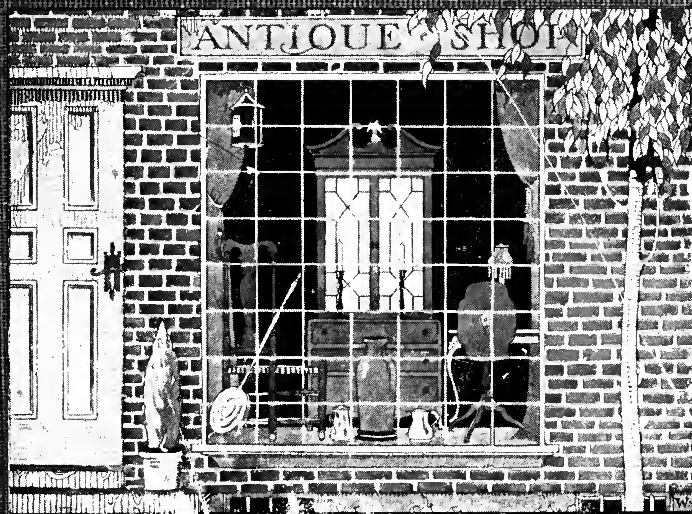
The Pleasures of Collecting



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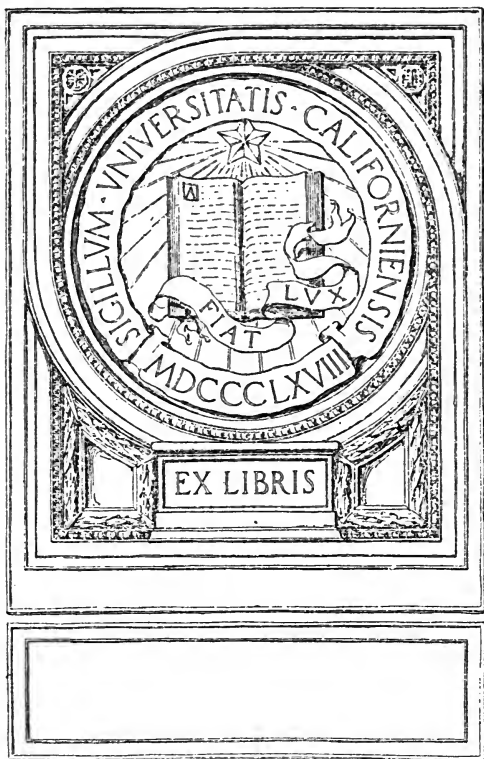
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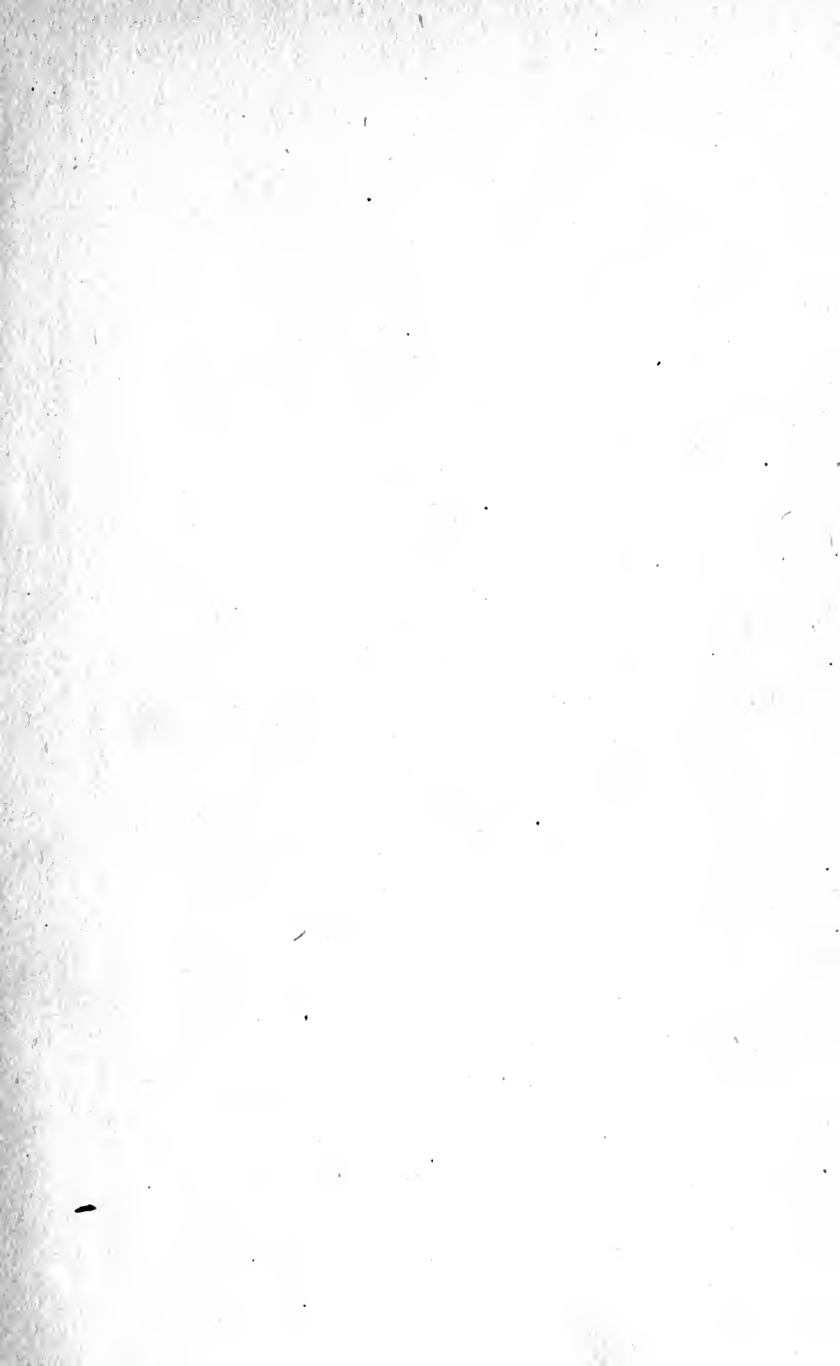

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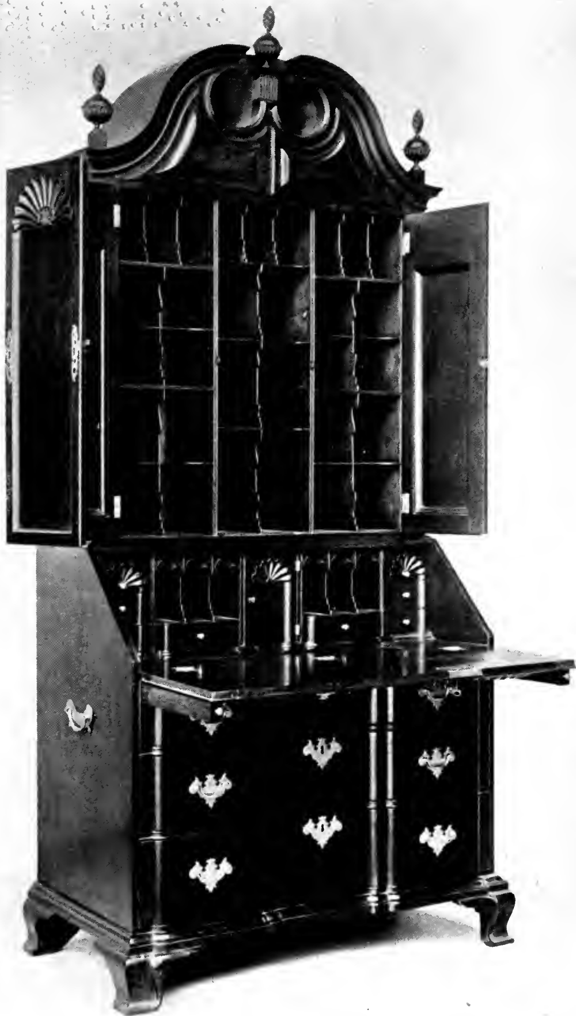
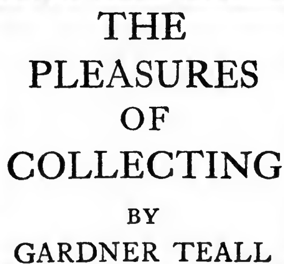


Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art
Early American Mahogany Block-Front Cabinet-Top, Rhode Island Style Desk, 1750-1775



THE PLEASURES OF COLLECTING

BY

GARDNER TEALL

Being sundry delectable excursions in the realm of antiques and curios, American, European, and Oriental

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The Century Company
1920

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TO

MY SISTER

FRANCES COTHEAL TEALL

IN LOVING MEMORY

500247

DEAR READER

Your true collector does not apologize for his hobbies; he exalts their virtues. Necessity may occasionally compel him to resort to the camouflage of mid-interest, as when his family is not in sympathy with his pursuits; or, again, as when fate has placed him in arid communion with unsympathetic associates, individuals whose personalities have developed independently of their souls, leaving them pronounced in the directions they invariably select; directions, in consequence, invariably divergent from those paths which the true collector loves to tread.

While not secretive by nature, and by the same nature eager to share his joys with his fellow-beings, the true collector is endowed, more often than not, with a certain intuitive perception which enables him to appreciate the futility of hoping to convert the unequipped infidel to the solaces of his own faith in the delights of the lares and penates of another generation, an intuition which warns him to protect his peace of mind by harmlessly appearing to accept with good grace the commonplacenesses un-

doubtedly enjoyed by the many, but with no culpable renunciation of his own lively interest in the quaint and curious mementos of the world of yesterdays, a world into which our own to-days slip, one by one, silently, but as surely followed by our to-morrows.

Was it not Charles Lamb who exclaimed: "Antiquity! thou wondrous charm, what art thou? that, being nothing, art everything? When thou wert, thou wert not antiquity,—then thou wert nothing, but hadst a remoter antiquity, as thou calledst it to look back to with blind veneration; thou thyself being to thyself flat, jejune, modern! What mystery lurks in this retroversion? or what half Januses are we, that cannot look forward with the same idolatry with which we forever revert! The mighty future is as nothing, being everything! The past is everything, being nothing!"

Your true collector may often maintain reticence in order that he may enjoy a normal place in the community, undisturbed by the merely idle curious, the undeft rummaging of the clumsy, the curt depreciation of the supercilious, the gushing of the undiscriminating susceptible, or the skepticism of those who measure the sanity of their fellows by the canons of their own irrevocable and

undeviating limitations, those to whom no music but the echoes of caverns can appeal. Such are beyond the pale of any errand in missionary spirit.

The true collector is born, not made. Yet one cannot discover the mirror without knowledge of the reflection. The contentment to be found in the acquisition and in the contemplation of the things that are dear to the heart of the antiquarian and the art-lover is a contentment that is the gift of the gods, always awarded the intelligent, though not always disclosed to them.

A friend, then, will be he who discovers to one a treasure like that which the joy of collecting uncovers. What we read and what we see pictured for us is precious, indeed, if it holds up to us the image of that which we immeditaely know to be congenial to our natural tastes. And so it is that this little book is not devised for savages, but tenderly has been nurtured in sympathy with the interesting and the beautiful things of yesterday. May it find friends among those who love them as well as among those who love the things of to-day which have prospered in their heritage from the days of long ago!

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THE PLEASURES OF COLLECTING

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

THE PLEASURES OF COLLECTING

CHAPTER I

THE PLEASURES OF COLLECTING

BLESSED is the man who has a hobby! declared Lord Brougham; and of all the hobbies it is doubtful if any are more blessed than those of the collector of antiques and curios, old prints, coins and medals, rare books and bindings, and the like. "God never did make a more calm, quiet, innocent recreation," good old Isaac Walton said of angling. But that is true, too, of collecting, which, figuratively speaking, is in itself a species of the art of angling, of dipping into the quiet pools of unfrequented places, there to angle for quaint curios and interesting mementos of bygone days, conscious that though the bait may be small, the catch may be large—besides, there is the fun of fishing!

In "Le Jardin d'Epicure," Anatole France has written: "People laugh at collectors, who perhaps

do lay themselves open to raillery, but that is also the case with all of us when in love with anything at all. We ought rather to envy collectors, for they brighten their days with a long and peaceable joy. Perhaps what they do a little resembles the task of the children who spade up heaps of sand at the edge of the sea, laboring in vain, for all they have built will soon be overthrown, and that, no doubt, is true of collections of books and pictures also. But we need not blame the collectors for it; the fault lies in the vicissitudes of existence and the brevity of life. The sea carries off the heaps of sand, and auctioneers disperse the collections; and yet there are no better pleasures than the building of heaps of sand at ten years old, of collections at sixty. Nothing of all we erect will remain, in the end; and a love for collecting is no more vain and useless than other passions are." Anatole France might well have added Sir James Yoxall's observation, that "good for health of mind and body it is to walk and wander in byways of town and country, searching out things beautiful and old and rare with which to adorn one's home." Indeed, collecting has aspects other than the one of discovery, of acquisition, of entertainment, or of furnishing a pastime: it has its utilitarian one as well.

There is an undeniable and oftentimes indefinable charm about a home in which well-chosen antiques and curios form part of the decorative scheme and become part of its furnishing and adornment. Many collectors have become such through an increasing interest in old furniture, rare china, early silver, and other classes of antiques and curios, inspired in the beginning by the acquisition of some object of the sort, personal contact with which has served as an example of the pleasure which collecting holds in store for one. The true collector is not merely "a gatherer of things," indifferent to the guidance of a discriminating taste. Rather, when he finds an object at hand, he considers it from many points of view—its historical value, its significance in the development of the arts, its anecdotal interest, its worth as a work of art, and its workmanship.

The intuitive sense will carry the *amateur* a long way, but connoisseurship will depend upon knowledge. Those persons who are absolutely indifferent to the whys and wherefores of things, uninterested in any effort to discover the "story" of an object, bored by its history or unappreciative of its beauty, are hardly likely to become collectors, though accident and the chances of fortune may throw interesting things into their possession.

Neither are they likely ever to become as Thackeray, who, in "Roundabout Papers," said of a certain antique and curio shop: "I never can pass without delaying at the windows—indeed, if I were going to be hung, I would beg the cart to stop, and let me have one look more at the delightful *omnium gatherum.*"

Now, it often happens that we find a collector-in-embryo—one who has a desire to start a collection, but fancies it an undertaking requiring very special qualifications—asking: "How could I hope to become a collector when I know so little about the subject I think I should be interested in? Then I fear good things cost too much, and that real bargains have long ago vanished from the mart." To such a one the reply can truthfully be made that it is by no means difficult for the beginner to acquire definite and valuable knowledge on any subject in the collector's field that may chance to interest him.

The way one learns to collect (and that means the way one learns about the things worth collecting) is by collecting. Contact with the objects themselves is necessary to connoisseurship, just as it is one of its pleasures. The collector learns more about Oriental porcelains, old English china, Dresden figurines, French enamels, Russian brass, Italian laces, or Bo-

hemian glass by having a few representative pieces of them at hand for study than he could learn, so far as helpful knowledge fitting him to judge is concerned, from volumes on the subject. While this contact with actual objects is necessary in developing a connoisseurship (one may have it visually in museums or have access to private collections; the shops, too, will teach one much), all the accessible writings on the subject should be consulted, as comparative study increases the interest and confirms or corrects one's personal deductions and opinions.

Supremely fine examples of old furniture, china, silverware, bronzes, miniatures, and the like, have not often been "picked up for a song." The collector must remember that the pastime of collecting is not one of recent development. Indeed, the ancients were collectors of the rare, curious, and beautiful. The Medici were renowned for gathering in their places *objets de virtu*, and few collectors of note of to-day could outvie the enthusiasm of Horace Walpole, who turned Strawberry Hill into a veritable museum. All this goes to show how keenly sought for have been all art objects of unusual importance. Naturally, when rare occasion brings them to the mart they command high prices. However, it is not for one to despair because he cannot

collect museum pieces, to cry for those things which have little to do with the pleasure of collecting beyond the interest their contemplation affords. That the by-paths which the collector may tread are literally bristling with bargains *is* true. Certainly the small collector need not become discouraged. For instance, the author continually finds within the boundaries of New York city alone numerous objects that any collector of limited means could acquire with rejoicing heart. One day it is a yellow Wedgwood mustard-pot for two dollars, another day a *genuine* Paduan medal for fifty cents; then a Persian lacquer mirror-frame for a dollar, and a Japanese sword-guard by Umetada, signed, for half as much! It adds to the interest of collecting that while the collector soon learns where to look for things, he constantly meets with them also where they are least expected, and the country holds as many treasures hidden away for the keen collector as does the metropolitan stronghold.

CHAPTER II

COLLECTORS OF YESTERDAY

THIS is an age in which Achilles gives way to Douglas Fairbanks, Helen of Troy to Mary Pickford. At least Homer in the original is unpopular and to confess to a liking for Virgil in the Latin is to be frowned upon by those who have persuaded certain of our universities to turn their backs on the very cultural presences that have given structure to civilization. As for myself, I shall continue to be old-fashioned. Only this morning I have been dipping into good old Pliny's "Letters." Now more than ever I am convinced that those who cried most loudly against the classics were those who knew nothing about them. Where, I ask, in all literature will there be found more things of human interest than in the writings of those old masters of antiquity?

It is Francesco Petrarca's chief title to fame that he was an inveterate collector of classical writings, that he devoted himself with an unending enthusiasm to the recovery of the literature of the Ancients. And yet he knew naught of Greek, little enough of

Latin from the point of view of scholarly attainment in the language. What he did realize, did sense, was the value to intellectual development of these bygone literary Titans, and at Padua he warred against the medievalism which was, after all, nothing more than a warring against the complacency of his own times, just as the attitude of those of to-day who fight against such of the finer things of life as are to be reached only through contact with the original writings of Homer, Euripides, Aristophanes, Sophocles, Horace, Virgil, Cicero, Cæsar, Ovid, Plato, Pliny, and the rest is, in effect, smugly complacent in its acceptance of cultural things as they stand.

Renan called Petrarch the first modern man; if only we could be as modern! And what a debt the world owes to his collecting proclivities, an instinct connected with an intelligence!

Of course, there were hundreds, one may venture to say thousands, of collectors who were his contemporaries; for the love of beautiful and of interesting things is seldom separated in the normal person from the desire to own them, a desire that has produced more history and more romance than one would dream of.

There are those who dissolve pearls in wine, those

who treasure them in necklaces; these two sorts are in the world. To Petrarch each scrap of writing was as precious as a pearl to be added to a necklace to adorn the fair throat of Learning, and his accomplishment, his devotion to this hobby, marks him as the very Prince of Collectors of Yesterday.

I suppose there have been collectors ever since things were discovered to be collectable. Every object of human creation seems eventually to fall within the collecting class, Father Time saying when. *C. Plini Caecilii Secundi Epistularum* sounds somewhat formidable to the ears of a foe to the classics, but it lately yielded this morsel from the eighth letter of Book VIII, a letter from Pliny to his good friend Rufinus:

> You have now all the town gossip; nothing but talk about Tullus. We look forward to the Auction Sale of his effects. He was so great a collector that the very day he purchased a vast garden, he was able to adorn it completely with antique statues drawn from his stores of art treasures.

Ancient Domitius Tullus! would that we knew how your sale came out! Did you turn in your tomb that some Eros from Praxiteles's own hand, some Amor chiseled by great Phidias himself, fetched but a hundredth of its value? Or did you rush off to Dis and to Proserpina with the gleeful tale of how

friend Pliny, who thought to get something for nothing, was forced up to a prince's ransom by Lucanus in the matter of that little sardonyx gem, engraved by Pyrgoteles, finer, the auctioneer declared, than the Perseus by Dioskourides? How human it is to wish to know!

Those old Romans were great collectors. Even when the creative spirit had degenerated they were appreciators of the fine things which the Greeks had produced. Petronius, that *arbiter elegantiarum* of Nero's court, amassed thousands of remarkable art treasures that even the emperor longed to possess. Incurring Nero's displeasure, and dying under the Emperor's orders, he disdained to imitate the servility of those who, under like penalty, made Nero heir to their possessions and, as Suetonius tells us, filled their wills with encomiums of the tyrant and his favorites. Petronius broke to bits a precious goblet out of which he commonly drank, that Nero, who had coveted it, might not have the pleasure of using it. Incendiary, violinistic Nero, Nero who on shaving off his beard for the first time put it in a golden box studded with precious gems! What would not collectors of a lock of hair of this great one, and of that, give to discover the beard of Nero!

I dare say, in no time was human nature more

perfectly understood than in Roman days. Even Augustus Cæsar was wont to amuse himself by a device explained by gossipy Suetonius as follows: "He used to sell by lot amongst his guests articles of very unequal value, and pictures with their fronts reversed; and so, by the unknown quality of the lot, disappoint or gratify the expectation of the purchasers. This sort of traffic went round the whole company, every one being obliged to buy something, and to run the chance of loss or gain with the rest." How many of us who have frequented the art sales in American cities, from the old Clinton Hall auction days to the present, would have imagined that Pliny took such things as seriously, Augustus Cæsar such things in jest? How old the new world is, how new the old!

From the time of the ancient Athenian vase shops, and even from long before that, to our own day, when we may browse in the realms of antiquarians at home, the bazaars of the Far East and the quaint inglenooks of Europe when we are traveling, collecting has been a passion with the many as well as a mania of the few. But we, ourselves, are more prone to collect the things of yesterday than were the collectors of yesterday to collect the things of the centuries before their time.

Lorenzo de' Medici, Lorenzo the Magnificent, found time when steering through the perilous channels of endless family feuds to immortalize himself as a collector. To the efforts of Cosimo, his grandfather, are due those priceless classical and Oriental manuscripts which formed the nucleus of the Laurentian Library in Florence. The grandson was worthy of his forebear. Through Joannes Lascaris he procured from the monastery of Mount Athos two hundred manuscripts of greatest importance for the Laurentian, an incomparable collection, which, together with other works of art, disappeared at the sacking of Florence during the rule of Lorenzo's wretchedly incompetent son, Piero. Lorenzo, notwithstanding his love for ancient works of art, was a ready patron of the art of his time. Lorenzo's daughter, Catherine de' Medici, had all the Medici love for art, and she, too, patronized living artists lavishly, as her husband's father, Francis I, had done in France before her. She it was who took such constructively active thought for the planning of the Tuileries, and her interest in books, manuscripts, and other things led to enriching the collections of the Bibliothéque Nationale.

What a remarkable list of collectors France can write in her Golden Book of Art-Lovers—Jean

Grolier, De Thou, Pierre Jean Mariette, Cardinal Mazarin, Comte de Caylus—to name but a few of literally thousands! Nor must we forget Madame de Pompadour, whose library and marvelous collection of works of art were sold after her death. There is no question that Madame de Pompadour took a constructive interest in art and literature, an interest which led Voltaire to assert that without her patronage the culture of her time would have found itself in sorry plight under the rule of a king whose thoughts had little or nothing to do with the finer things of life, that king who stood at the palace window looking forth as the cortège of the Pompadour passed by in a drizzling rain and remarked: "It is a wet day for the Marquise!"

Charles I of England was a king whose art-collecting proclivities produced rich spoils indeed for the Cromwellians. In the quaintly worded old catalogue recording his possessions we find noted among other things, "Item, a landscape piece of trees, and some moorish water, wherein are two ducks a swimming, and some troup of water flowers, being done in a new way, whereof they do make Turkey carpets, which was presented to the King by the French Ambassador, in an all over gilded frame. 1 ft. 10 x 2 ft., 5 wide."

Some of King Charles's treasures in the century following passed into the hands of Horace Walpole, who housed them in his villa at Strawberry Hill, that "Gothic castle" which revived the English eighteenth-century taste for Gothic design. Austin Dobson's "Horace Walpole" says of the master of Strawberry Hill:

> As a virtuoso and amateur, his position is a mixed one. He was certainly widely different from that typical art connoisseur of his day,—the butt of Goldsmith and of Reynolds,—who traveled the Grand Tour to litter a gallery at home with broken-nose busts and the rubbish of the Roman picture factories. As the preface to the Ædes Walpolianæ showed, he really knew something about painting; in fact, was a capable draughtsman himself; and besides, through Mann and others, had enjoyed exceptional opportunities for procuring genuine antiques. But his collection was not so rich in this way as might have been anticipated, and his portraits, his china, and his miniatures were probably his best possessions.

We must not judge Walpole's virtuosity by all that accumulated in his house—Wolsey's hat, Van Tromp's pipe-case, King William's spurs, and, I dare say, some chips of stone from the Parthenon and a vial of water from the Jordan! But let it be remembered that these things were gifts to Walpole, and as such were necessarily within reach, just as the cut-glass wedding-present pickle-dishes of our

own time must be given shelter against the sudden appearance of their donors. Perhaps there is merit in the discipline of such tender-heartedness.

Well, gone is Master Horatio, gone the wits and beaux and belles of his day, but he remains in our thoughts as the Georgian master of Chelsea china pseudo-shepherds and shepherdesses, the most elegant of collectors, the most brilliant of subjects in the sovereign realm of precious bric-à-brac. We are glad that he lent his presence to our ranks.

So, you see, collecting is not merely a fad of recent generations. In that which has gone before there is ever a peculiar fascination. The field is unbounded, its possibilities limitless; things which to us of to-day are commonplace, by reason of their niches in our every-day life, will be treasures to posterity a hundred years hence. Thus will the love of collecting go on from generation to generation, with new converts always ahead.

CHAPTER III

AMERICAN TABLES

AMONG collectors in America there is an ever-increasing interest in "things American." One of the most attractive fields in which one's hobby may browse is that of old furniture. Nearly every one appreciates the early furniture of good design and cares to know something of its history. America, both in colonial times and in the period following the Declaration of Independence, produced pieces of many sorts. Some of it was excellent, most of it was good, and a little of it was wholly of an indifferent quality. As table-makers the early American craftsmen exhibited much skill, and such examples of their work as are to be met with cannot fail to attract the attention of the alert collector who, having a house of his own, knows that by some mysterious providence, no matter how small that house may be, there will always seem to be room in it and need in it for "just one more table," if the table is a "find" and of interest as an American antique of genuine authenticity.

With tables, as well as with other pieces of furniture, the early American craftsmen who produced the finer examples did not allow themselves any decided departure from European models that were sufficiently numerous with the American furniture-makers by the close of the eighteenth century and at the beginning of the nineteenth. Naturally, much furniture from England came into the colonies throughout the period of settlement and development, followed by many pieces of French design and manufacture.

If we turn now to English reflections in American work we shall find comparisons of decided interest. There is often little or nothing to distinguish early American pieces from their English prototypes. However, there was no "slacking," in quality of material, workmanship, of finish in American furniture. The colonial cabinet-makers were thorough and conscientious, although not always "artistic," perhaps. Certainly these craftsmen had at their command the finest woods—maple, pine, walnut, birch, chestnut, and the ships brought in quantities of mahogany. Extant examples of this early craftsmanship show at once the intrinsic merit of stanch construction and virile line that makes them so much sought by collectors. Their sincerity of design,

while not always accompanied by the refinements of striking grace, compels our attention and respect.

Previous to 1776 we must expect American native furniture to run parallel in style (with natural lagging tendencies, of course) to the English periods with which they were contemporary. In earliest colonial times, times when voyages were few and far between, large shipments of furniture were not to be considered. As the wealth of the individual colonists increased, luxuries came to hold a place in trade which they could not have held at an earlier day in the New World. With the advent, too, of colonial officials, fat of purse, sent over by the mother countrf, came articles to enhance as well as to continue their comfort. One could be more contented with an easy-chair than without, and little by little the rude bench furniture of the Pilgrims was locally developed (reverting to English patterns) into a more attractive and acceptable sort of furniture, or was augmented by importations. At the same time this increased demand for cabinet-making invited English craftsmen to seek their fortunes in the New World, and before long a very respectable home industry, both in the North and in the South, was making its influence felt.

Fortunately New England thrift (or perhaps it

was conservatism) has preserved to us many pieces of this early American furniture, some of it dating back to the time of King James II. These New England Jacobean pieces follow simple lines in general, with here and there a piece of ornate type. In the reign of William and Mary and that of Anne a rapidly increasing number of English craftsmen migrated to the American Colonies, where they helped to perpetuate the styles of this period. It is not at all uncommon to meet with very fine examples of the Queen Anne period which were contemporaneously produced by American craftsmen; in fact, some of the New England cabinet-makers became so proficient that the products of their shops rivaled the output of British makers both in stanchness of construction and accuracy of contour. The well-proportioned cabriole legs of many pieces of this description extant—the generic term for furniture with a "knee," derived from the French *cabriole* (goat-leap)—are as well designed as any of the examples then being produced in the mother country by the skilled English cabinet-makers. Naturally, the local colonial production of Chippendale, Adam, Hepplewhite, and Sheraton styles was supported by the affluence to which the colonies attained. During the troubles of the Revolution the importation of ma-

hogany by the colonies was diverted by Great Britain. Substitutes, for the time—and this began to mark a decline, with fluctuations in the materials used—had to be found, such as that of the sweet-gum tree, *Liquidambar Styraciflua*, which in appearance and general character is very similar to mahogany, its distinguishing features being a slightly lighter color and grain.

The Dutch influence seems less to have entered the traditions of American furniture than that of England or of France. A fair amount of furniture was imported by the Dutch of New Amsterdam from Holland, and numerous authentic pieces of this Dutch furniture have come down to us; such, for instance, as the gate-leg table which is preserved in the Manor House at Croton-on-Hudson. But local cabinet-makers soon came to blend features of the English styles with those of the Dutch designers and finally purely English styles superseded the others.

Still another local division of colonial furniture was that introduced by those settlers known as the Pennsylvania Dutch. This type of "Dutch" must not be confounded with the Dutch of New Amsterdam. Coming to Pennsylvania, these immigrants brought with them their gaily painted peasant furniture, and in the early days of the colony they pro-

duced much of that sort for their own use. Hence their furniture cannot be said to have been a product designed for the market. Examples of it did not stray far from the locality of their production, save in those instances where the settlers emigrated to other parts of the country. Even then it appears to have exerted little or no influence outside Pennsylvania territory. Stiff, conventional flowers and fruits, birds, and decorative bands characterize the decorations. Pieces of this sort are still to be found in central and southeastern Pennsylvania, although the majority of such decorated wood antiques extant consist of bridal chests and small boxes.

In the North much of the early furniture, especially tables, was made of maple, pine and birch. Walnut, of course, was a great favorite, particularly with the earlier cabinet-makers of Pennsylvania, where superb slabs of beautiful black walnut were milled from the wonderful old trees, that so soon disappeared through this demand.

We must not be surprised to find so little early furniture of the South, for, despite the wealth and culture of Virginia, the Carolinas, and Maryland in colonial times, these Southern colonists were equally fashionable, and discarded the old for the new before

the dawn of the nineteenth century, earlier than did the Northerners. A search of the southern states will scarcely yield one piece of Jacobean design. A hunt for original William-and-Mary will be equally fruitless. But in the style of Queen Anne, many excellent pieces will be found.

No story of American furniture, no matter how brief, can be written without mentioning the name of Duncan Phyfe, the New York cabinet-maker whose artistic products justly won him the sobriquet of "The American Sheraton."

The period between 1795 and 1830 was marked by a persistent disinterest in all "things English," and an ardent admiration for all "things French," and this prejudice showed itself in the furniture. American cabinet-makers adapted these French designs according to their lights, and the result was not always unsuccessful. At the very end of its influence the work sank to a low level of artistic merit. Before that time it had known the apex of artistic line in the works of Phyfe, and if we are to judge American Empire, it were better to use the high standards set by his famous productions.

The tables of this period were usually made with square ends, the dining-tables being of the extension type having drop leaves and other leaves which could

Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art

American Walnut Gate-Leg Table, 1675-1700

American Pine and Walnut Chair-Table, *cira* 1700

American Cherry and Maple Gate-Leg Table, 1675-1700

Courtesy Mr. Frederick H. Howell

Late 18th Century English Tea Caddy
Late 18th Century English Tea Caddies
Ivory Tea Caddy and two Tortoise-shell of 18th Century

be inserted on pedestal tables. At this time centre-tables came into vogue. These were ordinarily circular in shape and usually rested on ornate pedestals rising from a plinth supported by winged claw feet. Some of these tables were rectangular and some had double tops that folded out or could be turned up against the wall. The "sofa tables" of Phyfe's design were oblong and had narrow drop leaves at both sides, the ends supported by the *Lyre* motif.

CHAPTER IV

TEA AND ANTIQUITY

ONE afternoon of a day late in autumn we were having tea in Camberwell. The home of our English friends was a house redolent with memories. The Brownings, Carlyle, and many others had in days gone by gathered beneath the hospitable roof. It was one of those houses whose exterior gave hint of an interesting history. Not all interesting houses do that. This one particularly did, so much so that it lent much of its fascination (or appeared to lend it) to its neighbors.

Perhaps we were in the mood for thinking so, for had we not dropped in to a tea at another wonderful house a few steps away but the day before? And what a house that had been! What a host!

I think all the treasures of the earth must have been gathered there to commemorate the yesterdays of beautiful things, of interesting personalities. There was the actual chair in which George Eliot sat when writing "Romola"; I had sat in it drinking tea! A plate of delectable biscuits was at my right

—on Carlyle's table! If I had been ill-mannered enough to devour all the biscuits, I am sure that plate would have revealed itself as equally delectable Sèvres; I guess as much from its edge. What an afternoon that had been! Charles Lamb's bookcase! The Persian lacquered mirror that had belonged to Rossetti!

"And did you know," said my companion, "that our host is the original of Walter Pater's 'Marius the Epicurean,' his best friend?" It was then that I gasped forth something about a Mahomet in Mecca. "You must remember," said the other indulgently, "that you are in London."

And here we stood, this other afternoon, on the threshold of another happy adventure!

"Tea and antiquity seem to go amazingly well together," said our host of this second day, "but our friend Marius has probably shown you that. Still, his hobbies are many. Ours are few. If we have not ridden in every nook and corner of the world, we have ridden furiously in one direction—tea."

With curiosity piqued we followed to the library. "Arthur!" warned our hostess, as the master of the house paused before the glass-encased shelves to the right of a tapestry-hung doorway.

"No," he laughed, "I 'm not going to—yet! You

see, every book on those shelves has to do with tea, old tea, new tea, good tea, poor tea. Everything any one has ever known and printed about tea is there. You will find the first edition of Pepys's Diary, in which that indefatigable chronicler remarks 'I did send for a cup of tee (a Chinese drink), of which I never had drunk before.' Then there is the rare first edition of Philippe Sylvestre Dufour's 'Manner of Making Coffee, Tea and Chocolate,' a quaint little volume printed in 1685, and just there" —our host pointed through the glass—"is Simon Paulli's 'Commentarius' of 1665."

"Arthur," laughed our hostess, "remember the fate of Carleton and Lord North in forcing tea down the throat of America, while Britannia wept!"

"I meant to go straight ahead!" our host replied with affected meekness, holding back the tapestry to admit us into the very sanctum of this entertaining collector's worshiping.

The large room, despite its generous dimensions, was cozy. Although filled almost to overflowing with rare bits of china, prints, brasses, pewter—in fact, with a wealth of objects that would delight the heart of any collector—there was order in it all. One did not tumble over a Turkey-red tea-cozy or mistake it for a hassock. Nor did one have to com-

press elbow to side to keep from precipitating precious tea-cups to the floor underfoot. In this instance a remarkable collection of antiques and curios furnished a whole room.

"I cannot vie with Marius in offering you the throne of George Eliot," said our host, "but here is a very comfortable arrangement once occupied by Queen Anne."

"Yes," commented our hostess; "Arthur went threadbare to have it, because Alexander Pope happened to have written:

> Here, thou, great Anna! whom three realms obey,
> Dost sometimes counsel take,—and sometimes tea.

In fact, I once arrived just in time to prevent him from buying Leigh Hunt's spectacles just because—what was it Leigh Hunt said of tea, Arthur? I never can remember."

" 'Oh, heavens! to sip that most exquisite cup of delight was bliss almost too great for earth; a thousand years of rapture all concentrated into the space of a minute, as if the joy of all the world had been skimmed for my peculiar drinking, I should rather say imbibing, for to have swallowed that legend like an ordinary beverage without tasting every drop would have been a sacrilege.' "

"No wonder you were keen for the spectacles!" I cried.

"But I 've never heard of Leigh Hunt's spectacles! I don't believe he ever wore them. You have to make allowance for the attitude my better half holds toward tea!"

"No, my dear," our hostess replied sweetly, "you know I love these things as much as you do." It was true.

Now, while we did not talk tea throughout all our little visit, we did eagerly examine the old tea-furniture. There was Delft, pottery, and porcelain of all sorts, marvelous tea-caddies, a collection of prints and caricatures of the Boston Tea Party.

"There were other tea-parties over there in America," our host explained; "you neglect them terribly! There was the 'Tea-party' of Philadelphia in 1773, the 'Tea-party' of Edenton in 1774 and the same year the 'Tea-parties' of Cumberland County and of Greenwich, New Jersey. I have them all in the library!"

We saw the books before coming away. Not the least interesting was Chippendale's "The Gentleman and Cabinet-Makers' Director," issued in London in 1762, with its designs for tea-tables and tea-chests, and the Hepplewhite book of 1787. Dr. Samuel

Johnson was rated a prodigious tea-drinker in his day, "beyond all precedent." We did not compete with his record, nor yet with that of Bishop Burnet, who thought nothing of sixteen cups of a morning, but we did not find our tea taste stinted, that delightful afternoon at Camberwell.

> Venus her myrtle, Phœbus has her Bays
> Tea both excels, which she vouchsafes to praise.

We found Waller's lines coming to mind many times afterward, when we had come to discover them in a dusty tome of 1662 which we found for a penny in a book-stall and added it to tea-ana! And what response to the memory of Camberwell adventures was evoked when, home again in our own country, we chanced upon Thomas's "Massachusetts Spy" and read therein that touching farewell to tea!

> Farewell, the teaboard with its equipage
> Of cups and saucers, cream bucket and sugar tongs,
> The pretty tea-chest also lately stored
> With Hyson, Congo and best Double Fine.

We began then with enthusiasm to read up on tea. It behooved us to begin with the "tea-party" episodes our host in Camberwell had hinted at as neglected by our histories. For one thing, there were the autographs to be sought of many of the

revolutionary participants. We found a book on the subject, long since out of print, and many a hint was contained therein. This was "Tea Leaves" by Francis S. Drake, "Being a collection of letters and documents relating to the Shipment of Tea to the American Colonies in the year 1773, by the East India Tea Company." There we found many portraits, facsimile signatures, etc. It is a book worth looking for. Our copy cost us but two dollars. On a fly-leaf some one—not the poet himself, alas!—had copied these lines of Oliver Wendell Holmes's "A Ballad of the Boston Tea Party":

> No! never such a draught was poured
> Since Hebe served with nectar
> The bright Olympians and their lord
> Her over-kind protector;
> Since Father Noah squeezed the grape
> And took to such behaving,
> As would have shamed our grandsire ape,
> Before the days of shaving;
> No, ne'er was mingled such a draught,
> In palace, hall or arbor
> As freemen brewed and tyrants quaffed
> That night in Boston Harbor!

And how completely the old rancor of it is gone in these days when our hearts beat in unison with the hearts of our British cousins! How different are

our tea-parties to-day, American and Britisher, brother and brother!

When we began collecting tea things, we did not get *everything* we wanted! One of the tantalizing treasures beyond our reach was the poetical effusion of Mr. Nahum Tate, who lived from 1652 to 1715 and celebrated the beginning of the eighteenth century with "Panacea, a poem upon tea, with a discourse on its Sov'rain virtues; and directions in the use of it for health." A greedy Mæcenas outbid us at the book auction where we thought only ourselves had discovered or could possibly wish to acquire it! With Dr. John Coakley Lettson's "The Natural History of the Tea-Tree," printed in London in 1799, we were more fortunate. Likewise Mr. T. Short's "A Dissertation upon Tea, Explaining Its Nature and Properties, Showing from Philosophical Principles, the Various Effects It Has on Different Constitutions; Also a Discourse on Sage and Water," produced in 1730, was ours for the expenditure of ten shillings, a rare piece of fortune coming to our door through the good graces of a Birmingham bookseller's catalogue. I fancy good Queen Anne set the pace to second place for sage and water! We are still on the lookout for the "Treatise on the Inherent Qualities of the Tea-Herb," by "A Gentle-

man of Cambridge," whose scholarly effusion came from a London press in 1750.

In the course of our adventures at home we found that tea-collectors were more numerous than we should have dreamed them to be, perhaps because the subject embraced collecting in almost every field —furniture, old silver, china and pottery, pewter, brasses, books, prints, and what not; to say nothing of collectors of Oriental tea things, as, for instance, the lady who has seven hundred and thirty-two interesting Japanese tea-pots, the equally interesting lady who has a collection consisting of as fine as possible a tea-cup of every sort of porcelain and ware of which tea-cups have been fabricated since the memorable days following the presentation of two pounds of tea to King Charles II by the East India Company. Another collector has gotten together a great number of fine Japanese color-prints, the subjects of which have to do with the tea ceremony, and yet another gentleman "goes in" for the Cha-no-yu (tea ceremony) pottery of Japan. Probably the most interesting collection of tea-caddies in America is that owned by Mr. Frederick H. Howell of New York. Tea-caddies offer to the collector an entertaining hobby, for although they are by no means common, they are still to be "discovered" in

many of those nooks that long since have, perhaps, given up other collectable things. I remember once dwelling with enthusiasm on the pleasures of collecting tea things.

"I have a little hobby along that line myself," remarked one of the group, "teaspoons."

"Don't you have to be careful?" was the question the man next to him could not refrain from putting.

But perhaps our friends are not always as sympathetic with the collector's pursuits or as courteously attentive, and there is always a time to stop before one becomes a bore!

CHAPTER V

CUP-PLATES

IT is surprising how rare the cup-plates of the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century have become, considering their universal use during that period when they were regarded as necessary and fashionable accessories to the tea-set. In the days of our great-grandmothers the etiquette of tea-drinking was markedly different from that which maintains in our own day. Then the tea-cup occupied much the position that the tea-bowl still holds with the Chinese, and the saucer that of the tiny Chinese cup. In other words—we blush to confess it!—our tea-drinking ancestors used the saucers of their tea-cups to cool their tea in, and while the saucers were so utilized, tiny plates (like the plates of a doll's tea-set) were employed as holders for the cups, thus to protect the polished top of the tea-table or, perhaps, the trays of satinwood from being stained by the moist cup rims.

Just why, when so many of these little cup-plates

were in use, so few have survived seems a mystery. While tea-cups, cream-pitchers and sugar-bowls abound, cup-plates still remain elusive. This is because these tiny objects, being truly plates in miniature, were, when they fell into disuse (and before collectors of old china and old earthenware began to take an interest in them), given to children to play with, thus meeting the general destruction to which nearly all dolls' dishes of all periods succumb. This seems the plausible theory for accounting for the scarcity of the cup-plate. Nevertheless, despite its rarity, the collector need not be discouraged. In all parts of the country where settlement has been early the collector of old china still stands a good chance of picking up cup-plates of all sorts. Even the glass ones are yet to be found.

True it is that any exceptionally fine cup-plates offered in the antique shops generally bring high prices. For instance, a four-inch cup-plate brought twenty-three dollars at auction a year ago, and another fetched thirty-six dollars at private sale. Certain other cup-plates which have come to the author's attention have been held for prices running from fourteen to forty-five dollars apiece. Although the collector of moderate means may not expect to indulge in many purchases, he is apt to run across

fine pieces at bargain prices that will send his spirits to the level of true elation. First of all, however, he must study the subject and learn to know a cup-plate when he sees one, for the successful collector is never a hunter of Snarks!

Only two hundred and fifty years ago the East India Company considered the gift of a couple of pounds of tea a princely one to make the King of England! Pepys gives us an inkling as to how uncommon a thing tea-drinking was in his time. However, the use of cup-plates is a much later one than Pepys's day; they were not the fashion until tea-drinking had become an almost universal custom.

The illustrations will give the reader an idea of the variety to be found in cup-plates. While the pieces put to this use are nearly of a size, their diameters vary by a fraction of an inch to an inch or more.

One of the best known cup-plate series is Hall's "Hampshire Scenery," with borders of primroses, hepatica, and other flowers resembling many of the Clews borders. Their color is rich blue. John Hall & Sons were Staffordshire potters (1810–1820), whose marks on wares Chaffers places in the "uncertain" list. Then there is a "Quadrupeds Series." The mark on this resembles an extended bell, on

which appears the name "I. HALL" in capital letters, with the word "QUADRUPEDS" in crude capital letters below, on a curtain-like extension with inverted flutings. But far more beautiful than either of these sets, and more interesting to the American collector, are those of a series in rich blue, one of which shows the Park Square Theatre, Boston, and bears the characteristic oak-leaf and acorn border of R. Stevenson and Williams. All the designs of Ralph Stevenson are eagerly sought by collectors of old china. The Stevenson works were in Cobridge, Staffordshire, but all record of both potter and pottery seems to have disappeared. Another cup-plate series contains a view of the first United States Mint, Philadelphia, and has the characteristic border—of scrolls, eagles, and flowers—of Joseph Stubbs. This potter made comparatively few pieces for the American market. From 1790 to 1830 he was owner of the Dale Hall Works at Burslem. His cup-plates are among the most desired objects of the sort.

Many cup-plates bore mottoes and verses such as those of the Liverpool type, a Romance Series, for instance, containing one known as "Returning Hopes," with the ardent verse appearing thereon as follows:

When seamen to their homes return,
And meet their wives or sweethearts dear,
Each loving lass with rapture burns,
To find her long-lost lover near.

These Liverpool cup-plates, by reason of their pictorial nature, have always been popular with collectors, hence the scarcity of them in antique and curio shops. Private collectors, too, seem loath to part with specimens of such printed wares. The glass cup-plates in native American manufacture are in no sense comparable esthetically with the cup-plates of porcelain and pottery of foreign fabrique. Still they are interesting historically. The majority of the glass cup-plates were crystalline glass, though some were colored—blue, green, yellow, brown, amber, rose, purple, etc. There were many glass factories in America in colonial days as well as in the nineteenth century, and American households were well supplied by them with cup-plates, although in design these were, more often than not, of comparatively little beauty.

Among the patterned cup-plate wares the collector will find, many varieties of the hundreds of varieties of the "Willow" pattern may with reasonable certainty be traced to their various potters; but this is a special study in itself, and one entailing the sur-

Courtesy of Mary H. Northend and Mr. William A. Cooper

Cup-Plates

Landscape, Wild Rose Border — Landscape, Falls of Killarney

Pressed Glass Cup-Plate

Portrait of Henry Clay

Floral Pattern — Hyena Design

Courtesy of Mr. Charles Allen Munn

Early Printed Cottons
Allegory of Franklin, and Apotheosis of Washington

mounting of many difficulties. The *amateur* need not concern himself with the matter completely in order to enjoy the few examples that may chance to discover themselves to him.

The lovely dark-blue Davenport ware, with designs in the Chinese style, are worth looking for. Ware such as this is familiar to every collector and is coming to be appreciated more generally than formerly. From even a small collection of cup-plates much pleasure may be derived, and the collector need not feel that it is hopeless to start getting together examples of worth. If things are being picked up here and there on the one hand, it is true that, on the other, examples of cup-plates fully worth while are coming to the market as well as leaving it.

CHAPTER VI

CHINTZ

CHINTZ has been called the *tapisserie d'Aubusson* of the cottage home. Its place in the affections of the collector of antiques and curios has long been secure. For fully fifty years and more lovers of household ancientry have gathered to their appreciation bits of old printed fabrics. Originally the word "chintz" was applied to the printed cotton fabric from India, each piece being called in early days a *chint*, a name which was derived from the Hindu *cint*, Bengal *cit*, and Sanscrit *chitra*, meaning spotted or variegated. Afterward it came to be applied to the glazed printed calicoes of European and American manufacture, gaily patterned with flowers and birds and figures in diverse colors on a white ground. Its calendered dust-shedding surface made the material a great favorite with careful housewives. Cretonne, the French substitute for chintz, a heavier material, was not introduced until somewhere around the year 1860.

The old-time chintzes are not so easily picked up nowadays. However, there are still excellent chances of occasional "finds," even in antique-combed America, where, happily, collecting has come to be one of our chief pastimes. I know one collector who has been so fortunate as to obtain many quaint specimens of old printed fabrics at small cost, from an upholsterer in his own town. From time to time chairs and sofas were brought to the upholsterer to be re-covered. Often these had several layers of material under the outer one, and below those of later days he would find, now and then, coverings of old printed cotton fabrics. Among these were a lovely spray-pattern chintz of the Queen Anne period and a hand-print of pastoral design by one R. Jones, manufacturer of Old Ford, London, who produced patterned chintzes about the year 1760. Many of the new printed cotton fabrics have borrowed their patterns from these interesting textile ancestors, though nowadays, in the case of monochrome and duochrome prints, the color effects are somewhat richer than those that obtained in the printed fabrics of the eighteenth century, with their cold chocolate browns, bottle-greens, and ox-blood reds. For the collector there will naturally be an inimitable charm about the original pieces, not to mention

their historic interest, while old multicolored chintzes cannot be surpassed in loveliness.

Chintz attained a beauty and a distinction of its own when it attracted the fancy of the fashionables of the eighteenth century. To maintain its favor, it did not rest content with being imitative but developed its own resources with a consequent richness that marks its place among decorative fabrics of the early days.

A sixteenth-century Portuguese writer, by name Odoardo Barbosa, gives us an interesting early reference to printed fabrics: "Great quantities of cotton cloths, admirably painted, are held in highest estimation." But even some two hundred years before his time the narrators of the romance of commerce were celebrating the chintzes of the Coromandel India coast. Doubtless these printed fabrics of the earlier centuries attained an intricacy and beauty that were long denied the European printed textiles which they inspired. Early examples of the latter are in no way comparable, artistically or technically, with contemporary India prints. Even to-day it would be difficult to improve esthetically on the beautiful printed stuffs that come to us from the countries of the Orient.

We do not know with certainty the circumstances

attending the introduction into Europe of the manufacture of printed fabrics. Long before English weavers had undertaken the industry, the printing of fabrics flourished on the Continent. The sixteenth century references to printed cottons in England are so few and so vague that we are virtually without knowledge of the earliest manufactories of these fabrics. We do know, however, that veritable legions of skilled craftsmen in the textile arts settled in the British Isles during the latter half of the seventeenth century. It is to them, probably, that the art owes its introduction there.

The Print Room of the British Museum exhibits a quaint old trade card—itself the impression of a wood-block such as the cloth-printers used—which bears the representation of a cotton-printer at work. In the costume of his time—the reign of James II—he stands before a long, broad Jacobean table, lengthwise of which lies a piece of cloth, one third showing the pattern which the printer has impressed on it. Behind the left end of the table is set a Jacobean stool on which rests a circular basin containing the color, which a boy is waiting to apply to the wood-block for printing. The master printer is in the act of impressing a section of the pattern on the white cloth by means of the wood-block, which

he is hammering with a wooden mallet. The text (in script of the period) reads, "*Jacob Stamps living at ye sighn of the Callicoes Lineings Silkes Stuffs New or Ould at Reasonable Rates.*" This old mode of block-printing obtained for fully two hundred years until the inventive genius of the nineteenth century joined hands with commerce, to the craft's almost complete discouragement. However, a revival of interest in the old arts was inspired by such enthusiasts as William Morris. The hand-printed fabrics have been restored to favor, and to-day they again play an important part in the decoration of the modern home.

Richmond, Bow, and Old Ford, London, became the earliest centers for printed chintzes in England. The few extant specimens of seventeenth-century chintz show us that the early printed cottons were crude enough. At first more than one color was not attempted. The next step appears to have been to add to the monochrome effect by applying washes of dye, either freehand or stencil application, to the outline pattern. This was done by brushing the color on as required, a process slow, laborious, and fraught with uncertainties. An examination of these early pieces, treasures though they are from an antiquarian point of view, reveals a smudgy appear-

ance resulting from the thickness of the dye-inks with which the patterns were printed. The early materials were very coarse canvas-like cloths.

With the advent of the eighteenth century the cloth for receiving the printed patterns was much improved, and it was not long before finely woven textures supplanted the cruder ones. This greatly facilitated the development of textile color-prints, and the Queen Anne chintzes were in consequence infinitely superior to those of the Charles II, James II, or William and Mary reigns. So popular did these improved patterned fabrics become that the chintz industry not only rivaled that of the silk-weavers but for a time threatened to drive the latter out of business. Indeed, so bitter became the feeling on the subject, between the two crafts, that riots resulted and an appeal was made to Parliament, by the silk-manufacturers of Spitalfields, for protection. History records that the silk-workers were so enraged because Westminster did not immediately forbid the wearing of chintz that the delegation which had carried the petition to London gave vent to its wrath by tearing off all chintz gowns whose wearers were encountered on the homeward journey. Finally, in 1736, Parliament passed an act prohibiting printed cottons and linens, an act which was soon repealed

and followed by an increased vogue in chintz. In France as well it was at one time considered expedient to forbid the manufacture of printed textiles; the restriction extended until 1759.

Authorities seem to be agreed in considering the middle of the eighteenth century as the golden age of old-time printed chintzes. Collectors eagerly seek specimens of this period, though they are all too rare to encourage hope in this direction except for occasional finds. It was during the years around 1760 that multicolored patterns were so beautifully and satisfactorily wrought with superimposed woodblock impressions. Chippendale furniture of the time naturally led to the popularity of Chinese motifs in design, and lovely indeed these were. The intertwining flower sprays that marked the printed fabrics of Queen Anne's day now gave way to motifs in separated positions. The *famille verte*, *famille rose*, and *famille noire* porcelains of China furnished many a motif for the chintz designers of the seventeenth century. In the Chippendale period buff grounds were introduced, whereas in the earlier chintzes the grounds had been white or untinted.

The third quarter of the eighteenth century witnessed an innovation in the manufacture of printed fabrics. Various mechanical devices were perfected

and led to an enormous increase in chintz manufacture. Cotton-printing was taken up in the northern counties and soon the trade center shifted thence from London, its old cradle-town. Engraved copperplates and roller-printing came into use. Still, as has already been said, hand-printing was destined to survive.

The collector of these various printed cottons will find the historical group especially interesting. Take for instance, the "Apotheosis of Washington" or the "Allegory of Washington and Franklin" subjects. In both, the figures of Washington were taken from the famous Trumbull portrait. In the "Apotheosis" chintz the medallions containing portraits of thirteen famous personages of early American history are after engravings by Du Simitière. "William Penn's Treaty with the Indians" forms the subject of another patterned chintz of especial interest to American collectors. Then there are the later political subjects which the nineteenth century's early history inspired. The printed kerchiefs also came within the province of the collector of printed cottons. Many of these kerchiefs are especially well adapted for framing. Such as the "Lord Thomas and Fair Eleanor" kerchief and the one bearing the title of "The Token or Sailor's Pledge of Love."

Some of these old kerchiefs and also many examples of printed chintzes of historic interest have found their way into American public collections.

CHAPTER VII

PEWTER

THERE are many persons—some of them collectors of other antiques and curios—who ask what the fascination of old pewter can be, frankly declaring that to them it has no attraction. Perhaps to some the mention of pewter suggests battered up, dingy, leaden-hued objects of metal, more suitable for bullets than suited to buffets. Again, there are those who, unacquainted with pewter lore, do not guess the wealth of historical interest that invests the subject.

Relics of any age that are so damaged as no longer to command respectful attention have no real excuse for perpetuation unless some highly important historic association attaches to them, for surely mere age or antiquity is not a raison d'être with the sensible. Pewter in a state of dilapidation is no exception to the rule governing the forming of any collection of quality, and no matter what its antecedents, it should present good form to be worthy a place in the worth-while collection, if it is to be re-

garded with other than the sentiment bestowed upon a chipping from the Great Pyramid or a bottle of dust from Pompeii.

But truly fine pewter has attributes to justify its collecting. In the first place, its decorative quality commends it to notice. Here, however, one must remember that an esthetic taste will recognize this, where one to which the artistic does not appeal will overlook it. Secondly, the story of old pewter, as recorded by Welch Massé and other authorities on the subject, authorities to whom the collector-student is bound to be indebted for much information, is one that lends entertainment to the pursuit of the hobby.

A few years ago a rage for old pewter swept over England and America, following a notable exhibition—the first of its sort—held at Clifford's Inn, London. This was in 1904. To be truthful one must record the "slump" that followed a few years later. But the true collector who had taken up with pewter remained loyal and enthusiastic, and with the appearance of a number of exhaustive and authoritative works on the history of pewter in America and in Great Britain, there has been a revival of interest in the subject which is bound to be permanent.

English pewter was much simpler than the pewter made in other parts of Europe. This latter often

attained to an ornateness from which, fortunately, the pewter of England of the best period is free. The manufacture of pewter in England was governed by the strict rules of the Pewterers' Company, which, as early as 1503, made it compulsory for the pewterers of England to mark their wares, just as the French pewterers of Limoges had been compelled to do a century earlier. Some of the early English pewter was marked with the heraldic Tudor rose with crown above, although the rose-and-crown is to be found on Scottish and on some Flemish pieces also.

As for the individual marks of the pewterers, these marks were called touches. Each pewterer was compelled to have his separate touch, which was recorded at the Pewterers' Company halls by impressions struck on sheets of lead. Nearly all the plates of touches in London so formed prior to 1666 were destroyed in the Great Fire, which also consumed nearly all the records, although some of the audit books of the company, dating from 1415, were saved. However, on the lead plates that have survived we find some eleven hundred pewterers' touches impressed. The earlier touches were somewhat smaller than those of later date; some of them, in fact were tiny. The mark X on old English

pewter was permitted on metal of extra quality, as one may learn from one of the company's rules of 1697, which gives notice that "none may strike the letter X except upon extraordinary ware, commonly called hard metal ware." The various instances of misdeeds on the part of pewterers who tried to evade the regulations kept the company busy for several centuries. The very last regulation of the Pewterers' Company concerning touches directs that "all wares capable of a large touch shall be touched with a large touch with the Christian name and surname either of the maker or of the vendor, at full length in plain Roman letters; and the wares shall be touched with the small touch." A penalty of one penny per pound was exacted from those pewterers who neglected to observe this rule.

While all the facts concerning the marking of old pewter should be diligently studied by the collector, as he gathers them from this source and from that, and will prove of great help, be of interest, and lend zest to collecting, one must not forget that much imitation old pewter has been fabricated with intent to defraud. However, such "fakes" (many of them are very attractive!) usually unblushingly bear upon them the ear-marks of their spurious nature, and the collector soon comes to have command of the

knowledge necessary to detect such reproductions.

The material of old pewter is variously compounded. Old fine pewter consisted of 112 pounds of tin to 26 pounds of copper, or—in place of the cooper—of brass. Again, a fine, hard resonant metal was made of 100 parts of tin to 17 of antimony. Distinguished from the fine pewter was common pewter—or "trifle" pewter, as it was called. This was made of 83 parts of tin to 17 parts of antimony, or, with slight variations, of 82 parts of tin to 18 parts of antimony. These various alloys are susceptible of a high polish and of retaining it well in ordinary circumstances some time. This pewter, too, has a good measure of hardness and possesses durability.

Britannia metal must not be confused, as often it is, with the real pewter. It was a late eighteenth-century invention of tin, antimony, copper, and zinc, which lent itself to fashioning on the lathe (a process called "spinning"), having in this respect a decided advantage over the less easily worked pewter. Naturally it did not take long for the new Britannia metal to supersede pewter when it was discovered that Britannia metal could be electroplated.

However, the general use to which pottery and porcelain, tinware and enamel attained had come to

have much, too, to do with banishing pewter from general use, though it remained longer in favor in Scotland than in England. "A whole garnish of peutre," such as a lady of 1487 bequeathed to one of her heirs, no longer came to be deemed fashionable. The master pewterers suffered and, as time went on, found themselves forced out of their trade.

With the waning of the popularity of pewter, vast quantities of it were melted up for solder and for other purposes, which accounts for the scarcity of really fine old pieces. Indeed, such articles as pewter spoons are exceptionally rare; not, as some suppose, because they were so small, but because they were especially serviceable to the traveling tinkers, who could convert them into solder. The English pewter spoon was seldom a small affair, if it ever descended in scale to the size of a dessert spoon. In passing it is well to call the collector's attention to the fact that pewter spoons are imitated and often placed before buyers as antiques. One needs especially to familiarize himself with the shapes of the bowls and of the handles of the English ones, and with other *minutiæ*, in order to determine intelligently the authenticity of a piece of pewter of this sort. Other objects are much more common, and ten genuine English pewter spoons would form a goodly

collection, considering their exceptional rarity.
The London pewterers guarded their trade secrets jealously. They permitted no outsiders to loiter and watch them at work. As the various molds for pewter objects were made at great expense, it was the custom for the guilds of the Pewterers' Company to own these and to let them out. This accounts for the various standard shapes of articles, made by quite different pewterers. Lists of such molds, dating as far back as 1425, have survived the vicissitudes of time and throw much interesting light on the subject. Let the pewter-collector remember that pewter objects appear to have come into vogue as a substitute for silver, and that pieces of old pewter usually follow in form the shapes of the contemporary silver objects of like use. Indeed, a study of old English silver will prove of great help to the pewter-collector in solving problems of chronology. One may not attempt to collect a whole garnish of pewter of a single period—a complete garnish consisting of twelve platters, twelve dishes, and twelve saucers—but it is quite possible, without an appalling outlay. On the other hand, unless it is a "find," one may have to pay forty or fifty dollars for a fine and authentic early English pewter spoon.

Whatever one collects in the way of old pewter of

any period and of any country, it should be displayed by itself and not mixed with silver, glass, and other objects. As to what dealers sometimes call "silver pewter," let not the unwary collector suppose that it is more than pewter of a fine quality (if the object proves to be that!). Silver cannot enter into the composition of true pewter, as it takes 950° C. to melt it, while the tin, melting at 230° C., would volatilize too greatly to combine with the precious metal before the silver even reached the melting-point. Perhaps because the finest pewter takes a silver-like polish it was originally called "silver pewter," without intent to mislead.

Another point worth remembering is that, although all sorts of objects have been fashioned of pewter—even a copy of the Portland Vase has been fashioned in this metal—the collector will find very few old English pewter tea-pots. Fully eighty-five per cent. of the tea-pots passing as pewter are, I should say, either Britannia or Ashberry metal. Very early ecclesiastical pieces of English make are rare, too. The Council of Westminster forbade the fashioning of church vessels of pewter, as it was thought not sufficently precious to be dedicated to such use. But in poorer communities exceptions must have been made, as we know of

its use in churches in 1194. The Council of Nîmes (1252) and the Council of Albi (1254) in France had later to take up a like matter, then permitting pewter in the manufacture of objects for church use under certain restrictions.

Not only in early times (by the year 1290 Edward I had accumulated three hundred pieces of pewter of fine quality) but as late at 1820, when George IV had pewter placed upon the table at the coronation feast, pewter has enjoyed the protection of royalty, which fact adds not a little to its historic interest. But let the collector beware of certain pewter plates with arms, portraits, etc., stamped in high relief, which are now and then to be met with, marked with a crowned rose and N. D. in the upper part of the crown, as well as a pellet in the center of each petal (except in the center of the upper one, where there is a six-pointed mullet). And let him beware of the marked pieces distinguished by a St. George or by a St. Michael and a dragon in a beaded circle and the letters A. I. C., as these are not old pieces but appear to have been fabricated as "ornamental" antiques.

Of course there are many other tricks resorted to by the unscrupulous, but the real collector, generally speaking, happily possesses that instinct which en-

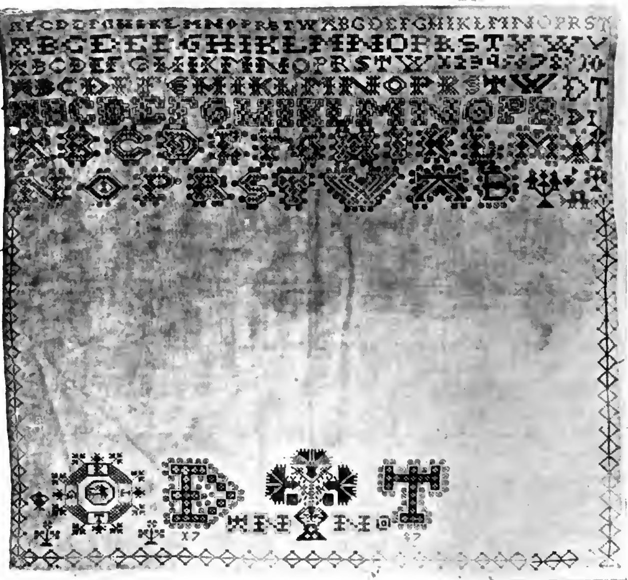
ables him to learn his lessons quickly and inexpensively; and there are plenty of reputable antique shops wherein genuine things are to be found. As a matter of fact, the writer has found that even where certain dealers have offered spurious objects as genuine, they have done so through ignorance rather than through cupidity. A dealer will usually be only too glad to have a collector who knows point to him mistakes in attribution. Most of the small shops are run by men who have little time for study, and who are far more likely to be imposed upon themselves than to attempt to impose upon their customers. After all, the dealer could not live without customers, and the only safe way to hold any customer is to treat him honestly.

Early in the eighteenth century the lathe began to be developed, so any specimens of pewter disclosing lathe marks would suggest a date subsequent to that period. The pewter formed by the "spinning" process is the most modern of all. The pewter collector should be careful how he polishes his pewter, as this ware should never be subjected to rubbing with brick-dust and like vigorous usage.

Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art
Chinese Pewter Jar with Bronze Cover.
Early 18th Century

A Swiss Pewter Wine-Flask,
Zurich, Dated 1766

American 18th Century Sampler



A Dated English or Welsh Sampler, 1787

CHAPTER VIII

SAMPLERS

BEFORE the age of machine-made things, and of attire much more conventional than in many of the earlier periods, there was, of course, great need of skilled needlewomen, not only professionally but at home as well, for it was in the home that most of the "finery" of our forefathers originated. Stubbes's "Anatomy of Abuses," which appeared in 1583, tells of the raiment of the men of the author's time who were "decked out in the fineries even to their shirts, which are wrought with needlework of silks," etc. The good Stubbes also complains that it was difficult to tell who were gentlefolk, because all men of that time affected silks, velvets, "taffeties," and the like, regardless of station. Thus we may see how important it was that the little misses of the days of long ago should be taught stitchery at the early age of nine or ten years.

Samplers are among the most intimate of collectable old things.

> . . . Bookless and pictureless
> Save the inevitable sampler hung
> Over the fireplace.

How patiently the little fingers toiled over these records of their wonderful (even if enforced) application! Truly, samplers are the needle-craft primers of yesterday. We have only to recall an old English play, "Gammer Gurton's Needle," probably the very first of the earlier English folk comedies, to understand the great importance attached to the needle. This play, written about 1560 (and attributed to John Still, Bishop of Wells, and formerly Master of St. John's College, Cambridge, where it was first produced) shows how, during the period of its conception, a steel needle was treasured as few family treasures of to-day, and so when Gammer Gurton lost hers—the only one she possessed—the misfortune took on the importance of genuine calamity. As collectors of samplers and writers on the subject of samplers have been baffled in trying to discover why no samplers dated or positively known to have been worked before the middle of the eighteenth century are extant, this clue to the probable reason which we find in "Gammer Gurton's Needle" is of interest; the fact is that as needles were so uncommon and such treasured possessions

they were not to be entrusted to tiny fingers. Later, when invention turned its attention to needle-making, needles became common enough. I imagine many a little girl of the eighteenth century wished that needles had never been "born"!

Very fine samplers containing both names and dates prior to 1800 are not to be found at every turn. Notwithstanding this, the sampler-collector need anticipate no discouraging difficulty in getting together examples for a fairly representative collection. It is only in comparatively recent years that we have discovered the value of old samplers as excellent decorative accessories on the walls of a room in which old pieces of furniture are placed. Samplers may be mounted and framed for hanging on a wall as a picture might be, and I know of few objects in the line of antiques that seem so appropriate for use in this manner for adorning the walls of a bedchamber.

While it is not always an easy matter to assign undated samplers to their exact periods, approximate dates may without great trouble be determined. Naturally, the earliest examples were more utilitarian than ornamental in conception, more like a mere example of stitchery of various sorts—a leaf from the scrap-book of needlework, as it were. La-

ter, pattern and design and pictorial composition were evolved. Likewise, the earlier samplers seem to have been longer and narrower in proportion than later ones. Threads of gold and silver are to be found in needle-work of the Elizabethan and the Jacobean period, where we should not look for them in the Georgian. Again, there are characteristics of pattern that clearly denote the embroiderer's time. The design of the letters of the alphabet embroidered on a sampler also forms a clue, inasmuch as it shares in common with contemporary dated, printed, and engraved lettering the more distinctive period characteristics of the latter. The earliest date of an alphabet sampler is, I believe, 1643; of a sampler with a motto, 1651; of a sampler having a border, 1726; of a representation of a house, 1763; of numerals, 1655; of a verse, 1696; 1728 has been suggested as the approximate date of the introduction of mustard-colored canvases on which the samplers were worked.

"Sad sewers made bad samplers," said Lord de Tabley in "The Soldier of Fortune," but the wonder is that the little fingers of yesterday should have acquired skill not only in one sort of embroidery but in the varied stitches often seen in a single sampler remarkable for its perfect and exquisite handiwork.

One is almost aghast, for instance, at the task suggested by John Taylor's "The Needles Excellency," where one reads:

> Tent-worke, Raised-worke, Laid-worke, Frost-worke, Networke,
> Most curious purles or rare Italian Cut-worke,
> Fine Ferne-stitch, Finny-stitch, Hew-stitch and China-stitch,
> Brave Bred-stitch, Fisher-stitch, Irsh-stitch and Queen-stitch,
> The Spanish-stitch, Rosemary-stitch and Morose-stitch,
> The Smarting Whip-stitch, Back-stitch and the Cross-stitch.
> All these are good and these we must allow,
> And these are everywhere in practice now.

With the infinitude of stitches it is not necessary here to be concerned, although the enthusiast in sampler-collecting will find the study of stitches helpful just as the expert will find it highly necessary. As there is much confusion in the nomenclature, there will be many stumbling-blocks, but the pursuit will be worth while. The earliest seventeenth-century samplers of lace-like appearance were worked in cut-and-drawn embroidery, with various additional lace stitches. Then there was the eyelet-stitch, damask-stitch, the backstitch (these three were used for alphabets), darning-stitches, tent-stitches, and tapestry-stitch (unusual) and so on.

The foundation of early samplers was the handwoven linen, either unbleached or bleached. Some-

times this was almost as coarse as canvas and again of closely woven texture. Linen thread or silk (somewhat loosely twisted) was employed for the stitchery. The harsh yellow linen of early eighteenth-century samplers came into vogue toward the end of the first quarter of the century, but was soon discarded. Unfortunately, tannery cloth was much in vogue at the end of the eighteenth century. This unattractive material seemed especially devised to satiate the appetites of moths! Most of the tannery-cloth samplers are worked in silk. The muslin-like tiffany cloth was occasionally used before 1800 for small and fine samplers. Later the coarse linens came into fashion. The crudely dyed threads marked the decline of the sampler from about 1800. Then cotton canvas and Berlin wool completed the fall of this one of the gentlest arts.

The early American samplers had, of course, their ancestry and inspiration in English samplers, with which I think they vie in interest and attractiveness. Surely there could be no more delightful wall decoration for a colonial house than one of the early American samplers! These are less commonly found than English samplers and American collectors naturally give them preference.

That the little misses of olden times managed at

so tender an age to produce such handiwork seems almost amazing. Little girls of five and six years achieved marvels in sampler stitchery as extant examples abundantly proves.

Poetry and samplers seem to have been good friends. In the second scene of the third act of "Midsummer Night's Dream," and in the fourth scene of the second act of "Titus Andronicus," Shakspere alludes to samplers. So does Milton in "Comus," and Sir Philip Sidney in "Arcadia." If those blest bards could but scan the verse of some of the sampler-makers! Here is one which, in its way, is a gem typical of task and talent:

> Sarah Bonney is
> My Name, England is
> My Nation; See How Good
> My Parents is to Give
> Me Education

There is rhyming for you! And may we not imagine that beneath those sentiments lurked a fine humor?

CHAPTER IX

WAX PORTRAITS

STRANGE it seems that so many fragile objects have come down to us from antiquity while cities of stone, statues of marble, and monuments of bronze too often have appeared lost forever. On beholding a perfect glass vase whose history dates back to Phœnician times, but which has survived centuries of vicissitudes, one cannot but reflect upon the extraordinary fortune of things apparently so perishable. In the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington, London, the museum of the Art Department of Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, and elsewhere one may find little wax models that have come down through hundreds of years, and one wonders that Time has lent so kind a hand to things which were constructed of materials that we have regarded as being so perishable.

Wax portraiture is one of the arts of the past so little known to many collectors that examples of it are not often met with in American collections. Ancient writers have given us a hint of the antiquity

of wax portraiture, not only in round sculpture, but in relief. Moreover, we know that the Greek artists in Egypt were adepts in painting portraits by means of powdered colors applied with rush brushes to slabs of cedar-wood covered with wax, into which coating the color could easily be worked when the sun's rays were permitted to soften the wax. Many of these ancient wax panels are extant, and they appear very much like paintings in oil colors upon wood.

We know that Lysistratus, who lived in the time of Alexander the Great, executed small busts in colored wax, and this is the earliest use of the medium in color mentioned by history. Works of this sort were forerunners of the later colored wax portraits of the seventeenth and of the eighteenth century, with the old custom, which Pliny mentions, of having ancestral portraits in the households of the Romans as connecting links in the progress of the art. Moreover, the Romans were wont to carry in funeral procession waxen portraits of the departed, as a curious custom clinging to civilization as late as the seventh century in England. Indeed, a visitor to Westminster Abbey may see the old wax form of Queen Elizabeth gorgeously attired, which was carried in the cortège at her burial!

More cheerful, on the other hand, are the remarkable wax portraits in relief—some white or monochrome and others colored—which were modeled ("painted" would perhaps be a better word) by the early artists of the *cinquecento*—Leone Leoni, Antonio Abondio in Italy, later by Guillaume Dupré and Antoine Benoit in France, and then by Isaac Gosset, Eley, George Mountstephen, Joachim Smith, S. Percy, and Peter Ruow and others in England.

How the ancients prepared their materials for working in wax is not recorded, but probably they anticipated all of the processes employed by the medieval artist in such portraiture, powdering the color, mixing in oil, and adding it to pure wax in the state of fusion. To Pastorino of Siena has been accredited the honor of having invented the particular wax paste used by himself and his successors in representing the hair and the skin.

In the sixteenth century the art of wax portraiture was practised in Nuremberg and reached a high state of development under Casper Hardy, prebendary of the Cologne cathedral.

Among the most interesting wax portraits by French artists are those from the hand of François Clouet, in the sixteenth century, which are among

the treasures of the Cluny Museum, Paris. Under Louis XIV wax portraiture attained so important a place in France that we find Antoine Benoit given the royal appointment of "*Unique sculpteur en cire colorée.*"

No material is more responsive to the artist's touch than wax, immortalizing as it does his individual handling in a manner peculiarly its own. Perhaps no English portraitist has given evidence of greater ability than did S. Percy, whose wax portraits, as well as those by Peter Ruow, are prized by collectors. Artists in wax portraiture were not unknown in America during colonial times. Among the names of early wax-portrait artists in America that of Patience Wright stands forth prominently. She was born in 1725, the daughter of Mr. Lowell, a Quaker of Bordentown, New Jersey. When twenty-three years of age she married Joseph Wright, and some years later was left a widow with three children. In 1772 she went to England. Already she had become noted for her excellent work in portraiture. A bust of Thomas Penn was one of her earliest works of the London period and the wax-portrait of Washington from her hand, modeled after an original from life by her son, Joseph Wright, is now in the possession of Dr. Richard H. Harte of

Philadelphia. This is the work which she mentions in a letter to Washington preserved in the Library of Congress:

> You may have my most grateful thanks for your kind attention to my son in taking him into your Family to encourage his genii and giving him the pleasing oppourtunity of taking a Likeness that has I sincerely hope gave his country and your friends, Sir, satisfaction. I am impatient to have a copy of what he has done that I may have the honour of making a model from it in wax work, as it has been for some time the wish and desire of my heart to model a likeness of General Washington.

To this Washington replied:

> If the bust which your son has modelled of me should reach your hands and afford your genii any employment that can amuse Mrs. Wright it must be an honour done me.

Wax portraiture almost died out in the nineteenth century, but it is of interest to note its recent revival by Ethel Frances Mundy and other skilful artists.

Good old Giorgio Vasari, the gossipy chronicler of the Old Masters to whom we owe nearly all of our knowledge of the lives of the early Italian painters, wrote an interesting treatise on the technique of art from which the following is quoted, as being of further interest to the collector of wax portraits:

In order to show how wax is modeled let us first speak of the working of wax and not of clay. To render it softer a little animal fat and turpentine and black pitch are put into the wax, and of these ingredients it is the fat that makes it more supple, the turpentine adds tenacity, and the pitch gives it the black color and consistency, so that after it has been worked and left to stand it will become hard.

This was the wax probably used for the backgrounds. Vasari continues:

And he who would wish to make wax of another color may easily do so by putting into it red earth or vermilion or red lead; he will thus make it yellowish red or some shade; if he add verdigris, green, and so on with the other colors. But well it is to observe that the colors should be powdered and sifted, and in this condition mixed with the wax afterward and made as soft as possible. The wax is also made white for small things—medals, portraits, minute scenes, and other objects in bas-relief. All this is accomplished by mixing white lead that has already been powdered with the white wax as already explained. I must not neglect to mention that modern artists have discovered the method of working all sorts of colors into the wax so that in taking portraits from life in half-relief they make the flesh tints, the hair, the clothes and all so lifelike that these presentments appear to lack only the power to speak.

CHAPTER X

HAND-WOVEN COVERLETS

THE collector who has been fortunate enough to make a pilgrimage through the villages of New England, visiting the antique shops in search of adornments to the shrines of their hobbies, will recall the occasional hand-woven coverlet that chanced to be displayed as the background to the ensemble of odds and ends. But one finds fewer and fewer of these old-time examples of handicraft. There have been eager but quiet collectors industriously seeking them out. Nevertheless the collector has always a chance of coming upon an early woven coverlet, particularly in those remote quarters where local auctions (occasioned by momentous events and not merely foregone conclusions) still disclose the hidden treasures of yesterday and bring them within reach of the moderate purse.

From colonial times the art of weaving coverlet by hand was practised wherever wool and industry suggested. The overseas traditions were faithfully carried out by the housewives of New England, and

then southward. There came to be modifications in the old weaving patterns as the ingenuity of those skilled in this handicraft developed. Indeed, an enormous variety of patterns was evolved. Proportionately few of the very old hand-woven coverlets have survived—precious they are to the collector of household antiques!—but even these show remarkable pattern variations. Of course, the time came when machine-weaving supplanted hand-work, and before long coverlets hand-woven were of the discarded arts, so far as the New England states were concerned. A few years ago, however, the industry of making hand-woven coverlets was revived, for the art had in a measure, fortunately, continued in the Southern mountains of the country. Many of the old-time coverlets were carefully copied and hundreds of new patterns also were devised. These later hand-woven coverlets are, many of them, of great beauty and intrinsically worth having, even when one can also acquire the earlier specimens, for the modern hand-woven coverlet is more often than not indicative of the same artistic spirit with which the colonial housewife endowed her work.

Blue-and-white is the usual combination in the old coverlets, though many of them introduced other colors, brown being the most commonly used after

blue. This blue was home-dyed—with indigo—and time has lent to many of the old coverlets a coloring comparable to that of the blues of Chinese porcelains.

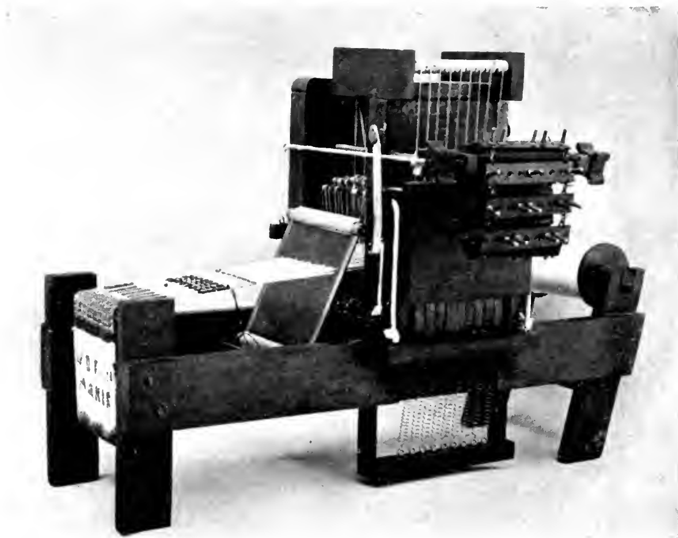
With the aptitude for determining the details of the fabrics, of which every woman seems intuitively to be possessed, the woman collector will in all probability be able to distinguish a truly old coverlet from one of modern fabrication. In a few instances some unscrupulous antique-dealer may claim antiqueness for an obviously modern coverlet, but the discriminating collector will be comparatively safe.

The collector will find old coverlets interesting as hangings, lounge-covers, and portières, as well as when put to their original uses. Fortunate indeed is one who chances to acquire a signed and dated example. Such a discovery leads the happy collector to haunt genealogical libraries until he has unearthed the mystery of its owner's place in history; for in the good old days the weaver was probably the owner as well.

Wax-Portrait of Ferdinand I. of Sicily, Italian, Late 18th Century

Wax-Portrait, Subject unknown, Italian, Early 18th Century

Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art



Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art
Model of an American Peg-loom. Bearing the Name of W. D. Fales of Providence, Rhode Island

Copyright by G. H. Buck
Handwoven Coverlet in Bed-Chamber of the John Howard Payne House, Easthampton, Long Island, New York

CHAPTER XI

CHAIRS

THE old-fashioned idea that a collector must arrange his treasures grouped in one spot no longer obtains. I recall asking one who had returned from a visit to a very interesting house if the host and hostess were collectors of antiques, curios, or rare *objets d'art.* "Oh, no," was the reply, "I don't think so. They showed me many beautiful things, but I did 'nt see anything that looked like a collection." Later I learned that this home contained one of the most notable collections of early furniture in America! All these pieces, of course, had been considered as articles entering into the adornment of this home and not merely as objects gathered clutter-wise into the semblance of an old curiosity shop. Even our museums are now often exhibiting their furniture collections arranged in such a manner as to carry out a complete idea of the original intention of the various pieces, displaying them in reconstructed rooms or in the counterpart of a portion of a room.

Probably no piece of furniture holds greater interest for the specialized or even the general collector than the chair. Its ancestry is venerable, but its remote antiquity need not be dwelt upon at length here. It is true that in a magnificent Louis Quatorze drawing-room, perfectly appointed and historically correct, the introduction of a cottage chair of the Windsor type would be as displeasing an anachronism as putting a wild thrush to neighbor with all the parrots of an avairy. On the other hand, the drawing-room of the average typical home in good taste the world over might contain a Chippendale chair, a Carolean settee, a Sheraton card-table, a Louis XIII stool, and an Italian Renaissance table, and yet be agreeably pleasing and pleasantly inviting if skill, good taste, and common sense had entered into the character of arrangements.

The collector who wishes to devote some attention to old furniture would do well to begin with old chairs. All the old chairs (the good ones and the fine ones) have not been "collected up" in the sense that they are permanently retired from business. When once they get into the museums, of course, they stay there, but even museums are not omnivorous. The acquiring of supremely rare or unique objects is by no means the only pleasure to be derived

from collecting. In fact, it is one of its least thrilling forms, being measured more by dollars and cents and the commerce of things than it is by the mere joy of acquisition.

Some one has estimated that every collection which does not go into a museum changes hands every twenty years on an average. It is a fact that collecting in America to-day is infinitely more easy of accomplishment than it was a century ago. In New York, for instance, the auction sales of a single recent season presented to the collector more opportunities than could have come his way in six seasons years ago. It is a mistake to suppose that all good "chances" have passed; they are, as a matter of fact, just about beginning in America. We are told that collectors have ransacked farmhouses and old houses in the East for interesting pieces of antique furniture. That is true, but the process means only a change of location and not an elimination of possibilities.

The collector of old chairs can easily become familiar with the various forms of peculiarities of design which mark the different styles and periods, as may be seen by even a passing glance at the accompanying illustrations. Indeed, the ear-marks that distinguish certain pieces of furniture of the his-

toric periods and distinct styles from others are, happily, so numerous that the art of identification becomes comparatively an easy one. Beginners will, to be sure, often come across modern reproductions of genuine old chairs. Not all of these—in fact, comparatively few of them—were made with intent to defraud. Occasionally some unscrupulous or ignorant person will offer a modern piece as genuine, but your true collector need hardly be deceived, except in rare instances, by attempted impositions. The form of the master furniture designers of yesterday has never been surpassed. There is nothing in modern design more beautiful or so beautiful as many of the old chairs of Chippendale, Sheraton, and Hepplewhite, and likewise of the early English and the French periods. Realizing this, the furniture-makers of to-day at home and abroad have sought to reproduce the best of these antique pieces for the service and the benefit of the modern home-maker, obviously as undisguised reproductions.

The collector who studies old chairs will glean many a helpful hint from these modern reproductions. The fine ones faithfully carried out are really worth collecting in themselves, as accessory to a collection of other pieces which the collector has been fortunate in obtaining in the originals. If you

Chippendale Mahogany Arm-Chair
1760-1780

Shield-Back Hepplewhite
Arm-Chair

Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art
Louis XIV Arm-Chair

Louis XV Arm-Chair

Courtesy Brooklyn Museum of Art

Three Rare Williamite Glasses. Two English Glass Rummers Engraved with Nelson Subjects, and a smaller Jacobite Arms Rummer. Centre Tumbler Commemorates Coronation of George IV of England. Two 18th Century Tumblers

chance to come across an old chair fine in the lines of its design, do not give it up as hopeless should you notice that it is disfigured with paint, dowdy, broken-down upholstery, and the like. A good restorer of old furniture will be able to work wonders with a piece of the sort. I remember discovering an old chair so hidden under the disguise of paint, putty, and car-plush as to have discouraged any but a discriminating enthusiasm. When this chair was turned over to a restorer he delivered it from its bondage of humiliation and it came forth an excellent and treasured genuine example of the finest Hepplewhite style. The "stuffing" had completely hidden a splendid ostrich-plume back.

To collect anything sensibly requires an interest in the available data concerning it. One might as well collect buttons manufactured in 1920 as to pay no attention to the study of things gathered together in pleasurable pursuit. So, too, it is with chairs. A chair-collector looks beyond the mere utilitarian fact that each chair can be sat upon with comfort, or can't be.

First of all he must acquaint himself with the various periods: Italian Renaissance, Frence Renaissance, Flemish, Spanish, Elizabethan, Carolean, and Jacobean (Tudor to Stuart), William and Mary,

Queen Anne, the Early Georgian, the French periods of the Henris, the Louis, the Empire, the styles of Chippendale, Adam, Hepplewhite, and Sheraton, and the early American forms.

The collector will find many excellent works in English by eminent authorities on furniture, all of which devote proper space to the subject of the chairs of the particular period of which they are treating. There the chair enthusiast will learn that walnut came to be widely used in English chairs after 1650; that Hepplewhite suggested haircloth for chair coverings; that the Carolean crown is a distinguishing feature of the Restoration period; that Queen Anne chairs are marked by simplicity, their beauty depending mainly on their fine lines, graceful curves, delicate veneering, and restraint where inlay is used; that mahogany came into use between 1720 and 1725, and not into general use before 1730; that Chippendale's best pieces were made between 1730 and 1760; that in all *real* Chippendale ball-and-claw terminations the claw is carved to suggest vividly a gripping strength, and not as merely resting passively on the ball as in the imitations and in nearly all modern reproductions. These are but a few of the many interesting facts every old-furniture collector should know, points that enable one to

collect chairs intelligently and with joy in the pursuit of a delectable hobby that is also a very practical one.

CHAPTER XII

ENGLISH DRINKING-GLASSES

THERE are few general collectors who have not, at some time, come under the enchantment of old glass. It is remarkable that objects so fragile in fabric should have survived the vicissitudes of centuries, as have specimens not only of European glass but of the ancient glass of Syrian, Phœnician, Greek, and Roman manufacture as well.

Glass-making in England had an early origin, derived, it would seem probable, from the Roman invaders. We know it to have flourished to some extent at Cheddingfold in the thirteenth century, continuing there for several hundred years, as we glean from a reference in Thomas Charnock's "Breviary of Philosophy," published in 1557, wherein is written: "You may send to Cheddingfold to the glassmaker and desire him to blow thee a glass after thy devise." An entry in Evelyn's Diary for February 10, 1685, refers to "his Majesty's health being drunk in a flint glass of a yard long, by the Sheriff, Commander, Officers and Chiefe gentlemen." This re-

minds us that flint glass was discovered and came into vogue prior to 1680; or in that year its fame had caused it to be so highly regarded elsewhere in Europe that manufactories to compete with English ones were established at Liège in that year. The early flint glass of England differed somewhat from the later product. Probably the flint glass as we know it now was not introduced before 1730, or perfected until over a century later.

Of all the English glass none is more beautiful or attractive than the drinking-glasses of this period. Particularly is this true of the engraved and inscribed drinking-glasses which collectors now eagerly seek. Rare, indeed, these glasses have become, and fortunate is the collector who comes across a "find" of the sort. English glass of the eighteenth century, though less ornamental than Venetian, was nevertheless more utilitarian. In respect to the spirit glasses and rummers, which succeeded ale-tankards of metal and of pottery, this is particularly true. No "glasse of Venice" could have withstood the table impact which the English eighteenth-century spirit glasses were designed to survive, a virtue which gave them the name of "firing-glasses," as the setting down of them by a company surrounding the jovial board produced a noise like

a miniature cannonade. Some of these "firing-glasses" in the Leckie Collection, now forming part of the permanent collection of the Brooklyn Art Museum, are engraved with grape-vine designs, and arms, and are inscribed. Of course such engraved and inscribed glasses are of greater interest and rarity than those which are without decoration or inscription.

The method of classification of English drinking-glasses takes into consideration the types of the feet, the types of the bowls, and the types of the stems. There is the plain-footed glass, the glass with the folded foot (so called because the outer circle of the foot is folded back beneath it to strengthen it), the domed foot (shaped as its name suggests), and the domed-and-folded foot glass (a combination of dome and fold). The folded foot is a type which indicates early origin, just as those glasses which have the foot broader than the bowl indicate their origin to have been prior to the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

As to types of bowls, there are the drawn bowl (bowl and stem drawn from a single piece of glass, as in the glasses of the seventeenth century); the bell-shaped bowl, the waist-formed bell bowl, the waisted bowl, the ovoid bowl, the straight-sided

bowl, the straight-sided rectangular bowl, the ogee bowl, the lipped ogee bowl and the double ogee form. The waist-formed bell-shaped (waisted-bell) bowl is rarely met with—the early eighteenth century marks its decline—and the waisted bowl is uncommon also. The bell-shaped bowls seem longest to have maintained favor. The Bristol Glass Works originated the ogee bowl shapes, which date from the middle of the eighteenth century.

As to the types of stems, the earliest in design is the baluster stem, in use as early as 1680, and popular till 1730; the plain stem, most frequently met with in glasses from 1700 to 1750; the air-twist stem, in vogue from 1725 to 1775, and perhaps later; the opaque white twist stem, dating from 1745 till the end of the century; the air and opaque white twist stem, the color twist stem, and the cut stem, dating from about the middle of the eighteenth century. Air-bubbles imprisoned in the stems of glasses have given to this type of glass the name of "tear-glass." Almost without exception the "tears" have their points downward, although glasses showing the reverse of this have in rare instances been met with.

The air-twist stems are an evolution of the tears. The glass containing air-bubbles came to be heated

and drawn out and ingeniously manipulated in such a way as to produce the effect of twisted filaments which formed such patterns within the glass as one now and then chances to find. Before manipulation the bubbles were produced artificially by pricking into the glass, softened by heat and covered over, in turn, with a film of molten glass.

The opaque white twist stem, and also the color twist stem, were obtained after the Venetian fashion of making Millefiori glass, described in Chapter XXVII (page 221), as derived from the Roman glass of antiquity. Rare specimens of stems are found with delicate tints of blue and red among the filaments.

All these twist and tear stems are nowadays reproduced and are occasionally fraudulently offered the unwary as genuine. But such glass neither rings true nor is right in color, though the copyists are coming to display their skill in the matter of tint likewise, even though balked by specific gravity. A number of the cut-stem glasses were coaching-glasses —that is, glasses without feet, which stood inverted on the tray when brought to the coach traveler at a relay inn. After his hasty drink the traveler would replace the glass inverted, hence there was no need for a foot; and there was less likelihood of a tray

of such glasses, hurriedly carried, coming to grief through carelessness. With the advent of railroads and the decline of coaching such glasses were retired from service. Many of these old-time coaching-glasses were engraved and inscribed, but few of them have survived and a specimen would, indeed, be a *pièce de résistance* in any collection of glass.

We see from these notes that there is less guess-work connected with the study and collecting of old glass than one uninitiated in the rudiments of its lore might suppose. Nothing is without a reason; the thing is to find the raison d'être—that is a true collector's pleasure.

Of all the engraved or the inscribed English glass none is more interesting in its historical connection than the Jacobite drinking-glasses. Their story, briefly, is this: After the flight of James II left William of Orange firmly in possession of the government, an act of Parliament, in 1701, formally excluded the house of Stuart from the throne and settled the succession (after William and his sister-in-law Anne should have died) upon the house of Hanover. Prince Charles James Edward, Chevalier of St. George (the son of James II), was recognized by Louis XIV of France as rightful King of England. This led William to prepare to make war on

France, when death overtook him, and Anne became Queen of England. Queen Anne, thanks to Marlborough, successfully carried out William's policies, and every attempt of the Stuarts to regain the throne was frustrated. Anne died in 1714, but as early as 1710 the Cycle, a famous and factious Jacobite club, was formed. Other Jacobite clubs followed throughout England and Scotland. The Jacobites were, of course, those who sought to restore the house of Stuart to the throne, a dangerous treason from the Crown's point of view, and those Jacobites who had any desire to keep their heads on their shoulders had to proceed with care and secrecy. Nevertheless, even after the rebellion of 1715 and the famous "disappointment" of 1745 the Jacobites, when toasting the king, would hold their drinking-glasses above a bowl of water to signify that they drank to "the king over the water," the Old Pretender or, after his death, to the Young Pretender.

The bolder Jacobites had their drinking-glasses engraved with Stuart emblems: a heraldic rose and two buds were, for instance, emblematic of James II, his son, and his grandson, while the star, oak-leaves, and acorns, etc., were obvious in allusion. The very boldest Jacobites had glasses inscribed with mottoes

—*Fiat* being the most general one, as this "Let it be done," was the motto of the Cycle Club, ancestor of Jacobite activity. The more timid Jacobites contented themselves with symbols or inscriptions engraved upon the under side of the foot of the glass. One comes across specimens of the *Fiat* Jacobite drinking-glass with the two oak-leaves engraved on the foot. Others are engraved with the heraldic rose upon the bowl and a star upon the foot. A large glass—its owner must have been the very boldest Jacobite of all!—is inscribed *Audentior Ibo* and also bears the portrait of the Young Pretender, whose death in 1788 did not, strangely enough, put an end to Jacobite activities. Indeed, the "Stuart fascination" is one of history's great mysteries. On the foot of Jacobite glasses one sometimes finds engraved the feathers of the crest of the Prince of Wales; the rose and two buds of the Stuarts on the bowl. Still other glasses are not heraldic, but have the heraldic Stuart rose engraved upon the foot.

It is truly remarkable that any of these Jacobite glasses should have survived, for many of them must, in their perilous time, have had to meet with destruction to escape serving as telltales when sudden and unexpected raids upon Jacobite strongholds were made by the officers of the Crown. Some of

these engraved and inscribed Jacobite glasses were probably decorated upon the Continent, but most of them are of English workmanship in engraving as well as in manufacture. Probably many of the Jacobite glasses were made at the glass-works of Newcastle-on-Tyne, proximity to the border of Scotland making such a location convenient on occasion. I think but few should be attributed to the Bristol glass-workers. Probably the largest number of Jacobite glasses were made shortly before the "Forty-five."

As the Jacobites had specially engraved and inscribed glasses, so, too, did the partisans of King William. Williamite glasses were to be found in Ireland as well, where a number of them—some are extant—were engraved with anti-Jacobite toasts. But when it was not likely that the Irish could forget James II. Authorities are not agreed as to which were first put forth, Williamite or Jacobite glasses, but I am inclined to think precedence in chronological order should be given to the engraved and inscribed Williamite ones. There were, of course, fewer Williamite glasses than Jacobite glasses, just as later there were fewer Hanoverian glasses, as the Williamites and the Hanoverians were in the ascendant, and public loyalty considered itself beyond the

necessity of symbolizing its fealty in other than the simple toast.

One may also include mention here of the Hanoverian engraved and inscribed glasses, one of which, for instance, was made to commemorate the coronation of George IV. Finally we come to rummers engraved with Nelson subjects, commemorating England's naval hero. These, of course, are early nineteenth century, as Nelson lived till 1805.

CHAPTER XIII

STUART EMBROIDERIES

THE Stuart period of embroideries is one of great interest to the collector. A few years ago comparatively little attention was paid to examples of English embroidered work of the seventeenth century. Specimens of the sort are now eagerly sought for, not only by private collectors but by public museums as well. True it is that the English embroideries of the seventeenth century are not comparable in artistic quality with those of earlier periods, although the technical skill displayed therein, particularly in the class known as stump-work, has not been surpassed in English needle-work of any period since that of the very early ecclesiastical embroideries. Certain of its characteristic patterns survived the Elizabethan reign, only to degenerate, during King James's time, into what one must confess to be some of the most uninteresting work in the whole history of English embroidery. Some quilted work, inspired by Oriental design, and certain crewels for hangings, were exceptions.

This Oriental influence was due to the rapidly developing intercourse, through commerce, of England with India and China, which marked the reign of James I and that of the two Charleses; a proclamation of Charles I, in 1631, for instance, permitted the importation from the East Indies of "quilts of China embroidered with gold." Obelisks and pyramids were favorite devices with the embroiderers of James I, just as they were with woodcarvers and silversmiths of the day, a fact interesting to note, as these devices often aid the collector in fixing the period of an object he may be studying. Toward the end of this reign it became fashionable to represent religious subjects in needlework. The manufacture of tapestry in England flourished side by side with embroidery throughout the reign of James I and those of Charles I and Charles II, and it was from tapestry subjects that the needlework pictures of the Stuart period derived their inspiration. So thoroughly established had their vogue become, that although the fabrication of tapestry rapidly declined toward the end of the reign of Charles II, embroidered pictures still held their own.

The *petit point* or tent-stitch was effectively employed in the tapestry embroideries of this period. In its earliest form this stitch was worked over a sin-

gle thread and produced a massed effect of very fine lines. The tapestry embroideries of the Stuart period often mirrored with extraordinary fidelity the fashions in the dress of the time.

Among objects in Stuart embroidery I have seen a little jewel-cabinet carried out mainly in silk flosses and some wool worked on irregularly woven tawny-white canvas, the material generally in use for petit point work, though the stitch employed in carrying out the pictorial subjects which adorned the sections of this cabinet is known as long-stitch.

Almost as precious as some of the jewels which once may have been treasured in this cabinet are the embroidered sachets, jewel-boxes, needle-case, pincushion, and two bits of beadwork which were tucked away in its recesses. Next to the long-stitch work of the cabinet itself, the stump-work sachet was perhaps the most important of these pieces. Stump-work consisted of featherstitching (though all other stitches were also employed) under which a padding was placed to form raised surfaces, taking this suggestion perhaps from the ancient *opus anglicanum*. These elevations or "stumps," as they were called, were of cloth, of hair, of wool, and sometimes of wood, paper, and parchment. In fact, their materials were various. These stumps were glued

Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art
English 17th Century Stump-work Embroidery. Subject: "Judgment of Paris."

Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art

Dutch Delft Shelf Ornaments, The Cow by Jacobus Holder, dated 1765
Four Dutch Delft Tiles, 17th Century

or basted on a ground of (generally) white satin, and the stitching was then executed to cover the stumping.

Quaint in conceit, though often crude enough in design, are the stitched emblems in much of this stump-work. The twice-repeated caterpillar was an emblem of the Stuart dynasty often employed, nor are other emblems without intended significance. The eyes of the birds, animals, and insects are often marked by seed-pearls, a practice of even earlier date in England, as one finds from the inventory of St. James House, 1549, wherein is mentioned a picture "of needlework, partly garnished with seed pearl."

Silver threads are also effectively introduced in Stuart embroideries and edgings of silver lace surround many of the objects such as the pincushion. Many Stuart embroidery patterns were copied from the designs of the richly brocaded silks of the period.

CHAPTER XIV

DELFT

WHEN Horace Walpole's ceramic treasures at Strawberry Hill came by inheritance to Lord Waldegrave they were sent to the auction room. It took twenty-seven days of long sessions for the auctioneers to dispose of them, notwithstanding the fact that there were eager bidders for every lot in his extensive collection. Of Walpole it was said:

> China 's the passion of his soul.
> A cup, a plate, a dish, a bowl,
> Can kindle wishes in his breast,
> Inflame with joy or break his rest.

And how many others there are of us who succumb to this same passion! Pottery and porcelain have, I think, more devotées in the temples of antiques and curios than almost any other of the household gods. Clay feet we know them to have, but we display their shrines!

Dutch delft is one of the sorts of pottery that is

especially dear to the gatherer of things ceramic. Its popularity has brought it to be uncommon, but if it is true that twenty years is, as statisticians say it is, the average time for a collection to rest before it comes upon the market again, we may take comfort in the fact that opportunities for picking up old delft are not vanishing. We have only to lie in wait for them, to be courageous in competition and alert in interest.

No faience has crept more winningly into literature than this to which the quaint, quiet little city that lies between The Hague and Rotterdam has lent its name. Here William the Silent dwelt and here he met his tragic death. Here in the little church is the tomb of Admiral van Tromp. Here, too, the Prince of Orange came to live. Knowles says:

> With the advent of the Prince and the foreign missions, with their extensive retinue of servants, came increased wealth on the top of Delft's own commercial and industrial prosperity. It did more; it brought the cultivation of artistic feeling and luxury, and a number of distinguished men of foreign culture and tastes—rich, sumptuous, money-spending, arrayed in costly brocades, moving in elegant carriages; notables and magistrates from neighbouring provinces and towns—all with a train of officialdom pertaining to their rank, with the strict precedence and etiquette, and the ceremonies of the times.

The requirements of the well-to-do households of Delft gave encouragement to the potter's art. The Dutch were well acquainted with the enameled and glazed pottery of Italy and of Spain. Such maiolica ware undoubtedly inspired experiment. With the importation of the Chinese blue-and-white porcelain —probably all that came to Europe at that early period passed first to Holland—the distinctive faience we know as old Dutch delft came into making, but it assumed distinctive qualities immediately, differentiating it from either the porcelain of China or the white-ground wares of Italy and Spain.

Some one once said to me: "I wish I could begin to collect real old delft, but I am afraid it is so difficult to pass judgment on pieces that without an expert to turn to constantly I should find my cabinet full of spurious ware. Mr. Antiqueman tells me it is very difficult to tell a piece of genuine old delft, unless one has had the years of experience he has had with it." Happening to have a slight acquaintance with this Mr. Antiqueman, I did not find it difficult to understand why he chose to throw such mystery around the subject. Personally I think too many antique men lose more than they gain by so zealously guarding those trade secrets that are no secrets at all.

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Once to know old Dutch delft is never to forget it. The knowing of it is not a difficult matter, once it is explained and one has contact with a genuine piece as an object-lesson.

In the first place, old Dutch delft is a pottery, not a porcelain. Pottery is *always* opaque, while porcelain is always translucent. Break a pottery object and it will be seen that it was formed of a baked clay base glazed or enameled over with a substance that has given it a coating which does not seem to be incorporated in substance with the base. Break a porcelain object and you will discover that all the way through it appears of a translucent substance. Old Dutch delft of the earliest sort was composed of a soft, friable, reddish clay base. Dutch delft of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had a body base of yellowish or pale-brown color.

These bases instead of being glazed were coated with an enamel-like slip. Tin entered into the composition of this coating and this tin-enamel gave it a surface which I should describe as densely opaque, with a metallic feel but without the metallic lustre, for instance, of the maiolica wares of Italy and of Spain. The surface of old delft is absolutely different from the glazed surface of porcelain, of modern pottery.

The modern delft of to-day is not to be confused with the old Dutch delft. The Dutch ware made to-day which passes with the old name is a glazed ware and not, like the old, an enameled ware. In modern so-called delft one can see through the glaze. As I have said, old Dutch delft presents a completely opaque surface.

Just here I should say that in some of the later sorts of old Dutch delft a glaze was added to the enameled surface, but as the enameled coating is there, one will readily recognize it beneath the glaze. As the clay base of old Dutch delft was so soft and friable, the surface of a piece was entirely coated with the tin-enamel. While it was not metallic in the sense of having a metallic lustre like the maiolica of Deruta or of Gubbio, light glinted across the surface of a piece of old delft reveals a tinny sheen. The surface will prove smooth to the touch, but it will not feel glassy as does that of a glazed ware.

So friable is old delft that it is prone to crip at the edges, there revealing the brown body base of the under clay. A drop of strong acid dropped on the body clay thus exposed will effervesce, since there is carbonate of lime in the understructure of old delft. This body clay is so soft that it is easily

cut with a knife. This cannot be said of the English Lambeth delft, which English ware, though inspired by the old Dutch delft and contemporary with much of it, was of a much harder body base, denser and more glossy than the Dutch clay. The enamel lay much more closely and evenly to the body base in old Dutch delft than it did in the English delft.

Dutch delft rarely crazed in the kiln; English delft often did so and in consequence its enameled surface came to be glazed to prevent this.

Then one often finds the colors of the decoration of old Dutch delft to have run—neither under nor over the enamel surface but *into* the enamel. This is because the colors were put upon the Dutch delft while the enamel was still wet and fixed in it during the liquefaction and fixing of the surface coating in the firing of the piece in the kiln. In such pieces of English delft as show the colors of their decoration to have run, it will be seen distinctly that these colors have run upon the enamel of the surface and not into or with it.

Finally the color of the clay body of the Lambeth delft of England is buff.

While nature has given us a sense of blue skies, scientists will tell you that she has been overly sparing with blue in flowers and in bird life. The Chi-

nese had long placed this color as the first of the five nominated in their popular traditions. To blue they gave a symbolism rich and varied. They associated it with the East, for instance, and again with wood. It is natural that it should have been a favorite color for the Chinese ceramicist. The palace china of some of the early Chinese emperors reserved the privilege of blue decoration, a blue, as an old Chinese writer tells us, as "seen through a rift in the clouds after rain." It was not until the sixteenth century that the Chinese obtained cobalt. This bright and vivid blue made speedy headway as against the grayer blues that until then had alone been produced by the Chinese ceramic artist. Cobalt was introduced into China by either the Jesuits or the Mohammedans; the Chinese themselves named the color "Moslem Blue."

The blue-and-white porcelain of China appears to have made a direct appeal to the Dutch potters. Blue was the earliest color used by them in their delft decoration. Purple followed, and after that the green, yellow, brown, and red of the polychrome delft pieces that we know.

We do know how popular the Dutch blue-and-white became. Every year quantities of it found their way to England. Much of it was sold there

at the Dutch Fair held annually in Yarmouth. King Charles II soon came to fear the effect on local potteries of the extended importation of Dutch delft into England and in consequence issued a proclamation against this commerce, declaring the sale of Dutch delft in England to be "to the great discouragement of so useful a manufacture so late found out" at home, presumably by the potters of Lambeth, who naturally would not be slow in attempting to imitate the Dutch ware so flourishingly in vogue. Probably Dutch potters had come over to work in the English ateliers. In the British Museum are interesting examples of English delft, a particularly fine set of plates having a line of poetry on each, so that when the six are arranged in proper order they form a little five-line verse.

CHAPTER XV

EARLY DESK FURNITURE

THE appeal of old furniture which has the merit of form, design, and workmanship of high order is one that is not the reflection of a passing fad or fancy; it has come to be one of attachment and genuine sincerity. If it took the greater part of the nineteenth century to teach us the futility of fixing our affections on exaggerated novelties, such as those which dimmed the reign of Queen Victoria and boomed the Bunthornes of the 'eighties, the twentieth century finds us discriminatingly chastened. We are taking out of our houses, those of us who can, the pieces of furniture that ought not to have been made, putting into their places old-time things of beauty, or, when it is not possible for us to acquire veritable antique pieces, the high-grade reproductions of old furniture that now grace the market and show no abatement in popular esteem.

In classifying the hobbies of several thousand collectors who stated their preferences, I found that a greater number were interested in old furniture

than in any one other subject. This fact is not strange, when one comes to consider the utilitarian phase. Generally, the collector of old furniture starts in with the chance possession of two or three antique bits which, by inspiring interest and appreciation, lead him to wish to bring the other house furnishings into harmony with the loveliness of the old pieces. Few collectors of antique furniture, of course, are without homes of their own, or the modern substitute—the long-lease apartment. The skill of the modern restorer of old furniture accomplishes wonders with the battered derelicts of the houses of yesterday by making the old pieces to shine forth in their glory anew; all of which lends encouragement to the collector and new zest to his traditional delight in the "hunt."

Upon first thought, a collection of desks might seem like a mastodonian assemblage. So it would be if the collector placed them all in a row or all in a single room! But the house of to-day can accommodate—indeed, finds necessary—more than a single desk in its furnishings. And so the collector of old furniture has another impetus in his search, a utilitarian one. Under the term "desk" we may include the various escritoires, bureau-bookcases and the secrétaires. All of these, in common with our cabi-

nets, tall-boys, and so on, had their origin in the chest or coffer of the Middle Ages. To the bottom of the chest came to be added a drawer. Next, side doors instead of a top lid came into fashion, and in this manner followed the many steps that led to the development of the piece of furniture we designate, for convenience, the desk.

It is not possible to tell just when the earliest desks were made. The desk is a composite affair, combining a cabinet, a bureau, drawers, and a writing-table. In Ghirlandaio's painting "Saint Jerome in His Study"—a work of about 1480, found in the collection of the Ognissanti in Florence—we see depicted a portable desk of the "schoolmaster" type; and another painting of the same period and in the same collection, the "St. Augustine" by Sandro Botticelli, depicts a desk with drawers. In other paintings by the old masters, and in very early engravings, we see delineated the various pieces of furniture in contemporary use designed for writing purposes, as well as others for the account-keeper. All suggest to us the probable units which combined to produce the escritoire and the secrétaire of later centuries, and lend interest to the collector's enthusiasm for searching out pieces of the sort.

When living was so much less complex in the mat-

ter of domestic doings than it is in our own time, there was far less need of such objects as desks. Whole families, even of the prosperous classes, could get along without them very well. Your Mona Lisa of the Renaissance could have carried her household accounts in her head, and probably did, while the housewife of the Northern countries had little use for a place to keep quires or reams of correspondence paper. Nor had they, in all probability, entered into the sphere of feminine prowess in home-banking matters that made necessary a writing-bureau sacred to personal command.

The finest examples of the craft of the old master cabinet-makers of the seventeenth century and the eighteenth were originally produced for wealthy patrons who paid well for the master's skill. While such pieces must naturally be beyond the reach of the collector of moderate means—except in rare instances where complete ignorance of their value is combined with a desire to part with them—they are still always interesting to note, and many of them have been reproduced with wonderful skill by some of the leading masters of the craft of furniture-making to-day.

Of course, no reputable dealer will attempt to pass off a modern copy of anything as an original.

At the same time, one may take great pleasure in acquiring a truly fine copy of a Queen Anne secrétaire or a Hepplewhite bureau, if it is knowingly purchased as a copy, whereas if deception is practised, the result must be a disappointment and discouragement to the owner, however fine the piece.

Unfortunately, all dealers are not reliable and occasionally fraud is perpetrated in connection with antique furniture. Even the metal trimmings—knobs, handles, etc.—are given the appearance of antiquity by all sorts of devices at the command of skilful craftsmen who produce worm-holes with buck-shot, antiquity with acids, and a worn appearance with friction.

The general furniture-collector is not likely to come across anything in the way of a find in a desk of the Renaissance, seventeenth-century, or even early eighteenth-century Italian periods; nor is he be likely to meet with the finer pieces of other early continental furniture, as nearly all of these, if not in public or great private collections already, would be justly held at a very high price by dealers into whose stock such pieces might come. However, there are frequent public sales of old foreign household furnishings, and great bargains may, indeed, be met with at these. In any event, the collector must cul-

tivate alertness, decision, and intuition for opportunities to buy—and once in a while to sell, too!

To the European the name bureau, from its French derivation, is understood to be associated with writing. In America we connect the term with a piece of furniture designed to hold articles of clothing in its various drawers. It was somewhere about the middle of the seventeenth century that the drawer was added to the lower part of the chest. Later in the century further drawer capacity was developed, and by the beginning of the next we find the complete chest of drawers in use. In view of this we shall not expect to find Jacobean desks, though we may find cabinets for writing-materials and documents and even occasional desk-like pieces.

In the William and Mary period (1688–1702) cabinets, secrétaires, and bureaus came rapidly into use. Simplicity and an unobtrusive elegance marked the designs of this period. The desks displayed distinct characteristics which differentiate several groups. In the first division may be placed the cabinet with bracket (straight) feet or bun feet; a whole front flap, which when let down displayed the drawers and the pigeonholes; a top either single-hooded or straight with ovolo frieze. In the second division we have the bureau-desk with its slant-

top desk-plane. Here we find the taller desk styles, sometimes with double-hooded tops, with or without vase-shaped finials. The third division includes the narrow slant-top desks on cup-turned legs, flat stretchers, and bun feet. The knee-hole desks (desks with the center portion arranged to permit the knees of the writer to go below the desk-plane) constitute the fourth division, while a fifth sort of desk had gate-legs braced by serpentine flat stretchers. The two center legs (there were six in all), pulled out as a support for the desk-flap when its plane was let down.

In the William and Mary period and in the Queen Anne period succeeding, the middle classes had come to a state of education undreamed of in the time of Elizabeth. Letter-writing, pamphlet-writing, and diary entries occupied many hours of the day and many candle-lit ones as well. This scriptorial activity called for more accessories than had been needed earlier. These newly devised bureau-desks combined solidity and dignity. They were distinctly architectural in design, with their moldings, cornices, and broken pediments. *Bombé* fronts came in with the Dutch influence. Walnut was the favorite wood employed, either solid or as a veneer for the wood bases.

The furniture-makers of the time of George I were beginning to find a demand, and to supply it, for writing-tables with tiers of drawers at each side of the knee-hole. From about 1720 mahogany entered into furniture-making extensively. Its use by the American furniture-makers in the colonies was coincident with, and possibly antedated, lacquer, which had been the rage and as a fashionable fad continued to hold the popular favor.

Of course, no writing-furniture is more eagerly sought than that of Chippendale. There were the writing-tables with bombé fronts, the bureaus, standing on legs that supported low bases, the bureau-bookcase style of desk (bureau-desk), the slant-top secrétaires, etc. In American desks of the period we find the block-front to have been very popular.

The writing-furniture of the brothers Adam exhibited the originality and excellence common to their other articles. They introduced the more general use of satinwood and others of the lighter-colored woods, and a contour of line in design that struck a new note. Painted ornament, too, was used by them more extensively than ever before it had been used in English furniture.

With the furniture of Hepplewhite we find the three section bookcase desk in vogue, and the pull-

over top (tambour) which was ancestor to the modern roll-top. The Hepplewhite desks are in great variety and of much beauty and practical utility as well. Sheraton included in his desks all the forms brought into fashion by Hepplewhite or modified by him. All these various periods were reflected in American desks, some of them with local modifications and variations.

CHAPTER XVI

CHELSEA

OLD Chelsea—with what associations is the name endowed! Hither came the wits—Smollett, Steele, Swift, Horace Walpole, and others of the *monde*. Those were the days when Chelsea was still a village of the eighteenth century, boasting of Ranelagh and its gaieties on the one hand, and Cremorne Gardens on the other. Here was the manor Henry VIII had given to Catherine Parr when Chelsea was completely rural; in Walpole's time it was just beginning to be truly suburban, while now it is so integral a part of London that it might long ago have had its identity swallowed up but for the perpetuation of its literary, artistic, and historical atmosphere by Carlyle and his circle and by Whistler and his.

The fifteen years from 1750 to 1765 comprised the period of old Chelsea's social heyday, though the aftermath was not without its distinctly brilliant though somewhat irascible flashes. These were years demanding fine things for the fashionables.

Horace Walpole and others had stirred up the passion for chinaware and the English porcelain and pottery-manufacturers were kept busy not only to supply the demand but to meet the exacting quality of that demand, which called for perfection in *fabrique*. With this in mind it is not at all strange that some enterprising potter with a provident eye to business should have decided on establishing a porcelain factory at Chelsea. Just when this venture was established, history has neglected to disclose, but it must have been somewhere around 1740. We do know that the Chelsea porcelain-works were already celebrated for their wares in 1745. Some students of ceramics believe a very early date should be assigned to Chelsea productions. It is even possible that porcelain was being made in the village as early as 1682, the year in which was begun the old hospital for invalid soldiers, designed by Sir Christopher Wren. Of course as Oriental porcelain had been introduced into England some fifty years before that —in 1631, to be exact—it is likely enough that works for the purpose of imitating it were established in Chelsea. Horace Walpole made note of very early "specimens of Chelsea blue-and-white." Perhaps these were the sort of crude porcelain which Dr. Martin Lister referred to in an account of his visit

to France, in 1695, wherein he mentions the superiority of the "Potterie of St. Clou" over the "gomroon ware" of England, although he observes that the English were "better masters of the art of painting than the Chineses," a statement that might have applied to Chelsea porcelains of the *gomroon*, or imitation Oriental genre, productions perhaps antedating the native English development in decoration.

The French manufacturers of 1745 had become concerned over the strides taken by the English potters and they petitioned, accordingly, for the privilege of establishing a soft-porcelain factory at Vincennes, complaining of the competition of English wares of Chelsea. Such early procelains as are extant and ascribed to a period coeval with that of the porcelain of St. Cloud exhibit clumsiness and lack of finish. Already the village of Chelsea had become well known in the industrial world through its glass manufactory established there by Venetian glass-workers under the patronage of the Duke of Buckingham, in 1676. It may be that the Chelsea pottery was evolved as an outcome of this experiment, an experiment so successful that Elers joined it in 1720.

The early bits of Chelsea were, almost entirely,

copies of Oriental wares and mainly decorated with Chinese designs. Queen Anne does not appear to have bothered her head particularly about the Chelsea porcelain. The Hanoverian Georges paid more attention to it. In their minds porcelain was too intimately connected with the table to escape royal patronage. George II especially encouraged the manufactory at Chelsea. Frederick II had early borrowed and taken from France the art of porcelain-making and had initiated his several hundred princes in the mysteries of its allurements. Naturally the Hanoverians were interested and George II had everything, from models to workmen, brought over in the hope of rivaling the wares of Sèvres and of Dresden. The Duke of Cumberland took an especial interest in the Chelsea factory and made it an annual allowance.

Soon the fame of Chelsea porcelain had become so great that the demand was far in excess of the supply and the prices soared accordingly. In 1765 contemporary reference informs us that the china of Chelsea was in such repute "as to be sold by auction, and as a set was purchased as soon as baked, dealers were surrounding the doors for that purpose. Watkins in his "Life of Queen Charlotte" writes:

There are several rooms in Buckingham Palace full of

curiosities and valuable moveables, but not ranged in proper order. Among other things, I beheld with admiration a complete service of Chelsea china, rich and beautiful in fancy beyond expression. I really never saw any Dresden near so fine. Her Majesty made a present of this choice collection to the duke, her brother, a present worthy of so great a prince.

Indeed, Horace Walpole, in writing to Sir Horace Mann in 1763, had said:

I saw yesterday a magnificent service of Chelsea china, which the King and Queen are sending to the Duke of Mecklenburg. There are dishes and plates without number, an epergne, candlestick, saltcellars, sauceboats, tea and coffee equipage. In short, it is complete, and cost £1,200.

After the death of the Duke of Cumberland and that of the director of the works, Nicholas Sprimont, the porcelain of Chelsea declined. Grosley's "Tour to London," as we have it in Nugent's translation, noted this. Apropos of earthenware he wrote:

The manufacturers of this sort lately set on foot in the neighborhood of London have not been able to stand their ground. That at Chelsea, the most important of all, was just fallen when I arrived at that capital.

The last proprietors had pleaded in vain for further state protection, but it was not forthcoming. It closed its doors, while the models, materials, etc.,

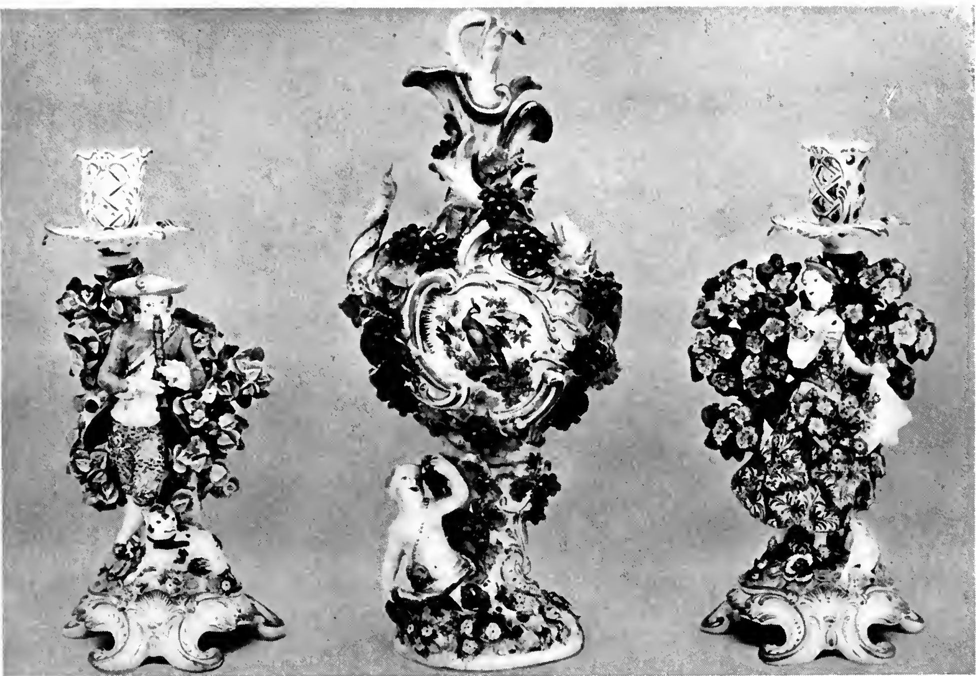
were carted off to Derby, followed by the forlorn workmen who witnessed the dissolution.

In Smith's "Life of Nollekens" we find the following reference to the porcelain of Chelsea:

> The factory stood just below the bridge upon the sight of Lord Dartery's house. "My father worked for them at one time," said Nollekens. "Yes," replied Betew, "and Sir James Thornhill designed for them. Mr. Walpole has at Strawberry Hill half-a-dozen china plates by Sir James which he bought at Mr. Hogarth's sale. Paul Ferg painted for them. The cunning rogues produced very white and delicate ware, but then they had their clay from China, which when the Chinese found out, they would not let the captains have any more for ballast, and the consequence was that the whole concern failed."

Nevertheless, although decorated by Sir James Thornhill, these plates were probably of Dutch *fabrique*, and not Chelsea.

We learn from Faulkner's "History of Chelsea" that Dr. Johnson "conceived the notion that he was capable of improving the manufacture of china. He even applied to the directors of the Chelsea China Works, and was allowed to bake his compositions in their ovens in Lawrence Street, Chelsea. He was accordingly accustomed to go down with his housekeeper, about twice a week, and stayed the whole day, she carrying a basket of provisions with her."



Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art

A Pair of Candlesticks and a Vase, Chelsea, 18th Century

Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art
Cabinet Inset with Wedgwood Jasper Ware Medallions

One could hardly imagine the good doctor's adventuring without the provisions! But alas! the doctor's mixtures all yielded to the intensity of the heat, while the clays prepared by the company came forth irritatingly whole. Faulkner says:

> The Doctor retired in disgust, but not in despair, for he afterwards gave a dissertation on this very subject in his works; but the overseer (who was still living in the spring of 1814) assured Mr. Stephens that he (the overseer) was still ignorant of the nature of the operation. He seemed to think that the Doctor imagined one single substance was sufficient, while he, on the other hand, asserted that he always used sixteen; and he must have had some practice, as he had nearly lost his eyesight by firing batches of Chine, Chelsea, and Derby, to which the manufacture was afterward carried.

The collector of old Chelsea will find it rare indeed. But as with so many things worth while, an occasional find will cause thrills of a quality scarcely to be compared with the ordinary excitement of coming upon a bit of commoner ware. As the Chelsea porcelain was of very soft paste, the pieces do not withstand refiring, in consequence of which it is not redecorated or patched up as often is the case with many wares. The color charm of old Chelsea is very definite. Where, for instance, in any other porcelains, will one find just its own peculiar claret

color? The earliest forms were Oriental, undoubtedly, but the early forms of Chelsea within the period of its history which is clear to us were French. Under the Georges, Dresden exerted its influence in form, color, and decoration. I have seen pieces of Chelsea that appeared comparable with Royal Sèvres, whose influence was so distinctly in evidence from 1750 to 1765. Especially fine are the pieces which bear the landscape decorations painted by Beaumont.

The Chelsea figure pieces began to appear about 1750, at least the earliest mention of them extant is dated about that time. While they were influenced by the Dresden and by French figurines, they developed qualities of their own and their greater naturalness and freedom from affectation at once lends them an unmistakable distinction. Not only were gentle shepherds, demure shepherdesses, and swains and sweethearts modeled in old Chelsea porcelain, but portrait busts as well came into fashion. Field-Marshal Conway, Walpole's friend, and others intimate with the master of Strawberry Hill "sat" to Chelsea. The George II portrait bust is one of the best of the series.

The early figure pieces were usually ungilded. On those that were gilded the gilt was sparingly

used. With the advent of 1760 gorgeous coloring and a lavish use of gilding came into play. Scent-bottles, cane-handles, knife- and fork-handles, breloques, bonbonnières, and patch-boxes are a few of the many things to which Chelsea porcelain lent itself. As to the texture of the ware, it has already been said that all genuine Chelsea is of very soft paste, requiring all decoration to be done at one time, as it could not withstand a second firing. In body it is uneven, the paste having the effect of poor mixing, as one will see by holding a piece of Chelsea to the light, when the spots can be detected. The glaze of the earliest pieces is thick and was applied unevenly. Nearly all bits of Chelsea porcelain display stilt marks.

A crudely drawn triangle marks the Chelsea ware of the 1745–1751 period. From 1749 to 1753 inclusive we find the embossed anchor, a raised anchor upon an embossed oval. Then followed, through 1759, the anchor mark in red or gold painted on the glaze. Sometimes Chelsea pieces were marked with two anchors. When the Derby Works acquired the Chelsea manufactory and continued the Chelsea porcelain for a while, the mark used was a combination capital letter D and an anchor. From 1773 to 1784 the mark was a crown over an anchor, or a

crown over a D, and a combination D and anchor. In the early pieces, which were copies of Oriental ones, various pseudo-oriental marks were used at Chelsea, but nearly all introduce an anchor-like mark. This anchor was probably suggested by some early Venetian workman in Chelsea's first porcelain manufactory. Fine Chelsea is rare enough to lead one to consider a few good pieces, even four or five, a "collection." But whether or not one is a collector, every lover of beautiful porcelain should know something of Chelsea's interesting story.

CHAPTER XVII

WEDGWOOD

THE mention of the name Wedgwood naturally suggests to the general reader those blue-and-white pieces which made famous England's greatest potter—Josiah Wedgwood. We picture to ourselves the beautiful vases, flower-holders, jardinières, tea-pots, cups and saucers, cream-ewers, and the like, and are not aware, perhaps, that many other ornamental uses were served by jasper ware (as Wedgwood called this ceramic product), not only in the blue-and-white, but in yellow-and-white, green-and-white, lilac-and-white, pink-and-white, and also in some seven solid body colors. Among these the small cameos in jasper, designed mainly for settings of jewelry, and the cameo medallions and cameo plaquettes are of particular interest to the collector of English earthenware.

While the cameos were mainly of the blue-and-white jasper, there were also those in other colors and white. The same is true of the larger cameo medallions and cameo plaquettes, though the color

pieces, other than the blue-and-white, are of great rarity. The cameo medallions had great vogue for ornamental decorative purposes. Jewel-boxes, writing-cases, furniture, etc., were decorated with them. An example of the sort is a drawer-and-chest cabinet in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. In this instance both small cameos and larger cameo medallions were employed in the decoration.

The cameo medallions and the cameo plaquettes were also in great demand for architectural embellishments, for setting in mantels, over-mantels, door-casings, door furniture, etc. The small cameos ranged in size from one fourth to two and a half inches in diameter. Josiah Wedgwood's genius produced many useful and ornamental wares, among them cream ware (1761) called Queen's ware from 1765; white stoneware (1759); black basalt ware (1766); fine white ware (1773–1775); jasper ware (1775–1795); rosso-antico ware (1776); pearl-lustre ware (1776–1779), and cane-colored jasper ware (1787). In perfection and fineness the various colored jasper wares led them all, and the jasper cameos were hardly surpassed by other pieces in this clay.

As the old firm founded by Josiah Wedgwood has

continued in business uninterruptedly from the eighteenth century, the recently revived modern Wedgwood cameos which have appeared in some of the most attractive recent jewelry awaken even a greater interest on the part of the collector in the study of the old pieces. Beautiful as are the cameos of modern Wedgwood jasper, those of Josiah's own period (1775–1795) can readily be distinguished, not only because of the somewhat less soft-to-the-feel surface but also because all foreign wares imported since 1891 are required by the tariff law to be plainly marked with the designation of the country of their manufacture.

Josiah Wedgwood probably was inspired to experiment with his cameos and cameo medallions and plaquettes through having come in contact with James Tassie, celebrated for his copies of engraved gems in sulphur and in vitreous compositions, some of which Josiah had purchased in 1769. His fertile brain set to work on the problem of creating cameo productions from his own ceramic materials. After surmounting untold obstacles Wedgwood finally achieved complete success in his undertaking. Immediately there was a great demand for the cameos, by the manufacturing jewelers of Birmingham and Sheffield (who employed such artists to mount them

as Boulton and Watt), and elsewhere. The mountings were of gold, of silver, and of cut steel. These last mountings were the most in demand. This jewelry also became much sought abroad and the demand in America was great.

The name cameo was first applied by Wedgwood in 1772. Nearly four hundred and fifty objects were catalogued by 1777. Their best period was from 1780 to 1795, 1787 being the year when Wedgwood had completely mastered the art of the jasper cameos and cameo medallions. There were then one thousand and thirty-two subjects listed—subjects drawn from Egyptian mythology, Roman and Greek mythology; sacrifices; ancient philosophers, poets, and orators; sovereigns of Macedonia, the fabulous age of Greece; the Trojan War; Roman history; masks, Chimaeras; illustrious moderns, and so on.

Even originally the small cameos were not cheap in price. In wholesale lots of ten some five shillings apiece was asked for them by Wedgwood. Unfortunately, all the cameo subjects are not now to be identified completely, even where given in the old catalogue, as no descriptions were placed on the subjects sold to the general public to identify them with the catalogue entries.

Cameos and cameo medallions and plaquettes were made both in solid jasper and in dip jasper. The former ceramic paste was colored clear through, while the latter was surface-colored only. Wedgwood employed some of the most famous designers of his day, among them John Flaxman, William Hackwood, Roubillac, James Tassie, John Bacon, Thomas Stothard, Webber, Pacetti, George Stubbs, William Greatback, Davaere, Angelini, and Dalmazzoni; and such gifted amateurs as Lady Templeton and Lady Diana Beauclerk drew for him.

The small cameos were fired but once; the large cameo medallions and the plaquettes were given a second firing. Fine old Wedgwood is as soft as satin to the touch, and most of it was left with a dull *matt* surface, although jasper is capable of receiving a high polish on the lapidary's wheel. While some few pieces of Wedgwood were not marked, nearly all of it was. The collector should be told that many imitated pieces have borne the name spelled with an *e* after the *g*, thus: *Wedgewood.* No genuine Wedgwood, old or modern, bears other spelling of the name than "Wedgwood."

CHAPTER XVIII

SAVING THE PIECES

OLD porcelain and earthenware, and even old glass, may be skilfully mended so as almost to pass as whole; and lost parts may be "restored" to a condition that will leave an object not to be a reproach to one's collection. Of course, the collection should entrust such mending and restoring to the hand of an expert, at least where broken or damaged pieces are of particular rarity. Probably the famous Portland Vase, now in the British Museum, is the most remarkable example of mending and restoring we know of.

This celebrated vase, it will be remembered, was discovered in a sarcophagus in an ancient tomb not far from the Frascati Road, near Rome, about the middle of the seventeenth century. From its first owners, after its discovery, it was known as the Barberini Vase until it passed from the hands of Sir William Hamilton (who had purchased it for a thousand pounds) into the possession of the Duchess

of Portland. Thenceforth it was known as the "Portland Vase."

This vase, which was of a deep, blue-black glass, decorated with semi-translucent cameo figures of white, cut in relief upon a dark ground in a truly marvelous manner, was one day dashed to pieces in 1845 by a crank named Lloyd, a visitor to the museum. Fortunately the hundreds of fragments were immediately gathered up and placed in the hands of the official restorer, a Mr. Doubleday, who accomplished the remarkable feat, aided by an engraving of the vase by Cipriani and Bartolozzi in 1786, and especially by a remarkable copy of the vase which Josiah Wedgwood had made.

Fifty such copies were originally made for subscribers at fifty guineas each, and all were disposed of. These first copies are among the rarest and loveliest examples of Wedgwood's wares. As the original molds survived, recent copies have been made, with black and also with dark-blue grounds. While Wedgwood's copies were remarkable ceramic achievements, they may seem to lack the intrinsic beauty of the original material, but they are pleasing and fine in themselves.

At the sale, in 1786, of the antiques and curios collected by the Duchess of Portland, her son,

then duke, was present in the auction room as a bidder. Wedgwood was bidding on the Portland Vase and the price went soaring up. Finally the duke discovered that Wedgwood's sole reason for desiring the vase was to reproduce it. On condition that he was to have one of the copies, free of charge, the duke offered to lend Wedgwood the treasure if Wedgwood would withdraw from the competition and allow the duke to bid it in. The matter was amicably arranged, and the vase was handed to Wedgwood for the purpose stipulated. He himself wrote:

> I cannot sufficiently express my obligation to his Grace, the Duke of Portland, for his entrusting this inestimable jewel to my care, and continuing it so long—more than twelve months—in my hands, without which it would have been impossible to do any tolerate justice to this rare work of art. I have now some reason to flatter myself with the hope of producing in a short time a copy which will not be unworthy the public notice.

Wedgwood is said to have looked upon his copy of the Portland Vase as his masterpiece.

Those who have been fortunate enough to see the original vase in the British Museum—where, restored, it is now safely guarded in the Gem Room—will appreciate how much can be accomplished in the hands of a skilful mender and restorer, and will

realize, too, the value of "saving the pieces" when accident appears to have destroyed a rare specimen of pottery, porcelain, or glass.

CHAPTER XIX

LOUNGING FURNITURE

SHOULD any one with a taste for antique furniture also find interest in old-fashioned verse, he might some day come across Cowper's lay which elegantly hints at the evolution of lounging-furniture, culminating in the development of the delectable sofa. I suppose few read old Cowper nowadays. I myself confess to no propensity in this direction beyond a liking for the ballad of "John Gilpin." Poor, gentle, melancholy Cowper, who tamed hares for diversion and gave to English poetry of the late eighteenth century a cast more earnest and more simple than had come to be its wont before his pen expressed his gift! But Cowper, mild and quiet though he was, had yet a keen sense of humor. This crept into certain lines that the lover of antique furniture may enjoy having brought to his notice:

> Ingenious fancy, never better pleased
> Than when employed to accommodate the fair,
> Heard the sweet moan with pity and devised

> The soft SETTEE, one elbow at each end
> And in the midst an elbow, it received
> United, yet divided, twain at once.
> So sit two kings of Brentford on one throne;
> And so two citizens who take the air.
> Close packed and smiling in a chaise and one,
> But relaxation of the languid frame,
> By soft recumbency of outstretched limbs,
> Was bliss reserved for happier days; so slow
> The growth of what is excellent, so hard
> To attain perfection in this nether world
> Thus, first necessity invented stools,
> Convenience next suggested elbow chairs,
> And luxury the accomplised SOFA last.

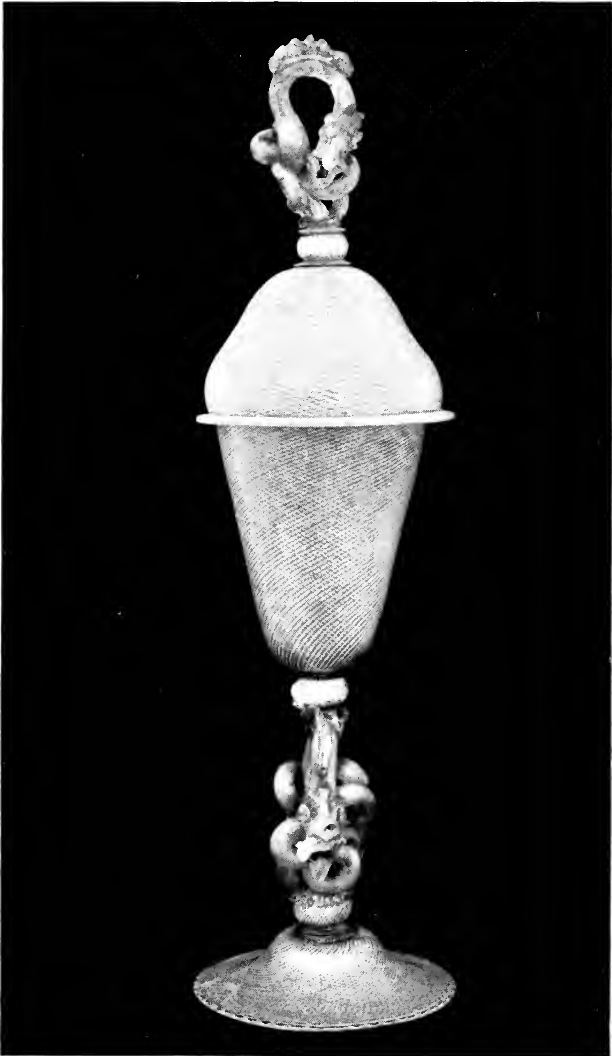
The couch has an ancient and classical ancestry. The Egyptians, the Greeks, and the Romans utilized it extensively. The settee evolved from the double chair—love-seat, it was often called—while the "accomplished" sofa combined, or was supposed to combine, all the advantages and virtues of couch and settee, not omitting the attractiveness of the love-seat! An understanding of these relationship adds not a little to the interest of collecting.

The collector will not concern himself with the couches of the ancients, but will come within the early English forms of this article of furniture. The name "day-bed" was earlier used for English couch furniture of the Jacobean period (1603–1688).

The seventeenth-century day-bed allowed a person to recline comfortably at full length. It was either laced or caned for cushioning. At one end the head-piece sloped back. At first this head-piece appears to have been stationary, but no doubt comfort soon suggested the later movable head-piece—a device more popular with the English than with the continental makers of day-beds or couches, as far as I have been able to discover.

In height the best day-beds were slightly lower than chair seats. The Jacobean pieces have the characteristic carved or turned legs. Undoubtedly many of these couches found their way to the colonies during the early period of American history. Captain William Tinge (1653) had inventoried such a couch, and a cane-bottomed one belonged to the Bulkelys and is now in the Antiquarian Society, Concord, Massachusetts. John Cotton (1652) was another early colonial couch-owner, and one might call attention to many others who made mention of such household objects in their carefully drawn inventories now preserved to us by the various antiquarian societies throughout the country.

The couches of the William and Mary period (1688–1702) conformed to the simpler forms that succeeded the Jacobean carved furniture. Not only



Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art
16th Century Venetian Glass Covered Cup, Skillfully Restored by an Expert Mender

Double Chair-Back Settee, Chippendale, 1735-1750

Settee, Adam Style

Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art

Sofa of the William and Mary Period

were the rarer woods employed in their manufacture, but as the couch had come to be looked upon as a necessity in the cottage as well as in the mansion, the more ordinary woods were utilized also. Many of these couches were exported to the American colonies, which, in their turn copied their forms and otherwise adopted them. Upholstered couches now began to come more commonly into use than the earlier couches, which were designed to be fitted with cushioned seats.

During the period of Queen Anne (1702–1714) the houses of the rich were, as a rule, beset by ultra-decorative fashions and in them luxury was expressed in much of the furniture as well as in other furnishings. However, such delightful specimens of the walnut furniture of the period exist—simple, elegant, and truly beautiful in line—that we may rest assured that good taste was enjoyed in the homes of the middle classes. Couches of this period will therefore be found to reflect the extremes.

The cabriole leg, the leading characteristic of Queen Anne furniture, soon made its appearance in the couch support.

Upholstery became more popular than ever, as enormous quantities of silks and velvets were being produced during Anne's reign. Chintzes, and

printed cottons, too, were in demand for couch covers. Lacquered couches and marqueterie couches were also in vogue during this reign, but few of these appear to have survived, and such as have are treasured accordingly.

About 1720—two years after Anne's death—mahogany came into general use in furniture-making. Cabinet-makers lost no time in employing this wood in the making of couches. Seven years after this, Thomas Chippendale and his father were established in London. In 1749 Chippendale opened his conduit Street shop in the Longacre section. Here he worked until his removal to St. Martin's Lane. A year after, in 1754, he brought out his famous book, "The Gentleman and Cabinet-Makers' Director."

The couches were being supplanted to great extent by the sofa during the time of the Georges, in which Chippendale lived, but such couches as remain show the various Chippendale lines. The brothers Adam (1672–1792), following their taste for Italian things, and designing for lighter woods and forms, gave more attention to the couch, perhaps, than Chippendale had done. Unlike the Chippendale couches, the Adam couches were without the end supports. George Hepplewhite, who died in 1786, gave to English furniture a well-defined style. The first edition

of "The Cabinet Maker and Upholsterer's Guide" was published by his widow, Alice Hepplewhite, in 1788. Hepplewhite, as had the brothers Adam, came strongly under the influence of the classic. Hepplewhite couches employ an end such as that which upholstered sofas had suggested. They also received inspiration from the French furniture of the time. In his book Hepplewhite gives on Plate XXXII, "Two designs of couches or what the French call *Péché Mortel*." It has not been my good fortune to come across a Sheraton couch in the strict sense of the word, though I presume such were made by Thomas Sheraton (1750–1906). His "Cabinet-maker and Upholsterer's Drawing Book" first appeared in 1791; but it concerned itself more with settees than with dwelling particularly on true couch designs.

The couches of the French periods—Louis XIV (1643–1715), Louis XV (1715–1774), Louis XVI (1774–1793), and the Empire (1792–1830)—all follow the well-known lines of these Louis Quatorze, Louis Quinze, Louis Seize, and Empire styles, and it will not be necessary here to go into detail concerning them. The English and American cabinet-makers of the years 1792 to 1830 adapted French Empire styles and as a result produced furniture which we

may designate as English Empire or American Empire, as the case may be.

The settee of the Jacobean period was a development of the double chair or love-seat. It followed the general styles of the period in legs and stretchers. The back usually was upholstered. It was not in general use until walnut had come to supersede oak. For this reason the Jacobean settees are for greater part of walnut.

The William and Mary period settees found the double chair back in favor, and comfortable indeed were these settees, many of them being provided with squab cushions in addition to their upholstered seats, backs, and ends. The William and Mary settees were somewhat shorter than the generously long settees of the Jacobean period.

Queen Anne settees were designed with straight backs, these backs doing away with the double-hoop backs of the settees of the reign that preceded Anne's. These backs were considerably lower, and, as with the couches, the cabriole leg formed a distinctive characteristic. In the Queen Anne settees of a later time the double back without upholstery came in again. The seats of these settees were depended upon for occasional use at the back.

Chippendale's settees followed the lines of his de-

signs for chairs. His window-seats did likewise. Colonel Wentworth's "Chinese Settee" of the Chippendale style is now in the Ladd House at Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

Very elegant indeed were the settees and the window-seats of the brothers Adam. Both coincided in lines with Adam chairs. The window-seats, though so often following Chippendale forms, were a refinement of these latter. They were supported by four or by six legs, usually, though several window-seats of Adam style have eight legs. These settees bear the characteristic fluting on the front rail.

The Hepplewhite settees are, for the most part, double backs or triple backs and follow in design the chair styles of this type. A Hepplewhite settee of 1780 upholstered in silk brocade has the vase detail in the arm-post and the legs are turned and reeded. Other Hepplewhite settees were cane-seated and cushioned, and with these squab cushions were used.

Sheraton himself tells us that cane-work as applied to furniture again came into favor with cabinet-makers about the year 1773. A very fine Sheraton two-back settee painted with medallions by Angelica Kauffmann is extant to test the skill of the eighteenth-century furniture-maker in the reintroduction of the use of cane for seating, and for the

backs. Some of the Sheraton settees were upholstered and some were designed for cushion coverings.

The settees of the various French periods followed the general chair-furniture lines in their styles, as did the settees of the English and the American Empire styles.

"Ingenious fancy" now brings us again to the "accomplished sofa." The settees and love-seats of the Jacobeans, and the couches that had long preceded even them, united in the achievement that Cowper immortalizes and which no early Victorian novelist could have dispensed with in creating his "atmosphere." The sofas of William and Mary and of Queen Anne were expanded and upholstered settees in effect. Chippendale devoted much attention to the sofa and came to use rolled-over arms in the larger one. Several of these are illustrated in his "Gentleman and Cabinet-Makers' Director," already referred to. Plate XXX shows two such sofas, and that on Plate XXXI is described by him as follows:

> A Design of a Sofa for a grand Apartment, and will require a great Care in the Execution, to make the several Parts come in such a Manner, that all the Ornaments join without the least Fault; and if the Embossments all along are rightly managed, and gilt with burnished Gold, the whole will have a noble Appearance. The Carving at the

Toe is the Emblem of Watchfulness, Assiduity, and Rest. The Pillows and Cushions must not be omitted, though they are not in the Design. The Dimensions are nine Feet long without the Scrolls; the broadest Part of the Seat, from Front to Back, two Feet, six Inches; the Height of the Back from the Seat, three Feet, six Inches; and the Height of the Seat one Foot, two Inches, without Casters. I would advise workmen to make a Model of it at large, before he begins to execute it.

The Adam sofas closely fall in with the general features of the Adam style, and the same may be said of the sofas of Hepplewhite and Sheraton. Hepplewhite in his book tells us that the dimensions of sofas "should vary according to the size of the room, but the proportion in general use is, length between 6 and 7 feet; depth about 30 inches; heighth of the seat frame 14 inches; total in the back, 3 feet 1 inch. The woodwork should be either Mahogany or japanned to suit the chairs in the room, and the covering must match that of the chairs." Four designs of sofas appear in Hepplewhite's book. Plate 27 therein shows a confidante. Of this he says:

This piece of furniture is of French origin, and is in pretty general request for large and spacious suites of apartments. An elegant drawing-room with modern furniture is scarce complete without a confidante; the extent of which may be about 9 feet, subject to the same regulations as sofas. This piece of furniture is sometimes so constructed that the ends

take away and leave a regular sofa; the ends may be used as Barjier chairs.

Of the Duchesse sofa Hepplewhite says:

> This piece of furniture is also derived from the French. Two Barjier chairs of proper construction, with a stool in the middle, form the Duchesse, which is allotted to large and spacious ante-rooms; the covering may be various as also the framework, and made from six to eight feet long. The stuffing may be of the round manner as shown in the drawing, or low-stuffed with a loose squab or bordered cushion fitted to each part; with a duplicate linen cover to cover the whole, or each part separately. Confidantes, sofas and chairs may be stuffed in the same manner.

In the rooms of the Antiquarian Society, Concord, Massachusetts, is a sofa which once belonged to Samuel Barron and which shows mixed Hepplewhite and Sheraton characteristics.

In Girard College, Philadelphia, one may see a Sheraton sofa that once belonged to Stephen Girard, the founder. Sheraton himself describes one of his own sofas as follows:

> A sofa done in white and gold, or japanned. Four loose cushions are placed at the back. They serve at times for bolsters, being placed against the arms to loll against. The seat is stuffed up in front about three inches high above the rail, denoted by the figure of a sprig running lengthwise; all above that is a squab, which may be taken off occasionally.

Sheraton also tells of the Turkey sofa "introduced into the most fashionable homes as a novelty, an invention of the Turkish mode of sitting. They are, therefore, made very low, scarcely exceeding a foot to the upper side of the cushion. The frame may be made of beach, and must be webbed and strained with canvas to support the cushions."

It would be interesting to go on dwelling upon a subject so rich in lore, but I fear, so little studied. The author has generously refrained from the harrowing mention of haircloth, as he imagines there is little he could add to a subject that all readers are probably too familiar with already.

CHAPTER XX

SHEFFIELD PLATE

EVERY one is familiar with the name "Sheffield Plate," and many have a vague idea as to what, superficially, marks its distinction; there are fewer, however, who know its story. It is interesting. A few years prior to the middle of the eighteenth century—1742 is the generally accepted date—there lived in a little house on Sycamore Hill in the English town of Sheffield an ingenious mechanic, Thomas Bolsover by name. His knife, which had a handle made partly of silver and partly of copper, had been broken, and one day in a leisure moment Bolsover took it to his attic room to repair it at the little work-bench he had fixed up there. In the course of this operation an unusual accident brought about the fusing of the copper and silver parts of the knife-handle. To Bolsover's surprise he found the metals had cohered, forming a copper basis with a surface of silver.

To a stupid mechanic this would have given rise to no reflection, or only to futile and passing

curiosity. To Bolsover it at once brought the reflection that a process developed by experiment from the results of this accident would be of definite utility. In view of the fact that the value of silver at that time was three times what it is to-day, the discovery of a substitute for the solid precious metal was of great commercial importance.

Bolsover was a cutler by trade and steel-working was Sheffield's chief industry. So little silver-working had been attempted in the town that there was not even an assay office there; in fact, one was not established until some thirty years subsequent to Bolsover's discovery and inventions. Although Bolsover was only a struggling workman, he had the good fortune of interesting a Mr. Pegge of Beauchief, who furnished him with the capital to set up a manufactory of articles produced by the new process. Buttons, buckles, snuff-boxes, and knife-handles were turned out from the new shops on Baker's Hill. This business Bolsover conducted in conjunction with one, Joseph Wilson. During this period Bolsover was probably so concerned with his work and the manufacture of the small articles mentioned that it never occurred to him that his process was capable of greater developments. Changing conditions open new channels that are to be anticipated only by

imaginative minds. Bolsover's mind was, I think, less imaginative than of a generally intelligent and practical turn. It was sufficient for him, in all probability, that he had stumbled on material which would replace silver in the manufacture of the small articles that appealed to his commercial instinct.

The middle of the eighteenth century was a period in which only the very well-to-do could afford articles of silver for household use. The middle class still contented itself with pewter. It apparently remained for Joseph Hancock, a brazier who had been in Bolsover's employ, to realize the possibilities of Bolsover's copper rolled-plate process (as it was then and for a long time afterward called), as a suitable material for silverware. Hancock produced tea-pots, coffee-pots, candlesticks, tankards, waiters, and so on.

It may seem strange that neither Bolsover nor Hancock followed the new industry for long. As astute business men, they might be expected to have anticipated the vogue that the copper rolled plate was later to enjoy. On the other hand, I think one should take into consideration the fact that the well-to-do of the day sought no silver substitutes, and that on the tables of the middle class such things as epergnes, bread-baskets, and cake-baskets were

hardly to be found before 1750, while coffee-pots and milk-jugs were rare even in silver, and tea-kettles and tea-urns even more so. As these various articles came into more extended use in silver form, they suggested to the immediate followers of Bolsover and Hancock the greater commercial field that would open to their manufacture in copper rolled plate. Still the old Tudor & Leader firm, founded by Dr. Sherburn in 1758 and existing till 1814, a firm advertising "the best wrought silver plate," devoted most of its attention to the making of buttons and snuff-boxes.

Authorities generally assign to about 1760 the earliest table pieces, except those (and they were very few) which Hancock produced. After this time the copper rolled plate, the manufacture of which Bolsover and Hancock found less remunerative than the metal rolling business they entered, developed rapidly. By 1774 there were some sixteen firms engaged in the hollow-ware making in Sheffield alone, and Boulton had established a factory for copper rolled plate in Birmingham. We may assume that Sheffield plate, as the ware came to be called then, became widely popular, for Ashworth, Ellis, Wilson, and Hawksly opened branches away from Sheffield—in Paris and in Dublin. There

were, of course, many improvements in Sheffield plate, such as the method of preparing for and applying the ornamental silver edges which was under the patents of Mr. Roberts of Roberts & Cadman in 1824.

To another discovery we may credit the decline of the fine copper rolled plate after 1840. It seems that a medical student, Wright by name, studying with Dr. Shearman of Rotherham, near Sheffield, discovered a process of depositing silver on copper by electro-decomposition. He sold his discovery to Messrs. Elkington in Birmingham, who took out patents, March 25, 1840. Those who have not studied the matter usually rest under the impression that Sheffield plate, as collectors know it, is an electroplated ware. On the contrary, although many of the beautiful original Sheffield-plate forms have been imitated in electroplated articles, it is not the latter that hold a collector's interest. Moreover, the true Sheffield plate so treasured to-day has the silver rolled on copper and not on nickel or white metal. I suppose tons of machine-made copper articles, electroplated, pass to-day with the unknowning as true Sheffield plate. Such of these as imitate the fine old forms that have been unsurpassed are certainly preferable to other modern wares that lack the beauty

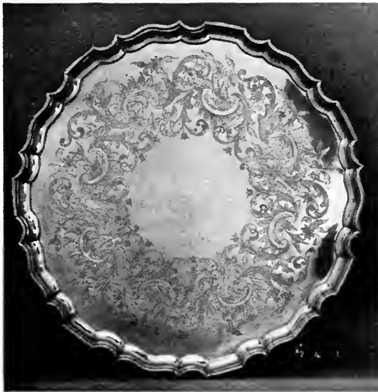
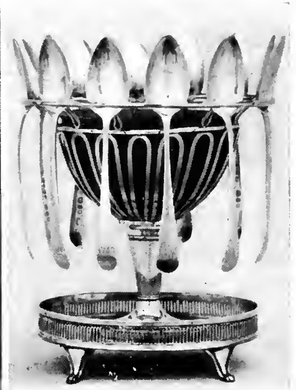
of form and the traditions of design. However, the electroplated wares should be declared such, and should not be fabricated to deceive.

Another point is that the cost of making copper rolled plate is twice the cost of making electroplate. It is, I think, better for the home furnisher to pay twice as much for a few excellent things than to have twice as many inferior ones at the same price. Modern Sheffield plate—that is to say, the rolled plate of to-day—is nearly all worth having. The old Sheffield pattern-books and many of the dies for the forms survived the capricious fortune that for so many years led the older art to give way to the commercial aspect of electroplate. Now, electroplating does not wear well unless it is done on nickel; a hard copper basis, moreover, enhances the beauty of the silver coating, and brings out a quality which nickel and white metal do not.

As it was not until 1784 that Parliament repealed the act that prohibited marking plated ware, no Sheffield plate that is genuine is found with a mark antedating 1784. From 1784, to, say, 1880, Sheffield plate may bear mark and maker's name beside it. The firm of W. Green & Co. was the first to have its mark and name registered for Sheffield plate; this was September 8, 1784. However, the

collector finds pieces bearing names and marks together very rare. Marks are generally so inconspicuously placed as often to be missed even when they do occur. Careful examination is necessary to discover them.

It should be borne in mind that the genuine Sheffield-plate metal consisted of silver and copper sheets inseparably joined and pressed out to the required thinness by being run cold through rollers. The metal was then cut and shaped by hand-hammering into the forms desired. Electroplated ware consists of a baser metal form already shaped before being coated with silver in galvanic solution. The possessor of any pieces of genuine Sheffield plate will subject them to ruin if he is, at any time, so ill-advised as to have them replated. Such a renovation will utterly destroy the beauty that intrinsically resides with even worn pieces of Sheffield plate that show copper traces.

Sheffield Plate Tray and Spoonholder

Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art

Sheffield Plate Teapots and Coffee Pot

Straw Marqueterie Box, French, 18th Century

Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art

Straw Marqueterie Box, English, 17th Century

CHAPTER XXI

STRAW MARQUETERIE

ON traveling to the Adriatic coast some years ago, I stopped for several days in a little Italian town not far from Ancona. I suppose few visitors have ever alighted there; at least that is the impression I got from the profuse welcome accorded me at the primitive *albergo* where I put up. Just why even the slow-creeping trains of the Marche ever bothered to stop here at all I have yet to determine. With myself I seem to have established a precedent. No errand other than that of the spirit took me there. It all happened because, when journeying eastward, I had asked a fellow-traveler what there was of interest in this town, and, then, why the train made so short a stop.

"No one ever gets out here," he explained; "there is nothing to see."

From that moment my curiosity was aroused, for experience has taught me that the most interesting places are those which most people find uninteresting.

One of the things I found in this little town will, perhaps, dear reader, interest you, and so I will make mention of it as introduction to my subject. The room to which I was assigned by my host of the inn was, I have reason to believe, the *chambre de luxe* of the country-side. The high beamed ceiling was painted much after the manner of the great ceiling of the Florentine church of San Miniato al Monte, although I saw nothing of it all by the flickering candle which lighted my arrival at this medieval hostelry. In the morning a burst of golden sunlight awakened me, and in through the windows was wafted the fragrance of the grape flowers in blossom outside. My sleepy eyes followed the walls around. And then opened wide on beholding a quaintly framed canvas of beautiful freshness, the picture of a group of saints.

Jumping out of bed and going over to inspect the painting, I observed on an old marqueterie secrétaire which stood just below it an array of curious, golden-hued objects. On closer examination I found some to be boxes, some jewel-caskets, others yarn-containers, while needle-cases, frames, book-covers and the like completed this odd assemblage of curious antiques. Then I discovered that they were all examples of straw marqueterie, but finer, of them, than

any pieces of the sort that ever before had happened to come to my attention.

I suppose being a collector makes one a discoverer. At any rate, a discovery it was, and I asked myself how on earth these things happened to be here. That morning my host explained.

"All these," said he, "I have been collecting as a hobby for years—things made by prisoners of war, interesting and worth preserving. The inlaid straw objects are but part of what I have—ivories, carved cocoanuts; jewelry, paper models, embroideries, and so on, all made by prisoners of war, mostly in Italy, I presume, as I have picked them up here in my own country in traveling around. I would not part with them for the world!"

This declaration dashed my hopes to the ground, but one can forgive much in a landlord who collects things more spiritual than rent, and a landlord in Italy who "travels around" also commands one's respect for his ability to be so independent. That is why I listened instead of bargaining, and in that morning I learned many interesting facts about my host's unusual collection. Perhaps there were few kindred collecting souls in the neighborhood who deigned to listen as sympathetically as I did or who made no effect to conceal an enthusiasm which these

things awakened within me. At any rate, the amiable innkeeper who would not part with his treasures for the world proved finally willing to sell a few of them for considerably less than a hemisphere, which gave me a chance to weave tales of my own in the years that were to follow.

Dr. John Eliot Hodgkin, F. S. A., a renowned English antiquarian, had a collection of some eighty pieces of straw marqueterie, a collection exceeded in extent at that time by two French collection only. Probably not over a hundred pieces of straw marqueterie are to be found in all the British museums combined. Dr. Hodgkin's interesting volumes under the title of "Rariora" are, unfortunately, out of print. In one of these he reproduced some of the specimens of straw marqueterie in his own extensive collection, and the reader who wishes further to interest himself in the subject is referred to the pages of those erudite tomes, which he may be fortunate enough to find on the shelves of some of the more important art libraries in America.

In Europe the earlier centuries brought into existence many small arts of which we have well nigh forgotten the very existence. It was thus these straw marqueterie objects of the sixteenth century, the seventeenth and the eighteenth, objects whose

form of decoration is so rare as to be almost unknown to dealers in antiques and curios. Indeed, I have failed to find a single specimen of *early* straw marqueterie in any shop in America, or to discover any dealer who really knew anything about it.

This decoration, composed of filaments of colored wheaten or oaten straw applied to small cabinets, pictorial panels, mirror frames, caskets, bookbindings, étuis, bonbonnières, plaques, etc., boasts of an early origin. Possibly it was known in the fifteenth century, but I have not found any examples that can with reasonable precision be attributed to a period earlier than the first quarter of the sixteenth century. In certain instances the straw filaments composing the mosaics or marqueterie covering of the objects was highly colored originally, but time has softened and toned them down. The finest specimens of this work resemble chiseled gold, and nearly all examples of straw marqueterie show a play of light on the grain of the fabric that produces the most exquisite effects imaginable, which one must see really to appreciate.

Very crude modern Japanese trays, boxes, etc., are technically akin to this old marqueterie, but are not worthy to be classed with it or placed near these rare old European specimens. Indeed, the Oriental ar-

tist-craftsmen have never appeared to grasp a full realization of the resources of straw as a material for producing the exquisite effects to which the earlier European workers attained, except in a few instances. This seems strange, considering the ingenuity of Oriental craftsman. The European artist-craftsman appears to have developed the art independently of Oriental suggestion, or at least independently of Oriental influence.

In all probability straw marqueterie started in a humble way with the peasantry. The materials for working it out lay at hand without cost, infinite patience being all that was required, with skill and inherent taste and a sense of design, which peasant art invariably exhibits. Probably the early Italians were the first makers of objects in straw marqueterie and the French were probably the next ones to take it up, borrowing the art from the Italians.

As no straw-work of this sort is being made in Europe to-day, one can but venture to guess at the details of the process. Such old volumes as Barrow's "Dictionarium Polygraphicum," and the "Handmaid of the Arts," in which one might reasonably look for some hint on the subject, are strangely neglectful of the matter, which leads to the conclusion that though straw marqueterie was at one time one of

the flourishing small arts on the Continent, it was less generally known in England. In fact, nearly all the English work of the sort dates from the eighteenth century.

In the Victoria and Albert Museum is an ingeniously constructed work-box of pine, decorated on the outside and the inside with colored straw-work arranged in panels containing checkers, diagonal lines, and other devices. The front is fitted with a revolving shutter, behind which is a panel ornamented in the center with buildings and fitted below with a small drawer. Below the shutter is a larger drawer, divided into four lidded compartments, two of the lids being of glass; under this drawer is another small drawer. At the top of the box is a lid fitted inside with a mirror and covering two compartments with hinged lids. The word "HOPE" appears on both the front and the back of the box. There are four turned bone handles and a lozenge-shaped lock-plate of the same material.

In the author's collection is a cabinet of straw marqueterie, measuring 8½ inches in height, 9 inches in breadth, and 4¾ inches in depth. There is one wide, deep drawer at the bottom, above which six narrower, shallower drawers are placed in two sections of three each. From the shape of the handles,

the proportion of the cabinet, the quality of the black lacquer inside finish of the drawers, and the design of the panel across the bottom, one is led to conclude that this is an uncommon example of Japanese workmanship.

A number of small boxes with figure subjects, all carefully and wonderfully worked out in filaments of colored straw, are extant to attest to the durability of straw marqueterie, which is not nearly so fragile as its name suggests it to be. Some of these were executed by French prisoners of war as Norman Cross in 1810.

From times immemorial, I suppose, war prisoners who have not been enslaved by their captors but have been treated without barbarity have sought to enlighten their tedium by various sorts of handicraft, exerting to the utmost their ingenuity in the matter of tools and materials. To-day the subject is one of immediate interest to us. Already have art objects made by prisoners of war interned in Holland and in Switzerland reached us. In time they will come to be as treasured as the antiques made by the prisoners of war of the Napoleonic period and of earlier times. To catalogue the variety of such things would require page after page. Naturally, nearly all such objects are "handy" in size and one

does not look for particularly large specimens of war prisoners' art work. One begins to realize, after visiting the convalescents' ward of a military hospital, what a blessing to the soldier some knowledge of an art handicraft may be. I have seen several marvelous things whittled out of wood by prisoners of war—bone carvings, beadwork, jewelry—that indicate the godsend the work must be to the soldier prisoner detained in the enemy's camp. But of all these objects I know of none that are more beautiful than those of straw marqueterie.

I do not know where the art originated. Mr. Hodgkin confessed to a like hiatus in his knowledge of the subject. However, I have no doubt that artistic straw inlaying was practised in the Orient at a very early date. Thence it may have been brought into Europe. I feel sure that it was known and practised during the period of the Renaissance in Italy, and I consider the old Italian examples of this craft to be the earliest European ones.

This early Italian straw marqueterie is distinguished by its golden hues, suggesting the richness of Venetian paintings. The objects to be covered by the artist in straw were of various materials, such as wood, paper, papier-maché, cloth, and occasionally glass, metal, or bone. The design, pattern, or pic-

ture was worked out by pasting filaments and little sections of straw (stained to various colors) on the surfaces of the objects to be covered, which were then varnished. The minuteness of some of this straw-work is extraordinary. It would seem to have necessitated the use of a glass of high magnifying power as well as to have required almost superhuman patience and ingenuity to put it together. Moreover, these early pieces in straw marqueterie were so faithfully fabricated that they have come down to us in excellent condition.

I imagine the French learned the art of straw marqueterie from their Italian cousins. I feel sure that the Spanish craftsmen did. At any rate, French prisoners of war have shown themselves wonderfully proficient in this art in the past. The French prisoners of the Napoleonic Wars who were quartered in England were prolific in their output of this sort. Numerous tea-caddies have I seen from their hands, here and there preserved in the cottages of the country round about Peterborough. At near-by Norman Cross was one of the chief camps of the Napoleonic prisoners of war. We are told that a regular market for the art wares made by French prisoners at Norman Cross was held daily in the camp. Perth was another prisoner-of-war concentration center and

contemporary writers tell us that the objects made by the French prisoners there were of a finer design and quality than like things produced by the English townsmen, in consequence of which there was brisk market rivalry. At Dartmoor, Stapleton, Liverpool, and Greenland Valleyfield the French war prisoners exhibited their skill. At the Liverpool prison they constructed little straw marqueterie cases to contain miniature ships and like articles.

What stories the objects of straw marqueterie made by prisoners of war could tell could they but speak! What silent testimonies of grit, patience, and fortitude! But perhaps we may be glad that we do not know all they might tell, for to-day has sorrow enough and we should be grateful that time has been kind enough to leave us just the beauty and not the life details of these objects from the hands of those who suffered in the yesterdays of other wars.

CHAPTER XXII

CONSOLES

AT first thought it would appear both ambitious and somewhat futile—this hobby of collecting consoles. But that depends on how you consider collecting in general; on whether you realize that you may make a collection of purely practical objects or of curios with uncertain decorative value. For both of these are prized by the collector. Thus, one might not be inclined to consider house furnishings as collections at all. But when some order enters into their selection and arrangement, they virtually become collections, just as, on the other hand, an aggregation of medals, a cabinet of jade, or a chest of Georgian silver can be made to play a decorative rôle in the house when well placed. It would, of course, be absurd to expect a cottage to provide the proper setting for Louis XIV consoles, but just how lovely some of the Adam console tables appear in the home of moderate aspects can well be understood.

The use of the term console in this connection has

been a matter of some dispute. It is reasonable to suppose that it was borrowed, because of the bracket supports—as distinguished from tables with four legs—from the French architectural term *console*, a bracket support. Since the idea came from the French, we must expect to find some of the earliest and most beautiful consoles in French period furniture. Some of the most notable ones are to be found in the great museums of America. Fortunate it is that these are available for public study; for many modern furniture-makers have been able to reproduce with fidelity the designs of these wonderful consoles. Collectors, of course, do not primarily seek reproductions, but many of the foremost among them realize that where originals are not obtainable, unusually fine reproductions are to be welcomed. The desirability lies not only in age but in intrinsic beauty. I for one believe that much pleasure can be had from the possession of fine reproductions of certain things, consoles among them.

Genuine antiques are the things we naturally strive for first of all, and consoles present a field that is, as yet, by no means prohibitive, even for the moderately filled purse. To be sure, the rare French consoles of the early Louis periods are not to be had at every turn (the war has rendered them still

rarer), but there are English consoles and console tables and others by early American furniture-makers that are surely worth hunting out. Their appropriateness to the scheme of the small house commends their preservation and insures a revival of interest in their modern use.

Virtually all of the eighteenth-century furniture-makers constructed console tables. Gilded furniture in all its gorgeousness found favor in England shortly before 1720, and the consoles and console tables were unusually well adapted to finish and decoration of the sort that suggested the magnificence of Louis XIV and, later on, the elegance and richness of Louis XV. During the Empire period some were elaborately decorated in white and gold. With the advent of the Napoleonic era, the console and the console table still held sway. Indeed, I do not think they have ever lost favor, and the last few years have seen a remarkable increase of interest in both furniture forms on the part of decorators and collectors of fine old furniture. Moreover, the console has not only interested but influenced many of our present-day architects.

The console and the console table are by no means confined to the furniture-makers of France, Great Britain, and America. We find both forms in early

eighteenth-century Italian furniture, and in Spain, Austria, Germany, and Russia one also comes across types of consoles that, dependent as they nearly always are on French models, still exhibit occasional variations in design that link them to the art traditions of the land of their manufacture.

Formal apartments and the smaller reception rooms of the eighteenth-century houses of more or less pretension came to feel the need of what one furniture-lover aptly called "a table that was not a table." In fact, Sheraton insisted that "portables," as he called consoles, were indispensable in the drawing-room. Marble shelves the width of small—and sometimes, indeed, of very large—tables were supported by brackets along the wall, bringing the shelf to the height of a table top. In earlier examples the bold florid and exaggerated types in soft wood, carved and gilded, often carried decoration to extremes. The consoles found place beneath great mirrors and, occasionally, beneath large paintings, tapestries, and the like.

In early consoles there was great variety in their supporting brackets, the motifs of ornament being taken from flowers, foliage, parts of the human form, animal and bird forms, rococo vagaries, and so on. During the Empire the eagle came to be popularly

employed as a console support by the French furniture-designers of the time. In the collection of the Duke of Beaufort are a number of the finest examples of the eagle consoles. There are also some fine examples in the state dining-room of the White House. Before long the earliest forms of console supports gave way to more extensive supports and finally these reached the floor, as in those consoles which have the cabriole form of support.

Sideboards were unknown during the first part of the eighteenth century, but when the console table was introduced into England, it rapidly developed from the French idea of the luxurious console for ornament's sake into the generous console table for utility's sake, which we soon find in the English dining-rooms. It did not take long for this to suggest the sideboard.

Reference has already been made to the interest in consoles on the part of the architects of to-day. This brings to mind the fine console tables of the brothers Adam—pieces which the collector will do well to acquire whenever the opportunity presents itself—for Robert Adam was an architect who designed furniture but was not himself a cabinet-maker, though his influence on the classical taste in the furniture of the late eighteenth century was de-

French Console, Louis XIV Period

Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art

French Console, Louis XV Period

Sèvres White Bisque
Statuette of Voltaire

Sèvres White Bisque
Bust of Franklin

Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art
A Pair of Sèvres Porcelain Covered Vases

cided. Robert Adam made exhaustive researches in France and Italy and reached as far as Spalato in Dalmatia, whither his interest in classic design took him.

In finding a place for the console in the modern house, it is well to remember its original use. Under a long mirror in the drawing-room was where it was generally placed, the tables being used in pairs to effect a studied balance. It can be advantageously placed in the hallway, where its dignity will add to the character of the entrance and at the same time take up but little room. In dining-rooms consoles are arranged to serve as sideboards. The type of console will naturally determine the type of mirror or decoration suitable to hang above it, all of which the furniture-collector should bear in mind.

CHAPTER XXIII

SEVRES PORCELAIN

THERE is no continental porcelain better known by name to every one than the French porcelain of Sèvres. Nevertheless, fewer chance collectors and lovers of old china appear to know as much about it as they do about old Worcester, Derby, Chelsea, or Dresden. Over fifty marks for Sèvres, nearly two hundred and fifty marks of painters, decorators, and gilders of the Sèvres manufactory, as well as over thirty-five of the marks of some of the modelers are known. The principal marks of fabrication from 1753 to the present number some thirty-five. From this it will be seen that Sèvres forms a group in the history of ceramic art that requires some study to master its *minutiæ* and the *indicia* that will enable the collector to pass intelligent judgment on pieces that come to his notice. While it is true that the collecting of Sèvres can hardly be a "poor man's hobby," it also is true that knowing something about even a single piece in one's general collection of old china, or of

less specialized antiques and curios, justifies giving attention to the ramifications of the particular phase of the subject that may, for the moment, more definitely apply to the piece in hand. Thus if one possesses a bit of modern Sèvres of fine quality, the interest of that possession cannot but be intensified by a knowledge of earlier examples of the fabrique to which it is allied.

Fatal improvements have often marked the progress of the arts. It was so with that of the Royal Porcelain of Sèvres. The early pieces were of soft paste, but in 1804 the director, Monsieur Brogniart, was so pleased with the introduction of the hard paste instead that he utterly banished the soft paste, going so far as to destroy the secret formula for its making, and burying alive, as one might say, all the soft-paste material then on hand in the Parc de Versailles! Poor, deluded mortal! Probably he died unaware of having murdered the Sèvres porcelain of the finest type! Thus one begins to understand why the examples of the pâte tendre of the year 1753 through to the change for the hard pâte are so rare and so highly prized.

By old Sèvres we comprehend the pieces made from 1753 to 1804. This is the true *vieux Sèvres*. From 1753 to 1777 inclusive the letters of the al-

phabet, singly, from A to Z, (W omitted), indicate the years of manufacture. The year letters were placed between the two script L's (one reversed). The letters A, B, and C indicate the pieces made at Vincennes (the original site of the manufactory) in 1753, 1754, and 1755 respectively, while the year of the removal of the manufactory to Sèvres, near St. Cloud, 1756, is indicated by the letter D between the double L's. The L's, of course, stood for the royal cipher of Louis XV, the first year, and then of Louis XVI of France from 1754 to September, 1792, when the French Republic was proclaimed and R.F. in monogram or in capital letters took its place.

In the study of any porcelain pieces the *amateur* should acquaint himself with the difference between soft and hard porcelain of any sort. The eighteenth-century porcelain has a soft, velvety "feel," the glaze not being so glassy as that of hard porcelain. A pen-knife can cause abrasion on soft-paste porcelain, while hard paste will nearly always repel even the pressure of a steel point drawn over it. With soft paste one can see through the glaze, as it were; with hard paste one cannot. The enamel of the soft paste of Sèvres presents a delicate, milky glaze, exquisitely distinctive. The

colors, too, show forth with velvety freshness. *Bleu du roi*—king's blue—is the name given the cobalt blue of the decoration; *turquoise* designates the sky-blue which dates from 1752, when Helbot first compounded it; *rose Pompadour* and *rose Dubarry* are the names given the reds during the domination of those court favorites; *violet pensée*, the name for the pansy color; *jaune clair*, the name for the pale yellow (*jonquille* was as often used); *vert pomme* and *vert jaune* designated the apple-green, while *vert anglais* and *vert pré* was applied to the color we term grass-green.

There is also a velvety "feel" about the unenameled portions of porcelain, owing to its fine texture, which distinguishes it from hard porcelain. Looked at obliquely against the light so that a portion of the white surface and a portion of the painted surface equally receive a beam, there appear no differences in surfaces. With a soft porcelain the enamel seems so to incorporate with the soft paste as to present a surface of indentical substance. Hard porcelain will exhibit a distinct difference in the lustre of the white surface and in the colored glazed surface. The color surface will invariably appear less brilliant.

In Sèvres porcelain of the first period the white

ground predominates. The flowers and wreathes, etc., are delicately scattered over but do not crowd the white field. In later pieces the decorations came by degree to be the more assertive. Likewise, more gilding was employed. After 1770 portraits came into the decoration, and the designs of the Louis Quinze and those of the Louis Quatorze periods were superseded by designs which followed more along Egyptian and Etruscan lines. With the soft porcelain of Sèvres very large pieces could not be produced, but of the later hard-paste porcelain huge vases were often fabricated, marvels indeed of ceramic skill, though seldom as artistic and perfect in technical qualities.

The bisque statuettes of early Sèvres eagerly sought by museums and collectors are one of the interesting phases of this manufacture, though these objects scarcely can be said to approach those of Saxony. Their manufacture at Sèvres was almost given up after 1777. We have, however, from our own day, the much-treasured statuettes modeled for Sèvres by modern sculptors, among whom was the late Auguste Rodin.

From 1778 to 1792, inclusive, the year mark was indicated by the double letters AA to OO, within the interlaced L's. During the period of the

First Republic (1792–1804) the mark was, first, the interlaced F.R. (for *République Française*), then the letters R.F. with the word "Sèvres" below ("Sèvres" being written with or without the accent mark), or just the word "Sèvres," and finally in the Consular period of this epoch "MN^le" over the word "Sèvres" (from 1803–1804). The years IX (1801), X (1802), and XI (1803) were designated by "T^9," "X,' and "II" in addition.

The mark of the first imperial epoch (1804–1814) was "M. Imp^le" over "de Sevres," two ornamental strokes below without accent mark, and then, later, the imperial eagle crowned with the legend, "*Manufacture Imperiale. Sevres,*" without accent mark (1810). The years XII (1804), XIII (1805) and XIV (1806) were marked by distinguishing symbols (1804 by two horizontal dashes, a dot above and one below; 1805 by two short lines aslant, a horizontal dash to the left and one to the right; the year 1806 by a mark resembling the prong of a trident, point upward).

The Sèvres marks of the second royal epoch consisted of the restored interlaced L's of Louis XVIII and the fleur-de-lys between (1814–1823); of the interlaced C's of Charles X, with the X between, or the fleur-de-lys or without (1824–1829); of

just the fleur-de-lys (August 30th to December, 1830) and other marks in circles (1831–1834) and the cipher L. P. of Louis Philippe (1834–1848).

With the advent of the second republican epoch, 1848–1851, the "R. F." was restored, only to be displaced by the imperial eagle (1852) with the letter S to left and "52" to the right of the eagle, and the crowned N of 1854 of the second imperial epoch (1852–1872), with the letter S to left and the year numeral to right of the N. The Third Republic brought back the "R. F." again, followed by other marks, the one introduced in 1888 showing a potter at work, the whole within a double circle bearing the legend *Nationale Sèvres Manufacture.* From 1817 date marks were designated by the last two numerals of the year number only, as the date 1807, 1808, 1809, and 1810 had been designated by 7, 8, 9, and 10. The years 1811 to 1817, inclusive, had been designated by the small letters o.z, d.z, t.z, q.z, q.n, s.z, and d.s, standing, respectively, for the French *onze*, *douze*, *treize*, *quatorze*, *quize*, *seize*, and *dix-sept.*

The output of the Sèvres works in recent years has been very small, that institution having become a place for the education and training of French potters who will carry on the Sèvres traditions in other

lines of their work. Such examples as are being made to-day take the form of presentation sets of ware especially designed and made as a gift to a potentate, a diplomat, or as a token of the French Government's regard on such occasions as the marriage of a princess or a president's daughter. Various quantities of it have been brought to this country at the time of expositions, and much of that has passed into the hands of the American collectors. It is still possible to pick up here and there good pieces that are genuine and thoroughly worth while.

Notwithstanding the advanced collector's greater eagerness to collect Sèvres of the pâte-tendre period, later Sèvres is an alluring, interesting, entertaining, and possible field for the collector to enter without discouragement, and the pieces of this later fabrique well deserve a place in the cabinet or as a decorative feature in the home of good taste.

CHAPTER XXIV

EUROPEAN ENAMELS

WHILE it is true that few collectors of the present day can aspire to any goodly number of really fine examples of European enamels, the subject is nevertheless one of great interest, and the author believes there are many who will find pleasure in a study of the enamels of European fabrication, particularly those objects familiarly known as Limoges enamels but more properly to be called painted enamels to distinguish them from the cloisonné and the champlevé enamels. It may be well to indicate here the characteristics of the several groups.

Cloisonné: As early as the time of the ancients it was found that to prevent the running together of molten glass enamels, little boundaries of metal wire could be devised for soldering on to the metal base to mark the divisions of the pattern, or merely to bound areas, thus forming a number of diminutive shallow "pans," into which the melted flux expanded, and when cooled and polished revealed a

surface level with the height of the wire cloisons, giving them the appearance of being metal wires that had been imbedded in the glass. Gold, being neutral to every known color, is the harmonizer paramount, and thus when gold cloisons were used, the various colors were knit together into esthetically pleasing surfaces. The little metal threads running through modern Japanese enamels are such cloisons. Cloisonné enamel is the earliest sort of true enamel known to us. It was the favorite Byzantine process, and also that of the Greeks, the Anglo-Saxons, the Chinese, and later of the Japanese and the Russians.

Relief Cloissonné. This term is used to designate those pieces wherein the enamel either is below or above the tops of the cloisons, or where only certain cloisons enclose enamel, or a combination of the three sorts, giving to the surface of an object completed in this manner an interesting uneven ground of smooth but unpolished enamel. The cloisons of much of this work, especially the Hungarian and the Russian, are of filigree wire, or twisted wire, instead of flat wire such as was used for this purpose by Byzantine craftsmen.

Champlevé. This is the name given to the process of gouging out of a field (*champ*) of metal a

number of hollows (*lévées*) or "ditches" for the pattern, in which cut-out depressions the vitreous color is fused and becomes enamel. It is akin to the ancient Egyptian method of scooping out surfaces in gold, soapstone, wool, and other materials, inserting therein bits of colored glass. Had the Egyptians practised true enameling, doubtless their process would have begun with champlevé, for they did not anticipate the Greek goldsmiths, who worked patterns on gold in cloisons long before they had any idea of applying vitreous color thereto. Indeed, the early Greeks and the Etruscans were wonderfully skilful at soldering gold. This champlevé process might be termed Gothic, succeeding in introduction though not superseding the Byzantine cloisonné. However, centuries before Byzantine or Gothic works appeared, the Celts produced champlevé enamels.

Repoussé. This term is applied to the base of those objects wherein the ornament is beaten out, in silhouette as it were, in the metal and the details marked by cloisons let in. Much of this work is easily mistaken for champlevé, but where the pattern is scooped out in champlevé, it is beaten out in repoussé. One who has visited the treasury of St. Mark's in Venice will recall that the plaquettes

from a Gospel cover to be found there were executed in repoussé—the pattern simply hammered in the silver, which afterward was filled with translucent enamel. In Oriental repoussé work the metal divisions between the fields of enamel are beaten up, the reverse of the process just described. In modern Chinese enamel-work the repoussé process has superseded champlevé for effects of the sort.

Basse Taille. This is the process of engraving the ground, which is to receive translucent enamel, so that the lines made by the graver will show up through the translucent vitrified coating and produce a greater play of light, or define patterns, the veining of leaves, the marking of petals, the lines of draperies, etc. The French enamelers of the eighteenth century habitually employed the process, and Indian enamelers preceded them by at least a century, while its invention is ascribed to an Italian, John of Pisa, in 1286. This chasing or engraving upon gold or silver for the purpose of showing graduation in the vitreous color to be applied is akin to champlevé.

Plique à Jour. Enamels of this sort consist of certain screen-like objects in filigree with their unbacked cloison divisions filled up with translucent enamel. *Plique à Jour* enamel may be compared

to stained-glass windows, the principle being the same, only carried out on a miniature scale. An excellent example of this is a fifteenth-century cup in the Victoria and Albert Museum, while the Crown of St. Stephen, dating from 1072 A. D., would appear to be the earliest known work of the sort that has survived. The Russians of the nineteenth century so perfected the process that *plique à jour* enamel is often called Russian enamel. Doubtless the forming of cups, caskets, and other precious objects of gems in unbacked mosaic suggested the style, and the jeweled cup of Chosroes to be seen in the Bibliothéque Nationale, Paris, may well be considered a forerunner of it.

Encrusted Enamel. This may be defined as enamel used to enrich raised and modeled gold-work where this vitreous color is neither entrenched, as in cloisonné or in champlevé, nor painted, like Limoges work, on a flat field. The craftsmen of the Renaissance, both in Italy and in France, produced exquisite jewels of encrusted enamel, imitated by the Florentine jewelers of to-day who display their wares along the shops of the Ponte Vecchio. Painted enamels in this group may be subdivided as follows:

(A) Those works which have vitreous colors

added here and there to subdue, to correct, or to outline and decorate enamel surfaces, such as the pale yellows added to soften glaring whites, red to restore a color unsuccessful in the firing, outlines of plants and other forms and inscriptions. Used in combination with both cloisonné and champlevé, and later to add further decorations to basse taille surfaces.

(B) Those works painted with successive firings of translucent or transparent colored enamels over a primary enamel ground that first has been fused to its metal field of gold, silver, or copper. Limoges enamels of this sort, whether in color or in grisaille (gray), as also are the much-neglected enamels known as Venetian enamels.

So much for the general broad divisions of enamels, though it must be borne in mind that there was often employed in the working out of a single object more than a single process. As color plays so important a part in the evolution of the history of enamels, the following table may prove useful to the collector as determining the more important colors of the enameler's palette at different periods in the history of the art:

COLORS AND PERIODS

Greek Work. The colors used by the Greeks were opaque white, blue, and green.

Barbaric Work. British, Gallic, Celtic, and Roman-Provincial enamelers used scarlet, cobalt blue, dark green, yellows through light shades to orange and to ochre; white, black, and possibly turquoise.

Early Byzantine Work employed opaque scarlet, coral, white, black, and translucent sapphire blue, emerald, green, ruby red, and manganese violet.

Later Byzantine Work. Added to the above colors, toward the eleventh century, cobalt blue and turquoise, pale yellow, and a flesh tint.

Early Limoges Work relied upon blue, green, red, with purple and iron gray, and the lighter half-tones known before the twelfth century.

Later Limoges Work. Its full palette is composed of deep blue to lapis blue and light blue; scarlet, a red approaching chocolate, green, greenish yellow, white, and a semi-translucent manganese purple. In thirteenth-century work blue is the dominating color. The twelfth-century translucent colors give way to the consistent use of opaque ones in the years following.

Germanic Work. This contains less cobalt blue, but employes the colors of the Limoges workers, introducing, however, a great deal of turquoise and much more green and pale yellow than the French enamelers used. The German enamelers were fond of black, also.

Nearly every writer upon enamels quotes the convenient commendation of the Greek sophist, Philos-

tratus, who went to Rome in the reign of the Emperor Severus, about 200 A. D., to teach rhetoric. In the description of a boar hunt in his "Icones," wherein he describes the trappings of the horses of the barbarians (Gauls or Britons), Philostratus writes: "For the barbarians of the region of the ocean [islanders?] are skilled, as it is said, in fusing colors upon heated brass [copper?] which become as hard as stone and render the ornament thus produced durable." The Romans in Italy knew nothing of such things. Labarte and other authorities would have it that this passage refers to Gallo-Roman work, though such is rarely to be met with; while others claim for it reference to the work of British craftsmen, perhaps under design-influence of the Romans. Probably enameling was known to the Celts and to the Britons independent of Roman occupation. Certainly the Scoto-Celtic and the Britanno-Celtic tendency in design has little in common with that of the ancient civilized world of Greece, of Rome, or of Egypt. It is just possible the ingenious Celts invented champlevé.

With the rise of the Eastern Empire in the fourth century A. D., with its capital at Byzantium, came in that style of art known to us as the Byzantine, just as the North Italians produced the Lombardic

style and western Europe the Gothic. Byzantine enamel was rigid and conventional in design but highly decorative and symbolical. At first the direct influence of Greek and Roman art affected their pictorial representations, as we see Christus in earlier work depicted as a clean-shaven, beautiful young man, an ideal that soon gave way to the sad representation of the Man of Sorrows. From the tenth century on, Byzantine ecclesiastical art was barren of invention. With the waning of the empire in 1057, the art of the Byzantine enamelers declined, and that of the Italians and the western Europeans blossomed forth untrammeled by stiff convention. Lombardic architecture and Gothic carving had helped to pave the way for the broader art of the Middle Ages, which no longer confined itself to cloisonné but began to put forth champlevé enamels of great beauty likewise. Indeed, in Gothic times western craftsmen rarely made use of cloisonné except for personal ornaments and jewelry. The famous "Lindauer Evangeliar," one of the chief treasures collected by the late J. Pierpont Morgan, exhibits upon its covers superb examples of early enameling.

With the revival of classical learning which brought about the Renaissance, and the subsequent

development of secular thought, art ceased to be what it had been throughout the Middle Ages—merely the handmaid of the church. No longer did the enamelers, Byzantine, Gothic, or Lombardic, work solely to adorn religious works; and ecclesiastical design broadened into secular application, a return of classical usages to a heritage of beauty and unrestraint from which, for some centuries, art had been kept by ecclesiasticism. By the twelfth century the art was well established to Cologne, Trèves, Huy, Maestricht, and Verdun, thence traveling perhaps to Paris. Limoges and the Rhenish provinces of France became prolific in champlevé enamels by the end of the twelfth century. It is to 1189 A. D. that the earliest known enamels of Limoges are ascribed. There an enormous quantity of work, good, bad, and indifferent, was turned out during the thirteenth century, an art turning to a trade thereafter, and declining to neglect in the fourteenth, and then going out of fashion altogether.

However, toward the end of the fifteenth century the public in general had broken through Byzantine, Gothic, and Lombardic esthetic domination and breathed the clearer air of the Renaissance, becoming imbued with a desire for gentler, more beautiful things; and the old town of Limoges, ever awake

to the commerce of demand, again started up her enameling ovens and went at the art with renewed vigor, retaining a supremacy that has handed down to us priceless treasures of the sort, exquisite and satisfying. This fine style may be said to date from 1530 to 1580 (being preceded by the early style 1475–1530), followed by a minute style, 1580–1630 preceding the decadence that dated from 1630 to the close of the manufactory in the eighteenth century.

Limoges enamels immediately bring to mind the names of such great artists in enamels as the Pénicauds, Courtoys, Limousin, Raymond, Martin Didier and Jean Court, dit Vigier, and in the decline Jean Laudin.

The painted enamels of the early style are executed with much white painting over purplish-brown grounds, the figures bearing strong resemblance to the Flemish type. The coloring in these examples is very beautiful. The painted enamels of the fine style exhibit the great advance achieved by draftsmen under Italian influence. The glazes are finer and the finishing process a more careful one. At this period painting in grisaille became popular. By this term is meant monochrome painting in enamel the light being worked up over a dark

Oval Dish by Bernard Palissy, 1510-1589

Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art

Lumières by Bernard Palissy, 1540-1590

Limoges Enamel Covered Cup Attributed to Pierre Raymond

Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art.
Champlevé Enamel Casket, French, 13th Century

ground, stage by stage, in white, leaving the chiaroscuro to be determined by the effect of the ground showing through. Shading was often further emphasized by black lines or hatchings. The resulting gray tone gives the style its name. Later, relief from the monotony of gray was found by the addition of one or two tints, such as flesh tint, as may be seen in the work of Jean Pénicaud, Pierre Raymond, and Léonard Limousin. Perhaps Pierre Raymond distinguishes himself as exhibiting the finest color sense, though he may not have possessed Léonard Limousin's qualities of bold and direct handling. This latter artist, who worked from 1532 to 1574 and advertised himself in a little panel introduced into one of his works as "Enameller and Painter to the Chamber of the King," was a consummate portraitist, and executed some splendid portraits in enamel. Any one who is acquainted with Italian faience will be struck by the relationships in effect between maiolica ware and Limoges enamels.

After Jean Limousin, descendant of the great Léonard, and his school, enameling as a truly fine art began to die out at Limoges, in 1610. Colin, Martin, Poncet, Laudin, and the Noalhers carried on the work, but Jean Limousin stood shoulders above them all. Toutin introduced enamel-paint-

ing on gold in 1732 and the products became daintily and insipidly delicate, quite in the taste of Louis XIV and his successors, until at last enameling became little better than a rivaling imitation of china-painting.

CHAPTER XXV

THE ROMANCE OF A POTTER: BERNARD PALISSY

FAR better it is that one man or a small number of men should make their profit from some art by living honestly, than that a large number of men should struggle, one against the other, so that they cannot gain a livelihood save by profaning the arts, leaving things half done. So said Master Bernard Palissy, born some four hundred years ago—in 1510, to be exact—near Château Biron in Périgord, France.

Where in the whole history of the arts will a more interesting figure be found? His was not the swashbuckling career of a Cellini; nevertheless the serious-minded would not exchange him for the volatile Italian who seemed ever and anon to be swallowing diamond dust or crossing a cardinal for copy. Palissy's was romance of a different sort, but romance of a fine type.

I have often wondered why we of to-day have almost forgotten about Master Bernard, Master

Bernard whom the readers of our grandmothers' generation immortalized. I suppose the cultivated virtue of novelty which in this restless era demands incessant changing of school-books from term to term failed to bring old Palissy along with it. In earlier days it was part and parcel of one's polite education to know something of Master Bernard, at least to know that there had once lived such a person. In those less curriculumed yesterdays the story of Palissy the Potter was always a welcome one. Perhaps we ourselves have merely overlooked the matter, and so I make here this venture, believing time has intended no slight to Master Bernard's memory.

How well I recall a certain lower shelf in a library which regaled a rainy autumn day in my tender years! There were treasures here convenient to the hand of one aged nine, treasures fitting the advancement of learning laboriously attained under the unflinching persistence of an all-too-faithful governess. In this sanctuary I chanced in childhood to come upon a tiny octavo bound in blue, stamped with gilt morning-glories, morning-glories such as I have always associated, for some unexplained reason, with the long-late Prince Albert and the equally long-late Lucy Larcom! Within the covers of this little book was a highly embellished frontispiece,

hand-stenciled in colors of saffron, scarlet, and azure, with an overwhelmingly deep dash of bottle-green. I imagine this volume emerged from the press at a time when aniline dyes self-proclaimed their advent to the mediocrity of the day. Beyond that I do not venture a date.

This giddy frontispiece seemed, even in my childish eyes, profanely gay for the subject it presented. Here was depicted the figure of a bearded man in foreign dress, visage forlorn, person unkempt. The artist pictured him in the act of destroying a quantity of furniture of a sort that might have given distinction to an early Victorian parlor.

Just what seemed so terrifying about the situation I do not know, unless it was that, as I distinctly recall, I myself had occasionally been regarded as somewhat destructive in the furniture line—as when, quite unintentionally, I scratched my great-aunt's mahogany sofa in making a desperate attempt not to slide off its hair-covered plateau at a moment when the peculiarly poignant texture of this revered fabric had caused me unwittingly to squirm about in manœvering for a less irritating bit of the area. From that time on a certain Miss Solander, occupying the important post of governess, could not adjust her perspective to considering me other than

a menace to mahogany in the front of the house or black walnut in the rear.

Thus you can well imagine how heroically there loomed forth from that frontispiece the figure of one who was deliberately breaking up chairs, tables, stools, four-posters, and what not—and a grown man at that! But the thrillingness of the situation was further enhanced by the fact that not only was he breaking up the furniture but he was feeding it to the flames! There was no doubt of it: a copious employment of carmine and saffron made that point clear. That any one should have dared to be so deliberately destructive at once awakened my curiosity, and I am not sure it did not awaken my admiration as well. I hope not, for as we grow older we like to think that our Golden Days were paragon in their virtues.

It was not long before I discovered in the background of the picture the figure of a woman in a Breton cap—inexcusable anachronism, though I did not know it then. Who was she? The furniture-breaker's governess, perhaps; no, that could not be, for he was older than she. From the corner of my eye I took a swift visual dart at Miss Solander. The lady in the picture appeared timid and weeping. No, it would not be a governess.

Just then a voice interrupted: "What are you looking at, child?"

"I do not know," I replied.

"You do not know!" exclaimed Miss Solander in expected disapproval. "Pray, why do you not know?" She moved near, to be serviceable.

Now, Miss Solander never cared for pictures, at least only for painted ones of forget-me-nots and buttercups in water-color and sheep by Mauve in oil, so I hurried on to spell out the title-page. I gave it up.

"P-a-l-i-s-sy,—Palissy. Master Bernard Palissy the Potter," coached Miss Solander.

"What is a potter?" I asked. And then it began.

In these after years I have always been glad that Miss Solander's embroidery chenille gave out at the first question, and that a gentle rain kept us indoors. Undoubtedly, too, this little book had been known to *her* childhood, for she extended it a more approving greeting than it was her wont to vouchsafe many of my other early literary discoveries. At any rate, I have forgiven her much, for that afternoon she read me the story of Master Bernard from beginning to end.

How it all came back to me yesterday when my

friend Cleon, at whose house I was dining, took me into his library and showed me, not a book about the old potter but an actual bit of his craft, a sauce-boat in the enameled faience which Palissy struggled through so many years of vicissitude to produce. Tenderly I took it in my hands and gazed intimately upon its lovely soft blues, grays, browns, wonderful greens, and the soft and well-fused marbled colors on the back of the piece, all of which, together with the sharp modeling of the relief and "neatness" of its workmanship gave unmistakable evidence of its authenticity. It had not the crude greens, the glaring yellows or the bright purples that betray imitations of Palissy's ware.

I have seen the fine collections of Master Bernard's handiwork in the Louvre, the Hôtel Cluny, the Sèvres Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Wallace Collection in London, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and the other collections of note, public and private, at home and abroad, but the little *saucière* which my friend Cleon permitted me to gaze upon—nay, dear reader, to hold in my hands!—there was not a finer bit anywhere. Master Bernard must have given a chuckle of contentment when he drew it from the kiln!

One might, with a princely purse, collect a few examples of Palissy ware in the course of a lifetime keenly devoted to collecting! But so rare is Palissy ware that even in Cleon's house I had not expected to see such a treasure. Strangely enough, it had been discovered, not just bought; discovered in London, and, unromantically enough, though exultingly, in a shop whose keeper ought to have known what it was, who ought to have known enough not to let it go for the mere pittance of—but that is Cleon's secret!

My own flair for collecting has often fed my pride, but it is tempered with a happy contentment from an interest in the things I cannot have, may never hope to have! I cannot, perhaps, describe to you the delight I experienced in coming upon that *saucière* at Cleon's or the joy I felt in being permitted to take my time in gloating over it unhurried by a museum curator, whose official anxiety must of necessity ever play false to his kindly attempt to conceal it. When I came home I looked over all my photographs of Palissy ware, and took down from its shelf in my library a volume in French of the Works of Master Bernard, a volume of the date of 1636, followed by one of 1777 and one of 1844. Master Bernard was not only a notable potter, but, as

both Lamartine and Anatole France observed, he holds a high position among French writers in the field of natural philosophy, agriculture, and religion.

Master Bernard's early life is wrapped in mystery. We know nothing of his parentage or of his early education. Probably, as Henry Morley observed, "As a child he rolled upon the moss and ripened with the chestnuts." In later life Palissy himself declared that he had had "no other books than heaven and earth, which were open to all."

Yet he learned reading, writing, and something of figuring, besides something of design and also of geometry, after the simple methods of his time. It is doubtful if any of the learning of his day was communicated to him in his youth, and it seems more probable that he drew inspiration for his philosophy from the trees and the earth, and that nature herself taught him those many lessons he applied so perfectly to future problems which confronted him. But we know that at an early age he became apprenticed to the art of painting and working at glass. Inasmuch as this art was considered very honorable in those days and practised by members of the lesser nobility, it is possible that Palissy may have sprung from that class who did not lose their dignity of station by following this vocation.

But under Francis I there came a certain disassociation in the crafts. The architect separated from the builder, the sculptor from the stone-worker, and the glass-painter from the glass-worker. It was then the art fell into decay somewhat, and like many another disappointed worker, Palissy turned aside to seek some other field for his abilities, as now he was scarcely able to eke out a living by the old means. For a time he commanded better fortune. In a document by him preserved in the Bibliothéque Nationale we read: "They thought me a better painter than I was, which caused me to be often summoned to draw plans for use in courts of law. Then when I had such commissions I was very well paid."

However, his superb improvidence—for one may almost call it such—delayed anything like his establishment in life, for we find him at the age of twenty-one years journeying through France as a sort of free-lance; at the very time, indeed, when Paracelsus the philosopher at thirty-seven was wandering, quite as ragged, through Germany. Finally he returned to his own country and settled in Saintes, about 1542, promptly married, and in the course of time became father to a goodly family, which he supported by his work of surveying the salt

marshes of Saintonge when his skill as a worker in glass and in designing was not in demand.

I imagine that Master Palissy, Madame and the little Palissys got on very comfortably for a time. Had not the Council of King Francis decided to impose a salt tax on the Saintonge, and had not Master Bernard been commissioned to make the surveys of the salt marshes in the neighborhood of Saintes?

Probably he spent much of his time in "tracing lines of geometry," of which things he wrote, "It is well known that, thanks be to God, I am not altogether ignorant." He had also added portrait-painting to his accomplishments. A more provident man than he might have prospered and his name have been forgotten. While the impecunious are not always to be rated wise, it is certain that Palissy's poverty drove him to the achievement of his fame as a potter in his desperate struggle to be free from its bonds.

One day as Palissy sat disconsolate outside his door, no work in hand, nothing ahead and the larder growing empty through his own extravagances and likewise those of his wife, he remembered to have seen, sometime about the year 1541, during his wanderings at Avignon or at Nîmes, a cup which, as he described it afterward, "was turned and enamelled

with so much beauty that from that time I entered into controversy with my own thoughts, recalling to mind several suggestions some people had made to me in fun when I was painting portraits. Then," continued he, "seeing that these were falling out of request in the country where I dwelt, and that glass painting also was little patronized, I began to think that if I should discover how to make enamels I could make earthen vessels and other things very prettily, because God had gifted me with some knowledge of drawing."

Now, Luca della Robbia had been dead some twenty-eight years, but not only was his work well known throughout Tuscany and other Italian states but specimens of it and of other Italian faience had been brought into France by Leonardo da Vinci, who died when Palissy was in his eighth year, and later by Benvenuto Cellini, who was but nine years Palissy's senior. However, Palissy had not visited Paris before this and probably he knew nothing of the Della Robbias, of Leonardo, or of Cellini, and less of the Italian faience. It was enough for him that he had seen a wonderful cup, made he knew not how, but produced by a process which, it is quite possible, he imagined to be a lost one, a process which now his ingenious imagination was seeking

to recover. Had fate or fortune taken him to Reims instead of to Avignon, he would never have thought of competing with the work introduced by the Florentines. But in those days of different intercourse he had seen only the one cup, and that he imagined to be unique; consequently, as we have seen, he resolved to set about becoming a potter himself.

How the imagination wreaths around that mysterious cup which inspired Master Bernard! What was it, maiolica of Italy or of Spain, or an enameled cup of southern France? Neither of these, I think. I cannot imagine it could have been anything short of some such treasure as a porcelain cup fetched from China by some Marco Polo!

At any rate, Master Bernard set about the business diligently and persistently. Once he had made up his mind to a thing there was no changing him, so long as the thing he had set his mind to appeared to him better, more wise, or more righteous than that which would take its place. He became as persistent a potter as he had been (and as he was!) persistent a Protestant. Luckily it was for him that the Constable de Montmorency, who was sent by the king to quell an uprising in Saintes, was later to come across Master Bernard and to take up with his ingenious compositions.

Eight long, tedious, heartbreaking years succeeded this resolution, during the course of which his powers of endurance and splendid physical strength were put to a severe test in his attempts to find a suitable enamel for the objects he made out of the earth of the neighborhood, a sort of pipe-clay. Month after month and year after year came sorrowful failures when he was seemingly just on the point of success. Without caring that he knew nothing concerning argillacious earths, he set himself to search out enamels, like a man who grooes in the darkness.

Whatever else he may have been, we can rest assured that he was thorough and practical in his craft. That so long a time elapsed before the results he hoped to attain were reached seems a proof to confute the theory often advanced that he had learned the secret of his enamel from the Hirschvogels in Nuremberg. If they disclosed any part of their craft to him when he was roving through Germany, they zealously guarded that of making white enamel, since for this he sought so long and arduously —indeed, through fifteen years of patient toil and discouragement. Abaquesne, at Rouen, had anticipated him, it is true, but it is just because it chanced to be his lot to have to seek out these things for him-

self that his works were endowed with marked originality.

All this time his family suffered in poverty. We can sympathize with his wife, certainly. That Palissy was quite out of his right mind she had no doubt. Was he not sacrificing everything for—what seemed in the face of his failures—nothing? It is hard enough to believe in genius in our own day, when miracles are no longer surprises. What, then, must have been the alienating doubts of Master Bernard's whole family as they saw him, day after day, absorbed with his clays, his enamels, and his ovens, while they stood by, hungry and neglected! The colossal selfishness of the men who win against all odds is forgotten afterward and forgiven, and one is inclined to think Palissy's plaint about the lack of encouragement of his friends and family more of a screen to his troubled conscience than anything else. When a man gives up the employment which supports his wife and children for the sake of obstinately attempting to discover the secret of making ornamental dishes like one he has seen years before, is there any wonder he is thought to be mad? Even in these days a family would ask that a commission in lunacy be appointed to look into his sanity.

And listen to his own testimony: "Another misfortune befell me, causing me great annoyance, which was that, running short of wood, I was obliged to burn the palings which maintained the boundaries of my garden, the which after being burned I had to burn the tables and the flooring of my house in order to cause the melting of the second composition. I was in such agony as I cannot express" —not a word about the agony of wife and children! —"for I was utterly exhausted and withered up by my work and the heat of the furnace; during more than a month my shirt had never been dry upon me; even those who ought to have helped me ran crying through the town that I was burning the planks of the floors, so that I was made to lose my credit and was thought to be mad. Others said that I was trying to coin false money, and I went about crouching to the earth, like one ashamed." I think that what Madame Palissy did not say places her in the hierarchy of our marveling esteem! Howbeit I write of a hero and not of heroines. Here, surely seemed to be a second Columbus tossed on the stormy seas of derision.

But finally, in 1549, the success of the secret formula for which he had been striving was attained as the fires of his experimental oven cooled. It had

been his agonized hope—the last straw held out by Providence. How differently they all regarded him now! Wife and children forgave him, friends returned to him, tradesmen were eager to give him credit, for Bernard Palissy had brought renown to their town, and they hailed him as a great man where but the day before they would have driven him to a madhouse. Quickly the fame of his achievements spread far and near, and almost immediately he found a munificent patron in Anne de Montmorency, the great constable, while to the king and the queen mother he became "worker in earth and inventor of figulines" by royal patent.

Is it any wonder he felt justified for all his sacrifices? He could now give his wife a prouder place than any she had ever dreamed of, and his children would be educated beyond all their companions. Surely it was worth these fifteen years of sorrow and suffering, he argued.

Ah, little blue book with the gilt morning-glories, the aniline frontispiece! Courageous, unflinching Master Bernard; brave, suffering madame!

When one remembers all these things every bit of Palissy ware becomes endowed with a double interest. It is distinguished in the earlier examples by its close adherence to natural forms, not, perhaps,

to be considered exactly beautiful according to the canons of art in our day, nevertheless admirable in many of its qualities; and its fidelity to nature is so remarkable often that one forgives it its lack of esthetic attributes. One of the extant examples is a large plate executed in enamel faience. It is covered with fishes, reptiles, crustacea, and mollusks in the midst of the modeled representation of water, together with herbs and marine plants. It is remarkable for the minute execution of its details and also for the richness of the enamel giving life to these wonderful studies from nature. Indeed, these rustic pieces, so admirable in their original way, exhibit Palissy's tendency to imitate nature with exquisite realism and a naturalist's love for accuracy of detail. He himself was so pleased with his success that he tells us live lizards often came to admire his fabrications, and that a dog which he made (the same is now in the Dresden Museum), caused many real dogs "to growl on coming near it, thinking it to be alive."

Palissy's work was eagerly sought by all the great nobles, and the illustrious constable gave into his hands the task of decorating the Château d'Écouen, thereafter one of the marvels of its time. Alas! there remains nothing of this work, nor of the fa-

mous grotto in the gardens of the Tuileries, with the decoration of which Catherine de' Medici had intrusted him. This was about the year 1565, after Palissy had taken his family from La Rochelle (where he had been for several years after leaving Saintes), to Paris to live. It was during the period that Master Bernard discoursed to the learned on topics in natural philosophy and was respectfully listened to at a crown a head, a large lecture entrance fee for those days. Palissy's sons, Nicolas and Mathurin, were working with him in Paris, as entries in the royal accounts for the year 1570 show. Only a few decades ago workmen excavating in the gardens of the Tuileries unearthed the remains of Palissy's old workshop, and later discovered some of his ovens.

But Master Bernard was to fall upon evil days. He was a Huguenot, and a former coreligionist denounced him, which led to his arrest in 1588. His property had previously been destroyed. Owing to royal protection he survived the terrible Massacre of St. Bartholomew's Eve. But the manner in which a man should say his prayers was of more importance to Henry III than the making of "figulines of earth," so Master Bernard traveled from the Tuileries to the Bastille. His friend the Duc de May-

ence obtained respite for him through clever artifice; finally the king agreed to grant him a pardon if he would recant the heresy of his Huguenot faith. Palissy indignantly scorned these ignoble terms.

Shortly after Henry IV succeeded Henry III. Probably kings had ceased to be interested in gray-haired potters and their expenses. At any rate, Master Bernard was condemned to deatk. Before the fragile clay that God had modeled into the cup of his life had a chance to be dashed to earth by hideous bigotry, his soul was liberated from his worn-out body, and the headsman's block was cheated of the grace of being Master Bernard's last pillow on earth. May heaven rest his soul!

I shall never forget, little blue book, how Miss Solander shed a tear over those last pages, how my own eyes were not dry. Somehow I think everything must have its story, and when I am in Cleon's house or in my own, looking at this thing or at that with the love a collector holds for the things of yesterday, I am not content with the thing alone, but my thoughts seek out the memory of its story. At least it was so with that inimitable *saucière* of Master Bernard of blessed memory!

CHAPTER XXVI

ITALIAN MAIOLICA

WHETHER one is a general collector or a collector of pottery and porcelain in particular, Italian maiolica will be found to be one of the most interesting of "lines," historically as well as intrinsically. Pottery, both soft and hard, is distinct from porcelain, although the term "old china" is commonly used to embrace the whole field of ceramics—unfortunately, I think, as it is of importance to the collector to be precise in the matter of definitions.

Pottery, as distinguished from porcelain, is formed of potter's clay with which an argillaceous and calcareous marl and sand have been mixed. The wares usually designated as earthenware are soft pottery. It may be scratched with a knife or file, and it is, generally speaking, fusible at porcelain furnace heat.

Soft pottery may be divided into four sorts: unglazed, lustrous, glazed, and enameled. The greater part of Egyptian, Greek Etruscan, Roman medieval

and modern pottery is unglazed, lustrous, or glazed, while the centuries-later maiolica of Italy is of the fourth sort; that is, an enameled or stanniferous glazed ware, the art of making which was originally learned, we may suppose, from either Moorish potters of Majorca (one of the Balearic Islands) or perhaps from certain Persian sources.

Italian maiolica was originally called *maiorica*, a name which later gave way to *maiolica*, as the Tuscans more often wrote it that way, even when referring to the Island of Majorca, as one may guess from the *rime* of Dante, where is to be found reference to "*Tra l'isola di Cipri è Maiolica.*" The coarser ware of half-maiolica—*mezza-maiolica*—is not to be confused with the true maiolica, which is a tin-enameled pottery, lustred, although the term maiolica is generally used to designate the ware of both sorts.

The Italians ascribe to Luca della Robbia the discovery of the tin-glaze sometime prior to 1438. We have no dated piece of Florentine or Tuscan maiolica antedating 1477, and of this year but one dated example. The next earliest dates—1507 and 1509—appear on maiolica of the Cafaggiolo *fabrique.*

In the eighteenth century, as Chaffers tells us,

Italian maiolica was called Raphael Ware, as it was believed, for a time, that Raphael himself had taken a hand at decorating some of it—an idea which quite naturally originated, as a great many designs from compositions by Raphael and other great masters appeared on maiolica ware. These, however, were copied from drawings and engravings. The best period of this pottery was subsequent to Raphael's death, which took place in 1520.

A Cafaggiolo plate in the Victoria and Albert Museum possibly depicts Raphael and La Fornarina watching a maiolica-decorator at work, suggesting, I think, that had Raphael himself taken a hand at maiolica-painting that fact would have led the artist of the plate to show Raphael at such occupation instead of portraying him merely as an onlooker. Again, Raffaello dal Colle, who designed maiolica for the wife of Guidobaldo I, Duke of Urbino, may have been confused by early students with Raffaello Sanzio, the great Raphael.

Of the development of maiolica in Italy, Fortnum says: "In the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries native wares were produced in various places, some of which still exist in the towers and façades of churches, and in the façade of a palace at Bologna. These are lead-glazed, rudely painted

or with single colors, and in some instances 'sgraffiato,' proving that the use of a white 'slip' or 'engobe' was known in Italy at that period, as affirmed by Passeri, who further asserts that in 1300 the art assumed a more decorative character under the lords of Pesaro, the Malatestas. An even, opaque white surface having been obtained, the development of its artistic decoration steadily advanced. The colors used were yellow, green, blue, and black, to which we may add a dull brownish red, noticed in some of the Pisan 'bacini.' Passeri states that the reflection of the sun's rays from the concave surfaces of these 'bacini' at Pesaro was most brilliant, and hence it has been wrongly inferred that they were enriched with metallic lustre."

For many years after the discovery or at least the application of tin-glaze to pottery in Italy, large works were popular. But before the end of the first half of the sixteenth century this practice had lost its vogue. There was, on the other hand, an increased demand for the tiles, plates, etc., of the maiolica, an encouragement that led to the establishment of numerous maiolica potteries throughout northern and central Italy, Romagna and Tuscany leading, and Urbino and Pesaro rising to importance in the manufacture of this enameled ware. Both

Pesaro and, later, Gubbio, had attained fame for the pearly, the golden, and the ruby lustre glaze given their wares, that of Gubbio proving the finest in this respect. Deruta has also laid claim to the introduction of the beautiful madreperla lustre. A few years ago the author visited this tiny, out-of-the-way village to inspect the *botega* of the modern maiolica-makers, and well recalls the ingenious arguments advanced by the gifted director in support of Deruta's claim, which left one convinced until Pesaro savants in turn sought to appropriate the glory for their own town.

Fortnum says "the Piedmontese and Lombard cities do not appear to have encouraged the potter's art to an equal extent in the fifteenth and the sixteenth century, and that neither can we learn of any excellence attained in Venice till the establishment of Deruta and Pesaro artists in that city in the middle of the latter period." Fortnum says: "Perhaps commerce did for the Queen of the Adriatic by the importation of Rhodian, Damascus, and other eastern wares what native industry supplied to the pomp and luxury of the hill cities of Umbria; for it must be borne in mind that the finer sorts of enameled or glazed pottery, decorated by artistic hands, were attainable only by the richer class of

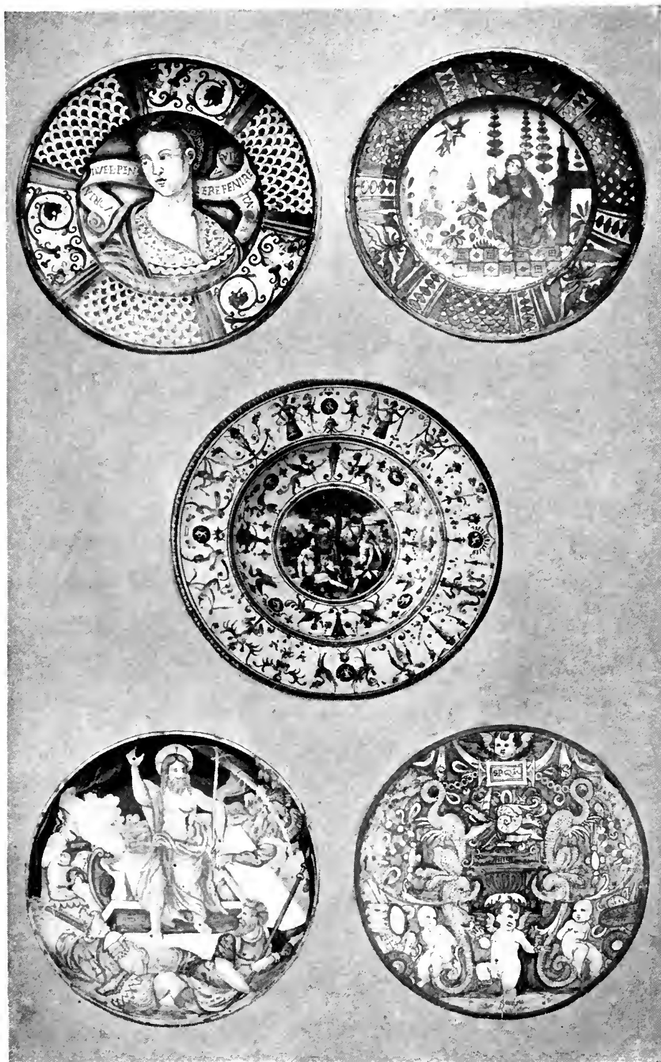
purchasers, more modest wares or wooden trenchers and ancestral copper vessels contenting the middle class." The art of maiolica flourished likewise in Ferrara, Rimini, and Ravenna. The Umbrian potters probably did not adopt the use of white stanniferous glaze before the close of the fifteenth century.

Federigo, who succeeded to the Duchy of Urbino in 1444, was a patron of the arts and a great collector. After his death, in 1482, his son Guidobaldo continued Federigo's patronage of the ceramic art. The introduction of the maiolica enamel did not, happily, lead to the abandonment of the metallic colors and prismatic glazes of the earlier potters. Authorities are agreed that the retention of these metallic colors and prismatic glazes stimulated maiolica manufacture in other localities. The bottega which Maestro Giorgio established in Gubbio at this period was probably the great center for the golden and ruby metallic lustre maiolica. In his handbook, "Maiolica," Fortnum says: "Some technicality in the process of the manufacture, some local advantage, or some secret in the composition, almost a monopoly of its use was established at Gubbio, for we have the evidence of well-known examples that from the end of the first to the be-

ginning of the last quarter of the fifteenth century many pieces painted by the artists of Pesaro, Urbino, and Castel Durante were taken there for the lustre embellishment."

In Urbino the manufacture of maiolica reached its culminating point in 1540, in which year Orazio Fontana, Urbino's greatest maiolica artist, entered the service of the duke. From 1580 Urbino maiolica declined.

There are exceptionally fine examples of early Italian maiolica in the Metropolitan Museum of Art and in other public and private collections in America. These the collector may study to advantage. While the pieces of supreme importance, like the canvases of the old masters, are not to be had for a song, still, "finds" are possible, and even later pieces of maiolica are beautiful and fully worth while. Such pieces, too, with the interesting history of the earlier objects that inspired them, should appeal to the collector. Perhaps if Italian maiolica were more studied and understood in this country it would be more popular with collectors, but just because so few of them are versed in its evolution the advantage accrues to the collector who is wide awake enough to look about him in time. In passing it



Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art

Early Italian Maiolica Plates

Pesaro, 1520-1535 — Deruta, 16th Century

Urbino, 16th Century

Gubbio, 16th Century — Castel Durante, 16th Century

Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art

Copies of Roman Millefiori Glass Made in Murano, 19th Century
Two Ancient Roman Millefiore Glass Bowls

should be noted that there is much—one may well say quantities—of modern maiolica to be found in the shops. Much of this is very beautiful, but the collector will soon have no trouble in distinguishing it from the old, even when the modern happens to reproduce the forms and designs of the early pieces.

CHAPTER XXVII

GLASS OF A THOUSAND FLOWERS

TIME has crumbled many a granite monument erected to the memory of monarchs of early Egyptian dynasties, but a tiny scent-bottle of yellow glass, with the name Amenophis worked upon it in blue, has come down to us from the Golden Age of the Pharaohs. King Amenophis little guessed that his fragile gift at life's parting from his Queen Thi would survive the vicissitudes of the unguessed ages that have treated the pedestal of his Colossus at Thebes with such scant courtesy. Yet here we may hold it in the palm of a hand, a lovely trinket whose fragility has defied the boast of bronze or the strength of stone! As Pliny says, it is no easy matter to give novelty to old subjects, authority to new, to impart lustre to rusty things, light to the obscure and mysterious. Yet he who writes of antiques and curios may find the subject of old glass so wide a field in which to browse that its restraints seem few indeed and its interest of broad appeal.

The millefiori glass of yesterday and to-day offers to the collector a fascinating study. It is the "Glass of a Thousand Flowers," a pretty name the Italians gave it centuries ago—*mille*, a thousand, and *fiori*, flowers. Don't you remember when you were little, very little, the round, heavy glass paper-weights into which you could look like a crystal-gazer and find mysteriously embedded flower-like forms of colored glass? How you puzzled grandfather's head, too, when you asked him questions about it. These old millefiori paper-weights—long out of fashion, alas! —were bought on faith as curiosities, and only the sophisticated age that decreed such marvels unfitting the dignity of maturity relegated them to hiding-places now for the most part forgotten. The wonderful striated marbles, the attractive "glassies" of our own Golden Age, maintained with us the tradition of attachment; and now we have once more begun to display the paper-weights of the Thousand Flowers, and antiquarians are doing such brisk business in them that manufacturers are almost encouraged to place on the market again these interesting objects of millefiori glass.

Since the time when the observing Herodotus wrote that the sacred crocodiles of Memphis wore ear-rings of melted stone, the collecting of glass has

encouraged its finer development. The ancient glass-workers were proud enough to sign fine pieces, though these are excessively rare. There was, for instance, "Africanus, citizen of Carthage, artist in glass." Nero was an ardent collector of fine pieces of glass, collecting them in his own peculiar manner, as we may infer from such anecdotes as that which has already been related of Petronius having broken a precious bowl (probably of murrhine) to atoms just before his death, to prevent the possibility of its falling into the grasp of the Emperor. So greatly was it prized at the time that its value had been placed at a sum now equivalent to $250,000! The very high prices paid to-day by museums for bits of antique glass are very likely to be far less than the same objects brought in Roman times; this, of course, refers only to glass of high artistic quality, such as would have commanded the attention of connoisseurs contemporary with its product.

"Who," says Dr. Johnson in "The Rambler," "when he saw the first sand or ashes by a casual intenseness of heat melted into metallic form, rugged with excrescences and crowded with impurities, would have imagined that in the shapeless lump lay concealed so many conveniences of life as would in time constitute a great part of the happiness of the

world? Thus was the first artificer of glass occupied, though without his own knowledge or expectation. He was facilitating and prolonging enjoyment of light, enlarging the avenues of science and conferring the highest and most lasting pleasure; he was enabling the student to contemplate nature and the beauty to behold herself."

We need not go into the early history of glass here, more than to say the ancients were highly skilled in the making of mosaic and millefiori glass, their products inspiring the millefiori glass of the Venetians and their followers in Europe and America. One cannot do better than to quote here M. A. Wallace-Dunlop's "Glass in the Old World," a most interesting and instructive work, unfortunately long out of print. In this volume the author says:

> No method of glass working has probably excited more attention than the wonderfully minute mosaics found scattered over the world both in beads and amulets. Old writers have exhausted their ingenuity in conjecturing the secret of their manufacture. Many of them are far too minute for human eyes to have executed, but like many other marvels the explanation is simple when once discovered. They were made (and are now successfully imitated in Murano) by arranging long slender glass rods of various colors so as to form a pattern, a picture, or the letters of

a name, and then fusing them together and while still warm the rod or cane so formed could be drawn out to almost any length, the pattern becoming perhaps microscopically small, but always retaining its distinctiveness. A tube of glass treated in the same manner never loses a minute hole in the middle. Thin slices cut off such a rod would present on each side (face) the exact picture (just as the pattern appears when slicing a cucumber) or pattern originally arranged. When this idea had been once suggested, thousands of patterns could have been invented, and slices from these rods placed in liquid blue or other colored glass, and cast in a mould and ground into shape, gave rise to the endless combinations of Greek or Roman workers—The Millefiori glass of the Venetian republic was simply a revival of this old industry. . . . Under the Ptolemies the Egyptians acquired a rare perfection in mosaic! We have, so far as I know, no Roman mosaic or millefiori glass antedating the reign of Augustus. It is in the Augustan age that we first learn the name of a mosaic glass artist, Proculus of Perinthus, to whom the Alexandrian merchants erected a statue.

The building of St. Mark's in Venice, begun in 1159, gave impetus to Italian glass manufacture. With the fall of Constantinople nearly a half-century later, many Greeks, skilled artists in glass, undoubtedly made their way to Venice and took thither the secrets of their trade. Certain it is that the early glass-workers of Venice and of Murano, where later the glass industry centered, gave curious and interested study to the old mosaics of the

ancients and in due course rediscovered the art of millefiori and perfected it in a manner that would have caused the Romans to open their eyes in astonishment. We must not forget that with the ancients a crystalline glass was of great rarity, though colored glass was common enough. Thus the crystalline products of the Venetians were an achievement reserved for later centuries, and this white glass, in combination with the colored glasses was so skilfully employed by the workmen and artists of the Murano glass factories that nothing has surpassed the Venetian products in millefiori for sheer ingenuity and beauty. Often, of course, millefiori work was carried to the extreme of becoming less a thing of beauty than a tour de force. However, the collector will find interest in all pieces of the sort, and their range was enormous. The glass of Venice was famous for its extraordinary lightness and this added to its vogue. The Chaplain of Louis XIV, Réné François, amusingly warned the world that Murano was filling Europe with its fantasies of glass; but rare enough are the early specimens of Venetian manufacture, more precious now than their weight in gold.

After all, there must always remain the zest of the chase in the spirit of the true collector, without which

wonderful finds would never have been made, though we need not to go to the extent of the Countess of Fiesque, a lady of Louis XIV's court. This lady died at Fontainebleau in great poverty at an advanced age. Historians of the gossip of the day have laid her indigent circumstances at the door of the rascally man of business, but I fancy her passion for mirrors had something to do with it. When almost in need of bread she astonished her friends by purchasing an enormously expensive mirror. "I had a piece of land," she said in extenuation, "which brought me in nothing but corn. I sold it, and the money procured this mirror. Have I not managed wonderfully to possess this beautiful glass instead of dull corn?" Doubtless the countess did manage wonderfully; contentment is a great thing!

Seven hundred years of glass-making in Venice produced an experience that was useful to the rest of Europe and finally to America. Much millefiore glass has been manufactured in the United States. The Pennsylvania Museum in Philadelphia is especially rich in examples of it. There are also many private collectors of millefiore glass in this country, some collecting specimens in general, others confining themselves to examples of American manufacture, while others specialize in millefiore paper-

weights already referred to. The late Dr. Edwin Atlee Barber, a noted authority on American glass, gave in the Pennsylvania Museum Bulletin the following information concerning the process of its making:

The glass rods used in the preparation of modern millefiori glass are usually made in metal moulds of comparatively large size. The interior may be circular or scalloped. Into one of these moulds ropes of colored glass are arranged in the pattern desired, to which, when taken out, two workmen attach iron rods, one at each end of the mass, and draw it out until it is of the requisite slenderness. The design retains its exact proportions through the entire length and is as perfect in a rod of an eighth of an inch diameter as in the original thick cylinder. If an animal is to be represented the mould is cut into the exact shape and when the glass is released and drawn out each detail of legs, tail, ears and other parts is uniformly reproduced in solid color so that even in the tiniest representation of the figure every part appears to be perfectly formed. Sometimes a cane will be composed of many threads of various colors and designs, each of which has been formed in this manner, arranged around a central rod and welded together. When the rods are finished they are broken into small pieces, or cut into uniform lengths or into thin slices, according to the sort of paperweights or other objects to be made. Into an iron ring the size of a paperweight a cushion of molten glass is dropped and while soft, the sections of rods are laid on the surface or stuck in it side by side in a regular pattern, the tops of the rods being pressed into a rounded or convex form. Over all more of the melted

glass is poured and the surface rounded into hemispherical shape by means of concave spatula of moistened wood. The last process consists in polishing the surface of the curved top and the flat base after the ball has been again heated.

Dr. Barber was authority for the statement that the millefiore paper-weights found their way into America from St. Louis in Alsace-Lorraine (first to produce paper-weights of the sort, *circa* 1840) and from Baccarat in France. To the manufactories of the latter town we look for the finest of the European millefiore paper-weights. At first the filigree rods, cut or uncut, were imported; but soon American glass-workers turned their attention to the complete production, and we may mark the period of 1860 to 1875 as that of the heyday of American-made millefiori glass.

It must not be thought that all the American millefiori glass has been picked up or picked over; there is much of it remaining to reward vigilant search and the collector will find it well worth going after. Out-of-the-way villages in the East and South still secrete many such pieces, and so does the householder of the Middle West; while one finds Pacific-ward examples of the old Glass of a Thousand Flowers that had so great a popularity before the Centennial turned the country to fresh ingenuities.

CHAPTER XXVIII

ANTIQUES OF PERSIA AND OF INDIA

ONCE upon a time an old gentleman moved into the house across the street. Whence he came no one knew, no one ever came to know. His name was Kyttyle—Major Kyttyle. As midsummer marked his advent, he probably felt properly attired when he appeared on the lawn that first day, to survey his new domain, in a basket-shaped hat of straw and a suit of East-India-looking stuff. Major Kyttyle's face was seamed and bronzed. I imagine his hair would have been as white as the snows of Dhawalaghiri had it not been as extinct as the Hippuritidæ, revealing a shining pink dome as reflecting as the pool of Anuradhapura at sunset, visible as now and then he would lift his hat to mop his brow.

Major Kyttyle's installation was followed by the arrival of countless foreign-looking trunks and boxes and the neighborhood naturally wondered what on earth the major had in them. Mrs. Minch was of

the opinion that a lone man could have no use for such a lot of truck. Mrs. Bittles ventured the opinion that Major Kyttyle might not be so "lone" after all; he might have a family and it might arrive later. "Families" usually did. Mrs. Minch only sniffed. "I can tell a bachelor anywhere," she declared with conviction. And she could.

However, although no family came upon the scene, a whole menagerie arrived one by one, from distant parts, to keep the major company and to scandalize the town. There was a pet monkey, a poll parrot, a Persian cat, and a globe of diaphanous-tailed goldfish the like of which had never been dreamed of thereabouts and which quite put to rout the two gilded minnows owned by the Pickhams, which till then had been the only exotics in the district and had lent a certain distinction to the Pickhams to which, socially, their breeding did not entitle them.

As time went on Major Kyttyle brought to him a few congenial spirits and yet the little group really found out nothing about the major's past beyond the fact that he had lived in the Far East for years. Why he had come to America no one knew. Why he had settled in our uneventful valley no one could guess. In fact, deliberately to choose the spot was thought to be an indication of mental weakness.

But if there is anything that the major was not, that thing is mentally weak. No one else could have had the will power and ingenuity to evade as successfully as did this gentleman of mystery, the life-history disclosures sought by the Minches and others who came to "know" the major.

Notwithstanding Mrs. Minch's earlier disapproval of the number of trunks and boxes which the "lone man" appeared to have accumulated, she came in time to revise her opinion when it was discovered that, though decent, the major's wardrobe had not comprised his luggage, whereas wonderful objects of Oriental art at once made it clear that the trunks and boxes had been put to a very excellent and approved good use when their unpacking found the major's house adorned with treasures in the way of pottery, brasses, rugs, damascened arms, Persian miniatures, Indian enamels, gem-encrusted jades, and what not.

Frankly, Major Kyttyle might have been as miserable with his treasures as was Midas with his enchantment had it not been that some of his neighbors were persons of culture and themselves not only appreciative of art but versed in some of its branches. Otherwise the major would have had to depend on whist, which, by the way, he played poorly and to which he was devoted.

As for the menagerie, it served to bring out the fact that the major adored children. His yard was always full of them after school let out. At first those fond mothers who could not be persuaded that the major's several East-Indian servants were not one and the same with the tribe of the son of Hagar, were much distressed, but when these did not steal forth like pied pipers, they concluded that perhaps they were n't gypsies after all.

Good old Major Kyttyle, how grateful I am that, mysterious though you were, you permitted me to browse for hours among the curious and beautiful things of the Orient that appealed to my child-fancy! And the marvelous tales you would tell us of their history! How patient you were with our eager queries! You should have been attached to some great museum, to interpret is hoardings to the soul of the people.

It was in your house, in the house of the stranger who had come among us, that I formed some knowledge of the arts of India and of Persia, a knowledge that made some of the beautiful things which had found their way from the Far East into my own home greater joys to behold than ever before.

I suppose I might have taken down one of the heavy volumes of that vast encyclopedia which so

formidably thwarted youth's enterprise though advertised to foster it, and have read therein much of what was told me in less pedantic and less academic style by the major.

If I have seemed to linger beyond the limits of a preface it is not that I started out to write a eulogy of Major Kyttyle, but rather that in what I am saying I hope there can be found some hint of the truest sort of collecting, the noblest sort of a collector—one who uses his collection as a preacher uses his text, happily discoursing to attentive ears and not shutting himself up with his treasures, like a medieval monk of old with book in cell.

The good major went to his rest long since. We had supposed him out of the land of India, not only because we gleaned from his stories that he had spent long years in service there, but also because of his attachment for the arts of India, which he seemed to hold above those of Persia. But when his grave was marked, the granite shaft provided in his will as a last luxury bore simply this legend, "*Kyttyle of Khorassan.*" Mrs. Minch was jubilant. "What did I tell you? A Persian! One never knows what with these mysterious people."

It is only within the last half-dozen years that the arts of India and of Persia have attracted much at-

tention with Americans in general. Happily, we are out of that stage where everything Asiatic is classed as either "Turkish" or "Chinese." The field here for collection is a broad one and naturally embraces a myriad of objects. Private collections and public collections of the arts of Persia and of India, including those of Ceylon, are growing apace. Good things and fine things are appearing in public sales and are still to be picked up in antique-shops by the discriminating one who has taken the trouble to study the subject. Fortunately, the collector now has at hand such excellent books for reference as the various works by Ananda Coomaraswamy, Vincent Smith, Martin, Birdwood, Havell, Hendley, and others.

Of Persian objets d'art an anoymous writer in the article on Persia in "The Everyman Encyclopædia" has said:

> The arts and crafts of Persia have suffered terribly from the state of misrule. Always artistic by nature, many beautiful arts were theirs, the secret of which has been forgotten through the years of civil war and trouble. Among them the exquisite lustre-ware, charming in design and coloring, is now difficult to obtain. The enamel work for which they were once famous is a lost art; formerly tiles of this work, exquisite in color and beautiful in pattern, were freely produced, and many wonderful specimens have been saved from ancient ruins, and many are still the glory of mosques and shrines; the predominating color was a very beautiful

turquoise blue in various shades, and a red-golden lustre which gave the work a peculiar iridescence. Jugs and basins in this enamel work have been saved, exceedingly beautiful in form and pattern. Silver work and brass work was an ancient industry; very little is done now. Carved wood, inlaid with ivory and mother-of-pearl, is still made to some extent, also seal-cutting. The Persian art which flourished in ancient times influenced Greek, Roman and Byzantine art, and was the father of Saracenic art and architecture, which has travelled far since its birth.

Persia has ever been famed for its textiles—not only embroideries and printed cottons but marvelous rugs which stand supreme in beauty. The old rugs of Persia were ancestors of the carpet of other lands. In this connection it is worth noting that the Persians never made themselves ridiculous by the application of inappropriate design. You will not find an old Persian rug patterned with formal bouquets tied with blue ribbons, suggesting a gift being trodden underfoot. A Persian floral patterned carpet will suggest flowers and verdue in their wild state as the stroller might chance to find them.

Although the impress of the art of the Chinese ceramicist and of the shawl-weavers of Cashmere exerted some influence upon the Persians, still the art of Persia from earliest times has retained a national distinction. Nearly all are objects from the earlier

periods now to be met with date from the reign of the shah Abbas the Great (1586–1628) when the native art manufacturers reached their greatest degree of excellence. Thence onward came the decline.

We have only to consider the fact that artistic ornamentation was applied to innumerable objects in daily service to realize how widely diffused was the taste for art among the Persians. They have truly been always an art-loving people. Some one has aptly remarked that every home in India is a nursery of art, and I think this must once have been true of the home in Persia. Apropos of Persian ornament it may be remarked that the native artists have always delighted in varied and symmetrical patterns of great intricacy. External beauty, too, seems to have been sought, rather than intrinsic thorough excellence of fabrique, excepting, of course, the products of the Persian looms and the works of the masters in metal.

As to Persian pottery, it has always been more or less of a puzzle to antiquarians. The ancient pieces in a perfect state of preservation are exceedingly few and rare, and all have been recovered from ruined areas.

There yet remain vast areas to be excavated

by enterprising antiquarian expeditions and later efforts are sure to be productive.

The ancient lustre faience dates back many centuries. Its genre was carried down as late as 1586. The finest Persian ware resembles Chinese porcelain somewhat, having a white ground with azure-blue decoration in bold, free designs. The paste is hard and the color is not blended with the glaze. Later specimens of this genre have less good design, blending color, and a glaze showing greater vitrification.

A second sort of Persian faience is thicker, shows a departure from Chinese influence somewhat, has a softer and more porous paste, is brighter in the blue, has a less even glaze, and a less well-drawn design. Red enters, as also relief and gaufrures.

A third sort of ware is denser and harder, of blackish color on a white ground, with thick glaze, and some pieces have been varnished with single color. Such pieces in this genre as exhibit figures in the decoration show these without faces, which would suggest that this class of pottery was the product of Persian potters of the Mussulman Sunnis sect, a sect more rigidly opposed to presenting the human face in art than that of the Shiahs,

A fourth sort of ware is white and translucent, of still harder paste, and bearing no marks or makers.

I have seen this ware only in small pieces. It is rare and is usually styled *porcelaine blanche de Perse.*

A fifth sort of faience is also translucid, very thin, and ornamented with lacy designs.

The ruins of Rhages have yielded examples of the sixth sort of faience, a common pottery of reddish clay varnished with single color, and all somewhat in imitation of the celadon porcelain of China. The green and bronze varnish is often very beautiful. Some of these pieces have designs in relief and gaufrure.

The faience tiles of Persia are among its most interesting and beautiful ceramic remains. Most of these tiles date from such Seljuk or Mogul rulers as Malik-Shah (1072), Hulagu Khan (1256), and Ghazan Khan (1295).

India has never produced anything like a porcelain. Even pottery of the glazed sort rarely appeared previous to the Mussulman tile products, which tile products were the forerunners of the modern glazed wares fabricated in Multan, Jeypore, and Bombay. However, unglazed pottery has been common throughout India for countless centuries.

In speaking of Hindu and Buddhist art Ananda Comaraswamy writes ("The Arts and Crafts of India and Ceylon"):

Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art

Ewer and Basin Bindri Ware, India, 18th Century

Polychrome Persian Tiles, 17th Century

Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art

Chinese Porcelain of The Kang H'si Period, 1662-1723

Jar, Famille Rose — Jar, Blue Hawthorn

Vase, Famille Noire — Vase, Celadon

I do not forget that in almost every art and craft, as also in music, there exists in Hindustan a complete and friendly fusion of the two cultures. The non-sectarian character of the styles of Indian art has indeed always been conspicuous; so that it is often only by special details that one can distinguish Jain from Buddhist *stupas*, Buddhist from Hindu sculpture, or the Hindu from the Mussulman minor crafts. The one great distinction of Mughal from Hindu art is not so much racial as social; the former is an art of courts and connoisseurs, owing much to individual patronage; the latter belongs as much to the folk as to the kings.

The alluring arts of the East are well worth one's study, well deserving of one's enthusiasm. Perhaps the illustrations of some of the antiques of Persia and of India here reproduced from photographs of some of the fine examples to be found will awaken an interest in the subject in some who chance upon them. I only hope the world holds more Major Kyttyles of revered memory, and that you, too, may have the good fortune to be brought into communion with such treasures as made the major's home vie with our conceptions of the palace of Aladdin, treasures which in time brought even the Pickhams to forgive the major his diaphanous-tailed goldfish, to feel no longer the sting of the insignificance of their poor little gilded minnows.

CHAPTER XXIX

CHINESE PORCELAINS

NOT to know something of Chinese porcelains, their history and their periods, is to be denied a pleasurable interest. The old porcelains of China are the ancestors of all china-wares of the world, and never have the finest antique fabriques of the Celestial Kingdom been surpassed or even equaled in beauty and texture.

The potter's craft, as we all know, had its origin in the dim ages of the past. Even the discovery of true porcelain must be dated so far back that we have no authentic record of the era of its origin.

The literature of China ascribes the invention of true porcelain to some twenty-five hundred years before Christ, but we cannot be certain that the art of porcelain-making was known and practised until, perhaps, after the seventh century. While Chinese literature of the early periods abounds in references to porcelain, we have not a single authentic dated piece of the very early dynasties. It seems plausible to advance the theory that true porcelain was an in-

vention or discovery of the Han dynasty (206 B. C.). The Japanese writer Okakura-Kakuzo has suggested that to the alchemists of the Han dynasty came accidentally the discovery of the wonderful porcelain glaze. The literature by Chinese authors of the T'ang dynasty is rich in references to porcelain. The poet Tu (803–852), for instance, says:

The porcelain of the Ta-yi kilns is light yet strong,
It rings with a low jade note and is famed throughout the city.
The fine white bowls surpass hoar frost and snow.

The white bowls of Hsing-chou in Chihli and the blue bowls of Yuen-chou in Che-kiang were highly esteemed and celebrated in song and story. Their resonance of tone was such that musicians were said to have utilized them.

The Arabs and Chinese were conducting a flourishing trade during the eighth and ninth centuries. To Soleyman, one of the early Arabian traders who wrote an account of his journeyings, we owe the first mention of China in the literature of the world outside the empire. "In China," said he, "they have a very fine clay which they manufacture vases from, as transparent as glass; water is seen through them." Bushell ("Chinese Art," vol. II) tells us that in the time of the Emperor Shi Tsung (954–959)

of the brief Posterior Chou dynasty established at K'ai-fêng-fu prior to the Sung dynasty, an imperial rescript ordered porcelain "as blue as the sky, as clear as a mirror, as thin as paper and as resonant as a musical stone of jade."

All the porcelains of the times we have referred to seem long since to have disappeared and the only knowledge of them which we have to-day is through the literature of their contemporary writers. The Sung dynasty (960–1280), the Yuan dynasty (1280–1367), and the Ming dynasty (1368–1643) open up to us surer knowledge as specimens of the time are available to students. The porcelains of the Sung and Yuan dynasties may be classed together. The ceramic production (*yao*) made in the province of Honan in the town now called Ju-chou-fu—a Sung dynasty porcelain therefore designated as *Ju-Yao*—stands famous for the qualities of its blues, which Chinese poets assure us rival the blue blossoms of the *Vitex incisa*, the Chinese "Sky Blue Flower."

The imperial ware of the Sung dynasty was the *Kuan Yao* (two Chinese words signifying "official ceramic kiln"). Then there was the *Yo Yao* porcelain, the early crackled ware; and the *Ting Yao*, a porcelain having a delicate resonant body. This

seems to be the most commonly met with among the wares of the Sung period. The *Lung-ch'üan Yao* of the Sung wares is the famed Celadon ware made in the province of Che-kiang. The Celadon ware of this dynasty is distinguished by its onion-sprout green color. The Celadon wares of later periods turn more either to greyish greens or to sea-green hues.

The *Chün yao* faience was the product of Chün-chou, now Yü-chou, a town of the province of Ho-nan. Marvelous indeed were its glazes of unsurpassed brilliancy and beauty of color. The transmutation *flambés* were especially notable.

In the reign of Yung Cheng (1723) the emperor sent a list of Chün-chou pieces to be reproduced by the imperial potteries in Chung-te-chen, from which (record of this being extant) we are able to glean some knowledge of the great variety of glaze colors of the earlier period. In this list appeared crimson-rose, japonica-pink, sky-blue, plum-color, dark purple, millet-yellow, flambés, etc. Early in the eighteenth century all these glazes and colors were reproduced with marvelous skill, but the new white body was probably infinitely superior to the early body.

The Chien Yao Ware of the Sung dynasty was

produced in Fu-kien province, where lustrous black-enameled tea ceremonial cups were manufactured. These were dappled with specks of white resembling the effect of hare's fur and partridge breasts. The Japanese treasure these pieces, to which they have given the name "Hare-fur Cups," above almost any other varieties of Chinese porcelain.

We now come to the Ming dynasty, and in the reign of Wan-li (1573–1619) the art of making and decorating porcelain had so advanced that native contemporaries were fond of declaring there was nothing that could not be made of the porcelain. The cobalt blues came into favor in this period, and it is also the time of the famed "Mohammedan blue." European and American collectors have given a great deal of attention to the blue-and-white porcelains that came in with the close of the Ming dynasty. It was between 1662 and 1722, however, that the very flower of the blue-and-white porcelain was produced. This marks the reign of K'ang Hsi.

The K'ang Hsi period (1662–1722) was the culminating one of Chinese ceramic art. Of this porcelain, Bushell says:

> The brilliant renaissance of the art which distinguishes the reign of K'ang Hsi is shown in every class; in the

single-colored glazes, *la qualité maîtresse de la céramique;* in the painted decorations of the *grand feu*, of the jewel-like enamels of the muffle-kiln, and of their manifold combinations; in the pulsating vigour of every shade of blue in the inimitable "blue and white."

He also tells us porcelains of the *famille verte* class pervade the period while those of the *famille rose* class may be said to have ushered in its close. The greens that give the porcelains of the *famille verte* and the *famille rose* classes their names are indeed gem-like in their beauty. Precious, too, to the collector are the Blue- and White or the Black Hawthorn Jars of the period. Hawthorn is a misnomer, for the prunus blossom and not the Hawthorn blossom furnishes the *motif* of the decoration. It is interesting to note that the *Prunus* blossoms in the white on the blue ground crossed by white zigzag lines represents to the Oriental fancy the flowers falling on ice breaking up in the springtime.

The master quality of fine porcelain is its glaze and the glazes of old Chinese porcelains have never been surpassed. The reigns of Yung Chêng and his celebrated son, Ch'ien Lung, who lend name to the period from 1723 to 1796, sustained the perfection of Chinese porcelain. The decadence of the art be-

gins with the modern period, from 1796 to the present.

The marks on Chinese porcelains are various in character and come under one or more of the following divisions: marks of date, hall-marks, marks of dedication and good wishes, marks in praise of the piece of porcelain inscribed, symbols, and other pictorial marks and potters' marks. It is not necessary here to go into the intricacies of these, but they furnish a fascinating study. This, too, is true of the designs that are to be found on the decorated pieces of Chinese porcelain. The casual observer will pick up a piece and admire or dismiss it on the judgment of the general impression it makes upon his artistic sensibilities. Not so with the connoisseur, who takes into consideration color, texture, glaze, and, quite as much as these (so far as intellectual interest is concerned), the story the design tells.

The porcelains of China, like the sword-guards of Japan, offer the native artists a vast wealth of mythological and folklore subjects. Then symbolism and occasion are closely cemented in Oriental thought, and if the collector of old Chinese porcelains finds their decoration puzzling at times in its significance, how absorbing are its unravelings!

Since the time of Queen Elizabeth the Western

world has recognized the beauty and the decorative value of the porcelains of China, and at no time have they sunk in regard. Rarities are no longer likely to be found hidden away, or acquired for a posy. At the same time, the possession of a single object and some knowledge of the evolution in ceramics that led to it are interesting.

CHAPTER XXX

CHINESE AND JAPANESE LACQUER

FEW pieces of the lacquer of China and of Japan reached the hands of collectors before the beginning of foreign trade by China and the opening of Japan in the mid-nineteenth century. Just how few may be guessed from the fact that the Orientals who allowed over sixteen thousand pieces of porcelain to be exported to Europe in one of the years of the eighteenth century permitted but twelve pieces of lacquer to leave their shores. And how eagerly these bits were sought by the collectors of the time! Marie Antoinette was one of them, and the Marquise de Pompadour another. The collection of the former of some hundred pieces is preserved in the Museum of the Louvre. Madame de Pompadour was, in all probability, a collector of greater discrimination. She possessed rare artistic sense, and the hundred and ten thousand livres the marquise expended on her collection tempted even the shut doors of Asia!

CHINESE AND JAPANESE LACQUER

Lacquer undoubtedly originated in China. Just when, we may not know, but it is of ancient ancestry. In fact, lacquer as a material has been used for centuries by the Chinese in industrial art. We can imagine that lacquer was at first employed as a preservative for the woodwork on which it was used as a coating, developing as time went on into a medium for artistic work of the highest order. Lacquer is not an artificial mixture such as our copal and other varnishes but is principally the natural product of the *Rhus vernicifera*, the Chinese lac tree, *Ch'i shu*. Therefore it is virtually "ready-made" when extracted. The tree abounds in central and southern China and is assiduously cultivated for its valuable sap.

Usually wood, most frequently cedar or magnolia, thoroughly dried and seasoned, forms the basis of lacquered objects. The form is thinly but securely constructed and primed. The surface is carefully ground down and coated thickly with a prepared varnish. This surface, when dry, is in turn made smooth by abrasion. Next this base is very skilfully covered with a layer of specially prepared silk, paper, or a cloth woven of hemp fibers, all depending upon the size and projected quality of the article. Successive coats of the prepared varnish are

then applied, each being allowed thoroughly to dry. Finally the *lac* is applied, layer after layer, spread on at first, and then added to by means of fine brushes of human hair. Those parts of lacquer-work which stand forth in relief are first built up with a lacquer "putty" of special preparation.

There are never less than three or more than eighteen layers of lacquer employed, thorough drying requisite to each separate layer. It is interesting to note that several hundred hours may be taken up with the preparation of the grounding before the actual lacquering is begun! With a paste of white lead the artist outlines his design. Next he fills in the detail with gold and colors, over which a coat of transparent lacquer is applied.

In the reign of the founder of the Ming dynasty in China, Hung Wu, there was published the "Ko ku yao lun" (A. D. 1387), a learned antiquarian, art, and literary work written by Tsao Ch'ao, and comprised in thirteen books. From this we learn of the following sorts of lacquer then held in esteem: ancient rhinoceros horn reproductions, carved red lacquer, painted red lacquer, lacquer with gold reliefs, pierced lacquer, and lacquer with mother-of-pearl incrustations. Tsao Ch'ao's erudition enables us, I think, to trace Chinese lacquer-work back to the

Sung dynasty with reasonable certainty. Another Chinese writer, Chang Ying-wen, wrote a little book, the "Ch'ing pi ts'ang" or "Collections of Artistic Rarities," which describes objects shown in an art exhibition held in the province of Kiang-su in the spring of 1570. After references to lacquers of the Yuan and the Sung dynasties he says in effect:

> In this our Ming Dynasty carved lacquer of the reign of Yung Lo in the Kuo Yuan Ch'ang factory, and that made in the reign of Hsüan Tê was surpassing in its color of cinnabar hue and also in its craftsmanship as well as in characters of the calligraphic inscriptions incised underneath the pieces.

There was a notable revival of interest in lacquer-work in the years that followed the upset condition of China during the close of the Ming period, when lacquer-work was of necessity neglected. During the lifetime of Emperor Ch'ien Lung (1736–1796), Père d'Incarville, a member of the French Academy and a Jesuit savant of note, wrote a "Memoire sur le Vernis de la Chine," published with illustrations in 1760. We find him saying: *"Si en Chine les Princes et les grands ont de belles pièces de vernis, ce sont des pièces faites pour l'Empereur, qui en donne, ou ne reçoit pas toutes celles qu'on lui pré-*

sente." This, in itself, stimulated European interest in collecting lacquer at the time.

In recent years Canton and Fuchow have been centers for the manufacture of painted lacquer, called *hua ch'i*, and Peking and Suchow for carved lacquer, or *tiao ch'i*. However, the collector must not look for any pieces of finest quality in the *tiao ch'i* since the reign of Ch'ien Lung, who lent carved lacquer-work his warmest approbation. We are told of a certain celebrated Arabian traveler, Ibn Batuta by name, who was in Canton about the year 1345 and made note of the excellence of the lacquer-work he found there at that time. That of Fuchow is described in the words of Monsieur Paléologue as "most seductive to the eye from the purity of its substance, the perfect evenness of its varnished coat, the lustrous or deep intensity of its shades and the power of its reliefs, the breath of the composition and the harmonious tones of the gold grounds and painted brushwork."

Of late years the collecting of the lacquers of Japan has engaged many of the most enthusiastic and discriminating connoisseurs, and there are many public as well as private collections of lacquer objects in America. Probably the favorite objects in Japanese lacquer are those interesting and beautiful little inrō

or compartment box, indispensable to every Japanese gentleman's attire in earlier days, and to which was attached by a silken cord the netsuke, or button, by means of which it was suspended from the obi, or sash. These lacquered inrō have not been surpassed for their beauty and are of literary interest.

Of the varieties of Japanese lacquer one may make mention of the *nashiji*, generally known to Western collectors as "avanturine," so named by Europeans from its resemblance to avanturine Venetian glass. When *kirikané* (torn gold leaf) is employed the lacquer is called *Giobunashiji*. The *togidashi* lacquer is that in which the pattern is produced by grinding and polishing, revealing the gold ground. *Hiramaki-ye* is the Japanese term used for all those lacquers which have design not raised above the surface more than the thickness of the lines that trace it. Then there is to be found a combination of the flat-gold lacquer with the relief-gold lacquer. The red Japanese lacquer is known by the native name of *tsuishu*, and the black lacquer is called *tsuikoku*; those in which the design is carved out of the lacquer-formed or superimposed layers which are exposed by the incisions of the graver are called *guri*. The *chinkinbori* lacquer, in imitation of the Chinese

lacquer, is a sort of patterned lacquer, the design of which is produced with a rat-tooth graver and the incision filled up with gold.

Honnami Kōyetsu (1556–1637) is one of the earliest Japanese lacquerers of importance whose work has come down to us. Koma Kiuhaka, who died in 1715, was another lacquerer of great distinction, the founder, in fact, of a "school." Bunsai, Kōrin, Yastuda, and Yasunari were brilliant followers. Korin (1661–1716) was the most famous lacquerer Japan has ever produced. It was he who first extensively used mother-of-pearl and pewter ornament in Japanese lacquer in combination with the decoration. Collectors will find few signatures on pieces of lacquer; the work itself must be the guide.

Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art
Chinese Red Cinnabar Lacquer Vase, 18th Century

Japanese Gold Lacquer Toilet Stand, 17th Century

Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art

Chinese Snuff-Bottles of the Ch'ien Lung Period, 1736-1796

CHAPTER XXXI

CHINESE SNUFF-BOTTLES

FIFTEEN hundred years ago there lived a Chinese painter, Wu Tao-tzu, famous in Celestial lore, of whom it was said that it seemed as if a god possessed him and wielded the brush in his hand. This greatest of all Chinese masters was held in high esteem by the emperor. One day, wishing to possess a landscape of one of his favorite bits of scenery, the emperor directed Wu Tao-tzu to go forth and paint it. In the evening Wu Tao-tzu returned, but empty-handed.

"Why!" exclaimed the emperor; "where is the landscape? You have nothing!"

"O august Serenity, Son of Heaven!" replied Wu Tao-tzu, "I have it all, all the landscape, here in my heart."

Perhaps he made some discreet concession to the material side of the adventure, for straightway he proceeded to cover a wall of one of the apartments in the palace with a marvelous scene, such as the one he had spent the day in contemplating. The next

morning it was finished. Delighted, the emperor came to view it. "Ah," said he, "wonderful, wonderful! It is the river, the bamboo, and there those majestic rocks!"

At the word, Wu Tao-tzu clapped his hands, and lo! there in the rocks of the picture a cavern appeared. Wu Tao-tzu stepped into it, the entrance closed, and Wu Tao-tzu disappeared from earth. Surely no legend better illustrates the Chinese point of view, that a painting is the home of the painter's soul.

That is the story which was told to me one day when, happening into a Chinese shop where some antiques and curios were offered for sale, I chanced to pick up a tiny bottle. It was not over two and a half inches high. Its weight proclaimed it crystal. A miniature scene and inscription were skilfully and beautifully painted inside.

"This," said the intelligent Chinese attendant, in answer to my question, "is little bit painting. Story one man artist man very much great. Him name Wu Tao-tzu."

Then he told me the story, a golden nail on which to hang a bottle! Surely enough, there was depicted Wu Tao-tzu entering the cavern. The inscription vouched for the incident.

"But what a tiny bottle! What was it used for?"

"Much little bottle China old time fine like this. More other bottle kinds use snuff for, medicine for. Look yes you please."

The Celestial showed me how the ivory "spoon," runnning the depth of the bottle and fastened in the coral stopper, was manipulated to fetch forth portions of anything a vial of this sort might contain. In snuff-taking the "spoon" was emptied on the thumb nail and the "sniff" deftly taken. That was my introduction to the fact that snuff-taking in the Orient had fostered a fashion that produced objects of virtue fully as interesting and beautiful as, and certainly more curious than the snuff-boxes affected by the Europeans of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

After this is it any wonder that the collector's instinct should have led me to be enthusiastic about Chinese snuff-bottles as a field for browsing? And soon I found that the fascination of these little objects of art had exerted no small influence on other collectors.

Fine snuff-bottles were not to be found at every turning. Nevertheless they were not so rare as one might imagine, although, as with any other class of art objects, supreme examples were difficult to ob-

tain at any price. If China has a population of four hundred million souls it must not be assumed that her craftsmen have produced anything like four hundred million snuff-bottles. True it is that men, women, and children of China smoke, but they do not all take snuff.

Nearly all of these bottles that we see in collections are, perhaps, snuff-bottles, though many of them were used for medicines, as the Chinese were great medicine-consumers. They used medicines when well—which was most of the time—in diminutive doses, perhaps as charms, and when ill in quantities that would amaze and frighten us. Hecate and her witches never prepared caldron more terrific than the Chinese physician of yesterday devised for his certainly suffering patient. The famous *materia medica* of herbal which Li Shi-chin spent thirty years in preparing, a work published in 1590, contained over eighteen hundred prescriptions dear to the heart, though I fear disastrous to the well-being of the Chinese invalid pro-tem. Gallon containers would not have sufficed for some of these prescriptions, while others—the least virulent, and therefore to be toyed with—were harbored in the tiny bottles that snuff was, later, to usurp.

Miniature Chinese bottles found in Egypt and in

Asia Minor—bottles of porcelain bearing inscriptions in Chinese from the Chinese poets—show that in the tenth century communication already existed between the extreme boundaries of Asia. Arabs traded at Canton and Hangchow to the end of the Sung dynasty, 1279. These little bottles were probably used by the Arabs for kohl, the black substance with which they painted their eyelashes. Sixty years before Li Shi-chin's herbal—"Pun tsao" was its title—tobacco was introduced into China, and before long tobacco as snuff became popular and fashionable.

Among the ornamental articles of Chinese adornment, says an authority on eastern costume, in none do they go to so much expense and style as in the snuff-bottle, which is often carved from stone, amber, agate, and other rare minerals with most exquisite taste. Jade, of course, was most precious of all and often imitated in glass, as were topaz, amethyst, tourmaline, amber, and other stones and substances.

Collectors in Europe and America are beginning to realize what interesting things in the way of snuff-bottles the Chinese glassworker produced.

All Occidental methods of glass-working have long been known to the Chinese. They have proved themselves skilful with blown, pressed, and molded

glass. However, their fame as glass-workers rests chiefly with their cutting, deep chiseling, and undercutting objects of glass. In this respect they have not been surpassed. Their work in this field was undoubtedly inspired by their wide and varied experience with glyptic work, a field in which their accomplishments in fashioning jade and other hard stones served them a good turn.

As glass presented a somewhat less resisting mass than that of nephrite, jadeite, or rock crystal, the Chinese lapidary found in it ready response to his craftsmanship. The carved glass objects of the Chinese usually are small. They generally suggest by skilful coloring and tinting the hard stones they imitate. The Chinese snuff-bottles are especially remarkable in this respect, as they are also in the marvelous fertility of invention bestowed on their decoration, though in form they are nearly of one general type and do not vary greatly in size. From the plain crystalline glass bottles decorated with landscape or figure subjects (by deftly painting the interior walls of the bottle so that the scene shows through) to the much-bejeweled bottles, all these gems of Chinese fabrication are triumphs of the art, patience, and ingenuity of the Oriental hand and mind.

It is interesting to note that the Chinese have never made claim to the discovery of glass. The historical work, "Wei Luo," based on third-century records, chronicles that ten colors of opaque glass were imported by the Chinese from Rome between the years 221 and 264. The Chinese themselves did not learn the art of glass-making until the fifth century.

The fine porcelain snuff-bottles of the Celestials are indeed things to be treasured. We find them in endless colors and designs. Some are plain, some with under-glaze decoration, some cased with pierced porcelain casing, others with molded decoration, and still others with painted decoration. Occasionally one finds a porcelain bottle whose glaze intentionally simulates glass.

The Chinese are skilful lapidaries. Their work in shaping jade and other hard stones has not been surpassed. The Celestial craftsman likewise shows great ingenuity in taking advantage of any irregularity in form or color of the stone he is working. The various quartzes are worked by the Chinese on the same treadle bench which they use in fashioning jade, and they work quartz stones along the same general lines.

A study of Chinese snuff-bottles will indicate the

unlimited range in the decoration, form, etc., of these objects. It will be seen, however, that they are all nearly of a size dictated by general convenience in carrying in pockets and pouches. The stoppers of these Chinese snuff-bottles are scarcely less beautiful in many instances than the bottles themselves. As a general rule the stoppers are of material more precious than that used for the bottle. Pearls and precious stones are less often employed, and I have never seen a Chinese snuff-bottle stopper inset with diamonds. The diamond is a stone the Chinese have never appeared to regard highly except for its utilitarian possibilities. Coral is a favorite for the snuff-bottle stoppers. Ivory is not uncommon for stoppers, but fine ivory snuff-bottles are very rare, as likewise are fine cloisonné enamel bottles.

There is no gainsaying that Chinese snuff-bottles cannot fail to attract the collector by reason of their esthetic interest. At the same time, few objects open up a more interesting intellectual treat than is afforded by a study of these tiny bottles in respect to the subject of their decoration. Colors, too, are to be studied. Five colors enter popular Chinese tradition: black, white—the Chinese regard these as colors—blue, yellow, and red, to each of which is attached definite symbolism. Colors are, for in-

stance, associated with the points of the compass—black with north, red with south, blue with east, and white with west. Yellow is the color associated with the earth, and so on.

Surely the treasured snuff-bottles of the Celestials offer the collector much that is intellectually delectable; and as really interesting specimens are not beyond the moderate purse, their enjoyment does not necessitate the sacrifices that might deter the collector since these little objects of art are not as hopelessly out of reach as were the grapes to Tantalus!

CHAPTER XXXII

CLOISONNÉ ENAMELS OF CHINA AND JAPAN

THE art of the enameler throughout the ages has ever proved to be a subject of interest to connoisseurs and collectors. While learned monographs in many languages have been written on the fascinating subject of European enamels, less appears to have been written concerning those of Asia and particularly those of China and Japan. The real collector, as distinguished from the mere gatherer or hoarder of art objects, finds a great part of his pleasure in acquainting himself with the processes of manufacture as well as with the history of the things he collects. It is this acquaintanceship with the minutiæ of a subject that enables one to collect with judgment.

The basis of all enamels is the application of fusible silicate or glass, colored with metallic oxides, all upon a metal ground. The varieties of enamels have already been described at length in the chapter on European enamels, but it will be convenient to

summarize the processes here as they apply to Oriental as well as to Occidental enamels.

In cloisonné enamel-work a metal base—of gold, silver, copper, or some other metal—has its design traced upon it by means of thin metal wires or strips soldered to the base and forming a number of divisions. These, when filled with the colored silicate (subjected to amalgamation by heat, and afterward polished) produce a beautiful patterned surface, the design of which appears traced in metal filaments. The Byzantine and the Greek enamelers executed their cloisonné enamels in gold, as likewise did the Anglo-Saxons, the Russians, the Chinese, and the Japanese in their finest work.

In the plique à jour enamels we find what is really a variety of cloisonné rather than a class, as the plique à jour is cloisonné unbacked by a metal ground but much like a leaded stained-glass window in miniature. That is, if one holds a piece of plique à jour work to the light he will find it allows the light to pass through, whence its name.

Champlevé enamel resembles cloisonné, but its pattern, instead of being traced by cloisons soldered on a metal base, is scooped out by a sort of deep engraving upon the metal base, these depressions being filled up with enamel, which is fired and then

polished. The Celts, the Persians, and the enamelers of India worked in this manner.

Respoussé enamel is, one may say, a variety of champlevé, or at least so closely akin to it that it is seldom considered as composing a class by itself, though I think it should be. In such enamel-work the design is wrought upon the metal base, not with cloisons as in cloisonné, nor by scooping out by a graver, as in true champlevé. Instead, the design is worked upon the metal by hammering out—respoussé—the depressions to be filled with the enamel. This is then fired and polished, as all enamel of any class has to be. Some of the enamels of India are such fine examples of work of this sort that they have passed as true champlevé.

Finally, we come to the *painted* enamels, such as those of Limoges. In the earliest examples of the painted class one finds the design applied directly to the metal base, grain by grain and layer by layer, in such a manner that the various fusings and glazings produce the results one finds in the marvelous old Limoges enamels; while in later work the enamel is fused upon the metal base, the designs being painted (in some instances printed) on the enamel.

This brief survey of the characteristics of the different classes of old enamels will the better enable

the collector to confine his attention for the moment to the subject of cloisonné enamels, and in particular to those of China and Japan. Of late years the cloisonné enamels of these countries have been extensively exported, more especially to America. Many of these modern examples are very beautiful, some of them very trashy, and none of them comparable in beauty with early Chinese work, though, from a technical point of view and an individuality of their own, I fancy some of the modern specimens would have made the seventeenth-century enamel-workers of China rub their eyes in wonderment. This great and difficult art is surely one of the glories of Chinese craftsmanship. One might not think that the outlook for collecting these old enamels in America very encouraging. Nevertheless it is a line of collecting that has not been overdone, and genuine old objects are to be found, here and there, by those who know them when they see them.

As color is the very soul of enamel, the rich, soft colors of the early Chinese work help to distinguish it. This is especially true of the varied and beautiful blues employed by the Chinese enamelers. Occasionally the Chinese employed both cloisonné and champlevé in the same piece as certain pieces of the Ch'ien Lung period (1736–1796) show. In genu-

ine old pieces it often happens that corrosion has made its appearance around the cloisons. While the early history of Chinese cloisonné is lost to us, we know it to have been in favor in the early fifteenth century, as a vase in the Victoria and Albert Museum attests. Not only for its blues is Chinese cloisonné noted, but it possesses characteristic reds, lilacs, violets, pinks, greens, and orange as well. The Chinese enameler's palette was medieval in its selection. The blues of turquoise and of lapis lazuli were great favorites likewise. A sang-de-bœuf and a sealing-wax red, opaque in quality, were further employed. In fact, the Chinese enamelers employed the colors of the early European cloisonné workers. Their whites, however, were always inferior and in early work exhibit air-hole pit marks.

The collector will understand from this how necessary it is for him to give careful attention to the subject of color in determining the early enamels. The metals employed by the cloisonné-workers should also be studied. Where gold was used it had to be fine gold, as alloys would not withstand the heat of the enameler's furnace. Enamel does not hold so well to silver as to gold or copper. Then there is the distinctive polish of the earlier enamels. These were polished by hand, in consequence of

which their surfaces did not present the mirror-like polish which modern contemporary cloisonné enamels exhibit. The surfaces of the old pieces is more like that of an egg-shell. Again, few of the antique cloisonné enamels show any transparency, a fact probably due to the oxide of tin in the solder. In recent work the cloisons have, in many instances, been fastened to the metal bases by means of a paste instead of by the soldering method—surely a shifty mode, and one marking the decline of the true excellence of the ancient art.

Rudyard Kipling's "From Sea to Sea" gives us a careful account of the art of enameling as he saw it practised by the *minakari* or enamelers of Kyōto. This account is worth looking up. While the work described by Kipling was that of the modern Japanese craftsmen of some thirty years ago, the process was the same as practised in earlier times not only in Japan but likewise in China, and everywhere that cloisonné enamel has been made. The process in use to-day follows the same tradition.

The Koreans probably acquired the art of cloisonné from the Chinese, and the Japanese from the Koreans (perhaps not before the fifteenth century). Captain Brinkley says: "One thing is certain, that until the nineteenth century enamels were employed

by Japanese decorators for accessory purposes only on wood and porcelain as well as on metal. No such things as vases, plaques or bowls having their surface covered with enamel in either style." This at once enables the collector to understand at how late a period, comparatively, cloisonné enamel became popular in Japan. It is believed that early in the nineteenth century a Japanese craftsman, Kaji Tsunekechi, produced the first vessel covered completely with cloisonné in Japan. This was at Nagoya. It won him great fame and many pupils. The earlier pieces of Japanese cloisonné followed in pattern, to a great extent, the Chinese enamels, and though they are somewhat less fine in color, they often excel in technique. Until 1890 the cloisons of Japanese work were soldered to the metal. Since that date a vegetable gum has often been employed for the purpose. In some modern work there appears to be no evidence of cloisons whatsoever, but some of these pieces have hidden cloisons. The Japanese cloisonné objects are usually enameled on the back or on the inside with blue enamel. Tōkyō, Yokohama, and Kyōto are the main sources of the modern product.

Thirty years ago Louis Gonse, a French authority, wrote that the Japanese had done little in cloisonné,

Courtesy Brooklyn Museum of Art
Chinese Cloissonné Palace Censer, Chia Ching Period, 1522-1567

Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art
Japanese Armour of the Feudal Period, showing Swords with their Sword-Guards (*Tsuba*)

but since that time its production has increased enormously. While much of this modern work is inferior in quality, that which is truly *fine* is well worth the collector's attention. With the rapidly changing conditions, both in China and Japan, such objects will greatly enhance in value in a few years hence and come to be properly esteemed.

CHAPTER XXXIII

JAPANESE SWORD-GUARDS

SMALL objects beautiful to contemplate, exquisite in workmanship, intrinsically valuable, and at the same time rich in historical associations have attracted men of all ages. Little wonder it is that the collector of the objects for art of the Japanese craftsmen finds in them an ever refreshing delight. The *tsuba*, or sword-guards of Japan, are famed for their workmanship, beauty of design, and historic interest, while their rarity is not such as to discourage the collector. A few years ago, indeed, these remarkable examples of the skill of the old-time Japanese metal-workers could have been picked up in the Japanese shops in America and Europe for a song. Though the price has advanced precipitously, fine specimens of sword-guards may still be had at far from prohibitive prices, when one considers that almost every tsuba can be counted a supreme example of the metal-worker's art. There are no two genuine Japanese sword-guards precisely alike. Each is distinctly an original and unique ob-

ject into whose fashioning has gone the best effort of those tirelessly patient and conscientious craftsmen of the Flowery Kingdom.

Feudal Japan has disappeared, and with it the need of the old armorers' art. Fifty-eight years ago a noted Japanese official sought in vain throughout Yedo—now Tōkyō—for a countryman who might prove to be conversant with the English language, a fact that gives one an intimation of the rapidity with which the old order of things has been thrown off and the new taken on. It was just forty years ago that an imperial edict abolished the wearing of swords. The edict was obeyed without a single known instance of resistance, and the shops of Kyōto, Tōkyō, and Ozaka dealing in art objects soon bristled with ancient swords and sword "furniture" from those samurai who a few months before held their swords as sacred as their persons.

It is clear that, as a result of this edict, a vast number of swords were brought into the market. Naturally enough, as collectors had not then discovered the tsuba, countless sword-guards were thrown into the melting-pot. Later, when European, American, and Japanese connoisseurs came to rescue the tsuba from oblivion, the native craftsmen, still possessors of a recent heritage of skill, fell to making sword-

guards for the market. Yet even these late nineteenth- and, one must suspect, twentieth-century tsuba are often beautiful, ingenious, and interesting enough to be desirable acquisitions on their own account.

In a land where the regard for the honor of the sword had evolved an etiquette and almost a religion it is not strange that the art-loving nation which conceived this regard should have applied its finest ability to the decoration of the sword accessories, until finally these became veritable treasure-troves recording the history and traditions of the country as well as its symbolism and even its physical aspect.

The "furniture" of a Japanese sword consists primarily of the tsuba, or guard,—a circular or oval (sometimes square and occasionally irregular) piece of metal, with a triangular aperture to receive the sword-blade. On each side is a smaller opening to receive the top of each of the two smaller implements that accompany many of the Japanese swords —the *kozuka* or handle of the short dagger, or *kokatana*, and the *kogai*, a skewer-shaped instrument. After the tsuba or sword-guard come the smaller ornaments placed one on each side of the hilt to enable the wielder of the sword to have a firmer grasp of it. These small metal

ornaments are called *menuki.* We find them, too, on the scabbards of swords, especially on the daggers or *wakizashi.* Of great beauty and interest are the *kashira*, metal caps fitting the heads of the sword-handles, secured in place by means of cords laterally placed. The *fuchi* are oval rings through which the blade passes; they encircle the bases of the handles where the blade is secured. The *kurikata* are cleats for securing the cords (*sageo*) which held back the warrior's sleeve whilst he was fighting. And finally there is the *kojiri*, the metal endpiece of the scabbard.

There is not one of the ornamental decorations of a Japanese sword that would not have awakened the admiration and envy of Benvenuto Cellini. And to think that after the edict of 1877 there were, literally, millions of them relegated to the rubbish heaps of the Japanese junkmen! Too few of the menuki escaped being melted up. Theirs is a fascination difficult to resist; but the tsuba more directly engages our attention for the present, and the smaller ornaments have been referred to here only in order that the reader may have some suggestion of their relationship to the tsuba.

The earliest name of a sword-guard maker to be met with is that of Mitsutsune (1390), Kaneiye of

Fushimi, Umetada, Shigeyoshi (a renowned swordsmith), Gōtō Yūjō (died 1504), Miochin Nobuiye (1507–1555), Iranken Yamakichi (1570) and Hoan were all renowned for their tsuba at a later period. Nobuiye's work was distinguished for the thin soft iron with a thick patina, reddish in hue. His tsuba bear traces of the hammer, as do the tsuba of his followers for a considerable period. To Gōtō Yūjō (1426–1504) and other members of the Gōtō family Japanese connoisseurs give preference. A Japanese expert at once recognizes in the Gōtō tsuba the *iyébori* or style of the family whose genius produced them.

The work on those sword-guards whose surface is punched into a texture of small dots until it resembles fish roe is called *nanakoji*, and for tsuba so finished the Gōtō family were without rivals. Moslé suggests that one of the requisites in the Japanese connoisseur's education is to recognize the iyébori (personal style) of the first thirteen generations of the Gōtō!

Piercing, chasing, and, in a few instances, inlaying and damascening came into the practice of the metalworkers with the advent of the sixteenth century. Umetada Shigeyoshi, who has been called the "master of masters," began the free use of the graver

in ornamentation. To him mainly are due the decorative changes that marked the tsuba which were made during this period. The close of the sixteenth century brought a stretch of two hundred and fifty peaceful years after the turbulence that had shaken Japan until then. Naturally, in the years of war the sword of the Japanese fighter called for guards practical and tough in texture, something that would deflect the powerful blow of an opponent. In the years of peace the tsuba were mainly adapted to court use and for the adornment of the person. The tsuba-makers of Ōsaka produced marvels of damascening in gold and silver on iron. The second Kaneiye encrusted his sword-guards with copper ornament, and Hirata Dōnin introduced the use of translucent enamels. The pierced work of Kinai of Echizen is supreme in its elegance of form.

The close of the seventeenth century gave rise to three schools of tsuba decoration—the Nara School, revolting against the academic style of the Gōtō, as did the Yokoya School, and the Omori School. In the work of the masters of all three of these schools, the Gōtō influence may still be traced, even though these metal-workers tried to get away from it.

The School of Ishiguro, Yedo, of the early part of the nineteenth century came to be famous for its

flat incised work, introducing colored surfaces. Kano Natsuo may be mentioned as the last tsuba-maker of distinction. The tsuba of the period between 1840 and 1870 were very elaborately decorated, and obviously could never have been used for their professed purpose. However, the collector will wish to acquire specimens of them, if only as examples of the marvelous handicraft of the Japanese metal-workers.

Nearly all of the imitations of genuine old tsuba can be detected by holding the guard on one's finger-tip and striking it sharply with another piece of metal. The genuine tsuba will emit a bell-like sound, the cast imitation a dull one. A perfect patina is always to be sought for in a tsuba.

One of the most important styles of ornamenting metal is *Zogan*, a process which includes damascening and is sub-divided into: *Honzogan* work, in which an undercutting retains the hammered-in inlay (if flush with the surface, this is called *Hirazogan*, and if it is in relief, *Takazogan*), and *Nunomezogan* work, which derives its name from a surface incised to represent linen mesh. The second style of ornamental working is included under the names *Kebori* and *Katakiri*. With kebori work the lines are finely cut, and the word designating this class

of work signifies "hair lines engraved." Katakiri work produces engraved lines varying in depth to produce the effect of painting. The Japanese hold this style in high favor. The third style of ornamental metal-work is *Nikubori;* work in this style is carved in relief, low relief being distinguished by the name, *Unsunikubori*, and high relief, *Takabori*. The final style is *Uchidashi.* This metal-work is repoussé, and is often to be found in combination with nikobori.

The subject of Japanese metal-work must ever prove one of fascination to the student or collector, and even a very small collection of tsuba will serve to cover the general field of representative styles. Like so many other articles of collection appeal, they combine the two interests of former utility and present beauty.

CHAPTER XXXIV

MEDALLIC ART

WHAT a marvelous field for enjoyment is opened to the collector by medallic art! To the uninitiated any coin or medal a hundred years old will seem instantly to suggest an almost prohibitive value. Nothing could be more of a mistake. As a matter of fact interesting coins and medals are within the reach of almost any one for a remarkably small outlay. Of course tremendous prices are given for tremendous rarities, but coin- and medal-collectors in America seem more interested in early coined United States cents which exhibit this slight variation or that, than in collecting for purely the beauty and the historic charm medallic art exhibits.

Perhaps I should not quarrel with such, for this state of affairs has, in times past, permitted my acquiring for pennies lovely medals and marvelously beautiful coins, while they were paying out, in the same sales, small fortunes for ugly broken-down cop-

pers whose sole virtue (in my sight) lay in their containing half their face-value of pure copper!

But we need not linger over these. Let us take thought of the *real* masterpieces of the times that were and the times that are. We must include the remarkable productions of our contemporary medalists, inheritors of the skill and best traditions of past masters.

In the first place, medallic art, more than any other, perhaps, nearly always displays prominent national characteristics; so it is comparatively easy to distinguish between the medals of various countries.

The debt history owes to coins and medals, for the clues to the past they have given it, is enormous. Cities and sites have been identified by their means, dates of dynasties made certain by their evidence, and forgotten deeds of heroes recalled through their records. A few years ago a Sicilian peasant is said to have discovered the only specimen extant of a rare coin of antiquity that adds certainty to our knowledge of the site of Abacænum, whose ruins lie outside the walls of Tripi.

As Vasari observed, the art of the medalist is "a work most difficult by artists as it holds the mean between painting and sculpture." That it does,

truly, as any collection of early medals and the best medals of to-day conclusively proves. At the end of the fifteenth century the making of dies as it was then practised permitted only designs for very low relief to be struck and of small circumference—such a size as we see in the coins of that time. Coins like the United States double eagle designed by Saint-Gaudens could not then have been attempted. Stamping from the die was a process yet in its infancy and was not then able to meet the requirements of striking the larger medal forms; hence these were invariably cast. First a model in wax was made and embedded in some fine molding-substance, such as earth or charcoal. Having fitted itself perfectly into every crevice of the wax model, this mold of earth was stiffened by a lye solution; the wax was melted out, and molten metal was poured from a crucible into the mold which was left behind. Whether or not replicas were made from the same mold is a question that remains unsolved. Probably not, but instead they may have been made from the new molds of new wax models formed in plaster molds from plaster casts of the originals. When removed from its mold the medal was worked over with a fine gritty substance, and often with finishing instruments. Moreover, the

edges had to be filed smooth, as the casting always left them rough. In many cases it is apparent that engraving was resorted to in order that outlines might be emphasized, especially in indicating hair.

In very early days medals afforded a convenient kind of portrait for transmisssion to distant friends; large numbers of medals, too, were buried under the foundations of buildings erected by a prince or a state, as in our own time coins are placed under the corner-stone of a public edifice. For instance, in the cellar walls of the Palazzo Venezia in Rome, built by Pope Paul II, twenty medals of that pope were found. Some bore on the reverse a representation of the palace, others the arms of the pope with the legend: "Has Ædes Condidit." They were enclosed in an earthenware case that had to be broken in order to release the contents. It is safe to assume that nearly all early medals bearing representations of buildings were cast for like commemorative purposes.

It remained for the beginning of the sixteenth century to witness the inauguration of the art of striking medals from engraved dies. In the British Museum there is an example of a medal of Pope Julius II by Francesco Francia the painter, who besides being a painter and a medalist was also a gold-

smith and likewise designed the font of italic type for Aldus Manutius the printer. This medal of Pope Julius was probably struck about the year 1506. It and the medals of Benvenuto Cellini in the Museo Nazionali in Florence (which latter medals are perhaps the finest examples of struck medals of the period, though by no means the most artistic) occasionally turn up in public sales. They, of course, command top-notch prices, although a truly fine gold coin from Cellini's dies, a coin of undoubted authenticity, was purchased in London by the author for two pounds, and from a dealer of international reputation.

When Francia and Cellini were engraving their dies the new method was still confined to medals of smaller circumference, for all the larger ones as yet continued to be cast, even down to the end of the sixteenth century; and of course casting is a method in very general use to-day. The modern process of reducing models by means of a clever mechanical instrument enables the medalist to work out the relief without size restrictions, from which the reduced size desired for the medal is finally obtained with absolute fidelity. In fact, modern medals are often produced in various sizes by an ingenious mechanical process, without any loss in effect from the same

original. Roty's medal for the French Alpine Club is such an example.

One may see that the change from casting to striking medals greatly affected the art of the medalist. The preparation of the model for casting required a technique almost identical with that of the sculptor preparing for a bronze statue, the sculptor in marble of course having to take into account further matters incident to the substance he was finally to work in. On the other hand, the die-engraver's art required a totally different technique, a skill akin to the requirements of gem-engraving and also to the craft of a goldsmith. When cast medals became reduced to the size of struck medals, the reduction required finer workmanship in the original modeling and in the finishing. This again brought the medalist nearer the goldsmith. Accordingly, we find Francia, Cellini, Valerio Belli, Cesati, Annibale Fontana, Leone Leoni, and others at once goldsmiths or gem-engravers and medalists.

It is interesting to visit some museum collection and compare a *cast* medal by Pisano with a *struck* medal by Cellini, or with one by Bernardi, in order to note their differences. Very often the extreme fineness in finish of early Italian medals makes them appear at first sight struck when in reality they have

been cast. This is especially noticeable in the medals of Pastorino of Siena, who very nearly brought medallic portraiture to its perfection. His manner is full of delicacy and beauty, but it just misses the mark in requisite vigor.

There are various medals intimately connected with American history, though many of them have been executed by alien artists. However, with the example set by Augustus Saint-Gaudens, Frederick Mac Monnies, Victor D. Brenner, Paul Manship, James Earle Fraser, John Flanagan, and others, it is to be hoped that more of our artists will turn to this field and that more encouragement, public and private, will be given in it. We might well emulate the attention that has been given to the subject in France.

Fine medals and coins should be tenderly treated. Every scratch mars their beauty. Each should be kept protected from abrasion. It is vandalism to subject a medal or coin to an unskilled scouring or scraping. The early Italians were greatly interested in medallic art and appreciated beautiful medals as perhaps no other people has ever done. There are, of course, those soulless persons who find in a medal or an uncurrent coin only a suggestion of something that might once have been spent but which cannot be

now, and who, with a shrug, refuse to share the enthusiast's pleasure. The collector must not hope to win such to the interest with which medallic art is invested.

CHAPTER XXXV

ENGRAVED GEMS

IN Beau Brummel's time not to know all about gem-engraving, the intaglio and the cameo, was thought to be devoid of one of the most important cultural attributes of every eighteenth-century gentleman. Those were the picturesque days of post-riders and sealing-wax, days that scarcely anticipated the letter-writing necessities of our own time, when we can scarcely stop to put on the stamp and one lick of the flap has taken the place of the perfumed elegance of yesterday's wafer, leisurely impressed with some exquisite seal.

It was only natural then that the seal should be a factor in the diversions of polite society while possessing a utility not yet exterminated by demands on man's time. Not only did every gentleman have a seal ring, but often he had several, and sometimes many for different occasions. Frequently these seals or *sigilii*, as the Latins called them, were engraved with devices directly upon metal. However, the far more popular method was that which is one of our

chief heritages from antiquity—engraving on gems or on semi-precious stones by means of the intaglio process. *Intaglio*, derived from the Italian *intagliere* (to cut into), means *incised* engraving, as opposed to the *cameo* process, or engraving *in relief*. Cameo-engraving is a later art, as generally practised, and cannot compare with that of intaglio-engraving, with which it has nothing in common but its subject and the material on which it is cut. An intaglio is the product of a reverse and much more difficult process than that by which the cameo is evolved. An impression from a well-cut intaglio leaves a very fine design in relief, and it is marvelous to behold the results obtained by the infinite pains of gem-engravers. In our own day the masters of the art can be counted on the fingers of one hand, so greatly has the demand for work of the sort diminished. Indeed, there is almost no call for it in America. Probably this is due to the fact that so few people really either understand the importance of the subject, the history of glyptic art, or realize the beauty of the fine works of the sort.

It should be borne in mind that although engraved gems, unlike Greek painted vases, are chiefly valuable as handmaids to history in preserving to us contemporary portraits of their times, they still make

known to us, as Collingnon says, a whole phase of Greek thought that was developed in the Macedonian epoch.

The Greeks never greatly favored the Egyptian scarab beetle-form for engraved gems and later introduced the oval, which is known as the scaraboid form, especially popular from 600 B. C. to 500 B. C., in the Archaic Period. With primitive engraved gems and scarabs (2500 B. C. to 900 B. C.) as well as with later ones, the archæologist has to move cautiously, since imitations were manufactured at a very early time. The researches in Crete by Arthur Evans brought to light great numbers of engraved seals and stones that are unquestionably of remote antiquity, and, by the form of their engraved characters, indicate the existence of a system of writing of a far earlier date than had been assigned to calligraphy on Greek soil. The most interesting examples of this class were found in the Palace of Minos at Cnossos, and were used for sealing documents in the Cretan script, while others were used in sealing storage vessels. That there is nothing new under the sun seems again to have been demonstrated in the discovery at Mycenæ of a massive engraved signet portraying three ladies in modern-looking divided skirts, a subject quite as up-to-date as

the beflounced corseted, frilled, and bonneted ladies that the Cretan frescos disclosed a few years ago, to the bewilderment of the Parisian dressmakers.

However, the intaglii which typically mark the early Mycenæan period are the Island Stones (900 B. C. to 600 B. C.), a name given to a lenticular stone of steatite, rock crystal, carnelian, or chalcedony, such stones being chiefly found in the Greek islands and in the Mediterranean region, where Mycenæan remains are to be found. The decorative devices employed were nearly always animals, such as the lion, deer, bull, goat, singly or quasi-heraldically arranged in pairs, facing in or facing out. Their artistic merit was often of a high order, though this excellence was somewhat overbalanced by the figures being arranged to occupy the entire area of a gem's surface. As Dr. Walters of the British Museum observed, "this *horror vacui*, or dread of leaving a vacant space, was characteristic of Greek artists at all periods."

The Transitional Period proper, from 500 B. C. to 450 B. C., produced very fine gems with genre subjects. These were probably influenced somewhat by the freedom acquired by the Greek vase-painters, whose art reached its perfection in that era. From thence onward no subject seems to have daunted the

gem-engraver who reproduced the most intricate details and reduced to miniature marvelously well the beauties of those groups of colossal statuary that particularly inspired him, subjects from paintings or his own devices, or figures, heads and portraits of his contemporaries, men, women and children—portraits which must have been possessed of the virtue of likenesses to an extraordinary degree, else they would not for centuries have continued in such favor. As Renton says, "we are forcefully reminded of the extreme durability of engraved gems when we reflect that some at the present time contained in our museums and collections have been buried in tombs or in the earth; others have been thrown upon the shore, washed by the sea or exposed to fire, pillage, and other dangers, but still appearing with the engraving in some instances as clear, sharp, and defined as it was the day they left the artist's hands." It is this careful and peculiar finish to the work that distinguishes the truly antique gems from the spurious.

We have little reliable data concerning the artists in glyptic art from the primitive period represented by the Samian Theodorus, who made the famous ring for Polycrates, to the period of the art's perfection, 450 B. C. to around 400 B. C. To the

latter period belongs, by right of his excellence, Pyrgoteles, who engraved the seals of Alexander.

The least doubtful names, perhaps, are those of Agathopous, Apollonides, Aspasios, Athēniōn, Boēthos, Dexamenos, Dioskouridēs, Epitynchanos, Hērakleides, Hērophilos, Hyllos, Mykon, Nikandrus, Onēsus, Pamphilos, Prōtarchos, Solōn, and Teukrus, tedious to catalogue perhaps, still a small number out of proportion to the vast quantity of intaglii that have been recovered from the past. We are sure of Dioskourides under Augustus, but even in antiquity names were forged upon gems at a later date or by an alien hand, such forgeries being especially common from the time of the Renaissance on. Indeed, it became quite as much the fashion to mutilate antique gems by adding bogus signatures as it did later to imitate the glyptic art of the ancients and attempt to pawn off forgeries and fabrications on the enthusiastic but indiscriminating. Of this the reader will find further mention in the chapter on Fraudulent Art, which follows. In ancient times intaglii were also imitated in glass and much affected by the poorer classes, so early had the idea of cheap imitation jewelry taken root.

However, such work was obviously false, while

there have been some very clever imitations engraved on very fine gems. The famous Poniatowski Collection was the greatest of the gigantic frauds of the sort perpetrated. In the happier days of the First Empire the patronage of the Empress Josephine had brought appreciation of the glyptic art to a pinnacle, whence it fell from mere discouragement by the exposition of the Poniatowski Collection fraud in a London market. These gems might best be described as regular pictures in stone and portraits of all the celebrated men of antiquity, each blandly "authenticated" with his proper name and the artist's signature! No wonder collectors and amateurs turned, frightened, to scan their own collections. If such traffic was fostered by dealers of their time, what recourse had they outside careful and arduous scholarship? Still, minute rudimentary knowledge of gem-engraving and its chronological phases should at once have set them at ease. The amateur of to-day knows that a signed gem is an exception to the rule and rests secure in the knowledge.

Although the various periods of Greek glyptic art have been indicated, it may be helpful to repeat them here in tabulated form, following mainly Walter's scheme of classification.

I Prehistoric Period—2500 to 900 B. C. Primitive seal stones, imported cylinders.
II Early Period—900 to 600 B. C. Island gems. Mycenæan era.
III Archaic Period—600 to 500 B. C. Scaraboids supersede scarabs.
IV Transitional Period—500 to 450 B. C. Finely engraved gems and prevalence of genre subjects.
V Culminating Period—450 to 400 B. C. Perfection in engraved gems.

Greek gems of the latest period are rare in comparison with those of periods preceding and following.

That Greek influence reached Etruria has been shown by full evidence in many ways, and we have large numbers of engraved gems from Etruscan tombs of the fifth and fourth centuries, these intaglii having for their subjects most commonly incidents from legends of the Greek heroes. It is well to note that deities are rarely portrayed on Etruscan gems, whose form was usually that of the scarab. The fourth century finds their workmanship greatly deteriorating.

The Romans were very fond of engraved gems and practised the glyptic art from early times. When Constantine the Great removed the seat of the Roman Empire to Constantinople in 329 A. D. this art,

like the other arts, followed him thither, of course; but for over a thousand years succeeding the intaglii produced seldom attained great excellence and the taste for engraved gems followed other esthetic tendencies into the obscure retirement of the dark ages. In fact, the glyptic art almost became extinct, but with the expulsion of the Greeks from Constantinople by Mahomet in 1453 A. D. it found itself again on Italian soil, thereafter to grow strong and flourish from the root it had taken.

Just as the ecclesiastics converted Greek painted vases to altar use and sculptured sarcophagi into containers of holy water, they now turned their attention to engraved gems and rescued these baubles from the reproach of being mere vanities by clothing their subjects with Christian legends. Probably to this fact we owe the preservation of some of our finest examples. It was a difficult task to rechristen the gems and endow them with a sacred character quite out of keeping with their conception. However, the early church was ingenious and gave to Jupiter with his eagle the significance of St. John the Evangelist, while Melpomene did very well for Salome with John the Baptist's head. However, gem-engravers arose to help truth out with veritable subjects, and the church became a powerful patron of the art of

gem-engraving. Prelates and princes hastened to have their fancies carried out in intaglii, until the cinquecento produced a host of clever engravers capable of catering to any taste or to any fad or fancy. About this time the forms of intaglii were greatly enlarged.

Lorenzo de' Medici and his successors were munificent patrons of the gem-engraver, and not only formed splendid collections of intaglii but encouraged engravers in Florence, and by the middle of the fifteenth century a graceful classic style had been revived. Giovanni, surnamed Della Corniole, was one of the most excellent artists of the time, and in his everlastingly entertaining "Memoirs" Benvenuto Cellini speaks of Micheletto, who was "very clever at engraving carnelians, an old man and of great celebrity." This was the engraver whom Vasari calls by the affectionate diminutive "Michelino," but Cellini himself later calls him "Michele."

The gem-engravers of the sixteenth century were prolific, and their work appealed immensely to the French taste. Francis I was a liberal patron of the glyptic art and had at his court the renowned gem-engraver, Matteo del Nassaro of Verona. Probably the first French gem-engraver of note was Julien de Fontenay, sometimes known as Coldore, who exe-

cuted an intaglio portrait of Henry IV, and was later invited to England by Queen Elizabeth. Subsequently a taste for the art developed in England, although the culmination of encouragement was not reached until the middle of the eighteenth century, when collecting engraved gems became a mania with many and good examples brought huge prices. Up to the beginning of the nineteenth century the influence of classic designs obtained. King George III was a liberal patron of gem-engravers, and to the foresight of the Duke of Devonshire and Marlborough the world owes the preservation of some of the finest examples extant of intaglii of any time.

The works of such classicists as Marchant, who studied in Rome many years, and of his successor, Burch, a Royal Academician, extending over a period of years from 1750 to 1815 or thereabouts, are well worth while, and would reveal an excellence of execution unsurpassed. Then followed such men as Weigall, Bragg, Grew, and in our own day the Rentons, who engraved intaglii for members of the royal family.

Since the heraldic style has followed the classic, interest in the art of intaglio-engraving has waned tremendously and can be brought back only by the

revival of that classic spirit which, after all, underlies everything that is best the world over, in art or in literature.

The substances employed by the gem-engravers are amethyst, hyacinth, agate, carnelian, chalcedony, crystal, and other precious gems. In our own day almost every stone is employed. The lapidary must not be confused with the gem-engraver. The first prepares the stone to receive the work of the second, just as the wood-sawyer prepares the material for the carpenter, or the man at the quarry the block for the sculptor. Pliny described at some length the process of gem-engraving in his day. As to the ancient mode of engraving gems, in which the drill wheel and diamond point were used, the use of the wheel is especially noticeable in the lenticular Island gems; it was a small bronze disk set on a shaft of metal worked like the drill with a bow and tube of emery powder; its purpose was for cutting lines to connect the points made by the drill, or else for broad, sunken surfaces. The diamond point, on the other hand, was used like a pencil, with the hand alone; it resembles the modern glass-cutting diamond and was employed for giving an artistic finish to the design, which could of course be best done with the free hand. The use of this tool required great technical

skill, the results of which may clearly be seen on some gems of the best period.

In passing it is interesting to note the devices to which makers of fraudulent "antique" intaglii have been known to resort. As an instance, that misty dullness of the stone which only age is supposed to give is produced in Italy by forcing the smaller engraved gems down the unwilling gullets of defenceless turkeys, whereupon the action of the gastric juice and the gritty substances in the gizzard outdo the devices of Time himself, as the funeral of the unhappy bird reveals to the dissecting and dishonest fabricator.

CHAPTER XXXVI

FRAUDULENT ART OBJECTS

THE detection of fraudulent antiques and curios and other bogus works of art has become a science. Phædrus, who lived and wrote in the time of Tiberius Cæsar, tells in his fiftieth fable of how his contemporaries carved the name of Praxiteles on their marbles and the name of Myron on everything they wrought in silver, in order that their productions might pass as masterpieces of those supreme Hellenic artists.

Though the Romans were an art-loving people, they openly connived at art-fraud, but for esthetic reasons, as we learn from Pliny. He tells us that in his time the coins of Rome were so clumsily modeled and so basely cast that several artists made new molds, treating the designs of the mint more carefully, and produced spurious coins which were eagerly sought in place of the inartistic legal tender.

Michelangelo, piqued at the extravagant attention paid the antiques (to the exclusion of interest in his early struggles for recognition), conceived the clever

idea of doing an Eros in marble after his own design, burying the work in mud for some months, and then digging it up in the presence of certain noble collectors. These gentlemen went mad over its beauty, proclaiming it to be the greatest relic antiquity had left them. Michelangelo finally disclosed to them his own initials, which he had carved in a hidden fold of the wings, and was highly amused at the discomfiture of his companions. They, however, came to their senses and had the good grace to recognize the towering genius who stood laughing before them. Indeed, one of them became his foremost patron.

This was a harmless trick conceived for salutary purposes, and not at all to be classed with the exploits of Gambello, Bassiano, or Giovanni del Cavino, whose forgeries of Roman medals were particularly skilful, though not proof against modern scientific methods of uncovering frauds. No wonder one of the ancient writers declared that, "the very nerves and sinews of knowledge consist of believing nothing rashly." This was especially true in the days of the Renaissance, when a study of the antique came so quickly into fashion, and in the train of it such efforts to collect ancient objects of art that some of the unscrupulous but skilful artists and artisans of

the time could scarcely resist the temptations offered by the ease with which clever art-forgeries were palmed off upon the gullible, who paid enormous prices for them. We know how Andreini of old-time Florence forged Greek signatures to ancient unsigned intaglii and how Flavio Sirletti lent his skill to it with the aid of Pliny's record of ancient sculptors. The collection of Prince Poniatowski, nephew of the last King of Poland, contained some three thousand fraudulent engraved gems! As all of these gems were very beautiful in themselves, and as nearly all of their subjects were original with their engravers, it is unfortunate that such excellent and exquisitely done work could not have stood forth on its own merits to cast fame and not shame on the cunning hands that produced them.

Some counterfeiting is too laborious for profit, but it is marvelous to see some of the things that emanated in the early days from the shameless fake-factories of Pietro Fondi and others at Venice and in Corfu. The Sienese, too, were skilful copyists of the various trecento, quattrocento, and cinquecento objects of art. Terra-cotta figurines and Greek and Etruscan vases have ever been subjects for the hand of the forger and fabricator of antiques.

Pottery and porcelain have always seemed to

tempt art-forgers and imitators. The way of the collector of Chinese and other Oriental porcelains and pottery has been made especially difficult in consequence. Even Bernard Palissy is believed by some to have imitated the wares of Briot, and in turn imitations of these imitations were once acquired by a museum. In our own day Palissy's own ware has been imitated by Lesnes, Barbizet, and M. Pall. Perhaps the London Jarman was the prince of fakers. He obtained undecorated Sèvres pieces from France and had a Quaker potter from Staffordshire, one Randall by name, add all sorts of delightful scenes. They were purchased by the royal family, who took the pieces on good faith as being Sèvres decorations.

European enamels and early ivories have not escaped attention at the forger's hand. When Sir A. W. Franks was innocently attempting to arrange the purchase of the *Diptychion Leodiense* for eight hundred pounds in England, he discovered that this object was nothing more than a clever combination of copies of two other panels of unquestioned authenticity.

And so things go merrily on, even in this day and generation. But your *true* collector is one who

studies the objects he collects and he is not likely to be easily deceived. Photography has stretched forward a helping hand and by means of enlarged photographic prints of a subject in dispute, the minute comparisons between authenticated and merely attributed works of a period may be studied. It was Juvenal who coined the name *"rara avis"*; and the impatient collector who would acquire a "rare bird" of art as it flies toward him from the horizon of opportunity must be sure he knows something of its "ornithology" before he rushes recklessly forth, perchance to put the salt of good money on some worthless tail.

There is told the story of a certain Bavarian collector who began to doubt the authenticity of a little statuette in his possession. Finally he sent for a noted authority on the subject, who tried to reassure him. As the collector did not seem convinced, the expert, as a last resort, made mention of a certain test that might, though with danger to the object, be applied. The collector insisted on the attempt, in the course of which the statuette was hopelessly defaced, though the accident confirmed the expert's opinion. "Ah," moaned the owner, "why did I let you touch it!" "Ingrate!" replied the other with

grim humor. "Have you not now the satisfaction of knowing your fears to be groundless, and my own knowledge to be trustworthy? Look at the pieces —without doubt the statuette was genuine!"

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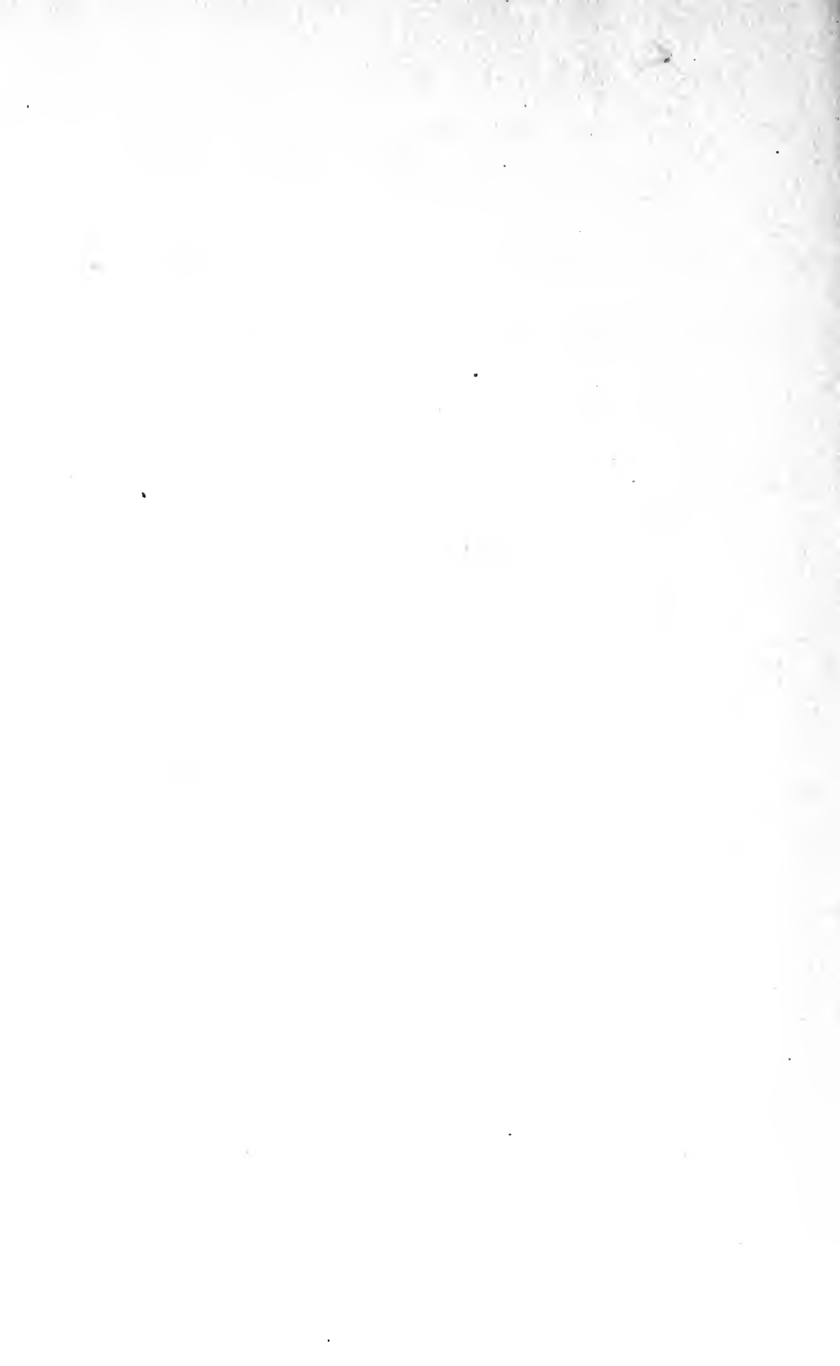

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