The Archaeological Journal.

JUNE, 1888.

ENGLISH ORNAMENTAL LEADWORK.

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In that curious production of John Swan the "Speculum Mundi" published in 1643, under the heading of "the third day'es work of Creation" he thus discourses on lead. "It is" he says "a raw and indigested metall but of better digestion than commixtion, for it is mixed with a grosse earthie substance which causeth it to be in colour so black, and so ready to foul. It is begotten of much unpure thick and drossie mercurie and by refining is made white. The kinds of this are varied by reason of the matter whereof it consisteth, and by reason of the heat by which it is decocted, and therefore it comes to passe that we have one sort which is called *Black-lead*, another farre whiter and clearer as being better concocted, and more purely composed. It is of a cold and binding nature and if it lie in the wet moisture will increase the weight. England hath store of it."

Of the metal thus quaintly described articles replete with grace and beauty have been formed in all preceding times; but at the present day, there appears to be no way in which decorative enrichment can be associated with it, and this is the more remarkable in our own country, as it has from the earliest date produced more lead than any other in Europe, indeed so abundantly in former ages that Pliny states that a law was made to limit the quantity which should be taken from the soil. From the mines in England worked by the Romans, pigs of lead have been found in Cheshire, Derbyshire, Hampshire, Norfolk, Nottinghamshire, Somerset, Staffordshire and Sussex. There are ten of these in the British Museum, one of which from Mansfield, Notts, bears the

impress of "Caius Julius Protus," and another from the "Latudæ" mines, Matlock moor, of second century date, is inscribed "Lucius Amconius Verecundus." The term "pigs" it may be observed has been applied to masses of lead, whilst in Sussex similar ones of iron are denominated "sows," and it is said that the Roman leaden ingots are alike in weight and shape to those manufactured at the present day.

Of the ornamental employment of lead by the Romans, we have numerous interesting remains showing its application to sepulchral purposes; thus at Warwick Lane, London, there was discovered a leaden box or cist, with a representation on it of a charioteer in a car urging on four galloping horses, and within the vessel was a glass urn containing cremated bones. In 1853, a leaden coffin enclosed within a sarcophagus of stone was found in the Minories; it measured four feet four inches long, by one foot two inches at the head, and contained the remains of a child of about eight years of age; this leaden cist was ornamented with beaded lines and scallop shells, at intervals. A third coffin was brought to light in the Old Kent Road, it was ornamented with two figures of Minerva at the top, and two escallop shells at the foot in relief (Archæologia, vol. xviii, 25, quoted Arch. Jour., xii, p. 195). Another found at Stratford le Bow, had an ornament upon it resembling the heraldic "fylfot" cross. In the third volume of the Essex Archæological Society's Transactions, there are several engravings of coffins found at East Ham and considered to be Roman; two of these are exactly like mediæval sepulchral slabs of stone, their shape gently tapering from head to foot; one of these measures four feet ten inches in length, the other only two feet four inches; they are freely ornamented with a kind of beaded moulding, differing from the ordinary corded work, and the smaller lid has a central stem, or shaft, with six scallop shells three on either side. Other examples have been disinterred at Colchester, and Norwich, whilst in 1887 one was unearthed at Plumstead in Kent, which after much trouble has at length been deposited in the county Museum at Maidstone.

It will be noticed from the above descriptions how frequently the scallop shell occurs as an ornament, and

that it had some especial reference to sepulture cannot I think be doubted, as it is made a very prominent feature in the designs of which it forms a part; especially is this the case in one of the East Ham examples. The lids of these Roman coffins are perhaps also noteworthy, as they are all lapped down over the sides, after the fashion of a modern card-board box. Some of the above I may add may be seen in the British Museum.

The Abbé Reynal mentions in his History of the Indes, (vol. ii, p. 4.) that many of the traders of different nations who resorted to the fairs established in France by King Dagobert in the seventh century, were the Saxons with the tin and lead of England, and the ancient excavations near Mam Tor, in Derbyshire, called Odin's mine, point from the name to a Saxon origin. At the Lewes Museum of the Sussex Archæological Society, is a small much battered leaden cist probably sepulchral and most likely of tenth century date; it is nearly a foot square, and six inches deep, having now no lid, but the sockets for the staples by which it was secured remain on two sides; the outer surface is enriched with figures of two elongated triangles enclosing simple interlacing patterns, and further embellished with diamond shaped corded work;—a favourite and easy way of gaining effect in cast metal work, which in later times was much in vogue as applied to south of England fire backs and sepulchral slabs. This little cist was found in the village of Willingdon, Sussex, near which there are traces of our Saxon forefathers in the neighbouring churches of Bishopstone, and Jevington.

Passing onwards to the Norman period we find that it furnishes some extremely good examples of ornamental lead work in the font bowls formed of this metal, and which confined to the south of England, are scattered over its face to the number of about eight and twenty. The great majority of these belong to the twelfth century, one to the fourteenth, whilst two are post-Reformational. They all comprise the upper part of the baptismal vessel only, placed on a stem or base of stone or brick. As best suited to the material of which they are composed their shape is always cylindrical; probably they were cast flat, then bent round and soldered up, often in a clumsy man-

ner forming a sad botch in the pattern at the junction thus made; some retain the mutilated sockets by which the flat wooden lids were securely locked on, a provision made compulsory in after times by the Constitutions of Archbishop Edmund of Canterbury. These fonts appear to be of undoubtedly English origin, certainly so in the majority of instances, an assertion supported by two examples, those in the neighbouring churches of Edburton, and Piecombe, in Sussex, which whilst resembling each other in many details, differ in design, the former having a series of oblong panels instead of a round headed arcade in the lower portion as at Piecombe, but both with bands of the same foliage, and little trefoil arches in the upper stage. At Llancourt, and Tidenham, Gloucestershire the design of each font is also similar.

A favourite feature in these font bowls is a series of seated or standing figures, placed beneath a continuous arcade. At Long Wittenham, Berks, the lower part of the vessel has diminutive pointed arches enclosing very small effigies; above these are square panels containing irregularly placed circles, whilst at Woolhampton, in the same county is a leaden arcading and statuettes, having the background cut away to show the stone frame or core. At Avebury, Wiltshire, the figures are placed under intersecting arches. Twelve mitred prelates surround the font at Childrey in Berkshire, each having a pastoral staff in one hand, and a book in the other. A fine example of late Norman date remains at the secluded village church at Walton-on-the-Hill, Surrey; it is of very delicate and excellent design, having pretty little seated figures under arcading carried on twisted and banded columns, similar to those seen in contemporary MSS. and round the shrine of the Confessor at Westminster; above and below the statuettes are bands of foliage of great elegance and elaborate richness. Probably the best leaden font bowl is that at Brookland in Kent, and which has been described and illustrated in the Archæological Journal, it has a double series of arches containing in the upper the signs of the Zodiac, and in the lower the corresponding labours of the months.

Only one example of fourteenth century date appears to remain in England, and this is also interesting as furnish-

ing an early instance of the use of heraldry on a sacred vessel, bearing several times repeated the arms of the Peverell family, *Girony of ten, within a bordure, bezanty:* the rest of the ornamentation consists of vertical and horizontal bands inscribed "JESUS NAZ.", the title of our Lord considered talismanic in the middle ages.

Eyethorne Church, Kent, and Clunbridge, Gloucestershire have the only post-Reformational leaden fonts that I am acquainted with; the former is an evident copy of a Norman design, and is dated 1628, at about which period the Clunbridge one was in all probability fashioned.

The finest leaden font remaining on the continent, is said by Mr. Burges to be that at Mayence Cathedral, and is of fourteenth century execution.

We are all aware that lead was extensively employed as a covering to the roofs of churches and other important buildings, instead of slates or tiles, as being a nobler and more enduring material than the two latter for such a purpose. For this use the Cumberland lead mines supplied much lead in the time of Henry II, when the roofs of Windsor Castle were covered with it, and sufficient was exported by the same monarch to lead the roof on the church of Clairvana Abbey in Champagne, as a present from him to the Cistercian order. Our ancestors used it of a much stouter substance than we do for their roofing, indeed of nearly twice the weight. In some instances they formed the metal on the top edge or ridge, into a cresting of foliage or traceried work, an example of which exists at Exeter Cathedral, and is engraved in the glossary of Mr. Parker; it consists of a band of simple fleur-de-lis ornaments only, but abroad there are many crests of much more elaborate character. The use of such an ornamental finish was most likely limited as I have failed to observe any examples figured in the drawings of illuminated MSS., as however rich the side crocketting and the end finials may be represented, the roofs themselves always end with a simple roll moulding. At Kersey, Suffolk, are two old houses which have square bay windows of slight projection, with brick cornices covered with lead dressed down over the top courses, and the edges cut to a reversed embattled pattern, producing an excellent effect. Gutters were

occasionally enriched with stamped designs, of which a specimen can be seen at Lincoln Cathedral, having a continuous row of sexfoils between simple roll mouldings.

During the middle ages rain water either dropped from the eaves of a roof, or being collected in the gutters, was ejected by means of a gargoyle or grotesquely carved stone head; but in Tudor times our present system of down pipes was to some extent introduced and they were then of lead, and not like modern ones of cast iron; their shape also was square not round, and at the junction of the pipe and gutter at the eaves, was formed a small cistern, the front of which was ornamented with shields, devices, initials, or dates. Two early examples are at Windsor Castle, on one is E.R, the Tudor rose, and fleur-de-lis, on the other the date 1589. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, these heads were sometimes very elaborately decorated, and of complex construction and design. At Ludlow "Old College" is one of the time of Charles II, square in shape with a half circular projection, on which is the cipher of that monarch the two interlacing CC's joined by a ribbon; rich foliage resembling acanthus leaves covering the sides of the head whilst the joins in the down pipe are covered with small pieces technically styled "ears," or bands having small heads and scroll work. At Canon's Ashby there are two which are probably the finest examples of early eighteenth century work left, and of which period are two very fine heads at Howell's Manor House, Horsham, in itself a square ugly looking residence, built by Nathaniel Tredcroft, whose initials with those of his wife appear on escutcheons cast separately from the rest of the work, at the sides are small cariotoid figures bearing baskets of flowers, whilst the junctions of the down pipes have lion's heads holding wreaths of foliage in their mouths. These beautiful pieces of lead-work almost redeem the excessive baldness of the rest of the elevation.

Like the Romans, the mediæval English made their leaden coffins works of art; those found in the Temple Church, London, were of rich design, and plates representing them were published by Mr. Richardson, the well known writer on monumental art. The cists

containing the bones of William de Warrenne, and his countess Gundrada now deposited in the church of Southover, Lewes, are freely ornamented with a lozenge pattern and border formed by cords impressed on the sand mould in which they were cast.

Although not strictly within the limits of the present paper I cannot forbear to mention that inscriptions on lead, as we all know, date from very early times. The Douey version of Job, chap. xix, vv. 23-24 is rendered "Who will give me that they may be marked down in a book with an iron pen in a plate of lead;" and the epitaph on King Arthur, said to have been discovered at Glastonbury, in Henry II reign, is recorded to have been written on a leaden plate, so that however apocryphal the story may be in itself, it bears witness to the fact of inscribed leaden tablets being known in England during the middle ages. A comparatively modern instance occurs at Saltash Church, Cornwall, which runs thus "This chapple was repaired in the maiorty of Matthew Veale Gent Anno 1689," Haines in his List of Brasses, mentions that at Burford, Shropshire, is a leaden plate with inscription and an effigy under a triple canopy, commemorating a Lady Corbet, and about the year 1516 in date.

Besides the decorative glazing in geometrical patterns seen in church windows, quarries of cast lead were used occasionally in domestic buildings for the purpose of ventilation, such a quarry of Gothic tracery work was found some years back amongst fragments of painted glass at Haverholme Priory in Lincolnshire, and is engraved in volume xiii of the Archæological Journal. When four or five of these are grouped together they produce a very pleasing effect, as may be witnessed in some of Caroline date at a house in North Street, Horsham.

At a meeting of the Archæological Institute September 11th, 1844, Mr. R. R. Smith exhibited a series of fibulæ or brooches of lead found in the rivers at Canterbury, at Abbeville, in France, and in the Thames in London. These brooches were stamped out of thin pieces of lead, and bore a variety of figures and devices, all of a religious tendency; they were obviously worn by devotees and pilgrims in the middle ages, as a kind of certificate of

their having visited a particular shrine or joined in some sacred ceremony. One of these bears a mitred head with the inscription CAPUT THOMÆ. This Mr. Smith further observed had unquestionably been brought from Canterbury to London (where it was found), by some visitor to the shrine of Thomas-a-Becket (*Arch. Journal* i, p. 277). Piers Plowman describes his pilgrim as having "a hundred of ampulles" attached to his hat, these were little leaden vessels, often impressed with ornamental devices similar to those on the articles before mentioned.

The antiquity of cast metal statues may be inferred from a passage in Chronicles, Book ii, chap. xviii, v. 2, where it says of Ahaz that "he walked in the ways of the Kings of Israel, and made molten images for Baalim." Although these castings were probably of bronze, the use of lead for the same purpose must date from a very remote period, and has been continued up to the present century. Leaden statues of mediæval date are pretty numerous on the continent, but appear to have nearly all perished in England, if we may except perhaps the little statuettes under stone arcading on the font at Ashover, Derbyshire. Abroad, there are round the fleche at Amiens Cathedral seven life-sized figures of Christ and the saints, these are however not cast but made up of separate sheets of lead beaten round a wooden core or mould. Of English cast statues, the largest was probably that of Astrea, which formerly ornamented the Market Cross, at Bungay, Suffolk, and weighed eighteen hundredweight. At Carshalton, Surrey, a magnificent mansion was once "projected" by Thomas Scawen, but appears never to have got further than the park enclosure, whose handsome entrance gates of wrought iron still remain attached to lofty panelled piers, the northern one of which is crowned by a leaden statue of Diana, the southern one being terminated by a similar figure of Acteon. The date is about 1726.

Ham House, at Petersham also in Surrey, a plain and somewhat ugly erection, dating however as far back as 1610, has a peculiar series of oval panels ranged over the ground floor windows; these retain in each of them a cast leaden bust, imparting a little life into the otherwise unadorned front. In a work called "The Ambulator, or

a Stranger's Companion in a Tour round London," published in 1782, is a lengthy description of Vauxhall Gardens, in which is mentioned "a statue of our great poet Milton—seated on a rock in an attitude listening to soft music as described by himself in his 'Il Penseroso,' it is now illuminated at night with lamps, and was cast in lead by Roubiliac." Probably it was a copy of a work by that celebrated sculptor.

During the two last centuries a favourite object for the display of ornamental lead-work was the cistern still to be met with in many houses of the period. One at Bishop Burnet's residence in Clerkenwell, is engraved in Pink's "History" of that parish, and described as being four feet two inches long, by one foot eight inches wide; the ornamentation is very rude consisting of two panels, in one of which is a reclining figure symbolizing plenty, in the other the crest of a lion passant holding a blazing star in the paw, and four large thistles by his side. Of more recent date is the fine cistern remaining at "The Cedars" Broad Green, Croydon, the front of which has three elegant panels, and a similar one at each end; in the centre compartment are the initials I. L. A. and the date 1756 in the angles. Another example in the same town, dated 1787 has human figures in niches.

There is a curious specimen of lead work to be seen at Chichester at Mr. Knight's, a plumber's shop in St. Martin's Street. It consists of a panel about eight or nine feet long and has various devices and crests upon it, such as double-tailed mermaids, and soldering irons in saltire. The whole bears the date 1728.

The Plumbers' Company of London, was not incorporated till 1611, which appears a very recent date for the members of such an important industry to combine together. The workers in pewter, an alloy of lead, formed themselves into a guild, incorporated by Edward IV, in 1474 and from an Act of Parliament obtained by them in 1534, it would seem that English pewter was highly thought of on the continent, as by this act Englishmen "are strictly enjoined not to repair to any foreign country to teach the art, or mystery of pewterers, on pain of dis-franchisement; and to prevent the art from being carried abroad, no pewterer was to take the son

of an alien for an apprentice" (Hughson's London, vol. ii, p. 355).

In bringing these few remarks to a conclusion, I am compelled to come to the conviction that most of the applications of ornament to lead work belong to byegone times, and that a revival at the present day is hardly to be expected. Doubtless a leaden font bowl would be as durable as one of stone, but the dull heavy colour of the metal militates against its use for such a purpose; our galvanized cisterns of iron have displaced those of lead, whilst well painted cast iron work seems the best for out-of-door requirements, such as rain water heads and gutters, having the recommendations of greater sharpness of outline, and what is often alas! of more consequence—greater cheapness. Taking these facts into consideration I fear that the art of ornamentally working in lead must be included among those which have become extinct, at any rate until fresh objects have been found in which that metal and artistic design can be combined.

ADDENDA.

NOTE I.—Occasionally entire buildings were covered with lead as may be seen by the following extract from Bede. "Ecclesiastical History, chap. xxiv.

"In the meantime Bishop Aidan being dead, Finian, who was ordained and sent by the Scots, succeeded him in the bishopric, and built a church in the Isle of Lindisfarne, the episcopal see; nevertheless, after the manner of the Scots, he made it, not of stone, but of hewn oak, and covered it with reeds; and the same was afterwards dedicated in honour of St. Peter the Apostle, by the reverend Archbishop Theodore. Eadbert (con. 638) also bishop of that place, took off the thatch, and covered it both roof and walls, with plates of lead."

NOTE II.—Since the compilation of the foregoing remarks, the rain-water heads have been removed from Howell's Manor House, thus destroying both the initials of the builder, and the date of its erection in 1706.

Nathaniel Tredcroft, b. Ap. 27, 1674, was son of another Nathaniel, presented by Cromwell to the living of Horsham; he married Elizabeth, only issue of William Scrase, of Steyning, co. Sussex. She died on Aug. 22, 1718, and her husband Oct. 27, 1720.

A Sussex antiquary informs me that the destruction of old lead-work is encouraged by the fact that it retains the silver found with that metal, and which used not to be separated from it when cast, as is done at

present. He added that he knew of a dealer who went about the country, buying up all the old lead he could from which he extracted sufficient silver to pay the price he originally gave for the metal.

NOTE III.—In the year 1257, at St. Alban's Abbey, was discovered a sepulchre with the following inscription written in lead "In this mausoleum was found the venerable corpse of S. Alban, the protomartyr of Britain, "it is supposed to have been laid in King Offa's time." Dr. Giles "Bede's Eccles. Hist." p. 29 n.

NOTE IV.—"Lead was evidently known to the ancient Assyrians, for the bronze lion (found in the ruins of Ninevah) was fastened with this metal to the stone which formed its base."

"Ninevah and its Palaces," p. 336.

At the Bar Gate Southampton, "On each side are two lions in lead, presented by W. Lee, M.P." (in 1744.) "Walcott's South Coast," p. 313.