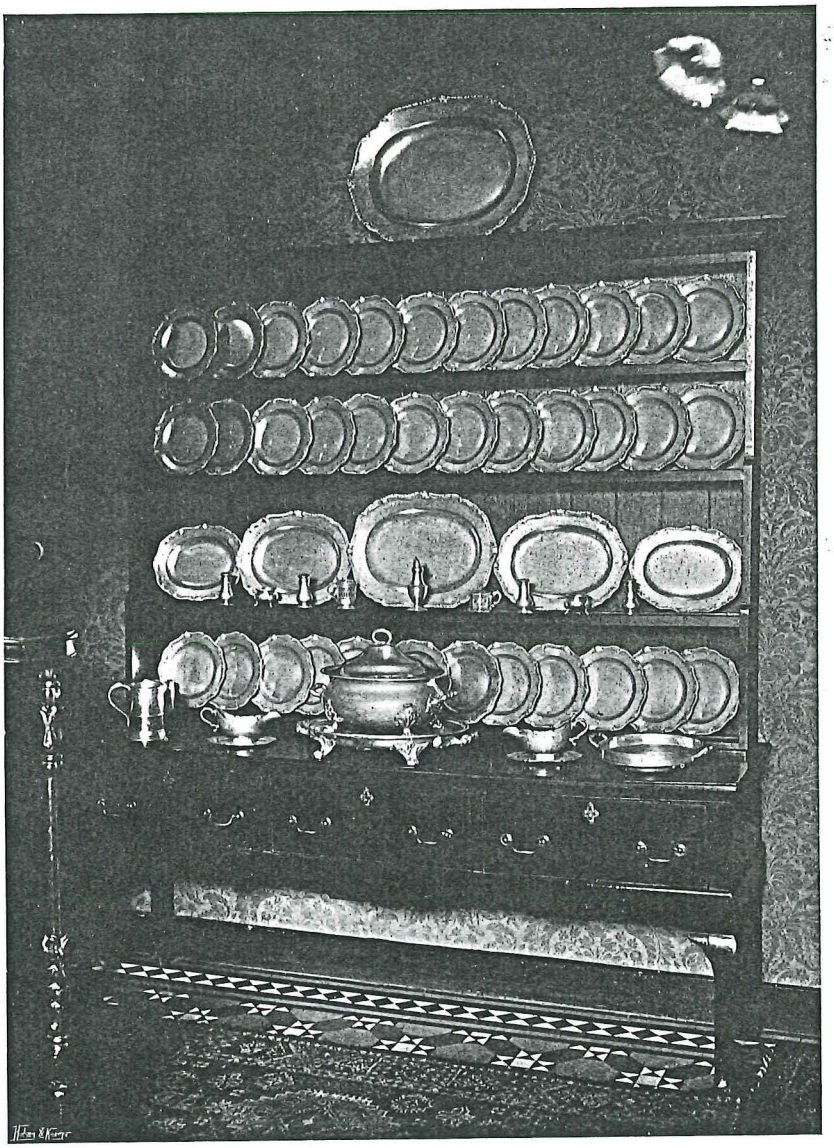
EGX

NOTES ON SOME OLD PEWTER.

IT is at first sight almost impossible to describe adequately, *i.e.*, technically and exactly, the collection of another from a set of photographs, however excellent they may be; but it is possible, assuming that the latter are representative examples of the collection, to generalise from the point of view of the form and of the variety or of any marked peculiarity in the articles shown in the accompanying illustrations.

In describing the objects thus selected, there is the risk that the description may seem to be a somewhat imperfect catalogue. This is inevitable when the description is written with the photograph as the text, because, had the photographs been taken to illustrate these remarks, the whole grouping would necessarily have been altered, in some cases considerably simplified.



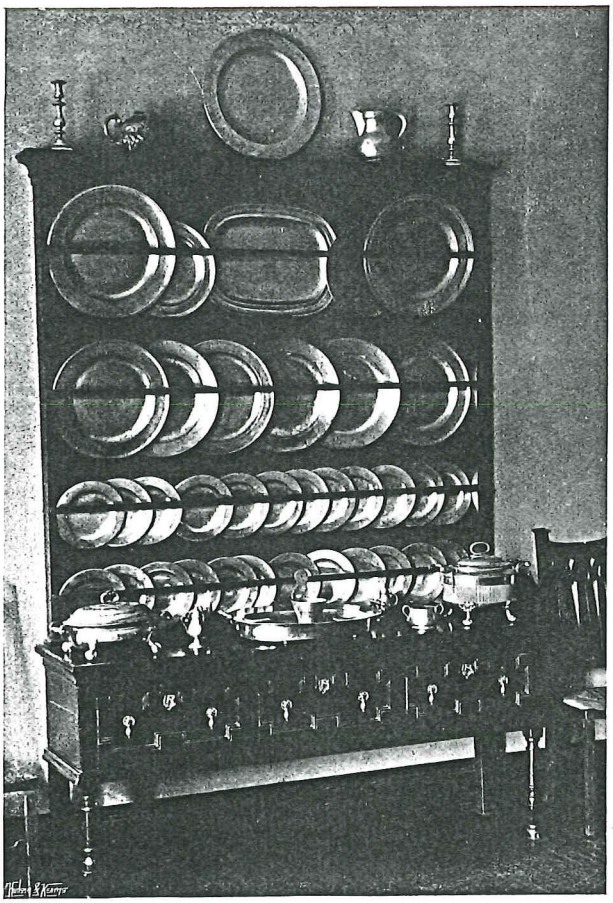
C. Reid, Wishaw, N.B. *A COMPLETE DINNER SERVICE.* Copyright

On the tall dresser there is nothing of unusual interest. The plates seem to be, like most of our English or Scotch pewter-ware, well and carefully made. Two of the chargers on the top row are of slightly earlier date than the rest. Of the small plates, which are perhaps somewhat crowded, it may be said that though marked by trifling differences in size and the curve of the booge, they are otherwise very much alike. The oblong dish on the top shelf is rather uncommon in the multiplicity of the mouldings on the rim. Dishes of this shape are generally entirely made by hand. The *raison d'être* of the rails on the four shelves is not apparent. In former days the plates were placed upon the shelves that they inclined forward, and rested face downwards against the rail. They are so placed on the shelves in Bavarian and Tyrolese dressers at the present time. Nowadays, thin fillets, about 3in. from the edges of the shelves, prevent the plates, which are made to incline face upwards, from slipping off the shelves. On the bottom shelf—or table, rather—of the dresser the central figure is a well dish. Its handles are nice enough, but the feet are absurdly small. They may, of course, be later additions. In the dish is shown an interesting dipper, though many people, from the fact that the dippers have been converted into hanging wall-pockets or spill-boxes, call them by these titles. Of the two soup tureens, that on the left is quite dignified and simple, and therefore admirably suited for manufacture in pewter; the other is somewhat stiff, is too ornate, and is marred by its handles and its too slender feet. The design is more suited for silver than for pewter, and so fails to please. Perfect teapots in pewter are not common, and that on the top shelf, if of pewter and in good order, is worthy of a better place. It seems, however, far too ornate for its purpose.

In this same collection are a few good specimens of the two types of measures generally known as "tappit hens," with and without knobs. Mr. C. F. C. Buckmaster thinks the Jersey and Guernsey measures were the original type. In all of these the handles have suffered, probably owing to the fact that they are too slender. As a point of construction, it will be noted that the handles are soldered on to a little cylinder which has previously been fixed to the body. Anyone who has tried, and perhaps failed, to solder a handle of the ordinary kind to the thin body of a pewter vessel, would appreciate the cylindrical connecting-link. Measures of this type seem always to have a common-sense purchase or thumb-piece. On the second shelf are a graceful two-handled basin or bowl, with uninteresting handles, and a couple of quart tankards, one of which has the kinked S handle. The body of that on the right is built up of two pieces, while that on the left is of one piece. The shelf below contains a couple of smaller tankards, both of the type used till quite recently in public-houses. The handle of that on the right is cast hollow in two pieces, and then soldered together. In the centre is a two-handled cup, of which the foot is obscured from view by an inkstand with four cup-shaped feet. Below, on the table, are two more good specimens of Scotch lavers, with spouts of the normal shape. The simple raised band usually found on the body is just enough to break the line of the sides without spoiling the general outline of the whole. In the centre are a deep dish of good proportions, a small bowl, and a few salt-cellars. At the extreme left is an inhaler, an article which is still made in pewter. It may be found in Messrs. Brown and Engle-field's catalogue. In general outline it is a common tankard, with the addition of a few special internal fittings.

Here can be seen to the best advantage a complete dinner service of pewter, the plates and dishes having an ornate moulded and shaped edge. It was made by Henry Maxted of London, 1700-50. On the lowest shelf are some simple little pepper-pots, the moulds for making which are still in existence. The pepper-pots in form are superior to many later creations in silver.

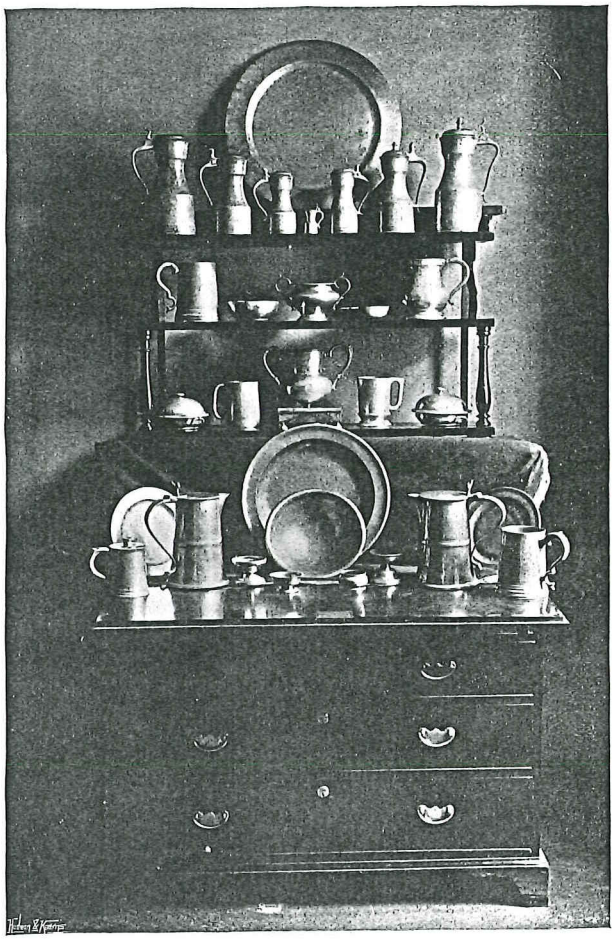
Six German tankards by themselves constitute an object-lesson in what to avoid in the ornamentation of pewter. As in most cases of ornament added subsequently to the making of the vessel, the workman has not known when to stop his hand. Each of the six is rather overweighted in the lid with the added supporters for the shields, which in themselves are too large for the place they occupy. Again, each of the six is marred by the addition of rather flimsy feet. The spouts, handles, and thumb-



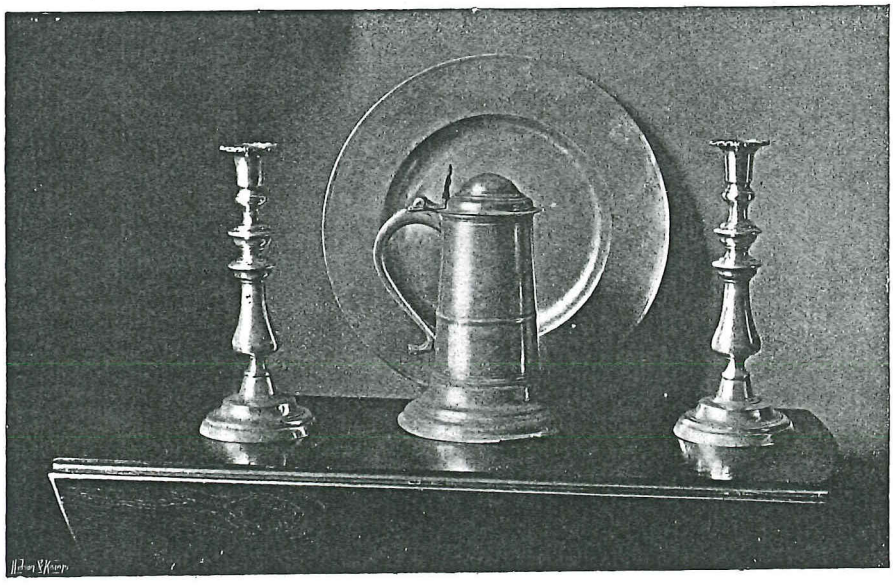
C. Reid. PEWTER ON A TALL DRESSER.

pieces are the same, or nearly so, in each, and call for no remark. Of the set, the two in the centre are the least offensive. In the case of the other four it is difficult to see the reason why a drinking-tankard should have a design suited for plain glazing worked upon it, or why another should be made to look like a quilted counterpane. The ornament in two of them is unintelligible. The argument in favour of the feet is that they make the tankards decorative; but let an unbiassed critic cover up the feet, and he will probably acknowledge that the feet are a mistake, if not a distinct blemish. From the point of view of construction these feet are not strongly enough made to bear the weight of the tankards when full, and the bottoms are not properly adapted for the addition of the feet. The ideal combination of a properly constructed and strengthened bottom and suitable feet is not often found. One such ideal specimen exists in South Kensington Museum; there are one or two in the Cluny Museum in Paris; and others can be seen in the museums at Nuremberg, Cologne, and Augsburg.

In one of the other illustrations much foreign, though with some English, pewter is represented. The foreign ware is very ornate, and does not harmonise well with the rest. Of the row of seven small plates, one plate only has its rim ornamented by stamping or tooling; the rest are all cast in relief, some of it too high in proportion to the size of the plates. There is no repose for the eye in any of these over-elaborated pieces. Of the English specimens, one may note the dish on the top shelf with a reeded edge, flanked by two diminutive candlesticks. On the shelf below are four larger candlesticks of three patterns, based, as usual, on silver originals; in the centre there is a tankard for water of a type common in nineteenth century public-house bars. A larger specimen of the same type is on the table of this dresser in the centre. On the table are a church flagon with a wide-spreading base, and a domed lid of the late seventeenth century type. At the other end is a German flagon of the same general type as those illustrated in another picture, but with flat discs as substitutes for feet. They are too thin to have ever been of much use, as they could not withstand any side thrust or strain. The discs resemble the buttons on the back of a frock or morning coat, which show what once was, but will not be again. Two tall candlesticks seem to be rather overdone with mouldings. The tobacco-box appears French, and is of the type that is often found to show traces of paint, if not painting, on the surface. On the top of the dresser is a tankard or measure with a bulbous body, the florid ornament of which seems to be much later than the tankard.



"TAPPIT HENS," AND OTHER PEWTER-WARE.



C. Reid. CHURCH FLAGON, CHARGER, AND TWO CANDLESTICKS,

The fourth picture shows in detail the church flagon and the two candlesticks shown in another

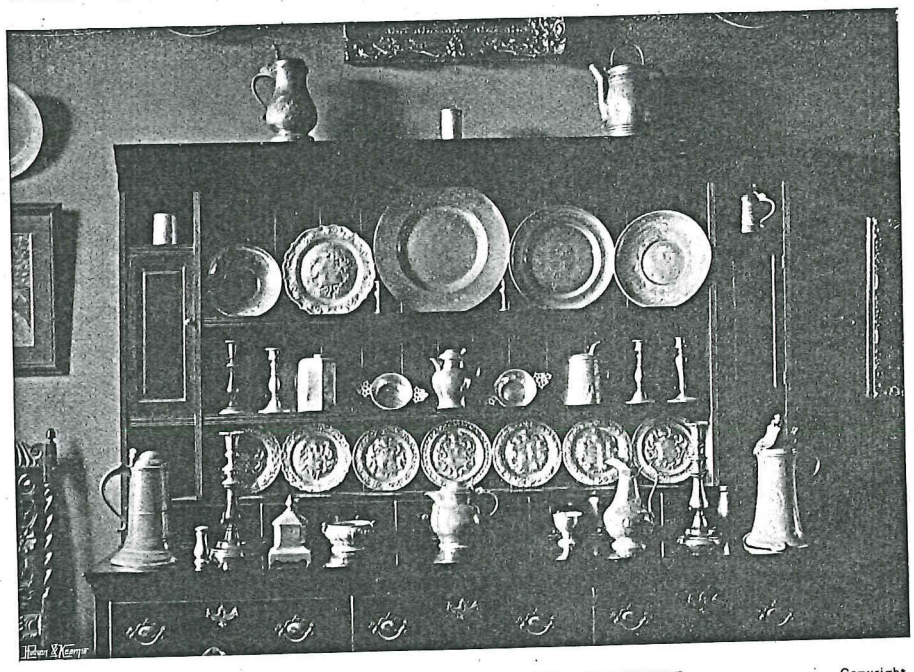
illustration, with a fine charger as a background.

Some of the pewter is illustrated in detail. On the extreme left there is the *biberon* or spouted vessel shown on the top of one of the dressers. The ribbed ornament is simple and pleasing, as is also the shape of the two handles for pouring and for carrying. Another feature well brought out in the photograph is the sliding bolt arrangement for shutting the lid of the vessel. The German flagon is a larger photograph of that shown below. The absurdity of the button-feet is here more apparent. The ornamented tankard shows plainly that the ornament is a later addition. It suggests the cheap and nasty ornament done by means of a snarling iron on the Britannia metal teapots of to-day. For simplicity the straight-sided tankard with its broad flat base and flat lid is far preferable. The ornament, too, is restrained and is kept quite flat. The two porringers, with pierced-work ears, are of no special interest.

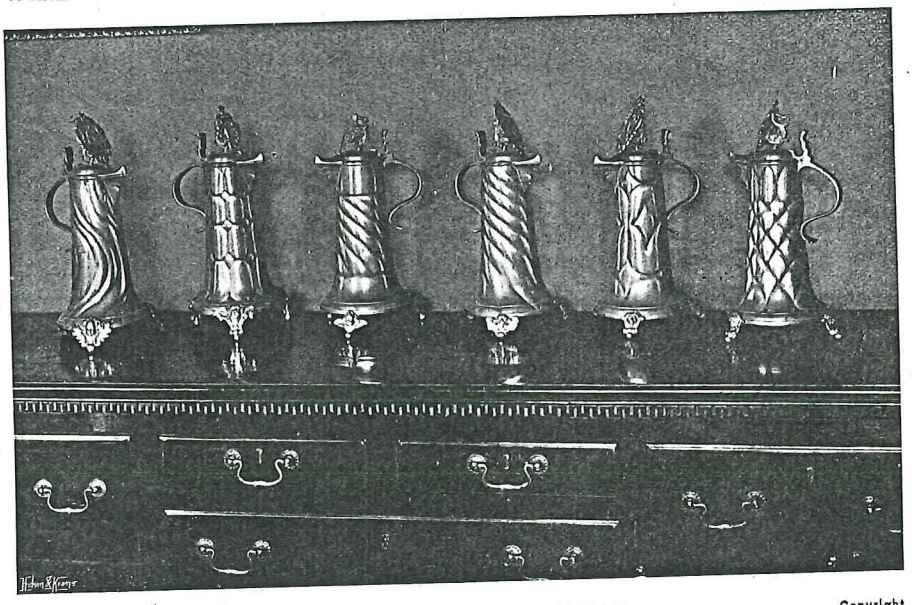
The lesson to be learned from these illustrations seems to be this—do not attempt to group English and foreign pewter together. At the recent exhibition in Clifford's Inn Hall the effect of the grouping was secured by placing the foreign work in a separate corner. Such grouping is fairer both to the English work and also to the foreign stuff, for comparisons, if not odious, may be unfair. One collector, who felt it his duty to criticise the exhibits at Clifford's Inn Hall, maintained that there was no "art" in the English pewter because there was no ornament. With such critics argument is useless and quite thrown away, but unfortunately they find many willing listeners.

H. J. L. J. MASSÉ.

C. Reid. *A BIBERON, THREE TANKARDS, & TWO PORRINGERS.* Copyright



C. Reid. *ENGLISH AND FOREIGN PEWTER.* Copyright



C. Reid, Wishaw, N.B. *SIX GERMAN TANKARDS.* Copyright

ANATOLE FRANCE on HUMAN JUSTICE

LAST Easter, in that modern Apologia, "Les derniers moments de Charles Renouvier," we read the following criticism: "Save for William James, a man of great talent, and Gabriel Tarde, your modern philosophers seem to me to have gone all astray. Their descriptions of nervous diseases prove nothing after all, and I find more psychology—a more prudent and profound psychology—in 'Crainquebille'" ("Crainquebille, Putois, Riquet, et plusieurs autres récits profitables," par Anatole France. Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1904, 3fr. 50c.) "than in many a treatise of psycho-physics or psycho-physiology." Renouvier was a disappointed philosopher, eighty-eight years of age, dying on Mount Pisgah—or at least in a remote country house—apparently absorbed in contemplating the future triumphs of his own philosophy. Yet he found time to read, at least to read the sages, and, wisely, he classed M. France among the sages. Among the thinkers and workers of France, among the men of science and the men of action, we should find a great majority to support M. Renouvier in this opinion. Our study table is littered by modern novels; they are moral tales, philosophical allegories, or else they are erudite ironical stories of the past, or perhaps brilliant, simple, and still more ironical descriptions of life in the provinces