

CORRESPONDENCE.

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"HYDRAULICKING" ON THE GOLD COAST.

To the Editor of "THE MINING WORLD AND ENGINEERING RECORD."
 Sir,—In the MINING WORLD (page 1329, December 16th, 1882) I see the following statement, signed M. Flint: "There is a feeling here (the Gold Coast) against washing gold, reefs being considered the only things that will pay; the argument being that the natives are cunning at the art of washing, and if gold is to be had they will have got it."

The same "feeling" is found in London, and arises from more reasons than one. Firstly: Routine is still a power amongst Englishmen. Secondly: Our engineers are mostly unacquainted with the value of "hydraulicking;" even the popular books deal with it very imperfectly. Thirdly: Expensive machinery, stamps, and mills, pay higher commission. As regards the "argument," that the top soils of the Gold Coast have been exhausted, such stupendous ignorance appears almost incredible. The surface has hardly been touched by the natives. In California 4½ dwts. pay, and I will undertake to extract at least double that proportion from any street, road, or swish hut in Axim town.

I repeat my opinion that much of the success of gold mining in West Africa will depend upon "hydraulicking." Unless the top dirt be removed, the exceeding rainfall, sopping the tenacious clays, will flood the mines in many places, and will make unwatering a heavy item of expenditure. As yet the Californian process has had no chance. Of the four mine managers whom I met, not one had any experience of mining, except what he picked up on the Coast; and non-professionals, once well grooved, do not like to change line. I lent "Brough Smyth" to one employe, directing his attention to the chapters on hydraulic mining. He wrote to me that his washings had produced only black sand, the titaniferous iron from which native women extract gold. An Australian miner and "other experts" are reported as declaring that the "dense forest" will prevent washing. And, pray, what was California in 1850? Have these men never heard of dynamite? My correspondent adds, by way of consolation, "However, ground sluicing can and will be tried." Another employe, who works hard over champagne breakfasts and lunches, writes to say that there are only two inches of water in the creek (subtending the property), and that another month will see it dry. Apparently, this valuable and trusty servant never thought of digging a water-hole. Hence, a friend assures me, "The hydraulicking scheme is completely set upon, and the expensive engine (lately sent out) is in a fair way of being broken up for old iron."

My friend, Mr. Gilbert Elliot, formerly in the Civil Service, Bombay, writes to me from Melbourne (care of Oriental Bank), that he can recommend honest and trustworthy men for employment. If we cannot find sober English miners we must look abroad, and before trying the United States and Germany, we might apply to Australia. In the meantime directors of companies should take more trouble to secure the first requisite, sobriety. Instant dismissal should follow a substantiated charge of excess. *Qui a bu, boira*, especially upon the West African Coast. All medical officers should be ordered to send in private and confidential monthly reports; and the abuse must be put down with a high hand.

Mr. E. L. J. Ridsdale's excellent address at the tenth anniversary dinner of the "Jermyn Street Gang" should give courage to half-hearted and weak-kneed shareholders in Gold Coast mines. Instead of disputing, *pro et con*, bimetalism, what we have to do is simply to bring the precious ore to market; and the depreciation of mines and metals will, I venture to say, continue till we do, no matter what be the nostrum proposed. Happily for our trade, the Gold Coast can supply the desideratum provisionally till lower California and Northern Mexico shall begin exploitation.—I am, &c.,

RICHARD F. BURTON.

Trieste, Austria,
 December 27th, 1882.

HOME MINES.

Sir,—Permit me, as a practical miner, to offer a few remarks on Home Mines. Lead mines have throughout the year been suffering from the deplorably low price of that metal. What was sold at this time last year for 15l. 5s. per ton realises now only 14l. 5s. Until there is an improvement in the price of lead I frankly confess that we see no hope of a substantial advance in the quotation of shares, or any addition to the profits now earned. In truth, the mines that are now able to pay dividends have been reduced to a very small number, and the struggle with the major part of them has been, and is, to live through the prolonged storm which they have had to weather. Tin mines have been more fortunately placed, although the price of that metal is now about 7l. a ton weaker than it was twelve months since. At the close of 1880 it was about 27l. a ton higher than it is now. There have been large dealings in tin shares throughout the year, and the changes in some cases have been remarkable. Copper shares have also been in very active demand during 1882, although prices are 3l. weaker, taking Chili bars as the standard. This time last year they were 65l. 15s.; to-day we quote them at 65l. 10s. Many remarks might be made upon individual companies, but, as a rule, it will generally be conceded that copper mines have held their own. There is no real diminution in the metallic produce of the country as has been erroneously supposed by some writers in the Press. Where a declension has been observable, it has been solely due to low prices. Given the inducement to increase production, there is no reason why the present output of metals should not easily be doubled.—I am, &c.,

PRACTICUS.

Truro, January 1st.

P.S.—The statistics so lavishly published about copper are misleading. One so-called authority contradicts another, and the discrepancies in some cases are serious. People before preparing statistics should be sure of their figures.

WEST AFRICAN GOLD FIELDS COMPANY.

Sir,—I applied for, and had allotted to me, some shares in the above company, and paid the amounts due. The directors have now made two calls, which I have some hesitation in paying, for on enquiring of the secretary I am informed that out of the 33,340 shares offered for subscription, only the small number of 3,288 were allotted. Were the

directors justified, do you think, in starting the company with so small a number of shares taken up?

The vendor was to have had a sum of 22,500l. in cash bonds, fully paid up shares, but "has forbore all present cash payments which are to be made to him out of sales of the property, or future issue of shares, and he retains no lien on the property," so writes the secretary.

Will you, in your next MINING WORLD, tell me if I can be compelled to pay my calls. Had I known, at the time of allotment, so few shares had been applied for, I should certainly not have accepted them, fearing that, with so small a working capital, no satisfactory results could be attained.—I am, &c.,

December 30th, 1882.

A SHAREHOLDER.

P.S.—We are afraid you will be obliged to pay your calls. On such a subscription we do not think the directors should have gone to allotment, but satisfactory statements were made at the recent meeting.—Ed. M. W.

MINING IN CARDIGANSHIRE, 1883.

Sir,—Mining at the present is very dead, especially in this part of the world. This, in one sense, is the fault of the proprietors of different concerns about us, who keep their men upon the lowest wages they possibly can, and also keep them at last from having that that they have earned, the result being that they are almost in a state of starvation, until the poor fellows, after doing all they can in gathering most of the lead together that they can find, are at last told that times are so hard, the mineral so low in price, that for a season they must stop the mines, unless they still would like to keep on, relying upon the honour of the companies, by and by, paying them perhaps so much in the S.

Such companies, sir, are not worthy the name. The mines, most of them, if carried out in a proper, practical manner, would be as good now as they ever were. Look, for instance, at the Green Hills Mine I brought before the readers of your paper a little time ago. This mine has been idle for years, because of the fall of the price of lead, and the owner, thinking some two years ago that better times soon would come, immediately began altering old machinery for new, throughout the mine. A beautiful water-wheel, rods, pulleys, bobs, capstan, in fact, everything was put in order, put to work, the mine drained of water, and then he left everything as it is to this day—idle. Had it been kept at work, doubtless, ere this, hundreds of tons of a most valuable metal would have been sold and thousands of pounds would have been in the pocket of the owner. But, sir, what has not been taken away remains for those who would like trying their fortunes in a Cardiganshire lead mine. Success is certain. About 13 miles out of the town of Aberystwith, by the wayside, a beautiful river running through the floors; nothing wanted but a little money to pay the owner for going out, or giving up a portion of the mine to a new party who would join with him in carrying it on as a practical mining undertaking. I can only say that the mine is 26 fathoms from surface; the lode in the bottom of Engine shaft at present is worth 5 tons of lead to the fathom. If there are any gentlemen or ladies who would like to join in the forming of a new company I, for one, shall be glad of their assistance in bringing it pure before the public, and in helping to enable them to pick up their share of regular dividends for many years to come.—I am, &c.,

SAM. TREVETHAN.

Rheidol Cottage, near Aberystwith,
 January 3rd, 1883.

CALLAO "BIS."

Mr. George Attwood has sent the following letter which he has written to the Callao "Bis" Gold Mining Company, Limited, in reference to their having recently struck the "Callao" lode:—

"I have had much pleasure in receiving your circular, dated the 20th instant, announcing that the 'Callao' lode had at last been cut. As the late engineer of your company (as well as a shareholder) I congratulate you upon being successful, and I have no doubt you have a most prosperous future, and that your property will soon become a dividend one.

"I must, as well as other shareholders, regret the great delay which has attended your mining operations for the last two years.

"On the 16th November, 1880, I finished my survey of your property, in relation to striking the original 'Callao' lode.

"On the 17th November I located the shaft and commenced to sink. By the 20th December of the same year the shaft had reached the depth of 80 feet (see report by George Attwood, dated 10th February, 1881).

"I calculated that the vein would be cut at or under 150 feet vertical from surface.

"I must again express my regret that it has taken you two years to sink 70 feet, whilst I put down a shaft 80 feet in four working weeks.

"I make due allowance for water met with in depth, timbering, &c., but two years is a long time to sink a small trial shaft 70 feet deeper.—I am, dear sir, yours faithfully,

"GEORGE ATTWOOD."

Sir,—I have read with great interest the remarks made by Mr. E. L. J. Ridsdale, and outlined in your editorial of 23rd ult. Mr. Ridsdale holds that the production of gold is diminishing, and—as I understand him—will continue to diminish, and that the consumption of gold is increasing, and will continue to increase. There is no difficulty about proving these conclusions as to the past and up to the present time. There can be no question as to their correctness. The future is another matter. There is no certainty about the future of gold, it can only be matter of opinion. To assist in forming such an opinion, allow me to submit to you two pieces of evidence, one on the probable future supply of, the other on the probable future demand for gold.

1. During the past ten years I have personally inspected the principal goldfields and mines of Russia, Spain, Brazil, California, Nevada, Arizona, North Carolina, Mexico, &c., and, with the exception of Brazil and Spain, where little or no gold is being now produced, I have derived a very firm conviction that at least for five or ten years to come none of these countries will be enabled to increase their present output, but, on the contrary, that it will diminish. In all of these countries there are certain mines which will doubtless increase their product, and there are many new and probably very rich mines yet to be opened in them; but speaking of the countries generally, I cannot believe that their output of gold will not diminish. The same must be said of Australia. There is a future for gold in Africa; but this future, so far as any product of importance to the world is concerned, is a long way off. Mining depends on climate, water, the organisation of labour, and the general condition of the mechanical arts. Labourers who cannot handle a spade, a drill, a

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