

Creek and Larry's Creek containing similar auriferous drifts. All the creek-beds coming out of the low ranges into Landing Creek—namely, Ryan's, Hut, Chinaman's, Beker's, Little Landing, Black Sand, Fox's, St. Helena, and Rip-and-Tear Creeks—contain auriferous drifts, which have in the past proved payable for working even by some of the most primitive methods, and, if a good supply of water were brought on these ridges, there is a large area of ground in this locality which would give remunerative employment to a considerable number of men. At the present time the most of the men working here are Chinese.

On the southern side of Larry's Creek almost every creek-bed contains gold, and some fairly rich deposits of auriferous wash-drift have been worked. A considerable amount of work has been done in Italian Creek and its tributaries. Mr. John Howell has been for the last twelve years sluicing in a high terrace in this locality, and for many years the ground yielded good wages for working, although the supply of water was very limited. Some of the auriferous drift here is nearly 100ft. in depth, having a little fine gold all through it; but the main layer of wash-drift lies nearest the bottom.

On the terraces above Caplestone a few parties are driving out the ground, and at this place the quartz pebble conglomerates show out on the face of the range, which is said to contain gold-bearing bands. At a little lower down the valley from Caplestone, abutting on the coal-measures, is the "Maori" or "Old man" bottom, or, at least, the gravels appear to be of the same age. Some men in the valley informed me that the range on the south side of Boatman's Creek would prove highly payable for working if a supply of water could be brought from the Waitahu River to command this ground. Some eighteen months ago the question of surveying a line of water-race from this river to command the whole of the terraces was brought before the Hon. the Minister of Mines when he last visited this locality; but no steps have yet been taken to form either a company or syndicate to undertake the work.

Passing over the range previously referred to, the watershed of Fryingpan Creek is reached. Some very fair deposits of auriferous drifts have been worked in the bed of this creek. At the lower end this creek-bed passed through a valley of a considerable width, in which the gold-bearing drifts have been traced and partially worked. The depth of the drift here became much greater, and there is a considerable quantity of water to contend with, which prevents the lower end of this valley from being worked. About four years ago a company was formed to construct a tail-race from the edge of the terrace near the Westport-Reefton Road to drain this ground; but after having constructed it for nearly 1,000ft. the company got into financial difficulties, and the ground and tail-race was sold to a private party, who considered that the level of this tail-race was much lower than what was required to drain the ground where the claim was taken up. The result was that the level was altered, and a new tail-race commenced; but after constructing it for some distance the tunnel broke in to the surface, which showed that the tail-race would be of no service, consequently the whole thing was abandoned. It is said there is a considerable area of ground that would pay fair wages for working if the original tail-race had been completed.

Soldier's Creek.

This is the vicinity where the alluvial drifts were first worked in the Inangahua district. Some of the claims in the bed of this creek contained rich deposits of auriferous wash-drift, and on the side of the range next to the Inangahua River sluicing-claims were opened up. Those were the days before Giant nozzles, or carrying on sluicing operations on a large scale, were introduced. On the West Coast two or three sluice-heads of water were considered a good supply to carry on hydraulic operations. There are still a few alluvial claims being worked now. Amongst the principal is Mr. A. Black's.

Devil's Creek.

On passing over the saddle from the head of Soldier's Creek the watershed of Devil's Creek is reached, and here a considerable amount of work has been done in the alluvial workings. The ground-sluicing operations carried on here some seventeen years ago were considered of such magnitude that a photograph of them finds a place on the front page of Lock's large book on "Gold and its Extraction." During my last visit to this district there were about thirty men employed in alluvial workings in Devil's and Soldier's Creeks.

It may be stated that all these alluvial workings are on line of the "Old man" or "Maori" bottom, and a great deal of the gold found here has been derived either from this class of material or from gravels of a similar age, of which there is little or no distinction.

GREY VALLEY.

Slab Hut Creek.

The upper gold-workings in the Grey Valley are situate in the watershed of Slab Hut Creek. The bed of the creek has been worked from about its junction with the Little Grey River to above the road-crossing of the new road from Devil's Creek to Merrijigs, a distance of about eight miles, and good returns of gold has been taken from some of the claims. There are still a few Europeans engaged in alluvial workings in Maori Gully, which is one of the tributaries of Slab Hut Creek, but in Main Creek the mining population are principally Chinese. However, some of the men working in Maori Gully were well satisfied with the returns they were getting.

Merrijigs.

The alluvial ground here is at a high elevation, and contains in some places a great depth of auriferous wash-drift. Several claims are opened out here; but the supply of water being entirely dependent on wet weather, there is consequently very little work done in any of them. The ground, however, contains a considerable quantity of gold, and, even with the very small supply of water there is, some of the men do very well. During my last visit here there were seventeen men engaged in the alluvial workings in this locality.