

Placer County Mines, 1888

A New and Promising Quartz District, Editors Press;—For some years past but little prospecting has been done in Placer county, that is, so far as quartz is concerned; but now the ledges that traverse this section of California are receiving more than ordinary attention, and the probabilities are that the quartz fields of Placer county will, in the near future, command the attention of the mining world.

The Bell mine and the property operated by the Zineraft Bros., located but a few miles distant from Newcastle, are both unfolding well, and give promise of becoming fine ore producers when necessary developments will have been placed on their respective properties. To-day they are both paying enterprises, but as yet development is only in its infancy. Valentine Bros., San Francisco capitalists, are prospecting a valuable gold bearing quartz property within a short distance of the town of Newcastle, and from present indications it will not be long before reduction works will be erected and the mine operated upon its merits.

Drs. Schnabel and Berry are also placing improvements upon a recent discovery that upon the surface shows handsomely, and if the present flattering prospect has a home deeper in the ground, it will unfold into a mining enterprise of the most encouraging and profitable character. Dr. Schnabel is a public spirited man, and takes an absorbing interest in the developments of our mineral resources and is ever ready to lend a helping hand and launch his money into underground developments where surface indications warrant an investment. Your correspondent has only mentioned a few of the prospects that exist in this immediate neighborhood, merely for the purpose of showing that our quartz fields are not entirely neglected, but that an interest is still taken in the development of such properties.

The eastern portion of the county, however, is where the future quartz bonanzas will be opened up. Here the indefatigable prospector has not been idle, but to the contrary, has penetrated the deepest recesses of our mountainous country, and there sought for the precious metal that has lured our mining-men, in the face of the most discouraging obstacles and dangers, to those fields that gave promise of becoming gold producers. This newly discovered district is one of the most promising, and is possessed of greater surface merit than any mining field that has been opened up in California for many years. In the vicinity of Auburn, and in the low hills that skirt the Sierra Nevada range, pocket hunting, with but few exceptions has been the nature of the mining engaged in, but this sort of work is uncertain, and in fact so precarious that none but expert prospectors, or those who recklessly invest their money care to face the desperate chances that attends such mining. In the new district alluded to the ore bodies are continuous, or exist in paying chutes or chimneys, and the man who invests his money in such properties does so with the firm assurance that his ledge is permanent and the ore bodies in them of such dimensions as to preclude the possibility of a failure. This new and promising gold field is located in the mountainous country lying between the middle and north forks of the American river, but a short distance from the old List Chance district. In early days it will be remembered that a large quantity of quartz gold was taken from the placer mines in this vicinity, and it was this fact that influenced prospectors to search for the ledges that fed such claims. That their efforts were amply rewarded is substantiated by the rich and valuable discoveries they have made, ledges that have shown decided improvement as depth was attained, and though development is as yet only of a meager type, the properties operated are unfolding in the most encouraging manner. The ledges are strong, healthy and well-defined, showing every indication of permanency and range in width from four to seven feet, and in some instances are much wider. The formation is elate and of that nature that guarantees a sure home for the handsome veins that traverse through it from north to south. The country rock is bright, highly

mineralized and does not show any indication of having suffered in any manner by internal convulsions or glacial action. It is, figuratively speaking, "rock in place."

The two most prominent mines at the present time are the Nimrod, operated by Glace & Corey, and the discovery claim known as the Leopard. The showing in both properties above mentioned is of the most flattering nature, and even though no other discoveries had been made would insure a bright future for the camp and be a source of wealth to their respective owners. Both mines are most advantageously located for thorough and rapid development, but so far only limited work in the shape of shafts has been performed. The owners, as is usually the case, are poor men and their labors have been principally directed toward proving the ore bodies they have encountered, and not with a view to opening their mines in a systematic manner. So far as this work has progressed, however, results have been of the most gratifying nature, so much so, in fact, that negotiations are now pending for the erection of a mill on each property. The main vein in both locations varies in width from 7 to 10 feet, but within the same locations and distant from the main ledge 100 feet, is another equally as rich, and four feet in width. Both veins are pitching; toward each other, the larger one at an angle of 20 degrees and the smaller one at 45 degrees. It will thus be seen that a confluence of the two ledges will take place at no great depth, where an extensive and rich body of ore will surely be encountered unless one of the heretofore infallible indications in quartz mining proves to be a failure. The gangue in both veins is composed entirely of quartz, all of which shows a paying average of rock and improving in richness as work progresses. No piece of ore can be taken from either of these properties that does not yield a paying prospect, and the character of the rock is such that improvements can be placed upon them rapidly and at light cost. In the immediate neighborhood is an abundant supply of the finest timber for mining or building purposes and also a sufficient quantity of water at all seasons of the year for milling purposes. In fact, every natural facility exists for the successful working of the mines, and it is only a question of a short time when reduction works will be running and a permanent and heavy gold-producing camp will be established. In winter the snow falls to the depth of several feet, but will not interfere a particle with operations in the mines, if those operating them have the forethought to lay in their supplies and make necessary preparations for the winter season.

Every mining man who has visited this promising district has pronounced it one of great merit and that it will sooner or later become one of the leading quartz fields in the State. The fact that the ore is in a manner continuous, and that the ledges from wall to wall will pay to work, is sufficient to recommend them to those who mine. This season a great amount of work will be performed in this district and it will also be thoroughly prospected for new discoveries. Gold properties are in demand, and such mines as are to be found here will find ready buyers. A mill or two planted in this district will very soon bring it into prominence, and the probabilities are that such works will be in operation before the season ends. The gold is entirely free and is generally diffused through the rock, and the ledges are of such dimensions that no wall or waste rock need be moved in forwarding improvements or in extracting the ore bodies. More information will be furnished your readers regarding this district before the season ends. Miner, Newcastle, Placer Co., Cal.

Mining and Scientific Press, V. 56, 6/19/1888, p. 362

Placer County Mines, 2, 6-1888

Editors Press:—It is surprising to the mining man who visits Placer county that so little development is going on in a field so rich and promising. Gold-bearing quartz ledges traverse this section in every direction, ledges that with proper development would become paying propositions; but for reasons that

will be dealt with further on, are undisturbed, and it is a question at the present time whether the wealth thus locked up will ever flow through the channels of trade.

In days gone by more or less work was performed by poor men on many of the veins to be found in this district, but the cost of machinery at that time was greater than they could stand or the showing would justify. The consequence was that abandonment followed simply because what were then termed "poor grade propositions" could not be worked profitably. Radical changes have taken place since that time, and mines that were non-paying then can be worked profitably to-day. Mining machinery, simple in its character and much cheaper in its construction has been invented, wages are much lower, and transportation rates so reduced that even the poorest grade mines will guarantee a respectable margin over the cost of extracting and milling of the ore. A barrier however exists to-day, one that cannot be broken down by the impecunious prospector, and in coming to Placer county, or at least in many portions of it, to ply his vocation, he finds himself baffled on every hand by agricultural patents that have been plastered over our mineral fields.

How these patents were obtained is a question that those who applied for them and the grantors can answer much more readily than your correspondent. This county is a recognized mineral district, and mining is still going on, and though not now regarded as a leading industry, would soon become active again, and millions of dollars would be taken from the ledges and river channels that are everywhere to be found but for the fact that an agricultural patent covers mineral ground. In nine cases out of ten the working of the mineral land would not interfere a particle with the tailing of the productive lands by which they are surrounded, but there seems to be a bitter feeling among those engaged in agricultural pursuits against the man who mines. They will not work ledges known to exist within their boundary lines and will not permit others to prospect them cognizant of the fact that such work would not interfere with the cultivation of the soil or damage it a particle. Many men who owe their success to the mines have turned their backs upon the industry that laid for them the golden egg, and in some instances have obtained agricultural patents on land that they knew was mineral land, and there is but one way that they could have done so, and that was by perjury or fraud of some description. It is high time that some inquiry was made into this matter and the nefarious practice stopped. If mining men possessed of capital were operating in this county, there is no question but what many such questionable patents would be annulled, but as it is, those who would act in the matter have not the means to bring such a contest to a successful issue. Mining in this portion of our State is receiving more attention than for sums years past, and a general revival all along the line is predicted. In the immediate vicinity of Newcastle a ten-stamp mill will be erected this season by the Valentine Bros., on the Hathaway mine, and adjoining properties will also receive their quota of work.

At Ophir more or less prospecting is being done, and it is reported that several good pockets have been encountered. This is, strictly speaking, a pocket camp, and many valuable deposits have been taken from the numerous veins that run through the district. Our prospectors being crowded from this portion of the held by reasons above mentioned, are searching the hills farther back, and it is there that future discoveries will be made. A great amount of prospecting is being done on our river channel, and with the most encouraging results. An Oakland company are operating a channel mine about two miles distant from this place, and though they have only been working a short time, have made discoveries that warrant them in erecting mills to crush the cement. This property was worked to some extent in early days, but water was encountered and in such quantities as to force them to suspend. It is located on patented ground, but the operators, when notified that they could not work the mine in consequence of this fact, informed the patentee that they would do so, and if he desired to test the validity of his patent to take

legal measures to stop them. This put an end to the controversy, and if a few more companies of the same sort were operating here the agricultural patent business on recognized mineral land would receive a serious setback.

The Zeracraft mine on the American river is still yielding well, and the grade of ore becoming better as work progresses. The mill is running steadily and produces monthly between \$8000 and \$10,000.

It is reported that a valuable quartz strike was made on the river last week, the ledge on the surface ranging between two and four feet in width and assaying nearly @200 per ton. There is no question but what many fine veins will be found along this once fabulous gold bearing stream. It is a fine field for the prospector, and a few more discoveries will lead to a thorough search of the country in the immediate neighborhood of the river to its mountain source.

Parties who have just returned from Last Chance, state that the snow has entirely disappeared, and that mine-owners are making preparation to commence work. This is undoubtedly one of the most promising districts in this portion of the State, and the development that will take place this season will be productive of results that will interest mining men. Nearly all the ore taken from the Nimrod and Leopard shows gold visible to the naked eye and the entire ledge from wall to wall will pay to crush. Nine locations have been made on this lode, every one giving good surface returns.

Newcastle, Placer Co. Miner,

Mining and Scientific Press, V. 56, 6/30/1888, p. 426