

Notice of an Antique Watch

IN THE POSSESSION OF MRS. HOLMES OF GAWDY HALL.

COMMUNICATED BY

THE REV. A. M. HOPPER, M.A.

THE beautiful Watch, of which a representation is here given, was discovered about seventy years ago secreted in a recess behind the tapestry, which then covered the walls, in the dining-room of Gawdy Hall. Together with it were found two Apostle Spoons and some papers relating to the troublous period of Cromwell.

From the inscription in the interior of the Watch,—“DAVID RAMSAY, SCOTTES, ME FECIT,”—there can be but little doubt but that it is the workmanship of the famous David Ramsay, horologer to James I., in whose shop the opening scenes of “The Fortunes of Nigel” are laid.

It is in the form of a star, or rather of an heraldic mullet of six points. The surfaces of the case on either side are flat, with a broad bevilling down to the rim of the lids. These surfaces are elaborately chased: on the front is the representation of the Holy Child in the manger at Bethlehem: on the reverse, that of the Adoration of the Wise Men. In the interior of the lids are engraved in like manner, the Annunciation and the Salutation. Round the sides of the case from angle to angle runs a scroll-work, containing figures of animals, admirably chiselled,—the fox, goat, hare, hound, bear, unicorn, &c.

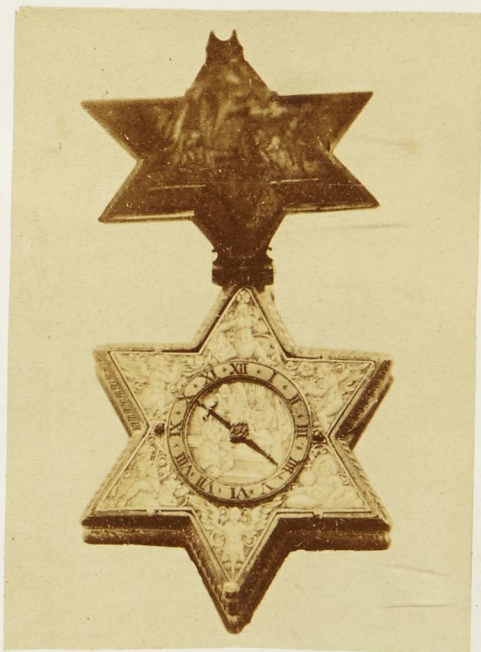


Silver Watch

OF THE XVIIITH CENTURY.

In the possession of the Family of
Holmes of Sawdy Hall.

OUTSIDE.



Silver Watch

OF THE XVIITH CENTURY.

In the possession of the Family of
Holmes of Gandy Hall.

INSIDE, SHEWING DIAL.

The material of which the case is made is silver, of a peculiarly pure quality : the rims of the sides are gilt.

On raising the front lid, the face of the watch is disclosed : it is of chased silver, having in the centre a representation of the Presentation in the Temple ; and in the angles, figures of angels : in the uppermost corner is the legend, "DE HECK SCULP." On a gilt circle, raised slightly above it, are the hours marked by one diagonal pointer.

On opening the lid on the reverse side, the outer frame of the works is seen, bearing the inscription above-mentioned—"David Ramsay, Scottes, me fecit." By pressing together two little pegs on the face of the watch, which act upon springs, the whole of the works become detached from, and slip out of, the case. The mechanism is of a very simple and primitive character : the movement is vertical ; there is no centre wheel ; and the balance-wheel is remarkably small.

Such is a passing description of this beautiful work of art. If we may hazard a conjecture as to its history, it probably was once the property of the last of the Gawdys, of Gawdy Hall. About the year 1650, Charles Gawdy mortgaged the estate to Tobias Frere, M.P. for Norwich under the Commonwealth, who afterwards seized it by sequestration ; and there is a tradition still current that it was not till after a regular siege that he gained possession of the Old Hall. Perhaps, in the confusion of that event, this watch, with other valuables, was secreted.

From Tobias Frere the estate of Gawdy Hall passed to the Wogans ; and from them to their descendant, Mr. Sancroft Holmes, in whose family the watch remains an heir-loom.

The size of the watch is, in breadth from point to point, an inch and three-quarters ; in thickness, three-quarters of an inch.