

My next excursion was to Sandhurst, a rapidly grown mining town, which has arisen since 1851 at the site of the most paying Victorian diggings. The railway for a long distance, as it nears Sandhurst, passes through the midst of various sites of old diggings. The surface of the ground on each side of the line for miles at a stretch has been turned over, scooped out and heaped up, and presents the appearance of an endless succession of deserted gravel pits. Here and there a few solitary diggers, mostly Chinamen, were rewashing the dirt, but nearly all was waste and bare. The vast extent of the fields, and amount of work done, astonished me.

Sandhurst, or Bendigo, is a large town with a newly-run-up appearance, built amongst the openings of the shafts of the numerous mines. The surface gold was long ago worked out, and the rich quartz reefs below are now being mined by means of shafts and drives. A new shaft was being sunk in the very centre of the town, in front of the principal banks and the verandah-covered pavements, which were crowded with share-brokers, doing business in the open streets. The great winding wheel and its supports looked out of place in the middle of the principal square and public garden of the city.

I went down two of the mines, and saw specks of gold in the richest quartz reef. Some of the very richest quartz, however, hardly shows the gold to the eye, for the metal lies hid in black dirty-looking streaks in the white rock, and is only brought to light after the process of crushing and amalgamation. I saw also the crushing establishments, where the din of the heavy iron stampers falling with a crash upon the quartz was absolutely deafening. Although the men employed in feeding the stampers are from habit able to converse, notwithstanding the noise, I could not hear in the least when my companion shouted into my very ear. I saw the pasty amalgam and the gold fresh from the retort, known as "cake," and finally I handled heavy masses of melted cake fused into solid ingots worth many thousand pounds. The mining people were most hospitable.

My last excursion was up the valley of the Yarra, to the beginning of the "ranges," the Australian word for mountains, at a place called Healesville. I went with one of the assistants of Baron Von Müller, the celebrated botanist, who kindly offered me his assistant as a guide. My object was to see some of the enormous Eucalyptus trees which grow in the "ranges," and which, as discovered by Baron von Müller, are the highest trees in the world, exceeding in height the *Sequoia gigantea* of California. One of these trees, measured