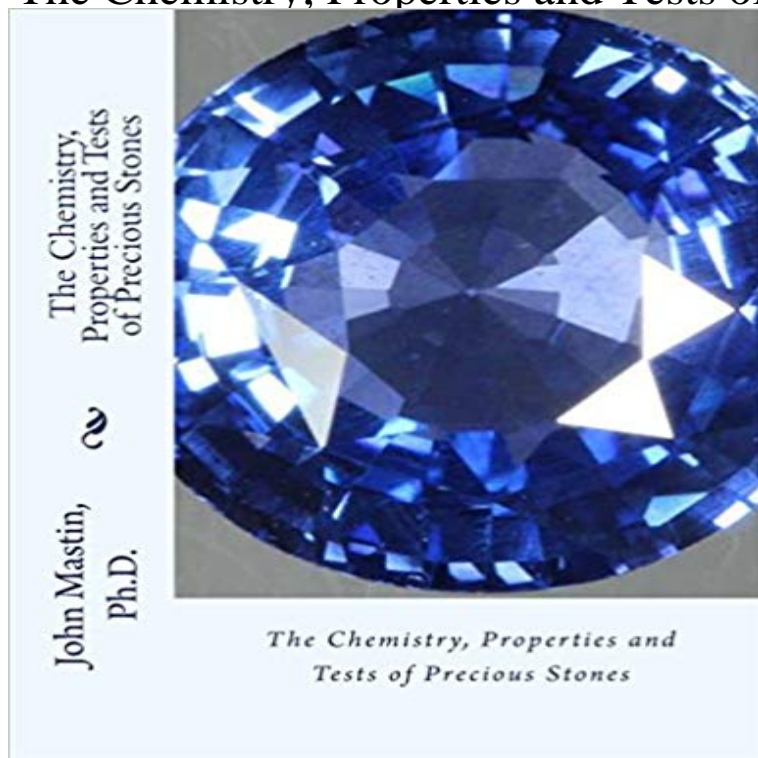


The Chemistry, Properties and Tests of Precious Stones



What constitutes a precious stone is the question which, at the onset, rises in the mind, and this question, simple as it seems, is one by no means easy to answer, since what may be considered precious at one time, may cease to be so at another. There are, however, certain minerals which possess distinctive features in their qualities of hardness, colour, transparency, refractability or double refractability to light-beams, which qualities place them in an entirely different class to the minerals of a metallic nature. These particular and non-metallic minerals, therefore, because of their comparative rarity, rise pre-eminently above other minerals, and become actually precious. Some little time ago certain London diamond merchants and wholesale dealers in precious stones made the suggestion to me to write a work on this section of mineralogy, as there did not appear to be any giving exactly the information most needed. Finding there was a call for such a book I have written the present volume in order to meet this want, and I trust that this handbook will prove useful, not only to the expert and to those requiring certain technical information, but also to the general public, whose interest in this entrancing subject may be simply that of pleasure in the purchase, possession, or collection of precious stones, or even in the mere examination of them through the plate-glass of a jewellers window.

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