

**THE ABC OF COLLECTING OLD
ENGLISH CHINA, GIVING SHORT
HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH FACTORIES,
AND SHOWING HOW TO APPLY TESTS
FOR UNMARKED CHINA BEFORE 1800**

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The ABC of Collecting Old English China, Giving Short History of the English Factories, and Showing How to Apply Tests for Unmarked China before 1800 by J. F. Blacker

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J. F. BLACKER

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Giving a Short History of the English
Factories, and showing how to apply
Tests for Unmarked China before
1800.

By
J. F. BLACKER.

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MANY books have been written on Old English China, and, in venturing to submit this addition to the number, we hope to reach collectors generally, and also those to whom the prohibitive price of the best books, with their lovely illustrations, has been an absolute barrier to possession. Our illustrations are many of them drawn with an ordinary pen from a specimen selected to illustrate a point. The writer has had the advantage of handling pieces in a great many collections, and also dealing with china actually for sale. The cover of the book is from a copper plate in the author's possession, engraved in 1614, and will form the cover of the series.

Thanks are due, and are hereby tendered, to Mr. J. H. YOXALL, M.A., M.P., for kindly reading the proofs.

OLD CHINA.

THE A B C OF COLLECTING.

THE beginner is bound to make mistakes in china-buying as in everything else, but, with careful guidance, errors may be reduced to a minimum. This book aims to give that guidance and to lead the diligent student onward, step by step, until a more or less expert judgment may be given by him on specimens submitted for his examination.

**Mistakes in
China-Buying.**

The first note is one of warning—never buy with your ears—in other words, learn to rely upon your eyes, upon your fingers, upon a knife, or upon a file. The respectable dealers will always give a written guarantee with any piece of costly china, and will refund the price if proved to be wrong. On the other hand, the tyro can scarcely expect to begin by making extraordinary bargains; therefore, the best plan at starting is to limit your price until such a time as you feel sure of yourself. Now, Old China is divided into two classes, both translucent if held up to the light—hard paste is one class, soft paste is the other.

**Old China is
divided into
Two Classes.**

Hard paste is sometimes called true porcelain, because it is composed of natural elements, and soft paste is artificial porcelain, because it is a combination of various materials, forming a transparent cement, which was first heated or fritted and then mixed with other substances, such as white clay, to give opacity to the body. In both hard and soft paste every piece was covered with a glaze. As a rule, the glaze on a hard body was itself hard; so, on the other hand, a soft glaze and a soft body were used together. There are a few variations from this rule, and these will be dealt with as they arise in connection with the various factories. Let us now examine a piece of hard paste china and learn to distinguish it from a piece of soft paste. It is absolutely necessary to master this difference, so