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plows, baby carriages, aluminum kitchenware, bundles of sole leather, barbed wire, kegs of nails, rubber tires — I found and bought some Kodak films that I thought I might use.

"Anything else today?" asked Raymond Babbitt.

"No, thanks," I replied, and then my eye fell on a pile of those small saddle blankets that the Navajo Indian sporting gentleman uses on his racing ponies. "That reminds me," I queried almost automatically, "How much are saddle blankets?"

"Six dollars each."

"By the way," I continued, "have you anything interesting in Navajo blankets?"

"Yes, a most unusual one that was brought in last night. It is in the curio shop — but isn't it something new your taking an interest in Navajo weaving?"

"Well, let me see it," I replied, and we went into the well-stocked Indian curio department. And here was spread out for me the blanket that the Indian trader had carried in his wagon the day before.

I recognized the border which I had previously seen. It consisted of a series of medallions, each with some queer archaic creature in it, and then, in the central field, one could make out primitive houses, cattle, birds, people, trees, even the Santa Fe railroad train that the observant Pueblo squaw often weaves into her blankets. It was a stunning piece of design, most effective in pattern.

"We can't quite make it out," said the salesgirl. "We get, from time to time, unexpected designs from unexpected sources — the National Biscuit Company trademark that some squaw has seen on a carton of crackers, once the Lipton Tea trademark, and then we had a purple cow with

the brand of a well-known mountain ranch on her quarter; but this one I don't understand."

I looked carefully, and my eye fell on the medallion I had studied the day before at the trading post. Again memories stirred. "My God," I said, "it is Ignatz and Krazy Kat." And then above, in other medallions, were Mrs. Gump and Mutt and Jeff, Tiny Mouse, Buster Brown, Miss O'Flage, Somebody's Stenographer, and — almost life-size in the center — a Greenwich Village flapper with short skirt, carmine lips, bobbed hair, high-heeled shoes, and red Tam O'Shanter — knowing, dapper and, of course, highly conventionalized — which one must admit is rather unusual with the present-day flapper.

The design all reeked of New York. It contained the eternal wisdom of *Vanity Fair*, the modern chic of *Harp-er's Bazar*, the sweet motherliness of the *Ladies' Home Journal*. Into it the squaw, "the bad woman," had unconsciously worked, in a beautiful, symmetrical pattern, all the longings, all the subtle understanding of her sex that mere man could never sense.

"What's it worth?" I asked.

"We are asking three hundred dollars for it."

"Do you know anything about it?"

"No more," they replied, "than you yourself have just puzzled out. We are told by the trader who brought it in last night that he had obtained it of a squaw up in the Navajo Reservation near Ganado."

Well, in the end I persuaded Ray Babbitt to let me have that piece — for a price. And that's the story of how an ultra-modern young Greenwich Village flapper traveled all the way to the Navajo country wrapped up in a comic supplement and came back in a beautiful Navajo blanket.

Vickers White Metal

By ETHEL STANWOOD BOLTON

ALL the world seems to be collecting antiques, and almost everything with any merit whatever that our forefathers made has one or more devotees. Yet, with all this collecting spirit abroad in the land, there seems, so far, to have been no one who has made the search for *Vickers white metal* his object. Pewter, its forerunner, has long been popular; and many still collect britannia, who have not learned the difference between it and pewter. Others are interested in its contemporary, Sheffield plate; but who has collected white metal?

Perhaps few pieces of this ware have found their way to this country; but how could a summer in England be more happily spent, from a true collector's point of view, than in hunting for the rather rare and quite beautiful objects which were made of Vickers metal. Or, if one cannot go abroad, why not hunt here instead? It would be a wonderful excuse for any number of motor trips.

White metal in the latter part of the sixteenth century meant silver, and one has a sneaking notion that Vickers remembered this fact when he named his new alloy. White metal — with its very close resemblance in color to silver — and Sheffield plate appeared about the same time; and,

together with the very cheap and easily worked britannia, superseded pewter quite completely.

In 1769, James Vickers of Sheffield, England, bought, from a workman who was ill, a formula for making white metal. Soon he set up a factory for its manufacture — the only one there ever was. Mr. Gale says that this metal was probably an alloy of tin, antimony, copper, and zinc; but, as it is somewhat soft, one wonders. Britannia is supposed to have much the same composition, with more tin and without the zinc; but the result in texture and color is very different from white metal.

It is not quite certain just when Vickers began to make his new ware, because his was so small an industry in Sheffield, in comparison with steel and Sheffield plate, that even the great history of the city ignores him entirely. The 1787 *Directory*, however, describes Vickers as the "Maker [the only one at the time] of Bits and Stirrups plated with white metal. (He makes also Measures, Teapots, Castor frames, Salt spoons, etc. of the same metal.)"

This alloy is white like silver, and so like the nobler metal that the casual observer would never question the identity of the two. It is, in reality, quite soft, so that it can be cut

with a knife. The articles which Vickers produced are very beautiful in shape, as they were all made in the best period of design, and closely followed the silver of the time both in form and in ornamentation.

Vickers also used his new metal instead of copper for receiving silver plating by the rolled process. Mr. Bertie Wyllie, who has written an interesting book on Sheffield plate, owns a snuff-box of white metal, with a silver-plated lid, and he has seen a white metal milk jug plated with silver by the rolled process. He is most enthusiastic concerning white metal, and characterizes pieces made from it as "admirable for their shape and design." One has only to examine the little creamer here illustrated to see just what Mr. Wyllie means, though one loses the color and texture. It seems a pity that the people who love and collect pewter should not know of this rarer form, and thus be able to appreciate their finds if they are so very lucky as to come across examples.



VICKERS WHITE METAL (c. 1780-90)

Cream pitcher of delicate and graceful form. In texture and color this piece is so like silver as readily to be mistaken for it. The weight of the metal is, however, greater in proportion to the size of the piece than would be that of silver. Mark on the bottom, in Roman letters, *I. Vickers*. Height 6".
Owned by Mrs. Charles A. Stone.

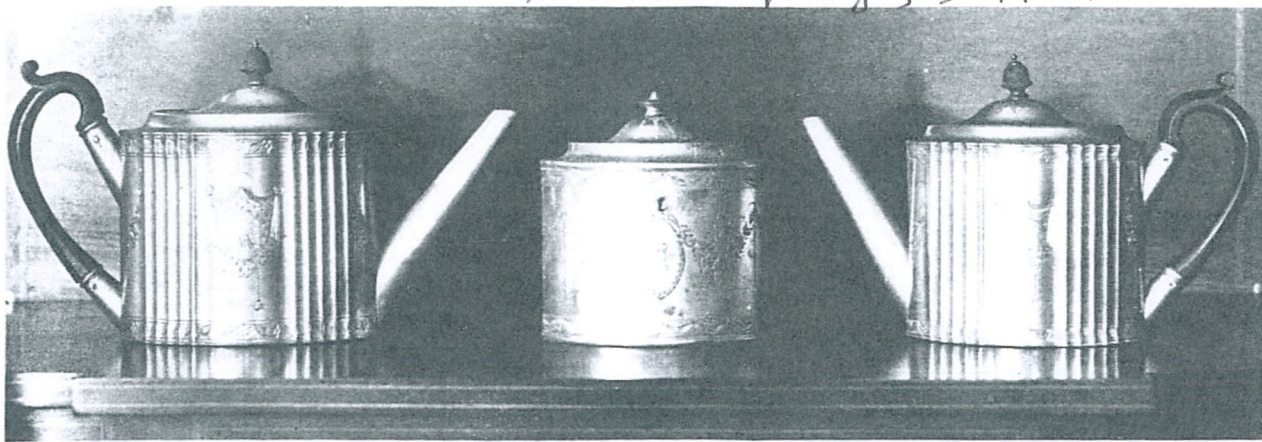
It is sad to have to add to these encomiums the fact that as white metal was driven out by Sheffield plate, Vickers joined the ranks with Dixon & Sons, and James Dixon and Sons, who were never pewterers in the best sense.* So, too, after a little, Vickers began to make the cheaper britannia ware. But there need seldom be any doubt in a collector's mind as to whether his find is white metal or britannia, for most

pieces of the former are marked plainly *Vickers*, and never by any chance will a specimen descend to the level of britannia in its shape. The white metal, also, is nearly always engraved after the fashion of the silver of its time, which it imitated. Britannia is very rarely thus decorated.

Perhaps it is cruel to suggest another class of collectables to a world already overburdened with things; but an assemblage of pieces of this rare white alloy would be as beautiful as a collection of silver of the same period, and really much less common.

*Different entitlements of the same concern. See *ANTIQUES* for April, 1926 Vol. IX, p. 249.



earlier: Antiques, July 1926, p. 40, 41**VICKERS WHITE METAL (1785-1800)**

Teapot, hot water pot, and tea caddy, manufactured at Sheffield, England, by James Vickers, in a tin alloy which was known by the maker's name. A refinement of pewter and a forerunner of britannia ware, it was made to compete with rolled silver plate.

Used by T. G. Hazard, Jr.

should it be permitted to develop intoxication. Only if further combing of Friesland or the Wilster Marshes yielded additional examples, would a sure basis for inference be at hand.

Ensued correspondence with Doctor Fritz Fuglsang, Director of the Industrial Arts Museum of Flensburg. This elicited the disconcerting information that, as the Director remarks, the chair "stands completely isolated from the general chair types of Germany and of all northern Europe." And he adds, "After I have read the discussion by Herr Stogdell Stokes,* I do not hesitate to identify the piece as American." It appears, further, that the chair in question was secured, some thirty years since, on the Island of Arum in the Friesland district, and that, at the time, its complete departure from normal forms aroused great interest.

"How the chair found its way to Arum," continues Director Fuglsang, "I do not know. Yet it is not unlikely that a sea captain of the island brought it thither from abroad. It would then offer an example of the often observed wide wanderings of art works, furniture, and the like, in our country. Yet this appears to be the only instance in which an American item has thus dropped upon our coasts."

Not much more need be said. The chair is reported to be in damaged condition. Both arms, broken at the point of bending, have received repair. The legs are renewals — without doubt German. But this maimed furniture foundling, picked up on the doorstep of a foreign nation and accorded friendly surgical aid and subsequent adoption, was born in America. The Attic, needless to remark, will continue to be circumspect in its acceptance of partial evidence bearing on pet theories.

Vickers White Metal

CONCERNING Vickers "white metal," a tin alloy brighter in surface and finer in texture than pewter, softer and far more exquisite in quality than the later

britannia ware, and, indeed, closely resembling silver in its color and its amenability to shaping and engraving. Ethel Stanwood Bolton has already written in *ANTIQUES*.^{*} Oddly enough, specimens of articles made in this ware seem to be exceptionally scarce. Mrs. Bolton was able to command but one photograph — that of a cream pitcher — to illustrate her discussion, and subsequent investigation among shops and private collections long failed to produce additional items which could be positively identified as products of the Vickers factory.

Recently, however, the Attic had the good fortune to encounter three dainty examples of Vickers ware, two of them marked, the other indubitably of the same make, which form part of the choice collection of T. G. Hazard, Jr. of Narragansett, Rhode Island. A photograph of these three pieces — a teapot, a hot water pot, and a tea caddy — kindly supplied by Mr. Hazard, is here reproduced. In form, proportion, general workmanship, and delicate excellence of engraving, these items conform to the highest standard of English silversmithing of the last fifteen years of the eighteenth century. Indeed, if judged solely from the photograph, they might easily pass for silver. Only careful examination of the originals themselves reveals the baser metal of their fabric. Each of the two pots is stamped on the bottom with the name *J. Vickers*. The tea caddy bears no maker's mark. These bits of white metal ware have been in the possession of Mr. Hazard's family for well-nigh a century and a half. That they fully substantiate Mrs. Bolton's contention as to the quality of the Vickers product is obvious beyond necessity for further argument.

The New Index

THE index for Volume XIII of *ANTIQUES* is now ready for distribution and will be forwarded to those who ask for it. This index will, likewise, be supplied in cases where subscribers send their loose numbers for binding by the *ANTIQUES* office. Prompt action, however, is urged, since the available quantity of indices is limited.

*See *ANTIQUES*, Vol. IX, p. 222.

*See *ANTIQUES*, Vol. X, p. 40.