

CHAPTER VIII

THE PRESTONPANS AND PORTOBELLO POTTERIES

INTRODUCTION

This district might justly dispute with Glasgow the priority of place in a book on Scottish Pottery, for we have accounts of the manufacture of earthenware and china bore from very early times. From this old town the Art of making pottery wares spread to the surrounding towns and villages of Cuttle, Newbigging, Musselburgh, and Portobello. A district of Five Towns of potteries similar to the larger prototypes of Staffordshire made famous by Arnold Bennett.

The earthenware figures here presented may be considered as poor relations of the finer china ones for long they were considered only good enough for kitchen shelves but now such old ornaments, with their sweet and fragrant memories of the past if we care to peer beneath their surface, are finding a niche in our drawingrooms.

These old Scottish ornaments may have little artistic merit and may warrant small praise, but they form an interesting link in the social history of Scotland

In the Loan Court of the Victoria and Albert Museum there are quite a number of such interesting ornaments, as well as jugs, etc. Edinburgh from early times in Scottish history was not only the Capital and seat of the Government, but



WHISKY FLASK.
Prestonpans Ware.

BOWL AND CREAM
JUG.

Britannia Pottery.

MUG.

Smith Institute, Stirling.

TEA CADDY.
Prestonpans.

OVAL JUG.
With portraits of
Wallace and Bruce.

PRESTONPANS AND PORTOBELLO

was also the social centre of the kingdom, till Glasgow by the opening years of the nineteenth century was beginning to assert her position as the commercial centre of Scotland.

After the Restoration towards the end of the seventeenth century the idea of producing a finer quality of pottery than hitherto produced occurred to Robert Douglas of Leith. In old Records of 1695 his name appears applying for permission to erect a kiln and the necessary workshops in Leith. It tells us that the expenses of doing so were far beyond his resources, and he was unable to complete the construction of the factory, and that some of his troubles were owing to the course of trade for the last five years, he could get none to join him in such a public and expensive work."

The Auld Alliance between the French and the Scottish peoples influenced much of our domestic arrangements, and some of the crockery required for the table would be at first

probably of French origin.

In 1703 two Scots, by name William Montgomerie of Machrie Hill and George L~, merchant in Edinburgh, evolved the idea of producing 'Purselane.' They probably had been in France as 'Scottish gentlemen of fortune,' not uncommon in those days, and had in their travels picked up some knowledge of this class of pottery from workmen in a French porcelain factory.

They successfully appealed to the Scottish Parliament for assistance, for in due course Act XI. 3. was passed, granting them protection in their enterprise.

The date is important and interesting, for it was some years later that Bow and Chelsea, the first china works in England, were established.

These men lost no time in erecting a 'Pott-house' and all the necessary conveniences for the production of "Laim, purselane, earthenware, and for bringing from foreign countries the men required for their encouragement in their undertaking."

The Scottish Parliament awarded them further privileges in granting them "exclusive rights of making laim, purselane, and earthenware for fifteen years."

Robert Douglas on hearing of this proposition at once petitioned against such a grant on the ground of the considerable expenditure he himself had incurred on a similar undertaking. To prove to Parliament that he was not so much concerned for his own private interest as the public good he was content to take Montgomerie and his partner into society with him,' so that the idea of producing porcelain might be more economically and efficiently carried on."

Public opinion however was averse to this proposal, and the monopoly was duly granted.

I have been unable to trace the site of this factory. Much later than the date of founding this pottery the following notice appeared in a London paper dated 24th December, 1764

"We hear from Edinburgh that some gentlemen are about to establish a porcelain factory in Scotland, and have already wrote up to London to engage proper persons to carry it on."

This paragraph very likely refers to the actual introduction of porcelain manufacture in Scotland, and may refer to the early china works in Prestonpans, or it might refer to the following letter from the late Sir George S Mackenzie to Wedgwood in 19th January, 1851, and dated from Edinburgh:

"The late Dr. Kennedy of this place, I remember, made a great many experiments in porcelain, and in looking among some of his papers in my possession I find some memorandum, and specimens of his manufacture, which perhaps you might wish to see. Some of the pieces, in my opinion, are very beautifully grained If you desire, I will send them in a small box, or packet."

Wedgwood, in his reply dated 28th January, 1851, says:



MOTHER AND CHILD.

TWO WOMEN CARRYING FRUIT.
Prestonpans Pottery.
Lent by Vernon Roberts, Esq.SOLDIER.
Uniform Grenadier Company
of the Royal Edinburgh Volun-
teers about 1800.

“The memorandum, and specimens of the late Dr. Kennedy that you are so good as to offer, and for which I feel properly grateful will not therefore be useful to me.

(Sgnd) JOSIAH WEDGWOOD.”

I am of opinion that factories supposed to have been erected in the town of Edinburgh were more likely to have been built in the neighbouring towns of Portobello, Musselburgh, or even as far away as Prestonpans. There, coal was close to the works. The chief potteries, therefore, around Edinburgh lie to the south-east of the city, along the shores of the Firth of Forth from Prestonpans to Portobello.

PRESTONPANS

This is probably the most interesting pottery district in Scotland, and has aroused more discussion, especially among collectors of old Scottish ware, than any other place.

Unfortunately, first-hand information is rare. It is now forty years since the last potter working in any of the ‘potworks’ died, and it is to be regretted that much useful and valuable information, as to what precisely was made, has vanished with him.

‘the earliest authentic information regarding potworks **In** the locality is to be found in a Record dated 1754, wherein it is stated that “over 70 potters were employed in two potteries.” Later in the year 1798 the *Statistical Records of Scotland* inform us that “the two potteries are busily employed making domestic ware of all kinds.”

In the opinion of many potters of a past generation Prestonpans was considered the birthplace of fine pottery making in Scotland. Certainly its connection with our craft is very old. It is maintained by authorities that this was in no small measure due to the beneficent influence of the monks at the neighbouring Abbey of Newbattle. These monks were the means of establishing the earliest coal mines in Scotland, and it is quite probable that, as plenty of good clay was at hand, they also started the manufacture of pottery, and that the embossed tiles, with designs of leopards, lions, and various geometrical patterns, such as were discovered in the ruined choir of the Abbey Church at Haddington, may have been made in the district.

Others maintain that the pottery trade in Scotland owed its revival, from the lapse subsequent to the Roman occupation, to our intimate commercial connection with Holland directly across the North Sea. The Dutch have no coal, and it is asserted that the Delft pottery manufacturers received considerable quantities of coal from Prestongrange Collieries. If this were so, it may have induced the Dutch potters to come over here, and settle in Prestonpans where their fuel would be much cheaper, and also because there was plenty of good clay to be had locally. But there is no proof, so far, of these interesting conjectures.

One of the best and early records of chinaware being made in Scotland is to be found in the pages of the *London Chronicle* of the year 1755, and is worth quoting

"Four potters well-skilled in the working of English china were engaged to go up to Scotland where a fine porcelain factory is going to be established in the manner and process of that now carried on at Chelsea, Stratford by-Bow. But we know nothing definite of the locality of this pottery."

There are two large mugs made in porcelain (Plate XXXII.) of a similar paste and with the same glassy glaze as that which we see in original Chelsea china.

They are well made and decorated, having the coat-of-arms of the Dalrymple family emblazoned in front, and at the back have the letters Over Hayles in red enamel inscribed under the handle. On account of this inscription it is generally believed they were made in a china factory in Prestonpans, although there is no mark of any kind to denote the maker or their place of origin. The mugs, which hold one pint, are, notwithstanding this uncertainty, worthy of examination, although they are, in my opinion, quite different from any other Scottish china.

The only defect in one of them is that the glaze is spit out inside under the rim, where the dipper, after having plunged the mug into the liquid glaze mixture, has not sufficiently shaken off the surplus glaze adhering to the mug. This blistering is evidence of some defect in the mixture of the china body, or it also may quite as well be some fault in the glaze. This is a vexed technical question in which experts differ, as it still occurs on the best china.

The other mug has been easily fired in the biscuit kiln, and is, in consequence, yellower in appearance, and the glaze has crazed owing to the softness of the body.

Prestonpans was one of the most prosperous parts of Scotland during the eighteenth century, and it is therefore not unlikely to have been the place most favoured in establishing a porcelain factory.

The original name of the place was Salt Prieststoun, which in course of time changed to Salt Preston, then during the process of usage the Salt melted away and it became Prestonpans.

The Englishman John Ray, while travelling along the shores of Prestonpans in August 1661, gives an account of seeing glass being produced from the local sand and kelp (seaweed). This mixture was calcined in crucibles made in a Prestonpans pottery from the local tobacco-pipe clay, which was found to be sufficiently refractory for that purpose. The first pottery of any consequence, established in 1696, devoted itself chiefly to the production of pans, Jugs, etc., for domestic use. There was another factory in operation about this year, but it mainly confined itself to roofing and other tiles, etc. At a subsequent date, and in the early years of the eighteenth century, there existed a pottery making whiteware and china. One of the cones of the kilns had a stone let into it dated '1760,' but this only referred to the building of the cone, as the pottery had been in operation prior to this date. It was situated a little to the west of the old police office in Kirk Street. The works ceased operations long ago, and most of the workshops were levelled to the ground. We have among many records of this old place, one by the Lord Lovat of Carlyle's *Autobiography* fame, who brought his second son Alexander to be educated in the Grammar School at Prestonpans.

This Lord Lovat had in his possession what is believed by many to have been the earliest specimens of chinaware made in the Prestonpans China Factory.

Lord Lovat, in conversation with Dr. Struthers, LL.D., who was staying with him in his old home at Beaufort, relates that this china was specially ordered by his son, while he was at school, from this factory as a present to his father. The flints, he added, which were used in the mixture of the glaze, were collected on Strichen Hill, the seat of his ancestry in those

days, by the boy while enjoying his school holidays there.

Lord Lovat said his earliest reminiscences of this china-ware were when, as a boy, his aged grandmother was wont to hold out to him and other young friends, as the very highest mark of her favour, the privilege of getting tea with her out of her precious Prestonpans china

The two principal potteries manufacturing whiteware were Gordon's and Watson's. A larger quantity of ware was made here than ever was made at Portobello, and was more distinctive in character, such as the embossed jugs which were made here in large quantities. One favourite design had Toby Philpot on one side and the Blacksmith of Gretna Green on the other, while a typical piece of Prestonpans, illustrating the 'Battle,' is an



"PORCELAIN" MUGS.
Decorated with Dalrymple Coat of Arms, with purple roses, red tulips, yellow barley, and blue forget-me-nots. Attributed to China Factory, Prestonpans, *circa* 1760.
Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh.

oval jug with a cavalryman leaping over a cannon painted in vivid colours. Mutchkin spirit ovals or flasks in white and stonewares were also made here, some with a portrait or classical group depicted on the front and a suitable emblem or motto on the back.

GORDON'S POTTERY

This factory, erected by a potter George Gordon early in the eighteenth century, was situated towards the west-end of the town near Bankfoot, and was the more widely and generally known of the two whiteware potteries. It made, principally, white and decorated earthenware in an extensive variety of shapes and patterns.

It is difficult to exactly assign to this pottery the articles that were its special products, for no trade-mark was used except on some of the printed ware, where we may find the initials of the proprietor beside the name of the pattern in the semi at the back of the plates.

It originally commenced operations on a modest scale, possessing only two kilns, the capacities of which were very limited in quantity.

Blue and white printed ware was one of the features of the place. Fortunately, some of the engravings are still in existence, and we are able to judge from these) as in Plate XXXIX., that the designs were chaste, and distinctly above the average of contemporary works of a similar grade. The Bird and Fly was one of the best sellers, and many pieces of this design

can still be seen in service.

Large quantities of jugs were made with embossed figures on the sides, and painted in light orange, brown, and grass green underglaze colours, with black and cobalt blue lines on the brims and handles. The wild scenes of fighting depicted on most of these jugs suggest an Irish 'Donnybrook Pair.' Others have so much orange predominating that they would admirably suit an Orange Lodge, but the bright emerald green present in the designs thoroughly destroys that theory.

The jugs are of two distinct forms, round and oval. The figures on the round 'jugs are supposed to represent scenes from the Battle of Prestonpans,' the memory of which was still fresh with old inhabitants, who, no doubt, would ever be ready to enlarge on the events of those stirring days. General Cope took his stand on the banks of the wooden railway that led from the coalpits to the potteries arid harbour.

The other form of these jugs was a peculiar narrow oval shape, with distinctive emblems and mottoes on the side panels. These were made specially for Jacobite clubs, which, when filled with water, allowed the members of these secret societies to pass their filled glasses of wine across the mouth of such narrow-mouthed jugs almost unnoticed when toasting the health of the King over the water.

The general quality of the 'ware is good, the colour of the body, a creamy white, is covered with a thin glaze slightly tinted with cobalt blue stain.

The decorations may be considered crude, but they are effective and pleasing in their simplicity and directness of design and appeal.

Besides making whiteware, terra-cotta and jet, or basalt wares, were also manufactured from local clays. For many years Gordon worked a seam of clay at the Upper Birslic Plantation to supply him with sufficient raw material for such classes of ware.

This pit was worked on the 'in-gaun-ee' system that is, on an inclined plane instead of an upright shaft. The quarry for many years after its disuse was known as the 'Clayholes.' This great open waste piece of land, which is still remembered in the neighbourhood, became famous as a covert for the badger, till the clayholes were finally filled up in 1870.

The beautiful old Prestonpans teapots and other wares in possession of Mr. Belfield, which I examined, display the excellent quality of workmanship of those days. Certainly, present-day potters are rarely to be met with



OVAL JUG.

Decorated in polychrome colours, on either side a heart-shaped medallion with bas-reliefs of children at play. One side inscribed "Sportive Innocence," and other side "Mischievous Sport." Under the spout W H is written in gold. Round the base an acanthus border.

FISHWIVES.

Decorated in underglaze colours.
Lent by Vernon Roberts, Esq.

OVAL JUG.

Decorated in underglaze colours.
*Lent by George T. Rainy, Esq.,
Edinburgh.*

Prestonpans Pottery. Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh.

who are able to turn out such carefully finished pots:

the handles, ornamental spouts *and* seams would alone test the skill of most 'pressers.' These pots (Plate XXXVIII.) were vitrified in the biscuit kiln, only the inside of them received glaze. The jetware has a fine smear of glaze all over it, which, from its glassy nature, in no way detracts from the sharply defined embossed patterns that encircle the pots, or from the high relief of the ornamentation of the knobs or handles of the articles.

Gordon, therefore, did not lack ability or enterprise in carrying on his business. We do not know who succeeded him, but, so far as can be learnt, the property never left the Gordon family till it was finally sold and the business wound up about 1832.

WATSON'S POTTERY

This was the other whiteware pottery, and was erected a few years later than Gordon's, about 1750, by the Watsons, an old family in Prestonpans. It was built on the shores of the Firth on a site a little to the west of the church.

The pottery made here was similar to what was manufactured in Gordon's factory in white and cream-coloured clays. It was larger than Gordon's, having three kilns, and was generally termed the Pott-Works by the inhabitants of the town. The firm was reputed to have given steady employment to over eighty potters alone, and to have reached a turnover of over £5,000 of white-ware in the year of its commencement.

The works extended from Ayres Wynd in the west to, and including a portion of the soap work in the east so that it is apparent the works attained a considerable size,

Watson, from all accounts, specialized in figuremaking. To accomplish this project he introduced many English potters and decorators, and this explains why many Prestonpans figures are remarkably similar to English figure-ware of that period, their distinctive feature being, however, the local characters portrayed.

A good example of this similarity was an earthenware punch-bowl, partly printed in underglaze blue with a floral or Greek fret border, and painted in approved

Staffordshire style with groups of flowers in colours.

The bowl was painted by an artist of the firm named Greig, who presented it to his sister on her marriage, and marked it "with her initials" H. T., 22nd June, 1811." It became the possession of Lieut.-Colonel Green, who obtained it from this lady when she had reached old age, while she was living in Stirling.

These decorated bowls were quite common in the Lothians, for it was customary to present a piece of Prestonpans pottery, suitably decorated and suitably inscribed, to an incoming tenant on a farm. Sometimes the present took the shape of a set of jugs, some kitchen shelf ornament, or chimney-piece china figures of bird or beast.

These articles are now fast becoming rare, and should be preserved) for they marked a genial and pleasant feature in Scottish peasant life a century ago.

The bulk of the early Scottish figures are supposed to have been produced here, such as Plates XXXI. and

XXXIII. They differ from the figures of other potteries in that they are more tastefully decorated; colours are not so profusely employed, and for this reason the modelling is seen to better advantage, the general effect being clean and bright. The palette of colours used was a very simple one—cobalt blues, reds, greens, and browns, but these even are used sparingly. The modelling of the pieces are their principal joy, especially the draperies, which are most effective. The illustration (Plate L.) shows this dearly, and is one of the most charming pieces of pottery modelling I have yet seen.

Besides making whiteware, the Company made stone-ware bottles in salt-glaze for holding the famous Prestonpans 'Ale (tu'penny ale). This factory is credited with making 'Grey Beards,' Or 'Bellarmine's,' which the Scottish potters insisted on calling 'Belmarines.' They were in common use during the eighteenth century.

The pottery during Thomson & Fowler's time advertised plates, bowls, bottles, grey beards, etc., among other pottery wares.

Watson, after many years of success, eventually got into difficulties, and was compelled to seek the assistance of Fowler, of John Fowler & Co., the Prestonpans brewers. In the end Fowler was forced to take over the entire property, and we hear no more of Watson.

Fowler never interested himself in the work of the pottery, and, being unable to carry on the business, induced his cousin, Cadell of Prestonpans, to become his managing partner.

A short time after Cadell withdrew his interest, and Thomson, a practical potter, was assumed as partner with Fowler in his stead. The style of the firm now became Fowler & Thomson. This Company appointed Charles Belfield to be works manager, of whom we will hear more later.

It is necessary to note all these varied changes of proprietors in this factory, for the operatives still continued calling the place 'Watson's Pottery' to the end of its existence. Sometimes this pottery is still called Cadell's and other times Thomson's, but they all refer to one and the same factory.

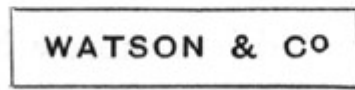
The new proprietors of Watson's 'pottery' were not content with making only whiteware, for they, shortly after taking over the works, launched out into making red clay bricks, tiles, field drain-pipes, etc., from clay in the vicinity of the factory; a scheme which did not succeed, and the tileworks ceased after being only a few years in operation.

Thomson, unfortunately, had other misfortunes. He had become surety for a friend called Laidlaw, who owned the Saltpans and Sulphur Works in the west-end of the town. The sum of money was £2,000, in those days a considerable amount. Laidlaw became bankrupt shortly after this arrangement, and in turn brought down Thomson, as he was unable to fulfil his obligation when called upon to do so. Thomson never got over his misfortune, and died shortly after with a broken heart.

The loss of Thomson, who had really been the head of the business, brought the pottery to an end, and the whole affair was sold off in 1840. Very few pieces of the figure work are marked, but there are a few figures marked impressed in the soft clay, 'WATSON.'

PRINTED WARE PATTERN MARKS.

BIRD & FLY



Before dosing I would draw attention to the old fashioned ink-wells made of local red day and covered with a jet-black glaze illustrated in Plate LVI. These were in general use in the parish schools throughout Scotland till about forty years ago, and are reminiscent of the quill pen and the village schoolmaster. They are now rarely met with except in some remote Highland glen.

NEWHALLS

A small pottery of one kiln, making common ware from the local clay, existed for many years in this village near Prestonpans.

CUTTLE

This place is also in the parish of Prestonpans, and had also a small pottery with a single kiln. It seems to have been carried on with energy and some enterprise for many years, manufacturing yellow ware in bowls, Jugs, and crocks.



FISHWIFE.
Portobello Ware.
(Rathbone),
about 1840.

PENNY BANK.

PIGEON ON ROCK.

PENNY BANK.

Portobello Ware.
(Rathbone),
1830-1840.

Prestonpans Pottery.

PRESTONPANS AND PORTOBELLO

ROMBACH

Rombach, whose name has a Dutch ring about it, built a small block of workshops and a solitary kiln in the High Street of Prestonpans, and used the local clays for making domestic ware. The pottery was closed a hundred years ago.

CUBIE

A potter, Adam Cubic, also built a one kiln pottery *not* far from Rombach in the high Street, towards the east-end of the town. He made chiefly water-jugs, saut buckets, butter tubs, etc., for the farmers. Cubic closed his works towards the end of the eighteenth century ; the date is supposed to be actually 1797.

PRESTONPANS POTTERY

When Gordon and Watson's potteries closed it was felt by everyone that the pottery trade had left the district. Fortunately, Charles Belfield had faith in the local talent, and in 1832 he founded this factory. It is the survivor of those halcyon days of potting in Prestonpans.

Belfield, like many leading Scottish potters of the title, hailed originally from a Derbyshire pottery in the early years of the nineteenth century.

The Duke of Buccleuch had erected a small pottery with one kiln at the village of Cousland, near his Palace at Dalkeith. Cousland clay fires a soft cream-colour, and Belfield was invited down by the Duke to manufacture some fine dinner and dessert services from it, and have them suitably decorated in tasteful designs. Specimens of this pottery are still to be seen in the Palace.

When the work was satisfactorily accomplished Belfield left, and became manager, as we have seen, of Thomson's pottery in Prestonpans till he left in 1832.

By 1836 Belfield took his son James in as his partner and founded the firm Charles Belfield & Sons. The factory was erected in the west-end of the town, partly on the site of the old secret work of the unfortunate Laidlaw. Some of the workshops are nearly two hundred years old. It is a quaint and interesting factory, delightfully situated on the rocky shores of the Forth. In winter a high and stormy tide sometimes penetrates into the kilnyard.

This is supposed to have been the first place to make white sanitary ware in Scotland of a superior quality. The quality was so good that very soon a fine connection was established, and the name Belfield became associated with the great sanitary improvements in houses throughout Scotland of that period.

The fashion of this class of ware changed and it became unprofitable to make, and ultimately bad to be discontinued.

The production of brown and yellow domestic wares from the local clays was then started, and Belfield Rockingham teapots and other brownware became known wherever tea was a beverage.

Previous to 1852 the manufacture of hand thrown drain pipes had been introduced by Charles Belfield, Sr., and these were added to the other branches of the pottery. These pipes initiated the immense drainpipe trade that has since grown up in Scotland.

They were originally formed by being thrown by hand or the old potter's wheel. The illustration (Plate LVI.) is an excellent example of these now historic pipes. If we examine the illustration we may discern the wavy marks of the potter's fingers as he formed the tube on his wheel. The pipes are usually 15 to 18 inches long, and about 3 to 4.5 inches internal diameter. They taper in width so that the narrower end can be inserted into the wider end, there is besides a check formed in the narrow end to enable the joint to be made tight.



MUSTARD POT. VINEGAR BOTTLE. PEPPER. SALT.

Prestonpans Ware.
Smith Institute, Stirling.

Charles Belfield, not content with this primitive pipe, invented a method of forming them by pressing ' them in a mould, at the same time introducing the spigot and faucet joint which is now in common use. Unfortunately, Belfield did not adequately protect his brilliant idea with a proper patent, and others reaped the benefit. Latterly, steam-power was applied to his invention, and the old order of piping was revolutionized.

These original thrown and hand-made pipes were used for a number of purposes. Large quantities were employed for conveying fresh water by gravitation to the towns that were then rapidly springing up in the industrial parts of Scotland. In this work Belfield's firm became recognized as experts.

When gas was introduced these pipes, now coated with glaze, were the only means available to convey gas. Occasionally these are still dug up in various districts, and should be preserved as relics of an age that seemed quite happy although *they* did not know the benefits of sanitary drainage, water, or gas supplies such as we now enjoy. Mr. Belfield, the grandson of the Founder is still carrying on the manufacture of all kinds of Rockingham 'ware and many other kindred articles in this old factory, and is maintaining the best traditions of this pottery centre for the quality of its wares.'

The town in these days was a busy centre. There were two important pottery fairs held annually, and these provided a ready market for the productions of the various potteries.

In the Scottish census of 1796 mention is made of two large potteries and two smaller ones working, and employing altogether 252 potters. The Brick and Tile Works employed as well some thirty potters for their own special work. These numbers appear to us today to be comparatively small, but industrial progress in Scotland was then only in its infancy.

The potters were a thrifty and prudent class of workers. This commendable trait in their character is brought out in the successful management of their Potters Friendly Society. It had over a thousand members. This 'was in great contrast to the coal miners, who, although they were more numerous, had no such society in the town. The potters were therefore entitled to have a good conceit of themselves, and felt justified in having a grand parade every year on the first Friday of June. This gala day was most religiously maintained till 1840, after which year no records have

been kept of this annual procession. Although the actual festival was largely abandoned, Potters' Day was held in happy remembrance by the townsfolk for many years afterwards.

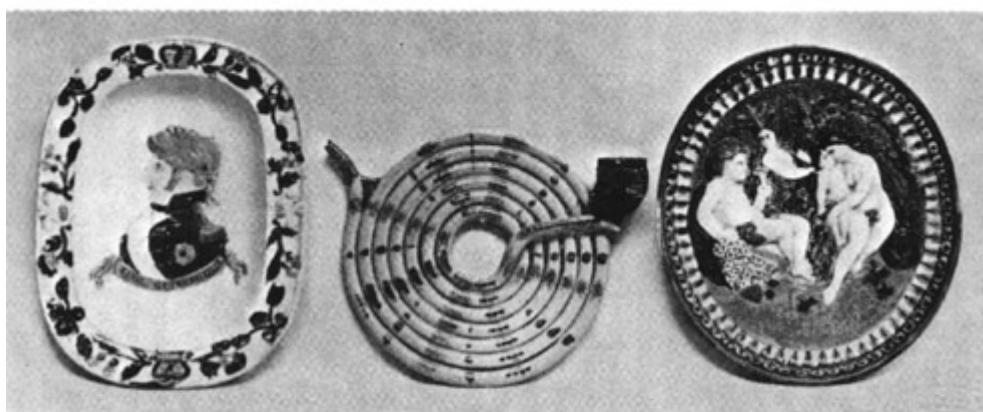
The 'simple' folks in those days had no expensive asylums to go to, and it was customary to employ them in many industries near their homes that were not dangerous, and on duties that they could perform easily.

Of this order was a wheelman called Rabbie Smith born in the town about the end of the eighteenth century. He dwelt with his sister Belle in a dwelling opposite the church known as Morrison's Buildings.' He worked in Gordon's pottery turning a wheel for a thrower, and, as he was the fortunate possessor of a drum, he became the unofficial drummer of the town.

If at any time there was a meeting of the Potters Society, he was not slow in seizing the opportunity of sounding his drum to summon all the members to their assembly.

But Rabbie's day of days was the annual procession of the potters on their gala day. Long before the appointed hour he was at the door of each member of the society, rousing them tip so that they should be in good time. Of course he accompanied the procession, with his drum slung over his shoulder, banging it loudly all the time.

PLATE XXXVI



DISH.

In white ware, with bas-relief polychrome decoration. Bust of George IV. in centre. Border with crowns, Prince of Wales feathers and floral ornaments.
1821.

PIPE.

In glazed white ware and decorated with various colours.
1820.

PLAQUE.

Coloured and glazed earthenware, figures of Bacchus, Venus, Cupid and Ceres, in bas-reliefs with enriched border.
1800.

Prestonpans Ware, Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh.

TAXIS

After our Napoleonic wars this country had so exhausted its financial resources that almost every industry was compelled to pay a share of the burden of refilling the Nation Exchequer. New taxes were imposed. Bricks and tiles came under the new schemes of taxation, which, in the case of bricks, amounted to 2s. 6s. per thousand, and in tiles 85. per thousand (a considerable percentage of their selling price), and such heavy duties handicapped and hindered these trades then struggling to make a beginning.

A tax was levied on stoneware bottles amounting to 15 per cent. on the quantity *made*, not sold, which conditions were considered unfair considering the quantity that might be broken before being sold.

From the Records of the locality we learn that coal was cheap-a most important factor for a pottery. For example, in Gordon's and Watson's works twenty tons of fuel were consumed weekly in each place for firing their kilns, and the price was only 5s. 6d. per ton, and that included cartage into the kilnyards.

The wages paid for producing the ware, to our ideas of this vexed question, were apparently low. The wage of a potter over a hundred years ago averaged 1s. per day, but if he was an energetic man he could earn considerably more. On piecework a clever potter could earn as much as 15s. per week; probably he would be a figure-maker, of which he might produce forty per day. Boys received from 1s. to 2s. per week, and started at the early age of eight years. When they were nearly fifteen years old, they were bound as apprentices, to be made in course of time journeymen potters. All of which gives a good idea of the time it takes to turn out good potters, and explains the excellent grade of ware in Prestonpans. From what one can gather the wages and conditions in the Staffordshire Potteries were no whit better, nor were they in any other trade; in some trades conditions were much worse. Coal mining was in a deplorable condition, and the workers were treated as serfs, or slaves of the pits, and lived under depressing surroundings.

The old Prestonpans potter was a craftsman, making his pots with care, and finishing them quite as well as similar ware was then turned out by his Staffordshire *confreres*. It is true, defects in the 'body' and glaze can be detected, as also in the crude colouring of these early pieces, but the 'whole appearance of the productions, and the general care in finishing the figures, particularly the draperies and features are worth more than a cursory glance.

In criticising the early Prestonpans figures it must be remembered early potters knew very little about fine grinding of flint, or glaze. The body inclines to be yellow, indicating a large percentage of Devonshire ball-clay in the body mixture, and not being very well sifted is rather sandy in grain, the glaze thin and poor, with the result that prominent parts, such as a nose, Or tips of fingers, or brim of a hat are exceedingly easily chipped, and it is 'very rarely we meet with a perfect example of an old figure-indeed, grave suspicion might reasonably be cast on a perfect specimen. The jugs, generally speaking, are better glazed, and have been fired harder, which has greatly improved their appearance.

Shortly after my father went to Verreville Pottery Gordon's pottery was closed, and many potters came from Prestonpans to Glasgow to find employment. Among these was a potter Robert Purves. He, by his ability, became 'works manager of Verreville, and my father and he became fast friends. In the course of many chats, of 'which my father left me notes, Purves said he never understood the reason of the white potteries closing after a successful career of a hundred years.

Purves was a typical Prestonpans potter he was not only a fine craftsman in clay, but could glaze and fire the pots as well. Few potters are competent to perform the whole process in those modern days of specialized trades, improved equipment, and organization In a pottery Now-a-days a potter will keep to making plates, or jugs. That man is a platemaker, or jugmaker-not a potter. His outlook and interests are in consequence narrow and limited. This is a misfortune, not only for the individual operative but for the craft as well.

There was a certain *esprit de corps* 'to turn out ware carefully finished and fettled.' This can be observed in the ware turned out of this town. The handles are carefully stuck-up,' the spouts and lips of jugs are of the same thickness as the edge of the article. The lids fit neither too tightly nor too slack. These are the details that show the good craftsman, for his character is not only to be found in the general design, but in the care and attention in producing the finished article. Therefore, Prestonpans figures especially are better modelled and potted than from any other Scottish pottery. The quality of the ware and glaze may be defective, but the general quality of the work overcomes one's prejudices, and one admires the pose *and* general artistic finish of the characters portrayed, for there is no attempt to cover the defects with splashes of strong and brilliant colourings, and for this reason Prestonpans ware was a credit to Scottish pottery. Another prominent feature is that there appears to have been no standard pattern of pedestal, so often met with in a pottery, for sticking the actual figures upon. Each figure was made in conjunction with the base, which often is charmingly wrought and designed to form a background and support the figure as well during the delicate processes of firing.

CASTLE POTTERY

This was originally a factory built on the most modern lines about twenty-five years ago to produce tiles for decorative purposes in a variety of coloured glazes or enamels. It was erected by a man Clunas, who) after

a brief period, was compelled to give up the venture and dose the place.

It was started again by the Scottish Porcelain Company, Ltd.

The works are under the management of Mr. Boyle, who at one time was in the Belleek Pottery at Fermanagh, in Ireland. The pottery produces small articles in lustre porcelain, with the coats-of-arms of various Scottish towns painted on them, and also a large variety of fancy ornaments, among which may be noted wicker baskets beautifully and delicately made of woven clay in the manner of the original Belleek ware.

DUNBAR

A large tile and brick work flourished at West Barns for many years, and made domestic pottery for local use. It was closed thirty years ago, and the works dismantled.

JOPPA

Joppa lies midway between Portobello and Musselburgh. A brick and tile work flourished for many years there. It made also glazed useful articles for domestic use. The saltworks are now one of the oldest industries in this old village, and have been in existence for fully two centuries supplying the local potteries with necessary sea salt for glazing their wares.

CHAPTER IX

PRESTONPANS AND FORTOBELLO AND OTHER CENTRES

PORTOBELLO

THIS historical district owes its prosperity and renown as a pottery centre to an abundance of good red clay of a fine quality found there, and ~so to its proximity to some of the oldest coalpits in Scotland.

On the banks of the Figgart Burn in the early part of the eighteenth century there was a stretch of countryside, the soil of which was so barren and clayey that it was impossible of cultivation. From time to time a few red bricks and tiles had been made by hand from it in a very primitive manner on the spot, but in 1764 a distinct change took place, transforming the quiet country side into a busy hive of industry. Two builders from Edinburgh, Patrick and William Jameson, came on the scene. They had undertaken large building schemes in Edinburgh and were anxious about their supplies. They therefore set about erecting large brick and tile works, and were soon producing three million bricks per annum. This soon far exceeded the local consumption, so Jameson found markets for his bricks in Virginia and in Carolina in America, and on the Continent.

This year, 1764, was also the date noted in the newspaper referred to relative to the establishment of a china factory.

In a map of this district dated 1783 'we will observe marked on it 2 poteries '-the spelling is peculiar and worth noticing, as it shows the influence of France in spelling pottery-and also 'Jameson's Brickworks.'

In one of those potteries about 1770 a raid was made by the press gang for obtaining seamen for the Service. The incident reminds us vividly of the good old days.'

The party was successful in capturing a potter named Robert Flay. He was, however, so besmirched with clay from his occupation that he successfully pled with the sailors to allow him to go home, wash himself, and change his clothes, to which request they acceded. When flay arrived at his home he went straight to his bedroom, and speedily raising one of the back windows, promptly made his escape.

John flay, a descendant became, as we shall *see*, proprietor of the Rosebank Works.

In the Scottish Historical Exhibition of 1891 there were among the various exhibits some interesting pictorial tiles made and designed by Benjamin Walker about 1770 in Portobello, which displayed considerable skill in their production. No actual trace of this factory can now be found.

Collectors of Portobello ware are more intimate with the names of the Brothers Scott. They were ingenious and enterprising potters, and although they had very little spare capital they confidently approached Jameson to help them in a practical manner about 1786, and he willingly erected a pottery which he leased to them, and the firm of Scott Brothers became established. This firm was well-known for its excellent quality of white stoneware. For many years their productions consisted largely of dinner ware and tea sets of a superior quality. Fruit services were also made and decorated in tasteful floral and ornamental designs. They also used the local red clay for many articles, both useful and ornamental, decorating them in a quaint manner with a pale pipeclay slip. This latter ware had a chocolate colour, when covered by the glaze which had a rich lead-glaze appearance. Latterly, models of beasts and birds were made in a grotesque fashion in this clay and highly glazed as well. They cannot have made large quantities of this class of ware, for it is now scarce and much sought after by pottery collectors, and the illustrations of a piece will give the reader a better idea of the genuine article than *any* amount of writing can do.

Unfortunately, like so many other articles of Scottish manufacture, a large proportion possess no distinguishing mark. Some) however, do have these marks stamped into the plastic clay (Plate XXXVIII.)

SCOTT BROS.

The pottery after being in operation for some ten years was closed in 1796, but not without leaving a permanent impression, for pieces of Scotts are still to be found, and are, rightly prized not merely on account of their rarity but for their artistic and technical qualities.

Two men from Edinburgh, Messrs. Cookson & Jar-dine, purchased the works, and soon re-opened them, for the following announcement was published a few months after completing their bargain, that the pottery was being reconstructed on Staffordshire lines, and that production would be enlarged, and business pushed forward on a liberal scale and plan."

Potters were induced to come from the neighbouring factories at Prestonpans, Mussdburgh, Newhalls, and Newbigging. The firm now put fresh vigour into the concern and it became soon a most flourishing affair. In 1808 they sold the business to one Thomas Yoole, who then took over the management himself. He had been associated with the firm for some years as their practical manager over the potters, so he was familiar with the requirements of the trade, and was besides already an outstanding figure in the civic affairs of the town.

Thomas Yoole had two charming daughters, Janet and Grace (curiously enough a favourite name for the daughters of potters), whom he brought with him one day on a visit to Glasgow, which was rapidly becoming the metropolis and business centre for Scotland. Stories had probably reached him of the extensive potteries being erected there, and no doubt the fine shops attracted the young ladies. When they arrived they were hospitably received, for we hear of them visiting one of the largest of these potteries.

They were shown over the various departments by one of the clerks a man named Rathbone, who, judging from his name, probably originally came from Staffordshire. In any case he seems to have made himself most agreeable to the guests, so much so that Yoole pressed him to come and pay them a visit in return for his kindness and courtesy, an invitation which the latter was not slow to accept, and we soon afterwards hear of him stopping with the Yooles at Portobello. He came, he saw, he conquered, and ultimately married one of Yoole's daughters, and it did not require much persuasion on the father's part to induce Rathbone to take up his abode permanently at Portobello.

His father-in-law made him a partner in 1810, and a new lease was granted by Jameson, of which we have this record "To Thomas Yuille or Yoole, and partner, under the name of Thomas Rathbone & CO~ white stoneware manufacturers, etc., etc."

Jameson was a brick and tile manufacturer, and it was in consequence, stipulated by him that the new firm should confine themselves entirely to the manufacture of whiteware, and not make any articles from the local red clays, such as tiles, etc., while he, on his part, was willing to confine himself also to this class of work.

The chief productions of the new firm, besides the general class of ware already described, became more ornamental in character.

Rathbone was a man of most cultured and artistic

PLATE XXXVII



OMNIBUS TEAPOT.

EGG HOOP.
Imitation horn.

CAN CUP.

CREAM POT.

Prestonpans China Ware.
Smith Institute, Stirling.

taste, and the works were now converted to producing, in rapid succession, daintily coloured and admirably modelled figures and plaques. These figures are still most interesting to us, as they depict the local characters as well as the style of dress of that period. Fishwives, fishergirls, seamen, soldiers, peasants, and various local celebrities all furnished him with ideas for his work. Besides these, he produced a wonderful collection of farmyard and wild animals. Among the best models of this class of work was a reproduction in miniature of the famous lions which are to be seen at the entrance of the Loggia dei Lanzi in Florence. This latter was generally admitted to have been Rathbone's finest piece of modelling in this style of pottery ware.

All these figures were made rather thick, heavy to handle, and, although their

general appearance is attractive, they do not possess the same quality in finish as the Prestonpans potters put in their work. The hole in the bottom to let the air and steam escape during firing in the kiln is usually a rough X. Indeed, in all specimens I have examined I have noticed this peculiarity. This aperture is done by the presser, after he had made his figure with a pricker, a tool somewhat like a hatpin, in the soft clay before he takes the hardened figure out of the mould to dry. In most cases this hole is made round, as if made by a disused gas-burner.

Small square and oval plaques with simple mouldings around the edge are also distinctive specimens of Rathbone's work. Some of these have portraits crudely illustrated on them, such as George IV., which was a popular piece to celebrate the visit of that king to Edinburgh also one of Queen Victoria riding on horseback, also commemorating her first visit to Scotland in 1842. Others have scripture texts printed in U/G black in the centre surrounded by a gold lustre frame.

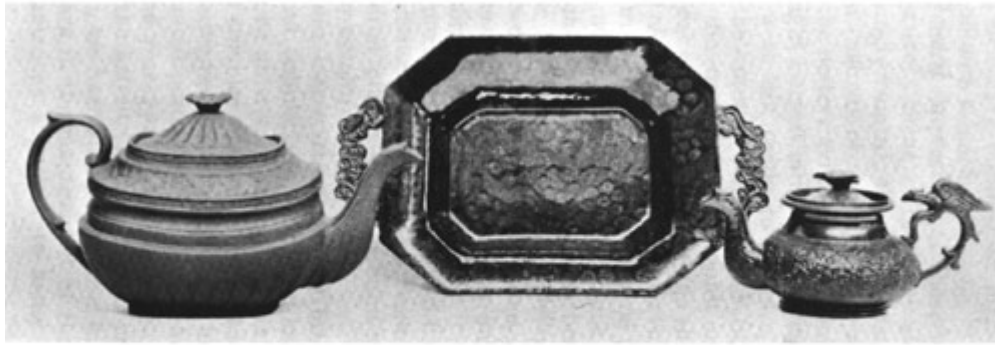
The most popular frames were square in form, and of a rococo pattern imitating in some cases the ambitious and elaborate designs of that genre. Gold was rarely if ever used on these frames, which were covered with the same simple colours that decorated the design in the centre of the plaque.

The body of the ware is cream colour, and the glaze that covered it, although clear and transparent, has a thin bluish appearance, the surface of which is inclined in parts to be rough, caused by insufficient grinding of the glaze.

Perhaps one of the most outstanding peculiarities of the coloured pottery is the frequent use that Rathbone made of a mulberry shade of brown, in some cases it verges on purple. This is produced by mixing oxide of Iron, the base of all browns, with a considerable proportion of black oxide of manganese. This manganese was obtained from the local chemical works that made bleaching powder from chloride of lime. Some of the chlorine remained in the manganese used in the recovery process, and in the reaction formed chloride of manganese ($MnCl_2$) a purple-coloured salt. The addition of this recovered manganese to underglaze brown colours was a fairly common practice but in Portobello this shade of brown was cultivated, giving the colour in many pieces a very delightful soft purple or plum-coloured tint of brown, almost verging to what is termed Aubergine in Chinese ware. The cobalt blue used was also a favourite colour, giving a clear and limpid effect wherever used in the figures. It was mixed with a soft flux of borax, or a mixture of common salt and flint, and is inclined to trickle where it has been laid on too thickly on the piece. Gold purple lustre is occasionally met with, adding a touch of richness to the article.

The other colours commonly employed were of the Overglaze or enamel variety: coral red and emerald green being among the most popular. They are effectively used in fine lines, and tend to brighten up the whole scheme of decoration.

The underglaze browns and blues form the foundation in decorating the robes and bases of the figures,



BASALTE TEAPOT.
(Wedding present to Mrs. Craig's
father or mother in 1815.)
Prestonpans.

DISH.
Chocolate coloured, with white
pipe-clay decoration, stamped
" Scott Brothers."
Portobello
Lent by Vernon Roberts, Esq.
Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh.

BASALTE TEAPOT, 1800.
Kingfield.

while the features are carried out in pale tints of vermilion red enamel. The eyelids and similar fine outlines are delicately outlined in black, with a fine pen rather than with a hair brush.

The general impression of these articles is pleasing and attractive. Some of them are vigorously modelled and strikingly painted, the figures particularly depicting the social customs of a century ago are interesting not only for the pottery enthusiast but also for anyone taking even a slight interest in the past traditions of Scotland.

They were not costly to produce, and were chiefly sold to the country folk all over Scotland. I should imagine the manufacturer would only receive a few shillings for a figure, and about one shilling for a plaque.

Those of us who may have a knowledge of the Staffordshire figure-makers' work of the same period, for it had a great vogue then, cannot but be struck with the similarity of style and model and decoration between the English and those Scottish ornaments, proving that many Englishmen were working for Rathbone, and that they had a considerable share in improving and maintaining the high quality of Portobello ware.

The pottery was now a large and flourishing business. Its importance can be gathered from the fact that over one hundred potters—a large number in those days—were fully employed.

Rathbone leaves us a record of his many disappointments, and tribulations which he had to endure, and which, if he must succeed, he had perforce to surmount.

His chief troubles were incurred in teaching and training up the native potters to produce the high grade of white and decorated pottery he had set his heart on producing. About the year 1845 he, it is admitted by his friends, attained the height of his fame and prosperity. In this year, also, we hear for the first time of his son taking an active share in the management of the works) as he was now assumed as a partner to assist his father in the business.

Unfortunately, shortly after young Rathbone had joined his father old Rathbone passed suddenly away. The business, although apparently prosperous, had absorbed a considerable portion of Rathbone's fortune.

The son, greatly handicapped for the lack of liquid financial resources, struggled away by himself for several years, until he was most reluctantly compelled to cease producing any more pottery, and the works were finally closed down. The town was deeply concerned over this stoppage, for the pottery had added to the renown and prosperity of the district.

The works remained idle for many years, no one apparently anxious to venture 'where such an able potter as Rathbone had failed. The works remained closed till 1856, when a welcome change took place.

The names of Yoole and Rathbone are not likely ever to be forgotten in Portobello. A small street which contained at one time dwelling-houses, is now absorbed in the extensions of the present Midlothian Pottery. Yoole's Place is still to be seen on a name-plate at the corner of the street. While on the Promenade, quite close to the works, there is a good-sized mansion-house which still bears the title Rathbone's House.

In 1856 the pottery again came into prominence. Dr. William Affleck Gray, a well-known medical man in Edinburgh, purchased the whole concern, and brought up two of his sons, Alexander and William, to be pottery manufacturers.

Marks on Rathbone's Ware, impressed into the Clay

T. RATHBONE.
P.



PLATE XXXIX



BLUE AND WHITE PRINTED PLATES.
Prestonpans Ware.
Collection of Author.

MIDLOTHIAN POTTERIES

The name of the pottery was now altered, and, as the sons attained proficiency in the management of the business, they were assumed as partners, and the style of the firm became W. A. Gray & Sons, Midlothian Potteries.

Dr. Gray, for reasons best known to himself, felt that Rathbone's expensive class of ware could not be profitably produced in the district. He, therefore, entirely changed the character of the productions of the pottery. White earthenware ceased to be produced, and the manufacture of stoneware was entered upon with enterprize and commendable energy.

The Rathbone family still maintained some interest in the works, for in a document dated 14th January, 1873, we have the following list of shareholders in the pottery:

1. John Rathbone, Glass Embosser and Stainer, 5 Norton Place, Edinburgh.
Annie Grace Rathbone, 5 Norton Place, Edinburgh.
D.C. Simpson, Curator for above.
2. W.A. Gray, M.D.
3. R.S. Riddell, Teacher of Music, Edinburgh.
4. Gentles, 1 Salisbury Square, Edinburgh.
5. Robert Wilson, at McLean & Hope's, residing at 11 Rumford Place, Liverpool.

Livingstone, Wine Merchant, Curator, Musselburgh.

In this class of commoner stoneware the works very quickly became fully employed. Extensive additions were frequently made to the original works till they are now among the largest stoneware potteries in Scotland, producing a large variety of articles for the home, colonial and foreign markets.

In 1880 the firm, finding the original pottery of Rathbone too small for the demands of their ware, purchased the pottery at Newbigging, Musselburgh, and after carrying out extensive alterations the first white jam pots completed in one firing were there produced. This was an important invention, as hitherto the white jam pots, such as made by 'Cochran in Britannia,' the original maker of the neck jar, required two firings.

This innovation was considered of such importance that Messrs. Gray patented it in 1882. Many other stoneware potters attempted to copy this process, but were reminded by the capable and shrewd men at the head of affairs in the Midlothian Pottery that they were infringing the Patent rights of Messrs. Gray & Sons, and they were compelled to desist.

For many years the Company enjoyed the benefit of their Patent till at last it expired. The pots and jars made by this process required great heat to fire them efficiently, and the process brought the glaze into such intimate contact with the clay jar that the articles were non-crazing, and being thoroughly vitrified, that is non-absorbent, were admirably adapted for containing food of any description.

The Gold Medal was awarded Messrs. W. A. Gray & Sons at the Edinburgh Exhibition of 1886 for this 'White Vitrified Ware.'

Dr. Gray died in 1896. He had retired from the business a few years before this, leaving the management of the works to his two sons, the elder of whom, Alexander, as well as being a partner in the works, had already taken an active part in the local affairs of the town. Indeed, it is said he was during his office one of the youngest bailies in Scotland.

Among his fellow-manufacturers he was highly esteemed, and occupied for some time the chair at their meetings.

He died in 1905 at the comparatively early age of fifty-eight, and his brother William took over the entire management till he retired in 1919.

William was different from his brother in that he had been trained as a practical potter as a thrower 'and turner,' and possessed all the necessary knowledge for



Portobello Ware.
Rathbone's Pottery.

successfully firing his wares in the various kilns. He died in his seventy-second year in October, 1921.

William Richardson, who had been with the Grays all his life, has now taken over the business. While adhering to the past successful policy of the firm, he has installed the most modern plant, such as the casting process, for producing his patent stoneware foot-warmers, etc.

A most interesting enterprise he has entered upon is the revival of the old brownware domestic articles of half-a-century ago. These are made from local clay, such as the clays used in their Rosebank works. This department is managed by John Flay, a descendant of Robert Flay who was chased by the press-gang. It is the only pottery producing now this most essential class of ware, viz. milk basins, crocks, bread cans, etc., and it is pleasing to note the venture is meeting with every success.

While visiting the pottery Mr. Flay showed me a finely modelled clock-stand made in the pottery during Rathbone's time. It is a massive piece. Unfortunately it received an accident while being lent to the Glasgow Historical Exhibition of 1911. It consists not only of an ornamental background and frame for a clock, but on a platform in front is seated the figure of Britannia on one side and the kneeling figure of a *negro* slave on the other, with chains falling from his folded arms, receiving his freedom, evidently, at the hands of Britannia, saying, "Am not I a man and a brother?" The whole piece lends itself to brilliant colour, all effectively shown up by the shining black figure of the negro.

In the decoration of the base there appears an important clue in deciding what are Portobello figures. The base of the figures is usually square, and made separately in the mould; on this base a rope or cable is formed as a moulding round the top edging, and decorated below with a 'Key Border' pattern in blue, put on roughly with a stencil or cut sponge—observe this peculiarity in Plate XXXIV.

While visiting the pottery I was shown several old and interesting moulds one of which was a toby jug, which shows how much Rathbone was influenced by what was then being produced in England.

Toby jugs are much sought after by collectors for their quaint, humorous, and interesting shapes and designs. Genuine pieces are highly prized, and were naturally much copied. The jugs form an interesting tribe—the general form is recognized. It is in the individuals that much interest may be aroused. A common form shows a stout middle-aged gentleman seated and holding a jug. He wears brightly-coloured checked (in Scotland) garments, and usually a three-cornered hat that is coloured black, one of the corners forming the spout. He may represent any notable or popular figure. Very often he represents John Bull, or cross-legged, and with a face to suit the part, he is Simple Simon. His *wife* too often appears with no distinctive title other than that of Toby's wife. Large or small, he or she is the embodiment of well-fed contentment, and thoroughly deserves the full name of Toby Philpot.

PORTOBELLO OR WAVERLEY POTTERY

Another pottery not far from the Midlothian Pottery was erected in 1770, and was occupied for many years by W. & C. Smith, who are credited with being the men who produced bone china in Portobello. We have a vague account of their proceedings, but very little actual information as to the size of the place or the patterns they produced, for again no mark was put on any of their ware. The pottery was enlarged in 1756, but in a few years the enterprise proved unremunerative, and it was disposed of to the adjoining soapworks.

By the year 1830 the soapworks resold the pottery to two brothers, Hugh and Arthur Cornwall, who carried on the works for many years, making china and other wares under the firm of Cornwall & Co.



EARTHENWARE SAUCE BOAT.
In green, with blue and brown streaks on wings and breast.
Gallatoun Pottery.

WHITE EARTHENWARE JUG.
Painted on one panel an allegorical scene, and on the other side the order of Saint Andrew flanked by thistles.
Prestonpans Ware, late 18th Cent.
The Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh.

TOBY JUG.
Raised crown on bottom.
Musselburgh Pottery, 1830.

EARTHENWARE GOAT ON ROCKY STAND.
Gallatoun Pottery, 1820-1825.

They latterly devoted their energies to the manufacture of stoneware jugs, jars, etc., in which they depicted hunting and other sporting scenes in a spirited, lifelike fashion. The demi-john illustrated in Plate LVI. shows the proprietors to have been excellent potters. It is one of the finest specimens of salt-glazed stoneware I have ever seen in any country.

The body of the ware is mottled-brown, and the figures are made in a cream-coloured pipe-clay, the darker background throwing up the relief clearly, yet with a charm of softness not usually met with in such ware.

A few years later the firm was altered to Mime, Corn-wall & Co. Not much change, however, was made in the pottery, only figures appear as well as animals. The individuality of conception, and the remarkable skill of this pottery is fully borne out by the saut-bucket illustrated in Plate LVI

The works in 1840 were sold to John Tough, who was already a master-potter at Newbigging. Tough took his son in now as partner, but the works apparently ceased manufacturing the higher grade of stoneware, and latterly only made coarse articles of common clay similar to those made in Newbigging.

About 1867 the Toughs gave up the pottery, and Mr. Buchan acquired a lease of it, ultimately purchasing the place. A few years later he was joined by J. F. Murray from the Caledonian Pottery, Glasgow. The firm now became Murray & Buchan, and continued so till 1877 when Murray resigned.

William Maclachlan, a brother of John of the Clyde Pottery, Greenock, took Murray's place in the management of the works for a few years, till he also resigned.

The business now passed entirely into the hands of Messrs. A. W. Buchan & Co., who have ever since carried on these works under their own name, producing large quantities of stoneware of every description.

These works on the quay side were built on the opposite side, from Rathbone's place, of the old harbour that had been constructed by the Jamesons in the middle of the eighteenth century which was so useful in importing the clays of Devonshire and Cornwall for the potteries and for shipping their finished products. This harbour, not much used now, has been filled up to make room for further extensions. Many of the old pic stones with rings attached that formed the original quay wall are still to be seen in the kilnyard.

WESTBANK POTTERIES

These works were also erected by the enterprising Jameson in 1770 for Anthony Hillcoat, primarily for making roof and drain tiles but, as business developed, he gradually added the making of brownware domestic pottery.

It was latterly purchased by a Clerk of the Justiciary Court called Alexander Guthrie. On his death his son William took over the management of the place. The works stood idle from 1880 to 1884. In 1890 the works were sold to Messrs. Peter Mitchell & Sons, and have since developed into one of the largest red pottery works in Scotland.

The clay pit became in course of time exhausted, and the works were recently removed a quarter of a mile to the south where another good bed of clay was fortunately discovered. The site of the original pottery is now covered by the new and gigantic Electric Power Station of the Edinburgh Corporation.

NEWBIGGING POTTERY MUSSELBURGH

This was established in 1820 by a potter John Tough (a good name for a potter!), who assumed a man Foster as a partner, and the firm's name became Foster & Tough. About 1840 the works were sold to one called Reid, who carried on the works successfully for many years till he ultimately conveyed the works and business to the Grays, as an addition to their Midlothian works for the manufacture of their white glazed ware, and it is still actively engaged in this line of ware.

ROSEBANK POTTERY

This pottery was also a venture of Jameson's, who erected it in the end of the eighteenth century. It originally was a comparatively small concern, and had many changes in its tenancy in the early days.

Early in the nineteenth century one of the brothers Scott purchased it but did not retain possession of it very long, for he shortly afterwards sold it to a Dougald McEwan, a well-known man and character in the town. His name is still associated with the place in the 'McEwan Square.' He died about the year 1828. After his death the pottery was purchased by Mr. Martin, a merchant from Dundee, who in turn sold it to Reid, who lately had become proprietor of the Newbigging Pottery in Musselburgh, which he had purchased from Foster, Tough & Co.

In 1830, John Hay, grandson of old Hillcoat, the original tenant of West Bank Pottery, and also of Robert Flay, of whom I described an exciting incident, acquired the pottery. He introduced more modern methods, and, putting new machinery into it, soon succeeded in producing quite creditable pottery of a useful domestic order.

John was assisted later on by his son Thomas, who carried on the business under the style of J. & T. Hay. After the death of the father, Thomas continued the business, and was ultimately succeeded by one of his sons of the same name. The lease, however, of the works and ground expired in 1920, and the site having been purchased by the proprietors of the neighbouring paper mills, the old and renowned Rosebank Pottery was closed and the buildings demolished.

There were other factories, but these were more for manufacturing building bricks, tiles, etc. Among these I might mention Messrs. William Hunter & Co., Thornton & Co., and Scott Turner, Ltd., all well-known names in the clay-working trade fifty years ago.

