

Some Old Pewter.

By H. J. L. J. Massé.

OUR museums, taking them as a whole, have some fine specimens of pewter, but of these the best pieces are, as a rule, foreign. This is a melancholy reflection; it must be coupled with the still sadder thought that the bulk of the pewter at the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington, is the loan collection of a private collector. On the other hand, there are in private hands in England some very fine pieces of English pewter, and with them, mainly, it is proposed to deal in the present article.

Some few months ago, in a back street in Kennington, two plates were dug up, some distance below the surface, in property belonging to the Duchy of Cornwall. Both were in perfect order so far as the metal was concerned, but both had been partly destroyed by fire, hence their burial by a

careless domestic. The curious thing about them was that the one was apparently of the time of Richard II., and the other of Richard III., *i.e.*, the difference in age was approximately a hundred years. In spite of this difference, both looked as though they had been made in the same mould, and by the same maker. The mark in each case was a crowned "R," and one bore a stamp containing a pewterer's hammer.

Mr. A. F. de Navarro has several Charles I. tankards of various sizes, but very perfect workmanship. They look almost like silver, and are treated by him as though they were of that metal. In his collection are several tankards showing the gradual development from the simple flat-topped tankard of Charles I.'s time to the elaborate domed-roof tankard of William and Mary. The earlier specimens



Chalices from the collection of Mr. A. F. de Navarro.

were quite plain and simple; the later ones are covered with tulips, roses, portraits, and all kinds of devices in wriggled work.

Mrs. R. L. B. Rathbone has a fine tankard that was formerly in the possession of the Worshipful Company of Fellmongers. From mention made of it in the minute-books of the Company, its date is 1666. It was used for the drinking of certain "long" drinks, as recorded in the front page of the same minute book:—

"Behold and see, this cup is full,
And out of it I'll take a pull;
I'll take a pull with such a wind
That I'll not leave a drop behind.

Behold and see what I have done,
I have not poured it in my shoon;
Nor have I drunk my drink in vain,
For I could do the like again.

Here's to thee, kind brother John,
'Tis time that thou and I were gone.
We've drunk our drink, we've stood our ground,
And this is called the Fellmonger's Round."

Some seven years ago, when Guy's Hospital was being enlarged by the addition of the Evelina portion of the building, four plates were found, with the mark of Prince Arthur, the eldest son of Henry VII. They were of rather thin metal, but in perfect order. Two of them were exhibited in my Second Exhibition of Pewter (held in Clifford's Inn Hall in 1908), by permission of their owner, the late F. G. Hilton Price. One of the plates was illustrated in *Pewter Plate*, by permission of the Council of the Society of Antiquaries. The British Museum has one of these plates, and there is another example in the Guildhall Museum.

Another piece of pewter, of the same date, or possibly a little later, is the measure at South Kensington Museum. It is very much battered, but bears the marks:—(1) "N.E.," with, above, a cardinal's hat; (2) a bishop with a mitre, and the letters "H.R."

Mr. C. F. C. Buckmaster has a small flat-topped measure, holding about a pint, with the marks:—(1) A bear in a small beaded circle; (2) "H.R.," crowned; (3) a later mark, "H.M.," in a small beaded circle, and the date "1687." On the lid the bear is impressed six times, and once inside the neck. It has been suggested that it belonged once to a tavern, having a bear for its sign.

Certainly no maker of that date used the bear as his sign, as far as the early marks are known.

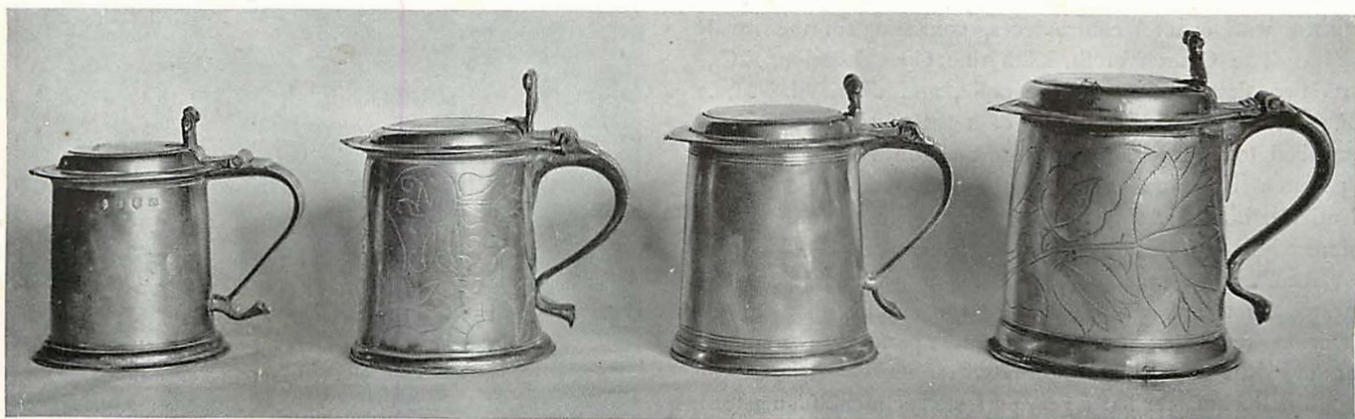
Last summer the writer saw a flagon of the black-jack type, with a mark containing a bell. It seemed to be Elizabethan in character and workmanship. It was dredged from a brook in private property, and, from its appearance, had been in the clayey mud for many years.

A very fine specimen of pewter, of the reign of James V. of Scotland, and James I. of England, still exists in the "Pirley Pig," in the possession of the

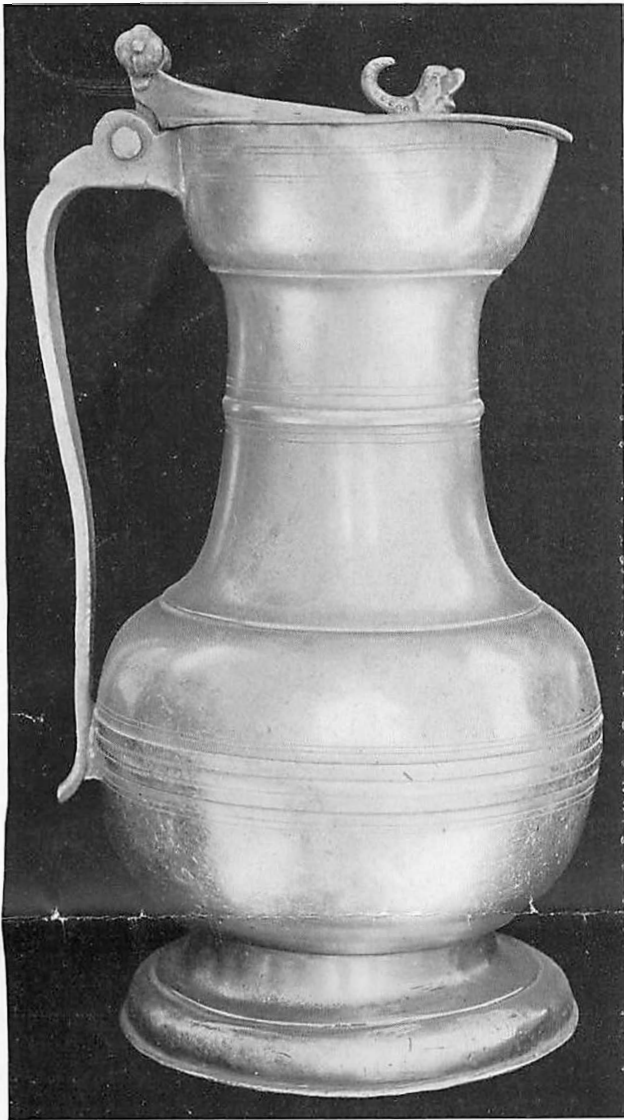


German Flagon: In the possession of Lord Swaythling.

Provost and Baillies of Dundee. It was a money-box, used for the fines of baillies for non-attendance, and was fastened by interlocking iron rods, to the ends of which locks were attached. The piece is one of the only two ornamented specimens in Scotland, the other being a basin in the Smith Museum at Stirling. The "Pig" is ornamented with ribbon-work, enclosing four shields, containing:—(1) The royal arms of Scotland, "J. G. R.," with a legend on a scroll, "Feare God and obey the King"; (2) arms of Scrymgeour of Dudhope, and the inscription, "Sir James Skrimzeour, Provost, Anno 1602. 14 May," and on a scroll, "Lord blesse the Provost, Baillzies and Counsell of Dundi"; (3) the initials, "P.L., R.E, M.I., J.L., W.H.," and the words, "Bailzeis. Anno.



Tankards: From the collection of Mr. A. F. de Navarro.



French Measure: From the collection of Mr. T. C. Charbonnier.

1602." On a Scroll, "Payment for not coming to the Counsell of Dundie"; (4) Arms of Dundie, the pot and lilies, and the punning motto "Dei Donum." The rest of the "Pig" is covered with rude scroll ornament, crescents, and interlacings, on a ground of hatched and cross-hatched lines. From never being cleaned, the pewter has a pleasant greenish patina upon its surface.

Of Charles I. pewter there are extant some very fine specimens, and, curiously enough, they are mostly rosewater dishes, with enamel centrepieces, consisting of the royal arms. The Church of St. Katharine Cree, London, E.C., has two, dated 1628, plain, simple, and dignified. Mrs. F. Barry has one—a survivor of a set of six which were supplied to Charles I. when at York in 1642-43. This specimen is more ornamental, being decorated with lenticular bosses in repoussé work on the rim, and also with similar bosses raised round the enamel centre.

Another one, smaller in diameter, was found in a well near Daventry, at the beginning of the nineteenth century. This one was dated 1627. Others, less perfect in condition, are in existence.

Mr. Backmaster has a very perfect specimen of a master-salt (c. 1650), with an early mark, viz., "I. F." in a diamond-shaped punch with two fleurs-de-lys. Mr. Hilton Price had

a less perfect one of the same date and make. Mr. de Navarro has a smaller one of rather later date. The two former are octagonal at the top and at the base, the latter one circular both at the top and at the bottom.

Domestic dishes of large size are not often found. One in the possession of Mr. H. V. Reade is a boar's head dish 28½ inches in diameter, and has been in his family since 1650. Another, nearly a century later, made by Thomas Buckby, who took up his Livery in 1716, is in the possession of the Town Council of Abingdon, Berks. It bears the arms of the Borough, and the inscription "Clement Saxton. Mayor, Burgus. Abingdon. An. Dom. 1725."

Mr. H. G. Moffatt used to possess some very fine seventeenth century pewter, formerly the property of, and bearing the arms of New College, Oxford, dated 1680. One of the objects was a small saucer, and the other a candlestick, with dodecagonal base, dodecagonal stem, and no signs of a grease-plate at the top. This pewter was nearly black, though in perfectly good structural order. It is now, after many vicissitudes, back in safe custody at its old home.

In the early years of the nineteenth century some silver-plate was found in the moat of the Manor House at Arley, near Wigan. It was six or seven feet below the bottom of the moat. With the silver were some candlesticks with bell-shaped bases, and baluster stems. The grease-tray in two of them was about half-way up the stem, and in the third rather lower. They were much battered, but had



Wine-flask: Dated 1748.

been restored to their original shape. Mr. Clisenhale Marsh, the owner of these, lent them at both of the Pewter Exhibitions held at Clifford's Inn Hall, and they were illustrated in the Catalogue of the First Exhibition.

One of the finest specimens of medieval pewter in existence in England is a tall flagon of the sixteenth century inlaid with brass. It is German work, with a distinctly Gothic feeling about much of the ornament, especially the borders and the mouldings. How the inlaying was done is a mystery. The straight pewter body in all probability was cast in a tubular mould, on the inside of which the cut-out inlay was temporarily fixed. The body was certainly not worked in the flat before it was fashioned into a cylinder. All the inlay is most elaborately engraved after the manner of the intricate work done on gun-locks and barrels. The thumb-piece and the knob on the lid are just as carefully made as any other part of the flagon. The piece would hardly have come down to our time had it not been for its common-sense base, for the walls of the body are in some places not thicker than brown paper. The nameless workman who made it must have loved his work, and taken immense pleasure in it, as is evident from the workmanship.

There is not very much old pewter surviving at Oxford. New College has some, mentioned above; Queen's College has some, mostly hot-water plates of Queen Anne date, and Worcester College has a few plates stamped "P. L.," *i.e.*, Provost's Lodgings. Very little, if any, of the kitchen pewter of the colleges is still in existence. A few years ago in some excavations at All Souls College, some old pewter was found in a disused drain, naturally much corroded, but of very great interest from the fact that the marks were unusual, and fortunately quite clear. The earliest was that of "A.M." with a bell. The only pewterer in London of the time was Anthony Mayors, and he used a different mark. The find is housed in a case in the Codrington Library belonging to the College.

Jacobean candlesticks of great beauty are to be met with sometimes. Mr. Charbonnier's collection is at present deposited in the Museum at Taunton; one has a circular



French Water-carriers.

base, but a square stem, with two flutings on each face, the other is octagonal both in the base and in the top. Mr. A. F. de Navarro has one with a base partly octagonal, partly circular. At the point where the base becomes circular there is an ornamental border. Mr. E. W. Gimson has a set of three, one of which is dated "'74," *i.e.*, 1674.

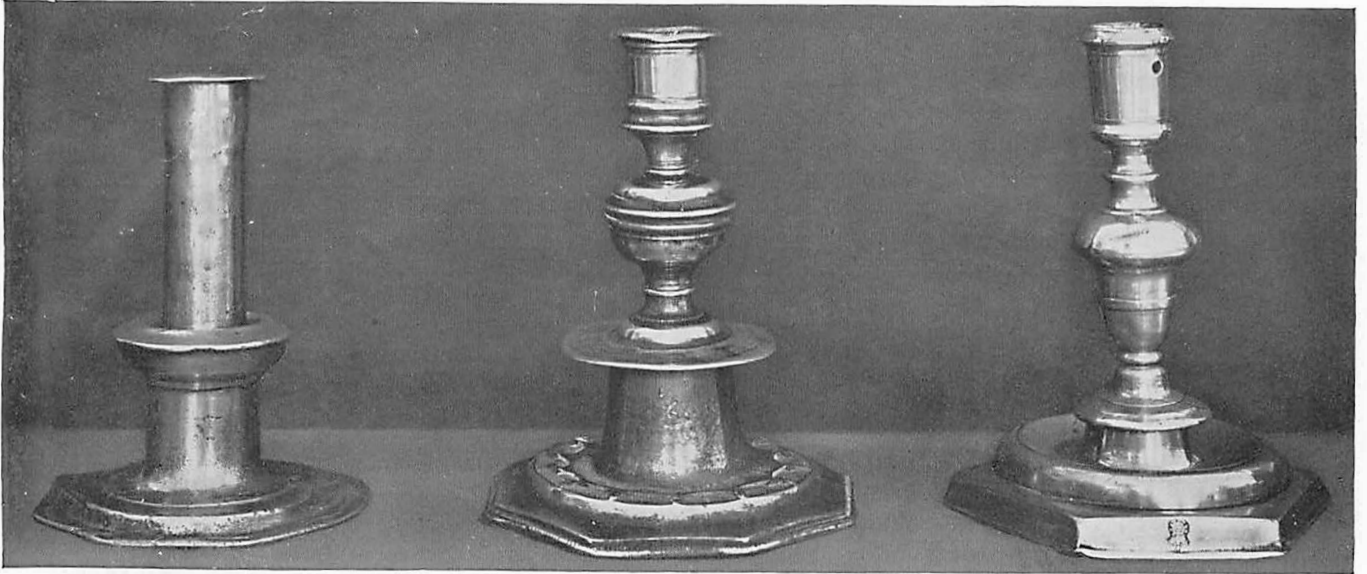
Of spoons there is infinite variety, both to delight the heart of the collector, and to stimulate the maker of fictitious pewter. Whatever form was made in silver, it was immediately copied in pewter; and such is the craze among collectors of spoons, that prices are often asked—and, unfortunately, paid—far and away above the value of the specimen. The craze has led to the making of spoons, and



Rose-water Dish: Temp. Charles I.



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A Tudor and Two Jacobean Candlesticks.

the faking of the marks. It is a coincidence that they are in nearly all cases found in excavations in Bermondsey. There is a good collection in the Guildhall Museum, and the various types are illustrated in the official catalogue.

The Inns of Court pewter has long since disappeared. Some of Staple Inn has found its way into the Guildhall Museum; some is in private hands, with the mark of John Redshaw, dated 1733. Some has the inscription, "Ex. Pr. dono," *i.e.*, presented by John Kock, who was President of the Society in 1716.

Of snuff-boxes in pewter there is infinite variety, both as to shape and as to size. They are, as a rule, extremely well made, but of very thin metal, ornamented by being stamped from a well-cut mould. The thin metal was probably strengthened by this treatment, as the plain ones



Tudor Plate, Henry VII.; and Measure, Henry VIII.

are ordinarily in worse condition than those that are more elaborate.

Obituary.

WE have to go back several decades in order to find downright appreciation of the art of William Powell Frith, who died on November 2, aged ninety. Less than thirty years ago Ruskin praised his painting, and his death has called forth many tributes to his qualities, but at one time Frith was a power. He would boast that he was not and could never become a great artist, but he knew he was a successful one. His pictures always had the popular vote, and his 'Derby Day,' which, when first exhibited, in 1858, needed a rail to protect it from the crush of sightseers, never fails to attract, even now that strong influences are at work to regulate the picture-gallery tastes of the people. Frith's personality made him a favourite, and the artist will be missed: he was an institution. In spite of his years he retained his humour and keenness for life, and the memories of a man who had known nearly all the great men of his period were invariably interesting. He published several books of autobiography, which were unusually excellent.

By the death of Mrs. Cassiot, of Elmwood House, Upper Tooting, the Corporation of London inherits some more pictures in addition to the large collection, the bequest of Mr. Charles Cassiot, which has been for some years at the Guildhall. The National Gallery also benefits.

The deaths are announced of Peter Severin Kroyer (November 20), the eminent Danish painter; of Edouard Rischgitz (November 3), a pupil of Corot, and a well-known teacher of painting; and, in her ninety-eighth year, of Mrs. Simpson, granddaughter of William Hamilton, R.A.