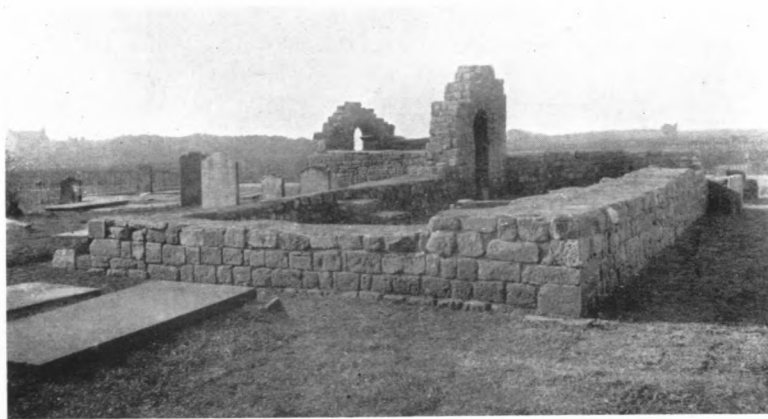




VIEW FROM THE SOUTH-WEST.



VIEW FROM THE NORTH-EAST.

RUINS OF THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS, WALLSEND.

V.—THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS, WALLSEND,
NORTHUMBERLAND.

By W. H. KNOWLES, F.S.A.

[Read 23rd February, 1910.]

To-day the importance of Wallsend is consequent upon the quality of its coals, and the universal reputation of its ship-builders to construct the largest ships afloat. Almost two thousand years ago it was known to the Romans, as its name implies, as the eastern extremity of the great Wall and the site of the station of SEGEDUNUM. A thousand years later the Normans had established themselves at Newcastle, Tynemouth and elsewhere, and within a quarter of a century of William's conquest, refounded the monastery on the site of the Saxon foundation at Jarrow. Thereafter the church at Wallsend was dependent on and associated with the monastery.

The site of the church is to the east of, and at some distance from, the modern town. It is perched on an eminence, surrounded on the south and west sides by a deep ravine, known as the Burn-closes, through which the Wallsend burn flows eastward on its way to the Tyne, which it enters at Willington, almost a mile distant. The little church must have been a conspicuous object at the time of its foundation, and the prospect from it to the south an extensive one, consisting of broad grassy slopes, with vistas of the river Tyne in the middle distance and the tower of Jarrow church beyond.

Mrs. Montague, the 'blue stocking,' who hired Carville hall in 1758, while Denton hall was being repaired, says that she 'had a very good land as well as water prospect. We see from our windows the place where once lived the Venerable Bede.'

In 1770 the attractions of Wallsend are further remarked in the *Autobiography of the Rev. Dr. Alexander Carlyle*, who was on a visit to his brother-in-law, John Erasmus Blackett, then living in Pilgrim street, opposite the house of his relative, Sir Walter Blackett. Carlyle writes 'We arrived at Wallsend, a very delightful village about four miles below Newcastle, on the road to Shields, where Mr. Blackett had a very agreeable house for the summer. There were other two gentlemen's houses of good fortune in the village, with a church and a parsonage house. Next day, the 1st of May, was so very warm that I with difficulty was able to walk down to the church in the bottom of the village, not more than two hundred yards distant.' Even to-day the village green is a pleasant contrast to the din and turmoil of the shipyards.

The earliest references to the site of the church at Wallsend are contained in two charters, one of them a grant of Walcher, bishop of Durham, of 1074, and the other of bishop William de St. Carilef of 1082. In the former, bishop Walcher, when he saw that the monks of Jarrow (after the Danish invasions) wished to restore their destroyed habitations, granted to Aldwin¹ the vill of Jarrow with its appendages, viz., Preston,² Monkton, Heworth, Hebburn, Westoe, and Harton, that they might be able to complete their work and live without want. In the later charter bishop St. Carilef granted to the Benedictine monks, whom he had settled at Durham, two vills on the farther side of the Tyne, namely, Willington and Wallsend,³ and, in addition, confirmed to them whatever bishop Walcher, his predecessor, gave to them, namely, the vills of Jarrow, Preston,⁴ Monkton, Heworth, Hebburn, Westoe, and Harton. As Wallsend is not mentioned in Walcher's grant, it is apparent that it formed part of the original possessions of the congregation of St. Cuthbert

¹ *Symeon. Dunel.* (Rolls Edit.) 1, 110.

² Now Simonside.—Ed.

³ *Feodarium Prior. Dunelm.* (58 Surt. Soc. publ.), p. xli.

⁴ *Ibid.*

of Durham, and that Carilef, when he turned the congregation out of Durham in 1082, replaced the seculars by the Benedictines previously settled at Jarrow, afterwards proceeding to divide between himself and the Jarrow monks the old endowments of the congregation of St. Cuthbert amongst which Wallsend is numbered.

As bearing on the date of the erection of the church, and proving its existence in the middle of the twelfth century, an undated charter of Henry the second⁵ (1154-89) may be remarked. In it, reference is made by the monks at Durham to Wallsend and its chapel (*cum capella sua*) and Willington with its appurtenances. Several charters also of bishop Pudsey could be cited about 1155 in which, as a witness, the name occurs of Alan, priest of Wallsend. Among these charters is the grant made to Durham by Ralph de Gaugy of the church at Ellingham. The frequency of the name suggests that Alan may have been of the bishop's council. A bull, *c.* 1180, from pope Urban to Germanus, prior of Durham, confirms to him *inter alia* the church of Wallsend.⁶

In the Jarrow account rolls⁷ are several entries relating to Wallsend, including one of 1347 wherein the master of the house at Jarrow accounts for 4*l.* received from William de Tynemouth, chaplain, for the fine of the chapel of Wallsend, leased to him for ten years. In 1369 and for several years thereafter,⁸ the monks of Jarrow were in receipt of 13*s.* 4*d.* from the chapel of Wallsend. An entry in 1408,⁹ contains the statement that 'nothing is received from the altarage [offerings to the altar, Easter oblations, etc.] and profits of the chapel of Wallsend, because the chaplain has received the whole profit there in place of his stipend'; and in the roll for 1432¹⁰ it is set out that nothing is

⁵ *Feodarium Prior. Dunel.* (58 Surt. Soc. publ.), p. lxxxiv.

⁶ *Hist. Dunel. Scrip. Tres* (9 Surt. Soc. publ.), lvii.

⁷ 29 Surt. Soc. publ. 31. ⁸ *Ibid.* 51, 56, 59. ⁹ *Ibid.* 83. ¹⁰ *Ibid.* 98.

received from the fisheries on the north side of the water of Tyne, nor from the small tithes and oblations of the chapelry of Wallsend, because they are assigned to the maintenance of the chaplain thereof. Presumably the cell of Jarrow had the great tithes and leased out the small tithes instead of paying a stipend, the chaplain at Wallsend receiving the minor fees or dues in return for a fixed annual rent of one mark.

The halmote rolls¹¹ record an order made in 1379 wherein 'it is enjoyned on all tenants of the vill on the one part, and on William the chaplain, that none gainsay another for the future, under pain of payment of half a mark.' The cause of the order is not indicated, but it is sufficiently clear that the chaplain and his neighbours possibly encountered each other on commercial affairs after the manner of the prior of Tynemouth and the good people of North Shields.¹² In the rental roll of the bursar at Durham is an entry dated 1539, from the chaplain at Wallsend, 'for a cottage and garden nil because they are waste.'¹³

The church continued to be used until 1797, when Mr. William Clark conceived the idea of repairing it, but selling the estate to Mr. Anthony Hood, he relinquished the project¹⁴; dilapidation followed, and the ruins gradually diminished.¹⁵ Their extent in 1843 is shewn by the late G. B. Richardson in a drawing in the possession of the society. In 1869 only the porch and the west gable existed as depicted by a photograph

¹¹ *Durham Halmote Rolls*, I (82 Surtees Soc. publ.), 155.

¹² *New History of Northumberland*, vol. VIII, 289.

¹³ *Feod. Prior. Dunel.*, 306.

¹⁴ Mackenzie, *History of Northumberland*, II, 464.

¹⁵ Services were conducted in a schoolroom after this for a number of years, until, indeed, the bishop of Durham threatened to excommunicate the churchwardens; the parishioners thereupon procured an act of parliament for the erection of the present church near to Willington. The foundation stone of this edifice was laid 10th November, 1807, and it was dedicated on 27th April, 1809.

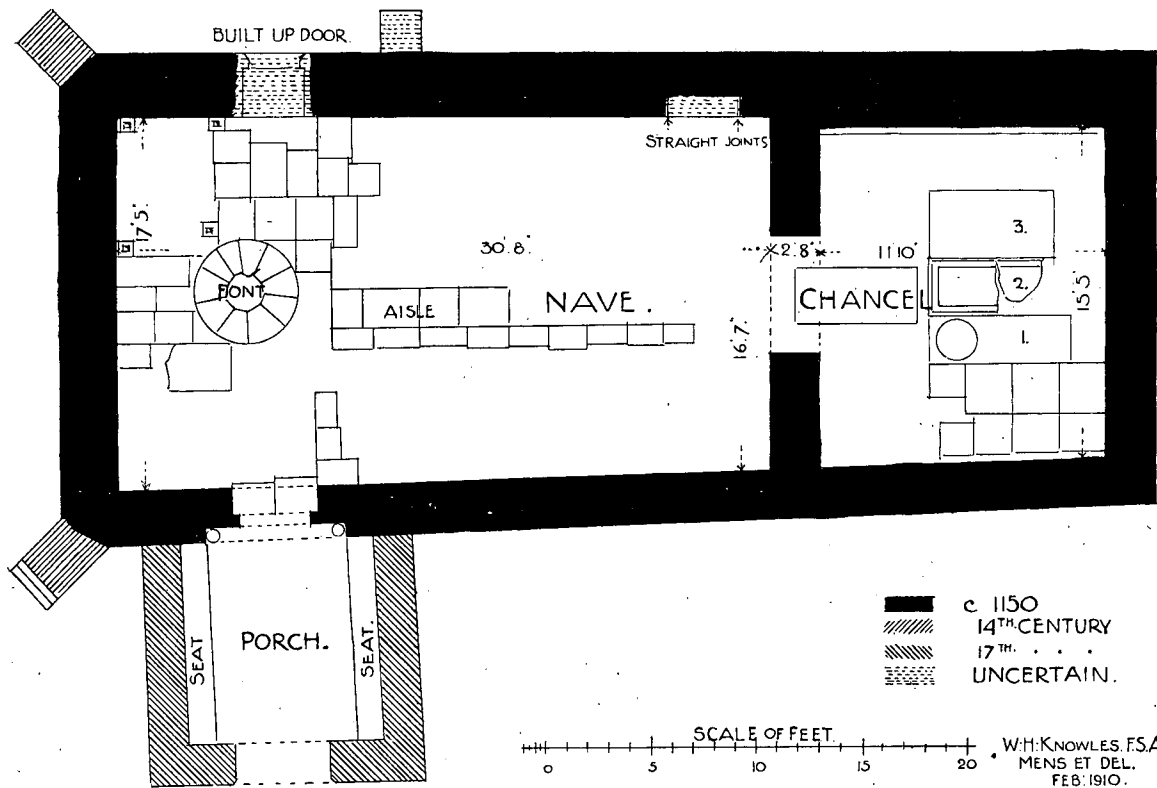


FIG. 1.—PLAN OF HOLY CROSS CHURCH, WALSSEND.

in our *Proceedings*,¹⁶ and at the time of the reparation recently undertaken, the porch alone was visible.¹⁷

In the autumn of 1909, the churchwardens and overseers determined to restore the fragment remaining, to excavate the site of the church, to collect the gravestones lying about in the open space and to provide for their reception and preservation within an enclosed area. The execution of this work has resulted in the recovery of the plan of the church, and of other interesting discoveries which are recorded below.

From Wallsend the approach to the churchyard is by a series of flights of steep stone steps. The church is a simple parallelogram, and measures externally 52 feet by 22 feet 6 inches. It comprised an aisleless nave and chancel, with a south door, which, fortunately, still exists. The details of this door sufficiently indicate that the building was erected about the middle of the twelfth century, and is confirmatory of the documentary evidence which proves its existence previous to 1155. (See the plan.)

The side walls incline to the east, the width of the chancel being 15 feet 5 inches, and of the nave at the west end 17 feet 5 inches. The length of the chancel is 11 feet 10 inches and of the nave 30 feet 8 inches. Excepting about the south door, the walls are not more than two or three feet above the floor level, and possess no architectural features: nor did careful search over the area of the chancel furnish foundations of a previous structure, or eastern termination of different width or form.

¹⁶ *Proc. Soc. Antiq. Newc.*, 2 ser. I, 22.

¹⁷ According to tradition the church was the scene of a thrilling adventure by one of the lords of Delaval, who was returning home after nightfall and observed the church brilliantly lighted. Riding recklessly forward to satisfy his curiosity he saw a number of hags occupied in the preparation of charms about a corpse. How Lord Delaval bravely burst in upon the assembly and dispersed the company and the after result is set out in Richardson's *Table Book, Legendary Division*, I, 395.

The chancel walls are of varying thickness, that on the north being greater than the adjoining nave wall. The wall containing the chancel arch is 2 feet 8 inches in thickness, and the width between the jambs of the arch 5 feet 7 inches.

The walling enclosing the south nave door remains to a height of 14 feet. The door is semi-circular in form, of two orders, the inner one is un moulded and continues to the floor

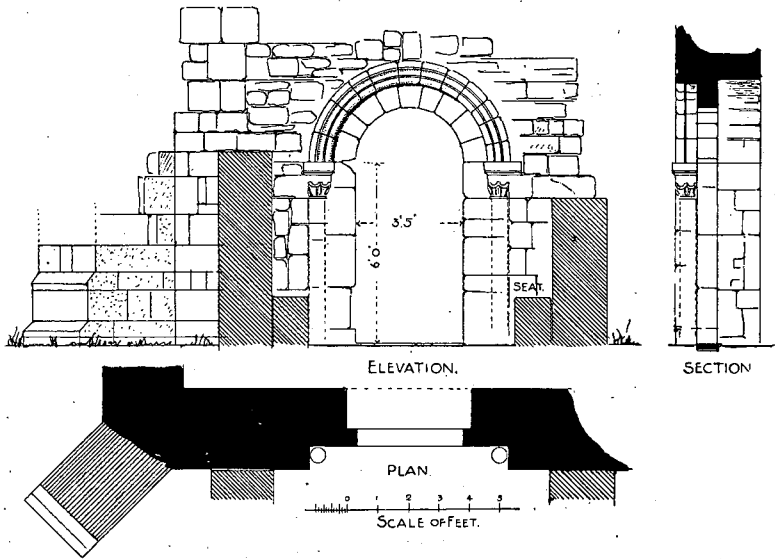


FIG. 2.—THE SOUTH DOORWAY AND SOUTH-WEST ANGLE OF NAVE.

without impost or base. The outer order is moulded with an angle roll, and a double-quirked flat hollow on the face. The arch springs from a chamfered and quirked abacus or impost, carried on a detached angle shaft, of which the capitals only remain. The latter are worked on a long stone with a double scallop to the south and interior faces. An incised line follows the semi-circular faces of the scallops, the cones of which are

divided by a rude leaf. The shafts and their bases have long since been destroyed. The rear-arch is without mouldings. In the west jamb (fig. 2) there are several stones larger than the rest, one of which is holed and may previously have served another purpose. They appear to be re-used Roman material similar to stones which occur in the churches at Corbridge and

Chollerton, which, like Wallsend, are near to Roman stations. In the north nave wall are the chamfered jambs of a built-up door opening, and at the east end of the same wall the straight joints of an opening of which there is no indication on the exterior. Fragments of plaster cover the faces of all the walls, including the openings just mentioned. The circular paved platform on which the font stood was uncovered, and in the north-west angle of the nave (see the plan, fig. 1) are four holed

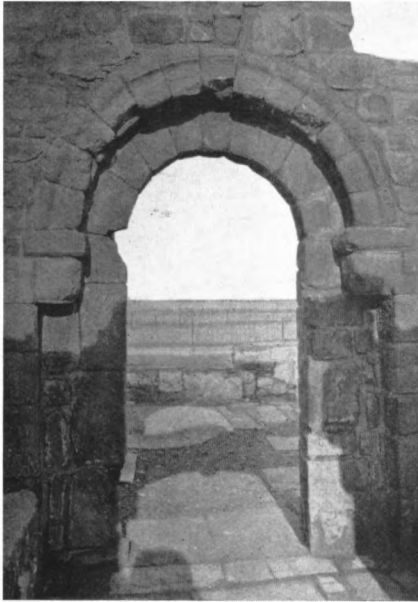


FIG. 3.—THE SOUTH DOORWAY.

post stones, possibly intended to secure the framework of a light screen to enclose a vestry space. Some flagged pavement occupies the area between the north and south doors, the central nave aisle and the chancel. The three grave covers indicated on the plan were also discovered and are described below.

In the fourteenth century the west gable was strengthened

by the erection of diagonal buttresses, the lower courses of which now remain, including two plain weathered offsets (fig. 2). The square buttress on the north nave wall is of later date, and is not bonded into the walling.

The projecting porch was added in the seventeenth century; a flat chamfered arch spans the opening and springs from a moulded impost. In one of the drawings by the late G. B. Richardson a panel is shewn above the arch, but this has long since disappeared.

The shape of the nave, a double cube on plan, the indications of the great height of the walls as compared with the width of the nave, and the narrow opening of the chancel arch are all characteristic features of the striking and impressive work of the early Norman period. The church, which would in Norman times be lighted with small round headed windows, placed high in the walls, seems to have been of the severely plain type, suited to the exposed position which it occupied. If any architectural feature of value adorned the fabric it is strange that no fragment, excepting a few pieces of double chamfered mullions of late date, have survived. The distant and detached position of the site has not availed against local depredation. The masonry generally is of squared stones, roughly coursed, that on the west gable being the best of the early work. The diagonal buttresses and the south elevation of the added porch are of ashlar courses. In the south wall of both nave and chancel the stones are somewhat smaller and the wall bears the appearance of having been more or less rebuilt.

Remains of contemporary churches of like extent to that of Holy Cross are not uncommon. One of similar dimensions once existed at North Gosforth.¹⁸ Another with a nave of equal width and possibly area, is St. Mary's, Jesmond,¹⁹ and a third example in the little Norman chapel at Seaton Delaval.

¹⁸ *Arch. Ael.*, 2nd ser. IX, 20

¹⁹ *Arch. Ael.*, 3rd ser. I, 144.

The bowl of the font now at St. Peter's church, Wallsend (fig. 4), was obtained in 1891 from Carville hall. It is said, with great probability, to have belonged to the church of the

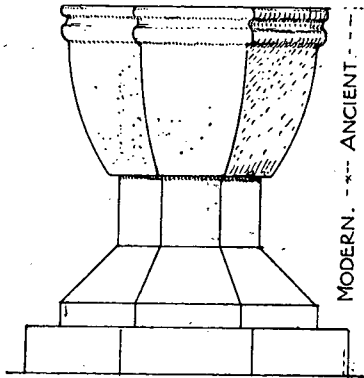


FIG. 4. — THE FONT.

Holy Cross. It is octagonal shaped on plan, with curved sides moulded on the top edge, and measures 2 feet 6 inches in diameter and 1 foot 9½ inches in height.

In the graveyard are quite a number of eighteenth century memorials;²⁰ several of them represent descendants of the persecuted Huguenots who were constrained to leave Lorraine, and engaged in glass making from 1620 on the banks of the Tyne.

Among the additional gravestones recently brought to light, are three in the chancel, shewn on the plan (fig. 1). That marked 1. is to George Hewbanke,²¹ who lived at Carville hall, the inscription is surmounted by a shield with arms: *Three chevrons interlaced, on a chief three annulets*, and crest: in a wreath a dragon's head; 2. The inscription within a border is to Francis George Raine, 'cumtime' minister²²; 3. Is to Richard

²⁰ Copies of the epitaphs and the position of the stones have been carefully recorded on a plan now with the churchwardens of St. Peter's.

²¹ The Burial Place of George Hewbanke, Master & Mariner, & Elizabeth, his wife. She departed this life, September ye 24th, 1710, in the 57th year of her Age. He had issue by her 7 Children, three whereof survived her (viz.) John, George and Sarah. In Papworth, arms are given for Ewbank, and are emblazoned: *Sable three chevrons interlaced gold, in a chief gold three annulets sable*. Burke gives a similar shield for Ewbank, co. Durham, with sable roundels on the chief in place of the annulets. He gives the crest in a coronet gules a dragon's head gold.

²² Francis George Raine, clarke, and cumtime Minister of this church with wife Margaret and . . . September, 1625. ther daughter Depected the 25 of July, 1626, his wife was daughter to Richard Stotte, merchant.

Hindmarsh, and others.²³ Another stone with a coat of arms: *A lion passant between two escallops, one in chief and one in base,* and crest: a hand grasping a dagger, records the burial place of Joseph Bonner,²⁴ a merchant adventurer, who died in 1757,

²³ Richard Hindmarsh dyed ye 12 day of November 1667. Elizabeth his wife dyed ye 6 day of January 1675. Elizabeth ye wife of John Hindmarsh who departed this life 16 of Aprill: Anno Dni. 1702. John Hindmarsh He dyed ye 1st November 1707 aged ninetie years. Richard Hindmarsh Esq. who departed this life ye 15 of Aprill: Anno Dni. 1703 aged 58 years.

²⁴ In memory of Joseph Bonner who died Febry. the 12th 1757 aged 62 years. Also Elizabeth his wife who died August the 4th 1762 aged 60 years. Also Elizabeth their daughter who died June the 5th 1740 aged 19 years. And likewise is Interred here the Remains of Isabella Swan Grand-Daughter of the above Joseph Bonner who Departed this life the 22nd of June 1780 aged 15 years.

In 1907, Mr. J. C. Hodgson, F.S.A., contributed some 'Epitaphs in Wallsend Old Churchyard' to the Society's *Proceedings* (3rd ser. III, 58). Additions to this list are the three described above and the following:—

1.—'The burial place of John [Hails]on and M[ary] his wife. Mich[al] their Son, died January 19th, 1786, aged 30 years. Margaret, their daughter, died 28 of March, 1781, aged 38 years. Also [the above] named John [Hails]on departed [January 16th] 1791, aged [60 years].'

2.—

E

I A

1731

3.—'In memory of William Parker, late Tide [Surveyor of] Howdon Dock, who [departed th]is Life, July 17th, 1793, aged 67.'

4.—In memo[ry of] William [Young], late of Wal[lsend], who died D[ecember 18th], 1802, aged 81.'

5.—'. . . Elizabeth Mann of Wallsend, . . . Farmer, John Mann, son of the above, died May 9th, 1782, aged 11 years, Elizabeth Mann, wife of the above John Mann, died July 13th, 1783, aged 38 years. The above John Mann died Oct. 15th, 1789, aged 58 years. Elizabeth Mann, daughter of the above John and Elizabeth Mann, died Feb. 7th, 1790, aged 21 years, Also Two of their Children died young.'

6.—'In memory of Mary, wife of John Robinson, Shipwright of Howdon pans, Also of their children, viz., Joseph and Will^m, who both died in infancy in 1791, and John, who died in infancy in 1793. The above named Mary Robinson departed this life May 10th, 1797, Aged 28 years. Alice Robinson, died March 15th, aged [4 years]. Also the above John

aged 62 years, from whom was descended the wife of Cuthbert Ellison of Hebburn, grandfather of the present Lord Northbourne.



FIG. 5.—COMMUNION PLATE.

Robinson, died at Norfolk, in Virginia, Sepr. 12th, 1801: aged 33 years, also John Robinson, son of the above John Robinson, died Sepr. 12th, 1803, aged 4 years.'

- 7.—' Here lyeth ye body of Ambrose Bunn, who depted this Life, May ye 12th, 1689.'
- 8.—' [Here lieth] the body of R. T. Watson [husband of] Dorothy Watson [who died] November [1st, 1778, aged 57] years. [Also the above Dorothy, who died 19 November, 1768, aged 74 years.]'

Two pieces of seventeenth century communion plate of silver are in use at the modern St. Peter's church, one a cup, possibly of Newcastle make, and the salver, most likely of foreign manufacture (fig. 5). The salver, probably made for secular purposes, is 11 inches in diameter. It has two hall marks: (i) a castle and (ii) the maker's initials, I.H., with a star over. Its wide border of admirable repoussé work is decorated with flowers and foliage, amid which are four panels with figure subjects representing the seasons.²⁵

During the excavations six coins were found: (1) A sixpence of Edward VI, with m.m. a tun, in very bad condition; (2) a turner of James VI of Scotland, 2nd coinage, 1623; (3) small copper coin of 1642, with 3 lilies on reverse, probably French; (4) a 'cart wheel' penny (1797) of George III; (5) a Nuremberg jetton or abbey piece, with ship on one side and a shield on other; and (6) an indecipherable copper coin.

²⁵ For description of the communion plate see *Proc.*, 2 ser. III, 244.