

## MAEREWHENUA.

The number of miners employed in this district continue about the same as they have been for some years past. There is a large area covered with auriferous wash-drift, but very little of it is sufficiently rich to pay for driving out, and the quantity of water that can be brought on to command the ground to work it on the hydraulic-slucing principle at anything like a reasonable cost is very limited. The number of men therefore, who can find profitable employment is controlled by the available water-supply. During my visit to this district last year a deputation waited on me with the view of obtaining assistance towards bringing another water-race on to the field from the Maerewhenua River, and I arranged to find the cost of wrought-iron pipes required for siphons to convey the water across some ravines, on condition that I was satisfied that the water-race which was partially completed was capable of conveying a fair supply of water. But I have not received any further communication from the parties who were engaged in the work, and so am unaware whether their race has been completed in accordance with the conditions or not.

The number of men engaged in mining on this field last year was seventy-five, and the quantity of gold obtained was 1,822oz. representing a value of £7,468.

## MOUNT IDA.

There are a fair number of men engaged in mining in this district, and some very rich ground has been worked, but the general average of the earnings of the miners is not large. The ground lies at so high an elevation as to preclude any mining for about two months during mid-winter, when the ground is frozen, and the water in the race converted into ice.

At Naseby the miners are chiefly dependent on water from the Government water-race to work their claims, and in last season, a particularly dry one, the supply of water was rather limited towards the end of the summer. The water-supply at this elevation is controlled to a great extent by the quantity of snow that lies on the mountains during the winter months, and from the heavy falls of snow during this winter a good supply of water may be expected for the next season.

## ST. BATHAN'S AND VINEGAR HILL.

The St. Bathan's basin contains a large deposit of quartz-drift, in which there are several rich auriferous layers. Over 300ft. vertically of this drift has been washed away in some of the claims, giving large returns of gold, and, deep as the workings have been carried, the quantity of the gold in the drift does not seem to diminish. This line of quartz-drift seems to follow near the foot of the range, and it is said to be a lacustrine deposit, where the shores of the lake were encircled by the present range of mountains. It is near the old shore-line where the rich deposits of gold-bearing drifts are found. The quartz-drifts are in stratified layers, having been greatly tilted since they were laid down, and faults are now found in this deposit, just as in solid rocks. These faults can be seen in Mr. Ewing's claim at Vinegar Hill, where the old lake deposit can be closely observed, containing as it does an immense quantity of the vertebræ of small fishes.

Before leaving St. Bathan's and Vinegar Hill, I cannot speak too highly of the enterprising manner in which Mr. Ewing has carried on hydraulic-slucing operations. The difficulties he has had to encounter time after time in opening out and working his claims, with all the most modern appliances, are worthy of the highest commendation. It is only by close attention, and adopting improved appliances that poor ground can be made remunerative for working.

## TINKER'S.

The results of the gold-workings in this locality show it to be one of the richest places of recent years in Otago, and, although the gold returns are less than they were a few years ago, most of the claims where water is available continue to yield very good returns. A similar description of quartz-drift is met with here as at St. Bathan's, with rich auriferous layers through it, but a good deal of the deposit at Tinker's cannot be successfully worked on account of