

my being a newspaper correspondent, and the chief was told that I wanted to go over the Trans-Siberian railroad. He received me very politely, and after some time, which I supposed was spent in looking up my record, I was told that my credentials were good, and that I would have a permit issued to me to pass over the road.

THE SIBERIAN METROPOLIS.

The chief of police told me that I could not start on my railroad journey before the next day, and I spent the meantime traveling about the city of Vladivostok. It is one of the queerest places I have ever visited. The hills are as steep as those of Kansas City, and the houses are built at all sorts of angles upon them. Back of the town I found three Asiatic settlements. One was a Japanese quarter, with buildings just like you find in Japan. Another was made up of Chinese houses, and a third was a collection of dugouts and huts, which were occupied by the Koreans. The town proper looks more like officers' quarters than a commercial settlement. It has one pretty Russian church, which was built, I think, when the present emperor made his trip through Siberia several years ago, and dug the first spadeful of earth that was thrown up for the first Trans-Siberian railroad. I found one large German business house, known as Kunst & Albers, where I was able to get my letter of credit cashed, and was thus supplied with plenty of money for the rest of my trip. This firm does business all over Siberia. It has ships which go a thousand miles northward to the mouth of the Amoor river, and which sail a long way up that mighty stream. It does a banking business and all kinds of exporting and importing, and it is a type of the big business houses of Siberia, of which there are perhaps a score. I met all sorts of people who had had all kinds of adventures. My friend Bryner, for instance, had come out to Japan as a boy from Switzerland. He had been in business in different parts of China. He had traveled all over Corea and Siberia, and he spoke fluently Chinese, Japanese, Russian, English, Italian, French and German. He was only forty years old, but he had made a fortune in trade and mines. He told me of the wonderful resources of Siberia, and said that the world knew nothing about them. He referred to one gold mine of which he knew, two hundred shares of which sold not long ago for two thousand dollars, and which were now worth fifteen hundred dollars per share. He has wonderful stories to tell about the coal, iron and timber resources of the country, and I will give some of his statements further on. With him I went to the Marine Club of Vladivostok and met many of the officials. I found that the town has a hospital, a gymnasium, good schools and a college. It has fairly good society, and the people who live in it seem to be well satisfied with their condition.

EASTERN SIBERIA.

In connection with Mr. Bryner I made some inquiries into the resources of Eastern Siberia, and the possibilities of the great Trans-Siberian railroad. Few people have an idea of the enormous extent of the possessions of the Russians in Asia. They number all told more than six million square miles, or about twice the area of the whole

United States. Siberia alone is twenty-five times as big as Germany. It contains forty-eight hundred thousand square miles, or nearly one and one-half times the area of the United States. It has a population less than one to the square mile, and is one of the richest countries in mineral wealth on the globe. Eastern Siberia alone is almost as big as the United States, and its resources are practically unexplored. All along the line of the Trans-Siberian road there are rich gold mines, some of which produce nuggets weighing a quarter of a pound, and the grains of gold there average as large as they do anywhere in the world. Mr. Bryner told me that the government of Russia insisted that all gold found in Siberia should be sold to it, and he told me that many men were making fortunes out of the gold mines. The mining is done in a curious way. The soil of all Siberia is frozen for more than half the year, and the gold-bearing rock is often in a perpetually frozen state. A hole is dug and a fire is built on top of it, and when the soil is melted it is cracked out or shaken out in iron barrels, which are made for the purpose. These iron barrels have sieves within them. They are made of boiler plate, and they are from ten to seventeen feet long. They are so arranged that they can be whirled about by machinery and steam, and they are laid upon an inclined plane and a sluice of water run through them. The water is introduced into the barrel by means of hose, and the inside fitting of the barrel is such that the sand is ground up and the small particles of gold are saved by means of mercury. There are vast gold mines along the Amoor river, and in some regions of Eastern Siberia quartz mining is extensively done. Mr. Bryner says that the completion of the railroad will lead to the exploration of a large part of unknown Siberia, and that the country may yet produce enough gold to raise silver to its old standing. The mines are not confined to the east, but they seem to exist throughout the whole country. They are found in the Ural mountains, and in the northern part of the country the gold has been frozen for ages, and it is said to be in the same condition as it was in the glacial period. Today there are something like forty thousand miners at work in Siberia, and the industry increases every year.

COAL, COPPER AND LEAD.

Every one knows that western Siberia has great copper mines, and the iron mines of the Ural mountains produce some of the best ore in the world. I am told that there are iron deposits of vast extent throughout eastern Siberia, and there is a great deal lying along the line of the new railroad. I rode through veins of coal in my trip over the line, the grades being cut right through the coal fields. These are not far from Vladivostok, and there may yet be great manufactories in Siberia. The Island of Saghalien is said to be underlain with coal, and there are vast coal mines near Tomsk, on the line of the railroad. There are, in fact, coal mines all over Siberia, and the silver and lead deposits are very large. There are ninety different mines of silver in one region alone, and there are lead mines in the eastern part of the country. There are four hundred different copper mines in another region, and it is almost impossible to estimate the mine-

ral wealth of Siberia. The western part of the country has been producing silver for many years, and the Altai mountains are one of the richest mining regions of the world.

SIBERIAN IMMIGRANTS.

Siberia is a very rich country agriculturally, and Russia is colonizing it as fast as she can. It has millions of acres as fat as the Red River valley, and it will eventually be one of the great wheat-raising countries of the world. There were a hundred thousand Russian immigrants in 1892, and the czar has now a special line of steamers, whose business it is to carry Russians from the Black sea and the Baltic around to Siberia. They take them in colonies and land them at Vladivostok, or at the ports of the Amoor river. They are given great advantages as to lands, but the land is usually parceled out to the communities and the villagers own the land in common, as they do in Russia. This, it seems to me, is a great mistake. No country can be developed to its full extent except by individual ambition and individual effort for individual gain. The chief trouble in Russia today is in its land system. If the land of the Russian empire were held by individuals instead of by villages the country would be one of the richest on the globe. As it is, it is only half farmed. No one cares to work when he has land in common with his neighbors, and the most shiftless farmers on the globe today are the Russian peasants. Land in Siberia I found to be sold very cheap. The rates are less than those of our government lands, and if I remember correctly they are three rubles per desiatine, or about a dollar an acre in silver, or less than 60 cents an acre in gold. The laws in Siberia are such that individuals can buy land if they wish it, but the peasants seem to like the village system best. They stick to their old habits, and Siberia is likely to be a second Russia.

SIBERIA FOR THE RUSSIANS.

I was struck with one thing in my visit to Siberia, and that was that the Russians propose to hold the country for themselves. They don't intend to throw it open to the world, though they are glad to have citizens who will take an oath of allegiance to Russia and become Russian subjects. The laws of the country are now such that only Russian citizens can acquire property, develop mines or do business. One of the requirements of citizenship is that the applicant must be able to speak Russian, and the people do not propose to be overrun by a lot of foreign-speaking aliens as America is. The mines are open to all the Russians with the single proviso, as I said, that the government have the first chance at the output. It has already established smelting houses and assay stations throughout the country, and it takes gold and silver at its market rates, taxing it a certain percentage, I believe, for the czar. I was told that the gold mines of Siberia turned out last year forty-five million dollars' worth of gold, and that there is a single mine not far from Vladivostok which has produced three million dollars in a single year. I met some rich mine owners in Vladivostok, and I heard all sorts of big stories. One mine, which was originally listed at forty dollars a share, has stock which is now worth forty thousand dollars a share, and large fortunes have been