

turning violently red ; “ had Miss Morris a-any offer ? Why—er—yes, I have heard—something of the sort—mentioned.”

“ Well then,” said Mr. Ryle, “ that’s at the root of the blunder. All sweethearts are shanny. Miss Bessie has sent my letter—refusal of my post—to someone else, and has sent me the precious missive that was to make some man happy.”

“ Give it to me, sir !” cried Mr. Selwyn starting to his feet ; and before Mr. Ryle could say a word he had captured and was reading Bessie’s epistle as fast as ever he could. “ Excuse me”—backing before his partner’s outstretched hand, and “ Come, this is too bad”—“ Excuse me. I’ve a claim—I’ll explain afterwards. I’ll be in again soon. I don’t think I shall start for Naples to-day, sir. It’s all right now.”

And so it was.

For a very few minutes after that, as Bessie sat tired and spiritless in a sheltered nook of the garden, a quick step came noiselessly over the grass. Two hands from some individual unseen held two letters before her startled gaze. A voice said—

“ Oh, you foolish, foolish darling ! Which is mine ?”

and all the whole week’s misery passed clean off these young people’s sky, just like an April cloud.

Rob always declares it was exactly the same as that magic bit of the nursery tale. “ The water began to quench the fire, the fire began to burn the rope,” which carried the sequence triumphantly up to the old woman getting home in time to cook her husband’s supper, for good fortune seemed to come bowling in full speed, and everything else in the shape of trouble reeled off so splendidly that spring.

The curate brother recovered faster than expected. Dick’s accident led to speedy promotion, with higher salary. At Easter, Rob was pronounced winner of the school scholarship for which he had long been privately working. Even that Suffolk farm re-let fairly for five years. With so much to cheer him, Mr. Morris’s health actually took a start in the right direction. And as for Bessie and Gerald Selwyn !

That gentleman took his bride with him when he went off on the Le Maitres affair at the end of April—for he insisted on “ happy’s the wooing that’s not long a-doing,” and they’ve certainly gone on proving the truth of the saying from that day to this.

GERMAN POTTERY.



FIG. 1.—VASE: OLD BERLIN WARE.

IT is one of the lessons of life which we do well to learn early—that no strong effort is ever wasted even when misdirected. Among other good things we owe to the studies of alchemists is the perfection to which German pottery has been brought. In the golden age, when Augustus the Strong ruled over Saxony, leaving behind him one of the most priceless art collections in Europe, a certain Fredrich Böttger, while endeavouring to make gold, discovered by accident how to bake china. As he himself said :—“ God our Creator has made out of the gold-

maker a potter.” The far-seeing Elector, recognising the value of the discovery, established Böttger at Royal Meissen, where from 1708 to the present day Dresden china has been exclusively made. The originator would never have rendered it a financial success. Like most geniuses, he was no man of business, but he laid the



FIG. 2.—MEISSEN CUP WITH PALE YELLOW GROUND AND CRIMSON MEDALLION.

foundation by which others realised gigantic sums. There are still at Dresden some eighteen huge blue and white Chinese vases for which Augustus the Strong exchanged a regiment of dragoons with Frederick William I., and his offers for Chinese and Japanese specimens were most extravagant. But his policy was a wise one. The Meissen factory became the leading one, and so continued to the time of

Augustus III., when the Prime Minister, Count Bruhl, was the manager. It was Count Mareolini, Minister to Frederick Augustus, who lost its prestige, and made an opening for Berlin and other china works.

Some of the earliest specimens of Berlin ware, bearing date 1744, are to be found in the Märken Museum. Kaspar Wigely was the moving spirit then,



FIG. 3.—TEA-POT IN THE EARLIEST MEISSEN STYLE.

and his works are all valuable. Meissen exercised a powerful influence upon it, and it is sometimes difficult to distinguish the two. The saying was that they differed like the two countries: while Prussia was reserved and strong of purpose, Saxony was light-hearted and aimless. Dresden china is more delicate and graceful;

Berlin, inspired by antique models, heavier in style and clear in colour. Fig. 1 shows a vase in old Berlin, with the snowball pattern which no longer exists. Fig. 7, a tea service, demonstrates the lightness and brightness of Meissen ware, the design birds, with the scaled rim in pale lilac. Fig. 2, a cup with double handles, is of the favourite yellow tint, like the hunt service made for Augustus the Strong, but the medallion on the cup is crimson. A celebrated Berlin service was presented to the Duke of Wellington in 1819.

If you have visited

Cologne you will probably remember the Neven and Seligmann collection of Dresden figures, most of them designed between 1730 and 1759, under the rule of George Herold, a true artist, who called to his aid John Joachim Kandler, the sculptor, and he created most of the best-known groups and figures of those early days, which now fetch fabulous sums. Lord Hastings is the happy possessor of a collection of quaint and curious animals of this period.

Frederick the Great filled his palace at Potsdam with works of art, and even the mirrors were set in china frames. The famous Voltaire room at Sans Souci boasted of a liberal display of Dresden vases; and in another room were the famous white vases, created under Kandler's auspices.

This great monarch made many royal gifts from the Meissen factory. One of the most renowned was an entire service to Catherine II. of Russia, including even forks and spoons, all painted with scenes associated with the Russian and Prussian armies. If I mistake not, this has found its way to English keeping—if not in its entirety, at all events a great portion of it. His Majesty, in presenting a vase to the Countess Camas, speaks of the china as his most precious possession. "I hope," he says, "that those who receive it consider it as good as gold, for we are beggars, and only possess honour—and porcelain!" This monarch had a keen sense of humour which was not always generally appreciated. On the occasion of a visit to Meissen, he desired his generals to



FIG. 4.—FIRST TRADE MARK OF MEISSEN, COPIED FROM THE JAPANESE.



FIG. 5.—MEISSEN CHINA: ONE OF A GROUP OF FIGURES.



FIG. 6.—A PLATE WITH THE YELLOW LION: OLD MEISSEN WARE.

choose what they liked, and thinking they were to receive a gift, they chose the best, having by-and-by the pleasure of paying for it.

The identifying marks on German pottery are a study in themselves. I am giving in Fig. 3, as a specimen in the earliest style of Meissen ware, a tea-pot, and the illustration will show how delicately the flowers are



FIG. 7.—MEISSEN CHINA TEA-SERVICE.

ainted. Many artists have made their names famous in their execution. Lindner's birds and flowers are among the best-known, and some of the most priceless old pieces made in Böttger's time bear the names



FIG. 8.—BREAKFAST-CUP: MEISSEN WARE.
(From the Von Dallwitz Collection at Berlin.)

of H. & A. von der Milde. This tea-pot has the earliest existing mark (see Fig. 4), copied from the Chinese and Japanese models to which the German makers owed so much. Pieces for Augustus the Strong bore "A. R." in blue, while others of the same date had Mercury's wand, save a few beyond all price bearing the insignia of the Countess Anna Cosel, on whom the sovereign lavished not only his affection, but his treasure.

The crossed swords, the present Dresden mark, is of more recent date. A cut through these shows the piece is defective. Some time previously "K. P. M." showed that the article came from the Königliche

Porzellan Manufaktur. Count Bruhl showed his supremacy by a "B"; Count Mareolini by a star. Nowadays there is a good deal of chicanery: old marks are skilfully copied and modern ones altered. A connoisseur judges also by the glaze, the colour, and other details. Even now it is possible to pick up veritable old treasures when they come into the market through misfortune or the demise of some of the old Saxon families, who rarely part with them save under pressure.

Among the best-known old Dresden are the Sulkowski service which Augustus the Strong gave to his son Prince Sulkowski, bearing exquisite floral sprays and the coat-of-arms; the Swan service, with the swans in relief surrounded by nymphs and Tritons, given by the same monarch to Count Bruhl, and now in possession of his descendants;

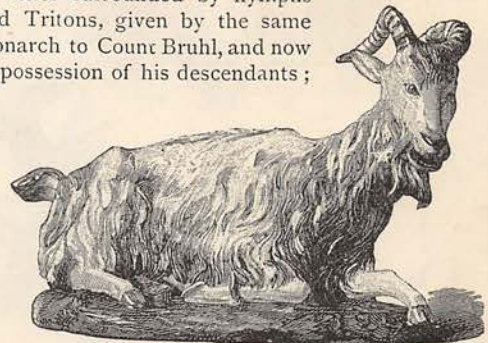


FIG. 9.—RAM: MEISSEN WARE.

and the service presented to Maria Joseph, his daughter, when she married the Dauphin of France, with the arms of Saxony and Navarre. But if you wish to study the progress of the Meissen manufacture, go to the Green Vaults at Dresden. There are Augustus the Strong's own service and many others. Then make your way to the Castle of Wilhelmsthal in Cassel, where only the very best German china is to be seen. Here is that well-known dainty figure in old Dresden of a lady wearing a Watteau-like dress over a distended hoop, and standing on high heels; and some enormous vases, together with an elephant with a tiger on its back, and a rhinoceros carrying a native Indian.

The Meissen factory is one of the sights which visitors to Dresden have an opportunity of enjoying. The vases with flowers in relief, the lace-like china, the wonderfully modelled animals, delight them still.

I should, however, advise a previous visit to the Tower of Dresden, rich with an unique collection of the old ware.

In the accompanying illustrations I have given some distinguished pieces, mostly taken from the Von Dallwitz collection at Berlin. Fig. 5 is one of a group of five female figures, each playing a different instrument—very graceful and life-like. Note Fig. 6, a

plate with the yellow lion, curious and original, but hardly so delicate in design as Fig. 8, a breakfast-cup with well-formed handle. The ram (Fig. 9) is a favourite model to be seen in many varieties.

But Dresden and Berlin are not the only china factories of note in Europe. The first specimen of porcelain seen in the West was a jewelled plate brought by a Crusader. Portugal and Holland were the first to establish their fame, and for centuries the Dutch china presented to the first Queen of Prussia had been undisturbed at Charlottenberg, until Queen Victoria went there in 1888.

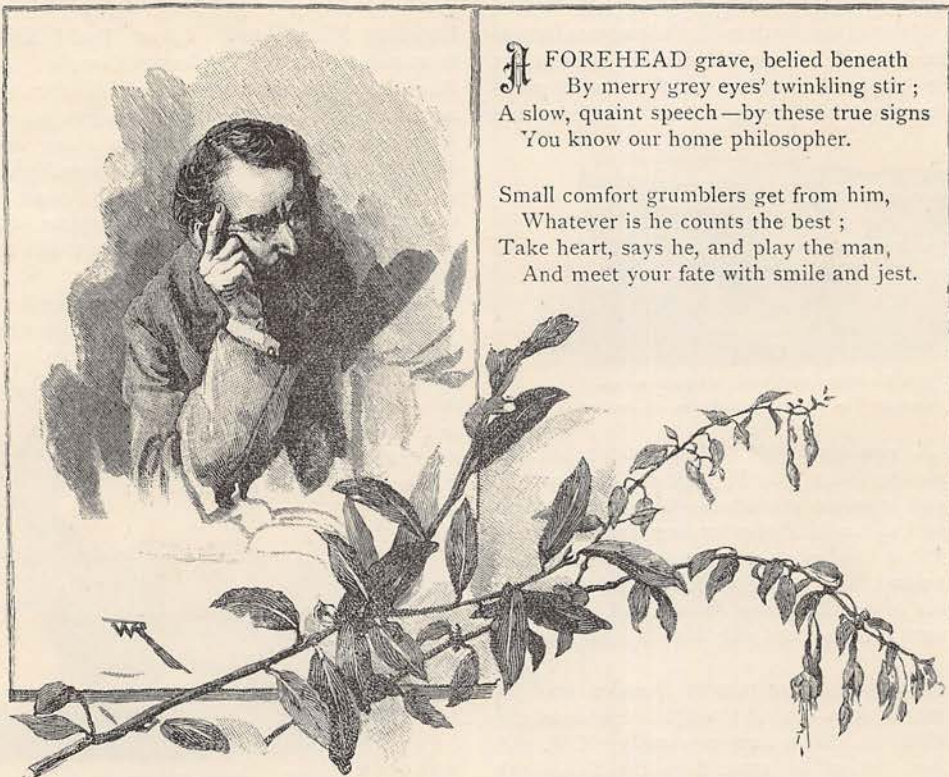
In the latter portion of the last century the Fraken-thaler manufacture became celebrated. It is distinguished by the mark of a lion about to spring. Another, Höchst, in Mainz, flourished under the well-known modeller Melchin. It is marked with a wheel and a "D."

The Kronenburg china, with a crown for its distinguishing mark, was started in 1758 at Ludwigsburg. Baron Busch, early in the latter half of the last century, engraved china with a diamond, and any of his works are eagerly sought by collectors. There is a good specimen in Hamburg, date 1751, in the form of a large coffee-pot.

ARDERN HOLT.

HOUSEHOLD SKETCHES.

I.—OUR PHILOSOPHER.



A FOREHEAD grave, belied beneath
By merry grey eyes' twinkling stir;
A slow, quaint speech—by these true signs
You know our home philosopher.

Small comfort grumblers get from him,
Whatever is he counts the best;
Take heart, says he, and play the man,
And meet your fate with smile and jest.