

Britannia metal and white metal table furniture—all speak well for the industry and taste of her artizans. But as our subject here is simply *gold*, we must not wander to other departments of Birmingham industry.

The gold-trinket trade of Birmingham is carried on rather by humble tradesmen—"garret masters"—than by large manufacturers. Many a workman who has saved five or ten pounds, leaves his master, buys a little gold and other metals, and employs his wife and children as his aids in producing the veritable "Brummagem" goods, which have somewhat damaged the reputation of the town—in the eyes of those, at least, who are not familiar with the really fine productions put forth by the better firms. Let not purchasers complain if the gold-clad trinket loses its external attractions rather too soon; Birmingham, like London, can produce good goldsmithery if properly paid for it. One small garret master makes buckles, another brooches, another clasps, and so on. Buttons, it is curious to observe, are differently treated; they occupy some of the largest establishments in Birmingham. In gilt toys, mere toys, France now beats Birmingham, partly on account of the superior taste shown, and partly owing to the lowness of wages. Glass, pebble, and cameo ornaments for Birmingham cheap jewellery are mostly imported from the Continent.

The great display in Hyde Park, of which we have lately seen the close, was a cyclopædia of information on the subject of gold, as on almost all other subjects. We have had opportunities of mentioning this in many previous pages; and we will now ask the reader—if he happens to possess the "Alphabetical and Classified Index to the Official Catalogue"—to glance at the various aspects which gold there presents to his view. He will find gold and gold ore from no less than eight different countries; gold leaf, and gold-beating machines, and gold-beaters' skin, from England, and France, and Turkey, and the United States, and Australia; a series of specimens to illustrate the processes of the gold-manufacture; gold pens from half a dozen makers; engraved gold plates from Switzerland; specimens of gold-plating from France; gold lace and gold brocades, not only from English firms, but from foreigners who rejoice in the names of Starchikoff, Troeltsch, and Sapognikoff; goldsmiths' work from about sixty English firms, and from almost every other country in the world; and if we change from the word *gold* to the word *gilt*, we have still other items to add to the list.

The "curiosities" of gold in respect to the currency question may be veritable curiosities indeed; but as they launch the curiosity-hunter upon the stormy sea of politics, we gladly avail ourselves of a good excuse for keeping clear of them.

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