

## The Ardagh Chalice and Brooches.

Mention has already been made of the property left us by Miss Helena Heffernan, Ardagh, Co. Limerick. In 1868, one of the tenants when digging on the Reerasta Rath came upon a curious cup, a chalice and four long brooches. Unaware of their value, he offered them to a gentleman for a small sum. This gentleman, being somewhat of an antiquarian, refused the offer, at the same time pointing out the course to follow in connection with them, viz : to take them to the agent, Dr. O'Hanlon, of Rathkeale, who, with the Most Rev. Dr. Butler and Lord Dunraven, carefully examined them, after which they were sent to the Royal Irish Academy of Antiquities in Dublin. After the usual scrutiny, the Academy returned them to his Lordship, who subsequently purchased them from the tenant.

A letter from a Protestant clergyman in 1873 appeared in one of the public journals, stating that the antiquities discovered in Ardagh had been given to the Catholic Bishop of Limerick, and that the tenant who held the land received no remuneration.

Fortunately, the agent, Dr. O'Hanlon,

had taken the wise precaution of getting a receipt signed by this tenant and by his mother (a widow) for the money, though at the time of the transaction there was no probability that the matter would ever be brought forward in such a way and be so misrepresented. Accordingly, with date, he published the acknowledgment and also their thanks in the same legal document for "being so liberally recompensed," which happily cleared up the whole affair.

The hoard, which was probably hidden about 1000 A.D., contained, besides four brooches and a bronze cup, a Communion Chalice of silver, etc., which is unsurpassed in artistic merit and probably the finest in the world. It is made of 354 different parts, and all kinds of technique which are conceivable in metal work, are freely displayed on it: gold filigree, two kinds of enamelling, settings of amber, glass, etc.; chasing, engraving and so on. (These articles were in the Bishop's possession till 1878, when the Royal Irish Academy petitioned his Lordship to forward them, offering at the same time a sum of money. The petition was complied with.

