

In forming a collection it is well to confine one's self to properly authenticated specimens, which does not necessarily mean *marked* specimens. Many of the finest pieces in our National museums have no mark, but can readily be authenticated by their known characteristics. Marks alone are often misleading, it being well known that certain factories in their early stages availed themselves of the marks belonging properly to others. The distinctive mark of Chelsea, an anchor, was primarily derived from Venice; pieces of early Bristol, are found having the crossed swords of Dresden, likewise pieces of Dresden with the blue cross of Bristol. Some of the finest and most valued Worcester specimens are marked with Chinese characters of the *Ming* dynasty; early Coalport frequently has Sèvres date marks. The marks are of value when they are understood, and the square Oriental device, or the blue crescent, on the piece of Worcester are just as good as if actual name and date were intelligibly impressed on the base of the specimen.

Then, again, the *absence of a mark* often contributes to identification of a piece, or better enables one to assign it to a specific period. For example: The specimen of genuine Capo de Monte without any mark is much earlier than that with the fleur-de-lis, or the Neapolitan crown and letter N. Among unmarked must be included nearly the whole of Lowestoft China, and a vast assemblage of old Oriental, Chelsea, Worcester, Venice,