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CHATS ON  
OLD JEWELLERY  
AND TRINKETS

## BOOKS FOR COLLECTORS

*With Coloured Frontispieces and many Illustrations.  
Large Crown 8vo, cloth.*

### CHATS ON ENGLISH CHINA.

By ARTHUR HAYDEN.

### CHATS ON OLD FURNITURE.

By ARTHUR HAYDEN.

### CHATS ON OLD PRINTS.

By ARTHUR HAYDEN.

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### CHATS ON OLD JEWELLERY AND TRINKETS.

By MACIVER PERCIVAL.

LONDON : T. FISHER UNWIN.  
NEW YORK : F. A. STOKES COMPANY.

CHATS ON  
OLD JEWELLERY AND  
TRINKETS

BY  
MACIVER PERCIVAL

WITH NEARLY 300 ILLUSTRATIONS

NEW YORK  
FREDERICK A. STOKES COMPANY  
PUBLISHERS

R.P.

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## PREFACE

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THIS little book has been written mainly for minor collectors—those who love old things, but cannot afford to pay large prices for them. A piece, the possession of which involves the writing of a cheque for three figures, is definitely out of their reach; even two figures is not a light matter to them, and they prefer to pursue their hobby in those less exalted regions where ten pounds goes a long way, and quite desirable things can be had for a sovereign or two. Of course they will not, at their price meet with things of the kind that it has been the aim of generations of collectors to add to their treasures. It is highly improbable, for instance, that they will find such treasures as the enamels of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries; and naturally, pieces set with fine stones will not come their way. But that should not deter them from starting on the quest. We do not disdain coloured prints because we cannot have Holbein's paintings; and if Chippendale's carved mahogany chairs are out of reach, do we not find beech "ladder-backs" very picturesque? So when we cannot

afford diamonds let us collect cut steel; and as painted enamels fetch the prices they do at auction sales, we will be happy with our little grisaille paintings on ivory in their dainty paste mounts. However, we must hasten if we want to buy them before prices mount, otherwise in the future we may mournfully look back on bygone days when such things could be bought for a mere song.

The field is a wide one wherein we may search. Treasure-trove may be found in the trinket-boxes of old ladies, who, having grown up in the days when "solid gold" reigned supreme, do not value the pretty trifles on which capable craftsmen of former times have displayed their powers, and are quite willing to part with them to those who do.

Sometimes a find is made among the oddments of a provincial jeweller, put aside to be broken up for the gold which they contain. A pawnbroker's in Edinburgh has yielded a very fine Flemish pendant; and in a London West End shop a charming eighteenth-century buckle has been bought for a few shillings. Even of more splendid things the collector must not despair (though being over-sanguine may lead him into the toils of the forger), and he should keep his eyes open, and know all he can of all sides of his subject, so as to be ready for any chance that may come his way. Was not the "Tara" brooch, now the pride of the Dublin Museum, offered to a metal dealer for eighteenpence—and refused?

It is, perhaps, more important that the settings and goldwork of a piece should be in good con-



dition and of fine workmanship, than that all the stones should be in place. Of course, the intrinsic value of stones may be considerable, but they can be replaced ; but if metal work and (more particularly) enamel are badly damaged, it is practically impossible to make them good.

However, really old specimens should never be consigned to the melting-pot without due thought, as damaged pieces of some periods are more valuable than perfect ones of others, by reason of the scarcity of any specimens at all.

There are fortunate people who have no need to *collect* old jewellery, as they are lucky enough to have had forbears who, generation by generation, have added to the family jewel-case specimens of each new fashion. Thrice happy is she whose ancestors have been content with "adding" and have not suffered from the mania for "resetting." I hope they will find a fresh interest in their belongings after looking through this volume, and comparing them with the illustrations. These same illustrations will, I trust, prove useful to students and artist jewellers, who may find inspiration for their work in the study of the masterpieces of the old-time craftsmen.

In writing this book I have not adopted entirely either of the two conventional plans for such works. That is to say, the historical, which follows the whole art in its progress through the ages, or the other, which deals with each class of ornament in a separate chapter, tracing its history through the different periods.

The scheme actually followed includes a short historical sketch up to the end of the seventeenth century. It makes no pretence to being complete, but will, I hope, be found to contain all that is necessary to lead up to the more detailed chapters, which deal with eighteenth and early nineteenth-century work, and the subjects which appeal to the minor collectors, for whom this book has been written.

In this miscellaneous section various points of view have been taken; for instance, the collector of "rings" will find a chapter devoted to his subject, while the specialist in a particular material, such as "Pinchbeck," or "paste," has not been forgotten. In these are incorporated the notes and sketches which have been collected during many years past, both with regard to pieces which I or my friends possess, and those which have specially interested me as a practical jeweller and enameller.

In conclusion, I must most heartily thank those friends who have kindly allowed me to photograph specimens from their collections, and the authorities of the British, the "Victoria and Albert," and the Birmingham Museums, both for permission to take original photographs and also to reproduce those officially supplied. My gratitude is also due to Sir George Birdwood, C.S.I., Mr. Rathbone (London), Mr. Mackay (Birmingham), Mr. Beloc, the *Queen* newspaper, and the *Artcraftsman* for permission to use photographs and other material.

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**GLOSSARY**



## GLOSSARY

**Acus.**—A pin. This term is used for Roman hair-pins and various other ornamental kinds. It is also used in speaking of the pin or tongue of ancient brooches or buckles.

**Aiglets, Aglets, or Aigulets.**—These are little tags or sheaths for the ends of ribbon, used in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Very few of them remain, and specimens are interesting and valuable.

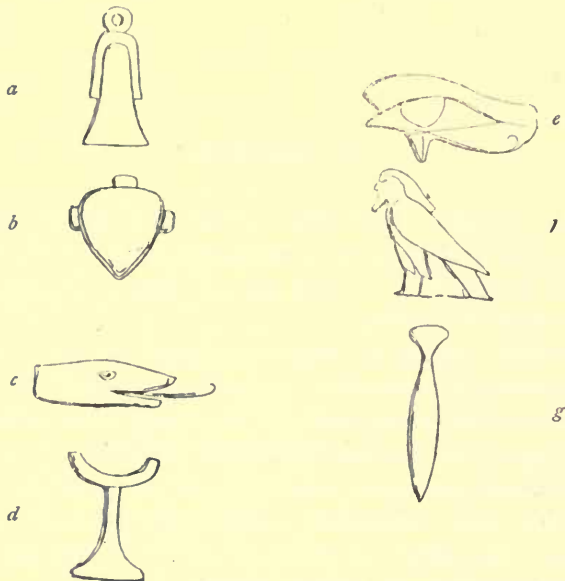
**Amulets** are small objects to which magical properties were attributed; they were often carried about the person in order to ward off evil spirits (or in some cases attract them).

They were sometimes ornamental in themselves, or might consist of inscriptions on cloth or parchment enclosed in cases, plain or decorative.

Egyptian amulets are very interesting. There were many patterns, which were worn by the living and buried with the dead. They were made of various materials (stone, metal, and faience especially), to which magical properties were ascribed. They were also strung between beads and necklets.

Amulets were much worn in Etruscan and Roman times, and from their usual form (a hollow of thin

metal containing the charm) the name of "bulla" (a bubble) was given to them.



#### Egyptian Amulets.

- a* Girdle of Isis. Assured the wearer of the protection of the holy blood of the goddess.
- b* The Heart.
- c* Snake's Head. Placed in tombs to prevent the deceased being bitten by snakes in the under-world.
- d* The Pillow. Typified the raising up and preservation of the head.
- e* Typified the strength and power of the Eye of Horus.
- f* Human-headed Hawk. Ensured to the deceased the power of untying his body, soul, and spirit at will.
- g* The Papyrus Sceptre.

*(From the British Museum Guide, by kind permission.)*

The Anglo-Saxons and other barbarian tribes wore crystal balls in this way.

During the Middle Ages the metals were dedicated

each to a different planet, and in the case of a metal amulet the sign of the appropriate planet should be engraved on it. The Sun's metal was gold, and silver that of the Moon.

**Aventurine Glass.**—A brownish glass with little glittering flashes in it, like fragments of gold-leaf. The method of making it used to be a trade secret of the Venetians, but it is not of any particular value. It is sometimes set as a stone, and sometimes used in mosaic.

**Bristows, or Bristol Diamonds.**—A kind of crystal.

**Bracelets** have been in use from a very early date, and were favourite ornaments in classical times. In the Middle Ages they were very uncommon till the fifteenth century, and very few specimens of Mediæval times have survived. This may be accounted for by the costume being fitted with long sleeves, which rendered it unsuitable for displaying them. During the Renaissance they came more into fashion, and Cellini recounts the making of some. In the seventeenth century they were not uncommon, strings of pearls with ornamented clasps being thus used. During the eighteenth century there were many varieties of them, and miniatures, cameos, Wedgwood plaques, &c., mounted as clasps on a black velvet band, were a favourite form. Charming small buckles were also used to fasten bands of velvet on the arm, and these were often worn in pairs.

**Bezel**, the ornamental face of a ring.



Roman Bulla.

**Bracteates.**—Very thin gold copies of coins or jewels, which were buried with the dead by the Greeks and other nations of antiquity.

**Chains** have been used from early times. The loop-in-loop pattern was introduced about four thousand years before our era and has remained in use to the present day. In its simple form it is very easy to make; as each link is soldered before the chain is interlinked, there is thus no danger of the previous join giving way in doing a subsequent one. It is much stronger than the chains which merely consist of bent wires without solder. In its elaborated forms it is known, as plaited, or Trichinopoly, chain, and these require both dexterity and patience to make. Chains were a great feature of the costume in later Mediæval and Renaissance times, when they were at once an ornament and a bank. A link or a whole chain was often used in payment for a purchase, or as a gift. They were sometimes made of a pattern resembling our modern curb chains, but were more generally of the broad, flat type familiar in portraits of Henry VIII. They are not the same thing as, or substitutes for, the necklet, which carried the pendant, but were a separate ornament and were often worn at the same time. About the middle of the seventeenth century they became less popular as independent ornaments. Very many pretty patterns were elaborated in the eighteenth century, especially to suspend the various trifles on the chatelaines, and the greatest pains were expended in diversifying the links. Long gold chains for wearing round the neck came into fashion about



1830. They generally had a swivel, to which a watch was attached, which was carried tucked into the waistband. These long chains are now again fashionable, and old ones of fairly light pattern are sought for.

The *Cire perdu*, or waste wax, process, was introduced in Egypt during the XIIth dynasty. It was in use for the enamelled jewels of the later part of the Renaissance period. The design was modelled in wax, round which the substance which was to form the mould was placed; the wax was melted away through the holes left for air passages, thus leaving the space free for the molten metal. Only one copy of any particular pattern can be made by this process, as the model is lost, but it reproduces the original with the most perfect fidelity.

**Damascening.**—Inlaid work of gold or silver on an inferior metal (generally steel in early examples). The following quotation from Cellini's *Memoirs* shows the use damascening was put to in Renaissance times.

“It happened about this time that certain vases were discovered, which appeared to be antique urns filled with ashes.

“Amongst these were iron rings inlaid with gold. Learned antiquarians, upon investigating the nature of these rings, declared that they were worn as charms by those who desired to behave with steadiness and resolution in both prosperous and adverse circumstances. I likewise undertook some things of this nature at the request of some gentlemen who were my particular friends, and wrought some of these little rings; but I

made them of well-tempered steel, and then set and inlaid them with gold so that they were very beautiful to behold. Sometimes for a ring of this sort I was paid about forty crowns."

**Enamel** may be defined as a vitreous glaze fused to its base by heat. As used in connection with jewellery the ground is always of metal, but it may also have glass or pottery as a foundation. It is applied to the metal in the form of a powder moistened with water. It is dried and placed in a furnace heated to a pale orange heat. The particles of glass melt and run together into a smooth coating. This process is repeated till the desired thickness is obtained.

Enamels as used for jewellery are :—

**Champlevé**, in which the ground is removed, leaving a design, or walls of cells standing up in metal, between which the enamel is placed.

**Cloisonné**, in which the walls to contain the enamel are added, in the form of thin strips of metal.

**Basse Taille**, in which the design is carved at the bottom of a sunk space and shows through the transparent coat of enamel.

**Plique à Jour**, a kind of cloisonné without a metal ground.

**Filigree Enamel**, in which the containing wires are either twisted or of fancy patterns, and the surface is not ground smooth.

**Painted Enamels**, and paintings on enamel ground with china colours, are also set in jewellery.

Several of the above processes are often used in one piece.

Forms in relief coated all over with opaque or translucent colours are said to be ornamented with **incrusted enamel**.

This art was well known to the Ancient Britons, who were celebrated for their work before the coming of the Romans, and a passage is often quoted as a proof of this from *Icones* of Philostratus (a Greek sophist at the court of Julia Domna, wife of the Emperor Severus):—

“They say that the barbarians who live in the ocean pour these colours on heated brass, and that they then become hard as stone, and preserve the designs that are made upon them.”

Byzantine craftsmen were the makers of numerous pieces, both large and small, which were widely disseminated through Europe. During the Middle Ages, Limoges was a centre of great activity in this direction (what are generally known as “Limoges” Enamels, but which had much better be called “Painted” Enamels, came later).

During the Renaissance a unique class of modelled pendants encrusted with enamels was made. From this zenith the use of enamel dwindled by slow degrees to the paltry and trivial prettinesses of the nineteenth century. There has been a great revival of its use in the present day; but to those who love the old work the bestowal of the title on the coarse blobs of blue and green sometimes used for so-called “Art” jewellery seems little short of desecration. However, there is a proportion of excellent work done.

**Enseigne**.—A jewel worn in the hat, that was very popular during the Renaissance period. It generally

had some kind of symbolical or emblematic meaning, which gave it a personal application to the wearer. Enseignes were also worn by ladies in the hair. They were generally circular in shape, and often exquisitely jewelled and enamelled. They differed from brooches by being fastened into their places by being sewn, the stitches passing through added loops or holes in the ornament. Cellini's account of "enseignes" as made in his day is most interesting. "At that time a sort of small gold medal was fashionable upon which it was customary for noblemen and gentlemen to cause to be engraved certain devices and fancies of their own, and they commonly wore them upon their caps. I made several things of this sort, but found such works very difficult: the celebrated artist Caradosso would not take less than a hundred crowns for one of them, because they contained numerous figures. I was therefore employed (not so much on account of the greatness of his price as his slowness in working) by some gentlemen for whom I made several medals in emulation of this renowned artist, amongst them one on which were four figures, with which I took uncommon pains."

**Etui.**—An ornamental case for implements of needlework, often decorated with choice goldwork, especially during the eighteenth century. Good specimens are very valuable, but were much copied in the Victorian period.

**Fillet.**—An ornamental band worn on the head to confine the hair.

**Fibula** is the word generally used in archæological books for brooches of early manufacture,

particularly those of the safety-pin and other early kinds.

**Fermailleur.**—The makers of “fermails,” which was a general title for clasps and other fastenings.

The Fermailleurs had a corporation at Paris. They were a most important class of workers during the Middle Ages.

**Ferronnière.**—A small jewel hanging by a narrow ribbon, so arranged that the ornament comes in the middle of the forehead. So called from the picture in the Louvre of La Belle Ferronnière (The Blacksmith's wife). It was first worn in Renaissance times, but was revived in the early nineteenth century, when a small locket was often worn thus on a narrow black velvet ribbon or tiny chain.

**Filigree or Filigrain.**—A method of ornament by a mixture of fine twisted wire and granulations. Most usually carried out in gold, but silver is also used by Indian, Norwegian, and other peasant craftsmen.

**George.**—The name given to the jewel of the Order of the Garter. They are often very interesting, and antique ones are of considerable value. There are “greater” and “lesser” Georges.

**Girdle Hangers.**—Objects found in Anglo-Saxon graves, which are generally considered to be the fastenings of a bag or purse.

**Gold.**—This beautiful metal always has been the one most used for jewellery, partly because of its rich appearance, partly because it is very easily worked, and also because it does not tarnish.

It is not often used pure. The reason generally

given for alloying it is that it is too soft for use in its natural state; but the most exquisite ornaments ever made, in two widely differing styles—Greek and Etruscan work, and the enamel jewellery of the Renaissance—are both made of gold which is of a very high standard, about twenty-two carats as a rule. The quality of gold is described by the expression, "so many carats," fine or pure gold being taken as twenty-four. Thus eighteen carat gold means that there are six parts of alloy to eighteen of gold; twenty-two carat means that there are only two of alloy, and so on. Besides the alloys made for convenience in wear and working, gold is also alloyed with various metals in order to alter the colour. Fine gold is an exquisite rich, but rather pale, yellow; alloyed with silver in a small proportion (four to ten pennyweights to the ounce) it has a greenish hue; copper (five to ten pennyweights to the ounce) gives a reddish tint; the addition of a third of its weight in iron forms "blue gold"; and when alloyed with silver in the proportion of half and half, "white gold" is the result. The usual test for gold to distinguish it from base metals is by touching with nitric acid, low grade golds responding to a certain degree, but fifteen or eighteen carat gold not being affected. The rule as to hall-marking precious metals is not in force with regard to gold work set with precious stones, or such things as locket, bracelets, brooches, and chains, so that it is often difficult to ascertain the exact standard of gold used.

The process known as colouring gold consists in



the removal of the alloy from the surface, leaving only a thin film of fine gold exposed ; this soon wears away and leaves the base quality of metal exposed, giving a very tawdry appearance. Things thus dealt with are not earlier than the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Gilding, however, was known from very early times and often has worn splendidly, silver-gilt pieces of the sixteenth century often retaining a considerable share of the original coating. The value of fine gold in small quantities is four pounds six shillings an ounce, and decreases a few pence for larger amounts.

**Granulations, Beads, or Grains.**—These are terms used for the small round particles or balls of metal which are so much used in Greek and Etruscan jewellery. It might be thought by those who are not acquainted with the practical side of the goldsmith's art that they are moulded or stamped, or produced otherwise by mechanical means, but they are the result of the same natural law which causes all small portions of liquid to assume a spherical form. When a little bit of gold or other metal is melted, it at once, whatever its previous shape, gathers itself up into a ball. They are produced in quantities by submitting a crucible containing a mixture of pea-flour or ground charcoal and snippets of metal to a heat exceeding the melting-point of the latter.

**Gypcières** were small pouches which were often fitted with metal frames. Though hardly jewellery in the ordinary sense, they are often so beautifully worked that mention must be made of them here.

**Hippocamp, or Hippocampus.**—A fabulous beast with

the fore part of a horse on the body and tail of a dolphin or other fish. This monster was a favourite subject in Renaissance jewels, the idea being taken from antique sculpture.

**Millefiore Glass.**—A patterned glass which is made in a very curious way. Numerous rods are arranged in position to form a design, then they are partially melted in order to make them stick together, and also to soften them so that they can be drawn out. They are then arranged with other similar rods, but of varying patterns so as to show the complete design. The whole is then heated again, and after being drawn out to the necessary size, cut into slices, which are to be found set as pins, pendants, and brooches. Any one who has seen sugar-sticks made will recognise it as the same process. What is known as "millefiori enamel" may not improbably consist of pieces of such glass fused into position. The process is chiefly met with in work which shows Roman influence. It must not be confused with mosaic, which is rather like it in appearance.

**Morse.**—A clasp or brooch used to hold a cape together.

**Mosaic.**—Florentine mosaic consists of small pieces of various coloured stones inlaid into a stone groundwork, often black. Glass mosaic is made in Venice and Rome of the minutest fragments of glass. Some of the pieces are so fine that they appear as if painted. A great deal of this mosaic work was very delicately set in filigree mounts about 1850 in Italy, and was very popular in England, but it is now quite out of fashion. It is not old or interesting



enough for collectors, and the designs are not quaint enough for those who like old jewellery to wear. The manufacture is still continued, and tourists often bring pieces home as souvenirs.

**Mosaic Gold.**—An alloy of similar composition to brass and Pinchbeck. It is practically the same as the latter. It was used for mounting the various mosaics, cameos, &c., so much worn in the early nineteenth century.

**Nef Jewel.**—An ornament in the form of a ship. It was a very favourite device in Renaissance times. The best known are those made in commemoration of the defeat of the Armada and the local jewellery known as "Adriatic."

**Niello.**—A metallic composition of silver, lead, and sulphur. It has been in use from the earliest times and in nearly all countries. In appearance it is a black substance, somewhat resembling enamel, but it lacks the glassy surface and has a faintly metallic lustre. It is still much used in Russia, where some very pretty pieces of jewellery are decorated with it. It is somewhat more easily achieved than enamel and wears rather better; so other points being equal, such as age, design, &c., enamel is more valuable.

An interesting account of how it was applied in the Middle Ages is given by Theophilus, the great monkish craftsman, "For laying the Niello. When you have mixed and melted the niello, take a portion of it and beat it square, long and slender. Then take the handle with the pincers, and heat it in the fire until it glows, and with another forceps, long and

thin, hold the niello and rub it over all the places which you wish to make black, until the engraved designs are full, and, carrying it away from the fire, carefully make it smooth with a flat file, until the silver appear so that you can easily observe the pattern and scrape it with the cutting iron, carefully cutting away the inequalities."

**Ouch, Owche, Nouche, Nowche.**—A brooch used for fastening a garment in front. The term belongs to late Mediæval times.

**Penannular Pin or Brooch.**—A pin with a ring head, on which the shaft moves round. The pin is pushed through the material and secured by a half-turn. The principal specimens are of Celtic origin.

**Pomander.**—A perfume case hung from the girdle. It generally consists of several parts hinged together, each containing a different spice or scent. They must have been a very necessary adjunct to the costume in times when the sanitary conditions were absolutely primitive. There was also a form known as a scent-ball, which consisted of the perfumes worked into a solid mass, into which the jewelled ornaments were stuck. The idea of this latter may have been derived from the Seville orange stuck with cloves and used to scent linen-chests, a plan still followed by old-fashioned housewives.

**Solder** is used for joining the different parts of metal jewellery together. It is an alloy of metals, composed as a rule mainly of gold or silver (whichever is used in the construction of the object) with other more fusible components added, so that a slightly less degree of heat is required to melt it than would

melt or damage the pieces which require joining. For example, fine or pure silver may be soldered with standard silver (which is mixed with alloy), but to solder standard silver, extra brass should be added to form a suitable mixture for the purpose. The nearer in composition the solder is to the principal metal the better the join. In order to make the solder flow along the joint, a flux (generally borax) has to be used with it. It is generally supposed that the Greeks possessed some secret method of soldering which has been lost, as otherwise it is hard to account for the absence of any perceptible trace of it in their work; but we must take into consideration the fact that they were perfect workmen, with infinite patience and unlimited time.

The following quotation from Dr. Henry Schliemann's "Mycenæ" is very interesting as bearing on the process of soldering as used by the ancient Greeks. "While speaking of soldering, I may mention that Professor Landerer informs me that the Mycenæ goldsmiths soldered gold with the help of borax (borate of soda) which is still used at the present day for that purpose." He adds that he was lucky enough to discover this salt on the border of an ancient false medal from Algina, that it was called in antiquity "gold cement," and that it was imported from Persia and India, under the name of *Baurac Pounxa Tinkal*. In the Middle Ages it was imported by the Venetians from Persia to Venice, where it was purified and exported under the denomination of *Borax Venetus*."

**Repoussé Work.**—A method of ornamenting sheet

metal by means of punches and other tools. Strictly speaking it is only "Repoussé" when the raising comes from the back ; work from the front is chasing, but the term is very generally used for a combination of the two.

**Rosary.**—A string of beads for counting the repetition of a set number of prayers, each ten Aves being preceded by a large bead called a Paternoster. They generally had a large bead containing a relic or a crucifix to show the circuit had been accomplished. They are still made in large numbers. As a rule they are not so sought for as similar work would be in another form, because either as curiosities or personal ornaments collectors prefer things having less sacred associations. Rosary rings are the same thing as decade rings which are dealt with in the special chapter on rings.

**Seigné.**—A breast ornament very fashionable in the seventeenth century. It was so called after Madame de Seigné. It consists of an open-work bow, generally set with small diamonds, and often enamelled.

**Shot-work.**—A large grain mounted in the middle of a silver coil. The central grain catches the light with a bright effect. This work is characteristic of the jewellery of many countries, being found as far apart as India, Scandinavia, and Italy.

**Rivet.**—A nail without a point which is used to fasten two pieces of metal together. It is retained in position by having the end hammered or burnished down to enlarge it, so that it cannot go back through the hole.

**Torc, or Torque.**—A necklet, probably of Eastern origin, which was very characteristic of Gaulish tribes. It was a national emblem of the Celtic race, and is found in several forms, generally a flat plate or bar bent into a ring or twisted on itself. Torcs were frequently of gold, but bronze specimens are more usual. Many have been dug up in various parts of the British Isles, especially in Ireland. Unfortunately, their discoverers being ignorant of their antiquarian interest, they have often been sold at the price of the gold or less, and consigned to the melting-pot.

**Verre Eglomisé.**—Glass decorated by having a design worked at the back in gold and colours. The method originally employed was first of all to cover the back of the panel with gold foil. Portions of this were removed to form the pattern, and then another glass was melted on to the back. This form was known to the Christians of the Catacombs, and remained in use by the Byzantines and through the Middle Ages. Later, the firing of the backing glass was omitted, in order to allow coloured varnishes to be employed, the effect of which was heightened by the use of silver foil.

**Wire.**—Wire as now used is formed by drawing down thin ingots of metal through taper holes in a metal plate, each hole being smaller than the preceding one, till the wire has reached the requisite fineness. The apparatus still resembles in its essentials that used during the Middle Ages. It consists of a metal plate with the necessary holes and the draw bench, fitted with a vice to hold

the plate and a winch to reel up the wire as it is lengthened. Small quantities are drawn through by hand. Hindoo craftsmen simplify matters to the extent of holding the plate between their toes while they draw the wire through it towards them. The very early wire was not made in this way, but consisted of very thin strips of metal cut from a sheet of suitable thickness and rounded as required. Beaded wire has been in use from very early times. It is made with tools somewhat akin to dies, and is not drawn as ordinary wire is. In appearance it looks like a string of tiny beads or granules. The process of making it is given by the monk Theophilus, whose writings are a store-house of information as to the methods employed in the Middle Ages.

# I. ANCIENT JEWELLERY

INTRODUCTION

EGYPTIAN

GREEK

ETRUSCAN

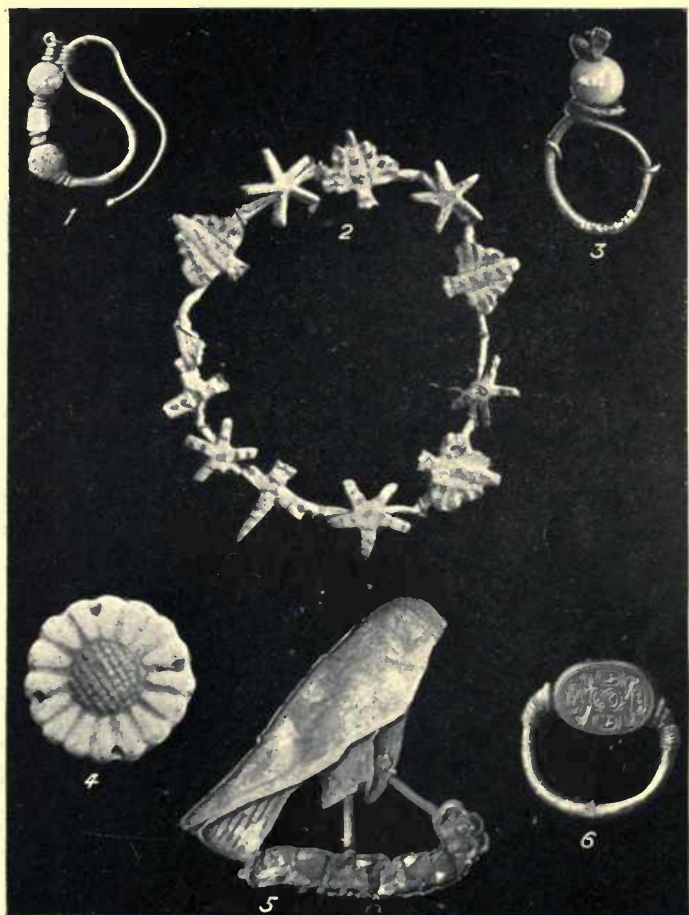
ROMAN



## EGYPTIAN

1. Ear-ring with several beads mounted on the front.
2. Beads of blue and green pottery.
3. Ring with bead ornament.
4. A very pretty pottery bead in the form of a daisy glazed in natural colours.
5. Hawk which has lost inlay, showing empty cells.
6. Scarab ring. The wire, after being twisted round the band, passes through the enlarged ends and the scarab, so that it serves as a swivel for it to turn on. The green stone scarab is inscribed with four uraei and four cartouches containing the symbol of "life."







## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION—EGYPTIAN, GREEK, ETRUSCAN, ROMAN

THE love of jewellery is very deeply rooted in human nature. It is perhaps difficult to decide whether it is its ornamental side or its symbolical character which has usually made the more direct appeal. Nowadays it is generally frankly worn for its beauty, except such things as medals and orders, civic chains and masonic and ecclesiastical jewels. In former times, however, a very large proportion of personal ornaments had also an element of meaning. Sometimes they were charms to ward off ill-luck, or amulets endowed with magic powers. Often they were insignia of rank, or had a religious significance. But whether they were to be worn simply as ornaments or as possessed of mystic powers, in almost every age some of the best decorative art of the day has been lavished on them. Often when household furniture and other things that we now deem necessities of existence had sunk to a very low standard, the jewellery and metal-work were still of the most exquisite character.

Sometimes the makers appear to have derived

their inspiration from the metal itself; they seem to have loved its colour, its ductility, and its power of granulation, and to have delighted in showing off these qualities to the very uttermost. Such work is seen in Greek, Etruscan, Anglo-Saxon, and much Indian jewellery.

Sometimes it was the love of colour which moved them, and then wonderful harmonies or contrasts in faience, stones or enamel, were evolved, such as we find in the Egyptian, Mediæval, and Renaissance periods.

At other times it was the desire to keep some much admired or cherished object, such as an antique cameo or a relic, continually on the person that led the worker to expend all his skill in making a shrine or frame worthy of the little treasure.

Then among savage peoples we find a desire to attract attention to different parts of the body, and to attain this object any glittering or brilliantly coloured thing is rudely set, or strung on a necklace for attachment to the person. Tinkling and jangling ornaments of roughly fashioned metal are also used for the same purpose.

Nearly every nation has its own distinctive style of work. In some countries this used to be carried so far that the very town or district where a certain piece had its origin could be stated with a fair degree of certainty; but the fine distinctions involved would be of very little interest to the general reader and owner of jewellery.

Always among the remains of early races which have come down to us have been found curious

ornaments which show that from the first vanity has had its place in human nature. But often these are uncouth and hardly beautiful according to our ideas, and are only interesting to those who have specialised in such things; so in this book they are not dealt with, as they do not come in the way of the general collector.

We will leave the more primitive works of all countries alone, and begin with the **Ancient Egyptians**, because though remote in point of time, their tombs have yielded such a rich store of treasures that the aspect of their ornaments and jewellery is much more familiar to us than those which were made at some periods nearer our own.

Often they appeal to us as being more beautiful and suitable for our own use than seems possible when we begin to reflect that they were made thousands of years ago. It is a most extraordinary fact that amongst them goldwork is found which not only could not be surpassed at the present day, but has rarely been equalled, even in the periods when goldsmith's work was the craft in which the leading artistic minds found expression. Gold was, however, rather scarce in ancient Egypt, and was chiefly used for the ornaments of the great, and for small things such as beads and signet-rings. It is likely that more of the precious metal was imported into Egypt than came from local mines. Some would certainly be found in the streams and rivers. Notable among the goldwork are the jewels found in the tomb of Queen Aah-hotep (XVIIIth Dynasty). There were among them a diadem with a crouching Sphinx,

a marvellously jewelled brooch, and one formed of three golden bees, also a wonderfully wrought chain.

Perhaps the Egyptian work which has the greatest interest to general collectors is the beadwork and the amulets of stone and earthenware, which probably formed the principal ornaments of the bulk of the people, and are so plentiful in some kinds that interesting specimens are quite inexpensive. In the best period it is noteworthy that each bead is made for its own place in the general scheme, and is not merely one of many made with no special end in view. These beads of pottery, glazed with blue or green, were made of very varying patterns, not only what we now generally term "beads," but in shapes somewhat like dumb-bells, hawks, shells, &c., and hollow gold beads were interspersed with them.

During the XIIth Dynasty a fine period of beadwork began, and the large round beads are almost sure to belong to this period. It was during the XVIIIth Dynasty that the beadwork reached its highest pitch of perfection, and many other colours were added to those originally employed, which were shades of blue and green. Many new patterns were also made, about two hundred and fifty being known of the little pendants and ornaments which are interspersed in the necklaces, besides ordinary beads and scarabs. After this, glass beads were introduced, and by Roman times were the kind principally used, and many thousand beads of this period have survived. Ivory and pottery beads were also made, but the glass ones are more interesting, being of such varied shapes and colours. Some of them were made on

the same principal as the millefiori glass (see Glossary), and others were curiously striped and spotted.

The jewellery of Egypt has another interest besides that of beauty of workmanship, in that the ornamental devices introduced always had a meaning. The most usual of these was the beetle, or scarab, which was an emblem of the resurrection of the dead; the human-headed hawk, which represented the union of the body, soul and spirit, and the heart. One feels that colour and symbolism were the leading motives in the mind of these Egyptian workers, and to express them they called most of the processes now used to their aid, except enamel on metal, which, strange to say, does not seem to have been employed till quite late in their history, though they used cells exactly similar to those employed in cloisonné enamel, filling them with coloured cement or stones, and also, strangely enough, used a vitreous glaze fused into cells of stone and pottery. Why they did not hit on enamel on metal is a mystery, but no early piece has been discovered, and the process was almost certainly introduced by the Romans. However, they carried the art of inlaying pieces of glass and stone into cells of gold to the utmost pitch of perfection, fitting the fragments of materials exactly to the contours of their appointed places with the utmost skill. M. Fontenay, who was familiar with all workshop processes, declares that nowadays none but the very cleverest workman could hope to equal the workmanship of these pieces.

They also did granulated work very beautifully,



## GREEK AND ETRUSCAN

1. Greek pendant. Fine period.
2. Gold disc with tube at back ; possibly an ear ornament. Early Etruscan.
3. A Phoenician ear-ring from Tharros.
4. Ornament representing a thunderbolt. Of gold set with glass.
5. Ornament in gold with fine wire. Ornamented with filigree and loop-in-loop hanging chains. Fine period. It was found in Crete. It was made about the third or fourth century B.C.
6. Greek necklace (part of).
7. Ear-ring with pendants. Ornamented in twisted wires, granulated work, beaded wire, stones, two kinds of chains, and a model of a vase. Late Etruscan.
8. Gold fibula with meander patterns worked in fine gold beads of extraordinary minuteness. Early Etruscan.





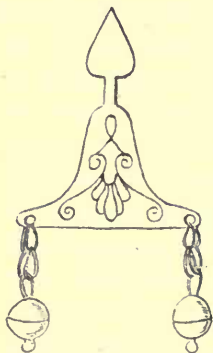


though not so minutely as the Etruscans; and through the Phœnicians the Greeks probably derived the process from them.

**Greek Jewellery.**—Among goldsmiths and jewellers the Greeks are universally acknowledged to hold the front rank. In looking at a piece of their work one cannot help being struck by the mastery over the material which the maker must have possessed. If it is simple, one feels that simplicity was the result deliberately aimed at, and that it is not caused by poverty of ideas as to design or lack of knowledge of the craft. On the other hand, the most elaborate pieces do not seem overcrowded or worried. The intricate ornament always seems to be in the right place and in proportion to the whole piece. Their delicacy never appears thin or their rich detail heavy. There is a logical sequence in every line. Probably the workman designed each piece as it grew under his hands; he knew the exact capabilities of the material and the purpose the work was to serve, and within these limits he accomplished (or so it seems to us) all that was possible in the way of translating beauty into gold. The very early work is mainly embossed, either by the repoussé method or by stamping. Amongst the other processes employed later are engraving, gem-cutting, and above all delicate filigree work which has never reached the same degree of perfection of workmanship and design as in their hands. It is this extreme minuteness of the work that at first may strike our sense of wonder most strongly, but after all it is the exquisite delicacy of taste which is really most

marvellous. It is not found only in the pieces which are the *chefs-d'œuvre* of the master craftsmen, but in the minor things which are so numerous that they must have been made by the ordinary working goldsmiths. It is possible that the minute workmanship in the way of affixing the tiny granules and wires may have been the result of some knack of craftsmanship which has been lost, though we know that in former times extraordinary patience was shown in

carrying out works of art; and even now Orientals spend years in making pieces of lacquer or needlework.



Greek Ear-ring.

The chains used are the plaited loop-in-loop kind, arranged in more or less intricate patterns, and they form the basis of most of the necklaces, which generally consist of numerous small pendants hung closely along such a chain. Those ornaments take various forms, such as amphoræ, rosettes, balls, and taper shapes,

all ornamented with delicate filigree in ever-varying designs. Ear-rings are found in a multitude of delightful patterns. A tiny Eros or Cupid is a very favourite subject; amphoræ and basket shapes are also found in considerable numbers. These ear-rings strike the keynote of movement, and their swaying motion must have given to the wearer an effect of extreme elegance. It is somewhat difficult to reconcile the idea of ear-rings at all with the general

conception of Greek art, as they always seem to have something barbaric about them, involving a mutilation (though it is only a slight one) of the human form. However, if there *must* be ear-rings, they are here in perfection.

Rings appear to have been mostly used as a convenient way of carrying the signet or seal, either as an intaglio engraved on the ring itself, or on a gem mounted in it. A serpent encircling the finger was also a favourite pattern. Head ornaments consisted of very ornamental coronals or wreaths, very likely used only for special occasions, and much plainer bands tapering off towards the back and with some slight ornamentation at the widest part in front.

Specimens of fine Greek jewellery are of course exceedingly rare in private collections, though occasionally a piece is offered for sale at a high price.

The very early Greek jewellery such as was found at Mycenæ is practically *all* preserved in museums for the purpose of study, and is unattainable by private collectors. It is almost all worked in repoussé, or stamped on very thin gold sheets. They had a curious way of embossing the metal used for making buttons and such things. The design was carved on wood and covered by the gold, which was fastened behind. Pressure was then applied to the metal, which being thin, sank into the grooves of the wood, so that the pattern showed through into the face. This differs from ordinary stamped work, as the matrix remains permanently in place to support the work. Favourite objects represented are octapods (sepias), butterflies, rosettes, leaf forms, and above all

scrolls and spirals of marvellous beauty, which at once remind us of the work of the Irish manuscripts two thousand years or more later.

**Etruscan Jewellery.**—The Etruscans inhabited, it will be remembered, a State of Central Italy, which was often at war with Rome, with varying success, till it was finally conquered and its power merged in that of Rome, in B.C. 282. They are particularly noted for their goldwork. Much has been recovered from sepulchres which are found here and there in various parts of the country. Unfortunately, only too often those who seek these tombs in order to preserve their contents safely in museums, where they can be studied, find that others have been before them, and that only a few scraps have been left, and that treasures of great artistic value have been most probably melted down for the sake of a few pounds' worth of gold. The general character of the Etruscan jewellery resembles that of the Greeks. Three periods are noted. The first, which is discovered in the most ancient tombs, bears traces of some influence which would seem to show a kinship to, or at least acquaintance with, Egyptian art. The second, in which Greek influence clearly predominates, and a perfect technique is wedded to artistic design; and a third period of decline. The main point in which the technique of the pure Etruscan kind differs from that of the Greeks is that lines, instead of being wrought in twisted wire (filigree) are carried out by means of rows of granulations, each tiny bead touching its neighbour. These bead lines disappeared under Grecian influence. The



Etruscans introduced scarabs into their work ; either originals from Egypt, the home of the scarab, or copies.

The enamel used is all cloisonné, and it and repoussé work are frequent methods of ornamentation. It was from the Etruscans that the Romans learned to attach so much importance to rings, which were objects of peculiar significance among them. They had the custom of using the ring for betrothals, and also as a signet. Some of the finest objects of Etruscan art are wreaths for the head. There are several in the Vatican which are made of the leaves of the oak, ivy, myrtle, and laurel in gold, enamelled in natural colours. In the Louvre there is a particularly pretty one of daisies mounted on spring wires.

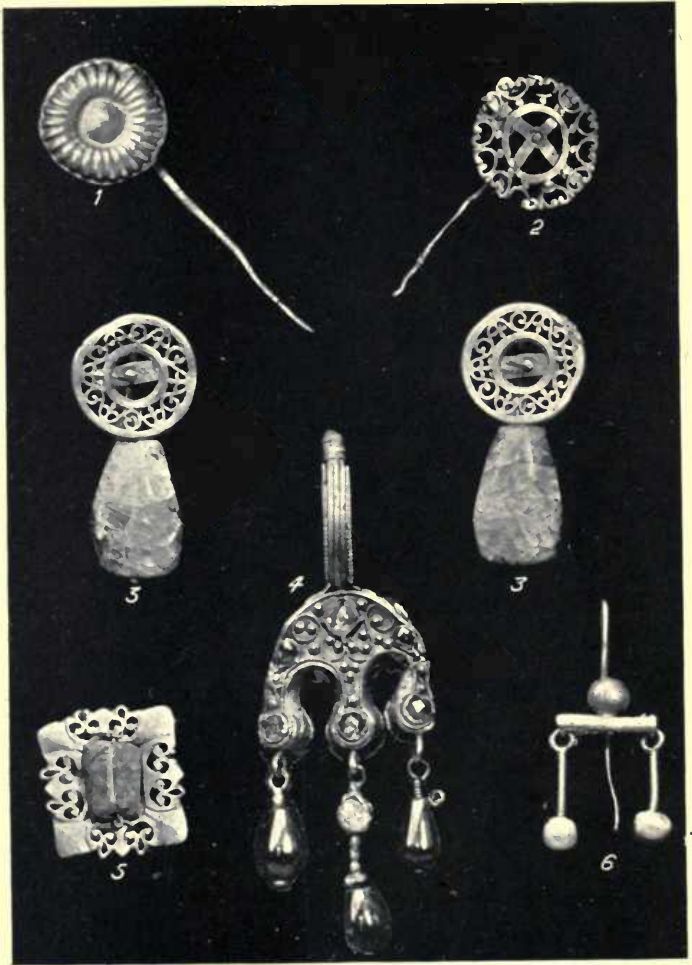
Genuine pieces of fine workmanship, whether Greek or Etruscan, very rarely come into the market and always command a high price. They are both perfect examples of exquisite craftsmanship, and also possess extreme antiquarian interest.

Beautiful copies were made in the early nineteenth century. Others of less delicate work are still made, but they seem to lack somewhat of the dainty grace which underlies the classic beauty of the originals. They are mostly much more massive, and are made of eighteen carat gold instead of the twenty-two or even finer metal, used generally by the old workers. I do not think the copyists ever attempt the pure granular Etruscan work ; it is mostly a few stereotyped patterns in twisted wire or filigree. There are also many actual forgeries calculated to deceive the very elect.

## ROMAN

1. Portion of a gold ear-ring.
2. Gold ear-ring of pierced gold.
3. Roman ear-rings of pierced work, with emerald matrix drops.
4. Ear-ring of gold. The bow is of corded pattern, to which is attached a crescent-shaped yoke of three pendants, set with cabochons of emeralds and ruby, and three jacinth drops. Ancient Roman.
5. Gold ear-ring, set in the centre with a hexagonal emerald bead. Ancient Roman.
6. Ear-ring of plain gold wire. Attached is a yoke and two wire pendants with pearl beads on the ends. Ancient Roman.



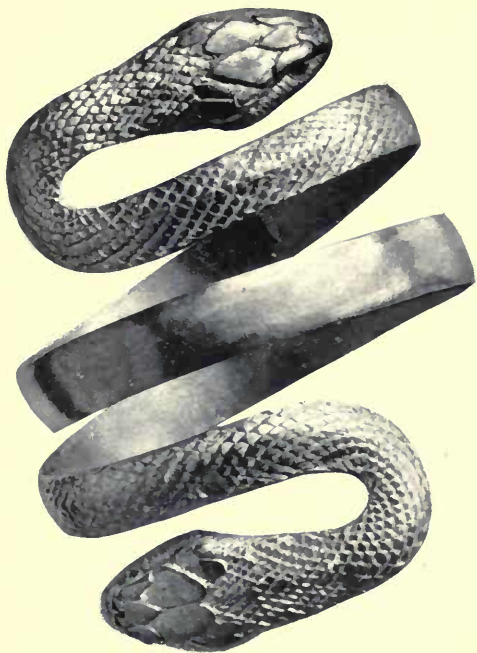




**Roman Jewellery.**—Roman jewellery is most clearly a child of the Etruscan and Greek styles. First one of these races then the other yielded to the might of the Roman arms. The conquerors were always ready to take advantage of any gift possessed by those whom they subdued, and their goldwork shows its origin very plainly. The earlier Roman jewellery seems to be derived from the Etruscan, though considerably altered in course of time, and later they brought Greek artists and workmen to Rome, who carried on their crafts, and instructed the Roman workmen in gem-cutting and other branches in which they excelled, thus giving these arts a fresh stimulus. Like the Athenians, the Romans constantly desired some new thing, and when the victories of Pompey were the means of introducing the fashion of splendid carved gems, it was followed with an enthusiasm almost amounting to madness; and later, as de Baye points out, the art of the Barbarians was not without its influence. He quotes from the poet Corippus, who describes the dress of Justinus II. "A purple robe, flowing from the shoulders, drapes the person of Cæsar. It is fastened by a fibula, the chains of which are glittering with precious stones, a trophy of his victory over the Goths." We find this love of gorgeousness frequently reiterated in Roman history, and many instances are mentioned—for instance, Servilia, the mother of Brutus, received as a gift from Julius Cæsar a pearl valued at fifty thousand pounds; and Cleopatra's ear-rings alone were valued at one hundred and sixty-one thousand, four hundred and fifty-seven pounds of our money. Lollia Paulina, the

## ANCIENT ROMAN

1. Bracelet in the form of a two-headed serpent. Gold.
2. Ear-ring with three hanging loop-in-loop chains, each furnished with an amethyst bead.



1



2



wife of the Emperor Caligula, adorned herself for an ordinary betrothal feast with emeralds and pearls worth nearly three hundred and fifty thousand pounds. This extraordinary extravagance is noted again and again, and we find that nearly a quarter of a million of our money was given for a single piece of jewellery. These large figures would of course refer to splendid gems and pearls, more than artistic goldwork. After these historical accounts of senseless ostentation, it is pleasant to turn to those unwritten documents which tell of earlier times and of those less ostentatious pieces which were the ornaments of the bulk of the populace. These show us that while among the very rich of certain periods preposterously expensive ornaments were the vogue, there was also a style of Roman jewellery which, while lacking the daintiness and exquisite taste that marks the simplest piece of Greek workmanship, yet has the charm of varied colour, wanting to a certain extent in Greek jewellery. This taste was satisfied in the richer classes by emeralds, sapphires, and other gems; and the lower orders supplied it by means of amber, amethysts, and other cheap stones, and especially by beautifully tinted glass. "The glass gems of the populace," as Pliny calls these last, may have been held in contempt by those who had the real thing, but they are very beautiful all the same.

Coronets and crowns of gold and gems were much favoured. Necklaces were generally of pearls or beads, with cameos or coins interspersed here and there. Rings were of great importance and mag-

nificence. Under Tiberius they were a sign of rank ; those who wore them were legally supposed to be descended from three generations of free men. But this rule could not be maintained, and it was relaxed till it stood that only a freeborn Roman might wear a gold ring. But even in this form it was not carried out stringently, and those who were inclined to evade it had their iron and silver rings coated with gold. Among the most successful of the simpler Roman jewels were the ear-rings ; they are somewhat heavy in their proportions, but the earlier ones still generally emphasised the swinging movement which is such a delightful feature in Greek ear-rings, by being hinged together in several parts or hung with chains. Towards the end of the Empire they, like other jewellery, became heavy and ugly.

Perhaps of principal interest to all of us are the remains of the Roman occupation of Britain, which are found in considerable numbers on sites which were inhabited by them, or used as camps. These are generally of the plainer kind, but many are enriched with enamel which was adopted by the Romans to a very marked extent. It is thought to have been a British invention : at any rate, it was not known to the Romans in early times, though the Greeks used the cloisonné process a little, but in quite a different way to the massive effect of Romano-British work. The Romans were very clever glass-workers, and as noted above made beautiful beads and pastes. They also made rings and amulets of this substance, of which the very flaws and slight imperfections seemed an added



beauty. Millefiori glass was also used in sections to set in rings and brooches. Numbers of bronze fibulæ of the Roman period have been discovered in Britain. They are now dull and covered with verdigris, but when new and of a rich gold-like colour they must have had a very different appearance. The interest of specimens is greatly enhanced if one knows exactly where they were found and the exact character of the remains discovered with them, which should always be ascertained and noted on a label attached to the piece. Without these particulars, unless the workmanship is out of the common, their importance is very slight.

## BYZANTINE

Brooch, probably German work of the eleventh century, set with Byzantine enamels, which were made in plaques of small size for such purposes.

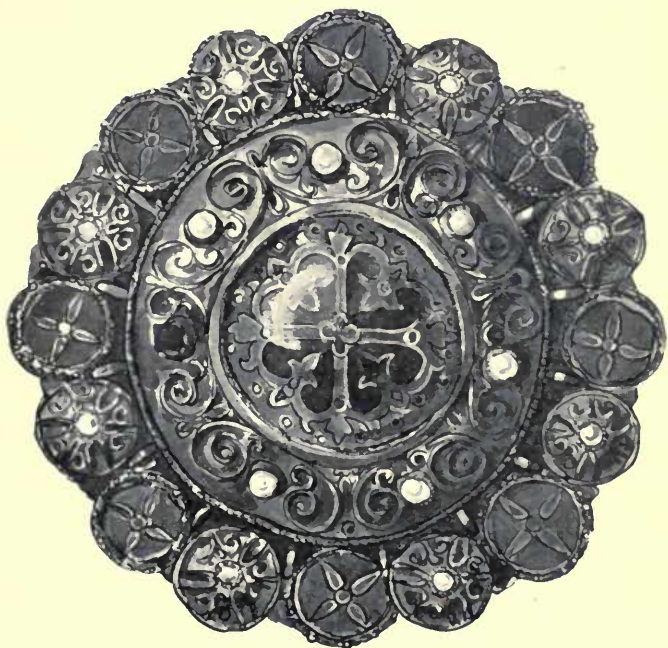
## II. THE MIDDLE AGES

BYZANTINE

BARBARIAN

LATER MEDIÆVAL

CELTIC





## CHAPTER II

### THE MIDDLE AGES

THE term "Middle Ages" is generally applied to the period from A.D. 476 to 1494, and was a time when the remains of classic art, the fresh inspiration of Christianity, and the new influences spread over Europe by the Teutonic invaders, were all at work. It will be convenient to deal separately with the differing types of jewellery which existed side by side, including the lingering remains of the earliest art of the Celts. The Byzantine and the Teutonic combined to form the later Mediæval style, which paved the way for the glorious jewellery of the Renaissance period.

**Byzantine Jewellery**—The Byzantine Empire lasted from the fourth century till the city was captured by the Turks in 1453; from the fifth century to the eleventh century it led Europe in all the arts of civilisation. But in art, from the twelfth century onwards, the universal adherence to a rigid convention killed any real growth. This later type of design (which has endured till now in the art of the Greek Church) is what is generally thought of as Byzantine Art, because many more things which

## BYZANTINE

1. An enamel plaque of Italian workmanship showing Byzantine influence.
2. An enamelled pendant. This is Russian work, but it shows the strong influence which the Byzantine style exercised over the art of that country, which, in fact, still persists. The same style is shown in the pendant of Russian workmanship of the fourteenth or fifteenth century, shown in Illustration 4.
3. Byzantine ear-ring ornamented with birds in cloisonné enamel and arrangements of grains. The pearls, of which only a few remain, are fixed by a centre pin.
5. Byzantine ear-ring of filigree-work, decorated with beads strung on wire.



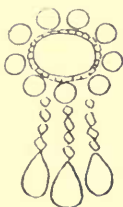




date from this time have survived than have come down to us from the Golden Age. There is, therefore, a danger of the earlier work, which was in many ways very beautiful, and is certainly very interesting, being overlooked.

In jewellery, as in other branches of art in the earliest part of the period, we shall find the classical feeling struggling, as it were, against the inrush of Oriental influences, but the latter soon became predominant. With the ever-increasing trade with the East came the knowledge of the magnificence of Oriental decoration. The greater ease with which precious stones could be procured caused them to be used in far greater profusion, and splendour of colour became the keynote rather than the delicate severity which was the leading spirit of the best Greek work. The love of colour found a congenial sphere in enamel. The earliest pieces in the distinctly Byzantine style probably go no farther back than the sixth century, and it was not till after the close of the iconoclastic period (during which all pictures and images were ordered to be destroyed) that it reached its perfection. When Basil took the reins of government in the ninth century, industry, trade, and art received an impetus whose effects lasted nearly three hundred years, and with the rest enamelling flourished. This enamel is mainly cloisonné, and is quite different from Romano-British work, which was somewhat heavy and of the champlévé variety. The art was probably reintroduced independently from Persia, but this is not known for certain, though it is thought

that a Persian type of design can be traced in all the earliest pieces. The cells are made of very thin gold strips, and the ground was also of fine sheet gold. The enamel was generally, though not invariably, translucent. At first it could only be made in very small pieces, and these were distributed widely over Europe, and were set in metal work by the goldsmiths of other nations, and also sewn on to woven material for vestments, in the same way that stones in gold mounts were used. They were also set in brooches and other jewellery just as if



Byzantine Brooch  
from the mosaics  
at Ravenna.

they were gems, and thus used have a very beautiful effect. Later, larger pieces were made as well, but these of course were used for book-covers, altars, and so on, not for personal adornment. The richness of the gem-work of this time can be studied in the contemporary mosaics and ivories, such as the portraits of the Emperor Justinian and the Empress Theodora

in the Church of San Vitale at Ravenna, which are rendered gorgeous by the profusion of jewellery set with real stones and pearls. Round the neck was worn a rich necklace with large hanging stones; pear-shaped drops also hung over the ears from the diadem and decked the robe. Contemporary writings are full of references to the magnificence of the jewellery of this time. It was, no doubt, with a view to combating the almost overwhelming inrush of Oriental ideas that the Church formulated those formal rules of art for

designers, which have done so much to crystallise the style of Byzantine figure work into grotesque stiffness, and barred all advance by prohibiting any direct appeal to nature.

Niello work was much used in decorating gold and silver, especially rings. The art of cameo cutting was also largely practised, but in quite a different style to the Græco-Roman which preceded it, and which was far superior both in design and technique. A characteristic way of mounting pearls was on wires, which were held in place by loops at intervals. Charming filigree work was still produced, though of a much coarser kind than Greek and Etruscan work.

To sum up: in studying Byzantine jewellery we shall find the principal interest lies not in its perfection of workmanship, nor even in its beauty (though both may be found in individual pieces), but in tracing out the influences which united to form a style which, in spite of its numerous and manifest shortcomings, has held its place for nearly a thousand years as the official art of one of the great Churches of Christendom.

**Barbarian Jewellery.** — With the decline of the power of the Roman Empire before the attacks of its numerous enemies on all sides, there also passed out of use in a great part of Europe that special type of art which had spread to all the countries over which Rome ruled, and quite another kind took its place.

The Romans called the other nations "Barbarians," and affected to consider them utterly uncivilised;

## TEUTONIC

- 1 and 2. A Merovingian brooch of bronze with a gold face ornamented with pastes and filigree.
3. Part of a buckle. A gold plaque set with garnets and ornamented with filigree-work. Anglo-Saxon.
4. Late Anglo-Saxon work. The Alfred jewel, A.D. 878. One of the most interesting of historical relics. There is every probability that not only did it belong actually to Alfred, but that it was made under his direct supervision. The decoration in grainwork and filigree is particularly happy.
5. Small pendant of a necklace which shows the typical inlaid garnet-work. The light stones are turquoises.
6. Part of a buckle with very fine filigree wirework. Anglo-Saxon.
7. A necklace of beads and coins. The coins are of Mauricius (582-602) and Heraclius (610-641), Emperors of the East, and Chlotaire II. of France (618-628). The centre pendant is set with millefiori glass.





yet these peoples possessed arts which are certainly worthy of our careful study, and the more we know of them the more they will be admired.

Their jewellery is most interesting and surprisingly beautiful. The special type characteristic of the Teutonic invaders is known as "Inlaid Jewellery." This method of ornamentation differs from other ways of using stones, in that instead of the gems being fixed individually in a setting which is burnished or bent over to keep them in place, the pieces are ground flat and each fastened, by cement or otherwise, into a compartment, or else cemented into holes pierced in sheet metal. These two kinds are known respectively as "cloisonné" and "plate" inlaying. The effect aimed at appears to be one of rich, flat colour, approaching that of mosaic or cloisonné enamel, rather than the separate points of coloured light which are obtained by gems cut and set in the usual way. The distinction was evidently quite clear to the workers, because we frequently find that the gorgeous inlaid work is used as a background for the more raised effects of cabochon stones or ivory bosses. They were not the only users of the style in Europe (as it may have been adopted independently by the Romans from the same source), but they have made it their own, by completely assimilating it to their racial genius. Its birthplace, by a general consensus of opinion, is the East. The very early pieces which are preserved in the Victoria and Albert and British Museums, and which are part of "the Treasure of the Oxus," must have been



wonderfully beautiful when the filling was in place. But unfortunately this has all disappeared. In Egypt, too, inlaid work was known, but it differed in several points from that described above. This kind of ornamentation may be traced across Europe from east to west, though we do not know exactly where it came from, nor the antiquity of its origin. Persian pieces of about 400 B.C., and Indian work not later than 150 B.C. may be cited; but its interest to us generally must be held to begin when our ancestors, in the shape of the invading Teutonic tribes, commenced their wanderings, and, leaving traces of their passage here and there, journeyed from the Caucasus across and over Europe, spreading at last as far as England.

While archæologists are able to assign, with a considerable degree of precision, the various objects to the particular tribes which made them, there is no necessity here to go into the numerous subdivisions, which are sufficiently intricate to give rise to a very considerable literature of their own. The general characteristics of the work known as "cloisonné," or "inlaid," have been given above, and wherever it is used there is a very general similarity in the way it is done. But the surrounding metal work differs considerably. For instance, in Scandinavia it is used on fibulæ on which the rest of the decoration consists mainly of wonderfully entwined and contorted animals, which require much study to distinguish which is head, neck, body or limbs, in so extraordinary a manner are they interlaced. In **Merovingian** and **Anglo-Saxon** work this feature is not nearly so pro-



nounced, though there are frequently introduced heads of various marvellous men and animals; but the decoration is more often of beautiful knot work in twisted and beaded wire, of a geometrical character, or similar designs executed in carved or cast work. The Frankish tribes were fond of using it on bird forms. We find, as the work proceeds farther towards the west, that the precious materials are more and more sparsely used; gold is beaten into thin plates or worked over bronze in some such way as that used later for Sheffield plate, and garnets are used much more economically.

We must remember that the materials mostly used for inlay, such as garnets, turquoise, and mother-of-pearl, all came from the East, where in some parts (to quote Sir Martin Conway's account of a fight in Northern Kashmir)<sup>1</sup> the natives used garnets to economise lead in their bullets, and where afterwards he came across a stream the bed of which was wholly and deeply covered with garnets; but naturally the farther they had to be fetched the more scarce and precious they became. The Anglo-Saxons who settled in England did not come from what we now call Saxony, but from Prussia as it was before 1866.<sup>2</sup> They settled in this country in the fifth century, and brought with them the type of inlaid jewellery general among the Teutons of the Continent. With it was allied a very charming kind of metal work which, though

<sup>1</sup> *The Burlington Magazine*, September, 1911.

<sup>2</sup> Stubbs' "Middle Ages," vol. i. p. 12.

less intricate than that developed by their Celtic neighbours in Ireland, was yet very effective and beautiful. But if we note this quality of roughness in Anglo-Saxon goldsmith's work when compared with Celtic, we should look at the condition under which the respective pieces were produced, and it may be accounted for. The Irish work was done by artificers working under the guidance and protection of the Church, but who were not (as far as we learn) generally monks, or even living in the monastery. More probably the art descended from father to son, and thus early training and hereditary instinct would combine to produce a more delicate handling. At any rate, this may be offered as a possible solution. Ireland, also, was in a much less disturbed state than England.

On the whole, Anglo-Saxon work resembled that produced at the same time on the Continent; but there were two forms of fibulæ which were specialised in our isle—the cruciform shape, which is exclusively found in Scandinavia and Northern England, and the disc-shaped variety. We must not be led by its shape to think that the cross-like form has any connection with Christianity; it was evolved quite independently, though it closely resembles some of the Russian forms of the crucifix.

While the fibulæ of various forms are quite the most important of Anglo-Saxon ornaments, the buckles found are numerous and beautiful. This arose from the custom of hanging their weapons and other belongings to a belt, so its fastening was

an important piece of their equipment. They are often of beautifully worked gold, inlaid with garnets; some are also formed of silver-gilt and bronze, either plain or gold plated. Sometimes enamel has been used to ornament them.

Rings and ear-rings were generally plain in early times, just a twist of silver wire with perhaps a bead added as decoration.

Necklets of beads with or without coins or ornamental pendants were favourite decorations; and the lapidaries were sufficiently skilful to pierce stones with precision. Amethysts and amber were frequently used in this way.

With the later and comparatively more peaceful times following on the spread of Christianity, came the increased use of enamel. During the Roman occupation it had, of course, been largely used in Britain, and the Celts were masters of the craft; but its extended use in Anglo-Saxon times seems to have been the result of Church influence from some source.

As before observed, the goldsmiths were now very generally clergy or their dependents, but they still retained, and introduced even into ecclesiastical objects, the methods employed by their pagan fore-runners. We have many fewer specimens of this later period, because the heathen custom of burying a man's belongings with him was disapproved of by the clergy, so the pieces we possess have mostly been found by almost miraculous accidents. The Alfred jewel is one of the most remarkable examples. The inscription "Alfred mec heht gewyrcau" ("Alfred

had me wrought ") leads one to suppose that it was actually made under the supervision of the King himself. We certainly know that he was for some time in the neighbourhood where it was found, which was three miles from the Isle of Athelney, where he fled from the Danes ; perhaps he even had it with him when he burnt the cakes. Possibly, having introduced foreign workmen, still further to improve the arts which he loved to foster, this may have been the production of a new pattern, and the inspirer caused his name to be inscribed on it. Its exact purpose is not known. It has been suggested that it was worn on the front of a helmet or as the summit of a coronet of some kind ; or it may have been the handle of a pointer. The cloisonné enamel is sometimes considered to be a portrait of the King, or it may more probably be a representation of Our Lord. It strikes one in the same way that the pictures in Celtic manuscripts do ; it seems so much ruder and less artistic than the surrounding goldwork, and in the illuminations the writing and borders are always perfection, while the attempts at human figures are like a child's first drawing.

The Visigothic Kings of Spain were very powerful, and copied much from the proud Emperors of the East. Like them, they surrounded themselves with the most splendid objects of gold- and silversmiths' work.

The most important find of objects of this period is known as the Treasure of Guarrazar, from the name of the village, six miles from Toledo,

where they were found. The principal things there discovered were votive crowns bearing the names of various Visigothic Kings who reigned in the seventh century. They may originally have been made to be worn on the head, and the chains and pendants added when they were dedicated. They are the most magnificent specimens of their kind, and are richly decorated with sapphires and pearls, and the characteristic red glass inlay. The crown of Recesvinthus is particularly interesting, the letters which spell out his name being formed of the red inlay. Suspended from each is a square sapphire, to which again is hung a large pear-shaped pearl. These crowns show specimens both of plate and cell inlay.

It is a pity that so many of the pieces of **Merovingian** jewellery that have come down to us are in such bad repair. Much of it is made of thin plates of gold over some other substance which has not stood the effects of time and wear.

The usual cloisonné work is used in its decoration, almost always in garnets over a *paillon* of embossed gold. The metal used is often a very fusible alloy of tin and copper, and the designs are frequently cast in this bronze. Gold is used with extreme care, and a very little is made to go a long way.



Visigothic Crown.

Goldsmiths were held in very high esteem among these Teutonic peoples and often attained great power. They were favourably situated for rising in the world, as they must generally have been men of intelligence and have been in positions where they could prove themselves trustworthy. It was thus that Eloi, the patron saint of goldsmiths, first came into favour. He received instructions from his Royal master, when he was a young stranger workman, to make him a gold throne (or perhaps a saddle, *Sella ora* are the words in the old manuscript), and provided with a bare sufficiency of material for *one*, he by good management made two of it. Whereupon the King was so impressed with his skill and honesty that he gave him a very high position. What really happened, in all probability, was, that Eloi, coming from a foreign Court where the art of goldsmithing was more advanced, had learnt superior methods either of applying gold in thin plates or else alloying it; but round the legend has grown up the superstition that angels helped him, and therefore he is not given the full credit which his skill and industry as a goldsmith deserves.<sup>1</sup>

It is interesting to note in the Burgundian laws that a slave who worked in gold was more esteemed than any ordinary free man, if we may judge by the blood-money exacted as a fine for their murder.

**Celtic Jewellery.**—The Celts represent a branch of the Aryan race, which arrived in Europe in pre-historic times. They have left traces of their occupation in various part of the Continent, but gradually

<sup>1</sup> Maitland's "Dark Ages."



they were forced to retreat before more powerful nations, or at all events those of them who remained, lost their characteristic art under the influence of other ideas. So it is in the extreme West alone that there is to be found a continuous series showing the later development of their art, and there, though to a certain extent classic influence may be traced, Celtic metal work maintained an independent existence. The Celts had an innate genius for goldsmithing and jewellery, and while we marvel at Greek dexterity in soldering, so we must admire the Celtic use of the hammer and rivets, wherewith they formed and fastened together the various parts of their work, as in what is known as the Late Celtic period they were still ignorant of the art of soldering. The rivets are often made to form part of the decoration, having pointed heads so that they break up the light pleasantly. The Celts were also exceedingly skilled enamellers, and it has been thought that enamelling was a British invention, though this is not at all certain. These early enamels (those of the Late Celtic period) were of the *champlevé* kind, and bright opaque colours, red, blue, and yellow, are used in them.

They also ornamented brooches and other objects with studs of various materials, such as coral and amber, affixed by means of pins. Their principal ornaments were penannular pins, bracelets, and *fibulæ*. These early objects are very interesting, and often show a very high degree of skill, but it is with the spread of Christianity in Scotland and Ireland that Celtic art reached its culminating point. In

## MEDIÆVAL

1. German badge or pendant of mediæval character.
2. A pendant of German workmanship. It is of a style which is often reproduced in pictures of the fifteenth century.
3. A pin with a figure of St. Christopher. Similar ornaments were usual in the Middle Ages. One is worn by the Yeoman in "The Canterbury Tales." It was found at Kingston-on-Thames in the eighteenth century.
4. A Burgundian brooch found in the Meuse. It represents a figure holding a stone in its hands. The wires on which pearls have been mounted are still to be seen.
5. A Burgundian enseigne or badge.
6. A fragment of a Burgundian crown set with stones and ornamented with filigree-work. It will be noticed that the pearls are strung on a wire which is held in place by loops of gold at intervals. This was a very usual way of setting small pearl beads in the Middle Ages.





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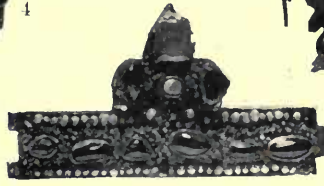
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6



jewellery, the penannular brooches (more fully dealt with in the chapter on "Brooches") are certainly the most beautiful objects found. Other ornaments are very rare, except beads. Rings were evidently seldom worn. There is only one example in the Dublin National Museum. Fragments of beautiful crowns of exquisite workmanship have been found. It should be noted that the interlaced pattern dates from after the introduction of Christianity, when soldering appears to have been brought into use.

**The Jewellery of the Later Middle Ages.**—During this period a gradual blending and mingling of the many different influences which were at work led up to that awakening which took place in the fifteenth century and is known as the Renaissance.

At the beginning of the period Byzantine traditions still kept a tight hold on all ecclesiastical figure work; and those enamels which show the human form, and carved gems, seem stiff and grotesque in their outlines, but all the same the general effect of the personal ornaments must have been gorgeous and beautiful to the last degree.

We cannot help but think that the feeling for beauty which is innate in most of us, finding so little outlet in a pictorial form displayed itself all the more freely in those directions where there were no rigid rules and traditions carried less weight. Unfortunately only too few pieces of this period, such as were worn on ordinary occasions, remain to us, and these are mainly brooches and rings.

There are also some magnificent ecclesiastical

jewels, such as those which once belonged to William of Wykeham, which are still preserved at New College, Oxford, which he founded. Otherwise there is very little in this country which will show us the kind of work done during these centuries, and on the Continent there is scarcely more of the lesser pieces.

Mention must be made of a most magnificent brooch or fermeil in the Cluny Museum. It is of most exquisite workmanship, and shows enamel, gem-work, cast-work, and engraving.

When we look at pieces like this we see at once where the miniaturists and illuminators found their inspiration as to colour schemes, and sometimes even as to actual design, some manuscripts being ornamented with exact drawings of jewels, which we cannot doubt really existed, so accurate are they to the minutest particular. During this period of change we notice that different patterns of settings began to be introduced, the simple or decorated collet being supplemented by several other kinds, perhaps introduced from the East, whence, of course, the stones were imported. Details resembling those of architecture were often introduced. This will not surprise us when we consider how great a part in the national life of almost all countries was given up to the building of those wonderful cathedrals and churches which never have been equalled in beauty. Most of the stones were cut *en cabochon*, and are frequently very irregular in outline, for the object was to show off their beauty and colour to the fullest extent and not to keep strictly to any particular law

of proportion. Pearls were still generally pinned on by a central rivet, and pearl beads fastened by a wire passed through the middle, looking as if held by two claws, were also now used. The Byzantine way of fastening rows of pearls strung on wire by gold bands at intervals, was frequent. Goldsmiths were people of great importance throughout the Middle Ages in all countries. The first charter granted to goldsmiths in England is dated at Westminster, 13th of March (Edward III., A.D. 1326-27).

It will be found that the taste for jewellery in the Middle Ages increased as the years went by, culminating at the Burgundian Court, where luxury in this particular reached an enormous height. King John of France vainly endeavoured to check over-extravagance by an edict forbidding the making of jewellery worth more than one mark. But it shared the fate of most sumptuary laws, and was more honoured in the breach than the observance.

Enamel was used with great charm and delicacy, and the standard of technique must have been very high. The Renaissance goldsmiths, who despised the old manner and melted up so much Gothic goldwork and jewellery, hardly surpassed their predecessors in this, if we may judge by the few pieces of Mediæval jewellery which have come down to us.



III

FROM THE  
RENAISSANCE  
TO THE END OF  
THE SEVENTEENTH  
CENTURY

## RENAISSANCE JEWELS. SIXTEENTH CENTURY

1. Pendant. A parrot enamelled in natural colours.
2. A very beautiful ship pendant of Italian (Venetian?) workmanship. The cells are edged with wire, some plain, some twisted. The enamel is not brought up to the height of the wire, nor is it ground flat as in ordinary cloisonné.
3. Italian ear-ring formed of a large irregular pear-shaped pearl, in a gold setting.
4. Cinquecento jewel. An enamelled lizard set with a Baroque pearl. It holds an emerald in its mouth.
5. Pendant in form of a pelican with her young. The bird is enamelled white, with portions of the metal showing through as feather marks. Spanish.







## CHAPTER III

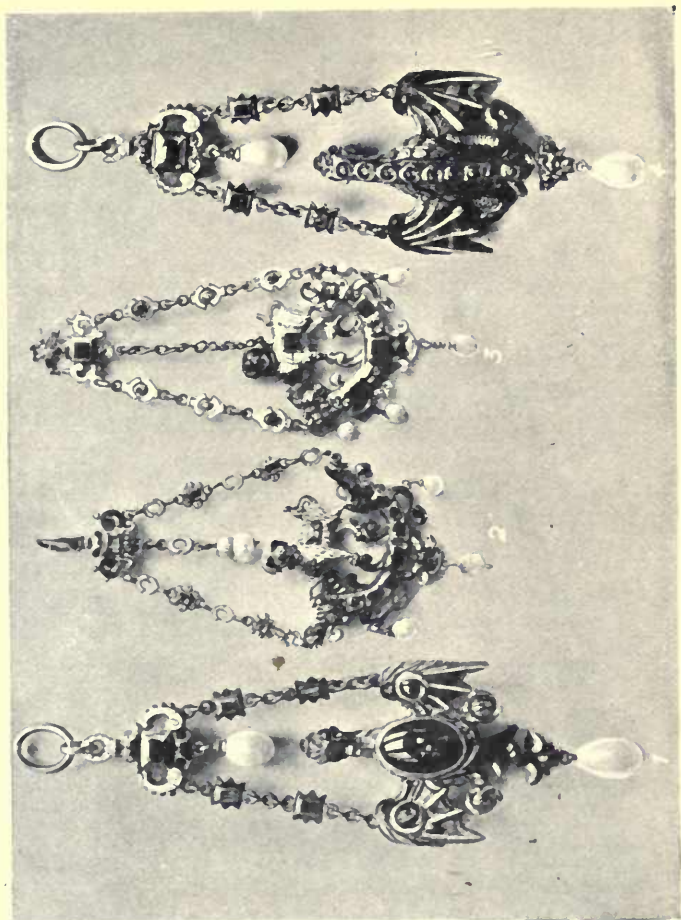
### FROM THE RENAISSANCE TO THE END OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

**Jewellery of the Renaissance.**—With the middle of the fifteenth century the Renaissance may be said to have begun in Italy, and thence the wave of new thoughts and impulses spread over Europe. Helped by the printing press, the revolt against tradition was passed on in a way that had been impossible before. New fashions were introduced in almost everything, some founded on Greek and Roman art and others on a return to nature.

In jewellery this tendency is strongly manifested. While gorgeousness and rich colour expressed on the somewhat grotesque animal forms and traditional floral ornament of the Gothic style had been the end to which the craftsmanship of the later Middle Ages tended, we find that real life and the beauty of animated things are the main-springs which move the jewellers of the Renaissance. The delight in colour is still over all, and the exquisite workmanship remains, perhaps, even refined and improved. There is an immense diversity, too, in the designs ; they resemble one another

## RENAISSANCE JEWELS

- 1 and 4. A cinquecento jewel set with emeralds and pearls. The back, it will be noted, was as beautiful as the front.
- 2 and 3. Two very similar pendants of late sixteenth-century workmanship. They are selected for illustration as showing the way in which a design was varied according to the taste of the artist.





now and again, but there is always a difference *somewhere*, as if the artist had seen his idea in a slightly altered light. When every touch is put in by hand, it is easier and far more amusing to make every piece of work different. It is only when machines or machine-like tools come into use that the monotony of constant repetition sets in.

We cannot think of Renaissance jewellery apart from the enamels, and when we think of *them* our minds at once turn to Cellini. At one time it was customary to label *all* ornate enamelled and jewelled ornaments as "Cellini" work, in the same way that all miniatures were vaguely ascribed to Cosway and mahogany furniture to Chippendale. But now, with the desire for an historical basis for all such definite assertions, we find that very little metal work and no jewels can be stated absolutely to be by him, and that the majority of those which tradition has assigned to him are almost certainly German or Spanish.

When we look at the eighteenth-century drawing, which is still to be found in the British Museum, of the clasp made for Pope Clement VII. (the clasp itself, alas! has gone into the melting-pot) which he so particularly describes in his autobiography, and compare it with work said to be his, we are struck with the great divergency in the spirit of the design from what is popularly know as "Cellini work"—such, for example, as the beautiful pieces of enamelled jewellery in the Waddeston Bequest, which the leading authorities consider German, or the dragon pen-

dant in the Louvre which is by most connoisseurs thought to be Spanish.

An instance is given in Mr. Clifford-Smith's book on "Jewellery," of a design by Hans Collaert, published in his series of pendants, which in two separate books is given as a jewel by Benvenuto Cellini. There are a number of books of designs engraved by jewellers of Germany and the Low Countries, but few are known to have originally emanated from Italy. It is undoubtedly the fact that Italian workmen were not only extremely skilful, but also were highly valued. One must always take Cellini's statements with a pinch of salt, yet even with a large allowance for the great conceit of himself which he undoubtedly had, there are undisputed facts remaining which prove that Popes, Cardinals and Kings were anxious for his services in supplying them with beautiful things, and there were other workmen, hardly less skilful than he, also to be found in Italy. But they were greatly influenced in matters of design by the German masters. The reason may, of course, be found in the fact that most of the trade in precious stones was in the hands of German and Netherlandish merchants, such as the Fuggers of Augsburg, who imported them from the East. But whatever the reason, the fact undoubtedly remains that it is exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to determine decisively the country of origin of most of the sixteenth century jewels by the style of their design, as certain characteristics are to be found in them all, with such slight differences that even the greatest experts differ on the point.



Generally speaking these jewels are of gold enriched with enamel applied in the form of a coating over the metal, not, however, all over it, as details are frequently left in the bare gold, which enriches and harmonises the brilliant tints. Opaque colours are rarely used, but white of a peculiarly rich shade is profusely employed. The goldwork is most exquisitely modelled, either cast, carved, or worked by a mixture of repoussé and chasing. Cellini states in his Treatise that all small things should be beaten up, and describes how he thus made the great clasp.

The stones are chosen for their beauty of colour. Irregularity of form, and even what are generally considered flaws, did not detract from their artistic value in the eyes of these workers, who desired nothing so little as symmetry and regularity. They seized on the shape of the stone, often almost bizarre, as a *motif*, on which they built the jewel, making an irregular pearl into the body of a mermaid or triton, or an emerald into the chest of a sea-horse.

The stones are mostly cut *en cabochon*, and are generally mounted in collet or openwork settings. Very frequently there hangs a pearl or a group of three pearls below the general subject, and having no particular relation to the design. Transparent stones are generally backed with foil and, which appears strange to us, diamonds were backed with black, or foil, on the exact shade of which much of the beauty of the stone was considered to depend. Cellini, as usual, considered himself to excel in obtaining the best results, and in his Autobiography gives an anecdote relating his triumph

over his rivals. He describes how the other jewellers, headed by a "fool," one Gajo, came to him about a certain stone, but he tells the story so well that it had best be given in his own words. "Gajo took the lead and said, 'Endeavour to preserve the tint of Miliano, to *that*, Benvenuto, you must show due respect; for as the tinting of diamonds is the nicest and most difficult part of the jeweller's business, so Miliano is the finest jeweller the world ever produced, and this is the hardest diamond that was ever worked upon.' I answered that 'it would be so much the more glorious for me to vie with so renowned an artist'; then addressing myself to the other jewellers, I added: 'I will preserve the tint of Miliano, you shall see whether I can improve it; and in case I should fail of success, I will restore its former tint.'

"The fool Gajo answered 'that if I could contrive to be as good as my word, he would bow to my superior genius.'

"When he had finished I began to make my tints. In the composition of these I exerted myself to the utmost.

"I must acknowledge that this diamond gave me more trouble than any that ever before or since fell into my hands, and Miliano's tint appeared a masterpiece of art. However, I was not discouraged, and feeling inspired by the contest I not only equalled Miliano's work but surpassed it. Perceiving that I had conquered Miliano, I endeavoured to excel myself, and by new methods made a tint much

superior to my former. I then sent for the jewellers, and having first shown them the diamond with Miliano's tint, I afterwards tinted it again with my own. I showed it to the artists, and one of the cleverest amongst them, Raffello del Moro, took the stone in his hand and said to Gajo, 'Benvenuto has surpassed Miliano.' Gajo, who could not believe what he heard, upon taking the jewel into his hand cried out, 'Benvenuto, this diamond is worth two thousand ducats more than it was with Miliano's tint.' I replied, 'Since I have surpassed Miliano, let me see whether I cannot outdo myself.' Having requested them to have patience a few moments, I went into a little closet, and unseen by them gave a new tint to my diamond. Upon showing it to the jewellers, Gajo instantly exclaimed, 'This is the most extraordinary case I ever knew in my life. The diamond is now worth about eighteen thousand crowns, and we hardly valued it at twelve thousand.

"The other artists, turning to Gajo, said to him, 'Benvenuto is an honour to our profession; it is but just that we should bow to the superiority of his genius and his tints.'

"Gajo answered, 'I will go and inform the Pope in what manner he has acquitted himself, and so contrive that he shall receive a thousand crowns for setting this diamond.' Accordingly he waited on his Holiness and told him all he had seen. The Pontiff thereupon sent three times a day to inquire whether the ring was finished. Towards evening I took it to him, and as I had free access and was not obliged to observe any ceremony, I gently lifted up a curtain

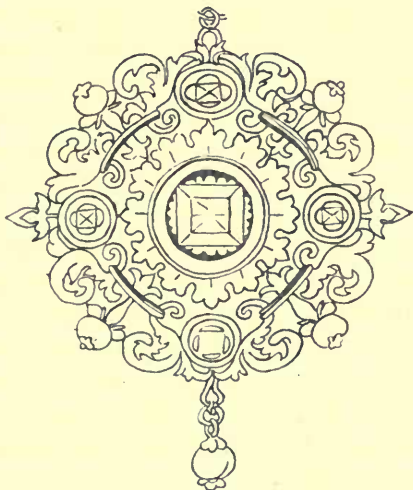
and saw his Holiness with the Marquis del Varto, who was trying to persuade him to something he did not approve of. I heard the Pope say to the marquis, 'I tell you no, for it is proper that I should appear neutral in the affair.'

"Immediately I drew back, but the Pope himself called me, and while I advanced and put the diamond into his hand, the Marquis retired to some distance. The Pope, whilst he was examining the diamond, whispered, 'Benvenuto, pretend to talk to me on some subject of importance and never once leave off whilst the marquis stays in the room.'

"So choosing the subject of most interest to myself, I began to discuss the method I had observed in tinting the diamond. The Marquis stood on one side, leaning against the tapestry hanging; sometimes he stood on one foot, sometimes on the other. We could have talked for three hours. The Pope took such delight in it that it counterbalanced the disagreeable impression the marquis had made on his mind. Our chat was prolonged almost the space of an hour, and the marquis's patience was so worn out that he went away half angry. The Pope then showed me great demonstrations of kindness, and concluded with these words: 'My dear Benvenuto, be diligent in your business and I will reward your merits with something more considerable than the thousand crowns which Gajo tells me you deserve for your trouble.' "

Besides showing the stress laid on the colouring of the stone, is not this a delightful picture of the life of the time? Does it not explain to us some at least of

the reasons for the splendour of the work of those days? The keen interest showed by the workman and his fellows in the processes of their craft and the no less deep interest displayed by the Pope in the jewel he has ordered, each have their part in raising the standard of workmanship to the point which makes this period so distinguished. A clever work-



Design for Pendant from the Kunstbücklein  
of Hans Brosamer. He died in 1552.

man is helped and encouraged by an intelligent patron, and the more closely the producer and the purchaser can be brought into touch the better for the craft. When this personal touch is lost, art is degraded to a mere manufacture, and the craftsman has to give place to the mechanic.

Of extreme interest are the engraved designs and

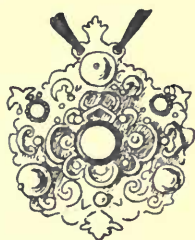
original drawings of this century, in which we may study the ideas which great artists, such as Dürer and Holbein, held on the subject, and also those of such past-masters of the craft as Virgil Solis (German), Etienne Delaulne (French), and Collaert (Dutch), and from these we can identify the school of design, though not the country of origin.

There are so many varieties of personal ornaments decorated in the same way, more or less, that it is not necessary to describe them all particularly. After the pendant the most characteristic is the enseigne, a hat ornament almost exclusively belonging to this period. It is most usually disc-shaped, and frequently consists of an ornamental device peculiar to the wearer, sometimes chosen because of a patron saint, or some historic incident which it was wished to commemorate. Initial jewellery was also popular, especially in the form of pendants, they generally consisted of large monograms interwoven, but sometimes of a single letter only. Naturally, works such as those described above fetch prices which remove them finally out of reach of all who are not extremely wealthy. Even the man of unlimited means beginning now would find it almost an impossibility to get together such a collection as that displayed in the Waddeston Bequest Room at the British Museum, because such specimens are not on the market. Still, a collector should never despair. There is always a possibility of finding treasures where least expected, if the knowledge of what to look for has been gained. But there are baits cast for the bargain hunter; these beautiful



things have been copied, and also the general style has been imitated. The least successful copies are those made of silver-gilt, on which the enamels are rarely brilliant. The originals are practically always of nearly fine gold, and the stones, though often flawed, are large and of rich colour. These inferior copies are often of small specimens, as these have a better chance of sale as personal ornaments than there would be for pieces of greater size. They are set most usually with insignificant stones or paste. They would not deceive a careful buyer, but there are also exact imitations set with fine stones and made of gold, and these are often so good that they lead people to buy them as originals, which is regrettable; otherwise, as they are far prettier than most of the jewellery which can be bought in the ordinary way, they are much more suited for artistic people to wear.

**Seventeenth Century.**—As the sixteenth century progressed a new feature was introduced into jewellery—the setting of many smallish stones, so as to form glittering lines or masses. The earlier use of stones had been for the sake of their colour, or to act as a focus of interest amongst goldwork and enamel. They had most generally been cut *en cabochon*, or by simple methods which, while they showed off the individual beauty of the stone, did

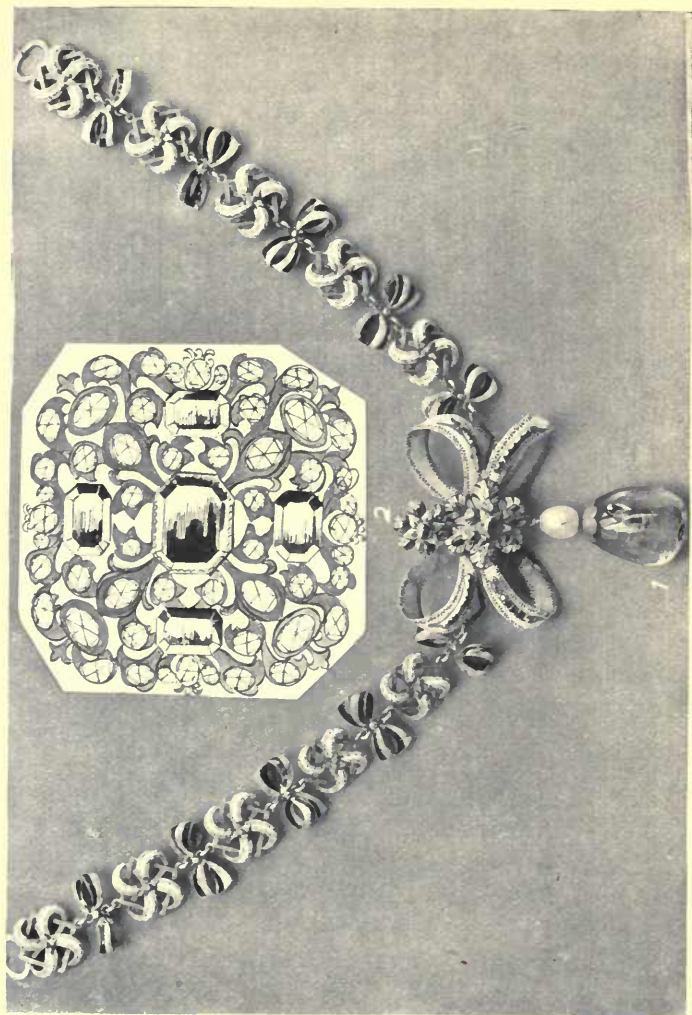


From a painting by Mabuse. The pearls are round beads (not halves), fastened by a centre pin. Compare with illustration on p. III.

## SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

1. Enamel necklet and pendant of French workmanship. It was made about the middle of the seventeenth century.
2. Seventeenth-century ornament (after Lejuge) in diamonds and other stones. In the same book, with similar designs, there are also drawings in the earlier styles of flower work and ornate goldwork.





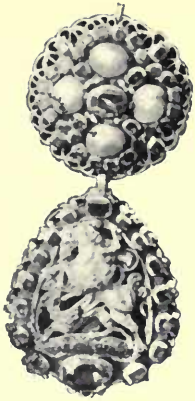


not add much to the glitter or reflecting power. Even diamonds, which, as used in later times, are almost a synonym for brilliance, were so cut that in order to show them up, various foils had to be used behind them, and sometimes they were even backed with black, as described in the last chapter. The diamond in the Cellini cope button, which in the eighteenth-century drawing now in the British Museum looks a deep grey, was thus treated.

But the art of cutting diamonds having been elaborated, their use with coloured stones, also cut in facets, as the principal interest of jewellery became a leading fashion, and is said to have been first practised by Daniel Mignot towards the end of the sixteenth century. Though the settings were placed in close juxtaposition, the stones of the earlier pieces are not actually very near to each other, because of the slope of the sides of the setting, which was often almost pyramidal, with the stone as a culminating point on the top. There is still a certain amount of interest, therefore, in the metal work, which is often of very good workmanship, though somewhat heavy. A favourite class of design is an arrangement of leaves, flowers, and knots of ribbon set with the different coloured transparent stones and diamonds, real or false. The diamonds were mounted in silver and the coloured stones in gold, as a rule, as this tended to increase not only the brilliancy but also the apparent size of the stones, quite a small one (especially with diamonds) making a brave display. But enamel work was not entirely ousted from the field, though its character was different from that of Renaissance

### SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

1. A George and dragon. Italian work of the early seventeenth century. The centre group is enamelled.
2. A sixteenth-century cameo portrait of Lucius Verius cut in a dark onyx. The enamelled setting, of early seventeenth-century workmanship, is in what is known as the "Peapod" style. The enamel is green with little white "peas." It has small diamonds set on each pod.
3. Pendant in an enamelled setting. The cameo is by Alessandro Cesati (also known as Il Greco, or Grechetto), who worked from 1538 to 1561. The setting, which is of gold, with flowers modelled and coloured in a natural manner, is of later date.



1



2



3



times. The enamelled beasts and fabulous monsters with their huge stones and baroque pearls, and the groups of minute figures worked in the round, gave place to an entirely different style which existed contemporaneously with the gem-work, and flowers, exquisitely painted in natural colours on an enamel ground, were used as the principal decoration of pendants; they were sometimes modelled in relief in the metal, or in a paste of enamel and china clay, and glazed afterwards. The effect is agreeable, but hardly in accordance with the very best taste, though they are much admired and highly valued. There was also used a kind of *champlevé* enamel which bears a most surprising resemblance to *cloisonné*; it is hard to understand why the design should have been carried out in this particular way. The enamelling is of perfect workmanship, but it was evidently considered inferior to the jewel work, as on the back red and blue enamels form a substitute for the diamonds and rubies of the face. Another form of enamel is a variety of *basse-taille* in which the design, consisting of ornamental arrangements of flowers and fruit, is covered with transparent enamel. Miniature-cases were often decorated in this way, which continued in use through the century.

Pearls were in immense demand during the period, and were worn in strings and ropes in great numbers, as shown in the portraits of the great ladies of the time. Henrietta Maria is always shown with quantities of them. There was also a great feeling for cameos, which were in considerable favour in



England. In the National Portrait Gallery there is a portrait of Thomas Chaffinch, the keeper of Charles the First's jewels (who lived 1600-60), in which he is painted surrounded by various works of art; the cameos are displayed to much greater advantage than anything else, which shows they were considered the most important of the treasures depicted.

Necklaces of enamel and goldsmith's work lost ground in public favour during the progress of the century, their place being taken by the strings of pearls. Ear-rings were large and important; sometimes the drop was a single pear-shaped pearl, but the greater number were of the popular gem-work in open designs. They were often so large that the pairs have been divided, and used separately as neck pendants. The rings, which are very interesting, are treated in the special chapter on the subject. The neck pendant when used was of gem-work, or a miniature case in one of the varieties of enamel. Particularly interesting are the rings and locket worn in memory of Charles I. Most of them have in the bezel a tiny portrait of the King or a little relic; others merely have his initials and the date, with mourning emblems. They are not so rare as one would expect them to be, but they seldom come into the market, as the memory of Charles is still very dear to most people; and while they empty their jewel-cases of other trinkets which they consider of little value, owing to there not being much gold or any valuable stones in them, they feel a sentimental interest in a relic of the Martyr King. Otherwise,



except the enamel work, in which the actual metal was of little value, there is not much seventeenth-century English jewellery surviving. The unsettled state of the middle of the century not only caused an interruption of the manufacture, but led to much jewellery being broken up to provide funds for the civil war.

Among the designers who published books of designs—which should be studied by any one who thinks they have a piece which might belong to the period—are Moncornet, who lived about 1670, showing the various arrangements of stones which were then so fashionable. Lefebure's "Livre des Fleurs," published in 1679, in which the flower-work is particularly well shown, the blossoms are drawn in a natural way but grouped decoratively. Jacques de Cerceau published a book towards the end of the century of another different type, the designs being somewhat like those in the well-known "Jacobean" embroidery.



Pearl and Diamond Ornament.  
From the Santini Design Book.



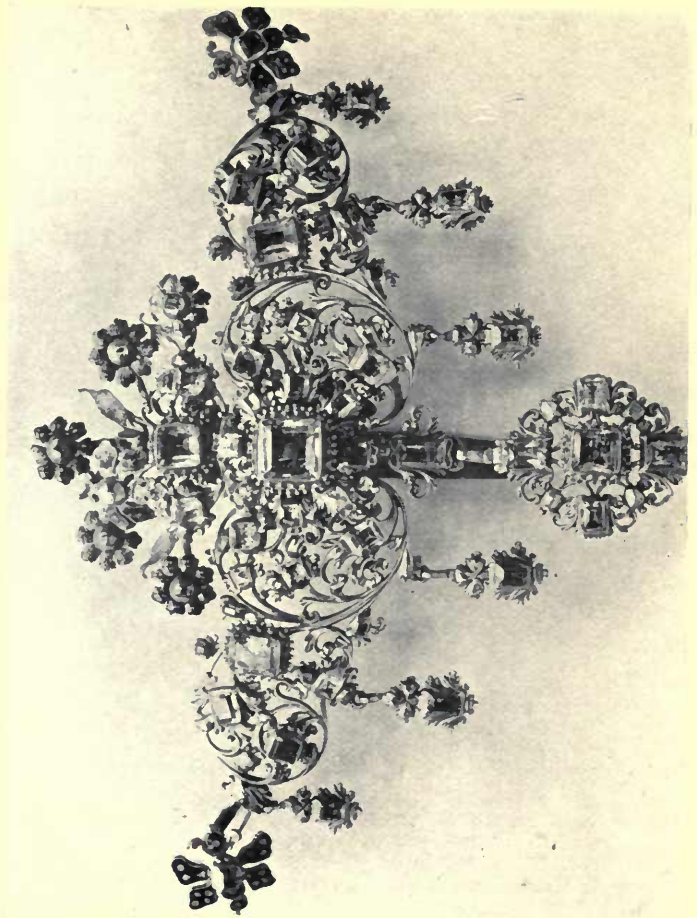
IV

THE EIGHTEENTH  
AND  
NINETEENTH  
CENTURIES



Late seventeenth- or  
early eighteenth-  
century Brooch.  
Diamond Bow.  
Coloured spray.

Breast ornament in goldwork, partly enamelled, set with table-cut emeralds. Probably of Spanish workmanship. Late seventeenth or early eighteenth century.





## CHAPTER IV

### THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES

**The Eighteenth Century.**—How closely akin to us in many points of thought and feeling were our ancestors of the eighteenth century! In a way, we seem to be more in touch with them than with our forbears of the nineteenth. Their pictures delight us, their pottery and porcelain is as much to our taste as it was to theirs; and then, was there ever a period when furniture so beautiful, yet so comfortable withal, was made? So, too, the jewellery of the eighteenth century seems to make an appeal to our taste which that of some other periods lacks. It is only now and again among the earlier pieces that one comes across things which can be used nowadays without the wearer appearing *outré*. But many an ornament of the Louis XV. and Louis XVI. periods of enamel, diamonds, or marcasite, or English Georgian paste or steel work, is the joy of the owner and the admiration of her friends.

Fortunately, it is not an expensive matter to satisfy this taste for eighteenth-century work, in some lines, at all events. Diamonds, even rose diamonds, may be too much for some pockets, but paste and

marcasite take their place now as they did in bygone days. If engraved gems are beyond us, a tiny Wedgwood jasper cameo is as dainty and perhaps more decorative. There is a good deal of this sort of thing about, of the minor kinds especially, but one must know where to look and what one is looking for. The country jeweller, the pawnbroker, the exchange column in the various ladies' papers may serve as hunting-grounds where treasure-trove may be expected.

For the origin of almost all the fashions in England after the beginning of the century we shall have to search in France, though English workmanship was in many things as good or better. Sometimes, however, we gave them our ideas in exchange; for instance, their steel jewellery is copied from ours both in workmanship and design, and Wedgwood's plaques were imitated at the Sèvres factory; but on the whole, with regard to the general design and way of wearing things, it was the other way round. For instance, when shoe-buckles were given up in France in order that the silver they contained might enrich the impoverished treasury of "La Patrie," Englishmen hastened to leave them off also, whereby about twenty thousand workpeople were brought to the very verge of starvation.

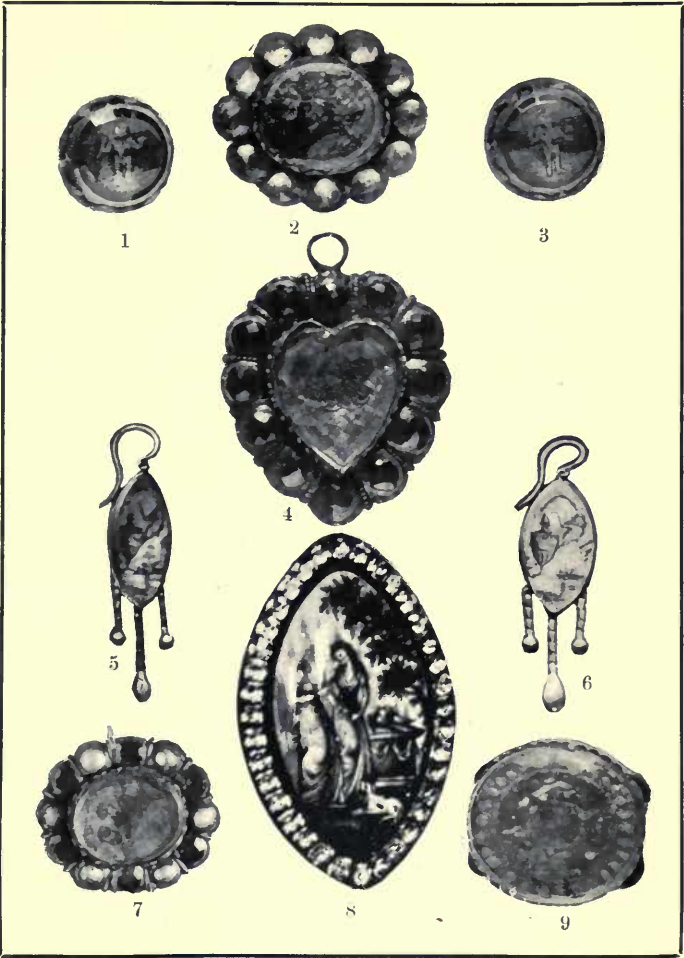
Throughout this century we find two classes of work on personal ornaments. In France (and this is one of the things they *do* "do better" there) they have distinctive words for them, whereas we only have the one, "Jeweller." They have *Bijouterie* for the "art of working in gold and enamel," and



*Joaillerie*, the "art of mounting diamonds and precious stones," thus distinguishing between the two distinct crafts. The old English term which corresponded more or less to the first was "toyman," but the "toyman" does not seem to have been nearly such an important person as the "bijoutier"; he did not work in such an elaborate way, nor in such precious materials. As a matter of fact, we have little made in England which can compare for richness and supreme technique with the masterpieces of the great French workers. However, there are pieces which in a simple way have a quiet charm all their own. For instance, there was an especially quaint kind of jewellery to be found in the little ornaments which it was usual to wear in memory of departed friends and relatives. English people always seem to have been fond of thus displaying some token of their affection, but till the end of the seventeenth century they were generally rings of gold or silver decorated in enamel or niello. This work which I am now describing sometimes took the form of rings, but also brooches and such things were much worn. The face is of rock crystal or glass, generally cut in facets, but sometimes step or table cut. It covers a delicate filigree work of gold, or cut out designs in the same metal, displayed on a background of hair or ribbed silk. The settings are of gold, and the workmanship of the whole is of a very high standard. There are not nearly so many specimens of this early kind as of the later *grisaille* work. It must have been more expensive to make, one would think, as the execution is often exceedingly minute.

## EIGHTEENTH CENTURY. IN-MEMORIAM JEWELLERY

- 1 and 3. Gold studs with little skeletons on silk. They are covered with glass and set in gold.
2. Similar work. There is a gold lion and initials, which are over a background of woven strands of hair.
4. Initials of fine gold with a ground of plaited hair. This is edged with blue and covered with faceted glass on crystal. The border is of garnets.
- 5 and 6. Pair of ear-rings. Late eighteenth century. Paintings in grisaille mounted in gold.
7. Goldwork initials on a silk ground. The border is of alternate rubies and pearls.
8. Pendant ornament. Very fine grisaille painting on ivory surrounded with pastes. 1780.
9. Slide with metal work in the centre of various colours, apparently lacquered. The design is a female figure and a stag, with initials in the middle.





Before going more particularly into the various kinds of work which flourished in the period we are studying, it will perhaps be just as well to notice that the general styles of decoration during the century may be roughly divided into two parts—the earlier, the “Rococo,” being compounded of a curious mixture of *motifs* such as shell-work, scrolls, flowers and feathers, all arranged just as the workman fancied. As far as possible there were no plane surfaces or symmetrical outlines, but irregular curves and unusual shapes were introduced. (Those who study furniture will recognise this style as having its counterpart in some of Chippendale’s designs.) Later, about the middle of the century, came a much more refined style, owing to the fashion of admiring all classic art, which was once more brought prominently into public notice by the discovery of Herculaneum and of Pompeii. It was popularised by the drawings and pictures published by the numerous artists who went to Italy for the purpose of studying ancient buildings and sculpture. Perhaps the Adam Brothers had the greatest share in making this style fashionable in England. Then quite at the end of the century we have the rigid and formal type, founded on the ideas of those who had been raised to power by the French Republic. “It was during this era of Jacobinism and Equality in 1793 and 1794 that what were known as the ‘elegancies of dress’ received their death-blow. Wigs disappeared, powder had gone, buckles gave place to shoestrings, and pantaloons encased the legs” (“The Beaux and the Dandies,” Jerrold).

### EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Enamelled and jewelled corsage ornament. Probably of Spanish workmanship. It is of gold set with rose diamonds. The flowers are enamelled in their natural colours.







In jewellery the rococo was not carried to anything like the extravagant lengths that it reached in other branches of the applied arts. Its principal effect was on the lines in which the gems which were so fashionable were set, and the work in which such things as seals are mounted. Watch-keys, watch backs, miniature-cases, and chatelaines are also objects in which we are likely to find the scrolls, ribbons, and shell-work mingled in the rich but somewhat inconsequent way which is characteristic of the style. During this period we find chiselled and wrought gold extremely popular, but this type of design is not really suitable for gold. It shows up lights and reflections to a certain extent, but one does not feel that a goldsmith would either initiate the style or even wish to work in it unless he were led to do so by it being in demand. It seems at best an interesting and highly skilled translation from some other material. It was in its most ornate forms an exotic, and failed to retain its hold long on the general fancy. The kind of mock simplicity that came into vogue under the influence of Madame de Pompadour expressed itself in jewellery by the most charming bouquets and groups of musical instruments, and other ornamental 'fancies' worked in gold *à quatre couleurs*. The metal was mixed with different alloys to vary the tint, copper giving a red tint, silver a green, and iron a blue shade. The design was cut out in pieces of the required coloured gold, and these were soldered on to



Rococo  
Ornament.

a plain ground and carved, chased and engraved in the most minute and perfect detail. Though apparently simple it was a very costly fashion, as it demanded the most elaborate and skilled workmanship to carry out the delicate design in the quiet yet distinctive manner demanded. With the coming of the "antique" taste a step farther away from the extravagant curves and swells of the rococo was taken. Restraint in outline and decoration became more and more marked; everything, except the gem-work, to be fashionable had to have some slight touch which showed what was considered "classic feeling." The real classic jewellery was not copied (at least the granulations and filigree were not), but cameos and imitation cameos were introduced, and urn shapes and other pseudo-classic motives were favourite items. To this period belong some very charming mourning jewellery, of all the more interest because it is often dated, and mostly of English workmanship. Generally a figure or figures in classical garb are gracefully arranged under a tree or porch, gazing mournfully at an urn or tomb. This idea is carried out very variously, and by different methods of execution in black on an ivory ground, or in grisaille on mother-of-pearl, and sometimes in colours, but this is rarer. In any case the shape is generally oval and surrounded with diamonds, paste, or pearls. Sometimes there was a piqué border of black enamel. Oval brooch clasps, pendants, and rings were all thus ornamented. Small portrait miniatures are also set in this way, surrounded with little stones and worn as neck

ornaments. Very fine pearl work and tiny ivory carvings were used in the same manner. A feature of the less expensive stone work was a considerable use of garnets set over gold foil for small brooches, clasps, and such things. The stones are always table cut, and must not be confounded with the popular garnet work of the mid-nineteenth century and onwards, in which the small stones are close set in crescents, stars, &c., and in which the stones are invariably sharply faceted and a glittering effect produced.

Eighteenth-century enamel is often very beautiful, especially the effects of transparent coats over a carved ground. In the early part of the century this was often of a floral or scrollish description, but later a more formal style was introduced with rich colours. Then there was also a very exquisite enamel consisting of flowers done in openwork metal, and enamelled in natural colours somewhat similar to seventeenth-century work. It is very scarce and extremely valuable. The painted enamels are works of art. These were not done in the styles of the earlier "Limoges," but more after the method of china painting. They are tiny pictures of delicate and exquisite finish, and were carried out by well-known artists, who frequently signed them with their names or initials. These pieces are exceedingly valuable, and have been admired and collected for many years, so are very rarely found. They are still copied nowadays, and even better imitations were made in the middle of the nineteenth century. If hall-marking were usual

## EIGHTEENTH CENTURY. MISCELLANEOUS

1. Pendant in silver-gilt, set with paste diamonds.
2. Star of the Order of Charles III. of Spain. This is decorated with blue and white enamel and edged with gold.
3. French vinaigrette. About 1750. It is enamelled in panels of green on a gold and white ground. The panels are further ornamented with bouquets of flowers in natural colours.
4. Brooch set with garnets. Late eighteenth century. English work. Similar garnet-work was used for clasps, buttons, and as frames for miniatures.
5. A small cross set with diamonds and rubies in very characteristic high settings. French.





this would not much matter, but it is generally omitted. Battersea plaques were also set in brooches, and have a general resemblance to the French enamel, but are not nearly so fine, though they have a charm of their own; the technique and finish are, however, far inferior.

A setting which came into fashion in the last thirty years of the century is very charming and characteristic. On a background of rich blue enamel over a finely engraved ground or blue glass over foil, is mounted an arrangement of diamonds (or their substitutes) in the shape of a bouquet or basket of flowers; the whole is surrounded with tiny stones exquisitely set. Jewels of this kind have a most refined and at the same time rich effect. They were sometimes mounted on other colours, but the fashion was principally for blue. A description of the rage for this shade is given by M. Fontenoy, and as it contains an interesting account of what may be found in this style of work, I will translate the passage. "They were not content with using blue enamel on everything, but made jewels in blue glass, for at this time everything was blue. Brooches and chatelaines with seals and keys set round with little diamonds, and with intertwined initials, hearts, crowns, and flowers, in the centre. Turtle-doves and woolly white lambs, the natural inhabitants of the blue landscape, were not lacking to complete the emblems of a sentimental philosophy."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This rage for blue glass found another outlet in contemporary table silver and pewter, which is often pierced to show a glass liner, generally of a rich cobalt shade.



Tortoiseshell was sometimes used for the larger articles of ornament, such as hair slides, and combs, and waist-clasps, and the backs and outer cases of watches. It is often ornamented in one of three ways by a method somewhat resembling inlay. For this purpose, the metal used is generally gold, but occasionally silver or Pinchbeck is substituted. When tiny gold pins are driven in closely together to form a pattern it is said to be "Piqué d'or." If the pins are larger it is said to be "Clouté d'or," and "Posé d'or" when the gold is in larger pieces and represents the silhouette of a design, such as figures or arabesques, which were afterwards beautifully chased. The style was introduced at the end of the seventeenth century, and continued until the end of the Empire period. The origin of the work will probably be found in the beautiful gold and black Oriental lacquer which, throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, held a high place in general estimation. Naples was very celebrated for piqué work.

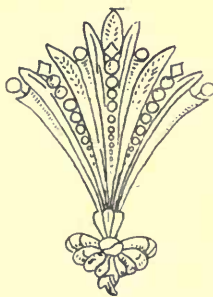
It was in the chatelaines that the "bijoutier" of the eighteenth century found one of the principal outlets for his skill. Here he had not to compete with the jeweller, and he took full advantage of his opportunities. The more expensive ones were made of gold and enamels. Their size gave him a fairly large surface on which to display his talents, as the garniture almost always included a watch, which hung generally from a swivel and important chain. The decoration generally culminated on the back of the watch, on which the utmost skill was



lavished in harmony with though rather more elaborate than the rest of the chatelaine. The collection of good specimens in gold and enamel is almost outside the region of "practical politics" for those who are not millionaires, but there are charming specimens in cut steel, silver, and Pinchbeck to be met with, which are carried out in the same styles only in a somewhat simplified way. Silver-gilt is often found. The early chatelaines usually carry a watch, watch-key, and seal; later ones have more things attached.

The jeweller's art in the early part of the century consisted in mounting diamonds and coloured stones together in various rather trivial designs. Sprays of flowers, feathers, and bouquets were made up of different kinds of stones to represent the originals in something of the natural colours. The coloured stones were set in gold and the diamonds in silver;

the main body of the work was generally of gold when coloured stones were used. In the early part of the century each stone, however small, generally had its own tiny setting, which as a rule were arranged closely together. Later, especially with diamonds, it became customary to mount them with no visible line of metal between, just a tiny point of silver serving to hold them in place. Diamonds were still mostly set solid, and were very frequently rose-cut, though brilliants were



Aigrette Design by  
Pouget, fils.

more esteemed. Some of the jewel work of the first third of the century, composed of small sprays of flowers interwoven with ribbons, is very dainty and pretty, reminding one of the workmanship of the giardinetti rings. This *motif* of a ribbon bow was elaborated in many forms and was used to support a miniature or pendant, or as a clasp to a band for wearing by way of a bracelet on the arm.



Miniature with pearl and diamond frame. Mid-eighteenth century.

The great vogue for diamonds must have followed on the discovery that nothing else shows so well by artificial light. Till the middle of the eighteenth century dancing was to a great extent an outdoor amusement and carried on in the day-time. When the custom changed, this quality of brilliance brought the diamond set alone to the fore, and it was somewhere about 1770 that they ceased to mix coloured stones with it. Of course diamonds had been set alone before then. Gilles Egaré and others had given designs for such pieces, but they were shown side by side with others, in which diamonds were mingled with coloured gems.

But in the last thirty years of the century the fashion was for diamonds or pearls only, and all the colour was obtained by enamel or miniature painting.

## THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

Very few people, probably, have ever made a collection of nineteenth-century jewellery from the point of view of the curio-hunter. The period is too close behind us for one thing, and for another it cannot honestly be said to have much to recommend it artistically. Still, it is important that a collector should be able to recognise the types that were made, in order that he may not be misled into placing them in other periods, especially as so much was designed in a way that was reminiscent of earlier times.

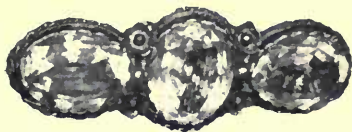
Perhaps in the future some of that made in the first half of the century may be sought after and prized. Some of it is very dainty and charming, but now the very words "nineteenth-century jewellery" seem to bring before our eyes a hideous vision of hair bracelets, slabs of moss-agate in coarse settings, and heavy gold chains, almost massive enough to restrain an unruly elephant. Such things certainly form a very large part of the ornaments which appealed to Victorian taste, but also we find other classes of work which, while it never reaches a very high standard, yet has merits of its own.

It is in France that we must seek the history of the origin of the nineteenth century modes, as we have of those of the eighteenth. The English might fight and fear "Boney," but, nevertheless, it was from across the Channel that the fashions came, so that we shall note the social changes in France that led to alteration of taste there. It was during the years

### NINETEENTH CENTURY

1. Early nineteenth-century brooch, set crystals. About 1815.
2. Brooch in milled wire and grainwork set with stones.
3. Small mosaics set in similar work.
- 4, 5 and 6. Favé turquoise ear-rings. About 1840.
7. Similar bracelet, with the addition of stamped leaves and flowers and cherubs' heads.

2, 3 and 7 belong to the first third of the century.



1



2



3

3

3



4



5



7



6



of the Directory, 1795-99, that a different style of jewellery began. Out of it was afterwards evolved the style known as the Empire. It is, in a way, merely an accentuation of the taste for the antique, to which during the last half of the eighteenth century the pendulum had been swinging back, as a recoil from the vagaries of the rococo, but now it was carried to the most exaggerated lengths; instead of the refined severity that had preceded it (which was always tempered with a little hint of a lurking frivolity), we find a coldness and formality of design which leads to poverty of effect. There was a great lack both of gold and stones, for the purpose of ornament. Either the *emigrés* had taken them out of the country, or those who owned them were afraid of displaying anything which might tempt the cupidity of an enemy. So almost the only stones used were cheap ones, either such things as moss-agates and other pebbles, or stones cut as cameos in the antique style. These were mounted in settings of low-grade gold and its substitutes, such as Pinchbeck. The whole idea of fashionable costume was to get as near the antique model as possible. An elaborate affectation of classic simplicity led to ladies appearing in public in extraordinary (and somewhat indelicate) adaptations of Greek and Roman draperies. Naturally the sparkling prettinesses of the former regime, made to be worn with delicate laces and voluminous brocades, were felt to be unsuitable for the exceedingly sparse covering in which the fair *citoyennes* chose to disport themselves. The ornaments of this date are more quaint than pretty, and their

value lies more in their interest as a "footnote to history," than in any particular artistic merit.

It will no doubt appear strange that in such a short time we should pass from workmanship of the very highest class to pieces which are, from a craftsman's point of view, beneath contempt, for it is astonishing how thorough the change was. To a certain extent, no doubt, jewellery of the old styles still continued to be made for a time, but there was no great demand for it even in England, for it was the time when there was a wave of feeling in favour of "Jacobinism and Equality," while in France of course, anything that savoured of the aristocrat was anathema.

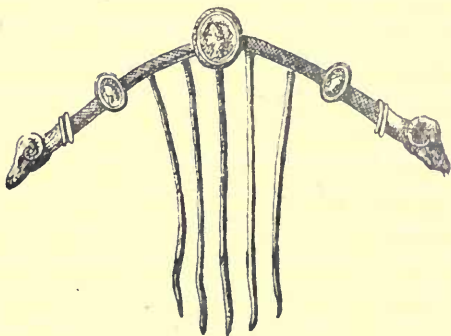
Many of the best workmen were scattered to other countries; many had lost their heads, for it was a dangerous matter to have served the aristocracy even in a humble capacity. Probably the real cause lay in the fact that in France the principle of apprenticeship was done away with definitely in 1791. The system had, of course, led to many abuses, but at the same time it did ensure that before a man set up a workshop for himself, he was at least a capable workman. This new arrangement brought about a very different state of things. Instead of men brought up from their youth to the knowledge of their craft, and with traditions of good workmanship behind them (amounting sometimes to an almost religious reverence for honest attention to minor details), another class pushed to the front. The old workmen who remained were unwilling or unable to carry out the new ideas, so contrary to all they had learnt and



taught, and thus other more adaptable workers who had found the task of learning the groundwork of their trade thoroughly too great drudgery, were enabled to set up establishments of their own, being unfettered by any restrictions. They were willing to do work (and to do it cheaply) in the new fashion, and their workmanship satisfied clients who had not been brought up to appreciate delicate niceties of craftsmanship. The result is we can identify the work of the time by the absolute breaking away from all previous traditions. A great deal was made, but not very much remains. Ear-rings were large and round, or consisted of a simple setting surrounding glass or shell cameos. Clasps for the girdle and pseudo-classic head ornaments were a special feature.

The state of the general industry in Napoleon's time was rather more satisfactory, and the work is better and the materials used are often of the richest. But we feel the lack of the instinct of the true jeweller for ornament. The jewels of this period seem calculated to display wealth and splendour, rather than to accentuate the wearer's beauty or dignity. The old firms attempted to reorganise their workshops on the old plan in order to carry out the new fashions, but failed to make headway. The new firms often had considerable knowledge of classical art, but artistic taste, however cultured and refined, is a poor substitute in matters of applied art for sound craft knowledge. A travelling Hindu goldsmith knowing nothing outside his trade would be more likely to design a really beautiful ornament than a Royal Academician who knew nothing of processes, tools, or materials.

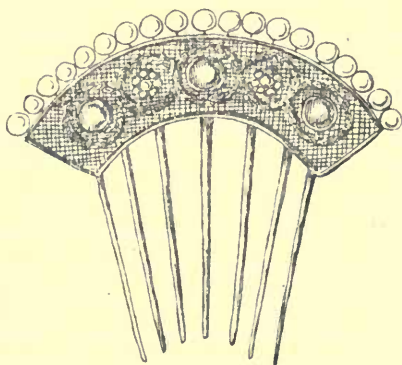
Most of the early Empire jewellery is made on the flat. There is little relief or modelling. It has the appearance of having been cut with scissors out of the sheet and stuck together in the required form. There was a certain carefulness about the execution but no imagination about the designs, for the ornaments of this time usually consist of groups of certain stereotyped details, such as matted gold, cameos, strings of pearls, and chains. Wreaths of laurel in



Empire Comb. Matted gold and cameos.

gold or enamel are a frequent feature. These jewels were worn in great quantities, so that a fashionable lady was said to look like a walking jeweller's shop. Cameos were Josephine's favourite gems, and so they were naturally very popular; and Wedgwood's jasper cameos and shell cameos were enormously worn, and continued in use throughout the first half of the century. Diamonds were also worn in considerable numbers and of great splendour at Napoleon's Court, but few specimens of this stone

work seem to have survived, as owing to the value of the diamonds and other stones the ornaments have been broken up and remodelled. Quite a number of less important pieces in the Empire style, however, are to be found in old jewel-cases and the trinket-trays of provincial jewellers. Some of them are decidedly attractive in their way, though they generally want setting to rights before they can be worn ; but even a good cleaning works wonders. The



Empire Comb. Pinchbeck, mock pearls,  
and coral.

gold is often considerably alloyed and tarnishes quickly. The construction is often lacking in solidity, so parts are often found bent and broken, which have to be straightened or replaced before we can judge of the original effect. Especially with the present style of dress they make very pretty ornaments. The most characteristic of all are perhaps the combs, which were made in an enormous variety of designs and formed a leading feature

of the head-dress. They were generally very high, and ornamented with cameos, small mosaics, and mock or real pearls. Coral was often introduced, and a very charming effect was obtained by piqué ivory, worked in the way previously described for tortoiseshell. Pinchbeck, horn, ivory, and tortoiseshell, plain or craved, were all pressed into service, but the well-known pierced tortoiseshell combs with a curved top came later. Necklaces and bracelets were formed of the ubiquitous cameos looped together with fine chains or strings of pearls.

Even before the overthrow of Napoleon, the reign of Classicism was on the wane, and with his downfall it seemed to come to an end somewhat abruptly. Throughout the Empire period, the large, fairly cheap stones, such as peridots, topaz, amethysts, and crystals, had had a considerable vogue set in the same way that cameos were used. Later on, the settings became much more elaborate. Stamped leaves and flowers of coloured gold, little domes of metal covered with granulations, and small flowers of turquoise and pearls were used to surround the principal stone. Rather superior in workmanship, and ever so much prettier in effect, is a kind of delicate goldwork made entirely without stampings, of milled-edge wirework, and tiny grains or beads. This is always exquisitely finished, and though light, is by no means fragile. It is very frequently set with such inexpensive stones as topaz (both pink and golden), half pearls, and small turquoise, and has a dainty and fairy-like appearance which, though perhaps a little trivial, is essentially feminine and

very wearable. This style of work is used in rings, brooches, and necklaces with centre pendant, which generally have ear-pendants to match, but of course the sets are often broken up. These dainty though inexpensive fashions were of course favoured under the Restoration regime. Those who returned to Court had little of their old jewellery left, and not much money to buy any new. The style of costume was quite changed, the luxurious and extravagant taste in dress, which had prevailed while Josephine set the fashion, gave way before the quieter taste of the old families, who felt that their manners distinguished them sufficiently from the common herd, without the necessity for extravagant expenditure, which they could not afford. Probably the "grapes were sour!" However, there certainly is a last flicker of eighteenth-century grace in some of these Restoration pieces.



Ear-ring. Stamped gold, turquoise, and pink topaz.

A very favourite way of setting small stones was on heads of wheat, which were used in bunches as a hair ornament, and also for the corsage, sometimes alone and sometimes in a bouquet mingled with field-flowers in coloured gold or enamel. The fashion continued for many years. An interesting list is extant of the jewels accumulated by Mademoiselle Mars, the celebrated actress, from whom they were stolen in 1828. She had amongst them eight sprigs of wheat, no doubt used to wear in

the manner of an aigrette (an illustration is given of a similar spray in Pinchbeck). These were of brilliants containing about five hundred stones. She had many other brilliant ornaments (ladies of the theatrical profession always have had a great love for these valuable stones), but the bulk of her ornaments consisted of cameos, topaz, pale emeralds, and imitation pearls, which are invariably mentioned as being surrounded with small brilliants. Rather a



Ear-ring.  
About  
1840.

pretty fashion, that of pavé turquoise and pearls, came a little later. This is a method of setting stones close together, so that only specks of gold are seen between them holding them in place. They rely for their effect on the massing of the blue stones or small pearls and are generally made in somewhat uninteresting designs; but the colour, whether blue or white shot with gold, is quite taking, and good pieces are sought after. There was a much later revival of this fashion, but the stones are generally poor in colour and the setting a little spiky, as it is not well finished. The old ones are generally so well burnished down that the tiny claws never catch in anything, such as lace or chiffon. About 1840, stamped and engraved jewellery came in for general use, while pieces in the manner of former periods had a very great vogue amongst the better-class jewellers. Some of them are actual copies of old pieces and are very accurate, so much so that they have sometimes been a source of perplexity to experts, but they generally



give themselves away by ignorance of some detail. On the whole, the pieces are more reminiscent of the epoch chosen, than copies of actual jewels. For instance, if they wanted to make a mediæval jewel (which was a fashion about 1835) they did not get a real piece of the time and follow it in all details, but instead they evolved "out of their inner consciousness" something that they thought such a jewel might have been, but never was. They took details from architecture, iron work, embroidery, anything but jewellery, and of course the result would have considerably surprised a mediæval goldsmith. The Renaissance was treated the same way, but also excellent copies were made as well; and the modes of Louis XV. and Louis XVI. were also imitated, sometimes very accurately, but more often falling far short of the daintiness of the originals.

During the first half of the century there had been workers who despised the general half-hearted attempts to copy the Greek style, and determined, if it were possible, to get to the bottom of the secret of the exquisitely fine workmanship displayed in Greek filigree. They did not, perhaps, entirely succeed, but they did make a series of wonderful copies which easily might be mistaken by any one but an expert for original pieces of ancient workmanship. The history of this revival is a most interesting one, as the workers were faced by extreme difficulties. They were not enough to daunt Fortunato Pio Castellani, who studied the question deeply and was also to a certain extent

## NINETEENTH CENTURY

Copy by Signor Alexander Castellani after the Greek original found in the larger of the two tumuli, called the "Blitznitsi," on the island of Taman, territory of Phanagoria, Southern Russia, and now in the Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg.







helped by good fortune. It was thought that the method had been entirely lost, but he succeeded in finding a few village workmen at St. Angelo in Vado, who appeared to have some remnants of knowledge of the old style. He brought some of them to Rome, and he and his sons worked with them, till they succeeded in reproducing the old effects. Whether they arrived at them by the old method is quite another question, and very hard to decide, as of course no documentary evidence of the Etruscan methods has been preserved. In his experiments, instead of using borax for a flux he substituted an arseniate and reduced the solder to an impalpable dust with a file. His business was carried on by a son, and another son made the beautiful collection of Europe peasant jewellery which may be seen at the Victoria and Albert Museum. It is interesting to note that he found that intelligent workwomen were better fitted to accomplish the very delicate parts of the work than men goldsmiths. This style of Greek jewellery has been kept up ever since, more or less, but it is usually much coarser and altogether clumsier than these beautiful Castellani copies. There are quantities of reproductions to be obtained in Rome, and indeed throughout Italy. They are sometimes attempted to be passed off as originals, and may be even actually seen dug out of the earth just as the tourist "happens" to pass by. This is of course a matter of arrangement with a guide, driver, or hotel keeper, on the part of the wily digger, so those who do not feel really qualified to judge will be wise not to believe in such "finds," or they

may find themselves in much the same position as the tourist who bought a mummy in Egypt, and having accidentally broken it on the return journey found, to his indignation, that it was stuffed with a Birmingham newspaper of the previous year. This taste for Greek effects was not without its influence on much nineteenth-century design, especially before 1850.

Hair jewellery was a very usual way of commemorating a dear departed or making a gift to lover or friend. Chains, rings, and bracelets were made out of it, and one wishes they had not proved so unexpectedly strong and lasting. It is generally exceedingly ugly, and, but that one has ceased to be surprised at the depressing hideousness of the time, one would wonder at the possibility of any one ever finding anything pleasing in such things.

The iron jewellery is an interesting study in itself, though one cannot call it beautiful. It is entirely different from the steel work which was introduced earlier, and was also used contemporaneously with it. It consists of exquisitely fine castings after most intricate designs, entirely carried out in iron. It was made at a time when gold was scarce, having been used up in the wars. Some of the pieces were given by the Prussian Government to those ladies who gave up their jewels for the sake of the Fatherland. Hoch to them and to all other patriotic souls!

V

PROVINCIAL  
JEWELLERY



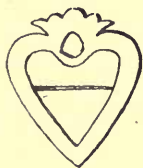
## CHAPTER V

### PROVINCIAL JEWELLERY

THE title given to this chapter is "Provincial Jewellery" rather than "Peasant Jewellery," because in many cases these ornaments belonged to people who were certainly above what we generally mean by peasants. "National" might perhaps have been used, but then certain types extend over large areas independently of the boundaries of the countries, while, on the other hand, some kinds are peculiar not only to a district but even to a town. So that the jewellery treated of here includes those types which have been more or less fixed and did not change greatly under the influence of waves of fashion. They are peculiar to a *place* and not to a *time*.

It is curious why the jewellery of a particular district should, as it were, have crystallised into a certain style at a particular period and continued to be made in that way ever since. Why should the peasant jewellery of the southern part of France show the painted enamel of the seventeenth century, and have retained also a certain general resemblance to the designs of that period, while a great deal

of that characteristic of the Austrian peasant is almost exactly similar to that of the Byzantine style? It is a most curious and interesting study, for some of these traditional designs can trace their pedigree back to the ancient Egyptians. Adriatic or Venetian enamels, again, bear quite a family resemblance to those of Russia. Again, why should England have no characteristic ornament, while the Scotch have their Luckenbooth and other brooches? Professor Haberlandt includes English cut-steel



Luckenbooth Brooches.

work among "peasant jewellery," but it was as much used in France as England, and was made for the fashionable classes. Perhaps the most distinctively English work is found among the "Memento Mori" brooches, rings, &c., previously described.

Everywhere, except perhaps in Holland and some parts of Italy, the custom of making the ornaments in the traditional way has died out, and they are not nearly as much worn as they were formerly. Hideous modern dress in many places has replaced the picturesque native costume, and the ornaments, formerly the pride and joy of the owner, are sold to a collector or for a museum.

In Normandy one seldom sees any characteristic work now. I asked a friend on the spot to obtain for me some specimens or photographs of peasant jewellery now in use, but she wrote that in the part where she was nothing of the kind was worn by the

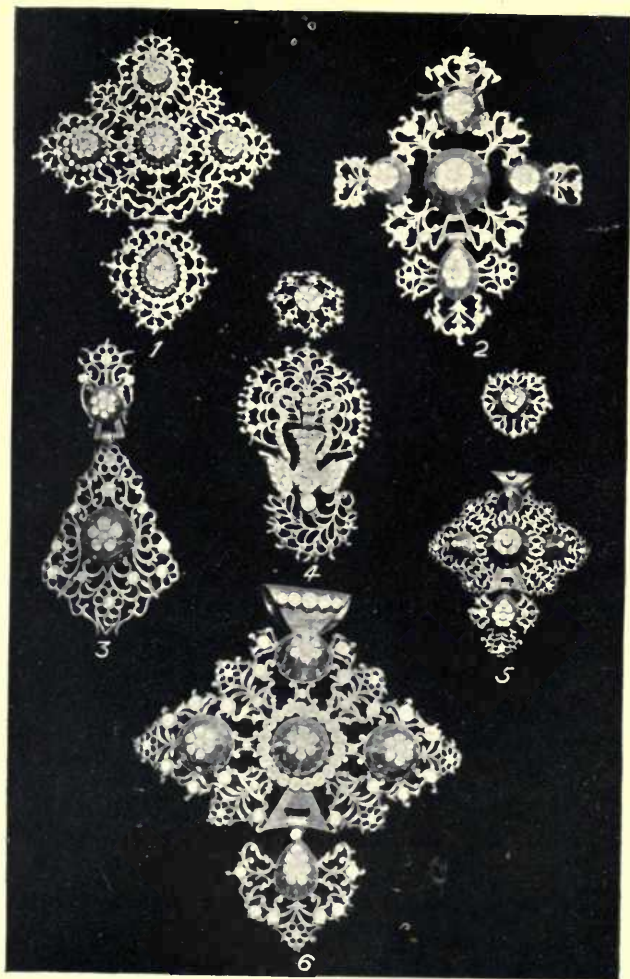


people but cheap, tawdry ornaments, obviously made in Birmingham. However, Breton peasants do still wear their national dress and jewellery in country districts to a certain extent, and so do Norwegians ; while in Holland it is still largely worn not only by the quite peasant classes, but by those of a superior position, especially on festive occasions. They are most averse from parting with any of it, but wily villagers who are seen wearing fine old sets have been known to possess a second set of modern manufacture, which they try to pass off on unwary travellers as having been in their family for generations. I have heard of one case in which the imposture was most cleverly carried out.

The originals were carefully examined and were undoubtedly old. A good price was offered, but the owner shilly-shallied about parting with them, delaying for one reason or another. Finally the would-be purchaser said, "Well, you may take my offer or not. I am leaving to-morrow first thing, so you will not get another chance." Late that night the ornaments were brought to the hotel, and after a cursory inspection by artificial light, the money was paid. It was only on examining them on returning to England that the imposture was discovered. The copies were good ones, but quite modern, and must have been made with the intention to deceive. Probably that simple Dutch-woman earns a nice little sum in the course of the year ! She is very likely only an agent for some dealer, who finds it easy thus to entrap travellers without implicating himself. The fraud would,

### PROVINCIAL JEWELLERY. NORMAN-FRENCH

1. Pendant cross with locket. Branched open work with bossed and ridged ornaments of crystals. From Normandy.
2. Silver-gilt open-work pendant set with plain pastes. From Normandy.
3. Ear-ring. Silver-gilt open-work pendant set with plain pastes. From Normandy.
4. Characteristic jewel from Rouen. Silver open work decorated in plain pastes. The branch which the dove carries is in coloured pastes.
5. Pendant cross and locket. Gold open work traced with bossed ornaments of small crystals. From Rouen.
6. Silver open-work pendant set with plain pastes. From Normandy.





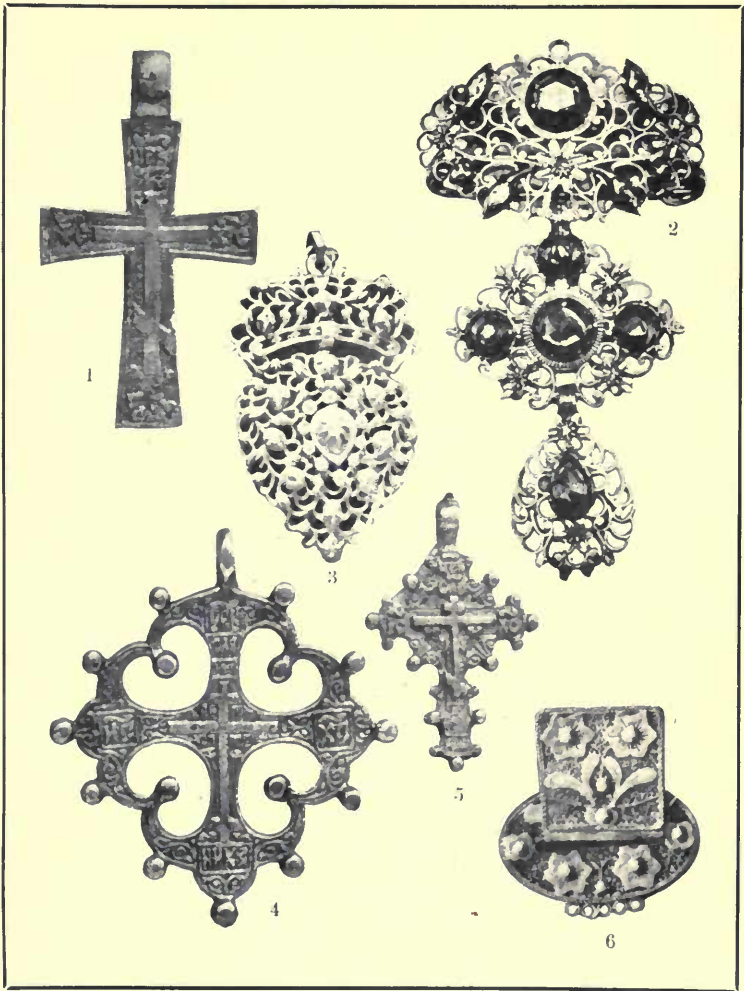
even if discovered in time, be very difficult to bring home; the woman would of course maintain that they were the same pieces all the time—an assertion hard to disprove.

Italian ornaments are now much more stereotyped than formerly, when each district had a type of its own, and the varieties were very numerous and frequently most interesting and artistic.

It is impossible to deal with all the different kinds of national jewellery, as even within the boundaries of one country differences exist between that of one province and another. One of the most generally admired kinds in **Norman French**, which is composed of a kind of filigree set with small crystals. The most ordinary shape of the pendants is based on a cross, but in many cases one would hardly recognise the fact unless one knew what it was intended to represent. The bottom member of the cross is very generally hinged on as a hanging pendant, just below the middle. The design of the filigree is generally based distantly on a floral pattern, and florets made out of loops of the filigree wire and somewhat attenuated leaves can be recognised. The stones, which are really small crystals collected in local rivers (the same kinds are also found in Ireland and other countries) are generally set in clusters or groups on the top of a high setting. The metal work is of gold, silver-gilt, or plain silver. They are still made for sale as souvenirs, but the new ones, besides being of inferior workmanship, lack the charm of individuality which was so conspicuous a feature in the old work, when each piece differed

### FLEMISH, RUSSIAN, AND TURKISH

- 1, 4 and 5. Russian crosses of the seventeenth century.
2. Pendant in three parts, of gold open work set with large and small diamonds. The large stones have high gold settings on a milgriffe base. The smaller ones in the middle of the flowers are set in silver. Flemish. Early eighteenth century.
3. Pendant in the form of a crowned heart. Silver-gilt filigree set with small diamonds. From Bruges. Eighteenth or early nineteenth century.
6. Turkish clasp of filigree with applied platework.





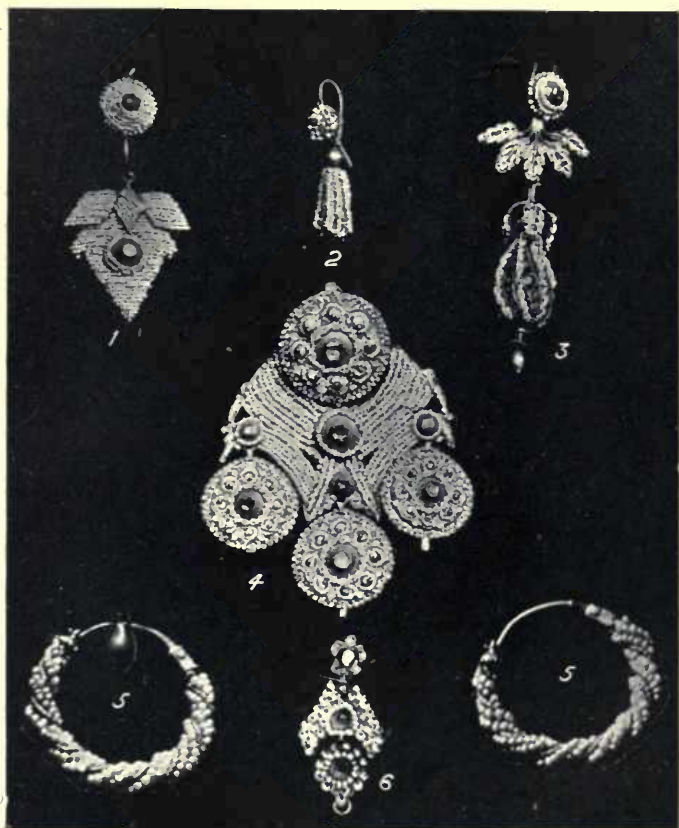


in detail though preserving the general character. Copies are often for sale in London curio-shops. They are well made, but nowadays the inspiration is lost, and though a clever workman can copy a set pattern well enough, the result is not convincing. Closely akin in some points to the general Norman French work is that which is particularly characteristic of Rouen. The general character is that of filigree of gold, or silver-gilt, closely set with small pastes, sometimes coloured. The especial feature being the *Saint Esprit*, or Holy Dove, which hangs as a pendant from the main ornament. The bird is generally composed of small stones closely massed together, and it carries in its beak a sprig or wreath of foliage which is often set with coloured pastes. When old ones are found they are charming, but they are very scarce, and modern copies are made.

There is some difference in the technique of **Flemish** or **Belgian** ornaments, but they have a general resemblance to those of the Norman workmanship. The filigree is composed of good stout strip wire, of gold or silver, in somewhat similar designs. The flower ornaments are cut out of sheet silver and mounted in relief over the general surface of filigree work. They are set with a small rose diamond in a close setting, riveted through the centre of the flower. Leaf-like ornaments with a small diamond inlet are a characteristic feature. The principal stones are often table-cut or even quite flat, with facets only on the inner surface. The high settings of the large stones are mounted on a kind of rosette, engraved or other-

### ITALIAN PEARL-WORK EAR-RINGS

1. Ear-ring. Gold. Escutcheon-shaped pendant of seed pearls and of green stones called Luciane. Nineteenth century. From Naples.
2. Ear-ring. Gold. Disc of seed pearls with ten pendant strings of pearls. From Secondigliano. Nineteenth century.
3. Ear-ring. Gold. Top of five leaves in seed pearls; pendant in seed pearls and filigree. Procida. Nineteenth century.
4. Ear-ring in gold. Top, a disc of pearls and seed pearls with a red stone in the centre; the pendant, three similar discs with two wing-shaped masses of pearls. Pozzuoli. Nineteenth century.
5. Ear-rings in seed pearls and filigree. Nineteenth century.
6. Ear-ring in seed pearls and green stones. Pozzuoli.





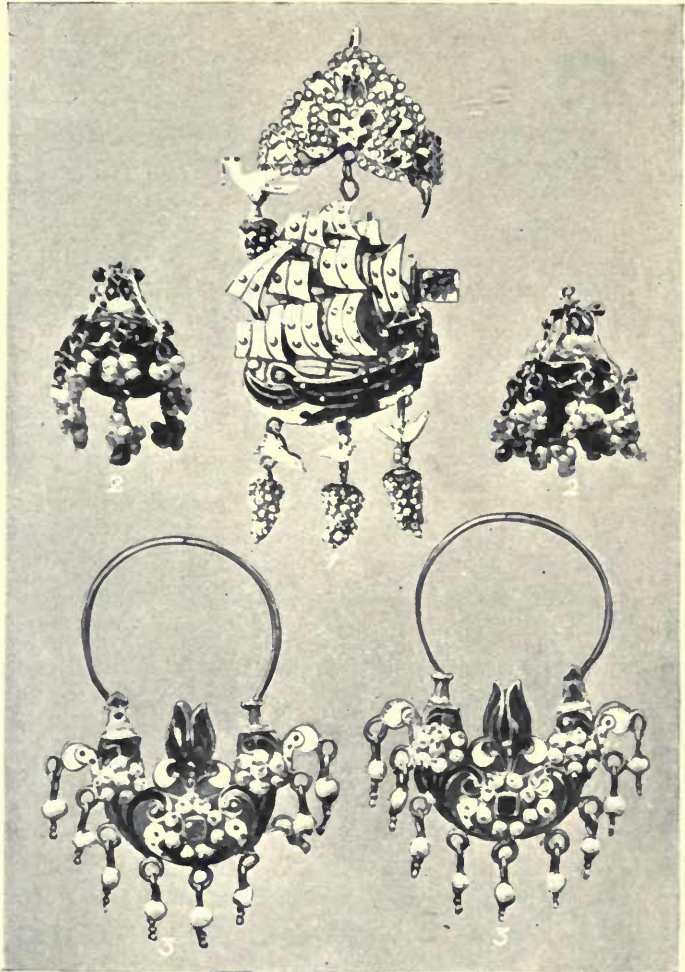
wise marked with numerous lines. The stones are practically always real in old specimens. A crowned heart is a favourite design.

Italy boasts the utmost variety of peasant jewellery. One has a difficulty in knowing where to begin. The poorer classes have had their special ornaments for a long time, as the following quotation from Cellin (Asbee's translation) shows: "I mind me also of having seen rubies and emeralds made double, like red and green crystals stuck together, the stone being in two pieces, and their usual name is 'doppie,' or doublets. These false stones are made in Milan, set in silver, and are much in vogue among the peasant folk. The ingenuity of man has devised them to satisfy the wants of these poor people when they wish to make presents at wedding ceremonies and so forth, to their wives, who of course don't know any difference between the real and the sham stones, and whom the little deceit makes very happy."

There is a certain likeness to French and Flemish work in the open-work set with garnet or pastes which comes from Avellino. The method of making is, however, different. In this case the open-work, instead of being built up out of pieces of wire, is fretted and engraved out of sheet, but the inspiration is evidently the same. Particularly interesting is the seed-pearl work from Pozzuoli and other neighbouring places. The tiny beads strung on hair or metal wire are coiled and arranged so as to form very attractive patterns. Pastes and coloured stones of various kinds are used to give relief of colour, and the result is very uncommon and pleasing. Filigree

### ADRIATIC EAR-RINGS

1. A most beautiful ear-ring in the form of a ship. The walls of the cloisons are partly of ribbon wire, partly of twisted wire. The little flag at the stern moves on its staff, and the bunches of grapes of small pearls are doubly hinged, so that the fullest advantage is taken of the decorative value of movement for ear-rings. Sixteenth century.
2. Pendants for ear-rings hung with pearls. They were originally enamelled. Venetian. Late sixteenth century.
3. Venetian ear-rings in enamel and small pearls.







wire work mixed with plate work in gold is also a feature of some districts; it is generally rather tame and uninteresting. One of the most interesting survivals is to be found in what is known as Adriatic jewellery. It is supposed to be the result of the traditions handed down by the descendants of the Venetian jewellers and enamellers of the Renaissance period. The old work consists of a metal groundwork, sometimes enamelled by the cloisonné method. The wires are frequently plain round or ribbon shape, but twisted wire is also used. The work is often very good. The stones used are generally pearls, which are pierced and fixed by means of wires.

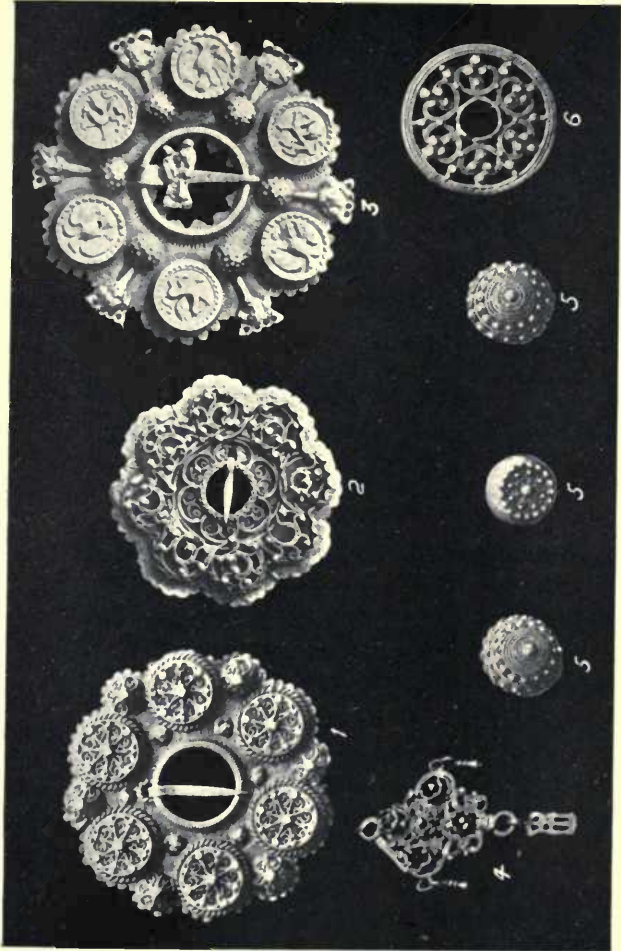
In the eighteenth century particularly charming ornaments used to be worn by the peasants of Brescia, which were made locally. It seems as if this part of Italy inspires its inhabitants with a kind of genius for the jeweller's craft. This special variety consists of painted enamel on plaques linked together with charmingly worked chains.

There is a kind of turquoise jewellery made at Florence, generally in the form of "fleurs-de-lis," which one sometimes sees among other oddments in jewellers' shops. Such things have no value beyond being pretty trinkets, as they are extremely cheap to buy in Italy. The stones are very flat, small ones, of inferior colour. They are generally set in silver-gilt.

**Scandinavian jewellery** is quite different in character, though filigree takes a considerable place among the methods of adornment. The bridal crowns are often splendid examples of the rich effect obtained by simple means. These ornaments are often of un-

## NORWEGIAN

1. Circular brooch in open filigree.
2. Circular brooch in conventional foliated design in wirework.
3. Circular brooch. Three of the bosses have double-headed eagles and three of them have winged dragons. On the pin is the Blessed Virgin and child.
4. Pendant of silver-gilt set with pastes and garnets. Seventeenth century.
5. Buttons decorated in shotwork.
6. Silver-gilt circular brooch with wirework ornamentation.





known age, as they are kept in the family and handed on from generation to generation, only being used when a daughter or a son is married. One can imagine that sometimes there may have been a little friction as to which crown should be used—that belonging to the family of the bride or to that of the bridegroom—when both possessed them. If neither had one, they used that which was kept in the church for the benefit of the parish.

The bodice fasteners through which the laces passed were often very pretty, being adorned with embossed work and pastes. These northern people, though thrifty, had seldom very much money to spare on personal adornments, so we find most of the charm of these things arises rather from the naïve and direct workmanship than from the material, as real stones and gold are seldom used, but silver-gilt and rather coarse pastes or amber are substituted. There is very little trace of old Scandinavian motives to be discovered among them, a conventional floral pattern or simple geometrical design being more usual. In the earlier pieces the designs are worked in actual filigree; the latter usually consist of simple repoussé or stamped work of floral character, following somewhat the old patterns. A considerable amount of jewellery is now made in Sweden and Norway, in which enamel and gold or silver-gilt are carefully worked into delicate and pretty designs. They are so quaint that people think they must be old. But though interesting ornaments they are of no value to the collector.

In various parts of Germany peasant ornaments

## SWEDISH AND NORTH GERMAN

1. Hooks. Silver parcel-gilt embossed with heart at ends. From Albo district. Early nineteenth century.
2. Hook for jacket. Silver-gilt leaf shape, ornamented with filigree and imitation stones. From Ingelstad, in the province of Skåne. About 1830.
3. Brooch of silver parcel-gilt. The filigree ornament is riveted on to the smooth background. It is set with coloured glass. From Vierlande, a district on the Elbe, near Hamburg. Early nineteenth century.
4. Heart-shaped brooch similar to Scotch Luckenbooth brooches. German. 1856.
- 5, 6 and 7. Hook or eyelets for lacing bodice. Embossed silver set with pastes. From Ingelstad. About 1840.
8. Buttons of silver filigree. About 1830.







are still made and worn, very often much resembling the types used in Scandinavia. The kind of filigree fastened over a smooth plate of burnished metal is common to Sweden, Norway, Finland, and the North of Germany, the technique being practically identical. The filigree work is also very similar to that of Norway, though perhaps of a rather slighter character. Strings of beads, especially of amber, are characteristic of the northern districts. In the parts where the Roman Catholic religion prevails, rosaries with beautifully carved beads and crucifixes are still made by the people themselves.

The most interesting of the Spanish jewellery is that made at Cordolova, of a kind of filigree in the old Moorish style. Some quaint jewellery of gold and seed-pearls were made at Salamanca. There is an excellent collection of these peasant ornaments at the Victoria and Albert Museum. It was most fortunate that it was obtained when it was (in the first half of the nineteenth century), as it would have been quite impossible later to have got so complete a collection, as the majority of the people have given up wearing them and now seldom have anything more interesting than a string of beads or a crucifix, and one only finds a few scattered pieces here and there. For genuine specimens a good price will have to be paid. Spanish ear-rings are very large and elaborate, often consisting of several parts hinged together and set with faceted stones or pastes. Silver, stamped in imitation of cut stones, has a brilliant effect, and glass cut and silvered like looking-glass has much the effect of paste. A long centre

## PROVINCIAL ITALIAN AND SPANISH

1. Reliquary. Brass champlevé enamel, black and white. About 1500.
2. Ear pendant. Gold set with emeralds; traditional pattern. Second half of the nineteenth century. Spanish.
3. Neapolitan ear-ring in silver-gilt and pearls and garnets. Eighteenth century.
4. Child's bauble. Probably for a Bambino. Silver. A neriad holding a mirror and comb, attached to a whistle and hung with bells. Spanish.
5. Ear-ring. Gold. Large foliated ornamental disc, set with garnets, with buckle-shaped ornament of similar work, from which hang three pendants. Avellino. Nineteenth century.
6. Filigree-work medallion. Gold. From the Neapolitan provinces. Nineteenth century.
7. Medallion. Silver-gilt. Star-shaped open work of coiled ribbon wire. Italian.
8. Curious hairpin. At one end a hand holding a flower. From Sorrento. Nineteenth century.





pendant with two smaller ones each side is a usual pattern. Old Spanish paste is generally of very effective design, though perhaps rather heavy, as the "stones" are often massed closely together.

Russia shows in most of its jewellery the influence of the Byzantine style of ecclesiastical art, which is still the only one recognised by the Greek Church. Neck pendants often contain small pictures and crucifixes. Copies of ancient design are now made exactly resembling the old ones. They are probably cast from an antique model. The most characteristic features are the enamel work known as the wire enamel (often painted within its twisted wire cells), and a considerable use of pearls, turquoise, and garnets set together with a very rich effect, about which there is a strong flavour of the Oriental. The turquoise can be bought very cheaply at the fair of Nijni Novgorod, where also the rough pearls are obtained, and the garnets are both native and are also imported in quantity. It is interesting to note these very stones were the favourites of our Teutonic ancestors when they migrated from their "vague region somewhere north of the Black Sea."

Enamelling also appeals to the somewhat Oriental taste of the Russians, as it enables colour to be introduced easily and cheaply, and also in a greater variety than where only stones are used. The style of ornamentation is not based on an imitation of stone work, but rather it seems to originate in the filigree (which probably preceded it), being filled in with enamel, which involved only a very slight

difference in either design or technique. The best specimens are scarce and valuable, dating from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Niello is also much used at the present day, especially in the southern districts, where there is quite a trade in manufacturing quaint ornaments as gifts and souvenirs. They are pretty but of small value.

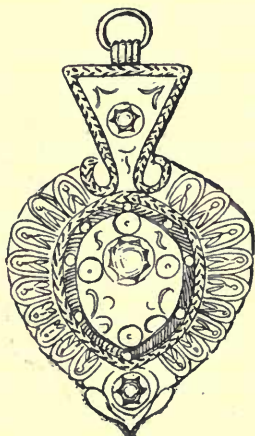
The Austrian peasants had a real genius for producing, out of the simple materials available to them, pieces of really exquisite taste and workmanship. They were made by the ordinary villagers, who all seem to have possessed a natural aptitude for artistic work. The women embroidered beautifully; and out of silver wire, tinsel, and horn the men made charming ornaments for their sweethearts and wives. It seems almost impossible that the immediate descendants of these real artists could not only cease to make their own ornaments, but wear and actually prefer the common machine-made things, which are all modern civilisation has to offer in their place. But so it is. Fashion is a stern master, and before we blame these villagers we must look at home, and make sure that our own house is not of glass before we throw stones. I do not suppose there is any one brave enough to dare to walk down Piccadilly in his great-grandfather's coat and breeches, be the satin ever so rich or the embroidery of the most exquisite! A woman *might* come out in her grandmother's gown and pass muster, but she dare not appear in one of twenty years ago. We are all slaves in one way or other. It is, however, good to know that some of these

pieces are being carefully preserved in a special museum of Peasant Art.

Hungary has a particularly fine class of national jewellery which, though it partakes somewhat of the general style of other European enamels of the later Renaissance, yet has a character of its own, owing to the strong touch of Oriental feeling which is engrafted on to it. Much of this jewellery dates from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and is carried out in many varieties of enamel, besides the usual encrusted kind. Some, for instance, is done in a kind of painted cloisonné, in which the colour, after being placed into the cells, was varied by pencilling of other colours. Sometimes the design is of leaves and flowers, in which case they have the ground enamel of the general tone, and the effect is enhanced by further tints showing the natural colours. Masses of white, or other opaque enamel, were also broken up with dots and lines of black, red, and other colours. There was more of the built-up goldsmith's work in this kind of ornament than is ordinary in other enamelled jewellery of the period, owing to its being based on filigree; grains of gold and twists of wire often form prominent features in the design. The pendant stones hanging from some of the jewels have curious settings with serrated bases. Copies of this work have been largely made. They are mainly in silver-gilt, and are often cast where the originals would be wrought. They are generally set with pastes and small baroque pearls. There are very few real examples in this country, but the imitations have been rather largely imported



by shops who make a feature of quaint jewellery. They are pretty, and have a fair amount of handwork about them, so they are rather deceptive, but will not bear comparison with the originals. The imitations are rarely made in gold, and show little delicacy of execution.



Part of Clasp. Turkish.

**Turkish** work, as is to be expected, shows more of the Oriental character than other European jewellery. It has all the Oriental faults without its excellences, and it is seldom of any importance, as there does not seem to be any rich store of craft tradition among the workmen, and it is generally flimsy and somewhat tawdry. It is often in those ornaments made for the richer classes merely an excuse for the display of conglomerations of

precious stones. The jewellery of the people is generally of filigree adorned with pastes and coloured glass. Inscriptions in decorative characters are a frequent feature, and add considerably to the dignity of the pieces, which otherwise are generally trivial.

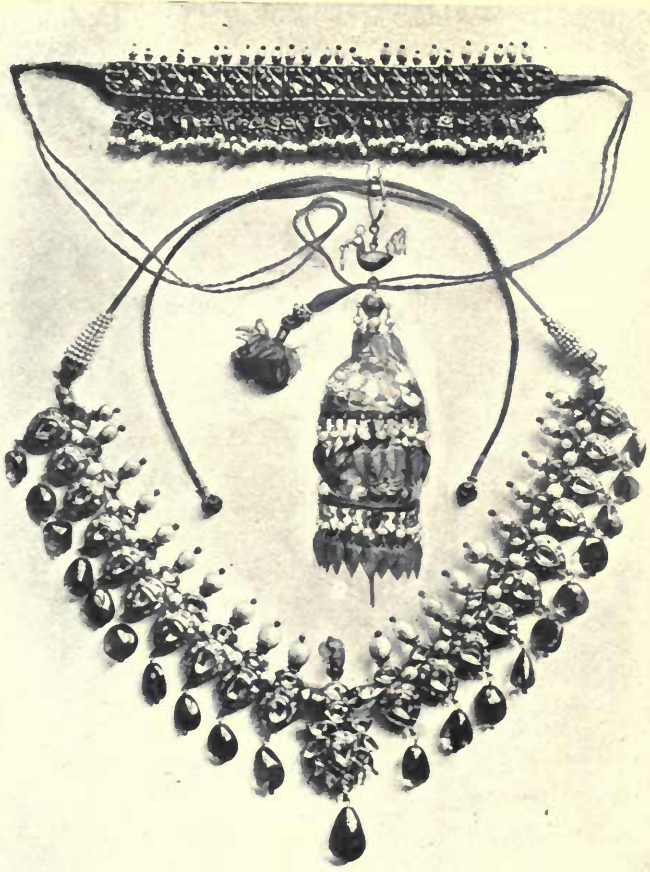


VI

ORIENTAL  
JEWELLERY

### INDIAN AND PERSIAN

1. Necklace from Indore set with diamonds, pearls, and emeralds.
2. Ear-rings. Composed of two gold domes enamelled with flowers and fringed with rows of seed pearls and gold leaves. Persian.
3. Tooshee necklace, richly jewelled, from Rattenpore.





## CHAPTER VI

### ORIENTAL JEWELLERY

**Indian Jewellery.**—When we see a large collection of Indian jewellery we are at once struck with the wonderful effect of richness, both of colour and ornament. There is a freedom and profusion about it which strikes quite a different note from the restraint that is displayed in almost all European jewellery, except such as shows strong Oriental influence. There is a general appearance that gold and gems, even as silver in Solomon's time, "are nothing accounted," they are apparently so carelessly and lavishly used. But when we examine more closely we shall often find that much of this display is obtained by the utmost skill in making a very little metal go a very long way, and that the stones used in such quantities are, to European notions, faulty and flawed. We may even think the design in some respects childish and trivial. But still further and deeper knowledge will bring, most probably, an intense admiration for the consummate mastery of material, and we shall recognise that the designs are, when we consider their purpose, as near perfect as it is possible to get. It is so easy to recognise for what

purpose they are intended : an ear-ring is obviously meant to hang—its particular beauties would show themselves in no other position but in the ear ; the turban ornament proclaims itself at once as such ; and with each object it is the same. We cannot imagine a design for one of *these* pieces being labelled “ Design for a brooch or neck-pendant, or *would also do for embroidery,*” as the inscription under a modern English “ art ” design runs ! The jewellers who make these things simply think in gold and gems. From father to son the traditions of craftsmanship have descended, and the same spirit animates their work that inspired their forefathers two thousand years ago. However, they show a great power of assimilation. Other designs and methods are from time to time grafted on to the original stock. We find traces of Persian and Arab art and of Greek and Etruscan methods, but they are all absorbed and combine to form various types which are most interesting and thoroughly characteristic of the people who inspire and make them. We must deeply regret that this power of so readily adopting alien ideas has most unfortunately led to the introduction of European designs and methods, and these, moreover, of a period when they were most debased and least worthy of imitation.

Just as in other arts, such as carpet-making and weaving, the use of aniline dyes and commercial methods have sadly spoilt the products of the present day, so we find jewellery, especially that made for sale to Europeans or for those who have adopted their habits and customs, is of quite a different standard of beauty and workmanship to that which

was made when the craftsman worked guided only by tradition and his instinctive taste. In buying for a collection it is most important that all should be of purely native design. Trinchinopoli jewellery has long been celebrated in Europe, and many pieces have been brought home as gifts by returning travellers as examples of Indian craftsmanship, and old and pure examples are valuable and beautiful; European influences, however, have for this very reason been especially strong, and much of that made nowadays, though still most excellent technically, is spoilt by the poor design. Of Delhi work in jade the same may be said. This beautiful stone, of different shades varying from greenish-white up to a full green, which has from time immemorial been used by the Chinese for ornaments, becomes a thing of exquisite, fairy-like beauty when cut and decorated with gems by the Indian workmen. The



Delhi Jade-work  
Necklace Pendant.

stones are of cabochon cutting, and are set in gold to form leaves and flowers; these, with stalks of gold holding them together, form a kind of incrustation, through the intricacies of which the semi-opaque jade background gleams quietly. The work is also imitated in enamel, but lacks somewhat of the life of the stone work, which in good old pieces is as valuable as it is beautiful. At Delhi, too, is made a very curious kind of granulated work; instead of the grains being round, the tops are pointed. They

do not appear to be filed, and I do not know how they are done.

Perhaps the finest gemmed jewellery of all is to be found in Cashmir and the Punjab. It is of distinctly Aryan type, to which also belongs much of the jewellery of the Rajputana, Delhi, and Central India, and also (though somewhat debased) that of Bengal.

Very interesting is the work found in Bombay, where two types exist side by side, the Mahommedans using the Mogul, or Indian type, and the Parsees (who are a people of Persian origin from the province of Pars) still (or rather did, until lately) use the old Persian styles, a tradition which has survived a thousand years. They are, however, a people of very advanced ideas, and have adopted many English customs (many of them being enthusiastic cricketers), and they no longer adhere to the national costume and jewellery, but have largely given it up for English fashions. It is a great pity that this should be so, because it seems as if it is almost impossible for Europeans to separate the idea of beauty from that of intrinsic value. A typical Indian jeweller of the old school works entirely independently of it. He endeavours to make the gold go as far as possible; gems are used for their beauty and colour, without regard for their pecuniary value. If he wants a certain shade of colour, and has not got a gem of the right tint, he puts in a paste; but whatever his material, his work is of the best he can do. We do not appraise an illuminated manuscript by the amount of gold-leaf or the weight



of the vellum; and it should be possible to bring ourselves to judge jewellery in the same way, putting the commercial spirit on one side and judging it as one would any other art work. Sir George Birdwood, in his invaluable book, "The Industrial Arts of India," has thus described the characteristics of the Hindu jewellery:—

"After the archaic jewellery of Ahmedabad, the best Indian jewellery, of the purest Hindu style is the beaten gold of Mysore, Sawuntwadi, Vizianagram and Vizagapatam, that well illustrates the admirable way in which the native workers in gold and silver elaborate an extensive surface of ornament, out of apparently a wholly inadequate quantity of metal, beating it almost to the thinness of tissue paper without at all weakening its effect of solidity. By their consummate skill and thorough knowledge and appreciation of the conventional decoration of surface, they contrive to give to the least possible weight of metal, and to gems commercially absolutely valueless, the highest possible artistic value, never, even in their excessive elaboration of detail, violating the fundamental principles of ornamental design, nor failing to please, even though it be by an effect of barbaric richness and superfluity."

The most pleasing pieces will be found, as a rule, neither among the ornaments made for the princes—which have almost too rich and ornate an appearance to be quite to our taste, or those of the poorest peasants, but among those made for the fairly well-to-do classes, who frequently have all their wealth made up into ornaments. There are so many inter-

## INDIAN AND BURMESE

1. Gold ear-rings of granular-work. From Delhi.
2. Silver ear-ring.
3. Burmese necklace with hanging ornament.
4. Indian necklace of amethyst and pearls.
5. Gold necklet with Jaipore enamels.

The necklaces are figured by permission of the authorities of the Birmingham Museum.





esting and characteristic forms that it is impossible to enumerate them all, but amongst the most artistic is the work done at Cuttack, which bears traces of the art of the Greeks and Etruscans, which probably reached India through the medium of that enterprising race of traders, the Phœnicians. It is exquisitely wrought in ever varying designs; much of it is done by boys. Work of this kind is carried out by the travelling jewellers, who carry with them their small outfit and take up a position in the courtyard. They have so much gold weighed out to them, and are paid so much for their time, and are expected to return the same weight of gold fashioned into whatever ornaments are required. They make, in this way, the most elaborate and beautiful necklets, ear-rings, and bangles of delicate wires and grains and thin plates, rarely repeating the same exact design, though they use again and again the same traditional motives and general ideas. It is only the lower orders who wear silver jewellery, which is despised by the well-to-do. Much of the cheap jewellery of the peasant classes is made completely of glass of various colours, and in other cases bits of looking-glass are set, instead of gems or paste, in base metal, white or brassy. Another quaint and interesting form is that used in Bombay which is made from a kind of sealing-wax or lacquer. This is drawn out into long, thin rods, and then coiled up into interlacing rings. It is coloured in various bright tints to suit the native taste for brilliant colours, and is most effective.

Enamel has not been done very long in India ;

it was probably introduced in the sixteenth century. The Indian enamel which is best known is perhaps that of Jaipur, which is generally of transparent green and red *champlevé* with a white opaque ground. It has thin walls to the cells, which gives it a general resemblance to *cloisonné*. It is probable that the colours are chosen on account of their likeness to rubies and emeralds, which are such favourite stones with Indian jewellers. The Jaipur red colour is very fine. The art is practised, though not to such perfection, all over India. Other kinds are also made, such as that made at Pertagbhur. This is almost more a glass or metal-worker's art than pure enamel, as it consists of a thick layer of green glass or enamel on a ground of bright gold, over which, while still soft from the furnace, an open-work pattern of gold is pressed, the green showing through the interstices of the pattern into which it rises; the gold is subsequently engraved. This is the description of the process given by those who have studied the subject, but the actual method is said to be the secret of a few families.

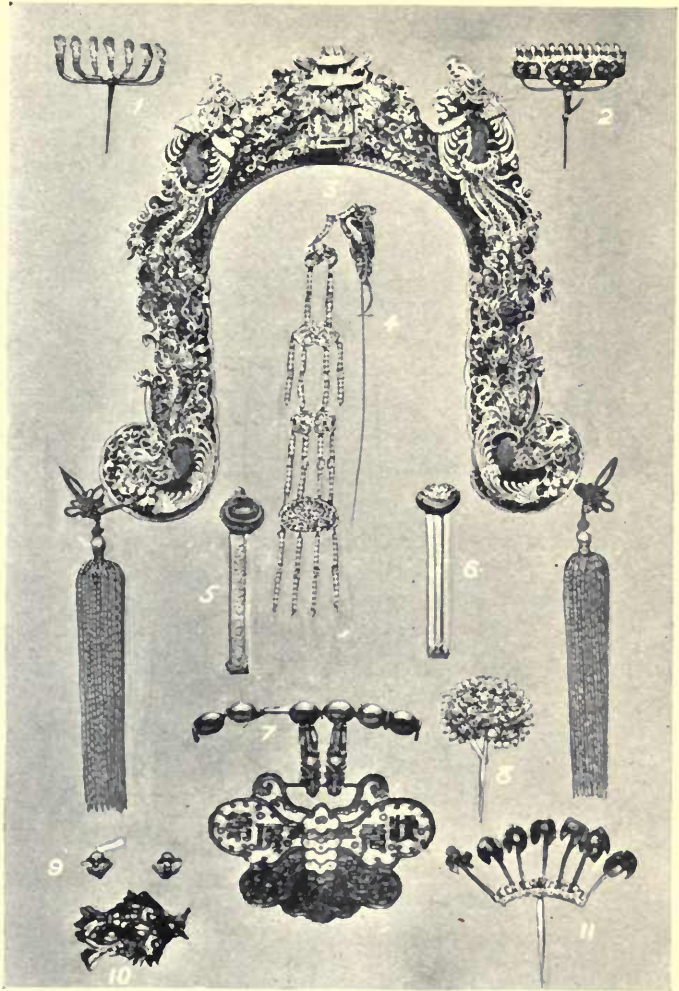
The same reason (the likeness to stones) probably has much to do with the choice of greens, greeny-blue, and turquoise by the enamel-workers of Cashmir; only in this case the stone that is the inspiration is the turquoise, which is much used in Northern India, where also is found the jewellery of Thibet, coming in by way of Bhutan and other frontier districts. This lacks the finish of Indian work, but is very picturesque, with its large, rough turquoises, often set in silver.

**Chinese Jewellery.**—The Chinese are very restrained in their use of jewellery, and comparatively little gold and gem-work is worn purely for the sake of ornament. Their taste lies rather in the direction of small works of art, such as carved ivory or jade, and lacquer work. Their gold jewellery is often of a somewhat heavy and simple character, as owing to there being no gold coins, this is a convenient way of keeping riches in a portable form. When made with this end in view the purity and weight of the gold is of course of greater importance than the workmanship. In other cases, however, though the work is massive the craftsman shows the utmost skill in producing the complicated and characteristic decoration. They also make delicate wire-work in gold and silver. The cap ornaments worn by all classes are beautifully wrought, those of the mandarins in gold and pearls, while that on the cap of the Emperor himself is an exquisitely embroidered gold dragon with a crown of pearls. Strings of pearls are also used as ornaments, and are very highly prized. Earthenware is also used for such things as buttons and girdle hangers, sometimes coloured to resemble jade, for which it is a substitute. But the most characteristic form of Chinese ornaments is certainly the inlaid feather-work. Cells are made as if for cloisonné enamel, and into these are delicately affixed tiny bits of kingfisher feather. The colours are various shades of blue, green, and mauve, blending and toning one into the other in the most marvellous way. Infinite patience is needed for the work, as each tiny piece has to be cut out

## CHINESE

- 1, 2, 5, 6 and 11. Hair ornaments.
3. Headdress of a bride. Silver-gilt filigree open work, with applied ornament in the form of a temple, dragons, and ho-hos (a sacred bird). It is inlaid in cells with kingfisher feather, and is further decorated with pearls and silk tassels and tufts.
- 4 and 8. Hairpins in feather work and pearls.
7. Necklet (part of) with pendant of cloisonné enamel.
9. Cap ornaments.
10. Small pendant of kingfisher-feather work, representing two carp, emblem of longevity.







and fitted exactly to the size of the place where it is to go. Of course, the bits of feather each consist of several strands or filaments which cling closely to each other. The best pieces to purchase are those with the finest wire and the smallest cells, as these are the most effective and the most lasting. The whole effect is a glorious sheen of gold and blue. The commoner work and that made for export has large cells, in which the feather is often carelessly inserted, the result often being that pieces soon come out and are not of course to be replaced in England. Among specimens which I have is a little fish barely half an inch long, and there are thirty cells on the body, each with its separate piece of feather. Copies very similar in style and colour are made in enamel. Most of the Chinese enamel ornaments, such as buttons and clasps, are in cloisonné, and are very charming. Such jewellery does not, however, seem to have been very highly esteemed, as there is seldom anything like the elaboration of the delicate cloisonné designs that we find on their panels or boxes. It may not, perhaps, have been much in favour for Court wear. It is mostly carried out in semi-transparent colour on silver. There is now being imported into England a quantity of cheap stamped silver jewellery coated with enamel, which is simply made for export, and is neither characteristic nor artistic. This ingenious people is always able to copy or adapt any process or design that they are asked to execute, but it is a great pity that they should make things so unworthy of the art traditions of their country.

Nail-guards often beautifully ornamented are sometimes brought to Europe as curios. The nails of the learned classes in China are worn long, to show that their hands are never soiled with manual labour. As they grow they become brittle, and cases are made to protect them,



Chinese Nail-guard.

in metal or lacquer work. Good old specimens are often very valuable, because of the beautiful work lavished on them; they are also interesting as characteristic of the curious ideas which prevail in this wonderful country, so advanced in some things and yet so extraordinarily behind in others.

**Japanese Jewellery.**—We find in Japan not only the most exquisitely delicate taste in the choice of material, and the utmost restraint in the use of colour contrasts, but a very distinctive manner of metal working. Most of the effects are gained by intricacies of surface and treatment, rather than by any display of glitter or rich gems. The metals used are often alloys of little intrinsic value but of great artistic beauty, and the general effect of a collection of personal ornament is more that of exquisite bric-a-brac than what we should call jewellery. Combs for the hair are a conspicuous feature, and are most finely wrought in lacquer, horn, gold lac on wood, wood with ivory appliquéés, or ivory stained various colours, and either carved or inlaid.

Japanese Haircomb.  
Gold lacquer.

Netsukés of carved ivory, horn, or bone, or worked in metal are very much collected; good specimens are very highly valued, but are getting increasingly scarce. Genuine old pieces show the most delicate workmanship. If of ivory, the colour is toned richly with age; the old metal ones show a characteristic patina. The good netsukés are small and compact. The edges are not sharp and crisp, but have been rubbed by years of wear. The most usual are figure subjects. Good ones show considerable ingenuity in making them suitable to their purpose. Once a few fine specimens have been studied, it will be impossible for dealers to take in a collector with the modern ones, coarsely carved, and stained to look old, sometimes offered at high prices. If fine they are of considerable value, and even a fairly nice one will be well worth five to ten shillings. Buttons for fastening garments are worked in metal, ivory, and lacquer, and their interest and value depend entirely on their workmanship. There is a lot of modern work about, made at commercial rates, for the European market; and of no interest to expert collectors.



Netsuké in position.

The sword-guards are a separate study in themselves. A great many were on the market some time ago of real value and beauty, having belonged to the ancient aristocracy of Japan. Practically these have been all absorbed into the great collections, and it is very rare to find a really

exquisite specimen of the best old work ; and though the simpler ones have great charm it must be remembered that the large prices are only for the very best ones. These sword-guards are sometimes of considerable age, dating back to the fifteenth century. They consist of flat pieces of metal of various sizes up to three or four inches in breadth, roundish or oval or nearly square. Generally there are three openings, through the largest of which the sword passed, and small knives or daggers through the others. They are made of various metals and alloys, in working which the Japanese show such consummate skill, and also of gold and silver. The designs are most elaborate and characteristic ; in the fine pieces the metal, though in reality strong as befitted their purpose, being worked till it has the delicate finish of lace yet retaining a certain solidity of appearance.

There are many other nations and tribes that have personal ornaments of an extremely interesting kind, but they belong more to the domain of the ethnologist, and it would be impossible to do more than touch upon them here. Mention may be made of the wampum of the North American Indians, so often spoken of in literature. It consists of the interior parts of shells rubbed down so as to form beads, which were also used as money. The jade or greenstone ornaments of the New Zealanders are often imported and used as charms. Genuine specimens are said to be bored from each side with holes which are wider on the surface than where they meet in the

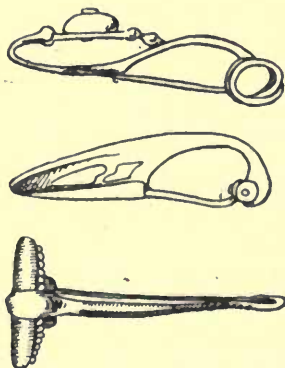
middle, as the natives had no proper drilling apparatus. The ancient inhabitants of Mexico also used jade, turquoise matrix, and pyrites (usually called marcasite). The most extraordinary of their ornaments which have come down to us are life-sized masks covered with inlaid turquoise. These were brought into Europe in the sixteenth century. Many of them belonged to the Medici family. They are exceedingly scarce, only twenty-two of them being known. Perhaps hidden away in some country house, among other things brought back by venturesome ancestors, there may be another of these hideous but valuable trophies!





VII

BROOCHES



Early forms of Brooches.



## CHAPTER VII

### BROOCHES

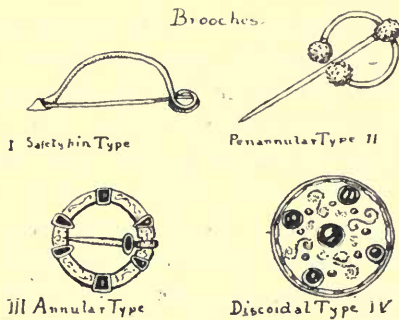
SERVING as a link between the purely useful and the purely ornamental, brooches have a rather unique position among articles of jewellery. They are generally very typical of the kind of metal work that was in vogue at the time they were made, and though often extravagant in size and work, and elaborate in their decorations, yet the very fact that after all they have a purpose to serve seems to have, as a rule, prevented their makers from utilising on them the more exotic forms of ornament, and so kept them in many cases distinctively national in character.

The examination of a series of specimens will be a very good means of obtaining a bird's-eye view of the various styles of ornament and workmanship employed as jewellery that have prevailed among European<sup>1</sup> peoples from an early period to the present day. The study is the more interesting because there have been several different types in which the mechanism of fastening is quite distinct.

The term "brooch" is used for almost any tem-

<sup>1</sup> The brooch, as we know it, is hardly used in Asia or Africa.

porary and removable arrangement which holds two parts of a garment together. Neither hooks and eyes nor buckles would come in under this definition. A pin would ; but in the ordinary acceptance of the word we look for another part hinged to the pin to retain it in the required position, before it is included as a brooch. The study of the evolution and distribution of the different types is an exceedingly interesting one.



Types of Brooches.

The simplest and earliest is a "safety-pin" form, which consists of a pin, a hinge, a spring, and a bow all in one place. This develops, still maintaining the same principle, many variants with separate parts. If instead of a simple bow a ring or hoop takes its place it is known as an "Annular" or "Ring" brooch. If there is a solid plaque or ornamental face, it is known as a "Discoidal" brooch. While if, instead of a perfect circle, the bow consists of a ring with a gap in it, through which the pin

is passed and given a partial turn to retain it in position, we have a "Penannular" brooch or pin.

They are all developments of the pin, and represent the attempts made by craftsmen in different ways to circumvent the natural inclination of the simple skewer-shaped pin to work out of the fabric which it was intended to keep together.

Following the primeval thorns, which no doubt our first parents used to pin their airy fig-leaf garments together, probably came the bodkin of wood or bone ; and until mankind had learnt to work metal no further development was possible, except perhaps some kind of a thong or a loop, passing through a hole in the head which could be stretched over the point.

When metal pins came into being, the advantage of doubling a pin in two and making a hook into which the point could be caught was at once manifest. Then springs at the hinge and shields for the points were refinements soon added, and they developed into the most wonderful elaboration. In the course of their evolution they are divided by antiquarians into several classes according to the peculiarities of their construction. On the whole, the earliest specimens are more curious than beautiful, and only a few descriptions are given which serve to indicate some of the types, leaving the more minute divergencies to those who make a special study of this branch of antiquarianism, which is sufficiently large to have a literature of its own.

There were a great many varieties in use during the early Iron Age. It must be remembered that the use of bronze was not discontinued when what

is known as the Bronze Age came to an end. Iron was used in addition, and the former metal continued to be used especially for ornamental and domestic objects. Some of these fibulæ were of excessive size and weight, and the contortions of the spring were often extraordinary.

Brooches nearly akin to the ordinary modern type were coeval with the safety-pin kind, and in appearance were very similar to those we are used to. Greek and Etruscan brooches are, like their other jewellery, marked by the exquisite delicacy of their craftsmanship.

The Romans appear to have used the safety-pin form of brooch almost exclusively, and like so many of their adaptations from other sources, they often exaggerated and distorted what had been beautiful and graceful shapes in the originals, into clumsy and heavy forms.

In Britain the fibulæ used before the coming of the Romans were in one piece. They were of foreign origin or at least of continental design.<sup>1</sup> Afterwards the bow-shaped kind with a separate hinge on which the pin worked to and fro was introduced. The harp shape was very characteristic of the Romano-British period. The T-shaped brooch continued in use after the Romans evacuated the country, and later was a favourite shape with the Anglo-Saxons. Probably the brooches found in this country in which cross-sections of millefiori glass are set were produced under Roman influence, as the art of making it does not seem to have been known to our British ancestors.

<sup>1</sup> See Celtic Art, Romilly Allen, p. 105.

The **Anglo-Saxons** and other Teutonic tribes were very expert in the jeweller's craft, and brooches were the objects on which they expended much of their attention. In gold and bronze numerous specimens have been discovered which have never been surpassed as personal decorations. Greek, Etruscan, and Celtic work is indeed more wonderful in minuteness and intricacy of craftsmanship, but the best Anglo-Saxon brooches are for their purpose entirely satisfying.

There does not appear to have been any one particular style of brooch which especially appealed to the **Byzantines** so as to give it a national character, and this is perhaps natural. Such differing cultures as those which combined in Byzantine Art would naturally express themselves in varying forms. They used both the safety-pin and discoidal form largely; some of the fibulæ being enormous in size and weight and very clumsy, with hanging pendants and attached jewels. Enamels of their characteristic type are found set in the face of discoidal brooches, which were probably made in other parts of Europe but under Byzantine influence.

Nowhere has the penannular kind of brooch reached the point of perfection to which it attained in the hands of Irish craftsmen. It probably may be, like so many of our decorative forms, of Oriental origin and is still in use in Algeria, but it was in **Ireland**, during the period from the ninth to the thirteenth centuries that it reached its high-water mark of beauty of design and craftsmanship. For it is so distinctive in its character and is

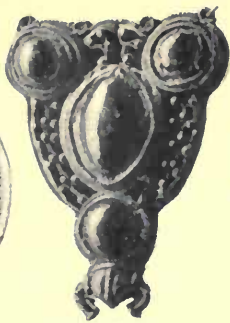
### BROOCHES. ANGLO-SAXON AND MEROVINGIAN

- 1 and 3. Merovingian brooch. It is made of cast bronze faced with gold beautifully worked with filigree. It is set with pastes. The photo of the back (3) is from a reproduction. The hinge and catch are of iron, and have suffered considerably from rust.
2. Anglo-Saxon fibula or buckle of filigree-work.
4. A most beautiful circular brooch which was found with a necklace containing coins of the sixth and seventh centuries. It shows the typical inlaid-work common to the invading Barbarians.
5. A fibula with a radiated head of the continental type. It is of bronze-gilt and is set with garnets.
6. Anglo-Saxon. A circular silver-gilt fibula. From Faversham (Kent). It is set with garnets.





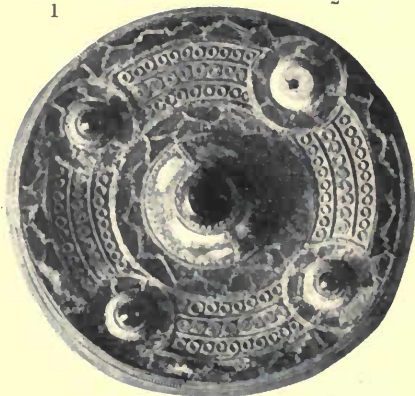
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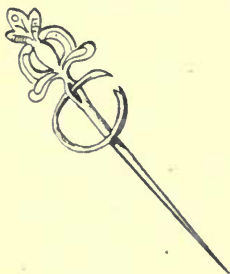


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often so exquisitely worked that it holds a unique position. It is curious that it should ever have become so popular, as it would seem to be a most singularly inconvenient form of fastening. The pin, which runs more or less freely on the broken circle, is prevented from coming off altogether by the enlargement of the end of the ring. Sometimes the ends terminate in bulbous forms, sometimes in discs, sometimes they simply broaden out in a general widening of the decoration.

The fastening of the garment is managed by passing the pin through two portions of the material; the ring is then given a twist, which brings one end under the pin, the weight of the cloak keeping it firm. The point of the pin always pointed upwards. It was worn by men on the shoulder and by women on the bosom.

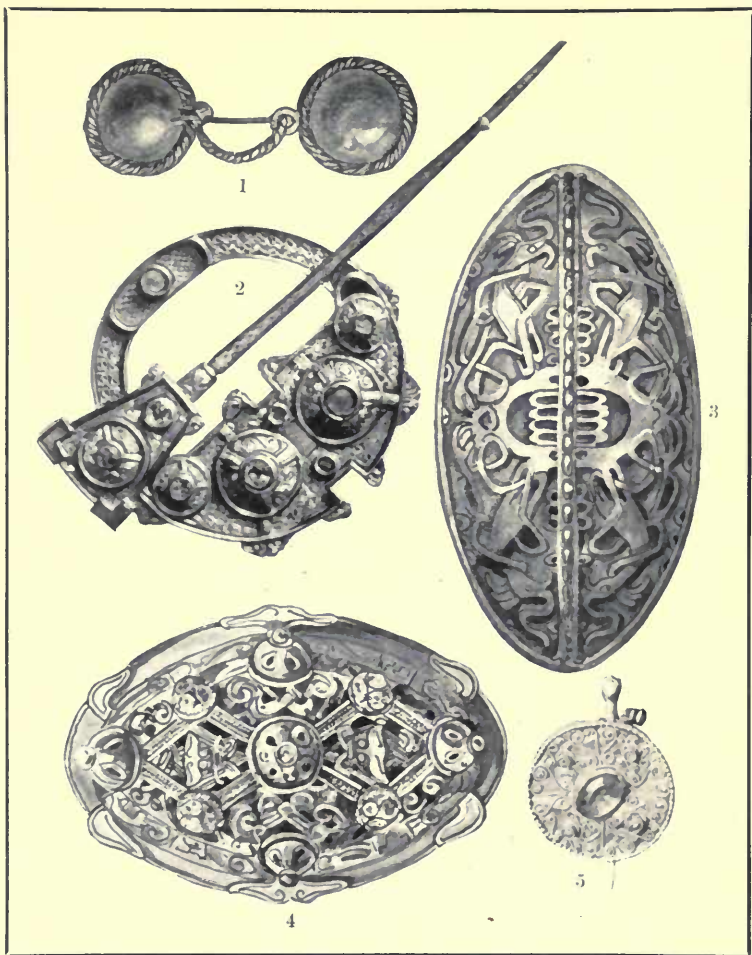


Penannular Pin as worn  
by the Kabyles of  
North Africa.

Absolutely unique amongst these brooches is the "Tara" brooch, which was buried in the sand for centuries, till found by some children in 1850. Their mother, after trying to sell it to a metal dealer in Drogheda, received a small sum for it, from a watch-maker. After passing through several hands it at last found a safe resting-place in the Royal Irish Academy collection preserved at the National Museum, Dublin. It is wonderful that after these vicissitudes it should remain in the very good condition in which it is, as the ornament is of the most elaborate and

## BROOCHES. NORTHERN COUNTRIES AND CELTIC

1. Curious hook-and-eye fibula of the later Bronze Age. From Denmark.
2. Penannular brooch with gap closed. The decoration is cast, not applied. It is set with blue paste and amber.
3. Tortoise brooch from Denmark, belonging to the Early Viking period. The material is bronze. On close examination the design is found to consist of four birds with their legs extraordinarily lengthened and intertwined.
4. Oval brooch of the type found in Norway and Sweden. It belongs to the latter Iron Age. It is of open-worked bronze.
5. An ancient British brooch ornamented with filigree-work in gold. The centre stone is an amethyst.





delicate kind. The craftsman who made it must have expended his utmost skill in carrying out the decorations of enamel, niello, gold filigree, carving, engraving, and settings of glass and amber. Attached to it there is a finely wrought chain of Trichinopoli work. In spite of the fact that the design is worked in addition with animal and human forms, and scroll and spiral patterns, the whole forms a harmonious decoration. One feels it is a triumphant vindication of Browning's saying :—

“One may do whate'er one likes  
In Art: the only thing is, to make sure  
That one does like it—which takes pains to know.”

Surely this craftsman felt a joy in his work.

Among the most interesting varieties of brooches are those to be found in Denmark and the Scandinavian peninsula.

One kind, which is attributed to the later Bronze Age, much resembles an ordinary hook-and-eye clasp, except that the hook part is much elongated, and instead of being on the under-side turns on to the front, where it fastens on a catch. This, of course, entirely prevents it from coming undone when the tension is slackened, as a hook and eye would.

During the latter Iron Age also most extraordinarily large and heavy fibulæ of varying types were worn in **Scandinavia**. The most interesting because the most distinctively characteristic is what is known as the Tortoise or Viking type. It is oval in shape, and is generally worked out of solid bronze. As its name denotes, it bears a general resemblance

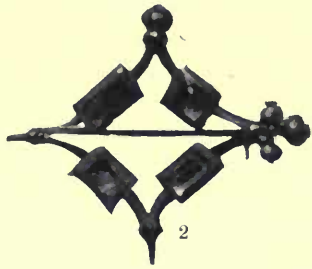
## MEDIÆVAL BROOCHES

1. An exceedingly small ring brooch found at Wexford. Probable date, fifteenth century. It is of gold set with stones, and is of English workmanship.
2. Brooch which, though not actually round in shape, yet belongs to the annular type. It is ornamented with stones and pearls mounted by pins through a central boring. It is English work of the fourteenth century.
3. English ring brooch of the fourteenth century. A very beautiful example in excellent preservation. The inner circle is composed of stones and open-work bosses alternately; the outer row consists of pearls and stones. The pin has been lost.
4. A Burgundian brooch found in the Meuse. This is a very rare example of curious workmanship. What appear to be stones or pearls round the sides are in reality enamel. No doubt it was originally set with pearl beads, but these have disappeared. It is composed of gold. The remaining stones are a diamond and a ruby.





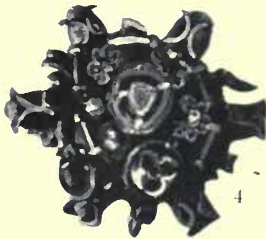
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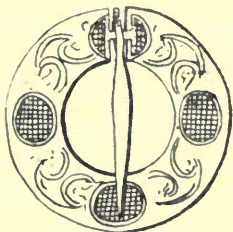


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to a tortoise in outline. The decorations, as a rule, are of a zoöomorphic character, and are sometimes most beautifully wrought. Specimens have been found in Scotland and Ireland, where they are probably relics of raids and settlements of sea-kings.

In England and France in **Mediæval** times the brooch form most frequently met with was a ring with a hinged pin. The material to be fastened was pulled up inside the ring, and the pin pushed through; the strain on it kept it in place, as there was no actual catch. They vary much in size, some of them being as small as a threepenny piece and most daintily worked. They are generally charming in design, the jewels being most happily selected to balance the metal work. Often their sole decoration is a motto, ordinarily of a religious or amatory character.



Ring Brooch. Scotch.  
Eighteenth century.

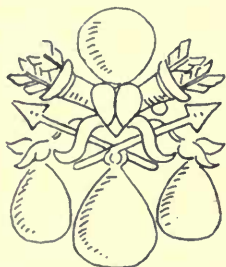
This was generally in French, even if the brooch was of English make, as French was the language of the Court and the nobility. In some of the ring brooches there was a distinct catch on the front, so that the pin could not slip sideways. A form of ring brooch was also used in Scotland that had the catch on the back. There was also a kind of double form, in which there was a bar down the middle. Two pins were hinged one to each side of the circle and they caught on to the centre division. The most noteworthy example of this

kind is the celebrated Glenlyon brooch. Ring brooches were made of various types in Scotland till comparatively recent times.

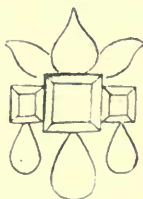
After the **fifteenth century** or thereabouts the discoidal brooch, after having been in use intermittently for centuries, settled down as the almost universally employed form. The face of course varied in shape; sometimes it was solid and sometimes of open-work, but the characteristic of having hinge, pin, and catch on the back of a flattish ornamented front were retained. It is still the ordinary type of brooch as worn by every one, and for the last five centuries the development consists mainly of changes in the fashion of its decoration. During the **sixteenth century** it was frequently of enamelled gold, most beautifully modelled in designs of figures and animals. It was often worn in the same way as the enseigne, which it resembled though not necessarily so individual in design. The enseigne, however, was stitched in position and the brooch was movable. It was worn in the hats of men and women, and it was also pinned into the hair of the latter. It seems at this time to have been more used as an ornament than as a fastening, and perhaps that is why the designs are often somewhat fantastic.

In the **seventeenth century** the use of figure subjects was not so common as heretofore, coloured stone-work and marvellously realistically worked wreaths and groups of flowers in enamel superseding them. The stone-work of the seventeenth century is decidedly scarce, and the most usual examples in brooches consist of charming groups of flowers made

of gold and silver open-work set with quite small stones ; sometimes they are arranged in a basket or vase. The back is generally engraved in accordance with the design on the front. If a basket or vase is represented, for instance, the strands of the weaving, or the contours and ornamentation of the vase are delicately imitated on the reverse. These brooches are largely imitated, and if in doubt as to whether a piece is original or a copy, the back is a much better guide than the front. The modern worker



Girandoles from book by  
Pouget, fils. 1762.

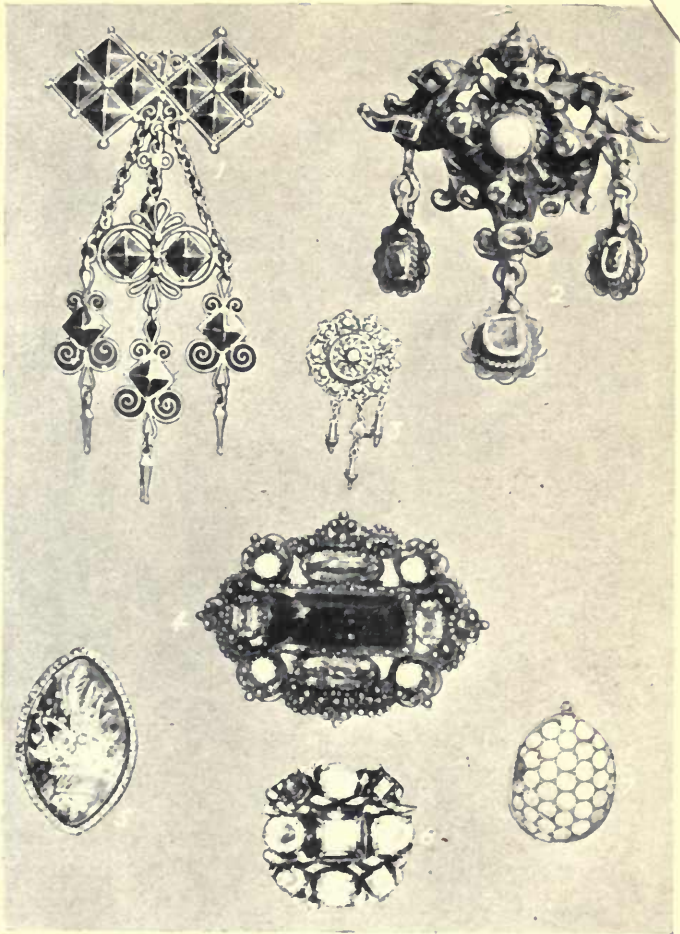


Girandoles  
Corsage  
Ornament.

has to economise labour, and shirks putting fine work where it will not be seen. This class of work was carried on to the first third of the eighteenth century ; more of the stones and less of the gold predominating later. It merged into a geometrical arrangement of stones grouped round a large one, in which one can sometimes trace the idea of a flower, but which was oftener purely formal. This kind of flower-work is used with pearls in the early and middle part of the eighteenth century to form a very favourite kind of brooch, the Girandole. The

## BROOCHES OF THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES

1. A modern Swedish brooch in gold and green enamel.
2. Modern Hungarian brooch in silver-gilt, set pearls and pastes.
3. A modern Florentine brooch of filigree set with garnets and pearls.
4. Brooch of early nineteenth-century filigree-work in gold. The centre stone is a yellow topaz, and it is surrounded with others which are pink. The corner stones are turquoise. The work is much better than most that was done at this period.
5. An ovate brooch mounted in gold. The central ornament is carried out in fine gold mixed with tiny pearls, mounted on a ground of purple foil. It is English work of the middle of the eighteenth century. The whole is surrounded with a ring of brilliants.
6. Early eighteenth-century brooch of mixed stones. The centre one is a peridot, and it is surrounded with stones of various colours. The fine spray-work is of small diamonds.
7. An oval brooch of pavé turquoise. Mid-nineteenth century.







general construction is practically always the same, a larger centre ornament from which hang three large pearls. The details of the design vary, but it generally consists of a knot of ribbon in stone-work, often with flowers and other ornament entwined in it. The only example that I have examined closely had imitation pearls, but the stones (rubies and emeralds) were, I was told, real. It is probable that this was generally the case, as these enormous pearls would be very expensive and the ornament was a favourite one. Very likely Royalty and the higher nobility indulged in the real thing, while those who could not afford them accepted the substitutes.

Then towards the end of the century coloured stones went out of fashion. Duflos in his book "Dessins de Joaillerie" (about 1770) complains that they were no longer mixed with brilliants. Diamonds or pearls were used alone, generally closely set in silver. Strass (so called after the man who invented it in 1758) and paste were not so frequently used for brooches as for buckles, buttons, &c., and those offered as old, of which the design consists of plain bows of ribbon in largish stones, should be carefully examined before being accepted as genuine.

Small works of art, such as miniature portraits or paintings in grisaille under crystal, and Wedgwood medallions surrounded by diamonds or pearls, often



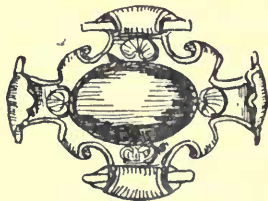
Eighteenth-century Brooch.  
From a portrait of Mrs  
Delany.

oval in shape, were popular from about 1780 onwards. Sometimes the centre was of rich blue enamel or glass, with marcasite or diamonds round.

Early in the nineteenth century a delightful style of mixed wire-work and fancy stones made its appearance; rather later pavé turquoise had a great vogue, and the tiny seed pearls threaded on horse-hair and worked in charming designs on fretwork and mother-of-pearl. About 1835 there was a new note struck which is worthy of note, as owing to some of its details recalling the past the inexperi-



Topaz Brooch sur-  
rounded with small  
pearls. *Circa* 1805.



Scroll Brooch. *Circa* 1835.

enced collector might imagine these pieces to belong to a much earlier period. It was a time when romantic literature was the rage, and accordingly jewellery had to partake of the feeling. The general shape of the pieces is founded on the scrolls of leather, on which, at one time, armorial bearings were displayed. When such skins become dry the extremities curl up, and this peculiarity was seized on as the base of designs. On the face of the brooch sentimental knights and maidens were modelled, and other details which appealed to the designer as being Mediæval, were added *ad lib.*, and precious stones

sprinkled here and there. On other pieces knights in armour were tilting, or troubadours serenaded their lady-loves. There is a sentimentality about these brooches that stamps them as belonging to an age when romance was talked and written about but had very little part in real life. No one who has studied the real products of the Middle Ages will make the mistake of thinking these Mediæval. They are, however, very well made. About the middle of the century come tubes of gold, knotted and twisted into various forms, often surrounding pebbles or coarse cameos, followed by other crude and inartistic fashions in which no one can possibly find any beauty. It was a time when jewellery was judged solely for the value of the gold and stones. Let us draw a veil over these real "Dark Ages."



Engraved Gold Brooch.  
Turquoise and small pearls.  
*Circa 1840.*

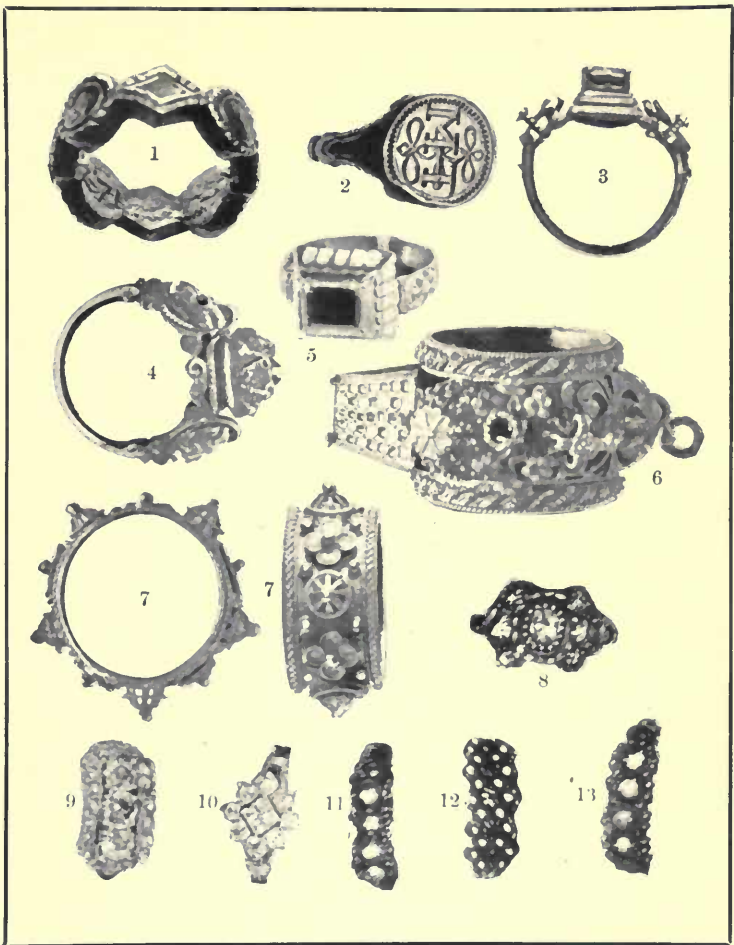


VIII

RINGS

## RINGS

1. Ring believed to have belonged to Alhstan, Bishop of Sherbourne A.D. 817-867. It is of ninth-century Anglo-Saxon workmanship.
2. The Darnley ring. This may possibly have been the wedding ring of Mary, Queen of Scots, and Henry Darnley, as his name is inside and the date, 1565, which was the year of their marriage.
3. Enamelled ring set with a stone. Probably of seventeenth-century workmanship.
4. A very elaborate ring with enamelled goats' heads on the shoulders.
5. Italian ring. Seventeenth century, with enamelled setting.
- 6 and 7 (two views). Jewish betrothal rings. Eighteenth or nineteenth century. These were not worn in the ordinary way, but were used ceremonially. They are of gold decorated with raised-work in filigree and coloured enamels.
8. Mid-eighteenth-century ring. Probably made by a Welsh local jeweller. The setting is heavy, but very handsome. The back and shoulders have been enamelled pale blue. The stones are diamonds, rose cut. The setting is silver.
9. English eighteenth-century ring set with Brazilian stones. The three centre diamonds are hobnail brilliants, the other rose cut. They are all set in silver.
10. Early eighteenth-century ring. The bezel is of table-cut diamonds set in silver.
- 11, 12 and 13. Rings set with pearls and turquoise in filigree mounts. About 1830.







## CHAPTER VIII

### RINGS

THERE are few more interesting collections than those of rings. If at all representative they not only show us a history of the jeweller's art in a compact and nearly complete way, but also tell us much of the history, laws, and religion of different countries and peoples. Of course, to make a really fine collection, large sums of money would have to be spent, but a small one, of considerable interest, even though it did not contain examples set with splendid stones, or any pieces of great historical value, could be formed at comparatively small expense. There would, perhaps, be nothing unique in it, but it would be made up of pieces that, if one knows what they are and something about their origin, are links in the chain of history, but which, if their period and purpose are not identified, are merely curios, and without very particular interest beyond their mere beauty of colour and workmanship.

The subject of finger-rings is, of course, a very wide one, and there are various large and learned volumes dealing with different sides and departments of it that should be carefully studied by any one

who is going in for making a large collection. Take seal-rings alone. In the subdivisions such as "scarabs" and "engraved gems," there are many volumes embodying the results of the greatest expert knowledge, so that only an introduction to the subject can be given here, sufficient for those who are starting, or hovering on the brink of starting, a collection.

The ring is not only one of the most ancient of personal ornaments, but also at various times it has been endowed with all kinds of mystical and emblematic qualities. It has been associated with religion, with law, with love, with death; in one form or another, in fact, it seems to be bound up with most of the phases of life.

It has not always been worn in the same way. Some of the ancient nations, the Egyptians, Phœnicians, and Babylonians, wore it on the third finger of the right hand; it was also sometimes carried on a string worn round the neck so that it hung down on to their chests. The Greeks and Romans wore them on their left hand, and they generally used a ring which also served as signet; the bezel often consisted of an engraved gem. But all these antique peoples frequently wore several examples; sometimes every finger was adorned with one or more. Under the Roman Empire the extravagance in wearing rings verged on the ludicrous. Men and women wore them on all the fingers of both hands except the middle finger, and further, wore them on nearly every joint. There were light rings for summer and heavy rings for winter; in

fact, there was no end to the foolishness displayed. Heliogabalus never wore the same set twice.

There are very few Anglo-Saxon rings surviving, one of the most noteworthy being the ring of Ethelwulf. It is made of gold with niello ornamentation and is a beautiful specimen of the workmanship of that period. This is an example of the extraordinary way in which beautiful things may come to light after being hidden for years. It was discovered in the rut of a cart-track, or rather in the wet mud squeezed out by the passage of the vehicle.

It was sold by the labourer who found it for the value of the gold to a jeweller, and after various vicissitudes was purchased by the British Museum. During the Middle Ages the rings were made with a very high bezel, the sides often ornamented with fine filigree work and enamels, and a small stone set in the top. These rings



Ring of Ethelwulf,  
King of Mercia.

are the most common objects of jewellery to have survived from Mediæval times, and almost the only pieces of what one may call the ornaments of everyday wear as distinguished from "crown" or "ecclesiastical" jewellery. The Renaissance type of the ring was, like the rest of the jewellery of that period, very elaborate, and was adorned with enamels, cameos, and figures worked in full relief.

During the seventeenth century faceted stones of mixed colours were very much used for the ornamentation, and with the eighteenth the diamond

began its reign, and has been *the* ring-stone ever since ; but still, during this period, there have been other varieties made that, without possessing a hundredth part of the intrinsic value of a diamond ring set with a large stone of the purest water, yet have qualities that make them much more interesting in a collection.

### THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF RINGS.

**Signet Rings.**—The earliest kind of seal generally to be found in collections is the Egyptian scarab, which takes its name from the beetle known scientifically as the *Scarabæus sacer*. It used to be thought that it buried its egg, having rolled it up in dirt into the shape of a ball ; and this process, with the hatching of the young, was considered emblematic of death, resurrection, and final immortality. The earliest scarabs are of soft stone. Afterwards, harder and more valuable materials were employed, such as amethyst, crystal, and the precious metals. They are, however, generally made of earthenware. The earliest form closely resembles the beetle, but this likeness decreases, and after the XXVIth Dynasty the insect original is hardly recognisable, the only point of likeness remaining being its shape. The original simple way of mounting them in rings is at once naïve and charming. A wire band of suitable length was prepared with the ends flattened and holes drilled in them ; a thin wire was wound round this shank and passed first through the holes in the metal, then through the scarab and the

metal on the other side, and again wound round the shank. This permitted the seal to revolve, so that when on the hand the beetle's back only was seen, the delicate cutting of the seal being inside next the skin. Later, the seal was made of the same material as the rest of the ring and was fixed in position. The Etruscan seal-rings sometimes are set with a scarab closely resembling the Egyptian ones. One kind of signet seems to be peculiar to the Etruscans. These rings are made of gold only, having no stones or ornament. The bezel is oblong, and the flat surface is worked in a design generally in intaglio, though some are in relief. The gold is only a thin shell, and has been filled in with melted tin after being made. The main idea and pattern of this ring is probably of Oriental origin. Among the Romans, the signet ring played a most important part, and was set with an engraved gem as a rule, but sometimes the device was cut into the metal of the ring itself. They were fond of having the seal in some way significant of the name, actions, or character of the owner. The fashion of engraved gems in Byzantine times only varied with regard to the design, which partook of a Christian character. Our Teutonic ancestors also made use of engraved stones, and as they cut very few themselves it was usual to have a Greek or Roman stone set as a signet. They preferred those which could be construed as Christian subjects. The heads of Greek gods were given the names of saints or our Lord, and such a subject as Jupiter and his eagle would be considered to represent St. John. Some of the seals are mounted in a style known



as the "three grains"—that is to say, three beads or balls are found at the junction of the bezel with the hoop. The engraving on these is often of a most barbaric character. During the Renaissance the love of antique or pseudo-antique engraved gems reached its height, but there were also in use signet rings with armorial bearings, similar in character to those which we now use. These were introduced into Italy in the fourteenth century, and thence the fashion spread, arriving in this country about the sixteenth century, and they have been in use ever since, though (especially in the eighteenth century) English people often used antiques for sealing purposes. Ladies were very partial to fancy stones cut with pretty symbols and mottoes, but these were more usually set as seals than in rings.

Merchant's Mark rings are found of various dates from the fifteenth century. They are often of bronze, brass, or latten, and were of great importance in a time when even a well-to-do merchant frequently could not write. Each, therefore, selected his mark—often initials or a simple device, which no doubt was also used as a kind of trade-mark, and this was engraved and used in the same way as armorial bearings would be used by those entitled to them.

**Posy Rings.**—During the Middle Ages numerous forms of the ring were elaborated, perhaps the best known being what is called the Posy, Chanson, or Motto ring. A gift of flowers was often made at the same time, and the term "poesie," originally bestowed on the ring because of the poetry engraved on it has been transferred to the bouquet. The

mottoes are generally of a religious character, or else a love motto. Sometimes, however, they were humorous. One cannot help being a little surprised that the lady, who having buried three husbands, caused to be engraved on the wedding-ring used when she took to herself another spouse,

“ If I survive  
I will have five,”

did not lose her chance of the fourth.

The earlier “posies” are usually in French or Latin, and are mostly inscribed on the outside of the ring, but those in the period when they are most numerous (the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries) generally have the motto in English, and engraved inside.



Wedding-ring. Early eighteenth century.

**Wedding-rings** have been in use from very early days, but the early Christians do not appear to have adopted them till about 860. They were not at first the plain circlets we now use, but were often highly decorated. The custom was of pagan origin, and at first was not welcomed by the Church. Even in the time of the Commonwealth the custom was considered to be of “heathenish origin,” and was discouraged, though not entirely abandoned. In some countries both men and women wear them. No doubt many of the posy rings were made for this purpose, including those with mottoes such as “In thee my choice I do rejoice,” “’Tis God

above doth seal our love," "Thou hast my heart till Death doth part," and so on. A quaint one runs, "I kiss the rod from thee and God."

**Jewish Betrothal and Marriage-rings.**—These very curious large rings are not meant to be worn in the ordinary way, but are simply used at a certain part of the ceremonial and are then removed; they are then kept as a memento. In some cases they are the property of the synagogue, and only lent for the occasion. The little house which forms the bezel represents either the temple or the ark of the Covenant. These rings have been copied in large quantities, and genuine old specimens are rare. There are fine examples in the British Museum of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century origin.

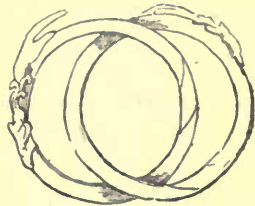
**Poison Rings.**—These were known to the ancients, but most of those that have survived are relics of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. They were of two kinds: in the one case the bezel contained a tiny box in which poison could be carried by those who feared long imprisonment or torture; and, the other, the *anello della morte*, was well called the "ring of death," as it had a small projecting pin impregnated with poison, a scratch from which speedily ended the existence of the unfortunate who had suffered it. It must have required pretty strong nerves to wear these rings, as there must always have been the danger of an accident happening, and the intending poisoner meeting the doom he had intended for others. Even now care is required in handling them, as lack of precaution may result in a dangerous



wound, the poison sometimes retaining its virulence even after the lapse of centuries.

All rings with little boxes in them are not poison rings, however, as they were used for carrying cosmetics, and such things as a tiny sundial, a miniature, or relic.

**Gimmel, Gemmel, or Gemmow Rings.**—This name is derived from Fr., *jumelle*, "twin": they were two rings so constructed that they formed a perfect ring when placed together. Sometimes the two halves were worn by betrothed persons, and both were worn by the wife after marriage, or one half might be given by persons going on a journey to those left behind, to be a kind of token to establish the identity of a messenger. They were also sometimes made of three or more parts, the extra piece being worn by the witnesses to the compact. They are often engraved with mottoes or designs. Sometimes a hand is modelled on each half, and when the two parts were worn together the two hands appeared clasped. The two halves are often intertwined so that they cannot be separated.

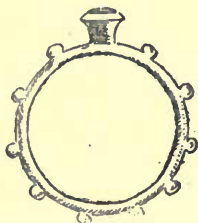


Gimmel Ring. English.  
Sixteenth century.

**Puzzle Rings** seem to belong to the same family. These rings fall into several parts, which have to be interlaced before they can be worn. There are many patterns, and they are favourites in Oriental countries.

**Talisman Rings.**—Some of them are known as Iconographic rings, because they have engraved on them figures of saints ; they were considered to protect the wearers from perils of fire and sword. Others were of a magical character, on account of the stones with which they were set, or the characters engraved on them.

**Decade Rings.**—These took the place of rosaries, as they had ten projections and a bezel or large knob. Each projection represented an Ave and the bezel



Decade Ring.



Giardinetti Rings.  
Seventeenth or early  
eighteenth century.

the Paternoster. They may date back to the fourteenth century.

**Sergeants' Rings** were made for presentation to all their fellow-sergeants and others, by those who were admitted to the degree of sergeant-at-law. The custom was a very old one. They were generally plain bands of gold without bezels, and had legal mottoes engraved on them. Quite large sums had to be expended in providing these gifts, which were rather a tax on the newly admitted sergeants. Those presented to the Chief Justices and Chief Barons had to weigh twenty shilling apiece.

**Giardinetti Rings.**—These were among the most charming of the rings of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They have for bezel a group of flowers worked in gold and coloured stones. Sometimes they are arranged as if in a vase; sometimes there is a group composed of a tiny basket containing the flowers. The back of the bezel is generally engraved to correspond with the front, and the whole effect is exceedingly pretty and delicate. They were a kind of translation into stone-work of



Marquise Ring.  
End of eighteenth  
century.



Marquise Ring.  
End of eighteenth  
century.

the earlier fancy for flowers worked in gold, and coloured to their natural tints with enamels.

**Marquise Rings.**—These very graceful and distinguished-looking rings came into fashion in the last half of the eighteenth century. They are often very large; sometimes the bezel is an inch and a half long, thus being necessarily the only ring worn on the finger, as it filled the space between the knuckle and the first joint. The shape is generally oval or a long octagonal. The background is of blue glass or enamel, over ribbed or matted gold, curved so as to fit the finger. In the centre is either a single

diamond, or several. The stones are always set in silver. The bezel is surrounded with a border of tiny diamonds. The varieties which had arisen, and were in fashion in 1785, had different names given to them according to the arrangement of the stones. A translation of a contemporary French fashion-paper thus describes them :—

“If the centre stone is not large enough, two smaller ones may be put at either end of the bezel, or the centre one may be surrounded with diamonds mounted like tiny stars. This kind of ring is called *au firmament*. The background glass may be of green, sky blue, puce, yellow, or grey. When in place of diamonds coloured stones are mounted on the paste ground, the ring is called *en enfantement*. Sometimes moss-agate is substituted for the glass.” Of about the same date are rings with large bezels surrounded with diamonds, the centre pavé with various coloured stones.

**Le Semaine.**—This is another French ring popular in the early nineteenth century. The seven stones were different and each was of a kind which had for initial the same letter as those which began the names of the days of the week. Somewhat similar were the later English rings of the nineteenth century, of which the initials spelt words such as “dearest,” or “darling,” or a name, such as the late King’s gift to Queen Alexandra of a “keeper” ring, the stones having initial letters spelling “Bertie,” which was his familiar name.

**Memorial Rings.**—The curious custom of wearing mourning rings (other forms of jewellery were also used

for the same purpose) was in very general use in the sixteenth century. They are of particular interest, as often they are dated and serve as a kind of key to the work in vogue at the time. Those of the sixteenth century are sometimes most marvellously executed. One which is in the Waddeston room in the British Museum is a triumph of skill. This has coloured stones on it, but the majority are in black enamel or niello with pearls or diamonds, though sometimes white enamel was used. At the beginning of the seventeenth century it became customary to make arrangements in wills for sums of money to be expended in gifts of these mourning rings to be presented to the relatives and friends. They were formed of very lugubrious devices; skulls, cross-bones, and skeletons being favourite items in their decoration.

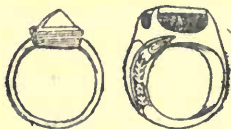
Mourning rings of the late seventeenth to early eighteenth centuries are embellished with exceedingly fine filigree work in gold, sometimes backed by a little woven strand of hair and sometimes mounted on silk. These have a thick crystal over them, generally faceted or table-cut. Towards the end of the eighteenth century the tiny black and white paintings used also in lockets and brooches were mounted in rings, and were wonderfully delicately done, showing the details up distinctly, no matter how small the picture.

**Cameo Rings.**—For information as to rings set with cameos refer to the chapter on that subject.

**Episcopal Rings.**—The earliest dated documents in which these are mentioned is dated 633, but they are

mentioned in rubrics thought to be earlier. The ring was endowed with mystical significance, and was generally of gold set with a jewel, often a sapphire. In conferring the office on a Bishop the ring and pastoral staff went together.

Possibly originally it may have been a symbol of authority, as given by the Emperor and returned to him on the Bishop's death; but later it was buried with the owner. They are larger than ordinary rings, as they were worn over a glove. They are very uncommon in private collections, as they are mostly preserved at the Cathedrals where they have been found.



Episcopal Rings.



Jade Archer's Ring.  
Indian workmanship (Delhi).

IX

BUCKLES

MORE PARTICULARLY

SHOE BUCKLES





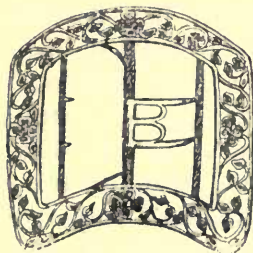
## CHAPTER IX

### BUCKLES (MORE PARTICULARLY SHOE BUCKLES)

THE ordinary buckle would seem to be a development of the ring brooch of ancient times, but differs from it in that one side has a device for fastening it more or less permanently to the garment, strap, girdle, or whatever it was meant to secure. They were used in early and mediæval times for many purposes, and beautifully ornamented specimens have been found, which are considered to have formed parts of harness or trappings for horses. As girdles or belt fasteners, too, they held a high place among the ornaments worn by both men and women. It is not known exactly at what date they came into general use as shoe fasteners. We may probably take it that they were introduced in the fourteenth century, and became fairly common during the following hundred years. They were shown on a brass which used to exist at Lynn, Norfolk, of one Robert Attelath, who died in 1376.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> With regard to this brass, I am favoured by Mr. Beloe, of Lynn, with the following note: "The Brass does not exist. It is noted as extant on p. 27 of Mackerell's 'Lynn' (1738). In 1780 it existed, and Craven Ord took a reversed impression of it, which is preserved in the

Throughout the sixteenth century shoe buckles were worn to a certain extent, and more or less in the early seventeenth. During the reign of Charles II. they were exceedingly fashionable, and the fine buckled shoes were the pride of the wearers, who struggled to keep them out of the mire with which the roads and streets were smothered. Samuel Pepys records in his diary January 22, 1659-60: "This day I began to put buckles on my shoes, which I have bought yesterday from Mr. Wotton."



Shoe Buckle. First half of the eighteenth century. Set coloured pastes.

Throughout the succeeding reign they became of little importance, and by the end of the century were replaced by rosettes of kilted and plaited silk. Under William II. however, small buckles were worn; and then smallish buckles on shoes with high red heels and broad square toes became the fashion for men, while the dainty ladies

of the time spared no expense in making the fastenings of their Court shoes and clogs as pretty as possible. Their size and importance increased, and Beau Nash is described as appearing at Bath in 1730 in "high-heeled pumps crossed on the

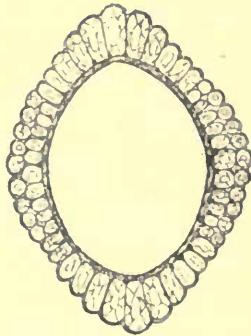
British Museum. This I have had reproduced in my series of 'Monumental Brasses in Norfolk,' three parts, 25 plates, 1888-9.

"I believe I am right in saying this is the brass which the sexton stole, and he afterwards hanged himself in the belfry sooner than be tried for it. Would he had hanged himself before! (My father M.B., sr. (ob. 1907 at 80), knew the thief's nephew.)—E. M. B."

instep with huge buckles that glimmer with a hundred twinkling lights," which no doubt were the pinnacle of fashion; and a little later Mr. Wortley (Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's son) is described as being "worth £2,500 in buttons and buckles." Then suddenly they went out of fashion, and in the last years of the century they had gone so much out of use that every effort was made to keep up the trade for the sake of the workers, who were being thrown out of employment by the disuse of the ornament. It shows the dimensions the trade had assumed, when it was estimated that in 1791 at least twenty thousand hands would be thrown out of work by the change of the mode of fastening shoes.

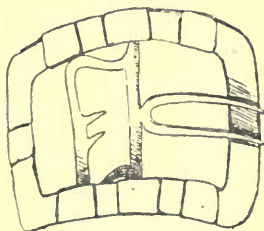
But "Fashion knows no king," and in spite of the efforts of distinguished people, such as Sheridan, who brought the matter to the notice of the Prince of Wales, and the sympathy of the Duke of York, it was impossible to check the tide, and by 1800 the trade was very nearly dead.

With such numbers being made it is no wonder that specimens are still fairly common. Buckles are to be found made of nearly every metal. The earliest are of steel or brass, as a rule. We do not find enamelled shoe buckles of Renaissance date in



Paste Buckle. The brilliant-cut "stones" are set in pewter. A "bright-cut" silver rim is on the inner edge.

a similar style to that in which every other kind of ornament was decorated ; no doubt they were not made. It is when we come to the eighteenth century that we find the greatest variety of material and the utmost beauty of design and workmanship lavished on them. The richest of all, of course, were of diamonds (rose cut or brilliants) set in solid silver, and those who could not afford them had paste or other substitutes of similar effect set in the same way. These are far from uncommon, but are in con-



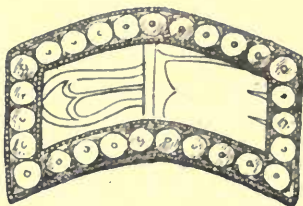
Heavy Brass Shoe Buckle.  
About 1740.

siderable demand, as, especially in the smaller sizes, they make charming ornaments for neck wear. Those are most prized in which the stones are each shaped to fit their position in the design.

Rich specimens were made of gold, either solid, or of open-work more or less ornate, and were used for day wear by the Court, and by the more sedate though prosperous classes, for best. Silver-gilt was naturally made in similar patterns, but it is interesting to note that even the plainer kinds had an individuality of their own, and a very large collection may be made without including two exactly alike. The silver buckles are among the most common, and at the same time the most interesting. Gold ones were of course more likely to be melted up for the value of the metal ; while silver specimens, with any pretension

to beauty of workmanship, were put on one side and kept. Of special note are those of carved silver, on which the metal has been worked, by means of cutting tools, into the requisite patterns. They do not very often seem to have been made of cast metal which is more brittle than sheet. It may have been found not to wear well in such fine things, and therefore this process may not have been used, or the specimens that were made may not have survived. At any rate, they are not very common at the present day. It is a pity that so few of these silver ones were hall-marked, as the exact dates would then have been known.

A great many buckles were made of faceted silver, that is to say, the metal is cut into numerous little sparkling points in the same style which

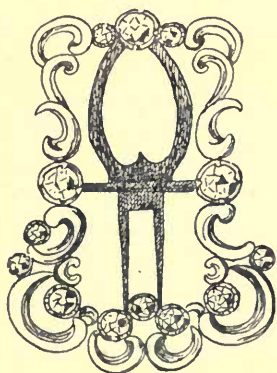


Buckle. Middle of eighteenth century. Discs of mother-of-pearl pinned on to brass ground.

was revived about twenty years ago. These later ones, however, were almost always of silly, trivial designs. The shoe buckles were not made so sharply curved as the old ones, and there was a lack of the individual care and attention which was given in former times. Cut steel followed the faceted silver in the general class of design, and for plain and general wear the polished steel was very usual.

Other materials of which shoe buckles were made are pewter, enamel, mother-of-pearl set in brass, sapphire paste, Wedgwood cameos (specially made

for the purpose), Pinchbeck, jet, tin, and blackened iron or steel. They were also made with the blue glass marquise background. A fastening which did away with the second set of prongs is known as Ely's patent fastening. It is a kind of spring box, and the patent for it was taken out in 1784. These buckles were principally made in London, but there were also manufacturers at Birmingham, Walsall, Wolver-



French Shoe Buckle. Gold set with paste diamonds.

hampton, and Bath for the metal kinds, while the London trade was mainly in the more valuable varieties. One of the best collections of shoe buckles ever got together is that of Sir Spencer Ponsonby Fane, who has over four hundred varieties, mainly of eighteenth-century origin, a great many of which are of most exquisite materials and workmanship. These beautiful shoe buckles speak

to us of a time when men had more leisure than now, both the workman who made them, and the wearer, who took infinite pains over such details. Sometimes, even, the diamond buckles for the shoes would match in pattern those of the breeches fastenings, the latter being of smaller size. No doubt the exquisite thus adorned plumed himself over his rivals, who had not been so thoughtful; for this was the time when "the nice conduct of a clouded cane" was the



making of a gentleman of fashion. In France buckles followed nearly the same course. They were much worn during the last half of the seventeenth and the whole of the eighteenth century, and enormous sums were spent on them. For instance, the Count of St. Germain expended nearly two hundred thousand livres on a single pair, and the King had a pair worth nearly as much. (He gave Mddle. Matignan some waist buckles set with seventy-two brilliants, worth twenty-four thousand livres.) Shoe buckles went out of fashion at the end of the eighteenth century ; the reason is a matter of history, When under the Republic the public finances ran low, a country town sent as its contribution all the silver shoe buckles of the neighbourhood, and the members of the National Assembly followed suit. We find an amusing account of the event in some verses which appear in *Le Nouveau Journal* of the time :—

“ D’Ailly se lève, il s’écrie,  
 Ah ! Messieurs, quel beau mouvement !  
 Imitons, Je vous supplie.  
 Un exemple si touchant.  
 Et dans l’instant.  
 Sur l’autel de la Patrie,  
 Offrons nos boucles d’argent !  
 On applaudit, un saint transport  
 A saissit l’Assemblé.  
 Aussitot, d’un common accord  
 La voila de-bouclée !”

It was an extraordinary thing how soon the fashion of going without buckles, which had its origin in

France, was followed in England, where the general public insisted on doing without them in spite of them remaining in favour at Court, where the wearing of strings was looked on as a mark of Jacobinism. They have ever since, down to the present day, formed part of the Court dress. They were also worn by bishops, judges, and in Highland full dress.

Other buckles of the eighteenth century which are of interest are the waist buckles, which followed the general fashion of the shoe buckles fairly closely. They differ somewhat in shape, the greatest dimensions being in the length instead of the breadth. Shoe buckles may be distinguished by their much greater curvature, sometimes almost semicircular. They were often of paste, cut steel, Wedgwood ware, &c., but were seldom made of real diamonds or rubies.

There are several good collections of buckles in private hands, but there is not a really representative one in either of the National Museums. They are interesting things to collect, as many nice specimens can be got for a shilling or two; but good paste ones have gone up enormously in value of late years.

Sir Spencer Ponsonby Fane, whose splendid collection is mentioned above, tells us that he started it with a pair which he picked up for a shilling. All collectors should read his most interesting article in the *Connoisseur* of June, 1905, which gives many valuable anecdotes and historical notes.



X

PAINTERS  
AND  
GOLDSMITH



## CHAPTER X

### PAINTERS AND JEWELS OF THE FIFTEENTH AND SIXTEENTH CENTURIES

IN the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries there was a very close connection and sympathy between painters and goldsmiths. Socially, they were on quite the same level, for in those days a man who made a supremely beautiful thing was honoured independently of the detail as to whether it was a fresco, a statue, a gate, a cathedral, or a jewel. Of course, the painters of those times were not exclusively painters of easel picture, as most of our artists are to-day. They found their work in the decoration of altars, frescoes, even wedding chests and processional banners, without feeling that in thus bringing the beautiful into the immediate life of those around them they were in any way personally condescending, or that their art was degraded thereby. Many of them had started life as goldsmiths, and even continued that profession simultaneously with the other of producing the panels, frescoes, and altar-pieces on which their latter-day fame rests. For alas! much of the goldsmith's work and jewellery of this period has

perished; the gold gone into the melting-pot, and the beautiful stones, reset and too often recut, have reappeared in other forms. A good number of pieces have indeed escaped—most of them, probably, because of the comparatively slight value of the metal and stones, in proportion to their beauty, as the greater part that we have are of enamel; but very many which consisted of fine stones in beautiful goldwork have gone.

It is of great importance, therefore, to study the works of the masters of painting of those days with a view to finding out what class of jewel they made and approved (because it is natural to suppose that in their pictures they would reproduce their own designs or those that they admired especially, when they saw them worn by those around them).

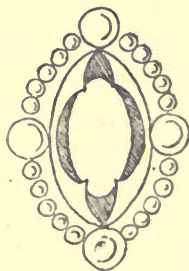
There are certain names which are generally grouped together and sometimes known as the "Goldsmith Painters," and foremost of these is **Sandro Botticelli** (1447-1510).

In his youth he was, on account of his aversion from "reading, writing, and accounts," handed over by his father in despair to a competent master in goldsmiths' work. Not that he stayed with him long, but evidently long enough to learn the fundamental principles of the art, so that he treats jewels lovingly and understandingly when he paints them. He does not plaster his figures with endless trinkets, but his love and knowledge are shown in such details as the beautiful pendants which hang round the necks of the dancing figures in the *Primavera*. The flowers in "Spring's" coronal always seem to me

to be arranged as gems would be in a golden crown, and the same spirit pervades the wreath on the head of Pallas.

Pollaiuolo is another of these goldsmith painters, and indeed it is a question whether his metal work did not come first with him, so vast and so magnificent was his work in this direction. His pictures are full of reproductions of what he did; evidently his enamelling and gold and silversmith's work was constantly in his mind.

Domenico Ghirlandajo is said by Vasari to have been so called because he invented the metal garlands worn by the girls of Florence on their heads on fête days, but they were in use long before his time; still, it is probable that his family was noted for their manufacture, and he most likely made them. If so, he surely made them well. The jewel illustrated

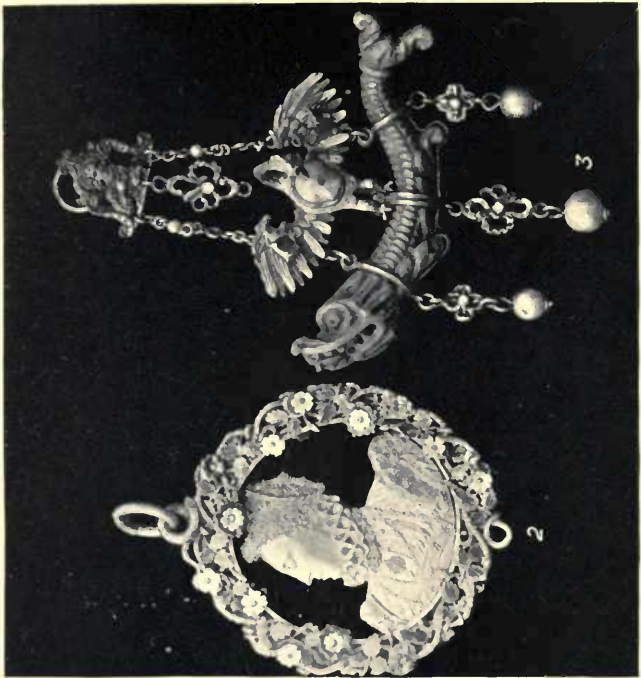


Clasp from picture by Ghirlandajo. 1449-94.

is sketched from his picture of the "Visitation" in the Louvre, where it holds St. Anne's cloak together. It is a type of ornament which is repeated again and again. A large coloured stone (often a ruby) is surrounded by a row of pearls. Sometimes these are all of a size, but often varied as shown. It is a natural grouping, well calculated to concentrate attention on the beauty, and especially on the fine colour, of the stones, and is used by all the painters of the time, much more often than any other. Frequently we find the whole ornament is

### PAINTERS AND GOLDSMITHS

1. The Lyte jewel, made about 1611, containing a portrait of James I. The reverse is most exquisitely enamelled.
2. The Phoenix jewel. A portrait of Queen Elizabeth cut from the Phoenix medal (1574), and surrounded with a wreath of York and Lancaster roses. The flowers are enamelled red and white. There has been a pearl or other stone hanging below.
3. A Venetian jewel. Late sixteenth century. A "Pelican in her Piety" standing on a coral fish or sea monster.







circular. Sometimes the centre stone has only four pearls round, one at the top and bottom, and one each side. A portrait of a goldsmith in the Pitti Palace is sometimes spoken of as being by this Ghirlandajo, but in reality it is by his son Ridolpho. He represents the subject as earnestly studying a pendant which he holds in his hand. It is not all visible, but a part of a bird (a pelican in its piety) is shown, and it must have been somewhat like the one illustrated on page 289 (No. 3), though this is probably rather later in date (end of sixteenth century).

Albert Dürer was the son of a goldsmith (his mother, too, was descended from one of the craft), and in many of his works are found beautifully depicted jewels, which may very probably be of original design.

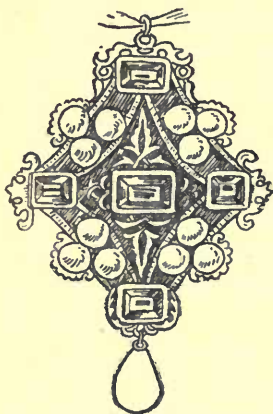
It is exceedingly curious that while the love of Greek antiques simply permeated the Renaissance atmosphere, there should have been very slight traces of any attempt to copy their style of working, either in the designs for jewellery, the pictured jewels, or in the actual objects themselves which have come down to us, always excepting their cameos.

The only piece of "Painter's jewellery" that I have been able to find obviously based on a Greek design (the well-known palmetto) occurs in the clasp of Mary Magdalene's cloak in Mantegna's picture of the "Blessed Virgin and Child, with John the



From "The Virgin and Child, with John the Baptist and Mary Magdalene," by Mantegna. 1431-1506.

Baptist and Mary Magdalene," in the National Gallery. There may probably be others, but I think they must be few. Certainly the Greek style of gold-working was not much followed by the craftsmen of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It is said that when the Pope showed Cellini an ancient Etruscan necklace, asking why he did not copy it, he replied :—



Design by Holbein for a  
Pendant.

“Let us not endeavour to imitate them, for in this style we should have to own ourselves their humble servants, but let us rather strike out a line of our own.”<sup>1</sup> He would, no doubt, much dislike owning himself beaten if he had attempted it, so we do not know if he did. He mentions the granulated style in his “Treatise,” but none of the jewels ascribed to him by tradition shows any sign of its influence, though in common with his contemporaries,

he studied the sculpture of the ancients and introduced classic gods and goddesses wherever possible.

Holbein designed a great many jewels of most intricate workmanship, which no doubt were carried out, under his superintendence, by his great friend

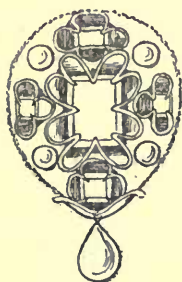
<sup>1</sup> I do not find this passage in my copy of Cellini’s Life, but it is quoted by many writers as being one of his sayings.

John of Antwerp, who we know made most important jewels for Henry VIII., and was employed by Thomas Cromwell to make gold chains, rings, and collars of the Garter. Holbein's designs were very elaborate and beautiful, the balance of the parts being particularly noticeable. Some of these were obviously intended to show up the beauty of perfect stones, but in all the metal work has its due importance. A most interesting identification has been made of a jewel designed by Holbein with that worn by Queen Catherine Howard in his portrait of her, of which a copy exists in the National Portrait Gallery. The drawing for the pendant is now in the British Museum. Large stones, somewhat formally set, are, however, more prominent in some of the Royal portraits, notably that at Windsor Castle of Henry VIII., in which almost every available spot on his garments is thus decorated. One feels sure that the taste of that much-married monarch must have had something to do with it, and it would be interesting to know if he himself selected the ornaments which were to be honoured by being thus immortalised. His daughter, Queen Elizabeth, took, we are told, the keenest interest in her "counterfeit presentments," and a very interesting conversation she had with the great goldsmith, **Nicolas Hilliard**, has been recorded. He was also a miniature painter, and while engaged on a portrait of her Majesty, she asked him:—

"Why the Italians" (then reputed to be the "cunningest" and to draw best) "shadowed not?"

On considering the matter he came to the conclusion, he tells us, that her Majesty was right, and that

for small portraits, especially those to be held in the hand, what he calls "gross lynes" (dark shadows, as we should say), are not suitable, and he approved of the Queen's desire to "Sit in the open alley of a good garden." This is so often incorrectly quoted, as if it were a foolish piece of vanity on her part, that it is worth noting that when a miniature is to be used as a part of a personal ornament—for instance, if it is to be worn as a pendant—there is no doubt that the "slightly shadowed" miniatures *are* best.



From "A Concert,"  
by Ercole di' Roberti.  
1450-96.

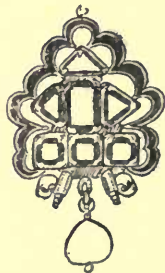
Queen Elizabeth was fond of giving her portrait in various forms as a present, and numerous specimens are extant. The one illustrated on page 289 is worked in gold with a most beautifully executed enamel wreath round it. It is cut out of a medal known as the "Phoenix" medal, on account of the design of the reverse.

One of the most interesting pendants in a fifteenth-century picture is that worn by the lady in "A Concert," by Ercole di Roberti (1450-96) in the Salting collection in the National Gallery. So carefully and accurately is it painted that it could be copied easily with every detail correct, and would make a very beautiful ornament.

An ornate enamelled and jewelled pendant is worn by Jacqueline de Bourgoyne in her portrait by Van Gossart de Mabuse (1470-1541). Surrounding the central stones is a dark band bearing traces of a

motto, which one can almost read but not quite. Here again the manner which the pendant is depicted is so faithful to the original that the way each stone is set is perfectly shown, and a skilled goldsmith would be able to make one, not only similar in general appearance, but in which the technique would be the same. The curious semi-claw settings are shown in most pieces of jewellery of about this date and earlier, and must have much enhanced the beauty of the stones by throwing broken lights and reflections through them.

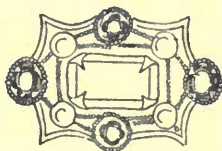
One of the few cases in which the jewel shown in an old picture can be identified with the actual object, is the Lyte Jewel, which is still extant. It is a most beautiful work of art, both as to the painting of the miniature and also the craftsmanship of the gold and enamel frame, both most probably by Nicholas Hilliard. See page 289. It was presented to Mr. Lyte as a token of King James's delight at a pedigree drawn up for him by that worthy gentleman, showing him to be descended from Brut. This jewel passed out of the family into that of Monypeny, who sold it to the Duke of Hamilton. Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild, who bought it at the Hamilton sale, bequeathed it to the nation; but the portrait of Thomas Lyte, painted in 1611, is still in the possession of the family, and shows this particular jewel.



From a portrait  
by Mabuse.  
1470-1541.

The study of these pictured jewels is particularly

valuable, as but for them we should be almost ignorant of a large class of ornaments of the fifteenth century which has almost entirely perished; while though we are richer in examples of sixteenth-century workmanship we may learn much as to the method of wearing them. Jewels which would be at once classed as neck pendants if seen apart, are shown in portraits of Queen Elizabeth and other ladies of that date pinned on to the elaborately dressed coiffure or used as decorations for the ruff.



From "Salvator Mundi,"  
by Quentin Massys.  
1466-1530.

XI

DIAMONDS  
PRECIOUS STONES  
AND PEARLS

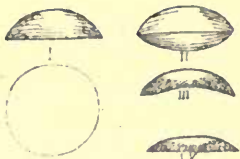




## CHAPTER XI

### DIAMONDS, PRECIOUS STONES, AND PEARLS

VERY few stones of any kind are set as they are found, because they are very seldom perfect enough to show fully the colour and other qualities for which they are prized until they have been polished or cut. Stones may be cut in facets or with curved surfaces; and generally speaking in ancient times, down to the fourteenth century, all stones were given curved surfaces; then gradually it became customary to facet all transparent stones except the garnet (which was also cut with a curved surface and known as a carbuncle). Of late years other transparent stones have again been cut *en cabochon*.



- I. Plain Cabochon.
- II. Double Cabochon.
- III. Hollow Cabochon.
- IV. Tallow-cut.

To begin with the **Curved Surfaces**. Plain cabochons are rounded on the top, with a flat base. This method of cutting is used for all opaque and semi-opaque stones, such as turquoise, opals, and star sapphires, and star rubies; they may be round or oval in outline. There is also the double cabochon with two curved surfaces, the under one being more

or less curved according to the depth of colour of the stone.

The hollowed cabochon is used for stones which would otherwise be too dark, and a very much flattened form is known as "tallow-cut."

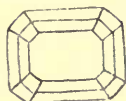
The ways of cutting stone in facets are exceedingly numerous:—

**Octahedral.**—This being the natural form of the diamond, it is probable that those stones that are of this shape have not been cut at all, but simply touched up to perfect the angles.

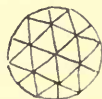
**Table-cut.**—This though a simple cut is of great importance, as it was so much used in old work both



Table-cut.



Step-cut.



Rose Diamond.

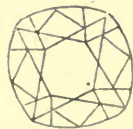
for diamonds and coloured stones. Crystals and glass were also cut in this way for covering miniatures, and the pearl and gold wire-work of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Diamonds cut in this manner and with a black backing are hardly recognisable as such. A table-cut stone, as its name implies, has the main face of the stone cut as a flat table with a plain bevelled edge; sometimes there are small facets round, formed by further cutting the corners.

**Step or Trap-cut.**—This method of cutting varies a great deal in the number and proportion of the facets; roughly, it consists of a largish flat face, two

or more bevels at different angles above the girdle, and numerous smaller facets following the same lines beneath the girdle.

**Rose-cut.**—In this method of cutting all the facets are nearly of a size and triangular; it is one of the earlier ways of cutting diamonds, and the stones shine with a very mellow but subdued lustre. They show hardly any fire or coloured flashes. It has a flat base. There is also the double rose-cut, which may be imagined as two roses set base to base. This is sometimes called the Briolet or Briollette.

A **Brilliant** should be cut with fifty-eight facets. thirty-three above and twenty-five below, there is also a band running between the two halves, known as the girdle, which is the only part gripped by the setting. The eight-sided surface at the top is much larger than the corresponding facet within the settings, but the greater depth of stone is below (these proportions vary and modern cut stones have more facets).



Hobnail Brilliant,  
from an eighteenth-  
century ring.

The principal stone cut in this way is the diamond, and the word "brilliant," used by itself, is generally taken to mean a diamond.

## PRECIOUS STONES.

**The Diamond.**—As mentioned before, the natural form of this stone is octohedral generally with slightly curved faces. In its original condition, or just polished or trimmed a little, it was used in

early Renaissance times, when it was fashionable to write various mottoes on glass windows with them. The plain table was the first artificial cutting, then its corners were cut off to form additional facets; and finally the "rose," with its numerous triangular faces, paved the way for the "brilliant," which, as its name implies, is far ahead in that particular, which is now considered the most important characteristic of the stone. It is said that Louis van Bergham discovered the art of cutting diamonds into facets in 1456, and that he formed a school for carrying on the art at Bruges.

The brilliant as now used in a slightly altered form, is said to have been invented by one Vincenti Peruggi of Venice, late in the seventeenth century. The principal difference in the present cutting is that the part above the girdle is now lower in proportion than it was. Old stones are often of a squarish form, known as "hobnails," while now they are oftener round.

The most valuable stones, generally speaking, are those very pure and lustrous white ones said to be of "first water," though coloured ones of certain tints are also much sought after. A really deep coloured stone of pure tint is very rare and valuable. The blue "Hope" diamond is probably the most celebrated, but rose, black, mauve, green, and salmon shades are also known and are of considerable value. The yellow ones are more common, and a yellowish shade is a decided detriment to a stone. Exceptional stones of course fetch exceptional prices, and even among those of "first water" there are speci-

mens found which eclipse others. These niceties are only to be properly estimated by experts, who remove the stones from their settings and place them on unglazed paper while judging them. Diamonds are sold by weight, the carat being the standard. Its actual weight has varied at different dates and according to the country. It has generally been somewhere about  $3\frac{1}{6}$  grains Troy, or four diamond grains. There are one or two tests which may help the amateur to distinguish the diamond, besides the one of scratching glass, which is not a good one, as some pastes will cut some glass. Diamonds removed from their settings lose none of their brilliancy by being placed in water, and continue to flash with undiminished brightness. There is also a saying "You cannot wet a diamond," which means that a tiny drop of water on one of the facets remains rolled up in a ball and does not spread over the surface as it does on glass or crystal. But these are merely "rule-of-thumb" tests. The best plan if buying diamonds of any importance is to have the opinion of an experienced valuer, who is accustomed to deal with these stones, as there are others, such as the white topaz, which bear a quite close resemblance to diamonds and might easily deceive an ordinary unskilled person. There are other frauds in diamonds, besides the actual substitution of paste, or inferior stones, for which a buyer should be on his guard, one being the use of a perfectly good stone, mounted on to a base of glass or crystal, so that it appears to be a large one. These are called "doublets,"

and they ought legally to be so marked by the seller, but in buying second-hand jewellery it would be quite possible for the vendor to be ignorant of the fact that they were frauds. It is not generally known that though diamonds are the hardest of all stones they are nevertheless quite liable to chip simply by being carelessly dropped.

There is a story told of a miner who found a large and beautiful stone. As he imagined that it was impossible to break a real diamond, in order to test it he hammered it on a rock. This split it into several pieces, and he concluded it was valueless. He slipped the fragments into his pocket and thought no more about it, till he mentioned his disappointment to a better-informed friend, showing him the pieces. On hearing that he had destroyed a stone worth three or four thousand pounds, his mind became unhinged, and he shot first of all the friend and then himself!

Diamonds which are set solid in silver should never be washed in water, as if a trace of damp gets behind them the metal is discoloured and gives a yellowish tint to the stones. This of course can be put right by having them taken out and the setting cleaned, but it is a risky proceeding, and there is always a good chance of damaging the whole piece. As an experienced jeweller once remarked to me on this point, "These old stones *grow* into their settings." Much beautiful old diamond jewellery has been spoilt, the craze for clear-set stones having led people to have their family jewels reset and often recut. However, I



suppose those who liked the kind of thing which they got in exchange for the beautiful examples of old craftsmanship did not deserve anything better, as they had proved themselves unable to appreciate it.

Rubies are the next hardest stone to diamonds, and when of fair size and good colour are the most expensive of gems. The mines of Burmah are those from which the best specimens come; the stones from Siam are too dark and have not the right kind of colour. The most admired of all are those of "Pigeon's-blood" colour. The Balas ruby is in reality a red spinel. Star rubies are real rubies which are a little cloudy. The star is caused partly by the structure of the gem and partly by the cutting, which is *en cabochon*. They are pretty and somewhat rare, but not so valuable as a perfect stone of true colour and transparency. The ruby belongs to the corundum tribe, to which the sapphire and the exceedingly rare stone known as the Oriental emerald also belong.

The **Sapphire** is a beautiful stone of a rich blue colour. Unfortunately, it does not show up very well at night. It is commoner than the ruby; and larger specimens are found more frequently. This stone was supposed in the Middle Ages to be a great help to the wearer in leading a good life, and was, therefore, often set in rings for the use of priests and bishops in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The most valued are of a corn-flower tint, the darker ones losing so much of their beauty by artificial light. The white sapphire is beautiful, and has a soft, rich

lustre. Star sapphires are similar to star rubies, only the colour is blue.

The **Emerald** is a green beryl. It has a beautiful, rich, velvety colour in the best specimens, which are very valuable. It varies in price immensely, according to its freedom from flaws and the richness of its colour. Very few emeralds are absolutely perfect, so that a slight flaw is not so important as in the case of other stones.

Many of the larger stones used in Renaissance and Oriental jewels are very far from perfect. To me the flaws add to the interest of the stones, by breaking up the colour and varying it. The Oriental emerald is a green corundum, and is very precious and scarce. The green garnet, the chrysolite, and the diopside may be mistaken for emeralds.

**Amber** though used in the same way as a stone in old work, but is not really a stone at all. It is, in fact, a fossil resin of the conifers of the Tertiary period. It is often pierced for use as beads, and is found in both cloudy and clear pieces.

**Aquamarine**, a sea-water blue stone, belonging to the same class as the emerald.

The **Beryl**.—The stone known as the beryl is of small value; it is greenish, bluish, or yellow in colour. Rose-coloured stones are also met with.

The **Chrysoberyl** is a most curious stone, one variety of which, called Alexandrite, appears green by day and bright red by artificial light.

The **Garnet**, a beautiful stone of a lovely red colour, which when cut *en cabochon* is called a carbuncle. It is also found table cut in much old jewellery and



slab cut in Barbarian jewels. The Babrowska, or green garnet, is a beautiful stone, but only used in modern jewellery. It is very like the emerald, but is not hard enough to stand much wear.

**Lapis Lazuli** is a rich blue stone, which sometimes shows spangles or specks of iron pyrites. It is an inexpensive stone, but in some settings has a very rich appearance.

**Malachite**, a rich coloured stone (opaque), of rather a streaky green. It is used in Russian work and nineteenth-century jewellery in flat slabs, or cut *en cabochon*.

**Opal**.—This beautiful stone, which is neither opaque nor really transparent, owes its milky appearance to myriads of tiny cracks. The best specimens are a happy medium between the almost clear and very nearly opaque ones; they show gleams of various colours, and are full of fire and life. Of varieties there are the Mexican fire opal, a reddish kind, and the harlequin, which takes its name from the patches of colour which show all over, not only in the centre. Opal matrix shows patches of the stone on a dark background. Cameos have been cut in the precious stone showing up against the matrix.

**Peridot**, a very beautiful stone of a yellowish green colour, not much used in old jewellery.

**Quartz**, a semi-precious stone, of which there are many varieties, amongst which are—

*Agate*.—Coloured quartz in streaks or layers.

*Amethyst*.—Purple or violet.

*Aventurine*.—Brown with glittering spangles.

*Bloodstone*.—Greenish with red spots.

*Cairngorm.*—Yellow or brown (the Scotch topaz).

*Cat's Eye.*—A curious stone showing threads of light.

*Chrysochase.*—Bluish green.

*Jasper.*—Bluish green, yellow, or red.

*Onyx.*—Bands of milky white, and various colours.

*Rock Crystal.*—Clear and colourless.

*Sard.*—Very clear in shades of red.

*Sardonyx.*—Layers of onyx and sard.

These stones are common and cheap, but have been used for the most exquisite cameo work, which lends a halo to them.

**Spinel.**—A hard stone found in various colours and varieties.

Rubielle spinels are orange and flame-coloured. Alamandine are purplish coloured. Red ones are called either spinel rubies or balas rubies. There are also indigo blue, black, and green spinels.

**Topaz.**—The Oriental topaz is a yellow sapphire, while the ordinary Scotch topaz is a yellow quartz. The real topaz is distinguished as the Brazilian topaz. When heated to a suitable degree it turns a lovely pink. This stone should not be exposed constantly to the light, as it fades.

**Tourmaline**, an interesting stone of varying colours, not used in old jewellery.

**Turquoise**, or **Turkis**, so called because it came to England via Turkey, but in reality the best ones came from Persia. In colour it is blue with a shade of green in it, which increases with age. In Renaissance times these stones were often cut as cameos.

They are also found with inscriptions cut on them in Oriental letters. Turquoise matrix shows dark veins and streaks.

**Pearls.**—Of course, pearls are not really stones at all, but we are so used to seeing them mounted in jewellery with precious stones, that we naturally include them in the same category.

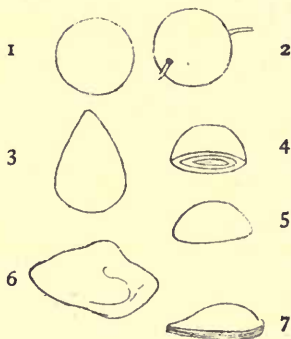
They are of animal origin, being found in shellfish of various kinds.

There are two kinds of pearl oysters. They are not like ordinary oysters, but similar to large mussels. The one from which the best pearls come is the *Meleagrina margaritifera*, and the Ceylon fisheries are the best known. Pearls are also found in river mud in Scotland and in North Wales.

I have myself found them in mussels from the River Conway. They were small and not very lustrous but valuable specimens have been discovered. There is a little brooch in the Victoria and Albert Museum which has a border of fine Welsh pearls.

The points of a pearl which determine its value are its shape, size, and colour. The best are perfectly round, like a ball; then comes the button-shape (round); then perfect pear-shaped or drop-shaped; and lastly various irregular forms. Perfectly round large pearls over twenty-five grains are very rare. The colour should be pure white with just the faintest translucency. A chalky look diminishes the value at once. The skin or surface should be absolutely smooth and flawless. Pearls being composed of numerous layers deposited by the mollusc, have a peculiar lustre which is known as the "orient,"

and this is one of the principal points which constitutes their beauty. This sheen is generally confined to the top layer, but sometimes a chalky pearl has the top layer removed, and a better orient is found underneath; but it is a risky thing to try, as it very nearly always means going from bad to worse. Pearls are weighed by the grain, not the carat, and



Pearls.

- |                 |            |
|-----------------|------------|
| 1 Virgin Pearl. | 4 Half.    |
| 2 Bead.         | 5 Button.  |
| 3 Pear.         | 6 Baroque. |
|                 | 7 Blister. |

the price increases enormously with the size, other qualities being equal.

A pearl that is flat at the bottom is called a "button," and the very irregular ones are known as "baroque" pearls. Pearl blisters are found on the shell, where there has been a menace of danger from without, such as a boring insect trying to work through. What is called "Coc de Perl" is not "pearl shell" as might be imagined, but a hollow pearl like a bubble. As is well known,

pearls are formed by the deposit of layers of nacre over some substance which irritates the oyster. The Chinese sometimes very ingeniously introduce small images of Buddha into the mollusc, and these being coated with mother-of-pearl form amulets. There is a shell showing these in the British Museum. I have seen a small crucifix coated by the same method. There are, in addition to white pearls, bluish, black, grey, pink, and yellowish ones. These last are not admired by English people, but the Chinese prefer them; they harmonise better, no doubt, with the Mongolian complexion. Pink pearls are very pretty. Black are favourites for tie-pins at the present day, and were used in Renaissance jewellery, especially as drops below pendants.

A few notes on **Imitation Stones** may be of interest, as they will set purchasers on their guard, but I should like to advise intending buyers not to imagine that they are likely to get many bargains in stones. They are much more likely to be taken in if they buy them on their own responsibility, unless they have sufficient experience to make them more or less experts. This is especially so in the case of travellers in the East, who are often offered, by wily Orientals, "stones" which they imagine must be cheap because they are obtainable locally. These often turn out to be simply coloured glass. In Ceylon this fraud is often practised. Sometimes a native has been known to work up quite an elaborate plot to make things seem probable. The story is told of a young tea-planter going up-country for the first time, who went to the rescue of an old

man who was being badly treated by a stalwart young fellow. Having sent the aggressor away, he released the poor trembling victim, who humbly, thanked him, calling down all sorts of blessings on his head, and brought out a pearl from his bosom, of which he said the other man had been trying to rob him. He was, so he said, afraid to keep it, and though it was worth five hundred pounds he would rather take ten from the "Protector of the Poor" than go in fear of his life. The young Englishman did not want the pearl, but as he thought he could sell it at a profit, he gave the man what he asked, thinking that it was a great bargain. Of course it proved to be merely an imitation, the whole scene being got up for his benefit. There are, no doubt, opportunities to acquire gems more cheaply on the spot, by those who "know the ropes," but the average traveller or new-comer, will find that he can buy stones much cheaper in Hatton Garden, with the guarantee of genuineness thrown in.

Of artificial stones, practically all are soft and can be scratched with a file (except some of the scientific gems); they are in fact glass, variously coloured. Old glass pastes that have seen much wear are often scratched and dimmed, and if they do not show any trace of this even at the angles, an examination with a magnifier often shows little bubbles and lines, which show they have been melted. These are quite different from the flaws in real stones, which show the crystalline character of the gem. One way of distinguishing them is to hold them to the lips (they must not be warmed by having been



worn) : the real stones feel cold, while the paste feels soft and warm. **Doublets** have been spoken of before in connection with diamonds ; they are more deceitful than paste and harder to detect, especially with coloured stones. If a pale stone has a rich coloured glass base it not only makes a large stone out of a small one, but improves the colour immensely. This, however, may be easily detected by applying a test for hardness underneath. An even more sophisticated form has been invented, which has a thin layer of stone cemented to the base as well. These **Triplets** are very liable to betray the unwary. Suspected stones should be removed from their settings and soaked in hot water or chloroform, which dissolves the cement and the whole thing falls to pieces.

**Imitation Pearls** are made in various ways, the most usual being a thin glass shell coated inside with a preparation of fish-scales. They are also made of white stone covered with wax. Black pearls and hematite have a close resemblance to each other, but the weight of the metal betrays it at once. The imitation of pink pearls by pink coral is easily found out, because though coral takes a high polish it lacks the sheen and orient of a pearl. There are many superstitions about stones which had great weight in the Middle Ages and in Renaissance times. One of them assigns a special stone to each month, and set of rings and other ornaments were made, so that the talisman could always be worn. The list goes back to very ancient times before the diamond was at all a usual stone.

| <i>Precious Stones.</i> |             | <i>Alternatives.</i>     |
|-------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| January.                | Hyacinth.   |                          |
| February.               | Amethyst.   |                          |
| March.                  | Jasper.     |                          |
| April.                  | Sapphire.   |                          |
| May.                    | Agate.      | Emerald.                 |
| June.                   | Emerald.    | Chalcedony, Onyx, Agate. |
| July.                   | Onyx.       | Cornelian.               |
| August.                 | Cornelian.  | Sardonyx.                |
| September.              | Chrysolite. |                          |
| October.                | Beryl.      | Aquamarine.              |
| November.               | Topaz.      |                          |
| December.               | Ruby.       | Chrysophase, Turquoise.  |

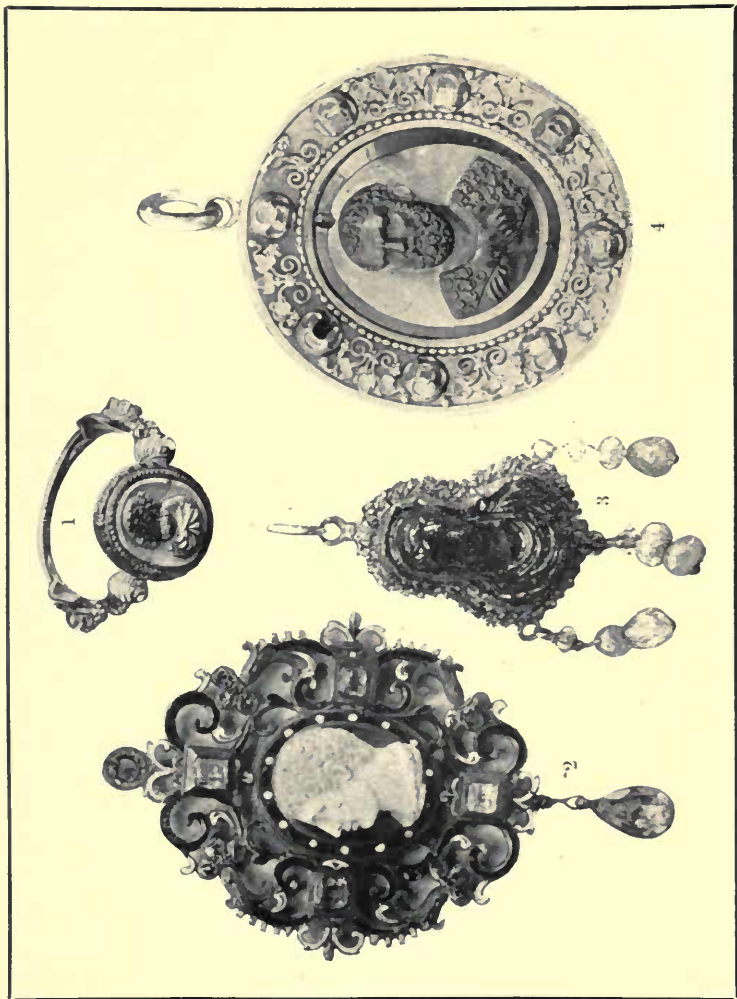


XII

CAMEOS  
AND  
INTAGLIOS

## CAMEOS

1. Gold and enamel ring. The cameo head of a negro has a diamond collar round the neck. It is German work of the late sixteenth century.
2. Cameo head of the young Hercules in an enamelled gold mount. The stone below is a later addition. The back is enamelled with a vase of flowers.
3. Head of the Blessed Virgin set in jacinth and mounted in gold-work of a light character.
4. Head of Hercules in a gold and enamelled setting. On the other side is a head of Omphale. Italian. Sixteenth century.





## CHAPTER XII

### CAMEOS AND INTAGLIOS

(INCLUDING GLASS GEMS AND WEDGWOOD MEDALLIONS, AND OTHER WORKS OF SIMILAR CHARACTER)

IN nearly every miscellaneous collection of jewelry there are to be found a few cameos or intaglios; the former very likely set as brooches, ear-rings, or buckles, and the latter more probably set in seals and rings. These little works of art vary considerably in character and value, as there is a possibility of their being antique gems worth, perhaps, a very large sum, or at the other end of the scale they may be badly cut shells of recent date. Between these extremes there lies an intermediate region, in which are to be found specimens which may justly be prized as examples of a very charming art, though not of any very great pecuniary value.

Intaglios of importance are, perhaps, more likely to be in private hands than very valuable cameos, from the fact that many men and women of culture made use of them for sealing documents of a private character, reserving their heraldic seals for business

purposes. When the custom of sealing letters with wax went out of fashion, the antiques were sometimes laid aside among broken and worthless trinkets.

It is difficult to give an exact definition of what is meant by a "Cameo" in so many words. If it is defined as "A precious stone sculptured in relief," we find that the majority of cameos would be left out, as a great many of the celebrated Græco-Roman stones were cut in onyx, which is not considered one of the precious stones; while numerous fine examples, dating from the fifteenth century and later, were cut in shell.

There are many small carvings in wood and honestone as finely executed and as small as those which we are accustomed to call cameos, yet we instinctively feel that they must be excluded, so that a better definition will be "A small carving in relief on some hard material of intrinsic beauty or value." This would include all the precious and semi-precious stones, coral, and shell, and would exclude bone, slate, honestone, boxwood, &c. But it would also cover ivory and precious metals, and it is a moot point whether they also should not be omitted from the catalogue of materials to be employed. Still, if they are carved in the style of cameo work, and (if of metal) are not stamped or cast, but sculptured with cutting tools, it seems that they should be admitted. I was once speaking to a collector on this subject, and he attempted several definitions, none of which quite pleased him, so he finally wound up by saying

*Univ Calif - Digitized by Microsoft®*

"Well, after all, a cameo is a *cameo*, and one knows one when one sees it."

And when one has seen a collection or two, no exact form of words will be needed.

The following list of the most usual materials may be of use:—

Agates, onyx, sardonyx, amethyst, emerald, carbuncle, jacinth, chrysolite, lapis, turquoise, chryso-prase, jasper, hematite, malachite, amber, mother-of-pearl, coral, and shells (*strombus gigas*, *cassis rufa*, *cassis tuberosa*, &c.).

It is generally considered that the scarabs of the Egyptians are the earliest ancestors of the cameo, and that from them the cult spread over the old world wherever Egyptian influence was felt, either directly or through the nations who traded with them. They are found in this form in Mycenæ, Greece, Etruria, and Assyria. The name "Scarab" is given them from the likeness of the earliest ones to the sacred beetle; others which retained the shape, but not such a close resemblance, are called "scaraboid." Some of the Greek and Etruscan stones are cut into animal forms on the back.

The cameo reached its position as a work of art (apart from the more or less sacred value as an emblem or a seal) somewhere in the second century B.C. About this date the Greeks gave increased attention to this form of engraved gem, and their skill led to still greater value being attached to these small treasures, which combine in themselves practical indestructibility with natural beauty and exquisite handiwork. For still another century

craftsmen do not seem to have fully realised the great advantage that resulted from utilising the different coloured layers of the onyx, in order to add the charm of varying colour to beauty of form and material. Once this was grasped, the popularity of these gems was much enhanced. Many of these works were too large for jewellery, however, and it was principally the intaglios and smaller cameos which could be used in rings and pendants which were mounted for personal ornament.

The onyx consists of layers of different colours. The stripes are not always quite horizontal, as they follow the shape of the hollow of the stone in which they were deposited, particle by particle, by the agency of dripping water, and are variously tinted by metallic oxides. The carver took advantage of the bands, and, by arranging his design to suit them, could show white flesh on a dark ground, with brown or yellowish hair, another band, perhaps grey, being utilised for drapery; while accidental changes of tone or stains were skilfully worked up into added beauties. Then not only are the solid colours taken advantage of, but by thinning down the opaque layers to a suitable degree, the dark colour shines through the resulting semi-transparency with a wonderfully luminous effect.

It is said that the Romans first became enthusiastic collectors of cameos towards the end of the first century B.C., when, having conquered Mithridates, Pompey brought his treasures back to Rome and displayed them to the wonder and admiration of the populace. Be this as it may, the wearing and



possession of these gems soon became a regular passion, and numerous Greek workmen were employed in making them, as no other nation could supply artists so skilled. Many of them settled in Rome, and for about a century the art was at its highest level, both for perfection of workmanship and beauty of design. During the succeeding three centuries the standard fluctuated. No doubt one excellent artist would influence all the work of his fellows, and while he lived his contemporaries would reach a higher general level. When he died, the quality would sink for a while till another genius arose ; but on the whole, the art of this period is beautiful, being noticeably Hellenistic in spirit. Following this came a period of decay, till, after the change of the seat of government to Constantinople, an entirely different style was developed.

It was not the display of the beauty, majesty, or grace of humanity, as shown in idealised treatment of nature and in portraits, that the Byzantine artist aimed at, but the leading *motif* was symbolism, and on the whole the cameos of this period are rather interesting than beautiful, though some of them are well cut and have considerable charm of arrangement. During the centuries that follow, the last traces of the Greek spirit died away, both in workmanship and design : the art was kept alive, but there are few specimens that will bear comparison with earlier work. It is coarse and crude until the Carlovingian period, when there was a renewal of interest, and with this impulse technique improved. The way was thus, as it were, paved for the extraordinary passion for

classical antiquities and works in the antique style which seized on all classes during the Renaissance. During the sixteenth century much work was done which was simply a copy of the gems of the classical period; and so close are these imitations, that in many museums specimens are said to be found labelled as genuine antiques which should in reality be ascribed to this date.

When, however, the Renaissance workers used their own designs, the gems show a delightful freshness, almost amounting to naïveté, which lends a very special charm to work of which the treatment shows originality, even if the basis of the design is a classical subject. Many of the great persons of the day, Popes and Princes, made collections of cameos and vied with each other for the possession of antique gems. Readers of "Romola" will remember the incident of the stolen gems on which so much of the story turns. These stones were eagerly sought for; and Cellini, in his Autobiography, tells us of the profits which were made by those who bought them from the vine-dressers who dug them up in the course of their labours. He also describes a stone which he possessed (to give his own words) as "A cameo upon which was engraved a Hercules binding a triple-headed Cerberus. This was a piece of such extraordinary beauty, that our great Michael Angelo declared he had never beheld anything that surpassed it."

He also gives his experience of his own metal work being passed off as a genuine antique, which bears out what we know from other sources, that

these old collectors were so keen on having the credit of possessing fine, and above all *signed*, specimens, that they were not above having signatures added to ancient gems, and even commissioned contemporary artists to produce work in the ancient style and sign them with the names of Greek gem-cutters when they could not otherwise obtain a specimen by a desired artist. Genuine signed pieces of the classic period have always been rare, and it was never so general to sign cameos as it was intaglios; and unless the signature is in relief it cannot be relied on as authentic; indeed, the contrary is far more likely.

The following points as to signatures should be carefully noted. On examination under a magnifying-glass the signatures on the stones of the best periods will be found perfectly regular.

If letters in Roman character are mixed with Greek ones, that alone is enough to announce a forgery. During the sixteenth century, when the Greek language was only just beginning to make its way again, engravers often made the mistake of inserting or omitting a letter. The Greek gem-cutters generally put their name in the genitive, so all signatures in the nominative are at least to be suspected. When there are two names, however, the first is often in the nominative. Roman cutters signed their names in Greek characters.

I am indebted for these valuable notes to the "Livres des Collectiöneurs" by M. Mage-Sencier.

The cutting of gems, as practised in ancient times, must have been a laborious proceeding, as they were either cut out with a diamond-point or with a drill

worked by hand, or, perhaps, with a string and bow, such drills having been known from very early times. (See Dr. Flinders Petrie's "Ten Years' Digging in Egypt.")

The wheels, which were introduced in Renaissance times, had a considerable influence in the placing of the design, these later cameos, as a rule, showing more flat margin. It is obvious that, when every particle had to be laboriously ground away, the object of the cutter would be to remove as little as possible, consistent with the proportions of his work. When mechanical means came to the aid of handwork it was comparatively easy to slice away a good sized piece.

Our Queen Elizabeth was a great patron of portraitists of all kinds, and her counterfeit presentment is well represented by the cameo-cutter in several stones. Coldoré, who was cameo-cutter to Henry IV. of France, did several of her, probably including the Barbor jewel. This jewel had an interesting history. It was made in commemoration of William Barbor's escape from martyrdom. He was at Smithfield, waiting to be burnt by order of her "Most Catholic Majesty" Queen Mary, when the news came of the Queen's death, so his life was providentially spared.

In the seventeenth century the art of cutting cameos declined. There was not much demand for them as personal ornaments, as other fashions, notably that for faceted gems, had arisen, but antiques were still highly valued as works of art. Charles I. had a splendid collection of them, which

was dispersed at his death. A few of them have been regained, and are at present in the King's private collection at Windsor. No doubt, if some great artist in the material had arisen he might have infused fresh spirit into the art; but it only lingered on in a half-hearted way till the revival of interest in classic art in the middle of the eighteenth century, when as in Renaissance times in response to the demand for cameos which the supply of old stones was insufficient to meet, imitations were made to such perfection that only the greatest experts can tell the difference; indeed, it is questionable whether, without historical evidence, the origin of some of these gems could ever be decisively settled. It does seem an anomalous thing that an artist should obtain only five pounds for a work which could be passed off and sold to an expert collector of antiques for a hundred times the sum. No wonder if some were led into fraudulent practices, though generally it was dealers, not the actual workers, who were at fault.

The French and English Courts set the fashion, and numerous excellent artists came to the front; among them were Natter, Sirletti, and Pistrucci. The Pichlers were also very well known, and always signed their name in Greek letters.

With the end of the first third of the nineteenth century cameo-cutting as one of the fine arts to all intents came to an end, though in Italy exceedingly pretty and minute work is still done, but it lacks inspiration. The twentieth century still waits for its revival of the art, in its higher forms.



The cameos dealt with above have all been on stone, and to form anything like a representative collection would be an impossibility, except for the very wealthy. However, no doubt there are many of the less important examples still in private hands, often perhaps belonging to people who do not recognise their value; but such examples, even if of equal merit, would not probably fetch the same price as stones whose history is known by their inclusion in well-known collections. It is remarkable that the pedigree, so to speak, of almost all of the well-known antique cameos can be traced back through the centuries. They have always been valued and passed on as precious treasures, and seldom or never have been buried and dug up, or lost and rediscovered in the almost miraculous way that so many other valuables have been.

**Shell Cameos.**—Fortunately for those who love them, the art of cutting cameos was also carried out in less expensive materials and by less laborious means, often on shells which showed layers of two colours, and there is a charm and mellowness about the tone of these which is lacking in the hard, dead white of the onyx. Well-cut specimens are real works of art. They are absolutely individual, as they have to be cut touch by touch (though the material is, of course, softer) as gems have to be. Thus there is as great a difference between a well-cut and a badly cut shell cameo as between a picture or miniature painted by a good artist and one done by a dauber. The charm of forming a collection of them lies in the fact that, as so few of them are

signed, there is no fictitious value given to them by a well-known name. The collector must form his taste by the study of really good cameos (shells and gems), so as to have a mental criterion with which to compare them. Armed with this knowledge, he can sally forth in quest of treasures. Pawnbrokers' shops and second-hand wardrobe dealers have been known to produce very fine specimens from among their oddments. But it is no use giving more than a shilling or two for specimens that are scratched or worn, as they are liable to be if they have been knocked about, as shell has this unfortunate drawback, that it chips and scratches very easily. Specimens that are badly cut originally are not worth having at a gift, any more than a poor painting; but brooches that seem too large for our modern taste make delightful waist-buckles or cabinet pieces, or look well mounted on shields in the same way miniatures are displayed.

Shell cameos are not cut in the same way as stone ones, the lapidary's drill and wheel being unnecessary in the softer material, but the tools are more like those used for carving and engraving metal. The small circular saw and scrapers are also used, and the polishing is done with rotten-stone or similar soft polishes, instead of diamond dust or emery.

Intaglios are the reverse of cameos—that is to say, the design is incised into the stone instead of standing out above it. They were originally made for seals, and in early days acquired as such an almost sacred significance.

The Romans in later times collected them, some-

times setting them in rings or necklaces, but more often keeping them in cabinets called "dactyliotheca."

The size of the intaglios was generally small, as they were primarily intended for seals. The ancients were careful to use stones which as far as possible were suitable to the subject. Thus we often find Pluto on a dark stone, Bacchus on the luscious purple amethyst, Amphytrite on an aquamarine (an allusion to her having risen from the sea), and poor flayed Marsyas on the red of a cornelian. They are almost invariably oval in shape—a reminder of their descent from the Egyptian scarab. Antique ones very frequently have irregularly shaped backs. In ancient times all the work was done by one and the same artist-craftsman, from the roughing out of the stone to the polishing, so he was not very likely to spend more time and work on the back than was needful just to polish it. The bezels of antique rings were very high, so flattening was unnecessary. With division of labour and the improved tools of the Renaissance period came the custom of smoothing the back. It is, however, not an invariable rule to judge by, as antiques may originally have had a flat back, or they may have been tampered with later. On the other hand, a forger would very likely imitate the rough back as he did everything else.

Of course, by now the gems of the sixteenth century, though often originally cut as frauds, are of very considerable value. Travellers in Italy are specially warned against the modern copies of ancient engraved gems, sometimes very skilful, at others of less merit, which guides and curio dealers



may attempt to foist on them, saying that they have found them themselves and have to sell secretly for fear of Government interference.

In the later times, during the second revival of interest in classical art in the eighteenth century, numerous very fine intaglios were cut which are hardly to be distinguished from the originals and, in fact, have been often mistaken for them. Noted English engravers of this time included W. Burch, R.A., and W. Brown.

**Substitutes for Cameos and Intaglios.**—The cost of separately cutting, engraving, and polishing stones, and even soft materials such as shell, pearl, and coral, must always be quite considerable, because of the time it occupies of one who, even for inferior grades and inartistic designs, must be at least a skilled workman. So from the earliest times there have been substitutes in the same style that were copies in cheaper material but were not made with any fraudulent intent. The Ancient Egyptian scarabs in glazed pottery of different shades, which are found in such great quantities, the moulded glass gems of Rome, the pastes of the Renaissance, the "Tassie" gems of the eighteenth century, and Wedgwood jasper medallions all come under this head, and form a group of objects which are worthy to rank as works of art, by reason of their charm of design and colouring, though the actual material is of little value. We must distinguish two classes of **Roman glass gems**—those which consist of glass treated entirely as a stone and cut down exactly the same way, which rank with those of onyx and other stones,

and the other class in which the glass received the impression of a matrix taken from a carved gem, and thus forms a replica of the original. This distinction is important, because it will easily be seen that while the first is an individual work, bearing the touch of the master's hand, the latter could be, and were, multiplied at will. They are found in both cameo and intaglio form; the glass itself is often imperfect, being full of bubbles and striations, which, however, rather add to the effect. The surface as it came from the mould was rather rough, and time and wear has often increased this, and also caused an iridescent play of light. It is noteworthy that those which show this play of colour, arising from decay of the surface, are more valuable than those which are better preserved. Sometimes the moulded glass was finished in the same way that gems were by a lapidary, and in this case the detail is wonderfully fine. These belong to quite a superior class of work, but there is a great charm about the simpler specimens, though they are not so valuable. The cameo pastes in two colours are wonderfully fine, and necessitated extreme skill in the workmen who carried them out. The glass was tinted to the requisite shade by metallic oxides, and though not perfect in quality was exceedingly hard.

Glass pastes continued to be made in Byzantine times, and in the Tara brooch, made about the year 700, rudely modelled heads are set, and the art lingered on through the Middle Ages. But at the time of the Renaissance it took on a new lease of life, and following the fashion of contemporary gem-

cutters, the glass workers copied the ancient models. They often worked with fraudulent intent, backing the glass with stone, so that the purchasers who thought of testing the back should be misled into thinking the whole was genuine. Some one has said that in Renaissance times every one was an artist; one is sometimes tempted to change it to an echo of David's lament and say, "All men are forgers," so many and so skilful are the fraudulent antiques they made; however, by now these very forgeries are in themselves of value and in turn imitated.

When we come to the eighteenth century, gems were copied in many materials, of which perhaps the most beautiful are those made in glass by Tassie.

He was a Scotsman hailing from Pollockshaws. In his youth he was a stonemason, but his talent was discovered and he received some training, and later came to London. The Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce patronised him, and gave him a bounty, in 1765, for specimens of his work. He made splendid imitations of antique cameos and intaglios, copying the real things as a means of spreading the knowledge of works of art, and not pretending that they were old paste or stones. His colours were very brilliant, and much resembled those of the antiques, but the red is clearer and more vivid. They were very cheap, and the prices ranged from 1s. 6d. only for intaglios suitable for seal rings, up to 5s. to a guinea for larger sizes, and from half to two guineas for cameos, which were more difficult to make. They soon became the fashion, as classical art was "the mode."

The Adam brothers, and other architects and artists, who did so much to spread the knowledge of things antique by their books and engravings, no doubt increased the sale of this style of ornament. Tassie soon became the fashion, and obtained an order from the Empress Katherine of Russia for a specimen of each of his gems. She seems to have had a great admiration for English Art, as she commanded pictures by Reynolds, and the well-known "Frog" service from Wedgwood about this time.

The pastes were largely purchased and some were mounted in the same way that real stones were used, to satisfy the taste for the antique style in those who could not afford the real thing, or, if possessing them, thought they were safer in cabinets than subject to the exigencies of personal wear. However, most of the pastes were probably intended for cabinet collections originally, and the majority of the settings are later. They are to be found with gold or Pinchbeck mountings in combs, rings, brooches, and bracelets; the tops of bags, purses, and snuff-boxes are also positions in which they are set, often backed with foil. They are intended, in the larger sizes, to be used in decorating furniture, but many pieces so used do not seem to have survived. There must be thousands of them about. Tassie is said in Raspé's catalogue to have made more than twelve thousand patterns; still, they are not easy to obtain, and are now much more expensive than they used to be when bought from regular dealers in antiques; but some jewellers and pawnbrokers who buy old jewellery to break up, do not put any value on them,

not understanding their artistic merit, but simply considering them as bits of glass. From such sources valuable additions to one's collection may be made. A collector lately bought a very nice bracelet set in Pinchbeck, containing eight of them, out of a tray containing numerous oddments, marked, "Any of these, 7s. 6d." Those in pretty, bright colours are more expensive than the duller ones. Prices now begin at about 2s. 6d. They are most charming things to collect for those who want an inexpensive hobby.

The following quotation from Raspé's catalogue shows the care spent on them:—

"The gems, whether intaglios or cameos, were moulded, and pastes were cast and finished from these in coloured glass, which, when the nature of the work would admit of it, were carefully polished; and where the colour, mixed colours, and nature of the respective originals could be ascertained, they were imitated as completely as art can imitate them. So that any of the paste intaglios and cameos are so perfect that our most eminent engravers, Messrs. Burch and Brown, are convinced that such faithful imitations are facsimiles and can hardly be distinguished from the originals. When the colour and nature of the gems could not be authenticated, the pastes were executed in agreeable and chiefly transparent colours, and constant attention was paid to the preservation of the outlines, extremities, attributes, and inscriptions."

There are also other impressions of antique gems dating from the eighteenth century which are less attractive than the glass ones. Those in sulphur



red and black, being frequently mounted in rings. They are dull looking, and are not greatly collected now. Whole cabinets of them sometimes come on the market out of old houses. They are interesting from an artistic point of view, as impressions have thus been preserved of stones which have been lost sight of. White plaster casts soaked in Castile soap and polished were also popular. In the eighteenth century the collection of these things seems to have filled the place which is to-day supplied by postage stamps, and to have been carried to similar lengths. Contemporary with Tassie's gems, and nearly akin to his work in feeling, though differing in material and appearance, were the tiny medallions issued from Wedgwood's pottery. They were not always copies of antiques, being often designed by Flaxman and other contemporary artists. They were made in the celebrated jasper ware, which had naturally a most beautiful surface, and by some authorities it is said to have been sometimes finished by the lapidary. They vary considerably in size, from the tiniest, which could be set in a ring or clasp, to the large ones which were intended for the doors of cabinets, &c.

They should have "Wedgwood & Bentley," or "Wedgwood" stamped clearly on the back in a size of lettering suitable to the piece, as the factory possessed stamps of all sizes. However, some which are undoubtedly genuine are unmarked. There are contemporary forgeries of fine workmanship. A worker named Voyez was employed by Wedgwood, who engaged him as a modeller for three years. He

considered him a "perfect master of the antique style," but after twelve months he was dismissed for drunkenness, before the time specified in the contract had expired, and afterwards spent some time in forging Wedgwood intaglios and seals, putting the names "Wedgwood & Bentley" on them. These forgeries are all, apparently, made before 1776. The ground colour of the cameos may be green, mauve, or buff (these fetch the highest prices), but the most usual of all is a clear pale blue, being used as a background for white heads or figures. Some cameos are all white and some all black. These latter are ugly, as a rule, but I have seen one surrounded with pearls as a pendant which had a certain sombre charm. All the varieties are mounted in many different ways: as bracelets, brooches, and necklets, and very often form part of the cut steel jewellery which had such a vogue in the last years of the eighteenth century.

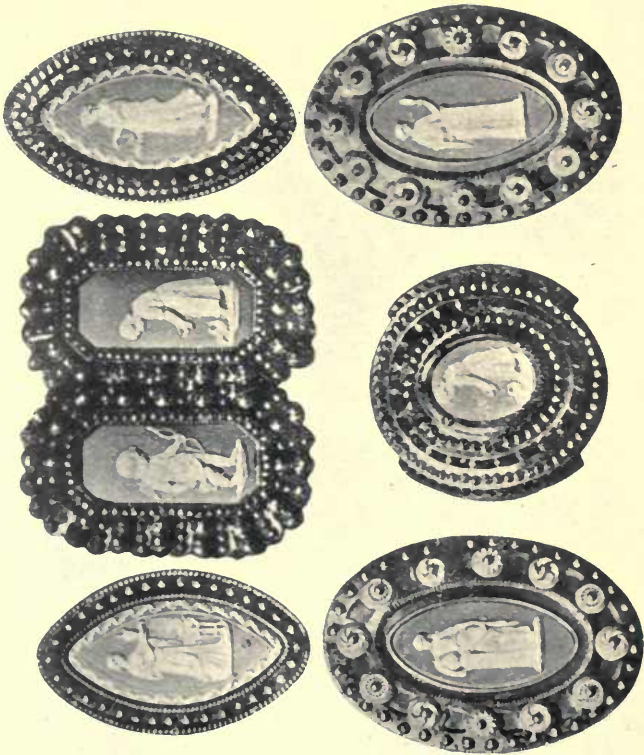
They often formed parts of ornaments strung up out of steel beads, and were also mounted in gold and Pinchbeck in the same way that cameos and glass were used. Boulton, of Soho, Birmingham, was chiefly associated with Wedgwood in mounting these cameos, large and small, in metal. The tiny cameos were only fired once, but the more important pieces twice. They had other vicissitudes to go through in the way of polishing the edges and finishing, so that it was surprising that the prices began so low as ten for five shillings. Strings of beads, snuff-boxes, and scent-bottles were also made.

Wedgwood's catalogue of these cameos gives some

### WEDGWOOD CAMEOS IN CUT-STEEL MOUNTS

These are all from the collection of Mr. F. Rathbone, of 20, Alfred Place, West, who kindly supplied me with the photographs.







very interesting particulars as to their general characteristics, besides a list of all the subjects in which they were made, which is a valuable help in ascertaining the origin of any doubtful piece. He tells us that, in addition to the coloured grounds, they were also made in white bisqué at a cheaper rate for cabinet collections. These white ones were occasionally mounted with enamel surrounds, to be worn on a ribbon like a miniature. I think it was not often done, as I have only seen one such piece, but it had a most charming effect. Seals were also made "with shanks highly polished and require no mounting." They were made in the classic subjects and also in "two complete sets of ciphers, one consisting of all the combinations of *two letters* and the other of all *single letters*." What has become of all these thousands of seals? Most of them must be somewhere. We see comparatively few in the curio shops or public collections, but they cannot have evaporated and they do not break easily. Perhaps some of the "intaglios part black and the surface blue and highly polished; by which means they are made to imitate the black and blue onyx," still masquerade as stones, but the unmounted ones would at once betray themselves. They are well worth looking for, as indeed are all these little pieces of Wedgwood jewellery.

Their artistic beauty makes them a great addition to any collection of the more modern forms of jewellery. Gaining as they do all their value from the workmanship and design, and owing practically nothing to material, they form a great contrast to

the work of a succeeding period, when jewellery came to mean nothing but so much gold and so many stones—of considerable money value, indeed, but totally destitute of either taste or skill in the use of the costly material.

**Adams'** jasper cameos of very similar style are also to be found set in bracelets, buttons, &c., and also beads for necklaces, chatelaines, and such things. They bear the impressed mark "Adams." Most of those I have seen are blue, light or dark, with white relief.

Mention may be made of the "cameos" roughly cut in lava and set in silver-gilt or base metal, which have their origin in Italy. It is hard to think that any one could possibly value them, as they are of coarse workmanship and ugly colours. However, they appear sometimes in the curio shops.

XIII

PASTE  
AND OTHER  
GLITTERING SUBSTITUTES  
FOR DIAMONDS



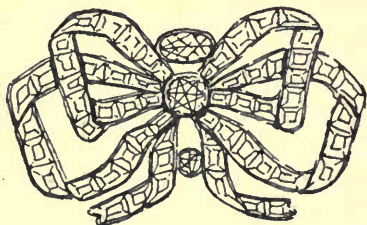
## CHAPTER XIII

### PASTE AND OTHER GLITTERING SUBSTITUTES FOR DIAMONDS

THERE are a great many substitutes for diamonds which, while hardly intended as imitations or false gems, yet were designed to have the same effect as the precious stone, and probably the wearers would not have been sorry if they had been taken for the real thing. First and foremost we must place paste and Strass, which certainly attempted and attained a very close likeness to the original; then the various natural crystals which have much the same appearance as paste; and lastly, another class of substitute, which consisted of non-transparent substances of metallic origin, which had a very good general effect, but which close examination would instantly detect. Of these marcasite bears the closest resemblance to the precious stone, and looks almost exactly like it in gas- or candle-light. Steel is another instance of the same class; cut silver was also used. All these substitutes came into being owing to the general rise of the middle classes to positions of comfort and luxury. There had arisen an intermediate class of much better general educa-

tion and some pretension, and naturally they wished to have, at any rate, the outward appearance of those with whom they "rubbed elbows." They were also worn, by those who could not afford diamonds, for details such as shoe buckles and buttons.

Paste, or Strass, in its various forms consists of glass of a hard and bright kind, which is cut in the same way as diamonds, and mounted so as to resemble these stones. These imitations, however, have not the same power of reflecting the light from



Paste Brooch. Diamond pastes in bow,  
with three larger sapphire pastes.  
Mid-eighteenth century.

the interior that the real stones possess, so they have to be mounted over foil in order that the light may be thrown back, instead of passing through them. This foil often gets discoloured with age, but it is a mistake to have the stone taken out and the foil replaced, as this gives a garish look to the stones. Old paste has a softness of colour which modern imitations entirely lack. This is probably due to some slight impurity in the glass. One notices the same thing in the copies of old drinking-glasses; there is always a hard look about the substance,



quite different to the soft mellow tone of the old ones.

The oldest paste imitating diamonds has each stone set separately, though the settings touch one another; the later ones (eighteenth century) more usually have the stones side by side in sunk settings, and are held in place by up-standing grains. This method shows much less metal. Stras, or Strass, is a form of paste invented by a man of that name, who resided in Paris. It was introduced in 1758, we are told by M. Fontenay; but Pouget fils, writing in 1762, tells us in an oft-quoted phrase, that "it had so prodigious a vogue, that for some time ladies had worn no other stones but this, but the stone is rather brittle, and does not keep its brilliancy," which reads as if it had been in use for more than four years.



Diamond Paste Ornament. Last half eighteenth century.

They are very charming, these paste ornaments worn in the eighteenth century; their graceful designs and delicate settings remove them out of the rank of mere imitations, and they deserve to be classed as works of art by reason of the exquisite workmanship displayed in them. They are valued according to the lightness and beauty of design. Small "stones" are generally preferred to larger ones, and a variety in the sizes used in a piece adds considerably to its appearance. The settings are generally of silver. Pewter, too, is used and for coloured pastes gold or silver-gilt. The diamond paste is much more common than that imitating

emeralds, rubies, and sapphires, as those stones were less fashionable towards the end of the eighteenth century, when making and setting of paste reached its zenith.

**Marcasite.**—This is the name of a mineral which closely resembles iron pyrites, being formed of the same elements in the same proportions but differing in physical and chemical characters (Church). This has caused a confusion between the two. As a matter of fact, it is the pyrites which is used for the jewellery. No doubt the mistake arose from the mineral being used for "Marquise" rings, but the stones are by no means always set in this form. It is also variously spelt "Marquissette" and "Marquisite." The cutting into facets was done by hand; they are either round or pointed, for of course it was not any use cutting them into brilliants, as the material was solid. Marcasite jewellery came, with other substitutes for diamonds, into fashion under Louis XIV., and during his and the two following reigns was much in use, and amongst it will be found very charming examples of the jeweller's art of the time; which like other objects of their period show how materials of intrinsically small value can be made, by good workmanship and suitable design, more worthy of our attention than pieces of which the actual cost of the materials is perhaps a hundred times more. I have been amused to see a lady, with an ordinary commonplace diamond star brooch, look on with surprise while artistic people were admiring a pendant of fine eighteenth-century workmanship, composed of what she would no doubt have de-

scribed as a common mineral with a blue glass background, while no notice was taken of her ornament. No doubt to her the marcasite pendant could never be more than the "primrose by the river's brim" was to Peter Bell.

The stones are always mounted in silver in the same way that diamonds of the period were set. They are, perhaps, shown at their best when arranged in the daintiest of designs—a tiny bouquet or basket of flowers, or a little spray consisting of a floret and a leaf or two over a background of glass backed with foil. This is of various colours; but much the most ordinary, and at the same time prettiest, is the rich deep cobalt blue over gold foil. The red and green glasses are much less common, and are far less artistic, though the green looks well enough if the spray covering it is pretty full, otherwise the effect is heavy.

These stones (it is convenient to call them thus, though it is strictly a misnomer) are at their best when very small, the brilliancy then being considerably increased as more light is reflected. Of course, there is no reflection from the back as there would be in paste or diamonds. Marcasite jewellery made in the eighteenth century is decidedly scarce. There was a later revival in the middle of the nineteenth century, when the old designs were well copied, on



Marcasite Pendant.  
Probably an ear-  
ring originally.

the whole ; but the setting of the minute stones was not done in the same way, being drilled into the solid metal instead of set by the old method, otherwise the resemblance is in many cases very complete. Some modern copies have been made, but they have been "manufactured," and there is a coarseness in the effect owing to the absence of the fine, dainty finish so conspicuous in the old work. Marcasite jewellery is said to have been made a great deal in Switzerland, where ladies were prohibited from adorning themselves with diamonds. Whether it was used in France by the nobility from motives of economy or not, is not so certain ; still, Pouget fils, writing in 1762, says, "M. de Silhouette" (who was for a time Minister of Finance to Louis XV.) "had made it fashionable in France." This is an allusion to a scheme of retrenchment by which he sought to revive the waning credit of France ; but as the plan was rejected and the minister dismissed ignominiously, it is not very probable that he should have set a fashion at Court, where his name was derisively given to those thin shadows of portraits cut in black paper, which were just becoming popular.

Poor M. de Silhouette, you did your best for your country, and in return are mocked at, even by the Court jeweller !

As a matter of fact, the aristocracy were impoverished from one cause or another and well may have been glad to share with the middle classes a kind of ornament which had a very good appearance at a comparatively slight cost. Marcasite had,

too, an advantage over paste and Strass in that it wore much better. I am not sure whether, being an iron compound, it is liable to rust, but I have not seen it so damaged ; however, it would be wiser for owners to run no risks of possible harm arising from this cause.

Pretty well everything that was made of paste and diamonds was also made of this mineral ; necklaces, buttons, pendants, brooches, pins, shoe buckles, and chatelaines are all thus mounted. Miniature cases and snuff-boxes have also been edged with rows of it.

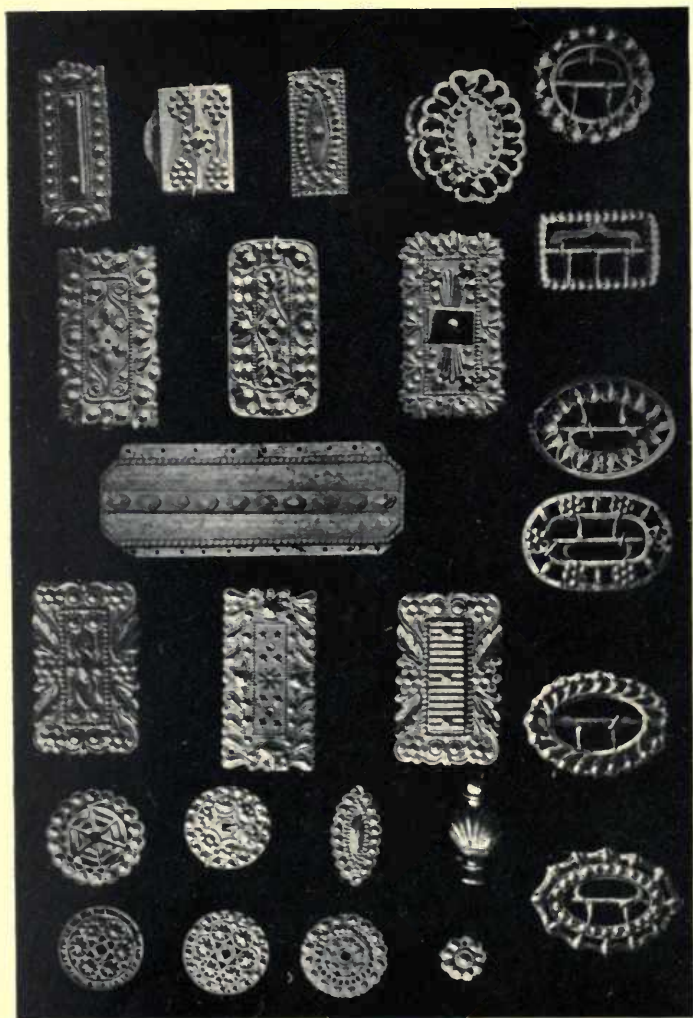
The old name in France appears to have been " Pierre des Incas," in allusion to the ancient inhabitants of Peru. Pouget fils tells us " they made ornaments of it, and put large pieces in their tombs."

**Steel Jewellery.**—Though steel jewellery does not resemble diamonds nearly as closely as do paste and marcasite it yet owes its vogue to the same desire which is expressed all through the eighteenth century for anything that reflects back glittering points of light. Of course, these pieces could never have deceived any one as to their composition, but they were very pretty and are most beautifully made, and were valued independently of their resemblance to diamonds. A great deal was made in Birmingham and Wolverhampton, and celebrated makers were Boulton of Birmingham and John Warrilow of Wolverhampton. For fine work enormous prices were paid. The facets were fixed by riveting. The designs are often exceedingly fine and delicate, because, as the material was not transparent, it was

### CUT STEEL

Shoe buckles, clasps, and buttons in fine cut steel. Reproduced by kind permission of the authorities of the Birmingham Museum. In the centre is a cut-steel waist buckle of English workmanship with blue fillet and faceted studs.









necessary to have many separate studs to get the full effect of the reflected light. All the work was done to that end, and it is from that point of view that we must judge it, so it is valued according to the number and delicacy of the facets and the grace of their arrangement. Those pieces in which a variety of arrangements are shown are better than the simpler ones. Chatelaines (a very ordinary thing made in steel) should have a number of patterns of links; one in my possession has nine kinds, all of them very pretty. Some of them have facets cut on the links themselves; others are studded with riveted-on facets. The purse is made of chain links with hanging tassels. The fashion was introduced into France in the latter part of the century, and the workmen there adopted English designs and English methods of working. About 1780 there was a very successful French maker named Dauffe.

We find, as well as the less important things such as buttons and buckles, that delicate necklaces, bracelets, and so on, were also made of this material. It is, perhaps, seen at its very best as a mount for the exquisite Wedgwood cameos, which seem to tone perfectly with the rather subdued glitter of the steel. No pains were spared in the tiny rosettes and filigree-like patterns which surround these fairylike works of art. The whole effect is most dainty, and it hardly seems possible that it should be composed of such prosaic materials as earthenware and steel.

A much inferior kind of steel jewellery was introduced about 1819 by a Frenchman named Trichot, who invented a mechanical means of making it very

cheaply. It became very fashionable, and was, and is, made in enormous quantities ; but it is not worthy of consideration. It is mentioned here to put collectors on their guard. The facets are not separately fixed by hand as in the original kind, but made *en bloc* in a kind of open-work, ready for applying to anything required. The designs are vulgarised and commonplace, and there is naturally none of the dainty perfection of finish which marks earlier work. There has not been, as far as I am aware, any deliberate copying of fine old steel jewellery to sell as old. But one does see the poor kind, mentioned above, for sale in dealers' shops at absurdly high prices. The fine genuine kind demands too much handwork to make it profitable to imitate in the same way as it was originally made.

XIV

PINCHBECK

## PINCHBECK

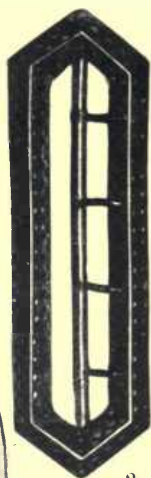
1. Shell cameo in Pinchbeck mount. Early nineteenth century.
2. Waist buckle in open work. Eighteenth century.
3. Back of miniature case. About 1760.
4. Hair ornament. Ears of wheat. Each grain is one of a group of four which have been stamped in a star shape out of matted Pinchbeck. They have been bent up, and are mounted on a central wire.
5. Pendant (part of ear-ring). Aquamarines set in stamped Pinchbeck. About 1835.



1



3



2



5



## CHAPTER XIV

### PINCHBECK

ALMOST every dealer who keeps antique jewellery as part of his stock, has a tray of various oddments in which we may count on finding a fair number of pieces on which he bestows the name of "Pinchbeck." As a matter of fact, as a rule the name is not rightly applied to one-tenth of them; but it has become almost a general term for all jewellery made out of substitutes for gold, so I have followed the general custom and headed this chapter with this title. Under this generic name are included all alloys which have had originally, and preserve to a certain extent, a colour which bears a close resemblance to gold. They have been given at different times various fancy names, such as Tombac, Prince's Metal, and Mosaic Gold. It is worth while, however, to know somewhat of the real history of the origin and composition of Pinchbeck, as pieces which may with some probability be ascribed to the inventor, are far more interesting than the later (and as a rule inferior) things. The ingredients of all the alloys are copper and zinc, the same metals which are used in compounding brass, but in Pinch-

beck the zinc is used in a lesser proportion. In brass it varies from one part to three, to two to three, while in Pinchbeck it is about one part to ten. There must, however, it seems to me, have been some further trade secret, either in the process of manufacture or in the after-treatment, to account for the much superior wearing qualities and colour of Pinchbeck. Possibly a slight wash of gold was used on the surface to prevent tarnish. This has remained in the hollows, and on the rubbed parts the very friction which wore away the gilding would serve to keep the metal in bright condition. The metal was first put on the market by a certain Christopher Pinchbeck (1670-1732), who is said to have invented it, and it soon became exceedingly popular. The appearance, especially when new, was so like gold, that it appealed at once to all those who, either from thrift or lack of means, thought real gold too expensive a material to use for the less important articles of personal ornament. Another motive for wearing it, referred to in the advertisement which follows, is that things made of this metal made a special appeal to travellers. In those days when a journey of even a few miles out of London led through roads infested by thieves and highway robbers, careful folk preferred not to tempt these "gentlemen of the road" by wearing expensive ornaments unless travelling with a good escort; so not only would a traveller with a base metal watch and buckles lose less if robbed, but owing to the freemasonry which existed between innkeepers and postilions and the highwaymen, they were actually



less likely to be stopped, as it was not worth while to run risks for such a poor spoil. Therefore while of course much of it was made to enable the wearers to make a fair show at a small expense, a good deal was also made for the "nobility and gentry," who used such things as watches, sword-hilts, and buckles made of it.

In 1732 Christopher the first (one of his sons was also Christopher) was gathered to his fathers, and was succeeded by his son Edward Pinchbeck, who continued to trade in the same material.

He was much annoyed, evidently, at the too sincere flattery of trade rivals, who brought out imitations, no doubt to the detriment of his business. He therefore inserted a long advertisement in the *Daily Post* of July 11, 1733, headed "Caution to the Publick." The following extracts will be interesting, as they show the kind of thing principally made by the original firm:—

"To prevent for the future the gross imposition that is daily put upon the *Publick* by a great number of Shop-Keepers, Hawkers, and Pedlars, in and about this town, Notice is hereby given, That the Ingenious Mr. Edward Pinchbeck, at the 'Musical Clock' in Fleet Street, does not dispose of one grain of his curious metal, which so nearly resembles Gold in Colour, Smell and Ductility, to any person whatsoever, nor are the Toys made of the said metal, sold by any one person in England except himself: therefore gentlemen are desired to beware of Impostors, who frequent Coffee Houses, and expose for Sale, Toys pretended to be made of

this metal, which is a most notorious imposition, upon the Publick. And Gentlemen and Ladies, may be accommodated by the said Mr. Pinchbeck with the following curious Toys ; viz. : Sword-Hilts, Hangers, Cane Heads, Whip Handles, for Hunting, Spurs, Equipages,<sup>1</sup> Watch chains, Tweezers for Men and Women, Snuff-Boxes, Coat Buttons, Shirt buttons, Knives and forks, Spoons, Salvers, Buckles for Ladies Breasts, Stock Buckles, Shoe Buckles, Knee Buckles, Girdle Buckles, Stock Clasps, Knee Clasps, Necklaces, Corals, and in particular Watches, plain and chased in so curious a manner as not to be distinguished by the nicest eye, from the real gold, and which are highly necessary for Gentlemen and Ladies when they travel, with several other fine pieces of workmanship of all sorts made by the best hands. He also makes Repeating and all other sorts of Clocks and Watches particularly Watches of a new invention, the mechanism of which is so simple, and the proportion so just, that they come nearer the truth than others yet made."

On the whole, it will be found that they are principally things for use as well as ornament, if we except necklaces.

This early Pinchbeck is very beautifully worked up and finished, some of the miniature cases and watches being designed and chased in a very masterly manner. They of course followed the general type of goldwork of the day, and the design is of the type known as Rococo. I have seen a chatelaine of this material which had so

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.*, chatelaines.

preserved its original colour and surface, having been carefully kept, that it was for years considered by the lady to whom it belonged to be gold. She was very annoyed at finding it was not of the precious metal, and removed it from the post of honour which it had previously held on her curio table. This seems to me a very commercial point of view. Surely antiques should be judged as works of art and not by the worth of the material.

The fame of English makers spread to France, where the alloy was evidently in considerable demand, especially for watches. In that country it was known variously as Pinsbeck, Pincebeck, and Pinsbek. A metal of the same character was invented by a Lille jeweller named Rentz, but it had one very important failing—it lost its colour very soon. Before it could be held to justify the name of “similor” it had to be perfected by Leblanc, a worker in the Royal employ, who somewhat altered the manufacture of it and obtained a really good imitation. A great deal of jewellery was made out of it, and it was very well patronised; but it aroused the indignation of the workers in the genuine metal, and legal proceedings were instituted, with the result that after a time the alloy was only allowed to be used for such things as shoe buckles, buttons, &c., which did not much compete with the regular goldsmiths’ work. It has been said that with Edward Pinchbeck’s death the secret of the correct method of making it, whatever it was, died out, but metal bearing a close resemblance to it continued to be used well into the nineteenth century—in fact, until

the process of electro-gilding made it easy and cheap to deposit a wash of gold on any metal as required. Brass articles with a coating of gold are often passed off as Pinchbeck, and even if they are without the gilding some dealers think "Pinchbeck" sounds better and helps to sell their stock. If unacquainted with the respective appearance of the metals, brass may be distinguished by having a metallic smell, especially when a little warmed by being held and rubbed in the hand. Rolled gold which is sometimes offered for it is quite a modern invention, and consists of an exceedingly thin plate of gold on a background of inferior metal. The gold forms a part of the sheet, wire, or whatever it is, before being made up, and is not a wash or coating added after.

A very charming collection illustrative of the general forms of the eighteenth-century jewellery might be got together, consisting of work in this metal, probably at one-twentieth of the price which would be paid for the same things in gold. Besides, the price is further reduced because as a rule the stones are not real; and buckles of Pinchbeck and paste, mock pearls, or coral will serve to illustrate design and workmanship as well as the finest diamonds and purest gold. Really good Pinchbeck is not, however, very cheap, watches especially being much collected, five to ten pounds being sometimes given for a nice, early specimen by a good maker. On the other hand buckles of early design may be obtained for about five to ten shillings each; a nice chatelaine would probably be worth thirty shillings

or more. A very handsome pair of buckles, most beautifully chased, were offered me the other day for fifteen shillings. The colour is as good as the day they were made, and the cost of making them a hundred years ago must have been considerably more, as the workmanship was that of a master-hand. Snuff-boxes in good early styles are always of value, and according to the amount of decoration may be worth from five shillings upwards. Buttons are not much collected, and there are a good many about which can be obtained at a shilling each or less. Of course, when we come to those which are set with such things as Wedgwood cameos and Tassie gems, though the setting is somewhat later than the original maker's productions, these charming copies of the antique have a certain value of their own apart from the mounting. Rather later, Pinchbeck, and similar base metals were used for the cheaper kind of jewellery which had such a vogue during the Directoire and Empire periods especially for the mounting of the high combs, set with modern cameos, mock pearls, coral, tortoiseshell, and such materials, which were almost universally worn at that time. These, though so plentiful in their day, do not appear in any quantity in dealers' shops, as a rule. Whether they are really scarce or whether there is only a small market for them and so are not made a feature of is uncertain. Probably if there was a demand for them numbers would appear from somewhere. This is not meant to infer that they would be imitations, but simply that people, seeing they had a pecuniary value, would turn out their stores and produce

hidden treasures, in the same way they have done lately with lustre ornaments. Five years ago one hardly saw one about. Now every curio shop has a few for sale. A very frequent ornament for the hair was a bunch of wheat, and this, like every ornament of the early nineteenth century, was copied in Pinchbeck. It had a very pretty effect, but there is not the same perfect workmanship in the work of those later times as there was in that made when the original firm worked; and though interesting as examples of a certain class of ornament, they are not in the same category as to craftsmanship as the earlier pieces.

Pinchbeck was also used for piqué work,<sup>1</sup> with a leather ground in place of the tortoiseshell of the more expensive pieces.

<sup>1</sup> For particulars of this work, see Chapter on "Eighteenth Century Jewellery, General," page 146.



**XV**

**BOOKS**





## CHAPTER XV

### BOOKS

SOONER or later every collector begins to specialise. Perhaps a lucky find or two turns his attention towards some one branch and leads him to wish to enlarge both his knowledge and his collection in that particular direction. He cannot do better, if circumstances permit, than study *every* example of the chosen class that he can find in museums and elsewhere, and read *everything* that he can discover on the subject. But time is often limited, and in order to help those who do not care to wade through volume after volume in which, perhaps, there is only a bare reference to their subject, I have prepared a list of works which indicate those books which perhaps will be found most useful in each class. There are, of course, many others in which very useful information may be found, but to name them all would be to make the list too long.

**Egyptian.**—A most interesting account of Egyptian jewellery is given in Professor Flinders Petrie's "Arts and Crafts of Ancient Egypt," which gives most useful particulars so simply that anyone can

understand them, though he is so great an authority on the subject. An article on Scarabs in the *Connoisseur*, vol. xv. p. 249, will make the subsequent understanding of such works as "The Sacred Beetle" (Ward) and Professor Petrie's "Historical Scarabs," easier.

The Guide to the Egyptian Collections and the third and fourth Egyptian Rooms at the British Museum contains a mine of information as to Amulets and Scarabs.

**Greek, Etruscan, and Roman.**—For this subject one must search in such works as "Mycenæ," by Schlieman; "Les Civilizations Primitives en Italie," by Montelius, and the "Catalogue of Greek, Etruscan, and Roman Finger Rings at the British Museum," by Marshall. There is an excellent chapter on Engraved Gems in Murray's "Handbook of Greek Archeology," and the British Museum Guide is also helpful.

**Byzantine.**—The Guide and the Catalogue of Byzantine and Early Christian Antiquities in the British Museum by Dalton are invaluable.

**Barbarian and Inlaid Jewellery.**—For Ancient Inlaid Jewellery see Dalton's "Treasure of the Oxus"; for the Inlaid Jewellery of the Dark Ages his article in the *Burlington Magazine*. Celtic jewellery is fully treated in Romilly Allen's "Celtic Art in Pagan and Christian Times" (this is also most helpful as to very early prehistoric ornaments, which I have hardly touched upon). "Early Christian Art in Ireland" (Stokes) is cheap and authoritative.

Anglo-Saxon jewellery is discussed at length

in De Bayes "Industrial Arts of the Anglo-Saxons."

The monk Theophilus should be consulted as to technical processes of Mediæval times. Labarte gives in his "Industrial Arts of the Middle Ages" a very full and beautifully illustrated account of jewellery.

**Renaissance.**—Cellini's Life and his Treatises are most valuable and should be studied, if not in the original then Mr. Ashbee's delightful translation should be used. Labarte's "Industrial Arts," mentioned above, is most helpful.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, many design-books were published, and the style can best be studied by consulting these. Very many artists and jewellers issued them, and by their means the same class of design was spread all over Europe.

Holbein and Dürer have left original drawings, which are to be found at the British Museum. Designs by Lull and the Santini family are in the print-room at South Kensington, and books of engravings by others can be seen at either library.

When we get to the **Eighteenth Century** we still have design-books to help us, also trade catalogues.

For the **Nineteenth Century** Vever's monumental work gives accounts and illustrations of the works of all the principal jewellers.

**Rings.**—For the classical period, the British Museum catalogue above mentioned should be consulted. "Finger Rings," by Jones, is full of historical anecdotes and quaint superstitions, besides

containing most useful facts about the subject "Antique Gems and Rings," by King, should also be consulted.

**Peasant Jewellery.**—"Die Volkerschmück," by Häberlandt, is a collection of photographic reproductions of all kinds of national jewellery. Unfortunately they are not grouped so as to make comparison easy, though they are well indexed. There is very little letterpress.

**Oriental Jewellery.**—Birdwood's "Industrial Arts of India" contains a great deal of valuable information.

**Precious Stones.**—There is an invaluable little book under this title by Professor Church, on the scientific side of the question. Full accounts of each stone with its properties, &c., are given at length. Streeter's books, "Precious Stones and Gems," "Diamonds," and "Pearls," should be consulted. For legends, anecdotes, and history, "Precious Stones," by Jones, is a perfect mine of wealth.

**Cameos.**—The book of this title by Davenport deals with the whole subject in an interesting way, and is well illustrated in colours. Babelon's "Catalogue des Camées à la Bibliothèque National" is of great value; King's "Handbook of Engraved Gems" should also be consulted. For copies of Cameos, Professor Raspé's catalogue of Tassie's gems, and Miss Meteyard's "Handbook on Wedgwood" should be consulted, also Wedgwood's own catalogues.

For a detailed account of each separate piece of jewellery such as rings, ear-rings, &c., Fontenay's

"Bijoux Anciens et Modernes" is the great authority (French). Mr. Clifford Smith's book on jewellery treats the subject historically, period by period, as does Roger-Miles in his book "Bijouterie" (French).

All these works give plenty of further references to other authorities, if still more detailed information is desired.



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