

CORRESPONDENCE.

[We do not hold ourselves responsible for the Opinions or Statements of our Correspondents.]

MINING ON THE GOLD COAST.

To the Editor of the "MINING WORLD AND ENGINEERING RECORD."

SIR,—I have lately received a long and interesting letter from Capt. Cameron. He tells me that the rains have been "diabolical," nothing like them since '73; 40 inches in forty-five days, melting away the swish huts, and making every street a young torrent. The weather, he continues, has had one good effect. A quantity of black auriferous sand has been washed down from the uplands; and native women, who are evidently better "hydraulickers" than the normal "consulting engineer," have been panning this titaniferous iron on the shore. This, again, proves what I pointed out in the "Gold Book," that there are rich "placers" immediately behind Axim. Many ounces have thus been won, 3s. worth of gold being taken from two bouts, and 4s. worth from four. It is to be hoped that the dust, together with old worn nuggets, will not appear in England as the yield of newly bought concessions.

The abnormal wet weather has also had its bad effect; the black hands shiver, and shirk work. Labour, indeed, seems to be getting rapidly worse. The men squander their money in the dens of Axim; and the week's "subsistence" alone keeps them idle for three days. They are born pilferers, and mischievous as monkeys; a head miner was caught throwing away amalgam from the mercury riffles. They light fires in the engine without a drop of water in the boiler. Cameron would have begun pumping early in July, but a miserable native intrigue smashed the bed-plate, and the standard of his pump, and he had to repair damages with his own hands. In fact, the imported Koolie, despite Mr. Gowans (who, I am told, is changing his mind), becomes an ever increasing necessity.

It is regrettable that the folks at home do not take more trouble about business in "foreign parts." They have sent Cameron some 700 feet of boards for the Nánwá troughs, but the material was spruce instead of pitch-pine. They have provided him with nails, but ne'er a hammer, and, with equal sagacity, they have forgotten wheelbarrows, perforated plates, planks for undercurrent boxes, blankets, and blanket tables. Cameron's life must be enjoyable. "I have to see my blacksmith make every weld, and my carpenter measure every plank and batten, and mark the place for every nail. The engine is all right now, but I have had to labour at all the parts with my own hands, and these are literally flayed with work. I was nearly knocked down when I saw the wreck of my pump. Were all my pains and troubles to come to nought exactly at the last moment? It is all dull monotonous grinding. Save for occasional and temporary flashes of memory, I am fast degenerating into an ordinary mechanic, in fact (to put the case at its worst) into a mining engineer. By the by, the livelier sort of nigger diggers are now calling

themselves "engineers," and, in presence of their European confreres, I can hardly dispute their claims to the distinction."

My attention has been drawn by a correspondent to a letter signed "Samuel Johnson," which appeared in the Mining Journal of August 4th. It is strange that an estimable print should have admitted such an ignoble production. While on the Transvaal diggings, the writer, a man of vast experience (!), hurried to West Africa after reading "Commander Cameron's report, a tissue of exaggerations and falsehoods." Arrived there he found that the "great Commander himself spent no end of money, and knew no more about mining than a pig knows about its grandmother." At last he tells us: "There is gold, but like the great Commander, they blow about ounces, whereas they are dealing with grains all the time."

Capt. Cameron's specimens have been submitted to the public, and the circular lately issued by the "West African Gold Fields, Limited," contains the official assays. My friend's name has been before the world for nearly a score of years, and it is not likely to be injured by the gross insults of an enraged, scurrilous, and ungrammatical mechanic.

A friend forwarded to me the Mining Journal of August 11th, containing an able letter ("Mining Notes and Recommendations"), signed "E. B. Gabbott." He is perfectly right about our ignorance of African mineralogy; the truth is the field has been far too large for the labourer. Every few months and every fresh exploration show this fact. Large deposits of copper have lately been discovered in Abyssinia, thus notably stultifying Herodotus, whose Ethiopia entirely lacked the metal. A German company has just bought the lands lying behind Angra Pequenho (or Santa Cruz), on the West African Coast, and finds the highlands subtending the shore notably rich in ores. No less than three expeditions are now en route thither. But Mr. Gabbott is notably wrong when he states that "Cameron's work on his journey across the Continent is almost void of reference to its mineral resources." I well remember my first impression on reading "Across Africa," that the book was peculiarly rich in this department, and I venture to recommend a re-perusal of it.—I am, &c.,

RICHARD F. BURTON.

Trieste, August 25th.

THE statement of the Schwabs Gully Diamond Mining Company (De Beers Mine, Kimberley) Limited, for the fortnight ending July 14th last, shows that the quantity of blue ground hauled during that period was 2,238 loads; on the floors at that date, 16,233 loads; but, owing to it not being fit for the machine, no washing was done. Diamonds to the extent of 7142 carats, valued at 600L., were found during the fortnight. The total working expenses being 1,111L.

THE MONTANA COMPANY, LIMITED.—We extract the following from The Madsonian, published at Virginia City, Montana, August 4th: "The heaviest casting probably that ever came to the country arrived on the Utah and Northern R. R., and was shipped in sections this week to the great Drum Lummon mine. It was the fly-wheel for the new mill—24 feet in diameter and weighing upwards of 20 tons. Although carried upon timbers in sections, it barely passed the bridges, and required the removal of coal-bins, &c. The loading of it and carriage of it, in wagons, was what might be called an artistically Herculean task."

rampound bell, jun., expressing on having he county. I to prove uly of last e felt that le to place as this was plant and 2s. 6d. per nish them e rapidly t, including efore had ld be well members, again, and sequence of lusion that le, and that could. Had id now only ave been in he extensive igholders in usagers mak- led, and the present time and accounts, s a property d reported n gement to g have a reim- among them- section of the it of capital; pt for raising and to carry nce the com- could for the et the tin tub xpend a con- s. He thought onvinced the se items in the he purchase of ain gentlemen order to satisfy purchase of the ayment of five a very unusual penses charged registration of with the assign said the item of hat there was the company) s to the amount mine, said he l defined holes, eholders had t tested had pro- s much pleased- ntinued to open r manner, they and of the words he mine, said he w Terras, or con id expressed his machinery on the s were re-elected Garston. ARNALL, it was left in the hands (Baxter's patent the mine, which on appetit- s safest, speed- cidity, flatulenc- emedied with use of all abdominal of gastric ject t organ a copper stion. These are harmless con- rsons and young and give much

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