

even as far south as Wales Clapperton's work is to be seen in the figure of Bishop Morgan on Cardiff City Hall.

Chelsea Physic Garden was founded in 1673 by the Society of Apothecaries and the Garden has associations with Scotland. It was James VI who founded the Society at Blackfriars, and during the eighteenth century the garden was much frequented by Mrs. Elizabeth Blackwell during the preparation of her beautifully illustrated botanical volumes. In this way she raised the money to release her husband from a debtors' prison, at the same time attracting the attention of many eminent individuals including Dr. Richard Mead and Sir Hans Sloane.

In March 1973 it was announced that one of Scotland's most significant documents describing the social scene in the late eighteenth century was to be republished in twenty volumes. The *Statistical account*, appearing between 1792 and 1799 is a rich source of medical information on the Scotland of the period. The first volume of the projected re-publication is scheduled to appear later this year.

A major commemorative event in Scotland and Africa during May and subsequent months in 1973 was the centenary of the death of David Livingstone. A special stamp was issued by the Post Office and celebrations were held in both countries. Books, both critical and adulatory of Livingstone, were published, but maybe, as doctors, we would still prefer Professor Michael Gelfand's study, *Livingstone the doctor* (1957). The Society was very fortunate in being able to have Professor George Shepperson, Professor of Commonwealth and American History at Edinburgh University, as its speaker at the meeting held on 23 June. Professor Shepperson has studied Livingstone deeply, has written much about him, and as was to be expected, gave not only an interesting address but a penetrating analysis of Livingstone's character and of his place in history.

On 6 June the Postgraduate Medical Centre at Raigmore Hospital, Inverness, was officially opened by Dr. Christopher Clayson. Dr. I. J. T. Davies is the regional director of postgraduate medical education at the centre.

A service was held in Greyfriars Kirk, Edinburgh, on 9 September to mark the centenary of the death of the Reverend Dr. Thomas Guthrie. Although not the founder of ragged industrial schools in Scotland—this honour belongs to Sheriff Watson of Aberdeen—Guthrie in 1847 threw himself wholeheartedly into the movement and the industrial schools named after him became well known. He was among the first to appreciate the value of the ragged industrial school movement as a preventive measure in dealing with juvenile delinquency.

#### THE TWENTY-FOURTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND SEVENTY-FIRST ORDINARY MEETING

The Society met in the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh on 21 October 1972, for its Annual General Meeting. At the Seventy-First Ordinary Meeting which followed two papers were read, one by Mr. Charles G. Drummond, F.P.S., the other by Mr. Noel Kretzmar, F.R.C.S.Ed. Mr. Drummond spoke on:

ADAM DRUMMOND OF MEGGINCH, SURGEON-APOTHECARY  
(1679–1758)

For between thirty and forty years I traversed daily the historic stones of the heart of Old Edinburgh, represented in the Lawnmarket and Grassmarket of the ancient city. It would be difficult to do so and remain oblivious of its atmosphere and unaffected by its past. There was, in my case, the added allure of being associated with two pharmacies there, that in the Grassmarket dating from 1797, the other in the Lawnmarket from 1700. I propose to deal with the latter, through the person of its most illustrious incumbent, Adam Drummond of Megginch.

I was fortunate to have become ensnared by the discovery of important documentary evidence of the life of the pharmacist more than two hundred years ago. In 1952 reconstruction of Fisher's Land in the Lawnmarket revealed a number of prescriptions which had lain undisturbed for over a couple of centuries. In examining these faded documents I was, at the time, primarily concerned with the drugs in use in those days; with the physicians who had prescribed them; and with the patients. The fact that several of the prescriptions bore the direction "To Mr. Drummond's shop" was not then important, though the name carried a certain appeal and was not to be dismissed out of hand. In an attempt to trace the history of the pharmacy it became clear that the business was in the direct line of succession and that the Mr. Drummond referred to was Adam Drummond, surgeon-apothecary, burghess of Edinburgh.

It is important to remember that the surgeon-apothecary in Scotland was the pharmacist, pharmacy and surgery being taught together as part of a course. The first surgeon-apothecaries were James Borthwick and Thomas Kincaid in 1657, and with only a break of some ten years towards the close of the seventeenth century, pharmacy and surgery were very intimately bound up. Although the Incorporation of Surgeons became a Royal College in 1778 and a separate body of druggist-apothecaries arose seven years later, it is of interest that, as late as 1833, only eight years before the founding of the Pharmaceutical Society, out of a total of seventy chemists, druggists and apothecaries in Edinburgh, forty-three still practised surgery and included the prefix "surgeon" in their description. Indeed one, John Cochrane, of the same pharmacy in the Lawnmarket, was described as surgeon and accoucheur. He continued to practise pharmacy until 1880 though I fancy by that time scalpel and forceps had been put aside.

Having established that the Mr. Drummond of the Lawnmarket was Adam Drummond of Megginch in Perthshire, I felt a sense of achievement and was disposed to let matters rest. But the family name kept intruding itself in a number of ways, at irregular intervals, in reading and, once, surprisingly in a little country churchyard in Pencaitland, East Lothian, far removed from Perthshire, where I came across a stone to the memory of one Alison Drummond of Megginch—one of those chance experiences which compel attention and reflection.

And then, a short time ago, in a legal office in the New Edinburgh which was only a vision in the time of Adam Drummond, a document was discovered which provided the necessary impetus to sustained effort. It was an Indenture of apprenticeship between Adam and a youth called John Campbell. The deed is in a perfect state of preservation and its discovery has proved of vital importance.

Adam Drummond was the third son and fifth child of Adam Drummond, the

second of Megginch. His father was born in 1641. He was a lawyer, a Privy Councillor of Scotland and was, for many years, a Member of the Scottish Parliament which sat in Edinburgh—that same parliament which formally rejected in 1690 the autocratic rule of the Privy Council and became, as G. M. Trevelyan says, “an independent force with which the Government had to reckon.” It was independent of Kirk and King, though friendly to both. But these were turbulent times and Adam Drummond, senior, the father of our Adam, was appointed in 1692 as one of the Commissioners to conduct the Inquiry into the Massacre of Glencoe.

But important and onerous as was the work of the father in his parliamentary and other duties in the Capital, nothing could be more mistaken than to imagine that his wife, Alison, on the family estate in Perthshire, was living a sheltered life. The family archives disclose that Alison was coping with all eleven of her children ill with smallpox at the same time, and she was expecting her twelfth child! “By skill, nursing, prayer and some miracle, they all survived.” Alison must have been a lady of sterling courage, character and devotion. To aggravate what must have seemed to be insuperable difficulties, the countryside was over-run with troops, following the accession of William III.

But it is to the third son and fifth child that our attention must be turned. Adam was born in 1679 on the family estate at Megginch Castle and went to the local school at the village of Errol, on the first stage of a journey which took him to St. Andrews, Edinburgh and Leyden. He entered St. Andrews University at the age of sixteen, and three years later he joined his older brother in Edinburgh, becoming apprenticed to a surgeon, Thomas Edgar. Edgar was the son-in-law of Alexander Pennycuik, who had been Dean of the craft of Surgeons in 1645 and Surgeon-General to the Scots troops in the Civil War, and James Borthwick served under him. So Adam found himself in competent hands during his formative years. But in the winter of 1699, Edgar was continually ill, and the young apprentice overworked. He himself suffered in his health and had trouble with his eyes. A letter home at that time from his brother John states: “I find Adam agrees very well with his employment . . . Adam must have a nightgown [i.e. a dressing gown] because he says he is obliged to rise sometimes in the night. In case you cannot get one presently, you may send over my old one about my black clothes, and it will serve him till he gets another.”

But the cold Edinburgh winters, and the disturbed nights, did not discourage Adam for, on the completion of his training, he set out for Leyden to join his brother John. That was the pattern of education in Scotland. All, of whatever station, attended the local school, proceeding to a Scots university and then to the Continent if they were following one of the learned professions. Schooling in England for Scots boys was unknown until after the Union of 1707.

Adam broke his journey in London to take a course of anatomy under a Dr. Erskine, who held the unusual post of physician to the Czar of Muscovy and, on Erskine's departure for Russia, Adam crossed to Holland. But there was a financial problem, as a letter to his father on 25 April 1704, disclosed. “My money is very nigh spent, but I can have more from a comrade who goes along with me, and shall repay him at Rotterdam.” He had wanted to study in Paris, and he sought the help of a Mr. Moulin, a family friend, to secure the approval and consent of his father.

*Proceedings of the Scottish Society of the History of Medicine*

Mr. Moulin's letter said: "His [Adam's] design is to go into France and spend one year there, which will improve him (as he tells me) in what he professes more than seven years in Holland, and that he can have a safe pass. If I mistake it not, the only place in France for an insight into chirurgery is at a place called Les Invalides—near Paris, provided he be not molested about his religion, or pestered and teased by the Perkinites. He deserves truly to be pleased in what you can." Parental consent was refused. Adam was far from happy at the decision, and on 5 August 1704 expressed his views forthrightly:

I received a letter from Mr. Moulin by the last post by which I understand that you are positively resolved against my going to France, which hath so discouraged me in my business that my thoughts are quite off the following any more after it. Since there is no other way left for my improvement, I resolve to study physic close here and wait punctually on the colleges, which study indeed was always more agreeable to me, the other being merely to please you in as also I knew there would be more advantage in it. However, since you are pleased to cross me in it, I resolve not to be one of those people who have been abroad merely for name's sake as is generally thought of in our employment by people who understand nothing in the matter. All I shall say is that I am persuaded you were never advised to the contrary by any who had but a moderate knowledge in our business, or that ever wished me happy, yea, I do not doubt but next to myself you will be the first that will find the loss of it, and will repent of it when it is too late, for if I should give all the pains that ever any mortal did, I cannot pretend to understand my business granting that I were to stay 3 or 4 years in this place or any other in Holland.

Several reasons for his father's opposition to Adam's studying in Paris have been suggested. One of them may have been financial, though it is highly probable that, in the prevailing political climate and the intrigues designed to restore the Stuarts to the throne—a prospect that made no appeal to his father—it was felt that Holland was safer.

No light is thrown on the poor opinion Adam had formed of the teaching at Leyden. At the time Boerhaave would be a junior lecturer, Adam's sojourn in Leyden occurring in the interregnum between the brief reign of Archibald Pitcairne and the accession of Boerhaave. It seems unlikely that Adam, sen., would have looked favourably on his son's close association, in his formative years, with that ardent Jacobite and Episcopalian, Pitcairne.

On his return to Edinburgh, Adam Drummond was elected to the Incorporation of Surgeons on 6 November 1707, setting up in business as a surgeon-apothecary in Fisher's Land in the Lawnmarket. (A land was a tall tenement, characteristic of the Old Town in which, for reasons of defence within the walls, an expanding population had to be accommodated by building skywards.)

But his professional accomplishments were such that his services were sought in wider fields. Robert Eliot was appointed professor of anatomy in 1705, an appointment not secured without a certain measure of guile. Eliot had offered to his brethren of the Incorporation to undertake the duty of teaching, and his offer was accepted, the Incorporation providing him with a theatre. It was then necessary to petition the Town Council so as to obtain financial assistance, for the university was at the time still the "Toun's Colledge" and appointment to the various chairs was in the gift of the Council. In his plea to the Town Council Eliot stated that he would instruct the youth to serve Her Majesty's lieges both at home and abroad in her armies. It

would, he said, “be ane means of saving money to the nation expended in teaching anatomie in foreign places.” He confessed to his brethren that what he really wanted was the teaching of students as such. Eliot was the first professor of anatomy in the Town’s College and the earliest in Britain. His salary was £15 per annum, for which princely sum he resorted to subterfuge with the Town Council.

In 1708, at Eliot’s request, Adam Drummond was conjoined with him in the post, at a bargain price to the town of two for the price of one, for the joint salary was £15.

Drummond appears to have made considerable impact within a very short time of his return from the Continent, for in 1707 he was made librarian of the Incorporation of Surgeons, and the representations in his favour to be conjoined with Eliot one year later were made by John Mirrie, then president of the surgeons and, prior to Eliot’s appointment, himself a lecturer on anatomical subjects.

On Eliot’s death in 1716, Drummond was joined by McGill, but on 21 January 1720, they stated to a meeting of surgeons that they were unable to attend to their professorship “owing to the state of their health and business”. “They and the haill calling being persuaded of the sufficiency of Alexander Monro, one of their number, did therefore unanimously recommend him to the Provost and Town of Edinburgh to be Professor of Anatomy.” Thus did Monro *primus*, at the early age of twenty-two, enter upon his duties—and found a dynasty—at the same salary as his predecessors. But the suspicion must remain that, able as young Monro was, the appointment was achieved with a certain amount of manipulation.

Adam’s health at that time cannot have been precarious, for he lived for nearly forty years thereafter, but there can be little doubt that his business was absorbing more of his time. Edinburgh was ready to take its place as a great centre of medical teaching and, within a few years, the Faculty of Medicine was born, with such illustrious pioneers as Andrew St. Clair, John Rutherford, grandfather of Sir Walter Scott and father of Daniel, of nitrogen fame, Andrew Plummer, whose pills I sold within very recent years, and John Innes.

Documentary evidence of the regard in which Drummond was held as a pharmacist is preserved in the old prescriptions uncovered in Fisher’s Land in 1952, for they were in the handwriting of the most eminent physicians of the day, including the Tweedales, the Mintos and the Hays, who directed their prescriptions to Mr. Drummond’s shop. He enjoyed the complete confidence of his medical colleagues.

Now it is time to turn to the most recent document to come into my hands, the Indenture between Adam Drummond and an apprentice, John Campbell. It suggests that, while certain to have a fine training, the said John Campbell seemed destined to have a thin time in other ways. The indenture reads:

Thir Indentures made at Edinburgh the twentieth day of February—One thousand and seven hundred and thirty-six years. In themselves proport leall and soothfast witnessing That it is appointed, Agreed and finally ended betwixt Adam Drummond Chirurgion Apothecary Burgess of Edinburgh on the One part and John Campbell lawfull sone to Collin Campbell Collector of the Customs at Prestonpanns; with the special advice and consent of the said Collin Campbell as Cautioner and Surety for and with him for fullfilling of his part of the Indentures under-written. And also the said Collin Campbell for himself and taking burden in and upon him for the said John Campbell. And they both with one advice consent and assent on the other part in manner, form and effect as after follows.



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That is to say The said John Campbell by the tenor hereof becomes bound Apprentice and Servant to the said Adam Drummond in his Arts and Calling of Surgery and Pharmacy for all the days space years and Terms of Five years next and immediately following his Entry thereto, Which shall be and begin, God willing, at the day and date hereof; During the which space the said John Campbell Binds and Obliges him to serve the said Adam Drummond his said Master faithfully and honestly by day and night, Holy day and Work day in all things Godly and Honest; And shall not hear of his said Masters skaith at any time by day or by night during the space forsaid, but shall reveal the same to him and hinder it to his power; And that he shall not reveal his Masters Secrets in his Arts, nor the Secret diseases of his patients to any person whatsoever; Nor shall he absent himself from his said Master's Service at any time during the space forsaid without his Masters Special Licence had and obtained of him for that effect. And that he shall not committ (as God forbid) the filthy crimes of Fornication or Adultery nor play at any Games whatsoever and that he shall not be Drunk, nor a Nightwalker, nor a haunter of debauched or Idle Company; and that he shall not disobey his Masters Orders pretending he is Elder or Younger Apprentice, Or upon any other pretence whatsoever; and that he keep his ordinary Dyets at Bed and Board unless he be withdrawn in his Masters necessary affairs and Employment and no other ways: And shall not go to any of the Professors of Medicine Chymie Anatomy Surgery or Materia Medica during the first three years of thir Indentures; and the last two years thereof only with his said Masters consent; And shall not misbehave by word or deed or any other manner of way. And if it shall happen The said John Campbell do Committ or Omitt anything contrary to the premises In that case it is hereby Declared he shall lose his Apprentice fee and be extruded by his said Master forth of his Service and shall lose all the liberties and priviledges of thir Indentures, And that they shall become void and null to him for his part thereof *ipso facto*, And that without any furder process or Declarator of Law, And that during the space of thir Indentures he shall not be guilty of, nor accessory to the raising of any Tumults or Uproars within the Town of Edinburgh or Suburbs thereof Under the pain of losing his freedome thereof for ever, And he and his said Cautioner Oblige themselves conjointly and severally To Relieve his said Master of any penalties that shall happen to be imposed upon him by the Town Councill of Edinburgh in case he shall be found guilty as said is; Conform to an Act of the Town Councill Dated the day of Sixteen hundred and ninety two years.

The Act of the Town Council referred to is not clear. The date is incomplete, only the year is stated, and that incorrectly. It should have read 31 March 1693. The records of the city contain the following entry on that date: "Upon application made be several deacons of the Incorporation of this City, the Council Statutes enacts and declares that in all tyme coming there be a clause inserted in all the Indentures of all the Incorporations of this Citie, Bearing that in caise any prentice of any of the said Incorporation shall be found guilty and convict of being accessory to any tumultuous insurrection whatsoever, They are hereby (*ipso facto*) to loose and tye their liberties and freedom of the Burgh."

The same subject was before the Town Council in 1686 and again in 1688, when at a meeting on 26 November, the Lord Provost reported that "There was ane tumult like to rise within the Cittie by the convocation of some idle persons within the Cittie who had seduced and perswaded severall of the students of the Colledge to join with them. . . . They in order to the suppressing of any tumult that shall rise in this Cittie or suburbs thereof appointed the Magistrates and Council to take such care and diligence for preventing any tumult within the bounds foresaid as the quiet and peace of the Cittie might be preserved at all tymes especieallie in this juncture when the neighbouring Kingdoms of England are invaded by foreigners and that this Kingdom expects the like invasion verie suddenly. . . ."

The foreigners referred to were William, Prince of Orange, and his forces who had landed at Torbay three weeks previously.

What the Act of 1693 did was to absolve the masters from the actions of their servants. That there was still thought to be a need for the inclusion of such a clause on 20 February 1736 will be more readily appreciated when it is recalled that the Porteous Riots, so vividly chronicled in Scott's *Heart of Midlothian*, occurred later in the same year. It is extremely unlikely that Adam Drummond and his young apprentice were unaware of that purposeful band which bore Captain John Porteous to his doom, for the procession passed their door on its way to discharge lynch law in the Grassmarket.

The indenture goes on to deal with a

premium of fifty pounds sterling upon which the said Adam Drummond binds and obliges him to Teach and Instruct the said John Campbell, his said apprentice, in the said Arts of Surgery and Pharmacy, and shall not hide or conceal anything of the same from him, and shall entertain him sufficiently at Bed and Board during the whole space forsaid; The said John Campbell or his said Cautioner always furnishing and Maintaining him in apparell of his Body in Linnings and Woolings decently and as become such an apprentice. Like as the said Adam Drummond Binds and Obliges him to book the said John Campbell his said apprentice in the Dean of Gild Court Books of Edinburgh within the space of forty days next after the date of thir Indentures. And in the Books of the Surgeon Apothecaries of the said Burgh as soon as conveniently he may do the same, being always done within the term of thir Indentures, and both which bookings to be upon the Apprentice his own proper Charge and Expenses. And the said Adam Drummond Binds and Obliges him, his heirs and successors to pay to the Treasurer of the Incorporation of Surgeon Apothecaries of Edinburgh for the time being, Five pounds Sterling, Toties Quoties, he gives liberty to his said Apprentice to go to any of the Professors above named During the first three years of thir Indentures. And finally both the said Parties Bind and Oblige them to perform the premises hinc inde under the penalty of Two hundred pounds Scots money by and all our performance thereof. Consenting to the Registration hereof in the Books of Council and Session or others competent, That Letters of Horning on six days and all other Execution needfull may pass hereupon in form as effeirs; And for that effect Constitute their Procurators. In witness whereof . . .

John Campbell was duly booked prentice, with a duty stamp of one pound and five shillings paid to H.M. Stamp Office. He proved himself to be a worthy apprentice, and the deed bears his discharge in his master's handwriting:

I, Adam Drummond, Surgeon in Edinburgh, doe acknowledge that John Campbell within designated has served me honestly and faithfully during the time of his Indenture. I therefore discharge him of all obligations prestable [guaranteed] by him. In witness whereof I have written and subscribed this all for the fifteenth day of March one thousand and seven hundred and forty and two years.

John Campbell appeared in the Burgess Roll of Edinburgh on 21 July 1743, as a burghess and guildbrother. He was elected to the Incorporation of Surgeons on 7 October of the same year, and followed in his master's footsteps by being appointed librarian of the Surgeons from 1746 to 1748. Most of the eighteenth-century prescriptions found in Fisher's Land bear dates which indicate that they were dispensed in the years during which young John Campbell was undergoing his training, and it seems certain that he had a hand in their compounding, just as it is certain that he visited the Physic Garden to collect some of the ingredients for the galenicals required—the male southernwood, the marjoram, the rosemary, the fresh tops of St. John's wort, the mint and the sage.

There is evidence from the family archives and from the autobiography of Alexander "Jupiter" Carlyle, D.D., of Inveresk, that Adam Drummond was still engaged in the training of apprentices in 1745 at the age of sixty-six, though the information is incidental and concerned more with the ill-starred venture of Prince Charles Edward to restore the throne to his father. Once more the capital was witness of historic scenes when Charles and his following marched into a city which offered no resistance. There is no need to go into detail except insofar as the events concerned Adam Drummond and his family.

Belated alarm over the situation resulted in the landing at Dunbar of government troops under General Cope. The opposing armies met at Prestonpans, where Cope's superior forces were surprised and routed by the band of Highlanders under the command of the Young Pretender. Particular interest attaches to a letter sent in the afternoon of the day of the battle by Adam to his brother's wife at Megginch. It is remarkably vivid in content and reads as follows:

Friday, 2 of the clock. Lady Megginch. J. Cope's army is quite routed, your sons Adam and Francis are made prisoners, along with Colonel Hackett. There is none of them wounded. They are lying in Colonel Gardner's house near the field by Prestonpans. I hope all our other relations are well. I heard the names of the wounded and killed . . . A few officers with Mr. Cope have made good their escape by boats to the man of war in the Firth, but whether with success or not I know not because they sent boats to apprehend them. This is all I yet know for it happened this morning and it is about 3 of the afternoon, but as to your concerns you may depend on what I say . . .

Alexander Carlyle wrote:

On Tuesday, and not sooner, came many surgeons from Edinburgh to dress the wounded soldiers, many of whom lay on straw in the schoolroom. As almost all their wounds were with the broadsword, they had suffered little. The surgeons returned to Edinburgh in the evening and came back again for three days. As one of them was Colin Simpson, apprentice to Adam Drummond, his uncle, we trusted him and his companions with the four hundred guineas, which at different times they carried in their pockets and delivered safe to Captain Adam Drummond of Megginch, then a prisoner in Queensberry House in the Canongate.

Colin's father, the Reverend Matthew Simpson, was minister of Pencaitland, and it was the stone to his mother and two of his sisters, who all died within a few days of each other in 1736 of "a violent fever", which gave me pause in that little churchyard.

Captain Adam Drummond was also a nephew of Adam, the subject of our paper, and was an officer in the Hanoverian army at Prestonpans. He acted as Paymaster of Col. Mordaunt's regiment and the money sent from the schoolroom was pay for the troops.

The family records disclose that, in addition to Colin Simpson, Francis Drummond, the son of Adam's eldest brother John, also served an apprenticeship to his uncle and became a surgeon in the army. He was wounded at Prestonpans though later in the day than the time of his uncle's letter, and died of his wounds a year later at the age of twenty-three. Yet another nephew, Adam Austen, son of Adam's eldest sister, Jean, was apprenticed to his uncle.

On the purchase of a house and estate near Burntisland, in Fife, Adam Drummond



became known as “of Binend”. I have used the title “of Megginch” and it is right to identify him in that manner for there are, I am glad to say, still Drummonds of Megginch. I cannot sufficiently express my indebtedness to the wife of Captain Humphrey Drummond for assisting me with my enquiries. Suffice it to say that, just as Robert Eliot and Adam Drummond were “conjoined” in the professorship over 250 years ago, so should the lady be “conjoined” in the authorship of this paper.

Adam Drummond was chairman of the Surgeons from 1746–48, a recognition of the high regard in which he was held. He died at the close of 1758 and lies in Greyfriars Kirkyard within a hundred yards of his illustrious predecessor, James Borthwick—two surgeon-apothecaries of distinction who adorned their profession and left their mark for all time.

The second speaker at the meeting was Mr. Noel Kretzmar, F.R.C.S.Ed., who read a paper with the title:

#### AN INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE ON THE DIAMOND FIELDS OF KIMBERLEY, SOUTH AFRICA

Nearly two thousand years ago the Roman historian Pliny wrote, “Ex Africa semper aliquid novi”—Out of Africa there is always something new. If this was true then of the whole of Africa, how much more true is it of that small area in the heart of Southern Africa where the fantastic saga of the discovery and development of the diamonds took place just a hundred years ago.

It all began with the discovery of the O’Reilly Diamond on the banks of the Orange River near Hopetown in 1867. That spark was seen far and wide and attracted adventurous spirits from all over Africa and other parts of the world. They arrived on this barren area of veld with great hopes and met with varying degrees of success. The diggers followed up their finds northwards along the Orange River, until they discovered that both banks of the Vaal River, near where Barkly West now stands, were diamondiferous. All moved there so that, by 1870, there was a tent-town and digger population at Pniel, as it was then called, of about seven thousand people.

But the discovery of the “dry diggings” in 1871 set forces in motion round the world like the explosion of an atomic bomb. Twenty-five miles to the south-west of Pniel where Kimberley now stands, on an area covered by four farms, in a piece of desert, opened out the greatest Eldorado of diamonds ever seen before or since. Diamonds of good size and quality were found by scratching the surface, then larger quantities were found after removing a few feet of topsoil and exploring the yellow ground below. This yielded more and more diamonds as they went deeper and created a still further sensation. Overnight diggers abandoned their claims at the river and crowded to the new spot, so that in two months a piece of barren dry veld had to accommodate over twenty thousand souls. They lived in shacks, in tents, in the open air. At any moment the valuable ground on which they lived was liable to be excavated for diamonds and replaced by a large hole.

This territory had not been considered worth having by the neighbouring powers