Precious Stones in History

When Stevenson's pestered Prince of Bohemia tossed the Rajah's diamond into the Seine, and the gem, describing an arc of light in its flight, vanished forever from the sight of men, his biographer tells us that "his spirits rose in exultation with the thought that he had closed the long catalogue of tragedies, crimes, intrigues and infamies which for untold ages had constituted the history of the stone. To possess that glittering lump of crystal, to call it their own, to display it to the world, even to take it by stealth at rare intervals from its hiding place and gloat over its beauty, men had for century after century, sold their honor, betrayed friends and country and not scrupled at the commission of the most fearful crimes. In the never ending struggle for its possession blood had been shed and myriads of lives sacrificed. It had glittered in the crowns of tyrants, decked the beauty of the fairest women, served as the chief adornment of monstrous idols, been wrested from owner after owner as the chiefest prize of conquest, and as it passed from hand to hand its course had been marked by scenes of striking cruelty of shameless crime."

Stevenson's Prince never dwelt outside of Bohemia, but the sinister and potent role assigned to his vanished diamond has been enacted by most of the great historic gems of which we have knowledge, for almost every one of the priceless diamonds and rubies now the pride of royal treasuries, or of rare collections in Europe, has a history full of strife, contest, rivalry and war

The empire of Napoleon was made and unmade by the Regent, long the pride of the crown jewels of France, and until within very recent years the finest large diamond known. This stone was purchased, in 1717, from its English owner, for the French regalia by the Duke of Orleans, then Regent of France, whence its name, and was first made publicly conspicuous at the coronation of Louis XV., in 1722, when it was flashed as the most magnificent jewel in the crown. Half a century later it was again the center of a crown, that which, in 1775, weighed so heavily upon the head of young Louis XVI., that he cried out in distomfort. "It hurts me." Then came the revolution and the crown jewels, now the property of the people, were deposited for safe keeping in the Garde Meuble.

On the morning of September 17, 1792, Paris was startled by the discovery that the Garde Meuble had been robbed of its treasures, including the Regent. During the preceding night robbers had scaled the colonnade from the side of the Place Louis XV., and, through a window made their way into the Garde Meuble, escaping undiscovered with their precious booty. Several persons were arrested on suspicion, but discharged for want of evidence. Finally, an unsigned letter reached the commissioners of the commune, stating that some of the missing jewels would be found in a ditch in the Allie des Avenues, Champs Elysees. Officers hastened to the spot, and unearthed, among other treasures, the missing diamonds, their great value having evidently made it impossible for the thieves to dispose of them with safety. Thirteen years later the story of the robbery came out.

In 1805 a forgery was committed on the Bank of France. Among those arrested was a veteran soldier, called by his comrades Baba, who betrayed his accomplices. "This is not the first time," he said to the court, "that my confessions have been useful to society; and if you condemn me, I shall implore the clemency of the Emperor. Without me Napoleon would not be on the throne, for it is to me alone the success of the battle of Marengo is due. I was one of the robbers of the Garde Meuble, and helped to bury in the ditch the Regent and the other objects, which, being easily recognized, would have led to detection. I revealed this hiding place. The Regent was found, and you are not ignorant of the fact that it was placed in the hands of the Dutch by the First Consul to procure the funds which were so much needed after the 18th Brumaire." Following this confession, Baba's accomplices were convicted and sentenced to the galleys, but Baba himself was imprisoned at Bicetre, where he was familiarly known until he died as "the man who stole the Regent."

Recent investigations into the history of the Regent throw doubt upon the truthfulness of Baba's story, but the vital part which the diamond played in building the fortunes of Napoleon admits of no denial. In 1798, six years after its recovery, it was pawned to Vanderberg, a banker of Amsterdam, and it was the funds thus secured that alone made possible Napoleon's Italian campaign and the battle of Marengo, the winning of which launched the Corsican upon his long career of conquest. Napoleon redeemed the Regent in 1802, and two years afterward had it placed on the pommel of the sword of state. It remained there until 1814, when Marie Louise carried it off to Austria, whence the Emperor Francis returned it to France, and it was reset for the coronation of Charles X. During the reign of Napoleon III. it was mounted several times, and in 1870 was deposited in the Bank of France. It is now in the Galerie d'Apollon of the Louvre with the two Mazarin diamonds not sold at the French crown jewel sale a few years ago. Its original weight was 426 carats, but this was reduced in cutting to 128 carats. It was cut by Harris, who devoted two years to the task, his fee being $50,000.

I have said that the empire of Napoleon was made and unmade by the Regent. Before it came to France it was known as the Pitt diamond, and this name gives the clew to its part in the Emperor's undoing. Tradition has it that the stone was discovered by a slave at Parteal, south of Golconda; that he escaped the rigid inspection to which all the miners were subjected by the native prince by concealing the gem in a wound in the calf of his leg; that he made his way to the seacoast and offered it to an English skipper, but that in lieu of payment he was murdered and thrown overboard; and that the skipper, after selling the great gem to the diamond merchant, Jaurchund, for £1000, perhaps from the effects of rum and an evil conscience, hanged himself. Be this as it may, Jaurchund, in 1703, sold the stone to Thomas Pitt, Governor of Fort George. The price asked was 200,000 pagodas, but Pitt, after long haggling, beat the vender down to 48,000 pagodas, about $96,000.

Pitt staked his whole fortune on the diamond, but the venture proved a lucky one, and in 1717 he sold it to the Duke of Orleans for 2,000,000 livres, $667,000. And with the money received from this sale was laid a firm foundation for the house of Pitt, from which sprang in time William Pitt the elder, the great Earl of Chatham, and William Pitt, the younger, a greater than the great earl himself. When the volcanic fury of the French revolution blazed out, in 1789, the second William Pitt then at the height of his unparalleled career, was building up the peaceful prosperity of England. In the first years of the great upheaval he was blind to its flame and deaf to its fury, but when in 1793, he was forced into war, his neutrality gave place to a policy of aggression, and his unremitting hostility to the Corsican ended only with the latter's overthrow. For that reason it is not too much to say that the Regent caused the fall as well as the rise of Napoleon.

The famous Sancy diamond has played a not less fateful and grandiose part in history. Whence this diamond came is a matter of conjecture. Legend has it that it belonged to Charles the Bold, Duke of Bergundy, who lost it in 1476 at the battle of Granson or the battle of Morat, and that it was found by a Swiss soldier, who sold it for a crown to a priest, from whose hands it passed through others until it was bought for 20,000 ducats by Pope Julius II. All this, however, has been proved improbable by M. Germain Bapst, and of the diamond's history nothing is known up to the time when we find it in the possession of Nicolas Hanlay de Sancy in the closing years of the sixteenth century. This Sancy, chief of the Swiss Guards of Henry IV. of France, was a clever diplomat and financier, wholly devoted to his king, on whose behalf he contracted many loans, often giving jewels of his own as security. Once he sent the Sancy to a Jew broker to be pawned. The servant never returned. The broker declared he had never seen him. But Sancy's confidence in his servitor was unshaken. He made searches, and at last the body of the servant was found in a deep ditch near the city walls. Evidently an attempt at robbery had been made, and when the body was cut open it was found that the faithful fellow had swallowed the diamond as the only means left him of outwitting his assailants.

On another occasion Sancy pawned his great stone for what was in those days the immense sum of 33,400 crowns, and redeemed it a year afterward. There are records in 1602 and 1604 of attempts to sell the stone to the Duke of Mantua. Marie de Medici was eager to possess it, but the price was a little too high even for the King, and in 1604 it was sent to Constantinople in the hope of finding a purchaser in the person of the Sultan. This failed and in the same year the gem was sold by Sancy's brother the French Ambassador at London, to James I. for 60,000 crowns, the term being that the King should pay one-third on the spot, one-third in six months, and the balance at the end of a year. The Sancy became in due course the property of Charles I., and formed part of the jewels of his queen, Henrietta Maria, daughter of Henry IV., of France, who on the outbreak of the revolution, took it to France in order to pledge it and raise money for the royal cause. At various times she raised large sums, giving as security, among other jewels the Sancy, which passed into the hands of the Duc d'Epernon, in part payment of the principal. This was in 1657, and in the same year the Sancy became the property of Cardinal Mazarin, who at his death, bequeathed it to the French crown as a portion of the famous collection of diamonds known as the "Eighteen Mazarins."

It is thus described in an inventory of the French diamonds drawn up in 1691: "A very large and deep diamond called 'Le Sancy,' given to the crown by the late Cardinal Mazarin, cut in facets on both sides in pendant form, of the finest water, white and brilliant, perfect in all points, weighing 53 3-4 carats, which having no equal, is of inestimable value, and which, for the formal purposes of this inventory, is declared to be worth 600,000 livres."

Louis XV. wore at his coronation a crown surmounted by the Sancy, and when the Queen entered Paris on October 4, 1728, she wore the great diamond in her hair. In Van Loo's portrait of Queen Marie Leczinska, now in the Louvre, the Sancy formed the pendant of her necklace. On many occasions Marie Antoinette wore the Sancy, and when the crown jewels were sent to Amsterdam to be recut the Sancy alone was permitted to retain the pendant form and primitive cutting, which is unchanged to the present day. When robbers during the revolution looted the Garde Meuble and, as already described, carried off the crown jewels, the Sancy was stolen, but was soon afterward recovered and played a part second only to the Regent in sustaining the armies of the new-born republic. With other crown jewels it was pledged with the Marquis d'Iranda, as security for sums advanced to supply horses for the republican cavalry and artillery. The loan was repaid, but the Marquis, or his heirs, failed to return the diamond, and sold it to Godoy, Prince of the Peace, from whose hands it passed in 1809 to Joseph Bonaparte. Then for nearly twenty years it disappeared from view. In 1828, however, it was again in the possession of the Godoy family. Four years afterward it was sold to Prince Demidoff, and remained in the Demidoff family until about 1865, when it was worn by the young prince Paul Demidoff, who appeared at a masked ball at the Tuileries in the costume of an Indian rajah. Strange to say, it was an Oriental millionaire who bought the Sancy for 550,000 francs when Prince Demidoff, after the death of his wife, sold all his diamonds and determined to become a monk, and it remained for more than twenty years in India. In 1889 it was exhibited at the Universal Exposition at Paris, and in 1892, return-property of a group of French bankers definitely to Europe, it became the

In the inventory of 1792 the value of the Regent was estimated at 12,000,000 francs. In the same inventory the Sancy was estimated at 1,200,000 francs, but for those who value the origin and history of an object the Sancy is perhaps the most interesting of all the French crown jewels. Curious also, is the story of the Koh-i-noor the costliest jewel in the possession of the British crown. This, the most famous of all diamonds, and its companion, the Orloff, are supposed to be the fragments of a still mightier crystal of 793 carats, of which the tradition has been preserved by Tavernier, who visited the East in 1670 and there saw and described many most remarkable jewels belonging to the famous Aurungzebe, then on the throne of the Mogul empire at Delhi. The legends relating to these twin stones are numerous and conflicting. One account has it that they shone for ages as the eyes of a monstrous idol in a Brahmin temple in Golconda. When the Mogul emperor fell out with the King of Golconda the Prime Minister of the latter forsook his master, contributed to his overthrow, and by the bribe of the Koh-i-noor obtained from the conquering Mogul the vacant throne. Another caprice of fortune landed the Orloff also in the hands of the conqueror. Thus the gems passed from Golconda to Delhi. Sometimes worn on the persons of the Moguls, sometimes shining side by side on the famous peacock throne, they were safely preserved at Delhi until the empire was overthrone by the Persian Nadir Shah. With the assassination of Nadir Shah, in 1749, their stories divide. The Orloff, then known as the Derya-i-noor, or Sea of Light, passed to a temple in Pondicherry, where it was stolen by a French deserter, who had pretended conversion so successfully that he was made priest of the temple, and there bided his time until opportunity favored him. He disposed of his booty to a Greek merchant somewhere on the shores of the Mediterranean, and in the year 1772 it passed into the hands of Prince Orloff, who presented it to Catherine II., Prince Orloff paid for it nearly $500,000 in cash, besides a patent of nobility and an annuity of twenty thousand dollars for life. The Orloff is now set in the top of the Russian crown. Its form, in technical language, is a high crowned rose. It weighs 196 3-4 carats, and is about half the size of a pigeon's egg. Unfortunately, it is not of first water, being slightly tinged with yellow, like the orange diamond.

And what of the Koh-i-noor—what of the Mountain of Light? That, too, has had its advantures since it parted company with its twin. It was carried off by Ahmed Shah, and under the stress of prolonged persecution was surrendered by his unhappy descendant, Shah Soojah, to the greed of Runjeet Singh. When that Sikh chieftain was on his deathbed he was urged to leave the jewel in the temple of Juggernaut, and so break the spell of misfortune that was supported to accompany it. But he refused to do this. The Mountain of Light continued to shine in the treasury of Lahore until 1849, when the sixth dynasty fell before the arms of England, and its last representative, Duleep Singh, lost his throne and his famous diamond. He was then a mere boy, but he never forgot that he had once been the owner of the Koh-i-noor. Brought over to England to be educated at public expense, "I should like," he said one day, "to place the jewel in the Queen's hand, now that I am a man. I was only a child when I surrendered it to her by the treaty, but now I am old enough to understand." His wish was conveyed to the Queen, and on the very next day he was summoned to the palace. The jewel was placed in his hand, and for some time he toyed with it. It was quite a different object from that which had caused so much joy and sorrow in the oriental home of his royal fathers. The lapidary's art had revealed all its hidden fire and dazzling beauty, but had shorn the gem of much of its historical and scientific interest. Then the descendant of Eastern kings handed back the rich prize of many conquests, and formally remarked that it gave him great pleasure to place the jewel in the hand of his sovereign. Some of Duleep's old friends in India would have said it was a good riddance. When the Indian custodian of the gem handed the splendid bauble over to the English, in the palace of the little Maharajah, he heaved a long sigh of relief and said the Koh-i-noor had been the cause of so many deaths in his family that he never expected to escape himself. When he had occasion to exhibit the jewel it was always attached to his waist by a stout cord of twisted ribbon. Dr. Login, the first British custodian of the gem, followed the old native keeper's example until, much to his relief, the treasure was transferred to England.

As Duleep held and looked upon his heirloom of his family it might well have conjured up in his mind, a train of associations that are a part of many stirring epochs, of Asiatic history, for no gem has ever figured so long and so conspicuously in history as the Koh-i-noor. The priceless jewel in the crown of the early Turkish invaders of India, of the Moguls from the north and the Persians from the West, it passed from people to people as the richest emblem of conquest. "My son Humayoun," said Baber, "has won a jewel from the Rajah which is valued at half the expenses of the whole world." It glistened in the headgear of Baber's hapless descendant when the Persian conqueror jocosely remarked to his fallen foe, "Let us change turbans," and walked off with the prize. Duleep's greatest ancestor brought it back to India, the prize of victory, and the third clause of the treaty from which date the downfall of the Sikh dynasty and British supremacy in the Punjab is devoted to the Koh-i-noor. Sovereign after sovereign won the gem whose origin is hidden in the mists of antiquity, and the British Queen, as the latest victor now holds the prize. Safety stowed away at Windsor Castle, the famous jewel probably does not give its present owner so much solicitude as in the days when only one man knew in which one of a dozen boxes it was kept, or on which of a hundred camels it was carried on the march.

Another historic diamond is the Nassak, 78 1-2 carats, a triangular stone with triangular facets. It was among the spoils taken by the Marquis of Hastings in the conquest of the Deccan, and in 1786 was sent by the Nizam to King George III., whose favor Hastings was at that time anxious to secure. He was on trial for having endowed the nation with an Eastern empire. Commissioned to deliver the jewel to the King, this circumstance brought himself and the royal family into great trouble, giving rise to numerous scurrilous writings and caricatures, which were publicly hawked about the streets of London and exhibited in the shop windows. Afterward the Nassak passed by sale through various hands to its present owner, the Duke of Westminster, who paid $36,000 for it at auction.

Rubies, when fine, are often more valuable than diamonds, and not a few have had long and eventful histories A very large and remarkably perforated ruby of antique workmanship, now in the possession of a noble lady of Ireland, has sharply engraved upon it in Arabic characters, the names of four successive rulers of great note in East Indian history, namely, Akbar, his son Jahangir, his son Shah Jehan and his son Aurungzebe, covering together about the first two-thirds of the seventeenth century. This was bought some years ago in Teheran, and is doubtless one of the jewels carried from India to Persia in 1739 by Nadir Shah, and scattered and lost after his death. Another ruby, larger than this one, of which a model and impressions still exist, had the same four names engraved upon it, but the stone has been recut—a piece of historical vandalism that is unpardonable. Its present whereabouts is uncertain. Still another ruby engraved with the name of Aurungzebe is said to have been among the jewels of his son, and a diamond that has been cut since also had the engraved names of Jahangir and Shah Jehan.

AT SEA IN A COFFIN.

A Convict's Queer Attempt to Escape—Escorted by Sharks, He Paddles His Sepulchral Canoe.

Some curious details of the life of the French convicts at Cayenne, Guyane, and the Safety Islands are given by M. Paul Mimande in a volume which he has just published in Paris, entitled "Forcats et Proscrits." After describing all the most famous criminals at present in the penal colonies, the author deals with marvellous escapes and attempts to escape.

Perhaps the most remarkable of them all is that of the assassin Lupi, who went to sea in a coffin. He managed to get some nails, tar, and cotton, and one dark night he got into a coffin shed. He selected a fine, stanch, and seaworthy coffin, fastened the lid, in order to turn it into a deck, leaving a cockpit sufficient to enable him to crawl in. He calked all the joints as well as he could, and when this work was finished he made a pair of paddles out of two planks. Then he brought out his craft with great precaution. Without much difficulty he reached the water's edge. There he launched his bark and crawled on board. Assisted by the tide, he paddled his sepulchral craft. Silently and slowly he proceeded, in the hope of reaching either Venezuela or British Guiana.

Now, 150 nautical miles in a coffin did not constitute a very tempting enterprise, but Lupi was full of confidence. At the penitentiary it was soon discovered that he was missing. No boat had been taken away. The boats are always well guarded, and nobody ever dreamed for a moment that any man would go to sea in a coffin. It was thought that he had either committed suicide or concealed himself somewhere near by.

Fortunately, or unfortunately, for Lupi, the steamer Abeille, returning from the Antilles, off Paramaribo, came close to him. The Captain noticed an object that looked like a piece of wreckage around which a flock of seagulls were circling and screaming. Naturally that excited his attention. He steered the boat in the direction of the object. As he came close to it his curiosity was increased. The thing which first he took to be a piece of wreckage turned out to be a coffin, and in addition to its noisy winged escort it was accompanied by two guards that travelled on either side of it like mounted escorts at the door of an official carriage. These two guards were enormous sharks, whose great dorsal fins from time to time seemed to touch the sides of the box. The Captain of the Abeille stopped the vessel and ordered a boat to be launched and manned. When the boat approached the coffin the birds continued to hover about, but the sharks went down. The men in the boat looked into the box, and what was their astonishment to find a man in it half drowned and almost in a fainting condition. They hauled him into the boat and took him on board the vessel, and a few hours later he was in irons in his cell.

called coffins, but Lupi is perhaps the only man who ever went to sea in a Unseaworthy boats are sometimes genuine coffin.

FOREST OF WINDMILLS.

Amsterdam, the capital of the Netherlands, is situated at the confluence of the River Amstel with the arm of the Zuyder-Zee called the Y, pronounced eye. It is a forest of lofty windmills in the form of towers, steeples, pyramids, truncated cones and aerial erections, waving their enormous arms, and whirling above the roofs like a cloud of monster birds beating their wings over the city. It is computed that there are no fewer than 12,000 windmills in Holland, chiefly employed in pumping and draining. Many are of vast dimensions, each sail sometimes exceeding 60 feet in length.

YOUR EYEBROWS.

They Plainly Reveal the Traits in One's Character.

The whole nature of a person, according to a faceologist, is indicated in the eyebrows. Eyebrows that are gracefully arched and elevated show imagination and ideality; and, when much elevated, credulity; those that are depressed over the nose and almost straight show penetrating powers of observation. It is also said that one perpendicular wrinkle over the nose and between the brows shows carefulness in small matters, while two or three wrinkles show conscientiousness.

Rough eyebrows show fondness for music, especially if thick and lowering while the art lover of either sex has eyebrows that are long and tapering.

One other sign which is sometimes found in a man's face, though oftener in a woman's, is the dimple. Every one loves a dimpled cheek, and the fact seems to be that dimples, whether in cheek or chin, mellow and sweeten the disposition. They show a strong desire to be loved and appreciated, as well as a wish to be agreeable. And they also show a keen appreciation of beauty in the opposite sex.

MATCH-MAKING MOTHERS.

The worldly mother has a valiant defender in the Countess of Desart. Match making is not so wicked after all, according to an article by the titled lady, published in the "National Review." The Countess begins her defense with: "The question of the future of their daughters is one which mothers ponder over deeply; and for an answer to it that shall be all-convincing and all-embracing they search daily. They can not assert that they have yet found it, and they perforce still lean, as their grandmothers' grandmothers before them leaned, on the marriage market."

The marriage market is not a modern invention and historical research seems to prove that not only in Babylon but also in Chaldea and Assyria did the custom hold. The marriages of Leah and Rachel looked suspiciously like sales, and the matrimonial alliance of David and Miriam appears in somewhat the same light. The Countess of Desart puts forward as one of her most formidable defenses of actually bargaining away a daughter the fact that the lovers never really know each other before marriage, no matter how much they may see of each other. The glamor of love and sentiment always hides the real characters of the young people concerned and their actual selves have to be learned anew after the honeymoon. In face of this the writer contends that there is nothing gained by a long engagement, in which the lovers are supposed to study each other, but during which the true natures are generally hidden under the veil of too intense affection.

The Countess of Desart laments the modern tendency of girls to look upon each man as a possible husband and to weigh for themselves the question of a man's worth, instead of letting an older and a wiser head settle such questions. Mothers want their daughters to be thoughtless of the future, so that when it comes to them, it may possess the charm of novelty. It is for the mother to go up and down the market, seeking the man to whom she is willing to intrust her daughter's future. The writer insists that she is not speaking of the girls who have been allowed to grow up wild and untrained, but of the girls who have been trained to be cautious and to realize the enormous significance of married life. Of course the woman considered in this case is not that new and abrupt creation, the woman who denounces marriage, in all its forms, but of the young lady in society, whose future must certainly be spent at the head of some prominent man's household. The Countess cites an instance of a young artist struggling to support his wife and child on $500 a year, which he earns by selling tiny pictures to chance visitors.

Will the beauty-loving soul of the artist always enjoy the sight of his little wife struggling with brooms and dust, ruining her complexion by cooking over a hot fire and spoiling her hands and eyes with darning rents and cleaning boots? If sickness or death comes, where will the youthful couple be? asks the skeptical Countess. The girl who is bred to being her own and her husband's servant may do all these ugly drudgeries willingly, but how long can she remain loving and happy when she has to do these things in the house of her husband, what a maid did for her in the home of her father? Here it is that the thoughtful mother comes in and stands like a wall between her beloved child, and the fascinating, but poverty-stricken stranger.

She does not of course, deny the daughter the sentimental but spendthrift youth and give her nothing in return; she immediately selects a proper husband for the waiting girl, and has the final satisfaction of seeing her task ending in the calm, safe settlement of her daughter in a life of ease, and good position. The girl who is raised in the lap of luxury, kept bright and beautiful by careful training, reading, travel, and other aids of luxury, loses her charm when the toils of a household have dragged her into the depths of weariness and dullness. Reading has to give way to bed-making, and the wife who pleased as a sweetheart is uninteresting as a cook.

Men always love beauty in a woman, and how is she to keep it when illness and work have taken all the animation out of her? Matrimony, according to the Countess, is the goal of a woman's life and she must be prepared for it and her future as carefully selected for it as is the business life of a man. Girls should be chaperoned, not because they may not be trusted, nor because their friends may not be trusted, but because they should be kept "unspotted from the world," to think that all men are good husbands and that all women are good women. And if they are married safely to a true man he takes up the lesson where the mother left off and the wife never learns how dreadful a world it is to these poor girls who have never enjoyed the protection due them.