

"ASTRA" TALKS WITH GIRLS.

[Correspondents seeking information in this department should address their queries to "Astra," Progress, St. John.]

Through the kindness of two correspondents I am able to give two very complete lists of the significations usually attached to precious stones. The first was sent to me last week by a gentleman in the city, so I give it the first place, and I trust that "Angel" and several more of my girls who have asked for information on this subject will see this week's paper, and "make a note of it," as Captain Cuttle would say.

THE LANGUAGE OF PRECIOUS STONES.

Diamond, innocence; ruby, beauty and elegance; emerald, success in love; opal, hope; amethyst, sincerity; topaz, fidelity; garnet, constancy and fidelity; turquoise, prosperity; corneal, contented mind; sardonyx, conjugal felicity; agate, health and long life; bloodstone, courage.

The second list is from "Molly Bawn" who has also taken the trouble to classify the gems and place them in regular order with the months they represent. So you see what kind friends we have, girls, and how readily they respond when we make any request. Following are the gems representing the months of the year, and the sentiments for which they stand:

January, jacinth, or garnet, constancy and fidelity in every engagement; February, amethyst, sincerity, also supposed to preserve mortals from dangerous passions, and insure their peace of mind; March, bloodstone, courage, and success in dangerous and hazardous enterprises; April, sapphire or diamond, repentance or innocence; May, emerald, success in love; June, corneal, the forgetfulness, or the cure of evil springing from friendship in love, content (this seems to me just a little involved); August, sardonyx, conjugal felicity; September, chrysolite, preserves from or cures folly, antidote to madness; October, opal, misfortune and hope; November, topaz, fidelity and friendship; December, turquoise or malachite, the most brilliant success and happiness in every circumstance in life, prosperity. The turquoise has also the property of securing friendly regard, hence the old saying, "He who possesses a turquoise will always be sure of a friend."

Now girls we can all of us buy an extra copy of PROGRESS today and cut this out, to keep in the frame of our mirrors, as that will be the place where we shall be sure of seeing it most frequently. I am so glad to have my love of the turquoise so amply justified. And just think what a comfort it is to know that any of us who feel conscious of being a little foolish can be certain of a cure if we only get a small chrysolite, and keep it near us; it would be as great a boon in a case of that kind, as quinine is in malaria.

MOLLY BAWN.—Of course there is room, and there would have been even if you had not paid your way so liberally with precious stones. Thank you very much for the list, it is the most complete I have seen but I wonder why pearls, the most lovely of all gems, in the estimation of many, should be left out of both lists, also why malachite should be granted a place amongst precious stones while coral and amber are left out? I shall lay both carefully aside for future reference. No, I am quite sure you had "no good reason" for not writing before; but I am very glad you wrote now, as you have been a great help to me. (1) Very ungrammatical; it should be, "He ought not to do it," or "He should not do it," and "The field contains four acres," or "That field has four acres in it." (2) "Who is the most noted living Canadian?" you ask, and I scarcely know how to answer. I dare say you will be surprised if I say Capt. Stairs of Halifax, Henry M. Stanley's companion and assistant in his late African expedition; but yet I believe it to be true. After him, I fancy the honors would be divided between the Canadian poet and man of letters, Prof. C. G. D. Roberts, and Sir Charles Tupper. (3) I believe Rev. Principal Grant, of Queen's University, Toronto, is considered the most noted preacher in Canada, and his reputation is not by any means confined, even to Canada. (4) Either will do, but publish is the more correct. Well, between ourselves I will tell you why we do not; the editor and I talked the matter over once, and he said that if I liked he would publish my portrait at the head of my column, but I responded that I was afraid it might destroy all the romance and mystery which now surrounded me, and the editor agreed with me so cordially that I let the subject drop at once and it has never been taken up since. I am afraid he thought you would all be disappointed if you saw me. (5) There is nothing to prevent you from being an excellent writer, if you practise a little, you write a most legible hand now, but it is scarcely formed enough. I think you will always write a little like a boy, but that is not by any means a drawback. It was not necessary to send your real name, but many of my correspondents do so. I hope you will write again.

HAILESTONE, North America.—You must really put a two cent stamp or two ones on a letter if you expect it to reach its destination, as we can scarcely be expected to pay postage on our correspondents' letters. (1) It is perfectly correct and proper. (2) No lady ever does such a thing, and I should think any man who would offer his escort to the same girl the next evening must be wonderfully lacking in spirit. Glycerine and rose water in equal parts is an excellent thing for the hands; so is vasoline cold cream. (3) I have published numerous recipes for removing freckles, but I have none of them at hand now, and my own conviction is that nothing in the world will remove them except skinning the patient. I will look up some freckle washes and publish them soon.

UNHAPPY JACK, St. John.—Go away Jack! you ought to be ashamed of yourself, and I am ashamed of you. If I were not perfectly certain that he would not do it I would "sick" the pup on to chase you right over the fence and "out." When a man has such an inclination to write on the bias, as you have, it is never safe to try and deceive a person who has seen your penmanship before. Besides, my dear boy, they use a peculiar shade of ink in your bank, and it "gave you away." Why did you not try to write down bill instead of uphill, and then I might not have discovered you so soon? Tell Kitty that you will stop flirting if she will do likewise. I daresay she has heard that you go walking with this girl and skating with that one, and she is trying to pay you off in your own coin, and even it isn't, why, you know, a girl who cannot be true in absence is scarcely worth having, so take my advice and don't be unhappy

Jack any longer. You might tell Kitty also that if she does not write more frequently you will consider the engagement off, and I am sure that will scare her into good behavior at once.

C. F. G., St. John.—Thank you very much for the trouble you have taken in writing out and sending me the list. It was most kind of you. I was amused at your expression of fear that I might be offended because you gave a different meaning for some of the precious stones from those I had given previously. I should be sorry you thought me so self-opinionated, when the truth is that I am always glad to be set right when I make a mistake, as I am still very far from the point where there is nothing more to be learned, and I have sense enough to know it. No one's education is complete, I think, as long as they live, and only very ignorant people think they know all things. But I prefer to think that the turquoise is the emblem of constancy, as I have always heard that it was, and it is my favorite stone. Thank you again for your kind and sensible words of approval for my work.

POLLY, St. John.—I wonder if you are the same Polly who used to write to me, quite a long time ago; I hardly think so, because your writing is different. Do you know your question is one of the most difficult, as well as the most frequent that I am asked! It is so hard to judge for a person of whose tastes you are utterly ignorant, but still I think it is the best of the magazines, *Harper's*, *Scribner's*, *The Century*, *The Literary Digest*, *The Independent*, and *The Review of Reviews*, for the current literature of the day. Books of travel, such as *A Ride to Khiva* and *Through Asiatic Turkey*, historical works, and, above all—strange as it may sound—read the works of the standard novelists, such as Bulwer, Lever, Thackeray, Scott, Dickens and George Eliot. Keep up also with the best modern novelists read the books that people are talking about, such as Edna Lyall's, Rudyard Kipling's, and the author of *John Ward, Preacher*, whose name I cannot think of just now. These are only a few, just those I happened to think of while I was writing; but the list might be extended almost indefinitely. Well, my dear, I never had any fancy work on hand when I expected Geoffrey; I was always waiting with undisguised and shameless eagerness for his arrival, and somehow he seemed to like it ever so much. The sooner I reached the hall door after he rang, the better pleased he was, and I generally got there very soon indeed. But, as you say, a great deal depends on the man, and there is something very sweet and homelike about a girl sitting sewing, or working at some bit of fancy work. You are perfectly right, all men like a girl "who always acts herself." Your questions are all simple and practical, and I am glad you like my column.

SANTANA, St. John.—I think it very wrong indeed, but you know men will amuse themselves at the expense of girls who foolishly encourage them, by "running after them" and it is a great pity that some friend older than herself could not reason with that silly little girl, and show her what a mistake she is making, but you know the office of advisor is usually a very thankless one, and few people care to undertake it. I do congratulate you with all my heart, you happy little girl, I feel certain from the way you speak that "he" is really the "best man on earth" except of course, Geoffrey, and it seems only the other day that Geoffrey and I—it isn't though, it is over eight years ago—I think your choice was a very wise one, nearly everyone has a diamond. Tell him he is a lucky fellow, but I am sure he knows it already. Thank you for the love, the poor pup is in very deep mourning just now, we are getting him a cravat collar; he was one of seven brothers you know, and two of them, both as great pets as he is, have just been poisoned. I only hope the criminals will be brought to justice. It was very nice of you to confide in me, and I appreciated it thoroughly.

CALIBAN, Montreal.—Good gracious, Caliban, you don't mean to say so! Four to one! Why, it makes one's brain absolutely reel to think of it, and here there are, at least, seventeen girls to one man. And to think that if I were not encumbered with Geoffrey, not to speak of the pup and the cat, I might go there and try my own luck, because if the "wingless angels," as you gallantly term us, are so scarce in your city, even I might have a chance! Why, Caliban, if you can talk to the girls in any way approaching the manner you write you do not need any advice from me. Just look unutterable devotion out of those large blue eyes of yours (I feel confident you have large blue eyes), sigh a little, and the thing is done. The portfolio is yours, and you are under female government for the rest of your natural life, with cupid as the governor general and conjugal felicity holding the reins. Well, do you know I really think I should consider it in the light of a gentle hint if I were you, because it certainly showed that the lady in question took a tender interest in your welfare, and if she was interested to the extent of wishing to see you happy, she would naturally like to feel sure your happiness was as perfect as possible. Lord Dundreary said, "If you want a thing well done, do it yourself." So if she would only undertake to look after it herself, all her doubts on your point would be set at rest. What do you think of that for an argument? Suppose you put it to her in that light and see what she says. And then be sure you write and tell me all about it like a dear boy, so I will feel that my humble advice has been of some service to you. Good bye for the present Caliban, I enjoyed your letter immensely. Write again some time, in any case, to your friend ASTRA.

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FISH.—Halibut, Cod, Gaspereaux, Herring, Halibut, Lobsters, Oysters, Clams.

MEATS.—Beef, Mutton, Veal, Pork, Kidneys, Tripe, Fowls, Rabbits, Bacon, Liver, Sweetbreads, Brains, Calf's Head and Feet.

VEGETABLES.—Potatoes, Artichokes, Squash, Beets, Turnips, Carrots, Cabbage, Onions, Parsnips.

SALAD.—Lettuce, Radishes.

FRUIT.—Blood Oranges, Figs, Bananas.

The Market.

There has been a Lenten air about the market for the past week or two, and those who have to provide food, Lent or not, find a difficulty in supplying a change of meats for the table. Beef, Veal, and Mutton, have been plentiful of course, but that is about all. A few pairs of fowls were sold at \$1.25 per pair. I have mentioned sweetbreads amongst the seasonable meats, but the housekeeper who is able to secure enough for a dish even for a small family will be fortunate. If not more than one or two can be obtained the best way to use them is to make them into patties or rissoles, because a little meat goes a long way in such forms.

Sweetbreads—What They Are.

Lamb's sweetbreads are the best, but they are so very small that they are rarely noticed except when the lucky diner to whom the mouthful falls, discovers that he has got something with his roast lamb that was not on the bill of fare. Veal sweetbreads are what are used in most of the receipts. They are the pancreas or glands of the throat, near the stomach. In this market, the sweetbreads are skinned on the fore-quarters of veal and sold with it. They may be dressed in many ways and are quite as frequently employed as ingredients in sundry made dishes, such as vol-au-vents, ragouts, etc., as served alone. They do not possess a very decided natural flavor, therefore they need to be accompanied by a highly-seasoned sauce, or they will taste rather insipid. In whatever way they are dressed they should be first soaked in lukewarm water for two hours, changing the water twice during that time. They should then be put into boiling water and simmered gently for five or ten minutes, according to size; taken up and laid in cold water to cool.

Rissoles of Sweetbreads.

Cut the sweetbreads (after blanching as above) into $\frac{1}{2}$ inch dice, season with salt, pepper, mushroom ketchup or chutney, and mix together with a small quantity of plain butter sauce. Roll out the trimmings of puff paste to the thickness of $\frac{1}{8}$ of an inch. Stamp it out in rounds using a small saucer or large coffee cup for a pattern. Place a little ball of the mixture on each round, moisten the edges and fold over like an apple turnover. Press the edges securely together, and flute them over with the back of a knife. Dredge lightly with flour and fry in fat, till they are browned. Drain them and serve with tomato sauce.

Croquettes of Sweetbreads.

Prepare as above, but make the white sauce thicker. Stir the mixture over the fire for a few minutes and then pour it upon a flat dish to cool. When cold divide into equal portions, roll up, with a little flour on the hands to prevent sticking, into balls or cork-shaped croquettes. Dip them in egg, beaten up with pepper and salt, roll them in browned bread crumbs, and fry a nice brown. Drain and serve on a hot napkin or doily, and garnish with parsley.

Cutlets of Sweetbreads.

Prepare mixture as for croquettes, only shape into cutlets, sticking a piece of pipe macaroni in the middle of each to imitate the bone of a lamb cutlet. Fry same as croquettes.

Vol-au-Vent of Sweetbreads.

Pattie shells made of puff paste filled with mixture as above, after it has been warmed through as for croquettes.

Remarks on Sweetbreads.

The above are the simple methods of preparing them. The French cooks would add mushrooms, truffles, cockscombs, etc., also enriching our plain white sauce, with eggs, butter, stock, herbs, nutmeg and milk of almonds until it becomes *supreme*, and then tack on a *la Financiere*, a *la Toulouse*, etc., etc., according to the mode of dressing them. Cooked whole, they are best braised—that is stewed in a small quantity of stock—not enough to cover them, in which are slices of carrots, onions and celery. The stew pan tightly covered and put into the oven, and cooked thus for half an hour or more. They are usually served with either tomato sauce, green peas, asparagus tips or with the more elaborate and costly ragouts, and as "re-forme" "toulouse" "financiere" and "godard."

Calf's Brains.

This is a dish little known here, but so well liked by those who have tried it that I find a difficulty in getting sufficient to "go round." I will however reveal a trade secret to the ladies—(the men never read this column). Sheep's or lamb's brains will do just as well. The butchers here do not keep them on hand, but will get them for you on notice. Like sweetbreads they must in all cases be blanched, i. e., parboiled first.

Calf's Brain Fritters.

Wash the brains in three waters, cold, and then let them lie in cold water for an hour. Boil them in water with a little vinegar for ten minutes, cool and cut them in slices. Drain and dip them into a batter made with two table-spoonsful of flour, two eggs and a quarter pint of cream or milk. This batter should be well beaten for 15 minutes before it is used. Half fill an iron saucepan with frying fat, make it hot, and fry each piece well dipped in the batter, till it is a pale brown color. Dish the fritters in a circle with a bunch of fried parsley in the centre, or with tomato sauce.

To Fry Parsley.

Have it quite dry and plunge it into boiling fat for a few seconds only, and drain.

Scrambled Brains with Eggs.

Wash and parboil the brains, cool and cut up small, but not minced. For one

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portion, break two eggs into a bowl and put in a table-spoonful of brains cut up, add a dessert-spoonful of butter, a table-spoonful of cream or milk and season with salt and pepper. Have ready a clean omelette pan, with enough butter in it to barely cover the bottom. Make hot and pour in the mixture. Keep stirring with a fork over a gentle, but bright fire until it begins to thicken and set. Have ready a slice of buttered toast and turn the "scramble" out of the pan on the toast and serve immediately. There is nothing nicer in its way for a breakfast or supper dish.

Sweet Omelet.

A sweet omelet is made exactly the same way, only of course there is no pepper in it and only a tiny pinch of salt; add, however, a teaspoonful of powdered sugar and half a teaspoonful of essence of vanilla. This last is an immense improvement.

Omelet au Confite.

Is the same as a sweet omelette, but with a spoonful of jam put into the middle just before it is turned over in the pan.

Omelet With Mushrooms.

Prepare the mushrooms first by stewing or frying them, season and put a spoonful for each person into a plain omelet in the same manner as the jam is put into the "confite."

Omelet With Tomatoes.

The same as preceding only using tomatoes instead of mushrooms.

Omelet With Oysters.

Proceed in the same manner, preparing the oysters first as you would for a stew. In making.

Savory Omelets.

and omelets with ham, cheese, etc., the flavoring matter is usually mixed all together with the eggs before cooking. An omelet should be served directly it is cooked, because if allowed to get partly cold it gets heavy; therefore it is best not to commence it until it is wanted for it only takes two or three minutes to make provided everything is in readiness beforehand.

Gaspereaux Roast.

The remarks in a previous letter on herring roes will apply to the roes of the gaspereaux. Parboil them first dredge in flour and then fry in butter. The soft roes, or smelts, I think are the sweetest.

Home Has the First Claim.

The first thought of a wife or a mother should be her home; all things, no matter how important, are secondary to that. No matter how rampant may become certain public evils, let her see to it that she keeps the evil out of her home and she performs her greatest duty to her God, her family and mankind. When a woman tries to remedy an evil by striding the lecture platform, warning others, when that very evil is invading her home by her absence, she is mistaking her mission in life, and she cannot realize it too soon. The good that a woman can do toward the great world at large is as nothing compared to her possibilities in her own home if she be wife or mother.

And the first duty of man as well as of woman, is to home, to his wife and children. As a husband, a father, an example to his sons and daughters, their counselor and friend, he should be the light and joy of his household, their strength for duty, their encouragement to excellence, their comfort and help in all that prepares for usefulness and makes home attractive to all. When husband and wife, father and mother make home what it should be, the false temptations of the world will lose their power, and children will grow up to be the joy of parent and a blessing to themselves and to the world.

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