

## DESCRIPTIONS OF THE ILLUSTRATIONS

### Plate 25.—IMPERIAL STAND FOR FRUIT OR FLOWERS

As stated in the description of the Imperial Screen reproduced (Plate 24) in this volume, the Imperial Throne was flanked with a pair of stands, on which were placed bowls of fruit or flowers or, perhaps, incense burners. The stand now illustrated is one of such a pair. It is of rare and striking form. The table is five-lobed, its edges decorated with three principal bands of ornament; the upper and lower with lotus flowers and foliage, while in that of the centre band, somewhat withdrawn, the foliage is varied with the svastika and thunder-pattern alternately. This is supported by a group of five boldly carved figures, the upper parts of which are shaped as highly conventionalised phoenix heads, from which rise slender balusters; while they terminate downwards each in a single leg and scrolled foot, ornamented also with thunder-frets. The five-lobed double base is richly decorated with foliage and flowers. The work is chiefly in carved red lacquer of fine colour; with underlayers of green and buff.

Height,  $36\frac{1}{2}$  inches; diameter,  $16\frac{3}{4}$  inches.

Ch'ing Dynasty (Ch'ien Lung)  
*Messrs. Spink & Son, Ltd.*

### Plate 26.—PANEL, LANDSCAPE

The panel here illustrated is one of a pair made for wall decoration; and representing a class of work which, during the reign of the Emperor Ch'ien Lung, and, apparently, at his own behest, was carried to a very high pitch of technical perfection. Those best known were made to commemorate the victories of his army in Eastern Turkestan, in 1766, and the suppression of the Formosa Rebellion about twenty years later; and show the movements of troops, with eulogistic poems, etc., carved generally in red and brown lacquer. The examples of this pictorial treatment of lacquer-work now under consideration, give us pure landscape, which loses nothing in decorative value by reason of its characteristic conventions. The actual subjects have not, so far, been identified. That reproduced has for its centre of interest, a rocky island, mainly occupied by a group of buildings evidently of some importance, having a two-storied pavilion overlooking the lake or river and various subsidiary edifices, with willow and other trees. The near shore is fringed with water-lilies; and, near by, three fishing-boats are seen, one of them working with trained cormorants. The projection of another island or of the near shore is seen in the right foreground; while the distance is occupied with a range of curiously contorted mountains beyond the water and a wooded promontory to the left. The second

## CHINESE LACQUER

of the pair is similar in treatment, but less successful as a composition. The design deals almost entirely with a mass of well-wooded and rocky country, overlooking a river. Near the summit, on the right is a group of imposing buildings from which a steep path leads to a quay on which is an elaborate gate-house, fronted with a ceremonial arch. Various small boats are in the river, and part of a building can be seen in the left foreground, on the near bank. These panels have their designs carved with extraordinary vigour and unusual depth in red lacquer. The water is of a greenish-black, which in the subject of our illustration, breaks into definite green for the crests of the little waves in the foreground. In both, the sky is simply left to a brown diaper pattern.

Height, 5 feet 3 inches ; width, 3 feet 2 inches.

Ch'ing Dynasty (Ch'ien Lung)  
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### Plate 27.—VASE

One of a pair of vases, of which the ovoid bodies are decorated with rectangular compartments in which are represented vases of flowers, the emblems of the Four Liberal Arts and similar objects, within a border of thunder-fret and on a trellis enclosing svastika. Between these panels is a filling of foliated scrolls and the necks and feet have leaf ornaments with thunder-pattern and borders of the latter pattern. In carved lacquer of three layers, red, green and yellowish-buff—the red being the chief.

Height, 15 $\frac{5}{8}$  inches ; diameter, 8 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

Ch'ing Dynasty (Ch'ien Lung)  
*Victoria and Albert Museum.*

### *Frontispiece* (front view), Plate 28 (back).—THRONE OF THE EMPEROR CH' IEN LUNG

One of the principal treasures of the Victoria and Albert Museum, and certainly the finest example of carved lacquer yet seen in this country, is the Throne of the Emperor Ch'ien Lung, presented to the Victoria and Albert Museum by Mr. George Swift, J.P., in 1922. It is said to have come from the Hunting Palace of Nan-hai-tze, near Peking, and to be one of a pair, the other being still, one hopes, preserved in the capital. There appears to be absolutely no doubt as to its authenticity ; while, as a work of art, its merits speak for themselves ; and it may be taken as representing the standard of highest achievement of the craftsmen of the Imperial workshop—and of the period of its origin.

The throne forms a broad, low seat, with four boldly incurved legs,

# CHINESE LACQUER

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PLATE XXVI

PANEL, landscape, for wall decoration. The design in carved red lacquer; the sky diapered in carved brown and the water in black touched with dark green lacquer. Height, 5 ft. 3 in.; width, 3 ft. 2 in. Ch'ing Dynasty (Ch'ien Lung).

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