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Suggestions For The Improvement Of Sporting Cups And Trophies. Part I.

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Sporting Cups.

skill into the fabric of the picture. Full of ingenuity, of resources, delighting in all delicate and dainty means of expressing the thought, she yet never descends to triviality, to mere "prettiness." I spoke of the psychology of the drawing in the earlier work; how much more it may be spoken of now. Each line in the *Queen and the Page*



SILVER CUP DESIGNED BY C. R. ASHBEE
EXECUTED BY THE GUILD OF HANDICRAFT

carries its full force of spiritual significance. There is something of Maeterlinckian mysticism about it, almost something of Maeterlinck's insistent repetition. It is rhythmic in its flow and the ear is attuned to the sadness of the undercurrents of life. It has the charm, the tenderness, the "morbidezza" of a mediæval love-story. Yet no one more than Mrs. Stokes deprecates the unhealthiness of much modern attitudinising. Practical, capable, enthusiastic, with that "divine gift" of the dexterous use of tools, loving her work without pose or affectation, looking for beauty in all things, she has a clear, sane and healthy outlook upon life. H. F.

The sixteenth Home Arts and Industries Exhibition will be held at the Albert Hall, London, from the 24th to the 28th May.

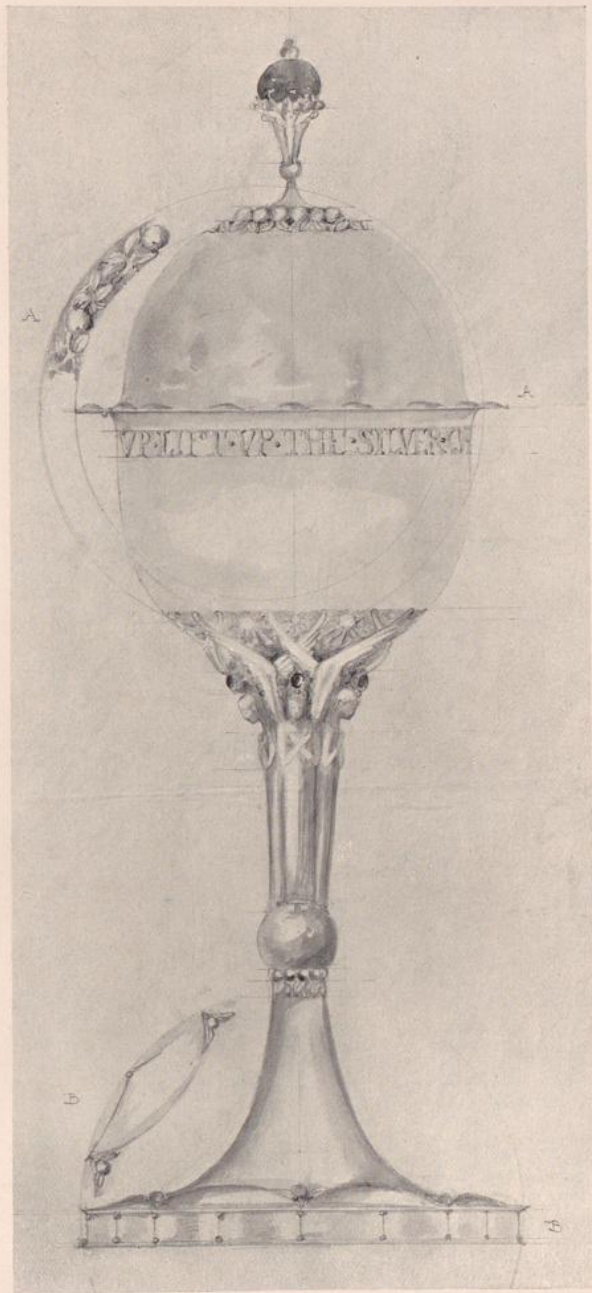
SUGGESTIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF SPORTING CUPS AND TROPHIES. PART I.

THE age in which we live is of a piece with the jerry-builder who angered Tennyson by destroying useful trees. "Why do you cut them down?" the poet asked. "Make the foundation of your house a few yards back, and you could save them. Trees are beautiful things." The jerry-builder smiled with amusement. "Trees are ornaments," he replied; "what *we* want is utility." And the industrial vandalism of to-day has not had a more laconic spokesman.

The most general manifestation of this destructive kind of "utility" is to be found in the modern craze for cheap things. Thackeray laughed at this craze, at this childish mania for cheapness. A friend spoke to him one day of a place where cheap and excellent old wines could be purchased;

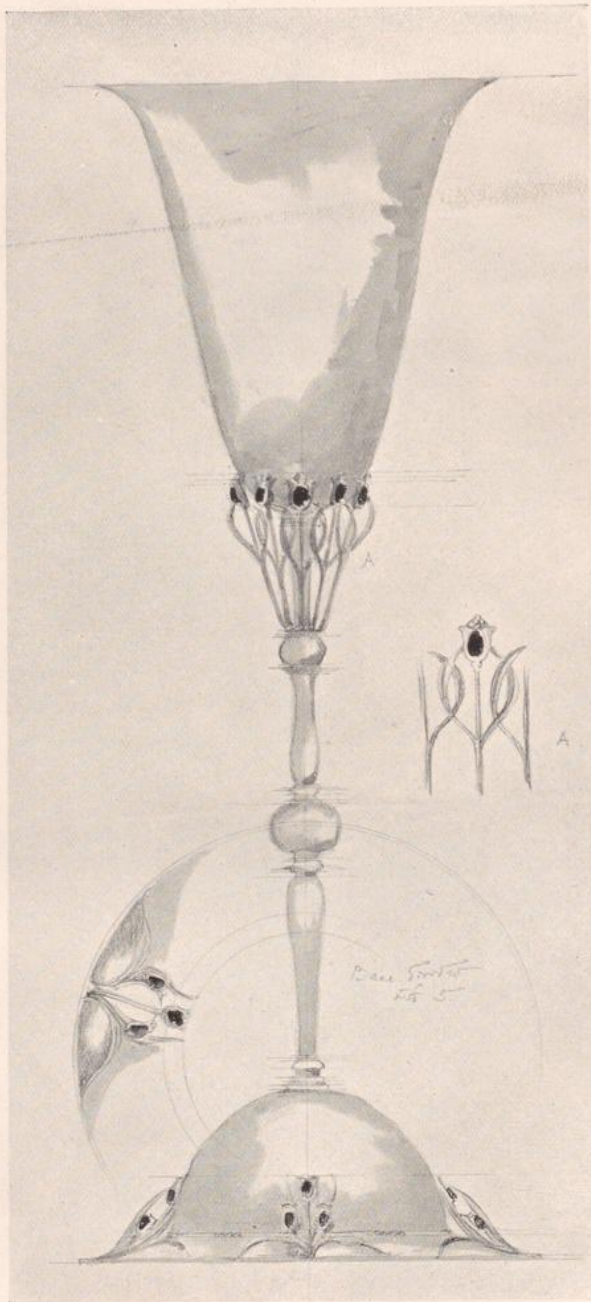


SILVER CUP
DESIGNED AND EXECUTED BY W. HARDIMAN



SKETCH FOR A CHALLENGE
CUP. BY C. R. ASHBEE.

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SKETCH FOR A SPORTING CUP.
BY C. R. ASHBEE

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Sporting Cups.

so Thackeray asked, not without reason, if there was another place where he could get a sovereign for seventeen shillings. Here we have good sense, yet most people believe that it would be extravagant to give even seventeen shillings for a sovereign. What they try to do, and delight to think that they succeed in doing, is to buy a shilling's worth of goods for sixpence-farthing, if not, indeed, for sixpence.

This folly—this cherished form of national thriftlessness—operates in two very deplorable ways. Not only does it keep many industries in

a state of degradation, but by so doing it tends seriously to weaken national character; for everything that encourages among workmen a slatternly habit of mind, a distaste for doing their very best, is certain at the same time to make them slack and lethargic in some other matters of importance, and especially in those matters having a national significance which does not directly affect their private or personal interests. Indeed, among the fine qualities of mind and character that the daily discipline of thorough workmanship matures none is unessential in the formation of the

best type of citizen, and thus we may say, without extravagance, that thoroughness in all workmanship is the true, the only proof of general greatness in a country. No nation that is slipshod in its hours of business can rise in its moments of pleasure to the level of its best traditions.

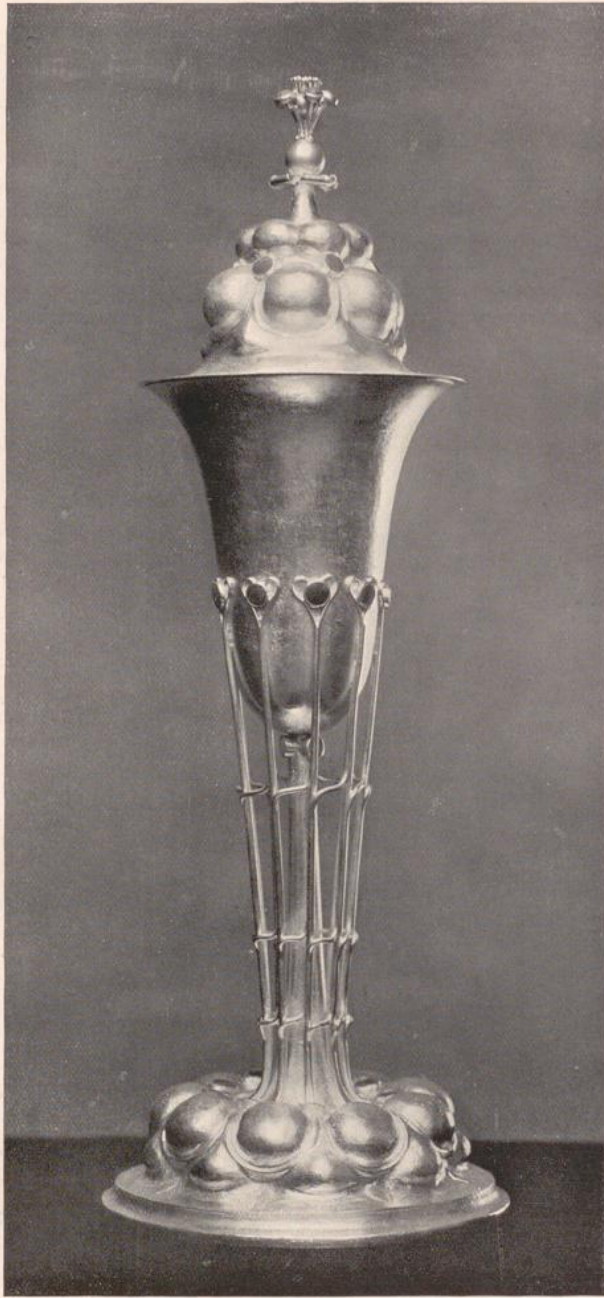
Enough has been said to prove that the mania for cheapness should be strenuously opposed. In this matter there must be no "queasy temper of lukewarmness." Many artists and authors have already set a good example, and it is encouraging to remember that our industrial type of society would have become more hideous and more sinister than it is but for the efforts of Carlyle and Ruskin, of Pugin and William Morris, and of other good art soldiers in the cause of thoroughness.

In the following set of articles a fight for the same cause will be made, with the hope of improving those metal-working industries that owe not a little of their wealth to the Anglo-Saxon love of games and sports. None can say precisely how many sporting cups are sold every year.



SPORTING CUP

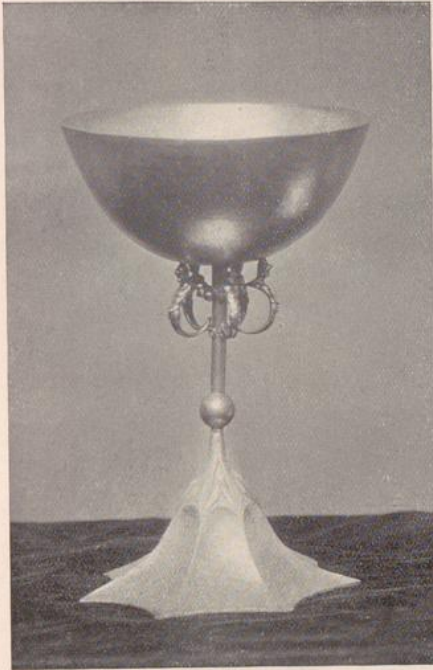
DESIGNED BY C. R. ASHBEE
EXECUTED BY ARTHUR CAMERON AND J. BAILEY



SPORTING CUP. DESIGNED
BY C. R. ASHBEE

Executed by the Guild of Handicraft

Sporting Cups.



SPORTING CUP

DESIGNED BY C. R. ASHBEE
EXECUTED BY W. HARDIMAN

Show an athlete a few cups, some small and good, others large and very bad. You will soon learn what his taste really is, and also that he is determined to gratify it at the cheapest rate possible. 'How much is this an ounce?' he asks invariably, and it is waste of time to point out the difference between the good cups and the bad. He looks upon that as a shop-keeper's excuse for piling up the price. Yet criticism, forgetful of these facts, prattles to me about art! Believe me, silversmiths are not in conspiracy against beauty. They cannot choose

The number is certainly very large, since those clubs alone which are devoted to games and to athletic sports may be reckoned up by hundreds, and not merely by dozens, like Sir Joseph Porter's relatives. Think, too, of the various regattas, and the shooting competitions, and the race meetings; to these, add the belief that Rifle Clubs will soon be established throughout the country; and last of all, remember that many sporting cups are sent from England to every part of the Empire. For the rest, a cup in silver is to most young Britons what an olive crown was to the ancient Greek athletes, not merely a prize, a token of victory, but a great incentive to real manliness in emulation. And this being so, is it not worthy of good and thoughtful workmanship? Our plea is that it should be a thing of beauty, a work of art.

Is this too much to expect? Our friends say "No," but the manufacturing silversmiths say "Yes." We had a talk with one a few days ago, and, after speaking of the rage for cheapness, he laughed at the taste of those who buy sporting cups and trophies. "Their taste is detestable," said he. "What they want is bulk, not beauty."



SKETCH MODEL FOR A YACHTING TROPHY
BY W. REYNOLDS-STEPHENS
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SKETCH FOR A YACHTING TROPHY.
BY W. REYNOLDS-STEPHENS

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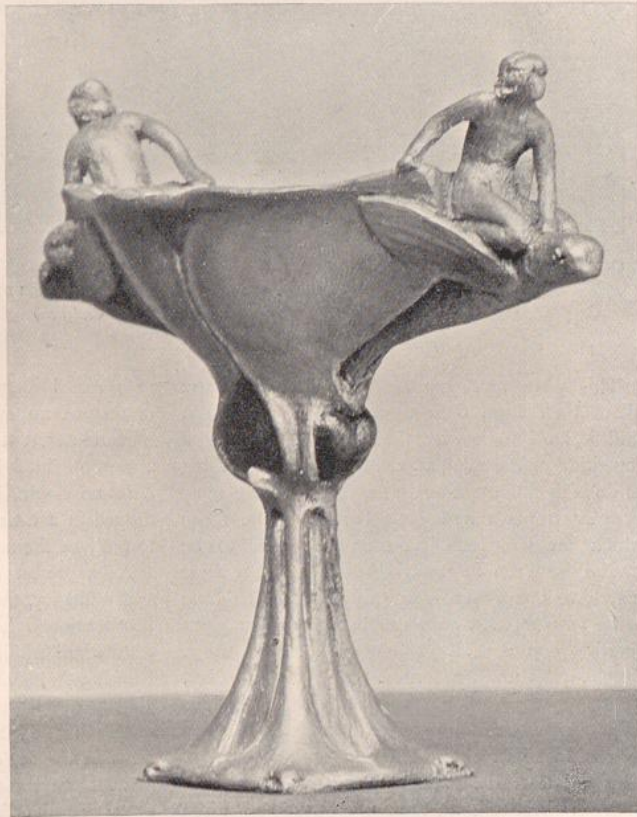
Sporting Cups.

but be men of business, and for this reason, if you wish to improve the general quality of their workmanship, you must begin by educating their customers. They can't pay their way by running counter to the public taste."

"That being so," we said, "how comes it that other manufacturers, equally dependent on the public taste, find a market for the best work of the best designers?"

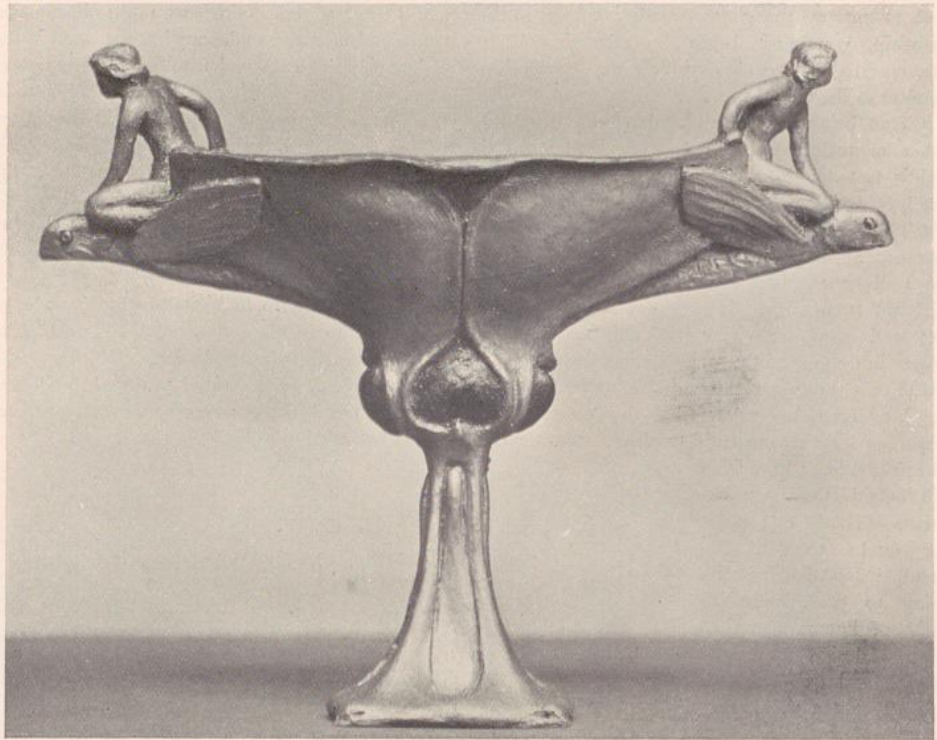
"The reason is simple enough," the silversmith answered. "A manufacturer of textile fabrics, or of wall-papers, has a purchasing public very different from mine. It may not appreciate art, but it does wish to be considered 'artistic,' for critics bring constantly to its notice those things which only persons of taste admire. On the other hand, criticism has never tried to influence the buyers of sporting cups and trophies. Sportsmen, like shipbuilders, have been left outside the art movement. That's one point for you to consider. Remember, too, that it is one thing to commission an artist of known name to draw a design for textile fabrics, and quite another thing to get a well-known metal-worker to make an important cup. The difference in expense would be enormous. The metal-worker, it is true, could make a design and leave it to be carried out in the manufacturer's workshops; but were he to superintend its translation into metal, the craftsmen would probably strike against his interference. It is never difficult to inflame the temper of trades' unionism. Besides, the present system of work would not be changed by carrying out a few good designs in a worthy manner. It is a better system that is needed, and to get one you must help to make sportsmen ashamed of their bad taste; you must bring them under the influence of the art movement."

But how is this to be done? As a rule, sportsmen do not read art criticisms, nor do their newspapers and magazines take any interest at all in the workmanship of cups and trophies. Our purpose, again, even if the sporting press were friendly to it, could not easily become popular, for it is opposed to that general British principle which, as De Quincey points out, "tends in all things to set the matter above the manner, the substance above the external show; a principle noble in itself, but inevitably wrong wherever the manner blends inseparably with the substance." This general tendency helps us to understand why Englishmen are usually bored when they are asked to look at style from an artist's standpoint. "Why make so much fuss about good design?" they ask. "These things are right enough; they serve their purpose, and we are used to them."



SKETCH FOR A YACHTING CUP
BY W. REYNOLDS-STEPHENS
DESIGNED AND MODELLED FOR "THE STUDIO"
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Sporting Cups.



SKETCH FOR A YACHTING CUP

BY W. REYNOLDS-STEPHENS

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This is how most sportsmen would talk to you about their cups, their trophies, and you would find it hard to answer them without inviting a repetition of the same arguments. The best thing to do is to call attention to the fact that the most popular trophies and cups happen to be those which are so "loud," so ostentatious, as to be un-English even in their defects. A faulty style may have many merits, and there would be little cause for complaint if the usual style of the modern sporting cup were English enough to be strong, simple, quiet, and unadorned. But, strange to say, most sportsmen like in metal-work a pretentious display of such tawdry and florid bad qualities as would be hateful to them in a book or a poem. This bad taste the manufacturing silversmiths do their very best to gratify, taking infinite pains to be sufficiently inartistic. Notice, for example, the surfaces of their machine-made cups. All are

ness and brilliancy of polish. There is no sign of texture, no evidence of ingenious tooling, no human interest at all. Some think that this result is always obtained by machine-polishing. Very often it is, no doubt, but many silver cups are actually dipped in a vat and plated, this being a quick way to produce the requisite kind of surface.

As a protest against this abuse of smoothness and brilliancy, the metal-work of the Japanese may be mentioned here, for its beauty and variety of texture are admitted to be unrivalled. At South Kensington may be found a collection of 57 oblong plaques in bronze; it seems to be little known, yet none can study it without gaining many invaluable hints in the use of both patinas and tools. Some plaques are smooth—smooth as the finest glazed pottery; others have a rugged texture resembling the bark of pines; and between these extremes there are marbled and honeycomb-like patterning, waved lateral hammerwork, and surfaces grained

A Master Draughtsman

like stone. How lucky we all should be if riches akin to these were to appear in our sporting trophies! Of course, this is far too much to expect at present, but some improvement ought certainly to be brought about if those who care for good metal-work make a determined effort to bring into vogue a better type of cup and trophy.

The worthiness of this aim has for some years been recognised here and there, and on several occasions this recognition has shown itself in a practical manner, as when Mr. Frampton made a beautiful medal for Winchester. Some years ago, again, the London Schools Swimming Association received from the Fabian Society a fine shield designed by Mr. Walter Crane; and to the same Association Mr. C. R. Ashbee gave a challenge cup designed by himself. Since then, in co-operation with his Guild of Handicrafts, Mr. Ashbee has turned out some attractive cups for several tournaments, schools, and tennis clubs, so that a beginning has been made. But what we need now is a more general and systematic attempt to familiarise the public with good sporting cups in various styles. With this end in view we invited some well-known metal-workers and designers to make special illustrations for this set of little skirmishing articles. Up till now several artists have finished designs, and we shall be glad to hear from others who can help in any way.

Of course it is unfortunate that designs in black and white cannot represent those qualities of surface and colour with which most buyers of sporting cups need to be familiarised. This drawback is serious, but it may perhaps be rendered less so by descriptions.

Reproduced in this article are two sketch designs of yachting cups by Mr. Reynolds-Stephens. In the larger one Triton supports a boat-shaped vessel of silver, at the stern of which stands a female figure, a figure of Victory, whose mantle is of gold, whose robe is of blue mother-of-pearl, and whose face, arms, and hands are in ivory. She holds in her left hand a gilded laurel wreath, and in her right, as a symbol of swiftness, a caduceus like Mercury's. The boat, too, has its symbols. It is decorated with ivory Cupids' heads, and on each one, wrought in blue mother-of-pearl, is a winged cap, and the meaning of this symbolism is, that in sport there must be love, good-fellowship, as well as speed. For the rest, the cutwater ends in a fish-head of gold, while along the bow the mother-of-pearl is again repeated, greatly to the advantage of a very fortunate colour scheme.

In the smaller sketch-design Mr. Reynolds-

Stephens takes a simpler *motif*, and gives us a charmingly-shaped cup supported by two fish. The fish are represented as in the act of starting off to swim. At the corners of the cup's base speed is symbolised once more, this time by swallows' heads, and the beauty of the whole work is greatly enhanced by the pieces of ruby-coloured crystal with which the knob is ornamented. Something reminiscent of that wayward orderliness which is common to the beautiful forms of shells is observable in the growth of this design.

The other illustrations represent some of the athletic cups, so well suited for clubs and schools, that are being produced by the Guild of Handicraft. In the workshops of this Guild only the subsidiary parts of cups are made by sand-casting from patterns originally modelled in wax. The principal parts are worked up from sheets of metal, then filled with pitch and hammered over till the repoussé comes right. The hammer-marks on the plain metal surfaces are retained throughout, for Mr. Ashbee has justly a strong objection to the abrasive process of treating silver with the polishing wheel, or buffers. The inscriptions are *pricked* into the metal, not chased or graved (as in the usual commercial manner), and great care is taken in the choice of well-formed letters. Briefly, Mr. Ashbee and the Guild of Handicraft are doing serious work. It is true that it would not be difficult to find some defects in their sporting cups, but at present we think it more profitable to recognise the sincerity of their efforts and the value of their practical example.

(To be continued.)

A MASTER DRAUGHTSMAN: PAUL RENOARD. BY GABRIEL MOUREY.

I REGARD M. Paul Renouard as being the very highest type of the modern draughtsman. He draws as naturally as he breathes; he can neither look nor listen without drawing, for his art has come to be with him a sort of sixth sense, working in unison with the others, registering and fixing, for the delight of his contemporaries, all his sensations, all his impressions.

A curious personality this, indeed, both as man and as artist, witty and *sympathique*, and very French, with great power of assimilation, wonderful quickness of vision, and inexhaustible fertility. Physically this *diable de petit homme*, with his thick beard and long hair, reminds one of a Moor. His features are strong and his colour high; his ebony