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Notes

Montpelier Gardens. The tobacconists had them in my young days at their shop doors, in the form of Scotchmen taking snuff, and their last service in life seems to have been very appropriate, viz.: to "mense the door check" of the undertaker in the form of "mites," exact counterparts of the live mite who used to stand at the door of every *respectable* house

whereunto they add 3 or 4 lbs. of tin gloss; but as too much of this stuff doth make the stuff brittle, so the more brass be the better is the pewter, and more profitable unto him that doth buy and purchase the same."

In France, at the period to which the specimens illustrated belong, 100 parts of tin were mixed either



FOUR PIECES OF OLD FRENCH PEWTER

FIGHTEENTH CENTURY

for an hour or two before the funeral cortège left, clad in the blackest of black, and wearing the mutes of "mute" expressions.—MABERLY PHILLIPS, F.S.A.

THE fine group of four pieces of French pewter shows the varying styles of decoration in use in the eighteenth century. It is not difficult to ascertain the ingredients at any period, for as early as the middle of the fourteenth century the proportion of lead was legalised. In 1348 fine pewter is described as tin mixed with copper or brass, as much as of its own nature it will take—about 1 part to 4. In the sixteenth century, when English pewter was very fine, "I have been informed that it consisteth of a composition which hath 30 lbs. of kettle brass to 1,000 lbs. of tin,

French Pewter

with 5 parts of copper, or with 3 of copper and 1 of bismuth, or with 15 parts of lead.

It must be remembered that when a purchaser was buying a vessel for domestic purposes, it was extremely important that there should not be an excess of lead, as this, when acted upon by wine, vinegar, or other fluid in the jug or flagon, might give rise to poisonous chemical compounds.

French pewterers used a rough test—touching the metal with a hot iron, and judging the quality by the whiteness of the scar on good pewter, or in the brownish shade on the inferior qualities. Such considerations in no way affect the artistic value of a specimen.

The extent of the use of pewter even in earlier times may be gauged by the list of pewterware bequeathed by a simple Paris tradesman in the

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