

MAKING MAJOLICA WARE.

WHAT THE ARSENAL POTTERY DOES.

Starting With One Kiln the Mayer Brothers
Work Up a Business Ending in the
Highest Kiln Ever Erected in
the United States.

One of the few, and probably the most successful, manufacturers of Majolica ware in this country to-day is Joseph Mayer, proprietor of the Arsenal Pottery, formerly Mayer Bros., located at the southwest corner of Third and Temple streets. This pottery was established in 1876 by the present proprietor, who came from England, where his ancestors for several generations followed potting, and where, along with every member of his own immediate family, he began life in a pottery when a mere lad, and for upwards of thirty years has been engaged in potting continuously. At the out-start the Arsenal Pottery was fitted up with one kiln, and the product was confined to Rockingham and yellow ware, which is still manufactured in large quantities, and commands a ready sale. Later on the present proprietor disposed of a half interest in the business to his brother, the late James Mayer, who was not only a practical potter of long experience, but a thorough chemist as well, and among other endorsements of his skill in the potting line, was able to show the much-coveted first prize medal awarded yearly by the famous South Kensington-London Art Exhibition. Mayer Bros. at once increased the productive capacity of the Arsenal Pottery by the erection of an additional kiln and other improvements, notably the erection of several improved mills for preparing colors, and began the manufacture of Majolica ware, a class of earthenware they have probably carried to a higher state of perfection, especially in the durability of their colors, than any other potters in the country. The success of the firm in this important feature is due to the superior scientific attainments of the late James Mayer, who was unrivalled in the chemical knowledge of colors and how to make them, and the great care exercised in their manufacture.

ERECTING IMPROVED MILLS.

To do this properly and successfully the proprietors of the Arsenal Pottery erected a series of improved mills to manufacture colors by what is known as the "fretted" process, and it is claimed these mills, now numbering thirteen in all, are not excelled in any pottery in America. The productive capacity of the Arsenal Pottery has been increased from time to time and now numbers three kilns, one of which is a large double or two-story kiln of the French pattern, and has a productive capacity equal to two ordinary kilns. This kiln measures twenty-four feet and six inches in height from base to shoulder, which it is claimed is the highest kiln ever erected in the United States. The premises are 100x150 feet in dimensions, and the buildings comprising the plant cover about three-fourths of this area, and are two and three stories in height. Employment is furnished to about eighty people, including some thirty odd decorators employed in applying colors on Majolica ware. This work is carefully done by hand, with the aid of brushes, and requires considerable skill. The product of the industry comprises a general line of a superior grade of Majolica and a line of Rockingham and yellow ware, such as tea and coffee pots, jars, spittoons, dishes, bowls, pans and all manner of odd pieces of new and handsome designs. Arrangements are now being perfected to engage in the manufacture of the famous Belleek ware. At present the pay-roll of this pottery foots up about \$500 per week, and the product, which represents an output of over \$7,000 a month, is chiefly sold in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago and in several Southern cities. The late James Mayer, who was an indefatigable worker, mentally and physically, and who in a great measure developed the Arsenal Pottery into its present enlarged and improved shape, died about three months ago after a short illness, believed to have been brought on by too constant study. Joseph Mayer, who founded the pottery, continues to give the most unremitting personal attention to every detail of manufacture and its business management.