

annually, of £40,000 sterling. The uncut cameo shells of various kinds, including the products of widely distant seas,—*e. g.*, the *cassia rufa*, or bull's mouth; the *cassia Madagascariensis*, the black helmet, or queen couch; the *cassia cornuta*, or horned helmet; the *strombus gigas*, or fountain shell: the *strombus pugilis*, and the *pyrula carnaria*, are annually imported to the value of upwards of £3,000 sterling, and, in the hands of the cameo engraver, are speedily converted into valuable works of art. But the modern application of marine shells for the purposes of ornament and utility, bring them within the range of most modern trades. Buttons, studs, knife-handles, paper-cutters, pen-holders, card-cases, parasol handles, card-counters, jewel and needle cases, snuff-boxes, thimbles, richly carved and jewelled brooches, beads, necklaces, and artificial flowers, are all made from these varied spoils of the sea. The ingenious Chinese turn them to numerous uses, one of the most noticeable of which is to supply a substitute for glass. Various species of the *placuna*, as the *p. sella*, and *p. placenta*, being thin and translucent, are used in China for glazing windows and for lanterns; while the powdered dust of the same shells furnish the silver pigment for their water-color drawings.

While thus noting with interest the development of novel and varied modern arts which turn the spoils of the ocean to such diverse uses, and lead to the transport of the gigantic marine shells alike of the Indian Ocean and the Antilles, to the marts of the old world, to contribute to European luxury and refinement: a greater interest attaches to the evidences, still traceable, of an ancient trade in the same products of the Florida Gulf, carried on among the widely scattered tribes and nations of the New World, before its discovery by Columbus. Reference has already been made to the varied uses to which these tropical shells were applied by the insular Indians of America, when first discovered by the Spaniards, but their economic employment was not limited to the inhabitants of the islands. Abundant evidence exists to prove that they were greatly valued, and even regarded with superstitious reverence, both by the more civilized nations of the neighboring mainland around the Gulf of Florida, and also by the rude Indian tribes even so far north as beyond the shores of our Canadian Lakes. In one of the singular migratory scenes of the ancient Mexican paintings, copied in Lord Kingsborough's "Mexican Antiquities,"* from the Mendoza Collection, preserved among

* Lord Kingsborough's "Mexican Antiquities," Vol. I., plate 68.