

SILVER: PEWTER:  
SHEFFIELD PLATE

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SILVER: PEWTER: SHEFFIELD PLATE

THE HOME CONNOISSEUR SERIES

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ANTIQUE FURNITURE.

F. W. BURGESS.

OLD POTTERY AND PORCELAIN.

F. W. BURGESS.

ANTIQUE JEWELLERY AND  
TRINKETS.

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SILVER: PEWTER: SHEFFIELD  
PLATE.

F. W. BURGESS.

OLD PRINTS AND ENGRAVINGS

*[In prep.]*

Other Volumes to follow.





FIG. 1.—SILVER URN AND STAND.  
(In the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington.)

THE HOME CONNOISSEUR SERIES

# SILVER: PEWTER: SHEFFIELD PLATE

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BY

FRED. W. BURGESS

Author of *Old Pottery and Porcelain, Antique Jewellery and Trinkets,*  
*Household Curios, etc.*

WITH 85 ILLUSTRATIONS



LONDON

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## PREFACE

ONE more volume is now added to the "Home Connoisseur Series"—*Silver : Pewter : Sheffield Plate*. Much has been written about the domestic wares which have been wrought and engraved in those metals. There have been writers too, who have devoted many years to the study of special branches of the craft—such as church plate, the silver and silver-gilt that adds such lustre to civic functions, and to research among old parchments and other records, in which mention is made of regal insignia and emblems of officialdom.

The building up of records of historic stories of the use of silver in past ages, and of its gradual acceptance among the middle classes as they grew rich is cumulative, and all writers on the subject are indebted to those who have gone before, just as architects to-day build upon the foundations laid by master masons in days of old.

This volume is not a book for the advanced expert so much as for the amateur and those who as "home connoisseurs" desire to know something about their own treasures and the relics connecting them with good old families who were prosperous in the eighteenth century, or, perhaps, earlier. In such a work domestic silver is

the chief object of review. But to awaken the proper interest in the subject there must be a review of earlier examples, and those historic records of past peoples and ages almost forgotten, in which the beginnings of craftsmanship and commerce are to be found.

Special prominence is given to silver, for this is the metal chiefly desired by the amateur collector, although having equal prominence in the title in that they are quite distinct from silver, pewter and Sheffield plate are quite secondary, and merely introduced into this work to provide the collector of silver with handy chapters of reference so that he may trace the connection, and to some extent the overlapping of domestic metal work of other materials and composite metals. There is no real sequence in the crafts which have been chiefly responsible for the domestic metal work of the household. Copper, brass or bronze, latén, and pewter have followed one another, but silver has been used in its purity rather than as an amalgam throughout the ages, and has remained popular when the public interest in pewter and other metals has waned.

Pewter was at one time the favourite metal for common domestic vessels, but its study and collection involves research into the work of many makers, and requires familiarity with marks and emblems which can only be treated upon lightly in this volume on silver, for these other metals are subsidiary.

Sheffield plate had but a brief career, and although it provides the collector with many very beautiful examples of that clever craftsmanship by which it was fashioned, it is rarely found in great variety or in large quantities

in the possession of the non-specialistic "home connoisseur." To-day, silver is used concurrently with electroplated wares which are too modern to possess any curio interest however beautiful they may be.

I would gratefully thank all those friends who have so courteously shown me their precious treasures, among which are curious things one rarely meets with. The public museums are the best places to find really representative collections, and in such exhibits as those at the Victoria and Albert Museum at South Kensington, are to be found not only examples of domestic plate, typical of that commonly used in well ordered houses in Georgian days, and during the reign of Queen Anne and her immediate predecessors, but there are also many rare examples of much earlier periods, and of the beautiful silver goods made in foreign countries, and by the master silversmiths of ancient guilds.

I would tender my thanks to the Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum, for permission to reproduce some of the rare and beautiful examples in the possession of the Museum Authorities, also for descriptions of these and other pieces. Such facilities for publicity help to stir up the interest of the public in national possessions, the very existence of which many are ignorant. Education in the higher branches of craftsmanship elevates a nation, and not only tends to add to the number of collectors, but does much towards improving modern workmanship, and raising it beyond the level of sordid commerce. The old masters loved their art, and worked at the bench, and their example may well be followed by those who aspire to the highest branches of the art. The collection of the

antiques and the admiration of those things beyond the reach of the ordinary "home connoisseur" inspirit the artist to greater things.

To Mr. Dudley Westroff and Mr. H. H. Cotterell my thanks are due for their kind permission to make use of the notes on Irish silver and pewter so ably written by them in the Guides to the National Museum of Ireland in Dublin. The authorities of the Museum Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction in Ireland, courteously give permission to reproduce some photographs of exhibits in the Museum.

Dr. Hoyle, the Director of the Cardiff Museum, with his usual courtesy sends photographs of the Dolgelly chalice and paten for reproduction. The Town Clerk of Cardiff has been good enough to furnish illustrations and descriptive matter of the plate and municipalia of the Cardiff Corporation, which beautiful pieces are indeed typical of some of the best plate of our provincial cities.

There are many fine collections of silver plate in the hands of London experts; through the courtesy of the Goldsmiths' and Silversmiths' Company, of Regent Street, I am enabled to illustrate and describe some of the beautiful pieces of old plate they have had in their possession. Such stores of antiques are well worth examining, and the collector finds much to instruct him in his hobby when exploring the displays of antique plate met with in some of the London art galleries. It is always interesting to trace back the commercial history of old firms who have worked continuously from the days when what we now collect as antiques were being made. The name of Sissons was closely associated with the manufacture of

old Sheffield plate during the last decade of the eighteenth century. Mr. W. Sissons tells me that his firm have still in their possession the old plate dies from which so many of the rare pieces of old Sheffield plate were originally fashioned. He kindly sends me photographs of several pieces of genuine old specimens still in his possession.

Every volume added to the "Home Connoisseur" Series should extend its usefulness; for there is no limit to the variety of antiques found in odd corners in every old home. And the term "old home" is far reaching, covering the relics of families who have settled in other parts of the World—in our Colonies and in the United States of America. The research into the curios of the household is by no means exhausted, and in future volumes it is hoped new interests may be awakened, and other things besides "furniture," "pottery," and "gold and silver jewellery wares" and "domestic silver" will be found among the things that count in domestic economy.

FRED W. BURGESS.

LONDON.



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# SILVER: PEWTER: SHEFFIELD PLATE

## CHAPTER I

### ANTIQUÉ PLATE

The sources of metals—Incentives to production—Precious possessions—  
Wastage in the past—Curios in the making.

THE study of old silver, pewter and Sheffield plate is one which appeals strongly to the "home connoisseur," in that these antiques are among the most treasured "home" possessions, as they are also the precious relics of the Church and of the State. Antique plate of the more valuable kinds is mostly of silver—sometimes gilt; but the scarcity of good examples of plate made in Sheffield at a certain period, of a composite metal, has placed the value of "Sheffield plate," as it is called by specialists, very much higher than the metal of which it was composed would warrant, especially is this so when specimens are worn and the copper undermetal is visible. Pewter was early a metal of which domestic vessels were made, and some very interesting objects have been preserved in old households.

Enthusiastic collectors of very early plate are comparatively few, and most of the best specimens are to be seen in public museums, in the Halls of the old City Companies, in municipal displays—there are, however, many notable examples of genuine antique silver and

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pewter in the hands of private persons who do not willingly part with their family possessions and who go to many "shifts" to retain their old plate. The changes in fortune which have befallen many good old families have, however, too often necessitated the dispersal of silver and other valuables, and the opportunities afforded to the wealthy, with no heirlooms, have not been neglected, thus it is that many parvenues are in possession of the rare pieces of plate that once graced the sideboards of those who can trace back their ancestry to the days of the Stuarts, and perhaps to Tudor times. This volume of the "Home Connoisseur Series" is written in the interests of those who own odd pieces of plate, the true value of which they hardly understand, and also as an inducement to others to increase their family treasures and add to the value of their personal estates in silver and other kinds of plate which make their homes beautiful, and enrich their tables and sideboards. The greater scarcity of genuine antiques and the ever increasing number of collectors and those self-made men who are now able to satisfy their craving for family possessions—those once owned by older families—make it unlikely that the market value of plate will depreciate—rather the contrary—thus securing the soundness of investment in "old silver" from a monetary standpoint.

### THE SOURCES OF METALS.

The source of raw materials is always a matter of importance to those who are engaged in manufacture; at times there is a scarcity of the material, and then comes a day of high prices and a shortage of supply of the manufactured article. In some places certain metals have ever been plentiful, and the people of those countries have been able to spare some for nations less fortunate, and from this

source of wealth they have prospered. The superabundance of mineral wealth in the past no doubt led to commerce and exportation and was an incentive to discovery and travel. It was the cause also of unjust oppression by the mighty, and we can recall many instances in history where the greed for gold and silver occasioned pillage and sometimes the destruction of whole tribes, and the confiscation of their lands, by more powerful nations.

The ancients found out the use of those metals which could be the more easily utilised for the making of domestic plate ; the precious metals became the most treasured possessions of kings, and of the priests of heathen temples, and afterwards of newer religions.

The destiny of nations has often hung in the balance, dependable upon metallic supply, their power of possession of all things has depended upon their ability to secure the needful coin or bullion ; and in some instances metals of lesser value.

To ascertain the origin of art treasures of gold and silver and of the other metals which at different periods have indicated wealth, it is necessary to enquire into the source of metals and to name those countries which have been noted for the stores of raw material which would enable them to produce a plentiful supply of these things for their own consumption and for the world's use.

In "*Antique Jewellery and Trinkets*," an earlier volume of the "Home Connoisseur Series," which may be read as a companion work to "*SILVER : PEWTER : SHEFFIELD PLATE*," an entire chapter is devoted to the origin of "Gold, Silver and other Metals," and it is unnecessary to repeat here the detailed information there given. To summarise briefly, however, the source of metals used in the production of table and ornamental plate it may be pointed out that Britain was one of the early mine fields of the world.

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There were British gold and silver, and copper, tin and lead to be found in Cornwall, and in a lesser degree in other parts of Britain. The Phœneecian merchants came for tin and bought other metals too. The wonderful relics of the Celtic tribes who inhabited Britain, and of the still earlier natives who had gold which they made up into jewellery and coins or rings indicate their wealth in metals. Important mines have been worked on the Continent of Europe, especially in Saxony and in the Hartz mountains where there have been large outputs of silver. The ancients obtained silver from Attica and the wealth of ancient Greece was mostly in silver coin derived from that source. In succeeding times the silver mines of Spain produced large quantities of the useful metal. Then came the discovery of the New World and later the wealth of Spain, derived from America, which was from time to time diverted to the use of other European countries. It was from the Spanish treasure ships that much silver was obtained for the manufacture of silver plate in England in early days. In more recent times silver has been obtained direct from Mexico, Chili, and Peru—and Nevada too, has yielded rich veins of silver.

When we turn to Eastern nations there is revealed an immense wealth in silver plate, but the domestic vessels of the ancients were few compared with those devoted to the worship of deities and to the decoration of temple shrines. Metallic ores are scattered all over the world, and gold and silver and tin (an essential in the production of pewter) are to be found in many countries, accounting for the very general use of metals throughout the periods following the Bronze Age, during which copper and tin were known and used in the form of bronze.

## INCENTIVES TO PRODUCTION.

The common commercial law of "supply and demand" has governed production in all ages. Personal necessity was the first incentive to production, and then the avarice of the chieftain and of the powerful noble forced labour, or gave encouragement to the skilled artist. No doubt the first pieces of domestic plate were very crude and closely resembled the natural objects lying about, or the pottery which had been made at an earlier period, but very soon the inequalities of man's nature were apparent; some excelled others in their ability to fashion or copy, and there were men who showed ingenuity in modelling and in original designs, their own abilities were to them incentives to production, and their marked superiority to others induced the wealthier patrons to encourage them, and pass to them commissions the fulfilment of which required more than ordinary ability.

As time went on the incentives to production increased, for the improvement in man and in his surroundings brought into play the skill of the craftsmen who fashioned things, and led to discovery of the possibilities of making advanced types and shapes to meet newer needs. The art of reproduction has always been fostered by modern requirement, and as new practices came into common use the maker found fresh scope for his ability to develop.

The older plate of the Middle Ages before so much perished to meet the needs of wars and a craving for altered designs and perhaps lighter and handier vessels, was essentially strong and useful. There was little difference in form between the silver vessels used in the church and those on the table of the secular feast. When the Mediæval splendour of the church spread and the love of richer ornament became general, the silversmith had newer aims, and the incentive to production was increased

in force. The designer and the decorator were encouraged, and the fact that many of those craftsmen were the monks and the lay brethren who understood and felt the motive of the decoration, and the form and ornament of the things they were fashioning, helped to promote good work, and was an incentive to better workmanship.

In modern days the buyer is often the user ; in the past, however, there was a very general custom of making donative offerings. It may be contended that the world must be growing more selfish, for self now comes first, whereas in the past there was greater sacrifice. The world needs more personal goods than formerly it must be admitted, but notwithstanding that, many of to-day's purchases of plate and other things are for the buyer's own use, there are still many generous folk in the world, and even gifts of plate are not altogether abolished.

Superstition had something to do with the lavish donations of plate and other treasures which began with the votive offerings at the shrines of heathen deities, continuing throughout the centuries as the great cathedrals were reared, and silver and gold altar ornaments were given to abbeys and churches, and in some instances bestowed as personal gifts to ecclesiastics. Records of corporations and civic communities tell of the great pieces of plate which were made to the order of their members for public use. Such bodies, too, in their corporate state were large buyers of plate.

Personal donatives became very fashionable in the time of Queen Elizabeth, and that gave continued impetus to the manufacture of jewellery and plate after the days when the dower of great ecclesiastical establishments had been suspended (not altogether abolished). In "*Antique Jewellery and Trinkets*" mention is made of the practice of receiving jewellery as New Year's gifts, a practice traceable to early times, and observed with

increasing volume in the days of Queen Elizabeth who encouraged her courtiers to give her presents of gold and silver ornaments. Such gifts often consisted of household plate, and many rare standing cups, salt cellars and the like, now treasured by old families, owe their origin to this ancient practice. It is said that Queen Elizabeth, however, preferred presents of jewellery, but was always very pleased when she received a piece of plate which differed in form and ornament from any others she already possessed. The Virgin Queen was not mean, for she generally made a return of gifts of plate of greater value, thus finding work for the court goldsmiths and silversmiths who flourished worthily in those days. Gifts were not infrequently exchanged between the wealthy ecclesiastics and their sovereign, a custom which had found royal favour at an earlier date and before the days of the Protestant Queen. It is recorded that Queen Mary once received as a "New Year's gift" a "saulte" of silver richly enamelled, and a pair of silver-gilt "pots," weighing 144 ounces, from Cardinal Pole.

The renewal of family plate in the days following the Restoration was, perhaps, the greatest incentive to production the silversmiths of this country ever had; times had changed and ideas of ornament and decoration had altered too, so that there was an unparalleled impetus to production, for most family plate chests had been reduced and many of them had been entirely emptied. The increasing luxury of the times found new uses for many things. The silversmiths during the reign of Queen Anne seem to have excelled themselves in the art of designing acceptable domestic plate for the dinner table and the sideboard, for their designs have been repeated again and again, and they are still the leading patterns on which modern makers model so many of their most beautiful and acceptable works.

The "cup of tea" became an institution which gave rise to many new table appointments, and proved an incentive to production of no mean importance. When tea-drinking became general amongst the middle classes in the eighteenth century many beautiful little silver caddies and caddy spoons were made. The fanciful sugar-tongs of the Georgian period are the delight of the collector to-day. The tea table brought into use the cream jug and the sugar basin and later the full tea-sets. Then came the incentive to produce kettles, urns, and the like—new luxuries. Improved candles meant better candlesticks and engendered a love for more light and greater distribution, adding very materially to the number needed; and very beautiful indeed were those of the days when "old" silver was being fashioned; such silver as the home connoisseur admires and loves to exhibit to friends.

#### PRECIOUS POSSESSIONS.

There is nothing—absolutely nothing—that is clung to more tenaciously than family plate. The store may consist of a safe full of rare old silver handed on from one generation to another, including pieces of the reign of Queen Anne, and perchance a caudle cup of the Stuart period, or it may be the modest family plate of the middle classes—a silver tea-set, spoons, sugar-tongs and helmet-shaped cream jug, with perhaps a pair of salts and a pepper box. Such relics, and especially sets, are hard to divide, and according to old traditions are often handed on to the eldest son, or to one who bears the family name corresponding with the initials engraved upon the silver.

The market price of old silver plate increases, and, therefore, there is an accruing value about the family treasure box; but that is not the only reason why these oddments are retained and the old spoons treasured, it

is often because of family connections and the sentiment with which such things are surrounded. The possession of silver is a link with the past, a sign of respectability, and the date-letter and the hall-mark upon the objects are to the man full of family pride of greater value than title deeds of newly acquired property, for they stamp the man in whose possession the plate remains as of a "good old family"—silver plate is the hall-mark of gentility. What would the *parvenue* give for such a treasure! He can buy old silver in quantity but there is a constant dread about its possession; he is in daily fear of being cross-examined about the initials or crests upon it, and he cannot face the inquisitive guest who asks awkward questions about his family plate. On the other hand the man or woman with but few of this world's goods besides the remnants of the old family plate chest courts enquiry and welcomes an opportunity of pointing out the date of the tea spoons or tea-caddy spoon which belonged to an eighteenth century ancestor. Even the scrutiny of an expert is welcome, for it may lead to the hitherto unsuspected discovery of a post-Restoration cup, or perchance, an earlier porringer used by the "family" when Cromwell was but a private gentleman, before his cannons roared and his stone balls were hurled at the castles of the royalists!

The preservation of family plate is indeed due to many causes. The most legitimate is that of lawful possession by lineal succession. Old houses have in some instances passed from father to son, without a break in the line of descent, and the plate chest has gone with the property; its supply has not been diminished but rather increased from time to time. That seems an ideal condition, rather rough on the younger members of the family no doubt, but much is due to the old hereditary instincts of succession for the preservation of what is interesting, and

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especially for the successive plate marks of the silver stored under such conditions, telling of brief breaks in prosperity, or of national troubles, when no silversmiths found employment, and again of days of success and lives lived under happier conditions and even luxury.

The family plate chest is undoubtedly a precious asset and should be jealously guarded. It is a sad pity when its treasures are divided, and the solid record of the family history, telling of its standing in the past, is deviated or split up. When once dispersed or stolen family plate is rarely recovered, it is seldom that there is any chance of a prosperous descendant tracing it or of finding old silver that belonged to his family, although initials and still more surely crests are sometimes useful guides to its recovery.

### WASTAGE IN THE PAST.

It has often been regretted that war has not only devastated countries, destroying much valuable property, but that it has directly and indirectly been the cause of the destruction of many interesting curios and antiques which have perished, never more to be replaced. Among these treasures have been much valuable plate—royal, civic, ecclesiastical and domestic. The thirst for revenge has sometimes led to the ruthless destruction of art treasures, and public and private possessions, full of old associations, especially those which like silver plate were obviously dear to their owners, have perished. At other times necessity, which knows no law, and overrides private desire, has caused the wholesale destruction of ancient plate, and what was at that time modern silver in common use.

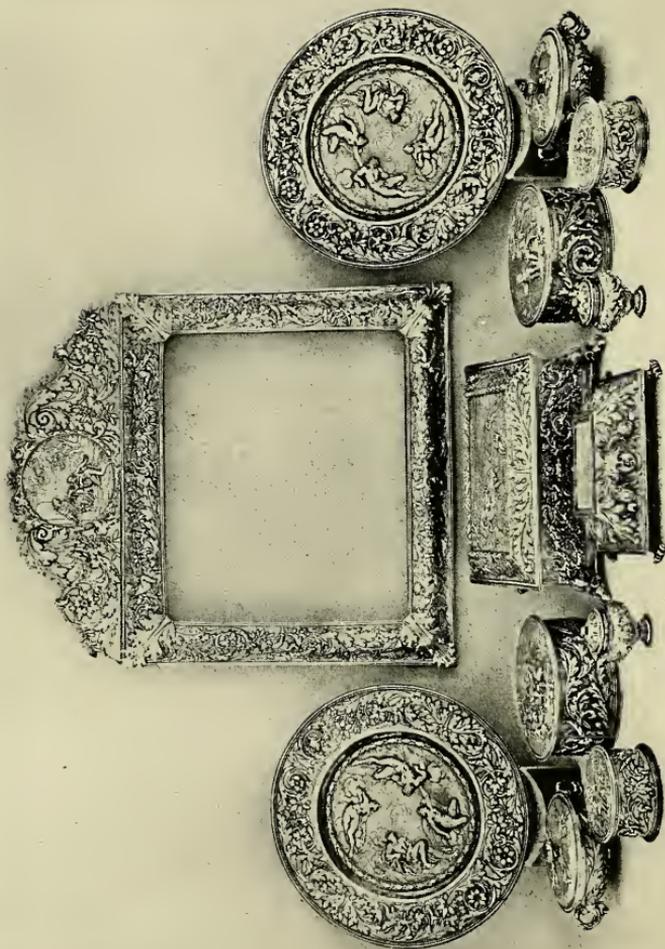
War has been a terrible antagonist to the arts of Peace, and the losses which the connoisseur of art has sustained in this way are typified by the Civil War in



FIG. 2.—FINE SILVER CHOCOLATE-POT.

1777-8.

(In the Victoria and Albert Museum.)



FIGS. 3, 4, 5, 6 AND 7—THE CALVERLEY TOILET-SERVICE.  
HALL-MARKED 1683-4.  
(In the Victoria and Albert Museum.)

England when the good citizens of Oxford and the men of learning in the colleges brought out their plate of priceless value and cast it into the pot from whence came forth new coins for the use of the King's army. The loss to the old families who followed suit was equally great, and many indeed must have been the heartburnings and the sad feelings which outraged family traditions and pride. That was a time when the horrors of war were brought within our very gates !

There must have been some compensating advantages when after the Restoration new silver plate was produced, and the older families again rejoiced in the well-furnished table and its shining appointments. The antiquarian, however, deploras the loss which can never be replaced, and perhaps wishes that the good folks of that day had been a little less loyal, and had hidden their household goods as some did, to be recovered later.

It is only fair to former owners to mention that some of the silver now old, bears marks of having had a much earlier origin. It was once a common practice to periodically remake silver goods, for there was a time when the antiquarian was in the minority and Dame Fashion had many devotees who preferred to own silver of the current type and pattern rather than of ancient design. It was not always necessary to melt down the metal, for the silversmith was clever at re-shaping vessels, and in doing so, either from design or carelessness, did not always remove the old hall-mark, indeed sometimes there are traces of older engraving under the newer pattern. The remaking of plate is frequently mentioned in old municipal records.

Robbery and plunder cause the wholesale destruction of curios and more valuable relics of former generations. Those who steal are rarely experts, and the metal value of those things they take is to them the chief aim in their

selection. It is well known that robbery has led to the wilful destruction of much old plate. Many have hidden their treasures in times of distress and riot to be recovered in after years, but the quantity restored to the world and to admirers of the antique must be very small compared with the plate which has perished.

Fire and water have been very destructive elements, spoiling the handiwork of many years and often destroying entire collections of antiques. Fire has indeed been the terror of the lover of the antique, for however well the loss is covered by insurance the actual articles destroyed by fire cannot be restored. During the past quarter of a century much progress has been made in the methods of safeguarding treasures, and the possibilities of losses are lessened, but on the other hand the risk is more in that larger collections have been assembled together, and therefore, when a fire occurs the loss is the greater. If the full story could be told of the many priceless gems which have been destroyed by fire and by pillage and wanton destruction the world would be saddened, and would stand appalled at the losses to museums and private collections.

#### CURIOS IN THE MAKING.

As a set-off to the losses which have been sustained in the past, and the ever present risk of loss from fire and robbery, there is the small consolation that Time is always making curios. What are to-day the height of fashion and the most up-to-date novelties will soon become obsolete in their use, and curios in the possession of which future generations and peoples will revel. The changes in social life and in the habits of a people tend to make the antiques of the future. The world grows apace, and the pace quickens, so that it is only natural to assume

that curios are now being fashioned at a much quicker rate than formerly. When the antiques of former generations are examined it is found that there have been times when the fashion of things has changed very slowly and it has taken many years to alter customs and to change the patterns of domestic plate. The change is more rapid now.

The collection of silver plate with which to enrich the sideboard, to ornament the table, and to convey a sense of importance to the guest has always been one of the aims of the home connoisseur, and the retention of those things which in a very few years become dear owing to little incidents with which they are associated tend to prevent the exchange or loss of such family requisites. The possession of silver plate is a laudable ambition, for it signifies just pride in the home in which these objects are to be used, and a proper fitness of the dignity which should attach to every home, and especially one in which the owner cares to lavish money in its furnishings. In modern days sterling silver has not quite the same attraction as in olden time, because there are so many more beautiful things made of other metals and the modern process of electro-plating and electro-gilding enable the householder to buy handsome pieces and to make their tables and rooms very gorgeous at a lesser cost than by the use of sterling silver. The design of modern goods is decorative, even if produced in less expensive materials. In olden time wooden trenchers gave place to the pewter platters and the handsome flagons and cups of "shining pewter" which were used with smaller vessels of silver.

A very remarkable impetus was given to buying among the middle classes when what is now known as "Sheffield-plate" was first produced, and the silversmiths of that day were enabled to model their goods after the fashion of the older silversmiths, and of the potters, who ran in

## 14 SILVER : PEWTER : SHEFFIELD PLATE

double harness with them in matters of design. When the making of "Sheffield-plate" fell into disuse and electro-plated wares took its place then articles of Sheffield-plate became curios in the making, and as changes in design and in the use of certain things became unfashionable then more curios were shaped, and thus every decade some new curio is taking form, being superseded by something which in turn will lose its charm as an article of daily use and become a relic to be preserved with even greater care. The same thing goes on in every grade of society and in every class of goods, although fashions recur again and in time many of the old things come up again and afford their owners a double interest not only in that are they curios but also welcome articles for common use once more restored; preserved, however, with greater care than the ordinary modern replicas. Many things are now cheapened by the use of machinery in production and the easier ways of manufacture, but nothing will in the eyes of the collector ever take the place of old hand-made silver bearing the maker's initials or touch mark, and Hall marks and date letters by which their periods of production and their place of origin are known, and thus their intrinsic value as curios can be assessed.

## CHAPTER II

### FAMOUS SILVERSMITHS

The creation of new fashions—Some early craftsmen—Noble workers—  
Cellini—Later silversmiths—Forgers' blunders

HISTORIANS recording the work of certain periods are apt to overlook the actual workers, and are inclined to give credit to the patrons who employed them, and perhaps in some instances directed their efforts. The personality of the artist is, however, of greater interest to the collector, who loves to discover and remember the man who won the right to stamp his work with "his mark." This is especially true in the case of the greater pieces in which the designer and the architect stood out conspicuously, and appeared on a higher plane than the workmen who carried out the orders and designs of the fabricators with slavish precision. The men who modelled statues and performed marvellous feats in the creation of monumental works were, in the past even more than in the present day, the actual workers, fearing to entrust the execution of their designs to others. This has been the case with the most renowned sculptors in marble and stone, and equally so with those who have fashioned relics in gold and silver and ornamented them with gems.

Famous silversmiths have been known in all ages, and fortunately many of their most important works still extant are rightly accredited to known designers, the artists who were responsible for the entire work. Hand

labour has at all times been conspicuous in the production of the best works, and the men who have become famous for the individuality of their handiwork engraved and chiselled their productions and embellished their designs with their own hands.

#### THE CREATION OF NEW FASHIONS

The designer and the craftsman, it is pleasing to state, are, among the workers in silver, often one and the same, for as the work proceeds fresh ideas occur to the silversmith ; he stores them in his brain either to enrich the piece on which he is working, or for his future guidance when fashioning other works to which they are adapted. This was especially so in olden times when the worker often evolved the pattern as he proceeded without pre-conceived plan of detail.

The silversmith has ever been devising new modes, the outcome of experience and greater knowledge of the requirements of his customers for whom he delights to make new adaptations, even in the commoner things, such as table appointments and articles of household use. Such "improvements" or novelties when they meet a popular demand have at all times been welcome additions to the plate chest or have been accepted as ornamental pieces for the sideboard, the table and the mantelshelf. Some of these inventions have found many patrons, others have been shortlived ; some few novelties have been created and have almost as soon been returned to the melting pot, without leaving evidence of their former existence ; the majority have, however, their types among the mementos of silversmiths in different ages, and others are made still, although perhaps in a moderated form.

Many of the miscellaneous oddments fashioned to meet

some special need were unique in their day, but most of them were subsequently many times duplicated, and some of the scarcer genuine antiques seldom found among the remains of the old silver cupboard have on account of their rarity been copied in more recent times. Great care should, therefore, be taken before such scarce oddments are admitted by the collector of genuine antiques, although replicas of more recent days are interesting.

The oddments of the old silver cupboard and even of the more narrowed range of the plate basket reveal many reminders of older habits and throw sidelights upon the customs of the peoples of different ages, and upon the tastes of the educated men and women who were in their time leaders of fashion, and they also help us to understand what were regarded as essential by householders, by fashionable dames, by gallants, and by those in a somewhat lower strata of society, all of whom in years gone by, loved to add little by little, as they were able, to their stores of family plate.

As it has been shown the ambition of most housekeepers was to possess solid silver spoons and sugar tongs to which they added as soon as possible cream jug and sugar basin, and substituted silver salt cellars for those of inferior metal. Some of the people of the latter half of the eighteenth century added many silver trinkets for which there is now no use.

#### SOME EARLY CRAFTSMEN

The Norman period was not very prolific in the smaller works of art, but from those times onward history tells of many famous British men who wrought in the precious metals, some of them men of noble birth and holding high positions, as well as ecclesiastics who were distinguished workers in metals. Among the number of early

workers was Leofstane, who was Provost of London, 1100-1135. Another very notable personage was Henry FitzAlwyn, Mayor of London, who was a skilled silversmith in the reign of Edward I, and he left his mark upon his handiwork.

In those times wealthy and noted patrons supported craftsmen, some of whom worked under the immediate direction of their patrons, and others who appear to have had more latitude given them in their work, fulfilling commissions from those who were in authority over them. The Abbot of St. Albans, a patron of the craft, in the twelfth century, presented a fine pair of silver candlesticks, the work of a monk, Anketil by name, to Pope Adrian IV—the stores of the Vatican contain many wonderful examples of silver ware, the work of monks and priestly craftsmen.

The men who worked in those days were no novices ; their methods of working and some of the very handsome pieces they wrought have been recorded, and it is clear that the best workmen were to be found in the religious houses ; many ecclesiastics found change of work and even recreation in the practice of their hobby of hammering metal and engraving and otherwise adorning it. The monk, Theophilus, a writer, and possibly an artist too, made a study of the work of the artists in gold and silver in the twelfth century and recorded their doings and some of their methods of procedure. He tells how they were very clever in smelting, refining, hammering, and chasing silver, and also in decorating some of those early pieces with repoussé ornament ; they understood the art of casting according to the *circe perdue* process.

There were some important changes in the commerce of this country in the thirteenth century when the art work which had been performed by the monks and those whom they had taught passed partly into the hands of

free workers, and thus separate crafts were established and further protected and conserved by the guilds which were to play such an important part in mediæval craftsmanship. Mr. Cripps, in his comprehensive work on "*Old English Plate*" gives the names of several fourteenth century silversmiths and goldsmiths; among them he mentions Thomas Hesse, who was King's goldsmith in 1566; Nicholas Twyford; John de Chichester; Thomas Reynham; John Hiltoft and others.

The wonderful silver shrine in Orvieto Cathedral was made in the fifteenth century by Ugolino da Siena and some of his pupils. Many Florentine workers operated in England and performed fine works for their patrons and for the great religious establishments. The silversmith's art found many supporters in England at that time, and early in the century Sir Drugo Barentyne worked and became famous. He was a public benefactor, and among other gifts to his city and services to his nation was the building of the second Goldsmiths' Hall in 1407; that building perished, but the memory of its founder is still preserved. Indeed, many famous citizens of London have in their times worked as silversmiths and goldsmiths and have become famous for their skill as craftsmen, thus contributing to the upbuilding of the Metropolis. Those men too, have been philanthropists and have done good work in the encouragement of less fortunate members of the craft and those in a more humble way of business. Many will recall the name of Thomas Wood, whose memory is perpetuated in Wood Street, Cheapside; he it was who built a row of ornamental fronted shops decorated with figures of the "woodman" (a play upon his name) made of lead and afterwards painted in colour. Most of these shops were occupied by members of the silversmith's craft; many interesting facts about this famous citizen and the good work he did, as well as the

trade he supported, are recorded in Price's "*London Bankers.*" It is, of course, with the work of later craftsmen that collectors and connoisseurs of silver plate are familiar.

#### NOBLE WORKERS

Mention has already been made of some noble patrons of the silversmith's art and also of the fact that several of them did good work with their own hands, working sometimes as amateurs for amusement, and at others as practiced craftsmen engaged in ornamenting religious houses and adding to their stores of plate.

St. Eloy, a French Bishop, devoted much time to the production of gold and silver shrines, among his best works being a shrine in which was enclosed the bones of St. Denis.

Much has been written about St. Dunstan, that London saint who wrought with "hammer and hand," and did much wonderful work. He was a noted ecclesiastic of noble birth, having royal blood in his veins. Born at Glastonbury, a place full of early recollections associated with King Arthur of almost legendary renown, and a place where sacred myths tell of its reputed graves of England's great saints, he was full of enthusiasm. The legendary stories of St. Dunstan are perhaps of little value and may have given fictitious renown to his doings. We know that history is true in that it records the skill of the saint as a worker in metals; he became the patron saint of the goldsmiths, and a silver image was made by the guild to commemorate his memory; but this treasure, then in the possession of the Company, was lost at the Reformation when so many interesting relics of Old London and of its plate and metal work were destroyed.

Cardinal Wolsey accumulated much plate, mostly the

work of Robery Amades, an artist he employed. Wolsey had many fine pieces, and his example as a collector of plate was followed by others. There was a lavish use of silver then, and it was no uncommon thing for the wealthy to have much plate in use in their households, even silver and-irons and massive mirror frames being made of the precious metal.

### CELLINI

There are some men whose names stand out so much ahead of their fellows that their works call for special individual mention, and their history appears to throw light upon the wonderful conceptions which were embodied in the decorative ornament of their works. Benevenuti Cellini was a remarkable example of a man who had sprang up as it were at the right moment. The taste for severe ecclesiastical ornament waned in the sixteenth century. The Renaissance spread and a new art was desired ; Cellini filled the gap, creating an entirely new school of design for the ornamentation of the enormous vases, dishes and ewers patrons of art then sought to procure.

Cellini, the Italian artist, was born in Florence, and studied art under curious surroundings little calculated to inspire him with the new school of decoration he devised, for he was in his early days a "fast youth" and passed through many escapades. It was in Rome that his individuality of style became apparent, and there he worked under the patronage of cardinals and others, for whom he made many rare pieces and famous statuettes and altar pieces. Cellini afterwards spent several years in Paris making many of his most noted works, including large silver-gilt vases, and a golden salt cellar for Francis I, which is still preserved in Vienna. His style became

popular and it is said that it not only influenced the silversmiths with whom he came in contact but those of Nuremberg and Augsburg who were at that time among the most prominent silversmiths in Europe.

On those rare occasions when genuine pieces of Cellini's work come into the market there is keen competition for their possession. Some of the works of this artist have gained such notoriety that they have been often duplicated by modern processes of production for museum display. Other pieces have gained fame by their withdrawal from the public gaze for many years. Thus when the famous Ashburnham silver was sold at Christie's in March, 1914, the Cellini dish which had been deposited in a banker's safe for thirty years or more was disposed of to a Scottish collector for 1,600 guineas. This silver-gilt rosewater dish, so typical of Cellini's art, had belonged to the fifth Earl of Ashburnham and had formed one of a set of twelve dishes, several of which were sold in Paris in 1893. This delightful piece depicted the triumphs of Titus and Vespasian, the entire set being illustrative of the triumphs of the most famous Roman Emperors ; a mighty effort worthy of the genius of Cellini !

#### LATER SILVERSMITHS.

It is, of course, with the work of the later silversmiths that collectors, and especially "home connoisseurs" have to do. The famous silver wrought during the period of the Restoration replenished the family store chests of the wealthy and noble families. It is, however, the beautiful silver of the time of Queen Anne, when Paul Lamerie flourished, that chiefly fell to the lot of the middle classes then being established.

Many new styles came into vogue at that time, especially during the first half of the eighteenth century ;

they were believed to have been the result of outside influences brought to bear upon the art of the period. Thus, Mr. Howard, in "*London Silver*," says: "the classical period was influenced by the revival of Greco-Roman ideas, disseminated by the increasing finds at Pompeii and Herculaneum."

Many silversmiths came and went, but they all worked on similar lines, following the earlier art, or copying that which had been so well exemplified in the works of Paul Lamerie. This famous silversmith died in 1751, and thus closed another period in the art of the silversmiths.

Another advance is claimed by those who delight in the works of Paul Storr, who was one of the most famous nineteenth century artists. In the later part of the century there was not much change, and none of the artists did more than reproduce the older styles. Aided by the advent of machinery and factory work the silversmith's style became modern, and as yet is in use, little of it showing any individuality of character causing the artists who fashioned it to stand out pre-eminently beyond their fellows, as did some of the older craftsmen.

The artists of the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century appear to have closely followed the styles of the contemporary furniture designers and become copyists rather than artist-craftsmen, differing from their fellow artists in silver in the days of Queen Anne who set the fashion, their work being copied by potters who often used old silver moulds in the production of their beautiful works which closely resembled silversmiths' designs, and now enrich the cabinets of collectors of ceramic art.

#### FORGERS' BLUNDERS.

The value of pattern is of greater importance to the collector than might at first sight have been supposed ;

it is a very great help in deciding the fate of a doubtful piece submitted by a not very scrupulous dealer or by one quite ignorant of the subject. It is well known that the styles of silver during most of the older periods, and especially in the days before the reproduction of the style of older days was practised, were in accord with contemporary furniture and other things.

The forger and copyist were and are still clever, but few of them are experts in design and the peculiarities of the articles used at certain given periods, and in their desire to "improve" the "antiques" they are faking, or the silver they are copying, and incidentally hall-marking by the welding in of a piece of small value, they forget that what they are doing will be clear as daylight to an expert who knows that such a style never existed at the period the piece purports to represent. Such blunders have been many; to take an instance, an Irish potato ring hall-marked in London and dated ten years before the first ring was known in Ireland is not an uncommon discovery. Georgian patterns hall-marked in the days of Queen Anne are among the mistakes frequently met with, they are forgers' blunders in the preparation of which many old spoons have suffered mutilation to "make up" the hall-marks on more valuable articles. Replicas are worthy of preservation, but only when openly declared as such—never when concealed by the introduction of false marks or styles of ornament.

It has already been pointed out the world owes much to the Goldsmiths' Company for the faithful discharge of its somewhat thankless and onerous duties in safeguarding the purity of silver and the proper marking of goods according to the period in which they were made. Referring to the measures adopted to maintain the purity of the quality of silver goods sold in the City of London, Mr. Cripps tells us that in the statute of 1423 it was

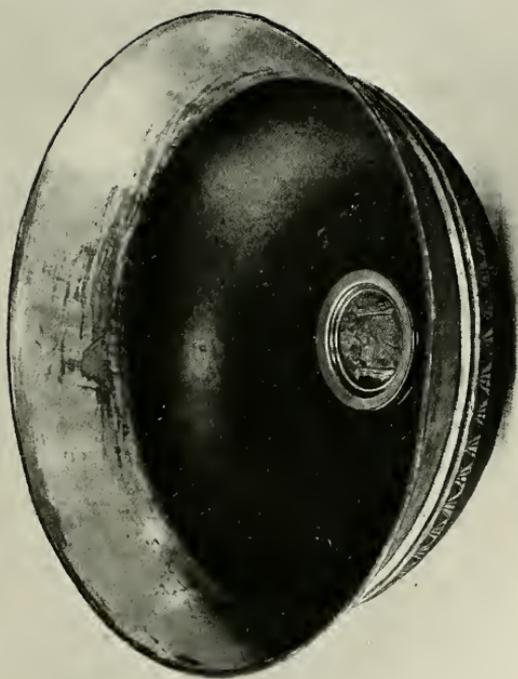


FIG. 8.—FIFTEENTH-CENTURY MAZER BOWL OF MAPLEWOOD, MOUNTED IN SILVER-GILT.  
(In the Victoria and Albert Museum.)



FIG. 9.—PLAIN TANKARD WITH COVER AND SKIRT-FOOT.  
1659.  
*(In the possession of the Goldsmiths and Silversmiths Co., Ltd.)*

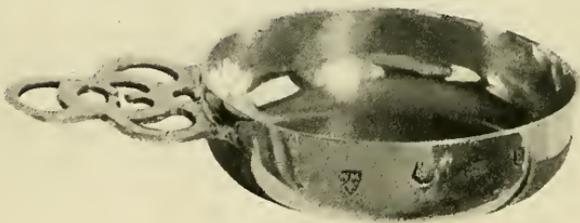


FIG. 10.—ANTIQUÉ BLEEDING-DISH.  
HALL-MARKED 1648.  
*(By the courtesy of the Goldsmiths and Silversmiths Co., Ltd.)*

ordained "that no goldsmith or jeweller within the City of London should sell any article of silver unless it was as fine as sterling, nor set it to sell before it be touched with the touch of the leopard's head, if it may reasonably bear the same touch, and also with the mark or sign of the workman of the same,"—then follow certain penalties, the safeguards against fraud and deceit.

The wiles of the forger are many but they rarely deceive for long. The "home connoisseur" collects silver with the object of acquiring a fairly representative selection of old pieces with which to adorn his sideboard or his cabinet, and he delights in showing his friends the quaint old articles no longer in use. Like the more advanced collector he points out with pride pieces bearing very old hall-marks, but he rarely goes so far as to pose as an expert in recognising the work of distinguished silversmiths by the styles he practised. The advanced collector who does possess such pieces, before paying the high prices demanded for genuine antiques, the work of famous silversmiths mentioned in this chapter, takes some trouble to ascertain their origin and prove their established right to acceptance—in this investigation the forgers' blunders, should the piece prove doubtful, are often found out. The best way to prevent mistakes and costly bad bargains is to study genuine antiques such as may be seen in the Victoria and Albert Museum at South Kensington, and the rare antiques in the British Museum. There is nothing like personal inspection of the silver plate to be seen in our national galleries and in the best private collections; it is a great help to the collector and a source of delight and pleasure.

## CHAPTER III

### EARLY EXAMPLES

Prehistoric silver and gold—Egyptian silver—Jewish plate—  
Massive metal work.

THE story of old silver, that is collectable silver, would be incomplete without some reference to the handiwork of those peoples who worked before the art of the silversmith was fully developed, and whose productions have for the most part perished. There are records of the silversmiths of olden time in those wonderful stories of real life found in the Bible, and there have been finds of silver, wrought and cast, which tell of much native ingenuity in the fashioning of idols and in making ornaments and twisting and shaping metal so that it could be the more conveniently stored. The world's wealth has often been counted by the ingots of gold and silver its peoples have possessed, and by the visible treasure they owned.

In very early days the store of silver and gold was made up of jewellery, things which answered the purpose of the retention of the precious metals in the form of bangles, armlets, bracelets and the like for personal adornment, thus serving a double purpose. Many of the earliest records speak of wealth consisting in jewellery and such treasures, rather than made up into usable things like cups, although the mention of vessels of silver and gold for use in temples and as royal insignia are many. They are by no means exhaustive, and the greatest stores of plate in olden time were, however, massive columns of

silver and large pieces of the precious metal which could not be easily purloined. Just as to-day the possession of much portable wealth causes anxiety, the treasures of the ancients must have given them much worry, for their retention in the days of robbery, and when might was right, made it very difficult to keep personal belongings intact. The frequent resort to burial in the earth and storing in secret hiding places preserved those treasures for future generations, for in many instances their first possessors died and left no records of their hoards, which in course of time have been found and carefully retained and conserved.

#### PREHISTORIC SILVER AND GOLD

We are told of gold and silver objects which have been found among the remains of lake dwellings in Switzerland, obviously votive offerings to the spirits thought to dwell at the bottom of the lakes. In a similar way silver and gold have been preserved in the graves of the prehistoric dead in this country owing to the early belief in a Spirit world ; but here, too, the metal has been worked up into rings and ornaments such as the people wore when alive ; and when the relics have taken the form of vessels as was often the case they were rarely of metal but of clay, replicas of the food vessels then in common use ; thus it is surmised that the very early peoples in Britain did not use much in the way of silver for domestic purposes. The Celts worked gold which they could the more easily understand and manipulate. The finds of Celtic gold in Ireland and other places have been frequent. The British Museum and the Museum of the Royal Irish Society in Dublin contain many fine examples, but these pieces are mostly ornamental and not intended for food vessels which were then made of clay ; these rare examples of ancient gold

also took the forms of weapons and protective pieces, like the shields and breast-plates which have been found in many parts of Ireland, and to a lesser degree in England.

#### EGYPTIAN SILVER

Inscriptions and pictures on ancient pottery tell of the forms of silver vessels used by the Egyptian peoples in early days. The wall-paintings in the tombs reveal many records of the daily avocations of the people, and of the things they used regularly, and also indicate the vessels which were reserved for special purposes and for use on great occasions, and also for the sole use of the priests in their worship. Several writers tell of the paintings on the walls of the tombs at Beni Hassan where there is a pictorial representation of the workshop of a silversmith, in which is depicted the process of making a large bowl of silver, which was called by the ancient Egyptians "white gold." In the story of plate of the ancients in the "*Encyclopædia Britannica*," reference is made to the five silver bowls which were found at Thumuis, now deposited in the Museum at Bulak.

On the monuments and sculptured stones in the British Museum, there are many illustrations of ancient Egyptian silver. The Museum itself has much metallic treasure from Egypt, and the collector of silver curios and other antiques can always find much to admire and instruct in a tour of the galleries where the objects are arranged according to periods, in cases indicating by their labels the different localities from which the relics were derived. The Egyptian galleries tell the student of the wonders of that nation which drew its knowledge from still earlier peoples of the East; it is interesting, too, to note that many of the relics found in Egypt while showing a local adaptation of subject and form, often indicate the source

of design, and show traces of the influences which were then working through the greater and more intimate connection which had been set up between different peoples of the East.

It was in Egypt that the great Jewish nation was reared, and it was there the arts and sciences were taught to the more intelligent Hebrews who afterwards became the industrial workers of that race in their long pilgrimage to the lands beyond Jordan.

### JEWISH PLATE

The culture of the West was far behind that of the East in ancient times, and when the peoples of these islands were in a state of semi-barbarism, the nations of the East had advanced civilisations. Their arts had scarcely penetrated into Europe. Long before the Greeks and the Romans possessed plate, or the Etruscans learned the arts of the metal workers, Egyptians and Jews knew how to make vessels of silver and gold, and possessed large stores of those works of utility and art. In Holy Writ there are many authentic and detailed accounts of plate in use among the Jews and other Eastern nations at an early date. Perhaps the most frequent mention in Biblical records is that of the cup which would then be a common food vessel and its form well known, and for which purpose silver and even gold appear to have been much used.

In patriarchal days the founders of the Jewish race understood the art of fashioning cups, and they soon acquired skill in making jewelled ornament.

From sacred writings confirmed by discoveries and the records of other nations, the vessels referred to in Bible history were those belonging to the leaders of the people and the heads of tribes, and the vessels used by the priests in the ritual of the worship of Jehovah. We must not

assume by constant mention of these things that they were the property of the common people, for in the East as among the barbarian races of the West, there was a great distinction, and perhaps a wide gap, between the chieftains and their peoples, and the heads of the tribes and the poorer members, although tribal relationship and family connection was stronger there than in some other localities where slavery and serfdom was rife. Abraham had in his retinue bond slaves too.

The gold and silver ornaments of the Egyptian peoples were taken and melted down to form a "golden calf," that was a piece of work worthy of the craft, although its purpose was evil, and it is evident that there were among the Israelites men who had learned the art of working in big things from the Egyptians, who at that time possessed many fine works of art in the precious metals. Long before the Israelites left the land of their bondage food vessels and drinking cups of silver were in regular use among Egyptian nobles and in the royal household. Pharaoh employed a cup bearer just as other Eastern monarchs in Assyria and Persia had done. The Biblical story of the cup of silver placed in Benjamin's sack hands on to posterity a true record of the silver-smith's art at that early time. The trade once learned by the captive Jews was never forgotten, and all through their wanderings in the Desert of Sinai it is very likely it would not only be remembered by those who had worked in metals but like other occupations the sons of the nation would be taught the handicraft, so that when the time came for the founding of a new people and a great nationality of freemen, there would be no lack of skilled labourers to furnish the Temple of Jehovah and the Royal House of David with suitable appointments for sacred and secular purposes.

The famous vessels of the Jewish Temple have been

pictured many times, their forms have been handed on by paintings and by sculptures in stone by Eastern artists and in written records of eye witnesses ; substantiated later on the columns and medals of Ancient Rome to which place the Golden Candlestick, with its seven branches so full of mystic meaning was carried after the sack of the Holy City. There can be no mistake about these ancient artistic triumphs of the metal worker's art for the great candlestick was represented on the arch of Titus, where were also figures of other sacred things taken from Jerusalem. The stores of gold plate in the days of Solomon were many, and not only were there plenty of vessels of silver for the Temple use but the tents of the King and his chieftains were full of such things.

#### MASSIVE METAL WORK.

There have in the past been many instances of massive silver work much of which has now perished, and of those few pieces that have been discovered much of their original beauty has disappeared. Gold is practically imperishable, and golden vessels from Greece and other places and from the Etruscan tombs, have been found almost in their original condition. Not so, however, with silver, for the metal suffers from the influences of earth and chemical deposits, it also suffers from exposure to weather.

Although not silver plate in the sense of collectable objects the massive work of the ancients must not be overlooked. In Assyria there were many great monuments in the precious metals. Among the statues of Ancient Greece, too, have been found monuments of considerable size and importance, one of the best known being the statue of Athene, by Phidias, found in the Pantheon. There has been nothing like these things made in recent days, and all the triumphal works of modern silversmiths

pale before the column of Theodosius which was of silver, weighing 7,400 lbs.—that was destroyed by Justinian who “used up the metal.”

Several of the Roman Emperors, at the time when Oriental splendour had such an attraction possessed many vessels of silver and gold, for the rulers of Byzantium loved the display of wealth and the pomp which it carried with it. Arcadius was possessed of a golden chariot drawn by mules caparisoned with harness of beaten gold. Theophilus had a throne of gold which had been taken from Bagdad. In more recent times the semi-barbarous peoples of the East had wonderful thrones and large works of silver and gold, the skill of the craftsmen showing traces of very ancient traditions.

The love of the beautiful had much to do with the pomp and display of gold and silver among Eastern nations, but there was an underlying reason in that it was then usually part of the policy of the State and of its regal head to overawe the common people by the use and display of plate and other treasures, the possession of which was the sovereign prerogative. The possession of big things and of the display of grandeur has been the prerogative of sovereigns and of those in authority ever since. Even in these days when Kings and Field Marshals go into the field of battle clad in the plainest garb of the colour of the clothes of the men they command, there is still an underlying desire for grandeur on suitable occasions, and the displays of metallic wealth is not altogether a thing of the past.

There is still work for the silversmith, and many objects of beauty are being, and will still be made by the craft, although the lavish expenditure of the precious metals is not likely ever to be made again to the extent the ancients employed it in fashioning their great monuments of silver and gold, of which there are authentic records



FIG. 11.—SILVER PIERCED CASTER.

1692-3.

(In the Victoria and Albert Museum.)



FIG. 12.—SILVER PORRINGER AND COVER  
1678.

*(By the courtesy of the Goldsmiths and Silversmiths Co., Ltd.)*

and well preserved examples. The value of silver has increased but not in the same proportion as the wages of the craftsman. In days of old many of the wonderful works we read about were the work of a lifetime, and years of patient labour were expended upon the decoration of a simple article. Such prodigality of labour is not possible to-day, although the results produced by the aid of modern processes and the use of mechanical appliances and scientific methods, enable the artist to produce remarkable effects in a comparatively short time, and to supply his clients with many noble works of art, not unworthy of the silversmiths of old.

## CHAPTER IV

### GREEK AND ROMAN SILVER

Classic design—Greek vessels and their names—Ancient relics scattered—Discoveries at Pompeii and Mycenæ—Remains of Roman Britain.

THE story of art during the classic period has been told often ; the threads seem to gather up naturally, and the viewpoint in each succeeding period has been focussed upon the works of the nations where classic art once flourished. These peoples, the relics of which are to be found in many places, and of a very varied nature, are, of course, the Ancient Greeks and Romans. In their several ways the artists and craftsmen of Greece and Rome wrought wonders, and in the perfection of their art styles the world had ever since had before it marvellous examples of their genius.

Greece excelled in the fine arts, and in the skilful cutting of gems and precious stones, as well as in the chasing and ornamentation of gold and silver vessels. The somewhat sterner Romans used vast quantities of bronze, and many of their most beautiful works of art were massive and grand. The details of every design, however, were ever kept in view, and many quite large objects were ornamented with minute scenes and exquisite designs. Much of the earlier Roman work was executed by Greek artists, hence it is that there is abundant evidence of the influences at work ; the Roman artists repeated ancient classic forms, giving full play, however, to their own ideas of the interpretation of the ornament and design favoured

by the Greeks who in their turn had been influenced by the art of older peoples.

There have been many kinds of ancient plate, and there have also been numerous discoveries of isolated specimens of Greek and Roman treasure, and among these are the pieces from which so many replicas have been made, and from which the goldsmiths and silversmiths of the Western nations during the last thousand years or more have drawn their best patterns and copied their forms.

#### CLASSIC DESIGN.

Those who are familiar with the great triumphal arches and the monuments erected in Roman Imperial days to victors and conquerors, many fragments of which remain, know how rich they were in ornament intermixed with historic rendering, illustrated by the chisel of the mason. Similar designs were aimed at by the metal workers. Architectural design has always led the way, and great works have from time to time been models from which silversmiths have gathered their best inspirations. The earlier monuments, some of which are now fragmentary, still standing in Athens and other parts of Ancient Greece, and others in national museums, have been excellent patterns for silversmiths and designers of every kind. The sphinx, the pyramids and the obelisks of Egypt in their simple grandeur have been much copied, and such monuments as the Needle of Cleopatra, now on the Thames Embankment, and Trajan's Column, a plaster cast of which may be seen at South Kensington, have served the purposes of the modeller.

Classic design is, of course, that work which appears in the opinion of experts to be authoritative and of acknowledged quality ; a term very largely applied to the masterpieces of the ancients, and especially to the art treasures and expositions of design and excellence given by the

craftsmen of Greece and Rome. The very general following of the styles which seem to have been given to their fellow workmen by great artists, who in their time must have stood out conspicuously for their superiority—as in some instances artists of the Middle Ages did—accounts for similarity of style in the finds of ancient plate and other art treasures. The completeness of the application of an accepted classic design is accounted for by the varied finds in which there have been many examples which when compared enable metal workers and others to produce objects ornamented with the ancient designs which are adapted to so many uses, and to such a variety of shapes.

Now and then the finds of classic plate have been considerable, but often even in large hoards only a few pieces have remained perfect. A very noted discovery of Roman plate was made at Hildesheimer, in Hanover, in 1869. It contained many fine pieces as well as smaller vessels including wine cups and carriers, and salt cellars, also cooking vessels. Running throughout this treasure trove, very pronounced was the vine and ivy ornament, a classic design well known to artists. The beautiful vases of earthenware made in Greece and in the islands adjacent in the classic period have given the potter and the silversmith of all succeeding generations form and design, and these as well as ancient silver and metal work have frequently been reproduced by modern artists, thus perpetuating the designs which classic masters first formulated. Such designs, apart from the more slavish copies of Roman and Greek plate which had even then been made, had a marked influence upon the art of the eighteenth century. It was Wedgwood, Flaxman and other artists in clay who showed the full beauty of the classic art in minute modelling, and their exposition of it was followed by many, especially by the silversmiths of that period and later.

## GREEK VESSELS AND THEIR NAMES.

Greek vessels are very distinct in form, and of course each different type or design had its especial use, and its own particular name, just as the vessels in domestic use to-day are known by their names and forms, some of the former indicating the shape, and others the purpose, of the vessels. Some of their old names have been perpetuated in modern reproductions and in vessels of similar forms still used, but most of the replicas of Greek silver are only made now as ornaments, for their original purposes are no more. Their graceful shapes must be seen to be fully appreciated, for the beauty of classic art which characterised the paintings, sculptures and figures of Ancient Greece was just as prominent in pottery and in metal—their graceful forms cannot be represented by any pen picture. In this connection it has been pointed out by students of the art of the ancients that the metal vessels and the pottery of classic Greece were but copies of delicate silver and gold vessels of an earlier period, such metal work in its turn being copied from still older pottery of similar shapes but having very crude ornament. It is well to remember that vast numbers of the more ancient objects have been repeated many times, that is to say there were old replicas, so that the exact age or period of any special find is not easy to state.

The best known forms of ancient vessels made in pottery and also in metal, of which the collector should take note, include the following :—

*Patera*, a flat bowl or saucer.

*Cantharus*, a drinking vessel or cup with loop handles, associated with the worship of Bacchus.

*Lanx*, a flat shallow dish of oblong shape, with ornamental handles which are flat and projecting.

*Scyphus*, a vessel of pointed shape resembling a funnel, probably used for wine and for similar purposes.

*Cyathus*, a small vessel of silver or other metal used like a punch ladle for pouring wine from a larger vessel or jar into cups and goblets. It is recorded that Roman gallants in drinking to their mistresses imbibed as many *cyathi* of wine as there were letters in the names of their adored ones.

The frequent reproduction of silver has been suggested. There is no doubt that the same metal has often been used up over again, for its peculiar ductility renders it easy to shape and remake. It is a nice point for our philosophers to decide how far the remains of ancient plate represent the original vessels into which the silver was first wrought, for in some of those which look very old, traces of still older designs may frequently be seen, for the hammering of those who have fashioned it has not always completely obliterated the graver's marks of the first makers.

Genuine antiques of pure design and of authentic origin are, of course, very rare, but the accuracy of pattern can be followed in the modern replicas made from well authenticated pieces in national and private collections. In the Victoria and Albert Museum, at South Kensington, there are many replicas of famous pieces of plate. Some of these have been again reproduced by modern silversmiths and are sold openly without any deception. Thus collectors have opportunities of obtaining pieces in every way as good in quality of workmanship, and the purity of the original classic design, as the older pieces now in the safe custody of museums—and at vastly smaller cost.

#### ANCIENT RELICS SCATTERED.

Although the opportunities of travel in olden times were few, the wars in which the Romans were engaged,

and the development of the lands they had conquered, are responsible for the widely scattered treasures of plate and other antiquities. Some of these were purely Greek in type, others were made by Greek artists under Roman control, and yet again there were those made by Roman artists, settled in colonies, who were not only influenced by the familiar forms of Greek objects but also by the local surroundings amidst which they were situated. These objects are found in every country in which the Romans were settled, and also in countries in which there is no evidence of any lengthy Roman occupation. Such treasures were no doubt carried by merchants and others who sometimes buried them for safety, or sold them to those who in times of danger secreted them. Thus for the time being many treasures were lost, to be afterwards discovered. These things have been turned up by the plough and during excavations quite unexpectedly, and they have also been found when organised search has been made in likely places.

The sites of known Roman stations and towns have, of course, been the most prolific in their yield, but not always so. Sometimes the discoveries have been made by workmen when digging drains and putting in foundations ; in times gone by the antiquarian was not so alert, and builders and their foremen were not so fully alive to the value of such finds as they are now, and many rare pieces perished or were sold for old metal value. Some were broken or damaged by careless handling ; some persons, however, without knowing the real value of antiques kept them as curiosities and thus preserved them for a more appreciative generation.

Military necessities have brought old antiquities to light in wars, old and new, on the Continent of Europe. It was when German soldiers were digging trenches in 1869 that the famous Hildesheimer plate, already referred to, was

discovered. Mr. Pollen, in his book, "*Gold and Silver Smiths' Work*," in describing the replicas of the Hildesheimer treasure made by Cristafle, of Paris, for the South Kensington Museum, says that the treasure, which consisted of "dishes, ladles, fragments of tripods or table stands, and handles of cups and vases" was made in the first century of the Christian era. These wonderful vessels are indeed fine examples of the Roman silver and gold appointments then in use, the forms of which were evidently borrowed from the Greek, and some portions show traces of earlier inspirations.

Although many of the discoveries of plate and its preservation is due to burial in times of trouble and war, some of the burials were made with the avowed intent of preventing anyone from ever obtaining them or making use of the possessions some great warrior or chieftain had gathered together. One of the most remarkable attempts to defeat the researches of the antiquarian of the future recorded in history is that of Alaric the Goth, who, according to legend, was buried with all his vast treasures, the result of robbery and plunder, in the place where the Tiber now flows. The funeral of the barbarian chieftain took place with pomp and ceremony, and his gold and silver was buried with him with all the superstitious dread of those barbarian hosts; and then with immense labour the river close by was diverted, and if legend tells true the waters of the Tiber still flow over the rare ancient plate of Alaric the Goth—it may be recovered, who can tell? for engineering science and skill grows apace.

There must have been much buried treasure in the tombs of the Ancient Egyptians, and notwithstanding the discovery of many historic cities and the temples and palaces of kings the sands of Egypt still cover vast possessions. The discoveries at Memphis which formed the subject of so many interesting lectures by Professor

Petrie some years ago, brought to light many valuable relics of ancient silverwork. One of these was a royal palaquin of solid silver, some portion being of gold, notably a representation of the goddess Hathor, wrought in gold, wearing a head-dress of bronze, inlaid with gold and blue enamel in emblematic design.

In Roman times silver was commonly used in Italy to overlay large objects—indeed the metal was frequently employed for enriching and even covering furniture made of wood, thus mention is made by writers of “silver couches and chairs.” Of these articles the most important works of early times have been attributed to the silver-smiths of the island of Delos.

As already indicated, there are few examples of very early silver plate to be found outside museums, and even in the national collections authentic pieces of Greek and Roman silver are very few indeed. There are some few pieces of ancient Greek silver and gold plate in the British Museum, and several good examples of Roman silver. The Victoria and Albert Museum is rich in replicas of historic plate, the originals of which are to be found in the different Continental Museums of note; and it has on view some beautiful electrotypes, representative of ancient Greek and Roman metal work, which have been found during excavations in Italy and other places of Roman occupation. A beautiful bowl, Gallo-Roman, shown there, is an electrotype; the original, found at Chavurse, near Montcomet (Aisne) is in the British Museum. There is also an electrotype in the Victoria and Albert Museum of a jug of Roman workmanship, the original being in the Louvre, in Paris.

#### DISCOVERIES AT POMPEII AND MYCENÆ

The discoveries at Pompeii, many of the objects being

now deposited in the Museum at Naples, consisted of vessels then in use, the greater part of them were very decorative, the vine leaf and the ivy ornament being general. The method of ornamenting was chiefly by hammering in repoussé, the cups and similar vessels frequently having a plain metal lining, giving a smooth appearance to the interior, although the exterior was richly decorated in raised ornament.

The "*Encyclopædia Britannica*," describing the finds of gold and silver plate at Mycenæ, says: "These early specimens are all very similar in character, graceful in shape, hammered, cast, and soldered with great skill, but with the exception of weapons and ornaments, mostly devoid of surface ornament," in that they appear to have differed from those found at Pompeii.

It is interesting to note the corroborative evidence of classic writers who often confirm the opinions of modern experts who have examined the finds of ancient art. Pliny, the great writer upon much that is of importance to those who love to follow closely the ways and habits of the ancients, tells of the superiority of workmanship expended upon quite common objects then in use, and of the way in which the greatest artists of his day did not disdain to work on small objects, and to use their great skill upon things which in modern days would be made by inferior workmen, and not engraved and decorated by the best artists of the time. Economic considerations do not appear to have influenced art to its detriment then as now. Again it must be remembered that many of the best articles of plate which have been handed down to modern times from the classic period were originally made for the temples of the gods, and it is not surprising that in their manufacture the greatest skill of the artist would be expended.

## REMAINS OF ROMAN BRITAIN

It seems natural that Britishers and those sons of Britain who in days long ago settled in America, and more recently in the great countries of English-speaking peoples which we include in the " Britain beyond the Seas " should take the deepest interest in the antiquities which have been found in Great Britain. These discoveries in towns and cities which are flourishing still are the links between then and now, between the past and the present. They tell us of an England very different from that of to-day, and bring to mind the long period of time during which our island home was dominated by the influence of Rome, and through its workmen by Greek art. Many of the most famous remains of ancient *Londinium* (London) are of bronze, but some of them are enriched with rarer metals. Some of the figures on which much careful work is apparent have silver and gold additions well chosen to give better effect to the figures, and prominence to their emblems and attributes. Thus the figure of an archer, now in the British Museum, found in Queen Street, London, which is of bronze, has silver eyes, and there is evidence that the bow and quiver of the archer, now missing, were of gold or silver.

History is almost silent about the site of the metropolis, destined to be fondly called the " Hub of the Universe," during that period London became a " waste " after the Romans had left it. It had then become one of those lost cities which swallowed up all that remained of Roman occupation and enveloped many treasures in the debris and dust, until years after buildings which had subsequently covered the site had served their purpose. Then the treasures were revealed in the excavations for more imposing piles which modern requirements demanded and in the building of which the foundations had to be laid once more in virgin soil.

The discoveries of Roman occupation have also been made upon sites where there are now few traces of buildings, other than the fragments turned up by the plough, a good example of such sites is that of Verulam, near by the great Abbey of At. Alban's, in the building of which Roman bricks and tiles gathered from the site of the ancient city were freely employed. It is, however, in such cities as Bath and Chester and other important towns, the very plan and outline of the modern streets coinciding with that of the Roman founders, that we appear to stand upon classic ground, for there, remains may be seen *in situ*, although often many feet below the present level. It is true the ruins shown are mostly architectural, although there are to be found the same designs in the metal work which has been discovered on the sites and mostly deposited for safety in local museums. In such places can be seen beautiful examples of the actual domestic metal work and appointments of the days when the Romans were in possession, and their artists wrought British silver into domestic plate, and fashioned jewelled trinkets.

## CHAPTER V

### SILVER IN THE MIDDLE AGES.

Byzantine silver—Architectural design—Religious influence—Splendour of the palaces—Mediæval vessels—Museum specimens.

THE silver plate wrought with such care by hammer and hand during the Middle Ages—that long period which for the purposes of art had its beginning in the days when the power of Rome began to wane, and when a new era of art was in the making—is very rare. Its study, however, shows that the silver and other metal work then fashioned slowly assumed a distinct type which in many ways was destined to influence the craftsmanship of future generations in Europe.

The art of Rome which was under the domination of Greek taste in its earlier times gradually lost its character and became impregnated with Eastern ideas and those influences which made themselves felt in Byzantium where the new art was formulated. Byzantine art spread and was followed and practised in all the countries where the Christian religion took root ; as it will be seen the ecclesiastics of each succeeding century, until the Reformation, exercised an increasing power, and with that strong hold upon popular opinion, and upon wealth, the art that most fitly promulgated and sustained by the influence of the priests was encouraged, and few were allowed to put it on one side in favour of other styles arising out of newer environment. Indeed, throughout the Middle Ages, on the Continent and in England, the art of the silversmiths

was founded on that which was established during the first few centuries after the Christian religion was accepted by the Emperors of Rome, and the transfer of the capital of the Empire from Rome to Constantinople had been effected.

#### BYZANTINE SILVER

The rarity of genuine pieces of plate made in the days when art was being settled according to the newer ideas makes it very difficult to be at all sure of the uses to which the first examples were put. It is clear, however, that most of those pieces which have been preserved were made for purposes of worship; and their forms would be established after some earlier attempts had been made to adapt the then existing patterns of vessels used for sacred uses to the purposes of the newly established religion of Christ. The priests of pagan deities had received contributions of jewels and of plate for the adornment of their altars and temples and from these would be made vessels for the sacred purposes of worship in the early Christian churches, and for the adornment of the buildings. Mr. Hungerford Pollen, in his well known work in which he wrote many interesting descriptions of the art treasures of the South Kensington Museum, says that the Abyssinian chalice, one of the rarest national treasures in old plate, "represents the shape of these early vessels better than any others still in use." That chalice is of gold, and no doubt it was made according to the form of the chalices used in the sacramental rites of the early Christian churches. The traditional cup used by Our Lord at the Last Supper has often been the subject of discussion and enquiry. There is, however, no reason to assume that in form and ornament it was other than an ordinary drinking vessel of a pattern then in use, and it is very likely that when the Christians instituted the rite of communion they

would fashion the cup they afterwards enriched with jewels and choice workmanship after the pattern of an ancient drinking vessel ; we have, therefore, in the cup a vessel which more nearly than any other follows the type of drinking cup in use among the ancients.

Needless to say, these ancient vessels of which so very few remain are not collectable curios, and centuries had to roll by before silversmiths began to make domestic plate of sterling silver. References to the silver of the Byzantine period are but introductory to the work of the silversmiths in the Middle Ages, that time during which although "dark" the church kept up the continuity of worship and of ecclesiastical ornament which it preserved and handed on to the laity when society was ready to accept silverware among its domestic possessions. The distinctions between the forms of vessels in everyday use in the baronial hall and in the castles of the wealthy and those used in religious houses were very trifling, and perhaps consisted mostly in decorations and inscriptions rather than in form ; even these, however, differed little, for the religious mottoes of the priests became the common property of the people, and were used by them on pottery and silver, and in Tudor times were cut into the oaken beams of their houses.

The Middle Ages proper may be termed those days which preceded the Mediæval art which culminated in the Tudor art in England, rather than the times when the two extremes met, for they undoubtedly overlapped. The influence of Eastern art as exemplified in the typical Byzantine ornament may be said to have extended from the decline of the Roman Empire until the Reformation, when the power of the Pope of Rome was thrown off and the emancipation of Mediæval England was complete.

Eastern ideas were fully appreciated at Constantinople, for they seem to accord with the idea to make the city

beautiful and grand in ornament and decoration. Enamels enriched with jewelled ornament covered the plainer parts of vessels used in the palaces, and jewels shone upon the altar plate in almost barbarian richness. It was from Byzantium that so much that was beautiful was derived.

In course of time Gothic art was evolved. Its great beauty is best realised in the splendid cathedrals and in the abbeys and wondrous buildings erected during the Middle Ages, in this country and on the Continent of Europe, which have been the admiration of the connoisseurs of art for so many generations. Alas ! many of these piles which showed the mastery of Gothic art acquired by builders and architects on the Continent have perished after defying Time and its ravages during the recent War, which has turned the world upside down and during which civilisation as it were has been suspended.

The plate which until recently reposed in the churches and cathedrals of France and Belgium has mostly been saved, although the buildings have perished, and perhaps ere long these pieces may be seen by the public in museums and other places, although it would be better if they could be used for their original purposes and in their ancient homes—restored. These relics will be regarded with interest in years to come—they will recall grim stories of battle and destruction.

#### ARCHITECTURAL DESIGNS.

There is much interest in the study of the art of past ages, and in tracing its origin and discovering the influences at work as each new move was made. The architects of the Middle Ages did much to perfect the styles which took their rise in Byzantium. It was the Eastern, or rather the Byzantine rendering of Eastern art that gave the

general plan to the architects and builders of Gothic piles, but to them is due the praise of having kept up the idea formulated on a much smaller scale in Byzantium during the closing days of Roman influence, and of adopting it to a greater and more extended use than it would have been put to had it not been for the suitability of the style to those large piles which were destined to serve such a great and glorious purpose, and perhaps by contrast to Roman architecture gave a new impressiveness to the Christian religion, then being firmly founded, and thus to some extent helped to change the views of the common people. To Architecture is due grateful acknowledgment for the service it rendered to art metal workers of that period; its styles have been perpetuated by the silversmiths of later generations.

To understand and distinguish the different traits of the art which was first practised in Byzantium, the striking features, some of which are always apparent, ought to be understood. These features which received their first application or interpretation began in architecture and then became incorporated with more or less suitability in the arts practised by metal workers, prominent among whom were the goldsmiths and silversmiths of the Middle Ages.

The early art of Byzantium showed the human figure in great prominence. That indicates that the dominating influence of Greek ideas, or of Roman interpretation of them, had not died out, indeed it was for a time strong. A change set in, and the figure which under the touch of the Greek artist seemed so full of life and real beauty, displaying the human form in its best and highest type of perfected development, soon became distorted. Little by little the figure subjects lost their true forms and became so changed that to the admirer of true beauty they were grotesque. Human figures and animal forms were so

spoiled in their treatment until the Byzantine figure assumed a type all its own, one which was conventional rather than real. Just in the same way the flowers and emblems and even the common domestic vessels which were often pictured on silver and on coins were crude and wrought without any regard to their real meaning or form. The engravers and designers of the finer and more minute pieces, like the silver coins of the late Roman Empire, lost the art of rendering them real, and formed a strong contrast to the splendid medals of early Greece and Rome, the collection of which gives equal pleasure to the connoisseur of art and to the numismatist.

The Byzantine style in metallic art which followed the architectural took from architecture the stereotyped designs in which acanthus scrolls played a part ; and metal work was often enriched with colours by the enameller who made the otherwise nondescript patterns beautiful after his own style.

A visit to one of the well preserved Gothic cathedrals in England or on the Continent of Europe dating from pre-Reformation days affords pleasure and instruction to the connoisseur of silver plate, for it throws much light upon the origin of the designs seen upon the plate fashioned for use during the period of its newness. In architecture, too, may be found the purpose of the introduction of certain features which in lesser objects decorated in the same manner appear meaningless. The styles and designs adopted by artists and craftsmen in the Middle Ages can all be traced to the work of masons and sculptors, painters and carvers who used their greatest abilities in adorning the buildings of the period. It is, therefore, to architecture that we must turn for the primary meaning of such designs and the emblems incorporated in them.



FIG. 13.—PAIR OF SILVER VASES AND COVERS.

HALL-MARKED 1758. *Maker: Ayme VIDERU.*

*(In the possession of the Goldsmiths and Silversmiths Co., Ltd.)*



FIG. 14.—SILVER SUGAR-BASKET  
IN THE ADAM STYLE. DATED 1784.



FIG. 15.—SILVER BUTTER-BOX AND COVER  
PIERCED AND ENGRAVED 1788.  
(The Goldsmiths and Silversmiths Co., Ltd.)

## RELIGIOUS INFLUENCES.

The influences of the prevailing religion or of its interpretation and practice at any given time is seen in the art productions of almost every nation, and these influences as exemplified in art are so strong in most of the examples that the force of the convictions of the artists and of the strong feelings of ecclesiastics by whom they were employed or controlled can be understood when examining these objects. When there was a sudden change from one religion to another, as so often has been the case in the history of nations, the newer inspiration was, of course, set forth as a matter of policy if not of conviction by the artists, who in so many instances worked for the men and women who felt strongly upon such matters. These changes might, too, be welcomed by artists as giving them opportunities of gaining new clients, and also because the changes of religious thought provided them with fresh subjects for treatment, just as political changes now-a-days influence art, and even religious propaganda and missions find business for their special supporters and followers.

The change in religion gave the exponents of Byzantine art a reason for throwing aside the more realistic forms of ornament which had so long dominated artists ; they soon discarded the beautiful figures of Greek form and the Roman attributes of the pagan gods and other personified characters. The new Christian religion came in with many hardships, and contrasted with the luxury and voluptuous pleasures of the pagan beliefs, and that would be sufficient to account for the hard lines and conventional figures which came to be the accepted form of ornament in the early Christian church. The sufferings of the followers of Christ changed their ideas of beauty and of merit—to suffer was meritorious, and the saints they

pictured in their ornament and in modelled figures were shown in severe garb, as those who had won their places of honour after great privations and pain. Beauty of form and that delightfully graceful pose which is associated with the pagan deities and with the ornament of their temples of Greece and Rome was too frivolous for the favour of those who had recollections of the hardships they had endured ; and as time went on these newer forms which had been early adopted for religious subjects became stereotyped, and were unchanged, and even now, after centuries of enlightenment are now the correct renderings of church art. The Christian church of to-day is the outcome of slow progress and the symbols used are to many meaningless, they have lost their original purport, its art decorations were the outcome of different conditions then prevailing.

The daily happenings in the first centuries of the Christian religion interfered with the right rendering of even common things of everyday life, and the artists and metal workers set up a style without any real semblance to contemporary surroundings, in that they differed from artists of a still earlier period. Thus, gradually, conventional figures of the Cross and of the Saints, and emblems of Our Saviour and of the Godhead, took the place of Greek figures. Although to use these conventional forms seems now to be unnecessary, with those influences at work it was quite natural that stiff and formal ornament should supplant the decorative foliations of Pagan Roman ornament. The change had been gradual, for the art of the first century of the Christian era, seen by those who lived in Rome in those early days had been more natural.

Much has been written about the marvellous metal work of Byzantine Art—to admire it now, apart from its antiquarian associations may be an acquired taste. One

of the great cities where that art prevailed, and where so much that was quaint and old is to be seen, is Venice, that beautiful city on which so many eyes have been turned lately and where many have grieved at the possibility of wanton injury—a danger happily no longer existing. Think of the massive altar of St. Marks, of the wonderful canopy supported by four silver columns plated with gold, and of the polished plates of silver which formed the dome of the altar! Here indeed was a masterpiece of the silversmith's art. It showed Byzantine ornament at its best. Upon the altar stood for many centuries a great gold cross in which were set precious stones. It was in keeping with the perfected art of Byzantium which became so richly jewelled, indeed in the days before plunder disgraced the conqueror and spoliation was a crime tolerated alike by friend and foe the churches might display their jewels without fear. The fear of the penalties of sacrilege were a deterrent to the boldest robber in those days. Wealthy patrons lavished their best upon the altars of their favourite churches and before the shrines of the saintly martyrs, until many of the cathedrals became rich in the splendour of their altars and tombs and of the vessels which were used in connection with the most sacred rites, upon special occasions. It is said that even the pulpit of St. Mark's, in Venice, was a veritable treasure house of silver and precious jewels. So it was in many instances when the sanctity of church and cathedral were almost superstitiously respected.

Such exhibitions of church plate as that to be seen in Venice and elsewhere gave impetus to the desire for private plate of similar styles and design; and, of course, in carrying out the commissions of their patrons the silversmiths of Mediæval England copied the patterns from which they had secured their orders, and thus the style of the period followed the type of the church ornament,

not only in plate but in all manner of decorative art, and in the Middle Ages and even during the immediate period which followed, the ornament of the home was little different from that of the church. It was thus in England as it had been for many years before on the Continent of Europe.

#### THE SPLENDOUR OF THE PALACES

We are rather apt to regard the dwellings of Mediæval England as without any comfort, and altogether without artistic surroundings. The Norman castles, with their severe style of architecture, give us that impression, but the walls of those buildings were covered with tapestries, and brilliant colourings enriched the sombre stone. The feasting of the baronial hall were not without their decorative appointments, and some of the barons possessed much plate and treasures modelled upon the common inspirations of the period. To find the early inspirations of the period under review—a long one in which the centuries rolled by without much change, the palaces of the Byzantine emperors must be searched and the records of their ways of living, which gave rise to the splendour of the palaces of Venice and of the great mediæval cities on the Continent, must be examined and their household appointments imagined, if not seen. Fortunately, there are many fine examples of mediæval art still to be seen in our museums and national collections, despite pillage and the destructive ravages of war, fire and flood.

Historians tell of the silver furniture of the palaces of Byzantium—of tables and seats of gold and silver, and of the vessels of silver from which their owners and their guests dined and supped. As it has been shown, it was here that the new art took its rise, but it spread quickly until all the principal cities in Europe had replicas of the ornaments of the churches and the vessels in halls and

palaces. According to authentic records and the few examples remaining, which could not have been isolated pieces, but merely fragments of the stores of plate then owned by wealthy lords and by the corporations of cities, it is clear that most of the ecclesiastical establishments were in mediæval days full of plate and in their lavish use on feast days they rivalled regal splendour.

The palaces of mediæval kings and queens, dukes and barons were enriched with plate and contained much artistic metal work, the wrought iron and the copper and brass often in its enrichment rivalled the handiwork of the silversmith and goldsmith, receiving its share of super decoration of enamels and even jewels. Alas! much perished even then, and little by little wars and the ignorance of the people robbed the collector of later days of those marvels which would now be of the utmost value in helping to piece together the story of the lives and doings of mediæval folk.

The height of the period of mediæval splendour was the high water mark of the best work and the greatest accumulation of plate of that quaint character that stamps it at once as "Mediæval," showing traces of its barbarian or Byzantine origin in style, design and even purpose. In every country's history there have been such times, and then have followed times of depletion; it was so in England and on the Continent of Europe centuries ago where if not in one generation in another internal strife as well as wars with other nations robbed the world's store of the beautiful. It is almost a miracle that any pieces have survived, yet there are still enough to show us the art of almost every succeeding generation and race, and to enable the connoisseur to trace the evolution of style and design as it changed faster or slower in accordance with the pressure of surrounding influences, or foreign invasion and plunder.

The famous crowns still existing in their entirety and those which have been altered or robbed of their jewels, their one-time chief attractions, their forms preserved perhaps by drawings or paintings, help the student. These exceptional treasures are not available for the amateur and seldom for the private collector of rarities, but their known designs and decorations, have influenced in a marked degree even modern artists, and had still greater influence upon the artists of earlier times and races, and those who had fewer models than we have at the present time, living too, as they did, when art training was not as acute and did not foster the free creative genius of quite ordinary workers.

#### MEDIÆVAL VESSELS

An enquiry into the forms and uses of mediæval vessels shows that the modern habits and customs of entertaining guests, and of partaking of meals, food and the use of certain household appointments are the same now as then. Modern developments are for the most part but the outcome of changed conditions and the result of the supply of different foods available. The altered conditions of the surroundings and common mode of life of the middle classes and other groups which have sprang up as it were out of the gap between the two great divisions of the population in the Middle Ages—the ruling classes and the serfs or workers. Both of the extremes as well as the intermediate classes have been divided many times in subsequent periods, thus providing intermediate articles of plate so that although there are many new things the older plate based upon common requirement and use are to-day but replicas in moderated forms of vastly older things. It is in the earlier forms of common articles that are found the most interesting relics, because we can under-

stand their use and surmise if not fully realise the conditions under which these other curios were used.

The curiosities of the table are almost of paramount importance. The modest salt cellar of to-day had its beginnings in the Middle Ages when the silversmiths fashioned a suitable receptacle for the salt—a generally eaten condiment of ancient use, for it was and is still the chief condiment of the East, and its presence is essential to the ceremonial welcome of the guest. We can imagine the bowl in which the salt was passed to every guest and the formal way in which the ancient reception of welcome was carried out. The salt was on every table and alike used by the wealthier classes and the common folk. On the board of the noble lord it was the distinguishing mark ; the line drawn between the upper and lower guests when all feasted at the same table.

Most of these ancient pieces of plate have their counterparts to-day ; there are some, however, that passed out of use within the period in which they were used, although vessels for similar purposes used in a more modified form came into being at a later time. Cleanliness has always been regarded as necessary at meal times, although in ancient times the opportunities for washing were not always available. The washing of hands in days when there were few knives and forks, and fingers took their place, was a much needed ceremony. At the baronial feast a silver or brass aquamarile, a massive ewer, was, with a bowl into which the water was poured, passed round among the guests. Some of these ewers took quaint and grotesque forms being hammered by the silversmiths into shapes intended, not always successfully, to imitate dogs, animals of various kinds, and sometimes men on horseback.

## MUSEUM SPECIMENS.

After a long closure the museums of the Continent and those of this country have been reopened and the public are free once more to admire the beauty of the grand pieces of mediæval plate among which are many fine masterpieces. The great works of artists who flourished centuries ago and forged and wrought their plate and other art treasures are scattered far and wide, a very small proportion are to be found in their first homes. After much rivalry for possession, these pieces have found their resting places in national museums and not a few have crossed the Atlantic and are now in American museums and in the private collections of wealthy American collectors of ancient art.

Paris is very rich in silversmiths' work, and the collections are much admired by those who have learned to appreciate the art of early days. In the Cluny Museum there is the gold altar front given by Henry II of France to the cathedral of Basle; its conventional statuesque figures and scroll ornament being typical of perfected eleventh century work.

In the Victoria and Albert Museum, there are many splendid replicas of famous silver pieces, the originals of which are in many instances on the Continent and in royal collections. Replicas are not always appreciated as they should be; it must be remembered, however, that many of the most attractive pieces were never duplicated, and early artists worked long years upon their masterpieces. It is only by the reproduction of these works by modern methods of manufacture that they can be seen by the art loving public in many countries. Such exhibitions are of great value for comparative purposes and their educational value is incalculable to mechanic, master designer and collector. They instruct the public in the peculiar features of the fine old plate of the Middle Ages which must indeed

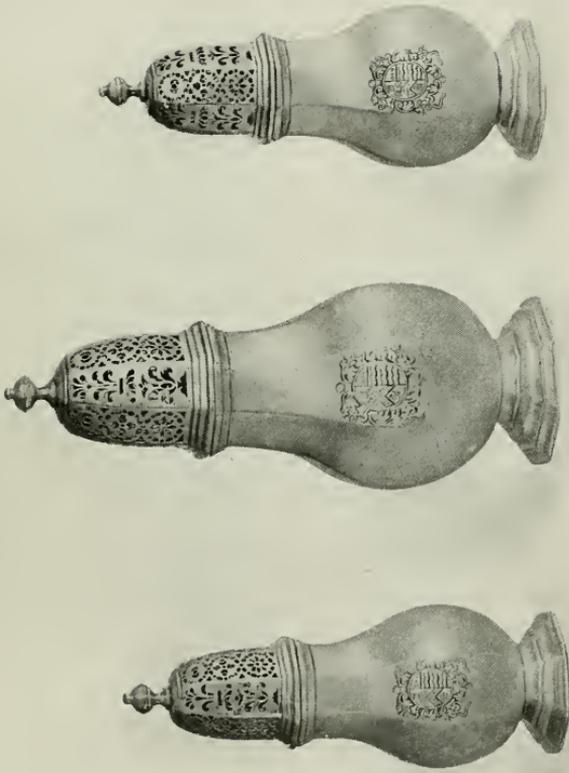
have added to the grandeur of the great feast days. Even the wooden bowls and cups used in early mediæval days had a charm all their own, but they were gradually enriched and mounted by the silversmiths. Authentic pieces (not reproductions) are few indeed, although as mentioned in another chapter the old guilds and some few civic authorities have still in their possession good examples of silver work supplementing the wood turner's craft. The mazer bowl shown in Figure 8, which is in the Victoria and Albert Museum, is of maple wood mounted in silver-gilt, the boss being engraved with the figures of the Virgin and Child, enthroned. This grand old piece of fifteenth century workmanship is sometimes called the "Cromwell" bowl or mazer, having at one time been in the possession of the Lambert family who were directly descended from Oliver Cromwell.

## CHAPTER VI

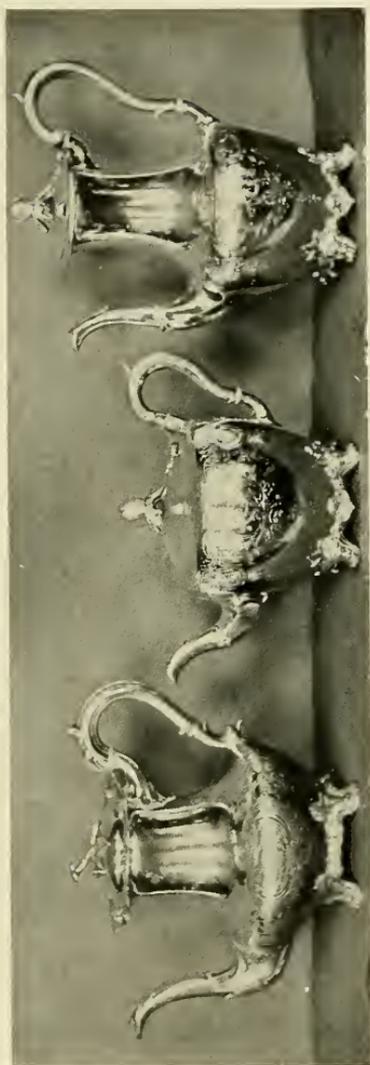
### THE MARKING OF SILVER

The objects of marks—Hall marks—Simple methods of distinguishing marks—London marks—Provincial assay offices—Date letters.

ONE of the most satisfactory things connected with old silver is that in many instances the plate can be identified and its local origin traced. In the early days the makers of silver plate were almost entirely craftsmen, and for the most part worked in connection with the old guilds which preserved the quality and fineness of the silver used, and also took care that there should be no adulteration of the metal. Further, they were careful to insist on the different makers using marks by which their handicraft could be known. Naturally, the makers themselves were glad to have such marks of identity, which to a certain extent acted as an advertisement and secured them further orders. The guilds early instituted a system of dating the plate, and marking all pieces of silver of any authentic value. As will be seen later there were a variety of marks which add to the interest the collector feels in tracing these marks and symbols of the early makers, denoting the places of assay, and the quality of the different metals used from time to time. The hall-marking of silver is, of course, somewhat different to adding the impress of the maker, but the collector in examining his pieces must take all the different marks in conjunction. These steps for the preservation of the quality of craftsmanship and of the metal used can be traced to an early



FIGS. 16, 17 AND 18.—SET THREE SILVER SUGAR-CASTERS,  
DATED 1713. Maker: AUGUSTUS CORTAULD.  
(In the possession of the Goldsmiths and Silversmiths Co., Ltd.)



FIGS. 19, 20 AND 21.—SHEFFIELD PLATE TEAPOT AND COFFEE-POTS.  
(From the collection of Mr. W. Sissons, of Sheffield.)

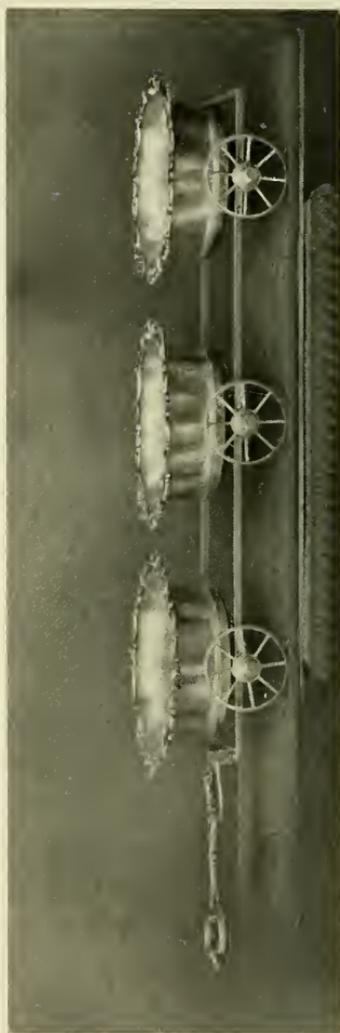


FIG. 22.—SET OF THREE SHEFFIELD-PLATED COASTERS ON STAND.  
(From the collection of Mr. W. Sissons, of Sheffield.)

date, strengthened by subsequent Acts of Parliament, and by additional powers granted to the guilds by an enactment of March 25th, 1697, the quality or fineness of the metal used in the manufacture of silver plate was declared to be 11 oz. 10 dwt. fine silver to every pound Troy. Hence it was that the silver coins so often melted down were not always of the standard quality required. This, perhaps, acted beneficially in that it checked the using up of the coinage, and tended to insure the purchase of new silver. It may, however, be pointed out that in the early days the re-making of silver was a common practice, and as customs changed old silver plate was remodelled, and in some instances the older marks were left. Hence it is that the marks on old silver do not always coincide with the shapes and designs of some well-known period. Furthermore, in judging silver and assessing its value from the marks upon it, it should be borne in mind that sometimes old silver of plain design was afterwards engraved and decorated by later artists to please the fancy of those who wished to possess silver plate of styles and designs more in accord with the period when they were being used.

#### THE OBJECTS OF MARKS.

There is no doubt that one of the more important objects of marking silver was to prevent imposition, for counterfeit marking of plate was always punished severely. The Goldsmiths' Company did all they could to protect the innocent buyer from fraud. Needless to say there have been clever counterfeiters, and many of the marks have been copied, but as in other things the fraudulent maker often defeated his object, over-reaching himself in his attempt to slavishly copy an earlier mark, very frequently adding something that the expert could readily distinguish.

To the uninitiated the marks upon old silver appear to be very complicated. Briefly it may be stated that while there are what may be termed general marks, used concurrently everywhere throughout this country, the different halls of assay in London and in the provinces have varied their markings, and especially so the date letters. A handy table which will enable the amateur collector to remember the chief points connected with early hall-marking is as follows:—

- (1) The leopard's head, crowned, introduced about 1300.
- (2) The maker's mark, his symbol or initials, met with as early as 1360.
- (3) The date letter, which is changed in May every year, used almost continuously in this country from 1473.
- (4) The lion mark, beginning in 1545.
- (5) The Sovereign's head, first used in December, 1784, discontinued in 1890.

These various marks were undoubtedly instituted with definite objects, thus, for instance, the Sovereign's head which was first used in 1784 was the mark indicating that the duty on silver plate which was then instituted had been paid; but when the duty was taken off in 1890 the use of the Royal portrait was no longer required, and it was discontinued.

#### HALL MARKS

There is much uncertainty about the original intent of the so-called leopard's head, which certainly was more like a lion's face in the early days. This mark, crowned at first, was afterwards uncrowned, the plate hall-marked after 1550 being so distinguished. The maker's mark usually consisted of initials or of the two first letters of

the maker's surname. The Britannia mark, which dated from 1697, was used in conjunction with the so-called lion's head erased, to which was always added the maker's mark.

#### SIMPLE METHODS OF DISTINGUISHING MARKS.

The first thing a collector has to do is to ascertain from the marks the place of assay, then to follow closely the date letter, which as will be seen in the illustrations of London marks varied according to each cycle of the alphabet, and which may be distinguished by the different shapes of shields used. In rarer pieces of plate it is, of course, interesting to discover from the maker's emblem or initials who was the craftsman who fashioned the rare piece. There are some anomalies in the marking of silver plate, and many of the small articles weighing less than 5 dwts. each are not marked, but there are some exceptions to this rule, the chief exceptions being tea, caddy and salt spoons, which although underweight are nearly always marked. The hall-mark will also be found on the tops of cruet bottles. Needless to say plate clearly marked so that it can be definitely distinguished is much more valuable than objects upon which the hall marks are indistinct and cannot be traced.

#### LONDON MARKS

A very large proportion of the old plate in private collections and in public galleries is generally found to have been hall-marked in London, although there are several provincial offices of assay where plate was formerly marked. The work of marking plate in London was entrusted to the Goldsmiths' Company, who made the several alterations at the different periods, some of which have been already indicated. Thus the leopard's head

was used from 1300, but the lion passant was not introduced until 1545, and it must be remembered that the lion's head erased, used in conjunction with the figure of Britannia was only introduced for a limited time, dating from 1697.

#### PROVINCIAL ASSAY OFFICES

As already intimated a considerable proportion of the antique plate coming into the hands of collectors was hall-marked in London, and can readily be distinguished by the date letters indicated in the accompanying illustrations, by the shield in which the date letters are placed, and by the London mark of assay. At different periods throughout the centuries during which collectable plate was made, local silversmiths and those craftsmen who banded together in guilds and were met with in several well-known centres of commerce, produced large quantities of plate for local patrons, and from time to time local offices of assay were opened up in these different districts. Of course the mark, or touch, as it was generally called, was of very ancient use, but carried out chiefly in London and York prior to 1423; but that is a very early date, and subsequently many offices were opened, and needless to say specimens of much later periods are the only representatives now of many of the towns in which assay offices were instituted as early as the fifteenth century.

In the seventeenth century there was a great revival of table plate to replace the old silver which had been taken from the domestic store cupboard and given up during the Civil War and in the years which followed for Royal and Parliamentary needs. The local magnates hastened to purchase new domestic plate after the manner of the Royal household, and silversmiths were busy in local centres working for their patrons and sending the products of their craftsmanship to the local offices to be

tested, examined, and hall-marked. The collector will, of course, identify as far as possible the locality of the hall-marking from the symbol or hall-mark of the town, and then proceed to ascertain the date or an approximate date from other indications, such as those given in the following pages.

To facilitate easy reference, although by no means in accordance with their importance or precedence, the towns in which there are or have been offices of assay are here arranged alphabetically. Thus in this order there are the following :—

**BIRMINGHAM** :—It was comparatively late when the assay office was opened in Birmingham, for that populous district known as the Black Country, so famous in later years for its hardware and silver work, was until the middle of the eighteenth century but one of many villages of little importance. Until 1773 the silversmiths there had to send their plate to Chester, London, or some other local centre then of importance, but in that year Birmingham along with Sheffield, was made an assay office, and received what might almost be termed a Silversmiths' Charter by Act of Parliament.

The hall-mark of Birmingham is an Anchor, used in conjunction with the Lion passant. The maker's mark has generally been used, and of course when there was a duty on silver the duty mark appeared on the Birmingham plate just the same as that marked in London. As it has already been intimated, the change of date letter in London was and is still in May every year ; in Birmingham the date letter is changed at the end of June. As some little indication of the best way of identifying plate hall-marked in Birmingham, which from the date of the foundation of the assay office already given must of necessity be comparatively modern, the following list of the alphabets

used and the dates when they were begun, will help. Differing from the London cycle of twenty letters, Birmingham uses the full alphabet. The first alphabet used, commencing with 1773, consisted of Roman capitals; the cycle beginning with 1795 showed small Roman. Then in 1824 old English capitals were introduced, following in 1850 by Roman capitals. Old English small letters commenced a new alphabet in 1875; and the alphabet now used in Birmingham, nearly drawing to a close, began with a small Roman A, in 1900.

CARLISLE:—This is one of the rare and little known hall-marks. Mr. Cripps refers to it in his exhaustive book on "*Old English Plate*," and mentions a few pieces marked with a Rose which he suggests were the work of Edward Dalton, a craftsman of that town, whose initials appear on some of the pieces.

CHESTER:—The goldsmiths of Chester were banded together in a guild at a very early date, and in the sixteenth century there were many silversmiths, but few examples of their work are now extant. There was an assay office in use towards the close of the seventeenth century, the mark then being the City Arms—a dagger in combination with three wheat sheaves. Chester was a favourite assay office, for the work of local craftsmen, many of whom were scattered about throughout the county and adjacent districts, and as already intimated the silversmiths of Birmingham and Sheffield, now such important centres in the metal trade, had to send their wares to Chester to be hall-marked. It is by no means easy to identify the exact date of such pieces, for there seems to be some considerable irregularity in the use of the date letters which are said to have been first instituted in Chester in 1692. There were some large pieces of plate hall-marked at that

early date, and there are extant a number of civic pieces bearing the Chester hall-mark, including one in the possession of the Mayor and Corporation of Chester—an ancient mace presented by the Earl of Derby, who was Mayor of Chester in 1663.

The Chester assay office seems to have been reconstructed in the reign of William III, and from that time onward there has been greater regularity in the use of the hall-mark, the maker's initials, and the Lion passant, the standard mark used in London. The Chester hall-mark is at present a Shield on which are three garbes, or wheat sheaves, with the dagger in the centre. As a guide to identify earlier plate, especially domestic plate, it may be mentioned that Roman capitals were used from 1797 onward, the alphabet being repeated in 1818, Old English being substituted in 1840. The modern alphabet for use in Chester began with "A" in 1902.

EXETER:—In the small villages round about Exeter, there were local silversmiths, and the Exeter assay office which was operating in the sixteenth century, marked a great deal of the silver plate used locally, many ancient examples being still found in the possession of Devonshire churches. Indeed, travellers and tourists visiting Cornwall and Devon have discovered valuable pieces of communion plate in common use in quite out-of-the-way churches. Some of the custodians of these relics are often quite indifferent as to the value of the chalices and patens in their care; on the other hand, others possessing more antiquarian instincts delight to show these old silver cups to visitors. Exeter has had a regular hall-mark from quite an early date, a distinctive Castle with three towers often clearly marked on the old silver. It is noteworthy that this office was used almost entirely for silver, no jewellery, with the exception of 22 carat wedding rings

being marked there. The Exeter date letters run from "A" to "Z" in Roman capitals from 1701 until 1725, when small italics were substituted. Roman capitals on a square-shaped shield were again used from 1749 onwards, and these alphabets on different-shaped shields appear to have been continued until 1837 when Old English was introduced; the Exeter assay office is now closed.

HULL :—This is one of the lesser known assay offices referred to by Mr. Cripps, and Hull is stated to have been a town where there were several busy silversmiths in the seventeenth century, making chiefly cups and tankards. There appears to have been a rather important trade guild operating in Hull in the seventeenth century and earlier, known as the Company of Goldsmiths and Braziers.

NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE :—This is one of the old assay offices now closed. It was in use from 1702 to 1884. There appears to have been careful attention to the use of date letters in Newcastle-on-Tyne, with a regular change every twenty years or so until 1759, when Italic capitals were introduced, and the full alphabet from "A" to "Z" commenced, that rule continuing until the close of the office. The hall-mark consisted of three Castles, to which was added in addition to the date letter a maker's mark, and of course a duty mark when it was in vogue.

Among the more important works of the Newcastle-on-Tyne silversmiths may be mentioned porringers and cups, of which there are many examples extant, and there appears to have been in the neighbourhood silversmiths famous for their church plate, for many of the old flagons, cups, and patens in the village churches and the towns round about, bear the hall-mark of the local assay office.

NORWICH :—This is one of the older assay offices, which although revived for a short time in more recent days has

long been closed. Years ago there were both gold and silver smiths in Norwich. Mr. Cripps mentioned one, Peter Peterson, who worked in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. He was the donor of a large standing cup which is still in possession of the Corporation of Norwich. The mark appears to have been instituted in 1624, and to have consisted of a Castle and Lion, with the usual additions to denote the makers and the standard mark, which latter was at one time a Tudor rose with a crown.

**SHEFFIELD** :—Although this assay office was opened in 1773 most of the plate marked there is undoubtedly modern. The mark is a Lion passant and a Crown, the latter being the chief distinguishing mark between Sheffield and other places. There have been considerable irregularities in the use of date letters in Sheffield, and it is only during recent years that any great reliance can be placed upon the dates, for although the letters from “A” to “Z” have invariably been utilised, several of the letters have been omitted, and these not according to any given principle.

**YORK** :—The silversmiths in York appear to have been famous for their ecclesiastical plate, although they made some domestic plate, chiefly for local use. There are some very beautiful examples of old civic plate in York, and throughout the county, bearing the York hall-mark, many examples dating from the sixteenth century. Mr. Cripps, in his exhaustive work, refers to the very early silversmiths known to have worked in York. Among these he mentions Thomas Gray in 1497, William Wilson in 1513, George Gaile in 1534, Ralph Bullein in 1537, and John Thompson in 1685. The early York mark was composed partly of a Leopard’s Head and a Fleur-de-lis. From 1812 onwards the hall-mark was composed of five Lions

on a cross, upon a shield, the leopard's head being used in conjunction.

#### IRISH MARKS.

In Ireland there were several towns of assay, one operating for a short time in a small village near Waterford, where it is said there was quite a little colony of Swiss silversmiths plying their trade. The chief office of assay in Ireland is, however, in Dublin, the hall-mark being the figure of Hibernia. The standard mark is the Irish harp crowned, both marks being on somewhat irregular shaped shields. Irish silver is much prized by collectors, and these indications of locality should be sufficient to identify any examples that may be met with. Date letters were used in Dublin from 1721, the full alphabet with the exception of the letter "J" being employed. The first alphabet was Old English, the others were Roman capitals, the only difference being in the shape of the shield.

#### SCOTCH MARKS.

There are two important assay offices in Scotland—Edinburgh and Glasgow.

EDINBURGH:—The hall-mark of the Edinburgh office is a three-towered Castle, and the date letters appear to have been very carefully used, different shaped shields distinguishing each successive alphabet, which can be traced without difficulty from the year 1681. Most of the Scotch plate has the maker's mark, and, of course, the duty mark from 1784 to 1890. Since 1759 a thistle has been used as a standard mark.

GLASGOW:—A large quantity of Scotch plate has been hall-marked in Glasgow. The mark is readily distinguished, for it is a Tree on which is a bird, a bell being hung from one of the boughs. There are several legends

about this mark, which, of course, is familiar to all Scotchmen ; the fish across the tree having also an important significance. The Glasgow office is comparatively modern, dating only from 1819, when the date letters used consisted of Roman capitals, the alphabet ending in 1845, when Old English was employed. In the early days other Scotch towns had the right to mark silver, and many of the rare examples of old Scottish plate appear to have been marked in Aberdeen, Stirling, and elsewhere.

#### DATE LETTERS.

The accompanying illustrations of the principal date letters used in London, and the shapes of the shields in different cycles of letters will give collectors an opportunity of ascertaining definitely the exact date of their specimens, provided they bear the hall-mark of London. As already stated, the letter denoting the date is changed in May each year. Until 1660 the London date letter was changed on the 19th May, afterwards on the 30th of the month in every year.

The alphabets used as date letters in London consist of twenty letters only, there being a few variations at different periods, especially at the provincial Halls of Assay. The letters omitted are "J," "U," "W," "X," "Y," "Z," the remainder of the alphabet being used in consecutive order. These twenty letters, representing a cycle of twenty years, have sometimes been in capitals, at other times in small letters ; in some instances Old English has been used, at others the mediæval Court hand. These letters are almost invariably represented as placed on heraldic shields, the shapes of which are altered in each cycle of letters, thus helping to fix the approximate date even should the actual letter upon the shield be somewhat indistinct.

## LONDON DATE LETTERS

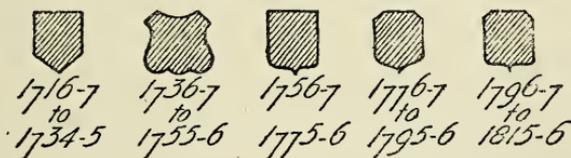
1638-9		1658-9		1678-9		1697 (March to May)	
1639-40		1659-60		1679-80		1697-98	
1640-1		1660-1		1680-1		1698-9	
1641-2		1661-2		1681-2		1699-1700	
1642-3		1662-3		1682-3		1700-1	
1643-4		1663-4		1683-4		1701-2	
1644-5		1664-5		1684-5		1702-3	
1645-6		1665-6		1685-6		1703-4	
1646-7		1666-7		1686-7		1704-5	
1647-8		1667-8		1687-8		1705-6	
1648-9		1668-9		1688-9		1706-7	
1649-50		1669-70		1689-90		1707-8	
1650-1		1670-1		1690-1		1708-9	
1651-2		1671-2		1691-2		1709-10	
1652-3		1672-3		1692-3		1710-1	
1653-4		1673-4		1693-4		1711-2	
1654-5		1674-5		1694-5		1712-3	
1655-6		1675-6		1695-6		1713-4	
1656-7		1676-7		1696-7 (to March)		1714-5	
1657-8		1677-8				1715-6	

LONDON DATE LETTERS—*continued.*

The alphabets following those on the preceding page can readily be distinguished by the *shields*, bearing in mind the simple data which is as follows:—

From 1716-1717 to 1734-1735 (inclusive) the alphabet, omitting “J,” “U,” “V,” “X,” “Y” and “Z,” consisted of Roman capitals; from 1736-1737 to 1755-1756, small Roman letters; from 1756-1757 to 1795-1796 Old English capitals; from 1776-1777 to 1795-1796 small Old English letters; and from 1796-1797 to 1815-1816 Roman capitals.

The shapes of the Shields used during the period 1716-1717 to 1815-1816 are as under:—



## CHAPTER VII

### TUDOR PLATE

Great displays of plate—Losses to collectors—  
Domestic silver.

IT is difficult to draw any hard lines of division between the different periods during which plate—ecclesiastical and domestic—assumed definite and distinct designs and forms. As it has been shown in previous chapters that the production of ecclesiastical plate was the outcome of customs and usages founded upon very early practices ; it changed little, for the same vessels with few exceptions were in use in the cathedrals, churches and colleges in this and other countries for centuries. It was only after the Reformation that any marked difference was observable in the vessels used in the performance of religious rites and those used for domestic purposes. The darkness of the Middle Ages prevented any great change taking place either in Britain or on the Continent of Europe. The division between rich and poor was very marked, and it was not until the Middle Ages had almost gone, and the newer period which for the purpose of distinction we call Mediæval, although in reality reaching towards the close of the sixteenth century, was there much difference in the habits and customs of the people necessitating the production of new patterns and shapes of plate.

It was by a slow process of evolution that the Middle classes came into being, and with the Tudor monarchs on the throne England began to be more enlightened and



FIG. 23.—SILVER PUNCH-BOWL, WITH CHINESE DECORATIONS.  
DATED 1688.



FIG. 24.—IRISH POTATO-RING.  
1774.  
Made by W. HUGHES, OF DUBLIN.  
(In the possession of the Goldsmiths and Silversmiths Co., Ltd.)



FIG. 25.—SILVER CANDLESTICK  
(ONE OF A PAIR).

Ornamented with Cast and Chased Flowers,  
Shells and Scrolls.

1743. *Maker:* PHILIPS GARDEN.

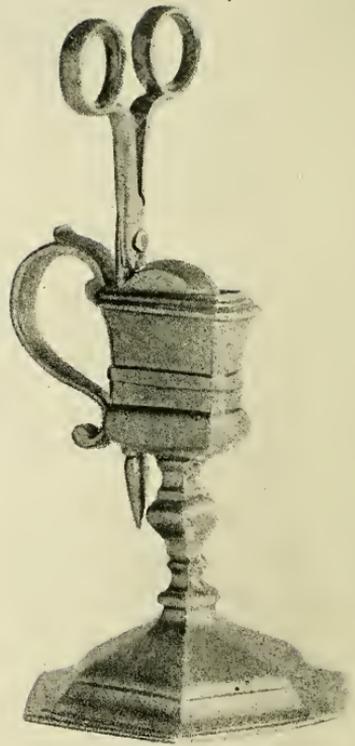


FIG. 26.—SILVER SNUFFERS WITH STAND.

1708. *Maker:* LOUIS METTAYER.

(By the courtesy of the Goldsmiths and  
Silversmiths Co., Ltd.)

the traditions of the Dark Ages faded, and better conditions of trade and commerce enriched a class which until then had been unknown. Merchant princes grew wealthy, and smaller traders furnished their dwellings with comfortable surroundings, if not on a lavish scale.

We have had abundant evidence that wars have had a marked influence upon trade, and upon changes that take place from time to time in the habits of the people and the way in which they live and accommodate themselves to new surroundings. This has often been observable in the history of this country. From time to time wars have brought to an abrupt end all the progress which has gone on for years, and very often they have thrown the country devastated back for several generations. The country waging war, although not actually invaded, has sometimes suffered also, and when not victorious possibly to a greater degree than the country its armies have destroyed. At the period about which we are writing—the late Mediæval or Tudor England—there had been such an upheaval; and a new start had been made, for the Wars of the Roses ceased, and then Peace came over the devastated fields of Britain. Rural England revived when the crown of Richard III was placed upon the head of Henry Tudor.

It was during the reign of Henry VII that the revival of trade began again, it was stimulated by the patronage and support of the King who, it is said, especially favoured the silversmiths. The work of the craftsmen was greatly benefitted by the support of clever artists who put their great talents to commercial uses. Even Holbein in his intervals of leisure when he was painting the portraits of famous men and women designed beautiful silver cups and some jewellery; these things, fashioned according to his taste, harmonised with the then prevailing surroundings. History records that the silversmiths were well

pleased with Holbein's designs and in many instances copied them faithfully, thus creating a new style in silver-smith's art, one which became associated with the period.

The Renaissance of art was then in full swing and enamelling had made great strides. It was in the sixteenth century that Cellini worked, and in addition to the beautiful jewellery and other things he modelled and designed that famous artist produced chalices, crosses, altar pieces; relic cases and shrines. His designs too, were accepted by more advanced silversmiths who wrought wonderful pieces for church purposes, civic and presentation plate.

#### GREAT DISPLAYS OF PLATE

One of the conspicuous characteristics of Mediæval England under the Tudors was the pompous display of plate by royalty and by those obsequious corporations and noblemen who sought to do honour to their sovereign. The plate these wealthy men and public corporations possessed had then assumed definite shapes and accredited forms for specific uses. These pieces were made in no haphazard way, neither were they the work altogether of men who were controlled by the church. Craftsmen had obtained some freedom, and were working under the control of influential guilds, of which they were members, rather than as aforetime working for private patrons, and under their guidance and direction. The standards and weights of the precious metals and the different articles being made were fixed, and the guilds had powers whereby the purity of the metal used and good workmanship were assured.

The earliest guild of goldsmiths in England dated back to 1180, but the Guild of Goldsmiths in Mediæval days controlling the output of plate acted under a Charter

dated 1327, in which they were styled "The Wardens and Commonality of the Mystery of the Goldsmiths of London." The so-called "Tower pound" had in former days been the standard, but in Tudor days the pound Troy, taking its name from the town of Troyes, in France, regulated the making of plate and assessed its weight. These regulations had brought the quality of English plate to a higher and more regular standard, and the marks already explained (*see* Chapter VI) tended to establish greater confidence in the work of the craftsmen whom it became the fashion to support. This led to wealthy men and others being in possession of plate which they were anxious to display, and the fact of possession and the encouragement of art by such patrons caused some competitive desire to make a show which would eclipse others with whom they came in contact.

There have been many occasions when great displays of plate—composed of gold, silver and metal of other kinds ornate with jewelled settings—have contributed to the splendour of the occasion. In the days when kings and priests and civil and ecclesiastical powers vied with one another the display of those things which added to the impressiveness of the scene enacted, or to the grandeur of the reception of kings and ecclesiastics, was deemed necessary. Many historic examples could be recalled. One of these often mentioned in history, and frequently imagined, is the historic meeting of the Kings of England and France on the Field of the Cloth of Gold, so vividly portrayed on tapestries and paintings in royal and national collections. It was hoped by the greatness of that meeting and the pomp and ceremony that surrounded it, to cement the friendship of the kings and peoples of England and France. The *entente cordiale* between the two nations had been established; it has been broken and re-established, but the bonds of past years have never been so

close, or the fraternal feeling so strong, as the bond of blood shed on French soil during the past few years.

In the Great War of 1914-1919 there have been many meetings of English and French rulers and the representatives of the two peoples. They have stood shoulder to shoulder in the great battles for freedom and right. Very great and historic have been the meetings between the King of England and the French President, but by contrast remarkable in their simplicity when the pomp of the Field of the Cloth of Gold, when silversmiths and goldsmiths and artists of every kind vied with one another to produce something great and to contribute to the eternal friendship they hoped thereby to build up, is recalled. When Henry of England and Charles of France met in that historic pageant so gorgeous was the display that it was said that beaten gold was the commonest ornament. Imagine that great fountain which we are told was covered over with plates of gold! British and French gold have recently, it is true, been given freely towards the provision of armaments to defy the common foe, and money has been spent, but there has been no need of the pomp of Tudor times to assure the citizens of both nations of the real friendship existing between them. The galaxy of kings who have passed the Arc de Triomphe has not needed the display of gold and plate, and gold and silver embroidery, to assure them of either the wealth or power of the two nations or of their Allies.

The British race can find gold, but it is in bullion and cash rather than in the plate of which there was such a lavish display on that day when in June, 1529, French and English fraternised near Calais. The plate displayed in that festive hall on the Field of the Cloth of Gold exemplifies the great shows of gold and tangible possessions then common among friend and foe, deemed necessary as indicative of power, wealth and good faith. The King of

England had with him his great Cardinal, for the Protestant Faith had not then been secured for England. Before Cardinal Wolsey, surrounded by many courtiers and supporters, was borne crosses of silver and much altar plate. It was amidst grandeur of gold and silver that the treaty was signed. To many persons the force of King Henry's words will be a matter of interest in the light of present day events. The King of France had told of the "demonstration of his power" but the King of England replied: "What matters to me most is the steadfastness and loyal keeping of promises compressed in charters between you and me." Displays of plate and pomp of gold are as nothing to the keeping of the *entente cordiale* and the peace of the world, and the respect of signatures involving the honour of great countries. It is the power behind the pomp that matters; that has been true throughout history, and it is true to-day. The world knows it, and by the might and justice of their own cause the Nations of the Earth intend to preserve peace henceforth, and with peace the full preservation and enjoyment of the arts of peace, including those of the goldsmith and the silversmith and other artists in metal.

#### LOSSES TO COLLECTORS

It is not possible to estimate the world's losses, or the extent to which collectors could have revelled in choice and rare pieces which have been destroyed. The production of works of art by machinery and by the aid of machine tools does not contribute much towards the stores of silver and gold which show the handiwork of the craftsmen, or help to instruct the future generation in the progress made in the present day. It is satisfactory, however, to know that the methods taken now to preserve and suitably house the nation's treasures will ensure the future from a

large percentage of those losses which might have occurred in the metallic treasures which in former times of stress would have perished. The new War Museum in London, and other museums, supplemented by collections of curiosities and other things illustrating the recent War are examples of how the future generations will benefit by such efforts.

History has much to tell about the art objects which were wilfully melted down on account of their metallic wealth, their intrinsic value as art treasures being ignored and unappreciated. An early incident of Jewish history will be remembered. The Jews spoiled the Egyptians, but those wonderful Egyptian jewels and large accumulations of golden ornament were little valued by the Jews who on the most trifling provocation melted them down in one solid mass, without any regard to their art beauty, to make a "calf," before which they cast themselves in idolatrous worship. It was a bare-faced sin and want of faith in their God and the leader He had given them, and an act of barbarous disregard for the jewels they had been so anxious to secure.

The losses to antiquarians have by no means been confined to acts of fanatical worship or to the irresponsible doing of early peoples. Some of the losses in Great Britain in Mediæval days were also unexplainable, and due to mistaken friendships or adherence to unpopular causes. When Perkin Warbeck raised his ill-fated rebellion he needed money and secured the support of James of Scotland who apparently had no money to give, but he sold without compunction the royal plate in order that he might send his rebellious friends supplies.

In England, when Charles I disastrously opposed the will of the people he needed money for the royalist cause, and many of his supporters gave their family plate to be melted down for the minting of gold and silver coin. In

this way vast stores of college plate and other historic and civic treasures found their way into the melting pot. It has often been questioned why so much valuable and rare old silver was melted rather than using up new metal. The stores of new silver in this country at that time were very small, and whenever silver money was required for the payment of the troops in time of war, and for expenses in connection with warlike enterprises, the only way was to fall back upon the domestic plate then in use in large quantities in the houses of old families. At Beeston and in other besieged castles they did not wait for diesinker and mintmaster, but simply cut up spoons and dishes into little pieces of approved size and weight, and stamped them with a mark of denomination and with some sign such as the castle gateway and a very crude inscription.

Some very fine examples of the work of old silversmiths who worked in Tudor and earlier times are still extant—although few, it is true. From these it is evident that enormous stores must have been lost during the Civil War, when so much was given to the Royalist cause, sometimes requisitioned, and often seized. It is a matter of speculation how far the pieces still preserved represent the articles then in use. It is probable that some vessels of even fairly common forms are almost unrepresented in collections, and perhaps some of the examples now known may have been but scarce rarities and the work of some local silversmith and not at all indicative of the common things of the period.

The losses of the Civil War were followed by the zeal of the Puritans and of the Commonwealth during which much fine civic and royal plate was destroyed or turned to other uses; not because it was needed but because the mistaken ideas of the puritan demanded a change, and as usual when such sweeping reforms are being carried out extremes were insisted upon rather than a policy of

gradual reform, the result of conviction and changing times.

The displays of wealth in the days of Henry VIII have been mentioned, but these were continued in another form during the reign of Elizabeth who loved grandeur and display, and it is suggested was not averse to receive costly tribute from her courtiers and those who sought to win her favour by such means. The tours of Elizabeth were notorious, and those she visited sought to impress her with their wealth by the grandeur of the plate and the jewels shown and worn. It was much of this family plate and the jewels given to the Virgin Queen that found its way into the melting pot in the following century, and thus robbed museums and art galleries of the present day of so much of that which would have given a true insight into the domestic life of the sixteenth century.

#### DOMESTIC SILVER

The "home connoisseur" is very much interested in the actual articles which were in common use when English Society was being fashioned and the middle classes added to those who already possessed visible signs of wealth. Such merchants and others were founding families and building houses—in some instances the "stately homes of England"—not castles. We can understand that when the days of castles as homes were numbered—even before the Civil War brought the old fortresses to ruins—there was a gradual alteration going on in the furnishing of the homes of the wealthy. As a matter of fact the Renaissance which was making such a change in all manners of art upon the Continent was working its way into the homes of the people of England. The darkness of the Middle Ages was being lifted and comfort was taking the place of severe ornament and formal



FIG. 27.—SILVER COFFEE-POT,  
By ISAAC DIGHTON.  
HALL-MARKED LONDON 1705-6.  
(In the Victoria and Albert Museum.)



FIG. 28.—TWO-HANDLED VASE AND COVER,  
By L. COURTAULD AND G. COWLES.  
HALL-MARKED 1771-2.  
(In the Victoria and Albert Museum.)

furniture. The sideboard or court cupboard was no longer a thing upon which silver and pewter, then almost antiquated, rested in solemn grandeur, only to be shown and used on rare occasions. The salt cellar had become a much smaller piece than in former times, and modern table appointments were coming into use, although in those days the fork was unknown as an article of common necessity.

In inventories of old plate there is a curious mixture of ecclesiastical and domestic plate, and in some instances the descriptions given show the intermixture of ornament, for the designs for some of the pieces were often similar, and indeed many of the pieces of church plate were given by their donors from family stores. Mr. Pollen, in his well known book, "*Gold and Silversmiths' Work*," gives some interesting particulars of the silver plate of the Earls of Warwick. Earl Thomas in 1400, he tells us, bequeathed "an image of the blessed Virgin; two cruets in the shape of angels; his cup of the swan, and knives and saltcellars for the occasion of the coronation of a King." "Amongst his table plate," Mr. Pollen says, were "two dozen silver dishes, twelve chargers, twelve saucers of silver, a pair of covered silver-gilt basins, four other basins, and four ewers of silver." There were also other vessels, including "a cup of gold."

Mr. Pollen also quotes from the will of Sir Thomas Lyttleton, who died in 1487, and left a "basin of silver, ewer of silver, two great saltcellars, and a 'kever' weighing ninety-three ounces; a standing plain gold piece with plain gilt 'kever,' weighing twenty-four ounces; six 'bolles' of silver, in the middle of which being enamelled the six months of the year; a 'standing piece' with 'kever' and two others; a depe washing bason of silver, forty-one ounces; two saltcellars, a 'kever' to one of them weighing thirty-one and half ounces; another of silver,

all gilt, on the myddle of which be three eagles with ' kever ' weighing thirty-three ounces ; low piece of silver with a ' kever ' ; a dozen of best spoons ; four more saltspoons ; and several other pieces silver ; naming also a dozen spoones of the third sorte."

Many old families have records of stores of domestic plate, but only in rare instances have they pieces bearing hall-marks of that early date. No doubt the few rare and much valued survivals of once well stocked butler's pantries and sideboards were for various reasons hidden or saved when so much was being destroyed. Around these relics of domestic plate of the Tudor period hang many tales ; very interesting indeed would it be to unravel such mysteries and discover the true incidents—not merely legend or myth—to which we owe the survival of these isolated examples.

Among the sundry oddments met with occasionally are the curious bleeding dishes dating from Tudor times. The example shown in Figure 10 is, however, of a slightly later period having been hall-marked in London during the early years of the reign of Charles I. Figure 9 represents a plain tankard made during the last few years of the Tudor kings. Such tankards are found with increased frequency among the plate of the seventeenth century, in the early years of which they became the accepted type, passing quickly into one of the necessary articles of seventeenth century equipment.

## CHAPTER VIII

### DOMESTIC SILVER—SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Historical influences—Changes in style—Household plate.

It is convenient to divide the chapters on domestic plate, following those of the Middle Ages and late Mediæval or Tudor, into the several centuries during which the old silver which comes under the ken of the twentieth century collector was being used and stored. It is obvious that the periods cannot be strictly divided by any sharp line, or such arbitrary dates as the beginning and end of a century, nor can these periods of time be given as the correct dates at which any new style was first introduced. Actual changes in craftsmanship are for the most part found in unison with the social, political and domestic changes which were made, sometimes slowly, at others abruptly. These divisions, marked by the centuries, however, happen to fall very near the times indicated by political changes, so that the student of history, looking back over the centuries, noting the numerous changes in social life since mediævalism was at its height, recognises in the historical happenings great changes which can very well be placed for easy division at the beginnings and ends of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

#### HISTORICAL INFLUENCES

When the seventeenth century dawned, the days of Mediæval England were past, and there was a new awakening in the country. Elizabeth, whose active life in which

she spent so much of her time in her progresses throughout her dominions, had passed away, and thus the Tudor monarchs who were in evidence during the later part of Mediævalism, and especially during that period after the influence of strong ecclesiastical power had been broken, made way for the Stuarts.

James VI of Scotland had acceded to the English Throne, and a new era had begun. For the first quarter of the century James I of England and his courtiers constituted the dominating influence, a new one in that the Scotch court had been transferred to England, and it had brought with it ideas, habits and customs which were unfamiliar—we can well understand that these events wrought changes in social life and in household appointments.

The Reformation, at an earlier date, had caused changes in church usage and consequently in the vessels employed in the celebration of sacred rites, and in the altar plate of the churches. But ecclesiastical plate is more fully dealt with in another chapter.

The country had gradually settled down and accepted customs and habits which were at variance with those prevailing in England when the church was under the rule of the cardinals of the Church of Rome, for the clergy of the Reformed Church influenced the people in their homes perhaps as much as in church worship and service. These changes affected new silver and caused some of the existing vessels to be put away, but much of the silver plate remaining in the houses of the wealthy was the same as that used at an earlier period ; in time the ornamentation and symbols which once meant much were disregarded and vessels which at first were banished from the table because of their popish emblems and former uses were brought out again, thus in course of time they were used along with newer plate of later dates, made according to altered ideas of form and decoration—the household

plate of the seventeenth century was varied, it was a mixture of the old and the new.

That was the position when towards the middle of the century the country tired of the Stuarts, and the friction between the King and the Parliament caused the Civil War, resulting in the dethronement and subsequent execution of Charles I, and the establishment of the Commonwealth of England. The changes in the Government of European countries brought about by the Great War of 1914-1919 give us some idea of what the consequences of the Civil War in England must have been in the seventeenth century, and of the revulsion of feeling which in a comparatively short time caused the return to monarchical rule; but time alone can show us to what extent these recent changes in governments and states affect commerce, art and style, through their monarchical or republican influence upon trade and the objects of utility in the decoration of which art plays a part. The main point to remember when viewing these things from an historical viewpoint is that in the seventeenth century, especially during monarchical rule, the court and its supporters had greater influence upon production than now, for the wealthy patrons of art and those who influenced social customs were few outside court circles—the middle classes were then only in the making.

Undoubtedly one of the most interesting developments of the commerce of this country at the period under review was the changes which passed over the merchants who became a new power in the country during the Commonwealth, and more so at the close of the century. In Mediæval days there was a vast gap between the wealthy nobles and the common people—that gap was soon to be bridged over.

The flight of James II and the accession of William III and Mary had an immense influence upon all kinds of

household goods. The Dutch had long been famous for their trade and commerce and for their importation of foreign merchandise which they brought over to Europe in their ships. Again new ideas circulated freely, and the events of the closing years of the century brought many new customs into common use, all of them requiring the assistance of the artist, the potter and the silversmith. In furniture, metal work, and all kinds of household appointments Dutch influence was seen. There were great strides in commerce, and ere the century closed it may be said British craftsmen had become more self reliant and plied their crafts with freedom under their guilds. They were in a position to guide the public demand for silver as other goods rather than to be ruled and swayed by the whims of patrons and foreign artists. The influence of historic events had been felt, and as a result the manufacturers of England, then a powerful body, had benefitted by the varied ideas which had been suggested to them—the silversmith had almost if not quite evolved a national style to be brought to a head in the days of Queen Anne.

#### CHANGES IN STYLE

The résumé of the chief historical events during the century likely to have a marked influence upon manufacture shows that some of those events were of such a drastic character that it is almost a wonder that commerce preserved any sequence of production at all. Some of the events, even in those days of fewer changes in household appointments, were so startling and entirely disturbing that metal workers must have had busy times. The changes from Popery to Protestantism had been sudden, and again strong and bitter religious contentions had not been unfrequent.

Towards the close of the century when things were

shaping themselves on lines we can better understand many were still living who could remember the fires of Smithfield ; the inroads on stores of money and plate during the Civil War were never forgotten by those who later on tried to replenish the domestic silver they had given up. New plate of two distinct types took its place, and among old silver of that period those fine old flagons and tankards with plain puritanical ornament and the florid decorations of Carolean silver and pewter form a strong contrast.

The beginning of the century was fraught with changes, the result of the transfer of the court from things purely English to those closely allied with Scotch customs. It cannot be too clearly realised that when James I came to his southern possessions he brought with him courtiers whose whole interests were bound up with the habits of the Scottish kingdom. Their ideas were associated both in religion and common usage with the vessels they had used in the Scotch kirk and in their highland castles. The new silver made for James in England would very naturally take some of the characteristics of Scotch ornament, and those who wished to flatter the new Sovereign would not be slow to copy the patterns most likely to please his taste. When Charles I came to the throne, his own ideas would be chiefly English, although on his marriage he had learned to appreciate French art, and the English makers would in consequence be influenced by foreign style. The Civil War as we have seen cleared away much that was old and valuable to a collector, and in sympathy with the puritanical feelings of so many at that time the makers of silver plate moderated their designs and fashioned the goods they made for domestic use after the manner of the plainer style then in vogue.

After the Restoration the coast was clear for a new style to be introduced, and it would most naturally contrast

as much as possible with the plainer style which had been in vogue during the Commonwealth. There had been no demand for decoration and little scope for the artist of other nations during the brief but very active advance made in trade and commerce abroad during the trade revival which followed the Civil War, and progress was made in colonisation.

It must not be thought that all decoration was barred during the Commonwealth, for even Cromwell himself gave some important commissions to silversmiths and others. The strictly plain articles at first made in contrast to the more fanciful were in a short time ornamented with lines and rings, and some of the shields on which crests and monograms were engraved were very tasteful in outline. Religious mottoes in accord with the views of the day were often inscribed on quite common objects of domestic use. The plates and dishes had large centre shields, and the style of the engraving and of the letters was very good, although plain. Sometimes a wreath further embellished the shield or central design on the platters and dishes.

After the Restoration the style became very florid and the designs at first somewhat stiff became fanciful and animals and grotesque figures were introduced. This curiously grotesque ornament was at its height in the reign of James II. The greatest innovation of the period was when Dutch subjects and ornament were introduced in the reign of William and Mary. Indeed, throughout the whole of the seventeenth century there was a tendency to introduce foreign goods, and to copy patterns first designed elsewhere. Thus, towards the end of the century there was a strong following of Oriental taste, and Chinese patterns were engraved upon many articles of silver. It was thus that many articles became dual in

their purpose, the commoner things serving the double purpose of use and ornament.

### HOUSEHOLD PLATE

The varieties of household plate made during the seventeenth century are somewhat disappointing; they were few in number and their uses were limited. The earlier part of the century was a period of evolution; new ideas were accepted slowly. In the beginning of the century the greater stores of plate were to be found in the colleges and in the possession of civic authorities and trade guilds. There must have been large quantities of old silver in the treasure chests of the nobility, too, and in many an old castle and mansion vast quantities were secreted. No doubt much was in bad condition, and when new vessels, spoons and table plate were wanted some of the old silver was reshaped and hammered into what was then the prevailing style, as influenced by the changes going on.

During the great "melting times" silver plate of which we have now no record was destroyed, and the marks and names of old silversmiths upon many of the pieces perished. Early in the century domestic plate was doubtless Elizabethan, and the most prominent piece on the table was still the standing salt. In the Court there was much splendour, for some magnificent pieces of plate in the form of silver tables and table services were made. It was when English nobles entertained their new King James that some impetus was given to the use of silver plate. James loved to visit his people in their own homes, and apparently on those occasions the possessors of silver dishes, plate, flagons and cups of various kinds displayed them on the table and sideboard. It was during then that great silver jars and silver furniture was made for Knole House and

other mansions which the King visited. Most of these large pieces of old plate have gone into the melting pot ; there are, however, still many cups and tankards which can be traced back to those days. Some are in national collections, a few are still in the hands of the families for whom they were originally made, but most of such pieces of rarity have changed hands many times, and when they come under the hammer realise high prices, for the cost of old silver goes up by leaps and bounds !

As time goes on the weight, size and shapes alter ; in Tudor days everything was strong and substantial like the oaken furniture then in use, but in the seventeenth century lighter silver began to take its place. When the royal exchequer was empty Charles I sold much of the Tudor plate which was very massive, and had lighter silver made for his table. The great standing salts gave place to smaller pieces and the variety of silver table appointments increased. The time soon came when large flagons gave place to porringers and caudle cups, but most of those still extant, dating from the days of the Commonwealth, are substantial in type and plain in ornament. Not long ago the increased value of plate of this period was illustrated in one of the London auction rooms. Cromwell gave his daughter Mary, on her marriage to Viscount Falconberg, a silver-gilt porringer and cover costing then a few pounds. It changed hands at the sale mentioned for more than a thousand guineas.

The florid style of the Restoration imparted strength although the cups were not weighty, the repoussé decoration adding to its substantial feel and strengthening it in utility. Much of the decoration used by silversmiths in the reign of Charles II was in accord with that which the King had favoured during his stay in exile in France and it may be said to have been derived from French designers and followed their style and influence.

When any of the little porringers of the period of Charles II come into the market, there is keen competition for their possession. The exceptionally fine piece shown in Figure 12, measures seven inches in height, and was hall-marked in 1678. The ornamental acorn knobs, well-modelled heart-shaped handles, and foliated ornament round the bottom, are all typical of the florid style of ornament then so popular. Another feature about this beautiful cup is the low relief engraving of the crest and wreath in the accredited style of the Restoration period. This cup is in the possession of the Goldsmiths and Silversmiths' Company, by whose courtesy it is used as an illustration of that period when so much new silver was made, and so many of the now scarce antiques were being fashioned.

## CHAPTER IX

### DOMESTIC PLATE—EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

The influence of social life—Increased trade brought prosperity—  
A transition period—A landmark in history—Artistic tastes—  
Muffineers and Pepperettes—A dish of tea.

WHEN we reach the eighteenth century we get more in touch with the conditions of life as they were in this country in olden time. There is a closer connection between the people who lived then and our own times than with those who lived at an earlier date, and we understand better their habits and customs. Indeed, in the English homes of to-day there are in daily use many things nearly the same as were in common use two centuries ago—those we now use being but modified and modernised replicas of the domestic wares of the eighteenth century. Let us for a moment turn to the actual happenings and conditions of that time. We cannot forget that even yet England was then under the influence of foreign workmen, and that when the eighteenth century dawned the people of this country had not forgotten that William of Orange and his Consort brought over with them much that was distinctly Dutch in character, and a few years later when Queen Anne reigned the styles that were in after years looked upon as English, and always associated with Queen Anne's reign, had not been formulated.

The strong influence of Dutch artists was still felt, but in the craftsmanship of those early days of the century were the beginnings from which would be shaped Queen Anne and early Georgian styles which became the national shapes and ornament of English silver and metal ware.

## THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL LIFE

Throughout the century, social customs and habits were destined to control fashion and the craftsmanship of this country even more than in the century just gone. The revolutionary spirit of the people and their leaders, and the desire to change queens and kings with scant courtesy waned, and Queen Anne soon became accepted as an English queen firmly seated on her throne. Her character and the social customs which surrounded the aristocracy and nobility of Queen Anne's reign were not the least influences upon the styles of furniture and household appointments, and these governed art decorations and ornament in the home.

The fighting men and the turbulent spirits who had played such a prominent part in the Civil War, and who had kept up the traditions of rough doings in certain families had quieted down. The pleasures of the chase had taken the place of wars abroad and local quarrels at home, at the close of Queen Anne's reign. The hunt was a new outlet for those who were accustomed to open air recreation and amusements, and gave a vigorous delight for the moneyed classes and those who had leisure. Furniture of the accepted pattern which we now call "Queen Anne" style was being made, and everything else was being fashioned like it. The day had not yet come for a studious life, or one devoted to scientific research, and much less for the wealthy classes and noble families to turn their attention to trade or other profitable occupations. The open house on the hunt days, and the lavish hospitality of a former period was continued, and the table appointments and the silver plate was in keeping with the needs of the master of the house at such times. The chase was followed by hunt dinners, the days of hard drinking had not gone, for the squire and the parson could

imbibe much strong liquor, and plentifully plied their guests with spirit and punch. Men made merry and cracked jokes over walnuts and wine, and drank heavily. For all these social extravagances there was still needed large cups and flagons, and although as time went on there were changes in the shapes and forms of the goblets and other table vessels, and in their ornament and decoration, there was no lack of work for a silversmith throughout the eighteenth century—massive plate was still desired.

The women of the household had their domestic duties according to their family traditions and the positions they held, but they seem to have had plenty of time for their needlework, and the stiff and formal ornamentation of the embroidery and pictures they worked in silks was in keeping with the ornamentation of silver and the fancy work of the times. They had also time for the practice of superstitious vagaries, and the practice of such love spells as spilling the salt and the potions mixed by old crones and so-called witches.

#### INCREASED TRADE BROUGHT PROSPERITY

It should be noted that there was a great impetus to trade in the beginning of the century, followed, of course, by increased wealth to many who had been impoverished by wars and times of civil disturbance. That new prosperity that came with the eighteenth century was shared by the craftsmen who made the home beautiful, and not the least so by the silversmiths and the pewterers, both of which crafts were kept busy; at that time largely discarding old shapes and methods of working which had been associated with their individual trades, fashioning the metal work and decorating it according to the styles prevailing in furniture, textiles, and imported goods from China and other Eastern countries. Most of the noted

silversmiths of that day were "little masters," working at the bench and employing one or two journeymen and, perhaps, two or three apprentices.

Heavy walnut furniture of the earlier days of Queen Anne required massive plate to appropriately make the display of silver and pewter in keeping with the rest of the things in the house ; but as her reign drew to a close the silver became lighter, more graceful in form, the ornament better and more profuse ; the engraver was encouraged and right nobly responded to the call, chasing beautiful candlesticks, and ornamenting the more important table silver. Much of the details of the decoration was left to his fancy, but he was generally careful to fall in line with the accepted styles of the period.

The City merchants grew rich ; the state of Society in the City and the houses in which traders lived and furnished lavishly can be judged by some of the old buildings still standing as typical examples of houses of the well-to-do of London and elsewhere. These old houses were richly upholstered, and the plate and pewter and brass vessels in daily use were in keeping with the wealth and status of the people who dwelt in those old homes and used those now valuable antiques. There was for a time an era of prosperity, and money was made and expended, the metal worker receiving a large share of the trade for improved household equipment. It is said that in the days of George II, there was very little difference in the style of living of an earl and a merchant prince ; even a well-to-do tradesman had a well furnished house behind his shop, a pretty city garden full of flowers and quaint leaden statues, not forgetting the old sundial, and a cellar of choice wines and spirits. There was plenty of good living and a rich supply of substantial table plate.

The eighteenth century was famous for its taverns and coffee houses. The inns in London were calling places

for the coaches and post chaises travelling in and out of the city. It must be remembered, however, that the taverns, later supplemented by the coffee houses, were the meeting places of traders and their customers, and that the habit of ratifying all important transactions by drinking together was firmly rooted in the business system of that day, and some may say that they have not yet entirely died out. The popularity of the taverns provided another outlet for the silversmiths and pewterers, for these houses were then rich in their stores of silver and pewter vessels, and many fine flagons, bowls, cups, and table plate in public galleries, and in private collections to-day, were first made for the innkeepers of olden times.

#### A TRANSITION PERIOD

The middle of the eighteenth century was a great transition period. There had been much social unrest after the wars of the days of Queen Anne, and the many disturbances among the people of different grades of society which had followed had not yet quite settled down. This unrest has always followed any great struggle, national upheaval, or an unsatisfied public—the twentieth century is now experiencing what was more acutely felt in the eighteenth. The history of society at that time gives a clue to the ultimate resumption of trade, and to the greater attention of the people to the refurnishing of houses, and providing domestic plate and other appointments in lieu of that which had been destroyed or grown obsolete, which was a distinct feature of this transition period.

Gradually as the century advanced great exponents of the newer tastes in artistic matters made themselves felt. By the middle of the century Thomas Chippendale had founded his newer style, and he and those of his school who followed imparted a new interest in domestic life,



FIG. 29.—SUGAR-BASIN.  
1774-5.  
(In the Victoria and Albert Museum.)



FIG. 30.—EIGHTEENTH CENTURY SUGAR-BASIN.  
(In the possession of the Goldsmiths and Silversmiths Co., Ltd.)

and those who could afford the luxury vied with one another in buying new silver. Then as the years rolled by Sheraton, Adam, and other cabinet-makers of note formulated independent styles, all of which were closely followed by silversmiths and metal workers. At no other time has such an influence been felt, promoting a fresh start for designer and decorator, as that during which the great furniture makers worked, compelling other craftsmen to fall in line with the styles they initiated.

The styles of furniture and its ornamentation became the forms and decorated enrichment of the silver goods which were then being fashioned. The helmet-shaped coal box which the coppersmith hammered into shape was in line with the accepted pattern of the cream jug, the foot and stand of which was altered from square to round, and its height regulated according to the fashion of other things—the helmet cream jug was but a development of the older sauce boat. The silver candlesticks of Georgian days were shaped and ornamented after the manner of the Doric or Corinthian columns of the buildings then erected ; even the tea-caddies were formed like the wooden ottomans and the walnut coffers then in use. Still more slavish in closely following contemporary styles were the engravers, who in turn produced patterns after the manner of ribbon and wreath carvings over the eighteenth century mantelpieces and doors ; they worked in accordance with the designs of the Adam Brothers, and they imitated the beautiful inlays of Sheraton style and traced designs after the manner of the Chinese taste then in vogue.

#### A LANDMARK IN HISTORY

It is only by noting well-known landmarks in the social history of a country that we can arrive at the starting point of a new era. Such landmarks serve to fix dates

just as the date letters of old silver tell definitely the time of its making, but such periods are often arbitrarily marked for their influence upon production, art, craftsmanship, and social customs do not always spread with equal regularity, indeed their influence would be felt in London or in the locality in which they occurred more than places further afield or more remote in their connections.

Such a landmark occurred when George III came to the throne in 1760. His reign was eventful in that during the later part of it the styles already mentioned were being formulated, and the silversmiths and others altered their mode in accordance with the growing popular taste.

The loss of our American Colonies must have come as a rude shock to commerce ; it caused a rupture in the continuity of trade with those Colonies, and gave an impetus to new industries in America, for such a break in commercial transactions, if only for a time, was not without its natural effect.

The States were free and thrown upon their own resources. What mattered it if the workmen of the freed Colonies followed the old styles or instituted new ones. Their claim to British descent was sound, and American citizens were only following the same line as their ancestors in England, deviating, however, at the point of breakage, and gradually founding a new school of cosmopolitan art.

In England science and the discovery of steam power and mechanical traction gave a great impetus to commerce. It was then that the old-world centres of trade, and many hitherto unassailed local occupations received a rude shock, and some rapid development was made in hitherto unknown localities. Birmingham was the new fast developing centre of the hardware trade. Sheffield, hitherto celebrated for its cutlery — Chaucer wrote : “ Sheffield thytel bear he in his hose ” — began to make much silver, and these growing centres wanted local

facilities for hall-marking their wares, hence the grant of halls of assay to both Birmingham and Sheffield in 1773. The opening up of canals brought rural England in touch with these trading centres, and the increasing wealth of the middle classes operated in favour of silversmiths and others who made domestic house furnishings.

The altered state of Society changed the order of trade, instead of very large and disproportionate articles of silver for the wealthy noblemen and massive sets of silver plate for the few, the silversmith began to make smaller cups and moderate sized dishes. The large standing salt had long disappeared, and very many varieties of smaller table salts made their appearance. The Georgian period, chiefly the latter half of the eighteenth century, brought with it great activity among the makers of silver spoons, chiefly of the size and type we still call "table" spoons. Very many sauce boats were fashioned; the newer tastes for sauces requiring them. About the middle of the eighteenth century the late, dissolute habits of the aristocracy made bed pull in the morning when breakfast was usually taken about eleven o'clock, dinner came at five o'clock, and supper at eleven o'clock—tea and its silver accompaniments had not then become a regular institution. The common folk, however, breakfasted at seven, dined at twelve, and went to bed early.

#### ARTISTIC TASTES

At the close of the century it would almost appear as if the artists were in the ascendant, and the culture they introduced in their respective crafts permeated throughout the different trades to which they were merely allied—incidentally it may be pointed out that the alliance between household furnishings and table appointments of which silver formed so important a part was at that time closer

than it had ever been. Ceramic art has always kept in touch with metal work, and very much shown in the craftsmanship of silversmiths and pewterers. In the early days of civilised life, silver and other metals took the place of crude pottery, and the metal workers improved upon the designs of the potter. Then towards the close of the eighteenth century potters and glass workers made acceptable wares which served the households of the middle classes and others better than metal, and to some extent they copied silver designs and improved upon their ornamentation. It was at that time that Josiah Wedgwood, and Flaxman, the famous artist associated with him, brought ceramic ornament to such a high state of perfection, and much of the silver ware of that period corresponded with it in design, and appropriately engraved, so that when used together in the dining hall there was perfect harmony and good taste in the combined use of pottery and silver.

#### MUFFINEERS AND PEPPERETTES

Among the table plate of seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth century households, cruets of various kinds have been conspicuous. The pepper boxes were an early institution, and some of the older pieces are remarkably quaint both in design and in their decoration. The tops of pepper pots have always been favourite objects for the engraver to show his handiwork. Some of the peppers and pepperettes followed the fashion of the salts, and later that of the more varied tea table appointments of modern days. Some have been square, others octagonal, and many of them of cylindrical form. The large casters and sets of cruets are among the finer pieces of later days, for following the fashion of odd pepper boxes, there came in the table cruet frame which held quite a number of

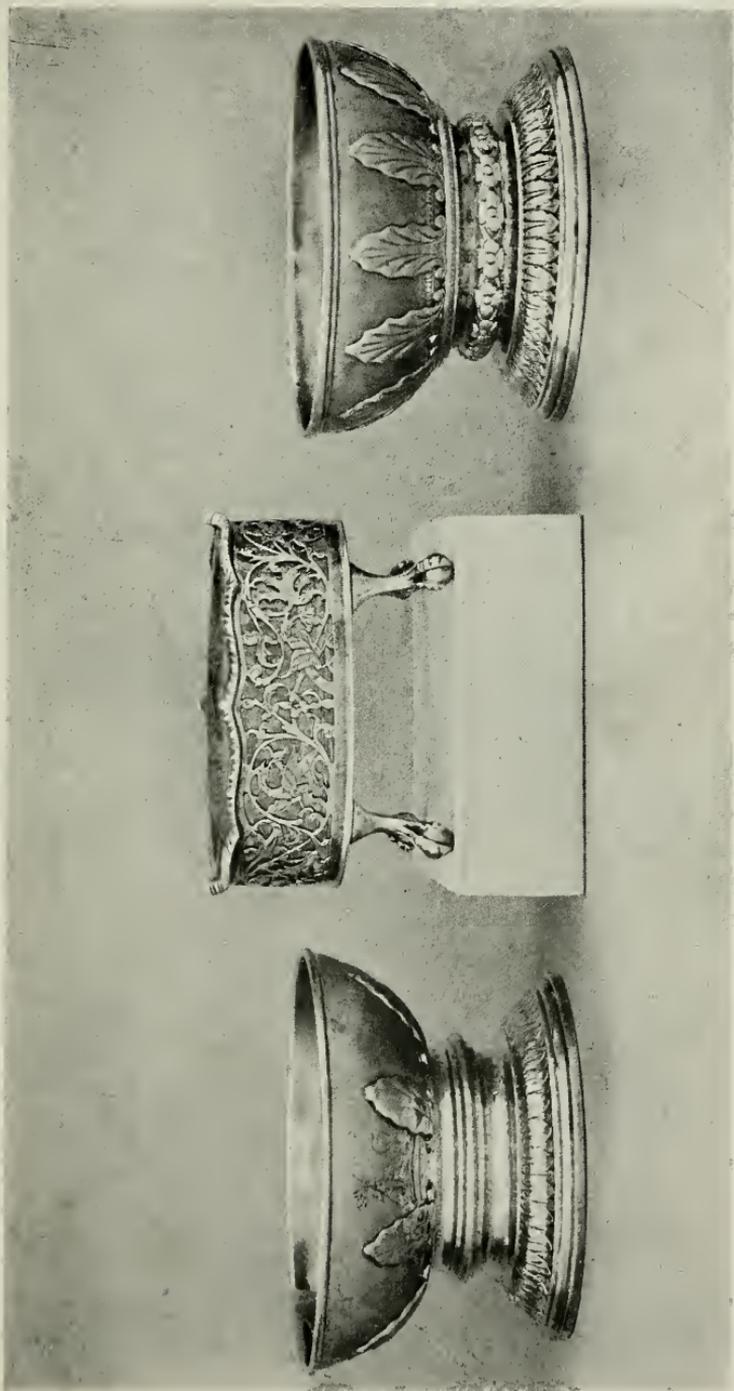


FIG. 31.—THREE SILVER SALT-CELLARS.  
(In the Victoria and Albert Museum.)



FIG. 32.—PEWTER CHURCH FLAGON.  
IRISH. EARLY 18TH CENTURY.  
(In the National Museum of Ireland, Dublin.)

bottles for the different condiments which increased in number as time went on. The vinegar cruet is of very ancient origin, for the Romans used these vessels and many of the early mediæval cruets were not unlike those of modern times. The examples of eighteenth century pepper boxes met with in collections are numerous; the fashion of larger sugar casters was an invention of the later days of the eighteenth century. In modern times its size has been considerably reduced, although there have been a number of replicas of these old casters made quite recently.

#### A DISH OF TEA

In another chapter special reference is made to the then comparatively new custom of tea drinking; the tea table became a regular institution, and the rare silver now treasured as charming and comparatively inexpensive representation of the art of that period was coming into vogue. A dish of tea was drank out of choice china, and the beverage to which was added a lump of sugar, was stirred with a delightful little spoon engraved according to the prevailing style of ornament most favoured by the owner. Sugar tongs and caddy spoons were sometimes engraved in like designs, although the varied patterns and shapes then created according to the fancy of the silversmiths provided many little objects of table use in silver suitable for presents.

Urns, vases, sugar boxes, peppers, and casters for a variety of uses were being made. There were dishes of silver and many things to make the table bright—shining platters contrasting with the white porcelain and richly coloured tea sets. It is undoubtedly among the eighteenth century silver that the home connoisseur revels, and carefully traces the date marks and deciphers the initials engraved thereon, many of them indicating the family

pedigree, and linking up the period of the four first Georges with that of the Fifth of the Georges under whom many readers of this book are now living.

There are really so very many things of an inexpensive type a collector can secure as representative of the table silver of the Georgian period that it is impossible here to do more than mention a few of the striking features—these articles are more particularly described in the several chapters devoted to them.

It was in the eighteenth century that the tea table came into vogue, and as the famous "set down" teas became general, the mahogany table creaked under the good things set out. The silver tea and coffee set was the admiration of all, but it was of later date than the charming cream jugs, basins, and sucrieres of a few years earlier. Spoons and forks, sugar tongs, ladles, little cruets, and egg frames were additions of considerable interest, but although the massive flagons and large drinking cups had given way to tea sets, punch bowls and ladles and spirit decanters (sometimes silver mounted) were decorated with beautifully engraved silver labels hung from delicate chains, and sugar crushers and toddy ladles and the sweet-meat dishes of such exquisite shapes were among the appointments of a well-furnished household. The pepper pots and casters were formerly heavy and large but they were gradually reduced in size and some in miniature were added and used in conjunction with the larger casters. The heavy table cruet frame appeared at this time, holding a number of large cut glass bottles, silver mounted. The blue-liner mustard pot came in about the middle of the eighteenth century, and of these old pots there are many varieties, the perforated sides through which the blue liner shows up being very decorative; it is these older eighteenth century patterns which are mostly reproduced to-day. The patterns of table silver introduced at

this period have been found so satisfactory, and answer so well for the purposes for which they were made, that although fashion has changed somewhat in their use, there are few innovations in modern table appointments, and most of the eighteenth century designs have been repeated again and again, sometimes in sterling silver, at others in metal and alloys of more modern types.

The illustrations in this volume, which represent the silversmiths' work of the eighteenth century, include some very beautiful pieces, and varied in style. There are two sugar baskets, quite different in design and decoration, and yet made at dates not far removed. Figure 29 is a pierced and chased basket, with blue glass lining, made in 1774 ; and Figure 14 is a basket of Adam style of ornament, chased and fluted, also made in the reign of George III, 1784.

The very handsome silver butter box with cover, shown in Figure 15, is engraved and pierced ; it stands on four feet, and has the initials of the original owner on a side panel, the date of this unusual and interesting piece is 1788.

The style and ornament of engraving altered as the century wore on, but there was but little difference between the silver plate of the early days of George III, and the later days of his grandfather. The two vases and covers shown in Figure 13 are rare examples of the somewhat earlier period, the handiwork of Ayme Videau, the hall-mark being 1758.

Casters of unusually large size were made throughout the reigns of George II and George III, and it is probable that few modern reproductions have more closely followed the original models than the replicas of casters of the well-known styles of the eighteenth century. The three very handsome casters shown in Figures 16, 17, and 18, octagonal in shape, were of somewhat earlier time, and

their form clearly shows their close connection with the Queen Anne period. The larger one shown in the centre of the page measures  $8\frac{1}{4}$  inches in height, and the two others shown beside it, measure  $6\frac{3}{4}$  inches. They were all made by Augustus Courtauld, and were hall-marked in London in 1713.

Another piece of Queen Anne silver is shown in Figure 26, which represents a pair of silver snuffers with silver stand, made by Louis Mettayer, and hall-marked in 1708.

As more fully described in Chapter XXII, *Candlesticks*, many fine pillar candlesticks were made during the reign of George II, when a very elaborate style of ornamentation was in vogue. A typical example is that shown in Figure 25, which represents one of a pair of silver candlesticks made by Philips Garden, in 1743. The design was cast, enriched by tooling and chasing, the chief subjects treated being flowers, shells and scrolls.

Another illustration given in connection with this period is a very fine coffee pot, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington, made by Isaac Dighton, and hall-marked in London (*see* Figure 27).

Figure 28 represents a two-handled vase and cover, made by L. Courtauld, hall-marked in London 1771.

Among the interesting specimens of eighteenth century silver rarely met with in private collections are the so-called Irish potato rings, a peculiar style of table ornament, chiefly manufactured in Ireland or for the Irish market, and peculiar to that country during a very short period. The example shown in Figure 24 is a fine ring measuring  $6\frac{3}{4}$  inches across the top, the work of W. Hughes, of Dublin, in 1774.

There is a great variety of cake baskets, some with open silver wire-work frames, others perforated, and many of solid basket shapes, enriched with choice engraving. In the Victoria and Albert Museum may be seen many

fine examples, one being of the wire-work type in silver-gilt; the hall-mark is 1770. From the Murray bequest, the Museum received a very fine basket made by S. Herbert & Co., of Foster Lane, described in the catalogue as "oval, pierced, and decorated with an applied border of flowers and scroll work, cast and chased," it is hall-marked 1755-1756. This fine example, along with other baskets, may be seen in the recently re-arranged silver plate collection in the central hall of the Museum. The basket shown in Figure 59 is of the open wire-work type.

The fine chocolate pot illustrated in Figure 2 is one of the beautiful pieces of plate in the Victoria and Albert Museum at South Kensington. It has an oviform body, chased and repoussé with foliage and festoons of drapery. It stands on a triangular base supported by three curved legs terminating in applied satyr masks. It was made by Henry Greenway and is hall-marked 1777-1778, London.

Among the sundry domestic silver generally in use towards the closing years of the eighteenth century were lemon strainers, such as that illustrated in Figure 66, a very choice example in the Victoria and Albert Museum. In the same collection are two beautiful waiters used about the same period; these are shown in Figure 44. Spice boxes were much in vogue during the latter half of the eighteenth century; the silver box illustrated in Figure 46 was hall-marked in London, and is in the National Collection at South Kensington.

Of the smaller and yet equally interesting pieces of old silver of the Georgian period there are many. The cream jug shown in Figure 48 is of the approved high helmet shape, its engraving is of the ribbon and wreath style and upon either side is an urn, and round the circular foot a row of bead ornament; the handle is strengthened by

thread pattern relief. This jug matches tea spoons and sugar tongs of the same date, 1793, all being engraved in script with the double initials of the original owner and his wife, "RC" and "LC."

Figure 49 is an example of an old punch ladle of cherry wood with silver rim and twisted horn handle: and the two little caddy spoons shown in Figures 50 and 51 are from a small collection of these interesting relics of days long past, one is of silver and handsomely engraved bearing the initial of the owner "S," the other has a pearl handle. To collect old sugar tongs is a delightful hobby and not at all expensive. Figures 60, 61, and 62 are three distinct types: (B) is of the open-work design, (C) an engraved pattern and the third (A) a small pair of sugar nippers.

There really seems to be no limit to the little things one might secure in Georgian silver and almost every old silver basket examined presents some new variety. For instance, there are the curious long marrow spoons, some very fine examples are in the Fitzhenry collection at South Kensington. Another group may be made of spoons with perforated bowls among which there are some large ones like those given to the Victoria and Albert Museum by Miss Francis Newman in 1908. Then there are gravy spoons with strainers and asparagus tongs, and the beautiful old fish slices on the blades of which silversmiths of old were wont to expend much time in their decoration, the best period is about 1760-1770, when so many triangular fish slices were made. When the century closes the chief interest in the old silver seems to be lost in the modern types which have not the charm of the old, although during the first few years of the nineteenth century—still Georgian days, there was not much change visible in the work of the silversmiths.

## CHAPTER X

### DOMESTIC PLATE—NINETEENTH CENTURY

Early days—Silver substitutes—Weighty silver—The reign of Victoria  
—Great trade movement—Silver to-day.

It is probably at this rather than any other period that we bring to bear the relationship between contemporary surroundings and the work of the craftsmen. There are still in present-day households abundant relics of the everyday things of the nineteenth century. Yet, although not far distant, the appointments of the household in its entirety as it was, say, fifty years ago is seldom found, for changes have been more rapid in furniture, china, plate and the like during recent years. The antiques, modern things they were at the respective periods of their use, which we prize are rarely possessed in other than odd pieces ; the entire furnishing of a room with its full equipment of china, silver, brass, and sundry nick-nacks which always harmonised so well in the eighteenth century and earlier periods is not available.

#### EARLY DAYS.

The early days of the nineteenth century were but a continuation of the Georgian period ; and although customs were changing slowly there is not much appreciable difference—it was as if the social life and the gay doings of the Georges were fading away leaving little new or interesting to take their place. Furniture was

good and solid ; upholstery was heavy and not very beautiful ; even the charm of the needlework with which the prim dames of that day occupied their spare time, was losing its brightness, and stiff and formal designs of no artistic beauty took the place of the pictorial scenes and other work of an early date.

Naturally all these things had an influence upon the handicraft of the silversmith, and although he shaped the dishes, vases, and the newer coffee pots and urns more in accordance with the times, making them somewhat smaller and less cumbersome, they were still strong and substantial, and there was no stint in the amount of silver used up in their making. The beautiful and decorative ornament which was in keeping with the Chippendale style, and the ribbon and wreath decoration which had become so general in the last quarter of the eighteenth century gradually disappeared, and the ornament of the early days of the nineteenth century was for the most part stiff and formal. The engraver seemed to have lost the charm of his light touch, and when placing monograms and crests upon table silver, instead of embellishing them with the beautiful and ornate scroll work, and light decorative ornament which had been so marked until the new century dawned, he used plain block letters, and even crests were devoid of any adornment, other than simple arms, <sup>as</sup> very frequently indifferently copied. This is often noticeable in the reproduction of crests and armorial bearings early in the century, for it is no uncommon thing for there to be different interpretations of the same arms, and some grotesque caricatures of heraldic emblems introduced instead of the greater conformity to the dictum of Herald's College which was always a feature in the early engraving. Perhaps it was because at an earlier period more importance was attached to armorial embellishment and correct rendering than in the nineteenth

century when heraldry was for the most part neglected.

In the early days of the century sterling silver was regarded as the proper material from which to fashion domestic plate, but the time had already come when other materials were made use of, and substitutes were found for sterling silver. Needless to say, pewter had for centuries been used side by side with the more expensive silver, but that was a well known compound metal, and although used concurrently few would confuse pewter vessels with those made of sterling silver. The time had arrived, however, when greater prominence was to be given to good substitutes.

#### SILVER SUBSTITUTES

As it will be seen in another chapter the beautiful so-called Sheffield plate, which was a composite material of layers of metal welded together, the outer one being of the precious metal, the inner of an inferior quality, had already taken a prominent place in household appointments. This Sheffield plate, cheapening production, had proved an excellent silver substitute, for it was equally beautiful in finish, and stood the wear of many years, looking all the time like sterling silver, which its outer case really was (*see* Chapter XXXII).

The silversmiths' art has at different times been subject to competitive production ; a healthy sign about it being that whereas the middle classes were able to discard pewter, and use a good substitute for pure silver wares, those who could afford it clung the more tenaciously to solid silver, and strained every nerve to possess it.

The greatest change in the art of the silversmith came about 1828, when Messrs, Elkington & Co., the famous silversmiths, perfected the method of electro-plating base metal with silver. This art which does not come under

review in this volume, gave great impetus to the trade of Birmingham in this direction, and provided householders with an abundant supply of cheap silver-plated goods, which when new had every appearance of the genuine article. Electro-plated wares are found in every household to-day, but none of these things, even those made in the early days of the industry, have the slightest interest to collectors ; much worn Sheffield plate is preferred to the best examples of "electro," and still more so the most trivial pieces of eighteenth century hall-marked sterling silver. The silver wares made in the early days of the nineteenth century may some day become valuable, but it will be a long time before collectors of silver will regard domestic plate of less than a century ago of much consequence.

#### WEIGHTY SILVER

As already intimated, at the beginning of the nineteenth century most of the plate was heavy and very substantial, both in design, and in the manner of ornament. Now and then large stores of late Georgian silver come into the market, and then it is that the collector can compare the different articles that were produced at that time, and also form some idea of the variations which have taken place in more recent times. That is to say the differences which have been made by the silversmiths in producing domestic articles for similar uses, and also the modifications which have been found necessary in consequence of the alterations made in modern modes of entertainment, and in the display adopted in table decoration. A very notable opportunity of forming a correct opinion of the plate chests of well-to-do people early in the nineteenth century was given a few years ago when the Coutts' heirlooms were on view at Christie's salerooms, having been brought to light after being stored away in the vaults of Coutts' Bank in the Strand for about three-quarters

of a century. Most of these pieces of domestic plate were made to the order of Mr. Thomas Coutts, the banker, for Harriet Mellon the actress, whom he married in 1815, and who afterwards became the Duchess of St. Albans. There were many famous pieces in that collection, notably two immense silver-gilt centrepieces, 19 inches high, weighing 1,233 ounces, the handicraft of Paul Storr, who completed them in 1816. The same famous artist also supplied the wealthy banker with sixteen entrée dishes and covers, which weighed 1,817 ounces. Mr. Coutts also owned 36 dinner plates, weighing 877 ounces, and six large sauce boats, and a vast number of other table dishes and ornaments in keeping with this weighty plate. It would appear that Mrs. Coutts, after she became the Duchess of St. Albans, added to the store of the Coutts' silver; among the fine pieces she purchased was a centrepiece which formed a wine cooler, massive and decorative, the cover being surmounted by a figure of Amphitrite seated on a shell, made by Rundell in 1824. Of course, there have been very many collections of a more modest character brought under the hammer, still bearing out, however, the idea of strength and solidarity, and showing that even in the lesser important pieces the silver of the early years of the nineteenth century was intended to last. Much of this heavy plate has disappeared, for there was as yet certainly no antiquarian value attached to it, and as time went on the Victorian house wife preferred less weighty plate and greater variety. So she very frequently sold for old silver the one-time family soup bowl and the large ladles and gravy spoons of silver, exchanging them for the more modern silver table forks and dessert spoons, and so the character of table plate has gradually changed; its size has been reduced, but fortunately sterling silver is still hall-marked, and its quality has been well maintained.

## THE REIGN OF VICTORIA

The greater portion of the nineteenth century is looked upon as Victorian. The young queen who ascended the throne of Great Britain in 1837 soon showed that she was destined to be a popular sovereign, and one who would make her tastes and character felt throughout her vast dominions. Art as we like to understand it was at a low ebb, and it required some one with strength of will and determined purpose to bring into prominence the arts of the sciences then dormant. The Prince Consort when he was settled in this country realised the need of something more than mere trade activity to improve the commercial products of this country and make them more attractive. With this in view he set about the creation of a great display of art—in short, an exhibition in which the more artistic products of foreign markets could be placed side by side with those of British craftsmen. It was the first great competitive exhibition of its kind, and its success was very marked; the Great Exhibition of 1851 was indeed a landmark in the history of productive art, and its usefulness commercially was the means of starting several others, notably one in Dublin, called the Great Industrial Exhibition, in 1853, and another in Paris shortly afterwards; then these were followed by a second Great Exhibition in London in 1862. At these Exhibitions art was a special feature, and silversmiths made several notable exhibits, Messrs. Elkington and others showing that they were well able to produce modern plate of an artistic character worthy of taking its place among the rich stores of family silver, although it would probably be a long time before it could be classed with the antique.

## GREAT TRADE MOVEMENT

During recent years we have grown accustomed to a continuous series of art exhibitions, and yet it is not so very long, historically, since that Great Exhibition in Hyde Park which astonished so many visitors was held. As we have seen the world's silversmiths were there, and many wonderful pieces in silver, silver-gilt and electroplate then displayed are still regarded as masterpieces of the art. The wonderful collection of art treasures then shown told that art was not dead, and that the trade revivals of after years, the later period of Victoria's reign, although perhaps not quite in accordance with present day ideas of the *nouveau* art would be productive of much fine work, and would supply the world with much that was good, solid, and even decorative, silver plate worthy of being placed among the older heirlooms of wealthy families.

The wares hall-marked within the last half century are not, it is true, old enough to carry any curio or antiquarian value; they are just ordinary useful plate for the table. The makers, following the vogue of former years adding here and there a new design, something which the customers of the period required. The nineteenth century ladies loved to overload their tea tables with good things and crowded many choice china dishes and pieces of plate full of sweet meats, jellies and preserves, upon the table. Improved silver appointments soon made their appearance; spoons were fashioned and engraved as servers, and rapidly every household had its fish carvers and fish knives and forks, followed shortly by dessert knives and forks of silver, later the handles being made of pearl or ivory. As tea became less costly its use became more general, and tea and coffee services were made larger. There were also many ornamental silver tea kettles and urns, the

introduction of electro-plated wares and the cheapened processes of manufacture helping to make all these things popular, and thus it is that the supply of sterling silver has been kept up although silver substitutes have been introduced and their use with the more valuable plate has become general.

#### SILVER TO-DAY.

Sterling silver to-day is a luxury rather than a necessity, but there is a strong preference in its favour, notwithstanding its enhanced price. Silversmiths are busier than ever, and the variety of silver goods shown in the shop windows greater than it has ever been. Although the collector can never allow the antique to be neglected, the hunter after Victorian and post-Victorian silver in the far distant future will find among the relics of that period, beautiful works of art upon which they will find the marks or touch of the hall of assay guaranteeing the quality of the metal of which they are made.

## CHAPTER XI

### ECCLESIASTICAL PLATE

Holy relics—Origin of early church plate—Abbeys and monasteries—  
Destruction of plate—Saved from the melting pot—Loving records—  
Discoveries of rare plate—A tribute to local societies—Disposal of  
church plate—Modern ecclesiastical splendour

THE term ecclesiastical plate is a somewhat generic one, embracing the vessels used in the more sacred rites of ceremonial worship and the secular vessels associated with them, and with church ornament and decoration. Loving devotees of religion, whatever its dogmas or beliefs and the manner in which the Deity has been approached, have ever lavished their wealth upon altar appointments and upon emblems of power and authority of the religion they professed. The collector of plate whose first efforts to collect or study the furnishing of the home by the silversmiths of old admires, but rarely aspires to possess what according to the views of many are properly kept for religious uses. Deeper research, however, shows that many of the cups, dishes and other objects in private houses in olden time were either identical with those then used for church purposes or they had been derived from similar sources without regard to their ultimate use.

It is clear that in quite early times English churches as well as the greater ecclesiastical establishments were supplied with proper vessels for the performance of sacred rites. These original vessels—some of tin and pewter—if they can be so called, were supplemented as time went

on by patrons and donors who gave handsomer chalices and patens and other pieces, and thus when the supply became more than could be commonly used the older—and in some instances the later and more valuable vessels—were secreted or stored away. It is these old vessels that occasionally come to light. Many of them were found years ago and put to secular uses by their finders and subsequent owners ; others changed hands by purchase. Thus it is that very many once ecclesiastical vessels found their way into private homes where they have knowingly or unknowingly been put to secular uses.

#### HOLY RELICS

Before considering the purposes of modern church plate it is well to remember that the earliest things of value are frequently associated with what were at the time of their manufacture regarded as relics of great importance and virtue. The fear of sacrilege kept away thieves and robbers and prevented violent seizure of things entrusted to the priests in times of stress and riot. The veneration of relics—right or wrong, wise or unwise—has preserved such things and their shrines for future generations.

Such relics of saints and martyrs are still numerous and have usually been enshrined in suitable cases of gold and silver, often set with priceless jewels. Many of the older relics are associated according to tradition with the Apostles, and a few with Our Lord Himself.

Before considering Christian relics, however, we must remember that the older religions of the world had their images of silver and gold, and many vessels used in the rites their priests performed. Pagan deities had many altars, and in museums are to be seen statuettes of ancient Greek goddesses. Eastern nations and savage tribes had

their idols and at an early time the Jews and those nations with whom they came in contact possessed Holy relics, safeguarded and preserved for their temple worship. Prominent among these relics were the golden Candlesticks already mentioned as being part of the treasure carried to Rome after the sack of Jerusalem and the Jewish Temple. During the days of Roman ascendancy in Britain pagan worship of many gods prevailed, and some time elapsed before the acceptance of the religion of Christ and the creation and adaptation of vessels to its use. It is at this point that the story of church plate begins to evolve from the shadowy land of myth and tradition.

It is proper that some mention of the first vessel associated with the most sacred rite of the Christian church should prefix more definite records of such things. The stories associated with the Cup used by Our Lord himself in the rite he instituted are naturally only traditional, yet those that have been handed down, doubtless, had some basis of fact in their first inception.

The Quest of the Holy Grail may have been a vain one, but it was one favoured in the days of chivalry by our own mythical King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table. One story has it that the Holy Grail was long preserved in the church of St. Lawrence at Genoa. As it has been stated in a previous chapter the original cup was probably an ordinary food vessel. Legend, however, says that this cup of green stone was the veritable cup presented by the Queen of Sheba to Solomon, thus linking up Our Lord with the House of David. Of these myths there is no proof; from whence this cup was derived in the days of the Crusaders is not clear, it reached Genoa at the close of the twelfth century and was long kept in a metal box—no mortal hand touched it when it was raised with silken cords by the Archbishop who held it up for adoration.

There is the British legend, too, immortalised by Tennyson, in which Arthur went in quest of the Holy Grail. It seems well that there should be no proven relics of the Son of God when on earth, and that church vessels should be retained for use and in fulfilment of holy rites, not as objects of veneration.

#### ORIGIN OF EARLY CHURCH PLATE

The early Christians, remembering their sufferings and persecutions, very naturally went to some extremes in the methods of worship which they tried to make as antagonistic as possible to pagan beliefs, notwithstanding that many Christian rites, feasts, and days of solemn vows were coincident in time of the year with ancient Jewish feasts and with pagan rites celebrated in countries wide apart.

The artists who had shaped idols and fashioned silver wreaths for pagan goddesses continued their craft under the patronage of the exponents of the new religion. With the introduction of Christianity there came about a new use for the arts for which Byzantium had become famous. The altar ornaments were rapidly fashioned, and cups, chalices, patens and other vessels which were early included in the Christian worship were made, perhaps, from the very silver which had at an earlier period been shaped in the forms of pagan idols or had enriched the altar of false gods. Mr. Pollen, in his interesting description of the almost barbaric splendour of some of the later Roman Emperors in "*Gold and Silversmiths' Work*," says that "Theophilus (A.D. 829) rebuilt the great palace of the emperors. The throne was of 'gold set with gems.'" Speaking of the artists of that period he says: "The scroll compositions into which they arranged the bases of candlesticks, the borders, crestings, and reliefs of their

reliquaries, and other metal work, abounded in representations of birds, dragons, and monsters, conventionally treated so as to give due effect to the sinuous scrolls and knots in which the rich interlaced ornament was combined." Here then we have indications of the adaptation of Byzantine art to the ornamentation of the Christian church. Very soon after that the church of Christ succeeded in increasing the grandeur of worship and making it more glorious and awe inspiring than that of paganism. This increase of ornament and greater use of jewels went on until the fulness of mediæval art completed the beauty of worship in a Gothic temple—a fit casing for the altar of God.

#### ABBEYS AND MONASTERIES RICH IN PLATE

The marvellous splendour of the Mediæval abbeys and cathedrals in Europe, and in a somewhat lesser degree in Great Britain was derived from a very lavish use of decorative material and the marvellous carvings with which it was enriched. Rich tapestries and the embroidered robes of the priests added to the wonderful carving of the woodwork of the interiors of these places worthy of sustaining the pomp of the worship in pre-Reformation times. The altars were aglow with vessels of gold and silver, in the making of which many jewels were used. It was then that Henry VIII looked with an avaricious eye upon the wealth of the church, and felt aggrieved at the increasing power of the Cardinals of Rome. With one fell swoop came the Dissolution of the Monasteries and the wholesale plundering of abbey lands and church property and wealth. The plate and jewels the religious orders possessed were confiscated, and much of the silver was melted up or re-made, and some of the more suitable pieces were converted to secular uses.

Notwithstanding the losses sustained some noted pieces of plate were hid away, and some few very ancient bits are still known. Many of these owe their preservation to historical or personal associations, a few also were saved out of curiosity because of their very ancient origin, obvious from the ornament upon them if not from oral tradition connected with them. One of the notable relics of these very early times is the Malmesbury caborium.

#### DESTRUCTION OF PLATE

Changes came thick and fast, and the Reformed church gloried in the protection afforded by the young King Edward VI, but during his reign there was wholesale destruction of ancient plate. Some of the vessels were deemed unsuitable for the newer method of worship, and much perished in order to find funds for the much needed repairs and restoration of church property, and the greater part of the residue was claimed by the Crown under varied pretences. Chalices and dishes once used in the celebration of the mass were deemed unfit for the Protestant communion, and so many were destroyed.

When Mary came to the throne there was a return to the Mass and another flutter among the custodians of church plate, resulting in further losses and depletion.

Again, when Elizabeth reigned Protestant communion cups were fashioned out of existing silver. The vessels surviving from the time of the last great change of the religion of the State are few, although here and there in old parish churches there are still in use ancient vessels hall-marked in the days of Edward VI.

It is impossible to pass over without mention, however brief, the vandalism of the premeditated destruction of holy things and of church buildings venerated by age and tradition. A conspicuous example is found in the

Cathedral of Rheims. At one time much valuable plate adorned its altar and some choice pieces specially made for the Cathedral have at times been removed to other places, one fine example being a chalice of gold and enamel, in recent years to be seen in Paris—in later times it has been plundered, the sacred edifice is to-day a ruin, and its glories gone, but not forgotten, and they may be revived.

#### SAVED FROM THE MELTING POT

In an earlier chapter it is stated that much of the beautiful quaint and oftentimes weighty vessels of the Oxford Colleges went into the melting pot. Custodians of these treasures must have brought out their old silver and consigned it to the purposes of the Royalists with many sighs. We can readily understand how some college don loyal to the founders of his college and to the donors of plate given for the use of the college for all time, cautiously hid away pieces around which precious memories clung. Such plate would appeal to many in those days, and perhaps some of the vessels would savour more of the delights of the chase than of mouldy tomes in the college library. The ancient foundation of All Souls yet has a marvellous standing salt known as the "Huntsman's Salt," an example of silver hid away when the plate chest was robbed for royal needs.

#### LOVING RECORDS

The very nature of church plate is inducive of exhaustive enquiry into the origin of vessels possessed. In some counties local talent and literary leisure have enabled loving records to be compiled. Alas, many counties have no such books to which their admirers may turn, others, however, have chronicled with patient care the ancient plate stowed away in vestry cupboard or vicarage safe.

Whenever these county records have been compiled it is astonishing to find how many treasures the church still possesses, although the real curio value of some of the pieces is unknown to those who possess them, and to those in whose custody they are placed. Many pieces of great beauty and extreme rarity have been found. One of the most comprehensive and painstaking works on the subject is that on "*Yorkshire Church Plate*," begun by the late T. M. Fallow, M.A., F.S.A., and completed by H. B. McCALL, F.S.A. This work is highly commended to the student of church plate who is anxious to compare the relative values of the different vessels used in any given locality. Not only were the clergy and custodians of the plate belonging to the numerous parishes in the city of York, and the North and East Ridings of Yorkshire requested to make returns of their plate, but the information given was followed up by personal visits by the authors of the work. The extreme value of the personal inspection by experts is apparent in the accounts given, for inaccuracies in description made in all good faith were remedied. The book is a splendid record of many years laborious research for which reliable accounts were compiled. It is a pity that such records of all the counties of England are not available.

#### DISCOVERIES OF RARE PLATE

Some of the clergy are truly simple minded, and place great faith in the integrity of the masses. In many country parishes there are rare stores of plate unprotected, in not a few church vestry cupboards, unlocked, are to be found valuable and in some instances priceless gems of the silversmiths' art. The sanctity of the altar even when aided by superstitious dread of sacrilege, would not deter some wandering visitors from pilfering. It is common



FIG. 33.—THE DOLGELLY CHALICE.  
(In the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff.)

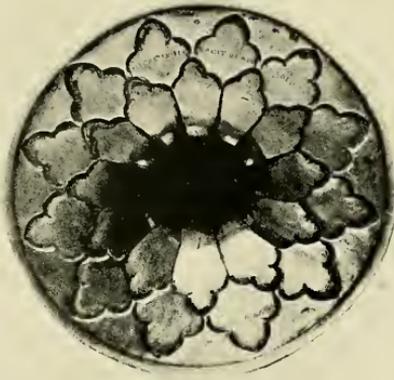


FIG. 34.—BASE OF THE DOLGELLY  
CHALICE.  
*(See previous page.)*

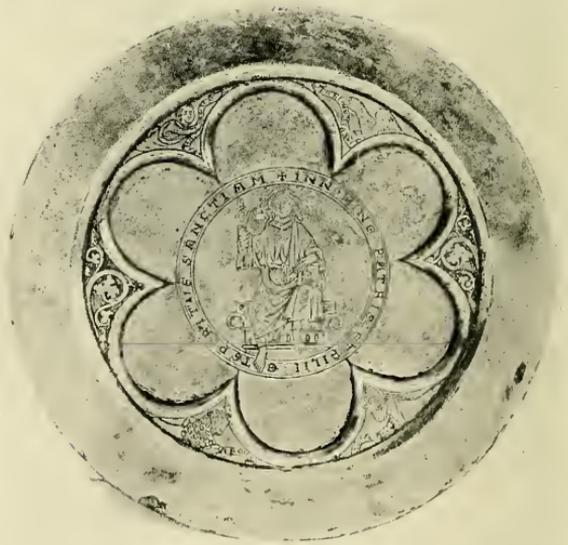


FIG. 35.—THE DOLGELLY PATEN.  
*(In the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff.)*

knowledge that poor boxes have been robbed again and again, many times by the same individual—the rare treasure of plate entrusted to vicar and churchwardens are a trust to be well safeguarded for the benefit of future generations.

It is almost impossible to understand how it is that rare ecclesiastical plate has been hidden away, and even when found its date or period made of no account. Yet there are many such instances. A few years ago the daily press announced the discovery of a chalice and paten, dated 1569, in a chest in Baldock Church ; these vessels had a royal historic interest, for they were used by Charles I when a prisoner at Baldock (Herts). No doubt they are jealously guarded now. Would that all such relics were kept and treasured as they should be !

#### A TRIBUTE TO LOCAL SOCIETIES

The work of the painstaking historian who devotes his time to a labour of love in collecting material for his book of great local interest, and in dissecting the varied and often conflicting accounts with which he is furnished, is ably supplemented by local societies, some of whom have done good work.

In towns and districts where there are enthusiastic archæological and kindred societies, controlled and influenced by energetic presidents and secretaries, all objects of real value and interest to the antiquarian are known. There is much to delight in a well kept local record. Now and then these societies help their members and friends in a very practical way by getting together on loan examples of ancient church plate, having special regard to those pieces bearing the impress of a long closed office of assay. Some time ago the Royal Cornwall Polytechnic Society had a remarkable exhibition of Cornish church plate, and among those shown were many very beautiful pieces, some

hall-marked locally at Exeter. Such efforts are to be commended.

There are many museums attached to free libraries and other public institutions, but few of them are rich in plate, and of all branches of the silversmith's art that associated with church plate is the most important, for its use at different times is interwoven with the established religion of the land, and the various changes which have taken place in customs and beliefs.

#### DISPOSAL OF CHURCH PLATE

In olden time, as in more modern times for a similar purpose by agreement with the clergy and churchwardens, superfluous vessels were sold to parishioners and others. Some might be bought because of its quaintness, but it was acquired chiefly as a cheap method of securing silver plate for domestic use. There must have been instances too, when the plate was sold for old silver, for it should be remembered that many of the so-called acts of vandalism were pardonable in that in the days in which they were done the silver would be much damaged, and of little artistic merit. To-day many things are destroyed, sold and scrapped as of no value as curios of worth, although in time to come similar objects may be regarded as priceless gems of antiquarian interest and research.

#### MODERN ECCLESIASTICAL SPLENDOUR

We are rather apt to underrate the plate used in modern cathedrals, and forget that many of the rich vessels on the altars of our great cathedrals are old—sometimes very old.

It is true that after the Reformation the cathedrals discarded or ceased to use many vessels the employment of which was essentially a part of the Roman Catholic faith. On the Continent of Europe some of the cathedrals possess, and use, not only rare old plate, but vessels

enriched by modern silversmiths in the same lavish manner as in former days—the gifts of modern donors. Many of these things are specially made for relics which have been acquired for the purpose of forming a suitable setting for “quaint jewels” with a history. The Roman Catholic Cathedral, of Westminster, owns many fine examples of ecclesiastical plate, and in their use maintains the traditional splendour of the Middle Ages. The cathedral itself, a fine building owing its inception to Cardinal Wiseman, first Archbishop of Westminster, and only consecrated in 1910, is a worthy pile. Among the chief altar ornaments and vessels used there are several monstrances, one of gold, heavily jewelled with precious stones, of great beauty; another of ancient workmanship also set with stones. A monstrance of Spanish workmanship rich with enamels was sent by an anonymous donor; the largest monstrance in the possession of the cathedral chapter is, however, of gold filigree, ablaze with gems, standing fully three feet high. There are some shrines too, very beautiful, especially one in which is the leg-bone of St. Edmund, one time Archbishop of Canterbury. The gold chalices used in the mass are numerous and several of them are studded with rare gems; among them is one which was given by King Alphonso of Spain.

The Cathedral of Westminster is only one of many churches possessing especially rare and valuable plate, the work of modern silversmiths. There are instances of quite small buildings of the Protestant faith being built regardless of cost by wealthy donors, and it is readily understood that in such cases the silversmith would be commissioned to produce his very best in order that the full glory of ornate worship might be carried out in a fitting manner. Whatever the creed, at all times, pious donors have come forward to enrich altars and the worship of the churches by gifts of silver and gold.

## CHAPTER XII

### ECCLESIASTICAL PLATE (*Continued*).

Shrines—Crozier and Crook—Cup or Chalice—Patens—Flagons  
and Cruets—Alms Dishes—Censers and the like.

THE story of ecclesiastical plate is chiefly historical, and the vessels are regarded as a whole rather than individually. Each object, however, has its separate use, and the form, size and ornament of church plate has ever varied in accord with the accepted purposes of its use, which has changed from time to time.

Church ornament is regarded as of the highest importance, for it is symbolical of the creeds and doctrines taught. The frequent use of certain symbols in architecture, plate and decoration confirms the story of prevailing beliefs of any given period ; and the engraving and other plans of decoration are often enough to indicate the period of their use, and possibly of their place of origin. To understand church plate properly some enquiry must be made into the actual purposes of the vessels used in ceremonial worship, and also of those consecrated to the purposes of altar ornamentation.

There was a time when there was a very free use of silver in ornamenting churches, abbeys and cathedrals. The remarkable find of ancient silver on Mr. A. J. Balfour's Whittinghame estate some little time ago contained very beautiful objects of plate supposed to have been deposited there in the days when Britain was subjected to the raids of pirates, who sometimes regarded it as a safe burying

place of stolen treasure, just as this country has in later days been the refuge of men and women persecuted for religion. Among the silver in this recent find in Scotland were many pieces indicating by their ornamentation that they had been taken from some ancient Continental establishment, and by their acquisition and exhibition the Scottish museums and those who frequent them will benefit.

The enrichment of shrines, tombs, altars and relics of saints and former ecclesiastics was indulged in when religious fervour was often attributable to superstitious motives. In mediæval days pilgrims and patrons were lavish in their gifts to the most noted shrines. The crozier of the archbishop and the crook of the bishop were large and heavy, and processional crosses were resplendent with jewels. The altar candlesticks were triumphs of the metal worker's art, and the altar crosses or the chrismatory were ablaze with jewels.

The vessels used in the sacred rites have distinct functions and their meaning and uses can be understood, although many of the once rare and costly treasures of the church have from one cause or another disappeared from worship and become antique relics of former days—curiosities only.

### SHRINES

When religious fervour, strengthened by superstition and ignorance, was at its height, self-imposed penalties and the avarice of ecclesiastics found employment for silversmiths, who encouraged the expenditure of vast sums on shrines and monuments. The tombs of saints were covered with costly metal work and many fine pieces were erected.

With the Reformation came the loss of rare and costly shrines which were destroyed or diverted to other uses.

On these much of the best art of the silversmiths and goldsmiths of the Middle Ages had been lavished, and rare gems for the adornment of such shrines had been given into the custody of abbots and priests. From 1547 onward there was much pillage, not only of the smaller vessels but of the larger shrines and objects which until then had been respected by the boldest robbers.

There is the shrine noted for its wonderful architectural beauty, and that which owes the admiration lavished upon it to the rare gifts of silver, gold and jewels by which it is adorned. Then again there are shrines which merely encase some smaller and much more valuable relic, or one venerated by its former associations.

Many shrines have gone into the melting pot in the past, some few, however, have been saved by private influence and are cherished by their owners more for their antiquity than their sanctity; other shrines have almost lost their identity and are now regarded as mere museum curios.

There are some very interesting relics richly ornamented and wrought in silver in the National Museum in Dublin. One of the best known of these is the shrine of St. Patrick's Bell, described and illustrated in "*Antique Jewellery and Trinkets*" (a recent volume of the HOME CONNOISSEUR series). According to the catalogue of the Museum the upper portion of the shrine is of silver, a wonderful example of the art of fourteen hundred years ago. Jewels and much decorative craftsmanship are introduced in its construction, making it a fit case for the little bell which is a personal relic of St. Patrick.

In the same Museum there are other ancient shrines, including that of St. Moedoc. These shrines enclose relics of the saints, that of St. Patrick preserving and honouring the Bell, said to have been used by the patron saint of Ireland, other shrines enclosing bones and other sacred mementoes of the saints, honoured men who were revered as time went on and their good deeds appreciated.

## CROZIER AND CROOK

The crozier and the pastoral staff or crook, the former appertaining to the archbishops and the latter to the bishops and in olden time to the abbots, are among the decorative symbolic episcopal relics. Many of these, both ancient and modern, are beautiful examples of the silversmith's art, and some are embellished with gold and precious stones. Some of the examples in the Victoria and Albert Museum are very fine, others are retained not so much for their value as works of art as for their historic interest, and for the personal associations connected with them, such, for instance, the ancient crozier of William of Wykeham, still kept at New College, Oxford, of which college he was the founder.

## CUP OR CHALICE

The earliest form of chalice was that of a two-handled cup, a type which disappeared about the tenth century. Experts in church furniture and ornament place much importance to the form of the cup which indicates the manner of its use. It will be remembered that according to the rites of the Roman Catholic church the consecrated wine is partaken of only by the priests, hence the small vessel or cup fashioned upon a large stem or foot. In post-Reformation times all who join in the celebration of the Communion, according to the Protestant faith, take the cup and drink the wine in memory of the shedding of the blood of Our Lord, hence the increased size of the vessel required in the ceremony or celebration.

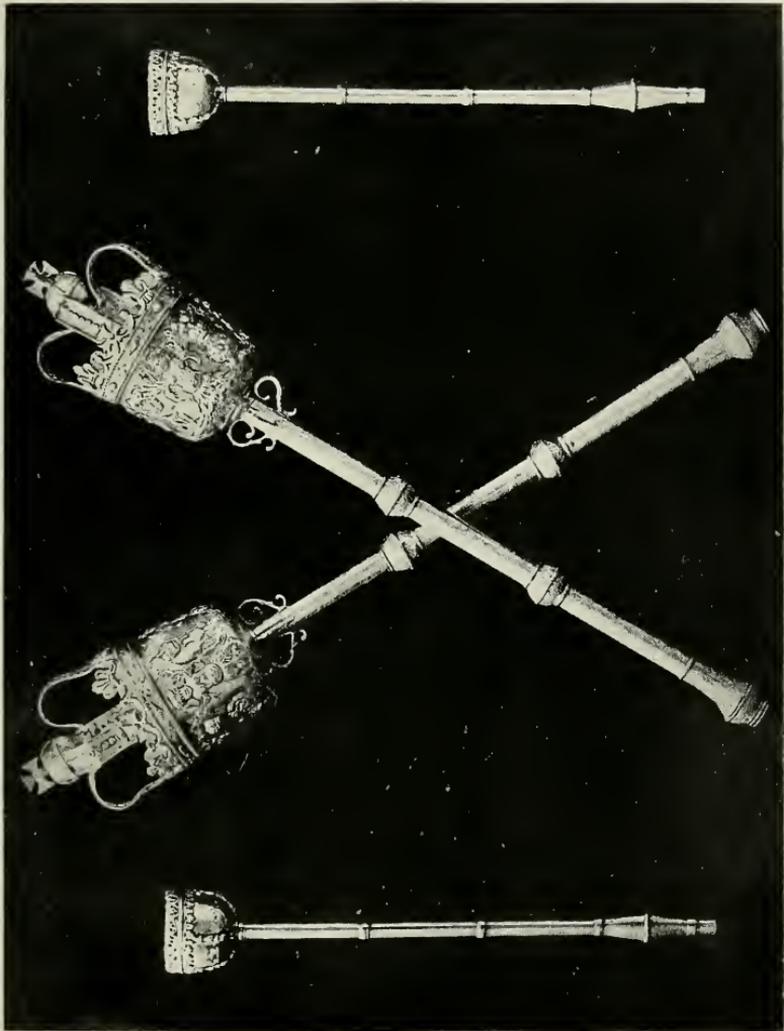
There was no general uniformity in size or ornament at any given period of use. The thirteenth century chalices with wide bowls and almost equally broad bases and short stems have been pictured many times and they

served during the days of mediæval ecclesiastical splendour. Two centuries passed and the chalices assumed a more cup-like form, many being exceedingly ornamental, the hexagonal stem becoming an important feature in decoration as well as the knop dividing it. Many of the later chalices—those made immediately preceding the Reformation—stood much higher, and generally showed enrichment in accord with Gothic architecture and ornament.

After the Reformation the cup was of beaker form, the paten being of suitable size and shape to form a cover to the cup. Fine examples of such cups and covers are extant, many, however, have been separated and are met with as individual pieces. Now and then there is great rejoicing over the re-union of long separated cups and covers discovered in different places by their fortunate finders.

There is much uncertainty about the actual date and hall-marks of many of the quaint old cups met with in churches to-day—often in regular use. The rightful custodians of church plate seem to be the ecclesiastical authorities over the places to which it belongs, but such plate has changed ownership many times, and want of funds for church restoration has often led to the sale of valuable old plate, which has been bought by donors as gifts to other churches, or more frequently by private collectors.

The use of chalices and other vessels made of inferior metal was no doubt in the early days of the Christian church common. It was, however, early considered that gold and silver were alone the proper materials for the cup used for such a sacred purpose as that of symbolising of the crucifixion of Our Lord. The Council of Reims, A.D. 847, made a declaration to that effect, and, as Mr. Cripps points out, this ruling was confirmed in this country by Stephen Langton in 1206.



FIGS. 37, 38, 39 AND 40.—CIVIC MACES.  
(In possession of the Mayor and Corporation of Cardiff, reproduced by the courtesy of the Town Clerk.)



FIG. 36.—SIXTEENTH CENTURY SILVERED-PEWTER EWER OR FLAGON.  
(In the Victoria and Albert Museum.)

In the National Museum of Ireland there are a few choice pieces of church plate. In the "*Guide*" to the Museum reference is specially made to several silver-gilt chalices, one of seventeenth century work, also to a church cruet of silver which is inscribed "Pray for ye Soul of John Reily," said to be of early eighteenth century workmanship. The Ardagh chalice is a relic of which Ireland may well be proud; it is richly enamelled and covered with beautiful silver filigree work, the handicraft of Celtic workers in metals.

In the British Museum "*Guide*," mention is made of the small spoons which in the fifteenth century accompanied the chalice, used when mixing water with the wine; such spoons of ancient workmanship and early dates are rare.

#### PATENS

Patens vary in size; indeed there has never been any standard capacity, while some are inconveniently small, others are extravagantly large. The earliest example known is said to be at Wyke church, in Winchester, the approximate date given being 1280.

Rare indeed are those ancient patens with engraving consonant with the carvings and inscriptions found in churches dating from the thirteenth century. Mr. Cripps speaks of one found in the tomb of Archbishop Walter, at Canterbury, who died in 1205, the "Agnus Dei" being the central ornament used by the engraver with good effect; but he tells us that later in the thirteenth century the "Manus Dei" was more commonly used, sometimes the head of Our Saviour being substituted, this latter ornament becoming more frequent in the fifteenth century and in the early years of the sixteenth century.

The paten or plate of more modern times is usually plain, most of the examples of quite early days are, however,

decorated, in many cases the centre being ornamented with symbolic engraving.

#### FLAGONS AND CRUETS

The small vessels termed cruets are the receptacles for the wine and the water for the cup. They were commonly in use in this country before the Reformation, and were engraved respectively "A" (*aqua*) and "V" (*vinum*). These small phials or cruets of pre-Reformation days gave place to large flagons used in the ceremonial service of the communion, being of course distinct from flagons and tankards which were merely vessels for serving out drink for secular purposes. The early sacramental flagons were made in pairs, one pair now at St. Margaret's, Westminster, and another pair at St. George's Chapel, Windsor, dated 1583, being mentioned by Mr. Cripps.

The larger flagons which followed were sometimes of silver, but more frequently of pewter. Many of those originally made for church purposes were afterwards taken for secular use, as it is pretty clear from the frequent use of church symbols on the flagons and tankards found in a collection of old plate derived from the stores of those who trace their descent to the days of the Commonwealth, and who have received their possessions from their ancestral homes.

#### ALMS DISHES

The alms-dish or basin as it was sometimes called in olden records varies in size and capacity. Many fine examples dating from the sixteenth century are known. All the royal chapels appear to be well stocked with these fine pieces, one at Windsor is dated 1556, and another covered with heraldic devices is dated 1684, the latter being at Westminster Abbey.

## CENSERS AND THE LIKE

As times have changed many of the vessels formerly used in church ceremonial have fallen into disuse, chiefly things used in connection with the practice of ceremonials after the teaching of the Roman Catholic church when it was the religion of this country, as by law established. Old specimens are to be seen in the leading museums, and such vessels are referred to in old inventories. In olden time many abbeys and the larger parish churches possessed great stores of plate, as an example Mr. Cripps tells us that St. Olaves, Southwark, in 1552, had no less than 1,062 ounces of silver which included "chalices, crosses, basins, mounted covers for the books, pyxes, a pax, a chrismatory, censers, cruets, and the like." Most of these things have disappeared, although a few remain in the custody of the churches in which they were first used.

Censers appear to have been used early in the Christian church, those used in the Gothic cathedrals in pre-Reformation times being very ornate—some of them of gold and others of silver. Incense boats, vessels of boat-like form, were common in the Middle Ages.

The chrismatory, a receptacle for consecrated oils is seen sometimes among old church relics. There are also many curios and spoons and decorative objects of minor importance. In this connection it may be pointed out that many of the smaller vessels found among old family silver are suspiciously like other pieces known to have been made for church use—even a fine silver dish ornamenting a sideboard may at one time have been used as an alms-dish, and the silver cup about which there is no family history not infrequently shows from its symbolic ornament that it was originally designed for use in the most sacred rite of the Christian church.

There are so many fine examples of old church plate, and much of it has been illustrated in specialistic works

describing the church plate of several English counties, that perhaps for the purpose of the "Home Connoisseur" to illustrate two or three examples of remarkable specimens will serve. The Dolgelly chalice and paten are among the choice examples belonging to Wales. Dr. Hoyle, the Director of the National Museum of Wales, sends for illustration in this volume, fine photographs from which the chalice and the decorative under work of the foot can be properly understood. The chalice is shown in Figure 33, and the base in Figure 34. Figure 35 illustrates the paten, in the centre of which is the legend: "INNOMINE PATRIS ET FILII ET SPIRITUS SANCTIAM," and an engraving of an episcopal figure in the act of pronouncing the Benediction.

As already stated there are very many fine old pewter chalices many of them made in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These are to be found in England and in Ireland. The illustrations given in Figure 32 is an Irish church flagon of pewter of 1737. It is inscribed "For the Parish Church of Inniscracent," and is reproduced here by the courtesy of the Director of the National Museum of Ireland and may be seen in the Dublin Museum.

## CHAPTER XIII

### COLLEGE PLATE

#### Oxford Plate—Cambridge Plate.

IN the foregoing chapters ecclesiastical plate has been fully described, and the same vessels that were used in mediæval times and in cathedrals, abbeys and churches in olden time and are still used to-day, are to be found in use in the churches and chapels of our universities. Many of the older colleges in Oxford and Cambridge, and other University towns were originally founded in connection with ecclesiastical houses, and most of the colleges have some form of ecclesiastical establishment in connection with them. In these churches are to be found many rare examples of church plate, some of the vessels having been used in the days when the services were conducted according to the rites of the Roman church. Some of these vessels continued to be used after the Reformation, and we can easily understand with what tenacity these old institutions of learning have clung to their ecclesiastical plate. During the Civil War the Oxford colleges were very enthusiastic on behalf of the Royal cause, and they emptied their plate chests to provide the very necessary silver to pay King Charles's troops. At that time vast quantities of college plate of priceless antiquarian value was melted down. Fortunately, there are still some rare examples of mediæval silver left, and these form the chief features of interest connected with college plate.

There seems to be an almost double life existing in these old seats of learning, for although ecclesiastical rites were always observed, and there was a constant use of the old church plate, these ceremonies were interspersed with many frivolities and times of feasting, which probably gave the necessary relaxation from study and book learning. In the college halls, when great feasts were held, the table was laden with many good things, and on such occasions, there was an ample display of silver plate, although, perhaps, the greater portion of the table vessels were of pewter or of some less costly material. The great standing salts used in mediæval halls were to be seen in the college refectory, and there were large flagons of wine and many massive cups of silver. These things, however, are outside the scope of the collector of silver or the "home connoisseur."

It is only on rare occasions that the plate jealously guarded by the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge and other Universities can be examined by the common folk. Much of it is of a plain substantial character, but there are some rarer pieces with histories attached to them, massive, decorative, and emblematical. It is these choicer pieces of historic value that are so carefully guarded, and rightly so, for they can never be replaced should any of them go astray. No doubt in other days much of the college plate passed out of the custody of the halls into private hands, for it is by no means an uncommon thing for rare pieces of plate to be found in old collections or belonging to old families which were undoubtedly made for other uses, from which original purpose they have been diverted.

#### OXFORD PLATE

It would not serve any useful purpose to give a list of

all the well known pieces of plate in the custody of the colleges. Some important books have been written on this subject for advanced collectors and those specially interested in ecclesiastical and college plate. It may serve the purpose of the "home connoisseur" to refer to a few well known examples as typical of the beautiful things of olden time which may be found in the plate chests of the college halls.

There is something very interesting in the origin of the old colleges, and in the study of the relics they possess we can often discover a connecting link between the present-day and former times. The college of All Souls possesses some beautiful plate, notably a delightful silver-gilt crystal salt, which belonged to the founder of the college. It was Archbishop Chichele who had to do with the French wars of the period of Henry V who founded a Chantry in which prayers could be said for the repose of the souls of all those who fell in the French Wars. To-day we raise monuments and memorials in honour of the "glorious dead" who have died in the recent Great War, in which they were called to give their lives for their country. Then it was otherwise, and the Chantry eventually became known as All Souls' College, and in the possession of that great institution remains this ancient salt, and other less known examples of ecclesiastical plate and vessels used in the feast.

Among the stores of plate at Magdalen is a remarkable piece known as the Founder's cup. That also commemorates the foundation of the college, and of its dedication, for the cup is fashioned after the manner of common pictorial representations of Mary Magdalen.

There is much ancient plate at Corpus Christi College including a pyx of rare beauty. There are also some very rare and fine spoons the latter once being in use on the monks' table. They were engraved with the arms of

Bishop Oldham. There is also the fine salt cellar given by Bishop Fox (*see* Chapter XX).

There is some exceptionally good old plate at Jesus College, one of the most notable objects being a remarkable silver-gilt bowl holding no less than ten gallons.

At many of the other colleges there are similar objects of considerable interest, for instance, New College has in its audit room many treasures, including ancient plate and jewels. Oxford as a city and University town is rich in its treasures of antiquity. The Ashmolean Museum is well known, and there may be seen many fine examples of early plate, but although not actually a piece of plate probably the greatest historic interest in that collection is the famous jewel of the Saxon King Alfred, the beautiful relic found many years ago in the Isle of Athelney.

#### CAMBRIDGE PLATE

The sister university of Cambridge is also full of interest, and its colleges still rich in ancient treasures, notwithstanding that many of the colleges like St. John's College have been robbed of their plate which has been melted down for national purposes. The University is represented by many symbols of olden time, one of the most interesting being a remarkable silver mace carried on state occasions by the University mace bearers.

The antiquities of Corpus Christi College include a curious drinking horn, a silver mounted bowl, and a vessel known as the Cup of the Three Kings. To this college also belongs that wonderful set of spoons, a complete set of Apostle spoons, including the rare Master spoon. The college has been especially favoured in gifts of plate, many rare pieces being added by Archbishop Parker, who was at one time Master of Corpus.

## CHAPTER XIV

### MUNICIPAL PLATE

Maces—Swords of state—Civic table plate.

THE term “municipal” conveys, perhaps, rather a narrow meaning to the plate which is rightly associated with the emblems of authority, it will, however, serve. Most of the maces, staves, and other emblems used to-day on ceremonial occasions are but adaptations of what have for centuries been associated with all kinds of regal and civic authority. The King when seated on his throne once deemed it necessary to hold in his hand a sceptre, and in that ornamental emblem showed his authority. The mace so richly decorative, took its rise in a real weapon of forceful service, for the mace is but a fanciful model of the ponderous arm of attack which early warriors wielded with such deadly effect.

Civic plate is not altogether confined to such bawbles as maces, staves of office, chains, badges, and other emblems, for many of the older towns possess large stores of plate of more real use and greater ornament. Some of these valuable possessions are held by ancient right; they are emblems indicating the authority exercised throughout many centuries. Others although ancient are the gift of mayors and councillors, and of wealthy landowners; some, too, being the gifts of Royal patrons, adding to the dignity of the table on which they are displayed, and forming special attractions when the civic plate is laid out for inspection.

Lord mayors, and mayors of minor towns, dress in civic robes, replicas of those worn in ancient times, and they wear chains and badges, thumb rings and other mystic pieces of the goldsmith's and silversmith's art—but these things constitute civic jewellery rather than civic plate. Sword bearers and mace bearers carry these massive emblems before the Chief Magistrate in civic processions and when holding high functions. By these emblems the representatives of the people are distinguished. The plate of many of the more important corporations consists chiefly of the magnificent pieces added from time to time in commemoration of office; of these gifts there are caskets, dishes, bowls, centrepieces and loving cups, and in some instances ancient salt cellars.

#### MACES

The chief interest in civic plate centres in the emblems of authority which denotes the position the holders occupy in their city or borough—loyally they govern and rule on behalf of their Sovereign and right royally they give feasts, on which occasions civic plate can be displayed and used. Many of the city maces are of early seventeenth century workmanship, some being of still earlier periods. As symbols of office they are drawn from the battle axe and the mace which was fashioned to break the armour which in later mediæval days had become of such a nature as to be a real protection against sword thrusts and the arrows of the archer. Many of our ancient things are represented in pictures and more than one historic statue and monument shows a mailed warrior holding aloft a battle mace. Collectors of ancient coins, too, are familiar with the symbols of kingly authority shown in connection with the portrait of the sovereign, who is generally represented wearing emblems of his

kingly authority, and holding either sceptre or mace, battle axe or sword. In course of time the mace lost its utility and it was regarded chiefly as symbolic, and as an emblem it lost its warlike character, for artist and craftsman combined to give it a more ornate appearance. The mace which represents the emblem of authority in most civic functions has a head of cup-like form which seems to have been very appropriately shaped in those days when mayoral processions ended with convivial feasts.

Silver and silver-gilt maces were often very massive, and the cup head grew out of all proportion to the handle ; they soon became inconveniently large. This abnormal head was in course of time covered with a crown or a crown-like arch surmounted with a ball and cross.

Most people are familiar with the fine old silver-gilt mace seen on state occasions when the Lord Mayor of London rides in his state coach, richly gilded—itself a relic of mediæval pomp. The mace held aloft as a symbol of power has been fashioned by local silversmiths who have incorporated local emblems ; the designers have been careful to identify it with the city or borough for which it has been made. These old emblems of civic power were also often enriched with the royal cypher and arms of the then reigning monarch and thus their approximate dates can now often be identified, and perhaps the importance attached to their use understood. Maces of minor importance have also been made, thus we have the maces of the mayor, the beadle and the tipstaff. The magnificence of the plate varies according to its importance, but its intrinsic value has sometimes been fixed according to the generosity of the donor or the extravagance or the parsimony of the public body who have ordered its manufacture. Symbolic use of such bawbles is all that is left of the once useful mace or battle axe.

As a symbol of authority the Mace of Parliament lies on the table when the Speaker of the House of Commons is in the chair, and when the House goes into Committee it rests on its stand "under the table."

London civic authorities, and the several Wards of the City have their maces and staves, most of them being of silver and frequently silver-gilt. Some are extravagantly large and curiously fashioned, their ornament and decoration often having some reference to the place in which they are to be used, or the functions they represent. One striking example of a London mace of this kind is found in the mace of the Tower Ward, a grand piece dating from the reign of Charles II. Instead of the cup-like top, the head is shaped in the form of the Tower Keep, which is in the Ward to which the mace belongs. Another instance of a suitable emblem instead of the stereotyped cup-like head is seen in the mace shaped like an oar, which is an appropriate symbol of one of the old Cinque Ports.

Naturally, the ancient maces are carefully preserved by those corporations to whom they belong, and many of the older cities own maces dating back from the Restoration, for one of the Royal fads of Charles II after his accession to the throne was to give new silver maces to those corporations who had lost their ancient plate during the Civil War in the Royalist cause. These maces, now respectably old, are rightly treasured. Some of the newer corporations, too, are the proud possessors of old plate, the gift of patrons fortunate enough to have been able to acquire old examples of these historic emblems. The fine plate so truly representative of provincial civic pomp owned by the city of Cardiff includes two splendid large maces, measuring about 33 inches in length, hall-marked in the reign of William and Mary, 1690, weighing 102 ounces, 12 dwts. In the description of the plate belonging to the Corporation of Cardiff these maces are described in

detail. They bear the maker's mark "R. C." in monogram, the bowls or cups and their crowned covers have the same maker's mark. The exterior of the cup head is ornamented with national emblems beneath a Royal crown. Thus there is the rose for England, the fleur-de-lis for France, the thistle for Scotland, and the harp for Ireland. The cross, or orb and cross, which surmounts the maces has been regarded as an emblem of some curiosity. In the description given of the Cardiff Corporation plate by Mr. G. H. Thomas, R.C.A., who is also the Herald Bard of the Gorsedd of Wales, we are reminded that this symbol is frequently said to imply the world dominated by the Cross, but he tells us that the symbol was known centuries before the Christian era in ancient Egypt under the name of the Key of Life. These beautiful maces, illustrated in Figures 37 and 38, are shown with two smaller maces, Figures 39 and 40, which also belong to the City of Cardiff, the latter being of an older date, probably made in the reign of Charles I.

We are apt to regard the mace as an ancient emblem having little reference to the present day, and when a new mace is made for a newly constituted borough, it is generally a replica of a more ancient emblem. One of the most interesting functions during the great War was the presentation at the Guildhall in London to Sir Robert Borden, the Canadian Prime Minister, for use in the Canadian House of Commons of a new mace to replace the one destroyed by fire when the Dominion Parliament House was burnt down a few years ago. This new mace incorporated some portions of the old one which had been saved, but it was a handsomer mace and fully emblematical of the present day importance of the Dominion of Canada and the place the Dominion holds in the Empire of Greater Britain. The Canadian mace is ornamented with the rose, thistle and harp, the emblems of Great Britain and

Ireland, and surmounted by the Royal Crown. Emblems still serve their purpose, and when Sir Charles Wakefield, on behalf of the Corporation of London, made the presentation, he said that in Canada English traditions would be well maintained, and that that mace would be one more link in the chain which bound together the Motherland and the Colonies.

#### SWORDS OF STATE

Swords of State are not uncommon, a well known example being the rare pearl sword, carried before the Lord Mayor of London on special occasions, and tendered as an act of fealty to the sovereign when he pays a state visit to the City of London ; the presentation is always made at the spot where there was one of the principal gates or bars of the City. The great silver keys of the City of London are emblematic of the gates and bars by which London town was once protected. They are comparatively modern keys, having been made for presentation to Queen Victoria on one of the rare occasions when she visited the City, and they are now on view as curiosities in the Guildhall Museum.

As already suggested in many places the silver plate of municipal authorities is of a two-fold nature, emblematic of authority and conviviality. All through the ages feasting on great occasions has been part of the ceremonial of civic functions. To commemorate his year of office the retiring Lord Mayor usually adds to the Mansion House store some beautiful and decorative object, generally something which can be used in civic banquets. In the same way the Mayors of provincial boroughs, in a practical way, increase the store of municipal plate.

When Sir James Ritchie was Lord Mayor of London, he hit upon a novel way of combining a memorial of his year of office and of the Ward he represented. His gift was a



FIG. 41.—SILVER-GILT CENTREPIECE.  
(The property of the Corporation of Cardiff.)



FIG. 42.—SILVER JARDINIÈRE.  
(Presented by ALDERMAN BRAIN to the Corporation of Cardiff.)

replica of the Mace of the Tower Ward already referred to. This beautiful modern triumph of the silversmith's art was so fashioned that the head could be detached and used as a centrepiece on the table. It was richly engraved and silver-gilt by the old fire gilding process.

#### CIVIC TABLE PLATE

Many who have attended a state banquet provided by civic functionaries have been amazed at the wealth of table plate used on those occasions. There have been the great standing salts which once served a really useful purpose, the silver and silver-gilt dishes and plates have been much admired, and the handsome centrepieces and great vases of silver have given dignity to the table. Many have gazed almost with awe at the rose-water dishes of silver and gold which have been handed round the table, and great has been the admiration shown by those present when the large two-handled loving cup has been passed round. These great cups have always been favourite pieces of plate, and fortunate indeed are those comparatively modern borough towns whose mayors have been able to bequeath them such handsome possessions. Fortunate indeed is the City of Cardiff in the possession of the magnificent loving cup which was given to Cardiff by the Marquis of Bute in 1891, and by the courtesy of the Town Clerk, we are enabled to give a description of that delightful piece of plate which weighs 389 ounces 5 dwts. The cup was made by James Crichton & Co., of Edinburgh, and is hall-marked with the Edinburgh hall-mark; it is fashioned in three parts, the base, the cup, and the cover; on the base are figures enamelled on silver, emblematic of the three local rivers, the Taff, the Ely, and the Rumney. These figures are seated among water lilies which are

wrought in white enamel with diamond centres, The Taff, the largest river, is represented by an old man with silver hair and beard, the two smaller rivers by youths. Around the stem is coiled the red dragon of Wales, studded over with rubies and diamonds, and emerald eyes. This magnificent cup, which stands 32 inches high, is richly jewelled with diamonds, sapphires, amethysts, rubies, emeralds, carbuncles, and aquamarines. The cup has two shields upon which are engraved the arms of the donor and of the town. The cover is surmounted by a female figure wearing a mural crown, her right foot resting on a block of coal, and her left on a ship's rudder; at her foot Sabrina, the Goddess of the River Severn. Needless to say this handsome work of art is emblematic of Cardiff, a well known coal and shipping port.

Although it does not appear to be quite in keeping with civic presentations, in many instances beautiful silver epergnes have been given; a fine example being one presented by Alderman Sir Thomas Morel, J.P., who was Mayor of Cardiff in 1898. That also was a splendid addition to the Civic plate, and especially interesting in that it was at one time the property of Charles X of France, who during his exile in England, resided at Holyrood Palace, Edinburgh (*see* Figure 41). The silver punch bowl or Monteith in Figure 42 is also in possession of the Corporation of Cardiff, having been presented by Alderman Brain, J.P., and forms an interesting and valuable addition to the Cardiff civic plate.

## CHAPTER XV

### ROYAL PLATE

Ancient plate—Tragic losses—Mediæval royalty—After the Restoration  
—The King's dining table—Royal gifts.

THE collection of Royal plate is outside the scope of the "home connoisseur," hence the reference in this volume to the vast treasures which go towards making up the sum total of what constitutes that great mass of silver and gold plate which is and has been in the possession of the Crown in this country, and of the rulers in other countries, must be brief. It would, however, be a serious omission to leave out altogether some mention of those beautiful and costly treasures which belong to reigning sovereigns and which form part of the contents of the treasure houses of the peoples over whom they rule.

In earlier times the jewels and plate found in royal houses was regarded as the personal property of the Kings and Queens, and they were in the habit of adding to or diminishing the stores at will. Much valuable plate has been lost through the foolish extravagance of royal owners, and no doubt many historic treasures that belonged to the nation were from time to time sold or destroyed according to the whim or caprice of the sovereign. On the other hand, we owe much to the wealth and personal influence of Kings and Queens who have at times been strong supporters of the arts, and who have often out of their personal incomes purchased many valuable pieces of plate which have been added to the nation's treasure.

It is thus somewhat hard to distinguish the difference between royal and national plate. Some of those better known pieces are connected with national and historic functions, and it would be unthinkable nowadays that they should be alienated from the rightful holder of the Crown. Some quite important pieces of plate belong to their present owners—they have been purchased by them or acquired by gift. Vast quantities of plate useful and ornamental, were given by wealthy sovereigns, by public bodies, and by colonial dominions to mark special occasions during the reigns of the late Queen Victoria and King Edward VII. These have passed into the custody of his present Majesty, who has himself been the recipient of many valuable gifts. Another youthful scion of the Royal House of Windsor, the heir to the throne of the greatest Empire the world has ever known, is beginning to "collect" rare souvenirs of plate. All these treasures are being added yearly to the treasure chests and safe deposits at Buckingham Palace, Windsor Castle and other places where the safety of such things can be assured. These are the royal treasures of to-day—and although perhaps among the most beautiful and representative of the highest art of the silversmith, they may not equal in interest the few ancient relics of a bygone age, which the connoisseur can discover in the royal plate chest.

#### ANCIENT PLATE

The oldest known examples of ancient silver and gold plate in this country are those relics of the craftsmanship of Celtic workers in the precious metals, already referred to in another chapter. Then we come to the plate fashioned by Saxon workmen, of which although there are records of regal treasures of that period extant, there are few pieces surviving the destruction of former times

when first plunder, then avarice, occasionally dire need and at times civil war and insurrection robbed the royal cupboard. The Chapel of the Pyx at Westminster Abbey formerly contained the royal regalia, and for many centuries in that quaint crypt might have been seen by the few privileged ones all the curious relics of former pomp and the insignia of royalty.

The symbolic crown of the sovereign is now worn for a few brief moments on very formal ceremonial occasions. From old paintings and from the representations of Kings and Queens on coins and medals we are apt to look upon the Saxon and Norman monarchs as wearing their crowns as their regular headgear. Whatever may have been the custom at a still earlier period, it is evident from well authenticated documents that golden crowns and coronets were reserved for state ceremonials, although the arms of England might be embroidered on crimson and purple surcoats and damascened in gold on armour and painted on shields.

William the Conqueror seldom wore the mark of sovereignty, although it is said he was very particular to observe the custom he had initiated of wearing it on three great festivals of the church which he punctiliously attended. Easter he kept at Winchester, the celebration of Whitsuntide was, however, observed at Westminster and he travelled to Gloucester at the feast of the Nativity. Stephen, we are told, was strict in his observance of the feast of the Nativity which he attended at Lincoln in 1145, on which occasion historians say *he wore his crown*.

The crown, the most interesting symbolic piece of plate, is mentioned many times in ancient history and appears to have been worn not only on state occasions but when to wear it would appear nowadays to be a dangerous procedure. Henry V wore his crown at the Battle of Agincourt, and it is said not only exposed the precious

ornament, but by thus indicating his identity risked his life.

Another royal wearer was Richard III, whose crown on his defeat on Bosworth Field was straightway carried to the Earl of Richmond to whom it was offered. This very literal surrender of a crown and its acceptance by immediately placing it upon the new King's head has its earlier counterpart in the Biblical story of the crown being removed from the head of Saul and given to David; it is also consonant with the usual declaration of the legions of Roman warriors by whom the Emperors of Rome were in so many instances proclaimed.

#### TRAGIC LOSSES

The loss of the crown by the first king of Israel and by Richard III of England have many counterparts in modern history although their losers did not wear their crowns on the battle field—likewise then they concealed their identity—although that mattered little in modern warfare. The loss of ancient plate has many times been bemoaned by collectors.

John lost his crown during a rough crossing of the Wash in 1216—he was fond of pomp and took care that the insignia of his royal personality should be in his “suit case” or its ancient prototype.

There are no modern incidents upon which we can base the value of a “King's ransom” at the present time. It would appear as if civilisation presents two different aspects—one a lapse into the brutality of barbaric times when it was thought the only way to rid the world of a tyrant was to take his life, and the other viewpoint a broad and even too generous one which gives greater tolerance to the miscreant and even allows the retention of jewels, plate and wealth although it is forfeited in the opinion of many.

One of the finest bronze statues in London is that of Richard Cœur de Lion who is represented wearing royal armour, with regal emblazonment, seated on his gaily caparisoned charger and rightly wearing his kingly crown. Can we imagine him in any other headgear? It was for the payment of the ransom claimed for the release of this monarch that England gladly gave up royal plate, and churches and ecclesiastics lost their treasures to provide the money to ensure the speedy and safe return of their warlike king. Richard was ransomed and his people were glad notwithstanding the loss of their silver and gold.

#### MEDIAEVAL ROYALTY

When the first of the Tudor kings was firmly established on the throne, the silversmiths received an impetus which gave them work under royal patronage ensuring a following by the mediæval nobility. As it is shown in chapters XI and XII, *Ecclesiastical Plate*, Continental artists set the fashion in the Middle Ages and seem to have been ahead of the craftsmen of this country in all matters of art. The possession of family plate dating from mediæval days is some guarantee of the standing of the family at that early period. Henry VII encouraged quite a number of foreign artists to settle in England. They were allowed to trade here and to make silver goods, but it was made clear to them that they owed a duty to the country in which they earned a livelihood—a lesson that might well be learned to-day—and they were enjoined to teach English apprentices and workmen their craft. It is due to the introduction of foreign artists, trade and craft, that the work of that period, although bearing English hall-marks, in all its designs shows a distinct trace of foreign style and ornament. Even in royal plate and symbolic decoration there appears to be a foreign interpretation

of our national emblems. Among the number of silversmiths brought over were many Italians whose "taste" was always apparent in their work. The Gothic type of ornament in silver was in like manner due to German craftsmen. Of course, these indications of the origin of design is apparent in all plate of that period including domestic; it is, however, much more clearly in evidence in the larger works such as those used in churches and in the regal appointments and emblems of state, like royal maces and the splendid salt cellars "*nefs*" and the like which served as distinguishing marks on the royal table and buffet.

Of the great dividing line between the upper and lower orders drawn by the salt cellar, reference has been made in another chapter. Attention may, however, be directed to the *nef* or ship which became the recognised form of central piece of plate in the fourteenth century. It was a large piece and its uses were varied, indeed, it seems to have been a compendium or receptacle for many table condiments and appointments. It held napkins, spoons and "spices," and was placed conveniently near the host whose special table appointments were usually placed in it. Many of these fine "ships" have belonged to royalty—one noted piece having been made for Edward III, the ornament upon it being in the form of dragons. One of the members of our own royal house is a collector of these ancient ships and owns many representative pieces.

The "*nef*," like the salt cellar, was also used as a receptacle for many kinds of condiments. It was usually a representation of a fully rigged ship, the name being derived from the French, and was originally a vessel used upon the altar for holding incense—it was an incense boat.

## AFTER THE RESTORATION

The chief landmark in the history of royal plate is, of course, the Restoration, just as the downfall of royalist dreams and the insignia and emblems in plate and jewels had been after the Civil War and the overthrow of the monarchy. Englishmen, however, returned to their ancient faith in kings and welcomed Charles II as representing the royal house descended from a long line going back to Saxon days when conditions were very different from those existing in modern times.

The first efforts of the silversmith of the new régime were directed towards the reproduction of the plate which had been destroyed during the Commonwealth. Most of the new regalia was made by Sir Robert Vyner in 1662. The "Crown Jewels" now shown at the Tower and used and worn on state occasions by the king are all replicas or pieces made after the Restoration. Some doubt exists about one small article of great historic interest—the spoon used at the Coronation ceremony for the anointing of the sovereign, this being, according to tradition, the ancient spoon formerly owned by Saxon monarchs. These wonderful and curious symbols of royalty may be briefly named as follows:—the crown of state, in which are many historic jewels; St. Edward's staff; a sceptre surmounted by a dove; another sceptre with a cross; the orb or globe, also surmounted with a cross; a pair of spurs; two armillas; an ampulla, and the anointing spoon. To these must be added crowns and coronets of queen consorts and the large salt cellars, many of them of later date. The array of regalia is well cared for, and although the additions are not numerous, the interest in it is well maintained by its careful upkeep and occasional ceremonial use.

The stores of royal plate at the different palaces include

many rare pieces, some dating from the days of Charles II, and many cups and salts from still earlier days, for even at the great demolition of silver at various periods of necessity, some few pieces escaped, either by accident or owing to the connivance of royalists, some of whom were perhaps connoisseurs of art of no mean order, and perchance collectors who preserved such relics by hiding them or transferring them to safer custody.

The numerous pieces of large plate coming to us from the days of Charles II, tell of the luxuries of that age, of court frivolity and royal licentiousness. Evelyn, telling of the gorgeous furnishings of the apartments of court mistresses, describes the Duchess of Cleveland's rooms. He says there were "great vases of wrought plate, table stands, chimney furniture, sconces, branches, brasenas, etc., all of massy silver."

#### THE KING'S DINING TABLE

The stores of royal plate contain complete services of gold and silver, besides many beautiful gems of rare workmanship and design. The plate chests of royalty, however, contain vast masses of table appointments enough for large entertainments and many guests. The difference in an examination of such stores and of an inspection of such an array when displayed in conjunction with other suitable table decorations is very marked. The value of appropriate display is as important for the proper appreciation of the gold plate of the royal House of Windsor as it is for the modest table appointments of the "home connoisseur." When the President of Brazil attended a banquet given in his honour by His Majesty the King at Buckingham Palace soon after the close of the Great War, 1914-1919, the historic service of gold plate, about which so much has been written, was brought up

from Windsor for the occasion, some of it was displayed upon buffets and the remainder was in use upon the dining table. According to an account of the function in the *Daily Telegraph*, "great electroliers supplied the principal lighting of the room. The general scheme of decoration was white and gold, the carpet and upholstery were crimson, and a vivid dash of colour was supplied by the uniforms of veterans of His Majesty's bodyguard of Yeoman of the Guard." Such surroundings add to the lustre of plate and in a more modest way the value of tasteful display and suitable surroundings cannot be over-estimated.

#### ROYAL GIFTS

Royal gifts are not necessarily royal plate in that their owners pass them on as heirlooms, the interest in them being that they were given to some ancestor by royal donors not because of their one time possession and use by kings and queens.

It is well known that many of the most treasured relics in ancient families were originally royal gifts. Among the older of such curios (now in the British Museum) is the cup designed by Holbein for Henry VIII by whom it was given to Jane Seymour.

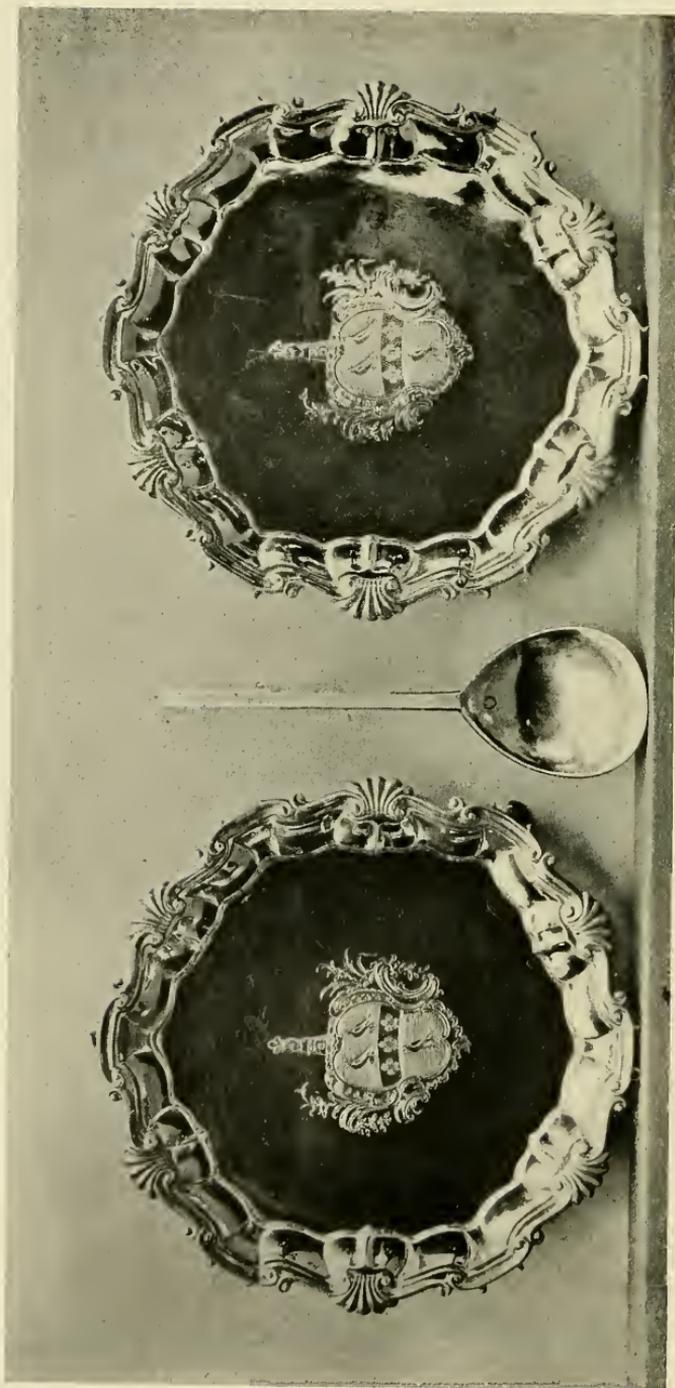
In modern days royal princes have given presents; it is said that the children of the Queen of Italy were rocked in a silver cradle, weighing about 40 lbs., a present from the Prince of Montenegro. A beautiful cradle was also made for the Queen of Holland, a richly decorated silver cradle—an ornament for the royal nursery.

There is yet another kind of presentation plate which is sometimes associated with royal plate, in that it was given to commemorate important events in the Royal house. An instance of this kind occurred on the Coronation of his late Majesty King Edward VII and Queen

Alexandra; to commemorate that auspicious event, Alderman F. J. Beavan, J.P., who was that year Mayor of Cardiff, presented the Corporation with a very fine silver epergne, oval in form, with four branches. It is supported by four winged female figures, and has a large cut glass centre dish and four smaller dishes. It stands on a silver plateau 30 inches by 19 inches. These remarkable examples of the silversmith's art are by no means modern, for although presented to Cardiff in 1901 they were genuine old silver, the epergne being hall-marked in London in 1808, and the plateau in 1814. The epergne weighs 149 ounces, and the plateau 543 ounces. In addition to these there was a silver tea urn on a square base with scroll feet, and an antique silver salver, the first named being hall-marked in 1828, and the latter of much older date, having the London hall-mark for 1775. All the pieces bear the inscription, "Presented to the Cardiff Corporation by Resolution of the Committee, to commemorate the Coronation of Their Majesties, King Edward VII. and Queen Alexandra, at which ceremony the Mayor (Councillor Francis John Beavan, J.P.) Chairman of the Local Coronation Committee, was present." Through the courtesy of the Town Clerk we illustrate the urn and tray in Figure 43.



FIG. 43.—SILVER URN AND TRAY.  
(Presented to the Cardiff Corporation by COUNCILLOR F. J. BEVAN, J.P.)



FIGS. 44 AND 45.—SILVER WATTERS.  
(In the Victoria and Albert Museum.)

## CHAPTER XVI

### PLATE OF THE CITY COMPANIES

Curious old pieces—Rare presentation plate.

THE plate of the City Companies is outside the ken of the "home connoisseur," but any book upon old silver would be incomplete without some mention, however brief, of the wealth of silver plate still in the possession of the old City Companies, and of those trade guilds which are found here and there located in the older towns in this country. These guilds are to us to-day but a reminder of the trade and commerce of England in very early times; they are for the most part sinecures now, for unfortunately most of them have lost touch with the actual crafts with which they were once so closely connected. Even the Masters of the Worshipful Companies are seldom men intimately associated with the crafts the names of which they bear. When we see the remains of these old societies and admire their ancient halls, and perchance are fortunate enough to get a glimpse of their archives and their curious relics of a bye-gone age, we recognise what a reality they were in olden time, and how they served a useful purpose; but alas, the old guilds, as at first constituted, are no more. These societies have at times possessed large estates, through the generosity of wealthy donors, men whose whole souls were wrapped up in the craft they practised, and gave of their wealth for the benefit of their poorer brethren, and for the promotion of the best interests of the trade they loved.

## CURIOUS OLD PIECES

Among the valuable possessions of these ancient guilds, perhaps the most interesting are the remains of their plate chests, quaint and curious pieces of silver which have been given at different times to enrich and beautify their halls, and to enhance the interest of their great feasts. Some of these pieces of silver are of very ancient date, but the London guilds have suffered much in the past, and great inroads have been made upon their stores of plate. At different times they have been called upon to provide funds in order that the sovereign of these realms might carry on wars in foreign parts. Sometimes they have parted with their silver in order to pay forced loans, and in the Great Fire of London many of the Worshipful Companies lost their halls, their archives, and many of their treasures. There are, however, still many pieces of plate jealously guarded by the City Companies, too much many would say, for it is seldom that these pieces are shown to the public, and their custodians seem to be very much averse to giving any publicity to the relics which tell of the old masters and the craftsmen who founded many of the principal trades in this country.

## RARE PRESENTATION PLATE

The Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths have in their Hall a vast store of plate, and many of the older Companies still have their great centrepieces, their large rose-bowls, and specimens of the great standing salts which once served a useful purpose in their Halls ; and most of the Companies still own silver loving cups, flagons, plates and dishes of quaint manufacture. Incidentally it may be mentioned that many of the pieces of plate owned by the trade guilds are by noted artists of olden time, and were

specially made for their donors and ornamented with the particular purpose in view. They often bear rare hall-marks, and the initials of celebrated makers, the date letters telling of their great antiquity.

These curious larger works of the silversmith's art are not altogether confined to the wealthier guilds or to those which still possess Halls of their own, for some of the lesser companies own at least one or two pieces of plate carefully stowed away among the archives of the Company. It is a pity that these rare old pieces, so seldom used, should not be on view in one of the City Museums ; then they could be made to serve a useful purpose, and, perhaps, to fulfil to a greater extent the objects of their donors. As these City Companies have to such a large extent lost touch with the trades they once represented, it seems only fair that these rich gifts of old plate and other relics should be exhibited where they can be seen and admired by the traders and craftsmen following the same pursuits as their first owners.

## CHAPTER XVII

### AMERICAN PLATE

American silver mines—Local silversmiths—Some characteristics.

COLLECTORS of old silver plate have secured specimens from varied motives. In this country the collector has amassed plate on account of its tangible worth, and oftentimes has looked upon it as a good investment on account of its sterling value. The connoisseur, however, regards all such treasures from the standpoint of the artist and rarely collects solely because the objects he acquires are bargains, and may perhaps in the future be worth much larger sums. As a matter of fact the collector is seldom wrapped up in the possession of silver on account of its value, rather because of the interest he takes in its possession and in the variety of objects he can secure. Some will devote themselves to certain periods, but most people like to possess variety and generally are not averse to the possession of the work of silversmiths in different countries and made at different times and under varied conditions. There are, however, the collectors of family plate and those who gather together examples of the plate of one locality, the products of local silversmiths; thus the collector may desire only genuine pieces of Irish silver or those pieces bearing the hall-marks of Scotch assay offices.

There is, however, another side to collecting and that is of plate and other objects associated with some one country, whether made in that country or brought over at some earlier date. That has been the position of collectors in America, for they could scarcely confine

themselves to the plate fashioned in the States because many of the most valued pieces were made in the Old Country and taken over to America years ago. Then there are examples of the Dutch silversmiths which were in like manner taken over in the early days.

#### AMERICAN SILVER MINES

The metal has some interest to Americans apart from its workmanship and its fashioning into usable articles, for the silver mines of South America are of great age and were known to the ancients as well as to the Spaniards who imported so much treasure from the New World in the early days. Mrs. Lowe, in her work on "*Old Silver*" tells of the gold and silver vessels found in the graves of the Incas, who it is now well known had an advanced civilisation, casting silver in stone moulds. Many ancient people had large possessions of gold. We read in the Bible that in the days of King Solomon "gold was not of much account in those days," and it is said of the Incas of America that their kitchen utensils were made of gold and silver. Travellers found immense stores of silver in America, and, as Mrs. Lowe tells us, the Spaniards sent from Peru between the years 1550 and 1660, "no less than four hundred million ducats in value of gold and silver." It is noteworthy, too, that it is from America that the world has obtained its greatest supplies of silver, and there was in former days barter and plunder in silver, and wars in which treasure was captured and put to other uses. Spanish dollars of American silver have often changed ownership, and these coins have been melted down and fashioned by the silversmiths of the Old World into usable vessels, and then in later times taken over to the other side of the Atlantic. Even yet search is being made for the lost treasure ships of the Armada and bullion is being made into silver plate.

## LOCAL SILVERSMITHS

With all this historic interest attached to the silver of the country we cannot wonder at the great interest Americans take in the collection of old silver plate and at their desire to obtain pieces made from the silver taken from their mines and hall-marked in foreign countries as well as in England. Their interest too, is still greater in the work of American silversmiths, although there are few examples of really ancient plate known to have been made in the States. Wealthy millionaires have gathered together great stores of plate from all parts of the world and have often been the purchasers of historic specimens when they have come under the hammer. It has often been a matter of regret in Great Britain when rare pieces have passed into the hands of American collectors ; and those who desire to conserve the national stores of British antiques are sorry to lose touch with such treasures. We are, however, indebted to the American buyer for many interesting loan collections, and in America there have been many exhibitions of American plate besides the private displays of collectors.

One of the most interesting collections of American plate was that shown at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston in 1906—it was essentially representative of American silver. The catalogue issued on that occasion contained much interesting information about the special objects shown. One of the most striking features about that exhibition in which there were so many pieces representing the work of purely American craftsmen was that in the older specimens there was the strongest resemblance to the taste and design of English silversmiths of that particular period. That was of course to be expected, considering that the owners of those silver tankards, beakers and tea-table appointments were English, or English

emigrants, or the sons and daughters of those who had then but recently left England for that new land in which the great nation then being formed was in the early stages of the making. Yet in many of the early examples of American domestic plate there were indications of the future prosperity of the nation by the massive solidity and weight of the pieces.

The author of the introduction to the Boston catalogue, in which there were many illustrations of domestic plate, tells of the "whistling tankard in cans with ear-shaped handles"; these, he tells us are "a vivid reminder of early America's great social vice of tippling." He further points out that heavy drinking was so common and intruded itself upon the social and commercial life of the people to such an extent that in the early years of the seventeenth century "no business transactions were consummated, marriage celebrated, or funeral ceremony performed without lavish consumption of liquor."

#### SOME CHARACTERISTICS

The chafing dish many years ago became a much used kitchen and table requisite in the United States, and for use of the table some fine silver chafing dishes were produced. Braziers were said to have been the forerunners of the chafing dish. That may have been so in America, but the idea probably emanated from a recollection of what had been used at a much earlier time in England. Collectors of old pottery such as was made in Sussex and in other English counties know that many beautiful examples of pottery chafing dishes are to be seen in museums and good collections, and the same principle applied in their heating and use was carried out in the silver chafing dishes for which Americans have still such a liking. As already stated most American collections

of silver, pewter and Sheffield plate consist chiefly of the products of English silversmiths, and the hall-marks are those familiar to collectors in Great Britain and in other parts of the world. The silversmiths who settled in America continued to ply their trade, and when fashioning articles for domestic use made them at first identical with the goods they had made in their younger days in the Old Country. As time went on, there were some fresh features, such as the chafing dish, which in time became distinctly American, and no doubt the modification of design to suit altered conditions was progressive, and the new nation, the trade of which rapidly increased, had its own devices, although the later export business of the States has always kept its manufacturers in touch with the older types which seldom changed, and for which there was the chief demand in other countries. The older makers in America seem to have made their names their chief recommendation, and seldom failed to identify themselves with their work. No date letters have been used in America, so that the exact date of any piece is difficult to affix, but the maker's mark and his initials are always shown very prominently and recognisable by those who specialise upon American silver.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### SPOONS

Spoons of antiquity—Spoons known by their handles—Maidenhead, Seal-top, and others—Restoration and Georgian Spoons—Spoons for specific purposes—Ladles.

IN an article published many years ago the writer of "*A Tale of Spoons*" introduced the subject to the trade as follows: "It is evident that spoons were unknown to early man, but a Scotchman has remarked that they were quickly discovered when the first bowl of broth was cooked. At the epoch of hot broth in the evolution of man a spoon was found to be indispensable. As the ladle to the pot so is the spoon to the bowl. Savages used spoons of wood, but even before the formation of a bowl Nature provided scallop-shells for the savage whose caldron smoked by the sea shore, and those who dwelt in the forest glade found spoons at hand."

### SPOONS OF ANTIQUITY

It is evident that spoons were at first used entirely for liquids, their convenience, however, made them handy implements for many dry products. The early cooking vessels were large and ponderous, and meat was chiefly boiled. Large meat forks and equally massive spoons were used in the pot, although spoons of much smaller size and lighter weights were included in the requirements of the kitchen and upon the table for feeding purposes. Various metals and compound metals have served the

housewife ; the earlier cooking spoons were of wood but few specimens are found in the debris of old towns and settlements ; they have perished, although numerous examples of iron, brass, latten, pewter and silver spoons are met with in collections representing the household appointments of former days.

Spoons have been used since the early days of civilisation in Eastern and Western countries, and crude examples showing the same idea of form occurring to peoples in all localities and at all ages are met with in use among the few existing tribes of savages and aboriginal man. Evidently the idea of their manufacture has been suggested by Nature under differing conditions. There has been little change in the first principle of the spoon and its use—it is still a bowl of conveniently small size with a handle attached. Yet there have been fashions in spoons and slight alterations in form to meet the requirements of polite society as ideas have altered. The bowl has at times been made nearly round, at others oval or elongated ; now and then new uses have been found for the spoon and fresh forms devised, at times the bowl has been perforated and adapted to other purposes than liquids. Perhaps the greatest variation has been in the handle and its manner of attachment to the bowl ; there have been distinctive characteristics too, in the manner of engraving and in the ornament—the style of ornament and the fashion of the initials or other engraving following contemporary decoration.

The spoon is generally associated with domestic plate by the “ home connoisseur ” ; it has, however, played an important part in many functions and historic events ; indeed, many ancient spoons in museums and collections show traces of having been made for some specific purpose or of having been owned by someone for his or her own personal use.

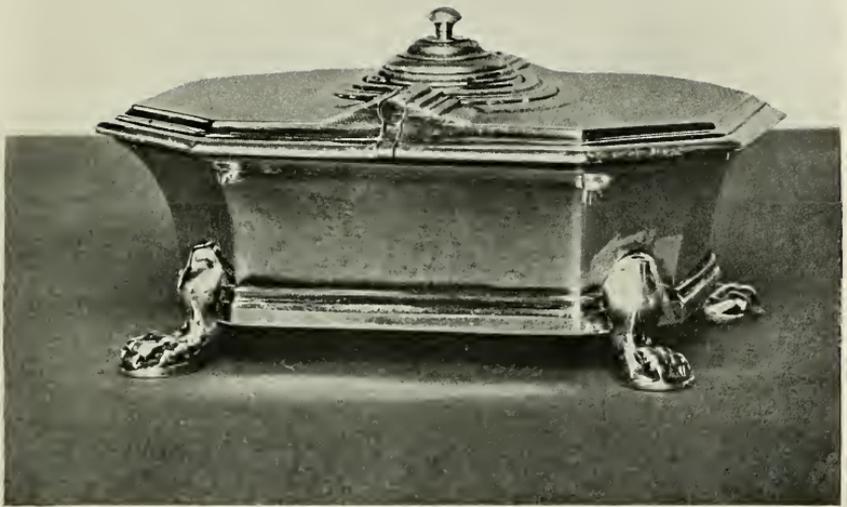


FIG. 46.—SILVER SPICE-BOX.  
HALL-MARKED LONDON 1728-9.  
(In the Victoria and Albert Museum.)

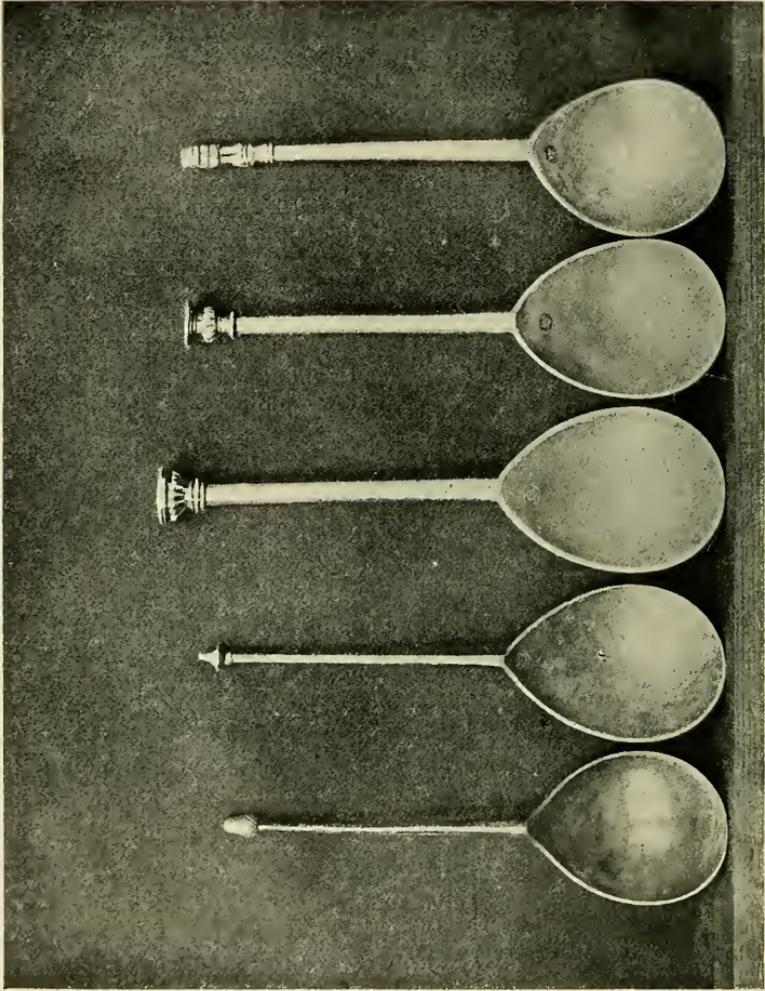


FIG. 47.—COLLECTION OF SILVER SPOONS.  
(In the Victoria and Albert Museum.)

The antiquity of the Coronation Spoon in our national regalia is sometimes disputed, if, however, it is not the actual spoon used in Saxon days at the coronation of the sovereign it is doubtless an exact replica of that ancient spoon which will occur to all as an example of a spoon made for a specific purpose, and although only required on occasions widely apart, kept for that purpose only.

There are many "odd" spoons in the family plate chest; some of these have been presentation spoons given to commemorate special occasions; among them prominence is given to the Christening spoon, although that name is perhaps a misnomer in that such spoons were intended to be used in later years by the child whose christening they commemorated.

As customs change and new practices become general, new spoons have been fashioned, as when snuff-taking came into general practice a small spoon which could be carried in the snuff-box was designed.

Undoubtedly the world would be placed in great difficulty if the use of a spoon was prohibited or its manufacture restricted.

There is an interesting old couplet referring to the spoon always present in some form or other, which runs:—

"It (*the spoon*) is with the King at his crowning; with the babe at his christening; with the corpse at his burying; and with the rest of the world at its snuff-taking."

#### SPOONS KNOWN BY THEIR HANDLES

The ancient spoons found during excavations of old buildings and amidst the remains of former races in this country are chiefly deposited in museums and national collections. There is a fine display of Roman and Saxon spoons in the Guildhall Museum, all of them found in London; the mysteries of the underground treasures of

the Metropolis will never be fully solved, and even in centuries to come fresh discoveries will be made. Whenever there are extensive excavations for the foundations of new buildings upon the ruins of the London of the past oddments revealing its domestic economy are found, and among these there have been many spoons. The age of these relics which cover a period ranging from Roman days to late mediæval can generally be ascertained from the forms of the bowl and of the handle.

In mediæval and late Tudor times the handle was well defined, and until we approach modern times—the age of reproduction and restoration of all ancient forms and styles—makers kept closely to the then prevailing fashion in silver, furniture and artistic ornament. Premier interest undoubtedly centres around the Christening spoon, the purpose of which has already been explained. The older form is that known as the Apostle spoon which in almost any condition bearing the image of one of the apostles is difficult to procure, and to collect a costly hobby.

Much interesting matter has been written about those now rare spoons—a full set of “Apostles” and the Master spoon numbering thirteen. But it is chiefly in isolated pieces that these spoons come into the market. Only one or two sets complete with the rare Master spoon are known. Many of the earlier examples dated from the reign of Henry VII, some being hall-marked in that of Henry VIII. No doubt in many instances several of these spoons, surmounted with the figures of favourite saints were given as christening gifts, in other cases only isolated examples were presented.

The gift of the Apostle spoon was chiefly in pre-Reformation times when belief in the services of the patron saint was strong and the favourite or family saint was often supplemented by the wealthy by the addition of other patrons, and as the relics still in existence show there were

some donors who presented "the whole lot," but whether the full set, including "Judas" with his emblematic "bag" was ever given to a babe at his christening is not clear.

The collector, fortunate enough to possess one or more of these rare spoons is, of course, anxious to discover the Apostles represented. It is not easy to distinguish any marked difference in the figures themselves, but as each Apostle is known by his attribute, the recognition is made clear.

Any of the Apostle spoons can be known by the attributes mentioned in the following list:—

- (1) The Master—Cross and orb, usually having the right hand held up in the act of blessing.
- (2) St. Peter—A sword or a key.
- (3) St. Andrew—A cross.
- (4) St. James the Greater—A pilgrim's staff.
- (5) St. John—The cup of sorrow.
- (6) St. Phillip—A staff.
- (7) St. Bartholomew—A knife.
- (8) St. Thomas—A spar.
- (9) St. Matthew—An axe or halbert.
- (10) St. James the Less—A fuller's bat.
- (11) St. Jude—A square.
- (12) St. Simon Zelotes—A long saw.
- (13) Judas—A bag of money.

St. Paul with a sword as his emblem is occasionally introduced as a substitute for Judas.

It is useful to note that most of the Apostle spoons are hall-marked, the mark being found on the stem of the bowl. There are often engraved or impressed initials, and sometimes legends are added. As was customary at that period the initials and the date are generally "pricked" on the bowl. As it has been pointed out, it

is rare to meet with any considerable number of Apostle spoons belonging to one set.

The bowls of Apostle and other spoons were hammered and the stem forged on to the bowl; the figures of the Apostles were cast, being afterwards soldered on to the stem. The mark was punched inside the bowl and this was in some instances supplemented by an additional mark on the handles.

Shakespeare has many references to spoons, especially Apostle spoons. These have frequently been quoted by writers on the subject. One of these in "*Henry VIII*," referring to the King asking Cranmer to be godfather to a "fair young maid that yet wants baptism," being a favourite. Cranmer raises objections, to which King Henry replies, suggesting that the Archbishop grudged the customary gift, saying: "Come, come, my lord; you'd spare your spoons!"

The gift of plate was costly then, it is more expensive to-day, and the now rare Apostle spoons, with their enhanced curio value, are gifts which can only be indulged in by the wealthy!

#### MAIDENHEAD, SEAL-TOPS AND OTHER SPOONS

Much that has been written about Apostle spoons applies equally to the spoons of different designs given for the same purpose in the years that followed, when the silversmith changed his design and fashioned spoons more in accord with the times. The Reformation, the lapse into the more ancient faith during the reign of Mary and subsequent events, not the least important being the downfall of the royalists and the strong puritanical element influencing art and production, all had their respective bearing upon the work of the silversmiths—even upon the manufacture of domestic spoons.

One of the earliest alterations noticeable was the substitution of spoons surmounted with the Virgin Mary for the "Apostles." These curious relics, now known as "Maidenhead" spoons, were made towards the close of the fifteenth century and the earlier years of the sixteenth century. Many spoons of this type are extant, although when brought under the hammer good examples realise £40 or £50 each.

A seated lion was the next fancy, and it appears to have been very popular. Known as the *lion-sejant* spoons, they were made in considerable numbers, and are more frequently met with than "Maidenheads" or "Apostles." With £20 or £30 in his pocket the collector may secure a good example.

The stump-top spoons of the sixteenth century were very plain and look very much like the earlier spoons with the tops cut off. It is difficult to realise that such spoons met with a ready market; they were, however, in keeping with the ideas of the extreme puritans whose lives must have been shorn of much pleasure, and their views of art and beauty very much warped.

There is still another old spoon dating from pre-Reformation times which calls for special attention, it is the seal-top, a development of the stump rendered more ornate by the addition of a plain seal head, a design suggested by the seals in common use before the Civil War. It is very interesting to trace the origin of things, and when such a simple suggestion as the reproduction of a seal top upon the handle of a spoon is noted, the only wonder is that it remained undiscovered so long, or that it had not been adopted at an earlier period. It must be remembered, however, that it was only then that even elementary education became general among the well to do, for at an earlier date the use of seals would be very restricted. Many of the seal topped spoons are replicas of actual seals bearing

engraved initials and in some instances crests, many of the earlier examples showing traces of gilding. For a hundred years or so this form of spoon appears to have been in use.

The spoons found in most collections are of course of a later date than those rarer examples mentioned. A few of the rarer examples are shown in Figure 47.

#### RESTORATION AND GEORGIAN SPOONS

After the days when the sacrificing of silver plate for the Royalist cause had become a virtue, there was for a time a reversion to the use of the older spoons made of commoner metals of which there was probably a fairly plentiful supply in the households of those who had given of their substance in the common cause. When money was more plentiful and affairs of State and of the landowners had become settled on a surer basis there was a return to the one time much preferred silver. Towards the close of the seventeenth century the stem was hammered out flat and shaped, having two clefts, the centre portion being rounded off, like a bird's foot; a fashion prevailing until its later straightening at the back, and the rounding of the top resulted in the evolution which produced the rat tail. Although there had been several minor developments it was not until the reign of Queen Anne when so much beautiful silver was wrought that the rat tail spoon of pronounced type was established. It was the general form during the Georgian period and is still much reproduced in modern silver. The distinctly old English type of the Georgian was long popular, and its revival in later years shows that the "fiddle" which followed it is not regarded as an ideal type, nor can it yet be "collected" as antique.

Side by side with the plainer and more graceful rat tail and its later developments, other ornamental handles

were introduced late in the eighteenth century and in early Victorian days. The best known of these decorative designs are the shell, lily, thread and bead. These constituted the chief types of form and ornament found among the old silver still in use in middle class households. There are, however, many small differences in engraving and ornament, for many of the spoons made towards the close of the eighteenth century were fashioned out of old silver, and some were the work of local silversmiths who added adaptations which might have been favoured in their own neighbourhoods but which never became generally accepted.

A word must be said about the relative sizes and the later uses of spoons. In olden time there do not appear to have been any large spoons corresponding with modern "table spoons" which only made their appearance a little earlier than the days of Queen Anne; after that time there was a marked difference between the spoons used for serving purposes and those required for the personal use of the owner or guest.

The knife, fork and spoon in case carried about by their owner belongs to an earlier age and need not be mentioned again in connection with table plate.

The beautiful decoration and engraving of Georgian silver appointments of the tea table are among the artistic gems of such work. Charming sets of tea spoons and the tongs so often accompanying them correspond in ornament and engraving to the helmet-shaped cream jug and the similarly shaped sugar basin of that day. In passing it may be noted that amateur collectors and owners of silver teaspoons are sometimes puzzled at the difference in size, weight and occasionally the form of the handles of the teaspoons which are ornamented *en suite*, and were apparently hall-marked with the same date; that doubtless is accounted for by the fact that they were hand

wrought and hammered in the days before die presses and machinery ensured exactitude in form, size and weight.

#### SPOONS FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES

The different uses to which spoons are attributed tell of the change in customs and habits. In olden time the Romans possessed spoons for curious purposes ; one of them was a small spoon with which to extract the edible snail from its shell, this snail being regarded as a luxury by the early Romans. The Romans had egg spoons too, fashioned to serve the purpose of an egg cup. In Georgian days there were several innovations, such as the curious spoons for extracting marrow from the bone—a double ended spoon with a handle in the middle.

The advent of the tea caddy and perhaps the cost of tea in early days of tea making gave rise to a new spoon—one which was obviously well suited to ornamentation. Of these little spoons there are many varieties, one of the most charming and delightful collections being that in the Victoria and Albert Museum, given to the nation by the late Mr. FitzHenry. The cost of these little spoons has risen considerably of late years, so that although their collection could once have been recommended to those having only a few shillings at a time to spend upon their favourite hobby, their average value must now be reckoned at about a pound each.

#### LADLES

Ladles may be regarded as a special form of spoon shaped in accord with the purpose for which they were intended. Soup originally taken from a bowl and drank was ladled out of the pot or large tureen with ladles of iron, brass and metal. Silver ladles would be used when the tureen was introduced on the table. The handles of ladles in later

times corresponded with those of the spoons in form and ornament.

The ladle around which the greatest interest centres is that of many varied forms used so extensively in the eighteenth century for punch. The popularity of the drink cannot be gainsayed. The liquor originally of five ingredients—spirit, water, sugar, lemon, and spice—gave occasion to the following rhyme :—

“ Whene’er a bowl of punch we make,  
Four striking opposites we take—  
The strong, the weak, the sour, the sweet,  
Together mixed most kindly meet :  
And when they happily unite,  
The bowl is pregnant with delight.”

Punch ladles have not always been made of silver, wood mounted with silver being met with, the handles being of silver, horn and other materials—it was a common practice to fasten a guinea or a silver coin “ for luck ” in the bowl of the ladle, some are like small sauce boats and others are deep and circular like an old fashioned iron pot.

Sauce ladles have been commonly used since the days of Queen Anne and are met with bearing hall-marks of all the different periods since that period. A variety are the small ladles used for toddy and other purposes.

## CHAPTER XIX

### TANKARDS AND CUPS

The tankard—Silver-mounted stoneware jugs—Standing cups—Loving cups—The grace cup—Beakers and tumblers—Candle cups and porringers—Cocoa-nut and ostrich egg cups—Cups of many kinds.

THERE is something very interesting about the old tankards and cups which have been used in the past under very different surroundings and conditions to those which owners and collectors of plate are accustomed to in the twentieth century. These two types of vessels are rightly connected together, for the one is, and was to a large extent, intended to supply and fill the other. Both are, however, very varied in size and form, the vessels often suggesting the changes in society as time went on, and the different conditions under which the persons who used them lived, compared with the present day.

The great leathern black-jacks of Cromwellian days, and the pewter flagons of the time of Charles II and of many years later, once full of foaming ale and home brewed wines, drank in manor house and baronial hall, and quaffed at roadside inn and tavern, remind us of the lives our ancestors lived, and tell somewhat of former conditions of travel. Such vessels were welcome sights in coaching inn and were emblematic of the refreshment offered in such places.

The term tankard is used in a general sense to denote several varieties of large vessels from which quantities of liquor was once poured into smaller and more convenient receptacles for personal use; the tankard was,

however, very frequently emptied without the medium of a cup. On the other hand, cups have usually been known chiefly by their more specific uses, the generic term cup being prefixed by some name by which its actual use could be recognised, as the "loving cup" at the feast, and the "caudle cup" in the home; and in these days the terms are useful to the collector in distinguishing the varieties of cups and vessels he possesses, many of them having been used for different purposes in the past. Some of the names have, however, been handed on, although the original uses of the cups can scarcely be identified; on the other hand the names in some cases still serve to denote a present day use which has scarcely changed at all during the lapse of centuries.

#### THE TANKARD

The earlier tankards used in England were of wood, and long after metal drinking vessels had come into vogue there were bowls and platters of wood in regular use; it was the cheaper material of the common folk. In Mediæval England the leathern blackjack was in constant request, the ale and other liquor being poured from the larger tankard into the smaller leathern drinking cup of tankard form; although not infrequently, as it has already been suggested, liquor was imbibed direct from the flagon, just as it was from the contemporary earthenware jugs, often of large capacity. These early vessels of leather were by no means devoid of ornamentation, indeed, some of the rarer types were mounted with silver and their owners' names engraved upon shields of the same metal; some of the old Spanish leather work was embossed and very ornate, presenting quite a contrast to the plain black leathern vessels of Mediæval England.

The pottery of the Middle Ages was very crude, but in later Tudor times, although coarse, it was modelled with

greater care, and the rich green galena glaze poured over it added to its appearance and to the convenience and even refinement of its use. This perhaps gave some incentive to the workers in metals who began to improve their drinking vessels, to give them better forms, and to add to their ornament. Silversmiths, too, often mounted vessels of pottery with silver rims and added lids of the same metal.

Hard drinking was customary in Mediæval England, and until the close of the eighteenth century few men could lay claim to regular sobriety. In quite early times it was found necessary to devise some means to check this heavy drinking, and perhaps to enable all to have a fair share, for it would seem that it was no uncommon thing for the early comer to take the cup or flagon and empty it right away. The idea of inserting pegs in wooden vessels in joint or common use to indicate the draught limit for each person was an old institution. The same custom was continued when vessels of metal were in use, and among the examples extant are many silver "peg" tankards of the time of Charles II, the reign during which the silversmiths received such encouragement. The lasting quality of the craftsman's work is familiar to the collector who knows this to have been a period of art revival and the sweeping away of much puritanical narrowmindedness.

By way of defining a date when the silver tankard came into general use, marking the decline of the use of the earlier pewter by the wealthy, it may be pointed out that there are many dating from the earlier decades of the seventeenth century, although there are frequent mentions of tankards in inventories of the sixteenth century, such pieces being now rare. Most of the best pieces are either in the hands of private collectors or safely deposited in museums; some, however, are retained by the city guilds,



FIG. 48.—HELMET-SHAPED SILVER CREAM-JUG.  
HALL-MARKED 1793;  
ENGRAVED WITH INITIALS "R.C." AND "L.C."

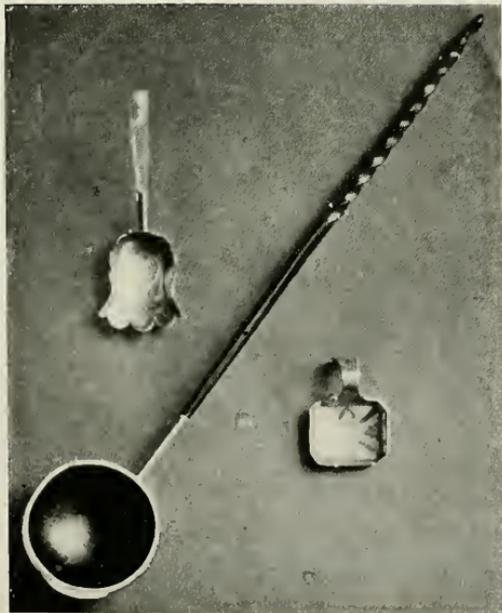


FIG. 49.—WOOD PUNCH-LADLE.  
WORM HANDLE AND SILVER MOUNTS. 18TH CENTURY.  
FIGS. 50 AND 51.—SILVER CADDY SPOONS.



FIG. 52.—SILVER TWO-HANDLED CUP AND COVER,  
BY MATHEW LOFTHOUSE, LONDON, 1710-11.  
(In the Victoria and Albert Museum.)

corporations and municipal authorities in whose hands they have been since they were made by their order or given by wealthy donors in times very different from those of the present day. A few choice bits are in the hands of less wealthy representatives of old families who cling tenaciously to such relics of their ancient lineage.

It is useful to note that many of the old tankards have fine, clear hall-marks from which their dates and places of origin can be ascertained without difficulty, a characteristic of great importance to collectors. The two chief varieties of tankards are distinguished by the lids, which are either domed-topped or quite flat, making a marked difference in their appearance. The covers of the older vessels were hall-marked in a very conspicuous position. Later, there was an attempt to hide the mark, and in the days of George II, when tankards were still in regular although somewhat modified use the marks were almost invariably placed inside the lid and on the bottom of the tankard instead of on the top of the lid and on the side of the vessel as in earlier times. This custom set the modern fashion of smaller and less conspicuous hall-marks, although quite recently there has been a decided vogue for the mark, and collectors often refuse to buy plate, new or old, without well preserved marks, clearly impressed. The hall-mark is to the "home connoisseur" or amateur collector the only reliable indication of authentic antiquity.

#### SILVER-MOUNTED STONEWARE JUGS

As it has been suggested there was a frequent use of metal mounts upon leather and pottery vessels and stoneware jugs and flagons were silver mounted—sometimes being silver-gilt. Many such pieces often of genuine authenticity sell for hundreds of pounds when brought

under the hammer, for they are very rare. Most of these mounted stoneware flagons are of mottled ware, ornamented in relief, like the famous bellarmine of a slightly earlier period. The potters of those days courted royal favour and freely used the royal arms or monogram, the Tudor rose and other loyal emblems, many of the pieces exhibiting considerable skill in modelling. The silver rims and the covers of these jugs are generally hall-marked, thus fixing their dates, and distinguishing them from ancient jugs and flagons which have been mounted with silver in more recent times, this of course making a material difference in their value to a collector.

Some of the rare Fulham ware jugs and cups were silver mounted, although possibly many so mounted have been given this additional ornament many years after they were made. Many vessels of this old pottery were similar to Cologne jugs and the grey wares of several Continental towns, Dutch imitations and foreign copies of the antique—silver mounted and impressed with marks little understood by the English or American collector are rather deceptive and should be avoided unless expert skill in identifying their true origin is available.

#### STANDING CUPS

The great standing cups which were used by those in the highest places, and passed round among the chief guests at baronial and civic feasts, must be classed as the most important vessels from which the choicest liquors were partaken. In course of time the great festivities of the castle and hall were to a large extent transferred to municipal halls and civic functions, and the festivals of the ancient guilds whose feasts have been maintained until the present time, although their former purposes and privileges have been curtailed. Of civic plate and the

remains of the former greatness of the city companies and guilds the chief pieces are the fine standing cups and covers. They are referred to in public records under different names, that of the "hanap," often mentioned in connection with these large cups is of Norman-French extraction although in the first place derived, it is said, from a Saxon word, which although primarily meaning a cup of large size, was passed on to us in the ever changing English language in the homely modern "hamper," a perverted use of the original meaning. These fine old standing cups are said to have been once kept in the "hamperium" and are often mentioned in ancient records of plate and in inventories of civic treasures. Most of them are of silver-gilt, and the condition of many of these old pieces is so good that we marvel at the quality of the gilding which has stood so long. There are many examples in the Victoria and Albert Museum at South Kensington, but few of them are much older than the reign of James I, a period when these standing cups and covers were made in great numbers.

The term standing cup has become rather common and is applied indiscriminately to any of the large presentation cups with covers which have been treasured from ancient times, and to those more decorative pieces of plate given to adorn civic feasts and other functions. The preservation of large cups is a time honoured custom, and thus many of our older municipalities possess early examples of such massive cups, most of them suitably ornamented. As explained elsewhere, the colleges of our principal universities have many fine examples of such cups. Take, for instance, that remarkable piece known as the Founder's cup—a splendid standing cup and cover which belongs to Christ's College, Cambridge.

A modern example of a large cup, truly a triumph of the silversmith's art, is the Bute cup, the large piece presented

by the Marquis of Bute to the City of Cardiff a few years ago.

An example of the two-handled cups and covers in use during the reign of Queen Anne is illustrated in Figure 52. It is a cup in the Victoria and Albert Museum, measuring seven inches in height, and hall-marked in London 1710-1711, the work of Matthew Lofthouse.

Then there is that beautiful two-handled cup and cover, the work of J. Jackson, of Dublin, hall-marked 1779, one of the treasures in the National Museum of Ireland, illustrated in Figure 69 ; and the other cups of less pretensions shown in Figures 70 and 71, also Irish silver.

In further reference to two-handled cups without covers similar to those just mentioned it may be pointed out, that such cups have been made throughout the last two centuries. Sometimes they have been very plain, or ornamented only with engraved shield, at others they have been very elaborate and according to the fashion of the period. Such cups are mostly found among the relics of old families, many of them being hall-marked in the reign of George III, or a little earlier in the century.

#### THE GRACE CUP

The two-handled " grace-cup " passed round with great ceremony at feasts and public functions scarcely comes within the scope of collectable plate, although it is difficult to point to the actual use to which important pieces of plate like the great two-handled cups of early dates have been put. Some of the city companies possess, and still use, traditional grace cups. One of the best known of these is the " Royal Oak Cup " given to the Barber-Surgeons in the reign of Charles II, still in the possession of the company. The stem of this fine and very elaborate piece is appropriately fashioned like an oak tree, the cup

and its cover being decorated with suitable foliated ornament, clusters of acorns hanging round, the top of the cover being surmounted by a royal crown.

### BEAKERS AND TUMBLERS

The beaker in its plainest form is a drinking vessel like the old Staffordshire tyg without its handle. It may be described as cylindrical but wider at the mouth. Sometimes this is quite plain but it is generally banded, and in some instances engraved with simple ornament. These drinking cups were commonly made during the reigns of the Stuart monarchs, especially in the earlier days of the dynasty. Later the plain rim became extended, until it was a foot.

Some of the beakers or stoops used in college halls and by guild brethren were more ornate and the arms of their owners were frequently engraved upon them.

In the reign of Charles I, wine cups on stems became general. There were tumblers, too (vessels with rounded bottoms), heavy and less likely to overturn than the taller beakers. In later times silversmiths and glassmakers have copied one another and there have been great variety in the cups modelled for everyday use.

The fashion of using drinking cups of sterling silver has never died out, although in common practice silver cups and pewter mugs are by no means general. For presentation purposes cups are still preferred and in the future the collector will have to rely upon the hall-mark, for almost all the antique styles of drinking vessels and large pieces of presentation plate fashioned after the manner of cups have been wrought again, in some cases more than one antique style has been incorporated in the design.

## CAUDLE CUPS AND PORRINGERS

Perhaps the least copied in the present-day by modern silversmiths are the beautiful quaint little caudle cups and porringers of the Stuart period, and of the days of Queen Anne. Caudle cups were introduced before the days of hard drinking had died out. They appear to have been an additional vessel rather than one superceding drinking cups then in use. It is said that long after greater comforts had been introduced in the homes of the wealthy, and even when the cold and draughty castles of Mediæval England had given place to manor houses and Tudor mansions the large rooms and long passages were chilly at night and many found comfort, warmth and sleep after drinking a cup of hot posset or caudle. These drinks were made from hot wine with spices poured upon milk, eggs being added occasionally. The cups were small, with rims narrower than the middle or body of the cup thus rendering it easy to skim off the curdled milk, which when removed left the clear drink in the vessel.

The caudle cups, which were two-handled, were dainty little pieces of plate, delicately chased and frequently well engraved. Many of them had the arms or crests of their owners on the sides; others were repoussé and in other ways conformed to the style of ornament then generally used. By way of contrast porringers have wider necks, and are more bowl-like in form; they are also two-handled. When first made they had plain sides, but in the days of Queen Anne they were fluted and shaped like the little fluted sugar basins of later times.

The silver porringer and cover shown in Figure 12 is hall-marked 1678 and is therefore of the Restoration period, as indicated by the style of ornament. Note also the pretty little cup and cover shown in Figure 52, already described.

## COCOANUT AND OSTRICH EGG CUPS

It seems rather a curious fashion to have reverted to the use of cocoanut shells and ostrich eggs as drinking cups. Indeed, their use recalls primitive methods of drinking, yet both the "shells" are very suitable for the purpose.

From mediæval days onward the half of a cocoanut, an ostrich egg shell and a piece of wood turned and hollowed, mounted on suitable stands, have served. In some instances they are quaintly and beautifully carved, in others simply polished, and in most cases they have been mounted with silver. Occasionally the whole of the interior has been lined with silver, silver-gilt linings and mounts are met with now and then. Cups of this kind were made as early as the fifteenth century, and the custom once established became general; the mounting of these cups continued, indeed, even at the present time they are made and sold, more probably for ornamental decoration than for actual use.

Many of the older trade guilds possess these quaint cups. One fine example is at Vintner's Hall and another may be seen by those few privileged persons who are allowed to inspect the plate of the Worshipful Company of Ironmongers. Mr. Cripps mentions a very remarkable ostrich cup at Exeter College, which he says was hall-marked in 1610, the silver stem being shaped like the legs of an ostrich.

## CUPS OF MANY KINDS

There are, indeed, cups of many kinds. The "home connoisseur" finds in the family plate chest cups which have been won as prizes in the hunting field—they have been taken in open competition and are justly valued by their owners; others have been given for services rendered,

or to mark some auspicious occasion, most of them bearing appropriate inscriptions.

Sometimes such cups deceive the amateur as when given and inscribed they have not been new ; indeed, it often happens that many valuable finds have until their hall-marks have been examined by an expert been regarded as comparatively modern, because of the date on the inscription, that of the earlier date of the hall-mark being overlooked.

In the sale rooms one often meets with curiously shaped cups which could not have been fashioned because of their usefulness for any particular purpose. Some are like the quaint jugs and teapots of former days, very unsuitable for drinking from. There is the curious Pea-hen cup at Skinner's Hall which may be instanced as an ancient fanciful cup which could never have served any useful purpose. It is shaped like a pea-hen with her two chicks on a stand at her feet.

Some of the replicas of ancient cups are very graceful but not very serviceable in roystering days. Such, for instance, the tazze of Greek-like form with high baluster stems which have their modern counterparts in champagne glasses.

It must not be assumed that replicas are to be despised, far from it ; indeed it is to the skill of the modern silversmith that we are indebted for the handsome silver models of celebrated examples of ancient art which can be seen in museums and art galleries. A visit to the Victoria and Albert Museum at South Kensington, is fraught with pleasure and instruction. There are many cases full of replicas of plate, the originals of which are stored in many countries, presenting a diversified selection of the silversmith's art. Cups have often been chosen for presentation

purposes, and silversmiths of all ages have vied with one another in their decoration.

Of cups and drinking vessels there is no end. The silversmiths are busy fashioning cups; they have plied their trade for centuries and have made plain and useful cups for general use, they have modelled cups for special purposes, and they have always been ready to design exceptional pieces to mark special events. The results of their labours in all ages have been remarkable, and relics of the silversmiths' skill are obtainable in the sale rooms, in museums and in private collections. The art of the silversmith is as good as ever, and always ready to produce appropriate gifts and souvenirs.

In concluding this chapter it seems fitting to mention that the gift of cups continues, and that many of these presentations are curios in the making, some being likely in the future to become relics of great historic value. One of these—a gift of quite recent days—is an excellent example of the modern silversmith's art. It was presented to Dr. Harriss, who so ably conducted the Empire Choir on their tours. The presentation was made on the greatest day of modern times—Peace Day—and the loving cup presented to Dr. Harriss by Viscount Campden, on behalf of the Empire Choir, bears the inscription: "Empire Choir to Dr. Charles Harriss. A memento from the Chorus of Victory, Peace and Thanksgiving. London, 1919." That cup tells of wondrous sights, and of a day that had no precedent. In Hyde Park were assembled upwards of 200,000 persons, and in their chorus of praise they were led by a choir of 10,000 voices, each one following the baton of the great conductor who through a megaphone led them in many impressive pieces, and in that special hymn, "Rejoice to-day with one accord," a hymn of great rejoicing, followed by "God bless the Prince of Wales." England's future king has

won the hearts of the people, and that cup into whosoever hands it may fall in the future will remind them of that great day, and of all that it meant to those whose feelings had been pent up for five long years. It will recall too, the great procession, and tell of those field-m Marshals and admirals of England and of France, who with their generals and commanders and men saluted the Cenotaph raised in Whitehall in memory of the "Glorious Dead," and of those armies who have fought and won a great peace during which the craftsmen of this and other nations can return to the arts of Peace.

## CHAPTER XX

### SALT CELLARS

The use of salt—The standing salt—Above and below the salt—  
Trencher salts—Bell and hour-glass salts—Georgian salts.

SALT is probably the oldest condiment used by man. In many of its forms it is provided by nature ready for use, requiring little or no preparation for the table. Common salt, chlorine and sodium, is found in solution, and as rock salt it has been widely distributed, hence its popular use long before it was thought necessary to provide special receptacles for its storage and for serving it up with meat on the table. In Eastern countries the drying up of salt seas supplied the condiment, and salt beds are known in continents far separated and formed under very different conditions. In this country the Cheshire "Wiches" are famous for their brine springs and deposits of rock salt. Very interesting indeed is a visit to the salt mines of Northwich and to the works where from early days table salt has been secured by evaporating the brine or natural springs of saline liquid pumped up from great depths. In the salt works of Mid-Cheshire there are vast heating systems by which the brine flowing into the pans is evaporated and the dry salt gradually formed; but in the East and especially in the neighbourhood of the Mediterranean, air and sun complete the work and effect the extraction of the precious salt in edible form.

## THE USES OF SALT

Curiously enough although so beneficial and even necessary to a healthy human body salt has a depressing effect on the nature and kills many of the lower forms of life. The desolate and lifeless character of the Dead Sea is proverbial. In America the Great Salt Lake with its islands and shallow waters is heavily impregnated with salt and its shores sparkle with the saline particles thrown off. Incidentally it may be mentioned that salt is not only used generally as a condiment, but it is largely employed commercially in the manufacture of chemicals, and in a variety of processes of manufacture it is found very useful.

There are many interesting stories told of Eastern countries and their quaint customs associated with the use of salt, of its importance in domestic economy, also its symbolic meaning in feasting a guest. Many of the formalities associated with its use are recounted in the Bible where much importance is attached to the nutritive qualities of salt.

With very stately ceremonial salt was handed to the guest in those early days when Arab Chiefs dwelt in tents and welcomed a stranger. Its importance increased along with its use, and as may be gathered from the magnitude of the great salt-cellars and vats of olden time, and from the customs associated with the use of the condiment, its value was fully appreciated in this country as it was in Eastern lands. In connection with the annual frolics of the "Boy-bishop" celebration at Eton, the scholars marched to Salt Hill accompanied by boy salt bearers who carried small bags of salt and in exchange for a pinch levied a toll of money from passers by.

Very remarkable were the great salt vats, immense receptacles which in the quantity they contained formed

a marked difference from the salt cellars that followed. The vats were plainer and the designer evidently had in view the storage and evident freer use of salt than when the salt cellars although very large were more ornamental and their size consisted of their enrichment and exterior ornament rather than their capacity for holding the condiment.

One very large silver salt vat, formerly belonging to Archbishop Parker is still safely preserved in Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.

### THE STANDING SALT

The great standing salt, that is, the receptacle in which the chief supply of salt was served became a piece of plate upon which much ornamentation could be placed. Many of these covered vessels—covered probably to preserve the freshness of the salt—were used as the chief table decoration upon the long refectory tables of the monasteries and the boards of the dining halls of the colleges in University towns. Some of these delightful pieces of old plate are still preserved among the remains of ancient plate now so jealously guarded in the colleges and by trade guilds. It would appear that gifts of these splendid relics of the handiwork and allegorical and emblematical design of the silversmiths of old were frequently bestowed by bishops and others on their former *alma mater*, and left by will to favourite institutions.

In Corpus Christi College, Oxford, there is an immense salt cellar or standing salt of silver-gilt formerly belonging to Bishop Fox. This ancient salt hall-marked 1517, is ornamented with a pelican, the bishop's emblem. This college is rich in antique plate and possesses several standing salts.

## “ ABOVE AND BELOW ” THE SALT

“ Home connoisseur ” collectors rarely possess these magnificent pieces which known as “ standing salts ” were commonly used in private households in the days when feasting in common hall appertained to the everyday life of noble lord and his retainer, just as it did in the halls of the colleges and the civic banquets of that day. The great salt-cellar was the dividing line which marked sharply the difference between the upper and the lower grades of society—a division none the less marked although all dined in the same hall and feasted off the same joints, and to some extent drank from the same flagon.

To fully understand the value of the great salt cellar it is necessary to make pen pictures of the position it occupied on the table of the baronial hall of Mediæval England and its still greater significance in the days of the Plantagenets.

The hall was crowded at the hour of feasting, for here it was that vassals and adherents, guests and servants assembled. The company was very mixed and some were far from desirable companions for the fair maids who also dined off the boards. The baronial hall of the large dwelling which even then retained some semblance to the castle but with the added comfort of the family mansion had its great hall where the oaken table was loaded with viands and none too dainty morsels. Screens were found useful in these large and draughty halls, they were handy too, to form a passage to the kitchens, where the provisions were prepared before a huge fire before which the meat revolved upon a giant spit. It was from these lower halls that shining pewter flagons and platters were brought forth. What an assembly lounged about waiting for the lord and lady of the feast! Among them were pages, heralds and men-at-arms, and not the least the Jester,



FIG. 53.—SILVER SALT-CELLAR.  
LONDON: HALL-MARKED 1605-6.  
(In the Victoria and Albert Museum.)



FIG. 54.—PEWTER TANKARD.  
18TH CENTURY.



FIG. 55.—PEWTER CANDLESTICK.  
18TH CENTURY.

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the fool who made merry and took great liberties. The upper table upon a raised dais—such an one is found in all ancient halls—was for the family and their chosen guests of equal rank. It was necessary that they should be better served and separated from the great oaken table in centre of the hall. At this table, however, there was mixed company for some of the household were of good birth and breeding and could scarcely be forced to consort with the lowest rank entitled to a seat. Here it was that the great salt-cellar was placed forming a dividing line of quality—above and below the salt. It was a moveable fixture, one which could be adjusted according to the standing and quality and number of the guests and retainers.

The smoking dishes were brought in, and the guests were seated where they could see the cup-board near the table on the raised dais and here was arranged the plate. It was the salt-cellar that marked the dividing line, hence its importance and the need for an imposing piece of plate. There were many vessels of silver and pewter for the more favoured guests and retainers, and wooden platters and horn drinking cups for those of lower rank. The provisions consumed in those days were immense and the liquor quaffed amazing. The hour of dinner was then ten o'clock in the morning, and supper was partaken of at four in the afternoon.

Many years came and went before society changed its habits and the standing salt became little else than an ornament upon the dining table. Its use lessened, but long before the great standing salt was discarded as a piece of family plate other vessels of smaller size and less elaborate forms came into use as receptacles for the salt consumed.

## TRENCHER SALTS

When the old covered salts "passed" a new and more convenient form, known as "trencher" salts came into use. Needless to say the older and larger salts remained where they were first placed upon the table and were not handed round.

Trencher salts of triangular form were uncovered open vessels placed at the corners of the domestic dining table. Sometimes these salts were square and in that form often used at the sides of a long dining table. No doubt their form was suggested by the wooden trenchers then in use, for the salts were flat, simply dished out and shallow receptacles for the condiment, and in general practice they would be placed in convenient positions near the trencher board.

The two leading shapes of the trencher salts sufficed for practical purposes, but changes were in progress, and circular, oval and even fanciful forms were destined to come in due course.

A good example of a seventeenth century salt cellar is shown in Figure 53 ; hall-marked in London in 1695-1696.

## BELL AND HOUR-GLASS SALTS

Along with standing salts, trenchers and the salt cellars of earlier days, there were special forms introduced by silversmiths or perhaps made to the order of patrons with "ideas" of their own. Some of these odd-shaped vessels survive in isolated examples. In other instances, however, it would appear that the "freak" pattern was popular and to some extent became a recognised form of salt cellar although its special use did not perhaps survive long.

Another rather peculiar form of salt-cellar was made in Tudor times, becoming popular in the days of Elizabeth,

known as the bell-shaped salt, the salt being extracted from the upper part of this turret-shaped vessel. Some of these now very scarce and valuable examples of the Elizabethan period were of dome-top form, the vessel often standing on three feet and frequently richly ornamented and even jewelled.

Another quaint form of ancient salt-cellar is the "hour-glass" salts, so called from their form which resembled the hour-glass then in regular use.

### GEORGIAN SALTS

Early Georgian salts are those which are mostly found among the valued remains of the old family plate chest, although trencher salts and circular salts of modified form come down to us from the days of Queen Anne.

When George II reigned most of the salt cellars—many small in size—were mounted on three feet.

In the eighteenth century silver was fast taking the place of wood and pewter; the salt cellars on four feet became larger than those made at the beginning of the century and several new varieties came into common use. The boat-shaped salt, with pointed ends was frequently seen in the early days of George III, sometimes these were elevated on rather high feet and their attractiveness and perhaps convenience was increased by the graceful handles not unlike those of the sugar basins of similar forms.

The variety of oval, oblong, circular and octagonal salts with galleries and open perforations are endless; they are all fitted with blue glass liners. These are indeed worth securing, but collectors should beware of broken glasses for it is very difficult indeed to obtain replicas. It may be useful to know that the hall-mark is usually found upon the bottom of the salt-cellar.

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The householder of to-day knows these shapes, although by far the greater number of salts met with in dealer's shops and auction rooms are merely cleverly made replicas of Georgian silver ; charming pieces and every bit as good for practical use.

## CHAPTER XXI

### BOWLS AND MAZERS

An ancient food vessel—Mazers—Monteiths.

THE bowl must have been one of the earliest food vessels used by the ancients. In countries where the cocoanut palm grew, the bowl was easily formed by the half husk or shell of the cocoanut. To-day, collectors revel in more recently prepared bowls or cups of cocoanut wood mounted with silver, and with punch ladles of wood similarly mounted and furnished with a handle of horn or other suitable material.

#### AN ANCIENT FOOD VESSEL

The bowl in its primitive state was a vessel with handle, and scooped out of wooden blocks or fashioned from the natural formation of shells or plants, all or in part of bowl-like shapes. It will, therefore, be seen that this very early type of wooden vessel was general and would be a pattern to the silversmiths and metal workers of all generations.

Very remarkable bowls of gold and silver have been preserved throughout the ages, generally in the tombs of the ancients whose food vessels of bronze and pottery were buried with them to send them fully prepared for a material existence in the unknown spirit world to which they went.

It would appear that in ancient records, the term bowl was applied rather freely, and those who search in these documents for accounts of the bowls of the ancients, are forced to the conclusion that the term often implies cup rather than bowl. When wooden platters and bowls were common feeding vessels, the bowl served the purpose of a cup, and in a similar way when a stem was added it is not always easy to differentiate between a cup in which only liquid was quaffed, and a bowl more suitable for thickened beverages—porridge and the like.

Collectors may be the fortunate possessors of bowls of ancient Greece or Rome, but between those ancient vessels and the silver of well authenticated date, there is a wide gap. The massive bowl of the Anglo-Saxons is more properly described as a cup in which spice and ale was quaffed.

#### MAZERS

Great interest attaches to the ancient mazer bowls, a few of which are still owned by the old City companies, and examples are found in National and Civic collections of old plate. These vessels were at first entirely of wood (the wood of the maple tree being chiefly employed) although afterwards made with silver rims and mounted on silver feet. Such pieces are found among the relics of former revels, and the rich stores of plate in the Universities. Some colleges have several fine old bowls, some having suitable inscriptions carved in the wooden bowl, others being inscribed on the silver rims.

In an account given in Spenser's "*Shepherds' Calendar*," in the sixteenth century, there is a definite allusion to the material of which the mazer bowl was made, and also to its inscribed silver rim and the oftentimes decorative chasing in which animals and other common objects were represented.

The reference reads :—

“ A mazer yrought of the maple wood, whereon is enchased man and a fair sight of bears and tigers that make fierce fight.”

The wood, it is said, was made from the “ bole ” of the tree—hence the derivation of the “ bowl ”—at first very shallow, afterwards deepened, and later made deeper still by the addition of the silver rim. A foot or stand was eventually added, and as the customs of the day altered the evolution from the bowl to the cup was certain although slow.

Mr. Cripps tells of the value of the mazer, and its employment as the condition of tenure in many ancient deeds, and of its functions being thus preserved long after its actual use as a food vessel had waned. He tells us in “ *Old English Plate* ” that in the reign of Edward III, “ the manor of Bilsington Interior was held by service of presenting three maple cups at the King’s Coronation.”

Some of these “ mazers ” in addition to being richly carved are further ornamented by precious stones. Mr. Cripps speaks of one in the possession of Fairford Church in which was a white crystal.

The old City companies have many such vessels, but sometimes their stores have been depleted and dispersed ; at others the vessels they possessed have been handed on to safer and more permanent custodians, as, for instance, the mazer in the hands of the Dean and Chapter of York Minster, which was in the possession of the Cordwainers Company in 1546, having been originally given to the Corpus Christi Guild at York by Agnes Wyman, who died in 1413.

This ancient vessel has been repaired more than once and bears several hall-marks and date letters of the York Assay Office. It is a remarkable relic of mediæval plate, the large wooden bowl being furnished with a deep silver rim and mounted on a tall silver foot and stand.

The ancient mazers, then very shallow, have in later days been found very suitable for alms dishes, and are still used in old churches for such purposes, having in many instances been bequeathed by wealthy parishioners.

It is improbable that there are still genuine old mazer bowls in the hands of the "home connoisseur," although wooden bowls of later date ornamented with silver shields and furnished with silver rims and feet are not infrequently met with among the relics of "good old families." As it has been suggested, the mottoes carved on the old mazer bowls are quaint, and the carving is generally found in the hand or script of the period. Thus in the fifteenth century the old Gothic type or script was in vogue, giving place afterwards to the type of engraving prevailing in the days of the Tudors, after which mazers as distinct from cups were seldom made; the finer works of art becoming the standing cups in which the chief ornament was in the stand or foot rather than in the bowl, a custom reversed in later days.

#### MONTEITHS

The early form of punch bowl, known as Monteith—called after a fashionable gentleman of society of that name, the originator of the above, a somewhat eccentric person who wore a quaint coat with scalloped tails—was peculiar. It was a fine silver bowl with fluted sides, having handles or a richly ornamented edge and foot. It was curious in that it had an additional loose rim which formed a frame or stand on which wine glasses were carried into the room; on being deposited on the table the glasses were handed round, the rim was then removed and the punch brewed.

Such bowls were made chiefly from 1700 to 1725, a period of a quarter of a century within which dates most of the hall-marked specimens extant have been found.

The punch bowl of later dates was seldom of silver, oriental china being fashionable and its rich colouring formed a marked contrast to the vessels of silver plate with which it was ranged on the sideboard of oak or mahogany.

## CHAPTER XXII

### CANDLESTICKS

Early examples—Candles in religious services—The Candlemaker—Candlemas Day—Domestic candlesticks—Snuffers and trays.

IN these modern days the illumination secured by coal gas conveyed in pipes to ornamental fittings in conjunction with scientific admixture of air, and intensified by incandescence, shares a sort of partnership with electrical brilliance in giving artificial light to the world. Oil and other lighting mediums are burned, too, in other approved lamps, all eclipsing the modest candle which was once deemed sufficient artificial illumination.

### EARLY EXAMPLES

There was a time doubtless, when men kept strictly the natural day, they rose at sunrise and crept into a place of safety at dusk. There are, however, records of very early use of artificial light. We know that the discovery of fire goes back into the days of prehistoric man and it would not be very long before the burning stick snatched from the fire became a torch and then there would be the desire to lengthen the duration of the flame, and so would come the discovery of a medium like the candle wick, which having access to fat as oil would continue to burn and give light.

The silver candlestick is by no means the type of the earliest "stick" of wood or metal. In many museums and in some private collections can be seen wooden bosses

on which are early "sticks," the primitive spikes on which the early candles were placed. Candles were, of course, made in Eastern lands at an early date. There are records of their use in religious ceremonies almost as soon as in private dwellings.

#### CANDLES IN RELIGIOUS SERVICE

No doubt the Biblical record of the Golden Candlestick in Jewish ritual will be recalled by those who consider the early craft of the metal workers who fashioned candlesticks. The ancient piece of plate carried away as a priceless relic by the Roman Conquerors at the sack of Jerusalem, was symbolic in its use. The lights, seven in number, which were never extinguished, signified completeness, and indicated the presence of Jehovah.

In later times massive candlesticks of bronze, silver and even gold have been fashioned for the temples of Eastern nations; they have occupied places of honour in the mosques of Mahomed, in the temples of Old Japan, and in the more important Cathedrals on the Continent of Europe and in Britain. Some of the candlesticks of the Middle Ages are triumphs of the silversmith's art; they were first cast and then carefully chased with fine figure work and allegorical enrichment. Others were fashioned by hammer and hand and were of skilful craftsmanship.

Large single candlesticks stood on the floors of mediæval churches and even altar candlesticks were often of great size. In these burned candles of large calibre, some of the stands being fashioned as branching candelabra holding many lights, sometimes replicas of the ancient Jewish candlestick, the form of which was handed on to future generations by the sculptures on the Arch of Titus. A remarkable specimen of that pattern was made for Milan Cathedral, and there have been numerous replicas in all metals.

It would seem that the fine pricket candlesticks formerly used for the great candles in the churches were usually made in pairs, a custom handed on to makers of silver candlesticks in more modern times.

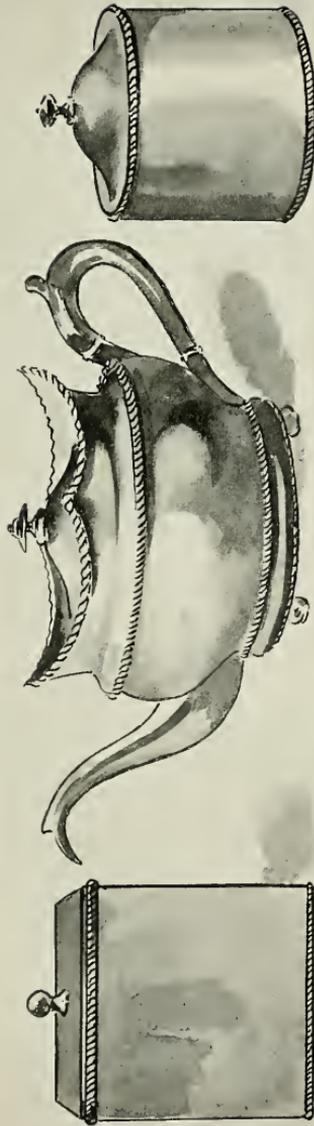
It would appear that such candlesticks for ecclesiastical purposes were made in this country from very early days for there are many records of such pieces, in brass and silver, being made in many localities. It is recorded that a fine twelfth century pair of candlesticks made for Gloucester Cathedral were fashioned from an alloy of white metal and silver ; indeed, there are many examples of plated—that is, the baser metal overlaid with silver—candlesticks, and of others the so-called silver of which is alloyed with tin and other metals.

#### THE CANDLEMAKER

Candlemakers possessing professional skill supplemented the efforts of the economic house-wife, one of whose duties in the days when wax and tallow furnished the domestic light was to mould the candles for household use.

Rush-lights were an earlier form of such artificial lights—rushes dipped in fat and tallow. By easy stages these simple lights were improved, cotton wicks suspended in the candle mould which secured the solidified tallow with the wick inside affording a more even and better light than the earlier process.

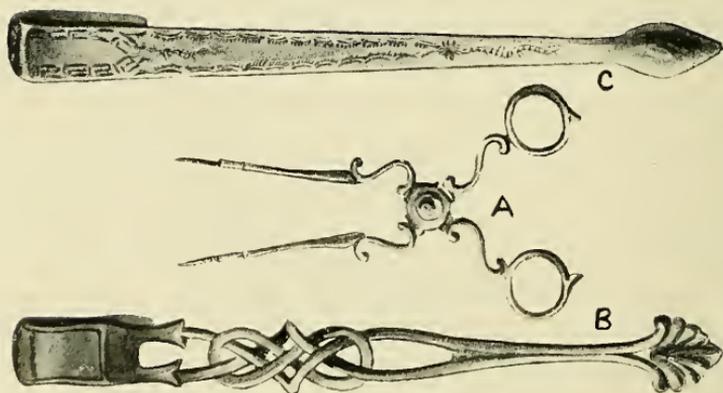
The Wax Chandlers Company became a chartered guild in the reign of Edward III, and as was customary in those days obtained control over the craft with the right of search to prevent candles of inferior quality being made and sold. These craftsmen plied their trade in Candlewick Street—now Cannon Street—in London. The craftsmen qualified for the true making of “ torches, prickits and great candles,” the Hall of the Guild being in Gresham



FIGS. 56, 57 AND 58.—SILVER TEA-POT AND TEA-CADDIES.  
18TH CENTURY.



FIG. 59.—SILVER CAKE-BASKET.  
WIREWORK PATTERN.



FIGS. 60, 61 AND 62.—SILVER SUGAR-TONGS.  
THREE DIFFERENT TYPES.

Street—the first hall built in 1493 was destroyed in the Great Fire. In course of time the art of candlemaking ceased to be the sole property of the Guild and many people in London and other towns practised the occupation.

Candlemaking was at a later period a common village industry, supplementing the home-made candles then so very generally made. There are many old prints and some interesting traders' tokens bearing testimony to the common craft of the candlemaker and the number of tallow chandler's shops.

In modern times, factory-made candles of wax, paraffin and other composite substances were introduced, and they have been burned in glass chandeliers, brackets and candelabra, suspended and upon the walls of palace and mansion, and in modest candlesticks of silver, brass, pewter and tin in the homes of the people.

#### CANDLEMAS DAY

The burning of candles has long been associated with religious rites and with feasts, an early practice being recorded as appertaining from the days of Justinian, the first celebration taking place in A.D.542. Candlemas, instituted by the Roman Catholic Church, commemorates the Purification of the Virgin.

The candlesticks on the altars of churches throughout the world have their symbolic meaning. The great golden candlestick of Jewish ceremonial, already referred to, was of hammered gold, a talent in weight. It was supplemented by many others on the completion of the Temple of Solomon—and almost without intermission, the symbolic light of the candle has been burned in the worship of Jehovah. Amidst many variations of creed the candle burns still in Christian churches as fire burned upon pagan altars, always regarded as symbolic.

Again, we can picture the use of candles in churches solely for lighting purposes. Very quaint indeed are the sconces on some of the old pulpits on which were hour glasses and other curious objects. Stories are told of the preacher pausing in the course of his long sermon to snuff the candles, and, of the beadle or sexton going round the church for the same purpose just as later he would carry an extinguisher for "douting" the lights.

The sconces and candelabra became more decorative, and in course of time added to the ornament of altar, pulpit and the building generally. Whatever the metal the "stick" should be regarded as secondary to the light it held. The lover of the antique and the connoisseur of art cannot forget his interest in the holder rather than the illumination; yet in some instances the latter has added much to the beauty of the former.

#### DOMESTIC CANDLESTICKS

At quite an early period candlesticks of wood, earthenware and pewter were fashioned. It was, however, not until the seventeenth century that the art of the silversmith was employed in casting, casing and decorating these silver "sticks" destined to play such an important part in the domestic furnishing of the homes of the eighteenth century folk.

The seventeenth century candlesticks were made with square bases and generally with fluted columns. These beautiful shapes, heavily mounted and decorated, culminated in the days of Queen Anne when the baluster stem was chiefly favoured.

The pricket candlesticks of the seventeenth century were chiefly made during the Restoration period and are now extremely rare.

The drawing rooms and dining tables of the earlier days

of the Georges and their rich colourings and heavy hangings and furnishings were lighted with candlesticks and candelabra of silver. Dished chamber candlesticks had been made earlier in the century, the large dish being a necessary feature when the draughts to which such lighted candles were subjected when carried about on staircase and landing caused the tallow or wax to run freely.

The two varieties—dished and pillar—were used in every household. As in every article of domestic use candlesticks partook somewhat of the then popular style of ornament ; so in Georgian days when Corinthian columns were favoured in architecture, similar designs were followed by the silversmiths.

Towards the close of the eighteenth century, the rims and dishes of candlesticks were ornamented with gadroon edges, a favourite ornament in Sheffield plate (*see* Chapter XXXII).

Silver candelabra became popular as the branches assisted in table and wall lighting. The large central lights of ball-room and hall were frequently of glass, relieved, sometimes, by silver ornaments and sconces, the effect produced being very rich and decorative.

The collectable varieties are many and differ in size. The tall pillar candlesticks for mantelpiece or table differ in style and ornament ; replicas of nearly all styles are procurable in miniature as these smaller candlesticks for the writing table became general at an early date.

The chamber candlesticks vary too, for some have large and deep dishes whereas others are small and almost flat.

Tiny candlesticks in silver once shone on desk and writing table and were often supplemented by silver taper-holders. Delft and porcelain candlesticks with silver sconces form a pleasing variety in a collection of candlesticks which are often attached to the very useful extinguishers.

## SNUFFERS AND TRAYS

In Georgian and early Victorian days the candles burned needed snuffing, and many beautifully shaped and ornamented snuffer trays on which the steel or silver snuffers were placed in readiness were made. Japanned trays for steel and brass snuffers, and others of metal, including polished brass were used on ordinary occasions, but trays of silver were owned by the wealthy and were regarded as indicative of good families in less pretentious households.

There are many fine examples of these useful and ornamental articles about, and in some of our museums there are quite early examples dating back to the days of James II.

Candlesticks and taper holders, snuffers and trays and the many little silver curios associated with their use make an excellent group of silver wares for the collectors' cabinet.

The variety of candlesticks is so great that it is difficult to select any number of types in the limited space at our disposal for illustration. Probably none of the designs which have been introduced from time to time have been so popular among collectors as those elaborate and decorative candlesticks made during the reign of George II., a typical example of which is illustrated in Figure 25—a beautiful candlestick, the handiwork of Phillips Garden, who so ably treated the elaborate scheme of decoration consisting of flowers, shells, and scrolls.

Figure 28 illustrates a very beautiful set of silver snuffers with a stand, the work of Louis Mettayer, hall-marked 1708. Snuffer trays of Sheffield Plate are shown in Figures 80, 81, 82, 83 and 84.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### PUNCH BOWLS AND LADLES

The Punch—Some famous bowls—Bowls and their designs—  
Ladles—The nutmeg grater.

THE punch bowl and its accompanying ladle has a great fascination for many. It is as it were the connecting link between the roystering days of the Restoration and the more sober days of the early Victorian period. These bowls and ladles are distinctly of the days of the Georges, and with their use are coupled up the many tales of the feast, the card playing and the good living of the men of leisure and wealth. It would appear too, from the numerous examples of bowls and their variety of ornament and style that the punch bowl was the ambition of the middle classes then coming into greater prominence, and as the good housewife of the Georgian era desired more than anything in her house a set of silver spoons and a tea set with its helmet-shaped cream jug so the master of the house liked to see on his sideboard a beautiful china punch bowl and a pretty ladle. The bowls were mostly of pottery and porcelain but many were of silver. The ladles of which more is to be said, were of mixed materials—there were silver bowls in which were coins of the period, and bowls of wood with silver rims, and the silver handles varied with those of horn and wood.

### THE PUNCH

Punch was a mixture from which a very fragrant and enjoyable beverage was extracted. It was the favourite

drink during most of the eighteenth century and took the place of but slightly diluted spirits of an earlier period, serving too, to moderate the quantity of drink consumed, for the time had come for the heavier drinking of the earlier days of English history to be reduced. The hot punch must have been very welcome when the mail coach stopped for the night at one of those delightful old inns on its journey. It was a gladsome sight to the weary traveller on a cold night and made guests contented and ready to face inclement weather outside.

This liquor, then comparatively modern, is said to have been concocted from five ingredients—spirits, sliced lemons, water, spices and sugar. The potters provided the bowl when the silversmiths' art was too costly, but the silversmith usually had a look in with the ladle, and very soon found another outlet for his craft in providing a silver box and grater for the spice. A toasted biscuit is mentioned by some writers as being one of the earlier ingredients of the steaming bowl, although this seems to have been discarded later. Various suggestions are made as to the origin of the name, most people assigning it to *paunch*, a Hindustani word. Of this wonderful drink one poet has it—

“Whene'er a bowl of punch we make,  
 Four striking opposites we take—  
 The strong, the weak, the sour, the sweet,  
 Together mixed most kindly meet.  
 And when they happily unite,  
 The bowl is pregnant with delight.”

### SOME FAMOUS BOWLS

As already intimated the majority of punch bowls were of porcelain. Some of these were sent over with those priceless vases from China, Oriental in ornament, which are now the admiration of collectors; others although made abroad conformed in their decorations to

English designs and taste. Potters in this country too, made many bowls and did justice to the festive board upon which the smoking beverage was placed. But as already stated there are in existence many fine bowls of silver, some made by the best known silversmiths of the day. One of these a rare example by Paul Lamerie, was shown at the exhibition of silver plate at Boston referred to in another chapter.

The family who can boast of the possession of a silver bowl is lucky indeed, and when there is none in silver to fill the prominent place in the family plate chest the bowl of china on the sideboard, in which rests the one time much used ladle, holds quite as great a place in the family treasures. A rather curious reason why the punch bowl is regarded with almost awe by many old families is given in "*The Book of Days*," where the writer says: "The punch bowl was once the most cherished of household effects in dissenters' families, from its being used as a baptismal font, thus acquiring a kind of semi-sacred character: and the head of the household naturally felt a solemn benignant pride in dispensing hospitality from the vessel in which his father, himself, and his children had been christened." The same writer says that the church favoured the punch bowl which was always in evidence on the tables of the clergy, in that the Bible "from the first chapter of Genesis to the last in Revelation there was not one word against punch."

The punch bowl was the central object on the inn table, it was in evidence on the sideboard and some of the landlords who became famous for the especial mixture adopted the "Punch Bowl" as their sign. A famous sign was that of the Spiller's Head in Clare Market, on which a punch bowl was painted as the central object. Another sign on which was painted a punch bowl was near Charing Cross. Very soon came the combination signs of which

there were the "Rose and Punchbowl" at Stepney, the "Ship and Punchbowl" at Wapping, the "Half-Moon and Punchbowl" at Whitechapel and the "Fox and Punchbowl" at Windsor.

It may here be mentioned that many of the old drinking vessels were utilised as inn signs like the "Rummer" in Bristol and other places. In the early days of the eighteenth century the "Rummer" tavern was a very popular place of resort in Cheapside. "The Tankard," "The Pot" and the "Pewter Vessel" were common, indeed, the Tankard inns were the subject of many writers' effusions, one writer bursting forth into poetic effusion of the "Raven" in Fetter Lane, says there were to be found

"Massy tankards formed of silver plate,  
That walk throughout his noted house in state;  
Ever since Eaglesfield in Anna's reign,  
To complement each fortunate campaign,  
Made one be hammered out for every town was ta'en."

#### BOWLS AND THEIR DESIGNS

The punch bowl in the style of its decoration for the most part followed the fashion of the day. It would appear, however, that in some instances the decoration and ornament of the contemporary china was copied, especially so in cases where the attempt was made to follow the local ornament, such, for instance, as the naval and sea pictures upon the bowls made at Liverpool and Sunderland.

The earliest form of punch bowl was the "Monteith" already referred to as one having a loose rim upon which wine glasses could be carried. These rims were very ornamental and added much to the appearance of the bowl when placed upon the sideboard as an ornament. But as time elapsed the custom of using silver drinking vessels gradually died out, for the wine glasses had already taken

the place of the smaller vessels and cups, and the ornamentation of the punch bowls, especially those rare and rich colourings of the ironstone china, were more favoured.

The large cup passed round among the guests fell into disuse and each guest now wanted his own drinking cup. He preferred his own glass, for the custom of emptying the vessel at one draught was falling into disuse. Punch with the customary toasts long held sway but the glasses were filled as required, and the ladle was no longer needed when the cup was filled with a jug of larger dimensions. The spirits diluted with hot water and the added spices and lemons were satisfying.

#### LADLES

The varieties of punch ladles consist of those made entirely of silver, those partly of wood and silver, and those with silver or wooden bowls, and handles of horn or other materials.

A collection of ladles is to be seen at the Victoria and Albert Museum in which nearly all the various types of design prevailing at the different periods during which punch was popular are to be seen. The bowls of the silver ladles vary ; some are like small sauce-boats, from which they have evidently taken their shapes ; others are deeper and like miniature cream jugs, and yet others are quite round and of true bowl-like form. The handles are of course sometimes quite plain, at others very decorative, the twisted horn handles are beautifully formed and look exceedingly well. A very popular craze, for such it was, consisted in the insertion of a silver or gold coin in the bottom of the bowl. The modern faker has made capital out of this and when making imitation ladles, or replicas of the old, whichever name the collector or dealer prefers, often inserts one of the coins of the period he copies in his

modern silver reproduction. Such use of coins is misleading and needs careful examination, one of the best tests in the absence of hall-marks is to notice the insertion and discover, if possible, whether the edges of the coin or its surface show signs of wear ; needless to say if the ladle had been used much the careful polish of the eighteenth century housewife would have spoiled the coin when judged from a numismatist's standpoint, and fakers are generally over anxious to use well preserved coins and very often overdo the reproduction, leaving the piece too new—obviously a fake !

The rims of the old wooden ladles are seldom marked and the socket for the horn handle is likewise without mark. In the old ladles, however, there is abundant evidence of hand work, whereas in the modern cheap examples there is not only an absence of wear but indications of rough craftsmanship and too much machine tool assistance in the production.

#### THE NUTMEG GRATER

Another necessary article was the nutmeg grater for the spice used in the punch. These pleasing little trinkets often carried in the pocket came into use about the end of the first quarter of the eighteenth century and very many different shapes were used. Fortunately for the collector most of those boxes now met with are marked, and therefore their authenticity can be proved and their claim to be genuine examples of the days when punch was so general, admitted or refuted. The small silver boxes, often of egg-shaped form, contained half of a nutmeg and a tiny grater of silver or steel. It is said that an examination of a collection of these little trinkets shows that the greater number of the hall-marks date towards the close of the eighteenth century. Perhaps most of the earlier ones

have gone into the melting pot, or it may be that the custom of carrying them did not mature very quickly. The latest mark met with is about 1810, although most of them are much earlier. Another variant in a general collection is the barrel-shaped case in which was also a tiny corkscrew, the uses of which may have been varied.

The collector generally associates these trinkets with such little objects as vinaigrettes, pomanders and silver needle cases and pin boxes. We can quite understand that these little things would be welcome gifts to ladies in the "good old days" when punch was drunk, and especially suitable for a souvenir gift or a keepsake to the housekeeper who often prepared the favourite beverage and administered the spice.

Although the general use of punch is generally ascribed to the eighteenth century it must be clearly understood that silver bowls were made in the seventeenth century and some of them were very fine examples of the silversmiths' craft, such, for instance, the remarkable bowl of the Restoration period, hall-marked 1688, shown in Figure 23, a truly grand piece, illustrating chased Chinese ornament, so ably rendered by the silversmiths of that day.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### THE TEA TABLE

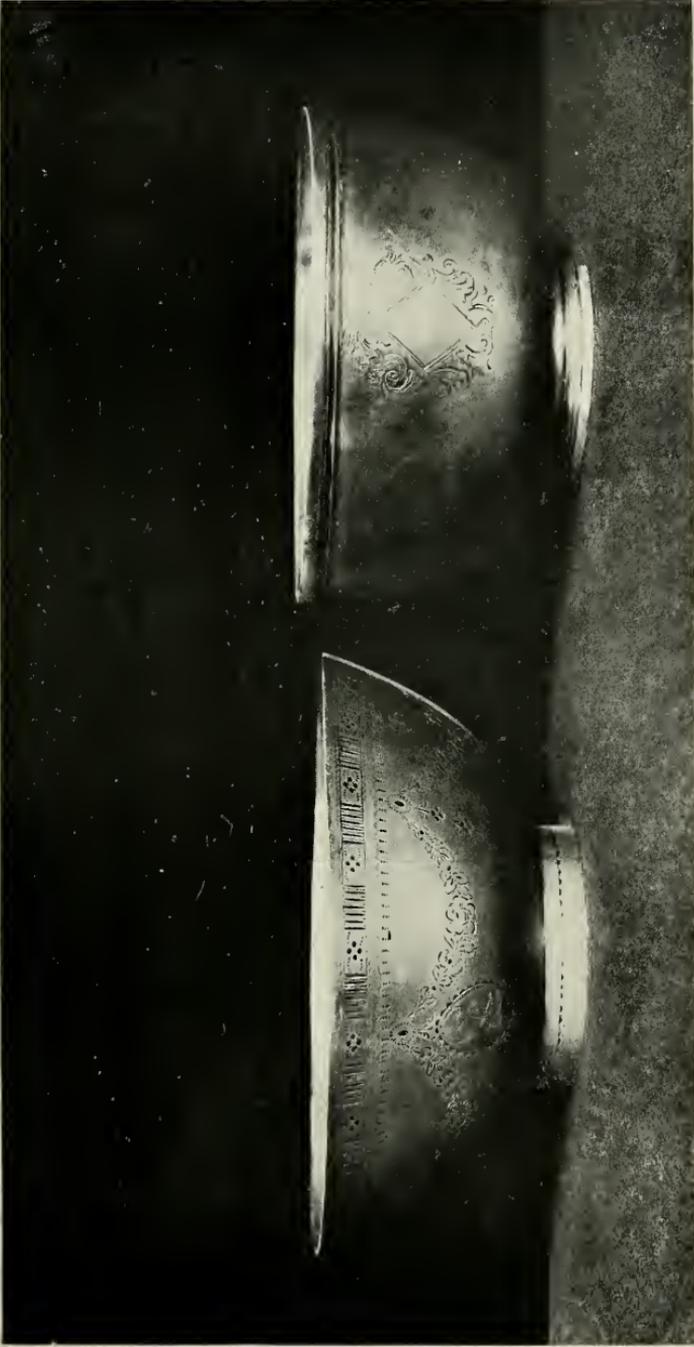
Early days of tea drinking—The teapot—Tea table accessories.

THE tea table as at first constituted shortly after the introduction of tea in this country quickly brought with it the need of other appointments besides the teapot, which may, of course, be regarded as the principal vessel of importance on the table.

Although it was not until the eighteenth century that tea drinking became general, the luxury of a drink prepared from the dried leaves of the tea plant (*Thea sinensis*) was not unknown in England at a somewhat earlier date. The so-called black teas are now chiefly drunk, but at one time small quantities of "green" tea were added. This dual use of teas is important in that it accounts for many of the rare little silver teapots of early days, and also for the "pair" of boxes of silver and of wood, in the old tea caddies.

#### EARLY DAYS OF TEA DRINKING

It seems strange to us now that the luxury of the teapot was kept a secret from the Western world for so many centuries, for the Chinese enjoyed a "cup of tea" made in their now rare teapots of quaint and strange forms,



FIGS. 63 AND 64.—TWO SILVER BOWLS.  
(In the National Museum of Ireland, Dublin.)



FIG. 65.—SILVER CHOCOLATE-POT.  
(In the Victoria and Albert Museum.)

of their priceless porcelain, long before any attempt was made to introduce tea into Europe. Many stories more or less legendary are told of the first traders in this commodity; the business commenced in the middle of the seventeenth century and tea drinking soon became fashionable, although somewhat costly. Small packages of tea found their way into this country through India, and in a few years tea was on sale in London. It is recorded that one, Garraway, opened a tea house in 1657, and sold cups of the new liquor. Yet it was not until 1664—seven years later—that tea was brought under the notice of King Charles II by the East India Company who sent him a parcel of the leaves. No doubt members of the nobility would soon follow the lead, although we can hardly imagine that the luxurious and hard drinking courtiers of that day would take kindly to the new drink. Perhaps it was, however, then as now, that anything new finds a following; and the novelty of tea drinking, and possibly the new silver and fine porcelain appointments it brought with it, would find favour with many, and the tea table would soon become a popular institution.

It would appear that although the Court had not officially accepted tea as a beverage, there were some persons of note who had already partaken of the new drink. Samuel Pepys, to whom we are indebted for so many side lights upon the doings and habits of his day, wrote in his famous Diary, under date September 25th, 1660: "I did send for a cup of tea, a China drink, of which I had never drunk before." It is not very clear whether or not the tea was appreciated by the great diarist, but it is evident that he was amongst the early "tasters," some of whom no doubt became connoisseurs of the drink, and learned to distinguish the different flavours of the tea produced from the leaves which had been prepared in many ways, and perhaps in the brewing treated differently.

Tea drinking among the elite brought with it the introduction of new vessels ; the use of sugar and cream necessitated additional receptacles, and although all that was needed on the tea table was at first of porcelain, the silversmith soon fashioned acceptable vessels, mostly following the shapes of porcelain wares, to which, however, were added other forms which took their style and decoration from the patterns of silver goods used first for other purposes.

#### THE TEAPOT

When tea was first imported into this country from China there were no vessels then in use suitable for brewing tea, and the cups of pottery and mugs of silver and pewter were far from idealistic for the new drink. Hence it was that for many years the importers of tea also imported tea china, and especially teapots of which there were many varieties—some of these were copied by the silversmiths who saw new business in these goods, but many of the teapots brought over were unsuitable models for the art of the silversmith. Indeed, it was some years before any true English type of teapot was made by the Chinese potters who long continued to send over shapes with which they were familiar, although they soon began to cultivate the English taste in their floral decorations.

There has always been an affinity between the two crafts—potter and silversmith—and sometimes it has been the one and sometimes the other who has taken the lead. The silversmiths of the closing years of the seventeenth century had considerable practice in fashioning silver after the impetus given at the Restoration, and the decoration upon much of the plate was suitable for the ornamentation of teapots. Thus it was that although at first they copied the creations of the Chinese they soon set the fashion in silver teapots, and as from the days of Queen

Anne onwards until the beginning of the Victorian era, there was always a well pronounced style of ornament in vogue, the silver teapots of each succeeding age followed closely the then prevailing characteristics.

The period upon which collectors began to secure teapots and tea sets commenced with the so called Queen Anne design of ornament and form. There was soon a vogue for sets and the single teapot supplemented by silver cream jugs not unlike the older sauce boats, and sugar basins modelled after the fashion of older porringers and caudle cups, were made. At first the sugar basins, cream jugs and other accessories were not always in keeping, but very soon the ornament and engraving of all the pieces became uniform and to some extent the size of the smaller pieces was made proportionate to the teapot which grew in size as time went on.

The family teapot of the later Georgian period was large and in its shape unwieldy and by no means graceful. In course of time as it became the fashion to serve up coffee also at the high teas of Victorian days, the importance of the silver service grew, for a coffee pot, sometimes of monster size, was added.

The tea and coffee sets of Queen Anne, Georgian and Victorian designs following the prevailing style of the period have been duplicated by modern copyists who pay a high tribute to the designers of old in following the lines they laid down. But in modern engraving, and in the "assisted" work of the artist there is much to be desired. The artist of old while following a given style managed to introduce specialistic features by which his work is known.

Generally classified, the styles of old silver tea services were of the Queen Anne type for some years after that good lady died. The florid style of the early Georgian was followed by patterns in which the designs of Chippendale's

furniture were introduced; the beautiful ribbon and wreath ornament of a later time gave place to the plainer patterns in which thread and bead outlines gave ample space for plain polished sides relieved by handsome crests, shields of arms and monograms. At times the influences of a passing craze or popular fancy was felt and the silver-smith was constrained to follow the short lived fashion of Chinese taste, or to add urns or other ornaments to his general scheme of decoration.

#### TEA TABLE ACCESSORIES

The meat teas and great display of good things in Victorian days brought into common use other accessories on the tea table. The great standing salt had been an object of admiration in olden times and the silver kettle with its spirit lamp upon the tea table lent itself to especial treatment. Many of these kettles had been used for heating the water for "toddy" many years before, but they afterwards served a useful purpose in providing a second supply of hot water for the teapot.

The silver hot-water jug came into vogue and it was at first modelled upon the eighteenth century silver jugs which had been made for holding the water for hot claret; indeed, it is said that some "forgers" or fakers of antiques have not infrequently secured old handles, generally hall-marked, for the former, adding of course to their marketable value.

Another form of vessel is the chocolate pot of the eighteenth century, often on a triangular base, that is a stand the feet and frame of which were generally well decorated by the engraver.

When coffee was drunk as well as tea, the then prevailing cream jugs were found too small, and the silver fittings of the table were increased by larger jugs for hot milk.

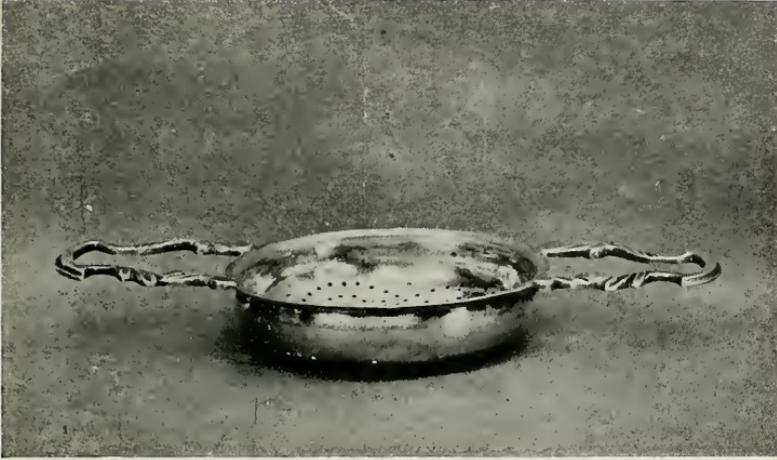


FIG. 66.—SILVER LEMON-STRAINER.  
(In the Victoria and Albert Museum.)



FIG. 67.—SILVER CREAM-JUG.  
(In the Victoria and Albert Museum.)

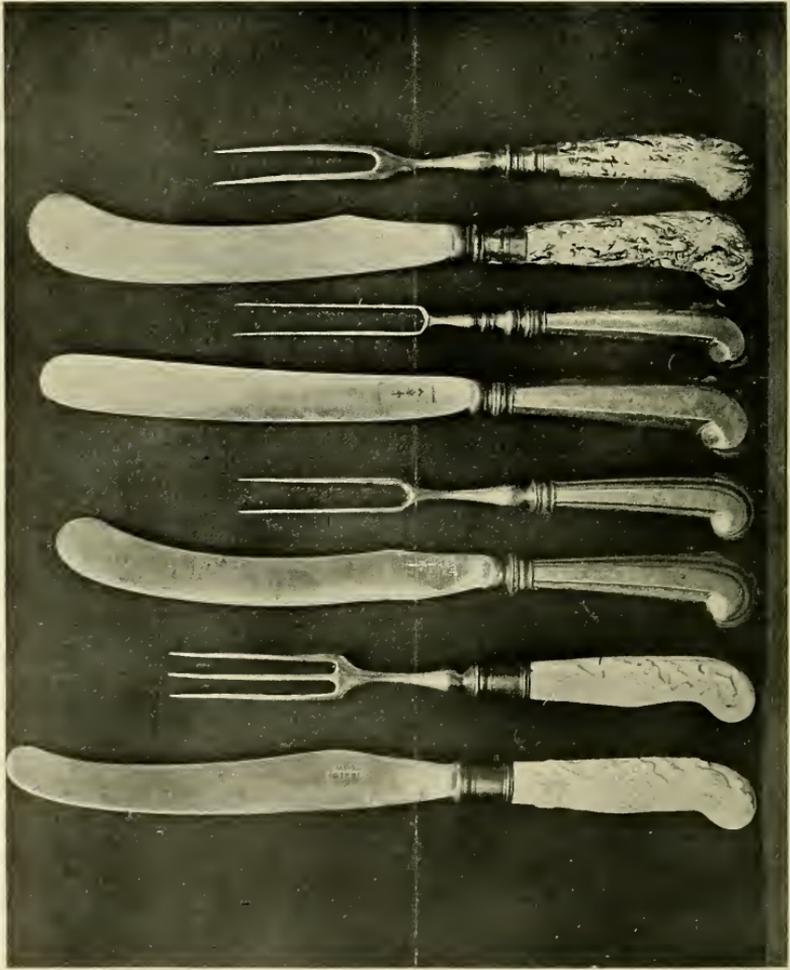


FIG. 68.—FOUR PAIRS OF KNIVES AND FORKS,  
18TH CENTURY.  
(In the Victoria and Albert Museum.)

The cream jug was always an object of special treatment and there are distinct styles in its form. The first cream jugs were undoubtedly fashioned after the style of the sauce boat, but that shape was not the best for the purpose and they were made taller, until the "boat" became a jug. The body of the jug was an excellent example of the skill with which the silversmith could shape and hammer a piece of plate; the jug evolved under the hammer blows of the artist until a perfect symmetrical body was secured, then the base, circular or square, was added, and a handle completed the vessel.

In the early days of George II, the jug was generally mounted on three feet or short legs. Then in the reign of Farmer George the cream jug grew in height, and later, towards the close of the century there appeared the beautiful helmet-shaped cream jug, on round or square base, so much sought after by collectors.

Among the oddities of the tea table service, were the "cow"-shaped jugs for milk and cream. These were first designed by potters many of them being ornamented with the old willow pattern; they were afterwards made in silver; in most instances silversmiths do not seem to have excelled in their modelling of animals, and the "cows" were mostly grotesque if not positively ugly; they were badly shaped and the handle was formed by a very unnatural twist and curl of the tail.

It may be convenient here to refer to sugar tongs (teaspoons, salts, peppers and other tea table accessories are treated upon elsewhere). The tongs which came into common use when loaf sugar was used to sweeten tea are of several forms. The plain sugar tongs of common form were evidently suggested by the small spoons (not unlike large mustard spoons formerly used) two of which joined together with an arch the shape of which gave a spring-like clip on the lump of sugar. These are sometimes very

decorative and were commonly sold as supplementary to the silver spoons then in use. Later the sugar tongs were made to match the spoons, and thread, bead, shell or other pattern was followed, the engraving of initials or crest being uniform. Perhaps the most interesting varieties are those beautiful pierced designs which enriched by engraving often very cleverly introduced are such delightful souvenirs of the art of Georgian days. Sugar tongs of scissor shape, some being shaped in bird-like form make another variety.

There is undoubtedly a large field for the collector of table silver and especially so among the curious accessories the actual use for which has been forgotten, modern fashions and habits having altered table practice. *See* Figures 60, 61 and 62.

To these tongs must be added the silver nippers which were obviously fashioned on the pattern of the steel sugar cutters with which the Victorian housewife was wont to cut up her sugar loaf. Sugar spoons, sifters and the like were among the table accessories, one delightful spoon with a spiked end often met with in all old family plate baskets, its use often forgotten is reminiscent of the old English garden in which the mulberry tree once flourished. Mulberries were served up at the table and there "sugared," the spoons being used for that purpose, the spike serving as a fork on which to carry the berry to the mouth. These rare little spoons are varied in shape and ornament and quite an interesting collection of these modest articles of plate could be got together by a patient specialist who does not want to get on too fast or to specialise on anything easy to procure.

Visitors to the Victoria and Albert Museum find many pleasing examples of tea-table plate to admire. Some of these things are illustrated in this volume and described in other chapters. Special attention is drawn to the silver caster shown in Figure 11, the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Simpson,

through the National Art Collections Fund. It is cylindrical, the cover being pierced with baskets of flowers and surmounted with a finial of open work rosette, the maker's mark is "L. B." crowned and the hall-mark 1692-1693—it is thus a very early piece. The very remarkable cream jug shown in Figure 67 is also in the Victoria and Albert Museum. An interesting Georgian teapot is shown in Figure 57, and two silver caddies in Figures 56 and 58. There are also two very representative sugar basins shown in Figures 29 and 30.

## CHAPTER XXV

### TEA CADDIES AND CADDY SPOONS

Early teapoys and caddies—The fully developed caddy—  
The caddy spoon.

OLD tea caddies and spoons are to be found in many households. The materials of which they are composed differ considerably and the interest in them as well as their intrinsic value is enhanced by their ornament and decoration. Naturally, the collector favours the more costly substance, and silver caddies with the charming spoons with which to measure out the tea in the days when the fragrant leaves were so costly, are among the rarer pieces in his cabinet. As, however, the vast majority of tea caddies, especially those of larger size were of wood or other comparatively less expensive material, a representative collection of caddies cannot be limited to silver, although the art of the silversmith takes the more prominent place in artistic craftsmanship.

### EARLY TEAPOYS AND CADDIES

The introduction of tea into this country has been mentioned in a previous chapter. The package in which it was imported from China was termed a "*Kati*," holding about 1½-lbs., according to our standard of weight ; hence the derivation of the "caddy." The old boxes, as indeed have been the more modern tea chests, were lined with very thin lead for the better preservation of the tea ; and

from this old Chinese custom was derived the lead or tin foil lining of the compartment of the handsome caddies which followed in course of time.

The "*Kati*" was suited for the purpose of storage but not adapted as a receptacle for the tea upon the table or sideboard. The rare china teapoy, round or square sided, was used in China, and when the exportation of tea began the teapoy accompanied the "*Kati*." It would appear that in the early days of tea drinking in this country, the Chinese teapoy was used ; then came the manufacture of porcelain teapoy or boxes and the choice little tin canisters made at Pontypool, in South Wales, and later in Birmingham, japanned and decorated in gold and colours according to the Chinese taste. Such caddies as they came to be called, increased in size, the case became much larger than the actual tea receptacles, generally two in number, and later divided by a central compartment for a sugar bowl.

#### THE FULLY DEVELOPED CADDY

The silversmith early began to produce acceptable boxes and canisters for use on the table. Very beautiful indeed were the rare little caddies made in the reign of Queen Anne ; and it would appear that in producing these choice little pieces the engraver took pride in artistic ornament following closely the style then prevailing in tea sets and other table appointments.

At first, no doubt, the caddy was a simple canister, soon, however, duplicated, for it is evident it soon became the fashion to buy the little silver boxes in pairs—for black and green tea. The owner's initials, crest, or symbol were added and often very artistically included in the general scheme of ornament.

It would not be a very great stride to join together the two square canisters and thus form a pair of caddies.

These were again separated to make room for the sugar box and the canisters were made to take out of the case, thus completing the fully developed caddy with its two receptacles for tea and one for sugar and provision for the spoon.

By the time the caddy had grown in size and held a larger supply of tea—say  $\frac{1}{4}$ -lb. in each box—the price of tea had dropped and tea had become the regular beverage of the middle classes as well as the upper ten who had at first indulged in the drink more probably because of its rarity and novelty rather than because of any special taste for the new beverage.

#### THE CADDY SPOON

The caddy spoon became very popular in the latter half of the eighteenth century, and this comparatively inexpensive spoon was added to the plate chest or basket of every middle class household. Very choice indeed were the engravings with which they were enriched, and varied too, in form. Many large collections have been formed, as many as two hundred and fifty distinct designs have been listed. A few years ago caddy spoons which had been sold with other "old silver," their use having gone out of fashion, could be bought for a few shillings each, now, however, their market value has risen, and ten to twenty shillings each is deemed a moderate price for quite ordinary specimens. The bowl of the caddy spoon as well as its engraving differs in shape some being shaped like leaves, others are of fanciful patterns and some suggestive of the old helmet-shaped coal box or huntsman's cap. In nearly all cases these charming little reminders of days gone by are hall-marked, and a pleasing study of style and ornament of each decade of the Georgian and early Victorian periods can be obtained by classifying a collection of caddy spoons according to their hall-marks.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### URNS : VASES : TOILET SETS

Urns of silver and copper—Vases and jars—Silver toilet sets.

THE tea kettle was the natural outcome of a desire to add to the beauty of a table ornamented with silver and delicate china. In the days when the tea table was loaded with rich cakes and pastries and with jellies and fruit there was ample scope for the use and display of silver dishes and sweetmeat trays. It was, however, in the larger pieces that the splendour of display was apparent.

#### URNS OF SILVER AND COPPER

Copper tea-urns were much in vogue towards the closing years of the eighteenth century, the wealthier folk indulging in silver urns which were decorative, usually the central ornaments on the sideboard when not in use upon the tea table. Many of these beautiful urns were richly engraved, the handles in some instances being handsomely shaped and chased ; the rims and feet too, were made the subject of special treatment, and frequently the plain surface of the urn over the tap was relieved by a large shield or oval plate on which was engraved the arms or crest of the owner. Urns from their importance were very suitable for presentation purposes, and many of those coming under the hammer have inscriptions in the beautiful script of a hundred years ago, indicating both donor and recipient.

As in so much of the silver of olden time, urns follow the style of ornament of the period when they were made and are hall-marked, thereby fixing accurately their date, and place of manufacture, a matter of interest to local collectors.

There are some very massive urns in the Victoria and Albert Museum, one of the most beautiful being that which forms the frontispiece to this volume. It was made by Thomas Whipham and Charles Wright, and hall-marked in London 1767-1768, and was the gift of Captain C. D. Rotch. The repoussé Chinese figure subjects are exceedingly suitable, for they represent a servant bringing tea on a tray to a gentleman seated under an umbrella ; there are also delightful figures playing on musical instruments, the decoration being a charming scheme of rococo ornament, *see* Figure 1 (*Frontispiece*). Another urn in the same collection, made by Paul Storr, is worthy of special notice. This beautiful urn stands upon a pedestal with four claw feet, and is of a somewhat more modern type ; it was hall-marked in London 1809-1810.

#### VASES AND JARS

A general note referring to vases, jars and the like silver pieces made for specific use and for ornament will serve. In many of the noted collections of silver which have come under the hammer in recent years there have been jars and vases, in many cases in pairs, and even sets of three, following the style and taste of the contemporary period of art ; the vases were made in pairs and sets of three or five after the manner of the porcelain jars and vases brought over from Holland and the East, and afterwards made at Worcester, Derby and other famous potteries in this country. Some of the collections of antique silver at royal castles and in the homes of the nobility (not yet

dispersed) include very massive vases and some by no means handsome, although costly pieces of plate. Their display appears extravagant and useless, and when shown on the sideboard or on the large broad mantel shelves of the great fire places built a century or more ago were no doubt imposing and, perhaps, no more lavish than the display of wine-cisterns and great bowls often decorated in repoussé and covered with the effusive reproductions of classic art, many of these subjects reminding us of the plaques and vases of Wedgwood's famous style, but the art of the silversmith when examined closely is generally crude compared to the delicate figure work of Flaxman and other artistic potters of his day.

Silver-gilt was frequently resorted to, and added to the grandeur of the family plate or presentation pieces. Few of these large pieces are to be found in the plate stores of the "home connoisseur," and they are chiefly to be seen in such places as the Victoria and Albert Museum at South Kensington, that wonderful home of so many of the nation's art treasures.

#### SILVER TOILET SETS

Another piece of luxurious extravagance was the one time use of silver toilet services. These sets date from the times of the Stuarts. Many such services were fashioned after the Restoration and Charles II kept his silversmiths busy fashioning such sets for his favourites. The entire service included silver boxes, candlesticks, mirror frames, and a variety of articles for the toilet table. Scent bottles too, were often entirely of silver and very massive. There are silver tables and "irons" for the fire-place.

Those who have the care of such pieces of antique silver know the trouble of keeping them clean. When modern ladies of fashion surround themselves with silver trinkets and toilet table appointments, such silver needs constant

cleaning, but vastly more so the larger pieces covered with deeply chased ornament and repoussé figures.

Many of these massive pieces in museums and private collections could be described, but a written account of the design chosen by the silversmiths of old or mention of the classic subject selected for treatment would be of little service to those who are seldom the fortunate possessors of these rare and massive works of art. There is pleasure in examining such treasures in museums and collections, but the real beauty lies in the manner of treatment and in the general effect produced by the artist who designed and perhaps fashioned the plate.

The rare beauty of some of the massive toilet sets can only be realised when these pieces are grouped together on one of the large tables, such as were in use in the guest chambers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In modern days we are accustomed to prize odd boxes of silver, sets of brushes and mirrors with silver backs, and a few small trinket boxes, but these pale before the rare silver once owned by the noble dames and Court favourites of olden time. By permission of the South Kensington authorities we illustrate in Figures 3 to 7, the remarkable "Calverley" service of solid silver; this set which comprises large mirror frame, pair of salvers on feet, pair of oblong caskets, two pairs of large round boxes, a pair of two-handled covered bowls, a pair of small covered vases, and a pincushion, bears the London hall-mark 1683-1684. The decoration is chased and repoussé, with panels of figure subjects of classical deities cast in relief. This valuable set was bequeathed to the Museum by Sir Walter Calverley Trevelyan, Bart., in 1879.

One sometimes finds pewter vessels silvered over, such as a very large sixteenth century flagon in the Victoria and Albert Museum, illustrated in Figure 36 (*see* Chapter XXXI).

Perhaps in closing this chapter one more allusion to the influence of contemporary art will not be out of place. When Charles II gave his instructions for the massive plate he commissioned, he and his silversmiths were imbued with the extravagant ornament of that day and practically covered bowls, vases and toilet sets with deeply embossed patterns and florid enrichment. Dutch art influenced the design of the silver of Queen Anne's days and also those of William and Mary. Early Georgian ideas were mostly based on the excavations then being conducted in Greece and Rome and the discoveries then made, and the architects who revelled in columns and plynths and capitols of the styles of ornament drawn for classic art then newly discovered and studied, influenced the silversmith. The wonderful chaste application of the styles of those early days by the Brothers Adam whose decorations may still be seen in and around the Adelphi, and in numerous buildings they created and mantel pieces and friezes they modelled, appealed to another age of workers in metal, and many of the urns and vases of the last quarter of the eighteenth century present fine examples of this beautiful ornament of which the Adam Brothers were such clever exponents. Other artists and designers followed and their influence too, is seen in interiors of the fine works of the period.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### KNIVES AND FORKS

The knives of primitive man—The knife of the huntsman—The days of steel—From dagger to domestic knife—Early adaptations—Legendary stories—The silver fork—Some pretty examples.

THERE is something very interesting in the story of table cutlery, which is closely allied with the silver forks, spoons and domestic plate which adorn the dining table, and reflect its shining surface, adding a glittering glow to the snow white damask covering the mahogany board.

The knife in its primitive form was a very simple instrument of utility, and in no way decorative, quite different from the "steel" associated with the modern plate chest. To trace the evolution of the knife of primeval man to that of the dweller in the handsomely furnished modern dwelling would be an interesting study. It is, however, outside the scope of the collector of silver, although some reference to the earlier forms of cutting instruments is necessary to fully understand the shape originally chosen for the table knife, and to realise the early beginnings of a knife with a handle.

#### THE KNIVES OF PRIMITIVE MAN

The collector of ancient flint instruments delights in the crudely chipped flints he calls "knives," and readily names the several varieties or groups into which the cutting instruments of primeval man have been divided by antiquarians. The much rubbed and water worn

celts and knives crudely shaped and fashioned with laborious care in the Paleolithic Age do not look much like the polished table cutlery and "rustless steel" of to-day. Yet in these crude knives of stone there was the germ from which sprang the art of the cutlery trade.

In the dawn of civilisation, which may be placed in the more advanced period we name the Neolithic Age, can be distinctly seen the craving for better cutting instruments; and the several purposes for which those early knives of flint were used can be recognised in the examples found in a good collection, gathered in different places, often far distant from one another, showing similar aspirations and cravings springing up naturally in the heart of man as he advanced from the mere savage.

Stone gave place to bronze, and in neither the Stone Age nor in that of Bronze was there any festive board, as we understand it, on which to lay table cutlery; there were, however, two distinct functions in which the knife was an essential in that very primitive civilisation—that of the knife with which to slay and to use for the purposes of defence against man and beast, and the knife used at the domestic feast. The feast and the appliances needed in its conduct must have been the earliest institution in camp or settlement. It is here that the dawn of civilisation is found, and here perhaps may be discovered all the elements of the "plate" used in after years.

### THE KNIFE OF THE HUNTSMAN

To trace the beginning of the use of the cutting instrument at the feast we must look for it in the huntsman's knife. The need of the very best instrument for defence against marauders—human and brute—quickenened the craft of the cutler, if that primitive craftsman could be

so called, and the knife of flint fastened to a stout stick with thongs of withy or with strips of skin was superseded by knives of bronze, iron and afterwards steel in as quick succession as discovery and early scientific research permitted.

The huntsman's knife like the sword of more advanced and perhaps more warlike nations was his constant companion and friend, always close at hand. When Art gave Craftsmanship the hand grip of friendship the first thought of the workman was to decorate the hilt or sheath of the sword or of the hunter's knife, well knowing that in doing so he would please his clients, and in the appropriate ornament he introduced he would shew his knowledge and appreciation of the skill of the hunter upon whose success he, probably in common with others, subsisted.

Centuries rolled by, and each succeeding age, as represented in all parts of the world used hunting knives, either of dual make or for dual purposes. Many of the sheaths were carved, inlaid and ornamented with gold and silver and precious stones. Wonderful combinations of the skill of the cutler and that of the silversmith and jeweller are extant, exemplifying the frequent combination of utility and ornament found in the workshops of olden time—perhaps more so than in these days of commonplace commercial production.

#### THE DAYS OF STEEL

The discovery of steel and its gradual although certain application to the manufacture of knives of all kinds led to a revolution in cutting instruments, and to a rapid multiplication of the different types of knives used.

In the Middle Ages Sheffield became famous for its knives and for the quality of the metal forged and hammered and casehardened. Chaucer mentions those early knives



FIG. 69.—SILVER CUP (TWO-HANDLED) AND COVER,  
By J. JACKSON, OF DUBLIN, 1779.  
(In the National Museum of Ireland, Dublin.)



FIG. 70.—TWO-HANDLED CUP,  
By W. WILLIAMSON, OF DUBLIN, 1730.



FIG. 71.—TWO-HANDLED CUP,  
By J. JOHNS, OF LIMERICK, 1740.  
(In the National Museum of Ireland, Dublin.)

so well known then to travellers and pilgrims. The Sheffield thwitel or whitle was but a poor instrument, but it served its purpose. Of this Chaucer writes :—

“ A Scheffeld thwitel bare he in his hose.”

These famous knives of Sheffield make had wooden or horn handles and were rigid, differing from the “ Jack ” knife, called after its maker, Jacques-de-Liège, an early Belgian cutler who made a folding handle, thus giving a basis upon which to fashion the modern pocket knife.

There have been many makers, but the production of good steel and knives of reliable make has been centered in certain well known towns. The cutlery of England, although once made in considerable quantities in London—winning repute so that the dealers were proud to mark the cutlery they sold, “ Town made, haft and blade,” is now almost entirely produced in Sheffield, which town has throughout the centuries maintained its renown for cutlery of sterling merit and good cutting quality.

Belgium had its “ Sheffield ” in Liège from early times ; in later days, however, most of the cutlery imported into this country from the Continent was made at Solingen in Germany. France has had its works in Paris, Meauvaux and other towns, and to some extent supplied English markets. Knives carrying a fine edge and capable of doing deadly harm have been made in Italy and in Spain too, but we hear little of their table cutlery ; the dagger and stiletto for which they were chiefly famous were used for other purposes.

#### FROM DAGGER TO DOMESTIC KNIFE

There was a long transition period during which the need for knives upon the feast table was felt, but not specially supplied. The Cutler’s Company in London, like many other guilds, controlled their own particular

trade and craft in the Metropolis, where it is said that in the reign of James I, "the best and finest knives in the world were made," therein competing with Sheffield with its already established reputation. According to an old record one Richard Matthew, at the Fleet Bridge, attained great skill in making these rare cutting instruments. This same cutler had commenced his business in the reign of Elizabeth, and had then obtained a "privilege under the Great Seal, for the making of a certain kind of knife and haft." It is said that this monopoly enhanced the price of knives "prejudicially to the Queen's subjects." Incidentally it may be mentioned that the craft of the cutler was threefold, the men being divided by their guilds into "bladers" who were the smiths forging the blades, "haft-makers" who made the wooden handles, and the "sheath makers" who made them decorative. The sheaths were necessary to protect the blade, and also for the convenience of transport in the days before their use had been narrowed down to the homely and peaceful cutting of meat upon the table, and as they were suspended from the belt were much in evidence and very suitable for ornamentation.

#### EARLY ADAPTATION

Knives such as were used for protective and other purposes were also brought out at the feast. Even the hunter's knife varied in form and size, and with the feast in view he would generally carry one of convenient size and form for cutting up the meat upon his platter, laying it upon a piece of bread as was then the custom.

The Anglo-Saxon, and later the Norman, carried about a *met sæx* or eating knife. These early feasters were careful to choose knives of good quality and when their cutting value had been well tested and tried, they were

much prized by their owners and not lightly parted with. Athelstan, the Saxon King, left his knife on the Altar of Beverley Minster as a pledge for the redemption of a vow of Benefaction which he had recorded, deeming it one of his most valuable possessions.

It was many years before any attempt was made to differentiate between the knife common to many purposes and that set apart for table use. The fashion was set by royalty in Tudor days when kings and courtiers began to provide themselves with special knives—and later, with spoons and forks—so that whether in camp, on the hunting field, or visiting their subjects in places where these signs of refined manners had not reached, they would be furnished with the appliances to enable them to eat decently according to the newer and more polished habits they had acquired and cultivated.

There are many interesting references in old books and manuscripts to these innovations creeping in here and there in accord with the gradually changing and progressive habits of society. Henry VI, when a wanderer after the Battle of Towton found rest awhile at Bolton Hall, where, it is recorded, he left his “knife and spoon”—whether purposely or inadvertently does not appear. According to “*Nichol's Progress*,” Queen Elizabeth had a meat knife with a handle of white bone in which was set a jewelled ornament. Indeed, many of the early knives evidently intended for eating purposes had very ornamental handles and some show that the maker had the decorated sheath of the hunter's knife still in view, reproducing it upon the handle of the sheathless knife. In such ornament silver was much employed, and in course of time silver handles and handles of horn predominated over the commoner wood, and the silversmith took the place of the carver.

Good manners in accord with more refined table

appointments came slowly. In colleges and schools where such habits ought to have been enforced there was rough horseplay at the table, and many stories are told of the almost wolfish scramble for food, and of the bad behaviour of those who were being trained according to the then prevailing ideas of polite society. Dean Stanley, in his "*Memorials of Westminster Abbey*" gives an extract from the Abbey Chapter Book in reference to the college dinners in the time of Dean Weston, 1553-1556, in which it is stated in reference to the students that "they became somewhat disorderly, forks and knives were tossed freely to and fro."

London has been made a veritable storehouse of the remains of domestic life, as the relics of each succeeding generation have been buried under the *debris* of rubbish and falling houses. The Great Fire destroyed much that was quaint and beautiful, the ruins of the burning houses, however, covered up many domestic oddments, and when these old rubbish heaps, often now many feet below London streets, are examined, the remains of mediæval cutlery are not infrequently dug up.

The cutlery of every period is represented in the Guildhall Museum. In this collection are numerous examples of knives marked with the stamps of mediæval cutlers, some with initials, others with trade marks, and many of these interesting relics have ornamented handles. The sixteenth century London makers' marks were numerous, members of the Cutlers' Company using, among other emblems, cross dagger, crown, crescent, fleur-de-lis, star, and similar devices to distinguish their products. In the seventeenth century good handles, well rivetted with pewter rivets were not uncommon, and although the table cutlery of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries appears rather crude when compared with that of the present day, it was strong and substantial, and sets such

as those met with in the quaint old knife boxes are reckoned among the valued household curios of the home connoisseur.

There are some rare examples of old cutlery in the Victoria and Albert Museum, at South Kensington, notably one very fine set of knives with ivory handles carved with figures representing English Sovereigns, all with one exception, that of Edward V, crowned and with orb in hand.

There are so many varieties of cutlery that it is impossible to give illustrations of representative types. The Victoria and Albert Museum is very richly stocked with old cutlery, some of the pieces being very rare and of types seldom met with; those illustrated in Figure 68 consist of four pairs of knives and forks with steel blades and prongs and silver handles, the period of their manufacture is late eighteenth century.

In the British Museum there is a very remarkable set of knives which was made for John, Duke of Burgundy, two of them being knives for use at the table; among the others is a large kind evidently intended for carving knives.

#### LEGENDARY STORIES

Old legends, myths, beliefs, and superstitions die hard.

It is almost incredible that in these prosaic days anyone can be found to believe in the potency of spells, or to refuse to receive a knife or cutting instrument without some payment, however small, because it is unlucky.

Poets of olden times have kept the memory of old folklore and legend green, and the "cutting of love" by the crossing of knives or otherwise transgressing some old custom or observance is still remembered.

Gay, in his "*Second Pastoral*" of the "*Shepherds' Walk*" has it in reference to the gift of knives:—

"But woe is me! such presents luckless prove,  
For knives, they tell me, always sever love."

It is said that the rustic, and as some would now say vulgar, habit of crossing knife and fork upon the plate had its origin in a religious motive in that by so doing a Greek cross was formed. In reference to this old custom Browning says :—

“ Knife and fork he never lays  
Crosswise, to my recollection  
As I do in Jesus’ praise.”

### THE SILVER FORK

Forks, unlike knives, have no ancient history ; they are a comparatively recent invention, although there are records of small silver forks having been used by the ancients in very limited numbers, and for specific purposes other than for use in conjunction with a knife upon the table or platter. These early forks were small two-pronged instruments and mostly far too delicate for use with meat. There are a few instances of tiny gold forks in the possession of royal personages at an early date, but their actual use is somewhat obscure.

Writers generally place the early portion of the seventeenth century as the date of the introduction of the fork into the domestic cupboard. Italy claims to have been the first country in which the dainty nobles used forks in their left hands instead of assisting the knife with their fingers. One, Thomas Coryat, says he saw forks in use in Italy in 1608. Prince Rupert brought a set from the Continent, and from that time onwards the fork-makers—silver two-pronged forks—found a rapidly developing market. The middle classes, even in the nineteenth century, were content with steel two- and afterwards three-pronged forks, and it was only in the latter part of that century that metal and electro-plated forks, used by those who could not afford sterling silver, came into common use.

No doubt some difficulty was experienced in the early days of their use. Ben Jonson gave some instructions to the gallants of his day, saying: "Then must you learn the use and handling of your silver forks at meals."

Like many innovations, the employment of forks met with some opposition, and their use was long regarded as effeminate.

#### SOME PRETTY EXAMPLES.

There are many pretty examples of silver forks in museums and private collections, some of them being parts of sets. Charles Edward, the Pretender, was never without his case of knife, fork and spoon, and it is still preserved as a rare curio of that ill-fated prince. When George IV visited Scotland, through the good offices of Sir Walter Scott, the Pretender's case of cutlery was presented to the King by Mary, Lady Clerk of Penicuik, in whose possession it was. Some years later it appears to have passed into the hands of Lord Londesborough. These interesting relics when not in use can be detached from their handles and placed in a shagreen case—each piece bears the initials "C. S." (Charles Stuart).

The Londesborough collection also included some quaint two-pronged sixteenth century forks, one of which is described as having a head like a jointed doll, moving with a strange motion when handled.

Many of the rare little silver forks, some quite ancient, were probably used by dainty hands for fruits, sweets, or pickles, some having recognised forms, others are unusual, and were, probably, shaped to the order of their owners, who may have had strong preference for some delicacy in handling which a silver fork of special form had been found acceptable.

Edward II had forks specially designed for eating fruit. It is recorded that the Duchess of Tourenne, in 1390, died

leaving more than one hundred silver spoons, but only two silver fruit forks. In the "*Guide to the Medieval Room*" of the British Museum it is affirmed that even late in the seventeenth century "it was the custom for each guest to bring his own fork" and that it is due to that custom that at the period even large houses required few. Makers of fancy silver wares rather encouraged the habit of personally owned forks, for they did good business in selling folding forks, and in many instances handsome cases in which they were kept.

It was not until the reign of George III that four-pronged forks came into general use ; therefore all four-pronged forks may be classed as among modern "antique" silver. The dates of such pieces can readily be ascertained by the hall-marks upon them.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### IRISH SILVER

Early workers in Ireland—Dublin plate—Other assay towns—Some characteristics—Potato rings.

THERE is special interest attached to the collection of local products, and many collectors like to secure silver bearing the hall-marks of their favourite places of assay, or of the towns in which they reside. When we come to the larger question of national craftsmanship the appeal is larger still and yet retaining its local interest. In Ireland, for instance, the collector of old Irish silver is not confined to that made in any one particular locality, nor is it necessary that the specimens he collects should bear the hall-mark of Dublin, although that is the principal place of assay, and the hall-marks of the city are the most familiar to Irish collectors. Other examples, however, are gladly welcomed ; indeed, there is a keen search for silver plate made in other parts of the country, and in olden time hall-marked in Cork, Limerick, Waterford, and other of the less known towns where the silver was “ touched.”

It is unfortunate that so many of the best pieces of old Irish silver are unmarked, and thus its curio value is lessened ; indeed, collectors have to regret that the actual date of the manufacture of old Irish silver must often be surmised from its relationship to contemporary pieces which have been known to have been assayed in one of the Irish assay towns. There were many local smiths

who worked for wealthy landowners and others in quite out of the way districts far away from Dublin city, and for their accommodation offices of assay were set up, supplementary to the principal office in Dublin, and as the products of this local enterprise were comparatively few, many of the pieces bearing the hall-marks of these out of the way towns are now exceedingly rare.

#### EARLY WORKERS IN IRELAND

The Irish Guild of Goldsmiths and Silversmiths was established by Royal Charter in 1637, although there had been a fraternity of goldsmiths in Ireland as early as the fifteenth century ; but the work of these early silversmiths is very rare indeed, and it would appear that what were once fairly common pieces of the now rarer types were destroyed in the numerous local disturbances, and from time to time sold for old silver when the fortunes of their owners were at a low ebb. The guild of Goldsmiths and Silversmiths had its headquarters in Dublin, and most of its members were engaged in the craft in the vicinity ; in other towns there were smaller guilds working under similar regulations, and exercising control over their local members. There was an important guild at Cork, which was founded in 1656. There is, of course, considerable interest in all plate made in Ireland, but the collector finds the greatest interest in special articles peculiar to Ireland, made to meet the demand created by local customs, such, for instance, the use of the potato ring, which was a distinct speciality belonging to the Sister Isle.

#### DUBLIN PLATE

It has been already stated that most of the plate hall-marked in Dublin was made locally ; although no doubt

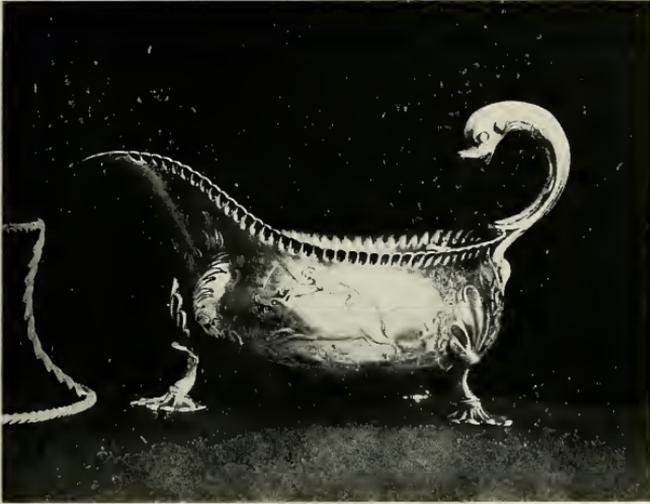


FIG. 72.—SILVER SAUCE-BOAT,  
By J. NICOLSON, OF CORK, 1789.



FIGS. 73, 74 AND 74A.—THREE IRISH SALT-CELLARS.  
(In the National Museum of Ireland, Dublin.)



FIG. 75.—PEWTER EIGHTEENTH CENTURY SALT-CELLAR.

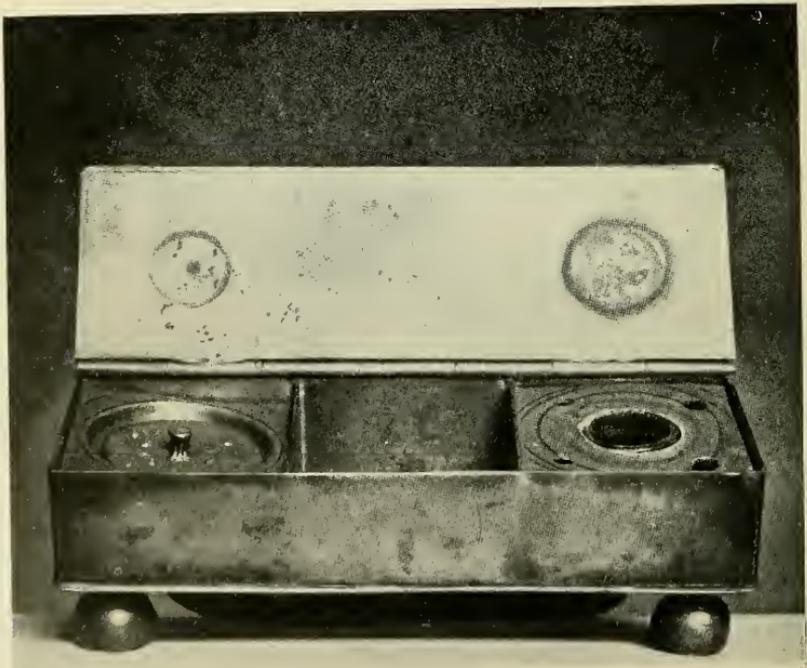


FIG. 76.—PEWTER INKSTAND,  
INSCRIBED "FOR THE PARISH CHURCH OF INNISSCRACANT."  
(In the National Museum of Ireland.)

some of it was the work of craftsmen farther afield, men who perhaps, as a matter of convenience sent their silver to Dublin, although there might have been a town of assay less distant. It is probable, however, that some of the patrons for whom the silver was made preferred the Dublin hall-mark, and for that reason, perhaps, there are fewer examples of the other marks.

The earlier plate—that is, the silver marked prior to 1730—was marked with a harp, crowned, as the standard mark, generally accompanied by a maker's mark or initials and the date letter. In 1730, the Duty mark was introduced in order to denote the payment of the duty then placed upon silver plate, the design being the figure of Hibernia, with one hand resting upon a shield, in the other an olive branch. At that period the duty on Irish silver was only sixpence in the pound, but in 1807 it was increased, and the sovereign's head already in use in England was substituted for the figure of Hibernia.

#### OTHER ASSAY TOWNS

The most prominent assay towns other than Dublin were Cork and Limerick, but at one time plate was hall-marked at Youghal.

The silver made by the Cork silversmiths was doubtless marked locally, the mark by which it is distinguished was a five-masted galleon, between two castles on which were flagstaffs.

The silver made at the little village of "New Geneva," near Waterford, was the work of a small colony of refugees who had made it their home, and appear to have received shelter and support from the native gentry in Ireland. These Swiss were not only good workmen in silver wares, but expert watchmakers, and they also made many interesting silver trinkets, among the household curios of

the Sister Isle may often be found specimens of their handiwork.

#### SOME CHARACTERISTICS

In looking among the remains of local craftsmanship we naturally expect to find some characteristics by which the pieces can be identified and distinguished from old silver brought from other places. The earliest examples of Irish plate were mostly ecclesiastical, and naturally did not differ much from the church plate used in Great Britain. Many very fine chalices and tankards were produced and also some beautiful pieces of civic plate, including a number of old silver maces, of which there are good examples in the Dublin museum.

The harp plays a conspicuous part in the characteristic emblems of Irish art, and it was well adapted for an artistic handle, and as such is frequently seen in the old household silver, this thoroughly national ornament forming the handles of sauce boats, gravy boats, and similar vessels.

Early in the eighteenth century, plain drinking cups with heart-shaped handles were common. A short time ago a very beautiful cup of this description made by John Hamilton, of Dublin, and hall-marked in 1718, was sold in London, but the price realised then was much less than it would be to-day. The antique value of old Irish silver has advanced in common with other plate. Quite recently a similar cup with a rib round the centre, hall-marked in Dublin, was sold at a good price ; it was a heavy cup, too, for it weighed thirty ounces. Many of the Irish cups of the middle of the eighteenth century were double-handled. Some of them were very delicately chased with flowers and fruit, shell ornament being also interspersed with scroll foliage.

## POTATO RINGS

There seems to be a good deal of uncertainty about the actual use of the potato ring, in which the bowl of steaming potatoes rested, until its invention no doubt the plain wooden bowl without ornament or decoration served. The fashion of the silver potato ring lasted for a number of years dating from 1740 onwards. The ring is generally massive, of considerable depth, and beautifully ornamented. It was heavy, too, and its weight appears to have been its doom, for during the famine of 1847 vast numbers of these beautiful old rings were sold for metal value, and realised considerable sums even in those days.

Irish potato rings are rare indeed now, and collectors gladly pay extravagant prices for genuine pieces. Alas, the potato ring has too often been duplicated in modern times, and replicas in silver and in copper plated over with silver are not infrequently sold as antiques. It is noteworthy that genuine potato rings are generally clearly hall-marked on the outer rim.

The Irish potato ring illustrated in Figure 24 and referred to in an earlier chapter, is a fine example of those splendid rings made in great numbers in Ireland during the later years of the eighteenth century. As has already been stated these rings are now very rare so many having been sacrificed during years of scarcity and poverty in Ireland, especially those hard times in the early part of the nineteenth century. The ring just referred to was made by W. Hughes, and hall-marked in Dublin in 1774.

The two bowls of silver shown in Figures 63 and 64 are in the National Museum at Dublin. One (Figure 63) is by Michael Homer, and was hall-marked in Dublin in 1785 : the other (Figure 64) is the work of John Hamilton and is a much earlier example having been hall-marked in 1729.

We are still further indebted to the Director of the

National Museum of Science in Dublin for the following illustrations of old Irish plate. Figure 69 represents a splendid two-handled cup and cover, the work of Joseph Jackson, of Dublin, hall-marked 1779.

The cups, too, are of superior types and very heavy, the Irish harp-shaped handles being very conspicuous in all the articles. Figure 70 was made by William Williamson about 1730, and was hall-marked in Dublin. That illustrated in Figure 71 was the work of Joseph Johns and was hall-marked in Limerick in 1740. The pretty Irish sauce boat standing on four feet was made by John Nicholson and hall-marked at Cork in 1789. The three salts on the same page show three styles then in vogue, for they are all of similar dates. Figure 73 is the work of Matthew West and was hall-marked at Dublin in 1782. Figure 74 is also by the same silversmith and of the same period, but Figure 74A is the work of Charles Townsend and bears date 1780.

Figure 76 represents a very interesting piece of old Irish pewter for it may be classed as semi-ecclesiastical as the ink-stand it represents was made for the use of the Parish Church of Inniscrascant and it is dated 1737 ; this charming piece of pewter with its sand box and ink well was made by John Heany, of Dublin. It is now in the National Museum of Ireland in Dublin.

## CHAPTER XXIX

### SNUFF BOXES

A new habit—Rare gems—Objects of beauty—Collectors' difficulties—  
Snuff—Snuff Spoons.

THE silversmith has ever been the plaything of fashion. He has had to modify his calling, to extend his productions, to broaden his ideas and to narrow his viewpoint from the bold repoussé ornaments of the Restoration to the fine lines and dainty chasing of the silver of the later years of the eighteenth century tea services. There is a vast difference between the hammered ornament of the great wine fountains and gaudy silver furniture of the seventeenth century and the almost microscopic engraving of the beautiful little silver ornaments of a century or more later.

### A NEW HABIT

The silversmith, just the same as the jeweller, has followed the bent of fashion, and he has seen the work of Oriental peoples admired and the taste of Parisian artists sought after, and he has with surprising aptitude laid aside old designs and sought the aid of an adaptable engraver. He has noted the trend of fashion and the tastes and habits of rising generations and provided further wants. It is noteworthy, too, that there have been times when owing to prevailing tastes the silversmith and the jeweller have been brought into closer

alliance than usual, and have united their arts in supplying the people of fashion in this country. Such a time came when snuff-taking was at its height; the silversmith and the jeweller helped one another in providing the gallant with a useful, decorative and acceptable snuff-box; they also combined in the production of rich and costly jewelled caskets for the precious powder, such as might be given to nobles and favourites whom the world desired to honour.

#### RARE GEMS

In "*Chats on Household Curios*," the writer, describing the ornamental snuff-box, one of the commoner curios of the household, says: "In the days when snuff-taking was a commoner practice than it is now, the ornamental snuff-box was the chosen gift to men of fame. Kings, princes, and the nobility received gold and silver and jewelled snuff-boxes on occasions when in modern days they would have been given a scroll of vellum in a golden casket." Here then we have the reason why there are so many wonderful examples of the combined art of the silversmith and jeweller in museums, and in private cabinets.

A collection of old snuff-boxes displays a wonderful diversity of taste and tells of the magic powder having been used under very different conditions, and by men and women in many grades of social life.

The snuff-boxes of stag's horn, of ivory unpolished and of gnarled oak tell of snuff-taking in the forest and amidst woodland scenery. There are plain wooden boxes, neat and beautifully polished, boxes of bone and ebony, of papier-mâché and of painted wood which savour of middle class gentility, and there are boxes of brass, pewter and tin once carried in the pocket of the miner, the labourer and the mechanic. All these are more or less ornamental

in their several ways ; some are inlaid with ivory and silver, and ornamental designs cover their surface. The quaint engraving of the brass boxes of Dutch style, and the punched ornament of the steel snuff boxes, coincide with the popular ornament of the pocket tobacco box before the days of pouches.

#### OBJECTS OF BEAUTY

Beyond all these snuff-boxes of the commonality are the more ornate works of the silversmith, which, aided by the engraver, became things of beauty, covered with delicately traced designs and little scenes, with mottoes, crests and initials—charming love tokens. Ranking higher in the scale of art are those delightful boxes of Battersea enamel and of silver and gold relieved by the insertion of coloured ornament, of painted miniatures and rare cameos and Wedgwood medallions. French artists excelled in the productions of choice snuff-boxes, and English silversmiths reflected credit on their art by the work they performed. Jewels of great worth enriched presentation boxes, and portraits encircled with diamonds were favourite outlets for spending large sums on these “baubles of fashion” receptacles for the powder used in a habit which has no claim to real merit, and one that the world has almost learned to do without. Like patch boxes, snuff-boxes have little sale other than as antiques—yet they have their counterparts, and many trinkets have taken their places. One of the most recent freaks of fashion—the outcome of a real necessity—may be seen in the little boxes the silversmiths so lately fashioned for pellets of saccharine or tiny particles of sugar in the war days of scarcity, and shortage of supply.

## COLLECTORS' DIFFICULTIES

In the sale room there is keen competition for all kinds of snuff-boxes. Sometimes quite a number are placed in one lot and a collector has to buy many useless specimens in order to acquire one or more curious examples. The more valuable silver boxes, or carved wood, ivory and tortoise-shell boxes plated with silver are rendered costly by the addition of jewels and have thus an additional value. Some are better appreciated for their curious and grotesque carvings and superscriptions which have a fanciful rather than a real market value.

## SNUFF

Snuff as is commonly known is a fragrant powder extracted from tobacco, and is used as a gentle irritant. There are varied qualities but generally the best portions of the tobacco leaf are used and pulverized in mills before flavouring. America has claimed to be the first to use this preparation, but it was soon introduced into Europe and early in the seventeenth century it became very popular, its use gradually spreading until the taking of a "pinch of snuff" became general, and to offer the snuff-box was a common courtesy not lightly to be refused.

## SNUFF SPOONS

In connection with snuff-taking the snuff spoon was at one time a small necessary which the silversmith supplied. The gay gallants of the eighteenth century not only revelled in the possession of handsome snuff-boxes and were habitual snuff-takers, but they were fastidious in its practice. We can imagine an exquisite of that period with his frills and laces, velvets and satins handling carefully the powder and daintily using his delicately made

and beautifully engraved little spoon with which he extracted the snuff from the box, placing it in the palm of his hand ready for the inhaling process. Thus with the snuff, the box in which to keep it and the spoon, we have the entire outfit and know the extent of the silversmiths' share in encouraging the habit, still lingering but apparently doomed to die out before the advance of modern conditions and newer interests.

The snuff-box and its much rarer little spoon is therefore destined to become an antique as well as a curio of considerable intrinsic value in the near future.

## CHAPTER XXX

### PRICES OF SILVER

Silver of noted artists—Famous loan exhibits—Elizabethan silver—Monumental pieces—Quaint inscriptions—Candlesticks—Cups and bowls—Silver of no intrinsic value—Red Cross sales—Conclusions.

FOR years past the purchase of old silver plate has been regarded as a safe investment. A glance at tabulated records of the prices paid say, thirty or forty years ago, and those recently realised shows that there has been a steady advance in the value of antique silver. It is true that the cost of all manner of curios has been increasing steadily, owing to the greater interest taken in such things, and also to the greater number of collectors which naturally tends to add to their rarity, and consequently to their market value.

For a quarter of a century or more before the close of the year 1914, this advance in the market value of antiques, among which old silver is classed, had been steady—always on the up-grade. Increased population and more collectors, and better organised buying schemes for museums and public institutions, brought about this advance, just as the market value of most things is regulated by the law of supply and demand. It is an accepted theory that antiques cannot be duplicated at will; genuine and authentic pieces can only be brought on the market by discovery, and by change of ownership which occurs with more or less regularity. The death of some enthusiastic collector places on the market unexpected supplies, and the energy of dealers' agents

brings to light antiques in lesser numbers, some of which have been hidden away and thought of small value. Thus the marketable supply is kept up, but it does not reach the demand which increases with greater rapidity. All this points surely to the steady growth in the price of old silver. In most cases buyers find that by careful selection they can add to their stores acceptable pieces, and should they wish to realise their investments they can do so at a profit. Added to collectors' interest in antiques there is a special reason why there should always be a desire to possess a better and more representative family plate chest, in that such an acquisition is looked upon as an indication of family status. It is true that many seek to establish themselves in the eyes of the world by their treasures which probably once belonged to those whose pedigrees reached back into a past century or two; as with all arts and antiques, old silver is much favoured by the newly rich who are eager buyers.

In the early days of the War, before the price of old silver, old and new, had soared upwards, and long before the labourer discovered that he was worthy of his hire (judged by present-day advances in the cost of living) a silver tea kettle changed hands under the hammer at £451 8s. 0*d.* It was thought a record price then, but such figures do not surprise us now, for we are accustomed to much bigger things in the present day.

It is held by some that the cost of raw material and finished products has reached high water mark, but it would not be safe to foretell when or at what point the cost of antiques will reach the climax. The supply of antiques must always be limited, and although present-day commonplace goods will in due time become ancient and, perhaps, curious, the pace will be slow, and the supply of newly made antiques will not catch up the ever increasing demand.

## SILVER OF NOTED ARTISTS

Fanciful prices have been realised for cups and other vessels which to the amateur collector appear to have possessed small artistic merit and made by makers of no great repute. It is, however, the wares of the great artists which are depended upon by their owners and by speculators in such things to realise large sums when offered for sale under the hammer, or brought under the notice of advanced collectors.

Of course, we can well understand cups by Paul Lamerie, although not of any great age as old silver goes, realising large sums of money, for he not only had great repute as a clever craftsman and designer in the middle of the eighteenth century, but the character of his work has rarely if ever been reached and certainly not surpassed by the modern silversmith. At a sale in 1919, a very fine silver salver by this famous artist realised £295 3s. 0d., being at the rate of 390s. an ounce.

## FAMOUS LOAN EXHIBITS

For years past frequenters of the national museums have been wont to gaze with awe and, perhaps, with envy at the loan exhibits. There have been many noted collections shown for months, and in some cases for years, at the Victoria and Albert Museum at South Kensington. During the War these famous collections were conveyed to places of safety, and the galleries in which they were wont to be exhibited were used for other purposes. Now, however, many of these famous collections have been brought to light again. Some have been sold and dispersed, but in the place of those distributed among private collectors other wealthy owners have placed at the disposal of the Museum authorities collections of valuable antiques,

among them being many remarkably fine pieces of silver plate. Now and then reminders of the one-time fine collections are in evidence when pieces which were once included in those collections are brought under the hammer. As far back as the Great Exhibition of 1851 beautiful art treasures were exhibited to the public, and at subsequent exhibitions special displays of plate have been made, and in many instances notable examples in those loan collections have passed into the permanent custody of national museums.

During the last few years several notable collections have been dispersed, such, for instance, as the Earl of Home's beautiful silver, sold in 1909. The greater portion of the collection was originally on view in South Kensington in 1862. At that sale high prices were realised, among the gems of the collection being many rare jewels and cameos and choice trinkets, together with some very important pieces of silver. Among the plate was a handsome silver toilet service of Restoration times. Another historical piece was a silver shaving jug and dish weighing 50 ounces, made in 1691, by one, John Diggle, for the Earl—afterwards Duke—of Argyll. There was a large wine cistern, too, weighing 240 ounces, made by P. Rolles, in 1712.

Mr. Fitzhenry was a noted collector of many antiques, and possessed exhaustive collections of old silver. One range of exhibits he so generously loaned to the nation was a representative collection of silver spoons which were exhibited in a number of cases, always a source of interest to visitors at the Victoria and Albert Museum. Much of the silver belonging to Mr. Fitzhenry was given by him to the Museum; other portions of the collection were sold in 1913 at Christie's. Among the prices realised on that occasion may be mentioned some high figures paid for choice Commonwealth porringers. One of these,

$3\frac{3}{4}$ -inches high,  $4\frac{1}{2}$ -inches diameter, hall-marked 1657, having the maker's mark, "W. G.," realised 440s. an ounce, £222 4s. 0d. Another small porringer, only  $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inches high,  $3\frac{1}{4}$ -inches diameter, 1656, by Christopher Shaw, was sold at the same rate, realising £90 4s. 0d.

#### ELIZABETHAN SILVER

There is always a special charm about the collection of Elizabethan relics. The curios of the household seem to accord with the wonderful black and white architecture of Elizabeth's reign, and there appears to be a dividing line between the early Tudor household goods and those made for the use of the wealthy courtiers of the Virgin Queen. The demand for old silver of this particular period grows apace, and long before the advance in the raw material, indeed, when modern silver plate was at its lowest ebb, and when competition kept down the price of the products of the silversmiths of the twentieth century, and the heavy, substantial and lasting table plate of the late Georgian period could scarcely find a buyer, relics of the Elizabethan age were readily snapped up by collectors. The steady increase in the value as shown by the high prices realised early in the century. In 1905, two flagons were sold at Christie's for £3,500, the same pair having been sold at the same famous auction rooms twenty-five years previously for £450. At a sale of old English silver in 1909, a pair of Elizabethan silver-gilt ewers and covers,  $12\frac{1}{4}$ -inches high, 1597, realised £2,500. A slightly older mazer bowl, hall-marked in the reign of Henry VIII, only  $2\frac{1}{4}$ -inches high, 5-inches diameter, sold for £400, and an Elizabethan beaker, 6-inches high, 1599, went for 400s. an ounce. At the same sale an Elizabethan chalice, 1570, only fetched 120s. an ounce, and a small Elizabethan tankard which had been damaged and repaired, 130s. an ounce.

When the silver of the late Mr. Paul Butler, of Gloucestershire, was sold at Christie's a few years ago, great interest was shown in a small silver-gilt porringer and cover, said to have been presented by Oliver Cromwell. It weighed 32-oz. 18-dwt., and made the high figure of 660*s.* an ounce, £1,085 14*s.* 0*d.*

#### MONUMENTAL PIECES

Some very fine large pieces of silver, once enriching the dining halls of the wealthy, have been sold recently at Christie's. In 1919, one of the lots offered was a large soup tureen, 1747, which fetched £585 16*s.* 0*d.* Judged by its massive proportions and weight the price was reasonable, for it only worked out at 58*s.* an ounce. This remarkable tureen was designed to illustrate an old myth, "A Pelican in her Piety," the group, cleverly worked, representing the female bird reviving her brood which had been done almost to death by the male bird by feeding them with her own blood.

Silver toilet sets are indeed scarce, and when they were lavishly fashioned for the wealthy the numbers made must have been limited. Most of those weighty sets were costly even when the silver was newly fashioned, often-times out of old plate which had become useless. Some of these large toilet sets were ornamented with embossed scrolls, and hammered all over until there was scarcely any plain surface left. Other services were fashioned according to the Chinese taste, like a set which was sold a few years ago, the seven and twenty articles weighing 393 ounces. The sum realised for this massive set was upwards of £1,000.

Many of the quite ordinary articles and ornaments were heavy, and were evidently intended to wear well. The Dutch silversmiths in their palmy days wrought some

wonderful work, and when such pieces are offered for sale the bidding often soars to heights rarely reached for ordinary English silver. Those who were present at the sale when a pair of pilgrim bottles of the time of William III, fashioned by Peter Horache, must have held their breath when the final figure reached £3,000. But that is a few years ago, and is now said to be quite a modest sum to pay for such works of ancient art.

#### QUAINT INSCRIPTIONS

The prices of old silver are sometimes guided by the curious and quaint inscriptions which add to the enrichment of the vessels. We can fancy that the buyer of a little porringer, hall-marked in London in 1644, who paid £13 5s. 0*d.* an ounce, which although a high price then would be considered modest now, took the inscription into consideration when assessing its value. The inscription, which if it had been duly attested, constituted a gift, read : “ This is left by me, Mary Roberts, to John Roberts, grandson to my dear husband, Major Hugh Roberts, to continue an heirloom to ye heirs of Havod-y-booch from him descended, with its cover.” It seems a pity that such a family treasure should pass out of the safe keeping of those who had special cause to cherish it !

Decorations conveying special local meaning and emblematic of family history, or of some special period in the fortunes of the clan, weigh with buyers, and especially with collectors of peculiar types. Scotch silver, so full of national reminders, and often profusely ornamented with local emblems, has special interest for many ; thus as much as £20 an ounce has frequently been paid for cups of Restoration dates ornamented with thistle heads, intertwined with the fleurs-de-lys. Scotch vessels of bowl-like form are often met with, indeed, they

are the silversmiths' reproductions of the ancient quaigh, a quaint bowl said to have had a common origin with the Welsh cawg, a drinking bowl or cup, formerly made up of wooden staves, in later days bound with silver and circled with a ring of the same metal often curiously ornamented.

Local design and reproductions of more ancient things, together with the use of emblems the meaning of which has often been forgotten is one of the special features of both Scotch and Irish silver. Many interesting pieces of old Irish silver have come into the market during the last few years, the prices realised showing that there is great demand for the work of silversmiths of whose work few examples are known. It may be mentioned here that choice pieces are gradually and surely being taken up by wealthy collectors whose collections are likely to remain intact for many years, and also being secured by the national museums and by the more important local museums from whence they are not likely to stray.

At the sale of the late Mr. Paul Butler, already referred to, there was a very remarkable Queen Anne cup and cover, engraved on the one side with the Royal Arms of her Majesty, and bearing a most interesting inscription, reading: "The gift of Her Majesty for ye battle fought against ye French fleet off Cape Malaga, in ye Mediteranean, 13th of August, 1704."

Among the Fitzhenry silver some fine Irish pieces were sold. There was a pair of oval baskets by William Homer, of Dublin, 1770, realising 390s. an ounce, £625 18s. 0*d.*; also a circular punch bowl with the Dublin hall-mark, 1723, which sold for £215 1s. 6*d.*, and an oval basket by John Lloyd, of Dublin, 1773, 360s. an ounce, £203 8s. 0*d.*

## CANDLESTICKS

Candlesticks are always in demand, for they are essentially collectors' pieces, and at the same time acceptable ornaments in any household. Fortunate indeed are those home connoisseurs who possess family plate bearing old hall-marks, and especially when such antiques are really useful and can be displayed appropriately in almost any room. Among such antiques candlesticks seem to possess a special charm. They can be purchased at almost any price, and many of the modern reproductions of antique style are welcomed by those who cannot afford to purchase those genuinely fashioned in the reign of Queen Anne and at early dates. As the years go back towards the beginning of the eighteenth century, and back still further in the seventeenth century, the figures realised under the hammer increase with almost every decade added to the age of the silver. In 1919, at Christie's, a pair of Charles II candlesticks with the maker's initials, "I. B.," sold for 400*s.* an ounce, £1,230. At the same sale a very attractive pair of small candlesticks made in the same period, formerly in the possession of the Marquis of Londonderry, sold for £565, being at the rate of 240*s.* an ounce.

Dealers appear to number among their clients those who seek to buy curious and seldom met with pieces, and to satisfy their wants they are willing to pay high prices for plate which to the amateur does not appear either elegant or attractive. The prices quoted for the work of well-known craftsmen and for silver of popular periods and scarce hall-marks, appear to be always on the increase. Quite recently a pair of taper sticks by L. Mettayer, 1708, realised 370*s.* an ounce.

## CUPS AND BOWLS

There seems to be a special passion among collectors for cups, and perhaps it is that they are conveniently placed on the sideboard or cabinet, and their ornamental value is fully appreciated by friends who do not always see the money worth in rare plate purchased by the connoisseur; such pieces which realise high prices on account of their rare dates and hall-marks. The collector, too, has a penchant for tiny beakers and choice little porringers, and for those distinctive forms and decorations which stamp them at once as being the work of silversmiths of the seventeenth century, before the days of Queen Anne, although possibly later than the Restoration period when silversmiths were busy replenishing the domestic stores depleted during the Civil War.

Some of the tankards of the Commonwealth have realised very high prices, for instance, a plain tankard, 1655, was recently sold at 470*s.* an ounce, £228 5*s.* 0*d.*; and at the same sale a cup made in the reign of James I, went at 430*s.* an ounce, £177 7*s.* 6*d.*

It is probable more cups have changed hands than any other silver, and yet there is always a demand for the plain goblets of the reign of Charles I, notwithstanding the heavy outlay such purchases entail. Not long ago a goblet, hall-marked 1634, sold at Christie's, realised 650*s.* an ounce.

As illustrative of the ranging prices of a somewhat later period it may be mentioned that a small beaker of the time of William and Mary sold recently, produced 370*s.* an ounce. About that time when the Dutch silversmiths were busy fashioning plate and competing in the production of cups with the English silversmiths, there was quite a rage for tazze which continued to be made in considerable numbers in the reign of Queen Anne, a moderate price

to pay to-day for examples of tazze made at that period would be from 350s. to 400s. an ounce, but there is no fixed scale. For instance, a single cup of octagonal shape, the work of an Irish silversmith, David King, of Dublin, 1717, changed hands recently at 620s. an ounce.

We have heard many complaints of the degenerate art of the Victorian Age, and know full well that silver fashioned then cannot lay any claim to antique value. It is, however, sad to reflect that there are few instances in which the beauty and the art of the Mid-Victorian Age attract collectors who gather together silver from an artistic view point. When the late Lord Huntingfield's silver was sold good prices were obtained for the really old, and there were many fine cups and flagons in that sale, but a large cup engraved, "Pigeon match between Peers and Commons, at Hurlingham, 1869," found no higher bidder than 2s. 9d. an ounce—to day it would have been worth much more to go into the melting pot.

Even useful silver of the late Georgian type has often been sold for but a slight increase on old metal value. £8 to £10 an ounce has frequently been paid for a Cromwell cup, but Georgian silver such as was used on the tea table and on the mahogany board of the period, generally massive, contrasting with the flimsy silver of the present day, can still be bought for from 15s. to 20s. an ounce.

One of the most remarkable collections of cups, ancient and modern, which has been brought under the hammer lately was that of the late Sir Walter Gilbey, whose old English silver was disposed of at Christie's. Most of the cups were presentation pieces, and cups won in various races and competitions. In this remarkable collection was an immense silver gilt cup in classical style which had been won in 1797 by Sir F. Standish's "Stamford." It was described in the catalogue as being 22-inches high,

and elaborately chased with bands and freizes of honey-suckle ornament. This massive cup weighed 170 ounces. There was the cup that won the Great St. Leger of 1821, weighing 115 ounces, realising only £46. Most of the cups of the early nineteenth century realised quite moderate amounts. Thus the Exeter Steward's cup, won in 1811, weighing 92 ounces, fetched £65, and His Majesty's plate, won at Winchester in 1822, 140 ounces, realised £60. But this collection consisting largely of modern cups contained some beautiful examples of antique silver, notably a little cup, only  $3\frac{1}{2}$ -inches in diameter, weighing about  $4\frac{1}{2}$ -ounces, which realised £50, the inscription on the rim giving both the object of its manufacture and the date when it was won. It read: "Brampton Moor Course, 1666, Sir Richard Sanford."

#### SILVER OF NO INTRINSIC VALUE

It is really very difficult to estimate the value of antiques which have been treasured for years by the families to which they belong, and in which they have been held as heirlooms, not because of their monetary worth, but because of their historical interest, their connection with members of the family, and perhaps associated with some honoured member of the family on which they have conferred reflected glory.

Such curios have probably little or no real intrinsic value; they have, however, a fanciful price set upon them on account of their unique character, or because of the scarcity of relics associated with the life and history of that member of the family whose memory extends far beyond the family to whom he is related. The realisable value of such curios is often very fanciful and uncertain, for public interest is very fickle, and at sales the competition depends upon those present, or upon the publicity

which has been given to the sale. It happens sometimes that similar objects, having practically the same historic interest, realise sums the reverse of proportionate to their intrinsic worth, although the public interest in the original owners might be regarded as equal. Take as an instance the sale of several swords included in the same sale a few years ago. Two of these were very beautiful and costly in their quality and enrichment ; they had been presented respectively by the Corporations of London and Liverpool to Admiral Lord Collingwood as marks of public approval of successful achievements ; they were sold at prices averaging £250 each. At the same sale another sword, quite a simple affair of no intrinsic value realised £273, but that sword had been worn by Nelson when a young lieutenant.

#### RED CROSS SALES

Many enthusiastic supporters of charities and of institutions by whom good work was done in the national cause during the late War gave freely their plate and other valuables. The so-called Red Cross sales realised large sums, and among the many valuable antiques were some curious pieces, many being famous for their past associations. Owners of large collections presented valued antiques and private persons depleted their often limited plate chests in aid of the good cause. Among the pieces of note was a remarkable porringer, formerly in the Ashburnham collection, the gift of Sir Ernest Cassel, bearing Latin and Greek inscriptions, dated 1675, the maker's mark, " T. M." It had originally been made for Anna, Countess of Pembroke, by whom it was given to the then Bishop of Winchester, the sum realised at the sale was £2,600. At the same sale a charming Queen Anne toilet mirror realised £210. There were many war incidents



FIG. 77.—FINE OLD SHEFFIELD-PLATE TRAY.  
ILLUSTRATED.  
(By the courtesy of Mr. W. Sissons, of Sheffield.)



FIGS. 78 AND 79.—HANDSOME PAIR OF ANTIQUE SHEFFIELD-PLATE VASES,  
Made by THE OLD FIRM OF "Sissons," OF SHEFFIELD.

in connection with the sale, one being the purchase of an Elizabethan silver-gilt chalice and paten, and its subsequent gift by the owner to Westminster Abbey, "in memory of a son he had lost in the War."

Even simple domestic silver which at one time graced the moderately furnished tea-table fetched high prices ; for instance, a small silver cream jug of the Queen Anne period realised £27 an ounce ; but, perhaps, such prices given at a sale attended by those who were more anxious to swell the funds of the sale than to make bargain purchases, should not be regarded as typical of the actual market value of old silver, and it is well for collectors not to seriously regard them as indicating their worth.

There were many Red Cross sales in 1918, and the good of the cause was ever in the mind of the buyers, the same spirit influencing the buyer as that which exercised the donor. Plain silver sauce-boats were in demand, one pair selling at £31 ; but they were again offered for the benefit of the funds, and realised another £27. Many candlesticks were taken from their former honoured places and given for the benefit of the War funds, among them a very noticeable and remarkable five-branched candelabra fashioned in the form of a tree, under the sheltering boughs of which was an anvil on which the village blacksmith wrought by hammer and hand. One can imagine how carefully the old plate basket had been ransacked, and the glories of the family plate chest probed, and after many misgivings the choice fell on what may have been looked upon as "odd," and of not much value. But the vagaries of the auction room, together with the enthusiastic reception every lot met with, kept the bidding brisk, and what at other sales might have been passed as unimportant showed a money value quite unexpected. It must not, however, be thought that the high prices realised were altogether due to the *esprit de corps* of the

buyers, for the sterling value of the objects was undoubted, for most people had given with a lavish hand.

### CONCLUSIONS

Those who frequented the Red Cross sales could not help coming to the conclusion that there were still many valuable pieces of plate in English homes, and that even in the modern house there were silver spoons, little trinkets, and occasionally larger pieces which had belonged to some of the good old families in the past, and although they appeared to be small and insignificant compared with the modern silver that graced the table, these relics of the silversmiths' art of a century or more ago were often of greater value when their present-day worth was assessed. The valuation of plate for probate purposes has oftentimes revealed untold treasures, and it is evident from incidents which now and then occur in the auction room many people possess family plate, the real value of which they do not know, and often do not appreciate. The hall-marking of silver is an excellent criterion to go by, and is very helpful even to the amateur when wishing to ascertain the age and approximate value of silver, and as it has been shown although the date standing alone is not sufficient to accurately judge the market value of silver, it is by no means an uncertain guide, and before selling old silver the owner should certainly consult an expert, as it often happens that pieces sold in the open market and disposed of by dealers in antiques have changed hands several times at enhanced prices, the original owner having received for his family possessions a much smaller sum than that actually paid by the connoisseur or the newly rich.

## CHAPTER XXXI

### PEWTER

Its constituents—Ancient pewterers—Touch marks—Church pewter—  
Domestic pewter.

PEWTER is the name given to that amalgam which has been used from very early times as the material from which many useful domestic articles have been made. In the descriptions given in this volume of old silver, and of the crafts which have been engaged in domestic metal work, much that might be said about pewter has been recorded. Although pewter and Sheffield plate, which form two of the chapters in this work, are given special prominence in the title page, they must be regarded as secondary to the more important subject matter of the volume which relates chiefly to old silver. As, however, both pewter and Sheffield plate are entirely distinct from the more precious metal, although their craftsmanship is on similar lines, it has been thought well to give them a distinct denomination in the general heading. But those collectors who specialise on pewter, and to a lesser extent on Sheffield plate, will no doubt go deeper in their researches about these several productions. For the home connoisseur, however, a few general descriptive notes, and some account of the articles usually found in old homesteads will suffice. Metals of every kind have been employed in the manufacture of domestic utensils, and in the more decorative objects, and throughout the ages there have been times when metals which to-day are regarded secondary, if not

actually common, have had special prominence. Thus there was a time when the early inhabitants of Britain, and later, their Roman conquerors, thought more of bronze than they did of silver and gold ; and very clever indeed were the metallurgists of that day in their mixture of copper and tin in producing a splendid material for domestic vessels.

The old wooden ware which once constituted the chief domestic utensils of the kitchen, and also of the table, has been much admired, for bowls and other vessels were cleverly fashioned out of hard wood—timber which it would be difficult to meet with in this country now. The wooden trenchers served as platters for the bread and other food served upon them, and it was not until mediæval days that pewter became a common metal in the English household. Lead had been much used by the Romans and also later on the Continent of Europe, and when tin was introduced as one of the chief ingredients in the metal known as pewter, it was found to be capable of a very high polish, and was soon generally accepted as the material out of which domestic articles and ecclesiastical vessels were made, and pewter was used side by side with the more costly silver, and was sometimes silver-gilt.

#### ITS CONSTITUENTS

Pewter differs from silver in that it is a composite metal, an amalgam that has varied at different times, and, therefore, there have been periods when the beautiful shining pewter was an ornament upon the sideboard and mantel shelf, contrasting greatly with the common ware of more recent times, when lead was in the greater proportion. It should be clearly understood that ancient pewter must not be confused with the comparatively modern so-called Britannia metal and other composite metals of

which inferior table requisites have been and are still manufactured. Pewter, as compounded in olden time, is a thing rarely met with in modern reproductions, the composite metals of the older amalgams being quite different, although themselves varying. The metals which have been used in greater or lesser degrees in the preparation of pewter are lead, tin, copper, and zinc, to which must be added in a lesser degree, bismuth.

In earlier times the pewter vessels used in this country were the product of British mines, Cornwall being the chief mining county. It is interesting to know that lead and tin from Britain were used by the Romans, who made an amalgam not unlike mediæval pewter in which tin was a large constituent. The pewter of the Middle Ages consisted chiefly of tin, and a small part of copper, the metal being known in the trade as "fine" pewter. Silver has been introduced in small quantities at times, and it is probable that some of the makers of early pewter were none too particular about the source of their metal, and in the making of new pewter vessels they often melted up older wares, mixed pots and pans of lead, copper, and tin, and perchance an old silver vessel was now and then included in the melting pot. Antimony was introduced in the manufacture of tankards and some other table pewter, the commoner vessels having a greater proportion of lead.

Naturally, the tendency of pewter to discolour made it necessary for vessels of that metal to be constantly cleaned, and rubbing and polishing have left marks of manual labour on much of the old pewter.

#### ANCIENT PEWTERERS

The pewterers, like other early craftsmen, banded themselves together in guilds for their mutual protection, and

for the maintenance of their craft. The pewterers' craft received its first Charter in 1348, and it would seem there was much need of the conservation of the art in that the ease with which the compound metal could be cheapened by the introduction of lead—often old lead—caused distress among those who desired to maintain the purity of their wares.

Many attempts were made in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to reduce the quality of the metal, and of the goods also, for not only was the metal reduced in purity and durability, but the vessels were made lighter. The Worshipful Company of Pewterers received powers under their Charter to search the maker's shops for inferior goods, and they appear to have rigidly enforced the standard of quality of material and general excellence of manufacture, not only among members of their own guild, but among others who made pewter goods and who brought them to this country for sale.

In 1503 it was made compulsory to mark all pewter vessels, and from that time onwards makers' marks were stamped upon their wares so that they could be identified, and the maker of inferior goods tracked. The pewterers' craft appears to have been an important one in the Middle Ages; the trade terms familiar to-day in the Black Country in connection with the manufacture of hardware and kitchen ironmongery are in many instances derived from the old trade names of the workmen employed in the making of pewter in the fifteenth century, and the tools they used in that work have been repeated with but slight variations even to the present day. The sadmen made dishes and plates, and the hollow-ware men shaped the tankards and pots and other hollow vessels.

It would appear that the making of pewter was carried on in many parts of England; indeed, the craft does not seem to have been settled in any one particular town to

the same extent as the cutlers of Sheffield and the "steel toy" makers of Birmingham.

London pewter was always noted for its quality and for the large proportion of tin in its composition. Pewter was made to a considerable extent in Exeter, York, and Bristol, and also in the capital towns of Scotland and Ireland.

#### TOUCH MARKS

The so-called touch marks are indications of places of manufacture, and also of the men who made the wares. There are so many varieties of marks and irregularities of marking that it is impossible to give here anything like a full account or guide. Some notes, however, may be helpful. Writers have made much of the "rose pewter" the crowned rose being found on much of the old French, Scotch, and some Dutch pewter. Many of the older French villas still possess fine stores of pewter, and there are many of our officers and men who brought home with them from France beautiful examples of rose pewter purchased from the houses in which they were billeted.

Among the Scotch pewter of the days of the Stuarts there are many fine flagons and tankards marked with the Edinburgh touch. The Irish harp was one of the marks of old Dublin pewter, the Edinburgh touch mark being a three-towered castle.

The portcullis, a well-known pewterers' mark, is seen on much of the old English pewter, especially that made in the seventeenth century. At that time the pewter was generally marked with one mark only—a maker's mark, but in earlier times there were small touch marks used on either side of the maker's initials, and these little marks closely resembled the marks of old silver.

The very terse and useful notes on Irish pewter by Mr. M. S. Dudley Westrop in the "*Museum Bulletin*" of

the National Museum of Science and Art in Dublin, published a short time ago, throws some light upon the early makers of pewter in Ireland. It is there stated that there are records of pewter wares made as early as the fourteenth century ; an account of the Priory of Holy Trinity mentions that in 1344 "one dozen saucers, one dozen dishes, one dozen plates, and two chargers" were purchased for seven shillings, the small sum of ninepence being paid to Walter, the goldsmith, for marking them.

It would appear that much English pewter was used in Ireland, but pewter was also made locally in considerable quantities.

Mr. Westrop gives the names of some of the Irish pewterers, among them he mentions Joseph Austen and Robert Powell, both of Cork ; John Heaney, of Dublin, and Charles Clarke, of Waterford.

Some of the beautiful old pewter in the National Museum of Ireland is, by the courtesy of the Director of the Museum, illustrated in this volume. Among them is an Irish church flagon (*see* Figure 32, described in Chapter XII).

#### CHURCH PEWTER

It is well known that just the same as silver many of the earlier pewter flagons, dishes, and plates were originally made for church purposes. In some of the older churches there are still to be found fine examples of pewter flagons, patens, and chalices. The flagons were often very large, being used on special church festivals for carrying the sacramental wine from the cellars.

Many writers have described the old Communion pewter of the Commonwealth, the heavy and somewhat cumbersome vessels that were in use in some of those churches. Some of the old flagons were made of the usual type of such vessels, but most of them had large spouts. The

cups used in the days of the Commonwealth were plain and of the type still known in Scotland as Presbyterian, a simple plain cup on a tall foot without any ornamentation or chasing.

Again referring to the large pewter chalices used in Scotland, commonly known as "tappit-hens" these vessels varied considerably in size, some holding fully three quarts, while others were quite small. There are some fine examples of these old pewter Communion services in the Edinburgh Museum.

The ordinary church pewter includes both chalices and patens of usual types, and many of these old vessels owe their preservation to the fact that the metal was of small value when contributions were levied for the Civil War, and so much of the valuable church plate of sterling silver went into the melting pot. After the Restoration, however, the pewter was discarded, and silver again took its place in most of the wealthier churches, but for many years pewter communion vessels were used in the less wealthy churches.

#### DOMESTIC PEWTER

When investigating the old catalogues of pewterers and their bills some interesting light is thrown upon trade customs in olden time. We find from these records that a "garnish of pewter plates" was the trade term indicating a service of twelve of each of the sizes commonly used, three dozen in all. As already intimated, there was much in common between the old church flagons and those used for domestic purposes. The sixteenth century tankard came into use as a vessel for ale, and was used in private houses as well as in taverns. In Cromwellian days the black-jacks, large heavy leathern tankards and drinking vessels, not easily damaged, were used side by side with the pewter vessels, mugs, and cups, which eventually

superseded them. For many years before pottery and glass and china were commonly used in private households, pewter was the chief metal employed, the pewter plates, dishes, cups and tankards being far more durable than the locally-made common earthenware of the seventeenth century.

Shining pewter on the plate stand and sideboard, and on the kitchen mantelpiece, well kept, and in good order, were indications of the careful supervision of a well trained housekeeper. Nearly all the silver wares were made in pewter for common use, thus taking the table pewter the heavier pieces of which consisted of dishes and plates, which in their turn had superseded the wooden trenchers of a still earlier period. There were many little sweetmeat dishes, sauce boats, and salt cellars, and there were pepper pots and receptacles for mustard and other condiments. There were egg cups of pewter, and in later days sugar bowls and cream jugs, and eventually tea sets ; but the tea and coffee sets of the nineteenth century were chiefly Britannia metal, not genuine pewter. If we go back to a very early period, we find in common use pewter barbers' bowls, and so-called bleeding dishes. There were also a variety of shallow basins with ornamental handles, and there were pewter candlemoulds, and many different candlesticks. When the old pricket candlestick with a wooden base had become almost obsolete and candles were made of better quality in the moulds referred to, both tall pillar and dished chamber candlesticks were made of pewter. These were in turn copied by the coppersmiths who fashioned both brass and copper candlesticks on similar lines.

In Chapter XVIII. "*Spoons*," some particulars in reference to the varied shapes of metal spoons in use in this country at different periods indicate that pewter spoons were made on similar lines, especially the earlier

type, those with circular bowls and straight handles. In some of our leading museums there are very fine collections of pewter spoons; many examples of the pewter made by London pewterers during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries may be seen in the Guildhall Museum. There are also on view the larger vessels and examples of table plate and fine pewter.

The Worshipful Company of Pewterers did much to conserve the quality of pewter in London. The House of Commons enacted that wine and spirits sold in taverns should be measured in vessels of pewter, and to-day the standard measures of such liquids are usually fashioned in pewter or a similar metal of which tin forms an important part. This decision, of course, benefitted the pewterers, and helped somewhat the tin mining industries of Cornwall. In 1621, it is recorded that Parliament suppressed the buying of old tin and pewter by metal dealers, thereby still further improving the metal trade of this country, and making it compulsory to use new tin and lead in the manufacture of pewter wares.

Massive pieces of old pewter, some silvered, are well represented in the collections at South Kensington. An example of such silvered pewter is found in Figure 36 which represents a ewer or flagon of pewter, the ornamentation very elaborate, and the work of a sixteenth century Swiss pewterer.

The pewter tankard shown in Figure 54 is quite plain and was made late in the eighteenth century. Figure 55 is a good example of a pewter chamber candlestick with ornamented edge made early in the nineteenth century and is therefore a somewhat late type of pewter ware.

## CHAPTER XXXII

### SHEFFIELD PLATE

The producers of Sheffield plate—The process outlined—General interest  
—Some examples.

THERE are certain characteristics about old Sheffield plate, by which the expert can tell at once that he has something quite different to the modern wares coated with silver by the newer processes. Electro-plating of metal goods has indeed superseded the more costly method of silver plating discovered in the middle of the eighteenth century. That industry, now quite obsolete, served its day, and furnished the collector with many magnificent pieces of this grand old plate, with its beautiful and decorative edges and ornaments of sterling silver covering up all traces of the composite character of the metal, or rather of the combined metals.

To secure a collection of Sheffield plate is an ambitious project, and at the prices such pieces realise nowadays more costly than a cabinet of sterling silver. There are, however, many pieces of old Sheffield plate still to be found in private houses, especially such things as candlesticks, snuffer trays, and salvers. It would appear that there was a great diversity of design produced by the method, and there are still extant a number of pattern books issued in the eighteenth century by the original makers, that is, the inventors and those Sheffield firms who afterwards became famous for the manufacture of household plate after this manner. Many of these old

catalogues are filled with illustrations and descriptions of the different objects which were made like the silver wares of that period, and many more illustrations of larger pieces of the cheaper metal enabled the manufacturers of old Sheffield plate to produce more imposing objects and more decorative pieces of plate at less cost than even smaller vessels made out of sterling silver.

#### THE PRODUCERS OF SHEFFIELD PLATE

Before giving a brief description of the method by which Sheffield plate was made, it may be well to give credit to the founders of the industry, and to point out that although dead as a commercial project the old firms by whom this plate was originally made are still well-known in Sheffield, and some of them still carry on the trade of manufacturing domestic plate, although by a different process.

The discovery of the process by which metal of an inferior type could be covered with sterling silver is generally accredited to Thomas Bolsover, who, about 1740, discovered this method of producing silver goods, less expensive than by the use of sterling silver sheets only. He applied his discovery to small articles, and it was not until the new plan was adopted by Joseph Hancock, a Sheffield cutler, that it was realised how useful this method was, and how it could be applied to larger and more important articles of domestic plate.

The method by which Sheffield plate was made appears to have become public property, for very many firms are known to have made it, among the most notable being Roberts, Cadman & Co., Hancock & Co., Boulton, of Birmingham, Tudor & Leader, and others who worked during the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The old business of Cadman's, afterwards became the property

of W. & J. Sissons, and their business is still well known in Sheffield. Some of the old plate bears maker's marks, among them being the marks of the firms already mentioned ; another mark was formed of crossed keys on a shield, the well-known trade mark of Henry Wilkinson & Co., of Sheffield ; the firm of Sissons used a bell as their mark.

#### THE PROCESS OUTLINED

Very briefly we must relate the process of producing Sheffield plate. It has, of course, many minor technicalities, and different makers slightly varied the methods generally adopted, especially so in the ornamentation, although in that there is great similarity. This peculiar ornamentation had a distinct style of its own throughout all the variations, and the ornament of the edges and of some more conspicuous parts was the chief fascination in the finish of this beautiful ware.

The silver was rolled to the required thickness, and then, together with the inferior metal (chiefly copper) used under the silver plate, made clean and bright, the two metals being welded upon an anvil. Another strip of plate was similarly treated, and the two with the silver outwards placed on either side of a thicker piece of metal, which was then treated with borax, the whole being bound together and heated in a furnace until the silver was nearly at melting point ; then the bar, after being welded, was rolled to the required substance, and was then ready for making up into dishes, plates, or other objects. The process of manufacture was then similar to that adopted when making metal or silver goods ; but when finished the composite metal needed special treatment at the edges, and therein was the original purport of the beautiful solid silver gadroon edges which were

securely soldered or welded so as to cover all traces of the composite metal. The objects were then completed and silver handles added. Another important feature is considered by many to be the mark of identification enabling the amateur to distinguish between the silver goods produced by any other process and the genuine Sheffield plate, is the shield of silver which was generally added in some conspicuous place, such as on the side or, as in salvers and dishes, in the centre. This shield served as ornamentation and also provided a thicker substance of solid silver for engraving monograms or crests. These shields were very carefully prepared and the edges hammered out, so that there was seldom any trace of any joining. Some of the more decorative pieces of Sheffield plate are gilded, and of course the inside of cups is often treated in that way. In the process of this old gilding, by the help of mercury, pure gold was used. Unfortunately, in many of the pieces of old Sheffield plate which have been uninjured by modern restoration the gilding has worn off.

#### GENERAL INTEREST

The interest shown in Sheffield plate, owing to its composite character and somewhat different treatment to silver or pewter has created considerable interest among modern collectors, and although it is very difficult to acquire a collection in fine preservation the collector is always keenly alive when rare pieces are offered in auction sales. It would appear that the interest shown in modern days is no greater than it was in older time, for the novelty of the invention and the method of practice in the production of old Sheffield plate seems to have been the reason why many wealthy men purchased this kind of plate when sterling silver was undoubtedly within their reach. Horace Walpole visited Sheffield in 1760, at a time when

the manufacture of Sheffield plate was a novelty. He evidently was attracted by the new process of making domestic plate, and writing to a friend is said to have used this phrase : " I passed through Sheffield which is one of the foulest towns in England." He then went on to state that a new process of plating copper with silver had been discovered, and that he had bought a pair of candlesticks for which he had paid two guineas, and he said they were " quite pretty." There are records of wealthy men of that day who secured pieces of Sheffield plate for a similar reason—they were attracted by the beauty of the ornamentation of the objects, and by the somewhat strange practice of making what was apparently a solid silver vessel with a lining of inferior metal.

There have been many interesting exhibitions of Sheffield plate, but the collections in our museums are by no means extensive. Some collectors, however, have got together important and thoroughly representative displays of this fine plate. One very important collection brought under the hammer some years ago was that of Mr. A. J. Bethell, of Newton Kyne Hall, consisting of about four hundred pieces, practically representing every variety of domestic plate produced in this fashion.

#### SOME EXAMPLES

As it has already been suggested the same things which have been made in sterling silver were copied in Sheffield plate, the chief difference noticeable being that those made by the latter process were heavier, and the use of the cheaper material caused the makers to favour more massive and imposing plate. The table silver—not spoons—were reproduced, and very many handsome salt cellars were made ; octagonal salts with substantial feet were favoured, and the boat-shaped vessels appear to have

been popular for salt cellars as well as for sauce boats and the larger cruet stands. Many of the cruet frames of that day were distinctly boat-shaped, fitted with wire divisions to separate and hold in position the glass bottles which were heavy and often handsomely cut, mounted with Sheffield plate enrichments. The gravy boats were large and imposing and were used in pairs, corresponding with the still larger sauce boats and soup tureens.

Bottle stands were in regular use in the days when Sheffield plate was being made, and the new material proved very suitable for such stands, some of which mostly showing traces of hard wear are still to be bought in dealers' shops, and in the sale rooms when the household plate of an older generation is being dispersed; it is, however, to be regretted that the copyers of antique silver have given special attention to the manufacture of replicas of "coasters" and stands, such copies mostly of copper electro-plated with silver are of little interest to the collector and of no curio value.

In the eighteenth century, and for some years afterwards the table was lighted with candlesticks of Sheffield plate, and they were especially decorative, the silver mounts already described being admirable ornaments for branched candelabra and candlesticks. Used in conjunction with them were the beautifully modelled snuffer trays and snuffers with decorative handles. The inkstands of that period were large and furnished with substantial pen trays; the quill pen was then in common use and the sand box was a necessary adjunct to the ink wells, for blotting paper is but a modern invention. Thus it is that the inkstands of that day included in their outfit a sand box and frequently a wafer box and a taper stand, too, for the sealing of letters was the only means of fastening them down.

It would be useless repetition to describe categorically

the numerous articles made by this interesting process. Suffice it to say that from 1745 to about 1820 Sheffield plate was produced in considerable quantities. A little later the newer process of electro-plating was perfected, and the manufacture of old Sheffield plate declined, and soon became one of the lost industries, an art that served its day and was superseded by newer methods, and simpler modes of production, the result of scientific research, and the discovery of how to spread a thin, even and regular coating of silver by electrical scientific methods.

The three examples of Sheffield plate tea and coffee pots shown in Figures 19, 20, and 21, indicate how closely the makers of Sheffield plate were able to follow the styles in vogue in sterling silver at the period when these goods were made. It is also noteworthy that the makers of Sheffield plate were not strictly confined to the period when they made the articles, for they frequently followed older styles of sterling silver. The two beautiful tea pots shown in Figures 19 and 20, and the coffee pot illustrated in Figure 21, are in the possession of Mr. W. Sissons, and these pieces were made by the old firm with which his name is associated ; they are indeed fine examples of the best period of Sheffield plate. In the same collection there is a very interesting set of three coasters, arranged on a frame running on wheels, by which the set of casters or wine bottles could be moved about readily on the table. This set is shown in Figure 22.

The very fine example of a large waiter of Sheffield plate in Figure 77, is of a type often met with in the smaller sizes but not often in one so large as that from which our illustration was taken ; it is indeed a piece the owner ought to be proud of possessing. The pair of vases shown in Figures 78 and 79, in the possession of Mr. W. Sissons, are very handsome indeed, the photo giving an end view as well as showing the plain front of the vases, both

handles and feet are of the best type of work of the period when Sheffield plate was made by artists who took much pains with the work and finished off the vases with such care.

The snuffer trays illustrated in Figures 80, 81, 82, 83, and 84, are also of the best workmanship and very choice pieces. Egg stands in silver had been very costly and when Sheffield plate made it possible for the middle class household to possess these very handsome table pieces of use and great ornament many were made. The example shown with snuffer trays is a good example of this period. The splendid round waiter with handsome gadroon edge, also in the possession of Mr. Sissons, illustrated in Figure 85, fitly concludes the illustrations in this chapter; it is a remarkably good piece.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

### MISCELLANEOUS

Inkstands—Whistles—Vinaigrettes—Pomander boxes—Drinking  
horns—Silver toys—Silver trinkets.

There are many little objects made in silver that do not come under any special heading and yet they are curious and interesting oddments appreciated in every collection. There are other objects, too, which are more commonly met with made from other materials, although now and then produced in the more precious metals; these, like the oddments in silver, are valued by the "home connoisseur," who, perhaps, treasures them especially because of their family history and their connection with times past when domestic life was somewhat different from that of to-day. In the following pages some of the best known oddments are mentioned, and their former uses explained; such miscellaneous things are, however, not all useless, for the silversmith provides to-day many of these sundries for the delectation of his clients.

In a sale catalogue of silver and jewellery one often comes across silver trinkets the uses of which from the meagre description given scarcely gives the collector an adequate idea of the value or the interesting surroundings of such one time common domestic objects. Take, for instance, old silver watches, apart from their known uses, even watches that will not go have a value a mere description cannot give any adequate account of, for the charm lies in the merit of the chasing of the case, in the beauty

of the face and in the rare engraving on the "watch clocks" of the works. The old shagreen cases for spectacles and watches are delightful; the stars of silver with which they are ornamented flash in the bright light of day and give a pleasing appearance to the otherwise sombre case of green dark with age. Old silver buckles tell of a fashion often revived but shorn of its value or the brilliance of the finish buckles gave to the silken hose and the knee breeches of a generation or two ago. Take another glance at the catalogue and read a line in the list of Georgian silver: "Cake basket with pierced sides." What a story could be written about the old table on which were cakes of every kind, and many delicacies, all home-made—wonderful baskets were those of olden time, richly chased silver and hand pierced work that did not give way like some modern imitations.

Silver sweetmeat dishes were used for preparations the making of which were family secrets, for many housewives held within their keeping the recipes for which their grandmothers had been famous. What must the table have been like with its full complement of silver in the centre of which was a large "chased bowl, on mounted plinths and mermaid handles weighing 368 ounces"—another line from a modern sale catalogue? The silver wine strainers, so often occurring in sales were associated with the fine old punch bowls and with the ladles for punch and toddy of which there were many varieties.

The collector of silver finds it difficult to distinguish between the collectable domestic plate and silver of a purely ornamental character such as was made by jewellers for the trade of the silversmith, indeed, the jeweller often overlapped the work of the silversmith—the craftsmen of the one were often employed by the other in certain classes of work.

## INKSTANDS

There is something delightful about the old silver inkstand which is so like that used to-day and the stand appears almost a replica. But very different, indeed, were the processes employed, and the stand of Georgian times was made in accordance with the requirements of that period. The "vase" of ink has been produced since the days when a horn was the receptacle for the ink which the scribe carried about with him, for when horns were in vogue few could write and the implements of writing were chiefly owned by professional scribes.

Let us go back for a moment to the time when the scribe went about from town to town and acted as the amanuensis of the people who wished to pen a long overdue letter or to write up their books. Such luxuries as inkstands were then only for the learned and the wealthy. The art of writing is, of course, no new thing, and those who practised it had good ink, some of which has lasted for centuries without fading. Ancient inkstands in the form of a truncated cone, inverted, have been found in Greece and Rome among the ruins of former peoples, but although even in the twelfth century in this country inkhorns were commonly used there were also stand dishes, some of them in silver and even in silver-gilt. The discovery of blotting paper came as a boon and a blessing to men, like the pens of note many years later; yet that is not so long ago, for very many of the silver inkstands hall-marked in the eighteenth century and even later are fitted with sand boxes, the old way of absorbing the ink on the paper or parchment. These stands upon which were arranged the taper stick, the sand box and the ink well or vase, has stood the usage of time for it dates back to days before steel pens when the quill was shaped and the penman, that is, the man who used the pen of a goose, was shaped

by hand with a "pen"-knife and the script carefully penned upon the paper or document of importance. Incidentally it may be pointed out that letters were then sealed, hence the need of the taper to melt the wax to which was attached the signet or seal, not infrequently also of silver.

### WHISTLES

Whistles were used long before the days of small bells and before any houses were fitted with gongs or crank bells. The whistle was the domestic signal, and when the call was made to those at a distance the horn which gave forth a louder sound was used instead. The horns were often tipped with silver, and whistles too, were made of the same material. They were the call for servants and for many other purposes; in various forms such things were made and carried in the hunting field, in the park and garden and in the village lanes; they were used, too, by the master of the household at the dining table. One very remarkable table whistle was sold at the great Strawberry Hill sale in 1842; it was in the form of a pair of owls of silver seated on perches, said to have been a beautiful example of seventeenth century silver-smiths' art.

### SILVER VINAIGRETTES

Among the most charming little trinkets of the ladies' bag or reticule, or on the cabinet table was the silver vinaigrette, regarded as indispensable some half-century or more ago. These pretty engraved boxes varied in size and shape, but in the construction of the interior they were all similar, the box with its inside lid of silver-gilt showing great taste in its ornamentation. The perforations gave a means of escape for the choice scents and aromatic scents or vinegar which was dropped on a tiny

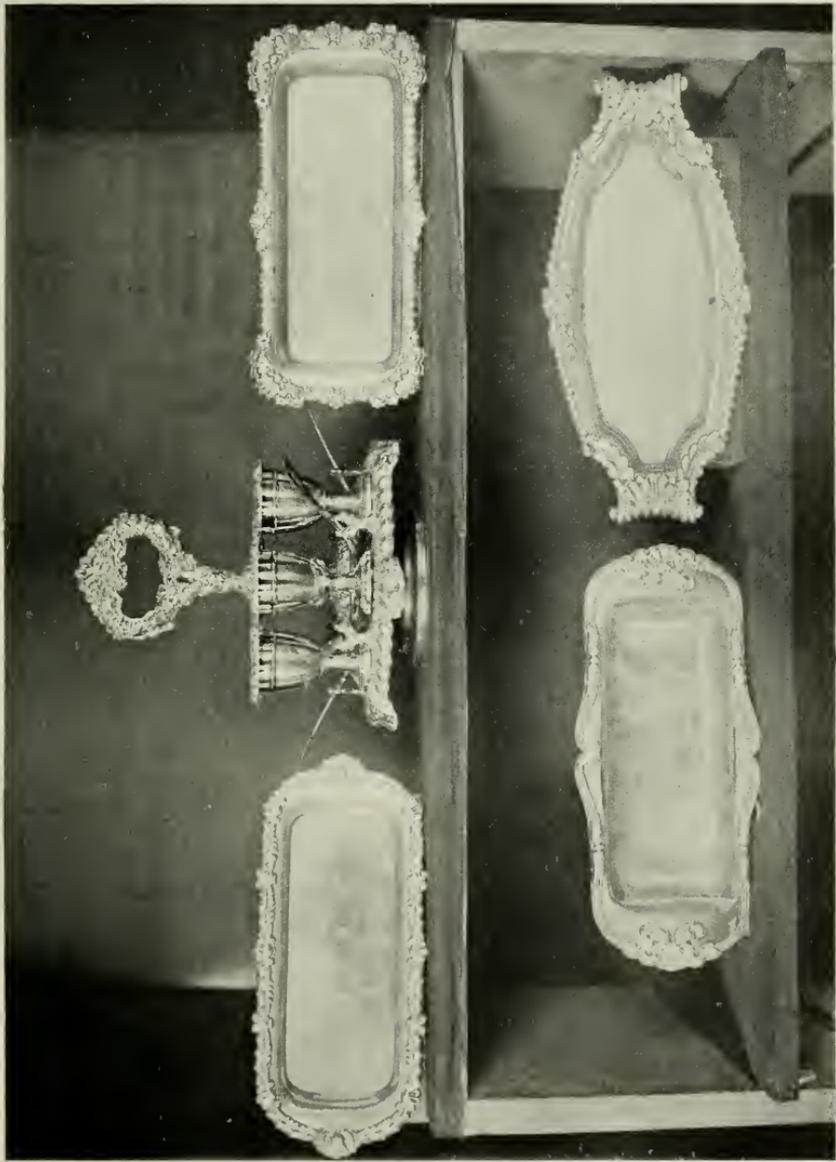
piece of sponge still found in the inside of most of the specimens which have been preserved. Nearly all these little boxes are hall-marked on the inside of the outer lid, and often on the outer portion of the inside perforated lid. These boxes were carried loose in the pocket or kept on a table close at hand ; others have rings from which they were suspended from a girdle or chatelain chain. They vary in shape but most of them are oblong but a few are round, not unlike the silver sovereign purses of later days, alas ! a need that has passed, for the golden currency has long disappeared, and in the place of a silver sovereign purse a Treasury Note case has appeared. Perhaps the sovereign purse will soon be classed among the curios of a former day !

#### POMANDER BOXES

Among the rarities of old silver toilet boxes are those curious old pomander boxes which were made to meet a great need in the days when sanitary conditions were not as now, and the effluvia of public places very far from nice. It is said that the pomander owes its general use to Cardinal Wolsey who filled an orange with sponge soaked in vinegar, wormwood, rosemary and spices, carrying it about with him wherever he went. The pomander box followed ; it was made by the quickwitted silversmiths of that day who saw a national need and stepped into the breach.

#### DRINKING HORNS

Among the relics of jovial times, and of days of hard drinking, there are preserved ancient horns. Much speculation has arisen as to the relative merits of the cup and the horn in times when they were used together. It



FIGS. 80, 81, 82, 83 AND 84.—FOUR SHEFFIELD-PLATE TRAYS AND EGG-STAND.  
(By the courtesy of Mr. W. Sissons.)



FIG. 85.—LARGE SHEFFIELD-PLATE WAITER.

has been thought by some that the cup was the more refined vessel in which wine was drunk, whereas, as of yore, ale and mead were quaffed from the horn. The Saxons were right royal feasters, and horns were emptied at a draught. The horn was of some importance, and symbolised deeds and transfers of value ; thus land was sometimes transferred and the inheritance made good by the gift of a horn ; some estates, too, were formerly held in fee by the annual payment of a drinking horn. Some very ancient horns are mentioned in Knight's "*Old England* " ; one of these, known as the horn of Ulphus, said to have been preserved for many years in York Minster. This Ulphus, a Dane, lived in the reign of Canute ; according to legendary accounts, he filled the horn with wine, drinking it before the altar of the Minster church, which he enfeoffed with lands and revenues. The ancient horn changed hands during the troublous times of the Civil War, passing into the possession of Lord Fairfax, but it was afterwards restored to York Minster.

Another celebrated horn is known as the Clephane horn, a beautifully carved ivory drinking vessel nearly two feet long, handsomely carved, bound by two silver bands. This mediæval horn was formerly in the possession of the Clephane family in Fifeshire, passing by marriage to the Marquis of Northampton. It was well known to Sir Walter Scott, who referred to its use for sounding an alarm from the battlements. It was suggested by Mr. O. M. Dalton, in a paper read a few years ago before the Society of Antiquaries, that it might have been brought over to this country by the Crusaders from Constantinople. There are, of course, many less important horns in museums and other collections, and there is no doubt that horns were in olden time used for a variety of purposes, sometimes to give a signal, at others as a drinking vessel. The pledging of healths is an ancient

custom and one very common in connection with the chase when horns were in common use on the field.

The story is told of the first pledge in England, a custom which seems to have originated either with the Saxons or the Norsemen. This early pledge referred to was given by the Maiden Rowena, who betrayed Vortigern by her cup of wine, and her toast "Waes Heal" (Be of health). The drinking horn was often mounted with silver, and sometimes raised on feet so that it could be placed on the table, although the common form of horn was the simple hunting cup. Undoubtedly, the horn in its primitive use was earlier than the wassail bowl, which itself was an early form of the later silver cup and other drinking vessels. For decorative purposes the horn is very suitable, and lends itself to ornamentation by silver bands and shields on which may be engraved the names or crests of the owners.

#### SILVER TOYS

A collection of the quaint little silver trinkets made after the manner of the ways of the days in which the silver articles were made must always be of special interest, in that these pretty little objects reflect the manners of our ancestors, and also reproduce in miniature the then common objects of everyday life. The so-called toys made of silver by Dutch silversmiths in olden time, some of them hall-marked in this country, were afterwards made in larger quantities by modern processes. There is, however, a marked difference between the silver toys made by hand, hammered and engraved by hand, and those in which machines contributed to the manufacture of similar goods produced at a much less cost. The old toys, so-called, when made by hand were, of course, seldom reproduced with any exactitude and therefore most of them vary considerably if not actually different, in that

they have a special charm over the machine-made goods of modern days.

Of these silver toys there are many kinds. In one large group may be classed the miniature representations of domestic articles, and in these there is a great charm in that they are for the most part copies of real articles then in daily use. There are the chairs and tables of the eighteenth century and things made years before, such as the silver cradles of the days of the Restoration and the large objects of toilet "ware" made in silver. When people indulged in actual silver furniture or wood overlaid with silver then it would be but natural that the toys with which the children of the wealthy played, and with which the people of a lesser rank ornamented their side tables and cabinets, should be replicas of the things to which they were accustomed.

The Dutch silversmiths were very apt in all manner of realistic ornaments in brass and silver. They made them very much like the little things in use in Holland, and the scenes and bigger things they copied were taken from objects and views they had before them in their own country. Thus we have among these trinkets windmills and canals and steeply pitched bridges, and many things reminiscent of that water-logged country. These Dutch silver toys and ornaments were often sent over to this country in the rough, and were then tooled and finished here, hence it is that so many of them are hall-marked with the English marks of assay.

There are, however, many pleasing little objects of distinctly English types although possibly some of them were made in Holland, such, for instance, a small dove-cote on a stand, with more or less surroundings such as might have been seen in many English homes in the eighteenth century or later. Fountains and sundials, leaden cisterns and vases, and the figures such as were

then common objects in English gardens were reproduced in silver and sold for drawing room ornaments. Very pretty "toys" they were indeed, and now what are left of them are treasured by the "home connoisseur," adding a peculiar charm to a collection of old family silver.

Perhaps those silver toys which tell of old village industries are among the most interesting; there are those representing the British housewife with her distaff or loom, and the lace worker with her bobbins flying rapidly as she deftly manipulated her stitches and moved her threads. Even the common trades like those of the carpenter and the butcher came in for reproduction. Just as the wooden toys of children of a generation or two ago consisted chiefly of shops and Noah's arks, so the silver toys of the period taught of trades and crafts, and also religious subjects, in some of which latter models may be seen traces of old-world superstitions.

Toys are as old as the hills, and their origin is lost in antiquity, for children of all ages, even the children of primæval man had their little toys, and so it has been throughout all times. Some few years ago among the oddments found in Italy, in the excavated ruins of an old Roman villa, were the playthings of the children of ancient Senators and Consuls, among them reproductions in lead and silver of household goods, and of sacrificial instruments and altars. Toys and pictures, and especially realistic models have taught the children of all ages. The toy furniture which in many instances faithfully represented chairs and tables, bedsteads and cradles, tiny fenders and stools, so often in silver, were similar to the toys the children played with. These little toys used by children, and constantly in their sight during early years initiated them in the use of things of great importance in real life. Such models and decorative ornaments, too, have reminded older people of many things they would otherwise have

forgotten. Take, for instance, some toys in use from time immemorial—not often made in silver, it is true. Foremost, there is the ark, one of the oldest toys, a constant reminder of that ancient flood so memorable in Bible lands. Very vivid are the thoughts and memories conjured up by toy cannon, soldiers, and guns; they tell of war not yet ended, of aggressive armies, and of battles for freedom. By way of contrast the little silver toys, reproductions in miniature of household fittings and furnishing, and the silver cradles of olden time, point to the domestic and world-wide Peace hoped for but not yet realised.

#### SILVER TRINKETS

In “*Antique Jewellery and Trinkets*,” a companion volume of the “*Home Connoisseur Series*,” there are some interesting little silver trinkets mentioned and illustrated. Many of these interesting little objects, the less important things of the household, are to be found in collections of old silver. Some of them are closely allied to the larger things dealt with in this volume, and others are equally pleasing and beautiful products of the silversmith who, in many instances, expended much time and ingenuity in the manufacture of these trinkets. Take, for instance, the little nutmeg graters carried about in the pocket, used in connection with the making of punch in olden time. Little sweetmeats were often kept in little silver boxes. In other days, too, it was the custom to hand round after dessert rare spices such as might then have been found in the silver comfit boxes which were divided into compartments for that purpose. In an old work, “*Nichol’s Progress*,” a comfit box of gold is mentioned, and it is said that both boxes of gold and silver were often accompanied by “a litill spone of gold.”

Silver buckles were at one time much worn and many very decorative objects were made for shoes and other purposes. Fashions change and there have been times when the buckle makers sought the support of wealthy patrons and even royal patrons to give a new impetus to the making and wearing of buckles.

Silver badges have been worn on many occasions. Sometimes these have denoted special appointments and at others they have been commemorative. Silver has often been chosen for these things. Medals have been struck in silver and during the last few years the medals that have been struck and worn have provided the collector of the far away future with an ample supply of small curios to gather. The collection of silver badges worn by the troops during the Great War of 1914-1919, if gathered together would indeed be an imposing array, for many new emblems have been devised and new awards have been given to commemorate the War and to show the gallantry of the men who fought in it.

Of the oddments of silver plate and of silver trinkets which are often found among the remains of the old silver plate chest much might be written. The object of this volume is rather to create greater interest in the plate belonging to families who have small quantities and to arouse their enthusiasm for its retention than to provide the collector with a catalogue of all the products of the old workshops. The home beautiful finds its greatest charm in its real home-like appearance, and the idea of a true home is that in which a reverence for all things of family interest is inculcated among the rising generation. The children of to-day are taught to seek the modern rather than the old and only to cherish the beautiful and those things that add to the so-called modern art of the home. Modern decoration and enrichment has its place but it should never crowd out the family things which have

been fondly retained by older and perhaps wiser people. The real status of a family may often be gauged by the signs of an ancient pedigree and the relics of former generations which naturally fall in their places, even if their surroundings are for the most part modern. Silver well cared for is a choice possession and we can well understand the reluctance of its owners to part with their family plate.

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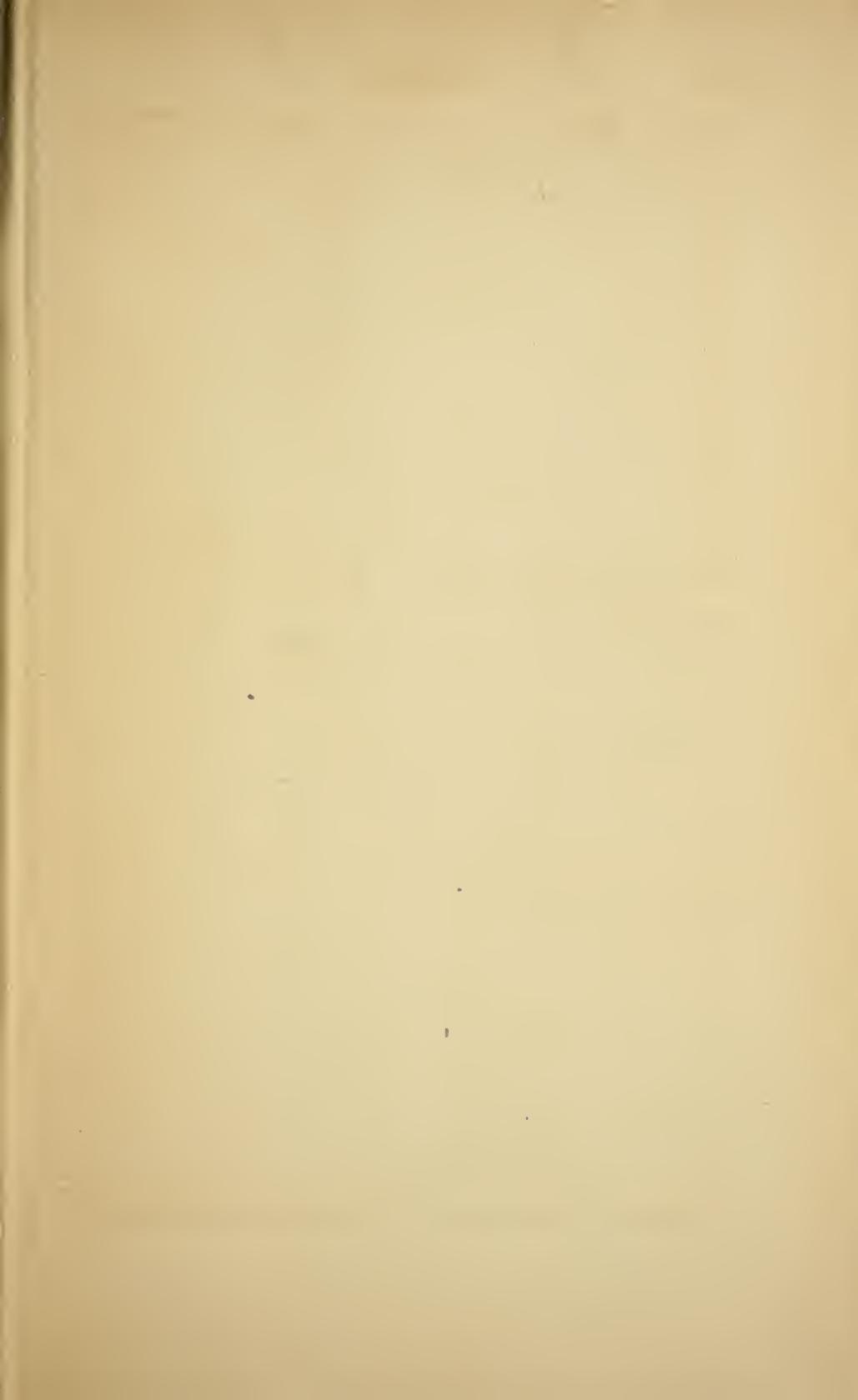
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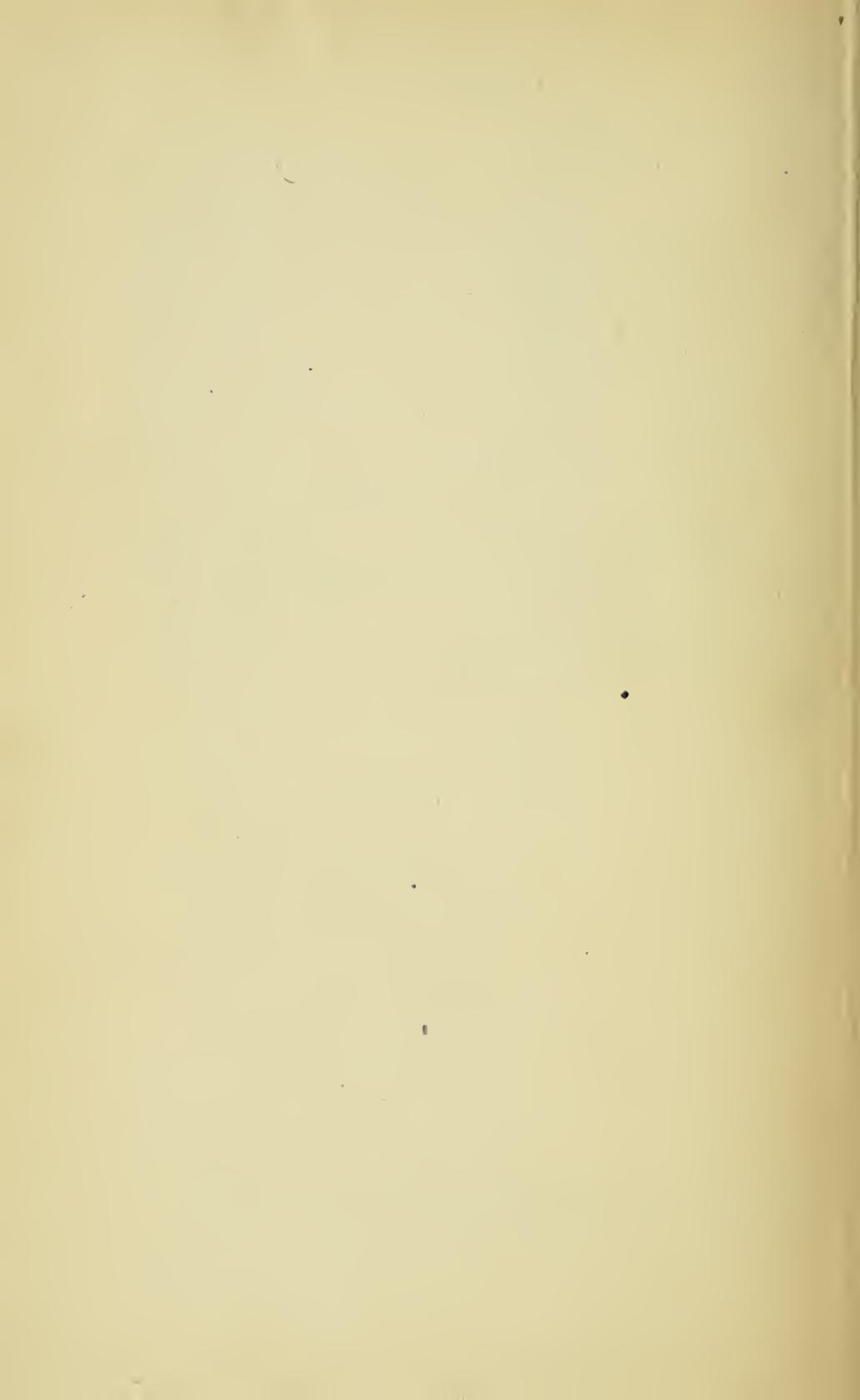
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