

and we have to use pumice stone and scrub it hard to get it off." The girls are factory girls pure and simple, and are usually, after the long hours of restraint, as wild as young colts on their coming out in the evening. I once undertook to assist some ladies with evening classes, &c., for such girls, and we certainly found them difficult to manage, but far more from wild spirits than from bad dispositions. There are a large number of artificial flower firms in London, nearly all being in the city. Most of them, however, pay by the piece. "What will next year's fashions be," is not only the wonderment of society belles, but of their poor East-end sisters, to whom it often means the difference of penury and comfort, for if the ladies in the Park wear flowers in their bonnets, the great middle class, for whom the girls' masters cater, follow suit. Unfortunately the constant underselling, which is so marked a feature nowadays, has caused the flowers to be offered in retail shops at such absurdly low prices, that the wholesale manufacturers have been obliged to reduce greatly the wages of their employées, and now it may be said truly—

"It is not poppies you're wearing out,
But human creatures' lives."

THE poppy is the most popular of all common flowers, although it is hard pressed by the daisy and rose. It may interest my readers to know how the poppy is made. First the pieces are cut out in white silk or cotton, then dipped in a scarlet dye, next pressed, and the centre touched up, and then they are left to dry. This part of the process is called cutting and shading. The workers now take the flower in hand. They begin with about twelve pieces, which they pinch together with a pair of pincers; next they take several more pieces and sew them on a green seed to represent the heart of the flower, fastening them with wire, and covering them with three pieces of green muslin for the stem or culo. A pansy is made in much the same way, only it needs more shading and care. Two pieces of velvet are stamped the required shape and then cut, next three pieces of satin are stamped and cut, both velvet and satin being white. Then the green culo is prepared as for the poppy. Next the two pieces of velvet are dyed a very deep violet colour, and the satin pale violet on the edge, yellow in the centre. When dry they are passed on to the makers, who goffer the prepared leaves, stick the two velvet ones at the back and the satin in front, add the stem, and stripe them with a small brush.

THE shaders and the makers work independently; the latter are generally employed as piece-workers,

and the former by the day. Alas! both receive but a minimum wage. The health of the shaders is most affected by the dye, as they are continually bending over it, but on the other hand they are distinctly better paid, as this is the branch of the work which needs the most skill and knowledge. Both shaders and workers need sharp and correct eyesight, neat hands, and a knowledge of botany. The workers need also to be skilful at arrangement. I need hardly say no colour blind person could possibly succeed at this work.

I QUOTE the following from the *Queen* of Oct. 11, just to show the extent of woman's work in America:—"In the schools of the United States, which are common for both sexes, the girls take over three-fourths of the annual prizes for diligence and knowledge. The women constitute about ninety per cent. of America's well-paid teachers. On account of their punctuality and trustworthiness they have ousted the men from their posts as cashiers in all the large shops. They have learned shorthand and typewriting, and are now used as clerks and correspondents in most large business establishments. They have a capital name as telephonists and telegraph clerks. They are, of course, certified Sick Nurses, receiving very good pay. They are clergymen, doctors, solicitors, members of school boards, editors, and correspondents, business managers, foremen, artisans, and detectives. They can, in fact, and do hold the same positions as men, with the exception of such as result from direct suffrage."

IN other words, they can do without the sterner sex in America, which is evidently the ideal land for women. To paraphrase the well-known nursery rhyme—

"But what will the men do then, poor things?
They will hide their heads under their wings,
Poor things!"

In reality they will stay at home and mind the baby whilst the mother goes out to work, a strange and not altogether happy anomalous domestic arrangement. Anyway the girls need not marry for a home, but only the man they can really admire and love. There must be many such men, however, for the marriages in America outnumber ours in this right little, tight little, overcrowded island.

MISS EVREINORA is the Editor of the *Northern Messenger*, a clever Russian periodical, which I have heard (I do not read Russian) is one of the best magazines in that country. Russian ladies are, according to my limited experience, always clever and interesting, and they are also always

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)