

be made, with the horal divisions marked on the outside by thin lines of red paint. This was the first hour glass. It required to be turned over only once in twenty-four hours, and, if it was blown with anything like the care which modern hour glasses are, it must have kept time with as much precision as the best of lever clocks. Indeed, it is not rare to hear people declare, even nowadays, that the hour glass is the best timepiece that was ever invented.—*Jewelers' Circular.*

SIBERIAN GEMS.

Amethysts of great brilliancy, and beryl, are occasionally discovered in several parts of the Oural—some exceedingly fine crystals of a blue, yellow, and rose color; those of the latter kind are rare, and when perfectly transparent, of considerable value. Chrysoberyl is met with in the same locality as the emerald; occasionally very fine crystals are obtained, and cut into beautiful gems. Topaz is also found in one or two localities, sometimes six inches long, perfectly transparent, and sold at a very great price. Pink topaz is rare. Mr. Atkinson says:—"Up to this time, only five small crystals have been met with at one of the gold mines in South Oural, and one of those was presented to me; I deeply regret to say that it is either mislaid or has been lost on my journey."

English mechanics have been employed in the Oural from a very early period, in its mining operations. Several of them, Mr. A. tells us, have become celebrated for their eccentricity, and their names will be handed down through many generations in connection with the works. He relates a tragical history of the fate of one of these adventurous spirits. In the reign of Emperor Paul, a young mechanic, named Major, was engaged by the Russian Government, and sent to Ekaterineburg to superintend a small mechanical establishment. In this town Major spent a long life, and constructed many machines, which, rude as they were, proved of essential value in the mining districts. Peasants were sent to him from the different villages, who had never in their lives seen any mechanical tools except an axe and a saw. When he entered upon his

duties he scarcely knew a word of the Russian language, which of course added much to his difficulties. However, as years rolled on, he acquired some knowledge of it. German he also learned by coming in contact with the miners, many of whom were from the Hartz Mountains. He likewise contrived to add a little French to his stock. His pay being liberal, and living cheap, he was enabled to keep a good establishment; and, being kind to the workmen, he gained their esteem and that of the officers who served under him, while his eccentricity amused them all. He had at length established a sort of jargon of his own, most strange and peculiar. In giving his instructions, he would begin in Russ, add a few words of German, then a scrap of French, and finally glide into an English sentence, which he concluded with an impetuous volley of threats in case of disobedience.

When the Emperor Alexander visited the Oural he was greatly pleased with the works Major had established, and, as a token of his satisfaction, presented him with a piece of land containing about twenty English acres, with all the minerals it contained, and gold was known to be deposited there. This imperial act of bounty proved fatal to the unhappy Englishmen, who built for himself a house on his land, and a few years later he began to excavate and wash the gold sand, usually obtaining more than two poods of gold a year, at a very small cost of labor. This was worth about three thousand five hundred pounds sterling. He had gone on this way several years, living at his country house with very few people about him, and often having no domestic except an old woman. At length an unusual productive vein occurred; the quantity of precious metal he had obtained during the summer was accurately known to the workmen, each day's produce being weighed, entered in a book, and delivered to Major every evening. He deposited it in an iron box which stood in his cabinet, the key of which he carried in his pocket. This year there were more than three poods of gold in the box. The time was approaching when this treasure would be sent to the smelting works at Ekaterineburg, there to be cast into bars, and forwarded to the mint at St. Petersburg, when, one Sunday morning, Major and his old housekeeper being alone in the house, a noise was suddenly heard

near the entrance door. The old dame rose to see what was the matter; but scarcely had she left the room when she was seized and thrown down a staircase. Major, hearing the noise, rushed to the door of his cabinet with a candle in his hand, when a blow from an axe fell upon his head, and he never breathed again.

After this, the murderers possessed themselves of the box and the gold, with which they made off, closing the doors after them. It was not till the morning of the third day that this terrible tragedy was known, when one of the officers of the machine works came to consult Major on business of importance. Search being made, the ghastly remains of the murdered man were found, his hand still grasping the candlestick. The old woman was discovered in a state of unconsciousness, though still living.

A strict investigation was made, and suspicion fell upon some of the workmen, who were seized and examined, but it was clearly proved that they were innocent. A strict watch was kept on the movements of certain men who were rather suspicious characters. One of these, a small merchant, was taken and searched. On examination, however, he proved to the satisfaction of the police that he was ninety versts distant on the morning of the murder. He was accordingly set at liberty. Years passed over, and all hopes of penetrating the mystery were given up. It happened, however, that the quantity of gold stolen from the mines had become so enormous that the government determined to discover how it was effected. An officer of police was dispatched to the neighborhood, and after a long and skillful course of manœuvring he contrived to effect the purpose for which he was sent. In the course of his investigations, also, he came upon a clue which led to the discovery of the murderer of poor Major, who was no other than the merchant who had been in the first instance tried and acquitted. This man had long been engaged in gold smuggling, in association with those who stole it from the mines. The murder was clearly proved against him and some accomplices, and they were sentenced to the horrible punishment of "running the gauntlet," and died immediately after. The band of gold stealers was broken up, and the officer of police returned to St. Petersburg to receive a reward for his arduous and really dangerous labors. *Exchange.*