In the copy document that follows -

Arthur Lazenby Liberty addresses the Applied Art Section of the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufacturers, and Commerce in London on May 17th 1904.

Here he expresses with quotations from and attributed to Welch his thoughts on the history of Pewter.

He later in the talk gives his thoughts regarding Liberty manufacture of Pewterware.

He comments on the silver content of early tin giving pewterware its unusual warmth and appearance - which has since been shown to be incorrect.

It appears he did not in this talk at least associate his celtic design theme with that of the Art Nouveau of Germany.

Indeed the chairman of the meeting in his final words expresses the view of the time amongst those concerned with antiquities concerning Art Nouveau which is not complementary.

The interest in this article is perhaps that these are the words of Arthur Lazenby Liberty in 1904 concerning his Tudric pewter and his view of the history of pewterware at that time.

Also of interest are the illustrations which clearly show some of the pieces for sale in 1904 both of Liberty and of Kayser from Germany.

At the very end of this section are illustrations of what
was advertised as a Liberty Pewter Catalogue from around 1910
- unfortunately this website was unable to acquire it.

1904

PEWTER AND THE REVIVAL OF ITS USE.[a]

By ARTHUR LASENBY LIBERTY.

Taking first a wide survey of the whole subject, it will be remembered that the advantages of using an alloy in the working of metals appear to have been known and appreciated at a most remote period in the history of the human race, and that not only does such process combine the different excellencies of the two or more metals used, but the cohesion and consequent strength of the alloy is generally found greater than either of the metals considered separately, instead of, as might be supposed, resulting in the exact mean strength of the two or more metals employed. It is considered most probable, too, I believe, that the first discovery of metals was due to the accidental presence of ore in the stones used in primitive hearths and fireplaces, and that, consequently, the more readily fusible metals, such as copper, tin, and lead, were those first known, and of these, copper being the most widely diffused, is supposed to be the first metal used by man. Copper is, however, rather difficult to cast, and it must have been one of the most notable discoveries made by our primeval forefathers, that by a small admixture of tin an alloy was produced that could be easily cast, was capable of being finished to a smooth surface with sandstone or a file, and was very much harder than the original copper itself. Weapons and instruments made of this alloy—that is to say, of bronze—are, therefore, as is well known, characteristic of the early stages of civilization—the termination of the stone age showing occasional evidence of the use of pure copper. In later, as well as probably in prehistoric times, large quantities of the red metal copper were obtained from Cyprus (whence is probably due its modern name). While almost as far back as 4000 B. C., according to Mr. Flinders Petrie, the Egyptians are said to have worked copper mines in the peninsula of Sinai for the production of bronze. But the question, I believe, is still an open one as to where the ancients derived their supplies of tin. Tin, however, is mentioned among the

[a] Address before the Applied Art Section of the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, London, May 17, 1904. Reprinted from the Journal of the Society of Arts, June 10, 1904.

spoils taken from the Midianites, and it has been conjectured that it was mined in some district of Central Asia, because it is also claimed to have been known (though where obtained is not clear) at an equally early date in China, and I believe, also, in Hindustan.

At a later date, but still before the Phœnicians had sailed beyond the pillars of Hercules, tin was unquestionably shipped from Tartessus in the south of Spain, a locality generally identified as the Tarshish of the book of Ezekiel. Still later, as we all know, the same enterprising navigators traded for tin to Cornwall and Devon, the Cornish peninsula, indeed, being identified by the Greeks solely with that metal, and named by them "Cassiterides," the land of tin, a title which, in view of the continuance and richness in the supply of this metal, it might justifiably have retained to days within living memory. Bronze being therefore the earliest known alloy, it may, perhaps, be permissible to suppose that the invention of pewter was due to an accidental reversal of the bronze-making process—that is to say, a small quantity of copper being mixed with a large proportion of tin. Be this as it may, such an alloy was subsequently discovered and found to possess much greater toughness and malleability than the pure white metal, and proved not to be affected by the acid of wine or vinegar (as is bronze). It was, too, both in appearance and durability, to a certain extent a passable substitute for the rarer metal, silver. It has even been suggested as probable that the "tin" mentioned by Homer in his description of the shield of Achilles, the "tin" statue of Dædalus referred to by Aristotle, and other similar artistic works described by ancient writers, was in reality a kind of pewter, since pure tin is very brittle, especially at certain temperatures, and not at all adaptable for working easily with the hammer.

Plautus mentions pewter dishes as being used at a banquet, and Galen recommends the keeping of antidotes and other drugs in vessels of glass, silver, or pewter. It would exceed the bounds of this paper, however, to attempt to follow the not too easily traceable history of pewter through the classic to the middle ages; although I wish to call passing attention to some illustrations of pewter vessels from the extremely interesting collection of Romano-British pewter now in the British Museum. It will suffice to mention that the craft existed in the early days of Greece and Rome, was never absolutely lost, even in the dark ages, and was practiced, more or less, in Saxon and Norman times in England as well as on the Continent. In mediæval days the principal patrons were, of course, the church, especially the monasteries. But I believe no specimens of this period are now extant. And this recalls the unfortunate fact that the facility with which pewter can be remelted and cast has been always fatal to the survival of ancient examples, for whenever pewter objects became badly worn or bruised it was always customary to send them

to the melting pot to be remolded. All the ancient pewter utensils and vessels which have come down to us, are, therefore, those only which could not readily receive damage.

As Viollet-le-Duc points out, pewter in mediæval days was the material in universal use for the tables and sideboards of the middle and upper classes, silver plate appearing only in the royal palaces and in the dwellings of the highest nobles, and then probably in very limited quantities at the upper table on the dais. The peasant and the artisan, it will be remembered, used dishes and platters of wood, or, as it was called, "treen," from whence we are told comes our word "trencher."

THE PEWTERERS' CRAFT IN ENGLAND.

The manufacture of pewter, therefore, during long centuries was a most important industry, the quantity produced was enormous, and from the eighth century, when the mines of Spain, the only others which appear to have been of importance, had ceased to be available in consequence of the Moorish conquest, down to the discovery and working of the tin mines at Perak, our own country possessed a practical monopoly of the metal, for the tin derived from Bohemian mines discovered in the thirteenth century was comparatively small in quantity. I would suggest, therefore, that the major portion of the pewter made in Europe from the days of Roman civilization down to the latter part of the last century, was made from English tin; that is to say, down to the time when the general use of pewter was supplanted by the introduction of earthenware and glass; just as in the same way pewter itself had previously supplanted the general use of wooden ware. Assuming, then, the patriotic postulate that Great Britain so long held a practical monopoly in the supply of tin to the world's markets to be correct, I purpose referring in detail to the tin and pewter industries mainly, in this country only, and the more particularly as they seem to be sufficiently typical of the like industries elsewhere.

Mr. Welch tells us that by far the larger portion of the tin produced in England was absorbed between the Pewterers' Company of London and members of the same craft throughout the country. Bapst says that Bruges was the principal mart for British tin on the continent, and that it was supplied thence to the whole of the north and west of Europe. The tin mines are still called "stannaries" (from stannum, the Latin word for tin), and were at a very early period granted privileges and placed under regulations by the Crown. According to Camden, King John, who was Earl of Cornwall before his accession to the throne, gave the earldom, with its privileges, to his second son, Richard, who derived from the stannaries in royalty and fines an annual income of 200 marks, equal to about £20,000 of

our money. "Great revenues," says the foregoing authority, "were drawn from the same source by the Dukes of Cornwall (beginning with the Black Prince); the royalty in the Middle Ages being as much as 40s. (equal to over £30 of our money), for every thousand pounds weight of dressed tin brought into the market." All tin had to be brought to certain specified towns to pass the Stannary courts, and there be stamped with the mark of the Duchy and the dues paid. After which, according to Mr. Welch, the guilds of the mines could sell to whom they pleased, except that the King or the duke had the right of preemption at the market price. Later the Pewterers' Company of London obtained the right to purchase one-fourth of all the tin brought to London for sale. The tin miners and, in fact, all connected with the industry at the mines were subject only to their own stannary courts of law (except in capital cases), and had even their own prison at their headquarters at Lostwithiel. Generally speaking, the royalties and dues were farmed. It must be understood, too, that whereas in other parts of the United Kingdom only the gold and silver were reserved to the Crown, the tin of Cornwall and Devon has always been the property of the King whoever may have been the owner of the soil. It is a peculiar institution, therefore, of Cornwall and Devon that, on lands not under cultivation, anyone on complying with the necessary formalities can mine for tin on condition of paying the royal dues and one-fifteenth to the landowner. The last assembly of the stannaries was held in 1752.

In common with all the other crafts carried on in the towns, that of the pewterer was doubtless bound by some sort of fraternity or association in the early middle ages, but the first formal institution of a guild was in the reign of Edward III, A. D. 1348. The ordinances for the government of this body were drawn up by its members and submitted to the lord mayor and aldermen, and by them approved. The records of the Craft of Pewterers thus commenced are more or less continuous from the establishment of the still existing Pewterers' Company in the reign of Edward IV, A. D. 1473, and are the material from which Mr. Welch has compiled his interesting history of the Pewterers' Company, published two years ago. These records, too, are not only interesting as a history of the guild, but afford a mass of information as to its relations to the general body of the citizens and the government of London in medieval times. The earliest rules for controlling the craft provide for the assay of all wares and for experts superintending the same. Anyone selling pewter before it passed the proper test, was condemned to forfeit the goods. Still, contrary to the general belief as to custom in such matters, the regulations do not appear to limit the ranks of the workmen to those who duly passed through a formal apprenticeship, but stipulated that either such (or otherwise competent men) should be employed. An

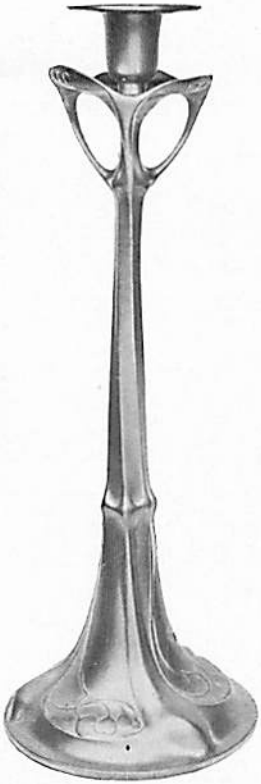


FIG. 1.—CANDLESTICK WITH HOLLOW COLUMN ADAPTABLE FOR ELECTRIC LIGHT. (MODERN GERMAN.)

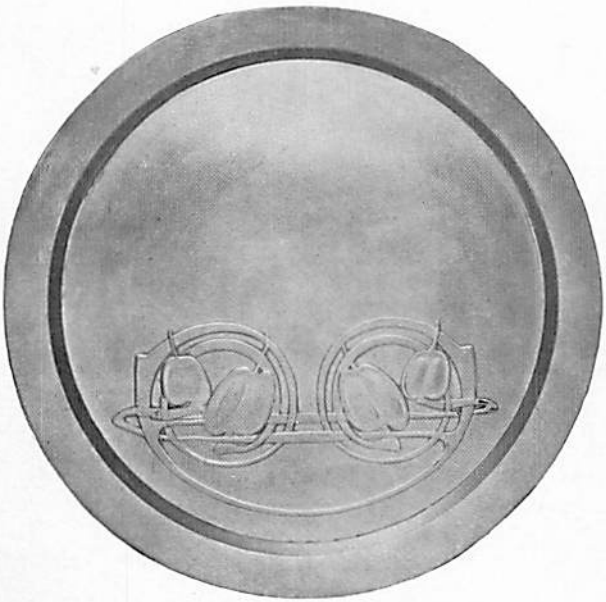


FIG. 2.—CARD TRAY WITH CONCENTRIC ORNAMENT IN LOW RELIEF. (MODERN ENGLISH.)

FIG. 1.—BISCUIT BOX.
(MODERN GERMAN.)

FIG. 2.—FRAME FOR PHOTOGRAPH.
(MODERN GERMAN.)

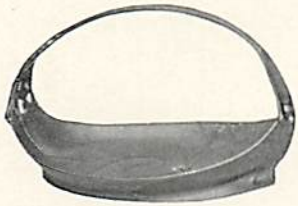


FIG. 3.—CAKE OR FRUIT BASKET. (MODERN GERMAN.)

FIG. 4.—FRAME WITH EAR HANDLES FOR GLASS FLOWER BOWL. (MODERN ENGLISH.)

FIG 5.—TRAY AND LID FOR GLASS BUTTER BOWL.

incidental commentary on the primitive lighting arrangements of the time is contained in the rule that no work is to be done at night, and it is easy to understand that work produced under the flare of a rough flambeau, or, on the other hand, by the meager light of a tallow candle, was not likely to enhance the reputation of the craft. As just mentioned, the penalties for bad workmanship, or for inferior quality of metal, were forfeiture of the articles and fines; suspension from membership was also inflicted in some cases, and for very bad or often-repeated offenses, expulsion. This last practically amounted almost to outlawry, for unless the offending member were readmitted it deprived him of his livelihood; since, if not a member, he could neither buy nor sell nor be employed. No master was to employ a workman without a character from the last employer, nor was he, under any circumstances, to entice away another's workman.

The qualities of pewter were also prescribed to prevent adulteration and inferior quality of metal being used. These regulations were always strictly enforced, and the control of the guild over the trade was fostered by the Crown and Parliament for many ages, its effect being to set up a very high standard of quality, both of material and workmanship, and thus maintain the excellent reputation of English pewter, besides insisting on a code of commercial morality which could not but have a great effect on the members as citizens.

The craft at this time consisted of three grades: The livery, or brethren, from whom were elected the wardens and other officers of the craft; the freemen, or yeomanry, members who had obtained license to set up in business for themselves, and the covenant men (journeymen) and apprentices. One of the rules most strictly enforced was that no members were allowed to go to law with one another, all disputes having to be submitted for decision to the warden and craft, thus keeping in view the idea of brotherhood in the society.

These ordinances, it must be remembered, were promulgated by the body called the Craft of Pewterers; and although there was doubtless a fraternity of workmen prior to this, and probably dating from quite early times, the regulations in question, having now been ratified by the lawful government of the city, first put the control of the trade on a legitimate basis. It must also be remarked that such control, though absolute, was not despotic, an appeal always lying to the lord mayor and aldermen in cases of injustice and oppression. In fact, not only under the Craft of Pewterers, but afterwards under the duly chartered Pewterers' Company, the city fathers often interfered in case of an arbitrary exercise of power, without any appeal to them having been lodged. With all the faults of the paternal government of trade during the middle ages the spirit of the guilds was distinctly democratic, and such regula-

tions were recognized as existing for the benefit of all. The records show, indeed, in a very striking manner the absence of privilege and mere influence, the very master or wardens of the company, in their capacity of craftsmen and dealers, sometimes falling under its discipline.

During the hundred and thirty years which elapsed between the formation of the old body of the Craft of Pewterers and the incorporation of the Pewterers' Company the guild had no hall, but rented premises for their feasts and business meetings from the House of the Austin Friars. Special religious services were observed by the brethren at Christmas, Easter, and the Feast of the Assumption, generally at the Church of the Grey Friars. The expansion of trade and the consequent increase of wealth and influence of the city of London generally during the fifteenth century doubtless excited the ambition of the craft for incorporation as a regular city company, and after delays, probably due to the disturbed state of the government through the Wars of the Roses, a charter was granted by King Edward IV in 1473 creating the existing Pewterers' Company. This charter is still preserved in the archives of the guild, and is a beautifully written and illuminated document in Latin. The powers already de facto possessed by the craft were by this instrument confirmed and extended, one of the most valuable new concessions being that of the right of search for inferior goods and metal below the proper standard of purity. This right not only was to extend over London and its suburbs, but over the whole country, and all provincial mayors and sheriffs were enjoined to assist the company's officers in the work. All such inferior goods or metal was to be seized and sold, the proceeds to be divided between the company and the Crown. These searches, besides fulfilling the primary object of protecting the trade against fraud and bad work, had the result of greatly strengthening the company's importance, and consequently attracting numbers of provincial pewterers into its ranks. The officers of the company who undertook the country searches were accustomed to entertain the provincial master pewterers while on circuit at the expense of the guild, and the country members when in town also enjoyed the hospitality of the city. Hawking goods by peddlers at fairs or markets was strictly forbidden, under pain of fines and confiscation of the articles, the shopkeepers, who of course were at the charge of rent, taxes, and other dues, claiming and enforcing the privilege of keeping the trade in their own hands.

Soon after the establishment of the company and its consequent expansion the need began to be felt for a hall of its own, and accordingly a site was found for the same in Lime street, where the present hall now stands. From very early times it had been the custom for

the wardens to purchase large quantities of tin from the stannaries in bulk and to retail the same at a small profit to the members, a plan doubtless advantageous to all parties, as the profit was applied to the payment of the general expenses of the guild. During the building of the hall, however, which necessarily caused a great drain on their resources, this practice was discontinued, but was resumed on the completion of the work. Part of the site was occupied by tenements built at the same time by the company, and the rents of these and sums received for the hire of the hall for wedding parties appear to have materially increased its income.

In 1504 a statute of the Parliament of King Henry VII abrogated the right of any guild or company to make ordinances without the same having received the assent of the chancellor, treasurer, or other officers of the realm, and at the same time rendered illegal the particular by-law which forbade members of such a fraternity from suing one another in the King's courts. In the same Parliament an act was passed in the interest of the pewterers to suppress hawking by peddlers, the adulteration of metal, and the use of false scales and weights. This statute was confirmed in the fourth year of the reign of Henry VIII.

In accordance with the first-named act of 1504, the ordinances of the company were, after eighteen years' delay, submitted to the King for confirmation in 1522, and duly assented to after the usual presents and gratifications to courtiers and ministers. About this time the importation of foreign pewter was seriously competing with the English trade, and after a considerable amount of lobbying and bribery in Parliament an act was passed in 1533 totally prohibiting the importation of foreign pewter, any so smuggled to be forfeited, together with a fine to the amount of the value. The right of search was again confirmed, and no foreigner was to be employed in the trade under any circumstances and under heavy penalties, and no person of foreign birth to be apprenticed. It was also forbidden for an Englishman to exercise the craft anywhere beyond sea, and thereby teach it to foreigners. Hawking was again forbidden, even when exercised by duly qualified pewterers, none to be sold except in a shop attached to a dwelling house, or in open fairs and markets. It is curious to note here that the Pewterers' Company republished these acts in a book form so late as 1741.

As an instance of the tight hold kept by the company on its members, it may be mentioned that at a court held in March, 1559, it was decreed that Robert West should bring his wife upon Friday next to " reconcile herself to Mr. Cacher and others of the company for her naughty misdemeanor of her tongue toward them."

No man was allowed to set up in business without first submitting to the master and wardens a specimen of his work. In case of dis-

putes between members of the guild, it was often decided that the one of the litigants held to be in the wrong should invite the other with his wife to supper, "and then to be merry together and so to be lovers and friends henceforth."

A very high standard of commercial morality was enforced. For instance, no pewterer was allowed, under a penalty of a fine of 20s. (probably equal to £10 of our money) to say to a prospective customer that his goods were superior in quality to those of others.

The following is a specimen of the amenities obtaining at the time between the English and those of the sister kingdom: "Thomas Wolshire shall pay for his opprobrious words toward Richard Scot, saying 'He played the Scot's part and had the Scot's heart,' 16d." Members had to attend the funerals of their confrères on pain of fine, unless they had a reasonable excuse.

Not only apprentices, but unmarried journeymen lived in their master's house and accompanied him to church on Sundays. They were not to absent themselves until after the afternoon service, when they were permitted to amuse themselves with shooting at the butts and dancing. On the other hand, the company was resolute to defend the rights of members, and once, for example, forbade any of the craft from serving any persons belonging to the Saddlers' Company until a claim against it by a pewterer had been satisfied. Adulteration of metal, as before mentioned, was severely punished, sometimes by expulsion, the culprit being described as acting contrary to his oath and "like no trewe pewterer and to the great slaundre of all the pewterers in London." Sometimes on giving an undertaking and a surety not to repeat the offense he was received back, but was made to pay a substantial fine. In cases when the offense was not very flagrant the punishment was to make the culprit change his mark, this being equivalent to a fine, in consequence of the loss of time and the expense of re-marking his stock and obliterating his old mark.

The statute of apprentices having been passed in 1563, the company, in 1564, issued an ordinance that each member of the livery should be allowed to take one apprentice, the master and wardens might have three, but only on condition that they employed two journeymen. Misbehaving apprentices were sometimes sentenced to be whipped in the hall. No member was allowed to sell old pewter bought secondhand, and no pewterer was to act as scullion even for the lord mayor himself, nor to repair or clean pewter except at his own workshop—a suggestive rule for maintaining the dignity of the craft. Gilding pewter was strictly forbidden, except when given as a present to friends. To insure proper registration, the members of the livery were accustomed to set up their marks in the hall.

It was a custom coexistent with the company for members to be enrolled who were not pewterers. An instance that may be given is that of one Isaac Tucker, who, in the year 1556, was admitted on the recommendation of "Sir Water Rawghley" (sic) on payment of £10, half of the usual fee payable by such members. It is expressly stated that this was done out of respect to "Sir Water," and for no other reason.

No journeyman was allowed to trade on his own account, but must obtain the permit of the company and register his mark or "touch," as it was technically called, and if a tradesman left London and afterwards returned he had to pay his dues for permission to start a second time. No tin was to be exported, except after having passed through the pewterer's hands—that is, in bars or made into pewter ingots.

In the last year of Elizabeth's reign it was forbidden to allow country pewterers and others to enter shops where London men were at work, "whereby they come to great light of further knowledge:" in other words, were finding out trade secrets. The monopolies granted by James I to the farmers of tin had a very prejudicial effect on the industry, and the company accordingly petitioned several times against the practice, which, after a time, was modified by the King. The sixteenth and early part of the seventeenth century must have been the palmy days of the pewter trade. The prosperity of the middle class brought substantial comfort into the homes of the artisan and the laborer, and every fairly well-to-do citizen, among other belongings, seems to have made a point of possessing his "garnish" of pewter, while even the thrifty workman and peasant had a modest quantity. A "garnish," I may here recall, consisted of 12 plates, 12 smaller platters, and 12 dishes. At this period, also, large quantities of pewter were kept in stock by members of the trade for hire to the nobility and gentry as well as to public bodies for banquets and other festivities, the pewterers often helping one another with loans when a great demand was made on their resources.

DECLINE OF THE INDUSTRY.

The causes of the decline of the pewter manufacture in England, as on the Continent, were mainly, as before stated, the competition of cheap earthenware for table and other domestic use, followed by deterioration of quality and design, and consequent loss of influence on the part of the English Pewterers' Company. The guild had for centuries maintained, by rigid enactments, the high quality of English pewter, both for home consumption and for export, and these enactments were enormously aided in their enforcements by the company's right of search. During the troubles of the great civil war, however,

this right fell almost into desuetude, and after the restoration the company found that it is much easier to maintain a privilege than to reimpose one when once practically abrogated. The right of search was felt to be unsuited to the spirit of even that age, and the company never succeeded in getting it legally recognized again. Possibly, as has been suggested, the authorities were indisposed to bring the question before the courts of law; as, in the case of an adverse decision, the right would definitely cease to exist, whereas by leaving the matter unsettled it might be once more established, should a favorable opportunity arise. It is probable also that the practice which we have seen had existed from early times, of admitting into the fellowship of the guild members who were not connected with the craft, became more and more common, until many of the influential so-called "pewterers" had ceased to possess any real business interest in the trade, with the inevitable result that the main object of the existence of the company was neglected.

Efforts, however, were made from time to time to revive the declining industry, but slowly and surely the products of the potteries ousted the plates, dishes, and vessels of pewter, whilst the art of plating inferior metals with silver displaced the old pewter dish covers, cruets, salt cellars, drinking cups, and the like, until at last even in the village inns and hostelries the electroplated tankards displaced the pewter pot. This last fact is significant, since good judges of malt liquor never lost the tradition that ale or stout was of better flavor when drunk from what was called "its native pewter." Thus the once flourishing craft of the pewterer degenerated to the production of some few mere utilities, such as lavatory fittings, public house bar appliances, and plumbers' requisites. Although exclusive reference has been made to English pewter, we must not forget that the pewterers' craft embraced Scotland, notably Edinburgh, as demonstrated by the "Tappit Hen" and "Christening Tankard," which examples by the courtesy of Mr. Walter Churcher are, with others from his collection, here for our inspection this evening.

MARKS.

Great numbers of old touches or makers' marks have come down to us, but it is, unfortunately, the fact that no register of them exists, and unless the name is mentioned they are, therefore, difficult to identify. Much interesting information from the collector's point of view has been written on the subject of marks, but it will suffice for the purpose of this paper to say that no piece of pewter was allowed to be sold without a mark, and that this rule extended to the pewter mountings on stone jugs and tankards; and it is thought probable that the crowned "Rose" mark was in some measure the official "touch" of the Pewterers' Company, being one of their armorials,

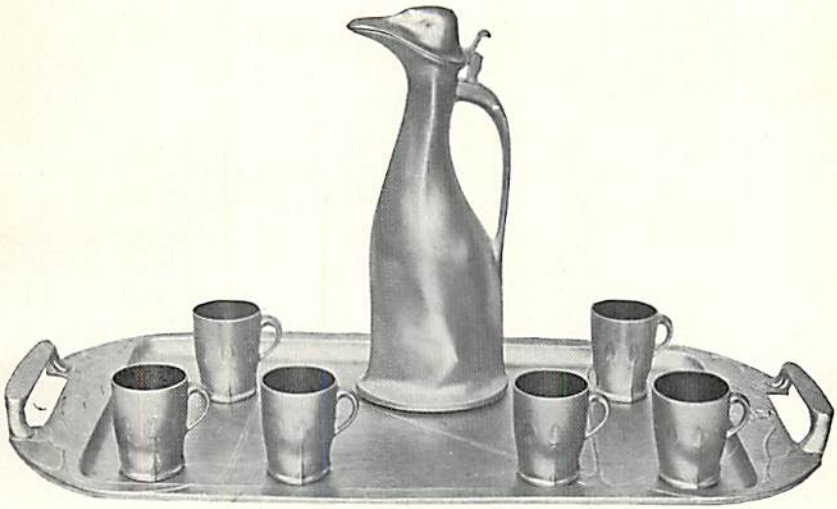


FIG. 1.—LIQUEUR SET AND TRAY, WITH FLORAL ORNAMENT IN LOW RELIEF (MODERN GERMAN.)

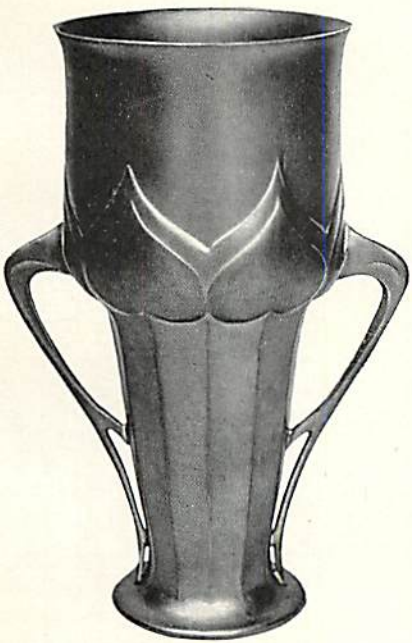


FIG. 2.—TWO-HANDLED VASE. (MODERN GERMAN.)

FIG. 3.—HOT-WATER JUG, WITH ORNAMENT IN LOW RELIEF. (MODERN ENGLISH.)

FIG. 1.—COFFEE POT, SPOUT MADE IN ONE PIECE WITH THE BODY. (MODERN GERMAN.)

FIG. 2.—GLASS CLARET JUG, WITH METAL MOUNTINGS. (MODERN ENGLISH.)

FIG. 3.—BEER TANKARD, WITH HANDLE. (MODERN ENGLISH.)

while the double "f" was a penal mark sometimes affixed to the work of a member who had been found guilty of malpractices, and signifying, as it did, false, the result commonly was his being obliged to join the ranks of the journeymen of the craft.

ALLOYS.

And now I must refer to the alloys and the process of actual manufacture. It is still questionable, I believe, what were the precise alloys and the relative proportions used in the manufacture of ancient pewter; and, indeed, down to our own day the word "pewter" has an elastic meaning. I gather, however, that some among the old examples show a large admixture of lead, as, for instance, a vase handle of the fourth century of our era, dug up in Rome, which, according to Bapst, was assayed in France early in the last century and found to contain about three-sevenths lead, without any trace of copper. This must, therefore, be considered as of very inferior quality. By way of explanation it has been suggested, indeed, that tin procured with difficulty from a remote and barbarous region was almost as dear as silver, and that this may account for the low grade of pewter being in use in Rome. On the other hand, however, Mr. Gowland's analysis of varying examples of Roman pewter show that the question of cost was by no means invariably considered. His results give for what he terms "typical" Roman pewter: 72.36 tin to 26.90 lead, and 70.58 tin to 27.62 lead; that is, to put it roughly, three parts tin and one part lead.

According to Mr. Welch, in the ordinances of the old English craft of pewterers two qualities of pewter are described, the first of tin with a small admixture (supposed to be about 5 per cent) of what is called "kettle brass," otherwise known as "peak" metal, the peak metal being a compound of copper with some other metal not definitely ascertained, and probably always kept a mystery of the guild. The second quality was originally called "vessel of tin," being a compound of tin and lead in the proportion of 1 hundredweight of tin to not exceeding 26 pounds of lead. This alloy was afterwards known as "lay," or lead, metal.

Some old pieces of the Elizabethan and Stuart periods were assayed two years ago by my friend, Mr. Haseler, when conducting some experiments on behalf of Liberty & Co., and besides tin he found them to consist of small quantities of copper, with traces of antimony, the latter probably being added for the hardening and cleansing of the other metals. These pieces were of what is known as the old first quality of pewter. We have seen that the craft always guarded most jealously the good reputation which the English pewter held, and that it included the keeping up of the requisite standard of purity in the metal. It was for this purpose, indeed,

that the Pewterers' Company possessed and exercised their peculiar powers. Thus, as has been noted, all tin brought to London was liable to be assayed by the company's inspector before being sold, and it could be seized and forfeited if of inferior quality, no matter to whom it might belong. It was also ordered (in 1438) that all articles (in accord with a published list) should be of a certain standard weight, thus insuring to purchasers a definite quantity of the metal. This was doubtless an excellent rule to prevent fraud when recasting was so constantly resorted to in order to make good the constant wear and tear to which pewter articles were liable at a time when they were used for practically all domestic purposes. Thus, it was a definite rule that "chargeours" of the largest size were to weigh three-fourths hundredweight per dozen, i. e., 7 pounds each, and small "bolles" 13 pounds per dozen.

In the present day and of late years many experiments have been made and various modifications have been tried in the composition of pewter, nearly every manufacturer having his own particular formula. For the production of modern pewter goods aspiring to be classed as artistic in design, the inferior alloy containing lead is discarded altogether (except by the Japanese in the manufacture of their antimony ware). And to avoid as far as possible the use of copper, which some consider to have a bad effect on the color, tin is nowadays alloyed in the proportion of about 5 per cent of antimony, or bismuth, or both. An excess of copper imparts a brownish tint, whilst the use of lead (always be it remembered the alloy of the so-called second quality pewter) imparts the well-known gray color tone which, be it acknowledged, has for some of us a decided charm. Still, as we know, if lead is used beyond a certain proportion it renders the pewter dangerous for the use of liquors containing acids, such as beer, wine, vinegar, etc., by reason of the chemical action they set up, the excess lead producing poisonous oxides.

A series of experiments were made some years ago under the auspices of the French Government, which resulted in a law being passed prescribing the proportion of lead which may safely be used, and this was fixed for France at 16½ per cent. The old pewterers appear to have had one advantage over the modern in the fact that their lead nearly always contained a small percentage of silver, which (unfortunately for the pewter trade) science has enabled the modern smelters to extract. That is to say, the fascinating luster which many old pieces of pewter possess is generally ascribed to the presence of this small proportion of silver in alloy. Modern German pewter, as compared with modern English, contains a much larger proportion of antimony, with some bismuth, and gives out when bent or bitten (which the modern English does in a far less degree) the well-known distinguishing crackle or cri. Modern German pewter

is produced principally in Nuremburg, Crefeld, and Munich. The German alloys have, in my opinion, however, the disadvantage of being more brittle than those used in this country, and I refer particularly to those used by the company with which my own name is associated. The alloys used by it are, as before mentioned, the results of careful trials made by my friend, Mr. Haseler, a partner in and director of Liberty & Co.'s works at Birmingham. His endeavor has been to reproduce a metal similar, as far as possible, to the best of the old English pewter, and in point of solidity the new alloy is, I believe, unequaled. The exact constituents and proportions used are regarded as a trade secret by my colleagues, as is the case with the composition of the alloy used by our German friends, although both could, doubtless, be readily assayed.

MANUFACTURE.

Pewter work is either cast, spun, or hammered, and the methods of manufacture differ in no essential in the present day from those of the olden times. Most of the old pewter was cast in molds of brass, which were highly finished inside and fitted with great nicety. But specially prepared iron is preferred nowadays, as higher skill in the working of the more enduring metal has been attained. Pewter can be cast of any degree of thinness, and is turned out of the mold in a state requiring a minimum of work in the finishing process, apart from the inevitable polishing and soldering. In the active days of the Pewterers' Company the guild was accustomed to purchase and to have made to order a large number of molds, which were let out on hire to its members. The latter, of course, also possessed stocks of molds of their own, often held in shares by different tradesmen. The reason for this arrangement was the great expense of producing properly made molds, and by this means the expense was shared by members to mutual advantage. The elaborate pieces, incrusted with ornament in relief, produced on the Continent during the Renaissance, especially in the sixteenth century, were cast in a different way, i. e., in sand, and in sections afterwards soldered together. These pieces, being produced in small quantities, the cost of a metal mold would have been prohibitive, since even for plainer work it was necessary to spread the cost of a mold over a great number of articles. The articles being cast in sand, however, left a finely granulated surface, requiring a considerable amount of extra labor to finish them by polishing and chasing.

One of the most satisfactory pieces of old English pewter, and perhaps the example most frequently referred to, is a large dish in the South Kensington Museum, of which, by the courtesy of Sir Caspar Purdon Clarke, I have been enabled to bring a sketch here to-night.

It will be seen that it is engraved with the royal arms and a floral border of simple design, and bears an inscription dated 1662. The engraving on it is plainly but boldly executed, and has the great merit of obtaining that too often ignored quality, namely, suitability. But, as we have seen, the quality of English pewter, as far as regards the metal employed, was always unrivaled, and the strength and excellence of the workmanship was also equal to the best. In the department of design, however, we have nothing to show in old pewter to compare in elaboration with some of the pieces still existing, the work of continental craftsmen. I greatly prefer, however, the taste of our own workmen, who made their platters and bowls almost always plain (and, therefore, more easily cleaned), depending on the shapes alone for the good effect of the cups, tankards, and measures. The shapes of our old craftsmen's hollow ware are almost always excellent and generally far superior to the classical ewers and vessels produced by the Frenchmen of the Renaissance. Our rivals on the Continent, indeed, appear to have made the great mistake throughout of overelaboration (for pewter is essentially a homely metal), with the inevitable result of subordination of shape to ornament. Some of the ewers and other vessels made by Briot, who has been called the Cellini of the pewterers, are, however, dignified, in addition to being elaborate. But too many of the show pieces in the museums and private collections by German makers of the Renaissance period are both inferior in execution and absurdly overdone in decoration.

The solder used is still the hard solder of the middle ages, made of tin and lead, sometimes with a small proportion of bismuth, and when skillfully done the process insures not only mechanical adhesion, but forms an alloy of itself between the solder and the metals joined. The old pewterers strictly forbade the use of soft solder (i. e., solder with too much lead); and although handles of jugs, etc., and the ears of dishes were at one time soldered an ordinance made in the reign of Elizabeth decreed that in future they were to be cast in one piece. Modern hollow ware is often "spun," as it is technically called, very much in the same way as clay on a potter's wheel. The metal is forced into the shape required by a blunt steel tool onto a wooden "chuck," or block, of the shape of the vessel to be made, and much of the ornament is worked by hand with the hammer and chaser. Some pieces are entirely hammered up from the sheets of pewter, and therefore bear the impress of individuality to a more marked degree.

THE REVIVAL.

I now come to the concluding and the more practical side of my subject—the revival of the pewterer's craft as an art industry. And here I would again allude to the notable paper on pewter read by

Mr. Gardner ten years ago, and the interesting fact that no sooner had the echoes of his words of lamentation died away than the cloud which threatened extinction to the industry slowly lifted, and from that day the erstwhile moribund craft has been struggling back to life. Among the controlling influences tending toward this result a certain firm, whose name I need not mention, had, shortly after that time, adopted for designs in silver plate and jewelry the motif and lines of ancient Celtic ornament. The results proving fairly satisfactory, the question arose, Why not apply the like forms and designs to the manufacture of pewter? Thus, rightly or wrongly, the pioneers of the revival of Celtic ornament decided to work in pewter on somewhat parallel lines with silver, and came to the conclusion that nothing is produced by the silversmith which may not, as occasion arises, be made in pewter, but with the distinct proviso that any attempt to imitate the precious metal should be avoided. For pewter, however, only modifications of Celtic forms were used, and these were soon supplemented by floral and plant motives to which the distinguishing name of "Tudric" was given. This modest effort was, at all events, the first step toward the reawakening of the pewter industry, and up to the present it remains the only effort that has been made in England. It attained some commercial success, and, directly and indirectly, it has been the means of the revival, so far as a revival has at present progressed. But the ideal of modern English pewter, as conceived by its sponsors, aims at more than a commercial success—it aims at a high standard in design, a high standard in workmanship, and a high standard in the quality of the metal, and it strives to avoid overmodeling and overchasing. It would devote attention to shapes being properly adapted to the several purposes for which the objects are made, it would see that the constructive lines be graceful, well contrasted, and strong, and that ornament, when used at all, be used with restraint, and grow out of the general design. These excellent intentions, unfortunately, are not always carried out, for faulty and eccentric notes strike out from time to time. These, however, it is confidently believed, are mere accidents by the way, and will doubtless become less and less frequent. The Germans are, practically, the only Continental representatives of the modern pewter industry, and they, having observed the new note struck in England, appear to have seized upon the fact that a change in the fashion of their own wares was desirable. So, forthwith, they proceeded to produce what they conceived to be an improvement upon the English work, and translated it into the fantastic motif which it pleases our Continental friends to worship as l'art nouveau. Still, alongside the foolish and undesirable, it must in justice be admitted that the Germans have recently produced many original and pleasing designs in pewter. I allude, particularly

to the work of Messrs. J. P. Kayser & Sons, Messrs. Walters Schert & Co., and Messrs. Lichtinger & Co. The present aim of the German pewterers seems to make for rather different results in certain details than with our designers, the ornament being made sharper and higher in relief, and the excess of antimony, or some similar alloy, used enables them to execute this kind of casting with great facility. As compared with goods made in this country the surface manipulation and finish of German goods is often more careful and satisfactory. On the other hand, our alloys are much less brittle, our work flatter and broader in treatment, and thus, it will, I think, be found that our designs and methods are more suitable to the capabilities of the metal, and are therefore better calculated to permanently advance the pewter industry.

As for the lines on which to advance, it should be remembered that for historic mansions and houses where the apartments are furnished after the style of the Renaissance, and wherever magnificence is fitting and desired, a rich and sumptuous array of costly silver plate is doubtless in harmony with its surroundings; but for the majority of households I venture to think that pewter is equally desirable for the many decorative adjuncts of refined and restful furnishing, and the more particularly as it can be obtained at modest cost. On this latter point we are continually being told that objects of art should not be regarded as luxuries, but should be easily attainable by rich and poor alike. Everything, therefore, which tends toward the production of useful and beautiful objects at prices within the reach of all classes should be welcomed. And herein, perchance, in these days of culture, are to be found the future possibilities of pewter, for its soft neutral tone and subdued luster harmonizes with any scheme of decorative coloring. Those, too, who object to the use of electroplate as an imitation of silver may be content to accept equally good forms in solid pewter in its place, while those who are already the fortunate possessors of treasures in pewter may contemplate with equanimity the advent of the burglar.

The manufacturer, however, realizes that as by a process of natural evolution pewter has ousted wood from the kitchen, so china in its turn has inevitably supplanted pewter. The fact must be squarely faced by him, therefore, that it is useless to reproduce the large majority of those many fascinating forms in old pewter, where the purposes which brought them into being are now attained by the substitution of other and more appropriate wares. For instance, however beautiful their form and patina, it would be absolutely useless to tempt a modern housewife to purchase pewter plates and vessels for tea and table use, now that spotless and dainty white

FIG. 1.—TRIPOD BOWL, TO HOLD GLASS DISH FOR FLOWERS. (MODERN ENGLISH.)

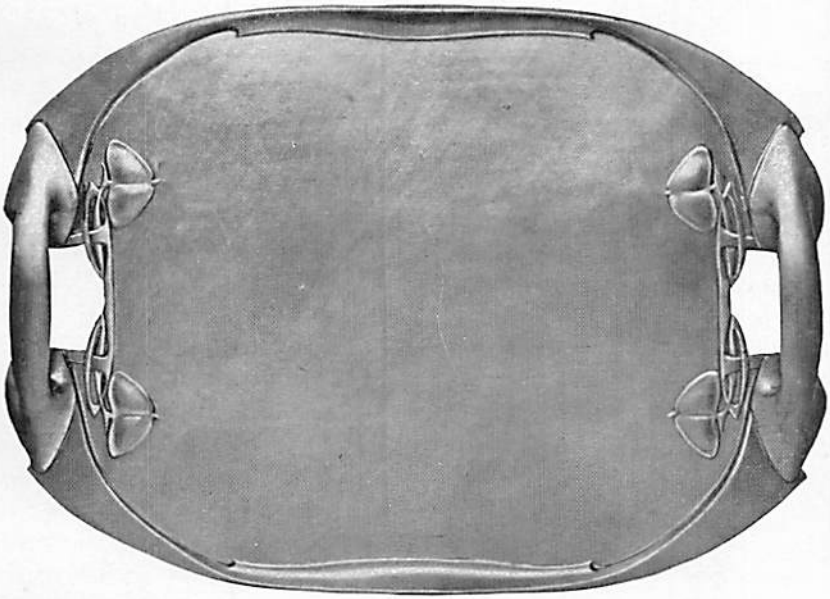


FIG. 2.—TRAY WITH GRIP HANDS. HOLLOW RIM GIVES ADDITIONAL STRENGTH. (MODERN ENGLISH.)

FIG. 1.—ENTRÉE DISH AND COVER, WITH ORNAMENT IN LOW RELIEF.
(MODERN ENGLISH.)

FIG. 2.—CIGAR BOX, WITH HAMMERED ORNAMENT SET WITH TURQUOISE.
(MODERN ENGLISH.)

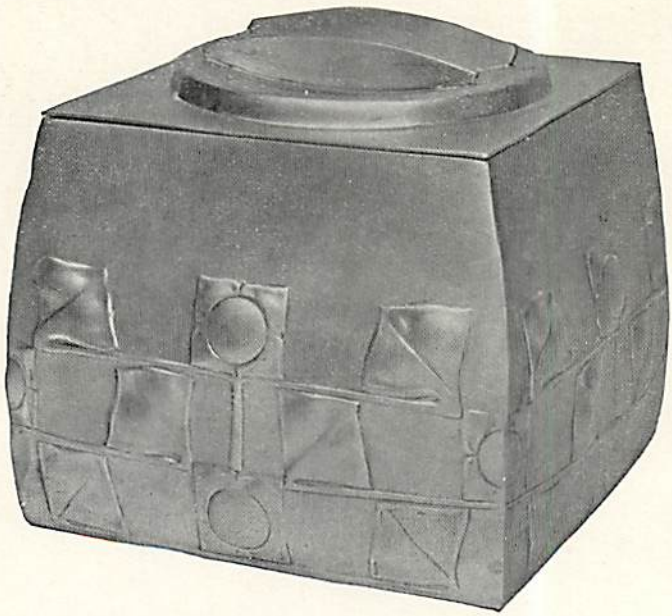


FIG. 3.—BISCUIT BOX, WITH HANDLES ON LID ARRANGED IN NOVEL FORM.
(MODERN ENGLISH.)

porcelain cups and dishes are obtainable at equal or less cost. A recent author tells us, indeed, that "it is a good thing to rub pewter over with a rag saturated with vaseline," but surely the process appeals to the palate as the reverse of appetizing, and is calculated further to emphasize the housewife's objection to pewter for culinary and table use. Then, too, besides the wares made for the service of food and other purposes requiring easy and perfect cleansing there is a quite considerable range of other things once made in pewter, which an altered state of conditions has rendered useless. These also are undesirable for the modern pewterer to reproduce. The author just quoted writes, however, in reference to some of them: "Among other instances of articles in pewter which have now unfortunately ceased to be made are snuffboxes, candle boxes, table fountains, and lavabos, or hanging washstands." Now, while sympathizing with collectors in regretting the disappearance of the good work of bygone days, it would be a more helpful attitude for the manufacturer to try to substitute useful objects for the useless ones. Instead of table fountains and candle boxes one might suggest the production of electroliers, jardinieres, and presentation caskets, challenge cups, card trays, and a host of et cæteras of the flower vase order. We have, indeed, an example of how a similar evolution was brought about by the Japanese metal workers, who, when they found that sword hilts and their inlaying were no longer required, transferred their attention to the invention of the cheap and clever antimony ware with which they have since flooded the European markets. And this antimony ware, be it remembered, is a branch of the pewterer's trade.

And now we come to the two questions which I have been working up to, i. e., (i) are the pewter wares now being made equal in quality and design to the average work of the best periods of bygone days? and (ii) what are the future prospects of pewter as an art industry?

The latest critic on this subject, the writer just referred to, has not one good word for modern pewter. He says:

> In striving to arrive at "art" pewter the manufacturers have produced the wrong kind of alloy. It is far too crude and white, and has a meretricious look, besides the fatal fault of almost looking like silver or electroplate. Another fault is that it is far too brittle and hard. There is no nice feeling in it; it is, unlike old pewter, hard and repulsive to the touch. Again, * * * satisfactory designs for pewter can not be extemporized by any designer, however cunning he may be at catching the public taste, so called, with a gaudy cretonne or a meaningless wall paper.

Happily, it is needless to add, there are many who hold more hopeful views on this subject, who consider a distinct advance has been made already, and who believe that there is good promise for the future.

DISCUSSION.

The chairman, in moving the vote of thanks to the author, said:

The charm of art was never so close, intimate, and grateful as when it was conferred on the familiar articles of utility about our hearths and homes. Its charm infinitely transcends in value the prices of the materials on which it is lavished, and can be equally imparted to the costliest substances—black ebony and white ivory, silver and gold, and precious stones—and to comparatively worthless substances—clay, iron, copper, tin, brass, and pewter, and ordinary woods—provided the artistic manipulation of them is sympathetically adapted to the distinguishing natural qualities—and the defects of the same—of these materials and to the uses the "objets d'art" fashioned of them are intended to fulfill. Just ten years ago Mr. J. Starkie Gardner gave us his scholarly paper (Journal, June 1, 1904) on "Pewter," and in it, as Mr. Lasenby Liberty has told us, expressed a regret that pewter had not shared up to that date in the great artistic renaissance of the reign of Queen Victoria. This observation was at once taken up by Kayser, and by Lichtinger in Germany, and in this country also by Mr. Lasenby Liberty, who for the past ten years has devoted himself, with the enthusiasm and resolution with which he pursues all his artistic enterprises, to the resuscitation of the ancient and once flourishing and famous British art of pewtery. Mr. Lasenby Liberty to-night has fully and clearly, and in the spirit of the most impartial criticism, told us of all that has been attempted and done in this respect by his firm, and from the specimens of their work placed before us and the illustrations of them in his lantern slides we can judge of the difficulties of the undertaking to which Mr. Lasenby Liberty has set himself as a labor of love and of the measure of success with which these difficulties have been overcome. What is required of all such articles is that while artistic they should never lose their utilitarian and homely character—that is, the character impressed upon them through untold generations of rough and ready domestic service. If this character is overlooked or ignored, or in any way blurred or masked, either in the form or the embellishments of these articles, if, indeed, it is not directly indicated and emphasized by their artistic treatment, the art elaborated on them has been wasted and is worthless, however unencumbered by purposeless conventionalities and unsignificant symbols or however original in conception and sincere in execution. The "summam alicui rei dare" to achieve here is directness, simplicty, and balance of form, the subordination of any ornamentation to the form and to the interpretation of its function, and the perfect adjustment of both form and ornamentation to the materials of which these articles are severally framed and to the human purposes they have to subserve. The decoration must not only be responsive to form and use, but as reticent as it is significant, and must avoid all excess. There must be no straining after originality, which, unless it comes of the rarest and richest genius, tends to languish under weak hands into nerveless and contemptible affectations and conceits and in strong ones to run riot in violent and offensive eccentricities. In France the contortionists of l'art nouveau have reached the basest artistic degradation in the studied pruriency of the nude decorative bronzettes with which the shop windows of all Europe have been crowded during the past three or four years. Compare them for a moment with the exquisite modeling and the purity of conception which is their animating soul, of the clay figurines of the coroplasts of ancient Tanagra and Thisbe, Cyme, and Myrina and you at once realize the gulf fixed between the inspirations of artistic genius and the diabolical subtleties of merely manipulative dexterity. There is, moreover, nothing new in this l'art nouveau. It is, in

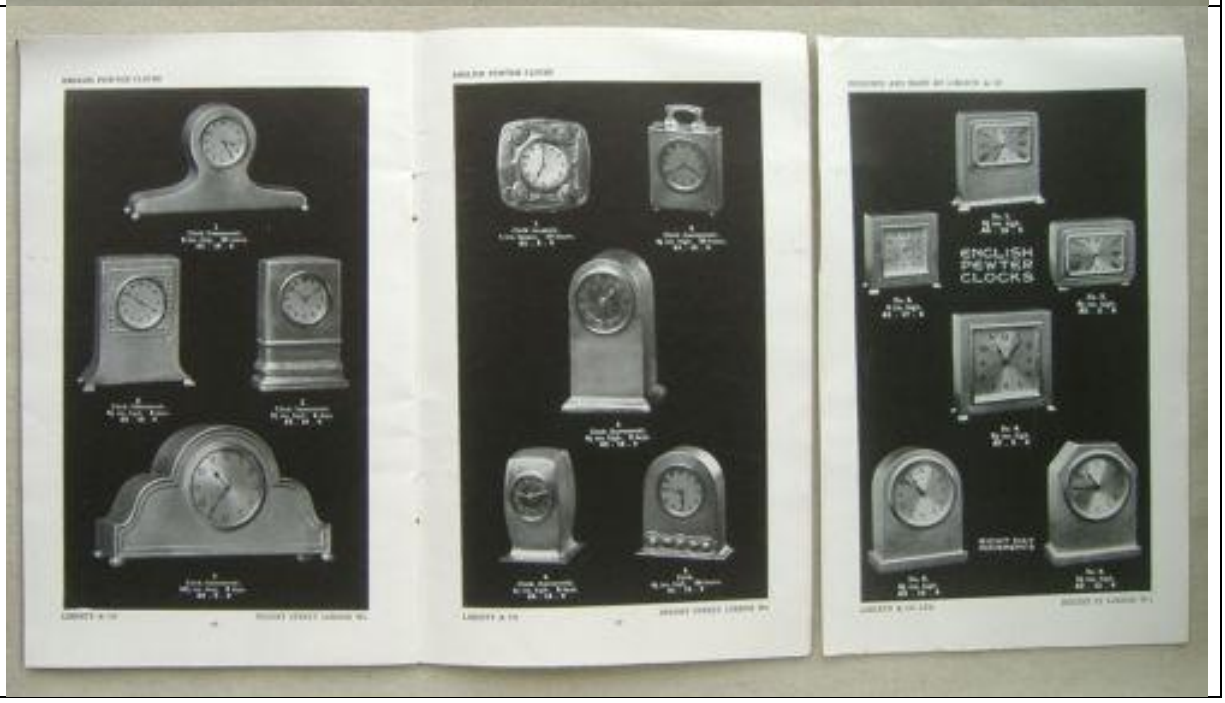
its "motifs," the primitive art of all savage races, to which the highest mechanical perfection is found given in the art of ancient Egypt and in much of the ritual art of modern Japan, which Celtic art all but touched with spiritual perfection, and which in our time has been brought into vogue by the marvelous black and white drawings of Aubrey Beardsley, a man of undoubted genius, but who, it should always be remembered, received his artistic training as an architectural draftsman, and again by the seductive jewelry of Lalique and cameo cut glass of Gallé. But at its best it is not of true artistic inspiration, but an intellectually conceived and calculated mannerism, foredoomed in the hands of mediocrities to the fate of all mechanical imitations. Truly artistic decoration in its whole scheme and in every detail is ever as spontaneous and free as the beauty and grace and sweetness of the "all a-blowin', all a-growin'" flowers of the Thames side meadows of a morning in May.

ENGLISH PEWTER

DESIGNED & MADE BY

LIBERTY & CO


ENGLISH PEWTER VASES
LIBERTY & CO
REGENT STREET LONDON W1
ENGLISH PEWTER VASES
LIBERTY & CO
REGENT STREET LONDON W1


ENGLISH PEWTER CLOCKS

The seller described the above extracts as from -

"English Pewter"designed & made by Liberty & Co, Regent Street, London, W1.

32 pages of b/white photographs of the pewter with prices. An additional loose sheet depicting more 'English Pewter Clocks', (also priced)

(No date is given for the catalogue but circa 1900 - 1910 won't be far out!)

The grey card covers are intact and the contents are securely bound, clean and complete. There are no loose, torn or damaged pages and no inscriptions.

The catalogue measures 9¾"x 6".

'The majority of the designs are original in conception, but in a few examples, such as Tankards, Plates and Porringers, old forms have been used'.