

WHANGAREI, AUCKLAND.

It was reported a few months ago that gold of a payable character was discovered near Whangarei. The place where this discovery was made is on the ocean-beach, in a narrow inlet about six miles north of Whangarei Heads. The gold was found among a cemented wash lying on the beach, which had evidently come there by a slip from the cliffs, which are at this particular place about 100ft. in height. The rock in the cliffs is of a metamorphic nature, full of small veins of crystalline sand cemented with iron solution, and in these thin seams or veins colours of gold are obtained. The gold found on the beach has evidently come from these thin seams. At the very place where the gold is found the face of the cliff is sloped back for some distance at the top, as though a large slip had taken place at some period, which, no doubt, has been the case. The action of the waves in breaking up the rock and scattering it has left the heaviest particles behind. The quantity of this wash is very limited, but it contains a little gold, copper, and zinc-blende.

There is a large lode of iron-pyrites, about 6ft. wide, exposed on the beach at low water. The action of the sea-water has given this lode a peculiar golden-yellow appearance, so that it was at first mistaken for copper-pyrites, but afterwards it was found that it contains very little copper, being chiefly sulphur, arsenic, and iron. Some of the gold that was obtained on this beach was assayed by Mr. Fraser, of Auckland, and found to contain a good deal of copper. From the appearance of the country in the vicinity where the gold has been found on the beach I should not expect to find gold in payable quantities. The discovery was made by Colin Urquhart and brother, who have the only claim there is on the sea-beach. There are others tunnelling into the face of the cliff with the view of finding a reef; but their chance of doing so is very remote.

OHAEWAI, BAY OF ISLANDS, AUCKLAND.

Metallic Quicksilver.—At Ohaeawai, which is about eighteen miles from Kawakawa, there are hot springs, which are not generally known except by the people living in the district. They are situated about two miles from the main Hokianga Road at a point nearly opposite the Ohaeawai Hotel, in a barren-looking country, covered with short, coarse fern and low manuka scrub. These springs are found here and there over a large area; and where some of these springs are the mud all around them is completely saturated with very minute globules of metallic quicksilver. At one of the places visited quantities of cinnabar were seen, which, no doubt, exists in large deposits in this district. From what I could learn, no one seemed to pay any attention to the cinnabar, but looked more for the quicksilver. The persons living in the neighbourhood stated that in some places the quicksilver can easily be collected, although not in large quantities.

This is a part of the country where a valuable cinnabar lode is likely to be found; but from the depth at which it would most likely be found in the vicinity of the springs, which are in low-lying ground, the difficulty of drainage would render it costly to work a lode, even if it were found and proved to be rich; but there is moderately high ground adjoining the springs that is likely to contain lodes of cinnabar, and that is well worth prospecting. Portion of the land where the springs exist belongs to the Natives, and a portion of it is Crown land.

Independent of the mineral value of this land, the springs are said to be very efficacious in cases of skin-diseases and rheumatic complaints; but, really, the whole of their curative properties are not known. A deal of sulphuretted-hydrogen gas is given off, and sulphur is found all round and about them. The water seems to contain a large amount of potash, but this can only be ascertained by analysis. One thing is certain—they are in a country where sulphur, arsenic, and mercury abound, and with these combinations the springs might be converted into a valuable sanatorium. At the present time there is a boardinghouse erected beside one of the springs for the reception of invalids from the northern districts, who bathe in the open pools.

MIDDLE ISLAND MINING.

COLLINGWOOD.

This is a field where a variety of minerals exists. Copper, tin, zinc, silver, iron, galena, graphite, molybdenum, gold, iridium, platinum, and coal can be got in close proximity to each other; still, although this is a district where a great variety of minerals are found, very little has yet been done towards prospecting the country and testing the value of the minerals that exist.

Gold was first discovered here in the end of 1856, and since that date this field has continued to support a limited mining population. The amount of gold taken from this district previous to the Otago goldfields being opened, or to take it up to the end of 1861, was 41,564oz., representing a value of £161,066. This gold was obtained from the washdrift in the beds of creeks. Indeed, it may be said that the principal gold that has been obtained in this district has been got in shallow alluvial deposits, for, to judge from the appearance of the old workings, very little work has ever been done. The principal gold-workings in the vicinity of Collingwood are on the east side of the Aorere River, and also on the branches of this river on the eastern side. On the western side of the Aorere River there are belts of crystalline limestone and calcareous sandstone. Underneath the latter coal-seams are found, but towards the West Wanganui there are belts of Silurian rocks, where gold is obtained. The auriferous belt of country goes from Collingwood towards Anatoki, on to the Salisbury Plains and Mount Arthur. The whole of the country is very rough and broken, without any roads excepting those up the valleys of the Aorere and Takaka Rivers. This may account to some extent for the small amount of prospecting that has been done, but the chief reason appears to be that the gold that has been found is widely scattered about, in patches here and there, without any continuous lead. It may be termed a good diggings for individual miners, but a portion of the country which is not suitable for companies to invest a large amount of capital to carry on gold-mining operations, as the patches of rich auriferous deposits in both alluvial and quartz have been found to be limited in extent. This assertion is well borne out by the fact that the