

mining captain, assay master, reduction officer, accountant storekeeper, blacksmith, two European miners, and engine driver. Mining on this property has not been prosecuted below the old native workings. No prospecting to prove the claim in depth has been attempted. Large sums have been paid to the vendors of mining concessions before the properties were proved to contain auriferous reefs. The London board and office management in India has also been very expensive. No money should have been paid to the vendors until the claims had been thoroughly prospected. No machinery or costly buildings should have been erected before the reefs were sufficiently developed, so as to insure continuous crushing.

Mining experts have been paid large sums to report on the Wynaad reefs. In the majority of cases they have simply reported on the surface outcrops, which reports are unreliable.

All that was required to develop the Wynaad reefs was one mining captain and two or three practical quartz miners to each claim, to prospect the claims in a miner-like manner. If this plan had been adopted originally, we think the shareholders would now be in a far better position regarding their scrip. The "Alpha" Gold Mining Company was floated in 1875; the capital was Rs. 100,000, in shares of Rs. 50 each. We, the vendors, being confident of the paying capabilities of the reef, received scrip instead of cash to the amount of Rs. 44,000, leaving Rs. 56,000 as working capital. Contrary to our advice, a fifteen-head stamp battery was procured from Australia, roads were made and all the necessary buildings erected, which absorbed the greater part of the capital. The part of the reef known as the Skull was first operated on, the reef being from 18 to 20 feet thick, consequently poor. The average crushing was only 8 tons of stone per diem, whereas a massive reef of this description required a battery capable of crushing 80 or 100 tons per diem.

Owing to insufficiency of capital, the "Alpha" works were stopped. On the 1st of June, 1877, we took over the claim on tribute for a period of nine months. We expended a large sum in repairing machinery, buildings and roads, which occupied three months.

The following results were obtained from our crushings (free gold only), the pyrites not being treated, except by chemical assay.

The number of tons of quartz crushed was 426, which averaged 10 dwts. 12 grs. per ton. Pieces of quartz containing gold were sold for Rs. 1.251.4 The "specimens" containing gold, got from a parcel of 104 tons, were sold for Rs. 920.

We paid 12 per cent. on the gross earnings. We had to labour under great difficulties, working in a very sickly season, with famine-stricken coolies, and often flooded out of workings, in consequence of an unusually heavy monsoon. Still, with all these drawbacks, we obtained good dividends.

No doubt shareholders will naturally ask the reason why none of the present companies have given results equal to ours. We attribute our good results to constant supervision, constantly testing the stone by hand power, and sending no worthless stone to the battery.

No doubt when the present mine managers sink below the old native workings, they will find stone that will yield handsome dividends. The present depth of quartz reefs in other parts of the world should be an incentive to mine managers to persevere in deep sinking.

A great many managers and others are sceptical regarding the gold and specimens we obtained from the "Alpha" reef, saying we procured them from Australia. We defy anyone to disprove our statement. There are several gentlemen in England and India who can vouch for the truth of what we have stated.

To prove we have faith in the Wynaad reefs, we will engage to take over any company's claim on tribute, the reefs being fully developed, and crushing machinery in good working order.

In conclusion, we ask how it is possible the reefs can pay dividends subject to such reckless expenditure, paying a full mining staff, and crushing from 10 to 20 tons of stone per diem only?—We are, &c.,

PIONEERS.

Ootacamund,  
23rd June, 1883.

MINING ON THE GOLD COAST.

SIR,—I have by no means forgotten the MINING WORLD, although the agonies of a "remove" have kept me long silent. "Three are as good as a fire" in England; here we are cleverer, and reduce the number to two.

My friend and fellow traveller, Cameron, is also giving me trouble. He perfectly sees the better way, yet some kakodæmon is deliberately misleading him. He and I have staked everything upon the superficial riches of the Gold Coast; he finds it far richer than even we had expected, and yet he is postponing "hydraulicking," sluicing and washing, to the routine absurdities of the "consulting engineer."

And now for his last letters. "The engine has been taken to pieces for cleaning purposes, and has been put together again. Pump all right. The dam holds up grandly, despite a rainfall heavier than has been known for years—from 4.28 to 5.56 inches in a single day. The lower section of my road gets flooded, but it drains dry immediately. Nevertheless, I am glad that the heavy transport is over. They have, I see, spread a report in England that the engine came to grief at the first stream. I have set up about 200 feet of flumes, and I hope to start the pump on July 1st. All this work I have had to do myself, and it has been anxious and vexatious at times. The earth over the entrance to my big tunnel has slid, owing to old workings, and we have to clear the entrance again. But close by I have struck the best reef in the country; it is on the Apatim (village) hill, which runs down close to the Ahema River. Thus we shall have some two miles of a double reef, or of a single one if they join. The stone can be washed before crushing, and will turn out rich. The 'mullocky' stuff (mud, clay, and stone) is full of gold, and the 'Tom, when started, ought to bring us real returns. You will find fine gold in the pores of the chamois leather, which contains picked bits. I am sending home other specimens of washings and of reef workings."

So far, so good. But presently comes:—"One sample I am sending them is about 1½ oz. of gold, mostly pure, but sometimes mixed with bits of quartz. We washed it out of about 100 lbs. of stuff. All the earth round is rich, and should be washed. But I suppose people will wish to drive on the reef, and let washing come second instead of first."

I wrote to my friend as follows:—"Say to people, 'Get ye behind me!' Washing and hydraulicking mean returns after a few weeks' work. Reefing, quartz crushing, &c., mean a barren period of at least two years, enlivened only by the growls and threatened legal proceedings of disgusted shareholders. We are dead sick of 'reefs,' and no one believes in them. Also it is perfectly useless to send home picked bits, and try-specimens; they are not worth their carriage. What we want is a ton of dust produced by the first washing, with careful and correct details concerning the quantity of stuff washed, the style of washing, and the extent of ground which remains to be washed. You tell me that 100 lbs. of stuff produces an ounce, equal to 4l. (allowing a loss of 1l. when washing upon a large scale). This means 80l. per ton, when two pence pays in California and Australia. What can you expect more from the very best reef? Why not prove our statements at once by sending home sufficient quantities? Apatim is on the Coast, and you and I know other properties which, under like conditions, will prove as rich. Remember that the Bear is abroad. In the *Mining Journal* (June 30th) you will find written:—"It is rumoured that the Gold Coast mines will be more disappointing than the Indian have hitherto been, the quantity of gold having been much overstated." This is a fine move of the ursine enemy, and you cannot meet it except by a palpable and startling disproof. As you know, our 'gold book' sang small; we did not dare to give the public such details as have lately been offered to them. Establish your case, and come back happy. No one will have done for the Gold Coast, for West Africa, one quarter of the good you will have done. But, *parula verba*, and plenty of profit!"

I was visiting my griefs and grievances in presence of a passing friend, who has had a large and long experience of foreign railways. He showed all the sympathy of fellow-feeling, and presently he wrote to me as follows:—"I can well appreciate your impatience on finding your practical suggestions criticised and decided against by mere standard 'home authorities.' Unhappily the public will not become shareholders in foreign enterprises unless some well-known engineering name appear upon the prospectus; and yet this mode of arranging affairs is too often the bane, instead of the blessing, of their interests. Great George Street or Victoria Street arbitrate for all countries and all climates according to the registered requirements of the London and North-Western or the Great Western lines. The head engineer, instead of being taught by his representative on the spot, who goes out to report facts, affects to teach him; and hence blunders and disaster are the consequence. Apparently the more tropical the country the worse is the ignorance. In railways it has too often occurred that stations, goods sheds, carriages, waggons, and horse boxes have all been misconceived, because a religion of obstinacy has insisted that all should be done, all the world over, according to the need of England. For the success of any foreign enterprise, I have long made up my mind that the head man should be the man on the spot, and that submitting his views to the criticism of the man at home, who can show only a mere home reputation, is too often little better than reference from the living brain to the barber's block."

So far, my friend, I think the "consulting engineer" is bound to eat humble pie in the matter of "hydraulicking," but I hardly expect him to do so.—I am, &c.,

RICHARD F. BURTON.

INFORMATION WANTED.—CONSOLIDATED OR SOUTH AURORA MINE.

SIR,—Travelling about, many hundreds of miles from London, it was only a few days ago that your print of 30th June fell into my hands. In it I noticed that a correspondent wished for information as to several mines, among which was the Consolidated Mining Company. I have been a shareholder for many years, and I should also like some information, and, perhaps, your practised pen can assist us. This mine was originally the South Aurora, which paid good dividends for some time, and the shares got to 100 per cent. premium. After that the dividends fell off, and entirely ceased. It was then discovered that the mines were not so valuable as they had been represented to be, and the vendors returned 40,000l. or 50,000l. of the purchase-money to the shareholders. This large sum the directors contrived to get through in a short time, partly in helping to make the Eberhardt tunnel, but mostly in advancing money on and purchasing mines, most of which proved worthless, and I think the directors could be held responsible for their acts in this matter. Among the purchases they made were some mines in Sardinia or Corsica, and for the development of which they have issued debentures to the amount of 30,000l., and since that time have made a further appeal to, and had a meeting of large shareholders.

The annual meetings are held from eighteen to twenty-four months generally. I returned from abroad in January, 1882, and there has been no meeting since that time. The shareholders get no information, nor do the mining newspapers, I believe. I consider the board to be inefficient and incapable, and I am surprised the shareholders have not taken some vigorous measures long ago. I hope you will give us your valuable assistance in arousing the most veritable Rip Van Winkles among mining directors that have come under my experience. I hope some other shareholder will help to ventilate this matter.—I am, &c.,

ITZUREL.

23rd July, 1883.

WEST AFRICAN GOLD FIELDS, LIMITED.

SIR,—In reference to my circular letter of the 14th July, which was noticed in your issue of that date, I have the pleasure to inform you that seven of the boxes of quartz received from Commander Cameron were forwarded to Messrs. Richardson and Co., smelters of Swansea, for assay.

The following is a copy of a letter received from them this day:—Below we beg to give you our assays of the gold quartz.

		The four large boxes.	
No.	Weight	Gold.	Silver.
No. 1.	0.65 ozs. per ton	traces	
No. 2.	2.1 "	0.3 ozs. per ton.	
No. 3.	2.2 "	0.5 "	
No. 4.	0.65 "	0.3 "	
		The three small boxes.	
No.	Weight	Gold.	Silver.
No. 1 (largest)	167.6 ozs. per ton	21 ozs. per ton.	
No. 2 (Next size)	97.3 "	10 "	
No. 3 (Smallest)	86.5 "	10 "	