

Coso Mining News

May 22, 1877

LOCAL MINING SUMMARY.

**A Trip to Lookout and Snow's Canyon—
Modoc Mines and Furnaces—The Win-
nietta Belle Mines and Mill—Shipment
of High Grade Bullion—Five-Stamp
Mill at Snow's Canyon.**

Last Saturday we had the hardihood to attempt a long-contemplated trip to Lookout. Accompanied by Martin Mee, foreman of the Defiance Mine, and Jerome S. Childs, Superintendent of the Lone Star and Eclipse, we mounted our steeds and set out, not, however, in the best of spirits, for we had been under the weather for several weeks. We arrived at the Modoc camp just at eventide, where we gave ourselves up to the tender mercies of the efficient Superintendent, Mr. Stronach. Our horses being cared for the next thing was to refresh our hungry stomachs, and the fine boarding-house of the Modoc Company furnished the wherewithal to do so, there being a good deal of substantials left after our hearty supper. We had the pleasure of meeting at this time with Mr. Selby, the chief smelter, with Mr. Bradstreet, book-keeper and general correspondent, Mr. Pierre, the irrepressible assistant, Mr. Moran, foreman of the furnaces, Mr. Moulds, chief mechanic, and a number of other gentlemen whose names we cannot now recall. Through the courteous kindness of Mr. Selby we were shown all around the furnace works, and are pleased to say that, in the complete arrangements and appointments, we doubt if better furnace works have ever been constructed on this coast. There are many new appliances, constructed by Mr. Moulds, which no other furnace that we have seen is possessed of. These are for the easy discharge of coal, by means of chutes, right in front of the furnace feed hole, another for ore, after it has passed through the breaker, to near the same place. The rock crushers, Blake's patent, are so set that the ore is merely slid into them, instead of raising it by means of shovels from the floor, and this saves much heavy work. Loose pulleys are also attached to the shaft of the crushers so that when they are not employed the belts are easily turned upon the loose pulleys

instead of slipping them entirely from the main pulley as is generally done. This also saves much time and trouble. One of the best arrangements that could have been thought of is one suggested and constructed under the supervision of Mr. Selby, consisting of a large plank platform where is dumped the ore as brought from the mine, and here it is spread out and carefully assorted by those experienced in this kind of work. Three men are employed at this work, and it is safe to say that their labor saves to the company at least \$100 each per day, in throwing aside material of little value, for it is well understood that the expense of coal, iron ore, lime, etc., used for fluxing is of no inconsiderable amount. We now go below and here we see the furnace men every now and then tapping the water-jacket furnaces to let off the slag, which runs as free as molten lead, and then dipping the metal from the well, upon one side of the furnaces, and pouring it into molds, when after cooling, it is assayed, weighed and then shipped to San Francisco and turned into coin, the latter in turn to be sent back for the production of more bullion. We could extend our report in describing the *modus operandi* of the manufacture of bullion to an indefinite length, but it is not necessary and our space will not permit. Somewhat fatigued we return to the office of the Superintendent, Mr. Stronach, and after a postprandial smoke, the exchange of queer ideas with two old newspaper men—Mr. Stronach and Mr. Bradstreet—besides listening to those relative to smelting of Mr. Selby, whose experience is large and second to none on the coast, we received a kindly invitation from Mr. Pier to share his hospitality by way of a good bed. We arose in the morning and, stepping outside, we had the pleasure of a grand panoramic view of Panamint valley. The sun, being but about half an hour above the Panamint range to the east, gave the whole valley a weird appearance, more like that of a grand sea of dirty water, while the furnaces, sending forth black volumes of smoke, seemed like a huge steamship just starting out upon the murky waters. After partaking of a good breakfast we took our departure for the

MINNIETTA BELLE CONS. M. CO'S MILL,
Some three miles around by the trail,
the mines, however, being located upon
the south extension of the Modoc. We
found Mr. R. C. Jacobs, the Superintendent
of the mill, busily engaged in retorting
the amalgam collected after a fourteen
days' run altogether, the mill being shut
down for a thorough clean-up and some
few repairs. A shipment of eight bars
of fine bullion will have preceded this
issue of our paper to San Francisco.

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These, in addition to the four bars shipped a short time ago make a total shipment in value of \$14,500. This, for a new ten-stamp mill just commencing operations, we consider pretty fair work, particularly as the ore was put through just as taken from the mines and without being carefully assorted. Hereafter the ores will be assorted and only those put through that pay most now, while the balance will be kept back to be worked hereafter when freights, supplies, etc., are cheapened. We met here also Mr. Chas. S. Peck, Superintendent of the mines, who gave us a cordial invitation to go up and examine them, but being desirous of seeing the

GOLD MINES AT SNOW'S CANYON.

And there being no feed for our animals at W. T. Grant's camp, we excused ourselves, promising to go over and return to

the Minnetta camp that night. We were detained longer than we expected to have been. A severe windstorm sprang up, and not feeling at all well, Mr. Mee and ourself concluded we had better make tracks for Darwin.

REGRETS.

There are some excellent mines lying between Grant's camp and the Minnetta, and these we particularly desired to see, but of course not returning by the route we had intended we were deprived the pleasure. These mines are owned by several parties, but a Mr. Ashmon and his partner, Mr. Cummings, are the ones who are operating upon them most extensively. We believe the two latter gentlemen have organized a strong Eastern company, and it is their intention to at once erect a five-stamp mill in Snow's canyon so as to work the ore and test their extent and richness. These ores are free-milling, being principally silver, but carrying 30 to 40 per cent gold. We have seen two assays which go from \$700 to \$1,300 per ton. One of the ledges, at the bottom of a shaft 30 feet deep is solid ore two feet and a half wide. Besides being disappointed in seeing these ledges we were still more so in not going through the mines of the Minnetta and Modoc, as we wished to verify for ourself the stories of the extensive ore-bodies lately discovered. We can assure our readers, however, that, from reports given us by the Superintendents, the men working in the mines, and others, disinterested,

who have lately gone through them, that there has been no exaggeration in regard to either. Mr. Selby promised to give us his figures in detail, for the number of tons of ore worked, bars of bullion shipped and its total value, but our change of route home prevented our getting these. If not for this issue, we shall endeavor to give them in our next. We can say this, however, that we doubt if there are any two furnaces of similar capacity on the Coast turning out bullion faster or as high grade, it now averaging \$600 per ton, frequently exceeding that figure.

BUSINESS AT LOOKOUT.

We found the "Hill" as lively, so far as business is concerned, as could be wished for. Birchett & Tait, dealers in varieties, tobacco, cigars, stationery, etc., are doing a thriving business. M. Scheeline has one of the largest fire-proof stores, well filled with goods of all kinds, that there is in the county. He is doing a large business. J. J. Gunn has one of the neatest saloons to be found anywhere, and it is filled night and day with good cash customers. Geo. Snow & F. P. Ball, also have a very neat saloon, and as they are both well known and popular with the boys, they are doing well. Jas. Maloney has the next largest saloon on the Hill and does his share of business. These constitute all the saloons at Lookout, and the business is extensive enough to give all a chance to make a stake.

WHAT IS WANTED.

We regret very much that there is no regular mail or postoffice there, as the camp is now large enough to command that consideration at the hands of the General Postal Department. We think that, if a petition was circulated, it would obtain signers enough thereto to receive the favorable consideration of our Senators and Postal Department.

NEW ROADS.

The Cerro Gordo Freightling Company has now a large force of men employed in building new roads up the Panamint valley to the Minnetta mill and around to the Modoc, and when these are finished and the tramway is constructed from the foot of the hill up to the furnaces of the Modoc Company, all their supplies will come in and their bullion go out by this route, which arrangement will undoubtedly save both companies much money and time. Altogether we cannot see anything now to prevent the mining section on the Lookout side of the mountain becoming one of the most thrifty on the Pacific Coast.