

The Indian Territory's Minerals. Game. Fish, Etc.



ANY years previous to the removal of the Five tribes west of the Mississippi, the Indian Territory was sparsely peopled by Mexicans, who led a roving life; leaving traces here and there in the shape of excavations, where they had, no doubt, sought to unearth silver and other precious metals. These excavations, which are very numerous, especially in some districts of the Cherokee Nation, vary in depth from five to thirty-five feet, and six or eight of these may sometimes be found within a square mile. The character of the specimens of ore discovered in the neighborhood of these places strongly indicates silver, and what might prove by development to be in paying quantities. From the amount of labor which must have been gone through by the Mexicans in this country, it is but reasonable to conclude that at some point or other they had made significant discoveries. Until recently, the sentiment among the Indian people was averse to the development of mineral wealth; of the Five tribes, the Chickasaws were the most intolerant. But in 1889 and 1890 the tribal government granted no less than five charters, to five organized companies of citizens, to mine for gold and silver, which charters covered the entire national domain, thus excluding any individual Chickasaw, who might discover mineral, from developing or making use of the same. It is the general opinion, however, that such charters will not stand the legal test, as they are infringements upon the rights of a people whose greatest pride and privilege is, the enjoyment of land in common. An extravagant amount of Anvil Rock Mining company shares were issued and disposed of, but the speculation was not a success.

Of the Choctaw Nation it may be said that it is practically