

Some Church Silver of Limerick City

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The Diocese of Limerick is rich in Church Silver of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These notes record those pieces in Limerick City belonging to the period, which are found in St. Munchin's and St. John's Churches, and those which formerly belonged to St. George's Church.

(For the purpose of record it may be noted that a full account of the Cathedral Plate has been given by Mr. J. N. A. Wallace in the Report of the Friends of St. Mary's for 1939, together with additional information in the N.M.A.J., Vol. 4, No. 2).

ST. MUNCHIN'S CHURCH.

CHALICE.

A typical piece from the second half of the seventeenth century. Dimensions— $6\frac{1}{4}$ inches high. Base and bowl, $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches across. Bowl, $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep. The inscription is contained in a band around the top of the bowl, which, like the foot, is decorated with pointillé work. There are no maker's marks. Inscription :

*Sacris St. Munchini Limeric D.D. Humillima Jesu Serva Maria
Marsh 1671.*

PATEN WITH FOOT.

Inscribed in a circle under the top. Dimensions—Paten, 6 inches across. Foot, $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches across and 2 inches high. There are no maker's marks. Inscription :

*Humillima Jesu Serva Maria Marsh 1671 Sancti Limeric D.D.
St. Munchin.*

Maria Marsh was a daughter of the celebrated Jeremy Taylor, Bishop of Down and Connor and Dromore from 1661 to 1667. She married Francis Marsh, who became Bishop of Limerick (1667-'73), and who was afterwards Archbishop of Dublin (1682-'94). It may be noted that her mother, Joanna Taylor, "The handmaid of the Lord," presented a chalice and paten with a similar inscription to Dromore Cathedral at the time of its rebuilding by Bishop Taylor.

FLAGON.

This is the gift of Dorothea Smith, wife of Thomas Smith, Bishop of Limerick, 1695-1725. She is buried in St. Munchin's Church, where there is a monument erected by the Bishop to her memory. Dimensions—Height, 11 inches. Diameter of top, 4 inches and of foot, $5\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Severely plain tankard design, except for the handle, which bears some decoration. The weight is inscribed on the base—38 oz. 17 d. Marked on lid, body and handle with the maker's mark only. This is an interesting and obscure mark—a capital script R in a shield. It does not appear to be found elsewhere. Mr. M. S. D. Westropp suggests that it may be the mark of James Robinson, of Limerick, who is mentioned in 1687 and who was Mayor in 1698. No less than four members of the Robinson family were silversmiths in Limerick between 1687 and 1767.

The flagon is inscribed : —

*The Gift of Mrs. Dorothea Smith
To the Church of St. Munchins
May the 1st, 1711.*

An entry in the minute books of St. Munchin's Parish throws an interesting light on the fate which must have overtaken much fine old silver. Up to Victorian times, when a piece of silver became "out of all order and reparacion" it was often handed over to a silversmith "to be exchanged for a better," the smith to be allowed a stated price per ounce for the exchange. A great deal more seems to have been lost or stolen. An entry of 1752 in the parish records notes "a plate bason for the bread, and a french plate flagon bought by the offerings," together with two brass candlesticks for the Communion Table. All these have disappeared. L

ST. JOHN'S CHURCH.

CHALICE.

Dimensions— $6\frac{1}{8}$ inches high. Base, $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches diameter. Bowl, $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches diameter. The lip of the bowl is repaired. Both bowl and foot are decorated with pointillé work. There are no maker's marks. Inscription : —

*Sacris Scti Johannis Baptistæ Limeric. Jo : Higginbotham Dicat
Dedicaty 1682.*

The donor became Chancellor of the Diocese of Limerick in 1683. He was vicar of St. John's parish and a signatory to the address of the City of Limerick to James II in 1684. He died circa 1687, when his will was proved in Limerick.

PATEN WITH FOOT.

Dimensions—Paten, diameter, $4\frac{3}{8}$ inches. Base, diameter, $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Foot, 1 inch high. Inscribed on the back in a circle with similar wording to that on the chalice. The foot is decorated with bands of pointillé work. There are no maker's marks.

FLAGON.

Ornamented with intertwined dolphins on the handle. Dimensions— $12\frac{1}{4}$ inches high. Diameter of base, $7\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Underneath the base the weight is inscribed—50 oz. It bears the Dublin mark and the date letter for 1680. Maker's mark—IP, over a six pointed star, in a heart shaped shield. This is the mark of John Phillips who was Master of the Goldsmith's Company in 1693. Inscription : —

*The Gift of Edmund Sexton Pery Esqr to the Church of St. John's
Limerick, 1750.*

The donor was Speaker of the Irish House of Commons and was created Viscount Pery in 1785. For a note on his arms see under St. George's Church below.

TWO PATENS OR SALVERS.

Dimensions—Diameter, $10\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Decorated with an interlacing design around a shield. London silver bearing the date letter for 1714. Maker unknown. Inscription on the back : —

The Gift of Mrs. Jane Perry to St. Johns Church Wt 42 oz.

The donor was daughter of the Ven. William Twigge, Archdeacon of Limerick from 1705 to 1727 and wife of the Reverend Stackpole Pery. She was the mother of Viscount Pery and of Lord Glentworth.

CHALICE WITH KNOP.

Dimensions—9 inches high. Diameter at base, $4\frac{3}{8}$ inches, and of bowl, $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches. A plain uninscribed piece, typical of early eighteenth century workmanship. Dublin silver of 1725, made by Matthew Walker.

ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH.

St. George's Proprietary Chapel was built in 1788 to serve the rapidly growing area of Newtown Pery. It was a comparatively small church, and in 1836 it was demolished with a view to substituting elsewhere a larger building—the present St. Michael's Church which was consecrated in 1844.

CHALICE.

Dimensions—Height, $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Diameter of bowl, $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches and of base, $3\frac{1}{8}$ inches. Dublin silver bearing the date letter for 1788 and the maker's mark of William Bridgman. Inscriptions :—

On base :—*Ann Dom. 1788.*

On bowl :—The arms of Viscount Pery, impaled with those of his second wife's family (Vesey), whom he married in 1762, together with the motto, *Virtute non Astutia*, and the wording :—

*The Gift of the Rt. Honble. Ld. Visct. Pery to St. Georges Church,
Newtown pery LIMERICK.*

PATEN WITH FOOT.

Beaded edge. Dimensions—Diameter of paten, 6 inches and of base, $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Height of foot, $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Similar inscription in a circle with arms as above; date *Ann. Dom. 1788*, and identical marks.

There is a large plated flagon which competes this set, and which bears the arms of William Cecil Pery, later Baron Glentworth and Bishop of the Diocese from 1784 to 1794. These pieces are now in St. Michael's Church, together with several pieces of 1824 Dublin silver presented to Mungret church by Bishop John Jebb.