

blocks of quartz containing gold have been got on the surface along the face of the range. The shareholders now wish to put in a tunnel higher up the hill than any of the reefs which have been worked, to prospect the ground, and try to find where the loose boulders containing rich specimens have come from. The company has a battery of ten heads of stamps, and three berdans, driven by a twelve-horse-power portable engine, which is now standing idle. There is a party of tributors working either in this ground or close adjoining it who have struck a small leader of quartz, out of which some rich specimens are being obtained; but it is not yet known to what extent it will run.

*Vizard Claim, Castle Rock.*—This is a claim of five acres held by one man, who has done a large amount of work, and is now likely to be recouped for his outlay. This claim was taken up about four years ago, and has been almost steadily worked during the whole period. Gold was first struck in the reef near the surface; but, as the claim was situated some distance back in the bush, in a rough part of the country, the stone could not be tested until the county constructed a road to enable the quartz to be conveyed to the crushing-battery at Matawai Creek. A deeper level has lately been constructed, and the same lode struck at a distance of 83ft. in from the mouth of the level, which averages from 9in. to 18in. in width. Some of the stone from this lode on the upper level went as high as 23oz. of gold to the ton. The new tunnel gives 83ft. of backs, and the stone looks equally as well as it did on the upper level; but there is a large percentage of antimony in the lode, which interferes greatly with the present appliances at the battery for saving the gold—copper-plates and quicksilver being used; but the antimony sickens the silver, causing a black scum on the top, consequently a large portion is carried off in the tailings. Mr. Vizard had at the time of my visit about ten tons of quartz ready for the battery; but previously to crushing he has to break it up as fine as possible, and burn it in a kiln, in order to get clear of a portion of the antimony. This will assist him to some extent; but quartz of this description should not be brought in contact with quicksilver. A far larger percentage of the gold could be saved on blankets. At the end of the low level that is constructed there is a great body of water continually flowing out of the face, which indicates that the tunnel is near a watercourse or another lode of quartz; but the flow of water being so great driving for a time had to be discontinued in this direction, until the ground is drained. The length of the run or shot of gold-bearing quartz in the lode that is being worked is 66ft., and it still continues to go down.

*Vaughan's Claim, Matawai.*—This is a claim where a rich shot of gold was struck on the surface; but the upper portion of the lode is worked out. A low level has been constructed, and the reef struck; but as yet no gold-bearing quartz has been found. The reef has been followed for a long distance, but the character of the stone and the surrounding rock is totally different from that on the upper level, where the gold was previously got. The country through which the reef has been followed is extremely hard tufaceous rock, having in places the appearance of rocks of a highly-compressed sedimentary character, and in other places a brecciated appearance. The proprietors do not expect to find gold in the reef until they get into a softer country, which is shortly expected.

#### MANAIA DISTRICT.

There are several claims in this district taken up, but as yet very little work has been done. The only place I saw men at work was at Lynch and Company's claim. They obtained good payable quartz near the surface, and sank down a winze on the lode for 30ft., at the bottom of which they drove on the reef in the direction of a creek which runs close by the mouth of the winze. In doing so they struck a large body of water, which drove them completely out, scarcely allowing them time to get up their tools. The reef here is from 3ft. to 5ft. wide, and the stone that came from the drive looks very well. However, nothing can be done here without pumping-machinery. They contemplate to drive into the side of the range with the view of striking another lode, as they are not in a position at the present time to erect machinery. The quartz contains a small percentage of sulphide of silver along with gold, and arrangements have been made to test five tons taken from the lower drive at the new quartz-smelting works at Onehunga.

This is a district well worthy of being prospected, and one which I think is likely to contain good lodes of auriferous quartz. The great drawback at the present time is that the quartz has to be packed on horses to the end of the dray-road near Lynch's paddock, a distance of nearly eight miles, and thence carted to the crushing-battery at Coromandel, a further distance of three miles. Therefore low-grade quartz will not pay for this expensive transit—it is only rich parcels that could be treated.

#### TAPU DISTRICT.

This is a district where very rich auriferous specimens have been found, and where a deal of gold has been obtained. At one time there was a large population on this field, but now it is very limited. There are still some claims being worked successfully; but the general impression of the residents here is that the low-level tunnel at present under construction will cut a great many lines of reefs at the low levels, some of which have been tested to within 150ft. of the level that this tunnel will command. They carried rich auriferous quartz to this depth, but could not be worked from a shaft owing to the large influx of water. The low-level tunnel is now in 423ft.; but it is not expected to cut any of the lines of reef before the tunnel is in 1,500ft. From the appearance of the country the tunnel is being constructed through, it is likely to contain reefs of auriferous nature. The rock is compact, but still of a soft kindly nature, such as that in which rich auriferous quartz is found.

*Bullion Company's Claim.*—This claim is situated on the opposite side of the hill from the deep-level tunnel that is being constructed. The owners have recently cleared out and retimbered an old tunnel, which was constructed several years ago for a distance of 750ft. Of this distance 100ft. at the extreme end was driven on a slide. At the end of this tunnel a cross-cut has been