Romance

AND

Reality

OF THE

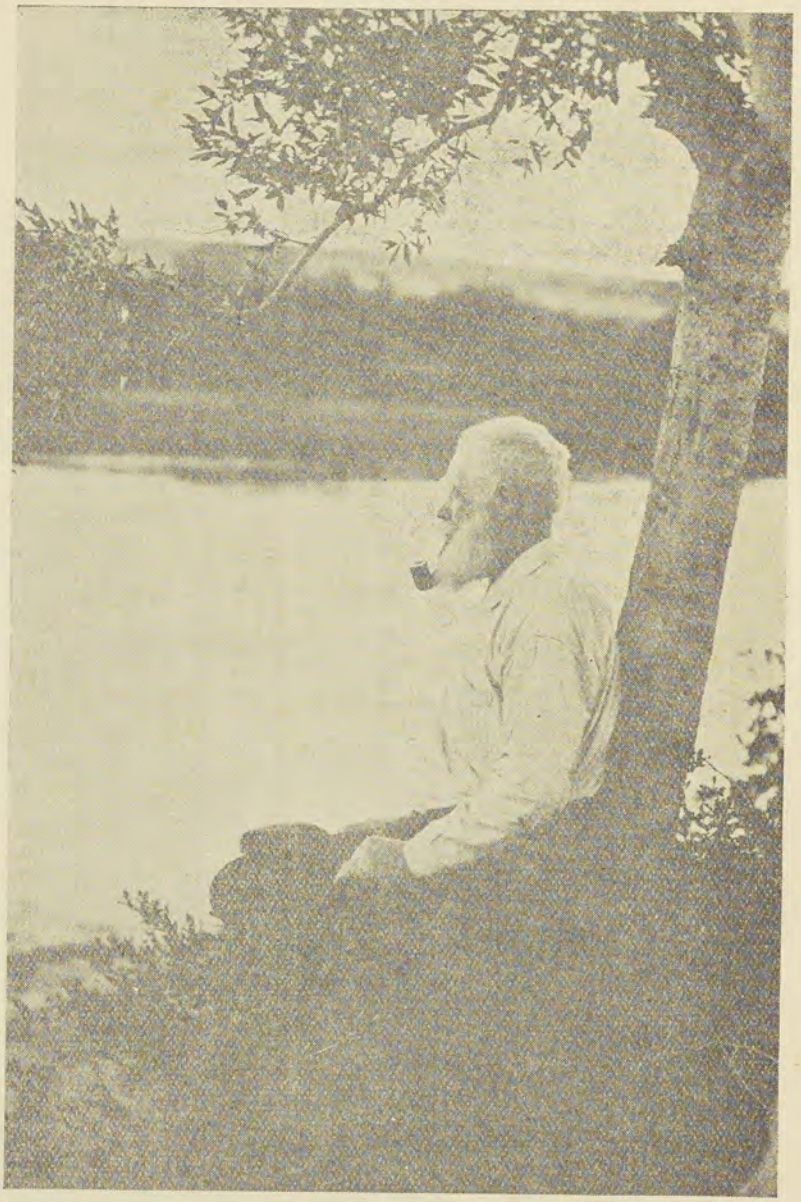
VAAL DIAMOND DIGGINGS.

BY

GEORGE BEET

AND

THOMAS LAURENT TERPEND



THE LATE RODERICK BARKER.
One of the principal pioneers of the River Diggings.
[Photo by H. B. White.

THE ROMANCE AND REALITY

OF THE

VAAL DIAMOND DIGGINGS,

BY

GEORGE BEET and THOMAS LAURENT TERPEND.

With an Introduction by Mr. Advocate S. B. Kitchin, B.A., LL. B.
(Editor of "The South African Law Journal."

OVER NINETY ILLUSTRATIONS.

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Kimberley.

1917.

To

The most Generous and, withal, most Independent of Men,

THE SOUTH AFRICAN DIAMOND DIGGER,

MINER AND PROSPECTOR,

Past and Present,

To whose sterling qualities of honesty, energy and enterprise this country owes in large measure her wonderful prosperity and development,

THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED,

As a tribute of admiration and good-fellowship.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

CONTENTS.

The Old Digger's Ode to Fortune.

Ah, Fortune, fickle jade! we've wandered far—
Your siren voice still echoes o'er the Vaal—
From each port and drowsy dorp, from the Shank to Zanzibar,
We have trekked the Land of Promises and slogged through every war,
Since O'Reilly glimpsed your beauty in that old Dutch kraal!

Ever sparing of your favours and your smiles—
Weaving dreams of golden splendour in our brains—
From Rush to Rush you've lured us; Oh, the long, dust-devilled miles!
To win or lose, and peg again, responsive to your wiles—
Romance still rocks the baby, whilst Reality complains.

Though we're nothing keen on mealie-pap or fame;
Though the wash declare a blank for months or years;
In your boudoir midst the bantoms, we shall meet you, saucy Dame,
And you'll yet adorn the table that is spread beside the claim—
So, good luck to pick and shovel!
(Set the boys to pick and shovel)—
Send good luck to pick and shovel, cry the old pioneers!

J. R.

Kimberley.

INTRODUCTION.

By Advocate S. B. KITCHIN, B.A., LL.B.
[Editor of the "South African Law Journal"; sometime Acting Crown Prosecutor for Griqualand West, etc.]

This book, to which I have been asked to write an introduction, is substantially a reprint—with the valuable addition of many beautiful and apt illustrations—of a series of articles which recently appeared in the "Diamond Fields Advertiser," dealing with past and present life and labour on the Vaal River Diamond Diggings. The work might justly have been entitled "The Romance of the Diamond Industry," for a romance it is, teeming with epic, humorous and poetic incidents. It also contains many interesting facts and figures, which are too little known, even in South Africa, concerning the almost incredible vitality of a wealthy industry and a fascinating mode of life, which have done much, directly and indirectly, to make the Union of South Africa what it is to-day.

Most people will be surprised to hear that a little less than fifty years since, when the Diamond Fields were discovered, the early diggers were in a state of war with the then Republics of the Orange Free State and Transvaal, and with the native chief, Jan Bloem, who also laid claim to the territory. I leave Mr. Beet to tell of the stirring episodes of these little "wars," which were waged to a successful issue by the diggers, unaided and alone. Fortunately such episodes are mostly of the humorous order, and the strongest weapon used appears to have been that deadliest of munitions, strong drink!

Those who are interested in the literature of South Africa will be reminded that the Diamond Fields has not only had poets—one is perhaps doing an injustice to the living "Kimberley Poet" by using the past tense—but that it once had even a Poet Laureate (a Scotsman, to boot) who composed a National Anthem for the diggers' community. This unique production may even one day be set to music and sung in the schools which are now dotted along the river where tents erewhile stood. Lines which might have been lost to fame will appear again in these pages, rescued from an unjust oblivion, so that they may no longer "waste their sweetness on the desert air." Even Cecil Rhodes will be found among the poets. With "hands that the rod of Empire . . . swayed," he "waked to ecstacy the living lyre" in some verses commemorating an occasion when he was stranded on an island in the Vaal River, Crusoe-like, during one of its historic floods.

Among other bright gems which will be found here is an epitaph, rich with humour and pathos, which I refrain with difficulty from quoting. This may serve to remind the reader that the proceeds of this book are to be devoted to an appropriate and worthy object, the Diggers Union Burial Fund.

Of the authors little need be said. There is no living man who has dug more deeply into the *débris* of the past, and made better "finds" than Mr. George Beet, Vice-Chairman of the Diamond Fields Pioneers' Association. Nor would it be easy to find among the diggers one who is more competent to tell of the conditions of life on the River Diggings than the present General Secretary of the Vaal River Diggers' Union, Mr. Thos. Laurent-Terpend. The former "writes with a master's hand and a prophet's fire" of the picturesque past; the latter worthily continues the same theme, and gives a graphic picture of the equally interesting present; and both are enthusiasts.

The "gentle reader" will be reminded of scenes which a Sir Walter Scott would have envied, and of a race of men, some of them fortunately still in our midst, who by their incessant toil and hardships endured in the heat of the sun, brought prosperity to the Cape Colony, and added one of the brightest jewels to the British Crown. This they achieved at a time of depression, when the mere possibility of a paying patch of diamonds being found in this country was scouted as beyond men's wildest dreams. One recalls the fact that, when gold was discovered on the Witwatersrand, one of the greatest living mining experts prophesied that the gold mines would be unpayable! The same was said of the Premier Mine, and, as Mr. Beet reminds us, much the same was said of diamonds when they were discovered. "Croakers" there always will be, when some equally wonderful mineral discovery is made in this "land of lost reputations," which, so far as its mineral wealth is concerned, is largely "an undiscovered country."

Fortunately the early pioneers were a race of optimists, who, with their picks and pistols ready, started on their march through the desert with a few months' provisions, into the promised land, which though not flowing with milk and honey, was watered by a wonderful river, which to-day is an inexhaustible source of wealth to the digger and the farmer, who is often a digger as well. Mr. Beet revives, with the pen of an artist, the picturesque surroundings in which the pioneers lived, and shows how they established from the earliest days that tradition for good fellowship and generosity, combined with enterprise, which is characteristic of the Diamond Fields to this day.

Mr. Terpend shows how these traditions have been maintained, and are being maintained, by the present generation of men. He also discusses with much insight the controverted problems concerning the origin of the diamond, and how it came to its present habitat; whether it came from above or below! The native account given by him of the spirit origin of the river diamonds and of those in the Kimberley mines, is ingenious and amusing. He also tells the story of the finding of many celebrated gems.

Not the least interesting part of the work is the illustrations, many of them being rare pictures of historic value, photographs of some of the larger river stones, and typical scenes illustrating the beauty of the river and the methods of industry employed by the diggers.

The authors have done much which will open the eyes of many, even in our own neighbourhood, to the wealth and beauty which remains to be extracted from the Diamond Fields, and to the fact that in these same fields there is scope and opportunity for artistic work of a high order, of which this book is an example.

Among the rarities which the reader will find in these pages are the authentic records of the first code of laws of the Diamond Fields, which was drafted by the early pioneers, and which, to some extent, survives in the present laws and regulations relating to diamond digging.

Here will be found valuable fragments of a hitherto unwritten history which "the world will not willingly let die," giving the reader a foretaste of a more comprehensive work to be published by the Diamond Fields Pioneers' Association, which has only been delayed on account of the war. Here also will be found valuable information and practical hints to all who may be lured at any time by visions of dazzling wealth to one of the healthiest and—when one's luck is in—one of the wealthiest of avocations. Nothing more need be added to commend a work like this, which should find its place on the shelves of every resident of the Diamond Fields who takes any pride in the history and achievements of the place of his abode, and of everyone in South Africa and elsewhere who takes any interest in the diamond industry or in the literature of real life. With these words I leave the authors to tell, in their own words, a story which will be found more fascinating than many a novel of adventure.

PART I.

MEMORIES OF THE PAST.

By GEORGE BEET.

"When Time, who steals our years away,
Shall steal our pleasures too,
The mem'ry of the past will stay,
And half our joys renew."

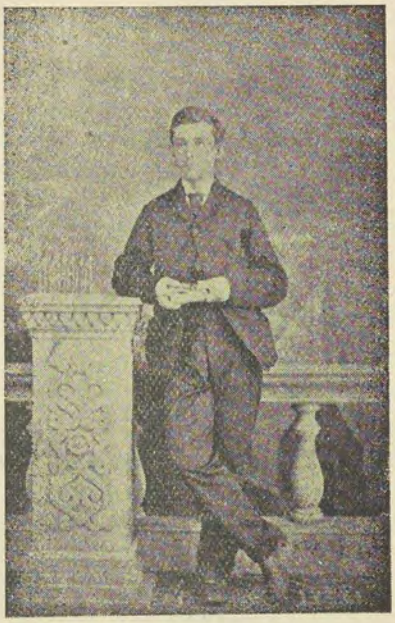
CHAPTER I.

THE GREAT DISCOVERY.

River Diggings! Magic name! Thou need'st not the aid of fiction or romance to proclaim or enhance thy mysterious fascination, for thy realities and history are stranger than them both! I only wish Providence had blessed me with the power to pen a supplement to that wonderful old classic, "The Arabian Nights," a tale of a great river-valley of diamonds in a desert land, guarded night and day by the terrible and forbidding genii known as Misfortune, Privation, and Disappointment, and of the final overthrow of those evil imps and the unearthing of the vast treasure of precious stones by the aid of those trusty allies of the pioneer—Pluck, Enterprise, and Goodfellowship! But human wishes are vain, and of little account, as the wisest of men hath said. So let me unfold a simple story, which is true in substance and in fact, the details of which are partly taken from the journals of those days, the "Diamond News"—the first paper printed at the Diggings—and the "Friend of the Free State," published in Bloemfontein, and partly from other sources, including my own personal experiences and observations.

Before entering upon my narration, I may state that I was intimately associated with the "Diamond News" for eight years—its palmiest days—and that recently I had access to the files of that paper in the Archives Office, Capetown, by kind permission of the Government. With this brief introduction, I will now proceed to "break ground."

In 1869, when I was about the end of my teens and living in Kingwilliamstown—the old frontier town of British Kaffraria, a place wherein



GEO. BEET.
One of the authors, on his arrival
at the Diamond Diggings.

GEO BEET—present day.

more general business was transacted than anywhere else on the Cape Colony borderland—word came in that diamonds were being found in profusion at a spot called Klipdrift, situate on the banks of the Vaal River, somewhere in, or in close contiguity to, the Orange Free State, a sort of No-man's-land in those days. The news was received with incredulity. Did not the oldest inhabitant remember and reiterate the saying: "South Africa! The last place God ever made! How could any good come out of it? Impossible!" This remark is by no means inaccurate or far-fetched, for I have often heard it with my own ears. These prophets of evil omen were by no means singular in their belief, for later, when the intelligence of the finding of diamonds was announced in England, it was received with scorn and contempt. Notwithstanding these adverse circumstances, the reports of the discovery became so persistent that Messrs. Harry Emmanuel & Co., the leading diamond experts and dealers of their day, decided to send their confidential geological adviser, Mr. Robert Gregory, out to Hopetown, with instructions to furnish a full report on the matter.

In due course this gentleman arrived on the scene of the "diamond finds," and after investigation solemnly expressed the opinion that the precious stones must have been brought thither and deposited by ostriches! Where the ostriches got the diamonds from he did not insinuate, but presumably the birds must have indulged, now and then, in an overland trip to Brazil on an "I.D.B." expedition! The critics, on the other hand, bluntly retorted that the expert had been privately directed to report unfavourably regarding the discovery. As a consequence, it was the custom for years afterwards on the River Diggings, when a person, uttered a thing about which there was any doubt, to call it "a Gregory." Now, I consider that this criticism was unnecessarily harsh, as the indications of diamondiferous deposits in these parts differed entirely from those in India and Brazil, and were then quite new to science, and, further, it should not be forgotten that Mr. Gregory was a respected member of a specially trained and conservative profession which demanded the strictest integrity. I therefore entirely exonerate him from any intention to mislead the public, however ridiculous his report may have appeared to some of his contemporaries, or in the light of modern knowledge.

To my mind, the most remarkable thing connected with the discovery is the fact that, whilst the first diamonds were found in the district of Hopetown, the rush of diggers did not proceed in that direction at all, but to Klipdrift, Hebron, and Pniel. I have endeavoured to ascertain some adequate explanation of this, and the most plausible is given in the remarks of three of my correspondents—Mr. George Alexander, "An Old Diamond Digger," and Mr. H. R. Giddy. The first-named states that Gregory's unfavourable report on the Hopetown district made would-be prospectors and diggers fight shy of that part, but, hearing independently of fabulous finds at Pniel, Klipdrift, and Hebron, they lost no time in rushing there instead.

The "Old Diamond Digger," in a letter to the "Diamond Fields Advertiser," says: "I have a dim recollection that the Pniel missionaries knew of diamonds having been found on their estate years before any other discovery. Perhaps this became known in Natal and elsewhere, and when the large stones were found in the neighbourhood of the Orange River, the pioneers, or some of them, remembering these rumours, decided to go straight to Pniel instead of Hopetown."

Mr. H. R. Giddy, one of the original Colesberg party, a member of which—Mr. Fleetwood Rawstorne—discovered the famous Colesberg Kopje, now known as the Kimberley Mine, on Sunday, 16th July, 1871, has obliged me with the following particulars: "A number of adventurous spirits,

JACK O'REILLY AND FAMILY.

including Willy and Harry O'Reilly (brothers of Jack O'Reilly, who brought to light the first diamond found at Hopetown), H. van Blerk, and several others, did go to Hopetown; but on their arrival, they found that Mr. Lilienfeld, a local merchant, had bought some diamonds, which had been found among pebbles taken from the bed of the Vaal River, and this fact established the source from whence they came. The news reaching Colesberg, prospective diggers at once made a bee-line for the Vaal. There was nothing to gain by going to Hopetown, as they had provisions to last them for months, so they therefore decided to make the Vaal River their goal. My brother, Orlando, who was there before I went up, struck the river at a place called Sivonelle, or Seven Hills, as the diggers styled it. I am convinced of one fact, that Lilienfeld, shortly after the discovery of O'Reilly's diamond, bought diamonds which were found among the pebbles in the bed of the Vaal before any large deposits were discovered there."

During the meeting of farmers held at Kimberley, on the 12th September, 1916, relative to the "Jackal question," I was introduced by Mr. J. G. Radloff, of Gumtree Siding, Orange Free State, to Mr. W. J. van Niekerk, of Paarl, a nephew of Mr. Schalk van Niekerk, the owner of the farm De Kalk, where the O'Reilly diamond was found, who gave me the history of the finding of that diamond and the Countess of Dudley's also, as told by his uncle himself. Here it is, word for word:—

A. R. C. O'REILLY and WIFE,
One of the sons of Jack O'Reilly.

SCHALK JACOBUS VAN NIEKERK, owner of the farm De Kalk.

"The late Mr. Schalk Jacobus van Niekerk was a son of Michael van Niekerk and Hester Aletta Pienaar, who came originally from Graaff-Reinet. He was born on the 11th December, 1828, and died at Mooimeisjes-hoek, in the Ladybrand district, on June 24th, 1881.

The first diamond was picked up by Mr. Erasmus Jacobs at "De Kalk," in the Hopetown district, in the year 1866. The size of this diamond was about 21¼ carats. Mr. Van Niekerk saw it, and considered it to be a diamond. It is said that the diamond was found in a workbox, or among other small stones which the children used as playthings.

This diamond was given by my uncle to a friend to be sold on the understanding that the profits were to be shared. That friend was Mr. J. O'Reilly, of Colesberg. The stone was eventually sold to the Governor, Sir Philip Wodehouse, for £500.

The second diamond was picked up by a Hottentot, named Booi, between the farms Welgevonden and Blauwkop, in the Hopetown district, in 1869. This diamond was 83¾ carats in weight. Mr. Van Niekerk purchased this diamond from Booi for 500 sheep, 10 heifers, one riding horse, with saddle and bridle, and one rifle. The diamond was then sold by Van Niekerk to Messrs. Lilienfeld Bros., at Hopetown, for £11,200. Messrs. Lilienfeld Bros. resold it to Messrs. Hond & Roskel, of London, for £18,000, and they again disposed of it to the Earl of Dudley for £25,000.

Thus were the first two South African diamonds brought to light by Mr. Van Niekerk. Thereafter came the discovery of the diamond fields, which have brought millions of pounds into our country.

It is said that the Dudley diamond was picked up at Paardekloof, where Booi tried in vain to sell it to the owner. Subsequently he went to Mr. Van Niekerk, who put the transaction through to their mutual benefit.

Another nephew of Schalk van Niekerk, Mr. M. van Niekerk, of Douglas, gives a further account of a most interesting nature.

"The following is a true statement of the discovery of the first and second diamonds found in South Africa. The man who discovered them happened to be my uncle, and the boy, Erasmus Jacobs, through whom the first diamond was brought to light, is still alive, and is at present living at Saratoga Saltpan, in this district.

Prior to 1867, Land Surveyor Von Ludwig was surveying the Crown lands between Hopetown and the junction of the Orange and Vaal Rivers. At that time Schalk van Niekerk was living on the farm "De Kalk," in the vicinity of the locality where Von Ludwig was surveying. Von Ludwig always spent his Sundays with Van Niekerk, and stayed with him for several months when making his diagrams. When he left he gave Van Niekerk a book on precious stones, and told him to keep his eyes open, as the country round about seemed to be of a diamondiferous character.

One afternoon Van Niekerk was explaining to one of his "bijwoners," a certain Jacobs, the characteristics of a diamond, when Mrs. Jacobs replied that her little son, Erasmus, had such a pretty stone which he kept amongst some other pebbles which he called his 'sheep and goats.' Van Niekerk asked to see it, as it answered to the description of a diamond. He offered to buy it. Mrs. Jacobs laughed at the idea of selling a common stone, and gave it to him. He told her that if it should prove to be a diamond he would share it with her. A few days afterwards O'Reilly, a trader, passed Van Niekerk's farm on his way to Colesberg, and Van Niekerk gave him the stone to take to Colesberg and find out whether he was right in his surmise that it was a diamond, and promised him one-third of the proceeds

if it happened to be genuine. O'Reilly gave it to Mr. Boyes, R.M., of Colesberg, who forwarded it to Dr. Atherstone, of Grahamstown, who pronounced it a real diamond. This diamond was eventually bought by Sir Philip Wodehouse for £500. Old Mrs. Jacobs was astounded when she received her third share of the £500.

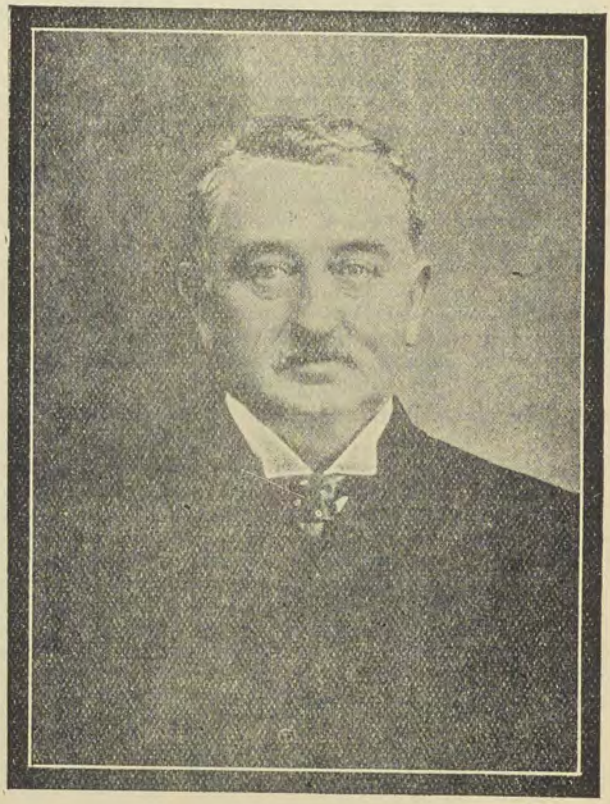
Van Niekerk then told all his neighbours and natives to bring him pretty pebbles, as he was prepared to buy them, and for nine months he was pestered every day by natives bringing pebbles of all sorts, which he bartered for tobacco, thread, calico, etc.

One day a native named Booi turned up at the farm of one Duvenhage, a few hours' distant from Van Niekerk's farm. He wanted to stay overnight with his few goats, but Duvenhage would not allow him to remain on his farm. The boy then said, "Ou Baas, ik zal jou een mooi klippie gee, laat mij maar blij van nacht." (Ou Baas, I will give you a pretty stone, let me stay over to-night.) Duvenhage replied, "Gaat naar Schalk Niekerk, hij is gek om klippies to koop, nie ik nie." (Go to Schalk Niekerk, he is mad enough to buy stones, not I.).

The boy departed, trekking through the greater part of the night. The next morning, while Van Niekerk was letting out his sheep, the old boy came to the kraal, and asked, "Koop, Ou Baas, noch klippies?" at the same time showing him the stone. Van Niekerk saw at once that it was a diamond, and gave the old boy 500 sheep, 11 heifers, a horse, saddle and bridle and a gun! Afterwards the boy was generally known as "Booi Diamant." Van Niekerk then went to Hopetown with the diamond, and sold it to Lilienfeld Bros. for £11,200. A fairly accurate account of discovery of the first diamond will be found in the appendix to the book "Moses and Geology," by Dr. Samuel Kinns.

P.S.—The second diamond is now known as the "Star of South Africa."

In confirmation of the assertion as to the Pniel missionaries knowing of the existence of diamonds on their estate, I may remark that, shortly after the conclusion of the last Anglo-Boer war, I wrote to the missionary in charge, Mr. Westphal, with a request for information as to when diamonds were originally found on the estate, to which he replied that in a note-book in his possession there was an entry to the effect that a small diamond, discovered by a native, had been sold in 1868 for £5! An inkling of this must have been gleaned by the Natal party under Captain Loftus Rolleston, and must have been the incentive which directed that party to Pniel.



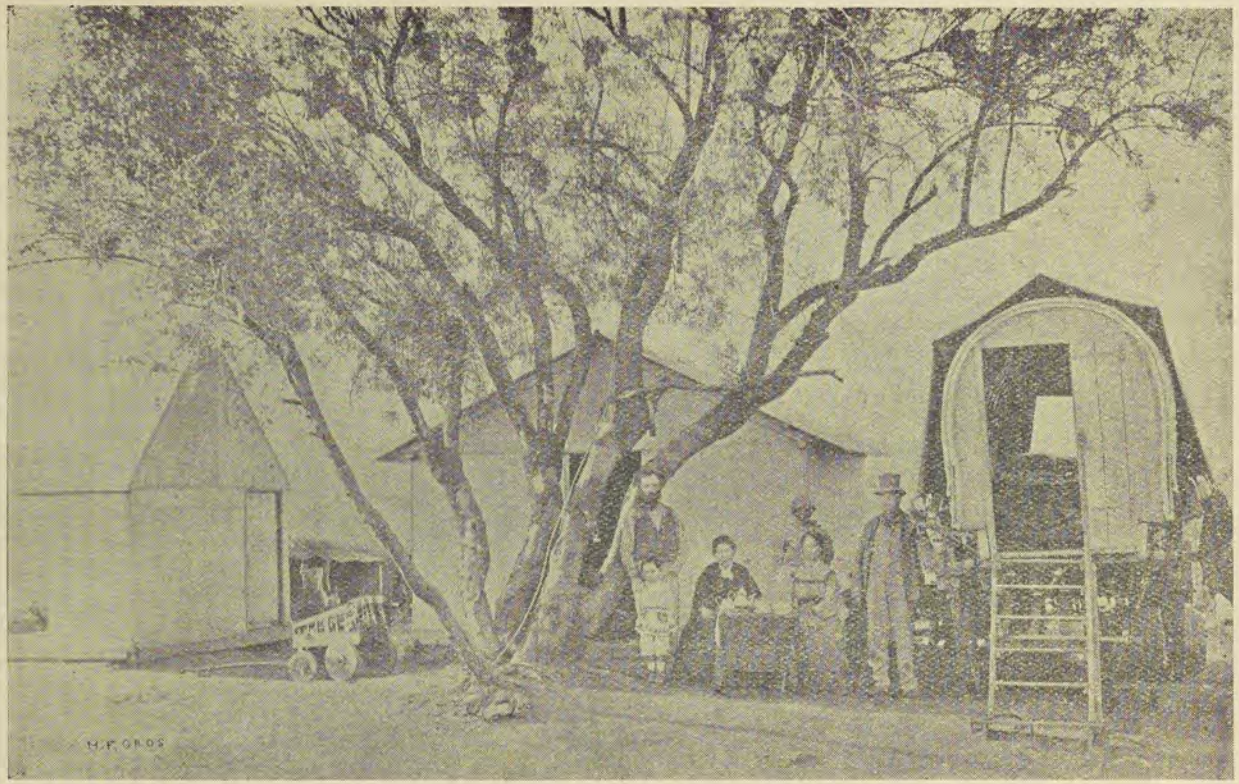
THE RIGHT HON. CECIL JOHN RHODES.
[Photo by Barnard, Cape Town.

CHAPTER II.

ON TREK TO THE NEW ELDORADO.

I will now try to depict the would-be aspirant to diamond-digging life coming from one of the frontier towns in the old days. Having made up his mind to proceed to the New Eldorado, his first care was to equip himself with a proper digger's outfit, consisting of a broad-brimmed hat, a corduroy (or Bedford cord) suit, a stout waistbelt, with pockets all round, extra strong boots, a bowie knife and revolver, together with a few months' provisions. He then had to secure his seat (*sic.*), preferably in a bullock-wagon, which was generally loaded up with from 8,000 to 10,000 lbs. of goods consigned to some enterprising merchant on the Fields. These "ships of the desert," as they were not inaptly termed, generally took about forty days to trek to the Diggings from my own town, and the wagons were liable to be held up for many days during the journey while waiting their turn to be ferried over the pont at Bethulie on the Orange River.

I need not go very minutely into the details of our adventures by the way—how, at the outset, we had to walk 75 miles instead of 18 to overtake our wagon, the owner of which had broken his appointment; how we caught it up at last, footsore, weary, and oh! so sweet-tempered; how Jupiter Pluvius overwhelmed us with more rain than was pleasant for travelling; how, in consequence, it took us a week to move a thousand yards, and our cumbersome schooner stuck in the mud nearly a hundred times; how a matter of 10,000 lbs. weight of stuff had to be off-loaded from time to time, in order to release the wheels from the mire; how our oxen died one by one from the then prevailing red-water disease; how some of our gay Lotharios made love, en route, to the Boer's pretty daughters—Susanna and Katrina—as also the English farmer's equally attractive ones Arabella and Angelina; how we "jumped," without malice aforethought, the absent farmer's fruit, and left its equivalent in money on the window-sill; how, through sheer necessity, we made a certain gaoler tipsy in an Orange Free State dorp, having, willy-nilly, to get our driver out of tronk; how scores of soldier and sailor deserters were seen moving Fieldwards still decked in their respective uniforms, scarlet and blue; how we witnessed the migration of countless thousands of springbok for days on end; how we ingratiated ourselves with the pontmen at Bethulie, and had ourselves taken across the Orange River before our allotted time by rendering them assistance in their arduous work; how some of us broached the cargo of brandy by the old trick of hammering one of the hoops of the cask sufficiently aside to permit of boring a small hole, and then, by means of a thick hollow straw, imbibed the precious fluid till all were satisfied, afterwards carefully replacing the hoop in its wonted position; how, as honourable men, like Brutus, we ultimately made restitution, with interest, for all our little peccadillos! Suffice it to say, we arrived at one of the four great camps at that time—Du Toit's Pan—after covering a distance of 390 miles in 43 days. Leaving the party there, not without some emotion, I engaged a seat in Geering's passenger cart and took the road to Pniel, my particular destination.



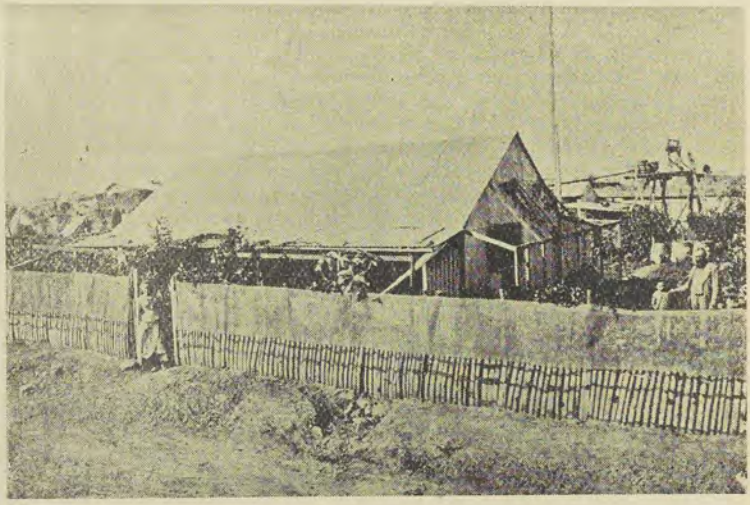
Travelling Wagon, used as a Catholic Chapel at Bultfontein in the early 'seventies.
(From a photo in the possession of Mrs. T. Laurent-Terpend.

The cart was of unusual size, and designed to carry nine passengers, including the driver, but very often had to convey more, as accommodation was a very elastic term in those times. I found myself tightly wedged in between two eminent legal luminaries, namely, Judge Barry and Advocate Halkett, of the Cape Bar, and for a time felt like a victim in the Court of Chancery, for no matter which way I moved I came ever in contact with the "limbs of the law!" Otherwise, I enjoyed their company immensely, as these learned gentlemen were true sons of Erin and Scotia respectively, and, naturally, wit and humour flowed fast and furious all the way. Speeding along we saw not a few springbok disporting themselves in the veld, several of them capering very high in the air or describing erratic circles at full gallop, a not uncommon proceeding when their young happened to be close by, and observant hunters aver that these antics are indulged in to divert the attention of their enemies so as to give their offspring an opportunity to beat a hasty retreat.

After passing old Mijnheer Bredenkamp's plaats—the "Half-way House"—and surmounting the rise of kopjes, we observed the Pniel Mission buildings on the right, and immediately in front of us "The Bend." The latter is most appropriately named, for if one studies a map of these parts, the Vaal River will here be seen to form one of the largest and most pronounced loops or bends to be found along the whole course of this magnificent stream. On the right-hand side of the road, close to "The Bend," we noticed some rather striking old stone ruins, which were said to contain several chambers or galleries extending underground for some distance. These ruins were, and are still, supposed by many people to be of early Portuguese origin, or, at least, of some considerable antiquity. As a matter of fact, they belong to a much later age, "and the gay beams of lightsome day gild but to flout those ruins grey."

The actual record of their history is, however, of some interest. In the course of my inquiries I wrote to Mr. A. R. Radloff, of the farm "Secretaris," in the Kimberley district, who informed me that the buildings were erected by a German named Kuphernagel, and were so well designed and executed that the builder must have been a craftsman of no uncommon merit. Below ground level there were arched vaults, built of rough stone, which were intended for cellars. When the erection was dismantled, work of more than ordinary solid architectural design was exposed to view, and must have led to the current assumption of their antiquity. I also communicated with Mr. J. G. Radloff, of Gumtree Siding, in the Orange Free State, who, in 1866, conducted a store on the side of the road opposite the building in question. He confirmed the statement made by his brother, adding that the construction was begun at the instance of Mr. Zerwick, a Berlin Society missionary, in 1846, but the design being projected upon too grand a scale, and the finances running short, the work had to be eventually abandoned. Passing "The Bend," with its high and rugged kopjes on either side of us, we found the going very bad indeed, and like the proverbial "rocky road to Dublin," the way was rough—boulders everywhere. However, after another half-hour's hard pulling, and harder swearing, we managed to overcome all difficulties, and arrived in sight of our Land of Goschen.

The scene that suddenly presented itself to my admiring and curious gaze at once reminded me of the scriptural account of the journey of the Israelites to the Promised Land. Innumerable tents of all sizes and shapes were the first objects to attract attention. They were spread over a large extent of river frontage, and covered the ground all the way back to the summits of the adjacent kopjes. The next thing that arrested



Percy Street, Kimberley, in the early Seventies.
(Birthplace of the Author, T. Laurent-Terpend.)

Back of Terpend's Residence, Percy Street, Kimberley, early 'seventies.

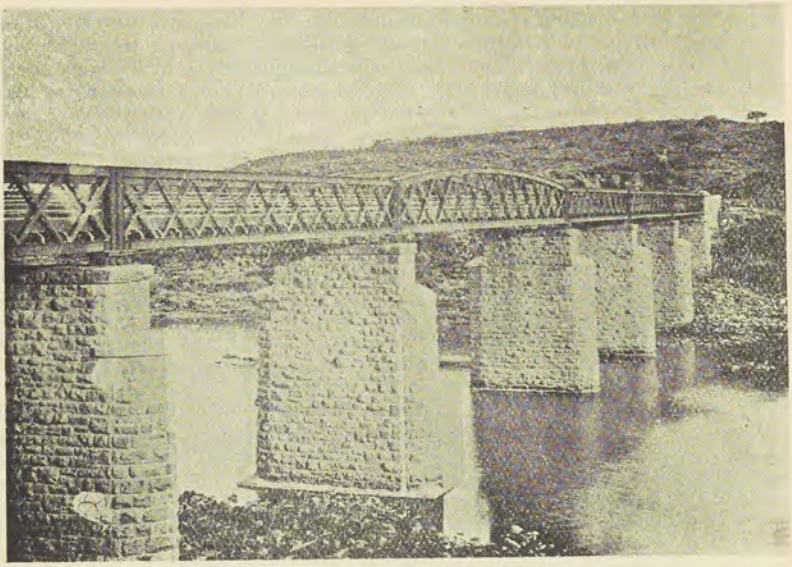
my notice was the line of rugged, reddish-brown hills, some towering aloft to a great height, especially one called Colesberg Kopje, on the north side of the river, and last, but not least, the glorious River of Dreams itself, here about a hundred yards wide, flowing placidly along between its high banks heavily shaded by stately willow trees, giving the whole a most picturesque appearance, and offering an ideal situation for a habitation and a home.

Passing along towards the centre of attraction, I observed not a few wagons and carts which had been converted into temporary living quarters, some of them having comfortable beds within, and otherwise nicely fitted up. The more important structures consisted of several wood and iron shanties, which did duty as shops and offices, some of which were roofed with galvanised iron, and others thatched with grass. Official buildings had flagstaffs equipped with their respective flags, British or Republican, according to their nationality. Various attempts had apparently been made to construct roadways, one or two of which constituted the main thoroughfares.

The majority of the diggers had congregated on the south side of the river, as Pniel was then in the zenith of its glory, the finds being phenomenal, and it was on the river's margin on this side that the principal rendezvous of Diggerdom was to be found. Here cradles, bebés, wheel-barrows, and all the paraphernalia required for digging operations, were in evidence at every turn, showing that work was being prosecuted in real earnest. On the left of the roadway, leading riverwards, was a store with the name of "Mundt" displayed on it, and closer at hand was another with "S. A. Moss, Negotie Winkel," inscribed on a large sign made of canvas. In the middle of the camp, and immediately adjoining the main road on the right, was Mrs. Jardine's store and wayside inn, at which the post-cart stopped. On the right of the road there was also a capacious tent with a canvas sign bearing the legend: "Auction Mart and General Agent." This particular business was carried on by that prince of auctioneers, Mr. A. A. Rothschild, whose advertisements in those early days of the diggings contained such flashes of wit that some of them were justly regarded as veritable masterpieces in the art of puffery, and as such, his notices of sales were eagerly scanned, and no doubt were eminently successful in attracting bumper attendances of the public, with benefit to himself and his many clients.

Scattered about the camp were a dozen or so classy-looking marquees which served as restaurants, and these were patronised by the many diggers who did not care to run their own messes. Then there was the tent of the Diggers' Committee, the full name of which, to be precise, was the "Diggers' Mutual Protection Association," of which more anon. Diamond buyers were, of course, very much in evidence, and each had his own offices, on which were painted the words "Diamant Kooper," or "Diamond Buyer." The principal buyer at that time was Mr. Moritz Unger, who afterwards promoted the erection of the Barkly Bridge, and promised me shares therein for assisting him in the venture; but unfortunately the shares never materialised, as he happened to go "dead broke," so I cannot well blame him.

Like huge antheaps, the big mounds of alluvial gravel were heaped up here, there, and everywhere, but mostly at a spot where there was a large "clompje," or cluster of trees, from whence the boats generally plied for hire across the river. The luxuriant foliage of the majestic willows afforded a most welcome protection to the digger from the sun's rays, and also from the terrific thunderstorms and strong dusty winds which prevailed from December to February. In winter the nights were intensely cold at times, but exceedingly pleasant in summer. Half-hearted attempts



Barkly West Bridge, showing pillars, from town side of River.
Opened 1885.
[Photo by C. J. Parsons, Barkly West.

The Hospital, Barkly West.
[Photo by C. J. Parsons, Barkly West.

at fencing one's preserves were in evidence here and there throughout the camp, but, like little Paddy's breeches, they exhibited more rents and tatters than coverture.

At Klipdrift, now called Barkly West, on the opposite side of the river, the show of tents was comparatively insignificant, but it contained a few buildings of a more permanent nature, some consisting of two storeys. The reason for this was that the Berlin Missionary Society laid claim to the whole of Pniel, over which at that time no Government in particular, except perhaps the British, asserted sovereign rights. Believing that the diamond industry had come to stay, and that a proper township would be sure to follow, more than a dozen enterprising individuals ventured to put their money into stone buildings at Klipdrift. One of these men, Mr. James Strong, or "Jim," as he was popularly called by the diggers, put up a solid stone erection costing thousands, which he at once let to the Standard Bank at a good rental; but, lo! the day soon came with the news of the discovery of marvellously dry rich diggings farther inland; and, hey presto! the inhabitants for the most part incontinently fled the place, taking the Standard Bank business along with them, and leaving poor Jim a wiser but a sadder man. Mr. Strong's faith in the future of Klipdrift was by no means singular, for contemporaneously the Imperial Government began to erect a Residency for the Governor of Griqualand West, Mr. Richard Southey (afterwards knighted), and had to relinquish it for the same reason. The remains of this grand gubernatorial palace may be seen on the east side of the village even unto this day.

In the neighbourhood of the camp, the precipitous sides of the kopjes were covered with mimosa, haakdoorn, and karoo bush, whilst on the flats below, the vaalbosch and "wacht-en-beetje" flourished abundantly. The game consisted of duikers, steinbucks, hares, rock rabbits (the coneys of Scripture), paauw, guinea-fowl, and pheasants, the last named, a little smaller than the English species, being plentiful. River-fishing also afforded good sport, the catches comprising yellow-fish, silver-fish, and barbel, the last being eel-like in form, but with great capacious maws. The curious fact may be recorded here that the Vaal, Orange and other rivers running westward in Griqualand West never contain eels. Mr George McKay informs me, however, that he once caught a specimen weighing 4¾lbs. in the Riet River, but I am inclined to believe that this must have been a species of barbel.

There being naturally a good deal of communication between the two banks of the river here, boats were constantly passing to and fro, and the modest fee of sixpence was charged for ferrying a passenger across. "Happy Jack," who later on became a Kimberley Town Councillor, was then the favourite Charon. In those days the whole community lived in an atmosphere of tense excitement, and hummed like a bee-hive. New "rushes" were always being started, and were quite gipsy-like in their nature: off, helter-skelter, to one spot to-day, and perhaps to another to-morrow, and on the following day back again to the old place, according to the reliability or otherwise of the news of good "finds."

As a precaution against the effects of the awful thunderstorms that passed down the valley during the summer months, some bright genius introduced the fashion of fixing soda-water bottles on the top of the tent-poles as a substitute for lightning conductors! Oxen, horses, mules, and donkeys could be seen grazing all over the veld, giving the outskirts of the Diggings quite a farm-like appearance, and the inoffensive but useful donkeys were so despised in those days that they might be bought for ten shillings a piece, while to-day they readily fetch from £7 to £10.

It may be permissible to quote here an extract from an interesting leading article which appeared in the first issue of the "Diamond News," dated October 10, 1870, in which the future stability of the River Diggings was boldly foretold:—"By mutual assistance, by the adding of one civilising agency to another, by fostering everything which contributes to turn a crowd into society, all will be benefited, and the Vaal Diggings will be helped onwards to that foremost position in South Africa which, from their singular natural wealth, they ought to command." In the light of subsequent developments, how truly prophetic!

Here is a pretty accurate description of the digger, taken from a handbook on Kimberley which was written by my son on the occasion of the last visit of the South African Science Association:—"In the camps there was a most heterogeneous assemblage of humanity; white men of all nations, and natives of many tribes. The white men were of all ranks—the sailor jostling his erstwhile captain, the university man swinging his pick side by side with the navvy, and the blue-blooded Cholmondeley sleeping in his sheepskin kaross by the side of the humble Jones. Yet, away from the restraints of civilisation, never could there have been gathered together a finer, more enterprising, hardy, and liberal-minded race of pioneers: men who could take prosperity and adversity with equanimity; men who could never forget the heaven-born rule of hospitality to the "strangers within their gates"; in fact, men worthy of the best British traditions. Industrious of habit, they were as a community noted for manly integrity, justice, and honesty in their mutual dealings, and their generosity and readiness to help wherever it was needed were proverbial. Crime was a rarity, although, from the unguarded way in which tents and wagons were left untended for hours together, opportunities were not lacking to any who might feel tempted."

CHAPTER III.

EARLY DIGGERS' COMMITTEES AND DIAMOND VALUATIONS.

Diggers' Committees were formed at a very early stage in the life of the Fields, and the members of these generally consisted of men of light and leading. Individually, they were not specially remarkable for educational abilities or qualifications, but as a body they certainly were possessed of the one prime essential—sound common-sense, really the most uncommon of all gifts. The rules and regulations framed by them exhibit a certain quaint terseness of expression which somehow remind one of Kipling's "straight-flung words and few." Nevertheless, they were effective enough in thoroughly carrying out the main objects in view. Original sets of these rules, which were printed in 1869 or 1870, are now excessively rare; in fact, the only surviving copy of which I am aware is the one now in the possession of that eminent bibliographer of South African literature and pioneer of the Diamond Fields, Mr. Sidney Mendelssohn. "Old timers" have often expressed a wish to obtain these early rules, and, to use their own words, "would give anything to get hold of them." Here, then, is an opportunity to secure an exact reprint of them for a mere nothing. They are taken from the set of photographic facsimiles presented by Mr. Mendelssohn to the Kimberley Public Library:—

RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR THE VAAL RIVER DIAMOND-FIELDS.

ALLUVIAL CLAIMS.

I.—Every man to be allowed 20ft. square. No party claims to exceed six in number, whose whole claim must be taken in conjunction.

II.—The boundary of each claim to be distinctly marked, and such marks at all times to be kept free from rubbish.

III.—All claims to have free access, at all times, for the removal of wash-dirt over any other claims that may be at work.

IV.—No claims to be allowed to throw their rubbish upon their neighbour's claim without permission.

V.—Should any dispute arise between two or more parties respecting their claim, such dispute shall be settled by the arbitration of four assessors, appointed by the parties in dispute, and a referee to be called in by the assessors if necessary, whose decision shall be final.

VI.—Should any party or parties mark off more ground than allowed by these rules, any other person shall have the option of taking the surplus ground from any side of such claim he may think proper.

RIVER CLAIMS.

VII.—Each man to be allowed 50 feet frontage along the bed of the river, the same to be distinctly marked at low-water mark.

PROSPECTING CLAIMS.

VIII.—Any person discovering a new run or patch of diamonds shall, upon reporting the same to a committee appointed, be entitled to four ordinary claims; and such report to be posted up in a conspicuous place on the present diggings, stating the locality; and should he fail in reporting, and another person finds payable ground in the same locality, the first person reporting shall be entitled to the prospecting claim.

IX.—No party shall be allowed to remain absent from his claim more than three successive working days, unless in case of sickness, work in conjunction with his claim as washing, etc., or pressing business, when a notice must be posted up on his claim, stating the time of his absence; after which time the claim shall be considered as abandoned.

X.—No man shall be allowed more than one claim at the same time.

XI.—Any person against whom it shall be proved as having picked up a diamond upon a claim belonging to another, and not restoring it to the owner of such claim immediately, shall be considered as a thief, and expelled the diggings.

XII.—No heap of dirt upon an abandoned claim shall be considered as private property, unless it can be shown to a committee that some accident, such as rain, breakage of wagon, etc., has prevented the washing or sieving of any such heap of dirt.

XIII.—That no party or parties shall be allowed more than five niggers to work their claim.

P. D. J. VANDERBYL, Chairman.

RULES OF THE DIAMOND-DIGGERS' MUTUAL PROTECTION ASSOCIATION.

I.—That this Association be called the Mutual Protection Association.

II.—That any person signing these rules becomes a member of the Association, and binds himself, when called upon, in case of danger threatening, or any other cause affecting the interest of the Association, to render immediate assistance.

III.—Any member of the Association hearing any cause of alarm shall at once report the same to the Standing Committee.

IV.—That any person wishing to become a member must be resident on this side of the river. And that any member within a radius of 20 miles of the general "rendezvous" shall be entitled to protection, and, if called upon, to render the same.

V.—That no European coming to these Diggings shall be entitled to protection until he becomes a member of the Association.

VI.—That any member misconducting himself, to the detriment of the Association, shall, after his case being duly investigated by the committee, and found guilty, be expelled from the Association.

VII.—That every member, to the best of his ability, shall avoid a breach of the peace with the natives.

VIII.—That no member of the Association, or any other person, shall sell, or cause to be sold, any spirituous liquor to the natives within a radius of two miles of the general "rendezvous."

IX.—That every member shall keep his fire-arms in such order as to be ready at a moment's notice.

X.—That no member shall divulge the secrets of the Association under any pretence whatever.

XI.—That a Commandant and Standing Committee be elected, and that every member binds himself to abide by their decision.

XII.—That any member having any just cause of complaint shall appeal to the Commandant and Committee, who shall adjust the same.

XIII.—That no member of the Association shall discharge, or cause to be discharged, fire-arms after sundown, unless compelled to do in self-defence.

XIV.—In case of alarm the signal shall be given from camp to camp, and every member shall then proceed immediately to the appointed place of muster.

XV.—That every white man coming to the Diamond Fields, for the purpose of mining or seeking for diamonds, shall sign the Mutual Protection Association and Diggers' Rules, and unless they can show, to the satisfaction of the Commandant and Committee, reason for not signing the rules, they shall be expelled from the Diggings.

XVI.—That any company having among their working members any person, or persons, that will not sign the rules, they shall expel such person, or persons, from their company, who shall have no claim for work done, or otherwise the company's claim shall be considered public property.

XVII.—That all fines levied by the Commandant and Committee shall go towards the funds, to be appropriated by them as they may think fit, for the general good of the public.

XVIII.—That any person fined and refusing to pay the said fine, sufficient of his property shall be taken by the Commandant and Committee, and sold at public auction, to meet said fine and expenses.

XIX.—That any person misconducting himself at any public meeting, or sitting of the Committee, shall be punished according to the offence.

XX.—That any European requiring liquor, and not calling for it himself, must send a note by his messenger.

XXI.—That it shall be the duty of the Committee to acquaint all Europeans, on their arrival from this date in this immediate locality, with the laws at present in force among the white population.

XXII.—That we, the undersigned, having read and fully understood the above-mentioned rules, do solemnly vow to abide by the same.

VALUATION OF DIAMONDS.

I have heard old diggers often declare that in the early days, from 1869 onwards, the valuation of diamonds was computed in the following rough and ready manner: If a one-carat stone was valued at, say, £5, a two-carat would be worth £10, and so on, by doubling the price by the number of carats. This statement is not quite correct, as the price-list here shown of Messrs. Leverson & Company for the month of November, 1871, will prove. I may state that I have also seen this firm's lists for the two preceding years, but, unfortunately, am unable to lay my hands on them at the moment.

Values of pure whites and well-formed rough diamonds, if free from flaws, i.e., of first water:—

½ Carat each, or smaller, from	£4	15	0	to	£5	per carat.
1 Carat each, or smaller, from	5	0	0	to	7	per carat.
4 Carat each, or smaller, from	13	0	0	to	16	per carat.
5 Carat each, or smaller, from	17	0	0	to	18	per carat.
6 Carat each, or smaller, from	20	0	0	to	21	per carat.
8 Carat each, or smaller, from	23	0	0	to	25	per carat.
10 Carat each, or smaller, from	26	0	0	to	28	per carat.
12 Carat each, or smaller, from	30	0	0	to	31	per carat.
16 Carat each, or smaller, from	33	0	0	to	35	per carat.
20 Carat each, or smaller, from	40	0	0	to	42	per carat.

Off-coloured diamonds of small size, say up to three carats, ranging according to purity and degree:—

For under 1 Carat, from	30s.	to	50s.	per carat.
For under 2 Carat, from	40s.	to	90s.	per carat.
For under 3 Carat, from	60s.	to	110s.	per carat.

CHAPTER IV.

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL AMENITIES.

In the camps the working hours extended from dawn to sunset, with, of course, an hour off in the morning and another at mid-day for meals. The great majority of the diggers had to handle the pick, shovel, and cradle themselves, as native labour was not then too plentiful or regular, so one can well understand how such a rough-and-ready mode of existence helped to engender a combination of horny hands and directness of speech that would rather shock the susceptibilities of the fashionable world beyond; but that's another story.

One of the first desiderata of a settled community in modern times is a newspaper, and this was supplied at an early stage in the history of the Fields by Messrs. Richards, Glanville & Company, the proprietors of the old Grahamstown "Journal," who started the now defunct "Diamond News" at Pniel in the month of October, 1870. This paper began its career as a weekly, which was sold at sixpence a copy, and later, on the discovery of the dry diggings, was transferred to Du Toit's Pan and subsequently to Kimberley, where it enjoyed a long period of success.

A perusal of the first few numbers throws some interesting sidelights on the every-day social life of the camps. For instance, new arrivals were advised by the editor to report themselves at the office of the paper on the top of Pniel Hill. Doubtless the information imparted and received was sure to have been of a mutually useful kind. It records the establishment of a Post Office, for the maintenance of which the munificent grant of £10 a year was allowed. No wonder the officials concerned soon made moan about this! To show the volume of mail matter handled, it may be said that the first dispatch of letters numbered 670, and of newspapers 750, while the number of letters received totalled 562.

Mr. John Campbell, formerly Magistrate of Capetown, was the first British Commissioner to be appointed for the district, and simultaneously a police force was established, consisting of an inspector receiving £200 per annum, three sergeants at £10 per month, and twenty-seven privates receiving 5s. a day. On the Klipdrift side of the river a branch of the Standard Bank was opened under the management of Mr. G. M. Cole. A diggers' committee was also formed there, consisting of Mr. Stafford Parker (Chairman), Messrs. Roderick Barker, Cawood, Horne, and Rowlands. In a characteristic speech on his appointment as chairman, Mr. Parker said: "If I am to accept office, and you have confidence in me, give me your support, and don't let every drunken man you meet say 'Pitch him in the river!'"

The story of the early political history of the River Diggings is full of stirring and exciting episodes, and is well worthy of being retold. In 1869, when only about thirty diggers had commenced "fossicking" for the pebbles that were "worth a king's ransom," Jan Bloem, the Chief of the Korannas, put in an appearance. His head kraal was at Nooitgedacht, opposite the Bend—a rather historic spot, as it was here that the claimants to Griqualand West held their meeting to discuss the question of sovereignty. Bloem instructed his Field-Cornet, Piet Quiman, who was sent with sixty of his tribe, to command the diggers to cease work immediately. The diggers "were not taking any," and refused point blank. This so exasperated the Chief's ambassador and his henchmen that they proceeded to throw back the diamondiferous gravel as the diggers shovelled it out. This the white men naturally resented. They

at once formed a Mutual Protection Association, the rules of which I have already given *in extenso*, and elected Mr. Roderick Barker as chairman, or "captain," as they called him. Mr. Barker acted energetically, and armed the diggers with whatever weapons he could lay hands on, from the ancient Tower muskets to the latest type of rifle. He then candidly advised Quiman to clear out, or otherwise he would rid the world of him and his entire gang. Finding that his opponents were in deadly earnest, Quiman took the hint and immediately departed.

A few weeks later Chief Bloem sent in a final ultimatum threatening to drive the diggers forcibly out of the country if they did not comply with his orders. Barker had his own tents and wagons on the site now occupied by the English Church, and there he prepared a laager, called in all the white men, whose numbers had now increased to about a hundred, and made ready to do or die. Bloem had fixed a certain night for his attack, and duly rolled up with his horde, but, after doing a little bit of reconnoitering, he evidently came to the conclusion that discretion was emphatically the better part of valour, and withdrew, leaving the diggers masters of the field. He never appeared again on the scene.

The next claimant was the Republican Government of the Orange Free State, who sent plenipotentiaries in the persons of two of its officials, named Steyn and Hohné. These gentlemen at once announced their intention to read a proclamation claiming jurisdiction over the whole of the diggings for their Government, as far as that side of the river was concerned. The announcement was treated with derision, and the pair soon left after threatening to send a Boer commando to enforce compliance with their demands. In due course the commando appeared, "looking terrible as an army with banners," and promising all sorts of vengeance, but it was subjected to so much good-humoured chaff, and such a liberal supply of "soupjes," that it gracefully retired, undertaking to return another day. That day never came, for instead of adopting any further physical measures, the Free State Government resorted to a course of diplomatic correspondence with the Imperial authorities, which culminated in its getting a sum of £90,000 as a solatium.

Another Richmond soon arrived in the field to claim the north side of the river round Klipdrift. This was in June, 1870. President Pretorius, on behalf of the Transvaal Government, accompanied by the State Secretary and Attorney, and about thirty Republican burghers, constituted the party. The President, in high-sounding tones, announced that his Government owned the whole of that part of the country, and consequently claimed full administrative powers therein, and that he had been instructed to read a proclamation to that effect on the spot, and hoist the Transvaal flag. Barker at once informed Pretorius that if he dared to hoist the flag he would pull it down. Pretorius then tried expostulation, and urged Barker and the diggers present to consider the matter in a calmer spirit, in order that further trouble might be averted. To give the diggers ample time for deliberation, he promised to return and raise the "vierkleur" in three days' time.

True to his promise, the President appeared on the day appointed, and introduced one Hugh Gwynne Owen, formerly a resident of Kingwilliamstown, and said that this gentleman would fulfil the duties of Resident Magistrate at Klipdrift. The doughty Barker, without further parley, ordered his bugler, Evans, to sound the advance, and, like one man, the whole of the diggers charged and halted directly in front of the Boer burghers. Owen at this stage produced the Republican flag, and it was promptly torn from his hands by Barker, and instantly disappeared from view in the crowd. Matters now became critical, and several shots were fired by the diggers as an earnest of what might happen later on if

Pretorius persisted in his attempts. Barker sternly ordered his men to cease firing, as he had no desire to cause bloodshed. Anticipating a collision, Pretorius prudently directed his men to withdraw, and proceeded to Hebron, whilst Owen, on refusing to leave, was promptly put over the river by Barker, and advised never to return, or a worse fate would befall him.

In parenthesis, a few words regarding Mr. Barker's personal career may not be out of place here. Roderick Barker was about forty years of age when he came into prominence as a pioneer leader at Pniel. He was born in the Emerald Isle, and came to South Africa as a soldier at the age of sixteen. He took part in several of the old Kafir wars, and was at the battle of Bloomplaats, for which he was decorated. When the first rush to Klipdrift took place Barker, who was then a trader, made his way to the New Eldorado with his wife, the daughter of a Mr. Clery. In height he was about 5ft. 10in., physically powerful, and of determined character, and could foot an Irish jig with the best dancer going. He died in the Kimberley Hospital about three years ago from the result of blood poisoning, leaving a wife and family; some of the latter are still working on the River Diggings. In his lifetime old Roderick was a man who was held in high respect by everyone with whom he came in contact. May he rest in peace!

Pretorius bivouaced his burghers at Hebron, and opened further negotiations with the diggers, but the diplomacy of his representatives was of such a tactless nature that after they had effected the arrest of a man named Gilman, the diggers became so incensed that they decided to form a committee, with Mr. Stafford Parker as chairman (or "president," as he was usually styled). Mr. Parker was a stalwart of the stalwarts

STAFFORD PARKER.
Ex-President, River Diggings.

amongst the digging population. Of commanding address, standing well over six feet in height, he looked every inch a leader of men. Born at Maldon, in Essex, in 1835, he joined the British Navy at the age of fourteen, and after doing service in the Mediterranean for some years, he left his first love and entered the service of the United States Navy. Finding his way to Simonstown, he retired from sea life, and made for Colesberg, where he joined the old Cape Mounted Police force, and married a Miss Sloane. On the discovery of the Vaal River diggings, he at once proceeded thither, and by his striking personality soon became the principal character of affairs in those stirring days.

It was at this stage then that the "Diamond News" reported laconically "A War Scare On." Special meetings of the Diggers' Committee were held, and "captains" appointed; orderlies were selected to assist these officers, and sitting outside one of the committee tents President Parker, the ruling generalissimo, might be seen busily ordering and organising the now imminent campaign. The "News" describes the scene thus: "There was Stafford Parker, not dressed in blue, but in red and white, and wearing a big wide-brimmed hat, looking the very image of a Southern planter. He was here, there and everywhere, working out his plans and forwarding the expedition in every way. Groups of men stood about declaiming against Transvaal impudence, and demanding leaders. Parker gave orders to get his commissariat wagon ready. Beeton rallied his company. McArthur was mounted, and all was ready. There were, of course, some hitches, and some knots had to be untied, but not long after sundown Parker and his men set out to see why Gilman had been put in prison. (Gilman, it appears, was a refractory Britisher who refused to acknowledge Transvaal rule.) There will be a tale to tell when they come marching home again!"

Actually, the force consisted mostly of camp followers, and there really was a story to tell—a strange one—which may now be related. I had it from the mouth of an eye-witness, who gave me the particulars only a few months ago. Here is the story in his own words. "I was living at Hebron, where a Boer commando was temporarily encamped, and one day my wife called me out to the stoep, and remarked: 'Look at the great cloud of dust down the road! It is being made by horsemen coming along from the direction of Klipdrift!' This proved to be President Parker, with about fifty of his men, as motley a crew as one could possibly imagine. Most of them seemed to be more or less under the influence of liquor. Anyhow, the moment the Boer commandant saw them, he gave orders to 'opsaal' and 'huis toe!' Had the commandant not been so terribly hasty, he could, of a certainty, have captured the whole lot!"

Thus ended the struggle for supremacy at the Vaal River Diggings, and the diggers, having got rid of the last of their bellicose friends, quietly settled down to their legitimate labours.

Committee meetings were held from time to time, as occasion demanded, but the diggers were puzzled to know what form of government to adopt. One poetical genius of the Fields, named James McHattie, offered the following suggestion as a solution of the problem connected with the naming of the new State: "Taking into consideration the prehistoric and present position of the River Diggings, 'Terra Nemo' or 'Terra Nemo Region' might as well be adopted as any other," and he composed an anthem which he chose to call "The National Anthem," an effusion which deserves to be set to the music of the spheres!

"No Mans' Land, gift divine,
Unto the brave and free;
The stars shall charter as they shine
In silent mysterie.
Ensign of power
In the trying hour!

The Southern Cross, encircling, tells
The shepherds on the plain,
To adore the spot where the river dwells,
And its freeborn rights maintain.
Its foes you shall
Them vanquish all!

The sun that climbs our mountains green,
Leads in the rising day;
See on our land no tyrants stand—
The diamonds clear the way!
Nations us see,
Victorious, free;
By high decree,
Long shall it be!"

The same Laureate, in his communication to the committee, also suggested a few rather striking ideas for a national flag, coat of arms, and Great Seal. The reading of all this caused much amusement, and the documents were ordered to be acknowledged with most cordial thanks.

The social life of the early days of the River Diggings is hard to define in a short sketch such as this. Existence in those times, without the presence and restraining influence of the gentler sex, rendered superfluous to some extent the outward expression of delicacy and refinement. In speaking amongst themselves, men generally prefer to call a spade a spade, and here I may ask a question: What, after all, is the essence of good manners in the social world? I should feel inclined to reply "naturalness." If this is correct, then I can safely say that the great majority of the first arrivals on the Fields, hailing from well-known and respectable families in the towns and farms of South Africa, were essentially Nature's true noblemen.

The camps at first had no recognised form of civil administration. They had, of course, their rough and ready Diggers' Committees, but no society can long exist without a proper code for the observance of law and order, together with the machinery necessary for its enforcement. Such as they were, the existing camp regulations were put in operation, but only in a perfunctory manner, and anyone was at liberty to take the law into his own hands, with comparative impunity. Eventually a chairman (or commandant) and a committee, with power to act as judge and jury, were evolved. They heard the evidence, pro and con, and if a prisoner was found guilty, he was duly sentenced, and then compelled to carry out his own punishment publicly. For instance, if a theft was committed and the accused was unable to establish his innocence, he was sentenced to carry through the streets a large board, not unlike the sandwichman's, with the word "Thief" written in large capitals thereon, and he was accompanied by a man ringing a bell. This may seem a

peculiarly drastic measure, but it was mightily effective, as habitual offenders were soon pleased to escape to pastures new. Next to the capital charge, the worst offence was considered to be the political one. Offenders in this respect were treated as traitors, and were put across the river in a manner that was anything but dignified. Prostitutes and drunkards were incontinently placed in the stocks, and all other offenders against decency and order were treated in an exemplary manner, according to their deserts.

Divine service was held periodically by visiting clergymen of various denominations. Dr. Ricards, the popular Roman Catholic Bishop of Grahamstown, was one of the first priests to visit the Diggings, and the men were so delighted to hear of his coming that a deputation, consisting of members of all religious bodies, was appointed to meet him, and he entertained a very large audience with an excellent lecture, as he was renowned for his extensive knowledge of the sciences, especially astro-

Right Rev. Dr. RICARDS.

nomy. Another eminent visitor was the Church of England clergyman, the Rev. Mr. Kitton, from Kingwilliamstown, my native place. He contributed an interesting account of his experiences to the Kingwilliamstown Press, and painted a vivid word picture of conducting the church service in one portion of a large tent, whilst in the other part a number of diggers were simultaneously holding high carnival. It is to be hoped the two celebrations were discreetly screened off from each other.

After working hours it was the custom of the diggers to exchange calls at one another's tents, and indulge in a game of cards, draughts, or chess, and at parting drinking to one another's success in the search for the elusive "gem of purest ray serene." Dancing was a somewhat diluted pleasure in these days, owing to the insufficiency of female partners, and was seldom patronised, for without the ladies the gay mazurka, the bouncing polka, and the dreamy waltz were, as at other times, about as attractive to the boys as stale champagne. As the years passed by, however, members of the fair sex appeared timidly upon the scene one by one and were speedily engulfed in the giddy vortex of the local matrimonial market. One perfervid swain—John Crampton—who had evidently fallen head over heels in love with a fickle but "mooi meisje," lamented his sad fate by bursting forth in an agony of despair in the columns of the "Diamond News." I venture to reproduce the verses in full, as they will give the reader a fairly good idea of the art of poesy as practised in the camps in those days:—

THE BELLE OF SIVONELLE.

It was while attending my daily occupation
Of digging at Sivonelle,
That very, very close to the Kafir Location,
I first met my dear Isobell.
She was the most bewitching creature
I ever saw or beheld in my career—
And a farmer's daughter, too!
But now, my poor blighted heart,
Thou need'st some assistance,
For she has proved untrue.

Then fare thee well, my false Isobell!
I certainly believe you have gone to—some village,
To become the wife of a Boer;
So fare thee well, my false Isobell!
I sincerely hope that you may enjoy your matrimonial
Life, and that before half a year is o'er
You may have children half a score!"

CHAPTER V.

MEMORIES OF CECIL RHODES.

At this period the divine afflatus seems also to have found access to the soul of no less a personage than that future Empire-builder, Cecil Rhodes himself. He ventured a flight into the empyrean on the occasion of his being marooned on an island in the Vaal River, somewhere in the vicinity of Schmidt's Drift, whilst in the company of Mr. H. S. Orpen, M.L.A., Mr. H. C. Hinton, and others. The effusion, which is probably

quite unknown to the new generation, was subsequently handed over to their host, Mr. Schmidt, who religiously preserved it. Here it is, in all its lingering sweetness:—

On an island quite small,
  In the midst of the Vaal,
We found William Schmidt like a Crusoe;
  We thought that confounded
He'd be when surrounded,
  Because the Vaal River it grew so.

But we lived on the best,
  In his Isle of the Blest,
You may wonder now how we could do so;
  If you want to know why,
You have only to try,
  For old Schmidt is a wonderful Crusoe!"

As Mr. Rhodes, during the whole of his Parliamentary career, elected to represent Barkly West and no other constituency, it is possible that some of my readers may be interested in learning something regarding his first entry into the great financial arena of his later days. Believing this, I am induced to say a few words about the man as I first knew him on the Diamond Fields in 1873. He was then a youth of about 20, tall of stature—I should certainly say nearly six feet in height—with a well-knit frame that showed little of the burliness of figure that manifested itself in his maturer years. He had a peculiarity of holding his left shoulder a little lower than his right, a feature that generally betokens a man who is kept close to his writing desk, although I do not think this was the case with Rhodes. In walking, the length of his stride was gigantic, and would be the despair of any drill instructor. In planting his feet down he did so fairly and squarely, and his footsteps would not be difficult to trace by a spoor-finder. He had light brown hair, parted at the side, the right having a curly inclination towards the front. His eyes were light blue and rather piercing, especially when he was inclined to doubt the accuracy of any statement which happened to be made by a person addressing him. His lips were firm and compressed, but his chin, on the other hand, had rather a mobile appearance. In disposition he seemed to be extremely reserved, though in reality he was not so, but certainly one had to know him first in order to get over this impression. So much for his physical characteristics. Let me now give a few particulars about his career at that time.

There was a small coterie of diggers, familiarly known as "The Twelve Apostles," all of whom were supposed to have tastes in common. They all resided together on the north side of North Circular Road, New Rush, and their encampment was under the shade of an enormous mimosa tree. The "Apostles" composed the following gentlemen: Cecil John Rhodes, the two brothers Moor, from Natal, Hunter, Dunsmure, the two Atherstones, Greenstreet, Dennysen, W. C. Scully, and one or two others whose names I cannot recall at the moment. Mr. G. M. Norris, of Johannesburg, in a recent letter to me, states that "The Twelve Apostles were Dr. Eadie, Messrs. George Hull, Tom McDonald, George Moor, Joe Denys, Captain Harford, J. B. Turner, Blackburn, Charlie Spiers, J. Gifford, Bill Bernard, and Aldridge. He admits at the same time that in all probability the persons I mention, might have been intimately associated with the Twelve, as they were hospitality itself, and thus may have

given rise to the conjecture of their being actual members. Rhodes was was ever ready to air his views in the local Press on any subject that interested him, as a perusal of the old "Diamond News" will show. In business proclivities he was catholic enough, being connected with a water contract, ice-making, and had, I believe, some interest in the Atlas Works, a local blacksmithing establishment conducted by Mr. James Hall, better known as "Benjy" or 'Barney" Hall, and for whom Mr. W. H. Craven acted as secretary and superintendent.

Politically, Mr. Rhodes and I differed considerably, but he was too large-hearted a man to bear any lasting animosity. He only regretted my inability to see eye to eye with him in such matters. When he was acting as Special Commissioner of the Cape Government to the Bechuanaland freebooters, I remember delivering a speech in the Town Hall in which I had occasion to criticise his actions, or rather some of them, and took up a line of censure which closely followed the criticisms of Mr. J. X. Merriman on the same subject. The shafts evidently went home, as Mr. Rhodes, so it was surmised, at once enlisted the services of Mr. R. W. Murray, the veteran journalist, to furnish a rejoinder in a paper run by Mr. George Garcia Wolff, called the "Diamond Fields Times." In a trenchant leader, Murray concluded by saying: "Mr. Rhodes only hopes he (Mr. Beet) will go to Merriman when he dies." to which I replied: "It matters not whether I go to Merriman when I die, so long as I do not go to Rhodes when alive!" This retort courteous immensely tickled the fancy of the public at the time, and I have no doubt Mr. Rhodes enjoyed the sally as much as anyone.

Griqualand Volunteers leaving Barkly West for Stellaland, 1882.

Floreat! River Diggings! For nigh on 50 years the lure of the diamond has attracted a host of fine, adventurous souls to this region of the Vaal, and in all likelihood it will continue to exercise its peculiar fascination for generations to come. Many a digger in bygone days has

succeeded, in a marvellously short space of time, in wresting great wealth from this portion of Nature's wonderful storehouse, and gone his way rejoicing. Others have had to battle long and hard against persistent ill-luck and privation before winning their share of the jealously guarded treasure; whilst many, alas! after a lifetime of toil and hardship, right manfully borne, have sunk down and died by the side of their claims without having gained their heart's desire.

No finer epitaph to the memory of these gallant fellows than that of my old friend, Mr. Albert Brodrick, of New Rush, could possibly be wished for:—

"Here lies a digger, all his chips departed—
A splint of Nature bright, and ne'er downhearted;
He worked in many claims, but now, though stumped,
He's got a claim above that can't be jumped.

May he turn out a pure and spotless 'white,'
When the Great Judge shall sift the wrong from right,
And may his soul, released from this low Babel,
Be found a gem on God's great sorting table!"

PART II.

THOS. LAURENT-TERPEND.

PART II.

THE DIGGINGS OF TO-DAY.

BY THOS. LAURENT-TERPEND.

"To catch Dame Fortune's golden smile,
Assiduous wait upon her;
And gather gear by every wile
That's justified by honour;

Not for to hide it in a hedge,
Nor for a train attendant,
But for the glorious privilege
Of being independent."

Burns.

CHAPTER I.

SCIENCE AND THE DIAMOND

"This diamond, gentlemen, is the rock upon which the future success of South Africa will be built." How swift and complete has been the fulfilment of that prophecy! When these words were spoken, distress was rampant throughout the length and breadth of the land. In many

instances the farmers of the south, on the verge of starvation, and bitterly resenting what they considered unduly heavy taxation, resolved to sacrifice their old homesteads and trek to the far north and freedom; numbers of the poor unemployed were crying in vain for work, whilst those who were in a position to afford it lost no time in shaking the dust of South Africa from their feet and migrating to the more prosperous colonies of Australia and New Zealand.

A Retrenchment Committee was appointed by the Cape Parliament, and estimates were passed for six months only; and with the dark clouds of commercial and agricultural disaster hanging ominously overhead, there came proposals of a paper currency. A deplorable and irremediable deficiency existed between revenue and expenditure; the country was impoverished and burdened by an infinite variety of afflictions; the coffers of the Government were depleted, and men viewed the future with doubt and dismay.

But at the moment when the dismal cloud of universal bankruptcy and ruin seemed to be at its blackest stage, the gloom was suddenly dispelled in that year of grace 1868, by the genial rays of a diamond flashing its message of hope from the table of the House of Assembly at Capetown, and inspiring that faithful and enterprising Colonial Secretary, Sir Richard Southey, afterwards Lieut.-Governor of Griqualand West, to utter those memorable words: "This diamond, gentlemen, is the rock upon which the future success of South Africa will be built."

Yes, gentle reader, in the late 'sixties and early 'seventies that little gem, the diamond, inaugurated a new era of faith, hope, and brightness in this land of ours, and set alight the Aladdin's lamp of success and prosperity for South Africa. As Dr. W. Guybon Atherstone said in later years: "It is the key that has unlocked the vast underground wealth of South Africa," establishing an industry that has easily exceeded the most optimistic expectations of its founders, and constituting in itself one of the wonders of the modern world. And as that eminent scientist, Sir William Crookes, remarked when lecturing at Kimberley some thirty-seven years after the discovery of the first South African diamond: "It is an industry which has made the few square miles in the centre of which we are standing the most valuable piece of land on the face of the earth."

From whence came the diamond? Speculation as to its origin is both voluminous and hypothetical. We assume with some degree of certainty that it is derived from carbon or carbonic acid by the combined action of heat and pressure; and, again, it is assumed to be formed by a gradual decomposition of vegetable matter, with or without heat. It has been suggested that the vapours of carbon during the coal period may have been condensed and crystallised into the diamond; and, again, that what is known as the original matrix became saturated with petroleum, which collecting in nodules, formed the gem by gradual crystallisation. The learned Sir Isaac Newton believed it to be a coagulated fat or oily body of vegetable origin, and combustible, and was sustained in his theory by many eminent philosophers, including Sir David Brewster. Dana and others in more recent times advance the opinion that it may have been produced by the slow decomposition of vegetable material, and even from animal matter. However, crystallisation of carbon from a liquid solution under intense heat and pressure is the theory that carries the most convincing arguments in its favour to-day.

The late Mr. Stow reckoned that the heavy gravel deposits were drifted down to their present positions by glacial action, but whether the diamonds formed a part of the original deposits, or were formed in

transit, or afterwards, he leaves one to guess. At any rate, this ice theory possesses a good element of foundation in accounting for the deposits found on the banks and terraces of the river, and on the adjacent high levels. In the Kimberley mines we are told that the diamonds found

Prehistoric Implements and Fossilised Animal Remains found in lower strata of river bed deposit, approximately 8 to 10 feet from surface.

[Copyright, H. B. White, Longlands.

their way into the vent-holes, or volcanic pipes, along with the mass of boiling mud or debris that long ago burst forth from Nature's great subterranean laboratory and filled up the pipes or mines. Many people assert that the river diamonds were carried down by the action of running water to their present habitat at the time these eruptions occurred.

Harger tells us that the diamonds were originally formed in the "blue-ground," or matrix, by the "blue-ground" borrowing carbon from the carbonaceous shale during its upward passage through the pipes; and he further conjectures that the bulk of the diamonds found in the rich layers of Mayer's Prospect, on Harrisdale, probably came from a large Kimberlite pipe in the immediate vicinity of the deposit. Professor Wagner, who has pretty nearly said all that can be said at present on the subject, and who speaks with authority and confidence, considers the high level gravels at Klipdam and Droogveld to be of great antiquity, and belonging to a much older period than the gravels on the terraces of Windsorton and Longlands; and, again, that the gravel deposits of the river-bed are of yet more recent date, and in process of formation even to-day; whilst he suggests the possibility of the flow of the river having been at one time in a south-westerly direction across Pniel and Droogveld on towards Schmidt's Drift; in which event the high-level deposits and river gravels would then be due to the carrying action of running water

Maydenbauer puts forth the meteoric theory. Monstrous meteors fell at some prehistoric period of the earth's formation, and in falling certain fragments became separated, and were scattered broadcast, "raining diamonds from Heaven," while the larger masses bored their way down into the solid earth. "Their remains," says Maydenbauer, "are crumbling away on exposure to the air and sun, and the rain has long ago washed away all prominent masses. The enclosed diamonds have remained scattered in the river-beds, while the fine light matrix has been swept away."

In support of this theory we cannot get away from the existence of black and transparent diamonds from the Canyon Diablo meteorite in Arizona, where, on a broad open plain of five miles in diameter, are thousands of masses of metallic iron from a meteoric shower, and near the centre of this plain, where the greater number of meteorites have been found, is a crater with raised edges, three-quarters of a mile in diameter and six hundred feet deep, where the main body of the meteor evidently fell. Dr. Stelzner has said that the blue-ground of Kimberley has a known resemblance to many meteorites; and Sir William Crookes himself does not consider the raining of diamonds from the Heavens to be impossible.

In 1912, a syndicate of scientists and financiers was formed for the purpose of searching for an enormous meteor, believed to be one solid diamond, worth untold millions, which fell ages ago in the Arizona Desert The legend of a "blazing star" having been sent from Heaven to chastise a particular wicked tribe was well known and still believed by the Red Indians round about the place. The story goes that some traveller or ranchman lost his way, and, stopping at Meteor Mountain, discovered the spot where this blazing diamond fell. He picked up a meteoric fragment of the many that were strewn around, and found it simply studded with real black diamonds. Sufficient fragments were found to indicate that the meteor itself was pure carbon. The engineers of the syndicate, computating the size of the meteor and force with which it fell, estimated to find the meteor itself two or three thousand feet below. The last I can remember of this venture was that a shaft had already been sunk to a depth of over one thousand feet, and that they were still sinking. That was in 1912. But do not worry, Diggers; the prices of our Vaal River diamonds to-day (1917) are better than ever before!

Experiments by learned savants have resulted in the conversion of diamond into graphite. This experiment was successfully accomplished by Professor Sir James Dewar in 1880, and again by Sir William Crookes in 1897, and clearly demonstrated by the latter to a Kimberley audience in 1905; but there it stops, for the graphite cannot yet be returned to its original form, the diamond.

The French Professor, Moissan, and some others, have been successful in the manufacture of minutely microscopic diamonds possessing the same qualities as the natural gem—hardness, crystallisation, refraction, and so on; these experiments proving of great value to the scientist.

Sir William Crookes conclusively states that the genesis of the the South African mine diamond is the crystallisation of carbon separating itself from the molten masses of iron deep down in the glowing, molten subterranean furnaces where they first took shape. A diamond is the outcome of a series of titanic convulsions, and these precious gems undergo cycles of strange vicissitudes before they can blaze in a ring or tiara.

Here is a digest of the famous lecture on diamonds delivered by Sir William Crookes in September, 1905, on the occasion of the visit of the British Association to Kimberley, which I trust will be sufficiently comprehensive to the reader :—

DIAMONDS.—I. ORIGIN.

1. Origin owing to volcanic eruptions.
2. Through process of internal, natural chemistry.

(1) is proved by

A.—Existence of volcanic pipes in Kimberley where diamonds are found.

B.—Presence of iron-saturated soil and ferruginous character of country.

A is proved by

(a) Collated experience of working of Kimberley pipes.

(b) Each volcanic pipe being the vent of its own special natural laboratory.

(c) Extractions and contents of pipes.

(d) Various attributes, associations, and characteristics of each vent.

(2) is proved by

A.—Scientific research and chemical analysis.

B.—Experiments in carbon, graphite, and other component parts of the natural gem.

A. is further established by

(a) Knowledge of varying chemical action upon component parts of the gem.

(b) Moissan's discovery of separation from molten iron and perfection of Sir A. Noble's experiment of screw stopper tube and granite vent.

II. MANUFACTURE.

1. Experiments upon natural and artificial diamonds.
2. Meteoric theory.
3. Conclusive experiment of graphite.

(1) is confirmed by

A.—Aid of lately perfected electric furnace.

B.—High-pressure and solvent of carbon being found in molten iron.

A. proved by

(a) Manufactured diamonds possessing same qualities as the natural gem.

(b) Hydraulic power and polarised light.

(2) proved by

existence of Canyon Diablo, Arizona.

(3) proved by

A.—Our knowledge of the composition of the diamond.

B.—Though unable to convert graphite to diamond, we are able to convert diamond to graphite (as here shown and made clear by present demonstration).

And yet, after all this explanation, Sir William admits that we can assert nothing with absolute certainty. Referring to that giant of diamond history, Mr. Gardner F. Williams, M.A., LL.D. (who knows as much about diamonds as any man living, as Sir William concedes), Mr. Gardner Williams himself, in answer to the question, "What is your theory of the original crystallisation of the diamond?" states definitely "I have none; for after seventeen years of thoughtful study, coupled with practical research, I find that it is easier to 'drive a coach and four' through most theories which have been propounded than to suggest one which would be based upon any more unassailable data. All that can be

said is that in some unknown manner carbon, which existed deep down in the internal regions of the earth, was changed from its black and uninviting appearance to the most beautiful gem which ever saw the light of day."

If the question of the origin and formation of diamonds in the mines is still unsolved by these great and logical thinkers, what can one say with reference to the habitat of diamonds in the river-beds, side-gravels, and adjoining terraces of the Vaal?

The speculation as to amygdaloidal diabase, which derives its source from what is known to-day as the Ventersdorp system, being the matrix of the river gem, is accepted by some diggers. It is probable enough that the amygdaloid, by decomposition, allowed the diamond to separate from its original birthplace; but if we accept the amygdaloidal diabase to be the matrix of the alluvial diamond, how is it possible for one to reconcile the presence of alluvial diamonds in gravels and layers without the least suspicion of any amygdaloidal diabase having been present at any period; the diamonds being simply mixed up with their kin-brother, the "bantom"?

It is owing to this looseness and freedom of the diamond in selecting as its associates those stones of the nearest specific gravity to itself—the bantom, carbon, bonestone, garnet, and others—and being found in so many varied layers over such an enormous tract of country, that one inclines to Mr. Stow's theory, that the alluvial stones may have been carried along by the ice glaciers, and, by natural selection by gravitation during transit, been strewn and deposited in their present habitat.

Those speculating upon the river diamonds having come from the Kimberley pipes or thereabouts point to the existence of fissures on the alluvial fields in support of their argument, a fissure being an alleged blow-out from some mine; in which event the old notion of a mine being situated somewhere in the Barkly West district bears some prospect of truth, and Cecil Rhodes is said to have expressed this opinion, for there are many of these fissures (and payable ones) in the vicinity of the Barkly West Commonage and the adjoining farm of Good Hope.

Several old diggers again support the idea that the whole of South Africa ages ago underwent a general volcanic action, causing eruptions everywhere, and later on these apertures caused by the eruptions were filled up to overflowing with matter containing diamondiferous deposits from down below, which was eventually carried off and spread by fluvial action to the terraces and river beds.

Well, everyone is entitled to his own opinion!

Here is the native folklore version as to the origin of diamonds. After the passing of many moons, and when there was great sorrow in the land, a spirit, pitying the wants and miseries of men, descended from heaven with a huge basket filled with diamonds. The spirit flew over the Vaal, starting beyond Delpoort's Hope, sowing diamonds as he flew on, past Barkly West, Klipdam, and on towards Kimberley, throwing out handful after handful from the huge basket all the while. On reaching Kimberley, where at the time large trees were growing, his toe got caught in the branches of a high kameeldoorn tree, and, tripping, he upset the basket, emptying out all the diamonds; thus forming the Kimberley mines!

But the question affecting you and me, Brother Digger along the Vaal, is not so much "from whence came the diamonds?" but "where may one strike a wash?" The most likely place to find diamonds is just where one finds "the wash"; for beyond the wash at present we can no further go. Where there is a wash with a good class of "bantoms," there is the possibility, nay, the certainty, of unearthing the precious gems. The

close association of the bantom with the diamond is nothing more nor less than natural selection by gravitation. Some diggers aver that the bantom in course of time, if left undisturbed, becomes a diamond; in fact, that the bantom is a diamond in another form. Why laugh? Who knows otherwise? However, the "bantom wash" is the one and only indication of the presence of diamonds to-day, that is, to the ordinary digger like myself. Old diggers will stake money and reputation on certain washes and on a particular "bantom" (and each digger, of course, has his own fancy of a wash, and his own particular "bantom"). But can he stake on everything else? The "bantom" is the keynote to the placing or locating of the river diamond, and the "bantom" wash is to-day the only "open sesame" enabling the River Digger to place diamonds on the buyers' tables. Beyond the wash we know nothing definite.

Before explaining the wash for the benefit of the uninitiated, allow me to give you a recipe for diamonds.

The Lemoine case of 1908 will still be fresh in the memory of most people interested in diamonds, so if the reader wishes to experiment, here is Lemoine's recipe for the manufacture of artificial diamonds:—"(1) Take a furnace; (2) take some powdered sugar carbon; (3) place the carbon in a crucible; (4) place the crucible in the furnace and raise the temperature to from 1,700 degrees to 1,800 degrees centigrade in order to obtain crystallisation; (5) when this high temperature has been obtained, apply pressure to the cover of the crucible. The diamonds will then be made, and it remains only to take them out." And there you are!

CHAPTER II.

DIGGING AND WASHING THE ALLUVIAL.

Test Wash of Claims.

By "the wash" is here meant nothing more nor less than the ordinary common hand-wash of the alluvial diamond digger, and implies no reference to the wash of the geologist or gold prospector.

Assuming that you are a new chum just arrived on the diggings, and that you have taken out your licence and pegged off your claim, say, in red ground for the sake of simplicity in explaining, all that is needed to test the wash is a pick and shovel, hand sieves averaging 18 inches in

Alluvial Kopje, Winter's Rush.
£10,000 worth of diamonds were won from this spot in a few months.

diameter and about 4 inches deep, one with a mesh 3-8-inch, ½-inch, or 5-8-in, according to fancy, and one of 1-8-inch; buckets, and a couple f tubs filled with water. The overburden, running from two feet to four feet or more, is picked and shovelled away till arrival at the gravel layer.

This layer is commonly called the deposit, and the wash will indicate whether the deposit in the claim is a light or heavy one. The depth of the layer varies in different camps, but the wash itself is much the same everywhere in red ground.

This gravel layer is then picked and shovelled, three or four shovelsful at a time, through the larger mesh sieve into the finer mesh one, the finer mesh sieve being thoroughly shaken meanwhile to allow of the extra fine clay or sand falling through, thus freeing and cleaning the gravel as much as possible. This process is continued till the finer mesh sieve is very nearly filled. You will here need a boy or claim-labourer who can gravitate a sieve, or you may call in the aid of any experienced digger.

The finer mesh sieve—or in diggers' parlance—the wash sieve—is carried to the vessel containing water (a tub is in general vogue), and submerged some 4 or 5 inches under the surface of the water in the tub. Grasping the wash sieve firmly on either side, with the arms held rigid, a series of quarter or semi-circular movements result in the lighter pebbles of gravel being thrown round the outer edge inside the sieve, whilst a corresponding up and downward motion causes the heavier material to sink to the bottom of the sieve.

When sufficiently gravitated, the sieve is taken out of the tub, and the water allowed to drain off. The sieve is then given a swift half-somersault motion that brings its face or open end flat down upon the ground or sorting place prepared for it. On removing the sieve, it will be found that the combination of rotation and pulsation to which the gravel had been subjected whilst in the tub has caused the grading of the very lightest stuff round the extreme edge, the medium-weighted round the inner circle, whilst in the very centre will be found the heaviest pebbles and stones, mainly bantoms, and probably some carbon, garnet, bonestone, rooiklip, greenstone, blockies, and a host of others, according to the nature of the gravel, and, not impossibly, a diamond. The centre of the sieve's contents indicates the class of the deposit in the claim, and that indication is commonly known as "the wash." The size of the centre of "the wash" may vary from ½-inch to 6 or 8 inches. A similar process of testing applies to deep ground.

You will naturally ask the advice of your brother diggers with reference to the wash of the claim. One may say "Quite good enough. Work it!" Another will tell you neither yes nor no, and advise you to act as you think best; whilst another will emphatically order you not to touch it. "It's no good!" But should there be anything of a wash at all, with only half-a-dozen bantoms showing, work out the claim by all means. You may be a wealthy man by the time you have finished; if not, you will at any rate know something about washes, for in the meantime you will have studied the washes in the claims of your fellow-diggers, and may possibly have selected for yourself a particular fancy stone or bantom and be able to expound upon washes, layers and alluvial digging in general.

Bantoms and Indications.

The "bantom" is so called from a corruption of a Dutch word meaning "band-around," and although all bantoms have not a band around them at all, this is more or less the generally accepted derivation of the term. There exists a "banthorn" on the Brazilian fields, and some consider the term "bantom" to have come from thence, along with the usual corruptions in transit. The river bantom when broken emits alternating shades of light from the quartz, carbon, garnet, iron-pyrites—in some of the darker bantoms—graphite, and the various minerals of which it is

composed. They are of various colours, sizes, and shapes, and receive a classification unknown outside the alluvial digging fields. Opinion as to the best bantom-wash to work upon is simply a matter of the individual digger's fancy, as already explained.

First in favour is the "Rushmer," so named after an old digger. It may be any colour, generally a greenish grey; or one may come across a light or dark-coloured Rushmer; but it is always striped round with bands of various colours, very smooth and polished, and of high specific gravity. Mr. C. H. Rushmer, of Klipdam, gives the following description of his bantom. It is bean shape, colour grey and sometimes yellow, and like a diamond, very slippery, with two gold stripes round the middle. Then come the dark-blue bantom, the purple, water-melon-pip, liver-coloured, the grey, and others with cruder names.

Among the associates of the bantom, and regarded as indicators of the presence of diamonds, are the following: The bonestone, a perfectly white stone, more or less angular in shape; the jasper, either a light or dark-red; the catseye, of a greenish colour, marked with spots resembling the eyes of a cat; the greenstone again, along with the Rushmer, is nearest in specific gravity to the diamond, some diggers classing the greenstone as a bantom. Blockies are small perfectly square cubes, pseudomorphs after iron pyrites, and composed of iron oxide, of either a black or very brownish colour. The blinkklip and rooiklip, the former black and sparkling, the latter deep and soft red, occur in some localities in red ground, and are composed of the valuable iron ore known as Hematite. All these, with some others, are mixed up with the bantoms in the wash. The specific gravity of the bantom is 3.4 to 3.5, while that of the diamond is 3.52 to 3.53.

River garnets, wrongly called rubies, are found at varying intervals in the bantom wash in the red ground, but quite frequently in the deep ground and the river bed. Some garnets are of a deep blood-red commonly called pigeon-blood red; others are a beautiful wine-red, and so on, in varying shades of red to very light pink, and weighing in the aggregate half a carat to one carat, garnets of two carats not being too plentiful, though the writer has seen one of 30 carats found at Gong Gong. The river garnet is very nearly of the same specific gravity as the diamond.

Outside of the diamond, the palm for beauty undoubtedly belongs to the agate, of which exceedingly handsome specimens have been found in large quantities in the rich runs at Droogveld. The agate, when cut and polished, makes beautiful useful ornaments as pendants for watch-chains or sleeve links, and if one could obtain a number of agates, all clear and regularly striated, they would form a collection of considerable interest and value.

SYSTEMS OF WORKING.

Red Ground.

The nature of the alluvial ground along the river varies considerably, and so also does the manner of working it. Probably the simplest of all is the almost ubiquitous "red ground" found from Klerksdorp down to Douglas, not only along the banks of the river, as was supposed in the early days, but often several miles from it. This ground, often only a few inches in depth, and seldom more than five feet, can be worked on a very small scale. Even now you can see two white men working alone, or a man with one or two boys. In such cases, of course, the gear required is not elaborate; picks, shovels, a bébé, two tubs,

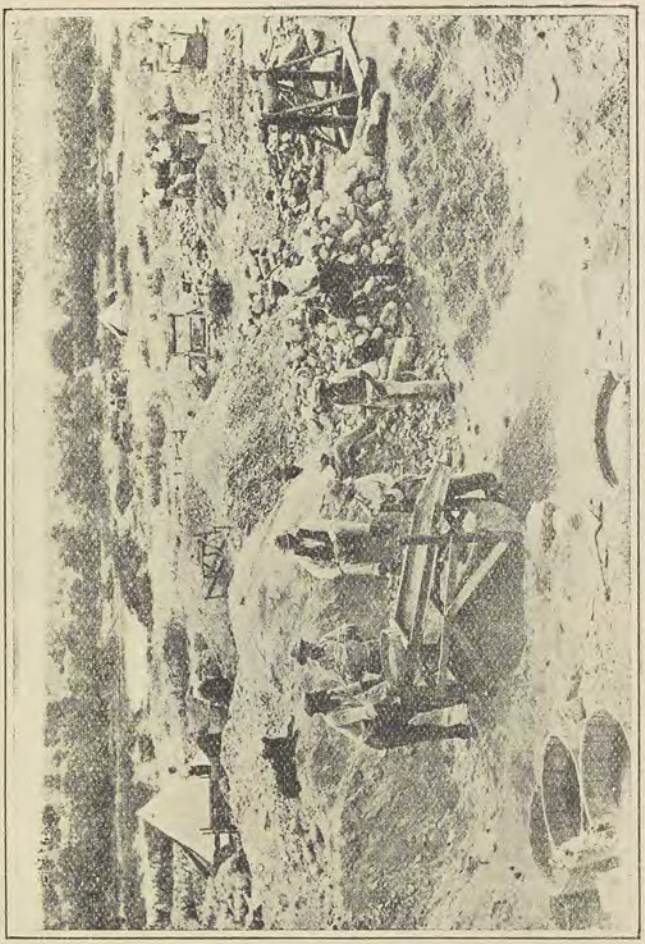
buckets, and some vessels in which to store water, completing the outfit. The working is done by hand, and the whole process is slow, and the results seldom remarkable. In the earlier years of digging, this method of work, more or less modified, was common, but since about 1890 or

Winter's Rush in 1908. "Gladwyn's Claim."

1891, coincidently with the discovery of Klipdam, the work has generally been carried on by more ambitious means. The tubs and hand-wash have been to some extent superseded by the machine, at first usually a "gravitator" or "eccentric" (not ill-named), and later by the "rotary." The number of boys has increased, until now one sees large gangs of natives loosening the ground, which is brought in trucks to the machine, and is subjected to the minimum of handling by the boys. Much of the "red ground," when treated in this manner, pays well enough, although it does not equal the "deep ground" or the river bed in its production of large or high-quality diamonds.

Deep Ground.

The term "deep ground" is applied to that diamondiferous deposit which lies at such a depth under other gravel, or perhaps lime strata, that it cannot well be worked from the surface. It is usual to sink a shaft, about six feet in diameter, hauling up and carrying away stones and rubble by means of a windlass, until the "layer" of gravel carrying the "wash" is struck, which may be actually upon the bedrock, or not infrequently somewhat above it. The depth may be anything from 20 to 100 feet; in some few instances, notably at Gong Gong, even that depth being exceeded, but on the average about 40 feet. Frequently the payable layer is so thin that it is necessary to take out a good deal of "dead ground" to enable the boys to work it. Lateral drives, or tunnels, are put in from the shaft, and the stones of any size pulled up, until



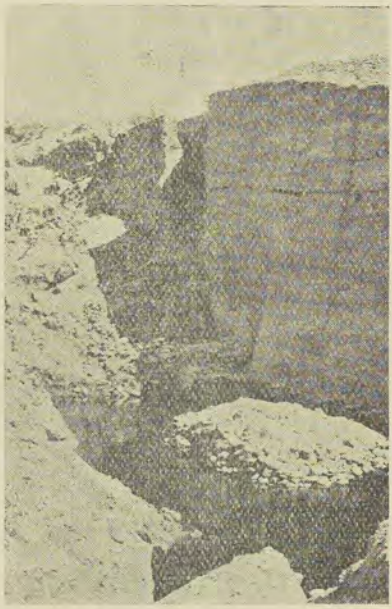
Deep Ground Workings, Shafts running from 16 to 40 feet.
Tysdale & Buchanan's Claim, Delpoort's Hope, 1903.

there is room below to pack them. The ground is then hauled to the surface, put through the bébé, and washed, usually by hand. This, of course, takes time, and the area worked out is small compared to surface work, but when a really good "wash" is struck in deep ground it seldom disappoints, the diamonds being found close together. Great care has to be taken in driving to avoid accidents, and there are many regulations framed by the mining authorities for the purpose, which are rigidly enforced.

Paddocking.

Of late years much of the ground which used to be worked in the manner described above has been "paddocked" or worked "open." This means the removal of all the overburden and unpayable ground over

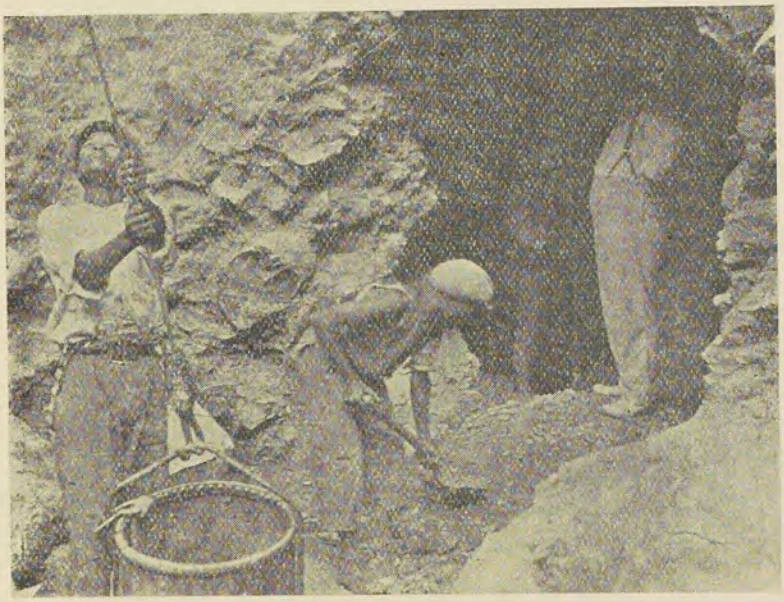
a considerable area, and the haulage of the diamond-bearing deposit, either by means of powerful cranes or by trucks running on an incline. This mode of working is safer and more satisfactory, as it does away with the leaving of pillared ground necessary in shaft and drive operations, but naturally it requires considerable capital.



River Bank, Austin's Rush.
35 to 40 feet stripping, all shovel work.

Breakwaters.

But the particular form of digging which offers the best prizes, and which is most popular in consequence, is working in the river bed. When the river falls to a low level, parties start working along the edge of the stream, or in detached pools of water. Then also breakwaters, or dams, are put in to divert the stream, and when the walls are complete the water within them is pumped out, and work commenced in the bed. This can be started usually about May, and continued until the river "comes down," which may happen at any time after September, but it is often as late as December. In former years these breakwaters were very small affairs, in most cases individual diggers putting in their own walls, and only enclosing one or perhaps two claims; but during the last 15 years some very large areas have been drained and worked. Generally a number of diggers form a syndicate, and contribute each a share of the expenses of construction and pumping, and then work out their claims. Sometimes one capitalist, or a company, puts in a large breakwater, and then either sells the claims to diggers or lets them out on shares.

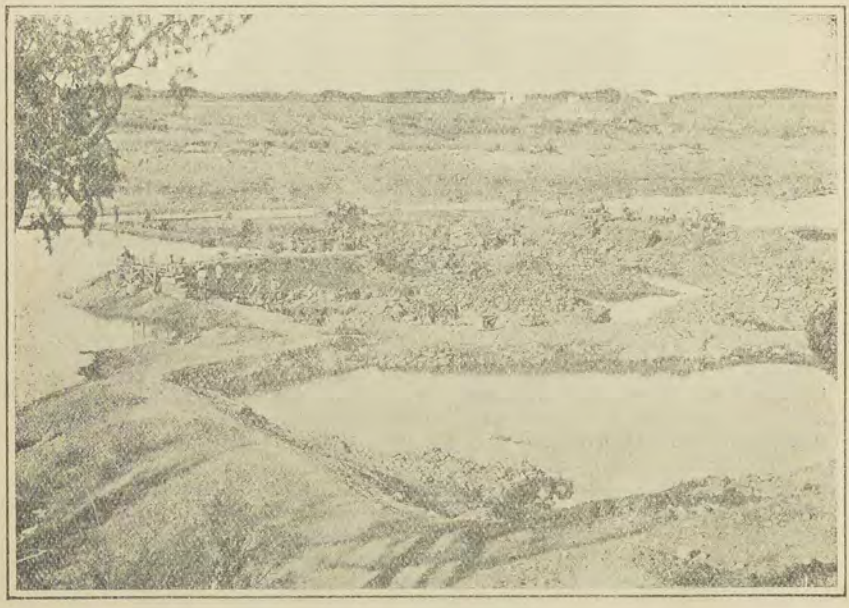


Opening of Tunnel in Shaft 40ft. deep. Taken from mouth of Shaft at mid-day.

[Photo by C. J. Parsons, Barkly West.

The river ground produces good quality diamonds, and also a very large percentage of big stones. During the last twelve years, large breakwaters have been put in at Barkly West, Good Hope, Gong Gong, Waldeck's Plant, Longlands, Winter's Rush, and Delpoort's Hope; also on the private properties of Pniel and the New Vaal River Diamond and Exploration Companies' Estates. During the past season the river has been worked at Eland's Drift, and has proved very rich in places.

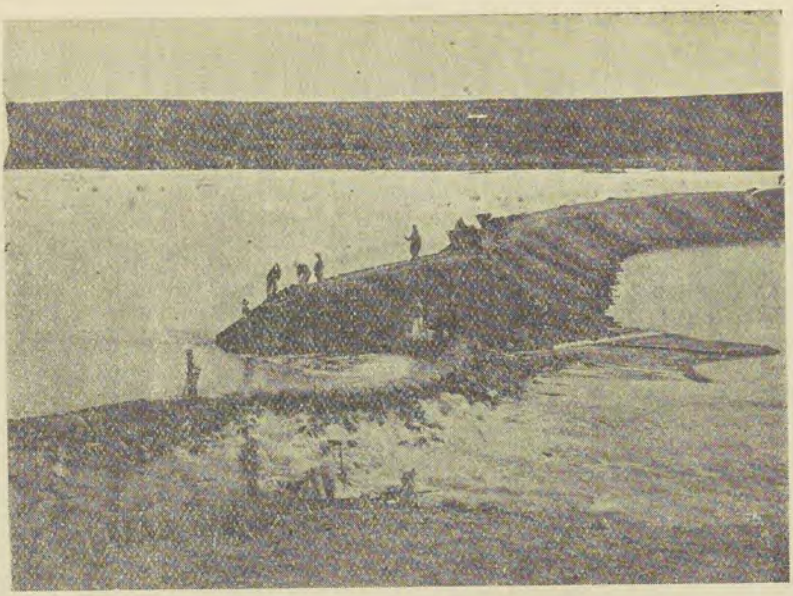
A. E. du Toit's Claim in the River, Barkly West, 1901.



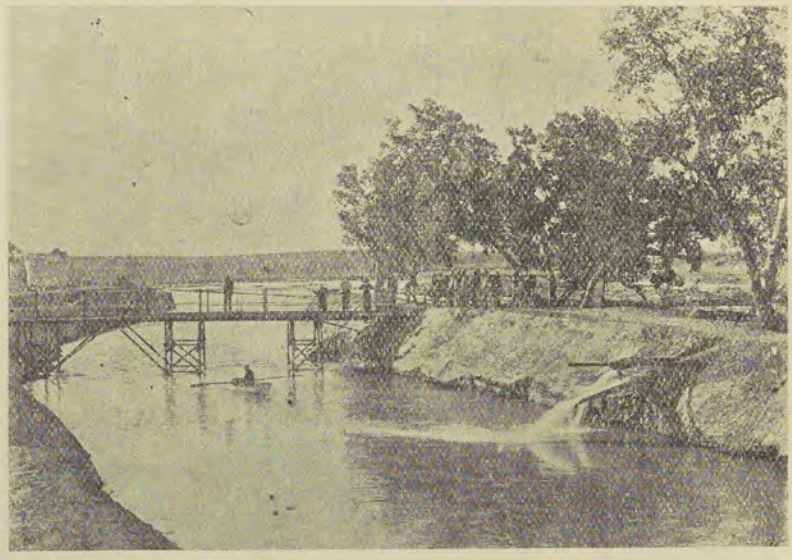
Delpoort's Hope Breakwater, water half pumped out.

Work inside Breakwater, after water has been pumped out.

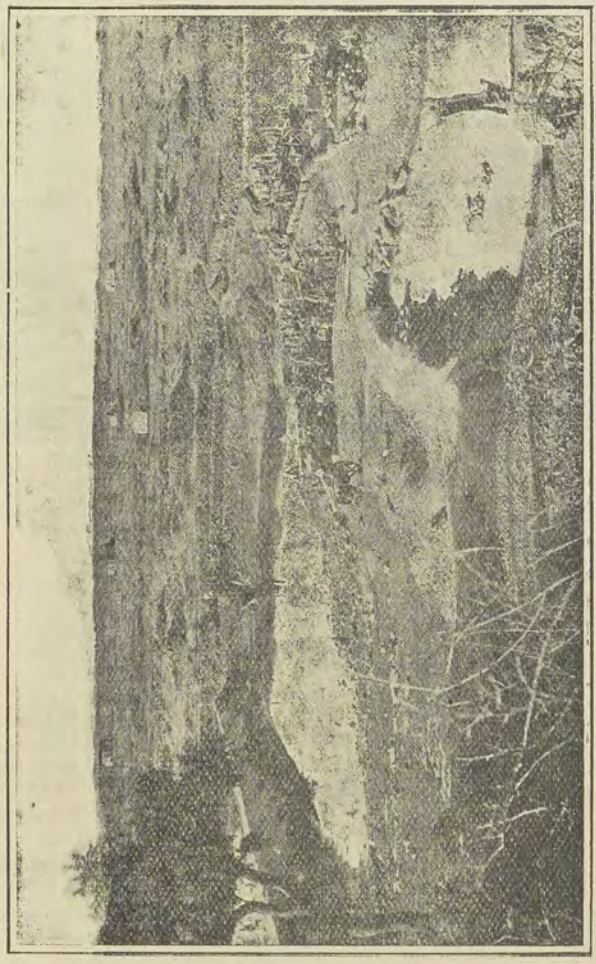
Working in River Bed, Sydney.



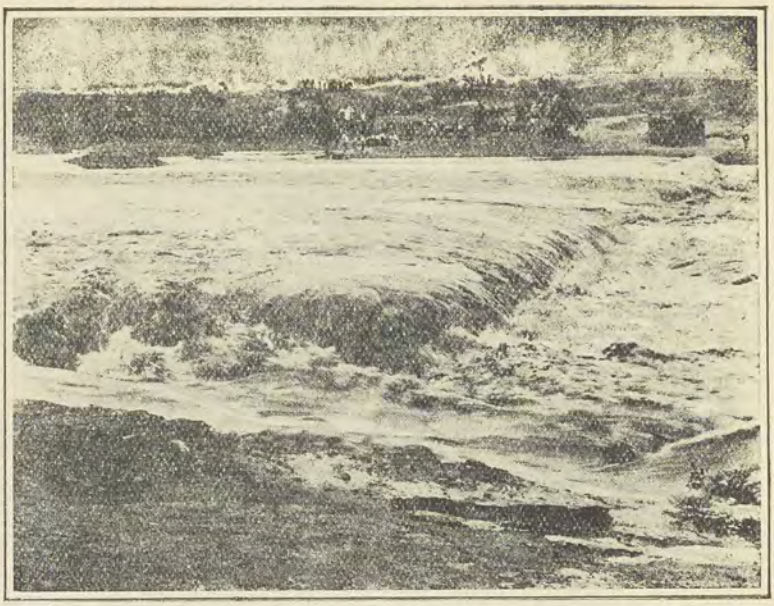
Sydney Pont Pool Breakwater Constructed 1910. Approximate cost. £3,000. Yielded about £90,000 worth of diamonds. Channel walls nearly a mile long. Area broken off 500 claims of 30ft. x 60ft.



Outflow Channel and Bridge at Sydney Pont Pool Breakwater, 1910.



Breakwater previous to the River coming down



River coming down: Breakwater submerged.

CHAPTER III.

SOME HISTORIC ALLUVIAL AND RIVER-BED DIAMONDS.

The O'Reilly Diamond.—The first in importance, from the standpoint of South African history, is undoubtedly the alleged first diamond found, or at least the first diamond made public in South Africa, viz., the "O'Reilly Diamond," which was brought to public notice in October, 1867, and weighed a little over 21 carats. Various as are the accounts with reference to the finding of this now famous diamond, the account given by Jack O'Reilly himself to the late Dr. Matthews, in 1876, cannot be controverted; moreover, I recall that my old uncle, Roderick Barker, who knew O'Reilly and his party well, considered it the true and correct account of the finding of the O'Reilly Diamond.

This is O'Reilly's own story of the finding of the first diamond:—

"I was trading round as usual, never dreaming of anything particular occurring, when in October, 1867, I outspanned at a farm belonging to a Boer named Niekerk, close to the Orange River. His youngsters, when I came there, were playing with pebbles just like the 'alleytors' and 'commoners' beloved by Master Bardell in 'Pickwick,' and their father was standing alongside watching them. Seeing me looking on, he pointed out one stone prettier than the rest in the hand of a little Griqua servant boy who was minding his children, and said: "Dars a mooi klippe voor een borst spelt!" (There's a pretty stone for a woman's brooch.) I had a diamond ring on my finger, and I fancied I could see some resemblance to the cut stone, and, taking it from the boy, I tried to scratch my initials on the window pane, as I had somewhere seen that this was one of the tests of a diamond. As soon as I found that the stone would cut glass, I offered to give Niekerk, if he would allow me to take it away, one-half of what I might get for it, supposing it proved to be a diamond. This he jumped at. I at once inspanned my oxen into my wagon and went to Hopetown, our trading centre at the time. When I got there I showed it to Solomon, the storekeeper—you must know him—who chaffed me, and laughingly bet me a 'dozen of beer' that it wasn't worth anything, and he remarked that I must be an utter idiot to bother about such a mare's nest. From Hopetown I trekked on to Colesberg, where I took another opinion. I asked the Resident Magistrate this time. He wasn't sure what it was, but advised me to send it to Capetown. I didn't care to do that, however, so I sent it to Grahamstown instead, where lived Dr. Atherstone, who knows all about such things. When I arrived there myself shortly afterwards and saw him, he said there was no doubt it was a diamond, and a good one too. Dr. Atherstone sent it to Sir Philip Wodehouse, then Governor, who bought it for £500, half of which I gave, as promised, to Niekerk."

As stated by O'Reilly, the stone was bought (in its rough state) by Sir Philip Wodehouse at the valuation placed upon it by Dr. W. G. Atherstone, £500. Through Mons. E. Héritte, the French Consul at Capetown, it was exhibited at the Paris Exhibition in that year. Dr. W. G. Atherstone, who passed the verdict on this stone, and whose belief in the possibility of South Africa being a diamondiferous country was unshakeable, vehemently urged that the Home Government should be approached for the purpose of carrying out an extensive geological survey and examination of the country on a prospecting scale, for the simple reason that the Colonial Government was so desperately hard up at that time that they positively could not afford to do so. However, the necessity for accepting any assistance from the Home Government was entirely done away with by the discovery of

"The Star of South Africa."—This was found by a Griqua on the the farm Sandfontein (?)—a star that lighted the way for thousands of adventurous spirits from many lands in their search for the precious diamond; the star that practically revealed the fabulous wealth locked up beneath the virgin soil of this Galilee of South Africa.

It was a magnificent white, weighing 83½ carats, and Schalk van Niekerk sold it at Hopetown to Lilienfeld Brothers for £11,200. This stone was subsequently exhibited in the rough at Port Elizabeth and Capetown, and afterwards sent to England, and cut by Hond & Roskel, who purchased it, and finally sold it for £30,000 to the Earl of Dudley. It is now known as the "Dudley Diamond."

The "Star of the South" is expressly mentioned here for the sake of explaining clearly that it has nothing to do with South Africa, as some suppose. The diamond known as the "Star of the South" is a Brazilian stone, found in 1853 in the diamond area of Minas-Geraes by an old negro woman. It is reported to be the largest of Brazilian stones; it weighed 254 carats in the rough, and was slightly off-coloured. Where this stone is to-day it is difficult to say.

Great difficulty is met with in procuring reliable data in connection with the finding of any large or remarkable River diamonds, for unless one has the good fortune to come across the lucky owner or finder when he is in the humour, it is a hundred to one that later on the latter has reverted to a state of impecuniosity, and does not feel disposed to speak of his past luck; and, this being a true account, the writer is not inclined to place anything on record that is not strictly accurate. Moreover, the finding of a diamond is treated by the digger as fairy gold and lucky, but to remain lucky demands the very strictest secrecy.

The "Fly" Diamond.—Old Antonie Williams, who later ran the pont at Windsorton, was in partnership with Robert Spalding, and in 1872 the latter bought a claim from F. Pepper, sen., at Waldeck's Plant, in a gully, now known as Smith's Gully. From this claim was unearthed a pure white octahedron, weighing 60 carats in the rough. The diamond received its name from there being something resembling a fly in the centre of it.

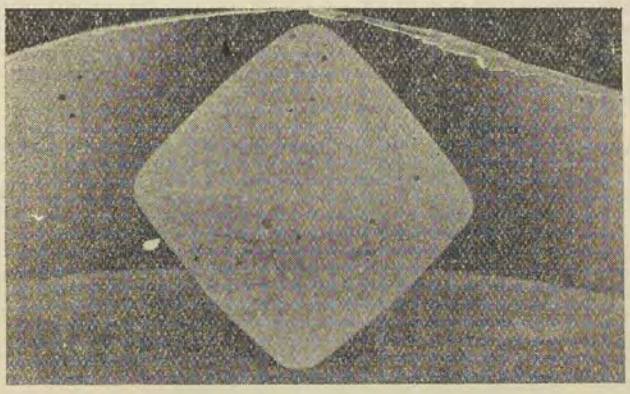
The "Stewart Diamond."—From this claim of Spalding and Antonie, at Waldeck's Plant, came yet another, and one of the most widely known of River diamonds, still remembered by the old Vaal diggers as the "Spalding" diamond, which was found during the latter end of 1872. It was a light yellow, and weighed in the rough 288 carats. The "Port Elizabeth Telegraph" of November 22, 1872, gives the following account of this diamond: "The claim from which this gem was taken was originally owned by a Mr. F. Pepper, by him sold to a Mr. Spalding

Exact size of "Spalding" (now Stewart) Diamond, found at Waldeck's Plant, November, 1872. 223½ carats in the rough.

"Stewart" Diamond To-day. Found by Spalding's Party, November, 1872, at Waldeck's Plant.

for £30, and handed over by the latter to one Antonie, to work on shares. The claim was quite an outside one, and not thought much of by the owner, but as others were finding near him, he thought it was just possible he might also find a gem. He persevered until first the 'Fly' Diamond, and next, after further toil, this prize rewarded his labour. Antonie's feelings when he first obtained a glimpse of the treasure may be better imagined than described. He says that he was working in the claim, when he told his boy to leave off picking in the centre and commence at the side. Not being understood, he took a pick and began himself, when he was suddenly held spellbound by the sight of a large stone with the primary aspect of a diamond. For some minutes he could neither speak nor move for fear of dispelling the apparent illusion, but, collecting his energies, he made a dart forward and clutched the prize. Even then, however, he did not feel quite safe, and it required a great effort to reach Mr. Spalding's cart, which had to be called into requisition. For two whole days he was unable to eat anything from the intensity of his excitement." This stone was eventually bought by a merchant at Port Elizabeth for £6,000 or so, a Mr. Stewart, who shipped it to England, and had it cut and set.

The "Litkie Diamond."—This unique stone, named after the buyer, E. M. Litkie, was found at Good Hope in 1891 by a native. I quote the particulars as given to me by an old digger who saw the stone, and who is convinced of his facts. It weighed in the rough 205½ carats, and was purchased for the ridiculous price of £250, made up in stock and otherwise. It was a perfect octahedron, and the most hand-



The "Litkie" Diamond." 205½ carats.
[Photo by Middlebrook, Kimberley.

somely clarified River diamond known up to that time. On second handling it realised £600, finally fetching £1,050. Another digger who also saw this stone informs me that, after purchasing the stone for £250 from a native, Buyer Williams immediately sold the stone to Buyer Litkie for £1,250. However, that does not alter the fact that diamond buying is not altogether an unprofitable game.

"The Carns" Diamond was also found about this time. It proved to be a mackle-diamond of 107 carats, and fetched only £300.

The "Beaumont Diamond" was a 273 carats cleavage found at "Grootkop," Windsorton, and sold for £4,000 to B. Oppenheimer.

The "Brady Diamond."—This diamond was found in January, 1902, and was until that time the largest River diamond discovered, weighing 330 carats in the rough, and valued at £3,630. It was found on Brady's farm, at Fourteen Streams, by two old partner diggers, who were as inseparable as Castor and Pollux, and who came out to this country in 1874 and worked on the early Capetown-Wellington railroad extension. They were known as the "Two Billies" (William Fowles and William Jennings). Both are deceased. The "Brady" was a coated stone of good colour, but when opened up on the mill was found to be spotted, and the cutter is said to have lost heavily over it.

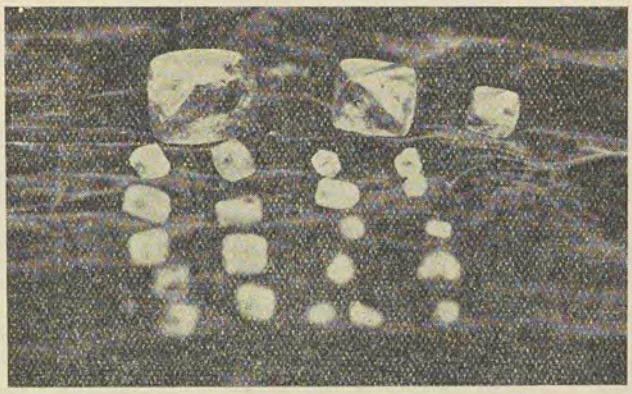
The "Orpin-Palmer" Diamond.—Shortly after the opening of the Vaal River Estate Company, in 1902, Messrs. Orpin and Palmer (George, sen.) were digging under lease from the company, when the attention of George Palmer was suddenly arrested by the exclamation of one of the boys, who, pointing to the rough rubble stones that had already passed over the screening, remarked that there was something that looked like a diamond. It proved to be a diamond of 117¾ carats, of a dull white colour. It was valued by Mr. Arend Brink at £1,000, and was purchased at that price by Mr. Morris Mendelssohn. The usual 10 per cent. charged by the company was not paid on this stone, as the company had promised to forego its percentage on the first £1,000 stone found on the estate, and, further, to give a gold medal to the finder. This was done by Mr. S. Mendelssohn, head director of the company. Since then many diamonds above that size and value have been found on the Vaal River Estate. Had it not been for the lynx-eyed native, who, fortunately, was honest, this stone would have been lost to the owner; the boy's honesty was rewarded in the shape of a most liberal "bonsella" (or gift).

About this time a diamond of some 80 carats was found by Michael Breen on the Company's ground, and sold for £500, the finder receiving the bronze medal promised by the Company for the first £500 stone.

The "Barkly Breakwater Diamond," and others.—In a breakwater at Barkly, constructed at a cost of £1,000, by Long Schmidt and Otto Bergstroom, backed by Mr. A. E. du Toit, who was the first man to start breakwaters on anything like a large scale at Klipdrift (Barkly West). Mr. Bergstroom, on October 20, 1905, when returning to his claim after handing in his diamond register at Barkly, had the above-named stone handed up to him by his piccanin wash boy. It was oblong in shape, of a dull steely colour, and thickly coated, weighed 109¼ carats, and sold for £1,050. Among other stones found in this breakwater may be mentioned a 73 carat yellow found by Jack Hood, another of the same weight found by Percy Tozer, a 79½ carat yellow stone by S. von Musits, and one of a beautiful green tinge of 66 carats belonging to Mr. Adamson, of Barkly West. These stones averaged £6 10s. to £7 per carat, as prices were running then.

The "Burgess Diamond."—This diamond was a square block of fine white cleavage, found by a native working for Mr. R. Burgess, at Klipdam No. 1, in the month of September, 1907. It weighed 220 carats, and was valued at £2,420.

The "Otto Bergstroom Diamond" came from the deep ground near the well-known pot-holes of Gong Gong. It was found by Mr. Bergstroom in September, 1907, and realised £759 7s. 6d. It weighed 121½ carats, was of a clear yellow colour, and a perfect octahedron in shape.

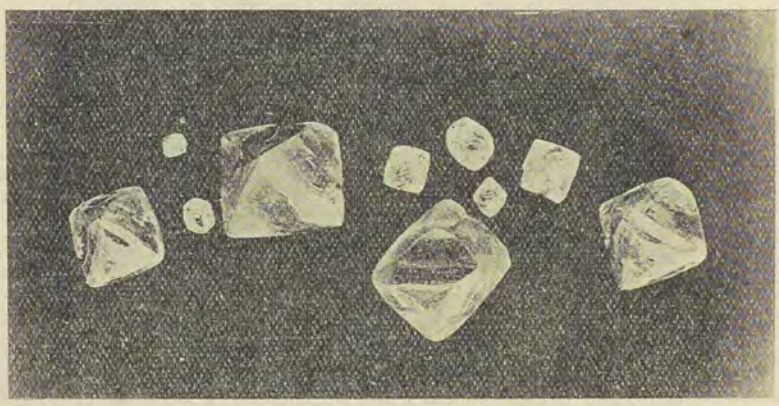


The "Otto Bergstroom Parcel," found at Gong Gong.
The three top, 121½ carats, 58½ carats, and 31 carats.
Total weight of parcel, 325 carats.
[Photo by S. McConnell.

The "Bob Gove Diamond."—This is at present the largest River diamond ever found. The finder of it informs me that it was a well-shaped, though slightly irregular, octahedron, as the copyright illustration shows, with a small borehole on the one side, and was a very

The "Bob Gove" Diamond.
Largest River Diamond found. 337 carats. Found at Delpoort's Hope. July, 1908.
(Copyright, H. B. White, Longlands.)

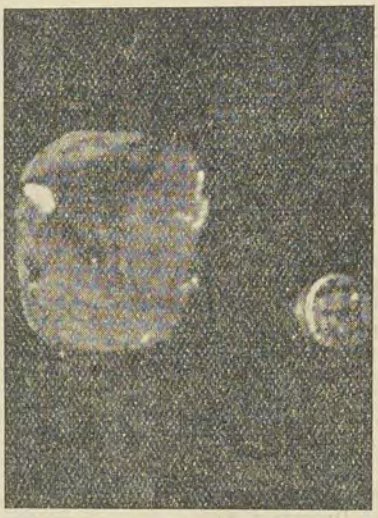
clear yellow colour. It was found in an old breakwater below Police Island, at Delpoort's Hope, on July 22, 1908, by Bob Gove, whilst handling the rough sieve. It turned the scale at 337 carats, and was valued at £2,000, though what this stone actually realised is a moot point, as Gove received from Burgard, the storekeeper who was backing him with a small gang of four boys only, a lump sum as his share. Where the stone now rests, or for what it was finally sold, is a secret locked in the German breast of Burgard himself.



The "John Holmes' Parcel," found in deep ground, Gong Gong, March, 1908. Total weight, 204 carats. (Copyright, H. B. White, Longlands.)

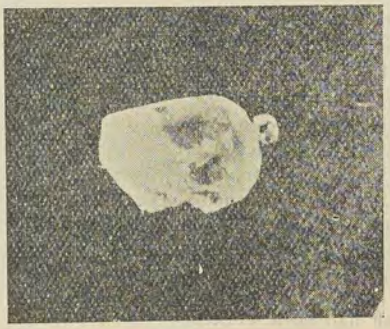
The "John Holmes Parcel."—The deep ground at Gong Gong has been responsible for many a beautiful and valuable gem, and rich indeed have been the finds in and near its famous pot-holes, and the adjacent "Bergstroom's Prospect." The gems here illustrated were found in March, 1908, at a depth of 68 feet, on the side of a stone reef in a very rich pocket scooped out like a funnel. The total weight of the parcel was 204 carats, the two largest weighing 65½ and 66 carats respectively. This peerless parcel realised but five guineas a carat, owing to the slump in the diamond market at the time.

The Fineberg-Jones Diamond."—This splendid byewater of 206½ carats was found on April 11, 1911, in a shaft 20 feet deep, on the Vaal River Estate, in the lime kopje of Niekerk's Rush, and a few feet from the boundary line dividing the Vaal River Estate from the Government ground. It was rather irregular in shape, and though of a yellowish colour, like most large byewater diamonds, it showed a very clear white in the centre. It was handed up to the working partner, Jack Jones, by the pick boy, who could not be convinced for some time that it was really a diamond. The stone was valued at £9 a carat, but the partners eventually sold it to Mr. Max Absche, of Kimberley, for £10 a carat. Mr Fineberg considers that the stone might easily realise to-day £12 or £14 a carat. It almost turned the weighing scales in the shop at 2oz. avoirdupois.



The "Fineberg-Jones" Diamond.

206½ carats. Found on Vaal River Estate, Niekerk's. Fetched £10 per carat. Compared with signet ring at side.



Webster's Kopje Diamonds found by Wilson, December, 1907. Large stone 124 carats; small one at side 6 carats, value, approximately, £1,500.

[Photo by S. McConnell.

DISCOVERY OF THE DROOGVELD "SLUIT."

Undoubtedly the richest alluvial diamond-bearing "sluit" the diamond world can record is that of Droogveld, discovered in 1912. Here are the bare facts of its discovery: The area where this "sluit" exists had been prospected time and again by various prospectors, old hands, and new chums, and passed over as worthless. In 1912 a herd boy, looking after cattle belonging to two diggers named "Bill" Johnson and "Jack" Love-

grove, examined one of the old prospect holes. Being an old claim-labourer, he, of course, knew all about "bantoms." This herd boy picked out some excellent "bantoms" from the old prospect hole, and took these "bantoms" to "Bill" Johnson. Bill went to the hole, and tried a "wash," which he found most promising. Major Tuckey, residential director of the Company, was approached, and permission obtained for the right of prospect over an area of five hundred claims, and thus the rich "sluit" was discovered. The walls of the "sluit" ran perpendicularly down from twenty to forty feet from the surface to the bottom, and were of solid rock. The "sluit" proper was about 100 feet wide and a couple of miles long, and after its discovery every square inch was quickly pegged-off by the diggers. Work really started there in June, 1912, and at once affected the Company's output, which ran up to 16,660 carats (worth £124,770) for the six months up to the end of the year. In the next twelve months the output was 50,070 carats, worth £336,266. Some of the lucky diggers in the "sluit" ultimately cleared sums of from ten to twenty thousand pounds each, and bought themselves farms, among these lucky ones being Commandant L. B. O'Donovan, Messrs. W. Black, R. Bridges, J. Hartwell, "Jack" Lovegrove, and A. Geyer, whilst others invested their money and retired to live in England.

I can but mention a few finds of this wonderful "sluit" and the adjacent rich runs of Droogveld which occur to me at the moment:—

"Joe Condell's Diamond," found in the "sluit" October, 1912, weighed 114¼ carats, value £1,000.

"Hartwell & Bridges' Diamond," found in the "sluit" January, 1913, weighed 117½ carats, value £1,400; and another gem of this partnership in July, 1914, 130½ carats, value £1,040.

"J. Sarson's Diamond," found in the "sluit" March, 1913, weighed 150 carats, value £1,740.

"Kennedy Bros. & Wise Diamond," found in the "sluit" November, 1913, weighed 121¼ carats, and sold for £1,275.

"Fred Mark's Diamond," found at Droogveld No. 1¾, September, 1912, weighed 104¾ carats, value £1,260.

"The Ben Engelsman Diamond," found Droogveld No. 3, 24th June, 1913, was a first Cape-white octahedron of 125 carats weight, and was purchased by Mr. Max Absche, of Kimberley, for £1,687 10s.

"The Rhodesia Smith Diamond," weighed 160½ carats, valued at £1,700, and found at Droogveld No. 1½, on August 16th, 1913. This diamond was picked out of the gravel face of an abandoned claim (in the reserved area which had been worked by the New Vaal River Diamond and Exploration Company) by a native labourer who had descended into the claim for natural purposes. The boy handed the stone to his employer, Mr. Samuel James Smith—better known as Rhodesia Smith—who in turn handed it to the New Vaal River Diamond and Exploration Company. The Company handsomely rewarded the "boy," and offered Smith £200, which Smith declined, saying that he did not want to be paid for being honest, and he asked that the amount should be divided amongst various London Charities which he named.

"Lucas & Goakes' Diamond," found at Droogveld No. 3, 31st October, 1913 weighed 196¾ carats, value £1,770 15s.

"The Droogveld Amber Diamond" was found by the digging partnership of Lucas Bros & Bowker on 31st October, 1913, at Droogveld No. 3, and weighed in the rough 178½ carats, the Company's valuation being £804 for

the stone. The partnership, however, refused this valuation, and exported the stone. One of the partners informs me that since then the gem has been cut into a brilliant of 60 carats. Sir Wm. Crookes has examined the diamond, and pronounced it to be a genuine golden amber, and the best coloured stone he has ever seen. An offer of £6,000 has been refused for it.

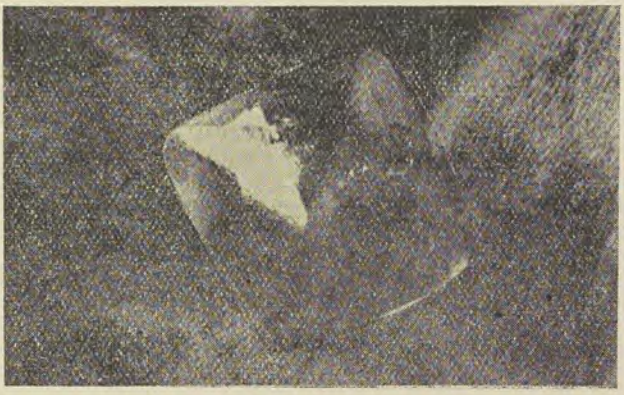
"Farmar & Cocking Diamond," found Droogveld No. 3, April, 1914, weighed 113¾ carats, value £1,030.

"M. J. Botha Diamond," found Droogveld No. 3, May, 1914, of 122½ carats, valued at £1,000.

"J. J. du Plessis Diamond," found Droogveld No. 2, July, 1914, of 119½ carats, valued at £1,320, and the partners, "Breen & Pettit," had one diamond of 114 carats, valued at £950 found at Droogveld No. 1½ on 31st December, 1914, and one more recently (12th March, 1915), of 122 carats, valued at £1,037.

You naturally ask what was the present writer doing at the time of these rich finds. Dear reader, I did peg-off at Droogveld, but, like the man who fell out of the balloon, I was not in it!

"The Harry Young Diamond" came from the river bed at a place known as the Horse-Shoe Bend, on account of the sharp angular turn taken by the river at this point, between Niekerk's Rush and Keiskamma. This diamond was found on 11th July, 1913, and like most of the larger



The "Harry Young Diamond," 269½ carats, value £2,700.
[Photo by H. B. White, Longlands.

stones, was of a yellow colour; it was octahedron in shape, and turned the scale at 269½ carats, possibly the largest diamond found on the Vaal River Estate ground. It sold for little over £10 per carat, realising £2,700.

"The A. Steyn Diamond" was an Austin's Rush stone valued at £1,555, weighing 141¼ carats, and found 3rd May, 1912.

The "Van Zyl Diamond."—If ever a diamond was welcomed by mortal man, it was this same gem. I give Frikkie Van Zyl's own account of its discovery. He says: "It was discovered on December 19, 1913, on a Friday, at Cawood's Hope, Pniel Estate. Its actual weight was 229½

carats; in shape a perfect octahedron, and deeply tinged with yellow, and was classed as a second Cape. It was picked out of a round hollow filled with gravel in the hard rock, and handed to me by one of my pick boys, Klein Kooi. A little while afterwards, my residence being

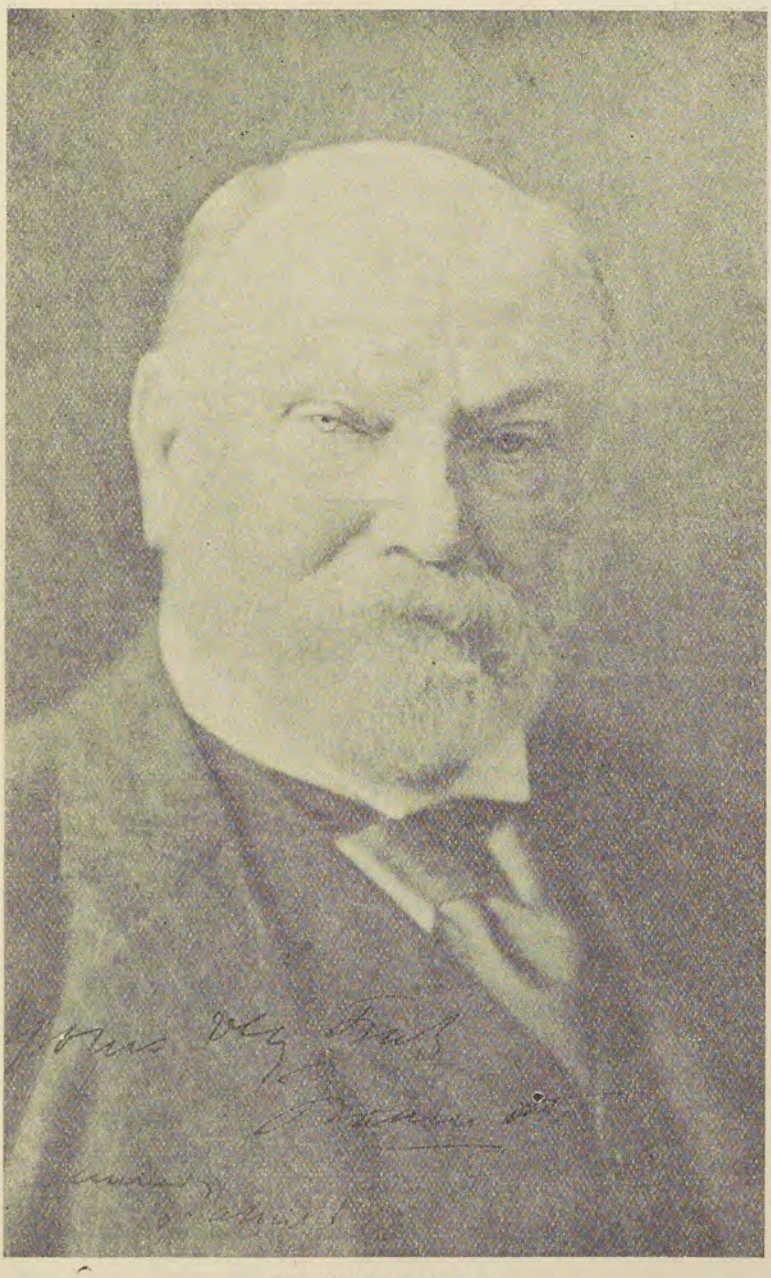
The "Van Zyl Diamond." 229½ carats.
[Photo by J. Watson, Kimberley.]

close by, I put the diamond into the hand of my four-year-old son to present to his mother. The little fellow exclaimed as loudly as he could: 'Ma! Keik hier wat voor een mooi olieklip het Pa gekrei!' and placed the gem in his mother's hand. Mrs. Van Zyl was for a moment speechless, and could hardly realise that the stone belonged to me. I was very far back financially, owing money running well into four figures, and I felt as though some unseen hand had lifted a big mountain off my shoulders. It was disposed of on Saturday, December 20, at Barkly West to Mr. G. Scott Ronaldson, of the firm of MacGill & Ronaldson, at the price of £10 per carat, totalling £2,292 10s., although valued previously at only £8 10s. per carat by the purchasing firm. The diamond was the largest ever found on the Pniel Estate, and at the spot it was found digging operations had been carried on for the previous half-century!"

The "Dan Campbell Diamond," unearthed during the month of April, 1916, from the old river bed at Gong Gong, weighed 192¼ carats, and sold for £1,666.

Here is an instance of luck on the River. Within only the past few months a new comer arrived and started digging outside one of the fissures at Barkly West with a gang of four boys, and in less than three weeks was rewarded by the finding of a beautiful first Cape octahedron of 12¾ carats, which fetched £217. Many a similar instance could be related.

Whilst sending this book to the Press we learn that Mr. R. J. (Bob) Craig has found a stone on the Vaal River Estate just over 100 carats, which realised £1,725. Good luck to him!



FRANCIS OATS, Esq.
Chairman of De Beers Consolidated Mines, Ltd.

CHAPTER IV.

DIAMOND VALUES AND DIAMOND BUYERS.

The comparative values of diamonds have varied enormously since diggers first began their search for the gems on the banks of the Vaal. In the earliest days they apparently fetched a good price, but after the discovery of the mines and the vastly increased output, the values declined greatly. The diamond being purely an article of luxury, the market has always been exceedingly sensitive; the slightest political or financial trouble invariably causing a sharp drop in prices, and if prolonged or serious, actual panic may occur.

PERSONALIA: THE DIAMOND BUYERS.

In 1885, a financial crisis of an acute nature caused a slump in the market, and prices fell to an unprecedentedly low figure, not only on the River, but also in Kimberley, and the outlook was very serious. The De Beers Company held a very large reserve stock of diamonds, and although the pressure was relieved by one or two of the biggest dealers taking over large parcels, it was evident to the heads of the industry that it was necessary to obtain and keep control of the market. With this object, the Diamond Buying Syndicate was formed, the first firms in it being Messrs. Wernher, Beit & Co., Messrs. Barnato Brothers, Messrs. Dreyfus, Bernheim & Co., Messrs. Dunkelsbuhler & Co., and Messrs. Joseph Brothers.

The Syndicate contracted to take the whole production of De Beers Company, and the wisdom of thus establishing control of the market has been amply proved since; and never more conclusively than at the outbreak of the present war, when the Syndicate was found to be holding about £1,000,000 worth of diamonds, which it was decided to lock away and hold until affairs improved. The result of this policy is seen in the present healthy condition of the market, which would certainly have collapsed entirely, possibly for years, had this enormous quantity been forced to a sale.

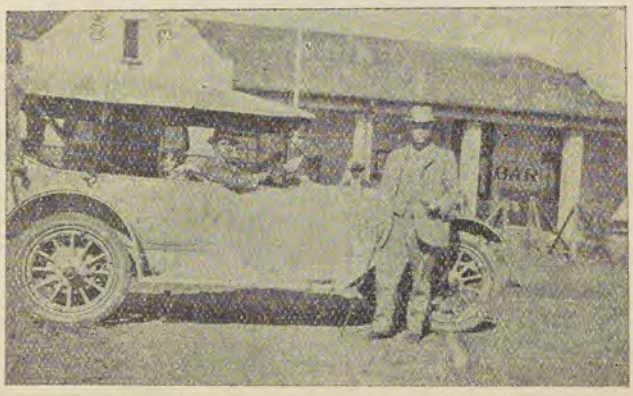
River diggers have all along benefited to an inestimable extent by the control, and they can thank the Syndicate for the present free and buoyant condition of the market. The representatives of the Diamond Syndicate along the River are Messrs. A. W. Weatherby and R. S. Chatfield, who are thoroughly popular, and purchase their full share of the output.

For many years after the opening of the alluvial fields the buyers, prominent amongst whom were Messrs. Julius Pam, E. M. Litkie, and Trutenbach, carried on their business in a very informal and unconventional manner, going round through the claims and buying stones there. This was known as "kopje walloping." Afterwards, things were done in a more decorous fashion; each buyer had his own office on the different diggings, with his flag flying over it, and a board bearing his name affixed to the door or walls. This change, which was due to the requirements of the Diamond Detective Department, was welcomed by the diggers. Mention may be made of a few of the buyers in the 'eighties and 'nineties.

Mr. E. W. Williams and Mr. J. L. Fraser, unlike most of their confreres, did not live in Kimberley, but at Union Kopje, Gong-Gong, and bought there and at the other diggings. The former was a particularly well-read and interesting man, and generally acknowledged to be the best authority on the River on the question of the value and place of origin of a diamond. His expert opinion was often appealed to in High Court cases relating to diamonds. Mr. Fraser was a well-liked dealer, and his musical talents often afforded great pleasure at social gatherings.

Mr. E. A. Bowley was for some years probably the best known buyer up and down the River, and bought more than any other. He was a man of infinite sympathy and kindness of heart, and his purse was always open to the necessitous digger.

Mr. Tom Bell was a familiar figure for many years; he is now buying on the Transvaal Fields. Messrs. Krauss Brothers were large dealers, who were always open to give a good price for a big stone or

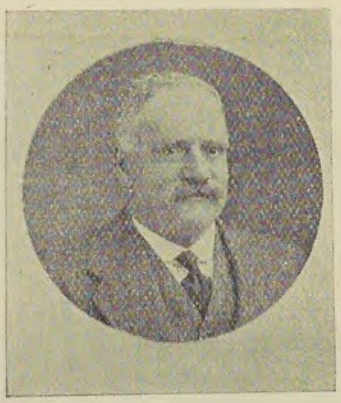


TOM BELL—old River Diamond Buyer, now at Bloemhof.

choice parcel. Mr. H. J. G. Roberts bought for years in connection with the above firm, and was specially known as the right man to whom to take a fancy stone. He is still buying on the River, together with Mr. Rogaly.

Mr "Sammy" Wilson, of Windsorton, is acknowledged to be the oldest River diamond buyer. He still resides at Windsorton, his old headquarters.

S. (SAMMY) WILSON. Acknowledged oldest River Diamond Buyer. Residence, Windsorton.



"GEORDIE" AARONSON. River Diamond Buyer for past 33 years.

Mr. "Geordie" Aaronson has been a conspicuous and popular personality for thirty-three years. A good sportsman and of an expansive and genial nature, he is known to everyone. Mr. D. MacGill first appeared in the character of a digger, but

G. SCOTT RONALDSON.

River Diamond Buyer (acknowledged expert on River stones.)

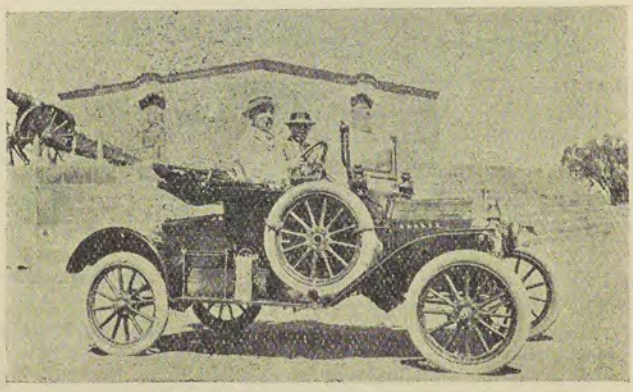
exchanged that role for the more comfortable and lucrative career of a buyer, in conjunction with Mr. E. A. Bowley. After the latter gentleman's death, he continued to deal in diamonds in partnership with Mr. G. Scott Ronaldson, who has been connected with the trade ever since his school days; and what Mr. Ronaldson does not know about it must surely be a negligible quantity. He is an acknowledged expert on River diamonds, Managing Director of Pniels, Ltd., and on the Board of the New Vaal River Diamond and Exploration Company.

Mr. H. Prince and Mr. N. F. Marcus are both good sportsmen, and justly popular both in business and socially.

Mr. Peter Clarke, who was for long years a digger, is a most estimate figure, with an unfailing fund of anecdote. There are at present many other buyers who pay regular visits to the Diggings, and each of them appears to make a tolerably good living; at all events, none of them show any intention of abandoning the occupation in order to adopt digging as the more profitable proposition—but space does not allow of individual mention of them all.

HARRY J. GEO. ROBERTS.

Diamond Broker in London 1882-1884; Diamond Broker and Valuator in Kimberley, 1886-1890; Buying on the River since 1892.



ALFRED ROGALY.

Diamond Buyer, Kimberley, since 1882.

ARTHUR WYNNE WEATHERBY.
River Diggings Diamond Buyer. 30 years' experience of diamonds.

N. F. MARCUS.
River Diamond Buyer.

HARRY PRINCE.
River Diamond Buyer, and
Popular Sportsman.

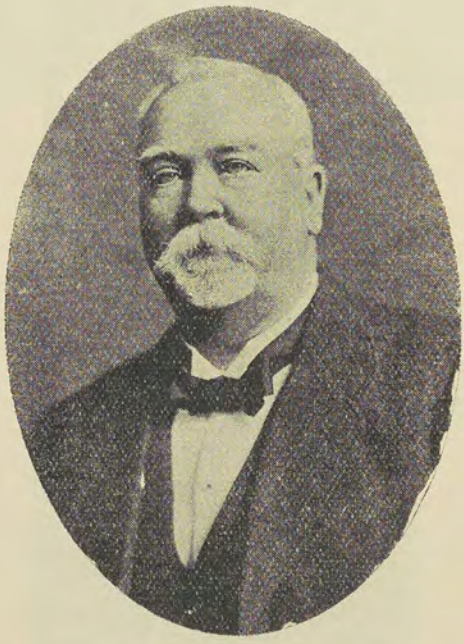
A. J. SILVERSTON.
Official Valuator at Sydney 1905-1912, and still buying on River.

ROBERT DUTHIE LAWRENCE.
Diamond Buyer, representing G. H. Bonas and Messrs. Joseph Bros.

ROBERT SIEVEWRIGHT CHATFIELD.
Diamond Buyer on River. Golf Champion, Kimberley, 1911-12-13 and 14.

H. FRIEND CLAYSON
Old digger—now buying. One of the biggest "backers" of diggers in Griqualand West. (Barkly West).

LIONEL A. H. RUTHERFOORD
Diamond Merchant. Kimberley High School boy. De Beers Diamond Office, 13 years (now River Diggings, Barkly West). Held Mile Running Championship for several years, and held Griqualand West Tennis Championship, 1905.



PETER CLARKE, Diamond Buyer.

CHAPTER V.

ADMINISTRATION AND OFFICIALS.

It is evident that an industry engaging so many individuals, and covering so wide an area as does alluvial digging on proclaimed farms, as distinguished from private estates (to which the following remarks do not apply), requires a considerable amount of Governmental administration, and it is a tribute alike to the tact and capacity of the officials, and the good sense and orderly instinct of the diggers, that this proceeds so smoothly and with so little friction. At the head of the system are two Mining Commissioners (although in the Cape Province there is no other official designation than Inspector of Claims).

One of these administers the proclaimed diggings from Warrenton down the River, with his office at Barkly West, and the other (stationed at Klerksdorp) controls the much more recent Transvaal fields. In each office there are two or more assistants, and the staff is completed by several mining constables who periodically visit all the diggings, measure off the claims, and generally see that the work is carried on with due regard to safety, and in compliance with regulations.

The duties of the Mining Commissioner, or Inspector of Claims, are many and various, and often delicate. In addition to issuing licences, transfers, and other official forms, he is the Court of Appeal in all cases of disputed ground and other questions. When called in to settle such disputes, he empanels two responsible and well-known diggers to hear the evidence with him, and, if they differ, his decision is conclusive. It is not too much to say that the verdict is invariably accepted without demur, and is recognised as being given with strict impartiality.

In the event of a new area being proclaimed a public diggings, the Mining Commissioner (or Inspector of Claims) has to attend in person and read the Act of Proclamation. He sends in at the end of every year to the Mines Department a report of that year's work and the events in his district, recording all accidents that have occurred, and also giving statistics of the number of alluvial diggers, the finds for the year, and the amount which the diamonds realised. He also includes in his jurisdiction any mines which are situated in his district.

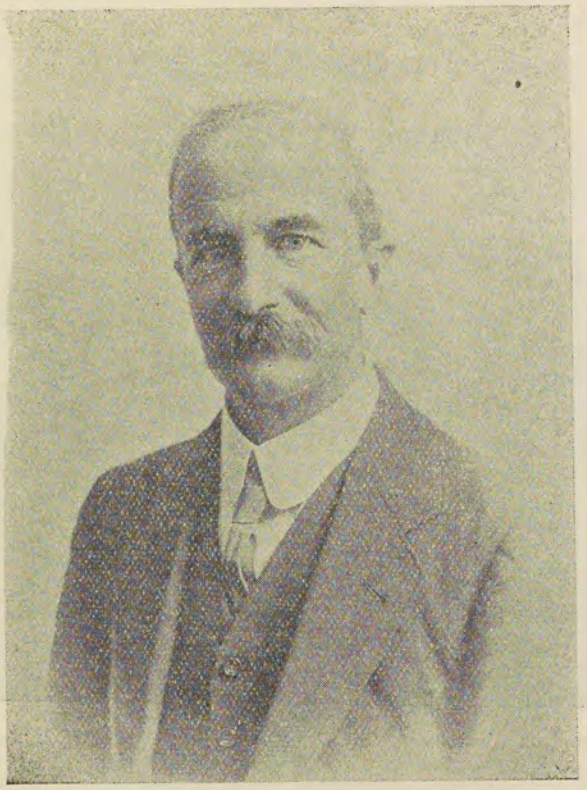
The first Inspector of Claims at Barkly West was Mr. W. Franklin, who held the office from its inception until 1906, when he retired on pension. He was an exceedingly active and capable official, who commanded the respect and regard of the whole community. He was also a good sportsman, and in every way a splendid man for the position.

He was succeeded by Mr. Herbert Rees, who had already had many years' experience in the Claims Office, and had nothing to learn when he took over the reins. During the ten years that he was Inspector and Registrar of Claims he enjoyed the full confidence, and even affection, of the diggers. Like his predecessor, he was an out-and-out sportsman,

and took a lively interest in everything that helped to cheer and enliven the lot of the whole body of residents in the district.. Amidst general regret he was transferred, in 1916, to Klerksdorp, there to administer the Transvaal fields as Commissioner of Mines.

His successor is Mr. J. T. Audas, formerly of Natal, who, judging from what has already been done during his short occupancy of the office, bids fair to maintain the traditions of harmonious relations between the Government officials and the diggers.

First Inspector of Claims, Barkly West, 1906.
WM. FRANKLIN (centre), and his sons, Arthur (left), Clifford and Gerald (right).



HERBERT REES, J.P.
(Over 30 years in District).
Inspector of Claims for 10 years. Promoted Mining Commissioner, Transvaal, 1916.

Proclamation of Released Area at Gong Gong by T. Melvill du Toit, Acting Inspector of Claims, May, 1912.

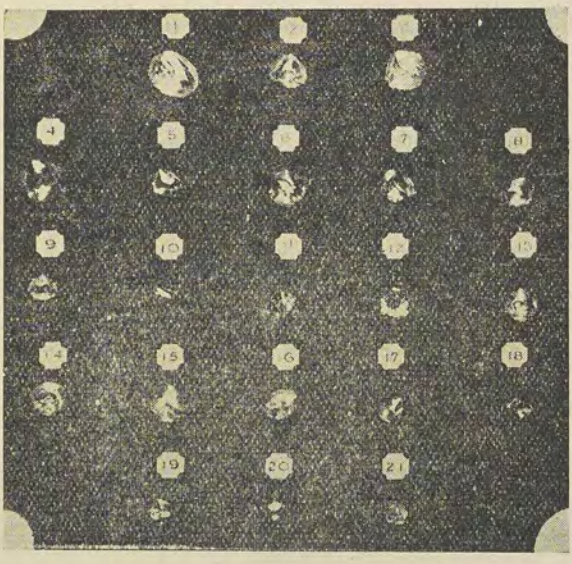
J. T. AUDAS, Inspector of Claims, Barkly West.

"I.D.B." (Illicit Diamond Buying) ON THE RIVER.

One of the chief drawbacks to digging is the constant leakage caused by the theft of diamonds by native labourers. Owing to its small bulk a diamond is of all objects the easiest to purloin and conceal, and in spite of the strictest supervision, it is almost impossible to prevent a smart "boy" from getting away with stones if he is determined to do so; and, of course, it is the large and valuable diamonds which are the most noticeable during digging operations. It is felt, too, that there is a too easy channel at hand for the disposal of stolen diamonds in the presence of the native licensed digger, who may be the thief's father, uncle,

Lieut.-Colonel T. J. WYNNE.

[Appointed Chief, Diamond Detective Department, Griqualand West, and Deputy Commissioner South African Police, 1st December, 1915, previously quarter of a century in Police Force of Cape Province, including ten years as Chief Inspector, Diamond Detective Department, on the Diamond Fields. A Justice of the Peace for the whole of the Cape Province.]



Diamonds swallowed by and recovered from one "I.D.B."
(Kindly lent by the owners.)

The valuation of the diamonds shown above is as follows:—

No. of Stone.	Weight.	Per Carat.	Value.	No. of Stone.	Weight.	Per Carat.	Value.
1	38	105/-	£199 10 0	12	14½	50/-	£36 5 0
2	21	70/-	73 10 0	13	19	65/-	61 5 0
3	30½	62/6	95 6 3	14	15½	42/6	32 18 9
4	45½	57/6	130 16 3	15	17	36/-	30 12 0
5	14	65/-	45 10 0	16	17½	45/-	39 7 6
6	23½	65/-	76 7 6	17	11	45/-	25 17 6
7	17	57/6	54 7 6	18	9½	45/-	21 7 6
8	16	57/6	46 0 0	19	5	55/-	13 15 0
9	7½	65/-	24 7 6	20	5½	50/-	13 15 0
10	7½	55/-	20 12 6	21	5	45/-	11 5 0
11	5½	52/6	14 8 9				

Total weight of diamonds—348 carats. Total value—£1,067 4 6

These diamonds were recovered many years ago, and to-day would be worth £4,000.

brother, or other relation. It is not suggested that all "boys" are thieves, or that every native digger is a party to the evil complained of, but the fact remains that the opportunity is there, and the temptation great, while it is notorious that many good stones reach the market, not through their legitimate owner, but through the medium of some native who holds a licence. It is also evident, as the records of the Detective Department show, that some white men whose standard of morality has shrunk, have engaged in this shameful traffic, which is the more disgraceful in their case than in that of a native, seeing that they should know better than the latter the iniquity of the crime, and must be aware that they sensibly damage the respect due to the superior race.

For the protection of the industry the Detective Department stations officers at various points along the River, and these render good service in bringing offenders to book. They undoubtedly do their best in very difficult circumstances, but there is a general consensus of opinion that they might with advantage be permitted by the Department to make a freer use of the "trapping" system, which is the only practical way to deal successfully with this serious evil. Perhaps, too, a little more latitude might be given to the Diggers' Committees in this connection, always conceding that the detectives are not hampered in any way. Every digger has to keep a register of diamonds found in his claim, and must make a return monthly to the Detective Department, showing the weight in carats and the amount for which he has sold.

Mines and Post Office Staff, Barkly West

[Photo by C. J. Parsons.

[P. R. Thomas (Clerk, Mines Office), J. Poynton (Postmaster); (sitting) F. J. Matthews (Chief Clerk), J. A. Roos (Mining Constable), J. T. Audas (Inspector of Claims), Miss A. M. Baker (Typist, Mines Office), Miss G. Gardner (Post Office), J. Audas, junr. (standing), W. Kividor (Messenger, Mines Office), and Thos. L. Terpend (Secretary, U.L.R. Diggers' Committee).]

STATISTICS.

The number of diggers on the fields varies very much from time to time, being influenced by many things. When prices fall to a low level, there is a considerable exodus of younger men to other occupations; when they rise, there is a corresponding increase in the numbers. At present, in spite of prices ruling high, there is, to the honour of the community, a small number on the rolls compared to some years, owing to so many of the men of military age being away doing their duty to South Africa and the Empire, either in Europe or East Africa.

A similar state of affairs obtained during the Boer War, and then, as in the present gigantic conflict, the fighting men from the River proved themselves of excellent quality, as might be expected from their condition of life. A large percentage of the men, as high as 30 per cent., have obtained commissions.

There are to-day, exclusive of those working on the Transvaal fields and on private estates, about 1,300 diggers. The revenue accruing to the Government from the diggings from Wedburg down to Douglas, for the financial half-year April to September, 1916, was £5,014 4s. 6d. In these six months these 1,300 claimholders found diamonds weighing 34,727¾ carats, valued at £234,056 12s. 0d.

CHAPTER VI.

TOWNS, VILLAGES AND CAMPS.

The earliest camps formed by the diggers on the River were Pniel and Klipdrift (soon after its foundation renamed Barkly). These two camps faced one another across the Vaal, and whereas the former was

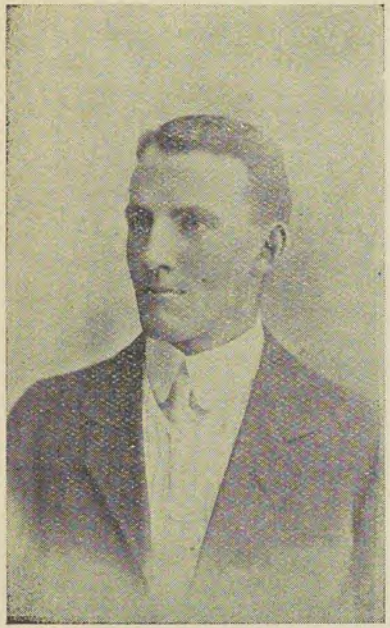
View of Barkly West from "Melville Park."

The Court Officials, Barkly West.

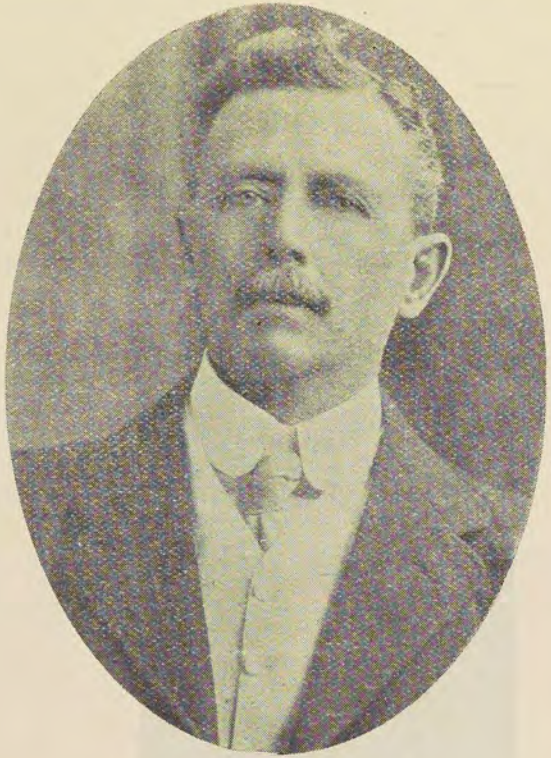
Standing (left to right): Chief Warder C. J. Parsons and Head Constable M. Driscoll.

Sitting: Messrs. G. T. Walter (R.M.'s Clerk), A. S. P. Campbell (A.R.M.), E. C. A. Welsh (R.M.), C. Carstens (Revenue Clerk), J. Wiseman (Messenger of Court).

[Photo lent by Chief Warder C. J. Parsons, Barkly West.

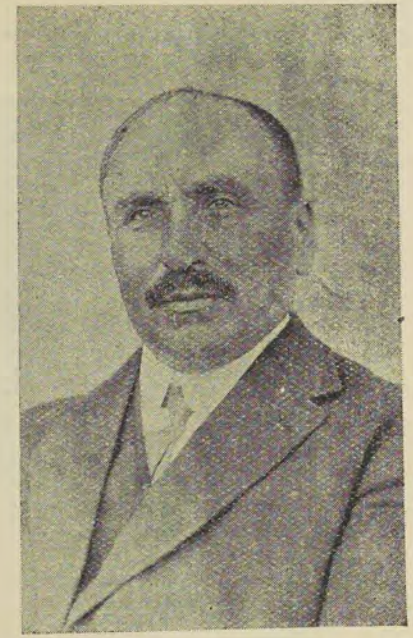


DUDLEY WINDSOR.
First Mayor of Windsorton.

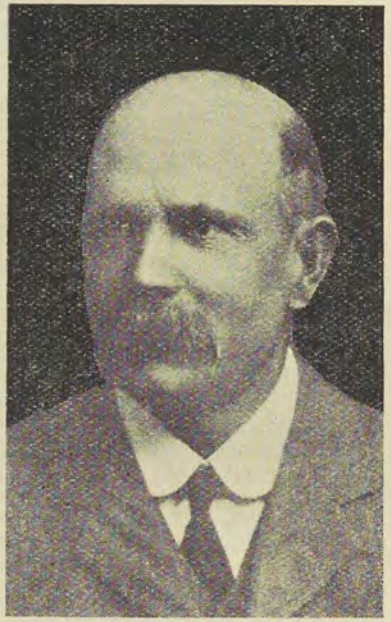


GEO. C. WAKEFORD, J.P.

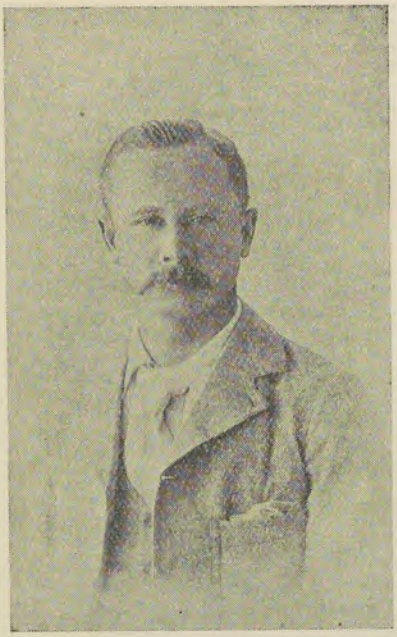
Griqualand West since 1876. Chairman Barkly West Village Management Board, 1906; Government nominee for School and Hospital Boards; member Divisional Council; Mayor of Barkly West since inception of Municipality in 1912.



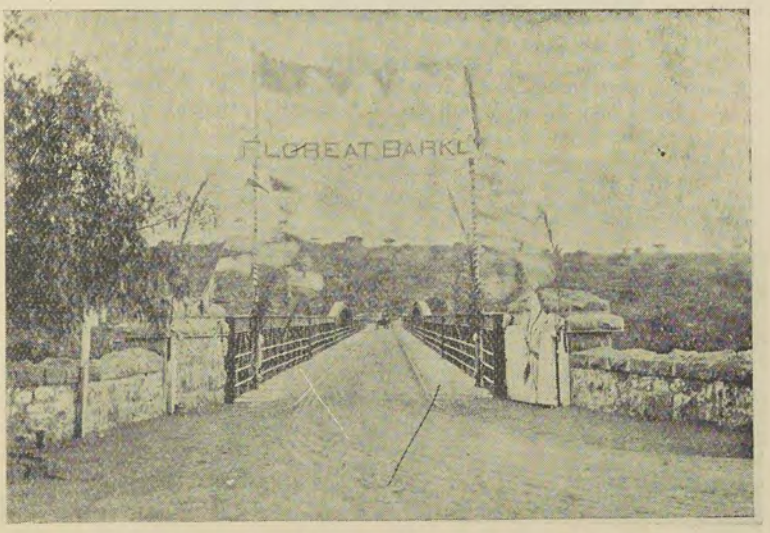
MANUEL LEO GENUSSOW.
First Chairman Barkly
West Chamber of
Commerce.



CHAS. E. M. HONEY, M.P.C.

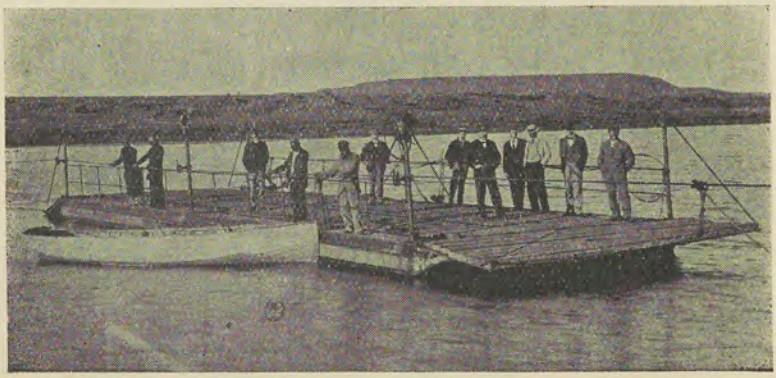


A. E. DU TOIT,
Deputy Mayor, Barkly West.



Barkly West Bridge, taken over by Government, March, 1912.
[Photo by C. J. Parsons

P. F. WINDSOR, J.P.
Managing Director of P. F. Windsor & Co., Ltd., of 40 years' standing.
The town "Windsorton" is named after him.



Windsorton Pont Refloated.

deserted upon the discovery of the Kimberley mines, and has never since been more than a "camp," the latter progressed for years as a village, until a few years ago it blossomed forth as a town, with a regular municipal "outfit." This survival and growth are owing largely to Barkly being the centre of the district, as well as, for many years, of the diggings. It is the seat of the Civil Commissioner, the Inspector of Claims, and of the various officials connected with the digging industry. Here are the offices of the Divisional Council, the District School Board, and also the parent River Hospital, two good hotels, and a considerable number of well-equipped stores, and also the oldest library in the district. During the last two years a Chamber of Commerce has been formed in Barkly, and incidentally it may be mentioned that a suggestion from this body is responsible for the appearance of the present volume.

Barkly is a pleasant little place, with some really good buildings, plenty of trees, and it possesses in its quiet and shady cemetery the oldest burying ground on the Diamond Fields. The camps next in order of foundation were Hebron (now Windsorton), Wedburg, and Robinson's Kopje, Gong Gong, Waldeck's Plant, Longlands, Winter's Rush, Delpoort's Hope, and Niekerk's Rush. Windsorton, in particular, has shown itself quite up-to-date in its excellent system of electric lighting, its improved streets, and other public works, and is quite worthy of its recent promotion to the rank of a municipality.

All these towns and camps are still existent in varying stages of vigour, and have for many years been transformed from congeries of tents and other temporary shelters to settled clusters of houses, most of them constructed of wood and iron, but including many really comfortable and not unsightly buildings of brick, with iron roofs.

Much later on there arose the large camps of Klipdam and the neighbouring farms, and later still those centreing round Christiana, in the Transvaal, and on the opposite bank of the river in the Free State. Again, some years passed before the large camps at and above Bloemhof, and almost up to Klerksdorp, came into existence. Even in the oldest of the diggings mentioned above there is still surprising vitality; several of them were spoken of twenty years ago as either worked out or at the point of exhaustion. Right up to the present day good patches and large finds continue to make their appearance, notably on the various fissures on the Barkly Commonage, running into the adjoining farm "Good Hope," at Gong-Gong, Waldeck's Plant and Keiskamma. The main camps along the River are to-day linked up by a telegraph and telephone service.

At all the above places men are working on a large scale, having good machinery, pumping water from the River to the works, and in all respects carrying on operations in a thorough and business-like manner which would amaze the diggers of the early days if they could revisit the scenes of their strenuous but primitive labours.

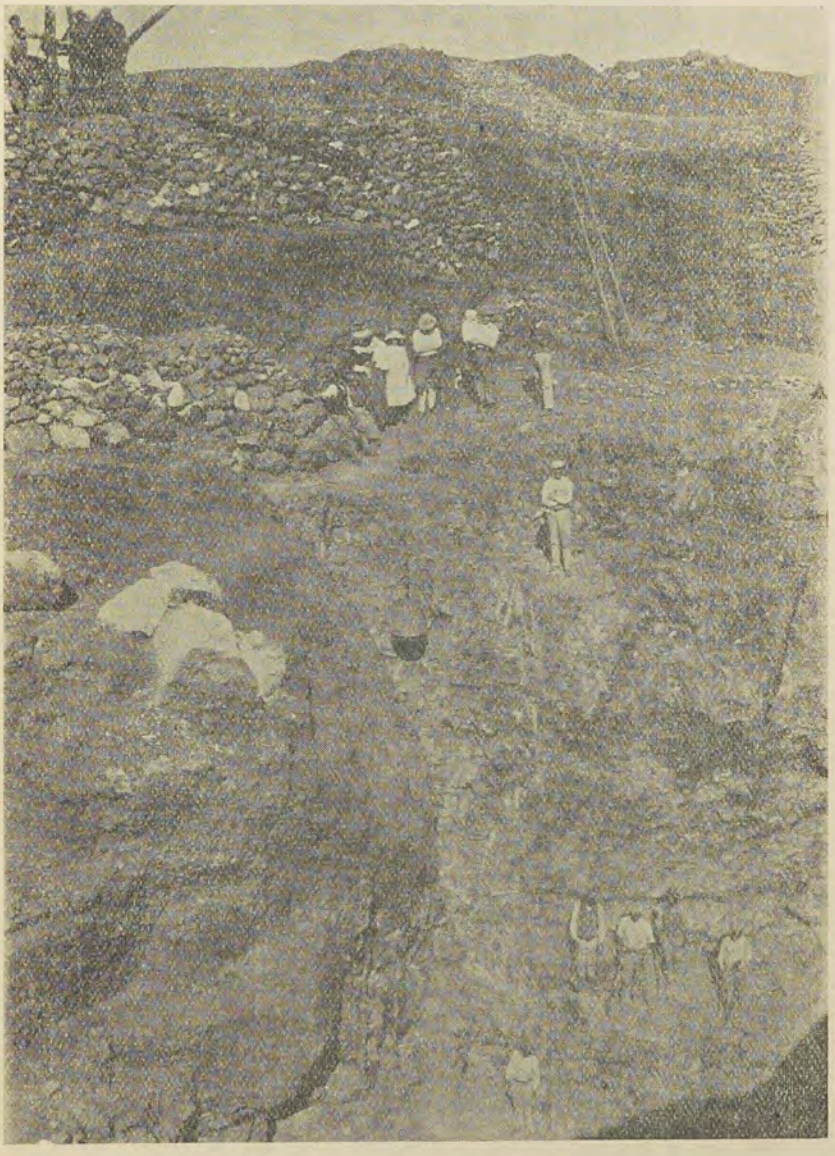
Both Barkly and Windsorton boast branches of banks, the former of the Standard Bank of South Africa, and the latter of the National Bank of South Africa. At Sydney-on-Vaal also, on the property of the New Vaal River Diamond and Exploration Company, there is a branch of the National Bank.

Mention of Sydney reminds one that this is in many respects the most up-to-date township on the River. It is but mere justice to state that, thanks to the enterprise and energy of the Company and its local officials, a bare and forbidding ridge has been converted into a green and attractive oasis amid a surrounding desert of sand. All the buildings about the square are substantial and imposing. There is a good hotel, a fine school-house, the bank, and a most excellent library, where in

Major H. P. TUCKEY, J.P.
[Joint Managing Director and Chairman S.A. Board of the New Vaal River Diamond and Exploration Company, Limited; Chairman Lower River Diggers' Hospital and School Committee, at Sydney-on-Vaal; President of various Sporting Clubs on Lower River Diggings; past President Diggers' Union; and past Chairman U.L.R. Diggers' Committee; late Major Kalihari Horse.]

addition to some 7,000 books on the shelves, one can see most of the best magazines and periodicals. The town is clean and well kept, and possesses a good electric light service. Here also is a well-situated and excellently equipped hospital, which has already proved a boon to residents on the Lower River.

The large alluvial area of Droogveld, which, when opened in 1907, came in for such wholesale condemnation, has since not only vindicated the opinions of the Company's officials and the prospectors, but has caused more stir in the diamond world than any other alluvial field. It has proved in places phenomenally rich, and has provided several of the lucky diggers there with a competence for life. The original "sluit" is now worked out, and finds are much less than they were three or four years ago, but there is so large a quantity of gravel on the property that one may confidently look for the discovery of numerous other good patches.



The "Sluit" at No. 2 Droogveld; Kellett's Claim.

Lieut. J. VAN PRAAGH, J.P.
[Joint Managing Director New Vaal River Diamond and Exploration Co., Ltd.; President Barkly West District Turf Club, and of many Athletic Clubs; Past Chairman Lower River Diggers' Hospital Board and Sydney Public Library. Military Service: Matabele Rebellion, South African Rebellion, and German East Campaign—Paymaster 12th S.A. Infantry.]

On the adjoining property of Pniel, which belongs (still!) to the Berlin Mission Society, the mineral rights are held by a company called Pniels, Limited. This company encourages diggers to work on the farm, and, like their neighbours on the Vaal River Estate, shows great enterprise, and gives every assistance to individuals who desire to extend their operations to new areas. Some good finds have been made both in the river-bed and also in the red-ground situated some way back from the river front. The company has laid water on to various parts of the estate for the convenience of the diggers.

In July, 1908, the biggest rush on record up to that time was witnessed when Harrisdale was proclaimed, and some 5,000 diggers—mostly mounted—lined up to peg-off. The Harrisdale Diamond Syndicate was formed in 1906, one of the first Managing Directors being Mr. W. (Duck) Harris, of Harrisdale. The alluvial deposits were extremely rich, particularly that of Mayer's Prospect, which, for the small area of 70 claims or so—leased by the Syndicate to individuals—is possibly the richest on record; the ground was quickly worked out, and the life of the camp was a sweet but swift

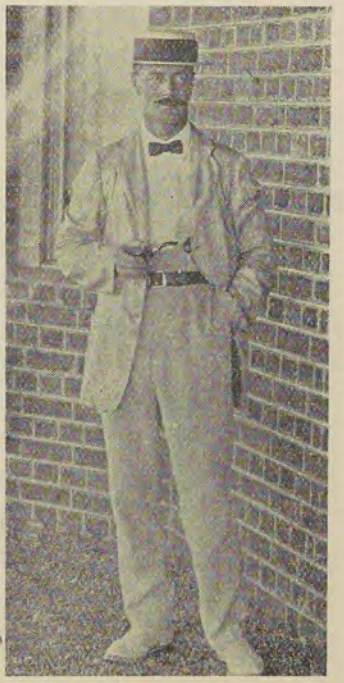
one. A law suit over the right of way resulted in the adjoining farm, Holsdam, being thrown open for prospecting in September, 1908, and Harrisdale was left practically deserted.

The camp of Longlands has played no unimportant part in the history of the River Diggings, it having been considered at one time the "hub" of the River. It was declared under Proclamation 35 on 8th December, 1871, and named after the prospecting digger Longlands. Some very rich runs have been struck at varying intervals, and to-day great possibilities still exist. Here are a Periodical Court, an excellent hotel, and some really good stores. Within the past year a Village Management Board has been established, and it is proposed to build a new Town Hall to replace the old Diggers' Hall to meet the requirements of the growing population.

Esterhuizen's Rush, Winter's Rush, and Delpoorts Hope were declared under Proclamation 34, November, 1871. The two last-named have at various times caused sensational rushes, and have been responsible for some remarkable finds; both are thoroughly go-ahead townships.

Further up the river we have Robinson's Kopje and Wedburg, the only proclaimed alluvial areas in the district of Kimberley, which along with Waldeck's Plant, Keiskamma, and Niekerk's Rush, are the only proclaimed areas on property on which there is no reservation of precious

ALFRED COHEN, J.P.
Formerly on Board of Pniel Diamond Mining Company, now Manager Pniels, Ltd.



ALBERT EARLY.
Manager River View Diamond Syndicate, and Owners' Representative at Robinson's Kopje, Wedburg.

stones to the Crown. They are situated immediately opposite Windsorton, and Robinson's Kopje is entitled, along with the latter place, Pniel and Barkly West, to rank as a pioneer digging, having been first worked at the latter end of the sixties.

Robinson's and Wedburg are on portions of the farms "Amantia" and "River View," the property of the River View Diamond Syndicate. These farms are cut out of that once great tract of country Rietputs, the original holding of the late Mr. Schalk Vorster, the pioneer settler of the place.

Robinson's Kopje obtained its name from Sir J. B. Robinson, who was a pioneer digger and storekeeper there before the discovery of the dry diggings, and until quite recently an old building was in existence which was pointed out as the place where he used to reside. Wedburg, proclaimed in the early eighties, was called after the prospector, Wedburg, a Swede.

In the early days of the diggings the work was confined to the red ground, and one can still locate a spot or two where the early digger rougned out his ground and carted the fine gravel to the banks of the river or the kuil, and put it through the cradle. Until quite recently one could still see some of the old claims marked out with a row of stones, and a small piece taken out in one corner and abandoned no doubt for some other rush. The River View Diamond Syndicate, the owners of the property, permit diggers to work on the unproclaimed portions of their property at a royalty of 7½ per cent., and about half of the digging now carried on is on the private area, and consists mostly of shafts and paddocks.

Killarney Diggings, 8th November, 1913, immediately before reading of proclamation by Mr. H. Rees. The old Union Jack in the far background has been hoisted at the opening of all new diggings since the early 'eighties.

It is said that in the very early days diamonds weighing 100 carats were unearthed on Robinson's Kopje; however what is lacking today in weight is made up in quality, and a month or so ago Robinson's Kopje output averaged £9 per carat.

There have been several camps lower down the Vaal as far as Douglas, but, with the exception of a rush to Sivonelle in 1907, the number of diggers there have always been comparatively small, and the finds have never been startling. Up the River, in the Transvaal, is Christiana, a very pretty little town, with water running at the side of the streets. Bloemhof was for a time the scene of great activity, and there is at present a large number of diggers right up as far as Klerksdorp, and some of the workings still show good results.

CONDITIONS OF LIFE ON THE RIVER.

Now, a few words touching the conditions of life on the River, and the effects which these conditions produce on those who embrace digging as a means of livelihood. First, to deal with the drawbacks and disad-

The Falls at Gong Gong.

[Copyright, H. B. White, Longlands.

vantages of the life. It is idle to deny that the element of chance does enter considerably into the occupation, although this can be largely neutralised by intelligent working, steady industry, and careful management.

Naturally, the possession of some capital, not necessarily very large, goes a long way to ensure the securing of a reasonable and steady living. In fact, digging is not, as it has too often been described by

irresponsible critics, a sheer gamble, but a legitimate and wholesome industry which offers a fair return to a man of moderate means, with the chance always of something much better; although it is not pretended that it can rival in the potentiality of wealth such distinguished occupations as the "rigging" of the market or the "running" of brandy to natives.

Then, again, the various communities are scattered and small. As a consequence, there is a certain feeling of being out of touch with the real world. There is not too much opportunity for rational amusement; transport is slow and expensive, and the necessaries of life, without mentioning luxuries, are by no means cheap. But, after all, these are drawbacks which are inseparable from all young and sparsely peopled countries, and not peculiar to the diggings. What can be more deadly dull than an isolated farm? There, the occupants have literally no outside amusements or recreation. On the River there are, at all events, sport clubs, cricket, football, tennis and other games and pastimes for the young people. There are occasional dances and concerts, and even now and again a visit from a circus or variety troupe. Moreover, for some years now several good libraries have been available for those residing within reach of them, whereby in his leisure moments a man can obtain some mental stimulant.

If the Government ultimately decides to construct the long and passionately-demanded railway from Kimberley through Barkly to the Harts River, and on to Kuruman, the conditions cannot fail to be improved greatly by easier and cheaper communications with other centres of life.

After all, the two great boons which digging offers are an almost ideally healthy life, and personal independence. It is usually said that nobody ever dies on the River except of old age or pneumonia—the latter being a somewhat comprehensive term. Of course, if a man comes here from Johannesburg suffering from miners' phthisis, the most he can expect is that his span of life will be somewhat prolonged; but there are at the present time quite a number of men who came to the River years ago practically under the sentence of death from consumption who are to-day hale and hearty.

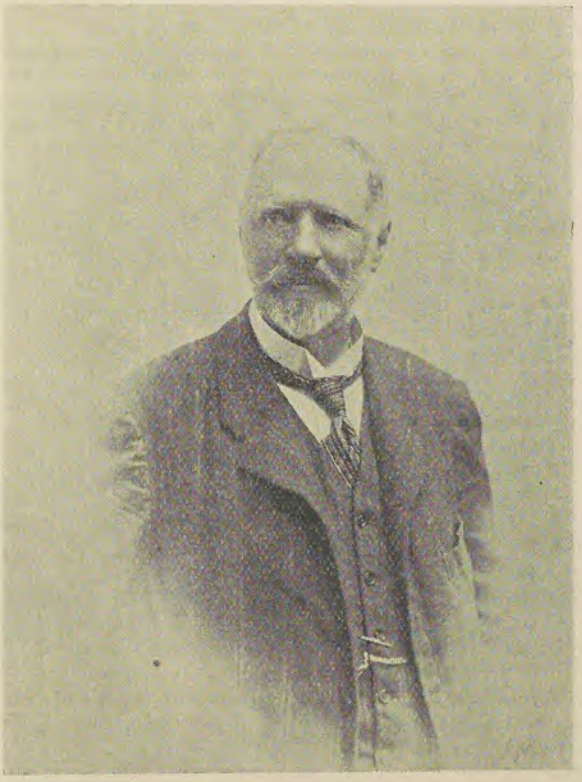
The children in the different camps grow up in the open air sturdy and almost aggressively vigorous. Even the frequent dust-storms which are the most objectionable feature of the climate, do not seem to have any ill-effect on the inhabitants. It is no uncommon thing to see men of seventy and upwards at their claims regularly, and taking an active part in the work. A year or two back, one old digger, aged 78, used actually to go down his shaft daily to see that the underground work was being properly and safely carried on.

Then, again, the perfect freedom and feeling of independence have a great and enduring charm for most men. There is no grinding necessity to be at one particular place at any particular time; every man is his own master, and feels that he is working for himself. This consciousness of independence may, with some, make for a certain looseness of method and a consequent declension from the maximum of output, but it certainly encourages a manly self-reliance and absence of servility to anyone—expressed perhaps at times with unnecessary vehemence.

About 1910, at the time of the rush to the alluvial diggings in the Transvaal, one heard doleful jeremiads about the disastrous effects to be expected from the exodus of men from the land to such a precarious and godless occupation, but they were totally unjustified. In hardly any cases did a farmer, i.e., the owner of land, either a practical or a nominal

farmer, make more than a brief and merely sight-seeing visit to the fields. The bulk of those who did come "from the land" to work, and endeavour to make a decent living under tolerable conditions, belonged to the "bywoner" class—surely, of all the white inhabitants of the Union, the most backward, the most ignorant, and the most to be pitied. These unfortunates had no interest in any land; they neither did, nor could, own any stock; they were bullied and tyrannised over by the owner on whose land they squatted; their children ran about in rags; and in fact, these men of white blood were forced to eke out a miserable existence under conditions which a Kafir of any spirit would not endure.

As might be expected, these people upon their arrival at the diggings had nothing of the buoyancy and courage of adventure, but were humble and diffident to a degree that was positively painful to witness; but after a little while, when they managed to make some sort of start, and when they found that nobody regarded them as of no account because they owned no land or stock, and had little or no money, they began to gain a little confidence and self-respect. If they can only make a fair



ARNOLD HIRST WATKINS, M.D., M.R.C.I., M.L.A.
[Member of the House of Assembly for Barkly West in first Union Parliament, 1910; re-elected 1915. Author of "From Farm to Forum." Held rank of Major in the Reserve S.A. Medical Corps.]

living and meet their fellows without their former galling and numbing feeling of inferiority, they have surely improved their position. Any laments of having made a bad choice are entirely negligible; they have rather in a measure "found themselves." Moreover, they now contribute, in however small a degree, to the revenue of the State; they have to pay licences at all events, and are to this extent better citizens.

The digger is always conscious of the fact that he is a member of a community which pays, in one way and another, a handsome sum yearly into the Government coffers, and can therefore ask for any required improvements without appearing in the guise of a suppliant pauper.

EDUCATION.

Even in the early days the diggers were solicitous that the children growing up on the fields should not totally lack the means of education. In 1872 a school existed at Barkly, and some years later another was started at Waldeck's Plant, which also served the adjacent camps. The tuition afforded, although far below the present standard, was sound enough so far as it went, and many a man who is to-day the father of a family is doubtless thankful for what he learned there.

In the course of time, as different camps established themselves as permanent centres of population, other schools were built, and to-day there are thirteen "Diggers' Schools" under the control of the Barkly West School Board. Here are the figures showing the number of children attending and the strength of the respective teaching staffs:—

Place	No. of Pupils.	Teaching Staff.
Barkly West	82	3
Good Hope	32	2
Gong Gong	20	1
Longlands	90	4
Winter's Rush	80	3
Delpoort's Hope	140	4
Sydney-on-Vaal	33	2
Droogveld	50	2
Keiskamma-Waldeck's	36	1
Holsdam	20	1
Klipdam-Holpan	120	5
Groot Kop	25	1
Windsorton	106	3

The following five schools are handsome and substantially built brick buildings:

Barkly West (built 1912)	cost £1,900
Windsorton (built 1914)	,, £2,304
Longlands (built 1916)	,, £1,600
Delpoort's Hope (built 1916)	,, £2,220
Klipdam-Holpan (built 1916)	,, £2,900

Of the remainder, which are all adequate wood and iron structures, Droogveld cost £390, Sydney cost £800, Winter's Rush cost £307 (there is also a hired building), and Groot Kop cost £327.

The sites at Keiskamma-Waldeck's, Gong Gong, Good Hope, and Holsdam owe their existence more or less to the enterprise of prominent local individuals interested in the subject of education.

None of the schools are of higher grade than A3, but in view of the fine buildings, large attendance, and adequate staffs, the schools at

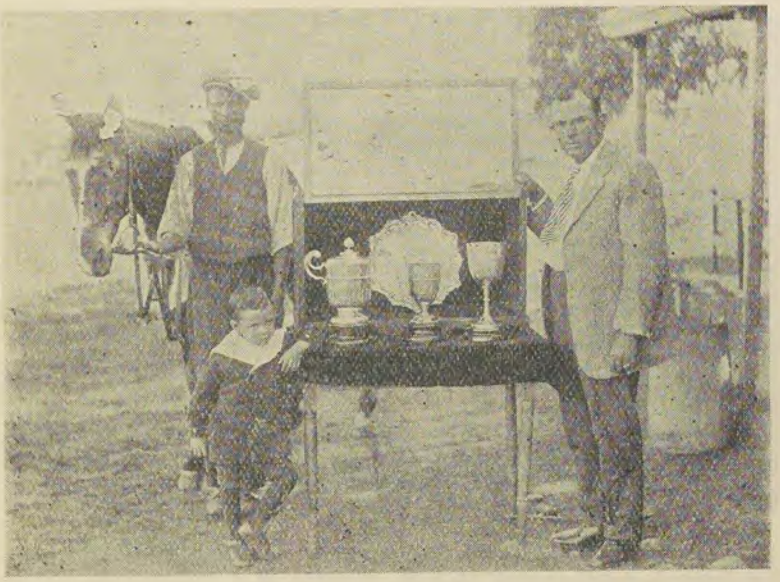
Barkly, Delpoort's Hope, Longlands, Klipdam-Holpan, and Windsorton, are fully entitled to be graded A2. It is proposed to start wood-work classes at all the schools.

The management is in the hands of local committees, elected by the parents and guardians of the children, and subject to the control of the Barkly West School Board. The first Secretary of the Board was Mr. G. A. Horne (since deceased), who was appointed to the post upon its institution in 1906, after having officiated as teacher at the school at Waldeck's Plant for several years. The great advance in the number and efficiency of the schools during this time is good evidence of his ability and interest in the work, and the relations between the Central Board and the local committees are most harmonious, leading to a smooth and amicable working.

CHAPTER VII.

SPORT ALONG THE RIVER.

RACING.—As was the case in similar communities established in America and Australia, from the first the sporting instinct was strong amongst the diggers. In the very early days those who possessed horses were



"WOOLOOMOOLOO."

[Old Police Trooper. Condemned and purchased by Mick White, and finally by John C. Holmes, of Longlands. Winner of the Barkly Cup, 1908; the Gong Gong Cup (presented by the diggers of Gong Gong); Barkly Cup in 1909 presented by Colonel Sir David Harris); Silver Salver, 1910 (presented by E. Oppenheimer, of Kimberley); several races to 1913, when pensioned off. Record for greatest number of races won on River. Died on farm Milk Vlei, May, 1916, aged 21 years.]

ready to match them against others, and many an impromptu but thoroughly-sporting race took place. The farmers in the district also took a lively interest in all such affairs, and after a while a really good Turf Club was formed, and existed for many years, the late Dr. Harrhy being the secretary. Barkly was then the only centre, but the meetings were well patronised by diggers, farmers, and others from the whole district, as well as by many visitors from Kimberley, and the stakes were of substantial value. Subsequently a Turf Club was started at Windsorton, and the racing there was good and enjoyable. When a set-back took place, Barkly, Longlands, and Sydney formed gymkhana clubs, and year by year the sport was kept up. Windsorton Turf Club continued its existence, but for some years few meetings were held. About 1909 a movement was started to combine the various clubs in the district, and after a little trouble a meeting of delegates decided to amalgamate, pool all assets, and form one club, to be called the Barkly West District Turf Club. This club has continued in a flourishing state, as the excellent meetings held regularly at Barkly, Windsorton, Longlands, and Sydney prove.

Cricket.—From the earliest days Barkly was the centre of much cricket activity. Then, and long afterwards, Kimberley teams did not find the journey too long, and many a day's leather-hunting did the Barkly players experience. Later, a club was formed at Hebron (now Windsorton),

KIMBERLEY AND BARKLY WEST CRICKETERS (about 1895-6)
Top Row:—S. Knott, B. Harvey, J. H. Diepraam, E. J. B. Gardner, W. Hall, W. du Toit, A. O'C. Franklin.
Centre Row:—J. Carey, F. Jansen, Jack Powell, A. E. du Toit, C. Dickens, Herbert Rees, J. Newton.
Bottom Row:—H. McKenzie, S. McConnell, E. Litkie, W. B. Spry, and Jack Backman.

and frequent matches took place between the two camps. Who of the old Barkly players does not remember the huge hits of George Futcher, of Hebron? Year by year the good old game was kept going; various digging camps started clubs, and a wholesome rivalry existed.

About 1906 a cup was generously presented by the firm of Messrs. MacGill & Ronaldson, and, later, a shield by Sir George Albu, both trophies for competition annually by all the River teams. The contests have been remarkably keen, and the trophies have repeatedly changed hands. The following table shows the results:—

THE MacGILL-RONALDSON CHALLENGE CUP.

1906-07—Won by Windsorton C.C. (S. P. Hartley, captain).

1907-08—Won by Longlands C.C. (T. Johnstone, captain).

MacGILL-RONALDSON CUP AND GEORGE ALBU SHIELD.

1908-09—Won by Longlands C.C. (T. Johnstone, captain).

1909-10—Won by Windsorton C.C. (J. E. Cumings, captain).

1911-12—Won by Barkly West C.C. (H. Rees, captain).

1912-13—Won by Windsorton C.C. (S. W. Windsor, captain).

1913-14—Won by Barkly West C.C. (J. H. L. Findlay, captain).

The game has naturally languished during the last two years, as the flower of the young men who would otherwise be playing cricket are now engaged in a grimmer struggle; but when happier times return, there will no doubt be a revival of the old enthusiasm.

The River has produced some really good cricketers. To mention only a few names which occur to the writer: W. S. Woodthorpe, one-time Captain of the Eclectic Cricket Club, Kimberley, and who is regarded as a great authority on cricket rules and records; Herbert Rees, who with the three brothers Du Toit (Willie, Bertie, and the late Melvill), was long the mainstay of the Barkly team; Bertie Gibbs, a fine all-round athlete; J. E. Cumings, of Wedburg and Windsorton, the two McKays, of the same place; J. Wiseman and A. Franklin, of Barkly, and the late Tom Johnstone, who was largely responsible for the success of the the Lower River Clubs, and whose tragic death is still deplored by sportsmen and others. The late C. Fitzpatrick, of Wedburg, and one time member of the Kimberley Pirates; T. Itner, also of Wedburg, one of the best bowlers on the River. The brothers Seymour and Clifford Windsor, of Windsorton; the last-named when at the wicket causing all the field to scatter against his well-known slogging; he is now slogging it with the Springboks in Flanders.

FOOTBALL.—In 1889, Barkly possessed quite a good Rugby football team, but for want of members the club, after two years, was dissolved. For two years no football at all was played along the River; in fact, it was not until about ten or twelve years ago that Association clubs were started at the chief camps, the principal moving spirits being Messrs. J. Fraser, Tom Johnstone, Eric O'Donovan, and J. Angus. In 1907, or thereabouts, Mr. Lockhart put up a cup for competition; later Mr. H. Sharwood did the same, and both cups were won by Sydney-on-Vaal. After that Mr. L. H. Brailey offered a cup to be played for by teams representing the different Lower River Clubs. The games resulting have been keenly contested, and the trophy has frequently changed hands. Here are the wianers of the

BARKLY WEST FOOTBALL TEAM IN THE EIGHTIES.

Llewellyn Powys-Jones, W. J. Peters, D. Bissett, W. Atherstone, Gwyn McEvoy, W. Wilks, Ben Gerard.
H. B. Thompson, Lambert, T. M. du Toit, W. W. Rush, Herbert Rees, A. E. du Toit, S. McConnell, William du Toit, Percy W. Day.

BRAILEY FOOTBALL CUP.

Delpoort's Hope, 1911; Sydney-on-Vaal, 1912; Barkly West, 1913; Sydney-on Vaal, 1914; †Delpoort's Hope, 1916.

† There was no competition in 1915.

Wedburg for one season held an undefeated record when Messrs. Early, De Beer, Van Bragger, W. A. Williams, F. Rousseau, Goodeson, M. Cohen, T. Itner, A. Franklin, poor Joe Howell, who has paid the supreme sacrifice at Delville Wood, and S. Windsor, composed the team.

Lawn Tennis.—The first Lawn Tennis match played in Barkly was in 1885, at the time of the Warren Expedition, when Dr. Fuller, the great Kimberley player, who was then at Boshof, O.F.S., came over and "wiped the floor" with the officers of the garrison. There were several private courts in Barkly, but it was not until 1887 that Mr. Powys-Jones, Assistant Magistrate at Barkly, started a regular club there (which has existed ever since), and laid down the two courts still in use.

There have been many good players in Barkly at various times—Major Van Ryneveld, Powys-Jones, George Rayner, Bertie du Toit, Taberer, Richardson, Herbert Rees, and others. But it was the lady players who did most to make Barkly famous in the lawn tennis world, and the "Barkly ladies' drive" was known in most parts of South Africa. Mrs. Tapscott,

and the Misses Green (her sisters), held the Griqualand West Ladies' Singles Championship alternately for a number of years. The late Mrs. Gardner was also a good player, and it was worth making a long journey to see her and the three Misses Green in a ladies' four.

In later years clubs were formed and courts laid down at Windsorton, Klipdam, Sydney, Longlands, Delpoort's Hope, and Gong Gong, and to-day there are numerous and enthusiastic players all along the River the year round. That fine Transvaal player, Turner, belonged to the Sydney-on-Vaal Club for a couple of years.

Shooting.—In 1903, Captain W. Scott, D.S.O., together with the late Mr. H. Sharwood and Mr. Clary R. White, started pigeon-shooting events, which sport "caught on" at the time, and was well contested, but lately this branch of shooting has not been heard of. For many years there was good shooting all over the district, and game was fairly plentiful, but, owing to the increase and spread of population, the destruction of the bush, and the unrestricted ownership by Kafirs of countless mongrel curs, things are sadly changed, and devotees of the sport have nowadays to go far afield, or must enjoy access to the few protected private areas.

Swimming.—In 1914 Mr. A. Abrahams gave a cup for natatorial competition; the course being across the Vaal at Sydney pont. It was competed for in 1914 and again in 1916, and on both occasions was won by Stanley White, who is undoubtedly a really fine swimmer, and has taken championship honours for Griqualand West.

Fishing.—Years ago some excellent fishing was obtainable almost anywhere in the Vaal, but since the advent of the Indian with his net, and the yearly construction of big breakwaters, this sport seems to have perished. Higher up the river, it is said, good sport is still obtainable with rod and reel.

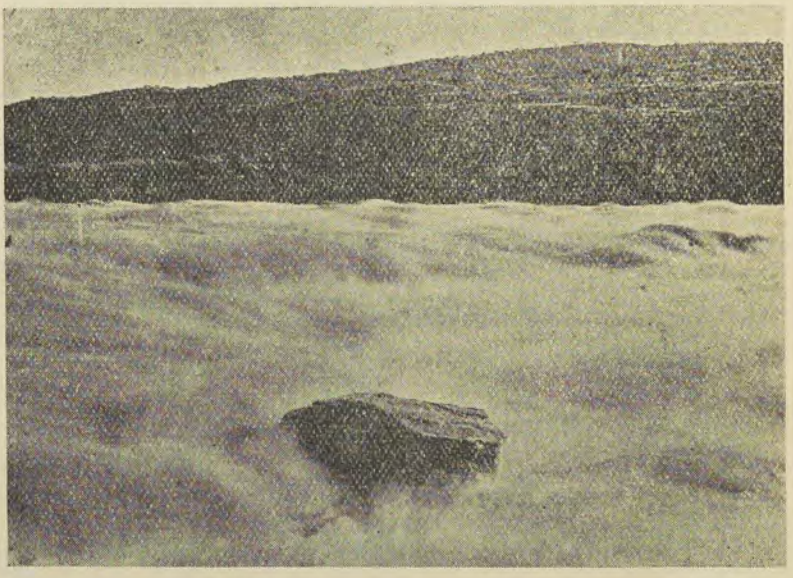
Golf.—This game is played at Longlands and Barkly. The links at the former place were the first on the River; those at Barkly were opened in 1916 by the Mayor of Barkly, Mr. G. C. Wakeford, and owe their inception to the enterprise of Mr. J. T. Audas, present Inspector of Claims at Barkly. At both Longlands and Barkly there are numerous and enthusiastic players.

Gymnastics.—A club was started in Barkly in July, 1914, and numbered at one time some forty members, of whom fourteen were ladies. The promoters were Messrs. Rees, Berry, Stokes, and the instructor, Max Friedel, gold medallist gymnast. The club has given two displays, for the entertainment of returning soldiers, and of visiting Boy Scouts.

TRAGIC ATTEMPT TO NAVIGATE THE VAAL.

In a boat built of canvas and wood in two sections, connected by a folding deck, and containing twenty-two water-tight compartments, Messrs. A. Gladwyn and George Price, accompanied by a Fingo servant, on the 10th February, 1893, started off from Windsorton to navigate the Vaal River. A large crowd assembled to bid them God-speed. The length of the boat was 15 feet, width 5 feet, and depth 13½ inches; it was fitted with sails and paddles, and weighed 185lbs. The object of the venture was to secure reliable data as to the value of the Vaal and Orange Rivers as waterways to the ocean. George Price, who was a first-class photographer, was to furnish valuable sketches, and a complete geographical map of the Vaal and Orange Rivers was to be supplied.

"Snyder's Farm"—Gladwyn and Party.
(Photo taken by George Price, who perished in attempting to navigate the Vaal.)



Attempt to navigate the Vaal.
This is the spot where the capsize took place.

After some seventy odd miles, Barkly Bridge was passed with the water running seventeen feet above normal level, and the gunnel of the boat only three inches out of the water. A short stay at Barkly, and some more farewelling, saw the adventurers off on their voyage once more. The first difficulty of steering the boat over the rocky point below the Barkly Hospital was successfully overcome. But later on, owing to the low freeboard, the boat shipped a lot of water, and consequently a certain control of steering power was lost, so that on approaching the Good Hope Rapids the running speed was twelve miles an hour. Here the boat fouled a rock, but got clear again after bursting open two of the water-tight compartments.

The Gong-Gong Falls were reached, when, shooting over a drop of some twenty feet, the boat was thrown up into the air, and toppled over backwards on top of its crew. This was the last Gladwyn saw of Price and the native, as he found himself entangled in the cordage and sail under the boat, from which he extricated himself by means of his clasp knife, and after a fearful struggle succeeded in reaching the shore, dragging the boat's painter after him. The body of Price was found 15 miles below the scene of the accident, and likewise the body of the native. Thus ended this attempt to navigate the Vaal; it was a daring if "mad-brained" venture, but, if successful, would have proved of great value to the topographer and to the Government

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CHAPTER VIII.

COMMUNAL ORGANISATIONS.

Diggers' Committees.—Reference has been made by Mr. Beet to the formation and personnel of the first Diggers' Committees. When the rush to the dry mines took place, and the River camps were practically deserted, these fell into desuetude, and were not revived until 1891. At this time Klipdam was rapidly assuming the character of Aaron's rod, and swallowing up the old camps. There was a very large and increasing number of diggers in and around Klipdam, and it was considered wise to form a Diggers' Committee to examine and decide upon new applications for licences, and to protect the interests of diggers generally.

The first Diggers' Committee elected under provisions of Proclamation No. 271 of 1891 and Section 36 of Act 19 of 1883 (vide "Government Gazette" of December 8, 1891) was composed of Messrs. J. H. Moulton (chairman), H. Parkiss, J. J. Naude, P. R. Day, A. B. Bridgewater, T. Buckle, and Geo. Puzey, followed in the next year by Messrs. W. Henderson (chairman), Barlow, Woodthorpe, Staples, Puzey, Hodgson, and Gibbon. Excellent work was done in the restriction of I.D.B., but the last-named committee had a lively time when trying to introduce the 1s. per head registration on native servants. Mr. Rhodes, then Premier, after discussing the matter with the Chairman, withdrew the registration clause from the Bill, which was at that time before the House.

A big rush to Christiana and the neighbourhood in 1897 carried a large number of diggers up there, and the Diggers' Committee languished for two years; ultimately, upon the outbreak of the Boer war it died a natural death. It was not revived until 1905, when, after the formation of the Vaal River Diggers' Union, the question was carefully considered, and committees were formed by virtue of Proclamation No. 304 of 1905 for the different groups of diggings. They have enjoyed a vigorous life since that time, and there are at present three committees on the River, viz., Wedburg-Windsorton, Klipdam-Holpan, and the United Lower River Diggers' Committee for the camps from Holsdam down to Delpoort's Hope. Their principal functions are the jealous examination of applications for licences, and the cancellation of the licences of any persons who prove themselves unfit to hold them. In addition to this, they direct what may be called the domestic policy of the diggings, such as the fixing of sites for native locations, controlling sanitary measures, and so forth, and, in fact, they may be regarded as advisers of the Government officials in all matters pertaining to the general running of the industry.

It is a matter for congratulation that leading men on the River have always come forward to serve on the committees, at no small sacrifice of their time and labour, and it may justly be said that, in spite of some small differences, the various committees to-day enjoy the confidence and voice the sentiments of the large majority of the diggers.

THE VAAL RIVER DIGGERS' UNION.

For many years thoughtful men on the River deplored the lack of cohesion among the diggers in the different camps, and the consequent dissipation of energy. At no time, and for no object, was it possible to obtain anything approaching unanimity; the majority, while willing to

A. G. GLADWYN, J.P.
[First President Vaal River Diggers' Union, 1904-1906. Organiser of many beneficial movements for the digger. Attempt to navigate the Vaal, 1893. Holds Royal Humane Society's Medal.]

profit by the efforts of others for the general benefit, showed a marked apathy when called upon to make some personal sacrifice of time or money.

After several abortive attempts to form some kind of a combination, the Vaal River Diggers' Union at last, in 1904, became an accomplished fact. The first President of the Union was Mr. A. G. Gladwyn, who had taken perhaps the most prominent part in its creation, and had shown great energy and patience in the face of discouraging rebuffs. When once set going and proved a living force, the new Union very rapidly justified its existence to its previous detractors, and has since represented, as it does to-day, the views of the vast majority of diggers.

The Vaal River Diggers' Union has received full and generous recognition from the Government, and is the channel through which communications between the diggers and the Ministerial and official world pass.

The Union has been fortunate in its Presidents and office-bearers, the former having been not only well-known but also popular figures, including Lieut.-Colonel L. B. O'Donovan, Messrs. Tom Palmer, E. C. Barlow, D. C. Evans, J. Miller, Major H. P. Tuckey, and Mr. Miller again, the last-named having now held office since 1914.

LIEUT.-COLONEL LIONEL BENNETT O'DONOVAN, J.P.

[Commandant Barkly West Citizen Commando; Vice-Chairman Barkly West School Board; member Barkly West Hospital Board; member Barkly West Licensing Court, ex-M.L.A. Barkly West Division; ex-Secretary Lower River Diggers' Committee; ex-President Vaal River Diggers' Union, 1906-1908.]

Amongst the benefits which the Union has obtained for the community may be mentioned the abolition of the charge of 5s. per quarter for miners' certificates, the prompt repeal of the 1s. tax on monthly returns of diamond finds, the extension of telephonic communication, the more rapid carriage of the postal mails by motor in place of the old mule-cart, and the obtaining from Government of thirty days' grace after expiration of licence, during which time a digger can win and sell dia-

THOS. E. PALMER.
Past President V.R.D. Union.

monds without infringing the law. The Union has also worked persistently, and generally successfully, for the following objects: The creation of police stations where their presence is required, the throwing open of the Barkly West Bridge free for traffic, additional medical practitioners for the district, the equitable adjustment of the mining profits tax, the raising of funds for the efficient maintenance of the Barkly Hospital, and the preliminary steps for the foundation of the Lower River Hospital.

In 1914 the Union started a Burial Fund, to obviate the scandal of any digger being buried as a pauper, and this good work is one of the chief cares of the organisation. Another charitable fund was raised in collaboration with the Mayor of Barkly for the relief of the families of indigent diggers at the beginning of the present war, and much distress was by this means prevented. The Union was also well to the fore in the formation of rifle clubs along the River a year or two ago, and was not to blame in that no distinct River unit was raised to sustain the credit of the digging community in the late South-West conquest and present German-East campaign, although many individual members of the community have joined various corps, and have done everything possible to uphold the good name of the River Diggings.

In such matters of interest to all as education and the throwing open of new fields, the Union has always proved itself vigilant. There is another object for which the Union, acting in harmony with all the local bodies, has striven without intermission, viz., the long-desired railway from Kimberley, through the Diggings, to Kuruman. At present the political signs do not appear too favourable, but it is to be hoped

JOHN MILLER, J.P.

[Member De Beers Benefit Society, 1906; member Harrisdale Diggers' Committee, 1908-09; ex-Chairman U.L.R. Diggers' Committee. Appointed J.P. on recommendation for valuable services rendered the River Digging community and industry. Originator (with Thos. Laurent-Terpend) of the Diggers' Union Burial Fund. Military Service: Cape Infantry, Plumer's Column, 1899; Bechuanaland Mounted Rifles, on General Berrangé's Headquarter Staff, 1914-15. President Diggers' Union 1912, and again since 1914.]

that there will be no relaxation of effort, and that sooner or later the Government will recognise the claims of the district and the fair prospect offered by the scheme.

The Executive of the Union is just now engaged in trying to ensure, through the Detective Department, a more extended and more vigorous enforcement of the "trapping" system, as it is abundantly clear that it is the only effectual method of fighting I.D.B., and without its employment the hopes of scotching those who are the chief curse of the industry is a vain one.

A general congress is held yearly at Barkly, and is well attended by members from all the camps. Invitations are extended to the Parliamentary representatives of the district, the Secretary for Mines, the Civil Commissioner and Resident Magistrate, the Mining Commissioner and his staff, the Chief and members of the Detective Department, and various heads of the different departments, all of whom are present or represented on the platform. Visits have also been paid by the Minister of Mines. General Smuts, while holding that portfolio, attended a conference of diggers, and heard most sympathetically the grievances and wishes of the delegates; in fact, since the inauguration of the Diggers' Union, which is able to speak with authority for the diggers generally,

their wishes have been considered more seriously than formerly, when there was no such declared unanimity.

The following comprised the first executive of the Vaal River Diggers' Union in 1905:—

President: A. G. Gladwyn, Longlands. Vice-President: E. C. Barlow, Klipdam. General Secretary and Treasurer: T. W. Halliwell, Windsorton.

Members of Executive Committee: William Kellet (Klipdam), Henry F. Coetzee (Klipdam), P. A. Smuts (Longlands), S. McGaw (Waldeck's Plant), J. R. McKay (Windsorton), Andrew O'Connor (Delpoort's Hope), H. C. Voget (Delpoort's), H. F. Clayson (Longlands), Captain Knapp (Niekerk's Rush), T. E. Palmer (Niekerk's Rush), W. S. D. Oldman (Sydney), Eldred Brown (Sydney).

The following were the office-bearers and committees of the original branches in 1904:—

Delpoort's Hope Branch.—Chairman: Nicholas van der Westhuizen. Vice-Chairman: Andrew O'Connor. Secretary: H. C. Voget. Committee: Messrs. M. Bunn, G. T. Smith, J. G. du Priez, M. Hannekomp, P. Marais.

Klipdam and District Branch.—Chairman: William Kellet. Vice-Chairman: Henry Coetzee. Secretary and Treasurer: J. G. Cooks. Committee: Messrs. George Bremner, Talbot Kennedy, Thomas Wheeler, Joseph Thomson, C. Flottow.

Longlands Branch.—Chairman: A. Gladwyn. Vice-Chairman: J. Norman. Secretary: E. J. Tunbridge. Treasurer: H. F. Clayson. Committee: Messrs. Thomas Pearson, P. Smuts, F. Rainer, T. Barker, J Cosgrove.

Niekerk's Branch.—Chairman: George Palmer. Vice-Chairman: Thomas Palmer. Secretary and Treasurer: William Read. Committee: Messrs. E. Brown, W. J. McLennon, J. Broberg, H. Engelsman, A. J. Smith, E. Knapp, G. M. Stewart, S. McGaw, A. J. Bicker-Caarten, S. von Musits.

Sydney Branch.—Chairman: A. Austin (sen.). Vice-Chairman: H. J. Dawson. Secretary and Treasurer; H. A. Carse. Committee: Messrs. W. S. D. Oldman, J. Bobbins, D. Booysen, A. L. Koefoed, P. van Niekerk.

Windsorton District and Wedberg Branch.—Chairman: Thomas William Halliwell. Vice-Chairman: J. R. McCoy. Secretary: G. A. Walters. Treasurer: P. H. George. Committee: Messrs. W. S. Woodthorpe, R. E. Stonnill, William Comlen, T. S. de Lorme, George Gibbon.

L'ENVOI.

In taking leave of their readers, the authors must crave indulgence for any errors of commission or omission. They earnestly desire to thank all those who have assisted them in the present work; particularly that well-known River digger, Mr. Herbert Dawson, whose advice and assistance have helped to guide the work through. It is very difficult to obtain thoroughly trustworthy information regarding events of even a few years back, and frequently it has been thought advisable to forego the mentioning of matters which might be interesting or amusing rather than run the risk of being liable to the charge of more or less inaccuracy.

The authors hope that the book will prove of interest alike to the "old stager" and to the new or intending digger; also that it will help to dissipate the too common belief set up by some irresponsibles, Parliamentarians, and others that the River is the last resort of the dead-beat and the loafer. It is not too much to say that the River diggers have been amongst the foremost in the ranks of those who have opened up and developed the mineral resources of South Africa, the Rand itself including among its pioneers many men drawn from the River, while others have done good work in Rhodesia and elsewhere.

The alluvial diggings are an integral part of the great diamond industry, and by no means one to be disparaged or deprecated; the relative smallness of the output, as compared with that of the mines, being partly compensated by the great superiority of the River stones, both in quality and value. This is clearly shown by the comparative prices fetched by the diamonds produced respectively by the mines and the alluvial diggings.

"In 1912 the average value per carat of the diamonds from the principal sources of production within the Union of South Africa was as follows:—

	Mines.	Alluvial.
	s. d.	s. d.
Transvaal	19 6	92 7
Orange Free State	48 2	105 11
Cape Province	50 4	120 6"

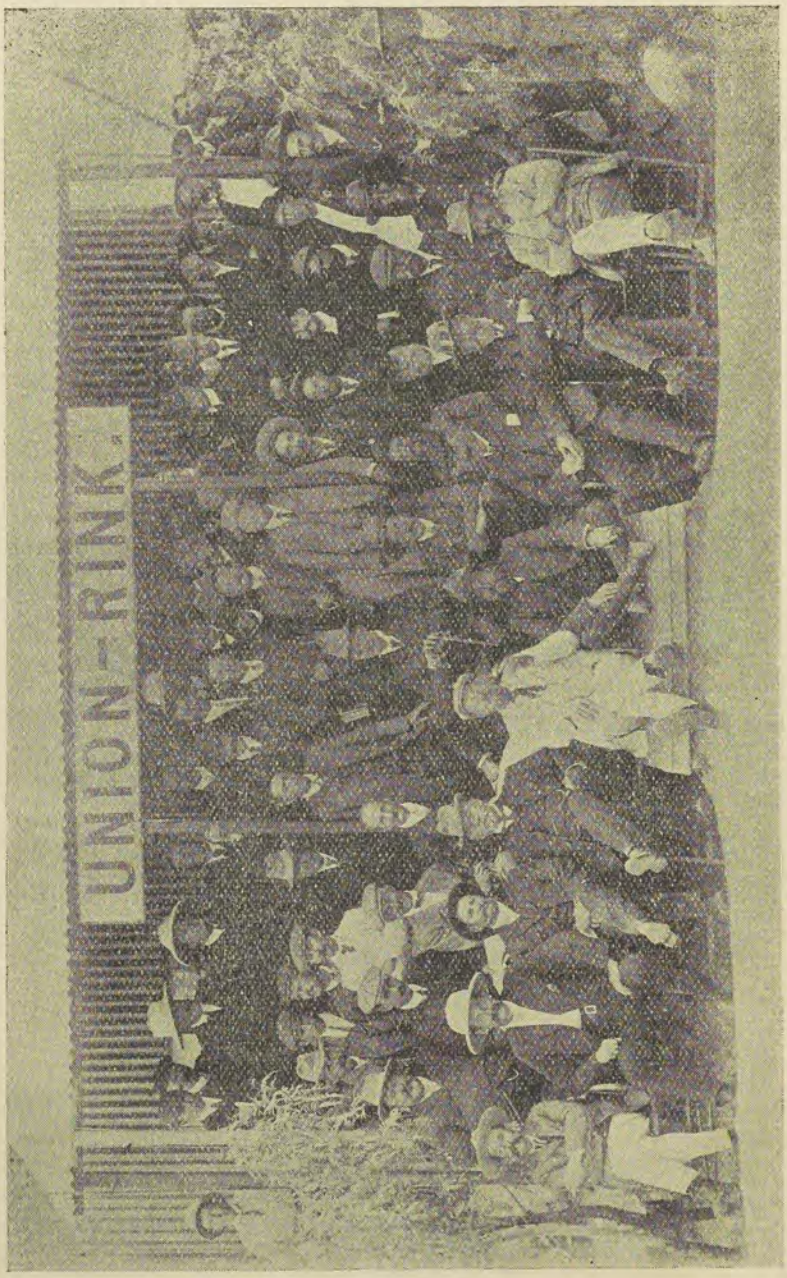
(Professor P. A. Wagner.)

To-day the average value of the diamonds produced on the River is, so far as can be ascertained, £6 5s. 8d. per carat. The mines being, since August, 1914, until early in 1916, non-productive, no comparative table can be given.

In response to a widely-expressed wish, the General Secretary of the Vaal River Diggers' Union intends to issue in the near future, under the title of the "River Diggers' Guide and Companion," a compendium of helpful facts and figures, together with rules and regulations governing the industry, and, as far as possible, everything necessary for a digger to know. The work will be published in a small and compact form, and at a price within the means of all.

Trusting that the foregoing efforts to enlist some measure of interest in the romance and reality of the Diamond Diggings will not have proved altogether in vain, and that the present attempt will act as a guide and assist those coming hereafter, the authors bid their indulgent readers

AU REVOIR.



VAAL RIVER DIGGERS' UNION, September, 1911. General Smuts in centre.

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