

Acres Near Kimberley Are Plowed and Harrowed for Precious Stones

(Copyright, 1908, Frank G. Carpenter.)
KIMBERLEY—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—Eleven thousand acres of diamonds.
 Hundreds of fields of blue clay sprinkled with jewels!
 A mighty farm where the diamonds lie out under the sun and the diamondiferous earth is worked with steam harrows!

These are some of the things you may see any day here at Kimberley. Last year the crop from this vast diamond farm amounted to \$32,000,000. It was equal to more than \$100,000 for every working day the whole year through. It was more than \$70 for every minute, or more than \$1 for every tick of the watch though all the minutes of all the hours of all the days of that year.



HARROWING THE BLUE GROUND FOR DIAMONDS.

Mining the Blue.
 All the soil of this mighty farm has been taken out of the diamond pipes, which I have described in a previous letter. There are five such pipes at Kimberley, and each contains a pudding of this blue clay, sprinkled with white currents of diamonds. The pipes range from 500 feet to several times that in diameter. Two of them, the Kimberley and the De Beers, have already been excavated to a depth of more than 2,000 feet, and the three others, the Wessington, the Bultfontein and Dutoitspan, are now being mined at 500 or more feet from the surface. In every pipe the blue rock has been found continuous, and everywhere it is peppered with diamonds. How deep down the deposits go no one knows. In the Kimberley they have been probed to a depth of more than a half mile, so that it is no exaggeration to say that there are hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of diamonds in sight.

As to the origin of the gems, they are supposed to be volcanic, and Mr. Gardner Williams, who managed the mines for twenty years, believes that they were shot up by mud volcanoes. There is no doubt but that the pipes were formed by some convulsion of nature and that it was at about the same time that the jewels appeared.

The mining, as I have described, consists of blasting out and raising to the surface the blue clay containing the diamonds.

Sorting Diamonds.
 I spent some time watching the diamond sorters pick out the precious stones after the grease was poured off. Each man had on a table before him a handful of diamonds of all shapes and sizes, and he was picking them up one by one with a pair of tweezers and dropping them into a tin cup, which cost, I venture, less than 5 cents. As I watched one of these men he lifted up a little white stone, saying: "This is worth \$20," and then showed me another, not much larger, worth double that sum. The manager afterward poured out a pint of diamonds on the table, showing me some that were worth \$60 a carat and others cheaper. He took up a little soap shovel and with it threw the diamonds back into the cup, handling them as though they were peas.

Later on I visited the company's offices in Kimberley itself, and was shown quart after quart of diamonds from the various mines. The sorters can tell by its shape and color from just which pipe each diamond comes, and I was shown specimens from every mine. I had in my hand a little bundle which contained about a pint of small stones, the value of which approximated \$500,000, and I was shown other bundles containing brilliants as big as the end of my finger. Some of these rough stones had smooth edges and they were almost pebbles in shape. Others appeared ready for setting and some were broken and chipped from other stones. Many of the diamonds contained flaws, but there were many which were absolutely perfect. The diamonds were of different colors. Some were as yellow as topazes, others a light blue tint and others pure white.

On the Diamond Floor.
 I have spent a part of this week in going with the diamond ore to the field or floors where it is left to weather, and in following it to the washing machines where the jewels are finally won. As the rock comes to the surface it bears no sign of them. I have looked over several thousands cars of it, but have not seen a single brilliant imbedded in the blue, and I am told that the precious stones are seldom discovered, except when they come out in the washing.

Sorting Diamonds.
 This blue ground is as hard as rock. I can just scratch it with my knife. It is so hard that you could draw a nail with a chunk of it, and it takes a heavy hammer to break it. The ground is carried from the mines to the floors and spread out there to a depth of one foot, all over the surface. It lies out for about a year, being plowed and harrowed from time to time. If the weather is dry it is sprinkled, and as a result it so melts or softens that the diamonds can be washed out of it.

Guarding the Fields.
 In looking over these fields one seldom sees diamonds, but the brilliants are there and they must be carefully guarded. Think of \$5,000,000 being scattered over the earth within easy reach of any town of 20,000 in the United States, and you have the situation at Kimberley. You would imagine that the fields would be railed and the stuff carried off. It is not. The fields are guarded day and night by men who march around them with guns in their hands. They have electric lights which keep them bright from sunset to sunrise, and they are surrounded by high fences of barbed wire, the strands being so close together that a man can not crawl through, and so high that he cannot easily climb over them. There are two of these fences around every field. They are about twenty or thirty feet apart, and the guards march between them. If a thief could crawl over the first fence he would be sure to be shot before he got to the second, and so the diamonds are comparatively safe.

Ten Thousand Negro Miners.
 During the year 1907 the miners of the De Beers company here kept something like 20,000 negroes regularly employed getting out the blue and working the floors and washing machines. They had there, all told, more than 3,000 whites. On account of the hard times in America, which has seriously cut the demand for diamonds, about 10,000 of the native miners have been recently discharged, and also over 1,000 whites. There are still 10,000 native miners at work, and this number will be increased as the market improves. I have had a good chance to see the miners during my trips about Kimberley. They are Kafirs coming from the various tribes of South Africa, the company preferring to have its men from as many different localities as possible in order to prevent strikes. The men work well and are more efficient than the ordinary African labor. They are big fellows, strong and muscular. In the mines they are bare to the waist, although most of them wear trousers and have shoes to protect their feet from the rocks. Each gang has a white overseer, but the laws prevent any mistreatment of the blacks and they have a right to lay their complaints before a "protector of labor" appointed by the government. The natives are never hired for less than four months, although the company is glad to keep them as long as they will work.

Washing Out Diamonds.
 This blue ground is brought to the fields in steel cars. There are 100 miles of railroad tracks, which run from the mines to the floors, and from them to the crushing and washing machines, which handle the earth, after its melting. Over every 100 feet track is a steel cable, and the thousands of cars are moved by the steam engines of the five central plants.

I saw the process of washing out diamonds at the De Beers mine. The rock was carried there a distance of eight miles by the cable. In reducing it, it was divided into two classes, one soft and one hard. The hard rock was that which had not been affected by the weather; and it had to be crushed to a powder before the diamonds could be taken out. This was done in mighty steel crushers which are so made that they will grind up the rock, and at the same time not injure the still harder diamonds within. After crushing, the coarser pieces are crushed again, and at the end it is all reduced to about the consistency of soft ground, made so by the weather.

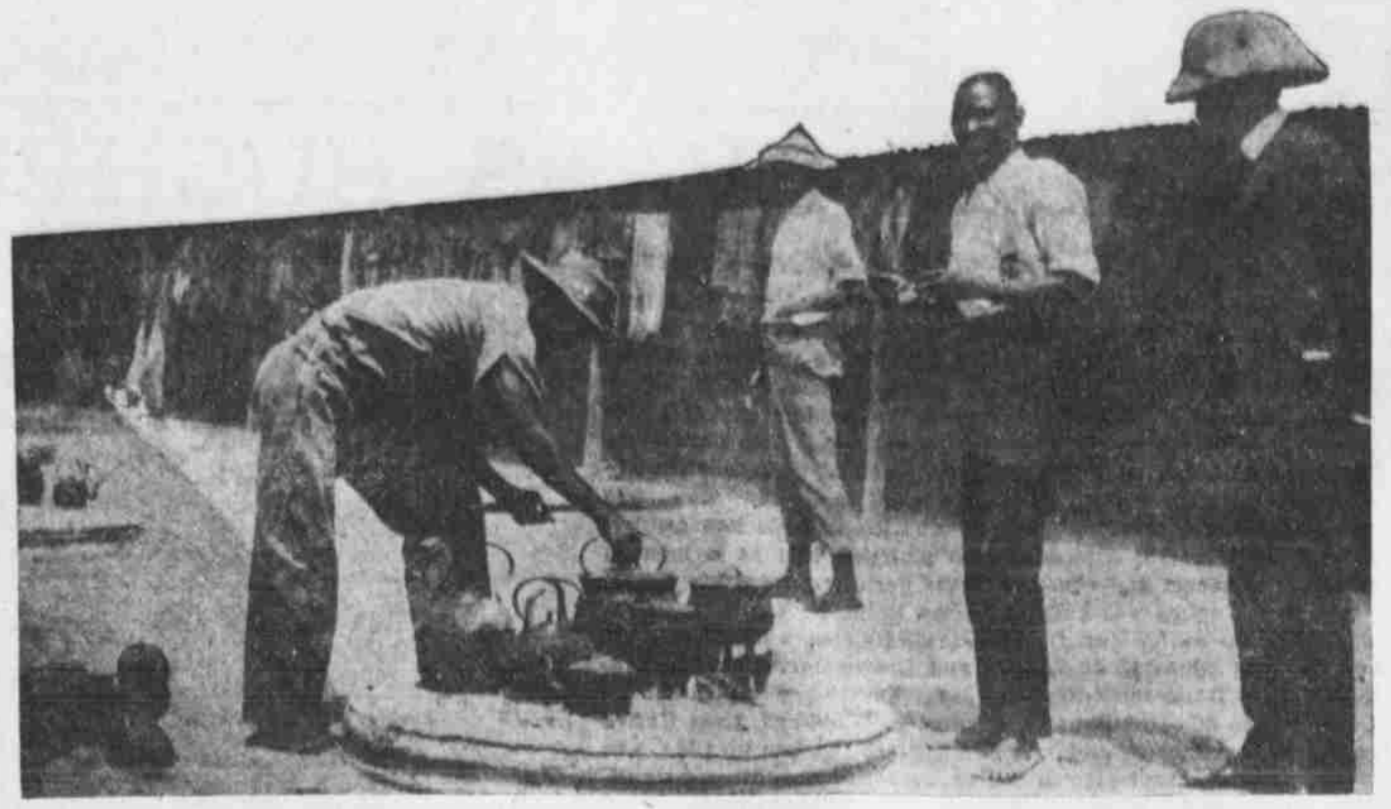
Buying Diamonds.
 All the diamonds of the De Beers company now go to the diamond syndicate. This is a sort of a trust which contracts to take the whole profits of the mines up to a certain point for five years at a time. It agrees to take so many million dollars' worth of diamonds every year at a fixed

Diamonds Saved by Grease.
 It used to be that all the gravel obtained in this way was sorted over by men. Both natives and whites were employed, but the chances for stealing were great, and it was found that many small stones were lost. Indeed some of the gravel which was sorted over in that way years ago is now being sorted again and at a great profit.

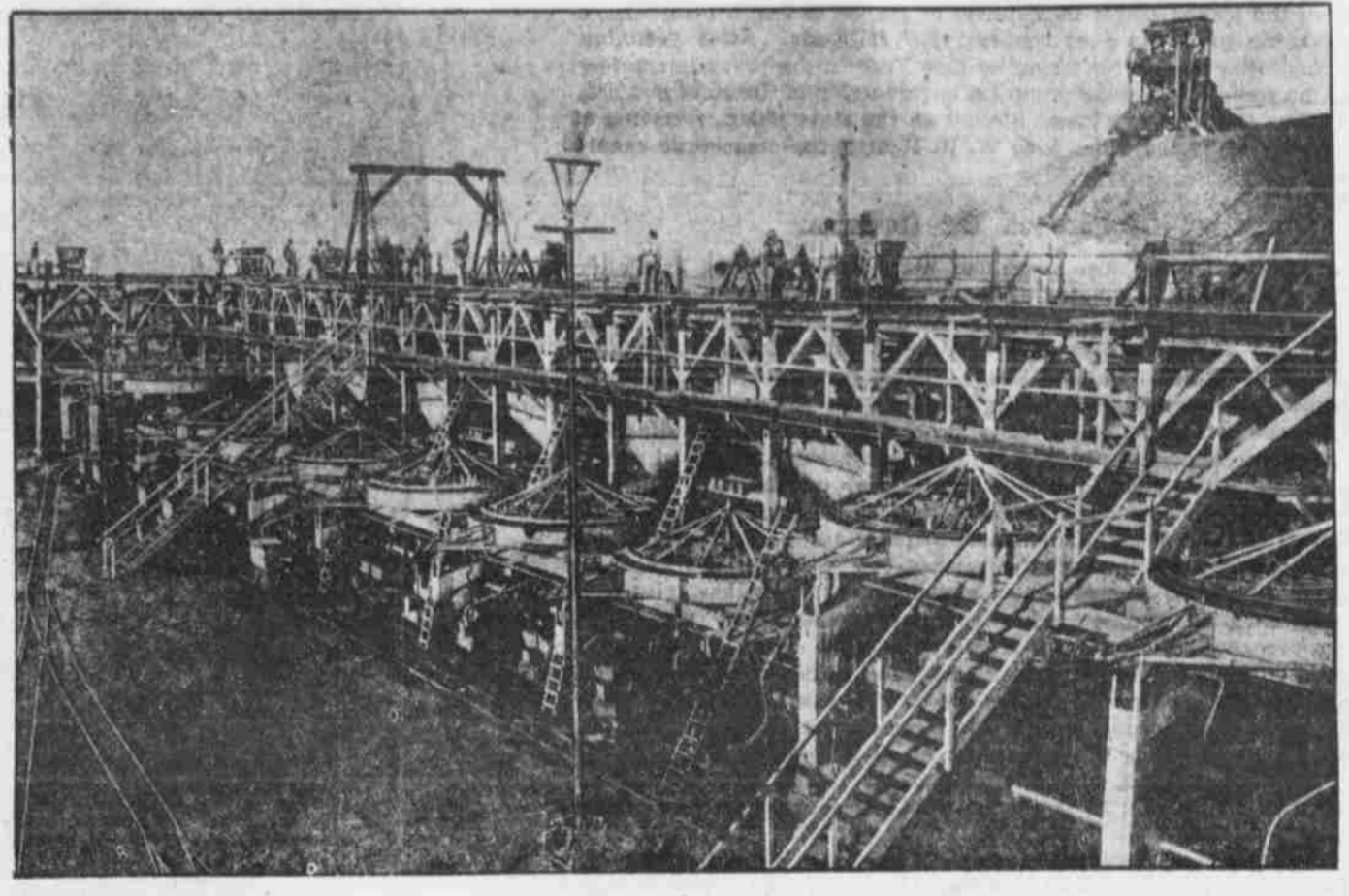
Today the diamonds are saved by tables covered with a grease just like axle grease. The gravel is run through what is known as a pulsator, consisting of a series of iron tables corrugated like a washboard. These tables lie at a slight angle, and the machinery shakes them, so that they are always moving as the gravel passes over them. They are covered with this grease, and by shaking almost every stone at one time or another comes in contact with this grease.

To Catch Diamond Thieves.
 The men buy their own provisions and do their own cooking. There are storehouses inside the compound which furnish groceries, and butcher shops where meat is sold lower than anywhere else in South Africa. Connected with the buildings are the offices of the managers of the com-

Now it is a curious thing that diamonds will stick in this grease, and that all the other stones will flow off without catching. Every few hours the tables are stopped and the grease scraped off. It is found to contain all the diamonds and also small bits



MINERS DO THEIR OWN COOKING.



DIAMOND WASHING MACHINES.

Stripped Up Twice.
 It can be safely said that H. Miles Moore is the oldest resident of Leavenworth, relates the Leavenworth Times. He was a member of the townsite company that came down the river from Weston, Mo., in 1854, and staked out the site for Leavenworth. Only two members of the company are living, and the other, A. T. Kyle, is no longer a resident, having returned to Weston.

"It seems strange," said Mr. Moore, "that I survived those ragged days to enjoy the quietude of old age when my career came so near being nipped in youth so often."

"Why, twice in the year 1856 I was struck up by proslavery ruffians and once thrown into the Missouri river in the same year. I was cut down by friends who found me hanging by the neck unconscious. Those ruffians were terrified by my reappearance to life—here he chuckled as in appreciation of a good joke—"when I walked about the streets the next day."

Tricks of Alabama "Wets."
 The sale and distribution of the whiskey sandwich is the latest method of evading the liquor laws in the state of Alabama. Leaves of bread, cut and arranged like oyster sandwiches, are sold over the counters in lunch rooms presumably operated for that very purpose, a bottle of whiskey being cleverly arranged between the layers of the bread.

Chased By a Meteor.
 Mr. and Mrs. William Gaddis of Columbus, Ind., were pursued by a meteor, or some other stray heavenly body while driving about five miles east of that town. They were traveling in the direction of Columbus, and had remarked about the extreme darkness of the night, as they were scarcely able to see their horse, when a sudden bright light shone on them with such brilliancy that they were blinded. Supposing that an automobile was coming from the rear, they drove to one side to await its passing, but as no machine came, they turned to look for it, and were startled to see a ball of fire which seemed to be about five feet in diameter coming toward them.

Stork Refuses to Wait.
 A novel suit has been started in New York by the filing in the county clerk's office of the complaint in an action brought by Mrs. Olga Eisenberg against the Postal Telegraph Cable company to recover \$10,000 damages for alleged negligence of the company in not delivering a telegram sent by her husband, Aaron Eisenberg, to the family doctor telling him to come at once, as the stork was expected.

Handshake Breaks Arm.
 As the result of a vigorous handshake, Jeremiah Berger of Wilmington, Del., and so is at the Delaware hospital suffering from a broken arm.

Handshake Breaks Arm.
 Berger is a powder worker for the Du Pont Powder company, and lives at Henry Clay. A few days ago he met Patrick Dougherty, a hotel proprietor, and the two clasped hands in a hearty shake as it was the first time they had met for several months.

Handshake Breaks Arm.
 A few days later Berger's arm began to pain him. He went to the hospital to consult a physician and was then told a bone had been broken.

Handshake Breaks Arm.
 Berger declares he will be careful hereafter to whom he extends his hand in greeting.

Handshake Breaks Arm.
 "The defendant failed to deliver it in

Maids of Honor to the Queen of Ak-Sar-Ben

 MISS PETERS.	 MISS DAVIS.	 MISS CONGDON.	 MISS POWELL.
 MISS BARKALOW.	 MISS BAUM.	 MISS PATTERSON.	 MISS MORGAN.
 MISS MOOREHEAD.	 MISS WHITE.	 MISS BOURKE.	 MISS MORGAN.

Quaint Features of Life

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Jumped in Canal from Moving Engine.
 Fireman John Mulroy of 313 Academy street, Trenton, N. J., leaped from his moving engine into the waters of the Delaware & Raritan canal as his passenger train was coming from Bordertown, and saved the life of an eighteen-year-old Italian, who could not make people understand his name.

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