



VARIETY OF PLAQUES.—[SEE PAGE 840.]

DECORATIVE POTTERY OF CINCINNATI.

THE first occasion on which the decorated ware of Cincinnati was shown in a quantity to be specially remembered was in May, 1875, at the "International Entertainment" given by the "Women's Centennial Executive Committee of Cincinnati," in the old Elm Street Exposition Building, on the site of which the College of Music now stands. In the general aim of this committee to make a creditable addition to the work of women at the Centennial Exposition, the specialty of china-painting, then exciting some interest among the women here and in other parts of the country, was looked upon as promising a possible field of lucrative work for

women. The exhibit, prepared by a few ladies of Cincinnati for this occasion, consisted of several dozen pieces—cups and saucers, pitchers and plates. The excellence of its execution excited attention, and many of the articles, together with subsequent work, were sent to the Centennial Exposition the next year.

The newspapers of that day (May 23, 1875) gave the following as the list of ladies who prepared this first exhibit of china-painting: Mrs. S. S. Fisher, Miss Clara Fletcher, Mrs. L. B. Harrison, Mrs. William Hinkle, Mrs. E. G. Leonard, Miss M. L. McLaughlin, Miss Lincoln, Mrs. A. B. Merriam, Mrs. Richard Mitchell, Miss Clara Newton, Mrs. Maria L. Nichols, Miss Rauchfuss, and Miss Schooley.

These ladies were invited to prepare the work by the Centennial Committee, who provided the china and the firing; the decorators gave their work. The articles were sold at auction during the entertainment, bringing good prices, the highest being twenty-five dollars for a cup and saucer; thirty-five cups and saucers were sold, aggregating three hundred and eighty-five dollars.

The origin of the movement can not be more precisely told, perhaps, than by saying that in the summer of 1874 Mr. Benn Pitman, of the Cincinnati School of Design, started a class of ladies (who had had some practice in water-color painting) in china-painting. The specialty of china-painting was not included in the curriculum of the School of Design, and could not, under the rules, be taught there. Mr. Pitman procured the necessary materials, invited the ladies to meet at his office for instruction, and engaged the late Miss Eggers as teacher. The ladies forming the class were Mesdames William Dodd, George Dominick, and E. G. Leonard, and Misses Charlotte Keenan, Florence Leonard, M. Louise McLaughlin, Clara Newton, and Georgie Woollard. At that time Miss Eggers and Mr. Hartwig were the only persons to be found in the city who practiced and taught china-painting. Although some of the class generously insisted on sharing the expense of this experiment, Mr. Pitman declined their assistance, and bore it entirely himself.