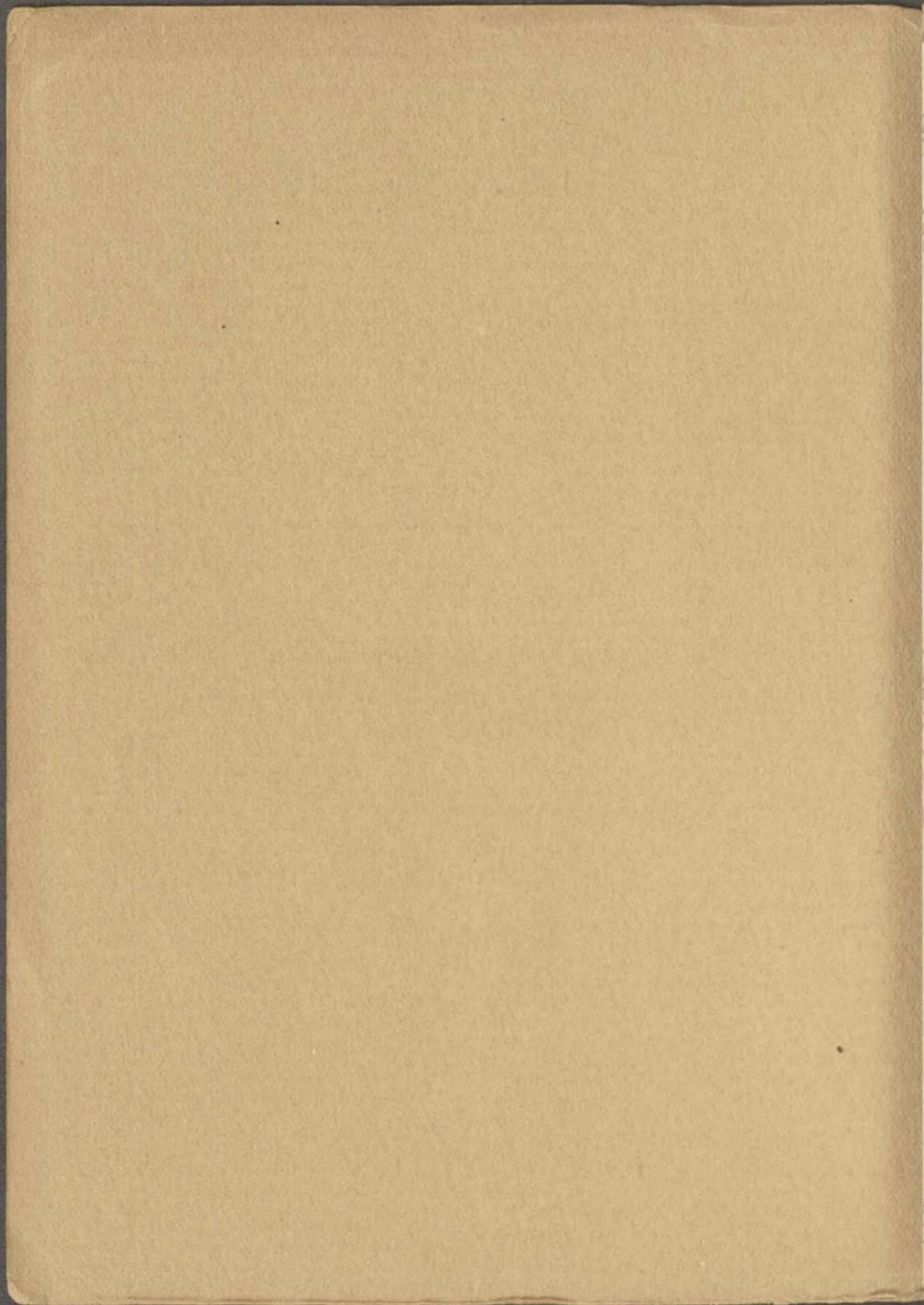


AMETHYST
JADE





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FOREWORD



THE inherent beauty of the two stones which are treated in the following pages, and their many true gem qualities, have given them a foremost place in popularity.

The fascinating lore and tradition that has surrounded them through the ages is so extensive that the question of what material to use in this little book, what to reject, became something of a problem, albeit a pleasing one.

We hope that as you read the following pages you may in some measure share with us the pleasure which we derived from compiling the information contained therein.

H · J · HOWE · INC
SYRACUSE

For the information contained in this little book, we are indebted to the following authors, to whom we wish to extend our thanks:

MR. JULIUS WODISKA
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THE AMETHYST

BIRTHSTONE FOR FEBRUARY

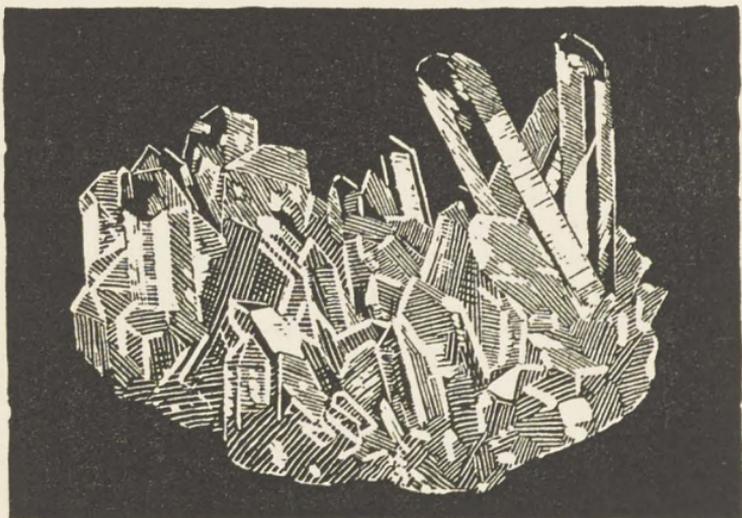
SYMBOL OF TRUE LOVE



HE purple amethyst stands pre-eminent as the most popular of the semi-precious gems. Being a variety of quartz and obtainable in large quantities, this stone is now of more artistic than intrinsic value, but its qualities are those of a true gem. Indeed in early times, when the available supply of amethyst was limited, it was esteemed as a precious stone and was held in equal value with the sapphire. In many of the gem-pieces which have descended to us from ancient Rome, the amethyst and the sapphire are found side by side.

The chief sources from whence the present-day supply of amethysts is derived are Brazil and the Ural Mountains in Siberia, although the gem is found in many other localities. In North America, amethysts are found in Maine, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, North Carolina, and in the regions adjacent to Lake Superior. The Siberian amethysts, accompanied by beryl and topaz, occur in cavities in granite, although they are often found lying loose and very near the surface. The Siberian stones are so far superior to all others in the richness and depth of their dark violet hue, that the merest

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Amethyst Crystals

novice in the selection of gems would unhesitatingly show a preference for them over those from other sources. Very fine amethysts are occasionally obtained from Ceylon where they are found as pebbles in river-beds. These, however, occur in such small quantities as to be almost negligible. The Oriental amethyst which is procured from Ceylon is really the purple sapphire.

While amethyst is found in all degrees of purple

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from the lightest tint to a shade that is so dark as to be almost opaque, the gems of a dark reddish-purple are most highly prized. Good amethysts of this type hold their color-value under all circumstances, while some of the paler stones lose their violet color and show a dull gray under an artificial light.

The amethyst lends itself to almost every type of cutting, but because of the great value which was placed upon this stone by the ancients it was not often engraved. Today, however, many of the finest amethysts are engraved or carved.

USED BY THE EGYPTIANS

The amethyst figured in the earliest Egyptian amulets, the forms and heads of animals constituting the most favored models. An exceedingly fine specimen of ancient Egyptian goldsmith's work which was evidently worn as a talisman by one of very high rank, is now in the Louvre Museum, Paris. This is a pendant of gold, lapis-lazuli, amethyst and Oriental pearl, shaped into a bull's head. The amethyst is engraved on both faces, the form of a priest being figured in each case.

A LEGEND

The name amethyst is derived from the Greek word *amethystos*, meaning "not drunken," for the

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ancients believed that the wearer of the gem was preserved from inebriety. From the mythology of the Greeks we learn that the god Bacchus, being offended by some neglect that he had suffered, declared that the first person whom he should meet would be devoured by his tigers. Fate willed that this luckless mortal should be a beautiful maiden named Amethyst who was on her way to worship at the shrine of Diana. As the ferocious beasts sprang toward her she was metamorphosed into a white stone by her patron goddess, and Bacchus, repenting his cruelty, poured the juice of the grape over the petrified body of the maiden, thus giving to the stone its beautiful violet hue, while at the same time he decreed that whosoever should wear the stone would be preserved from intoxication.

RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATIONS

The association of the amethyst with sacerdotal things is old. It is the pious or episcopal gem, the precious stone of the Bishop, and it is regarded as imparting especial dignity and beauty to the property of the Roman Church. It is also the stone appropriate for mourning. The amethyst is sacred to St. Valentine who is said to have worn one at all times. In Revelation (XXI, 20) it is given as the twelfth foundation stone of Jerusalem.

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PROTECTIVE AND CURATIVE VIRTUES

In medieval times the amethyst was a favorite amulet as a preserver of the wearer in battle, and many a pious crusader who nightly told his beads, relied also upon the purple stone that hung as a protective charm beside his rosary. This gem was believed to be a good influence if worn by persons making petitions to princes, and when worn by a man, it was thought to attract to him the love of noble women. It was regarded as a protection from plagues, witchcraft, hailstorms, locusts and thieves. It was also supposed to induce sleep.

THE TALISMAN OF CHARLEMAGNE

One of the most interesting relics from medieval times is found in the Talisman of Charlemagne which was formerly preserved in the Cathedral Treasury at Aix-la-Chapelle, and which, because of its sacred character and on account of the mystic power ascribed to it, always exerted a peculiar fascination over the minds of those who visited the shrine.

The "Talisman" is supposed to bear a piece of the True Cross which is surrounded by fifty or more large gems, many of these being amethysts.

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In the summer of 1804, Empress Josephine went to Aix-la-Chapelle where she visited the tomb of Charlemagne. Napoleon at this time *authorized* the Cathedral chapter to bestow certain relics, among them the famed talisman, upon Josephine. It eventually went to the hands of Hortense, Josephine's daughter and the mother of Napoleon III, and was later inherited by him. It is said to be now in a private collection in Paris.

SOME FAMOUS GEMS

The signet ring of Cleopatra was an amethyst, engraved with the figure of Mithras, a Persian deity, symbol of the Divine Idea, Source of Light and Life.

From the ring of Edward the Confessor was taken an amethyst which now adorns the British crown. This particular stone is, by tradition, endowed with pronounced therapeutic virtues.

STONES OF LARGE SIZE

Amethyst has been known to reach gigantic size at times, one crystal having been obtained which weighed 140 pounds.

The artists of the Renaissance eagerly availed themselves of these huge and beautiful crystals to carve them into the fanciful but elegant vases that

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were so acceptable to the taste of their age. The Parisian Collections offer the choicest specimens of their skill in this line, presenting cups, vases, and urns carved from single gems, some of them measuring eight inches in height.

Because of its beauty of color and its adaptability as an ornament the amethyst has always been held in popular esteem. It is coming, however, into the especial favor of those whose refined discrimination in matters of dress includes a gem-piece to harmonize with a costume.

JADE



IN THE western world the popular appreciation of jade is a comparatively recent development. Not so in China however, for throughout the Chinese Empire jade has been the stone *par excellence* for many centuries. A Chinese will say: "It is not a stone, it is jade." More often than otherwise we hear the material referred to as "Chinese jade." It is interesting to note, therefore, that the name jade is not of Chinese origin but was derived from the Spanish *piedra de hijada* (stone of the flank), a term which was bestowed upon the stone because the Indians whom Cortez encountered in America greatly esteemed this material as a remedy for all diseases of the kidneys.

Jade is the generic name for two very similar minerals, jadeite and nephrite, the latter word being derived from a Greek term meaning kidney. The ancient Greeks believed, as did the American Indians, that this stone possessed the virtue of a specific remedy for diseases of the kidneys, and it is a peculiar fact that for centuries the Chinese, isolated from both Greece and America, have

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entertained the same belief, which incidentally, seems to be quite unsupported by science.

Jade is a hard, tough mineral which is carved only with extreme difficulty, but which for this reason wears well where hard usage is given. It occurs in Turkestan, Siberia, Silesia, Germany and New Zealand, and traces of it have been found in Alaska. The best material comes from Turkestan which is the present principle source of supply, and where it is taken from mines that have been worked for more than two thousand years.

Jade is found in gray, green, white, and blue masses, the preferred variety being that which most closely approximates the emerald in color and which is translucent when held to the light. Material of this type is rare and commands very high prices.

USED BY PRIMITIVE MAN

Of all gem minerals jade is entitled to the first place in point of antiquity, a fact which has long puzzled mineralogists, for although implements of jade have been found in the oldest cliff dwellings in America, and among the relics of the early lake-dwellers of Switzerland, the sources from whence this material was obtained remain a mystery.

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Jade Adze. Ancient Aztec Workmanship

There are no known deposits of jade to which these people might have had access. In spite of this fact, however, jade was well known to the aboriginal Mexicans who employed it as their chief jewel and gave it a place in their estimation which superseded the emerald. They cut it with singular skill by some process now unknown, and appropriated it to the use of the Earth-goddess and royalty alone.

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THE TREASURES OF THE AZTECS

The old chronicler of the Conquest, Diaz, states that when Montezuma first interviewed Cortez, he wore a mantle thickly studded with jade and pearls—an elaborately carved clasp of jade fastening the imperial robe. According to his own account, Diaz contented himself with four pieces of jade alone out of all of the accumulated treasures of Montezuma in their division amongst the soldiers on the *noche triste*, "disastrous night" (July, 1520), when Cortez was forced to evacuate Mexico. He later had occasion to congratulate himself upon his prudent choice, for most of those who had burdened themselves with bullion perished.

JADE MENTIONED BY SIR WALTER RALEIGH

An early notice of jade as a remedial agent appears in Sir Walter Raleigh's account of his travels in Guiana. Treating of a people of "Amazons" said to dwell in the interior of the country, Raleigh says: "These Amazons have likewise greate store of these plates of golde, which they recover by exchange, chiefly for a kinde of greene stone, which the Spaniards call Piedras Hijada, and we use for spleene stones, and for the disease of the stone we also esteeme them; of these I saw divers in Guiana, and commonly every King or *Casique* hath one,

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which their wives for the most part wear, and they esteem them as great jewels."

Very little reference to jade is made by the Greek and Roman mineralogists. It is probable, however, that many gems designated by them as emerald or chrysoptase were more truly to be classified as jade. The scarcity and the hardness of this material united in preventing the artists of the Renaissance from leaving examples of their workmanship in it. If we are to find classical reference to jade we must turn again to the Chinese.

"CHINESE JADE"

As far into the past as Chinese literature can be traced, jade is mentioned, and the esteem in which the mineral was held is shown by the fact that the earliest Chinese pictograph character designating the word king was a string of jade beads. From time immemorial it has been used by this people for amulets, talismans, idols, bells, priest's gongs, symbols of office, the decoration of altars and shrines, jewelry, medicine, and the protection of the dead as well as the living.

We are told that when Confucius was much troubled by the ill-success of his efforts to reform the Chinese morals of his day, he sought consolation in playing on the "musical stone."

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A SUBJECT FOR LEGEND

Jade has been made the subject of countless poetical Chinese legends, among them being the following: A Chinese youth, pursuing a many-hued butterfly, was led into the garden of a wealthy mandarin whose beautiful daughter he thus encountered. The two were mutually attracted to each other, and the youth, instead of being punished for his trespass, ultimately married the maiden. (It should here be explained that jade is used as the mandarin's badge of office.) Because of this story, the Chinese regard the jade butterfly as a symbol of marital happiness, and it is often presented by a bride-groom to his bride.

LARGE JADES

Jade is occasionally found in masses of enormous size. One such piece which was discovered some years ago by Dr. George Frederick Kunz, America's leading authority on gems, weighed 4704 pounds. The largest mass known was uncovered in New Zealand. This weighed 7000 pounds and was donated to the Museum of Natural History of New York by the late J. Pierpont Morgan.

A REMARKABLE MONUMENT

In jade we have the most remarkable monument, taken all in all, that the glyptic art of any age or

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any nation has produced. This is the immense tortoise found in the bank of the Jumna, and now displayed in the mineralogical gallery of the British Museum. It is carved with an exact fidelity to nature, out of an unparalleled block of fine olive green, perfectly polished and agreeably clouded with lighter shades.

