

Concerning Tôle Peinte

By LADY WALSTON

Within the last two years a discovery of much importance to all interested in old painted pewter was made, when by chance the secret formula which had been lost for over sixty years was discovered in an old diary. It is in the possession of Mr. W. H. V. Bythway, in whose father's diary for 1864 it was found. The document was evidently put there for safe keeping, and, when that year's diary was replaced by a fresh one, the paper was doubtless overlooked and eventually forgotten. It will be interesting now to see what use will be made of the recipe,

which according to some authorities contains seven ingredients and according to others seventeen, and whether the industry which ceased operations in 1864 can, and will, be revived. (For further details see *The Free Press of Monmouthshire*, October 5th, 1928.)

Though it is a well established fact that some of the best examples of painted pewter were made at Pontypool and Usk (No. vii.), and even hall-marked silver and Sheffield plate urns were occasionally sent there to be decorated, Holland was a country so closely in touch with Wales that, in



No. 1.—PAIR OF CHESTNUT JARS



BELONGING TO LADY WALSTON

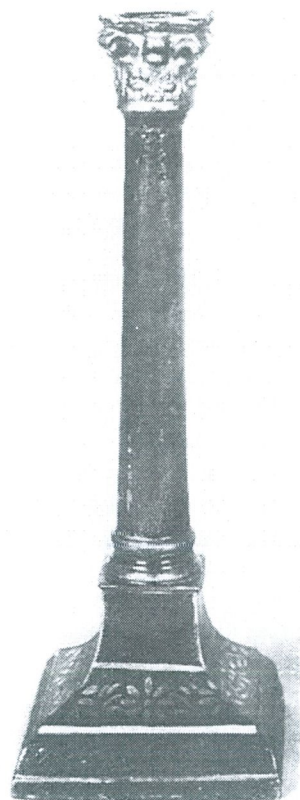
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many instances, it is difficult to determine whether a piece is actually of Dutch or Welsh origin. What is known as *tin* in England is called *Blik* in Holland, and pewter is called *Tin*; while both are spoken of there as "Welsh Lacquer."

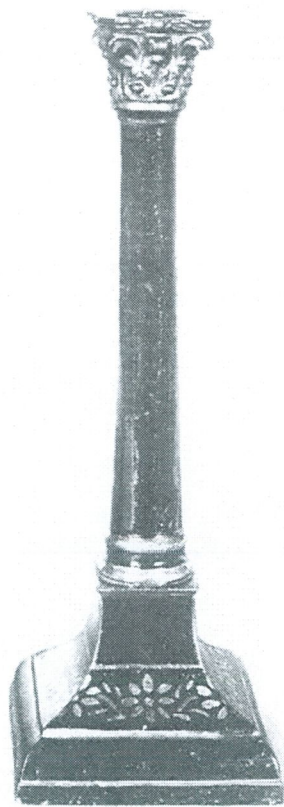
In Holland, the industry was probably started about 1700. It is, however, more than likely that the All-goods, of Pontypool,

Dutch shapes decorated in the characteristically French style which prevailed at the end of the eighteenth century.

Although a simple kind of lacquering was at an early period done at Zeist, near Utrecht, and even as late as the middle of the nineteenth century Hoorn continued to produce lacquered articles, there are but few specimens in any of the museums

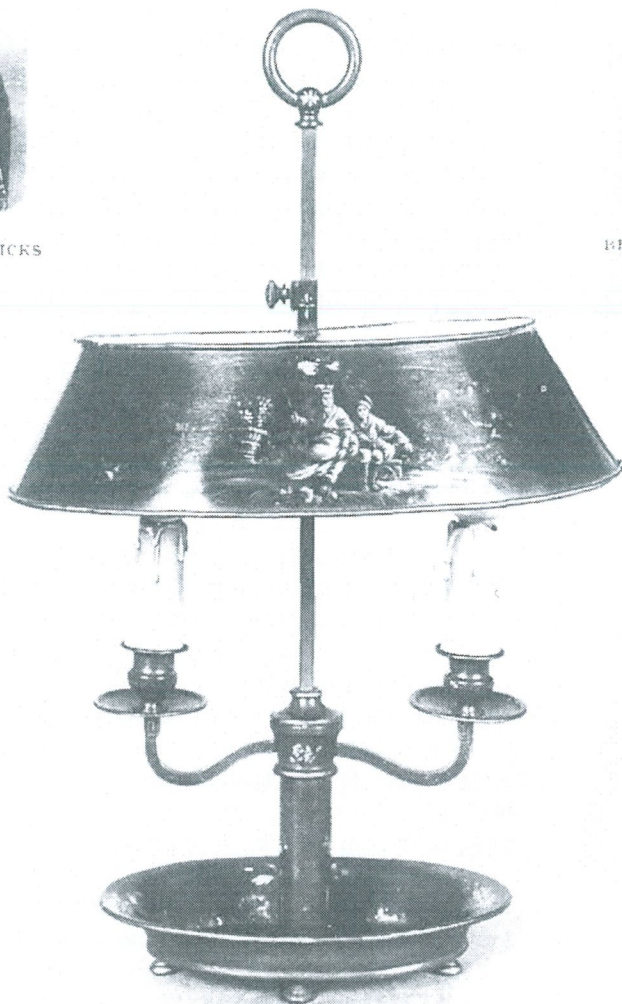


No. II.—PAIR OF CANDLESICKS



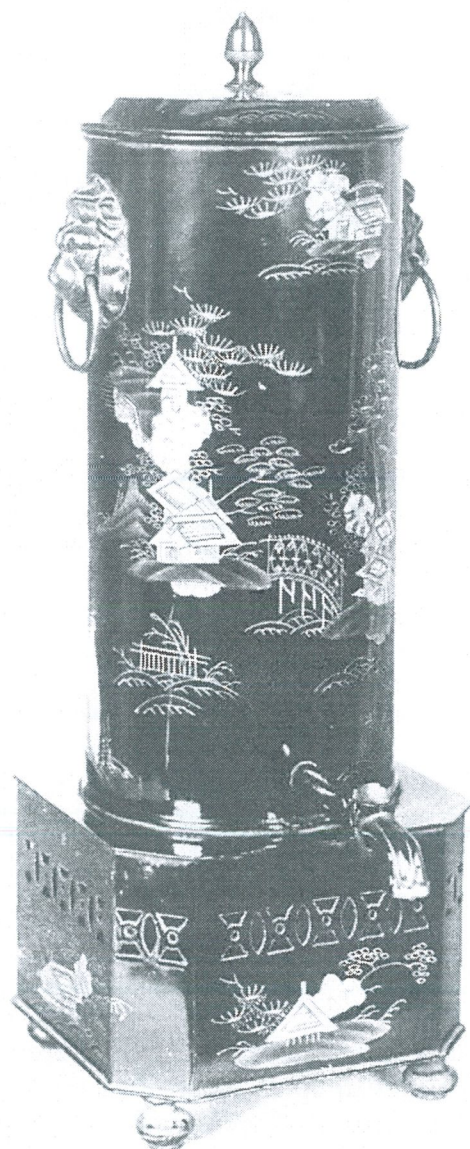
BELONGING TO LADY WALSTON

who had a warehouse on the banks of the river at Carleon and sent their lacquer ware to the Continent by the way of Bristol, were responsible for introducing such articles into that country even before that date. Later on the Dutch sent some of their pewter to Wales to be painted and decorated by Baxter and other well-known artists, and it seems probable that much of it found its way through Belgium to France, as it is not uncommon to meet with what may be considered typically



No. III.—GREEN LACQUER LAMP WITH CHINOISERIE DECORATION
BELONGING TO MRS. HUGH CLARKE

at Amsterdam, The Hague, Utrecht, or Delft. At Haarlem there is a charming coffee-pot and an indifferent one; while at Amersfoort there is an interesting tobacco box and an ash receiver decorated in Louis XVI. style on a cream ground. Strangely enough, painted pewter appears to be very little prized in Holland, but doubtless that is because most of it is clumsy in shape and coarse in decoration. Occasionally, however, it is possible to find something unusual as well as good, as,



NO. IV.—BLACK LACQUER COFFEE URN WITH CHINOISERIE DECORATION. BELONGING TO SIR CECIL HARCOURT SMITH

for instance, the two black lacquer and gold Corinthian column candlesticks (No. ii.).

Coffee urns (see Nos. iv. and v.) are not uncommon, though they seldom are of as good a quality as the ones here illustrated, which are particularly interesting both as regards shape and decoration. They are more frequently seen in the South near the Belgian frontier than further North where the rounded shape on three legs prevails. Chestnut jars are becoming increasingly difficult to find, and are seldom either as graceful in design or as beautifully decorated as the Welsh ones. Those illustrated here (No. i.) are typical of the best period of Dutch art, and the cream and red flowers picked out with gold on a black ground form a most

decorative scheme. Such jars were used for hot chestnuts until comparatively recently and were always placed on the dining table on New Year's Day, but were otherwise kept on the mantelpiece as ornaments. Lacquer coffee urns, as well as trays, were also in constant use.

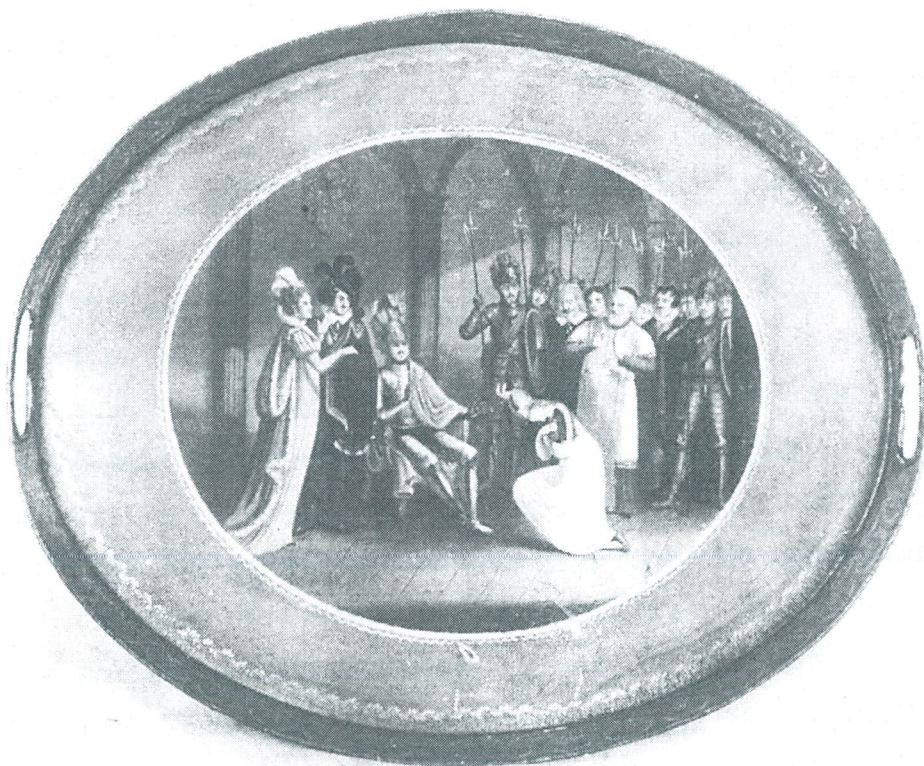
In North Germany *Lackiertess-Zinn Gefass*, or lacquered tin, was manufactured in Brunswick about 1800, and at the Landes Museum there are to be seen some interesting specimens including beaker-shaped vases, a knife and fork receptacle of red lacquer with a perforated border decorated with a gold thistle running design, and an especially interesting large tray with a beautifully painted picture showing Duke Frederick William of Brunswick embarking for England on August 7th. 1809. Elaborately painted trays were not uncommon at that period, and the one here reproduced (No. vi.) is a typical example.

While in a previous article (see *THE CONNOISSEUR*, November, 1925) I showed that



NO. V.—COFFEE URN BELONGING TO SIR CECIL HARCOURT SMITH

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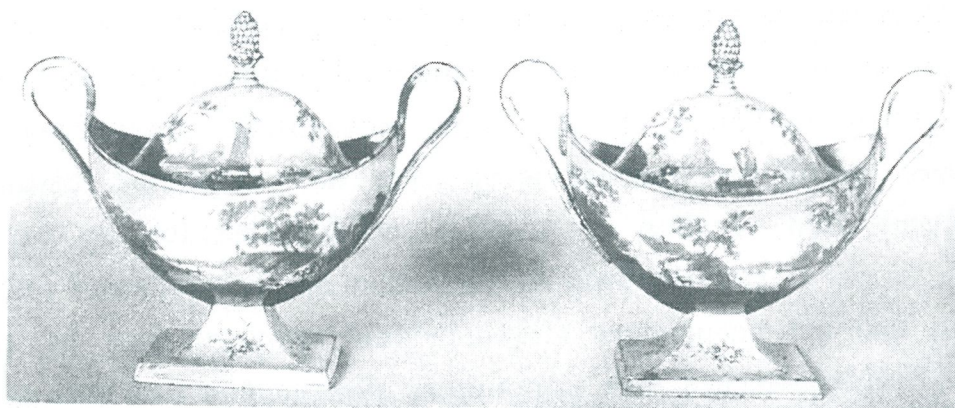
NO. VI.—RED LACQUERED AND PAINTED TRAY

BELONGING TO LADY WALSTON

laquering on tin and pewter was an art carried out in France and Italy, it is interesting to know that even in the Western Hemisphere such objects were also manufactured towards the beginning of the nineteenth century. They appear to have been chiefly made in Pennsylvania, and may have been suggested by examples brought over from Holland, but the shapes are as a rule straighter and more elongated than the Dutch originals and less graceful than the Welsh. Also the lacquer ground is thin and the coloured decorations extremely crude and garish, resembling the

painted wooden boxes and trays executed by Hungarian and Russian peasants.

After all, it is not surprising to find some deterioration of style in a newly settled country, for under older and more comfortable conditions it was comparatively easy to produce perfect works of art. The difficulties of all kinds encountered by the early settlers, on the other hand, were so great that it was but natural that, in spite of good original pieces from which they could draw inspiration, their own productions were frequently crude both in execution and decoration.



NO. VII.—PAIR OF BOAT-SHAPED VASES
CHIEFLY BROWNS AND GREENS

CREAM GROUND DECORATED IN SOFT TONES,
BELONGING TO LADY WALSTON