

would have estimated it to within five or ten pounds in five minutes. [For these various valuations consult any file of Cape papers for May, June, and July, 1868.]

It is said at Hopetown that a native has a very large diamond, but will not part with it, nor show it to any one, nor has any one, I believe, seen it; and, therefore, I suspect it to be a myth, as a Griqua would only be too glad to convert it into money or cattle, etc. Here is another fact which certainly does not prove much for the diamond discovery:—A person had a farm in the neighbourhood of Hopetown, which he wanted to exchange for reasons best known to himself. He got a resident in Hopetown, who is one of the authorities on the diamond question, to give him a certificate that he had found two diamonds, knowing at the same time it was false. This diamond valuer gave him the required certificate *without seeing the diamonds*, through the help of which he exchanged his farm with the government—he afterwards confessing that he had not found two diamonds on the farm, but merely wished to exchange for a better locality. I can now only conclude by expressing my conviction that the whole diamond discovery in S. Africa is an imposture—a Bubble scheme.

V.—ON THE GOLD-FIELDS (?) OF SOUTH AFRICA.

By JAMES R. GREGORY.

GOLD is said to have been found in South Africa, and very probably it is. I have myself an undoubted specimen from the copper mines in Namaqualand, in which the gold is imbedded and associated with silicate of copper or chrysocolla; but with regard to the “diggings,” as they are called by the Cape papers, and which are situated some considerable distance up beyond the Great Orange River, and north and west of Natal, the question is whether the gold is in sufficient quantity to pay for the labour and expense of its production. It is certainly very premature to call this auriferous district “Gold diggings” and “Gold fields,” when really not ten ounces of gold have as yet been produced altogether in something like twelve months. Parties have been up and returned, each on some very trivial excuse. Some travellers describe the gold quartz as containing gold in large quantities, and yet they have not obtained satisfactory specimens themselves, although these “*rich beds*” (it is said) extended over many miles of country, and rich gold quartz could be had almost for the trouble of picking it up.” The great idea seems to be in getting persons to come out on a wild-goose-chase, when nothing definite is known about these wonderful “diggings.” Ancient furnaces are said to be found in the neighbourhood, and of course fuel!!

I have just returned from South Africa, though I confess that I have not been to the so-called gold-diggings. I simply read the reports and communications in the Cape newspapers, and having mixed with many people acquainted with the district, I have formed an opinion of the probability or plausibility of the reports, and

reasonable expectations of the success of the seekers of gold in this part of the world.

I will mention a few facts that came under my own observation. For instance, while I was at Hopetown, a trader came in from the so-called Bamangwato diggings. This is the most southerly of the gold districts. He showed me and put in my hands one evening a piece of quartz on which gold-leaf was fastened. I immediately detected the imposture, and exposed it at the time, several persons being in the room. Yet, in the next issue of the *Colesburg Advertiser* for July 14, 1868, was the following paragraph:—"We (*Colesburg Advertiser*) have received the following, under date Hopetown, July 9:—"Lishinskey has arrived from the Bamangwato, and brought down some specimens. Mr. Gregory, the mineralogist, who is here from England, pronounces them very rich. At the place where they are now searching for gold there are old diggings, as they have found furnaces which appear to have been built hundreds of years ago," etc., etc. And again: "Capt." Black and his party have obtained about two to three ounces of gold dust as fine as snuff, and have been digging two to three months, and expect to get *nuggets* as they go deeper! (there are six or seven persons in this party). Now we see by a mail that came home about three weeks ago that Capt. Black and his party had returned from the diggings, *not because there was no gold*, but that they could not agree among themselves. Is this a reasonable and satisfactory excuse? And by the last mail which arrived here on the 6th of November we learn that the Cape Government have not yet organised a commission to enquire into and examine the auriferous districts, but that private commissions have been organised, and have started to the gold districts. Does this look altogether satisfactory as to the private opinion of the Cape Government? Another fact: When I was on my journey home in the steamer from the Cape, a passenger from Natal, in presence of myself and several others, said that he considered it perfectly fair and legitimate to represent that pieces of gold quartz, from Australia or elsewhere, were found in the South African gold-fields. This will give a further idea of the commercial morality of these colonies, and show that they are not behind other countries in bubble schemes.

I merely wish to call the attention of persons about to visit or embark in the gold-digging speculation, to carefully read and digest the various reports from the gold-diggings before venturing too much on the faith of newspaper paragraphs. And one thing especially, don't believe any specimens you see of gold quartz that are said to have been found in South Africa, without knowing personally the finder and receiving them direct from him. Many persons have quartz said to be from there; but none have had it direct, and generally it has passed through several hands. Finally, look in the money article of the *Times* of any date, and compare as a fact the so many thousand ounces of gold now on the way home from Australia, &c., with the very unsatisfactory accounts from the Cape.

What I complain of is that these gold-fields are too much puffed and advertised, before anything whatever is known of their capa-

bilities for working and realisation. It may turn out eventually as a good place for investment of capital, and I hope may. But this puffing is altogether much too premature. The commencement of Australia and California was very different. The actual nuggets turned up honestly, and spoke for themselves.

NOTICES OF MEMOIRS.

I.—ON A REMARKABLE INCRUSTATION IN NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

By SAMUEL SHARP, F.S.A., F.G.S.¹

A SPECIMEN of a plant incrustated by carbonate of lime having been left at the Northampton Museum (of the Geological Department of which I am the Hon. Curator), I visited the place whence it had been brought—an ancient gravel-pit about three miles from the village of Old or Wold, and some fourteen miles N.N.E. of Northampton.

The section exposed is about eight feet in height, and the gravel contains broken flints, angular and sub-angular fragments from the Oolitic limestone and ironstone of the district, and rounded pebbles, composed for the most part of materials foreign to the locality, and derived from older gravels or from the Boulder-clay which caps many of the high lands in the county.

In the section of the gravel, I found the mass of incrustated plants from which the small fragment had been taken. This, as seen in the section, is about ten feet in length, and about two feet six inches in thickness (see Woodcut). Its dimensions inwards were

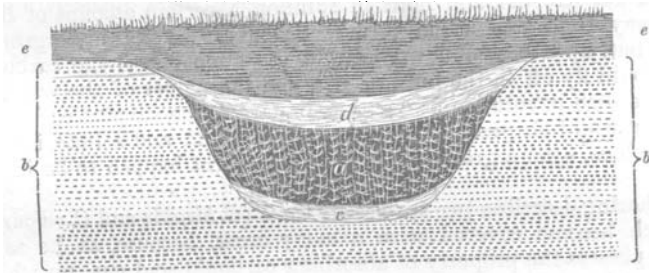


Diagram-section of side of Gravel-pit near Old, Northamptonshire, showing position of ancient tufaceous deposit containing *Chara vulgaris*.

- a. Mass of incrustated *Chara vulgaris* (2½ feet in thickness, and 10 feet in breadth.)
- b. Stratified gravel (8 feet in thickness).
- c. Lower layer of calcareous paste (6 inches in thickness).
- d. Upper layer of calcareous paste (12 inches in thickness).
- e. Surface soil (9 inches, deepening to 1 foot 9 inches).

not ascertainable, and no trace of it was to be found in the opposite section of the pit, distant some fifteen or twenty feet. It reposes upon six inches of calcareous paste, made up of the decomposed material of the mass, and this paste again rests upon the gravel as a base.

¹ Read before the British Association, Section C. Norwich, August, 1868.