

THE KOH-I-NOOR.

This has hitherto been a fatal jewel. May its recent recutting have broken the spell? Its history is well authenticated at every step. This stone of fate seems never to have been lost sight of from the days when Ala-ud-deen took it from the Rajahs of Malwa, five centuries ago, to the day when it became a crown-jewel of England. Tradition carries back its existence in the memory of India to the year 1077, B.C., and a still wilder legend would fain recognize in it a diamond first discovered near Masulipatan, in the bed of the Godavari, five thousand years ago. The Koh-i-Noor is reported by Baber, the founder of the Mogul Empire, to have come into the Delhi treasury from the conquest of Malwa, in 1504.

The Hindoos trace the curses and the ultimate ruin inevitably brought upon its successive possessors by the genius of this fateful jewel ever since it was first wrested from the line of Vikramaditya. If we glance over its history since 1304, its malevolent influence far exceeds that of the necklace for which Eriphyle betrayed her husband, or the Egeus Sclanus of Greek and Roman tradition. First falls the vigorous Patan, then the mighty Mogul Empire, and with vastly accelerated ruin, the power of Nadir, of the Dooranee dynasty, and of the Sikhs. Runjeet Singh, when it was in his possession, was so convinced of the truth of this belief, that being satisfied with the enjoyment of it during his own lifetime, he sought to break through the ordinance of fate and the consequent destruction of his family by bequeathing the stone to the shrine of Juggernaut for the good of his soul and the preservation of his dynasty. His successors would not give up the baleful treasure, and the last Maharajah is now a private gentleman. In 1850, in the name of the East India Company (since in its turn defunct) Lord Dalhousie presented the Koh-i-Noor to Queen Victoria. Perhaps we should have been better without it; such at least, appears to be Mr. King's opinion.

The British will hardly relinquish their faith in the malignant power possessed by this stone, when they think of the speedily following war which annihilated the prestige of the British army, and the Sepoy mutiny three years later, which caused England's existence as a nation to hang for months on the forbearance of one man. The people saw the Koh-i-Noor lustreless at the exhibition in 1851, then weighing 186 carats. Its recutting, performed in 1862, though executed with the utmost skill and perfection, has deprived the stone of all its historical and mineralogical interest. As a specimen of a gigantic diamond, whose native weight and form has been interfered with as little as possible (for with Hindoo lapidaries the grand object is the preservation of weight), it stood without a rival save the Orlov in Europe. As it is, in the place of the most ancient gem in the history of the world—older even than the Tables of the Law and the Breast plate of Aaron, supposing them still to exist—we get, according to Mr. King, a bad-shaped, because too shallow, modern brilliant, a mere lady's bauble, of but second rate water, for it has a grayish tinge, and, besides, inferior in weight to several, being now reduced to one hundred and two carats and a half. The operation of recutting was performed in London, under the care of the Messrs. Garrard, the Queen's jewellers, who erected for that purpose a small four-horse steam engine on their premises. It was conducted by Voorsanger and another skillful workman, sent over by Mr. Coster from Amsterdam. In consequence of the advantage gained in using steam power, the actual cutting occupied no more than thirty-eight working days—a striking contrast to the two years necessary to cut the Pitt diamond by the old hand process. In some parts of the work, as when it was necessary to grind out a deep flaw, the wheel made three thousand revolutions per minute.

CURIOUS HISTORY OF A REMARKABLE MAD-STONE.

For the first time in our life we saw yesterday a genuine mad-stone, and heard its history from the owner, who inherited it from his father. The fortunate possessor is Colonel B. Lee Milam, of Waterford, Marshall County, Mississippi. Colonel Milam is a prominent citizen of his county, and his statements need not rest on any doubt, which we may have had about the efficacy of the mad-stone in curing the bites of mad dogs, cats, snakes, spiders, or other venomous animals or insects. Colonel Lee Milam is a native of Madison County, North Alabama, from whence he removed in 1835. The family came from Virginia, and the Colonel inherits also his middle name, being a second cousin of Robt E. Lee.

The mad-stone in his possession is about the size of a hen's egg; as heavy as so much brick and rather more porous, and is of a light clayish color. One end is flat, as if it had been saved off, and a grain runs through the stone from end to end, as if it had in some former age, been so much wood or bone. About fifty years ago this stone was split into three or four pieces, but was carefully fastened together with a wire, which still performs its office. The stone was brought from China, in the year of 1810, by Dr. Baker. The doctor died in a few years, and the stone was sold at public sale among his other property. Mr. Jarvis Milam, the Colonel's father, was the purchaser, and at his death he willed the stone to the present owner, with the condition that all the family should have the use of it as often as necessary, free of charge. As to its virtues, Colonel Lee Milam states that it has been applied with success in over one thousand cases, and has only failed in two, and in those the part affected could not be successfully reached. He has used it himself over two hundred and fifty times. When applied it adheres as if by suction, and usually remains on ten or twelve hours. When the poison is all extracted the stone falls off. During the process a very offensive stenche fills the room, making the air sickening in the extreme. The stone is then soaked in warm water from twenty-four to thirty-six hours, when it becomes cleansed and is again ready for use. Colonel Milam assures us he can cure any case of dog, snake or other bite where madness or dissolution has not already set in. Cures have been effected even as long as two weeks after the bite. Last week the

stone was used successfully in several cases. It is known for many leagues around, and the people come from far and near to be healed. Colonel Milam has been offered five thousand dollars for this wonderful stone, but always refuses to entertain the proposition. He said, playfully, yesterday, that he might sell it for ten thousand dollars if the buyer would always allow him the use of it. Great is mad-stone. We are converted. What say the medical world?

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