



BY ERNEST E. WILLIAMS.
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WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

LAST, but not least, among the provinces of the Australian Continent comes Western Australia. It was only born as a self-governing Colony at the beginning of 1890; but how huge an infant! It spreads over one-third of the entire continent—over 624,588,800 acres; it equals, that is, the total areas of Austro-Hungary, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Greece, Switzerland, Servia, and Montenegro combined.

In 1890 its population was under 40,000; at the end of 1895 it was 101,235; to-day it must closely approximate 200,000; for in recent months immigrants



have been pouring in at the rate of about 1,000 a week—mostly, however, from other Australian Colonies. But if this 200,000 were multiplied one hundred-fold, so vast a land would still cry aloud for men to come and take possession of her. Western Australia, when it has been settled, will be an empire in itself. Unhappily, that settlement has been grievously delayed. It was right back in 1616 that Dick Hartog, the first European to reach Western Australia, beached his vessel on the island off the coast which

now bears his name. But it was not until the early years of the present century that colonisation was attempted on the Swan river, and those early settlements had a chequered and not very prosperous existence. All sorts of mistakes were made, all sorts of troubles worried the pioneers, and in the Fifties farms were deserted for the Victorian gold fields. To-day Victorian farms are sometimes deserted for the Westralian gold fields.

Just now Western Australia is inevitably associated in all our minds with the production of gold. "Westralia," as Throgmorton Street likes to call it, just means gold and nothing else, and, apart from speculation in gold mining shares, Western Australia has no existence in the minds of ninety-nine out of a hundred Britons. However much this is to be deprecated—and it is to be deprecated very strongly—it is undeniable that gold, with all its evils, is making Western Australia at present. Indeed, there would be no self-governing Colony of the name yet had not the huge discoveries of gold in the second lustrum of the Eighties induced rapid immigration, suddenly expanded commerce, the construction of railways, and the other incidents of vigorous colonisation which make almost imperative the granting of a constitution. Gold is supposed to have been discovered so long ago as 1688, but no attempt was made to work it. Just two centuries afterwards, in 1888, rich alluvial gold was again discovered on the same spot; and now gold is far and away the most important article in the Colony's exports. The trade in the metal began in 1886; the export was valued that

year at £1,147. In 1896 its value was £1,068,808. When the returns for 1897 are completed, it is probable that the total value will considerably exceed two millions; and, judging by the extent of the auriferous area, and the fresh indications of wealth which are almost every day appearing therein, there is every reason to believe that Western Australia is only at the beginning of its career as a producer of gold. So great is the Western Australian Government's faith in the Colony's future as a gold producer that it has constructed a mint, and is aiding the erection of smelting works at Fremantle, to avoid the present necessity of taking refractory ores to Adelaide and elsewhere. It proposes to supply Nature's deficiencies by constructing a canal (at an estimated cost of two and a half millions) to the Coolgardie gold fields, and to erect public quartz-crushers in certain isolated localities for the use and encouragement of small producers.

But now a word of warning. Gold is good, but, as Sir John Forrest, the Premier, told Mr. Faithfull Begg, who, with other Westralian capitalists, waited on the Premier in London last summer, you cannot eat gold. Mr. Begg and his friends seemed to be under the impression that gold is the one thing necessary for the country's health, and they demanded that every other industry should be sacrificed to it. Such a demand implied short-sighted and most mischievous selfishness. Sir John Forrest, though he has made many concessions in the matter of abandoning import duties on certain articles in order to favour gold mining—I think too many—resolutely refused altogether to sacrifice the Queen of Industries to the Courtesan of Industries. Unhappily, the Westralian Legislature has since passed a resolution favouring Mr. Begg's all-for-gold fiscal theory, and agriculture, I suppose, will soon cease to be fostered into vigorous life by the aid of a Customs tariff. Yet the fostering of agriculture is a far more statesman-like and necessary work than is Government aid to gold mining. Of the 624½ million acres in Western Australia, only about six million acres are alienated, and of those not more than a third are under cultivation. This means that Western Australia, which might easily become a big exporting country, does not at present grow sufficient cereals to feed its own population. Yet the grain is good, and the wheat lands compare favourably with those of other Australian Colonies and of wheat-growing countries throughout

the world. The average return per acre of Westralian wheat fields for the decade 1885 to 1894 was twelve bushels, and even in the bad year, 1895, 8·09 bushels to the acre were produced, which is twice the amount raised from Victorian and Queensland wheat acres. Moreover, production is cheapened to the Westralian farmer. The Government gives its land away. You can have for the asking 160 acres of land in districts specially selected by the Government for agricultural settlement, and all the Government wants of you in return is that you will be good enough to live on the land for a few years and do some work upon it. Further to help the newly-settled farmer, the Government has established a State Agricultural Bank, which lends money to farmers who lack the capital necessary for improving their land. These homestead areas are all within easy reach of a railway, and they are all in districts which have an average rainfall sufficient for raising crops.

At present the pastoral industry takes precedence of the agricultural. Nearly 90,000,000 acres are leased for pastoral purposes; the Colony feeds over two and a quarter million sheep, and wool holds second place to gold in the list of Westralian exports. The industry is still going ahead. In 1892 this country received less than six and a half million pounds of wool from West Australia; in 1896 the gross weight exceeded eleven and a half million pounds. Other live stock also show substantial increases during the past decade.

Western Australia, like the rest of the Continent, holds great potentialities as a fruit-growing country, and could produce—and produce well—fruits of tropical, sub-tropical, and temperate zones. Up to the present time these potentialities have been but little exercised, and the Colony imports to the value of some £20,000 a year fruit which might well be grown in the Colony. It is to be hoped that West Australia's remissness in this regard will soon be remedied; at the least, the Colony should determine to go seriously into the vineyard business. The West Australian Year Book calculates that, at a low estimate, there are 5,000 square miles in the Colony suited to vine-growing; there are barely three square miles under cultivation. The average product of wine from existing vineyards was, in 1894, 136 gallons to the acre. Suppose that the whole area available were put under cultivation. On this computation, the Colony's total produce of wine would be 435,200,000

gallons—but little short of the production in Italy; and, doubtless, with the progress of the industry, the resulting produce would be greater. At present there is plenty of room for improvement. The Westralian vineyards have excellent vine-cuttings imported from South Australia, but greater skill is necessary in the work of manuring the vineyards and manufacturing the wine.

To the average Briton who ever thinks of Western Australia at all, or thinks of it as other than a conglomeration of gold mines, the country figures in his vision mostly as a great arid desert. At any rate, he would probably be surprised to learn that in the extra-tropical regions alone there are forests covering an area as large as Great Britain. The trees are varied, but Western Australia takes her main stand as a timber-producing country on jarrah and karri. Both these woods are amongst the finest hardwoods in existence; they are of great density and durability; they resist the white ant and the *teredo navalis*, the insect which is so destructive to wooden piles placed in the sea. The jarrah is one of the least inflammable of woods; and there are few hardwood purposes, from agriculture to furniture, to which either the jarrah or the karri is not suited. In England these woods are best known for their adaptability to street paving, and for this purpose they are being increasingly used in London and in provincial towns. Piccadilly and Regent Street have already been paved with jarrah. The Westralian Government expert estimates that the jarrah and karri forests cover 47,000,000 acres, and that their value is not less than 124 millions sterling. Sir John Forrest believes this calculation to be too



"KING KARRI"—242 × 40 FEET.

low, but such a gigantic figure might well satisfy even a Colonial Premier. It would cover the Colony's debt eleven times over; and such an asset is worth bearing in mind by the critics in this country who profess alarm at the big public debts which West Australia, in common with the other Australasian Colonies, has cheerfully encountered. The total output from the Westralian saw mills in 1896 was worth over £400,000.

Just a word as to the other mineral resources of Western Australia. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the Colony is a mass of iron. To such an extent does it

prevail that the magnetic compass cannot be worked with accuracy, and the Government geologist is probably not far beyond the mark when he affirms that his Colony contains enough iron to supply the world. At present these iron deposits are awaiting the enterprise of the capitalist and the arm of the labourer. Lead, tin and copper also exist in abundance; tin and copper are being worked, but the getting of lead has temporarily died down, pending better prices and the application of more capital. Prospecting

for coal has not been so successful as in the neighbouring Colonies, but the Government is sufficiently sanguine respecting the merits of the Colony's coalfields to lay down a railway thither from the seaport of Bunbury.

Western Australia's recent progress has been at a rate which far outstrips that of even the most flourishing among the other provinces of the Empire. Western Australia's public debt is only £31 per head of the inhabitants—less than two years' revenue! South Australia and Queensland are solvent and stable, yet their debts are equal to nine times their annual revenues.

TASMANIA.

Tasmania is to Australia what the Isle of Wight and the Channel Islands are to Britain. The Colony has been called by its lovers the "Sanitarium of the South" and the "Garden of Australia." It deserves both appellations. The climate is cooler than on the neighbouring continent, yet it stops short of cold; it is freshened by the sea breezes which surround it, and moistened by a fairly plentiful rainfall, yet it is not humid, and is so invigorating, pure, and generally healthful, that nine children out of every ten born survive the first year of life, and young persons arriving in the Colony with the seeds of phthisis in them are said to lose them entirely in a few years. As to the justification of the second title—that of the "Garden of Australia"—let the Tasmanian apples on our dinner tables bear witness.

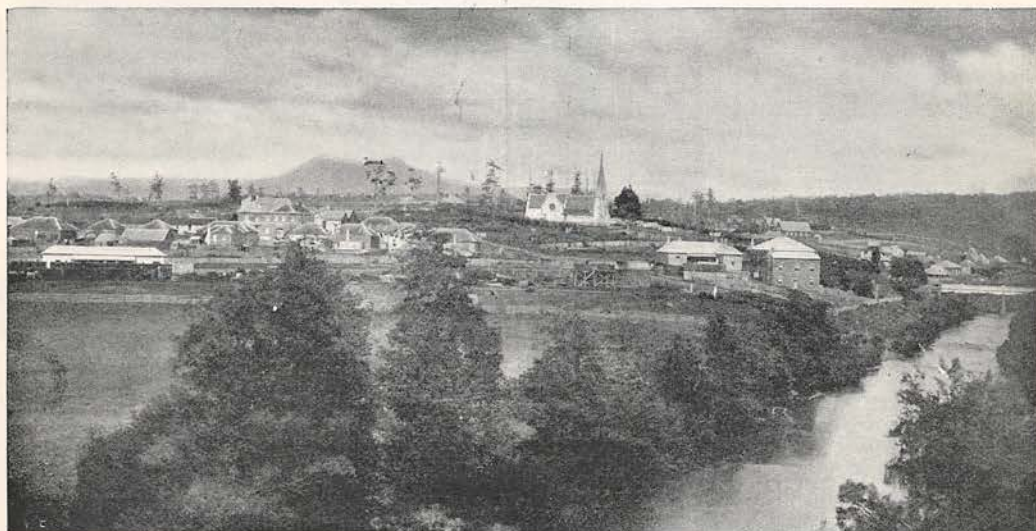
Tasmania was discovered by a Dutchman—Tasman—in 1642. He had been sent out to explore the unknown South by Van Diemen, the Governor-General of Batavia. So it came that the island was first called

seemed in no hurry to follow the advantages of their discovery. One hundred and thirty years later Frenchmen went there, and a few years after there came a representative of the future owners in the person of Captain Cook. Colonisation began in 1803 by the founding of a British penal settlement.

Tasmania has never felt the big boom; its progress has been very gradual, the rate of increase since 1861 having been 1.63 per cent. annually, considerably less than that of the other Australasian Colonies. Indeed, of late years Tasmania, despite its many attractions, seems to have been overlooked by the emigrant in search of a new home. The population at the beginning of 1897 was 166,111 souls, of whom three-fourths

were born in the Colony; the two chief towns, Hobart and Launceston, hold thirty thousand and twenty thousand inhabitants respectively.

It is meet that Tasmania should be Australia's garden, for it cannot, like its sisters, boast of great territories. Its total area, including islands and lakes, is only 16,778,600 acres—a little less than the area of Scotland. Yet, restricted as is its area,



From a photo by]

DELORAINE, TASMANIA.

[Anson, Hobart.

Van Diemen's Land, and afterwards by the name of the actual navigator who first sighted its shores. But the Dutchmen

it has not yet been fully settled, only 4,766,644 acres having been alienated from the Crown when the latest tables were com-

puted. There are considerable tracts, therefore, awaiting the axe and the plough, though not so many as the disparity between the amount of alienated land and the total area would indicate, for Tasmania is a mountainous country, and contains over a hundred mountains varying in height between one thousand and six thousand feet. Nearly all the best pastoral land is already sold. Many acres of agricultural land remain in the hands of the

the last settlement, and with a moderate outlay of capital make for himself a thriving agricultural home. On the other hand, the intending immigrant who does not wish to go through the first rough years which reclamation of the land from Nature implies, may easily find good developed farms in the market.

Agricultural land in Tasmania differs from that of many of the larger Colonies in



From a photo by]

[Beattie, Hobart.

BALLAST PIT AT SEVEN MILES NORTH-EAST OF DUNDAS TRAM.

Crown, but they are all more or less heavily timbered and at present difficult of access, though the Government is doing its best by building roads, bridges, and railways to extend transport facilities over the island. This unreclaimed bushland may be bought from the Government at £1 an acre in cash, or 26s. 8d. per acre if paid in fourteen annual instalments. So there is still room for the hardy pioneer to take up his station behind

that there are no large areas of a uniform class. The Official Handbook of the Colony says that it would be difficult to find a farm of even two hundred acres which does not contain two or three different soils. This variety offers to the farmer plenty of scope for the cultivation of different crops; and mixed culture, though it has certain drawbacks, has the compensating advantage of giving varied interests to the farmer, and

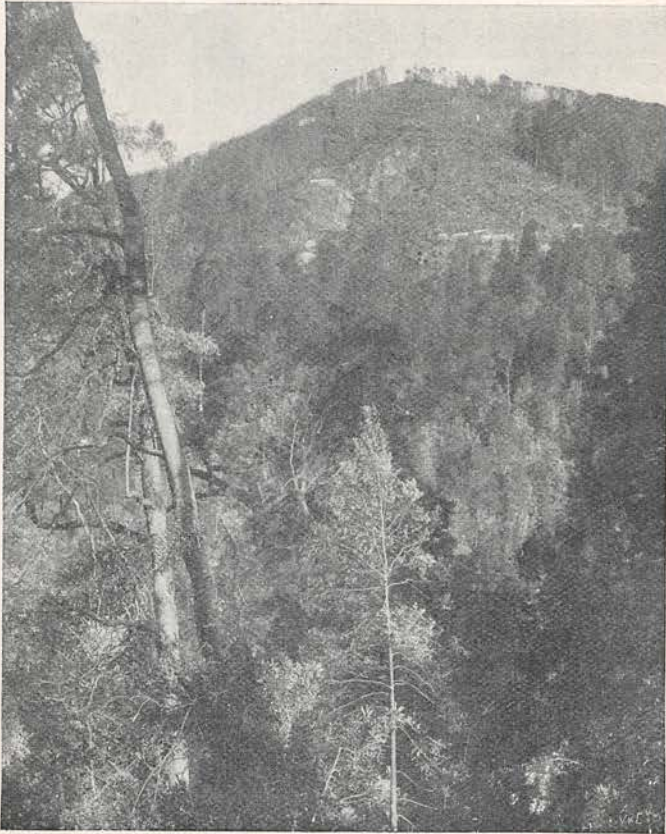
mitigating the evil effects of the lean years in particular crops. The land in arable cultivation is roughly about a quarter of a million acres, and that laid down to permanent artificial grasses is nearly the same. Judging from the return of cereal products, Tasmania compares very well with her sisters. The 1895-96 figures show that her 64,652 acres of wheat lands produced 1,164,855 bushels, which works out to an average of 18.01 bushels to the acre. She is equally fortunate in her root crops. For example, the 19,247 acres of potatoes yielded 81,423 tons—an average of 4.23 tons to the acre—which is considerably better than any other of the Colonies in the group (save New Zealand) can show. Hops also flourish luxuriantly, and it bodes well for the Colony's agricultural future that the hop gardens are rapidly taking an important part in Tasmania's rural economy.

But, excellent as are the results of Tasmania's ordinary farming operations, it is as a producer of temperate zone fruits that she excels. Here in Britain she is best known by the apples. The quantity of raw apples we received in 1896 from Tasmania reached a total of 152,469 bushels, valued at £77,919. It is not necessary to say more in praise of their quality than to remind you how often comparisons are made between British and Tasmanian apples to the disadvantage of the British. But Tasmanians should not be

satisfied with this £78,000 worth of yearly export. In the same year Britain received from the United States raw apples to the value of £672,243. Tasmania should carve a very big slice out of that supply. Nor should she confine herself to the apple trade. Wondrous tales are told of her giant pear trees. There is a tree at Launceston which is eighty-six feet high, and has produced over fifty bushels of fruit in one season. The total value of fruit, jam, and jam pulp

exported from the Colony in 1895 was £151,380.

Tasmania is rich in other rural resources. The Colony holds one and a half million sheep, and the export of wool to England in 1896 reached a total of 5,639,920 lbs. A glance at the accompanying illustration is sufficient to indicate that Tasmania has no mean wealth of timber, and those trees which cover the hillsides are good hardwoods of commercial value. The



From a photo by]

THE CURTAIN-DAVIS MINE, TASMANIA.

[Beattie, Hobart.

saw-milling business shows signs of development, and the industry should certainly be a success, seeing how near the forests are to shipping ports, enabling the timber to be sold at low prices.

Tasmania, moreover, is a country of mines. Indeed, it is claimed that in proportion to her area she is the richest in mineral wealth of all the Australian Colonies. Already the mines employ between four and five thousand hands. Silver lead ore has at present the largest output, the extraction in 1896

amounting to 21,167 tons, worth £229,662, and, as those well known properties the Mount Bischoff and the Mount Lyell mines testify, tin and copper also exist in large quantities. The copper mines, however, await the construction of transport facilities for their development; but the tin mines have made such progress that they now stand in the front rank of Tasmania's mineral wealth. The output in 1896 was valued at £285,720.

And the inevitable gold is also found. The output in 1896 was worth £234,697. Tasmania as a mining country looks like doing big things in the near future.

NEW ZEALAND.

The Fortunate Isles! 'Tis a ravishing title which Mr. Reeves has given to the Colony he so ably represents in London; and

though, naturally, the head of an emigration office would be inclined to regard his Colony through rose-hued spectacles, one cannot deny that New Zealand has some right to its alluring pseudonym. The thrifty and industrious peasant, driven by economic stress from his own land to find in New Zealand a comfortable home and independence, would be little disposed to deny the claim; the sportsman, who regards hungrily the Scottish deer forests of his rich neighbour, and can roam freely through the magnificent highlands of New Zealand, where

big deer are plentiful, would raise small objection; the socialistic reformer, who sees the Earthly Paradise in the extension of State functions, would acclaim the title. The new woman must look longingly on the land where divorce laws are equal and the parliamentary candidate sues for woman's hand.



DRESSING SHEDS AT MOUNT BISCHOFF TIN MINE, TASMANIA.

New Zealand, like Tasmania, was discovered by Tasman in 1642, but he made little exploitation of his find—he did not trouble even to land. For 127 years afterwards the Maoris were left in undisputed possession. Then came Captain Cook, but settlement was still delayed. Not until 1825 was colonisation attempted, and then local prejudice—in the persons of the Maoris—caused the attempt to fail. Settlement really began with the founding of Wellington on the 22nd of January, 1840. A week afterwards the Queen's sovereignty was proclaimed, and the Colony was a dependency of New South Wales until 1841. Fifteen years afterwards it received responsible Government. The total area of the Colony is 104,471 square miles, including 438 miles of outlying groups of islands which are practically useless for settlement. The Colony, therefore, is in size about one-seventh less than the United Kingdom. On the 12th of April, 1896, it had a population of 703,360, besides about 40,000 Maoris.

New Zealand is especially interesting to political, social, and economic students, in that this Colony has more boldly adopted the modern socialistic idea than any other State in the civilised world. So far the experiment seems to have been successful. It is conspicuous in the new system of land tenure, which finds its Charter in the Land Act of 1892. The New Zealand Government believes in keeping the ownership of the land in the hands of the State. It is not dogmatic on the point, and will sell land outright, but it prefers a system of perpetual leases, under which the tenant pays an annual rent of four per cent. on the value. The tenant is secured in his holding, and is, for all practical purposes, an owner, except that the land tax system precludes him from reaping the reward of unearned increment. This goes to the State, but the tenant has full compensation for any improvements he may make in the land, and is not called upon to pay more in taxation or rent by reason of his own industry and skill. The State also advances money to settlers at five per cent. interest, and only demands repayment of the principal in annual instalments of one per cent. The total area alienated up to the commencement of April, 1896, was 21,365,182 acres. Including 1,210,340 acres for pastoral runs, the area still open for selection is 2,879,945 acres. In addition to this, and to lands belonging to the Maoris, there remain a total of 16,617,175 acres, of which about a quarter

consist of barren mountain tops, lakes, etc. In extent of unsettled country, New Zealand cannot compare with the other Australasian Colonies, yet there is still room for many more settlers than the land at present holds.

New Zealand's chief industries are the allied productions of wool and frozen mutton. In 1895 the Colony's sheep runs mustered a total of 19,826,604 head, rather more than Queensland's total, and it is confidently predicted that the Colony has not yet half reached her sheep-carrying capacity. Of wool the total annual produce in 1895 was 132,632,901 lbs., an increase of 45·17 per cent. over the clip ten years previously. It is a big amount, but it must not be assumed that the figures spell over-production, or even the limit of production, for the world's wool clip is over two and a half billion pounds weight annually; and, remembering the excellent quality of New Zealand wool and the climatic and other favourable conditions under which it is produced, one cannot deny the existence of room for considerable further expansion in the New Zealand wool trade. The room for expansion is further evidenced when we recollect the great collateral industry which enables New Zealand to make profitable use of her shorn sheep. New Zealand went into the frozen mutton trade in 1882, and the trade has advanced with gigantic strides. In 1896 she sent to us 1,079,109 hundredweights of frozen mutton. She has created the trade, and she has practically a monopoly of it; the efforts of the River Plate and other competitors to stay her progress have so far been practically futile. Nor does New Zealand hold the trade by price cutting to the margin of production cost. The New Zealand sheep farmer who delivers carcasses at his shipping port (and in these narrow islands no one is very far from a shipping port), and receives twopence a pound therefor, makes a handsome profit on the transaction.

The increase in cattle during the last decade has been less marked. Still, there has been a substantial increase during the past five years, and the Colony now carries 1,018,776 head. It should carry more, for New Zealand cattle are free from the diseases which afflict cattle in other countries. Indeed, there is said to be only one other country—Iceland—which is similarly immune; and the Arctic rigour of the Icelandic winter makes ridiculous a comparison between the relative profitableness of stock raising in Iceland and in New Zealand.

Mention of cattle suggests consideration of New Zealand's dairying capacities. As in Victoria, so in New Zealand, it seems likely that the dairy will in the future form the staple industry. New Zealand has entered on the struggle for the world's butter and cheese market. Any success she has hitherto gained is attributable to the introduction and growth of the factory system; and, naturally, in a Colony which appreciates acutely the advantages of democratic association for economic purposes, the co-operative method is entering largely into the dairy factory system. Naturally also, the Government has extended its aid to the industry by appointing a dairy expert and instructors, who visit factories to give lectures and other assistance. So far, it must be confessed, New Zealand butter is more a matter of promise than performance. The factory butter seems to be in the right way; but the home-made article, of which there is still a good deal produced, is not as a rule of the quality necessary for winning a world market. New Zealanders will doubtless improve in this regard, for everything is in their favour. They have a humid climate and abundance of water; their sown grass is already ten times greater than all the rest of Australasia's, and these grasses are said to be much more prolific. They have easy access to shipping ports, and they, of all people, should well understand the working of the freezing chamber.

Grain at present seems under a slight cloud, but surely a passing cloud, for New Zealand wheat lands are not easily beaten. Hitherto there has been a disposition, common to new countries, to disregard the laws of rotation, and to work the land with one crop year after year for all it is worth. But the New Zealanders are too shrewd a race to pursue this wasteful policy for long. Their land will grow all the cereals and all the root crops in profusion; while, as for manures, no land in the world should be better off. The offal of those millions of slaughtered sheep afford an unrivalled profusion of cheap raw material to the artificial manure manufacturer. Just now oats form the chief cereal export.

The total value of all agricultural produce raised in New Zealand in 1896 was £5,112,351, about half of this being credited to grain and pulse.

But New Zealand is also going to be a fruit country. It has not done much so far; but, with its fertile soil and its fine and varied climate, it is capable of producing not only all sorts of British fruits (Auckland's

orchards grow excellent apples in abundance, and are worth £40 or £50 per acre in favourable seasons), but those fruits, such as oranges, lemons, olives, and grapes, which need a warmer climate than England's. Cider manufacture is already making good progress, whilst the cultivation of olives and the manufacture of olive oil in the North Island seems likely to become an important industry.

New Zealand cannot compare with the Australian Continent as a timber country; yet it possesses timber resources of no mean value. The kauri tree is its speciality. The value of the output of sawn timber in 1895 was £898,807, which places timber fourth on the list of New Zealand industries. The saw mills alone employ over 4,000 hands. Of not less importance than the kauri tree is the kauri gum, which is so largely used for the manufacture of oil varnish and for glazing calico. (It has also a surreptitious use in the matter of "amber" pipe stems.) Kauri gum is fourth on the list of exports, no less than 7,425 tons (at £56 8s. a ton) having been sent away in 1895. Kauri gum digging is not, perhaps, the most profitable of mining industries, but it affords a fair living to the workman who prefers a vagrant, independent life to settled work or the chance of a fortune; and it has proved of great service to the unemployed in times of commercial depression.

I have left gold to the last paragraph, not because the industry is unimportant—for gold is third on the list of New Zealand's exports, and the industry has recently received a fillip—but because other industries stand out more prominently in a view of New Zealand's industrial future; 293,491 ozs. of gold were produced in 1895, and their value was £1,162,164. Though the palmy days of New Zealand's gold mining was the decade following the rush to Gabriel's Gully in 1861, there is good hope that with the better methods of mining and treatment of the ores recently introduced, the future of New Zealand gold will for many years to come be little less prosperous than has been the past.

The value of the coal raised in New Zealand in 1895 was £410,762, but this comparatively small production is no criterion of the Colony's coal resources. These have been roughly estimated at 444,000,000 tons, and the quality of that raised up to the present has stood severe tests of excellence. The industry awaits harbour improvements for its development.