

SOME NOTES ON THE *FORMS* OF
PEWTER WARE
BY H. J. L. J. MASSÉ

IN considering the "form" of the various types of exhibits at the show in Clifford's Inn Hall, the one salient feature that impressed itself on the mind at every turn was the simplicity of the earlier work. Modern work was barred, for, interesting as it might have been to some, with its mad eccentricities of form and vagaries unspeakable in the way of ornament, it could only have challenged comparison, and on rather unequal terms.

The simplicity was due to the fact that the early pewter was designed for use and not for display in the house. No vessel with queer handles, impossible curves and angles, fragile lids, could have been produced in the times when we had master pewterers who knew their business and their customers' requirements. To the innate simplicity of the earlier pewter the beauty is largely due, and it is this simplicity which appeals to the cultured eye to-day.

The methods of construction were in the main responsible for the simple flowing lines of everyday objects—at any rate in English pewter. With the ornate foreign specimens it is not proposed to deal, at any rate in this notice.

As the method of manufacture was, for the majority of pewter articles, that of casting, followed by the process of finishing by turning in a lathe, the form is in nearly all cases cylindrical. In fact, for most articles of domestic use this is the typical form; it is easily got, by means of moulds; the ware is easily repaired when occasion arises, and easily cleaned.

Without specifying any exhibits in detail, it might be said that all the drinking vessels fell into this category.

From round to square is an easy transition for any one working with a soft material such as pewter, though the objects of this shape are not common. Cruets and chis-matories are said by Bapst to have been made square, but it is the bases that are found square, not the bodies of the vessels. The one exhibit that was square was a diminutive coffee-pot or chocolatière, the spout being formed by one of the angles. The lid was detachable and the handle was fixed at the corner opposite to the spout. The ornament was cast and subsequently chased, and in all probability the four sides were soldered together, though there was no trace of this to be seen.

Rectangular objects were common enough, as all the ordinary inkstands exhibited were of that form. One lent by Mr. Roland T. Mole, with two small drawers, was almost a perfect square; another, lent

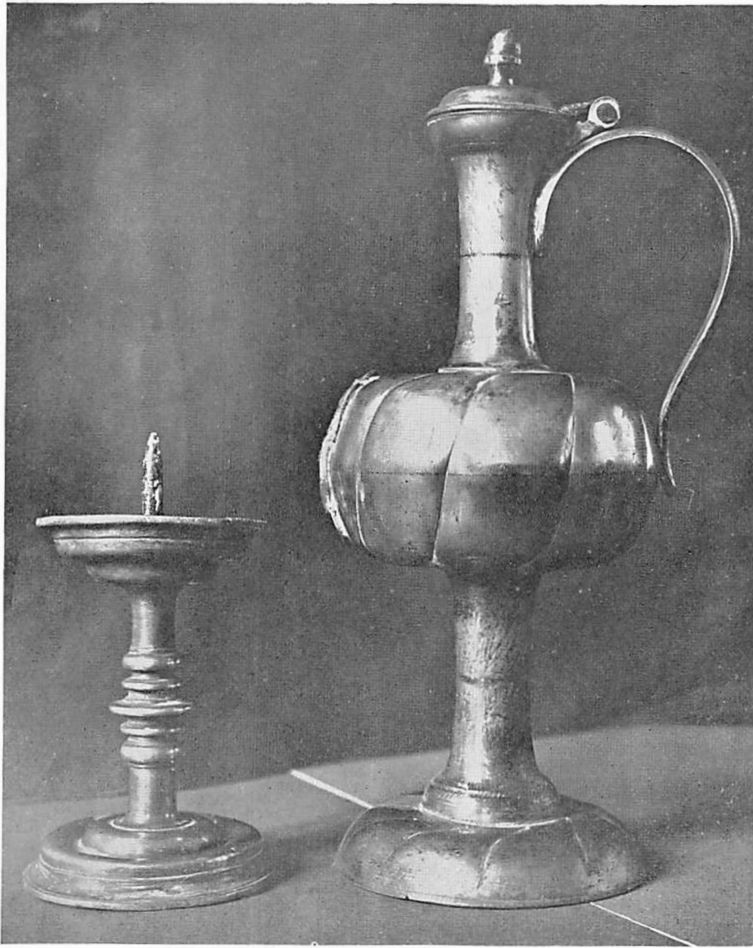


FOOD-BOTTLE OR FOOD-CARRIER
FROM THE COLLECTION OF H. LONGDEN, ESQ.

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by Sir Thomas Snagge, had a square base and a circular superstructure. Mr. Navarro's little specimen, in the form of a reliquary with a gabled top, was especially interesting. One newspaper critic, who certainly had never seen the inside, stoutly maintained that it was a reliquary.

The eighteenth century ink-stands, mounted on little balls or lion-heads for feet, were eminently practical, as their lids were a perfect protection to the ink-containers within. Amongst the finest specimens were those

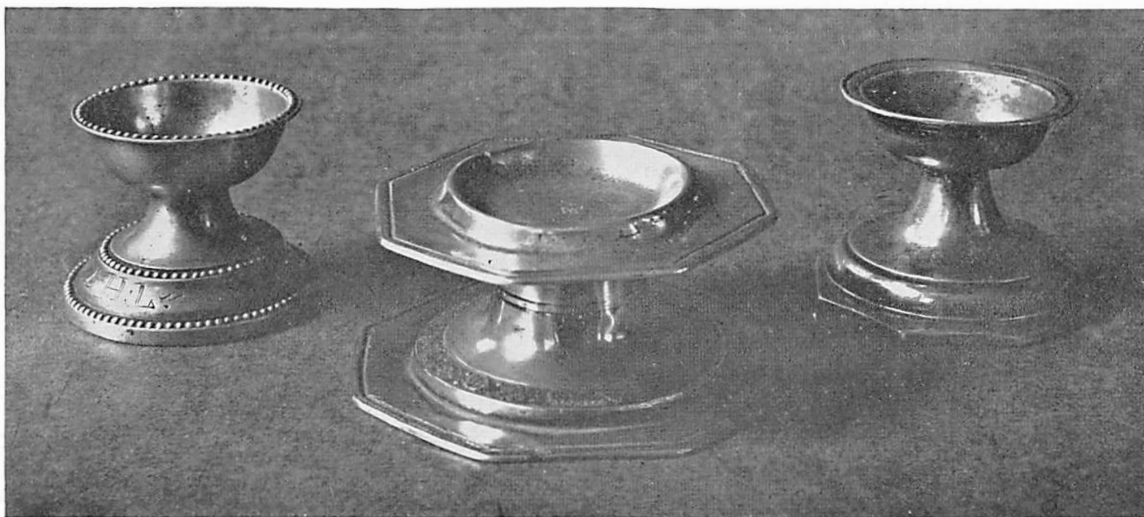


PRICKET CANDLESTICK (GERMAN) FROM THE COLLECTION OF H. J. ELLIOTT, ESQ.
FLAGON (GERMAN) FROM THE COLLECTION OF CAPTAIN YOUNG

belonging to Mr. R. Martin Holland, Mr. Roland T. Mole, and Mr. Cecil C. Brewer.

A rectangular tea-caddy, lent by Mrs. Gerald Walker, was of special interest, as it was inlaid with brass, the ornament consisting of a Russian coat-of-arms.

Hexagonally-shaped vessels were few, but are of the kind described in the catalogue, for want of a better name, as food-bottles. Why they should be hexagonal is a mystery, and why they should have screw-on lids is not clear. A



THREE SALT CELLARS FROM THE COLLECTIONS OF
1. F. INIGO THOMAS, ESQ. 2. C. F. C. RUCKMASTER, ESQ. 3. A. F. DE NAVARRO, ESQ.



VARIOUS TYPES OF CUPS AND CHALICES



CANDLESTICKS OF VARIOUS TYPES

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bayonet-catch joint or fastening would have been far simpler to make and far easier to fasten and unfasten when required. The earliest, those of the Rev. T. Buncombe (1672) and Mr. H. Longden (1673), were the best, those of 1848 and 1850 were of poor quality and absolutely commonplace.

The octagonal form for any vessel was not represented in the exhibition.

With regard to the form of the plates and dishes, the greater number were round, the form again being due to the fact that the ordinary plates of daily life were cast, then finished by being turned in a lathe, and finally hammered to give extra strength and solidity. A fine dish, 28" in diameter, dating back to the middle of the seventeenth century, was lent by Mr. H. V. Reade.

One large plate or dish was distinctly oblong, with a very narrow rim. No specimen was actually exhibited of the semi-circular type resembling the dripping-pan, so common in

the days of the roasting-jack. A very fine set of octagonal plates and dishes, part of a full set, were lent by Sir Thomas Crawley Boevey, Bart. They were in fine preservation and none the worse for their 150 years of existence, though of late years they have not been in actual use. Tankards and flagons may well be classed together in one group. The finest tankard was no doubt that lent by Mr. A. B. Yeates. It was once the Guild hanap of a Corporation of Locksmiths and Gunsmiths. It was massive yet eminently graceful in form, and its ornament thoroughly well done. Another fine specimen was that lent by Sir Samuel Montagu, a most delicate

piece of inlaid work. The whole body of the vessel was inlaid with brass, which was subsequently engraved. Every detail was evidently wrought by one who loved his work and took the keenest pleasure in doing it well. Another fine specimen was lent by Mrs. Donkin, one formerly the property of some Guild in a town in North Germany.

It is a curious fact that our English Guilds do not seem to have cared for pewter guild-cups. Most of our existing Corporation plate is silver or silver-gilt.

A fine specimen, earlier somewhat in date, was lent

by Captain Young. It had a narrow neck and stem, and a bulbous body composed of two hemispheres soldered together. The whole piece was a triumph of workmanship, being built up altogether of eleven pieces.

Of Church flagons the finest was that, dated 1753, lent by Dr. H. B. Tait. Tall, and gracefully tapering from base to top, it was admired by everybody.

Though dated 1753 it was un-

doubtedly of earlier date. Mr. T. Charbonnier lent another fine specimen, unfortunately imperfect in the lower part of its base. It was extremely light pure metal, and had apparently been made by a silversmith rather than by a pewterer.

Drinking cups, beakers, chalices, and drinking tankards were well represented, with but little variety. Mr. Churcher lent some representative types of eighteenth and nineteenth century drinking cups from his collection. Perhaps the most graceful of all was a small half-pint mug without a handle, inscribed, "The Vulcan, Brockley," lent by Mr. Thackeray Turner.

The beakers, of the usual date, *i.e.*, William and



ITALIAN DISH, VERY SHALLOW
FROM THE COLLECTION OF F. A. WHITE, ESQ.

The Connoisseur

Mary, seem to show from their shape that they were survivals, or at any rate descendants, of the earlier horn drinking vessels, with the addition of a moulded base, and a turned-out lip, both features being added to give strength in what was found to be the weakest points.

Of tankards with lids, the earliest specimen was that lent by the Rev. F. Meyrick-Jones. It was small in size, with a perfectly flat lid and a pretty little thumb-piece.

One lent by Mr. A. F. de Navarro was a little later in date and slightly larger in size, but an excellent specimen. Both of these were unmarked by their makers. The former was quite plain, the latter ornamented with sprays of flowers in "wriggled" work.

A fine specimen dated 1694 was lent by the Worshipful Company of Pewterers.

German student-tankards were represented by exhibits lent by Mr. E. P. Warren and Mr. Hugh Byran, together with several varieties of the type lent by Mr. J. Cahn.

The common type is that with gradually tapering sides, or that with sides which decrease the taper and increase it again slightly at the top. These foreign tankards are often marred by the subsequent addition of feet, and by thumb-pieces out of all proportion, both in size and weight, to the lid which they are required to open.

A fine plain gallon measure, with the Romford mark, was lent by Mr. Wentworth Huyshe. This was the post-boys' usual vessel for drinking from in the few minutes allowed for changing horses at the wayside inns and posting-houses.

Chalices, or cups called chalices, were exhibited in great numbers. The chief types are shown in the accompanying illustration.

Mr. T. Charbonnier contributed a genuine chalice with two handles.

Of Candlesticks and their types much might be written. There were between sixty and seventy exhibited, no two exactly alike, but all variants of earlier, probably silver, originals. Some of the prettiest forms were French, lent by Mr. G. Frampton, R.A. Some of the simplest were English, plain, domestic, every-day candlesticks.

Mr. C. F. C. Buckmaster contributed some small table-candlesticks of Queen Anne type. Mr. A. Vigers and Mr. A. B. Yeates some good French types.

Candlesticks could be classified by their bases more easily than by their stems. Mr. S. Chisenhale Marsh lent four with bases of curious shapes, varying from that of a bell to that of a genuine pagoda. Apparently they were of English manufacture, but so far quite unique. They were found in a moat in Lancashire early in the nineteenth century.

A square-based candlestick, with square stem, in fact all square, of Jacobean date, was lent by Mr. T. Charbonnier. Another with a round stem and an octagonal base and grease-tray was lent by Mr. A. F. de Navarro.

Of purely octagonal based candlesticks, the best were lent by Mr. E. W. Gimson; one of them was dated 1674, and the others were presumably contemporary. Mr. H. G. Moffat lent a similar one, which had been damaged by repeated blows

upon a table, or other unfair use.

Spoons of every variety of form were exemplified in the unique collection of Mr. H. W. Murray, and what was missing there was to be seen in the eight specimens of Mr. C. F. C. Buckmaster.

Snuff-boxes were lent by Mrs. Gerald Walker, Mr. W. Churcher, and Mr. C. F. C. Buckmaster, but with the latter it is proposed to deal in a separate article at no distant date. All the snuff-boxes, almost without exception, showed traces of gilding in the



CIBORIUM, FLEMISH WORK
FROM THE COLLECTION OF J. G. LOUSADA, ESQ.

Some Notes on the "Forms" of Pewter Ware

inside. All seemed to be English, and none bore any makers' marks.

Bowls and basins varied in form from the seventeenth century barber's bowl to the baptismal font from the Church of Marston Morteyne in Bedfordshire. Small bowls, persistently labelled "bleeding bowls" by their owners, showed many varieties in the form of the handle. Most of them were perforated, but many were quite plain in shape, with, in two cases, slight ornament in relief.

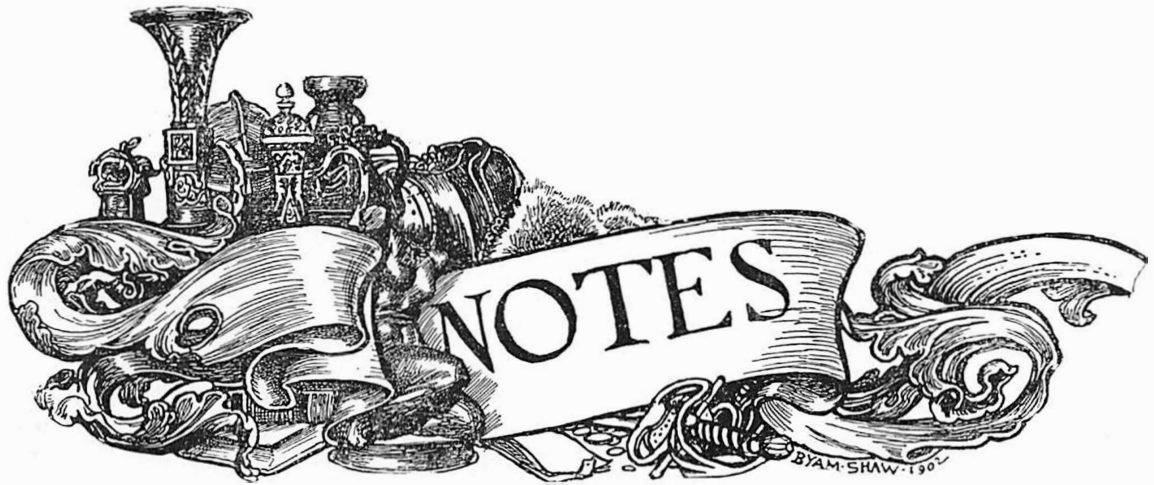
Of the more pretentious form of basin there were two with ewers. One, a small oval basin with moulded rim and a very gracefully shaped ewer—it would barely hold a pint—was lent by Mr. C. F. Hayward. From the design it was of Italian manufacture. Another lent by Mr. F. A. White seemed to have belonged to a German bishop, and to have been

intended for ceremonial use. The basin was almost flat, with a raised boss in the centre, into which, however, the foot of the ewer seemed designed to fit. The ewer was based on the elaborate type modelled by Briot.

Of objects not classed here, it will be enough to mention as unusual a "harvest-bottle," made in two halves and soldered together, lent by Mr. Ronald T. Mole; a *biberon* of Swiss make, lent by Mr. T. Charbonnier; two bizarre "fonts" so called—lent by Mr. J. Cahn, which seemed to be compounded of soup-tureens (as the ring handles were still upon their rims), and of the bases of large candlesticks; a milk-jug in the form of a cow, made by Michel Pechel, a silversmith of Augsburg in 1720, for a customer as a wedding present.



VARIOUS TYPES OF BOWLS



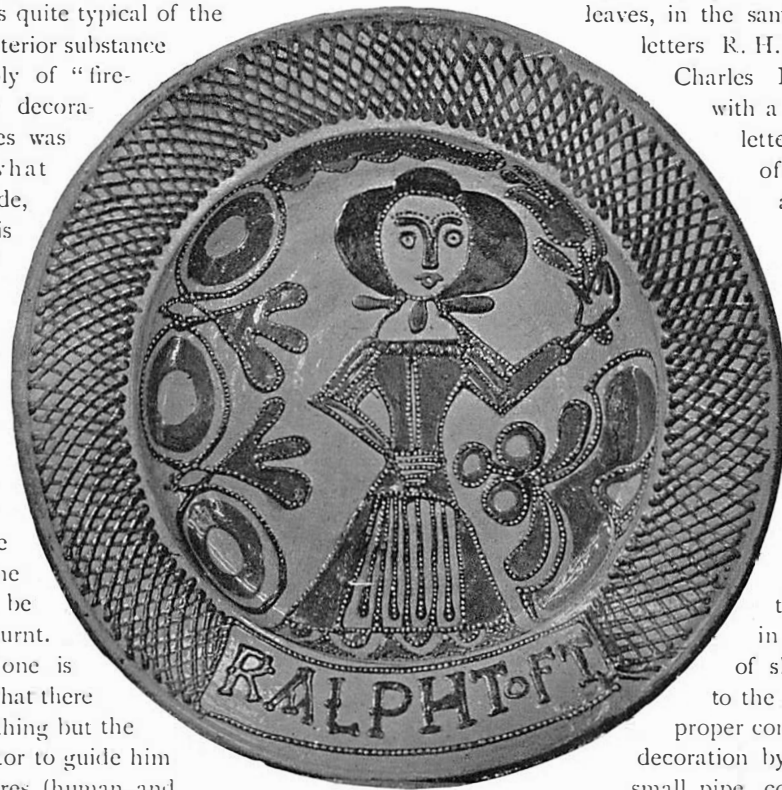
THE accompanying illustration (scale, $\frac{1}{4}$ linear) represents a perfect slip-decorated circular dish, nearly $16\frac{3}{4}$ inches in diameter, manufactured by the Staffordshire potter, Ralph Toft, who flourished from 1670 to 1680. (His earliest dated piece, as far as the writer has been

**Ralph Toft Dish
in Farnham
Museum,
North Dorset**

able to ascertain, is, however, 1676). It was purchased by the late General Pitt-Rivers, D.C.L., F.R.S., at the Edkins collection sale, and placed in the still-existing and very extensive museum at Farnham, North Dorset (eight miles from Blandford Station, and eight miles from the historical town of Shaftesbury). The dish is quite typical of the Toft School, the interior substance consisting probably of "fire-brick clay." The decoration of such pieces was always somewhat grotesque and rude, consisting in this case of a lady holding a flower in her left hand, outlined in black with white dots, the interspaces being filled in with orange-slip; the trellis border is inscribed with the maker's name. The black spots would be red before being burnt. This specimen alone is sufficient to show that there was apparently nothing but the taste of the operator to guide him in producing figures (human and animal), foliage and conventional

ornament. The final process in the production of these late seventeenth century dishes (before the firing) was the glazing with sulphuret of lead, often mixed with manganese, producing a rich yellow and transparent coating. The powdered lead ore was firstly calcined. It was in 1680 that the discovery of glazing by salt was discovered.

Farnham Museum contains four other dishes of the Toft School. One is ornamented in the centre with an arrangement of six human forms, with six others round the rim, and ornaments in dark and light brown on a buff ground. A second represents a lion rampant with its tongue out, and a branch of conventional leaves, in the same colour, with the letters R. H. A third represents Charles II. on horse-back, with a fleur-de-lis, with the letters I. C., and a rim of alternate lozenge and triangular forms in relief.



RALPH TOFT DISH

Slip pottery may be regarded as the earliest ornamental ware produced in this country, about the middle of the seventeenth century, but it may have been produced earlier on the continent than in England. A kind of slip ware was known to the Romans. Slip ware proper consisted in producing decoration by pouring, through a small pipe, coloured clay diluted with water to the consistence of a