Old Church Silver of East Killaloe.

By the Rev. R. Wyse Jackson.

(A Record of the Plate in the Protestant Churches).

The Diocesan unit of East Killaloe corresponds roughly with the ancient Ely O'Carroll territory. That is to say, it is an area extending from South Offaly through North Tipperary, towards the northern boundary of County Limerick, and it may be defined as a triangle around its three principal towns of Roscrea, Birr and Nenagh. One piece of silver—the Dunkerrin "Jane Carroll" chalice, preserves the name of the ruling family of early times.

Within this area there is a quantity of interesting Church silver, some of it dating from pre-Cromwellian times. There is, too, a substantial group of pieces belonging to the early part of the Eighteenth century. It is tempting to see in these chalices and patens of Ballingarry, Ballinaclough, Templederry, Ettagh, Shinrone and Dunkerrin, a practical answer to Archbishop King's comment on the unfurnished state of Killaloe Diocese during the last years of the reign of George I.

"As to Killaloe, for all I can learn, 'tis in a miserable condition, both as to churches, the cures and the discipline... An active, prudent and experienced man ought to be placed here that may be able to go through with his business, and that may have skill and courage to reform what is amiss."

The Archbishop had hoped that a strong bishop might be appointed in 1714 to put matters right, and it would certainly seem as if an effort were made to provide suitable vessels for the celebration of the Holy Communion, for several of the local landlords at this period presented handsome pieces to their parish churches.

Needless to say, much of the Diocesan plate is modern. In this paper we have not attempted to catalogue anything later than the 18th century, nor to deal with the Sheffield Plate of the Diocese. On adequate terrier of this exists in manuscript in the Library of the Representative Church Body, Dublin.

For the non-existence of all the ancient plate that once must have existed there are many reasons. Obviously, much have disappeared during the troubles of the 17th century. On the whole, it is surprising that even Roscrea, Birr, Lockeen and English still have silver from before 1641. And other pieces may well have been pillaged during 1798, as an anecdote related below suggests. Often silver was lost by careless guardians; other pieces were stolen even within comparatively recent times. Thus the Ballymackey silver of 1828 was purchased, as the contemporary Vestry Minutes of 1826 note, at the cost of £15 9s. 6d. to replace the original chalice and paten stolen from the church. Again, many of the parish churches were re-founded in quite modern times and have chalices and patens of 19th century silver or Sheffield plate. Thus, for example, the Church of Kilruane was built in 1822, following a meeting held in the long abandoned ruins of the mediaeval church, and the plate records the date. Or, again, after some two centuries of lay improprition and neglect, the Parish of Corbally recommenced its church life by holding services in a derelict mill lent by John D. Hutchinson, and the Sheffield plate Communion service records that fact.

"Parish of Corbally
Divine Service opened at Timoney Mill
2nd August 1829."

Or, again, as the custom was, ancient silver may have been given in part exchange for new pieces, or old vessels may have been re-modelled, as seems the case with the English paten of 1559.

Nearly all the chalices described, save one beautiful piece of mediaeval design in use at Roscrea, are of the rather heavy post-Reformation style, with large bowls. Some seem of exaggerated size when we consider the comparative smallness of the congregations served—for example, the chalices of the adjoining country parishes of Shinrone and Aghaneen. Perhaps we may see here something of a reactionary tradition from the small-bowed mediaeval chalice.
Before cataloguing the silver of East Killaloe proper, it is worth mentioning something about the plate of Seirkieran, which is an anomalous part of the Diocese of Ossory, entirely surrounded by Killaloe territory. The monastic foundation of Seirkieran, near Birr, and in the Barony of Ballybritt, is one of the oldest Christian settlements in Ireland, and this little "island" parish is the mother Church of Ossory Diocese. Perhaps it was in honour of its antiquity that, shortly after the Battle of the Boyne, Queen Mary presented it to a service of plate "in token of her gratitude to the Almighty for the preservation of her husband in that important conflict." (Cooke, History of Birr). A similar gift went to Castlecomer parish at the same time. This still exists and is in the care of Captain Prior-Wandesforde. It is inscribed:

"Ex dono Mariae Serenissimae
Angliae &c Reginae in usum
Ecclae Bmae Mariae &c Castlecomer
Obit 28 Xbris 94
Honi Soit Qui Mal y Pense
Dieu et mon Droit."

But, unfortunately, the Seirkieran plate did not survive, owing to an odd succession of accidents. To continue in the phrasing of Cooke—"During the troubles of 1798 this plate was taken from the gentleman who had care of it, and having been subsequently recovered through the influence of the Roman Catholic Parish Priest, in a very battered condition, it was repaired and re-gilt at the expense of the parish. However, it afterwards vanished completely, no person knows where."
It appears from Vestry records that soon after 1798, during the incumbency of the Rev. Matthew Wood, who lived to be a hundred, this silver was placed for safe keeping in some unrecorded location. This was distinctly unfortunate, as no one has ever discovered it since. Perhaps it may even still be in existence, and may some day follow the example of a previously unrecorded Cromwellian Communion set which was found a few years ago in a dusty tin box in one of the banks of Enniscorhony.

The present old plate of Seiridian comprises three pieces—a large chalice 12 inches high, and a paten, both of 1808 Dublin silver made by William Law, and also a similar chalice of 1730-31 Dublin silver, without maker's mark, and inscribed with the crest of a wolf (?) passant. Curiously enough, this plate very nearly went the way of the Queen Mary set, having been stolen out of the Church in 1928, only to be found by chance half buried in the mud at the verge of the local stream.

It must be noted that this paper deals only with the plate of the Eastern part of the Diocese. In West Killaloe (Co. Clare), there are some interesting pieces not described here—notably two chalices and patens in Ennis, dating from 1685, a chalice and paten of 1713 in Kilnamagh; a chalice and paten of 1775 in Kilsheel; and, perhaps, most interesting of all, a chalice in Kilfenora cathedral which records in its inscription that it is:

"Caelix Ecclesiae Cathedrales Finnborensis."

and that it was bought:

"Neptuno Blood Decano Anno Domini 1665."(1)

AGHANCON.

Chalices—Large chalice, 12 inches high, 5½ inches across top, 5½ inches at base. Capacity some two pints. Small chalice of similar design. Both are of Dublin silver, bearing the date letter for 1788, and the maker's mark of Joseph Jackson, who also made the Finne Plate.

Paten—6 inches across, on three feet, Dublin silver of 1788, bearing the mark of Michael Homer of Dublin. All pieces are inscribed as follows:

"The GIFT of
John Darby Esqr MERCHANT of London
to the Church of Aghancon."

This John Darby, of London and of Markley in Sussex, was the third son of Jonathan Darby of Leap Castle, King's County. He succeeded to Leap on the death of his elder brother, Admiral Sir Henry D'Esterre Darby in 1823.

BALLINACLOUGH.

Paten of Sheffield plate, oval, supported on four feet of shell design, beaded edge, inscribed with crest, an arm clad in mail grasping a dagger.

Chalices of design to match, 6¾ inches high, 3½ inches across top and base, beaded ornamentation on foot and around stem. London silver, bearing the date letter for 1774 and the maker's mark of Charles Wright. No inscription.

Collecting plate or paten, saucer-shaped, 1¼ inches deep, 8½ inches across, Dublin silver without a maker's mark, but bearing the date letter for 1717-18. Engraved with arms as follows—azure, nine estoiles, argent, impaling what is intended for Neale, but really resembles O'Neill arms. These arms belong to John Bayly of Debsborough, Co. Tipperary, who was born on June 17th, 1691, and who married on July 7th, 1720, Deborah, daughter of the Venerable Benjamin Neale, Archdeacon of Leitrim. After her husband's death she married in 1736 Henry Prittie of Kilboy, Nenagh, the ancestor of the Dunclay family. (See Kilmore Parish, infra).

1. (Neptune Blood had an extraordinary career; he was the only cleric of the diocese of Killaloe or Kilfenora who, having been in a benefice there before 1641, still survived as a clergyman of the Diocese after the Restoration—a remarkable feat through those twenty years of turmoil).

For an account of the Roman Catholic silver of the Diocese, see Mr. D. F. Gleeson's very full account in Molua, 1940.

I am indebted for much helpful information to Mr. T. U. Sadlier, Mr. M. S. D. Westropp, Mr. Liam O'Gog and Archdeacon St. J. Seymour.
BALLINGARRY.

Chalice, simple 18th century design, 9½ inches high, 4½ inches across at the top and foot. Underneath the foot is a crown, and on the bowl the Dublin marks, date letter for 1714-15, and the maker’s mark of Thomas Bolton. (2)

Paten, 5 inches across, 1½ inches high, foot 2½ inches across. Marks identical with those on the chalice. Inscribed (as is the chalice): —

"The Gift of Tho Sadler Esqr.
To Balingary Church
Nov ber 1714."

This Thomas Sadler was a member of one of those several Cromwellian families who presented church plate to the Diocese. Of Sopwell Hall, Co. Tipperary, he was born in 1642, became a Deputy Governor of the County, was High Sheriff in 1692 and 1695, and died in 1716. He was the only son of Colonel Thomas Sadler, M.P., of Cromwell’s army, who came to Ireland in 1649, and at various times was governor of Galway and Waterford. This Thomas settled down at Killenagh or Kilnahalah, in County Tipperary, the chief seat of the Brehon Carby MacEgan, changing its name to Sopwell after his English home.

BIRR.

The silver of Birr is remarkably fine and of early seventeenth century date. (For a particularly interesting paten, also preserved in Birr Church, see English, below).

Chalice, 9½ inches high, base 4½ inches across, top 4 inches across. Inscribed: —

"The Communion Cup of the Parishes Church of Parsonstowne, in the Kings Countie.* Anno Domini 1636."

Paten, 5½ inches across, foot 2½ inches across. Inscribed: —

"The Cover of the Communion Cup of the Parishes Church of Parsonstown in the Kings Countie.* Anno Domini 1636."

It is very probable that this chalice and paten were given by the Parsons family. In 1620 Sir Lawrence Parsons, the first of the ruling family, had acquired the ownership of the town by exchange, and before 1626 he added a tower to the old church of St. Brendan. Both chalice and paten bear a mark which is identified by Mr. M. S. D. Westropp as probably being that of John Woodcocke, who was Warden of the Goldsmiths’ Company in Dublin (The Guild of All Saints) in 1637, the first year of its incorporation.

There is a handsome modern (1910) flagon of Dublin silver by Edward Johnson, designed to match the old pieces and inscribed: —

"Bequeathed to Birr Parish Church, Parsonstown
by
Ellen Mary Woods
Born in Birr 31st March 1820
Died there 5 Dec. 1910."

DUNKERRIN.

Paten 6½ inches across, 2 inches high, foot 3½ inches across. Dublin silver, by Thomas Bolton, bearing the date letter for 1727-8. Inscribed in a circle: —

"The gift of Thomas Sfrank Esqr for the use of the Church of Dunkerrin anno 1726."

This Thomas Sfrank was a member of the local Dunkerrin family resident at Frankfort Castle.

2. (Bolton was one of the best known and most largely patronised Dublin makers of this period. We find other examples of his work in the Diocese in the parishes of Eltah, Dunkerrin and Killmore, and his output seems to have been phenomenal. For example, it is recorded that on one occasion alone he brought a 281 pound lot to be assayed. The son of Henry Bolton of Rathoath, clerk, he was apprenticed in 1675, became a freeman of the Dublin Goldsmiths’ Company in 1686, Master in 1692, and died in 1753.)
Chalice, 9 inches high, top and base 4½ inches in diameter; Inscribed in two lines:

"Ye 26th October 1698
The gift of Jane Carroll Deceased to the Parish Church of Don Karin."

Jane Carroll was a member of the old Irish family of O'Carroll, one of whose members, the widow of "The Great" Mulrooney O'Carroll, built the mediaeval Franciscan abbey at Roscrea. Jane was probably related to Robert Carroll of Emell Castle, King's County, whose will is dated 16th October, 1710.

The markings on this chalice are puzzling, and appear to be unique, though similar in some ways to those on the Knockgrafton Chalice of 1712 in Cashel Diocese, described by Archdeacon Seymour. They consist of the two incised marks, twice repeated. (Fig 2a). repeated.

Clearly the comb-shaped object is intended to resemble a battlemented building; the masonry work is quite distinct. It is not enclosed in a shield. The letters are either "I.B." or "H.B." Unless further evidence comes to light, it would seem impossible to be certain about the origin of this piece. The most probable conjecture seems to the writer to be that the battlemented mark may be the Limerick Castle symbol, and that the maker's mark is that of one of the Buck family who flourished in Limerick about the beginning of the Eighteenth Century. For example, the Bruhenny Flagon of Buttevant, which dates from before 1715, bears the letters "I.B." as does a 1720 paten in St. Mary's Cathedral in Limerick, and a 1732 chalice in Kilmeedy (Limerick).

![H B 1579](Fig 2. (a) Marks on Dunkerrin Chalice. (b) Engraved date on Eglish Paten.)

There is also an unidentified mark, "H.B." joined, of 1663, in conjunction with a ship (3) (which was used on Cork silver from this period up to 1712), and which is attributed to a Cork maker. Possibly, then, this Dunkerrin chalice is a Cork piece.

EGLISH.

Belonging to this country church near Birr, are a silver chalice and paten of 1819 and a small Tudor paten of great interest.

Paten 5½ inches in diameter, shallow plate shaped with flat rim, ¾ inch wide, similar in design to the William Miagh paten of Thurles. (J.R.S.A.I., March, 1939; p. 37). Inscribed in very crude, scratchy, amateurish script around the top of the rim is:

"Ye church at Eglish 1775."

There is also inscribed below the rim a date, 1559, in typical Tudor figures (reproduced below). The only mark is "G.M."—the mark of George Moore of Limerick, who was working 1768-1784 (See North Munster Arch. Journal, 1939; p. 160). The front is covered with deep scratches, the result of an Eighteenth Century custom of cutting the Communion bread on the paten during the service (A silver knife for that purpose is preserved in the church of Fethard, Co. Tipperary). (Fig 2b).

Now, it was typical of the mid-sixteenth century to date church silver in this way, and many similar examples exist. The shape and style is typical English post-Reformation—there is an almost identical paten, dated 1549-50, at St. James's, Garlickhithe, and another of 1549 of St. Mildred's, Bread Street, London. The style is quite distinct from the ornamented pre-Reformation patens, and we may well place this piece as one of the earliest, if not the earliest, Irish patens of its kind.

There would be no possible doubt as to its early Elizabethan date but for the 18th century inscription and George Moore's mark. It seems possible to reconcile the evidence only by supposing that the old paten was inscribed and possibly repaired by him some two hundred years after its original manufacture, and that he took the opportunity of stamping it with his mark in token of the work he had done in 1775.

ETTAGH.

Chalice 9½ inches high, 4½ inches across at the top and foot. Inscribed around the top of the bowl:

"The Gift of Medhop Lloyd Esqr to the Church of Ettagh 1716."

Medhop Lloyd, of Gloster, Kings County, was the eldest son of Capt. Trevor Lloyd, by Rose, daughter and heiress of Francis Medhop, of Tonagh (Gloster), King's County.

In a circle underneath the foot is inscribed:

"Repaired 1860 at the Expense of John Lloyd Esqr & Church repewd., Rev'd. Telford MacDonagh, A.M., Rector."

This chalice is of Dublin silver, made by Thomas Bolton, and bearing the date letter for 1715.

Paten, 5 inches across, mounted on raised foot 2½ inches across base. Dublin silver made by Thomas Bolton and bearing the date letter for 1715-16. Inscription the same as that around the top of the chalice.

FINNOE.

Chalice and paten, Dublin silver, with beaded decorations, made by Joseph Jackson. The chalice bears the date letter for 1791, the paten that for 1785. Both are inscribed:

"Union of Finnoah, 1792."

KILMORE.

Chalice, 10½ inches high, 3½ inches across the top, 4 inches across the base, inscribed:

The Parrish Church of Kilmore anno 1713.

It bears underneath the base a crowned harp, and engraved, the figures "13," Dublin silver by Thomas Bolton, having the date letter for 1710-12.

Paten 6 inches across, on foot, 1½ inches high and 2 inches across the base, inscribed with the same wording. Dublin silver by Thomas Bolton, bearing the date letter (much worn) for 1710-12.

Kilmore Parish comprises the Silvermines district, near Nenagh, described in Dineley's "Tour." This silver was probably given by the Cromwellian family of Prittie, the ancestors of the Dunalley family. There is a handsome flagon of 1886 London silver, presented by Charles C. C. Webb.

LOCKEEN.

The neat chalice belonging to this parish is one of the oldest in the Diocese. Height 7½ inches, top 3½ inches across, base 3½ inches across, without any inscription, but having a hole in the side of the bowl repaired with a circular patch—possibly in place of some crest or other marking. London silver, bearing the date letter for 1636-8, and having a much-worn maker's mark, which is probably that of William Shute who, in 1627, made the flagon for All Hallows Church, Barking.

There is also in this parish a simple, uninscribed, dished paten, without foot, 6 inches across, and of 1822 London silver, probably by Philip Rundell, and a fine flagon, 8½ inches high, ornamented with gadrooning and inscribed with an "I.H.S." in Glory, of 1824 London silver, by William Eaton.
MODREENY.

Chalice of rather squat proportions, 5\(\frac{3}{4}\) inches high and 3\(\frac{1}{2}\) inches across at the top and base, decorated on the bowl and foot with broad bands of pointillé work, and inscribed in a band around the top of the bowl: —

“Sacris Sti Kerani Modriniansis, D Dq Humilimus Jesu Servus Johannes Harrison.”

Paten 4\(\frac{1}{2}\) inches across, mounted on a foot 3\(\frac{1}{4}\) inch high and 2\(\frac{1}{2}\) inches across, inscribed in a circle on the back with identical wording.

Modreeny is the mother church of the parish of Cloughjordan. This James Harrison built the town of Cloughjordan and occupied it with disbanded soldiers. His tombstone in Modreeny graveyard reads: —“Here lieth the body of James Harrison of Cloughjordan Esq., who died the 25th of July, 1727, in the 72nd year of his age.” He was a son of Colonel John Harrison, of Cromwell’s army, who had his debentures redeemed in or about Cloughjordan, died in June, 1697, and is also buried in Modreeny. The marriage of his granddaughter, the last of the line, into the Prittle family, united two important Cromwellian estates.\(^4\)

This silver bears no maker’s mark of any kind, but is typical of the end of the seventeenth century, and may be assigned to that period. Thus it is almost identical in shape, style and decoration with the Ballingarry (Limerick) chalice, which is dated 1691.

NENAGH.

Chalice 8\(\frac{1}{2}\) inches high, 3\(\frac{3}{4}\) inches across the top, 4\(\frac{1}{2}\) inches across the base, inscribed around the bowl: —

“Bought by Mr. Robert Minitt Churchwardin at ye Cost of ye Parish. 1669.”

On the underside of the base the weight is marked: —“12 oz. \(\frac{3}{4}\)” The Minitts came into Nenagh by the purchase of the Annaghbeg property from the Cromwellian grantee, Col. Pfox.

Dublin silver bearing the date letter for 1696-7-8 and the maker’s mark of Joseph Walker, who manufactured a paten, chalice and flagon for Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin.

Paten raised on foot, without inscription, except for the weight “6 oz \(\frac{1}{3}\)” and bearing identical marks.

Second paten, 6\(\frac{1}{2}\) inches across, raised on foot 2\(\frac{3}{4}\) inches high and three inches across base, bearing in a semi-circle the prosaic inscription: —

“Parish of Nenagh Bought in the year 1788 Cost £4 : 7 : 2.”

Dublin silver of 1787 by William Bond.

Associated with Nenagh is the Parish of Monsea, where there is an attractive little chalice and paten presented by another Cromwellian family, the Gasons.

Chalice, lip repaired, of 1810 Dublin silver, made by James Scott, and sold by W. Hamy, inscribed: —

“Given by Richd Gason Esqr For Mount sea Church.”

Paten without foot, with shallow depression and gadroon rim; Dublin silver of 1812, bearing the marks of James Le Bass and W. Hamy. Inscription on back as chalice.

\(^4\) For information about these persons, and for all the Diocesan area of East Killaloe, see D. F. Gleeson’s “Last Lords of Ormond,” as also Dwyer’s “History of the Diocese of Killaloe.”
ROSCEA.

Chalice, 8½ inches high, 4½ inches across the top, bowl 3½ inches deep, hexagonal foot 4½ inches across. Around the top of the bowl a strip of silver ½ inch wide has been welded on, thus deepening the bowl by this amount. This chalice is of rich pre-Reformation style and is a marked contrast from all the other very simple chalices in the diocese. The knop is richly decorated with raised work in the familiar winged cherubim's head design. The base is uninscribed except for the letters: —

'*SC*MP*

It has been suggested that this chalice may have been given on the occasion of the wedding of two persons bearing these initials.

There are no maker's or date markings of any kind, but considerations of design assign this piece to the second half of the seventeenth century.

Paten without foot, 5½ inches across, rim 3 inch across with gadrooned edge, dished centre, ½ inch deep. No markings, but inscribed on the rim with the same four letters as the chalice.

SHINRONE.

Chalice, 12½ inches high, base 5½ inches across, top 5 inches across. Dublin silver bearing the date letter for 1722-23, and a semi-obliterated maker's mark, which is probably that of John Robinson. Inscribed: —

"Ex Dono Elizabetha Baldwin Vudt in Vusum Ecclesia Shinrono."

Paten without foot, 11½ inches across, dished, with rim 1½ inches wide, inscribed on the rim: —

"The Gift of Mrs. Elizabeth Baldwin Widow to ye Church of Shinrone July the 5th, 1730."

Dublin silver bearing the date letter for 1733-34 and for maker's mark the letters "Su"—a rare mark which is found also on a Dublin sauceboat of 1710, and which probably belongs to the Sutton family of silversmiths.

Elizabeth Baldwin had been a Miss Bolton. She had been married to John Baldwin of Corolanly, Shinrone, J.P., and High Sheriff of the King's County in 1697. He died in 1699. His sister-in-law, Elizabeth Baldwin, wife of John Jervis of Clonlisk, King's County, was the mother of Charles Jervis, court painter to Queen Anne. A notable example of his work is a portrait of Dean Swift, now in the National Portrait Gallery in Dublin.

Second paten 7 inches across, on foot three inches high and 4½ inches across the base, ornamented on the raised rim with beaded work. Uninscribed. Dublin silver, no date letter, but bearing the mark of John Lloyd of Dame Street, who was Master of the Dublin Goldsmiths' Company in 1780.

TEMPLEDERRY.

Chalice 7 inches high, top and base 3½ inches across, bearing only the maker's mark of Henry Daniell of Dublin. Inscribed: —

"Ex Dono Maria Whiterow in usum Ecclesiae Templerrjensis 1715."

She was the only child of Jason Whiterow, of Ballenealogh, by his wife, Maria, who, after the death of her first husband, became the wife of John Otway, of Castle Otway, Templederry, Co. Tipperary.