HOW THE ANCIENTS ENGRAVED GEMS.

A writer in *Harper's Magazine* for September says: We must remain as yet some little in doubt as to the methods employed by the old artists to perfect these miracles of taste. We have, however, the absolute certainty that these ancient masters were familiar with the diamond, and that their best work was made by using this, the hardest of all substances, as a tool. A splintered fragment of the diamond served as a scraping tool, and they were well acquainted with the drill. Prehistoric man worked a drill at the very commencement of his existence. A Phœnician gem—a lion attacking a bull—shows how the drill was used. A number of circular depressions are found in the gem which mark the extremities of the figures. This was done not for the sake of effect, but to show the artist the limit of his work as to depth. After the holes were sunk, the artist united the various portions of his work by scratching. Now the use of the diamond point or splinter, fixed in a style of iron socket, allowed a certain flexibility of handling which our modern processes of gem-engraving do not permit.

To-day the work is done by means of a minute rotating disc of copper, which is whetted with oil and diamond dust. On the least application of the substances to be cut to the disc, it is the disc which bites into the stone. The difference of manipulation is, then, that to-day it is the stone which goes to the tool, and not, as in olden times, the tool to the stone. It is more convenient, then, in 1879, to bring the cart to the horse. It can now be readily understood why, in modern work, time and labor being spared (the art-conception not entering for the present into the subject), why this work of to-day is inferior to the art which is past. It is purely a mechanical process now, for a rotating disc will no more draw lines which have feeling than will photographing processes paint pictures. It has been stated that we are not entirely acquainted with the methods employed by the old glyptic artists. This becomes quite evident from this fact, that their best work seems to have been both cut and polished at one and the same time. To-day we have no tool, no substance which will accomplish this double feat. Mr. King, dwelling on the diamond point, says: "Its extensive use is the great distinction between the antique and modern work."

Too Many Girls.—"Them girls'll be the death of me," sighed Mr. Plug this morning, as he came up street, "Why, I thought they were very nice girls," said a sympathizing friend. "So they are nice enough, but there's too many on 'em an' they are too attractive," said the disconsolate patriarch. "Them three daughters of mine were enough in all conscience, but now my niece is up here from Boston, and it seems as if the old scratch had got into 'em. I don't object to young people havin' a good time, and girls havin' beaux and all that, but when it comes to havin' sparkin' goin' on all over the place, damme it's too bad," said Mr. Plug, unconsciously quoting from Pinafore. "Last night Sue had a feller courtin' her at the front gate, and Julia had her chap in the parlor, and when I got ready to go to bed, bless me if Andromanche (that's my niece from Boston), didn't have a young start spooning on the front stairs. She says that's Newport style. Cuss sich nonsense! I couldn't get up stairs to go to bed without climbin' over 'em. I thought I'd go out to the barn and sleep on the hay, but durn my pictur if I didn't fall over Milly and some young snoozer 'nuther settin' in the barn door. This things got to stop before the cold weather, for I can't afford wood and carrysene for any sich nonsense when it's too cold for out-door sparkin'."

HOUSEHOLD PERILS.

Under this head the Boston *Journal of Chemistry* names several dangerous substances which find their way into households. There are two or three volatile liquids used in families which are particularly dangerous, and must be employed, if at all, with special care. Benzine, ether and strong ammonia constitute this class of agents. The two first named liquids are employed in cleansing gloves and other wearing apparel, and in removing oil stains from carpets, curtains, etc. The liquids are highly volatile, and flash into vapor so soon as the cork of the vial containing them is removed. Their vapors are very combustible, and will inflame at long distances from ignited candles or gas flames, and consequently they should never be used in the evening when the house is lighted. Explosions of a very dangerous nature will occur if the vapor of these liquids is permitted to escape into the room in considerable quantity. In view of the great hazard of handling these liquids, cautious housekeepers will not allow them to be brought into their dwellings, and this course is commendable.

As regards ammonia, or water of ammonia, it is a very powerful agent, especially the stronger kinds sold by druggists. An accident in its use has recently come under our notice, in which a young lady lost her life from taking a few drops through mistake. Breathing the gas under certain circumstances causes serious harm to the lungs and membranes of the mouth and nose. It is an agent much used at the present time for cleansing purposes, and it is unobjectionable if proper care is used in its employment. The vials holding it should be kept apart from others containing medicines, etc., and rubber stoppers to the vials should be used.

Oxalic acid is considerably employed in families for cleaning brass and copper utensils. This substance is highly poisonous, and must be kept and used with great caution. In crystalline structure it closely resembles sulphate of magnesia or epsom salts, and therefore frequent mistakes are made and lives lost. Every agent which goes into families among inexperienced persons should be kept in a safe place and labeled properly and used with care.

DOLLS OF DRIED FRUIT.

If a genial papa or doting auntie wants to amuse the little ones immensely any evening after tea, this cannot more successfully be accomplished than by making them some dolls of dried fruit, for they can at first "wonder and admire" while the evolution of the grotesque figures is going on, and afterwards have the delicious pleasure of eating the manikins up. The materials to be employed are a few each of shelled almonds, figs, prunes and raisins, also four apples, three of which must be graduated, two loose pieces of wire, and two pieces of board measuring two inches square, in each of which must previously have been fixed firmly two wire pins about four inches high.

Having got all the things together, begin with the man. Put an almond on each wire for his feet, turning the toes or narrow end out. (The wires must be near enough together to have the heels just touch.) Above these, string on each wire three large raisins for the legs. Then comes a large prune on each for the knickerbockers. Above these, three figs strung on both wires make the body. Through the upper fig pass a wire horizontally for the arms. String three smaller raisins on each arm, and continue the figure by putting two largest-sized raisins over both wires, one above the other, for the neck. The head is made of one large prune, with pieces of almond for the eyes, nose and mouth, and the hat is half an apple, with a raisin for a tuft. The little woman is made in the same way, except that she only has one raisin leg above each almond foot, and then come three graduated apples to form her skirts, and over them the three figs with the raisin-strung arms for her body.

BIDE YOUR TIME.

Every man must patiently bide his time. He must wait. More particularly in lands like my native land, where the pulse of life beats with feverish and impatient throbs, is the lesson needful. Our national character wants the dignity of repose. We seem to live in the midst of a battle, there is such a din, such a hurrying to and fro. In the streets of a crowded city it is difficult to walk slowly; you feel the rushing of the crowd, and rush with it onward. In the press of our life it is difficult to be calm. In this stress of wind and tide all professions seem to drag their anchors, and are swept out into the main. The voices of the present say—Come! But the voices of the past say—Wait! With calm and solemn footsteps the rising tide bears against the rushing torrent up stream, and pushes back the hurrying waters. With no less calm and solemn footsteps, nor less certainty, does a great mind bear up against public opinion, and push back the hurrying stream. Therefore, should every man wait—should bide his time. Not in listless idleness, not in useless pastime, not in querulous dejection; but in constant, steady, cheerful endeavors, always willing and fulfilling, and accomplishing his task, that, when the occasion comes he may be equal to the occasion. And if it never comes, what matters it to the world whether I or you, or another man, did such a deed, or wrote such a book, so be it the deed and the book were well done. It is the part of an indiscreet and troublesome ambition to care too much about fame—about what the world says of us; to be always anxious for the effect of what we do and say; to be always shouting, to hear the echo of your own voices! If you look about you, you will see men who are wearing life away in feverish anxiety of fame, and the last we shall hear of them will be the funeral bell that tolls them to their early graves. Unhappy men, and unsuccessful, because their purpose is not to accomplish well their task, but to clutch the "trick and fantasy of fame," and they go to their graves with purposes unaccomplished and wishes unfulfilled. Better for them, and for the world in their example, had they known how to wait. Believe me, the talent of success is nothing more than doing what you can do well, and doing well whatever you do—without a thought of fame. If it come at all, it will come because it is deserved, not because it is sought after. And, moreover, there will be no misgivings, no disappointment, no hasty, feverish, exhausting excitement.—*Longfellow.*

Why Gold in Jewelry Changes Color.—It is well known that the human body contains humors and acids, similar in action to, and having a like tendency towards baser metals, as nitric and sulphuric acid have, namely, to tarnish or dissolve them, varying in quantity to different persons. Thousands wear continually, without any ill effect, the cheaper class of jewelry with brass ear wires, while if others wore the same article for a few days they would be troubled with sore ears, or, in other words, the acids contained in the system would so act on the brass as to produce ill results. Instances have occurred in which articles of jewelry of any grade below 18 carat have been tarnished in a few days, merely from the above-named cause. True, these instances are not very frequent; nevertheless it is as well to know them; every case is not the fault of the goods not wearing well, as it is generally called, but the result of the particular constitution by which they are worn.

A New Surgical Conquest.—Surgery can justly boast of a new conquest; when an eye is severely wounded, the healthy one is in danger of being impaired by "sympathy;" to preserve the good eye, it was hitherto the practice to remove the injured one. Dr. Boucheron has discovered, that by cutting the ciliary nerves, the "sympathy" is stopped, and thus dispenses with the necessity of removing the injured organ. Forty surgeons have thus operated successfully.