

specimens of work done by pupils, &c., &c. A classified catalogue of the exhibits will be prepared by Mr. Keltie, who hopes to include in it remarks on the various classes of objects. The exhibition will remain open during the months of November, December, and January, a period which, it is hoped, will prove convenient to those for whose special benefit it has been organised. If any of our readers possess objects which they think might appropriately find a place in the exhibition, they might be good enough to communicate with Mr. Keltie.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Gold-washing in Tibet.

SHANGHAI, 2nd May, 1885.

SIR,—In the March number of the Society's 'Proceedings,' at page 172, I note that Colonel Prejevalsky says, "Gold is very plentiful throughout Northern Tibet. At the diggings we visited the Tungutans went no deeper than one or two feet from the surface, and the washing was of the most primitive description. Nevertheless they showed us whole handfuls of gold, in lumps as big as peas, and twice and thrice as big. Without doubt with more careful washings vast treasures would be found here."

I am afraid that Prejevalsky is mistaken, but his mistake can be easily explained, and, geologists will understand what I mean, appearances have deceived him. Gold being of greater specific gravity than the pebbles and gravel under which it is found, readily sinks through the strata, until arrested by the solid rock formation first met with. The diggers seen by the enterprising colonel were probably washing out the old bed of a lake or river, and at a place where the rock was covered by a couple of feet of the movable *strata* only, because it gave less trouble to reach the solid rock or bed on which the gold invariably lies, and which, in my opinion, is the only place to find gold, excepting of course in an amalgamated state, with other metals, or quartz, &c. Gold may of course be found beneath the same kind of pebble beds at greater depths, but always I believe resting on a solid sole-plate of rock. I have myself visited the gold-fields of Northern and Eastern Tibet, and those of Hu-nan also, and found the same conditions prevailed, at each place.

In the Koko-nor region, I saw men digging down under a pebble bed over twenty feet thick, but they did not wash the upper stuff, they only commenced to wash when within a couple of feet of the rocky sole, on which the gold was found in nuggets, varying from the size of a turnip seed to a pea, and I was told that lumps of several tael weight were occasionally unearthed. On the other hand I have seen nuggets of gold in Eastern Tibet varying from the size of a pea to that of a hazel-nut, and as in the first case the gold was almost pure, and perfectly malleable.

I also found traces of platinum in the Koko-nor region, but the diggers did not prize it enough to collect it even, as they were unable to melt it.

In the winter of 1880-1881, I wrote an account of my journey in that region which I sent to the late Captain W. Gill for the Royal Geographical Society, but I

do not now remember all I then wrote, and I have lost the copy of the letter, and my notes also.

Trusting that the above will tend to explain the erroneous idea that, because gold is found at a couple of feet below the surface, it must necessarily be very plentiful at greater depths, when in reality that can hardly be the case, if the rock is reached beneath a couple of feet of pebbles.

W. MESNY.

To the President of the R.G.S.

Obituary.

Dr. Emil Riebeck, a Fellow of our Society, died on June 22nd, 1885, in the thirty-second year of his age, at Feldkirch, when about to return from Switzerland to his native town, Halle-on-the-Saale. By the death of his father a few years ago the deceased came into possession of a considerable fortune, and he determined to employ some of his ample means in the furtherance of anthropological and geographical research. In the summer of 1880 he left Germany for the East, accompanied by Dr. F. Mook and C. B. Rosset. Having visited the Caucasus, Greece, Asia Minor, and parts of Syria, Dr. Riebeck attempted an exploration of Moab, which was frustrated by the Meshali Arabs. On the return from Kerak, Dr. Mook was drowned in the Jordan. His place was subsequently filled by Dr. Mantel. In Egypt Dr. Schweinfurth joined the expedition, and under his leadership a visit was paid to the island of Sokotra, which was fruitful in scientific results. Subsequently Dr. Riebeck visited India and Eastern Asia as far as China and Japan. The results of one of the most interesting incidents of these explorations have only recently been published by Dr. Riebeck in a handsomely illustrated folio volume entitled "The Chittagong Hill Tribes: results of a journey made in the year 1882." In 1883 Dr. Riebeck returned to Germany. His collections were exhibited in the Berlin Industrial Museum, where they deservedly attracted much attention.

In 1884 Herr G. A. Krause, who had done some good linguistic work in Northern Africa, applied to Dr. Riebeck for the means which would enable him to sojourn for some time in the Niger region. Dr. Riebeck at once acceded to his request. This Niger Expedition, however, notwithstanding that it involved its promoter in an expenditure of 1500*l.*, yielded hardly any results. At the time of his death Dr. Riebeck had planned a great expedition round the world, which would have taken him more especially to the minor islands of the Pacific. Dr. C. von den Steinen, only recently returned from a successful exploratory journey in South America, and Dr. C. Dettenborn were to have been his companions. In August Dr. Riebeck intended to have come to London to make his final preparation for this expedition, had not death prematurely cut short his career. In Dr. Riebeck the cause of geographical research has lost a liberal supporter.