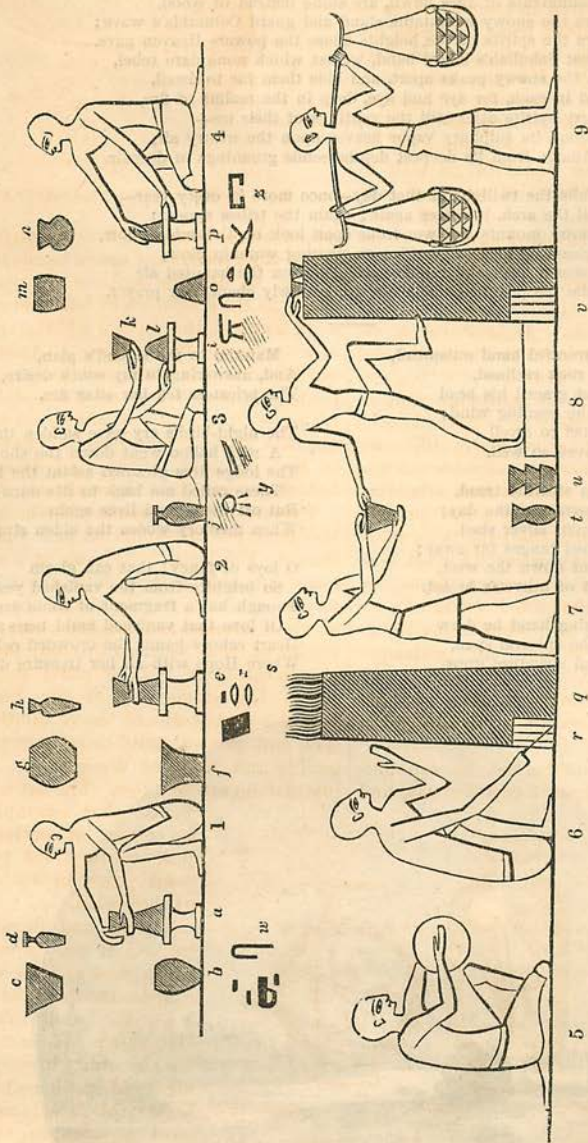


SOME NOTES ABOUT POTTERY AND PORCELAIN.

By WILLIAM C. PRIME.



AN EGYPTIAN POTTERY—FROM A TOMB.

a, c, i, p, the wheels on which the clay was put. Fig. 1 forms the inside and lip of the cup as it turns on the wheel. *a, b, c, d* are cups already made. Fig. 2 forms the outside of the cup, indenting it with the hand at the base, preparatory to its being taken off. Fig. 3 has just taken off the cup from the clay *l*. Fig. 4 puts on a fresh piece of clay. Fig. 5 forms a round slab of clay with his two hands. Fig. 6 stirs and prepares the oven *q*. At *s* is the fire, which rises through the long narrow tube or chimney of the oven, upon the top of which the cups are placed to bake, as in *v*. Fig. 7 hands the cup to the baker *s*. Fig. 9 carries away the baked cups from the oven.

THE last twenty-five years have witnessed a great change in America with reference to the cultivation of the beautiful in art. It was formerly said of us that we were a money-making people, and had no time or inclination to think of the merely ornamental arts. Now we are gathering museums of art, and these are visited by thousands; we are educating children in the love of æsthetic pursuits. Our citizens are every where dec-

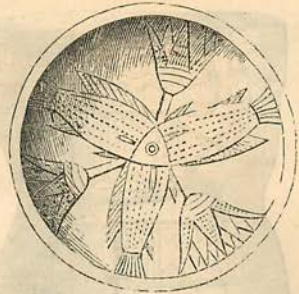
orating their parks and grounds, their houses and rooms, with objects whose influence is refining and purifying.

As yet we have not gathered in America any Museum of Art in its broad and grand sense. Painting and sculpture have attracted the attention of many, and our chief cities possess galleries which are highly valuable and instructive, and will doubtless grow to vastly increased importance in these

departments. But art includes many departments of the beautiful and ornamental which are as important, as interesting, as refining and elevating, as are painting and sculpture. Let us hope that the Metropolitan Museum of Art will in time combine in its collections specimens from all these departments, so that the American people may have an opportunity of seeing something like the Kensington collection in London, where the man of the nineteenth century may know what men of the various centuries have regarded as beautiful as well as useful; where the women of our time may learn what has pleased the eye and charmed the heart of woman in other ages and countries.

None of the arts are more interesting or important than that which is now generally known as the ceramic. It includes in its interest that which relates to the useful and beautiful alike. It furnishes the highest developments of skill in sculpture and in painting. Unfortunately it is little known to us in America by actual sight, since we have no public collections to educate the people in its history. But of late attention has been given to it by not a few private collectors, and we trust the time is at hand when there will be opportunity for all who can not travel abroad to learn at home, by inspection, the fact that a collection of pottery and porcelain is not, what many imagine it, a gathering of odd and grotesque figures and broken china. A glance at history will show the thoughtful reader to how high a position the ceramic art is entitled in the story of the race.

In all ages and countries men have moulded clay into convenient forms for use, and



BLUE GLAZED POTTERY OF ANCIENT EGYPT.

baked these forms in fire to harden them. Of all the products of men's hands none have proved so durable against fire, flood, and decay as these articles of baked clay. Whenever we find the ruined habitations of ancient races we find pottery. Around every old Eastern city there are heaps of broken pottery in masses beyond conception, where, for ages on ages, these shattered household utensils have accumulated. Savage races in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America have baked pottery from the remotest times.

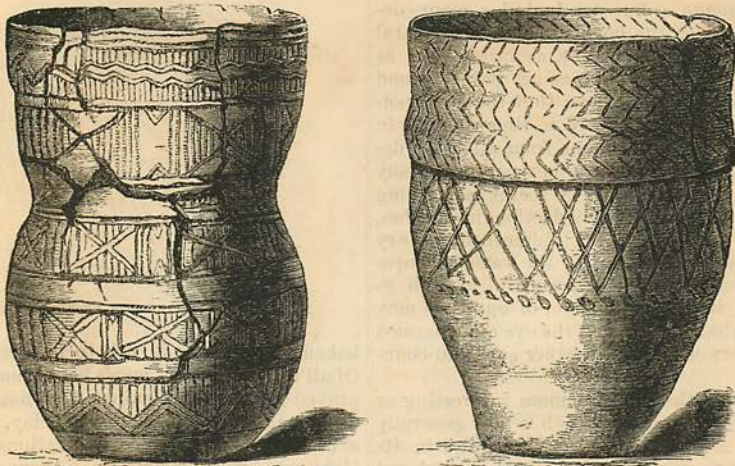
Probably in no country in the world can the progress of the art be better illustrated than in England. A glance at the illustrations of this article will show the rude forms of early Saxon work, the beautiful bowls of Roman red Samian ware, the rough work of the Norman period, the tile ornamentation of old churches in mediæval times, the stone-ware of the Elizabethan age, the first works of the Staffordshire potters, and the splendid developments of the genius and taste of Wedgwood. These illustrations are but few. The art was so universal that examples might

be given of perhaps every half century for two thousand years in various parts of the world.

Useful and durable as it proved, it was, of course, one of the first articles which the human race sought to make beautiful and ornamental. Hence it is of all arts the best for the study of the development of refinement in the history of races, and it is almost equally important for the study of the tastes, the affections, the religion, the manners and customs, of men in all ages. And when in its history we reach the periods of the greatest refinement and civilization of various nations or races, we find in it unsurpassed examples of purity and cultivation of taste, superb models of beau-



CHINESE BOTTLES FOUND IN EGYPTIAN TOMBS.



CELTIIC POTTERY FOUND IN STAFFORDSHIRE.

ty in form, and the richest specimens of harmonious combinations in color.

We do not purpose a history of pottery and porcelain, but a sketch of a few prominent points in the story may be useful to American readers, and will be more widely useful if we begin by some definitions, on

porcelain was made only by the Chinese and Japanese until the eighteenth century, when the method of making it was first discovered in Europe.

Pottery, unglazed and undecorated, depends for its color on the character of the clay, and for its form on the skill and taste of the potter. Pottery when glazed may receive any general color which can be fused with or laid under the glazing material. The glazing materials are of various kinds, being compositions which, when subjected to great heat, melt and form a smooth shining surface, so hard that it can not be readily scratched by any metal. Majolica is a term now used to imply any article of pottery which is decorated with colors in the glaze, rudely or artistically. Faience is another word, which is synonymous with



ROMAN BOWL OF SAMIAN WARE.

the theory that some of our readers, especially the younger portion, are wholly ignorant of the subject.

In its broadest sense pottery may be defined as any object made of clay, and baked in fire. But porcelain, which would be included in this definition, is distinct from pottery. Porcelain includes in its composition material which vitrifies throughout the body of the fabric. Pottery when broken shows the rough surface of the baked clay; porcelain when broken shows the same shining enameled material in its interior as on its polished exterior surface. Pottery has been made by almost all nations, civilized and barbarian, in all ages;

majolica. Some writers have used the word faience as including certain styles of decorated porcelain, but this is not generally accepted as correct. The word majolica is by some supposed to be derived from the island of Majorca, where decorated pottery



ROMAN BOWL OF SAMIAN WARE.

was manufactured at an early date. The word faience is derived from the city of Faenza, where a similar factory existed. The derivation of the word porcelain is uncertain, and none of the theories on the subject are satisfactory. Enough that we know what it means.

Porcelain is divided into two general classes, known as soft paste and hard paste. No description can explain the difference, which must be learned by experience from the sight and the touch. It consists in the composition of the paste, which, when fused in fire, produces in the one case a soft and (to the touch) oily-feeling surface, in the other case a surface hard and firm as glass. Soft-paste porcelain is sometimes classed with pottery.

The history of pottery covers, of course, a period almost identical with that of the human race. The oldest picture of a pottery is found in an Egyptian tomb, and the oldest specimens which can be dated are found in Egypt, where dishes, vases, ornaments, and countless articles of religious significance and use are found, not infrequently impressed with the names of kings, thus affording, as with coins, the means of fixing approximately the date of their manufacture. These articles are found in the greatest number with a blue or green glaze, sometimes red, and occasionally with two or more colors on one object. Beads and bugles of pottery, covered with a rich blue glaze, are often found, and these are sometimes varied by stripes of other color, chiefly black. The ability of the Egyptian artists is often displayed in vases with hieroglyphic and other decorations, and in larger or smaller figurines of gods, animals, men, and women. The style of Egyptian art in sculpture can be studied fully as well, if not better, from the pottery than from the stone remains of that ancient people. We have before us as we write a collection of upward of a hundred articles of Egyptian pottery, representing



SAXON PITCHER.

gods, men, beasts, birds, fish, frogs, lizards, and other objects, some of which were made more than three thousand years ago, and which are therefore remarkable illustrations of the importance of the ceramic art as a conservator of the ideas and abilities of man.

We pass rapidly over the ancient history of pottery, since it would fill our allotted space were we to attempt an outline of its points of interest. Phœnicia has recently, since the explorations of Di Cesnola in Cyprus, begun to contribute largely to this portion of the history. We refer the reader to the number of this magazine for July, 1872, where he will obtain an idea of the immense sweep of the subject, which in Di Cesnola's collection is illustrated by thousands of examples of Phœnician and Greek ceramics. Etruscan vases are known to all lovers of art. Rome encouraged the manufacture and decoration of pottery in all her



SAXON JUG.



SAXON JAR.



ROMANO-BRITISH WARE.



vast dominions. Exquisite shapes, forms of the purest beauty, ornamental decorations in the most delicate taste, as well as grotesque and strange objects, remain to us in abundance from ancient Greek and Roman art, and have furnished the originals for our most highly admired patterns in modern times. The Roman red ware, commonly known as Samian ware, is found wherever Roman sway extended.

In the Dark Ages, as we commonly call them, the ceramic art sank with others into obscurity. Men made pottery-ware always, but made little attempt toward ornamenting it. Meals were served on wooden or metal dishes and plates. Liquors were drunk from pottery or pewter cups, and by the rich from silver or gold. Glass was among the luxuries scarcely known till a late period. Rude tiles for pavements and other uses are our most important relics of the mediæval ceramic art.

The Mohammedans were the first, in what we call modern times, to revive the art of

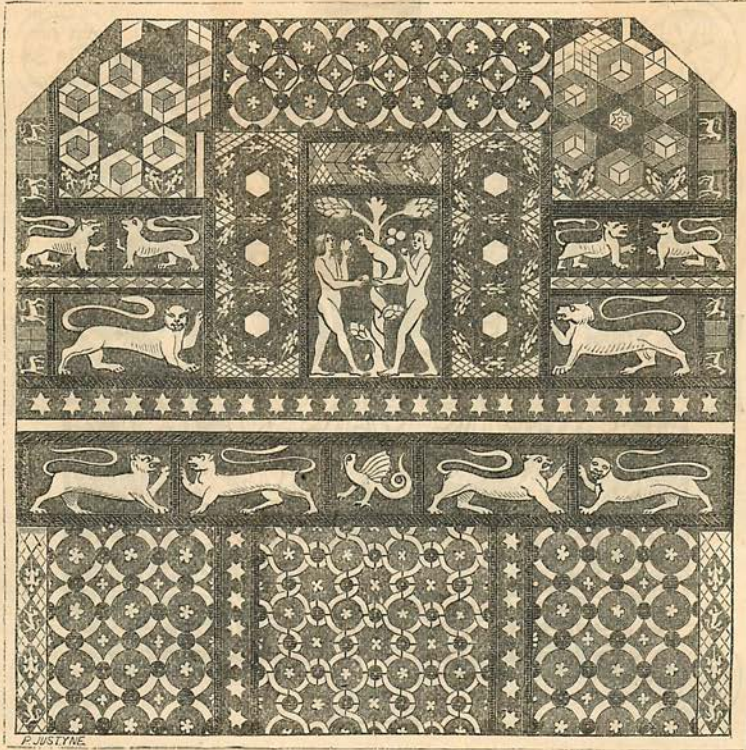
decorating pottery, and collections of modern pottery and porcelain begin with the Saracenic productions. The places of manufacture among the Eastern nations are not definitely known. There is reason to believe that as early as the fourteenth century there were potteries at Brusa, at Damascus, and further to the east, possibly even in Persia. It is a fact that old families in Syria and other parts of the East possess a great deal of porcelain from China, which they suppose to have been for many centuries in the possession of their ancestors. It was and still is the custom of the Mohammedans, in making pilgrimages to Jerusalem, Mecca, and other holy cities, to carry with them merchandise for exchange and trade with pilgrims from all parts of the Moslem world. In this way Chinese porcelain was doubtless brought to Mecca, and thence distributed among the various nations who worshiped the Prophet. It may well be that the Western Asiatics derived their ideas of making and decorating pottery from their familiarity with Chinese porcelain long before Europe knew of the existence of such ware. There are in a private collection in New York a large number of bowls and plates of old Chinese porcelain, which were purchased from an ancient Arab family in Jerusalem, who declared that they had descended from



ANGLO-NORMAN JAR.



ANGLO-NORMAN WARE.



TILE DECORATION FROM CRUDEN'S CHAPEL.—[THE DESIGNS ARE SARACENIC, COPIED BY THE ENGLISH.]

their ancestors through several centuries. Whether the ancestral period was many hundred years may be doubted, but the mere fact of finding a considerable quantity of such porcelain in a city which is more than ten days' camel journey from the nearest port on any water of the Indian seas, opens an interesting view of the internal commerce of Asia.

The Saracens decorated their pottery with various colors and with many beautiful devices. They found at an early period the durability of pottery, like that of brick, when exposed to the elements, and hence they manufactured great quantities and varieties of tiles, decorated and plain, which afford us now the best specimens which we possess of their ability in the art. These were used for exterior as well as interior architectural purposes. An English copy of Saracenic style is given in the above illustration, showing Oriental art and its Western influence. The Mosque of Omar, as it is commonly called—the Dome of the Rock, as it should be called—in Jerusalem, is sheathed on the outside with tiles of various colors, many of which are exceedingly rich in tone and beautiful in design. There is in Cairo a private residence of a wealthy and accomplished Mohammedan gentleman which is

the house in which his ancestors have resided for an uninterrupted period of more than eight hundred years. His reception-room, a large hall with a ceiling more than thirty feet high, is incased from floor to ceiling with Saracenic tiles—the decoration blue on a white ground. Many ancient tombs in the East are ornamented in a similar manner. The Orientals prize these tiles highly, and specimens are consequently rare in Western collections. As the Mohammedans never represent God, and seldom man, in a picture, we find few instances of figure-painting on their pottery. It was the custom from very ancient times in the East to ornament the interiors of religious buildings with ostrich eggs hanging from beams, lamps, and elsewhere. They had a symbolic design.

At a very early date—possibly, as some writers have believed, as early as the thirteenth century—these eggs were imitated in pottery, and Christian churches as well as Mohammedan mosques were decorated with them. These eggs were white, with rude decoration—generally crosses and hideous cherubs, in blue, yellow, black, and other colors. Many of them still hang from the old walls and lamps in the Oriental places of worship, prized with great veneration, and



TILE FROM CHERTSEY ABBEY.

are perhaps the earliest specimens which are known in the modern period of majolica, or decorated pottery. A New York collection contains several of these rare specimens.

The Saracens transported the art to Western Europe, and the direct succession of its history would carry us to Spain, where they introduced and carried on the manufacture of the dishes, vases, etc., now classed as Hispano-Moresque. Specimens of these form an interesting and important part of a collection. They are often very rich and beautiful, and are distinguished for a metallic lustre, especially of golden-copper, never equaled elsewhere. Elegant work in the art was done in Spain as early as the fourteenth century. The celebrated vase of the Alhambra is supposed to date from A.D. 1320, and is the noblest specimen of Hispano-Moresque ware extant. It has a white ground, with decoration in blue and golden-copper color, and is four feet three inches high.

The manufacture continued in Spain down to the seventeenth century, producing wares of various beauty, all of which are now highly prized as specimens. It was established in Majorca by the Saracens, and when the Pisans besieged and took Majorca, A.D. 1115, they brought specimens home to Italy with their spoils. These were inserted as archi-

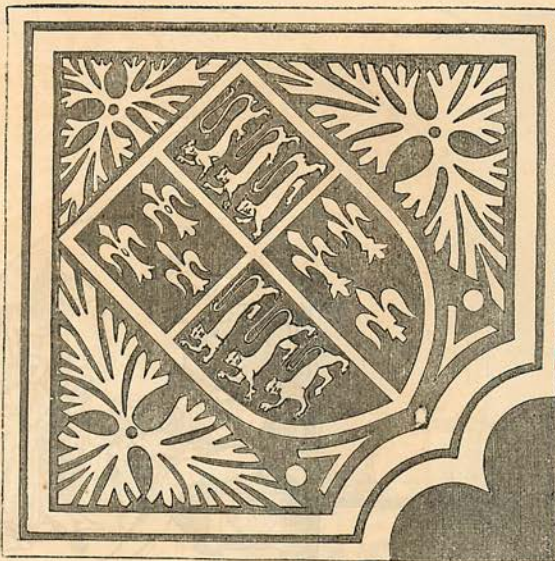
tectural ornaments, where some still remain (as in the front of the Church of San Sisto in Pisa), but it was two hundred years before the art was imitated in Italy. In Italy, where undecorated pottery was common enough, the art of glazing and ornamenting it with colors had long been totally lost. In the early part of the fourteenth century, at Pesaro, in the duchy of Urbino, a process was invented of covering pottery with a colored glaze which had a peculiar metallic lustre. Although an improvement on the old ware, this was but a slight advance. Yet from this the art grew to superb results. Luca della Robbia (born about A.D. 1400) was a goldsmith and sculptor at Florence. He was employed on the cathedral and other buildings. While moulding figures in clay he conceived the idea of covering them with an enamel surface, which he made by using tin in combination with other substances. The result was successful, and he at once began to produce works for architectural ornament, which were placed in the walls of buildings, and many of which now remain where he placed them, uninjured by the storms of four centuries. He first produced figures in relief, white on a plain blue ground. He afterward introduced green, yellow, and other colors in the reliefs of vines, flowers, and in varied designs. Some of his works were

of enormous size, when designed for exterior architectural ornaments. He died in 1481. His nephew and pupil, Andrea della Robbia, survived him, and continued the art in such close resemblance to the style of his uncle that it is wholly impossible in some cases to assign specimens to one or the other of them. The Robbia-ware stands at the beginning of the history of Italian majolica. Specimens of it are by no means common. It was the first modern work in Europe, of which we have any knowledge, in which the skill of a sculptor was applied to the formation of clay for baking and coloring. The sons of Andrea—Giovanni, Luca, Ambrosio, and Girolamo—followed their father, and survived him in the art. Girolamo went to France, and worked for Francis I. in Paris. He survived all his brothers, and with him died all knowledge of the peculiar art by which Luca and his successors had made their enamels.

Meantime, at Pesaro, the glazed ware before spoken of, and which is known as mezzamajolica, was improved upon, and the colored glaze was put on dishes in patterns. The earliest which we know of these were imitations of the Saracenic devices on dishes and tiles. Then the manufacturers began to paint arms of families, portraits, and re-



OVIFORM MAJOLICA VASE.



TILE FROM MALVERN ABBEY.

ligious or other pictures. This stage of the art had been reached before the beginning of the sixteenth century, and in the early and middle part of that century we are brought to the period of the highest art in the decoration of majolica, collections of which rival in beauty the finest galleries of paintings.

At Pesaro, Gubbio, Castel Durante, Faenza, and other Italian towns and cities the manufacture and decoration of pottery became one of the highest arts, encouraged by the wealthy and noble, employing the pencils of the first artists, and commanding extravagant prices. Gradually artists in majolica-ware extended their experiments in coloring, until there was no work on canvas which could not be successfully copied on pottery. The fact that artists painted portraits on plates in their studios seems to be established by a majolica plate now in the Kensington Museum, which represents such a scene. This plate has become somewhat celebrated in our day from the fact that while in a private collection its decoration was, without reason, said to be a picture of Raphael and the Fornarina (see illustration on page 328). This gave it such a reputation among collectors that although it had been sold publicly at the Stowe sale for £4, and by the dealer who there purchased it again sold to Mr. Bernal, a celebrated collector, for £5, it brought at the auction sale of Mr. Bernal's collection £120. It would be very likely now to command £200 if sold at auction, although there is really nothing in its history or execution to make it worth more than any other fair specimen of the early Italian majolica. The name Raphael-ware



THE RAPHAEL AND FORNARINA PLATE.

was long given to all the majolica of this time.

At this period of the history it will be found that gathering majolica for a collection is about as difficult, and costs nearly as much, as gathering a gallery of the old masters in oil. The collector must have judgment, education in the subject, and taste in art. We have no longer to deal with the mere antique, or the grotesque or curious. Plates are known which have been attributed to Raphael. We have heard a connoisseur pronounce unhesitatingly on a plate made at Pesaro that the portraits of the Marini family were painted by Paul Veronese. Many of the exquisite patterns of decoration found in frescoes at Perugia and at Rome, from the hands of Raphael, his master, and his contemporaries, are found on majolica of the same period. It was common at this time for lovers to order from the artists vases or plates with portraits of their mistresses, to be presented to the ladies themselves. Hence we find such portraits, with the legends *Giovanna Bella*, *Cecilia Bella*, *La Madalena Bella*, etc.

These are known in collections as amatory plates or vases (see illustration on page 329). The names of many artists who devoted themselves to the decoration of majolica are known. Orazio Fontana, Giorgio, Xanto, and Guido Durantino are a few among the

most celebrated. They worked at different places in different periods, but chiefly at Pesaro and Gubbio.

Many Italian towns and cities are now celebrated chiefly as the sites of majolica factories in the sixteenth century. Castel Durante is famous for products of unsurpassed beauty. A bowl is known, bearing date 1508, with the name of this place, and the art flourished here for two hundred years.

Parallel with the works of Urbino were the products of Faenza, where the art was established during the fifteenth century, and culminated in the sixteenth. Faenza-ware, in its greatest perfection, was thinner and lighter than that of other Italian factories. Dated pieces of Faenza-ware are known of A.D. 1485. Deruta, Nocera, Caffagiolo, Florence, Padua, Pavia, and numerous other Italian cities produced these beautiful fabrics, which collectors delight to find with marks and indications of the locality of their manufacture.

It is impossible to give any description of Italian majolica, since it is seldom that two articles are known which are alike. Every form in which clay can be moulded—vases, cups, saucers, plates, bowls, candelabra, jars, pitchers, table furniture, figures, flowers—all are found, made with greater or less skill of sculpture and modeling, decorated

in every style, from the rudest daubs to the most exquisite artistic work in landscape, portrait, historical, mythological, and religious painting. A collection of this ware is no collection of broken china or queer old stuff, as many imagine. It is a gathering of beautiful works of art, every touch of the pencil gleaming through the glaze with all the freshness in which it left the maker's hands. Some idea may be formed of the estimate placed on the better specimens from the prices paid at the Bernal sale in London, in the year 1855, to which we shall refer hereafter.

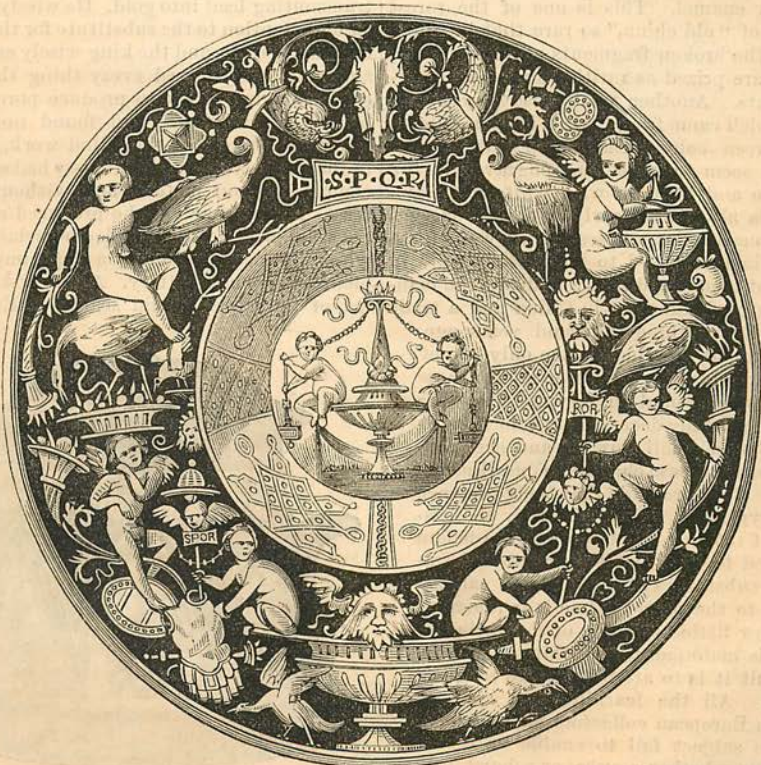
We shall not attempt to follow the history of majolica in France and other parts of Europe. The only chapter which deserves special notice is that relating to Palissy, the potter (born about 1510), whose story is widely and well known. He was a glass maker and a glass painter. Conceiving a notion that if he could discover the art of enameling earthenware he could make a fortune, he devoted fifteen years of blind toil, in the most profound ignorance of what he was about, to the discovery, which he at length achieved. He then began to produce dishes of various forms, ornamented with figures in high relief. He copied nature, made models of snakes, frogs, shells, ferns,

fruits, etc., and placed them on his fabrics. Afterward he made busts, full-length figures, and portraits in relief on his wares.

Among the various products of our own day, the French and English potteries are manufacturing, in immense quantity, imitations of Palissy-ware, and our American shops and houses abound in them. They are beautiful as well as grotesque in design, rich in color, and the modern work is often so absolutely an exact reproduction that connoisseurs are likely to be deceived.

It must be remembered that while pottery in its common forms was used by the poorer classes for household and table purposes, the superb works of art which have been referred to were only articles of show and decoration in the houses of the rich. And now the Dutch people, having opened trade with China, began to bring into Europe the porcelain manufactures of that far country.

We have already alluded to the extreme antiquity of the art of making porcelain in China. There is no possible combination of color more beautiful than a collection of the old fabrics of the Celestial Kingdom in the ceramic art. The delicious softness and purity of surface give a depth and lustre to the pigments used which they had nev-



FAENZA FRUIT DISH, ORNAMENTED WITH "AMORINI" TROPHIES AND ARABESQUES.
VOL. XLVIII.—No. 285.—22



PALISSY DISH, OF HIS EARLIEST WARE.

er been known to possess in the majolica work of Europe. Even the most ancient white porcelain of China has a beauty that has not been equaled by modern European art. We have before us a small vase which at a glance seems to be of snowy purity, but on close examination is found to be ornamented with a fern-leaf pattern in still whiter enamel. This is one of the rarest kinds of "old china," so rare that in China itself the broken fragments of vases of this ware are prized as rarities and worn as ornaments. Another small vase now before us, which came from Egypt, is of a delicate sea-green color, ornamented with leaves which seem to have been engraved in the surface and filled in with white porcelain. This is also of an early and rare species. It is one of those vases which were for a long time supposed to have been found in ancient tombs, and thus to indicate the manufacture of porcelain in China and a trade with Egypt three thousand years ago. The present specimen is the only one of its kind which we have seen among these small vases found in Egypt. They are more commonly decorated in colors, sometimes with small flowers, and occasionally with Chinese characters (see illustration). It is probable that their presence in Egypt is to be explained by the system of interior Asiatic commerce before referred to, and that they contained fragrant substances of considerable value.

Up to the present time it is remarkable how little is known of the antiquity of this manufacture in China, and how difficult it is to attribute dates to specimens. All the learning and research which European collectors have devoted to the subject fail to enable us to determine whether a vase, or a bowl, or a plate is many centuries old, or whether

it is a reproduction of an old pattern and style. There are some kinds of porcelain, like those already mentioned, and others decorated in certain colors, which the Chinese collectors prize as certainly antique, because both style and color are now regarded as lost arts.

When Europeans received porcelain for the first time they recognized its usefulness, and saw that if the art of mak-

ing it could be discovered and kept secret, the happy possessor of the art would have something about as valuable as the philosopher's stone. At the beginning of the last century a young chemist, or alchemist, named Böttcher, was in the employ of the Elector of Saxony, Augustus—also King of Poland—seeking the long-sought secret of transmuting lead into gold. He wisely turned his attention to the substitute for the philosopher's stone, and the king wisely encouraged him. He mixed every thing that he could imagine likely to produce porcelain, burned his mixtures, and found nothing. For years he kept at this blind work, much in the same style in which Palissy had sought enamel, without method and without success. In the year 1708 he produced a hard red ware, which may be called porcelain, but which was coarse, and only a slight improvement on common pottery. As the first product of the experimental search in Europe,



POSSET POT—STAFFORDSHIRE—FIFTEENTH CENTURY.



STAFFORDSHIRE WARE, ABOUT 1650.

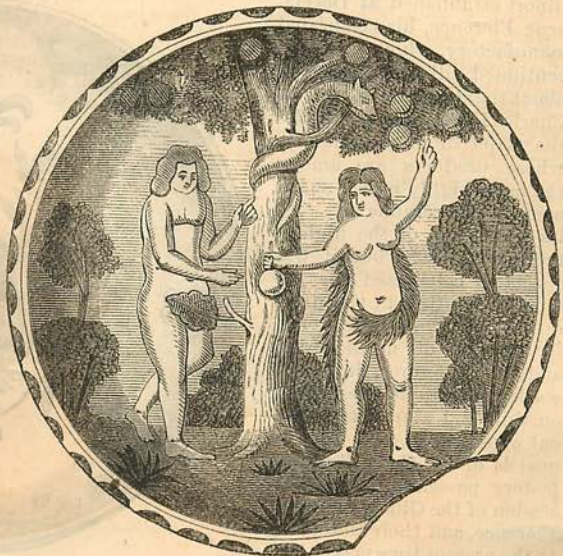
this ware is important in collections, where it is known as Böttcher-ware. Specimens are before us in plain red, with engraved ornaments, and others covered with black lacquer, ornamented in the Chinese style, with landscapes and figures in gilt. This ornamentation is not baked, can be scratched off with a knife, but withstands hot water.

The alchemist continued his heterogeneous mixtures from day to day and year to year, until one day (A.D. 1710) he made a paste in which he placed some hair-powder that his servant had bought in a Dresden shop, and to his astonishment he produced the long-sought fabric. The hair-powder proved to be a white clay, found near the city, and was, in fact, kaolin, the peculiar clay which is essential in the making of hard-paste porcelain. The art was found. Although its first products were not pure white, it required but a little experience to perfect them, and in the year 1715 a quantity of white porcelain of German manufacture was offered for sale at the great fair of Leipsic. The importance of the discovery in a commercial point of view can hardly be overestimated. The reader need but think for an instant of the vast extent to which this manufacture has attained in Europe in a century and a half. There is more porcelain broken in any

one day of the year in America now than all Europe contained in the year 1600.

Every effort was made to keep the golden secret, and the workmen employed were actually prisoners. Before the year 1719 one of them escaped and sold his secret at Vienna, whence it spread over Europe, and wherever kaolin could be found, hard porcelain was manufactured.

Prior to the discovery of Böttcher the method of making what is called soft-paste porcelain had been discovered in France, and as early as 1698 we have accounts of very beautiful products at St. Cloud, which were exceedingly costly, and could be furnished only to the very wealthy. In 1745 a company was formed in Paris, to the capital of which the king contributed, for the manufacture of soft porcelain. The king established the works at Vincennes, and they went forward with great success, producing every form of useful and ornamental work, decorated in superb style, until 1754, when the factory was removed to Sèvres, where it has since continued to the present time. Until 1768 the Sèvres manufactory produced only soft paste. In that year Madame Darnet, wife of a surgeon in a village near Limoges, seeing in a ravine some white clay, took it to her husband and asked him if it would not do



STAFFORDSHIRE WARE, ABOUT 1650.



JUG—STAFFORDSHIRE WHITE WARE BEFORE WEDGWOOD.

to use as soap. He sent it to the chemist Macquer, in Paris, who recognized it as kaolin, the first which had been found in France. From that time Sèvres abandoned soft paste and made true hard porcelain. Meantime porcelain was made in various parts of Europe. Berlin established a factory, which rivaled that of Saxony. Höchst, Frankenthal, Fürstenburg, Nymphenburg, Anspach, Ludwigsburg, all made wares of great beauty. Specimens of their fine products are valuable in collections.

It appears from recent discoveries that as early as A.D. 1580-90 a small factory of true hard porcelain existed at Florence, in Italy. But although about twenty specimens of its product exist, the art was lost, and it was not till A.D. 1755 that the Marquis Ginori established at Doccia, near Florence, his celebrated manufactory, which has been continued till our time. At about the same time, A.D. 1736, Charles III. founded at Naples the Capo di Monte factory, whose products are among the most highly prized specimens of the ceramic art. All its work was of the highest order of beauty, but it was specially celebrated for exquisite painting in the decoration of plain surfaces, and for groups of mythological and other figures, in raised work with stippled flesh tints, on thin and almost transparent cups and vases. The old models of the Capo di Monte factory passed into the possession of the Ginori family at Florence, and their factory up to the present time makes imitations of the old work. To

the uneducated eye these are very deceptive, as they doubtless are very beautiful, but they lack all the delicious sharpness of mould and perfection of color which characterize the genuine specimens.

We have already alluded to the peculiar interest attaching to the history of pottery in England. The great beds of clay in various parts of the British Islands have been worked with various skill from the remote times. The Celts, the Romans, the Saxons, the Normans, the Anglo-Saxon race, have left their abilities and tastes abundantly exemplified in ceramic art in England. With the more modern history there Americans are concerned, for the reason that our supplies of pottery and porcelain for more than a century have come chiefly thence, and old houses in our country abound in beautiful specimens of the English wares of Chelsea, Lowestoft, Worcester, Staffordshire, Liverpool, and Bristol.

In England the art of making soft-paste porcelain was introduced about 1740-43, when the Bow and Chelsea works were both founded. "Bow china," as it has been called, is therefore highly valued, as it affords specimens of the earliest English work. More especially specimens are valued in the decorations of which a bee is found in full relief, a figure often introduced on the work of this factory.

The Chelsea factory turned out work which has seldom been surpassed in Europe. Its models and its workmen were imported from Saxony and Brunswick, and its products were in such demand that dealers crowded its doors, and took every piece as fast as baked. Its finest pieces were made between 1760 and



STAFFORDSHIRE SAUCER.

1765, when it rivaled Dresden and Sèvres. The first hard-paste porcelain made in England was by Cookworthy, who established a factory at Plymouth in 1760. For a long time it was supposed that this was the last as well as the first hard-paste factory in England, but it is now well ascertained that great quantities of porcelain heretofore classed as Chinese, and abounding in England and America, were made at Lowestoft, in England, where a manufactory of pottery and porcelain was continued in successful operation from 1756 till about

1820. In many respects this Lowestoft china is more important than any other English ware. It so closely resembled the Chinese fabric that it was always bought and sold as such. In the latter part of the last century American families were in the habit of ordering sets of porcelain from England, which were made with initials, monograms, or arms on each piece. Many such sets are now in American families. A large proportion of them, commonly supposed to be Chinese, were actually made at Lowestoft. This ware is known by several peculiarities. On the larger pieces, the tureens, platters, etc., the surface is uneven, as if the paste had been partially smoothed by the hand. The decorations are often minutely penciled wreaths, frequently of small roses. Roses are often found among the decorations, generally without stems, or with only a hair-line for the stem. Some vases are found with very elaborately painted borders in fine work. Squirrels and foxes at full run are sometimes in the border-work. A very deep, strong cobalt blue in narrow and broad lines, or on the raised ornaments, also characterizes this ware. Arms or monograms, supported by small birds holding wreaths of small flowers, are among the peculiarities of Lowestoft porcelain. But while the works of Bow, Chelsea, Derby,



JOSIAH WEDGWOOD'S CREAM WARE, PAINTED WITH AUTUMN LEAVES.

Bristol, Plymouth, Lowestoft, and other factories form important portions of a historical collection of English pottery and porcelain, the greatest interest attaches to the Staffordshire potteries, where the business has been carried on from Roman times, and where the manufacture of pottery has been carried to a degree of perfection unsurpassed, if equaled, in any period of the art.

Among the earliest specimens of decorated Staffordshire pottery in collections are placed sundry large plates or dishes of coarse ware, painted rudely in a thick glaze, some of which bear the names of potters named Toft, and are supposed to be of the middle of the seventeenth century. We illustrate these rude beginnings of modern art. In 1690 two men named Elers came from Nuremberg to England, and established a factory in Staffordshire, in which they produced work closely imitating the Japanese red ware. They worked in great secrecy, but a potter named Astbury, oblivious that stealing a workman's knowledge was as grave an offense as stealing his money, counterfeited idiocy, got employment from the Elerses in their factory, kept up his deceit for years, till he had mastered the secrets of his employers and made drawings of the machinery in use, and through him the art became public, and numerous potteries used it.



JOSIAH WEDGWOOD'S FIRST TEA-POT.



ELERS-WARE TEA-POT.

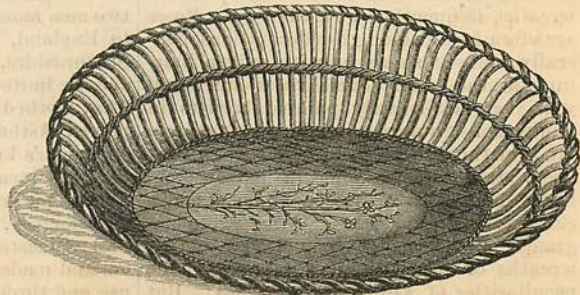


MEDALLION OF WESLEY, WEDGWOOD-WARE.

The Wedgwood family had long been potters in Staffordshire. Josiah Wedgwood, the thirteenth child of his father, a Staffordshire potter, was born in 1730. He had but a limited education, but in after-life, as his works became important, he read extensively, and added to his stores of knowledge much which went to good account in his wonderful productions. Beginning work as a potter on his own account, he produced finer wares than had been previously made, and at length manufactured a cream-colored ware, of which he presented some to Queen Caroline, and it thence took the name of queen's-ware, by which many old persons will remember it. Proceeding to develop the powers of the plastic art, Wedgwood at length began to produce those stone-wares—which occupy an intermediate place

between pottery and porcelain—for which he became, and will forever be, famous. Every beautiful antique form attracted his notice, and he reproduced it. Making the bodies of his vases and other articles of a soft blue, pearl, gray, red, or black color, he placed on them exquisite forms and figures in white cameo as delicately finished as the most beautiful works of ancient or cinque-cento art. In the same manner he made portraits, seals, cameos, and intaglios for jewelry, figurines, plaques for divers uses, table furniture, and ornaments of every kind. Hundreds of his cameos and intaglios were made from impressions of original antique gems loaned to him by their possessors. His crowning work was the reproduction of the Portland Vase, whose history is so celebrated. With him the ceramic art received its highest development in ancient or modern times; for, while greater beauty of decoration in painting characterized other wares, he produced the noblest artistic results of the moulding of clay.

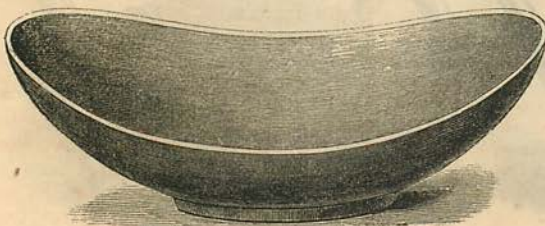
The brief outline which has thus been given of the history of pottery and porcelain will serve to show the importance of collections of specimens of the art for both historic and æsthetic considerations. In the world of beautiful art there is nothing to surpass it.



WEDGWOOD'S CREAM-WARE TWIG BASKET.

The ancients furnish us forms which satisfy the eye and gratify the purest taste. In the Di Cesnola collection alone are found more than a thousand vases of different shapes, no two alike.

The Saracen wares, especially the tiles or plaques, abound in delightful interminglings of colors, graceful arabesques, and combinations of curved and straight lines. Modern designers of wall hangings and other decorations are seldom aware of their indebtedness to Arabian taste for many of their most esteemed patterns, and many



WEDGWOOD'S CREAM-WARE BREAD DISH.

remain to be copied which are only known on the Oriental tiles.

Italian majolica is a world of art in painting. Hundreds of beautiful pictures, glowing with brilliancy, are preserved on the pottery-wares of Urbino, Pesaro, Gubbio, Castel Durante, Faenza, and other cities and towns of Italy.

Dresden, as soon as Böttcher's discovery was perfected, afforded employment to the best artists in flower and landscape painting. A collection of the best works of the Marcolini period includes beautiful forms of vases and dishes decorated with charming bouquets of flowers, or delicately finished miniature landscapes, copies of the finest pictures of the day; and once in a while we find on a Dresden piece a head, painted with evident affection for his work by a great artist—great though unknown. We have before us a saucer decorated with the bust of Héloïse, a miniature which no work of Sèvres, or ivory painting of the most distinguished artist, has ever surpassed.

The Dresden (or Meissen or Saxon) works produced many small and large figures and groups, which were executed with great skill. The Berlin works surpassed them in this branch of the art, and the old Berlin figurines are justly prized for their beauty. But the Höchst works surpassed both Berlin and Dresden in these figurines.

The Sèvres work is celebrated for beauty in form, color, and decoration, but more especially in the latter. The earlier productions of the work at Vincennes and at Sèvres are enormously prized, and it is somewhat difficult to assign a good reason, unless the fact is that holders of family pieces seldom part with them, and they are therefore not easily obtained. This is not, however, a sufficient explanation of the fact that a Sèvres vase of the early period commands often ten or twenty times the price of an equally beautiful work of a factory whose products are more rare. It may therefore be fairly supposed that Sèvres por-



MEDALLION OF THOMAS BENTLEY, WEDGWOOD-WARE.

celain is expensive only because so many persons desire specimens, and raise its price by competition, for the mere sake of possessing what every one else wishes to possess. This remark must be understood of the work in general. There are specimens of Sèvres which are jewels in beauty, and which lovers of art who have the money to expend may well be pardoned for purchasing at exorbitant prices. We shall speak of some prices paid for these before closing our article.

The Wedgwood-ware of Staffordshire is valued for its perfectness in shape and the exquisite art preserved in its decorations. A large collection of Wedgwood-ware affords in itself a history of all that is beautiful in form from the remotest periods of the ceramic art; for Wedgwood copied every thing that was accessible and that deserved reproduction. It also furnishes fac-simile illustrations of the most beautiful antique and modern cameo-work.

Flaxman was in the employ of Wedgwood from his earliest life, before he became distinguished as an artist, and a large number of Wedgwood's models were moulded by his skillful hands, either as copies of the antique or as original productions.



MEDALLION OF MRS. WEDGWOOD.

The most precious ware now known to collectors is a species of pottery made at Oiron, in France, in the sixteenth century. Of this manufacture little is known. It goes by the name of Henri Deux ware. It is very beautiful in form, and the decoration is chaste and charming. Only about sixty pieces are known at present, and these are valued very highly. It is supposed that the factory was established by H el ene de Hangast-Genlis, a lady of taste and wealth, about

A.D. 1520. She little imagined the mania her wares would produce after three centuries.

A collector of pottery and porcelain should be guided by two considerations in gathering specimens. His first idea should be to make the collection historical, and thus to illustrate the rise, progress, and spread of the art throughout the world. Specimens of every kind of ware and of every celebrated factory are to be sought for this purpose. The next idea is simply that of beauty in decoration. The artistic character of the decoration should determine the value of the piece to be bought. Numerous specimens of the same factory are not desirable unless they exhibit different styles of decoration, or unless each object is a work of high art.

The prices at which pottery and porcelain are bought and sold to collectors may well deter many from attempting large collections. These prices have increased enormously of late years. The sale of Mr. Ralph Bernal's great collection in London was the last of importance, and the prices there obtained were supposed to be the highest limit of extravagance, never again to be reached. But probably no article then sold could now be purchased, if it were offered at public sale, for any thing short of a large advance on the Bernal sale prices. Of the Italian majolica, a large number of specimens of Faenza-ware brought from £50 to £70 each; one plate, already mentioned, £120; a dish by Xanto, £80; a



CAMEOS BY WEDGWOOD, WHITE ON BLUE AND OLIVE-GRAY GROUNDS.



WEDGWOOD VASE.

plate of Caffagiolo-ware, £90; a Gubbio plate by Giorgio, £142. More ordinary plates, of good artistic character, sold for £10 to £20. A vase fifteen inches high sold for £220, and another similar for £200.

Henri Deux ware commands the highest prices of any known fabrics. A Biberon was sold at the Comte de Pourtales's sale in 1865 for £1100. In 1850 a salt-cellar was sold at public sale for £52, which in 1859 brought £280, and is now valued at £500. A tazza, sold in 1850 for £62, was resold in 1861 for £450. A large ewer, sold in 1842 for £96, is now regarded as the most valuable extant specimen of the ware, and estimated at £1500. Out of fifty-two pieces of this ware known or catalogued, with estimated values, three pieces are placed at £150 each, and the remainder at from £300 to £1500.

The prices of Dresden porcelain are determined wholly by the value of the decorations as works of art. It is a common error in America to overestimate the value of Dresden-ware. Specimens of Böttcher-ware brought at the Bernal sale from £2 to £16. Cups with saucers, of the best periods, varied in price from £2 to £14; a pair of oviform vases, the ground incrustated with forget-me-nots, with decorations after Watteau, £99 15s.; a pair of candelabra, £231; a clock, £120; another, £110.

The prices of Sèvres also depend mainly on the artistic character of the work. A cup and saucer with blue border and roses brought at the Bernal sale £5 5s.; a green cup and saucer, with figures painted by Chabry and Mérault, £55; one painted by Leguay, £22; one painted by Morin (1772), £160; another by Leguay, £107. A pair of vases, fourteen and a half inches high, of the color known as rose du Barri, painted with groups of Cupids in medallions, were bought by the Marquis of Hertford for £1942 10s. These vases Mr. Bernal had bought for £200 from Henry Baring, Esq. Baron Mayer Rothschild and Mr. Addington, two renowned collectors, bid against the purchaser, who also bought the next lot in the sale, two Sèvres vases eighteen inches high, turquoise-color, with medallions—a shepherd and shepherdess—and bouquets painted by Dodet and Drard, for £1417 10s.

Cups and saucers of Capo di Monte sold at this sale for £32, £34, £36, and £37 respectively.

Old English ware commands prices

according to its beauty and rarity. At the Bernal sale a pair of Chelsea vases brought £110; a cup and saucer with medallions of Cupids, £21. Palissy-ware at this sale brought good prices. A dish with a lizard in the centre, originally purchased, broken, in Paris for twelve francs, mended, and sold to Mr. Bernal for £4, was bought by Baron Gustave de Rothschild for £162; other Palissy dishes, £5 to £26.

These prices are, of course, for fine specimens. But let no one imagine that the money thus expended is thrown away. There is no collection of art which proves its value as does a collection of pottery and porcelain by charming the eye and heart of every one, of whatever class, old or young.

The inexperienced will naturally inquire how collectors know the porcelain or pottery of one manufacture from that of another. There are, of course, general characteristics which enable them to assign the large majority of pieces. It is not difficult to recognize Italian styles of painting in art, or the styles of other countries. So, too, particular dishes or plates are recognized as the work of known artists, where they are not signed. A large number of specimens of majolica are signed. The great factories of modern times have always had marks by which their works are known. The Dresden mark, for example, was at first the letters A. R. interlaced, the initials of Augustus Rex; then they adopted two crossed swords in blue on the bottom of the piece. These still mark Dresden work. When a dot is found between the swords the date is of the period near 1770. A star between the sword handles indicates the period under the direction of Marcolini, about 1796. Other variations of the mark indicate different specialties of the fabric. Berlin work is always marked with a sceptre in blue. Höchst was marked with a wheel. Sèvres marks are of great variety, according to the changed dynasties in France. For those who desire to study the subject, books must be consulted, and these are abundant. We recommend, for a general view of the subject, Marryat's *History of Pottery and Porcelain*. London: John Murray, and Jacquemard.

For specific study of marks, monograms, and characteristics of various wares, the best work is *Marks and Monograms on Pottery and Porcelain*, etc., by William Choffers.



LOWER PART OF THE PORTLAND VASE, REPRODUCED BY WEDGWOOD.