

Big Money in China-- Rich Coal Fields

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SHANGHAI, Oct. 3, 1900.—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—The mineral resources of China will form an important consideration in the payment of the war indemnity. The Chinese will not stand an increase of taxation, the reformation of the corrupt officials is a work of years and the most of the money demanded will probably have to be secured by concessions. There is no doubt but China has enough minerals to pay its war debt a thousand times over. It has long been considered the richest coal country in the world and the railroad surveyors have discovered coal and iron almost everywhere. The Germans have found diamonds in Shan Tung and mines of gold and silver are being operated in several places at a profit. Still, no one knows what China contains and the powers should undoubtedly take advantage of the situation and demand a careful geological survey of the empire. Such a survey would be in-

valuable to the scientific and industrial world. Some of the wheelbarrows have sails, and the freight rates are so heavy that it costs \$6 to bring a ton from the mines to Kiao Chau, a distance of seventy miles. Coal worth \$2.25 a ton at the mines sells for \$7 a ton a few miles away. The Germans are now building a railroad to these mines. The roadbed is almost completed and the cars are on the way. As soon as the conditions become settled it will be put into operation and this coal will have an outlet to the sea.

Rich Mines Along the Yangtse.

The Yangtse Kiang is one of the most wonderful rivers of the world. It is over 3,000 miles long and it almost bisects China. The biggest ocean steamers can sail up it into China as far as New York is distant from Chicago, and with its tributaries it furnishes more than 12,000 miles of navigable waterways. There are vast coal deposits, which could easily be made accessible to the Yangtse Kiang. This is so of the Shan Si coal beds, which I describe further on. They are the greatest in China, and a short railway will bring them to the Han river, which flows into the Yangtse at Hankow. The mines of Yunnan are not

far from the upper Yangtse, and there are coal beds all along the Yangtse valley. I am told they are to be found near Nankin, Hankow and from Chin Kiang to the borders of Tibet.

Mrs. Bishop visited a coal mine in Sichuen, on the Yangtse, about 2,000 miles back from the sea. She says the seam was four feet thick and was of a hard bituminous nature. It was reached by a tunnel six feet long, in which was a wooden tramway, and the coal was carried out in baskets on wheels. The mine was worked day and night in shifts of twelve hours, the miners being paid 14 cents a day, with an allowance of three meals of rice. The coal costs about 40 cents a ton in labor and a short distance away from the mines it was selling for \$1.75 a ton.

In the upper Yangtse, near Suchau, there are coal mines in the side of a cliff, which have been opened by galleries hung from the top with ropes of plaited bamboo. The miners bring the coal out upon the galleries and thence slide it down in baskets into the boats on the Yangtse.

There are thousands of abandoned mines both along the Yangtse and in other parts of China. One of the greatest troubles is water. The Chinese have no good pumps and as soon as the water comes into the mines they leave them. Shafts are seldom put down more than 200 feet.

In Shan Tung the experiment of trying modern pumps was attempted. The pumps were ordered from England and were brought into the coal regions at great cost. They were allowed to lie there and rust until thieves had stolen many of the parts. Then an engineer was brought from Shanghai to put them up, but was unable to do so.

The old American firm of Russell & Co., when they owned the steamers on the Yangtse, got all their coal from Kukiang. There was an explosion from fire damp and the Chinese thought the devil had gotten into the mine and it is shut to this day.

How Water Demon Flooded a Mine.

Another instance of Chinese superstition occurred in one of the Kaiping mines, which lies near Teng Shan, on the Tien Tsin-Shanhai railway. These mines are the greatest in China. They employ about 10,000 men and have an output of 1,500 tons of coal a day. I have visited them and can say that they are up to date in their machinery and modern methods of working.

The mines at Kaiping are operated by Chinese under foreign supervision. Not long ago a new mining engineer from London was brought to take charge of them. He went through the mines and was surprised to find a large block of the best coal in the center of one of them. He asked why it had not been taken out, and was told that it was the home of a water demon. Upon inquiry he found that the former engineer had left it partly to please the Chinese directors and partly because he thought there might be something in the theory.

The new man said: "Hang the water demon. Let's get out the coal." The Chinese still protested, but, as he insisted, they put in a blast and fired it. When the wall of coal fell a great stream rushed in, flooding the mine and shutting up access to many chambers. Since then the water in that mine has not been controlled, although the costliest of pumps have been purchased. The block of coal was in reality a great pipe in which a subterranean river flowed through the mine. The coal had been cut out about it, but the pipe had been left intact until the engineer ordered it

dynamited. The Chinese must have suspected the river. At least they looked upon it as holding a demon.

As Good as Pennsylvania.

If you will take your map of China and look at the province lying west of Chih Li, bordered on the north by Mongolia and on the west by the winding Hoangho, you will see the Pennsylvania of the Chinese empire. It is the province of Shan Si, which is said to contain the greatest and richest coal area of the globe. It is just about as big as Illinois, and it has four times as many people. It is of much the same shape as Illinois, and like Illinois has a great river running about its western and southern sides. It contains iron and limestone in vast quantities, and in the future it will probably be the greatest manufacturing and steel-making section of the world.

This province has been recently visited by Noah Drake of the Imperial Chinese university of Tien Tsin. He speaks of the anthracite area as greater than that of Pennsylvania and estimates that it contains more than 600,000,000 tons of coal. There is quite as much bituminous as anthracite, and the deposits of both kinds are beyond description wonderful.

Shan Si is a mountainous country with a great table land in its center rising more than a mile above the sea. This table land is made of sandstone, shale and conglomerate of as many different colors as the cliffs of the Colorado canyon. The top of the plateau is covered with a rich loess deposit, a bed of clay or dirt from 500 to 1,000 feet deep, which is gullied with water courses. Under the dirt there are vast deposits of coal and iron, exposed by the water. There is a great deal of coal about the edges of the plateau and in the mountains. It lies at an elevation of about 2,500 feet in horizontal beds, and is to be seen wherever the rivers have cut through.

The anthracite seams are unbroken over an area of more than 13,000 square miles. They are of a thickness from twenty-five to fifty feet, and of an average of forty feet. The anthracite gives from 8 to 10 per cent of ash, and it is but slightly impregnated with sulphur.

The bituminous coal fields of Shan Si have an area of 12,000 square miles, or as great as that of Massachusetts and Connecticut. They lie in the western part of the province not far from the Yellow river, and are spotted here and there with deposits of petroleum or limestone and rich iron ore.

A Concession Worth Millions.

A part of this rich territory has been gobbled up by some big capitalists, under the name of the Pekin syndicate. These men have a grant from the emperor and have farmed out the development of their mines to the Anglo-Italian syndicate, which claims a capital of \$30,000,000.

The concessions of the Pekin syndicate include the rights to all the petroleum of Shan Si and to a large part of its coal and iron. Prof. Noah Drake says they have one bed of coal which contains more than three million tons of fine anthracite. The bed is twenty-two feet thick on the average. They have other deposits which are even more valuable.

Their concessions lie in central and southern Shan Si and extend over into Honan and the mountainous regions below the Yellow river, comprising a territory greater than the whole of New England and forming perhaps the richest coal concession ever made.

I find a general belief here that China is rich in the precious metals, and the geological surveys so far made point to the same conclusion. The Germans say that there is plenty of gold in Shan Tung and that the Chinese there are washing it out of the streams. Gold is now being mined in Mongolia and in different parts of Manchuria. The Moho Mining company is working placer deposits not far from Mukden; it has already exported something like \$1,000,000 worth of coarse gold. There is gold in Yunnan, in southwestern China. There are placer deposits along the Han river and also along the western highlands on the borders of Tibet.

Pumpelly found silver in sixty-three different localities and lead in twenty-four. In Yunnan the silver is mixed with lead. The province has also tin, zinc and iron. Lead is also found in Fukien, opposite the Island of Formosa, and in Kwantung, not a great distance from Canton.

Fortunes in Copper.

The big dividends now being paid on copper mines in the United States may at some time be paralleled in China. The copper ore is rich and it is said to exist in every province. It is being mined in Shen Si, where the emperor has fled, and also in Kweichow, below the Yangtse. Yunnan has a white copper which is mixed with tin, iron, nickel and lead, and it has copper mixed with silver, tin and lead. The Yunnan copper mines are now worked by native companies, who have been paying about 1 cent a pound royalty to the government and four times that amount to the owners of the mines.

I know several Americans who are studying the stones of China with regard to the American market. I met a gravestone man from Seattle at Hong Kong two weeks ago. He had been traveling through the province of Kwantung looking up granites and marbles. He told me he expected to establish a business in Canton for the making and exporting of tombstones and fine building stones to the United States. He says the granites and marbles of China are as fine, if not finer, than ours, and that our workmen are not so skillful as the

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The Average Voter

is quietly musing over results, and, if his party has won, is shaking hands with himself, the active politician is chasing rainbows and seeking rewards for his services. The president is republican, the state is republican, the legislature is republican and

The Next Senator

will be a republican, because the legislature is of that political faith. Who are the lucky two? South Platte and North Platte will insist upon one apiece. Thompson, Henshaw and Lindsay are talked of for the south and Rosewater, Mercer and Meiklejohn from the north, with back counties to hear from. However,

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(Continued on Eighth Page.)