

THE POTTERY AND CHINAWARE TRADES

By JOHN R. BOOTH, London.

(Author of "Stone: Links With the Past.")

How many people in Canada to-day are able to tell definitely the original source from which they receive the ordinary breakfast cup and saucer, or the inevitable tea pot or dinner service that they purchase at the local stores? They have only to look at the stamped words of the manufacturers on these articles, and if such towns as Stoke, Hanley, Burslem, Longton, or even London, appear on them it may safely be concluded that they have emanated from one of the best producing centres in the whole of the world. And, again few Canadians are not aware that in the mineral resources of the great Dominion there is actually the raw material for turning out china and earthenware, just the same as there is in Stoke and those other pottery centres adjoining it. China clay is produced in Canada, and it only wants the art of the potter to lick it into shape for the local household. Surely if the potter is not to be found in the Dominion, the speculator or the man with a lynx eye for a rising industry can adopt the principle that the textile manufacturer has adopted, and that is, import the labor from England, where the finest potters of the day are to be found ready to give a helping hand. Canada's population is growing day by day, and this year it is estimated 500,000 persons from every part of the world were received within her domain. Naturally, these people and the existing population have to be catered for in pottery and chinaware, and if Canadians are letting the "grass grow under their feet" and encourage other countries to increase their exports through the Dominion's laxity, it may safely be assumed that in years to come Canada will be the dumping ground for all potters from all nations. At the present moment Canada is trading in pottery and chinaware to a considerable extent with British manufacturers. From English ports there were exported in 1908 376,778 cwts. and in 1912 616,849 cwts. Whilst this year the figures go up to just 700,000 cwts. In addition, there are large exports of unmanufactured clay sent to Canada, last year there being no less than 19,624 tons. But it is gratifying to know that Canada is dealing in the best market for earthenware and china, though the prices may not be as low as the German or French products. The American patronise Germany, but British manufacturers have not catered for the American market for the reason that "Uncle Sam" will not pay the figure for the good article; he wants a cheap article and at a cheap price. Therefore, Leipzig is his happy hunting ground once a year.

Now all things are not impossible, and with a little research work, and with the aid of British help and labor—and, of course, the Dominion's Government—Canada should in another decade be in a position to have her own pot banks and her own potteries. In the pottery towns of England, that is the six centres in Staffordshire, the clay locally is generally of a coarse kind and used only for common ware and "seggars." The potters have, therefore, to import all their finer clays from a distance (just the same as Canadians would have to do), e.g., blue clay from Poole, and Cornish stone, or china

clay, from Cornwall in the South of England, some hundreds of miles away. Flint and bones are also very largely used. The earliest form of material used was moistened clay, which was dried in the sun or by the fire, and with the advance of the Romans in England came the advance of the potter's occupation. Josiah Wedgwood—the ware bearing the name is one of the best to-day in the market—was one of Great Britain's best potters, and one of the greatest men in any age or country in his line. Wedgwood was born in 1730, and between 1755 and 1758 he discovered kaolin, or Cornish clay, in Cornwall, which he developed, and with which he succeeded in producing a cream colored pottery, which was to be found on the continent in every hotel or public place from Madrid to St. Petersburg soon after the discovery. Wedgwood did not complete his plans alone, but had the assistance of leading artists, and others engaged in the craft were Adams, Turner, Meyer, etc. Since 1758 the British pottery industry has leaped into fame. No ancient pottery has ever attained to the fame and importance of those made in Staffordshire, in England. Everything which is useful or ornamental for every request for the prince and the peasant, may here be found and obtained, from the simple milk bowl to the elegant flower pot or artistic vase, from the plain white and gold tea cup, to the transparent and gilt tea and breakfast service, from the common white plate to the superb tureen or elegant dessert dish. Not only throughout Europe, but wherever civilization makes its way, the plates, dishes, cups, and jugs of the Staffordshire Potteries are to be found. And still similar raw materials abound in Canada, if Canadians will only put their shoulder to the wheel and study the propositions, and the pros and cons of any little difficulties likely to arise.

A short time ago I was talking to a well known potter, and he told me that Canada was the best market for British pottery outside the British Islands, and he hoped that in the coming developments in the Dominion Staffordshire potters would continue to hold the foremost place. That shows there is a great demand in Canada, and that is what Canadians must have impressed into their minds. Not alone that, but the Americans will provide a good market. According to "The Times" (London), arrangements are on foot for a visit of Canadian business men to Great Britain early next year. My advice to them is: "Don't return home until you have visited the Staffordshire Potteries." They are not much to look at, but the work and the skill are there—and they will be an eye opener.

There are such firms as W. T. Copeland & Sons. Previous to 1833 the works of this firm belonged to Spode, and before him to Turner. In addition to china and earthenware of unsurpassed excellence, the firm is famous for Parian statuary. Minton, Hollins & Co.'s works are noted for encaustic tiles made by the process of subjecting dry powdered clay to great pressure in iron moulds. This clay is found locally. Then there is George Jones & Son, who produce a large and striking variety of articles in ma-

jolica, besides the imitation Palissy & Leadbeater marble whilst other firms wire insulators, and at least, there is the china of Mr. W. J. which is to be found in ceramic art ware pottery towns and towards the end of showrooms, show- ters and glass ma- tation from Cana- the other towns, Beale—

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