

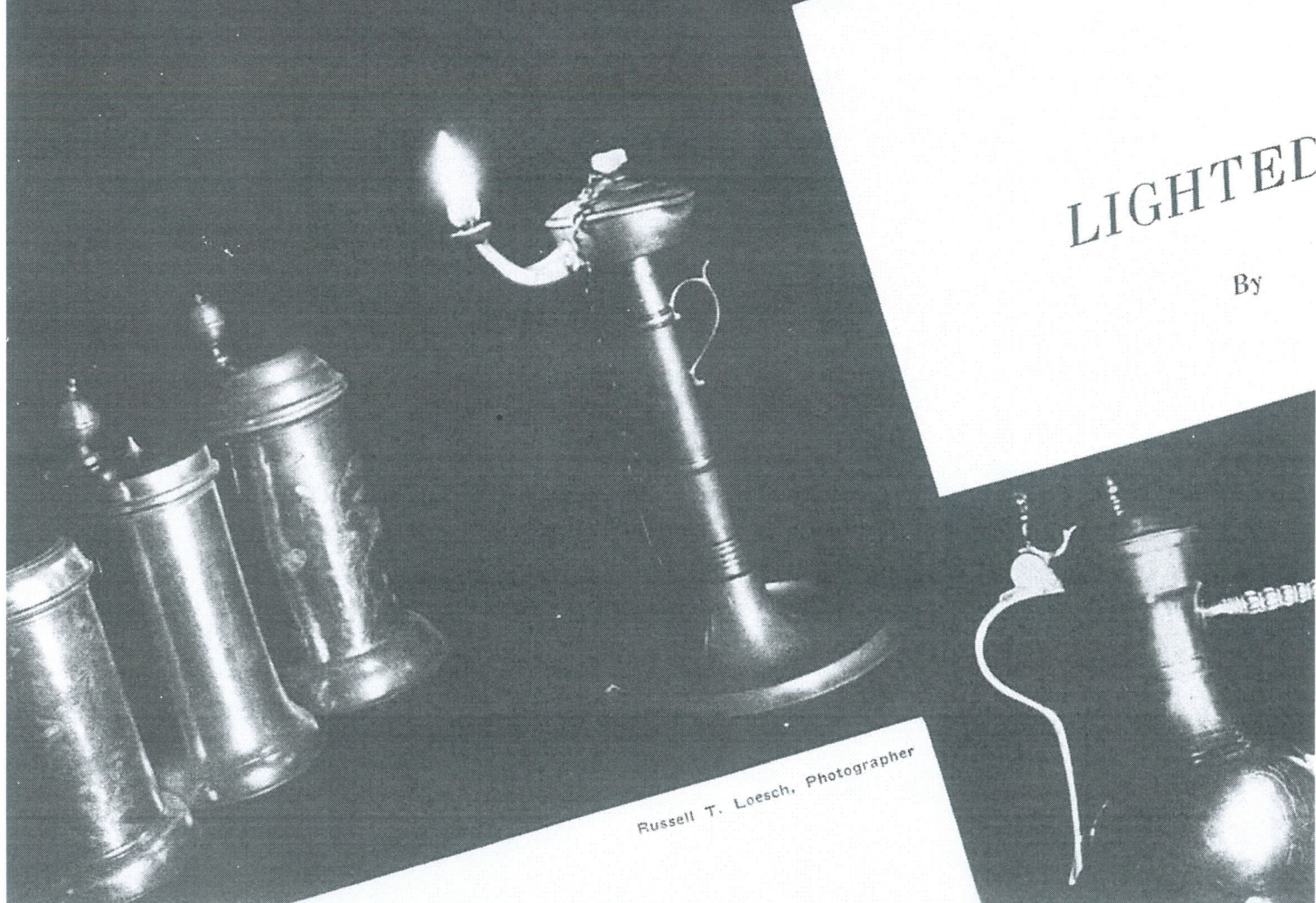
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A RARE group of pewter showing a bénitier, whale oil lamp.—Center: A German group that has found favor in the taproom—three-lidded tankards with characteristic thumbpieces lighted by a spout lamp of unusual character.—Below: A pewter aiguière of fine form and richly decorative pattern. The pewter lamp is what is called a “double-wick support.”

LIGHTED

By



Russell T. Loesch, Photographer

UT these old lamps were dirty, and ill-smelling." So states an on ancient lighting devices, and sentiments have been expressed by writers on the subject during the last two decades, including our-

A series of experiments have however, that while such statements may have been true of some of the and some of the fuels used in the they are certainly not true of the type.

reality the reservoirs of these old may be filled with almost any fuel, the wick adjustment is correct, will be no more smoke, or smell, as produced by any well-behaved . Furthermore, if we except the simple forms, of those whose wicks against the edge of the reservoir, lamps are not dirty if handled with able care. And these facts are especially true of lamps made of pewter. Usually the light produced by these of the past can hardly be termed

brilliant, but it does compare favorably with the light of candles. Anyone will admit the soft attractiveness of candle-light, but it is no longer a novelty. On the other hand burning lamps are both interesting and novel, while their many and varied forms have far greater decorative possibilities than have candlesticks.

We all know and cherish that lovely, soft sheen of old pewter, properly polished, but when it is brought out by the light of an old pewter lamp the effect is doubly satisfactory. For best results all of the pewter used should be polished, but only to the point where that peculiar pewter glow is reached, and not to a state of brilliance. One of the most discussed points among pewter collectors, by the way, is polishing. Some feel that not a single shade of the patina acquired through years of neglect, should be removed, while others demand the most scintillating polish possible. There is a point between these two extremes where the true value of pewter tone is arrived

at, and having been once attained, it easily maintained. There is really more pleasing metal color than pewter and nothing serves to accentuate beauty any better than a lighted pewter lamp, properly placed.

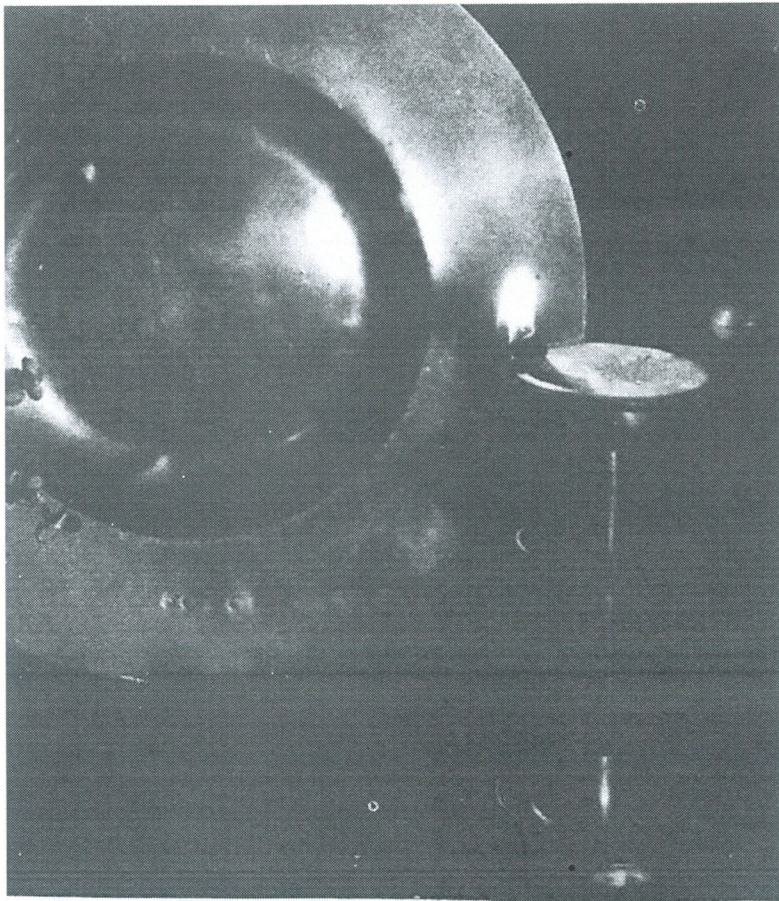
The knowledge of the technicalities of lamps need not be extensive in order to burn them successfully, although one should know the type of lamp that is being used. The majority of pewter lamps to be found today belong to one of three types, and the type depends on the arrangement for holding the wick. The first type is known to the collector as the wick-support lamp. The wick lies in a metal trough or half-tube, attached to the bottom of the reservoir and slanting to its edge. The second type has a tube or spout projecting from the side of the reservoir to hold the wick and is termed spout lamp. The third type, or wick-tube lamp, has one or more tubes held in a circular plate that screws into the top of the reservoir.

LAMPS OF OLD PEWTER

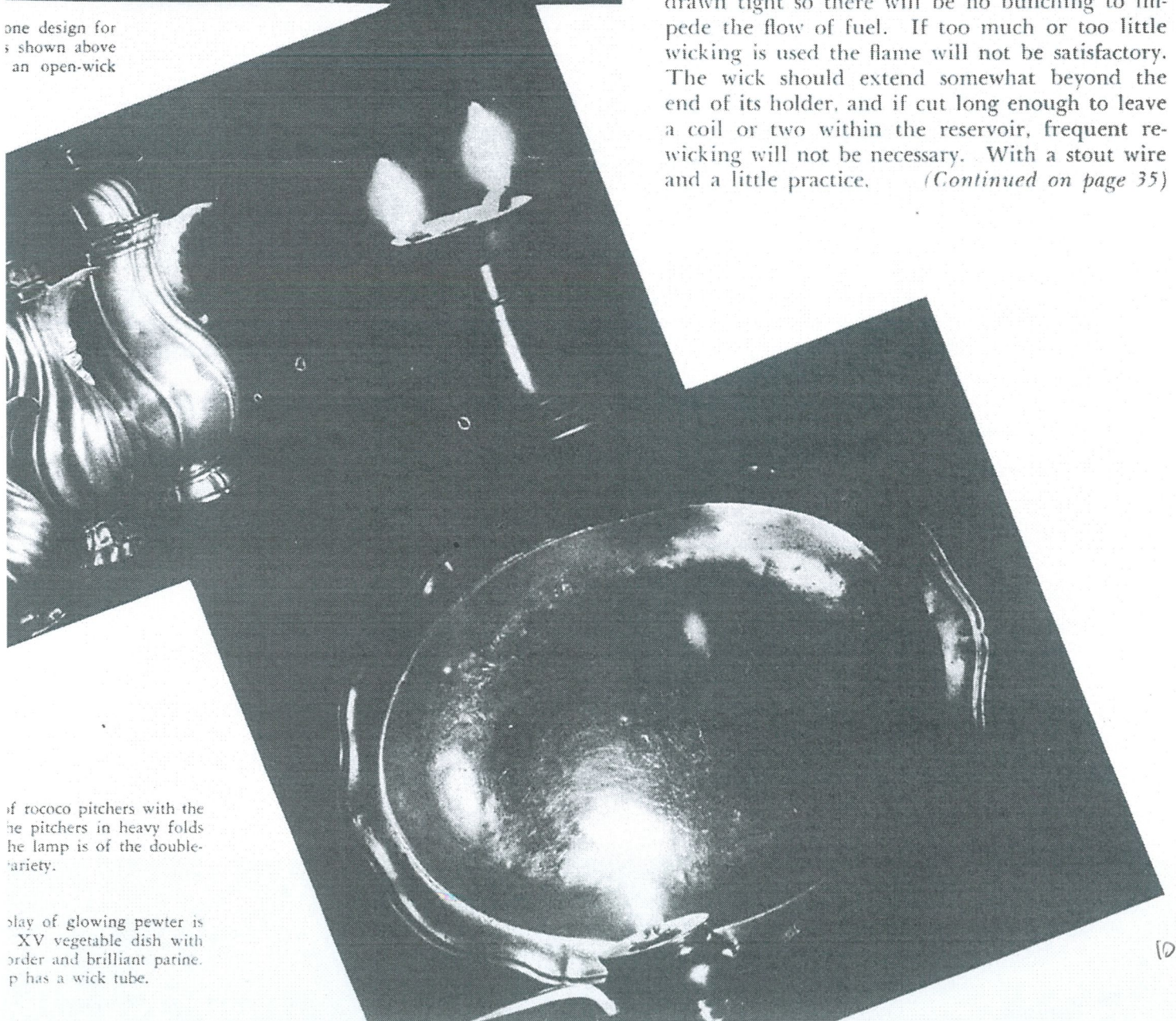
ELYSE S. AND EDWARD A. RUSHFORD

WITH this wriggle-work platter shown below is a covered variation of a pewter lamp. Its double light is especially effective in bringing out the markings of the wriggle-work decoration.





one design for
s shown above
an open-wick



of rococo pitchers with the
he pitchers in heavy folds
he lamp is of the double-
ariety.

slay of glowing pewter is
XV vegetable dish with
order and brilliant patine.
p has a wick tube.

The melting point of pewter is quite low and the tubes and wick supports are always made of some other metal possessing greater heat resistance, as tin, brass or copper. Even the spout lamps have a protecting ring of hard metal between the end of the wick and the pewter to prevent melting. We once witnessed what was literally the self-destruction of a beautiful pewter "Sabbath lamp," by its own heat. It was later learned that the wick supports had been removed, and the flame permitted to burn in direct contact with the pewter.

It is therefore advisable before one of these ancient light producers is permitted to function again to have it thoroughly cleaned and subjected to a careful examination. It may have been the victim of rough handling in the past, and resulting holes or cracks could lead to unpleasant results. At the same time the condition of the wick supports, tubes and protecting rings may be noted.

The selection of the wick is quite important, and one made up of a number of coarse, cotton strands, lying parallel, not woven, gives the best results. For wick-support lamps, enough wicking to fill the trough without dragging over its sides is advisable. For spout and wick-tube lamps, just enough to fill the wick holder comfortably, and drawn tight so there will be no bunching to impede the flow of fuel. If too much or too little wicking is used the flame will not be satisfactory. The wick should extend somewhat beyond the end of its holder, and if cut long enough to leave a coil or two within the reservoir, frequent re-wicking will not be necessary. With a stout wire and a little practice. *(Continued on page 35)*

OLD LAMPS OF OLD PEWTER

(Continued from page 10)

can be placed without difficulty and even greater ease obtained if the wick is in an oil and squeezed properly again, before it is in-

ough practically any fuel will burn in these lamps, and wicks seem to give better results and produce less carbon and dirt. They only require less attention than any of our lamps, when first started, will burn from eight hours without the "tending". In the past it was customary to burn solid lamps with open reservoirs, but now that were closed, or with glass covers that lessened the danger of spilling. A great deal of highly purified oils are on the market, and we have obtained very satisfactory results with the favorites of the day: kerosene, whale oil, olive oil and almond or colza oil. They all burn readily with a good flame, without smell, while the odor of the oils them-

selves, is rarely objectionable. For open reservoirs, fresh, clean lard is very satisfactory, or tallow may be melted and "run in" to fill them. If one likes to do things in the good old-fashioned way, the greases saved from last Sunday's roast will burn very well and excite even greater astonishment than the more refined fuels.

The reservoirs may be filled from any container, but the small spouted "oil flagon" is very convenient, and makes a pleasing accessory for pewter lamp burning. An oil-moistened wick will light more readily than a dry one, which requires a few moments wait for capillary attraction to get in its work. If a column of smoke arises, the projecting portion of the wick is too long and a part of it must be carefully pushed back into the holder with a "wick pick". Should the flame be small and weak, there is not enough wick exposed and it must be "picked up" until the adjustment is right. The best light is obtained with a symmetrical flame just short of smoking. The wick should stand in a perpendicular

position above its holder, even if this is slanting. It may be spread out with a wick pick to enlarge the flame, but any resulting "red points" should be pushed back into it.

A dimming of the flame is due either to accumulated carbon which must be removed, or to a shortened wick which must be picked up, and of course, one must remember to replenish the fuel supply from time to time. If the flame is extinguished, leaving a smouldering ember, then, and then only, will there be smoke and a very disagreeable odor.

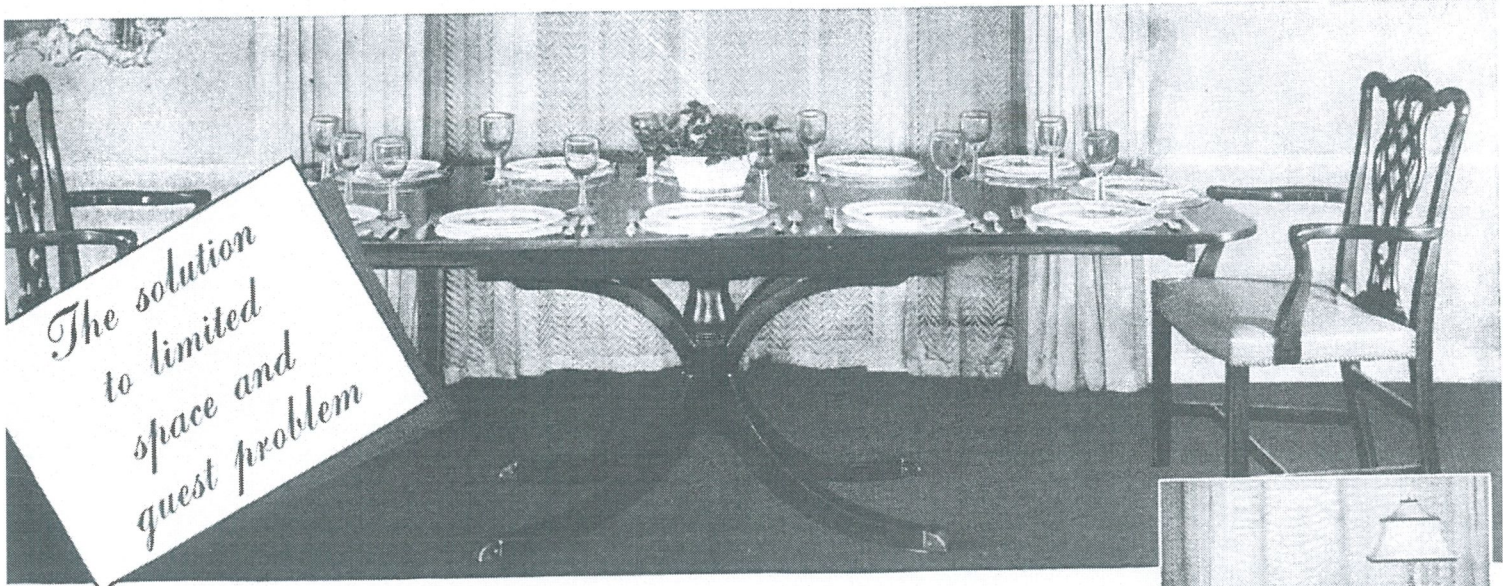
Double, wick-support lamps, with their twin flames, afford double illumination. We have found a small lamp of this type effective with a group of three graduated rococo pitchers from Switzerland, while one of larger size brings out the beauty of an aiguière from the same country, in a most satisfactory manner. A German group has found particular favor in the tap room, three lidded tankards with characteristic thumbpieces, lighted by a spout lamp of unusual form and size.

Small, low setting lamps of the wick-tube type give very good results with plates and platters of comparatively large size. Or such a group consists of but two pieces, a Louis XV vegetable dish, and a long-handled night lamp, yet the variations of light and shadow make it a most pleasing combination. Possessing a decidedly religious feeling, a group composed of an Austrian platter with a Biblical design in wriggle work, and a chalice of exceptionally fine form, lighted by a small lamp placed at the right of the platter.

The use of pewter lamps in spotlighting flowers has many possibilities with the constant changing parade of bloom throughout the seasons. American pewter lamps of the whale oil variety lend themselves admirably to this end, while a most striking effect may be obtained by the use of a bull's eye, or lantern lamp.

Thus may these old pewter lamps be put to work again, bring back the past and add new and novel charm to the present.

K



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*Patent Numbers 1969875, 2071729, 2092214

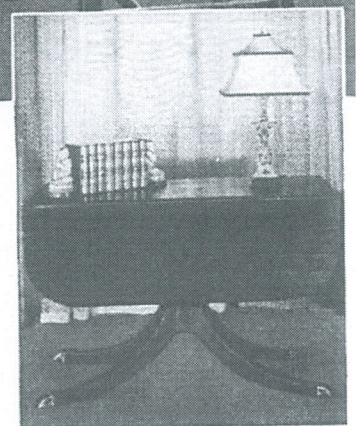
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