

A Craze for Diamonds.

The passion for diamonds is increasing, says a New York paper. Probably at no previous time in the history of the American world of fashion were so many of these precious stones worn as now, nor so large a proportion of them of such excellent quality. Here and there the popular taste may select the fanciful gem—tourmaline or zircon—but the fire glancing from the facets of a diamond has a charm for the multitude not possessed by any other gem. Most of the diamonds come from the Cape of Good Hope, a few from Brazil, and some from Siberia and Borneo. The discovery of the African diamonds six or seven years ago upset the market, but it has since recovered its equilibrium. Merchants in this city claim that imitation diamonds have not materially injured their interests. Such stones depend upon the glare of gaslight to avoid detection, as sunlight readily exposes their real character. The demand for fine stones is increasing, and for stones finer cut than it is generally possible to obtain in Europe. Many diamonds brought to America are not cut in prismatic proportion and have to be cut over by American workmen to bring out their real beauty.

A diamond has thirty-six facets on top and twenty-four facets below. If the distance from the table to the color is more than one-third of the stone its life is lost and it should be recut. The bottom of a good diamond tapers almost to a point in the cutting, which is finally taken off. Of all the diamonds the white translucent stone that is free from flaw and perfectly cut is the most valuable. Pink diamonds are rare, but bright yellow, brown and jet black diamonds may be easily found in the market. While a dull tint injures a white diamond a marked color of red or green adds considerably to its value. Nine-tenths of the blue diamonds are milky, while all the fine white stones have just a suggestion of blue in their composition.

Diamonds cost more than they did ten years ago. A perfect brilliant of the first water is worth about \$50; one half carat, \$175; one carat, \$550; two carats, \$800. Diamonds of a larger size bring whatever may be obtained from the purchaser, as no fixed price can be stated. As a diamond loses nine-twentieths of its weight in cutting, the value of a rough diamond may be calculated per carat as one half the estimate mentioned. Diamonds imperfect or thin are usually reduced to powder or utilized in tools for drilling purposes. Three-carat stones often bring \$900.