

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

THE ANTIQUITY OF GLASS.

The art of making glass is very ancient. "Although perfectly transparent itself," says a popular illustrator of its history, "not one of the materials of which it is made partakes of that quality."

The art of making glass is reputed to have been discovered by accident. To the Phœnicians was long ascribed the good fortune of the discovery. It is stated by Pliny that some ancient mariners who had a cargo of *nitrum* (salt or soda) on board, having landed on the banks of the river Belos—a small stream at the base of Mount Carmel, in Palestine—and finding no stones to rest their pots on, they placed under them some masses of *nitrum*, which, being fused by the heat with the sand of the river, produced a liquid and transparent stream. Such was the origin of glass. The Sidonians, in whose vicinity the discovery was made, took it up, and in process of time carried the art to a high degree of excellence; they are even said to have invented glass mirrors.

The above account by Pliny is, in substance, corroborated by Strabo and Josephus. Notwithstanding this explicit statement, it was long asserted that the ancients were unacquainted with glass, properly so-called; nor did the denial entirely disappear, even when Pompeii presented evidences of the skill of the ancients in glass-making. It is proved that glass working was known to the Egyptians at a very early period of their national existence. Sir I. G. Wilkinson, in his able work on the manners and histories of the ancient Egyptians, has adduced three distinct proofs that the art of glass working was practised in Egypt before the Exodus of the Children of Israel from the land—3,500 years before Christ. At Ben Hassen are two paintings representing glass blowers at work, and from the hieroglyphics accompanying them, they are shown to have been executed in the reign of the first Osirtasen, at the early date above mentioned. In the same age images of glazed pottery were common, proving the mode of fusing, and the proper proportions of the ingredients for making glass, to have been then known. He also adduces the instance of a glass bead about three-fourths of an inch in diameter, and of the same specific gravity as our own crown glass. This relic Capt. Hevey found at Thebes, and its date is proved by its bearing, in hieroglyphic characters, the name of the monarch who lived 1,500 years before Christ. Such was the skill of the Egyptians in glass-making that they successfully counterfeited any of their precious stones worn as ornaments for the person. Winckelmann, a high authority, is of opinion that glass was employed more frequently in ancient than in modern times. It was used by the Egyptians even for coffins. They also employed it not only for drinking vessels, but for Mosaic work, the figures of deities, and sacred emblems, in which they attained excellent workmanship and surprising brilliancy of color. Glass among the Hebrews was rare and valuable. Job

prizes it as much as gold. "Man," said he, "should prize wisdom above gold or glass."

Notwithstanding so many records exist of the knowledge of glass-making by the ancients, there remain but comparatively few specimens of antiquity to prove the fact. Most writers have erroneously referred to the beads which ornament mummies as satisfactory evidence of Egyptian glass-making. The majority of these, however, are composed not of glass, but of burnt clay, or earthenware glazed, or, perhaps, of glazed earthenware pounded and mixed with colored glass fused together. Of such substances are the numerous small images and other figures. It is certain that the glass-houses of Alexandria were celebrated among the ancients for the skill and ingenuity of their workmen, and from thence the Romans, who did not acquire a knowledge of the art till a later period, procured all their glassware. Strabo relates that a glassmaker of Alexandria informed him that an earth was found in Egypt without which the valuable colored glass could not be made. It is also related that the Emperor Hadrian received, as a present from an Egyptian priest, several glass cups sparkling with every color; these, as costly wares, were ordered to be used only on grand festivals. Glass vessels have also been found in the ruins of Herculaneum; and it appears that glass was used for admitting light to dwellings in Pompeii, and some houses had window-frames filled with a kind of transparent *talc*. In the reign of Tiberius a Roman artist had, according to Pliny, his house demolished—according to other writers, he was beheaded—for making glass malleable. The Pompeian and Roman architects are known to have used glass in their Mosaic decorations. Of these, remains have been found among the ruins of the villa of the Emperor Tiberius, in the Island of Capri. Several specimens are yet to be seen in Westminster Abbey, cemented into the sides of the tomb of Edward the Confessor. They are flat pieces about a quarter of an inch thick; the under layer has a reddish, granulated appearance, and is perfectly opaque, whilst the upper surface is of white, transparent glass; between the two is a very thin layer of gold-leaf—the whole being fused into one substance. This description of gilded glass was, no doubt, highly valued, and the perfect state in which it was found affords a convincing proof that the art of glass incrustation was, to a certain extent, known to the ancients.

WHAT THE ELEPHANT CAN DO.

WHAT a queer sight! An elephant dragging a plough! The elephant is put to many uses. If he cannot thread a needle, he can pick one up from the ground with his trunk. His sense of touch is very delicate.

An elephant was once left to take care of a little boy baby. This he did with wonderful care and gentleness. If the baby strayed off too far, the elephant would stretch out his long trunk and bring the little wanderer back.

In the year 1863 an elephant was employed at a station in India to pile up heavy logs,

a work which these animals will do with great neatness and speed. The superintendent suspected the keeper of stealing the rice given for the animal's food. The keeper, of course, denied the charge; but the elephant, who was standing by, laid hold of a large wrapper which the man wore around his waist, and tearing it open let out some quarts of rice which the fellow had stowed away under the folds.

So closely do elephants remember the meaning of the signs which have been taught them that they will instantly obey the gentlest signal, such as the lifting up of a finger or the slightest touch on their ears.

Mr. Jesse, the keeper of an elephant in London, was once giving him some potatoes, when one fell on the floor just beyond the sweep of the creature's trunk. There was a wall a few inches behind the potato; and blowing strongly, the sagacious animal sent it so hard against the wall that the potato rebounded and on the recoil came back near enough for the elephant to seize it.

The elephant likes music, easily learns to mark the time, and to move in step to the sound of drums. His smell is exquisite, and he likes perfumes of all kinds, and, above all, fragrant flowers; he chooses them, picks them one by one and makes bouquets of them, and, after having relished the smell, carries them to his mouth and seems to taste them.

POWER OF A SWEET VOICE.

THERE is no power of love so hard to get and keep as a kind voice. A kind hand is deaf and dumb. It may be rough in flesh and blood, yet do the work of a soft heart, and do it with a soft touch. But there is no one thing that love so much needs as a sweet voice to tell what it means and feels; and it is hard to get and keep it in the right tone. One must start in youth, and be on the watch night and day, at work and play, to get and keep a voice that shall speak at all times the thoughts of a kind heart. But this is the time when a sharp voice is most apt to be got. You often hear boys and girls say words at play with a quick, sharp tone, as if it were the snap of a whip. When one of them gets vexed you will hear a voice that sounds as if it were made up of a snarl, a whine, and a bark. Such a voice often speaks worse than the heart feels. It shows more ill-will in the tone than in the words. It is often in mirth that one gets a voice or a tone that is sharp, and sticks to him through life, and stirs up ill-will and grief, and falls like a drop of gall on the sweet joys of home. Such as these get a sharp home-voice for use, and keep their best voice for those they meet elsewhere, just as they would save their best cakes and pies for guests, and all their sour food for their own board. I would say to all boys and girls, "Use your guest-voice at home." Watch it day by day as a pearl of great price, for it will be worth more to you in days to come than the best pearl hid in the sea. A kind voice is a lark's song to a hearth and home. It is to the heart what light is to the eye. It is a light that sings as well as shines. Train it to sweet tones now and it will keep in tune through life.