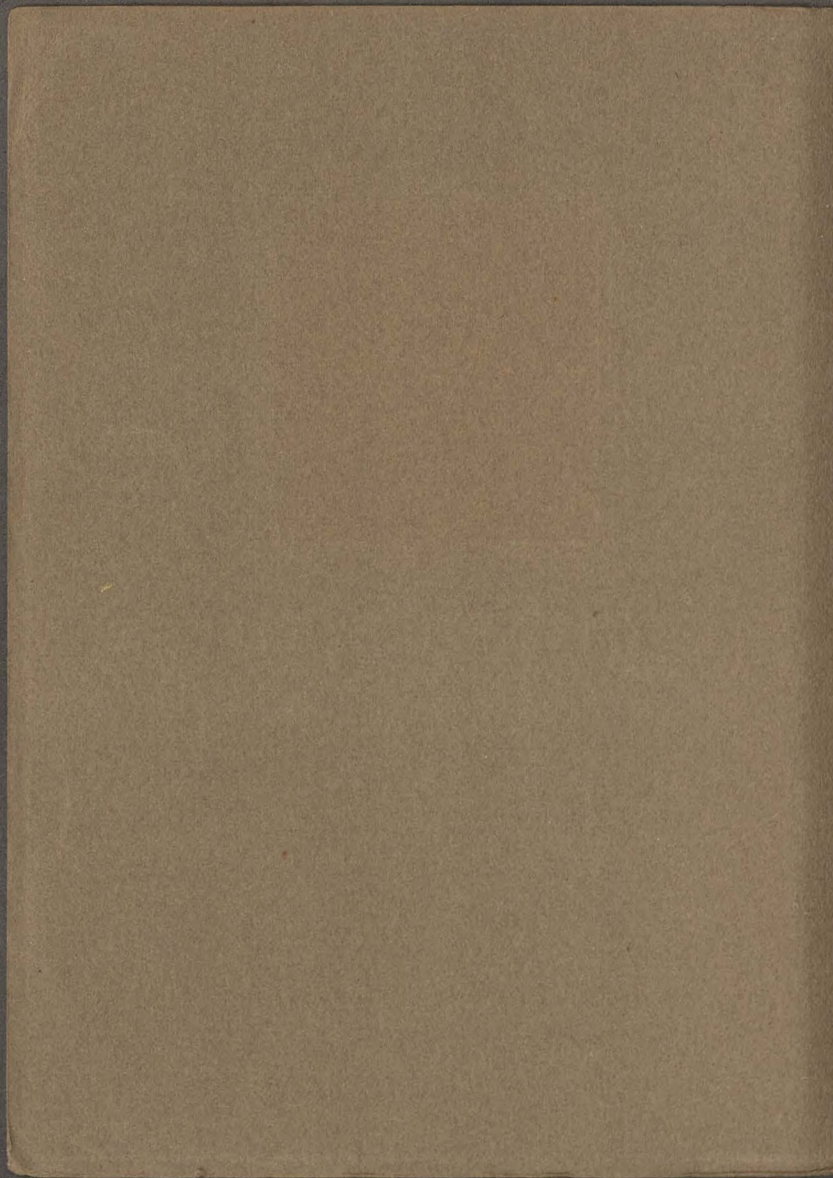


THE EMERALD



FOREWORD



WHO has not, at one time or another, picked up a bright pebble, admired its transparency or translucence, and saved it to show to someone else or simply to look at again? Was that done purely because of the beauty of the stone, or because of its rarity?

The desire to acquire anything in the nature of a gem is recognized by psychologists as an inherent trait in all mankind. Indeed, it is not limited to mankind alone, for birds such as the crow and the magpie, and some animals as well, possess it in a marked degree, carrying bright pebbles and shining or colorful objects to their nests.

Your desire to possess gems, the pleasure which you derive from their possession are not to be attributed to their beauty, their rarity, their value alone. When you purchase a gem you are satisfying an instinct as natural and as age-old as any which you possess.

H ▸ J ▸ HOWE ▸ INC.
SYRACUSE

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THE EMERALD
Birthstone for May
Symbol of Youth, Love and Life



IT SEEMS very appropriate that the emerald should have been chosen as the birthstone for May, the month when Nature, awakening from her long winter rest, feels the stirring of new life and decks herself in the green of spring. Long before the Christian Era the Greeks, recognizing the fitness of this association, dedicated the emerald to Venus, goddess of love, life, and generation, while in far-off Mexico the Aztecs had instituted the same symbolism and pronounced this gem sacred to the Earth Goddess who controlled the destinies of growing things.

The true emerald is beryl of the accepted green hue. This gem is obtained from mines in Siberia, South America, and Upper Egypt. It has also been found in very limited quantities in North Carolina. While we often hear of Brazilian emeralds, there

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is no authentic proof that the emerald was ever found in Brazil, and it is thought that green tourmaline, somewhat resembling the true emerald and found in great quantities in Brazil, may have been introduced into Europe as the Brazilian emerald and thus have given rise to the idea that true emeralds came from that locality. Emeralds from Siberia and South America are of the finest quality, the gems from the Egyptian mines being light in color and cloudy.

A fine emerald is the rarest of the precious stones, and throughout the ages it has occupied the first place in point of value. While it cannot be said that there is no such thing as a perfect emerald, such gems are so exceedingly rare that the flawless emerald has passed into proverb as an unattainable form of perfection. Practically all emeralds contain fissures, cracks, and small enclosures of foreign matter, which if present in great quantity, tend to make the gem cloudy and dull. Depth and

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beauty of color should be the first consideration in the selection of an emerald, after which should follow transparency and approximate freedom from flaws.

HISTORY

The earliest source whence this gem was obtained is the so-called "Cleopatra" mines in Upper Egypt. The length of time during which these mines have been operated is not known. Implements found there date back to the time of Sesostris, 1650 B. C., but as emeralds have been found in the wrappings of mummies of a much earlier period it is practically certain that the "Cleopatra" mines were known many centuries before that time. During the Middle Ages the location of these mines was lost, but they were discovered early in the last century by a French explorer. They were, however, worked but little at that time, and were closed within a few years. About 1902 they were reopened and are still producing gems.

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Cortes exhorting his band

When the Spaniards grimly conquered Peru and Mexico and ruthlessly despoiled those countries of all treasure that could be carried away, immense numbers of emeralds, some of almost incredible size, were literally poured into Spain and eventually found their way into other parts of Europe.

The Spaniards having seized nearly all of the emeralds that the natives had amassed in their temples, devoted their attention to searching for the source of these marvels

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of nature, and in 1558 they discovered the mines in what is now the United States of Colombia. These mines have been worked almost continuously since that time and are the principal source of the present-day emerald supply.

As the natives, who met with gross injustice and cruelty at the hands of the Spaniards, hid all of the mines that were known to them and refused to give any information as to their location, it is possible that other emerald mines may yet be discovered. No emeralds are produced from either Peru or Mexico at the present time. It is believed, therefore, that the gems which the *conquistadores* found in the possession of the Incas and the Aztecs came from mines which remain unknown to us, or from the mines in Colombia.

CORTES' EMERALD

Perhaps the most extraordinary of the gems which the Spanish obtained from the

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New World at the time of the Conquests were the five choice emeralds which Hernando Cortes presented to his bride, thereby mortally offending the Queen who had desired them for herself. These had been fashioned into divers fancy shapes. One was cut like a bell and had a fine pearl for a tongue. Another was shaped like a rose, and a third like a horn. A fourth was fashioned into the form of a fish, while the fifth was hollowed out and shaped into a cup. These gems were lost on Cortes' disastrous voyage to assist Charles V at the siege of Algiers, 1529.

AN UNFORTUNATE TEST

We are told that many fine emeralds were destroyed through the ignorance of the Spaniards who believed that it was the nature of the true emerald to withstand the blow of a hammer. Of course no gem would stand such a rigorous test.

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EL DORADO

Lake Guatavita, on the Andean plateau of Colombia, was the chief holy place of the native Indians of that locality hundreds of years ago. Gold and emeralds, unknown to their impoverished descendants of our day, were then plentiful among them. It was customary for the Indians, at their semi-annual festivals, to cast great quantities of gold, emeralds and other precious stones into the lake as propitiatory offerings to the divinity who was supposed to dwell therein. During the ceremony, the *Casique* (tribal chieftain), having covered his naked body with an adhesive clay over which was then sprinkled gleaming gold-dust, would paddle to the center of the lake bearing the choicest offerings, with which he would plunge into the water. Having washed away the gold-dust, he would swim ashore. The Spaniards, observing this procedure, called the *Casique* "El Dorado" (The Golden One). The term is

now generally used to signify a place where gold is found in great abundance.

Attempts have been made to secure the treasures of Lake Guatavita by drawing off the waters of the lake, but they have met with but partial success. One of the early attempts at least resulted in the recovery of so much treasure that the government's three per cent share is said to have amounted to \$170,000. In none of these essays, however, was the lake effectually drained. It is probable that in order to secure the treasure it would now be necessary to dredge forty or fifty feet below the present lake bottom, the religious custom which we have related having prevailed among the Indians centuries ago.

RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATIONS

Not among the Indians alone did the emerald possess religious associations. In Rabbinical legend it is related that four precious stones were given by God to King Solomon. One of these was the emerald.

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This gem was one of the stones in the breast-plate of the Jewish High Priest. In Greek mythology there was a gem-city (the City of the Islands of the Blessed), the walls of which were of emerald. The first Mohammedan heaven was supposed to be composed of emerald, and in Revelation this gem is given as the fourth foundation stone of the New Jerusalem.

THE "SACRO CATINO"

The "Sacro Catino," a cup preserved in Genoa, was long believed to be made from a single immense emerald. Investigation has since proved that it is of no more valuable material than green glass. A legend still current in the early part of the sixteenth century represented this cup as having been used by Christ at the Last Supper. At one time when the government was pressed for money, the Sacro Catino was offered to a rich merchant of Metz as a pledge for a loan of 100,000 crowns. He was loath to take it, as he probably recognized its spurious

character, but was finally forced to accept it under threats of dire vengeance in case of refusal. When some years later the Genoese were ready to redeem this precious relic, they were puzzled to learn that no less than six different persons claimed to have it in their possession. The merchant had fabricated a number of copies which he had succeeded in pawning for large sums, assuring the lender in each case that the redemption of the pledge was certain.

It seems not amiss here to state that while we sometimes hear of "synthetic" or "scientific" emeralds, there is no such thing. All attempts on the part of man, to fuse emerald chips, or to otherwise evolve a gem which will stand the tests that are used to identify the true emerald, have failed, and imitation emeralds can easily be recognized by one who is familiar with the character of the true gem.

LORE AND SUPERSTITIONS

The superstitions that are attached to the

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emerald are many. Thus it was believed to foreshow future events. Whether this was accomplished through images seen in the stone in the manner in which such images are seen in crystal spheres, or through some power to confer prophetic vision believed to be inherent in the stone, is not plain. As a revealer of truth this stone was an enemy of all enchantments and conjurations, hence it was greatly favored by magicians who found all their arts of no avail if an emerald were in their vicinity when they began to weave their spells.

Many other virtues were supposed to be peculiar to the emerald. If one wished to strengthen his memory or become an eloquent speaker he was sure to attain his end by securing possession of a fine emerald. The gem revealed the truth or falsity of lovers' oaths, sharpened the wits, enhanced the honesty of the wearer, and cooled all passion. It was also believed to be fatal to the eyesight of serpents.

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THERAPEUTIC USES

The emerald was employed as an antidote for poisons and for poisoned wounds. It was also used against demoniacal possession, and as a cure for epilepsy, dysentery, leprosy, and many other diseases. It was considered most efficacious in the treatment of diseases of the eye, and so general in the early centuries was the idea that the pure green hue of emeralds aided the eyesight and rested the eyes, that gem - engravers were said to have kept some of them on their work-tables that they might look at the stones from time to time and thus relieve the eye-strain caused by close application to their delicate tasks.

LARGE STONES

Tradition and unauthenticated accounts tell of phenomenally large emeralds. Most of these stories are without foundation, the number of large emeralds in existence being extremely limited. One of the largest of these belongs to the Duke of Devonshire.

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This gem is a South American stone, badly flawed but of good color. Its weight is 1347 carats.

The finest cut emerald known is a gem of thirty carats which belonged to the late Czar of Russia.

FAMOUS EMERALDS

Of the famous emeralds perhaps the one most deserving of mention was that which belonged to Nero. This gem, famed far and wide, was believed to possess many powers. It was fashioned into a lens and through it the Roman Emperor was accustomed to view the gladiatorial shows.

In ancient times green was used as the mourning color for those who died in the flower of youth, an emerald being placed at times on the index finger of the deceased. In the tomb of Tullia, the dearly beloved daughter of Cicero, was found a large and rarely beautiful emerald. This gem passed into the hands of Isabella da Este.

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A famous talismanic emerald, once the property of the Moguls of Delhi, ranks as one of the finest gems known. It possesses an unusual depth of color and weighs 78 carats.

THE EMERALD TODAY

It may be truthfully said that the emerald is the most beautiful of the colored gems, and it is to be regretted that so few of them are to be had. In recent years this gem has become increasingly difficult to obtain and one who possesses a fine specimen is indeed fortunate. The small stones are more plentiful and are used in many of the most beautiful rings and gem-pieces in conjunction with diamonds or other precious stones to lend a touch of that superb color which is characteristic of the emerald alone.

