

OLD FRENCH PLATE:

A HANDBOOK FOR THE COLLECTOR.

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OLD FRENCH PLATE

ITS MAKERS AND MARKS.

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ETC., ETC.

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PREFACE.

THE high esteem in which old French plate is held amongst connoisseurs and collectors at home and abroad renders a knowledge of the ancient marks used to distinguish it as genuine, desirable and even necessary.

The comparatively modern marks placed upon French plate since the Revolution are well known, having been published both in France and in England. But whilst these, which are of little interest, have been so often printed, no attempt had been made until the appearance of the first edition of the present treatise to interpret the marks by which the beautiful works of the old French goldsmiths may be identified.

Many mistakes must needs occur when an art subject is first dealt with by a foreign author: but even allowing for these, the complete exhaustion of the first edition and the demand for a new one of *Old French Plate* is some proof that it has been a useful handbook; and it is hoped that the many corrections and additions which have been made in the present edition will enable the reader better than before, to fix the date of almost every

specimen of old plate made in Paris, and the origin of a good deal of the old provincial French plate, which he has the opportunity of examining.

The author wishes to acknowledge his indebtedness to all the best works on the subject of French gold and silver-work, including those of Labarte, de Laborde, Lacroix, Lasteyrie, Germain Bapst and Eudel, and especially to the works of that celebrated expert the Baron Jérôme Pichon, whose catalogue of the Lenoir Don in the Musée du Louvre, and "catalogues raisonnées" of the collections of ancient plate the property of himself and of M. Eudel (prepared for the notable sales in the years 1878 and 1884 at the Hôtel Drouot which have so greatly called the attention of collectors to the beauty of old French plate,) are full of the most valuable information.

It has too long been hoped that M. le Baron Pichon would some day give the world the advantage of his unrivalled learning: in the meantime the author has endeavoured to condense into the present treatise as much of the information to be gathered from these authorities and from his own observations as will be useful to the English amateur, collector, and dealer in old French plate.

W. J. C.

CIRENCESTER,
November, 1892.