

MINING—Continued.

AUSTRALIA—Confirmatory news has been received, says the *Sydney Herald*, which shows that a considerable amount of payable gold has already been obtained, including nuggets averaging in weight from half an ounce to 190 ounces. Specimens have already reached Sydney. The gold appears to be but slightly water-worn, and can not have traveled far from the matrix. It is good color, resembling that from the Palmer and Northern Queensland fields, and it brings a high market price. A rush has already set in from Western Australia and from New South Wales. Large numbers of diggers, storekeepers, and others, have found passage around westward, while others from Victoria, New Zealand, etc., have arrived in Sydney, whence steamers are specially laid on, most of which will call at the Queensland ports en route to pick up additional miners. The two places of debarkation are Port Derby (King's Sound) and Cambridge Gulf.

Mr. Derby, a merchant, writing on March 30th, says:—"About eight men have made their way in from the gold-fields. They report about forty men up there. They have come in to buy rations. It is going to be the largest field in Australia. All the men who are in have gold with them, but they are keeping it dark, and have only brought in enough for their wants. I bought eighty-four ounces from two men yesterday, twenty two ounces from another, eleven ounces from another, and seven ounces from another. We hear of another party close to here that has 240 ounces with it, one piece weighing nineteen ounces. It is a beautiful sample of gold, quite as good as the Palmer gold. What we have purchased runs from five ounces to one ounce, the pieces being all water-worn, except one parcel, which was evidently got on the surface from a rough leader. All I am afraid of is a big rush of men with no money."

The laboring white men demand 15s. a day for ordinary work, and it is very difficult to obtain the services of blacks. Chinese labor is also scarce at present. A few miles from Derby, Mr. Derby saw a number of alligators in a river, and he has seen snakes also very frequently, some of them being very long. He says that 150 miles of the 300 that divide Derby from the diggings is over a boggy track. The belief that the field will prove one of the most permanent and paying that has yet been discovered in any part of the world grows daily; and as it has been estimated by Mr. Hardman, the government geologist of Western Australia, that an auriferous area of country extending over some 3500 or 4000 miles exists, there appears to be ground for the opinion. Mobs of horses are got together for dispatch, and milch cows and cattle will be sent to the landing ports. Several hundred sheep are also sent to provide for temporary requirements. The latest information is a telegram from Perth, which states that a miner named Morgan has returned to Port Derby with a large quantity of gold, including a nugget weighing two and a half pounds of solid gold.

COMPETITION IN PETROLEUM.—In all probability, the oil-fields of Burmah, which country was recently annexed to the English Indian possessions, will be explored so soon as that country becomes settled, which, with the force that the English can put into the field, ought to be within a very few months. These fields, says the *Stockholder*, have been only very crudely and partially explored, but have been of importance for hundreds of years, and the only thing that has delayed their development has been the wretched system of government of the native kings. This district is located in the geographical center of the case trade, and on all oil produced there a saving of from 3 to 4 cents a gallon would be made in the cost of transportation, as against shipments from America. The route to and from the fields is all water, and labor, cheap, reasonably intelligent, and fairly trustworthy, can easily be obtained. It is not at all likely that English enterprise will permit this valuable deposit to remain in the hands of natives, when very large profits can be obtained at a comparatively small outlay, and it is reasonably certain that, within a year or two at the utmost, the American exporter can count on another foreign competitor. What the outcome of the Suakim District will be is another matter; but if there be any considerable deposit of oil there, the English may be depended upon to utilize it. The nearest refinery to Suakim is at Fiume, at the head of the Adriatic, in Austria, and distant from Suakim from 2,300 to 2,500 miles. It is about 800 miles from Suakim to Port Said at the Mediterranean. Accounts from Europe all agree that the Russians are pushing their preparations to land their oil in Europe most energetically, and the cable has announced that an Austria-Hungarian company has obtained a monopoly of shipping the oil westward by the Black Sea route. Tank steamers are building to supply the Baltic and English markets, while those interested in the Russian article are now doing their best to get it to market. It must be admitted that their operations have been very slow, and the English may be expected to do more in the way of developing and marketing the products of Egypt and Burmah in three years than the Russians have succeeded in doing in the last twenty. At present prices of refined oil, the importers of Western Europe do not fear any close competition with the American article; but it is hardly longer a question with refiners and exporters here how much prices can be advanced this year, but the more important one is, how much longer America's foreign trade can be held.

Among the more valuable and interesting provincial blue books are the reports for the department of mines of Nova Scotia. The Province has an active, effective and learned official, in the person of Edwin Gilpin, the inspector of mines. Mr. Gilpin is an accomplished geologist, a careful statistician, can turn his hand effectively to any sort of manual and engineering work about a mine, and is able to prepare an official report with information in it.

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