

viously been imported into those countries from the manufactories of Birmingham, England. The fact does not speak well for our vaunted acuteness. Even the hammered bronzes of China and Japan are often but clumsy specimens of English stamped work. Birmingham manufacturers do not object to helping one-half the world to deceive the other half, provided the material part of the work is done in their shops.

"As for Sheffield manufacturers, they show a boldness in the manufacturing of sham art work which exceeds all their proverbial impudence in turning out sheet-iron razors. Some of our young "bloods" acquire in Paris a taste for old arms. A few years ago they ransacked New York for them, and many an old Dutch carving knife under a fancy name found its way to the glittering circles of cutlery over their mantelpieces. The Sheffield manufacturers noted the demand, and we were soon flooded with an unseemly lot of polished iron. I was obliged to keep some of it. We had terrible looking corkscrew swords, Turkish scimitars weighing twelve pounds, flashing cutlasses, Spanish daggers, Italian stiletos, French foils, and Damascus and Toledo blades in abundance. They were mere toys, harmless things that would hardly penetrate cloth, but they sold at high prices. Let me show you a true blade. Here is a fine Toledo dagger, exquisitely engraved and Damascened. It is small and light, running down to a long, fine point; yet when I place this English penny piece on the table so—I can drive that point down through it, and—see—the point remains ununjured. A blow like that would bend up those Damascus daggers from Sheffield like so many fish hooks. This fashion has now given place to a passion for collecting bad firearms—guns which never seem to hit anyone except when they go off by accident. Some of the old Sheffield 'arms' may still be seen in the Bowery accumulations of pawn shop bric-a-brac.

"Ivory goods?" The old dealer's eyes twinkled. "I just happened to think," said he, "of an order I had three years ago for half a dozen ivory diptychs and an assortment of Etruscan carvings. That was about the most preposterous order I ever received. I was irritated at first, but grew amazingly cheerful as I thought of my customer's greenness. Some men imagine that money will buy anything, old or new, in existence or out of it. It

is true that some fine specimens of ivory taken from Etruscan tombs are still preserved. The British Museum has a dozen of them, and some are extant which were known to be in existence at the time of Moses. But as to buying them as you would a bootjack—

"A diptych, you know, consists of two carved ivory covers, each from eight to fourteen inches long and proportionally wide. The Greeks used them for writing tablets, and the Romans gave them to Consuls for presents; that is how the fashion arose of giving portfolios to Cabinet Ministers. They were rare even in their day, and as the iconoclasts destroyed all the ivory carvings they could lay their hands on, you may imagine how scarce they are at the present time. Even European Museums count themselves fortunate when they possess half a one; so the six diptychs ordered by my customer would have made a bad hole in his fortune.

"I think it was in the spring of '76 that a greatly dilapidated fellow called on me and pointed to my private office. He locked the door and took from under his coat a fourteen inch diptych which he offered to sell for \$1,500. Had he offered me the Vatican or St. Peter's for a like sum I shouldn't have been more surprised. I knew there was something wrong, but could not say where. The marks of age, etc., were perfect, and the work stood the magnifying glass wonderfully well. When at last I determined to take off the frame and backing, the man went down on his knees and begged me not to expose him; he had stolen it from a Pavian monastery, he said. It proved to be carved on new ivory, ingeniously pieced out and fairly well cut; it had been manufactured in a garret in Pisa by a man who makes a business of it. I let the fellow go; he did not lie any worse than dealers are often obliged to do, and was only like us, selling goods for something else than what they are. The rascal also had two replicas in his pocket; the three articles worth only about \$50. Five years afterward I saw one of them in a well-known private library in Thirty-fourth street, but made no sign.

"There are many methods of making imitation ivory carvings. Sometimes the material is sawed into thin sheets, steamed in softening vapors, and pressed into moulds. It is then stained for age, cut, filed or otherwise tortured into shape,

and, after being filled in with cement, is backed with an ivory veneer and offered for sale. Relief figures are made from a composition of ground bone and gum, and then cast and polished. But lack of luster and grain betrays them to careful observers. If you buy 'Japanese cabinet work, ornamented with raised ivory carvings, handle it carefully, for a sharp rap will often powder the bogus ivory. Look out too, for imitation mother-of-pearl. It is a comparatively new sham in ornamental art, and liable to damaging accidents upon very small provocation.'—*Jewelers' Circular.*

PECULIARITIES OF BUYERS.

Buyers all have their peculiarities, and when they come to New York, it is the business of the jobbers to "size them up," and humor their peculiarities while selling the largest amount of goods possible. There is the vacillating buyer who wants to replenish the stock of his little store out in Squedunck, but don't quite know what he ought to buy. His market is a slow one, and he is in doubt as to what will best call forth the shekels from the pockets of his close-fisted customers. Last year he had quite a run on big silver watches and wedding rings, but is fearful that the "boys" have got all the watches and all the wives they want, so that he can't count on them for this year's trade. The lumber business wasn't very profitable last winter, and the young men, he is afraid, won't feel like buying bracelets and pins for their sweethearts; the old folk will want a few spectacles, but they run mostly to steel bows, and eye glasses are not fashionable in his locality. What to buy is with him a weighty problem, that can only be solved by visiting all the manufacturers, overhauling all their goods and still being doubtful as to the few he finally selects. Such a buyer does not appreciate novelties, wants standard goods, and so the jobbers exert themselves to work off old stock on him. All the way home he is in doubt whether he can find a customer for that 1½ dozen of fancy bracelets he bought and that cost him \$60 a dozen. While in the city he was fearful of being imposed upon; he had read of the tricks of New York sharpers, and looked upon every person he met as a "bunco steerer" or a "capper" for a gambling house. He would deal only with the old established firms lest the younger houses should impose upon him.