

of thousands—of persons to our shores who never would otherwise have come. There is a charm about gold-mining that no other class of mining possesses: the reason being that in the early days of the goldfields, both in this and other countries where gold has been discovered, it was usually easily got; the ground in general was of a shallow depth, and in many instances rich patches were found requiring but little labour to get it. Gold, also, being in a metallic state, is always a marketable commodity, with no variation in its value when its assay is known. It is a class of mining that has enriched many of our colonists; and probably some of those who are indebted to this branch of industry for all the wealth they possess fail to recognise its importance, and even set it down as a gambling transaction. The shallow placer-workings where the gold was easily obtained are now getting worked out, and more capital is required to carry on operations than in the earlier days: large areas of superincumbent drift have to be removed before the auriferous layers can be reached. A pick, shovel, tub, cradle, and tin-dish were at one time all the implements a digger required to enable him to earn his livelihood and make good wages; but those days are past. Every claim that is now taken up requires capital to open it up; some claims requiring thousands of pounds to be expended in placing a proper plant on the ground before any gold is ever obtained. The expenditure in testing and developing the gold-mines in the colony is becoming greater year after year, as the lode-workings on the upper levels on old-established reefs are getting taken out; and the time is not far distant when lower levels on some of those lodes will have to be opened up, and assistance given in some instances to prove the value of the deep ground in large gold-mining centres. The population is now in these centres; the colony has expended large sums of money in erecting schools, public buildings, and the conveniences necessary for permanent settlement; and every effort should be made to get the value of the mineral lands tested before the miners leave for other fields. The advantages the colony has already obtained through the influx of a large mining population, and the prospect of further valuable discoveries being made in lands still belonging to the Crown, or which might possibly be acquired from the Native owners—lands which in most instances are valuable neither for agricultural nor pastoral purposes, but which would nevertheless prove of far greater value if gold were discovered—are well known; and efforts to extend the present workings to a greater depth deserve encouragement, as by such extensions the goldfields are made capable of supporting a larger population, and of giving profitable employment to the labouring classes. A good goldfield rush would do more than anything else to satisfactorily solve the unemployed question.

The yield of gold last year, though not so much as for the former one, shows, as a matter of fact, that there has been a definite increase, for a portion of the gold in the former year should have been credited for the year 1890–91. The quantity obtained during the financial 1892–93, as taken from the returns of gold entered for exportation, was 228,659oz., representing a value of £917,467; while the return for the former year was 276,535oz., representing a value of £1,107,177; but of this gold a large quantity was held by the banks in the Middle Island pending the abolition of the gold duty, which took effect from the 1st April, 1891. As compared with year 1889–90, which was 201,760oz., valued at £803,174, last year's return shows an increase of 26,899oz., valued at £114,293. Of the gold produced last year, the Auckland District contributed about 17·95 per cent.; West Coast, 44·45 per cent.; Otago, 35·04 per cent.; and Nelson and Marlborough, 2·56 per cent. It will be seen, therefore, that nearly one-half of the gold is obtained on the west coast of the Middle Island. The total yield of gold from each of these districts last year being: Auckland, 41,052oz.; Marlborough, 3,055oz.; Nelson, 2,792oz.; West Coast, 101,636oz.; and Otago, 80,124oz.

#### EARNINGS OF THE GOLD-MINERS.

According to the returns furnished to the department, the number of miners employed in gold-mining in the different districts last year was 12,197, details of which will be found in Table No. 11 annexed, while the number for the previous year was 12,724. This shows a decrease in the number last year of 527. This decrease has been from the Marlborough District, 118; Nelson, 188; Westland, 248; and Auckland, 1; while there has been an increase in the Otago District of 28. Taking the value of gold exported last year—namely, £917,467, it shows the average earnings of the miners to be £75 4s. 5d. a man per annum; while the earnings for the previous year amounted to £80 12s. This shows a decrease in the earnings last year of £5 8s. 7d. per man. To take the different districts, with the number of miners employed in each, and the value of the gold obtained, the earnings of the miners would be as follows: Auckland, £116 2s. 6d.; Marlborough, £49 14s. 6d.; Nelson, £52 10s. 4d.; West Coast, £77 10s. 3d.; and in Otago, £63 5s. 9d. per man per annum.