

## ABOUT PLACERVILLE, CAL.

THE SACRAMENTO AND EL DORADO COUNTY WOOD AND TIMBER CHUTE—NEW DICHES IN EL DORADO COUNTY—HOW ALL WILL NATURALLY COMBINE INTO OUR COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM—GIGANTIC TIMBER RESOURCES OF THE COUNTRY TO BE DEVELOPED.

[Correspondence of The Record-Union.]

PLACERVILLE, FEB. 16, 1875.—*Eds. Record-Union*: The interest manifested by the Record-Union in the permanent prosperity of Sacramento leads me to give some additional items to those already given to its readers, in regard to the amount of timber and cord wood, and the facilities, present, and prospective, for transporting them from this country to Sacramento city. In El Dorado county there is a timber belt, the west line of which lies in about the longitude of Placerville, and extending north and south from thirty to forty miles across the county. Its breadth west to east varies from thirty to fifty miles, comprising about 1,200 square miles, or more than 700,000 acres, most of which is well wooded; the larger portion being covered with a heavy growth of sugar pine, yellow pine, spruce, cedar, or oak, with some California maple, and in some places a large growth of California laurel, the two latter being suitable for manufacturing furniture, or ornamental work. In this timber belt are contained probably 200,000 acres of the finest sugar pine forests in the state.

Much of this fine timber is being destroyed by persons known as "Shake makers." Sugar pines of gigantic size, often from eight to twelve feet in diameter at the base, tapering slightly to a height of eighty or a hundred feet without a limb, are felled, a "cut" four feet in length sawed off, and if not found to "rive" well, the tree is abandoned and left to decay; while if the tree is acceptable to the shake makers, not more than a third or a half of it is worked up. I am informed by a United States surveyor that he recently saw 32,000 shakes made from sixty feet of a tree, the remainder left to destruction by the elements. The writer has seen hundreds of sugar pine trees partly worked, and then left to rot or be burned by autumnal fires, which so frequently pass over portions of this timber tract. A tree of the kind above mentioned, if sawed into plank would produce more than 40,000 feet finishing lumber, worth in Sacramento five cents per foot—\$2,000—while if manufac-

tured into shakes, would not bring one-fourth of that sum in the same market.

The objection to parties manufacturing shakes is not so great as the wanton destruction of this fine timber. Shake makers ply their vocation on government lands, surveyed or unsurveyed, and on railroad lands alike.

An old hunter who frequents those localities informed the writer this week that the destruction of timber by shake makers is alarming, and ought to be discontinued. I have called attention to the destruction of this fine timber that persons most interested may take notice of the same.

Intelligent and successful lumber men, who have been engaged in the business for twenty years or more in this country, and who have examined nearly every square mile of this timber belt, inform me that there are many thousands of acres that will produce 300,000 feet to the acre of merchantable pine and spruce lumber, and that the average of the whole will range between 5,000 and 300,000 feet to the acre.

If the average per acre is placed at 20,000 feet, this belt will yield fourteen billion feet of boards, or more than ten million cords of four foot wood.

There is a large amount of the finest quality of black oak wood—in addition to the pine and spruce—which is worth in market \$2 per cord more than the white oak, which grows to the west of this belt, and along the foot-hills, and is now the principal wood sent to the Sacramento market.

The north and middle portions of this timber is situated along the tributaries of the middle and south forks of the American river; the south portion along the tributaries of the Cosumnes river. That portion lying on the northwest slope of the Diamond Spring ridge, in the vicinity of Newtown, Pleasant valley, Sly Park, and east of there; all of that along the Placerville ridge, and the middle and southern slope of the Georgetown ridge, in the vicinity of Gaddos and Silver creeks, can be reached and transported to Placerville by the El Dorado Water and Deep Gravel and Mining Company's canal and its branches, now in course of construction, and which will be completed the coming summer. The main trunk of this canal is about forty miles in length, twelve feet wide on top, six feet wide on the bottom and five feet deep; the minimum grade being six feet to the mile, with curved flumes

across the head of the ravine, so constructed as to allow the floating of timber thirty feet in length. The terminus of the main canal, five miles east of Placerville, will have an altitude of more than twelve hundred feet above Shingle Springs, the present terminus of the Placerville and Sacramento Valley Railroad. A chute or V flume, can be constructed from the main canal via of Diamond Springs and Mud Springs to Shingle Springs, the length of which would be thirteen miles, with a fall from seventy-five to one hundred feet to the mile, which would insure success for transporting cord wood, and timber also, if the flume be of proper size.

A chute, to be profitably used for timber, would require to be constructed of two inch plank, twenty-four inches wide, which would be eight feet to the foot—board measure—tressle-work or support of the flume, about four feet of lumber to the foot, in all twelve feet of sawed lumber to one foot of flume, or about sixty-four thousand feet of lumber to the mile, worth 2 cents per foot, \$1,280 per mile, or a total cost per mile of \$2,300. A chute thus constructed, with the use of seventy-five inches of water, would transport 300 cords of wood or 300,000 feet—board measure—to Shingle Springs or other points on the line, every twenty-four hours, at a cost of \$20 for motive power. Inch boards cannot be carried through a V flume. A chute for the transportation of cord wood only could be constructed for a much less sum. If the Placerville and Sacramento Valley railroad should soon be completed to this place, which our citizens are very anxious to have done, a five mile chute would be all that would be required. With the railroad terminus at this place, Placerville would become an important point for the burning of charcoal and the shipping of wood and lumber. Charcoal could be loaded into cars and transported in bulk and deposited in the machine shops or mills at Sacramento with but one handling. This center route by the El Dorado Water and Deep Gravel Mining Company canal commands one half, if not two-thirds of the timber and cordwood in the country.

On the north side of the Georgetown ridge and southern slope of the Middle and North Fork of the American river, chutes can be constructed from the California Water Company's canal near Georgetown, and from the North Fork ditch in Placer county, both of which would terminate at or near Folsom; that on the Grizzly Flat ridge by chutes from the Consumnes river

to Shingle Springs or Latrobe. Thus at a comparatively small outlay of capital Sacramento can be supplied with cheap fuel and lumber for all manufacturing and domestic purposes, from El Dorado county, and the supply cannot be exhausted in the next fifty years. In the vicinity of Diamond Springs, Placerville, Kelsey and Georgetown, where lumbering was carried from 1850 to 1856, the large trees cut down, and since that time autumnal fires prevented, which, before the occupation of the country by white settlers, destroyed the young trees and undergrowth, a dense forest of luxuriant growth have sprung up and now cover the hills and most of the uncultivated land. Those young pines are from ten to fifty feet in height, and from three to twelve inches in diameter, and when cut and seasoned in summer, make excellent firewood or charcoal. Such wood is much used now by families here.

If Placerville had direct communication with tide-water, she might be a formidable competitor with Sacramento or Chico for the rolling mills. Her water power is cheap, and equal to anything of the kind in the state, and besides her wood and timber facilities we have excellent beds of iron ore, one about one mile from town, with another some distance from here which is almost pure metal, and in vast quantities. I am informed by parties who have tested it, that in a common blacksmith's forge they have worked it for horse-shoes.

Oxford.

#### Effects of Hard Times in London.

The sales of plate and jewelry in London this spring will exceed the ordinary displays in this branch of costly decoration. Early in March a casket of jewels of rare magnificence, belonging to a lady, will be offered for sale. Added to these are a gold vase, more than 100 ounces in weight, chased and enamelled in colors, and studded with 1,700 precious stones; an Eleanor cross in silver, a grand piece of old Venetian work in silver, enriched with gems, representing the "Triumph of Maximilian," and large camel by Girometti and other famous Roman workers. Following these sales, in April, comes, notwithstanding the accession of King Alfonso XII., the sale of the jewels of Dona Ysabel de Borbon, which had been announced some time before the recent change in Spain. Some articles have been withheld, but at present the directions given to sell remain in force. Among the collections of old plate, which will enable the virtuosi in this favorite walk to enrich their cabinets, is that of the late Mr. Klockman, a German merchant of London, which is to be sold in May