

**A FLOOD OF "ANTIQUES."**

**Britain and Continent Make Them While You Wait.**

Are your antiques genuine antiques? That is a question which many collectors, on both a great and a small scale, think they can answer in the affirmative. Otherwise, of course, they would not have "collected" them. The chances are greatly against their answer being correct, according to Maxwell Blake, United States Consul at Dunfermline, who has been investigating the traffic in alleged antiques in Great Britain and on the Continent. What he has found out has been published in "The Daily Consular and Trade Reports." The subject is of especial interest just now.

It may be generally stated, he says, that nothing but the veriest trash is to be found in 90 per cent of the antique shops of Europe. He advises the collector to buy only on expert advice or of dealers willing to give a detailed written stipulation that the articles are guaranteed to be approximately of the period represented, and, with respect to English furniture, that no carving, inlay or repairs, not frankly admitted, have been added, the purchase money to be refunded if any of the statements is found to be untrue.

Dexterous copyists on the Continent make miniatures, decorated snuff and patch boxes and Battersea and Dresden enamel ware by the gross, especially for Americans, who are particularly keen just now in the collection of small "articles of vertu." The painting on the boxes is usually poor in quality and generally a crude copy of some original example. Close observation will generally reveal that the rim to which the top is hinged is artificially colored. Their modern origin and hasty execution are frequently to be detected by the gobs of fresh glue exuding from underneath.

Copies of pictures are being sold as originals at prices much above their true value as copies.

no more than its intrinsic value, of comparatively recent manufacture, an old original hall mark taken from some article of little value.

Tons of "faked" Sheffield plate are being made for the benefit of the collector. It has generally been believed that the genuine could be readily told from the spurious because of a discernible sub-surface of copper. This was because in the old ware the silver was fused on the copper before the ware was hammered into form. As

the shape of alms dishes, plaques, candlesticks and jardineres, while they come by way of Holland, are not "old," but of distinctively modern make.

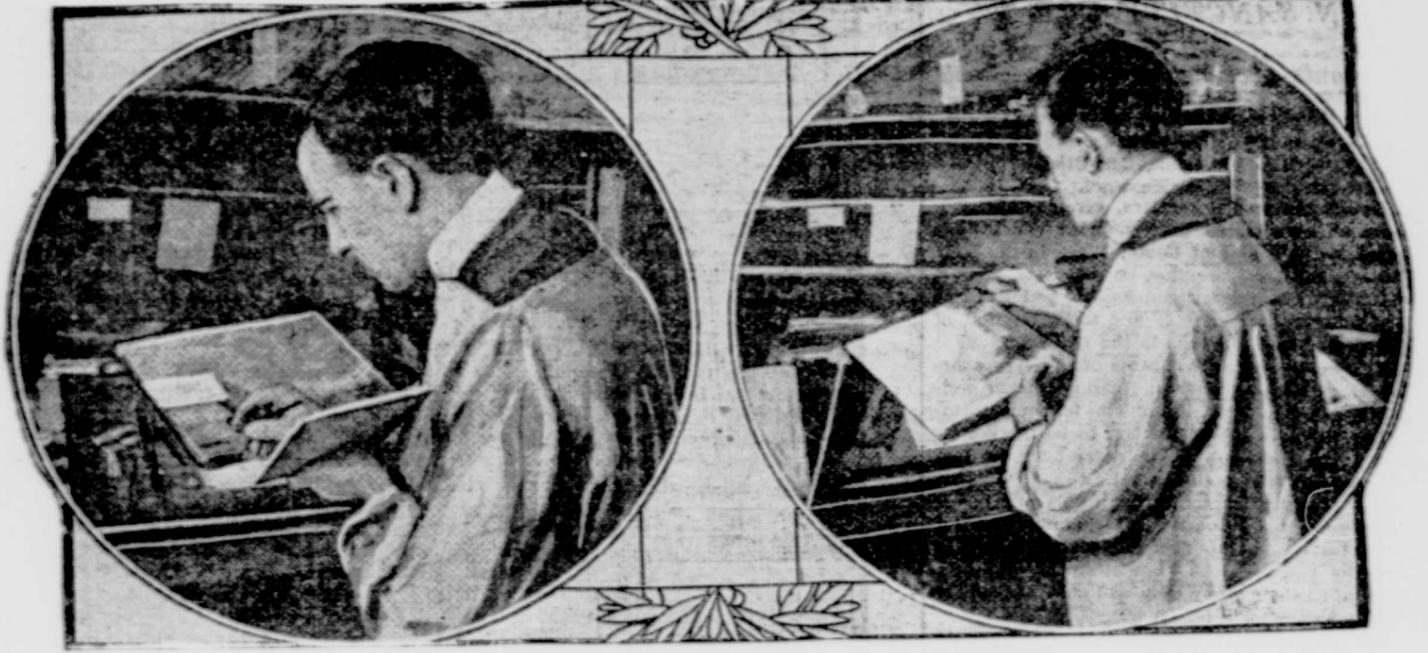
"Difficulties thicken," says Mr. Blake, "as the subject of old English furniture is approached. Large stakes are here frequently played for and the cunning of the dealer amounts to sheer genius. Illustrative of this, an instance of recent occurrence may be cited.

discovery, demanding, on penalty of exposure, that the full purchase price be immediately refunded. Much to the purchaser's surprise the dealer refused to make restitution under the circumstances which, he alleged, involved both his reputation and his honor. But, to put it differently, if the customer would simply state his dissatisfaction with his purchase, then he (the dealer), knowing the chairs to be genuine, would thank him for the privilege of being allowed to recover them, but, it must be distinctly understood, only upon the terms and conditions of an ordinary sale. The dealer thereupon offered about \$1,000 over and above the sum for which the chairs had previously been purchased. To this, of course, the nobleman demurred, protesting that he desired no profit from an unfortunate venture, but in the end, in order to secure the recovery of his money, he was prevailed upon to acquiesce in this extraordinary proposal.

"The chairs having been duly returned, no great time elapsed before another customer took their purchase under consideration. A sale had now, however, become much simplified, for not only could the source of the purchase be pointed to with pride, but actually the check was exhibited, showing beyond all doubt that the chairs had been purchased from Lord — the well known collector, at a price indicative of their apparent worth. Thus, the dealer, shadowing his own dishonesty by this clever ruse, contrived to snatch even a further profit out of this second and more unscrupulous transaction.

"It is no exaggeration to say that such episodes are daily occurrences in the antique trade, except that, generally speaking, the ignorant purchaser seldom gets in exchange for his investment even so much as a good modern copy. Many so-called antique shops actually carry on business without having one genuine piece of antique furniture in their establishments.

"Grandfather clocks are frequently made up of such incongruities as a modern dial with a forged maker's name and date, an old case patched up and set off by a modern inlay, and perhaps works of about fifty years ago. Grandfather chairs are, almost without exception, modern or old frames debauched by new cabriole or claw-and-ball legs. Violins signed 'Stradivarius' or 'Jacobus Stainer,' surreptitiously hidden in rubbish heaps, are replaced by others as soon as sold."



FORGING THE SIGNATURE ON AN IMITATION "OLD MASTER."

RUNNING A MIXTURE OF GUM AND VARNISH OVER THE FINISHED "OLD MASTER."



PUTTING THE "OLD MASTER" IN AN OVEN TO DRY AND CRACK THE VARNISH.

RUBBING IN SOOT AND ASH TO SIMULATE APPEARANCE OF AGE.

The faked "old masters" keep a number of men busy. The copy of the picture having been painted, the next process is that of giving the canvas the appearance of age. The signature having been applied by a man intimately acquainted with the signatures and marks of the old painters, the canvas is covered with a special mixture of gum and varnish. It then goes into a hot oven, in which it is cracked after the manner of an old picture. A mixture of soot, ash and setting material rubbed in after the baking gives the impression of long exposure to dust and dirt. A little paint is then flicked from a stiff-haired brush on to the picture to give the appearance of fly marks. The finishing touches are those of a knife blade applied for the purpose of removing any marks which might "give the picture away." Genuine old prints and engravings are rarely, if ever, to be found on the bargain counters by the amateur collector.

Continental firms, well known to the dealers, do not hesitate to attach "old marks" to china made in imitation of Dresden, Chelsea, Worcester and Bow, worth their weight in gold. In order to convince the gullible of the genuineness of some punch or toddy ladle supposed to date back to the Cromwellian period, small coins of that time which are valueless from the numismatist's point of view are purchased by purveyors of this kind of "fake" and set into pieces just from the mint, so to speak.

The forging of hall marks in silver is a hazardous operation in Great Britain, and early English silver is very high priced. How does the "fake" manufacturer get around this difficulty? He will deftly insert into a piece worth

a matter of fact, electroplating has made it possible to coat a copper piece with silver after it has been turned out by machinery, and this is done in the case of the "fake" Sheffield ware. Most of this, it is said, ultimately finds its way to America and the colonies.

It is asserted that 95 per cent of the pewter ware to be found in England and Scotland has been made within the last ten years. Practically all of the "old Dutch" brass articles, in

"What purported to be some exceptionally rare Chippendale chairs were sold by a well known dealer to a certain nobleman, who, unhesitatingly accepted the dealer's word that they were genuine. Some time after this, however, the service of an expert were employed to further examine them, when it was revealed that a swindle had been perpetrated, the chairs being nothing more than fine modern copies.

"The customer informed the dealer of this



Flicking paint on an "old master" to imitate fly marks.

Putting the finishing touches to an "old master" with a knife.

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