



AFRICAN BLACKSMITHS.

That night an angel appeared to the eldest monk, and asked, "Why did not the holy hymn ascend to heaven at evensong, as heretofore?" and the monk, astonished, replied, "Oh, blessed angel, surely it did ascend! Heard you not in heaven those almost angelic strains from the voice of our gifted young brother? So sweetly he sang that our poor voices were hushed, lest we should mar the music." But the angel answered, "Beautiful it may have been, but no note of it reached to heaven. Into those gates only the music of the heart can enter."

Here is a lesson for our choir-boys and "St. Cecilia" or "Chapter of Praise" girls—indeed, for all of us. Let us try to sing, not only with our lips, but with our hearts; and by loving and working for missions now, be ever practising for the day when the glorious anthem of praise and thanksgiving shall ascend from all nations, and kindreds, and tongues, to the Redeemer of all the world.

AFRICAN BLACKSMITHS.*

IN describing a native forge it would be better to speak first of the tools—how they are made, and their use.

There are two bellows to every forge, made of goats' skins turned inside out. This is done when the animal is first killed, by hanging it up by its hind legs and then stripping off its coat, only cutting it at each leg and around the neck and tail; thus they have a bag similar to the old water-skins one reads of in Holy Scripture, and still in use in some parts of the East.

After the bag has been properly dressed, a sugarloaf-shaped piece of wood is made and a hole bored through. This is taken and put from the inside through the hole of the neck of the skin, and pegged on tightly with wooden pegs; the legs are tied up, and the large hole at the back is then made to open and shut by fasten-

ing a loophole for the thumb on one side, and one for the four fingers on the other. Then by opening the thumb and fingers, and drawing up at the same time, the bellows are filled, and by shutting the hand, and pressing down, the air is sent through the hole in the wood. An iron tube is fixed in the wood, and this is placed in a clay tube, which is put into the fire. Having two bellows of this description, one for each hand, a continual draught is kept up.

Two hammers are used, one large and one small; the smaller is used by the man who sits and keeps up the fire and attends to the irons, and the larger one by the blower when any heavy work is to be done. These are made simply by taking a piece of iron about an inch thick and punching a hole in it for the handle to be fastened. Lastly, a pair of pincers, which are only two pieces of iron very roughly fastened together.

The anvil is a piece of iron, wedge-shaped, having a surface at the top about two inches square, and driven into a log of wood which is buried in the ground.

USING THE PIECES.

SOME years ago there lived and worked in Italy a great artist in mosaics. His skill was wonderful. With bits of glass and stone he could produce the most striking works of art—works that were valued at thousands of pounds.

In his workshop was a poor little boy, whose business it was to clean up the floor and tidy up the room after the day's work was done. He was a quiet little fellow, and always did his work well. That was all the artist knew about him.

One day he came to his master and asked, timidly: "Please, master, may I have for my own the bits of glass you throw upon the floor?"

"Why, yes, boy," said the artist. "The bits are good for nothing. Do as you please with them."

Day after day, then, the child might have been seen studying the broken pieces found on the floor, laying some on one side, and throwing others away. He was a faithful little servant, and so year after year went by and found him still in the workshop.

One day his master entered a storeroom little used, and in looking around came upon a piece of work carefully hid behind the rubbish. He brought it to the light, and to his surprise found a noble work of art, nearly finished. He gazed at it in speechless amazement.

"What great artist could have hidden his work in my studio?"

At that moment the young servant entered the door. He stopped short on seeing his master, and when he saw the work in his hands a deep flush dyed his face.

*The following account was written years ago by Mr. Bellingham, who for a considerable time superintended the industrial work of an English mission.