

DIAMOND MINING IN SOUTH AFRICA

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The diamond mines of South Africa are distributed over a large area of country, being found in all the provinces of the Union, with, so far as the author knows, the exception of Natal. The centre of the industry is, however, located in that part of Cape Colony formerly known as Griqualand West, with the chief scene of operations at Kimberley.

GEOGRAPHICAL

Kimberley is situated on the main line of the Cape Government Railways, and is distant approximately 600 miles from Cape Town. Kimberley is practically the geographical centre of British South Africa. It is here that the De Beers Consolidated Mines, Ltd. have their headquarters, with the producing mines dotted around, covering an area of some 16 square miles. The mines directly under the control of the company in the Kimberley district are five in number, being

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| (1) De Beers, | area, 13.72 acres. |
| (2) Kimberley | " 10.37 " |
| (3) Bultfontein | " 23.54 " |
| (4) Du Toitspan | " 31.79 " |
| (5) Premier | (now known as Wesselton to distinguish from the Premier Mine near Pretoria, Transvaal). About 35 acres. |

It is with these Kimberley mines that the paper will more particularly deal.

EARLY HISTORY

Doubtless the early history of the diamond industry will be of interest. Africa is and always has been the traditional home of the Queen of Sheba, King Solomon's Mines, and the marvels of Ophir. It would take too much time to go into the details of the early exploration of the continent by Portuguese and other travellers, suffice it to say that as far back as 600 B.C., Phœnician sailors sailed down the Red Sea and returned with gold, ivory and feathers, and it is surmised that they obtained their treasure from that part of the east coast of Africa, now known as Sofala, almost due east of the ancient ruins of Zimbabwe. In the fifteenth century, the Portuguese made several expeditions into the hinterland of the Sofala coast, with the object of locating the source of all the gold that