

THE COLEMAN COLLECTION OF ANTIQUE GLASS.

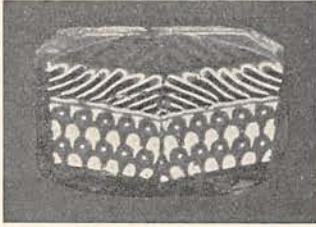


FIGURE 1.

THE world of the Mediterranean Sea, eighteen centuries ago, was rich in works of art and decoration beyond our experience, and beyond our flights of imagination. It is an effort which few of us can make with success to picture the wealth in beautiful art of a great city of the empire. The marbles have been burned to lime, the bronzes have been melted into *gros sous* or their equivalent, the stuccoes have crumbled from the walls, the paintings have gone down with their walls to ruin, the shattered pottery has been used in filling and grading and building, and its remaining fragments are of no value except for an inscription or an impressed name—mere potsherds, with now and then a scrap of antiquarian interest. The shattered glass alone contains in its very substance such beauty, and such completeness even in ruin, that its fragments are treasured up and studied. These broken bits point to a general use of vessels of decorative glass, used as we use porcelain for the finer vessels of table and toilet, and also a great abundance of objects of pure ornament, of wall-linings and floor-coverings, made of the same splendid material. No other substance is like that—beautiful in itself, in its very essence. Fragments of glass have often the



FIGURE 2.

value that fragments of pottery sometimes have—the partial figure, the incomplete pattern on the surface; and they have also what no pottery and no other artificial substance has—the beauty we generally think of as peculiar to natural stones, to agates, and to jaspers. As a collector fills his cabinet with pieces of precious and semi-precious stones, with here and there a piece which has, as it happens, a head or a piece of a head carved upon it, so the enthusiastic vitreologist collects glass as glass, loving its substance and its surface, its color and its texture, its translucency and its opacity, its set patterns and its vague cloudings; here and there a stamped or a wheel-ground pattern adds its own attractiveness, but the glass itself is the thing! Precious and beautiful is glass, even in fragments.



FIGURE 4.

Glass vessels of the Renaissance are certainly more picturesque and varied in form than those of Roman times, but in this peculiar and appropriate charm of colors and patterns in its substance the ancient glass stands first, and that without comparison. The ancient glass is far richer, also, in the patterns and figures engraved and ground upon the surface. In other words, the sixteenth-century man looked upon glass as a plastic material, a delightful thing to manipulate hot, and to see keeping its spirited outline, its graceful shape, when cold; but to the man of the second century glass was a material like onyx, in layers of contrasting color, or a material like moss-agate, with lovely patterns of color in its very substance—patterns to

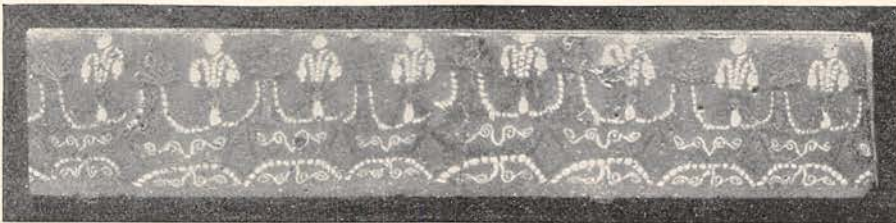


FIGURE 3.

be revealed to sight by grinding down and polishing the surface. Pliny says, indeed, that clear glass was preferred; but that is merely the longing of the amateur for the unattained; very beautiful, nearly transparent, glass has come down to us from Roman times, but that does not prevent the colored sorts from being much the more carefully treated as decoration. The earlier workman had a graver taste in shapes than his successor of the sixteenth century; he sought simpler outlines and more rounded forms, and, as comported with his love of the colored material, more substance and thicker walls to his vases. And therefore a collection of fragments of glass of the Roman centuries has a value which no future gathering of scraps of Venetian, French, or Bohemian can approach.



FIGURE 6.

The collection made by Mr. C. C. Coleman, an American artist living in Rome, explains all this. It includes specimens of that material in which scrolls of thin glass, like little pieces of paper rolled up and allowed to open again partly, are imbedded in the solid transparent mass. This is evidently of the very same workmanship as the onyx glass which there will be need to mention below, but with the thin sheets of whitish opaque material in small scraps, and rolled up, instead of lying flat and of the full size of the piece. This particular make has been copied at the modern Murano factories, but at heavy cost, for a saucer of it may cost five hundred *lire* in Venice. There are specimens of that glass in which are imbedded drops, as it were



FIGURE 5.

this is thickly set with flower-like figures of brilliant color, sometimes arranged in formal patterns, sometimes freely sprinkled through the solid substance. There are the lace-glasses, the many sorts of *vitro di trina*, as the modern makers call it, with thin white threads permeating the transparent paste. There are the solid-color glasses, opaque and hardly vitreous in their appearance, resembling *rosso antico*, or plain red jasper, so closely that one can hardly believe them to be glass. These pieces are sometimes used in free mosaic, inlaid one color in another, but not fused together; and sometimes they are set in metal like the blue glass of the Mykenæan epoch. There is black and dark-brown glass, with a strong vitreous luster like obsidian. There are the tiles and slabs of what might be called a solid and a homogeneous mosaic; mosaics of set pattern, made up of squares and polygons, and also those made of foliated and lobed, quatrefoiled and cinque-



FIGURE 9.

foiled, flower-like units of ornament, looking very much like a freer and simpler Florentine mosaic, but compacted into the fused body of the glass. Figure 1 is a specimen of this class. Figure 2 is a single irregular flower, such as might be incrustated in marble or in stucco. Figure 3 is an unusually beautiful piece of much more delicate work, a mosaic of minute tesserae, all made solid by the unifying heat. Such work as



FIGURE 7.



FIGURE 8.

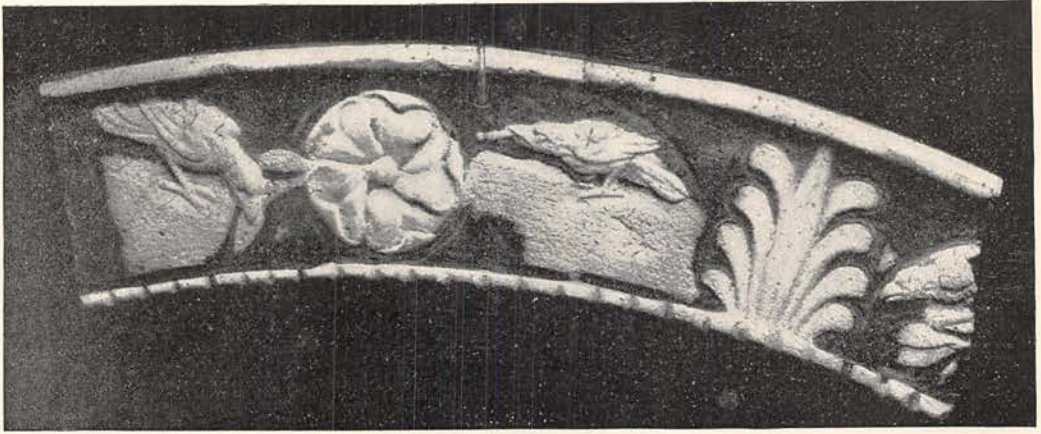


FIGURE 10.

this, in patterns of much larger scale and bolder design, was used for wall-linings as we moderns use ceramic tiles. Very many fragments of this kind of glass are included in the Coleman collection; it is a beautiful, a most effective, wall-decoration, which it behooves the moderns to restore to its place; for nothing can make it mechanical and stiff in appearance; machine-work is not applicable to colored-body glass. Then there are, of course, the more common patterns of spiral and wavy zigzag; such glass as the *amphorini* and the little jugs with spouts are made of, which are not rare in collections; glass that looks as if its many-colored constituents had been pulled out by an iron rake, much as "comb-marbling" is done on paper and the edges of books. This material is not so compact; the colored strips and strings of half-melted glass have not been able to coalesce so firmly. It looks as if it would break apart along the lines of separation of the colors, with comparative ease. And there are the many varieties of glass where the different colored masses are whirled and twisted together more loosely, more freely; much as some of the very recent Louis Tiffany glass vessels are composed.

But there is another kind of artistical glass in which this collection is rich—the glass of sculptured surface, pressed while hot, or ground or engraved when cold. Wall-tiles were made in this way, exquisite bas-reliefs, having indeed the peculiar look of the mold-formed surface rather than that which is carved by the tool, but hardly the worse for that. Still more delicate are the medallions stamped upon vessels, and those made separate for mounting, as jewels. Figure 4 is a Gorgon's head impressed with a die in the hot glass. Figure 5 is a profile of a youthful Bacchus made in the same way, an exquisite work of art. Figure 6 is a head in fine preservation, peculiar in the very modern treatment of expression. Figure 7 is a centaur, a strangely modeled horse-body, growing small where its equine character needs a greater girth, all to meet the human dimensions more readily. Figure 8 is a relief of Christian inspiration, apparently a rather barbarous piece of late Roman work. Such pieces as this are found in the catacombs near Rome, and in the south of Italy; they are nearly always the round bottoms of bowls or dishes which have been broken. Figure 9 is a bit of semi-architectural detail, an



FIGURE 11.



FIGURE 12.



FIGURE 13.



FIGURE 14.



FIGURE 15.

admirably designed sculptured ogee molding. All these are pressed or molded in the hot glass, and they show perfectly what extraordinary effects we might produce in this way for the decoration of buildings, within and without, at low cost.

Carved glass, ground, or "cut," by swiftly revolving wheels, and finished by tools such as are used by the gem-engraver, were a speciality of the artists of Roman times. Everybody has heard of the Portland vase in the British Museum—an amphora about ten inches high made originally of glass in two layers. The outer shell of opaque white glass has all been ground away except where the design of human figures and trees and rocks is left, a perfect cameo on a very large scale. There is an amphora in the Naples Museum as marvelous in workmanship, and probably more beautiful, than the British Museum vase: that piece is about thirteen inches high, also of blue body and white reliefs—a most elaborate composition. "Cameo glass" of very recent times is an imitation of such work, and is more deficient in artistic design than in workmanship. Fragments of a vase of this ware are included in the Coleman collection; a dancing faun with cymbals is preserved almost complete, and patterns of anthemias and ivy-leaf wreaths remain in good condition. In all the finer specimens of this ware the blue ground shows through the thin edges of the white relief, adding a great charm to the modeling, in a way familiar to us in a very modern ware, porcelain with *pâte-sur-pâte* decoration. Of such workmanship are the pieces shown in the illustrations now to be described. Figure 10 is part of the lip, or rim, of a large dish, the pattern left in relief as the white layer has been ground away elsewhere. Figure 11 is a fragment on which two heads and

a lecythus remain of a larger composition. Figure 12 is a tragic mask. All these are roughly worked, no great amount of pains having been spent upon them. It has not been thought necessary to complete the rounding of the parts, the proportion of the different reliefs; all has been left rather flat and uniform—a silhouette rather than a bas-relief. But there are many pieces of the most refined finish: figure 13, a group of two male figures, one of which holds a thyrsus, is a very complete piece of modeling; it has the look of a life-size bas-relief, small as it is. The sphinx with a caduceus, figure 14, is another admirable bit, and it is strange to see how careless the artist has been about cleaning up his background; he has left irregular traces of the white glass there, in the full conviction that they would make no difference—that his modeling was fine enough to bear all such little drawbacks. Figure 15 is a fragment of a bas-relief of real Hellenic beauty, and has a suggestion in it of the Parthenon frieze. Figure 16 is a head of Roman dignity, and (dare we say?) of Roman lack of amiability. The head is laureled: perhaps a comparison with coins might enable us to guess at the name of the personage represented. And now we come to reliefs in two colors, where the onyx-like glass has not been used merely to give a white relief upon a dark ground, but for the adornment of the sculpture itself. Figure 17 is



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FIGURE 18.

a head, of which the heavily dressed hair, in great rolls and ridges, is of very dark blue glass, and the face itself in opaque white. In this piece

a band of leaf-gold covers the fillet of white glass that goes around the head. Figure 18 is a Roman lady with another elaborate coiffure, the hair, in its tightly curled masses, is cut out of the dark glass, while the face and neck with the earring and necklace are carved in the white material. This head is inclosed in an oval panel, slightly depressed below the general surface of the piece, and molded at the edge in a delicate frame.

There are in the Coleman collection perfect and unbroken bowls and vases, and some of these are of great beauty. But the charm of it is in the comparisons it makes possible among some thousands of specimens of almost every kind of ancient glass which is known to us. No collection of perfect vessels which exists, or which is likely to be brought together, could contain so many varieties of glass, and, for obvious reasons, perfect vessels could hardly afford such ample opportunity for study of make and texture, and of all the processes of manufacture.

Russell Sturgis.

LOVE IN MASQUERADE.

I DREAMED that love came knocking
 At your door one winter night,
 While the specter trees were rocking
 In a blast of savage blight.
 "Oh, I perish!" poor Love pleaded;
 "Ope the door, for love's dear sake."
 But although you heard and heeded,
 Still no answer would you make!
 Not one word of sweet replying
 Would your haughty lips have said,
 Even if Love had lain there dying,
 Even if Love had lain there dead!

Then I dreamed that Love o'er-ruled you;
 For in tenderest voice he cried,
 "Nay, dear lady, I sadly fooled you,
 Since I am not Love, but Pride."
 And you straightway oped your portals,
 With a merry and welcome nod,
 To that wiliest of immortals,
 To that masquerading god.
 Ah, you oped your portals lightly,
 Not for Love's, but Pride's, dear sake;
 Yet, O lady, if I dreamed rightly,
 Love soon taught you your mistake!

Edgar Fawcett.

