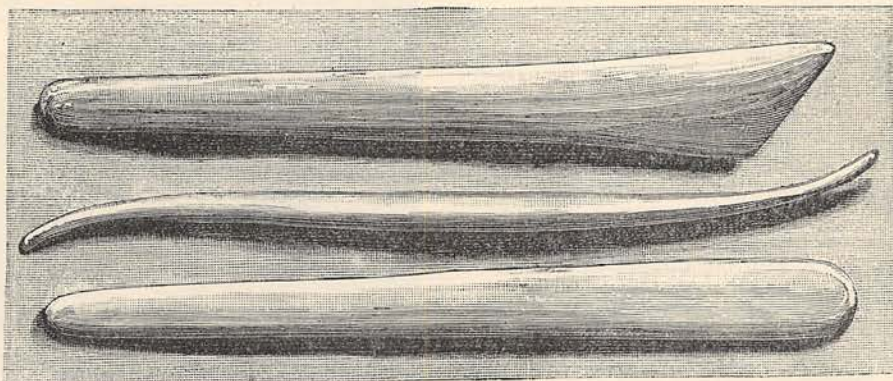


Paris. This is rather an expensive process, and therefore many artists learn to cast their own.

When once cast, a good price may be obtained for even small models—half a guinea for a little

The work can easily be done at home, provided there is a room which can be used as a studio; and the outlay is very small, the tools being so few in number. A three-legged stool for modelling figures, or an easel



THE NECESSARY TOOLS FOR MODELLING.

bird, and of course a great deal more for busts, figures, and animals, which always command a good sale.

Modelling in clay is decidedly a profitable branch of women's work; and as so few excel in modelling, compared with the large number of those who paint on china, crystoleum, &c., it is a field in which there is at present no excessive competition.

for flowers and fruit, is necessary. In the former case the artist stands, in the latter a high stool can be used. The clay is not expensive, but it should be bought properly prepared, and must be kept damp, in a cool place, and in a box free from air.

Terra-cotta only requires to be burnt, it is modelled in the same way as the clay, and well repays the trouble bestowed upon it.

---

### BY-PATHS OF COMMERCE: RAGS, AND THE TRADE IN THEM.



IF all the by-paths of commerce perhaps none presents so many aspects as the rag trade. Ranging from the itinerant collector who scours the towns and villages in search of rags, bones, and bottles, to the mysterious "merchant" who is prepared to execute an order for a hundred tons or so at a few hours' notice, dealers in rags represent every shade of fortune. Scarcely less varied, too, are the commodities themselves. Thus, while some are only fit for the dunghill, and, as a matter of fact, are sold for manure, others still have so much of their primitive value that they are dedicated to the manufacture of shoddy, and are again made up into cloth. Linen rags, too, are of every quality, and serve as raw material for all the varieties of paper from the finest note to the commonest brown.

The rag trade is now one of huge dimensions. Not only our own, but almost every country is ransacked to keep up the supply. From China and Japan, Australia and all the colonies, from the shores of the Mediterranean, and from all the countries of the Continent do huge consignments daily come to the

London Rag Market, the chief centre of the trade for the rest of the civilised world.

In view of such considerations as these it is not surprising that rags should be a staple of commerce. Nor is the cause far to seek. In spite of the fact that paper may be made of an infinite variety of materials, it may be taken as practically true that it cannot be made without rags. It seems, indeed, to be doubtful whether in this manufacture rags will ever be wholly superseded; and it is to be expected that, in all countries in which paper is in demand, rags will long be at a premium.

It is, indeed, only to be wondered at that the supply should never fail. In England alone, for instance, not all the rags that can be collected from every source would keep the multitudinous paper-mills occupied for long together, and we are, to a large extent, dependent upon those that are imported. Still, a vast number of people are wholly occupied in the various branches of this industry, for such it must be called. Who is not familiar with the peripatetic collector? He takes various forms, but never loses his unmistakable identity. In the metropolis he usually travels with a pony and cart, and makes rather a parade of his

calling. The crates for bottles, the baskets for bones, the barrel for household waste, and the bags for rags, are all ostentatiously displayed. In the country, again, he often comes in the guise of a pedlar. In more ways than one the character is favourable to the exercise of his avocations. His licence acts as a passport; and should a zealous police constable become suspicious, it often serves as a guarantee of respectability. To country serving-maids the offer of a few trinkets or ribbons is almost irresistible; and here, too, it is to be feared that the supply of rags is increased by illicit means. In this connection, indeed, the trade in rags has many a lesson for many people. These domestic scavengers contrive to earn a living out of other people's leavings, and, for all their forlorn appearance, are not so poverty-stricken as they would have us believe. Many people, indeed, would doubtless be surprised if they could see the contents of a rag-bag, and what a quantity of good and serviceable material is consigned to that receptacle.

The next stage through which rags pass is that of sorting, and this is usually done at the larger dealers', who either employ collectors or purchase from them. Sorting is not nearly so important a matter as it formerly was. Linen and cotton must, however, of course be separated from woollen fabrics. The stronger and better sorts of each of them must again be divided, for they fetch better prices, and are applicable to different uses. But the original distinction (according to whiteness) is, to a great extent, a thing of the past. By the application of bleaching to rags it is found that nearly every kind can be used for making the finest paper, and the consequences are that the value of the better and whiter kinds has greatly decreased, and much of the inferior foreign supply is equally serviceable with those collected at home. Instead of realising as much as £25 per ton, indeed, prices have fallen to a pretty uniform rate of from £17 to £19 per ton. The only advantage which the dealers in English rags still enjoy is in the matter of freight. But this is, of course, a by no means unimportant item.

Not the least noteworthy fact in regard to the home supply of rags is that it is chiefly kept up from the poorer districts. The trade, indeed, presents great dangers, and cases of infection having been transmitted by means of rags are by no means uncommon. Nor is this to be wondered at. Until the rags are disinfected—and this frequently, if not universally, does not take place until they reach the paper-mill and are subjected to the action of heat or chemicals—nothing is done to prevent their spreading contagion. It is, of course, to be expected that the collectors who regularly visit the slums, and purchase for a few pence or halfpence the left-off rags of the degraded and the dirty, should, in their own interest, exercise some discretion; but the matter is one of such moment in its bearing upon the public health, that it ought not to be left to the chapter of accidents. In the case of hospitals and workhouse infirmaries it may be reasonably concluded that every precaution is taken to disinfect clothing or bedding before it is disposed of; but there

is much reason to fear that these precautions are wholly neglected in private houses, and especially, though by no means exclusively, among the poorer classes.

Beyond the rough-and-ready sorting which we have already pointed out, rags seldom undergo any other process than that of compression into bales for the convenience of transport, before they pass into the hands of the merchants and shippers who supply the paper-mills and execute export orders. At this stage they come into the same category with imported rags, which usually arrive in this country in bales. These dealers have little or nothing to do with the rags themselves, and often merely act as factors between the consignors and the manufacturers, whether English or foreign. The rags arrive at the paper-mills, then, in the same state as they came into the hands of the large dealers. There they are first dusted—a process which is very necessary, and which, of course, gets rid of a great deal of dirt. This is accomplished by placing them in large cylindrical sieves and beating them by machinery. They are then sorted and cut into shreds by hand, and it is this class of workers that is exposed to the greatest risk of infection. Smallpox has, indeed, in several cases been officially traced to rags in paper-mills, and several instances of its occurrence are recorded. The various processes of boiling, treating with caustic lime, washing, bleaching, and final conversion into pulp, however, effectually remove any further danger of infection. Still, the danger, while it lasts, is sufficiently real to excite some apprehension.

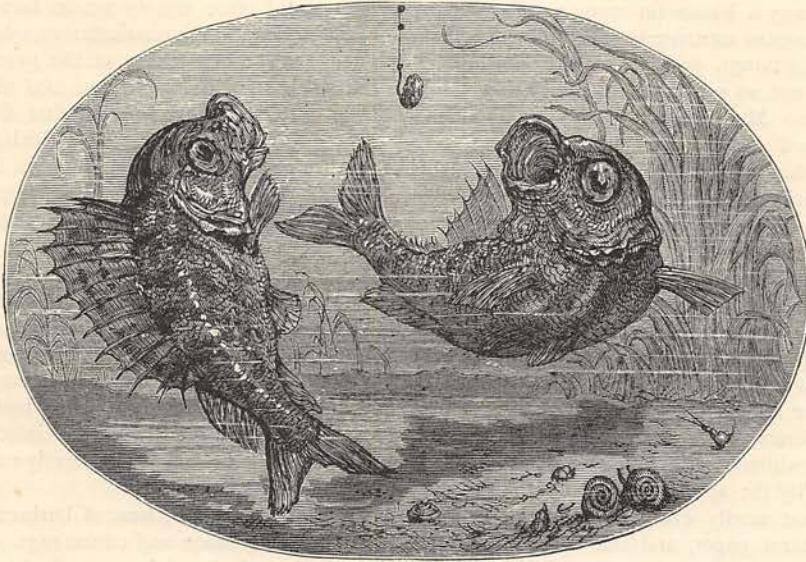
Such is the usual course of business in this country in the case of linen and cotton rags. The earnings of the great majority of those engaged in it are, of course, very small. Even the collectors can make so little out of the rags they gather that it is very doubtful whether the occupation would be legitimately remunerative, and, as a matter of fact, the chief gainers by the demand for this commodity are the railway companies and carriers.

In the case of woollen rags a larger number of hands are employed in preparing them for their final condition. A great many people are, for instance, occupied in cutting out the seams and button-holes of old cloth clothes, which has to be done before these are available for shoddy. These are called mongoe-cutters, and the prepared woollen rags are known as mongoe. This is then disposed of to the shoddy manufacturer, who prepares it by subjecting it to high temperature, and by carding and tearing it to shreds, for the use of the cloth manufacturer. With the exception of the waste cuttings of mills, and tailors' and dressmakers' shops, the greater part of the supply of woollen rags also comes from the poorest parts of the town, or from abroad. A very common and dirty kind is, indeed, imported from Germany, and sold to the Kent and Sussex hop-growers at about £3 a ton, for the purpose of manure for the hop-gardens. Rags were formerly very largely used for making up flocks for mattresses, but they have been largely superseded by cotton-waste, which is imported in immense quantities from America, and forms almost entirely the

bedding of the poorer classes. It is, however, reassuring to know that the processes through which the wool used for making these mattresses passes effectually disinfect it.

But it will be seen from the foregoing that the rag trade has many ramifications, and is of considerable importance in the world. It has reached its climax of

prosperity in New York, in which city, according to some figures recently published, there are more than 800 rag-dealers, and the pickers, who are mostly Italians, gather £150,000 worth yearly in the streets and roads, while the money realised for cotton rags alone in the United States is put at £4,400,000 per annum.



### SOME MODERN FABLES.

#### THE FISH AND HIS WIFE.

**A** FISH, who had been nibbling at a very enticing bait, had such a strong suspicion of a hidden hook, that he returned hungry to his cave. Addressing his wife, who was busy with her preparations for dinner, he remarked casually, "I saw, my dear, a very delicate morsel just above our roof. I think, if you would fetch it, it would be quite an addition to our little meal."

With that cheerful alacrity so abundantly bestowed by devoted wives on selfish husbands, by one stroke of her fins, and one whisk of her tail, she had the bait in her mouth—but also, alas! the fatal hook in her gills. Thus was her husband bereaved, and her million and a half babes left motherless.

*Moral.*—Without puzzling our readers with the yet unexplained fact, that the more selfish and exacting the husband, the more devoted and obliging we always see the wife, we will draw a lesson from this fable, viz., that when anything difficult or dangerous is to be done, it is good policy to get some one else to do it.

#### CAT AND DOG.

A cat and dog, who had been brought up together from kittenhood and puppyhood, continued fast

friends through life. Their mistress, a widow, would often sit with a pleased smile, watching their innocent gambols. Sometimes she had to interfere, when their play became too boisterous for her neat little kitchen.

On one occasion, this widow went into the village to visit an old friend, a maiden lady in easy circumstances. Dandy, the dog, followed her. She was shown into a bright pretty parlour, where she found the old lady seated at a window with her work-basket at her feet, in which lay a beautiful tortoiseshell cat. She was occupied with her crochet, and before she could disentangle her zephyrs and her thoughts to welcome the widow (for she was puzzling out a new stitch), Dandy had laid his rough paw on Miss Tortoiseshell's satin coat, and uttered the short, sharp bark which his own puss so well knew to be the invitation to a romp.

Such unparalleled impudence of course aroused Miss Tortoiseshell's just indignation. She rose with an injured air and bristling back, and before you could say "Jack Robinson," Dandy was making a hasty retreat, with scratched nose and bleeding ears.

*Moral.*—Do not carry the familiarity of home life into general society.