

“ Without doubt there still require many experiments to determine how this mixture has taken place, if it be the work of Nature or the effects of some volcano, or simply the produce of the Spaniards’ labours in the New World to acquire gold in the mines of Peru.

“ If we rub platina on white linen it blackens it like common scoria, which made me suspect that it was the parts of iron reduced into scoria which are found in this platina, and give it this colour, and which seem, in this state, only to have undergone the action of a violent fire. Besides, having a second time examined platina with my lens, I perceived therein different globules of liquid mercury, which made me suppose that platina might be the produce of the hands of man, in the following manner:—Platina, as I have been told, is taken out of the oldest mines in Peru, which the Spaniards explored after the conquest of the New World. In those dark times only two methods were known of extracting gold from the sands which contained it; first, by an amalgama with mercury; secondly, by drying it. The golden sand was triturated with quicksilver, and when that was judged to be loaded with the greatest part of the gold, the sand was thrown away, which was named *crasse*, as useless and of no value.

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