

GEORGIA GOLD REGION.

This interesting country is assuming additional importance from the developments that are daily being made by the untiring perseverance of the miners, who at no distant period will prove it to be one of the richest mining districts in the world. Heretofore the business has been pursued, measurably, without system—every man his own miner—no one particularly acquainted with it; consequently *very* many have failed to realize their *high wrought* anticipations; others, more fortunate, have succeeded, more from accident than skill or industry. Mining in Georgia has not yet assumed a fixed character. Those who have been engaged in it, have made it rather a matter of speculation, by frequent transfers, than to ascertain the real value of the property. Hence so many frauds practised upon the inexperienced and credulous. But when capitalists (formed into companies and patronized by the Legislature) engage in the business, and pursue it systematically, as in other mining countries, it must inevitably become one of the most profitable and abundant sources of wealth, both to the proprietor and the State.

The formation of the country as far south as the declivity of the mountains, is primitive, comprising the counties of Rabun, Habersham, Hall, and the ten counties obtained by the late survey, together with a part of several others. The country thence to the Atlantic, may be

termed tertiary. In the former, gneiss and mica slate predominate, alternating with granite, feldspar, hornblende and talcose slate, and quartz, &c. The chief of the veins which are metalliferous, are found in mica and talcose slate; some in granite, gneiss and argillite slate. Iron abounds in every part of the country, and enters largely into the composition of most of the ores. One striking feature of the upper gold belt of Georgia, and the pole star of the miner, is a bold vein of hornblende slate, extending from the Blue Ridge in Rabun county, and running parallel with the strata, (which varies but a few degrees from N. E. and S. W.) through Habersham, Lumpkin, Cherokee, Cobb, Paulding, and Carroll counties. It is a little singular, but no less true, that nearly all the mines which have been wrought to profit, are on or near this vein, which is from a few hundred yards to several miles in breadth. The mining operations of this section, have been chiefly confined to deposits; yet several veins have been and are now being worked, though I believe, with one exception, to little profit, by reason of defective machinery. In Naucoochy Valley, a vein mine owned by Mr. Blake, is about to be put into operation a second time, upon a different plan, by experienced and practical men, who will most probably succeed. The gold veins are composed principally of quartz, running parallel with the strata, though in some few instances they traverse it, in which case they are either very rich or poor. The quartz is generally associated with hepatic pyrites of iron, (more or less decomposed,) and ochre.

The ore of many veins in Habersham and Lumpkin, particularly the former, will yield from one to two and a half and three dwts. per bushel, and that of two veins which I have examined will produce 5 dwts. average per bushel. These veins are walled with talcose slate, and are from 12 to 20 inches in width, to the depth of 40 feet, (as far as opened.) A few veins have been pursued from 1 to 200 feet, but a sufficient number of facts have not been ascertained, to judge positively whether the veins increased in richness in proportion to the depth or not; but few have been pursued below the water line. I have opened more than one hundred in the counties of Hall, Habersham, and Rabun, nine tenths of which would not justify labor; but the majority of those that would, were richer, and the ore of better quality, as I descended. Some ceased to be metalliferous at the water level: others terminated with the change of formation. For instance, those which were enclosed in argillaceous schist, terminated when it reached granite or sienite slate.— The gold veins of Mexico, contain no metal near the surface. The miner looks for some of the accompanying minerals, (talcose slate generally,) and upon that evidence drives a tunnel into the base of the mountain, with the expectation of finding a gold vein, and is rarely disappointed. But here we have no such difficulties to encounter; we have a sure guide; the gold from the surface, and in many instances very rich, compared with ores wrought in South America and Europe, where ore is frequently worked of the value of 20 cents per bushel, and make a profit. Why do not we make a profit on ores worth one, two, three, and even five dollars per bushel? The question may be thus answered: In the first place the adventurers are too avaricious, investing all their capital in gold lands, leaving nothing to put the mines into profitable operation. In the second place, we have had no experienced and practical miners until lately, who could fairly estimate the value of the ores. And lastly, we want enterprise, capital, and legislative patronage, to enable us to proceed with any certainty of success.

The mines of our country have certainly been very productive, and bid fair, from many recent developments, to exceed our most sanguine expectations. A discovery has lately been made on Capt. Richardson's farm in Naucoochy Valley, which is yielding enormous profits, and from its situation, (being in the centre of a large alluvial bottom of more than 100 acres,) promises to be more extensive than any mine ever found in this county. The proceeds with from 6 to 12 hands, are from 100 to 500 dwts. per day; one day, 11 hands obtained 560 dwts.; above 50 dwts. per hand! The gold is found in masses of from 2 to 25 dwts., is 23 5/8 carats fine, alloyed with copper. I mention this to show that gold deposits may exist so as to be worked profitably in large river bottoms, which is contrary to the theory of many.

The first gold found in the United States, was in Cabarrus county, North Carolina, in 1804. The mass weighed 28 lbs. and was picked up by accident. The first regular mining was done in 1813, in the same place, when \$2500 worth was obtained, which continued nearly the same until 1824, when the receipts at the Mint were \$5000. In 1825, \$17,000; in 1826, \$20,000; in 1827, \$21,000; in 1828, \$46,000; in 1829, \$134,000; in 1830, \$466,000; in 1831, \$518,000.— Previously to 1830, North Carolina furnished all the gold obtained in the United States, to the Mint; but in that year Virginia furnished \$24,000, South Carolina \$26,000, Tennessee \$2,000, Alabama \$2,000, North Carolina \$204,000, and Georgia \$212,000. Besides, large quantities were exported to England and France, of which we have no account, and what was consumed at home by Jewellers.— The returns of 1832 have not been made out, but cannot be short of \$700,000. That of 1833, from the immense number of persons engaged in the Cherokee country, and the richness of the deposits, together with the mines of North Carolina and other States, may safely be stated at upwards of one million dollars.

The other metals and minerals abounding in this country, are iron, silver, quicksilver, copper, lead, nickel, titanium, cobalt, manganese, molybdæna and antimony, all of which are rare except gold and iron. There are veins of magnesia and kaolin in Hall county. A quarry of beautiful marble is said to exist in Murray and Gilmer counties. The ruby,

garnet, tourmaline, agate and rock crystal, are found in the water-courses, and I have no doubt the diamond will be found here.

M. S.

P. S.—The lower gold belt of this State is not so extensive, but several rich mines have been discovered in Lincoln, Columbia, Wilkes and Oglethorpe counties—it runs parallel with the mountains.

Naucocochy Valley, Dec. 15, 1833.

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