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American Ceramics



LOSANTI WARE

LOUISE M'LAUGHLIN, CINCINNATI

A MERICAN CERAMICS—A BRIEF REVIEW OF PROGRESS BY CLARA RUGE

POTTERY developed before any other art industry in America. The beginnings were undoubtedly stimulated by the work of the Indians, who produced and still produce beautiful potteries. The Indians showed that the American clays could be used with advantage.

Cincinnati, whose clays are especially adapted to artistic productions, may be called the birth-place of modern American potteries. The first definite artistic results were obtained by Louise McLaughlin in her "Losantiware." Surface painting—mostly a dilettante play on French porcelain—had been done before. She was the first one who did underglaze painting in this country. She produced her own porcelain, moulded it herself, painted and fired it. She even made her own colours. Now, in advanced years, she is still busy and her ware has maintained its position. The decorations are worked out in relief in original designs of conventional plants.

Another pioneer in this industry was Maria Longworth-Storer, who founded the Rookwood Pottery, named after her childhood home. It was a happy coincidence that Mrs. Storer combined enthusiasm for art, talent and wealth. Thus she was able to create a movement which has grown to large dimensions, though she herself has now retired from it.

The Rookwood potteries were started in 1880. Ten years later the new enterprise was already self-supporting and at the Paris Exhibition of 1889 a gold medal was won.

The beautiful deep reddish brown potteries with glossy surface decorated with flowers or heads of Indians first created the fame of the Rookwood ware. Later came ware with figures in relief in the Indian manner. At the Columbian Exposition in Chicago the Sea-Green type was added and beautiful samples of Tiger-eyes and Goldstone ware were shown. These effects mostly depended on the firing. The crystalline glazes observable in Goldstone have been developed in other forms by great European factories, but the Rookwood potteries are the originators.

The Irisware is the result of experiments to obtain beauty in light tints, equal to those already produced in dark browns, and reds. Irisware is made in light blues, grays and pinks. These and the first matglaze potteries



VELLUM WARE

ROOKWOOD

American Ceramics

were features at Paris in 1900. At the Pan-American Exhibition, and the Art-Industrial Exhibition in Turin of the following year, a great variety of beautiful matglaze was shown.

The latest Rookwood invention, shown at the St. Louis Exhibition, is the "Vellum" ware. These potteries stand between high-glaze and matglaze. They retain the charm of the Biscuit condition (first firing). The name "Vellum" conveys the refinement of the texture and colour

which is characteristic of this ware. Devoid of lustre, though without dryness, it presents both to the touch and to the eye the qualities of old parchment. The earlier matglazes, by reason of their heaviness, permit only slight decoration, except modelling or very flat and broad painting. The Vellum retains all those qualities shown hitherto only by the Rookwood high glaze. Not in the heavy and strong effects of matglaze, but in the subtle and delicate qualities, lies the beauty of Vellum. Elaborate decorative painting, approaching that of the Irisware, is possible. But the charm of the decoration under the fine texture of the new glaze surpasses that of the older high glaze. The decorations

are often modelled and painted on the same piece.

The Architectural Faience is also one of the latest Rookwood achievements. It is executed in matglazes and the colours are very brilliant. Reds, yellows, blues, greens and grays are obtained. Decorative modelling is employed a great deal. Mantels, fountains for hotels, the tablets for the stations of the New York underground railroad are done in this faience. The modern feeling begins to prevail in Rookwood



GRUEBY POTTERIES

ware, especially in the faience. But the French "Art Nouveau" and other European influences are never found in direct imitation. All the decorations are well-adapted to the material and the forms. Originality dominates.

Among the best designers for these potteries are Carl Schmidt, Ed. Diers, E. T. Hurley, Hattie E. Willcox, Sallie Toohey, W. P. MacDonald, J. D. Wareham, Lenore Asbury, F. Rothenbusch, K. Shiiyamadani, Sara Sax.

For many years Rookwood Potteries occupied the field nearly alone, but within five years several potteries, which produce work of great excellence, have come into prominence. It was at the Pan-American Exhibition that the larger public became first acquainted with



VELLUM WARE ROOKWOOD



MATGLAZE ROOKWOOD

American Ceramics



GRUEBY POTTERIES

BOSTON, MASS.

the very artistic productions of the Grueby ceramic in Boston.

The forms are of a high, classic beauty; the colours show subtle, light harmonies. Ivory, old

but the forms show slender plant designs. The texture has a rough appearance, but on touching it one finds that it is entirely smooth. There is certain similarity in this ware to old Korean vases.

The Grueby works have also taken up the production of faïences. In the beginning they tried to imitate the colours of the Della Robbias and copies after their works were the main object. Lately the faïence production has been much



IVORY FAVRILE POTTERY

TIFFANY FURNACES

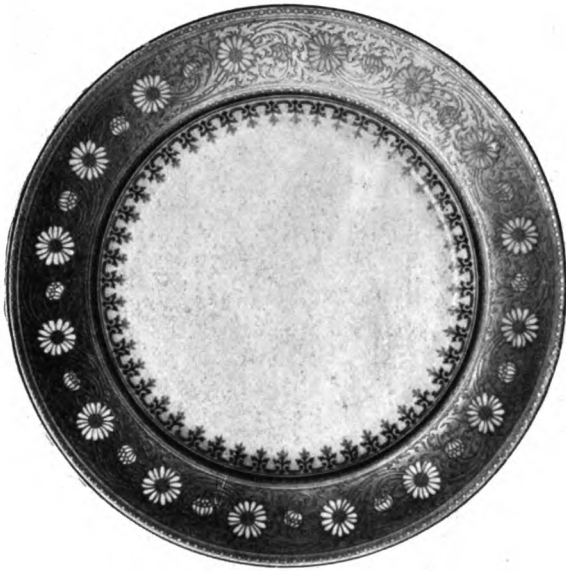
green, reddish gray, a light greenish blue, are the most preferred tints. The vases are all of one colour only. No decorative painting is applied,



GREEN FAVRILE POTTERY

TIFFANY FURNACES

American Ceramics



LENOX
PORCELAIN

"LENOX INCORPORATED"
ALBERT A. SOUTHWICK

enlarged and we find many original motifs, though they always lean toward classical or Oriental decorations. A very quiet tone is characteristic of all Grueby ware.

Very often the Gruebys have successfully used their vases as lampstands and have combined them with Tiffany's favrile glass with beautiful effect. But probably Tiffany will in future produce the lamps altogether, because we must welcome as the newest of American potteries the Favrile potteries, executed under the supervision of Louis C. Tiffany in the Tiffany furnaces at Corona, Long Island. The great facilities of the Tiffany furnaces made it possible to conduct experiments on such a large scale that excellent results could be obtained very promptly. The body used is in porcelain, but for the plastic decorations other clays are employed. The slender forms chosen often approach those of the favrile glassware. But while the glass shows plant motifs in the forms of objects themselves, in the Tiffany ceramics plastic decorations are used.

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Water plants, especially the lotos and the poppy, are employed with great taste, and various kinds of creepers, cereals and the fuchsia.

Antique decorations are chosen occasionally, especially for round pieces. The colour was at first almost exclusively a deep ivory, sometimes shading into brownish effects. Of late greenish tints have been effectively employed. The large vases are made in beautiful greenish tints, without decorations, but sometimes with a peculiar rough surface, to give certain effects of light and shade. The latest productions, however, have an entirely soft surface. To the matglaze, crystalline effects are added, and the colouring varies from light into deep green. The vases are of exquisite beauty. The colour effects of the Tiffany Favrile Pottery is produced—as in the case of the glass—not through painting on the surface, but by chemical mixtures added to the clays.

The Lenox China, made by "Lenox Incorporated," of Trenton, N. J., partly for Tiffany, is of American porcelain. Chemically the Lenox body resembles the best English porcelain in that it contains a considerable percentage of phosphate



LENOX
PORCELAIN

"LENOX INCORPORATED"
FRANK G. HOLMES

American Ceramics



PORCELAIN—CRYSTALLINE GLAZES

MRS. ALSOP ROBINEAU

of lime, which aside from the practical advantage of reducing the liability to fracture gives a certain mellow quality that is characteristic. Mr. Albert Southwick, of Tiffany's, and Mr. Frank G. Holmes, of the "Lenox Incorporated," have vied with one another in producing the most original designs in Lenox ware.

Recently Mrs. Alsop Robineau, of Syracuse, N. Y., has produced porcelain of delicate and original beauty of colour by kerosene firing. The glazing is in mat, half mat or crystalline. No decorative painting is attempted but a wonderful

scale of colouring has been achieved by this process which depends upon the firing of metal mixtures in the glazes.

The Robineaus have found it best to confine their work

entirely to productions they can personally execute. Mrs. Robineau does the clay work, Mr. Robineau the firing. The handling of flowing col-



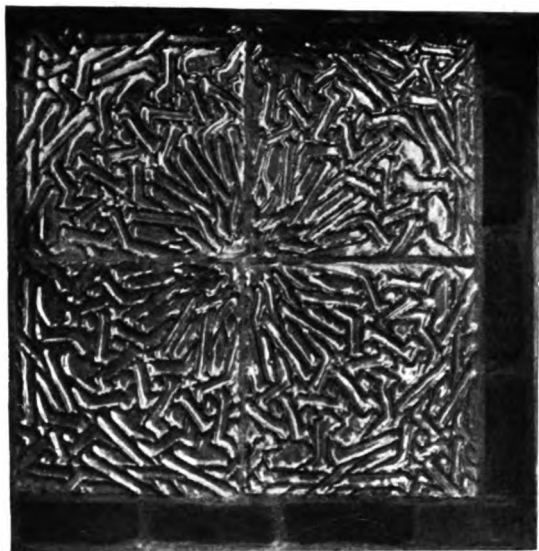
ROBINEAU VASE



TILE

MORAVIAN POTTERY

American Ceramics



TILE

MORAVIAN POTTERY

oured glazes requires enormous care. The touch and personal labour of the artist are necessary in all phases of the work, from the mixing of clays and glazes to the end. The Robineaus have discarded the casting process entirely. Every piece is now made on the wheel by Mrs. Robineau.

While no surface painting is used modelled decorations have lately been successfully employed. The shades of the colouring include brown, reddish orange, yellow, ivory, greens and blues of rare beauty. This charming American porcelain ware

seems destined to bring American porcelain a world's renown. At present the rarity of the pieces makes them less widely appreciated than their artistic value warrants.

The Volkmar Potteries also attract collectors on account of their beauty in colour. Deep broken tints are predominant. Charles Volkmar attains his results by putting one underglaze painting over another and by firing the pieces again and again after each painting. Only one unmixed colour is used each time and a beautiful, nay, at times really atmospheric, effect is acquired in this manner. Very few decorations are used either in designs or in modelling. Lately paint underglaze decorative designs have been done on some vases, producing subtle, mystic effects. Mr. Volkmar has nearly abandoned high glazing for matglaze. His studios are in Metuchen, New Jersey. William Macbeth exhibits his potteries.

The potteries of D. C. Robertson, in Dedham, Mass., also excel in beautiful colours.

In New York Marshal Fry is one of the most successful individual potters. Formerly he made use of flower decorations, marked by artistic feeling and skill. Of late he has developed a preference for Japanese motifs and colouring. Simple landscapes in this style furnish very unusual and pleasing decorations for his potteries, which are also technically of very high quality.

Miss M. Mason is one of the foremost overglaze workers doing genuine art work. Her very original designs show exquisite taste in using land-



TECO WARE

GATES POTTERIES, CHICAGO

American Ceramics



VAN BRIGGLE POTTERIES

COLORADO

scape motifs in a flat, broad style and plant motifs in decorative lines. Her colour sense is very refined. She knows well how to harmonise form, decoration and colour in one artistic entity.

Mrs. I. M. Hibler's potteries show a fine use of Oriental motifs. Very original designs are displayed by Anna B. Leonard, the president of the Ceramic Society in New York, and M. M. Meinke, Emily Peacock, Catherine Sinclair and several other members of that society have shown at the exhibition last spring, reviewed at the time in these columns, that we may count upon genuine artistic work from this quarter.

Beautiful brown ware is produced by the Brush Guild (Mrs. and Miss Perkins), and Mrs. Doremus, in Bridgeport, excels in porcelain of translucent shades, which blend into different colours.

An interesting new establishment in the East is the Moravian Pottery and Tile Works in Doylestown, Pa. After designs from C. Mercer, ware of artistic quality is produced by adapting Moorish ideas to modern purposes.

In the West many new potteries and individual

potters have made their mark in recent years, and this is not to be wondered at because that region contains rich deposits of clays adaptable to ceramic work.

The green Teco ware produced at the Gates potteries of Chicago is comparatively new. The name "Teco" is derived from "Te" in Terra and "Co" in Cotta. The originator, William D. Gates, desired to produce an art ware that would harmonise shape with decoration. Teco ware is marked by chasteness of design, a velvety, glossy finish and uniform moss-green colour. The Gates potteries are located in a picturesque valley beside a little lake. Aquatic plants are cultivated there and furnish the motifs to the designers. Besides William D. Gates, T. Albert, W. I. Dodd, Blanche Ostertag, Mundie and Dunning are designers for Teco.

In Colorado we find the Van Briggles. Artus Van Briggles, the originator, died last summer. Mrs. Van Briggles is carrying on the work. Beginning in the employ of the Rookwood potteries, Mr. Van Briggles went to Paris and transferred his

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S. A. WELLER

ZANESVILLE, OHIO

interests to painting. Before long he returned to his first enthusiasm. Removing to Colorado, he found the native red clays an interesting basis of experiment. He made use of metallic vapours, generally those of copper. Not only the technical quality of his potteries, but the forms of them perhaps more than anything else, proclaim Van Briggles a real artist. The human figure, animals, above all the abundance of wild flowers in Colorado, gave him motifs, which he used in a unique way. They were his subjects, not for brush work, but for modelling. His vases are all of one colour only and no decorative plastic work is visible; the form of the vase itself is a triumph of the sculptor's art.

His studies in France also led him to introduce a novelty to America—the combination of pottery

and metal work. Whenever he felt that a touch of jewellery would add to the beauty of his creation, he adorned his potteries with the precious and semi-precious stones of Colorado.

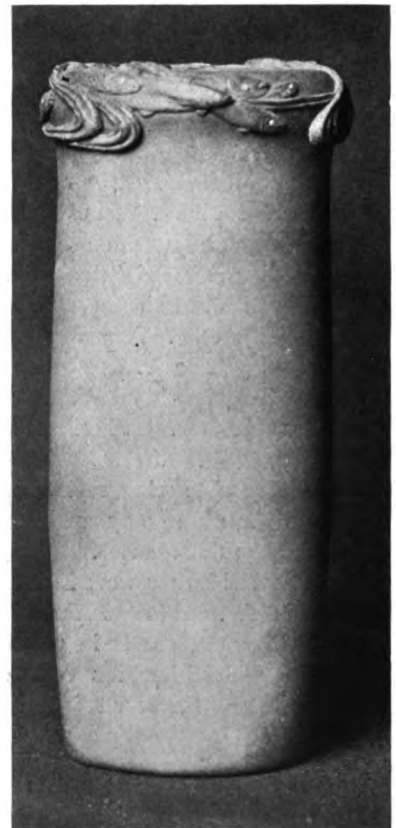
A centre for pottery is Zanesville, Ohio. While most of the companies follow purely commercial lines, some of them, like the Weller pottery, in their dark blue Sicardware with metallic surfaces, turn out artistic products of great beauty.



S. A. WELLER

ZANESVILLE, OHIO

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VAN BRIGGLES