

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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HOPE DIAMOND STILL IN EXISTENCE

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Contrary to wild rumors regarding the famous Hope Diamond, it is still extant and is the proud possession of Mrs. Edward B. McLean of Washington. This stone is said to be worth approximately \$300,000. At the present time, Mrs. McLean is on an extended trip into Greenland and other points in the North Atlantic and, without fears or dread that her ship might be wrecked, is wearing this diamond in her necklace.

In a recent issue of the *Gemmologist*, Major J. F. Halford-Watkins reported that the Hope Diamond, which was supposed to have brought bad luck to its owners, had met its just fate in sinking with the *Titanic* in 1912. Stories have even percolated around that this diamond was the cause of the sinking. I suppose that whoever started this story thinks that some Oriental genii had an iceberg shoved into the path of the *Titanic* because the Hope Blue was on board!

It seems impossible to put an end to such ridiculous ideas as are held, that if the owner of some famous stone meets with a series of misfortunes, that stone is the cause of the ill luck. True, some of the past owners of the Hope Diamond had had some bad luck, but who hasn't? Perhaps people in the coming generations will be intelligent enough not to blame an opal or some stone reputed to bring bad luck, if the owners happen to meet with tragic ends.

In "The Magic and Science of Jewels and Stones," Isadore Kozminsky states that the Hope Diamond was sold by Mrs. McLean to Monsieur de Hautville and he goes on to tell of all the tragic deaths that came to this family shortly after. I do not doubt the statements about the tragedies of de Hautvilles, but I am assured by first-hand information that he does not own the Hope Diamond and, therefore, this innocent stone cannot be the cause of their troubles. Mrs. McLean has owned this gem since 1912.

Several questions have been raised about this stone being at A Century of Progress. It has been, but only as a pendant to

a necklace worn by Mrs. McLean. On her visit to the Fair earlier this season she was wearing the genuine, original Hope Diamond which she is now said to be wearing on her extended trip. At the World's Fair the stone was seen by Mr. J. F. Sullivan of the Diamond Exhibits Corporation. Mr. Sullivan has been associated with the De Beers Company for 42 years and is considered a diamond expert. In an interview with Mr. Sullivan, he related the following account of his experience with the Blue Gem.

Mrs. McLean walked in the Diamond Exhibit, General Exhibits Building, went straight to Mr. Sullivan and said:

"Hello, South Africa, how are you?"

"Very well, Madam," Mr. Sullivan replied.

"Are you superstitious?" Mrs. McLean went on, with a smile.

"Not a bit," was the definite answer.

Mrs. McLean then took off her necklace and placed it in his hands.

"Here is the Hope Diamond," she said calmly.

Mr. Sullivan examined the gem closely for several minutes and says that without doubt it is a true diamond, steel blue in color, weighing about 40 carats.

Mr. Mercer, manager of the Diamond Exhibits Corporation, informed me that they offered Mrs. McLean nearly \$10,000 for the privilege of exhibiting her diamond at A Century of Progress, but she refused with her characteristic smile. She has tried on several occasions to sell the stone, or to get a loan on it, but without success.

For two and a half centuries the glittering Hope Blue has been one of the world's famous precious stones. Its tragic history began in 1688, when it was stolen from a Hindu temple. It was, according to the superstitious, immediately invested with an Oriental curse which falls upon all who own it. Eventually it was sold to Louis XVI, who presented it to Marie Antoinette shortly before she was sent to the guillotine. Since then, bad luck has pursued its owners (so they say), until it came into the possession of Mrs. McLean. Her wearing it as constantly as she does certainly testifies to her disbelief in these wild claims as to its destined ill favor.

portion in jewelers' stocks must be similar. And if a synthetic, even though ignorantly, is advertised or sold without the qualifying "synthetic," it is a direct violation of the Code and punishable by the loss of the Blue Eagle, and perhaps also by a heavy fine.

Moreover, even a gem expert could not have determined most of the 33 stones without a fine microscope. In all but two or three cases, magnifications of over 300x were necessary before a determination could be made. More than half of the gems were of good color and lacked the off-tint which betrays a synthetic to an experienced dealer. One padparadscha (orange sapphire) required several hours' work and 800 magnifications; it was finally proved to be genuine. On the other hand, a ruby which required even longer to work out, using the same magnification, was proved synthetic.

A reasonable number of determinations sent by A.G.S. students as well as those sent by students of the G.I.A. are performed in the Institute laboratory without charge. Therefore, the students of both organizations are urged to send doubtful gems classified as genuine ruby or sapphire, or as zircon or alexandrite, to the laboratory for a definite determination. To non-students a minimum fee of \$3.00 will be charged, and will not be exceeded without first notifying the sender. Associate Members of the A.G.S. are entitled to a 33 1/3 % reduction in this fee, making the minimum \$2.00.

Acquire Kunz Library of Gems

The extensive collection of works on precious stones, gems, and jewels formed by the late Dr. G. Frederick Kunz, of New York City, who for many years was associated with the U. S. Geological Survey, was bequeathed by him to his widow, Mrs. Opal Logan Kunz, of New York City, and to his daughter, Mrs. Hans Zinsser, of Boston, Mass. Through the good offices of Mr. Walter E. Reid, Mrs. Kunz and her daughter presented the collection to the Geological Survey Library with the understanding that any items not desired by that library were to be sold, their proceeds to revert to the estate. There were some items unsuited to the collection of the Geological Survey Library; the Library of Congress was given the first opportunity to examine the collection and have already purchased 270 volumes and pamphlets and have placed an order for 174 additional volumes and 3 maps, which have not yet been delivered. The volumes acquired include scientific books and periodicals and many works in limited editions and fine bindings. The most outstanding items are quite widely varied in subject material; they comprise three medieval manuscripts, the collection of works relating to Jeanne d'Arc, the rare Mercator Atlas, Amsterdam, 1623, etc.

The report above was obtained through the particular effort of Mr. Al C. Reade, head of the book order department of the Los Angeles Public Library. The G.I.A. has secured a catalogued list of books of the Kunz Library which are now in the Geological Survey Library. This list will be incorporated in the gemological bibliography which will soon appear in *Gems & Gemology*.