

EUQ

Scottish Pewter

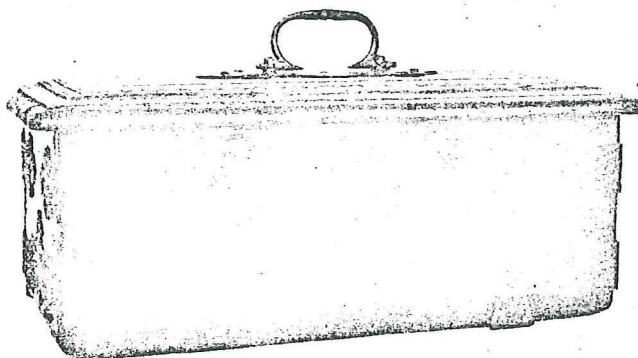
rare, less than half a dozen being known. They vary in diameter between about two and eight inches.

It will be noticed that, except in the case of the rose-water bowl in Part I of these notes, no maker's names are given. This is partly due to lack of space, and partly to the fact that, though church flagons usually bear their makers' touches,

very few of the measures are marked other than with excise marks and the initials of the Dean of Guild. A quaint exception is found in the mark struck upon an early "Pot-belly" measure, "MADE BE LACHLAN DALLAS." All the pieces illustrated in Figures 2 to 6 are in the well-known collection of Dr. A. J. Young, of Christchurch.

THE EDINBURGH TOUCHPLATES

By Lieut-Col. J. S. BISSET, F.S.A., Scot.



Small oaken coffer known as "Johnny Faa's Charter Chest," but probably a "common box" of the Edinburgh Pewterer Craft; circa 1650. By courtesy of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland.

WITH reference to Capt. Sutherland Graeme's letter in the March number of *THE ANTIQUE COLLECTOR* in which he kindly refers to my recent paper on the Edinburgh Touchplates, perhaps the following extract from the Edinburgh Burgh Council Act of 1562 may be of interest to those to whom the Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland are not readily available.

The Council were concerned at the poor quality of the metal being used by the local pewterers and the Act, after giving instructions for the assaying of the work of each craftsman by his fellows, ordains that to prevent dispute as to the quality and authorship of the piece under assay: ". . . the said powdereris has instantlie at the making heir of (to) put in thair commoun box of the pudermaker craft ane assay (i.e. sample) of tyn markit with all thair markis and according thairto in tyme cuming the tyn weschell to be maid . . .".

It seems, however, that the Act was soon for-

gotten or ignored as it was re-enacted in 1600, and it is probably in this latter year that the first of the touchplates we have to-day was prepared, as that is the earliest date used in any of the touches recorded on the plate—even by craftsmen who had been made freemen before that date.

The small oaken coffer in which these plates, along with other articles of pewter, were found, was in the possession of a gypsy family named Faa, and is shown in the accompanying photograph. It is some 16 inches long by 7½ inches broad, of rough workmanship and decorated with ornamental iron strappings and escutcheons, all badly corroded. It is generally assigned to the 17th century. Legend attributes it to the famous early 16th century gypsy Johnny Faa, Lord and Earl of Little Egypt, the touchplates being said to be his charter to travel and trade throughout the country, but it is almost certainly an old "common box" of the Edinburgh pewterers, though probably not the identical box of 1562.