



Sandwich Glass Medallion.

Ancient Colors in Sandwich Glass

THE legend of a lost art still haunts our stained glass shops. Few of us escape some reference to it from one week's end to another. Often it relates to color; and who can blame a returned tourist for asking questions about the colors in ancient glass?

If he has visited Chartres and has gloried in the appeal of the western group throughout the changes of a sunny day, he is probably sure that the twelfth century colors in glass are lost to us forever.

Recently a travelled architect said to me: "Of course you fellows can't get blues like those in the Tree of Jesse and *La Belle Verrière* at Chartres. Too bad that formula is lost!"

He looked incredulous when I said the formula had been re-discovered if it ever had been lost. His face didn't clear very much when I pointed out to him, on my large color-photographs, modern areas of blue restorations in both those windows. He did admit that, as he studied the windows themselves, even with powerful glasses, he had not noticed any real break in the blues of either window.

He listened respectfully to my declaration that the glassmaker is not to be blamed for our "Lost Art." He was making beautiful glass in the dark ages when Sir Joshua Reynolds and china decorators were painting picture windows. Even in our own dark period, the glassmaker far excelled the artist-designer in clever effects.

To-day the artist-in-glass who knows his stuff has gratitude and praise for glassmakers in America and in Europe. They have given him a palette to rival that of the twelfth century. Let the window makers accept that challenge! While I continued to deny the "loss" of colors — an apprentice charged into the room jubilant over a small medallion in his hands. He held it triumphantly against the light, and we both shared his enthusiasm.

"That's like it!" the architect exclaimed, "That's like old glass color, especially the blues and reds. Where did you get that glass?"

He was frankly incredulous when I said that the medallion was made of Sandwich glass fragments. Naturally the familiar label called to his mind tableware in white and tints that col-

lectors and dealers have long recognized as an important item among New England antiques.

When we compared pieces of ancient glass (patined and corroded) from Chartres and Canterbury with bits of broken Sandwich glass, his wonder grew. We agreed that here is a region for lively speculation. How could those workmen have attained such a mastery of pure color when the demand for color was probably a casual one? Color in tableware, even against white linen, could never have the eloquence of glass directly in light. So it is hardly possible that these colors were achieved in the Sandwich works through research and experiment alone.

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WHEN we learn that skillful glassmakers were brought from England and Ireland (later from France, Germany, and Belgium) to Sandwich, we have another idea. Our speculations turn to formulas, and we wonder if there isn't something in the persistent legend that old color-formulas have been jealously preserved through centuries — and never "lost."

Deming Jarves, the founder of the Sandwich Company, leaves some interesting suggestions in his little book *Reminiscences of Glassmaking*. His words of the Leighton family are significant. "Convinced of the importance of scientific skill in their business, they (the Sandwich managers) secured some years ago the services of Mr. Leighton and his three sons at a liberal compensation." The word "liberal" may mean that they were lured away from the New England Glass Company of Cambridge where Thomas Leighton (the founder of the Leighton family of glassmakers in America) reigned as "gaffer," or superintendent, from 1826 to his death in 1849.

The career of Thomas Leighton is interesting. He is said to have begun his apprenticeship at the age of seven in Birmingham (home of the famous Chance, known of all stained glass men). Afterwards he went to Dublin, later to Edinburgh where he became "gaffer." There he was prevailed upon to join the New England Glass Company in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The glass industry and its secrets were closely guarded in Great Britain then, and he "escaped" to America by way of a "fishing trip" to France. He was a man of character and deserves a high place among the talented and skillful glassmakers of New England. Rumor credits the Leighton family with important color formulas but Frank W. Chipman (in the *Romance of Old Sandwich Glass*) tells us that discoveries were

made in that factory. James D. Lloyd discovered the brilliant clarifying effect of Oxide of Antimony. Other Sandwich men perfected the process of making ruby glass with gold.

We are quite willing to believe all he says about the skill of those glassmakers when we note the clarity and brilliance of that glass against the light. Its colors rival those made especially for our windows, and the varied textures and thicknesses of fragments remind us of a wise remark Deming Jarves himself made about ancient stained glass in his *Reminiscences* (quoted in part from M. Chevreul): "Much of the ancient glass is of unequal thickness, and so presents convex and concave parts, which refract the light differently and produce an agreeable effect." Wouldn't he be surprised and pleased to know that just such an effect is attained — in little — by the use of bits of his jewelled Sandwich glass? Would he recognize articulations of glowing nuggets from cullets discarded by his workers a century ago and rescued by lovers of light and color to-day?

C. J. C.

The Beauty of Color

By MARY WEBB*

COLOR, like fragrance, is intimately connected with light; and between the different rays of the spectrum and the color-cells of plants there is a strange telepathy. These processes, so little explored, seem in their deep secrecy and earthly spirituality more marvellous than the most radiant visions of the mystics.

Green is the fresh emblem of well-founded hopes. In blue the spirit can wander, but in green it can rest. . . . Uncurling oak-leaves have a dash of blue and a great deal of sienna; daffodil leaves and holly are blue-green; young larches are sky and gamboge; there is a great deal of red in the tender young leaves of birches; fir-needles have a whitish line on the underside; yews are black-green; the laburnum is toned with gray. Because it is so plentifully mixed with other colors, it is never crude.

* From *The Spring of Joy*. With permission of E. P. Dutton Company, Inc.