



First American Belleek

the kiln. "Dominie" took entire charge of the business end of the firm and one memorable day he was able to announce that every note had been paid. A miniature kiln was built in the office; the cancelled notes were placed in it and burned while Lenox stood by, tears streaming from his blinded eyes. Lenox addressed "his boys," as he called the workmen, and urged them never to abandon the ideal of creating beautiful china. Quality first -- the money would come after.

The blind potter died in 1920 but his dream lives on in the modern plant built on the site of the first small factory, and in the finely textured product which his devotion and determination developed. Today the Lenox Pottery occupies more than seven acres of ground. The plant, constructed largely of glass to afford the maximum of light, has the best equipment for china making. The air is freed of dust by the latest ventilating devices. Yet here and there throughout the factory there are still reminders of the ancient potter's primitive methods.

Visitors from all over the world come to watch the evolution of dull clay and minerals into exquisite fragile china. It is a process requiring extreme precision and refinement.

The raw materials, clay, feldspar and flint, are selected by specialists. They are weighed and tested at every stage from mine to mixing room so that there will be no variance in the proportions. Even the water with which they are mixed is filtered and measured to the last ounce.

Several different kinds of clay are used in Lenox pottery. Feldspar is a crystal-like rock formation which when crushed beneath an ancient millstone becomes a glistening white powder. New England feldspar is used exclusively in Lenox pottery. When the clay and rock powder have been properly mixed, they are placed in a huge revolving cylinder containing water and flint pebbles. This process is called pebble grinding.

Lenox was about to achieve his dream, he was stricken with paralysis and blindness. Burdened as he was with debt and physical handicaps, it looked as if his factory would have to be converted into a tenement. But the artist was not ready to surrender. He knew that his china was lovely and that in time the public would learn to appreciate and buy it. Harry A. Brown, the secretary of the company, shared this faith. He became the eyes and legs of the stricken man. Together they worked to solve the monetary difficulties of the little industry.

The potter called his devoted friend "Dominie," some one to lean upon, some one to trust. Every day Lenox was taken to the pottery and though he could not see, his sensitive fingers could trace the graceful forms and feel the glaze and texture of the china as it came from