

Crich Ware.

By W. TURNER, IN "THE QUEEN," APRIL AND MAY, 1906.

By G. LE BLANC SMITH.

IN the pages of *The Queen*, Mr. Turner has concisely set forth much that is worth knowing about the old and almost entirely forgotten potteries of Crich. Crich, on its craggy limestone hill top, does not appear a place either yielding clay for the potter or art for



Fig. 1.—Posset Pot of Crich Ware. 1717.

the pottery, but it has done both, and what is more, done them well.

Mr. Turner has lately explored the site of this old pottery, and when we hear that his companion-in-arms was Mr. Micah Salt, of excavation fame, we may rest assured that the work was thorough.

In the paper under notice Mr. Turner goes through the gradual development of the present name Crich; in 1085 it is "Crice," 1195 "Crech," 1291 "Crouche," 1580 "Cryche,"



Fig. 2.—Posset pot of Crich Ware. 1739.

1586 "Creach," 1693 "Critch," 1815 Crich ("i" pronounced long as to this day).

Mr. Turner concludes therefore that "Crouch ware" was Crich pottery, for "in the seventeenth century, when it became 'Cruche,' the pronunciation of it, in the *patois* of the county, would become 'Crouch.'"

After reference to the geological formation of the neighbouring country Mr. Turner continues:—

"Water, washing along various deposits, has formed a clay, called Wessington clay, and sometimes Crich clay.

which has a large amount of silica in it, very like (as Farey says) the clay which the Staffordshire potters called 'Clunch.' . . . It was a clay most suitable for the needs of the potters who made crucibles for the Bank of England."

The first move in the direction of establishing potteries at Crich was, Mr. Turner considers, the transference of "a piece of ground to one Thomas Morley, a potter," by Lady Mary Dixie (*née* Willoughby, and a descendant of one John Clay—a curious coincidence—of Crich). From ancient documents Mr. Turner places the first working date of these potteries at about 1666-1763.



Fig. 3.—Posset Pot of Crich Ware. 1777.

With regard to the discovery and excavation of the ancient site Mr. Turner says:—

"This is all that has been discovered about this old pot works, until the re-discovery of the site and its interesting contents by myself and friend in the year of grace 1904. In the refuse heap a trench was cut. It was about 6 feet by 4 feet, and 3 feet deep."

During the excavations the old potter's cellar, or store-house, was unearthed, and locally exaggerated into a subterranean

passage, some three miles in length, connecting Crich with Dethick!

Fifteen excellent photographs help to explain the nature of the pottery, a description of which, however, space does not admit in this notice. Of those here illustrated, fig. 1 is dated 1717, and is a posset pot from the collection of Mr. H. T. Wake, Fritchley. Fig. 2 is another posset pot, height 9 in., diameter $9\frac{1}{8}$ in., date 1739, with a fine lustrous glaze. Fig. 3, another posset pot, owned by a Crich family, is glazed, dated 1777, and has remains of the initials T. H. on the spout. Fig. 4 represents a punch bowl, marked "John Hogg and Sarah his wife, November 16th, 1732." It is well glazed.



Fig. 4.—Punch Bowl of Crich Ware. 1732.

The specimens illustrated are, with the exception of that in fig. 1, owned by Mr. Micah Salt. There are many old potteries in our county; does nobody know their history and associations? I am sure the Editor would be glad of contributions on this subject, and the feeling should be shared by many others.

It is satisfactory from our point of view, if not from that of Crich, to think that the decadence of the Crich potter's art was owing to "the overwhelming competition of the Staffordshire potteries," and not to State-aided "dumping" from beyond the seas, which has proved the death of another famous Derbyshire industry, *i.e.*, lead-mining.