

MAKING GLASS EYES.

THE MANUFACTURE IS A CURIOUS AND PROFITABLE BUSINESS.

Thousands Turned out Every Year—Ready Made Ones are Cheap but the Made to Order Sort Come High—These Eyes do not Often Last Long.

There are many curious industries in this big city, says the New York Herald, and one that ranks pre-eminent in the peculiar line is a glass eye factory. It may seem strange that there should be a sufficient demand for glass eyes to support such a factory, especially as it employs a number of skilled workmen all the year round.

The prime reason for its existence is that the glass eye does not last more than a year and very often not more than six months. Of course, this necessitates the purchase of new eyes every little while by afflicted people, and the number of people who use these eyes is surprisingly large, judged by the yearly production of the factory.

Five hundred eyes are turned out weekly or about twenty six thousand in a year. Not all of these are sold, but this percentage is very small. The unsold ones are stock eyes—that is, they are used in the sale department of the factory, or are sent to dealers throughout the country as samples.

The prices of glass eyes vary considerably. An ordinary ready made eye costs \$5, while a made to order eye with the pupil and cornea carefully colored, costs anywhere from \$10 to \$30, and occasionally as much as \$50, but this latter price is a rare one.

Gray eyes are the most common; then come blue, and then brown. Black eyes are a myth, and the factory has never had a call to make one. Ophthalmic hospitals are the largest consumers of the false eye. These buy in quantities, and naturally get the product at reduced rates.

They buy the ordinary ready made eye, as they are used, for the most part, on poor people who are financially unable to be fastidious in the manner of exact color.

The most startling feature of the factory is the cabinet in which the stock eyes are kept. They are placed in large trays, sectioned off into tiny squares, each square containing an eye. Blue eyes of many shapes and shades are in one tray; brown eyes of all kinds in another, and gray eyes of many varieties in a third.

When a purchaser comes in he or she is fitted with an eye from one of these trays, and if the buyer is content with the ready made article a duplicate is furnished from the stock. If the made to order article is wanted, the sample is sent up to the work rooms with instructions covering the minor changes or improvements that can be made.

All of the regular customers have sample eyes in the factory. This enables them to send from a distance for a duplicate, and a new eye, perfectly fitting and of the correct color is shipped to them. The reason that the eye wears out is that the action of the tear—which is acid—affects the enamel, roughing the edges and surface and causing irritation of the eyelids.

There has never been a time in the history of the world that artificial eyes did not exist. The ancient Egyptians, four and five thousand years ago wore false eyes of gold and silver, and later of copper and ivory. It is on record that two patriotic Lutetians, when their country was in financial distress, generously presented their golden eyes to the public treasury.

During the Middle Ages porcelain superseded metal in the making of artificial eyes, and a century ago the glass eye arrived. Now enamel is considered to be the best material for the work, and it is used to the exclusion of all others.

The process of making the eye is easily described, but the work calls for much delicate and pain-staking labor on the part of the seven or eight skilled workmen. Formerly one man made artificial eye from the crude to the finished state, but now the work is divided into a number of specialties each man performing only a fraction of the whole task.

In its initial stage the eye is a long, slender stick of enamel, made of perfectly transparent and fusible flint glass. This is placed in a crucible and exposed to great heat. The globe-maker places the enamel over a blow-pipe supplied with wind which is pumped by engine power into a large cylinder and stored under water pressure. Under the careful manipulation of the workman the enamel tube is formed into an oblong globe, just the size and shape of a human eye.

Next it passes into the coloring room. A piece of colored enamel is placed on the summit of the globe, and this is gently heated in a small flame and continuously rotated. Gradually this takes the form of the iris, and then a spot of darker enamel is added to represent the pupil. Then this

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is covered by a thick layer of crystal to form the cornea.

At this stage the eye is detached from the blow-pipe and cooled and then sent to the cutting room, from which it emerges shaped into a small hollow oval with irregular edges. The cutting is a difficult process, as a hair's breadth deviation in size will make a material difference in the fitting.

The edges are fired and the eye allowed to cool slowly, this being the annealing or tempering process, which toughens the enamel and renders it less liable to break. The final work is the polishing, and then it is ready for the owner.

The coloring work is the most delicate of all, as sometimes eight and nine colors are worked in to give the correct shade. Brown eyes of the hazel variety require a very delicate streaking of yellow and gray, and some kinds of blue eyes are equally difficult to fashion. There is also a great variety in the sclerotic or white. In children's eyes it is a pale china blue, in old people a gray, while with men who are heavy-drinkers or smokers it has a yellowish tinge.

Of course the great art lies in making the artificial eye an exact duplicate in expression, size and color of the living eye, and so cleverly is the work now done that few people can detect the genuine from the false.

HOW PRISONERS COMMUNICATE.

Ingenuous Methods Employed by Them to Talk to Each Other.

The prisoners makes every conceivable effort to hold intercourse of some kind with their fellow culprits, if only to relieve the silence and solitude—intolerable to persons of their class, who have not sufficient cultivation of mind to supply them with food for thought. Knocking on the walls of separation between the cells, scratching sentences on the sides of the baths or the bottoms of the tins used to contain their gruel, and many other devices of that inadequate nature, are instantly detected and stopped by the officials. The chapel is perhaps the most favorable ground for enabling them to let their presence at least be known to acquaintances who have been incarcerated at an earlier or later period from themselves.

The male and female prisoners are, of course rigidly separated during the services. A high and strong wooden partition divides the portion of the building they respectively occupy, but they do not allow this serious obstacle to deter them altogether from the communications they especially desire to hold with the opposite sex.

In singing the hymns they often try to introduce words of their own, or make very peculiar responses, which can be understood over the wall. A male prisoner will be afflicted with an extremely bad cough, which in measured attacks, makes known to a lady friend on the other side that he is 'in quod,' but he is seldom oppressed by this bronchial malady on more than one occasion, since the governor informs him that as his cough is so distressing, he is to remain in his cell, and not be exposed to the air of the chapel until he is better—a cure for his complaint, which is at once perfectly complete. On the female side of the partition a woman permitted to take her infant, born in prison, to chapel with her, pinches the unfortunate mite until its shrill yells reveal her proximity to its father, attentively listening through the wall.

Recently the governor of one of our county prisons was greatly perplexed by the discovery that the female prisoners in his charge managed in some mysterious manner to ascertain the presence of every individual man on the other side of the impervious dividing barrier. One of the women inadvertently let drop the fact that she had recognized her husband, whose position there must, according to rule, have been completely unknown to her. None of the officers could account for an unpermitted knowledge which was found to be shared by all the other women. At last a very careful examination of the chapel gave an explanation

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of the mystery. Although strictly divided, as we have said, both the male and the female prisoners faced the altar in their seats, and over it had been fixed a very large brass cross against the wall, so highly polished as to form a very good mirror. In its clear surface the women saw the reflection of every man as he passed to his place and had enjoyed the spectacle with impunity till a wile, much interested in the appearance of her spouse, had made an imprudent remark to one of the officers, which revealed the fact. The brass cross instantaneously disappeared, and the bland wall behind it no longer tells any secrets.—London Hospital.

WHAT PRESIDENT LINCOLN HAD LEARNED.

He Found out How to Spell Maintenance Correctly.

Mr. Albert Blair, writing in the St. Louis Globe-Democrat about President Lincoln, remarks especially upon his inaffectedness, and in so doing relates a story which may prove an encouragement to readers who have sometimes found themselves ignorant where they had supposed themselves well informed.

In February, 1865, Mr. Blair was present at a White House reception; a general reception, open to everybody. Mr. Lincoln was attended by Judge David Davis, who took the names of all comers and introduced them to the President.

Of course there was a crowd, and nobody had time for more than a word and a handshake. Mr. Blair was presented to the President, and then stepped aside to watch the show. Mr. Lincoln and Judge Davis carried on a conversation, constantly interrupted though it was.

'Now,' says Mr. Blair, 'it was 'How do you do, colonel?' or 'My brave boy (this to a young soldier)!' or 'I am glad to see you,' or some other phrase of cordial recognition.'

There was no official starch, but what especially impressed Mr. Blair was a remark made by Mr. Lincoln in a perfectly matter-of-fact, unaffected tone, loud enough to be heard by many of the bystanders.

'Judge,' said he, 'I never knew until the other day how to spell the word "maintenance." Here a hand interrupted him. I always thought it was m-a-i-n, main, t-a-i-n, tain, a-n-c-e, ance, maintenance; but I find it is m-a-i-n, main, t-e, te, n-a-n-c-e, nance, maintenance.'

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