

ERI

SOME CURIOUS FOOTED PEWTER

By Percy E. Raymond



FIGURE ONE

Many years ago, an unusual footed English porringer came my way. Obviously it is a fake, for it has two handles, and no English porringer has two handles. The late H. H. Cotterell said so, and that is that. He proceeded to prove it by publishing in *Antiques*, June, 1928, figures of double eared porringers by the English pewterers, John Waite and Henry Smith. Adolf Riff had anticipated him by an article in the same magazine in October, 1927, and Cotterell republished some of the figures in his book in 1929. Nevertheless, the dictum still holds among English collectors, that there are no double-handled English porringers.

This specimen (Fig. 1, center) is doubly suspect, for a porringer with a circular foot is a thing unknown in Great Britain or the United States, or, so far as I know, Continental Europe. Nevertheless, I am inclined

to believe that the piece is genuine. The handles are marked only with a crowned X, but in the bottom of the bowl is the touch of George Beeston, who made pewter in London from 1743 until after 1765. He was neither early enough nor famous enough to justify the faking of his rather elaborate touch. It may be that he made the article as a footed bowl, and that a later faker has added the handles. If so, the operator went to considerable trouble in making the handle mold, for the ears are neither usual nor simple.

Rummaging through my odds and ends recently I came upon the pair of chamber candlesticks here shown alongside the porringer. I find from the label on the bottom that at one time I assigned them a date of 1790, then changed it to c. 1720. The touch is H.T. in a heart, which could be English, but which is not in Cotterell.

Lining them up, I was amazed at the similarity of the profiles of the three pieces. The candlesticks and porringer are not from the same mold, for there are differences in dimensions. But they are extraordinarily similar.

Next I began looking at my footed bowls and tulip-shaped cans. And I discovered, what a better informed person would have known already, that this type of foot belongs to the mid-18th century. The can at the left (Fig. 2) was made by John Townsend, who struck his touch in 1748. The one at the right has the excise punch of George II, who ceased to function in 1760 and also, incidentally, those of William IV and

Victoria. George Beeston made some of the pewter for the coronation feast of George III. Perhaps he got over-excited and produced, as a *tour-de-force*, a double-eared porringer. At any rate, a date of *circa* 1760 would do nicely for all five pieces illustrated.

But bringing the cans into the picture suggests something else. Do you see it? The sticks, and the bowl of the porringer were cast in molds which normally were used for producing the basal portions of cans and tankards. A little work on the lathe would make all necessary changes.

It's rather amusing to study one's pewter during the long winter evenings.



FIGURE TWO