

records and graveyard inscriptions. With such periodicals it is customary, in treating these subjects, to eliminate all dates within the period of fifty years from the date of publication.

As in a period of twenty-five years, a new generation is supposed to take the place of those who were active members of a community at the beginning of that period, it may reasonably be admitted that twice that length of time having elapsed, a piece of silverware, a mahogany chair, or even a painting, may in this community be regarded as commencing to grow old.

Some latitude must be allowed, nevertheless, in an article such as the present, and while fifty years will be regarded as the usual limit of age by the writer, this limit will be by no means strictly adhered to. There are many articles of plate in this field, which on account of associations or events connected with them, or of their superior workmanship have become interesting to the student of contemporary history, and it is desirable to leave these columns open to the description of more modern articles, should any examples of sufficient merit be discovered, from time to time, to warrant their being tabulated in the following pages.

In the case of old silver which has been made in the British Isles, it is usually possible to tell the age, even to a year, owing to the practice of marking plate, which dates from very early times. With silver made in America, the age of an article is not so readily learned, the maker's name being usually the only guide in ascertaining the age of a given article.

Before taking up the subject of old silver and its markings, the writer desires to acknowledge his indebtedness to Mr. Buck to whom allusion has more than once been made in the columns of this magazine, and to whom individually, as well as to his very valuable work on "Old Plate," the writer is indebted for much assistance and much of the information which appears in the following pages.