

6888

## Antiques (USA), no date, 2 pages

---

Henry Francis du Pont died at his home at Winterthur, Delaware, on April 11, at the age of eighty-eight. For nearly fifty years he has been the leading figure in the sphere of the American decorative arts, influencing it—in his unassuming way—more than any other one person. His collection, which he opened to the public in 1951, is incomparable in quality, quantity, and installation, and it has set the standards for a whole generation of collectors, dealers, and museums. While he was first and last a collector, his interests extended into other fields, related and unrelated. His museum's program of graduate study, for example, was the first of its kind. Mr. du Pont was the last of the group of great collectors active in the 1920's, and he will be remembered, with the admiration and affection of those of us who knew him, as the greatest of them all.

---

IN ANTIQUES FOR FEBRUARY of this year some of the masterpieces of Western textiles owned by the Art Institute of Chicago were discussed and illustrated by the curator of the collection, Christa C. Mayer. Among the rich and varied fabrics in gold and silver threads, silk, linen, wood, and cotton, only one piece of lace represented the institute's considerable holdings in that category. This month we show another outstanding example: the springlike bouquet on our cover is an exquisite veil of Brussels lace, given to the Art Institute by the Antiquarian Society of Chicago in 1924.

The veil is made of linen and measures seventy-two inches at its greatest length and greatest breadth. It is needle lace, in what is known popularly as rose point because of the floral nature of the design, or—more properly, perhaps—as *point de gaze* (literally, gauze stitch) because of the diaphanous texture of the ground. This lace is closely related to *point d'Alençon* but is even finer and filmier since the ground on which the floral design is embroidered is made with a single thread given a single twist.

*Point de gaze* makes particularly lovely veils, for the delicacy of the ground gives it a graceful "fall" and its transparency makes all the little roses and other motifs stand out "as if on a mist," Marian Powys says in her *Lace and Lace-Making* (Boston, 1953). She speaks of the great popularity of this lace in the Empire period and throughout the nineteenth century, and illustrates luxurious veils made for empresses and queens. None is more

splendid than this one. It too is believed to have been made for royalty, in the first half of the nineteenth century. Traditionally it belonged to a member of the Russian imperial family, and the Russian double-headed eagle is worked into the intricate composition of flowers and ferns, ribbons and bowknots, scrolls and arabesques.

THE TWO PEWTER communion beakers on the frontispiece bring us back to American antiques. One is engraved *The Gift of Mr. Daniel Emery To the Church in Nottingham 1743*, the other *The Gift of Mr. Samuel Parkman, To the Church in Nottingham 1743*. According to Jane C. Giffen, curator of the New Hampshire Historical Society in Concord, which owns them, the Reverend Daniel Emery was called to the Congregational Church at Nottingham, New Hampshire, on September 8, 1742, and the church was formally organized on November 3, 1742. The first meetinghouse was constructed during Emery's seven-year pastorate, though not completed until 1755 when pews were constructed and sold to members. The beakers were used from 1743, when they were given, until 1878, when the church was dropped from the Congregational rolls. Where they were during the succeeding years is not known. In 1915 they were presented to the New Hampshire Historical Society, with two flagons by the London pewterer Samuel Ellis (w. 1721-1733) which, as their similar engraved inscriptions reveal, were also presented to the Nottingham church by Daniel Emery. After reposing in the society's collections more or less unnoticed for over fifty years, the beakers were included in an exhibition prepared by Mrs. Giffen for a national meeting of the Pewter Collectors' Club of America last fall.

The beakers stand five and a quarter inches high and have tapered sides, flaring rims, and simple moldings around the bases. This basic form persisted with variations in American pewter from the late seventeenth century until well into the nineteenth, and though these examples are unmarked they appear to be unquestionably American. Similar tall, flared beakers are known with the RB rose-and-crown mark which has long baffled students of American pewter. Recently Ledlie I. Laughlin has identified this mark as that of Robert Bonning, a little-known pewterer who appears in Boston records in 1731 and 1739. Because Bonning is the only pewterer working as early as 1743 who is known to have made beakers of this particular form and size, the Nottingham pieces have been attributed to him by the pewter specialist Thomas D. Williams, to whom we are indebted for the information given here.

Sheila Winchester



Pair of pewter beakers presented to the church in Nottingham, New Hampshire, in 1743.  
*New Hampshire Historical Society.*