANON ROCK, D.D.

WHILST excavations, lately made in Rome and its neighbourhood, have brought to light spoons that have been lying buried, perhaps a thousand years, every now and then, very recently, odd chances have been finding for us in these islands other spoons of an older age, and fashioned after quite another form. In the recent number of the "*Bullettino di Archeologia Cristiana*" for November and December, A.D. 1868, its far-famed editor—an honorary member of our Institute—has sent forth, drawn up in his accustomed lucid and learned manner, an article entitled "*Cucchiari d'argento adorni di simboli e nomi Cristiani*," and along with it a plate on which are shown, figured in beautiful metalized colouring, several of them. In this paper the Cav. Giovanni De Rossi tells us that, besides other silver spoons which have been found at Porto—on the banks of the Tiber near Ostia,—nine others of the same metal have come to light during the last year (1868) in places about Rome: these he deems to be of the fifth century. The bowls are narrow, and drop about a quarter of an inch below the handle, which is long and tapers to almost a point; in fact, excepting the midriff in the bowls, they are quite like our precious coronation spoon spoken of at the end of this Memoir.

One of our Vice-Presidents, Mr. Albert Way, whom we all so highly esteem, and to whose untiring zeal the cause of British archaeology is so much beholden, has, with his usual judicious industry, brought together, figured and illustrated in the present volume of our Journal, not a few like appliances, though made after a type altogether different from the old Roman fashion.

Those wide but shallow Late Celtic spoons of bronze, with handles of the very shortest kind, and, in shape, quite like those horn scoops now used for household purposes, must have for us a deep historic value, thinking, as we do, that

they speak of two curious facts among the manners of the Celtic tribes who once lived in these islands. From the first of these two facts we learn the sort of food which was so common among them, as to be deemed by continental strangers to form the national dish of the Britons, the Scotel and Irish Celts.

A strong proof of this may be obtained where we least of all might have thought to look for it. That learned father of the Latin part of the Church, St. Jerom, was sometime wont to let off a spurt of wit at his literary antagonist.

During the early years of the fifth century, among the followers of our British philosopher, Morgan, who changed his Celtic name into its Greek equivalent, Pelagius, there was a certain Celestius, by birth an Irishman—one of a hot and hasty temper. Perhaps it may be needful here to say that of old “Scotus” and “Scotia” were the then respective appellations for “Irishman” and “Ireland.” While roaming over Christendom, this noisy Celt busied himself in spreading the heretical opinions of his more wary teacher Pelagius in upholding which he ran foul against St. Jerom, whose strong and unanswerable arguments against Pelagianism he seemed not to understand. To account for this dunder-headedness shown by Celestius in the controversy, the learned doctor of the church tells him that he crams himself overmuch with Irish porridge ;—“Nec intelligit (Celestius) Scotorum pultribus prægravatus” (S. Hieronimus in prophetam Hieremiam). Now, reader, just shadow forth to yourself this same Celestius and some friends seated at some meal with, in their midst, an earthenware pot having four handles, so that it could be easily drawn to his own side by any individual guest,—a pot, in fact, like the one found on Portland Isle, and lately figured in this Journal (vol. xxv., p. 50, *ante*),—and you will see at once that while these spoons, by their shallow wideness, answered their every meal’s purpose of cooling, at the will of him who had to sip from out of it, the portion he had ladled for himself from the seething mess, they, at the same moment, show us a passage of the every-day life of the Celts, whether living here, in Ireland, or on the western shores of Gaul.

Now for the second, and, as I look upon it, far more curious and important fact shown by these old spoons.

They almost always occur in pairs, and are occasionally

found at springs of water, or in rivers. Besides this circumstance, one, and only one of the two spoons, has bored through it a hole invariably in the same spot, just below the lip and about midway on its left-hand side, or, if I may be allowed to say so—presuming the holder of this spoon to stand looking to the north—this hole is found at its south quarter.

That such spoons could never have served, either in the Latin or any of the Oriental liturgies, for the distribution to the laity of the Holy Eucharist, is to my mind quite certain. All over the Church, up to about the tenth century, the people drank out of one of those so-called ministerial two-handled chalices (a glorious one of which, beautifully enamelled, has just been found in Ireland), as may be seen well shown upon that fine Greek embroidery upon the Imperial Dalmatic sent to the Roman Pontiff from Constantinople, and now kept in St. Peter's at the Vatican. About the tenth century, it would seem that the use of the long-handled spoon or "*labida*" was introduced among the Greeks; but in these western parts, for partaking of the chalice, were used gold, silver, or ivory reeds, about which I have spoken, in the "Church of Our Fathers" (t. i., pp. 161, &c.) For Eucharistic purposes, never, at any time, in the liturgy of this country, was employed any spoon, but a very small one with a deep bowl—just like our present salt-spoons—for spilling two or three drops of water before consecration into the chalice—a ritual practice yet followed by some among us in this country. The "*labida*" of the Greek liturgy is long as well as narrow in its bowl, so that it and its contents can be taken into the mouth with the utmost ease: the Celtic spoons are much too broad for the purpose. In no part of the Church would an appliance have been allowed in the service of distributing the Holy Eucharist, through which, as through that hole in one of the spoons, the merest atom of the sacred species might by any possibility have fallen on the ground. That same opening, moreover, instead of a help, would have become a hindrance to the ready drainage of the spoon before putting it by after service.

That these specimens of Celtic handicraft were, at one period or another, set aside by some of that people for the especial service of the Christian Church in some of her rites

seems beyond a doubt, from finding upon them, after they had been cast, certain emblems of Christianity scratched roughly. In the bowl of one we see the sign of the cross upon the handle of another three circles, the symbol of three distinct persons in the one same Godhead.

What was then the use meant for them—was it liturgical? if so, to what rite were they appropriated? I answer for giving the sacrament of Baptism—one for holding the oil of the Catechumens; the second, the one with the hole, for holding the oil of chrism, or, as we used to call it, “cream.” In support of this opinion, I wish to lay a heavy stress upon some facts belonging to these spoons. They are sometimes found close by some running water, or at a well, in couples and with a hole pierced at a particular place in one, and only one of the pair.

Even to this day, the rites for Baptism have much of symbolism—in the first ages of the Church they had much more about them. But, first of all, I must bring to the reader's mind a few passages in Holy Writ. While on their road from Egypt to the Land of Promise, the Israelites wandered forty years through the wilderness, which fact they were afterwards told to keep in remembrance by yearly holding the Feast of Tabernacles. In the new Law, our Lord was baptised by John in Jordan's waters running through a desert. At the beginning of Christianity, the Church never gave baptism to anybody, except in danger of death, but at the end of the Lenten forty days' fast—during which the Catechumens had undergone instruction—on Easter morning at day-dawn, and at Witsuntide.¹ Now, see how the living waters, flowing through the wilderness of fields and tabernacles in deserts were shown forth by the ceremonials followed among the Celts, at the Easter-tide baptism. By our own Beda—who copies the whole passage from an older writer, Constantius, in his life of St. Germanus, whom the Celts called Garmon,—we are told, while reciting what preceded the celebrated Alleluiatic victory won by the Celts, probably at Mold, in Flintshire, led on by this same Gaulish bishop against the invading Saxons and Picts:—“Aderant etiam

¹ “Whitsunday” is a most erroneous way of spelling. The reason given, that on Pentecost the Church's colour is white, is perfectly wrong; it is red or fire

colour, not white. The root of the word is *wit* or understanding. In the Promptorium Parvulorum it is written Whysson tyde.

Quadragesimae venerabiles dies, quos religiosiores reddebat praesentia sacerdotum, in tantum, ut quotidianis praedicationibus instituti certatim populi ad gratiam baptismatis convolarent; nam maxima exercitus multitudo undam lavacri salutaris expetiit, et ecclesia ad diem resurrectionis Dominicae frondibus contexta componitur atque in expeditione campestri instar civitatis aptatur.”²

This preference among the Celts for “living water” in the administration of baptism is further shown in a passage from the life of St. Columba, written by the Irish Adamnan:—“Cum Sanctus in sua conversaretur peregrinatione, infans ei per parentes ad baptizandum offertur iter agenti; et quia in vicinis aqua non inveniebatur locis, Sanctus, ad proximam declinans rupem, flexis genibus paulisper oravit, et post orationem surgens, ejusdem rupis frontem benedixit, de qua consequenter aqua abundanter ebulliens fluxit; in qua continuo infantem baptizavit.”³ Such passages show us that, whenever they could, the Celts in these islands used, instead of the still or, so to say, dead water kept about the house for ordinary purposes, the living waters of a stream or a spring, for baptism; hence these baptismal spoons are sometimes found in rivers or at springs, or by the side of some well-spring where they had been dropped and lost, perhaps even left on purpose under the guardianship of religion.

• As now, so then, two distinct anointings, each with a particular oil, took place at baptism: the first with olive oil, on the breast and between the shoulders, in the form of a cross, rubbed there by the right-hand thumb that had been dipped in the consecrated oil held in that spoon without a hole; while yet standing in the water under which the catechumen had been three times plunged; the second and principal anointing was given to this neophyte within the tabernacle woven for the ceremony, of fresh and budding boughs. The oil here used was olive, but plentifully mingled with the costly and sweet-smelling balsam or balm of Gilead. Among the Celtic people this second oil was not, like the first, merely rubbed as now, but actually poured out upon the crown of the head where it was made to trickle in the shape of a cross. To do this well and accurately, so as not to spill it where it ought not to fall, the second or pierced spoon

² Hist. Ecc. lib. i. c. xx. ed. Stevenson, p. 44.

³ Vita S. Columbæ, ed. W. Reeves, p. 110.

was employed. Holding this in his right hand, the celebrant let flow slowly through the small hole little drops of the chrism, so that it might take the shape of a cross upon the neophyte's head; and while this anointing was meant to imply the teaching of St. John (1 Epist. c. ii., v. 20), it took for itself the word *χρῖσμα*, used by the Apostle. The very earliest hitherto known forms for baptism are those that were used in Gaul; to whose people our Celts were alike in their heathenism then, as well as afterwards their Christian, belief and ceremonial. Now, in those "ordines," as they were called, the rubric directs this chrism to be poured out precisely after the same way in which the same chrism is directed, by a rubric in the sacramentary of St. Gregory the Great, to be poured out upon the water in the font, as it is hallowed for baptism, on Holy Saturday:—"Inde accipiens vas aureum cum chrismate, fundit chrisma in fonte."⁴ And in our own Anglo-Saxon service for the coronation of a king, at which the bishop poured out from a horn the oil upon the prince's head:—"Hic verget oleum cum cornu super capud ipsius," and not to be, as at present, rubbed, but poured out upon the head, as we see from the words "infusio," in the old Gallican form given in the codex edited by Mabillon, "*Liturgia Gallicana*" (p. 364), and "suffundis," in a codex published by the same great Benedictine monk (p. 325, *Museum Italicum*, t. i.). Though upheld by no internal authority, but an idea of his own, Mabillon chose to call this missal the "*Sacramentarium Gallicanum*." I think I could show, were this the place, that the venerable codex found at Bobbio, in the ancient Lombardy, is one of the very missals brought with him by the Irish Columbanus from Ireland itself to Bobbio, which monastery that great saint founded, or, at least, is the copy of such a liturgical codex, and therefore ought to be designated not sacramentarium "*Gallicanum*," but "*Hibernicanum*." At all events, this "infusion" or "suffusion" of the chrism, which was performed with the perforated spoon, is remarkably illustrated by a passage in the life of the famous St. Brigid of Kildare, in which her biographer—very likely St. Ultan, A.D. 656—tells us: "*Magus dormiens vidit duos clericos vestibibus albis indutos effundere oleum super caput puellae, ordinem baptismi complentes consueto more.*"

⁴ *Sancti Gregorii Liber Sacramentorum*, ed. Menardo, p. 75. Parisiis, A.D., 1642.

⁵ Egbert's Pontifical, p. 101.

Unus autem ex illis dixit: Hanc virginem vocate Brigidam.”⁶ The importance given among Celts to this unction, whether at baptism or confirmation, may be furthermore seen in the words of St. Patrick in his letter to the British prince, Coroticus, to whom that apostle of the Irish says, while upbraiding his cruelty: “Postera die qua chrismati neophyti in veste candida,” &c.⁷

From whatever side, whether domestic or ritual, we look at them, these spoons are highly curious and valuable. Whatever be the real age of the objects before us—they may be very old, and in after Christian days set apart for holy use and marked with the sign of the cross—no doubt, in them we behold the shape after which the oldest Celts fashioned this article of household furniture, and in Christian times, for ritual requirements. The cross on them would take them back to the end of the third or beginning of the fourth century; but from the three little circles within a larger circle occurring on the handle in one of them, we may safely lean to the opinion that they may be of the end of the fifth century, when Pelagianism had been condemned by the Church throughout Christendom, and put to flight in these islands by the two visits here of St. Germanus: the great atonement for original sin, and all other sin, made by Our Lord at Calvary, is set forth by the figure of the cross; the necessity of baptism for new-born infants, and all others is symbolised by those three circles all within a larger one, as the form of that sacrament then was as it now is:—In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost—doctrines which were, by implication, denied by the heresy of Pelagius.

Here starts up before us a very curious, and, to all here in England, important question, which now asks, as it has been asking for itself an answer these thousand years and more, What was the mode of administering baptism among the Britons?

At the celebrated meeting between St. Austin, the first archbishop of Canterbury, and the seven bishops and several monks from Bangor, with Dinorth at their head, whose supposititious speech, a glaring forgery, coined not more than three centuries ago, may be seen in the Cottonian MS., Claudius,

⁶ Vita S. Brigidae, apud Acta SS. ed. Bolland. Februarii, t. i, p. 119.

⁷ S. Patricii Epist. ad Coroticum, Acta SS. ed. Bolland. t. ii Martii, p. 538.

A., viii. p. 76, and is published by Spelman and by Wilkin—that apostle of our Anglo-Saxon forefathers thus addressed the British clergy:—“*Quia in multis quidem nostrae consuetudini, imo universalis ecclesiae, contraria geritis; et tamen si in tribus his mihi obtemperare vultis, ut pascha suo tempore celebretis; ut ministerium baptizandi, quo Deo renascimur, juxta morem sanctae Romanae et apostolicae ecclesiae compleatis; ut genti Anglorum una nobiscum verbum Domini praedicetis; cetera quae agitis, quamvis moribus nostris contraria, aequanimiter cuncta tolerabimus.*”—“For as much as in many things you act against our custom, nay against the custom of the universal Church, yet this notwithstanding, if you will yield to me on these three points—to keep Easter-day at the proper time; to follow the rite of baptism through which we are all re-born in God, according to the manner of the Roman and Apostolic Church; and to preach along with us God’s word to the Anglo-Saxons, we will quietly bear with everything else, however contrary to our manners.” (Beda. Hist. Eccle. l. ii. c. ii.) This divergency among these Celts in the administration of baptism from the Roman form, must have been marked. What was it? Immediately after baptism, and as an ending to that rite, the feet of the neophyte were washed by the Celtic celebrant while he said a certain form of prayer. At Milan, in the days of St. Ambrose, in some parts of Spain and of Gaul as also among the Celtic Christians, everywhere this ceremony of washing the feet of the recently baptized was followed. The council of Elvira (Illiberis), A.D. 301, in its 48th canon, enacted that the feet of the recently baptized should not be washed by the bishop, but by some cleric. “*Placuit . . . neque pedes eorum (qui baptizantur) lavandi sunt a sacerdotibus, sed clericis.*” In his work, *De Mysteriis*, c. 6, St. Ambrose expressly tells us, that, at Milan, this washing of feet at the end of baptism, was observed, and, in another book, which, if not from the pen of that illustrious saint is from that of a writer of his time, and who describes the use of the Church at Milan, it is thus spoken of:—“*Ascendisti de fonte; quid secutum est? Audisti lectionem: succintus est summus sacerdos: pedes tibi lavit.*”⁸ As applicable to our present inquiry, there is an important observation by the same writer, given in the words

⁸ Ambrosius de Sacramentis, l. iii. c. i.

following: "Non ignoramus quod ecclesia Romana hanc consuetudinem non habeat, cujus typum in omnibus sequimur et formam. Hanc tamen consuetudinem non habet ut lavit. Vide ergo ne forte propter multitudinem declinarit. Sunt tamen qui dicant et excusare conentur, quia hoc non in mysterio faciendum est non in baptisinate, non in regeneratione, sed quasi hospiti pedes lavandi sunt." By the form in use among the old Gauls, we find that the feet of the newly baptized were washed, as may be seen in the two missals edited by Mabillon, in his "*Liturgia Gallicana*," where, at p. 249, we find this rubric and prayer:—" *Dum pedes ejus lavas*, dicis:—Ego tibi lavo pedes. Sicut Dominus Noster Jesu Christus fecit discipulis suis, tu facias hospitibus et peregrinis, ut habeas vitam aeternam." And again, at p. 364:—" *Ad pedes lavandos*," after baptism, a prayer in almost the self-same words is given, to be said. Stronger still, for my opinion, is the testimony of that remarkable missal, if not the original, is an early copy of an Irish Missal used by St. Columbanus and his Irish monks while in Burgundy, and carried thence along with them to Bobbio. In this liturgical codex, after the suffusion of the chrism on the newly baptized individual, and clothing him in the white garment, we have this rubric:—" *Collectio ad pedes lavandos*," followed by this prayer:—"Ego tibi lavo pedes, sicut Dominus noster Jesus Christus fecit discipulis suis, ita tu facias hospitibus et peregrinis. Dominus noster Jesus Christus de linteo quo erat praecinctus, tersit pedes discipulorum suorum; et (quod?) ego facio tibi, tu facies peregrinis, hospitibus, et pauperibus."⁹

By these liturgical authorities, it is shown that in all those countries where any of the Celtic people ever held a sway, this ceremony of feet-washing at baptism, when they became Christians, always took place, up to a late period, whether in Celtiberia or Northern Spain, at Milan or through Lombardy (for at one time the river Rubicon was the boundary between Gaul and Italy), over the whole of Gaul, in England, and Ireland. The words of a North Italian writer, which we have just now given, tell clearly that in the fourth century, the Roman Church did not use the rite at baptism of washing feet. In Celtiberia itself, an early council had, as was just now shown, forbidden it to be done by bishops, then the ordinary administrators of this sacrament.

⁹ Ed. Mabillon, apud Museum Italicum, t. i, p. 325.

Let us now look homeward, and try to find out what the Christian Celts—the Scoti, or Irish, and the Britons—have left to tell how they, in their day, did in this matter. An ancient writer, likely at the end of the seventh century, drew up a catalogue, first printed by Ussher,¹ of Irish Saints, whom he distributes into three classes, the first of which begins with St. Patrick and ends with the reign of a King Tuathal about A.D. 542. Of this class we are told all were bishops and some were Romans, some Franks, some Britons, some Irish; and they had one mass, one celebration—“*unam missam unam celebrationem*,” or, as we should now say, one Use. The second class comprehends those three hundred worthies who lived in Ireland between A.D. 542 and 598 and of them it is recorded that they celebrated diverse masses or uses; that from David the bishop, and from Gildas and Docus the Britons, they received a mass, or use—“*diversas missas celebrabant A Davide episcopo et Gilla et Doco Britonibus. Missam acceperunt.*”² Further on, Ussher says:—“*Secundi ordinis Sancti ritum celebrant missam a sanctis viris de Britannia, sc. a sancto David et a sancto Gilda et sancto Doco, in catalogo nostro legimus.*”³

In this catalogue, and next to his dear friend Columba we find Caineus, or St. Kenny, placed. In the life of this saint given to the world A.D. 1853, by the Marquis of Ormonde, we read:—“*Cum Sanctus Kannechus crevisset et perfectus esset sensibus voluit sapientiam legere et religionem discere. Perrexit trans mare in Britanniam ad virum sapientem et religiosissimum Doc legitque apud illum sedule et mores bonos didiscit Quadam autem die cum Sanctus Kannechus sedens scriberet, audivit sonum tintinnabuli,*” &c., cap. iv. p. 2. Another little incident in this saint's life tells how, in after years, his journeys hither were very frequent. His friend, St. Brandan, for the purpose of making for the altar a chalice, had brought together some artificers; but, before their work was quite done, they found they had not gold enough; knowing, however, that St. Kenny used to go often to Britain, St. Brandan called upon him to borrow more:—“*Sanctus Brandanus habens secum artifices facientes calicem altaris, aurum sufficientem non habuit ad illam fabricam. Tunc ministri dixerunt ei*

¹ Britt. Ecc. Antiquitates, p. 473. Londini, 1687.

² Ibid. p. 474.

³ Ibid., 493.

vade ad Kannechum forsitan aurum cum eo invenies quia frequenter in Britanniam vadit," *ib. cap. xlix. p. 30.* Such evidences afforded, not by British, but by Irish witnesses, of the good neighbourhood, the kindly fellowship, the warm and frequent intercommunion kept up between the Churchmen in both the islands all through the sixth century and later, would lead us to think, had we not been positively told, that the Church in Ireland made its liturgy, its Use, in fact, to be the same in belief and ritual with that followed in this our island; if, then, we can only find out what was the form of baptism among the Irish in the sixth century, we may rest assured that in such a ritual we behold the practice of the British Church, too, at such a period.

Just as these pages were being drawn up for the press, I was favoured by the Earl of Ashburnham with a sight of his very precious, nay, unique, Irish Sacramentarium,—a missal, and an order of baptism,—once in the library at Stowe, and which his lordship courteously brought up to London on purpose for my inspection. Any one fond of archæology, and in a more especial manner of liturgical studies, will at once understand what must have been my feelings the while I handled and pored over so venerable a book of Christian Celtic rites, the vellum leaves of which were almost black in places, from having beheld about thirteen ages roll over them; as this Codex had been, to my thinking, written out at the end of the sixth or the beginning of the seventh century. The shape of the letters, the whole manner of writing throughout this *Ordo Baptismi* seem to be of the period above given; spaces are all along left open for rubrics, but they are not everywhere put in; and when they do come, are not in red but black ink, and are written smaller than the text, which, like those rubrics themselves, is always in Latin. A dwarf quarto in size, its vellum leaves are of a strong but not thickest kind.

This Order of Baptism begins with the prayer following:—"Domine Pater omnipotens aeternæ Deus, expelle diabolum . . . ab homine isto de capite, de cappellis, de cervice, de cerebro, de fronte, de oculis, de auribus, de nariibus," &c. Then comes the exorcism of the salt:—"Creatura Salis . . . in nomine Trinitatis," &c.; after applying which the priest asks:—"Abrenuncias Satanae?" and im-

mediately follows the ceremonial opening of the ears, or as is written here :—"Efeta, quod ÷ (est) aphertio, in nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus sancti ;" and from this passage in the prayer, "quem liberasti de errore gentilium," it would seem that, at the period when this Order of Baptism was in use, many of the Irish people were still heathens and unbelievers. Following after this, we have the first anointing which, not as now, was then, at least among the Irish and Britons, given with the two separate oils—chrism being one—as the rubric says thus : "Huc usque catachominus incepti oleari oleo de crismate in pectus et inter scabulas (scapulas) antequam baptizaretur : deinde letania circa fontem canitur, deinde benedictio fontis ; deinde ii. Salmi, Sitivit anima mea &c. Deinde benedictio completa mittit sacerdos cresmaria in modum crucis in fontem et quique voluerit in . . . vasculum aqua benedictionis ad domus consecrandas et populum aspergitur aqua benedicta." This blessing of the font is worded very much after the manner laid down by the Latin Church :—"Exorciso te creatura aquæ," &c., as may be seen in the old Salisbury Manual, as well as in the Ordo Ministrandi Sacramenta in actual use.

Just before the baptism itself, the catechism, or questions asked upon articles of faith, is set forth ; and from the rubric here, we find that the celebrant went down into the font along with the person or persons about to be baptized—"dis-cendit in fontem."

This being done, and baptism given, the rubric says :—"Oleatur cresmate in cerebrum in fronte, et dat vestem candidam diaconus super capite et fronte et dicitur presbitero, Domine Sancte Omnipotens, Domine noster Jesu Xpe qui te regeneravit ex aqua et Spiritu Santo. Quique tibi dedit remissionem omnium peccatorum, Ipse te lineat crismate salutis. Ungo te de oleo de chrismate salutis, &c., et dat vestem candidam diaconus super caput in frontem et vestitur manto candido, tegitur presbitero. Tunc lavit pedes accepto linteo. Dominus et Salvator noster Jesus Xps pridie quam pateretur accepto linteo splendido et sancto et immaculato precinctis lumbis suis fit (infundere?) aquam in pelvem, lavit pedes discipulorum suorum," &c.

Whenever an old Irish codex of holy writ on the liturgy had been written out by or had ever belonged to any of the saints in that land, it came, as years rolled on, to be looked

upon with religious veneration and deemed a holy relic ; as such, it was enshrined in a costly covering made of silver and garnished with precious stones. The *Liber Sacramentorum*, out of which is given the above Order of Baptism, came in time to be so esteemed, and its old and well-wrought shrine is still in existence in the rich library of Ashburnham Place. It is a stout oaken box, overlaid everywhere with silver plates curiously wrought, garnished with niello ornamentation and inscribed with several names, telling of the royal personages who by their munificence contributed to its adornment, or of those who lent their individual handicraft for that purpose. This curious box has been figured by the Rev. Dr. O'Connor, and a glance at his engravings will show that the older side differs from the other both in the script, the shape of the letters, as well as in the style of its art, as widely as a gap of three centuries can mark the difference. On the older of the two sides are inscribed the names of two reputed kings of Munster, of whom one, Donnchadh, was the son of Brian Boroimhe ; on the later side we read of one Gillaruadan O'Macan, the comharb,—that is, abbot,—for whom a prayer is asked because he covered this wooden box.

As we were told just now, St. Kannek, Canice, or Kenny, as he is severally called, was very fond, while here in England with St. Docus, of writing out books, and as the Irish were then in the habit of borrowing their ritual from the Britons, no doubt liturgical codices would have been the works this saint most of all transcribed to carry home with him to Ireland ; and going back thither, at last he settled down in Munster and built a monastery at Aghaboe.⁴ This saint's contemporary, and living not far off at Lorrha as its abbot, was St. Ruadan, whose name occurs upon this silver case. May not then this *Ordo Baptismi* be written out by the very hand of St. Kenny himself while under Doc and among the Britons, and have been given to his neighbour St. Ruadan ? or may it not be a copy written out by that abbot of Lorrha from a copy lent him from Aghaboe ? Be this as it may, the form of baptism just set forth comes from a codex written out while St. Gregory the Great, who died A.D. 604, was Pope, and St. Austin, the first Archbishop of Canter-

⁴ Ware, ed Harris p. 20.

bury, was striving to bring the Anglo-Saxons to a belief Christianity.

Now let us lay, side by side, the two forms for this sacrament—the one in use among all the Christian Celts, the other which we see in the “Gregorii Papae Liber Sacramentorum,” p. 71, edited by Menard, and in use, not only Rome, but throughout the remainder of Christendom. While then, reading these two rituals, we shall behold that the only differences between both are, first, a slight variation in one ceremony—the pouring out instead of rubbing on the head the oil of chrism, and letting it flow down on the forehead; the second, another superadded right, the ceremonious washing of the neophyte’s feet at the end of baptism. Agreeing then in every particular besides, these could have been the two only things objected to by St. Austin while he beseeched the British bishops and clergy to do away with the difference between his and their mode in the administration of baptism. That St. Austin was quite warranted in making such a request to the Britons, is clear on several accounts.

To the eyes of not a few it might have easily looked as if this feet-washing had been meant by the Church to teach the faithful to believe that such a remarkable ceremony was an integral and so essential an element in the outward sign, that, without it, the inward grace—the cleansing of the soul from all sin was not efficaciously wrought by baptism. To try and get this stumbling-block to true belief out of the way was only the bounden duty of any bishop; and so clear was such an obligation, that not long after, the Celtic nations everywhere let this ceremony at the end of baptism drop quite out of their several rituals.

For a like cause, the pouring out through that small hole in one of the spoons of the chrism, on the head, must, it is likely, have been given up, especially since in the Irish Order of Baptism, belonging to the Earl of Ashburnham, as well as in the Sacramentarium which, as we said just now, we take to be a copy of the old Irish Missal, the rubric says, “Suffundis chrisma in *fronte* ejus,” &c.,⁵ and thus not unlikely to mislead some people into the idea that it might include the administration of quite another sacrament—that of Confirmation—at which the bishop makes, and with the same oil, upon the forehead of the individual confirmed, a sign of the cross.

⁵ Ed. Mabillon, Museum Italicum, t. i. p. 325.

What, then, was the difference in the administration of baptism, between the old Britons and the Roman missionaries? Like other Celtic tribes, the Britons always washed the feet of the newly baptized, making that ceremony a part of that sacrament of regeneration; and, secondly, poured out the chrism upon the forehead, as well as the head, instead of touching with it the head only of the neophyte: the Romans never washed the feet, nor poured out the chrism, but merely rubbed with it, under the sign of the cross, the head.

The washing of feet, yet kept up as one among the ceremonies peculiar to Holy Week, and in many lands done to the poor, no less by kings and queens and the nobility than by all ranks of the ecclesiastics, had, from what we read, (John xiii.) been taught as a token of brotherly love and lowliness to his disciples for them to do, by our Lord himself, who, however, did not link such an observance, even in the very remotest degree, with the administration of baptism.

That celebrated Gaulish prelate, St. Caesarius, archbishop of Arles, who died A.D. 542, is the last who speaks of this feet-washing as a baptismal rite, in his sermons thus:—"Hoc itaque admones, Fratres dilectissimi, ut quotiens Paschalis sollemnitatis venit quicumque viri, quaecumque mulieres de sacro fonte filios spiritaliter exceperunt, cognoscant se pro ipsis fidejussores apud Deum extitisse, et ideo semper illis sollicitudinem verae caritatis impendant. Admoneant ut auguria non observent, phylacteria vel characteres diabolicos nec sibi nec suis aliquando suspendant, praecantatores vel ministros diaboli fugiant, fidem catholicam teneant, ad ecclesiam frequentius currant . . . peregrinos excipiant et, secundum quod ipsis in baptismo dictum est, hospitum pedes lavant," &c.⁶

This ancient baptismal ceremony in use among the olden Christian Celts would seem to have left a deep impression upon the Celtic mind long after that part of the rite had been abrogated. Of this fact we have a highly curious illustration in the life of our countryman, St. Cuthberht, when but a young monk he had been appointed in his monastery to the office of receiving guests. In that capacity, while one morn-

⁶ Appendicis Sermo clxviii., opp. S. 293, n. 3. See also Sermo cclvii. p. Augustini opera et studio Monach. 421, n. 2, ib. O. S. B., S. Mauri, Parisiis 1683; t. v. p.

ing affording the hospitality of the house to a wayfarer, the saint not only washed the young man's feet, but, to warn them, with his hands put them in his bosom, in true Celtic manner, like some foot-holder to a Cambrian king who always kept at court such an official (Welsh Laws, t. i. pp. 63-351):—"Exiens enim primo mane . . . ad hospitum cellulam invenit inibi quendam sedentem juvenem quem solito mox humanitatis more suscepit. Nam lavandis manibus aquam dedit, pedes ipse abluit, linteo extersit, fovendam humiliter manibus suo in sinu composuit," &c.⁷ An earlier example still is furnished by the Irish St. Columba, of whom Adamnan, in his life of that abbot, tells us:—"Sedens in domo sanctus et fratribus praeциpiens dixit, praeperate oculi hospitium aquamque ad lavandos hospitum pedes exhaurite."

Before ending such a subject as the present, we must not forget to tell the reader that still to be found among our English regalia is a splendid coronation spoon. This ritual appliance is not only one of the oldest pieces of plate known to be now in being anywhere, and wrought in the twelfth century by English hands too, but as beautiful and symbolic as craftsmanship could make it. Its rather narrow bowl is by a ridge running all along the middle, divided into two channels, as if fashioned on purpose to hold two distinct liquids or oils quite apart. Over this inside portion of the bowl is gracefully trailed leaf-bearing boughs of trees, done by a graving tool. Its long and tapering handle is most artistically wrought and full of symbolism. Four small pearls stud it where it springs from the bowl, telling of the man in the Gospel who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went his way and sold all that he had and bought it. Above and below is a small patch of green enamel—Hope's colour of regenerated man—speaking of his longings for Heaven, which is put before our eyes by that long streak of celestial blue enamel, reaching the jewel at the upper end. This highly curious spoon is well figured by Shaw in his "Dresses and Decorations of the Middle Ages." Franchi, of Clerkenwell, has cleverly electrotyped it.

By the Roman Pontifical only one oil, the *Oleum Catechumenorum*, is directed to be used in the coronation service: according to the old English ritual, two oils, the

⁷ Vita auctore Ven. Bedae, op. Hist. t. ii. p. 62, ed. Stevenson.

⁸ Vita S. Columbae auct. Adamnani, ed. Reeves, c. 4, p. 27.

Oleum Catechumenorum and the Chrisma are required, as we find in the Exeter Pontifical, p. 143, ed. Barnes; and more at length in the "Device for the Coronation of King Henry VII." among the Rutland Papers, edited by Jerdan for the Camden Society, pp. 16, 17.

To our thinking this same spoon in olden times, and while the ancient use of Salisbury was followed, was employed at royal baptisms, as well as at the coronations of our kings and queens.

It is, then, a matter of no small interest to find that a liturgical appliance in the shape of a spoon should be now, as it was so many ages gone by, employed in this land for holding the oils blessed then, as now, after a solemn manner by the Church for her various and sacred administrations. More interesting still is it to find that from a few seemingly worthless old Celtic spoons may be drawn a ray of light to shine upon a hitherto dark spot in our national annals, the elucidation of which is and ever must be one of the purposes of our Institute. Archæology and history are twin sisters, and they cannot live nor thrive apart from one another.