

ment took the subject in hand, and appointed a Mr. Weaver to superintend the operations. He instituted a search into the various modes in which the gold had deposited itself, with a view to establish a systematic mode of extraction; he engaged diggers and collectors and labourers; and he established the necessary commercial machinery for carrying on operations. It was calculated that the country people had collected £10,000 worth of gold before the Government had taken possession of the works; and the Government collected 945 ounces, valued at £3675; but when the accounts came to be balanced, it was found that the expenses had exceeded the receipts. The bright vision was dissipated, the scheme was abandoned, and the Government has never since taken part in the matter. The Wicklow gold mines have still an interest to the minds of some, but the golden particles are too "few and far between" to render the collection a very profitable employment.

Quitting our own islands, and directing a glance to the continent of Europe, we find that Hungary and Transylvania are among the chief gold countries; the precious metal being found in the sands of some of the rivers. There are also two or three Bohemian rivers which yield a small supply. In one part of the valley of the Rhine, between Mannheim and Basle, gold is found in a sand-bank in the river, but not in sufficient quantity for working. There are many parts of Europe whence gold was once obtainable in profitable quantity, but where the search is now abandoned: such are the banks of the Ebro, the Rhone, and the Danube. Africa is said to yield about 5000 lbs. weight of gold annually—from the district between Abyssinia and Darfur; from the region south of the Great Sahara; from the Mozambique coast; from the sands of the Gambia, the Senegal, and the Niger; and from that portion of the Atlantic sea-board which obtains the name of Gold Coast. Asia contributes small supplies from some of the rivers in Asia Minor, from the Indian islands, and from certain parts of India, China, Cochin-China, and Sumatra.

But of all the contributions which the Old World produces, in this department of mineral wealth, none equal those of the vast Russian Empire. The quantity has been rapidly increasing within the last few years. In 1842 the quantity was about 33,000 lbs., and this has since risen to 50,000, 60,000, and even 80,000 lbs. There are two groups of Russian gold deposits, near the Ural and the Altai Mountains respectively. The eastern group, near the Altai, is said to comprise a district as large as France, over the whole area of which "not only are considerable quantities of gold found mingled with sand and gravel on the surface, but even the rocks themselves, when pounded up, are found to afford a percentage of that valuable metal."

It is curious to observe how varied are the aspects in which the gold presents itself. In the Ural district, for instance, it occurs in minute fragments imbedded in coarse gravel, somewhat like that at Woolwich; it also occurs disseminated in veins of quartz in hard rocks, which are worked by regular subterranean mining operations; and it occurs associated with platinum, and one or two other rare metals, in detached fragments of rock. The processes adopted by the gold collectors vary according to these varied modes of deposit. If the sand of any river contains a few grains of gold to five pounds weight of sand, it will pay for the expense of gold-washing. In the Altai district the gold appears disseminated in a quartz sand, not merely in river valleys, but sometimes even to the summit of a mountain. There has been one mass obtained, weighing no less than 78 lbs., and valued at £3000.

Crossing the Atlantic, we find that Brazil, until the recent discoveries in California, has been the richest of American gold countries. There is a chain