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AN EXHIBITION OF AMERICAN COLONIAL PLATE

IT is within bounds to say that the American section of the Hudson-Fulton exhibition in the Metropolitan Museum of Art was an eye-opener to people as regards both the quantity and the quality of industrial art objects produced in this country in Colonial times. The exhibition included silver and is now followed by a special exhibition of church silver, both of English and Colonial make, but used here prior to 1820, and of domestic silver made by New York silversmiths of the Colonial period. As in the case of the former exhibition the efforts of the Colonial Dames have contributed much to the success of this and a valuable contribution to the literature of the subject has been made by Mr. R. T. Haines Halsey in his introduction to the catalogue on early New York silversmiths.

The greater portion of the domestic plate in the exhibition comes from his large collection. Other individual lenders are Mrs. Elihu Chauncey, Judge A. T. Clearwater, Mrs. George S. De Witt, Mr. Stanley M. Dexter, Mr. Herbert Dupuy, Mrs. Richard S. Ely, Mrs. Robert Temple Emmet, Mr. Luke Vincent Lockwood, Mrs. Eldridge Palmer, Mr. George S. Palmer, Judge Charles W. Parker, Mrs. Robert

Remsen, Mrs. T. J. Oakley Rhineland, Mrs. William Rhineland, Mr. J. H. Uhl, and Professor Theodore S. Woolsey. Unfortunately New England is not represented in the exhibition, because there is a show of silver now in progress in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and minor exhibitions in other New England cities. But churches from as far south as Virginia and as far west as Kentucky have sent their Colonial plate.

A fairly large amount of such plate survives in this country, Queen Anne having presented a communion service practically to every Church of England parish in the colonies. Usually only a communion cup and paten were given, but Trinity Church, New York, has a complete set with the royal arms between the letters, "A. R." There are seven pieces in this set—two flagons, two cups and a covered paten and one alms basin used at the altar. It should be noted that while Colonial old plate is conspicuously undecorated, the very lack of decoration adds greatly to its dignity. This old Trinity set was made in London in 1709 by Francis Garthorne, who also made plate for St. Anne's, Annapolis; St. John's Chapel of Trinity Parish, New York; St. Peter's, Albany; and King's Chapel, Boston. Queen Anne's gift to Albany was to "Her Indian Chappel of the Onondawgus." At the same time she presented a similar set to "Her Indian Chappel of the Mohawks." This latter set was taken from Fort Hunter when the tribe migrated into Canada and portions of it are now at Brantford and Deseronto. The flagon, which is at Brantford, has a dent in the side. It was made by

a spade when the flagon was buried during the Revolution. The set given to the "Indian Chappel of the Onondawgus" and now in St. Peter's, Albany, has been applied for several times by the Indians. The church, however, claims that it was given to the chapel, now St. Peter's, and not to the Indian tribe.

One of the most interesting pieces in the exhibition is loaned by St. Peter's Church, Perth Amboy, New Jersey. This is a chalice with paten cover. On the chalice is an engraving of Christ on the Cross with ministering angel. It was destined to be used for administering to the sick in their own homes, and is unique in the history of the American church. It is of London make, 1722, but although bearing the maker's mark, "I. S." his name is unknown. St. Mary's Church, Burlington, New Jersey, sends a crown beaker evidently made in Holland in 1700 and exceptional because engraved all over, but chiefly because with cover, beakers without covers having been in general use. Another exceptional exhibit is a secular cup presented by Lady Gooch, who was Rebecca, daughter of William Stanton, to Christ Church, Bruton Parish, Virginia. It is a curious two-handled cup and cover, made by Peter Harache, and despite its evident secular purpose, used as a chalice. The maker was an eminent goldsmith and plate-worker of Suffolk Street, Charing Cross, London, who had emigrated from France after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

Church plate, it should be noted, does not come from the old Episcopal parishes alone but also from churches of other

denominations. Thus the Reformed Church, Flatlands, Long Island, sends a beaker. Of Rev. J. T. Polhemus, of this church, who had his morning discourse at Flatbush, with his evening service alternately at Midwout and Breuckelen, the people of Breuckelen (Brooklyn) protested to Governor Stuyvesant that "every fortnight on Sundays he comes here, only in the afternoon for a quarter of an hour, when he only gives us a prayer in lieu of a sermon . . . by which he contributes very little to the edification of his congregation."

Mr. Halsey very justly points out that the work of New York silversmiths has suffered somewhat in esteem, because no such glamor attaches to any of them as surrounds the name of Paul Revere, Boston's famous patriot and silversmith, or even of the earliest New England silversmith, John Hull, who, for thirty years coined the pine tree shilling by order of the Assembly of Massachusetts. The New Yorkers, nevertheless, did good, forthright work, took part in the affairs of their time and were men of some importance in their day.

The exhibition has been beautifully installed by Mr. Henry W. Kent, assistant secretary of the Museum, and Mr. John H. Buck, curator of metals, whose work, "Old Plate," is authoritative. Colonial portraits add to the interest and charm of the show. They are by John Smibert, Jonathan B. Blackburn, Robert Feke, Peter Pelham and Copley. The lenders are the American Antiquarian Society, of Worcester; Mr. W. Irving Babcock, of New York; Bowdoin College; the Brook Club, of New York; Mrs. Underhill A. Budd, Mr. William Smith

Carter, Mrs. George H. Clements, Mrs. H. J. Hayden and Mrs. Peter J. L. Searing, of New York; the New York Public Library and Trinity Church Corporation; the Rhode Island School of Design; Mrs. Elizabeth Mathews Richardson, of Roxbury, Mass., and Messrs. David P. Kimball, of Boston; John Richard Savage of Garden City, L. I.; Daniel Berkeley Updike, of Boston, and W. H. Wentworth, of Lexington, Mass.