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## "THE LOST ARTS."

EXTRACTS FROM A LECTURE BY  
WENDELL PHILLIPS.

The following lecture on "The Lost Arts," by Wendell Phillips, is replete with entertainment and instruction, and is well worth reading. Mr. Phillips, during the present lecture season, has delivered this interesting review of his subject before crowded houses in the principal cities east of the Rocky Mountains:

### EVERYTHING IS BORROWED.

You may glance around the furniture of the palaces in Europe, and you may gather all these utensils of art and use, and when you have fixed the shape and forms in your mind, I will take you into the Museum of Naples, which gathers all remains of the domestic life of the Romans, and you shall not find a single one of these modern forms of art or beauty or use, that was not anticipated there. We have hardly added one single line or sweep of beauty to the antique.

Take the stories of Shakspeare, who has, perhaps, written his forty odd plays. Some are historical. The rest, two thirds of them, he did not stop to invent, but he found them. These he clutched, ready made to his hand, from the Italian novelists, who had taken them before from the East. Cinderella and her slippers is older than all history, like half a dozen other baby legends. The annals of the world do not go back far enough to tell us from where they first came.

All the boys' plays, like everything that amuse the child in the open air, are Asiatic. Rawlinson will show you that they came somewhere from the banks of the Ganges or the suburbs of Damascus. Bulwer borrowed the incidents of his Roman stories from legends of a thousand years before. Indeed, Dunlop, who has grouped the history of the novels of all Europe into one essay, says that in the nations of modern Europe there have been 250 or 300 distinct stories. He says at least 200 of these may be traced, before Christianity, to the other side of the Black Sea. If this were my topic, which it is not, I might tell you that even our newspaper jokes are enjoying a very respectable old age. Take Maria Edgeworth's essay on Irish bulls and the laughable mistakes of the Irish. Even the tale which either Maria Edgeworth or her father thought the best is that famous story of a friend writing a letter as follows: "MY DEAR FRIEND: I would write you in detail, more minutely, if there was not an impudent fellow looking over my shoulder reading every word." ("No, you lie—I've not read a word you have written.") [Laughter.] This is an Irish bull, still it is a very old one. It is only 250 years older than the new Testament. Horace Walpole dissented from Richard Lovell Edgeworth and thought the other Irish bull was the best—of the man who said: "I would have been a very handsome man but they changed me in the cradle." [Great laughter.] That comes from Don Quixote, and is Spanish; but Cervantes borrowed it from the Greek in the fourth century, and the Greek stole it from the Egyptian hundreds of years back.

### GREEK JOKES IN THEIR DOTAGE.

There is one story which it is said Washington has related of a man who went into an inn and asked for a glass of drink from the landlord, who pushed forward a wine-glass about half the usual size—the tea-cups also in that day were not more than half the present size. The landlord said, "The glass out

of which you are drinking is 40 years old." "Well," said the thirsty traveler, contemplating its diminutive proportions, "I think it is the smallest thing of its age I ever saw." [Renewed laughter.] That story as told is given as a story of Athens 375 years before Christ was born. Why! all these Irish bulls are Greek—every one of them. [Great merriment.] Take the Irishman who carried around a brick as a specimen of the house he had to sell [laughter;] take the Irishman who shut his eyes and looked into the glass to see how he would look when he was dead [renewed laughter;] take the Irishman that bought a crow, alleging the crows were reported to live 200 years, and he meant to set out and try it. [Laughter.] Take the Irishman who met a friend who said to him, "Why, sir, I heard you were dead." "Well," says the man, "I suppose you see I'm not." "Oh! no," says he; "I would believe the man who told me a good deal quicker than I would you." [Great merriment.] Well! those are all Greek. A score or more of them, of a parallel character, come from Athens.

Our old Boston patriots felt that tarring and feathering a Tory was a genuine patent Yankee firebrand—Yankeeism. They little imagined that when Richard Cœur de Leon set out on one of his Crusades, among the orders he issued to his camp of soldiers was that any one who robbed a hen-roost should be tarred and feathered. Many a man who lived in Connecticut has repeated the story of taking children to the limits of the town and giving them a sound thrashing to enforce their memory of the spot. But the Burgundians in France, in a law now 1,100 years old, attributed valor to the east of France because it had a law that the children should be taken to the limits of the district, and there soundly whipped, in order that they might forever remember where the limits came.

So we have very few new things in that line. [Laughter.] But I said I would take the subject, for instance, of this very material—very substance—glass. It is the very best expression of man's self-conceit.

### TEACHINGS FROM GLASS.

I had heard that nothing had been observed in ancient times which could be called by the name of glass; that there had been merely attempts to imitate it. I thought they had proved the proposition; they certainly had elaborated it. In Pompeii, a dozen miles south of Naples, which was covered with ashes by Vesuvius 1800 years ago, they broke into a room full of glass; there was ground glass, window glass, cut glass and colored glass of every variety. It was undoubtedly a glass-maker's factory. So the lie and the refutation came face to face. It was like a pamphlet printed in London in 1836 by Dr. Lardner, which proved that a steamboat could not cross the ocean, and the book came to this country in the first steamboat that came across the Atlantic.

The chemistry of the most ancient period had reached a point which we have never even approached and which we in vain struggle to reach to-day. Indeed, the whole management of the effect of light on glass is still a matter of profound study. The first two stories which I have to offer you are simply stories from history.

The first is from the letters of the Catholic priests who broke into China, which were published in France just 200 years ago. They were shown a glass, transparent and colorless, which was filled with a liquor made by the Chinese that was shown to the observers and ap-

peared to be colorless like water. This liquor was poured into the glass, and then, looking through it, it seemed to be filled with fishes. They turned this out and repeated the experiment, and again it was filled with fish. The Chinese confessed that they did not make them; that they were the plunder of some foreign conquest. This is not a singular thing in Chinese history, for in some of their scientific discoveries we have found evidence that they did not make them, but stole them.

The second story, of half a dozen, certainly five, relates to the age of Tiberius, the time of St. Paul, and tells of a Roman who had been banished and who returned to Rome, bringing a wonderful cup. This cup he dashed upon the marble pavement, and it was crushed, not broken, by the fall. It was dented some, and with a hammer he easily brought it into shape again. It was brilliant, transparent, but not brittle. I had a wine-glass when I made this talk in New Haven, and among the audience was the owner, Professor Silliman. He was kind enough to come to the platform when I had ended and say that he was familiar with most of my facts; but, speaking of malleable glass, he had this to say—that it was nearly a natural impossibility, and that no amount of evidence which could be brought would make him credit it. Well, the Romans got their chemistry from the Arabians; they brought it into Spain eight centuries ago, and in their books of that age they claim that they got from the Arabians malleable glass. There is a kind of glass spoken of there that, if supported by one end, by its own weight in twenty hours would dwindle down to a fine line, which could be curved around the wrist. Von Beust—the Chancellor of Austria—has ordered secrecy in Hungary in regard to a recently discovered process by which glass can be used exactly like wool and manufactured into cloth.

These are a few records. When you go to Rome they will show you a bit of glass like the solid rim of this tumbler—a transparent glass, a solid thing, which they lift up so as to show you that there is nothing concealed, but in the center of the glass is a drop of colored glass, perhaps as large as a pea, mottled like a duck, finely mottled with the shifting colored hues of the neck, and which even a miniature pencil could not do more perfectly. It is manifest that this drop of liquid glass must have been poured, because there is no joint. This must have been done by a greater heat than the annealing process, because that process shows breaks.

The imitation of gems has deceived not only the lay people, but the connoisseurs. Some of these imitations in later years have been discovered. The celebrated vase of the Genoa Cathedral was considered a solid emerald. The Roman Catholic legend of it was that it was one of the treasures that the Queen of Sheba gave to Solomon, and that it was the identical cup out of which the Saviour drank at the Last Supper. Columbus must have admired it. It was venerable in his day; it was death for anybody to touch it but a Catholic priest. And when Napoleon besieged Genoa—I mean the Great Napoleon—it was offered by the Jews to loan the Senate \$3,000,000 on that single article of security. Napoleon took it and carried it to France, and gave it to the Institute. Somewhat reluctantly the scholars said: "It is not a stone; we hardly know what it is."

### EXCELLENCE PER SE.

Cicero said that he had seen the entire Iliad, which is a poem as

large as the New Testament, written on skin so that it could be rolled up in the compass of a nut shell. Now this is imperceptible to the ordinary eye. You have seen the Declaration of Independence in the compass of a quarter of a dollar, written with glasses. I have today a paper at home half as long as my hand, on which was photographed the whole contents of a London newspaper. It was put under a dove's wing and sent into Paris, where they enlarged it and read the news. This copy of the Iliad must have been made by some such process.

In the Roman theater—the Coliseum, which could seat 100,000 people—the Emperor's box, raised to the highest tier, bore about the same proportion to the space as this stand does to this hall, and to look down to the center of a six-acre lot was to look a considerable distance. (Considerable, by the way, is not a Yankee word. Lord Chesterfield uses it in his letters to his son, so it has a good English origin.) Pliny says that Nero, the tyrant, had a ring with a gem in it which he looked through and watched the sword play of the gladiators—men who killed each other to amuse the people—more clearly than with the naked eye. So Nero had an opera glass.

So Mauritius, the Sicilian, stood on the promontory of his island, and could sweep over the entire sea to the coast of Africa with his *naucopite*, which is a word derived from two Greek words, meaning to see a ship. Evidently Mauritius, who was a pirate, had a marine telescope.

You may visit Dr. Abbott's Museum, where you will see the ring of Cheops. The signet of the ring is about the size of a quarter of a dollar, and the engraving is invisible without the aid of glasses. No man was ever shown into the cabinets of gems in Italy without being furnished with a microscope to look at them. It would be idle for him to look at them without one. He couldn't appreciate the delicate lines and the expression of the faces. If you go to Parma they will show you a gem once worn on the finger of Michael Angelo, of which the engraving is 2,000 years old, on which there are the figures of seven women. You must have the aid of a glass in order to distinguish the forms at all. I have a friend who has a ring, perhaps three-quarters of an inch in diameter, and on it is the naked figure of the god Hercules. By the aid of glasses you can distinguish the interlacing muscles and count every separate hair on the eyebrows. Layard says he would be unable to read the engravings on Nineveh without strong spectacles, they are so extremely small. Rawlinson brought home a stone about twenty inches long and ten inches wide, containing an entire treatise on mathematics. It would be perfectly illegible without glasses. Now, if we are unable to read it without the aid of glasses, you may suppose the man who engraved it had pretty strong spectacles. So the microscope, instead of dating from our time, finds its brothers in the Books of Moses—and these are infant brothers.

### THE OLD DYES.

So if you take colors. Color is, we say, an ornament. We dye our dresses and ornament our furniture. It is an ornament to gratify the eye; but the Egyptian impressed it into a new service. For them it was a method of recording history. Some parts of their history were written; but when they wanted to elaborate history they painted it. Their colors were immortal, else we could not know of it. We find upon the

stucco of their walls their kings holding court, their armies marching out, their craftsmen in the shipyard with the ships floating in the dock, and in fact we trace all their rites and customs painted in undying colors. The French who went to Egypt with Napoleon said that all the colors were perfect except the greenish-white, which is the hardest for us. They had no difficulty with the Tyrian purple. The burned city of Pompeii was a city of stucco. All the houses are stucco outside, and it is stained with Tyrian purple—the royal color of antiquity.

But you can never rely on the name of a color after a thousand years. So the Tyrian purple is almost a red—about the color of these curtains. This is a city of all red. It has been buried seventeen hundred years, and if you take a shovel now and clear away the ashes this color flames up upon you a great deal richer than anything we can produce. You can go down into the narrow vault which Nero built him as a retreat from the great heat, and you will find the walls painted all over with fanciful designs in arabesque, which have been buried beneath the earth fifteen hundred years; but when the peasants light it up with their torches the colors flash out before you as fresh as they were in the days of St. Paul. Your fellow-citizen, Mr. Page, spent twelve years in Venice, studying Titian's method of mixing his colors, and he thinks he has got it. Yet come down from Titian, whose colors are wonderfully and perfectly fresh, to Sir Joshua Reynolds, and although his colors are not yet a hundred years old, they are fading; the colors on his lips are dying out, and the cheeks are losing their tints. He did not know how to mix well. All this mastery of color is as yet unequalled. If you should go with that most delightful of all lecturers, Professor Tyndall, he would show you in the spectrum the vanishing rays of violet, and prove to you that beyond their limit there are rays still more delicate and to you invisible, but which he, by chemical paper, will make visible; and he will tell you that probably, though you see three or four inches more than 300 years ago your predecessors did, and yet 300 years after our successors will surpass our limit. The French have a theory that there is a certain delicate shadow of blue that Europeans cannot see. In one of his lectures to his students, Ruskin opened his Catholic mass-book and said: "Gentlemen, we are the best chemists in the world. No Englishman ever could doubt that. But we cannot make such a scarlet as that, and even if we could it would not last for twenty years. Yet this is 500 years old." The Frenchman says: "I am the best dyer in Europe; nobody can equal me, and nobody can surpass Lyons." Yet in Cashmere, where the girls make shawls worth \$30,000, they will show him 300 distinct colors, which he not only cannot make, but cannot even distinguish. When I was in Rome, if a lady wished to wear a half dozen colors at a masquerade, and have them all in harmony, she would go to the Jews, for the Oriental eye is better than even those of France or Italy, of which we think so highly.

### ANCIENT MASTER ARTISANS.

Taking the metals, the Bible in its first chapters shows that man first conquered metals there in Asia, and on that spot today he can work more wonders with those metals than we can.

One of the surprises that the European artists received when the English plundered the Summer palace of the King of China was the curiously-wrought metal vessels [CONCLUDED ON FIFTH PAGE.]