

The Diamond and Its Bloody Story

All the revel, riot, recklessness, quick dramas, and dazzling riches of all the world's mining rushes and gold stampedes are crowded into the mad romance of the diamond

By Walter Noble Burns



ALL the diamonds in the world could be packed in your wife's clothes closet. They could be stored in a kitchen pantry, where, in the dim light, the cook might mistake them for navy beans and attempt a puree. They would form a pile about as big as the pile of coal the truckman dumps on the sidewalk at the basement entrance to your apartment building. If the pile had a base diameter of eight feet and were rounded into a cone, it would be five feet high. A pile of coal of equal size—and coal by every tie of chemical relationship is the diamond's first cousin—would cost \$28. The pile of diamonds, reckoned at \$100 a carat, would have a value of \$4,635,547,480. If figured at current diamond prices, it would be worth from three to five times that much.

There are, it is estimated, 46,355,474 carats of cut and polished diamonds in existence. In terms of avoirdupois they would weigh 10½ tons. The total includes possibly the first diamond ever found on earth—who knows?—and the last gem picked from the chimneys of South Africa; the little twinkler that the shop girl wears on her finger and the Kuh-i-Nur that blazes in Great Britain's crown.

The War Advanced Diamond Prices

One hundred dollars a carat, used as a basis in the estimate, is perhaps below the average cost of diamonds throughout history. Diamond prices have been subject to wide variations. The war advanced the price about one third. Present prices are about one hundred per cent. higher than those of fifty years ago, and they undoubtedly will go higher in the next few years. But every dia-

mond is an individual problem as far as price is concerned. The price always depends on the stone's color, comparative flawlessness, inherent brilliancy, and cutting.

A one-eighth carat diamond sells at present for from \$12.50 to \$20; one-fourth carat from \$37.50 to \$62.50; one-half carat from \$100 to \$200; three-fourths carat from \$187.50 to \$337.50; one carat from \$300 to \$500. Importers buy rough diamonds in foreign markets for about \$90 a carat. A rough crystal of 2½ carats, which will cut to a gem of one carat, costs \$225. Import duty is 10 per cent.; 1 per cent. is to be added for insurance and brokerage charges; the labor of cutting may be figured at \$15. The polished one-carat gem thus represents an outlay of about \$250. If this diamond turns out to be a gem of first

quality, it will retail at from \$500 to \$550.

But such quotations are not wholly dependable. Some blue-white one-carat stones sell for \$2,500, while you can buy a one-carat yellow diamond for \$150. Blue-white diamonds bring the highest price in the market. But many connoisseurs prefer as more beautiful the snow-white gem often found among river diamonds, whose sharp, cold brilliancy is like that of clear ice gleaming in winter sunshine.

Democratic Uncle Sam and His Diamonds

The United States in recent years has become the greatest diamond-buying nation on the globe. For years it absorbed from fifty to sixty per cent., and during the war 85 per cent. of the output of the South African mines, which supply 98 per cent. of all the diamonds in the world's markets. A recent estimate placed the value of the diamonds in this country today at \$1,350,000,000. Of this \$500,000,000 was set as the value of the stones in the country in 1900. Importations since 1900 have amounted to \$506,000,000, this including



The diamond was a clumsy jewel of dull luster until the art of cutting and polishing it was discovered in the fifteenth century. If the stone is large the first step is to make an incision and then to cleave it with a mallet, which two steps are illustrated by this picture

Some of the Diamonds that Have Had a Thrilling Past



A The Regent, or Pitt (A), weighed 410 carats, and was bought for about \$120,000 by Pitt, Governor of Madras. The Duke of Orleans, Regent of France, paid \$400,000 for it. It was cut to nearly 137 carats, and was stolen during the Revolution, but was recovered and is still in France. The Kuh-i-Nur (B) led one Indian potentate to kill his three brothers and imprison his father. It has been cut and recut. It weighs now 125 carats and has been valued rather fancifully at \$1,000,000. The

C Pigott (C) weighed 82 carats. It was last heard of in Egypt. It is valued at \$150,000, rather little for a stone of such size. The Empress Eugénie (D) weighs 51 carats, and is the property of the famous Gaikwar of Baroda. Two centuries before it shone on the bosom of the proud Eugénie it was given by a peasant to a blacksmith for mending a plow. The Duke of Westminster owns the Kassak (E), weighing something under 79 carats. Little is known about it

\$175,000,000 worth of rough stones which were doubled in value by cutting.

Prosperity has no better barometer than the diamond trade, and the increase in diamond buying year by year has reflected the nation's growing wealth. Yearly importations of cut diamonds increased from \$1,317,420 in 1867 to \$27,000,000 in 1913. They fell to \$18,000,000 the first year of the war, and to \$9,000,000 in 1915. They showed a reaction from war conditions in 1916, when they reached \$20,567,222, and were \$21,855,735 in 1917 and \$13,925,772 in the first eight months of 1918. The diamond-cutting industry in the United States began in 1873, when \$176,426 worth of rough stones were imported. Importations amounted to more than half the importations of cut stones in 1916 and 1917, and had become almost equal in 1918.

Time was when they adorned only the princes of the earth and sparkled only in palaces. But they have become a democratic gem in the great democracy of the West. The stenographer emits Kimberley sparkles. Faint Dutoitspan gleams show in the ears of the pretty waitress. No cook or housemaid can hold up her head without a diamond among her jewels.

Diamond Cutting—a Distinctly Modern Art

The perfectly cut and brilliant diamond the world knows today is not more than fifty years old. The ancient world knew little of diamonds. From the first pharaoh to the last, through all the pageantry of thirty-one dynasties, diamonds were unknown in Egypt. From the dawn of history, Babylon remained unfamiliar with them for forty centuries. The pioneering conquest of Alexander across the Indus in

327 B.C. acquainted Greece vaguely with their existence. The patricians of Rome in the days of the early empire rarely owned them. Byzantine supremacy, the rise of Venice to maritime power, the Moorish conquest of Spain, brought only a trickle of diamonds into western Europe. A fashionable jewelry store in America today carries more diamonds in-stock than were in all Europe when Columbus sailed from Palos.



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The Cullinan diamond was divided into nine large stones and a number of small brilliants. Here is the biggest of the stones. It weighs 510½ carats and is the largest brilliant in the world

To the right is a brilliant weighing more than 309 carats. It is the second largest stone cut from the famous Cullinan

The earliest cutters used their wheels deftly enough, but they neglected their mathematics. Bringing out a diamond's full brilliancy is a mathematical problem. Increase of facets adds to surface area and surface glitter. But the angle of total reflection must be considered in relation to the angle of incidence, and the facets so arranged that a ray of entering light will be reflected from the inner facet surfaces and returned in refracted rainbow sparkles through the top of the stone.

Making the Diamond Sparkle—a Mathematical Problem

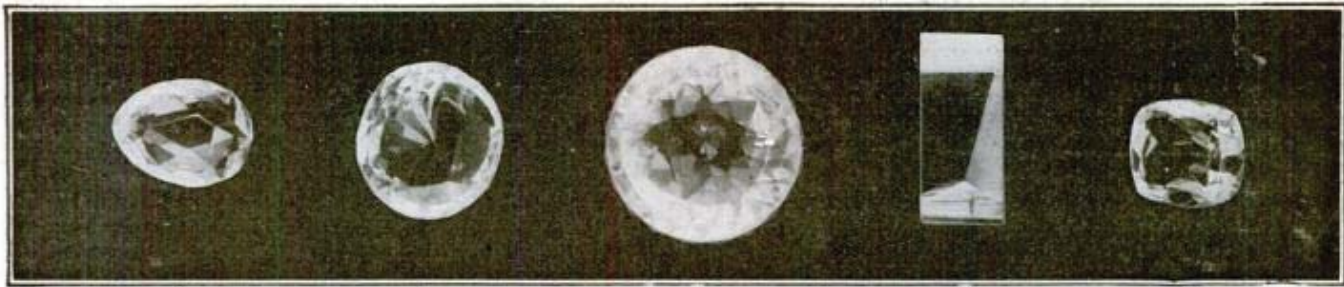
Henry D. Morse, of Boston, in the last century was the first to discover the balanced proportions that developed a diamond's highest reflective and refractive possibilities. Since brilliancy is the crowning glory of a diamond, he did not hesitate to sacrifice whatever weight was necessary to achieve it. Retaining the fifty-eight facets of the earlier cutters, he found that a diamond is at its sharpest climax of brilliancy when its depth from table to culet is six tenths of its diameter, and a little more than two thirds below. Cut in this style, a diamond not only flashes light from every polished facet surface, but seems alive with coruscating inner fires.

Morse's proportions are the rule of the world today, and they mark the final



To the left is the Cullinan diamond as it appeared in the rough. It weighed in this state 3,025½ carats (1½ pounds) and was as white as water. The stone was purchased from the Transvaal Government in 1907 and presented to King Edward VII

To the right is the Excelsior diamond, found in 1893 at the Jagersfontein by a native while loading a truck. It weighed 971 carats in this rough state, and was ultimately cut into ten stones weighing from 68 to 13 carats



Swallowed by a faithful serving-man to save it from the robber who slew him, the Sancy (A) was sliced from his stomach to adorn the royal person of Henry of France and Navarre. The Orloff (B) was stolen by a French soldier from the eye of an idol in a Brahmin temple, stolen again from him by a ship's captain, bought by Prince Orloff for \$450,000, and given to the Empress Catherine II. It weighs nearly 105 carats, and was one of the Russian crown jewels. The great Mogul (C), most magnificent of Indian gems, disappeared from

history, never definitely to reappear. It has a bloody history going back to the year 1665. Its fame lured Nadir Shah to the sack of Delhi. This is a glass reproduction made from extant descriptions. It probably weighed after cutting, 280 carats. The Akbar Shah (D) was originally a stone of 116 carats with Arabic inscriptions upon it. After being cut down to 71 carats it was bought by the Gaikwar of Baroda for \$150,000. The Polar Star (E), a magnificent stone weighing 40 carats, belongs to the Princess Youssouppoff

triumph of art in the achievement of the perfect modern jewel.

Fiction in its maddest moods never invented romance more bewildering than the stories of the great diamonds of India. For these baubles wars have been waged, nations devastated, thrones and dynasties overturned, men slaughtered by tens of thousands. For gems men have plotted, intrigued, robbed, murdered, committed every cruelty and treachery, stained their souls with every crime.

The fame of the Great Mogul lured Nadir Shah to the sack of Delhi. Desire to possess the Kuh-i-Nur was woven into the complex motives that led Aurung-zeb to deluge India with blood, slay his three brothers, and dethrone and imprison Shah Jehan, his father.

The Orloff, stolen from the eye of a temple idol and sold overseas, was presented to Catherine of Russia by her princely paramour to patch a lovers' quarrel. Swallowed by a faithful serving man to save it from robbers who slew him, the Sancy was sliced from his stomach to adorn the royal person of Henry of France and Navarre.

The Great Mogul, the most magnificent gem of the Indian mines, disappeared from history, never definitely to reappear, its fate a riddle of the centuries.

The Baleful Gleam of the Hope Diamond

The Hope blue diamond—stone of tragic fame—is the only one of the great historic diamonds to come to the United States. When Louis XIV bought it in the seventeenth century, it was a gem of 67½ carats. It disappeared during the French Revolution, and remained lost until 1830, when it reappeared as a jewel of 44¼ carats.



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The ill-starred Hope diamond eventually passed into the possession of Mrs. Edward Beale McLean, whose husband bought it for \$300,000. She wore it on one occasion together with the Star of Este, the two stones together being worth \$500,000. The occasion was a dinner which, a curious statistician figured, cost about \$166 a minute

From its first appearance in Europe, a superstition has clung to it that it brought disaster to all whoever owned or wore it. Certainly it has been associated with a long list of tragedies. Tavernier, who brought it from India, failed in business, and died on his voyage back to the Orient to recoup his fortune. Madame de Monte-

span, upon whom the Grand Monarque bestowed it, was supplanted in the king's affections by her rival, Madame de Maintenon. Nicholas Foquet, a courtier who borrowed it, was executed. Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette, who inherited it, lost their heads on the guillotine. Princess de Lamballe, of Marie Antoinette's entourage, was killed by a revolutionary mob.

The thieves who stole it were executed or deported to penal colonies. Wilhelm Fals, the gemsmith who cut it down for them, ended his life in poverty. Hendrik Fals, his son, who stole it from the thieves, committed suicide. Francis Beaulieu, last of its underworld owners, who sold it to Daniel Eliason, a London jeweler, died of starvation in a garret in Soho. Lord Francis Hope became a bankrupt, and was scandalized by the elopement of May Yohe, his American actress wife. At last accounts May Yohe was a scrubwoman in Tacoma.

Lorens Ladue was shot and killed by her infatuated admirer as she danced in the glare of the footlights with the diamond on her bosom. Her Russian cavalier, who had hung the jewel about her neck, was assassinated. Simon Montherides, who sold it to Sultan Abdul Hamid, was killed in an accident. Two of its Turkish custodians were murdered. Salma Subaya, the sultan's favorite, was shot while in the Yildiz Kiosk; and Abdul Hamid finally lost his throne.

Imported into the United States, it was bought by Edward B. McLean for \$300,000. As beautiful as when, fresh from the mystic East, it dazzled the court of France, the diamond for years brought only happiness to its new owners. Then one day the little son of the McLeans, first-born of a happy marriage and heir to vast riches, was killed at play by an automobile. Instantly the tragic tradition recurred to the public.



The Florentine diamond (A), among the crown jewels of Austria, weighs 139½ carats and is valued at \$525,000. It is a very pale yellow. It was picked up on a medieval battlefield and sold for two francs. The Hope (B), 44¼ carats, is believed to be a portion of a beautiful blue stone of 67 carats cut from a stone weighing over 112 carats, which was discovered in India, brought to Europe by Tavernier, and which was stolen from the French crown jewels. The Hope has

the same color as the missing gem. The Kuh-i-Nur (C) eventually passed into the hands of the East India Company, and was presented by it to Queen Victoria in 1850. This is a picture of it recut to 106 carats. The Star of the South (D), perhaps the most famous of Brazilian stones, was found in 1853. It was cut from 254½ carats to 125 carats, and was bought by the Gaikwar of Baroda for \$400,000. The Pasha of Egypt (E) weighs forty carats and is valued at \$140,000