

were about eighty-one Europeans and twenty-six Chinese engaged in gold-workings at the time of my recent visit to this locality.

*Maori Creek and Maori Gully.*

Under this head is included the country between the Arnold and the New River, with the gold-workings in the vicinity of Dunganville. The whole of the country here is more or less auriferous, and a considerable mining population is still making a fair livelihood. The workings at Maori Gully include those in the Stillwater Creek Valley, where a large amount of work has been done, and where a considerable quantity of gold has been obtained. The ground becomes poorer as it gets back from the terraces alongside the creek; but wherever a fair supply of water is available and can be got to command the ground, the claims yield sufficient gold to pay fair wages for working them.

At Maori Creek there was a large population for many years, and there is still a considerable number of men who are making a fair livelihood carrying on mining operations. Taking the whole of the mines in the district—that is, at Komata, Maori Gully, Stillwater, Cockabuller, Mosquito, Woods', Connor's, Liverpool and Maori Creeks, Riley's, Italian and German Gullies, and Meehan's Flat—there were about 160 Europeans and 82 Chinese engaged in gold-workings at the time of my last visit to this place.

*Marsden and Paroa.*

There is a considerable number of miners obtaining a livelihood in the different localities and gullies between the Grey River and the Teremakau. This includes the gold-workings at Paroa, Limestone, Irishman's, Cockeye, Nemona, Rutherglen, Cameron's, Welshman's, Marsden, and Manuka. The gold-workings near Paroa are on the old sea-beach leads, while on the terrace at Rutherglen the gold has been derived from the denudation of the high-level ocean-beach lead, and gold brought down by the New River, which has flowed here at some remote period, leaving concentrated gold-bearing material in the old channel. At some of the places mentioned the workings are carried on from adit-levels, and the bottom layer of the wash-drift driven out; but, in every place where there is water to be got, sluicing is the method adopted for working the ground. There is a large area of country covered with auriferous drifts which will yet be worked and found to give those engaged in this avocation a means of earning a fair livelihood.

It may truly be said that the land on the West Coast is valueless except for mining, and those depending on the mining population for their livelihood. There is comparatively little good agricultural land, and what good land there is in the valleys of streams and rivers, if it were alienated, would entirely shut up mining, as the low ground in the vicinity of all gold-workings is required for the deposit of tailings. Hydraulic sluicing is the most economical method of working the ground, and therefore all the land, if alienated in any manner, should be subject to mining. There are about 176 Europeans and 110 Chinese getting their livelihood at mining in this locality.

*Blackball and Moonlight.*

The gold-workings on the north side of the Grey Valley are very considerable. They extend from Slatey River to Brunnerton. The workings here are on quite a different formation to those on the south side of the Grey River, where there is a belt of this country running from Slatey to Barrytown and Canoe Creek, and from the Blackball to the Ten-mile. In the bed of Moonlight Creek the conglomerate is of the same character as that at the Ten-mile Bluff. Between Slatey and Brunnerton every creek-bed coming out of this belt of country contains auriferous wash-drift; and there is a large mining population in this neighbourhood, the two principal places being Moonlight and Blackball.

The Moonlight Diggings are situate about seven miles up the Moonlight Creek from the Grey River. Some of the men now working on this field have been steadily at work on it since it was opened. The gold here is principally of a coarse, nuggety character, with very little fine gold. Some of the miners showed me the gold they were getting, and, in mentioning the prospects they were getting in their claims, referred to every piece of gold they obtained as a speck, whether it was large or small. They work sometimes a considerable time without getting the colour of gold, and a few nuggety pieces reward them for the time they have been working. There is very little wash-drift in the creek-bed in some of the claims, the nuggets being under big boulders, which they turn over with crowbars. From the information supplied me by the miners, this is one of the best fields for mining in the Grey Valley. The men are doing better here than in any other place in the Grey district. The workings are not confined to the creek alone. Some of the terraces and hills are worked from adit-levels, while hydraulic sluicing is carried on in some parts.

From the formation of the country in this vicinity, and the character of the gold obtained, there will be some valuable quartz lodes yet discovered in this locality, and most probably on the range to the northward and westward of the present workings. In many of the gullies in this direction rich specimens of gold-bearing stone have been found, and some prospecting has been done with the view of discovering the source; but, so far, success has not attended their efforts. The character of the road, which is only a very bad horse-track, is a great drawback to this place. It has been constructed up hill and down dale, without any attention paid to grading; some of the sideling cuttings are constructed on grades of about 1 in 4, and the track not properly formed at that; consequently provisions are dear, and men have to make good wages.

The whole of the country about Moonlight, Slatey, Shellback Gully, Caledonian Gully, Baxter's Creek, Garden Gully, B. A. Creek, the Meg, and Healy's Creeks is auriferous, and men are working in each of those places. Between Slatey and the watershed of the Blackball Creek there were about eighty Europeans and seventy-five Chinese, the larger portion of the Chinese being in Shellback and Caledonian Gullies.

At the Blackball and Ford's Creeks there is also a good deal of mining being carried on. The terrace going up from Kinsella's to the Blackball Township is being worked from adit-levels, and,