

*Mount Ida.*

There is still a large quantity of auriferous ground that would pay fair wages for working if a constant supply of water could be obtained, but this is so very irregular that the ground has to be rich to pay for the expenses of opening-out and contingencies in connection with bringing water on to it. There are a few small water-races brought in, but the great majority of the miners are wholly dependent on receiving a supply of water from the Mount Ida Water-race. In very wet seasons there is a tolerably steady supply for eight or nine months of the year, but in other seasons there is only three or four months' constant supply. This water-race is so constructed that every small fresh in any of the creeks it crosses washes away a portion of the race, and has again to be repaired before any water can be sent down. When it is taken into consideration that this water-race is seventy miles in length, and the ditch cut across all the shingle-beds of creeks, the low side being banked up, and that considerable leakage is always taking place amongst the shingle, it can easily be understood the difficulty there is in keeping up a constant supply. In mid-winter there is always two or three months that no workings can be carried on, owing to the hard frost at this altitude, as the water, if allowed to run in the open conduit in winter, would get completely frozen up. This, together with scanty supply in dry weather, and the numerous breaks in wet weather, shows that there cannot be in an ordinary season more than about six months' constant supply.

On my recent visit to this field many of the miners complained to me about the irregular supply, and stated that several would open out new ground if water was available, but the ground in the district being as a rule very poor, the miners have to be constantly employed in order to make wages. There is a large stretch of country that the water-race commands, having the same character of quartz-drift, or what is termed in the locality granite-wash, as that being worked about St. Bathans and Muddy Creek, in one place on the low side of the water-race, between Old Hut Creek and Pierce's Gorge, where some prospecting was done a number of years ago, and where it is stated gold was obtained; but there seems to be no inducement held out for any one to prospect the country in this locality. It is a place where free water could often be given if the water-race was kept in proper repair, and constructed in a different manner across the shingle-beds of creeks. The workings are all confined to within a radius of about one and a half or two miles from Naseby.

During these last four or five years there has been a considerable improvement in the method adopted for working the ground on this field. Several parties are now getting wrought-iron pipes to replace the antiquated canvas-hose; but there are still a good many yet who are content to break down the wash-drift from the bank with picks before allowing water on the material. This is done in many places where a considerable head of water could be got if iron-piping were used. There are some claims at the head of Home Gully which are being worked close up to the level of the race, and in this instance the ground has to be broken up before it can be sluiced away; but in general the water could be made to do the whole of the work at a far less cost than by manual labour. There is now about 9,000ft. of wrought-iron pipes used on the field, of from 7in. to 9in. diameter. This size of pipe on many of the fields where hydraulic-sluicing is carried on would be considered far too small to work the ground; and so they would here if a good supply of water could be obtained, but in general the quantity that each claimholder uses is about three Hogburn sluice-heads, which is equal to one and one-fifth Government heads, and therefore they are sufficiently large to carry all the water they use.

In *Hogburn* there are still a few parties working in what is called the Main Gully. The Extended Company, who have a water-race of their own from Deep Creek, which gives them a supply of about three and a-half Government sluice-heads, are working the ground by a hydraulic-elevator, the depth being from 8ft. to 10ft. They use about 1,000ft. of iron pipes, which are from 7in. to 9in. in diameter, and keep three men employed in the claim. M. Young and party of three men have also a claim in this gully; they have the water from the Mosquito Water-race, and use canvas-hose for hydraulicking. The depth of the ground is about 8ft., but there is very little fall, and consequently only a very limited quantity of material can be sluiced away. Messrs. Barrett and Pullen have also a claim in this gully, but have very little fall to work it; the ground is about 6ft. in depth, and they use only three Hogburn sluice-heads of water.

In *Roche's Gully* Messrs. Guffie and Inder have taken up a claim, and are working it with a hydraulic-elevator. They purchased the hydraulic plant belonging to a company which worked for years in the bed of the main gully, near the township, but had to go into liquidation. As Messrs. Guffie and Inder were shareholders in this company, and became responsible for some of the debts, they had to purchase the plant to save themselves. They have shifted it up into Roche's Gully, and commenced working directly on the upper side of the main street, using about three and three-fifths sluice-heads of water, and from the returns that this claim has been giving since sluicing operations have commenced, it is likely to pay the proprietors about £100 per month, clear of all expenses. There are 2,000ft. of wrought-iron pipes, 9in. in diameter, in connection with this plant, and two men are employed in the claim.

In *Enterprise Gully* there are about five parties of Europeans, and several Chinamen at work, each party using about three Hogburn heads of water, with the exception of A. Brown and another, who have leased the Surprise Water-race, and get, when water is available, about two Government sluice-heads, the quantity from this water-race being variable according to the supply in the Eweburn. If there be two sluice-heads in the Eweburn that quantity is supplied from the Mount Ida water-race; but as the supply gets less the quantity turned into this water-race is regulated accordingly. There is, however, a dam in connection with this water-race which always guarantees a fair supply being got. A. Brown has about 1,000ft. of pipes, 9in. in diameter, in connection with his claim, and Messrs. Bysord and Reed, who are in the same gully, use about 300ft. of 7in. wrought-iron pipes.