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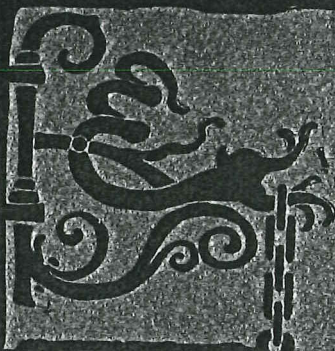
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IN LONDON.

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Numerous Illustrations

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OLD PEWTER.

London Brygge, and his one quarter att Hertford, a nother att Oxenford, a nother at York, and the iiiij^{te} at Cambryg."—(Kingsford, "Chronicles of London," pp. 148, 149.)

1443, February 1. "Item the same yere upon the Candelmasse Evyn befor by a grete tempeste of thundir and lightenyng at aftir none the Steple of Seynt Pawlis Chirche was sette on fire, aboute the medyll of the shafte in the tymbir; whiche was quenchild by grete labour, and specially by the grete diligent labour of the morow messe preste of the Bowe in Chepe, which was thought impossible except the grace of God."—(Kingsford, "Chronicles of London," pp. 155, 156.)

This note, though it does not mention the Cross, may have, I think, an important bearing on its history, for only a few years afterwards we find it entirely rebuilt after a new design. It may well be that the "grete tempeste" here recorded destroyed or damaged Paul's Cross as well as the steeple of the Cathedral. At any rate, the nearness of date is remarkable, if it be a mere coincidence.

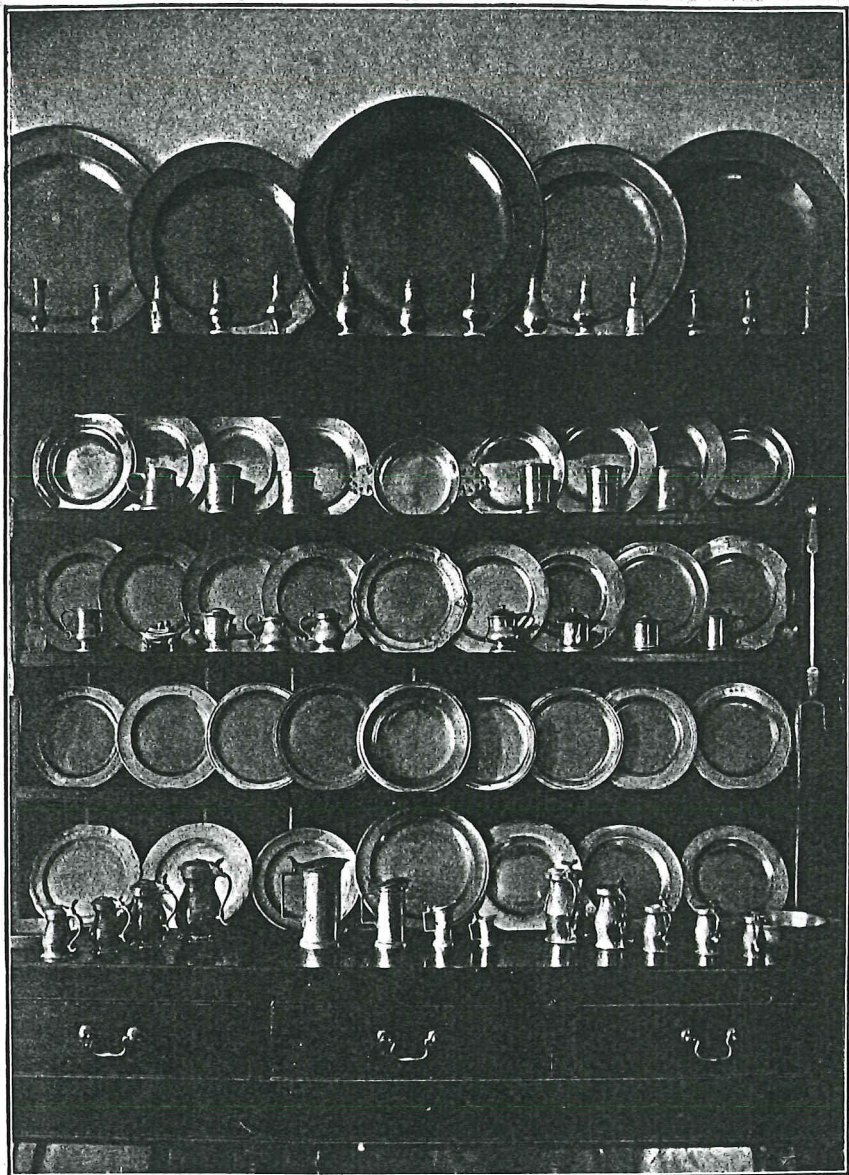
1445-6, March 15. Sir William Estfeld, Citizen and Mercer, bequeathed certain sums for sermons to be preached at *St. Paul's Cross* and in the pulpit at the Hospital of St. Mary without Bishopsgate, and also to clerks of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge coming to London to preach the word of God, so that his soul may be had in remembrance by them.—(Sharpe, "Wills in the Court of Husting," vol. ii, p. 510.)

[To be continued.]

OLD PEWTER.

By H. M. COOKE.

OF recent years during which the collection of pewter has become a hobby, much has been written about it, and many statements as to its history and manufacture have been made; but with the exception of the records collected by Mr. Charles Welch, F.S.A., in his "History of the Pewterers' Company," by Mr. H. J. L. J. Massé in "Pewter Plate," and by the late Mr. Ingleby Wood in "Scottish Pewter Ware and Pewterers," most of what has been written is purely conjectural. This



Old Pewter: Plate 1.
Photograph by H. J. Glaisher.

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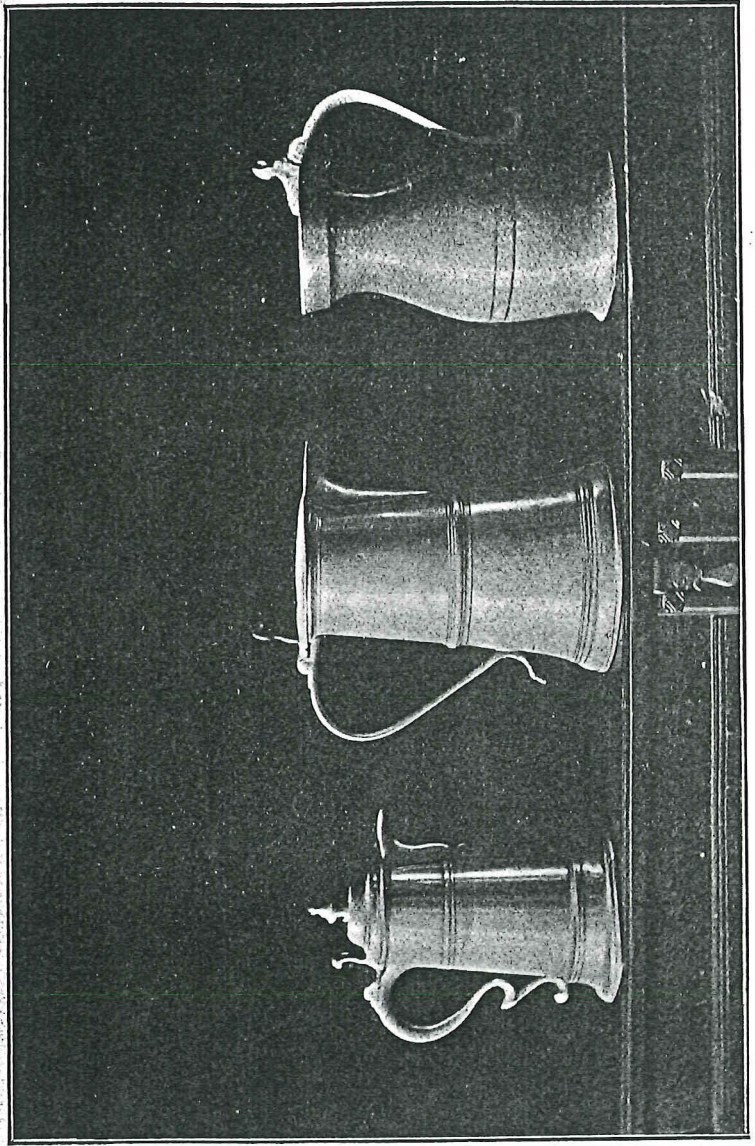
is necessarily so, because the trade, as a craft, is almost non-existent now, and for a long time past its traditions have been lost sight of. Indeed, of the old London Pewterers, there is said to be only one firm still carrying on business.

The first question that is usually put to a collector by the uninitiated is, "what is pewter made of?" Speaking quite broadly, pewter is composed of tin alloyed in varying quantities with antimony and copper; lead, bismuth and zinc being sometimes employed also.

The charm of old pewter ware is due chiefly to its form and colour. The form is almost always dignified and simple, depending on the lines and general proportion of the article rather than on extraneous efforts for its adornment. However much may be said, and doubtless much is to be said, for the elaborate work of François Briot and some other craftsmen like him, pewter does not lend itself to this kind of decoration; and in looking at specimens of their work, one experiences a feeling of disappointment at the want of restraint displayed in decorating a metal which requires no embellishment and owes most of its charm to its natural simplicity.

The variety and constant change of colour, due to the difference of alloys and to atmospheric influence, are always a pleasure to the collector. He finds in a dozen articles made by different pewterers that scarcely two will be of the same hue. The colour in some measure is necessarily dependent on the surface being good, and owing to the rough usage to which old pewter has often been subjected, the surface frequently is found to be worn, and corroded by the action of acids. Oxide, too, when it has formed on the metal, generally leaves an ugly scar. In acquiring specimens in bad condition collectors must be prepared for occasional disappointment in this respect.

It might be well here to compare British with Foreign Pewter. The various German, Dutch and Flemish makes are inferior to and coarser in texture than the British, and even the best of these will never acquire that smoothness after wear, nor assume that mellowness from time, which is so characteristic of old British pewter. This does not apply generally to French metal, however, which, both in material and workmanship, reaches a high standard. Some of the finest specimens in existence are of French manufacture. That the superiority of British over Foreign Pewter is recognized abroad is evident from the number of so-called "antique" specimens offered for sale on the Continent. These are made in Belgium and Holland in large quantities, and are stamped, sometimes cleverly but more often clumsily, with copies of the English Pewterers' marks. The writer bought one of these pieces from a stall



Old Pewter : Plate 2.
Photograph by H. J. Glaisher.

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in the rag market at Bruges a few years ago. It was a palpable "fake," but the cost was trifling, and he purchased it as an interesting specimen of the "faker's" art. Much of this spurious "old" metal is imported, and is on sale in London and elsewhere at the present time.

Although pewter had been in use for some centuries previously, both for ecclesiastical and domestic purposes, it did not come into general domestic use until the seventeenth century. It is rare nowadays to come across anything earlier except in museums. From that date, therefore, it is that a collector's interest, as a collector, generally begins. As a domestic article pewter succeeded wood, and was used almost universally until earthenware became cheap. It then gradually fell into disuse, and much of it probably was destroyed or melted down. Hence the comparative scarcity of old pewter to-day. To the wanton destruction at the time of the Reformation the disappearance of much Church pewter is due, but no doubt in some cases it was laid aside as too base a metal for sacred purposes, and in course of time was destroyed. Some interesting specimens remain recking nothing of fashion or splendour, and these show solid work well done, content to mind its own business.

In France and Belgium at the present time one can still find, hanging on the walls of farmhouses and cottages, pewter holy-water vessels (*bénitiers*), bowls (*écuelles*) and plates; but dealers are buying these up, and soon one will search in vain, even in the more remote districts, for treasures of this sort.

On account of its fusibility pewter was used by Goldsmiths to take castings of certain articles. Benvenuto Cellini is said to have used it for this purpose in connexion with his work.

The Pewterers' Company still exists, and amongst the minor City Companies ranks high in seniority. It can look back upon a history full of interest from a national standpoint, as well as from trade aspects pure and simple. Although for the most part the Guild consisted of those engaged in the manufacture of pewter, it had religious and social objects in view as well. Members were allowed to introduce friends who were not associated with the industry. Like other Guilds, the Pewterers were called upon to bear their responsibility in connexion with State affairs, and to contribute their quota to national expenses. The first Charter was granted to the Company by Edward IV in 1473, and they exercised in those days, and for some time after, a careful and even arbitrary supervision over the members of the craft. The rules which governed it were jealousy guarded, and penalties for infringement were rigidly enforced.

The Company was granted the right of search for false wares

OLD PEWTER.

throughout the country, and the King's officers were enjoined to give them every assistance in pursuing this right.

The official records of the Company are interesting, and collectors are indebted to Mr. Welch, the Librarian of the Guildhall, London, for having carefully transcribed them from the original documents to which he was granted access by the Company. These were published some four years ago. The few quoted here, from Mr. Welch's book, will serve to show the extent of the Company's power over the craft, and the manner in which they exercised it.

1629.—On April 30th Richard Duxell was expelled from the Court of Assistants and the Livery, "having by the instigation of the diuell committed a most notorious and hainous offence against Almighty God, and criminall against the lawes of this kingdom."

On November 19th, the Widow Boulton's man came before the Court with unseemly haire, not befitting an apprentice, which they caused to bee cut off.

1658.—September 23rd. Order entered on the Minutes to be prepared against the next Court for any women that use any uncivill language or wilfully take place of their seniors at the table. There husbands to pay ten shillings.

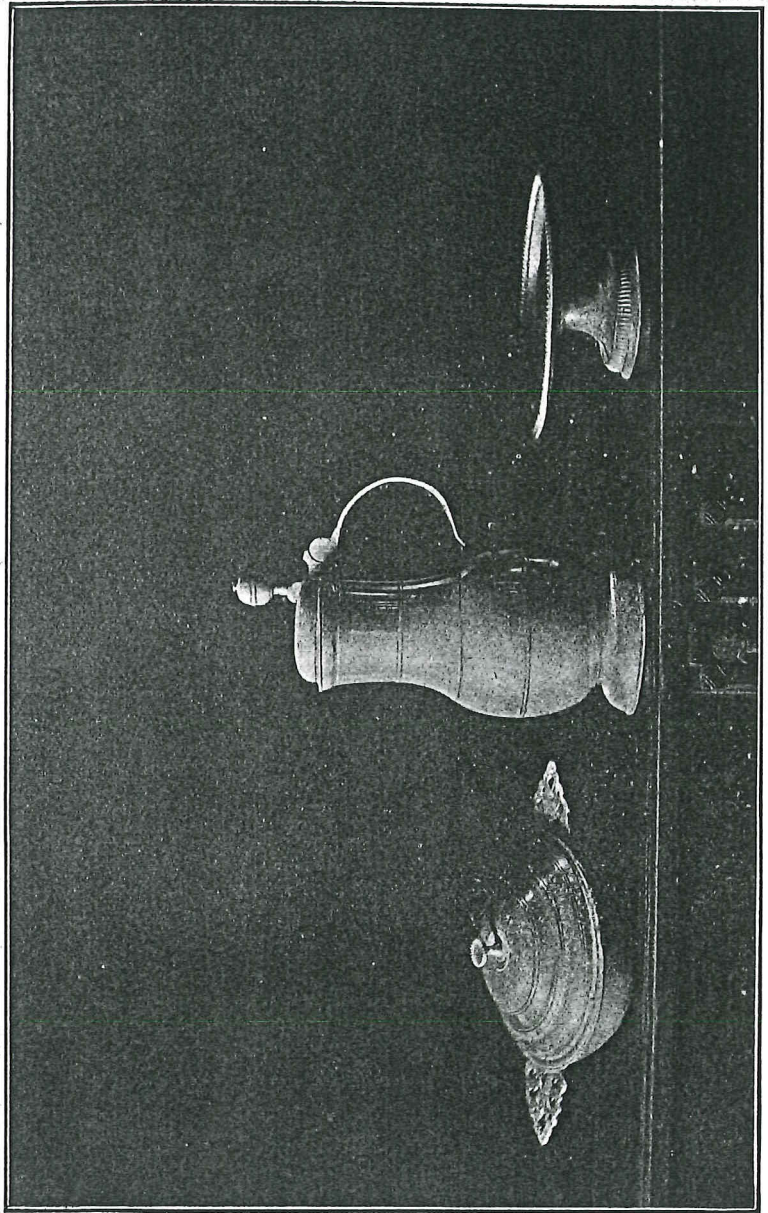
1668.—On February 25th. Will Jones complained against Towden "for making distinction between fyne and double refyne, and y^t his customers as well as others may know hiss fyne by his single touch and his double refyne by his double touch. Mr. Towden answered y^t the reason why he made such distinction was for y^t he gave servants double wages for that which he called double refyned. The Court acquainted him y^t y^e Statute mayd noe other distinction of pewter than fyne and lay, and charged him to desist in his foresaid practice.

1691.—December 17th. No member of the Mistery shall strike any other mark on his ware than his touch or mark, struck upon the plate at the Hall,¹ and the rose and crown stamp, and also the letter X on extraordinary ware. Yet nevertheless any member may add the word *London* to the rose and crown stamp or in his touch.

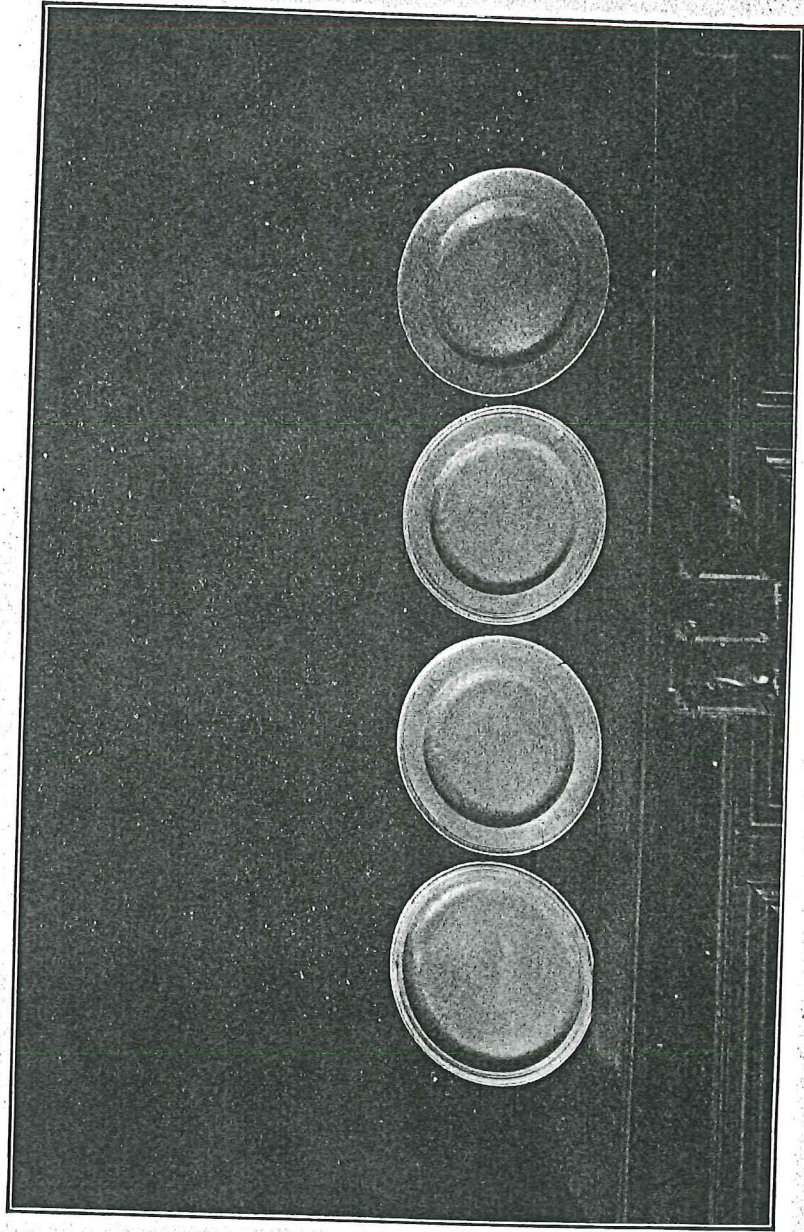
1698.—August 11th. Ordered that none should strike any other mark on ware than his own proper touch and the rose and crown stamp, that any member may strike his name at length between his touch and the rose and crown also the word *London*. None may strike the letter X except upon extraordinary ware, commonly called "hard mettle ware."

1722.—August 8th. Six ordinary plates of Francis Whittle, bearing the words "superfine hard mettle," were ordered to be broken.

¹ This is explained later.



Old Pewter: Plate 3.
Photograph by H. J. Glaisher.



Old Pewter: Plate 4.
Photograph by H. J. Glaisher.

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1728.—Many complaints were received of the bad quality of pewter made at Bristol, but the Company hesitated to exercise their authority by holding a search so far from London.

1741.—September 24th. A Committee reported that nothing could be done to prevent country pewterers from striking "London" and "Made in London" on their ware, without application to Parliament.

From the foregoing extracts it will be seen that the Company were strict on the point of marking. But despite the stringent rules there were many offenders; and as time went on, and the vigilance of the Company was relaxed, the number of offenders increased, until it would seem that makers only obeyed the rules each so far as his individual fancy led him.

There is much yet to be learnt about the marking of pewter, and if only for this reason the subject is fascinating to collectors.

The marks found generally on London pewter are the crowned rose, the maker's name over his trade mark or "touch," the words "London" or "Made in London," and the crowned X.

The rose was the emblem of the Company, and the crowned rose was probably the official mark stamped on goods to be exported.

The crowned X should only be on metal of the best quality. Some specimens have this mark repeated, but there is no evidence to justify the suggestion that this was an indication of any special excellence either of metal or workmanship.

Occasionally the metal also bears the description "superfine" or "superfine hard"; and one maker, Edward Box, stamped some of his ware "No better in London." But, as we see by the records, "puffing" of this sort was against the Company's rules.

The "touches," or trade marks, were punched on metal plates kept for that purpose at the Pewterers' Hall. They were probably started early in the sixteenth century, but only five of these plates are now in existence, the earliest dating from the middle of the seventeenth century. A Register containing a list of the marks was kept, but unfortunately this has not been preserved.

The "touches" were not always punched on the plates in strict chronological order. The earliest were generally small circles with the maker's name or initials; later the name and "touch" were enclosed by palm leaves, and the palm leaves later still gave place to scrolls. These differences in detail may sometimes be a rough guide to the age of an article, when the name or the "touch" or both have become indistinct or obliterated.

Dealers nowadays, to enhance the value of their wares, often point to the small marks in shields of a lion rampant or a leopard's head crowned, and describe articles bearing these as "silver pewter."

OLD PEWTER.

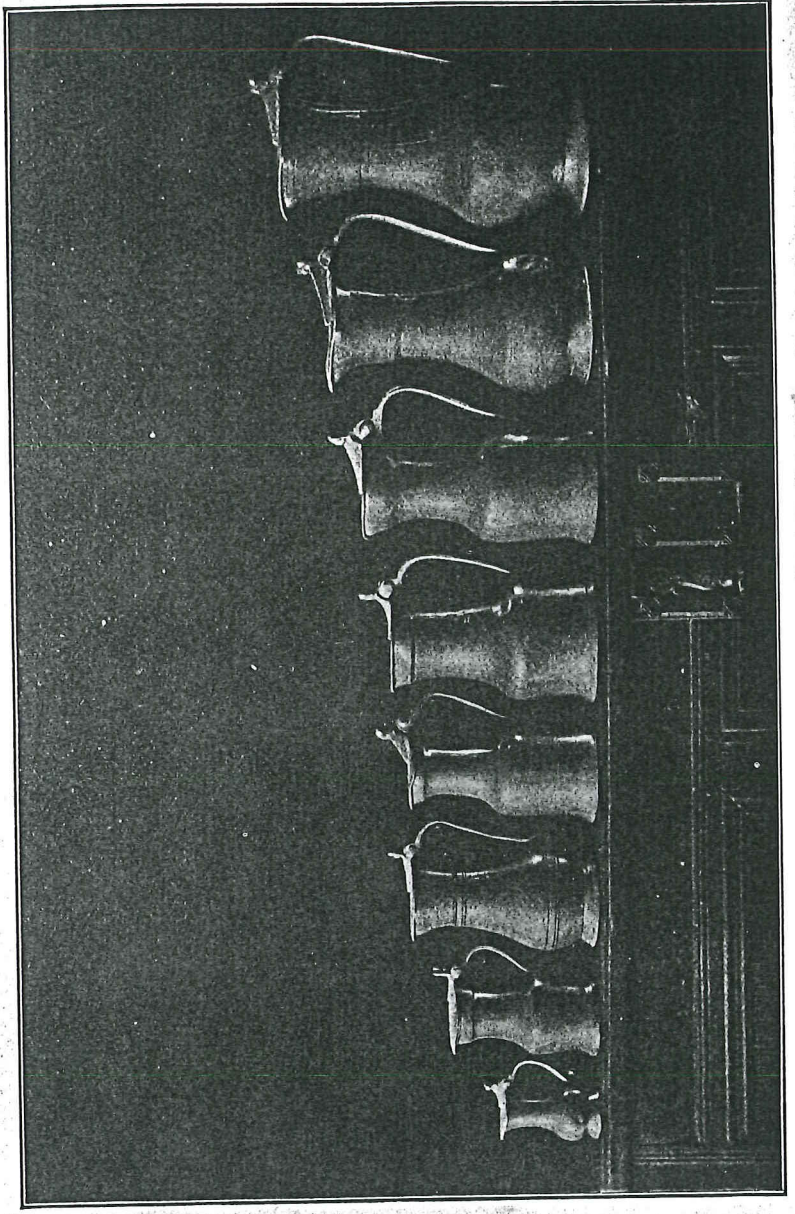
To use no stronger term, this is a misnomer, and collectors should not be prevailed upon to purchase on the strength of such statements. These small marks were not authorized. They are useful in identifying the maker because they often contain his initials, but they indicate no special value in the metal. Except for the infinitesimal quantity that there may be in raw lead, it is safe to assume that pewter contains no silver.

These last remarks are meant to apply only to genuine old pewter, and not to the modern amalgam, which is now being made abroad in large quantities, and sold by jewellers and others as "silver pewter," and under a variety of other fanciful names.

Besides such marks as a lion or leopard's head, the small shields occasionally contain a rose, thistle or harp, and pewter bearing the thistle or harp is often described as Scotch or Irish, because it has these marks. Sometimes the description is correct, but not always. The writer has a plate, made by a London pewterer, bearing among other marks a harp; another, made by a Dublin pewterer, with a thistle; and a third, by a Scotch pewterer, bearing both the rose and thistle.

Up to the present there seems to have been no satisfactory explanation of the crowned or plain initials so often seen on pewter, especially on plates and dishes. The obvious suggestion is that they are the initials of the owner, and in some instances this may have been the case. But why should a private individual have his initials crowned? In the opinion of Mr. Walter Churcher they denote some government inspection at the time when a tax was levied on pewter; and this would appear a more reasonable solution of the question. The initials would be the initials of the Government Inspector possibly, just as G. R., W. R., and V. R., the initials of the sovereign, are found now on measures as a government guarantee of their capacity; or they may have indicated the date of inspection or payment of the tax. An alms dish, which appears in the accompanying illustration, bears the date 1745, and five sets of two initials, each letter crowned. These initials are arranged symmetrically around the date, and it has been suggested that they are the initials of churchwardens or other church functionaries; but, except for the symmetrical arrangement of the letters, there is nothing to favour this suggestion.

The methods of cleaning pewter are as numerous as the methods of dressing a salad, but it is not possible to lay down any rule on the subject; it must depend entirely on the condition of the article. The drastic treatment required for a specimen badly corroded would be unnecessary and probably injurious for an article merely dirty from neglect. In the latter case the old-fashioned and simple method,



Old Pewter: Plate 5.
Photograph by H. J. Glaisher.

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adopted at inns and elsewhere, of boiling in a weak solution of soda, will usually be quite effectual in removing dirt and surface stains; but when a black oxide has formed and eaten into the metal, this is often so obstinate that it is necessary to treat pieces so affected with hydrochloric acid. It is hardly necessary to say that this should be done very carefully, and if possible out of doors, because of the offensive fumes given off by the acid. As soon as the acid has done its work the pewter should be rinsed in a solution of soda or ammonia.

On no account should scraping be resorted to, however obstinate the oxide may be. The ugly scars left by scraping will be far worse, and they are ineffaceable.

Repairing pewter is always a difficult and dangerous process, and should not be undertaken except with extreme care. Owing to the brittleness of old pewter anything like a blow is risky and frequently results in a crack. A dent or a bulge may sometimes be straightened by a wooden mallet after warming the metal; but unless other damage is a positive eye-sore, repairing is to be avoided. In the matter of repairs, the professional pewterer of to-day has to be watched as carefully as the professional restorer of antique furniture. If left to himself he will probably restore a thing beyond recognition, and throw in an "art" polish to cover blemishes.

A collection should not be scattered, nor should it be too crowded. From a decorative point of view many good collections lose their charm owing to the common fault of crowding. An old dresser, or a set of dull oak shelves, would seem a natural resting place for pewter. Plates and dishes should be so arranged that the rims do not overlap. Small articles may be arranged in front of them, but large articles suspended by hooks are apt to spoil the general effect. The exigences of space often prevent a quite suitable surrounding for a collection, but to some extent this difficulty may be overcome by having a background of plain wall paper.

The writer is loth to close this paper without referring to the loss pewter collectors have sustained by the untimely death in January last of his friend, Mr. Ingleby Wood. An architect by profession, he was an artist in the true sense of the word. To his enthusiasm collectors owe much of the information they now have. His last article on pewter appeared after his death in the "Magazine of Fine Arts," but by collectors he will best be remembered by his "Scottish Pewter Ware and Pewterers," published about two years ago. It was the fruits of long and careful research by an enthusiast, who brought his knowledge of art to bear on a subject in which he was keenly interested.

OLD PEWTER.

NOTES ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS.

No. 1.

The three sets of tankards on the dresser under the shelves, from left to right, are Scotch, French, and English respectively. The Scotch and French vessels were in use during the last century, but are now becoming obsolete in both countries. The English wine measures are earlier; they are probably late seventeenth or early eighteenth century. The thumb-pieces of the first and second are different from those on the fourth and fifth; otherwise the measures are similar in shape. The third largest does not belong to the group; it is Scotch, and is dated 1820.

Basins like that in the centre of the third shelf are becoming somewhat rare, though at one time they were no doubt common enough. What purpose they served originally seems doubtful; but since pewter went out of fashion many of them have found their way out of doors into farmyards and elsewhere, to be used for poultry food and other purposes; and so they have gradually disappeared.

The plate with the scalloped edge, on the shelf above the basin, is French, of eighteenth century manufacture, and bears the arms of the family of Malhortie de Matte.

No. 2.

On the left of this group is a church flagon, probably early nineteenth century; the handle and thumb-piece are curiously shaped.

The tankard in the centre (date, 1750) was in use until a few years ago at an inn on the Brighton Road. The handle and spout are unusually well shaped.

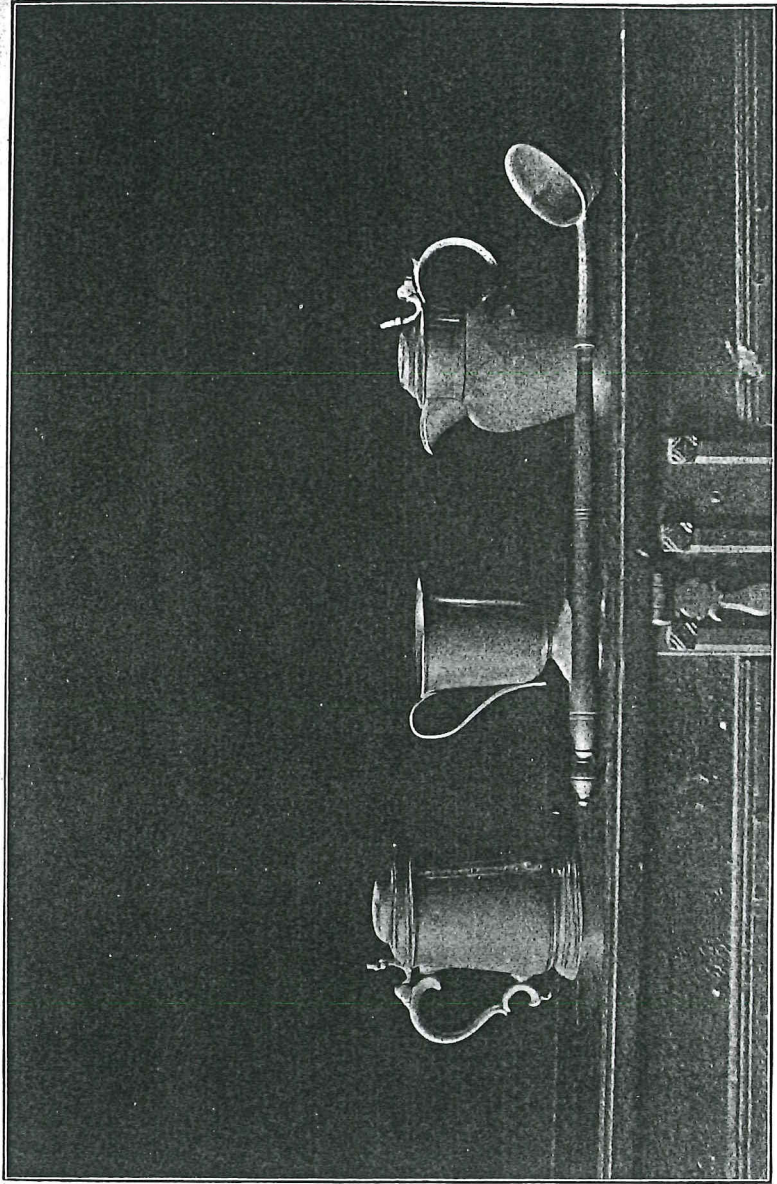
The third tankard, about the same date as the last, made by Ash and Hutton (? of Bristol), was recently discovered with some smaller ones of the same shape in a garret in Somersetshire.

No. 3.

The first of this group is a French soup bowl, dated 1754. Amongst the peasants in Normandy these bowls were often given as wedding presents. Sometimes they are engraved with two hearts joined, and other symbolical designs appropriate to the occasion. The specimen illustrated here has a conventional design.

The tankard in the middle is German (? date).

The paten is considered by a London pewterer to be a very early specimen of Britannia metal work. It came from Somersetshire, and is marked underneath with a fleur-de-lys and the maker's initials.



Old Pewter : Plate 6.
Photograph by H. J. Glaisher.

"TOM BROWN'S" COUNTRY.

No. 4.

This set of plates shows the gradual transition in the form of the rims from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century. The date of the earliest (on the left) is about 1650.

No. 5.

The measures in this group are all French, with the exception of the second and third from the left, which were in use in the Channel Islands.

The large ones were used generally for cider, and the smallest, which is of an earlier period, for wine or brandy. These large cider jugs are frequently described incorrectly as English.

No. 6.

The tankard on the left is a fairly common type of the latter part of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; and the toast and water jug, with a strainer in the spout, is of the same period.

The cup with the handle is probably French. As this paper goes to press it is being submitted to an expert in France for opinion.

The ladle is Flemish, and comparatively modern.

"TOM BROWN'S" COUNTRY.

By H. J. DANIELL.

WE have all heard of "The Hardy Country," "The Ingoldsby Country," and "The Dickens Land," but who has sung the praises of the Tom Brown Country, the great Vale of White Horse, second only in beauty to the Vale of Evesham, and the birthplace of one of England's greatest kings?

The casual traveller, as he is whirled along in one of the Great Western's express trains, sees the Vale only as a flat stretch of very ordinary country, backed by the long, lean, rolling Downs, whose bareness is pleasantly relieved by thick copses scattered along the ridges; but let him descend and penetrate this little known land, let him explore these quiet hamlets and peaceful fields, and he will find that the Royal County of Berks, in its western division, can show scenery as good as that of any shire, and villages whose historical interest is second to none.

Let us then detrain at Wantage Road Station, and make our way through the quiet country—not by one of the modern thunderbolts, but by "Shanks, his mare"—and see all that there is to see, quietly and at our ease.