

MINING IN CORK.

MINING enterprise in Ireland, especially in Cork, has, for some years back, shared the depression which resulted from an unfortunate political excitement, although there is no district in the kingdom which has produced so much mineral with such a limited scale of operations; the extraordinary copper vein at Colleras in West Cork was closed (just as its immense wealth was being developed) by the independent action of the proprietor, Isaac Deane Notter, Esq., who would not stoop to absurd demands on his purse or domain. An old and valuable property on the same vein or lode, but eastward at Schull (a corruption of School) harbour, in the township of Cosheen,* is about being re-opened by the accomplished veteran and, of course, experienced mining engineer and mineralogist, Captain William Thomas. M.E. and C.E., of St. Just, in Cornwall. This property was well known to the father of Mr. S. C. Hall, F.R.S., the eminent author and biographer of Torrey Moore; and Sir Robert Kane made special mention of it in his "Industrial Resources of Ireland." But in addition to the injury received by the *patriotic* (?) attempts of some to improve the prosperity of their country, a great blow was given by the publication of geological maps, in which the district was coloured, as if composed of sandstone, in which it would be useless to look for the carbonates of copper, sulphates of iron, baryta, or other valuable mineral. If this colouring had been accompanied by a note or explanation of the fact that the geologists had an idea that the slate was an outcrop of the sandstone, or that they failed to ascertain the exact nature of the carboniferous series of slates and killas (or grauwacke, as the Germans call it), and that roofing or clay slate largely abounded in the district, so much injury might not have resulted, and the colouring would have been taken as the result of a mere vexed question or argument over a technical glass of gin hot in some friendly tap in the Strand, or perhaps Jermyn-street.

But when we consider that neither the elvans, granites, diorites, or porphyries of the district are shown, we must say that great and undeserved injury is done to the locality by these maps, which are largely and eagerly consulted by promoters and speculators in London. We would be sorry to hint that this erroneous colouring were other than the fault of over-strained theory. A friend said to the writer, when remonstrating on the subject, "Oh, you want petrology and not geology?" We said: "We want whatever will show best the resources of the neighbourhood; a working man would not call the Yorkshire flags under Schull Church, slates; but that is the only part of the map you have *not* coloured as sandstone; the diorite of Schull is a better paving stone for Cork or Dublin than the diorite of Wales, but you show no indication of its being there in such valuable quantities."

The speculators of London, and the wealthy men of England, are not without good practical advisers; these men know where to look for the likely places where valuable mineral deposits occur; but if they miss from the Government maps the indication which would exist of greenstone protrusions, elvans, porphyries, &c., &c., were mineral to be had, who can blame them if they prefer to advise the seeking in some distant land the dividends denied them at home?

Statements have been volunteered that the copper was merely a surface deposit, washed down from-perhaps the clouds; it would be difficult to say where else. The only portion of the West of Cork that got fair play was Allihies, better known as the Berehaven Mines (although many miles from Berehaven); the copper there was most inferior yellow carbonate, but the quantity found balanced the quality. In Cosheen, on the contrary, the green carbonate, popularly known as Malachite, has been got in cartloads, and the writer has some most exquisite specimens auriferous and superior to the ore of Siberia.

At Colleras, outside the town of Goleen, there are no surface indications; the ore is to be seen pure and simple in bocks in a tunnel or natural adit or cave running in from the sea at a great depth at low water, and, in fact, all through West Cork, like the coal mines of Ballycastle in Antrim; the correct way to attempt mining operations is by adits, and deep sinking is certain to be ultimately productive.

Mr. Warrington W. Smyth, F.R.S., &c., writing some years since on the mines at Allihies, in his most valuable notes described the rocks as "slaty rocks," the "*killas*" of the miners, and "*inter-stratified massive beds*," "dark blue varieties of *clay slate*," with gray and blue kinds of same, a mass of "slaty and grit rocks;" but nowhere does he describe them as *old red sandstone*; and as a practical man and authority, his opinion was far before the tyros of the Geological Survey of that date, however they may have improved since, or whatever hints they may have had from head quarters.

Every miner knows that "old red sandstone" is generally a rock barren in "mineral ores," and hence the injury done to the character of Cork as a mining country, by the publication of geological maps coloured to show the existence of that rock. We were most disappointed when about to build extensively in West Cork, in 1862, to find that there was little or no red sandstone, practically, in a district coloured for miles as such, theoretically. However, the company, in again placing their property at Schull Harbour in the hands of Captain Thomas, have exhibited not only a confidence in his well-known skill, but a proper contempt for the puerile efforts of a government to damage one portion of a kingdom for the advantage of another. Mr. John Kelly, F.G.S., writing in the *Atlantis* in January, 1859, makes this pithy remark, speaking of the geological colouring of the government survey:—"There is a long narrow district of old red sandstone shown on the map. . . . Two of the highest hills in south of Cork are situated in it, that is Carrickfadda and Mount Gabriel. The geologist who goes up Carrickfadda hill to see this old red sandstone will be surprised to find none there. The rocks are all gray, hard, thick-bedded grit, with a few bands of gray clay slate;" and were evidence wanting of this stupid attempt to do an injury to poor Ireland, an immense mass could be forthcoming, but it is not requisite. The gentleman whose name we have mentioned as being employed by the company is above all mere *sapper and miner* influence; his experience at the Condurrow and Wheal Greville Mines of Cornwall, in many parts of England and Wales and the Isle of Man, and as a consulting mining authority in every part of Ireland, places the matter beyond the mere accidents of official flunkysm.

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*" Little Cave" or "Cove."—Joyce.