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## EXHIBITION OF GEMS USED AS AMULETS, ETC.

At the Annual Meeting of the American Folk-Lore Society, November 28, 1890, Mr. George F. Kunz of New York made an exhibition of certain gems possessing an interest in connection with folk-lore, of which the following is a description.

Star sapphire (asteria,) Ceylon. Light blue sapphire, cut *en cabochon* showing lines of a six-rayed star. In Ceylon these are worn because they are believed to bring good fortune to the wearer and guard him from evil spirits.

Moonstone from Kandy, Ceylon, believed to bring good fortune, and considered holy. These are never sold on any other than cloth of yellow, the sacred color.

Lodestone, a native oxide of iron having magnetic properties. In Europe it was worn for centuries for the power it was supposed to possess, and for the charm it was believed to give the wearer. Large quantities of it are found at Magnet Cove, Arkansas. It is estimated that from one to three tons are annually sold to the negroes of the South, to be used by the voodooes, who employ it as a conjuring stone. In July, 1887, an interesting case was tried in Macon, Georgia, where a negro woman sued a conjurer to recover five dollars which she paid him for a piece of it to serve as a charm to bring back her wandering husband, which it failed to do. As the market value of this stone was only seventy-five cents a pound, the judge ordered the money refunded.

Lodestone (native magnet) worn by the physicians of the fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries.

Tabasheer, bought at the bazaar held at Calcutta, Hindostan, November, 1888; a variety of opal found in the joints of the bamboo, and sold in India for medicinal purposes. This is thought by the writer to have been the snakestone mentioned by Tavernier as possessing the power of neutralizing the bite of the cobra di capello.

Amber circular bead, — very ancient; Cholula, Mexico: believed to be the first noted occurrence of its use as an ornament by the old Mexicans. It was used as an incense in their temples.

Strings of crude amber beads worn by a chief in northern Africa (originally from the Baltic Sea).

Prehistoric beads of garnet, drilled from both sides, — from ancient Bohemian graves.

Small charms made of red and white carnelian, agate, etc., some in the form of rude arrows; found in an ancient Assyrian grave. These are similar in character to those in the Assyrian gallery of the Louvre.

Agate seals, — one containing a Pehlevi inscription, — older than the Persian.

Persian seals, of chalcedony and jasper, not ancient. To every contract is affixed a seal. Nowhere is the use of seals so universal as in Persia, where every mule-driver, or other person who cannot write, carries a seal.

Ancient Assyrian seals, cut in bloodstone, hematite, sard, carnelian, and chalcedony.

Assyrian seals cut in hematite and black slate.

Turquoise talismans, inscribed with inscriptions from the Koran.

Fragment taken from the jade tombstone of Tamerlane, the celebrated Tartar prince, and conqueror of Persia, India, and Egypt. The tombstone is in the mosque Guer Emir at Samarcand. This fragment is from the collection of Dr. Heinrich Fischer. Whoever procured this piece left the remainder of the tombstone for some enterprising American or English collector.

Persian talisman of dark green jade, on which is inscribed the entire first chapter of the Koran.

Mace-head of white jade, said by General Richard Khan (secretary and interpreter of the present Shah of Persia (Nasr-Ed-Din) to have belonged to the great Persian conqueror, Nadir Shah, obtained by him in his loot of India, with other jewels of the treasuries of the kings and moguls of Delhi, which were estimated at the time to be worth £32,250,000. This mace-head is decorated in East Indian style, and contained one hundred and sixty-nine precious stones of fair size, which were removed from it and sold by the descendants of Nadir Shah, who now reside at Teheran, Persia, in a destitute condition.

Votive adze of jadeite, Oaxaca, Mexico. Largest archæological jadeite object known. Weight two hundred and twenty-nine and three-tenths ounces troy. This is of especial interest, because there have been cut from the back two pieces, and an attempt has been made to separate a third portion. Jadeite celts were cut into halves and quarters and then ornamented. This cutting was done to extend the material, owing to its scarcity.

Breastplate of jadeite, ornamented with a Maya face ; taken from a tomb near Santa Lucia, Cotzumaguapa, Guatemala, near the temples and tombs of the ancient kings of Quiche.

Necklace of emerald-green jadeite beads, and one bead of rock crystal, from the valley of Mexico.

Necklace of beads of emerald-green jadeite, amethyst, green moss agate, serpentine, aragonite, marine shells, etc., from San Juan Teotihuacan, Mexico.

Hei-Tiki fetich charm of Maori chiefs, from South Middle Island,

near Massacre Bay, New Zealand, made of the Oceanic variety of jade, with scalloped circular eyes of the haliotis or abalone shell.

Jade Hei-Tiki fetiches or charms, made of the Oceanic variety of jade ; in one the eyes look toward the right, and in the other toward the left.

Chinese armlet of jadeite (imperial jade) ; — the material mined at Mogung, Burma.

Earring, Maori work, — New Zealand, made of the Oceanic variety of jade.

Aztec pendant of bloodstone (green jasper, with red spots), from Mexico ; used by the Aztecs and in Spain in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to stanch the flow of blood from a wound.

Gold ornament, star-shaped, with raised representation of the whorl of a shell, from Cholula, Mexico.

Labrets — lip ornaments — made of obsidian, from the valley of Mexico.

Fetich from the Pueblo of Santa Domingo, near Wallace Station, New Mexico, made of gypsum, with eyes of turquoise ; used by the medicine men of the Pueblo Indians in their ceremonies to induce rain.

String of beads and a small animal fetich, made of marine shells, to which are attached drilled pieces of turquoise and steatite, from an ancient Zuñi grave near Tempe, Arizona.

A rock-crystal tablet, found in an excavation near Cholula, State of Puebla, Mexico, evidently made to represent an inundation (the whole tablet represents the goddess of water), the lines being the water, and the date of the inundation given as occurring in the "year of four flint."

Lip ornaments, one made of beryl, three inches by one and a half inches ; and one of aventurine quartz, worn in the lower lip by the Botacudo Indians of Brazil, Calhau, Brazil, South America.

*George Frederick Kunz.*