

## AN UNPUBLISHED POEM.

The writer of the subjoined poem was a gentleman of great literary ability, but unfortunately did not attempt to cultivate his rare talents as a poet until comparatively late in life. Had he done so sooner he would assuredly have won for himself a high place in the ranks of the poets. He was born in Edinburgh, and in early life a writer to the *Signet*. He came to this country as private secretary to Lord Sydenham, and afterwards became Collector of Customs at Kingston, where he died a few years since. We are indebted to Evan McColi, the poet, for a copy of the poem.

## THE BATTLE OF ALMA.

See! the Hosts to Alma tending,  
France and Britain's armies blending;  
Horse and Foot are quickly forming,  
Alma's heights prepared for storming.  
Array'd the Moslem's wrongs to right,  
And curb the haughty Muscovite.

See! the river's banks where treading,  
Infantry their ranks are spreading;  
See! the troopers forward dashing,  
Swords against their chargers clashing.  
Hear's of men for combat burning,  
Horses hoofs the ground are spurning.  
All! the hope of glory gladdens,  
All! the thirst of battle maddens!

Pennons in the van are dancing,  
Bay'nets in the sun are glancing,  
Drum and fife are loudly pealing;  
Throbs each pulse with generous feeling.  
O'er the heights resolved that, gleaming,  
Britain's flag shall soon be streaming!  
Although around these heights there close  
Myriad fierce and savage foes!

Hark! the gun for onset booming,  
Many there to death is dooming.  
Hark! the loud huzza declaring,  
How their hearts are full of daring!  
On they push through Alma's water,  
Redden'd all its waves with slaughter.  
Speed they up the highlands higher,  
To the heights of Alma higher.

Through the foes, to stem them rushing,  
Break they all before them crushing!  
Russia's bands in serried numbers,  
Guns of iron hurling thunders!  
Balls from thousand rifles whistling,  
Rocks and crags with sabres bristling.  
Nothing can their purpose alter,  
Not a moment do they falter!

Where the swords most keen are clashing,  
Where the fire's most brightly dashing,  
Where the smoke's most densely curling,  
Mortars, shells most frequent hurling,  
Britain's sons are onward straining,  
Numbers, fire, and sword disdaining!  
With shouts! and courage still unspent,  
Press they up the steep ascent.

On the right, hark! shouts replying,  
Friendly voices to them crying!  
See! the riders' heads appearing  
'Mong the cliffs, see! horse careering!  
France's gallant sabre dashing,  
'Mid the flying form in crashing!  
Gallia's sons upon them fall—  
Britain's sons still "Onward!" call.

Though their life-blood flows as water,  
On they force in spite of slaughter;  
Up the ascent where gore is gurgling,  
See on hands and knees they're struggling!  
Though dead in heaps their comrades lie,  
Their flag behold! on Alma fly!

Hush'd the shouts of victors greeting,  
Still'd the vanquish'd's cries retreating.  
Grateful thoughts are gently swelling,  
Back their souls to holler feeling.  
To the Lord our voices raise we  
Let all hearts adoring praise Thee!  
Trior for us this day has given  
Trior! the victory hast given!

JAMES HOPKINS.

Woodstone, April 12th, 1855.

—*People's Journal*.

## DIAMONDS.

From the earliest times up to the beginning of the eighteenth century, India was supposed to be the only diamond producing country. The first brought to Europe were from the kingdoms of Visipoor and Golconda. They were found at the base of the Neela Mulla Mountains, in the neighborhood of the Krischna and Ponnai rivers—a

district so sterile that previously to the discovery of the treasures contained in its soil, it was little better than a desert. During the rainy season the floods descend in torrents from the mountains, and after their subsidence numbers of diamonds are found in the ferruginous sands washed down from the rocks.

The diamonds thus found were conveyed to the city of Golconda, where they were disposed of, either to native princes or foreign merchants. The qualities of the diamonds were distinguished by the name of Hindoo castes; the best and largest were called Brahma, the second Krischna, the third Bysch, and the fourth Sudra. The use of these gems was formerly a regal privilege of the Rajahs and Sultans, but as successive dynasties were overthrown, diamonds ceased to be the exclusive property of royalty.

The tradition of a valley of diamonds, similar to that described in the story of "Sinbad the Sailor," is of great antiquity. The celebrated Venetian traveller of the thirteenth century, Marco Polo, thus relates what he heard on the subject:—"In the summer, when the heat is excessive and there is no rain, they—the Indians—ascend the mountains with great fatigue, as well as with considerable danger, from the number of snakes with which they are infested. Near the summit, it is said there are deep valleys, full of caverns and surrounded by precipices, amongst which the diamonds are found, and here many eagles and white storks attracted by the snakes on which they feed, are accustomed to make their nests. The persons who are in quest of the diamonds take their stands near the mouths of the caverns, and from thence cast down several pieces of flesh, which the eagles and storks pursue into the valleys, and carry off with them to the top of the rocks. Thither the men immediately ascend, drive the birds away, and recovering the pieces of meat, frequently find diamonds sticking to them."

In 1719 a time of Travernier, a French jeweller, who published all his travels in the East in the seventeenth century, the mines of Golconda employed 60,000 persons and in a still earlier age were so productive that the Sultan Mahomund, who died at the end of the twelfth century, left more than four hundred pounds weight of diamonds in his treasury.

The largest quantities of diamonds are now imported from the Brazils; they were found accidentally while searching for gold. So little did the gold-seekers suspect the nature of the little hard translucent pebbles occasionally picked up, that they either tossed them carelessly away or used them as counters while playing cards. One Bernardo Fonsica Lobo, who had seen rough diamonds in India, formed a shrewd guess as to their value, and took several to Lisbon where they were identified as real diamonds. From that time gold digging was abandoned to slaves, and all the population united in the search for the precious gems. These valuable productions of the Brazilian soil were at first found in immense quantities: in the first fifty years after the discovery, it is said that diamonds to the value of twelve millions sterling were exported.

The process of digging and washing is carried on entirely by negroes. Large diamonds are of course rarely found. If a slave discovers one of eighteen carats weight he

immediately receives his freedom with the privilege of working for himself henceforward.

These precious stones are scattered about in such profusion, that whenever a fowl is killed the crop is examined and diamonds frequently found. A negro once was fortunate enough to find a diamond worth three hundred pounds sterling adhering to the root of a cabbage he had plucked for his dinner. Fowls are well known to be addicted to picking up any shining substance instead of gravel. The only diamond ever found in Europe was discovered a few years ago in Wicklow, and was supposed to have been conveyed thither by some bird of passage. In Gibraltar, the migratory pigeons that are caught at certain seasons have frequently particles of gold dust about their feet, brought no doubt from the auriferous deposits in the hitherto unexplored regions of Africa.

The diamond supply from the Brazils is now falling off; but we are on the eve of the discovery of new fields that may probably prove as productive as the districts of Golconda and Cerro de Frio. Late news from Ballarat gives notices of fresh discoveries. A Diamond Mine Company has been established at Melbourne, the object of which is to work a field on the Tudegong River in New South Wales, where not only diamonds but numbers of other precious stones have been found. Most of the diamonds hitherto picked up have been brought to Melbourne; the value of one of these stones is estimated at four hundred pounds sterling. Diamonds have also been lately discovered at the Cape of Good Hope. When we consider the wide districts of Australia and Africa now open to exploration, it is impossible to set a limit to the riches that may be revealed. As objects of beauty the preciousness of diamonds must always remain the same; but it is just possible that great discoveries may so far reduce their marketable value as to render the possession of a parure of diamonds no longer a mark of distinguished rank or wealth. As jewels are not subject to wear or tear, every one found is one added to the world's store; those worn by the Roman Emperresses are no doubt still in existence, and in purchasing a jewelled ring we may possibly acquire possession of a gem that once sparkled on the finger of a Julia or Faustina.

Though the pure white diamond, colorless and pellucid as water, is the most esteemed, these stones are found of various hues—yellow, blue, green, pink, and even black. One of the most perfect specimens of the colored diamond is that belonging to Mr. Hope, which unites the lovely hue of the sapphire with the brilliancy of the more precious gem. The insignia of St. Esprit, formerly worn by the Kings of France, consists of a dove formed of a single sapphire, mounted on a ground of white brilliants and surrounded by blue diamonds of a color almost as intense as the sapphire. The button of the King of Saxony's hat is composed of a splendid green diamond of great value.

The diamond possesses a remarkably high refractive power: it is to this power of separating the rays of light into their elementary colors that its great brilliancy is owing. Though it is found in numerous forms they are all derived from the regular octohedron. The facets of the crystal are often curved, however, thus giving the stone a spherical appearance. The structure is lamellar, and the diamond may be readily cleaved parallel to the plane of the octohedron.

Boetius de Boot, in 1609 was the first to suggest its inflammability; the same surmise was made by the great Newton; but the