between crossed nicols is a very low grey, and good interference-figures are obtained.

The association of minerals in the schists is the same as that noticed at the margin of the Ben Cruachan 'newer granite' mass, and also at the margin of 'newer granite' at Netherly in Elgin.

Tourmaline, kyanite, and staurolite also occur in the Moine Schists of Mull, but are in no way connected with the granite.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### CAPE COLONY.

SIR,—In the review of the work by Dr. Rogers and Mr. Du Toit (GEOL. MAG., December, 1909, p. 561) attention was called to the absence of references to authorities *in the index*, not in the text.

REVIEWER.

*March* 17, 1910.

### THE MEANING OF THE TERM 'LATERITE'.

SIR,—In discussing the meaning of the term 'laterite', I have at least the qualification of an intimate acquaintance with the material to which the name was first given in the area in which it is typically developed.

As I understand Mr. Scrivenor, he contends that whatever may have been its original signification, it has been so widely employed in other senses that it should be dismissed from scientific language, the more so as the word 'bauxite' is available to replace it.

It must be remembered, however, that bauxite is a mineral name indicating a substance containing approximately two molecules of water to one of alumina, whatever may be its true chemical constitution. The bauxite of the type locality, Baux near Arles in the south of France, is believed to have resulted from the action of aluminium sulphate on limestone, but this is only one way in which such a product might have been formed.

Laterite, on the other hand, is a rock name given to a widespread clay-like deposit which plays a conspicuous part in the surface features of Peninsular India. It has recently been recognized with similar characters in other tropical countries, and has been shown by the classical researches of Max Bauer, Warth, and Holland to be formed by the surface decomposition of alumina-bearing crystalline rocks, whereby the alkalies, alkaline earths, and combined silica are to a large extent removed, leaving behind the free silica, the titanium oxide, and the oxides of alumina and iron, which have taken up water to form hydrates.

This well-characterized formation obviously requires a special designation, and what could be more suitable than the name that Buchanan applied to it over a century ago, and which is still employed in the Peninsula in the same sense in scientific, technical,