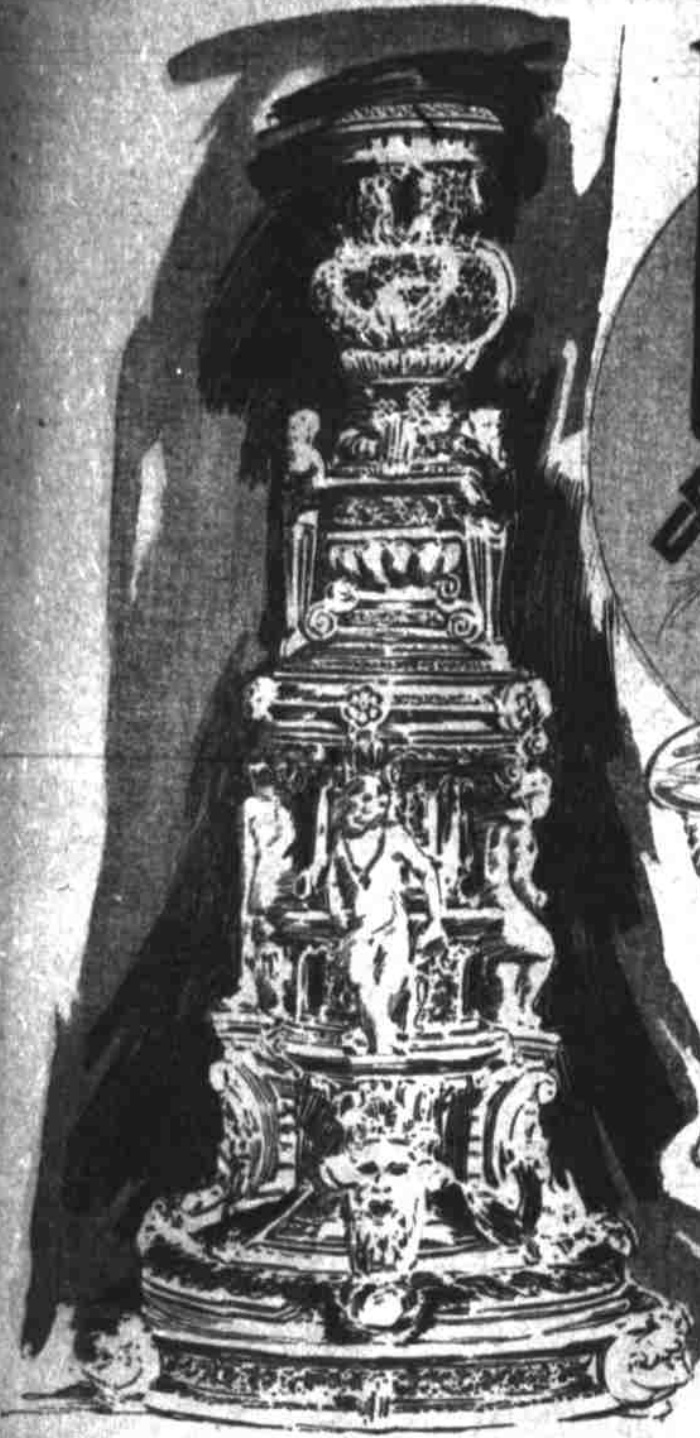
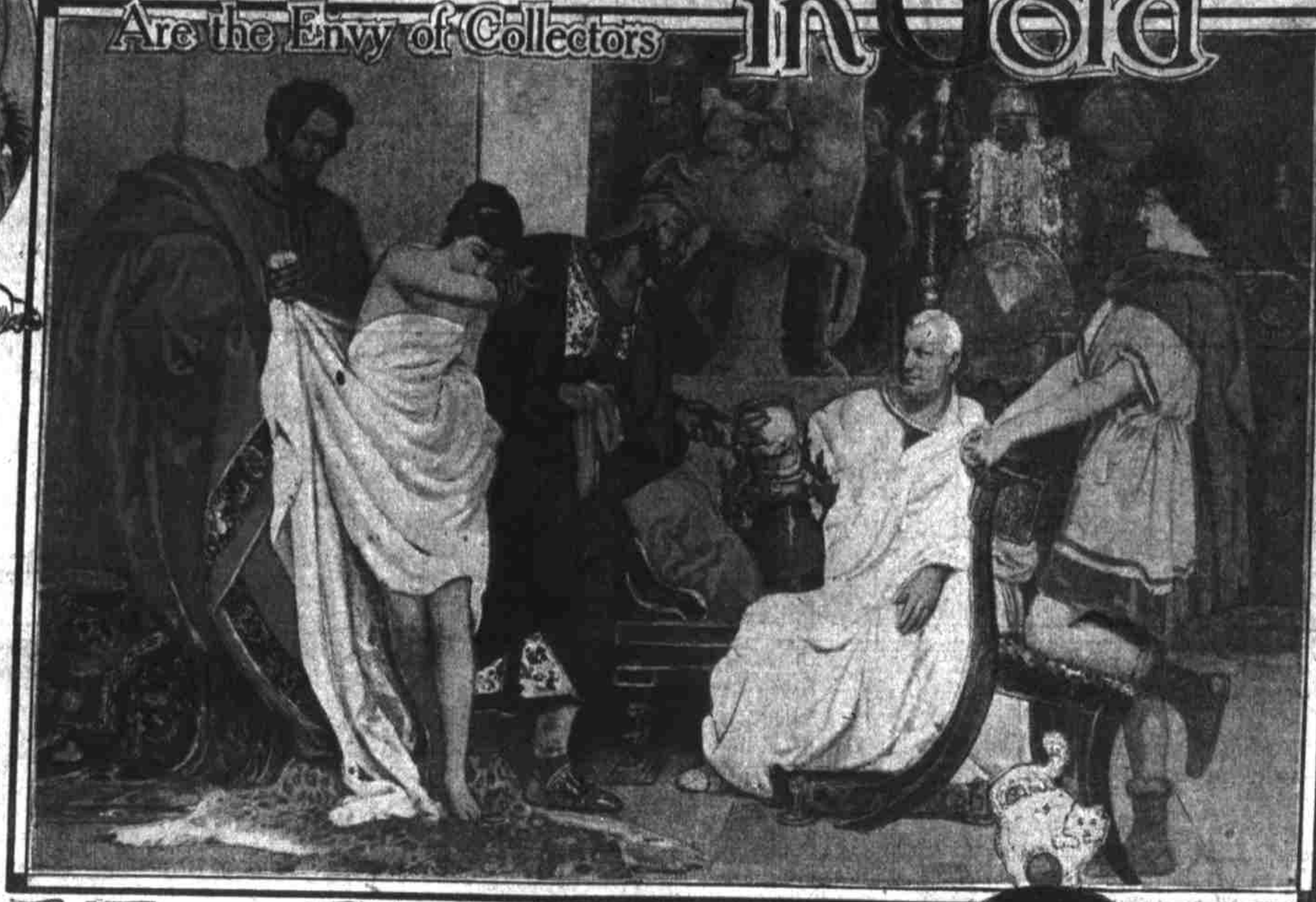


Pottery Worth Its Weight in Gold

Marvelous Works of Art That Are the Envy of Collectors



Candlestick of Henry II Ware Worth \$20,000



The Woman of the Vase? Adapted from Painting by H. Siemiradzki

THERE is scarcely a dwelling built these days that lacks the plate rack in its dining room. And there is scarcely a buyer or a tenant who moves in that fails to fill up the rack with pottery of some kind, from blue plates to beer steins. It is the modern evidence of the survival of the taste for fine china and porcelain, which has cost its devotees millions in centuries past, and is still embalmed in specimens that are worth more than their weight in gold. For 14 carat is the jew-

elers' standard of bullion the world over, and its price is 56 cents per pennyweight, or \$11.20 an ounce Troy.

Women, who are supposed to be the born lovers of fine china, figure among collectors, as a rule, simply as modest amateurs.

The history of china, like the history of horses, demonstrates that it takes men to be plungers. It takes a Morgan to make a collection and loan it to the Metropolitan Museum, a Lord Thynne to own a vase worth \$27,000

lance now included three which, at the sale of the Fountains (Narford Hall) collection, were found in an old clothes basket under a bedstead. They sold for the enormous sum of £6236—\$31,000. If they weighed nearly a hundred pounds avoirdupois, they still brought \$20 an ounce.

At the Spitzer sale in Paris, in 1892, a tassa, or bowl, which had brought a little less than \$5000 a few years earlier at the Hamilton Palace sale, was purchased by George Salting for nearly \$7500. A candlestick in the Rothschild collection cost \$18,000. Another, at the sale of the Fountaine collection, was bought by Detoul for nearly \$20,000. One such candlestick, included among the half dozen specimens, treasured in the South Kensington Museum, in England, is only 12 1/2 inches high, and at

FEW great paintings have been admired more than H. Siemiradzki's "The Woman of the Vase?" One sees that it must be a very beautiful and rare piece of pottery that raises a question against the prompt ownership of the lovely, shrinking slave.

Nowadays, most lovers of china admit there are no manufacturers who put out specimens for commercial purposes that are actually worth their weight in gold. Perhaps they may tell of single pieces put out by skilful decorators that command big prices—for instance, there is, or was a few weeks ago, in an Atlantic seaboard city, awaiting a purchaser, a pitcher vase of eggshell Coalport porcelain, that weighs fourteen ounces, and is worth \$350—more than twice its weight in bullion. But there is plenty of ware—for example, that designed by M. L. Solon, who worked for Minton, Stoke-on-Trent, until he retired to occupy himself with authorship on his darling topic—that has sold for many times its weight in silver. It was he who originated the work known as "pate sur pate," paste on paste, a process eminently suited to the facilities of Minton's, where soft paste material was a specialty.

One vase of his, three or four feet in height, sold for 1500 guineas—more than \$7500. Yes, and one eight-inch plate of his, now in the United States, which weighs eleven and one-half ounces, was on sale for \$200, nearly double the worth of its weight in gold.

With Solon, in the future, it may be as it has been with Palissy, and with scores of other men famous in the ceramic art in the past—as it has so notoriously been with all artists, from Van Dyck to Millet. All are not doomed to die to win; but the value of things admired rises with their rarity, and many a specimen of the most humble potter's work, the very names of their authors unknown from the hour when they left the kiln, have soared to prices a thousandfold increased with the lapse of the ages.

Solon, the living expert, the creator of a new phase of the art, has his own ceramomania. Like other true lovers of their professions, who, writers of books, must have some rare folios and fine bindings for their very own; or, makers of pictures, treasure some canvases they esteem exemplars of their art.

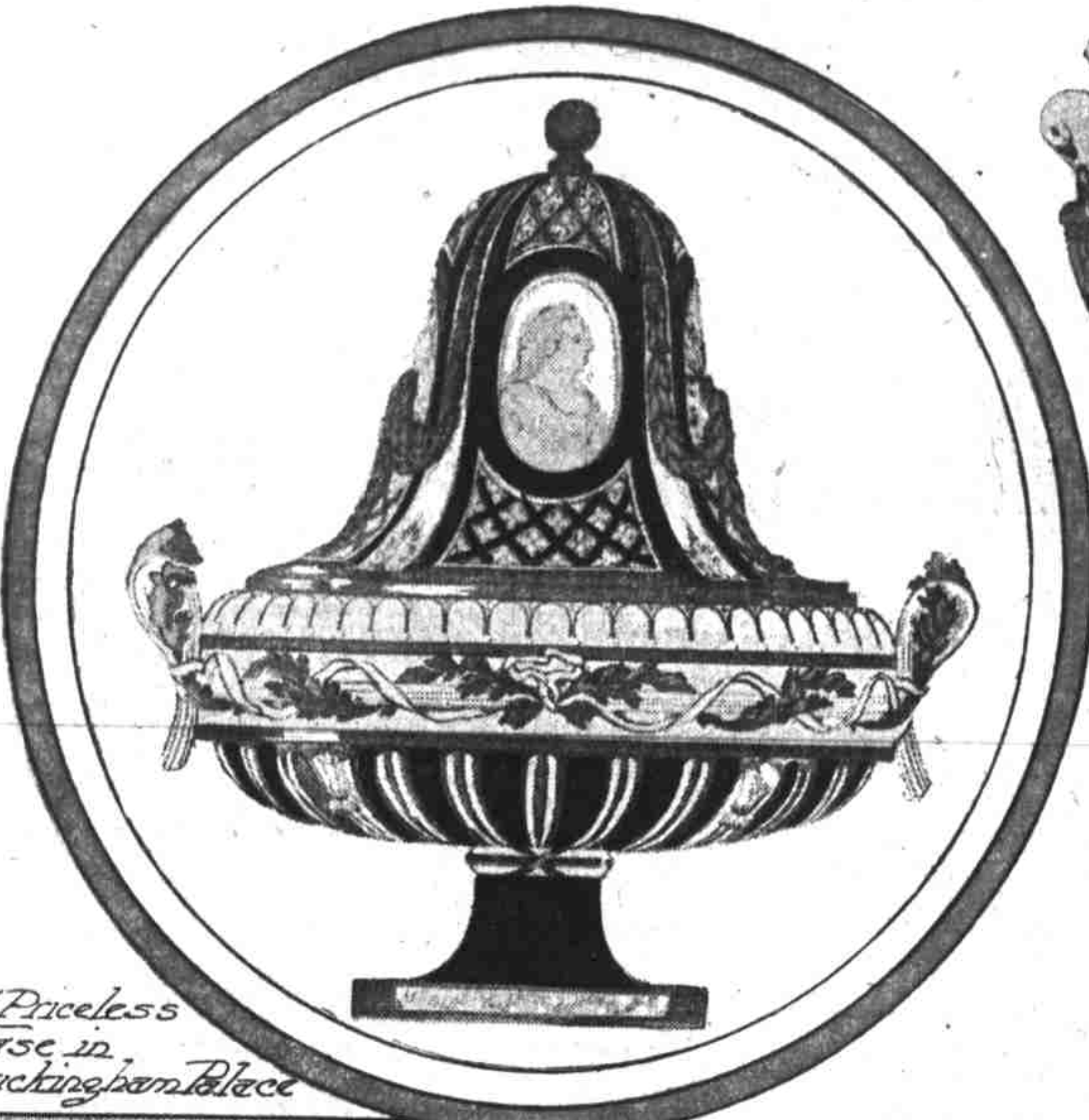
So he bought, a while ago, a number of tanagras, charming figures, which are being more and more highly appreciated. And those rare tanagras proved to be counterfeits, fully as impudent as those which unscrupulous forgers delight in putting off on rich collectors and famous museums.

When, however, china or porcelain begins to approach its weight in gold, it assumes attributes of identity which are usually ample safeguards for even the moderately well informed.

There is a French ware, dating back to the time of Henri II, known variously as Oiron, Henri II and Saint Porchaire, as successive enthusiasts have made historical discoveries which proved one thing, and later discoveries that proved another. For the last half century, every specimen has been identified, cataloged, pedigreed, registered and guaranteed, with a wealth of documentary evidence sufficient to prove the identity of an heir to the French throne before the dethroning Revolution.

Counterfeiters, to whom success would mean thousands of dollars, would find it easier to sell the United States Mint a gold brick, or pass a Canadian dime on a Washington car conductor, than to palm off a spurious Henri II piece upon a collector, unless the collector happened to be an American millionaire just commencing to fulfil his ultimate purpose in the scheme of existence. They have tried it, many a time; and their efforts are the laughing stock of ceramic literature.

Yet the list has always remained open to the admission of new specimens. If only their authenticity was beyond question. Thus, the list of sixty-five pieces of Henri II ware known to be in ex-



A Priceless Vase in Buckingham Palace



Vase Owned by the King of England

the base 4 1/2 inches in diameter. Palissy, whose heroic consecration to his chosen art, whose long years of deprivation, longer years of royal favor and ignominious end in the royal Bastille, have been the theme of all writers on the ceramic art, is one of the potters whose fame has survived and grows ever more exalted. Massive as some of his productions are, there are many, now esteemed priceless.

One of the most admirable is a famous dish, in violet and green, depicting Venus with several Cupids, a treatment of the subject as noteworthy for the exquisite grace of its lines as it is for the brilliant harmony of its colors.

The name "majolica" is a household word in almost every European country, and the American housewife contracted her ambition to own majolica when she listened at her mother's knees.

Christianity taught its lessons, to the poor and to the rich, in the glazes of majolica; and the very travelers to the Holy Land bore flasks ornamented with symbols of their pious pilgrimages. Especially fine pieces have risen in price until they are worth their weight in gold, as instance an old Italian one of remarkable wealth in detail and a great beauty of conception—"The Resurrection," a plaque measuring 9 1/2 inches in height by 8 inches in width, which was sold from the Pourtales collection for \$600.

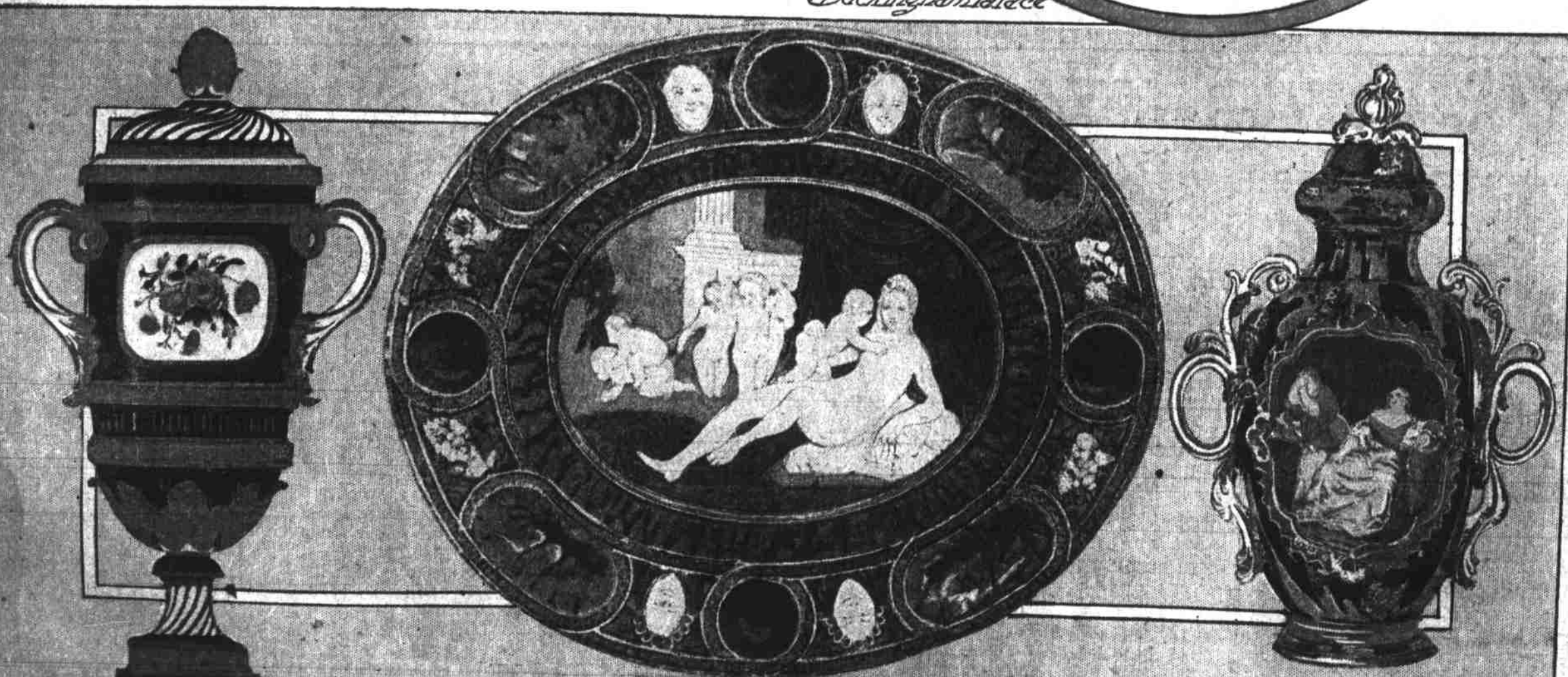
England, in the range of its china and porcelain, has produced pieces that are the joy of connoisseurs and the despair of all collectors whose purses would have been discovered by Fortunatus. It was in 1763 that Dr. Garnier, in England, presented to the Foundling Hospital a Chelsea vase, twenty-four inches high, with a ground of deep blue, painted on one side with a Boucher subject, on the reverse with exotic birds.

It was slightly damaged, but Lord Dudley paid a high price for it, and, finding the companion vase in the possession of Lord Chesterfield, obtained the second one for \$10,000. In 1856 the pair sold for \$21,000.

Lord H. Thynne's sale, half a dozen years ago, two other vases attained the record price for Chelsea, bringing \$43,000.

There is a vase in the British Museum, only twenty inches high, one of two presented by Dr. Garnier more than a century ago, when he made his gift to the Foundling Hospital, that is beyond price, because the British empire never needs money badly enough to sell such treasures. But if it were put up at auction today a Morgan would be likely to give \$20,000 for it, as he is said to have given \$125,000 for three peachbloss jars with covers and two bankers, and \$100,000 for a single red hawthorn vase, in his collection now in the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art on loan.

Sevres is a name quite as famous to conjure with. In the Jones collection, deposited in the South Kensington Museum, there is a Sevres vase which once served to unite two distant kingdoms. It was part of the collection of Sevres porcelain presented by King Louis XVI of France to Tipoo Sahib in 1788, when Tipoo sent three ambassadors to the court of France. The collection was then valued at 25,125 livres, about \$6000, while this particular vase was inventoried at nearly \$200. Today the lessened purchasing value of money, and the enhancement of values upon such notable specimens, would probably bring bidders willing to give for the Tipoo Sahib vase far more than its weight in gold.



The Famous Venus and Cupids of Palissy

Vase Given to Tipoo Sahib by Louis XVI of France

Chelsea Vase in British Museum. Said to be Worth \$20,000