

by the frequency with which he refers to the subject. With the object of procuring further information he sent his "notice" to Russia, and from Baron von Asch, surgeon in the Russian army, he learned that in January, February, and March, 1782, a disease described as "febris catarrhalis epidemica benigna" prevailed in the Russian capital. It originated in eastern Siberia, on the Chinese frontier, and spread through the whole of Russia.—*The British Medical Journal*.

### SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

*A Text-book of Precious Stones.* By FRANK B. WADE, B.S. Published by G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1918. 8vo, pp. xiii + 318. Illustrated.

Those who are familiar with the work on "Diamonds" by the same author will find the present book characterized by similarly attractive features. The style is clear and precise and readability and practicality are afforded by examples drawn from the writer's own experience.

The book will appeal to the amateur rather than the professional student, but this is probably the intention of the author. His experience as a teacher has doubtless aided him in presenting the subject in a systematic and easily assimilable manner. The physical properties of gems are treated under the various subdivisions of refraction, absorption and dichroism, specific gravity, luster, hardness, and color, each to the extent of one or more chapters, and numerous practical details are given in the chapters on testing, cutting, occurrence and imitation of gems. The chapter on "tariff laws" affords useful information not readily found elsewhere and the bibliography of the subject of gems is the most complete and satisfactory for the purposes of the general reader that the reviewer remembers to have seen. The book is not extensively illustrated, a few text figures from line drawings comprising all the pictures that are provided.

Besides its usefulness for general reading, the title of the book and its systematic plan suggest that it could be employed for more formal instruction. The wide distribution of

gems in Nature and their possession in some form in almost every home, make it probable that they could be used more extensively than is now the case as a basis for school study.

The reviewer finds little to criticize adversely in the book beyond the occasional use of the term "gemology." While this term might be generally understood to refer to the science of gems, it is incorrectly formed for this purpose and in reality has quite a different meaning. The Greeks seem to have had no single term for distinguishing objects used for the purposes for which we use gems, but indicated things of value by the adjective *τίμος*. Prefixing this adjective to *λίθος*, stone, the term *timiolithology* can be obtained, which is at least a word properly formed to indicate the science of gems.

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### SPECIAL ARTICLES

#### PINK ROOT OF ONIONS

IN 1915 Professor F. W. Mally called the writer's attention to a very serious disease of onions in Webb County, Texas, and locally known as pink root. Investigations were begun on this disease with Professor Mally, who cooperated in the field experiments and offered valuable assistance in many ways. A search in literature showed that there were no records that could be found, where mention was made of this new plant trouble. From conversation with Professor Mally I was told that Professor W. M. Gilbert, of the United States Department of Agriculture, had at one time worked on this disease and also published an account of the same. However, a letter received from Professor Gilbert dated May 15, 1918, says as follows: "So far as I know there are no publications on this disease, as I did not do enough work on it to secure results for publication and have not had the opportunity to study it very recently." The writer was the first to report on this disease in 1917.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Taubenhaus, J. J., "Pink Root, a New Disease of Onions in Texas," *Phytopath.* 7: 59, 1917 (abstract).