A pitcher in blue and white of the Marcolini period (Meissen). About seven inches high.

Two very valuable Capo di Monti or Ludwigsburg figures, about ten inches high, and a vase eight inches in height.

Top of Ludwigsburg dish, showing the perfect detail of cupids. When complete the dish was worth $1,000.

A Ludwigsburg figure with flowers in perfect form and colour. About seven inches high.

At the Sign of the Maple

A DEPARTMENT MAINLY FOR WOMEN

Treasures in China

By MADGE MACBETH

EVERY one will grant that the ideal way in which to collect china is to "pick it up." In order to do this one must have at least a superficial knowledge of the history of china, otherwise unscrupulous dealers will foist imitations and obvious fakes upon one with such ease as to be deeply humiliating. At any rate, one does not take the greatest pleasure in buying china from a dealer; rather at a sale or in a perfectly impossible and out-of-the-way place; an old urn covered with the dust of ages and scorned by the spick-and-span housewife as a germ catcher, may be "picked up" by the connoisseur as cheap as the dirt which clings to it. What joy to find a ducal coronet beneath the dust and verify one's suspicions—that the piece is a true Ludwigsburg, let us say!

That which we call porcelain is a discovery of such ancient date that no one can tell just when it was first invented. Certain it is, that it was discovered over a thousand years ago by the Chinese who converted the rude stone and clay of the mountain side into that white, translucent, gem-like substance which we call porcelain. This name has been misapplied to older wares from Greece and Egypt, but these are seldom other than bits of highly glazed earthenware. The glory of discovering true porcelain belongs wholly to the Chinese.

Its existence can be traced as far back as 618 A.D., sometime before the T'ang dynasty, which has been called the Augustan Age of Chinese Art. The collector always begins with studying the difference between pottery and porcelain. Next, between real and artificial porcelain, popularly called hard and soft paste. Briefly, porcelain is earthenware made translucent by the addition of some natural or artificial fluxing material; true porcelain consists of two natural felspathic substances, a non-fusible clay called *kaolin* by the Chinese, combined with a fusible stone called *petuntse,* this latter melting in the kiln to a glassy material which holds the former in suspension and gives the porcelain its translucent and vitreous character. Over this body is a thin glaze of *petuntse,* sometimes softened with a little lime. This is the nature of true porcelain, no matter where made.

SOFT-PASTE or artificial porcelain is formed of a natural clay suspended in a fluxing material artificially prepared. In the old artificial porcelain this flux was made of glass, or frit made of sand, lime, flint, bone-ash, soda, etc., the ingredients differing at almost every factory. This difference produced a variety of wares of diverse translucency, hardness and tone. The glaze, too, varied. True porcelain requires 1,350-1,450 degrees, Centigrade, to fire it, and the glaze needs as much heat as the body; artificial, fritted porcelain only bears from 1,100-1,150 degrees for the body and only about 1,000 for the glaze, which is melted at a second firing.

It is probable that Chinese porcelain first came under European notice during the Crusades in Palestine and Syria. The first important collection was gathered at Dresden, chiefly by Augustus the Strong, between 1694-1705, and the greater part of it may now be seen in the Johanneum of that city. No sooner were Western potters familiar with the Oriental porcelain which had been brought into the country than they set about to imitate it, and as early as 1519, in Vienna, and at Ferrara, in 1575, an artificial porcelain was produced. No specimens

A Furstenburg elephant somewhat after the manner of Dresden ware. Must be nearly two hundred years old. Owned by Mrs. Thompson, Ottawa.

of these wares are in existence. Florence, Delft and Rouen also opened porcelain works and made exceedingly good imitations, especially the Delft ware. But true porcelain was not discovered in Europe until 1709, when Bottger—Johann Friedrich Bottger—at Dresden, unravelled its secret. Bottger was a native of Schleitz, Thuringia, born in 1685, and he started life as an alchemist at Berlin. He gained the dangerous reputation of being able to transmute metals, and fearing persecution fled to Dresden, in the year 1701, where the Elector of Saxony, Frederick Augustus 2nd, gave him protection. Bottger turned his attention to pottery of different sorts in the royal laboratory and made his famous discovery which caused such a turmoil and raised such hopes in the royal breast that the discoverer, his men and the pottery were removed privately to the Albrechtsburg, at Meissen, a few miles west of Dresden, and there they all worked as state prisoners. All approach to the factory was forbidden, the workmen were pledged to the deepest secrecy and it is recorded that they were reminded of their pledge by the inscription "Secret to Death," which was placed above the doors. The secret slipped out, however, and fugitive workmen were welcomed anywhere, welcomed and given protection.

Meissen, known in France as *porcelaine de Saxe,* and in England, inaccurately called "Dresden," was not perfected by any means in Bottger's lifetime. Four periods came before a neo-classical style was fully developed. In the fourth period, under the guidance of Count Camillo Marcolini (1774-1814), the rococo ornament gave way to severe outlines borrowed from antique shapes, and the ware was covered with profuse painting in which formal landscapes, medallions and stiff flowers played an important part. A star between crossed swords marks the Marcolini period, of which this pitcher is a specimen. (See illustration.)

It belongs to Mrs. George Thompson's collection and is a beautiful, graceful piece of the potter's art.

An Empire Dresden Tea Set. White ground with delicate tracings in gold. Owned by Mrs. Thompson, Ottawa.

ANOTHER valuable antique which was "picked up" in a very interesting manner is the Furstenburg elephant. A brief history of this unique ware is as follows: The Duke of Brunswick, being very anxious for a porcelain factory, instructed the Oberjagermeister von Langen to arrange matters for him. He engaged J. C. Glaser, of Beyreuth, as arcanist, in 1746, but the attempt was unsuccessful until 1770, when the best works began. Sometime after 1780 the factory was sold at auction—the ducal support being greatly diminished. The mark was generally an F in underglaze. This elephant was evidently one of the earlier pieces, as then—between 1746 and 1753—Passau earth was used and that produced a greyish ware, which is accurately descriptive of the elephant's body. The trappings are tinted exquisitely, rather after the manner of "Dresden" ware, and every petal of each rose leaf stands out perfectly. Mrs. Thompson has a particular fondness for elephants, those in her collection—ivory and china combined—amounting to something over sixty.

The factory of Ludwigsburg was founded by Duke Charles, under the guidance of Ringler, who remained until 1802. It was situated in a very unfavourable spot (as far as clay went), but in spite of that porcelain of the finest quality was produced, owing to the liberal subsidies of the patron. The mark is a double C under a crown. The same kaolin was used for this ware as for Furstenburg and produced a slightly greyish tint also, but that was almost entirely done away with under the artist Pustelli, 1760-1762, whose statuettes include the usual subjects and are exquisite bits of work. The two shown here are owned by Mrs. Thompson.