

Online Supplement 2
to
William Moorcroft, Potter. Individuality by Design

Published reviews and articles on the pottery of William Moorcroft

- 01 'Florian Ware', *The Magazine of Art* (March 1899), 232-4, reprinted by J. Macintyre & Co.
02 W.P. Jervis, 'Florian Ware', *Keramic Studio* (April 1902), 260-61.
03 F. Miller, 'The Art Pottery of Mr W. Moorcroft', *The Art Journal* (February 1903), 57-58.
04 W. Thomson, 'A Short Visit to the Potteries', *The Pottery Gazette* (October 1904), 1114- 1115.
05 A.V. Rose, 'Flamminian Ware', *The American Pottery Gazette* (February 1906), 37.
06 W. Thomson, 'James Macintyre & Co. Ltd.', *The Pottery Gazette* (March 1908), 329-30.
07 'W. Moorcroft, Ltd., Burslem', *The Pottery Gazette* (October 1913), 1147-49.
08 'Art and Personality', *Canadian Mail Supplement* (7 March 1914).
09 'W. Moorcroft, Ltd., Burslem', *The Pottery Gazette* (April 1918), 309-10.
10 'A Master Potter', *The World's Work* (February 1922), 203-204.
11 'Potters of Today, No.9: Mr W. Moorcroft', *The Pottery and Glass Record* (1923), 656-8.
12 J. Fraser, 'A Potter of Genius', *Daily Graphic* (28 June 1924).
13 'The Master Potter', *Sunday Dispatch* (24 March 1929).
14 'W. Moorcroft, Ltd., Burslem', *The Pottery Gazette* (April 1930), 612.
15 E.G. Marfield, 'The Revival of Ceramic Art', *Town and Country News* (15 August 1930), 24-5.
16 'Mr W. Moorcroft', *The Pottery Gazette* (June 1932), 729-33.
17 R. Serlanges, 'La Céramique', *La Revue moderne* (15 March 1939), 19-20.
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FLORIAN WARE.



VASES, &c., DESIGNED BY W. MOORCROFT.

THERE has been of late years such a large production of so-called "art-pottery" that has almost become a term of reproach, whether regarded from the point



of view of design or decoration, that we are glad to welcome one of the most recent developments of ceramic art introduced from

the Burslem potteries. We have recently had the opportunity of examining many specimens of Florian ware—as it has been named—and, with but one or two trifling exceptions, found them all good, both in design and colour. Unlike most of the cheap decorative pottery, this ware is produced primarily by the oldest methods of the potter's art—throwing and turning—and not by the mechanical methods of moulding. In the decoration, too, there is no use made of the rapid methods of printing, but each piece is dealt with individually, and so retains that spirit of the artist which is so woefully lacking in the ordinary commercial "art pottery."

Florian ware is made of a body which may be described as fine faïence. It is manufactured, as we have said, upon the potter's wheel, the shapes being designed for the thrower by the artist. In this operation the use of mechanical tools is employed very sparingly, and almost all depends

upon the manual dexterity and artistic feeling of the operator. Certain difficulties, of course, prevent the objects being finished



on the wheel: the plastic clay cannot maintain an indefinite weight, and unless the articles are left sufficiently thick at the bottom to enable the weight to be supported, they would, of necessity, collapse in the hands of the workman; especially as the clay must, of course, be soft, or it would be impossible to impart to it the true contour of surface that is desired. It is, therefore, removed from the wheel and set aside until, by the evaporation of its moisture, it attains the consistency of cheese, when it can be cut by a sharp tool. The object then passes under the turner's hands, who, by the aid of a horizontal lathe and a sharp iron tool, removes any excess of clay which had been necessary for the first operation, and proceeds to develop the interpretation of the design supplied by the artist.

After this process the object is immersed in a liquid body of a different colour to that of which it is formed. The range of colours

available for these liquid clays is considerable, those at present employed being chiefly yellow, blue, green and brown. This superimposed clay is allowed to dry until it is of the same consistency as that underneath, and then the decoration is proceeded with. This consists in imposing upon the surface clay, by means of special modelling tools, an appliqué decoration in white clay, the design being accentuated or developed by the use of metallic oxides, or other means capable of imparting the desired colours, and retaining them when subjected to a high temperature. This firing is necessary in order to render the clay permanently hard, and it is usually accomplished without injuring the form of the object. After the firing it is in what is known as the *bisque* state—*i.e.* it is hard, dry, and porous; and the next process consists of an immersion in a liquid compound of a glassy material which, when again subjected to firing, imparts to the surface a brilliant glaze.

It will be seen from this description that all the decoration is worked in clay, or



metallic compounds, and is underneath the glaze, so that it is rendered absolutely indestructible by atmospheric influences. It therefore differs to this extent from a great



TWO VIEWS OF A "FLORIAN" VASE.



"FLORIAN" WARE VASES.

deal of the ordinary pottery, on which the decoration is effected over the glaze. The finished appearance of Florian ware is beautifully brilliant and luminous.

But to us one of the most interesting features of this ware is that it bears indelibly the mark of the artist and the skilful craftsman. All the designs are the work of Mr. W. Moorcroft; every piece is examined by him at each stage, and is revised and corrected as much as is necessary before being passed into the oven. The decorative work is executed by students—who have previously to go through a course of training at the Burslem Art Schools—and, while the design of Mr. Moorcroft is followed as

closely as possible, any individual touches of the operators are seldom interfered with if they tend to improvement. It thus happens that no two pieces are precisely alike. From the illustrations which we are enabled to give it will be seen that for form and decoration this ware deserves a large share of popularity. Messrs. Macintyre, who are the manufacturers, are to be congratulated on their success in placing before the public a ware that really exhibits evidences of thoughtful art and skilful craftsmanship.

It might be stated that the designs for the most part are registered.

Extract from STUDIO:—

“LEEDS ARTS AND CRAFTS EXHIBITION, November, 1900.

“The most interesting work in Pottery was shown by Messrs. James Macintyre & Co., Ltd., of Burslem, coloured with metal oxides and executed entirely on the clay.”





FLORIAN WARE

[From the advance sheets of "The Encyclopedia of Ceramics," by W. P. Jervis.]



THIS is an arbitrary name given by the manufacturers, Messrs. MacIntyre & Co., Burslem, to the pottery designed by Mr. W. Moorcroft. In its manufacture there has been a return to first principles, as it is all made by the old process on the potter's wheel and the turner's lathe, the more mechanical method of moulding having been rejected, on purpose that as far as is practicable in a commercial project, the individuality of the designer should be preserved, nor is there any use made of other mechanical aids, such as printing the outline, each piece being entirely done by hand. The body is a fine earthenware and on this the artist sketches the design in the raw clay with slips mixed with various metallic oxides, capable of standing the heat of the biscuit kiln. Whilst this means a very limited palette the ware seems to have gained rather than have lost from its limitations, the greys and blues, with their outlines of white, being most satisfying, especially when the coldness is relieved by a few touches of orange. Students from the Burslem School of Art, of advanced experience, are trained to carry out Mr. Moorcroft's designs under his immediate superintendence,

and no piece is allowed to be fired that has not passed his critical judgment. There may be sometimes a slight departure from the lines laid down, but such departures if artistically conceived are welcomed instead of rejected, and it thus happens that no two pieces are exactly alike. Whilst the methods employed have no elements of novelty, Mr. Moorcroft has at the same time so used them as to produce something entirely new and of such a high order of merit as to justify us in classing his work as a distinct advance in ceramics, charming alike in thought and execution. Florian is the inspiration of an artist and the fulfillment of the dream of a potter upon whom the beauties of the pottery of the far East, of Greece and Egypt, had left an indelible impression, and who has succeeded in giving expression with much humanity to some beautiful thoughts in an imperishable material. Our illustrations will give a good general idea of the forms and decoration, but the unsurpassably beautiful colors with their iridescence and charm, their hidden depths



revealed by the fire of the furnace, can only be imagined. Mr. Moorcroft is as yet but a young man, but this initial effort with which his name has been associated leads us to hope for yet greater things. For over one hundred and fifty years no



added precious secret in ceramics has been discovered. Florian ware suggests the question to our thoughts as to whether the man and the time have arrived.

PATE SUR PATE

THE process of decoration known as "pate sur pate" originated with the Chinese. A Chinese vase, with white flowers in relief on celadon ground, induced the Manufacture of Sevres to make experiments with the view of obtaining similar effects. The result was a new style of decoration which has been carried to a high point of perfection by M. Solon, who studied the process at Sevres, but has been connected with the Mintons of England since 1870. We have illustrated in November, 1900, some of the fine vases made by that celebrated artist and reproduce here his most famous production, the Queen's Jubilee vase.

The process of pate sur pate differs completely from the process employed for the production of Wedgwood's jasper ware, in which every detail is pressed separately into a mould and subsequently applied to the surface to be thus decorated. Pate sur pate is all worked by the hand of the artist. By a careful treatment of the various degrees of thickness of clay applied on the colored body of the piece, the subjects are modelled in delicate transparency, standing out from the

ground or gradually blending with it, recalling to the mind the sharp cutting and the mellow tints of antique cameos.

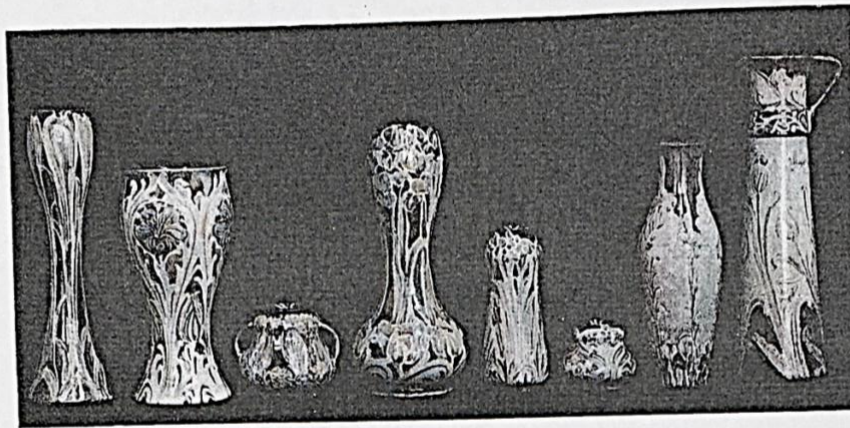
On the plain ground the design is first sketched. Then with a brush dipped in china clay diluted with water, a first coating of white is deposited to delineate the subject. Gradually and always waiting until one coating is dry before applying another, the substance increases, the thinner or the higher reliefs are obtained according to the fancy of the worker, who must be somewhat both of a painter and modeler. He has to sharply mark the minute details which otherwise would be lost under the glaze, to scrape, incise, cut out his work with the metal tool of a chaser, and, before firing, the piece is a real bas relief but without the transparency afterward produced by vitrification.



The vases are formed of clay colored in its bulk by the few metallic oxydes which will stand the high temperature to which they are submitted. In this manner an original is produced each time, each piece of pate sur pate being unique.

The process used now by M. Solon at Mess. Mintons' differs in some respects from the process used at Sevres, particularly in the variety of colored clays used for the body of the vases, the bright red, the dark yellow, the deep black and other colors having never been attempted anywhere else in the bulk of the paste.

Original photographs of figures and landscapes by Mr. Clarence H. White are on view in the art galleries of the Pratt Institute, in Brooklyn.



Vases.
By W. Moorcroft.

The Art Pottery of Mr. W. Moorcroft.

MADE AT THE WASHINGTON CHINA WORKS, BURSLEM.



Tea Caddy.
By W. Moorcroft.

those who would see the arts that minister to our every-day wants once more expressive of our higher aspirations.

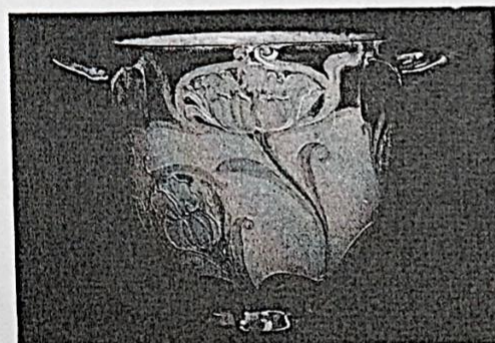
In Mr. Moorcroft's own words, "This pottery was the outcome of my great admiration of some of the pottery of the East. I have always been charmed with the sense of freedom and individuality that characterises their work. It was after long dreaming of what was possible in this direction, that in 1893 I was first able to express my own feeling in clay. Perhaps no other material is so responsive to the spirit of the worker as is the clay of the potter, and my efforts and those of my assistants are directed to an endeavour to produce beautiful forms on the thrower's wheel, the added ornamentation

ONE is always glad to chronicle the effort on the part of a craftsman to escape the torpid uniformity that is so often the mark of manufactured art, the product of the factory system; and in the pottery executed by and under the direction of W. Moorcroft at the Washington China Works, Burslem, we have an instance that merits attention on the part of

of which is applied by hand directly upon the moist clay. This, I feel, imparts to the pottery the spirit of the art-worker, and spontaneously gives the pieces all the individual charm and beauty that is possible, a result never attained by mechanical means."

A laudable and ambitious programme, you will say, which, if carried out, will lead to interesting results, and the reproductions of a few examples of "Moorcroft" ware accompanying these notes will enable the reader to gain some slight idea of what this "fine phrenzy" becomes when it has "a local habitation and a name."

Mr. Moorcroft is the designer of this pottery, and though he must be ably seconded by the staff of assistants whom he has trained, apparently he does not allow his potters to do something on their own, as the master potter wishes the ware to maintain the particular



Bowl.
By W. Moorcroft.

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character which his ego has imparted to it.

The decoration is executed entirely by hand on the "thrown" pot, and each piece is examined and corrected, if necessary, by Mr. Moorcroft before being passed to the oven. Such supervision as this keeps the staff on the stretch and the pots up to the standard set by the master craftsman.

The specimens of Moorcroft ware I have examined are characterised by a particular tone of colour which may be described as a pale celadon with deep mazarine blue enrichments, while yellow and green are sparingly introduced. The general effect is grey green and dark blue, and as all the colours are under the glaze a softness and depth are secured which yields a harmonious result. The patterns are based on nature, though no direct reference to individual forms is made, and are outlined in clay so that these outlines are in relief and remain whitish. The colours are then flowed into the spaces formed by the raised outlines, and the whole is then subjected to a



Thrown Vase.
By W. Moorcroft.

very high fire, after which the ware is glazed with a very hard transparent glaze which brings out the colour and secures permanency. The body of the ware is cream and the glaze identifies itself with it so that there is no crazing or porousness, which is the fault of so much so-called artistic pottery, where the glaze does not contract in the same ratio as the clay. The glaze of Moorcroft ware is as hard as salt-glazed ware, and the palette is therefore restricted, there being few metallic oxides that will bear the high

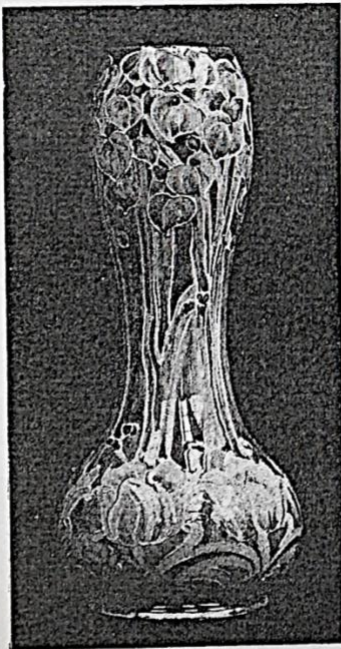
a nice swing about vous freedom which is too often absent in pottery.

It may be the ideal after which potters should strive, to give an employé a pot and leave him to decorate it; but until art becomes once again an intuition it were wiser to leave some artist-craftsman to plan out the decoration and then see that it is carried out with spirit, as Mr. W. Moorcroft succeeds in getting his staff to do.

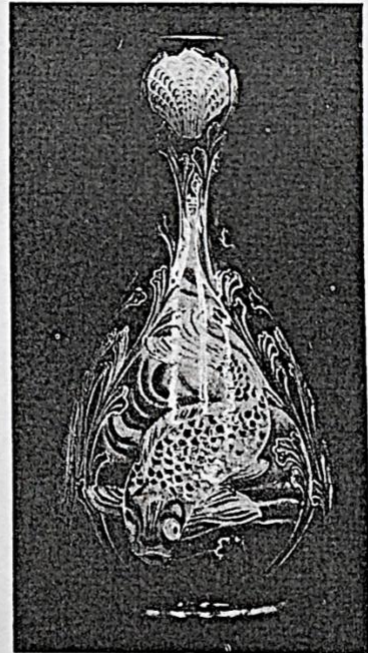
FRED.
MILLER.

fire to which this ware is subjected; but this is no drawback where harmony of colour is aimed at, as the limited palette helps to secure this, and the commonness, almost vulgarity of much "art" pottery is avoided by this enforced reticence.

In the patterning Mr. Moorcroft aims at breaking up his surface without overlaying the whole with ornament. Though, as I have said, based on nature, and happily not on worn-out motifs still seen on pottery decorated under Continental influences, a highly ornamental character is imparted to the design, so that the decoration does not assert itself too much and so destroy the contour of the pot. I imagine the raised outlines are produced by squeezing "slip" out of a fine orifice, the decorator guiding the tube so that the design is thus outlined with clay just in slight relief. Mr. Moorcroft has apparently trained his staff to good effect, for the lines on some specimens I have examined have them and flow with a certain ner-



Thrown Vase.
By W. Moorcroft.



Thrown Vase.
By W. Moorcroft.

A SHORT VISIT TO THE POTTERIES
(BY A 'POTTERY GAZETTE' SPECIAL COMMISSIONER)

MESSRS. JAMES MACINTYRE & CO., LTD., Washington China Works, Burslem. Messrs. Macintyre make a large number of electrical and other specialities, and they have recently made extensive alterations in their premises for the convenience of that branch of their business. But the company have another very important department devoted to the production of artistic ceramics. This branch is under the personal superintendence of Mr. William Moorcroft, an artist who has already made a name for himself, which, whatever now happens, will in the future be classed with the most famous art potters of the country. It is not for me, not for anyone now living, to say in what position in that list Mr. Moorcroft's name will be found, but it will be there without a doubt.

I asked for Mr. Moorcroft, and in a very few moments he came to me, and took me into his studio and showroom. In this section of their business Messrs. Macintyre produce high-class ceramics specially designed for duty in the drawing-room, the dining-room, and the breakfast-room. Everything produced here is artistic, to begin with, but the other feature of this large business is the pronounced individuality imparted to such a large proportion of the pieces produced. I can better explain how this happens by reference to one creation, and I will take the latest – Florian ware. The individuality discernible in this is, of course, that of Mr. W. Moorcroft, the director of the art section of Messrs. Macintyre's works. It was a distinct disadvantage to me on this occasion to have Mr. Moorcroft himself for my guide. He was far too modest for my purpose. I would rather have had one of his many intelligent assistants who understood his methods. Mr Moorcroft's explanations, though frankly given, were elicited rather than volunteered. I was, however, already acquainted with the 'Burslem ware,' and also with the spirit which has evoked and now controls it, so that few remarks of Mr. Moorcroft on his latest triumph were sufficient. There are not many secrets about it. I understand most of the designs are registered, but Mr. Moorcroft has neither patented nor registered his method of producing his beautiful effects. He lets you see him do the primary, and most essential, part of the work, and tells you how it is completed. But you cannot 'go and do likewise.'

The secret of the graceful and beautiful 'Florian ware,' of which three illustrations are given herewith, is that the particular grace and beauty pertaining to these pieces were conceived by the artist-potter in the beginning, and have been steadily kept in view through every stage. There has been no chance work, no accidental addition to, or omission from, the original design. In these days of advanced science and mechanism it will surprise many persons to learn that the forms for this 'Florian ware' are fashioned by the most antiquated methods employed in pottery. They are simply thrown and turned, the shapes having been designed by Mr. Moorcroft himself. The turner gives just the form intended. The piece is then what would be called in the glass trade, 'cased.' That is to say, it is coated with a liquid clay differing in colour from that of the body, and when this is dry the artist-potter himself adds the outline of the design intended in white 'slip.' The only 'secret' process (in addition to the inimitable skill of the artist) occurs at this stage, and lies in the chemicals employed to secure the marvellous coloured results after firing the ware at the high temperature

required to give the necessary density to the body. All the decoration, including the chemicals required for what are to be the coloured effects, is applied to the clay, and the whole is then glazed and fired, with the beautiful results seen. The pieces illustrated have a delicate celadon ground, with charming tinted combinations and rich shades of colours rather than distinct colours themselves.

Every piece of Florian ware bears Mr. Moorcroft's signature, and if it did not, each piece carries with it the impress of his skill. Each design is absolutely the work of his own hand, while the decorative detail is carried out by trained artists under his personal supervision. He examines the work in its various stages, and passes each finally before it is fired. Not only is his own contribution all free-hand work, but some latitude is of necessity given to the assisting artists. Mr. Moorcroft encourages slight individual deviations so long as they do not interfere with the original scheme. This is how it happens that no two pieces of Florian ware can ever be exactly alike. Messrs. Macintyre & Co. have reason to be proud of the success of a production they have done so much to develop. A hundred years hence connoisseurs of pottery will have reason to be proud of the possession of a signed piece of Moorcroft faience. By that time other, and perhaps finer, art pottery will be available, but there can then be no replica of Florian ware.

FLAMMINIAN WARE

ARTHUR VEEL ROSE

MR. W. MOORCROFT, the art director for Messrs. James Macintyre & Co., Ltd., of Burslem, England, is responsible for another artistic triumph, even greater than his Florian Art Pottery, which last caused such favorable comment by connoisseurs and collectors of ceramics.

This new Flamminian Ware is an original pottery restrained in form and design, combining some of the best traditional qualities with the spirit of the present age. The whole is conceived and controlled by one mind, which results in a perfect cohesion in all parts. The clay used in its production is of a rich plastic nature, and is built up directly upon the thrower's wheel, with a true architectural spirit. Any ornament that may be added is applied while in a plastic state, thereby producing every emotion of the art potter, each subtle touch being expressed in the material.

Simplicity, the Alpha and Omega of all great effort, is the main characteristic of this ware. It is in marked contrast to the so-called New Art, which has carried its influence all over Europe and America, and which is seen in extravagant twirling lines running rampant in wall papers, fabrics and all kinds of furniture, so much so that one wearies of such restless expression, and longs for repose. In this pottery the forms in all cases are expressive of the material, there being no evidence of producing forms that are wanting in fitness.

The beautiful iridescent color is in the body of the ware, the whole elements being in perfect fusion, and obtained entirely by the direct action of flame upon the surface, hence the name, 'Flamminian Ware.' The fire plays the notes upon the pottery, and leaves its expression in thousands of different forms, as varied and infinite as nature itself. At one moment one sees results echoing the beauty of crystals, as seen in frozen snow under the searching light of the sun; at another moment is depicted the spirit of the seashore, as seen in the beautiful lines left by the waves on the sand. Indeed, nature is seen in all her moods in one form or another. The coloring is reminiscent of a dream of an Eastern life, with the glorious sunlight illuminating its natural wealth of color. The whole suggests endless possibilities, and should appeal to all lovers of ceramics.

mented, and very good value. Tams & Son are showing a large variety of vases, flower-pots, centres, and side pieces. There are several new designs, and the decorations are sufficiently varied to meet the tastes of all buyers. A new shell flower-pot is shown in several sizes. Embossed patterns,



JOHN TAMS & SON, LONGTON.

both in vases and flower-pots, are numerous. The "No. 546" is a handsome vase, blue decorations on gold ground, in which the tulip is introduced. The illustration shows a few of the most recent productions.

JAMES MACINTYRE & CO., LTD., Washington China Works, Burslem, are famous for artistic pottery for use and ornament. But they are also manufacturers—and on an extensive scale too—of other kinds of pottery, which, though not classed as artistic, are absolutely necessary to the commercial, industrial, and domestic requirements of the day. I am always treated courteously at Washington Works and have on two or three occasions been shown over these "other" departments. I do not know any company making pottery for so many entirely different purposes. In these notes I have never attempted to write of anything but the high-class ceramics the firm produce for use and ornament, and my visits to the works are limited to the department so ably controlled by Mr. Moorcroft. My reason—I will not say excuse—for this is, that readers of the "POTTERY GAZETTE" are not so directly interested in the "thousand and one" miscellaneous pieces of pottery manufactured by this many-sided company. They make china door furniture, such as finger-plates, white, black, and decorated in colours, knobs for door handles, shutters, drawers, and cupboards; door numbers and street names in pottery. Advertising novelties for all trades, and sundries for brass workers tin platers, sanitary engineers, shop fitters, &c. But the most extensive department of all is that devoted to the manufacture of porcelain electrical fittings. The company have the reputation for supplying these of the highest insulating qualities. Those of us who do not know much about electrical installations may form a slight idea of the extensive use made of pottery in connection with them, by looking at the fittings in our houses, offices, factories and public buildings. Ceiling roses, switches and handles, wall plugs, lamp holders, balance wheels, pushes, connectors and a score of other things that are used out of sight, are all made of porcelain, and Macintyre & Co. make them all. They are all very interesting and indispensable, but I am not equal to writing about them, and if I was, this is not exactly the place in which to do it. I shall, therefore, as I have hitherto done, follow the advice given to the cobbler, and "stick to my last." When I was at the works a few weeks ago, I was not only shown the specimens in the show-room, but

was permitted to look over some of the designing, modelling, and decorating rooms. I have often spoken of the results of Mr. Moorcroft's painstaking, enthusiastic researches in the evolution of new schemes and effects in glazes, colouring, and designs for purely ornamental pieces. I should like to emphasise the remarkable progress he is making in the application of artistic ornamentation to articles of every day table use. I wish I could have spent more time in the decorating rooms. I should have learnt much that would have been interesting to me. The decorators at Washington Works are artists, trained under Mr. Moorcroft's tuition, and all working under his personal supervision. Many of them are occupied in the application of artistic ornamentation to tea cups and saucers, to tea pots, sugar basins, and cream jugs. Messrs. Macintyre are showing us



JAMES MACINTYRE & CO., LTD.

that there is no reason why a useful cup should not be a pretty one. They are producing a large variety in tea ware with artistic ornamentations by hand at reasonable prices. I was shown some sweetly pretty decorative

treatments in which simplicity of outline was the dominant feature. I wished to obtain photographs of some of them, to illustrate my remarks, but it was not possible to get them through in time. (Samples, however, of the company's wares may always be seen at their London show rooms, Thavies-inn, Holborn-circus, and these new productions will soon be there.) Artistic feeling is growing, and the daily use of tea ware artistic in form or ornamentation, or better still, in both, will foster it. To put it crudely, the ornamentations I am referring to are hand work, and each piece is therefore, unique. Dealers will assist in the cultivation of a better taste if they will point out to their customers the difference between hand work and mechanical work and explain that it is worth paying for. This would be advantageous to themselves (as dealers) to the public, and to the trade. Industrial art must suffer from the inert nature of mechanical processes. It may be said that the action of the human hand is itself mechanical, but the difference between the mechanism of nature and the mechanism of man is that the first, however simple, is always exactly suited to its industrial purpose, whilst the latter, in its most elaborate efforts is feeble, because incapable of variable application—the action must, of necessity, be uniform, in spite of difference in the things acted upon. There are some advantages no doubt in the rapid multiple reproduction of mechanical fine art. The human hand may not be able to do what a machine can, but it can do what a machine cannot—it can impart its individuality to its work. This is what Macintyre's decorative artists do in their original productions, "Dura," "Florian," "Aurelian," and "Eighteenth Century" wares. It is a necessity of nature that no two blades of grass ever can be exactly the same, and it is one of the most charming features of art (not mechanical) that no touch of the pencil, no cut of the graver, can be quite like another. I cannot now say much about the most fascinating section of Mr. Moorcroft's artistic productions—that which indicates the progress of his experimental work in ornamentation. These include some striking glaze effects and remarkable colour treatments. We illustrate a tall vase, exquisite in form, charming in ornamentation. It is of a very fine ivory body, thrown on the potter's wheel and decorated entirely by hand. The colour is all under glaze, and, of course, absolutely permanent. The high temperature at which this piece was fired has revealed inexpressibly beautiful colours. The whole productions of the firm, however, whether for the purpose or utility or ornament, whether for beautifying the dining table or the drawing-room, or forming part in the decorative scheme of a house, are obviously the outcome of much careful study, and are of such a character as to meet the demands of those who appreciate unique examples of the potter's art.

SHAW & COPESTAKE, Sylvan Works, Longton.—An entirely new showroom has just been completed at the works of this firm in Normacot-rd., Longton. In honour of its inauguration we were asked to bestow a name upon the firm's latest speciality—a pretty example of decorative ware—a request with which we had pleasure in complying. The showroom occupies the site of an old packing house. It has been entirely redecorated, elegantly furnished, and is splendidly lighted, both naturally and electrically, showing to advantage the numerous new patterns of semi-porcelain goods which the firm produces. Nothing in the showroom is old, and every line is eminently saleable. A special feature is a series of six vases, intended to

be retailed at the price of a shilling. Perhaps the most attractive of the six is a shape known as the "Berlin" which has a solid cobalt blue ground, and is decorated with a tasteful litho floral or figure panel. The handles are gilt, and there is a neat gilt ornamentation round the panel. The other shapes vary a little, but all of them are effective. They may also be had with a ground of maroon or dark green. Another novelty is a similar line with the exception that the vases are smaller, and are intended to retail at 6½d. The room contains one show table almost entirely devoted to new patterns of cheese stands, ranging widely in price. Some of the best of them are of the "Gem" shape, shaded in pale pink and light green, or in blue, with gold ornamentation. Other very neat styles are the "Dolphin," the "Royal," the "Sylvan," the "Alexandra," and the "Queen." We also had our attention directed to a few samples of toilet and trinket sets, a branch of the trade, however, which Shaw & Copestake only touch in the most expensive decorations. Jugs are shown in endless variety, all the shapes and patterns being quite new. Some are florally decorated, and some have litho landscapes, filled in by hand. An uncommon, spiral-shaped jug, gold traced, with a decoration of azaleas, is, we were told, taking very well on the market and the Crown Derby style is also in steady demand. From the point of view of artistic merit, however, the showroom



SHAW & COPESTAKE.

boasts nothing finer than its admirable selection of best vases in pairs and sets. Prominent patterns are the "Saxon," the "Elgin," and the "Holborn," all of which have cobalt blue grounds, decorated with charming animal and landscape studies in litho, liberally extended by hand. The raised gold ornamentation round the litho panels is exquisitely traced. In the case of sets, the centrepieces are on pedestals, and look very handsome. Other sets are shown in bronze green, water green, pink and various coloured grounds, with raised gold, landscape, floral, figure, and other decorations. These decorations are also carried out in an extensive range of flower pots of all sizes and shapes, notably the "Gipsy," which is in four sizes, exhibiting raised gold birds and flowers, on a bronze green ground. The pot has three gold feet, and is neatly finished. The very latest of the firm's productions is the "Nulli Secundus" decoration, which is applied to vases, flower-pots, and pedestals. It is a French style of ornamentation, showing some beautifully executed roses on a sepia brown ground. An entire range of ware is to be made in this decoration forthwith. Some choice lines in fruit dishes and pedestals complete the contents of the room, which will well repay a visit. The "Sylvan" works con-

October 1, 1913.

THE POTTERY GAZETTE.

1147

Bristol pottery of to-day. In these latter decorations the "Barr" shape is prominently employed, and it is a capital form, eminently suitable for the purposes to which it is put. If I am not mistaken, it is a rejuvenation of a shape originally appearing in the old Mason ironstone; indeed, one of the patterns I saw on show, an old mulberry print—which, by the way, looked extremely fine—is, I believe, a reproduction, in fact, of an original Mason design. In dinner ware the "Bath" decoration, a medallion design, supplied on either plain or gadroon-edged shapes, is a really excellent thing. The "Cromer," a border pattern done on the "Antique" shape, is remarkably and beautifully neat, whilst it is to be had in several colours in plain prints, and also in Japan—blue, brown and gold. The "Weston" design, done on the "Badminton" shape, is an all-over floral pattern of distinct merit, and it is supplied in plain prints as well as in Japans and lustres. The "Ashton" is another very good print, which can also be had illuminated. The bolder "pounced" patterns, suitable to the propensities of the Oriental markets, are not neglected, and the prices of them are quite extraordinary. The firm is, of course, strong in other lines, besides dinner and toilet ware; for instance, they have a by no means negligible range of accessory lines, such as teapots, jugs, marmalades, and general suite ware—in fact, everything of utility for the household. An important point that cannot be overlooked here is that all the patterns on show can, if so desired, be obtained in leadless glazed ware. A demand for such ware has been expressed, and Pountney & Co., Ltd., have thought fit so to apply themselves as to be able to meet it. They have, further, studied the wishes of their clients by including the various advances, which have from time to time been made, in the selling prices of the goods, thus sparing their customers all needless complications. Besides what is to be seen in Mr. Adams's room it may be mentioned that the Bristol firm are important makers also of sanitary ware and tiles. But this is another story, and, as such, must be reserved for a future occasion.

W. Moorcroft, Ltd., Burslem.—Although probably there will be a considerable proportion of the general readers of these notes who, within the last month, may have received an interesting circular from this new firm, for the benefit of those who may not have done so we take this opportunity of referring to it. The circular in question explains that, owing to the discontinuance by Jas. Macintyre & Co., Ltd., Washington Works, Burslem, of the production of the faience and decorated potteries styled "Florian" ware, which for many years past they have been manufacturing according to the designs and under the supervision of Mr. William Moorcroft, arrangements have been made, with the cordial good wishes of Jas. Macintyre & Co., Ltd., under which this particular class of pottery will henceforward be manufactured by Mr. Wm. Moorcroft at Cobridge, Burslem, under the style of W. Moorcroft, Ltd. The circular further states a fact which the keen buyer will doubtless be ready to acknowledge, that Mr. Wm. Moorcroft "has earned a well deserved reputation for the quality and artistic merit of his work at the Washington Works, as is evidenced by the Gold Medals awarded to him at the Brussels and St. Louis Exhibitions for examples of his pottery, and it therefore seemed most desirable that the good work which he has established should be continued." The writer recently visited the new factory at Cobridge, which has been specially built in order to enable the manufacture of "Florian" ware to be perpetuated, and was extremely interested in all he saw. The factory is of a type which, in a sense, is remote from any of its neighbours, inasmuch as it has been constructed on lines resembling a pottery studio rather than typical

of an average "pot bank." The buildings have been designed on the most approved lines, and with every modern comfort; everything is on the ground floor; the various rooms are lofty and splendidly light, the latter



A MOORCROFT BOWL.

property being the result of a partial glass roof, and the sanitary arrangements have been carried out on approved Home Office lines, open spaces, &c., intervening between the lavatories and workrooms. A further feature of real interest is that the situation of the factory has been judiciously chosen,

for, in the first place, it is directly on the side of the N.S. Railway line, which is obviously advantageous, in fact, it is so near to the station as to be almost considered a part of it; and, in the second place, the position withal is very pleasant, overlooking a small public park. It is not, however, so much to the new factory that I have to refer, but more particularly to the Moorcroft productions, although most pottery houses of repute will be well acquainted with them. Firstly, the articles which are fortunate enough to receive the attention of such an artist as Mr. Moorcroft are all thrown and turned



TYPICAL SPECIMEN OF MOORCROFT WARE.

on the wheel, and are consequently characterised in their initial stages by the quality of soundness, whilst the shapes are simple and yet artistic. As for the decorations, these are effected entirely by hand upon the unfired

clay, to which is afterwards applied a rich glaze, the result being that, in the subsequent process of firing, the whole is brought into a homogeneous mass. The designs, which are thus quite distinct from mere surface decorations, are the outcome of many years' study and thought on the part of the designer, whose signature places the hall-mark of genuineness on every piece that is issued. Mr. Moorcroft's own words might well be quoted in further description of his idealistic productions. "I have always been charmed," he says, "with the sense of freedom and individuality that has characterised the work of the Eastern potter, and it was after long dreaming of what was possible in this direction that, in 1898, I was first able to express my own feeling in clay. Perhaps no other material is so responsive to the spirit of the worker as is the clay of the potter, and my efforts, and those of my assistants, are directed to an endeavour to produce beautiful forms on the thrower's wheel, the added ornamentation of which is applied by hand upon the moist clay. This I feel imparts to the pottery the spirit and the art of the worker, and spontaneously gives the pieces all the individual charm and beauty that is possible, a result never attained by mechanical means." That Mr. Moorcroft has lived up to his aesthetic ideals hardly needs affirming. Invariably the decorations are in strict conformity and harmony with the forms employed, whilst the individuality and freedom of the brushwork applied to the clay cannot but be appreciated by all in examining the finished pieces. Throughout the colours are skilfully and delicately blended, a fact which must inevitably meet with instant approval. There is nothing like unaided brushwork for an artist who wishes to impart a full measure of expression to his handiwork, and the Moorcroft productions may truly be said to portray faithfully the susceptibilities of the designer. It is the intention, I believe, that at the new factory the Moorcroft productions shall be generated in greater variety than ever before, and not only will strictly artistic forms be employed for the purpose, but these quaint slip wares will be produced also for household purposes, such as in tea services, salad bowls, biscuit jars, fruit bowls, bulb bowls, early morning sets, salt and pepper shakers, match holders, tobacco jars, ash trays, and similar articles of both use and ornament, so that there shall be something to appeal not only to the propensities of the collector and the connoisseur, but to the more prosaic needs of a wider clientele. Our illustrations show a few Moorcroft specialties, which are merely typical of many.

Lovatt & Lovatt, Ltd., Langley Mill, near Nottingham, have their London showroom at 26-27, Hatton-garden, E.C., where their interests are watched by Joseph Lockett & Sons, Ltd. The "Langley" leadless glaze stoneware is thoroughly well known in the English markets, especially in the provinces, whilst it is steadily and surely gaining ground in the metropolis. Made from a clay which is quarried in the Midlands, it is, of course, quite distinct in character from the ordinarily accepted white earthenware manufactured for the most part from the Dorset and Devon ball clays, but what it lacks in colour of body is more than made up for in the successful way in which the overlaid decorations are applied; in point of fact, the appearance of the ware undergoes such a metamorphosis at the hands of the decorators that it would be almost difficult to speculate as to the original colour of the "biscuit."

Moreover, the "Langley" stoneware possesses certain very commendable qualities, some of which cannot legitimately be attributed to a number of the denser white wares, and amongst these is the important property of heat retention. A more suitable material could hardly be imagined for the manufacture of teapots, coffee-pots, cocoa jugs, hot-water jugs, and other similar articles where drastic variations of temperature are unavoidable in use. It is not surprising, therefore, that this is one of the principal directions in which the Langley Mill pottery's efforts have been directed. In this capacity the firm has long been enjoying popularity, and for an admirable display of such articles dealers are strongly recommended to pay a visit to the Hatton-garden showroom. The designs are diversified and plentiful; moreover, they are far-reaching, for, from the original "Langley" ware there has been a gradual evolution and extension in the direction of coloured slips, coloured glazes, interchangeable coloured bands, &c., until there has been built up quite a strong and interesting line. One of the newest styles of decoration consists in the employment of an amber glaze, which is exceedingly smart looking, and is



DECORATIVE TEAWARE: W. MOORCROFT, LTD.

taking on very well indeed. Its appearance, even in the bulk, is admirable, and as it is generally recognised that pieces often look incomparably better when singled out than when surrounded, as in a pottery showroom, by much that is diametrically opposed to them, and consequently negatives their individual charms, it is quite reasonable to forecast that this line will prove a thoroughly successful one. There are also some very good new lines on show in slip-painted articles, which are assisted by a "runner" embossment, and as the available colours are so variable, it is conceivable that finality is, as yet, far from reached in decorative possibilities, and consequently also in the matter of choice. In heat-resisting pie-dishes and cooking utensils of similar species there is a wide scope, the sizes and shapes being prolific. Stew jars can be had in all sorts of sizes, and at distinctly moderate prices, as also many other articles which are part of the necessary complement of the up-to-date kitchen. For footwarmers there is possibly no better material, and the utmost use has been made of this fact at Langley Mill. The "Cozy" bedwarmer is a capital little speciality, having several features to commend it. At this particular period of the year such articles are quite an adjunct to the business of Lovatt & Lovatt, Ltd., and as in our trade it is even

ART AND PERSONALITY

'Moorcroft Ware' and the Desires of the Collector.

(*W. Moorcroft. Ltd., Burslem, Staffs.*)

A visit to the stand of Messrs. W. Moorcroft Ltd., was an artistic treat. In spite of the fact that it is almost impossible in a limited space and with many different articles to get into it to give any one article or even group of articles a true artistic value, Mr. Moorcroft, the head of the firm, who is a true artist, succeeded in impressing upon his display the individual artistry which every separate specimen of his ware possesses. A visit to Mr. Moorcroft's workshops is a lesson in the degree to which individuality and personality can be introduced into potting. All 'Moorcroft' ware is handmade, and each separate piece bears the signature of its maker. To Mr. Moorcroft belongs the credit for the design, and to him and to the band of skilled workers he has gathered together at Burslem belongs the credit for the wonderful perfection of colouring and finish which his ware possesses. At the works it is to be seen to greater advantage than that at the Exhibition, for there a piece can be taken and viewed with its proper background and with the surroundings which enable it to acquire its true value. But, whether seen at the works or at the Fair, the visitor must have been impressed by the 'personality' of the pieces shown. Already Mr. Moorcroft enjoys considerable Canadian appreciation. Some of the great houses which cater especially for the connoisseur, and for those who can appreciate the luxury of beauty, are constant and enthusiastic patrons of the 'Moorcroft' pottery, and find a large demand for it among those of their customers, who take thought in the decoration of their homes. Already, in fact, something of a 'Moorcroft' cult has arisen, for the output of the ware, individually treated as each piece is, is necessarily small, and is limited, moreover, to the life of the artist and to the expert staff working under his direction. 'Moorcroft' ware, therefore, is sought after by the collector with an eye to the future, and the ware bearing the signature which we reproduce in these columns will undoubtedly in the course of time rank with those rare products of past masters which are the show pieces of the collector's cabinet. We reproduce, besides the signature which appears on the base of every piece of Moorcroft ware, photographs of two characteristic specimens. It is a pity that it is impossible to show their beauty of colour, but even the most elaborate colour printing would hardly do justice to the delicacy and richness of the tints, and the photograph does at least make manifest the simple beauty and the flowing lines for which Mr. Moorcroft has as great a feeling as he has for colour.

09 'W. Moorcroft, Ltd., Burslem', *The Pottery Gazette* (April 1918), 309-10.

A51. – W. MOORCROFT, LTD., of Burslem, were allotted a corner site close to the entrance, so that visitors to the pottery and glass section, or, indeed, to any part of the Fair, found that this was one of the very first exhibits to claim attention. And it was well that it should have been so, for no more convincing example of the vitality and vigour of the craft of the artist potter in this country could be imagined.

The stand was an open one, framed in dark oak, with old-fashioned fittings carefully selected and arranged to do justice to the detail of each section of the exhibit, while blending at the same time into a harmonious colour scheme that was a perpetual source of delight to the appreciative onlooker. Around the outer sides were ranged island cases of lustre ware, principally vases and bowls of classic shapes, all characterised by the purity and, indeed, almost severity of line that is essential in this class of goods if vexatious cross lights are to be avoided. Of colours there was a truly remarkable variety, but their beauties were far beyond the power of any verbal description. To mention the several shades of red, bronze, blue, green, mauve and yellow is utterly futile in regard to conveying any idea of the entrancing interchange of light and colour through a myriad elusive tints – colour glowing with light and light breaking up into colour perpetually, so that the eye is never weary of gazing, but continually finds fresh beauties in each successive masterpiece.

On a centre table were some of Mr. Moorcroft's achievements, notably a pansy border and an orchid decoration which had deservedly won the patronage of Royalty. The pansies, grouped round the upper rims of vases and bowls, were realistic in shape and naturally coloured in yellow, bronze, red and black, while the orchids were purple, mauve and blue. But here, again, the mere colour-term is useless as an expression of the depth of tone, the delicacy of shading and the velvety texture of the surface.

These qualities were once more exemplified in a collection of Moorcroft designs on a dresser at the end of the stand. Here were slightly conventionalised flowers, trees and fungi, admirably grouped in just the happy proportion of freedom and regularity – liberty exercised without license. As usual, the pen fails entirely in writing of the quality of the colours due to the careful compounding of the glazes from Mr. Moorcroft's own recipes and firing at extremely high temperatures under his personal supervision. A new term is really needed to designate this fire-painting, as 'pyrotechny' has been usurped by a less worthy industry. The colours acquire an unrivalled depth of hue, seeming to carry the light with them far into the body of the ware and to give it back with renewed brilliance imbued with their own tints, yet merging imperceptibly into the kindred sections of the prismatic scale. This is seen alike in the yellow of the flower petals, the blue of the tree tops and the red of the toadstools. The last-named lowly organisms contribute one of Mr. Moorcroft's most recent and happiest themes, which is applied with telling effect to a massive bowl with a Latin motto round the rim.

Along the remaining side of the stand was placed another huge dresser loaded with choice bowls and vases, all bearing the rich pomegranate decoration, the ruddy colouring lighting up the background with quite a Rembrandesque effect. On sundry little tables were shown dainty tea ware and such like useful goods. But the whole of Mr. Moorcroft's work is of the greatest use in keeping alive in this country the spirit of industrial art, the extinction of which would be one of the most disastrous losses war could inflict.



LIEUT.-COL. J. OBED SMITH

menace, the exclusive control of the sailing arrangements of women and children proceeding across the Atlantic by troopship, transport, or guarded liner. He has always been doing his best to save womankind from one danger or another. That is the sort of man to have the key of the gate.

Some biographical details ought to be given, though if the modern history of Canada is the history of immigration, the history of immigration for the past two decades is very much the biography of J. Obed Smith. It is an odd circumstance, to begin with, that the man who was to populate the Canadian West should have chosen to be born in Birmingham, but so it was, not very much more than half a century ago. He went out to Canada in his "teens," drew the deep breath of a pioneer in the wild, but soon heard the call to the town, becoming a well-known figure in Manitoban civics, passing from the shorthand-writer's table to the Bar, and then to sundry Government offices, until he became, twenty years ago, Commissioner of Immigration for Western Canada. The map of Western Canada is scattered with names, picturesque and reminiscent, but those who know the story of its colonisation since this century began will see the name of Obed Smith

written across fifteen hundred miles or more of its territory.

Thirteen years ago he settled in London, with Canadian emigration still the absorbing business of his life. He has completed more than thirty years in Canadian public service, and has served under nine Ministers of the Crown. The world in general reserves its hurrahs for the politicians, and accepts its Civil servants with the same indifference as it accepts its public statues. Yet if it were not for these men behind the thrones of Government departments how badly would it go with some distinguished reputations! It is a flattering illusion, in the old country and the new, that we are governed by the puppets whom our votes have raised to power, and whom, if they misbehave, we can soon depose. We are really governed by the men who are in power all the time. It may be that in some cases government by permanent officials works out ill, but here is at least one instance where it has worked out to the immense advantage both of Great Britain and Canada.

A MASTER POTTER

Those who are acquainted with the work of Mr. W. Moorcroft, artist and potter, will agree

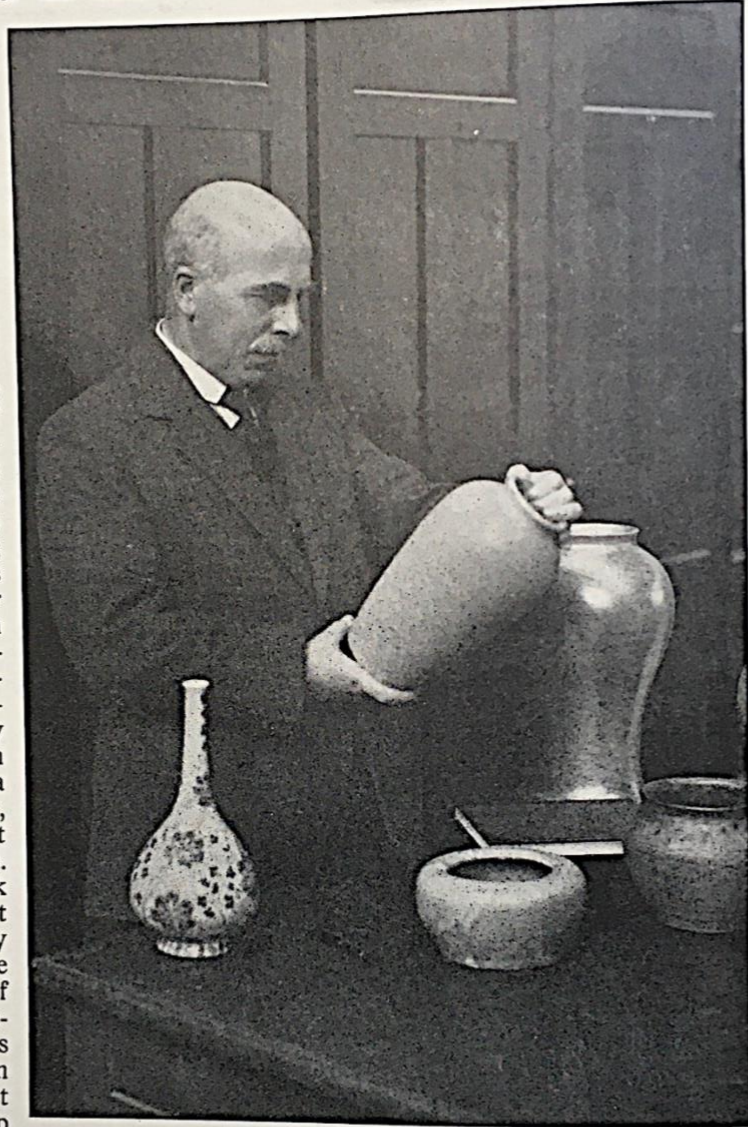
that his devotion to his calling, from an early age, and his marked success in producing many meritorious works of art, have earned for him the title which we have ascribed to him here. For his work is full of character, and his standards high. He thoroughly understands his craft, and is an accepted authority in ceramic circles.

If Mr. Moorcroft were inclined to retrospection, he would tell of his early interest in pottery, both European and Oriental; and of his great love for those English and Continental museums wherein the history of a nation is told, to a great extent, by its ancient earthenware. His work proves that he fully realises the true value of form in decoration. Its charm is in the perfect relationship between

colour and shape. In Mr. Moorcroft's pottery, indeed, all elements appear responsive to each other. As an eminent authority on ceramics says, "It is distinguished by simplicity of shape, perfect potting and colour schemes, which, in some illusive fashion, known only to their creator, provide a feast of colour and reflections of mysterious beauty."

Mr. Moorcroft's love for his art led him recently to build his own factory, of his own design. So the Moorcroft Potteries stand on a hill, in comparatively open country, comprising ideal workshops, around which

have been planted trees and shrubs, and an attempt made to appeal to the æsthetic sense. This factory was properly planned, is well-lighted, and thoroughly hygienic in every way. It is a point for remembrance, that Moorcroft Pottery, admired and purchased by many famous patrons, including Her Majesty, Queen Mary, is produced in praiseworthy workrooms, making for the health and happiness of the workers. Each piece of pottery is "thrown" on the Potter's Wheel. The whole production is hand-work.



MR. W. MOORCROFT

It is impossible to come into personal contact with Mr. Moorcroft without feeling and knowing that he is absolutely determined to produce what is best in decorative pottery. It is quite true to say of him, that rare ability as an artist is supplemented by extraordinary enthusiasm and determination, attributes which make him a real helper of his fellow-men.

POTTERS OF TODAY

NO.9. MR. W. MOORCROFT

To fit into a particular niche with such completeness that one is in distinct accord and harmony with the general scheme of things as Mr. W. Moorcroft has done, is not by any means commonplace; and if one cannot accept the theory of predestination in its entirety, when viewing his life from its commencement to its latest stage, one is apt to have some mental leaning towards the theory expounded by Shakespeare –

'There is a destiny which shapes our ends rough hewn [sic] them how we may.'

Those responsible for the creation, development and later training of Mr. Moorcroft's early years, fully intended, as far as was humanly possible, that he should be the type of man he is today, for, from his very beginning, the 'outlay' of his life was on such lines, as were conducive to the unfolding of such a character as eventually developed.

Mr. Moorcroft was born in Burslem, 1872, of parents who were rich in intelligence and fully conscious of the responsibility of providing their children with life's equipment, in an educational sense, of the most efficient kind, within the range of their means, and in their endeavour to surround their children with all things beautiful and elevating, they lavished their substance. They were idealists there is no doubt, and utter believers in the dictum that environment plays a most important part in the forming of character, and the influencing of a child's mind, consequently home surroundings were such as would inculcate lofty and artistic ideals.

Mr. Moorcroft's father was engaged at the Hill Pottery, Burslem, and the subject of this biographical sketch was educated from the very outset with a view of him ultimately adopting an artistic career in the Potting Industry. Study and execution of art subjects were an important part of his boyhood education. The early portion of his scholastic career was spent at a school, then held in Longport Hall, which previously had been the residence of the Davenport family, the early art training he received was obtained at the Wedgwood Institute, Burslem; this necessitated a walk from Longport Hall up to the Wedgwood Institute and back again in all weathers. He supplemented his daily instruction by attending evening classes at the Wedgwood Institute and later at South Kensington, and some of the Continental museums.

Mr. Moorcroft has met with many triumphs during the last ten years of his life, his work has been acclaimed by writers in many important publications, and it has been his good fortune to receive recognition from the Royal Household, particular attention has been paid to his productions on several occasions by their Majesties the King and Queen, his work has also been purchased by her Majesty Queen Alexandra and several of the Royal Households of Europe.

There is no secret about the methods employed in the actual making of his ware, for his system is as old as the hills. Mr. Moorcroft's ware is made on the wheel, then, it is passed on to the turner, and this is no new method, and so on through the various stages to the decorator.

There is no secret either about the basic methods he employs in decorating the ware, but there is a something, which, if it is not altogether a secret, and that is, his decorative treatment and the extraordinary effects ultimately accomplished. These seem to get nearer the border of secrecy, anyhow, they get men guessing as it were. And here Mr. Moorcroft is different to others, different in his knowledge of colour merging and grouping, different also in the innovations in the colour schemes he employs, which he carries through so successfully, different also in his knowledge of the blending qualities of the various colours, and the harmonising of colour effects. Speaking broadly of Mr. Moorcroft, his ware denotes that the guiding hand, and the master mind, are those of the super craftsman, and the principal [sic] which dominate[s] and control[s] the organisation at the works, and which, to some extent, may be ascribed as contributing to the results achieved, is this, 'Only the best is good enough.'

There is a charming freshness also about every new line he introduces, each demonstrating the originality of conception which appeals so strongly to the beauty loving individual. It is no wonder then that Moorcroft ware has been so extensively purchased by those most able to judge of its beauty and merit, and who reside in all parts of the world, and for which we know there is a steady increasing demand. The wonderful ceramic productions of Mr. Moorcroft must be a reward to him for the toil and consistency of purpose employed during so many years of strenuous activity. In his early age he achieved distinction as a student, in his later life he has made history by the application of that talent, skill, and knowledge to the task of a master potter and with even greater distinction.

Mr. Moorcroft's temperament is peculiarly that of a highly strung sensitive aesthetic, and it is likely that his personality, combined no doubt with a richness of ability, allied to the skill of an alchemist, is, or may be is, the principal cause, or, is the true explanation why such happy results are accomplished at the factory at Cobridge. Credit must also be given to the ingenuity of the man for his ability to conceive such absolute distinctiveness.

At the outset he ploughed a lone furrow, but has reaped a rich harvest therefrom, not rich in a monetary sense – but rich in the manifest appreciation of a multitude of admirers and patrons. He risked a lot in embarking upon what was considered a precarious proposition. He has, however, met with a commensurate and gratifying return.

There is a passage in the good book indited at the diction of, or written by one of the Apostles, which is as follows: 'By their works ye shall know them.'

We have tried to execute a pen picture of Mr. Moorcroft, but in justice to the man we feel we have accomplished it in a very inadequate manner. We must therefore leave it to our readers, and the interested of the world at large, and we know that in this we have Mr. Moorcroft's sympathy, that he should be judged by and through his work.

'Facta non verba' is a Latin quotation aptly fitting to the temperament of Mr Moorcroft, but to which may be added the English word 'unobtrusiveness', and these remarks do not apply to the later stages of his life alone, but, almost from the cradle the same characteristics were discernible. Never once can it be said that things were made for him, of sensible training he had an abundance, the rest has depended upon his own capabilities.

To touch lightly on Mr Moorcroft's private life, just to make this biographical sketch more complete, we may say Mr Moorcroft married in 1913 a Miss Florence Nora Fleay Lovibond of London. They took up their residence at Trentham, and have resided there ever since.

It would be fatuous on our part to comment on the prospect of his commercial and artistic future, but we feel sure that 20 years hence we shall be justified in using language when speaking or writing of him which at the moment would appear to be fulsome flattery.

A POTTER OF GENIUS

BY J. FRASER

England has long excelled in the ceramic arts, and the productions of its famous old potters are of world-wide repute, and most eagerly sought after. And to-day, too, we possess craftsmen of surpassing gifts, artists imbued with the highest decorative sense. Such a master potter is William Moorcroft, an artist of the most distinguished gifts, whose work may be seen in the Palaces of Industry and of Art at the British Empire Exhibition. His technical equipment is superb. The master of to-day is the old master of to-morrow, and the discerning connoisseur does not lose sight of this fact. Moorcroft Pottery will be the quest of collectors of future generations, for it is the perfect expression of the potter's art, of that inherent beauty which 'is a joy for ever,' whose 'loveliness increases.'

Staffordshire was ever famous for its pottery, with Burslem as its chief centre of fame, and it is here that the beautiful Moorcroft Pottery is produced. In design, harmony, delicacy and richness of colouring this stands unique among ceramic ware of to-day. Baron Hayashi, the Japanese Ambassador, in purchasing two Flambé vases last year, said the Moorcroft vases were in every way the equal of early Chinese work – a very great compliment indeed.

Stall 464 M in the Palace of Industry provides a real feast of beauty. Take, for example, the vase with oxydised silver lid and base, entitled 'Moonlit Tree,' a nocturne in blue and old gold, with foliage of blue-grey and pale gold against deep dark blue, and misty blue hills encircling the base. It is a masterpiece. Or the magnificent Rouge Flambé vase, richly mottled in translucent reds, purples, greys and greens, subtly toning into shades of black; or the tall vase, 'Autumn Tree,' on a black carved ebony stand, with its splendid sunset effect behind the trees, its valley and winding paths. Only a great artist, a great colourist, could produce these, there is, too, a delightful beaker, mounted in oxydised silver, of a rich opal, flecked with golden, feathery cloudlets, and melting into purple and russet towards the base. It is the work of a poet. And there are many other pieces hardly less delightful, such as the large jar and cover with pomegranate design, or the jar decorated with wistaria; and there are jardinières of rich colourings and bowls of exquisite shapes, splendidly decorative.

The King and Queen have expressed the highest appreciation of Mr. Moorcroft's art, which has also won the enthusiastic admiration of the Queen of Rumania. Queen Mary is no new admirer of Moorcroft ware; she has acquired several delightful specimens in the past. Undoubtedly Moorcroft is a potter of genius.

THE MASTER POTTER
ART OBJECTS FOR THE QUEEN
ONE-MAN FACTORY

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT
BURSLEM, Saturday

Meet Mr. William Moorcroft. He is an unassuming little man with a softly modulated voice. When he speaks of himself it is in a tone of depreciation, but in the Potteries district he is regarded as the master potter of the world.

Experts will tell you that in beauty and distinctiveness his work approaches the brilliant ceramic products of ancient China, and that if he had made money his god he could have accumulated a great fortune.

But instead of employing a host of workmen he insists on doing nearly everything himself. Not only does he design all his wares, but he also moulds the clay and fires the furnaces. Every piece of china – and no two are alike – is signed by him before it leaves his little factory at Burslem.

He is potter to the Queen, who has bought dozens of examples of his work. Members of other royal families in Europe and many American millionaires are also among his customers.

'No machinery is used in the execution of my work,' Mr. Moorcroft said today. 'I use only the potter's wheel, an instrument that has been in existence for 4,000 years or more.'

'Many people have asked me why I mix my own chemicals, why I design and mould all my own work; but my only answer is that I am the creator. To leave this to other people would be to destroy my greatest joy. My work is the revelation of what I consider to be beauty.'

'To get the desired colouring effects I have to be most careful in watching the temperature of the ovens and the running of one colour into another. If the result is not as I wish the pottery is useless to me and is laid aside.'

Mr. Moorcroft showed me four rooms stacked ceiling high with beautiful pieces of china, but to him they are so much waste.

14 'W. Moorcroft, Ltd., Burslem', *The Pottery Gazette* (April 1930), 612.

W. MOORCROFT, LTD., Burslem, once more presented an exhibit which, to lovers of the beautiful in pottery form and decoration, provided a real resting place for the eye. Mr. Moorcroft was, according to his custom, personally in attendance, and a busy man he was, for one after another visitors of note called upon him, usually to express their congratulations upon his achievements. Mr. Moorcroft had the honour of a visit from the Queen, Princess Mary, and the Duke of York, and it was not the first time by many that Her Majesty was gracious enough to express admiration for particular patternings in 'Moorcroft' ware, bearing the producer's own signature as a backmark. Another distinguished visitor to the stand was the Prime Minister, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, who, though he confessed to being a busy man, said he would like to know something as to the methods by which Mr. Moorcroft's charming decorative effects were secured in red flambé and other individualistic styles.

It is always difficult to name individual pieces produced at the Moorcroft Potteries for special mention, seeing that neither names nor numbers can serve to identify any particular creation. Somehow, each individual pot seems to have some quality which is personal, and belongs to no other pot in quite the same degree. In short, there is a soulfulness about every individual piece of 'Moorcroft' ware which can be associated only with pottery which reflects in no uncertain degree individualism in its production.

Mr. Moorcroft's display was not one whit behind his efforts of previous years. It must be admitted that he has developed a particular style which is characteristic of his enterprises, and one pauses to think whether any other style would be quite as successful in reflecting the artistic sensibilities of Mr. Moorcroft as the one which he has chosen in order to leave his abiding mark upon the pottery of our time. If, however, Mr. Moorcroft never evolved anything in pottery beyond what is represented by his present achievements he would, at least, have the satisfaction of knowing that he has proved how pottery, as a plastic medium, can be used to express the finer susceptibilities, just as literature and poetry is chosen by some to attain the same ends. Moorcroft pottery is no ordinary pottery; it stands in a class by itself and has to be viewed from that standpoint.

THE REVIVAL OF CERAMIC ART
A British Master Craftsman and His Creations

By E. Grafton Marfield

During the middle of the nineteenth century the growth of mechanisation was so rapid that it swept almost everything else out of men's thoughts. Art in all its forms deteriorated, and the general scheme of things which should be lovely became uninspired, uniform and mediocre, as the ingenuity of the machine replaced the skill of the artist craftsman. The tendency may be traced in many directions, but nowhere was it more apparent than in pottery.

Ceramics is a practical art; few, if any, of the works in this medium are mere abstract conceptions. Rather are they representative of the manner in which man strives to make his ideal compatible with the affairs of normal existence.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century there were many evidences of a break-away from the conventionality which had followed in the wake of the industrial revolution. During the Edwardian period the movement towards a renaissance in art grew, and it may safely be claimed to-day that the search for beauty is greater than at any previous period. We are prepared to appreciate beauty for its own sake; and, more prosaically, we recognise the high psychological stimulus of having about us things which lift the mind from the commonplace to the contemplation of the beautiful.

It is because of this that the art of the potter is so popular at the present time. No other art form comes so near the daily life, and the history of ceramics is a long story of the adaptation of commonplace objects to artistic ends. The renaissance of English ceramics owes much to the genius of W. Moorcroft, a potter who has succeeded in striking a happy compromise between the manufacturing needs of today and the claims of art. In this compromise, the claims of art have been superior; it is no mere figure of speech that Moorcroft pottery will be valued by future generations as typical of the finest ceramic art of the early twentieth century.

Moorcroft brought to his work not only a knowledge of ceramics. He had studied architecture – which taught him the value of contrast between mass and the beauty of pure line; he had studied pictorial art, and gained an insight into colour balance and colour harmony. Yet his pottery is neither architectural nor pictorial; its beauty is based upon the skilful combination of colour and line with a delicacy of texture and glaze almost unparalleled even in the famous pottery of the Chinese.

Blues, reds and oranges of amazing translucency and iridescence; plain tints patterned only by firing, and wonderfully conceived line and still-life decorations; delicate vases for ornamental purposes; tea-services and pieces of utility – all find their place in the Moorcroft range, and all are superb, whether one judges them from the broad standpoint of pure aesthetics or the more 'narrow' angle of ceramics.

Many things have gone to place this pottery in the predominant position it holds today. The designer is always experimenting, and evolving new colours and methods of treatment. The pieces are produced by those methods which, for very many centuries, have been supreme – that is to say,

the clay is thrown on the ancient form of potter's wheel. The factory – if one may apply that somewhat ugly term to the home of these lovely articles – is placed in perfect surroundings, and the workers are not only highly-skilled, but are true enthusiasts, and are imbued with the spirit of the old-time craftsmen.

Moorcroft pottery has received the praise of many eminent experts, and it has been honoured by being purchased by Her Majesty The Queen, who has, of course, a high reputation as a connoisseur. Mr. Moorcroft, indeed, holds a royal warrant of appointment as potter to Her Majesty.

This ware represents the extraordinary artistic merit of contemporary ceramic art, and there can be no doubt that the value of the pieces – each one of which is signed by Moorcroft – will increase very markedly in the course of the years.

Mr. W. Moorcroft

There is an old proverb which runs: 'No tale so good but may be spoiled in the telling' : and this comes to mind instinctively as we take up our pen with a view to reminding our readers of the activities of Mr. Moorcroft, whom we recently revisited at his most interesting pottery at Burslem. We must confess that whenever we come to speak of Mr. Moorcroft's wonderful and individualistic creations in pottery, we invariably experience a feeling that our choice of words may be inadequate to express what we have in mind and what we would wish to convey to a wide constituency of readers. However, this we must chance.

There is one fact which serves to make our task not quite so difficult as it might otherwise be, and that is that there are few dealers who cannot share our sense of admiration for what Mr. Moorcroft has accomplished as a creative potter. Who is there who could not wax enthusiastic when handling any piece of pottery which bears Mr. Moorcroft's autograph? If all that we had to do was to give a very short definition of Moorcroft pottery our task would be simplicity itself: we should content ourselves by saying that Moorcroft pottery is *true* pottery. And, certainly, that is something which could not be said of some of the commodities which are to be found at the present time on the shelves of many china shops.

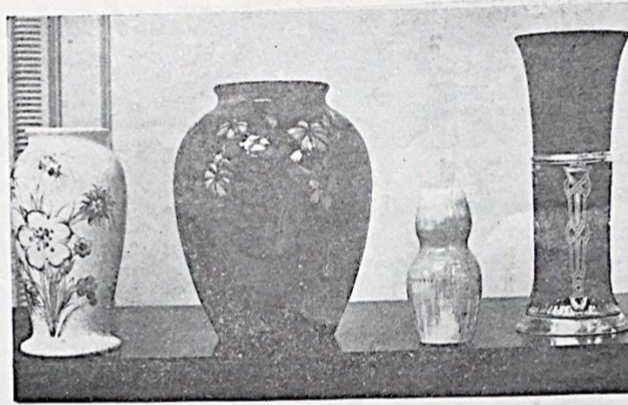
For well over thirty years we have watched with considerable interest the development of 'Moorcroft' pottery, from the time of the earliest pieces of the 'Florian' series, which, because of their worthy characteristics, we did not hesitate to extol. We well remember calling the attention of our readers, in the days long before Mr. Moorcroft possessed his own well designed pottery, to the gracefulness of his shapes, and emphasising that, so far as the decorations were concerned, these were effected entirely by hand upon the pottery in the clay state, thus rendering all the decorations absolutely imperishable. We further pointed out – what has always been the principle of Mr. Moorcroft's work – that the individuality that is associated with hand-made and hand-decorated pottery of so special a type as this is successful in arousing an interest and appreciation that is destined to last.

There is one thing that stands out in connection with the whole of Mr. Moorcroft's work, and that is that there has been no compromising with principles. It would appear as though, whenever Mr. Moorcroft applies himself to the creation of a new piece of pottery he keeps constantly in front of himself that old injunction: 'To thine own self be true...' and thus it is that there results a perfectly delightful pot, which anyone who is aesthetically inclined could not fail to treasure.

There is one point, however, that we would like to make clear in our present observations. We have occasionally heard it said that Mr. Moorcroft produces only luxury lines, and on the ornamental side at that. Now, that is incorrect. It is true that Mr. Moorcroft produces certain pieces which are – and must necessarily be, by reason of their intrinsic worth – expensive; we would not deny, for example, that it is not everyone who can afford to purchase such handsome specimens of Moorcroft ware as the two pieces which we find here pleasure in depicting. But it should be borne in mind that, nowadays, there are some very acceptable – and not highly expensive – productions in Moorcroft utility wares, such as tea-sets, coffee sets and table lines generally.

Before any dealer makes up his mind that 'Moorcroft' wares are beyond his trade, or the resources of his pocket, it would be well for him to make certain of what the position really is. It may, conceivably, be discovered that preconceived ideas are all wrong, and that Mr. Moorcroft is much more adaptable than is sometimes thought. From what we know of Mr. Moorcroft we would say at once that he would be the last man amongst our present-day potters to flirt with principles; he has far too high a regard for what true pottery is and what it stands for; at the same time, pottery does not have to be exclusive to be true and worthy and genuine. Therefore, to our friends the dealers we would again say: Find out what Mr. Moorcroft has to offer: for the result, for some, may well imply disillusionment.

— 19 —



ARTS DÉCORATIFS

LA CÉRAMIQUE

C'est avec une joie très vive que j'ai revu au Salon d'Automne de Liverpool quelques-unes des plus récentes créations d'un maître incontesté de la céramique anglaise William Moorcroft. Je me souvenais encore des collections présentées à Paris, soit à l'Exposition des Arts Décoratifs de 1925, soit à celle, présente encore à tous les esprits, de 1937.

Ce qui séduit surtout dans les créations de ce remarquable artiste, ce n'est pas tant la perfection technique, bien que celle-ci soit en tous points irréprochable et que la pureté des coloris qu'il réalise dénote une maîtrise hors de pair pour plier à sa volonté la puissance souvent capricieuse du feu. Il s'agit là surtout, en effet, de virtuosité technique, parfois de véritables acrobaties, qui relèvent surtout de la science et de l'expérience. Mais nous sommes attachés ici avant tout au point de vue artistique et ce sont plutôt les manifestations de l'esprit

et du génie de l'homme que nous entendons rechercher dans les œuvres que nous commentons.

Ce qui, à mon sens, place bien haut dans mon estime le talent de William Moorcroft, créateur et réalisateur, c'est sa propre conception de l'art. Parmi les œuvres des maîtres de tous les temps, peintres, architectes, sculpteurs, etc., qui ont survécu et se sont imposées à l'admiration de toutes les générations ne sont-elles pas celles où l'art est le plus simple et reste le plus près de la nature ? C'est ce même idéal que nous retrouvons dans les poteries exposées à Liverpool comme dans celles qui ont été admirées en d'autres circonstances dans maintes Expositions internationales.

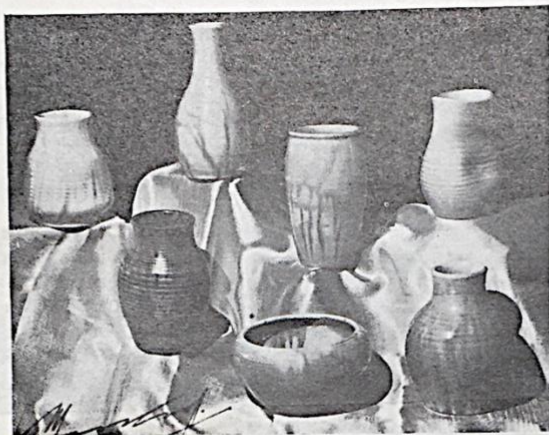
Signalons notamment la lettre qu'adressa le Directeur du Deutsche Museum de Munich à M. W. Moorcroft :

« C'est avec le plus grand plaisir que nous vous accusons réception des quatre pièces de poterie que vous avez eu l'amabilité de nous présenter et qui sont arrivées en parfaite condition.

« Nous vous remercions chaleureusement de ces pièces magnifiques ; elles ont été mises dans la case centrale de notre salle de céramique et forment le motif principal de notre exposition. Une carte sera placée pour indiquer le nom du donateur. »



QUELQUES CÉRAMIQUES DE W. MOORCROFT



Qu'il s'agisse d'une fleur, d'un épi, d'un animal, d'une grappe ou même d'une feuille, ce sont ces chefs-d'œuvre choisis parmi les plus modestes de la nature dont William Moorcroft s'inspire et qu'il interprète avec un souci rigoureux d'exactitude pour ne pas altérer par la stylisation leur originelle beauté. La nature seule est à la base de ses compositions décoratives ; tout son savoir, toute son expérience lui ont servi à acquérir une grande humilité et à ne pas prétendre concurrencer les créations naturelles par la recherche de la beauté. Cette nature, il la sert plus qu'il ne se sert d'elle, en proposant ses exemples à l'admiration de tous. C'est là l'indice éclatant d'une valeur morale qui apparaît manifestement dans tous ses travaux.

Ceux-ci acquièrent, de ce fait une force éducatrice, car ils relèvent l'esprit des masses ; en même temps ils échappent à l'influence de toute doctrine d'école, ou des fantaisies d'une mode passagère et c'est pourquoi ils

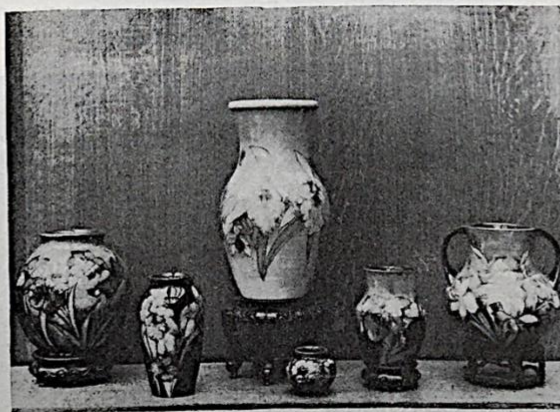
s'imposent dans le présent à l'estime générale des hommes de toute culture, comme ils s'imposeront par la suite à l'admiration des générations à venir ; ils portent, en effet, la marque de l'art véritable : celui qui est universel et éternel.

LA BIJOUTERIE

C'est un bel ensemble de bijoux ciselés et d'orfèvrerie qu'exposait à Munich, M. G. Kramer jun. qui est, au surplus, un remarquable artiste de l'école allemande contemporaine en cet art délicat et difficile.

Car nulle part, peut-être, autant qu'en cette branche artistique, le bon goût ne joue un rôle plus prépondérant, G. Kramer jun. sait faire riche sans tomber dans le défaut trop fréquent de faire trop riche.

Ses bracelets, ses diadèmes, ses bagues, ses pendants d'oreille demeurent toujours conçus et exécutés dans une tenue d'élégance et de sobriété qui en fait tout le



MODÈLES DE CÉRAMIQUES DE W. MOORCROFT

It was a real pleasure to see at the Autumn Exhibition of the Liverpool Walker Art Gallery some of the most recent work by an undisputed master of English pottery, William Moorcroft. I have not forgotten his two exhibits in Paris: one at the Exhibition of Decorative Art in 1925 and the other, still fresh in everyone's mind, of 1937.

What makes the creations of this remarkable artist so compelling is not so much their technical quality, although this is flawless in every respect, and the purity of his colours demonstrates his unrivalled ability to control the power of fire – so frequently capricious – and to make it subservient to his will. His work embodies his mastery of technique, at times his quite spectacular virtuosity, the fruit above all of knowledge and experience.

We wish to focus here, though, on the artistic qualities of his work, and to explore how the objects before us give expression to the will and spirit of the man.

What makes the creative talent of William Moorcroft so exceptional, in my view, is his very personal conception of art. Among the works of the great masters of all ages, painters, sculptors, architects, etc., those which have survived and earned the admiration of every generation are surely those whose art is most unaffected and reflects the spirit of nature. This same quality is evident in the pieces on display in Liverpool, just as it has characterised the work admired in different surroundings in numerous International Exhibitions. We see this particularly in the letter written to Mr W. Moorcroft by the the Director of the Deutsches Museum in Munich:

'It is with the greatest pleasure that we acknowledge receipt of the four pieces of pottery which you so very kindly presented to us, and which have arrived in perfect condition.

We thank you very warmly for giving these outstandingly beautiful pieces; they will be put in the middle case of our room of ceramics and they will form a centrepiece of our ceramic exhibits. A card will be put with the pieces with the name of the donor.'

Whether it is a flower, an ear of corn, a living creature, a cluster of grapes or even a leaf these masterpieces of nature, chosen from its most unassuming examples, are William Moorcroft's inspiration, which he observes and represents with rigorous attention, free of the stylisations which might distort their essential beauty.

Nature alone is the basis of his decorative designs; all his knowledge, all his experience have inspired in him a great humility which does not set out to compete with nature's creations in its search for beauty. He serves nature, he does not make use of it, holding up examples of its loveliness to be admired by all. This is striking proof of the moral value clearly evident in all his work.

As a result, his creations acquire something of an inspirational force, because they uplift the spirit of ordinary people; what is more, they are not influenced by aesthetic doctrines, nor by the whims of transient fashion, which is why they enjoy widespread appreciation today, across all cultural boundaries, and why they will be admired too by future generations; they are stamped with the hallmark of true art, that which is universal and lasts forever.

MOORCROFT POTTERY
COMMERCE AND ART
TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir,- The appreciative notice of Moorcroft Pottery, appearing in your issue of today, will give pleasure to many who have at heart the interests of British handicrafts. We are today realising more and more that commerce and art are to their mutual advantage allies, and it is encouraging to find that you, Sir, are prepared to give this outstanding British production the distinction of a special notice.

Moorcroft pottery has for some years been recognized abroad as standing in a class by itself among modern products of ceramic art. Its author and producer is not only a skilled potter and painter, but a chemist of capacity unrivalled in his own line, who is daily by experiment adding to his knowledge. It is not without reason that every important specimen issuing from his works bears his signature, for his individuality asserts itself in every piece; but one can almost always rest assured that the handling of material, form and decoration will give pleasure, not only to the amateur, but to the expert and the scientist who know the problems which confront any potter who is not merely a commercial provider.

The pottery stands at the British Industries Fair showed us a bewildering mass of commercial manufacture, much of it mechanically produced, and though often not unattractive, harping on hackneyed or worn-out themes, or else displaying originality of a regrettable character. In the Moorcroft stand it was a relief to find originality based on sound principles of technique and style, and free from any taint of the worst excesses of modernism.

Your description emphasises the 'technical soundness' which characterizes Moorcroft's work. It contains, however, one or two phrases with which I venture to join issue. It says, for instance, that it is 'practically without Oriental reference.' I am not quite clear as to what this exactly means, but surely it is hardly possible for any glazed earthenware not to 'refer' in some degree to the primary source of its being : and surely least of all the pottery in question. Moorcroft's flambé, celadon, and 'powder blue' (not, by the by, stippled), while not copied from the Chinese, definitely owe much to Oriental inspiration.

In your last paragraph a comparison of Moorcroft with Wedgwood is set up which I fear may give rise to some misconception. Both styles, it is true, aim at symmetry and purity of form, but whereas Wedgwood was obsessed with his interpretation of the then new range of classical models, with the consequent limitations involved, Moorcroft has drawn upon an infinitely wider field of inspiration, which imparts to his work movement and naturalness that are human and individual.

If British pottery of to-day is to have due recognition at the New York World's Fair, I trust that, for the credit of our handicraft, Moorcroft pottery may be given the position it deserves.

Yours faithfully,
CECIL HARCOURT SMITH
62, Rutland Gate, S.W.7.

WILLIAM MOORCROFT
A CRITICAL APPRECIATION

William Moorcroft (1872-1945) was a great Staffordshire potter. Although he achieved the psalmist's allotted span, those who knew him best could never convince themselves that he was anything but a young man – young in those qualities that inspire the envy of middle-age, in confidence, enthusiasm and a high idealism. Great as were his triumphs in those happy days before the first World War, they were but a prelude to the rich success of his period of maturity which came after 1920. In the restless inter-war years when almost every conceivable style was applied to the decoration of pottery, Moorcroft proceeded on his way, untroubled by the latest craze and indifferent to the newest aesthetic theories. Topical consideration or the vogue of the moment meant nothing to him. His career was a singular example of evolutionary development.

If his views on art in general were decided, as indeed they were, his opinions upon the art of pottery were devastatingly emphatic. Very often, at the conclusion of an Arts Committee meeting at the Hanley Museum, he would be prevailed upon to express his views on some particular topic; and to one at least of his audience – as he must surely have done to all – he gave that particular pleasure that comes of hearing an artist speak of the thing he loves. Conservative, as befits a craftsman, and prone to value the classical in art, Moorcroft was by no means unconscious of all that was good and sound in contemporary performance. His own work showed this most clearly. Never content to rest upon past achievements he was constantly experimenting towards an ideal. It may be that he never achieved his goal – the true idealist never does – but in the quest he achieved a host of noble pots which are secure of their place in the history of ceramics.

In later years he was proud of his appointment as Potter to Her Majesty Queen Mary, but he was equally proud to call himself, simply but effectively, 'Master potter.' This somewhat archaistic title reminds us of 'Master of the King's Music' or 'Master mason.' Like them, it is the laureate of a noble profession and, belonging to the chosen few, is more than coveted. Potting is an exacting business and the potter must devote his whole life to the craft. Research must be his watchword. Here the legend of Palissy is particularly apt, but it must not be thought that such single-mindedness is confined to history. The same virtue, though a little less theatrical, is found in the lives of many recent potters to name only William Burton, Bernard Moore, Howson Taylor and the subject of this memoir. Their reward is in the story of their craft and they would not have it otherwise.

William Moorcroft was born in Stoke-on-Trent, where in early life he came to recognize the symbol of his destiny in the pottery kilns which formed an even more prominent feature of the landscape than now. His father, Thomas Moorcroft, was an artist of distinction at the Hill Top Pottery of Bodley & Co., Burslem. This firm, to which William Moorcroft went for a short time in his youth, was noted for the excellence of its wares. It has long since passed out of existence, but in the closing years of the nineteenth century it was known for good taste and fine body material. Doubtless something of the fastidiousness of William Moorcroft's outlook was bred in this atmosphere.

After receiving a good general education at the Longbridge Hall Academy, conducted by the Rev. Mr. Russ, Moorcroft was sent to the Wedgwood Institute in Burslem, where he came under the sound influence of George Theaker. Before long he was at South Kensington, where he must have come into

contact with Walter Crane and perhaps even William Morris himself. The influence of these men is clearly discernible in Moorcroft's early work, though it is to be doubted whether their political doctrine was ever acceptable to him.

After a short period in Paris he was free of the schools. Henceforward his work lay in production and it is remarkable how quickly he attained an independent vision. By his twentieth year he was already attracting attention not only in the Potteries but in London, and even further afield. In decoration his first main inspiration came from Persian and Turkish faience. The strap-leaved plants of the latter wares were constantly in his mind. He could scarcely have chosen more rightly, for the sinuous beauty of the best Turkish decoration – perhaps the finest *linear* ceramic decoration of all time – was exactly suited to Moorcroft's temperament. His close and penetrating study of Persian pottery also taught him much, as his later work often proved. These Near-Eastern influences, together with the Morris stimulus that he had absorbed at South Kensington, formed his style. It is to be expected that a young man working in the 'nineties' would pay lip-service to the prevailing art-nouveau. In some of his early work, for James Macintyre & Co., where he had succeeded Harry Barnard as art director in or about 1897, this concession to the fashion of the day is noticeable. But it was never a decadent *fin-de-siècle* product and he soon discarded it for a more personal style. In the same way we find him experimenting with shapes. Apart from his domestic wares, of which he designed a very large number, his ornamental pottery produced by Macintyre's exhibits this same process of trial and error. The simple but highly sophisticated forms of fifth-century Athenian pottery at first attracted him. In particular, the Kantheros and Skyphos vessels appealed most strongly to his mind and some of his earliest pieces are modifications of these shapes. 'Rhodian' decoration, however, is an unsuitable embellishment for such severe form and he soon came to realize this. From about 1900 until the year 1912 when he commenced potting on his own account, the gradual emergence of William Moorcroft the artist potter was shown at many exhibitions in Europe and America.

In these days when we have come to accept the potter as an artist in his own right, it is well to remember how much Moorcroft did to bring this about. Before his day pottery was regarded as a mere commodity; it had little or no exhibition value. There were trade shows in London as early as Josiah Wedgwood's time, but they were essentially a means of communication between the manufacturer and the buyer. Nothing approaching the West End Art Exhibition, so beloved of the Victorian aesthete, was attempted in pottery until Moorcroft and de Morgan began to show their work. Small but choice gatherings of recent work were a means that Moorcroft employed, not only in his own interest but also to educate the public in what he felt to be a distinct art form. At the International Exhibitions he achieved great success. As early as 1904 he was awarded the gold medal for pottery at the St. Louis Exhibition. A similar award followed in 1910 at Brussels and again in 1913 at Ghent, but the list of honours is too long for inclusion here. It is sufficient to say that he was known wherever fine pottery is appreciated. In America his wares were eagerly sought by discerning collectors, but what pleased him most was the recognition he received from the Far East. Indeed, he would often remark, half humorously, that to see his best work one had to travel abroad. Several American museums possess representative collections of Moorcroft ware and before the war good displays were to be seen at Vienna, Brussels and, I believe, Tokyo. The writer can well remember a carefully-selected group at the Deutsches Museum in Munich which the Curator had commissioned from Moorcroft direct.

Almost all his work was done on earthenware and, good as was the body material at Macintyre's, it was further improved after Moorcroft commenced potting on his own account at Cobridge. Here he experimented with a variety of bodies until he achieved the right material for his purpose. Both underglaze painting and colour-glazes were used, often together, on the more important pieces. This called for no small degree of chemical knowledge which he was well qualified, both by training and by

temperament, to supply. In his floral designs good use was made of a pale celadon green which acted as a foil for the more brilliant oxides of the decoration. How brilliant these could be was borne upon visitors to the yearly British Industries Fairs at Olympia before the last war. Against a background of simple waxed polished oak, a few, often a very few, glowing vases would be shown in a careful arrangement of form and colour. I do not think it is realised how much trouble he took with these annual displays, nor how much of the art which conceals art was employed in obtaining the desired effects. Each year some new essay in pure pottery would be shown at Olympia. It might be a sensitive restatement of form owing something to the Chinese or perhaps a fresh essay in plant form deriving from his studies in Near Eastern pottery. Whatever the theme, it would be informed with that sensibility, that almost dateless sense of style, that formed the main contribution of William Moorcroft to English ceramics. He was the last person in the world to bludgeon his public into accepting a new mode. Persuasion not unmixed with urbanity was his most constant trait both as man and artist.

It is, as yet, too early to appraise him satisfactorily; time alone will decide. To some he will appeal most strongly as a great colourist; to others his superb drawing in clay on clay will make the most lasting impression. In any event, the statement made at the beginning of this article is surely valid. He was a great potter.

JOHN BEMROSE