# DENTON JOURNAL.

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## AFRICAN DIAMONDS.

### ABOUT THE RICH EXPORT TRADE.

**The Stealings that Lower Prices and Defy the Police—In the Diggings—A Busy Place.**

The major part of the produce exported from South Africa is used for the adornment of ladies. This is a curiosity of commerce that needs some explanation. Out of a total value exported of £7,500,000, ostrich feathers and diamonds account for £5,000,000.

Twenty years ago all known diamonds had come to Europe or the United States from immemorial Eastern stocks or from the scanty produce of mines in Brazil and elsewhere, which were calculated to yield not more than £50,000 worth in the year. To-day, situated in the midst of a wide-stretching plain affording at all points a sea-line horizon of flat "veldt," is the town of Kimberley with a large European population of wealthy and well-to-do people, and a large native population earning every year more than £1,000,000 in wages. And from this mining oasis in the agricultural desert has been sent in the last 15 years something like £90,000,000 worth of diamonds in the rough, which, with the cost of cutting, setting and selling, must have taken from the pockets of consumers something approaching £100,000,000.

As all the world knows the South African diamond mines have their own story of unexpected discovery at the least as startling as that of any gold field or other rich mineral deposit in the world. In 1867 the first diamond was found, the favorite toy of a little Boer girl, which she had picked out from among the roots of an old tree. Its genuineness was not long in doubt, and in a few months the bed of the Vaal River was known as a profitable diamond region. Prospecting became the rage, and here and there on the open, flat, grassy veldt diamonds were found in spots with common peculiarities of soil and so forth. In three years' time the secret of the diamond deposits had been so far fathomed as to prove that they were strange circular deposits, or patches, of peculiar earth isolated from one another and few in number. These were at once "rushed," and a regulation digging community took possession of the new district. Private individuals, previous proprietors, and Governments fought for the claim to these new mineral riches, but despite these squabbles the practical work was carried on of marking out these circular patches in diggers' claims over the flat surface. At first the rule was each digger for himself; and with pick and shovel diamonds were brought to grass in such profusion that the whole mining world was startled by a discovery exceeding in magnitude, real and prospective, any previous find. But, as men dug deeper in their claims, so they found it necessary to arrange and amalgamate with their neighbors; moreover, the deeper they went the more necessary for machinery to hoist the soil to the surface. And then, as they passed on through the top "yellow," they came upon a "blue" soil which was yet more rich in diamonds.

Suffice it to say, that in ten years' time each one of these greater circular areas had been so far emptied of soil as to represent great quarries 100 to 200 yards across and 300 or 400 feet deep. Early in the digging the geologist stepped in to point out that these circular basins were evidently a species of volcanic crater, hollowed out in the surface rock by subterranean action and filled up to the surface with a blue diamondiferous mud. The walls of these basins are locally known as "the reefs," and in their greed to secure all they could the older miners cut out all the "blue" right up to the reef. When, however, the cuttings got down deep the walls or reefs began to fall in, owing to the disintegrating action of boiling sun and heavy rain, covering up in their fall large areas of valuable blue. At first the digging was simple and cheap—the mere turning up and searching of loose soil; a second stage was reached when the soil had to be cut out and hauled up to the surface with the aid of machinery; a third stage brought the miners to a stiffened blue, which had not only to be brought to the surface, but then spread about and broken up by hand labor and exposure to the weather, and at the present moment all around the mines are to be seen literally miles of the "blue," laid out in shallow layers over the open veldt. With these more extended operations came more elaborate machinery for hoisting, for spreading on the "floors," and for sorting. Now, round each great basin or quarry is a circle of steam engines working wire rope lifts up and down to the bottom of the quarry, and round the brink run locomotives and trains of trucks whisking the "blue" so brought up away to be spread out like so much manure over the veldt, and to be taken thence, when duly disintegrated by the weather, broken up by hand, and harrowed and rolled to the washing places, where it is all sent by hydraulic action through a series of rotatory sieves and pulsators, on the principle of, in successive mechanical operations, washing away all dirt that is lighter than diamonds. The washers are so arranged that the outfall of each portion is graduated in size, and falls on a series of sorting tables. At these stand five or six of the principal men—owners and Directors of companies among them—spreading out the clean washed stuff, graduated from the size of pebbles to that of sand; and the visitor may stand by in wonder to see the searcher at the one end pick out his eight or ten "big" stones per hour, or assist the searcher at the other busily sorting out of the sand innumerable white specks of diamonds. The day's work, tumbled into small snuffboxes, will frequently reach a local value of £1,000. None can fail to be struck on looking into one of these great mines or quarries that the whole of that great mass of earth and rock has been dug out, pulverized, and searched for the diamonds it contains. One can look into a quarry of slate or stone and see the rocks themselves cut down and carted away for use; but in these quarries the soil and the rock are cut out and dug out, and what for? Simply that out of every 100 tons raised out of the quarry an ounceweight of diamonds may be secured. It is a startling and impressive thought in gazing into these great quarries that all that soil should have been dug out at a cost for labor alone of something like £15,000,000, and with the aid of invested capital of £1,000,000 in machinery, in order to distribute so many hundredweight of precious stones to decorate the ladies of civilized centres.

And now a fourth stage has been arrived at. The new problem is how to continue to dig out the blue which now lies practically beneath the reef. The consequence is that round these quarries regular mining shafts are being sunk, and the "blue" is to be attacked by underground work. Good mining judges maintain that this is the wrong system, inasmuch as when the shaft is sunk no method of underground mining can secure and bring to grass any large proportion of the blue, which is not in veins but bulk. A wider system would be to terrace the reef sides and always work them as open mines or quarries. Thus, as years go by the cost of getting out these diamonds increases steadily; but it also so happens that the price of diamonds has steadily and greatly fallen. The all-round price per carat has fallen from £3 to £2s. per carat. At this one cannot be surprised. Of late the world was content to receive each year an accession of new dug diamonds of about £10,000 in value on the average. But suddenly from South Africa comes a new supply, exceeding £4,000,000 worth each year for 10 years. It is true that recently in Australia, North America, and other extra-European centres of European civilization, a new population has come in being, numbering over 70,000,000, the upper ten thousand of which are specially prone to diamond ornaments, and no doubt at the first there was a great void to be supplied. But now it would seem that the limit had been reached, and the market is overstocked, and the world as it stands thus supplied seems hardly likely to take more than £2,000,000 per annum. The fall in price has, however, already checked the output, as several of the smaller mining bodies and also those working the less profitable mines have ceased work. It seems probable also that even the larger mines will reduce operations in the face of the low prices, and then as the supply falls off so may prices again be expected to rise. A diamond is a pure and unmitigated luxury, and therefore there could be no complaint, if those who hold a monopoly of the supply chose to restrict output in order to keep up prices. It seems not improbable that a policy of this type will shortly animate all the diamond diggers of this district.

But this fall in prices is not only due to overproduction. It is estimated that 10 per cent. to 15 per cent. of the fall is due to the sale of stolen diamonds. These, of course, can be and are sold at a very low price, as their cost of production usually means some trifling sum paid to a native laborer for what he can secrete on his person or by other means smuggle out of the mine. In the early days, when each man worked for himself, there was no diamond stealing, but as it grew to be necessary to work on a larger scale and by the aid of hired labor, and as at the same time the process of operating afforded new opportunities for stealing, this crime grew to be one of the great curses of the industry. At present at every stage of the process laborers or employes come across diamonds. The men down in the mine, blasting and picking out the blue, frequently come upon the valued stones; and as the "stuff" is handled at every stage diamonds show themselves. The natives posted to empty the buckets coming up from the mine watch keenly for what may gleam in the process, and so does the engine driver or mule man who runs the laden trucks out to the floors. And on these floors the regular gangs, who unload and break it up, find many and large "stones;" and so, right through the process, there is ample opportunity at every turn to pick up a stone which is sure to be worth pounds, and may be worth thousands.

How to prevent or even to check this thieving has taxed the best energies of proprietors and police for many years past. Success has not yet appeared, for with every new appliance, some new form of theft seems to come into being. There are endless means actually adopted. Swallowing the stones is quite common, and at one time the thief threw them wrapped in dough to dogs, which were killed and cut open by his confederates outside. Hiding them about the dress and pitching them away to be picked up at night are among the other means. From the commencement the method of collecting the stones has been rough and ready rather than careful and complete, and to the stranger there appears to be not only every chance but every temptation for employes to steal perpetually.

The evils of this diamond stealing are far-reaching. Foremost among them stands an unnatural lowering of prices. The possessor of the stolen stone has paid but little for it, and although he will naturally endeavor to realize as high a price as he can, he nevertheless greatly undersells the possessor of stones that have honestly paid all the expenses of production. It is estimated that every year from one-fifth to one-sixth of the stones exported are stolen, or, in other words, something like £500,000 worth of stolen diamonds leaves the colony annually. At the diggings at first there was a not unnatural laxity in dealing with this new and prolific wealth, and the social soil was at the least congenial to the development of this laxity into customs little less than criminal. Nowadays there is danger that this stealing, with its necessary complement, the "illicit diamond buying," or "I. D. B. trade," as it is euphemistically known, may sap the morality of the community, and against this vigorous protest is now being made. The mine owners are willing to pay large sums to stop this illicit trade. One mine calculates it loses each year at present £100,000 in unnecessarily depreciated price, and £100,000 in value of diamonds stolen, or a total loss of £200,000 in an output of £1,000,000, but there seems ground for hope that this great evil may be successfully put an end to.

### USE OF OPIUM BY WOMEN.

**An Assertion by a Normal School Professor Not Generally Accepted.**

Prof. T. P. Stowell, of the State Normal School at Cortland, N. Y., is accredited with the statement in public that "opium in some form or other is used by women just as generally as tobacco is used by men. Girls use opium as much as boys use cigarettes. If the druggists of this city (Syracuse), would tell what they know it would arouse the city in a night. It is owing to alcohol, tobacco, and opium, that we find so many suicides, insane people, and cranks."

When spoken to on the subject, Prof. Bacon, of the Syracuse High School, said that he had read the lecture and found it very hard to believe that there was any justification in fact for the remarkable statement of the lecturer. He knew Prof. Stowell to be of high repute in his specialties, but he thought he had been led into exaggeration under the excitement of an oratorical effort. In Prof. Bacon's experience as a teacher he had never known a single case of opium at a school, and he had almost positive knowledge that the use of the drug is not common among either boys or girls. He thought the confectioners might possibly have made use of opium to enhance the value of their goods.

Dr. Brownell, Professor of Chemistry at the same High School, was present at the lecture and afterward expressed himself as utterly at a loss to account for the bold statements made from the platform. His classes of girls were equally astounded at the declarations. Dr. Brownell had known extremely rare instances of girls who indulged in arsenic eating, but he had never heard of one who had been guilty of tampering with opium.

Edward S. Dawson, Jr., a prominent Syracuse druggist, said he thought the Professor had greatly exaggerated in an endeavor to place emphasis upon his remarks. Any one asking for opium is subjected to a severe cross-questioning, and the effects of this policy in Mr. Dawson's business are shown by the fact that scarcely half an ounce of the drug is now sold where half a pound was disposed of formerly. The youngest patron he has is at least 35 years of 1, and minors are never allowed to purchase.

Mr. C. W. Snow, another druggist, thought that the statement was absurd. He had never sold opium to a girl, and no one in his store had ever done so. His experience taught him that a decrease in the consumption of opium was taking place in this country. Physicians no longer prescribed it in the large quantities common a few years ago.

Dr. Totman, of Syracuse, had never encountered a case of opium eating among girls. He did not think the Professor had attempted to substantiate his statement. In some cases of acute inflammation, the doctor thought an opiate was absolutely necessary, and in some of these instances the patient continues to use the drug, and ends by becoming a confirmed eater.

**Marriage Among Southern Girls.**

The youth masculine of New Orleans is mostly married at 22 or 23. A girl of 20 has received half-a-dozen offers at least. Matrimony is the grand authorized aim, as publicly recognized as the Louisiana lottery. Girls are educated to marry, and to detest the circumstances that compel them to earn their living in any less womanly way. But there are girls, brave girls, whose pretty faces may be seen behind the counters of almost every large store in New Orleans, who, while hating conformity with shoppy conditions, have put their delicate shoulders to the wheel of family adversity, and sweetly contributed their mites to the general income. Of the professional ambition that fires their Northern sisters they know nothing. They are limitely and entirely domestic, lovable and loving, asking only to be shielded from the facts of life.—*From a New Orleans Letter.*

**A Short-Tailed Cat.**

Japanese cats have the shortest kind of tails, or else none at all. Being deprived of this usual plaything they are very solemn pussies. An American once took one of these tailless cats to San Francisco as a curiosity, and it utterly refused companionship with the long-tailed feline specimens there; but, finding a cat whose tail had been cut off by accident, the two became friendly at once.

**A Notable Diary.**

The immediate publication of the manuscript diary of Shakespeare's cousin, the Town Clerk of Stratford-on-Avon, is announced. The diary extends from 1613 to 1616—the years of Shakespeare's residence at Stratford previous to his death on the 5th of May (April 23, O. S.) of the latter year. From beginning to end it is a record of the attempts made to enclose, and of the resistance offered to the enclosure of, the common fields of Stratford, in which Shakespeare was interested, not only as a freeholder, but also as the owner of a moiety of the tithes.

**He Knew What He Was Doing.**

"Oh, George, I'm ashamed of you rubbing your lips like that after that dear little girl has given you so sweet a kiss!"

"I'm not rubbing it off, nurse. I'm rubbing it in."—*Life.*

**A New Meaning.**

Sunday School Teacher—"What is the meaning of the words, 'Quench not the spirit?'"

Bright Boy—"Papa says it means, don't put in any water."—*Boston Beacon.*

**A Lesson in Physics.**

Teacher—What is velocity?

Pupil—Velocity is what a man puts a hot plate down with.


# A CAR LOAD

of Shad, Mackerel and Herrings at prices never before offered by anyone.

NO. 1 MACKEREL, slightly stained, at $5.00 per barrel. First-class

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I promise to be, as I have been before, a benefit to you.

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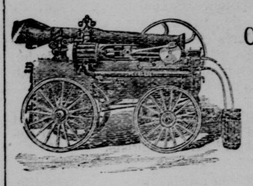

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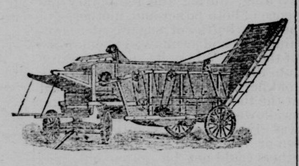

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| 6 25 | 2 15 | Oxford, | 12 08 | 10 00 |
| 6 34 | 2 23 | Trappe, | 12 00 | 9 52 |
| 6 50 | 2 38 | Easton, | 11 45 | 9 37 |
| 7 00 | 2 49 | Chapel, | 11 33 | 9 24 |
| 7 08 | 2 55 | Cordova, | 11 27 | 9 17 |
| 7 18 | 3 05 | Queen Anne, | 11 18 | 9 08 |
| 7 29 | 3 16 | Ridgely, | 11 06 | 8 58 |
| 7 39 | 3 26 | Greensboro, | 10 56 | 8 48 |
| 7 48 | 3 36 | Goldsboro, | 10 46 | 8 38 |
| 8 55 | 3 43 | Henderson, | 10 40 | 8 32 |
| 7 02 | 3 50 | Marydel, | 10 34 | 8 26 |
| 8 11 | 3 58 | Slaughters, | 10 26 | 8 18 |
| 8 14 | 4 00 | Hartley, | 10 24 | 8 16 |
| 8 24 | 4 09 | Kenton, | 10 14 | 8 06 |
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