PLATE VIII.

BIDE MY TIME

Given by Jonathan Gordon from the Corporation of the City of Lincoln Anno Dom. 1761 to the Sequestrators

Limerick Silver Freedom Boxes.

By J. N. A. Wallace.

Early this year I was privileged to examine a very fine Limerick Silver Freedom Box, a photograph of which (top and bottom) is here reproduced.

This box is very well made and finely finished. It is circular, with a diameter of 4 inches and a depth of just over 1 inch, the lid or cover is slightly domed and it weighs 7 oz. 6 dwt. The maker was the well-known Limerick silversmith, Joseph Johns. His mark, a lion rampant between the capital letters I I is stamped on the inside of the cover and also on the bottom of the box.

On the lid is engraved the arms of the City of Limerick, a double towered and embattled gateway with portcullis and from a staff fixed on the conical roof over the gateway flies a pennant decorated with a cross. Around the arms, close to the rim of lid, is engraved in plain cypher the following dedicatory inscription : "To the Right Honble. John Earl of Loudoun from the Corporation of the City Limerick 1st of July 1751."

On the bottom of the box is engraved the Loudoun arms, crest, motto, and supporters embellished with the usual mantlings. These may be described as follows: —Arms. A gyronny of eight, gules and ermine. Crest. A double-headed eagle displayed rising out of flames, a small sun or star over the dexter head of eagle. Motto. On a ribbon under arms : "I Bide my Time." Supporters. Dexter, a man in armour, plumed on the head with three feathers (gules), and holding with the right hand a spear in bend proper ; sinister, a lady richly appareled, plumed on the head with three feathers (argent) and holding in the left hand a letter of challenge.

The Earls of Loudoun were scions of Scottish Campbell family, and John, the Limerick freeman, was the 4th Earl, succeeding his father in 1731. He died unmarried in 1782.

I am indebted to Dr. Hayes McCoy of the National Museum for the following details of the Earl's military life. The Earl's own regiment, the old 54th Highlanders, was disbanded in 1749, after the '45 rebellion, but he commanded the 30th regiment of foot from that date to 1770. The 30th regiment (later the Cambridgeshire regiment; now the East Lancashire Regiment) came to Ireland late in 1748 or in 1749, and was commanded by General Frampton. Its first quarters were chiefly in Kilkenny and Duncannon Fort, but in the end of the year four of its companies were moved up from Duncannon and Dungarvan to Kilkenny, Philipstown and that area. Frampton died during the year and John Campbell, 4th Earl of Loudoun (1705-1782) succeeded him in command on November 1st, 1749. During 1749 the 26th and 28th regiment were in Limerick. The 1750 alterations included the movement of Loudoun's 30th regiment from Kilkenny to Limerick, to form (with the 29th and 35th foot, also moved there) the garrison of Limerick, the 26th and 28th foot being moved elsewhere. In 1752 the 30th regiment was in Kinsale. From these troop movements one may conjecture that the Freedom of Limerick with the silver box was conferred on the commanding officer on the regiment leaving the city. Loudoun was at this time a Major General in the army.

Elsewhere in this journal, Mr. R. Herbert contributes a paper on *The Antiquities of the Corporation of Limerick.* These include a list of Freemen, with the dates on which that honour was conferred on each individual. The Earl's name appears in this list on the date as engraved on the box, namely 1st July, 1751. The mayor of the city for this year was James Smyth, with W. Wakely, senr., and J. S. Tavener as sheriffs.

The National Museum in Dublin has in its possession another Limerick Silver Freedom Box, similar in shape, but smaller than Loudoun's box, it weighs only 5 ozs. and was made also by Joseph Johns. The inscription engraved around the city arms on the lid reads: —"The Corporation of the City of Limerick to Nicholas Bonfoy Esqr." The National Museum acquired this box at the Day sale in London. The freedom was conferred on Bonfoy on the 4th June, 1755. The Mayor being Stepney Rawson and the Sheriffs, Edward Villiers and Joseph Johns. You will notice the prominent position held in the city by Joseph Johns, the maker of both these boxes.