

entirely out of fashion—a mark of bad taste, when we consider they are the only gems which cannot be imitated. The finest opal known is one in the museum at Vienna, obtained from Czernowitz, where mines have been worked since 1400. It is of great size and remarkable beauty.

That pearls have been considered one of the richest gifts of nature from remote ages, we may conclude by the frequent mention made of them by that wisest of Jewish kings, who “made silver and gold at Jerusalem as plentiful as stones, and cedar trees as the sycamore trees that are in the vale for abundance.”

Hindoo mythology ascribes the creation of pearls to the god Vishnu, and Pliny says they are formed of the drops of morning dew swallowed by the oyster. When Pompey conquered Mithridates, he found in the treasury a portrait of the king formed of pearls in mosaic, and several crowns of the same material.

Baroques, which are excrescences in the mother-of-pearl, are occasionally very large and display some extraordinary freaks of nature. Caire, a celebrated French jeweler, possessed one representing the Order of the Fleece, another representing a bearded dog, and still another representing a Chinese with crossed legs.

The principal pearl fisheries are on the west coast of Ceylon, the Persian Gulf, Aroo Islands, New Guinea, the Red Sea, and America. The fisheries in Panama and California were probably known to the ancient Mexicans, for we learn from old Spanish histories that the Aztec kings had immense numbers of fine pearls, and we also read that the palace of Montezuma was studded with pearls and emeralds.

Although such substances as lapis-lazuli, coral, and malachite do not properly belong to the family of gems, yet they have been so long used for personal adornment that they may almost claim a relationship. Lapis-lazuli is usually found in granite or calcareous limestone with iron pyrites disseminated through the mass, which, when polished, gives it the appearance of being spotted with gold. Pliny says, “In sapphiris aurum punctis collucet caeruleis; similis est celo sereno, propter aenea puncta stellis ornato;” which may be translated, “In the blue sapphire shine golden specks; it is like a serene sky adorned with stars, on account of its golden points.”

It is a favorite stone for the adornment of Spanish and Italian churches, the largest piece, it is said, in the world being in the church of the Gesù in Rome. It is in the form of a sphere, above the altar, beneath which reposes the remains of St. Ignatius, the founder of the order of Jesuits.

Amber is greatly used in Oriental countries for ornamentation, and is found in great abundance on the Prussian shores of the Baltic and also in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, etc. Various experiments have proved the fact of its vegetable origin, an idea surmised by Pliny. The trees which produced it have been named *pinites succinifer*, and Goepert says, that not less than 163 species of insects have been found, most of which are unknown to us except by what can be learned from their remains encased in amber.

The Greeks had a very pretty tradition con-

cerning the origin of amber, which was, that it arose from the tears of the sisters of Phaeton, who, lamenting his death, were turned into poplar trees and poured forth their perpetual tears into the River Eridanus, which were congealed into succinum or amber.

Malachite is a beautiful copper ore, the finest qualities coming from the mines of Prince Demidoff, in Siberia. There is a magnificent malachite vase in the Vatican, presented to Gregory XVI. by Emperor Nicholas, but it takes away from the admiration we first feel, when we learn that these splendid ornaments are really only *veneered*—the article being made of iron upon which the stone is laid.

Coral is too well known to require mention, except to simply recall the pretty Greek legend that the blood dropping from the head of Medusa, which Perseus had deposited on some branches near the sea-shore, becoming hard, was taken by the sea nymphs and planted in the sea.

The supernatural power ascribed to gems by the ancients is sometimes amusing to recall. Boetius says the ruby is a sovereign remedy against the plague and poisons, it drives away bad spirits and evil dreams. The jacinth will bring honor, riches, and wisdom to the wearer, the amethyst sharpens the wits, the emerald betrays a false witness by changing its color when in the company of such a one, the chrysolite cools boiling water, the diamond makes men courageous and magnanimous, and the sapphire sympathizes in color with the health of its owner.

The Jews had a belief that if, on the Day of Atonement, when the high-priest asked Jehovah to forgive the sins of the nation, the stones in the Urim and Thummin shone brightly, they were forgiven; if, on the contrary, the gems became black or cloudy, God had turned His face from the petitions of his people.

But the question “what makes the diamond like a drop of light?” still remains unanswered. Plato told us that the origin of precious stones was the vivifying power in the stars, which could convert the most vile and offensive matter into the most perfect objects, and the diamond he says is a kernel in the gold, being the purest part condensed into a transparent mass.

Theophrastus, the friend and disciple of Aristotle, says that water is the basis of all metals, earth of all stones, and that their various qualities, such as hardness and density, are produced by the mode of their coalescence and concretion; in some by the action of heat, in others by the action of cold; thus rock crystal was supposed to be a congelation like ice, and only to be found in the coldest regions.

We, who think ourselves so wise in these latter days, say they are made of such and such chemicals, in such and such proportions, but never yet has any one proposed a theory which could account for the formation of the diamond or discovered what lends its color or tinge to the gem.

Shall we not, therefore, stand in humility and reverence before Him who hath not only prepared the earth, that “out of it cometh bread,” but hath also made “the stones of it the place of sapphires, and in it the dust of gold.

Six Weeks After Marriage.

BY “HE.”

HE. Pass the sugar, love? If my coffee were but half as sweet as you are it would need no more.

SHE. Now, I don't think you or your coffee need another bit of anything sweet!

HE. Thank you, pet. See, here are the letters; will my Angel read them to me? so that if there is any good news it will be still better from your lips.

SHE. No indeed! We'll read them together, of course. I'll look over your shoulder.

HE. And your gentle breath will fan my cheek—so!

SHE. Ah! An invitation to Mrs. Grant's reception! Shall we go?

HE. Now, dearest, you know that it rests entirely with you. Whatever gives *you* pleasure makes me happy!

SHE. You precious old dear! Then we'll go—that is, if *you* are perfectly willing. Now don't say yes because I do, for wherever you are, there is my happiness. And what shall I wear? You always know about such things better than I.

HE. Now, my angel (ah, how fittingly were you named! Angelica!—Angel!) you are bewitching in the plainest dress, but any one would know that your name was Angelica, should you wear your satin and lace.

SHE. I knew that you would think just as I did, dearest—not about my being an angel, you know, but the dress. But I would wear it if I didn't like it, and it made me look like an Indian, if it pleased you.

HE. As though it would please me for you to look like an Indian! But you couldn't look anything but lovely if you tried. I ordered the carriage at ten. I thought we would go for a drive in the park, that is, if you would enjoy it.

SHE. Will, dearest, I really believe that you are all the time trying to think of something to make me happy.

HE. Ah, Angelica! Would I not do anything to give you one moment's happiness? Sometimes I think we are almost too happy for it to last.

SHE. Oh, don't say that, dear love. It *will* last; and we shall be even happier than this as the years flit by; for will not our love grow deeper and stronger, with the dawn of each new day? And now, dear, if we are going to ride, I must leave you—just for a little while.

HE. Oh! must you go? But don't be long.

SHE. As though I could! Bye-bye!

HE. There—she is gone. *What* if she were gone out of my life forever? Oh, maddening thought! I could not, would not, live without her. Star of my soul! Guiding me to all that is pure and good and true! my love! my life!

Six years after marriage.

HE. Pass the sugar, Ang.

SHE. I declare, William, you use sugar enough to sweeten even as acid a disposition as yours. Is that to-day's paper? What's the news?

HE. Oh! take the paper if you want it;

but you know that I can't bear to have any one look over my shoulder, and breathe into my face.

SHE. Johnny, stop eating with your fingers—there! Take that, and see if you can't mind next time you are spoken to!

HE. Why, what has the child done? You are altogether too hasty, Mrs. S—!

SHE. I wish, Mr. Smith, that you would attend to your own affairs. You are forever meddling with that which does not concern you.

HE. Well, whose affairs do you think you are attending to? The child shall not be abused because of your abominable temper. *Angelica*, indeed! *Zantippe* would be more appropriate. Where are my letters—give them to me, and I will go.

SHE. I wish you would! There was but one, and that was from a woman. I'm sure I don't know how many female correspondents you have. Oh, you needn't begin to tear around. I mistook the "Mr." for "Mrs." and opened it by mistake.

HE. Oh, yes! Quite likely you opened it by mistake. If there is anything I hate, it is having you open my letters; and—John James, come here, sir! what were you doing? Look at that! I'll teach you to destroy my letters again—there! How does that feel? I'll—

SHE. You wretch! How dare you strike a child of mine in that way? Come here, Johnny! Poor little fellow! did papa hurt him? There, don't cry. Mamma loves him—never mind!

HE. Mrs. Smith, I do wish you would not interfere when I see fit to correct that child. It is strange that a woman doesn't know any thing!

SHE. I would like to know what would become of us if every one in the house knew as little as you do!

HE. Let me tell you, madam, this is improper language to use before a child. I'll hear no more of it! You are as ugly and spiteful as a—as a—if there is a divorce to be had for love or money, I'll have it! I was a fool to ever marry!

SHE. You were, indeed, a fool, sir, and I'm afraid you'll never be any better! Oh, if I had only—known what—a b-brute you—w-were b-before I left m-my—hap-py h-home! Such a—l-life as I lead—d! Ha-ad to re-fu-se the in-vi-ta-tion to-o Weber's party-y b-because I ha-dd noth-in-ng d-ec-cent-t to—wear-r!

HE. Nothing to wear, indeed! sit there and cry because you have "n-noth-ing-g to-o—w-we-ar!" It's buy, buy, buy, and still you have nothing to wear! Where is that dress for which the bill came in the other day? You've never worn that, have you? My favorite color, too! But I don't care whether you go or not. I'd rather you would stay at home. I shall have a better time, I presume.

SHE. I'll go now any how, just to spite you! Your favorite color, indeed! Do you suppose I'd wear a dress that makes me look like a tallow candle, just because you liked it? A round train, too, when they wear square altogether now."

HE. Well, you look like a tallow candle any how, so it can't make much difference. Mrs. Smith, you are enough to ruin a man! Do

you suppose that I am made of money, that you can afford to be so dainty about your dresses? You will—

SHE. I'll not endure this another moment, sir, not one! And my child shall not listen to such language. Come, Johnny! (*Exit.*)

HE. There, she is gone, thank heaven! I remember the time when I thought that I could not live without her, but now I think I could exist quite comfortably. I hadn't tried living with her then long enough to know what I was talking about.

The Wild Grape-vine.

BY BRYANT WHITING.

HERE is a breath from a heavenly land,
That haunts the woods in June,
When the brown bee has his harvest time,
And the robins are in tune.

*Hum, bees! hum among the clover;
Ring, robins! ring the woodland over;
Ring from chestnut, oak, and pine,
The blooming of the wild grape-vine.*

HERE brooklets dream o'er shaded pools,
Where turtles eye the sun,
Faint notes of perfume fill the air,
Like a tune that's almost done.

*Run, brooks! run the blue sea over;
Tell, turtles! tell the crane and plover,
Run and tell, the sun doth shine
On nothing like the wild grape-vine.*

HERE the gum-trees cast dark shadows,
Over green and ferny meadows,
In the sunshine clear and amber,
Twining skyward, vines now clamber.

AR o'er all the fair fields showering
Scents, the senses overpowering,
With a rapture far more charming,
Than the red-grapes' juices harming.
'Twas on those the fauns and satyrs
Drank success to woodland matters,
Holding wild unseemly revels
On Olympian forest levels;
But this rare, ethereal nectar,
Never mortal nerves will hector.

LITTLE pale green blossom, modest,
Thou'rt the best thought of the forest;
Thou art the heart-beat that revealeth
All the warmth sweet summer feeleth,
When a maiden doth discover,
She is loved by a true lover;
Then her pulse in throbbing pauses,
Such a hush the knowledge causes:
Thus, when first o'er field and moor
Steals thy breath, thou summer wooer,
Still, the rover stands enchanted,
Ere he seeks the region haunted,
By a spirit so endearing,
All his tangled pathway cheering.

THE vines on sunny, lichened rocks,
Fantastic shadows fling,
And twine among the forest boughs,
Where bright-eyed squirrels swing.

*Write, rocks! write, on your dumb pages;
Speak, squirrels! speak, you saucy sages!
Among the flowers with breath divine,
The sweetest is the wild grape-vine.*

The Flora of the Swiss Alps.

BY MRS. LIZZIE P. LEWIS.



AMONG my home treasures is a somewhat clumsy volume, filled with pressed flowers, the result of many a summer day's wanderings, and the first link of a chain which binds me to more than one true heart across the broad Atlantic.

Can that April morning ever be forgotten when I began my Alpine tramps? The sombre darkness of the pine forests, the brightness of the sunny slopes, the mystic loveliness of the bejeweled glaciers! We sat down to rest, and our seat was a pillow of greenest moss. At our feet nodded and waved flower-cups more brilliant in color than visions of Paradise, the fungi and lichens even wearing a strange and foreign air.

This first impression never vanished, and though our walks were a hundred times repeated, yet we ever greeted with feelings akin to reverence the high-born flora of the Alps. Long years ago the sound practical sense of the Swiss distinguished separate zones of vegetation by special designations, which are still retained, such as Grass Alps, Maïen or Hay Alps, Intermediary or Terrace Slopes. Recently scientific men have more accurately divided the country into zones of vegetation according to climate, elevation, geological formation, and other characteristics.

The Alpine flora begins half way up the highland zone, between the altitudes of 2,500 and 4,000 feet, but develops itself more fully in the sub-Alpine region, from 4,000 to 5,500 feet. This hill region is rich in plants that love a turfy soil and marsh lands. In the forest clearings great numbers of tall, large-leaved shrubs and bushes seek out the running streams and cover the moist spots in the meadows. They are juicy, luxuriant plants, with dull-colored flowers, because of the perpetual shadows in which they delight to dwell. To this class belong the milfoil, colt's foot and monk's hood, etc. Hanging over precipices of slaty or primeval rock, we find the Alpine alder, the mountain currant, the spurge laurel, and thornless rose. However, for certain reasons, many of the wild plants which formed the original clothing of this district have almost entirely disappeared. The region is now characterized by the number and variety of its grasses, its countless scrophulariæ, orchidæ, ranunculaceæ, rosaceæ, umbelliferous plants, and the beauty and profusion of its timber trees. Shrubs and underbrush grow luxuriantly on this zone, and it has been asserted that nearly three-fourths of the whole Swiss flora are natives of this and the mountain region adjacent.

On this second zone, the number of plants amounts to 600, chiefly characterized by slender forms, long thin stems, leaves and petioles