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BOOK REVIEWS

MODES AND MANNERS, by MAX VON BOEHN. Translated from the German by JOAN JOSHUA. Medium 8vo, illus., cloth. (London: Harrap, 1932.)
VOL. I. FROM THE DECLINE OF THE ANCIENT WORLD TO THE RENAISSANCE. Pp. 310, with 25 plates in colour and 220 illustrations in half-tone.
VOL. II. THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY. Pp. 290, with 16 plates in colour and 177 illustrations in half-tone.

These are the first two volumes of a familiar German work, whose appearance in an English dress was evidently a mere question of time. They are to be followed in due course by volumes III and IV, treating respectively of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The present critic has the advantage of acquaintance with the German originals, which included four further volumes dealing with the nineteenth century and an ancillary volume * on what may be called the anatomy of costume by Emma von Sichart. These five tomes have already been Englished for our benefit, and it has been interesting to compare the manner of their English sponsors with that of the latest translator. And here it may at once be said that Miss Joan Joshua emerges from the ordeal with flying colours. The German author is to be congratulated on falling into the hands of so faithful and discreet an interpreter; one, moreover, who rarely reminds us, so far as mere diction goes, that we are in fact keeping alien company. In this respect it compares favourably with the English version of Emma von Sichart's companion volume, issued by the same publishers in 1928 under the misleading title of "A History of Costume," which somehow contrived to be as unfair to its original as the latter was to the author (Carl von Köhler) of which it was in the main an avowed adaptation. *Traduttore traditore* is untrue in the present case.

Its merits as a picture-gallery are no doubt what has chiefly recommended the original series to public favour, both at home and abroad, and here the publishers (who are also, I believe, those of that excellent art journal *Pantheon*) enjoyed the peculiar advantage of being identical with the well-known firm of art-photographers, Bruckmann's of Munich. This of course placed at their disposal a remarkable stock of negatives of Old Masters, the blocks from which have done duty in both the German and English editions as illustrations of contemporary costume. For all their excellences, these illustrations suffer to some extent from the defects of the system, the photographs in stock having been primarily taken for their artistic rather than their antiquarian value. A more serious fault is that no attempt whatever has been made to indicate their relation to the letterpress, so that the two are not, as they should ideally be, evidently an organic whole. This is the more regrettable in that the books appear to have achieved success principally as a history of costume. In point of fact, it would be quite easy on the one hand to substitute a completely new selection of pictures without in the least disturbing the text, on the other to rewrite the letterpress on different lines without affecting the illustrations.

* "Praktische Kostümkunde." In the original this was published in *two* volumes.

At least on the literary side, "Die Mode. Menschen und Moden"—to give the series its original title—is not, as seems to be generally assumed, a history of costume, but a general description of manners and customs, in which of course costume is given its place. It is eminently readable, but so crowded with isolated "facts" that it is often difficult to see the wood for the trees. As Chesterton says of H. G. Wells's "Outline of History," the work is permeated throughout by "two hearty detestations: a hatred of Pagan Rome and a hatred of Christian Rome." Indeed, one might go farther and say that the work as a whole suggests a whole-hearted disapproval of the civilization to which we are heirs, as repeatedly evidenced by the author's *obiter dicta*. Not the "Church of Rome" only but organized Christianity at large is his *bête noire*, which throughout these books plays the part of King Charles's head. The result is a depressing picture of callous cruelty and brutish stupidity, emphasized rather than relieved in spots by a thin veneer of "culture." Those few who are familiar with the writings of Alwin Schultz and Henne am Rhyn will feel the point of view not altogether novel. Here the attractive form and the parade of erudition is apt to mislead the uninformed layman. After all, by underlining details selected *ad hoc* and omitting or minimizing the nobler manifestations of human genius, it is not so difficult to conjure up the vision of a hell upon earth. The more experienced reader at least will take little harm from Herr von Boehn's obsessions. For such the work contains any amount of useful material for reference, especially in the English edition, to which the translator has added a useful and much-needed index. It is perhaps as well, however, to note that the fluent English masks a mentality essentially Teutonic, and that despite his surface erudition, the author's first-hand knowledge of sources other than German is not really deep.

F. M. K.

PEWTER DOWN THE AGES. From Mediæval to the Present Day. With Notes on Evolution. By HOWARD HERSCHEL COTTERELL, F.R.Hist.Soc. (London: Hutchinson and Co., Ltd.) 21s. net.

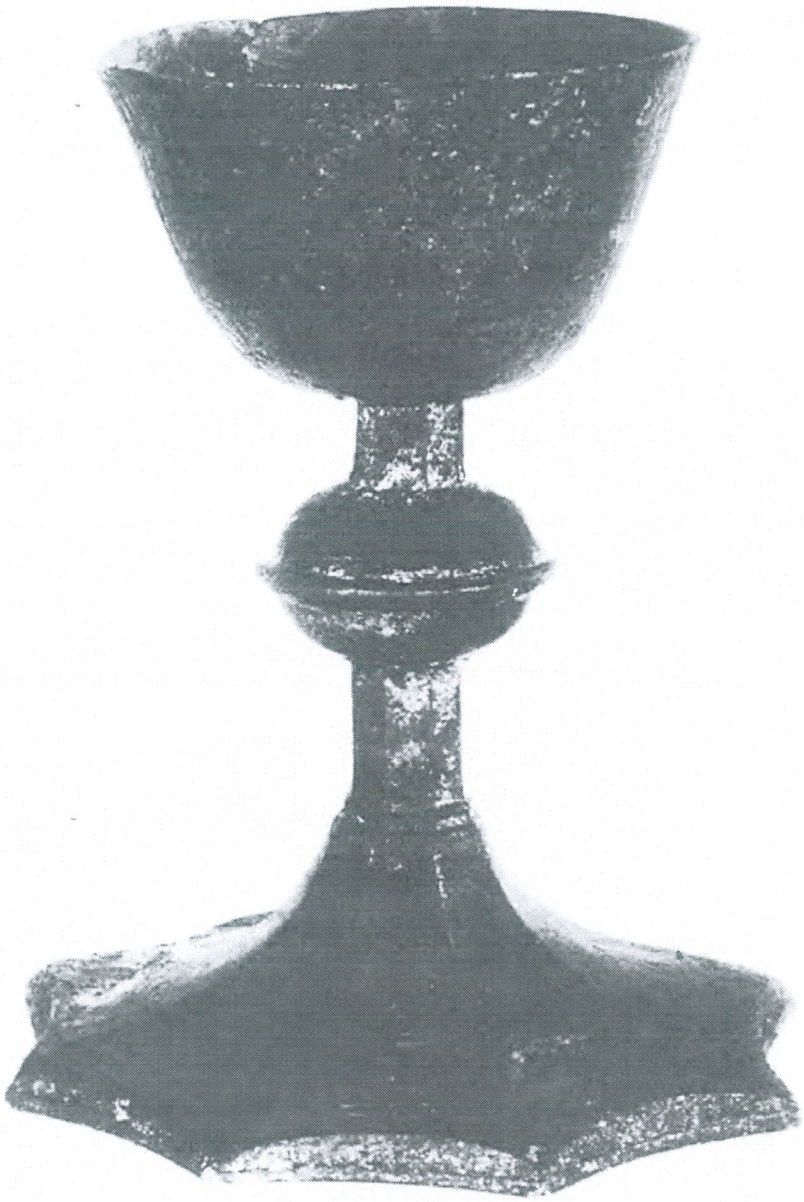
The lover of fine pewter will have cause to thank Mr. Cotterell for his new book, a worthy successor to his monumental work "Old Pewter: Its Makers and Marks," but issued at one-fifth the price. Mr. Cotterell is the author of several other books on the subject, besides being a Founder and past President of the Society of Pewter Collectors. He is in close collaboration with Continental authorities, and has pursued his quarry in many lands. The information he gives is, therefore, of exceptionable value, and could only come from exact knowledge and long intimacy with the finest pieces. His method of imparting it is easy and colloquial, as though chatting familiarly to fellow-enthusiasts, without recourse to obscure or puzzling technicalities; and when these are necessary we simply turn to the very useful and complete glossary of terms at the end. The book,

moreover, is set in so large a type—as large as our old-fashioned nursery books—that reading it is a physical pleasure.

As one would expect from such an expert, it is a guide for pewter fanciers who fly at high game; and what makes the book especially useful as a reference is the number of large-scale illustrations of rare and choice examples (there are 161 of them) presented in historic sequence and superbly printed. Nothing, by the way, makes a more satisfactory half-tone block than a pewter object. The text takes the form of a running commentary on the illustrations, explaining their points, periods, differences, characteristics and the provenance of types, and the author supports his argument by means of a selection of old pictures in which pewter vessels and utensils are introduced, a source of information too often neglected. This source, however, must not be relied on too implicitly in the matter of dates. Pewter does not wear out so quickly as that.

Extremely interesting, and to the point, in the opposite direction, is the inclusion of Jost Amman's woodcut of a pewteret's workshop, showing a variety of types; one of them, as the writer points out, depicting a Zürich *Glockenkanne*, generally regarded as a Swiss conception of later date.

Mr. Cotterell tells us that "with the exception of sepulchral chalices and early spoons, few *authenticated* examples of mediæval British pewter are known to exist, and one has therefore to turn to countries across the English Channel for evidence of what the records of such early periods are like." But where England stood pre-eminent was in the quality and honesty of her metal. The English formula for the pewter amalgam was so highly esteemed on the Continent that objects of special importance were in later times stamped with the words "Etain Anglais," "Englische Composizzion," and such like labels, and even with the word "London," to certify that the composition was of English quality.



AN EARLY SEPULCHRAL CHALICE FOUND IN THE TOMB OF A FRENCH BISHOP. ("Pewter Down the Ages")

Good wine needs no bush, and it is satisfactory to note that the English were averse to decorating their pewter-ware with surface ornament. To our thinking, the smooth grey metal with its undecorated bloom has something noble about it, and is far more agreeable to the eye—and to the touch—without unnecessary engraving or embossing. Such treatment always tends to the meretricious; no great skill being required owing to the softness of the metal.

It is interesting to note how certain types persist in their main features throughout the ages, as though the most suitable forms for holding or containing vessels having been once discovered, were established for all time as not being susceptible of much improvement; whatever diversity of detail we may find in otherwise standardized types. All the more valuable, therefore, is our author's guidance in the matter of what to look for. Mr. Cotterell points out how far Continental influence has permeated English work and home influences radiated outward.

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Some of the earliest forms were decided ages before the introduction of pewter, being derived from pottery and bronze vessels. Mr. Cotterell shows us (in Fig. IV) an example of a bronze-inspired *Stubeskanne* or Hall-Flagon of pewter which has strong resemblance to a Chinese bronze of antique shape.

Again, the *Gourde* or *Bulgekanne* is another convenient form adapted from the gourd—a shape in its flattened version often termed "pilgrim's bottle"—which is found in all times and in all countries, from China to Peru.

A peculiarity often found in the *Gourde* of early times is the curiously-shaped foot which enables the vessel to stand upright safely, and the small shield affixed to the lower part of the body (analogous in position to the tailpiece of a violin), the meaning of which is not clear. The author suggests that it may indicate a former ring attachment for tilting purposes, but this is by no means certain. The ring, if any, may have been intended to run a strap or sling through when carrying.

With all respect to the *Gourdes* of more ancient lineage which the author illustrates, the finest, to my thinking is the French example (Fig. XXX) of the sixteenth century, with Gothic features, whose fat, smooth contours literally invite the hand's caress. Its massive simplicity is of the essence of fine pewter form, and the "mask" lugs and stirrup handle and trefoil-headed screw-cap put the finishing touches to a noble *ensemble*. The two halves of all genuine early *Gourdes* are joined vertically, and not laterally or round the centre as in later types.

The differences in form of pewter vessels of similar type, though subtle, are so patent to the educated eye, being so much a matter of "expression" in the moulding, that such a fine example as the polyhedral flagon (on page 46, Fig. XIV) of pure Gothic form found in the ruins of the Homburg Castle in Switzerland conjures up its period in every line. Each curve of its swelling and massive form, together with the seated lion on its cover, is eloquent of that turbulent age. The author rightly hails it as one of the finest pieces of pewter that has survived the passing of time.

Another fine Gothic piece, which we give as an illustration, is the Sepulchral Chalice (Fig. XV) found in the tomb of a French bishop. Coming to modern times, the author repeats his assertion, which he first pointed out in a contemporary, that the well-known Scottish measures, known as "Tappit-hens" are the victims of a misnomer. The word, he tells us, is "an entirely wrong application of a corruption of the old French word *topynett* (a quart), a word denoting capacity and *not* shape." The second size is known correctly as the "Chopin," from the French *chopine* (a pint), and the third size is called a "Mutchkin." The designation, however, has gained so strong a hold in popular currency that the author may well despair of ever effecting a change.

Mr. Cotterell's book is further enriched by a detachable pocket list of the most prominent British pewterers and their marks, abridged from his larger work.

H. G. F.

EVERYDAY THINGS IN CLASSICAL GREECE, by MARJORIE and C. H. B. QUENNELL. (London: Batsford.) 8s. net.

In the present volume, which concludes their series of books on Everyday Things in Ancient Greece, the authors very wisely begin with the architecture. This most fascinating subject is too often kept in the background, or skimmed over in a chapter towards the end of a book. Here it occupies 48 out of the 138 pages in which all kinds of matters are described and discussed. If our grandfathers, who had to struggle with large dictionaries and plain texts, and whose memories of the classical languages consisted mainly of hours spent on learning declensions and paradigms, could see such books as this, they would expect that every child would prefer classics to any other course of study. Now that Latin and Greek are no longer compulsory, all kinds of allurements are set before the public. One can only regret that such alleviations of the old dull routine did not appear many years ago. Had they done so, the classical studies with their quite invaluable training might still have held their once impregnable position in education.

The second chapter, which deals with the Town and its public buildings, includes such varied subjects as town-planning, markets, medicine, dramatists and actors. In the third chapter, which is concerned with Town Houses and Everyday Life, we have plans of houses, pictures and descriptions of furniture, vases, games, coins, terra-cottas and a sketch of Xenophon's delightful account of the household of the young Ischomachus and his wife. By the way, the little wife should hardly be called an "infant of fifteen." A Greek girl of that age would probably be quite mature. And did not our own Mr. Pepys marry his wife when she was exactly that age?

It is a pity that the authors repeat the silly statement that men fastened their hair "with a golden grasshopper." There is absolutely no authority for this grasshopper; the hair was fixed up with golden bands, and the coils of hair with golden bands at intervals produced the ringed effect of a grasshopper's body.

In the fourth and last chapter Sea Fights and Land Battles are described. Here the authors follow the course of events in the narrative of Thucydides. To older persons the tragic story of the Sicilian Expedition can never be too fully told, but there seems some little danger that the boys and girls for whom the book is primarily intended may find the detailed account rather tiresome. That is, however, the only adverse criticism that can be levelled against a most charming and useful book.

I only noticed the following slips: On page 38, "the scent of the sacrifice could be wafted in to (not into!) the god"; page 56, "the mortal dust of (not or) St. Chad." The lady commemorated by the exquisite monument shown in Fig. 26 was named Hegeso (not Hegesa). In the first chapter it is a little confusing to read of the Temple of Athena Nike on page 11, and of the Statue of Athene Promachos on page 12. There ought to be consistent spelling throughout; alas! there never is in any book.

With regard to the parapet of the Nike Apteros Temple, the authors quote Dinsmoor's article of 1926, but do not seem to know of Rhys Carpenter's book published in 1929. The illustrations, like the printing and binding, are excellent.

C. K. J.