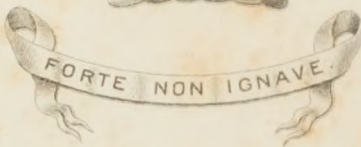
The image shows a book cover with a marbled paper pattern. The pattern consists of irregular, organic shapes in shades of brown, tan, and beige, interspersed with thin, swirling lines of red, blue, and green. The marbling is set against a light cream or off-white background. The book's spine is visible on the left, bound in a plain, light brown or tan material. A white rectangular label is affixed to the bottom left corner of the cover.

STATE LIBRARY OF N.S.W.
MITCHELL LIBRARY

DSM/
980.1/
27B1



Alfred Lee

CASE _____ SHELF _____

N^o _____



A

SHORT ACCOUNT

OF THE LATE DISCOVERIES OF

GOLD IN AUSTRALIA;

WITH NOTES OF A

VISIT TO THE GOLD DISTRICT.

Lately published in 8vo. pp. 96, with 2 Coloured Maps, price 6s.

A SKETCH
OF THE
PHYSICAL STRUCTURE OF AUSTRALIA.

BY J. BEETE JUKES, M.A., F.G.S.

Late Naturalist to and Author of "Narrative of the Surveying
Voyage of H.M.S. Fly."

"The work is a very acceptable one, and will prove useful both to the scientific enquirer and the emigrant, the descriptions of the physical features as dependent on the geological structure, are briefly but clearly stated."

Annals of Natural History.

T. & W. BOONE, Publishers, 29, New Bond Street, London.

S

tree hill

A

SHORT ACCOUNT

OF THE LATE DISCOVERIES OF

GOLD IN AUSTRALIA;

WITH NOTES OF A

VISIT TO THE GOLD DISTRICT.

BY

JOHN ELPHINSTONE ERSKINE,
CAPTAIN, R.N.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON :

T. & W. BOONE, 29, NEW BOND STREET.

1852.

Price Two Shillings and Sixpence.

P R E F A C E.

THE following short account of the circumstances attending the discovery of Gold in our Australian Colonies, has been compiled on the passage to England from Sydney (which the writer quitted on the 18th of August), from notes made by himself on the spot, and authentic extracts from the Colonial papers. Some of the latter have doubtless been already published in England, but the accounts are now collected and brought down to the latest period at which any intelligence is known to have left the Colony.

As the writer paid a hurried visit to the two stations, or *diggings*, at Summer-hill Creek, and the Turon River, the notes of his excursion are added, although they profess to contribute nothing towards mineralogical information, but merely to relate facts as they would strike an ordinary observer.

He is indebted to Captain Stokes, R.N., lately

conducting the New Zealand Survey, in H.M.S. Acheron, for the accompanying plan, which has been compiled principally from Sir Thomas Mitchell's map of Australia.

Portsmouth,

December, 1851.

GOLD IN AUSTRALIA.

THE discovery of the existence of Gold in New South Wales, can hardly be said to be a recent one, as far as regards the history of that country.

In 1 vol. 8vo. cloth, with large Map by Arrowsmith, and numerous Illustrations.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA AND ITS MINES,

WITH AN

*Historical Sketch of the Colony, under its several Administrations,
to the Period of Captain Grey's departure.*

BY FRANCIS DUTTON.

“The best work which has yet been issued from the press, descriptive of the resources and management of this thriving colony.”—*Mining Journal*.

“We have here a well-timed book. South Australia and its Mines are now objects of great interest; and Mr. Dutton's plain, unadorned recital, contains just what the intending emigrant, or the mercantile inquirer, will rejoice at having placed within his reach.”—*Colonial Gazette*.

T. & W. BOONE, PUBLISHERS, 29, NEW BOND STREET.

spoil the earth of its natural treasures. An impostor amongst the first convicts knew the temper of his companions. With a brass buckle and a guinea he manufactured specimens of the precious ore, and displaying them, endeavoured to get clothes and provisions from the stores as the reward of his discovery. But the deceit was detected, and the impostor flogged for his fraud. The miserable man afterwards ended his life on the scaffold.”—*Chambers's Papers for the People, vol. 6.*

In December, 1829, it is mentioned in a Sydney

conducting the New Zealand Survey, in H.M.S. Acheron, for the accompanying plan, which has been compiled principally from Sir Thomas Mitchell's map of Australia.

Portsmouth,
December, 1851.

GOLD IN AUSTRALIA.

THE discovery of the existence of Gold in New South Wales, can hardly be said to be a recent one, as far as regards the history of that country.

Among the convicts who were sent out to form the first settlement, several instances are known to have occurred of rewards being demanded for real or pretended discoveries of gold, but either from a doubt of the men's veracity, or from an apprehension of the consequences of such a temptation in a penal settlement, their information seems always to have met with great discouragement from the authorities.

A popular writer of the present day, thus alludes to one case of the kind :—

“THE FIRST GOLD-DISCOVERER IN AUSTRALIA.—The curse of many colonies has been a mine of gold, a grove of spice trees, or a bank of costly pearls ; for they allure men from industry to spoil the earth of its natural treasures. An impostor amongst the first convicts knew the temper of his companions. With a brass buckle and a guinea he manufactured specimens of the precious ore, and displaying them, endeavoured to get clothes and provisions from the stores as the reward of his discovery. But the deceit was detected, and the impostor flogged for his fraud. The miserable man afterwards ended his life on the scaffold.”—*Chambers's Papers for the People, vol. 6.*

In December, 1829, it is mentioned in a Sydney

paper, that a piece of gold in the quartz matrix, had been bought by Mr. Cohen, a silversmith, from a labouring man, whose surprise is described as great on his receiving its proper value in money.

For several years afterwards, a shepherd named M'Gregor, perhaps the same individual, was in the habit of occasionally bringing pieces of gold to Sydney, by the sale of which he is said not merely to have supplied his immediate wants, but to have realized at one time a considerable property. He repeatedly offered to reveal the fortunate locality, (which was supposed to lie in the Wellington district), to respectable persons for the consideration of a large reward; but his honesty seems to have been questioned, as his conditions were never acceded to. Whether his supply had failed him or not is doubtful, but he certainly was, at the time of the late discoveries, in jail for debt.

The Rev. W. B. Clarke, of St. Leonard's parish, whose ability as a geologist, as well as in other departments of science, is well known and acknowledged in New South Wales, brought specimens of the metal in 1841 from the basin of the very river (the Macquarie) now supplying it, and he has also repeatedly announced his conviction that gold existed in considerable abundance in the "schists and quartzites" of the mountain-chain. In consequence of communications made by him to the Geological Society, Sir Roderick Murchison, in a letter addressed to Sir Charles Lemon, advised that a

person well acquainted with the washing of mineral sands be sent to Australia, speculating on the probability of auriferous alluvia being abundant, and suggested, "that such would be found at the base of the western flanks of the dividing ranges."

The following passage from the Quarterly Review of September, 1850, will shew the opinion these gentlemen had formed, at that time, of the probable capabilities of the country :—

"The important point for Englishmen now to consider, is the extent to which our own great Australian Colonies are likely to become gold-bearing regions. The works of Count Strezlecki, and others, having made known the facts, that the chief or eastern ridge of that continent consists of palæozoic rocks, cut through by syenites, granites, and porphyries, and that quartzose rocks occasionally prevail in this long meridian chain, Sir Roderick Murchison announced, first to the Geographical Society,* and afterwards to the Geological Society of Cornwall, his belief that wherever such contrasts occurred gold might be expected to be found; Colonel Halmersen suggested the same idea at St. Petersburg. Very shortly afterwards, not only were several specimens of gold in fragments of quartz veins found in the Blue Mountains north of Sydney, but one of the British Chaplains, himself a good geologist, in writing more recently thus expresses himself :

"This Colony is becoming a mining country, as well as South Australia. Copper, lead, and gold are in considerable abundance in the schists and quartzites of the Cordillera (Blue Mountains, &c.) Vast numbers of the population are going to California, but some day I think we shall have to recall them."

Mr. Montgomery Martin, in a pamphlet published in 1847, says :—

"Sir Thomas Mitchell, in his recent expedition to the North-

* In May, 1845.

east, found a region like the Uralian mountains, abounding in gold. The specimens I have seen of the gold are very rich. It is in large grains or irregular veins, loosely embedded in white quartz."

About the beginning of 1849, a very fine specimen of gold in quartz was brought to Melbourne, Port Phillip, where in March of that year, it was shewn by Mr. La Trobe, the superintendent, to Sir Charles FitzRoy, the Governor of New South Wales. This specimen was said to have been found by a shepherd, in the "Pyrenees," a day or two's journey from the town; and mysterious stories were current as to his disappearance, it being supposed that he had been induced to leave the Colony by some person who had bought the secret. The general feeling, however, on the subject was one of incredulity; and many who were supposed to have some knowledge of mineralogy, declared their belief that the specimen in question was an artful fabrication.

In the course of the same year, Thomas Icely, Esq. of Coombings, a member of the Legislative Council of New South Wales, exhibited to several of his friends, specimens of quartz brought from his property on the Bulabula, in which gold was distinctly visible; and persons of good authority in England, to whom he also submitted them, expressed opinions very favourable to their richness in the precious metal. Speculations were often hazarded among persons interested in the subject, as to the probabi-

lity of the Colony becoming a gold-producing country, and even confident assertions made, that if washing the alluvial deposits in the streams or gullies, flowing from the supposed auriferous ridges, were practised, gold in dust would certainly be procured. Strange to say, however, so simple an experiment was never tried by those most concerned, in spite of Californian experience ; and consequently in society generally, the majority of persons, slow to believe in the possibility of a change so important, whenever the subject of gold mining was mentioned, spoke of it with a sneer, as a kind of absurd speculation. In fact, it may be readily conceived, that the interest of the wealthiest and best-educated class of colonists, viz. the large landed proprietors and "squatters,"* being directly opposed to the diversion of the already limited supply of labour to new objects, this feeling of incredulity was not generally combated by them, and many more examples might be given of the extent to which their scepticism on the subject of gold was carried. Among the most remarkable was perhaps that in the case of a Mr. Trappit, who having found a lump,

* The term "squatter" is not applied in Australia, as in other countries, to a poor person who sets himself down on a small portion of unoccupied land, but to a gentleman, generally of capital, who leases from the Government extensive tracts of Crown-land beyond the borders of the settled districts, (and of which he has often been himself the discoverer), as runs for his sheep or cattle.

or (as it is now termed), a “pocket” of gold, at the root of an old tree, was told by persons to whom he shewed his treasure, that it had been evidently the effect of a *bush* fire, fusing into an irregular mass, some *gold watches* which *must* have been stolen and *planted* (the slang term for hidden) by a convict servant. It was probably more with a view to the extension of copper-mining in New South Wales, (which had proved so profitable in South Australia), than with the hope of developing the richness of the country in the precious metals, that the Colonial Government, about this time, expressed a desire to secure the services of some eminent English geologist in exploring its mineral capabilities, and accordingly in November or December 1850, Mr. Stutchbury, who had been for some time curator of the Bristol Museum, arrived in Sydney; having been named Geologist to the Colony. Up to the beginning of May 1851, however, no report, holding out any hope of the existence of the precious metals, had been received from this gentleman, although he was said to have visited some of the localities in which they were believed to be most abundant.

On the 2d of May, 1851, a notice appeared in the Sydney Morning Herald (the leading paper of the Colony) intimating that it was no longer a secret that gold had been found in the earth, in several places in the Western Country, and that the fact was first established on the 12th of February

by Mr. E. H. Hargraves, a resident of Brisbane Water, who had returned from California a few months previously. It was added, that while in California, Mr. Hargraves felt persuaded that, from the similarity of the geological formation, there must be gold in several districts of New South Wales, and when he returned his expectations were fulfilled.

On the 8th of May, Mr. Hargraves delivered a lecture in Bathurst, when he publicly announced his discoveries, stating that after a careful examination of from two to three months, he had found that one large gold field existed from the foot of the "Big Hill" to a considerable distance below Wellington; that the precious metal had been picked up in numberless places, and that indications of its existence were to be seen in every direction. So satisfied was he on the point, that he had established a company of nine working miners, who were then actively employed digging at a point of the Summer Hill *creek*,* near its junction with the Macquarie, about fifty miles from Bathurst, and thirty from Guyong, and that the name of "Ophir" had been given to the spot.

Mr. Hargraves exhibited to the people present samples of fine gold, weighing in all about four

* The word *creek* is never used in New South Wales in its proper sense, of a small bay or arm of the sea, but in that of a fresh-water stream, which occasionally dries up partially or wholly. These *creeks* may be considered the tributaries of the larger streams, or rivers, which latter, in like manner, vary in size, according to the season.

ounces, the produce, he stated of three days' work. The amount thus earned by each man he represented to be £2. 4s. 8d. per day, but he observed, that from want of practical knowledge, and proper implements, he was convinced that nearly one half of the gold actually dug had been lost, owing to the labour having been performed in his absence.

One of his samples was a solid piece weighing about two ounces, which had been found attached to the root of a tree, another consisted of small pieces weighing from several grains to a pennyweight, all elongated and of various shapes, and a third of small particles, principally oval.

Besides at Summerhill and Lewis'-ponds Creeks, Mr. H. had also found gold at "Dubbo," below Wellington, which he stated to be in powder, fine as the finest flour, but he did not believe that it existed in sufficient quantity to pay for labour.

From the nature of some of the country explored by him, he was of opinion that gold would be found in mass, and would not be surprised if pieces of thirty or forty pounds should be discovered. He had seen none in California which promised metal in such heavy masses, but he did not consider that description of country desirable as a field for speculation. One or two persons might be fortunate while their companions would obtain nothing; but the ground which yielded the dust or larger particles could be calculated upon as returning a certain remuneration for a given quantity of labour.

It was understood in Sydney that, previous to this meeting at Bathurst, Mr. Hargraves had been in communication with the local government on the subject of his alleged discoveries, and had offered to make their extent known to the authorities on the payment of a certain reward. The Government, however, though admitting Mr. Hargraves' claim for some consideration, should his anticipations prove to be correct, declined to make any definite promise until the value of the gold-field should be ascertained, when the subject of a reward would receive their consideration. This having been assented to on the part of Mr. Hargraves, Mr. Stutchbury, the geological surveyor, was directed to accompany him to the district pointed out, and to furnish the Government as soon as possible with his own opinion as to the amount of its mineral capabilities. Mr. Hargraves was at this time on his way to meet the geological surveyor at the appointed locality.

The fact of the existence of gold in the Summerhill Creek having been thus made known to the public, before these two gentlemen arrived at the spot, digging had already commenced. On the 10th of May, two days after Mr. Hargraves' meeting, three persons left Bathurst, and on the 12th, two of them returned, bringing one piece of gold which weighed down thirty-five sovereigns, another of about half an ounce in weight, and several small pieces which might weigh half an ounce altogether.

The largest piece was described as of solid gold, about three inches long, and of varying thickness, with a small portion of quartz embedded in its thickest part, and the smallest as like spangles, but rough and uneven on the edges. On the following day, two pounds and a half of gold, in lumps, besides a quantity of dust, were brought into Bathurst, which of course induced the formation of parties for mining, and the construction of machines, &c. for washing the soil.

The digging, therefore, might be said to have fairly begun; and the Government only awaited the report of the geologist to decide upon what steps should be taken to secure the rights of the Crown, and regulate, as far as lay in their power, the conditions on which the public should be admitted to the search.

On the 16th, the arrival in Sydney of the specimens mentioned above caused a great sensation, and on the 17th the report of Mr. Stutchbury reached the Government. This report was so conclusive as to the existence of gold in large quantities, that a proclamation which had been prepared for some time was immediately issued, declaring the right of the Crown in all precious metals, and prohibiting all persons from searching for or carrying off the same, except under regulations which were to be shortly promulgated. These, which were framed in some degree on the Californian model, were published a day or two afterwards,

and insisted principally on a charge or license-fee of thirty shillings, which was to be paid by every individual applying for permission to search for the precious metals for every calendar month or part of a month, to a Land Commissioner appointed to receive it, who was also to have the power of allotting small portions of Crown land to each worker, and of settling disputes as to conflicting claims, &c. On private lands, no persons but the proprietors, or such as they might authorise, were to be allowed to work, but all were to provide themselves with licenses.

At this time (19th May), so rapidly had people collected, that it was estimated that, even in this thinly-populated country, five or six hundred were already at work on the Summer-hill, and a tributary called Lewis-pond Creek, although, it was added, that few were earning more than they could at their respective trades, and that numbers had left the place in despair, after labouring for some days without success; a result, considering the general ignorance on the subject of mining or washing, &c. and the absence or imperfection of instruments, not to be wondered at. Prices of all consumable articles were rising, causing much complaint among persons of small fixed incomes. Flour, for instance, had risen from 25s. to 40s. per 100 lbs., and mutton, which in general cost little more than a penny, was retailed at the gold-field for threepence a pound. Great fear was beginning to be expressed, not only by the landed proprietors and stock-holders, but

also by the tradesmen in the towns, that they would be deserted by their workmen ; and the newspapers were very gloomy in their prognostications, complaining that “ the colony was about to be cursed by a gold mania,” and foretelling all kinds of excesses among the labourers proceeding to the diggings, many of whom were in the habit (in imitation of what they understood was customary and necessary in California,) of carrying fire-arms ostensibly for protection.

The following *original* lines, published in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, will give some notion of the feeling in Sydney :—

THE ADVENT OF GOLD IN NEW SOUTH WALES.

“ Mute are all tongues, and pale all cheeks :

All eye, all ear, 'tis gold that speaks.

Mammon his glittering standard waves,

Hail'd by the shout of willing slaves.

“ The homesteads wail their absent men,

Never to hear their voice again ;

And flocks deserted roam at will,

Where'er they roam, a prey to ill.

“ The squatter, speechless with despair,

Weeps o'er his hopes dissolved in air,

Bewilder'd, looks for help around,

For help which cannot now be found.

“ Desertion, want, and woe appear,

Where smiles of home could once endear ;

E'en Nature's voice cannot be heard,

'Mid the base strife by av'rice stirred.

“ Force will, and fraud, the victors be,
Murder and rapine rampant, free ;
And every vice that bears a name
Flourish in spite of law and shame.

“ May 17th.

R. S.”

None of these anticipations of misconduct on the part of the people, were, however, realized, in consequence (at least partly) of the prompt measures taken by the Colonial Government.

Mr. Hargraves had, as soon as the value of his disclosures were ascertained, received a reward of £500, and he was at the same time appointed a Land Commissioner, with the view of what is called “prospecting,” or searching for other gold-fields, with a salary of the same yearly amount. Mr. Hardy, Police Magistrate at Paramatta, was now nominated in addition “Crown Land Commissioner” for the Gold Districts, and a force of twelve mounted constabulary was raised, both to enable him to preserve order and to enforce the payment of the license fees, which it was supposed every attempt would be made to evade.

The excitement in Sydney was kept up by occasional accounts of great success on the part of individuals. On the 24th of May, very favourable intelligence was received from the gold diggers, many of whom wrote to their friends, that they were making £3 or £4 a day. One party of four, was said to have taken out 30 ounces in one day, and a piece of one pound weight had been found. A

letter, said to be from a person of undoubted veracity, stated that one man, with whom the writer was acquainted, had within three weeks accumulated £1600 worth of gold! It was also stated, that whatever might be the desponding accounts of some disappointed adventurers, the fact was certain, that a large quantity of gold was lying in the Bank at Bathurst, awaiting a safe conveyance to Sydney, and that the whole of Mr. Wentworth's property near Bathurst (Fitzgerald's Valley), was found to be one large gold field.

The attention of the country being now generally drawn to these facts, and apprehension being entertained that all labour would be attracted towards this new source of wealth, meetings were held in different districts to propose rewards for the discovery of gold in the immediate neighbourhoods.

At Goulbourn, to the south of Sydney, it was determined at a large meeting, to open subscriptions to raise £200 for this purpose. Several persons put down their names for sums from £5 to £20, and £80 were subscribed in the room.

To the north, at Maitland, on the River Hunter, £270 were subscribed for the same object, although as that district is an extensive coal-field, lying on the eastern slope of the dividing range, it was not very likely that any discoveries of the precious metals would be there made.

Similar rewards were afterwards offered in other places, and even in New England, and beyond the

boundaries of the "settled districts." In the newly constituted colony of Victoria, (late Port Phillip,) like steps were taken. A meeting was held at Melbourne, the Mayor in the chair, at which the following resolutions were passed:—

"That this meeting is of opinion that gold in considerable quantities exists in close proximity to Melbourne, and that a subscription ought to be forthwith entered into, for affording a reward to any person or persons who shall disclose to a committee to be appointed, a gold mine or deposit capable of being profitably worked, within 200 miles of Melbourne.

"That the committee hereafter appointed be instructed to apply to the Local Government, to induce it to promise its influence in procuring a grant out of the Land Fund, to any person who may discover any gold mine, capable of being worked, within this province."

It was *now* generally believed that gold had actually been found in the Plenty Ranges.* One man had brought in gold which he sold for £17. 10s, and Mr. T. Stephen had found some specimens.

Mr. La Trobe, the Lieutenant-Governor, had sent a surveying party and some policemen into the district, to make inquiries, &c. &c.

In New South Wales, on the other hand, the expectation of a great influx of people from the neighbouring colonies, having considerably raised

* The Plenty Ranges, are apparently a continuation to the southward of the Bathurst Ranges, and it is said that the geological features of both are similar.

the prices of flour and other articles of necessary consumption, the Government thought it proper to increase the salaries of clerks in the receipt of £150 a-year and under, (being those of and below the third class), clerks of benches, and district constables, 25 per cent for the month of June; the increase to continue until a sufficient reduction in prices should be made, to render it no longer necessary. The salaries of constables, boatmen, messengers, and other inferior servants of Government, were also increased one shilling a-day. The example of the Government was followed in many instances by the merchants in Sydney, although in the former case, the increase was discontinued after the month of June, prices having by that time fallen to the usual level in the city.

Before the end of May, the first shipment of gold for London had been made on board the *Thomas Arbuthnot*, the estimated value being about £800. Among the freight, was one piece which weighed about 40 ounces, and had previously been exhibited in Sydney.

Pieces of the same description continued to be found at intervals, viz. one of 36 ounces, and another of 22, by a Mr. Lester, who sold the latter for £76. Two fine specimens of 18 and 23 ounces respectively were also bought by the Colonial Government for presentation to the Queen. Pieces of this description, called in South America mining language "pepites," were here named "nuggets,"

and many stories, unnecessary to repeat, were told of men being bewildered when they found one larger than ordinary.

The principal Commissioner, Mr. Hardy, had arrived at the junction of the Lewis Ponds, and Summer-hill Creeks (which had now received the name of Ophir) on the 2nd of June, and immediately began to issue licenses and collect the fees. No opposition whatever was offered to him, although as might be expected, many evasions of the payment were attempted. Mr. Hardy having at first allowed persons to work on a week's credit, in the hopes of their raising sufficient gold to pay the fee, the Government intimated to him their disapproval of the practice, and required that no individual should be permitted to dig until payment was actually made, either in money or gold, which latter was to be received at the rate of £3. 4s an ounce, the price in Bathurst at this time being only £3.

Although there can be no doubt that many evaded payment altogether, still Mr. Hardy succeeded in collecting 600 fees, amounting to £900, in the month of June. The behaviour of the people assembled was in general very orderly, and some persons detected in selling spirits without a license (called in the Colony "Sly grog-selling") having been turned away, and their stock seized, little or no drunkenness took place. A clergyman usually visited the "Diggings" on Sundays, when

divine service was performed, and always well attended.

Mr. Green was appointed Assistant Commissioner and a Magistrate about this time, and a small addition made to the mounted police force, which was organised under an active officer of the army on half-pay (Captain Battye). These measures tended very much to the preservation of order and the enforcement of the law.

The necessity of speedily acquainting the Home Government with the state of affairs in the Colony, and its altered prospects, had seemed so urgent, that an application was contemplated by the Local Government to Captain Stokes, of H.M. steamer *Acheron*, then lying in Port Jackson, to proceed with despatches to Singapore, as the quickest mode of communication with England; and it was said that the expediency of immediately increasing the military force in the Colony was to be strongly pressed upon her Majesty's Government. Circumstances, however, occurred to moderate, in a great degree, the excitement which had prevailed among all classes of the community. The weather, which had to the end of May continued sufficiently dry to favour mining operations, set in cold and wet, which not only retarded the digging by flooding the banks of the creek, and filling the "gold holes," but began to render the exposed mode of life intolerable to those unaccustomed to, and ill provided against its hardships. As yet no better habitations than tents

were in use at Ophir, the greater number of the people "camping" in or under their drays, or living in huts ("gunyahs," as they are here called) rudely constructed of the branches and bark of the eucalyptus. In providing for their sojourn in the "bush," it had been forgotten by many who left Sydney and the neighbourhood, that the climate in the more elevated country was much severer than on the coast, and that at this season of the year the heavy rains of the day were generally succeeded by hard frosts at night. Numbers were, in consequence, disheartened, and abandoning the pursuit of gold-seeking in despair, and returning to Sydney, gave such accounts of their privations and want of success, that a complete re-action took place in the public mind, so that by the middle of June the first excitement seemed to have altogether passed away in the Colony itself, and that just before the arrivals from the neighbouring ones began. In the course of a month from the 21st of June, 877 souls (viz. 710 men, 89 women, 45 boys, and 41 girls) arrived from Melbourne, Adelaide, and Hobart Town (chiefly from the former); but the accounts they received on landing were so discouraging that many returned by the earliest opportunity, while others took readily pastoral or agricultural employment. There was no complaint of want of labour in any department, and the desertion of seamen from merchant vessels which had been at first so general that several homeward-bound ships were detained

in port for want of hands, although wages of £5 a month were offered, had ceased. Crews had been furnished to three vessels by the commanding naval officer, who had lately arrived from New Zealand in H.M.S. Havannah, to enable them to proceed to England ; but there was now no difficulty in procuring hands at £4. a month, and ships and coasters suffered little or no interruption in their voyages.

This temporary calm, although of very short duration, was of great service to the Colony, by enabling all classes of men to take a more dispassionate view of the state of affairs, and of the precautions necessary for the future, than they had hitherto been disposed to do. It was seen, that neither on the one hand was ruin to be apprehended, nor the accumulation of fortunes, with little toil or trouble, to be looked for on the other. The attempt which had been made to impose high prices on all articles in Sydney, had quite failed, and miner's implements and outfits especially, for which exorbitant sums had been asked, might be bought on the ground, considerably under their original cost. The Government found it unnecessary to continue the increase of salaries, and it was intimated to their clerks and others, that it was not intended that the addition of 25 per cent. should be paid beyond the month of June, for which it had been awarded. In the agricultural districts too, attention was paid to the probable exigencies of an increasing population, and in many places (as on the estate of

the Messrs. Macarthur at Camden), a much larger breadth of wheat was sown than usual.

The Rev. W. B. Clarke (whose claim to the first announcement of the existence of gold in the mountain ranges of Australia, could not be contested,) published a useful pamphlet of "Practical Hints respecting the discovery and working of Gold," which tended much to enlighten the general ignorance on the subject, and to shew, that although fortuitous circumstances might occasionally enrich some fortunate individual, it was only by hard labour, and attention to rule, that people generally could hope to make gold-seeking a profitable employment.

The progress of discovery was, however, by no means stopped, and information of new fields (many perhaps of doubtful value), was daily received,

Among places where gold was said to have been found, were the Shoalhaven Gullies, and the Crookwell River, in the county of Argyle, south of Sydney, Fitzgerald's Valley, and O'Connell's Plains, near Bathurst, Mudgee and Cassilis, in the county of Bligh, to the northward, and many tributary streams, or creeks of the Macquarie; and it may be remarked, that all these spots lie at but a short distance from the meridian, which Mr. Clarke had pointed out as that near which auriferous deposits might confidently be looked for.

It was also affirmed, that a valuable quicksilver mine had been discovered in one of the New

England ranges, separating the Peel and Macdonald rivers; but up to the middle of August this report had never been confirmed.

The following letter, from the Geological Surveyor, to the Crown Commissioner, which was made public about the end of June, revived in some measure the interest which had been gradually flagging during the previous two or three weeks:—

“ Geological and Mineralogical Survey.

June 9, 1851.

SIR—I have the honour to advise you of points, which, I believe, would repay parties working for gold. They are as follow:—

1. The great bar in the Macquarie River, at Walgumbulla, about three miles below the junction of the Turon.

2. The bar at the junction of the Turon, on the Macquarie River.

3. The several bars on the Turon for eight miles up, especially the first three from the junction.

4. On the Macquarie, at (Neeli) Nelly's corner, and the bars above and below—three or four miles either way.

At each of the above-named places I found gold by prospecting with a small pan, and without going any depth.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

(Signed)

“ S. STUTCHBURY.”

“ To Mr. Commissioner Hardy.”

A letter from Bathurst of the end of June, mentioned that numerous parties were leaving Ophir for the Turon, to search the spots mentioned in Mr. Stutchbury's letter, but accident determined

that gold should first be found in great abundance at a different point on the same river.

A glance at the map will be necessary to enable a stranger to understand the relative position of the different points. It will be seen, that whereas the Summer-hill creek (composed of the united streams of Frederick's Valley and Lewis's Ponds), takes its rise at the foot of the Canobla's Range, and flows to the north-east, till it joins the Macquarie ten miles beyond Ophir, the Turon rises at the base of the great north and south dividing range, and flowing nearly parallel for some distance to the Macquarie, and separated from it by another range running east and west, over which (at Lewis' hill,) the road to Mudgee passes, joins it at a point about ten miles in a direct line north-east from Ophir, and twenty-five north-west from Bathurst.

It was at a spot sixteen miles above this junction, forming nearly an equilateral triangle of twenty-five miles side with Ophir and Bathurst, and lying between Lewis and Cherrytree Hills, that the first gold was reported to have been picked up by a shepherd in the employ of Mr. Richards, (a gentleman owning a sheep station in the immediate neighbourhood of the River Turon) on the summit of a hill close to the house, and bought by him for £3. In the course of a few days nearly a hundred men were at work in the creek below, when it was notified to them by the Assistant Commissioner, that they must pay the license fee,

or desist. Their success, however, becoming known, the number of workers rapidly increased. As early as the 21st of June, 200 ounces were sold in Bathurst as coming from the Turon, accounts stating that the gold was to be obtained with less labour than at Ophir, though it was not found in such large pieces, or "nuggets."

At the end of June the accounts from the Turon were still more favourable to the diggers, the more moderate stating the mean produce of each "cradle" at an ounce a day, which taking the usual number of three to a party, would make the daily earnings of each man, £1. Four or five hundred were now assembled here, and were beginning to spread themselves up and down the river, but this number being composed principally of parties who had from the floods or other causes been obliged to quit Ophir, where they had already paid a license fee, no great addition could as yet be considered as made to the "digging" population.

Although the mass of the gold-seekers, both at Ophir and the Turon, was composed of men a little above the labouring class, there were several parties still at work at the former place, which had been got up by gentlemen of some capital, employing labourers at weekly wages. One of these, headed by an enterprising gentleman, Mr. Gideon Lang, was reported to have been very successful. An article in the Sydney *Morning Herald*, attributed to Mr. Lang himself, mentions that on one day

(June 14) his party of five found a "nugget" of nineteen ounces, and three ounces of gold dust, amounting, at Sydney prices, to the value of £71. 5s, and on the 16th (a Sunday having intervened) they made £13. He states also the average earnings of *successful* parties at Ophir, well fitted out and washing hard, at from £19. 10s. to £26 a month, or from 15s. to 20s. a man per day. At the same time, many were leaving the place for the Turon, and on a point opposite to his station, where a week before forty-two fires were in sight, only twenty-seven could now be counted. A few Australian blacks had been attracted to the spot, and were very useful in assisting the white men to build their bark "gunyahs," but the labour of digging and washing was not of a nature to suit their habits.

Labourers might be hired on the creek for £1 a week and their rations, who worked no doubt with the view of laying by enough to purchase an outfit and pay for a license; the notion being quite dispelled, that gold was to be picked up by those who chose to come to the ground unprovided with implements of any description. Hitherto the process of obtaining the gold dust, had been confined to the simple one of washing by a rocking motion, twenty or thirty baskets full of soil at a time, in a plain box resembling (and well known to every Californian digger by the name of) a "cradle," the finer soil or paste thus produced, being afterwards

rinsed out in the bed of the river, twice or three times a day, by hand, in a shallow tin milk dish, the grains of gold remaining, of course, by their superior weight, at the bottom. The expense necessary to equip a party of four in the plainest manner was estimated as under.

The following is a list for a cradling party of four:—

	TOOLS.	£	s.	d.
One cradle	.	1	10	0
One heavy crowbar	.	0	10	0
Six picks, with one end pointed and the other square.	.	0	18	0
A water lifter	.	0	2	6
Two shovels	.	0	10	0
Two zinc buckets	.	0	8	0
Two tin milk dishes	.	0	5	0
One axe	.	0	4	6
Nails, tacks, cord, tomahawk, &c. &c.	.	1	0	0
UTENSILS.				
Tarpaulin	.	7	0	0
Camp oven	.	0	10	6
Iron pot, kettle, quart pots, plates, &c. &c.	.	1	2	10
PROVISIONS FOR FIVE WEEKS.				
Flour, 250lbs. at 30s. a hundred	.	3	15	0
Sugar, 60lbs., at 25s.	.	1	10	0
Tea, 7½lbs. at 2s.	.	0	15	0
Butcher's meat, 300lbs. at 2½d.	.	3	2	6
		<hr/>		
		£23	3	10
SUNDRIES.				
Carriage and expenses on the road, say from Sydney	.	8	0	0
Licenses, now payable before commencing to work	.	6	0	0
		<hr/>		
		£37	3	10

The experience of an American gentleman (Mr. Bush) and others who had seen the different processes in California, soon suggested, however, the employment of a more scientific and complicated machine, as better adapted for the extraction of the minuter particles in which the gold, especially at the Turon, was found in the earth. This machine, known to gold diggers, as the "Quicksilver" or "Virginian rocker," is described as "about six feet long by eighteen inches broad, having a plate of iron the whole length, with three eight-inch holes bored or punched in it about one inch from each other. Below this is the rifle box, also the whole length, with eight or nine partitions or rifles, into each of which about a pound and a half or two pounds of quicksilver is placed. The earth, stones, &c., are thrown upon the iron plate, through which the earth passes with the gold into the rifles below, while the stones go off at the lower end; when the machine is in motion, the quicksilver traverses through the dirt and amalgamates with the gold, while the dirt and pebbles are washed out of the machine by the force of the water, leaving the silver behind containing the gold. At night the whole of the amalgam is taken out, washed clear of the earth, emery, &c., and then strained through a chamois leather bag, by this it is reduced to a thick paste, from which the quicksilver is retorted, leaving the gold in one pure solid piece. The rocker must be worked regularly and steadily, not even stopping

for an instant, unless when cleaning the box, and when properly managed it is very profitable. On the other hand, if it is not conducted properly, not only will there be no gold saved, but most likely a great portion of the silver will be lost; as much as 50 lbs. having been lost by mismanagement, in one week's labour. To do it justice, eight men are required for one machine: two in the pit digging; two bringing the dirt in wheelbarrows, one man rocking, one pumping, one supplying the machine, and one taking or throwing away the stones as they come out. The cost will be about £80 or £90, taking the quicksilver at £2. 2s."

The first attempts to procure gold by this machine were not very successful, the amalgam appearing to be imperfectly retorted, and a large portion of the quicksilver remaining, a defect said to be owing to the water being used at too low a temperature. The Government accordingly declined to receive it in payment of license fees, &c. at a higher rate than £2. 8s an ounce, that procured by washing being estimated at £3. 4s. As similar complaints were made of the rocker at first in California, where it is now said to have superseded the common cradle, it is to be presumed that where grain-gold or dust is the object of search, its superiority will also be ultimately acknowledged in this country. Another objection was, the high price of quicksilver, the small quantity in the Colony having, of course, risen rapidly in value. Corrosive sublimate, which

had been formerly used in sheep-washing, but had been supplanted by other preparations, was eagerly bought up, as its reduction to mercury was effected by a simple and inexpensive process. This drawback will, no doubt, be speedily removed by importation, even if no discovery be made of the metal itself in the country.

The rains, which had so checked success at Ophir, operating in favour of the diggers at the Turon, where a scarcity of water had at first been complained of, and gold being found there in great abundance, the numbers continued to increase, not only by the migration of the unsuccessful from the former place, but by adventurers from Sydney, Maitland, and New England, as well as by overland parties from Port Phillip (Victoria). A Bathurst paper, of the 5th of July, estimates the number of miners at 800 or 1000, stretching over seven or eight miles of the Turon river. Stores were rising in quick succession, there being seven or eight in full trade, besides retail butchers' shops, where the neighbouring stock-holders found an excellent market for their sheep and cattle. The miners were said to be earning fair wages, &c.

The Government, in consequence, found it again necessary to increase the number of Commissioners; and, on the 15th of July, a second Assistant (Mr. King) was appointed, the expenditure for police, &c. on account of the mines being advanced from £120 for the month of June to £180 for July. As

the Commissioners, however, soon collected £2250 for licenses issued for that month (viz. 700 at Ophir and 800 at the Turon), the increase bore a very small proportion to the additional revenue. Nor did it appear that the expectations formed by people beginning again to flock to the mines, were unlikely to be realized. On the 14th of July many persons had arrived in Bathurst, bringing with them large quantities of gold—one party of six had made £400 in ten days, another of the same number £500 in fourteen days, and a Mr. Hebblewhite received a letter stating, that a party of three, who were unsuccessful for seven days, obtained, in five afterwards, two hundred ounces. A party, headed by Mr. Suttor, a large proprietor in the neighbourhood, had accumulated upwards of sixty pounds of gold.

At Ophir, the numbers had gradually fallen off from 700 or 800 to 300 or 400, but a few of these were still very fortunate in the discovery of large pieces. A party of three, on the 2nd of July, who had purchased their licenses in the morning, sold in the evening $9\frac{1}{2}$ ounces; but such examples were rare.

Meanwhile adventurous persons were not idle in the business of "prospecting," or searching out new spots for mining. One locality, on a branch of the Macquarie, named Campbell River, which received rather prematurely the Scriptural name of "Havilah," attracted at first about one hundred persons

principally from its contiguity to Bathurst, from which it is only about fifteen miles distant. Gold was found in small quantities, but that it was not abundant was proved by those employed abandoning their labour, when required to pay the license fee.

Mention has already been made of a shepherd, named McGregor, who was believed for many years to have been acquainted with a spot, where gold was plentiful, but who, at the time of the announcement of Mr. Hargrave's late discovery, was in jail for debt in Sydney.

Several persons were said, on that announcement, to have liberated the man, on condition of his shewing them the spot whence he had obtained his gold, and an effort was certainly made by his assistance to re-discover it, but without success. Mr. Hale, a respectable jeweller of Sydney, accompanied the party, who found gold in small quantities, in some of the neighbouring creeks, although McGregor failed to point out the place where he had formerly procured it in the quartz matrix. Mr. Hale also found in quartz coloured crystals, which he at first took for, and shewed in Sydney, as rubies, but which it was afterwards said were amethysts or garnets. X

The search in this district was, however, followed up soon afterwards by some gentlemen, from Mudgee, who proceeded to explore the Meroo, (otherwise the Merindee or Merinda) Creek, which, rising in the Pyramul, (a spur of the great north-

ern range, and the source of several tributaries of the Turon, falls into the Cudgegong River, about 15 miles above its junction with the Macquarie. At the junction of the Meroo and Gratti Creeks, is a sheep station belonging to Mr. Henry Cox, called from its secluded situation, "The World's-end," surrounded, according to one of the "prospecting" party, by "mountains composed of trap-rock, with large beds of quartz, cropping out in all directions; there being in one spot particularly, an immense mass of quartz, appearing in the distance like snow, with a vein, about a yard wide, running from it, crossing the creek, and thence up the mountain on the opposite side." The gentleman who gives this account adds, that they had not washed more than two buckets of gravel, taken from a bar on the creek below, when gold appeared in the cradle, similar in size and appearance to that found in the Turon, and that in the course of the following day which was passed in "prospecting" up and down the creek, the existence of the hitherto hidden treasure, was proved in every place they tried.

It is remarkable that, in a matter so exciting to the imagination, and one in which the credulity or ignorance of the vulgar might so easily be imposed upon as a successful search for gold, although the numbers assembled at any one place may sometimes have been over-estimated, and speculations as to the future hazarded, sufficiently extravagant, yet very few instances occurred of idle tales or even exagge-

rated stories of the quantities picked up by fortunate individuals, being spread either by common rumour or the newspaper press.

It was, therefore, more with surprise than incredulity, that a rumour was received by the public, about the middle of July, of a mass of quartz, weighing nearly three hundred-weight, and containing upwards of a hundred pounds of gold, having been found in the neighbourhood last alluded to, viz. that of the Meroo or Merinda Creek. The Bathurst mail of the 15th, however, brought a confirmation of the report, and the following account (which proved to be essentially correct) was published in the Sydney papers, as coming from Bathurst, whither the gold acquired by the unfortunate destruction of the magnificent specimen, had been brought on the 14th of July.

“ Mr. Suttor, a few days previously, threw out a few misty hints about the possibility of a single individual digging *Four Thousand Pounds' worth of gold* in one day, but no one believed him serious. It was thought that he was doing a little harmless puffing for his own district and the Turon diggings. On Sunday it began to be whispered about town that Dr. Kerr, Mr. Suttor's brother-in-law, had found *a hundred weight of gold*. Some few believed it, but the townspeople generally, and amongst the rest, the writer of this article, treated the story as a piece of ridiculous exaggeration, and the bearer of it as a jester who gave the Bathurstonians unlimited credit for gullibility. The following day, however, set the matter at rest. About two o'clock in the afternoon two greys, in tandem, driven by W. H. Suttor, Esq., M.C., made their appearance at the bottom of William Street. In a few seconds they were pulled up opposite the *Free Press*

office, and the first indication of the astounding fact which met the view, was two massive pieces of the precious metal, glittering in virgin purity, as they leaped from the solid rock. An intimation that the valuable prize was to reach the town on that day having been pretty generally circulated in the early part of the morning, the townspeople were on the *qui vive*, and in almost as little time as it has taken to write it, 150 people had collected around the gig conveying the time's wonder, eager to catch a glimpse of the monster lump said to form a portion of it. The two pieces spoken of were freely handed about amongst the assembled throng for some twenty minutes. Astonishment, wonder, incredulity, admiration, and the other kindred sentiments of the human heart were depicted upon the features of all present in a most remarkable manner, and they were by no means diminished in intensity, when a square tin box in the body of the vehicle was pointed out as the repository of the remainder of the *hundred weight of gold*. Having good-naturedly gratified the curiosity of the people, Mr. Suttor invited us to accompany his party to the Union Bank of Australia, to witness the interesting process of weighing. We complied with alacrity, and the next moment the greys dashed off at a gallant pace, followed by a hearty cheer from the multitude.

“In a few moments the tin box and its contents were placed on the table of the Board Room of the Bank. In the presence of the Manager, David Kennedy, W. H. Suttor, T. J. Hawkins, Esquires, and the fortunate proprietor, Dr. Kerr, the weighing commenced, Dr. Machattie officiating, and Mr. Ferrand acting as clerk. The first two pieces already alluded to weighed severally 6 lbs. 4 ozs. 1 dwt., and 6 lbs. 13 dwts., besides which were sixteen drafts of 5 lbs. 4 ozs. each, making in all 102 lbs. 9 ozs. 5 dwts. From Dr. Kerr we learned that he had retained upwards of 3 lbs. as specimens, so that the total weight found would be 106 lbs. (One hundred and six pounds)—all disembowelled from the earth at one time. And now for the particulars of this extraordinary gathering, which has set the town and district in a whirl of excitement.

“A few days ago, an educated aboriginal, formerly attached to the Wellington Mission, and who has been in the service of W. J. Kerr, Esq., of Wallawa, about seven years, returned home to his employer with the intelligence that he had discovered a large mass of gold amongst a heap of quartz upon the run, whilst tending his sheep. Gold being the universal topic of conversation, the curiosity of this sable son of the forest was excited, and provided with a tomahawk he had amused himself by exploring the country adjacent to his employer's land, and had thus made the discovery. His attention was first called to the lucky spot by observing a speck of some glittering yellow substance upon the surface of a block of the quartz, upon which he applied his tomahawk, and broke off a portion. At that moment the splendid prize stood revealed to his sight. His first care was to start off home, and disclose his discovery to his master, to whom he presented whatever gold might be procured from it. As may be supposed, little time was lost by the worthy Doctor. Quick as horseflesh would carry him, he was on the ground, and in a very short period, the three blocks of quartz, containing *the hundred weight of gold*, were released from the bed where, charged with unknown wealth, they had rested perhaps for thousands of years, awaiting the hand of civilized man to disturb them. The largest of the blocks was about a foot in diameter, and weighed 75 lbs. gross. Out of this piece 60 lbs. of pure gold was taken. Before separation it was beautifully encased in quartz. The other two were something smaller. The auriferous mass weighed, as nearly as could be guessed, from two to three cwt. Not being able to move it conveniently, Dr. Kerr broke the pieces into small fragments, and herein committed a very grand error. As specimens, the glittering blocks would have been invaluable. Nothing yet known of would have borne comparison, or, if any, the comparison would have been in our favour. From the description given by him, as seen in their original state, the world has seen nothing like them yet.

“The heaviest of the two large pieces presented an appearance not unlike a honeycomb or sponge, and consisted of particles of

a crystalline form, as did nearly the whole of the gold. The second larger piece was smoother, and the particles more condensed, and seemed as if it had been acted upon by water. The remainder was broken into lumps of from two to three pounds and downwards, and were remarkably free from quartz or earthy matter. When heaped together on the table, they presented a splendid appearance, and shone with an effulgence calculated to dazzle the brain of any man not armed with the coldness of stoicism.

X

“The spot where this mass of treasure was found will be celebrated in the golden annals of these districts, and we shall therefore describe it as minutely as our means of information will allow. In the first place, the quartz blocks formed an isolated heap, and were distant about 100 yards from a quartz vein which stretches up the ridge from the Murroo Creek. The locality is the commencement of an undulating table land, very fertile, and is contiguous to a never-failing supply of water in the above-named creek. It is distant about fifty-three miles from Bathurst, eighteen from Mudgee, thirty from Wellington, and eighteen to the nearest point of the Macquarie River, and is within about eight miles of Dr. Kerr’s head station. The neighbouring country has been pretty well explored since the discovery, but with the exception of dust, no further indications have been found.

“In return for his very valuable service, Dr. Kerr has presented the black fellow and his brother with two flocks of sheep, two saddle horses, and a quantity of rations, and supplied them with a team of bullocks to plough some land in which they are about to sow a crop of maize and potatoes. One of the brothers, mounted on a serviceable roadster, accompanied the party into town, and appeared not a little proud of his share in the transaction.

“Our readers are now in possession of an accurate history of the whole affair. The particulars were kindly furnished by Mr. Suttor and Dr. Kerr, and may therefore be relied on as correct.”

*Because it is
most likely
Higher up.*

This incident, although not believed by the more instructed to be so conclusive as to the general diffusion of the precious metal in large quantities, as the abundance of grain gold in the sands of the Turon, at once revived all the interest which Mr. Hargrave's revelations had first raised in May. Even the most sceptical of the "squatters" began to calculate on the probability of gold becoming one of the staple productions of New South Wales, and the desponding tone of the public press gave way to one of exultation at the greatness of the Colony's prospects. The Sydney Morning Herald, which had at first bewailed the "advent of gold," and the "curse of a gold mania," now declared that the question had assumed "a more cheering aspect;" adding,

"We have said the announcement of this fact startled the Colony: it will startle all Australasia; it will startle England, Ireland, and Scotland; it will startle even California; shall we exaggerate if we say?—it will startle the whole civilised world!

"Every mail arriving in England from these Colonies, after the one despatched by the Thomas Arbuthnot, will add confirmation to the glorious tidings that New South Wales is a country rich in virgin gold, and will of course serve to arrest more and more the attention of all classes of our countrymen. But when the mail arrives in which will be proclaimed the extraordinary fact just referred to—when every newspaper in the three kingdoms echoes and re-echoes the story of this MARVEL OF THE AGE—there can be no question that a sensation will be produced in the national mind such as, for intensity and prevalence, was never produced before. From the monarch on the throne to the peasant at the plough, there will be astonishment, wonder, and admiration.

From the palace to the cottage, from the drawing-room to the nursery, from the philosopher and the statesman to the school-boy, this LUMP OF GOLD, and the land which produced it, will for awhile be the all-absorbing topic.

“ From every considerable port in Great Britain and Ireland, ships will come in abundance, as full of merchandise and passengers as the law will allow. Population and wealth will flow in upon us in copious, rapid, and continuous streams. Port Jackson will ere long be one of the most crowded and bustling harbours in the world, and Sydney take her place amongst the richest and most flourishing of cities. New South Wales will be crowned by England as the QUEEN OF COLONIES. Steam navigation will connect the two countries by a stronger and dearer bond of union, and British capitalists vie with each other in hastening so happy a consummation. Steamers of the first class—the largest, the strongest, and the swiftest—will be placed on the line which is to bring England in communication with the LAND OF GOLD. Railways will follow as a natural and necessary result. Transportation will be put down. Our political freedom will be enlarged. Our country will be blessed!!!”

This rhapsodical tone may give some notion of the general excitement which prevailed in the country ; but it must be admitted that the almost ludicrously sudden change of opinion might be in some degree justified by the accounts of the continued good conduct of the assembled “ diggers,” and of their perfect submission to the ordinary course of law, which had been able to suppress all attempts at robbery or violence, and almost entirely to put down even drunkenness and gambling. Only one death (from apoplexy) had been reported at either of the stations, and no complaints were

heard of any want of attention to the sick or hurt, on the part of their comrades.

The attention of the authorities having been thus called to the probability of gold being found in the *matrix*, which would pass into the hands of individuals with great prejudice to the rights of the Crown; it was considered advisable that some measure should be adopted, in such cases, further than the payment of a small license fee, to assert these rights, pending the decision of Her Majesty's Government on the question. It seems to have been admitted, that the finder of the large quantity of gold alluded to, had not, at the time, been even the holder of a license, and also that the ore had been removed from Crown-land of which he was only the rentor. The Crown-land Commissioner, accordingly, under directions from the Local Government, took possession of the gold, which had however in the mean-time, passed into the hands of a second party, the house of Messrs. Thacker & Co., of Sydney, whose agent had bought it in Bathurst for the sum of £4160.

After some discussion on points of law, which appeared to be very little understood, on the subject of the precious metals, the Government decided upon delivering the gold to the purchasers, taking their bond for a royalty of 10 per cent., should the Home authorities decide upon the legality or expediency of exacting it, and "additional gold regulations" were issued, requiring the payment of

a similar royalty on all gold found in the *matrix*, on Crown-lands; thus giving a security of possession, the absence of which had probably been the cause of the Vandal-like and irreparable destruction of the beautiful production of nature, whose mere commercial value had so excited the imaginations of men. These regulations, which were issued pending the preparation of more detailed ones, for the working of "gold combined with quartz or other rock, remaining in its original bed or situation," restricted the operation of the licenses to "alluvial gold, whether consisting of dust, grain, scale, or lump gold," and required that previously to the working of "matrix gold," notice should be given to, and permission obtained from the Commissioner of the gold district, under penalty of forfeiture and prosecution. In conformity with the principle laid down in the provisional regulations of May, no person was to be allowed to work "matrix gold" on private land, except the proprietors and persons whom they might authorise, the royalty to be charged on such private lands being only 5 per cent.

As an additional security to the public, the Local Government at this period, established a weekly conveyance for treasure from Ophir to Bathurst and Sydney, which was to be accompanied by an armed escort. It was at first supposed, that the amount of gold, thus brought to the capital would be a tolerable test of the general produce of the mines, but such was the feeling of security on the public roads,

that a charge of 1 per cent., (the Government not being answerable for losses that might occur from any cause) was sufficient to deter many from availing themselves of the offered protection, and they continued to have recourse to private opportunities and the ordinary mail.

By the latter conveyance, it was said that on one occasion so early as the 13th of June, from £1000 to £1800 had arrived in Sydney, and the first escort which came in on the 19th July brought only £2500 in Government charge.

On the 23rd of July, by a vessel (the "Mary Bannatyne") bound to London, nearly 280 pounds of gold, valued at the current rates at £11,600 (besides 800 ounces of Californian gold), were shipped through the Custom-house; but as it was generally supposed that smaller amounts had been privately despatched by other vessels, no estimate could be formed of the quantity of gold actually raised in the Colony. There could be no doubt, however, that it was steadily increasing; and as every post brought letters detailing the improved prospects of the writers, a migration from Sydney to the country recommenced on a large scale. On one day only (the 5th of August) the police estimated the number who left the city for the "diggings" at four hundred, and these persons had so far profited by experience as to be generally very well equipped, there being few who did not belong to a party owning a dray stored with implements and provisions, some being even accompanied by

1851

their families. Complaints of the amount of the license fee, which had been often made at first by those without capital, who having abandoned their ordinary occupations found the search for gold scarcely afford them a livelihood, were no longer heard; the average earnings on the Turon were undoubtedly much greater than heretofore; and even at Ophir, where gains were less generally diffused, and which was, comparatively speaking, almost deserted, some who remained were accumulating money very rapidly.

The following returns, supplied to the newspapers by the heads of the parties themselves, will shew in some degree the earnings of successful diggers at two different places, and at the interval of a month. The first is the account of the gold acquired in the month of June at Ophir by (it is believed) Mr. Gideon Lang's party, and the second by that of a Mr. Harvie, of Dapto, at the Turon, where the projected township had been officially named "Sofala," in July.*

(No. I.)

"Ophir, Monday, 30th June.—Closed up the month's account, and made every thing clear to start on a new score. The amount of gold we have got is $58\frac{3}{4}$ oz., which at £3. 7s 6d, the price we receive for the small gold, is £188. 15s 8d. The number of

* "SOFALA.—A site has been fixed upon for a township at Sofala, on the Turon River, at the crossing place of the road from Bathurst to Mudgee, in the county of Roxburgh. A copy of the approved plan will be deposited for information at Sofala, and at the Office of the Surveyor-General in Sydney."—*Extract from the Government Gazette.*

*By this it is clear that
much is left behind*

days' work of the whole party collectively are 101, so that the produce is equal to £1. 17s 3d per man for every day he worked, and I have no doubt we should have had close upon £3. per day with the quicksilver machine."

(No. II.)

Mr. Harvie and his party commenced operations at the Turon River on the 30th of June. During the first week they only obtained 3 ozs., 16 dwt., 15 grains of gold. Their daily gains for the next week are represented to have been as follows :

Monday, July 7th	8 dwt. 12 grs.
Tuesday ,, 8th	8 — 16 —
Wednesday ,, 9th	5 — 0 —
Thursday ,, 10th	6 — 0 —
Friday ,, 11th	3 — 15 —
Tuesday ,, 15th	1 — 20 —

The party now took possession of new ground, which had been vacated by other diggers who were dissatisfied with it; and the results of their labours for the next three days are thus stated:—

Thursday, July 17	24 ozs. 17 dwt.
Friday ,, 18	16 — 17 —
Saturday ,, 19	3 — 6 —

At this stage of their progress, the river rose in consequence of the rain, which caused some interruption to their operations. On the Monday morning, by falling the swamped oaks, they formed a bridge over the water, which enabled them to reach their claim; but this preliminary business occupied nearly the whole of the forenoon. Notwithstanding this hindrance, their success during the remainder of that day was quite intoxicating.

The following are the amounts procured during that, and the next five days:—

Monday, July 21	77 ozs. 17 dwt. 22 grs.
Tuesday ,, 22	52 — 6 — 21 —
Wednesday ,, 23	5 — 5 — 0 —
Thursday ,, 24	14 — 10 — 0 —
Friday ,, 25	3 — 0 — 0 —
Saturday ,, 26	3 — 8 — 12 —

Thus it will be seen that Mr. Harvie's party obtained an amount of gold over 200 ounces within the surprisingly short period of ten days. The spot where the larger quantities were found is described as being twenty-five feet deep above the bed of the river, on the side of a mass of steep rocks. The claim had been offered for sale by the first purchaser to five or six different parties, all of whom rejected it as valueless. An old Californian miner gave it as his opinion that it was one of the last places where experienced men would think of looking for gold. Mr. Harvie says that the nuggets were mostly found in crevices of the rocks, jammed in, as it were, by some force of the elements which had acted upon them, perhaps, some thousands of years ago."

*Having fallen
therefrom during
decomposition
perhaps this
ages!*

An authenticated account of the gains of several other working parties at Ophir and the Turon during July, will also shew that whether extended or not, the gold field is evidently very rich in certain places.

OPHIR.

A party of three seamen (Crode and Co.) 1 nugget of 52 ozs.
1 do. of 40 ozs., besides smaller pieces.

Five men, £120 in one week.

Another party, £80.

Four boys, £280 in a month.

A party who occupied a deserted hole, £159 in one day. The following day, 2 lb. of gold.

A Frenchman (Frederic) and his mate, £300. in a month.

ON THE TURON.

Macansh and party (six in number), 157 ozs. in nine days, sold for £494. 10s.

Mr. Hall's party (3 to divide, 5 others hired men), 40 lbs. in a month, sold for about £1800.

West of O'Connell's plains and party, 23 lbs. in three weeks, sold for £875.

Dawson's party, 200 oz. of which 9 lb. was procured in three days.

Whitehead's party, 135 oz. in five days.

&c.

&c.

&c.

The quantity sent down soon shewed a considerable increase, so that on the 7th of August the Government escort delivered at the Treasury in Sydney 288 lbs. of gold, valued at upwards of £11,500, and on the 12th a shipment to the amount of £28,960 (including the 100 pounds of Mr. Thacker's gold, which in its mutilated state the public were admitted to view) was made on board of the barque *Bondicar* for London.

From this date up to the latest arrivals from the mines on the 17th of August, although some *prospecting* parties of intelligent persons reported but indifferent success on the tributaries of the Turon, in general the accounts announced great gains on the part of individuals and small companies; some writing from the neighbourhood of the Turon that "dry diggings" had been found not only in the gullies, but on the surface of the mountains, where 5 or 6 ounces a day had been collected by parties of three or four men each. The escort and mail for the 15th delivered about 240 pounds of gold, valued at the price the Government had contracted to receive for payments for licenses, &c. (viz. £3. 8s 6d per ounce) at £9864. The charge for conveyance being now, however, $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, viz. $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent from Ophir or Sofala to Bathurst, and 1 per cent

thence to Sydney, many persons still availed themselves of the post as equally safe and more economical, so that it was stated that the postage for gold received in one day alone amounted to £27.

Among the specimens received was a fine sample of gold dust from the "World's End," spoken of before, where it was said regular *digging* had begun, and two of the largest *lumps* or *nuggets* yet discovered at Ophir, one of 57 and another of 75 ounces, arrived by the same conveyance, and, as customary, were exhibited in the jewellers' shops. Such exhibitions of treasure, procured nominally by labouring men, and occasional announcements like the following, of the earnings of unaided individuals, were sure to counterbalance all the accounts of failures, which were lightly dwelt upon, or attributed to a want of skill or industry.

"*Aug. 8th.*—Amongst the most agreeable features attending the large consignment of gold received on Thursday at the Colonial Treasury, is the fact, that remittances to their poor relatives were made by many of the gold-diggers. One or two cases deserve especial mention. A son of Mr. John Hill, jun., of King Street, started some short time ago for Ophir, taking with him two lads in indigent circumstances; upon their arrival they admitted another lad into their party, and the youthful mining company commenced operations. For a few weeks their success was but moderate, but they determined to persevere, and in somewhat less than a month they obtained no less than 7 lbs. 10 oz. of gold, which was sent down to Mr. Hill, through the Treasury. In his son's letter a request was conveyed to Mr. Hill from one of the lads, whose parents and brothers and sister were in a state of extreme distress, that he would hand over the whole of his share

of the consignment, amounting to about £70., to his father and mother, a commission which Mr. Hill was prompt to execute. A second case is that of a man, who leaving his wife with all that he possessed, save five shillings, started about five weeks ago with a firm resolve not to be daunted by hard work. His wife on Thursday received 2½ oz. of gold from him. A third instance of the effects of courage and perseverance has been given by another small party of native youths, who started about seven weeks ago, with provisions for three months. Within a short distance from Bathurst they met numbers returning, dispirited at the work and the weather; and who endeavoured, but in vain, to induce them to turn back also. They pushed on, and the result of their labours was shewn on Thursday, by gold remittances to their relatives and friends, of the value of about £500. A person who keeps a small shop near the Queen's Wharf, was at the diggings for several weeks, not making five shillings a day: he determined to give up and come back to Sydney, but was unable to sell his cradle, &c., and therefore was compelled to stop; immediately on the departure of the party with whom he wished to come to Sydney, his "luck" turned, and he arrived in Sydney yesterday, with gold valued at £250. A party of five worked for a fortnight, procuring but a few shillings a day to divide amongst them; four of them gave up, and the fifth gave them £4. for the cradle and tools; in four days after he was left, the fifth man was rewarded for his perseverance by obtaining above sixty ounces, which he sold for £200."

"*Aug. 15th.*—A man named William Welfare arrived in Sydney yesterday, from the Turon. (This is the person alluded to by our correspondent as forming a party by himself.) He worked twenty-four days, and obtained sixty-nine ounces at the hole next to Mr. Norrie's party at Maitland Point. He procured from two to five ounces every day, and on leaving sold his claim for £8. The following is his last week's work: Saturday 5 oz., Monday 5 oz., Tuesday 5 oz., Wednesday 4½ oz., Thursday 3½ oz., Friday 3 oz., being 26 oz. in six days, worth £90."

The weather too having cleared up, with every prospect of a fine spring, an eagerness for gold-seeking, not less intense, but better directed than at first, seemed to pervade all classes in Sydney. Merchant-seamen were again deserting their ships, or procuring releases from their engagements, and many policemen had given the necessary notice of their intention to leave the force at the conclusion of their term of service. So many of the water police (an indispensable force in Port Jackson) had done so, that the Inspector-General found it requisite to apply to the commanding Naval Officer for assistance to carry on the duties when the men should claim their discharges. Although these timely precautions were taken, it was not feared, however, that there would be much difficulty, by a moderate increase of wages, in ultimately supplying their places, or in keeping the whole police force up to its proper strength. There had been no great rise of prices in Sydney, except in the case of the carriage of goods, which had risen from 4*s.* 6*d.* a hundred weight from Sydney to Bathurst (120 miles) to 30*s.*, besides 10*s.* additional to the diggings. From this cause alone flour was selling there at from £40 to £60 a ton, whereas in Sydney the price was but £25; not higher than warranted by an indifferent harvest in Van Diemen's Land, and which would probably be soon reduced by expected importations.

Up to this time the effect upon agricultural and

pastoral labour had not been so great as to cause a recurrence of the alarm first felt in May, and it was believed that many country gentlemen, having taken advantage of the reaction in June to renew their engagements with shepherds, &c. for lengthened periods, there would be no movement among that class of men until at least the first clip of wool and the harvest should be secured. At present, the "gold mania," affecting chiefly those somewhat above the labouring class, one striking result was the apathy with which the approaching election for Members of Council (the first under the new Constitution) was looked forward to, all speculations for the future being apparently confined to the probable results, social and political, of this great discovery.

It is doubtful if the whole amount of gold hitherto raised in the Colony can be estimated with any approach to accuracy. The value (at Sydney prices) of that known to have been shipped between the 28th of May and the 18th of August, in the "Thomas Arbutnot," "Mary Bannatyne," "Bondicar," "Mount-Stuart Elphinstone," and H.M.S. "Havannah," exceeds £50,000; which, as other ships have certainly taken away small sums, is probably very much under the quantity produced in the first three months, even supposing that little remains unsold or hoarded.

As little dependence must be placed on any calculation of the produce of the mines at present, although the minimum may perhaps be arrived at

with some degree of certainty. The Commissioners' returns of the licenses sold in August had not yet been made public, but it was known that nearly two thousand had been issued during the first few days of the month at the Summer-hill and Turon Creeks, and the numbers were increasing so fast that the appointment of a third Assistant Commissioner and a further addition to the mounted constabulary (the expenses of which establishment had before been advanced to £350 a month) were considered necessary. The most moderate accounts considered that not fewer than three thousand were at work at the two places above-mentioned, besides those at the "World's End," which the Chief Commissioner had proceeded to visit. Taking the average of each person's earnings at ten shillings for every day in the year, supposed to be the smallest constant gain which would induce people of the class generally employed to abandon their usual avocations and style of living, for the inevitable hardships of severe work and exposure, the production would be £1500 a-day or at the rate of £543,000 a-year. That this is not overrated is proved by the late arrivals of treasure by the escort and post, which have averaged £10,000 a-week, or at the rate of £520,000 annually. If the above be any thing near the truth, it will also shew that up to the present time the license fee of one shilling a-day, is in fact a royalty of ten per cent, an amount which it is believed has never been realized long by any Government.

Licenses

*

*Licenses are
= 10 per cent
on each day's
gain!*

Whether these calculations of the amount of gold at present raised in New South Wales be correct or not, it is certain that experience, aided by science, can alone determine the value of the future workings in Australia. It is equally improbable that the extent of the gold field should at once have been hit upon, by the scanty population now inhabiting a vast continent, as that the richness of even a small portion of it, should have been tested by the simple and imperfect methods of procuring the gold hitherto practised. It has as yet been found in three different forms, viz. in grains or scales, in lumps or nuggets, and in the quartz or other matrix, the proportions to each other being quite undetermined. In the first-mentioned case, the size and shape of the grains seem to depend on the character of the stream in which the gold is found, those of the Turon, (although more abundant) being smaller and flatter than the rounded particles of the Summer-hill Creek, where also the largest lumps or nuggets, weighing from one to fifty (and in one case it is said seventy-five) ounces have been picked out of the interstices of the clay slate. One magnificent example of gold in the quartz matrix has been mentioned, but it is also found in the streams, embedded in rounded water-worn quartz pebbles, which will make it difficult to draw the distinction between alluvial, and what is called "matrix gold" in the Government Regulations.

Some beautiful specimens of gold embedded in a

red ferruginous earth had been found by Mr. Wentworth, a member of the Legislative Council, upon a hill on his property at Frederick's Valley, and it is generally believed that a very large proportion of the quartz on the western slope of the dividing range is highly auriferous. The question, if it be sufficiently so in general as to justify any hope of its being profitably worked by the application of skill and capital, is one of the greatest importance, as on its solution depends the alternative of mining becoming one of the regular employments of industry in the Colony, or of the search for surface gold, (a pursuit not less delusive and demoralizing than gambling) remaining for a few years the precarious resource of a large portion of the labouring population. The few experiments yet made on the richness of the quartz have necessarily been on so small a scale, and conducted with such imperfect instruments, that the results vary too much to lead to any conclusion.

The Rev. Mr. Clarke, in the beginning of July, after detailing some experiments rudely made on an ounce of powdered Californian quartz, from which he obtained between two and three grains of pure gold, with a portion of a grain of silver: the same quantity of pounded quartz from Ophir, whence he extracted two grains of pure copper, and from the Murrumbidgee, which produced three grains of copper alloyed with gold, adds,—

“ The probability is, that all the quartz is more or less metalli-

ferous. Now, at the rate of production by the above-mentioned experiments, taking gold at 76*s.* per ounce (American value,) a ton of Californian quartz, such as that used in our experiments, would be worth £1140 sterling. Worked for copper, the Ophir and Wellington quartz would be worth (at £75 per ton of copper,) 6*s.* 3*d.* And, allowing for gold at the rate of a grain to the ounce of the same auriferous quartz, the value of quartz per ton, producing both copper and gold, would be (at 64*s.* per ounce for gold) £160 6*s.* 3*d.* It is very certain that this, even allowing for the cost of production, indicates a new source of colonial wealth, only one, perhaps, of many connected with the previous discovery of gold."

Mr. Hale, an intelligent goldsmith and jeweller of Sydney, from the same description of quartz obtained similar results, which, supposing the material experimented on to be an average specimen of the metalliferous rock, do not seem very encouraging. The following account of quartz from Mr. Icely's estate, is, however, more favourable:—

"Two ounces of quartz from the estate of Mr. Icely having been pulverized and amalgamated with quicksilver, produced a button of metal weighing 7·9 grains, which, on analysis by Mr. Porter, was found to contain silver, ·3; gold, 6·65; alloy, ·95. At this rate, a ton of quartz would yield about 170 ounces, value about £520. What the expense of procuring it would be we have no idea. The quartz exhibited no appearance of gold, even under a powerful microscope."

Mr. E. W. Rudder, a gentleman lately returned from California, and who, at the time of writing, was employing a digging party on the Summer-hill Creek, communicates the annexed result of his experiments on the Ophir quartz some weeks later,

*Important
& just what
I have
concluded*

which, if correct, would shew that usually thrown away by the miners to be even richer in gold than the specimen from California alluded to by Mr. Clarke:—

“The first experiment was from quartz, broken out of a specimen I sold to Mr. ———, and which contained gold visible to the eye in portions, and invisible in others. The result was a return equal to $1\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of gold in 100 lbs. weight of quartz. This kind of quartz is always, I believe, thrown away by the miners, and thereby, as you perceive, a great amount of the precious metal lost, or about £1260 in every ton. I made two other experiments on quartz, in which no gold was at all perceptible, and with results equally satisfactory, having obtained gold from both.”

*Because
I believe
most all
containing
& trap also.*

If we may believe the newspaper accounts from California, these differences in the values of auriferous quartz veins are not greater than occur in that country, where it would seem that a yield of 25 cents from one pound of quartz rock is considered sufficient* to warrant a large outlay in crushing—

* A late Californian paper contains the following information:—

“The correspondent of one of the New York journals writes:—

“San Francisco, July 14th. The mines continue productive, though it has been recently remarked by a gentleman high in the confidence of Government, who has recently returned from a trip through the mines, that the amount of money spent and to be expended during the next three years in quartz rock machinery and experiments of various kinds, involving heavy expenditures, will exceed the profits of gold obtained therefrom in the subsequent three years of labour and toil. The subject is beginning to engage the attention of many of our citizens.”

“A Nevada journal says:—

“To estimate the immense wealth which must, according to all indications, exist in the Gold Tunnel Quartz, we can scarcely realize

mills and other machinery. From thence, and other gold-producing countries, it will be necessary, and cannot be difficult, to ascertain, before incurring heavy expenses, the lowest amount of produce, taking all the circumstances of position, &c. into consideration, which will make regular operations remunerative. The richness of the ore must of course be determined by careful experiments in the country; and as a Government commission, including, besides the name of Mr. Stutchbury, the geological surveyor, those of the Rev. W. Clarke and Mr. William Macleay, was said to be in contemplation for a general survey of the gold district, it is probable that, ere long, ample information will be laid before the public. Should the result of the inquiry prove favourable, the Colonial Government will be enabled to consider the offers of projected companies, who propose to lease tracts of Crown-land for mining purposes; and permanent regulations may then be framed to encourage private individuals to turn the mineral wealth of their estates to the best account.

The alluvial gold hitherto found in New South

the result which our figures give us. We give them as follow: — Surface length of vein, 150 feet; depth to which the same can be worked before reaching the water-level of Deer-creek, 150 feet; average thickness of the vein rock, $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet; number of cubic feet, according to the above dimensions, 101,500; weight of a cubic foot, 100 lbs.; average yield per pound, 25c.; consequent value of gold contained in the 101,500 feet in the vein, \$2,537,500.”

Survey

Wales is said by Mr. Clarke to be rather superior in fineness to that of California and of Minsk in Russia, and to yield somewhat above 90 per cent. of the pure metal. One *nugget*, which weighed 51 oz. 14 dwts., with small bits of quartz in the indentations, was estimated by Mr. Hale to contain 51 oz. of clean gold of 23 carats fine.

Price of Gold

The price first given at Bathurst by purchasers was £2. 18s. an ounce, the gold-dust being, either from design or awkwardness, imperfectly freed from particles of titaniferous iron, called by the diggers "emery." It gradually rose to £3. 5s. at the diggings, and was in August at Sydney £3. 8s. 6d.

The above is a sketch, necessarily slight and imperfect, of the progress of events in New South Wales, from the time of the first *available* discovery of the precious metals to the latest advices from the Colony (the 18th of August). 1851

In a business so precarious as that of gold-mining, it is impossible to surmise what prospects may not be developed or disappointed by the events of a few months. But even should the extent or the richness of the gold-field prove to be considerably less than the more sanguine persons expect, the immediate effect must be to attract population to that portion of this large continent which offers the greatest chance of wealth, and of increased commercial activity. That other districts and neighbouring Colonies believe this must be the case, is evident from the efforts making by the employers

of labour to discover like advantages among themselves.

In addition to the districts before alluded to, that of Darling Downs, beyond the boundaries of the settled country to the northward, and occupied entirely by *squatters*, may be mentioned, where a reward of £840 was offered, and said to have been claimed, for the finding of available workings.

Reports were current that the former discoverer of gold in Victoria (late Port Phillip), whose mysterious disappearance has been mentioned before, had been met with in the streets of Sydney, and a Melbourne paper states, that at the gold-field near the Pyrenees (the scene of his first discovery), sixty persons were obtaining an ounce of gold each per day, at the end of July.

Among the other Colonies, Van Diemen's Land had held a meeting, where, if the public prints may be believed, the Governor had headed a subscription for a gold-discovery reward, with a sum of £20. To this Colony, whence New South Wales derives a large quantity of grain, and where any interruption to agricultural work would be ruinous, the consequences of a large emigration of labourers (unless means be adopted to replace them) must be very serious. In South Australia also, whose rapid progress and present state of prosperity are greatly owing to the richness of her copper ores, a fear that the miners would be attracted to the gold country was generally felt, and the price of mining shares

had fallen considerably in consequence; whilst in New Zealand, the emigration of labourers and the exportation of grain were so dreaded that the inhabitants of Auckland, ready, as in all young communities, to set aside favourite maxims of political economy when individual interests are threatened, petitioned the Lieut-Governor to prohibit the exportation of food, and to prevent any persons quitting the Colony without making provision for the maintenance of their families, should they leave them behind.

As it cannot be desirable that our other Australasian Colonies should be drained of their scanty labouring population, the effect of a large influx of people from Great Britain into New South Wales must ultimately be very beneficial to all, population alone being required to develop their several resources. Should gold become one of the regular staples of the country, employing many thousands in its production, any surplus immigration would still find ample and profitable occupation in cultivating the soil, and extending the growth of the fine Australian wools. The rapid increase of this export, from $8\frac{1}{2}$ millions of pounds in 1840 to 28 millions (valued at little less than a million and a quarter sterling) in 1849, nearly 45 per cent of the whole amount of wool imported into Great Britain, will give some notion of the interests involved in its production, and of the chance it offers of sufficient employment for the future, when the

country shall be fully peopled. It must be ever satisfactory to consider that, taking the most unfavourable view of the gold-miner's prospects, and supposing, not only that as was the case in Wicklow, the surface gold should soon be exhausted, but that expensive modes of dealing with the auriferous rock, should turn out to be no more remunerative than in Brazil (where the profit on the capital employed is said to amount to about 4 or 5 per cent.) or even fail altogether, any probable number of the labouring class whom golden dreams might induce to abandon their native land, would still find in their new home, with equal advantages of law and order, immediate plenty, and the almost certain prospect of social advancement, which the jostling competition of a thickly peopled country, can afford to few in Great Britain and Ireland. Many causes, such as the length and expense of the voyage, and perhaps an apprehension on the part of the ship-owner of an unprofitable detention of his vessels by the desertion of seamen, during the existence of a gold mania, must operate against too sudden an influx of numbers. But it is to be hoped, that ere long a steady stream will begin to flow into this land, destined, we cannot doubt, to a speedy pre-eminence in the southern hemisphere, and to occupy, before many centuries shall pass, no contemptible position among the nations of the earth.

Very true

(NOTE)

THE following are the latest prices in the three principal Australian markets. It should be remarked, that owing to a bad harvest in 1850, the prices of wheat and flour had risen considerably in all, before the discovery of gold in New South Wales : 4s or 5s a bushel for wheat, and £12 to £13 a ton for flour, having been about the average for the last few years.

The scale of wages is from the Melbourne market, and varies very little in all the Colonies. To enable a comparison to be made with wages in other countries, it must be remembered, that the *ration*, which is almost always in addition to money wages, is never less than 10 lbs. of meat and 10 lbs. of flour weekly, besides tea and sugar, &c. to each individual. One sheep among three men weekly, is often given on out-stations, as the meat ration.

SYDNEY MARKETS—FRIDAY, AUGUST 15.

THE MILLS REPORTS.—Messrs. Barker and Co.—The supply of Colonial has been very small, and fetched from 8s 6d to 10s, according to quality. Two parcels of Launceston wheat, about 3000 bushels, were purchased at 11s. Flour is firm at £25 for fine, and £23 for second quality, per ton of 2000 lbs. Bran 1s to 1s 2d per bushel.—Mr. Briellat: For good samples of wheat 10s to 10s 6d is readily given; and for Van Diemen's Land 11s per bushel. Very little, however, has lately been offered for sale. Flour remains at former quotations, namely, £25 per ton for fine, and £23 for second quality, with an inclination to advance. Bran is 1s 2d to 1s 4d per bushel.—Mr. Smart: A fair supply of wheat has arrived to market during the past week, and has been readily taken at from 10s to 10s 6d. Flour is firm at £25 for fine, £23 for seconds. Bran £5 per ton of 2000 lb.

MAIZE.—3s to 3s 3d per bushel.

OATS.—3s 6d to 4s per bushel.

BARLEY.—3s 6d to 4s per bushel.

POTATOES.—Colonial £3. 10s to £4 per ton ; Hobart Town £5. 10s per ton.

BISCUIT.—The prices quoted by Mr. Wilkie and by Messrs. Barker and Co., are as follows: Cabin 35s per cwt., ship 30s per cwt.

FORAGE.—Hay has ruled during the week at from £2. 10s to £3. 15s per ton ; straw £1. 10s to £2. 10s per ton. Green food 6d to 7d per dozen.

GEORGE-STREET MARKETS.—Fowls 1s 6d to 3s, ducks 3s 6d to 4s, geese 5s 6d to 7s, pigeons 10d, turkeys 6s 6d to 10s, wild ducks 3s to 4s per couple. Roasting pigs 2s 6d to 3s 6d each. Butter 7d to 1s, cheese 6d to 7d, bacon 4½d to 5½d, lard 4½d to 5½d per lb. Eggs 7d per dozen. Potatoes 3s 6d to 4s 6d, onions 30s to 34s per cwt. Cabbages 1s to 2s, cauliflowers 1s to 3s, lettuces 1s, turnips 1s 3d, celery 1s 6d to 2s, parsnips 1s 3d, carrots 1s 3d, pumpkins 3s 6d to 7s per dozen, or dozen bunches, as the case may be. Green peas 4s 6d to 5s per bushel. Oranges 2d to 6d, lemons 3d to 4d, citrons 3d to 6d, bananas 1s 2d per dozen. Loquats 2s to 3s per basket.

BUTCHER'S MEAT.—The ordinary price of beef is from 1d to 1½d per lb., but one or two very good cattle have been sold by the carcase butchers at 2d per lb. Mutton 1d to 1½d per lb.

CATTLE, ETC. FOR SLAUGHTER.—As for some time past, so still the supply of cattle in good condition is very far short of the demand, and consequently the prices obtained for stock in even tolerable condition rule high. Sheep have been well supplied, and have realised paying prices. A lot of 60 bullocks, in very bad condition, were sold at 37s 6d per head ; 20 head were sold at 55s, 50 at 57s 6d, 10 at 60s, 100 at 63s, and 58 at 80s. Mr. James Pye, of Baulkham Hills, sold to Mr. William Peisley, three stall-fed animals (two bullocks and one heifer) which had been fed principally on Swede turnips, mangel wozel, and green barley, for the sum of £50. One of the bullocks is expected to weigh nearly 1300 lbs. Several gentlemen of considerable experience, and good judges, have pronounced these to be far superior to any stall-fed cattle that have ever been brought into the

Sydney market. A lot of 1450 sheep were sold at *5s 7d* per head; 600 at *6s 3d*; 300 at *8s 6d*; and 1000 at *9s*. Lambs are very scarce; about *8s* has been the ruling price, but really good are worth *10s*. Calves may be had at from *12s* to *20s*, according to quality. Pigs are very saleable, at from *2d* per lb. for large and heavy, to *3 $\frac{3}{4}$ d* for small shop pigs.

HORSES.—The demand for cart horses increases. Mr. Stewart sold twenty-one head on last Saturday—nine at from *£10* to *£14*, and twelve at from *50s* to *£9*. At Armstrong and Burt's Repository, the horse sales have been as follows—one at *30s*, one at *£2*, two at *£3*, two at *£5*, two at *£7.15s*, one at *£8*, two at *£9*, two at *£10*, two at *£13*, and one at *£14*. The demand for useful horses is still considerable; the supply, however, is small.

MELBOURNE MARKETS—JULY 26th.

VEGETABLES.—Potatoes, *6s* per cwt.; dried onions, *6d* per lb.; green do. *1d* per do.; parsley, *2d* per bunch; radishes, *1d* per do.; carrots, *2d* per do.; turnips, *2d* per do.; parsnips, *1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d* per bunch; cabbages, *3d* each; cucumbers, *4d* to *6d* each; horse-radish, *6d* per stick; dried herbs, *2d* each; cauliflowers, *6d* each; celery, *6d* to *8d* per head; lettuce, *1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d* each; water cress, *1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d* per bunch; beetroot, *2d* to *3d* each; new potatoes, *6d* per lb.

FRUIT.—Apples, *6d* per lb.; pears, *3d* each; oranges, *1s* to *1s 6d* per dozen; tomatoes, *4d* per lb.; green almonds, *1s* per do.; green figs, *1s* per lb.; chillies, *1s 6d* per lb.; pumpkins, *6d* to *8d* each.

POULTRY.—Geese *5s* each; turkeys *5s* to *7s* each; fowls *3s* to *3s 6d* per couple; ducks *4s 6d* to *5s* per couple; pigeons *1s 6d* per pair; eggs *2s* per dozen.

Twenty-one loads of vegetables at Saturday's market.

SETTLER'S WHOLESALE PRICE CURRENT—JULY 26.

Wheat, *9s* to *10s* per bushel; oats *5s* per bushel; bran *1s 6d* per ditto; pollard *1s 8d* per ditto; flour, first quality, *£25* cash, *£26* credit, per 2000 lbs.; seconds, *£23* cash, *£24* credit, per ditto; potatoes *£5 10s* per ton; maize *6s* per bushel.

For hay, prices range from £6. to £6. 10s.

LIVE STOCK.—There was a good supply of fat cattle throughout the week at the market, and prices have somewhat declined, from last week's quotation; in the latter part of the week there was a good demand by the shippers, first quality cattle may be quoted at from 10s to 11s per 100lbs.

A slight decline also took place in the price of fat sheep, the supply being rather heavy, good wethers sold at from 9s 3d to 10s 6d per head. Stall sheep have not varied in price since last quotations, the demand still continues good.

Mixed cattle (all above two years old) sell at from 13s to 16s per head, according to condition and breed, no sales of consequence have taken place at the market this week.

Working bullocks, in low condition sold throughout the week at from £4. 10s to £7. 10s per pair, good teams are worth from £9 to £11 per pair.

Useful hacks sold at from £12 to £15, rough and ordinary ditto from £4 to £9 per head; good draft horses, and also well bred hacks, are saleable at fair prices.

ADELAIDE MARKETS—JULY 14TH.

Wheat, 8s to 8s 6d; flour, £20; oats, 5s 6d to 6s per bushel; bran, 1s 8d; pollard, 1s 10d; barley, English, 2s; ditto, Cape, 6s 6d to 7s, scarce; hay, £6. 10s.

CATTLE MARKET.—Cattle sold at 13s per 100 lbs.; sheep sold at 13s per head.

MELBOURNE LABOUR MARKET—SATURDAY JULY 26TH, 1851.

Married couples, without family, per annum, and rations, £35 to £40; ditto with family, £30 to £33; labourers, 10s per week; shepherds, with rations, £22 to £24 per annum; hut-keepers ditto, £20 to £22; general useful servants, £26; bullock drivers, ditto, £26 to £28, or 10s to 12s per week; ploughmen, £26 per annum, and rations; gardeners, ditto, £30 to £33, or

12s per week ; cooks ditto, £26 to £30, or 10s to 12s per week ; grooms, £26 to £30 ; bush carpenters, £30 per annum ; carpenters, 16s to 20s weekly, or £45 to £50 per annum ; blacksmiths, £45 to £50 per annum ; wheelwrights, 25s to 30s per week ; sawyers, from 7s to 9s per hundred feet ; milkmen and dairymen, £26 per annum ; stock-keepers, £23 to £26 per annum ; thrashers, 4½*d* per bushel, and tie up the straw.

FEMALE SERVANTS.—Thorough servants, £16 to £18 per annum ; housemaids, £14 to £18 ; cooks, £18 to £20 ; laundresses, £18 to £20 ; nursemaids, £10 to £14.

NOTES OF AN EXCURSION

TO THE

AUSTRALIAN GOLD FIELDS.

July 26th, 1851.—HAVING sent on a horse from Sydney yesterday, I drove to Penrith (33 miles) this morning, and there met our party, consisting of Messrs. Hugh Hamilton, Walter Leslie, and Lieut. Pollard.

We left Penrith on horseback at 3.30 P.M., and having crossed the Nepean by the ferry, continued our journey across Emu plains to the ascent of the Blue Mountain range, arriving at our stopping place (Wilson's Inn, 20-mile hollow) at half-past seven. We saw few pedestrians on the road like *diggers*, either going or returning. Three new drays we passed, going up, well appointed, and in the evening saw several parties "camping," apparently bound in the same direction. The road would have been considered very bad for a carriage, but was tolerably good for horses. The weather had apparently set in fine, a great deal of rain having fallen during the last fortnight. One or two drays had camped for the night in front of the Inn, but we found nobody

in the house but Captain Battye, employed in the newly raised mounted police, who was going down to Paramatta on duty. The feeling of security in travelling may be inferred from the fact that our party, unarmed, carried among us in notes, &c. £900, my friend and relative Mr. Hamilton, taking £800. for the purchase of gold.

July 27th.—We started at eight o'clock, and travelling along the nearly level summit of the range, stopped for an hour at the "Weather-board Inn" (4 miles) to see the Regent's Glen, a magnificent valley in a wild country, thickly wooded, and surrounded by sandstone cliffs upwards of 1000 feet high. A stream of water—full at this season—forms a pretty fall over the cliff.

We baited at Blackheath, ten miles further on; said to be 3400 feet above the level of the sea, and the highest point of the first range of hills, and gradually descending the northern slope of Mount Victoria by a very picturesque road, passed the pretty village of Hartley, and arrived at Binnings Inn, Bowen Fells, about a mile off the Bathurst road, on that to Mudgee, before dark.

The direct track to the Turon strikes off either here or from Hartley (4 miles back); so we cannot expect after this to pass many travelling towards that place. As yesterday, we saw but few people on the road. One party of five was going up, and another of seven looking very like disappointed diggers going down. Several drays were camping, but not

so many as to have been remarkable at any time. The weather beautiful, but frosty and cold at night. We found nobody at the Inn. Colonel Mundy had breakfasted here yesterday on his return from the diggings, and must have crossed us when we were at the Regent's Glen this morning.

July 28th.—We mounted our horses at a quarter to seven; the morning very cold, and taking the Mudgee road for seven miles, struck into "Piper's flat," where we found a good bush track, and rejoined the Bathurst road at "Meadow flat," about twenty miles from Binning's; thus lengthening our journey about four miles, but turning the flank of Mount Lambey, the highest point of the range, over which the road is most unaccountably carried, and which is said to be in a very bad state at present.

Mr. Lee, whom we met, told us flour had risen to £45 a ton at Bathurst, and that he was going down to purchase. He said there was a report of another large lump of gold having been found by either Mr. Suttor or Dr. Kerr, the fortunate discoverer of the first mass of 106 pounds.

At Meadow Flat, where we breakfasted and baited, we found two drays of Port Phillip people going to Bathurst on their way to some one or other of the *diggings*; and we heard from the landlord, that a piece of gold, weighing forty-two ounces, had been found at the Turon, being the first *nugget* dug up in that locality, where the produce has hitherto been

scale gold. The last accounts from the Turon were very encouraging to diggers.

We left Meadow Flat at half-past twelve, and arrived at Bathurst, (eighteen or nineteen miles), at half-past four easily. The road between Meadow Flat and Green Swamp, eleven miles from Bathurst, was very bad; and about half way we found the mail-cart broke down and deserted. About Green Swamp we left the sandstone and come upon a country of decomposed granite: the road, which decends gradually into the Bathurst plains, consequently very good; and we forded the Macquarie without much difficulty.

In the open space before Mr. Black's inn at Bathurst, were standing some half dozen drays, laden or preparing to load for the diggings; and in the court-yard was one belonging to young Black, loading with cedar cradles, iron bedsteads, tents, &c. for the Turon. There was no great bustle, however, in the house, the only inmates besides ourselves, being two gentlemen, one Mr. Daniels, Mr. Thacker's partner, who had come up to conclude with Mr. Suttor the purchase of the much-talked of 106 pounds of gold; for which £4160 were given.

We had no difficulty in hiring from a man in the town, three horses to go on to Ophir (Summer-hill Creek), to morrow, having decided upon leaving our own here to recruit. The hire was only 7s a day for each.

We were told of twenty-three pounds of gold having been sent in yesterday from the Turon, the produce of fourteen days labour of four men, which was sold for £860; and there seemed to be great excitement in consequence of the late reports from that quarter.

I had brought letters from the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Deas Thomson, to the principal Gold Commissioner, Mr. Hardy, and to the two Assistant Commissioners, Messrs. Green and Essington King, but found they were all at the Turon, whither numbers were flocking both from the Summer-hill diggings, and other parts of the country.

As Mr. Green was expected to go to Ophir tomorrow, we decided upon proceeding thither first, hoping to fall in with him, and afterwards to meet Mr. Hardy at Bathurst on our return on Thursday.

July 29th.—Mr. Hamilton having some business to do at the Bank, we did not start until after its opening at 10 o'clock. My horse, hired yesterday, broke down soon after leaving Bathurst; and I was obliged to walk several miles before arriving at a station belonging to Mr. Green, "Rock Forest," a stage of sixteen miles. The road was generally level and good; the soil apparently decomposed granite. Near Rock Forest, the country becomes more hilly and undulating; the summit of one hill being covered with magnificent granite boulders, (whence the name), interspersed with quartz pebbles, as is

This is a likely spot for gold

the road generally. The *forest* consists of the usual open bush of gum-trees.

I succeeded in getting a police horse at Rock Forest which carried me the eighteen miles to the Commissioner's tent above the creek at Ophir by 5 o'clock. For some miles the hills had been composed of schistose slate, the laminæ nearly perpendicular, crossed by broad veins of quartz. About half way from Rock Forest, we came upon "Lewisponds Creek," but above all the workings, which do not begin for some miles further down the stream. The land was still level, until within two or three miles of the stopping place in the midst of the diggings, where the hills may be five or six hundred feet high above the level of the creek, the banks of which are occasionally about one hundred, the width being about eighty yards, with a rocky or slaty bed, where several parties were digging and rocking. We had met fifty or sixty persons leaving this place, generally for the Turon; and the accounts of those we spoke to were not encouraging. Mr. Hamilton stopped to address some respectable people from the Lachlan, (where he generally resides), who had been working for a month, and had not cleared their expenses. Others said they had made about 10s. a-day each, but none spoke of great good fortune.

The work for the day was over when we arrived at Mr. Green's tent, where we were hospitably received and lodged, in his absence, by his police

*at the water
= section with
trap or granite
gold or copper
will most
likely be
found.*

serjeant. The night was very fine, but the frost severe towards the morning, making a good covering of blankets and opossum rugs necessary. The serjeant, an intelligent man, told us, that the people had only quitted these diggings in consequence of the floods, caused by the late rains, filling the holes and stopping their operations; and he anticipated a great return of numbers in about two months.

July 30th.—After breakfast, we walked down to the creek (a few hundred yards) by the side of a dry gully, and came at once upon the widest and most frequented part; the site of the new township of Ophir being directly on the opposite bank, where about twenty tents and huts were standing, many having been removed. The whole of the sides of the creek, here 80 to 90 yards wide, with streams running through the bed, which we had to cross by a bridge composed of a fallen tree, were dug and turned up to the depth of five or six feet, like a stone quarry, the slaty rock lying about in heaps. In eight or ten holes parties were working, and their cradles rocking alongside, the water in the former being so high as to render bailing necessary, a very laborious occupation, for which I saw substituted, in only one or two instances, a small square pump of simple construction. At the first hole where we stopped, and which we had reached by crossing the stream on a tree, three men, apparently seamen, were working, and they told us they had some gold to dispose of. A piece, weighing

*This is about
mid-winter
in Australia*

about three ounces, the quartz having been hammered out, was produced, but we were requested not to shew it to their next neighbours, who had evidently a suspicion that these men had been peculiarly fortunate, and were anxious to ascertain to what extent. As in a few other cases, we told them to bring their gold to the Commissioner's tent after work was over, and we proceeded to walk down the creek. The work appeared to be generally of the same description; viz., moving large pieces of slaty rock, and washing the earth, out of which we saw but little gold dust procured. One or two parties, however, had evidently been fortunate in finding *nuggets*, and we remarked (which did not appear to be the case afterwards at the Turon, where concealment is more difficult, from the numbers working close together) that they were in general disposed to keep the gain secret from the neighbouring parties. These generally consisted of three or four men to a single cradle, and few acknowledged to having made as much as ten shillings a day per man. Others, however, confessed to Mr. Hamilton, to whom they were known, that they had done very well; one company in particular, of three men, having found during the last nine days upwards of 21 ounces, a piece of which, weighing 11 ounces, was bought by one of our party.

We saw a cradle washed out, at a point a few miles down the river, called Alexander Point, near

which, in the month of June, Mr. Hamilton had himself worked, with three or four others, for three weeks, making but little more than sufficient to cover his expenses. The washing we saw amounted to about a quarter of an ounce, but the people seemed to have some gold dust laid by to dispose of. One fellow produced a pistole of Louis XIV. a coin I was not acquainted with, apparently of debased metal, and wanted us to buy it, as having been found in the creek. On the bluff, opposite to Alexander Point, Mr. Gideon Lang, of Sydney, had established himself with a party. He was said to have had great success at first, which I suppose had left him, as he had gone *prospecting*, leaving a quicksilver machine, or Virginian rocker, idle on the bank of the stream. A company working here, headed by a man like the mate of a merchant vessel, appeared to have charge of the machine, and spoke of having done tolerably well themselves, and of their intention of improving their outfit. They were very anxious, however, to hear any accounts we could give them from the Turon.

After walking three or four miles down the creek, we returned to the junction of the two, Lewis Ponds and Frederick's Valley, which we found was only about a quarter of a mile above the spot where we had first come down upon the main stream, or Summer Hill, opposite to Ophir. At this junction (sometimes called Fitzroy Bar), is a large pond or

water-hole, as it is here termed, of a hundred yards long by eighty wide, and it is said a few feet deep only. There is an impression that great quantities of gold will be found here when the waters shall subside; and as it is near dry, a proposal has been made by a company to lease and drain it. It may be questioned, whether their expectations are well-founded; and at all events the abstraction of so much water would be injurious to diggers below in the summer time.

We walked for a short distance up the Lewis-Ponds Creek, where little was going on, and afterwards up that of Frederick's Valley, one bank of which is the property of a Mr. Lee, who had given permission to some individuals to buy licenses from the Government to dig on his lands, for an equal consideration, viz., 30s a month. The few diggers here were not doing much, and several were packing up and preparing for their departure for the Turon. A little higher up the creek we found an ingenious gentleman, Mr. Rudder, with a comfortable hut and a party working. He had been in California, but was wrecked in December last on his return to New South Wales, upon the Elizabeth Shoal, the crew and passengers getting with difficulty to Moreton Bay in the boats. It was said that he had lost all his gains, which were considerable, in the vessel (the Rosetta Joseph), the circumstances of whose loss I had been acquainted with before. His opinion is very favour-

able of this country's golden capabilities, compared with what he had seen of California, and he looks forward to a large produce by means of science and machinery. He shewed us specimens of gold obtained by amalgamation from crushed quartz, in which no gold had been visible, but I do not know in what proportion. Out of a mass of quartz, in which gold was slightly visible, he had obtained 1 oz. 14 dwts., being 1-77th part of the whole weight. Whether he had been successful here I did not venture to inquire, but as he talked of continuing his operations, I presume he either had been, or expected to be so. He had, however, divided his party, a portion of them having gone to *prospect* on the Turon.

On our return to the tent at dusk we found Crode, the leader of the first party we had spoken to on the creek, waiting according to appointment, and, to our surprise, in addition to the specimen of three ounces, spoken of before, he produced a magnificent one which he had evidently desired to keep concealed in the morning, and which was the largest piece of pure gold yet picked up. This lump or *nugget* measured 6 inches by $3\frac{1}{2}$, was one inch thick at the larger extremity, and half an inch at the smaller, and weighed 51 oz. 14 dwts. According to his account, it had been found six days previously, about three feet below the surface of the creek, imbedded between two pieces of slaty rock, and was now bought by Mr. Hamilton for £3. 5s. an ounce. (I

subsequently purchased it in Sydney for £175. 15s. being at the market price of £3. 8s.)

Written hard } Mr. Green, the Assistant Commissioner, arrived from Bathurst in the evening, having come in from the Turon yesterday with Mr. Hardy, in charge of the weekly Government convoy. He informed us that Mr. Hardy had, in consequence of letters from the Colonial Government, considered it his duty to seize the 106 pounds of gold which had been beaten out of one or two blocks of quartz by a Dr. Kerr, the owner or renter of some land near the Meroo river, but unlicensed. As mentioned before, the treasure had passed into the possession of Messrs. Thacker & Co, and was to have been taken to Sydney by Mr. Daniels, one of the partners, to-day. It had been sealed up and deposited in the Bank at Bathurst pending the decision of the Government.

The numbers at these diggings have diminished very much during the last fortnight or three weeks. In our walks we saw but about fifty cradles, and although we knew that 600 licenses were sold for the month of June and 700 for July, on this river alone, yet from observation and inquiry I do not think there are more than 200 workers here at present, and probably not more than 150 will qualify for August. The causes are, as hinted at before, the height of the water and the increased productiveness of the Turon. The expense of moving is so great, and so much time is thereby lost, that I doubt

whether the latter cause would have operated if an average gain of ten shillings a day per man, could have been calculated upon. I think it may therefore be inferred that 500 persons out of the 700 have failed latterly in making that amount. I believe also, that several parties remain who are working at a very little profit for the time, in the hope of occupying the best spots when the dry season arrives, and indeed one of three, all intelligent men, headed by a Cornish miner, came to consult the Assistant Commissioner as to the necessity of continuous occupation to constitute a claim to the ground. They had been successful before the floods, and had made minute calculations as to their chances of profit in remaining or moving to the Turon. They seemed finally to decide upon remaining. The majority, however, of those now here, are no doubt working profitably, or are stimulated by the hope of success in *nugget* finding, which would rapidly bring up arrears. There is a curious mixture of persons here, a few being decayed gentlemen, and not a small sprinkling of seamen, which I was sorry to see. One man (by name Matthew Dowd) claimed acquaintance with me, as having been a boy in the "Illustrious," when I commanded her, and told me that my late coxswain in that ship, and one of the gig's crew, had been working on the Creek within a few days. One or two Australian blacks were lounging about, and were said to have been very useful in assisting the diggers to put up

their temporary bark huts. None of them seemed to be tempted to dig for gold on their own account, although they perfectly understood its value, and one readily sold me a "boomerang" for a couple of shillings. The general good behaviour and even civility among all classes was most striking, and I saw but one drunken man during the day among the tents, which constituted the largest proportion of the dwelling places. Some used their drays as such, and a few had their families in substantial huts, with some fine looking children. Several Jews were going about buying gold, but in general the justness of their weights was suspected, and a gentleman like Mr. Hamilton was preferred to deal with. Indeed, from his being well-known, many of the people had kept a fortnight's earnings for him to purchase, although he having been prevented from arriving on last Saturday, (the usual day for winding up their accounts) they had almost all been disposed of since then. The quantity bought to-day can, therefore, be no criterion of the amount raised in a given time. Our party bought, during the day, somewhat more than eighty ounces at an average price of £3. 4s. 6d. an ounce, but we knew of many who would have brought gold for sale had we remained another day.

Work | The work required is tolerably hard, but in this fine climate especially, where a slight exposure to damp is no great suffering, it cannot be considered harder than ordinary field labour in England or

Scotland. As Mr. Leslie remarked, it is certainly not more severe than hedging and ditching in the latter country. The process is of the most simple kind. The digging is generally close to the water where the rocking and washing business goes on; never further than forty or fifty yards. The soil being carried in buckets to the cradle, is there rocked for several hours, water being gradually ladled in, as the original supply runs through. In most cases the cradles are washed out only twice a day, the mode of doing so being the simplest possible. The soil having been rocked into a muddy paste is placed in a flat tin or zinc milk-dish, which is dipped into the river and rinsed round, the stones and earth being thrown out, till the gold, by its specific gravity, alone remains. I saw nothing in actual use at Ophir but the plainest form of cradle, no quicksilver machine being then at work. On the bank of the creek I saw however a deserted cradle or washing machine of a new description which had been washed away from above by a flood, being a cylinder intended to be turned round by a handle. There appears to be no defined rule, either with the public or the Commissioners, as to the size of the particular allotments to each person or party. I was told, in a loose way, that, *if possible, about ten feet frontage* was allotted to each person on the river, to be worked back as far as he pleased. In no case did I see any that had been so, further than a hundred yards, nor did I hear of

*Just my
Plan*

any dispute in which the Commissioners' decision had not been accepted as final.

July 31st.—Mr. Green had most kindly put us up for the night in his own tent, going himself with a friend to that of the policemen. After breakfast this morning we amused ourselves by pounding some quartz, part of a block of about fifty pounds weight, which I had seen thrown out of a productive hole yesterday, and brought home with me, on a small piece of iron, with a common hammer. Not expecting any visible result, I was agreeably surprised to see particles of gold very distinctly in the pounded matter, and a small fragment which I carried away in my pocket-book, shewed under the microscope a large proportion of gold. This agrees with what Mr. Rudder told us yesterday, who mentioned also *silver* as being found with the gold, and another metal, called here by the general name of "pyrites," or "emery," but which he took to be either platinum or palladium. Several work-people had also shewn me specimens of this substance, which looked exactly like the points of miner's picks broken off, and had for some time been mistaken for such by them,

Provisions were good and plentiful along the line of the settlement. Beef and mutton were sold at three-pence a pound, and no person in this country ever thinks of stinting himself in food, the regular ration being considered indispensable, at whatever price it may be procured. Flour is the only article materially

advanced in price, it selling at £50. a ton. At present a man's weekly ration, including ten pounds of meat, ten pounds of flour, besides tea, sugar, &c. costs, at Ophir, about twelve shillings. Soap is dear, which makes the price of washing high, viz. five shillings for a dozen articles. As yet there is no stabling for horses, with the exception of a small inclosed paddock for those of the police. All others must be *hobbled*, and left to pick up what they can in the bush.

We took leave of Mr. Green, and rode into Bathurst, where we arrived before dark, finding Mr. Hardy at the river, with whom we arranged to start for the Turon to-morrow.

August 1st.—We left Bathurst at 11 o'clock, and stopping for half an hour at Mr. Suttor's house (8 miles) and baiting at his sheep station of "Wyagden," 8 miles further on in a plain where several small settlers are located, crossed in the afternoon "Lewis's Hill," which forms the southern range of the Turon valley, and is a very steep ascent for drays. Continuing for five or six miles along the crest of the ridge, a descent of two or three more brought us down on the Turon by 4 o'clock. The appearance of the country is not unlike that about Ophir, excepting that all the features are on a much larger scale. The height of the hills we estimated at 1000 feet, with broad sloping valleys between, leaving sufficient level space on the sides of the river to enable one to ride

along its banks, which was not generally practicable at Summer-hill. The view, as we descended, was beautiful, the picturesque effect being much increased by the straggling tents and huts of the diggers, with the winding line of smoke curling up the sides of the hills.

On the road from Bathurst, a distance of 27 or 28 miles, we had passed fourteen loaded drays, with an average company of seven men to each. One only was returning with diggers whom we did not question, and two were empty going to Bathurst for stores, &c.

We crossed the river to Mr. Hardy's tent, and having put up our horses, or rather turned them out hobbled, walked down to the bank, to see a few of the cradles at work on the nearest flat (or *bar* as it is here called) of the river, of which some twenty were in sight, washed out, before leaving off work. Out of five which we saw, Mr. Pollard bought the produce of the first, weighing 1 oz. 1 dwt., and the four men to whom it and the second belonged, said they had made during the day half an ounce per man. The third washed out about 3 oz. of gold, and the two last about half an ounce each. Taking the number of washings at only two a day, the twelve men who owned these five cradles, must have averaged considerably above half an ounce (32 shillings) each, this day, and they did not appear to think they had been by any means fortunate. These men were all working on a low

point, (or as it is here called a *bar*) opposite to a precipitous bank at a turn of the river.

After removing or quarrying the heavy overlying stones, and below them a layer of coarse gravel, a stratum of finer gravel mixed with earth is arrived at, in which the gold exists in small *scales*, often visible to the eye. This auriferous stratum rests on a bed of clay, at a depth of about ten feet, and appears to have a varying inclination and depth according to the steep or sloping nature of the river's bank on which it has been deposited. Hence parties working near to each other on the same bar, may have very different fortune. In one of the cradles I noticed the people breaking up and washing pieces of indurated clay (not the lower bed) with good effect. *of course*

The bed of the stream is here about fifty yards from bank to bank, and opposite to the high rocky turns the other bank is low (about eight or ten feet in height) but quite distinct from the bed of the river or bar. The people seemed generally to work *from* the bank towards the stream probably from fear of being overtaken by the floods, and had therefore to convey the soil from twenty to thirty yards to be washed. This distance will of course be diminished as they approach the stream, should the ground be found to be worth working.

Few, if any, appeared to have had any practical experience in mining, and I cannot but think that even a slight acquaintance with the subject would be of great service, and save much useless labour.

Mr. Pollard and I rode out with Mr. Hardy just before dark to the house of Mr. Richards, who has a sheep station about a mile and a half from the river, where we were hospitably entertained and put up by his overseer. The nights are quite cold enough at this season to enable one to appreciate the comforts of a roof over one's head, and a good fire.

The other gentlemen were received by Mr. Kiug, the Assistant Commissioner, in his tent, the horses being hobbled and turned out to graze.

An enclosed paddock with a shed for horses is in contemplation, and a tolerably comfortable wooden hut with a bark roof has been put up for the police; but until a site for a township shall be fixed upon, the Commissioners do not consider it worth while to go to any expense for permanent buildings.

We found a gentleman (Mr. Trappit), a relative of Mr. Richards, at the house, who, we understood, had come upon some speculation of building frame-houses in the projected township of Sofala, bringing workmen with him for the purpose. In the course of conversation, which turned entirely on gold, he informed us that he had been long aware of its existence in the quartz, &c. of the Wellington district, and had in fact several years ago found at the root of a decayed tree a piece weighing several ounces, which his neighbours, to whom he shewed it, tried to persuade him was the result of a bush-fire fusing some gold watches, which must have been

stolen and there *planted*. He told us of several late discoveries which had been made in the neighbourhood of Mudgee to the northward, and in particular that at one spot on the Meroo river, called the "World's End," eighteen miles from Mudgee, and about four from the spot where Dr. Kerr's large mass was found, two or three hundred persons were digging profitably. His information was so circumstantial that Mr. Hardy decided upon proceeding thither in a day or two, as soon as he could get through the heaviest part of the work of issuing licenses on the Turon for this month. Mr. Hargraves, the prospecting Gold Commissioner, had, according to Mr. Trappit, visited the spot, and had also found gold down the whole course of a stream called the "Umby," or "Oomby," from near Wellington to where it joins the Mudgee river, twenty-five miles east of that township. At Lawson's Creek, sixteen miles N.N.E. from Mudgee, a Mr. Bayley had come one day on a party of Australian blacks, prospecting on the river on his estate (probably the first who had ever made the attempt), and had encouraged them to proceed. Another gentleman of that neighbourhood, Mr. Cox, was also said to have found gold, in sinking a well, as much as twenty-five feet below the surface, and these points were considered the most northerly where undoubted discoveries had been made. A short time must determine whether or not they can be worked to advantage.

We ascertained to-night that several of the accounts of the great gains on the Turon, which we had read in the Sydney papers, were not exaggerated; for instance, Mr. Hall's party of eight, of whom only three were to divide the profits, the others being hired labourers, had obtained forty pounds of gold in a month. Mr. M'Kansh and party thirty-five pounds, and Mr. West of O'Connell's plains, twenty-three pounds, which had been sold for £875.

August 2nd.—We rode over to the Commissioner's tent early in the forenoon with Mr. Hardy, who was to be busily employed all day in issuing licenses; Mr. King, the Assistant Commissioner having begun yesterday, and distributed about 200.

We again remarked, when crossing the hills, the very beautiful effect of the smoke curling up their sides from the straggling line of tents along the course of the river, pointing out all its sinuosities, and giving the notion of a much larger assembled population than we knew to be on the spot. On reaching the stream, we put up our horses, and Mr. Pollard and I accompanied Mr. Hardy on his walk up the river, that we might see the mode of issuing the licenses. The other gentlemen of our party going with Mr. King, who was proceeding in the opposite direction towards the "Wallaby-rocks," on the same business. The present mode is both inconvenient and tedious. The Commissioner, attended by a policeman, walks along the bank of the river,

stopping where any cradles are seen at work, or persons assembled, and demands to know if any wish to take out licenses. Much time is lost in discussion, and in weighing out the amount of the fee, which is often paid in gold-dust, its cleanness or freedom from "emery" being sometimes a point of debate, before the license can be delivered to the individual.

This consists of a slip of paper taken from a book, like a banker's cheque-book, the name of the holder being necessarily filled in on the spot; and (the license not being transferable) his description being supposed to be so also on the book from which it is torn. Those who cannot pay are warned off, but of course with so small a staff it is impossible for the Commissioner to prevent some from working clandestinely when his back is turned; at least, until they shall have earned enough to pay for a license.

I remarked, indeed, that, when Mr. Hardy made his appearance, many cradles, which no doubt belonged to three or four persons each, had, or pretended to have, but two owners; and several took licenses alone, expecting, as they said, to pick up partners in a day or two. An occasional inspection of licenses at irregular periods during the month would, however, remedy this defect of the system, although it would require a much larger force of police than is at present at the disposal of the Commissioners. It may easily be conceived that, as the duty above mentioned must be performed on foot, two hundred licenses are about as many as one

Commissioner can issue in a day. For some days after the beginning of each month, therefore, a certain number of persons must either stop their operations or work without a license. A better plan might perhaps be devised, which would include a fixed *office* where licenses might be renewed every twenty-eight or thirty days, together with a registration of cradles, and their periodical inspection. To carry such a system out, however, a much larger force of inspectors, &c. must be organized, which time and an increasing revenue will no doubt soon enable the local Government to do.

Leaving Mr. Hardy to proceed with his labours, Mr. Pollard and I continued our walk to the next turn in the river, which, from the extraordinary richness of the *bar*, has been named "Golden Point." From one spot close to the stream here we counted upwards of thirty cradles at work to the right and left of us, with the usual average of three men to each, and we were addressed by one of the workers, named "Brandt," well known as the keeper of an oyster-house in Sydney, who civilly offered to keep the contents of his cradle unwashed until we returned in an hour or two to see the operation. He told us that he had lodged thirty ounces of gold in the Bank at Bathurst as his share of the last fourteen days' labour, he forming one of a party of six who owned and employed two cradles, and that almost all on the "Point" were doing well.

Tents, bark huts, and drays were ranged in a tolerably regular line, on each bank of the river here, where the level land is sufficiently extensive above the banks to admit of a considerable number of houses, and of a tolerable bridle and dray track. There were several stores of food, clothing, and implements, and one or two butcher's shops well supplied with both beef and mutton. There were a few women and children, and we did not see a single case of drunkenness, owing partly no doubt to there being no licensed *grog* shops. A little further on, on a low bar or island which divides the stream, but must be covered during floods, we counted thirteen cradles just established, and on the bank where we stood, one or two *prospectors* were employing themselves washing the soil, previous to fixing upon a *claim*, which is the name given to each man's or party's allotted portion of ground. One man had come down to try what he called a *new colour*, just fallen in with, being a thin blue clay, and told us that if one or two specks of gold were found in the dish, it would be reckoned worth working. Four or five grains were found, which, considering that the soil had not been cradled, but merely rinsed out in the *prospecting pan* (a flat vessel of tin, like a milk dish) proved it to be very rich. A short walk brought us to "Oakey Creek," one of the tributaries of the Turon, up which we walked for a mile or so. It is narrow, not more than twenty or thirty yards wide, and I should

think from appearances the water would fail in summer. One or two parties whom we spoke to had not been successful. One man spoke of earning 5s a day, but all agreed that 10s or 15s was much under the general average. The gold in this creek is said to be larger than in the river, which is probable enough, but we did not see any well authenticated *nuggets*. A Mr. Austen, a Jew dealer, who has a large store, shewed us some pieces of one or two ounces, which he believed had been found in this neighbourhood, and it was also said that one nugget weighing upwards of forty ounces had been discovered in the Turon. Mr. Hardy, however, doubted the fact, and thought it had been brought from Ophir, which was most probably the case, as a lump answering that description had been stolen by one of a party at work there. Certainly the general appearance of the ground to a superficial observer like myself, is very different here, there being no schistose slate visible on the surface, nor the same quantity of quartz either in veins or pebbles; indeed, on the slopes of the hills, some of the rocks looked almost like basalt. The banks of the river also, where the diggers work, are more shingly (and in places muddy) than at Ophir, and the labour consequently much lighter.

On our return down the stream we were stopped by Brandt, who reminded us, that we were to see his cradle washed out, which we proceeded to do. Before beginning, he guessed its value at more than

£8, and he certainly washed out $3\frac{1}{2}$ ounces of gold dust, being half a day's work for a single cradle, his party of six possessing two. No one seemed to consider this more than ordinary luck, yet the day's earnings of these men must have been at the least £7 each, which agrees tolerably well with Brandt's former account of his *savings* for a fortnight. At this point, as along the river generally, the common cradle seemed most in use. We saw one party only, by way of experiment they said, going over some once-washed soil, with the quicksilver machine. We did not hear the result, but it is probable that it may be worth while here, where the particles of gold are fine and may escape the common process, although I believe little is lost at Ophir.

On returning to the Commissioner's tent, in the afternoon, we mounted our horses, and rode down the river for about seven miles, to where a point of the range meets the stream in picturesque precipitous cliffs, called the "Wallaby Rocks." Along the whole of this distance, and we are told for several miles further down, the banks are occupied by working parties at intervals, though some of the reaches of the river, which is too deep in places even to be fordable at this season, are not available, and consequently deserted. Besides the beauty of the scenery, we observed nothing worthy of further remark, and our time would not admit of seeing anything of the

immediate neighbourhood of the Wallaby Rocks, where the workings are said to be rich, and a number of people assembled. Altogether during the day, we have traversed about eight miles of the course of the Turon, and cannot have seen fewer than 200 cradles at work, employing between six and seven hundred men. As hinted at before, the first few days of the month, when the Commissioners are known to be about, collecting licenses, are not the most favourable for making a correct estimate of the digging population. Besides those engaged in other avocations about the tents, many were evidently idle, awaiting a favourable opportunity for beginning, and not a few drays were arriving and unloading, whilst some of their owners were pitching their tents, and arranging their habitations.

We could not but be struck, as we had been at Ophir, with the civility met with from every person addressed, and with the general appearance of order and quiet, in which respects, it is said, there has been a great improvement since the workings were begun, and a regular authority established.

A few cases of disputed possession were referred to Mr. Hardy in my hearing, and his decision at once submitted to, and here, as on the Summerhill creek, there is no fixed regulation, nor does it seem possible to make any, as to the amount of river frontage composing a *claim*. At the former place, ten feet were considered sufficient for each

individual, and half that space in this richer locality seems to be adopted as the fair allowance. The duties of issuing licenses and settling disputes are not the only ones which occupy Mr. Hardy's attention, he kindly affording assistance in cases of sickness or accident, having been called upon to-day to bleed a man, who was suffering from an attack of pleurisy. The people were, he said, very attentive to their sick comrades, but happily they were generally healthy, which the absence of any medical practitioner would seem to prove.

Prices were as yet somewhat higher than at Ophir, but were not expected to continue so. Flour was as high as £60 a ton. Beef and mutton, $3d.$ to $3\frac{1}{2}d.$ a pound. Sugar, $8d.$ a pound; and tea, of which there is a great consumption, $2s. 6d.$ a pound.

The cost of the weekly ration was considered to be thirteen or fourteen shillings, and labourers were to be hired at from twenty to thirty shillings per week, in addition.

Mr. Hardy, having been busily employed all day, did not return to his tent until dark, when we again rode out to Mr. Richards's.

The Commissioner and his Assistant had issued to-day about 350 licenses, making between five and six hundred for the first two days of the month on the Turon alone. From what they hear, they seem to expect to issue 2000 at least on this river immediately, and no estimate that I have heard

gives a less number than 3000 as that employed in digging on the various localities. We met another gentleman at the house this evening, a Mr. Blackstone, who had come to dispose of cattle to the butchers. He had bought, on the road, yesterday, a team of eight bullocks and a good dray, for £32, and expected, after paying all expenses, to clear £4 a-head on each of the animals. He had been, like ourselves, among the diggers during the day, and had heard much of the richness of the bar or island in the river above Golden Point spoken of before, as just occupied; a Sydney hairdresser, named Robertson, who had lately returned from an unsuccessful trip to California, having with his party secured eleven ounces in a few hours. Bedford, Mr. Richards's overseer, shewed us also a very beautiful specimen of gold in quartz weighing six ounces, which had been dug up on the river, yesterday, and which he had bought for £15.

From all quarters, this evening, we heard of nothing but great success on the part of the diggers. We had bought a small quantity of the Turon gold-dust as specimens, and Mr. Hardy, to whose kindness and attention we were much indebted, gave me a fragment of quartz from the neighbourhood of the Meroo creek, in which specks of gold are distinctly visible to the naked eye.

August 3rd.—Mr. Hardy rode over with us to the station on the river, where we took leave of him and our friend Mr. Hamilton, who was to

remain here; and, having breakfasted, Messrs, Leslie, Pollard, and I started about 10 o'clock, on our return to Sydney.

It being Sunday, no work was going on on the river; this respect for the day being apparently established by common consent. A few parties were starting on prospecting excursions, and others, were strolling in the bush, orderly and well dressed. We remarked two very decent-looking women who had retired to a quiet spot, and were occupied with their books, apparently in devotion. Crossing Lewis' Hill we met several drays, some of whom we had passed on our way out on Friday, and saw others camping in the bush; all on their road to the diggings. After descending Lewis' Hill, and passing "Wyagden," (Mr. Suttor's sheep station) we struck off to the left across Winburndale rivulet, instead of taking the direct road to Bathurst, and cutting off an angle of the plain, came out on the Sydney road, about two miles from Green Swamp, the first stage. Here we found our own horses waiting, and resumed our journey, stopping for the night at Meadow Flat.

August 4th.—In consequence of the continued fine weather, the roads were so much better, that we rode over Mount Lambey, from the summit of which there is a fine view of the country; and descending to Hartley, where we breakfasted and baited, and re-ascending the beautiful pass of Mount

Victoria, reached our old quarters for the night at Wilson's Inn, 20 mile hollow.

August 5th.—The numbers we met on the road to-day, shewed that the late accounts of successes on the Turon, had produced their full effect in Sydney. Before arriving at Penrith we met several gentlemen of our acquaintance who were going up with the intention of organizing parties, and we recognized others of the class of domestic servants who addressed us, and were eager to hear the latest intelligence, and to ask advice as to their proceedings. One man in particular, whom we knew to have already made an unsuccessful attempt, was now benefiting by his former experience, and formed one of a party possessing a well stocked dray. We baited at Penrith and arrived at Paramatta, where we were to pass the night, by 5 o'clock.

August 6th.—On the road to Sydney, we continued to meet many drays and digging parties, and on our arrival were told that the police estimated the numbers who had left the town yesterday for the Turon, at 400 persons.

During our trip, which has lasted eleven days, we have had very fine weather, which has allowed us to see the country, and particularly the digging operations, to great advantage. We have encountered no inconveniences of any kind, having met with much kindness and attention from the Commissioners, and having been tolerably well put up at all the inns, which are generally better than one

would expect in a new and thinly peopled country like this. Our expenses have been very little more than they would have been before the gold excitement began; the only charges which seem to have advanced being hay and corn, which, however, are always high in this country, the daily expenses for a horse amounting to little less than those of a man.

Travelling, as we did, without a servant (who would only have been an incumbrance), our whole outlay has not exceeded £1. each a day.

Sydney,
August 7th, 1851.

THE END.

AN 6153094

**STATE LIBRARY
OF N.S.W.**



N1942837



MI
DS 980.1

27B1

DSM/ 980.1/ 27B1

A short account of the late
discoveries of gold in
Australia : with notes of a
visit to the gold district

