

fabulous wealth. The Marawhenua gold field, immediately on the other side of the Mount Ida Ranges, and scarcely twenty miles from Mount Burster, has all the attractions possible for a large population: a beautiful healthy climate, where trees, plants, and flowers of all descriptions thrive most luxuriantly; where sickness in families is scarcely known; where from an elevated plateau can be seen the broad, magnificent Waitaki, winding its course through an extensive plain for forty miles to the ocean. And the ocean itself, at that great distance, lends enchantment to the view. Truly, scenery is only an acquisition, a luxury in New Zealand, and will not keep together a population; and even health, thriving plants and fruits, though desiderata, are not sufficient to create a city; but fortunately there are other essentials in abundance in that really beautiful place, to form out of the present nucleus of a township a large inland town, as it will be (against all obstacles) in less than five years. Firstly, there is a great extent (say 15,000 acres) of rich arable land (exclusive of 40,000 acres freehold, the property of Messrs. Borton and McMasters, said to be worth £5 an acre). Secondly, there is a vein of gold pretty evenly sprinkled over an area within a radius of four to five miles from the township as a common centre. In the richest finds, about 70 ounces have been sluiced out by three men in six weeks. In the poorest claims, miners are sharing from £5 to £6 a week each; yet the population is very small, and no likelihood of increase for at least one year. This can be explained easily. The same reason, I have no doubt, nearly all the Wardens in New Zealand can give concerning their respective districts: that the day for poor men's diggings has gone by, and we are approaching the eve of a new era—one that Victoria has experienced—viz., gigantic operations and comparatively safe investments for capitalists. An account of the result of investments at Marawhenua, and plain figures, will best help to confirm my statement in regard to that place, and, to my knowledge, equally applies to many other places I am familiarly acquainted with in Otago. To prove the richness of these diggings, I will mention that the few miners, perhaps thirty all told (though there are others cutting races), have sold upwards of 1,000 ounces during the last twelve months, with an indifferent supply of water for continual mining operations, owing to the incompleteness of the water-races, and the interrupted supply from the feeders. In regard to the races now in course of completion, the first one is the "Mosquito," with first rights to the Marawhenua River, in length twenty-seven miles. The owners are now constructing two immense reservoirs, which, when completed, will enable them to sluice the highest ground on the field. The Mount Pisgah race, with first rights to the Kakanui, is fast progressing, aided by Government money under the Public Works Act. The Golden Hill race, when completed, will be seventeen miles long; and to carry it into Marawhenua diggings, it will be necessary to erect twenty chains of box fluming, a suspension fluming of four chains, and a tunnel of eighty feet blasted through rocks. The Marawhenua Company have cut ten miles of their race, and the Band of Hope have nearly completed theirs. On the north side of the Marawhenua River there are several large races, viz., the Ben Lomond, the Fiery Cross, the Little Wonder, How and party's, and McCann and party's. When all these races and their discharge reservoirs are completed, which I believe we may expect in another year or eighteen months at the farthest, there will be steady employment for at least 300 miners, to which there will be added, I may almost say necessarily, 300 others of different occupations, including women and children. These calculations are based upon the supply of water now approaching the ground, the yields hitherto obtained, the prospects gained in many different places, the success of the small farmers and gardeners, and the genial climate.

In regard to the capital that has been and will be expended to bring about a township of 600 people, I may mention that £20,000 is rather under the mark. Of this the Mosquito Company spent three years and £4,000 to bring their race in. It actually only discharges two heads (though probably will eventually supply ten), and yet is very valuable property. The Golden Hill, only partly finished (fourteen miles), has cost already £3,900; and the other races in course of construction, it is estimated, will cost at the rate of about £200 a mile.

At the present time there is a check upon mining enterprise at this place, owing to an impending action against How and party by Messrs. Borton and McMasters, freeholders, through whose land the Marawhenua runs, and which has been polluted, it is said, by How's mining operations, to the detriment of sheep-washing at certain seasons by the freeholders. I do not anticipate any serious inconvenience to the miners should it become necessary to leave the river undisturbed, as it would only be for a short period once a year; and it would be practicable, if agreed upon, to carry a race of clear water (at least I think so) to the dip from different streams, independent of the Marawhenua. I do not desire to comment on the principle involved, I simply deal with facts touching their bearing on the prospects of the Marawhenua gold field, which, as I have already said, will be without a doubt, in a few years, one of the most picturesque and stirring inland gold fields towns in Otago. It is supposed that in one year the railway will be completed to within ten miles of the township, which will bring the people to within six hours' communication of Dunedin, supply them with daily mails, and Newcastle coal at £3 10s. a ton.

At St. Bathan's, which is next in order on the list of mining localities, there is at present a very small population, not exceeding, perhaps, 200 persons, but a sludge-channel is about to be constructed from the Manuherikia River, three miles up, to a large extent of auriferous ground, unused at present, so choked is the outlet with terrace tailings. The ground in question has been well prospected, and is known to be fairly payable for sluicing. There will be water in abundance, and employment for another 100 to 150 persons added to the present population. The sludge-channel will take probably two years to construct. It will cost say £1,000 a mile, and I believe the sludge washed out of it will almost, if not quite, pay the constructors the cost as they proceed, by the quantity of gold they will clean up out of the accumulation of wash-dirt swept down during the past nine or ten years. St. Bathan's may be called purely a mining township, but, like the now far-famed Bendigo Gully on the north side of the Dunstan Ranges, its treasures seem inexhaustible.

The Kyeburn diggings have been steadily retrograding during the past year, owing to a rather scanty supply of water, the poverty of the ground, and the expenses in keeping the races in repair. There is no doubt, however, that there is a large extent of auriferous ground, which will in the future be considered payable enough though now despised, as £2 a week as return for six days' labour is