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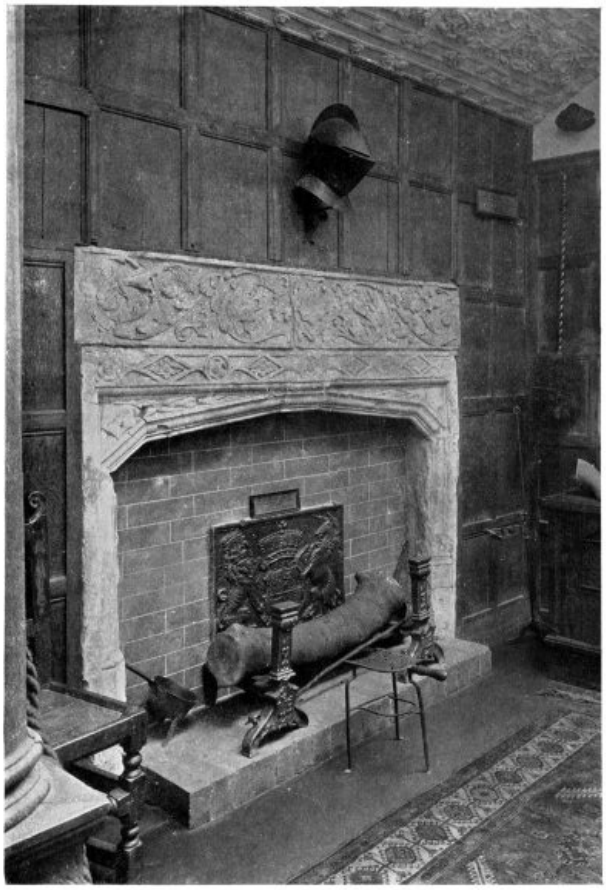

FIG. 1.—OLD FIREPLACE, SHOWING SUSSEX BACK, ANDIRONS, AND TRIVET.

Frontispiece.

Chats on Household Curios

BY

FRED. W. BURGESS

AUTHOR OF "CHATS ON OLD COINS," "CHATS ON OLD COPPER AND BRASS," ETC.

WITH 94 ILLUSTRATIONS

LONDON
T. FISHER UNWIN
ADELPHI TERRACE

First published in 1914

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PREFACE

There is a peculiar charm about the relics found in an old home—a home from which many generations of fledglings have flown. As each milestone in family history is passed some once common object of use or ornament is dropped by the way. Such interesting mementoes of past generations accumulate, and in course of time the older ones become curios.

It is to create greater interest in these old-world odds and ends—some of trifling value to an outsider, others of great intrinsic worth—that this book has been written. The love of possession is to some possessors the chief delight; to others knowledge of the original purposes and uses of the objects acquired affords still greater pleasure. My intention has been rather to assist the latter class of collectors than to facilitate the mere assemblage of additional stores of curiosities. It is truly astonishing how rapidly the common uses of even household furnishings and culinary utensils are forgotten when they are superseded by others of more modern type. {8}

The modern art of to-day and the revival of the much older furniture of the past have driven out the household gods of intermediate dates, and it is in that period intervening between the two extremes that most of the household curios reviewed in this work are found. Although many of the finest examples of household curios are now in museums, private collectors often possess exceptional specimens, and sometimes own the most representative groups of those things upon which they have specialized.

The examples in this book have been drawn from various sources. As in "Chats on Old Copper and Brass" (which may almost be regarded as a companion work), the illustrations are taken from photographs of typical museum curios and objects in private collections, or have been specially sketched by my daughter, who has had access to many interesting collections, to the owners of which I am indebted for the illustrations I am able to make use of.

My thanks are due to the Directors of the British Museum, who have allowed their printers, the University Press, Oxford, to supply electros of some exceptional objects now in the Museum; also to the Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum, at South Kensington; and the Director of the London Museum, now located at Stafford House. {9}

Dr. Hoyle, the Director of the National Museum of Wales, at Cardiff, has most kindly had specially prepared for this work quite a number of photographs of very uncommon household curios. The Curator of the Hull Museum has loaned blocks, and photographs have been sent by Messrs. Egan and Co., Ltd., of Cork; Mr. Wayte, of Edenbridge; and Mr. Phillips, of the Manor House, Hitchin. To Mr. Evans, of Nailsea Court, Somerset, I am indebted for the loan of his unrivalled collection of ancient nutcrackers, some of which have been sketched for reproduction. I have also made use of examples in the collections of private friends, and illustrated some of my own household curios, many of them family relics.

The story of domestic curios is made the more useful by these illustrations, and also by references to well-known collections. There is much to admire in the once common objects of the home, now curios, and it is in the hope that some may be led to appreciate more the antiques with which they are familiar that these pages have been penned. If that is achieved my object will have been accomplished.

FRED. W. BURGESS.

London, 1914.

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THE LOVE OF THE ANTIQUE

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CHAPTER I

THE LOVE OF THE ANTIQUE

No place like home—Curios in the making—The influence of prevailing styles—A cultivated taste.

There is an inborn love of the antique in most men, although some are fond of asserting that their interests are bound up in the modern, and that they have no time to devote to the study of the antiquities of past ages or the things that were fashionable in times long past. Yet most people, when their secret longings are analysed, are found to have an admiration for the old; if not a superstitious veneration, at any rate a desire to perpetuate the memory of their ancestors and to keep in mind the things with which they were familiar. The wealthy man of to-day, who may have sprung from the people, secretly, if not openly, endeavours to surround himself with household gods which tell of a longer past and a closer relationship with the well-to-do than he can legitimately claim. In the pursuit of such things many a man has found his hobby; and there are few men who do not find recreation and delight in a hobby of some kind. Such interests outside their regular occupations broaden their outlook and widen their knowledge. Some hobbies tend to lead to specialization, and the specialist is apt to become warped and narrowed; not so, however, the collector of household curios.

{22}

No Place Like Home.

It would be difficult to find greater delight than that which centres in those things that concern the home and home life. The love of the old homestead and the goods and chattels it contains is ingrained in the breast of every Britisher; and although families become scattered and some of their members find homes of their own beyond the seas, they find the greatest delight in the objects with which they were familiar in years gone by, and venerate the relics of former generations—the household gods which have been handed on from father to son.

It is not the intrinsic value of the household curio that is its chief charm; it is rather the knowledge that its long association with those who have claimed its ownership from the time when it was "new" has made it truly a family relic. These thoughts, being so deeply rooted in the

minds of most men and women, foster the love of household curios and intensify the interest shown in their possession.

To all it is not given to own family relics; neither would they serve to satiate the ambition of the true collector, although they might form the nucleus of his collection. He seeks other treasures in the town and in the country and wherever such things are offered for sale. {23}

Curios in the Making.

The domestic habits of the people of this and other civilized countries have been the outcome of a slow process of upbuilding. There has been no sudden change; in all grades and under every different social condition, at every period, the improvement of the furnishings of the home has been one of gradual and, for the most part, steady progress.

There was a time when, beyond the bare furniture, tapestry hangings, tools of the craftsmen, and weapons of the warrior, there were few household goods of a portable nature. In mediæval England the oak chest was sufficient to contain the valuables of a large household; and very often beyond a cabinet or sideboard or corner cupboard there were few receptacles where anything of value could be safeguarded. The dower chest, in which the bride brought to her husband household linen and her stock of clothing, and in the wooden compartment in one corner of the chest her jewels and coin of the realm—if she possessed any—was then a prominent piece of furniture. The oak chest, rendered formidable with its massive lock and bolts, opened with a ponderous key, was the chosen receptacle in after-years as a treasure chest, and regarded as the safest place in which to keep valuable documents and other property. In the Public Record Office may be seen the old iron box in which the Domesday Book was kept for many centuries. The old City Companies have their treasure chests still; and boxes studded over with iron nails and fitted with large hasps and locks are pointed out in many old houses as passports to family standing. {24}

The household curios which a collector seeks include objects of utility and ornament. Many of them are associated with household work, and quite a number of one-time kitchen and culinary utensils, as well as those which were once cherished in the best parlour or withdrawing-room, are found places among such curios. During the last few years domestic architecture has passed through several stages of advancement. The stiff and formal Georgian houses, the painful Victorian villas, and some of the earlier attempts at architectural improvement have been swept away to make room for modern replicas of still older styles which have been revived or incorporated in the *nouvre* art, which touches the home in its architecture and internal decoration, as well as in its furnishings. In modern dwellings the Elizabethan style has often been followed, although modern conveniences have been incorporated. When furnishing such houses with suitable replicas of the antique the householders of the last quarter of a century have been unconsciously, perhaps, fostering the love of household antiques and providing fitting homes for their family curios.

The Day of the Curio Hunter.

This is admittedly the day of curio hunting, and those who specialize on household curios have exceptional opportunities of displaying them to better advantage than those who cared for such things in the past. Perhaps it is because there were so few opportunities of arranging and {25} displaying household antiques during the last three-quarters of the nineteenth century that many objects now treasured have been preserved so fresh and kept in such excellent condition. The housewives of the past generation were undoubtedly conservative in their retention of old household goods, and it is to their careful preservation that so many objects of interest, although perhaps fully a century old, come to the collector in such perfect condition.

The patient labour expended by the amateur artist, the needleworker, and the connoisseur of home art a generation or two ago has provided the collector to-day with an exceptionally interesting class of curio, for there is much to admire in amateur craftsmanship, and especially in the handiwork of the needlewoman and the weaver and decorator of so many beautiful textiles which have been preserved to us. Sentiment was strong in the early nineteenth century, and among the love tokens of that day, chiefly the work of amateurs, some very beautiful and unique curios were produced. These, too, have come down to the collector of the twentieth century, and help him to secure specimens representing every decade, so that in a large collection, carefully selected, the slow and yet sure progress made in the fine arts, and the improvement in the ornamental surroundings in the home, is made clear. In each one of the different groups into which household curios may be divided there are many distinctive objects, all of which are in themselves interesting, but when viewed in association with other things which have been used {26} at contemporary periods, or associated with the home life of persons similarly situated, but dwelling in different localities, are doubly interesting.

The Influence of Prevailing Styles.

In determining the origin of curios, and defining the periods during which they have been made, it is useful to have at least a little knowledge of the influence or character of the prevailing styles in the countries of origin. French art has exercised a great influence upon the productions of other nations; it has also been moulded by the curios and other articles of foreign origin then being sold in France. Regal and political influence have left their mark upon almost every period

of French art, and have had much to do with the contemporary art of other nations, for France was for centuries a guide in most of the fine arts, and especially in those things which tended towards decorative effect. The furniture of France may be said to be an exponent of the country's history, so great has been the connection between French art, controlled by passing events, and its commercial products. It is said that the State pageants of the Louis XIV period tended to raise the tone of the work of French artisans and to encourage artists. That was a period of great development, for in the year 1670 the famous tapestry factories sprang into existence; and it must be admitted that the designing of those wonderful textiles influenced the manufacturers of furniture and smaller objects both in France and in other countries. {27}

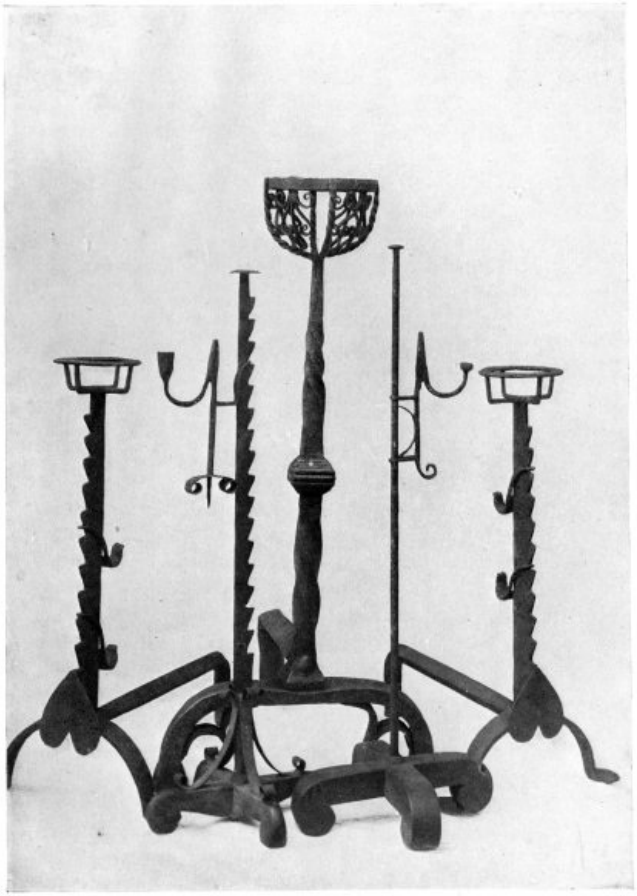


FIG. 2.—ANDIRONS WITH RATCHETS.
FIG. 3.—ORNAMENTED CRESSET DOGS.
FIG. 4.—TELESCOPIC RUSH AND CANDLE HOLDER.
FIG. 5.—RATCHET RUSH AND CANDLE HOLDER.

Sir Christopher Wren is reputed to have been carried away by the influence of the Louis XIV art. {29}
It was in that King's reign, too, that Charles Boule perfected his veneers of tortoiseshell and fine brass work. Buhl cabinets, fancy boxes, and many smaller objects found their way into this country, and are now household curios. When Philip of Orleans was Regent of France Boule introduced vermilion and gold-leaf as the groundwork upon which to throw up the beauty of tortoiseshell, and his designs became lavishly extravagant. Of these there are some beautiful examples extant; one, a facsimile of a bureau made in Paris in 1769, so elaborate that its cost was reputed to have been about £20,000, is to be seen in the Wallace Collection at Hertford House. In the reign of Louis XV great encouragement was given to the importation of lacquer work from China, influencing the creation of similar works in France; and it was owing to his support that the Vernis Martin enamels or varnishes were produced. Then came those beautiful paintings of landscapes with which so many of the rarer household curios dating from that period were ornamented.

The French style came over the Channel. Thus it was that French influence, as shown in its art in which its political history was reflected, permeated into the workshops of England. Then came the popularity of the designs of the Adam Brothers and Sheraton. During the Revolution in France art was at a standstill, but as soon as Napoleon had established his Empire artistic France began again, and we see its influence in the Empire ornament of furniture and curios. Perhaps {30}
one of the most striking instances of change in style was that in our own country when the Prince of Orange came over and William and Mary were crowned King and Queen. Dutch influence on the art of Great Britain was immediately seen, and in the curios of that period there is a remarkable difference between those produced at that time, when Englishmen were content to allow the art of another nation to dominate their work, and those of an earlier date. Dutch marquetry is seen in cabinets and smaller household antiques in the manufacture of which panels were applicable. There was a change in design about the year 1695, just after Mary died, the characteristic seaweed following the floral, as if the very flowers had been banished after the

Queen's death. The influence of the King and of his successors was very noticeable in the style and decoration of household goods; the history of this country at that time, just as the history of France had been, was reflected in the art of its craftsmen.

A Cultivated Taste.

The love of the antique is regarded by some as a cultivated taste. The specialization upon any one branch of household curios may justly be regarded as such, but surely not the regard, almost reverence, for family relics, although they are but the common things of everyday life! Their collection stimulates the connoisseur, and encourages him to fresh exertions, and in that sense the habit of keeping a keen look out for anything that may illumine previous researches or add {31} greater lustre to those things already secured, is gradually cultivated.

Household curios are not unassociated with the folklore of the district where such objects have been made, or were commonly in use; and the very names of many things, the uses of which are almost forgotten, are suggestive of former occupations and older methods of practising household economy and the preparation of food. It is common knowledge that the purest old English is met with in the dialects of the countryside, and oftentimes once household words, now lost in modern speech, are found again when the old names or original purposes of the curios remaining to us are discovered. The cultivation of a taste for gathering together household antiques is much to be desired, and in the pursuit of such knowledge there is great pleasure—and as the value of genuine antiques is ever rising, some profit, too. {33}

II

THE INGLE SIDE

{35}

CHAPTER II

THE INGLE SIDE

Fire-making appliances—Tinder boxes—The fireplace—Andirons and fire-dogs—Sussex backs—Fireirons and fenders—Trivets and stools—Bellows.

In winter the ingle side, or its equivalent in a modern house, appears to be the chief centre of attraction. It was ever so; and to-day the lessened necessity for crowding round the fire and sitting in the ingle nook, owing to modern methods of distributing the heat, in no way lessens the attraction which draws an Englishman to the fire. In the United States of America stoves of various kinds are deemed good substitutes, but in this country the open fire is preferred, and modern scientific research aims at perfecting and improving existing accepted methods of heating and warming rooms rather than of displacing them.

In the days when the earliest collectable curios of the ingle side were being made by the village smith, and the local sculptor and mason were preparing the chimney corner and the mantelpiece to surround the fireplace, it was in front of the great open fire in the kitchen, before which the {36} large joints were roasted, that the retainers of the baron and the landowner or lord of the manor assembled on winter nights. It was around the fire which crackled on the hearth in the great hall that the more favoured ones forgathered, and in the lesser homestead the family drew up their chairs and found seats in the ingle nook, near the fire, when snow was upon the ground, and frost and cold draughts made them shiver in the houseplace.

The fireplace has its attractions still, and builders and architects have designed many cosy corners within reach of the fire. The furnishings of the hearth have become more decorative as times have become more luxurious and art has gained the ascendant; and sometimes their greater ornament has been at the sacrifice of utility, but the root principles of construction as seen in the older grates and fire appointments remain. {37}

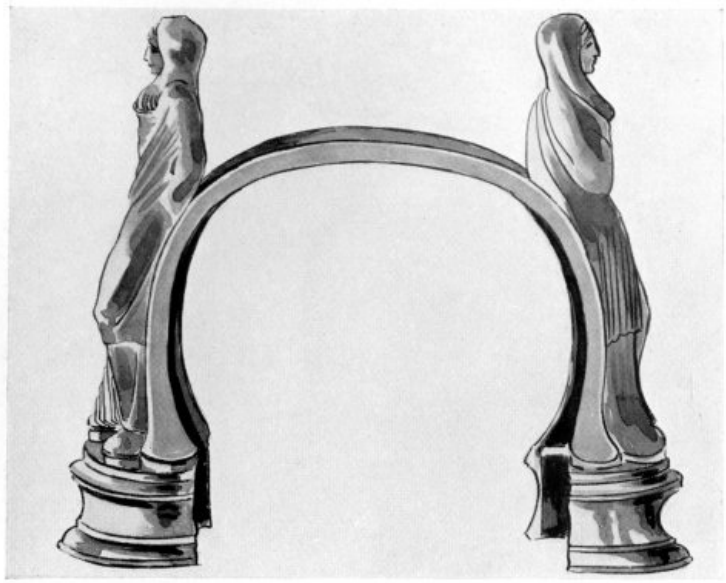


FIG. 6.—ANCIENT ROMAN FIRE-DOG.
(*In the National Museum at Naples.*)

FIG. 7.—SUSSEX GRATE BACK, DATED 1588.

Fire-making Appliances.

It seems natural to inquire into the origin of the need of a fireplace, and to do so we must go back to prehistoric times and trace the discovery of fire-making apparatus, for without the means of lighting a fire it is obvious that the grate would be useless. With the fire came artificial light, the two great discoveries being perfected side by side, sometimes the one gaining ground, at others the one that had fallen behind shooting ahead as the result of some great discovery, or the application of scientific principles not deemed of utility to the one or the other as the case might {39}
be. The fire-making appliances which were in use for the purpose of lighting fires were of course used long before any scheme of artificial lighting—apart from the flames and radiance from the fire. Professor Flinders Petrie, that great investigator into the antiquities of the Ancients, tells us that fire-making by friction has been found to exist in far-off times. It would appear that the discovery of how to produce fire has been accomplished independently by men living under very different conditions and at all ages. The fire-making of the Ancients has been rediscovered by primitive people in more recent days, although it is probable that native races who until recently have been living apart from the great world outside have moved slowly in their march of civilization, and have been using the same methods as those first tried by their ancestors ages ago. In the unrivalled collection of appliances got together by Professor Petrie, there are fire drills from the Transvaal, bow drills used by the Esquimaux, and fire ploughs from North Queensland. Lighting fires must have been a slow and difficult task in the days when tinder boxes were in request, for when Curfew rang and the *couvre de feu* had done its work there was no fire in which to thrust the torch, and the entire process had to be gone over again when the fire had once more to be kindled.

Tinder Boxes.

The tinder box, formerly a real necessary, was to be found in every house, and in many instances, in the days before lucifer matches, it was a desirable pocket companion. Tinder boxes were made {40}

of different materials; some were of wood, others of iron or brass. They lent themselves to ornamentation: thus some were engraved and quite artistic; many of the more recent ones were made of tin, and on the covers were decorative little scenes. The contents of the tinder boxes were of course flint and steel and tinder (something very inflammable, such as scorched linen), with a damper for extinguishing the smouldering fire after a light had been obtained, or in later days by the sulphur-tipped match applied to it. Among the varieties are what are termed pistol tinder boxes, instruments which contained a small charge of gunpowder, which, when fired, lighted the tinder. Tinder pouches or purses containing flint and tinder having a piece of steel riveted on to the edge of the purse or pouch were a common form. Those brought over from Central Asia were frequently decorated with dragons and the swastika symbol, in damascened work.

Many inventions were put forward by chemists before the perfecting of the common match, the wax vesta, and the fusee. One of these was Berry's apparatus, which he devised in the beginning of the nineteenth century, calling it a "contrivance for lighting lamps in the dark." It consisted of an acid bottle with a string by which a conical stopper could be raised, and a chlorate match held against the stopper became ignited.

Match boxes are collectable, and collectors of fire-making and lighting contrivances often include a few old matches. The lucifer match consisted of sticks tipped with potassium chlorate and {41}
sugar, held together with gum, igniting when touched with concentrated sulphuric acid. They were invented in 1805, and by the year 1820 had quite taken the place of tinder boxes. Various lighting pastes were used, until the improvements which resulted in the "safety" matches. The dangerous sulphur and white phosphorus have given place in modern match-making to sesqui-sulphate mixtures; and wax vestas and other "strikers" have superseded the curious objects the collector meets with.

The Fireplace.

In studying the curios of the fireplace, it is scarcely necessary to go back beyond the grates and fire appointments which may be seen in the old houses standing to-day. Even during the last generation or two there have been many changes, and in rebuilding and refurnishing the antiquities of the fireplace have in many instances been swept away. During more recent days, however, there has been a greater appreciation of the curio value of mantelpieces and old grates, and it is no uncommon thing for hundreds and even thousands of pounds to be paid for rare specimens.

In some instances the fireplace may truly be said to have been the central attraction, for the old grates and mantelpieces have often realized as much as the whole of the remainder of the materials secured when an old house has been pulled down. Some of these mantelpieces of olden time were magnificent memorials of the sculptor's and the carver's art. They included {42}
overmantels, the entire breastwork of the chimney often being covered with stone or marble or black oak, right up to the ceiling or the cornice.

The open hearth was the earlier form of fireplace, and long before chimneys were built logs of wood burned on it, and in still earlier times in a basket or brazier, the smoke finding its way to the roof, the rafters of which soon became blackened. Chimneys, however, are of early date, and the household curios of the fireplace have almost entirely been used under such conditions of fuel consumption, the up-draught of the chimney carrying away the smoke and harmful gases. The firebacks and the andirons, and later the fire-dogs, of the open fireplaces are collectable curios of considerable interest, and the hobby may be indulged in at a moderate cost. The collection of mantelpieces may be left to the wealthy and to those who have baronial halls in which to refix them. Fig. 1 represents an old fireplace in a panelled oak room with a Tudor ceiling. There is a Sussex back of rather small size, and a pair of andirons, on which a log of wood is shown reposing. An old saucepan has been reared up in the corner, and there is a trivet on the hearth. There is a very remarkable group of cresset dogs shown in Fig. 2. One pair of dogs or andirons has ratchets on which supplementary bars were placed. These show an early advance from the simple andiron, and point to the later developments of the fire-grate with the fast bars which were to come. In the same group two rush-holders or candlesticks are shown, one with a ratchet, {43}
the other adjusted on a simple rod, the socket being held in place by a spring (see Figs. 4 and 5).

As time went on and change of fuel came about, the forests of England being gradually consumed on the domestic hearth, coal was substituted for the fast-vanishing wood. Then it was that a change was needed, and instead of the open fireplace and the andirons on which the logs of wood had formerly been laid, iron baskets or grates in which coal could be placed were made, so that the scattering of fuel and cinders on the open hearth could be prevented. Sussex backs gave place in time to the grate in which a metal back was frequently incorporated, flanked by the dogs in front. Then came the closed-in grates and the hob-registers of the eighteenth century, many being designed after the beautiful ornamentation produced by the Adam Brothers; also the decorative metal work enriched with ormolu and brass, which in due course again gave way to the plain and oftentimes ugly register grates of the Victorian Age, which in more modern times have been displaced by the reproductions of the antique, and by well-grates and scientifically constructed stoves and heating radiators by which heat can be conserved, the draught of the fire and the chimney regulated, and the coal burned more economically on slow-combustion and semi-slow-combustion principles. Science has taught builders and others how to radiate the heat, and prevent that waste which formerly went up the chimney, so that the necessity to sit round

the fire is not as great as it once was, and rooms large and small are more evenly heated. The fireplace has once more become a thing of beauty, and all its appointments are rendered harmonious with the furnishings of the home, whether they are modern replicas of the homesteads of earlier periods or constructed according to the newer art of the present day. {44}

Andirons and Fire-dogs.

The brazier on a piece of stone in the centre of the room served well when charcoal was plentiful, and although the smoke ascended amidst the rafters the heat spread and there was plenty of room for many persons to assemble "around" the fire. With chimneys built at the side of the house for convenience, the timber was laid upon the hearth flag. Under the conditions that appertained when great open chimneys allowed the rain and snow to fall upon the fire or on the logs laid ready for the burning, the difficulties of lighting a fire were experienced. Then the local smith came to the aid of the "domestic" or serf, and hammered into shape what were termed andirons, their use making it easier to light the logs, giving a current of air under them, causing them to burn brighter. The andirons were afterwards called fire-dogs, and in course of time bars rested on hooks or ratchets, or were laid across the dogs. {45}

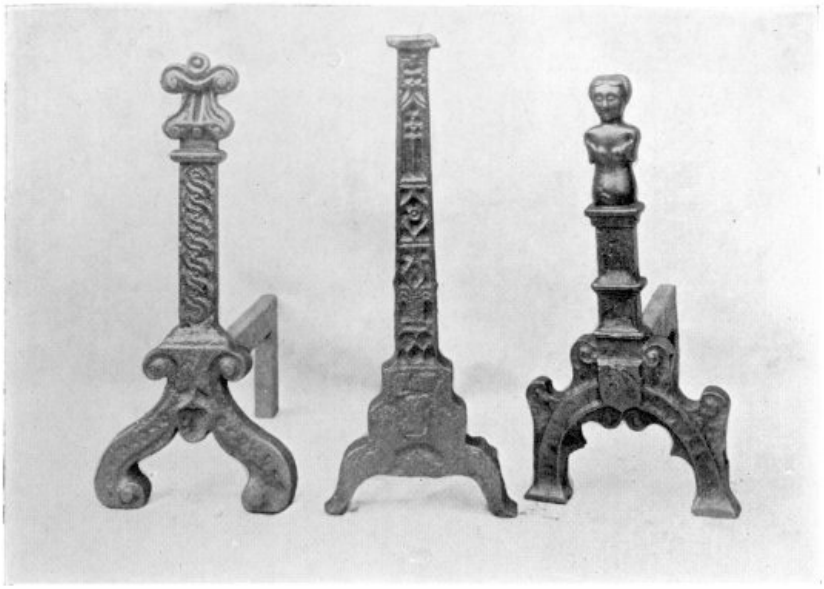


FIG. 8.—THREE SINGLE DOGS OR ANDIRONS.

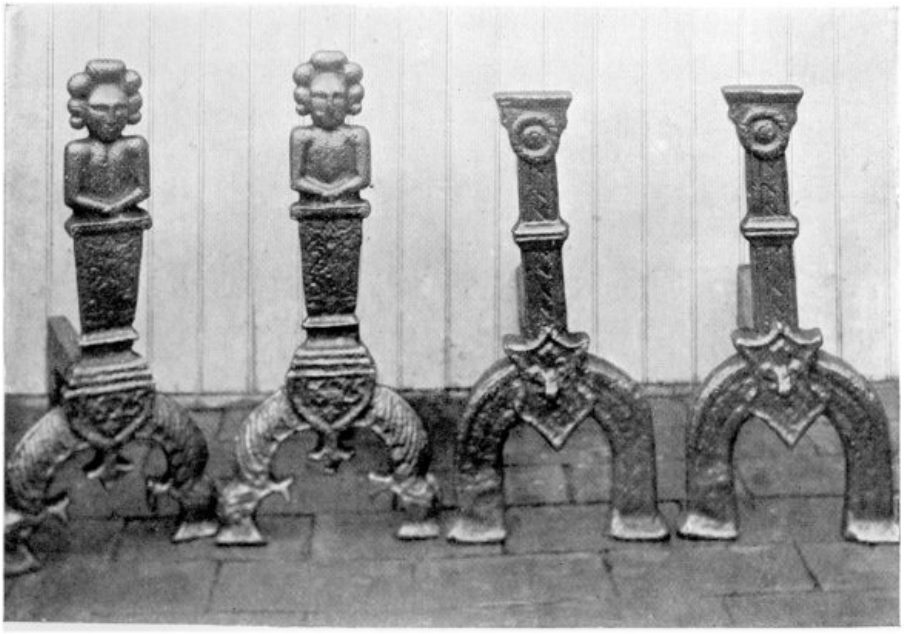


FIG. 9.—PAIR OF DATED SUSSEX ANDIRONS (1625).
FIG. 10.—PAIR OF SUSSEX ANDIRONS.
(*In the collection of Mr. Wayte, of Edenbridge.*)

There are no records of the earliest inventors of andirons or dogs. It is quite clear that small fire-dogs were in use in Rome at an early period; the one illustrated in Fig. 6, measuring 6¾ in. in height, of artistic form, two draped figures being the supports of the arch, is in the National Museum in Naples, where there are many other beautiful examples of early Roman metal work. {47} In the seventeenth century some of the more elaborate ornamental cast brass fire-dogs were enriched with black and white or blue and white enamel, several varieties of fireside ornaments being decorated in the same way.

Enamel thus applied to metal is exceptionally valuable, as much as two hundred guineas being paid for an enamelled pair of fire-dogs. It is the ordinary forms of cast or wrought dogs with which collectors are mostly familiar, especially those made in the famous Sussex ironfields, such as those shown in Figs. 8, 9, and 10, which are of early date, the pair illustrated in Fig. 9 being dated 1625, the others probably contemporary. Single examples of similar designs are shown in Fig. 8. The need of the metal furnishings of the hearth—as the chimney places of the smaller manor houses and the dwellings of the traders were being erected—caused an impetus to the trade of the ironfounder and smith, and the founders and smiths of the Sussex villages came to the aid of the builder. There are dated examples from the sixteenth century onwards, recording the periods when these interesting souvenirs of domestic building and the great Sussex ironfields —now deserted—were in operation.

Sussex Backs.

There is a peculiar attraction about the castings made in Sussex in the days when the foundries of that county were in full work, and many villages were filled with busy pattern-makers, moulders, and founders carrying on a thriving industry in districts which have now been given up {48}
to the plough; for the Sussex ironfields have been abandoned, as when the timber of the district was consumed it was impossible to work the forges economically, for coal was far distant and transport costs prohibitive. The old grate backs for which the Sussex foundries were famous in the seventeenth century were often modelled on Dutch designs, and some showed German characteristics. There are many noted English designs, too, mostly taking the forms of coats of arms and the shields and crests of the landlords for whom the stove-plates were made, some becoming "stock" patterns and often duplicated. There is quite a fine collection of these grate backs in several museums, and some good examples can still be bought from dealers whose agents secure them from time to time when property is being rebuilt. In the Victoria and Albert Museum there is a long oblong plate on which is cast the arms of Browne of Brenchley, in Kent, probably made in the second half of the seventeenth century. There are others with cherubs and curious supporters of shields of arms. A still earlier piece, probably cast about the year 1600, is an oblong Sussex back deeply recessed, on which is the arms of John Blount, Earl of Devonshire, another bearing the Royal arms of the Tudor period. In Hampton Court Palace there are some especially fine grate backs, mostly bearing the Royal arms. At a little earlier period the cast grate backs were chiefly plain with isolated crests or designs scattered over the surface, often quite irregularly. {49}

The three fine examples of Sussex backs illustrated are typical of popular styles. Fig. 11 shows the Royal lion of England, accompanied by the emblems appearing on the Royal arms in the seventeenth century; the Tudor rose crowned, the Scottish thistle, and the French fleur-de-lis indicative of the throne of France to which English sovereigns then laid some claim. The date of this fine back is 1649. Fig. 7 is of an earlier period, being dated 1588, beneath which are the initials "I.F.C." There are also roses and fleurs-de-lis, as well as anchors and other emblems. The back shown in Fig. 12 has for its design the Royal arms surrounded by the Garter, and the initials "C.R.," a design which was duplicated very extensively soon after the Restoration. It will be noticed that the Royal arms formed the design of the Sussex back shown in position in Fig. 1. Some of the German and Dutch designs are very curious, many of them representing scriptural subjects, like Moses and the brazen serpent; the death of Absalom; the temptation of Joseph; and the often-repeated story of the Garden of Eden.

In the American museums there are some very interesting examples of foundry work; some of the cast backs, evidently modelled on German or Dutch designs, take the form of stove-plates, including both front and side plates, mostly bearing dates in the middle of the eighteenth century. Pennsylvania was the chief district in which these plates were made, some being cast by William Siegel, who went to America from Germany in 1758, and erected what was known as the Berkshire furnace. A curious early stove-plate in an American collection, dated 1736, has upon it {50}
a scene known as "the dance after the wedding." It is said to have been used in the front of what was known as the German wall-warming stove.

In form the Sussex shape is usually rectangular—that is, wider than its height. It would appear as if the back was at first moulded from a wooden plate, the crest, initials, or design being then impressed by movable moulds or stamps, generally of wood. These were irregularly placed, consequently crowns, roses, crosses, family badges, and all kinds of emblems were dotted promiscuously over the plate. Some of the plain plates with cable-twist borders were probably used as hearthstones and not as backs. The styles which were gradually developed were chiefly on the same lines as those which became popular in France. Their use lingered long in that country for until recently in many an old family mansion might have been seen a *plaque de cheminée*, on which was the coat of arms and supporters of the original owner of the château, and sometimes of the kings of France. The Sussex ironfounders worked chiefly at Cowden, Hawkhurst, and Lamberhurst, and there were forges at Cranbrook, Coudhurst, Tonbridge, and Biddenden. The principal ironmasters of Kent were the Knights and the Tichbornes, whose descendants became baronets.

> "Life is not as idle ore,
> But iron dug from central gloom,
> And heated hot with burning fears,
> And dipped in baths of hissing tears,
> And battered with the shocks of doom

To shape and use."

TENNYSON, *In Memoriam*.

{51}

FIG. 11.—SUSSEX BACK WITH ROYAL EMBLEMS.

FIG. 12.—SUSSEX BACK WITH ARMS AND ROYAL INITIALS.
(*In the collection of Mr. Wayte, of Edenbridge.*)

{53}

Fireirons and Fenders.

Fire brasses or fireirons came into vogue with grates, although the sets now regarded as old fire brasses, some of which are very elaborate and massive, made at the beginning of the nineteenth century, were first used when fenders came into vogue; instead of being reared up alongside the fire-dogs in the chimney corner they rested on the fenders. There is not much to distinguish the variations in fireirons except the obvious indications of older workmanship and design, when contrasted with modern "irons." The shovel pans gave the artist in metal some opportunity for showing his skill in design and perforated work. It is probable that the earliest form of shovel was that known as the "slide," its use being to shovel up the ashes of a wood fire, an operation necessary more frequently then than in modern days when coal has been the principal fuel consumed. Some of the older specimens are dated, and bear the owner's initials; thus one authentic specimen from Shopnoller, in the Quantock Hills, is engraved, "I T. 1784." Many of the Dutch metal workers produced very beautiful and decorative stands on which miniature sets of rich brasses were hung; some of the old English fireside stands were arranged as receptacles for tongs, shovel, and brush, and now and then the baluster stem supported by a tripod base had a central attachment from which a toddy kettle could be slung. The brass toddy kettle formerly stood upon the hob of the grate, singing merrily, always ready for the cup of tea which "cheers but not inebriates," or, as was frequently the case, for the preparation of hot toddy or spirit.

{54}

The evolution of the fender forms a pleasing story in connection with the ingle side. Perhaps the earlier form likely to interest collectors of household curios is that made of perforated brass, often some 8 in. or 10 in. in depth. These fenders standing on claw feet were afterwards fitted with bottom plates of iron, on which was a ridge or rest against which the fire brasses were prevented from slipping. Then came iron or steel scroll-shaped fenders, tapering down from a few inches in height at the ends to centres almost level with the ground. To obviate the inconvenience of there being no resting-place for the fireirons loose supports were fitted into

sockets at the ends, and these afterwards were cast as part of the scroll. Then came the stiff and formal early Victorian metal work—iron fenders with steel tops relieved occasionally by ormolu ornament. These in their turn gave way to fender kerbs of metal, stone, marble, or tiles, and loose ornamented fire-dogs which have in more recent times served as rests for the fire brasses. {55}

FIG. 13.—FINE CARVED WALNUT WOOD BELLOWS.
(*In the Victoria and Albert Museum.*)

Trivets and Stools.

Combination appliances were early adopted, although we are apt at times to associate combined utensils with modern innovations. The old English trivet of wrought iron made in the eighteenth century was frequently "improved" by the addition of a toasting fork, which could be adjusted and set at certain angles so that the toast could be left in front of the fire for a few moments until it {57} was quite ready to be taken off and put on a plate standing conveniently on the trivet until the dish or rack of toast was complete. (Some scarce trivets are illustrated in "Chats on Old Copper and Brass.")

Bellows.

The Germans were noted for the manufacture of decorative bellows cut and carved in quaint designs, some of the finest examples being made in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Others were made in Holland, some of the Dutch bellows being inlaid with mother-o'-pearl. There are also examples of old English carving, the style of the ornament taking the form of the designs on contemporary oak furniture. Some of the largest and handsomest bellows of English make are of late seventeenth-century workmanship. The example illustrated in Fig. 13 is a magnificent specimen, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum at South Kensington. {59}

III

THE LIGHTS OF FORMER DAYS

{61}

CHAPTER III

THE LIGHTS OF FORMER DAYS

Rushlights and holders—Candles, moulds, and boxes—Snuffers, trays, and extinguishers—Oil lamps—Lanterns.

Household lighting has been one continuous effort to render the hours of darkness bright, and to provide by artificial means a luminosity which would, if not actually rivalling the sun, enable men to carry on their usual avocations with the same ease, convenience, and comfort after daylight had disappeared as during the earlier portion of the day. Every stage which has been advanced in artificial lighting has been welcomed in the home just as much as in the factory and in the workshop, for there are many daily duties as well as pleasures and amusements which are carried out much more satisfactorily when a good light is available than when there are shadows and dark corners only dimly lighted.

To realize what artificial lighting was in the days now happily long past, it would be necessary to visit some old-world village, if one could be found, where there had been no attempt at street lighting, and in which not even oil had penetrated. The candles of very early times did not give {62} more than a dim glimmer, and the darkness of mediæval England can be imagined from the primitive lighting appliances which are preserved. Fortunately the entire story of lighting as science came to the aid of trader and householder is revealed in the lights of former days, which as time went on became more varied and numerous, found in collections of well-authenticated specimens. The suggested caution implied is not unnecessary, for the periods overlap, and there is but little to show when such things as lamps and lanterns were actually made.

Rushlights and Holders.

In tracing the development of lighting from quite homely beginnings, rushlights, prepared by the cottager and the farm hand for the winter supply, seem to come first on the list. Rushlights, however, were used in this country by many until comparatively recent times side by side with lights much more advanced. But centuries earlier than we have any record of artificial lighting in this country, and equally as long before any of the earliest British curios of lighting were used, lighting engineers, if we may so call them, in Greece, Rome, Egypt, and still earlier in other Eastern countries, were far advanced. None of the lighting schemes of the Ancients, however, produced much more than the dim light of the swinging lamp in which oil was consumed. {63}

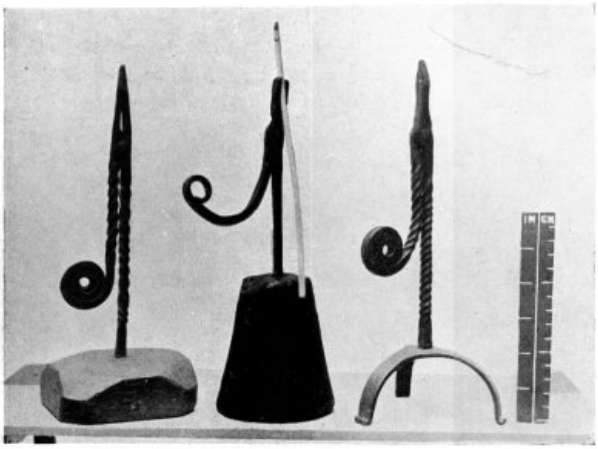


FIG. 14.—THREE RUSHLIGHT HOLDERS.
(*In the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff.*)

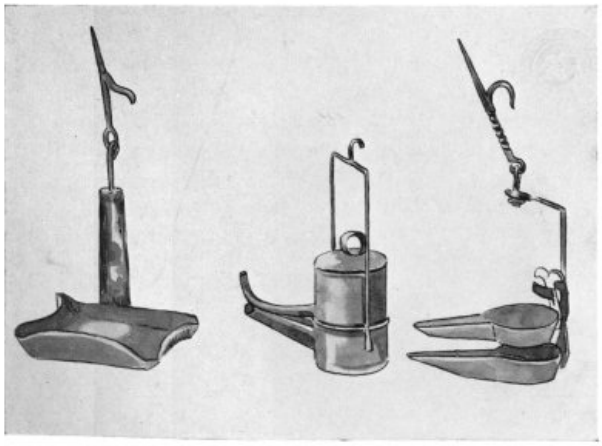


FIG. 15.—THREE VARIETIES OF OLD OIL LAMPS.

To range side by side a number of rushlight holders taken from districts widely apart, it becomes evident that there was a striking similarity between the earlier types. The smiths everywhere {65} seem to have fashioned a simple contrivance by which the rushlight or early candle could be held upright, and then, to give the "stick" solidity, the iron shaft was fastened securely into a wooden block, which was very often quite out of proportion to the size and weight of the stand, and apparently unnecessarily large and heavy. In the larger examples the holder is often made to slide upon an upright rod so as to be useful at different heights. The sliding rod was needed, for the light so dim could only be of real service when quite close to the person using it, or to the work it was intended to illumine (see Figs. 4 and 5).

Although some of the more elaborate and advanced holders were of copper or brass, most of them were of iron, the work of local smiths, few of whom made any attempt to decorate what they evidently regarded as strictly utilitarian articles (see Fig. 14). Although rushlights antedated candles, some of the holders were made to answer a dual purpose, and on the same stem or slide as the rushlight holder there was a candle socket, an important feature fully exemplified in Figs. 4 and 5.

Candles, Moulds, and Boxes.

The collector of household curios does not trouble about the candles; his object is to secure a few candle moulds, candle boxes, and, of course, candlesticks. It may, however, be convenient here to refer to the moulding of candles which was at one time a domestic duty just as it had been to collect rushes and after they were dried dip them in fat, and to make lights which would burn {66} with more or less steadiness.

The candles were made from various fats, much of which was accumulated in the kitchen during the processes of cooking, supplemented by other ingredients deemed best for the purpose. The candle moulds or tubes in which wicks were inserted were of varying capacities and ranged from two to a dozen or more. The moulds were dipped in troughs of fat, having been heated sufficiently to melt the fat. The process was by no means new, in that it was used in this country by the Saxons; and at a still earlier period candles were made by the Romans, for among the sundry objects picked up among the uncovered ruins of Herculaneum have been small pieces of candle ends.

There was but little advance in the art of candle-making, for the candle, briefly described as a rod of solidified tallow or wax surrounding a wick, remained almost unimproved until the eighteenth century, when spermaceti was introduced, and in more recent years paraffin has been substituted.

Candles were hung up by their wicks in bunches until required for use, but those needed for immediate supply were always kept in candle boxes. It is these boxes of copper, brass, and tin which are sought after. The decorated japanned tin boxes are very pleasing, and some of the best, ornamented after the "Chinese style" or painted with little scenes, and rich in gold ornament, especially those made with other japanned wares at Pontypool in South Wales, are desirable acquisitions. {67}

Of the varieties of candlesticks there is no end. The two great divisions are the pillar or table candlesticks, and the chamber candlesticks. The first named are chiefly seen with a small socket and flange to catch the running tallow, the last mentioned have larger dishes which catch the drips from candles which are being carried about. Among the varieties are the earliest form of pricket candlestick on which the candle was "stuck," the bell candlesticks, and the candlesticks which were fixed on brackets against the wall. As time went on varied materials were introduced, and ornament was chiefly in accord with prevailing styles, which influenced the maker of candlesticks as all other metal work. Iron, copper, brass, pewter, silver, and Britannia metal and wood have been used, and many of the handsomest chandeliers and brackets are those made of lustres and cut glass. The large chandeliers hung a century or two ago at great expense in the centre of large rooms have frequently been retained, and gas and electric light have been introduced instead of candles. In Fig. 16 we illustrate two exceedingly well-preserved old walnut floor-candlesticks, with brass sconces. They come from the Sister Isle, where there are still curios to be met with.

Snuffers, Trays, and Extinguishers.

There were difficulties to contend with in the use of candles, chiefly on account of the irregular burning of candles when exposed to the slightest draught, and to the imperfect combustion, which left a charred piece of wick which it was necessary to remove to make the candle burn {68} once more. Then, again, the extinction of a burning candle involved some skill, and instruments were devised to effect this without causing unpleasant odours or smoke to arise. Previous to the use of lanterns out of doors, and oftentimes when halls and corridors were imperfectly lighted, torches thrust into the open fire and thus lighted were used. Extinguishers of iron were frequently erected near an outside door, or added to the iron railings outside the house. These were for the purpose of extinguishing links—many such are to be seen still outside old London houses. They were the prototypes from which originated the ordinary form of chamber candle extinguisher, frequently fastened to the "stick" by a chain. {69}

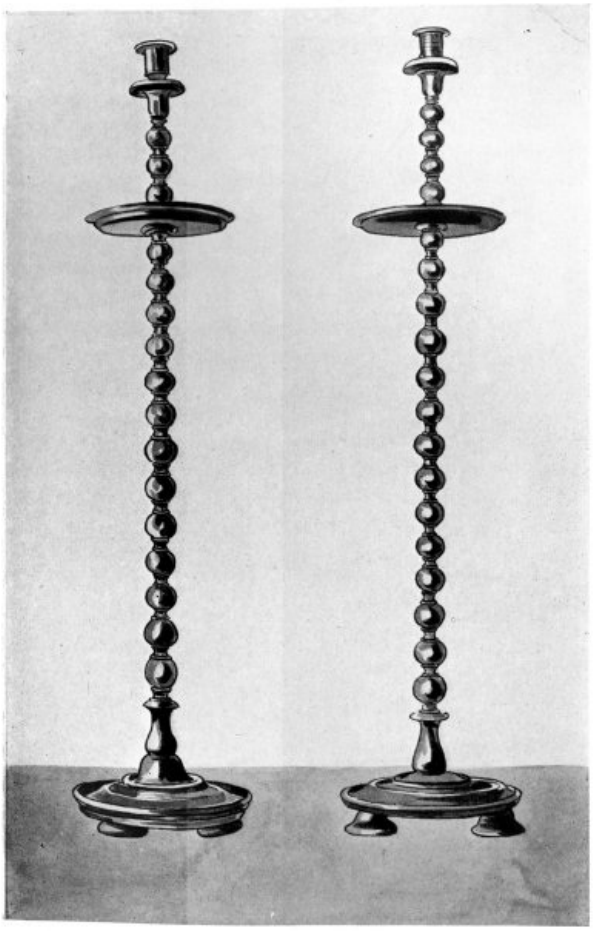


FIG. 16.—TWO WALNUT WOOD FLOOR-CANDLESTICKS.
(*In the collection of W. Egan & Sons, Ltd., of Cork.*)

The extinguishers used in the early days of candles are known now as snuffer-extinguishers, to distinguish them from snuffers (the old name was *doubters*). In form they were not unlike scissors; the two circular metal plates of which they were formed closed in and compressed the wick, thereby extinguishing the light. The earlier snuffers had very large boxes, and some were remarkably handsome, an exceptionally fine example being shown in Fig. 17. They were discovered in an old house at Corton, in Dorset, in 1768, and were described by a writer towards the close of the eighteenth century thus: "They are of brass and weigh about 6 ounces. Their construction consists of two equilateral cavities, by the edges of which the snuff is cut off and received into the cavity from which it is not got out without much trouble." Snuffers of iron, and later of steel, are the commoner forms, but they are frequently of brass and of silver and {71}
Sheffield plate.

The need of some convenient tray or receptacle for the snuffers, not always over-clean when they had been used a few times, was met at first by what are known as snuffer stands made of wrought metal, and often very ornamental. Then came the oblong tray of convenient shape, following in its decoration and ornament prevailing styles in other domestic tin or metal work. In this connection it should be pointed out that there are many varieties of taper holders and stands used for the small wax tapers, then common on the writing table.

Oil Lamps.

Although oil had long been a recognized illuminant from which a good artificial light could be obtained, it was not until the eighteenth century that any marked attempt was made to substitute oil for candles in this country. For really beautiful lamps we have to go back to the bronze lamps of ancient Greece and Rome, and the terra-cotta lamps of the early Christians, many of which were exceedingly interesting. Householders in England, and in America, too, preferred the beautiful silver candlesticks and those charming and artistic scrolls which once decorated the walls of the houses of the well-to-do. There came a time, however, when oil lamps were reinstated, and although candles still held sway and were difficult to displace, inventors and makers of oil lamps began to compete for the lighting industry. The three old lamps now in the {72}
Cardiff Museum, shown in Fig. 15, must be classed among the commoner types of early lamps, once plentiful in farmhouses and cottages.

The lamp used on the table in Victorian days was the moderator lamp, the principle of which was a spring forcing the oil up through the burner—but such lamps have no claim upon the curio hunter either for beauty of form or rarity of material. These lamps, which burned colza or seed oil, were superseded in time by paraffin and petroleum lamps. Now and then some wonderful

invention flashed across the scene, but although various modern improved burners have come and gone, the lamp, excepting for purposes of ornament and decorative effect, has given way to coal gas and, in more modern times, to electric lighting. There are few household curios of any value associated with oil lighting, and as yet gas is too new! {73}

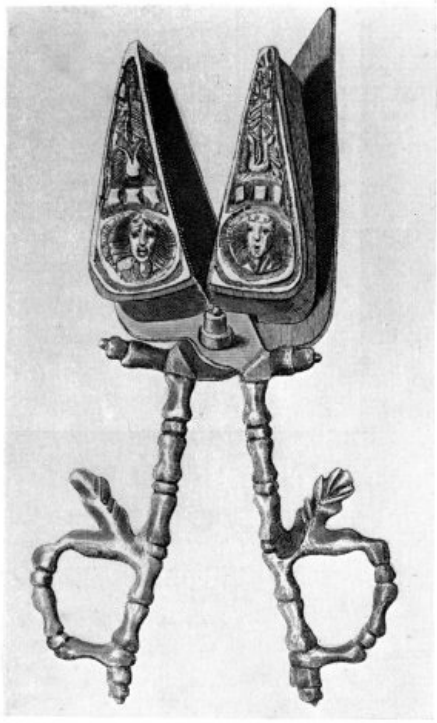


FIG. 17.—FINE PAIR OF ANCIENT SNUFFERS.

Lanterns.

The portable lantern made of iron and tin and glazed with horn was long an indispensable feature in every household. Horn lanterns were carried about everywhere in the days before street lighting was general, and to some extent they are needed in country districts to-day. There is a remarkable similarity between the modern glass lanterns of circular type and the old watchman's lanterns of a couple of centuries ago. The same design seems to have served the purpose through many generations, and to have been duplicated again and again. Among the ancient lanterns are some in which candles have been burned, and others where the candle socket has been utilized {75} for the insertion of a socket oil lamp. In more modern times the horn has given place to glass. The carriage lamps of former days served their purposes well, and although some are certainly antique, they are by no means desirable curios. The light they gave when driving through a country lane was indeed a dim flicker compared with the powerful arcs of the modern motor-car.

The beacon fire is no longer seen on housetops, neither is the lantern in the yard and the vestibule furnished with a candle; but curiously enough, even in the most modern appointed houses, so great is the love for the antique in the furnishings of to-day, that beautifully modelled little replicas of the old horn lanterns are hung in entrance halls and passages—but instead of the candle there is the electric bulb! {77}

IV

TABLE APPOINTMENTS

{79}

CHAPTER IV

TABLE APPOINTMENTS

Cutlery: Knives, forks, and spoons—Salt cellars—Cruet stands—Punch and toddy—Porringers and cups—Trays and waiters—The tea table—Cream jugs—Sugar tongs and nippers—Caddies—Cupids—Nutcrackers—Turned woodware.

It is very difficult to realize in these days of refinement and of comparative luxury, even in the homes of the working classes, what the table appointments must have been in early English homes. Sometimes glowing accounts are given of the feasting of olden time; but no doubt many of the great occasions contrasted in their luxurious magnificence with the usual mode of living. They were, however, the days of feeding rather than of refinement in partaking of the sumptuous feast. The table appointments on such occasions were crude and simple, and they were altogether absent from the tables of the lower classes. It is difficult, indeed, to realize that the conditions under which people lived in mediæval England, in the days when the baron and his followers assembled in the great hall, and with his chosen companions sat above the salt, {80} satisfied men of wealth; it was, however, in accord with the spirit of the age.

The primitive methods of serving up food and eating it observed by the majority of people then would be looked upon with disgust nowadays by every one. The table appointments were not only very few, but those which were used, like the knife and spoon, were often brought into the feasting hall by those who were to use them. The polished oaken board was often laden with rough and readily prepared dishes, the result of some fortunate expedition or of a prosperous hunt. The knife was the chief implement used until comparatively recent days, for forks are quite a modern innovation. The spoon, it is true, goes back to hoary antiquity, but in England, even in the Middle Ages, spoons were used chiefly for ecclesiastical purposes. In Harrison's *Elizabethan England* we read that the times had changed, for instead of "treen platters" there were pewter plates, and tin or silver spoons instead of wood. {81}

FIG. 18.—HANDSOMELY DECORATED KNIFE CASE AND CONTENTS.
(*In the Victoria and Albert Museum.*)

Cutlery: Knives, Forks, and Spoons.

The term "cutlery," derived from *coutellerie*, the French for cutlery, had been evolved from *culter*, the Latin for knife. Primarily it referred to cutting instruments, and especially to knives, but in a general way, when speaking of table cutlery, spoons and forks may appropriately be included. Early records referring to cutlery indiscriminately use the terms knives and swords; indeed, the arms granted to the London Cutlers' Company in the sixteenth year of the reign of Edward IV are two swords, crossed; later a crest, consisting of an elephant bearing a castle, was {83} added. Homer tells us of knives carried at the girdle in his day, and describes them as of triangular form. The Anglo-Saxons and the Normans carried about with them met-soex or eating knives, but it was not until the end of the fifteenth century that knives were used at table, other than those which were carried at the girdle, every man using his own cutlery. In England, Sheffield was early noted for the manufacture of knives, for Chaucer tells us, "A Scheffeld thwitel bare he in his hose." Another form of spelling the word which denoted knife was *troytel*, and from these terms is derived "whittle." The jack knife came in in the days of James I, after whom it was named, the original term being Jacques-te-leg, these knives shutting into a groove or handle without spring or lock.

The making of a table knife even in early times necessitated the work of many hands, for taking part in its production were the smiths who forged it, the bladers who made the blade out of the metal already hammered, and the haft-makers. When the knife was complete it was handed to the sheath-makers, who fashioned the sheath of leather, and sometimes encased it in metal. The host did not provide table cutlery for his guests until the reign of Elizabeth. In earlier times it was left to the traveller to provide himself with whatever he deemed necessary; thus it is recorded that when Henry VI made a tour in the north he carried with him knife, fork, and spoon, as it was stated "he scarcely expected to find any at the houses of the nobility." From that custom, no {84} doubt, arose the common practice of fitting separate sets, and afterwards sets for more than one person, in cases, the materials used being for many years the beautifully embossed *cuir boulli* leather work. Queen Elizabeth carried her knife and other appointments at her girdle, a custom followed by her ladies; although it is said that at the Court of the virgin queen it was customary

for the gentlemen courtiers to cut up the meat on the platters of the fair ones with whom they were dining; the ladies at that time being content to prove the truth of the adage, "Fingers were made before forks."

Collectors soon realize that there were many forms of knives even amongst those specially reserved for table use. Both blades and handles have passed through many stages in the gradual evolution from the hunting knife to the cutlery on the modern dinner table. The blades have been narrow and pointed like daggers, and they have been scimitar-shaped, and rounded off at the point. The qualities of the material have changed, too, Sheffield cutlers and those of other places vying with one another. The cutlery trade has long drifted north, although at one time the members of the London Cutlers' Company were proud of the quality of their goods, and boasted of their knives being "London made, haft and blade." This ancient Guild tried hard to maintain their pre-eminence, and in the days of Elizabeth obtained a Charter prohibiting all strangers from {85}
bringing any knives into England from beyond the seas.

The carving knife seems to have had a separate descent from the large hunting knives used to cut up barons of beef, roasted oxen, and portions which were cut off the joint for each individual or for several persons.

Forks for table use were a much later invention, although there were larger meat forks, flesh forks, and heavier iron kitchen appliances (see Chapter V).

In very early times small forks, of which there are some in the Guildhall Museum dating from Roman and Saxon times, were chiefly used for fruit. The use of forks at table, for meat, is attributed to the invention of an Italian, and the custom thus started rapidly spread "in good society" on the Continent of Europe. Thomas Coryate, a noted traveller, is said to have introduced them into Germany, and afterwards into England, where their use was at first much ridiculed as effeminate, the "fork-carving" traveller being spoken of in contempt.

Forks were in regular use in England early in the sixteenth century. Dean Stanley, in his *Memorials of Westminster Abbey*, quotes from the Chapter Book of 1554, in which it is stated by Dean Weston (1553-6) that the College dinners "became somewhat disorderly, *forks* and knives were tossed freely to and fro." The old table forks were two-pronged, the prongs being long and set near together; the steel forks of the early nineteenth century were three-pronged, and {86}
another prong was added later, the latter form being adapted by the makers of silver forks in more recent years.

In Fig. 18 is shown a very handsome knife case and its contents, which are to be seen in the Victoria and Albert Museum. In Fig. 19 another example of a set of knife, fork, and spoon in the same collection is illustrated.

The spoon is, like the knife, of great antiquity. It is said to have been suggested by shells on the shore, and by the hollow of the hand which in the most primitive days was used to drink with. The most beautiful old spoons are those made of silver, a magnificent pair being shown in Fig. 20. Many such spoons are now almost priceless, especially the much-valued Apostle spoons, often given in olden time as christening gifts. Silver spoons more correctly belong to antique silver, which forms another branch of curio-collecting.

Of spoons there are many made of other materials than silver, some being carved in wood (see Chapter XIII), others of ivory, and some of bone. Many of the older spoons were made of brass or latten; but when silver became popular table spoons of silver were procured whenever it was possible to afford them, and a collection including in the varieties the Apostle and the seal top, and its various developments from the rat-tail to the fiddle, is obtainable. As regarding spoons Westman has written: "The spoon is one of the first things wanted when we come into the world, and it is one of the last things we part with before we go out." {87}

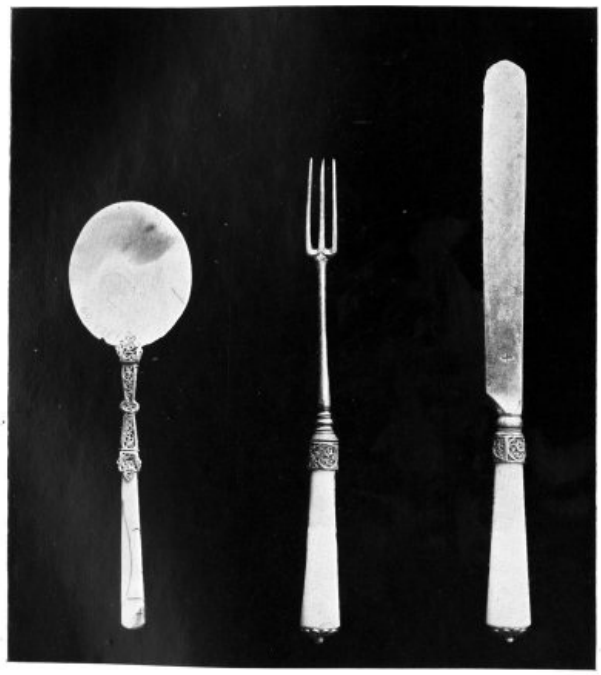


FIG. 19.—KNIFE, FORK, AND SPOON.
(*In the Victoria and Albert Museum.*)

The collector revels in the beautifully engraved blades of the rarer curios; in the handles so {89}
varied in their materials and ornament; and in the cases in which knives, forks, and spoons have in many instances been preserved. From the curios in museums and from family treasures it is evident that much of the cutlery has been presented as donations to the housekeeping outfit of a newly-married couple, or given as presentation sets or pieces on some special occasion; just as cutlery is often chosen for presentation purposes to-day.

From the sixteenth century onwards such sets have been made and presented. The recently arranged cutlery room in the Victoria and Albert Museum at South Kensington, that great art treasure-house of the nation, contains an exceptionally representative collection. In some instances the examples are only single specimens which may have been presented separately, or they may have formed part of a more complete set. There are sets of carving knives with long blades, forks with double prongs, and broad-pointed flat-bladed servers, many of them etched and engraved all over. Even after carvers were regular features on the table the small knives and forks were brought by the guests who were bidden to the feast, for it must be remembered that it was not until 1670 that Prince Rupert brought the first complete set of forks to this country.

In the Victoria and Albert Museum there is a very beautiful little knife, the handle of which is delicately carved, the group which constitutes the design representing our first parents standing beneath the Tree of Knowledge, in the midst of which the wily serpent is cunningly concealed. {90}

Another pair consisting of a very handsome knife and fork have handles representing animals and grotesque figures. These were the work of Dutch artists in the seventeenth century; but curiously enough the quaint leather case in which this knife and fork are enclosed was evidently of earlier date, for it has upon it "1598." Some of the cases of leather made by the *cuir boulli* process are circular, there being separate holes for each of the knives they were intended to contain. Some of the knives are very curious, especially those with wooden or horn handles of sixteenth and early seventeenth-century make, which have been found in considerable numbers in Moorfields and Finsbury, along with sharpening steels. The ordinary table knives of a little later date, when they were sold in half-dozens and dozens along with two-pronged forks, were decorative, their handles being made of materials varying in quality and in the excellence of their manufacture. One of the most beautiful sets of rare historic value now on view in the Victoria and Albert Museum is part of a set of fourteen, the ivory handles being carved to represent the kings and queens of England. These rare examples of the English cutler's and ivory carver's art, dated 1607, have blades damascened with gold. There are knives also with handles of amber, one very remarkable set in amber over foil being decorated with the figure of Christ and His Apostles on one side of the handles, and on the other side there is the Apostles' Creed. {91}

Among other materials used in the manufacture of handles for knives and forks, some of the latter having two prongs and others three, chiefly made in the eighteenth century, are: Battersea enamel on copper, Staffordshire agate ware, Meissen porcelain, Venetian millefiore glass, Bow porcelain, jasper, Venetian aventurine glass, enamelled earthenware, and Chantilly porcelain. In many instances these handles made of such beautiful materials are further decorated by miniature painted scenes and floral ornaments. Another favourite material is bone, some of the older handles being stained, mostly green, afterwards decorated with applied silver in floral and geometrical designs. There are a few maple-wood handles of the eighteenth century, and others of stag's horn and of shagreen.

The knife box with its divisions, referred to elsewhere, is exemplified in many remarkably fine cases to be seen in our museums and in isolated specimens in private collections.

The interest in a collection of household utensils is greatly enhanced by the halo of romance which surrounds the uses of some of them. This is seen and understood by the collector of cutlery perhaps more than of anything else, for many old customs have been associated with the giving of cutlery, and superstitious beliefs have crept in.

The gift of cutlery at weddings was not always the prosaic thing it is nowadays, for the cases and even the knives were often accompanied by some sentimental rhyme or poetic inscription. Two knives, apparently the gift of bride and bridegroom to one another, now in the British Museum, {92} are engraved with separate inscriptions. One reads:—

"My love is fixt I will not range,
I like my choice I will not change";

while on the other is engraved:—

"Witt, wealth, and beauty all doe well
But constant love doth fair excell. 1676."

The early uses of knives in association with religious rites are interesting, as, for instance, the golden knife with which the old Druids cut the mistletoe with pomp and much mystic ceremony. The early Christians made use of the knife and symbolized the cross when feasting; indeed, the old country habit—which is now deemed a sign of vulgarity—of crossing the knife and fork after dining, took its origin in that act of devotion, for together they form the Greek cross. Browning refers to the custom when he says:—

"Knife and fork he never lays
Crosswise, to my recollection,
As I do in Jesu's praise."

In Russia this custom of the peasantry was deep-rooted; and there they were careful to take up the knife and fork and lay them down on the plate crossed before commencing their often meagre meal. {93}

FIG. 20.—PAIR OF DECORATED SPOONS.
(*In the Victoria and Albert Museum.*)

Strange to say that although knives and forks have been crossed in reverence, to cross knives has been deemed unlucky, and to present a maiden with a pair of scissors—two crossed blades—has long been held by those who believe in such signs as unlucky. To give a knife is to "cut luck"—so {95} the legend runs; hence so many when presenting a pocket knife will demand a penny (as the smallest coin when silver pennies were in circulation) in return. The Rev. Samuel Bishop, M.A., Master of the Merchant Taylors' School in 1795, wrote the following lines on the subject of presenting a knife to his wife:—

"A knife, dear girl, cuts love, they say—
Mere modish love perhaps it may:
For any tool of any kind
Can separate what was never join'd."

Salt Cellars.

The condiments of the table were usually supplied in separate vessels. The use of salt with meat goes back to primitive times, although we have few records of the vessels in which it was served. The Arab chief offers his guest salt as an act of friendship, and as such it is partaken of. The classic Ancients consecrated salt before using it, and the salt cellar was placed upon the table together with the first fruits "for the gods," those to whom they were offered being generally Hercules or Mercury. The Greek salt cellars were shaped like bowls, and as the salt became an important feature as a dividing line between rich and poor, the size of the cellar grew. To realize the importance of the salt cellar in mediæval England, we have only to visit the Tower of London, where the great salt cellars of State are kept. The large standing salt was the dividing line upon the table. Salt cellars dating from the fourteenth century are in existence, and many curiously {96} shaped designs intervened before the bell-shaped salts which were fashionable in the days of Elizabeth and the trencher salts of Queen Anne and the early Georges. Salt cellars with feet came into fashion in the reign of George II; then followed many minor changes until the beautifully perforated salt cellars with blue liners bearing hall-marks dating from the close of the eighteenth century came into vogue. It is from among the Georgian table appointments that collectors gather most of their specimens. The materials of which these salt cellars were made vary; there are sterling silver, antique pewter, and Sheffield plate; and there are salt cellars of china and porcelain which may well be included in a collection of table curios.

Cruet Stands.

The separate bottles or cruets, casters, mustard pots, and very rarely salts, were gradually gathered together and placed in a frame which grew big in late Georgian and early Victorian days. For convenience the stand was placed in the centre of the table, and often made to revolve. Such cruets are met with in silver and other metals, also in papier-maché, often ornamented with mother-o'-pearl and painted flowers. The greatest interest, however, is found in collecting separate bottles, such as those charming Bristol glass cruets, ornamented with flowers and lettered with the names of their contents, such as "VINEGAR," "SALAD OIL," "MUSTARD," "PEPPER."

There is a greater variety of form in the metal cruets and casters, which followed the prevailing {97} styles silversmiths were then employing. Especially graceful are the old pepperettes and vase-shaped casters. The woodturner, too, contributed to the table appointments of the eighteenth century, and the carver made some curious and even grotesque figures, the heads of which took off, and thus formed pepper casters. One of the most noted grotesque sets reminds us of the Toby fill-pot jugs in form, a complete set consisting of two salts, two mustards, and two pepper pots. Genuine specimens are very difficult to meet with now, although those Staffordshire cruets have been reproduced, and are offered either singly or in sets; but the difference between the genuine antique and the modern replica ought not to deceive even an amateur.

There are varieties of mustard pots, which were in turn round, oval, square, hexagonal, and cylindrical, some being like miniature well buckets with perforated sides and blue metal liners.

Punch and Toddy.

A hundred years ago the punch bowl was inseparable from the convivial feast. It was a favourite sideboard ornament, and found in frequent use on the dining table, round which smokers and card players drew up and filled their glasses with punch and toddy. Ladles were indispensable, and were varied in form and in the materials of which they were composed. Punch ladles were in earlier days made of cherry-wood, mounted with a silver rim and fitted with a long handle, often made of twisted horn. The horn, which was somewhat pliable, was secured to the bowl by a silver {98} socket. Other ladles were made entirely of silver, some having a current coin of the realm, a guinea preferably, fixed in the bottom of the bowl—for luck. Some of the ladles were beautifully decorated in repousse, others were shaped like sauce boats; there were ladles without lips, others deep like the porringers, and yet others were quite round like a drinking bowl. Some are family heirlooms, others have been purchased in curio shops, and unfortunately during the last few years so great has been the demand for them that many modern copies have been palmed off as genuine antiques. The hall-mark on the rim is in many instances a guarantee of age, although some of the genuine specimens do not appear to have been hall-marked at all. The fact that an old coin is found fixed within the bowl is no criterion of antiquity, and does not always indicate that the punch ladle itself is contemporary with the coin, for old coins are common enough and readily fixed in new ladles.

Collectors of old china simply revel in punch bowls. Punch was at the height of its popularity when most of the domestic porcelain and decorative china, now rare and valuable, was being made. The best known potters in Worcester, Derby, Bristol, Liverpool, and the Potteries made punch bowls, some ornamented with their characteristic decorations; others were specially emblematical, such, for instance, as the bowls covered with masonic signs; some were nautical in design, and many were enriched with coats of arms and crests. Several of the punch bowls {99} belonging to the old City Companies are on view in the Guildhall Museum, and isolated specimens are seen to be in other places.

Oriental china was at that time being imported into this country very extensively, and some remarkably delicate bowls, contrasting with Mason's strong ironstone, are obtainable. These

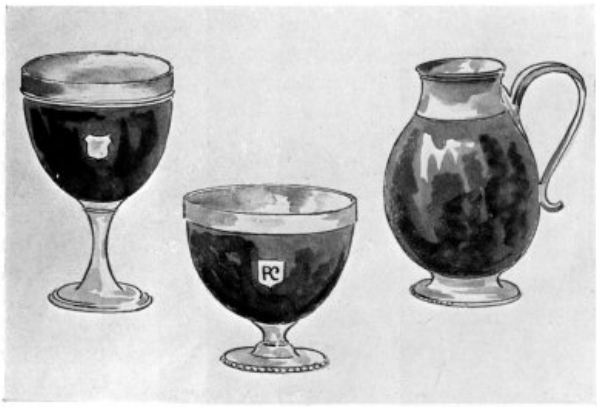
bowls, ladles, and the charming little egg-shaped boxes which formerly contained a nutmeg and a tiny grater are household table furnishings of exceptional interest. It may interest some to learn that punch, which came into vogue in the seventeenth century, derived its name from a Hindustani word signifying five, indicative of the five ingredients of which it was composed—spirit, water, sugar, lemon, and spice.

Porringers and Cups.

Although sterling silver and other materials from which drinking vessels are usually made have been exhaustively dealt with in other volumes of the "Chats" series, as table appointments drinking cups must be referred to here. Caudle cups were in use in the sixteenth century, and throughout the century that followed they were used along with porringers, which differed from them only in that the mouths of the porringers were wider and the sides straight. The caudle cup, sometimes called a posset cup, is met with both without and with cover, and in some instances it is accompanied by a stand or tray. Caudle or posset was a drink consisting of milk curdled with wine, and in the days when it was drunk few went to bed without a cup of smoking hot posset. {100} Many of the early cups were beautifully embossed and florally ornamented, although others were quite plain, with the exception of an engraved shield, on which was a coat of arms, crest, or monogram. Many of the porringers which followed the earlier type were octagonal, and in some instances twelve-sided. In the reign of William and Mary the rage for Chinese figures and ornaments caused English silversmiths to decorate porringers with similar designs. The style which prevailed the longest was that known as "Queen Anne," much copied in modern replicas. Very pleasing, too, are eighteenth-century miniature porringers.

There is much to please in the work of the silversmith and potter, as well as the glass blower, in the cups they fashioned; and the artist admires the chased engraving or the rich colouring, and perchance the etching and cutting of the cup. Some, however, show preference for the earlier cups and drinking vessels of commoner materials, and for those eccentricities of the table found in curious hunting cups, vessels which had to be emptied at a draught, or to be drunk under the most difficult conditions like the puzzle cups of Staffordshire make. The peg tankards of ancient date, a very fine example originally belonging to the Abbey of Glastonbury, afterwards in the possession of Lord Arundel of Wardour, held two quarts, the pegs dividing its contents into half-pints according to the Winchester standard. On that remarkable cup the twelve Apostles were carved round the sides, and on the lid was the scene at the Crucifixion. {101}

FIG. 21.—TWO WOODEN CUPS.
FIG. 22.—WOODEN FLAGON, WITH COPPER BANDS.
(*In the National Museum of Wales.*)



FIGS. 23, 24.—COCOANUT CUPS (SILVER-MOUNTED).
FIG. 25.—COCOANUT FLAGON.

It is said that the pegs were first ordered by Edgar, the Saxon king, to prevent excessive drinking, the tankard being passed round, every man being expected to drink down to the next peg. Heywood, in his *Philocathonista*, says: "Of drinking cups, divers and sundry sorts we have, some of elm, some of box, and some of maple and holly." According to the quaint spelling of those days there were then in use in Merrie England: "Mazers, noqqins, whiskins, piggins, cringes, ale- {103}

bowls, wassel bowls, tankard and kames from a pottle to a pint and from a pint to a gill." The leather cups and tankards or black jacks (see Chapter VIII) were mostly used in country places by "shepheards and harvesters." A writer in a work published in the early years of the nineteenth century says: "Besides metal and wood and pottery we have cups of hornes of beasts, of cocker nuts, of goords, of eggs of ostriches, and of the shells of divers fishes."

A simple cocoanut, mounted in silver and made into a cup, perhaps a century or more ago, is by no means to be despised. Some are beautifully polished and ornamented with incised work. Contemporary with the earlier specimens are pots made of ostrich eggs, mounted in silver, regarded of great value in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Some of the university colleges possess fine examples, and there are many in the hands of London silversmiths. Figs. 23 and 24 represent two cocoanut cups with feet of silver, one engraved with the owner's initials, the foot being decorated with bead ornament. Fig. 25 is a cocoanut mounted as a flagon with handle of {104} whalebone and rim and foot of silver. The use of such cups seems to have been very generally distributed all over the world, for there are many South American examples, as well as the English varieties. The gourd, too, was used for similar purposes; the Mexicans made such bowls and cups, finishing them off with silver mounts and sometimes adding silver feet. There are French flasks made of small gourds, sometimes scent flasks being made in the same way, not infrequently decorated with incised inlays of coloured composition on a black ground. Some of the English silversmiths engraved hunting scenes on small flasks made of the rind of a gourd, choosing hunting scenes and birds and familiar outdoor objects.

In Figs. 21 and 21A are shown two curious old wood drinking cups, and Fig. 22 represents a wooden jug bound with copper.

Horn was a favourite material for cups, sometimes surmounted by elaborate covers and feet of silver. One of the rarest drinking horns, now in Queen's College, Oxford, was presented to the College by the Queen of Edward III in 1340. Of later types there are beakers and tumbler cups, the latter rounded at the base so that they were easily upset, the idea being that they must be emptied at the first draught. From these cups sprang the quaint hunting cups in porcelain, modelled in the form of a hare's head, or like a fox, some of the scarcest being evidently modelled for the fisherman's use, to take the form of a fish's head.

The very remarkable drinking cup shown in Fig. 27 is made of walnut; the ridges, carved in deep {105} relief, stand out boldly, each one being carved, the letters forming a complete metaphor, to which is added the name of its original owner, the inscription reading as follows:—

"TAKE . NOT . FROM . ME .
AL . MY . STOR . AXCP . YE .
FILL . ME . VEE . SVME . MOR .
FOR . AV . TO . BORROV .
AND . NEVER . TO . PAY .
I . CALL . THAT .
FOVLL . PLAY .
IōN WATSON 1695."

Trays and Waiters.

In olden time not very far from the dining table stood the cupboard or buffet from which evolved the sideboard. On it were displayed the cups and flagons and table appointments not actually in use. It is true the servants carried the great dishes from the kitchen, and removed the lesser vessels on trays and "waiters," and it is such trays, especially those in silver and Sheffield plate used in the last century, which are now valuable. The waiter or serving man or woman has been an essential feature in domestic service from the earliest times, for the history of society invariably records those who wait at table:—

"The waiters stand in ranks; the yeomen cry
'Make room,' as if a duke were passing by."
SWIFT.

It is an easy remove from the waiter to the tray or vessel on which the waiters carried the things {106} they served up to those on whom they waited. The name "salver," commonly applied to a tray or waiter, seems to have originated from the old custom of tasting meats before they were served, to salve or save their employers from harm. Among the more valuable are the trays or waiters of silver and Sheffield plate. Trays made of iron and japanned after the fashion of Japanese metal lacquer wares, which towards the close of the eighteenth century were so largely imported into this country, are often neglected, yet many of them are truly antiquarian and by no means unlovely.

One of the chief seats of the industry was at Pontypool, but the business drifted to Birmingham. It was when the japan wares, so called from the attempt of the makers to copy the lacquers of Japan then much imported, were being successfully made amidst surroundings then exceedingly romantic in the little town singularly situated on a steep cliff overhanging the Avon Llwyd, that dealers found trays, breadbaskets, snuffer trays, knife trays, caddies, and urns much in request. In Bishopsgate Street Without, in London, there is a noted wine house known as the "Dirty Dick." This curious title was derived from the owner of a famous hardware store who kept it, and was dubbed "Dirty Dick" because of his untidy shop. The wild disorder of the establishment gave rise

to a popular ballad of which the following are two of the first lines:—

"A curious hardware shop in general full
Of wares from Birmingham and Pontypool."

{107}

In addition to japanned wares there are trays of paper pulp ornamented with mother-o'-pearl and richly decorated with gold.

The Tea Table.

The modern tea table presents a much less formal array of china and good things than that of a generation or two back when high tea was an important function, and the good wife of the household loaded her table with many substantial dishes. The best china was taken from the cupboard, and family heirlooms in silver were arrayed on either side of the teapot. Needless to say the teapot was an indispensable adjunct, and some of the teapots belonging to the old sets are massive and gorgeous, rather than beautiful, although the earlier teapots made in this country in the eighteenth century, a time when tea was expensive and a real luxury, were quite small.

There are many curiosities, too—such, for instance, as the Chinese teapots of the Ming period, when the potters seem to have vied with one another in producing grotesque forms, and from china clay fashioned objects which typified their mythological beliefs. Some of these teapots took the form of curious sea-horses represented as swimming in waves of green and amidst seaweed. Some of these fabulous beasts are spotted over with splashes of colour, and others have curious twig-like formations upon their sides, said to denote pieces of coral and water plants from the ocean. The teapot was at one time most frequently filled from the pretty little oval copper or brass kettle on the hob, or from a swing kettle on a stand on the table. The table kettle was {108}
generally heated by a spirit lamp which kept the water boiling ready for use. Of later years silver table appointments of early eighteenth-century make have become very scarce, and the curio value of the larger pieces has steadily risen. It would seem as if the maximum figure had been reached for silver of that period, for at the sale of the Fitzhenry collection a plain kettle and stand, an example of Ambrose Stevenson's work in 1717, realized £697.

Cream Jugs.

The cream jug included in the tea and coffee sets of silver or metal, and in the tea china of which so many beautiful sets are still extant, has almost an independent position in connection with table appointments, for ever since tea drinking became general it was regarded as a necessity, and was made in accord with the then prevailing styles. It is almost the commonest collectable antique in this particular group. In silver it was always hall-marked, and its date can, therefore, be fixed. Briefly outlining the development of its form, it may be mentioned that it was quite plain in the reign of Queen Anne, when tea drinking came into fashion. When George I came to the throne it was widened somewhat and made a little shorter. At that time the silver cream jugs were hammered into shape out of a flat sheet, there being no seam; after the body was formed a rim was added and a lip put on. There was a deeper rim in the reign of George II, and then feet took the place of rims. {109}

FIG. 26.—EARLY ENGLISH BRONZE EWER.

Gradually Chippendale carving and the shaped legs of the furniture then being used were reflected even in the cream jug, the lip in those days being hammered out of the body of the vessel with a graceful curve. Rims again took the place of feet in the reign of George III, and the tall legged cream jug came into vogue. The body was decorated with repousse work or engraved, and the shape gradually changed until the familiar helmet-shaped cream jug resulted. The helmet cream jugs were beautifully engraved with ribbon and wreath decoration, and frequently there was a beaded pattern round the rim and the handle. The same styles prevailed both in Sheffield plate and in Britannia metal, often misnamed pewter. The decoration on the china cream jugs was frequently floral, but in those made in the leading potteries there was a distinct following of the public style. {111}

Sugar Tongs and Nippers.

With the use of lump sugar late in the eighteenth century sugar tongs were added to the table appointments, and their decoration and ornament usually followed that of teaspoons. They were sometimes engraved with the crests or initials of the owners, and occasionally, in the case of wedding presents, with the initials of both the master and mistress of the household, one being placed inside the sugar tongs and the other on the arch outside. In connection with the cutting of lump sugar steel sugar nippers were much used in the kitchen before lump sugar was bought from the grocer ready cut up. These nippers, some of the earlier ones being chased and engraved, have now passed into the region of household curios. {112}

Caddies.

As the tea table would be incomplete without the beverage brewed from tea-leaves it follows as a natural sequence that the housewife has always required a storebox for her supply, and in some cases one in which she could keep under lock and key more than one variety. When tea was first imported into this country it was sent over from China in a *kati*, a small wooden box holding about 1-1/3 lb.; hence the name passed on to the more elaborate receptacles on the sideboard containing the household supply. These boxes were mostly fashioned in accord with the furniture, many having the well-known Sheraton shell design on the lid, or on the front of the box. Some are square-sided, others tapered, generally finished with beautiful little brass caddy balls as feet, and often with brass ring handles and ornaments. The inside of the caddy was divided into two compartments, usually boxes lined with lead or lead paper, and frequently a central compartment for a sugar bowl was added. In nearly all the better boxes there was provision for the silver caddy spoon with which to apportion the accustomed supply.

Chelsea and Bow Cupids.

Those curious little boy figures known as Chelsea and Bow Cupids are for the most part classed with ornaments, but they more appropriately belong to table appointments, for in olden time when the cloth had been removed these curious little figures were placed upon the mahogany or oaken board along with the dessert, as if to guard the fruit and the wine. The Cupids are garlanded with flowers, baskets of which they have in their hands—delightful little figures when genuine antiques. They vary in size and are said to have been divided in the past as "small" and "large" boys. {113}

Nutcrackers.

Many a famous joke has been cracked over the "walnuts and wine." It was when the board was cleared of the viands that the nuts and fruit were partaken of. The edible nuts mostly favoured before foreign supplies came into the market were the hazel, walnut, chestnut, and the famous Kent filberts. Although doubtless supplemented by any objects handy, the primitive method of cracking nuts with the teeth was generally practised by the common people. What more natural than for the early inventor to see in the human head the "box" in which to place his mechanical device and to give power and leverage by utilizing the legs of the man he had carved in wood. In the Middle Ages some remarkable carvings were produced, mostly working on the same lines as the earliest forms. In the seventeenth century, when metal crackers came into vogue, pressure was applied by means of a screw, and the contemporary wood crackers were designed on that principle. Afterwards the older type of cracker was revived, both in wood and metal; subsequently the simpler form at present in use was adopted. {114}

Here and there in museums and among domestic relics odd pairs of these old crackers are discovered. The interest in them, however, grows when several early examples are placed side by side. There are a few instances of specialized collections, and through the courtesy of Mr. Charles Evans, of Nailsea Court, who possesses a unique collection of all periods, we are able to illustrate a variety of forms. Fig. 31 represents a very early pair of nutcrackers, probably made in the fourteenth century; the one shown in Fig. 34 has the Elizabethan ruff round the neck of the carved head; and Figs. 28, 29, and 30 represent the screw period, Fig. 28 being an early example. One of the finest pieces in the collection is Fig. 29, a cracker in the form of a hooded monk; Fig. 30 being a charming bit of wood-carving in walnut wood, a somewhat grotesque figure representing an old fiddler. Fig. 33 is a curious cracker combining a useful pick almost in the form of the bill of a bird, Fig. 32 being of similar date. The next group shows the evolution

from the metal screw to the more ordinary types, Figs. 36 and 38 being screw nutcrackers; 35, 37, and 39 being quaint examples of early metal nutcrackers modelled on more modern form. Such curios are extremely interesting, and whether exhibited as specimens of carving or of metal work, or used as table ornaments combining utility and antiquarian interest, they are well worth securing. {115}

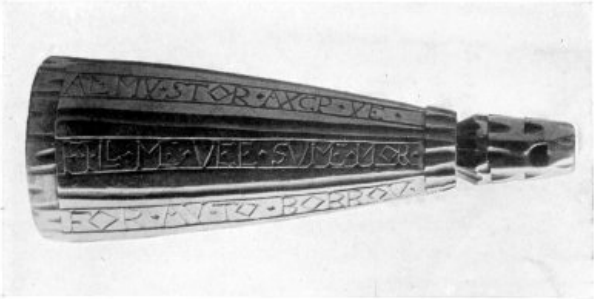


FIG. 27.—INSCRIBED SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY WOOD DRINKING CUP.
(*In Taunton Castle Museum.*)

FIGS. 28-30.—EARLY CARVED WOOD NUTCRACKERS.
(*In the collection of Mr. Charles Evans, of Nailsea Court.*)

{117}

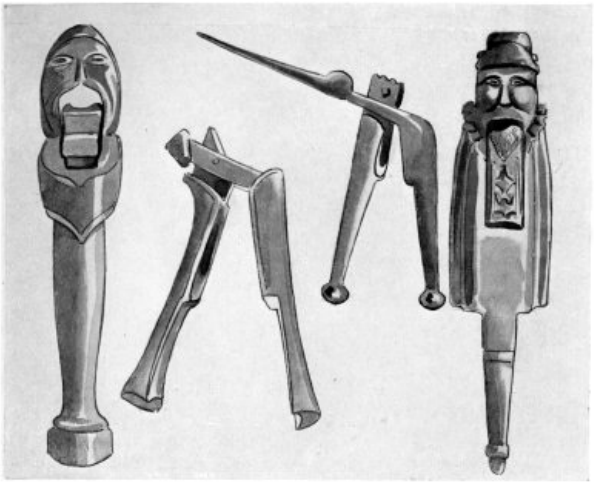
Turned Woodware.

Table appointments have afforded amateur wood-turners and carvers opportunities of showing their skill. Even before the days of modern lathes with eccentric chucks and other improvements, turners were very clever in producing little articles for table use, and in their making expended a wealth of skill and time. Among these were pepper boxes and wooden salt cellars, and carved wooden spoons, especially salad servers, which are even still made and delicately carved, the Swiss peasants being famous for such work. One of the village occupations during winter evenings in years gone by was to make wooden objects, although most of their efforts were directed in other ways than table appointments (see Chapter XIII, Fig. 85).

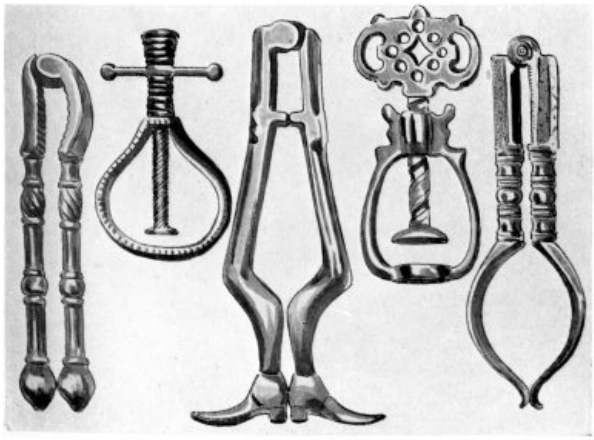
On the Sideboard.

Not far removed from the dining table is the sideboard or buffet, so important a piece of furniture in the dining hall, for on it were formerly displayed table appointments and emblems of the feast. The urn-shaped knife boxes which were so often placed on either side were chiefly of mahogany, sometimes inlaid with satinwood and often with those rare shell-like ornaments which became so popular in the days of Chippendale and Sheraton. The compartments in which were placed the table knives prevented either blades or handles from being rubbed. Copper and metal urns were frequently conspicuous on the sideboard, although many of the small tables so much treasured now as antiques in the drawing-room were originally made for urns to stand upon. {118}

There are many beautiful curios of the home made of wood, among them being such rare gems as wood screens and the frames of hand screens, some of which screwed on to the ends of the mantelpieces with small clamps. {119}



FIGS. 31-34.—MEDIÆVAL WOOD NUTCRACKERS.



FIGS. 35-39.—EARLY STEEL AND BRASS NUTCRACKERS.
(*In the collection of Mr. Charles Evans, of Nailsea Court.*)

V

THE KITCHEN

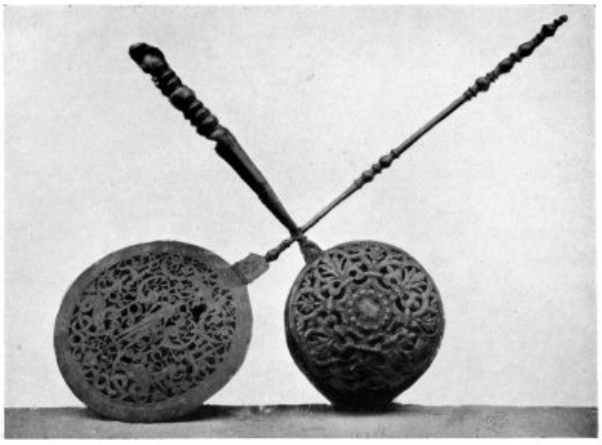


FIG. 40.—TWO ANTIQUE WARMING PANS.
(*In the Victoria and Albert Museum.*)

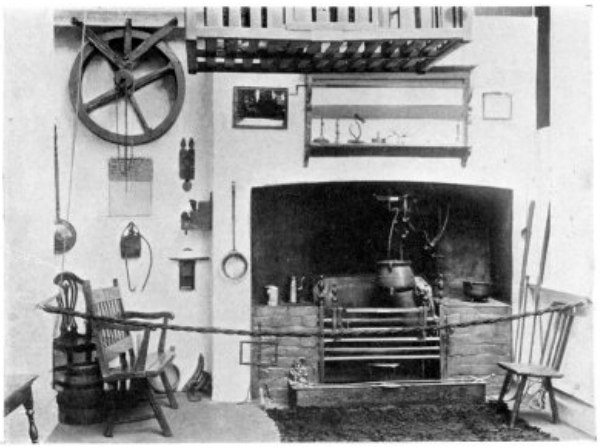


FIG. 41.—WELSH KITCHEN FIREPLACE.
(*In the National Museum of Wales.*)

{125}

CHAPTER V

THE KITCHEN

The kitchen grate—Boilers and kettles—Grills and gridirons—Cooking utensils—Warming pans.

It is in the kitchen and the pantry that domestic economy centres. The very essence of home life is found in the preparation of suitable food in which to satisfy human appetites. Whether the kitchen is furnished with apparatus sufficient to cook for the inmates of a large institution, or with the more modest appliances with which a chop or a steak can be grilled or a small joint roasted in a gas oven, the basis of cooking operations is the same, and the cook requires an outfit of culinary utensils small or large, according to what she has been accustomed to use or considers necessary for her immediate wants. In olden time the kitchen was furnished with fewer accessories in proportion to the meat consumed than at the present time, and the large hanging caldron and the strong and heavy wrought or cast iron saucepan on the fire, and the roasting spit and jack in front of it, went a long way towards completing the outfit. The gradual advance and increase in the furnishings of the kitchen have been the outcome of development and progress in {126}
culinary art. Since the introduction of scientific cooking and the establishment of schools of cookery, the hired cook and the mistress who dons the apron and assumes the role of the economic housewife have learned to appreciate the use of modern culinary appliances, lighter in weight and convenient to handle. These differ according to the purposes for which they are to be used.

Hygienic conditions now regarded as essential have displaced many of the older cooking pots which have been condemned as injurious to health. Greater knowledge of the chemistry of cooking, and of the action of acids upon metals, has enabled the scientific cook to differentiate between the pots and pans to use according to the various foods prepared. The beautifully finished light, handy, and convenient porcelain-enamelled saucepans and stewpans and aluminium cooking pots used on modern gas stoves and ranges, would have been just as unsuitable on the open fires of the older grates as what are now regarded as the curios of the kitchen would be deemed to be in modern culinary operations. In almost every house there are to be found obsolete utensils, some of which are valued on account of their great age, others because of their unusual forms, and some because of the beauty of workmanship and the costly materials of which they have been made. It is when turning out the kitchen and storeroom on the occasion of periodical cleanings that these old-world pots and pans come to light; at such times the collector may be able to secure scarce specimens and rescue them from oblivion. {127}

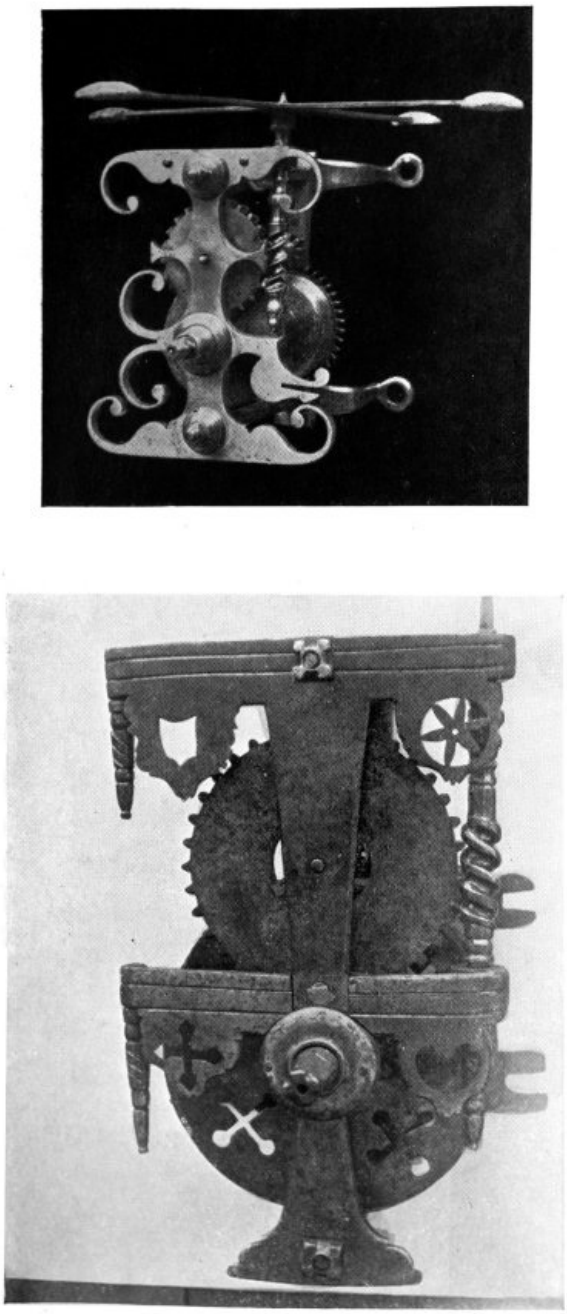


FIG. 42.—MECHANICAL ROASTING JACKS.
(*In the collection of Mr. Charles Wayte.*)

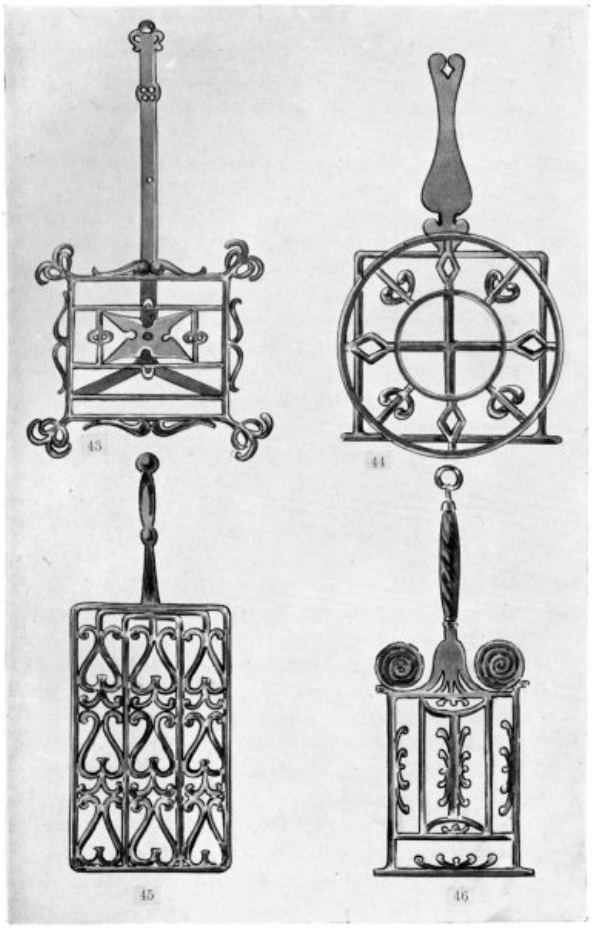
It is not always easy to realize what the old kitchen was like when these vessels were in use, {129}
although in out-of-the-way places kitchens may occasionally be discovered in which but little change has been made. This is especially so in some of the Welsh villages, and in order that visitors may see what such kitchens are like a Welsh cottage fireplace showing the objects which might commonly have been found there a century ago has been reconstructed in the National Museum of Wales. This we are able to reproduce in Fig. 41 by the courtesy of the Director. The grate came from Llansantffraid, and was made by a local blacksmith; the spit and its bearers came from Glamorgan; the brass pot came from Barry, and the dog wheel (referred to on p. 130) from Haverfordwest; most of the minor accessories came from different parts of North Wales.

The Kitchen Grate.

The kitchen grate has evolved from the open fire; at first in the centre of the room, then removed for convenience to the side or end in front of which joints of meats were roasted on a spit in olden time. The spit, at first quite primitive, was improved upon by local smiths, until quite intricate arrangements provided the desired revolutions, and turned the meat round and round until it was properly cooked. In the thirteenth century the "bellows blower" was an officer in the Royal kitchen, his duty being to see that the soup on the fire was neither burnt nor smoked. In course of time the bellows blower in lesser households became a useful kitchen boy, turning the spit by {130}
hand. It would seem, however, as if in quite early days efforts were made to economize labour in the kitchen, and turn the spit by mechanical contrivances.

In roasting meat sliding prongs held the joint in place, a cage or basket being used for roasting poultry. This contrivance, first turned by hand, was afterwards accelerated and made more regular by the mechanical contrivances just referred to. These appear to have been of three

different types. There was the clock jack, two splendid specimens of which are illustrated in Fig. 42, types becoming exceedingly rare. Those illustrated were recently in the possession of Mr. Charles Wayte, of Edenbridge, an enthusiastic discoverer of antiquarian metal work in out-of-the-way places in Sussex and Kent. Earlier still there was the smoke jack or rotary fan fixed in the chimney, operated by an up-draught, pulleys and cords being attached to the end of the spit. The third method referred to involved the shifting of manual labour from man to his domestic beast, for the faithful hound was pressed into the service of the cook. The dog worked in a cage, operating a wheel or drum which in its turn revolved the turnspit. Such turnspits seem to have had a lingering existence, and were occasionally heard of in North Wales late in the nineteenth century. {131}



GRIDIRONS SHOWING FOREIGN INFLUENCE IN DESIGN: FIG. 43, ITALIAN; FIG. 44, FLEMISH; FIG. 45, DUTCH; FIG. 46, GERMAN.

Roasting before the fire lingered on long after the old-fashioned iron jacks and spits had ceased to be the common method of cooking meat. The meat hastener and the Dutch oven conserved and radiated the heat, the joint turning slowly by the clockwork mechanism of the improved brass bottle jack. As the size of the fireplace narrowed and kitchens were built smaller roasting in ovens became popular; the cooker of to-day with its hot-plates, grills, and steam chests—whether heated by coal, gas, or electricity—presents a remarkable contrast to the old open fire grate. {133}

It will readily be understood that the necessary basting of meat roasting before the fire involved the use of ladles and other utensils before the modern cooking appliances were invented. Most of the old vessels were strong and lasting, and the materials employed in their construction were iron, copper, and brass. In Fig. 49 we show a selection of fat boats and hammered iron grease pans (in the centre of the plate is an old mothering-iron from Sussex) typical of the vessels used in open fire roasting. To these may be added basting spoons and skimmers, in many places called "skummers."

Boilers and Kettles.

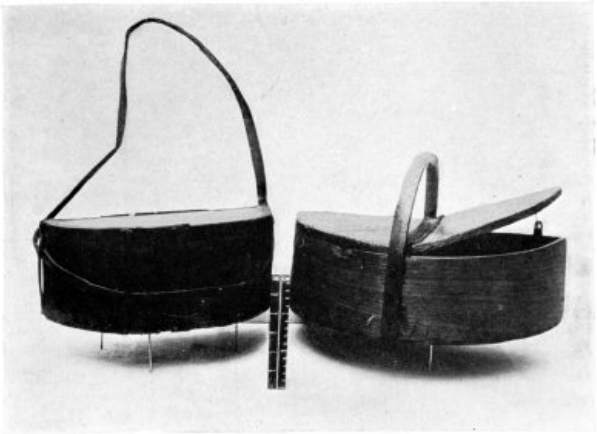
It is probable that the cooking pot over the fire has been used side by side with roasting apparatus from the earliest times, although no doubt vessels would be required for boiling foods before roasting, in that discoveries show that the earliest method of roasting a piece of meat or a small animal was to encase it in clay and then expose it to the fire. The clay crust could then be broken and would, of course, have been destroyed.

No doubt the crock antedated the bronze pot, which was at first made of metal plates hammered and beaten into shape, and then riveted together. This method was followed by the craft of the founder, who cast vessels after the same model first in bronze and then in iron. The cooking pot was indispensable when the food of the common people was chiefly such as necessitated a vessel {134}

containing liquid; the name of this ancient vessel has furnished us with many apt quotations, and it is still the pot so many find difficult to keep boiling.

There have been many contrivances by which to suspend the pot over the fire. Years ago the usual method of suspension was from a beam of wood or a bar of iron placed across the chimney opening—the name by which the bar was known in the North of England was a "gallybawk." Simple contrivances of metal followed, the suspension hooks and chains leading to improved cranes with rack and loop handles.

No doubt many have noticed the apparent indiscriminate use of the term "kettle"; the tea kettle as we understand it to-day is a modern invention. The old kettle was a boiling pot with a bail handle, its modern survivor being the three-legged kettle of the gipsies, and the boiling pot or fish kettle of the modern household. Associated with the early use of tea kettles slung over a fire is the now scarce lazy-back or tilter, at one time common in the West of England and in South Wales. {135}



FIGS. 47, 48.—TWO WOODEN FOOD BOXES.
(*In the Cardiff Museum.*)

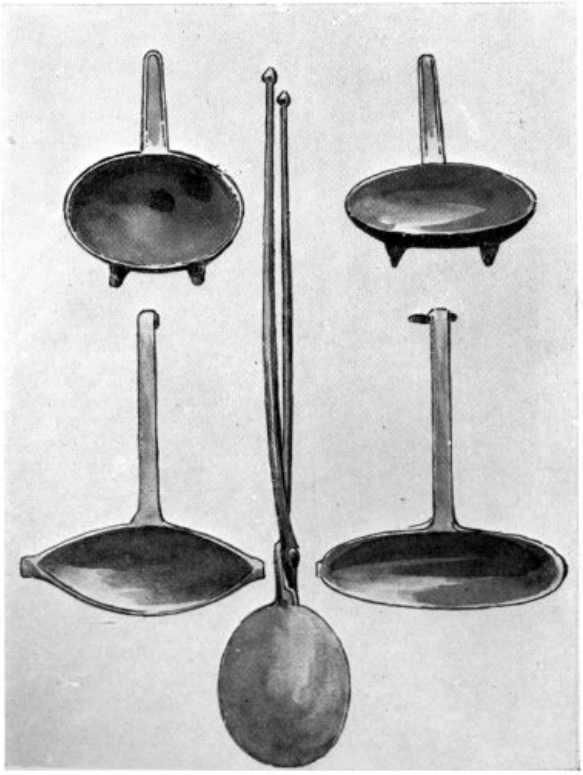


FIG. 49.—A COLLECTION OF IRON FAT BOATS AND GREASE PANS.

In "Chats on Old Copper and Brass" some very interesting illustrations of old copper and brass saucepans, skillets, and pipkins are given. The skillet has survived for several centuries. Those {137} made in the seventeenth century were frequently inscribed with various religious and sentimental legends; one in the National Museum of Wales is inscribed "LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR." Frying pans have been in common use for a great number of years and are still daily requisitioned. Bakestones, on which cakes were formerly baked, are, however, becoming obsolete. They were called girdle plates in the North of England, and bakestones in Wales and elsewhere.

Grills and Gridirons.

The gridiron or "griddle" was an appliance used extensively all over the Continent of Europe from the sixteenth century onward. In this country it was formerly made by the village blacksmith, and, like the iron stool, kitchen fender, and other iron and brass kitchen utensils and furnishings, was often made quite decorative. It would appear as if the smith filled up his spare moments in designing intricate patterns with which to decorate the grid. Some of the sixteenth and seventeenth-century European gridirons were quite elaborate, serving the double purpose of ornament and use, for when finished with for cooking purposes they were carefully cleaned and polished and hung up over the kitchen mantelpiece. Some of the characteristic types met with are shown in the accompanying illustrations. In Fig. 43 is seen the light and lacy Italian style; in Fig. 44 the openwork design of the Flemish; a formal Dutch pattern being illustrated in Fig. 45; whereas the heavy German floreated type is shown in Fig. 46. Contrasting with these Continental {138} types the English gridiron was strong and serviceable, and essentially a grid or grill, the smith putting his best work in the handle rather than the grid.

Cooking Utensils.

Besides pots and pans there are many cooking utensils which may now be reckoned among the domestic curios. There are, of course, ewers and basins, water-carrying and retaining vessels, and colanders of brass and earthenware, strainers and graters which have been used from time to time in the kitchen. Sometimes the metal worker appears to have gone out of the way to produce curious forms not always the most convenient for the purposes for which they were made—such, for instance, as the aquamaniles, several of which may be seen in the British Museum (see Fig. 26). {139}

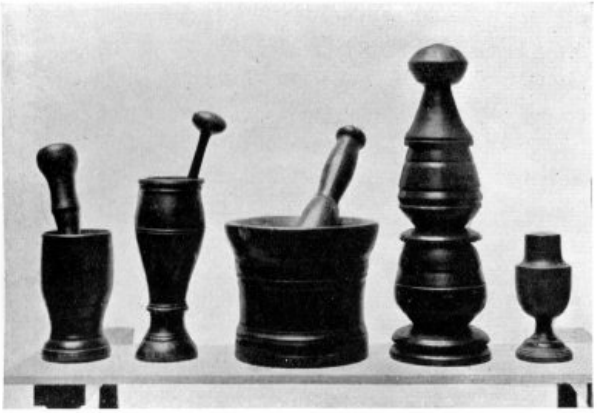


FIG. 50.—WOODEN COFFEE CRUSHERS AND PESTLES AND MORTAR.

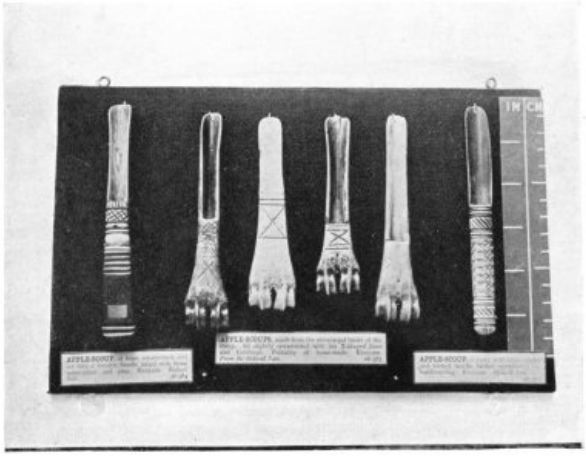


FIG. 51.—APPLE SCOOPS OF BONE.

Some of the minor kitchen utensils include flesh hooks and forks and carving knives. There are spoons of every kind made in all metals, some of the earlier examples being of brass and latten. In this connection also may be mentioned ladles, fish slicers, and scoops. There are also many curious little pastrycooks' knives, and knives used for cutting vegetables and preparing a repast in olden time, many of them quite decorative, even the common pastry-wheel frequently being carved. It was at one time customary to expend much skill in decorating apple scoops, those shown in Fig. 51 being very choice specimens in the National Museum of Wales, in Cardiff. The {141} one on the left hand of the picture is made of bone, and is inlaid with a small brass name-plate; that on the right-hand side is of ivory delicately turned, the scoop being exceedingly thin; and those in the centre are all home-made out of the metacarpal bones of the sheep, being slightly ornamented with cut X-shaped lines and hatchings. In the same museum there are some remarkably interesting coffee crushers and mortars and pestles, several of these being illustrated in Fig. 50. In Fig. 53 we show a representative selection reminiscent of the days when wooden spoons and wooden platters were in common use. The trencher takes its name from *tranche*, the old name of the platter which replaced the piece of bread on which it was formerly customary to

serve up meat; like the bread, it was at first square. The minor kitchen accessories formerly in constant use included many objects of wood, such as the charming little nutmeg mills of turned rosewood, some of which are to be seen in the British Museum. There are also antique pasteboards and rolling-pins for rolling shortbread, pot stirrers of wood, and other utensils such as sand glasses.

In Figs. 47 and 48 we illustrate two wooden food boxes, such as were formerly used to carry food to men working in the field. They are now deposited with other curios in the Cardiff Museum, where also may be seen some little wooden piggins, and bowls used for porridge; the piggin was an ancient vessel often mentioned in mediæval days (see Fig. 52). {142}

Warming Pans.

There are some household appointments which, like some of the brass skimmers, platters, engraved foot and hand warmers, chestnut roasters, and the like, have always served the double purpose of use and ornament. Among these are warming pans which in modern days have been brought out of their hiding-places, repolished, and hung up in conspicuous places by the fireside. In the Victoria and Albert Museum, as well as some of the provincial museums, there are many very fine examples, those having dates and names upon them being especially valued. As an instance of an exceptional specimen in the Victoria and Albert Museum we may mention one on which there is an engraving of reindeer, ducally gorged, the inscription upon this pan reading: "THE EARL OF ESSEX. HIS ARMES. 1630." Another elaborate warming pan is engraved with figures of a cavalier and a lady, richly embellished with peacocks and flowers. The pan is of copper, but the handle is of wrought iron with brass ornamental mounts. Some pans have wooden handles, either walnut or oak, some of the more modern being ebonized (see Fig. 40). {143}

FIG. 52.—WOODEN PIGGINS AND PORRIDGE BOWL.

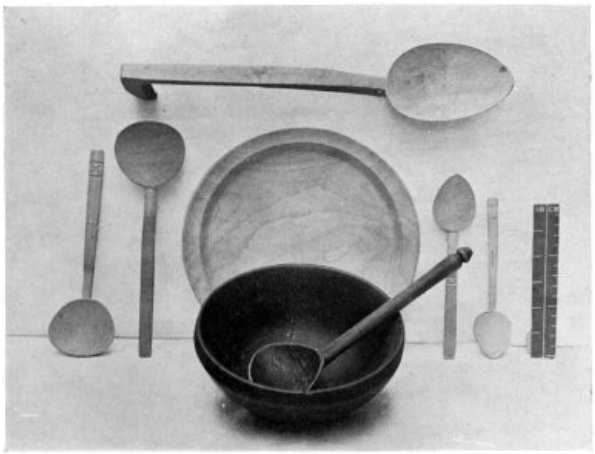


FIG. 53.—WOODEN PLATTER, BOWL, AND SPOONS.
(*In the National Museum of Wales.*)

This brief review of kitchen utensils by no means exhausts the varieties of old metal work and other curios which may still be found in kitchens. There appears to be no end to the minor varieties in form and decoration. This is natural when we remember that years ago kitchen utensils were not made in quantities after the same pattern as they are nowadays. They were the product of the local maker, the smith and the village woodworker being frequently called upon to supply new kitchen utensils, and it would appear that they did their best to make their work successful in that the vessels they fashioned were lasting, and during their use contributed in no small degree towards the ornamentation of the home. {145}

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CHAPTER VI

HOME ORNAMENTS

Mantelpiece ornaments—Vases—Derbyshire spars—Jade or spleen stone—Wood carvings—Old gilt.

We are apt to wonder sometimes what it is that makes the house homelike, and why there are such strong attachments to the old home. Surely it is the familiar aspect of the furnishings, rather than the bricks and mortar, that makes the old home so dear! To the original owners there was an individuality about every piece, although to the collector the same characteristics of well-known objects tell that in days gone by the cabinet-maker followed stereotyped lines, and there were but few who moved out of the regular ruts and made distinctive designs in home ornaments and sundry furnishings. It is noteworthy, however, that however much alike in furniture no two houses were alike in their ornamental surroundings. The pictures and portraits on the walls have peculiarities recognized and understood by those who have dwelt for many years among them. Familiar table appointments, however humble, have a homelike look, and there are odd bits of old china in the cabinet and silver or pewter on the sideboard which distinguish one house from another; and it has ever been so. Chimney ornaments, which may be quite commonplace, have well-known characteristics which cannot be duplicated. It is undoubtedly among the home ornaments that the tenderest thoughts linger, and it is the trinkets of comparatively little value to an outsider that members of the family store when the old home is broken up. There are such ornaments in every household; and whenever there is a sale there are those who gladly buy them because of their associations with those by whom they were owned and valued. The collector rarely gathers them on sentimental grounds, securing them as curious specimens or characteristic styles wanting in his collection. Some specialize on old china cups and saucers; others on rare porcelain figures; some on the beautiful gilt and ormolu knick-knacks which looked so well on the early Victorian drawing-room table, and others prefer odds and ends, some of which are mentioned in the following paragraphs. It is, perhaps, from the old ornaments of the home that we learn most about the true home-life lived in former years. Wood carvers, silversmiths, leather workers, glass blowers and potters fashioned their ornamental things after the living models they saw about them, in the days in which they worked. Thus in the groups of Staffordshire figures, now much sought after, we learn something of the story of life in the Potteries in the closing years of the nineteenth century. The story is recorded in the earthenware "landlord and landlady," "lovers arm in arm," and rustic cottages with which collectors are familiar.

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{151}

FIG. 54.—BRASS CHIMNEY ORNAMENT (ONE OF A PAIR).

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Mantelpiece Ornaments.

There are many quaint brass chimney ornaments which were popular in many parts of England fifty to sixty years ago much sought after nowadays. They were of polished brass, usually in pairs, and when several were arranged on a mantelpiece they presented a bright array. The one illustrated in Fig. 54 is of the type much favoured in country districts. It represents a shepherd with his crook, the companion brass being a shepherdess. On the sea-coast fishermen were much fancied, and in mining districts the miner with his pick and other industrial models were extensively sold. These were varied with birds and animals and miniature replicas of household furniture. The older ones are not very common, and therefore have been much copied, for of these goods there are many modern replicas.

Vases.

Ornamental vases have varied much in form, until a collection seems to cover every style of art. Thus Egyptian and Roman influence is seen in some; others of French origin, dating before the Empire period, are a combination of French art with Egyptian ornament, brought out during the Directoire, when after the Battle of the Pyramids French artists introduced the sphinx and other Egyptian ornaments into their art designs. During the Empire period, the style that is said to consist of a blending of Roman, Greek, and Egyptian prevailed. Many of the continental countries have been noted for glass ornaments—especially vases. The beautiful Venetian glass is rich in colour, and the vases are varied and graceful in form, especially those of ewer-like shape. Bohemia has always been a noted centre of the glass industry. Then in our own country some beautiful vases have been produced.

{154}

There are other materials which are met with in curiously shaped vases. At one time the beautiful Derbyshire spars were much used. There are biscuit china and Parian vases, and many exquisite vases of silver and other metals. Much might be written of the Oriental vases and enamels, especially of the artistic treasures of Old Japan and China, from whence so much of our early vases and beautiful porcelain came. Of the products of Chelsea and Bow, of Coalbrookdale and Derby, and of Bristol and Nantgrw, writers and collectors of rare ceramics have had much to record of the many-shaped vases with which the homes of the middle classes were made beautiful in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. These are preserved with care, but many of the vases produced by the pioneers of the potting industry in this country serve their original purpose still, and glass and china and rare Wedgwood jasper ware ornament the home of the twentieth-century reader of the "Chats" series, as they did the "withdrawing" rooms of their original owners in the eighteenth century.

{155}

FIG. 55.—BLACK AND GOLD DERBYSHIRE MARBLE VASE.
(*In the Author's collection.*)

Derbyshire Spars.

{157}

The Derbyshire spars and inlaid marbles just referred to were very popular, some exceedingly ornamental and decorative pieces being produced. Others were stiff and formal, and can scarcely be regarded as beautiful. The variety of marbles quarried in Derbyshire gave the artist ample opportunity of displaying taste in colour. The most beautiful are those made of fluor-spar, the celebrated Blue John Mine providing the most beautiful specimens. The purple shades present delightful tints, and some of the old workers in Derbyshire mosaics were exceptionally fortunate in their schemes of arrangement of the tiny pieces they inlaid so carefully. The marble workers in this country have never been able to produce those beautiful effects for which the Florentine school of artists was famous, although it has been claimed by some that the artists of the Peak produced in their larger works some equally as effective. Among old household ornaments small Roman mosaics, so called, are often met with. At one time the Florentine artists used gems and real stones, whereas the Romans chiefly employed glass. Many will be familiar with the Vatican pigeons and the fountain so frequently copied. It is said that the Derbyshire workers in mosaic excelled themselves in the production of a beautifully inlaid vase covered with flowers, foliage, and birds, prepared for the late Queen Victoria, in 1842. Half a century ago fancy shops were filled with the products of the Derbyshire mines, but most of the best pieces are now among household curios. The wide-topped vase shown in Fig. 55 is made from Derbyshire black and gold {158} marble, and was produced in Matlock about sixty years ago. It may be interesting to collectors to mention that although the Romans are believed to have worked the Blue John mines, it was not until 1770 that the lovely purple spar was rediscovered in the Hope Valley, a workman passing through the Winnats being attracted by the pieces of spar he saw lying about, eventually bringing them under the notice of the owner of a Rotherham marble works. Besides the smaller objects there are the larger tables, worked in the same materials, some of which are sometimes met with second-hand for quite trifling sums.

Jade or Spleen Stone.

Among the rarer curios of the home are those wonderful ornaments cut and carved out of jade, a beautiful stone which has been so highly prized by the Chinese. Its special value lies in the exquisite tints of the different hues. These marvellously varied stones were formerly quarried from the Kuen-Kask Valley, where jade or yu-stone runs in different-coloured veins through the rocks. It is said that jade in the form of spleen stone first came to Europe from America. It is found extensively in Mexico, and also in Burma, but the chief interest centres in the grotesque and cleverly carved Chinese curios. The beauty and value of these pieces lies not so much in their forms as in their marvellous tints and the clever way in which the Chinese workmen, in fashioning grotesque forms, have cut away practically all the colour of certain intruding shades, {159} leaving the figures in some brilliant hue of green, red, or pink, standing out upon a base of some other shade. The curiously smoked mutton-fat colour is one of the rarest, but to the amateur the more transparent and brilliant tints possess the greatest beauty.

FIG. 56.—TEMPLE GUARDIAN, CARVED FROM THE GNARLED ROOT OF A TREE.
(*In the Author's collection.*)

True jade, or nephrite, is a native silicate of calcium and magnesium, and does not exhibit either crystalline form or distinct cleavage. In addition to the "mutton-fat" shade spoken so highly of there are lovely shades in green, emerald, moss, tea and sea green, violet and yellow, and white and camphor; but the rarest of all combinations is violet, mutton-fat, and emerald green. {161}

Wood Carvings.

Many of the more decorative household ornaments are made of wood. To cut down a tree or to whittle a stick has been the favourite occupation of men of all ages, and the possession of a pocket-knife the ambition of the schoolboy from time immemorial. Something to cut keeps him out of mischief and calls forth any ingenuity he may have. Some of the most wonderful curios have been cut by hand, fashioned with skill. Some are remarkably realistic in their forms, faithful copies of living originals, or of objects of still greater antiquity with which the wood carver has been familiar. Carvers have sometimes allowed themselves to run wild in their imaginations as they have cut and shaped a block of wood, giving it the most fantastic form, picturing myths and fables in a wonderfully realistic way. There seems to be no end to the variety of wooden ornament. The carver has found a place in architectural design, too, many old houses being enriched with his handiwork. In the days when walls were panelled with oak, the carver and the wood worker delighted in cutting deep and intricate mouldings and in giving that delightful linen fold to the panels which would otherwise have been plain. That was the ambition of the household decorator of Elizabethan days. Tudor beams were cut and carved and quaint mottoes engraved upon them. The old oak settles—sometimes portable, at others fixtures—were carved all over, and the fronts of oak chests were often made into pictures of wood. They told the tale of the family tree by the coats of arms and the shields emblazoned by the cutter of wood, sometimes being enriched with colour; at others the picture forms were created by inlaying and superadding fretwork. There were intricate carvings of the Sheraton and Chippendale periods, and there were the wonderful floral sprays, cherubs, and other ornaments so cunningly wrought by Grinling Gibbons and his followers. Wooden ornament in those days took the form of over-doors, and wreaths running down the lintels; and massive mantelpieces of oak were carved deeply. There were vases of wood full of flowers cut from the same material standing on wooden pedestals. The floral sprays, it is said, were in some cases so delicately cut that they shook like natural flowers when any one crossed a room or a post-chaise rumbled along the street. Some remarkable picture frames were cut and carved by amateurs, corresponding well with the handiwork of the needlewoman they enshrined. The cutting and carving of banner screens was a work of art, and many times a labour of love. {162} {163}

FIG. 57.—CARVED PLAQUE STAND. {165}

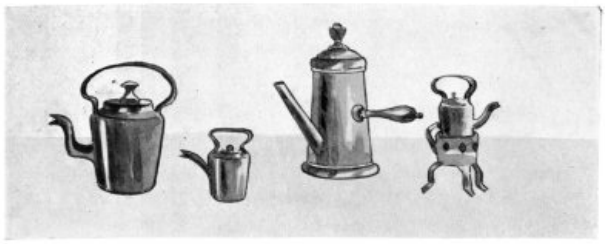
There are quaint relics of other countries in wood carving among the curios of the home. Some remarkable pieces of carved cherry-trees have been brought over from Japan, the black trunk or root of the tree being turned into a grinning demon, similar to the one illustrated in Fig. 56, which resembles the "temple guardian." Others have been fashioned like ancient idols or apes, many being an intermixture of different-coloured woods, varying from almost red-brown to black, throwing up the carving in relief. The Oriental was a clever wood carver, and with his primitive tools he cut and fashioned a piece of wood according to his own sweet will, evolving from it intricate works of art in wood. Perhaps the most remarkable examples of the wood-worker's skill are those tiny miniatures of which there is such a splendid collection in the British Museum, notably the almost microscopic reliquaries. The Japanese and Chinese have shown remarkable skill in carvings, and especially in the way they have set off china plates and bowls intended as ornamental objects; a truly magnificent example of such work is shown in Fig. 57.

Old Gilt.

The highly decorative work known as old gilt, very fashionable in the early Victorian drawing-room, has quite recently been hunted up, and many pieces have been restored to positions of honour. The gilt, so-called, was in reality eighteen-carat gold overlaid upon soft brass by a {166} process not now practised. Delightfully decorative trinket stands, card trays, and little baskets were made in this way; and as they were afterwards coated over with a transparent varnish, they have preserved their colour; indeed, when found black with age, after carefully washing in soap and water, they frequently come out bright and untarnished. Then if brushed over with white of egg or some transparent white varnish they will keep their colour for many years to come. These decorative ornaments, often perforated as well as embossed, were frequently enriched with imitation jewels. Those shown in Fig. 61 are typical of the style of ornament referred to. Sometimes scent satchets and jewelled caskets are found fitted with quaint reels for sewing silk and curious needle holders. The more elaborate pieces are often ornamented with floral sprays made of porcelain; some of the baskets filled with coral and seaweed have curiously made little birds and butterflies, many of them being genuine Chelsea. Others are the framework for holding Bow figures or painted plaques. This Victorian gilt is at present not over-scarce, and as it is not as yet much in demand collectors have an exceptional opportunity of securing interesting specimens at moderate cost.

Old Ivories.

Much might be written about old ivories. Ivory has been a much-valued material for ornamental decoration from quite early times. In almost every home there are curios and pieces of furniture in which ivory has either been overlaid or inserted as panels. At one time it was much used for {167} overlays, and in very thin plates made up into all kinds of decorative models.



FIGS. 58, 59.—MINIATURE COPPER AND SILVER KETTLES.
FIG. 60.—MINIATURE IVORY COFFEE BOILER.

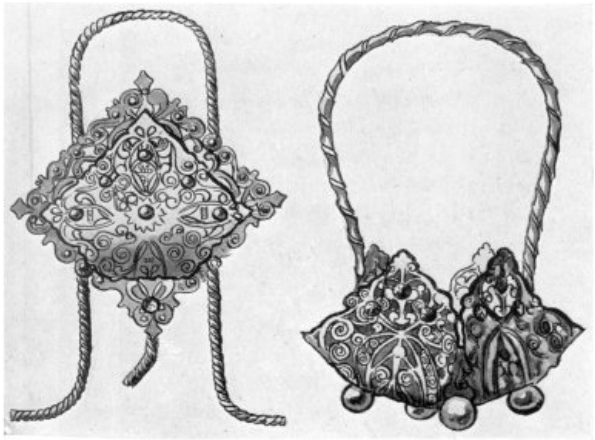


FIG. 61.—TWO OLD-GILT JEWELLED ORNAMENTS.

There are carved tusks from Africa and India, and quaint native curios made of ivory cunningly wrought. It is from the East that we receive so many beautiful curios, and especially so from India, China, and Japan. The three remarkably handsome ivories illustrated in Fig. 62 will serve to illustrate the beautiful and oftentimes costly curios found in so many homes. {169}

Miniature Antiques.

Some of the most pleasing little antiques are silver models of children's toys. The original models made contemporary with the furniture or household gods they purport to represent were frequently the gifts of godparents, and many are most elaborate in their designs, every detail found in the larger originals being faithfully reproduced. Some of these little silver toys, with which probably children were seldom allowed to play, represented common objects outside the home, such as the dovecote in the garden, the travelling coach with its prancing steeds, the pack-horse ascending the slope towards a bridge over a stream, in some instances objects of husbandry and agriculture, being given to children familiar with the country.

Another favourite type of model curio is found in the remarkably tiny objects workmen sometimes prided themselves upon making—such curios, for instance, as the silver and copper kettles and coffee pot shown in Figs. 58, 59, and 60. The larger specimen (drawn larger than the original) was made from a copper farthing, the smaller kettles being hammered out of threepenny-pieces; the coffee pot is of ivory—a charming model. {170}

There are a few sundries which should not be overlooked when collecting curious things reminiscent of home-life as it once was. Among these are the glass pictures once so much prized by well-to-do folk, now valued only by the collector of such things. These were really "prints from prints." The method of their preparation was most inartistic, although it was effectual. A piece of glass was coated with varnish, the print was then placed upon the varnish, and when dry and quite hard the paper was washed off, leaving a "print" upon the prepared surface, which was then painted over at the back, the picture thus being made complete.

Much store was formerly set by the little plaques and medallions which, with silhouettes, hung upon the walls. Among the gems of such ornaments were the exquisite tablets and cameos made by Josiah Wedgwood, whose beautiful vases and miniature bottles, as well as tea-sets in the same wares, were so much admired. {171}

FIG. 62.—THREE FINE OLD IVORIES.

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VII

GLASS AND ENAMELS

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CHAPTER VII

GLASS AND ENAMELS

Waterford, Bristol, and Nailsea—Ornaments of glass—Enamels on metal.

Glass is used in every home. It is seen in its ornamental forms, and is necessary in almost every department. In kitchen and pantry there are dishes and tumblers and wine glasses and decanters ready for use. Among these there are often found old glasses—that is, glass vessels which from their rarity or age have attained a curio value; indeed, many housewives are unaware that their kitchen cupboard contains what would be valued as interesting specimens gladly purchased by collectors of glass. Many of the old tumblers are beautifully engraved, often having floral ornament and dainty rustic scenes. They are now and then commemorative of events which the glass maker has recorded with his graving tool, and sometimes they have been prepared to catch the passing fancy. The styles of table glass have changed, and their shapes and sizes have altered according to the popular custom of imbibing certain liquors.

When punch ceased to be the customary drink, and lesser quantities of ale were consumed, punch bowls and tankards were less in request. Their places were taken by wine glasses of more {176}
delicate forms, and charming tallboys and crinkled vessels of glass took the place of the older mugs and pewter cups. The glasses used in proffering and drinking toasts have changed much during the last century, and the "fiat" glasses of the Jacobite period, and those curious glasses with portraits of the Old Pretender and the Young Pretender upon them, are curios only, for they are no longer needed, neither is the toast of "The King" drunk "over the water." Spirit glasses and decanters have altered in form, but among those which have survived and are still sound are some rare examples of cutting, made in the days when the glass cutter worked with primitive tools, and such methods as the sand blast, chemical etching, and some of the newer processes were unknown.

Waterford, Bristol, and Nailsea.

Among table sundries are glass salts and cruets; the latter, however, have been modernized and reduced in size, and the bottles and curiously shaped oil and vinegar cruets of a hundred or more years ago look quaint when compared with those of the present day. Even the flower vases which formerly adorned the table, and the more decorative dishes used for fancy sweetmeats and confections, have changed, leaving in the process many of the older pieces, relegated to the store-cupboard, where disused glass so often remains until in due time it is rescued from oblivion by the collector of household curios. Among the eighteenth-century cut glass jugs and trifle bowls {177}
are many beautiful vessels, for the making of which certain districts from time to time became famous. The old Waterford glass is especially noteworthy, and as a speculation, apart from the interest it possesses for collectors, is worth securing. Bristol glass to the uninitiated appears to

be a misnomer, in that the beautiful white milk-like surface upon which so many exquisite floral designs have been painted looks more like egg-shell porcelain, but when held up to the light is found to be of glass-like nature, pellucid although semi-opaque.

Nailsea glass has many peculiar characteristics about it, notably the curiously introduced waved and twisted lines in colours. Many objects which were essentially curios, their utilitarian purposes having always been secondary, were made at Nailsea. There are gigantic models of tobacco pipes, formerly hung up against the walls as ornaments. As fitting companions to the pipes were walking-sticks of glass, some very remarkable designs which might at one time have been carried by the gallants of that day. They were often filled with sweetmeats and comfits, ornamented with bows of ribbon, and presented to ladies of their choice by devoted swains. A few of those curious sticks or shepherd's crooks, as they were called, are to be seen in most representative museum collections. The so-called rolling-pins of glass, made at Sunderland as well as at Nailsea and Bristol, were known as sailors' love tokens, and are referred to more fully in Chapter XIII. In the Taunton Castle Museum there are some interesting specimens of old glass, notably one of the very rare dark bottle-glass linen smoothers which came from South Petherton. {178}
Such smoothers were at one time favoured in the kitchen laundry in the days when servant-maids excelled in getting up linen, and prided themselves on the beautiful gloss they were able to impart—in the days before public laundries with their modern glossing machines were instituted.

Some of our readers may have seen the curious glass tubes, one yard in length, into which ale was poured in the days when it was considered a desirable attainment to be able to drink at one draught a "yard of ale."

Of the larger vessels such as wine bottles, the chief collectable feature about them is the old glass-bottle-makers' stamps, very frequently found on fragments of bottles, such stamps often turning up among the oddments of kitchen drawers which have probably been undisturbed for many years. To collect bottle stamps is certainly an uncommon hobby, but one that is not altogether devoid of interest.

Ornaments of Glass.

Of household ornaments in glass there appears to be no end. There are the glass Venetian vases and ewers, beautiful and graceful in form, richly ornamented in gold; and there are the old English and French vases, the colouring of which is not always in accord with modern taste. Cut glass, in whatever form it is met with, is appreciated, in that the workmanship involving so much studious labour is recognized. Continental glass has at all periods been imported into this country, and especially so Bohemian glass, of which there are decanters of ruby, claret, blue, and {179}
other rich colours; some remarkable effects have been produced upon red glass by adding tinted colours and white decoration interspersed with gold. Glass lustres have acquired an antiquarian value, and chandeliers and mantelpiece lustre candlesticks are sought after by the collector, who sometimes finds interspersed with cut glass lustre pretty coloured china droppers.

FIG. 63.—BATTERSEA ENAMELS. {181}

Pictorial Art in Glass.

Stained-glass windows are associated with ecclesiastical edifices. Old English houses, however, not infrequently contain armorial panels, coats of arms in leaden frames, and curious little pictures in colours which can be hung against modern windows where the light will throw up the rich colouring of the old-time painters. Little patches of colour, too, were often introduced in otherwise plain diamond-shaped lattice panes.

There are glass pictures, so-called, oftentimes consisting of coloured prints pasted on one side of the glass, a softened effect being produced by the glass through which they were seen; but they must be distinguished from the more costly paintings *on* glass sometimes met with.

In many an old house the glass shade with its contents so inartistic, although removed from its place of honour on the parlour table, found a niche where it is preserved. Under such shades were preserved wool-work baskets filled with artificial flowers, among which were often small porcelain figures, butterflies and birds. Sometimes a Parian vase has been filled with wax {182} flowers, the making of which was a favourite pastime half a century ago. The dried plant called "honesty" was frequently covered with a glass shade. Glass ships were exceedingly popular in seaport towns, and little miniature replicas of household furniture in glass are met with; indeed, there seems to have been no limit to the fancies and freaks of the glass blower, who has at different periods provided the present-day collector with curious, if very breakable, curios.

Enamels on Metal.

The art of enamelling on metal has been practised from very early times. In its earlier forms it was chiefly an art applied to jewellery and the ornamentation of ecclesiastical metal work. In time, however, it was applied as a convenient method of decorating utilitarian household articles such as fire-dogs and candlesticks. Those who frequent the more important museums often associate enamels with the costly and rare enamels of Limoges, and the choice bits of Italian enamels seen in the cases of metals where the most valuable curios are gathered together. Such vessels as those marvellous effects produced by the enamellers of Limoges are indeed rarely found among household curios; it is well, however, to note that the processes by which those effects were produced changed as time went on. The earlier translucent enamel of the Italian artists was laid over an incised metal ground, the design previously prepared showing through. In the later Limoges enamels the surface with which the copper base was overlaid was painted, {183} very much in the same way as the miniature painters on enamels operated in after-years.

The process of covering metal with enamels made of a species of glass is very ancient, but the basis of all enamels is the application of fusible colourless silicate or glass in pattern or design,

mixed with metallic oxides, the prepared surface being afterwards fired until the enamel adheres firmly to the copper or other metal. The processes varied, but the firing or fusing was the same throughout. The name "enamel" is traceable to the French word *enail* and the Italian *smalto*, both having the same root as the Anglo-Saxon word "smelt." The enamels of China and Japan so extensively imported into this country of late years are chiefly made by filling cloisons or cells formed of fine metal wires or plates with coloured enamels and then firing them. As the collector advances in his appreciation of the old craftsmen, he soon recognizes the difference between the antiques sent over by Oriental merchants and the modern works made on present-day commercial lines, and not the work of men whose time was deemed of small account if they acquired notoriety for the beauty of their work.

The household enamels of English make consist chiefly of those beautiful little boxes, trinkets, and domestic objects made at Battersea and Bilston in the eighteenth century. The enamels used for the ground were tinted rose, blue, and other shades, and ornamented with painted pictures and mottoes. A very fine group of Battersea patch boxes is shown in Fig. 63. {185}

VIII

LEATHER AND HORN

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CHAPTER VIII

LEATHER AND HORN

Spanish leather—"Cuir boulli" work—Tapestry and upholstery—Leather bottles and drinking vessels—Leather curios—Shoes—Horn work.

That "there is nothing like leather" has been believed by people of all ages, and in many countries the general belief has been put into practice, for many indeed are the uses to which leather has been put. As a lasting material it has been proved to possess excellent qualities. The artist, too, has found that leather is capable of being treated so as to give the effect of delicate carvings, and to serve well many purposes of decoration.

In the East leather was used in patriarchal times, the skins of animals making excellent water bottles. In mediæval England leather black jacks, cups, and flagons withstood the rough usage of those roisterous times. The collector seeks both useful and ornamental, and finds much to delight among the old leathern objects hid away as being now quite useless or antiquated.

Spanish Leather.

As early as the fifteenth century Cordova, in Spain, was celebrated for its workers in leather, and for the fine ornamental leather vessels produced there. Some of the designs favoured by Spanish craftsmen were gruesome in the extreme. Indeed, many were fashioned for the purpose of creating fear in the use of the vessels so ornamented. {188}

A few years ago a remarkably fine collection of old Spanish leather work was exhibited in London. There were some hideous and grotesque figures, which it was said had been designed for the mental torture of the victims of the Inquisition. Some of the larger specimens were remarkably well executed, especially so some of the wine bottles which imitated very realistically the pose of men and women. Some of the female figures were represented wearing flowing gowns and costumes of the height of fashion—tall and noble women. By way of contrast there were little manikin wine jugs of the most grotesque forms.

The Spaniards made leather upholsteries of remarkable designs; they also ornamented boxes, trunks, and cases for knives and costly trinkets.

"Cuir boulli" Work.

Most of the decorated leather work of that period, examples of which are not very difficult to secure, was made by the *cuir boulli* process. The leather, after being boiled down to a pulp and salt and alum added, was then moulded to any desired form, the decoration being imparted in the process.

The Victoria and Albert Museum is very rich in fine examples, and a description of some of the typical pieces there may serve as a guide to collectors hopeful of including some objects moulded {189}

by this process among their household relics.

The work was carried on at Cordova and other places for a long period, some of the museum examples dating back to the fifteenth century. There are cases for holding what were then rare books and manuscripts, and a remarkable scribe's case with a red cover has loops on either side to which a cord was attached. The scribe was an important personage in commercial and private correspondence in the days when even rudimentary education was by no means general.

In the same collection is a leather box for holding a knife and fork; on the outer case is a medallion, in the centre of which is a representation of the two spies returning from Canaan with a large bunch of grapes. There are also cases which have once held wine bottles, some ornamented in colours; indeed, the stamped, cut, and embossed designs of the *cuir boulli* work were frequently enriched by the addition of red, yellow, and gold.

There are some specially interesting examples of Italian work, representing a period covering nearly the whole of the Renaissance. In this connection there are pilgrim bottles of yellow glass encased in wonderful leather covers, cut and embossed. There are leather snuff boxes with trellis-work ornament and scroll borders, one very interesting piece being varnished to imitate tortoiseshell. There are also some attractive toilet objects, evidently antique presentation pieces. One is a most elaborately cut and incised comb case, on the exterior of which is the motto or {190}
legend: "DE BOEN AMORE." In the same collection there is a fine leather case for a cup or tankard. Such cup cases are not uncommon, many being the receptacles for treasured heirlooms. Perhaps one of the most noted examples of the use of embossed and decorative leather work is the ancient case of stamped leather intricately foliated, a highly decorative work of art in which is enclosed that remarkable goblet of legendary fame known as "The Luck of Eden Hall."

Tapestry and Upholstery.

Stamped and embossed leather work is very conspicuous in domestic upholstery. In very early times the leather work, hung upon the wall in panels, took the place of more modern wall-coverings, and it was truly lasting. Much of the Cordovan leather is still very fresh in appearance, although several centuries old. Some of the panels hanging on the walls at South Kensington look remarkably fresh, and, richly decorated in colours, many of them are very effective. A special branch of this work was that devoted to the decoration of chair backs; stamped leather work for upholstery has been used in this country to a large extent, and some of the large oak chairs are still upholstered in the original ornamental leather produced by boiling the hides by a special process, so that the material could be readily moulded. In more modern times, however, the decoration is effected by embossing and stamping, supplementing such ornament by the use of an immense quantity of small brass nails, which are arranged in geometrical patterns or straight {191}
lines, oftentimes names and dates being included in the design.

In this connection also are screens of painted and gilt leather, chiefly of eighteenth-century manufacture. There is a good deal of this leather work to be found in old houses still, and much of it is capable of improvement by properly cleaning and touching up here and there so as to revive the old colours. Here and there hung up as wall decorations may be seen leather-covered boxes which were specially made to hold deeds; in the older examples there is a large circular piece below the narrow box, arranged so that the seal could hang in its proper position from the end of the deed; they were, of course, in common use before the days of safes and other methods of preserving parchments and property deeds. One in the Victoria and Albert Museum is stamped on the exterior with the description of the deed it originally contained, the inscription commencing thus: "THE GRAUNT OF HEN: THE 5 TO THE ABBOT OF RADING."

Chests and Coffers.

Before modern travelling requisites were known and in the days when journeys were few, the leather-covered coffer contained the whole travelling outfit of perhaps some noble lord and his household. There were also large coffers covered with leather used as permanent receptacles of clothing, covered with ornamental embossed leather work, some very decorative. There were smaller coffers, too; possibly they were jewel caskets in their day. There are others which may {192}
have been presentation cases, for their decoration is especially elaborate. In making these continental craftsmen seem to have excelled. In the Victoria and Albert Museum there is a curious German casket of wood covered with leather, strongly bound with iron, having three immense hasps from which locks once hung, altogether too massive for the little casket. One would think such precautions were of not much avail against theft, for the box itself could be removed readily! There is another charming little casket, with a circular or dome-shaped top, decorated and banded, a veritable prototype of the tin trunks generally in use a quarter of a century ago. There is also a remarkable piece, a wood box covered over with leather embossed by the *cuir boulli* process. The chief design takes the form of two armed horsemen, surrounded by grotesque ornament on the top, on the sides being hunting scenes, episodes of the chase. This curious example of the work of seventeenth-century artists in leather measures 16½ in. in length by 12½ in. in width. Another typical piece, of a highly decorative allegorical character, is a rectangular coffret with arched lid, the ornament being in colours and gilt. On the front is a knight and a lady, on the lid two paladins mounted on griffins, two savages with clubs and shields, and two images of the sun, these typifying the story of the delivery of a captured lady by a knight.

Leather Bottles and Drinking Vessels.

Several interesting specialistic collections of leather bottles and drinking vessels have been got together, showing the varied forms of the almost imperishable vessels, so suitable as liquor carriers and drinking cups in olden time. In the Guildhall Museum are several different types of bottles, black jacks, and silver-rimmed cups. Until comparatively recent times many old inns were famous for their leather drinking cups, but as the coaching days came to an end such vessels were gradually dispersed. Now that motor-cars have popularized the road once more, and old inns are again frequented, the collector seeks in vain for what were once quite common. In another noted collection there is a drinking cup or bottle moulded like a negro's head, and there are what are called pilgrim bottles, some of which are of ornamental type. The so-called pots have sometimes lids and loosely fitting covers; the black jacks, however, are chiefly open, ill-shaped vessels. Some of the black jacks were very large, one in the Taunton Museum measuring 19 in. in height. It was originally used in the servants' hall at Montacute House, which is one of the finest old buildings in Somerset. This famous jack was in olden time filled with beer every morning and placed on the servants' breakfast table. Those smaller cups with silver mounts and shields, on which are often engraved crests or initials of their former owners, are of the rarer type, but they are not infrequently found among the relics of an old family. There is a fine collection in the Hull Museum, and in other places where they are found in excellent condition, proving the truth of the rhyme published in *Westminster Drollery* in the seventeenth century in praise of the black jack, which runs as follows:— {193} {194}

> "No tankard, flagon, bottle, or jug
> Are half so good, or so well can hold tug;
> For when they are broken or full of cracks,
> Then must they fly to the brave black jacks."

Leather Curios.

Some very fine pieces of leather work have been modelled as curios and ornaments. Some of the most notable are models of old warships and fully rigged galleons made of leather. Leather pictures were made some years ago; a little later leather modelling of baskets of flowers, and the making of picture frames of leather was a popular amusement, some of the ornamental brackets made of leather being specially effective. The surrounds of picture frames made of leather cut to shape, carved and modelled, had a very similar effect to the beautiful carved wood work of an earlier period. Some of the powder flasks of leather which were used a century or two ago are valued curios, as well as the leather cases stamped and embossed so decorative and appropriate to the pistols and knives they were made to contain. Of the finer objects there are small curios like leather snuff boxes and trinket cases.

Of the more utilitarian leather work there is the wearing apparel of former days, the leather clothing of Cromwellian times and the leather boots. In the Victoria and Albert Museum there is a remarkably interesting case of leather shoes showing the evolution in style and appearance. There are some very pointed shoes worn in the fourteenth century, a slightly different shape in the fifteenth, both contrasting with the change in fashion which had come about in the sixteenth century, when the boots were square and some of the shoes very rounded. The Wellington boots of a later period are not yet much valued; there may come a time, however, when they will be regarded as museum curios. Leather gloves date back many centuries, and some of the old specimens with gauntlets and decorative cuffs are interesting antiques, as well as leather wallets, purses, and girdles. {195}

Shoes.

Among sundry Eastern curios quaintly shaped and sometimes beautifully embroidered shoes are met with, such as those which have been brought over to this country from China and Eastern lands. Most of the shoes worn in the East are slipped off easily, and, like Persian and Turkish slippers, are made of red leather beautifully embroidered, silk, satin, and velvet being overlaid and embroidered with silver and sequins. The old practice of compressing the feet of young girls in China is dying out, but some of the curious little shoes which gave such pain to their wearers are seen as museum curios on account of their curious decoration. Indian shoes are met with at times, especially those embroidered with silver thread, and with green and other coloured silks. A curious ceremony is associated with the marriage of a Turkish bride, who wears a pair of clogs carved all over, sometimes with symbolical significance, on her way to her prescribed ceremonial visit to the bath. At one time it was customary for a Jewish bridegroom to present his bride with a shoe at the conclusion of the wedding ceremony, this custom being not far removed from that of throwing an old shoe after a newly married couple for luck. {196}

Horn Work.

Art in horn work was practised more a century ago than it is to-day, the material being then a favourite one for drinking cups and a variety of ornamental work. Old snuff boxes were frequently made of horn impressed or stamped with beautiful designs, such as hunting scenes and mythological figures. Horn can either be cut, moulded, or turned, its natural elasticity making it very durable and difficult to break. Its source of supply is chiefly from the horned

cattle, the buffalo and the bison, the horns of these beasts in their natural state frequently being mounted on shields just as in later years the horns of smaller animals, such as the South African varieties of the ibex, springbok, and similar horned sheep and cattle, are brought over to this country and mounted as ornaments. It is said that the old art of impressing or stamping horn and tortoiseshell has long been discarded, and is only retained for stamping buttons. Fancy hair ornaments were frequently so moulded, the horn or tortoiseshell being afterwards decorated with inlaid silver and gold.

Some of the pressed work is extremely beautiful and has every appearance of being done by hand, but much cheaper, of course, as the patterns could be multiplied to any extent after the {197} dies had been cut. Thin plates of horn were formerly used in lanterns, and a similar piece of horn was used as a protector over the ancient alphabet and child's spelling tablet that gave it the name of the horn book. Among household curios are drinking horns elaborately etched, and frequently turned in a lathe. They were popular in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and the turned patterns then so common were copied by the silversmiths, who made silver tankards and drinking cups on the same models. The cornucopia or horn of abundance figures frequently in sculpture, paintings, and works of art. The horn is one of the early instruments of music (see Chapter XV), and has long been associated with sports. It has sounded the "Tally Ho" of the fox hunt, and played an important part in coaching days. In some old houses veritable horns are found hung in conspicuous places as relics of the past, but the coaching horns just referred to are for the most part of metal.

The Worshipful Company of Horners is still in evidence at City feasts. The work of the craft in olden time, as recorded by the chaplain of the Company in a little book he has prepared, giving the history of the Horners, was practised in the days of King Alfred. At least two hundred and fifty years before the Norman Conquest many of the patens and chalices used in churches were made by horners, and at one time cups, plates, and other vessels made of that useful material were in daily use in English homes. {199}

IX

THE TOILET TABLE

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FIG. 64.—ANTIQUE DRESSING OR TOILET GLASS.
(*In the Victoria and Albert Museum.*)

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CHAPTER IX

THE TOILET TABLE

The table and its secrets—Combs—Patch boxes—Enamelled objects—Perfume boxes and holders—Dressing cases—Scratchbacks—Toilet chatelaines—Locks of hair—Jewel cabinets.

The mysteries of the toilet table are sometimes revealed in the curious furnishings of the dressing-room. The numerous accessories which are purchased from the beauty specialist, and as the result of speciously worded and attractively illustrated advertisements, in the present day, indicate that it is not at all unlikely that the fashions of all ages have demanded a plentiful supply of toilet requisites in order that the Society beauty might vie with her nearest rival. The curio collector is not so much concerned with the cosmetics, salves, pomades, and hair washes and dyes, the use of which has called forth receptacles for them, as with the choice boxes, cases, and implements of the tonsorial art which their use involved.

To search for such things and to secure some hitherto unknown instrument or receptacle is ever the ambition of the energetic curio hunter. The field is large enough, for such curios are found in {204} the tombs of the prehistoric dead, and among the household gods of the primitive savage in the few remaining unexplored inhabited countries to-day. Such objects may with a fair prospect of success be looked for among the relics of Assyrian and Egyptian races, and among the bronze curios of Ancient Greece and Rome; and excavations reveal relics of Saxon and mediæval England among the ruins which have been covered up for centuries.

Coming down the ages, the mysteries of the toilet table, as pictured in the not always refined engravings of the copper-plate artists of a century or so ago, tell of habits and conditions prevailing among the ladies of Society then which would hardly be deemed polite and refined now.

Ladies who used patches and cosmetics and dressed their hair in such a mode that it was rarely let down and brushed, needed many accessories now obsolete. Moreover, the gradual change which passed over Society, and the privacy of the modern toilet as compared with the days when much that is now deemed curious and antique was in common use, has brought about a new order of things, and made other trinkets than patch, powder, and salve boxes acceptable gifts between lovers; hence we scarcely realize the sentiment that induced the donors of toilet requisites to bestow them on the ladies of their choice, or the recipients to welcome some of the curios obviously given from sentimental motives.

The illustrations in books published many years ago incidentally recorded the use of some of the {205} curios then in the making. The artists certainly were not over-modest, and far from bashful in the lucid way in which they pictured or caricatured the toilet table, and the maiden who in those days was acquainted with the uses of the little relics of her day which are now among the household curios appropriately grouped under the heading of this chapter.

The Table and its Secrets.

It is before the looking glass, the central object on, or forming a part of, the toilet table, that the chief mysteries of the toilet are performed. It is obvious, therefore, that the table, to be in accord with the use its name suggests, should be the grand receptacle for all the minor preparations and their boxes or covers, as well as for the brushes and combs and mirrors and sundries a Society beauty may require.

It is scarcely necessary to tax the mental faculties in imagining what may have been the equivalent to brushes and combs with which the prehistoric woman of thousands of years ago brushed and combed her tangled tresses. She was ingenious enough to break off and trim sharp prickly thorns, and to use them as pins to fasten her scanty home-made garments, no doubt; and she would probably find in Nature's supply what served her when making her toilet, and viewing herself in clear pool or stream. Artists have pictured such toilets, and poets have told of the toilet and the bath of Greek and Roman maidens of olden time. {206}

It is said that the toilet of a Roman lady occupied much of her time. After she had risen and taken her bath she placed herself in the hands of the *cosmotes*, slaves who possessed the secrets of preserving and beautifying the complexion of the skin. She frequently wore a medicated mask and went through what would to-day be considered very painful operations. Her skin was rubbed with pumice stone, and superfluous hairs were removed with a pair of tweezers. Grecian slaves were adepts at colouring eyelashes and eyebrows and treating the lips with red pomade. The mirror was in frequent use. Many of the polished metal mirrors of those days were adorned with precious stones and had handles of mother-o'-pearl; and silver and gold were common in the fashioning of the framework. Hair appointments, including combs, were very decorative, frequently being made of ivory, and many beautiful carved specimens are to be seen in our museums.

The dressing table as we understand it to-day was of later days, for many centuries elapsed

between the toilet of the ladies just mentioned and that of English dames whose odds and ends are to be found in most houses to-day—for few are without family relics of the toilet.

The toilet or dressing table was originally quite small, and made solely for the purpose named. It opened very much like a small desk or bureau, and was seldom more than 18 in. or 20 in. in width. The desk-like flap served the purpose of a table; behind it was a number of tiny drawers in which the secret mysteries of the toilet were hidden. There, too, were the lady's trinkets and {207} jewellery, safely housed in the depths of those curious recesses. Such a table was surmounted by a looking glass of the type now spoken of in a generic sense as Sheraton. In line with the more elaborately fitted tables were independent glasses fitted with a small drawer—a poor substitute, however, for the toilet table and glass, combined or used in conjunction, in front of which the ladies of the eighteenth century performed their toilets.

In Fig. 64 is illustrated a very beautiful glass of the Oriental style of japanned decoration. The slide supports of the desk-like flap are on the principle adopted in the construction of contemporary bureaux. There is also a drawer, full of compartments, which draws out and discloses their covers and some of the instruments and articles of the toilet they contain.

Combs.

The combs of olden time were much more elaborate affairs than they are to-day. It would appear that the comb which must so frequently have been viewed by the fair user was considered the most appropriate toilet requisite on which to expend care and to lavish costly labour in order to make it truly a thing of beauty, to be retained and even jealously guarded.

The precious metals and ivory were used as well as hard woods. Alas! like the fate of modern combs, the teeth—coarse and fine—snapped one by one, and oftentimes a rare and beautiful {208} back, between the two rows of teeth that once were, is nearly all that is left of the once perfect comb. Many combs of ivory, however, carved all over with exquisite miniatures, have been preserved, and the scenes upon them have been incidents of the chase, classic love scenes, and sometimes reproductions in picture form of well-known biblical scenes, not always of the most delicately chosen subjects.

Not long ago a very remarkable gold comb of first-century workmanship was found near the village of Znamenka, in Southern Russia, where excavations in a burial mound had brought to light the tomb of a Scythian king, whose head was adorned with this beautiful comb. The upper portion represented a combat between three warriors, one mounted on a charger. That comb, however, should be classed among "dress" combs rather than dressing combs.

The ivory combs for combing the hair vary in size and in the strength of their teeth. Sometimes a comb made of boxwood was inlaid with ivory, and delicately pierced panels were inserted in the centre of the comb. In some instances a small mirror is found instead of a carved panel; especially is that the case with the smaller combs carried in a reticule or bag.

Inscriptions were common, such, for instance, as those which breathed the sentiment on a boxwood comb in the British Museum, which is inscribed in French: "Accept with goodwill this little gift"; it is a pretty piece of early work, dating probably from the middle of the sixteenth century. {209}

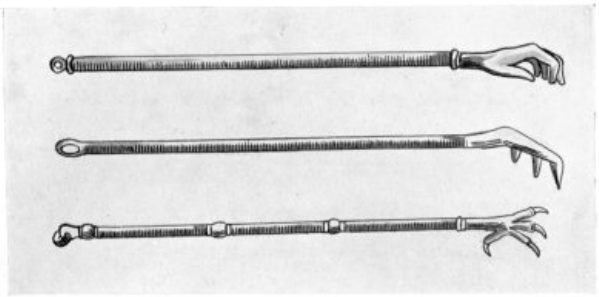

FIG. 65.—THREE OLD SCRATCHBACKS.

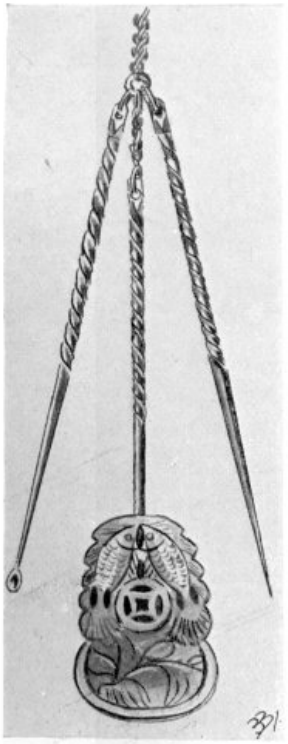

FIG. 66.—SILVER CHATELAINE TOILET INSTRUMENTS.

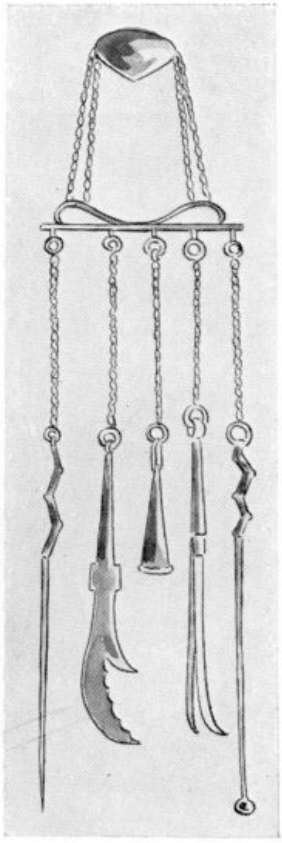

FIG. 67.—ANOTHER CHATELAINE SET.

Patch Boxes.

The accessories of the toilet table—useful and ornamental—are many. It has ever been so, and in the change going on many odds and ends are left behind and become relics of former practices. Perhaps among the most interesting of these curios are the little boxes of porcelain, enamelled wares, and wood, which were once used as "patch" boxes, and as receptacles for the pigments employed when gumming patches upon the cheeks and forehead was the height of fashion, and when painting the face was the rule rather than the exception. {211}

It may be contended by some that these mysteries of the toilet are not unknown in the present day, but as yet the modern accessories of the toilet table do not come within the ken of the curio hunter. It was at the Court of Louis XV of France that the practice of gumming small pieces of black taffeta on the cheeks originated, the patches soon afterwards becoming common in this country. From simple circular discs were evolved stars, crescents, and other curious forms; then, as in so many other instances, extremes of fashion brought the practice into disrepute, for so extravagant became the style that the "coach and horses" patch and others as absurd came into favour. The famous Sam Pepys recorded in his Diary the first time he saw his wife wearing a black patch; apparently it caught his fancy, for he wrote: "My wife seemed very pretty to-day, it being the first time I had given her lief to wear a black patch." Incidentally it may be noted that the famous Pepys controlled even his wife's toilet, and that she was obedient to him even in the mysteries of the dressing table! {212}

Enamelled Objects.

The receptacles for all these compounds varied; some were of wood, beautifully carved, often embellished with brass mountings, the insides being lined with silk, and small mirrors were inserted in the lids. The pretty trinket trays, curiously coloured and decorated, boxes, and little candlesticks for "my lady's table," made of Battersea and other enamels, were much in favour a century or more ago.

Some remarkably charming boxes are met with stamped with the name of Lille, in France, where many such objects were made—the English enamels of that period are rarely if ever marked.

It would appear that very many of these little articles were the gifts of friends or purchased as souvenirs of the comparatively rare visits to fashionable places of resort. Many of those given by friends were chosen because of the mottoes and emblems with which they were decorated; for, like the combs, they were made use of to convey messages of love and friendship. We can well understand the fear that might arise lest patches became loose and rendered the fair wearer ludicrous; hence the little mirrors so often found within the boxes, which it may be mentioned were carried about in the pocket ready for use when opportunity served.

Many of the older specimens are found with mirrors of steel which, owing to exposure to damp, have become very rusty, and, in some instances, have perished altogether. Others with silvered {213}

glass mirrors show spots, and are much blurred from the same cause. The colourings of enamels vary; in some the groundwork is white, in others pink or rose-colour or blue. Little picture scenes are varied with the quaint mottoes or sentimental lines so much in vogue then.

The illustrations given in Fig. 63 are typical of the choicer decorations, showing the floral style as well as the pictorial miniature scenes for which the artists of that time were famous. Some of the toilet sundries took the form of scent bottles, others etui cases and boxes for toilet requisites, including manicure sets.

Perfume Boxes and Holders.

Perfume has always been associated with the requisites of the lady's toilet. Sweet-smelling spices are referred to in biblical records, and even to-day the offering of perfume is a symbol of honour to the guest in the East; and some very beautiful Oriental scent sprinklers and spice boxes are now and then met with among Eastern curios. The long-necked rose-water sprinkler is the most common form, supplemented by betel-nut boxes and receptacles made by Persian artists for the famous attar of roses. Scents and "sweet odours" became fashionable in Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; articles of clothing were scented, and there was a profusion of scent for the hair and in making the toilet. {214}

The pomander box, the favourite perfume holder of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries of England, was in the form of an apple, the perfumes and spices being made up like a ball. It is said that the perfume was prepared from a sixteenth-century recipe, the basis of which was sweet apples or apple pulp, and scented gums and essences. From the pomander box smaller receptacles were evolved, and more elaborately prepared scents were kept in them. Some of the preparations consisted of camphor, mint, rosemary, and lavender in vinegar, a piece of sponge being saturated with the liquid. Then came the use of aromatic vinegar, and gradually beautiful little silver vinaigrettes were introduced. Many of them were very ornamental in shape, highly decorated with miniatures and floreated embellishment, the monogram or name of the owner often being added. In the outer case was usually a cover of perforated gold which closed over a piece of sponge, upon which aromatic vinegar or some similar preparation was poured. The best vinaigrettes are those bearing the hall-marks varying from 1800 to about 1840, when the making of vinaigrettes declined and other scents took their place.

The burning of perfumes in bedrooms and the fumigation of wardrobes and chests by means of a fumador was a custom much resorted to by Portuguese ladies in the eighteenth century. Sweet lavender is still used in the linen cupboard, although its use was much more general in the days when London street cries were heard. {215}

Dressing Cases.

When people travel and visit their friends their luggage includes among other things a dressing case, for there are many toilet requisites which are of a personal character, and cannot well be substituted by others. It is true that the need of portable dressing cases has increased of late years owing to greater travelling abroad. Dressing cases, however, are by no means modern, for some very beautiful examples with silver-topped bottles, hall-marked in the days of Queen Anne, are among the collectable curios. There is a still older example in the Victoria and Albert Museum—a case of tortoiseshell, filled with a complete toilet set, consisting of four combs and thirteen toilet instruments, partly of steel and partly of silver. It is an historic case, having been presented by Charles II to a Mr. T. Campland, who is said to have at one time sheltered him. Many old families have interesting and valuable examples, and not infrequently isolated cut-glass bottles with Georgian hall-marked silver tops which have formed part of the equipment of dressing cases are met with.

Scratchbacks.

Old English scratchbacks are among the rarities of the curios associated with the toilet table. It is unnecessary to comment upon the habits and customs of those periods when scratchbacks were found necessary, or to refer to the hygienic conditions of the toilet then conspicuous by their absence. It is sufficient to allude to these curious little instruments, mostly shaped like a hand, {216} often of ivory, and always fitted with a handle in length from 12 to 15 in. The hand in some cases is large in proportion, measuring as much as 2½ in. in length, sometimes as an open hand, at others with the fingers closed, often very beautifully modelled. Horn and whalebone were favourite materials for the handle, although some were of ebony and other woods. Scratchbacks appear to have been made both in lefts and rights in this country; but the scratchbacks of the Far East were invariably rights. The accompanying illustrations, Fig. 65, show the usual types of these now obsolete toilet requisites, which it may be noted were sometimes duplicated by miniature scratchbacks carried about on the person, hung from the girdle.

Toilet Chatelaines.

The chatelaines worn by the ladies of olden time were bulky, and the various objects deemed necessary to carry about the person rendered them cumbersome in the extreme. A bunch of keys was always in evidence, and a glance at a few old keys indicates how large the keys of even quite small boxes were in olden time. There were the keys of the store cupboard, of the linen chest,

and of the larder and the wine cellar. Drawers and cupboards and boxes, as well as the bureau or desk, were always locked, and to deliver up the keys was indeed to surrender one of the privileges of the matron and housewife which were jealously guarded. {217}

FIG. 68.—FINE ORIENTAL LACQUERED BOX.
FIG. 69.—SMALL LACQUER CABINET.
FIG. 70.—A PAGODA-SHAPED CASKET.
FIG. 71.—DECORATED JEWEL CASE.

There were articles of toilet use, too, worn at the girdle. It is recorded that Queen Elizabeth carried her earpick of gold ornamented with pearls and diamonds. The little set, which was worn {219} at a lady's chatelaine in the eighteenth century, shown in Fig. 66, consists of toothpick, earpick, and tongue scraper of silver, whereas the set illustrated in Fig. 67 includes tweezers, a nail knife, and other instruments. There are some charming manicure sets extant, as well as isolated nail files of ivory and steel, and curious little instruments for simple surgical operations, such as strong-nerved ladies were not averse to perform in the good old days.

Locks of Hair.

Although long since separated from toilet operations, mention of locks of hair so carefully preserved may not inappropriately be made here. Many of these are associated with happy memories of childhood, others of more saddened recollections. It has been a common practice to preserve locks of hair of departed friends and relatives. In former days these locks of hair were often enclosed in lockets, some of which were very large. The simple lock did not always satisfy, for there are many artistic plaits and beautifully formed sprays, imitating feathers and even flowers, which were in years gone by cunningly interwoven and artistically arranged on cardboard preserved by glass, often in golden lockets and frames. Some persons have made quite important collections, one of the most noted being that of Menelik II, the Abyssinian king, who possessed upwards of two thousand locks, varying from light to dark, and from fine to coarse, each lock being labelled with the date and particulars of its acquisition. It would be well perhaps {220} not to enter too closely into the source of some of these specimens, which had peculiar interest to the dusky king. It is said that some of them were chiefly admired for their settings, which included mounting with rare emeralds. The collection of emeralds, of which he had some of marvellous beauty and lustre, was another of that monarch's hobbies.

Jewel Cabinets.

In association with the toilet table are the numerous boxes which have been made as receptacles for jewels. From the days when the dower chest contained a small compartment for valuable trinkets the furniture of the lady's boudoir has been incomplete without a jewel box or some article of furniture where the knick-knacks of the home could be kept, and more especially the wearable jewellery. The Chinese and Japanese have ever been clever in the fashioning of small

cabinets, and many delightful little boxes, cabinets, and jewellery receptacles have been brought over to this country.

Some of the old lacquer ware is exceptionally interesting, the decorations upon such pieces being doubly so when the legends they depict are fully realized and understood. The accompanying illustrations represent four Japanese jewel cases which are exceptionally fine curios. Fig. 70 is decorated on the outside of the doors with a view of Itsukushima; and there are two peacocks on the top, and the two elders of Takasago are depicted on the back. The bamboo and the plum are designs symbolical of longevity. This truly exceptional piece was sold in the auction rooms of {221}
Glendining & Co., who also disposed of the remarkable jewel box shaped as a pagoda, illustrated in Fig. 71, a very beautiful piece elaborately decorated with birds and landscapes, and the box illustrated in Fig. 68 and small cabinet, Fig. 69. {223}

X

THE OLD WORKBOX

{225}

CHAPTER X

THE OLD WORKBOX

Spinning wheels—Materials and work—Little accessories—Cutlery—Quaint woodwork—The needlewoman—Old samplers.

Under the generic term of "workbox" the curios of the household associated with the industrial handiwork of former days may well be reviewed. There is no record of when receptacles for ladies' work were first introduced, although, no doubt, in very early days small oak boxes, carved, and bearing the owner's initials, and other indications of ownership, would be the chosen receptacles for the numerous oddments which are required in the practice and pursuit of every home handicraft, and especially those connected with plying the needle. There was a time, however, when the fabrics used in the making up of clothing were home-made, when the seamstress and the needleworker stitched and embroidered upon cloths spun if not actually woven by the housewife and her handmaidens. In the barrows containing remains of people of the Stone Age, and the peoples of the early Bronze Age, among the few ornaments and personal adornments buried with them were spinning whorls—the curiosities which remain to us of the {226}
earliest known form of textile craftsmanship.

Spinning Wheels.

In old pictures and woodblock engravings some curious illustrations are met with showing Englishwomen using the distaff. St. Distaff's Day was formerly the 7th of January, for it was then that the women resumed work after the Christmas festivities were over. The distaff and the spindle belonged to an age little understood now, and the occupations of the women of that date are almost forgotten. The spinning wheel was the outcome of the simpler distaff and spindle, and although the spinning wheels we find among the most interesting of household relics look primitive indeed compared with the complex machinery seen in the spinning mills to-day, those dating from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries must have been considered ingenious contrivances when compared with the older models, just as the latest types of sewing machines show a wonderful advance from the early machines invented in the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Very clever indeed were many women in manipulating the spinning wheel, and there seems to have been some competitive contests for notoriety among country women, who found a pleasing though perhaps at times tedious occupation in spinning the wool for the local weaver who wove the home-made cloth. It is recorded that in 1745 a woman at East Dereham spun a single pound of wool into a thread of 84,000 yards. She was far outdistanced, however, a few years later, when a young lady at Norwich out of a pound of combed wool produced a thread computed to measure 168,000 yards. {227}

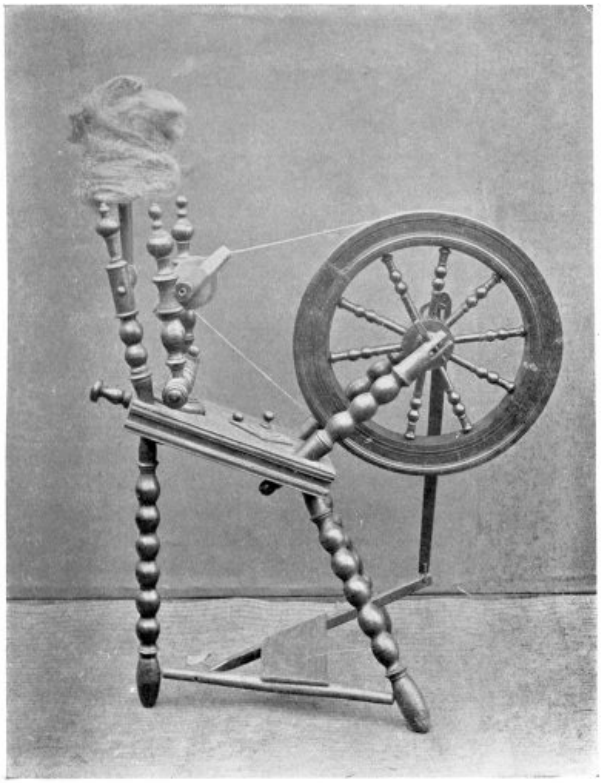

FIG. 72.—OLD SPINNING WHEEL.
(*In the collection of Mr. Phillips, of the Manor House, Hitchin.*)

To secure a fine spinning wheel is the ambition of collectors, and many ladies point with pride to the old relic placed in a position of honour on an oak chest of drawers, or, perhaps, standing on a coffer in the hall. An exceptionally fine wheel is shown in Fig. 72; it is one of many secured by Mr. Phillips, of the Manor House, Hitchin. Another illustration is taken from a sketch of a spinning wheel in the Hull Museum (see Fig. 73). It appears that early in the nineteenth century Hull encouraged the training of domestic spinners, and at that time supported a spinning school. *Apropos* of that institution reference may appropriately be made to Hadley's "History of Hull," in which the historian, in reference to Sunday Schools, which had then quite recently been founded, says: "From the Sunday School reports for this year [1788] it seems they did not take. To whatever cause this may be attributed, it by no means warrants the aspersions thrown upon the town on that account, which has with equal ardour and wisdom espoused that useful establishment of Spinning Schools, in preference to a preposterous institution replete with folly, intolerance, fanaticism, and mischief." In explanation it has been remarked that, "Evidently wheels were plentiful in Hull and Sunday Schools a novelty." To-day we can reverse the statement, for schools are plentiful but spinning wheels are rare! {229} {230}

Collectors eagerly secure anything in the way of a genuine antique wheel, although the fastidious have the choice of two distinct types—those worked by hand and those operated by a treadle. Sometimes a spinning wheel made for the foot could be worked independently by the hand, just in the same way as modern sewing machines are made for hand or treadle, and sometimes a combination of both methods. The very general use of the spinning wheel is accounted for by the fact that this useful machine was met with in every cottage in the days when homespun yarns and wools were prepared by hand, and they were also found in the mansion and the palace, where they served to amuse the ladies of the household.

There are many varieties of spinning wheels, among them the old oak spinning wheels used in England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the more decorative used until quite late in the eighteenth century, from their ornament and lightness, apparently used more for preparing the material for fancy work rather than for really utilitarian purposes. Some highly decorative spinning wheels inlaid with mother-o'-pearl and ivory have been brought over to this country from Holland and other continental countries, perhaps the most decorative being those made by French workmen in the Chinese style, the wood being lacquered blue and ornamented with gilt.

Mr. John Suddaby, who presented the spinning wheel we have illustrated to the Hull Wilberforce Museum, named after William Wilberforce, paid a high tribute to the famous philanthropist, who he declared to be associated with the spinning schools of the town. The old wheels of early date were gradually improved until they were rendered obsolete by the greater inventions of machines which could be worked by steam engines, thus originating the factory system of textile production. {231}

Among the sundry curios associated with the spinning wheel are handsomely carved wood distaffs of boxwood, curiously turned spindles; and now and then a pewter vessel of circular form, puzzling in its identity, turns out to be the rim cup from the distaff of an old spinning wheel.

Materials and Work.

Old workboxes appear to be very numerous. The older ones were mostly of wood, but the external decoration seems to have been a matter of taste, some preferring inlays. In early days moulded plaster ornament, richly gilded and coloured, was much favoured, and in still earlier times deep relief carvings in the oak of which the boxes were made. In the Stuart and later periods ladies worked the exterior ornament in silks and satins and embroidery. Among the workboxes in the Victoria and Albert Museum there is a painted box in distemper and gilding, the subject chosen for the ornamentation of the lid being the story of David and Bathsheba, round the sides being floral devices. This decorative workbox has drawers and compartments, a sliding front facilitating their use.

In the same collection there are workboxes overlaid with straw work in geometrical patterns relieved by colour. Straw-work decoration was much favoured at the commencement of the nineteenth century, its origin being traceable to the French military prisoners in this country during the Napoleonic wars between the years 1797 and 1814, when many officers and men were detained at Porchester Castle, near Portsmouth, and at Norman Cross, near Peterborough. The grasses, of which the boxes were covered, were collected and dried by the prisoners, who obtained the different shades and tints which render this class of work so effective by steeping them in infusions of tea, according to a note by Dr. Strong, who visited the barracks at Norman Cross. {232}

The workboxes, so rich in gilding and relief, came from Italy, when, as early as the year 1400, caskets were covered with a species of lime which was moulded, the gesso, as it was called, on a gilt ground of white compo, giving it a very rich effect. Leather was used with good effect, too, for the ornamentation of workboxes, red morocco being much favoured in England early in the nineteenth century. Fig. 76 illustrates three very beautiful little fitted boxes with inlaid ornament and straw work.

Little Accessories.

The contents of an old workbox are many and varied. Among the odds and ends it is no uncommon thing to find relics of lace-making, by which so many cottagers have been able to maintain themselves for generations. {233}

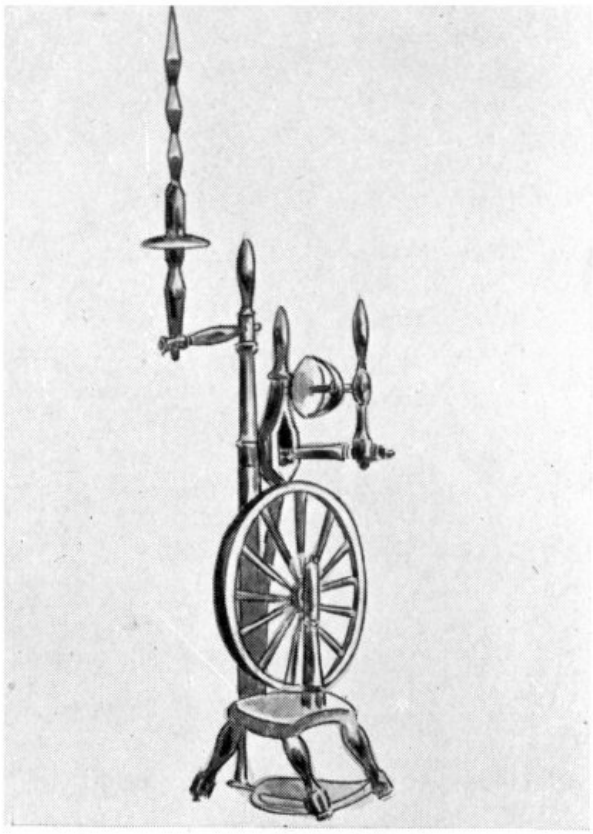

FIG. 73.—SPINNING WHEEL.
(*In the Hull Museum.*)

FIG. 74.—OLD LACE BOBBINS.
(*a*, *b*, *c*, *d*, *e*, and *f*, reading from left to right.)

There is something very remarkable about the manufacture of pillow lace, in that it is carried on in the villages of Buckinghamshire just as it was two or more centuries ago, and the pillow and the bobbins are almost identical in form and design—indeed, the patterns of the lace have changed little, for the workers cling tenaciously to the old designs, Flemish in their characteristics, just as they do to the old bobbins. {235}

Some of these little spools or bobbins have been handed down from mother to daughter as heirlooms, and many of them carry a romantic story, if it were but known. Just as the Welsh lovespoons and the Sunderland glass rolling-pins were given as love tokens, many of these bobbins are the result of patient labour, their decoration having often been the work of days; ivory, bone, wood, and metal being cut and shaped, gilded and stained, in order to provide the favoured one with a bobbin unlike any other and quite distinctive in design. In the making of pillow lace, pins, cleverly placed so as to form the pattern, were inserted into the cushion, and the threads on a dozen or more bobbins deftly twisted in and out and tied round the pins. The glass beads, many of the older ones of odd shapes and colours, hand-made, made the first distinction, and their weight helped to keep the light turned wood bobbins in place. It was the bobbins which were ornamental, and some of the older ones—those made in the eighteenth century—are very decorative, and now much sought after by collectors. Those illustrated in Fig. 74 have been selected from a large collection for their representative types: (A) is the oldest; the {236} ornament is of pewter let into the wood, it has a very small spool; (B) is ivory, the incised parts stained green; (C) is bone, the incised pattern filled in with gold beaten into a thin plate; (D) is also of bone with a band of brass and coloured inlays; (E) walnut wood, turned in the deep grooves are six loose silver rings, some of the heads are of brass gilt; (F) the most modern type, such as may be seen in use in Buckinghamshire to-day, the present revival of the hand-made lace industry being due to the efforts of the North Bucks Lace Association. Of such handwork Cowper wrote:—

> "Yon cottager who weaves at her own door,
> Pillow and bobbins all her little store:
> Content, though mean, and cheerful, if not gay,
> Shuffering her threads about the livelong day."

The lace-maker, and the housewife who occupied her leisure moments in lace-making, left behind many collectable curios. The worker of samplers and those advanced in the higher arts of needlecraft had also their little work necessaries. Very clever indeed were the workers of silk-embroidered pictures, and the instruments they used were fine and delicate, different indeed from the coarser needles of the knitter and the meshes of the netter. In later years the workbox became more substantial, and less attention was given to the exterior, for the interior fittings of the workbox became beautiful, and a wealth of art was shown in the carving of the ivory accessories, and the pearl tops of the thread and silk reels and winders and the curious little wax holders. There were cleverly contrived measuring tapes, and beautiful little baskets of ivory and wood, some filled with emery, others serving the purpose of receptacles for pins and needles. From these evolved the needlebooks and the more modern companions. {237}

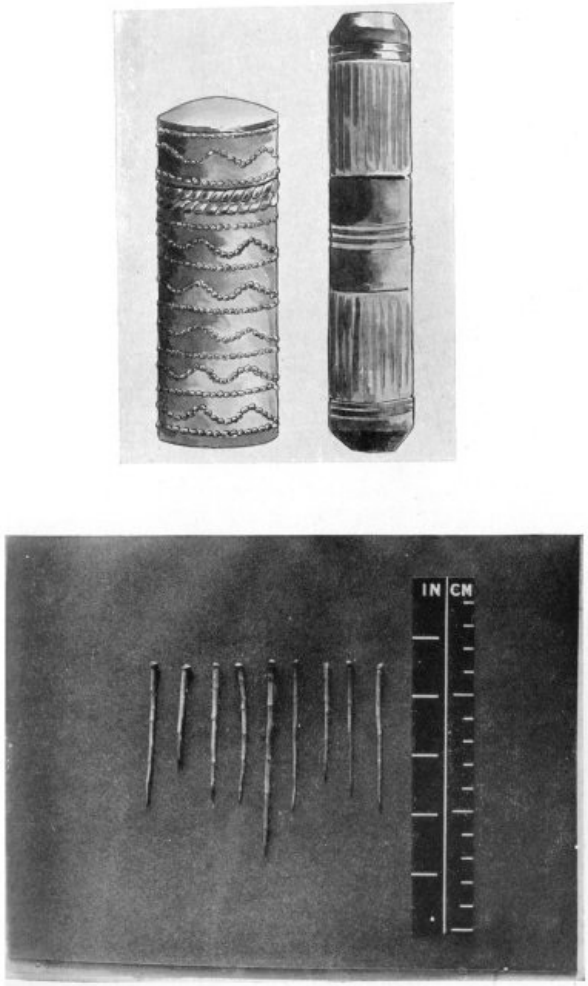

FIG. 75.—OLD PIN POPPETS AND ANCIENT PINS.

In Fig. 77 are shown several beautiful oddments taken out of an old workbox; they are all made {239}
of ivory, carved and fretted in such delicate tracery that it is a wonder that they have survived for a century or more without injury. Ivory work holders, in which ladies rolled their needlework when they went out to tea, were often beautifully carved; they, too, are charming additions to ivory workbox fittings.

Cutlery.

The cutler has contributed to the curios of the workbox. The knives and scissors, bodkins, and stilettos from an old workbox look strangely out of date when compared with those bought in the shops to-day. The chief thing that is so noticeable to the critical observer is the cutting of the steel and the hand ornamentation of those days. Some of the embroidery scissors were engraved all over with fancy patterns, and there are some remarkably quaint button-hole scissors, on which the owner's name or initials were often engraved.

Some time ago an old lady made a small collection of thimbles. It was not a very expensive hobby, but the variety she secured was truly remarkable. There were thimbles of bone, ivory, steel, brass, enamel, silver, and even gold. Some were chased and engraved, some stamped and {240}
punched. There were thimbles of huge size and others with open ends, the same that sailors use.

It is said that the thimble dates back to 1684, when one Nicholas Benschoten, of Amsterdam, sent one as a present to a lady friend with the dedicatory inscription: "To My frouw van Rensclear this little object which I have invented and executed as a protective covering for her industrious fingers." It is said the name in this country was originally "thumb-bell," so called because of the shape being of bell-like form. Of the thimbles of the wealthy it is recorded there are thimbles of onyx, mother-o'-pearl, and of gold, encrusted with rubies and diamonds—the seamstress has, however, to be content with useful if less costly "baubles."

Quaint Woodwork.

By way of contrast the outfit of the worker often includes wooden needles and occasionally utensils made of wood, but covered with evidences of love and tender regard for those who were destined to use them. The knitter seems to have been peculiarly fortunate, for knitting sticks and sheaths afforded the amateur carver ample opportunities of showing his skill; and, like the carved lovespoons, of which there is such a famous collection in the Cardiff Museum, the knitting sheaths and sticks seem to indicate that in a similar way the amorous swain gave vent to his feelings in the curious designs, mottoes, and names which he carved upon knitting sticks and kindred objects used by the lady of his choice. In the Victoria and Albert Museum there are some {241}

beautiful boxwood needle sticks; one example is cleverly carved with emblems of Faith, Hope, and Charity. Another beautiful needle stick in the same collection is mounted with silver. On some of the woodwork used for similar purposes there are cleverly designed pictures, and these were not always associated with private use, for the clothworkers in many districts used quite fanciful tools, especially in the villages, where time was of small moment, and the long winter evenings could be occupied with cutting and carving the handles and framework of the tools which in everyday practice served such a useful and often wage-earning purpose. In the Victoria and Albert Museum there is a remarkable cloth-measure made of walnut, bearing date 1745, three-sided, one being covered over with letters of the alphabet cut in deep relief, thus serving a useful purpose in the home or as an educational standard. On the second side there are cleverly designed pastoral and hunting scenes, and on the third the arms of the Swiss cantons. Other portions of the measure illustrate the implements and tools used by clothworkers at that period.

Switzerland has long been famous for its wood carving, and many of the curios found in this country have come from the Swiss mountain villages. No doubt some of our readers have come across the old pin poppets which boys and girls carried with them to the village school half a century or more ago. The girls filled them with pins and needles, bodkin and stiletto, and the {242}
boys with pencils and pens. In Fig. 75 two curious old pin boxes are illustrated. The *pins* shown on the same page are, however, of much older date; they are, in fact, merely thorns; these interesting and authentic relics of the "common objects of the home," or perhaps more correctly described, of dress, are to be seen in the National Collection of Wales at Cardiff, the measuring stick shown in the photograph giving their size. The pin poppet, as its name denotes, was, however, intended originally for the requirements of the early needleworker who at the dames' school won renown in those great achievements—the samplers of old. These, however, do not exhaust the wood-carving curios of the workbox, but they may serve to remind collectors of what they may hope to discover in their hunt for household curios.

The Needlewoman.

The curiosities much prized to-day, the work of the needlewoman, or those who plied the needle chiefly for purposes of amusement or to give pleasure to those on whom they bestowed the products of their skill, are met with in many distinct forms. This is not a work on needlework, or we might tell of the various stitches which are indicative of certain periods. It is, however, admissible to mention some of the household curios, the product of such patient labour applied to the skilful manipulation of silks and threads and cottons and wools, of all colours and substances, embroidered or worked on canvas or other fabric. {243}

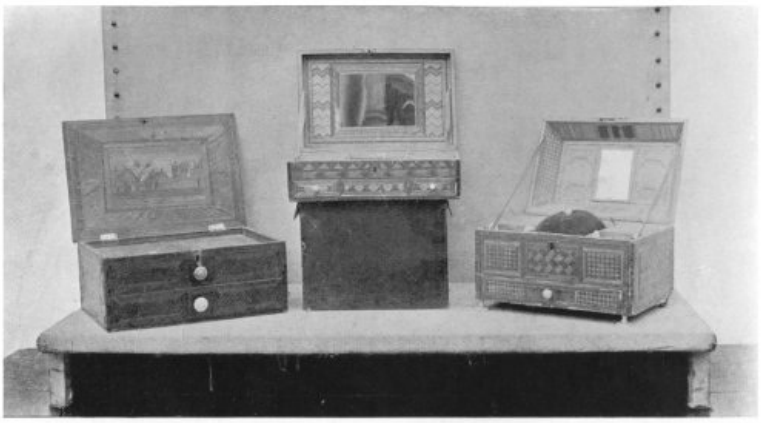

FIG. 76.—THREE OLD WORKBOXES.
(*In the collection of Mr. Phillips, of Hitchin.*)

The mistresses of the old English homes were very industrious. They worked crewel bed {245}
hangings and cross-stitch and tent-stitch upholstery in the seventeenth century, and in still earlier times richly ornamented linens and other fabrics with flowers and scriptural subjects. Writing in reference to Queen Mary, the wife of William III, Sir Charles Sedley said:—

> "When she rode in coach abroad
> She was always knotting thread."

And her example was followed by many in humbler circumstances. In later years women have wrought needlework and beadwork pictures, and have even threaded their needles with human hair when no silk could be found fine enough.

Of the permanent ornaments of the home—now valued curios—there are cases formerly used on a lady's toilet table, embroidered with floss silk and frequently dated. Some were made to hold devotional books, others were portable boxes, the covers of which were worked on white satin with coloured silks and beads, oftentimes scriptural scenes being depicted in silk; one very favourite scene in the seventeenth century was the visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon.

Many beautifully embroidered trinket boxes record the patience with which they were worked, and were undoubtedly a labour of love. Among the smaller objects, gifts from friend to friend, were pincushions, some of which bear dates in the seventeenth century. These were worked in

coloured silks on canvas, the ornament often taking the form of a fruit or flower basket, birds and insects. The favourite material and colour for the back of such pincushions was yellow satin. A rather pleasing variety consisted of bag and pincushion worked to match, the two being united by a cord of plaited silk. Of purses there were many varieties, chiefly made of coarse canvas worked in cross and tent stitches with coloured silks and silver threads, couched or laid over silver thread, and then stitched to the canvas concealing it. There are also miniature pincushions worked in silk like the old samplers and brocade pocket books, some of which were woven in France in the seventeenth century. There are also holdalls and needle cases in embroidery and cross stitch. The favourite colours worked by English ladies in the eighteenth century were pink, orange, and light green. On these were often worked mottoes and rhyme. One will serve as a sample:— {246}

"When Judah's daughters captive led
Behold their mighty kings subdued."

Loyal mottoes were frequently worked, especially during the days when the Pretenders were carrying on their hopeless campaign. There is a subtle reminder of the desire to make known loyal feelings, intermixed with prudence in concealing them, in the quaint embroidered garter in the British Museum which is inscribed "GOD BLESS P.C."

To smokers were given embroidered tobacco pouches in green, pink, and silver; one charming old beadwork tobacco pouch in Taunton Castle is embroidered "LOVE ME FOR I AM THINE, 1631." There were necklaces and bracelets of needlework, and some of coloured glass beads, as well as the long watchguards worn round the neck, chiefly of the nineteenth century. {247}

FIG. 77.—OLD WORKBOX FITTINGS.
(*In the Author's collection.*) {249}

Old Samplers.

Old samplers may well be regarded as educational, belonging to the schoolroom as well as to the workbox. They were intended to teach needlework, and served as reminders of alphabets, sums, and mapping. Many worked in silk on yellow linen in the eighteenth century were quite elaborate pieces of needlework. Those of the seventeenth century, chiefly of linen, were much cruder and simpler in design. During the latter half of the eighteenth century samplers were mostly worked on canvas or sampler cloth, a material which was used almost as long as samplers were in fashion. Different stitches were employed; there was the early drawn and cut work, and then the silk embroidery showing the girl's acquirement of the darning stitch.

Some early tapestry maps are numbered among the educational curios in which samplers are so prominent. The Yorkshire Philosophical Society own two unique specimens of sixteenth-century tapestry, formerly in the possession of Horace Walpole. They measure about 16 ft. by 12 ft., the sections including Herefordshire, Shropshire, Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, and a part of Berkshire. These remarkable maps are vividly coloured and show excellent pictorial scenes indicating villages, parks, and country seats. Such maps are rare, but now and then really interesting examples of needlework mapping are met with. {250}

Collectors keep an eye on preservation, but they are keen on dated specimens, and those with ornate and quaintly picturesque borders. The condition adds to the beauty, but not always to the value, for many of the older and less well-preserved samplers are now becoming scarce. They have been retained by those who have no interest in antiques because they bore the name of some fair ancestress who lived and worked on her sampler more than a century ago, leaving it behind as a memorial of her skill in the use of a needle for future generations to admire. How many ladies of the twentieth century are preparing permanent records of their skill in needlework for those who are to come to hand on to generations unborn? is a question some may like to ponder. {251}

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CHAPTER XI

THE LIBRARY

From cover to cover—Old scrap books—Almanacs—The writing table.

The library is usually where the master of the house conducts his business correspondence and, if a student, spends much of his time among his favourite books, or, perchance, engages in literary work. In days gone by, when there were fewer opportunities of visiting public libraries, and when circulating libraries were few and far between, the man of letters accumulated around him standard works and ancient tomes, possibly seldom read. When such a library, perhaps scarcely examined for a century or more, comes to be dispersed, it often happens that curiosities are brought to light.

The furniture of the library is full of interest, for a quaint writing table, bureau, or desk full of oddments is an exceedingly prolific field of research. In the following paragraphs a few of these curiosities are referred to; there are others, however, that the collector will discover, possibly one of the scarcer curios of the library, some of which realize unexpectedly high prices when they are brought under the hammer. {254}

From Cover to Cover.

The books which constitute the library are often curious, and there is much that receives its monetary value on account of its antiquity and rarity. An old library will frequently include black-letter printing and old volumes illustrated with wood blocks, and, perchance, illuminated initial letters. Some of the volumes may be printed on vellum, and there may be some in manuscript. The bindings of presentation books may be of rich calf and tooled in gold; some may even have edge paintings and choice hand-painted illuminations. The subject-matter of the volumes often gives rise to specialistic collections. Some will find amusement in tracing the progress of a great industry through published information, like those curious old time tables in the early days of railways, and the pamphlets which are classed by the collector as "Railroadia," and from them learn the story of the "iron horse." There are others who collect books and prints relating to ballooning, the microscope, and many of the earlier sciences. There are topographical curiosities and historical marvels. Some books will be valued because of their illustrations, for the work of a master hand may be recognized by the expert searcher after valuables. The rare mezzotints, stipples, and delicate line engravings, to say nothing of the more valuable colour prints, often realize far more than the books themselves. Ancient art is more valued than the literary efforts of past masters of wielding the pen! {255}

It is thus that the books are often thrown away after the pictures or even superadded illustrations or mere name-plates have been removed. The collector of bookplates searches for his treasures. Some talk of the vandalism of the collector of ex-libris, but they must remember that it is quite easy to remove a bookplate without injuring the volume, and there are many worthless books. The name labels or bookplates found in English libraries range from the early dated plates of the close of the seventeenth century to the present day. The different styles of ornament in vogue in the respective periods of their engraving were with few exceptions adhered to by the printers of such plates. Thus the collector classifies his albums and rejoices in the variations and details of the engraver's fancy, while he separates them into such well-defined groups as early armorial, Jacobean, Chippendale, ribbon and wreath, urn, pictorial, armorial, and simple shield. To other than the enthusiastic collector, bookplates may possess merit in that they have belonged to famous men, and are souvenirs taken from the volumes which were once handled by distinguished statesmen, divines, and men of letters.

Old Scrap Books.

The making of scrap books or the filling of portfolios was not always an amusement for children, neither did older folk make those quaint scrap books with such assortments of literary and pictorial odds and ends solely for the amusement of their visitors. Many enthusiastic collectors stored their treasures in such books, the binding of which was often very costly and quite gorgeously ornamented. Some pointed with pride to collections of prints, others to albums of frontispieces, printers' marks, and tailpieces, some of which were beautiful little pictures. {256}

In modern times collectors rescue from the flames old tickets, pictorial benefit tickets, theatre passes, and quaint pictures which tell us of great events which happened in days gone by at

Ranelagh, Vauxhall, and other places.

Ranelagh, where the entertainments of which relics in the shape of beautifully engraved tickets are to be found, was at Chelsea, and the gardens visited by Walpole, Johnson, and Goldsmith were famous for their promenades and for the music and singing which might be enjoyed, among the evening pleasures being displays of fireworks and masked dances. In the summer tea and coffee were sipped under the trees, and there were water carnivals on the river. There were also masquerade balls and dances, for which tickets engraved by Bartolozzi and other famous artists were issued. It is these tickets which are preserved and collected now.

The autograph hunter extends his hobby by adding old parchments and deeds with seals, for among the odd bundles of parchments in old libraries are many documents attested with thumb-marks and seals—"His mark," of days when many of the landed proprietors could not write their own names. {257}

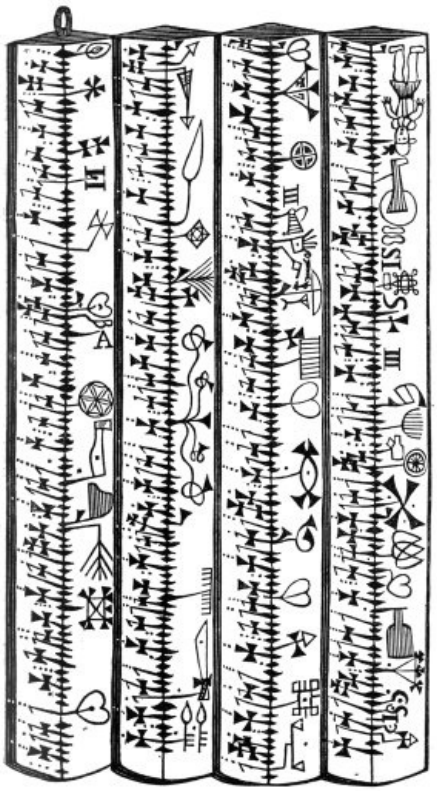

FIG. 78.—ANCIENT CLOG ALMANAC.

The joys of St. Valentine's Day, remembered by older people still, are unknown to the present generation, but collectors perpetuate February 14th as it was kept in the past by filling albums with such old valentines as they may be able to secure. {259}

Watch Papers.

Another comparatively small collection can be made up of pictorial watch papers, those rare little pictorial views which once reposed in the interior of the cases of old watches. Watches are by no means common curios of the household, but now and then an old silver verge or a decorated watch case thought little of is found to contain one of those pretty pictures which were chiefly engraved and printed in the eighteenth century. Many of the designs were printed on satin; some were devices in needlework; again others were cut out in the most lace-like designs. Theatrical celebrities were often pictured; thus the theatrical amateur would buy his watch paper representing the celebrated Miss Gunning, or possibly Mr. Garrick. The pictures were really gems, too, for great artists such as Angelica Kaufmann, Cipriani, and Bartolozzi did not disdain to engrave watch papers.

Old Almanacs.

Some of the best finds when libraries have been overhauled have been the curious old almanacs published when superstition was rife. The oldest, perhaps, were the clog almanacs, although some were common in Staffordshire until about 1820. The accompanying illustration (see Fig. 78) was engraved in an old book referring to that county published more than a century ago. In Camden's *Britannia* some information is given in reference to these early clog almanacs, in which it is said holidays were distinguished by hieroglyphics; in some the Massacre of the Innocents was denoted by a drawn sword; SS. Simon and Jude's Day by a ship, because they were fishers; and St. George's Day by a horse. In the Norway clog almanacs St. Martin's Day is marked with a goose, the custom of eating a goose now being transferred to Michaelmas. In the illustration given in Fig. 78 the first section embraces January, February, and March; the second, April, May, and June; the third, July, August, and September; and the fourth, October, November, and {260}

December. Conspicuously inscribed on the clog will be noticed the ring for New Year's Day; the star denoting the Epiphany; the axe for St. Paul; February 14th is indicated by a lover's knot; a spear denotes St. George's Day in April; and May Day by a tree branch. The keys of St. Peter are noticed as indicating the 29th of June; the scales of St. Michael are seen at the end of September. St. Catherine's wheel figures in the middle of November, immediately under it being the somewhat large cross of St. Andrew. Other symbols will doubtless be recognized on this interesting relic.

The study of the almanac is not now one of the chief diversions of the fair sex. At one time, however, when ladies had fewer amusements than they have now, they spent much time poring over almanacs, and placed implicit trust in what they found recorded there, especially in the {261} forecasts and prognostications for the future of those born on certain days and under so-called lucky or unlucky stars. One of the most popular calendars of olden time was "The Ladies' Diary or the Woman's Almanac," containing many delightful and entertaining particulars for the fair sex. Let us take, for example, a copy of that popular almanac for the year of grace 1749. On the cover there is a picture of the Queen. Alluding to the peace then prevailing are the lines:—

> "Perch'd o'er this Realm, the ancient seat of Kings,
> Now dove-like peace the sprig of laurel brings;
> And British fair ones happy days shall see,
> While George shall reign, and Britons still are free."

Another George is on the throne, and his consort Queen Mary is an ideal woman, and what to many is of the highest importance, Peace reigns in this country and Britons are still free!

Among the contents of that curious almanac are Latin and French enigmas, mathematical questions and paradoxes. The concluding paragraph for the dedication of that day is entitled "Truth's Moral Euclid"; the proposition given being:—

> "Virtue promotes happiness, private and public.
> Vice is destructive of happiness, private and public.
> Honour is the reward of virtue."

One of the finest collections of old almanacs is in the Bodleian Library at Oxford—chiefly seventeenth-century productions. A still older almanac was the "Poor Robin" of 1664; another {262} seventeenth-century almanac being the "Vox Stellarum" of Francis Moore, a quack doctor. In 1733 Benjamin Franklin published in Philadelphia his "Poor Richard's Almanac," noted for its verses, jests, and sayings. The monopoly once possessed by the Stationers' Company has long been broken down, and of later almanacs and calendars there is no end. Among the miniature books, the collection of which is much favoured now, are some very tiny almanacs, like the beautiful specimens of such a calendar given in Fig. 80, produced actual size, shown open and closed. This miniature almanac is printed on satin and is full of pleasing little pictures. It is the work of a French artist early in the nineteenth century, the pictures and their descriptions and the monthly calendars occupying alternate pages. The binding is of mother-o'-pearl, bound in ormolu and richly gilt and engraved. Some similar calendars in tiny leather bindings, beautifully tooled and ornamented in gold, are also collectable.

The Writing Table.

The writing table usually occupies an honoured place in the library. It may be a massive table of oak or a simple writing desk venerated on account of the great literary works which have been written upon it. It is no uncommon thing to read of large sums paid for a writing desk on which the manuscript of a famous book has been penned, and some of the writing tables upon which deeds of historical fame have been signed have gained a reputation and a money value out of all {263} proportion to their curio or antiquarian merits. Not long ago the late King Edward presented to the Commonwealth of Australia the table on which the great Charter was signed, together with the inkstand and pen used on that occasion. Those will be relics for future generations to value.

The table appointments are among the collectable curios of the library, and prominent among these is the inkstand. Inkstands find their prototypes in the inkhorns of the scribe; and throughout the generations which have provided curios for twentieth-century collectors there have been fresh supplies in silver, pewter, Sheffield plate, copper, bronze, iron, wood, china, and brass. Very beautiful indeed are some of the old inkstands in their separate vase-like attachments. The ink-well was formerly accompanied by a sand box or a pounce caster, in modern days superseded by a second ink-well. The sand casters for sprinkling pounce or sand upon newly written pages were a necessity before the days of blotting paper. Perhaps some day blotters, blotting pads, and the like, may become collectable curios!

Collectors of old china are familiar with the rare boxes, egg-cup-like in form, made by Richard Chaffers, of Liverpool, the blue and white decoration, the name of the potter in the narrowed portion of the box being characteristic of what was for a long time known as "Dick's Pepperbox." It was, however, intended for a pounce box, the pounce or pumice being a fine powder of the cuttle-fish bone, afterwards giving the name to the pounce paper or transparent tracing material. {264} Of the inkstands to be seen in our museums there are many dating from almost prehistoric times; their variety may be instanced by mention of one in the Berlin Museum, an Egyptian curio said to be 3,400 years old, below the ink compartments being a case for holding reed pens.

In early days before even well-to-do people could read and write the scribe found a ready occupation. The materials he used were carried about in a writing case of metal, and among such curios are writing cases which were used in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. They were often the work of the craftsmen of Mesopotamia, who were clever artists in metal, and the work they performed came to Europe through Syria. The example shown in Fig. 81 is the work of Mahmud, the son of Sonkor, of Baghdad, and is dated 1281. This beautiful specimen may be seen in the British Museum.

The implements the scribe used changed as time went on, for parchment was used quite early in the East. Writing was introduced into Spain by the Moors in the tenth century, although writing paper was not made in England until the fifteenth century. {265}

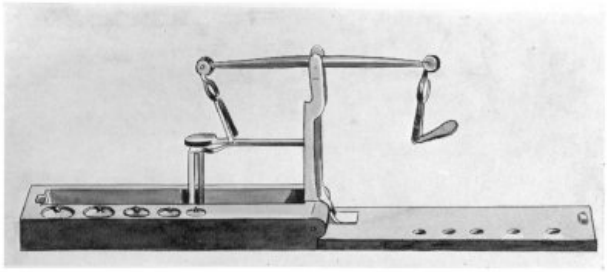

FIG. 79.—OLD COIN TESTER.

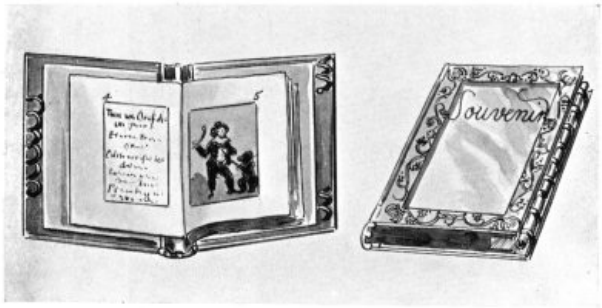

FIG. 80.—MINIATURE SOUVENIR ALMANAC.

FIG. 81.—ANCIENT WRITING SET.

The evolution of the pen has been slow, for the use of quills continues still in some Government offices, and quills are still supplied to readers in the British Museum Reading Room. The old-fashioned quill pens were in days gone by shaped with a small knife made specially for that purpose. Indeed, it is to the quill pen that we are indebted for our "pen" knives, which have long been put to other uses. It was not every one who was expert in cutting a pen neatly and making it {267} write well. Consequently an instrument was made for that purpose, known as the quill-pen cutter. These cutters are now and then met with in old desks, where they have lain unused for many years.

Quill-pen making was an important industry until the invention of the steel pen, and the quality of the quill was a matter of importance to the scribe. In a trader's circular dated 1820 there is notice of the Royal Appointment of a Liverpool maker, who was authorized to exercise and enjoy all the rights, profits, privileges, and advantages of his appointment of Pen Cutter and Quill Dresser to His Majesty King George IV. In the same circular it is stated that the quill pens supplied were of varying qualities, secured from the swan, raven, goose, turkey, crow, and duck.

Sealing correspondence was a necessity before gummed envelopes were invented. Then sealing-wax was in daily use on the writing table, and the signet ring or seal was requisitioned. The outfit of a library table would scarcely be complete without wax, wafer irons, and seals. One of the curios found now and then in old desks is a little cutting instrument useful in removing seals or opening letters which had been sealed. In the days before penny postage letters were sent carriage forward, and the postage which had to be paid on the receipt of letters from a distance was a heavy tax on those who had many friends and much correspondence.

The penalty of being the recipient of much correspondence may, perhaps, have been lightened by {268} the wording of the seal; for many old letter seals conveyed sentimental messages which to the receiver from that particular sender might have meant much. The following is a selection of the characteristic sentiments of the day: "Break the seal, read the letter, and keep the secret"; "You have a loyal friend"; and "Life is naught without a friend." We cannot tell what was the result of

sending a letter bearing such a seal legend as:—

> "Mine is a heart that loveth thee;
> So, ladylove, do thou love me."

Collectors' hobbies now and then are increased by the introduction of something entirely new, something never known before, and the world rejoices over a genuine novelty. The cynic declares that there is nothing new under the sun, but the introduction of the penny postage in 1840, at the instigation of Rowland Hill, laid the foundation to stamp collecting, which has become the most popular of all collectors' hobbies. The philatelist is found in every civilized country, and the collection of postage stamps, used and unused, grows apace. A bundle of old letters in entire envelopes, posted forty or fifty years ago from one of the British Colonies, discovered when ransacking an old library, will probably prove the most valuable relic of the past found in it. {269}

XII

THE SMOKER'S CABINET

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CHAPTER XII

THE SMOKER'S CABINET

Old pipes—Pipe racks—Tobacco boxes—Smokers' tongs and stoppers—Snuff boxes and rasps.

The slave of the pipe and the moderate smoker of years gone by have left behind them relics in nearly every home. Such curios are found when pulling down old houses, and clearing out rubbish heaps; and even when making excavations in the vicinity of once occupied ground remains left behind by smokers of olden times are discovered.

Many are marked as curios on account of their curious forms; others have been regarded as such because their uses have become obsolete, and some because of their great beauty and the costliness of the materials of which they are made.

The collectable curios of the smoker's cabinet consist of clay pipes, varying from the earliest form known to the later types not far removed from the modern clays still smoked by workmen; of pipes of curious forms and quaintly carved bowls; and the Eastern pipes, which look more like show pieces in their size and forms than any pipe made for actual use. The curios include tobacco {272} jars, spill cups, and ash trays; and there are also brass and copper spittoons and pipe racks. An old smoker's desk often contains odd curios, such as the one-time common pipe-stoppers, so many of which were made by Birmingham "toy-makers" in the eighteenth century.

Old Pipes.

When tobacco was first introduced into this country, and smoking was taught to those whose descendants in countless numbers were destined to worship at the shrine of my Lady Nicotine on British soil, the pipe was brought over too; for tobacco and the tobacco pipe are inseparable, although the pipe shares its popularity with cigars and cigarettes.

There are few records of early experiments in the modelling and baking of local clays by pipe makers; it was, however, soon discovered that Broseley clay was most suitable for the tobacco pipe, and there are pipes known to have been made at Broseley in the seventeenth century. The flat heels of the early pipes were useful in that pipes could then be laid down on the table. Then in the reign of James II an advance was made by the spur-like projection of the bowl, which was found to be convenient for the purpose of branding with the initials of the maker or his trade mark, and there are many examples of old marks, some of which are very curious, a not uncommon form being a punning rebus on the maker's name; thus we have a gauntlet, used by a man named Gauntlet. {273}

The earlier forms of clay pipes gradually gave way to the long-stemmed "churchwardens," which in course of time were again superseded by pipes with short stems. The meerschaum in its day had many followers, and some of the curiosities of the smoker's cabinet (the term "cabinet" is used here in a figurative rather than a realistic sense) are those elaborately carved specimens of meerschaum, that remarkably light material that lends itself so well to the carver's art.

Pipe Racks.

There appear to have been two distinct forms of racks—those used for cleaning or rebaking clay pipes, and the racks on which they were stored. The pipe rack was originally a wrought-iron frame upon which dirty clay pipes were stoved in a brick oven and restored to their original freshness. The stoving of pipes was a common practice not only in taverns and public clubs but in private houses in the days when long clay pipes were served to the guests, and a bowl of punch was placed before them—it was thus that convivial spirits enjoyed themselves in time gone by.

Now and then these old pipe racks are met with in some outhouse or attic, but they are getting very scarce, for most of them appear to have found their way into the scrap heap of the old-metal dealer. Some of the racks intended for the storage of pipes and not for baking them were exceedingly decorative, the ornamental sides terminating with acorn knobs made of cast lead. {274}

Tobacco Boxes.

It seems natural to suppose that the need of a suitable receptacle for tobacco would early be felt. Many of the old tobacco boxes—those for storage purposes—were made of lead or pewter. Lead was found to be cool and was also used as an appropriate lining for boxes made of other materials. Jars soon came into vogue, and there are quite ancient specimens, especially the old japanned boxes, ornamented with figures in gilt.

There is, of course, a vast difference between the storage jar and the smaller box carried about by the smoker much in the same way as the pouch is now used. Many still prefer metal to other materials, and it is no uncommon thing to see brass and steel boxes in use in industrial districts. Few, however, excepting modern replicas of the antique, are decorated in the way the old Dutch tobacco boxes of brass were in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is not very clear why so many of them were engraved with scriptural subjects, for there does not appear to be much connection between biblical history and the pipe! Engravings of scenes depicting Noah and the Flood are common, the incongruity of the clothing shown being often commented upon; one writer upon the subject referred to the engravings on one of these tobacco boxes as being ornamented with Jewish characters wearing knee breeches of English type, talking to Dutch frauen. Historical portraits are not uncommonly met with on these quaint boxes, and quite a number of battle scenes have been engraved. Such metal work has been gathered together in {275} several museums, and in the British Museum there is a fine collection of various shapes, some oval, others long and narrow, and some almost square. The brass tobacco box illustrated in Fig. 83 has a medallion portrait of Frederick the Great in the centre, such embossed subjects being very popular in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, both in England and in Holland, although Dutch artists gave preference to scriptural subjects, many fine examples of which are to be seen in our museums. Fortunately there are many really curious specimens obtainable at a moderate cost.

FIG. 82.—THREE CURIOUS PIPE-STOPPERS.

FIG. 83.—BRASS TOBACCO BOX.

Smokers' Tongs and Stoppers.

Curious little ember tongs were formerly used by smokers for taking up hot embers or ashes with which to light their pipes. Of these there are several varieties, most of them of polished steel, cut and chased. In the eighteenth century similar tongs were used for holding cigars; some were fitted with small knives, and a few of the earlier examples included tinder boxes. Not infrequently one end of the handle terminated in a tobacco stopper.

Stoppers, were, however, destined soon to become an independent and important smokers' accessory. They were made of different materials, including brass, steel, bone, and ivory, to some being added a pick for clearing out the bowl of a pipe. Many curious handles were modelled, among the varieties being some representing soldiers in armour of the time of James I. There is one favourite type representing Charles I, crowned, and wearing the collar of the Garter, and {278} another a bust of Oliver Cromwell. In one example a farm labourer works a flail, in another a milkmaid goes a-milking with her pail. There are many varieties of a hand holding a pipe, of jockeys and prize-fighters, and of St. George and the Dragon.

The three stoppers illustrated in Fig. 82 are quite exceptional specimens, illustrating, however, the kind of stopper which collectors should keep a keen look out for. These examples are in the British Museum along with a few others of seventeenth and eighteenth-century manufacture, having striking characteristics. One is described as having a human figure at the butt, and at the other end a crowned head. The third example is an historic souvenir, having been made, as the inscription on the stopper indicates, from the royal oak which sheltered Charles II, by Mr. George Plaxton, at one time "parson of the parish."

In the Taunton Castle Museum there is an exceptionally beautiful stopper made of ivory inscribed:—

"NOW . MAN . WITH . MAN . IS . SO . VNJVST .
THAT . ONE . CAN . SCARCE . TELL . WHO . TO . TRVST."

There are similar stoppers in private collections. The inscription on one at South Petherton reads:—

"THE . FAYREST . MAYD . THAT . DID . BAYR . LIFE .
FOR . LOVE . TO . MAN . BECAME . A . WIFE."

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Snuff Boxes and Rasps.

Snuff-taking has been a habit associated with smoking tobacco from quite early days. The preparation of snuff was formerly achieved at home, and consequently there sprang up the need of rasps, which were frequently carried about in the pocket, many of the cases being very ornamental. They varied in size, but the rasp cases usually held a plug or twist of tobacco from which the snuff was made.

There are several fine old snuff rasps in the Victoria and Albert Museum, one large rasp measuring 15 in. in length; its case, which is of walnut and extremely decorative, is attributed to a Dutch carver who executed it in the second half of the seventeenth century. There is also a small iron rasp in a case of teak wood, which is inlaid with rosewood, ivory, and tortoiseshell, the rasp measuring about 8 in. in length. An eighteenth-century French rasp of boxwood is carved in low relief; on one side a pair of doves is represented, under the picture being the legend, "*Unis jusqu'a la mort*." On the other side there is a man blowing a horn with the legend, "*La fidelite est perdue*," around which is a rope-like frame supporting two cornucopiæ. Another curious variety of snuff rasp is made to run on wheels. When snuff-making became an established trade, and the need for snuff rasps to be carried was not so great, the decoration of snuff boxes became more ornate.

It was in the days of Queen Anne that the height of the glory of the snuffer was reached; it was, however, during the reigns of the Georges that so many beautiful boxes were made. There were boxes carved out of a piece of wood, others of bone, papier-maché, and metal; indeed, all the {280} metals seem to have been used, for among the curiosities of old snuff boxes are those made of iron, copper, brass, silver, and gold. Some of the more costly were enriched with diamonds and precious stones, and with tiny miniature paintings and beautiful Wedgwood cameos.

In the days when snuff-taking was a commoner practice than it is now, the ornamental snuff box was the chosen gift to men of fame. Kings, princes, and the nobility received gold and jewelled snuff boxes on occasions when in more modern days they would have been given a scroll of vellum in a golden casket.

Many provincial museums contain excellent collections of smokers' requisites. In the handbook of Welsh antiquities published in connection with the National Museum of Wales, in Cardiff, there are allusions to several interesting specimens, the writer of the guide quoting some lines penned by a sixteenth-century poet, who extolled tobacco thus:—

"Tobacco engages
Both sexes, all ages—

The poor as well as the wealthy;
From the Court to the cottage,
From childhood to dotage,
Both those that are sick and the healthy."

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XIII

LOVE TOKENS AND LUCKY EMBLEMS

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CHAPTER XIII

LOVE TOKENS AND LUCKY EMBLEMS

Amulets—Horse trappings—Emblems of luck—Lovespoons—Glass curios.

The collector rarely troubles about attempting to solve matters of dispute, and cares little to enter into argumentative discussions in reference to the supposed purposes of the curios he collects, or the different uses with which they have been associated. He does not inquire too deeply into the faiths and beliefs which may have been held and revered by his ancestors when he puts in his cabinet some curiosity which may have been regarded almost with reverential feelings and handled with superstitious regard by its original possessor. The more thoughtful man does, however, pay some tribute to their early associations. Our museums are filled with such relics, with delightfully carved reliquaries, triptychs, and marvellously carved beads which in their religious use as rosaries have been looked upon as something more than mere specimens of the carver's art. There are mysteries in beliefs which have been held dear in the past which are not understood by succeeding generations. {284}

It is difficult to understand in the present day the deep-seated faith in amulets and charms, which were thought to have brought about what would now be regarded as curious coincidences, or to place reliance upon the babbling utterances of some old crone who posed as a witch or a fortune-teller. Yet among such old-world stories there are germs of truth although misapplied. The emblems, amulets, and charms so implicitly believed in a few centuries ago are objects numbered among collectable curios, valued even in this prosaic age not only for their intrinsic worth and antiquarian interest, but for the so-called magic influences they were supposed to possess.

There is something more understandable about love tokens, for we can tell their purpose, and indeed to-day, stripped of the charm which was often supposed to go with them, love tokens are given, received, and valued just as much as they were in the past.

Amulets.

The amulet, which in its realistic form is regarded as an antiquity to be preserved with care, was usually regarded either as a charm against disease, accident, or misfortune, or as something the possession of which would bring good luck. The efficacy of amulets was believed in by the most cultured and scientific peoples in the past, for it was an article of belief in Egypt and Chaldea. The Jews had regard for their phylacteries, and the Greeks and Romans had their amulets. The image of Thor was an amulet peculiar to the old Norsemen; and in Britain we have had many examples. {285}

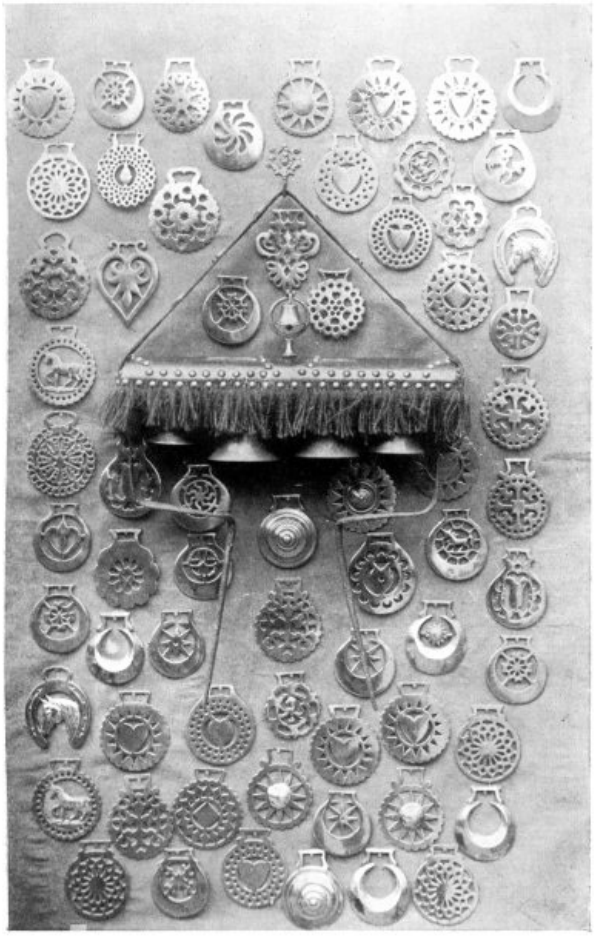

FIG. 84.—COLLECTION OF HARNESS AMULETS AND TEAM BELLS.
(*In the possession of Mr. Charles Wayte, of Edenbridge.*)

Although not necessarily objects to be worn, no doubt charms usually took the form of something which could be suspended, for the origin of the word coming to us through the Latin has been traced to an Arabic word, signifying a pendant. In the early Christian Church the fish was worn as a symbol or charm, and in many parts of rural England to-day amulets are kept, and even charms, as preventives against disease. Men and women buy so-called amulets from the jewellers' shops at the present time, and wear them on their watch chains or bangles, and round their necks; but the faith reposed in such charms by the educated classes in this country may be dismissed as a myth, for few really understand their true significance, or place any real reliance upon such fanciful relics of a former age—an age of superstition, when people blindly clutched at any mysterious protective power or emblem. {287}

Horse Trappings.

Among the commoner emblems of good luck handed down from the far-off past, are the brass amulets worn on horse trappings even to-day. A set of brasses consists of a face brass, taking chief place of prominence on the horse's forehead; two ear brasses, which are seen behind the ears; ten martingale brasses, worn on the breast; and three brasses suspended from straps on each of the shoulders. These amulets were primarily worn to keep off the "evil eye," and thus protect the horse and its rider or its owner from calamity and harm. The brasses were varied in design, some of the more important being developments of the crescent moon. Some were made to imitate the sun with its pointed rays, others the Catherine wheel; the Kentish horse, too, a relic of Saxon days, has been frequently used, and there is the lotus flower of Egyptian origin. There are Moorish and Buddhist symbols, and many curious developments which have gone far astray from their original types. The agriculturist is still superstitious, and does not like to lessen the number of these somewhat weighty brasses suspended from his horse trappings. For purposes of utility they are useless; they remain, however, a connecting link with the superstitions of the past, and a collection of such curious objects is of extreme interest. In Fig. 84 is shown an exceptionally fine collection got together by Mr. Wayte, of Edenbridge, who collects many such things. {288}

Emblems of Luck.

There seems to be a distinctive difference between the amulets which were protectors against harm and those which are emblems of good fortune. Perhaps hovering between the two may be classed such curios as those which tradition has held to be a preservative of luck, like "the Luck of Eden Hall," that wonderful goblet preserved with such great care in its charming case of *cour*

boulli. In this category are the numerous gifts from friend to friend having no special emblematic value, but which were frequently handed over with such sayings as: "I give you this for luck," and "May good luck go with you." The wish and implied virtue in the charm has about as much value {289} in it as the wish playfully and unbelievingly uttered by the twentieth-century maiden at the wishing well to-day.

There is still, however, an undeniable lingering belief in the mysterious value in the possession of an emblem of luck, one of the best known and commonly used to-day being the horseshoe, preferably, according to old tradition, a cast shoe found and nailed up over the doorway or in some prominent place. It is generally believed that the horseshoe carries with it good luck on account of its form, which resembles the crescent moon, a notorious symbol in the days of the Crusaders, already referred to as being an important feature in the amulets or charms on horse trappings—such is the curious mixture of scepticism and superstitious faith met with to-day!

Lovespoons.

The collection of Welsh lovespoons in the National Museum of Wales, several of which are illustrated in Fig. 85, is quite unique. Dr. Hoyle, the Director of the Museum, in his admirable description of the case in which these pretty little objects are shown, explains that they are arranged to show the evolution of the lovespoon from the normal spoon. Such lovespoons might, a few years ago, have been seen in many Welsh homes, where they hung as things of ornament and sentiment, for it is said they were given in "spooning" days to the girl of his choice by the lover. The handle is of course the appropriate field of decoration, the double bowl being symbolic {290} of "We two are one." The dated spoons were mostly made in the middle of the eighteenth century.

Glass Curios.

Some of the most pleasing love tokens are those made at Nailsea in Somerset, and in Sunderland. The commoner kinds, chiefly made at the latter place, were known as sailors' love tokens. They took the form of rolling-pins, which were evidently intended for ornament and not for use. A bow of ribbon was tied round the end of the pin by which the roller could be hung up. These glass rolling-pins were covered over with sentimental mottoes, generally accompanied by a ship, a typical feature of the decorations commonly used. Some of these little mementoes given away by sailors were of white semi-opaque glass, others were brilliantly coloured.

Nailsea glass works were noted for the Italian influence shown in the colour effects produced in them. Among other objects made at those famous glass works were flasks and bottles for wines and spirits in greens, browns, and blues, to which were added in smaller quantities red and yellow. Other trinkets of an ornamental character were glass tobacco pipes, bells, and coach horns. There were also Nailsea walking sticks made of twisted glass, and many curious cups. Most of these were given for luck, especially as love tokens when sailors were about to set out on a voyage, the superstition attached to the gift being that if the glass pin were broken it was a sign that the vessel in which the giver had sailed had been wrecked. Hence it was that a ribbon {291} was securely attached, and the gift hung up out of harm's reach.

FIG. 85.—OLD WELSH LOVE SPOONS.
(*In the National Museum of Wales.*)

In association with glass rolling-pins and other love tokens there are many sundry curios which from the mottoes upon them were evidently given with a similar purpose. Even objects of metal and brass were frequently inscribed with loving reminders of the donor. The pleasing little trinket and patch boxes of enamels and glass, referred to in another chapter, were given from sentimental motives as evidenced by their inscriptions. Covers of pocket books and tobacco pouches were covered over with similar legends, like a delightful beadwork tobacco pouch in the Taunton Castle Museum, on which is the motto or sentiment, "LOVE ME FOR I AM THINE, 1631," wrought by a seventeenth-century needleworker. {293}

Similar mottoes are found on the little pincushions formerly carried in the capacious pockets of women of olden time, sometimes wrought in needlework and at others in beads. {295}

XIV

THE MARKING OF TIME

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CHAPTER XIV

THE MARKING OF TIME

Clocks—Watches—Watch keys—Watch stands.

The early marking of time was simple enough, for we are told that the Arabs, by driving a spear or a staff into the sand of the desert, told the time of day. The shadow of the sun roughly gave those who were familiar with astronomy the lay of the land and the time, approximately. When

the dial and the gnomon were understood, dialling became a popular science, and ere long the sundial on the church tower, in a public place, or in a private garden, told the time. Then came the marking of time by pocket dials—an advance which foreshadowed the watch which was to come.

The pocket dial was soon followed by mechanical clocks, the clock watch, and the more delicate work of the watchmaker. The watch has become more accurate in its marking of time by the introduction of machinery in its manufacture; and it is cheapened by competition, so that now every one for a mere trifle can carry in his pocket a watch by means of which he can tell accurately the hour of day, as Shakespeare has it in "As You Like It":— {298}

> "And then he drew a dial from his poke;
> And looking on it with lack-lustre eye,
> Says, very wisely, 'It is ten o'clock;
> Thus we may see,' quoth he, 'how the world wags.'"

Some further references to the sundial will be found in Chapter XVII, the sundial being one of the accompaniments of the old-world garden.

Clocks.

In "Chats on Old Copper and Brass" some mention is made of old clocks, and of the watch which grew in beauty and fineness of workmanship as it evolved from the watch-clock and the still earlier lantern and other old clocks, which were gradually introduced to supersede or supplement the earlier sundials. Very remarkable indeed are some of these household curios. The very movement of the clock, with its pendulum swinging to and fro and the loud tick which can be heard all over the room, gives a sort of venerated respect for the "grandfather," with its massive and often richly carved or inlaid oaken or mahogany case, making it an important piece of furniture in the room. {299}

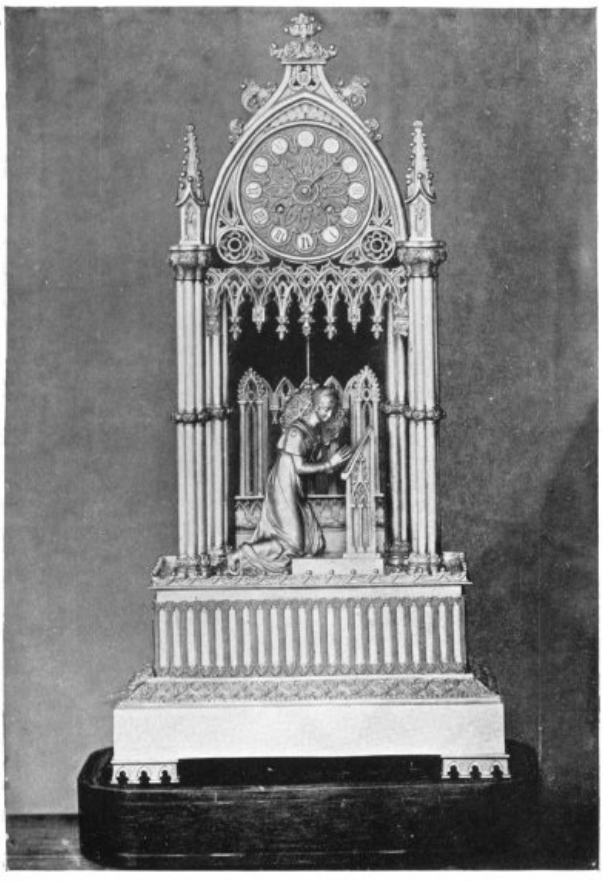

FIG. 86.—FINE GOTHIC FRENCH CLOCK.
(*In the collection of W. Egan & Sons, Ltd., Cork.*)

The Cromwellian lantern clock was beautiful in its way, and it may be regarded as the earliest type of commonly used domestic clocks, most of which were made at a later period than is denoted by the name of Cromwellian. They are, however, of a good respectable age, and are now really valuable household antiquities. The lantern clock may be regarded as the ancestor of the {301} "grandfather," the works of which were protected by a wooden case. The evolution from the earlier type is quite easy to follow, for the wooden hood to protect the clock on the bracket shelf was added; then came the framed head, which was glazed, and eventually the lower case covering the weights.

Much has been written about "grandfathers" and the smaller variety commonly designated "grandmothers." The dials of the earlier specimens are of brass and have only the hour hand, an

onward step being marked when the minute finger was added. The mechanical arrangement by which the days of the week and the month were indicated was a happy addition, although some would, doubtless, regard them as somewhat unnecessary. The collector of antiques is likely to be imposed upon unless he is acquainted with the technical construction of both works and frame or case, for it is not an uncommon thing to fit in a modern antique case a set of old works.

The timepiece is an innovation of comparatively recent days. From the first it became the central ornament on the mantelpiece, and many artists were employed in providing suitable designs and combining various materials to produce clocks in keeping with prevailing styles of furniture and decoration. The French clockmakers became experts as designers of the smaller and more varied cases of mantelpiece clocks, many fine examples of the Empire period ranking as art treasures as well as curios. {302}

Fig. 86 represents an exceptionally fine example of a Gothic French clock, beautifully modelled, and in excellent condition. Some of the gilt clocks and side vases to match were bought as mantelpiece ornaments, rather than for their merit as timekeepers, although the best makers always put in reliable works—there were no such works as those made by machinery and sold so cheaply to-day!

The timepieces of early Victorian days are scarcely antiques, and few of them are treasured as such, although undoubtedly curious.

Watches.

The first step towards watches as we understand them was the manufacture of pocket clocks (many of which show Dutch influence in design), some of the cases of which were very beautiful. The watches which followed in due course were at first without glasses, and for the better protection of the works and of the delicate engravings and ornamentation of the backs and dials loose cases of metal or shagreen were made. Some of them were highly ornamental, little studs of gold or silver being arranged in geometrical and floral patterns on the exteriors. Two very pretty examples of such cases are shown in Fig. 88.

Many of the watch backs were chased and perforated and beautifully enamelled; the dials were covered with painted miniatures, and gold watches were enriched with jewels. From Switzerland and Nuremberg come many choice examples; but there were clever watchmakers in England too, among them John Stevens, of Colchester, a sixteenth-century watchmaker noted for his pierced and engraved brass-gilt cases. {303}

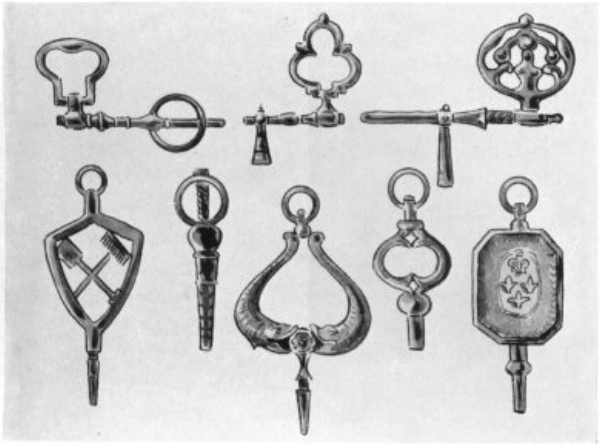

FIG. 87—SPECIMENS OF OLD WATCH KEYS.

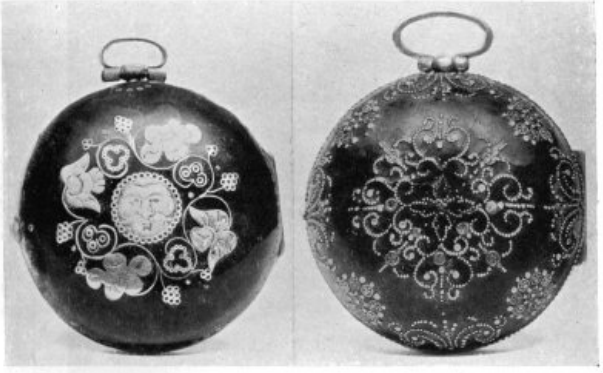

FIG. 88.—TWO ANTIQUE WATCH CASES. {305}

Classical figures and designs showing Dutch influence became popular late in the seventeenth century; then fashions changed, and the Court of the Emperors of France exercised an influence over art in this and other countries, and watch cases and other lesser objects were made more or less in harmony. At one time curiously shaped cases were the fashion; at another octagonal watches, such as were made in the seventeenth century by Edmund Bull, of Fleet Street, who is

said to have made an elliptic silver watch engraved all over with minute scriptural subjects.

The collection of watches is a hobby indulged in by but few; there are, however, many single examples included in household curios, and not infrequently several handsomely engraved old watch cases are seen exhibited in the modern glass-topped curio tables so fashionable in twentieth-century drawing-rooms—now and then the interest in them being increased by the musical bells of the repeaters, many of which were made a century or more ago.

Watch Keys.

Keyless watches have been invented within the memory of most of us; it is obvious, therefore, that old watches were supplied with old keys, many of which were curious in form. The collector in search of a small group of collectable curios finds the watch key an excellent variety on which to specialize. When larger clocks were supplemented by the pocket watch, the loose key with {306}
which to wind it up naturally took the form of the larger clock keys. Such keys soon became more ornamental, for they were either carried in the pocket or attached to a chatelaine or bunch of keys; many of the bows were modelled on the pattern of other keys on the bunch.

In the accompanying illustration, Fig. 87, some little idea may be formed of the early developments. The three keys in the upper row are of the clock-winder type, showing the gradual improvement in their formation. Then came a development of the metal keys, mostly of brass, the engraving and modelling of the key itself being improved, the ornamentation being supplemented by enamelling. The watch key ultimately became very ornate, for the more precious metals were gradually introduced, and rich enamels, rare gems and stones, and Wedgwood cameos were added.

Pinchbeck metal was very much used for watch keys, the fob seals remaining in fashion until knee breeches went out. Some of the French keys are extremely decorative, and many cut and polished steel keys are worth collecting. It is said that Switzerland is one of the happy hunting-grounds of the watch-key collector, but there are many curio shops, both on the Continent and in this country, where fancy keys can be bought still at reasonable prices. In some localities special designs and metal have been made. Thus it is said that in Holland the silver keys of large size were long favoured, and many of these are still on sale. Another special feature about these {307}
curios is that makers at one time specialized on trade emblems, and it is quite possible to get together an interesting collection representing the attributes of musicians, butchers, bakers, and horticulturists, one signifying the latter industry being shown in Fig. 87, that on the left-hand corner of the lower row being fashioned in the form of a spade and a rake.

Watch Stands.

There are some very quaint old wood watch stands used chiefly as the temporary home of the watch at night, although some seem to have been permanently used by those who possessed a second watch. Some of the wood carvings were covered with old gilt; others were relieved in colours. Some were classic in design; others were like the little French clocks of the Empire period. Some were shaped like musical instruments, and others of more elaborate forms of decoration represent Mercury and Hercules supporting the watch stand. Some of the most beautiful are made of French lacquer and ornamented in the Vernis Martin style. To these may be added watch stands of marble, and curious inlays, of papier-maché and japanned wares, and some of brass and bronze. {309}

XV

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

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CHAPTER XV

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Early examples—Whistles and pipes—Violins and harps.

There are few homes without some old musical instruments, indicating that at one time or other one or more members of the family have been musical. There is a sadness about the discovery of a long-neglected instrument, telling of the breaking up of the old home or of an absent one whose instrument has been cherished in memory of happy moments when harmonious sounds and beautiful music were drawn from the now long-neglected piano, harp, or violin. To its owner a simple flute or bugle is probably of as much value as an old piano, although the more important

instrument may be more valuable as a curio and antique. There are some old instruments which increase in value, such, for instance, as violins made years ago by masters of constructional art, for they have become mellow with age, and, like the bells of some old parish church, now give out rich and yet soft notes when handled by a master hand. The story of the development of the piano from the very early prototypes is an enchanting theme to the lover of music, for there is a far {312}
remove from the modern pianoforte, and still newer player piano to the virginal, harpsichord, and spinet which may occasionally be found among the curios of the household.

Early Examples.

In the eleventh century, when musical notation came into being, a monochord was used to teach singing. The clavichord followed in due course, and by a rapid process of development regals, organs, and virginals evolved. The virginal, although distinct, was associated with the spinet, which with the later harpsichord may be found in houses which have been but little disturbed since the middle of the eighteenth century. It was in that century that the piano came, but not until it was well advanced, for in an old playbill of Covent Garden Theatre, published in 1767, it was announced that "Miss Brickler will sing a favourite song from *Judith*, accompanied by Mr. Dibdin on a new instrument called the piano forte." Of such instruments and of earlier types there are many fine examples in the Victoria and Albert Museum at South Kensington, in the Royal Scottish Museum, and in the Crosby-Brown Collection in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. In Fig. 89 is seen a beautiful spinet in excellent condition.

Whistles and Pipes.

It is said by the exponents of artistic furnishing and decoration that no home can be complete without music, for it gives an atmosphere of art which nothing else can impart; and certainly a {313}
collection of household curios cannot be complete without some musical instrument, although but a humble example. It may be a moot point among collectors whether the insignificant whistle or primitive call can be regarded as sufficiently musical to rank in this category. It is certain, however, that it is one of the commonest of sound producers; if there is a boy in the home there is almost sure to be a whistle in the house. Few trouble about the scientific explanation of the sound produced by this common instrument, but experts tell us that the sound comes because condensations occur by the collision of air against the cutting edge placed in its path. Of antique whistles there are many types, those shown in Fig. 90 being the most frequently met with. The one marked "D" is said to be an attempt to increase the volume of sound by the extension of a cutting edge. A double sound is produced by that marked "F," whereas "A" is of the more familiar type, the example illustrated being an ivory whistle used upwards of a hundred years ago.

From the whistle came the tin pipe capable of producing tunes in the hands of a skilful player. The whistle and pipe were in olden times associated with coaching days and inns. At one time it was customary for a whistle to be attached to the handles of spoons used on inn tables. Thirsty travellers blew the whistle when refreshment was required, and from that custom we get the common expression, "You may whistle for it." The horn, too, was a favourite instrument, and very {314}
necessary in days gone by, when it served many useful purposes.

The horn is probably the most ancient of all wind instruments. It was used at the Jewish feast of the Atonement, and the Romans used it for signalling purposes, their infantry carrying circular bronze horns. There is an interesting popular fable that horns were first introduced into Western Europe by the Crusaders; but that is incorrect, in that bronze horns have been found in prehistoric barrows. The horn was commonly used for summoning the folk mote in Saxon times, and in quite early days horns sounded in English homes on the arrival of guests. The hunting horn was found in every house of importance in mediæval times, and in the sixteenth century it had become semicircular. Great composers testify to the value of the horn in instrumental music, Handel and Mozart writing pieces specially adapted for its use.

Some very quaint old flutes are found among household instruments, the origin of the primitive pipe or flute being lost in the mists of antiquity. Among household curios old flutes beautifully inlaid stowed away in antique leather cases are interesting relics of former days. {315}

FIG. 89. OLD SPINET.
(*In the collection of Mr. Phillips, of Hitchin.*) {317}

Violins and Harps.

To many the chief charm of old instruments is found in the delicious tones and notes produced by an old violin, which, if the work of a well-known maker, commands a fancy price; among the most valuable being an authentic Stradivarius. Many old English violins were made in Soho in the eighteenth century, for that was the centre of the trade, although in still earlier days violin makers worked in Piccadilly. In Soho, too, horns, trumpets, drums, and guitars were made. The guitar, but in slightly altered form, was the popular home instrument played upon by Greek and Roman maidens. Many of the earlier European lutes were in reality guitars. Some beautifully inlaid specimens are occasionally met with. Of these there are many varieties in the Victoria and Albert Museum; among them there is a guitar lyre, on which is a mask of Apollo, an exact imitation of the lyre of the Ancients, which was formerly used by a member of the Prince Regent's Band at the Royal Aquarium, Brighton.

There is one other instrument which ranks high among the musical instruments of olden time found in British homes. It is the harp, heard to perfection in the drawing-room and the concert hall—an instrument upon which such beautiful melodies can be produced. There are many pretty legends about the harp heard with such delight and yet superstitious awe by the Vikings, who, on their return from Britain, told of the mysterious shores where mermaids of great beauty were said to rise from the seas, and, sitting upon the foam-lashed rocks, played upon their harps music of sweetest sound. American collectors to-day pay large sums for genuine Irish harps, which differ somewhat in size and form from those upon which Welsh maidens played. There are still a few such ancient instruments to be met with in Ireland and Wales. {318}

Of minor instruments there is not much to say—all are intensely interesting when they carry with them memories of former owners, for they are veritable mementoes of home amusements, pleasures, and delights. {319}

XVI

PLAY AND SPORT

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CHAPTER XVI

PLAY AND SPORT

Dolls—Toys—Old games—Outdoor amusements—Relics of sport.

It would appear that there have been amusements at all periods of the world's history, and that everywhere work and play have gone hand in hand together. The occupations of the nursery have been an intermixture of lessons and play; amusements, although not always of an elevating or educative character, have for the most part tended to develop and form the mind, as well as

strengthen the body. Recreation has played an important part in the upbringing of child and man, and when absent the advance has been retarded. The youth of all ages has found time for games and sports, which have enlivened the duties of manhood and womanhood by physical and mental pleasures. Even as age creeps on, men and women lessen the monotony of daily toil by indulging in indoor games and outside sports, suitable to their age and inclinations. As few games can be played or sport engaged in without accessories, it is not surprising that many relics of the play and sport of past generations are to be met with. {322}

Some of the appliances and apparatus which were acquired in the pursuit of these pleasures have become of antiquarian value, for many of them are curious and represent amusements almost forgotten. Others tell of the steady survival of the oldest games and amusements, but show the developments and alterations which have gone on in the methods of playing or in the appliances which have been invented to enhance the interest in those delights. These changes are seen more especially in sports and games of skill. As an instance, we may take one of the great manly sports, that of hunting game, a custom surviving from days when this England of ours was a wild and uncultivated forest and swamp, full of strange birds and many wild animals roamed therein. The flint-pointed arrow of primitive man was but the beginning in the evolution of arms. In the relics of these former plays and sports there is much to admire, and many objects to collect.

There is something very pathetic about the household relics of the playroom and the nursery. Many little articles of clothing and valueless toys and trinkets are retained by a fond mother years after her offspring has grown up. They remind her of her early married life, and very often of children who have played in the nursery but who never lived to grow up. These pathetic relics have been carefully preserved for at least one generation. Then their associations have been forgotten, and those into whose hands they fall probably know nothing of their origin; to them they are merely curios. A sympathetic feeling may have induced a new owner to retain them for a little while longer, although of no great intrinsic value; but oftener than not they have been kept as connecting links between the old and the new, and thus they have been handed on until their age alone would make them collectable curios in this day of reverence for all things old! {323}

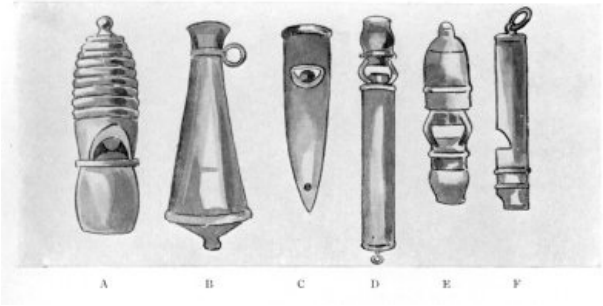

FIG. 90.—CURIOUS TYPES OF WHISTLES.

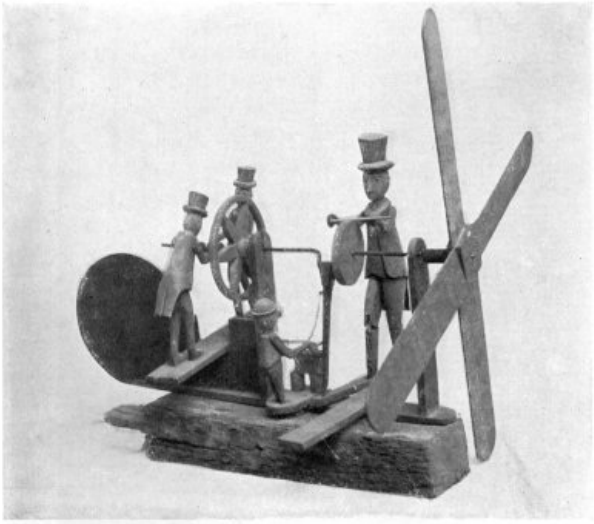

FIG. 91.—QUAINT OLD TOY.
(*In the possession of Mr. Phillips, of Hitchin.*) {325}

There has been a remarkable sequence in the toys of children of all generations, and of races far apart. The same games have been played, and the same toys used. Now and then a child more careful than usual preserves his or her toys when grown to man's or woman's estate; but such collections are rare. There are some noted collections, however, which have passed into the range of museum curios, grouped together as representative of the period when they were played with—authentic records of the playthings of that day. In Fig. 91 there is a remarkable old toy now in the diversified collection of household curios and antique furniture of Mr. Phillips, of the Manor House, Hitchin.

Dolls.

Probably the commonest toy is the doll, which children have ever regarded as the ideal plaything. The maternal instinct is strong in the youngest girl, and dolls are often looked upon as something more than mere toys. They are talked to, played with, and treated as if they were human beings. Their realism, at first imagined, seems to have grown up with their long use until a personality surrounds each one of the dolls in the nursery. Now and then a quaint doll is treasured as having {326} been the plaything of more than one generation, especially so the old wooden Dutch dolls, strong and lasting, which have in some instances been handed on as playthings, almost as family heirlooms.

The most famous collection of dolls played with by one child, and yet dressed to cover almost every period of English history—a veritable history of costume—is that famous collection in the London Museum, consisting of dolls dressed by and for the late Queen Victoria, who, doubtless, had unique opportunities of copying correctly the costumes of the Court, and of others less high in social status, during the reigns of the English sovereigns who had preceded her.

Few, if any, can hope to possess such a representative collection; there are many who can find, however, curiously dressed dolls which are very helpful in learning something of local costumes and useful instructors in research after the habits and occupations of people who may have lived in places and districts little known to the present generation.

Some children's toys are much older than they appear at first sight to be, for many very similar playthings were found in the playrooms of boys and girls who lived two thousand years ago. There are the dolls and quaint little figures played with by Greek and Roman children. Among the more familiar objects were little wooden tortoises, ducks, and pigs. Some were cleverly carved out of wood, and the arms and legs of dolls moved, much the same as the Dutch dolls of later days. Those children had chariots and horses of metal much the same as children have leaden {327} soldiers now. They trundled hoops of bronze, in some of them bells being placed in the centre, ringing as they ran along. Some of the toys of these little Roman and Greek maidens and youths were very elaborate, and must have belonged to the children of the wealthy, who, like modern parents, gave presents to them on "name" days.

Toys have always served the double purpose of amusement and education. Years before kindergarten methods were adopted—although unknown, probably, to parents—scientific and philosophic toys were doing good work, and driving home elementary truths. There were curious cylindrical mirrors, the inevitable kaleidoscope, and the water imps, an amusing toy, for the imps, inserted in a bowl or bottle of water, bobbed about in a curious way when the india-rubber cap which covered the neck was pressed and manipulated by the fingers. The modern picture theatre, with all its attractions to grown-up folks, was foreshadowed in the very primitive magic lantern, which threw a cloudy disc and an almost undiscernible picture, by the aid of an evil-smelling oil lamp, on an old sheet hung up in the nursery.

Old Games.

There are many curios reminding us of indoor games and winter amusements now obsolete, and of the change which has gone on in games still played. When we recall the number of new games which have been introduced during the last quarter of a century, it is surprising how few have {328} survived. New games come and go, and their accessories are discarded as but toys of the moment. Most of the popular games are those which have been handed down throughout the ages, many of them of great antiquity, especially scientific games and games of skill. Among these games, or rather the apparatus for playing them, are often curios, for they are quite different to and often more decorative than those used in playing similar games to-day. We are accustomed to plain leather or wood chess and draught boards and the regulation patterns of the men nowadays, but formerly much time was expended in decorating and enriching chess boards and men. The boards often served other purposes too, many being beautifully inlaid and reversible; thus the older game boards were fitted with slides for backgammon, provision being made for chess, merelles, and fox and geese, the oak of which they were often made being relieved with rich marqueterie (*tarsia*) of ebony, ivory, and silver.

It is not often that a collection of old chessmen is found among household curios, although it was not uncommon to discover among sundry ivory carvings a few odd pieces which had been secured on account of their beautiful carving. In India and China some very remarkable chessmen have been produced. The origin of the game is lost in antiquity, although it was played in the East at a very early period. It is said to have been introduced into Spain from Arabia, and to have been played by the Hindus more than a thousand years ago. It was certainly known in {329} this country before the Norman Conquest. Some few years ago a very remarkable collection of chessmen, such as may be seen in isolated sets or still more frequently represented by single pieces in cabinets of old ivories, was dispersed under the hammer in a London saleroom. There were Chinese sets in red and white, wonderful figures standing upon concentric balls; antique Persian sets in cream-coloured ivory decorated in colours and gold, kings and queens on elephants, knights on horses, and bishops on camels; Burmese sets with royal personages seated on chairs of state; and some very remarkable English porcelain, Wedgwood ware, and Minton pottery sets.

Several finds of Scandinavian chessmen, made, probably, in the twelfth century, have been made in the island of Lewis. From these and other sets met with in other places much has been learned about the evolution in the game.

The queen does not appear to have been introduced into the game until the eleventh century. The castle has undergone many changes; its older name of "rook" was derived from the Persian word *rokh*, a hero. No doubt all the pieces were then carved personalities, well understood from king to pawn. In the modern forms of Staunton and London Club patterns the knight alone retains its semblance in the horse's head—a poor substitute for the beautifully carved warrior on horseback seen in some of the older sets.

Draughts, or dames, is also a game of antiquity; and in the British Museum there is a set said to {330}
date back to the Saxon period. Some of the old boards are interesting relics, and the sets of carved draughtsmen, now scarce, are beautiful works of art.

Backgammon is one of the older kindred games, frequently played on the interior of the chess board which was for that purpose marked with twelve points or flèches in alternate colours. In this game dice were used, and some of the old dice cups are very prettily decorated.

Cribbage played with cards and a board is said to be essentially an English game. Some very remarkable cribbage boards were made many years ago, many of metal, others of wood and ivory; one exceptionally interesting piece, a brass cribbage board, in the Victoria and Albert Museum, is engraved: "MR. CHRISTR ELLIOTT AT WINBORROW GREEN, SUSSEX 1768."

Cards, of which there are so many curious types among the old examples found in many homes, were introduced into the West of Europe from the East about the fourteenth century. At first they were hand drawn and coloured, then printed from wood blocks, being subsequently printed from blocks and plates engraved on the types which were gradually standardized. Some very interesting collections of old cards have been made, one of the most complete being that of Lady Charlotte Schreiber, now in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum.

In the days when card playing was at its height many fine brass counter trays and curious card trays were fashioned in brass and copper. Some of these may very well be collected, and are {331}
suitable receptacles for old metal counters, of which there are many varieties. Some of these counters were made by the diesinkers who helped tradesmen to provide themselves with token change, and they bear a striking resemblance to the contemporary metallic currency. Others were chiefly hand engraved, and often sold in small metal and silver boxes, those dating from the time of Queen Anne being the most interesting. The most popular card counters in the early days of the nineteenth century were brass copies of the spade-ace gold guinea, which they closely resembled, and it is feared, when gilt, were not infrequently palmed off as genuine gold.

Outdoor Amusements.

The outdoor games practised when household curios were being fashioned necessitated fewer accessories than such games do to-day, and many of them were crude and obviously the work of amateurs. Yet the same games were being played and possibly enjoyed as much, although the sport was rougher!

When we think of winter amusements in the past somehow we conjure up pictures of hard frosts and crisp snow, although rain, damp, and fog were probably frequent visitors in Old England. Some of the games can be traced back to very early days—such, for instance, as skating, many ancient skates having been found. There is a remarkable contrast between the beautifully made skates now used on the comparatively rare occasions when the ice bears and the roller skates used all the year round, to those curious bone skates, so very primitive in their construction, {332}
examples of which are to be found in several local museums. In the Hull Museum, among the Market Weighton antiquities, there is a choice collection from East Yorkshire; one, made from the cannon bone of a horse, is smooth and well polished, having seen some active use, evidently belonging to some skater in the fifteenth or sixteenth century.

The bone skates were fastened on to the feet much the same as metal skates, but they had no cutting edges, and consequently the skater carried a stick shod with an iron point, and by its aid propelled himself forward. Fitzstephen, writing in the time of Edward II, describes the ponds at Moorfields where the citizens of London skated. The ponds have long been dried up and built over; it is there, however, where, during excavations, some very fine examples of the old bone skates have been found.

Relics of Old Sport.

Among the relics of old sport met with are the curious and often beautifully embroidered hoods of white leather used in the days of hawking. These pretty little hoods, which were placed over the head of the hawk when carried on the wrist to the hunting field, were often embroidered in panels and furnished with braces for tying round the hawk's head. In the British Museum there is a curious silver lock-ring for a hawk engraved with arms and owner's name, apparently of seventeenth-century workmanship. No doubt the real purport of such curios is often overlooked, for not infrequently hawks' hoods have been found amongst old dolls' clothing, having been given {333}
to children in later years as playthings.

Guns, Pistols, and Flasks.

Eastern weapons have been brought over to this country in large numbers, some of them very ancient. It is said that among some of the Arab tribes it is no uncommon thing to meet with

swords and daggers of antique form, richly damascened, and sometimes with jewelled hilts, made a thousand years or more ago, and a few years ago Crusaders' relics could be met with in the East. Many of these knives have silica blades, some of the handles being of jade. Those of grey jade are often piqué with gold, others, of ivory, being inlaid with jewels.

There is not very much to interest in old guns of English make, for few found in houses date back beyond the commencement of the nineteenth century. Among them, however, are flint-locks and here and there an old wheel-lock. The pistols met with among household curios are often handsome and have been preserved in leather cases, carefully stowed away. Some of them record the days of duelling, others the dangers of the road, when highway robbers lurked in every wood, and many a family coach was waylaid and its occupants robbed of their jewels and their purses of gold. To those interested in sporting, and familiar with the breech-loading guns of the present day, much interest attaches to the old powder flasks which were once necessary accompaniments of sportsmen. There are many beautifully engraved, embossed, and decorated flasks in museums, {334} some of the early seventeenth-century specimens being made of boxwood, others of ivory, frequently ornamented with hunting scenes. In Fig. 92 is shown a curious flint-lock powder tester, then also regarded as one of the essential accessories of the sportsman's outfit. The copper powder flask illustrated in Fig. 93 is now in the Hull Museum. It is specially interesting in that the plain copper work is engraved in the centre with its original owner's monogram—"W R" in script. This flask, made about the year 1750, was evidently a keepsake, for engraved round the circular disc is the legend "Keep this for Joseph's sake."

In the Victoria and Albert Museum at South Kensington there are some more elaborate specimens, two of which are illustrated in Fig. 94. They are magnificent examples of metal repoussé work—a favourite decoration in the eighteenth century, copied in more inexpensive forms in the nineteenth century by makers of sporting accessories, who stamped them from dies and reproduced some of the old hunting scenes.

A review of the outdoor sports and relics of former days would scarcely be complete without some mention of swords and rapiers, which were once commonly worn, along with pistols, alas! too frequently in use when a hasty word called forth a challenge to a duel. Many of these old swords are rusty, but they frequently show marks of former use. They are needed no longer by civilians in this country, and take their places in trophies of arms, forming important features in the decorative curios of the household. {335}

FIG. 92.—A POWDER TESTER.
FIG. 93.—A PRIMING FLASK.
(*In the Municipal Museum, Hull.*)

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XVII

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CHAPTER XVII

MISCELLANEOUS

Dower chests—Medicine chests—Old lacquer—The tool chest—Egyptian curios—Ancient spectacles—Curious chinaware—Garden curios—The mounting of curios—Obsolete household names.

There are many household curios which cannot be classified under the headings of the foregoing chapters. They represent well-known features in every home, and yet each little group has an individuality of its own. Some may say that the main features of house-furnishing have been left out of consideration, and that they are the most interesting household curios when age and disuse have come upon them. Household furniture, however, has been fully dealt with in the "Chats" series in the two volumes entitled "Chats on Old English Furniture," and "Chats on Cottage and Farmhouse Furniture," to which books those interested in the curiosities of cabinet-making and village carpentry are referred. Yet notwithstanding the completeness of those works there are a few objects which have so entirely passed into the range of household curios, and their uses were so entirely apart from present-day furniture, that some of them are specially noted in the following paragraphs, together with a few other isolated antiques. {340}

Dower Chests.

If there is one piece of furniture above another that is surrounded with a halo of romance, surely it is the dower chest! We can picture the incoming of the coffer in all the newness of hand polish, fresh from the hands of the village carpenter or the retainer who had wrought the gnarled old oak grown on the estate for a favourite daughter of his lord—that chest which was to be packed full of fragrant linen, between which was laid sweet lavender, and richly embroidered garments for the bride, who, with her personal belongings stowed away therein, was to pass from the parental home to her newly wedded and unknown life. There are ancient chests full of historic memories, such as those in which the wealth of monarchs has been stored, like that in Knaresborough Castle, which, according to legend and some reference in old deeds, came over with William the Conqueror. In the Castle Museum there is another chest made for Queen Philippa in 1333—a veritable dower chest.

Some of the older chests have had loops for poles by which they could be carried about; but such were more correctly treasure chests. The dower chests usually remained in the home of the bride, and in time became her receptacle for bedding and other household stores, the little tray or corner box for jewels and trinkets being disused and eventually done away with altogether. {341} The evolution of the chest until it became a cabinet or a chest of drawers is a story for the lover of old furniture to tell, but the dower chest in its earlier forms is a curio rich in legend and folklore. It may interest American readers to record that many of the oldest specimens in the States were first used as packing cases of unusual strength, gifts from the old folks at home, when colonists in Jacobean days crossed the Atlantic. Curiously enough, American craftsmen copied them and maintained the purity of the old English style long after the makers of English dower chests had been influenced by Dutch and French design and inlay.

Medicine Chests.

Some of the early English medicine chests, the foundation of which is of wood, are covered with tapestry, others with green satin, sometimes ornamented with floral devices made of puffed satin, overlaid and outlined with gold thread. Medicine chests varied in size, but few households were "furnished" without a fitting receptacle for home-made recipes for simple ailments, such as were much resorted to in the past. The chests were usually well fitted with bottles and phials, and with glass stoppers or silver or pewter tops. Many of the medicines had been prescribed by local practitioners, and were regarded as sovereign remedies to be used on all occasions; others were family recipes held in high repute. In such chests there was often a drawer or compartment containing bleeding cups and lancet—a remedy often resorted to when an illness could not be diagnosed. {342}

Old Lacquer.

The beautiful red lacquer work is getting scarce, although it has had a long run, for it is more than twelve hundred years since the Japanese learned the secret of making it from the Coreans, who in their turn had it from the Chinese. The secret of producing in China and Japan lacquer which cannot be imitated in other countries lies in the *rhus vernificifera* which flourishes in those localities. It is the gum of that tree commonly called the lacquer-tree, which when taken fresh and applied to the object it is intended to lacquer turns jet-black on exposure to the sun, drying with great hardness. It will thus be seen that although French and English lacquers have been

very popular, the imitation lacquer applied can have neither the effect nor the durability of the natural gum which sets so hard, and in the larger and more important objects can be applied again and again until quite a depth of lacquer is obtained, sometimes encrusted over with jewels and other materials embedded in it.

The best English lacquer was made in this country between the years 1670 and 1710, and was a very successful imitation of the Oriental. At that time and during the following century very many tea caddies, trays, screens, trinket boxes, and even furniture, were imported; and it was those which English workmen copied, gradually increasing the variety of household goods for which that material was so suitable. {343}

FIG. 94.—OLD POWDER FLASKS.
(*In the Victoria and Albert Museum.*)

Old English lacquer differed from the more modern papier-maché in that instead of the pulp being composed entirely of paper, glued together and pressed, it was composed of a basis of wood, covered over with a black lacquer, on which the design was painted in colours. It was made under considerable difficulties, in that it had to compete with the imported Oriental wares which were made in China and Japan under more favourable natural conditions. {345}

The art of japanning was revived in England late in the eighteenth century, and some remarkable pieces appear to have been the work of amateurs who painted and gilded so-called lacquer work, tea caddies, and jewelled caskets. It must be remembered that the art of japanning was looked upon at one time as an accomplishment, for about the year 1700 many gentlewomen were taught the art.

French artists took up the Oriental style, and produced some very successful lacquer work, striking out in an entirely distinct style, which, as Vernis Martin decoration, became famous. The varnish or lacquer forming the foundation for those delightful little pictures was not unlike in effect the Oriental lacquer which to some extent it was intended to imitate.

In the early nineteenth century lacquering as an art fell into disrepute, and such decorations were largely associated with the commoner metal wares, stoved and lacquered by the so-called japanning process carried out in Birmingham and other places, although there is now some admiration shown by collectors for small trays, bread baskets, candle boxes, and snuffer trays of metal, japanned and decorated by hand in colours and much fine gold pencilling. {346}

The Tool Chest.

There have been amateur mechanics in all ages, and among the household curios are many old tools suggestive of having been made when the carpenter had plenty of time on his hands to decorate his tools with carvings, and frequently to make up his own kit. Thus old planes and braces were evidently the work of men who possessed some humour and skill, too, for some of the carved decoration is quite grotesque. There is a fine collection of old tools made and used in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries on view in one of our museums. There is a carpenter's plough, dated 1750, moulding planes and skew-mouthed fillisters of beechwood, and a router plane of carved hornbeam. The modern hand brace becomes more realistic, and its origin understood at a glance when we examine the old hand brace of turned and carved boxwood, dated 1642, in that collection. The part where the bit is fitted is literally a hand, carved out of solid wood, and the curious crank indicates an imaginary twist in the arm, perhaps suggested by some carpenter who was able to manipulate his tools in a way not commonly understood, thus giving to future carpenters a most useful tool. {347}

Egyptian Curios.

Among the collectable curios of old households are many antiquities from foreign lands. Perhaps the most interesting, in that they afford us examples of the prototypes of household antiques as they were known to a nation possessing an early civilization, polish, and refinement, are those which have been discovered recently in Egyptian tombs. Some representative examples may be seen in the British Museum. There are toilet requisites including mirrors, combs, and even wigs and wig boxes, as well as a glass tube for stibium or eye paint. There are ivory pillows or head rests, models of the ghostly boats of the underworld, and a vast variety of children's toys, including wooden dolls with strings of mud beads to represent hair, porcelain elephants, and wooden cats; and there are children's balls made of blue glazed porcelain, and of leather stuffed with chopped straw. There are many games and amusements, such as stone draught boards, and draughtsmen in porcelain and wood. There are bells of bronze and some remarkable musical instruments like a harp, the body of which is in the form of a woman; and there are reed flutes and whistles and cymbals such as were carried by priestesses. There are curious ivory amulets, quaintly carved spoons, ivory boxes, and even theatre tickets. Necklaces and pendants and other articles of adornment are plentiful, for the Egyptian maidens possessed much jewellery—bracelets, rings, and necklaces. One very exceptionally fine relic of this far-off age is a toilet box {348} complete with vases of unguents, eye paint, comb, and bronze shell on which to mix unguents, and other trinkets. Many such antiquities find their way into museums and private collections of household curios, and are useful and interesting for purposes of comparison, telling of customs which change not, and of the many connecting links which exist between the past and the present.

Ancient Spectacles.

It is truly astonishing how many ancient spectacles, which to collectors of such things would be veritable treasures, lie neglected and allowed to "knock about" until broken or otherwise damaged. Those mostly discovered are the heavy brass and silver-rimmed spectacles of about one hundred years ago, some very interesting specimens of which are to be seen in several of the larger local museums.

Spectacles are of very respectable age, although they cannot be traced back to the ancient peoples, for the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, notwithstanding that they polished glass and rock crystal and possessed much scientific lore, were ignorant of their use as aids to sight.

It is said that the credit of the discovery of how to make use of artificial aids to defective sight must be accorded to Roger Bacon, who in his book *Opus Majus*, published in the thirteenth century, mentioned magnifying glasses as being useful to old people to make them see better. True spectacles are said to have been fashioned in 1317 by Salvino degli Armati, a Florentine {349} nobleman. At first they were convex; indeed, no mention of concave glasses for shortsighted persons was made until towards the middle of the sixteenth century. From that time onward there were developments, and among the household curios are to be found silver, brass, and tortoiseshell rims, and glasses of more or less utility.

Curious China Ware.

Old china and pottery have been fully dealt with by many specialist writers, but there are some household curios made of porcelain, china, and earthenware which cannot be omitted from this survey of household curios. Foremost among these are the now scarce Toby jugs, made at so many of the famous potteries. In a large collection the variations are at once recognized; yet the same idea seems to have run through the minds of the artists in fashioning these jugs, so essentially typical of the age in which they were made and used. Among the Sunderland jugs are many variations both in size and colouring; they were rich in colours, too, and look exceedingly well on an old cabinet.

The posset cups of silver were supplemented by tygs and posset cups and many-handled drinking cups of early Staffordshire make. The brown and yellow slip decoration of this ware is a striking characteristic. All the early seventeenth-century ale drinking cups like the tygs had handles, and in those days of conviviality the double or multiplied handle served a useful purpose, for the vessels were in use when it was the custom of the ale-house for several friends to drink out of one {350} vessel, just as in more polite society and on public occasions the loving cup was passed round.

Some of the so-called portrait busts and statuettes of the eighteenth century are especially interesting to collectors. There are figures to suit all; musicians may delight in that of Handel; others in the busts of Wesley and Whitfield; explorers in the statue of Benjamin Franklin made about 1770, and some in that of John Wilks seated near an old column of a still earlier date. There is also a cleverly modelled figure of Geoffrey Chaucer. One of the best known groups is that of the "Vicar and Moses," made by Wood, of Burslem.

Garden Curios.

It is said that garden craft, like most other forms of art, came from the East; that the cultivation of gardens commenced in Egypt, Persia, and Assyria, travelling westward through Greece and Rome; and in some of the early English gardens which horticulturists are so fond of copying to-day there are traces of Eastern influence still remaining.

Although the garden is the place where we expect to find flowers, foliage, and perhaps fruit and

vegetables, it has always been associated with home life, and some of the charms of domestic comradeship owe their greatness to the garden and pleasance.

It has always been the aim of the professional and the amateur gardener to furnish the lawn and flower-beds with appropriate settings, some of which have become very quaint in the eyes of twentieth-century horticulturists. {351}

The Egyptians had their trellised bowers, and their tiny pools of clear water. The Greeks, however, were fortunate in having undulated and even hilly ground to cultivate, and their gardens were much more picturesque than the level ground of Egypt, although the Orientals built terraces, and by artificial means enhanced the beauty of their gardens. The adornment of gardens with statuary comes to us from Greece, and many modern reproductions of ancient Greek statues are regarded as the curios of the modern garden. Delightful, indeed, are some of the statuettes in stone and lead representing Aphrodite and the Graces. The Roman gardens were magnificent in their miniature temples, replicas of which are found in the old Georgian summer-houses, such as may be seen at Kew, and in many private grounds, dating from that period. The Romans were lovers of roses, and had many charming rose bowers, curiously and cunningly formed.

The dawn of gardening on some approved plan, and then ornamenting the portions not covered with greenery, began in monastic days. The oldest of the occupations of civilized man, it was long held in high repute, and many worthy men have posed as amateurs. Indeed, there have been Royal gardeners, among the most familiar being Edward I and Queen Elizabeth. From Tudor times onward the once waste land in the immediate vicinity of castles and palaces was cultivated, and the gardens of the nobility along the Strand in London were full of beautiful stonework and statuettes. A writer in the sixteenth century, describing an English garden of his day, wrote: "Every garden of account hath its fish pond, its maze, and its sundials." {352}

Many fine old fountains or miniature fishponds remain, and sundials are among the curios associated with the outdoor life of the home. The garden houses of the eighteenth century included a bowling green or court, viewed from the terrace; and towards the end of that period many leaden figures were cast, the favourite being replicas of Roman statuary dedicated to such deities as Bacchus, Venus, Neptune, and Minerva. These lead statues have been collected by dealers during the last few years. Some of them are really very beautifully formed, although in many instances the wear and tear of a couple of centuries has covered them over with scratches and indentations. A few years ago lead statues received little consideration from their owners, and the children made them targets for stone-throwing. They are thought more of now, and at several recent sales lead statuettes and vases have sold for considerable sums.

Sometimes ancient lead cisterns are seen outside old houses; many of these and even rain-water spout heads, beautifully moulded and cast, are among the household curios for which there is some call among collectors.

The Mounting of Curios.

A miscellaneous assortment of curios displayed without any regard to their proper setting has just the same effect as a badly framed picture, or a painting with an inappropriate frame. Sundry curios may be made to look charming when properly shown in a glass-topped table or a suitable case, their value as home ornaments being materially increased. Indeed, there are many beautiful objects which look nothing unless properly framed. The Wedgwood cameo gems so varied and so very minutely tooled require proper display; according to their colours so should they be arranged on a velvet or cloth background with an ample margin to separate them. A group of miniatures looks nothing unless in suitable setting or mount. Much of the beauty of old china is lost because it is simply laid out without a colour scheme. A cup and saucer look very much better when shown on a stand, so that the saucer can be seen and every detail of the cup examined, the richness of the colouring inside or out, as the case may be, being thrown up by the ebonized stand on which it is placed. Carved ivories should certainly be shown with a dark setting. In a similar way Oriental plaques and even smaller plates with light backgrounds are set off to the best advantage when shown in dark ebony frames. The Orientals know the value of framework perhaps more than any other people, and among the curios they have sent over to this country are appropriately carved frames and stands. The almost priceless ginger jars when placed upon carved-wood stands, for which the Chinese are so famous, are beautiful indeed, the contrast of the black and blue against the black base being very striking. Indeed, much of the carved furniture of the Orientals has been specially designed as a framework for mother-o'-pearl and gem ornaments. The rare jade carvings in black ebony screens, and the marvellous carving of the larger screens are but appropriate settings to the painted and needlework pictures so rich in colours and gold. In Fig. 57 we illustrate a very remarkable piece in which the artist has expended his wonderful skill in providing a suitable stand or frame for a very beautiful early porcelain plate. Every detail of the carving is worthy of close inspection. This beautiful piece was included in a collection of jade, cloisonné enamels, and carved furniture gathered together in Java some years ago by a well-known collector of Chinese and Oriental curios. Now and then such pieces are to be seen in the shops of West End dealers. But it would be difficult indeed to find one so characteristic of the Chinese carver's art as the one shown. {353} {354}

Obsolete Household Names.

Most household goods and both useful and ornamental home appointments used at the present time are the outcome of progress and development, and their names have changed but little. The change has been in style, material, and manufacture rather than in newness of purpose. It is true that in modern household economy some of the present-day household utensils are the outcome of modern invention, having no similarity in form to the simpler primitive contrivances which they have superseded. Thus, for instance, the vacuum cleaner has little in its appearance to associate it with the old-fashioned carpet brush, neither has the modern knife cleaner much in {355} common with the old knife board. There are some articles, however, which have become quite obsolete, and their names are fast disappearing from inventories of household goods, and, like the older antiquarian relics, are likely soon to be forgotten. In the foregoing chapters mention has been made of the collectable objects of household use, dating from the period of bronze to modern times, and no doubt there are many other articles which have entirely disappeared on account of their perishable nature, or from their very character, there being nothing to suggest their retention. It may be useful for purposes of reference to note the following articles of furniture, kitchen utensils, and mechanical contrivances, which were mentioned in a book published about one hundred years ago—house furnishings, about the ancient uses of which we hear nothing at the present time.

Ample—An ointment box, formerly carried by a medical man.

Apple-grate—A sixteenth-century cradle of iron in which to roast apples.

Bombard—A large leathern bottle for carrying beer; a term also applied to ancient ale-barrels.

Canister—The ancient canister was a pannier or basket, the name being appropriated to its modern use when tea came into the market.

Chafing-dish—The name appropriated to modern cooking vessels was originally applied to a dish upon which perfumes were burnt, and in Roman times was an ensign of honour.

Comfit boxes—Boxes divided into compartments in which were rare spices, handed round with dessert.

Finger-guard—Horn finger-guards were formerly used by writing masters to protect their nails when nibbing pens. {356}

Fire-screen—Fire-screens are noted as early as the fourteenth century, long before they were filled with needlework; they were made of wicker, described by a sixteenth-century writer as "a little wicker skrene sett in a frame of walnut tree."

Scrip—Scrips were hung from girdles, and differed, among the chief varieties being the shepherd's scrip, the pilgrim's scrip, and the traveller's scrip, a kind of purse or wallet.

Standish—The old name for an ink horn or vessel, afterwards applied to the stand or dish, or, as we call it now, inkstand, which contained the box or vessel for ink, and another for blotting powder.

Trencher—A wooden platter, a term more particularly applied to the beautiful hand-painted circular boards for sweetmeats or cakes.

In conclusion, in the foregoing pages most of the best-known household curios—regarded as such by the collector—have been passed in review. The list is, however, by no means exhausted, for as search is made among the relics of former days many little-known objects come to light, and as isolated examples find their way into public and private collections. {357}

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