

safety, and misdirected, lay knocking about of the London docks for many days without a claimant. The regret of the dock thieves, when they subsequently discovered the value of the case that had lain so long within their reach, must have been poignant. A marked advance in the price of diamonds took place here in 1863 and 1864, when gold rose above 200. Many men who had always despised jewelry, were seen to sport large diamonds, which they bought as a hedge against the currency. Many a pretty girl whose papa had copper-head tendencies became the owner of a diamond brooch or drops through paternal distrust of Uncle Sam's greenbacks. Fair diamonds of 3 to 4 carats sold to a considerable extent in this country in 1863 and 1864 for \$3500 a \$4000 each.

The land of gems—India—gave us the first diamonds known to commerce. They were found in various parts of Hindostan, in Africa, and in some of the Indian Islands; above all, in the territory of the Nizam, sometimes called Golconda, after a powerful fortress. Of this country a Sultan died, in the time of the crusades, bequeathing 400 pounds weight of diamonds to his successor. This little legacy, assuming all the stones to have been small, would have been worth at the present day \$42,000,000, and if, as is probable, many of the gems exceeded 1 and 2 carats in weight, more than twice as much. A century and a half since diamonds were found in Brazil; and for nearly

almost all the new diamonds come from thence. Most of the mines, as well as the Boraco, long famous in Golconda, are now treading the same weary way—

Brazil's

whether in

troughs, much after the method of the early California gold-hunters; and the diamonds, if any, are found among other pebbles at the bottom of the trough. The work is mostly done by negro slaves, who occupy long sheds with troughs on each side. Upon elevated seats sit overseers, who watch over the men and receive the diamonds when found. When a slave finds a diamond he raises his right hand and shouts; the overseer approaches him, receives the diamond, and rewards him. If the diamond is over 17 carats in weight the lucky finder receives his freedom, is crowned with flowers, and is allowed to look for diamonds hereafter for his own benefit. For gems of lesser weight lesser rewards are given. Innumerable precautions are taken to prevent thefts by the workmen. The men are stripped before they leave the shed, and leave their working clothes in the hands of the overseer. On the least suspicion attaching to a man he is rigorously purged. His mouth is examined, and his whole naked body undergoes a survey by men skilled in detecting strange hiding-places for diamonds. Similar precautions were adopted in India with regard to visitors who went to see the diamond mines. They were such that no female was likely to visit them twice. For all this it is believed that fine diamonds are constantly stolen by the Brazilian slave, and no doubt their Indian brethren are equally light-fingered.

It is not clear that diamond-hunting is, on the whole, more profitable than raising pigs or potatoes. You can easily hide in your closed hand the entire product of a lucky year's labor by five hundred men in the diamond-producing district of Brazil. It is the history of gold-hunting over again. Valuable diamonds are found about as often as big nuggets, and on an