

Finch & C^o



A FINE ENGLISH SILVER GILT AND RED CORAL CHILDS TEETHING STICK

A FINE ENGLISH SILVER GILT AND RED CORAL CHILDS TEETHING STICK WITH WHISTLE

MAKERS MARK 'MB' – PROBABLY LONDON

CIRCA 1720 – 30

SIZE: 14 CM LONG – 5½ INS LONG

LITERATURE

CORAL WAS THOUGHT TO HAVE GREAT AMULETIC POWERS HAVING ORIGINATED, ACCORDING TO GREEK MYTHOLOGY, AS THE SPURTS OF BLOOD THAT HAD GUSHED FORTH WHEN THE MEDUSA'S HEAD WAS CUT OFF BY PERSEUS. AS A PROTECTION AGAINST EVIL AND MAGIC SPELLS IT WAS BELIEVED TO BE HIGHLY EFFICACIOUS. THE TEETHING STICK THEREFORE HAD A DUAL PURPOSE.

BY 1740 THE CORAL TEETHING STICK BEGAN TO BECOME COMBINED WITH BELLS AS WELL AS A WHISTLE AND WERE AS USUAL A POSSESSION FOR AN 18TH CENTURY ARISTOCRATIC CHILD AS HAD BEEN THE SILVER SPOON OF THE 17TH CENTURY.