

LEGEND OF THE TOPAZ.

Why the Jewel Is Called the Stone of Gratitude.

The topaz is called the stone of gratitude, and the old Roman books record the following legend, from which the stone derives this attribute:

The blind Emperor Theodosius used to hang a brazen gong before his palace gates and sit beside it on certain days, hearing and putting to rights the grievances of any of his subjects. Those who wished for his advice and help had but to sound the gong, and immediately admission into the presence of Caesar was obtained. One day a great snake crept up to the gate and struck the brazen gong with her coils, and Theodosius gave orders that no one should molest the creature and bade her tell him of her wish.

The snake bent her crest lowly in homage and straightway told the following tale:

Her nest was at the base of the gateway tower, and while she had gone to find food for her young brood a strange beast, covered with sharp needles, had invaded her home, killed the nestlings and now held possession of the little dwelling. Would Caesar grant her justice?

The emperor gave orders for the porcupine to be slain and the mother to be restored to her desolate nest. Night fell, and the sleeping world had forgotten the emperor's kindly deed, but with the early dawn a great serpent glided into the palace, up the steps and into the royal chamber and laid upon each of the emperor's closed eyelids a gleaming topaz.

When the Emperor Theodosius awoke he was no longer blind, for the mother snake had paid her debt of gratitude.

PASSPORTS IN FRANCE.

The Kind That Were Issued in the Time of Louis XVI.

The mysterious cards of the Count de Vergennes each contained a brief history in cipher of those to whom they were given. De Vergennes was Louis XVI's minister of foreign affairs, and when strangers of a suspicious character were about to enter France he issued to them these strange cards, which acted as passports, and were also intended to give information concerning the bearer without his knowledge.

In the first place, its color indicated the nationality of the man who carried it. The person's age, approximately, was told by the shape of the card. A fillet around the border of the card told whether he was a bachelor, married or a widower. Dots gave information as to his position and fortune, and the expression of his face was shown by a decorative flower.

The stranger's religion was told by the punctuation after his name. If he

was a Catholic it was a period, if a Jew a dash, if he was a Lutheran a semicolon and no stop at all indicated him a nonbeliever.

So a man's morals, character and appearance were pointed out by the pattern of his passport, and the authorities could tell at a glance whether he was a gamester or a preacher, a physician or a lawyer, and whether he was to be put under surveillance or allowed to go free.—Sunday Magazine.

Materialistic Man.

Sir James Crichton-Browne, the English physician, speaking before some members of his profession, protested against the tendency to adopt too materialistic an explanation of man. The raw material of a medical practice became a mere contrivance of matter and force; the brain of this poor consumer of pills and potions a "glue-like substance, nine-tenths water, with a little phosphorus thrown in." "They left us man," said Sir James, with a smashing figure, "a motor car, self made and self started, with no passengers and no chauffeur, moved by a series of explosions or redistributions of energy, and rushing on to inevitable destruction."

A Prayer.

Send some one, Lord, to love the best that is in me and to accept nothing less from me, to touch me with the searching tenderness of the passion for the ideal, to demand everything from me for my own sake, to give me so much that I cannot think of myself and to ask so much that I can keep nothing back, to console me by making me strong before sorrow comes, to help me so to live that while I part with many things by the way I lose nothing of the gift of life.—Hamilton W. Marble.

Maude Was Willing.

A strict housewife said to a new maid, "I forgot to tell you, Maude, that if you break anything I'll have to take it out of your wages."

But Maude, whom two days had heartily sickened of her berth, replied, with a merry laugh: "Do it, ma'am; do it. I've just broke the hundred dollar vase in the parlor, and if you can take that out of \$4—for I'm leavin' at the end of the week—why, you'll be mighty clever."—Argonaut.

"Paradise Lost."

Milton's "Paradise Lost" was commenced between 1639 and 1642 and completed about the time of the "great fire of London" in September, 1666. Its author composed it in passages of from ten to twenty lines at a time and then dictated them to an amanuensis, usually some attached friend. It was first published in 1667 by one Samuel Simmons, and a second edition appeared in 1674. For these two editions Milton received £10 and his widow £8 more.—London Chronicle.

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