

CANADIAN GEMS AND PRECIOUS STONES.

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The subject of this paper is Canadian Gems and Precious Stones ; and although I shall touch briefly on such materials, available for the purposes of the Lapidary, as have come under my observation during the past nineteen years, I cannot hope to accomplish anything more than a general outline of their distribution, together with some of their most important characters. Before I begin the enumeration of the various minerals, I had better first of all define what a gem really is.

For the sake of convenience I shall divide the various minerals into two classes—1st, Gem material ; 2nd, Semi-Gem material. Now it sometimes happens that the conventional value put upon a gem of the second class, through richness of colour, transparency, etc., is much higher than belongs to a gem of the first class ; hence to draw a line between these two classes may often be attended by some difficulty. The real gems are represented by the Diamond, Sapphire varieties, Chrysoberyl, Spinel, Beryl, Topaz, Zircon, Garnet, Tourmaline, Iolite. Quartz and Chrysolite. All others are considered as semi-precious stones.

The origin of the taste for gems is lost in the most remote ages ; it is very evident that the gems mentioned in the scriptures, and other early accounts, do not correspond with ours of to-day. Pliny describes a Sapphire as a stone spotted with gold ; this is thought by some authors to be the mineral we call Lapis-Lazuli.

The ancients must have included a number of minerals under the same name. Carbuncle, for instance, included all gems of a red colour, such as the Hyacinth, Ruby, Garnet, etc. Much superstition has existed in all ages regarding the various gems. The following extracts from Emanuel's "Book of Gems" may be interesting :—
 "Serapius," he says, "ascribes to the Diamond the power of making men courageous ; also, if this gem is placed in contact with a loadstone, it nullifies its power. According to Boetius the Ruby is a sovereign remedy against the plague and poison ; it also drives away evil spirits and bad dreams. The Jacinth procures sleep and brings riches, honour and wisdom. The Amethyst dispels drunkenness and sharpens