

Mining in Placer County, 1869, [Written for the Mining and Scientific Press.]

Editors Press:—When at Colfax, I visited the Rising Sun Q. M. Co., which has a small five-stamp mill, but it was not running at the time I was there, having suspended for a short time to make repairs. This company has made some very excellent runs within the past six months. Their rock looks well, shows much free gold, with good-looking sulphurets, which also assay well. They have done but little as yet towards developing their mine, as their shaft is down only about twenty feet.

Iowa and Wisconsin Hills: From Colfax I went to Iowa Hill, about half a mile from which I visited the cement claim owned by the Morning Star M. & M. Co. They have a fine ten-stamp mill, built by J. G. Bisbee, which commenced crushing gravel about three months ago. The mill is run only during the daytime. The foreman, Mr. J. Mitchell, accompanied me through the mine. Passing into the tunnel about 400 feet, we found some eight or ten miners poking away at the cement. The mine is worked night and day. Gold was readily discovered in the cement. I was informed that there are twenty-four shares in the company, and that a majority of the shareholders are workingmen. They clean up from fifty to one hundred ounces. [Our correspondent does not say how often.] They find that it pays to work from eight to ten feet into the bed-rock in this mine—a very unusual occurrence.

There are other placer claims near this locality, owned by W. Wisler and others, upon which preparations are being made for winter's work. At Wisconsin Hill, two miles distant, there are some very large claims; but they are not worked at present for want of water.

Mr. O. J. Spencer's (Mt. Pleasant) sawmill is actively at work sawing out blocks for sluice boxes. These blocks are from two to three inches thick and are affixed to the sides [and bottoms?], by the use of which the boxes are made to last three times as long as without. The first cost is a little more, but the saving in the end is considerable.

Damascus: Twelve miles more brings the traveler to Damascus, another small mining town. Here I found two companies operating quite extensively. The Mountain Gate Co. have an old tunnel in some 3,500 feet, and, have just completed a second, lower down the hillside, which is now in over 3,000 feet, where the cement is paying well. The mine is owned by twenty-three shareholders, every one of whom is a shareholder, and does his regular day's work upon the claim. Twenty-two were at work the day I visited the mine. The last cleanup, after a two weeks' run, gave them 120 ounces of gold. They are not now employing any extra hands; but soon will do so. Such a company is bound to succeed. There is no business in the world where cooperation, under good management, will succeed better than in mining.

The next mine visited was the Lewis claim—an old claim, containing very hard cement. The company have a tunnel in some 700 feet. They have at present only six men employed. The old company erected a mill, some years ago, at a cost of \$30,000. The cement is taken out and dumped in a pile, where it is left eight or ten days to "stocken" when it is worked in sluices. I understood it was the intention to commence crushing soon; but why they do not crush at present I did not learn. I see no reason why the claim should not be a valuable one.

Michigan Bluffs: From Damascus I passed on to Michigan Bluffs, where I found the various companies making extensive repairs and getting ready for winter work. Messrs. Erman & Co. have paid \$19,000 for a ditch, and bought some very valuable mining ground for \$3,000. They have half a mile of main tunnel, besides numerous side drifts. There are many miners working, and doing well at the river, and up the canon. Mr. J. W. Richards, a well known miner of this place, recently fell, and catching at a large rock, it rolled over upon him in such a manner as to break his leg in three places. He expects to be all right by the time the water comes in for winter work. M.

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When at Auburn I went to see the Evening Star mine, located three miles from that place, and owned by Wm. Quick, J. B. Taylor and others. There is a shaft down sixty feet on the ledge, which they were timbering up at the time of my visit, so that I could not go into the mine. The Superintendent informed me that the ledge is from ten inches to two feet in thickness. It was discovered last spring by Mr. A. P. Lowery, who was engaged in setting sluice boxes across it. On prospecting, he found that it was very rich, both in free gold and in sulphurets. They have taken out quite a lot of good-looking rock, a portion of which will be hauled to the Green Emigrant mill next week, a mile and a half distant, for reduction. The rock is rich from the top down.

There are numerous other ledges in this section; but they appear to be "pocket veins" Most of the placer mines in the vicinity of Auburn are worked out. At the Green Emigrant mine I met Mr. J. F. Clouser, and J. F. Jordan, Esq., of Chicago, prospecting the mine with a view to its purchase. The trouble with this, as with other mines in the neighborhood, is the fact that, although they present large, well-defined veins at the surface, sometimes five to eight feet in thickness, they are liable to run out entirely at a depth of fifteen or twenty feet. Prospectors, however, are confident that there is a good ledge somewhere near, which they are still in hopes of finding. The Green Emigrant mill was put up in the fall of 1868. Notwithstanding the generally unfavorable character of the ledges here, they are often found to pay in spots as high as \$20 to \$40 to the ton.

While at Michigan Bluffs, Messrs. Erman & Co. informed me that they had derived much benefit from having the strips of wood, in the bottom of their sluice-boxes, lined with strips of iron. The placer miners in this section express the opinion that some of our inventors would do well to turn their attention to improvements in collecting placer gold. They think that quartz operations have absorbed more than their share of the attention of the inventive genius of the State. I throw out the hint for what it may be worth.

M.

P. S.—In the notice last week of the Lewis' claim, the word "stocken " should have read "slacken."

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