

TINKER'S, MATAKANUI, DRYBREAD.

At these places there has also been a good supply of water, and work has been kept up well; indeed, the full returns of the yields are not yet to hand. Some of the washings-up have been delayed to take full advantage of the water; and a very extensive slip in the hill at Tinker's has seriously interfered with one or two of the claims there. The granite wash known as the Deep Lead continues to show very good prospects, but the dead work necessary to manipulate the immense quantity of large stones accumulated on it prevents the actual returns being what they otherwise would be. The prospects are said to show an average of 1dwt. to the square yard, which, if the ground were easy to run-off, would give magnificent returns. The Undaunted Company has had a good steady season's work. Their washing-up at Christmas time, which was only a partial one, yielded about 700oz., and judging from present appearances it is anticipated that a yield of 1,500oz. will be secured ere winter sets in. This company continues to employ about twelve men. The Mountain Race Company continue operating on the granite wash, and appearances warrant the belief that they have several years' profitable work ahead of them. Their last washing produced about 560oz., out of which they were enabled to pay a dividend of £320, and in addition to make an outlay of over £500 on a new property. The Matakaniui Company have been compelled to remove from the very good part of their claim near the Undaunted Company's boundary (being blocked there by the tail-race of the latter company) to the lower part of their ground. This alteration compelled the company to wash up earlier than was intended. The return—350oz.—is therefore not a fair test of the value of the claim. Another washing-up will be made before the winter sets in. The company employs about nine men.

The Sugar-pot Company are working in the same ground as last year. The prospects are always good, but the ground is hard to work, on account of the large quantity of stones, and a somewhat limited fall. The last washing amounted to 400oz.—seven men's work for nearly two years—so that, notwithstanding the good prospects at per yard, the wages and expenses absorb the greater portion of the yield. It will be found necessary to resort to elevating here. Similar ground is known to extend to a depth of 250ft., the washdirt being in almost a vertical position. Simes and Morgan have been compelled, through a slip, to change from the ground they were working so profitably in, to some shallow ground at Abyssinian Flat. Their last washing gave a return of 425oz., an amount sufficient to cover all working-expenses and leave a fair margin of profit to the shareholders. Ewing and Macconochie obtained about 220oz. in January last, being the result of over a year's operations. This, unfortunately, hardly paid expenses, and they are now employed on some shallow ground on the Spur to the north of Vesey's Gully. They have put through about five acres in the space of eight weeks' working, the depth being only about 2ft. It is expected to turn out well. There are a number of small parties scattered about the various gullies and terraces doing fairly well; also a few in the neighbourhood of Devonshire.

OPHIR, IDA VALLEY, GERMAN HILL.

No change has taken place at these places. There are a few miners scattered about, but it is to be feared their earnings from mining are very small. A small Welman dredge was placed on the Manuherikia River, just below the Ophir Bridge, but it did not prove a success, and has, for the present, at any rate, been laid up. At German Hill matters have not improved. The supply of water, even with the copious rainfall which has been so beneficially felt elsewhere, has not been sufficient to improve mining at this spot. There are only about half a dozen men left, and their earnings are barely enough to give them a living. They seem to lack the energy and means to prospect at all.

KYEBURN.

The number of miners employed in this locality is about the same as last year, and they continue to operate principally on the deposits of the old river-beds at higher than the present levels. The nature of the work is somewhat difficult; a very large quantity of stones has to be removed by hand, rendering progress slow. These higher workings are showing signs of exhaustion; but there remain the present river-flats, which are of great extent, and known to be highly auriferous. They will have to be worked on the elevating principle, or other process. The granite wash is also here in large deposits, and the general opinion is that if it were fully prospected it would be found to be auriferous.

Some of the water-race holders are still suffering from the effects of the floods of 1892, which deposited incalculable masses of running drift or shingle in the creeks, rendering the races almost unworkable. Parker's party are busy on their new tail-race, which will, it is considered, give them some years' work of a profitable nature. Brown and party have worked away a considerable area on the mining reserve, and are now prospecting the deeper ground, where the indications are sufficiently encouraging for them to contemplate erecting an elevating plant, which they find will be quite necessary to work successfully.

On the whole the general results of the operations in this part of the district have been fairly remunerative for the past year, although nothing in the way of large yields has been reported to me.

HAMILTON'S, SOWBURN.

This portion of my district suffered acutely from the dry seasons in 1890, 1891, and 1892, and, although the past year has been so good with regard to the rainfall, this place has not recovered the effects of the previous drought, which caused almost an entire cessation of work, and compelled not a few of the miners to seek other occupations. It is gratifying to add, however, that those who have remained have, according to my information, done fairly well; and there is no doubt that a continuance of the water-supply will attract some of the men back to the locality, where there is plenty of ground which in good seasons will pay good wages. It is said that Foster and party have had a successful season at the Three-mile, and that Griffiths is also doing very well.