

PLATE 1.



A PORTION OF THE MORGENTHAU COLLECTION.

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THE MORGENTHAU COLLECTION¹

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A few months ago New Yorkers were astonished and delighted to see displayed in the window of a Fifth Avenue store a small but strikingly beautiful collection of minerals. This constituted the contribution of Mr. Mengo L. Morgenthau, President of the Mirror Candy Stores, to the window displays which marked Fifth Avenue week. Mr. Morgenthau, who has quite recently become a collector of minerals, has now placed a portion of his private collection on permanent exhibition in one of his stores at 1495 Broadway. In doing this he has placed in a prominent position before the public eye a series of very fine and strikingly beautiful examples of the harmonies of form and color in minerals. These are effectively installed in wall cases, equipped with slightly sloping shelves and concealed artificial lighting, most of which are placed in a room opening into the store, thus constituting a small museum (see frontispiece).

Among the specimens, which number some 1500, are magnificent crystallized copper, calcite and massive datolite from Lake Superior; large and remarkably fine fluorite, barite and cuprite from England; a splendid series of malachite and azurite from Arizona; a wonderful collection of crystallized and nugget gold; not to mention notably large and handsome specimens all along the line. The effect of giving such prominence to a spectacularly fine assemblage of minerals may be foretold by quoting from the introduction to the catalog which is being prepared for free distribution to the public.

“Among the influences which work for the uplifting of mankind there is none more frankly obvious, more subtly potent than the appeal of the beautiful in nature. The beauty of a sunset, of a

¹ *Editorial note.*—This article inaugurates a series on “Noteworthy Mineral Collections.” Contributions to this series from our readers will be welcomed.

hillside, of a garden, has in it that which touches closely those higher levels of our natures where resides the inspiration to high ideals and great endeavors. So it is that much of our art, our painting, sculpture, music, poetry owes its inspiration to the beautiful things we see in nature. But in the wealth of beautiful forms and colors in the animal world and the plant world we are rather apt to overlook the beauty of that silent hidden world of the earth beneath our feet. Here is a charm of form no less perfect than the curve of the flower petal, a delicacy of color no less exquisite than a butterfly's wing, a vividness of contrast no less striking than the plumage of a tropical bird.

"Mr. Morgenthau in gathering together this assemblage of the beautiful things of the mineral world has planted for us, as it were, a garden of the products of the rocks which make up the mass of the world. We know, of course, the vast utility of these things. We realize that for our metals, our building materials, for the coal which heats us and gives power to our machinery as well as for the jewels which adorn us, we must go to that treasure house of minerals which is locked up in the rocks. But it remains for such a collection as we find here to show us to what an extent in emphasizing the utility of a mineral we have missed its beauty. Malachite not only gives us an important source of copper but it delights our eye with a soft velvety green deeper than the grass and more restful than the sea. Cerussite not only furnishes us with dull though eminently useful lead, but it also bewilders us with a delicate white network of interwoven rods more mathematically perfect than a spider's web."

In placing before the public this splendid collection of the beautiful and the interesting in minerals, a collection which is most admirably displayed and lighted, Mr. Morgenthau has expressed the hope that the interest which he has thus aroused may induce many who see it to visit and study the large Mineral Collection of the American Museum of Natural History. Few of those who are privileged to see the Morgenthau Collection realize that in the American Museum of Natural History the New York public has access to one of the five largest and finest mineral collections of the world, and it is confidently hoped that here our eyes may be opened to the opportunities offered by this great treasury of the earth's wonders.