

of twelve hours each and cost \$40,000. Eighty carats were removed. The stone was then placed in the jewel room of the Tower of London.

SHAH OF PERSIA

This diamond cost a man his life. On January 30, 1829, A. Griboiedov, Russian ambassador to Persia, was murdered in Teheran. Feeling in Russia ran high and war was threatened, until, to conciliate Russia, this diamond was sent as a gift to the Czar at St. Petersburg by a special Persian envoy. Russia was thus appeased and war was averted. The diamond was kept in the Diamond Room of the Winter Palace up to 1914. In that year it was removed to Moscow and in 1922 was added to the "Diamond Treasure" of the U.S.S.R.

Previously the diamond had had a long and checkered career. It is one of the few known engraved diamonds. The earliest date and inscription on the stone are "Burhan-Nizam-Shah II, 1000 years." Burhan-Nizam-Shah II was a ruler of Achmednagar, India, and the "1000 years" corresponded to A.D. 1591. A second date and inscription read: "Son of Johangir-Shah-Jehan-Shah, 1051." This refers to the Great Mogul, Shah Jehan, whose title meant "Ruler of the Universe" and the date corresponds to A.D. 1641. A third date and inscription are "Kajar-Fatliali-Shah Sultan, 1242." This refers to the then reigning Shah of Persia and the date A.D. 1824.

In 1591 the Great Mogul Akbar sent messengers to the rulers of some of the provinces of India, to inform them that they were henceforth under his control. In reply, Burhan sent an "unsatisfactory answer" and what was regarded as a "trifling" present of fifteen elephants and five gems. Angered, Akbar sent a military expedition against Burhan which conquered his city and returned with all his elephants and gems, among them this large diamond. The diamond then descended to Akbar's successor, Shah Jehan, famous as the builder of the Taj Mahal, which he constructed as a tomb for himself and his favorite wife. Its rich adornment of precious stones indicates his fondness for gems. Shah Jehan's son Aurungzeb rose against his father, thrust him into prison and usurped his throne.

How the stone was later carried to Persia is not known, but it is probable that Nadir Shah, the Persian conqueror of India, took it in 1739.

(To be concluded next month)

Lectures on Gems

Although the Layman Lectures presented on Sunday afternoons by Mr. Paul G. Dallwig have ceased for this season, it is timely, in view of the opening of H. N. Higinbotham Hall of Gems and Jewels, to point out that the autumn season, beginning on the first Sunday in November, will open with "Gems, Jewels and 'Junk.'"

THINGS YOU MAY HAVE MISSED

Famous Snake Killers

Probably most people make their first acquaintance with a mongoose by reading Rudyard Kipling's "Riki-tiki-tavi." As a result, the Indian mongoose described in that story exclusively represents the mongoose tribe, to many persons, or at least assumes an unduly prominent position.

Actually, there are numerous kinds of mongooses (and incidentally, even though one knows it's wrong, how much more natural it would seem to write "mongeese" for the plural!). A representative and interesting collection of various species of mongooses, from Asia, Africa, and Madagascar, is on exhibition among the systematic series of mammals in Hall 15.

Because they are so famous as killers of poisonous snakes, there has been prevalent an idea that mongooses are immune to snakes' venom. This is only partly the case; their success in killing the snakes is largely due to their great agility—they are quicker



WATER MONGOOSE OF AFRICA

One of the group of famous snake-killers, various species of which are found in India, Africa, and Madagascar.

in striking, and sinking their teeth into the neck of the reptile, than the latter is in making its strike.

Despite its popular fame, and whatever value it might have in killing American rattlesnakes, the importation of mongooses into the United States is now prohibited. The reason they are unwelcome as immigrants is that they were introduced some years ago into the West Indies and Hawaii, but rapidly became pests, and the harm they did, to birds and small mammals, outweighed any advantages they might offer as snake killers. Mongooses feed on other small forms of life, and not merely on snakes, contrary to a widespread belief into which many persons have been misled.

PREHISTORIC BOATS AND NETS

By HENRY FIELD
CURATOR OF PHYSICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Excavations on the shores of Lake Neuchâtel in Switzerland have revealed that the Lake-Dwellers lived there at least 4,000 years ago. According to Dr. P. Vouga, Director of the Neuchâtel Museum, since the boats of these people were dug from tree trunks their customary form had a relatively massive stern, almost vertical in the archaic

examples, later slightly curved in such a way as to facilitate boarding.

With regard to the Lake-Dwellers' nets, preserved at Robenhäusen, various sizes of mesh were used and they were constructed so as to form a square, not a lozenge, as in modern nets. The nets were supported by square floats made of poplar bark and pierced with a single hole in the center. This hole was made by means of fire in the examples found by Dr. Vouga.

As weights the Swiss Lake-Dwellers used flat, ovoid stones about three or four inches in length and notched near the center. Similar weights were employed by fishermen in Lake Neuchâtel up to the middle of the nineteenth century.

A reconstruction of a fishing scene at Auvèrner near Neuchâtel forms the last in the chronological sequence of dioramas in the Hall of the Stone Age of the Old World (Hall C). In Case 15, opposite the Lake-Dweller scene, are examples of nets and net sinkers excavated about fifty years ago by Dr. J. Thiessing.

SUMMER MOTION PICTURES OFFERED FOR CHILDREN

A series of six free programs of motion pictures for children will be presented at Field Museum on Thursday mornings from July 10 to August 18 inclusive by the James Nelson and Anna Louise Raymond Foundation for Public School and Children's Lectures. The programs will be given in the James Simpson Theatre, and include motion pictures with sound, some in color, and one accompanied by a lecture—that of July 17, on the subject "Exploring and Collecting in Forest, Field and Stream." Mr. William Hassler, a New Jersey naturalist will tell of adventures on nature pilgrimages, and show in colored motion pictures some of his own experiences.

On three of the programs there will be animated cartoons as well as the more serious films. All six programs will begin at 10 A.M. Children from all parts of Chicago and suburbs are invited, and no tickets are necessary for admission. Children may come alone, accompanied by adults, or in groups. Following are the details of each program:

July 10—THE ADVENTURES OF CHICO (*The story of a Mexican boy*).

July 17—EXPLORING AND COLLECTING IN FOREST, FIELD AND STREAM (*Films, and lecture by William Hassler*).

July 24—SUMMER TIME IN THE NORTH WOODS (*Animals and birds*); and a cartoon.

July 31—TO THE SOUTH SEAS WITH ZANE GREY; and a cartoon.

August 7—A WESTERN VACATION IN THE RANCH COUNTRY, YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK AND THE GRAND CANYON (*All color pictures*); and a cartoon.

August 14—TUNDRA (*An Arctic adventure*).



Field, Henry. 1941. "Prehistoric Boats and Nets." *Field Museum news* 12(7), 7-7.

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