

monarch in the "golden age" of Israel. This was the celebrated "gold of Ophir," brought by the Phœnicians and Jews from that far and unknown land, whose location was a puzzle to historians until so happily solved by Rider Haggard a year ago. From the coast of Asia Minor, a voyage thither and return in the puny vessels of those ancient times consumed three years. It has been generally supposed to be on the east coast of Africa, or in the East Indies; but that these mines were located in the heart of the "Dark Continent," and were reached by such a "royal road" as described in Haggard's romance, it had never before "entered into the mind of man to conceive." In the Ural mountains, that still yield their yellow treasure, gold was mined in the time of Herodotus, and ancient Ethiopia and Nubia added their contributions to the precious store. The Greeks obtained it in Thessaly and the island of Thasos, and the Romans procured it in the Pyrenes and in the provinces of Italy bordering on the Alps, as well as in the form of plunder and tribute from all the civilized nations of the known world. The ancient Spaniards washed it from the golden sands of the Tagus, and the nations of Eastern Asia found it in many places in that land once considered fabulously rich by the people of Europe. Some of this formed the plunder and tribute gathered by Alexander on his famous raid into India, and it was always an incentive to conquest by the Romans, as well as the lodestone which drew thither the fleets of Spain, Portugal and England in later years.

At the time of the discovery of America, and the opening to Europe of the vast store of treasure accumulated by the Aztecs and Incas, as well the inexhaustible mines of Mexico and Peru, the estimated supply of gold in Europe was \$170,000,000.00, but a little more than the surplus coin now in the United States treasury. Its production had, to a great degree, ceased, so that only enough was mined to replace the annual wear and loss. For years the alchemists had been endeavoring to transmute the baser metals into gold. Many of these learned men claimed to have succeeded in accomplishing that impossible feat, and were rewarded with persecution, even to burning at the stake, by the ignorant, credulous, bigoted and religiously fanatic people, who accused them of witchcraft, magic, and being in league with the devil. Even long after the great storehouse of America was opened, these deluded and deluding scientists pursued the *ignis fatuus* of alchemic gold with the same zeal with which they sought the potent ingredients of the elixir of eternal life.

Humboldt estimated the quantity of gold sent from America to Spain, during the thirty years which elapsed between the landing of Columbus on San Do-

mingo and the conquest of Mexico by Cortez, at \$270,000.00 annually; but from the time the great Spanish conqueror carried the cross with fire and sword into the peaceful and happy land of the Aztecs—with one hand forcing upon them the religion of Christ and with the other robbing them of the accumulated treasure of ages—gold poured into Spain in a steady stream, rendering that nation the richest in Europe. With it, Charles and Philip maintained their armies of conquest, and with it was also fitted out that wonderful Spanish armada, which the latter sent to overwhelm England, and from which the people of the "tight little isle" were saved by the valor of their seamen and the mighty winds that "blow upon the face of the deep." An idea of the vast quantity of gold possessed by those highly civilized nations of America, and used by them chiefly for ornaments, can be had from the statement that the noted and cruel Pizarro received, as ransom for the treacherously imprisoned Inca, a roomful, which is estimated to have been of the value of \$15,480,710.00. The discovery, a few years later (1545), of the great silver mines of Potosi, added to the vast wealth that for several centuries poured into Spain from Mexico, Peru and the far Philippines of the East.

The three great sources of the world's supply of gold at the present time are the United States, Australia and Asiatic Russia, ranking in the order named. In the United States, gold is found in quantity in every state and territory lying on either slope of the Rocky mountains, and between them and the Pacific. In fact, along the entire length of this great "backbone" of the American continents, extending from Chili to Alaska, the precious metals are now being mined by thousands of men, who have invested millions of dollars in the necessary plant and machinery for conducting the business on an extensive scale. On the Atlantic slope, the Appalachian mountains, running through Virginia, Tennessee, North and South Carolina, Georgia and Alabama, have annually yielded a supply of gold since the first discoveries were made, nearly a century ago. Gold has also been found in other portions of the Union, but not in large quantities. Canada and Nova Scotia add their quota to the contribution of North America, and Brazil swells that of the southern continent. In the Old World gold is found in nearly every land, and is produced in considerable quantities in Italy, Austria, Ural mountains, Siberia, China, Japan, India and the Indian archipelago, Borneo and other islands of that group. Australia and New Zealand add largely to the world's supply, and Africa is now rapidly increasing its contributions. In smaller quantities it is produced in Scotland, Ireland, England, Wales, France, Spain, Switzerland, Germany and Russia.