

## AMBER, CRYSTAL, PEARLS.

### SOME INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT THREE CURIOUS SUBSTANCES.

#### Insects Encased in Amber—A Remarkable Discovery of Crystal—How Chinamen Produce Pearls.

"Amber is a curious stuff," said a collector of curios the other day. "It is only comparatively recently that its nature has been known, and even at this day very few people seem to have any notion as to what it is in reality. The ancients regarded it as altogether mysterious and even magical. They found that it was rendered electrical by friction so as to attract light substances, and our word 'electricity' comes from the Greek name for amber, which was 'electron.' A favorite puzzle with them was how the insects so frequently found in amber came to be so situated. I have myself seen a chunk of very transparent amber in which a small lizard with five legs was encased, looking as if it might have been alive yesterday, though, doubtless, it had been dead for thousands of years. The mystery regarding this sort of phenomenon is easily enough explained when it is understood that amber is actually the fossil gum of an extinct kind of cone-bearing tree. In the process of hardening it imprisoned the flies and other creatures preserved in the chunks of it that are found to-day. It is discovered plentifully by digging in certain parts of the great plains of North Germany, where the strange tree once flourished. It is also found in considerable quantities along the shores of the Baltic, in the yellow sand stone. At Palmicken, in East Prussia, it is dug in regular mines; elsewhere it is picked from cliffs, and a good deal of it is gathered in the shape of nodules cast up by the waves. The finest specimen of amber in Europe is a cup made of that material now at the Brighton Museum, England. It was found at Hove some years ago, together with weapons and utensils of stone and bronze, so it is evidently very ancient, indeed. In the fourteenth century, and before amber was made into knives and forks with one prong, which were used by princes and church dignitaries, it was more valuable than gold then. Now it is worth from \$2 to \$50 a pound, according to its quality. The most important use made of it is for meerschaum and other pipes. Meerschaum, by the way, is a material dug out of the earth in Turkey; it comes in boxes holding fifty pounds and valued at from \$20 to \$300. The dust and chips obtained from it in the process of manufacture are worked in pipes, this material being called 'imitation meerschaum.' Amber dust is melted, and the product is what is sold as 'amberine.'

"What a very beautiful sphere of crystal this is!" said the newspaper man, taking in his hand a cool globe that looked like a huge dewdrop, which the collector handed him for examination. "Yes, that is a pretty specimen. I suppose you are aware of the theory entertained by the ancients regarding such rock crystal. They thought it was actually ice frozen to great density by duration of time, congealed beyond liquidation. The famous writer on natural philosophy, Pliny, who wrote more facts that were not true than ever any man collected together before or since, says the crystal is undoubtedly water frozen by cold so intense that nothing can melt it again. Roman ladies of that time were accustomed to carry such spheres as this one in their hands during hot weather for coolness. It was the thing, also, to have the material worked into wine jugs and other vessels. Nero had two drinking cups of crystal worth \$3000 each, and a crystal ladle also; but when he learned that he had lost his kingdom he broke them, lest they fall into the hands of any one else. A crystal lens was employed in Rome to kindle the sacred vestal fire. Great care was taken not to put the crystal in a warm place for fear that it would melt. The most remarkable discovery of crystal on record was made in 1867 above the Tiefen glacier by a party of tourists, a single cave in the granite yielding 1000 crystals of from fifty to 100 pounds weight."

"And what is this?" "That," replied the collector, "is a diminutive Chinese god, covered with a coat of pearl by a real pearl oyster. On such parts of the coast of the Flowery Kingdom as produce pearl oysters a regular business is often made of manufacturing pearls artificially by introducing into the shells of the live oysters foreign objects of various kinds. You doubtless know that the pearl is a morbid symptom in the bivalve. A grain of sand or some such substance getting into the oyster produces irritation, and the animal protects itself by covering the objectionable particle with coating after coating of its own pearly secretion. The interruption of light by the successive coats of which the pearl is formed in this way gives it its beautiful lustre. Taking advantage of this habit of the pearl oyster the ingenious Chinaman pries it gently open and puts in whatever he likes, maybe a little figure of a god like this. The oyster goes to work and covers it with pearl, until after a few months the idol is a pearl idol. It is worth mentioning incidentally that sharks are by no means such a terror to pearl divers as is commonly supposed. It is true that now and then a diver does get gobbled, but for every such human victim hundreds of sharks are killed by the divers. In a great majority of instances the diver proves more than a match for the sharks, at home as he is in the water, and armed with a long, keen knife for striking the fish behind the pectoral fin in the fatal spot. The diver is perfectly safe while on the bottom gathering oysters, because the man-eating sharks are not ground feeders and they will not touch him there. It is when he is rising to the surface with his catch, out of breath after two minutes spent below, that he is apt to find a fish perhaps thirty-five feet in length looming overhead like a gigantic shadow, waiting to take him in at a bite. This is unpleasant, but it is the

shark that gets the worst of it usually. The first thing that the diver tries to do is to get to the surface for a breath of air, then he gets under again and maneuvers until he gets the fish afloat. Pearl divers in the Torres Straits are not one-twentieth part so much afraid of the tiger sharks which are swarming there as of the giant mollusk at the bottom, six feet or more across its shell, which lies with extended jaws, as if waiting for the unfortunate fisherman to drop into them. The victim, dropping out of his boat into the depths with a heavy stone attached to his feet, brings his leg into contact with the mantle of the huge mollusk, which closes upon the limb with one tremendous bite. Only one thing remains then for the diver to do, namely, amputate the limb with his own knife, because the mighty bivalve's jaws are clasped together with a tenacity that would take several horse power to loosen, and it is anchored to the bottom with a cable of its own three times as strong as the best iron rope."—Washington Star.

### WISE WORDS.

If you are a good man, what are you good for? Be not simply good, but good for something.

When man chooses for himself, he chooses wrong.

Toy pistols kill more people than sixty-four pounders.

A broken word is something that can not be mended.

Don't scold the world until you know your own heart.

If happiness is your object in this life, don't try to get rich.

If you haven't much, you can double it by being thankful.

Life is not worth living, unless you live for somebody else.

No man's conduct can be right whose convictions are wrong.

The only thing you can be sure of success in, is in doing good.

Money lost can be recovered, but an hour lost is gone forever.

It is human nature to want the garden somebody else has made.

No one can love anything good without being made better by it.

A really good man never wants to climb a tree to be looked at.

Thousands of people fall because they are afraid to make a beginning.

The quickest way to become rich is to learn to be contented in poverty.

No man really knows anything until he knows it well enough to tell it.

To have what we want is riches, but to be able to do without is power.

A rotten post will tell you the truth about itself the minute you shake it.

Don't have much to say about yourself if you want to keep clear of hypocrisy.

Example is more contagious than smallpox, and there is no way of vaccinating against it.

People who never think of anybody but themselves are always little, no matter how big they feel.

Let your light shine in your own home, and don't be afraid that it will become too bright. Don't be turning it down all the time, as some people do their gas.

—Indianapolis (Ind.) Rain's Horn.

### The Secret of Shooting on the Wing.

"We are making the best firearms to be found in the world in this country to-day," writes Captain Bogardus in the Philadelphia Times. "Americans on the whole are the best shots. In the English army there are many good shots at long range, but I fail to see the sense of lying on one's back, resting the gun on the toes and blazing away at a target 1,000 yards away. The Germans shoot off-hand at 200 or 400 yards distance, which I think is much better. I advise the American militia to adopt that style, because it will be found more useful in the field in actual warfare. "It is a well-known fact that one-half the shots made in the field are at birds which fly across the sportsman or go quattering off from him, and most of the misses that occur are owing to the failure of the shooter to hold forward enough so that the centre of the charge will be upon the bird when the shot reaches him. The centre of the flight of shot should reach the line of his flight just where he will be when the line of the shot intersects his line of flight, not where he was when the aim was made. At a fast flying crossing pigeon I hold from eight to ten inches ahead; at a quattering bird from three to four inches. At a bird going straight away close to the ground I hold right on; if rising I shoot high. At an incoming bird I shoot right at the head and rarely fail to kill."

### The Pearls of Bahrain.

The pearl fishery is the great occupation of the Bahreine. The pearls of their seas are celebrated for their firmness, and do not peel. They are commonly reported to lose one per cent. annually for fifty years in color and water, but after that they remain the same. They have seven skins, whereas the Cingalese pearls have only six. The merchants generally buy them wholesale by the old Portuguese weight of the cha. They divide them into different sizes with sieves and sell them in India, so that, as is usually the case with specialties, it is impossible to buy a good pearl in Bahrain.—Cornhill Magazine.

### A Palace of Beer Kegs.

One of the biggest features of the World's Fair in Chicago will be furnished by Milwaukee, Wis., provided the plans now being talked of are carried out. It will be a beer palace, modeled somewhat after the corn palace of Sioux City and the ice palace of St. Paul. The imposing structure will be built entirely of beer kegs, casks, bottles and other appurtenances of the beer industry. The plan is to have all the Milwaukee brewers contribute to the affair. Inside this immense structure there will be a number of interesting exhibits. —New York Journal.

### SELECT SIFTINGS.

The tongue of the giraffe is nearly a foot and a half long.

A jaguar will rather attack a black man than a white one.

In Russia a man may appear as a witness in a lawsuit against his wife.

W. L. Osborne, of Phoenix, Arizona, has collected ten tons of honey this season from 171 hives.

Consul Meyers, of Honolulu, declares that of the 1159 lepers at Melohair only twenty-eight are Chinese.

A man in Jefferson County, Penn., is said to have lost his sight from drinking too much ice-water when heated.

A Los Angeles (Cal.) pickle factory bought eighty tons of cucumbers at Anaheim recently at one cent a pound.

Five miles may be taken as the extreme limit at which a man is visible on a flat plain to an observer on the same level.

A North Sea codfisher carries a set of lines 7200 fathoms in length, and having the amazing number of 4680 hooks, every one of which must be baited.

Lincoln, Me., has a blind man who is a clever croquet player. He plays by information as to direction and by measuring the distance by walking to the object ball.

A Waterloo veteran who resides near Oswestry, England, has just attained his ninetyeth year. He has been married four times, and is the father of twenty-four children.

Pemberton, N. J., has a curious freak of nature. At the farm of Alfred Johnson are twin calves, under sized, yet healthy, covered with long white, fleecy wool and with tails like those of a rabbit.

It is said to be not at all unlikely that the house in which President Lincoln died will follow Libby Prison to Chicago, a Western syndicate having made an offer for it. The intention is to put it on exhibition during the World's Fair.

One of the largest forests in the world stands on ice. It is situated between Ural and the Okhotsk Sea, in Russian Siberia. A well was recently dug in this region, when it was found that at a depth of 116 metres the ground was still frozen.

The French order, the Legion of Honor, was established by Napoleon in 1802. There are five grades, that of chevalier, officer, commander, grand officer and grand croix. Recipients receive \$50, \$100, \$200, \$400, \$500 a year respectively.

Richard Trevithick, of England, built the first locomotive in 1804, but the first locomotive after the modern idea was built by George Stephenson in 1829; the idea of the construction of a locomotive was given to the world by James Watt in 1769, and patented by him in 1784.

The St. Joseph (Mo.) News relates that the Mayor of Keytesville, that State, was arrested the other day for a violation of a city ordinance, which prohibits the throwing of paper in the streets. The City Marshal caught him in the act, and the Mayor fined himself \$1 for the offence.

Leigham Court, Streatham, near London, comprising sixty-six acres, has just been sold for \$450,000. It was for many years the residence of the late M. J. Tredwell, a railway contractor, who began life as a navy. His widow still preserves the pick and shovel with which he worked as a laborer.

The barrad or barraid was the name of a conical cap worn by the Irish as late as the seventeenth century, and apparently of very ancient origin. O'More, a turbulent Irish chieftain, is represented wearing one in a delineation of the taking of the Earl of Ormond in 1600. It was of the most primitive form, resembling the capper of the ancient Britons.

### Frauds in Old Furniture.

The most colossal swindles that are perpetrated on the confiding New York public are in old furniture. More old furniture, so-called is sold here in a year than the past produced in a century. Chairs, tables, sideboards, desks, beds, settees, fireplaces—everything, in fact, that is salable, is made right on the spot, in a west-side factory, for one house alone, which supplies all the trade. You can order anything in the way of old furniture you like from this house. If they do not happen to have it they say to you: "Leave your orders and we will have our agents pick it up for you," and almost before you are out of the store the order to manufacture the piece you want is over at the factory. Belgium used to be the great source of production for fraudulent old furniture, but the house in question eventually saw its way clear to making its stock at home. It imported the best Belgian and French wood-carvers and designers it could secure. It purchased genuine old pieces to be used as models, and photographs, engravings and drawings of old furniture in European museums. Its work is beautiful and worth money, though not, of course, the three or four hundred per cent. profit it sticks upon it on account of its alleged antiquity, of which, if you demand it, it will furnish a certificate. One part of its factory is devoted to the production of counterfeit "Grandfather's clocks" alone, of which it sells hundreds every year.—New York News.

### Punished for Eating With Ladies.

Some of the high case Hindus of Bombay have got themselves into trouble by attending a social dinner with two ladies, one of whom was Dr. Emma Ryder and the other the well-known Pundita Ramabai, who will be remembered as a recent visitor to this country. The priests have brought these offending gentlemen to trial and pronounced sentence against them. For eating a simple meal with ladies in the open day, these polluted Hindus must "change their sacred thread," go through a process of purification, "bathe in some sacred tank or river," and do other ridiculous and inconvenient things.—Philadelphia Press.

### A Root's Remarkable Trip for Water.

A story of one of the most interesting freaks of vegetable life is told by Elwood Cooper, of Santa Barbara. As coming from him the story cannot be anything but strictly in accordance with the facts. Through Mr. Cooper's garden there ran, some years ago, a sewer made of redwood timber. This sewer was again cased by an outside sewer. Across the sewer there was built a brick wall many feet high, and in such a way that it was pierced by the inner sewer, which it enclosed tightly, while the outside sewer ended abruptly against the wall. The outside sewer casing had in course of time decayed, and a eucalyptus tree standing some sixty feet away had taken advantage of this and sent one of its roots to the coveted spot in an direct a line as possible. Here the root entered the outside sewer and followed its course as far as it could. At last it came to the wall which shut off its course, and it could go no further, the inside sewer being perfectly tight.

But on the other side of the wall the sewer and its double casing continued, and this eucalyptus tree evidently knew how to get there. Some three feet high in the brick wall there was a little hole an inch or two in diameter, and this the eucalyptus tree was aware of, as its big root began to climb the dry wall and face the sun and wind until it found the hole, through which it descended on the other side and entered the sewer again, and followed it along as formerly. How did the tree know of the hole in the wall? How did it know that the sewer was on the other side? Did it smell, and if it did, how could it direct the root to go and find the place with such precision? The roots of any plant grow always and unerringly in the direction of its food just as the eucalyptus tree did.—San Diego Union.

### An Aztec Festival.

One of the most novel celebrations ever held on the American continent took place in the City of Mexico the other day. It was the celebration of the 369th anniversary of the torture of Cuauhtemoc, the last Emperor of the race, by Cortez, for the purpose of making him divulge the location of the treasure supposed to have been buried by Montezuma.

The celebration took place on the Plaza de la Reforma, where there had been erected two Aztec pavilions. Three battalions of infantry formed in double line, through which President Diaz and his Cabinet passed to the Aztec temple, where the Governor of the Federal district, the city council, military men and others, received him.

Addresses were delivered in the Aztec language and poems were read. Indians for miles around came bearing feather-worked standards and attired in costumes such as were worn previous to the fall of the Aztec Empire. There were native bands by scores, and it was estimated that, including the military bands, there were at least four hundred musicians present.

After President Diaz placed a wreath on the statue of the Emperor the Indians nearly buried the base with flowers arranged in an artistic manner. Open air dances were given, Indian music being furnished by the native bands.—San Francisco Chronicle.

### Chloroforming a Bull.

The Buenos Ayres Standard notices what it calls an "extraordinary veterinary operation which it says is perhaps one of the most, if not the most, successful veterinary operation of modern surgery, on an imported bull, the property of the trustees of the late Signor Corti, which was purchased last year for the sum of \$5000 in gold. The statement is as follows: "For some time past a large growth has been forming on the throat of this animal, and yesterday Mr. Mitchell decided to remove the obstruction which endangered the bull's life, and most successfully removed a tumor of twenty-four ounces weight, sections of which he has forwarded to a specialist for microscopical examination. This, perhaps, the only case on record of a bull being chloroformed, it taking as much as ten ounces chloroform and six ounces of ether before he was under the influence."

As to the removal of the tumor it is one of the simplest of veterinary operations. As to chloroforming an animal it has long been practiced in the United States in connection with operations, but also in Chicago in the vivisection of animals to eliminate pain.—Farm, Field and Stockman.

### Illinois has more miles of railway than Iowa.

F. J. Cheney & Co., Toledo, O., Proprietors of Hall's Catarrh Cure, offer \$100 reward for any case of catarrh that cannot be cured by taking Hall's Catarrh Cure. Send for testimonials, free. Sold by Druggists, 75c.

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The man was Dr. Pierce. The discovery was his "Favorite Prescription"—the boon to delicate women.

Why go round "with one foot in the grave," suffering in silence—misunderstood—when there's a remedy at hand that isn't an experiment, but which is sold under the guarantee that if you are disappointed in any way in it, you can get your money back by applying to its makers.

We can hardly imagine a woman's not trying it. Possibly it may be true of one or two—but we doubt it.

Women are ripe for it. They must have it. Think of a prescription and nine out of ten waiting for it. Carry the news to them!

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