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substance, all but the teeth, in forty days. The stone has been supposed to be some variety of alum. However this may be, as among the oldest nations who used the sarcophagus it was intended to preserve, not to destroy, the body, it would seem somewhat of a misnomer if taken in the literal sense of the word. In Egypt sarcophagi are found in very early times, and thence their use passed over to the peoples of the Mediterranean. They were usually in form of a house, as is the present example. Cyprus, Etruria, notably the coast of Asia Minor, and Syria have yielded some remarkable specimens in which the highest art has been brought to bear upon the last resting place of the dead.

Everyone knows of the superb sarcophagi now in the Ottoman Museum of Constantinople, which were discovered near Sidon by Hamdi-Bey and described by Theodore Reinach in the latter half of the last century, when the beautiful coloring still vividly brought out the quality and relief of the sculptures. Indeed, even now the splendor of those monuments still remains. One was at first spoken of as that of Alexander the Great, but the attribution has been abandoned. The one known as "Les Pleureuses" is probably the best known of the series, and its beauty of thought and execution have been celebrated in verse by the late Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, who visited the Ottoman Museum under the spell of his own bereavement after his young daughter's death, and wrote what is probably his finest poem.

The sarcophagus, now deposited in this Museum, was originally colored and the flat creamy or yellowish groundwork still remains, although if the decoration was ever polychrome, no traces of the colors have survived on the bulls' and sheep's heads, the rosettes and winding streamers that unite the garlands, or the leaves that depend therefrom, and that, were it not for the dust that in the course of eighteen centuries has accumulated on the reliefs, accentuating them in black, would be monochrome.

S. Y. S.



CHINESE JADES

The Museum has come into possession of a valuable group of Chinese jades, purchased with funds presented by the late Miss Anna Blanchard a few months before her death. The collection consists of an archaic vase or beaker of rectangular form, a covered vase of yellow jade, and a scholar's study set of three pieces of green jade.

What is popularly known as jade (Chinese *yü*) is termed nephrite by scientific mineralogists. It is a silicate of lime and magnesia and is somewhat harder than feldspar. Jadeite, which in appearance is not readily distinguishable from jade, is in reality an entirely different mineral, a silicate of sodium and aluminium, being slightly harder than nephrite, and considerably heavier. While the jades, or nephrites, are usually green in color, the result of more or less iron in the composition, they often possess a gray, green, yellow, blue or red tone, and the most highly valued variety in China is that which in appearance suggests the peculiar translucent white of mutton fat, in which no coloring

impurities are present. Jadeite is often brighter in color and more translucent than nephrite, apple green and lavender being particularly characteristic. One of the most highly esteemed varieties is white or transparent, with veinings of emerald green.

The early, or archaic jade, attributed by dealers and some collectors to the Sung dynasty (960-1280 A. D.), is generally known as tomb jade. The Chinese call it *han yǔ*, or han jade, that is to say, jade which was held in the mouth, for the reason that formerly objects of similar jade were placed on the tongues of deceased persons before burial.

This archaic variety of jade is usually of a yellowish gray color, resembling the steatite used by the Chinese for carved figures, and frequently contains many impurities, which produce a brown mottled and streaked effect. The surface is frequently softened by long burial. The tall square beaker-shaped vase, recently acquired by the Museum, is of this character. On each of the four sides is carved in low relief on the central projection a grotesque face, the nose being represented by the conventionalized ju-i sceptre



ARCHAIC JADE VASE AT LEFT
YELLOW JADE VASE WITH COVER AT RIGHT

head, which latter ornament also appears again in the upper section of the side. Below is a band containing an incised fret design beneath which are leaf-shaped motives, each one containing a smaller sceptre head.

The other examples of the group are of the Ch'ien-Lung reign (1736-95), a period during which much of the best work in jade was executed. The cov-

ered vase is of the rare greenish yellow tint. Until recently this variety of nephrite was only found in detached pieces, but in 1891 it was discovered *in situ* in the province of Kansu. This unusual piece is carved in low relief with design of strapwork terminating in conventionalized heads of the dragon and phoenix.



GREEN JADE SCHOLAR'S ALTAR SET
On Carved Wooden Stand

The scholar's altar set consists of the usual three pieces, an incense burner on four feet, a slender vase for holding the incense tools, and a covered box to hold the incense. They are made of dark green nephrite and are elaborately carved with a strapwork and dragon design in low relief. The cover of the incense burner is surmounted with a coiled dragon, the whole being supported by an exquisitely carved jade stand with intricate openwork design.

E. A. B.