

a companion to the newly discovered diamond, and came to the conclusion that the stone had been washed down by the overflowing of the Vaal River. In 1866 more stones were found by the natives on the banks of the Vaal. This strengthened Dr. Atherstone's theory of a diamond deposit, and he suggested that the Home Government should make a systematic examination, the Colonial Government being too poor. The suggestion, however, was not taken up, for while the suggestion was being made the announcement of a remarkable discovery caused a tremendous rush to the field, thus avoiding the necessity of a government investigation. This was in 1869, when a Griqua shepherd boy picked up a beautiful stone weighing $83\frac{1}{2}$ carats, near the Orange River. Schalk Van Niekerk paid what appeared to the poor boy the monstrous price of 500 sheep, ten oxen and one horse for the stone. Van Niekerk sold it to Lillienfield Bros. of Hopetown for \$56,000.00, who again sold it to Earl Dudley for, it is stated, \$125,000.00. The stone became known as the "Star of South Africa." The field soon became more defined by the finding of many smaller stones in the vicinity of the Vaal.

The first systematic prospecting was done by a party of Natal prospectors at the Mission Station of Hebron. Not having any success there, they moved twenty miles down the river to Pniel. Here for days they were doomed to disappointment and were on the point of giving up when they were rewarded by the appearance of a small diamond. Later some natives were induced to point out a kopje where they had found some diamonds; here the party found a deposit of extraordinary richness, and in three months were rewarded with half a tumblerful of stones, two or three hundred in number, from tiny gems to diamonds of 30 carats or more. The news leaked out and a motley throng of fortune hunters poured in. Every nationality of Europe was represented, mixed with the descendants of Guinea coast slaves, and natives of every dusky shade. One writer described the scene at Pniel as the "whistling, shouting, yelling, snorting, neighing, braying, squeaking, grinding, splashing Babel." Klipdrift (or Pniel) was as a swarm of bees whose hive had been upset. The diamond fields were centered at Pniel until 1870, when an overseer on a farm called Jagersfontein in the Orange Free State, found a 50 carat stone in the gravel around the bed of a spruit (small stream). Farmers flocked in and paid the widow of the late owner \$10.00 per month to work patches 20 feet square. The Boers smoked while the Kaffir servants delved Blink Klippe. In September, 1870, almost simultaneous with the Jagersfontein find, a more remarkable discovery was made at Du Toitspan, on the farm Dorstfontein, owned by Du Toit. Du Toit sold out his farm to Adriaan Van Wyk, who first charged \$2.00 per month for