

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.

The work shown on the occasion referred to in 1875 was for the most part the outgrowth of this experiment, and although imperfect, when compared with later results, it was unquestionably the most extensive and satisfactory exhibit of amateur overglaze decoration made up to that time in the United States. The work was deeply interesting as so many careful experiments. Each one made her own trials, and gained knowledge and courage from her failures. Modes of firing were as imperfect as all other means and appliances; but the interested workers were undismayed by difficulties and mistakes, and eagerly pressed on to higher degrees of excellence.

Prominent among the ladies whose work gave character to this early exhibit in 1875 were Mrs. E. G. Leonard and Mrs. Andrew B. Merriam, whose interest has continued unabated, and whose delicate and finished overglaze work has caused their names to be well known among the best amateur artists of the country.

Among the efficient means of popularizing china decoration in Cincinnati at an early day were the establishment of a small oven, and the teaching of overglazed painting, by Mr. Edwin Griffith, in the spring of 1877. He visited the New Jersey potteries, learned something of the processes of using the oxides and of firing, and being skillful in the use of the brush, and pleasant in his ways, he became a successful teacher. The classes of Mr. Griffith were taught, and the process of firing was carried on, in the third story of the old building on the southwest corner of Fifth and Race streets, above the carving school of Messrs. Henry L. and William Fry. The house has since been removed. Mr. Pitman was instrumental in starting Mr. Griffith in this work.

From 1874 to 1877, the attention of the ladies was exclusively given to overglaze painting.

In 1877, Miss M. Louise McLaughlin, who had been among the foremost in her success in china-painting in 1875, published a hand-book on china-painting, for the use of amateurs in the decoration of hard porcelain, and also began to experiment in her search for the secrets of the Limoges faience.

The first results in this direction shown in Cincinnati were in the fall of 1877.

In the next year specimens of this work were sent to the Paris Exposition. At about the same time, or soon after, Miss McLaughlin painted the first successful piece of blue underglaze on white ware.

It is said that unsuccessful efforts have been made in different parts of Europe to imitate or reproduce the faience of Limoges. However this may be, there is no doubt that in the United States we are indebted to the intelligent interest and persistence of Miss McLaughlin for its accomplishment. Months of labor and considerable money were spent before success was achieved: the preparation of clays, the adaptation of colors, suitable firing for underglaze decoration, were all matters of vital importance in the accomplishment of the new decorative process. Down to this time there were no facilities for firing decorated wares beyond the very imperfect means used for firing the overglaze work of jars, and the ordinary kilns of the potters.

During the process of her experiments in 1877-78, the work of Miss McLaughlin was done at the pottery of P. L. Coultry and Co., where special pride was felt in the matter by members of the firm and employes, and where everything in their power was done to insure success.

In giving credit where credit is due, it may be added that Mr. Joseph Bailey, Sen., and his son Joseph, of Mr. Dallas's pottery, gave her many practical suggestions, derived from their long experience in the business. It required the union of the knowledge of the artist, the chemist, and the potter to conduct the experiments to a successful termination.

The glaze used was that of Messrs. Coultry and Co., and was found to be admirably adapted to the decorative process which Miss McLaughlin had discovered.

The clays, of which she used a variety, were brought from different parts of Ohio; the vases, jugs, etc., many of them her own designs, were at that time made by the firm of Coultry and Co.

In the latter part of 1879, two kilns for firing decorated wares were built at the pottery of Frederick Dallas, one for underglaze, the other for overglaze work, the latter said to be the largest of its kind in the United States. The cost of these kilns was advanced by two ladies, respectively Miss McLaughlin and Mrs. Maria Longworth Nichols. During the year 1879, the work of Miss McLaughlin

was transferred to the Hamilton Road pottery of Frederick Dallas.

In her specialty, which may be called Cincinnati faience, Miss McLaughlin has been constantly at work, month by month increasing her knowledge of methods, etc., until the results show a high degree of excellence and beauty. Many of her pieces have found homes in New York and other



FIG. 1.—VASE DECORATED BY MRS. WILLIAM DODD.

cities, but some of her largest and most successful specimens have not been seen outside of Cincinnati. Her "Ali Baba" vase, forty-two inches high, was produced in the winter of 1879-80, and has been presented by Miss McLaughlin, with other pieces, to the Women's Art Museum Association of Cincinnati. In the rooms of the association, with other ceramic work, it forms the nucleus of a collection probably destined to have historic interest in future years. This "Ali Baba" vase, or jar, has a groundwork of sage green, blending the gradations of color from the full tone up to a fleecy, cloud-like greenish-white; the decoration is a Chinese hibiscus, the colors being held in subdued tones. The potting of this piece, said to be the largest made down to that time in the United States, is the work of Frederick Dallas.

The success of the Cincinnati faience by Miss McLaughlin led to numerous experiments by others toward the same end. A number of them were successful in the discovery of the principles involved in the

new process, and all were distinguished by individual characteristics of style. Notable among the discoverers and workers in this specialty are Mrs. William Dodd, Mrs. M. V. Keenan, Mrs. Dr. Meredith, and Mr. J. T. Wheatley.

In the spring of 1879, a "pottery club" of ladies was organized, with twelve active and three honorary members. Each one of the ladies is at work upon some specialty, or at least bringing to her work so marked an individuality as to characterize it with distinctive features. All have painted, and still paint, overglaze; each works in incised design, in relief decoration, and in underglaze color.

The Pottery Club has rented a room at the pottery of Frederick Dallas, where it is convenient to work in the various specialties in the "green" clay and "biscuit" ware. Their room is perhaps fifteen by twenty-four feet, having windows on the east, south, and west, in front of which, running round the three sides, is a shelf, or work-table, some two feet wide. A few plain chairs, modelling stools, a stove, and wash-stand comprise the fittings and furniture of the room. The building in which this pottery studio is found was the home of Mrs. Trollope during the time of her residence in Cincinnati. The access to the studio, which is on the second floor, is through the yard of the pottery, in which stand some of the kilns.

The members of the Pottery Club are as follows: Miss M. Louise McLaughlin, president, Miss Clara C. Newton, secretary, Miss Alice B. Holabird, treasurer, Mrs. E. G. Leonard, Mrs. Charles Kebler, Mrs. George Dominick, Mrs. Walter Field, Miss Florence Carlisle, Miss Agnes Pitman, Miss Fannie M. Banks, Mrs. Andrew B. Merriam, one vacancy; honorary members, Mrs. M. V. Keenan, Miss Laura Fry, Miss Elizabeth Nourse.

While it would be difficult to describe in this article the character and quality of the work of each member of the Pottery Club, any sketch of the decorative pottery-work of Cincinnati would be incomplete and unjust which failed of a due recognition of its excellence. Calling the roll of its membership brings into review much of the best of the enamelled faience, of the underglaze color, of the incised design, of the relief-work in clay, and of the exquisitely finished overglaze painting, which have given reputation to the work done in Cincinnati.

To a smaller room, perhaps ten by twelve feet in size, also in the second story of one of the buildings of the pottery, two ladies, not of the Pottery Club, daily take their way through the dusty floors, piled high with partially dried "biscuit" and glazed wares. For them the hours of daylight are too few and short. From this dim and unattractive little nook comes a succession of creations unique in character and beauty. The vase of "green" clay, brought up from the hands of the thrower below, is submitted to the artistic fingers of Mrs. William Dodd and Mrs. Maria L. Nichols, who practice every style of work on "green" and "biscuit" ware, from incised design as delicate as the spider's web, to Cincinnati faience, and relief-work in clay so bold that one is tempted to reach forth her hand and take the bird from the bough.

A piece of Mrs. Dodd's (Fig. 1) is a vase thirty inches high, buff body (Rockingham and white pastes), with bough of apple blossoms in high relief and natural colors, in which is a nest of eggs, and perched on the bough two brown birds of life size. To this extent the color is underglaze. Subsequently Mrs. Dodd added an overglaze decoration, by which the surface is flecked with clouds of gold here and there, and the neck of the vase enriched with a twining wreath of apple blossoms, and the base with a fringe of grasses and marsh plants.

The work of Mrs. Nichols is shown in vases of all sizes, and in wonderful variety of style, for her talents enable her to throw off work with uncommon rapidity. Among her pieces, during the last year, has been a succession of vases, each some thirty inches high. The body is of Rockingham in some cases, in others a mixture of Rockingham and white pastes, giving a soft buff color in some pieces, in others a rich cream. A majority of the large pieces of Mrs. Nichols are Japanese grotesque in design, with the inevitable dragon coiled about the neck of the vase, or at its base, varied with gods, wise men, the sacred mount-



FIG. 2.—VASES DECORATED BY MRS. MARIA L. NICHOLS.

ain, storks, owls, monsters of the air and water, bamboo, etc., decorated in high relief, underglaze color, incised design, and an overglaze enrichment of gold. (See Fig. 2.) The large vases are thirty-two and thirty inches high.

Other pieces of Mrs. Nichols are in the fine-grained red clays of Ohio, decorated in incised and relief work, and an illumination of dead gold; surface finished with semi-glaze; also in a mixture of blue and yellow clays, producing charming tints of sage green, blue-gray, etc.

It is an interesting commentary upon the occupations of our women that the dusty quarters of the manufacture of iron-stone and Rockingham should be the point of attraction for so many of the refined and cultivated women of the city.

So much interest has been felt by the public in the practical work of the Pottery Club, that to avoid inconvenient interruption they decided to give an occasional reception, to which visitors would be admitted by cards of invitation. The first of the series was held in May, 1880. On this occasion not less than two hundred pieces were shown, which, from their variety of style and excellence of execution, formed a most interesting exhibit.

Early in 1878 the first effort in underglaze color in the Lambeth style, or, as it should be called, the "Bennett"* style, was made by Miss McLaughlin.

* Mr. Bennett's attitude toward Mr. Doulton is so respectful and deferential, and in regard to what he



FIG. 3.—WORK OF MRS. DOMINICK.



FIG. 4.—WORK OF MISS HOLABIRD.

In 1879 the attention of a number of ladies was given to underglaze color work: during the year experiments in this direction became general. Success in using blue was not found difficult, and unremitting efforts have finally triumphed in the satisfactory use of a variety of colors.

The work of Mrs. Dominick (Fig. 3), Miss Holabird (Fig. 4), Mrs. W. P. Hulbert (Fig. 5), Mrs. Kebler, and Miss Newton, in underglaze color, in the style of John Bennett, is full of interest and promise.

The relief-work in clays by Mrs. C. A. Plimpton is distinguished by features so marked as to make it unique and original among the various styles of work being done in Cincinnati. The decoration is generally on a body of Rockingham (Figs. 6 and 7), or one of the fine red clays of Ohio, on which the design is painted, so to speak, in varying relief, with clays of different colors and shades. A landscape, for example, upon a dark red or brown body, is artistically and delicately wrought, as if with the engraver's burin, in brown clays of different shades, with yellow and white pastes for high lights. Or on a close-grained, soft-toned red body of Scioto clay (Fig. 8), a branch of grapevine in high relief encircles the rim of the vase, while delicate sprays spring from



FIG. 5.—WORK OF MRS. W. P. HULBERT.



FIG. 6.—WORK OF MRS. C. A. PLIMPTON.

the base, the entire decoration being in clays of different colors. The largest diameter of this piece is sixteen inches. Her surface work is substantially that of *pâte-sur-pâte*, so beautifully shown by Solon, and it demonstrates in a most interesting manner

has himself done is so modest, that his own statement in answer to an inquiry on this point is not without interest. It is as follows: "Your impression respecting Doulton Lambeth faience is right. I introduced it, and taught all the pupils, glazed and burned; but in justice to Mr. H. Doulton, the principal, I must say it is very doubtful whether I would have brought it to the success it attained had I not been engaged by him: his natural good taste and desire to improve in art pottery always had a stimulating effect upon me. You will gather from the above that I think the Lambeth faience ought to be called 'Doulton'; at the same time, I have felt slighted by no mention being made of my name in Mr. Sparkes's paper on Lambeth pottery."

At the time of Mr. Bennett's employment by Messrs. Doulton, the only artistic work done by them was in the gray stone-ware which they were producing in their establishment: they had no studios for *painting*, either over or under glaze, till Mr. Bennett went there.



FIG. 7.—WORK OF MRS. C. A. PLIMPTON.

The use of Parian paste for light relief-work, or for modelling in high relief, has received special attention from a number of ladies. Misses Elizabeth and Adelaide Nourse have produced some effective work in pottery in bold relief. Fig. 11 shows a piece of carving in yellow clay, unglazed, by Miss Adelaide Nourse; Fig. 12, a vase of cream-colored clay, carved by Miss Fannie M. Banks.

An interesting specialty is seen in the work of Miss Agnes Pitman, a part of the design being incised on a common clay body, which is then covered with a colored slip; finally other designs in low relief are laid on in Parian paste, modelled, and wrought with delicacy and skill. Miss Pitman also shows work in incised and low-relief decoration covered with dark glazes. A vase by Miss Pitman (Fig. 13) is of yellow clay, with incised designs and low-relief work in brown and white clay, semi-glaze finish.

The point of interest in the work of these Cincinnati women (leaving out of the question the excellence of its execution) is in the decorative uses which have been made of the common clays, and the variety and originality of the styles in which they are working. The various kinds of work mentioned in this article, except the few pieces of overglaze-work on European porcelain, are all done in Ohio clays from Cincinnati potteries, and, with few exceptions, are from the pottery of Mr. Frederick Dallas.

A piece by Mrs. William Dodd (Fig. 14), body of sage green (a combination of blue and yellow clays), shows a landscape in low relief, in red, brown, and white clays, with a garniture of woodbine in white clay; semi-glaze finish.

Fig. 15.—Stone-china tea-pot: blue glaze; decoration in gold and white enamel, low relief, by Mrs. Walter Field.

Fig. 16.—Cincinnati



FIG. 8.—WORK OF MRS. C. A. PLIMPTON.

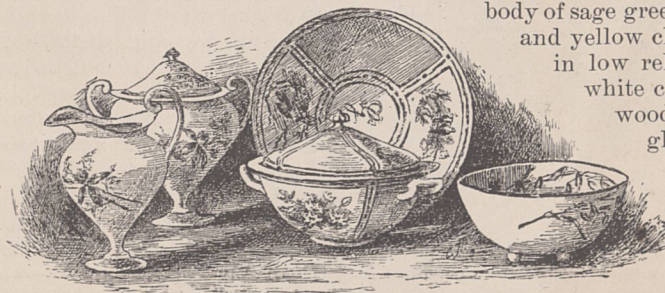


FIG. 9.—WORK OF MRS. E. G. LEONARD.



FIG. 10.—WORK OF MRS. E. G. LEONARD.

faience vase: soft green ground, with tiger-lilies, by Miss Laura Fry.

Mrs. Merriam's work is shown in group Fig. 17. The central piece is overglaze; a gold and silver decoration on a rich dark green glaze; stone-china body. The end pieces are underglaze on cream-colored body.

Group Fig. 18 shows the work of Miss McLaughlin. The vase decorated with branches in relief is of dark brown clay; branches in red-brown clay. The four other pieces are in the enamelled faience.

The illustration at the head of this paper shows a variety of work in plaques:



FIG. 12.—WORK OF MISS F. M. BANKS.

the central piece at top, by Mrs. Frank R. Ellis, is blue glaze on white body, decorated in gold and white enamel; the plaque to the right, by Mrs. M. V. Keenan,

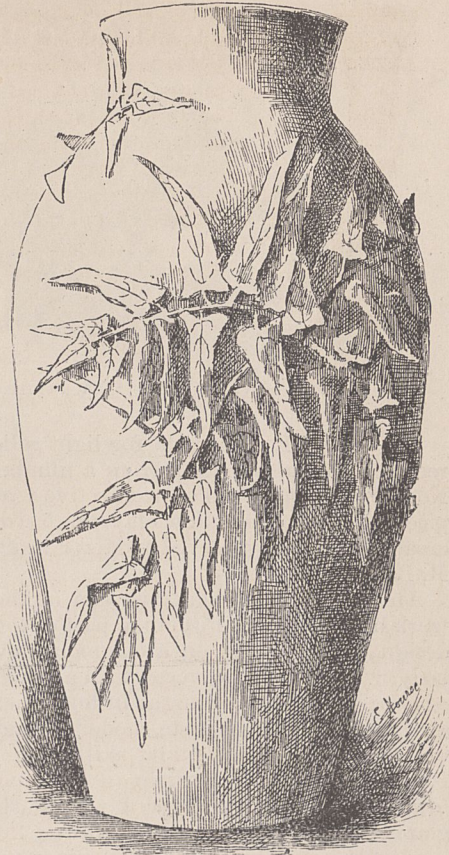


FIG. 11.—WORK OF MISS A. NOURSE.

is of Cincinnati faience; that to the left, by Miss Sarah Schooley, is in low relief, overglaze decoration, on soft buff clay body; below, an arabesque design in blue, underglaze, on white ware, with overglaze lines in gold, by Miss Clara Newton.

Fig. 19. — Mirror frame: designs in brown, on tiles, by Mrs. Charles Kebler.

The experiments of Mr. J. T. Wheatley in Cincinnati faience were begun in 1878. For a time his work was done at the pottery of P. L. Coultry and Co., but in the spring of 1880 he established himself in quarters of his own on Hunt Street, where he built a kiln for firing decorated wares (underglaze), and where all the processes of the preparation of clays, of moulding, glazing, and firing, are performed by him. It is understood that Mr. Wheatley has been unselfish in regard to his discoveries of modes and processes, freely communicating them to any who wish to learn, and



FIG. 13.—WORK OF MISS PITMAN.

who are welcomed to work at his establishment. Mr. Wheatley is busily engaged in experiments with colored glazes, and in the preparation of new shapes and moulds, some of which rank with the largest yet made here.

During the spring of 1880, a class was taught in the practice of Cincinnati faience by Messrs. Retig and Valentine. These young gentlemen were pupils of the School of Design for a number of years. Mr. Retig had established some reputation as a designer of frescoes, and for artistic talent generally; in his quickness and accuracy of hand and appreciation of color Mr. Pitman saw the kind of skill to make a successful decorator of pottery, and at his suggestion

Mr. Retig prepared himself for this work. Here again we recognize the unflinching interest of Mr. Pitman. His encouragement and aid in all practical ways have been intelligently bestowed, as many can testify who have felt the benefit of his knowledge and liberality of spirit. In reference to the growth of interest and advance in decorative pottery, as well as some other branches of industrial work, it can be said that no one in Cincinnati has done more toward making an industry into an industrial art than Mr. Pitman.

The class of Messrs. Retig and Valentine numbered sixty at the close of the spring term, and showed some encouraging work. The pieces decorated by Mr. Retig are said to be among

those which have brought the highest prices in New York.

No porcelain clay has been found in Ohio, and we have the authority of Professor Orton,

State Geologist, for saying that we are not likely to find it. Professor Orton says: "We have in Ohio the main elements of a suc-

cessful manufacture of porcelain and pottery, the fine varieties of porcelain clay being excepted. The two main elements are coarse clay and fuel. It is always counted an object to locate the manufactories near these supplies. The finer material can be brought a long way, if need be, for the amount required is very small in proportion to the pottery clay used in baking the porcelain, and the fuel."

But if not within the State, we have at our very



FIG. 14.—WORK OF MRS. W. DODD.



FIG. 16.—WORK OF MISS LAURA FRY.



FIG. 15.—WORK OF MRS. WALTER FIELD.

door an abundant supply of fine china clay.

Of this Indiana clay Professor E. T. Cox, State Geologist of Indiana, says: "The Indiana porcelain clay is the very best quality known to the world for the manufacture of fine porcelain. It is not, properly speaking, a kaolin, since the latter is derived from the decomposition of feldspathic rocks, and the former is a precipitate from a water solution. It is a new mineral, and I have named it 'Indianaite,' from Indiana, and *ite*, a stone (Indiana stone). It is found in the greatest abundance three and a half miles north of Huron, Lawrence County, Indiana." In addition to this "Indiana stone," a fine china clay is now brought here over the Southern Railroad from near Chattanooga.

Professor Cox was appointed one of the judges on fictile products at the Centennial Exposition, where he had rare opportunities of comparing the raw material, as well as the manufactured products, of the United States with those exhibited by foreign countries.

In regard to the "Indianaite," he says: "I saw no porcelain clays at the Centennial from other portions of the world which were equal to it in color or purity. This fact must speak for the future success of porcelain manufacture in the West. . . . European potters were much astonished at the excellence of American wares. Only a few pieces of porcelain were exhibited by our potters, but this was enough to show our ability to produce fine grades of ware. The body and glaze of our iron-stone and granite ware was in every way equal, if not superior, to that made in England and France."

Professor Cox also says, February, 1878: "I have just received a sample of pure white silica, in powder, from Perry County, Missouri. It is found there in extensive beds, and may be had at much less cost than the white quartz of the New England States, which is found in lumps, and has to be burned and crushed. The Missouri silica will save all of this labor, and is naturally prepared for use."

It is obvious from these statements that Ohio is favorably situated for the manufacture of fine porcelain, and the economic value of her common clays is a compensation for the absence of a porcelain clay within her borders.

So great an advance has been made in the use of underglaze color within a few

years in Europe, and especially in England, that soft pottery for certain decorative and domestic uses has become popular, and the distance between it and its more pretentious sister, porcelain, has been lessened. Its perfection of glaze, and the consequent pleasure of handling, and the richness, depth, and blended quality of its coloring, appeal so pleasantly to the senses as to give it a certain superiority above overglaze work, especially where it is to be handled. The Ohio clays are all that could be desired for this wide and interesting field of work, and their uses are being shown by the potteries of Cincinnati. Experiments with the clays long used, and with those less known, from various parts of the State, with the introduction of new colored glazes which are especially needed for delicate incised and relief work, the making of new and improved shapes for table-ware and decorative pieces, show an impulse at the same time interesting and encouraging. Doubtless pure porcelain will be made in Ohio; but she can well afford, if she chooses, to rest her chances of reputation as a centre for the production of pottery upon her own varied and beautiful clays.

The pleasing tints of buff and cream pastes, with the soft, charming blue slip made by Frederick Dallas, seem as great an improvement among us over the glaring iron-stone, as was the invention, one hundred and twenty-five years ago, by Josiah Wedgwood, of his cream-color (C.C.) body. May we not draw a parallel between our own country at this time and the condition of England, in respect of her pottery, when Wedgwood lifted the industry from the low state in which he found it? It is true that the English had begun to make porcelain at that time, but ordinary table-ware was so rude and imperfect that the C.C. body of Wedgwood was considered an important advance.

The interest in this part of the country is not confined to Cincinnati, but to some extent pervades the towns and cities of Ohio generally. Ladies from Dayton, Hillsborough, and more distant points come here for lessons, send to the potteries for clay and "biscuit" ware, and return their decorated work for firing and glazing. Decorated work is sent here to be fired from New York, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, and Indiana. The number of amateurs in the city alone whose work is fired at the pottery of F. Dallas

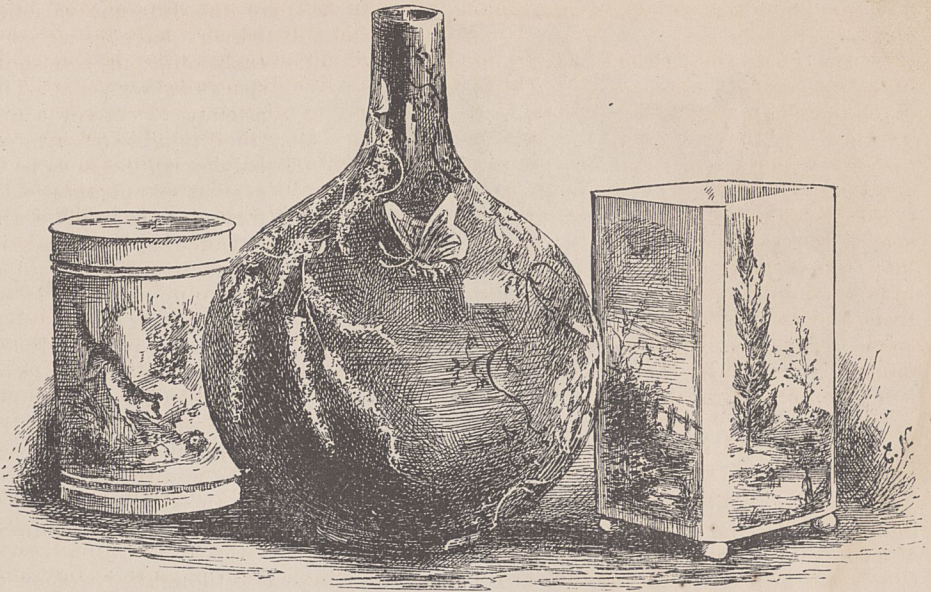


FIG. 17.—WORK OF MRS. MERRIAM.

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.

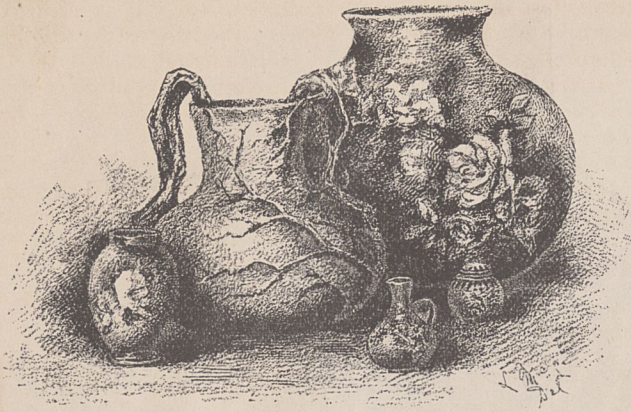


FIG. 18.—WORK OF MISS McLAUGHLIN.

The little exhibit in 1875 was a suggestion of suitable work for women, and also of a future of commercial importance for Cincinnati as a centre of activity in pottery-work. Certainly the results have far exceeded the most rose-colored expectations of those days, in the growth of the interest, and in the quantity and quality of the work done. As might be expected, in the amount of work done by so many untrained hands, much of it is crude and inartistic; but a collection such as may at any time be brought together of the decorated work of Cincinnati, in the various specialties which have been enumerated, would excite attention and interest, in proportion to the intelligence of those who saw it, wherever it might be shown. It is not too much to say that in the history of the potter's art in Europe, so far as we have accounts of it, there has at no time been a beginning more full of promise than that which this sketch has attempted to describe.

The impossibility of procuring skilled teachers has developed the best efforts of the amateur decorators, and may in the end prove a fortunate circumstance; it certainly will, should it result in the development of a distinctive type, which may in time become a national style. It is too early to predict what the American style will be, but it is encouraging that the tendency is to broad and pronounced effects rather than to pettiness of detail.

The aim of this sketch has been to present a historical outline of the beginning and progress of the decorative pottery work of Cincinnati from 1874 down to the time of this writing, mentioning some

of the different varieties which have succeeded each other in the short space of a few years. The attempt to convey a distinct impression by verbal description must be to a great extent unsatisfactory, since so much of the advance has been made in the successful use of color, and so much of the effect is dependent on it.

To name personally the numbers of women who have done good and promising work is beyond the possibilities of such an article, and the mention of

names is limited to those whose work has rather led the way in distinctive directions.

Begun by a few thoughtful women of taste and social influence, who foresaw possible results of importance to their city, as well as pleasant occupation to women of leisure, and a solution, to some extent, of the problem of self-support and independence for women, the work has gone on, one successful experiment after another marking its advance.

If, in the earlier part of the movement, clays from distant parts of the State were wanted, a woman sent for them; if kilns for firing decorated wares were needed, the money was provided by women. A young woman, after patient experimenting, and the bestowal of time and money, discovered the process of making Limoges faience; an amateur, self-trained, she has published a little volume of instructions to amateurs on overglaze painting, now in its ninth edition; and a similar handbook from the same pen, "*Pottery Decoration Under the Glaze*, by Miss M. Louise McLaughlin," has recently been issued from the press of Robert Clarke and Co.

A woman's taste and interest were influential in the manufacture of the Capodi-Monti porcelain of Naples, and for the faience of Oiron the world is indebted to a woman, these two specialties combining more of originality and beauty than anything Europe has produced in porcelain and faience.

In Cincinnati, the crowning result of the six years' work by women, and the earnest of the future, is also inspired and

executed by a woman. During last autumn a new pottery for decorative work went into operation in the suburbs of the city. In addition to toilet sets, pitchers, etc., to which attention will be given, it is the intention to manufacture gray stone-ware, which is not now made in Cincinnati, and to put upon the market a class of articles for which there is a practical and constant demand, of shapes so

help of the potters of the city, who have aided and fostered the interest by all the means at their command, and without whose practical sympathy and co-operation no such advance could have been made.

At the close of this sketch, it is interesting to turn for a moment to the advantages which the coming Art Museum (made possible by the generous gift of

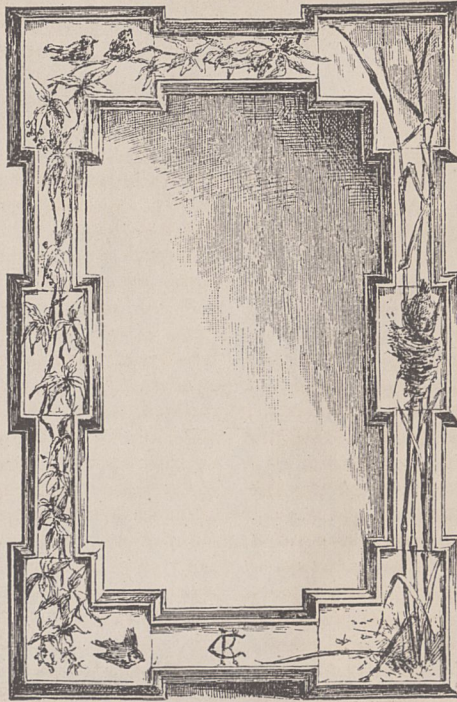


FIG. 19.—MIRROR FRAME DESIGNED BY
MRS. CHARLES KEBLER.

good that the simplest article of household use shall combine the elements of beauty.

These are pleasant times and places, when women give their leisure and means to the founding of an artistic industry. Mrs. Maria Longworth Nichols, by this use of time and money, practically opens a path in which unlimited work for women may eventually be found.

This sketch of women's work would be incomplete without mention of the hearty

Mr. Charles W. West and the liberality of many citizens) holds in store for these women who have already accomplished so much. They have long nourished hopes of help from its educational treasures and its training schools, and have gone on courageously, supported by their own constancy and faith, until public opinion sees in the not distant future an artistic industry added to the attractions and prosperity of the city, and respectfully gives the credit where it is due.