

niog district in January 1872 was about 3,350.¹ There are also slate quarries in South Wales, but few of them have been worked to much advantage, and in Cumberland, where slates are or have been worked in the green slates of the volcanic rocks of the Lower Silurian series. The material composing these slates is simply very fine volcanic dust, hardened by intense pressure, and rendered fissile by slaty cleavage.

In Scotland, in the small island of Easdale, in the Firth of Lorn, there are slate quarries that have been worked for many years, which produce a good, coarse-grained slate, but they are of small importance compared with the immense quarries of North Wales. It is probably not an over-estimate to say that about 15,000 men are employed in the slate quarries of Britain, involving, perhaps, the direct support of about 50,000 people.

So steady is the profit sometimes derived from slate quarries, that every here and there in North Wales, where the rocks are more or less cleaved, speculators go to work, and opening part of a hill-side, find a quantity of rotten stuff, or of slate full of iron pyrites, or cut up by small joints, or imperfectly cleaved; and after a time, when money runs short, they sell the property to other speculators, who sometimes ruin themselves in turn.

In various districts of Great Britain the rocks abound in the ores of certain metals, which, generally occurring in hilly regions, the workers in these mines are rarely congregated in great crowds like the slate quarriers of North Wales, or the miners of coal and iron. I will first allude to the case in which the mineral wealth is derived from what are termed lodes, or

¹ This fact was supplied to me by the kindness of Mrs. Percival of Bodâwen.