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# FAMOUS DIAMONDS

BY  
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GEOLOGY  
LEAFLET 10

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY  
CHICAGO  
1929

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STEPHEN C. SIMMS, DIRECTOR

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY  
CHICAGO, U.S.A.



The form, size and color of a number of these diamonds are recorded in models which are displayed in Higinbotham Hall of the Museum. This leaflet is devoted to a brief history and description of these. It may be remarked in advance that much that is legendary is contained in the accounts of the older diamonds, and it can hardly be deemed possible always to separate the traditional from the true. In such cases the would-be historian can do little more than to record some of the different legends.

### CULLINAN

Of all known gem diamonds, this is by far the largest. Not only did this diamond in the rough greatly exceed in size and weight any other of gem quality known, but a much larger cut stone was obtained from it than had ever been produced before. This large stone is nearly twice the weight of the fabled Great Mogul diamond. The Cullinan diamond as found weighed 3106 metric carats, or over  $1 \frac{1}{3}$  pounds avoirdupois. Its dimensions were 4 by  $2 \frac{1}{2}$  by  $1 \frac{1}{2}$  inches. It was found January 26, 1905, in Premier Mine No. 2 of the Premier Diamond Mining Co. Ltd. This mine lies about 20 miles northwest of Pretoria, South Africa. The finder was Mine Captain Frederick Wells. He observed, while making his morning rounds, something shining in the wall of the mine and on further investigation a wonderful gem was disclosed, which it is said took all day to free from its rock matrix. The discovery of this stone, while the source of the greatest elation, is said to have been accompanied by some fear on the part of the mine owners that a purchaser could never be found for so large a jewel. The stone in the rough resembled a lady's fist in size and shape and its transparency made it appear like a piece of ice. It was named the Cullinan diamond for Mr. T. N. Cullinan, President of the Premier Diamond Mining Company. As







large as this diamond was, its planes and markings indicated that it was only a part of a crystal. The whole was probable a huge octahedron, from which the Cullinan diamond had been separated by natural cleavage.

The question of the disposal of the stone was finally solved by its being purchased, at the suggestion of Premier Botha of the Transvaal Colony, by the Assembly of that province as a present to King Edward VII of Great Britain, in recognition of his grant of a constitution to the Colony. The price paid for the stone by the Transvaal Government is said to have been \$800,000. After being sent to London a decision was made to cut it into as large a stone or stones as possible. Owing to a defective spot at the center of the stone it was found necessary to cut it in two in order to obtain flawless gems. From the two parts thus obtained the two greatest known cut diamonds were secured. The largest was a pendeloque or drop brilliant weighing 530 metric carats.<sup>1</sup>

The second large stone was a square brilliant weighing  $309\frac{3}{8}$  carats. As stated, these two are the largest of known cut diamonds. Following these a pendeloque weighing 92 carats, a square brilliant of 62 carats, a heart-

<sup>1</sup>As is well known, the carat is the unit almost universally used for expressing the weight of precious stones. The name is said to be derived from that of a variety of locust tree which has seeds of uniform size which were formerly used for weighing gems. Until recently, the value of the carat has varied in different countries, so that in order to determine the exact weight of a precious stone when given in carats, it has been necessary to know whether the weight was stated in English carats, for example, or in those of some other country or town. Thus the carat of Florence weighed 197 milligrams, and that of Madras 207 milligrams, while that of most European countries varied slightly from 205 milligrams. Fortunately an international carat has now been adopted. This fixes the weight of the carat at 200 milligrams (1-5 of a gram). This is known as the metric carat. In English weights this corresponds to about 3 grains. A Troy ounce contains about 155 carats. Where weights are known in the following pages they are stated in the form of metric carats, but as it is not always possible to determine what value of carat was originally used, the weight of the gem cannot always be given metrically.

shaped brilliant of  $18\frac{3}{8}$  carats, a marquise brilliant of  $11\frac{1}{4}$  carats and another of  $8\frac{9}{16}$  carats, a square brilliant of  $6\frac{5}{8}$  carats, a pendeloque of  $4\frac{9}{32}$  carats, 96 brilliants weighing  $7\frac{3}{8}$  carats and a number of unpolished "ends" weighing 9 carats were obtained. All of these are flawless and of the finest blue-white color. They were delivered to the King and Queen of Great Britain on November 1, 1908 and except on special occasions rest together with other jewels of the English Crown in the Wakefield Tower of the Tower of London. Here they are kept in a glass case within a double cage of steel. They are cleaned semiannually under the supervision of high officials. The case is lighted by night and day and is guarded continually by armed and uniformed sentries.

#### DRESDEN GREEN

If in addition to size, transparency and brilliancy, a diamond possesses a marked body color, no gem can surpass it in relative value. Of green diamonds the finest and one of the largest known is the Dresden Green, so-called because preserved in Dresden, Germany. It was purchased in 1743 by King August the Strong of Saxony, for the royal treasury. He is said to have paid \$60,000 for it. It was valued by Kluge, a German authority, in 1860 at \$150,000.<sup>1</sup> It is of almond or pendeloque shape and weighs 49.8 metric carats. It is  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches long and  $\frac{5}{8}$  of an inch thick. It is clear apple-green in color, being intermediate between emerald and chrysoprase in tint, and is perfectly transparent and flawless. It is probably of Indian origin, but nothing is known of its history previous to its purchase by August the Strong. This king had a passion for collecting rare gems and jewels, and a large exhibit of these, including this green diamond is still to be seen in the Green Vaults (Grüne Gewölbe)

<sup>1</sup>Valuations and prices in this leaflet are stated in round numbers and generally represent either the reputed price paid by purchasers or estimates of it.

in Dresden. Another green diamond in the collection is a brilliant weighing 40 carats which it is said the King was accustomed to wear in his hat.

### EMPRESS EUGENIE

E. W. Streeter describes this diamond as "a perfect brilliant of 51 carats, of an oval shape, blunt at one end and very beautifully cut." It was first set as the center of a hair ornament belonging to the Empress Catherine II of Russia. This ruler presented it to her favorite, Potemkin, at the same time that she gave him a magnificent palace. From a grand niece of Potemkin, Emperor Napoleon III of France purchased the stone for a gift on the occasion of his wedding, to his bride, the Empress Eugenie. During the whole of her reign, the Empress wore it as the center of a diamond necklace, but after the downfall of her fortunes caused by the Franco-German war of 1870, the gem was sold to the Gaikwar of Baroda, India, for \$75,000 (£15,000). So far as known it still remains in the possession of this Indian ruler.

### ENGLISH DRESDEN

The English Dresden, so called to distinguish it from the Green Dresden, is one of the few large diamonds that have been obtained from Brazilian mines. It weighed in the rough 119½ carats. The rough stone was found about 1857 in the Bagagem district, Brazil, the locality from which nearly all the large Brazilian stones have been obtained. It came the same year into the possession of Mr. E. Dresden of London, England, who after cutting it, offered it for sale to various crown princes of Europe without success. He finally sold it for \$200,000 (£40,000) to an English merchant in Bombay, India. This merchant was a large dealer in cotton and was able to purchase the diamond through profits made by the great increase in

the price of this commodity resulting from the American Civil War. Shortly after his purchase of the stone, however, the war closed, the price of cotton fell to a low point and, lacking the capital which he had invested in the gem, the merchant failed. The shock of failure soon brought on his sickness and death. The stone was then sold by his executors to the Gaikwar of Baroda, in whose possession, so far as known, it still remains.

#### FLORENTINE

This gem, also known as the Austrian Yellow and Grand Duke of Tuscany, is one of the largest of famous diamonds, its weight being 137.25 metric carats. The first recorded mention of this diamond was made by the French traveler Tavernier. He wrote that he saw it in the possession of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, and as he is known to have visited this nobleman in the year 1657, it was probably at that time that he saw it. Tavernier describes the diamond as being "clear, of good form, cut on all sides into facettes and tending somewhat to a citron color." Using it to illustrate his method of calculating the value of large diamonds, he figured its worth to be approximately \$950,000. He also published a drawing of the diamond which accurately represents the stone known today. It is rose-cut and has the form of a star with nine rays. How or where the Grand Duke of Tuscany obtained it is not known, but without doubt it came originally from India and was fashioned by Indian cutters. Since the Duchy of Tuscany included the city of Florence, the diamond became known as the Florentine diamond. When Francis Stephen of Lorraine exchanged his Duchy for the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, he acquired the diamond with it. Later he became the consort of the Empress Maria Theresa and the gem came into the possession of the Imperial Family of Austria. On October 4, 1745, Francis Stephen was crowned head of the Holy Roman





AUGUSTUS II, SURNAMED "THE STRONG"  
ELECTOR OF SAXONY AND KING OF POLAND 1697-1733

He was the founder of the famous collection of gems preserved in the "Green Vaults" of Dresden, Saxony, which contains the "Dresden Green" diamond



Empire and on this occasion the diamond adorned the Crown of the House of Austria. It has remained one of the crown jewels of Austria until the present day, but according to report it has been offered for sale by the present Austrian government.

### GREAT MOGUL

About all that is known of this diamond is the account and sketch of it given by the French traveler, Jean Baptiste Tavernier. He states that he saw it in 1665 in the possession of the Great Mogul of India. He described the stone as having the form as if one "cut an egg through the middle." The weight he gave as  $279\frac{9}{16}$  of "our" carats, and further stated that the diamond was rose cut, round and very high on one side and that on the lower edge there was a little notch and a slight flaw in it. He also published a sketch of the diamond, from which the model has been constructed that serves as the present representation of the stone.

From other references by Tavernier and allusions by another traveler, Francois Bernier, we learn that this diamond had been found about 1650 A.D. in the Kollur mine on the River Kistna in India. It came into the possession of Emir Jemla, also called Mirginola, who was an important official of the kingdom of Golconda and who through commerce in diamonds and other commodities had amassed great wealth. Being harassed by the jealousy of other officials of the kingdom, he sought to transfer his allegiance to the Mogul Empire and for this purpose lavished the most costly presents upon the emperor Shah Jehan. Among these presents was this great diamond. Sometime after the receipt of the diamond by Shah Jehan his son usurped the throne and shut his father up in prison. The diamond thus came into the possession of the son, Aurungzeb, among whose treasures Tavernier saw it. Tavernier stated that the stone in the

rough weighed  $787\frac{1}{2}$  carats, but that the cutter, Hortensio Borgio, had cut it so poorly and reduced its weight so much that the King, instead of rewarding him for his work, fined him 10,000 rupees and would have taken more had he possessed more. Tavernier estimated the value of the diamond to be more than \$4,000,000.

This information ends our positive knowledge of the stone. As to what happened to it subsequently a vast amount of speculation has been indulged in without yielding any satisfactory conclusion. A number of English investigators have found reasons for identifying it with the Kohinoor, while others are equally sure that it is the diamond now known as the Orloff. In the opinion of Streeter,<sup>1</sup> who is probably the best English authority, the Great Mogul diamond has ceased to exist. He thinks it probable that either during the sacking of Delhi by the Persian Conqueror, Nadir Shah, or at his death, the diamond was stolen and to escape detection was cut into smaller stones or was lost altogether.

### HOPE BLUE

Since of all colors of diamonds, blue is among the rarest, especial interest and value attaches to what is the finest of all blue diamonds known, the Hope Blue. This diamond is a perfect brilliant weighing 45.5<sup>2</sup> metric carats.

It is not only of an extraordinary sapphire-blue color, but it has a brilliant luster and fine play of colors. Its dimensions are  $1\frac{1}{8}$  inches long and  $\frac{7}{8}$  of an inch broad.

Two detailed sketches and an outline drawing of this diamond made in London in 1812 by an English lapidary are preserved, but further than this the known history of the diamond begins in 1830, when, set in a brooch, it

<sup>1</sup>Great Diamonds of the World, E. W. Streeter, p. 78.

<sup>2</sup>41 $\frac{1}{4}$ , Kunz.

came into the hands of Mr. Daniel Eliason, a London pawnbroker. Somewhat later it became the property of Henry Thomas Hope, a London banker, whose possession of it gave it the name of the Hope diamond. Mr. Hope is said to have paid \$90,000 (£18,000) for it. It was sold in 1906 and again in 1909. In 1911 it was purchased by Mr. Edward B. McLean of Washington, D. C., at the reputed price of \$300,000 and it is still retained by him. This and the Tiffany Yellow are the only famous diamonds described in this leaflet that are now owned in America.

While, as has been stated above, the known history of the diamond begins with the year 1830, it is believed by many authorities that the Hope Blue is a part of a blue diamond weighing  $112\frac{1}{4}$  carats which was obtained by the French traveler Tavernier in India and sold by him to Louis XIV of France in 1668. While no further mention of a blue diamond of this weight appears in history, in an inventory of the French Crown Jewels made in 1791, a "fine, light-blue diamond weighing  $67\frac{1}{2}$  carats" is listed which is thought by many to be the Tavernier Blue cut to this weight. Its value was stated to be \$600,000 (3,000,000 francs). With the other Crown Jewels, it was stolen from the Garde Meuble of Paris in 1792 and was never recovered in its original form. It is believed, however, that it was cleaved into one large and two small fragments, of which the large one, cut to a symmetrical form, reappeared as the Hope Blue.

#### JUBILEE

This is one of the largest of known diamonds, but being of recent origin it has not yet acquired the historical importance that some smaller stones have. The rough diamond from which it was cut weighed 650 metric carats. It was found in the Jagersfontein mine in the Orange Free State, South Africa, in 1896. It had the form

of a flattened octahedron. From it was cut in 1897. the year of the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria, a perfect brilliant weighing 245 metric carats. The dimensions of the brilliant are  $1\frac{5}{8}$  inches long,  $1\frac{3}{8}$  inches broad and 1 inch deep. On account of the association of its cutting with the Victorian Jubilee, it was called the Jubilee diamond.

### KOHINOOR

This is probably, at least among English-speaking peoples, the best known of all diamonds. For centuries it has served as a symbol for supreme beauty and worth. In Roget's Thesaurus it is given among the words denoting perfection. As a matter of fact, several diamonds surpass the Kohinoor in size, brilliancy and transparency. None, however, equal it in the length and eventfulness of its history.

The story of the Kohinoor begins far back in the dim past. According to tradition, it was found in the Godavery River, South India, four or five thousand years ago, and was worn by one of the chiefs of the war described in the celebrated Indian poem, The Mahabharata. The diamond descended to one of the ancient princely families, that of the Rajahs of Malwar, and passed down through many generations of these rulers until 1304 A.D., when it was taken as part of the spoils of battle from the then reigning Rajah. The history of the diamond up to this time is very doubtful, but since then it is well known. Sultan Baber, the conqueror of India and founder of the Mogul empire, left on record, under date of May 14, 1526, the following account of how it came into his possession.

"Bikeramjit, a Hindoo," he says, "who was Rajah of Gwalior, had governed that country for upwards of a hundred years. In the battle in which Ibrahim was defeated, Bikeramjit was sent to hell. Bikeramjit's family

and the heads of his clan were at this moment in Agra. When Humayun arrived, Bikeramjit's people attempted to escape, but were taken by the parties which Humayun had placed upon watch and put in custody. Humayun did not permit them to be plundered. Of their own free will they presented to Humayun a "peshkish" (present) consisting of a quantity of jewels and precious stones. Among these was the famous diamond which had been acquired by Sultan Aleaddin. It is so valuable that a judge of diamonds values it at half the daily expense of the whole world. It is about eight mishkels. On my arrival Humayun presented it to me as a peshkish and I gave it back to him as a present." So this diamond fell into the hands of the Moguls. Humayun was Baber's son, and succeeded him on the throne. Then the diamond had about two centuries of rest, after which it began a period of active history. It remained one of the most valuable gems in the Mogul treasury until 1739, when Nadir Shah, the Persian conqueror, invaded India and captured the Mogul capitol. Nadir is said to have got possession of the diamond by a cunning artifice. According to one account, the diamond had formed one of the eyes of the peacock of the famous "Peacock Throne." The throne was captured, but the diamond eye had vanished. Nadir was informed by one of the women of the harem that Mohammed, the dethroned ruler, wore it hidden in his turban, which he never laid aside. Nadir, therefore, offered to restore him to his dominions, making the occasion one of grand display. During the ceremony, he artfully proposed, in token of renewed friendship and reconciliation, to exchange turbans with him, an offer which Mohammed dared not refuse. Returning to his tent, the turban was carefully unfolded by Nadir and the long-sought-for gem rolled out. He gazed at it with delight, and exclaimed, "Kohinoor" (Mound of Light). He took the diamond to Persia, and there its tribulations began.

It had got into the land of assassination and rapid changes in power. The stone remained with Nadir at Khorassan while he lived, but an assassin brought his life to an end, and his grandson, Shah Ruhk inherited the stone. He found it a source of endless misfortune.

Shah Ruhk was governor of the city of Mesha, and Aga Mohammed, one of the small kings, determined to relieve him of the Kohinoor and other famous jewels. By a ruse he captured the city of Mesha and ordered the Shah to deliver up his treasures. The Shah declared that he had already disposed of them. Mohammed, who did not believe him, ordered his prisoner to be tortured, a threat which caused the Shah to yield up a large number of his gems, but as neither the Kohinoor nor an immense ruby which he was known to possess were among the jewels delivered, Mohammed ordered that the Shah's head should be shaved and encircled with a crown of plaster, into which boiling oil should be poured. The agony produced by this horrible torture succeeded in making the Shah surrender the great ruby; but he still retained the Kohinoor, protesting that it was not in his possession. His health was permanently injured by this severe torture. He got rid of the Kohinoor soon after. In 1751, Ahmed Shah, founder of the Afghan empire, came to his assistance and, forming an alliance with him, received the great diamond as the price of his aid. On the death of Ahmed he left it to his son Taimur Shah, who, on his death in 1793, bequeathed it in turn to his son Shah Zaman. To the latter it brought misfortune. He was deposed, imprisoned, and deprived of his sight by his brother Shah Shuja ul-Mulk. He succeeded, however in retaining the Kohinoor, which he hid by embedding it in the plaster of his cell. In time the plaster crumbled away and exposed a sharp point of the gem, against which one of the prison officials scratched his hand. Looking down to ascertain what caused the accident, he discovered the

missing Kohinoor, which was shortly delivered to the cruel brother. To him it proved a "stone of fate." It was while he had it that it was first seen by an Englishman. The Shah Shuja became so powerful that the government sent Mr. Elphinstone to him as an ambassador. At the reception given the English diplomat, the Shah appeared in apparel glittering with precious stones, among them being the Kohinoor, worn on his breast. A short time after this, the Shah was expelled from Cabul, but succeeded in taking with him the far-famed diamond, concealed on his person. Accompanied by his brother, Shah Zaman, whom he had himself blinded, he took refuge with the famous Ranjit-Singh, the "Lion of the Punjab." Although Runjit at first protested friendship for the brothers, he soon began to extort their treasures from them. Thinking that the Kohinoor was in the possession of the Begum, Shuja's consort, he endeavored by starvation and imprisonment to secure the gem from her. This was continued until Shuja was prevailed upon to give up the gem, receiving for it about \$40,000 and a small annuity for himself and family. Runjit had the stone set in a bracelet and wore it on public occasions. After his death it remained in the treasury at Lahore until the annexation of the Punjab by the British Government in 1849. Included in the terms of the conquest was the stipulation that the Kohinoor should be presented to the Queen of England. It was brought to London in custody of two officers and shown to the public in 1851 at the London Exposition. At that time it weighed 186 $\frac{1}{8}$  carats. Its form was that which had been given it by the Indian cutters centuries before. As their efforts had been chiefly directed toward saving as much of the stone as possible with little regard to symmetry and with probably no knowledge of the laws of light, it was thought advisable on the arrival of the gem in England to recut it so as to improve its symmetry and brilliancy. The

eminent physicist, Sir David Brewster, and some leading diamond cutters were called into conference as to the best mode of cutting, with the result that it was decided to reduce it to the form of a regular brilliant. The work of recutting occupied thirty-eight days of twelve hours each and cost \$40,000 (£ 8,000). Eighty carats of weight were removed from the stone, giving it its present size of  $106\frac{1}{8}$  English carats or 108.8 metric carats. The stone is now exhibited in the jewel room of the Tower of London. The stone is not of the first water, it being of a grayish tinge.

### NASSAK

This diamond made its first appearance, so far as known, as a votive offering to the deity Siva at one of the famous cave temples located at Nassak, India. Nassak is about 100 miles northeast of Bombay. The natural shape of the diamond was undoubtedly triangular, and this form it still retains. The Indian cutters of this as of other diamonds confined their work almost wholly to polishing the natural facets, this practice being partly due to their lack of knowledge of a means of shaping the diamond without a great expenditure of time and labor and partly to the fact that estimates of diamond values in India were based more upon gross weight than on brilliancy.

In one of the various civil strifes that were common in the region in India where this diamond was possessed, the temples were looted and the diamond was among the spoils seized by the victors. When the British obtained control of this part of India in 1818, this diamond, although attempts were made to conceal it, came into the hands of the Marquis of Hastings, the leader of the British forces. He presented it to the East India Company and by them it was brought to London in 1818 and sold to a firm of London jewelers. As it became



evident on inspection that the brilliancy of the jewel could be improved by skillful cutting, it was turned over to a European cutter for that purpose and a most satisfactory result was achieved. As described by Streeter, the "rudely faceted, lusterless mass was transformed into a diamond of perfect brilliancy." Moreover, this change was accomplished at a sacrifice of not more than 10 per cent of the original weight. The stone in its present form weighs  $78\frac{5}{8}$  carats.

In 1831 the jewel was disposed of at public sale for the sum of \$36,000 (£7,200) to a London firm and by them sold in 1837 to the Marquis of Westminster. He had it mounted on the hilt of his sword, where it remained for many years, but it is said to have recently been brought to this country for sale. Streeter gives the reputed value of the diamond as \$125,000 to \$150,000.

#### ORLOFF

The legendary history of this diamond begins with the story that it served as one of the eyes of an idol in a Brahmin temple at Seringham, India. In order to obtain it, it is said, a French soldier early in the eighteenth century assumed the character of a native devotee and displayed such zeal that he was appointed guardian of the shrine in which the idol was kept. The soldier took advantage of this opportunity, one dark and stormy night, to tear the diamond from its socket and escape with it to Madras. Here he sold the diamond for \$10,000 (£2,000) to an English sea captain who brought it to London. After passing through several hands, the diamond reached Amsterdam, where it was seen by Prince Orloff of the Russian Court. Being at that time in retirement on account of having incurred the displeasure of his royal mistress, Catherine the Great, he attempted to win back her favor by presenting to her this remarkable gem. He accordingly purchased it at a price various-

ly given as from \$200,000 to \$450,000, and sent it to his sovereign. She accepted the gem and gave costly presents in return, but it is not recorded that any further restoration of favor was granted. The diamond was mounted in the royal scepter and has remained there during all the changes of rule in Russia. To the Russian crown it has been what the Kohinoor has to the British. It now forms a part of the Diamond Treasure of the Union of Soviet Republics. Dr. A. Fersman, the noted Russian mineralogist, who has lately (1925) examined it, states that it is undoubtedly of East Indian origin and East Indian cutting. He states that it is of exceptional purity and of an agreeable, pale, bluish-green tinge. He gives its dimensions as: Height 22 mm. ( $\frac{7}{8}$  of an inch) width 31 mm. ( $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches) and length 35 mm. ( $1\frac{3}{8}$  inches) For various reasons, Dr. Fersman feels confident that this diamond is the same as that known as the Great Mogul, which was seen by Tavernier in India in 1665 and is described in another part of this leaflet. Like the Great Mogul, the Orloff diamond is high on one side and has a notch and flaw in it. The discrepancy in weight between the two, 279 carats for the Great Mogul and 199 for the Orloff, Dr. Fersman explains as a failure to understand the weight of the Indian *rati*, in which denomination the weight was given. Other authorities who have investigated this possibility, do not agree with this view. Owing to its being mounted, the diamond could not be removed for weighing at the time Dr. Fersman examined it, but he estimates its weight to be 199.6 metric carats. It is thus one of the largest of known cut diamonds, being exceeded in weight only by the large Cullinan and the fabled Great Mogul.

#### PASHA OF EGYPT

This is described as a diamond of excellent quality, cut in an octagonal, brilliant form and weighing 40 carats.

It was purchased for \$140,000 (£28,000) for the Egyptian Treasury by Ibrahim Pasha and so far known is still the property of the Egyptian Government.

### PIGOTT

Lord Pigott, an Irish Peer who served as Governor of Madras, India, during two periods, brought this diamond to England about the year 1775. It is supposed to have been presented to him by an East Indian princess. After his death in 1777, the diamond was sold in 1802 at Christie's in London for about \$50,000 (£10,099) to one Parker, a pawnbroker. A lottery was organized and the stone disposed of by this means. It fell to a young man who soon parted with it at a low price to a firm of London jewelers, Rundell and Bridge. It was sold by them in 1818 for \$150,000 (£30,000) to Ali Pasha, at that time Khedive of Egypt. This ruler always wore it in a green silk purse attached to his girdle. He was assassinated in 1882 by his enemy, Raschid Pasha, but before expiring ordered (so that the assassin might not acquire his two greatest treasures) that the diamond should be crushed to powder in his presence and that his wife, Vasilica, should be strangled. His wife fortunately escaped, but the diamond was destroyed and now only the model which had been made of it, remains. The diamond is described as "a brilliant of great surface, both in table and girdle, but of insufficient depth." Its weight was 85.8 carats.

### POLAR STAR

This diamond of 40 carats weight is usually stated to be one of the Russian crown jewels, but in the list of diamonds in the Russian Diamond Treasure given by Fersman (1925) the only stone of this weight noted is a briolet. All descriptions and models of the Polar Star show it to be a brilliant. According to these accounts the diamond was at one time in the possession of Joseph

Bonaparte, who paid \$10,500 (52,500 francs) for it. It was said to have been purchased later in England for the Russian crown and was described as being remarkable for its rare purity and luster.

#### REGENT OR PITT

The tradition usually associated with the origin of this diamond is that it was found by a slave in India at the Partaal mines on the Kistna River in 1701. Instead of reporting the find to his master, the slave cut his leg as if by accident and in the bandage covering the wound enclosed the diamond. He then made his way to the coast and exchanged the diamond with an English skipper for a free passage to another country. The skipper on receiving the diamond threw the slave into the sea, sold the stone to a merchant for \$5,000 (£1,000) squandered the money in dissipation and went and hanged himself. The merchant who purchased the diamond, a Parsee named Jamchund, sold it to Sir Thomas Pitt, Governor of Fort St. George at Madras, for the reputed sum of \$100,000 (£20,000). Governor Pitt on returning to England in 1710 found that reports of his acquisition of the diamond had preceded him and that he was accused of having procured it by unfair, if not violent, means. These reports caused him great distress, both because of the imputation of dishonesty which they implied and because of their making widely known his possession of such a treasure. Although he immediately published a full account of the transaction by which he came into possession of the diamond (in which nothing dishonorable appeared), his anxieties seemed never to have been allayed and he developed a morbid fear that he would lose or be robbed of the gem. Accordingly, he is said to have gone about much in disguise and rarely to have spent more than two nights under the same roof. Up to this time the gem had been in the rough state. It had a weight of 410

carats, which distinguishes it as one of the largest diamonds ever found. Whether it would make a satisfactory cut stone was not known until this work was undertaken in London, but the cutting produced one of the finest and most brilliant of known diamonds. The weight of the stone was reduced in the process from 410 to 143.2 carats. In form the cut stone is somewhat rounded. Its dimensions are: Length,  $1\frac{1}{8}$  inches, width, 1 inch and depth,  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an inch. The work of cutting occupied two years and cost \$25,000 (£5,000). A model was made of the stone and sent to John Law in Paris. Law, famous later for his connection with the so-called Mississippi Bubble, together with one of the French nobles, took the model to the Regent of France, the Duke of Orleans, and urged its purchase for the French Crown. The Regent after some hesitation agreed and in 1717 the gem became the property of France. A sum usually stated as \$625,000 (£125,000) was paid for it, of which \$25,000 (£5,000) is supposed to have been received by Law. The sale of the diamond was of much assistance to Governor Pitt in enabling him to advance the fortunes of his family. His son became the celebrated William Pitt and his grandson the brilliant orator and statesman, the Earl of Chatham. At first, only the interest on the cost of the diamond was paid by the French Court, other jewels being furnished as security, but in time the whole amount was defrayed. The diamond remained among the French Crown jewels until 1792, when, on September 17 of that year, it, together with many other jewels, was stolen from the Garde Meuble. Some weeks later an anonymous letter received by the Commune gave the information that some of the stolen objects could be found in a ditch in the Champs-Elysees. When the spot was reached, the Regent diamond was found to be among the gems returned in this mysterious way. It has been thought probable that it was returned because it was too well known to be safely offered

for sale. The diamond was for a time pledged to the Dutch Government as security for a loan with which to carry on the Napoleonic wars. Later, as Emperor, Napoleon is said to have had it mounted in his sword hilt. Since that time it has remained in the French treasury and is now to be seen in the Galerie Apollon in the Louvre in Paris. The value of the diamond has been estimated as high as \$2,040,000, but a more reasonable valuation appraises it at \$900,000.

### SANCY

Although not a large diamond, the Sancy has had a more extensive circulation among the kings and queens of Europe and a longer authentic history than any other known, except, perhaps, the Kohinoor. It was at various times in the possession of Henry III, Henry IV, Louis XIV, Louis XV and Louis XVI of France and of Queen Elizabeth, Charles I and James II of England, serving now as an ornament and now as a convenient form of security for loans. Like some other famous diamonds, it was also at one time the price of a man's life.

Discarding as unreliable the tradition that the diamond was one of those lost by Charles the Bold on the battlefield of Granson in 1746, the first satisfactory information regarding it tells us that it was brought from the East to France by Nicholas Harlai, Seigneur de Sancy, French Ambassador to the Ottoman Court, about 1570. He is said to have purchased it in Constantinople, for a large sum. The diamond was then either loaned or sold by M. de Sancy to Henry III of France. This king had become bald at an early age and being very sensitive as to this defect was accustomed to wear at all times a small cap. In the front of this cap glittered the Sancy diamond.

Whatever may have been the terms on which Henry III held this diamond, it was later returned to M. de

Sancy. When Henry IV succeeded to the throne, he made de Sancy his superintendent of finance and shortly after desired to borrow the diamond to serve as security for a loan by means of which he might add some Swiss soldiers to his army. The diamond was sent, but the messenger entrusted with carrying it never reached his destination. After a long time it was discovered that he had been killed on the way, evidently by robbers who knew of his errand and had determined to gain possession of the diamond. Knowing well the trustworthiness of the messenger, de Sancy believed that in some way he had found means to outwit the robbers. Accordingly he had the body disinterred and in the stomach of the victim the diamond was found. The messenger had given his life to protect his master's possessions. It may be remarked that the shape and size of the diamond, about that of an ordinary peach stone, was peculiarly favorable to this manner of concealment. The diamond, thus again restored to Sancy, was sold by him to Queen Elizabeth of England somewhere between 1590 and 1600. It seems to have remained among the English Crown Jewels until, by the widow of Charles I, Queen Dowager Henrietta Maria, it was presented to Somerset, Earl of Worcester. By purchase or gift from him it again came to the English Crown, for we next hear of it in the possession of King James II. James is said to have sold it for \$125,000 (625,000 francs) to Louis XIV of France about 1695. From the latter it passed to Louis XV, who, like Henry III, wore it on his hat.

In 1792 there occurred the famous robbery of the Garde Meuble in Paris which resulted in the disappearance of the most famous of the French Crown Jewels. The Sancy was among those stolen, but it suddenly reappeared in 1828 as having been sold by a respectable French merchant to Prince Demidoff, a member of the Demidoff family, for \$100,000 (£20,000). In 1865 it was

purchased by a London firm for a wealthy Parsee merchant of Bombay. It soon returned to Paris, however, being shown at the Exposition in that city in 1867 as the property of a Paris firm. It was later sent again to Bombay and from a jeweler there was purchased in 1875 by the Maharaja of Patiala. Although this ruler died shortly after, the diamond is still in the treasury of his realm. It is set in platinum and forms part of a necklace which is worn by the present Maharaja on State occasions, according to a letter recently received by the writer from the Maharaja. Dr. Kunz, however, has recently stated that this diamond is now in the possession of Lady Astor.

There is little doubt, from its form and cut that the diamond originated in India. Its "water" and brilliancy are said to be the finest order.

#### SHAH OF PERSIA

As has more than once been true of famous diamonds, this one represents the price of a man's life. On January 30, 1829, A. Griboiedov, the Russian ambassador to Persia and a famous author, was murdered in Teheran, Persia. Feeling in Russia against the Persian Government ran high and war was threatened, until, to conciliate Russia, this diamond was sent to the Czar at St. Petersburg by a special Persian envoy as a gift. By this acknowledgment of fault and offering of indemnity on the part of Persia, Russia was appeased and war was averted. The diamond was kept in the Diamond Room of the Winter Palace at St. Petersburg up to 1914. In that year, however, it was removed from St. Petersburg to Moscow and in 1922 was added to the "Russian Diamond Treasure" of the Union of Soviet Republics.

Previous to its acquisition by Russia, the diamond had had a long and checkered career, and fortunately for history, important dates in that career are marked on the





JEAN-BAPTISTE TAVERNIER  
A FRENCH TRAVELER AND GEM MERCHANT

He made six journeys to the East, 1630-1669, and accurately described many large diamonds which he saw there



gem itself. It is one of the few known engraved diamonds. The earliest date and inscription on the stone are "Burhan-Nizam-Shah II, 1000 years." Burhan-Nizam-Shah II was a ruler of the province of Achmednagar, India, the "1000 years" mentioned corresponding to 1591 A.D. The inscription evidently refers to his possession of the stone. A second date and inscription read: "Son of Johangir-Shah-Jehan-Shah, 1051." This refers to the Great Mogul, Shah Jehan, whose title meant "Ruler of the Universe" and the date corresponds to 1641 A.D. A third date and inscription are "Kajar-Fatli-ali-Shah Sultan, 1242. This refers to the then reigning Shah of Persia and the date 1824 A.D.

From the first inscription it is evident that the diamond was found previous to 1591. It then came into the possession of the ruler of the province of Achmednagar, India. In 1591 the Great Mogul<sup>1</sup> Akbar sent messengers to the rulers of some of the provinces of India, Burhan-Shah among them, to inform them that they were henceforth under his control. In reply to this, Burhan sent an "unsatisfactory answer" and what was regarded as a "trifling" present of 15 elephants and 5 gems. Angered by so meager a recognition of his power, Akbar sent a military expedition against Burhan which conquered his city and returned with all his elephants and gems, among them being included, doubtless, this large diamond. The diamond then descended to Akbar's successor, Shah Jehan, and during his possession of it the second inscription was cut. Shah Jehan is famous as the builder of the Taj Mahal, which he constructed as a tomb for himself and his favorite wife. Its rich adornment of precious stones indicates his fondness for gems. Before the completion of Shah Jehan's reign, his son Aurungzeb rose against his father, thrust him into prison and usurped his throne. This throne in a material sense was a gorgeous

<sup>1</sup>Great Mogul=Great Mongol.

affair, lavishly decorated with all kinds of precious gems. The French traveler, Tavernier, saw it at this period, and states that in front of the throne itself, where it could always be seen by the occupant, there was suspended a large diamond of 80-90 carats. It is surmised, but not positively known, that this diamond was the one which we now call the "Shah." A peculiar feature of the Shah diamond is that it has a groove cut entirely around one end of it. It is thought probable that this groove was cut for the purpose of suspending it in the manner above indicated.

How the stone was later carried to Persia is not known, but it is probable that Nadir Shah, the Persian conqueror of India, took it in 1739 when he seized the treasures of the Great Moguls at Delhi. It was while it was in the possession of the Persian rulers that the third date, which corresponds to A.D. 1824, was inscribed upon it.

The diamond has been little altered from its natural form by its various possessors, this form being an elongated octahedron. Some of the natural facets have been polished, the others have been left in a state of nature. The stone is not of the finest water, since it has a yellowish tinge. It is, however, of perfect transparency. Its weight is 88.7 metric carats. The models that have been made of the stone represent it but imperfectly.

#### STAR OF ESTE

This is a comparatively small diamond, weighing only 26 carats. It appears larger, however, because of its well-designed proportions. In purity and brilliancy it is said to be of the highest quality. It has been valued at \$25,000. It derives its name from having been owned for many years and, so far as known, until his death, by the Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria-Este, heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary. It will be recalled that the assassination of this prince, in Sarajevo, June 28,

1914, was the immediate cause of the World War. So far as known, this diamond was still in his possession at the time of his death. What subsequent disposition has been made of it, is unknown to the writer.

#### STAR OF SOUTH AFRICA OR DUDLEY

The history of this stone goes back to the earliest discovery of diamonds in South Africa. During the excitement resulting from the recognition in 1867 by Mr. John O'Reilly of the fact that some pretty pebbles with which the daughter of a Mr. Van Niekirk with whom he was staying were diamonds, a report reached Mr. Van Niekirk's ear to the effect that a native African had a much larger stone of the same kind. Mr. Van Niekirk immediately hunted up the native and purchased the stone, although it cost him nearly all that he possessed—500 sheep, horses, etc. He shortly after sold the diamond to a firm of South African jewelers for \$56,000 (£11,200). The stone weighed in the rough  $83\frac{1}{2}$  carats and was cut by the purchasers to an oval, three-sided brilliant of  $46\frac{1}{2}$  carats of great brilliancy and of the finest water. It then was sold to the Countess of Dudley for \$125,000, who had it mounted in a head ornament surrounded by 95 smaller stones.

#### STAR OF THE SOUTH

This is the largest and finest Brazilian diamond that has ever been obtained. It was found in 1853 by a slave woman in the mines at Bagagem, the Brazilian locality at which most of the large diamonds of that country have been discovered. The finder was rewarded for her discovery by freedom and a pension for life. The rough stone was sold at first for \$15,000 (£3,000), later for \$175,000 (£35,000), and then passed through several hands at an increasing price before being cut. It was cut by Coster

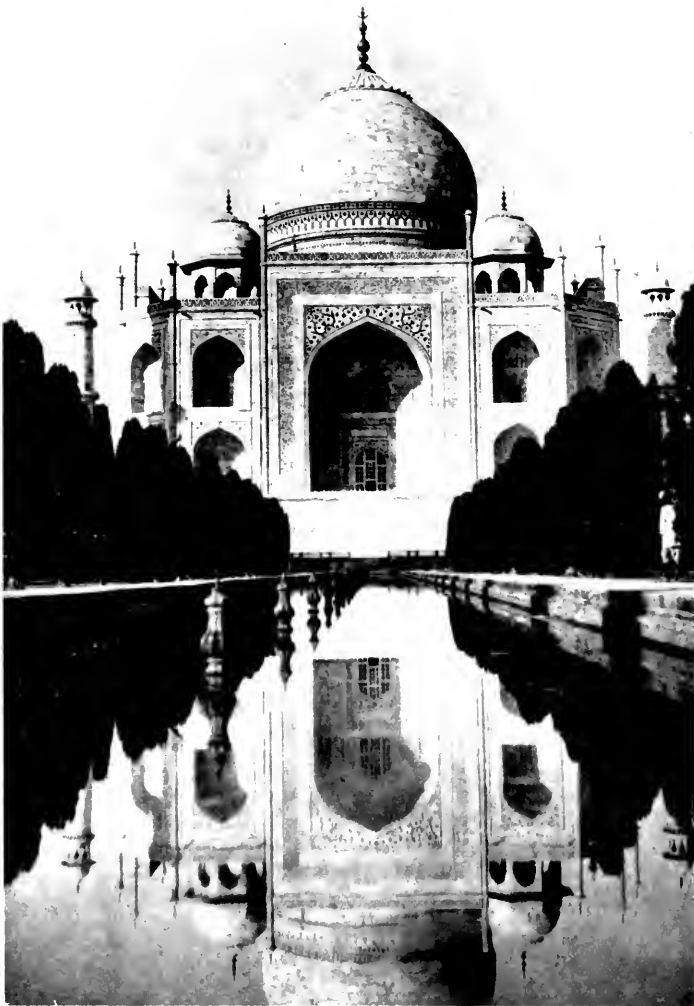
of Amsterdam at an expense of \$2500 (£500), to a gem 35 millimeters ( $1\frac{3}{8}$  inches) long by 29 millimeters ( $1\frac{1}{8}$  inches) broad and 19 millimeters ( $\frac{3}{4}$  of an inch) thick. These proportions are remarkable for the length given the stone. The cut stone weighs 128.5 metric carats. While it is a "white" stone by reflected light, by refracted light it shows a decided rose tint, an unusual but attractive feature which Streeter regards as derived from the form given to it in cutting, but this seems somewhat unlikely.

After being cut, the diamond was purchased by a syndicate of Paris merchants and exhibited at the London Exhibition of 1862 and at that of Paris in 1867. It was later sold to Mulhar Rao, the Gaikwar of Baroda, India, for \$400,000 (£80,000). So far as known, it is still in his possession. Shortly after acquiring the diamond this ruler was threatened with deposition by Queen Victoria because he had endeavored to murder a British official, Colonel Phayre, by administering to him diamond dust mixed with arsenic. This is said to have been a favorite practice of this ruler as a means of disposing of troublesome individuals. Dr. Laufer<sup>1</sup> states that it is a common superstition in India that diamond dust is "at once the least painful, most active and most infallible of all poisons." The threatened punishment of the Gaikwar was not carried out, however. During the recent visit of King George V to India, the Gaikwar gained further notoriety by refusing for a time to pay homage to the King, but he finally agreed to make the necessary obeisance.

#### STEWART

This was a large river diamond found at Waldeck's Plant, Vaal River, South Africa, in 1872. It weighed in the rough 296 metric carats. The stone was first sold for

<sup>1</sup>Pubs. Field Museum of Natural History, 1915, *Anthrop.* Ser. Vol. XV, p. 41.



### THE TAJ MAHAL, INDIA

This famous tomb, where lie the remains of the "Great Mogul," Shah Jehan, is richly adorned with precious stones. Among other large diamonds possessed by this ruler during his lifetime were the "Kohinoor," "Great Mogul" and "Shah"

Photograph by Helen Günsaules





\$30,000 and later for \$45,000. It was cut to a slightly yellowish brilliant of 123 metric carats which is said to be in the possession of an English owner, but no further history of it is available.

#### TIFFANY YELLOW

This, perhaps the largest and finest of yellow diamonds, was found at the Kimberley Mine, Kimberley, South Africa, about 1878. It was cut in Paris to a double brilliant weighing 128.5 metric carats. It has 40 facets on the crown, 44 on the pavilion or lower side and 17 on the girdle. Total 101 facets. It has been recently stated by Dr. Kunz that this unprecedented number of facets was given the stone not to make it more brilliant but less brilliant, since, as the stone was of yellow color, it was thought better to give it the effect of a smothered, smoldering fire than one of flashing radiance. The stone has the unusual feature in a yellow diamond of retaining its color by artificial light. It was exhibited at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 by Tiffany and Company of New York City, and it is still a highly prized possession of that firm.

OLIVER C. FARRINGTON.





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