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ON A SLEEPING BOY.

Just now I missed from hall and stair
A joyful treble that had grown
As dear to me as that grave tone
That tells the world my order care.

And little footsteps on the floor
Were stayed. I laid aside my pen,
Forgot my things, and listened—then
Stole softly to the library door.

[illegible]

THE TURQUOISE.

Where It Is Found and Why It Is Losing Its Value.

[illegible] the turquoise [illegible] Persia [illegible] Shah. It is only in that country that the mineral in question for the jeweller's purposes is found. Much and widely as the turquoise is used for personal ornaments, the supply has for some time undoubtedly exceeded the demand except for fine stones of an uncommon size. But, as is the case with all precious stones, unusually large pieces approaching the size of a hazel nut, for example, when of good quality, are eagerly sought after, and have a high intrinsic value.

The turquoise has in all likelihood been used as a gem from a very remote antiquity, since the range of mountains where it is plentifully found is situated at no great distance from the southern shores of the Caspian Sea, near to, if not within, the area believed by many to have been the cradle of the human race. By some scholars, it is thought highly probable that the turquoise was used for inlaying the delicate and beautiful gold work of ancient Greece, and at all events, there is a cameo portrait of a classic Greek Prince in this mineral among the specimens in the famous collection of Marlborough gems. There is some doubt about the name this precious stone was known by in Pliny's time. He mentions that the *callais*, which was probably the turquoise, was found in Asia, where it occurred projecting from the surface of inaccessible rocks, whence it was released by means of slings, but these were the days of fables. That it was known to the ancient Romans is, however, proved by the fact that there still exist some, though only a very few, of their works of art cut in the mineral.

What of certainty is about the name applied to the turquoise in Pliny's times leaves us in doubt as to what mystic virtues were then attributed to it. But in the middle ages the turquoise, like the opal, was believed to have wonderful properties, indeed, it was credited with more supernatural virtues than most of them. The wearer of it had been his sight strengthened and his spirits cheered, he enjoyed immunity from the consequences of a fall by the gem itself breaking in order to save his bones, and his turquoise, like himself, turned pale if he became sick. When its possessor died it entirely lost its color, but recovered it again on passing into the hands of a new owner. In some mysterious way, when suspended by a string, it correctly struck the hours on the inside of a glass vessel. Other precious stones have lost all the marvellous powers that belonged to them for centuries; the emerald no longer relieves the fatigued eyesight; the diamond can not now dispel fear; the sapphire, though still cold to the touch, has ceased to sweat and to extinguish fire. In these perverse days the hail-storm comes down upon the wearer of an amethyst, and bright red coral attracts rather than repels soldiers, but the turquoise still retains one of its mysterious properties, and flaunts it in the face of modern science. Some times slowly, sometimes suddenly, it [illegible] turns pale, becomes spotted, changes from blue to white; at all events, that before in this capricious manner are found more common than those whose color is distinctly permanent.

The turquoise is called in chemical language a hydrated phosphate of alumina. This means that it consists mainly of phosphoric acid and alumina, along with nearly twenty per cent of water. It owes its color to small quantities of a compound of copper and iron. It occurs blue, green and bluish green; but the change to a pale, mottled, or white color, which inferior turquoises undergo, generally takes place soon after they are taken from the mine. These colors are opaque, or only very slightly translucent, and the stone has a somewhat waxy luster. It is only those of a fast sky-blue color that are prized for jewelry, but at one time, a green turquoise was more highly valued than a blue one. Nowadays, however, people have no patience with either precious stones or precious metals that can be easily mistaken for those of inferior value. Either green feldspar, which is of the same hardness, or malachite, which is softer, might be mistaken for green turquoises, and both are common minerals. But there is hardly any other natural stone of the same, or even the former, hardness that can be confounded with a blue turquoise. The mode of trial of some jewellers is to scratch with pieces of both stones, but there is no certainty, in fact, there is every confusion, because this one mineral is [illegible] by [illegible] of other minerals. [illegible] Oriental turquoise [illegible] Persian [illegible] Persian mines. Very little is known of the [illegible] Persian mines. Mr. [illegible] Consul Pelly in 1874 [illegible] Foreign Office by Mr. A. Houtum Schindler, who was for a short time sent to forward the mines. There are [illegible] a range of mountains [illegible] on the north an open plain, in the Bard-i-Mesken district, in the province of Nishapur, in the province of Khorassan. Before he left Mr. Schindler had [illegible] 1000 workers. It may be mentioned that the mountain on which the mines are situated is thought to be given the color of a green as well as a blue, [illegible] where the [illegible] color [illegible]. There are [illegible] to be seen two and six thousand feet above the level of the sea, and a strong north-west blows almost continually over the ridges of the hills, traversing the situation very boisterously. Wheat, barley and mulberry trees grow well on the slopes at the lower edge of these heights.

Geologically, the mountains are composed of sandstones and nummulitic limestones lying on clay-slates and inclosing immense beds of gypsum and rock salt. But these stratified rocks are broken through and metamorphosed by rocks of igneous origin, such as greenstones and porphyries. The turquoise-bearing veins occur in the metamorphic strata, and the mines proper consist of shafts and galleries in the solid rock. There are also "diggings" in the detritus of disintegrated rock washed down towards the plain, and it is here that some of the best turquoises are found. A number of the mines are ancient and very extensive, and although most of them are now more or less in a state of neglect, Mr. Schindler states that the presence of many old shafts now filled up for light and ventilation proves that they have at one time been skilfully worked, and were probably then under Government control. But they appear to have been, for nearly two centuries, farmed by the village peasants who only think of a quick return for their money, and therefore cut away the rock wherever they see fit, passing, without leaving proper supports to prevent the falling in of the mine. Several laborers have at different times been buried in the galleries through the rubbish being badly propped up. The perpendicular depth of one mine is one hundred and sixty feet, and others are nearly as deep. The miners work with picks and crowbars in much the same way as that in which coal mining is carried on elsewhere, and it is a curious illustration of how slowly long-established processes are altered in the East, that gunpowder should have been used in these mines only within the last thirty years. But it is not strange, as can be seen by some examples of rock-blasting at home, to learn that the results obtained by gunpowder are, in one view, less satisfactory than those got by the pick. The powder does more work, but it is also more destructive, as it breaks the turquoises into small pieces.

Here we may say a few words about how it fares with the people who are occupied with the mining, cutting and selling of the turquoises. About two hundred men work in the mines or at the diggings, and some thirty more elders of the village—buy the turquoises and sell them to merchants and jewellers. A certain additional number of hands cut and polish the stones; but this work is done elsewhere, as well as in the district where they are found. The population of the villages in the neighborhood of the mines is about twelve hundred, and the inhabitants, as in most mining districts, are improvident. Nearly all the men, and not a few of the women, are inveterate opium-smokers. Agriculture is neglected. Turquoise-dealing and its gains make the people careless of any thing else. As a rule, the money is quickly spent, and men who easily earn a sum fully equal to fifty pounds sterling per annum, have often nothing to eat.

At the mines, the turquoises are roughly divided into three classes, of first, second and third qualities. All the stones of good and fast color and favorable shape belong to the first class. But how curiously these vary in value will be best understood by quoting Mr. Schindler's own words—"It is impossible to fix any price, or classify them according to different qualities. I have not yet seen two stones alike. A stone two-thirds of an inch in length, two-fifths of an inch in width, and about half an inch in thickness, cut *pakami* (conical) shape, was valued at Meshed at three hundred pounds; another, of about the same size, shape and cut, was valued at only eighty pounds. Turquoises of the size of a pea are sometimes sold for eight pounds. The color most prized is the deep blue of the sky. A small specimen of a darker color, which only connoisseurs can distinguish, or an inferior one, supposed to be tinged with green, is valued more highly than a larger one of a good blue. Even there certain intangible properties of a good turquoise, [illegible] the water of a diamond or the fire of a pearl, [illegible] Meshed [illegible] Persian [illegible] Mr. Schindler [illegible] pounds. [illegible] pounds.

[illegible] Persian [illegible] stones, [illegible] and the [illegible] Persian [illegible] Shah, which he had for only two days, when it became green and valueless, and the prince of no value. Throughout Europe there has been a great fall in the price of this gem within the last few years, and it would seem that this is owing to the fact that large quantities of stones which approached the Oriental in color have been disposed of at not being great prices. Up to the time that they were sold, their color had been preserved by keeping them damp, but when taken out of their moist packing, they slowly became white. It need hardly be said that the color of most precious stones is very permanent. There is, however, a variety of opal occurring in Mexico which is very beautiful when first found, but after a brief time it entirely loses its bright play of colors. Both the turquoise and the opal are peculiar in containing a considerable amount of water in their composition.

The color of a fine turquoise has not escaped the notice of enamellers and potters. For centuries, an imitation of its characteristic and lovely blue has been applied among other colors to the exquisitely decorated pottery of Persia. On the most expensive and perhaps also the most beautiful of all porcelain, the Sevres ware of soft body made in the latter half of last century, the turquoise blue is often a conspicuous color. Towards the end of the century, when the directors of the far-famed *fabrique* changed the character of the china to that of a hard paste or body, its decoration with a turquoise color was no longer possible. But modern English porcelain, like the old Sevres, is of soft paste, and one of the fonts on which our great Staffordshire potteries pride themselves is the successful production upon it, in recent years, of a soft and clear turquoise blue.—*Chambers's Journal.*

A new origin for the term "painting the town red" has been dug out by Tom Jones, of the Harrisburgh *Telegraph*. He has discovered in the archives of Pennsylvania that William Penn gave fifty gallons of rum and twenty-five pounds of red paint to the Indians for a tract of land. Thereupon he comments: "Just imagine that tribe of Indians filling themselves up with that fifty gallons of rum and doing the great decorating act with twenty-five pounds of red paint. Why a cowboy lout or a Sagwa symposium means nothing compared to the way the aborigines carmined the vicinity of the village wherein dwelt Billy Penn."—*Philadelphia Press.*

—Sugar cane requires replanting once in three years in the Southern states, but only once in twenty in Cuba.—*Chicago Times.*

—At a recent Austrian court reception some of the titled ladies wore trains twenty feet long to their dresses.

BRAZILIANS AT TABLE.

People Who Breakfast at Noon and Dine on a Mountain Top.

[illegible]

A SHAMEFUL CASE.

How a Patient Eye-Screen Man Was Robbed of His Time by a Cobbler.

He had a sample fly-screen under his arm, and he turned heels and entered a little shoe shop on Lafayette street.

"I chas worry busy to-day," said the cobbler, as he looked up.

"Yours, I suppose so, and so another flies," was the reply. "My friend, have you given any thought to the momentous query, 'Shall I Keep the Flies Out or In This Summer?'"

"I has to get dis boot done in half an hour."

"Exactly, and I don't propose to hinder you. I am taking orders for screens. You can peg, peg away, while we talk, talk fly-screens."

"I doan' want some."

"That is to say, you propose to spend this shop all summer and swatting the visits of winged insects. Do you know how much time a man loses in four months in striking at flies?"

"I doan figure on dat."

"Of course you don't, but I have. You will lose just two days in every month. "That's eight days thrown away, and not a fly killed. Now, then——"

"I doan' chant some flies-screens."

"That is, you think you don't. How many cubic feet of air do you suppose comes through that door in four months?"

"May be six."

"May be millions! How much do you suppose accompanies it?"

"I chas worry busy."

"Exactly, but more than two bushels of dust enter this shop by way of that door, and you inhale at least half of it. How many microbes accompany the dust?"

"Dis shop chas under mortgage, you see."

"That's all right, but for ten hours a day you inhale one hundred cholera microbes an hour."

[illegible]

SHAMMING COMPLAINTS.

Alleged Disorder Indicates Which Were Caught in Dodo Cove Traps.

[illegible]

A VALUABLE DISH.

The Extraordinary Price Paid for a Small Piece of Brica-Brac.

At a sale just held in Paris an extraordinary price was paid for a very small piece of bric-a-brac. It was a dish executed by Palissy for a lady in Brest. The antiquarians of the place were not moved very far back in point of time, but the history of the dish was traced back to the year 1570. It was a very remarkable production indeed. It was supposed to have been in the possession of a private gentleman in Nevers, who was probably induced to consent to part with it by the offer of the enormous price for the dish. So great a price for a trifle was not to be allowed to slip, and the dish was handed over and the gentleman Dames duly paid. If the dealer had made an improvident bargain, he soon found a ready buyer for his bargain. Palissy's work was in high demand, and it was brought to him for inspection. Enquiring where it was procured and the Prince paid the dealer three times the price he had paid for it, he immediately at the rate of [illegible] thousand francs. The dish remained in the Secretary's cabinet till its disappearance, when it was sold for [illegible] francs. It was purchased by a well-known amateur, who had it placed in a place of honor in his mansion. The dish was [illegible] at the Hotel Drouot. It was [illegible] a few days ago for twenty-five thousand seven hundred francs.—*Art Journal.*

—The soil of Northern Virginia, upon which occurred so many battles, is now so poor that it does not furnish pasturage, and cattle raising there has been abandoned.—*Washington Star.*

RURAL HELP.

Hints to Farmers Based Before Engaging Part of the Farm.

[illegible]

SALT FOR STOCK.

[illegible]

STOCK-RAISING.

Conveniences Which Intelligent Farmers Avail Words and Are Taught.

[illegible]

LIVE FENCE POSTS.

Suggestions to Farmers Who Are About to Repair or Build Fences.

On the whole we recommend [illegible] to be durable, any [illegible] permanent post [illegible] not need to be renewed [illegible] ten years [illegible] [illegible] post [illegible] [illegible] post [illegible] [illegible] post