

Gems & Gemology

A bi-monthly periodical, without paid advertising, supported by subscriptions from Gemologists and other gem enthusiasts, aims to increase the gem merchant's knowledge and ability in order that he may protect more thoroughly his customers' best interests.

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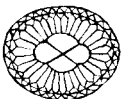
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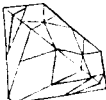

THE AMERICAN GEM SOCIETY

555 South Alexandria

Los Angeles, Calif.

Important Diamonds

of the  World

Robert M. Shipley

In Collaboration with
A. McC. BECKLEY

THE HOPE DIAMOND

The Hope Diamond, now in the possession of Mrs. Edward McLean of Washington, D. C., is one of the few truly blue diamonds in the world. It is an unusual stone, combining as it does a pronounced color with the flashing brilliancy and fire common to all diamonds.

The origin of this gem is not known with absolute certainty, but circumstantial evidence so strong as to be almost irrefutable links it with the blue diamond which Tavernier bought in India during his visit there in 1642. The stone which this early diamond trader secured supposedly came from a mine located on a branch of the Coleroon, which is in the mountain range known as the Ghats in Southwest India. In the rough it was "flat and thin" and weighed 112½ carats.

In 1668 Tavernier returned to Paris and there sold the blue diamond, along with many other diamonds, to Louis XIV. It is believed that Louis or one of his successors had the rough stone cut, since a century later the only blue diamond in the French Crown Jewels, which fitted Tavernier's description, was a triangular brilliant which weighed about 68 carats.

When Louis XIV gave audience to the Persian Ambassador in Paris, February, 1715, he wore gems whose value was estimated at about \$60,000,000. One of these, according to reports, was a large blue diamond which he wore suspended from a ribbon about his neck. This is the only time that the king seems a pathetic figure—pallid and frail and very small. He was to die in the fall of that year after a reign of seventy years. What were the thoughts of this Persian Ambassador as he gazed at this miniature jewel tower? Did he think of the Persian Ruler, Nadir Shah, a man in his superb height and great breadth who could wear the jewels of all the world with ease?

In an inventory of the Crown Jewels made in 1791 "a fine light-blue diamond weighing 67½ carats" is listed. It was stolen in a grand scoop with the other Crown Jewels from the Garde Meuble (the Royal Treasury)

in Paris in 1792. Of course, so well-known a diamond of such a rare color could not easily be sold intact, in any market in Europe, without positive detection. Recutting would be the only resort of the thief.

Evidently this course was followed, and the diamond was cleaved, for in 1830, an extraordinary $44\frac{1}{4}$ -carat blue gem came into the market. David Eliason was the dealer, a man very well known as an expert on jewels. He had sold many superb gems to kings and princes and bankers. This jewel passed into the hands of Henry Thomas Hope for the sum of \$90,000—a small sum when we realize that this is a stone which could not be duplicated in color and size. Indeed few other blue diamonds of notable size are known. Other blue gems are the $13\frac{3}{4}$ -carat Brunswick and the 40-carat Wittlesbach Diamond which was recently offered for sale at Christie's in London.

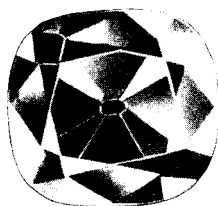
This blue Brunswick Diamond came into the market in 1874, when the jewels of the Duke of Brunswick were sold. The English gem dealer, Edwin W. Streeter (who had the reputation in annals of jewelry sales that Duveen has in the world of picture sales), made a close examination of both the Hope and the Brunswick and was convinced that they were parts of the same stone, the lost "French Blue", both being identical in color and quality, moreover the shape confirmed Streeter in his theory. In the first cutting of the stone, when it was owned by the King of France, the shape was triangular thin and flat. Streeter believes that "it would have been easy for an expert to cleave a triangular piece of about 10 or 11 carats, the recutting of which, as a perfect brilliant, well proportioned, would reduce it to its present weight of $44\frac{1}{4}$ carats. The Brunswick jewel "once formed the triangular salient protuberance which formerly appears to have characterized the stone now known as the 'Hope Brilliant'." This weighs $13\frac{3}{4}$ carats. There is also a fragment weighing about $1\frac{1}{4}$ carats of the same blue. Any differences between the original weight of the "French Blue" and the added weights of the Hope, the Brunswick and the fragment may, of course, be accounted for by loss of weight incidental to cleaving and treatment. This fragment is now one of the brilliant stones in a butterfly composed of colored diamonds which was last reported to be in the possession of an English family.

The Hope family owned the 44-carat blue gem for a number of years and from them it took the name which it bears today. In 1851 the Hope diamond was shown at the great Exposition in London. In 1867 it was sold at Christie's in London, along with the other gems of the Hope collection.

The history of the stone about this period is somewhat confused, but the following report from "The Romance of the Jewel", by Francis Stopford, may be of interest:

"There are many other stories of diamonds which are supposed to bring bad luck to their owners: for instance the well-known Hope blue diamond, which has always been a stone with a curse. It was brought from India by Tavernier, the French explorer, who sold it to Louis XIV. Fouquet, the king's famous minister, borrowed the stone, and fell from his high estate. Marie Antoinette had forsworn its wear before her proud head was placed under the blade of the guillotine. Her favorite friend, the Princesse de Lamballe, had occasionally worn it before the 'Day of Pikes'. In 1830 it was bought by Mr. Henry Thomas Hope, from whom it derives its name, for

£18,000. He escaped any evil consequences. It then became the property of Lord Francis Hope. Lady Francis Hope (a well-known actress), when she parted from her husband attributed all her troubles to the Hope diamond, and prophesied evil for its purchaser. The stone passed from Lord Francis to Mr. Weil, a London diamond merchant, who sold it to a New York jeweler, who could not find a buyer for it, and fell into financial trouble. The unlucky gem found a buyer in M. Jacques Colot, a French broker, who paid £60,000 for it. He sold it to a Russian, Prince Kanitovski. The prince lent the diamond to a beautiful actress at the Folies Bergères, and shot her from a box in the theatre on the first night she wore it. A few days afterwards the prince was stabbed by revolutionists. Colot had not got rid of the evil heritage of the diamond, as he went mad and committed suicide. The next aspirant for disaster was Simon Montharides, a Greek jeweler, who is said to have been thrown over a precipice and killed. From Montharides it passed into the custody of Abdul Hamid, who speedily lost his throne."



THE HOPE

The World's Largest
Blue Diamond
Weight, About 45 Carats

At least parts of the above account, which was taken from the London Daily Express by Stopford, are without foundation in fact. They are but a few of the amazing tales of the baleful powers of the Hope diamond which have been concocted by various feature writers. Another report is that at the time the stones were put up for sale at Christie's, one of those interested in it was the Emperor of Russia. The sale failed to materialize when the trustees of the Hope estate refused the Emperor's bill of credit.

In 1908 the Hope diamond was acquired by Habib Bey at a price reported to be about \$400,000. In 1909 the diamond was again on the market. A dealer by the name of Rosenau bought it at auction in Paris for about \$80,000.

The last sale of this famous gem was to Edward B. McLean of Washington in 1911, the sale price in this case being \$300,000. The "curse" of the Hope diamond seems to have attacked the McLean family in true traditional

style. In 1919 the only son of the family was run down by an automobile and killed. Edward McLean, on October 31, 1933, was judged insane. The gem is now the property of Mrs. McLean, who has tried upon several occasions to sell it, but without success.

A blue diamond is exceedingly rare, especially when a rich depth of color is combined with great brilliancy. A very few quite red diamonds have been found and red is still the rarest color, but stones possessing any pronounced hue of blue are almost as unusual.

A few authorities do not feel that the blue color of the Hope is of especial beauty. The late Godfrey Eacret of San Francisco, described it as being of a slightly greyish blue, the color of the more usual Montana sapphire. However, this hue is extremely rare in a diamond.

CHANGE IN BIRTH STONE LIST AGAIN SUGGESTED

The directors of the California Retail Jewelers Association have adopted a resolution to be presented to the A.N.R.J.A. at their annual convention, urging a change in the birth stone list adopted by the A.N.R.J.A. in 1912. The changes proposed would add or change several alternative stones for various months. They would substitute other stones for both turquoise and its alternate lapis lazuli as December birth stone. This would eliminate from the traditional lists one more stone with some claim as a traditional stone for persons born in this month.

At a recent meeting of representatives of the mineral societies of California and Oregon a resolution

was adopted "against the proposed changes in the traditional list of birth stones." These mineral societies are composed principally of laymen interested in the collection of minerals.

The list adopted by the A.N.R.J.A. in 1912 contained several important changes and substitutions from traditional lists, notably the substitution of sapphire for chrysolite or sardonyx, which alone had foundations in tradition as the September stone.

Unfortunately many of the stones in the traditional lists are lacking in popular appeal today, and it has been in an effort to popularize the list that the majority of changes have been proposed from time to time.

IMPROVED GEM-CUTTING MACHINE EXHIBITED

Recently on view in Los Angeles was a revolutionarily-designed gem-cutting machine developed in the Felker Research Laboratory of Torrance, California. Designed especially for amateur lapidaries, the outfit is constructed to occupy minimum floor space. All operations, including sawing, cutting and polishing, may be performed with results which compare favorably to those achieved in much more completely equipped lapidary shops.