

# The Art of the Potter—

WHILE New Zealand is steadily developing her young but healthy pottery industry, English manufacturers are preparing to recapture the world-wide trade they have lost during the past five years. That they will succeed seems probable, for English pottery is famous throughout the world. It is an industry that has combined the individuality and artistry of the craftsman with a judicious use of mass-production methods. British pottery is a home-grown industry, combining tradition and progress with marked success.

Although the manufacture of pottery in England is centuries old, it was not until the end of the eighteenth century that a wide-scale industry was founded. This development was due to men like the first Josiah Wedgwood who did so much towards establishing England's reputation in the pottery world. It was also influenced by the fact that tea was becoming an increasingly popular drink about this time, and was responsible for a great demand for fine tableware. Such potters as Wedgwood and Spode reaped the benefit of their years of patient work, and the whole industry entered an era of prosperity.

Pottery is an ancient industry. Its products are still made from clay and hardened by fire as they have been since the earliest days of civilization, but new methods of firing have at various times been introduced. In England, the white earthenware clay body is a mixture of ingredients drawn from various parts of the country—ball clay, china clay and Cornish stone from Cornwall, Devon,



and Dorset, and flint from France or the south coast of England. The translucency of china ware is produced by the substitution of calcined bone for the flint and ball clay used in making earthenware. The glaze on pottery is produced from such a mixture of materials as china clay, Cornish stone, flint, felspar, borax, lead silicate, and various metallic oxides. From these rough materials come, with the aid of fire and the potters' traditional skill, a delicately-glazed and decorated teacup and saucer or fragile ornament.

An idea of the potters' craft may be obtained from following the processes carried out in the making of a cup. First of all, the clay body is prepared by grinding and working until it is of a thin cream texture. Then it is sieved, passed over a battery of magnets to remove any minute particles of iron which may be in the mixture and which could cause a speck or defect, and then transferred to a press which squeezes out the water. The clay is then "pugged" and cut up into cylindrical sections ready for working.

Today, the potters' wheel is not often used, and its place has been taken by what is known as a "jolley", in the case of such articles as cups and bowls, and as a "jigger" in that of plates and saucers. The "jolley" has a power-driven, revolving disc with a head like a metal plant-pot, which holds a plaster mould. A ball of clay is placed