

III.—THE BELLS AND COMMUNION PLATE OF ROTHBURY PARISH CHURCH.

BY D. D. DIXON.

[Read on the 31st August, 1887.]

THE BELLS.

THE use of bells for both secular and religious purposes is of very ancient origin. As early as the time of the old Jewish dispensation, small gold bells were hung on and around the skirt of the vestment worn by the officiating high priest. Bells were also used by the ancient Greeks and Romans, mostly for secular purposes; and the most effective weapon wielded by the Britons against the legions of Julius Cæsar, is said to have been the "crotal," or spear bell, being a javelin with a bell at the butt end.

Regarding our parish church bells—whose history is at present occupying the attention of the members of this society—there seems to be no doubt whatever but that bells were used in our churches during early Saxon times. The Venerable Bede, in his Ecclesiastical History, relates how, in the year 680, a nun of the monastery of Hackness—"On a sudden heard the well-known sound of a bell in the air, which used to awake and call them to prayers;" and it is also recorded that Benedict Biscop—our own northern Saxon church builder—"went over to Gaul, and brought to England all things necessary for the church and altar, including sanctus bells for Christian worship." Therefore it is certain that by the sound of those early "church-going bells" our Saxon ancestors were called to the services of the church, to

Their Uhtsang, or early morning service, corresponding with the
Roman *Matins*.

Their Primesang, a later morning service, corresponding with the
Roman *Prime*.

Their Undersang, at nine o'clock—the Roman *Tierce*.

Their Middaysang, at twelve o'clock—the Roman *Seat*.

Their Noonsang, at three o'clock—the Roman *Nones*.

Their Evensang, early evening service—the Roman *Vespers*.

Their Nightsang, the last evening service—the Roman *Compline*.

There are very few pre-Reformation bells in the churches of North Northumberland, due perhaps to the fact of its close proximity to the borders of Scotland, which would render the district liable to the frequent pillage of the Scots, who no doubt considered bell-metal as plunder worthy of notice. The famous Bernard Gilpin, the Apostle of the North, who evangelized throughout Northumberland during the latter part of the sixteenth century, relates that at one church he went to in Redesdale there was no bell to call the people to church. Whether the Scots had robbed them of their bell, or whether the lawless dalesmen had themselves melted the bell in the same manner as their brother Scots in a parish across the Border were said to have done with their parish bell, we do not know. Perhaps the following description might apply to both:—

‘ Was there e'er sic a parish,—a parish,—a parish,
Was there e'er sic a parish as little Dunkell,
Where they steeket the meenister, hanged the precentor,
Dang doon the steeple—*and drank the bell?* ’

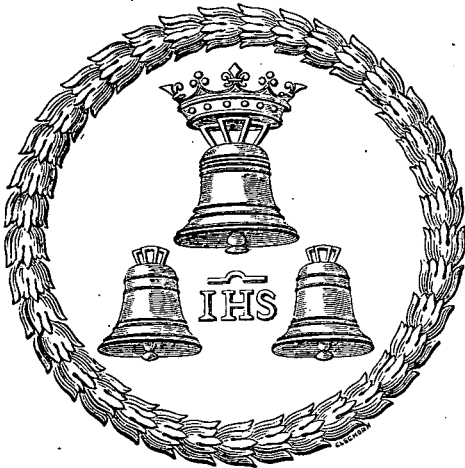
There are two small bells in the tower of Rothbury parish church, neither of which is very ancient. One is dated 1850, the other 1682. The latter is the survivor of the two old bells which hung in the ancient tower previous to the restoration of the church in 1850. Its companion being cracked (report says by the furious ringing of “Sexton Jack” [John Watson] at a wedding) was at the said restoration recast, and bears the following inscription round the shoulder:—

C & G MEARS FOUNDERS LONDON 1850.

The bell is $22\frac{3}{4}$ inches in diameter and $18\frac{1}{2}$ inches high. The surviving bell, although it was much chipped and corroded, was perfectly sound, and was therefore re-hung along with the 1850 recast. Around the shoulder of the older bell runs the following inscription:—

JOHN THOMLINSON RECTOR OF ROTHBURY 1682.

The founder's name is not on this bell, but his mark is quite legible on the outside, viz., three bells within a circle of leaves, being the mark of James Bartlett, who had the Whitechapel foundry from 1676 to 1700. The diameter of this bell is 21 inches, its height 17 inches; and although it is less than the new bell of 1850, it is thicker, and can be heard at a much greater distance. Mr. Stahl-schmidt has favoured the society with the loan of



the annexed cut of the founder's mark.

The parish records throw some little light on the history of this bell, to which attaches an interest the newer one does not possess. Therefore with your permission I shall endeavour to give a short account of the older bell. The Rothbury parish record book commences in 1659. The first notice of the church bells is found in the minutes of the vestry meeting held on Easter Tuesday, April 1, 1662, when the following entry (which has reference to the disorders committed during the Great Rebellion) was made:—

'In regard that the late Troublsome Times had occasioned the spoyling and deprivation of those things convenient and necessary for y^e celebration of God's publike worship in his holy Church: In regard of Authority enjoyning and y^e Due consideration had thereupon. The Rector, together with the Curate, and fflower and twenty ordered that a sesse of each mans Antient Rent throughout y^e whole Parish, should speedily be raised, collected and Levied by y^e new Churchwardens for the present yeare, vizt:—for a front, Table, furniture for y^e Communion, Cuppe engraving, cover of front, Books of Common Prayer, Great Church Bible, The Booke of Homilyes, fflagg: y^e Alley. *Also together with something about Bells, vestry chest, Glazing and many more.'*

As can be gathered from the churchwardens' accounts of the disbursement of this "sesse," the repairs to the bells at this time were very scant indeed. All we find is:—

| | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|----|----|
| Bell Ropes | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | £ | s. | d. |
| The Smith for Bell Tongues & Hooks | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 00 | 01 | 06 |
| | | | | | | 00 | 05 | 06 |

The bells mentioned here were no doubt pre-Reformation bells, and it is to be regretted that the old minute book gives no description of them, otherwise we might have had preserved to us the names of the bells, the saints to whom they were dedicated, or other black letter inscriptions which it was customary at that time to place on church bells.

After a lapse of seventeen years, the bell question was again discussed by the vestry. During that period John Garthwaite, the first rector after the Restoration, died, and was succeeded by the famous Dr. John Thomlinson, brother to Dr. Thomlinson of Whickham, at whose house he died in 1720. Immediately on his coming to the living of Rothbury in 1678, that indefatigable rector began to remodel and arrange the affairs of the parish, which he found in a very confused state; and amongst other things were the church bells. The following entry in Dr. Thomlinson's own handwriting is found in the old church book:—

'That upon Ash Weddensday 1679 it was agreed upon by the minister, churchwardens & four & twenty (*nemine contradicente*) that the Bells of Rothbury should be *new cast* this spring, provided that this could be done for the whole Antient rent of the parish and thereupon they unanimously made it their request to me, that I would write to A Bellfounder to that purpose: withall adding that rather then fail they would be willing to the halfe Antient Rent more.'

Whether the "sesse" on the "whole Antient Rent" had never been levied, or, if levied, the sum it raised was not found sufficient to defray the expense of recasting the two ancient bells, I cannot, from the books, find out; but on the 14th of April, 1682, another effort was made to renew the bells, and as we know the date of the present older bell is 1682, this time the scheme succeeded. The following interesting record is found in the old parish book:—

'April 14 1682. Whereas the said Parish Church Bells of Rothbury were fallen into great decay insomuch that they were well nigh become useless to the Parish. The Minister and the Four & Twenty thought it expedient to move the Parishioners to ye repayre of them by way of a cheerfull & voluntary contribution: and to encourage them thereunto have ordered that ye names and sumes of each benefactor should be particularly recorded in the Church-books, as a perpetuall monument of their Charitable benevolence to ye Church as also that after ages may read, how profuse, and Liberall their Ancestors have been to promote a design that conduced to ye Beauty and ornament of Gods house.'

Their names are as follows:—

ROTHBURY.

| | £ | s. | d. | | £ | s. | d. |
|----------------------------------|----|----|----|---------------------------------------|----|----|----|
| Mr. Tho: Ogle | 00 | 03 | 00 | Robert Trumble... .. | | | |
| Mrs. Ogle | 00 | 01 | 00 | Roger Davison | | | |
| Henry Ogle | 00 | 00 | 06 | Charles Carr | 00 | 01 | 00 |
| Mary Ogle | 00 | 00 | 06 | William Graham | 00 | 00 | 06 |
| Edward Ogle | 00 | 00 | 02 | Michael Graham | 00 | 04 | 00 |
| John Ogle | 00 | 00 | 02 | Hector Henderson | | | |
| Eliz. Wilson | 00 | 00 | 04 | James Butterfield | 00 | 00 | 04 |
| Mr. Robert Clennell | 00 | 01 | 00 | Jane Oliver, widd. | 00 | 00 | 04 |
| Ellin, his wife | 00 | 00 | 06 | Ralph Browne | 00 | 00 | 06 |
| Tho. Clennell | 00 | 00 | 02 | Anne, his wife | 00 | 00 | 06 |
| Edward Burghill | 00 | 00 | 06 | Henry Browne | 00 | 00 | 02 |
| Anne Kirke | 00 | 00 | 02 | Dorothy Young... .. | 00 | 00 | 02 |
| Mr. Bernard Rumney | 00 | 00 | 04 | James Young | | | |
| John Rumney | 00 | 00 | 06 | Will ^m Wilson, Senr | 00 | 00 | 04 |
| Isabell Wardell... .. | 00 | 00 | 06 | Andrew Harrison | 00 | 00 | 02 |
| Dorothy Wardell | 00 | 00 | 06 | Tho: Gibson | 00 | 00 | 02 |
| Catherine Robson | 00 | 00 | 02 | Jane Harrison | 00 | 00 | 02 |
| Ephraim Clennell | 00 | 00 | 06 | Eleanor Machell | 00 | 00 | 02 |
| Margaret Clennell | 00 | 00 | 06 | Isabell Watson | 00 | 00 | 06 |
| Robert Henderson | 00 | 00 | 02 | Isabell Vrpeth | 00 | 00 | 04 |
| Grace Ogle | 00 | 00 | 02 | Anne Vrpeth | 00 | 00 | 02 |
| George Maving | 00 | 00 | 06 | Isabell Robson | 00 | 00 | 06 |
| Jane Maving, widd. | 00 | 00 | 06 | Marg ^t Robson | 00 | 00 | 02 |
| Jane Storrer | 00 | 00 | 02 | Archibald Douglass | 00 | 00 | 06 |
| George Trumble | 00 | 00 | 06 | Margarett Swan | 00 | 00 | 06 |
| Richard Wilson... .. | 00 | 00 | 06 | Mr. Isaac Wallace | 00 | 03 | 00 |
| John Hall and his wife... .. | 00 | 00 | 06 | Mabell Vrpeth | 00 | 00 | 02 |
| Geo: Swan | 00 | 00 | 06 | W ^m Simpson | 00 | 00 | 02 |
| Charles Turner | 00 | 00 | 06 | John Douglas | | | |
| Tho: Clarke | 00 | 00 | 06 | John Marshall | 00 | 00 | 06 |
| Will ^m Robson | 00 | 00 | 06 | W ^m Taite... .. | 00 | 00 | 06 |
| Anne Robson, his wife... .. | 00 | 00 | 06 | John Taite | | | |
| John Gray | 00 | 00 | 02 | Alice Taite | | | |
| Gilbert Gray | 00 | 00 | 02 | Henry Taite | 00 | 00 | 06 |
| John Smayle | 00 | 00 | 04 | Tho: Gray and his wife... .. | 00 | 01 | 00 |
| William Hunter | 00 | 00 | 06 | Isabell Gray | 00 | 00 | 04 |
| Tho: Hunter | 00 | 00 | 04 | Alexander Watson | 00 | 00 | 04 |
| Alexand ^r Swan | 00 | 00 | 06 | W ^m Kirke | 00 | 00 | 04 |
| Alex. Maving | 00 | 00 | 02 | Tho: Mason and his wife | 00 | 02 | 06 |
| George Oliver | 00 | 00 | 06 | Mary Swan | 00 | 00 | 06 |

| | £ | s. | d. | | £ | s. | d. |
|---|----|----|----|---------------------|----|----|----|
| Tho: Dixon ... | 00 | 01 | 00 | Andrew Craghill ... | 00 | 00 | 02 |
| Tho: Dixon, jun ^r ... | 00 | 00 | 06 | Cuthbert Swan ... | 00 | 00 | 06 |
| James Davison ... | 00 | 00 | 06 | Bernard Pearith ... | 00 | 00 | 06 |
| Alexander Dagleish ... | | | | John Pearith ... | 00 | 00 | 06 |
| W ^m Wilson, junio ^r ... | 00 | 00 | 06 | James Younge ... | 00 | 00 | 06 |

WHITTON.

| | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|----|----|----|-------------------------------------|----|----|----|
| Geo: Carr ... | 00 | 01 | 00 | Michael Milburne ... | | | |
| Andrew Buckham and his wife ... | 00 | 00 | 06 | John Soulsby ... | 00 | 00 | 06 |
| John Buckham ... | 00 | 00 | 06 | Mary Soulsby ... | 00 | 00 | 04 |
| Richard Buckham ... | 00 | 00 | 06 | Joseph Soulsby ... | 00 | 00 | 02 |
| Oswald Gibson ... | 00 | 00 | 04 | Roger Snawdon and his family ... | 00 | 02 | 00 |
| Mary Gibson ... | 00 | 00 | 02 | Christopher Little ... | 00 | 01 | 00 |
| Lewis Ogle ... | 00 | 01 | 00 | Anne Carr ... | 00 | 00 | 06 |
| Tho: Ogle ... | 00 | 00 | 06 | Gawin Eansley ... | 00 | 00 | 03 |
| Mary Ogle ... | 00 | 00 | 06 | Dionysius Milburne ... | 00 | 00 | 06 |
| Gawin Snawdon ... | 00 | 00 | 06 | Alexander Turner ... | 00 | 00 | 06 |
| Elinor Snawdon ... | 00 | 00 | 02 | Anne Snawdon ... | 00 | 00 | 02 |
| Henry Turner ... | 00 | 00 | 06 | John Barnes ... | 00 | 00 | 06 |
| Blanch Heckles ... | 00 | 00 | 02 | Isabell Richardson ... | 00 | 00 | 06 |
| Chr: Milburne ... | 00 | 00 | 06 | John Snawdon ... | 00 | 00 | 02 |
| Anne Milburne ... | 00 | 00 | 02 | | | | |

The total amount of the subscription list was £2. 18s. 11d., and to pay the cost of hanging the bells we find the following:—

‘That upon Ashwednesday being February 20th 1683 the Rector & XXIV did meet and then it was unanimously agreed that one halfe antient rent should be forthwith collected by the present Churchwardens for the hanging of the Bells & purchasing a Surplice.’

Therefore, the bell with the inscription, “John Thomlinson Rector of Rothbury 1682,” and its companion discarded in 1850, were undoubtedly the fruits of the levy on the ancient rent and the voluntary subscriptions given by the Rothbury parishioners of two centuries ago. It is said that “old names die hard,” many of the surnames recorded in the list of subscribers are yet extant in the parish of Rothbury. Ogle, Maving, Carr, Smail, Swan, Snowden, Watson, Soulsby, Aynsley, and others; we also find in the list the name of Bernard Rumney, the famous northern poet and musician, who lived and died at Rothbury; he composed that amusing ballad “Ecky’s Mare,” found in Bell’s *Northern Bards*. Like many modern scribblers he had not much to spare, his name is down for the modest sum of

fourpence. Judging from the terms of the resolution made at the vestry meeting, in 1679, viz. :—"that the bells of Rothbury should be *new cast*"—not that new bells be obtained—and seeing that the restorers of 1850 had the old cracked bell of 1682 *recast*, I think we may conclude that it is the identical metal of the pre-Reformation bells which in a new form yet rings amongst the hills of the ancient parish of Rothbury as it did in those far-off days of Scottish raids when often the indwellers would be roused by its clamour to join the "hue and cry," when every man was obliged upon pain of death to rise and follow the fray.

In the present day when a fire breaks out during the night in the village or neighbourhood, the sexton rings the church bells to arouse the villagers, who flock to the scene of the fire, each with his bucket and his pail, and with might and main labour at their centenarian fire engine, an ancient machine of the last century more fit for the Black Gate Museum than for quenching a fire. This fire engine formerly stood in the old church porch. The passing-bell is always tolled at Rothbury, and the parishioners are informed whether the deceased is a man, woman, or child in the following manner :—after the bell has been solemnly and slowly tolled for the usual length of time, three quickly repeated strokes denote a child, six a woman, and nine a man. This has been the custom from time immemorial. During the early and middle part of the last century, when clocks were only possessed by the few, and long before the eight or ten hours' movement was dreamt of, a "six o'clock bell" was rung morning and evening for the purpose of letting the workpeople in the neighbouring fields and elsewhere know the hours of starting and leaving off. There was also an eight o'clock evening bell, probably a survival of the curfew bell.

There is no evidence in the accounts of any repairs having been done to the bells during the first forty years of their new existence, not until the rectorship of Dr. Sharp, who followed Dr. Thomlinson in 1721, when the entries in the church accounts for oil, leather, ropes, and other 'et caeteras,' become very frequent, occasioned no doubt by the continual ringing of the bells for the daily services, also the morning and evening bell, an ancient custom evidently re-established by Dr. Thomas Sharp.

The first is in the Easter accounts of

| | £ | s. | d. |
|--|---|----|-----|
| 1724—Will ^m Mavin, mending the bells | 0 | 6 | 0 |
| Oil and candle used about ye bells | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 1726—To Will: Mavin for mending ye Bell | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| To bend Leather and oyle for ye Bells | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| 1727—A Gill of Oyl for ye bells | 0 | 0 | 4½ |
| Pair of Bell Ropes | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| For more oyl and candles for the Bells | 0 | 0 | 3½ |
| 1728—To ye Smith for mending ye Bells | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| To Arthur Tait for Leather for ye Bells | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| To a pair of Bell Ropes | 0 | 2 | 7 |
| Ridley for helping Mavin w th ye bell tongue | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| And twice helping up with ye bell | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| 1730—To John Maving for a Gudgeon to ye little bell | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| A Bolt and two Cottrels for ye great Bell | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| John Ridley work at ye little bell... .. | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| 1731—Oyl and nails for ye bells | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| A pair of Bell ropes by R. Storer | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| John Ridley mending the little wheel | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| John Ridley two days' work at ye bells | 0 | 2 | 8 |
| Jack Mavin for new Gudgeon and two Cottrels... .. | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Bushing ye two pans of ye great bell w th brass... .. | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Bushing ye two pans of ye little bell | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Mending ye great bell tongue &c | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| 1732—Oil and nails for ye Bells | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Bell Ropes | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| Mending the Bell tongue | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| 1738—Oyl, Bell Ropes, Soap, Nails, Almanack | 0 | 5 | 7¼ |
| Smith (viz., Mavin) Mending ye great bell | 0 | 3 | 6 |
| ————— Mending ye little bell | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Ridley at ye Bells a day and a half | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| 1740—Mavin ye Smith mending the great bell | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| The mending ye little Bell | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| The Ropes for ye great Bell | 0 | 1 | 4 |
| 1742—Smith's bill for mending the Bells | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| R. Storer Sen ^r Oil for the Bells | 0 | 1 | 4 |
| ————— For a pair of Bell ropes | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| John Ridley's bill for the Bells | 0 | 1 | 4 |
| 1743—John Mavin's bill for ye Bells | 0 | 5 | 9 |
| Matthew Shotton at ye Bells | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| Rob ^t Storer Sen ^r his bill for Bell ropes &c | 0 | 5 | 6 |
| 1744—For oil for the Bells... .. | 0 | 0 | 10½ |
| To John Ridley mending the Bells | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| John Mavin, mending the Great Bell | 0 | 2 | 4 |
| ————— and the little Bell | 0 | 1 | 4 |
| 1748—Rob ^t Storer Sen ^r oil for the bells... .. | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| John Ridleys Bill for work at ye Bells and Belfry | 0 | 6 | 8 |
| Rob ^t Storer Junior his bill for ye Belfry... .. | 0 | 6 | 3 |

| | £ | s. | d. |
|--|---|----|----|
| 1750—To John Maving mending the bells | 0 | 3 | 2 |
| 1751—To Ridley's bill for the Bells &c | 0 | 5 | 4 |
| 1752—To John Ridley for relining a Dormant in the Steeple and for greasing the Bells | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| To John Maving mending the great bell | 1 | 4 | |
| To him mending the little Bell | 1 | 6 | |
| To him mending the lock of ye great Gate | 0 | 3 | |
| 1753—For a New Bell Rope paid W ^m Readhead | 0 | 9 | 0 |
| Smiths bill for mending the Bells... .. | 0 | 2 | 10 |
| Joiners bill for work at ye bells &c | 0 | 7 | 10 |
| 1754—The Smiths bill for the bells &c | 0 | 3 | 4 |
| Oil for the Bells to Ridley | 0 | 0 | 3½ |
| 1755—The Smiths Bill for the Bells this year | 0 | 5 | 8 |
| 1767—To Ringing the Bell at 6 a.m. & 8 p.m. ½ year | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| 1768—To Ringing the Bell one half year | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| To John Ridley for Ringing the 6 o'clock Bell ½ year | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| 1769—To Ringing ye Bell at Morning & Evening ½ yr... .. | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| 1775—To John Selby's Ringing the Bell M & E. ½ a yr | 0 | 5 | 0 |

[Early in the January of 1779 it seems the great bell had fallen out of its frame, and three thirsty Rothburians, for a New Year's drink, worked for four hours in replacing it. No other payment for the work is recorded in the churchwardens' account than this:—]

| | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| 1779, Jan. 7—To three men to Drink for 4 Hours workin getting up ye great Bell | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 1783, March 12—To Robt Snowdon, Blacksmith for mending the Bell Gudgeons and balancing them | 0 | 1 | 6 |
| Leather for the Bell Clappers by — Vint | 0 | 1 | 6 |

Since the foregoing account was written, I have received the following communication from our Secretary, Mr. Blair, who has kindly assisted me in many ways whilst preparing this paper, to whom I had sent rubbings of the marks and inscription on the 1682 bell:—

Mr. Stahlschmidt, a great authority on bells, writes me thus:—'The 1682 bell is by James Bartlett, who had the Whitechapel foundry from 1676 to 1700. No doubt it contains the metal of the previous bell. Equally certain is it that the 1850 bell does *not* contain the metal of *its* predecessor. Nowadays the old metal is never recast unless specially ordered (and looked after). Unless there is direct evidence that the daily morning and evening peal was instituted by Dr. Sharp in last century, I should feel inclined to look upon the former as a survival of the pre-Reformation 'morning ave bell' transferred to a later hour and a secular purpose. The usual time for it was 4 or 5 a.m. The fact of the first direct payment for this work occurring in 1767 is not sufficient evidence to my mind that the custom then commenced. Down to that time it may have been considered as part of the sexton's usual routine work. I notice, too, that Dr. Sharp died in 1758, which strengthens this argument of mine.'

THE COMMUNION PLATE.

The communion plate of Rothbury Parish Church (All Saints') consists of seven pieces, viz.:—


No. 1.—An embossed and engraved brass alms dish, having a large ruby-coloured stone in the centre, the gift of the late Mrs. Wealleans of Flotterton House. Diameter, 16 inches. Modern, about 1872.

No. 2.—An electro-plated salver, which stands upon the credence table with the unconsecrated bread during celebration. Modern, and perfectly plain. The gift of the Rev. W. S. Wrenford, curate of Rothbury, 1881.

No. 3.—A small silver cross spoon. Five hall-marks :—(1) maker's initials I.F. ; (2) a lion passant ; (3) a leopard's head ; (4) the sovereign's head ; (5) date letter **t** for 1874.

The remaining four pieces—the flagon, the paten, the large cup, and the small cup¹—are of silver ; these I shall endeavour to describe, and at the same time give as much of their history as can be gathered from the quaint old pages of the church books.

FLAGON.—The flagon is 11 inches high including the lid, 8½ inches without the lid ; 3¾ inches diameter at the top. It bears six hall-marks, a coat of arms, and an inscription:

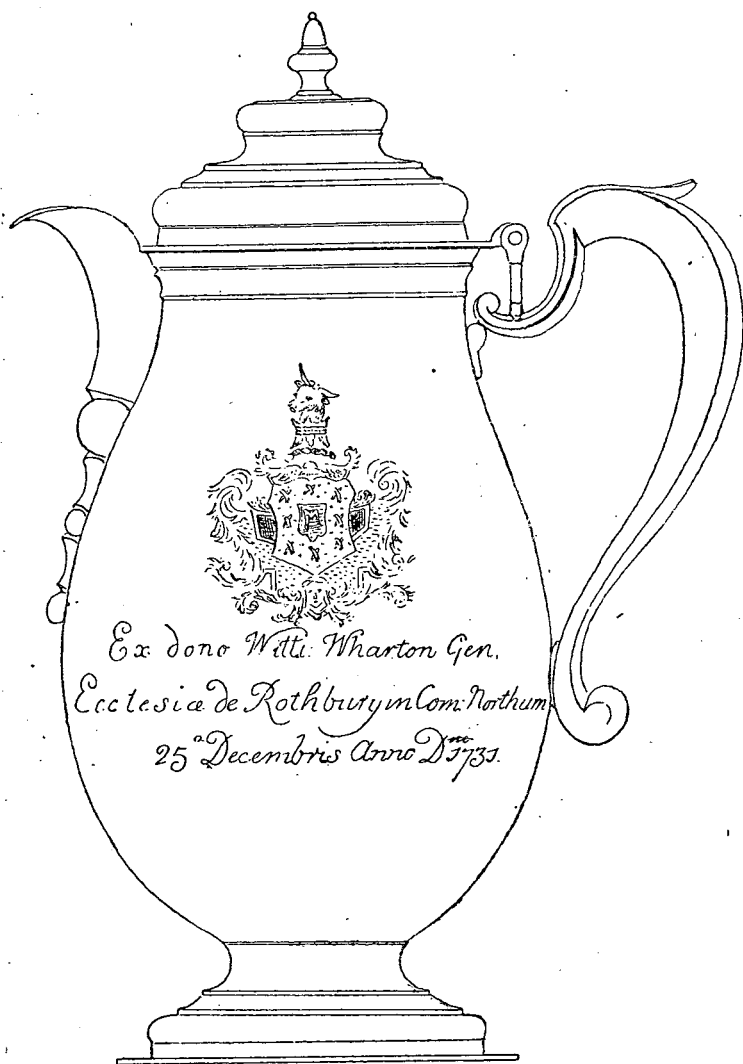
The marks, in the deciphering of which I have had the kind assistance of Mr. Boyle, are:—(1) Initials of maker, **R. M.** for Robt. Makepeace, repeated ; (2) a lion passant ; (3) a leopard's head crowned ; (4)  for Newcastle ; (5) date letter **L** for 1731. Inscribed :—

Ex dono Willi: Wharton Sen. Ecclesie de Rothbury in Com: Northum: 25^o Decembris Anno Dⁿⁱ 1731.

The coat of arms and crest are those of the Whartons, and I am indebted for their description to the kindness of one of our members,

¹ See pp. 28, 30, and 31, for illustrations of the communion plate, from drawings by Mr. J. T. Dixon of Rothbury.

Mr. Bates, who says:—"As to the shield and crest on the flagon, they are of interest to students of Border history from their having



being borne by Sir Thomas Wharton, governor of Carlisle, summoned to Parliament as Lord Wharton in 1545, and subsequently made

Warden General of all the Marches towards Scotland, viz.:—*Sable, a maunch argent within a bordure or charged with eight pairs of lions' paws saltirewise erased gules, with the crest, a bull's head erased argent attired or, gorged with a ducal coronet, per pale of the second and gules.* The fanciful bordure to the shield was an augmentation granted to Lord Wharton by Edward VI., and could only properly be borne by his descendants, of whom this William Wharton could not have been one, at any rate by a legitimate line, as Lord Wharton's male issue became extinct on the death of the eccentric Philip, Duke of Wharton, in the first half of the last century. The Lords Wharton used generally, it seems, another crest, which is a perfect curiosity of heraldry, viz.:—*A Moor kneeling in coat of mail, all proper, ducally crowned or, stabbing himself with a sword of the first, and pommel of the second.*"

Records of the Whartons—who appear to have been an important family in Coquetdale—are found in the church books of Rothbury during the 17th and 18th centuries. In the list of vestrymen for 1659 occurs the name of Thomas Wharton, gentleman, and about the same period we read the following memorandum:—

'There was Given Sixty pound by Commissioners for the repayre of ye Chanssell at Rothbury to be Disbursed by Mr. Tho. Warton of Newtowne who was Intrusted wth the money & the worke.'

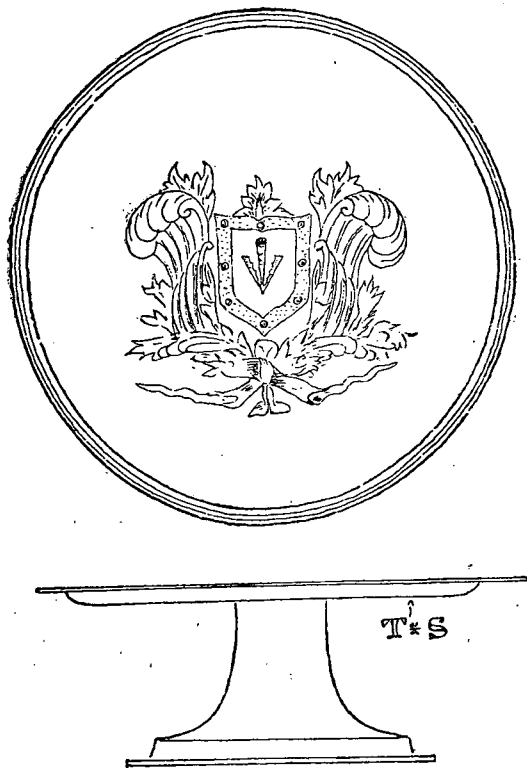
On the stone mantel of the kitchen fireplace at Brockley Hall Farm House, in Rothbury Forest, there is yet to be seen cut in fine bold Roman capitals the name, "Thomas Wharton, 1666," while in the vestry list of 1731 we find the name of the giver of this flagon, viz.:—"William Wharton, gentleman, of Brockley Hall." The gift of this handsome silver flagon was certainly not before time, because we read in the minutes of April 14, 1721:—

'It was also then further agreed that ye pewter flagon used at ye communion table be mended at ye place where it leaks.'

Twenty-three years after the silver flagon was given to the church it required some repairs. In the churchwardens' accounts for Easter, 1755, there is this entry:—"For mending the Flaggon for the Communion, 0 3 6."

PATEN.—The paten is 2½ inches high, 7½ inches in diameter, having a slightly raised edge, with mouldings. Four marks and coat of arms on front; one mark and initials on back. Marks on


front are:—(1) Maker's initials, I. I., "probably," says Cripps, "the mark of Jno. Jackson;" (2) a leopard's head crowned; (3) a lion passant; (4) year letter *m* for 1689; with a lion passant on bottom of stand, and the initials T.S. engraved on the back of the paten.



Respecting the coat of arms I again quote Mr. Bates, who says:— "The shield on the paten proves this to have been provided by Thos. Sharp, rector of Rothbury, 1721 to 1758. The arms are *azure, a pheon argent within a bordure or charged with eight torteaux*; these arms were granted, it appears, in 1691 to Dr. John Sharp, who was archbishop of York, 1697 to 1714." I might add that Dr. Thos. Sharp, rector of Rothbury and archdeacon of Northumberland, was a son of Archbishop Sharp. The initials T.S. on the back of the paten are undoubtedly Thomas Sharp's.

LARGE CUP.—The large cup is 8 inches high, the bowl 4 inches deep, diameter at top $3\frac{3}{8}$ inches, at bottom $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches. No marks are visible; but, judging from the imbricated ornamentation around the stalk, which somewhat resembles that seen on the Edlingham cup² of 1612, and also on those at S. John's, Newcastle,³ and Bywell S. Peter's,⁴ both of which are of the first half of the seventeenth century (the S. John's cup is also similar in shape), we may assign this cup also to the early part of the seventeenth century.

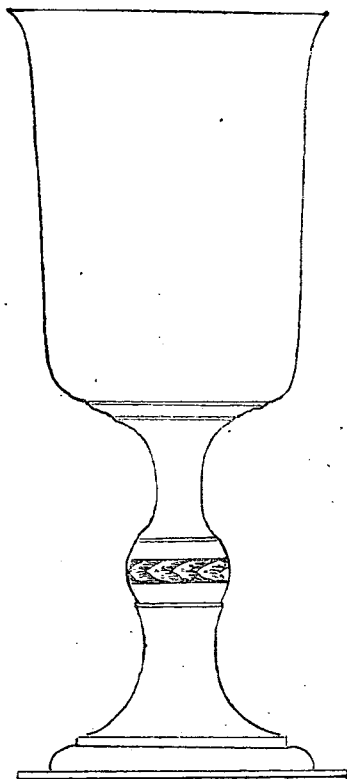
There appears from the church books to have been a "cuppe" in existence in 1660; and as we find traces of all the other pieces—the flagon, the paten, and the smaller chalice—given during the 18th century, and no trace whatever of a new chalice having been given, this must be the "cuppe" mentioned in the minutes of the vestry meeting of Easter, 1662.

SMALL CUP.—This cup is $3\frac{3}{8}$ inches in height, $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches diameter at the top, $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches diameter at the bottom of the bowl; the bowl is $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep. There are two marks:—(1) Initials of maker,  for John Langlands, a Newcastle silversmith; and (2) lion passant; and it contains the following inscription:—*In Usam Parochiæ Rothburiensis.*

² *Proc.* iii. p. 95, and plate facing p. 100.

³ *Proc.* iii. p. 38, No. 6.

⁴ *Proc.* iii. p. 129 and plate.



There is nothing on the cup to lead to the name of the donor. Fortunately, however, there is pasted into one of the vestry books, by the careful hands of that worthy man, the Rev. John Shotton, who was curate of Rothbury from 1743 to 1783, a letter, which without doubt refers to this small cup, and shows it to have been the gift (in 1776) of Giles Alcock, Esq., merchant, of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. During the first half of the last century the Alcocks of Newcastle purchased the Cartington estate, in the parish of Rothbury, which had probably been confiscated owing to the active part its owner, John Talbot, took in the Jacobite rising of 1715. Talbot was taken prisoner at Preston, whom Patten thus describes:—"John Talbot of Cartington, in Northumberland, a brave young gentleman." The Cartington estate remained in the hands of the Alcocks until 1883, when it was purchased by Lord Armstrong of Cragside. Thus we discover the connection between Giles Alcock the Newcastle merchant, and the parish church of Rothbury. I shall conclude with reading a copy of the letter mentioned:—

Newcas: 13 June 1776.

SIR

Being well inform'd that there is not a Cup belonging to the church at Rothbury, that is both becoming and convenient for the administration of private Sacrament Especialy in the remoter parts of the parish, I desire the Minister & Church Wardens of Rothbury for the time being, will please to Accept of that, which the bearer will deliver for that purpose, along with the good wishes for the parish in general of

Your hble Servant

GILES ALCOCK.

Rev Mr Shotton.

This, gentlemen, is about all I can tell you respecting the Rothbury church plate; and although the pieces are plain and unadorned by jewels or precious stones, yet they are of great interest to the antiquary; while to myself, one of their guardians for the last twenty years, this venerable communion plate, hallowed by the sacred use and religious associations of over two centuries, possesses a peculiar charm which the most elaborately engraved communion plate of modern times could not have.