

STORIES of New Jersey

The china next passes into the hands of the glaze dipper, who with remarkable dexterity immerses each piece in a glazing solution. It is then fired a second time, to fuse the glaze. If the glaze has been applied unevenly the whole piece will crack under the heat, which is 2,100 degrees for this operation.

The piece is now ready for decorating with gold and colors. This work calls for unusual talent, and is one of the reasons for the high cost of production at the Lenox plant. Of the 325 employees, 39 are skilled craftsmen, with salaries as high as \$90 a week.

Thousands of dollars worth of 24-carat gold is used annually for embellishing the ware. No adulterated, so-called commercial gold is tolerated. In order to conserve every ounce of gold, all wiping cloths and utensils are burned to recover any clinging particles.

Color work is done in several ways. On some pieces the artist does the painting free hand and on others he follows an outline design. Sometimes an elaborate design involving 14 or 15 colors is transferred and then supplemented by hand work.

At each stage of ornamentation the piece must be fired in the decorating kiln. Color-firing and gold-firing require different degrees of heat, so that one piece may have to go into the decorating kiln several times before it is ready for final inspection. At every point experts pass upon each piece and sooner or later the tiniest flaw is discovered. When a piece falls below standard it is immediately destroyed.

The insistence of Walter Lenox upon attaining nothing less than perfection and the devotion of his helpers have been amply justified. Today the lustrous Lenox china is in demand all over the world. There are 1,700 pieces in the White House dinner service, and sets have been ordered for the official banquet services of several other countries.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

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