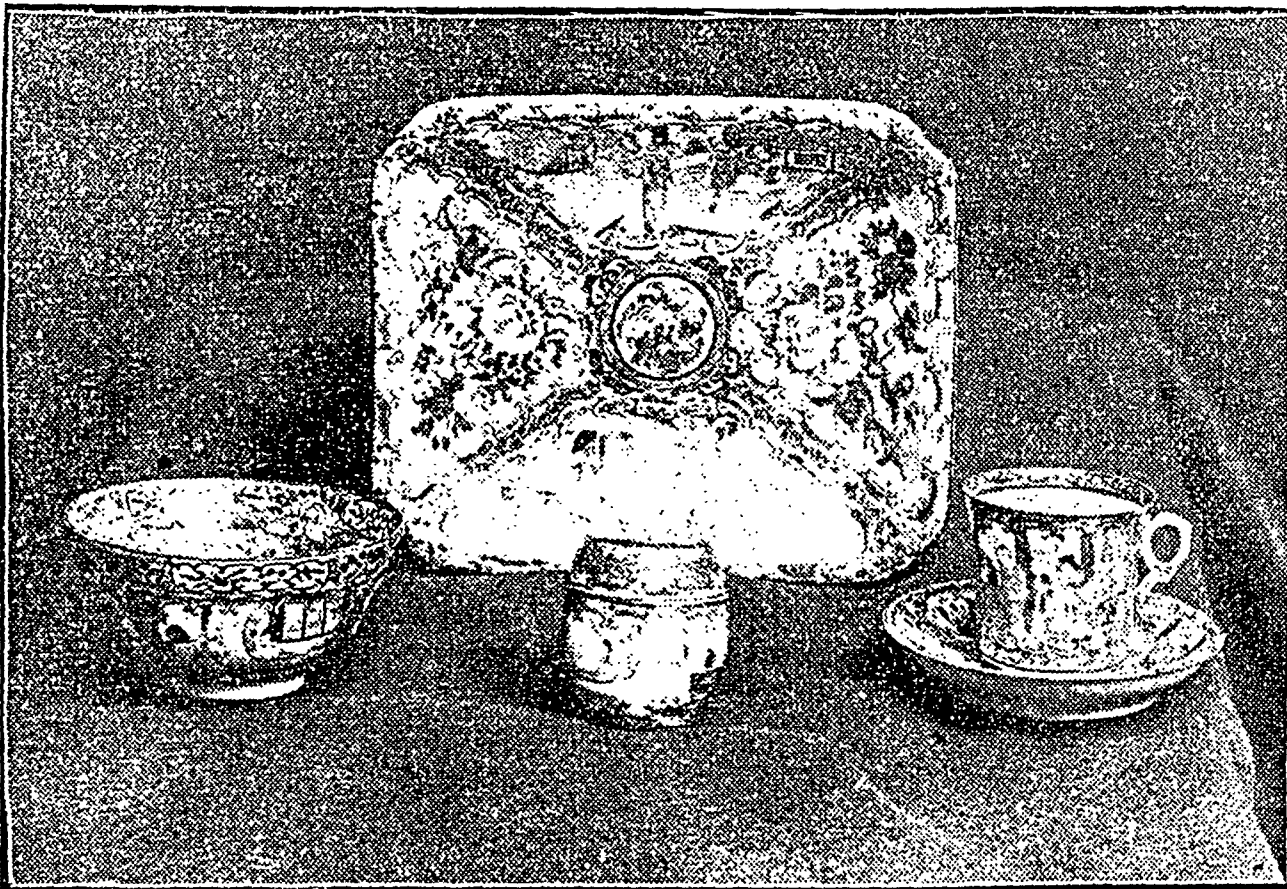


# The Fad For "Green India," Or Gold Medallion Ware



Group of "Green India"

BY CONSTANCE CRISHOLM.  
If you were to ask 50 women at random what china they were collecting, 48 of them would answer with pride and delight: "Why, green India, of course!"

And yet of these 48 there would not be four, probably, who could tell you anything about it in the remotest degree, except that they loved to "pick it over" in the Oriental shops in order to get the best pieces, those free of nicks and defects. And, truth to tell, there is not much to be learned about it from books on ceramics. The enthusiast must also delve elsewhere for what she finds.

Many of the "green India" faddists suppose that the ware is made in the land of the rajahs, judging so from its name; while others believe it to be potted in India and decorated in China. The fact is, however, that the name India became associated with it many years ago, because, like the blue India of our grandmothers, it was first brought from the Orient by the old East India Company of Holland and London. The opaque pottery kind usually collected is made and decorated at various potteries in the vicinity of Canton and is exported mostly from Hongkong. But there is a fine, thin "green India," which is a porcelain, and this is made in Japan and sent to China for decoration. The cups of the old sets are thick, like the other pieces, and there are also thick cups among the modern wares, but of recent years the modern ware, and that

years most collectors prefer the daintier cups made of the finer Japanese kaolin.

So universally do the women of our cities—for the fad extends from coast to coast—call this coveted china "green India" that its commercial name of gold medallion ware, the name by which the importers know it, is almost never heard socially over the tearups.

It gets this importation name of gold medallion, also royal gold medallion, from the gold circle or ring in the centre of the design. Within this gold circle is inclosed a butterfly, a bird or a flower. From this centre four bars of sea-green enamel radiate on the larger pieces, such as platters, plates, serving dishes and saucers, dividing the design into four panels, two having a floral motif and in the other two scenes showing men, women and children in a typically Chinese environment. An Oriental expert in a New York emporium of products from the Far East vouchsafed the information that the design is an old one and that the people and scenes represent historical personages and events in the chronicles of the "Walled Empire." Of that we had felt quite sure, and, knowing that most, if not all, of the art products of the Orient embody symbolism in their designs, we conjecture that the transverse bars of green enamel may symbolize the cross of Buddha or the four cardinal points.

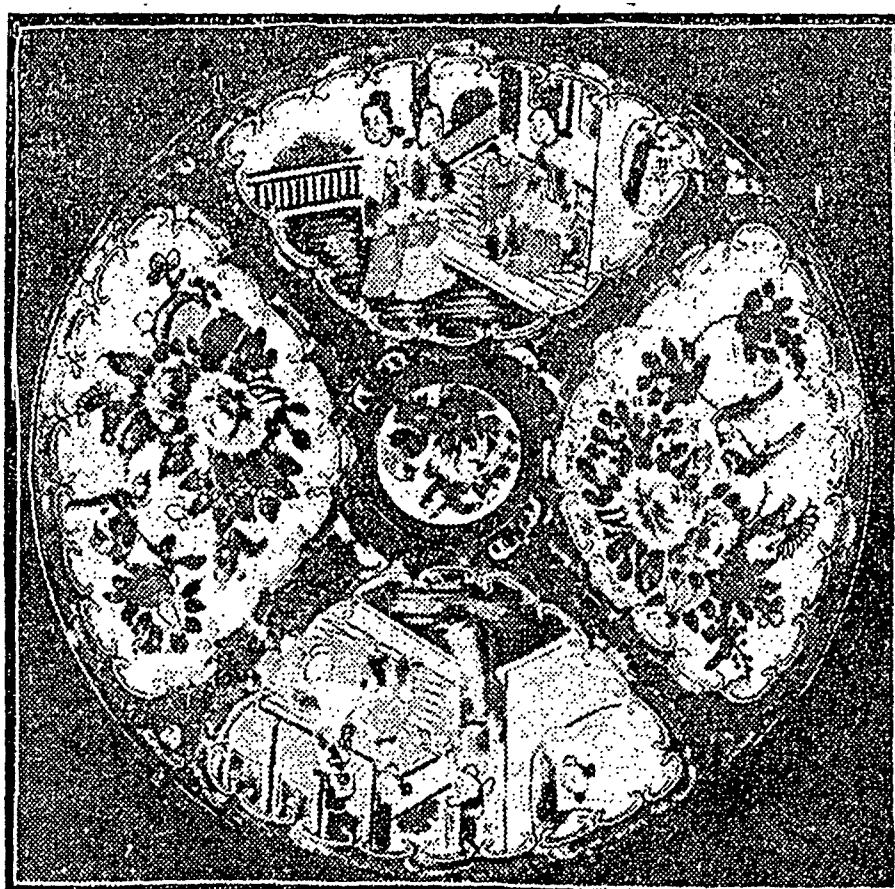
Likewise we fancy that the gold circle and the butterflies are emblems of the soul,

as in our symbolism, for if Persian rugs and the basketry and pottery of our American Indians are rich in symbolism, we may surely look for it in the art of this ancient people.

Many handsome pieces of Chinese pottery, such as the large ornamented jars with covers, have the dragon decoration, and we know that the Imperial dragon always has five claws.

Any piece that bears the five-clawed dragon shows the symbol of the Emperor; likewise the princes have the four-clawed dragon for their emblem. The fong-boang, represented with long, streaming feathers, is the symbol of the Empress, and is considered a bird of good omen; so, in selecting a piece of Oriental ware to present as a gift, you wish good luck to the recipient if the fong-boang adorns it. Pieces made for the Emperor to present to his officers bear a mark known as the "tablet of honor," which includes the swastika, the symbol of life and good fortune used by the Orientals and Asiatics from earliest times. Such a piece would be a rare find in this country, but, as the officers do not emigrate, could only be found in the possession of a Celestial who had inherited it, and the average collector need not hope to secure it.

"Green India" harmonizes particularly well with brass, and a tea table is most attractive fitted up with brass kettle, tray and caddy, the rest being in the green



"Green India" Plate.

enamel. The "green India" candlesticks are among the prettiest pieces, and these or brass ones are charming on such a table. The green china candlesticks are also very effective as mantel decorations in a white-and-green bedroom.

Some workers in these potteries of China make only one kind of piece for generations, many families making cups or platters, while others specialize in plates, bowls or teapots.

The Chinese think their national brew is best when made in a teapot of the heavier ware, and many Occidental tea makers are of the same opinion. A great many of the "green India" collections so highly prized by American women have been bought or given piece by piece. No "green India" enthusiast goes out and buys a whole set of it at one time. She is too much of a connoisseur to do so banal a

thing as that, even if she has the money in bank. Being an artist, she wishes to prolong the keen delight of haunting the "green India" shops where this fascinating product of the East abounds, and, with a companion to whom to appeal when in doubt, select the purest greens, the finest enamel and the richest colors that may be found, for there is, as these collectors know, a decided difference in the quality of "green India," some pieces being much more beautiful than others.

There is comfort, however, in always being quite sure that if company is coming or an occasion for gift giving arises, one can rush, even at the eleventh hour, into the shop of subtle odors and find the supply of "green India," or royal gold medallion ware, still unexhausted.