

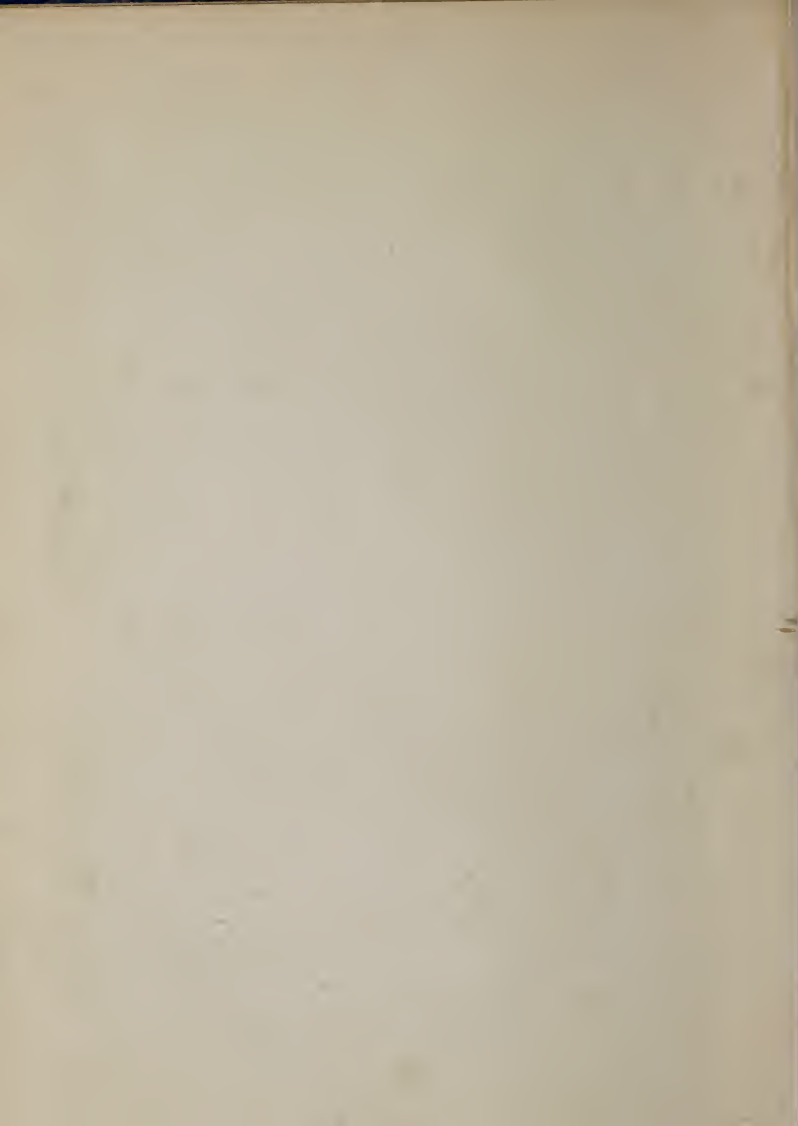
Josiah Wedgwood

A.H.CHURCH, F.R.S.

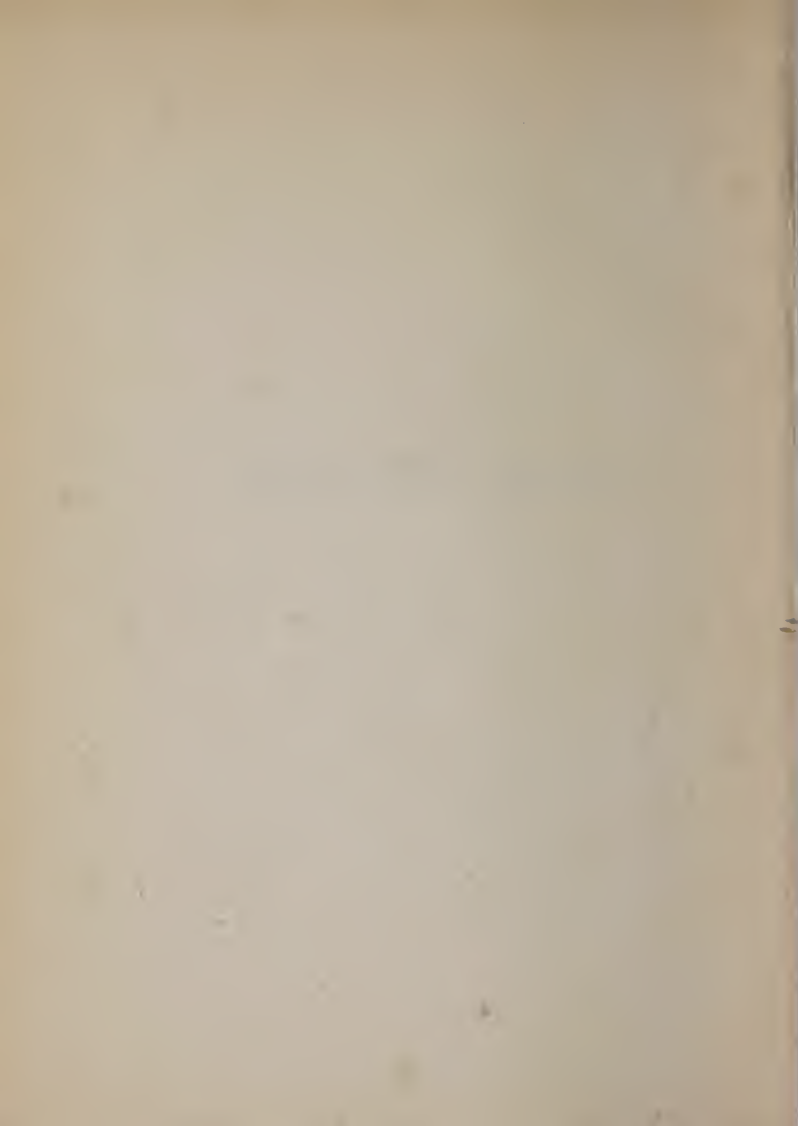


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JOSIAH WEDGWOOD



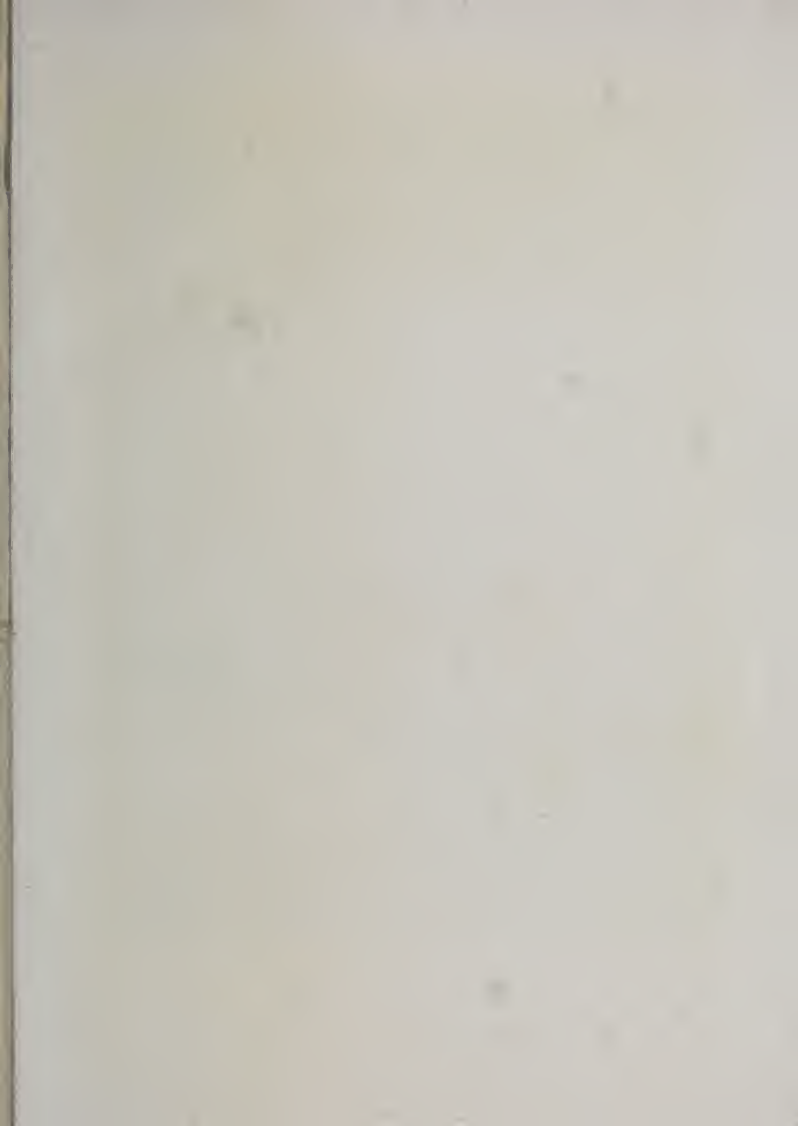




FIG. 1.—PORTLAND VASE.

WHITE ON DARK SLATE COLOUR.

JOSIAH WEDGWOOD

MASTER-POTTER

BY

A. H. CHURCH, F.R.S.

PROFESSOR OF CHEMISTRY IN THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS

AUTHOR OF

"THE CHEMISTRY OF PAINTS,"

"ENGLISH EARTHENWARE," &c., &c.

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British Museum (B.M.)

Victoria and Albert Museum (V.A.M.)

Mr. A. H. Church (A.H.C.)

The pieces to which no initials are appended were in the collection of the late Mr. J. Lumsden Propert.

Josiah Wedgwood

Master-Potter

CHAPTER I

HIS PRECURSORS

Elers of Bradwell—John and Thomas Astbury—Ralph Shaw
--Thomas and John Wedgwood—Enoch Booth and
Ralph Daniel.

DURING the last quarter of the seventeenth century two potters of exceptional skill and marked individuality were at work in England. The earlier of these artists in clay was John Dwight of Fulham, a sketch of whose life and labours was given in the *Portfolio* for 1893. Dwight, whose artistic productions probably dated from the year 1671, exercised no recognizable influence upon the other potters of his day. It was otherwise with the later ceramist, the Dutchman, John Philip Elers of Bradwell Wood and Dimsdale, near Burslem. He, with his brother

Josiah Wedgwood

David, came over from Amsterdam soon after the Revolution of 1688. As early as the year 1692 or 1693 his manufacture had attained a high degree of perfection ; at this time he had a warehouse for the sale of his goods in the Poultry in London. Although his undertaking did not prove a commercial success, and his own potworks were abandoned about the year 1710, Elers really initiated a complete change in the methods and style of Staffordshire earthenware. It is scarcely to be contested that he introduced into the district the process of glazing with salt, and thus founded a special local industry which for seventy years formed a considerable factor in the prosperity of the Potteries. He perfected if he did not introduce the process of washing, levigating, and otherwise preparing clays, and thus effected a marked improvement in the fineness, durability, solidity, and general physical properties of the "bodies" or "pastes" of which they formed the chief constituent. But Elers did more than this, for a third innovation in the English practice of pottery may be reasonably attributed to him. He used the lathe so as to turn his pieces into forms far thinner and more uniformly exact in shape than any which the wheel or the whirler could produce. The advent of J. P. Elers had in

His Precursors

the end a most marked effect, though not one immediately perceptible, upon the subsequent productions of the Potteries. It started the more intelligent and enterprising of the native master-potters upon new lines — lines which, though they then included something of a foreign element, soon acquired a thoroughly English character. There is, indeed, an immense interval and contrast between the grand, massive, picturesque and quaint, yet clumsy, coarse and cumbrous platters, tygs and posset-pots of the latter half of the seventeenth century, on the one hand, and, on the other, the dainty, sharply-turned tea-sets of fine red stoneware made by Elers, which not even Wedgwood himself, with all the appliances of sixty years later, could rival, at least in this material. Elers' ornaments, when he added them to his vessels, were sharp in execution, graceful in design, and in thorough keeping with the fine texture of his ware. They were impressed, upon lumps of clay stuck on to the turned pieces of ware, by means of brass moulds or stamps sharply cut or engraved with intaglio designs. A may-blossom, a bird, an interlacement of curves, a cross formed of fleur-de-lis, figured amongst his favourite devices, the superfluous clay being scraped off from the edge

Josiah Wedgwood

of the reliefs by means of small tools. Elers and his proceedings were at first regarded with jealousy, but soon received the homage of imitation. A potter, John Astbury by name, obtained admission to Elers' factory; by feigning idiocy he secured employment therein in some humble capacity until he had learnt their secret methods of procedure. Then he modified and extended the processes which he had surreptitiously acquired, and so was able to make a large variety of cheap and curious wares. Never quite equal in fineness of body and sharpness of ornament to the productions of Elers, the pieces turned out by John Astbury are not mere imitations. For the paste of his ware he used various clays, which acquired in the kiln a red, fawn, buff, orange, or chocolate hue—some of these colours being developed by the glaze employed. Generally, his ornaments were applied in Devon or pipe-clay and stamped. They consisted of foliage and flowers; crowns, harps, shells, stags, lions, birds, and heraldic ornaments. For the inside of his teapots he often used a wash of white clay, and he was continually making experiments in the mixing and tempering of clays. Thus it happened that about the year 1720 he was led to introduce a due proportion of silica, in the form of ground



FIG. 2.—JOSIAH WEDGWOOD.

FROM THE ENGRAVING BY S. W. REYNOLDS, AFTER SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS (B.M.).

His Precursors

flint,¹ into the body of his ware, in order to secure a higher degree of refractoriness in the fire, as well as less shrinkage. To his son, Thomas Astbury, who commenced business in 1723 at Shelton, may be attributed further improvements in earthenware bodies. He it was who first produced the "cream-colour," which afterwards, as perfected by Josiah Wedgwood, displaced almost all other materials for useful table ware.

To these potters, Elers and Astbury, due credit must be given. They were the forerunners of Wedgwood, who in a long letter to his partner Bentley, in the year 1777, clearly defined and honourably acknowledged the indebtedness of the potters of his day to the improved processes introduced by the foreign artist. Elers and his immediate successors inaugurated an era of experimental inquiry; but the great potter, whose chief labours in the ceramic art I shall endeavour to describe in the present paper, accomplished a greater and more complete task. Under happier circumstances than those of his predecessors, with a keener sense of what was beautiful and appropriate, with more untiring industry and greater commercial aptitude, aided moreover by

¹ This discovery was attributed by Wedgwood to Heath, a potter of Shelton.

Josiah Wedgwood

accomplished advisers, Wedgwood became the chief agent in the transformation of an entire manufacture. The year 1760, when he may be regarded as having become thoroughly established as a master-potter, marks a boundary between that which is crude and archaic and that which is refined and modern. As to what were the losses involved in the change wrought by Wedgwood something will be said later on in this essay ; there can be no doubt that the gains were great.

Although the year 1760 has been named as a critical date in the history of Staffordshire earthenware, it must not be supposed that the inception of many improvements and changes had not occurred earlier, nor, on the other hand, that the older methods did not linger on, especially in the minor potworks, to the very close of the eighteenth century. Then, too, it should be remembered that many local potters besides those previously named contributed important elements to the final result. During the forty years 1720-1760 numerous patents for ceramic improvements were taken out, and unpatented inventions made or utilized. Amongst the more important of these may be named the slip-kiln, used first by Ralph Shaw ; the fixing of the proportions in which various clays should be mixed, by Thomas and

His Precursors

John Wedgwood ; the introduction of liquid glazes or dips, by Enoch Booth ; and the employment of plaster of Paris for moulds, by Ralph Daniel. It would, however, be tedious, were it possible, to present a résumé of the various methods and materials contributed by Wedgwood's immediate predecessors to the art of potting. That he availed himself of many of them, as well as improved and added to them, is certain.

CHAPTER II

HIS EARLY YEARS

Birth—Education—Traditions of childhood—Apprenticeship—Partnership with John Harrison and Thomas Whieldon.

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JOSIAH, the thirteenth and youngest child of Thomas and Mary Wedgwood, was baptized in the parish church of Burslem, Staffordshire, on July 12, 1730. He came of a race of potters who for several generations had been exercising their ancient and useful craft in the district of the Potteries. His parents were neither poor nor rich. Many of his relatives were in prosperous circumstances; some might be called comparatively wealthy, and occupied important and honourable positions. The boy went first to a dame's school; afterwards, when about seven years old, he attended as a day-scholar a school kept by one Blunt, in a large half-timbered house situated in the market-place of the neighbouring town of Newcastle-under-Lyme. This school-

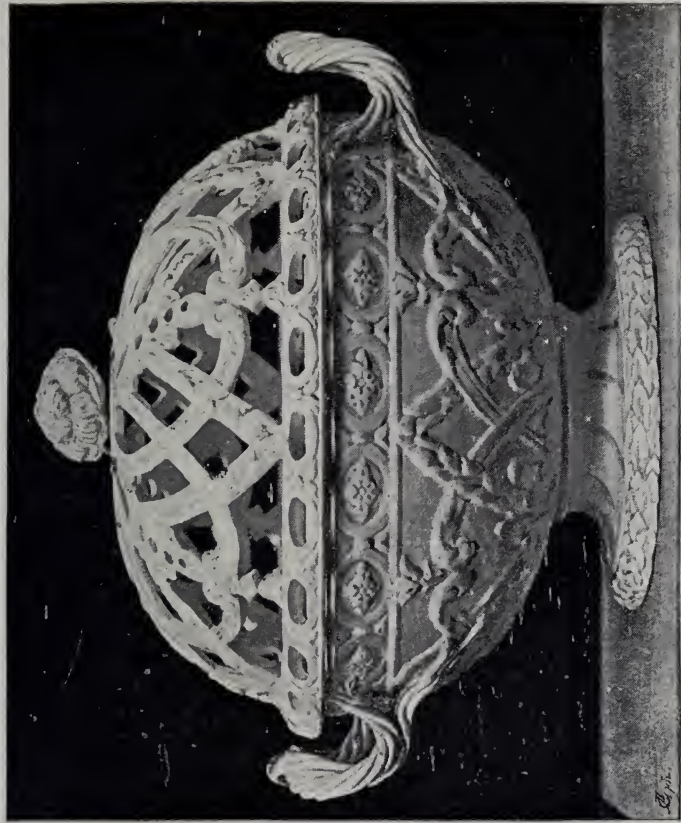
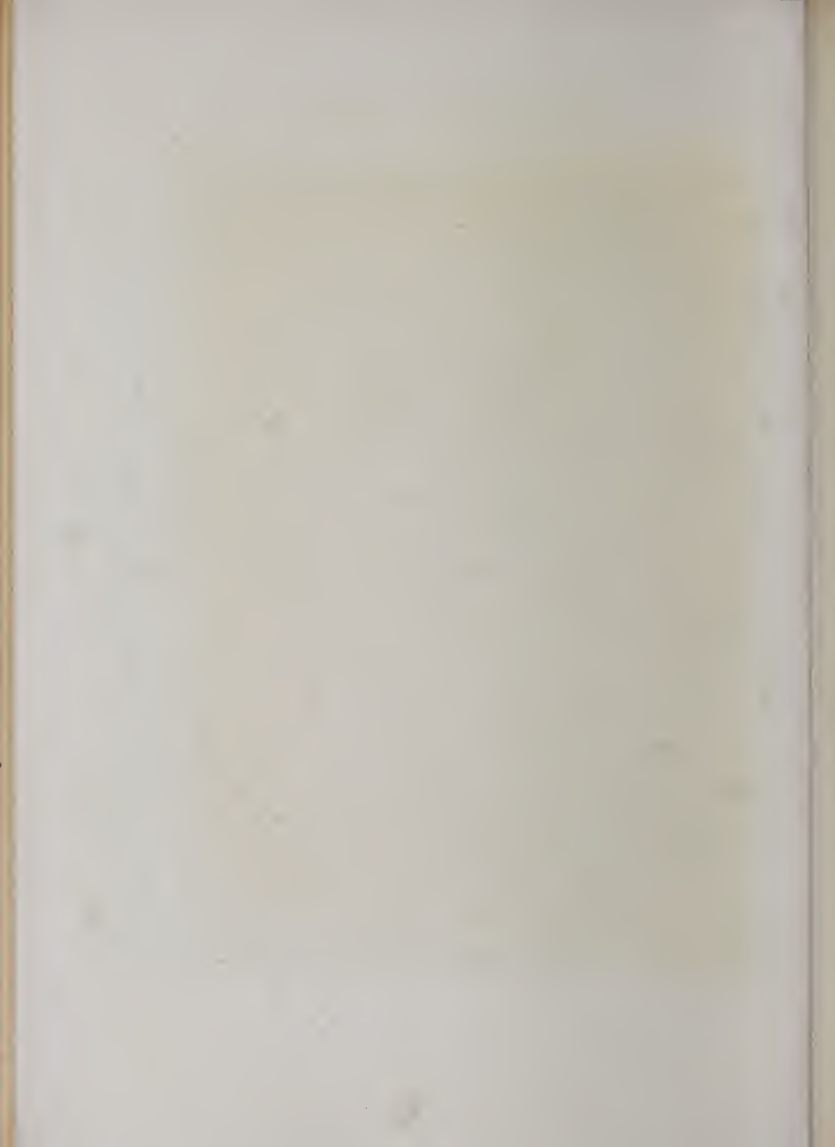


FIG. 3.—CHESTNUT BASKET, CREAM-COLOURED WARE (V.A.M.).



His Early Years

master appears to have been a man of more than ordinary acquirements, not unacquainted with the elements of natural science. The biographer of Wedgwood, the late Miss Meteyard, tells us, I know not on what authority, that the young Josiah was an adept in the art of cutting out with scissors designs in paper. These represented "an army at combat, a fleet at sea, a house and garden, or a whole potworks and the shapes of the ware made in it. These cuttings when wetted were stuck along the whole length of the sloping desks, to the exquisite delight of the scholars, but often to the great wrath of the severe pedagogue." It is to be hoped that this tale is true, and that we have here a significant indication and presage of the artistic capacity which reached so high a degree of development in subsequent years. Another tradition recorded by the same writer points in a similar direction. For it seems that the boy in very early years—he must have been at the time under nine—began to collect curious and beautiful things, commencing a kind of small museum in one of his father's work-sheds, and loading its shelves with fossils and minerals from the neighbourhood. This tradition is the more reasonable since we know that in after-life Wedgwood became an ardent collector of shells, both

Josiah Wedgwood

recent and fossil, as well as of other objects of natural history.

In the summer of 1739, before he had quite completed his ninth year, Josiah Wedgwood lost his father, who died, after a short illness, at the age of fifty-two. At this early age Josiah Wedgwood was removed from school, and began the work of a practical potter in the factory of his eldest brother Thomas, to whom the patrimony of his father had been bequeathed. Here his nicety of eye and dexterity of hand served him in good stead, so that he soon became an expert "thrower" on the wheel. After the lapse of about two years he was attacked by small-pox, which assumed a virulent form, and greatly enfeebled him for some time, more particularly affecting his right knee. However, when Josiah was in his fifteenth year he was bound apprentice to his brother Thomas for a term of five years, dating from November 11, 1744. Unfortunately, as it seemed at the time, he was soon compelled by the return of the weakness in his right knee to abandon the thrower's bench and to turn his attention in other directions. This necessary change in the character of Josiah's employment may not have been without its advantages, and probably gave the youthful potter a wider insight into the practical requirements of

His Early Years

his craft, and familiarized him with the various separate departments of the works. At this time he was engaged in "moulding," and in the making, by the association of variously coloured clays, of imitations of banded and streaked agate, in the form of knife-hafts and snuff-boxes; these were afterwards mounted by the cutlers and hardwaremen of Sheffield and Birmingham. Towards the close of his apprenticeship Josiah seems to have developed a strong tendency to original experiment. In this direction he met with no sympathy from his master and eldest brother, who refused his proposal, when the term of his indentures was over, to take him into partnership. Josiah then agreed to an offer made by John Harrison, a tradesman of Newcastle, who, though apparently ignorant of the potter's craft, had invested money in the factory of Thomas Alders, of Cliff Bank, near Stoke. Thus it came to pass that a partnership was formed, of which Josiah Wedgwood, Thomas Alders, and John Harrison were the three members. This arrangement did not last long, nor was it wholly satisfactory. It could scarcely have been expected that these three men would have worked well together. One of them had nothing but a pecuniary interest in the potworks; the nominal chief seems to have been endowed

Josiah Wedgwood

with very ordinary skill and intelligence in his craft ; while the junior partner was an enthusiastic innovator, full of schemes for the improvement of the potter's art, and at the same time greatly in advance of his local contemporaries in mental equipment and artistic perception. Wedgwood at this time (1751 or 1752) had but just attained his majority, yet he soon introduced many improvements into the humble pottery of which he had taken charge. The out-turn of the works increased ; the clouded, mottled, and tortoiseshell wares, as well as the salt-glazed white ware, which together constituted the stable of its productions, attained a greater degree of excellence and were more highly appreciated by buyers. But Wedgwood found himself thwarted in many directions, and was not allowed to share his due proportion of the increased profits. His generous spirit, so conspicuous in after-life under more happy circumstances, was galled by the limitations imposed upon him by the greed and narrowness of view which characterized his co-partners. Fortunately, he was soon enabled to escape from his thralldom, a new partnership being offered to him by a worthy master - potter, Thomas Whieldon, of Fenton, who had risen from small beginnings to a position of considerable importance. With him

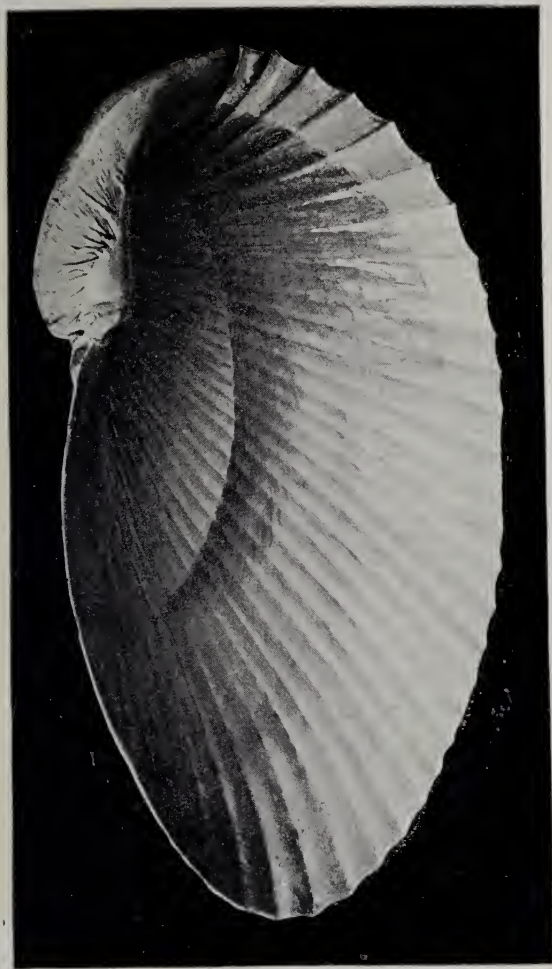
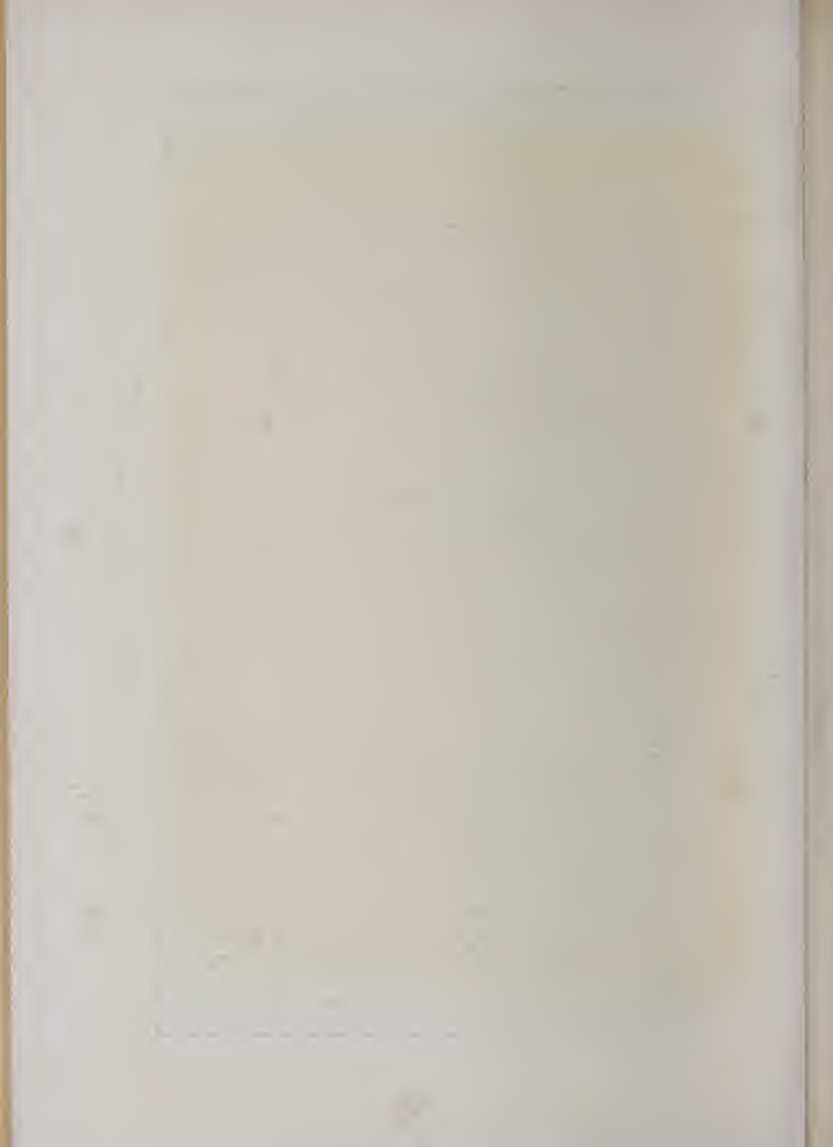


FIG. 4.—DESSERT DISH. TINTED WHITE WARE (V.A.M.).



His Early Years

Wedgwood worked for a few years (probably six), and then, about the year 1758, determined to establish himself in business, for there is a memorandum of agreement still extant, dated December 30, 1758, by which Wedgwood, who was still living at Stoke, engaged the services for five years of one of his relatives, a second cousin, Thomas Wedgwood, then living in Worcester, and practising there as a journeyman potter. There is no doubt that much of the merit of Thomas Whieldon's productions in agate, tortoiseshell, and other wares, is to be attributed to his partner. There is a particularly rich green glaze which Josiah Wedgwood has the credit of inventing, or greatly improving, at this time, and which is frequently found upon dessert services and other pieces which have been assigned with good reason to the factory of Whieldon.

CHAPTER III

AS MASTER-POTTER

The Ivy House Works—Increase of business—Division of labour introduced—Finish versus vitality—Public spirit and generosity.

IN the year 1759, at the age of twenty-nine, Josiah Wedgwood was working entirely on his own account as a master-potter. He had already achieved a local reputation, but none of his contemporaries could have then anticipated the wide renown which he was afterwards to acquire. His capital was extremely small; but he knew his strength, and ventured to take on lease a portion of the premises belonging to his distant cousins, John and Thomas Wedgwood, of the Big House, Burslem. These potters were advanced in years, and, having accumulated a sufficient fortune, were at this time partially retiring from business. The rent he agreed to pay was no more than £10 yearly, but the factory he acquired would probably be regarded as having

As Master-Potter

at the present day an annual value of ten times that sum. It included a cottage, two kilns, and a sufficient number of workrooms and covered sheds. It was known as Ivy House Works. Its site in the market-place is now covered by the shambles.

In these modest premises, which soon became wholly inadequate to his rapidly extending manufacturing and business requirements, Wedgwood, in spite of the weakness occasioned by a recent illness, set actively to work, restricting his labours at first to the production of small ornamental articles, similar, no doubt, to those which he had made when in partnership with Whieldon. Here an arrangement which he had made with that potter at the outset of their association stood him in good stead, for he had expressly reserved to himself the right of keeping secret all the improvements which he might effect during the term of partnership. He began with a very small staff of workmen, but these were chosen with discretion, and so trained in habits of order and observation as to be capable of realizing in some measure, as time went on, the ideals of their master. But Wedgwood himself was not merely the guiding spirit of his factory, but the best and most skilful workman in the place. At first he made most of his own models and moulds, pre-

Josiah Wedgwood

pared his own mixtures of clays, superintended the firing of his kilns, and acted as clerk and warehouseman as well. His reputation rapidly advanced among his neighbours, and he was frequently called upon to exercise his ingenuity in making matches to replace broken pieces belonging to services of foreign origin. Orders came in from a more widely extended area, while Wedgwood himself started new lines of manufacture which speedily attracted attention and acquired a certain degree of importance. At this time the potters of Staffordshire impressed no signature or other distinctive mark upon their wares. Wedgwood as yet had not adopted the useful practice, so that we have to depend for our knowledge of the kinds of work which he was producing at the Ivy House Works upon uncertain traditions and the far from precise recollections of old workmen, although the manuscript memoranda of the great potter himself do afford some indications of the directions in which his activity was then employed. It is stated by Simeon Shaw that Wedgwood in these early days added, in a second small potworks, the manufacture of white stoneware to his other labours, and that of this body he produced relief-tiles: it would be of considerable interest to recover a few



FIG. 5.—MUG, SILVER MOUNTS. BLACK BASALT (V.A.M.).

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As Master-Potter

examples of a kind and form of ware which collectors of the present day do not associate with the name of Wedgwood.

In a year or two the works were enlarged and more journeymen engaged, while the modern system of the division of labour was gradually introduced, so that each workman was no longer everything by turns and nothing for long. This distinction and distribution of work avoided the waste of time inseparable from the old-fashioned methods prevalent in potworks. The constant change from one kind of occupation to another, and from one part of the factory to another—from mixing-shed to slip-kiln, to thrower's bench, to moulder's shop, to firing oven, and back again, had indeed many drawbacks. It was impossible for any one man to acquire equal facility in the varied kinds of manipulation demanded in the different departments of the works. And there was waste of material and injury to the plant, as well as loss of time, involved in these constantly recurring changes of occupation. Wedgwood thoroughly understood the impossibility of conducting a large and rapidly growing business upon the old lines. His was an orderly mind; he could not tolerate the dirt, disorder, and slovenliness which were the common characteristics of

Josiah Wedgwood

the workers in clay. It is not to be denied that the methodic revolution which he effected in the technique of his pottery resulted in the loss of certain elements of value. The quaintness, the *naïveté*, the picturesqueness of the rough processes and products of the older days disappeared. Individuality was lost. The workmen became parts of a well-ordered and accurately adjusted machine. The marks of human handiwork became unrecognizable. A tendency to aim at mechanical perfection and mere finish was developed at the expense of higher qualities. But it should not be forgotten that the vast majority of the objects turned out from Wedgwood's factory belonged to the class which he designated "useful ware." For their safe carriage by land and by water, and for their complete adaptation to their intended uses, perfect regularity in form and substance were most desirable qualities. Dozens of his plates can be piled up without exerting unequal pressure upon one another, so exactly do they correspond in size and shape; their rims, too, have precisely the right contour. The lids of his jugs and teapots fit perfectly; his handles can be really held, his spouts pour. Thus, while in the domain of fine art mechanical perfection often proves incompatible with vitality of expression, it

As Master-Potter

is otherwise in the case of work which lacks its full measure of utility if it be not wrought with careful finish.

Improvements in kilns, and in the minor mechanical appliances needed in order to carry into practice his ceramic ideals, now occupied much of Wedgwood's time. Sketching patterns and making models also engaged his attention, but he was also busy in endeavouring to bring to perfection the cream-coloured body or paste which very soon was to become familiar and famous under the name of Queen's ware. Of this, the most widely known and most abundant product of Wedgwood's skill, something more will have to be said later on in the present essay.

In the course of 1760, less than two years after Wedgwood had begun his labours at the Ivy House Works, we meet with a proof not only of his increasing financial prosperity, but also of that public spirit and generosity which distinguished his later years. For at this time he contributed the sum of £10 towards the establishment of a second Free School in Burslem, most of the smaller master-potters giving but half this amount. Very shortly afterwards Wedgwood's attention was directed to another matter of local interest. The condition of the roads in his neighbourhood

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was most deplorable, while such means of communication between the towns and villages of the Potteries and the larger centres of population as existed were circuitous, badly planned, and wholly inadequate in number. Wedgwood never lost sight of the importance of securing easy communication and rapid transit of raw materials and of goods by land and by water between the chief places of production and of distribution.



FIG. 6.—LAMP.

BLACK BASALT (V.A.M.).

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CHAPTER IV

HIS CERAMIC IMPROVEMENTS

Queen's ware—Black basalt ware and encaustic painting
—White semiporcelain—Agate and marbled wares—
Terra-cotta, etc.

IN the preceding chapter an outline has been traced of the work accomplished or begun by Wedgwood during the first three years of his occupation of the Ivy House Works (1759-1761), one of the most troublesome, and yet, in the end, most successful of these labours, including a long series of experiments made with the object of improving the common cream-coloured earthenware of the district. The body of this ware had been modified from time to time by several potters, and had been made finer in texture as well as brighter in appearance by the alterations which had been introduced in the preparation of the raw materials, and in the selection of the siliceous and argillaceous substances which were its components. When this improved body was

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glazed with salt, in the manner employed for true stoneware, it was still somewhat of a greyish or dull pale yellow ; and when the common lead glaze was employed it developed a still darker and less satisfactory hue. The experiments of Wedgwood were begun in the early part of 1758, while he was still in partnership with Whieldon, but were pushed much further during the next three years. He employed both ground flint and pipe-clay in association with compounds of lead in the glaze, and thus got a mixture which, having several properties in common with the body to which it was applied, was less liable than the common lead glaze then in use to become *crazed*—that is, irregularly fissured on being fired in the kiln. The body itself was likewise improved and made of purer materials, and thus admitted of being delicately tinted in a number of hues varying from a cream to a saffron colour. It was not, however, until some years subsequent to the period of Wedgwood's career of which I am now writing that the final improvements in cream-ware were effected. They may be referred to a date shortly subsequent to the year 1768, when the attention of the Staffordshire potters was forcibly directed to the true Kaolin or China clay of Cornwall and to the felspathic mixture known as

His Ceramic Improvements

China-stone or Cornish stone, both these materials being named and their employment in the manufacture of porcelain claimed in the patent granted to William Cookworthy of Plymouth in that year. This conclusion is founded partly on the evidence of Wedgwood's own notebooks and partly on a memorandum by Enoch Wood, which is published in full in my *English Earthenware*, p. 82. Still, even in 1761, Wedgwood's cream-colour ware had attained a decided superiority in colour and in smoothness of glaze over the corresponding fabric made by his local competitors, while the forms which he introduced were far more varied and elegant. In these productions the good taste, the sense of fitness, and the keen power of observation which distinguished Wedgwood found their appropriate expression. One can trace the motives of much of his work, both as to form and decoration, in the collections of various kinds which he was amassing, and in his constant intercourse with the metal-workers of Sheffield and Birmingham. To the former source he was indebted for the designs derived from objects of natural history, particularly shells and plants; to the latter source he owed many shapes and methods of decorative treatment which were in use for silver-plated ware. There is a cream-

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colour centrepiece or *compotier* for the dessert table, formerly in the Jermyn Street Collection, and now at South Kensington, which affords an apt illustration of the metal-work designs which Wedgwood adapted to his reproductions in a different material. Such adaptations may not be wholly justifiable from an artistic standpoint, but they had the merit of introducing the elements of lightness and elegance into a manufacture which had hitherto been often marked by a tendency to heaviness and clumsiness. A more legitimate loan from the processes of the silversmith was the introduction of diapers and other conventional designs in pierced and perforated work. This style of ornamentation was subsequently pushed to its extreme permissible limit by some Leeds potters, Messrs. Hartley, Greens and Co., who became the most successful imitators of Wedgwood's cream-ware, about the year 1783 or perhaps somewhat earlier. Of a bolder design and more free in treatment is the beautiful chestnut basket at South Kensington, represented in Fig. 3. Another change for the better effected by Wedgwood consisted in the greater sobriety of the enamel colours with which his cream-ware was decorated when not left entirely plain. It should be mentioned here that he did not disdain



FIG. 7.—PLAQUE, SACRIFICE OF IPHIGENIA.

WHITE AND GREEN JASPER (V.A.M.).

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His Ceramic Improvements

taking advantage of hints as to models and ornamentation afforded by Oriental and Dresden porcelain, and by the productions of Chelsea and Bow, nor was he free from indebtedness to the Dutch faience made in such large quantities during the eighteenth century. Wedgwood's earlier works in cream-ware were occasionally enriched with gold, but until the year 1765 this metal was not burnt into the glaze, but simply attached by means of japanner's oil-size. Later on true gilding was more generally and more freely introduced, especially on what may be called armorial services. Towards the close of Wedgwood's career the love for extremely rich and showy decoration had increased, and the factory at Etruria possessed the means of gratifying it. Still, even then there was a certain measure of restraint shown in the painting executed under Wedgwood's superintendence—a restraint not exhibited by the contemporary work produced in the china factory at Worcester.

In connexion with cream-ware, or rather Queen's ware, for so this product came to be called in 1763, after Wedgwood had been appointed potter to Queen Charlotte, a similar but nearly white fabric should be named. It was called Pearl ware. Its production was very limited

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in amount, and was in part the natural result of greater purity in the materials used. The period to which it may be assigned is a late one in the life of the potter. It was used occasionally, amongst other purposes, for those delicately tinted shell dessert-services (see Fig. 4) in which a general yellowish ground would have impaired the purity of the superposed colours. The writer possesses an exquisitely turned goblet of this Pearl ware, the exterior being veined with gold lustre and gold pink, produced by means of purple of Cassius. Both Queen's ware and Pearl ware were employed in the making of statuettes and busts. Of these a few specimens will be found in the Victoria and Albert Museum and in other collections. They rarely bear the stamp of Wedgwood's name, but have been identified by means of the few examples which have fortunately been so marked. There is, for instance, a symbolical bust of "Sadness" at South Kensington which is thus authenticated; it is no less than 22 inches in height. The large figure of "Fortitude" at South Kensington is not signed, but a duplicate in private hands is.

Black basalt ware is another famous product of Wedgwood's kilns. In a cruder form it had long been made in the Staffordshire potteries, and was

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often called "Egyptian black." It owes its colour chiefly to iron. The developed fabric as produced by Wedgwood was richer in hue, finer in grain, and smoother in surface than that made before his time, or subsequently turned out by his local successors and imitators. Wedgwood called it "black porcelaine" and "black basaltes." Its density was high (2.9); it took a fine polish on the lapidary's wheel, and forms an excellent touchstone for gold. Some of the black basalt produced at the Leeds Pottery was, however, almost, if not quite, equal to that of Wedgwood. He employed it extensively for large relief plaques, vases, life-size busts, and medallion portraits of "Illustrious Ancients and Moderns." With his seals (frequently wheel-polished on the shanks), and his small intaglios in black basalt, collectors are familiar. This ware also furnished the ground on which the majority of his so-called "encaustic" paintings were executed. These were intended to reproduce the effects of the work on Greek and Etruscan painted vases and other vessels. The enamel colours used were so constituted as to yield a matt or nearly dead surface, while the black background was either dull or had the half-lustre of Nolan ware. Unfortunately, the *quality* of the colours was poor, while the timid touch of

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Wedgwood's enamellers was not competent to realize the associated strength and beauty of the original classical conceptions which they were engaged in reproducing. And it is necessary to confess that Wedgwood's encaustic paintings on vases and plaques have generally a depressing effect upon those who really appreciate the supreme excellence of the antique art which was supposed to have inspired them. However mechanically perfect, the imitations were artistically defective. The originals which Wedgwood copied were, moreover, for the most part not happily chosen. His largest work of this class is a reproduction from a Greek vase of the period of decadence preserved in the British Museum. His copy of this immense vase or crater, formerly in the Jermyn Street Collection, is no less than 33 inches high and 18 inches in diameter. A favourable example of Wedgwood's productions in this ware is furnished by the vase shown in Fig. 8; the original is at South Kensington. The rare bronzed ware made by Wedgwood appears to have been black basalt dusted over, sometimes before and sometimes after firing, with a metallic bronze powder. Wedgwood's work in plain black was, however, far more satisfactory in effect than any which had been enriched by



FIG. 8.—VASE.

ENCAUSTIC PAINTING ON BLACK BASALT (V.A.M.).



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subsequent treatment in the way of enamelling or coating with metallic preparations. Witness the fine series of busts, about 20 inches in height, in the South Kensington Museum, which represent Zeno, Cicero, Cato, Seneca, Bacon, Barneveldt, Ben Jonson, and Grotius. There also exist several statuettes from the antique and many fine vases, plain or with figures and ornaments in relief. The basalt vases made between 1769 and 1780 were usually rather simply decorated with vertical shallow flutings and strap-work, and with festoons of drapery, flowers, or husks; their handles sprang from masks, goats' heads, satyrs, etc. During the whole of the partnership between Josiah Wedgwood and Thomas Bentley this class of vases was made in large numbers. But about the year 1776 bas-reliefs of figures were first applied to these vases, amongst the first so used in that year being the Dancing Hours, designed by Flaxman. Another vase which this sculptor modelled about the same time is a two-handled drinking-vessel covered with high reliefs—masks of Minerva, Cupids with musical instruments, and festoons of foliage. A copy is preserved at South Kensington. The well-known large ewers for water and wine were also the work of Flaxman. A fine mug of this ware is shown in Fig. 5.

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Wedgwood was not far wrong in writing, as he did in 1779, in the fifth edition of his *Catalogue*, of his suites of five vases for chimney-pieces: "We have reason to conclude that there are not any vases of porcelain, marble, or bronze, either ancient or modern, so highly finished and sharp in their ornaments as these black vases."

I have omitted to state that many objects of practical and domestic utility were made in this black ware. Amongst these, inkstands in great variety are found, as well as salt-cellars, flower-pots, and candlesticks. The large lamp in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Fig. 6) could hardly be employed otherwise than as an ornament, but it is an excellent example of black basalt ware: the design and modelling are good, and the material of fine quality, though it has suffered in places from overfiring. A large and massive specimen of this ware is a font, once in a country parish church, and now in the Hooker Collection: it is $17\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter and $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches high.

Full justice cannot be done to the artistic effect of specimens in black basalt unless they are seen against a suitably coloured background. Wedgwood himself appreciated the difficulty of showing them properly, and wrote to his partner Bentley

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recommending the employment of some yellow material in order to bring out the tone and hue of the vases exhibited in the showroom. This recommendation is thoroughly justified by the experience of the modern collector. Yellow textile fabrics, and even yellow papers, strikingly enhance the beauty of this black material. In the same way it will be found that, in framing plaques and portrait cameos of basalt for the purpose of mounting them in articles of furniture, slightly polished satin-wood forms an effective bordering.

Wedgwood made tea and coffee sets in black basalt ware, the pieces being fluted or decorated with reliefs of figures in the same material. Occasionally he used simply enamelled designs upon the edges of his cups, saucers, milk-jugs, and trays; more rarely he introduced conventional patterns in burnished silver or gold.

A kind of white semiporcelain was made at an early period by Wedgwood. He used it at first for the plinths of his marbled and variegated vases—afterwards, in an improved form, for some of his portrait medallions and plaques. It differed from the white jasper which I shall presently describe, in its slightly straw-coloured or greyish-yellow hue, in its waxen smooth surface, and in its marked degree of translucency. It did not

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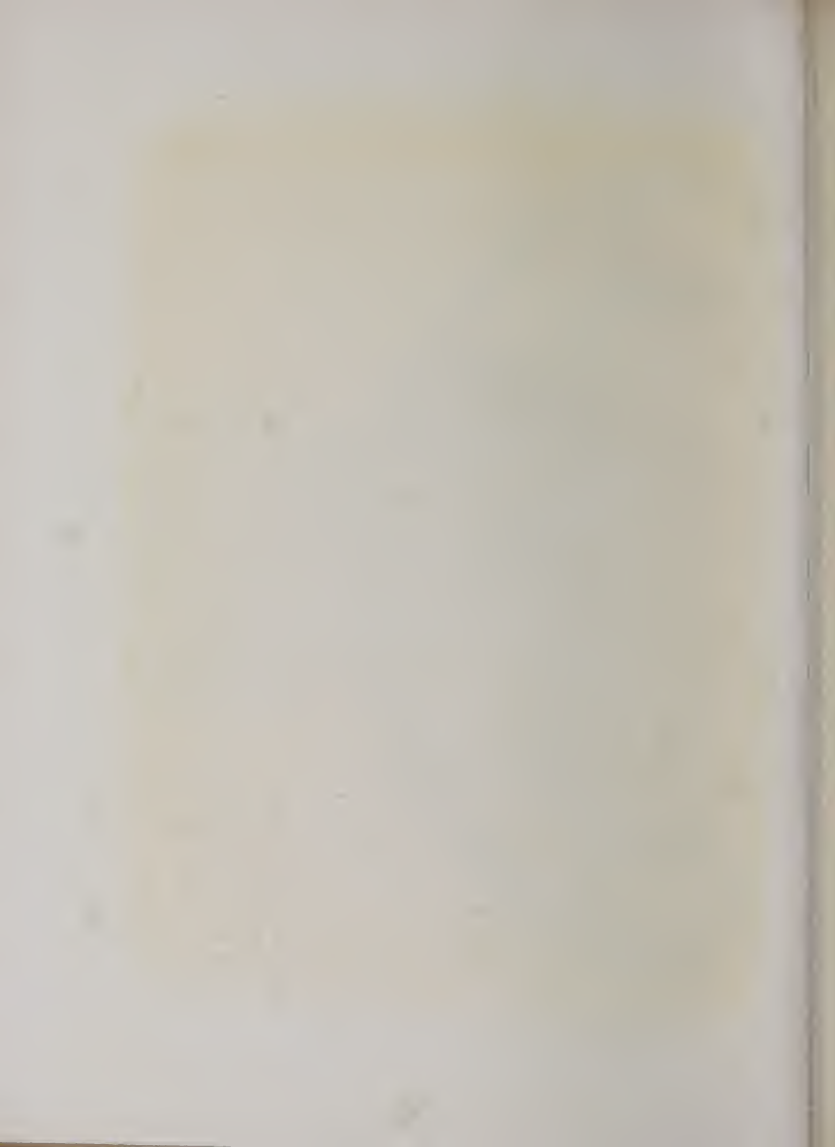
contain the compounds of baryta which formed characteristic, and indeed essential, constituents of the true jasper-body, a subsequent invention. A tendency to warp and crack in firing reduced its usefulness as a ceramic paste.

Variegated ware as made by Wedgwood was of two kinds. One of these, which may be distinguished as "solid" agate ware, was coloured throughout its entire substance by means of the association in bands, twists, stripes, and waves, of clays of different hues. It had been brought to a high state of perfection, possibly by our potter himself during his partnership with Whieldon, but it can scarcely be considered a distinctive product of Wedgwood's independent labours. But in his hands it was far more largely used for purely ornamental pieces, such as vases, than heretofore, while at the same time he produced by means of this material several characteristic imitations of definite kinds of natural agate and marble. The other kind of variegated ware made by Wedgwood was coloured on the surface only, the body being of common cream-coloured earthenware (see Fig. 12). The mottled and veined colouring was picturesquely irregular and varied much in hue. The handles, rims, and occasionally the plinths, of vases in this ware



FIG. 9.—T.VZZA.

RED RELIEFS ON BLACK BASALT (V.A.M.).



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often showed the natural colour of the cream-ware body, or were covered with oil-gilding. Amongst the natural materials imitated were these: granite, speckled with red, grey, white, and black; serpentine, with mottlings of green, grey, and yellow; antique yellow, saffron veined with black; also Egyptian pebble, jasper, porphyry, and several kinds of agate.

Under the designations, Rosso antico, cane-colour, and bamboo, Wedgwood included a number of bodies which would now be called *terra cotta*. They had a dead, dry surface, and so differed from the black basalt as to be distinctly porous. They varied much in hue, but their names afford a good indication of the range of colour which they present. Two varieties of these terra-cottas were sometimes associated in the same piece, the body being in one colour, the reliefs in another. Moreover, these bodies were sometimes used in conjunction with the black basalt; sometimes they were decorated with reliefs in white paste. The red terra-cotta was occasionally made of a pale tint; a chocolate hue is also known. Red reliefs on black basalt (such as the tazza shown in Fig. 9), white on chocolate, purplish-black on white, and dull sage green on cane-colour, afforded satisfactory contrasts or

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harmonies. Some of these terra-cotta pastes, such as the white and green above named, were probably of later introduction than the others. I may repeat here what I have mentioned in a previous chapter, that Wedgwood's red terra-cotta never equalled in fineness of texture and beauty of hue the red ware made long before his day by Elers of Bradwell, nor that darker and still denser product invented very early in the eighteenth century by Böttger at Dresden.

Wedgwood's "jasper" body is of so remarkable a character, is so distinctly an original invention of his own, that it demands separate discussion. The five succeeding chapters (V. to IX.) will be devoted to its consideration. This treatment involves, I am aware, a break in the chronological sequence which has hitherto been recognized, at least in some measure, as a guiding principle in tracing the progressive development of Wedgwood's life-work. But when the jasper-body has been considered from various points of view, the thread of the narrative will be resumed.

CHAPTER V

HIS INVENTION OF THE "JASPER" BODY

Its characteristic components—Compounds of baryta—
Range of colour—Solid jasper and jasper-dip.

IT was Josiah Wedgwood's appreciation of antique gems cut in onyx and niccolo that led him to invent the most original and the most beautiful of all the ceramic materials with which he worked. This was the jasper-body, or jasper-paste. Though it may be roughly described, when in its simplest form, as opaque and white, its opacity and its whiteness are susceptible of considerable variation. Sometimes it has the deadness of chalk, but the finer varieties possess the delicate hue and faint translucency of ivory or vellum. Wedgwood and his artists took advantage of this translucent character of the white jasper, as it allowed the colour of the ground to appear in a slight degree through the thinner parts of the cameo reliefs, and thus

Josiah Wedgwood

suggested, as in some draperies, the idea of a fine and light texture. On the other hand, there were many subjects and styles of treatment where any marked degree of translucency in the material used for the reliefs was of decided disadvantage; here a greater thickness and the more opaque varieties of the jasper-body were preferred. The smoothness of surface which this ware, as made by Josiah Wedgwood, almost invariably possessed, is delightful at once to the senses of touch and sight, and, moreover, it affords one of the best criteria for distinguishing old work from new. It was caused chiefly by the extreme fineness to which the components of the jasper-body were reduced, but the exact adjustment of the temperature of firing the ware to its composition doubtless influenced the result. The modern jasper-body is granular—"saccharoid," to borrow a geological term—in appearance and rough to the finger; it needs to be rubbed down with fine emery before it can be made to pass successfully this test of touch. Though generally left with its natural matt or nearly matt surface, the jasper-ware is susceptible of a fine polish. Wedgwood occasionally polished the grounds and bevelled edges of some of his smaller cameos and intaglios, particularly in his more direct imitations of natural



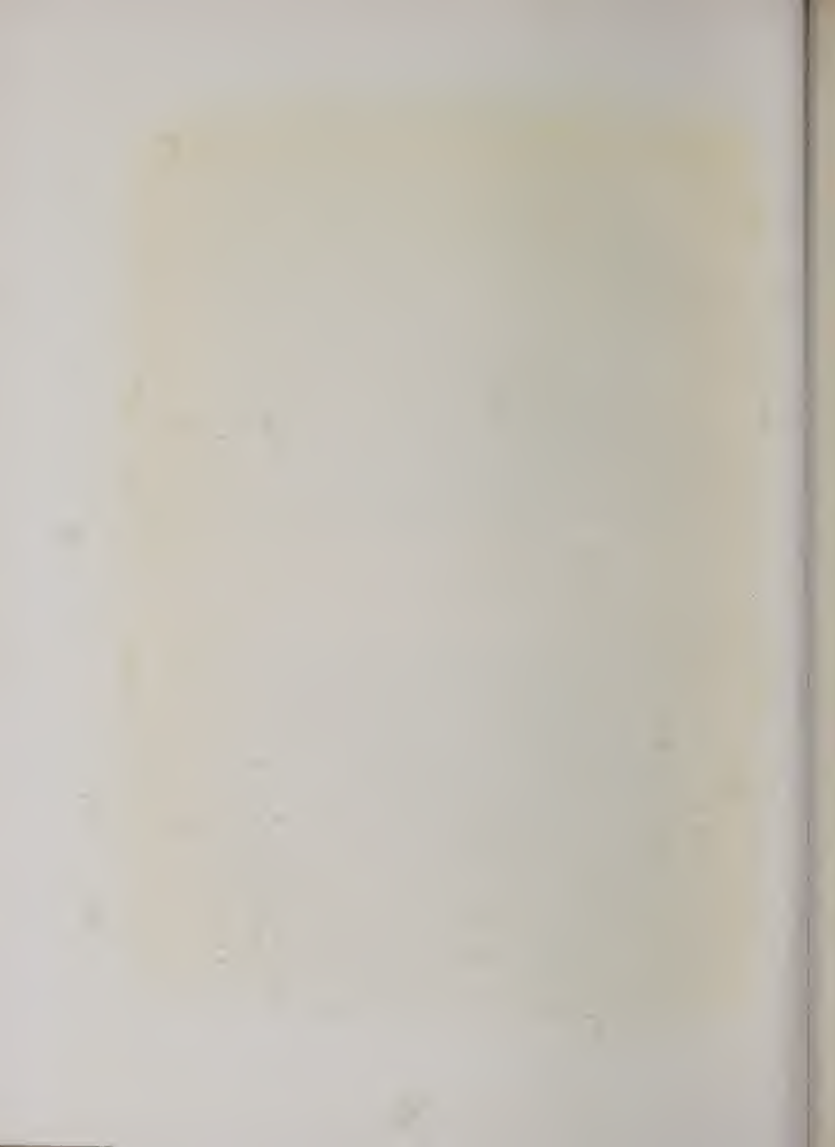
FIG. 10.—MEDALLION, A ZEPHYR.

WHITE AND BLUE JASPER (A.H.C.).



FIG. 11.—MEDALLION, A MONUMENTAL GROUP.

WHITE AND BLACK JASPER (A.H.C.).



The "Jasper" Body

stratified stones: examples of polished edges are furnished by the two specimens shown in Figs. 10 and 11, and by the bevel (showing three strata) of the Medusa plaque (Fig. 16). The inside of teacups, bowls, and salt-cellars was also frequently ground and polished on the lathe.

The peculiarity in chemical composition which marks out the jasper-ware body from all other ceramic pastes was brought about by the introduction of a compound of the element barium. This metal occurs in nature chiefly in the form of sulphate, the mineral, which is found abundantly in Derbyshire, being known as cawk, heavy-spar, and barytes. The distinctive character of the alkaline earth contained in heavy-spar seems to have been first ascertained by Guyton de Morveau in 1779: four years afterwards Withering recognized the same earth in a mineral carbonate, now called witherite, from Leadhills in Lanarkshire. But as early as in the year 1773 Wedgwood was making experiments with these two minerals. The chemical knowledge of his day was, however, too imperfect to be of great use to the inquiring potter, who was obviously much puzzled by the apparently capricious behaviour of the two compounds under the action of fire. In 1774 he wrote to his partner Bentley, "I must go into

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Derbyshire to search for spath fusible or No. 19": not long afterwards he made the journey thither and found what he required. Wedgwood's keen observation and his untiring assiduity in experiment were soon rewarded. He had learnt the chief properties, as constituents of his new jasperware, of the sulphate of baryta or cawk and of the rather more fusible carbonate, although we possess no evidence of his having discovered the differences in their chemical composition. Henceforth cawk became the chief ingredient of his "jasper," although a small quantity of the carbonate of baryta was occasionally introduced as well. The other materials were clay and finely-ground flint.¹ He tried several kinds of clay, such as Weal blue clay, Dorset clay, and Cornish China-clay. He also used Cornish or China-stone, which contains a notable proportion of felspar. Wedgwood wrote to his partner in somewhat enigmatical terms when indicating the ingredients of his jasper-body, saying that its composition was "too precious to reveal all at

¹ The useful fireproof cement lately introduced into commerce under the name "Purimachos" consists of the same ingredients, the clay being in smallest proportion. Some of Wedgwood's chemical vessels approach it very closely in composition.

The “ Jasper ” Body

once.” One of his formulæ, when translated into percentages, is probably pretty nearly represented by these figures—sulphate of baryta, 59 parts ; clay, 29 ; flint, 10 ; carbonate of baryta, 2.

One of the chief charms of jasper-ware consists in the daintiness of its colour. Besides several tones and hues of blue derived from cobalt, we meet with a yellow, a lilac, and a green jasper ; there is also a black variety. Each of these colours occurs in several modifications. The black is sometimes bluish, sometimes neutral ; the green, which was derived from a mixture of iron and cobalt, though always toned with some grey, exhibits many different hues, ranging from yellowish-green to bluish-green ; the lilac, due to manganese, varies generally between a pink and a pale purple, but occasionally presents the precise hue of a mixture of cocoa-decoction and milk ; and the yellow is slightly greyish, with a tendency towards an amber hue in some examples ; in other pieces it approaches the colour of the lemon, while some varieties may be called buff. As a rule Wedgwood limited himself to the association, in any single production of his kiln, of no more than two of the above colours, with the addition of white ; the least happy in effect of these

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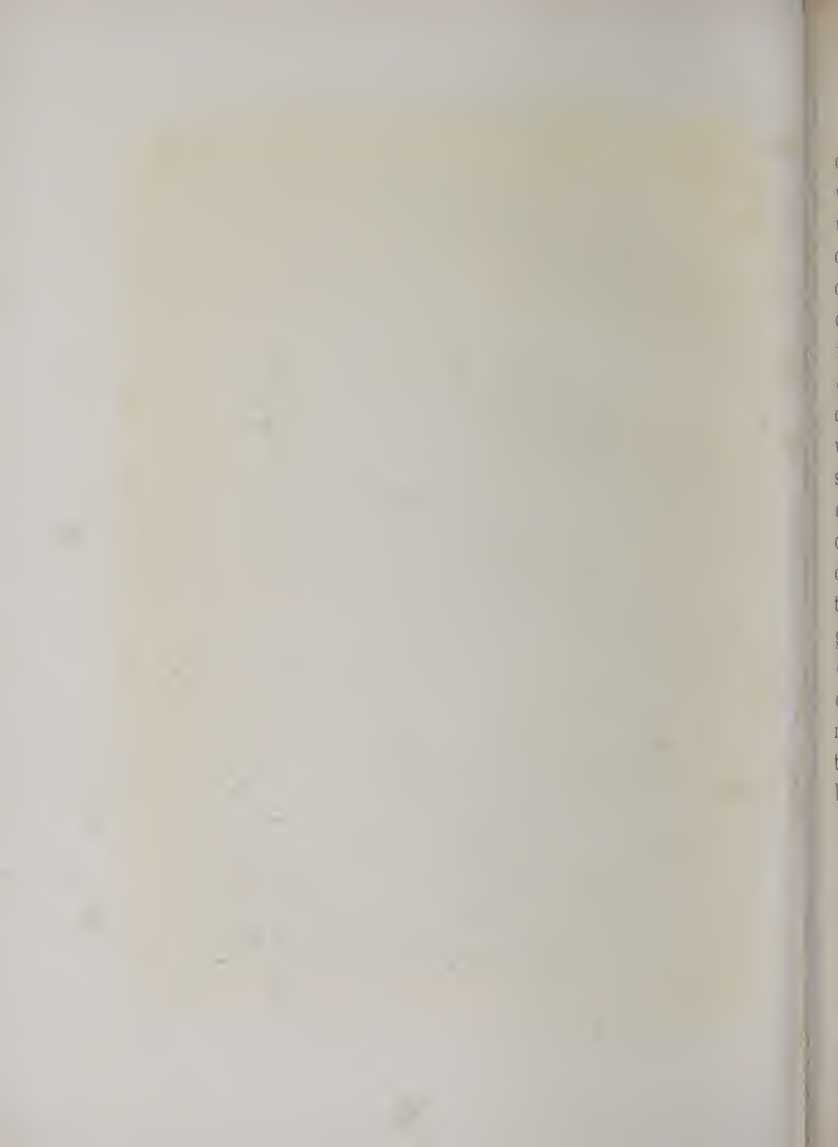
combinations are those in which blue and yellow occur alone, unaccompanied by white.

Jasper-ware was made in two ways. In one process the entire substance of the white body was coloured by the metallic oxide used; in the other, the surface only was stained. The former method yielded the product known as "solid jasper," the latter gave the "jasper-dip"—by it the most delicate and refined effects were produced. This jasper-dip was invented in 1777, really in order to obtain a higher quality in the colour, rather than to economize the costly oxide of cobalt, although the latter result was not unimportant. During the partnership with Bentley, the solid jasper was, however, chiefly employed. But at the time of Bentley's death in 1780, and for the next fifteen years, Wedgwood produced the great majority of his larger ornamental pieces in jasper-dip. It is, however, to be noted that the two methods of manufacture were often associated in the same object. Thus, in the beautiful coloured chequered work which we find on some of the vases, flower-pots, and *déjeuner* sets of what we may call the *period of perfection* (1781 to 1795), the little quatrefoils applied to the surface are of solid jasper, while the coloured squares are of jasper-dip. A troublesome defect in both methods



FIG. 12.—VASE.

CREAM-COLOURED WARE IN IMITATION OF GRANITE (V.A.M.).



The “ Jasper ” Body

ought not to be passed over. The facility with which the white jasper-body became tintured with the colours imparted by various metallic oxides very frequently caused the thinner parts of the white reliefs to acquire a stain from the coloured surface below them. This discoloration is rarely absent from the edges of the white relief on a black ground, which frequently presents a dirty-yellow hue. A broken white-on-blue cameo which I possess shows on the fractured surfaces signs that the cobalt had risen into and had delicately tintured with a faint azure hue the overlying white relief, while the thinner portions of the latter also owe part of their colour to their translucency, which permits the blue of the ground being seen through them. A thin slice of white jasper placed in close contact with any distinctly coloured surface exhibits this phenomenon. It constantly happens, however, that this staining and this translucency of the jasper-body produce effects which are quite satisfactory.

CHAPTER VI

THE BARBERINI OR PORTLAND VASE

Modelled from the original by Henry Webber—Discovery of the vase, its date, decoration and material—Prices realized by Wedgwood's copies.

THE name of Wedgwood is inseparably connected with that remarkable glass amphora commonly called the "Portland Vase"; the best of his copies, such as that reproduced in Fig. 1, challenge comparison with the original. That Wedgwood should have succeeded in translating the light-and-colour effects of a glass cameo into another material indicates how complete was his control of the jasper-body, and how efficient was the aid which the modellers employed upon the task rendered him in this critical case. It is somewhat strange to find that Flaxman does not appear to have taken any part in this work, although Sir W. Hamilton had written to Wedgwood saying, "I should have thought my friend

The Portland Vase

Flaxman would have been of use to you in your present undertaking; for I must do him the justice to say, I never saw a bas-relief executed in the true, simple, antique style half so well as that he did of the Apotheosis of Homer from one of my vases." According to Miss Meteyard (*Handbook*, pp. 297 - 299), the work connected with the copying of the designs on the vase was done chiefly in London, although several of Wedgwood's own modellers — Henry Webber,¹ William Hackwood, William Wood, and others—were engaged upon it. The same authority also states that the original was not sent down to Etruria until December 22, 1790, more than four years after it had been entrusted to the care of Wedgwood. It is difficult to reconcile this statement with others—in Miss Meteyard's *Handbook*—such as this one, that in October, 1789, a perfect copy had been made, and with one's conviction that such a potter must have had the vase always at hand during his laborious efforts in preparing suitable colours and bodies wherewith to reproduce it. For it must be remembered that the original material is a very dark blue glass, over which was a layer of nearly opaque white glass, out of which

¹ An excellent modeller, recommended to Wedgwood by Sir Joshua Reynolds and Sir William Chambers.

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the cameo figures in relief were cut. On the other hand, Wedgwood had to make his copies in a blue-black jasper-body; to this the moulded reliefs in white jasper were affixed, but the variations observable in different specimens show that much surface-modelling must have been executed by hand after the reliefs had left the mould, and before the object was fired. It should be stated in this connexion that Wedgwood altered slightly some of the minor details of the designs on this vase, and restored the parts which had been corroded.

The modern history of the Portland Vase, although it has been often given, is so interesting as to bear repetition here. A few words may not inappropriately be prefixed in correction of some of the views as to its date and subject entertained by writers on Wedgwood ware. It is now generally admitted by experts that this remarkable example of cameo-cutting belongs to the closing years of the Roman Republic, or, at least, cannot be of later date than the first century of the Imperial Principate. Diverse interpretations of the two scenes depicted on the vase have been offered, but it is most probable that they illustrate episodes in the courtship of Peleus and Thetis, their meeting on Mount Pelion being depicted in one group;



FIG. 13.—FLOWER-POT AND SAUCER.

OLIVE GREEN RELIEFS ON CANE-COLOUR TERRA-COTTA (V.A.M.).

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The Portland Vase

and in the other the consent of Thetis to be the bride of Peleus, Poseidon and Eros being present. The youthful bust on the base of the vase represents Paris wearing a Phrygian cap, and heavily draped. It is a separate work, and formed no part of the original design.

Until the acquisition of the vase by the Duchess of Portland in the year 1785 it was known as the Barberini Vase, for it was discovered between the years 1623 and 1644, during the pontificate of Urban VIII., Maffeo Barberini. This Pope had ordered the sepulchral mound called Monte del Grano, situated at a spot on the road to Frascati, about two and a half miles from Rome, to be excavated. In a marble sarcophagus of the early part of the third century of our era the vase was found; it was subsequently placed in the Barberini Palace in Rome. James Byres, of Tonley, bought it from the Barberini family, and sold it for £1,000 to Sir W. Hamilton, who in his turn resold the vase to the Duchess of Portland for 1,800 guineas. This was in the year 1785. After the death of the Duchess, the Duke of Portland purchased it for £1,029. He lent it to Wedgwood. In 1810 the fourth Duke deposited it on loan in the British Museum. On February 7, 1845, William Lloyd, a scene-painter, wantonly broke it

Josiah Wedgwood

into many fragments. These were put together without much adroitness; the bottom was not replaced. The restored vase may be seen in the Gem and Gold Ornaments Room. The above-mentioned sarcophagus is now in the Museum of the Capitol in Rome. The reliefs on its sides, representing stories from the life of Achilles, furnished Wedgwood with materials for two of his largest and finest plaques—the “Sacrifice of Iphigenia” and “Priam begging the Body of Hector from Achilles.” These subjects were taken, with some modifications, from the reliefs on the front and back of this sarcophagus; the sculptures on the two ends, representing groups of warriors, were also employed in the same way. The whole set of designs appear to have been modelled by the Italian sculptor Pacetti, who worked at Rome for Wedgwood under Flaxman’s superintendence. Some additional particulars with regard to the plaque of the “Sacrifice of Iphigenia” (Fig. 7) will be found in the next chapter.

It was Wedgwood’s intention to produce fifty proofs (for so we may call the early copies) of his reproduction of the Portland Vase; we do not know whether this intention was fulfilled. About twenty of these old examples of the first issue have been recognized in various public and private

The Portland Vase

collections. Nearly all approach very closely the dimensions of the original, which is $10\frac{1}{4}$ inches high, but differ from each other in the quality of the blue or black ground, and in the tint, the degree of opacity, and the refinement of the white reliefs. At the beginning of the last century, a few years after Wedgwood's death, more copies of the vase were made, but we are inclined to think that none of them is equal to those of the first issue. It has also been produced in smaller sizes and in other materials; while Wedgwood's many imitators copied, though with very moderate success, this conspicuous triumph of his skill. Wedgwood charged £50 for some of his copies of the Portland Vase; for other examples, which were flawed or which did not entirely satisfy his critical eye, he seems to have been content with a smaller price. The sums which early specimens have brought by auction have increased a good deal during the last half-century. In 1849 the copy in the Tulk Collection was bought in for £20; that belonging to Samuel Rogers sold for 50 guineas in the year 1856. The copy in the Purnell Collection fetched no less than £173 when that remarkable assemblage of works of art was dispersed at Sotheby's in the year 1872. A good early copy sold at Christie's in 1890 for £199 10s.;

Josiah Wedgwood

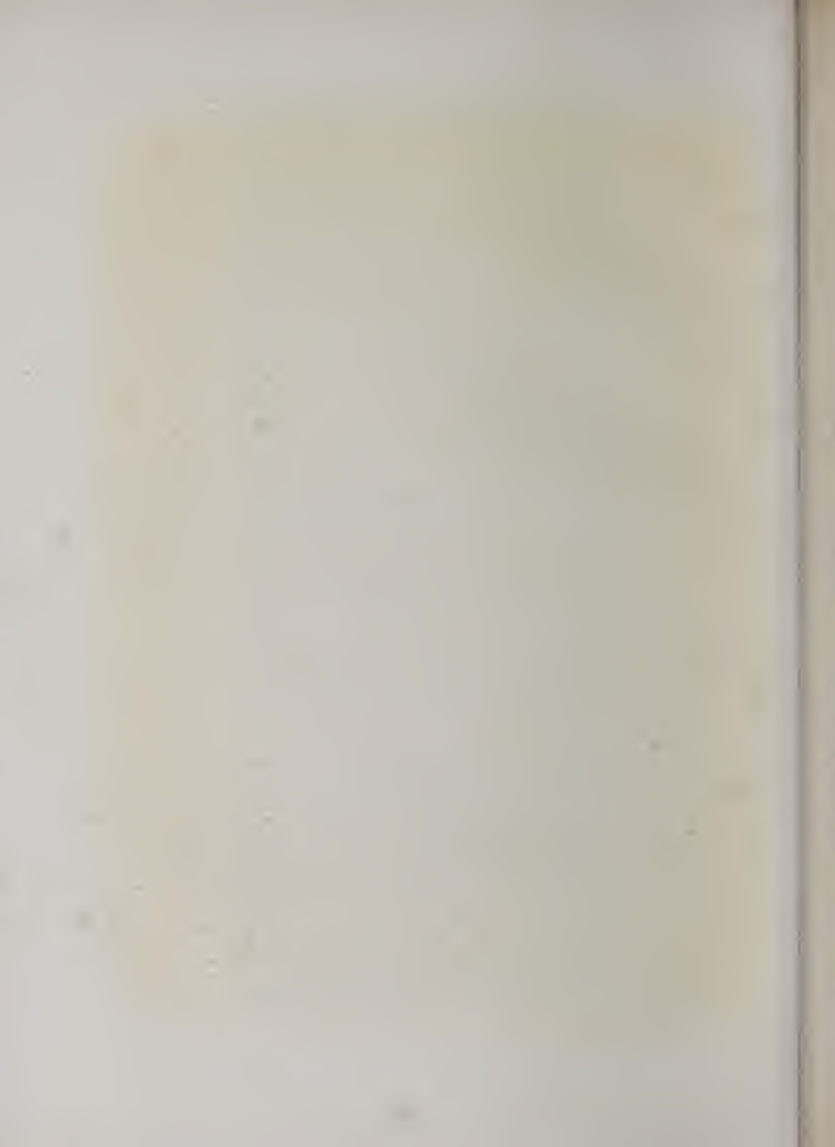
it was in the collection of Mr. Cornelius Cox. In 1892 another example of this vase brought £215 5s. at the dispersal of the choice series of works by Wedgwood belonging to the late W. Durning Holt. The example, formerly in the Museum of Practical Geology, was originally bought in the year 1793 by Dr. R. W. Darwin, of Shrewsbury. That in the British Museum is one of the first subscription copies. In the Victoria and Albert Museum there is a specimen from the Jones Bequest. That which is reproduced in Fig. 1, from the collection of the late Mr. J. L. Propert, is of unrivalled quality. This vase, when sold at Christie's in 1902, brought no less than £399, the highest price yet realized for a copy. In this example the ground is rather lustrous and of a most unusual colour, not exactly black, but an extremely dark slate hue. It has now passed into the collection of Mrs. Spranger.

In a discussion in strict chronological order of Wedgwood's labours, his reproduction of the Portland Vase should have been described in a later chapter, but the fame and importance of this work seemed to demand a separate and early treatment of the subject.



FIG. 14.—PLAQUE, SACRIFICE TO HYMEN.

WHITE AND BLACK JASPER.



CHAPTER VII

HIS CAMEOS, MEDALLIONS, AND PLAQUES

Early trials in colour—Cameos and intaglios in semi-porcelain and black basalt—Cameos and medallions in the jasper-body—Plaques and tablets—Important examples.

DURING Wedgwood's lifetime, in the sixth and last English edition of his *Catalogue*, Class I. of his productions consists of two sections. The first of these is described as containing "Small Cameos from Egyptian, Greek, Roman, and Antique Gems. 637 subjects." In the second section are included "Intaglios or Seals. 391 subjects." In the first edition of the *Catalogue* (1773) the cameos and intaglios were grouped together, and numbered in all 285 only. As time went on Wedgwood not merely increased the number and variety of his productions of this class, but endeavoured to attain a higher degree of perfection in material and workmanship. He

Josiah Wedgwood

tells us that his cameos were made for two purposes—some to serve as ornaments, the rest to be gathered into cabinets in order to illustrate mythology or history. This remark applied, doubtless, not only to the works comprised in Class I., but also to the cameos of the nine succeeding classes.

Amongst the most instructive specimens of the early cameos are a number of trial-pieces made of a cream-coloured paste or a greyish-white semiporcelain, but having their grounds washed or painted with enamel colours or stains. The colours are olive-green, blue, dull pink, ochre-yellow, lavender, brick-red, chocolate, and black. In most cases the surface is glossy and uneven, while the colour is not brought accurately up to the contours of the relief-head. The small uncoloured semiporcelain cameos lack sharpness, and they were not improved by the addition of coloured grounds. Still, these first experiments of Wedgwood prepared the way for his subsequent successes, such as those which are illustrated by the medallions and plaques which are shown in Figs. 7, 10 and 11, and in the portrait cameos which have been selected for reproduction in the present monograph. It must be owned that the terra-cotta body and the whitish semiporcelain

His Cameos, Medallions, etc.

employed by Wedgwood were ill-adapted for the adequate reproduction of the exquisite workmanship of engraved gems. Under even a very low magnifying power the serious defects of Wedgwood's materials are painfully apparent, the results obtained by the use of glass being immeasurably superior. With the finest varieties of black basalt and of the jasper-body a nearer approach to the delicacy of the originals was frequently secured, especially in the case of those objects which were of considerable size.

Wedgwood's invention of the jasper-body, though not brought to perfection at one stroke, finally enabled him to produce cameo reliefs on grounds coloured of almost any hue that might be preferred. As the *whole* ground, both that part shown and that covered by the relief, was coloured either throughout its substance or over its entire surface, there was no difficulty in securing perfect sharpness and accuracy of contour to the relief subsequently affixed thereto. This relief had been previously moulded; after its application to the prepared ground it could be, and often was, worked on by sculptor or modeller, so as to repair defects, and to do such undercutting as was necessary. Thus it is constantly observed that the character and merit of indi-

Josiah Wedgwood

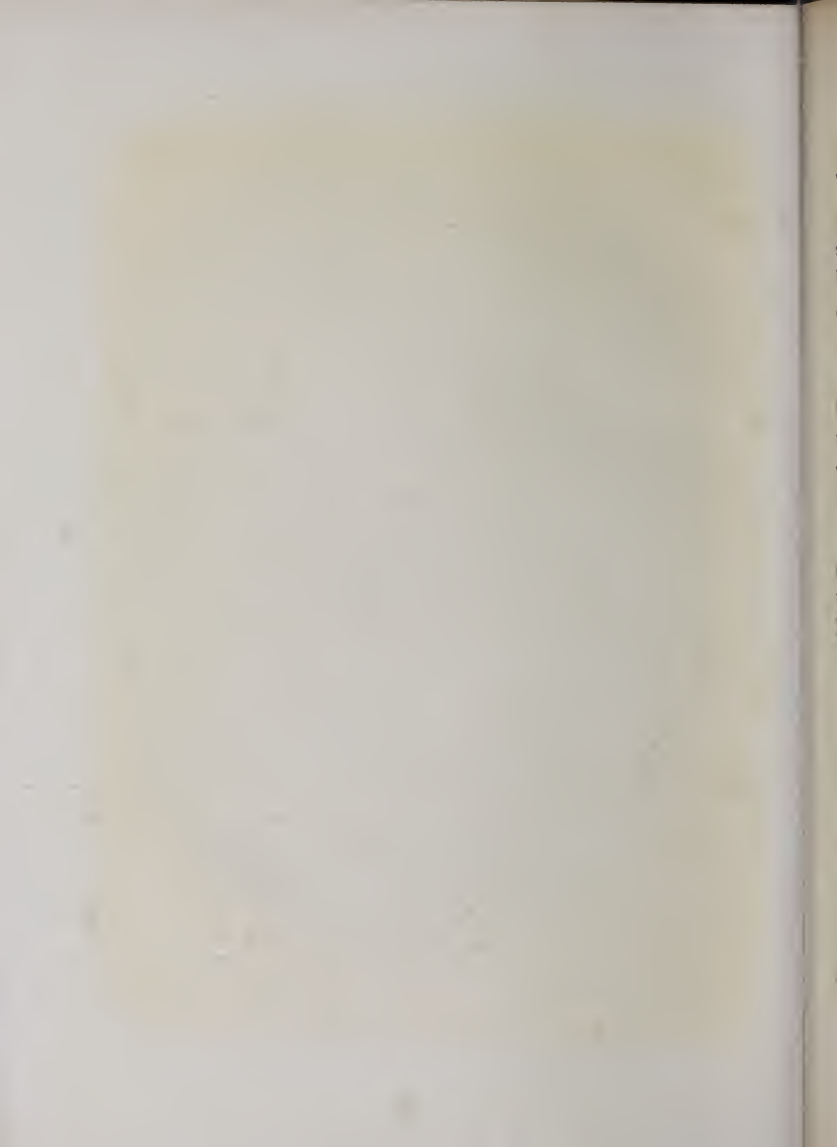
vidual specimens of cameos taken from the very same mould are widely divergent. Some have not been touched by the tool, while others have been modified by the after-treatment which they have received at the hands of more or less competent artists. Attention has already been directed to these points in the chapter on the Portland Vase.

Another operation was not infrequently performed upon the smaller cameos, especially upon those intended for mounting; even the larger plaques for fireplaces were occasionally subjected to the same treatment, which consisted in polishing their edges on the lapidary's wheel. This at once revealed the fineness of the body, and indicated, even on a cursory inspection, that the colour of the piece was due, not to an enamel paint adherent to the surface, but to an intimate union of the chromatic constituent with the very body of the ground. These characteristic qualities are beautifully shown in the case of the cameos having laminated grounds. Such grounds are made up of two or more superimposed layers of the ceramic paste, differently coloured. Generally they consisted of laminæ having different tints of blue; occasionally a white layer occurs between two coloured layers. The extremely fine Medusa's



FIG. 15.—MEDALLION, BACCHANALIAN BOYS.

WHITE AND BLACK JASPER (V.A.M.).



His Cameos, Medallions, etc.

Head (Fig. 16), taken originally from one of the Townley marbles and modelled by Flaxman, shows by its bevelled and polished edge that the solid jasper-ground to which the white relief has been applied is of composite structure, consisting of three layers, the central one being dark blue, the others considerably lighter. In a few rare instances, chiefly of cameos for rings and pins, not only was the edge polished on the wheel, but the entire field also; such examples simulate very closely the appearance of the natural-banded onyx.

In Wedgwood's *Catalogue*, the sixth edition, published in 1787, Class II. comprised 275 subjects represented on medallions and tablets, many of large size. In addition to these, a good many fine plaques are known which do not appear in any edition of the *Catalogues*; some of them were undoubtedly modelled and issued after 1787. Amongst them may be named the two large tablets represented respectively in Figs. 7 and 14. The first of these plaques is the "Sacrifice of Iphigenia," the design having been modelled in Rome, under the supervision of Flaxman, by the Italian sculptor Pacetti, from the relief on the front of the sarcophagus in which the Barberini or Portland Vase was found. This plaque is of

Josiah Wedgwood

large size, 15 inches by 6 inches. The figures are white, relieved on a delicate greyish-green ground. So far as material and colour are concerned, this fine cameo is extremely beautiful. The heads are well modelled, and the expression of the faces aptly rendered, and if there be some defects in the drawing and a certain lack of restraint and breadth in the composition, one must remember that the original sculpture was executed at a time when the true antique feeling had been in some measure lost. Still, as an example of the complete command of the potter's art which Wedgwood had attained, this plaque is exceptionally important. It is interesting to note that there exists a slightly modified version of it, in which the nude figures are partially draped; the effect is less happy. It was a copy of this draped version which was sold in 1869 at Christie's for £121 16s. The specimen from which Fig. 7 is taken was in the Jermyn Street Collection. Fig. 14 is another example of Wedgwood's large jasper tablets, but in this instance the white figures are relieved on a black ground. This piece belongs to the period when Wedgwood had just completed his reproduction of the Portland Vase. The plaque from which the illustration is taken was in the collection of Mr. J. L. Propert.

His Cameos, Medallions, etc.

It is the largest known example of a black and white jasper tablet.

An interesting plaque modelled by Flaxman represents the conclusion of a commercial treaty between England and France: Mercury joins the hands of two symbolical figures who stand for the two countries. It is in very low relief, while the treatment of the draperies is so simple as to verge upon poverty of expression. It is, however, a characteristic example of the sculptor, and offers a remarkable contrast to the florid style of most of Pacetti's work, as illustrated by the "Sacrifice of Iphigenia." A large oval plaque (Fig. 18), white on a green ground, is in the British Museum. The subject is "An Offering to Peace." It is remarkable for the rare quality of the coloured ground.

There is one group of figures produced in cameo form by Wedgwood which has been more frequently copied and imitated in various combinations and in various kinds of ware than any other design. It consists of three *amorini*, or rather "Bacchanalian Boys," instinct with life and *espèglerie*. The modeller of the group and the author of the original drawing was Lady Diana Beauclerk. There is a particularly fine example in the Victoria and Albert Museum of this beautiful plaque, the

Josiah Wedgwood

material being black and white jasper (Fig. 15). It is of the highest quality—texture, tone, and modelling being alike excellent. Bought in the year 1855, before the period when the productions of Josiah Wedgwood had regained the appreciation of connoisseurs, it was acquired for a few shillings. It is worth while comparing it with the copy made by Josiah Spode a few years subsequently, an example of which will be found on a jug of brown earthenware in the same museum.

Among the smaller cameos in jasper-dip which belong to a period subsequent to the year 1780, when Wedgwood's partner Bentley died, three examples have been selected for illustration. One of these, representing Achilles with the body of Hector, is given in Fig. 19. The specimen once in the Propert Collection has a field of an olive-green hue, while the border is black and white. Some exquisite examples of these choice tricoloured cameos are met with in cabinets; some were mounted in gold and set in small toilette and snuff boxes of ivory. The subjects vary—Aurora in her chariot, boys at play, and a sale of *amorini* being among the most frequent. Unfortunately, their charms of colour and of tone do not lend themselves readily to any available process of reproduction; the originals must be



FIG. 16.—MEDALLION, HEAD OF MEDUSA.

WHITE AND BLUE JASPER.



His Cameos, Medallions, etc.

studied. Nor do these pieces admit of satisfactory enlargement by photography. For, as already pointed out in the present chapter, the small and numerous details of these medallions betray the inadequacy of the granular paste to represent really minute and fine work directly one attempts to increase their apparent size. In this respect the jasper-body is greatly inferior to such natural substances as cornelian, sard, amethyst, aquamarine, etc., which are virtually homogeneous and textureless. The two other cameos or medallions mentioned in the preceding paragraph are represented of their original size on Figs. 10 and 11; both are in the writer's collection. The one medallion, of white on a rich blue ground of jasper-dip, is one of a set (designed by Stothard) of four aerial figures, with floating draperies and wings, of slightly varied design. The colour of the ground shows slightly through parts of the wings and draperies, and imparts to them a faintly diaphanous appearance, appropriate enough to the figure of a zephyr. The other medallion is as fine a piece of work, in white on black jasper-dip, as Wedgwood ever produced. It should be called a "Monumental Group" rather than a "Sacrifice." A figure of Athene surmounts the pedestal in the centre; on the left a Victory offers

Josiah Wedgwood

drink to a serpent ; while on the right stands a soldier symbolizing a warrior who had fallen in battle. A similar commemorative group will be found upon a marble in the Phigaleian Room of the British Museum. This was presented in the year 1780, and may possibly have suggested the design of the above-described medallion to Flaxman, whose work it seems to be. There may, however, exist an antique original agreeing more closely with the modern composition. But whatever the origin of its motive, there can be no question that this particular cameo unites beauty of arrangement to refinement of material and execution in a very high degree. These small and elegant works of art were intended by their producer to be mounted in many different ways, not only in jewellery with borders of gold, silver, cut steel, or molu, but also in cabinet-work, such as buffets, chairs, coffers, harpsichords, and tea-caddies. They were actually used for all these purposes, and for many others. A long list of their various applications will be found in Miss Meteyard's *Handbook* (p. 76).

The larger plaques, described previously, were intended, so Wedgwood tells us, not only as cabinet pictures, but for the enrichment of important articles of furniture, and more par-

His Cameos, Medallions, etc.

ticularly for the decoration of mantelpieces. Many of them are still to be found *in situ* in the fireplaces for which they were originally made, but the majority of those which have survived the vicissitudes of time have been gathered into the collections of public and private museums. The suites of mantelpiece tablets generally consisted of five pieces, occasionally of seven. The central feature of the arrangement was an important plaque of considerable length ; on either side of this was a smaller plaque or frieze ; at each angle a circular medallion. A number of mantelpiece suites in blue and white jasper and in white biscuit were included in the sale at Christie's of the stock of ornamental pieces which remained in the warehouse on the death of Bentley. This auction took place in 1781 ; it is interesting to note the prices which these beautiful pieces then realized. Thus lot 451, in which the long tablet of the Choice of Hercules formed the central member, and which was accompanied by a pair of heads of Medusa and a pair of Bacchanalian figures, brought two guineas and a half, the warehouse price having been fixed at £6 15s. A favourite plaque for the decoration of these mantelpieces was an enlarged copy of the Marlborough gem representing the Marriage of

Josiah Wedgwood

Cupid and Psyche. This cinque-cento cameo was reproduced in many different sizes. Fig. 14 is taken from the large and fine specimen in the British Museum. Other tablets, made chiefly for the same purpose, and produced in considerable numbers and of important dimensions, were the following: A Bacchanalian Triumph, taken from the Borghese Vase in the Museum of the Louvre; An Offering to Flora, modelled by Bacon in 1778; The Apotheosis of Homer, modelled by Flaxman from a vase painting; The Nine Muses, modelled by Flaxman; The Dancing Hours, designed by Flaxman in 1776; Priam begging the Body of Hector from Achilles, modelled by Pacetti from the bas-relief at the back of the Barberini sarcophagus, but with some modifications of the original design; A Group of Bacchanalian Boys under an arbour with festoons of panther skins, by Lady Diana Beauclerk; The Apotheosis of Virgil, modelled by Flaxman; Hercules in the Garden of the Hesperides, modelled by Flaxman in 1787 from an antique vase now in the British Museum; Achilles and the Daughter of Lycomedes, modelled by Davaere; The Judgment of Paris. All these tablets were produced on a large scale, the length of the extant examples in the jasper-body of those above named ranging from



FIG. 17.—PLAQUE, MARRIAGE OF CUPID AND PSYCHE.
WHITE AND BLUE JASPER (V.A.M.).



His Cameos, Medallions, etc.

12 inches to 26 inches, and the height from $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches to 8 inches. But these dimensions were considerably exceeded in a few instances. Thus a tablet in blue and white jasper, sold in 1880 at Christie's, was 26 inches long by 11 inches high. It represented A Sacrifice to Hymen, and was made in the year 1787. This example brought no less a sum than £415.

CHAPTER VIII

HIS PORTRAIT CAMEOS AND MEDALLIONS

Historical series—Heads of “Illustrious Modern Personages”—Identification of the subjects—Unusually large cameos—Variety in subject and treatment—Models by Flaxman, Hackwood, and others.

IN Wedgwood's *Catalogue* the portraits are grouped under Classes III. to X., the most important and interesting examples belonging, however, to one only of these classes—namely, the last. Wedgwood tells us that he aimed at producing “regular biographical suites of distinguished characters, in different ages and nations, for the illustration of that pleasing and instructive history”; he adds, “With this view he has been at considerable expense in collecting, repairing, modelling, and arranging portraits of illustrious men, both of ancient and modern times. The present class (III.) contains those of Greece, Egypt, and the neighbouring states, in chronological order. The four following classes

His Portrait Cameos, etc.

exhibit a complete series of the Roman history, from the foundation of Rome to the removal of the seat of empire to Constantinople. The thread of history is continued, in the two next classes, by a set of the popes, and of all the kings and queens of England and France; and the more recent periods of history are illustrated, in the succeeding one, by a considerable number of princes, statesmen, philosophers, poets, artists, and other eminent men, down to the present time. These portraits are made, both in the basalt and jasper, with coloured grounds. Their general size is 2 inches by $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches." A somewhat larger size with a rim is common; it measures $\frac{3}{4}$ inch more in each direction. Most of the specimens in Classes III. to IX. are in black basalt ware; in comparatively rare instances only have they much artistic merit, but the several series, when properly arranged in the trays of a coin-cabinet, possess a certain educational value.

With the medallion portraits of Class X.—the "Heads of Illustrious Moderns"—we enter upon the consideration of the most interesting group of Wedgwood's productions. The majority of the specimens preserved in museums or the cabinets of collectors are in white and blue jasper; those with black, green or pink grounds are not common.

Josiah Wedgwood

A few are wholly white. There exists also a considerable number of these medallions in black basalt. Some of these, large ovals of 4 inches by $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches with moulded borders, are favourable specimens of this class of work. Amongst good examples of this size the portraits of William Penn, Olden Barneveldt, Benjamin Franklin, and Admiral Lord Duncan may be mentioned. The last-named portrait, with others, equally well modelled, of the three Admirals Howe, Saint Vincent, and Nelson, were probably (with the exception of Howe) produced after Wedgwood's death.

The portraits of this class were modelled in some instances from the life by modellers employed by Wedgwood. A good many, also taken from the life, were the independent work of such artists as James Tassie, Isaac Gosset, and Eley George Mountstephen, but were reproduced in the jasper-body by Wedgwood from casts which were taken from the originals. Medals, paintings, and engravings also furnish the materials from which the artists employed in the pottery worked.

In one of the volumes named in the *Bibliographical Notes*, the catalogue compiled by Mr. C. T. Gatty for the Wedgwood Exhibition of the



FIG. 18.—PLAQUE, AN OFFERING TO PEACE.
WHITE AND GREEN JASPER (B.M.).

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His Portrait Cameos, etc.

Liverpool Art Club, the difficulty in the way of identifying very many of the extant portraits belonging to Class X. is distinctly brought out. Mr. Gatty describes the exceptionally full means for naming the portraits which he enjoyed. For instance, he was able to refer to a series of casts from the old moulds at Etruria, and 600 of these had the names scratched upon them. In spite of the help thus afforded and that obtained from other sources, Mr. Gatty is compelled to confess that a very large number of portraits remained unknown. He succeeded, however, in naming a fair proportion of those which had become anonymous, and in revising several incorrect attributions.

A few of his cameo portraits were made by Wedgwood of unusually large dimensions and in very high relief, but the known examples are extremely rare. They were ovals averaging $10\frac{1}{4}$ inches by $7\frac{1}{4}$ inches in dimensions. Amongst them we find the following: Robert Boyle, Benjamin Franklin, Dr. Joseph Priestley, Sir William Hamilton, Sir Joseph Banks, and Dr. Daniel Charles Solander. It is unfortunate that two fine specimens of these blue and white jasper cameos, portraits of Newton and Locke, perished in the Alexandra Palace fire of 1873. There are

Josiah Wedgwood

five in the British Museum, presented by the late Sir A. Wollaston Franks.

It is an extremely difficult matter to select typical examples of these portrait cameos for illustration, not because one's choice is limited, but because there are characteristic qualities of modelling and finish, quite apart from variations in opacity and colour, which need, for their adequate representation, the inclusion, not of five or six specimens, but of a score. Fig. 21, taken from the medallion formerly in the Jermyn Street Collection, and now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, represents the astronomer Sir F. W. Herschel. It was modelled by John Flaxman in 1781, when his sitter was forty-three years of age. The planets and their orbits shown in the field are Saturn and Uranus, the latter having been discovered on March 13, 1781. In the preceding illustration (Fig. 20) a characteristic portrait of Dr. Samuel Johnson appears. The late Mr. J. L. Propert was the owner of the particularly fine example from which this figure was taken. The model was made by Flaxman in 1784, the year of Dr. Johnson's death. A very different man in a very different sphere of activity was Edward Bourne. His portrait (Fig. 23), also from the late Mr. Propert's choice collection, was the

His Portrait Cameos, etc.

work of one of Wedgwood's own modellers at Etruria, William Hackwood. In two letters to Bentley, written in 1779, Wedgwood mentions this portrait as that of "Edward Bourne, my old Bricklayer"; adding, "Old Bourne's medallion is the man himself, with every wrinkle, crink, and cranny in the whole visage." On the truncation of the bust, scratched with a fine point in the jasper-paste before the piece was fired, one can read the signature and date, "Wm. Hackwood, 1779." A portrait remarkable for its extremely high relief and deep under-cutting is that of Ferdinand I. of the Two Sicilies, and IV. of Naples. It was derived from an Italian contemporary medal. Fig. 22, taken from the late Mr. Propert's example of this cameo, scarcely gives an adequate idea of the way in which the head stands out, almost detached, from the ground. Such work is not only difficult of execution, but is peculiarly liable to distortion and to the formation of fire-cracks in the kiln. For these reasons such medallions were produced in very small numbers. A remarkably fine piece of work, as regards both colour and size, is the portrait of the Empress of Russia, Catherine II. The ground here (Fig. 24) is of a very rare hue—an exceedingly dark olive-green. The illustration

Josiah Wedgwood

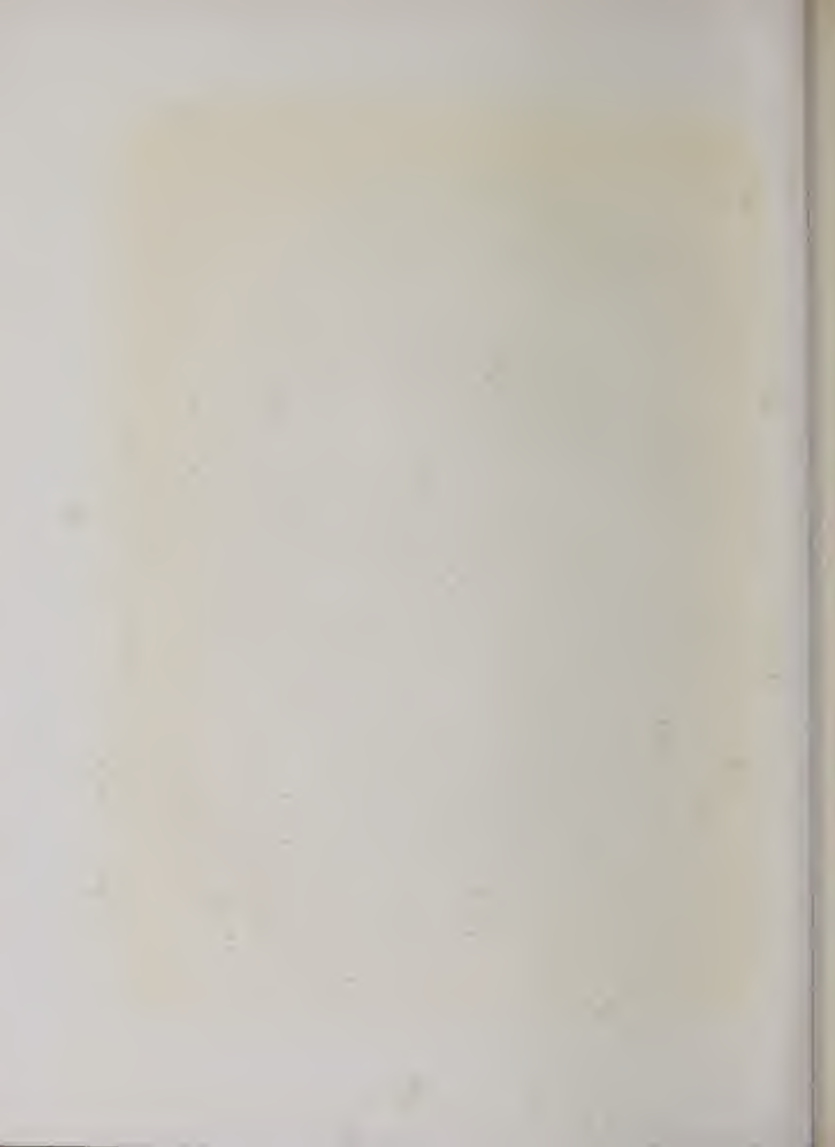
is also from the late Mr. Propert's collection. This portrait is derived from a gem engraved by Maria Feodorowna, afterwards Empress of Russia.

It would occupy far too much space to attempt to give even a mere list of the "illustrious moderns" whom Wedgwood has immortalized in clay. They include princes, statesmen, lawyers, naval and military commanders, philosophers, poets, naturalists, travellers, and physicians. Painters, architects, and antiquaries, divines and men of letters, as well as many ladies of rank or beauty, are also represented. The unknown and obscure have likewise their place in the long series. But although I cannot venture to give a tithe of the many famous names in the list, it will be of some service to collectors and connoisseurs if a small number of these portraits in this class, which can be assigned to particular artists, be here recorded. The names given are derived from the correspondence and accounts of Wedgwood, and in a few instances from signatures on the moulds or cameo impressions. Several modellers are represented, so far as these sources of information are concerned, by no more than a single portrait. Thus to Burch, one version of the head of George III. belongs; to M. Gosset, one of the two likenesses of George II.; to T. Pingo, a second portrait of



FIG. 19.—MEDALLION, ACHILLES WITH THE BODY OF HECTOR.

WHITE, GREEN, AND BLACK JASPER.



His Portrait Cameos, etc.

George III. ; to James Tassie, the likeness of a painter, James Byres ; to Joachim Smith, one of the two portraits of Josiah Wedgwood ; to Lewis Francis Roubiliac, the head of the Duke of Marlborough. The name of the medallist Renaud is found upon the portrait of Louis XVI. of France, that of J. B. Nini upon that of Marie Antoinette. Wedgwood's chief modeller of likenesses, William Hackwood, doubtless produced a very great number of these cameos, but very few bear his signature. Among these may be mentioned those of Edward Bourne, the Reverend William Willet, and Voltaire, one of the likenesses of Wedgwood, and a third version of that of George III. But far less incomplete information is available with regard to the assistance afforded by John Flaxman in this department of Wedgwood's productions. To him may be assigned the following portraits amongst a large number which are also undoubtedly his work : Lord Amherst, Sir Joseph Banks, Mrs. Barbauld, T. O. Bergman, A. K. Boerhaave, Earl of Chatham, Sir William Chambers, Queen Charlotte, Captain Cook, Dr. Erasmus Darwin, Duchess of Devonshire, General G. A. Elliott, Dr. J. Fothergill, David Garrick, George III., Sir W. Hamilton, Warren Hastings, Sir F. W. Herschel, Admiral Viscount Hood, Dr.

Josiah Wedgwood

Samuel Johnson, E. Kæmpfer, Admiral Viscount Keppel, Earl Mansfield, Sir Isaac Newton, Lord North, Hon. William Pitt, Queen of Portugal, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Marquis of Rockingham, Mrs. Siddons, Dr. D. C. Solander, and the King of Sweden.

Before leaving this part of the subject mention should be made of the occurrence, on the backs of a small number of copies of the portraits in the jasper-body, of inscriptions relating to the materials used. The particulars given do not convey any precise information to the ceramist of to-day, for the key wherewith to unlock their secrets is lacking. But these rudely incised memoranda, as to the materials of the paste and the colouring wash or dip applied to the surface, afford proofs of the constant care bestowed by Wedgwood in order to secure the technical perfection of the jasper-body and the continuous development of its artistic capacities. The citation of a few of these inscriptions will suffice to explain the nature of the information afforded by these experimental records. Thus, on a portrait with a pink ground of Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, in the Mayer Collection, occur the words, "Wash light laloc, 3,624. Head and ground, one of 1,559, and one of 3,614, with cobalt in it." On

His Portrait Cameos, etc.

a cameo with a green ground, representing Lord Camelford, we find, "Wash made 3 of old 3,681, wash 2 of 1,605 mended." A third inscription of the same character occurs on a blue and white jasper cameo of John Locke: "Head and ground 1 of 3,614, and 1 of 1,559. Wash 1 of the above and one of new F wash." One may learn from these particulars that Wedgwood sometimes whitened his pastes by neutralizing their yellowness by means of cobalt; that he numbered and preserved for future reference supplies of his jasper-paste of known composition; and that his trials of variations in the components both of body and of wash must have been exceedingly numerous. The marks T B O and T T B O found on some pieces relate to the position of the specimens in the kiln, and may be expanded respectively into Top of Biscuit Oven and Tip Top of Biscuit Oven. By one writer they were mistaken for the signature of an artist named Tebo, who is known to have been employed at Etruria.

CHAPTER IX

VASES IN THE JASPER-BODY

Not made before 1781—Period of perfection—Decadence—
Designs of vases and pedestals—Wedgwood's letter of
1786 to Sir W. Hamilton—Prices of fine examples—
Conventional ornaments.

ALTHOUGH ornamental vases of other materials had been made long before 1781, it was not until that year that Wedgwood began producing them in his jasper-paste: this was after the death of Bentley. It is to be noted that no examples of these fine specimens of Wedgwood's skill were included in the sale at Christie's (in 1781) to which reference has previously been made. It had doubtless been found that the black basalt vases with reliefs of the same material, or with encaustic paintings, as well as the variegated vases of which Wedgwood constituted his Class IX. under the designation of "Vases in glazed Terra-Cotta, imitating Crystalline Agates," did not meet with a very ready sale. Something

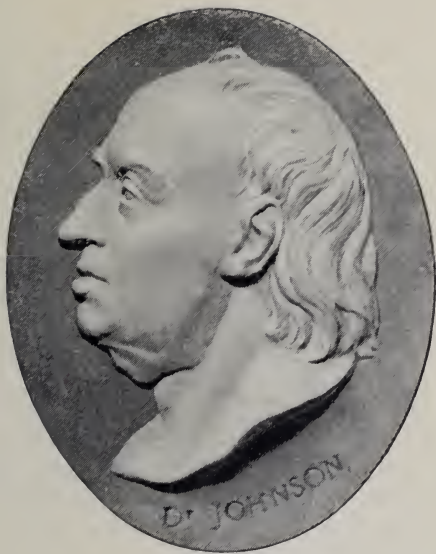


FIG. 20.—MEDALLION, DR. JOHNSON.

WHITE AND BLUE JASPER.



Vases in the Jasper-Body

fresh was needed to attract the public eye. The solid jasper-body had been invented several years before, but had been used almost exclusively for flat cameos and plaques. The jasper-dip or washed jasper had been but recently perfected, and its gamut of colours had not yet been completed. There was required but a single step to transfer to a rounded surface the reliefs which had hitherto been prepared for one that was flat. It is probable that the first vases made of the jasper-body were produced in the solid variety, but this was soon in great measure displaced by the kind in which the surface only was tintured with colour, and which was capable of realizing more delicate and varied effects of hue and tone. Jasper vases were first exhibited to the public in the early part of 1782 in the showrooms in Greek Street, Soho. The forms, generally derived more or less directly from the antique, were for the most part satisfactory in outline and proportion; the sizes varied, and sometimes attained considerable dimensions, a few specimens being 18 inches or even more in height. Many of the subjects in white relief, with which these vases were decorated, had been previously employed for tablets, but others were specially modelled for the purpose. Flaxman's designs were extensively employed. The manu-

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facture of these fine vases, and the introduction of new types with frequent rearrangements of the ornamental details, continued on an increasing scale from 1782 until the death of Wedgwood in 1795. For a few years after the latter date, very fine examples were turned out from the works, the original moulds with the old staff of skilled workmen and modellers being of course still available. But the loss of the master soon made itself felt. The guiding and controlling spirit was gone. Refinement of material, care in execution and delicacy of colour, were no longer demanded in the same uncompromising manner as heretofore. There soon set in a mechanical and artistic decadence. But in recent years progress has been again made, especially in the manufacture of porcelain.

Many of the more important jasper vases were accompanied by pedestals of the same material and colour; as a rule, these additions detracted from the beauty of the pieces they were intended to improve, being incongruous in design or scale. A single example will suffice to illustrate this point. Thus, a vase is well known of excellent proportions and no less than 18 inches in height. It has well-formed handles with twining serpents, and round the body a Bacchanalian frieze adapted

Vases in the Jasper-Body

from that on the Borghese Vase in the Louvre. It stands on a turned base and has a plinth of suitable dimensions. But its pedestal is much too big for it, no less than $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches high. Moreover, this pedestal is decorated with Bacchanalian trophies and festoons of vines in such high relief and of such large proportions as entirely to dwarf the chief decorative elements of the vase itself, a single vine leaf on the former being four times the size of the heads on the latter. Incongruity of subject between vase and pedestal, though less immediately obvious than disproportion in size and discord of curve, often becomes painfully marked on careful examination. Thus a vase, bearing the subject of the "Infant Academy," and decorated with graceful floral festoons, is placed on a square stand which has on alternate faces groups of military trophies and figures of warriors. In some cases of pairs of vases the design on one was of an entirely different class and style to that on the other. Thus we find "Hercules in the Garden of the Hesperides" on one vase, while its companion bears a "Group of Bacchanalian Boys" from the design of Lady Diana Beauclerk.

It would be tedious to enumerate the many subjects which are found upon the jasper vases:

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a large proportion had previously appeared on the medallions and plaques. "Apollo and the Nine Muses," "The Dancing Hours," "Blindman's Buff," and the "Apotheosis of Homer"—all from the designs of Flaxman—are of frequent occurrence. Fig. 29 is a characteristic example of the adaptation to the round of the first-named of the above designs, and is taken from the specimen formerly in the Jermyn Street Collection. It is an oviform amphora in pale blue jasper with cameo figures in white, and is $15\frac{1}{4}$ inches in height; its greatest diameter is $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches. The body is ornamented with a frieze of figures representing Apollo and the Nine Muses in white on a granulated blue ground; it is noticeable that part of the relief foliage above the figures is of the same colour and substance as the ground. The handles are white of floriated design; the cover is surmounted by a white figure of Pegasus; the square plinth has an anthemion border. There is in the British Museum a vase of rather larger size than that shown in Fig. 29, but resembling it in colour and in some of its details, and also having the same Pegasus cover. Moreover it is peculiarly interesting because it was presented to the museum by Wedgwood, and described by him in a letter to Sir W. Hamilton under the date June 24, 1786.



FIG. 21.—MEDALLION, SIR F. W. HERSCHEL.

WHITE AND BLUE JASPER.

Vases in the Jasper-Body

He there states distinctly that in his jasper work every ornament and leaf is first made in a separate mould, and then laid upon the ground with great care and accuracy, and "afterwards wrought over again upon the vase itself by an artist equal to the work." He goes on to say, "from the beginning I determined to spare neither time nor expense in modelling and finishing my ornaments," and adds that he has presented to the British Museum the finest and most perfect vase he has ever made, mentioning that this specimen "is 18 inches high and the price twenty guineas." It is scarcely necessary to remark that such a vase would bring several times that sum at the present time. A specimen of the type and size shown in Fig. 29 fetched £68 5s. at the sale of the Barlow Collection in 1869, where also a particularly sumptuous though smaller vase, with Flaxman's "Dancing Hours," realized no less than £131. The prices were, however, greatly exceeded at the sale of the collection of Dr. Sibson, eight years afterwards, when one of the large "Homeric" vases of white and black jasper-dip brought no less than £735, passing into the collection of Lord Tweedmouth. The subject on this vase was the "Apotheosis of Homer" by Flaxman. The cover was surmounted by a Pegasus. The

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accompanying square pedestal bore reliefs representing Sacrifices to Flora and to Cupid, and was decorated with white griffins at the angles: the height of the whole was nearly 25 inches. A similar and companion vase with the "Apotheosis of Virgil" was in the collection of the late T. Shadford-Walker, of Liverpool. These unusually large vases in black and white jasper were not made before the period 1789-1791: copies are of extreme rarity. In fact, the smaller vases, ranging in height from 5 or 6 inches to a foot, were always produced in far larger numbers than any of those described in this paragraph.

Besides vases in white on blue and white on black, the other colours described in Chapter V. were also applied in the adornment of these objects. Many examples with white reliefs on a green or a lilac ground occur; we give an example of the latter colour in Fig. 28. There are numerous varieties of hue and tint on these pieces, the green being sobered by the presence of much grey and ranging from a sage hue to one in which there is a good deal of yellow, while the lilac is sometimes pinkish and sometimes bluish. Some tricoloured combinations are also met with corresponding with the tricoloured medallions described in Chapter VII.; a few vases have three colours

Vases in the Jasper-Body

in addition to white. In such cases the happiest effects are perhaps realized by means of chequer-work and other conventional designs rather than by the introduction of figure subjects. For when the latter are associated with much decorative detail executed in a variety of attractive hues, the entire composition frequently lacks repose and breadth.

There is no ground for the statement that Wedgwood, during the last two or three years of his life, sparingly introduced gilding (duly burnt in) into the decoration of a few of his jasper vases in white and deep lapis or mazarine blue.

CHAPTER X

MISCELLANEOUS PRODUCTIONS IN JASPER

Chessmen—Match-pots, pedestals, and drums—Pipe-bowls and hookahs—Tea and coffee sets—Salt-cellars—Bulb-stands and flower-pots—Lamps and candlesticks—Scent-bottles—Bell-pulls.

WEDGWOOD applied his jasper-body with great ingenuity, fertility of resource, and good taste, to the production of an extraordinary number of objects of utility or luxury, personal or domestic. Many, indeed, though not all, of these articles had been made by him in the other bodies which he had perfected, such as cream ware, terra-cotta, and black basalt, but these materials were inferior to jasper in *quality* of colour, and did not admit of equal richness and variety in decorative treatment. Of these objects, excluding cameos, medallions, plaques, and vases, to which several preceding chapters have been devoted, the famous chessmen designed by Flaxman in 1785 demand prominent notice. The

Miscellaneous Productions

original drawing for the set is still at Etruria ; for it Flaxman's charge was six guineas. In accord with the origin and character of the game, the style adopted by the artist for these figures is distinctly medieval, and not classical. Many of the pieces, notably the king, queen, and bishop, are well adapted, by the simplicity of their contours, for the purpose for which they were intended. But their liability to break, and the difficulty experienced in handling many of them, would alone suffice to prevent their use by chess-players. The two sides were made in olive-green and lilac, in black and white, and in blue and white. The old specimens form a beautiful suite of ornaments for the cabinet ; the modern replicas are rough in texture, and defective as to their minuter details and the modelling of the faces.

Wedgwood produced an enormous number of pedestals, drums, match-pots, and other cylindrical pieces. Flaxman's group of "Blindman's Buff" lent itself charmingly to the adornment of these pieces of a round form. Fig. 25 represents one of a pair of stands for vases in the Victoria and Albert Museum ; they are in white, on a ground of sage-green. They were purchased for the collection in 1855, at a time when Wedgwood's productions were less esteemed than they

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are now ; still, one is surprised to find from the labels that the Museum gave no more than £10 for this important pair of pedestals. Many of the smaller objects in this group were intended to be mounted in ormolu as candelabra ; they are frequently found decorated with cut-glass pendants. The four-sided altar-shaped pedestals, with bases rather wider than the tops, and the cylindrical drums, with small cameo figures in white on blue, or with chequer-work of two colours and white, make particularly beautiful supports for a gilt bronze and glass superstructure, provided the design of the latter is kept sufficiently simple.

For the Eastern markets, Wedgwood provided vessels in jasper to be used in the hookah, or hubble-bubble ; these have sometimes been mistaken for lamp-reservoirs. A few pipe-bowls for tobacco also exist ; they may have been more abundant once, as they are peculiarly liable to injury and accident.

Tea and coffee sets, including oval trays for the whole equipage, cups and saucers, bowls and sugar-basins, with teapots and coffee-pots, were made in an immense variety of forms, and in all the colours of which the jasper-body was susceptible. Some of the blue and white pieces are of solid jasper, others of jasper-dip. The sugar-



FIG. 22.—MEDALLION, KING OF THE TWO SICILIES.

WHITE AND BLUE JASPER.



Miscellaneous Productions

bowls as well as the cups were often polished on the inside by means of the lapidary's wheel. The tea equipages, particularly the teacups and saucers in jasper-dip coloured blue, sage-green, or lilac in radiating stripes, and with acanthus-leaf borders, and, on the cups, children at play, are simply exquisite. Fig. 30, from a specimen in the British Museum, represents the refined beauty attained in this class of vessel. In the actual piece the translucency of the paste adds a special charm to the colour effect. Very rarely we meet with examples of bowls, basins, chocolate, and teapots, and cups and saucers, fashioned wholly out of white jasper, or of white jasper decorated with delicate applied reliefs in solid sage-green or solid lilac jasper. I recall three pieces of supreme excellence belonging to this group—all, alas! destroyed in the Alexandra Palace fire of 1873. One was a covered sugar-bowl, another a teacup, the third a tumbler with sloping sides. The outside of each was adorned with *amorini* in high relief; the interior of each piece had been polished on the wheel—all three were of pure white jasper. The solid white jasper, with applied reliefs in solid sage-green and lilac jasper, is of rare occurrence; at least, very few of the extant pieces belong to the time of the first Josiah

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Wedgwood. A cup (Fig. 26) and saucer (No. 383—'54) in the Victoria and Albert Museum are old, but the bowl figured in the previous edition of this monograph was made about the year 1872; it is of thicker substance and less dainty finish.

Many different forms of pots for growing bulbs, such as the hyacinth, tulip, and crocus, and for flowering plants, were made in the jasper-body. Wedgwood's good taste in the matter of decoration was apparent in these works, for he was careful to select such ornamental motives as would not clash with nor overpower the foliage and blossoms to be associated with these vessels. The slight concave curvature which he gave to the flower-pots relieved them from the ordinary prosaic appearance of such things, while the rims were made so solid as to be proof against any ordinary blow. The material and the workmanship were of the highest quality, quite equal to those of the best ornamental vases. But nowadays, while an old jasper vase 4 inches high of Wedgwood's period of perfection cannot be bought for less than £10, a flower-pot of the same quality and pattern may be acquired for £2 or even less. The illustration given in Fig. 13 happens to be derived, not from a specimen in jasper, but from one made of a

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very fine kind of terra-cotta, but it is equally adapted to demonstrate the beauty and simplicity of a form and decorative treatment originated by Wedgwood. It is of cane colour, with reliefs in a sober greenish-grey. The design of these reliefs is taken from the common hard-fern, *Blechnum boreale*. Wedgwood, of course, made flower-pots in other wares besides jasper, using cream-ware, pebble-ware, black basalt, and red terra-cotta, variously decorated with engine-turning, and with raised designs and paintings of many kinds. This was also the case with his bulb-stands and with his bough-pots for cut-flowers and foliage. But the multiplicity of his patterns in these classes baffles any attempt at adequate description.

A pair of picturesque candlesticks with white figures and foliage on a ground of blue were in Mr. Propert's collection (Figs. 31 and 32). They were selected for illustration on account of their differing widely in style from the classical and highly conventionalized designs with which we have been previously dealing. But Wedgwood in this section of his productions exhibited as much fertility of resource and sense of fitness as in any of the groups already discussed. His pillar candlesticks are models of simplicity, and so also are his

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taper-holders. The lamps designed after antique patterns are, however, for the most part cabinet objects, and are not fitted for everyday use.

One word about scent-bottles. These dainty pieces, often with polished edges and mountings of gold, have always been highly appreciated. They vary in size and shape, but were generally made in solid blue jasper, with figures or portraits of white in low relief; they sometimes are bordered with conventional designs, also in white.

Oviform handles for bell-ropes were made in considerable numbers, and in Queen's ware as well as in jasper. They were decorated in a simple and appropriate manner. There is a representative series of specimens in the Liverpool Museum. A favourite chequer pattern in the jasper-body is shown in Fig. 27.

Nothing has been said—for the limitations of space forbid the further extension of this chapter—of watch-backs, earrings, opera-glass mounts, and a number of other minor objects of decoration or utility, for which Wedgwood employed with success his beautiful jasper-paste. But it must not be forgotten that the master's works were of extraordinary variety both in material and in form. Not only was his solid jasper made to assume a

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great number of different hues and tints, but large and important pieces were produced in solid lilac and green jasper, as well as in blue. So likewise his terra-cotta bodies presented many hues and many degrees of hardness and density.

CHAPTER XI

LATER YEARS

The Brick House—Marriage—Partnership with Thomas Wedgwood, purchase of the site of Etruria—Grand Trunk Canal—London showroom—A surgical operation—Partnership with Thomas Bentley—Etruria, the village, the works, the Hall—Josiah Wedgwood and Richard Champion—Scientific work—Death—Portraits.

IT seemed advisable, on several grounds, to describe in successive chapters the chief materials and productions of Wedgwood's manufactory, although this treatment of the subject involved a long break in our brief narrative of the potter's life. This we may now resume by mentioning that a second small potworks, on the side of the road opposite to the Ivy House Works, was very soon required by Wedgwood in order to cope with the rapidly increasing demand for his wares. Moreover, at least as early as 1763, scarcely five years after his first start as an independent manufacturer, Wedgwood, finding that still larger premises were necessary, rented the

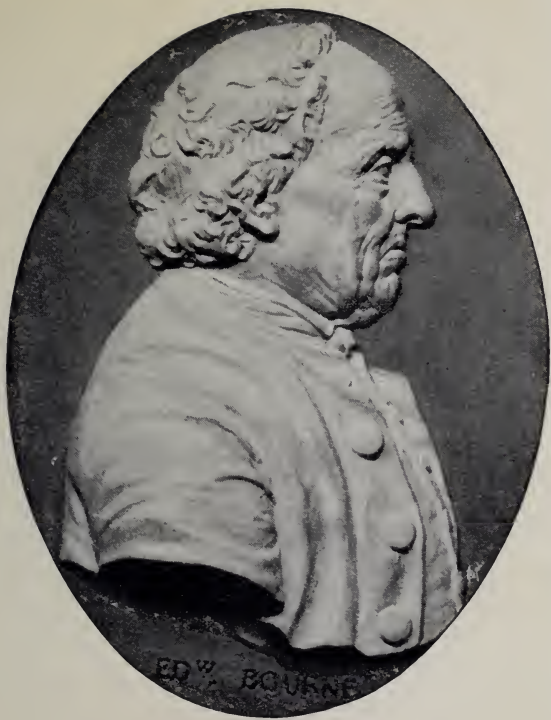


FIG. 23.—MEDALLION, E. BOURNE.

WHITE AND BLUE JASPER.



Later Years

Brick House and Works, sometimes called the Bell House Works, at Burslem. The site of these works is now occupied by the Vegetable Market in Queen Street. He retained this factory until his final and complete removal to Etruria in 1773. To the dwelling-house attached to these pot-works, Wedgwood brought his bride, Sarah Wedgwood, a cousin, the daughter of Richard Wedgwood, of Spen Green. The wedding took place on January 25, 1764, in the parish church of Astbury, Cheshire. This marriage was altogether happy, Mrs. Wedgwood fully sympathizing with her husband's varied tastes, employments, and aspirations, and yet devoting herself with exemplary diligence to all domestic and maternal duties. Their direct descendants during the last one hundred years have continued the labours which the death of Josiah Wedgwood in 1795 might have interrupted.

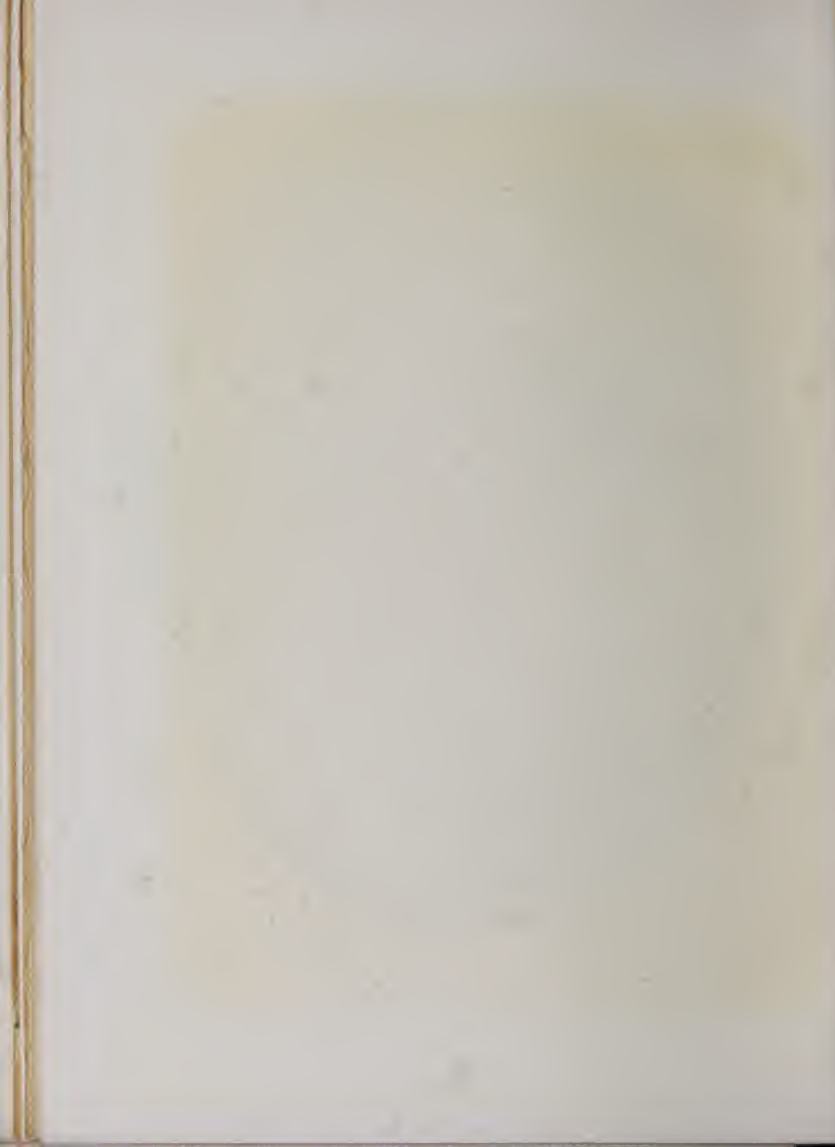
The year 1766 was marked by the partnership then arranged between Josiah Wedgwood and his cousin Thomas, who had been employed in the works since 1759. As before mentioned, he had been previously engaged at the Worcester china factory; he was a skilful potter, and became superintendent of the department of the "useful works" both at Burslem and afterwards at Etruria.

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This partnership was dissolved only by the death of Thomas Wedgwood in 1788. In the same year, 1766, Wedgwood succeeded in acquiring a suitable site in the neighbourhood of Burslem for a new factory and dwelling-house. He says in a letter to Bentley, under the date July 18, "I have now bought the estate I mentioned to you, for which I am to pay £3,000 at Michaelmas next." Subsequently he acquired from another landowner a considerable addition to his domain, so that its area sufficed not only for the erection of a village for his workmen, and an extensive potworks, furnished with many new and costly appliances, but also for a mansion for himself surrounded by spacious grounds, as well as a good house for his partner Bentley. It must indeed have been a prosperous business which Wedgwood had created, for it to have yielded him, in the brief space of ten years, the large profits necessary to carry out the immense undertaking which he had now commenced. For three years after his purchase of the "Ridge House" Estate, his new Etruria Works were opened. The formal inauguration took place on June 13, 1769, Wedgwood himself "throwing" on the wheel the first six vases. Some of these are still preserved. They are of black basalt, painted with figures in the antique



FIG. 24.—MEDALLION, CATHERINE II. OF RUSSIA.
WHITE AND DARK GREEN JASPER.



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style in two tones of red, and bear the legend "Artes Etruriæ Renascuntur." In form, and in the finish of their encaustic decoration, they were greatly improved upon in the course of a year or two, but they are of considerable interest as being almost the only dated specimens of Wedgwood's time still extant; they consequently serve to fix the period in which more advanced work of the same character and material was produced at Etruria.

Wedgwood, at the time of his commencement of his new works at Etruria, was busy also in furthering the facilities of water-carriage in his district. His sound sense and foresight had been of great service in settling the plans of certain sections of the Grand Trunk Canal in the year 1765, when his knowledge of the requirements of the district of the Potteries had proved extremely useful to the Duke of Bridgewater's engineer, James Brindley. Mr. Bentley and Dr. Darwin were also both in consultation on this matter with Wedgwood, whose promptitude in proving the weakness of rival schemes, and judicious advocacy in influential quarters of the plan finally adopted, were of incalculable value in securing a favourable issue when the Bill for authorizing the canal was under discussion in Parliament. It is character-

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istic of Wedgwood, shrewd man of business though he was, that he demurred to the prosaic directness of the course of that part of the canal which passed through his newly acquired estate. In 1767 he wrote to Bentley, saying, "Mr. Henshall and I spent yesterday and to-day at Hetruria in setting out the canal through that district, and on Monday next I shall begin to make it. The fields are so very level that the canal will run in a straight line through them ; at least, so it is set out, for I could not prevail on that Vandal to give me *one line* of Grace—he must go the nearest and best way, or Mr. Brindley would go mad."

The variety of important matters which engaged Wedgwood's attention at this time—1767-68—was indeed considerable. For besides the canal and the founding of Etruria, he was endeavouring to secure an adequate showroom and depot in the Metropolis for his productions. The room in Charles Street, Grosvenor Square, did not allow of the exhibition of many sets of dinner and dessert services and of vases, and no one knew better than Wedgwood the importance of space for the proper display and arrangement of his wares. One likely house after another was inspected, until in August, 1768, some premises at the top of St. Martin's Lane were finally secured

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at an annual rent of one hundred guineas. In the midst of all these and many other occupations Wedgwood became convinced of the necessity of having his right leg amputated. He foresaw that in superintending the work in the large establishment which he was about to found at Etruria, the retention of this useless and often painful member would be a serious encumbrance. On May 28, 1768, the operation was successfully performed, the patient making a rapid recovery, thanks in great measure to the assiduous care of his wife and the cheerful companionship of his friend Thomas Bentley, who remained with him until all danger was over. The name of this friend has been frequently mentioned before in this essay; and it is now time to give a few particulars concerning one with whom for eighteen of the most active years of his life Wedgwood was continuously consulting and corresponding.

The first meeting between Josiah Wedgwood and his future friend and partner Thomas Bentley took place at Liverpool, in 1762. Wedgwood had again injured his knee during a journey to that town, and in consequence placed himself under the care of a very competent and well-informed surgeon there, Mr. Matthew Turner. The doctor effected the introduction of the two men; hence-

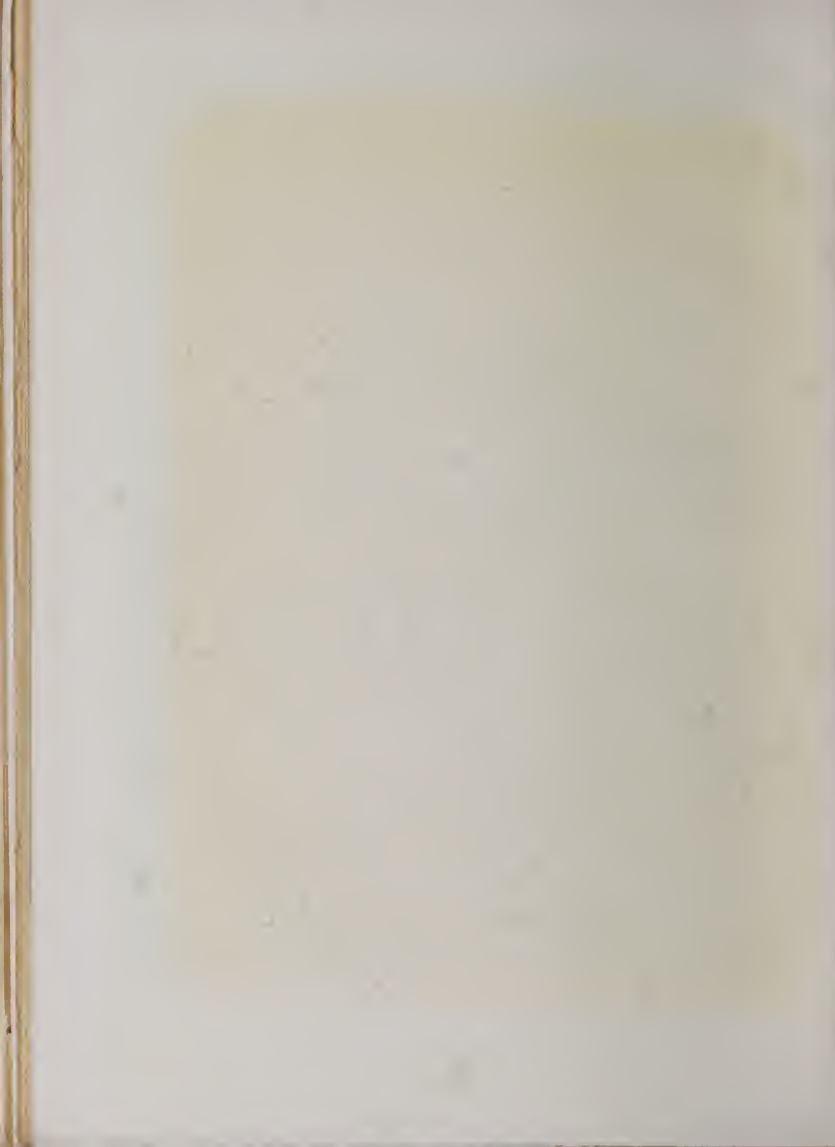
Josiah Wedgwood

forward they became firmly attached friends, serving one another with zeal and in many different ways. They were nearly of the same age; in love for art, in business capacity, and in their generosity and public spirit, they had many characteristics in common. Bentley possessed accomplishments which the somewhat untoward circumstances in which Wedgwood's early years were passed had prevented him from acquiring. He had spent some time on the Continent and spoke fluently both French and Italian, and was a fair classical scholar. His house in Liverpool became the meeting-place of many distinguished scientific and literary men, while his polished manners and his deep and intelligent interest in the public questions of the day brought him into contact with a large number of the conspicuous and wealthy men of the district. Thomas Bentley was in no way connected, so far at least as has been ascertained, with the famous critic Richard Bentley, who was sixty-nine years old when Wedgwood's future partner was born. Bentley introduced Wedgwood to many of his friends, including Dr. Priestley, the celebrated discoverer of oxygen, Dr. Aikin, and a number of ingenious persons engaged in various kinds of literary, scientific, and artistic labours. Some were sur-



FIG. 25.—PEDESTAL, BLIND-MAN'S BUFF.

WHITE AND GREEN JASPER (V.A.M.).



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veyors, engineers, and mechanics; some painters and engravers; of their talents, in not a few instances, Wedgwood, in after years, made good use. Bentley was a merchant and warehouseman in an extensive way of business, and in this capacity also his association with Wedgwood exercised a considerable influence upon the growing prosperity of the master-potter. Negotiations for a partnership between them were opened by Wedgwood in 1766, but it was not until November 14, 1768, that the arrangements were finally completed, Bentley acquiring an equal share in the profits arising from the sale of ornamental as distinguished from useful ware. On articles belonging to the former class the stamp impressed bore the names "Wedgwood & Bentley," sometimes abbreviated into "W. & B.," but occasionally altogether omitted. Bentley left Liverpool, though not finally, in 1768, and occasionally resided in the Brick House at Burslem, a dwelling attached to one of the factories then occupied by Wedgwood. A residence was being built for him at this time close to the new potworks of Etruria, but the greatly increased demand for ornamental vases of Wedgwood's make compelled him to change his plans, and to migrate to London, where he established himself in rooms over the warehouse rented

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by Wedgwood in Newport Street. Another move soon followed. A house and garden at Chelsea were obtained on lease dated September 22, 1769, the year in which the original china works there were sold to William Duesbury of Derby. Here Bentley took up his quarters, which were conveniently situated, for they enabled him to superintend the enamelling branch of the factory, which had been for some time conducted in the inconvenient premises of Newport Street, but was now to be better housed at Chelsea. The tenure of these Chelsea premises did not last long, for in 1774 Bentley removed his family and the enamelling business to Greek Street, Soho. Many of the letters written by Wedgwood to Bentley are preserved; selections from this interesting correspondence have been printed by Miss Meteyard in her *Life of Wedgwood*. Bentley died on November 26, 1780, to the great sorrow of his friend and partner. He was buried in Chiswick Church, where there is a monument to his memory by Scheemakers. The inscription which it bears, though somewhat rhetorical and exaggerated in expression, offers a warm and well-deserved tribute to his high qualities of head and heart.

The death of Bentley was felt acutely by his surviving friend and partner. But Wedgwood

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continued his work with unabated industry and enthusiasm, losing no opportunity to extend his business and to develop at the same time the perfection and artistic merit of his manufacture. It has already been pointed out that the production of vases in the jasper-body was subsequent to the death of Bentley, and that many of the most beautiful medallions and plaques, more particularly those in jasper-dip, were made between the years 1781 and 1795. Yet it must be borne in mind that not only were a vast number and great variety of fine things in variegated and black ware made during the term of the partnership, but that the splendid suites of mantelpiece plaques originated during the same period. We are able to fix the dates of some of these sets, partly by means of the extant invoices of the modellers and other artists employed, partly by the entries in the sale catalogue of 1781, and by those in the several editions of the firm's own *Catalogue* published during Bentley's lifetime, and partly by actual examples of these suites known to have been made in particular years. Thus there are in Mr. F. Rathbone's gallery two white marble mantelpieces made for Longton Hall, one in 1777, and the other two years after. The first of these has a central ornament, the fine

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design by Flaxman representing the "Apotheosis of Virgil"; on either side of this are two decorative plaques forming the frieze; the blocks at either end are heads of Medusa, while the jambs are ornamented with two important plaques representing trophies and altars. The later mantelpiece has a large central circular medallion—a profile head—of Ceres, while the other plaques bear designs of corn and conventional ornament. All these pieces are wrought in solid blue and white jasper of fine quality. The *Catalogues* issued by Wedgwood and Bentley have just been named; they were drawn up by Bentley and revised by his partner. The first appeared in 1773, the second in 1774, the third was a translation into French of the second, the fourth was published in 1777, and the fifth in English, and a sixth in French in 1779. Bentley wrote the introduction to the first edition, and also the various modifications and numerous additions which appeared in the subsequent issues. One edition only, that of 1787, was published after Bentley's death. It should be added, in order to show the Continental development of the business, that the *Catalogue* was published in Dutch in the year 1778 at Amsterdam, and that in the following year it appeared in a German dress at Leipsic. The

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wide distribution in Europe of the productions of Etruria at this time may be learnt from the numerous specimens bearing the stamp of Wedgwood and Bentley which have been recognized in many Continental cities by English travellers. The writer, for instance, discovered many of the variegated or "pebble" vases in the Natural History Museum of the Florence University.

Something has already been said as to the founding of the Staffordshire Etruria. The village, if such it can be called, does not now present, it must be owned, a very pleasing aspect, but as its population has been gradually increasing since Wedgwood's day, and now reaches the respectable total of 6,300, it must be regarded as a flourishing colony. The potworks remain, so far as outward appearance goes, in much the same state as when first erected. This cannot be said of Wedgwood's residence, Etruria Hall. In 1884, after a recent visit of inspection, I wrote of it in the following words: "The house has an air of faded magnificence, in spite of neglect, the dinginess of its surroundings, and the smoke-smitten trees hard by." The destruction of vegetation, which imparts so dreary and forlorn an appearance to the neighbourhood, is due not so much to the smoke of the potworks, as to the noxious

Josiah Wedgwood

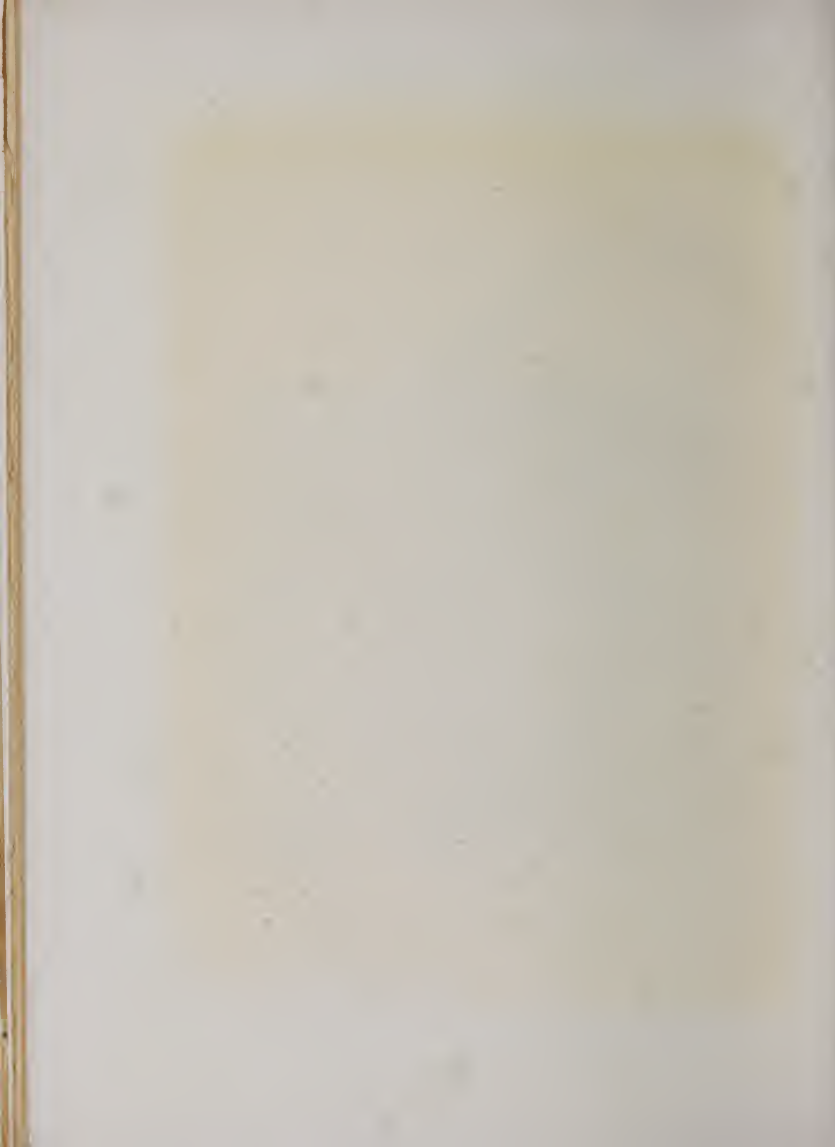
gases emitted from the neighbouring bar-iron furnaces of Lord Granville. On penetrating to the cellars of the mansion I had no difficulty in discovering some of the appliances and receptacles for his secret preparations, used by Josiah Wedgwood. For here rather than in the works he was continually experimenting, in order to effect the improvement of his ceramic pastes, glazes, and pigments, away from the too curious eyes of visitors or workmen; and here his secretary and assistant, Alexander Chisolm, was in frequent attendance.

It is impossible, in a condensed account such as that now offered, to describe even a few of the important orders which Wedgwood executed at the Etruria Works for royal, distinguished, or wealthy patrons. A word, however, must be said concerning the celebrated service made for the Empress of Russia, Catherine II. This was shown in the summer of 1774 in the new Greek Street rooms. Mrs. Delany wrote about it, saying: "There are three rooms below and two above filled with it, laid out on tables, everything that can be wanted to serve a dinner; the ground, the common ware pale brimstone, the drawings in purple, the borders a wreath of leaves, the middle of each piece a particular view of all the remark-



FIG. 26.—COFFEE-CUP.

WHITE JASPER WITH GREEN AND LILAC RELIEFS (V.A.M.).



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able places in the King's dominions." The service (or rather the services, for there were two) consisted of 952 pieces. Their cost as plain cream-coloured ware previous to decoration was no more than £51 8s. 4d. The mere enamel-painting of the views and borders entailed an expenditure of more than £2,200. Some duplicate specimens of plates and cups belonging to this service still remain in England, and though well and elaborately decorated, they cannot be said to be wholly satisfactory. This was the fault, not of the potters and painters, but of the conditions imposed by the imperial patron. There is an incongruity in the notion of cutting up your slice of mutton on a charming landscape, and helping a medieval castle to a spoonful of mashed potato! The Empress kept this service at her country retreat of La Grenouillère, where it was seen by Lord Malmesbury in 1779.

When during his later years Wedgwood had become not only very prosperous, but had acquired considerable wealth, his generous and public spirit prompted him to employ much of his riches in furthering wise schemes of benevolence and general utility. All through his life, as means and opportunities allowed, generosity was a marked characteristic of the man. In two par-

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ticulars, however, his conduct has been censured. In the first place, the modellers and artists whom he employed were not permitted to affix their names to the products of their skill, and were thus debarred from acquiring public recognition and honour. This suppression was, however, the general and not wholly unreasonable custom of Wedgwood's time, as, in a somewhat less degree, it is the custom of to-day. Then there is a second matter which must be mentioned in this connexion. Wedgwood strenuously opposed Richard Champion of Bristol in his attempt to secure some slight pecuniary reward for his laborious and skilful trials in the manufacture of true porcelain just at the time when he was on the point of making a commercial success of his admirable productions. One would like to think that it was imperfect acquaintance with the facts rather than prejudice and self-interest which induced Wedgwood to write to Bentley thus in 1777: "Poor Champion, you may have heard, is quite demolished. It was never likely to be otherwise, as he had neither professional knowledge, sufficient capital, nor scarcely any real acquaintance with the materials he was working upon. I suppose we might buy some growan stone and growan clay now upon easy terms, for they prepared a large

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quantity this last year." These statements have been traversed with considerable success by the late Mr. Hugh Owen in his *Two Centuries of Ceramic Art in Bristol* (pp. 149-151). And subsequently to the year 1873, when this book was published, Mr. Owen and his friend the late William Edkins obtained further evidence in support of the position taken up by the former.

This is scarcely the place for the disquisition on what are commonly described as the scientific labours of Wedgwood. He reckoned many scientific men, such as Darwin and Priestley, amongst his friends, and thoroughly appreciated their endeavours to apply their knowledge to purposes of practical utility. He had an able assistant in Alexander Chisolm, who entered his employ in the year 1781; and we read of his engaging a lecturer on chemistry to give instruction to his sons. He received the distinguished honour of being enrolled in the Royal Society, not, however, by reason of his chemical qualifications, but on account of his ingenious invention of an instrument for measuring high degrees of temperature. It was on January 16, 1783, that Josiah Wedgwood was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society; he was formally admitted into this Society "for improving natural knowledge"

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on February 13 in the same year. Five papers by him were published in the *Philosophical Transactions*. Three of these, relating to the measurement of high temperatures by means of the shrinkage of clay cylinders, appeared in the volumes for 1782, 1784, and 1786, and furnish details concerning the use and the indications afforded by the pyrometer invented by their author. The two remaining papers are on chemical subjects, and are to be found in the *Philosophical Transactions* (vols. lxxiii., 1783, and lxxx., 1790). The first of these contributions gives an analysis of Derbyshire black wadd, and is interesting to the modern chemist as describing a method of separating iron from manganese by means of fractional precipitation with an alkali, and as mentioning the change of colour due to the passage of the protoxide of the latter metal into the binoxide. But it is impossible to argue from these two chemical papers and from his letters and memoranda that Wedgwood was a great chemist. Doubtless he was a most persistent and indefatigable experimenter, as well as an acute observer. The trial of materials and recipes, gathered from all quarters, with a view to their employment in bodies, glazes, and colours, constituted the greatest part of his experimental

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work. Chemistry in Wedgwood's day was a science in a very early stage of development. Even had he mastered all that was known of it, the aid that it would have afforded him in his practical inquiries would have been comparatively insignificant. Nevertheless, it may be freely conceded that in his knowledge of chemistry and of physics Wedgwood stood alone amongst the potters of his day. We learn from his papers and memoranda that he was familiar with the few chemical reagents that were available in his time. He tested the action of these, as well as of different temperatures and admixtures, upon the materials which he was using, or was proposing to use, in his craft. His studies, however, must necessarily have been confined in great measure to the comparison of phenomena, the real nature of which a whole century devoted to philosophical research has not sufficed entirely to explain.

Wedgwood's literary work was not wholly restricted to his correspondence with Bentley, Darwin, and other friends. He wrote and published several pamphlets. His style was somewhat laboured and his grammar not above reproach; but he succeeded in conveying his meaning, while we always feel sure that he wrote under a strong conviction of the importance of

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what he was saying. There is sound common sense in the able *Address to the Young Inhabitants of the Pottery*, which he published in 1783 on the occasion of bread riots. In the same year he also wrote another address to workmen on the subject of entering into the service of foreign manufacturers. His *Memorial Relative to a Petition from Mr. Champion for the Extension of a Patent*, and his *Conjectures on the Bas-reliefs of the Portland Vase*, were less happy productions.

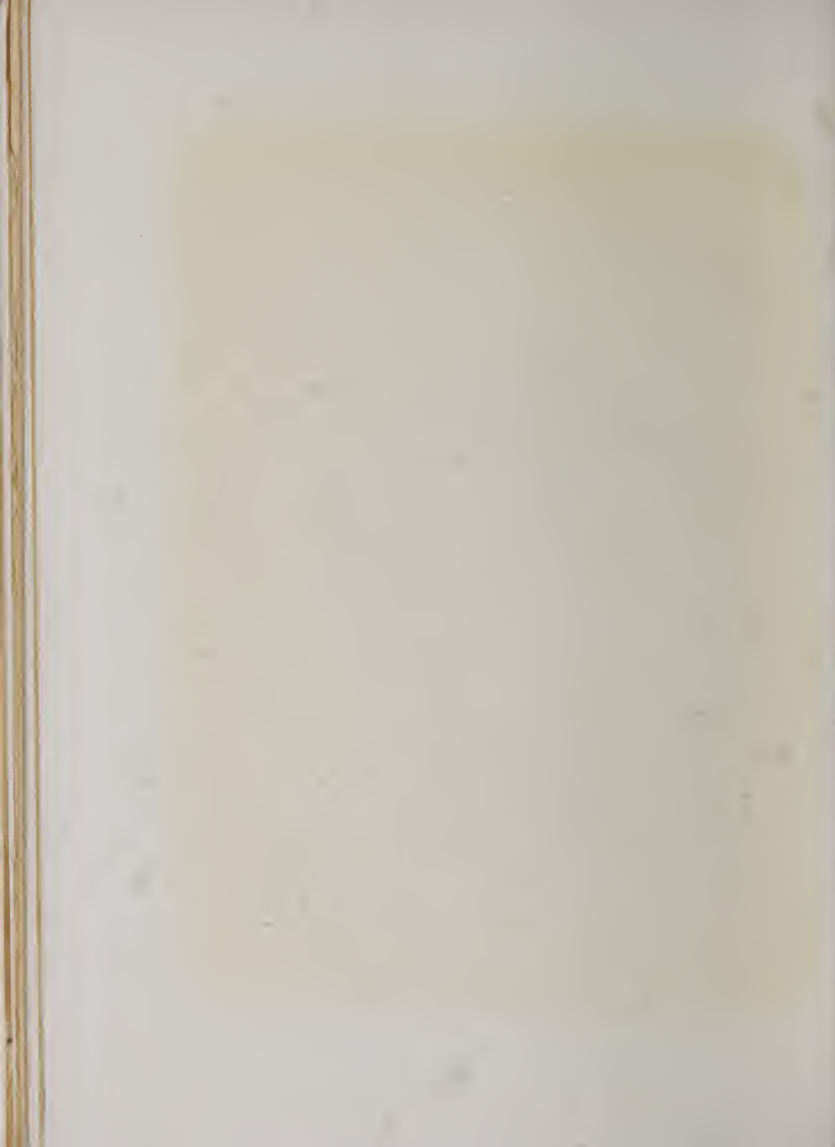
Here we must again make mention of Wedgwood's *Catalogues*. His cameos, intaglios, medals, busts, statuettes, bas-reliefs, vases, and other ornaments after the antique, are grouped into a certain number of classes. The detailed lists are accompanied by introductory paragraphs describing the material, the qualities, the adaptability to various purposes, the difficulties attending the manufacture, the relative value and cost, and the educational and artistic importance of his various groups of wares. Wedgwood's opinions and statements are characterized by sound sense, and are as worthy of perusal now, in the beginning of the twentieth century, as they were towards the close of the eighteenth.

Wedgwood's health was never robust, and during the last five years gave frequent occasions for



FIG. 27.—BELL-PULL.

WHITE, GREEN, AND LILAC JASPER (V.H.C.).



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anxiety to his friends. He had partially retired in 1790 from some of the more active duties of his business, and was able to take longer holidays than before. At home he had many recreations—collecting books, engravings, and objects of natural history, and occupying himself in the development of the garden and grounds of Etruria Hall, where, moreover, he constantly entertained a succession of congenial visitors. But Wedgwood was not long to enjoy his partial retirement from the cares of business. After a brief illness, the nature of which left no hope of recovery, Josiah Wedgwood passed away, towards the end without pain and unconscious, on January 3, 1795. Had he lived to the late summer of that year he would have been sixty-five. His grave is in the churchyard of Stoke. In the chancel of that church there is a monument to his memory by Flaxman. The inscription thereon tells us that he “converted a rude and inconsiderable Manufactory into an elegant Art and an important part of National Commerce.”

Wedgwood left more than half a million of money, in addition to his large and flourishing business.

There are five portraits of Josiah Wedgwood. The best of these is by Sir Joshua Reynolds ; it

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was painted in 1783. It has been engraved twice. The version by S. W. Reynolds has been reproduced in Fig. 2. George Stubbs painted two portraits of the master—one, on horseback, is now in the possession of Lord Tweedmouth ; the other, of kitcat size, was engraved by G. T. Stubbs, but is an unsympathetic and commonplace work. The fourth portrait is the cameo medallion, of which none of the copies in the jasper-body is of the fine quality. The fifth is the posthumous relief by Flaxman on the monument in Stoke Church. To this list may be added the modern bust by Fontana, in the Memorial Institute at Burslem.

CHAPTER XII

HIS POSITION AS AN ART-POTTER

A pervading style—Merits and defects—Sources of his designs—Artists employed: James Tassie, John Flaxman—Imitators and successors.

IF one has collected together a considerable number of pieces of the different kinds of earthenware which were first made in England between the years 1760 and 1800, it will not prove a difficult task, even for the uninitiated, to separate the specimens into three groups. Of these groups, one will present what naturalists call a distinctive "facies." It will show, in respect to material, form, and colour, not only a marked superiority to the other groups, but a pervading style—a style originating in the union of beauty with utility. Ornament is not an after-thought, but a growth—a development rather than an addition. Needless to say that this characteristic style distinguishes the vast majority of Wedgwood's productions. A second group in

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our hypothetical collection will show in a hesitating way and to a variable degree many of the merits of the first group. It will contain works by the most competent of the plagiarists and imitators of the great potter. One feels that, had it not been for his previous labours, these productions would never have seen the light, and that the greater number of them have a second-hand and second-rate air. The third group will be altogether miscellaneous and, for the most part, inferior. With rare and not very important exceptions, the pieces included in this group will represent potteries which were not under the control of an inspiring and original idea.

The case presented in the preceding paragraph may help us in defining Wedgwood's artistic position. He was not a mere employer of artists, not a mere translator into clay of designs made by other hands in other materials. Nor was he a mere copier of the antique. He possessed a marvellous power of co-ordination and adaptation, and appreciated the grace of congruity, although he occasionally allowed the association of incompatible decorative elements. He was endowed with an inventive faculty, which revealed itself, not only in new materials and new methods, but in the origination of new forms. Moreover,

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having selected with consummate taste the artistic materials, original and derived, which he deemed to be best suited for his purpose, he so informed them with his spirit and temper, that, under wide diversities of substance, colour, and shape, there will be found a certain unity of conception. In a word, no other potter of modern times has so successfully welded into one harmonious whole the prose and the poetry of the ceramic art. Wedgwood's appreciation of beauty and his imagination and fancy, on the one hand, with his skill, perseverance, and knowledge on the other, enabled him to attain an altogether unique position. True, he may not have left us any artistic works which we can call wholly his own, although we know that he was a practical thrower, an expert modeller, and an ingenious designer of new forms. But we owe an immense debt of gratitude to Wedgwood for the exquisite taste with which he reproduced and multiplied in beautiful materials the creations of great artists such as Flaxman, and for the industrial enterprise which enabled him to make and to distribute throughout the Old and New Worlds countless objects in which utility and beauty were happily combined.

Wedgwood's successes were, however, not un-

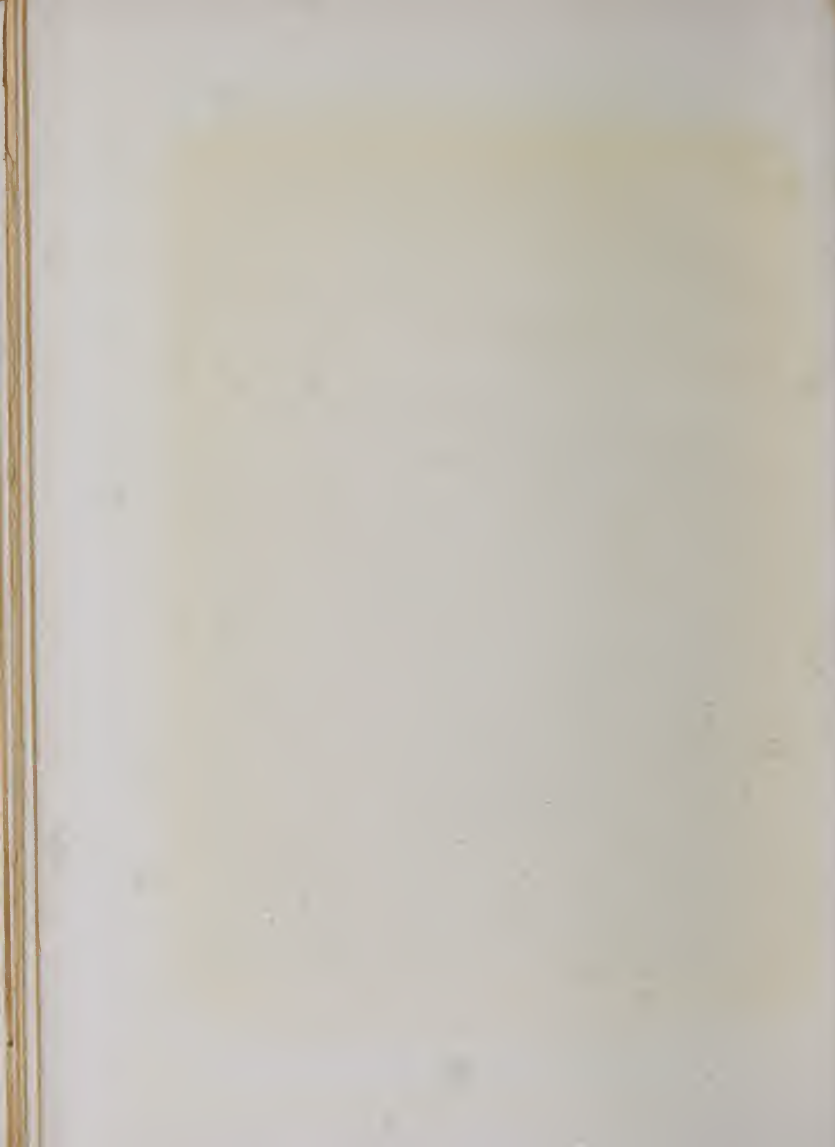
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accompanied by drawbacks. Mechanical processes were more largely employed by him than by any of his predecessors. Very few even of his most elaborate and most purely ornamental productions were unique. He used the same decorative motives over and over again even in his more costly pieces ; and the touch of the human hand, which gives life to designs poor in conception and feeble in execution, was necessarily absent from the vast majority of the cheaper products of his kilns. Occasionally he did not hesitate, instead of preparing new moulds, to rearrange the figures of a classic composition, to omit some of them, or even to add incongruous elements from another source. If he had possessed more knowledge and more appreciation of the meaning of the ancient myths, these changes would have been impossible. He appreciated the element of *form* in *classic* art, but lacked the fine culture needed in order to enter fully into its spirit. However, he did intelligently and earnestly strive after his ideals of excellence, and did attain a large measure of success. He saw clearly that "multiplying copies of fine works in durable materials must have the same effect upon the arts as the invention of printing has upon the sciences." Thus wrote Wedgwood in the fifth edition (1779) of his



FIG. 28.—VASE, A PROCESSION OF DEITIES.

WHITE AND LILAC JASPER (V.A.M.).



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Catalogue (p. 48). Still, it is to be regretted that he expended so much of his extraordinary power and skill in the work of making copies of objects of antique art, although he thereby favoured and followed a prevailing fashion of his day.

Indications have been already given from time to time in this paper of the sources, ancient and modern, from which Wedgwood obtained his designs. His earlier productions were mere copies from casts of antique and cinque-cento gems and pastes. Afterwards he borrowed from a great diversity of sources, often modifying the original composition. He had frequent recourse to illustrated books like those of Comte de Caylus, Mr. James Stuart, and Sir W. Hamilton. He had drawings and models made from Greek vases and Roman and Græco-Roman bas-reliefs. The portraits of illustrious persons of his own day were taken from pictures, engravings, coins, and medals, or were specially modelled in wax by competent artists, such as Flaxman, Hackwood, and Tassie. Many other artists, both sculptors or modellers and draughtsmen, contributed designs. Sometimes the drawings of lady amateurs (Lady Diana Beauclerk and Lady Templeton, for instance) were translated into cameo reliefs and became

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popular. In the hope that further information may be ultimately elicited concerning some of Wedgwood's artists, I have gathered many of their names into an alphabetical list, appended to this chapter, accounts and letters of Wedgwood as given in Miss Meteyard's works having been the chief source of information. Our knowledge of the works produced by the Italian sculptors employed at Rome, either independently or under Flaxman's or Henry Webber's supervision, is imperfect, but in some instances they have been identified, though details of the personal history of these men—Angelini, Dalmazzoni, Pacetti, and others—are wholly wanting. Of the many excellent designers and modellers who executed work of a more or less original character in Wedgwood's own factories and exclusively for him we know scarcely anything but the names and a few of their productions. Occasionally, however, we learn incidentally some interesting particulars concerning these artists. Thus we find that, in 1769, Wedgwood wrote of an accomplished painter of admirable figures and borderings on his Etruscan ware, a Mrs. Wilcox, who had just left the china factory at Worcester, "She is a daughter to that Fry who was famous for doing heads in mezzotint." This was Thomas Frye, the inventor of

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Bow china. Thus, a casual notice of his daughter affords interesting evidence of an hereditary talent, and suggests a link of connexion between three famous potworks.

When, however, Wedgwood obtained the occasional aid of independent artists other sources of information are available. Such, for instance, is the case with two modellers to whom the potter was largely indebted—namely, James Tassie and John Flaxman. Brief notice of the careers of these two men may therefore be here fitly introduced.

Wedgwood appears at first to have been dependent for his copies of antique and modern gems upon James Tassie. A bill of his is extant, dated November 11, 1769, in which Messrs. Wedgwood and Bentley are charged 11s. 8d. for seventy impressions in sulphur, and 2s. for a couple of impressions in enamel glass. The majority of the cameos and intaglios comprised in Wedgwood's first *Catalogue*, published in 1773, were derived from moulds furnished by Tassie, but in later years Wedgwood employed moulders of his own, by whom an immense number of impressions were made from the original gems in many famous cabinets. Still, a few words concerning James Tassie may be of interest, for to

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this very skilful artist Wedgwood not improbably owed the idea of copying in a plastic material, not merely antique gems, but the portraits of the men and women of his day.

James Tassie was born at Pollokshaws, near Glasgow, on July 15, 1735. He commenced his career as a stonemason, but soon turned his attention to the arts of modelling and sculpture, studying in the academy established in Glasgow by Robert and Andrew Foulis. From Glasgow Tassie went, in 1763, to Dublin, where, in conjunction with Dr. Quin, he perfected the vitreous compositions used in copying antique gems. In 1766 Tassie settled in London. In the same year the Society of Arts granted him a premium for his "Profiles in Pastes." He exhibited "Portraits Modelled in Paste" at the Society of British Artists in 1768; in the following year he contributed other portraits to the exhibition of the Royal Academy. The extent of his labours, both as an original artist and as a copyist, may be gauged by the fact that the catalogue of his reproductions from the antique, issued in 1791, contained no less than 15,800 numbered items; to these must be added several hundred portrait medallions, which are undoubtedly of his own modelling and execution, although he copied in



FIG. 29.—VASE, APOLLO AND THE MUSES,
WHITE AND BLUE JASPER (V.A.M.).



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his white vitreous paste many of the works of other sculptors and medallists. Tassie's larger cameo portraits are generally of high quality, and may be ranked with those which Wedgwood produced in his jasper-body. Indeed, there occur examples of the busts of many distinguished persons both in Tassie enamel and in Wedgwood paste. And it may be safely concluded that the originals of many of these were the work of James Tassie. The late Mr. John M. Gray, in his biographical sketch of Tassie (Edinburgh, 1893), particularly names the medallions of Joseph Black, chemist, James Byres, architect, the Earl of Mansfield, and Viscount Melville, as reproduced by Wedgwood from the moulds furnished by Tassie. The death of James Tassie took place on June 1, 1799, rather more than four years after that of his better known contemporary, Josiah Wedgwood. It is to be regretted that his tombstone, in the graveyard attached to a Congregational chapel in Collier's Rents, Southwark, though it existed in a dilapidated condition in the year 1860, has since that date been destroyed.

It is worthy of note that Tassie frequently mounted his portrait reliefs of white enamel on grounds of coloured glass, and that many of his more important cameos show unmistakable signs

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of having been finished by the gem-engraver on the lapidary's wheel. Moreover, there is still a third; particular in which one may possibly recognize a similarity in the processes adopted by Tassie and by Wedgwood. For in Sir John Soane's Museum there are preserved four oval medallions—cream-coloured reliefs on a puce ground—which have been always attributed to the Scotch artist, and which remind one very forcibly of those early trial pieces in which Wedgwood covered the backgrounds of his cameos with coloured enamel, which when fired yielded a rather glossy, though uneven, surface. I do not, however, feel certain as to these two plaques owing more to Tassie than their design. Of course, there was a radical difference between the moist plastic material employed by the potter and the half-fused vitreous enamel which the artist in glass used in the manufacture of the vast majority of his productions. The pressing of softened glass into a mould demanded the utmost promptitude and precision in manipulation, while a more leisurely treatment was admissible in the case of any kind of ceramic paste.

It was on the recommendation of Bentley that John Flaxman's aid as a designer and modeller was first secured by Wedgwood. The project of

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making large tablets for chimney-pieces was under discussion between the partners in 1775. On January 14 in that year, Wedgwood, in replying to a letter from Bentley, says, "I am glad you have met with a modeller, and that Flaxman is so valuable an artist. It is but a few years since he was a most supreme coxcomb, but a little more experience may have cured him of this foible." Wedgwood soon learnt to estimate very highly the genius of the young sculptor, wrote of him as "the greatest artist of the age," and gave him a long series of important commissions. I have already indicated, in preceding chapters, how many of the finest portrait medallions and classical figures and groups can be unhesitatingly assigned to Flaxman, but the sculptor was occupied with many other commissions for the potworks of Etruria during the whole period 1775-1795.

The story of Flaxman's life is so well known that the briefest summary of the chief incidents of its earlier part is all that need be here given. His father was a maker and seller of plaster casts, but was occasionally employed as a modeller by Roubiliac, Scheemakers, and other sculptors of the time. His second son, the subject of this notice, was born on July 6, 1755. The boy's health was weak, and his time was spent, except

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for a brief period, at home, and chiefly amongst the casts of his father's shop. We hear, however, of the notice taken of him by some of his father's artistic and literary patrons. He occupied himself in drawing and modelling and in teaching himself classic fables and Latin. When no more than twelve years old he gained the first prize for a medal from the Society of Arts, which awarded him a similar distinction three years later. From 1767 onwards he contributed works to several public exhibitions: in 1770 he exhibited a wax model of Neptune in the Royal Academy, of which he then became a student. In the competition for the gold medal in 1772 the President and Council of the Royal Academy awarded it to a rival. This reverse seems to have exercised a salutary effect upon the youth, checking his tendency to self-assertion. In 1775 he began working for Wedgwood, who, during the last twenty years of his life, helped in many ways the young sculptor. When Flaxman was twenty-four he executed the lifelike portrait of himself which is given in Fig. 33 from the specimen at South Kensington; for this the authorities of the Museum gave £161 14s. just thirty years ago. A replica of this terra-cotta medallion was in the Proport Collection.

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Flaxman's series of monumental designs was commenced in 1780, and was continued until his death in 1826. Of his larger works these public monuments were the best, but as the marbles were too often completed by Italian workmen, the spirit of Flaxman's original models frequently evaporated under their hands, a certain degree of emptiness and insipidity being the result. In his smaller works, especially in the wax portraits and classical bas-reliefs executed entirely by his own hand for Wedgwood, and in such pieces as the statuette in terra-cotta of a seated figure with a syrinx in the right hand in the Victoria and Albert Museum, the life and power of the sculptor is well seen. By many critics his pen and pencil and washed sketches are considered to be Flaxman's most characteristic and satisfactory work. Their simplicity and grace were caught from antique vase-paintings and bas-reliefs, but these drawings, slight though they generally are, are instinct with personal observation, and possess the charm of tender feeling and happy invention.

In 1782 Flaxman married Ann Denman; five years afterwards, helped by the recommendations and pecuniary aid of Wedgwood, he went to Rome, where he remained until 1794; the rest of his life was spent in London.

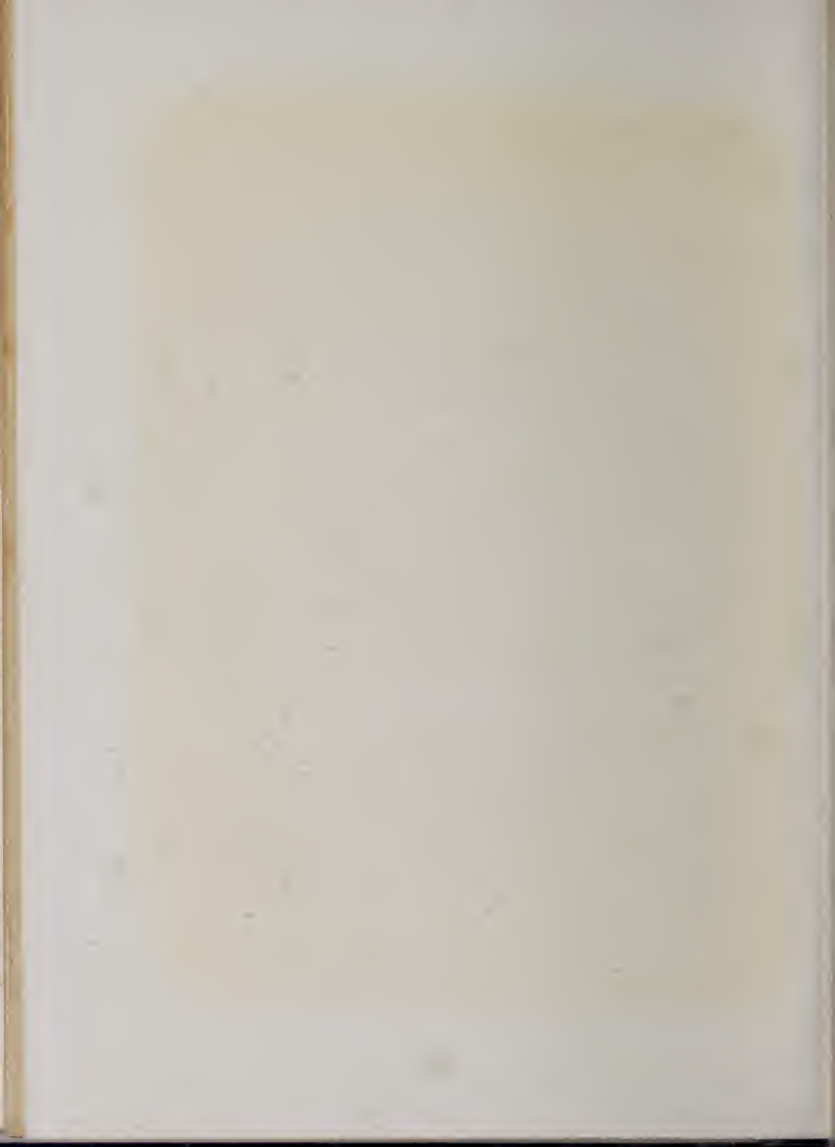
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Wedgwood's successes provoked the rivalry of his brother potters; but, not content with improving their own productions, they deliberately copied his. For instance, they did not have direct recourse to the antique examples whence Wedgwood derived so many of his designs, but they secured early copies of his pieces and proceeded to imitate them—form, body, ornament and all. Cameos, seals, vases, and the "useful" ware—all were pirated. None of his plagiarists achieved a success at once so varied and so complete as that of Wedgwood. Perhaps John Turner, who worked in Lane End from 1762 until his death in 1786, may be regarded as having nearly equalled Wedgwood in the quality of his blue and white jasper. It is, however, distinguishable by its texture, which is more porcellanous, and by its colour, which has either a greenish or a purplish hue. William Adams, a cousin of the William Adams who owned the Brick House Works at Burslem occupied by Josiah Wedgwood, produced blue and white jasper of good quality; much work in the same body is also due to the successors of Adams. W. Adams, who was born in 1745, built his factory of Greengates, Tunstall, in the year 1787, and there made his jasper ware: he died in 1805. The blue colour in his pro-



FIG. 30.—SAUCER.

WHITE AND LILAC JASPER (B.M.).



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ductions did not exhibit the range in hue and depth which characterized the jasper of Josiah Wedgwood ; the body is also rather less refractory in the fire. However, on the whole, it may be stated that Adams' jasper realizes more nearly than that of other imitators the characteristics of the original material. Specimens may be seen at Bethnal Green and South Kensington, also in most of the public collections in the provinces. The Holburne Museum at Bath contains several pieces.

The blue and white cameos made at Sèvres in imitation of Wedgwood's jasper are often good in effect and daintily modelled. But their harsh touch is generally marked ; they are of biscuit porcelain. Other Continental factories, such as Meissen, Fürstenburg, and Gross Breitenbach, made similar but less successful attempts. Other imitations of Wedgwood's blue and white cameos in the jasper-body were made at Buen Retiro, and by Ollivier and by Després in Paris at the close of the eighteenth century. Palmer, of Hanley, was an unscrupulous imitator of Wedgwood's seals and vases, and occasionally forged the mark "Wedgwood & Bentley." He and a potter of the name of Neale also imitated the encaustic-painted vases of Wedgwood. Elijah

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Mayer, of Hanley, produced many good pieces in the style of Wedgwood and in various bodies. A dozen other Staffordshire potters, belonging to the last quarter of the eighteenth century and the first quarter of the nineteenth, might be named as having worked under the direct influence of the inventions and improvements introduced by Josiah Wedgwood.

LIST OF THE CHIEF MODERN ARTISTS WHOSE DESIGNS OR MODELS WERE USED BY WEDGWOOD.

(Dates in brackets refer to years in which the several artists are known to have been working for Wedgwood.)

Angelini (Rome, 1787).

Astle, Thomas ; 1735-1803.

Bacon, John ; 1740-1799.

Barret, George ; 1732-1784.

Beauclerk, Lady Diana ; 1734-1808.

Burch, Edward (1772).

Coward, John (1768).

Dalmazzone, Angelo (Rome, 1787-1795).

Dassier, John ; 1676-1763.

Davaere or Devere, John (Rome, 1788-1794).

Flaxman, John ; 1755-1826.

Fratoddi (Rome, 1787).

Gosset, Isaac ; 1713-1799.

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- Gosset, Matthew ; 1683-1744.
Grant, B., and Hoskins, James (1774).
Greatbach, William.
Hackwood, William (1770).
Landre, Mrs. (1769, 1774).
Le Brun, C. ; 1619-1690.
Lochéé, John Charles (1787).
Mangiarotti (Rome, 1787).
Manzolini (Rome, 1787).
Nini, Jean Baptiste ; 1716-1786.
Pacetti (Rome, 1787).
Parker, Theodore (1769).
Pingo, T. (1769).
Reynolds, Sir Joshua ; 1723-1792.
Roubiliac, L. F. ; 1695-1762.
Stothard, Thomas ; 1755-1834.
Stubbs, George ; 1724-1806.
Tassie, James ; 1735-1799.
Tebo (1775).
Templeton, Lady (1783).
Smith, Joachim (1773-1775).
Steel, Aaron (1784).
Webber, Henry (Etruria, 1782).
Wilcox, Mrs. (1769-1776).

Amongst other names of painters, designers,
and modellers which might have been included

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in the above list are those of Boot, Miss Crewe, Denby, Holinshed, Keeling, Richard Parker, P. Stephan, Ralph Unwin, and Edward Watson. In a considerable number of cases, extant productions of Wedgwood's factory can be definitely assigned to many of the artists whose names are here recorded.

CHAPTER XIII

COLLECTIONS AND COLLECTORS

Provincial museums—Public collections in London—Formation and disposal of private collections—Criteria of quality and date—Marks.

HOWEVER small a collection of English pottery may be, it generally includes a few examples of Wedgwood's productions. But it will be easily understood that a few examples cannot suffice to adequately represent the amazing variety of work which was turned out from the kilns of the great potter. Very few collections, public or private, have been formed in pursuance of a definite plan; indeed, at the present day it would not be possible to obtain by purchase anything like a complete representative series of Josiah Wedgwood's productions. There are several distinct types as to form, though not of material, which are now known only from his *Catalogues* or his manuscript papers. And then, too, of his

Josiah Wedgwood

largest and most important plaques and vases very few examples exist, so that years may elapse without one of these rare pieces coming into the market. Josiah Wedgwood himself found, when too late, that it was impossible to make up a complete set of his own works.

None of our national museums possesses a really representative collection of the works of Wedgwood. Several provincial towns, however, are richer in this respect than London. Liverpool, with the Mayer Collection, and Birmingham, with the interesting series of specimens gathered and presented by Messrs. R. and G. Tangye, are far ahead of the Metropolis. Fortunately, Burslem itself, as the central town of the Staffordshire potteries, contains the Wedgwood Memorial Institute, in which is preserved a really fine assemblage of the productions of the great potter. This collection is due to the munificence of Mr. Thomas Hulme, who has formed it by means of judicious selections from all the recent sales of examples of the old period of the Etruria manufactory. Other specimens will be found in the two pottery towns of Stoke and Hanley, although in the Mechanics' Institute of Hanley and the Free Public Library of Stoke the productions of the predecessors and contemporaries of Wedgwood



FIG. 31.—CANDLESTICK, CHILD AND TREE.

WHITE AND BLUE JASPER.



Collections and Collectors

are far more fully represented than are those of the master. The Castle Museum of Nottingham is the fortunate possessor of the fine collection of the late Mr. Felix Joseph. Some specimens will be found in the Art Museums of Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Dublin, and the Holburne Museum at Bath. In the year 1906 a most interesting museum of specimens was arranged at the Etruria factory. In it are gathered together many examples of the work, both experimental and definitive, of the distinguished founder. Two cases are of particular interest. One of these contains a large number of Josiah Wedgwood's early trial pieces duly annotated by his own hand ; in another case are shown specimens of salt-glazed ware, such as the great potter made almost at the beginning of his independent career. I understand that these examples of white stoneware have been stored away, like the fine array of trial pieces, in the Etruria works, so that their origin is not doubtful. A detailed catalogue of this assemblage will not, it is to be hoped, remain long a desideratum.

The two Metropolitan public collections of Wedgwood are those in the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum. Even were they combined into a single assemblage, they

Josiah Wedgwood

would afford a very imperfect notion of the extensive range of our potter's labours. One would miss examples—or, at least, an adequate representation—of entire groups of Wedgwood's productions, such as large plaques in black basalt, in white semiporcelain, in coloured jasper, and in encaustic-painted ware, of statuettes, busts, and animals ; of lamps and candelabra ; of flower- and root-pots ; of cream-coloured services for table use ; and of ink-vessels, paint-chests, eye-cups, and other objects of domestic and technical utility. I do not think that too much emphasis can be laid upon the happy manner in which Wedgwood associated beauty with serviceableness in the different varieties of useful ware. This characteristic feature cannot be properly shown by a miscellaneous gathering consisting of a pair of plates from one service, a dish from another, and a soup-tureen from a third. One wants in a museum a table equipage, not complete, indeed, but representative. So also one would like to see in a public gallery illustrations of the way in which Wedgwood adapted his productions to the arts of the jeweller and the architect. His bas-reliefs in various bodies let into panelled walls, his suites of tablets for the friezes and jambs of mantelpieces, his large vases and busts for the

Collections and Collectors

tops of bookcases, and his wine-coolers for the sideboard, cannot be duly appreciated when dissociated from their intended surroundings and ranged in crowded ranks on the shelves of a cabinet. Nor can the artistic effect of Wedgwood's small and delicate jasper cameos be properly seen when these choice gems are fixed in formal rows upon a museum table, instead of being framed in cut steel, in gold, in silver, or in ivory, or set in bonbonnières, tea-caddies, and patch-boxes. Our national collections are, therefore, not inadequate merely on the score of incompleteness, but also by reason of their defective arrangement. It should be added that Sir John Soane's Museum contains a few—a very few—specimens of Wedgwood. They include an imperfect set of the chessmen, three black basalt plaques, and five "Etruscan" vases. Besides these pieces, there are the four small early cameos referred to on p. 182 as traditionally attributed to Tassie.

During the last forty years or so many private collections of Wedgwood's productions have been made; many also have been dispersed. Specimens of the jasper-body have been more generally sought for than those made of other, and perhaps less choice, compositions. Coloured jasper vases and *déjeuner* sets, as well as cameo medallions and

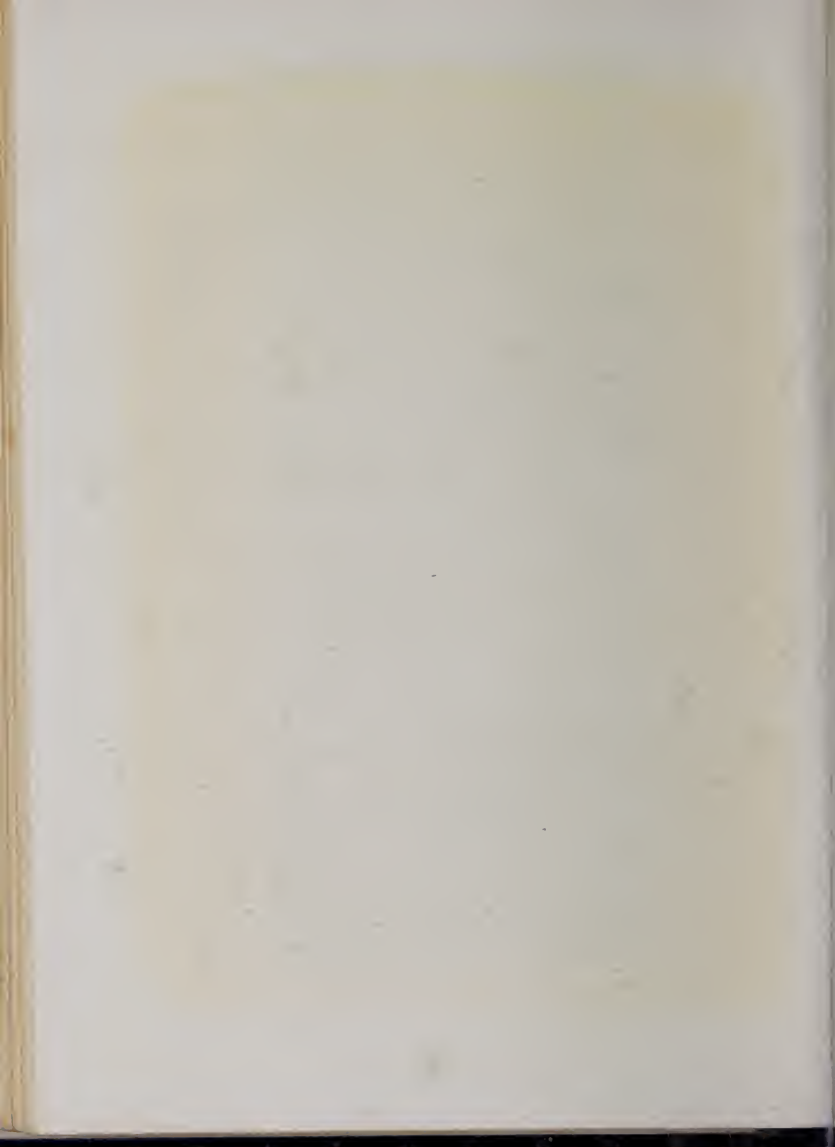
Josiah Wedgwood

portraits, have mainly engaged the attention of collectors. Black basalt, white semiporcelain, and white jasper, as well as granite and marble ware, have not secured a high place in the esteem of the majority of connoisseurs. A few collectors have gathered together specimens of table services in Queen's ware. The delicately tinted dessert dishes, plates, tureens, *compotiers*, and bowls, in the form of different species of shells, have been more highly appreciated than the pieces with enamelled ornamental borders of more or less conventional design painted by hand. The cream-ware decorated with transfer-printed engravings in black, red, or puce, has perhaps been deemed to be a less characteristic product of Etruria, since we know that for the most part it was printed and fired in the kilns of Messrs. Sadler and Green at Liverpool. But on more careful inquiry it will be found that Wedgwood did not rest content with the designs purchased from others or made by Sadler and Green, but was continually furnishing the Liverpool firm with fresh material obtained by himself and more agreeable to his own taste. He frequently suggested improvements in style, method, or colour. As to this last point, that of the harmonious colouring of his cream-ware, Wedgwood wrote to



FIG. 32.—CANDLESTICK, CHILD AND TREE.

WHITE AND BLUE JASPER.



Collections and Collectors

Green in 1770 (in reference to designs printed in outline and filled in with enamels by hand), urging him to avoid certain crude colours and to adopt a more sober scale. So that after all no collection of Wedgwood's cream-ware can be considered representative unless it contains a series of specimens illustrating the salutary influence which the great potter exercised upon the practice of the art of transfer-printing on earthenware by Sadler and Green.

The frequent formation and frequent dispersal of private collections of the works of Wedgwood during the last five-and-twenty years has had several different results. Many specimens have found a final, and we hope secure, resting-place in public museums ; many have passed from one private collection to another, then to a third, and perhaps even to a fourth ; not a few have been lost sight of, at least for a time. Another consequence of such changes of ownership and of the attention paid to the subject has been seen in the searches which have been made for fine examples in every part of Europe. Not only the shops, but the private dwellings of France, Germany, Italy, Holland, and Belgium, have been ransacked by enthusiastic collectors and eager dealers. One hears of a series of large white and lilac jasper

Josiah Wedgwood

plaques being discovered in a little back parlour in Venice ; of a fine cameo of the Medusa's head being bought for 5 lire in a broker's shop in a village near Turin ; of beautiful medallions set as ornaments in furniture, in clocks, and even in doors in a remote French château ; while some very choice specimens of the best period of manufacture have returned to the country which produced them, even from Russia. Wedgwood had agencies in several important Continental centres, and the distribution of his ornamental as well as of his useful wares during the last quarter of the eighteenth century was carried out on an extensive scale.

During the last twenty or thirty years, not only have a large number of fine specimens of Wedgwood's work formed part of several collections of works of art and of domestic furniture which have been dispersed by auction, but there have been sold many inclusive and general gatherings of pottery as well as of Wedgwood's productions in particular. The prices obtained on such occasions have fluctuated considerably, but have, as a rule, been greatly in advance of those of forty years ago. When several such sales occur about the same time or at a period of commercial depression the prices realized are naturally lowered, especially

Collections and Collectors

if it so happen that the Wedgwood collectors of the day are content with what they already possess, and no new gatherings are being formed. The priced catalogues of recent auctions are, for these reasons alone, insufficient guides whereby to judge of the appreciation of the examples sold. Moreover, a catalogue affords no adequate indications of quality, for all old Wedgwood is not necessarily fine. The chief collections dispersed (mostly by auction in London) during the last five-and-thirty years were these : De la Rue, 1866 ; Marryat, 1867 ; Barlow, 1869 ; Carruthers, 1870 ; Bohn, 1875 ; Sibson, 1877 ; Shadford-Walker, 1885 ; Braxton Hicks, 1887 ; J. Bowker, 1888 ; Cornelius Cox, 1890 ; Bolckow, 1891 ; J. Anderson Rose, 1891 ; W. Edkins, 1891 ; W. Durning Holt, 1892 ; G. H. Vize, 1892 ; Braxton Hicks, 1895 ; Madame de Falbe, 1900 ; W. Bartlett, 1901 ; W. J. Stuart, 1901 ; Watterson, 1901 ; Apsley Pellatt, sold at Weybridge in 1901 ; Willoughby Loudoun, 1902 ; and J. L. Propert, 1902.

At the present time there are many possessors and collectors of old Wedgwood. Some of them are owners of hereditary or family collections, but the majority have formed their own gatherings by recent purchases. But a glance at the long list of sales by auction recorded above will serve

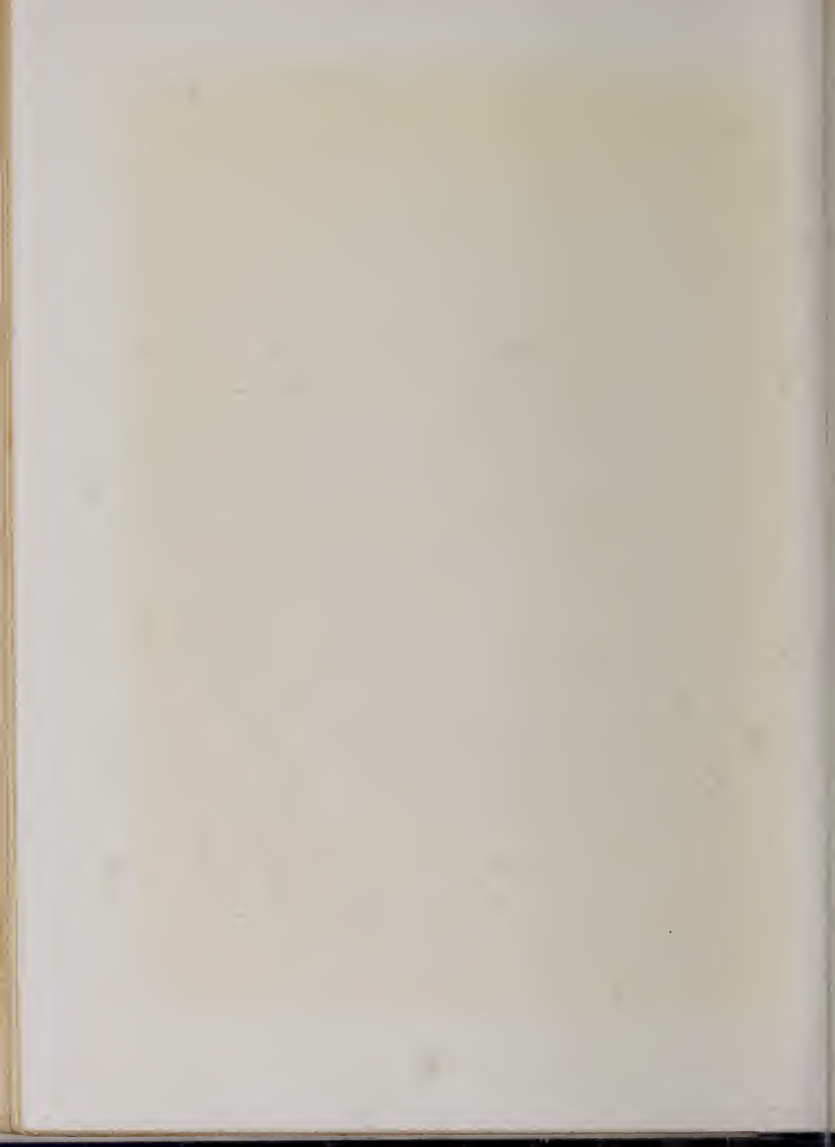
Josiah Wedgwood

to show how many changes of ownership have occurred within the last half-century. Indeed, the vast majority of specimens of fine Wedgwood not permanently lodged in public museums have been migrating from one collection to another during this period. Like choice drawings by old masters, the best and most important examples possess an artistic pedigree, so that one often meets such records as these: "From the De la Rue, Sibson and W. J. Stuart Collections"; "From the Barlow and W. J. Stuart Collections"; "From the Marryat and Shadford-Walker Collections." The name of the chief expert in old Wedgwood should be introduced here. Mr. Frederick Rathbone of South Kensington has done more than anyone else in the way of forming the best collections of recent years; a visit to his gallery in Alfred Place West is indeed a treat to the lover of eighteenth-century ceramic art. He has been hunting for fine pieces of Wedgwood at home and abroad for thirty years, and possesses a keen eye for the work of Josiah's period. Moreover, having been for some years the agent and representative of the firm of Josiah Wedgwood and Sons, he became acquainted with the modern period of manufacture, and so received some help in his task of comparing and contrasting the new



FIG. 33.—MEDALLION, PORTRAIT OF FLAXMAN.

TERRA-COTTA (V.A.M.)



Collections and Collectors

work with the old. His knowledge of marks and of the other criteria by which the good pieces may be recognized has been freely imparted to connoisseurs; I am myself indebted to him in several ways, more particularly for the cuts of the signatures with which the present chapter closes. Mr. Rathbone has also prepared and brought out many valuable *catalogues raisonnés*, as well as a sumptuous work with numerous plates in colour, *Old Wedgwood*. This volume was published in 1894-1898 by Mr. Quaritch.

It is not possible to define precisely in words those special characteristics by which fine and old Wedgwood may be discriminated from new and inferior. The senses of touch and sight must both be brought into requisition. Whatever the variety of material, shape, and decoration may be, there will be apparent a pervading air of lightness, with truth of form and perfect finish. In the case of the jasper-body, flatness and smoothness of ground, without ripples, bubbles, or stringiness, are marked features.

The mark on the productions of Wedgwood consisted simply of the name impressed in the clay in letters of varying size; but during the partnership (1769-1780) with Bentley the form adopted on the ornamental ware was "Wedgwood

Josiah Wedgwood

& Bentley," with the addition of "Etruria" on the basalt, Etruscan, and variegated or pebble vases, and occasionally on the pedestals of large busts or figures. On the very small basalt intaglios the initials only, "W. & B.," appear. During the best period of manufacture the impressed marks are sharply defined; occasionally genuine old pieces have no stamp. Besides the manufacturer's mark, an immense number of supplementary signs, sometimes impressed, sometimes painted, have been noted; Miss Meteyard devotes fourteen pages of her *Handbook* to their description; they are workmen's marks, and have little significance; in a few instances, however, they serve to distinguish invariably fine work in the jasper-body. Such is the case with the letter O and the numeral 3, which occur, singly or in association, below the usual Wedgwood stamp.

The following marks are selected from Mr. F. Rathbone's essay on the subject; they, or some of them, occur on pieces made up to the time of Wedgwood's death, but the stamp WEDGWOOD in capital letters has been continuously used at Etruria from 1795 until the present day.

Collections and Collectors

wedgwood

This rare mark is found on an early piece supposed to have been made by Wedgwood at Burslem.

WEDGWOOD
WEDGWOOD
Wedgwood
Wedgwood

These marks are believed to have been used by Wedgwood previous to his partnership with Bentley, and afterwards on "useful" ware.



This mark occurs on a wafer or bat of clay affixed inside the plinths of old basalt vases or the pedestals of busts.



This circular stamp occurs round the screw at the base of the basalt, granite, and Etruscan vases — never on those of jasper.

Josiah Wedgwood

WEDGWOOD } These marks, varying in size, are
 & BENTLEY } found upon busts, granite and
 WEDGWOOD } basalt vases, figures, plaques,
 & BENTLEY } medallions, and cameos, also
 Wedgwood } occasionally (and by accident)
 & Bentley } upon useful ware of the period.
 & Bentley }

Wedgwood } This mark occurs on intaglios
 & Bentley } and is generally accompanied
 356 } by the *Catalogue* number.



} This rare mark is found only upon
 chocolate and white seal intag-
 lios, usually portraits, made of
 two layers of clay and having
 the edges polished for mount-
 ing.

Wedgwood } These marks were employed
 Wedgwood } chiefly, if not exclusively, in
 Wedgwood } the period after Bentley's
 WEDGWOOD } death, while the last three
 WEDGWOOD } were continued after Wedg-
 WEDGWOOD } wood's death.

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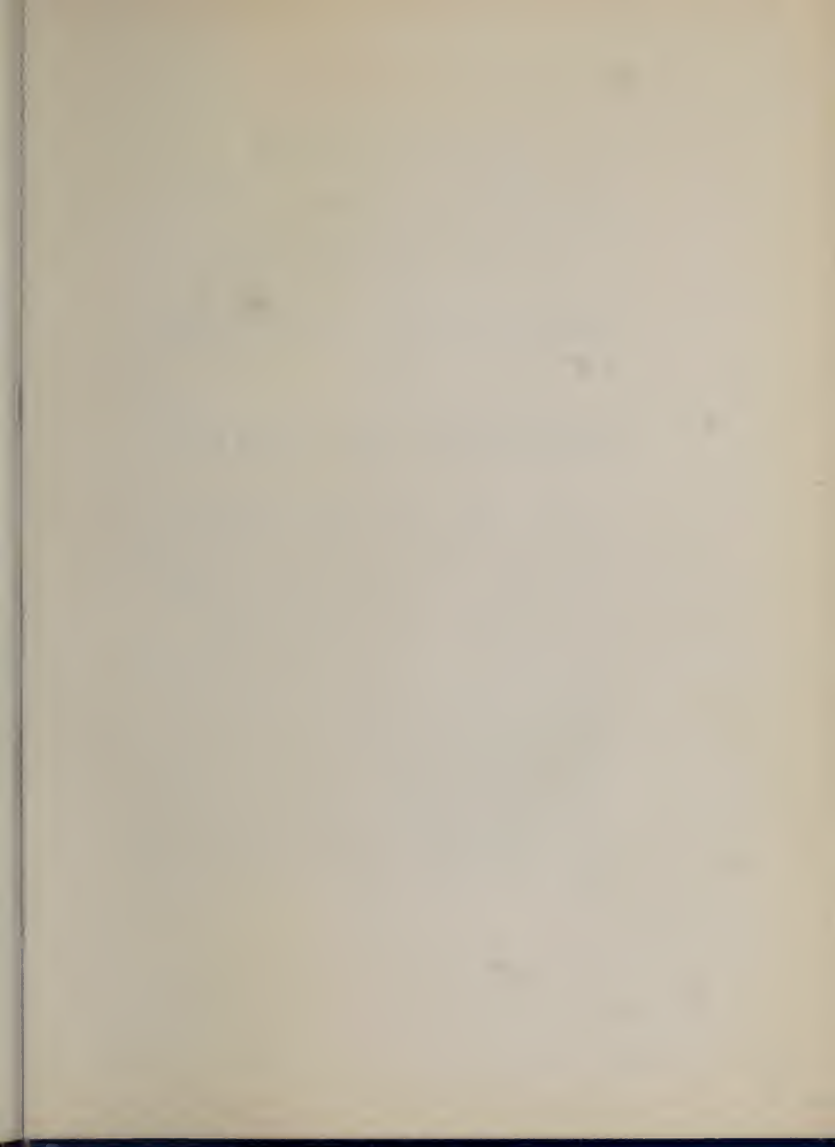
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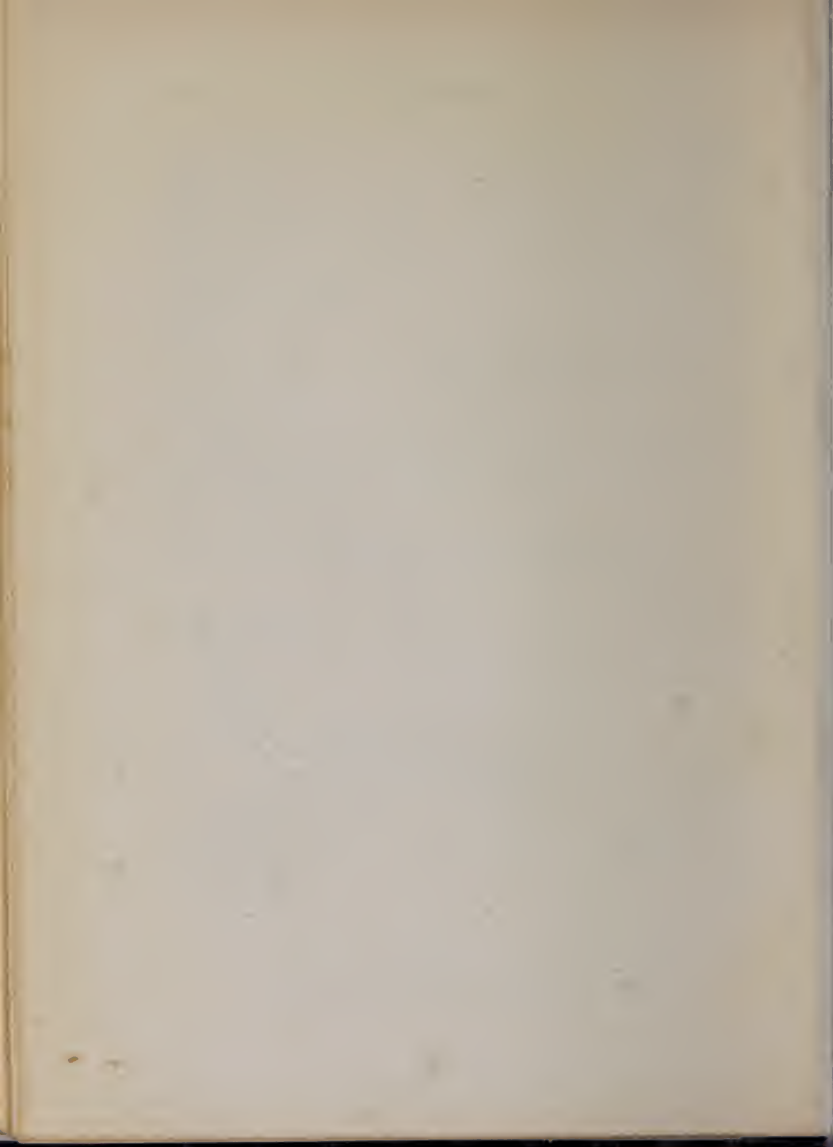
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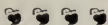
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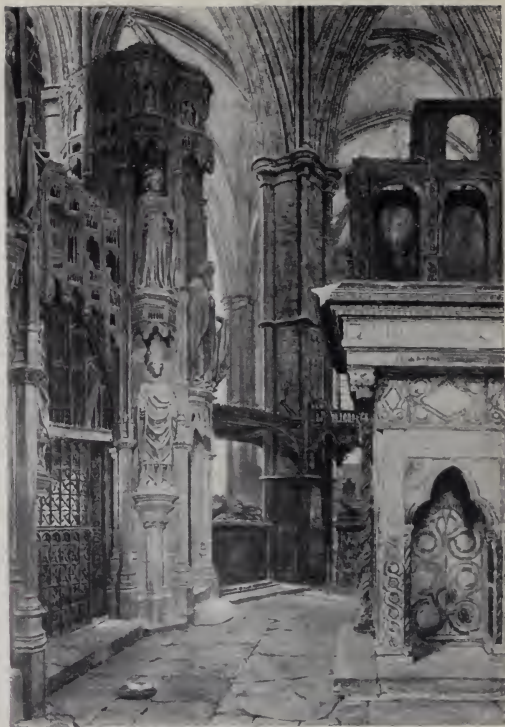
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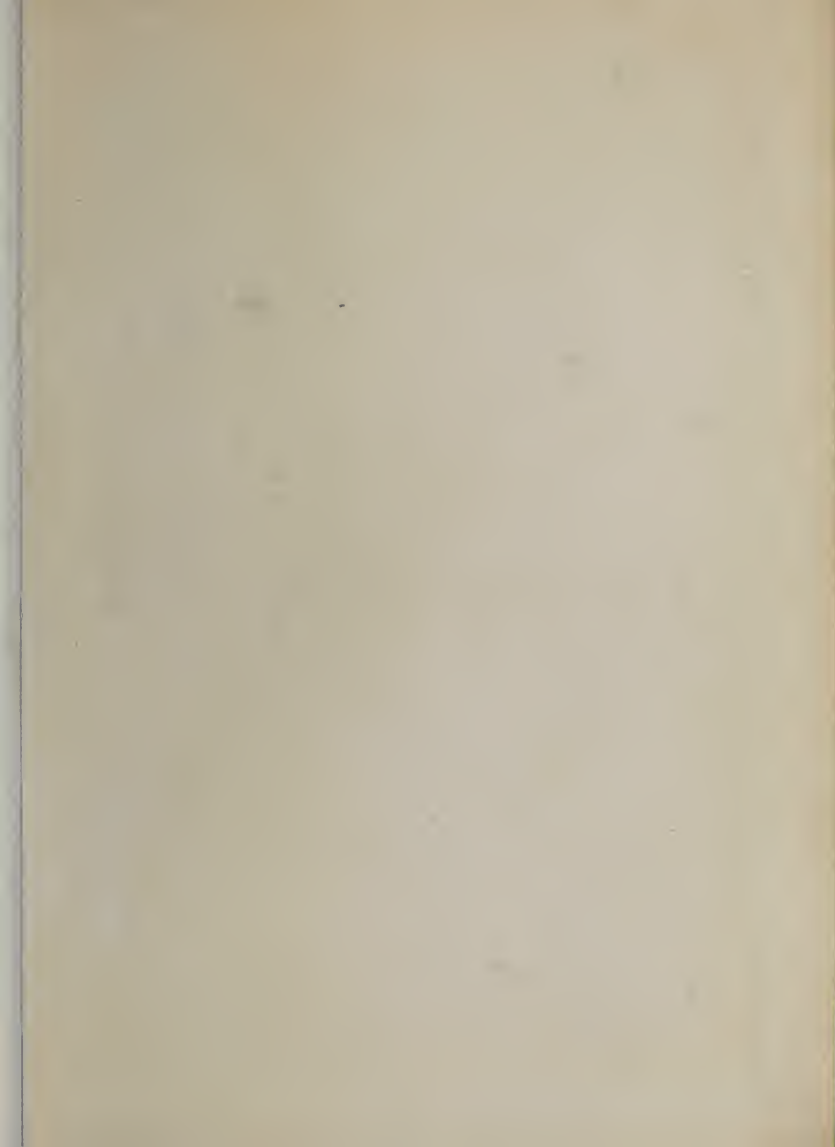
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