

# EXAMPLES OF SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURY DOMESTIC SILVER

*With Interpretations of Same  
by George Christian Gebelein*



*A* REPRINT of an article  
written by Irene Sargent,  
Litt. D., Professor at Syracuse  
University, for the September  
1922 issue of THE KEYSTONE,  
with additional illustrations.



# Examples of Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Domestic Silver

*With Interpretations of Same by George Christian Gebelein*

By IRENE SARGENT, Litt. D.  
Professor at Syracuse University



INFINITE riches in a narrow room." This phrase of Marlowe, the Elizabethan, describes as none other could do the treasures in domestic utensils in silver contained in a workshop of the historic quarter of Beacon Hill, Boston. The environment enhances so greatly the effect of the objects there displayed, or which are there in the making, as to deserve a brief description. Both the quarter of the city and the shop itself, with its contents, have an old-time, old-world character at once charming and disturbing to the visitor—disturbing because he loses for a brief moment his sense of time and place. To the eastward, beyond the not distant Common, lie the mercantile and banking districts, ultra modern in their aspects. But here the narrow street at the nearer end leads to the picturesque river embankment of the Charles; while northerly, it follows the sharp ascent of the hill, crowned by the bronze-gold dome of the State House, built by the architect Bullfinch for a smaller Boston. The street, like many a distinguished elderly face, bears the marks of the fast-revolving, relentless wheel of fortune. Long ago the place of residence of distinguished citizens, it experienced a middle period of decline, during which a part of its length became an alignment of stables; one of these, in turn, having been developed into a member of the series of houses in Italian palace style, for which the immediate locality is at present noted. The palace, faithful to its special type, presents an enigmatic front, and its neighbor toward the river embankment is the low house whose second and upper story is the shop of the silversmith. The almost conversational tones of hand-directed hammers and punches encourage the visitor as he mounts

the dark, steep staircase with narrow treads, and, if a frequenter of the place, he may recall the story of the trembling old lady who once braved its (to her) perilous passage on a sentimental journey involving family tradition and affection. Wearing garments which tended to conceal her station, she carried a small tin "dipper" of Colonial fashion which, preserved through generations of her kindred, was then used to measure food stuffs in the kitchen of her well-married daughter. The "dipper" she had cunningly removed from its time-honored place and functions, that she might have it reproduced in silver to serve as a holiday gift, and she urged upon the craftsman the utmost haste, lest the original should be missed by those who used it so frequently.

But the jealous guardians of tradition—sometimes jealous to the point of pathos or even of grotesqueness—form only one of the many classes of persons who visit the Gebelein Shop. Besides these conservers of old objects and customs, there are also rich collectors in search of pieces signed by famous smiths, English, French or Colonial American; there are students coming, not to acquire—for their purses are lean—but rather to observe, that they may later instruct; finally, and in considerable number, those who seek expert judgment for the benefit of museums or individuals upon works of doubtful authenticity. And, in passing, it may be added that one of the most valuable qualities of Mr. Gebelein is his ability to pronounce between the fraudulent and the real and to attribute nameless, although undoubted, "antiques" to their proper makers. Furthermore, however enviable this power may be as a personal possession distinguishing its owner, its public and civic usefulness is still more important.



since it acts as a safeguard for the inexperienced purchaser and the would-be student, while it restrains the boldness of falsifiers.

Often called to discriminate between the originals and the imitations in very costly and extensive collections, Mr. Gebelein, it is said, never tempers justice with mercy, and, if necessary, does not hesitate to wound the pride of ownership. Nor is he reluctant to reveal the means used by the special class of counterfeiters whom he confronts in his judgments: an interesting example of such disclosures being that a recent sterling piece of standard manufacture may be altered by processes known to silversmiths sufficiently to meet the most essential stylistic demands, and the stamp of the company crudely effaced to make room for the fraudulent mark of Paul Revere



*Tankard Originally belonging to the Sargent Family Who Were Established in Essex County, Massachusetts, Before the Middle of the Seventeenth Century. The Body of the Piece is the Work of John Coney (1655-1722); the Original and Flatter Cover being Lost, it was Replaced by the Present Domical Form; the Spout is an Even Later Addition and Due to the Temperance Movement of 1825.*

or of some other of the craftsmen who were his contemporaries.

Although thus awkwardly accomplished, this deceit, together with others equally palpable, has not seldom been successful and has entailed much profit to the one who devised it; so that the action in itself proved the need of experts to police artistic matters. It also reveals the absolute baseness of the one who would reduce the deliberate, patient, intelligent, ingenious work of enlightened citizens to the level of a sheet of metal cut and shaped mechanically by a few blows of an applied inconsiderate force.

From an opposite point of view, counterfeits are really compliments paid to originals of great merit. If so judged, they become agents of legitimate propaganda, since they stimulate the acquisition of knowledge, they tend to increase the patronage of public libraries, and, in the instance of our present subject, they, in the name of their originals, turn the individual interested backward to a time of rigid morals, of "English undefiled" and of good government. Again Evil is self-destructive, even though the process of elimination be slow, while the beneficent effects of a counterfeit which has been exposed to public contempt are permanent. Those persons favored by fortune, whose desires are toward Old English, First Empire French or American domestic silver plate, have but to be guided by the caption of that obsolete law of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts: "Caveat Emptor" (Let the purchaser beware!)

As to the well-trained or well-directed buyers of old domestic silver, especially that of American production, Mr. Gebelein regards them as wise investors with their eyes fixed on the future. And his opinion must be honored as one formed from the experience of a master craftsman of the first degree of excellence; as that of a critic acquainted with the entire literature of his subject; above all, as that of an observer in constant contact with the pulse of the market. From this, his strong position, he ventures the prophecy that, at a not too distant day, the prices to be commanded by chosen works of our Colonial silversmiths will make those recently paid in New York for old English plate seem modest indeed. At present—he further comments—an English piece produced at the beginning of the Restoration (1660) has practically the same value as a corresponding American object dated a century later; while a further ground for belief in a future sharp advance in the market prices of Colonial silver is reasonably based on the





*Two Originals: Bowl and Cover in Silver, Eighteenth Century, by John Vernon of New York City.  
French Coffee Pot in Silver; Period of the First Empire (1804-1814)*

fact that so little of it is known to exist, if its volume be compared with the British.

The pieces here presented in illustration all belong in style to the above mentioned brilliant periods of the craft; the majority being originals, while the remainder are either interpretations or adaptations made by Mr. Gebelein for wealthy amateurs who have been willing to allow him the time necessary for the use of the old technique and devices now prohibited by

the pressure of competition. The modern tea services have gone forward to their destinations, but the historical objects are assembled in the workshop, with the exception of the most valuable of the collection, which is the John Coney brazier, because of the period and the reputation of its maker.

To understand the beauty of these pieces, as quite apart from their properly regulated market value, at least some slight preliminary study is required.



First, a careful reading of authoritative manuals, obtainable in even small public libraries. Afterward, a few visits to great collections: notably that of Judge Clearwater, in the Metropolitan Museum, New York City, consisting of more than six thousand objects, or to the very much smaller, but infinitely precious, assemblage of loaned church and domestic plate at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. The former of these collections may be termed cosmopolitan, as illustrating the European influences which impressed the craftsmen of the early American production at the four centers, Boston, Newport, New York and Philadelphia; the latter is provincial, since it is largely composed of the major works of Bostonian silversmiths. It has, therefore, the value of an interpretative text-book for the comprehension of the accompanying illustrations, showing the principles which were the foundations of the school, and the varia-

tions in treatment which were the distinctive marks, the sign manual, of each master.

As certain of the Bostonian smiths here represented were born in the seventeenth century and subject in their youth to its conditions, one must recall the advantages enjoyed by them over their similars in the other colonies.

The first of these advantages was the more equal distribution of wealth; while scarcely less important were the liberal commercial laws which permitted the Massachusetts colonists to trade with the West Indies and not alone with the mother country, as the men of the New Netherland were forced to do. Into the port of Boston, therefore, there flowed a rich steady stream of Spanish coin, which, after the depreciation of the Colonial currency (first issued in 1690), quickened the impulse to accumulate silver in manufactured



*Modern Interpretations of Early American Silver by George Christian Gebelein, Boston Metalsmith: Three Silver Porringers with Handles (left-hand Example) Copied from Paul Revere the Younger (1735-1818); and (right-hand Example) Jeremiah Dummer (1645-1718); the Handle of the Middle Example is an Original Design by George C. Gebelein. Based upon Eighteenth Century Motifs. Below: Child's Bread-and-Milk Service, Reproducing Old Forms and Technique*



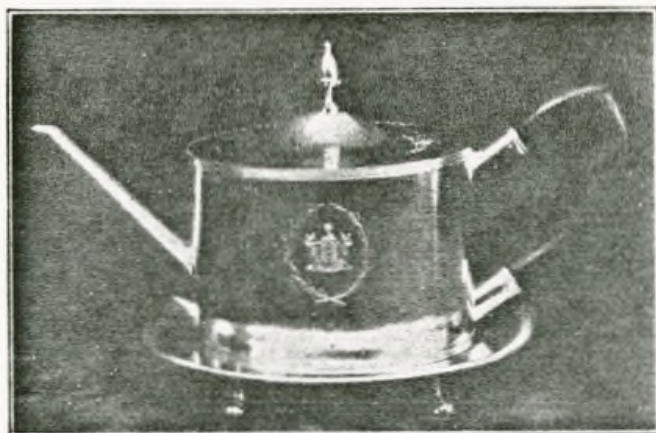
form as an investment or security, which, by way of the melting-pot and the mint, could be easily recon-verted into the medium of circulation. A third great advantage was the frequent importation of fine English silver by the most opulent colonists, although their action was naturally not appreciated by the domestic smiths whose announcements in the Boston newspapers of the time occasionally assumed the form of complaints and even of polite sarcasm against the patrons of English industry.

All the early American silver is substantial in weight, simple and most structural in form; every curve and the slightest ornament having a reason for its existence and its precise position. Any notable piece of this period of production is positively architectural, and, when compared with a British contemporary, it differs from it in the same way that a design for a country house by Thomas Jefferson differs from that of an English Georgian like Vanbrugh, the architect of Blenheim Castle. The American smiths made no attempt to imitate the baronial plate of the mother country. They were content to set forth in clear, striking terms the historic principles of their craft. They scorned all labor-saving subterfuges and delighted to display their mastership in delicate devices, such as the "blind-hinge" and the "bayonet-catch." The men of this craft (at first styled "goldsmiths") were important persons in all the colonies, holding important civic positions and, especially in Boston, church offices, since the right to exercise a skilled trade as a master was dependent upon active membership in a religious body.

The dean or earliest of these smiths has been qualified as a merchant prince, from the evidence offered by his own diary, some time since published by the Massachusetts Historical Society. This man was John Hull (1624-1683), who was born in Leicestershire, England, but four years after the landing of the Pilgrims and who arrived in Boston in 1635, five years subsequent to the foundation of the city. He was made a Freeman in 1649 and three years later, when the General Court (Colonial Legislature), defying the Crown, voted to coin shillings and their fractions, Hull was appointed mint-master, with the right to retain as his own one shilling of every twenty coined. To this considerable private revenue he added the gains derived from his commerce as a ship-owner with the West Indies; so that, at times of depression, he was able to finance the Colony. He married his daughter to a Chief Justice and he shared his profits as a metalsmith with his friend Robert

Sanderson, whose name appears joined with his own on several fine still existing pieces of plate.

One of these is a chalice or communion cup, owned by the First Church of Boston (richest in historic silver of the religious organizations of the city) and now preserved in the Museum of Fine Arts. It



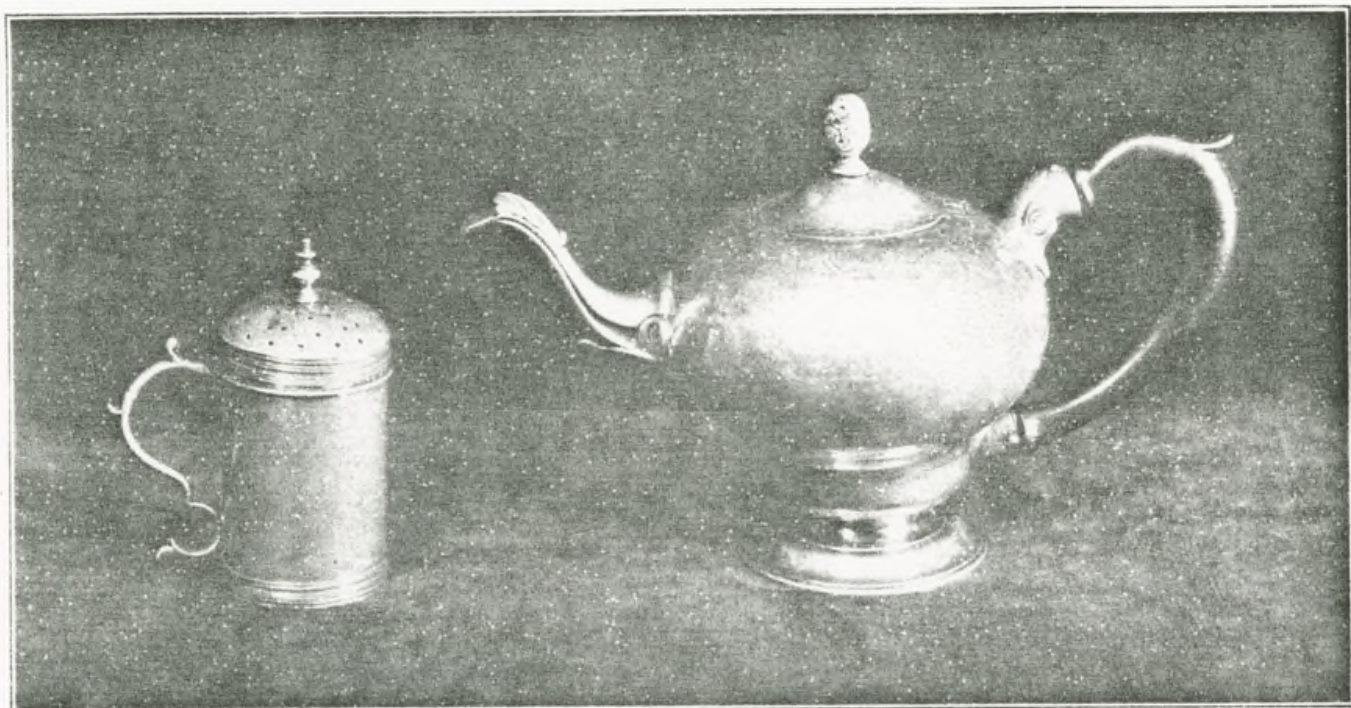
*Member of a Tea Service Designed by George C. Gebelein,  
in Georgian Style*

is a beautiful example of both design and technique. Rising from a base round and ample, its baluster stem is treated with four very well defined rings and a pear-shaped bulb or knosp for easy grasping; the latter being set between the pairs of rings. The bowl is high and capacious, with an almost imperceptibly expanding curve most agreeable to follow. The height of this piece is but five and a half inches, yet, owing to the justness of its proportions, it appears, like the perfect Parthenon, a temple to be entered, rather than an object to be held in the hand.

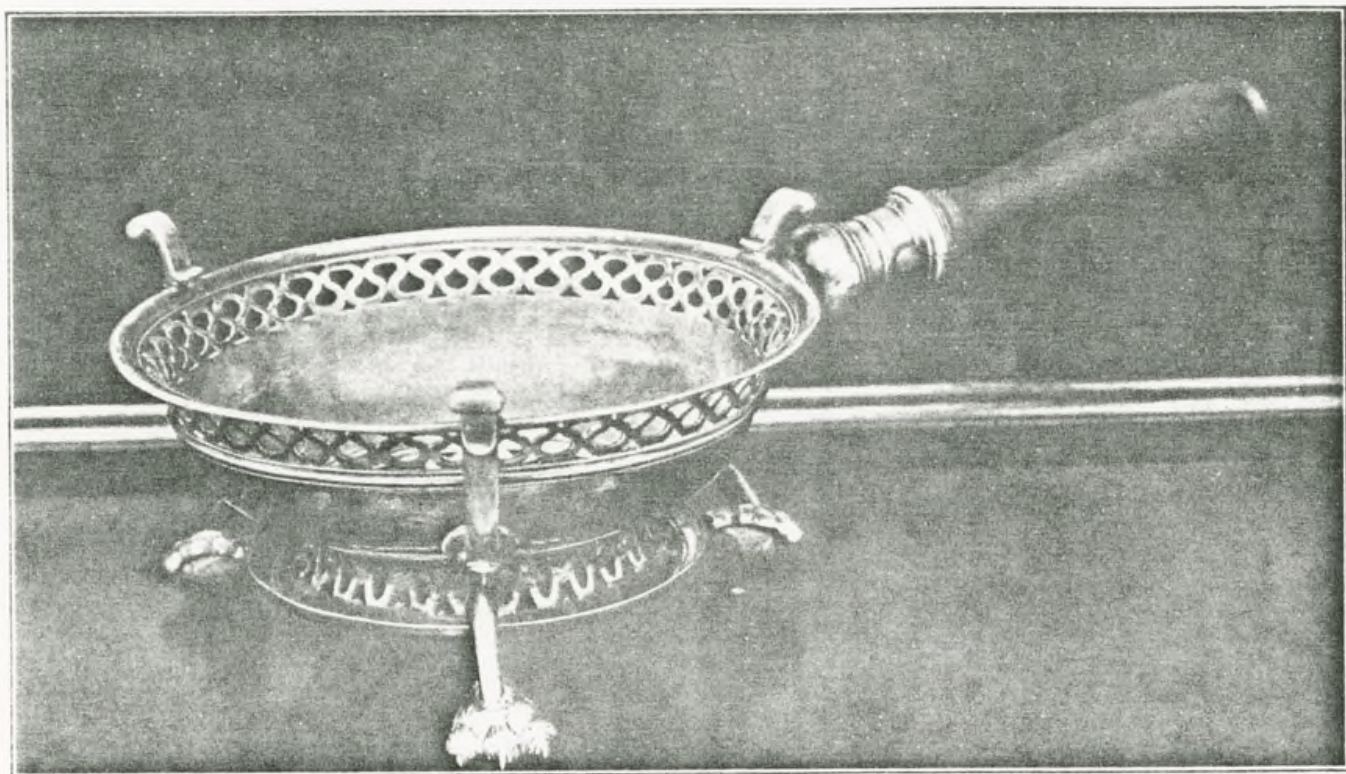
The theory and practice of Hull were transmitted without loss to Jeremiah Dummer (1645-1718), who, like his master, according to the quaint phrasing of his death notice in the "Boston News Letter," "served his country faithfully in several Publick Stations and obtained of all that knew him the Character of a Just, Virtuous, and Pious Man." His memory as a smith is today maintained by superb chalices with gadrooned (convex fluted) bowls and baluster stems, by basins or patens, tankards and candlesticks, all of which are shown in the Museum of Fine Arts.

Following Jeremiah Dummer, the leading silver-smith of Boston was John Coney (or Cony, as the name is often written by the best authorities). His dates are 1655-1722 and he was probably taught by Dummer, whose brother-in-law he later became. A





*Two Examples of Early American Silver: Castor by Jacob Boelen, Born in Amsterdam, Holland, Known to Have Been in America in 1659; Worked in New York and Died in That City in 1729 (Very Rare and Valuable Example)  
Eighteenth Century Teapot: Inverted Pear Shape; Maker, William Simpkins*



*Brazier in Silver by John Coney, Metal Smith of Boston and Instructor of Paul Revere the Elder (1655-1722)*



skillful engraver, like all the workers in precious metals of his period, he was chosen to make the plates for the first paper money issued in America. Added to this distinction, his biographers always mention that of his being one of the original subscribers to the erection of King's Chapel under the reign of William and Mary (1689).

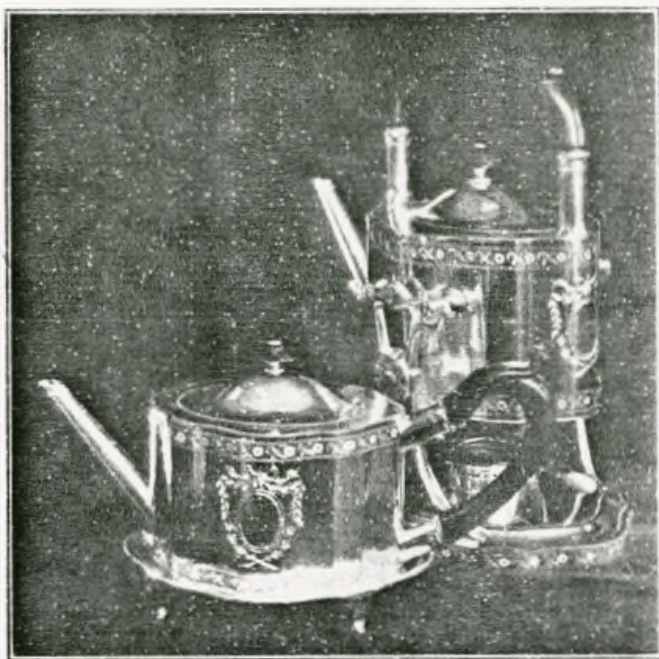
Of his art as a silversmith, many examples are extant, the most famous of which is the magnificent two-handled loving cup presented in 1701 to Harvard College by Judge Stoughton, Lieutenant-Governor of the Massachusetts Colony, who had been the presiding justice at the trial of the Salem witches in 1692.

This cup takes its place among the best existing pieces of Colonial silver, and is irreproachable in both design and technique. It is round on plan, with a finely fluted torus moulding at the splayed base, surmounted by a beautiful low gadroon treatment of the expanded body. Above, on the plain surface of the metal, elaborate armorial bearings are engraved. The two handles are of the Italian renaissance type, ornamented with acanthus scrolls and small heads modeled in the round, which serve as thumb pieces. The bowl has a moulded and slightly reverted lip, fitted to receive the cover on which the flutings of the base are repeated: the finial being a carefully wrought fruit resembling a melon and set in a calyx.

No less admirable in technique, but, from the nature of its service, less ornate in treatment, is the brazier by Coney here illustrated. This utensil was the forerunner of the modern chafing-dish and a cherished essential of every opulent early American household. Together, the two views give an adequate idea of the agreeable outline, of the proper poise and balance, typical of the old masters in silver, which are offered by this piece. Especially to be observed are the firm, round edges formerly given to all work in the noble metals, but now sometimes neglected to the debasement of the substance, which is so made to appear like a thin sheet of tin. Very interesting also are the pierced designs on the standard, at the bottom of the bowl, made for the penetration of the flame, and on the wave-like curving sides of the dish: since by their shapes they show how uninterrupted and straightforward is the evolution of ornament, recalling, as they do, the acanthus and the Greek water-plant and even the stone tracery of late Gothic windows. Finally, the approximate date of the Coney brazier might be determined alone by the claw-feet of the standard, similar to those of the

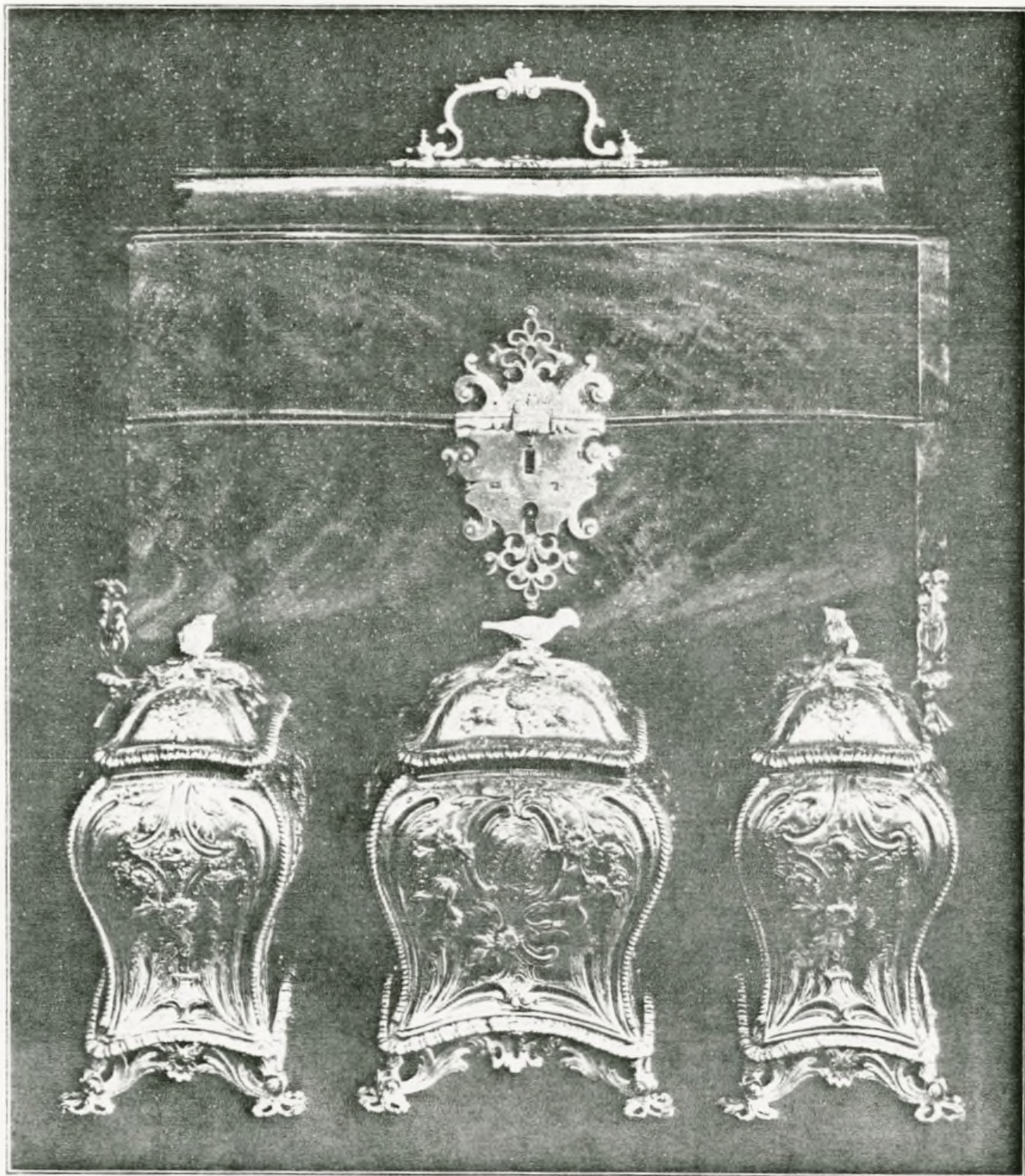
Chippendale chairs with the "cabriole" leg; this motif being of Oriental origin and signifying the grasp of Evil after the pearl of Purity, and having been introduced among the Western peoples through the extension of European trade with the East in the seventeenth century.

Another of our illustrations is a tankard by the same master silversmith, John Coney. It is of late seventeenth or early eighteenth century production and originally belonged to the Sargent family, who came to America in the great exodus of Puritans from England in the decade following the foundation of Boston (1630). This tankard by its form shows itself to be of New England production; those fashioned in New Netherland or New York being of more stocky proportions, cylindrical on plan and heavier in weight. Instead, the body of the Coney piece slowly diminishes as it rises and is banded at the base and also just below the coat-of-arms bearing the chevron of the military sergeant. The handle is of the familiar scroll type and has the "cherub-drop"; a motif borrowed from the Italian renaissance mask, so often used by Cellini and other goldsmiths, his contemporaries and successors. The height of the piece is now nine and one-half inches, but this measurement was less when the tankard issued from the Coney workshop. It is sad to say that the original



*Interpretations of the Georgian Period, Recalling the Architecture of the Brothers Adam (1760-1800), by George C. Gebelein*





*Eighteenth Century Tea Cabinet in Mahogany Veneer with Silver Ornaments in "Cut-Card" Work,  
Two Tea Caddies and Sugar Box; Work Dated 1767*



and much flatter cover has been lost, and that it is replaced by another of more domical shape, splayed at the base, and consisting of mouldings, a high cap, and a finial. Such a loss is not by any means unique, since, in the third quarter of the nineteenth century, the remaining objects of Colonial household art were liable to fall into neglect and one fine tankard cover was discovered on the Massachusetts coast, at the bottom of a leaky sailboat and serving to bale out the incoming sea water.

A second modification of the Sargent tankard is even more to be regretted, since it interferes with profile and proportions. On the other hand, it constitutes a historical landmark, evidencing the North American temperance movement of 1825 and the obedience thereto of the contemporary owners of the object. The addition of the spout transformed the tankard from a cup of inebriation—the receptacle of New England rum or of hard cider—into a distributing agent for the mild stimulant of tea or coffee.

These vicissitudes, entailing not inconsiderable alterations, are here noted in the interests of truth and archaeology, yet, in spite of them, the tankard remains a piece of great commercial value, the amount of which may be learned from the legend accompanying the illustration.

From the tankard the passage is natural to that other old form of drinking-cup, the "beaker," an

English word of probable German origin, applied to a moderately high and wide-mouthed vessel. At first of domestic use, after the Reformation, in Holland, at least, it replaced the sacramental chalice of the historic church. Thence it passed into the New Netherland and subsequently into New England. The example appearing among our illustrations dates from

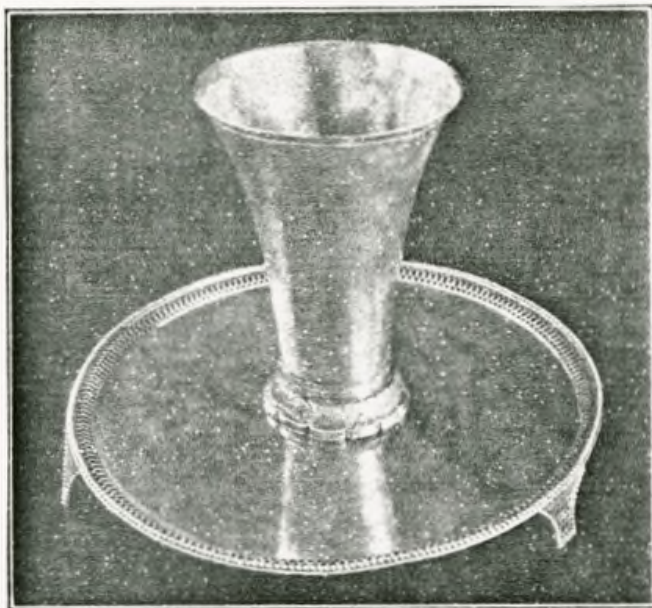


*Salt Dish in Solid Gold of High Degree of Purity by George C. Gebelein. Piece in Style of the Eighteenth Century, but the Form Based upon the Kantharos (Classic Greek Individual Wine Cup)*

the late seventeenth century, is of Swedish workmanship and has a high value. The vase shows a single movement of profile, slow and dignified, and a lip sufficiently reverted to accentuate the composition. The base is engraved with a delicate leaf-pattern and the body with other floral motifs. A similar beaker is owned by the First Reformed Church, Albany, N. Y., and another by the Old South Church, Boston: both of which are illustrated in the fine book of E. A. Jones, "Old Silver of American Churches."

The Swedish beaker is here seen standing on a beautiful English tray, circular in shape and surrounded by a "gallery" in open fretwork. This detail marks it as a production of the Chippendale period, when tables and other articles of wooden furniture were so adorned by the great carver, second and greatest of his name, who died in 1779. The date of the illustrated tray falls, therefore, in the latter half of the eighteenth century, and the style of the gallery is indeterminate, wavering between the Chinese and the Gothic "fantaiesies" of its designer.

Like the brazier, the tankard and the beaker, the porringer, also, has fallen into disuse, owing to changes in manners, customs and food, which have



*Old English Round Tray in Chippendale Style, Dated 1776 (Silver) Swedish Beaker in Silver, Seventeenth Century (Very Rare)*



been effected among us since Colonial times. The last-named utensil was necessary to our ancestors at their breakfast, which, before the introduction into North America of tea, coffee and chocolate, consisted of broth and porridge. But long after the general acceptance of these exotic products, a dish of cereal was regarded as an essential part of the morning meal of a gentleman and the silver porringer continued in active service throughout the eighteenth century.

The examples of this interesting bowl-shaped receptacle in our illustrations are, all of them, the work of Mr. Gebelein, but they have been modeled under the inspiration of the old silversmiths of Massachusetts. In the group of three the "keyhole" handles of the left and the right examples are reproductions from the work of Paul Revere (patriot, 1735-1818) and of John Potwine (Boston and Hartford, 1698-1792): while the low, overflowing basket of fruit of the central figure is an invention of the modern designer in the Anglo-Dutch style of William and Mary (1689-1702) and Queen Anne (1702-1714). The group of three porringers is very fittingly combined with a child's service for bread-and-milk and to complete the *couvert*, a "mug," knife, fork and spoon, sturdy in proportions and with no sharp angles: the whole very suggestive of a little boy favored by rich and refined surroundings.

As further beautiful examples of the porringer

there are shown two other pieces wrought in exceptionally heavy silver. These, when seen at the eye level and in profile, recall birds in flight, so active and springing are their lines. They have diameters (measured from tip to tip) of eleven and a quarter inches and their handles are reproduced from John Potwine and John Edwards (1670-1746), the latter of whom, born in England and instructed in London, was, later in life, prominent in the civic affairs of the Massachusetts Colony.

Another early and a very celebrated craftsman, Jacob Boelen, is represented in the silver castor or caster, shown in combination with a teapot by William Simpkins, of Boston (1704-1780).

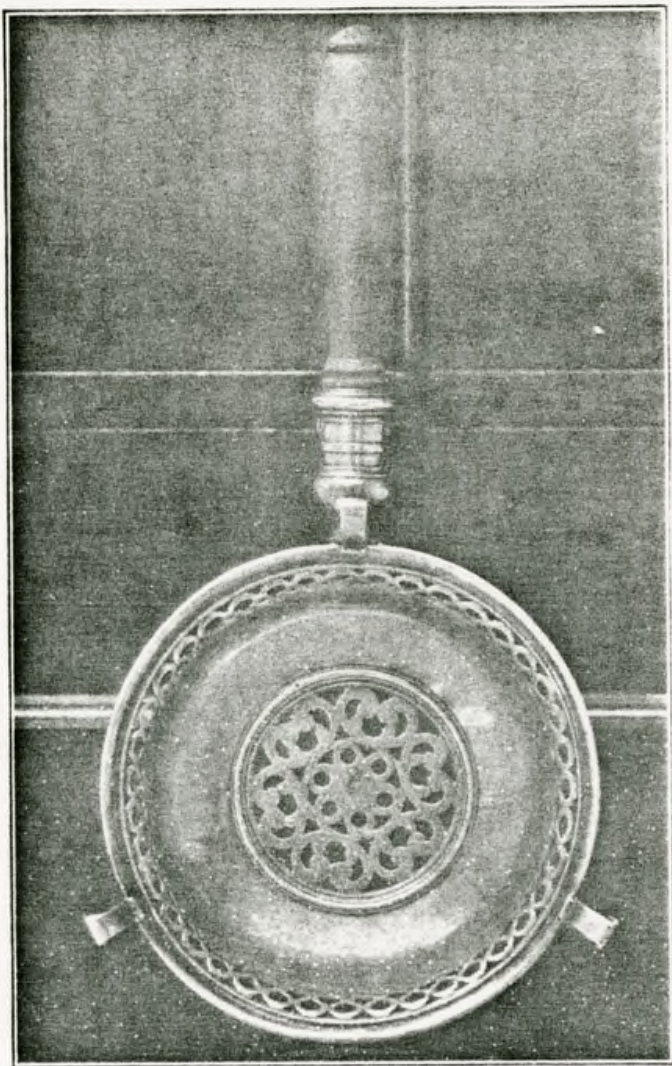
Boelen (1654-1729), as is explained in the legend accompanying the illustration, was a Hollander and the most distinguished and eldest of a family, several of whose members were highly successful as metal-smiths in the New Netherland. The castor is a rare piece of fine proportions and exquisite workmanship: an example of the use of the "bayonet catch" or clasp, which firmly holds together the body and the cover and is most dependable in action. As has been already stated, this clever device has been abandoned in the production of modern commercial silver.

The allied utensil, the salt cellar, is found in a beautiful object by Mr. Gebelein, remarkable for its technique. It is wrought in gold of high purity,



*Tea Set Adapted from old French Silver and Showing the Influence of Odier the Elder in the Ornamental Motifs Designed and Executed by George C. Gebelein*





*Showing Exquisite Pierced Decoration, Inside of Brazier by John Coney*

with a hammered surface. Were it an "antique" it would be classed as of eighteenth century production; that is, its form savors of that English classical style, which owing to the Brothers Adam (Adelphoi) prevailed for forty years (1760-1800). But the salt cellar is equally of the Italian Renaissance, which itself points backward to the Graeco-Roman, especially the Pompeian.

The covered bowl illustrated on the same plate with the French Empire coffee pot, is also a piece of the same period, when both English and Continental designers used two opposing forms for the bodies of their vessels: the tall, slender, ovoid vase, point down-

ward, and the low shapes oval on plan and often paneled, such as are seen in the tea services by Mr. Gebelein. The former of these is derived from Greek ceramics of the best period (fifth and fourth centuries B. C.); while the low shapes were popularized by study of the objects discovered in 1748, amid the lava and ashes of the cities destroyed by the eruption of Vesuvius under the Emperor Titus.

The silver bowl is beautiful in proportion and profile, firm and restrained, without rigidity. It is the work of John Vernon, who, it is known, was working in New York in 1789 and who belonged to a family of silversmiths, among whom was Samuel, also distinguished in the history of Colonial plate.



*Front View of Sargent Tankard, Showing Coat of Arms*



Of the English Rococo period an exceptionally interesting example is the mahogany veneer chest as a container for the three accompanying silver boxes. This English period of fifteen years (1745-1760) is one of overcharged ornament in the decorative arts. It corresponds to a part of the reign of Louis XV (1715-1774) in France, and its profiles and decorative *motifs* are based upon French models. The swollen curves of the chest and of the boxes resemble those of the *Vernis Martin* cabinets in the Museum of Decorative Arts, Paris; the so-called "cut-card" ornament (cut from a sheet or "card" of metal and applied) of the scutcheon of the chest, and the rose and acanthus treatments of the boxes are English renderings of originals from beyond the Channel. The pieces are dated 1767, when the custom of tea drinking had become popular throughout the British Isles, and preference for green or for black leaves had developed, as is indicated by the presence of the two caddies placed one at each side of the larger sugar box.

As all the remaining pieces of our illustrations are connected with the service of tea or coffee, and the majority are teapots, attention must be invited toward the development of that utensil by the English and the Colonial silversmiths.

The earliest mention of tea by an Englishman is contained in a letter by a certain Mr. Wickham, agent of the British East India Company in Japan, asking another official of the same enterprise, resident in Macao, for "a pot of the best *chow*" (Oriental name of the commodity). But in the days of tardy, indirect means of communication, commerce developed slowly, so that nearly a half century later, Samuel Pepys wrote in London: "I called for a cup of tea, a China drink I had never before drunk."

In the American Colonies the price of the new luxury was prohibitive, the variety called Bohea selling in Boston, during the year 1666, for sixty shillings the pound; then falling and fluctuating until the time of the "Tea Party," when its value was only three shillings for the standard unit of weight.

Following Oriental custom, the first teapots used in Europe were of porcelain or pottery and very small in dimensions. Those in metal quickly followed and the earliest English example in silver known is one bearing the hall-mark of London, corresponding to the year 1670-71. It is circular in plan, with a tapering body and a conical cover. This shape remained in vogue in Great Britain until the middle of the eighteenth century, although the globular Chinese



*Individual Tea Service, Old Dutch Influence, by George C. Gebelein*





*Sugar Bowl*

*Cream Pitcher*

*Waste Bowl*

*After Georgian Period as Brothers Adam Dictate to George C. Gebelein*

teapot in either pottery or silver was in frequent use in the last years of the seventeenth and the early part of the eighteenth century. The conical and the globular forms were succeeded by the pear-shaped pot, first presented like the fruit set upright, and subsequently as if inverted, with the pouching curve above. The covers of such pots were lowdomed, the spouts were attached far down on the body, and they followed a peculiar curve called the goose-neck.

Under the Adam influence (1760-1800) the bodies became tall, more slender and very distinctly ovoid, often with paneled sides: the adjuncts of the service assuming very pleasing shapes, especially the cream pitcher, which in books on Colonial silver is generally called the "helmet" type. But this form, with its deeply scalloped spout and gracefully curved handle, is not of English origin. It was of frequent use in the Italian Renaissance and examples of it occur in the wares of Bernard Palissy, the Huguenot potter. In the same forms the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, contains an entire and very noted tea service by Paul Revere, the patriot (second of the name and profession). Another specimen is the already mentioned covered bowl by John Vernon. Still another is the French coffee-pot which stands at its side.

The latter utensil was not distinguished from the pot for tea until the beginning of the reign of George III (1760-1820), when it became pear-shaped, and still later changed to the classical urn form. As treated by a French goldsmith of the early years of the First Empire (1804-1815), our example makes allusion to the Egyptian campaign of Napoleon (1802). These allusions are seen in the body suggesting the processional (Canopic) jars of the ancient people of the Nile Valley, in the long flattened leaves of a water plant to which the feet are attached, and in the feathered or scaled neck of the sinuous spout, which recalls a bird or a reptile.

Finally, these tall pots, whether French or English, as well as the low forms, including the sugar bowls, are frequently topped by an upright fruit, sometimes called the pineapple and interpreted as the symbol of hospitality. But such finials are in reality pine cones and they were adapted from Greek art, in which they stand as the emblem of Dionysius or Bacchus, patron god of the drama and theater.

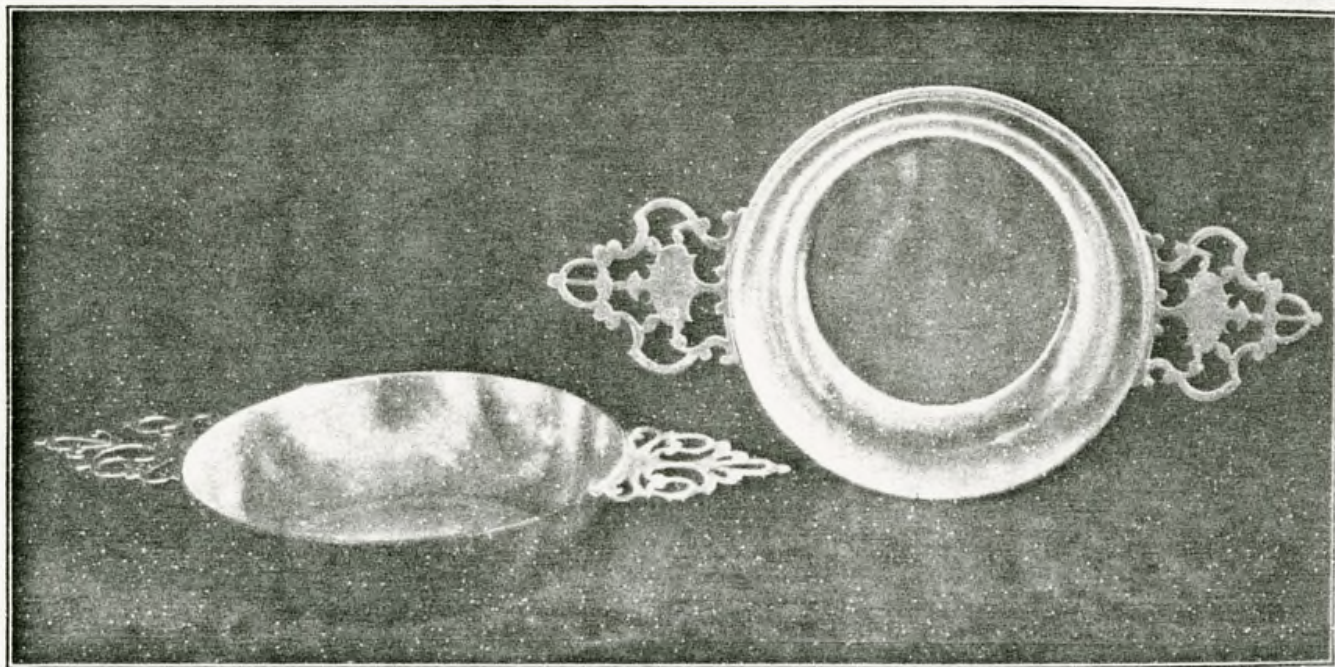
The teapots of our plates, with the exception of the beautiful inverted, pear-shaped example by the Colonial smith, William Simpkins, are all the work of Mr. Gebelein, evidencing his deep knowledge of



eighteenth century models and his apprehension of the principles of architectural design. Particularly remarkable is the low-formed elaborate service of paneled construction suggestive of the studies of Robert Adam in the so-called "returned" entablatures of late Roman buildings. In this service the floral ornament of the tiny friezes is much to be admired, as is also the superb technique of the whole, yielding in nothing to the old craftsmanship, as may be proved by examination of the "blind" hinges of the covers and the poise and swing of the kettle. The modern

silversmith shows also his breadth of view in the spherical melon forms of the service with a charming floral border pattern adapted from the Frenchman Odier the elder, or yet again in the stocky Dutch contours of admirable workmanship found in the small, individual service.

As the observer gradually, slowly, reaches the understanding of this craftsman's ability, patience and forthright honesty, he formulates a belief in the apostolic succession of art passed down through time by the agency of the human hand.



*Two-handled Porringers*

*Left Hand Example Adapted from John Edwards (1670-1746)*

*Right Hand Example Adapted from John Potwine (1698-1792)*