

The Albany Register.

VOLUME V.

ALBANY, OREGON, AUGUST 1, 1873.

NO. 48.

Strange Episode in the Life of a Mining Expert.

A San Francisco Chronicle reporter gets the following remarkable story from a mining expert named Bredemeyer, a German, which we doubt not will prove interesting to the general reader, and therefore transfer it to our columns:

REDEMEYER'S REMARKABLE STORY.

Said he: I worked four years as a practical miner in my native country, till I was about 18 years old. I then went to the mining school at Duren, and after graduating there went to Berne, where I also graduated at the mining school. In 1862 I secured a position, through the Government of Holland, as Superintendent of Mines in Dutch India. There I remained, principally in the tin mines, for two years. All those tin mines are worked by Chinese. One head Chinaman makes the trade for the coolies, who work on shares with the Government, to whom all the mines belong. They only work during the dry season of eight months. The tin is found in the valleys. The mode of mining is as follows: The jungle is cut away in wide strips across the valley. In these cuts, at short distance from each other, holes are bored by hand, the drill being eased in a copper cylinder that sinks, and keeps the sand from falling into the bore from the sides; consequently all the sand loosened by the drill is raised by its screw to the top of the cylinder, whence it is taken and carefully washed and analyzed. As soon as tin is discovered a hole as large as an ordinary room is dug straight down into the earth, the ore being conveyed to the surface in two baskets on poles. They use a single notched tree trunk as a ladder. All the tools, provisions, etc., are purchased by the coolies at their own expense from their share of the profits, the Government furnishing them with furnaces. All the smelting is done by Europeans. Those tin mines are the richest in the world, and yield immense profit to the Dutch East Indian Government.

THE MINES OF BORNEO AND SUMATRA.

After developing many mines in Dutch India I went to Borneo in 1864, and remained there till 1866. The principal mines in Borneo are gold, and they all belong to the Sultan. There are one or two diamond mines there; but few rubies are found. They work their mines in a very primitive style, washing out the gravel, as in our placer mines, and melting the nuggets in crucibles or furnaces of fire-proof porcelain. The mining interests are not much attended to in Borneo, the Sultan receiving all the gold and gems found. In 1866 I left Borneo and went to Padang, in Sumatra. The mines are owned and worked there by the Dutch Government. Malay prisoners are sometimes used in breaking quartz or removing the earth from shafts. The ore contains only silver, cropping out gray, like some specimens that you see in brokers' windows on Montgomery and California streets.

MINING AMONG THE BURMESE.

In 1868 I accepted a position under the King of Burmah and left Borneo, being still unmarried. I was appointed General Superintendent of all the mines in Upper Burmah, and at once started for that kingdom, traveling through all British India, where I had many curious and interesting adventures, which, if you like, I will tell you at some other time. The principal mines in Upper Burmah are ruby,

gold and silver mines, though sapphires, emeralds, topazes and spinells are also found there. They are found in gravel beds—the ruby where the gravel is of a light color, and sapphires where it is dark; every mineral and precious stone known to science, save the diamond, being found in Upper Burmah.

Reporter—Then the diamond is not found associated with other gems?

Mr. Bredemeyer—Seldom, tho' sometimes with rubies. At the time of the diamond excitement I was in this city, and was much amused at the credulity of your people who believed that all kinds of stones could be gotten in one place. But to continue. All the mines are placer gravel mines—quartz mines, which are there in plenty never being worked. When the Burmese find a good ledge they begin to work at it without any system, always selecting the spots easiest worked and where they get the most. They neither dig horizontally, perpendicularly, obliquely, or in any other regular style, but go at it helter-skelter and without any system. The men dig out the gravel and the women and children carry it in baskets and jars to the streams, where it is washed in a deep, almost cone-shaped, wooden pan (po-gan-bya), exactly like the Mexican wooden pan used in California in early days. This plan of working is followed in all their mines. The men use a pick pointed at one end only, called a *koukthe*. They like very much to bring things to a point, for they will commence a hole as large as a room at the opening, which by the time it reaches one hundred feet below the surface will be so narrow that a man can scarcely turn around in it. Besides the one-pronged pick, they use, also, a short-handled shovel, not unlike your sugar scoops. It is astonishing to see how quickly they will excavate with it.

RICHNESS OF THE MINES.

Upper Burmah is, without doubt, the richest mineral country in the world, containing, as I told you, every known mineral and precious stone except the diamond. Fabulous quantities of precious metals are annually extracted from the mines, and yet the miners seldom save more than sixty per cent. of the gold and silver in the ore. The King of Burmah and his nobles know the richness of their kingdom and are disinclined to let foreigners travel there and see for themselves the richness of the mines. It was their jealous watchfulness that brought about my greatest troubles and adventures there. During 1868 and 1869, as I told you, I was General Superintendent of all the mines of Upper Burmah, consisting principally of ruby, gold, silver and copper mines. As the mines under my superintendence gave very large profits, I was a favorite with the King who made me equal in rank to his Governors and Ministers, and gave me as a guard of honor soldiers from his own life-guard. I also frequently received magnificent presents from his Majesty. I was the first white man who traveled over the entire country of Upper Burmah.

A SUDDEN REVERSE OF FORTUNE.

My good fortune continued till June, 1869. Everything that happened thereafter I consider sprang from a fear on the part of the Burmese Government that having seen all the immense mineral wealth of their kingdom I might report it to some foreign Government. It was about 9 o'clock in the evening, in June, 1869, just after I had reviewed the daily report of gains of the ruby mines of Media, situated twenty miles above Mandalay, near the Irrawaddy river, that about

300 Burmese, armed with bamboos, knives and spears, approached my bungalow. Immediately suspecting something wrong, with the assistance of my servants, I quickly got several kegs of powder out of the magazine, situated about ten yards off, and carried them to the inside of the bungalow. My servants and guard, immediately after, ran away and mingled with the approaching crowd. Fortunately the guard left their firearms in the bungalow on the gun rack, and so I was the only possessor of firearms, having eight guns and two revolvers. Just as my interpreter, a half-breed Madras, was getting away, I caught him, and threatened to shoot him on the spot if he moved one step out of the house. With his assistance I bolted all the doors, and compelled him to load and reload the guns as fast as discharged.

BESIEGED IN A BUNGALOW.

As soon as the Burmese came near the house I began to fire sharply upon them, and so I defended myself for three days and two nights, killing and wounding a number of my assailants. They continued to lurk around until on the third day I had not a single bullet remaining. Seeing that I had ceased firing when they showed themselves, they surmised that my ammunition was exhausted and surrounded the bungalow to the number of about three hundred and began to tear it down about my head. Perceiving that further resistance was useless I threw away my sword and surrendered. The black devils all rushed upon me, and I was seized by them and savagely beaten until my body was covered with wounds and bruises.

CRUCIFIED BY THE HEATHENS.

Then they raised a cry, "Crucify him! Crucify him! as he says his God was crucified. Hang him on a cross!" They placed manacles on my wrists and ankles, fastening them with heavy chains to an iron band around my waist. I was then tied with strong thongs to a rude cross, my hands, feet and limbs being so tightly bound that the thongs cut deep into my flesh. The cross was then raised, and I hung on it, suspended about three feet from the ground, with the scorching rays of a tropical sun beating directly down on my bare head for three hours. The agony I endured during the first half hour, after which I lost all consciousness, no tongue can express. [Here the narrator bent down his head, and showed the reporter a number of deep scars on it, which, he said, were made by his tormentors with their knives, bamboos and spears. He also showed the scars on his wrists and ankles and on his limbs made by the things which bound him to the cross. He was literally covered with scars from head to foot.] "I do not know," he continued, "why they did not kill me at that time, but for some reason they took me down after I had hung three hours on the cross. When I regained consciousness I gathered from their conversation that they intended to take me away on horseback and throw me into one of the tributaries of the Irrawaddy to drown. They cut the thongs and removed the manacles from my limbs, which were swollen so badly that the fiends had to cut deep into them to get at the cords and the clasps of the manacles."

THE ESCAPE.

I had five horses at the bungalow—one of them a wild, vicious animal that no one but me could ride. The Burmese took the four gentle horses and placed me on the other one, and proceeded on their way. As soon as my blood began

to circulate through my numbed and stiffened limbs I began to lay my plans for escape. Watching a favorable opportunity, I knocked the mounted guard nearest to me down, and striking my horse in the side dashed furiously away, with the mounted natives in full pursuit. The noble animal held gallantly on his course, outstripping my pursuers and carried me safely to Mandalay, the Capital, falling dead under me as I reached the town. Had I been politic enough to have gone immediately to Major Slaiden, the British Ambassador, I would have saved myself much trouble, but not suspecting the Government of complicity in my persecution, I went directly to the palace of the King to demand that my persecutors be punished. I was not permitted to see the King, but Pa-Ka-Mendji, the Chief Minister, accused me of an attempt to blow up the village where my bungalow was with gunpowder and with having killed a number of the subjects of the King.

CAST INTO PRISON.

Upon his order I was chained hand and foot, and weak, faint and bruised was imprisoned with 150 murderers and robbers in a room which was so crowded that none of us had room enough to lie down. The twenty-two white residents of Mandalay, with the British Ambassador, hearing of my misery, and having assured themselves of my innocence, went to the King and expostulated with him concerning my cruel treatment, and finally succeeded in getting me released. After my wounds had healed, and my arms, which my keepers had disjoined, had been put back in place, I went among the whites, who advised me to leave, saying that I would have more trouble if I did not. I believed what the King told me, however, about his ignorance of my imprisonment, and listening to his friendly talk I engaged in his service again and went to the silver mines of Sekkadown and Sekkawe for him. This country was so unhealthy that I daily lost some of my Burmese miners by fever. After six weeks I also became sick, and fearing that I should die far away from Christians, I saddled my horse and rode to the residence of the Chief Minister, Pa-Ka-Mendji, and reported myself as sick and unable to continue my duties at the silver mines. The Chief Minister rebuked me severely for leaving the mines without permission, and ordered me to go back at once. I became suspicious and went immediately to the British Ambassador, of whom I asked protection. His medical adviser told me that I had been poisoned at the mines, and the same evening I commenced to vomit and became frightfully delirious. After being carefully nursed by the wife of an Italian jeweler for three days, I recovered and escaped to Calcutta on board an English steamer, on which the British Ambassador, Major Slaiden, also went away on a two years furlough.

AGAIN ON HIS TRAVELS.

From Calcutta I traveled through Hindoostan, Revah, Poonah, Thibet and Cashmere, over the Himalayas into China, and returning to Calcutta married my present wife. I then went to Japan and was employed for two years by the Japanese Government in their mines. Last June I came to this city. The story of my adventures in Burmah were published in several English and German papers in 1869 and '70, among them the Calcutta *Englishman* of October 11, 1869, the *Coler Zeitung* of February 2, 1870, but never so fully or correctly as related to you now by myself.

Cashmere is a perfect Eden. There are some rich diamond mines

at Reevah and Poonah in Cashmere. They manufacture the most exquisitely colored and woven shawls, sashes, scarfs, etc., there, of Cashmere goats' wool. They sometimes sell what they call Cashmere shawls in the United States here, so I am told at \$3,000, \$4,000, and even \$5,000, but I have never seen a Cashmere shawl outside of the East yet. They are fabulously rare and costly there, even, being seldom seen except in the possession of some princely rich Nabob or Arab Paasha or Sultan. The reason that they cost so much is because they are all wrought by hand, no loom being yet invented that can equal the weaving of the primitive loom handled by the long, delicate, flexible fingers of those beautiful Cashmere women. There is where all those finest India lawns come from.

THE MINES OF JAPAN.

Reporter—Tell me now something of the mines in Japan.

Mr. Bredemeyer—In 1870, I went to Japan and at once secured a position under that Government. Japan is rich in minerals, and the natives are old miners, working their mines nearly as systematically as white men do in this country. They are the best miners among the heathen. The mines are worked partly by the Government and partly by high officials. The processes of the Japanese are rude and imperfect. They extract only about six per cent. as much metal as the Europeans do. In Kasher are soft coal mines in enormous quantities, fifty to one hundred feet below the surface. In Amalax lots of anti-mony and anthracite coal from eight to fifteen feet in thickness, crop out on the surface in many places. In Simabara are vast beds of sulphur and alum. The Japanese do not use or export them, and seem totally unacquainted with their value. In the small islands in the north are some paying gold mines worked by an English company under the superintendence of Mr. Gover, an Englishman. All the machinery used there was brought from San Francisco. I will show you some Japanese minerals.

The engineer withdrew from the room for a moment and returned with a curious constructed box and basket containing a variety of mineral specimens. There were specimens of red lead ore, cobalt, copper ore mixed with gold, slate and silver ore, malachite, opals, large and lustrous, found in ground between the seashore and the high lakes; rubies, very dark and large; amber, found in the high lands, with slate, lead, silver, coal and copper; lead and silver ore from near Hakodate. After examining the specimens to his satisfaction the reporter took his leave.

CHOLERA MIXTURE.—The following is said to be an absolute specific for the prevention of Asiatic cholera, if taken when looseness of the bowels is first noticed, and is good at any stage of the disease:

Tinct. Opii.
Tinct. Capsici.
Tinct. Rhei co.
Tinct. Mentli pip.
Tinct. Campho.

Mix equal parts of each.

In common language, it consists of a mixture of equal parts of tincture of opium, red pepper, rhubarb, peppermint and camphor, and the dose is ten to thirty drops in two or three teaspoonfuls of water.—*Journal of Com.*

Wm. M. Tweed, in a recent conversation with a prominent Democrat, said that he had grown a quarter of a century older in the last few years; and what had weighed on him more than anything else was the perfidy of his professed friends.