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BY THE REV. CHARLES W. KING, M.A., Senior Fellow of Trin. Coll., Cambridge.

THE ROYAL COLLECTION.

AMONGST the numerous and magnificent Collections contributed to the Exhibition of Works of Glyptic Art, held in the rooms of the Archæological Institute (June, 1861), that entrusted to the society by the gracious permission of Her Majesty was of peculiar interest, arising from the unique character of many among the objects comprised within it; a character derived, indeed, necessarily from the circumstances under which it has grown up to its present extent. It may, in fact, be described as a relic-chamber in miniature of the royalties of Europe during the last three and a half centuries. With a few unimportant exceptions of indifferent antique intagli and modern copies, the gems are exclusively camei, ranging in date from the first years of the Revival down to the recent extinction of the art, and consist principally of portraits, contemporary, of the sovereigns reigning in this and the other kingdoms of Europe, during those three centuries and a half, or of others, distinguished statesmen and warriors, who flourished during those same ages. Hence, this series would furnish a rich harvest to any one who had made historical miniatures his special study; a branch of archæology with which the writer of this sketch is, unfortunately, but very slightly acquainted. These camei, executed either by the direct commission of our kings, or

received by them as presents from other royal patrons of the art, form a series unique in itself, the growth of centuries; and therefore, taking into account the conditions of its origin, altogether without a parallel. Many mythological subjects also, the works of the respective engravers of the portraits, have accompanied the latter into the collection: for the most part fine works indeed, but such as are to be seen in abundance elsewhere, and in the cabinets of private amateurs. The camei really antique are few in number and dubious in character, with one extraordinary exception, which from its importance demands a special and detailed description, to be found at the end of this notice.

The series of regal portraits opens with, perhaps, the earliest authentic one (of modern date), anywhere now extant, a head in profile of Louis XII. on a ruby, a stone of considerable size (being half an inch in diameter), and of the finest quality. The drawing is correct, though somewhat stiff, after the usual manner of the Quattro Cento heads: the relief is somewhat flat, and all the details most accurately finished: both for material and execution this gem is an invaluable monument of the early times of the art. Both the choice of the stone and its style may warrant its attribution to Domenico dei Camei, famed for his portrait of Ludovico Il Moro, upon the same (in that age), almost priceless precious stone; for it may reasonably be conjectured, that the French conqueror of the last of the Sforzas had commanded the Milanese engraver to perpetuate his own features, in the same manner by which he had once before made his skill in the newly revived art famous throughout all the Courts of Italy. This ruby is set in a massy gold ring in the fashion of the times, having the name of "Loys XII." and the date of his decease, 1515, engraved inside. Can it have been sent as a memorial of this king on his decease to his brother-in-law Henry VIII.?

Next comes a bust in front face shewing the bluff features of the latter monarch, a cameo minutely finished and displaying the usual flat relief of such works done in the first quarter of the sixteenth century. It is upon a choice sardonyx, the relief in pearly white upon rich brown sard. Still more important is another likeness of the same good-humoured tyrant, which gives us his bust again in front face, accompanied by that of the infant Edward VI., wearing a

baby's cap, also in front face ; a work made out in every detail with all the precision of a miniature of the period. Everything in this tends to support the opinion, that similar camei were executed in Italy or France after paintings, (in this particular case we might safely aver, by Holbein,) sent to serve as models to the gem engraver, the Vicentino, or Nazaro, then in the height of his reputation. This gem is indeed a wonderful, probably an unrivalled, example of these early portrait camei. The stone, an oval nicolo of extraordinary dimensions, has the back hollowed out in intaglio, so as exactly to correspond with the reliefs on the front, the heads being sunk exactly under and corresponding part for part with the cameo of the obverse, in order to give transparency to the heads when viewed by transmitted light ; a singular expedient peculiar to this period or individual artist, and to be also observed in the head of Edward VI. in the Devonshire *parure*. (Necklace, No. 48.)

An excellent profile head of Francis I. on a yellow and white onyx, the relief in the coloured layer upon a transparent ground, forms the centre of the most superb enameled pendant jewel for a neck-chain, remaining to us from those gorgeous times. The oval frame inclosing it has on either side Mars and Cupid, full length figures as supporters ; above it reclines a second Cupid, at the bottom lies coiled the device of Francis, the salamander. At the back of the cameo is a group, Apollo and Daphne, in full relief, affixed to and covering the extent of the setting. From the legend beneath, significant in its application, DAPHNEM PHEBUS AMAT, it is by no means an improbable conjecture, that this elaborate specimen of the artist-goldsmith's skill was designed as a present or love-token for some beauty of the name of "Laura," who at the moment held captive the amorous warrior. Unfortunately no inscription or cypher can be discovered upon it, to support this conjecture, although the name of each deity is with superfluous liberality of information written either beneath him or at the back. These figurines are perfectly modelled and elegantly designed, whilst the enamel upon them is admirably coloured and altogether unimpaired. Several *breloques* set with cameo-heads in various stones, works of the same age, hang from it by short chains ; the best of these is a veiled head of Ceres, on a large and fine coloured turquois.

Following this in order of time may be noticed five busts in somewhat higher relief, all camei of small size, which present that type of female portrait which passes muster usually for Mary Queen of Scots. One of these has been identified by an experienced judge as Lady Jane Grey; amongst the rest, one is probably the Duchess of Parma, the others are possibly Italian or French princesses of that age; the similarity of style and of costume rendering the exact attribution of this class of portraits in the highest degree difficult. There is, however, one of the number which, closely examined, appears to be an authentic portrait of the Scottish Queen. But the matured skill of the last half century of the Cinque Cento period has never produced a more extraordinary or more beautiful cameo than the bust of Queen Elizabeth upon a large and perfect sardonyx, in which the relief stands out boldly in a pure white upon a ground of the richest brown sard. The face is life itself, whilst the details of the jewelry, the plaits and intricacies of the head-tire and of the farthingale, testify to the incredible patience of the engraver. As a work of art this ranks first in the series. Pendant to this is an equally fine, though much smaller, cameo, of her grim wooer Philip II., beautifully finished doubtless by his own court engraver, Jacopo da Trezzo; the relief in white on a dark ground. It is evidently from the same hand as the more important one, No. 200, Besborough Gems. An agate with the head of Philip is mentioned by Van der Doort, among gems belonging to Charles I., given to him in 1637. (Catalogue edited by Vertue, p. 59.)

A head of William III., signed NATTER, deserves examination, as does also the bust of Clementina Sobieski, wife of the Old Pretender, a charming and delicate performance, finished, particularly as regards the hair, much in the antique manner, and a characteristic example of the Roman school at the commencement of the last century, when the engravers abandoned the previous and peculiar style of their country, and sought to revive that of the best Imperial times. The disputed point as to whether the true diamond has ever been engraved is here set at rest, in the first instance that has actually come under my own observation, by the signet made for Charles II., when Prince of Wales. In this the ostrich plumes between the letters C. P.—“Carolus Princeps”

—are neatly and deeply cut upon a table diamond ($\frac{1}{8} \times \frac{3}{8}$ inch in size), formed into a heater-shaped, seven-sided shield. The stone is slightly tinged with yellow, but of fine lustre, and such that of its nature no doubt whatever can be entertained; but to remove all possibility of scepticism, I may add that it has been examined and declared a diamond by Professor Tennant. The ring holding this, in every respect, most interesting relic, has the back enameled with a bow and quiver *en saltire*. A marvellous specimen of metal work is the signet of his unfortunate father, having the royal arms most minutely engraved upon a shield of steel, and the lion and unicorn (modelled with matchless skill in the same metal in full relief) reclining upon the shoulders of a gold ring, and that of a size by no means inconvenient for wear upon the little finger. There is something in the style of the quarterings upon the shield that reminds one of the peculiar touch of the celebrated Simon, whose first employment was that of a seal engraver, and who may well be supposed to have executed this microscopic work for his first patron, before he displayed his genius as a medallist in the service, some years later, of the Protector. An eye-onyx (double-eyed) of uncommonly bright colours, and presenting the most striking similarity to that organ in some ferocious animal, from its being set in a brooch of antique form, has evidently been worn as a prophylactic by some royal lady.

Amongst the mythological subjects a group of Mars and Venus, in the highest relief, in white upon the transparent layer of an onyx, is the most deserving of notice, although there are many elegant heads of nymphs and similar poetic creations in the somewhat large number of modern camei, which any where else would be highly admired. But, as before remarked, it is the series of historical portraits that gives so peculiar an interest to this collection; from a careful study of these (unlike the hasty glance which the few hours allowed by the circumstances of the examination permitted me to give to the most important only) many valuable discoveries may be anticipated in this important department of the art.

This brings us to the grand antique cameo at first alluded to, which, quite appropriately for the situation it fills, may be pronounced the most important as to dimensions, subject, and material that distinguishes any English cabinet of gems. It is of extraordinary magnitude, in form a perfect

oval, $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches high by $5\frac{1}{2}$ wide, and bears an easily recognised portrait bust (in profile) of Constantius II., with laureated head, the spear across the shoulder, and ægis covering the breast. Hence the interest of the portrait itself, for the rarity of such monuments of his times need only be adverted to. The vast sardonyx of the finest quality supplies five well defined layers thus skilfully employed by the ancient *cælator*. The laurel-wreath is rendered in the brown, the flesh in the pearly white, the ægis covered with eagles feathers (not scales) in a darker brown; the Gorgon's head embossed upon it in white is in itself a perfect gem for delicate execution. It must however be owned that the face is without much character, and may belong to any of the three sons of Constantine; it is not indeed the most important portion of the composition, for here, as in all works of the far advanced Decline, the artist has expended his chief pains upon the accessories and the insignia of imperial rank. An elaborate architectural cornice, reserved in the thickness of the slab, encloses the whole, affording another opportunity for the exhibition of the various unrivalled excellencies of the material. It has been fractured into many pieces, but now carefully joined together, and no portion is deficient. The great size of this work leads to the supposition that it may have formed the medallion surmounting a standard, in which position busts of the emperors often appear, and, from its enormous value, it may be conjectured to have decorated that of the *protectores domestici* or Imperial bodyguard. This cameo is thus described by Van der Doort, as one of four "agate-stones" in possession of Charles I., which had come into his keeping:—"Imprimis, a large oval cracked and mended agate stone of four colours, one on the top of another; first brown, and then white, and brown again and then white; wherein is cut an emperor's head in a laurel, side-faced; kept in a leather case, which agate the King had when he was Prince. (*Margin.*) This was cracked and broken in former time by the Lady Somerset, when her husband was Lord Chamberlain." (Catal. of Pictures, &c., belonging to Charles I., edited by Vertue, p. 59.)

Another very singular late Roman cameo in a rare variety of sardonyx, brown, bluish-white, and black, presents in flat relief two youthful heads *regardant*, and covered with helmets of different forms, but such as mark a late period of

the empire. They are enclosed in a rim reserved in the upper layer of the stone. Probably they are the two elder sons of Constantine, for the style of the work as well as the peculiarity of the stone closely resemble those of the large cameo (No. 164) in the Besborough Collection. On the reverse is cut an Anubis-abraxas of the rudest character surrounded by an undecipherable legend: an addition, from its rudeness, plainly due to the following century.

Amongst the remaining camei, a Bacchus gathering grapes, assisted by a little genius, Ampelus, a Jupiter borne aloft upon his eagle, and a lion passant are apparently antique: the two first are small and elegant gems. Of the intagli, a Cupid bending his bow is the best; the list is closed with a few others of ordinary and late Roman work.

The intermixture of many copies of the antique and palpable forgeries amongst relics descending from a historical source, is explained by the fact (recently pointed out to me) that the notorious "Consul Smith," author of the *Dactyliothea Smithiana*, had succeeded in effecting the sale of his collection, almost entirely composed of such articles, to George III.

THE MARLBOROUGH GEMS.

THIS famous collection, as it now stands, has been formed by the union of the Arundel and the Besborough, together with certain additions made towards the close of the last century by the grandfather of the present Duke of Marlborough. The Arundel Collection (numbering 541 gems) seems, as far as I can trace it, to have been brought together chiefly by a Lord Howard of Arundel, towards the end of the seventeenth century; but it contains, nevertheless, a large proportion of much more recent gems subsequently admitted. The majority, indeed, are antique, but intermixed with many copies, some unskilful enough, of celebrated gems, apparently placed here as originals. It includes also many masterpieces of modern art, and several of the best works of Pichler and Marchant, acquisitions of the late noble collector, who has noted in the MS. catalogue preserved at Blenheim, that he had forwarded certain fine stones to Rome to be there engraved by Pichler. A large proportion of these gems, and which appear to represent the original cabinet of the amateur of the Stuart age, whose name is now borne by this

entire division of the Blenheim collection, are set in fine gold in a plain, solid imitation of the ancient ring worn by the later Romans, having a slight, round shank, gradually thickening towards the shoulders. Carrying out too faithfully the ancient fashion, the gems are invariably backed by the gold, which in many cases renders the identification of the transparent specimens extremely difficult. Interspersed throughout the series are many gems of the first quality, uniformly set in massy rings of fine gold, in tasteful forms, which, though slightly diversified, are evidently all of the same age and workmanship. All these are enameled with arabesques of foliage in black, in a pure and elegant Renaissance style, and must necessarily have proceeded from some important collection formed in that same age. The fleur-de-lys placed under the head of one, and the letters D. I. H . S. B. similarly disposed in another, are to be noticed, as perhaps sufficient to furnish some indications to the inquirer concerning the original source whence these truly regal jewels have proceeded.

The Catalogue of this, the larger division of the Marlborough Cabinet (of which the MS. preserved with the collection at Blenheim was entrusted to the Institute through the kindness of the Duke of Marlborough), has been drawn up in Latin by some scholar, whose experience in this branch of antiquities was slight in the extreme, and whose knowledge of antique iconography almost as limited; thus female heads of the most diverse character are with him all portraits of Livia; the male, all of Augustus or of Claudius. For the convenience of reference I have, however, retained his nomenclature, adding such corrections as seemed necessary under each number, inasmuch as the same has been followed, without any questioning, both in the magnificent work, "The Marlborough Gems," and also in the equally elegant plates by Worlidge.

Of the Besborough gems (200 in number), Natter has left an ample Catalogue Raisonnée, dated 1761, for the use of a MS. copy of which in the Duke of Marlborough's possession, we are indebted to his Grace's courtesy. This Catalogue, however, much to my surprise, manifests little acquaintance with the subject, either as regards the different styles of art, the relative antiquity of the gems, or the real significance of the designs. As for the portraits, they seem here also to have been attributed almost at random, and to

a very restricted number of the famous names of antiquity : a strange error for an actual worker in gems to commit, and also for the author of the "*Maniere antique de graver en pierres fines*" to indorse, he follows the then prevailing English custom (remarked upon by Lessing) of terming "beryl" every other shade of the sard except the red, which is throughout his "carnelian." His numeration has been adhered to in the following conspectus of this portion, though it will be found here not quite consecutive, for the rings appear to have been somewhat displaced from his arrangement.

Of the 200 thus catalogued by Natter, a note informs us that Nos. 85 to 129 inclusive were bought of Lord Chesterfield by Lord Besborough (Duncannon), and Nos. 130 to 162 from the famous Medina¹ Cabinet at Leghorn : the remainder were due to the choice and taste of his Lordship himself.

Although the Besborough Collection deservedly ranks as one of the first in Europe for the interest and value of the works of art it contains (as viewed exclusively in that light) amongst the gems themselves, yet is it pre-eminently distinguished by the unusual taste and elegance of the rings in which they are for the most part set. In this point of view alone they will furnish a rich treat to every amateur in that elegant branch of the jeweler's craft. Some are choice examples of the Renaissance goldsmith's skill ; the majority, however, plainly show that they were made to the commission of the noble possessor, exhibiting as they do the most varied designs in the Louis XV. style, in which one is at a loss what most to admire—the fertility of invention displayed in the great variety of the forms, or the perfection of workmanship with which these designs have been carried out in the finest gold. Beautiful illustrations are they of an art now extinct, that of the artist-jeweler, in these days too often replaced by the lifeless manufacture which mechanically reproduces unmeaning patterns, for sale alone.

BESBOROUGH GEMS.

(CASE I.)

The large stones in the first row, despite the eulogium bestowed upon each individually and at great length by Natter, are evidently works of the Renaissance or of later schools. Of the first, a splendid example is No. 2,

¹ Formed by a wealthy Jew of that name for whom Flavio Sirletti executed many of his best works, long regarded

as the finest antiques with signatures of the artists.

the Julius, on a large nicolo of singular beauty of colour, the design betraying all the exaggeration of the later portion of the Cinque Cento period. The sole probable exception to this judgment of mine is No. 3, the Julia Domna, a carefully executed but stiff bust upon a huge beryl. Here the drawing is truly that of her period, when the influence of the Decline had already commenced to affect, though latest of all, this branch of art; but the gem has been so much re-cut and facetted to suit the huge diamond-set seal it now fills (a convincing proof of its supposed value), as greatly to augment the difficulty of forming a satisfactory opinion as to its authenticity.

No. 5. A Bacchanalia: a Faun drawing upon his lap a Nymph "nothing loath," whilst a Satyr blows vigorously upon the double fife, intaglio upon a fine blue beryl, is positively ascribed by Natter to H. Sirletti (though, adds he, claimed by Costanzi). But for the express statement of Natter, the work would seem to indicate a hand by full two centuries anterior to the date of these artists, being altogether in the manner of the Cinque Cento.

10. An oval nicolo of the uncommon width of $1\frac{3}{4}$ inch, but pale in colour, a votive offering from Ammonius to the Heavenly Juno; which, engraved in the rudest late Roman style, represents that goddess, tower-crowned, (as Cybele,) riding upon a lion *courant*, (as seen upon the coins struck at Carthage,) and flanked by the Dioscuri. The dedicatory inscription, cut in the clumsiest characters of the Lower Empire, is, above the figure, **ΟΥΡΑΝΙΑ ΗΡΑ**; and in the exergue **ΑΜΜΩΝΙΟΣ ΑΝΕΘΗΚΕ ΕΠΙ ΑΓΑΘΩ** "dedicated by Ammonius for a blessing," reminding us of the numerous gems of every sort described by Lucian as offerings brought to the same Power (his Dea Syria), from all the nations of the East.

12. An Athlete, a front figure, anointing himself; at his side a table and prize-vase, signed **ΓΝΑΙΟΥ**, a glorious composition on a rich jacinth-coloured sard,² has been mercilessly repolished to the all but total obliteration of the signature and the outline of the figure, in order to bring out the singular beauty of the stone, so as to fit it for the elegant ring it now adorns.

13. Achilles mourning over the slain Amazon-queen, as Winckelmann explains the group; or rather, Apollo lamenting the rash slaughter of Coronis, a more probable interpretation, corroborated by the crow perched on the tree above the corpse, is in all respects a perfect Greek composition, the pose of the male figure, and the execution of the nude, beyond all praise; upon a clear yellow sard.

15. A small comic mask, a three-quarter face with flowing beard, very spirited in treatment is signed **ΚΥΙΝΤΙΑ** in minute characters, evidently intended for the artist's name.—one of the so rare incontestable examples.

19. Head of Omphale, signed **ΓΝΑΙΟΣ**; admirable work, on a rich ruby-sard, but is to all appearance from a modern hand, perhaps Natter's own, as it resembles his avowed works.

27. Interesting as giving the interior of a sculptor's studio; he is

² The nature of this stone has been much disputed, some calling it a hyacinth, some a Bohemian garnet, and on the latter consideration, like Kohler, denying its antiquity "because the ancients always cut such gems en cabochon," but this is indubitably a sard.

Dr. Brunn, in his recently published "Geschichte der Griechischen Künstler," censures the arrangement of the composition and seems inclined to doubt it for that reason; but I have no doubt myself as to the genuineness of work and legend.

seated working at a bust, around are tall vases just finished. These accessories are burnt to a white surface internally, resembling enamel, in a singularly neat manner, of which I have observed no other example: so are also the letters **IXΘΥΣ** on the reverse of the sard, marking it as the signet of some early Christian artist. The work, from its good style, cannot be later than the time of Severus, or even the preceding century.

27. Tydeus, in the well-known attitude, regarding the severed head of Melanippus, on whose corpse he plants his foot; a good archaic Greek gem, and singular from having a Victory of the same style cut upon the reverse.

33. A splendid almandine, a lion seen in front trampling upon an antelope; a hound in the distance. The lion's head in full face, the body in shallow and flat intaglio; a most spirited work of the perfect Greek period.

34. A Dancing Faun; the drawing good but somewhat sketchy, and apparently unfinished, upon sard; it is set in a ring of the most elegant design ever invented by Italian taste. Appropriately to the subject, the shank consists of two thyrsi, whilst around the head of the ring runs an ivy garland, the leaves enameled green. The execution of this charming idea equals the design.

41. A minute nicolo, a comic mask in profile most vigorously treated, inscribed **ΛΟΥΚΤΕΙ** "Lucteus," the owner's name.

44. A palm-tree surrounded by the various pieces of a warrior's panoply; at its foot a ram (perhaps Aries indicating either the horoscope of the owner, or the Sign ruling the scene of his exploits, Persia, &c.³), with the owner's name in large letters **ΜΕΑΙΔΕΡ**. According as we take the combined characters for **AN** or **NAN**, this name may be either Mæander or Menander, probably the latter. Natter ridiculously interprets it as referring to a battle on the banks of the famous stream. In this singular composition the whole of the work is microscopically finished with the diamond-point, upon a sard.

57. A Roman head, of the Augustan age, wrongly called Cicero's, presents us with a singularly exact prototype of the Earl Russell's well known features—the forehead and nose are absolutely identical. One of the most striking amongst the miraculous likenesses occasionally detected in these mirrors of the past. Yellow sard.

58. A Gryphon *courant*, vigorously treated; an excellent and antique cameo.

63. A Frog, or perhaps toad, the latter, says Apollodorus, was the emblem of Argos, deeply cut in a magnificent almandine, of Roman work. A favorite device in the later imperial times, the animal typifying a new birth by its total changes of form and habits, and hence adopted into the list of Christian symbols.

73 and 74. These figures of Meleager and of Perseus signed **ΧΡΩΜΙΟΥ** and **ΚΟΙΝΟΥ**, are modern copies, and indifferent ones too, on pale sards, though often quoted as genuine signatures.

76. This "River god" seems rather a comic poet, reclined and declaiming, with a Satyr or Pan approaching him as if to hold a colloquy, or to inspire his muse. An early cameo of remarkably good work, but nevertheless not so much to be praised as its exquisite old Italian ring, adorned with two masks of Pan upon the shoulders, the very master pieces of chasings in gold—so vigorous, so full of life, are these minute full-faced heads in half relief.

³ Or his native town, Antioch.

77. An accurate copy of the Mercury Criophorus of Dioscorides (by Natter?). Sard.

79. A curious and early Renaissance shell cameo of the Three Kings ; each bust cut in a different shade. The work is so early as to be almost mediæval in design, and probably one of the first efforts in this branch of the Quattro-Cento period.

92. The most valuable as well as genuine example of the sapphire bearing an antique intaglio that I have ever met with, is this head of Caracalla, a faithful, unflattering likeness, displaying the Alexandrian twist in the neck so much affected by him. The intaglio, somewhat shallow, is polished within to a singular degree of lustre ; the hair and beard are rendered by minute drill holes. The stone, a deep violet, but somewhat streaky, $\frac{3}{8}$ inch high by $\frac{1}{4}$ -wide, is for magnitude and authenticity without a parallel in any cabinet.

95. Cicero, on the same precious stone (though a much smaller and paler one), is a good, deeply cut work of high merit considering the difficulty of the material, but certainly is not antique.

87. This is of special interest, being a contemporary portrait of the younger Brutus, a deep intaglio on sard, most carefully finished ; a fine example of the early Roman style ; the hair will be noticed as entirely executed with the diamond-point. An accurate copy of this is the sard (31) in the same case.

75. The Diana of the Hills signed ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝΙΟΥ, an intaglio on a beautiful sardonyx, betraying, by many peculiarities in surface and touch, its modern origin. A copy of the Farnese (by Sirletti?).

91. Two glorious heads, Socrates and Plato, *regardant* ; a bold yet finished example of the best Roman style, on a large and fine coloured almandine. Important as serving to identify the disputed portrait of the latter philosopher.

93. A sard engraved with a head of Lucilla, mediocre in execution, but set in a ring worthy of Cellini, to whose age its workmanship belongs. It is certainly the most artistic example of this ornament that has ever come under my notice. Two nude figures, one seen in front, the other from behind, carved out in flat relief upon the shoulders of the shank, bear torches in either hand which wind round the setting ; doves and flowers fill up the interval between them. The perfection of these minute chasings is beyond all description, each is a finished statuette : curious too is the elegance with which they are employed so as to fall naturally into the curvature required by their position.

In the border of this case are deposited a few uncatalogued gems : two are curious works in burnt sard, in which the white layer of extreme thinness has been removed partially, so that the figures appear painted in white on a red ground, but not raised above it. One, "Christ's Entry into Jerusalem," is a very good composition of numerous figures : the other, three saints, a standing group, has been painted at the back (in colours corresponding to the various robes) so as to give the ground the appearance of an opal, and to produce a singular deception as to the nature of the stone, when viewed by those unacquainted with the contrivance by which this union of brilliant colours is produced : this artifice is mentioned by Agricola in the fifteenth century. Other specimens are to be seen in the Devonshire Collection.

(CASE II.)

This case contains the more choice treasures of the collection ; smaller in extent, but with few admissions of modern or dubious character.

97. The Young Hercules, a noble head ; sard.

98. Plotina (or Marciana) a small head, but in the perfection of the Roman portrait style ; on a sard of equal beauty with the intaglio.

99. A Syrian King (Antiochus Epiphanes ?) with radiated crown as Phœbus ; a head finer than which matured Greek art has left us nothing in this department. European topaz, or bright yellow crystal.

102. Medusa's Head, nearly front face, deeply-cut ; a caduceus, introduced for some unknown motive in the field, has led Natter to class it amongst the heads of Mercury. Greek work of accurate design ; on yellow sard.

106. This Silenus mask, a full face, cannot be sufficiently praised ; it is life itself, a masterpiece of the Augustan age. Sard.

109. Head of a Greek Prince, with full wavy beard, cut off square (Demetrius Nicator), bold but fine work. Sard.

114. Faun leaning against a column, from which springs the half figure of a female, perhaps Echo, represented thus in the story of Narcissus on other monuments ; a comic mask and *pedum* placed on the ground in front. Roman work, on a remarkably clear and green prase, much resembling prehnite.

Another head of the Young Hercules, far surpassing any hitherto noticed in its grandiose character ; indubitably designed for a portrait of Alexander, and by a contemporary artist ; and fully worthy of the fame of Pyrgoteles. Large, deep-colored sard.—Similarly the next, a full face of a Laughing Faun, with vine-crowned hair, due to the same school, is far above the other so numerous repetitions of this subject, such a favorite with the ancients. This intaglio is in somewhat shallow cutting. Sard.

123. Curious head of a Triton, his cheeks intersected by gills, fins floating down from and blending into his jaws. Late Roman on red jasper.

124. The most celebrated gem of the entire Collection, known as the "Head of the Dog Sirius," but really that of the Solar Lion, radiated and with two persea-leaves above it, by which we recognise an Egyptian divinity. The stone is the finest oriental garnet in the world for size and splendour ; the intaglio of the deepest cutting, so that the impression stands out in full relief, shewing the gaping jaws and the very throat of the monster. The work appears Roman of the best period, but the surface of the gem (unless repolished) is suspiciously recent. A work of incredible vigour, and which immortalises Natter, to whom it is now generally assigned (if indeed by a modern hand, for the question is beyond my powers to decide⁴), though it has stronger claims to be considered

⁴ Even the arch-sceptic Kohler calls it a work to which neither ancient nor modern times have produced an equal ; and only cavils at the species of the stone, taking for granted Natter's statement that it is a *Bohemian* garnet. Dr. Brunn does not venture to pronounce a

judgment ; he however shows on the authority of De Murr that it is attributed to Natter by a mistake. Natter owns to having copied it, and his work is probably the large topaz of the Russian Imperial Collection, which made the purchase of his private cabinet.

as a monument of the skill that flourished in Hadrian's times. On the collar is **ΓΑΙΟΣ ΕΠΟΙΕΙ**; ("carbunculus," a fiery stone). Heads of the Sun-lion thus represented, and on garnet, are not unfrequent: such a head is exactly reproduced in this famous gem, hence its antique interpretation as a dog's by the artist, which the collar seems to indicate would be a sure test of a modern origin.

135. Omphale in the garb of Hercules, a Greek work upon an amethyst of unusual color and brilliancy, may be without hesitation pronounced the first amongst the innumerable repetitions of this favorite subject, for its perfect drawing, minute finish, and elegance of pose.

137. Equally remarkable for lustre is this sard, bearing the full-length figure of a masked comic actor, standing in a thoughtful attitude, and holding a long *pedum*. The style of the intaglio is Greek.

140. The earliest and most tasteful example of a Gryllus known to me; the general outline that of a peacock, the body made up of a ram's and elephant's heads combined; the tusks of the former filling out the wings of the bird, and the usual Silenus mask, the breast. The legend **NICE**. T. P. S. A. in the tall, slender lettering of the Augustan age, gives the name and titles of the lady owner, whose sex is likewise expressed by the bird chosen for her device, the attribute of Juno and of empresses. This sard rivals the carbuncle in color and lustre, being as unique in quality as the intaglio upon it is in design.

143. This noted bust of Agrippina, as Ceres, with the signature **ΑΣΠΑΣΙΟΥ**, a boldly executed portrait, has however upon close examination many marks that militate against its genuineness; at all events its antiquity is very dubious; in fact Dr. Brunn pronounces it an indubitable work of Sirletti's.

149. This far-famed intaglio, in which Eneas is seen escaping within the Scæan Gate, whilst Apollo interposes between him and Diomedes, who strikes vainly at the air-drawn phantom of his adversary, is yet in my opinion of but doubtful authenticity. Winckelmann indeed describes an antique paste taken from this very stone. Natter however asserts that this paste is not antique; I suspect that he knew more than he chose to avow about the origin of the work in question. The stone is a fine sard of some size.

151. Bust of a Muse, Terpsichore, her luxuriant hair most artistically tressed round her head; in front, a lyre and a butterfly. A Roman work of uncommon merit, but a modern hand has foisted in, and with blundered spelling, the letters **ΣΑΦ**, with the view of augmenting its historical value as an authentic likeness of the Lesbian Muse.

155. The most singular mimicry of nature, in color as well as form, ever accomplished in this art; a fly in full relief standing entirely out from the onyx in all its natural colors, even the wings have the very gauzy shimmer of nature. Wonderful advantage has been taken of the very unusual shades of the stone to produce a result unique in antique cameo. The extremities of the wings have somewhat suffered. This was perhaps an *ex voto* to Jupiter Apomyios, or Baal-Zebub: or an amulet to keep off his bloodthirsty hosts.

156. Here also do the layers of the onyx serve singularly well by their colors to the character of the "iratus Chremes," as depicted in a bald-headed, red-faced comic mask with hoary beard, seen in front. The contrasting, sharply defined shades of red and white add amazingly to the irascible expression of the countenance in this Roman cameo.

160. This group of Priam kneeling at the feet of the seated Achilles, whilst two Myrmidons stand by on guard, engraved upon a very small sard, is an unrivalled example of early Greek art. Nothing can be imagined more perfect than the drawing of the figures themselves, added to the accuracy of the features, and the minutest details in Priam's costume and the warrior's armour. The grouping also is most effective in its admirable simplicity.

161. A huge spider in its web covers the surface of a magnificent almandine; this is a genuine Roman work, probably designed as an amulet "*contra araneorum morsus*," a defence against the tarantula.

(CASES III. AND IV. *united.*)

These contain the larger camei and intagli of the collection, for the most part mounted in Rococo jewelry (when not otherwise described) set with pale sapphires, carbuncles, amethysts, and peridots of large size, and in a showy style. These settings are in fact highly-ornamented picture frames, and considerably enhance the effect of the camei they inclose.

175. Bust, in full relief, of Marciana (not "*Domitia*"), after her apotheosis, supported on a peacock, whose tail is outspread behind. The face of this statuette is a perfect likeness, and most carefully finished. This invaluable specimen of sculpture in "*hard stones*" (for it is beyond all suspicion a monument of the times of Hadrian) is cut out of a soapy-coloured calcedony, three inches high. It belonged to the Ducal collection at Mantua, dispersed on the sack of that city by the Imperialists in 1628.

165. A bust of Cleopatra represented with negro features, engraved in very flat relief, is a hideous but early Renaissance cameo; perhaps a portrait of the celebrated black slave, the favorite of Clement VII. and of Duke Lorenzo of Urbino, and the mother of Alessandro dei Medici. The bust is executed in the black stratum upon a transparent ground of a most singular onyx two inches in height.

163. The noblest work in relief that graces the Collection, a Medusa's head in more than half relief and three inches in height, in purest calcedony. The face is slightly turned to one side, the work bold and grandiose beyond all description. For magnitude as well as expression, this is perhaps the finest Medusa's head in existence, and far bolder than the celebrated one at Florence, and dates apparently from the Augustan age. The back of the stone has been deeply drilled out in several points, under the nose, the projecting tresses, &c., so as to give transparency to the upper surface.

188. Busts of Livia and the young Tiberius, as in conversation; both in three-quarters relief, cut out of a huge mass of green turquois, and in point of art a truly beautiful work; the likenesses most perfect, and the heads, especially that of Livia, exquisitely modeled.

A head of Caracalla, a three-quarter face, and in half relief. This, an antique fragment, 1½ inch high, has been skilfully applied upon a bust of a similar white stratum and a transparent ground. This is a remnant of a very important work, but doubtlessly smashed to pieces upon the intelligence of the tyrant's death.

176. Another fine Medusa, full faced, in white upon brown; the snaky

locks, only roughed out by the drill, are left unfinished, furnishing an instructive example of the antique mode of procedure.

166. Bust of the deified Augustus, the head veiled and laureated, seen in front, worked in half relief in white cacholong on a transparent ground; this gem is perfect in execution and in a grand style.

184. Serapis, intaglio head of bold Greek work upon an irregular pyramidal mass of the purest amethyst, retaining its natural form, but polished all over. This specimen of the gem, being of unique beauty and dimensions ($1\frac{1}{2}$ inch high), has in all probability been a votive offering dedicated to the deity figured upon it, in the same way as the gems similarly consecrated to the Dea Syria. A perfect amethyst like this, when India was the only source for the supply, must have been of enormous value under the Ptolemies, whose age is recognisable in the style of the engraving.

196. This minute Renaissance cameo, only $\frac{3}{4}$ inch wide, is a masterpiece amongst those miniature works of that age in which lay the especial forte of Pietro Maria da Pescia. Upon it we see a sacrifice, celebrated by no less than six figures before a nude statue of Bacchus mounted upon a lofty pedestal: an aged man in flowing robes, a satyr, the attendant nymphs, a crouching lion behind the altar, are all worked out with most marvellous precision and perfect accuracy of drawing.

164. This superb sardonyx of the brightest colors, light and dark browns, and a blueish white, and $3\frac{1}{4}$ by 3 inches in extent, presents in extremely flat relief an imperial helmeted bust, designated Galba's by Natter, on the strength of the strongly marked aquiline nose that distinguishes the profile. But this characteristic feature, joined to the late form of the helmet, which has a deep neck guard, and the entirely Lower Empire mannerism of the work induces me to assign it with confidence to Constantine, whose profile (late in life) it faithfully represents. His reign, long and luxurious, produced a great revival in the art of engraving camei, more existing of him and of his family than of any of his predecessors (save Augustus and Claudius); but Constantine's far exceeded any of the preceding in the beauty of the sardonyx material, the Eastern trade having then attained its fullest extent. These splendid, huge slabs came probably from the Ballagats range on the N.W. coast of India. The flesh is given in the blueish-white layer, as is the crest of the helmet, which itself is reserved in the light brown, the field almost black, but a rich sard by transmitted light. The entire surface has been re-polished, but slightly and without injury to the work; still, traces of the antique graver are perceptible in the helmet. Traced in large but almost imperceptible letters around the field (by nitric acid?) are the name and titles of some possessor in the sixteenth century, ANDREAS. CARRAIA. COMES. SOVERINAL.

182. A laureated head, "L. Verus," mounted in a most elaborate and elegant Cinque Cento pendant, set with small table diamonds, appears to be a work of the same age as the setting, and in fact bears some resemblance to the portraits of Francis I.

174. Bust of Pallas, a three-quarter face, on a clear pale amethyst, $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. high. A deeply-sunk, magnificent intaglio in the finest imperial style, but the name, ΕΥΤΥΧΗΣ ΔΙΟΣΚΟΥΡΙΔΟΥ, &c., has manifestly been added, and that in the lettering used by Dies and his colleagues. On the other side of the field may be seen a Λ and an effaced letter, an unfinished inscription from the same hand, indications all confirming my opinion as to the supposititious nature of this legend. According to Dr. Brunn, this is a

copy of the most interesting and authentic intaglio of which we have any tradition. The original "crystallino imago" is fully described by Cyriacus of Ancona, who had carefully examined it in the collection of Giovanni Delfino, a Venetian Admiral, in the latter part of the fifteenth century. It was then considered the portrait of Alexander the Great.

186. This Hippocampus, somewhat coarsely cut in high relief in pearly white, upon a black ground, on an oval onyx one inch wide, retains its original setting, a *box-mounting* in thin gold plate surrounded by a margin *decoupe* in a simple pattern. Appended is a loop by which it hung from the necklace. Of late Roman work, as the pierced border indicates (3rd century), as is also the cameo itself, but most rare in this condition.

185. A historical monument of the highest interest, being a gift from Charles V. to Clement VII., and from the latter to the Piccolomini family. The stone, $1\frac{1}{8}$ inch high, a perfect sardonyx, black, bluish-white and brown, exhibits the ancient Indian perforation through its axis. The antique cameo, the head of Omphale, or perhaps Antinous (to whose features a resemblance may be traced in it), is a fine and genuine work of Hadrian's age, scraped out in flat relief by the diamond-point. On its other side a Cinque-Cento artist has taken advantage of so precious a material for a bust of Hercules, front face in very flat relief, a meritorious performance, and highly interesting in its juxtaposition with the true antique, from the comparison between the two extremely diverse manners that it presents. Mounted in a most rich and massy frame with broad margin in gold, carved with arabesques in relief, and set with table rubies and diamonds of fine water; gems, for that period, of considerable size and immense value according to Cellini's table. The edge of the frame is enameled with an elegant arabesque of vine branches in black completely encircling it. The intrinsic value of such a setting, so enormous in the estimation of those times, was doubtless a great recommendation to that necessitous Pontiff (for it was probably amongst the presents interchanged on the reconciliation of Pope and Kaiser after the sack of Rome), though as a Medici he could doubtless appreciate also, at its true worth, the antique treasure that it enshrined.

193. A splendid sardonyx of the same quality as that bearing the portrait of Constantine, and $2\frac{3}{8} \times 1\frac{1}{8}$ inches in size, a stone of great intrinsic value, has been engraved with a sacrifice to Priapus, an intaglio in the late Roman, perhaps Renaissance period; the work quite unworthy of the unique quality of the stone, which, indeed, seems to have been somewhat repolished to bring out the beauty of its colors. The group consists of two females offering cakes and incense before a figure whilst a third blows the flute; a pretty design had it been on an inferior material.

200. Bust of Philip II. by Jacopo da Trezzo, without doubt, a masterpiece of that age, and of equal merit, perhaps from the same hand, as the glorious bust of Queen Elizabeth in Her Majesty's collection. The relief in pure white upon a rich brown. On the reverse is cut the intaglio device, an eagle grasping a serpent and soaring aloft, with the motto, *NIHIL EST QVOD NON TOLLERET QVI PERFECTE DILIGIT*. A mysterious device, warranting, perhaps, the conjecture that this portrait was executed at the command of the Spanish monarch, and sent as a love-token to the virago Queen, before his disappointment led him to the adoption of a more violent system of attack upon the crown matrimonial.

198. The Chnuphis-serpent, in better work than usual, upon a fine,
VOL. XVIII. Y Y

clear prase, has a singular formula surrounding him, **XNOYMIC ΠΙΓΑΝ ΤΟΠΑΗΚΤΑ ΣΑΡΩΦΙΤΑ**. The "Beater of the Giants," *i. e.*, of the Evil Spirits, rebels against the Good Principle; alluding to its powers as an amulet. On the reverse the well-known symbol of the treble S pierced by a bar.

(To be continued.)