

Globe.—The reef in No. 6 level was struck after driving about 400ft. from the bottom of the shaft. This reef has an average width of about 15ft., and it has been driven on 180ft.—viz., 130ft. west, and 50ft. east, where there was a blank for a few feet, when another block of stone, running south-east and north-west was met with. This block has been driven on 54ft., and has an average width of about 10ft. The main shaft is now down 825ft., the depth of Nos. 5 and 6 levels being 200ft., which will give about 275ft. of backs on the reef. It is a matter for regret that the fine bodies of stone met with on No. 6 are rather poor, the gold apparently being of a very fine character, and difficult to save. An intermediate level between Nos. 5 and 6 levels was opened up, at a depth of 80ft. below No. 5, on the stone which had been sunk on in the winze. This intermediate level is now nearly worked out. In extending No. 5 level east another body of stone was struck, and this has been driven on 25ft., and there is 5ft. of payable stone. The company have from 60,000 to 70,000 tons of tailings stacked. The total output from the mine has been 71,808 tons of quartz, yielding 34,321oz. of gold, of the value £136,175, out of which shareholders have received £40,000.

MERRIJIGS.

Golden Lead.—Prospecting has been steadily carried on during the year, the work being mostly confined to the upper levels. At the beginning of the year a tunnel was driven 120ft. at the south end of the claim, and a gold-bearing leader was intersected at a depth of about 20ft. from the surface. Two small crushings from this leader proved scarcely payable. By steady prospecting and trenching on the surface another gold-bearing leader was discovered further north, from which a payable crushing has been taken. In order that this part of the ground might be cheaply and conveniently worked, No. 2 or lower level of the upper workings required to be extended about 100ft. This work was taken in hand, and is now nearly completed. It is to be hoped the company will now have a profitable spell of work, for the enterprise and perseverance displayed under adverse circumstances deserve success. The driving of the low-level tunnel, after reaching 670ft., was discontinued, the company being unable (without assistance) to carry on so much prospecting. From small crushings the company have obtained 114oz. of gold during the year.

Gumberland.—From the mouth of the incline-shaft a perpendicular shaft has been sunk a depth of 200ft. From the bottom of the shaft a cross-cut was driven 150ft. to the line of reef, but up to the present time the reef has not been found. Prospecting, however, is now being carried from the bottom level in the hope of picking it up. The sinking of the winze from the previous level was continued to a depth of 90ft. An uprise from the bottom level was taken up 65ft. to connect with the bottom of the winze. An intermediate level has been opened 80ft. from bottom of the lower level, and stone from this is now being stoped out. The stone is broken and disconnected, but is of good quality. The total output of the mine amounts to 12,272 tons of quartz, from which 10,595oz. of gold have resulted, the gold obtained presenting a value of £43,416 3s. 1d., from which £13,800 has been disbursed in dividends. The company have from 5,000 to 6,000 tons of good tailings stacked.

BIG RIVER.

Big River.—During the past year the sinking of the main shaft from No. 4 to 5 level to a depth of 120ft. was completed, and, a chamber having been formed, a cross-cut was driven therefrom 160ft. to connect with the winze which had been sunk on a strong body of stone from No. 4 level. This block of stone is 48ft. long, and has an average width of 12ft., and it is of very good quality. Stoping is now being carried on with splendid results. The reef in No. 3 level has been driven on 100ft., but, owing to its being blocky and irregular, it will not average more than 3ft. in thickness. The quality of this stone is about the same as that on No. 5 level. Very little stoping has been done on this stone, so that this block should last some time when operated on. A winze is being sunk on this block from No. 3 level, and it is now down 30ft. There is stone nearly all the way down in this winze, and it is evidently of large size, as only one wall has been carried down, and it is of good quality. Should this block live down to No. 5 there would be about two years' work in the mine without sinking the shaft further. In order to avoid delay in the working of the mine owing to shortness of water, the company intend erecting steam winding-machinery, and the boiler is now being sent out. The outlook of the mine at the present time is certainly very good, and the coming year should be a profitable one for shareholders. The total output of the mine amounts to 9,061 tons of quartz, which yielded 14,202oz. of gold, representing a value of £56,807 7s. 9d., out of which dividends to the extent of £27,900 have been paid.

PAINKILLER.

Sir Charles Russell.—For the past twelve months no work has been done in the low level, which is now in a distance of 1,200ft.; it is, however, intended to resume operations in this portion of the mine at an early date, with the object of striking the reef at that depth. Inside the mine work has chiefly been confined to extending the intermediate level south and stoping above it and No. 1 level. The reef has varied in size and regularity, and the yield from the stone has not realised expectations, falling short of the test crushings at the Keep-It-Dark battery. A 10-head battery, driven by steam-power, has been erected and furnished.

CRUSHINGTON.

Hercules.—The trial crushing referred to in last year's report as being then taken out from the winze sunk on the reef from No. 7 level, near the South Keep-It-Dark boundary, was put through, and gave a return of 17dwt. to the ton for 31 tons crushed. No. 8 level was then extended to intersect this block, and after driving 225ft. the reef was struck, and proved to be 120ft. in length on this level, with a width of from 2ft. to 10ft. This block, between Nos. 8 and 7 levels, is now being stoped out, and the stone is averaging 12dwt. to the ton, enabling £1,200 to be paid in dividends to share-