

*Merrijigs District.*

*Inkerman Combined Mine* (Area, 456 acres; owners, Inkerman Combined Gold-mines, Limited).

—The amount of development work carried on during the year has been very extensive, and suitable mine equipment is provided. A 10-horse-power engine is used for winding, a 30-horse-power engine to work the air-compressor, and a Tangye pump. A No. 2B Little Giant rock-drill is also used. The mill machinery consists of a 40-horse-power steam-engine for driving the 30-stamp mill, but this has not been used, as no quartz was crushed during the year. The development work carried out for the year ending 31st March, 1898, was as follows: At the New Inkerman workings, on the western slope of the main ridge between Rainy Creek and Devil's Creek, sinking the main shaft was proceeded with in February, 1897, and 87 ft. sunk by the 16th April, making the total depth of the shaft at that date 423 ft. At this depth a chamber, measuring 16 ft. by 11 ft. by 8 ft. was constructed, and No. 4 level driven eastward a distance of 605 ft. From this No. 4 level a drive north on a reef track was produced for 126 ft., with a cross-cut to west of 87 ft. To facilitate driving in the No. 4 level (which level will ultimately connect with the low-level tunnel coming in from the other side of the range) a dam was constructed in the No. 3 level, and all water accumulating from the old stopes and from surface percolation was stored behind this dam, a Tangye's pump being employed to lift the dammed water some 319 ft. to the surface. In the surface tunnel north and works (to the eastward of the main shaft), for the year ending the 31st March, 1898, 504½ ft. of new country has been opened up, represented by 383½ ft. driving, 104 ft. sinking, and 17 ft. uprising. Of the above-named distances a winze 104 ft., stopes 53½ ft., and a cross-cut 34 ft. have been opening on ore. At the surface winze (north of Revival Gully) 46½ ft. has been sunk, 23 ft. driven, and 16½ ft. stoped. Of the distance opened, 63 ft. has been on ore. The work carried out at the old Inkerman Mine for the year ending the 31st March, 1898, consists of driving in new country for 818½ ft., and sinking and uprising 212½ ft. Of the above distances, 314 ft. has been opening on ore. To ventilate this portion of the mine it was found necessary to sink an air-shaft 102 ft., and connect this with an old uprise. This air-shaft will be serviceable as a filling-in shaft when the connection between the No. 3 Inkerman ore-bodies and the Low-level Tunnel is completed. The No. 2 Inkerman Block has been driven on for 75 ft., and a winze sunk 6 ft., the whole 81 ft. being on ore. At the Supreme Mine the work carried out for the year ending the 31st March, 1898, has been the opening of 970 ft. of new country, representing 147½ ft. sinking and 822 ft. driving. Of this distance, 514½ ft. has been opening up on ore. The low-level tunnel from Rainy Creek was commenced in February, 1897, and on the 25th March, 1898, had been driven a distance of 2,089 ft. The tunnel was commenced with hand-drills, which were superseded on the 1st May by rock-drills, driven with compressed air. By the first method 221 ft. was driven, representing twelve weeks' work; and by the latter method 1,868 ft., representing forty-six weeks' work; the respective weekly averages being 18.41 ft. and 40.6 ft. The greatest distance driven in the tunnel for any one week has been 64 ft., and the greatest distance driven in any four consecutive weeks has been 199½ ft. Air-boxes (for ventilating purposes) have been laid throughout the tunnel, and are worked by an exhaust, with compressed air obtained from the receiver at the mouth of the tunnel. The power is obtained from a Cornish boiler situated at the battery, which drives a Class C Rand air-compressor, from which the air is conveyed by 1,000 ft. of 3 in. pipes to the receiver at the mouth of the tunnel, and from there to the face. In the construction of the tunnel the principal material used has been: Mining timber—sawn timber, 12,000 ft., 792 props, 412 sills, 1,692 sleepers, 396 caps, 2,342 laths, 822 stays, 5,200 ft. of rails, also 3,100 ft. of 3 in. air-pipes; explosives, &c.—6,050 lb. of gelignite, 6,100 detonators, 26,100 ft. fuse; also 9,960 candles. The work carried out at the Rainy Creek coal-pit has exposed two years' supply of coal, which will be won as required. The seam is from 4 ft. to 4½ ft. in thickness, and is of excellent quality. Since the opening of this working, in May, 1897, the tonnage of coal won and used at the boiler driving the air-compressor has been 365 tons. For the year ending the 25th March, 1898, the country opened up represents 6,157 ft., and the average number of men employed over the same period was sixty-five. The amount of wages paid to the workmen on the mines for the fifteen months ending the 25th March, 1898, was £11,324. (This is exclusive of amounts paid to a number of men employed getting timber by contract, and for driving by contract, and does not include official salaries.)

*Sir Francis Drake Mine.*—The reef in the surface block has been exhausted, and the owners are again making a commencement to further sink the main shaft.

*Golden Lead.*—The owners of this claim continue to carry on work to a limited extent. The battery was used to crush 480 tons of quartz, which yielded 196 oz. 7 dwt. of gold.

*Revival Mine, Devil's Creek* (Area, 86 acres).—This property was bought by Mr. G. Perotti in June, 1897, and since that time four men have been at work prospecting it. Seven months ago a leader 1 ft. in width, giving fair prospects, was discovered, and followed 30 ft. at surface. The men are now driving a tunnel in order to get the stone to the battery. There is a battery of ten heads, driven by water-power, which is now ready to start crushing. Mr. Perotti says, "This mine was formerly known as the Golden Point. A company before me spent £10,000 developing it between 1879 and 1885." In 1885 the whole property was bought by Mr. G. Perotti, who worked it until 1894, at a cost of £9,000, and met with no success. Some very rich stone was found in this claim, and it is possible that the property may yet prove good.

*Painkiller District.*

*Dillon Extended Mine* (Area, 60 acres).—Work in this mine consisted chiefly in driving and stoping on the reef, which is from 1 ft. 6 in. to 5 ft. in width. The aerial tramway was also put in working-order, and a parcel of 60 tons of quartz sent to the mill. Five men were employed.

*Big River Mine* (Area, 38 acres; owners, Big River Gold-mining Company, Limited).—The development work commenced last year in driving at the low level was continued to intersect the line of reef at a distance of 270 ft. from the shaft, which at this level reaches a depth of 930 ft. from the surface. A rise was put up from the low level to meet a winze sunk from the level above,