

Latest from the Diamond Fields.

Fresh tidings from the African diamond fields confirm the glowing accounts previously received. The banks of the Vaal River are now swarming with eager gem-seekers. A city has sprung up there, under canvas, which already contains nearly twenty thousand souls. Money is said, even by the least sanguine reporters, to be as plentiful as dirt, and champagne to flow like water. The air is filled with tales of wonder. Not diamonds only, but rubies and garnets have been found in numbers among the dense red gravel of the Orange and Vaal Rivers. The Dean of Graham's Town writes to the *London Times* that every fact named in a previous letter of his to that journal, published in September, has been abundantly confirmed. Dr. WILLIAMS' original letter was sharply criticised for alleged exaggeration, and for stimulating emigration which, it was feared, might turn out disastrously. He now declares that his statements and prognostications are more than verified. The diamond hunters now do what they were advised by experts to do at first, namely, go down deep in the earth instead of confining themselves to the surface. At a depth of thirty feet the precious stones are as abundant, he asserts, as they were above. Again, as to the rivers, the immediate banks of which were by many supposed to constitute the necessary limits of the diamond-bearing soil, Dr. WILLIAMS makes this statement: The earlier settlers naturally kept as close to the streams as they could, for the convenience of getting water easily for washing the gravel. They knew not, therefore, how far, measured from the river's banks, the diamond gravel might extend. Now, however, there being about fifteen thousand men on the spot crowding together, some are naturally elbowed away further and further from the stream. Yet, at a distance of six miles, and under the disadvantage of having to cart their water from the river, there are diggers who have realized splendid profits. A spot has even been struck twenty-five miles north of the Orange River where diamonds in profusion have been obtained. So astonishingly, adds this informant, is the diamond tract in course of discovery being extended, "both in depth and surface area," that he believes there would be room sufficient for the whole male population of London to work in and find handsome remuneration.

Another interesting statement concerns the size of the stones. The percentage of large ones—many of them gems of the best shape and water—is pronounced something marvelous. In this the African far surpass the Brazilian mines. Dr. WILLIAMS gives a recent notable instance. An old man, a neighbor of his, sixty-five or seventy years of age, once in good circumstances, by a series of misfortunes had been reduced to beggary. With extraordinary courage for so old and feeble a person, he started for the diamond fields. Fortune seemed to smile on the spectacle of a tottering graybeard thus painfully wielding the pick and shovel. At all events he was absent but a few weeks when he returned to Graham's Town with over twenty thousand dollars' worth of gems. One of these, weighing forty carats, is said to be the most beautifully shaped rough stone the reporter has ever seen. There are said to be many cases like this.

What is more to the purpose, Dr. WILLIAMS declares he has never known a sober man, having health, who was disgusted at the diamond fields with either the life or work. In other words, there is good average remuneration for steady labor. A man can live well there for about \$400 a year, and all are advised to bring enough with them to live for half that time, as a safeguard against contingencies. Prices are but slightly in advance of what they are in England. In this there is a vast difference between the first occupation of the diamond fields of Africa and the gold-diggings of California and Australia. The cost of the bare necessities of life in those countries was at the outset quite fabulous. There is so far another difference which it is to be hoped may be permanently observable; we hear from South Africa few or no reports of crime. This fact is the more striking since the population largely consists of the same elements as constituted the original gold-seekers. There are many Americans as well as natives of the British Islands, at the diamond fields, while the Spanish or half-breed admixture that formed a small part of the Californian band of treasure-hunters, may be set off, we suppose, in South Africa, against the Dutch Boers. This distinction hardly accounts for the moral difference so far apparent, of which, certainly, it is very satisfactory to hear. A broader theme for congratulation is suggested by the fact that the glittering spoil thus discovered will be the means of swiftly colonizing that magnificent country, and we may hope of bringing speedy enlightenment and civilization to the unfortunate millions that people the African continent.