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SOME RARE SILVER SPOONS

~~By Norman Gask~~
1533

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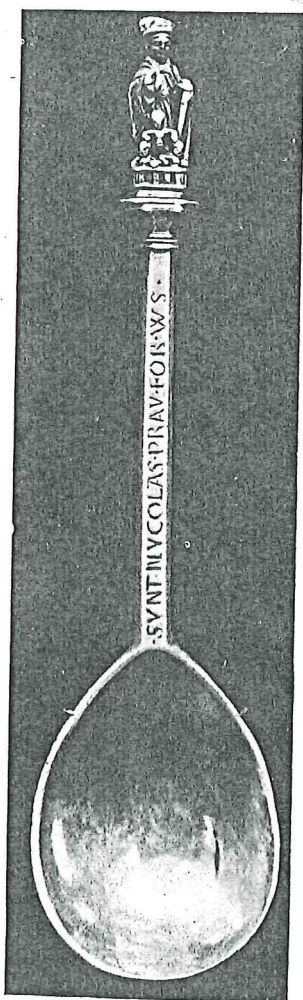
MANY rare types of early English silver spoons, recorded in mediæval and Tudor wills and inventories, are unknown to the collector of to-day. Spoons with dragons' heads, for example, are bequeathed in a will of 1355, and 12 spoons with dolphins are recorded in an inventory of 1568. 'Ij sylver sponys withe angells on the knoppes gyltyd' are quoted in a Durham Registry will

of 1546; 'xii silver spones wt skallap shells on ther heads' in that of Rcbert Bennett, Prebendary of Durham, dated 1558; 'iij dossen of sylver sponys with knottes of sykyls (sickles) in the hed,' in an inventory, dated 1523, of the effects of Dame Agnes Hungerford, and 'a dosen of sylver spones with myters, the myters beyng gilt' are listed in an inventory of Minster Priory, Sheppey, Kent, dated 1536.

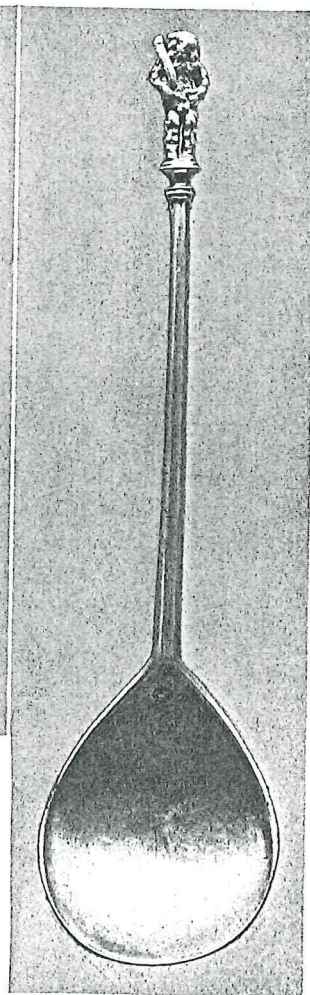
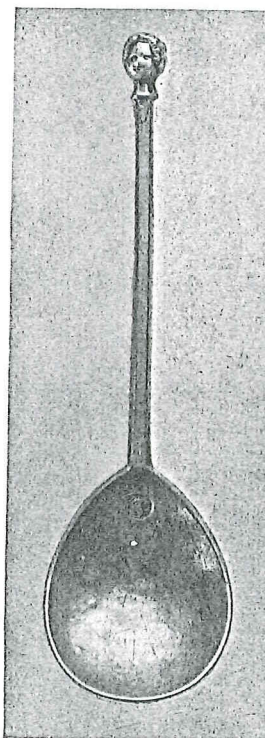
An early English gold, or silver-gilt spoon in the form of a swan is recorded as in the possession of a former Duke of Richmond. The Jewel-Book of Henry VIII refers to spoons knopped respectively with such finials as 'Columbynes' (Doves), Falcons, Martlets and 'Roses'. None of

these varieties, nor many others that could be mentioned, has apparently survived to-day.

What is the rarest English silver spoon known to be in existence to-day? The Coronation spoon in the Tower of London stands in a class by itself, and although the handle was probably made in the twelfth or early thirteenth century, the bowl probably dates from the second half of the seventeenth cen-



No. I.—A PARCEL-GILT SPOON KNOWN AS THE ST. NICHOLAS BY JOHN CARSWELL; IT BEARS LONDON MARKS FOR 1528-9



No. II.—CHERUB'S OR MOOR'S HEAD SPOON: CIRCA 1550: ONE WITH WOODWOSE FINIAL OF THE LATE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

tury. Collectors generally, I believe, will award pride of place to that remarkable Tudor parcel-gilt example known as the St. Nicholas. This has the distinction of having

realized the highest sum ever paid for a single spoon. It was sold from the famous Dunn-Gardner collection at Christie's in 1902, for no less than £690. This spoon, by last accounts, was in the possession of a private collector in the North of England. It owes its name to the fact that the handle is surmounted by the figure of St. Nicholas (Bishop of Myra in the fourth century A.D.) restoring to life the three dead children (No. i).

The handle is engraved, SYNT NYCOLAS PRAY FOR WS. The spoon bears the London hall-marks for 1528-9, with the orb and cross between 10 as the maker's mark. These initials were at one time mistaken for the Sacred Monogram, but they are now known to have been those of John Carswell. The spoon, like many another piece of ancient wrought silver, looks as if it might have been made only yesterday. No other early English spoon with a similar top is known to be in existence.

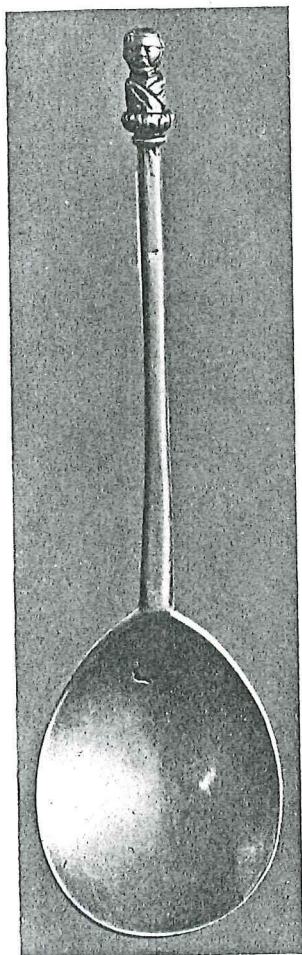
Another silver rarity goes by the curious name of the 'Woodwose.' It is a late fifteenth-century example, bearing in the bowl, as its only mark, the leopard's head uncrowned within a beaded circle or ring of pellets, the early London hall-mark. 'Woodwose' means a wild man of the woods, a savage, satyr, fawn or madman, 'wode' being early English for wild or mad, and 'wose' signifying a being. An example of this spoon, which came from the H. D. Ellis collection,

and is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington, is illustrated (No. ii). The finial is a wild man in skins holding a club in his right hand. This spoon was at one time mistaken for an Apostle. The testatrix in a will, proved at York in 1486, bequeathed 'sex cochlearia argenti cum wodwysshes deauratis' and again the will of Agnes Hildyard, proved in 1498, bequeathed 'sex cochlearia optima arg. cum wodwoshes.'

Woodwoses figure in ancient East Anglia church furniture and architecture, and it is possible that, as Mr. Ellis pointed out, his specimen was one of the dozen spoons 'with woodwoses' ordered to be made by the Wardens of the Goldsmiths' Company, during their visit to Coggeshall, Essex, in 1468, to replace a dozen, destroyed as improperly stamped with the 'Liberd's Heed (Leopard's Head) and containing an excess of alloy.

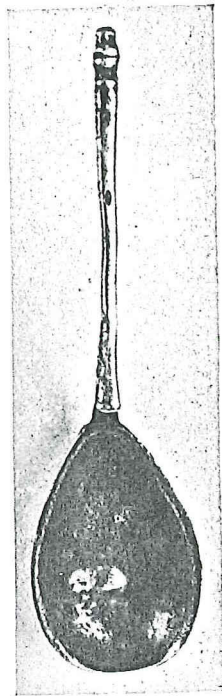
Another rarity is that small silver variety known as the Moor's Head or Cherub's Head. A fine example marked in the bowl with the fleur-de-lys and therefore possibly made in Lincoln is also at South Kensington (No. ii). It bears a *W* as maker's mark and is attributed to about the middle of the sixteenth century. The Man Head or Bearded Man is similarly rare. A late Elizabethan example, made in 1600-1, is shown here (No. iii).

No. iv dates from the Roman occupation of Britain, and is attributed to the third or fourth century A.D. It is $3\frac{1}{8}$ ins. long, the bowl evidently designed from a mussel-, or mussel-like, shell, with the characteristic Roman 'elbow' connecting bowl and stem. The shell, possibly man's first spoon, is thus suggested as the much-discussed origin of the famous English so-called 'fig' or 'pear-shaped' bowl which persisted well into the middle of the

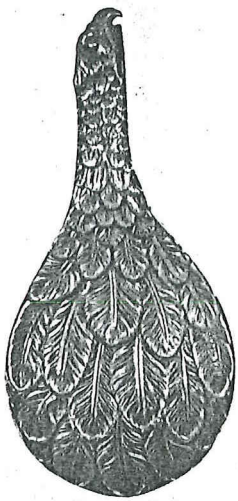


No. III.—BEARDED MAN OR MAN HEAD FINIAL SPOON: DATE 1600

DARELLI
RAVENNA



No. IV.—SPOON WITH KNUCKLEBONE FINIAL



No. V.—EAGLE CADDY SPOON
BY JOSEPH TAYLOR, 1795-6

seventeenth century. The four-sided stem terminates in two superimposed knuckle-bones, a minute Roman profile head being clearly punched on top of the upper bone.

The rarest set of twelve spoons is Sir Joseph Tichborne's Elizabethan silver-gilt 'Worthies' or 'Celebrities' (No. vii), the only set of its kind known, which was sold at Christie's in June 1914, for £2,000.

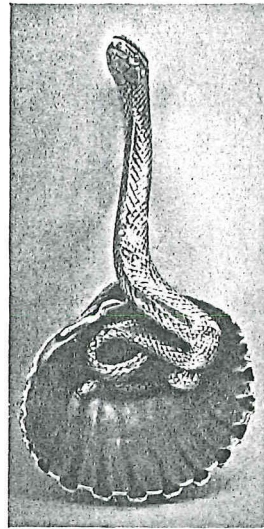
This set bears the London marks for 1592-3

with the maker's mark, a crescent or *C*, encircling *W*. All twelve are about the same size as the modern dessert-spoon. The terminal figures of the 'Worthies,' as shown by the names clearly engraved on the fronts of the handles are: The Master, St. Peter, King David, Judas Maccabeus, Joshua, Alexander the Great,

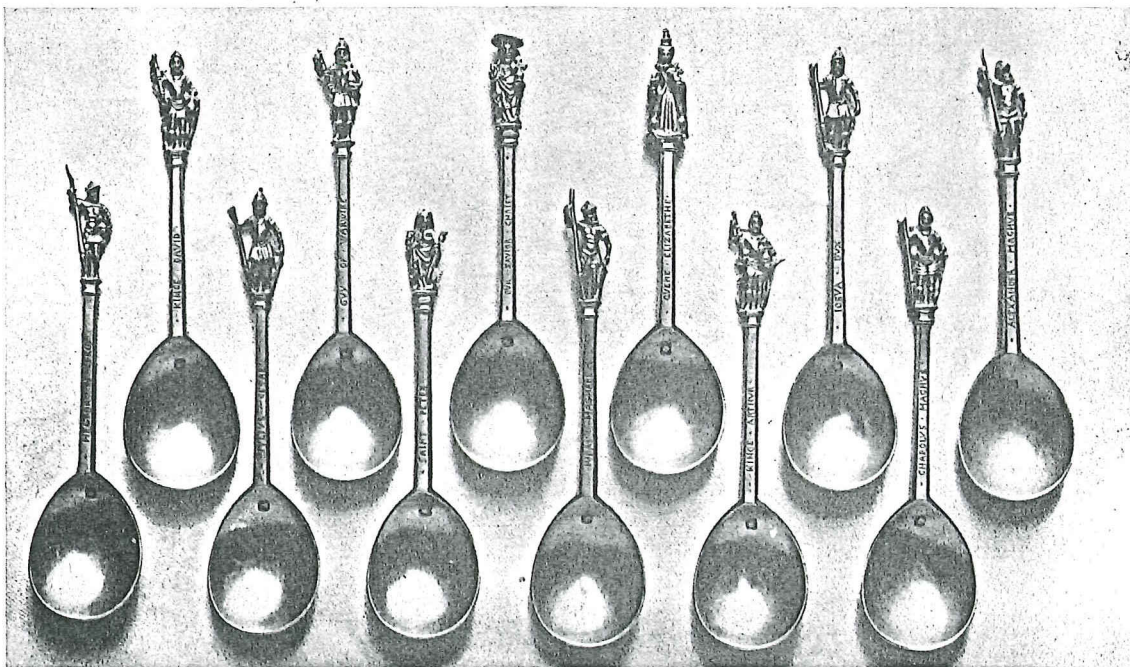
Charlemagne (Charolus Magnus), Hector of Troy, Julius Caesar, King Arthur, Guy of Warwick and Queen Elizabeth. Of half-sets mention should be made of Bishop Oldham's six spoons, with owls as finials, of the year 1506-7 and Bishop Fox's six, with gilt balls, of the year 1516-7, both half-sets being now at Corpus Christi College, Oxford.

For the rarest caddy-spoon it is necessary to refer to the Henry W. Lewer collection.

This unrivalled collection contains a number of examples which are the only ones of their kind known; one illustrated (No. vi) being described as the Serpent-and-Shell. Another example from the same collection, the Eagle or Eagle's Feather, a famous and eagerly-sought caddy-spoon rarity, is also shown (No. v).



No. VI.—SERPENT-AND-SHELL
CADDY-SPOON : CIRCA 1820



No. VII.—SET OF TWELVE SILVER-GILT SPOONS WITH TERMINAL FIGURES OF 'WORTHIES' : EACH SPOON ENGRAVED WITH NAME OF THE SUBJECT ON THE STEM : HALL-MARKED LONDON 1592-3 : MAKER'S MARK *W* WITHIN A CRESCENT OR *C*