MUNICIPAL ENGINEERS, CONTRACTORS AND MATEAIALS

VARIETIES OF CLAY. When clays are formed from granite rocks they are usually white or yellowish white, and are very adhesive or plastic; when resulting from the decomposition of slaty rocks they are more or less colored and sandy, and when limestone mud kets intermingled their plasticity is greatly diminished. The plastic element consists of some combination of silica (quartz or flint in a peculiar condition) and alumina (one of the constituents of alum), with more or less water; but a perfectly pure combination of this kind rarely occurs in nature, there being always present various quantities of sand, iron, lime, magnesia, potash, &c. The less of these substances present the richer or fatter the clay, whilst clay containing a great deal is called poor. These substances not only exert an influence upon the plasticity of a clay, but also upon its relation to fire; the nearer a clay is in composition to a pure silicate of alumina, and the more silica it contains, the more infusible it is, but an admixture of iron or lime will give it the character possessed by a mixture for mak ing bottle-glass, for when subjected to a heat depending upon the amount of these foreign substances it will melt. The finer clays, or such as are infusible and white, are very rare, while those which contain lime, such as ordinary clay marls, and those rich in iron, such as brick clays, are common. A clay may contain so very little foreign substances as to be infusible, and yet have sufficient iron to give it a color; for we may remark here that the color which a clay assumes on being burned depends upon the iron which it contains. The fine white clays (kaolin) are used in the manufacture of porcelain and are found usually in granutic countries; the inferior white clays (p:pe-clay) are usually found in coal districts and are used in the manufacture of earthenware and pipes; at present we shall confine ourselves to the colored clays. These we conveniently divide into the infusible or fire-clays, which burn either of a buff or of a dark color, and the fusible or ordinary brick clays, which burn of various colors, especially of a pale yellow and bright red. The fire-clays are chiefly obtained from beds associated with coal, very frequently forming the underlying stratum, and hence called coal-seat, though they are also found under many other circumstances, and even on the surface. They are generally of a bluish black color and of a hard slaty texture, a good example of which is afforded by the well-known Stourbridge clay. The fus-ible clays are derived from various sources, but are very often superficial deposits, constituting the subsoils of large tracts of country. They usually contain a certain amount of carbonate of lime, and in some cases so much as to be true marls. They also frequently contain sand and pebbles; when, however, the proportion of sand amounts to one-fourth of the entire mass, it is not considered as clay in the strict sense of the word, although that substance may be separated from it by washing. Indeed there are few loose superficial deposits, such as soils and sub-soils, that could not be thus made to yield clay. The economical use of the fire-clays are chiefly for the manufacture of brick designed to withstand great heat, the construction of furnaces of various kinds, pots for fusing glass, re-torts, &c. The fusible or common clays constitute the materials from which our usual building bricks, roofing and flooring tiles, araining pipes, garden pots, common

pottery are made. Both kinds are employed in the production of figures and ornaments in what is called terra-cotta.

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