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The Editor's Attic

The Cover

THE eagle on this month's cover is from a bronze original that perches on a desk in the Editor's Attic. A French bird, one of a considerable flock recently recovered in Paris by an American traveler and collector, this specimen came Americaward bringing quite a romantic tale behind him. He was, according to this account, modeled and cast by Pierre-Philippe Thomire (1751-1843), the French sculptor whose finely executed gilded bronze ornaments add both elegance and value to many an elaborate piece of Louis XVI and Empire furniture. Having been hatched under such competent auspices, our eagle and a hundred or more similar members of the brood were assigned to the high task of decorating certain important street lights of Paris — a quartet to a lantern. For many years they retained, undisturbed, their positions of ornamental contemplation. During the Franco-Prussian war, however, they suddenly disappeared. Whether it was believed that the starving Parisian populace might attempt to reduce them to terms of edibility, as did Ser Federigo with his pet falcon; or whether, on the other hand, it was feared that the invading Germans might seize upon so proud an array of poultry, the tale leaves us in the dark. In any case, the eagles were hidden, and, having been thus bravely safeguarded, were ignominiously forgotten for half a century, when their accidental discovery led to their sale to an enterprising American. The Attic does not vouch for the truth of this story; indeed, it believes that such tales, whether appended to eagles or to lesser fowl, would better be taken with a liberal admixture of salt. But true or false, the story is a fairly good one, and so likewise is the eagle.

A Postscript Concerning

Commemorative Porringers

IN his *Further Notes on Commemorative Porringers*, published elsewhere in this number of ANTIQUES, Howard

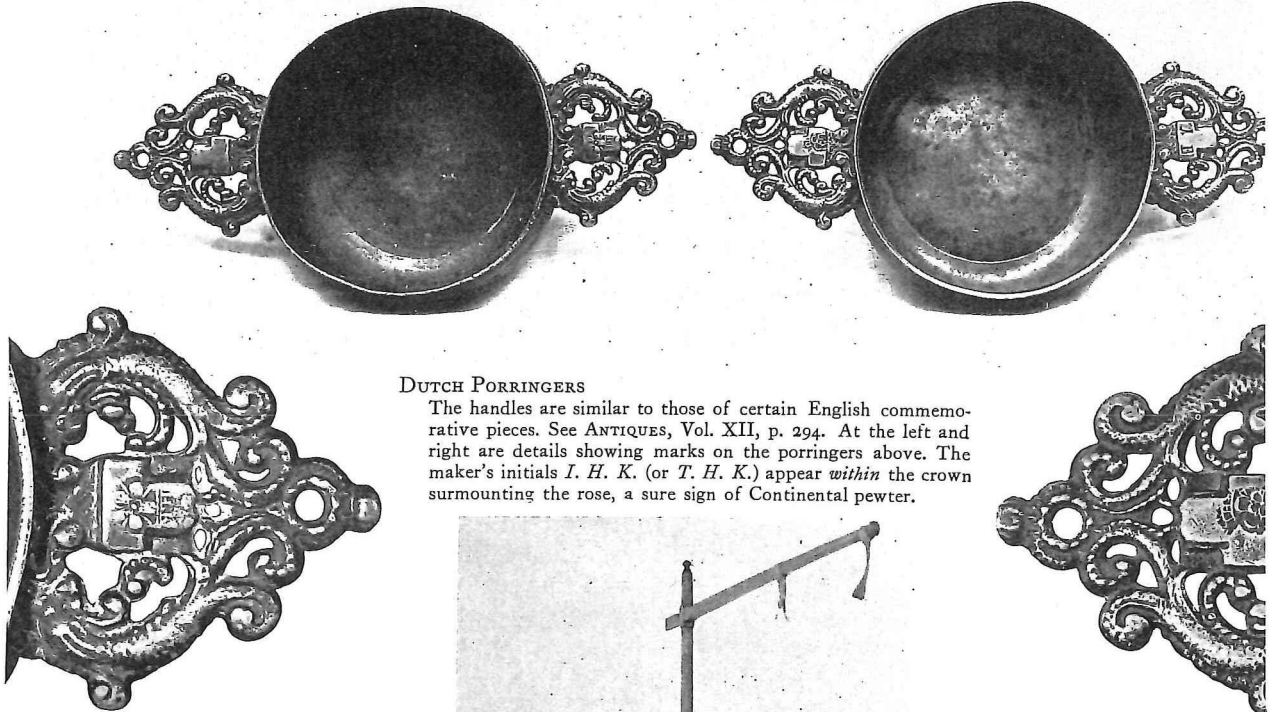
Herschel Cotterell seems to dispose quite completely of a previous editorial suggestion that such porringers, though English in subject, might yet prove to be in closer alliance with Continental than with English workmanship.* Certainly there can be no question that the marks which Mr. Cotterell so conclusively assigns to specific pewterers are English marks, stamped by identifiable English craftsmen. Yet it is, nevertheless, a curious circumstance that these Continental-looking commemorative porringers should occur only in celebration of two English sovereigns, one of whom, William of Orange, was a Dutchman, while the other, Queen Anne, occupied the throne during a period when Continental — notably Dutch — fashions dominated the English decorative arts. It is also a curious circumstance that the complimentary inscription on one of these porringers should exhibit a glaring error in the spelling of a royal entitlement — *Princ*, instead of *Prince* George. One can imagine a foreign moldmaker's being guilty of a slip of this kind. But an Englishman? Perhaps it is a delicate question. Eighteenth-century folk in all walks of life were prone to orthographic lapses.

In the face of conclusions offered by a man of Mr. Cotterell's international reputation as an expert in pewter, the Attic would not have ventured to present any queries anent the spelling of *Prince*, or to advert again to the various un-English characteristics of the porringers under discussion, had it not been for a postscript note from Mr. Cotterell himself — a note received too late to be appended, as it properly should have been, to his lengthier treatment of the subject.

The postscript reads as follows:

But just as one feels that the air is cleared — there comes a photograph from my friend Mr. Vetter of Amsterdam, showing two porringers in the collection of Mr. Tellander of Hilversum, Holland, with those identical double-dolphin ears, but bearing a mark which leaves us in no doubt as to their *Continental* origin. I am illustrating these, but, as the telltale marks do not convey any very decided message in so small a photograph, Mr. Vetter has also sent me full-size pictures taken by Mr. Ducro of Amsterdam, well known to readers of ANTIQUES through the many excellent pictures from his camera which have illustrated my articles on *European Continental Pewter*. In this full-size picture, here reproduced, it will

*A note appended to M. Riff's article in ANTIQUES for October, 1927, Vol. XII, p. 294.



DUTCH PORRINGERS

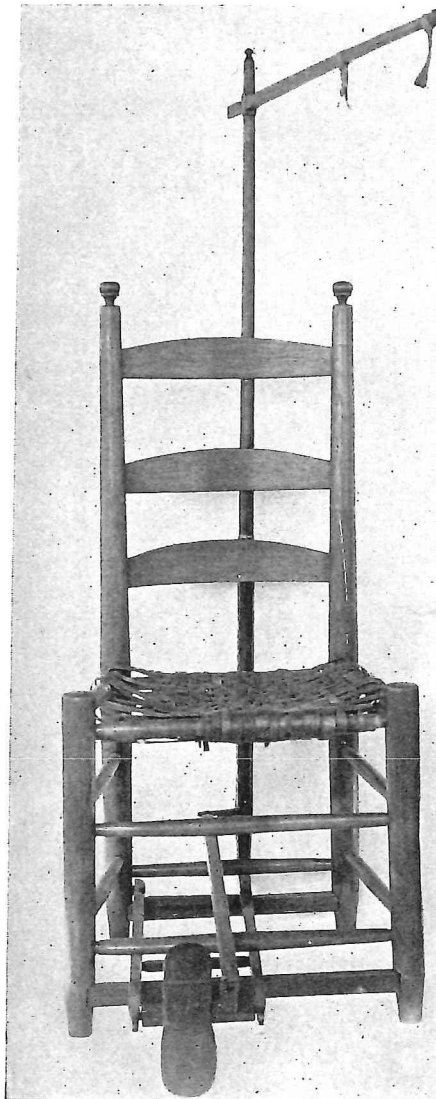
The handles are similar to those of certain English commemorative pieces. See *ANTIQUES*, Vol. XII, p. 294. At the left and right are details showing marks on the porringers above. The maker's initials *I. H. K.* (or *T. H. K.*) appear *within* the crown surmounting the rose, a sure sign of Continental pewter.

at once be seen that the maker's initials *I. H. K.* (or *T. H. K.*) appear *in* the crown surmounting the rose, one of the infallible tests for Continental pewter. Thus we have this double-dolphin ear appearing with English and with Continental marks, so that the ear alone is *not* a reliable test of nationality. On the *V*-shaped piece which attaches the ears to the body there appears, cast in relief, the letters *I. H. S. S.* with the *S*'s reversed.

The photographs forwarded by Mr. Cotterell with his postscript are reproduced herewith. They should be compared with the illustrations accompanying the already cited article by M. Riff. The porringer pictured in Mr. Cotterell's expansion of M. Riff's theme has handles which differentiate it from others of the general group.

The Attic greatly admires Mr. Cotterell's candor in offering this unfortunately belated communication. It is the candor of the thoroughgoing student and scholar. For what can these two Dutch porringers which Mr. Vetter has unearthed mean, except that our presumably English commemorative porringers are essentially Dutch in type? Cast in England, they probably were; dignified with an English touchmark, they undoubtedly were. But whence came the molds?

The Attic's doubts concerning the actual origin of the porringers



CHAIR WITH MECHANICAL FAN ATTACHMENT
(eighteenth century)

Of beechwood, with splint seat; the mechanism, of walnut. Owned by J. Stogdell Stokes

will not be entirely quieted
that question is completely
settled
Before the Day of

Screens

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN'S with a treadle attachment operated a fan qualified to great Quaker's philosopher while his hands were occupied,* finds curious in a chair here pictured through the courtesy of J. Stogdell Stokes of Philadelphia. The latter screen, however, is not a rocker but a beechwood slat-back, whose posts are yet shapely, turned posts of its eighteenth-century origin found by Mr. Stokes in the doah Valley of Virginia.

Below the lower front rung of the chair, a squared stretcher, is inserted between the legs. In these stretchers, in turn, is a treadle device, of walnut, operable with the right foot, connected with a pole which projects from the back of the chair. When the treadle is depressed,

*See *ANTIQUES*, Vol. XIII, p. 115.