



FIG. 17.—WORK OF MRS. MERRIAM.

is more than two hundred, and of this large number all but two are women.

It is curious to see the wide range of age and conditions of life embraced in the ranks of the decorators of pottery: young girls twelve to fifteen years of age find a few hours a week from their school engagements to devote to over or under glaze work, or the modelling of clay; and from this up, through all the less certain ages, till the grandmother stands confessed in cap and spectacles, no time of life is exempt from the fascinating contagion. Women who need to add to their income, and the representatives of the largest fortunes, are among the most industrious workers; and it is pleasant to know that numbers of these self-taught women receive a handsome sum annually from orders for work, from sales, and from lessons to pupils.

As a purely social and domestic entertainment, much is to be said in its favor as an educating and refining influence. Taking the broader view, we are led to the conclusion, from the signs everywhere pervading the country, that the times are ripe for the introduction of a new industry in the United States, in which the feeble instrumentality of women's hands is quietly doing the initial work.

Any appreciative or correct estimate of the work done by the women of Cincin-

nati must be based on the fact that, like amateurs elsewhere in this country, they have had no instruction in the art of decorating pottery, for the reason that there was no practical teaching to be had. With the single exception of Mr. Lycett, who taught a few months here, we have had no help from any practically and artistically educated decorator. The realm of underglaze painting was an unknown land, the use of color on the "biscuit" an experiment, and success only to be achieved after repeated failures.

An effort was made in the fall of 1878 to secure the instruction of John Bennett, of New York, for a class in Cincinnati in underglaze painting; but Mr. Bennett replied that he had been at considerable expense to bring his family from Lambeth and to establish himself in New York, and that for the present the secrets of his processes must be confined to his own studio. He was willing to instruct in his fine, broad, free-hand style, overglaze, but not in underglaze work.

Looking back through six or seven years to the beginning, as it may be called, of the movement in china-painting, or the decoration of pottery, in the United States, we can not fail to be struck with its significance, taken in connection with the steady growth in the pottery trade, and the improvement in American wares.