

News of the Week.

FRIDAY.

WE (*Cromwell Argus*) reported some time ago that two or three parties who were working on the Criffell Hill, near the head of the Luggate, were doing very well. Others have since taken up claims in that locality. In all there are at present five or six parties working, and it has coaxed out during the last few days that a good deal of gold has been getting quietly—in fact from what we hear some of the claims must be rich. Several men started yesterday to prospect, and we have no doubt that more will be heard of this new field during the next week or two. The deposit of gold at this place appears to be one of those things that puzzles both the practical miner and the geologist. The diggings are on the crown of the ridge between the Luggate Creek and the Cardrona River, at an elevation of about 1,500ft above the Clutha. The gold is deposited on ledges, and the washdirt is loam, with a small quantity of gravel. The question arises how was the gold deposited at this elevation? No quartz veins have been found from which it could be derived, and the great height above the level of the valley forbids the idea of a deposit from any lake formation. Being on the very top of the range, water is extremely scarce. The first party that found gold has been engaged for twelve months in bringing in a race from the head of the Luggate, but being so high up very little water will be obtained when the race is brought in, except during the melting of the snow. All the parties have been paddocked by hand labour. Two or three sledges the wash-dirt some distance to a swamp, where a little water oozes out, and by saving the water in a dam, obtain enough to wash the dirt through a box. The other two parties paddock out the dirt and stack it for washing in spring by the melting of the snow. The gold is nearly the poorest yet found in the district, being worth only £3 9s per oz. One person who is dissatisfied with the price given by the bank here, intends to send his gold to the Melbourne Mint, thinking to get a better return.

The Southland Land Board were recently compelled to refuse applications by deferred-payment selectors to complete their purchases, owing to the receipt of the circular from the Lands Department to the effect that the Act of 1884 was retrospective so far as the clause relating to six years' residence is concerned. The Board took the opinion of Judge Williams, and this was read yesterday. He stated that the Act was not retrospective, and that he failed to see how any doubt could ever have arisen on the point. The Board afterwards granted the various applications.

The Kingite Natives at Whatiwhathoe have been holding a series of religious meetings. The desirableness of abandoning the Hauhau superstition has been generally affirmed, but what Christian denominational form of religion shall take its place seems not to be so easy of determination. All are agreed on one point, and that is that the form of religion fixed upon shall embody in it the Blue Ribbon principle as one of its chief characteristics.

A Maori named Kiri was committed yesterday to the New Plymouth Lunatic Asylum. He is a Parihaka Native, and his hallucination was of such a nature as to make Te Whiti jealous. He declared that he was appointed by God to rule the Natives, and that he had power to kill all wicked people—both Europeans and Maoris. Te Whiti did not like this attempted usurpation of his authority, and was the means of having Kiri sent to the Asylum.

The manager (Mr. Anketell) and accountant (Mr. Burrup) of the Union Bank at Roebourne, Western Australia, have been tomahawked and killed on the bank premises. The keys of the safe were stolen, but no money was abstracted. At present there is no clue to the murderers.

The Commission appointed to adjudicate upon the claims of German subjects in Fiji will meet in London. Dr. Kraull, German Consul at Sydney, will represent Germany on the Commission. The disclosures relative to these claims have caused some sensation at Berlin.

Mr. J. F. Garrick (Agent-general for Queensland) and Mr. Murray-Smith (Agent-general for Victoria) are urging that Germany should be requested to surrender her recent annexations in New Guinea.

Intelligence has been received that a severe engagement has been fought near Gakdul between the British troops under Sir Herbert Stewart and a body of the rebels numbering 10,000. Heavy fighting proceeded for some time, but Colonel Stewart finally gained a brilliant victory, and inflicted a heavy loss on the enemy, fully 800 of whom were left dead on the field. The British casualties are set down at nine officers and 65 rank and file killed, nine officers and 85 men wounded. After the battle the enemy retired, and Colonel Stewart will advance forthwith to Metemneh, from which position it is hoped communication will be opened with Khartoum.

SATURDAY.

The murder of Mr. Anketell, manager, and Mr. Burrup, accountant of the Union Bank of Australia, at Roebourne, Western Australia, was committed on the 12th inst. Both victims were asleep at the time they were killed. The cause of the crime is as yet completely a mystery, but tracks which have been discovered in the vicinity are being followed up.

Mr. Farnell, speaking at Cork, urged the labourers and farmers to pay no rent, and also advocated the protection of Irish industries.

It is rumoured that the Conference respecting the Pacific will be held in London, and that it will lead to mutual intercourse between Germany and England respecting these islands.

The severe weather experienced in the north of Italy has caused a heavy avalanche at Piedmont, and in Savoy several villages have been completely destroyed.

Herr Kruger recently delivered a speech to the Goshenite Boers, in which he stated that the Transvaal Government were determined to pursue severe measures to repress disorder in Bechnanaland. In reply the Goshenite leaders protested that they were anxious to live at peace with the Natives.

The Committee of the German Reichstag have recommended the subsidising of an African-Australasian line of steamer.

Particulars of the engagement between the rebels and the British troops under Colonel Sir Herbert Stewart near Gakdul show that when distant a quarter of a mile from the English lines the Arabs charged in splendid line with their banners waving. Amongst those killed was the Emir of El Metemneh. The Emir of Berber received a spear thrust. Several of the men under Colonel Burnaby, and great many camels were speared by the Arabs. The Arabs, having formed a square, were charged by the marines, who killed every Arab composing the square. Great tactical skill and bravery were shown by the Arabs. The loss of the English included six officers and 46 men killed. A Gatling gun was disabled. The sailors, in their charge on the square, lost two officers. The country in which the engagement took place was very rocky and rugged. The rebels under the Mahdi have captured Amderman. Later information from Gakdul states that the English were enticed into a difficult position, when the Arabs charged the front line, but were repulsed. They then furiously attacked the left rear. At the onset the "heavies" broke, but quickly rallied. The guards and light infantry then opened up a murderous fire on the enemy. It is estimated that the Arab loss was 1200 killed and wounded. Colonel Sir Herbert Stewart's horse was killed under him. The enemy have retired to El Metemneh. The British lost nine officers killed, including Colonel Burnaby, and nine wounded, including Captain Viscount St. Vincent and the Earl of Airlie; also 65 men killed. 85 were wounded.

Some amusing incidents (says the *Auckland Herald*) occurred at the fire on Saturday night. As Mr. Holdship, the managing director of the Auckland Timber Company, was passing up and down the gangway near their factory, in the vicinity of the bucket gang, keeping an eye on the operations, a stranger, who was working like a beaver, but did not know Mr. Holdship, accosted him with, "Confound it man, take a bucket and put your hands to. Don't you see the mill is likely to catch fire?" The "controlling nozzle," which Superintendent Hughes used for the first time on Saturday night, is a combination of branches and nozzles, and regulates the pressure and volume of water thrown to any extent required. He had it made at Branston and Foster's, for mill work especially. The full force of a jet of water from it would knock a man down. A short distance from the mouth the cover is perforated with large holes, looking like the chambers of a revolver. The Iroquois' blue jackets, when they got hold of it on Saturday night, on relieving the Auckland firemen, christened it, "The Young Gatling." In a few minutes the pressure of water caused it to get lively, and it took the Yankee branchman over the yard. Presently one of the men of the Iroquois got in the line of fire—or rather water—and it struck him heavy. He made a double somersault, and cavorted into a sawdust pit. On emerging, he managed to ejaculate, between mouthfuls of sawdust and scoria ash, "Why is this thus?" But the only explanation vouchsafed was, "Can't help it Bill; the 'Young Gatling' is a terror to kick!" Shortly afterwards, a Salvage Corps man came along, and that diabolical "controlling nozzle" accidentally got his range. He got it squarely on the "centre of gravity," and was shot as if from a catapult headfirst into a stack of timbers, his legs remaining in the air, doing a "Breakdown." The American branchman requested some of his mates to "pull the 'blooming' fool out," and a volunteer party went in and drew him out in sections, like a telescope.

It is popularly supposed that St. Bernards are gentle animals (says the *Lyttelton Times*), whose sympathies lie with human beings rather than against them. The idea is fostered by the Alpine stories, but it is just as well to know, in view of the recent increase in the number of these dogs, that they are often very dangerous and savage brutes. Twice lately in Wellington children have been attacked and maltreated by them. Only this week a little boy of three or four was nearly killed by a St. Bernard. Both hands were bitten through, the left ear nearly torn off, and a bad scalp wound inflicted. But for the prompt interference of a man who heard the boy's screams there would not have been much of him left.

MONDAY.

The first harvesting in the district (says the *Trapscha Times*), was done the other day by Mr. Allan Mitchell, who cut a crop of oats in Gabriels Gully. The oats were of the long Tartar variety, and the crop was very heavy, being over 5ft. in height, but the birds had done great damage to the grain. The grain which ripens first in the district is sure to suffer most from the ravages of the small birds, and these destructive pests impose no small tax upon the farmers, whose returns are trifling enough as it is.

The first annual report of the Wellington Meat-preserving and Refrigerating Company states the Company's operations have resulted in a profit of 10 per cent. The directors recommend that the amount to the credit of the profit and loss account be dealt with as follows, viz.: To pay a dividend at the rate of 5 per cent. per annum, £739 11s 8d; to commencement of a reserve fund, £500; to be carried forward, £238 16s 2d;—total, £1478 7s 10d.

The *Hawkes Bay Herald's* correspondent at Makatoku telegraphs that large bush fires are raging in that district. Parsons and Small's sawmills, with their houses and a large stock of timber, were entirely destroyed. The insurance is believed to be £1,600 in the National Office, but probably this is partly reinsured. Several other mills were threatened when the dispatch left.

At midnight on Friday a fire broke out in Elliot street, Auckland, on the upper floor of a two-storey block of buildings leased by M'Inlay, signwriter, from David Kean, residing at Wellington. The ground floor in the northern division was used by M'Inlay as a workshop, and the upper floor was partly used by Davis, a saddler, as a workshop, and also used as a workshop by Mr. J. H. Holmes, scenic artist of the Opera-house, who slept in the front room. The Fire Brigade soon extinguished the flames. As Holmes was known to sleep in the upper storey, and had not been seen about, search was made upstairs, when his nude body was found lying on its back, the skin having peeled off in sections, though the body was not scorched or burnt. An examination of the premises by Detectives Hughes and Walker went to show that Holmes had probably been reading in