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Nicolaus Bolgan, hailing from Nicöping, Sweden, but working at Strassbourg about 1730 produced this splendid posset cup of which we show cover and lugs. The example

set by F. Briot found many able followers working at the Alsatian capital, although the bucolic scenes and strapwork belong to the inventory of the Baroque designer.

DECORATED AND DECORATIVE PEWTER FROM THE RUHMANN COLLECTION

By ROBERT M. VETTER

APPARENTLY not only the collector falls victim to the magic of pewter material but its singular fascination inspired also artists and more ambitious artisans to transcend the limits prescribed by mere utility combined with unassuming handsomeness. From the collector's view-point therefore, pewter may be grouped into plain household and

tavern types, and decorated pewter, for which the German investigator and collector Demiani has introduced the term "Edelzinn" which really means decorated pewter for decorative purposes. The picturesque effect of scoured pewter against oak or walnut sideboards and panelling was keenly appreciated in the XVIth century and when during the renaissance period wood work was covered with elaborate non-constructive carving, other materials had to follow suit. Pewter was no exception. Ultimately the ornamentation was carried to such an extreme as to make the object in question fairly useless, unless the aesthetic enjoyment derived from the contemplation of beautiful objects is considered as indispensable as the purely material condition of existence. This necessity was clearly felt during the renaissance.

At that time the employment of pewter had already become universal so that only a sort of mass production could meet the general demand. Intensification of tin-mining and tin imports from overseas as well as the employment of permanent metal moulds made it possible that important production centres could develop in many British



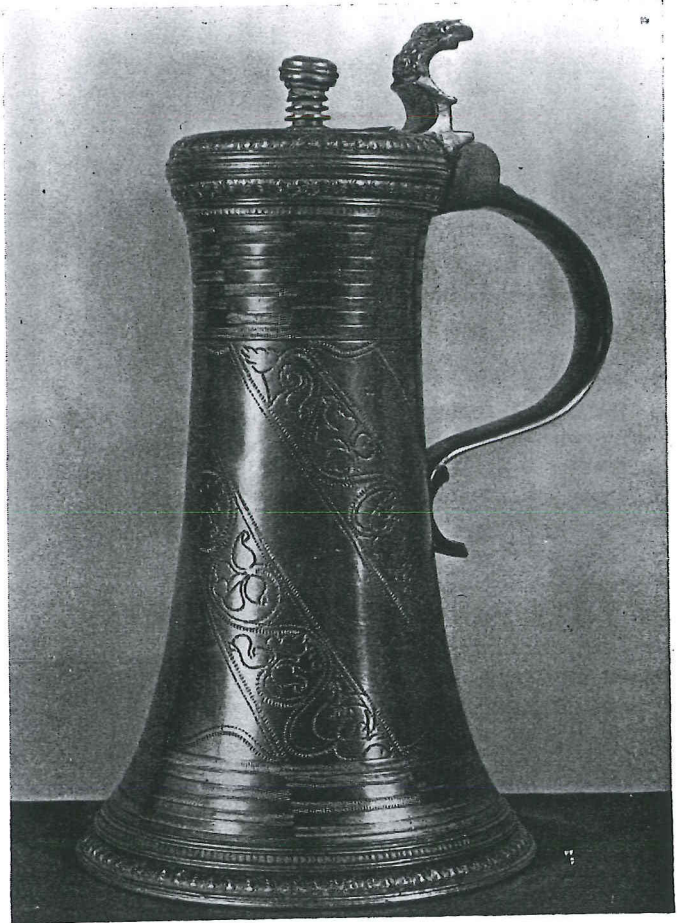
Tankard 6 in. high made by a Graz pewterer of the early XVIth century, combining late Gothic elements with Renaissance features. The engraving is of singular beauty and the plastic details peculiar. It bears witness to the high level of the pewterer's skill and his ambitions. A rare and highly interesting precursor of the full-fledged Edelzinn. The bottom is provided with a screw for fixing a container for nutmeg.



Pilgrims' badge or token 1½ in. long, probably French about 1400. An early example of ornamental pewter. Cast by the *cire perdue* process.



Western Switzerland and the adjoining French provinces produced this type of flagon, nearly always bearing an engraved coat-of-arms. These vessels are provided with screw caps and attachments for ornamental chains accentuated by masquerons. These chains are reminiscent of the pilgrims' and soldiers' flask which was slung to the side or fixed to the girdle by a strap or chain. Similar bulging flasks of larger dimensions were also suspended from the underside of carriages and contained the coachman's wine ration. This flask or gourd is 12½ in. high and was made about 1700 by Urs Jans of Solothurn, Switzerland.



A flagon of unusually pleasing proportions 12 in. high and made about 1600 by pewterer G.H. at Hallein, Salzburg. The ornamentation is of singular beauty consisting of punched bands, encircling cover, lip and foot. The diagonally engraved bands (wriggle work) extend between zones of curiously staggered finely wriggled bands. Elegant proportions combined with simple decoration result in a work of exceptional grace.



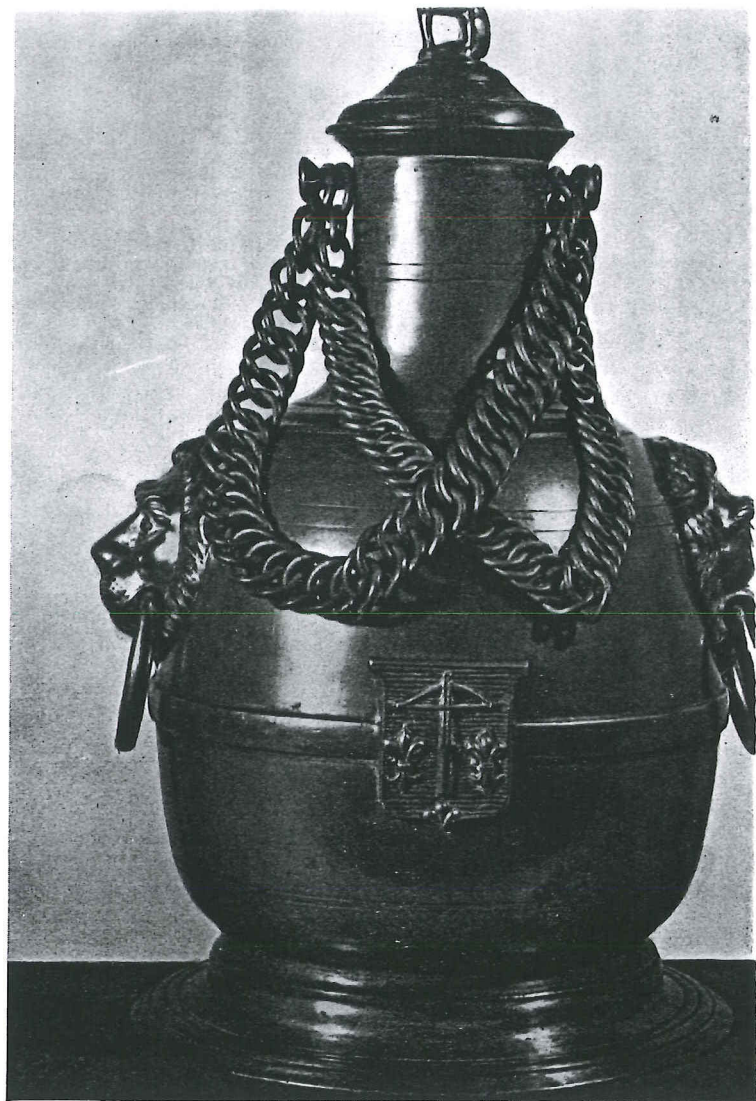
Although Edelzinn has during the second half of the XVIIIth century, when this engraving was made by Georg Christof Kilian of Augsburg, lost its hold on the general public, we believe this etching of interest as it demonstrates the growth of the popularity of pewter and the variety of the objects made during the XVIIIth century. Close examination of the scene shows that we are confronted with a temporary booth on one of the annual fairs which were regularly held at German towns. Only at the fair it was allowed to sell pewter from outsiders, much to the grievance of the local craft but beneficial to the exchange of ideas and normalisation of types, shapes—and prices. The buyers on the engraving apparently belong to the well-to-do class and the great variety of wares coincides with the increase and differentiation of domestic culture and advancement of culinary taste during the XVIIIth century.



Hexagon flagon with screw top, 11 in. high, made by Michael Hemersam at Nuremberg about 1640. Nuremberg pewterers were frequently experimenting with new methods of decoration. Here a sort of sgraffito technique is employed. The ground appears to be gilded or bronzed by some unknown process, subsequently japanned black and the ornament scratched in. The perfection of design and execution show a masterly hand. Whether applied by the pewterer himself or some sort of "Hausmaler" cannot be ascertained as comparison with objects showing the same manner of decoration are lacking.

and Continental towns. Last not least the system of training of journeymen and strict supervision by the guilds were important factors beyond the mere technical progress. The ease of reproduction based on employment of permanent metal moulds permitting a practically unlimited number of casts, fully justified the pains and cost spent on the fabrication of these most elaborate and beautifully finished dies. The truly artistic refinement and the meticulous finish of these dies and the castings made from them arouses our wonder and admiration.

Compared with the quantity of pewter which must have been cast from such moulds or dies during the XVIth, XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries, the number of objects available to the collector represents only a very small remainder from a general and fairly common commodity. Pewter as all other things followed—though somewhat reluctantly—the trend of fashion. It could always be re-cast in accordance with the ruling taste. Wars made fatal inroads into the pewter inventories of the citizens because tin is an important constituent of bronze from which cannon and—in our time—ships' propellers were and are made. Every lover of old pewter will have been impressed by an episode



A sturdy flask of Bernese origin, pewterer F.K., who worked during the XVIIth century. Base, lion's heads with rings and lion on cover are of brass. The formidable size (20 in. high), its generous girth and pronounced stability, the crossed ornamental chains and relief cast escutcheon are eminently characteristic of Swiss pewter.

described by Benvenuto Cellini (1500-1571) in his famous autobiography*), according to which at the crucial moment Benvenuto Cellini threw 200 pewter dishes and plates from his household into the bronze melting furnace in order to lower the melting point and increase the volume of the charge before draining it into the mould of his famous Perseus statue. It is not said whether this was just plain or decorated pewter. However, this vivid description of the event has, apart from its purely practical significance, reminded us frequently of the rôle which Benvenuto Cellini has played in the development of the exuberantly decorative high-renaissance style which he brought to France, where his works inspired many French artists, such as François Briot (1550-1615), who may be considered the most gifted master pewterer of the "Edelzinn" period. His influence on the contemporary craft was significant and its persistence remarkable.

His works and the ones ascribed to him are extensively described and illustrated in the pewter literature and numerous specimens are preserved in public collections and familiar to every serious collector so that we need not enter into descriptions. His manner of decoration was figurative high-relief, cast from permanent metal moulds, a style and method followed by a vast number of capable pewterers,

* In Johann Wolfgang v. Goethe's (1749-1832) famous translation, chapter VI.

notably in France and Germany (Nuremberg), while even the sober and conservative British pewterers yielded to the influence of the Continental fashion. The examples shown by Mr. Ronald F. Michaelis in his "Antique Pewter of the British Isles" illustrates that tendency very clearly.

Other means of decorating pewter than by high- or low-relief may be summed up as engraving (wriggled or burin work), punching, graining, etching (rare), repoussé, lacquering and gilding. If we add to the category of "Edelzinn" also pieces of distinctly elegant shape or embellished by the addition of ornamental chains, brass and enamel parts and other decorative details, we arrive at the collecting program of one of the most distinguished pewter connoisseurs, Dr. Karl Ruhmann of Vienna. From his early youth already a passionate and discriminating collector, he finally concentrated on "Edelzinn" as described above, excluding the more popular types of household pewter, unless they distinguish themselves by harmonious proportions and excellent workmanship. (In APOLLO four articles on "Decorated or Show Pewter" by Howard H. Cotterell and the writer of the present article appeared from November, 1933, onwards, in which some of Dr. Ruhmann's treasures were already shown.) Few of the existing collections contain "Edelzinn" of such variety and quality. Dr. Ruhmann is not only a passionate lover of pewter but his approach has moreover always been scientific and strictly selective. The great majority of the items can be traced to their origin and appropriate period. Collaboration with the late Prof. Erwin Hintze has made him familiar with the methods of identification. He purged his collection of the plainer household types and discarded a remarkable set of XVIIIth century Baroque and Rococo pewter as he wanted to

specialize on "Edelzinn" only.

During summer 1960 pewter collectors and experts could admire select items from his collection which were exhibited at the Ferdinandeum, Innsbruck, Tyrol, and commented by an excellent catalogue which will enter many a library as a source of valuable information. Restriction of available space allows description only of a very limited number of characteristic examples of the pewterer's art and the various methods of embellishment.

We refer the reader to the captions under the illustrations which contain the necessary details.

May this lovely collection be spared the fate of such famous ones as Figdor's, Manz', Kahlbau's, etc., which were either dispersed or wantonly destroyed. Pewter, the friendly metal, has always been an easy prey to the ubiquitous barbarism. Having observed the inherent trend of pewter collecting during the last 50 years, it became evident that the general preference for the plain household and tavern types, displayed against a homely background has somewhat decreased whereas the interest for decorated and purely decorative types of Continental origin and even for Baroque pewter, imitating silverware increased. Such types were formerly eschewed by many orthodox collectors as gaudy and foreign to the true spirit of pewter.

No doubt, numerous exhibitions and scientific, well illustrated publications have helped to bring about this obvious change of taste while, last not least, the growing scarcity of eligible specimens has contributed to a widening of the collector's scope and taught him to take a more liberal view, free from national prejudices.

All items illustrated are from the collection of Dr. Karl Ruhmann, Vienna.

SOME PORTRAITS OF JOHN RUSKIN

IN THE RUSKIN GALLERIES, BEMBRIDGE SCHOOL, ISLE OF WIGHT
AND BRANTWOOD, CONISTON

By JAMES S. DEARDEN,
Curator of the Collections

THE Ruskin Collections at Bembridge and Brantwood were made by the late John Howard Whitehouse, founder of Bembridge School and of the Birmingham Ruskin Society; founder and president of The Ruskin Society and Friends of Brantwood. Included in the collections are twelve portraits of John Ruskin, several of which are previously unrecorded.

The Catalogue of Portraits which is included in the 38th volume of the Library Edition of the Works of John Ruskin lists sixty-nine likenesses of that great Victorian, covering the period 1822-1902. Of this figure, three are posthumous portraits and twenty-three are photographs. There are at Bembridge and Brantwood a number of portraits not included in this catalogue and other "unrecorded" portraits are known to exist in other collections.

Ruskin was first painted in 1822, when he was 3½ years old, by James Northcote, R.A. Northcote first made a life-sized oil-painting and then later in the same year, painted Ruskin's head in his allegorical "The Thorn in the Foot". The first adult likeness of Ruskin appears to be the cameo cut in Rome in 1841, which is now at Brantwood.

This cameo is the first in this catalogue, which includes thereafter, at least one likeness of Ruskin in each decade of his life, until his death in 1900.

Ruskin was most particular about the way in which artists

portrayed him. For instance Ruskin posed himself for his 1886 portrait by Blake Wirgman—not in this collection—and pointed out the particular view the artist should take. When Wirgman had finished, Ruskin himself put the finishing touches to the hair and eyebrows, about which he was very particular.

The following unpublished personal impression of Ruskin's appearance by T. F. Plowman, who knew him at Oxford, either between 1869-79 or 1883-5, is of interest:

"... although he was not a man by any means of imposing presence or carriage, there was something about him which arrested attention when you met him in the street. You would probably want to look twice at him and would think he was someone of distinction. He walked with a slow measured step and looked though he was mentally pre-occupied and had little regard for what was passing around him. His face and bearing seemed to suggest the refined philosopher coupled with the artistic temperament. He was accustomed to walk with his hands behind his back underneath his academics and with a slight forward bend of the body, so that he always struck me as being not unlike a dignified bird; the projection of the gown being suggestive of the tail. He dressed carefully, though not ostentatiously, and invariably wore a bright blue scarf with a pin in the centre.