

Trying to Beat Nature.

Artificial Flowers Made in the Twinkle of an Eye—How the Girls are Paid.

'No, sir, that is only imitation,' said a New York Mail and Express reporter who had raised a Jacquemont rose to his nose.

'Several persons have thought it was real,' he continued; 'well, it is one of the best specimens I have ever seen.'

'It must be a delicate business manufacturing these flowers?'

'Very, and a business that has improved considerably during the last few years. Nearly all the flowers used here are manufactured in this country.'

'Can you explain how you transform ordinary muslin into such delicate looking flowers?'

'Certainly. Step into the factory. I will show you every part of the performance. Step this way,' and the reporter was shown into a long room which presented a busy appearance.

Seated at a long table that extended down the centre of the room, were fifteen or twenty girls all busy clipping and cutting muslin, and fastening it with wires in various ways, presenting as it were by sleight of hand, some lovely rose or delicate lily.

It used to be the custom to manufacture the floral designs from a material called chiffon, but that is too expensive an article to compete in the present market, so ordinary Victoria lawn is substituted.

This is first of all soaked in water to shrink it and then stretched on a frame to dry. When dry it is folded so as to make about sixteen thicknesses and it is ready to cut for any flower we want.

'Now suppose we make the most popular decoration of the present day, the snowball,' said the manufacturer, and he took a scollop, circle-shaped steel die and cut out of the muslin sixteen pieces at each blow of the mallet.

The pieces were placed in alcohol and tinged in the centre to give them the natural tint of the flower. After drying them, each of the scallops is twisted and about twelve pieces strung together by passing a wire through the centre.

A little paste is added and in less time than it takes to relate, the snow ball is ready to adorn some lady's bonnet.

'What are the most difficult flowers to manufacture?'

'Well, the rose, I suppose, or the mignonette. All those that have fine petals cause more or less trouble. The manufacture of leaves is a little different. They are cut in a similar way out of green muslin and then put in a press to stamp on the veins.

The color is put on with a stencil and dyes, and each leaf is dipped into wax and dried. Every leaf and petal is handled separately, so that will give you an idea of the work accomplished.

Fashions are constantly changing and prices vary from twenty cents to \$2.50 a flower.'

'Are not the dyes used very injurious?'

'Not at all. Paris green was used in the old times, but now it is dispensed with and ordinary aniline dyes substituted. Wages? Some people have an idea that girls barely earn a living. We pay three cents a gross for stamping separately. That appears very little when you know every leaf is stamped separately, but an accomplished hand will stamp fifteen or twenty gross in an hour, and working nine hours a day will give about \$4. No bad pay, eh?'

Sauer-Kraut.

This is the way in which sauerkraut is made in Strasburg, Germany. They slice very white and firm cabbages in fine shreds with a machine made for that purpose.

At the bottom of a small barrel they place a layer of coarse salt, and alternately layers of cabbage and salt, being careful to have one of salt on the top. As each layer of cabbage is added, it must be pressed down by a large and heavy pestle, and fresh layers are added as soon as the juice floats on the surface.

THE COLONEL AND THE CAT.

Col. Tom Clark, of Brooklyn, once owned a cat on which he showered all the affection of his bachelor heart. And the shower took the place of a pound of mince meat every day.

One morning the Colonel noticed that his feline namesake had waded away to a were skeleton, and immediately he summoned his boy Bill to appear before the bar.

'Didn't I tell you to give that cat a pound of meat every day?' asked the Colonel. 'Yes, sir, and that's what I give him every morning before you're out of bed,' answered Bill. 'I don't believe a word of it. My opinion is that you either pocket the money or eat the meat yourself. Bring me the scales and the cat.'

The scales and cat were brought; the latter was placed on the former and Tom and the maker stopped at the one-pound mark. 'There,' exclaimed the boy in triumph. 'Didn't I tell you I gave him a pound of meat this morning?' 'There's the pound of meat sure enough,' said the Colonel, stroking his chin. 'But where the devil's the cat?'

'But where the devil's the cat?'

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