

of Chinese engaged in mining operations on 31st of December, 1879, was 9110. There is a decrease of 528 in the return for the past as compared with that of the preceding year. Dividing the value of the gold exported and received into the mint amongst the mean number of miners employed in the year 1879, the average per man is 76*l.* 1*s.* 2½*d.* The averages for 6 years are shown in the following statement :—

Year.	Alluvial Miners.			Quartz Miners.			Average Earnings per man per annum.		
	Earnings per man per annum.			Earnings per man per annum.			per man per annum.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
1874	58	9	2½	183	0	9	99	8	3'07
1875	63	5	5	182	17	8	104	4	4'02
1876	51	10	7	160	17	9½	89	19	6'84
1877	47	8	0½	139	12	0½	82	6	1'69
1878	47	3	6½	138	7	7½	82	12	11'38
1879	48	10	1½	118	8	7	76	1	2'32

Number of quartz reefs proved to be auriferous, and the total extent of auriferous alluvial and quartz ground worked upon, in the several mining districts, in 1879 :—

Mining Districts.	Number of Quartz Reefs proved to be auriferous.	Square miles of Auriferous Alluvial and Quartz Ground worked upon.
Ararat	80	87½
Ballarat	347	159½
Beechworth	865	340½
Castlemaine	404	164
Gippsland	501	209½
Maryborough	613	127
Sandhurst	772	146
Totals	3,582	1,234

NOTE.—The number of quartz reefs cannot be strictly correct, as parts of the same reef, in some localities, are held to be distinct reefs, and named accordingly. As the reefs are further explored, it is found, too, that what were supposed to be separate reefs are not really distinct. The extent of auriferous ground is here put down from estimates made by the Mining Surveyors and Registrars, not from actual surveys; and in a few instances the estimates of the present Surveyors and Registrars differ from those made by their predecessors. The figures vary from year to year; and as the shallow alluvions of the older gold-fields are abandoned by the miners, they are taken up and occupied under the provisions of the Land Act, by agriculturists and gardeners; consequently ground which one year was included in the estimated area of gold-workings is excluded in another.

Gold obtained from quartz veins and alluvial workings during the year 1879 :—

	oz.	dwt.
From quartz veins	433,925	10
From alluvial workings	273,334	10
Total gold exported and minted	707,260	0

NOTE.—The above figures are but rough approximations. The Mining Surveyors and Registrars can furnish only estimates based on information afforded by the banks and gold-buyers, and on their own knowledge of the character of the workings in their districts. The check on the returns—and not a sufficient one—is that afforded by the returns of quartz and quartz tailings crushed, pyrites operated on, and wash-dirt and cement treated, which, however, cannot and do not comprise information respecting all the stuff put through the mills.