

AN EPITOME OF HUMAN HISTORY MAY BE FOUND IN THE STORIES OF FAMOUS DIAMONDS

(Editor's Note:—Following are a few excerpts from FAMOUS DIAMONDS, Field Museum Geology Leaflet No. 10, by the late Dr. Oliver C. Farrington, former Curator of Geology. The complete leaflet, with 27 pages of text and 5 illustrations, is available at THE BOOK SHOP of FIELD MUSEUM, price 25 cents).

¶ Diamonds have long fascinated mankind. The Greek name, *adamas*, meaning "unconquerable," shows early appreciation of the diamond's properties, and in India diamonds were highly esteemed before recorded history.

The form, size and color of a number of these diamonds are recorded in models displayed in H. N. Higinbotham Hall (Hall 31) of Field Museum. Much that is legendary is contained in accounts of the older diamonds, and it is hardly possible always to separate tradition from truth.

CULLINAN

Of all known gem diamonds, this is by far the largest. Not only did it 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

T. N. Cullinan, President of the Premier Diamond Mining Company.

The Cullinan diamond was finally purchased by the Transvaal Colony Assembly as a present to King Edward VII. The price is said to have been \$800,000. In London, owing to a defective spot at the center, it was necessary to cut it in two to obtain flawless gems. Thus the two greatest known cut diamonds were secured. The largest was a pendeloque or drop brilliant weighing 530 metric carats. The second large stone was a square brilliant weighing 309 3/18 carats. Many other flawless blue-white gems, large and small, were obtained. They were delivered to the King and Queen on November 1, 1908, and except on special occasions rest with other jewels of the English Crown in a glass case within a double cage of steel in the Tower of London.

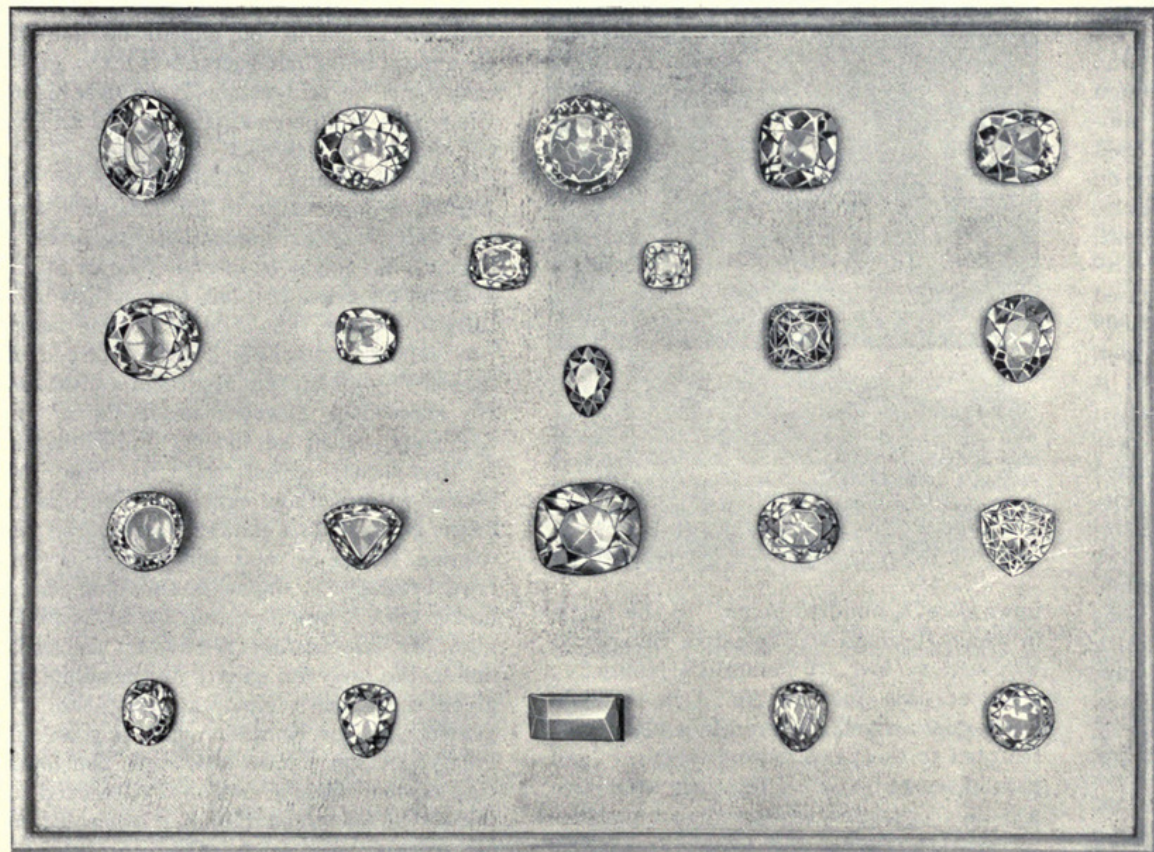
GREAT MOGUL

About all that is known of this diamond is the account given by the French traveler and gem merchant, Jean Baptiste Tavernier, who saw it in 1665 in the possession of the Great Mogul of India. He described the stone as having the form of an egg cut through the middle. He gave the weight as 279 9/16 carats, and stated that the diamond was rose cut, round, and very high.

From other allusions by Tavernier and another traveler, Francois Bernier, we learn that this diamond had been found about 1650 A.D. in the Kollur mine on the River Kistma in India. It came into the possession of Emir Jemla, also called Mirginola, an important official of the kingdom of Golconda. Harassed by the jealousy of other officials, he sought to transfer his allegiance to the Mogul Empire and lavished the most costly gifts upon the emperor Shah Jehan. Among these was this great diamond. Shah Jehan's son later usurped the throne and imprisoned his father. The diamond thus came into the possession of the son, Aurungzeb, among whose treasures Tavernier saw it. Tavernier stated that in the rough it weighed 787 1/2

carats. However, the cutter, Hortensio Borgio, had cut it so poorly and reduced its weight so much that the king, instead of paying him, fined him 10,000 rupees. Tavernier estimated the value of the diamond to be more than \$4,000,000.

What happened to the diamond subsequently has been the subject of a vast amount of speculation. A number of English investigators have identified it with the Kohinoor, while others are equally sure it must be the diamond now known as the



MODELS OF FAMOUS DIAMONDS

(About one-third actual size)

On exhibition in H. N. Higinbotham Hall (Hall 31—the Gem Room)

KEY for identification (relative positions of names below correspond to positions of diamonds in illustration above):

KOHINOOR FIRST CUT	STEWART	GREAT MOGUL		REGENT OR PITT	STAR OF THE SOUTH
		POLAR STAR	STAR OF ESTE		
KOHINOOR RE-CUT	HOPE BLUE	DRESDEN GREEN	TIFFANY YELLOW	DRESDEN	
ORLOFF	NASSAK	JUBILEE	PIGOTT	FLORENTINE	
EMPRESS EUGENIE	STAR OF SOUTH AFRICA	SHAH OF PERSIA	SANCY	PASHA OF EGYPT	

The high value of large diamonds is due both to their extreme rarity and their size.

Appreciation in the value of the largest diamonds, has led to records being made of their ownership and changing fortunes. Hence, many have fairly complete histories which show rulers and nations striving for their possession. Some of the basest as well as some of the noblest of human traits have been displayed to obtain and preserve them. To some extent, the history of diamonds affords an epitome of human history.

had ever been produced before. The Cullinan diamond, as found, weighed 3,106 metric carats, or more than one and one-third pounds avoirdupois. Its dimensions were 4 by 2 1/2 by 1 1/2 inches. It was found in 1905, in the wall of a mine about twenty miles northwest of Pretoria, South Africa, by Mine Captain Frederick Wells. The discovery, while the source of great elation, is said to have been accompanied by fear that a purchaser could never be found for so large a jewel. The stone was named for

Orloff. It may no longer exist. During the sacking of Delhi by the Persian Conqueror, Nadir Shah, or at his death, the diamond may have been stolen, and to escape detection may have been cut into smaller stones.

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. 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. The soldier took advantage of this opportunity to tear the diamond from its socket and escaped to Madras. Here he sold it for \$10,000 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. In retirement on account of having incurred the displeasure of his royal mistress, Catherine the Great, Orloff attempted to win her back by presenting this remarkable gem. He purchased it at a price variously given as from \$200,000 to \$450,000. Catherine accepted the gem and gave costly presents in return, but it is not recorded that any further restoration of favor resulted. The diamond was mounted in the royal scepter and remained there during all the changes of rule in Russia. It now forms a part of the Diamond Treasure of the Union of Soviet Republics. It shows exceptional purity, and is of an agreeable, pale, bluish-green tinge. Its dimensions are: 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). Dr. A. Fersman, noted Russian mineralogist, asserted that this is the same diamond as that known as the Great Mogul.

KOHINOOR

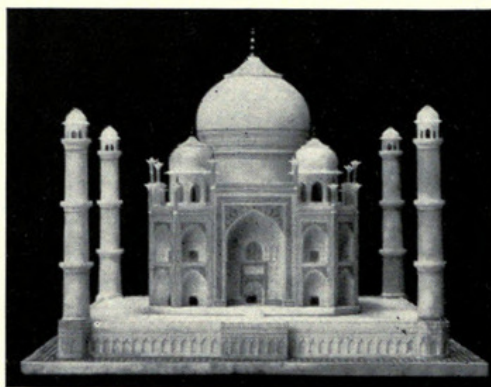
This is probably the best known of all diamonds. For centuries it has served as a symbol for supreme beauty and worth. Several diamonds surpass the Kohinoor in size, brilliancy and transparency, but none equal it in the eventfulness of its history.

Carats

The carat, as is well known, is the unit almost universally used for expressing the weight of precious stones. The name is said to be derived from a variety of locust tree which has seeds of uniform size formerly used for weighing gems. Until recent years, the value of the carat has varied in different countries, so that 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 was finally adopted with fixed weight of 200 milligrams ($\frac{1}{5}$ 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 they are stated here 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.

The story of the Kohinoor begins 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 a war chief. It descended to the Rajahs of Malwar, and passed down through many generations of these rulers until A.D. 1304, when it was taken as part of the spoils of battle. Sultan Baber, conqueror of India and founder of the Mogul empire, left the following account dated A.D. 1526:

"Bikeramjit, a Hindoo, who was Rajah of Gwalior, had governed that country for



THE JEWELLED TAJ MAHAL

Probably more richly adorned with precious stones than any other building in the world is this famous tomb at Agra, India. Shown above is a model exhibited in Hall L of Field Museum. The Taj Mahal contains the remains of the "Great Mogul," Emperor Shah Jehan, who possessed during his lifetime such famous diamonds as the Kohinoor, the Great Mogul, and the Shah of Persia.

upwards of a hundred years. In the battle in which Ibrahim was defeated, Bikeramjit was sent to hell. Bikeramjit's family . . . were at this moment in Agra. When Humayun arrived, Bikeramjit's people attempted to escape, but were taken . . . and put in custody . . . 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."

Humayun was Baber's son, and succeeded him on the throne. The diamond remained one of the most valuable gems in the Mogul treasury until 1739, when Nadir Shah, the Persian conqueror, invaded India. Nadir is said to have got possession of the diamond by a cunning artifice. 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 his dominions, making the occasion one of grand display. During the ceremony, he artfully proposed, in token of reconciliation, to exchange turbans, an offer which Mohammed dared not refuse. Later the turban was carefully unfolded by Nadir and the long-sought-for gem rolled out. He delightedly exclaimed "Kohinoor!" (Mound

of Light). In Persia the stone remained with Nadir until an assassin killed him. Then his grandson, Shah Ruhk, inherited it.

Shah Ruhk was governor of the city of Mesha, and Aga Mohammed, one of the small kings, determined to relieve him of the Kohinoor. He captured Mesha and ordered the Shah to give up his treasures. The Shah declared he had already disposed of them. Mohammed then ordered his prisoner to be tortured, a threat which caused the Shah to yield a large number of gems. But as neither the Kohinoor nor an immense ruby were among them Mohammed ordered that the Shah's head be shaved and encircled with a crown of plaster into which boiling oil should be poured. In agony the Shah surrendered the great ruby; but he still retained the Kohinoor. His health was permanently injured and he got rid of the Kohinoor soon after.

In 1751, Ahmed Shah, founder of the Afghan empire, came to his assistance and received the great diamond as the price of his aid. He left it to his son Taimur Shah, who, on his death in 1793, bequeathed it in turn to his son, Shah Zaman. The latter 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 and exposed a sharp point of the gem. A prison official discovered the missing Kohinoor, and delivered it to the cruel brother. It was while the Shah Shuja had it that it was first seen by an Englishman, Mr. Elphinstone, sent as an ambassador to the powerful ruler. At the reception given the English diplomat, the Shah appeared with the Kohinoor glittering on his breast. A short time after this, the Shah was expelled from Cabul, but succeeded in taking 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 Runjit Singh, "Lion of the Punjab." Runjit soon began to extort their treasures. 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 for about \$40,000 and a small annuity. Runjit had the stone set in a bracelet. After his death it remained in the treasury at Lahore until the annexation of the Punjab by the British in 1849. The terms of the conquest stipulated that the Kohinoor should be presented to the Queen of England, and it was brought to London. At that time it weighed $186\frac{1}{16}$ carats. Its form was that given it by Indian cutters centuries before. Their efforts had been chiefly directed toward saving as much of the stone as possible. In England it was recut to improve its symmetry and brilliancy. The work occupied thirty-eight days

of twelve hours each and cost \$40,000. Eighty carats were removed. The stone was then placed in the jewel room of the Tower of London.

SHAH OF PERSIA

This diamond cost a man his life. On January 30, 1829, A. Griboiedov, Russian ambassador to Persia, was murdered in Teheran. Feeling in Russia ran high and war was threatened, until, to conciliate Russia, this diamond was sent as a gift to the Czar at St. Petersburg by a special Persian envoy. Russia was thus appeased and war was averted. The diamond was kept in the Diamond Room of the Winter Palace up to 1914. In that year it was removed to Moscow and in 1922 was added to the "Diamond Treasure" of the U.S.S.R.

Previously the diamond had had a long and checkered career. 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 Achmednagar, India, and the "1000 years" corresponded to A.D. 1591. 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 A.D. 1641. A third date and inscription are "Kajar-Fatliali-Shah Sultan, 1242." This refers to the then reigning Shah of Persia and the date A.D. 1824.

In 1591 the Great Mogul Akbar sent messengers to the rulers of some of the provinces of India, to inform them that they were henceforth under his control. In reply, Burhan sent an "unsatisfactory answer" and what was regarded as a "trifling" present of fifteen elephants and five gems. Angered, Akbar sent a military expedition against Burhan which conquered his city and returned with all his elephants and gems, among them this large diamond. The diamond then descended to Akbar's successor, Shah Jehan, 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. Shah Jehan's son Aurungzeb rose against his father, thrust him into prison and usurped his throne.

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.

(To be concluded next month)

Lectures on Gems

Although the Layman Lectures presented on Sunday afternoons by Mr. Paul G. Dallwig have ceased for this season, it is timely, in view of the opening of H. N. Higinbotham Hall of Gems and Jewels, to point out that the autumn season, beginning on the first Sunday in November, will open with "Gems, Jewels and 'Junk.'"

THINGS YOU MAY HAVE MISSED

Famous Snake Killers

Probably most people make their first acquaintance with a mongoose by reading Rudyard Kipling's "Riki-tiki-tavi." As a result, the Indian mongoose described in that story exclusively represents the mongoose tribe, to many persons, or at least assumes an unduly prominent position.

Actually, there are numerous kinds of mongooses (and incidentally, even though one knows it's wrong, how much more natural it would seem to write "mongeese" for the plural!). A representative and interesting collection of various species of mongooses, from Asia, Africa, and Madagascar, is on exhibition among the systematic series of mammals in Hall 15.

Because they are so famous as killers of poisonous snakes, there has been prevalent an idea that mongooses are immune to snakes' venom. This is only partly the case; their success in killing the snakes is largely due to their great agility—they are quicker



WATER MONGOOSE OF AFRICA

One of the group of famous snake-killers, various species of which are found in India, Africa, and Madagascar.

in striking, and sinking their teeth into the neck of the reptile, than the latter is in making its strike.

Despite its popular fame, and whatever value it might have in killing American rattlesnakes, the importation of mongooses into the United States is now prohibited. The reason they are unwelcome as immigrants is that they were introduced some years ago into the West Indies and Hawaii, but rapidly became pests, and the harm they did, to birds and small mammals, outweighed any advantages they might offer as snake killers. Mongooses feed on other small forms of life, and not merely on snakes, contrary to a widespread belief into which many persons have been misled.

PREHISTORIC BOATS AND NETS

By HENRY FIELD
CURATOR OF PHYSICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Excavations on the shores of Lake Neuchâtel in Switzerland have revealed that the Lake-Dwellers lived there at least 4,000 years ago. According to Dr. P. Vouga, Director of the Neuchâtel Museum, since the boats of these people were dug from tree trunks their customary form had a relatively massive stern, almost vertical in the archaic

examples, later slightly curved in such a way as to facilitate boarding.

With regard to the Lake-Dwellers' nets, preserved at Robenhäusen, various sizes of mesh were used and they were constructed so as to form a square, not a lozenge, as in modern nets. The nets were supported by square floats made of poplar bark and pierced with a single hole in the center. This hole was made by means of fire in the examples found by Dr. Vouga.

As weights the Swiss Lake-Dwellers used flat, ovoid stones about three or four inches in length and notched near the center. Similar weights were employed by fishermen in Lake Neuchâtel up to the middle of the nineteenth century.

A reconstruction of a fishing scene at Auvèrner near Neuchâtel forms the last in the chronological sequence of dioramas in the Hall of the Stone Age of the Old World (Hall C). In Case 15, opposite the Lake-Dweller scene, are examples of nets and net sinkers excavated about fifty years ago by Dr. J. Thiessing.

SUMMER MOTION PICTURES OFFERED FOR CHILDREN

A series of six free programs of motion pictures for children will be presented at Field Museum on Thursday mornings from July 10 to August 18 inclusive by the James Nelson and Anna Louise Raymond Foundation for Public School and Children's Lectures. The programs will be given in the James Simpson Theatre, and include motion pictures with sound, some in color, and one accompanied by a lecture—that of July 17, on the subject "Exploring and Collecting in Forest, Field and Stream." Mr. William Hassler, a New Jersey naturalist will tell of adventures on nature pilgrimages, and show in colored motion pictures some of his own experiences.

On three of the programs there will be animated cartoons as well as the more serious films. All six programs will begin at 10 A.M. Children from all parts of Chicago and suburbs are invited, and no tickets are necessary for admission. Children may come alone, accompanied by adults, or in groups. Following are the details of each program:

July 10—THE ADVENTURES OF CHICO (*The story of a Mexican boy*).

July 17—EXPLORING AND COLLECTING IN FOREST, FIELD AND STREAM (*Films, and lecture by William Hassler*).

July 24—SUMMER TIME IN THE NORTH WOODS (*Animals and birds*); and a cartoon.

July 31—TO THE SOUTH SEAS WITH ZANE GREY; and a cartoon.

August 7—A WESTERN VACATION IN THE RANCH COUNTRY, YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK AND THE GRAND CANYON (*All color pictures*); and a cartoon.

August 14—TUNDRA (*An Arctic adventure*).



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