

the same into the truck underneath; and one man is required on the top to attend to the winding and emptying the trucks into the stone heap. It would, however, be too slow a process where there was a large supply of water and many stones in the ground.

Shamrock Company.—This company is working the ground by hydraulic elevators. There is a water-race constructed from the Totara River and brought to the claim, where the head of water is about 300ft., and the elevating-pipe has a vertical height of about 58ft. At the time of my recent visit to this claim the working was being carried on along the lead, which is about three chains in width. The whole of the ground has been previously driven out, and the timber, in many instances, is standing the same as when it was put in nearly twenty years ago. Mr. Archibald Kennedy, who was for many years assistant to the manager of the Waimea-Kumara Water-race, is now the manager of this company, and, judging from the manner he is conducting the operations, this ought to be a venture which will return a fair interest to the shareholders for the capital they have invested.

During my visit to this place there were ninety-six men employed, either as owners or wages-men, in the mining claims; this includes all the men engaged in the workings between the Buller and Totara Rivers, but exclusive of the men working at Bradshaw's Terrace.

Croninville.

There was a considerable number of men employed in claims in this locality a few years ago, and the returns from some of them were of a highly-payable character; but the ground is getting poorer, and requires a good supply of water and constant working to make it give returns which pay small wages. During the last year there were sixteen men employed in the claims in this locality.

Charleston.

The township at this place is now of very small dimensions to what it was in the early days, and the number of miners on the field shows a corresponding falling-off. There seems, however, to have been about the same number of miners in the district last year as there was for the previous one. A number of men have now small crushing-batteries for crushing the cement. They find that this method of dealing with the cemented sand pays them better than attempting to sluice it and break it up by a series of traps in a tail-race. The County Council has completed the extension of the Argyle Race to the Four-mile Creek, and ought now to have a good supply to meet all the demands there are for water to work the claims. From information gathered from the people residing here the returns from the sales of water does little more than meet the expense of maintenance, but it is expected in the future, now that a good supply of water can be relied on, that the revenue will be sufficient to meet the payment of interest on the loan the local body raised to complete this work.

The most prosperous place to all appearances in this locality is where the Shetlanders are situate, on the ocean-beach, about three-quarters of a mile from Charleston. Here sea-beach combing is carried on for six hours a day—that is, three hours after high water and about three hours after low water—all having claims abutting on to one another, with a certain frontage to the ocean. The same beach has been steadily worked—that is, when not covered with a large quantity of soft loose sand—for the last eighteen years, and still many of these claims give very good returns for working. As much as £350 was paid not long ago for some of these beach claims. The earnings of these men vary considerably; during some years very little loose sand is found on the beach, and then nothing but the compact black-sand layer is left when the tide recedes.

Each man has the whole of his washing appliances on wheels so that it can be taken down and up the ocean-beach as the tide rises or recedes. In former years these appliances consisted of a wide box with hopper at the head. The box was covered with either baize, plush, or blanketing. All these are, however, now discarded, and a table or box with hopper at the upper end is now made on a frame, to which an axle is attached with two wheels. There being short handles projecting at the lower end of the box, and the axle and wheels being attached underneath the head of the same, the whole is taken up in wheelbarrow fashion after every tide and placed beyond the reach of the waves. The tables are about 9ft. in length, and covered with copper-plate coated with quicksilver. The hopper at the head of the box has a number of small apertures for distributing the water and sand over the box, the latter being about 2ft. 6in. in width. A flume is constructed above high-water mark along the beach for over a mile in length, and each party has a short branch from this flume, and from the end of same each party has a long coil of canvas hose coated with tar to lead the water from the branch flume to the hopper where the sand is shovelled in. The hose is fixed so as to deliver the necessary quantity of water required to carry the sand over the copper-plated table. One of these machines treats as much sand as ever one man can shovel in. They take up the surface of the beach for above 9in. in depth, and shovel it into the hopper as fast as they can. No attention is required beyond occasionally lifting any quicksilver out of the ripples at the end of each copper-plate, and keeping the plates properly coated with quicksilver. These are certainly the best appliances that have come under my observation for working the sand on the ocean-beaches.

Cement Workings.

The cement workings are confined to Charleston and Addison's Flats. This is not hard cement in the proper sense of the term, but merely sand held firmly together by the oxidation of the iron and moisture it contains. Some of the sand is hard to break down with a pick, but when once down it is easily broken up. It occurs in bands, the same as the layers of black sand on the beaches; but some of these bands are a considerable thickness, and show that in former times the ancient sea-beaches contained thick layers of black sand similar to that now operated on by the beach-combers. The gold is distributed through this cemented sand, which requires to be pulverised in order to