

THE MINING INDUSTRY IN 1885.  
A Review of Operations and Results.  
A Summary of Important Doings In the Mining Regions Last Year.

Drift Operations.

With the closing of so many hydraulic claims increased attention has been given to drift operations, imparting, during the past few years, quite an impetus to this branch of mining in California, where it is now being extensively pursued and, for the most part, with favorable results, the mistakes as common in former years being now generally avoided. The counties most noted for drift diggings are Placer, Calaveras, El Dorado, Butte, Nevada and Sierra, the most active localities consisting of the Slate Creek basin and the Bald Mountain district, Sierra county; the vicinity of You Bet, in Nevada county, and the Forest Hill divide, in Placer county, in each of which a number of largely productive and profitable claims are being worked. A large proportion of the gravel taken out at the Breece and Wheeler and at the Mayflower mines, on the Forest Hill divide, requires to be crushed with stamps, which is also the case with some of that extracted elsewhere. Where this method of treatment becomes necessary, the expense of handling is much increased, but this class of gravel is always correspondingly rich in gold. Thus, the gravel taken from the Mayflower mine yields on an average \$20 per ton, this being from six to eight times as much as is contained in the ordinary grade. The Breece and Wheeler claim is yielding at the present time nearly as rich material as the Mayflower. The number of men employed by the larger drift companies, varies from one to two hundred. Many claims, however, are worked by small companies, consisting of five or six partners. In several instances this class of operations are being carried on with signal success by companies of practical miners, associated together for the purpose. Formerly many Chinese were employed by the drift companies; but of late they have been almost wholly replaced by white men. Very few Chinamen, in fact, are any longer employed by the white miners in California, though some ten or twelve thousand of them are at work in the California gold fields on their own account. As but little water is required for drift operations, this class of miners were not seriously inconvenienced by the low stage of water the past summer, it being their practice to store their gravel in dump yards, and when they have not water for frequent washings, hold it until the supply becomes more plentiful. The drift mining interest in California is at the present time in a fairly prosperous condition, with a favorable outlook before it. The deposits adapted to be worked by this plan are very extensive, the beds of the "Dead Rivers," in which the most of them rest, covering a linear extent of several hundred miles, of which not a tithe has yet been exhausted.

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