



Educational Playing Cards of the Eighteenth Century

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originals in porcelain, and some interesting examples painted with European designs from colored prints which were sent to China to be copied on the porcelains of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

The earliest piece of Canton enamel in the collections is a large bowl of the K'ang-hsi reign, with a plain powder blue ground. The Ch'ien-lung period is represented by numerous fine examples, including a graceful tea-pot with deep rose ground, and a bowl with pink ground decorated with dragons in green and brown (see small cut). Many other pieces, such as are usually attributed in museum collections to the period from 1736 to 1820, are of later date, extending into the middle of the nineteenth century, such as that numerous class of objects decorated with floral designs in polychrome on dark blue. These collections will be more fully treated in a handbook on the Museum enamels, which is now in course of preparation.

E. A. B.



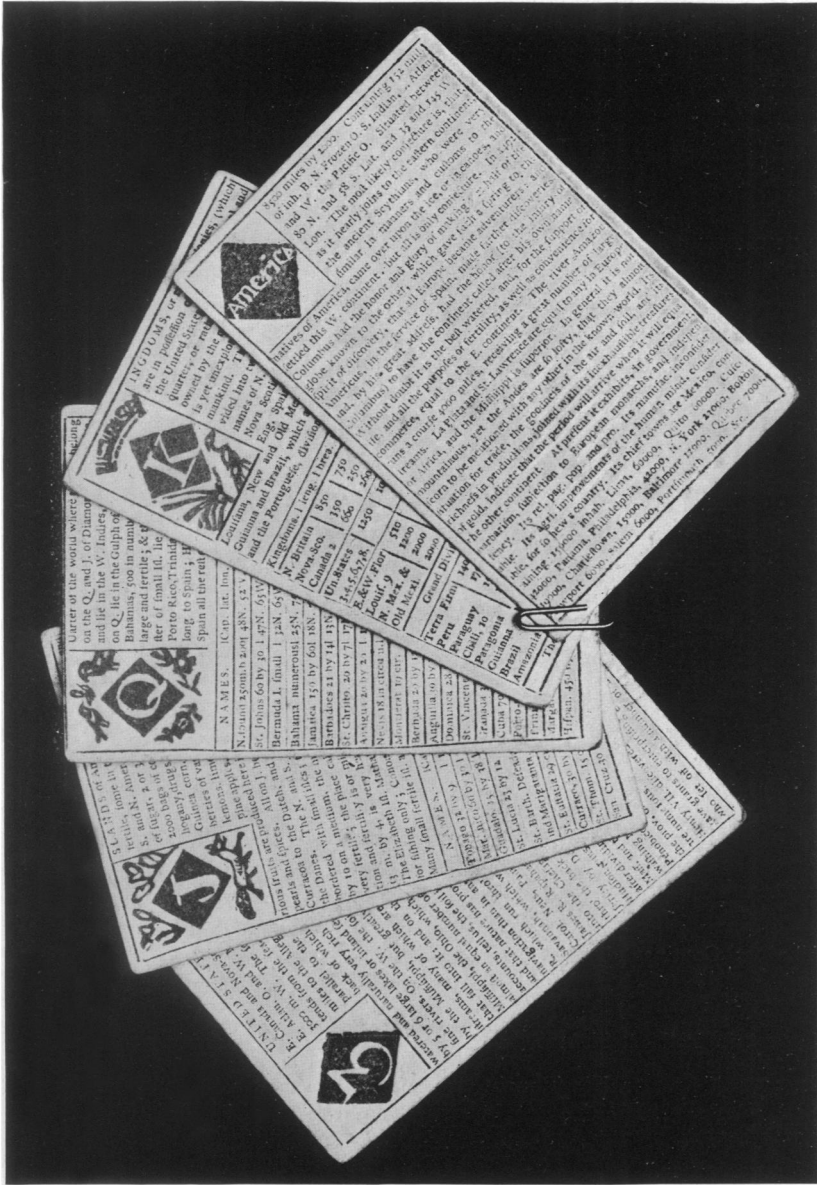
EDUCATIONAL PLAYING CARDS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

A humble though truly interesting addition to the collections has been made recently in the shape of a pack of educational cards printed in the latter part of the eighteenth century. It consists of a full pack of which no better description can be given than that presented by the author himself in the "Preface" card introducing the pack:

"While Guthrie's and other grammars instruct those only who have opportunity for study; this compendium is calculated to give those who have not much time to read (and particularly young persons at school) a general acquaintance with the bigness, boundaries, population, capitals, latitudinal and longitudinal distances from London, islands, rivers, lakes, mountains, climates, productions, agriculture, manufactures, trades, government, religion, customs, learning and curiosities of every Kingdom or State in the world, in an easy suatory manner; as it describes Asia under Spades, Africa under Clubs, Europe under Hearts, America under Diamonds; arranged thus, each quarter is described on the first page of its suit, and each K. page contains the Kingdoms, and the number pages their descriptions; the reader will observe that Tartary on the K. of spades has the figure '2' annexed, which refers to the 2 of spades; England, Scotland and Ireland have 2, 3, 4, their description begins on the 2 and ends on the 4, etc. The islands are on the Q. and J. of each suit."

A quaint note follows:

"Should the scientific discover any inaccuracies, their candour will ascribe them to some pardonable cause; and that of the public will graciously accept the labours of the Author as an evidence of his good will toward mankind." Some curious assertions on the part of the author show the state of knowledge of his day, and how little of the Western Hemisphere had been seriously explored. For instance, while describing the American Continent, he remarks: "In general it is not mountainous. Yet the Andes are so lofty that they almost scorn to be mentioned with any in the world." Again, in enumerating the



EDUCATIONAL PLAYING CARDS
About 1790

chief towns of the American Continent, he mentions first Mexico, 150,000 inhabitants; Lima, 60,000; Quito, 60,000; Cuzco, 42,000; after which come Philadelphia, then still the Capital of the United States, 42,000; New York, 23,000; Boston, 19,000; Charleston, 15,000; Baltimore, 12,000; Quebec, 7000; Newport, 6000; Salem, 6000; Portsmouth, 5000, etc. At this time Louisiana belonged to Spain, to which France had ceded it in 1762. The United States is mentioned as separate from those "Kingdoms or rather colonies which are in possession of European Kings." An article on Canada describes it as three thousand miles from London W. by N. and east New Britain and Hudson Bay, S. Nova Scotia, Province of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York, W. by unknown lands.

As to the date of the pack, the fact of Philadelphia being mentioned as the Capital of the United States shows it to have been at least as old as 1790⁽¹⁾ when Washington was founded and the seat of government was officially in Philadelphia until 1800, when it was removed to Washington. It may be noted that the resumé of English history given on the 2, 3, and 4 of hearts, stops short with the ascent of the throne by George III—that is, 1760; and this fact, as well as that of Louisiana being mentioned as a Spanish possession, might have inclined one to give the cards an earlier date limit had it not been for a note on France which narrows the earliest time limit to about 1786-1789. On the 5 of hearts may be found this sentence: "The French are now struggling for civil and religious liberty"—which perfectly describes the legislative struggles of the crown and privileged classes and the *tiers état* that immediately preceded the Revolution of 1789. Moreover, while the article on Poland does not mention the first partition of that country in 1772, the note on Prussia states that "They (the Poles) were almost ruined by the late King of Prussia," a luminous phrase which fixes the lower limit of time for the printing of the pack to 1786 when Frederick the Great died, who with Russia and Austria divided one-fifth of the Polish territory. There is no reference to the great partition of 1793 in which Catherine II. played a leading part. The positive dates 1786 and 1793, therefore, fix the extreme limits of age of this interesting pack. The other internal evidence referred to above fits in perfectly. As it is highly improbable that the pack could have been printed in either year forming the extreme of possible time, one may fairly name 1790 as the rough hypothetical date.

S. Y. S.

(1) Philadelphia, however, was usually the seat of Congress from 1774.

The 1st Continental Congress was held in Carpenters' Hall, September 5, 1774; 2d in old State House, Independence Hall, May 10, 1775; and excepting from September 26, 1777, to June 18, 1778, when Philadelphia was occupied by the British, Philadelphia was the virtual capital of the colonies. The National Convention that framed the Constitution sat in Philadelphia 1787, and from 1790-1800 Philadelphia was the official National Capital.

In 1790 Alexander Hamilton helped Jefferson to pass a bill authorizing the President to select a site on the Potomac for the Capital and to provide for the reception of Congress in 1800. When this took place in the appointed year it was a "backwoods settlement in the wilderness. Only the President's house and one wing of the Capitol were ready for occupancy."