



The Curious Lore of Precious Stones; Being a Description of Their Sentiments and Folk Lore, Superstitions, Symbolism, Mysticism, Use in Medicine, Prot

George Frederick Kunz

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This historic book may have numerous typos and missing text. Purchasers can usually download a free scanned copy of the original book (without typos) from the publisher. Not indexed. Not illustrated. 1915 edition. Excerpt: ... fIDn t^e Ctyerapeutfc OJge of \$recfoug and \$>zmU HE medicinal use of precious stones may be traced back to very ancient times. It has been conjectured that their employment for such purposes was introduced to Europe from India, whence many of the stones were derived. Nevertheless, the earliest evidence we have rather points to Egypt as the source, and, indeed, it appears that in early Egyptian times the chemical constituents of the stones were much more rationally considered than at a later period in Europe. The Ebers Papyrus, for instance, recommends the use of certain astringent substances, such as lapis-lazuli, as ingredients of eyesalves, and hematite, an iron oxide, was used for checking hemorrhages and for reducing inflammations. Little by little, however, superstition associated certain special virtues with the color and quality of precious stones, and their virtues were thought to be greatly enhanced by engraving on them the image of some god, or of some object symbolizing certain of the activities of nature. Later still, the science of astrology, most highly developed in Assyria and Babylonia, was brought into combination with the various superstitions above indicated, so that the image was believed to have much greater efficacy if the engraving were executed when the sun was in a certain constellation or when the moon or some one of the planets was in the ascendant at the time. If we exclude certain fragmentary notices in Egyptian literature-- notably the statements in the Ebers Papyrus--and the very uncertain sources in Hindu literature, the earliest authority for this branch of the subject is the Natural History of Pliny. In this connection, however, it is only just to call attention to a fact which has been often...

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