

Virginia City Territorial Enterprise
February, 1863

The Spanish

We slide down into the Spanish mine yesterday, to look after the rich strike which was made there lately.

[This in the time before elevators, when, as in the salt mines in Austria, one slides down a polished wooden bannister on a waxed leather apron to reduce the heat. It is a great ride down but a long hike back up. Ed.]

We found things going on at about their usual gait, and the general appearance of the mine in no respect differing from what it was before the recent flood. A few inches of water still remain in the lower gallery, but it interferes with nobody, and can be easily bailed out whenever it may be deemed necessary.

Every department of the Spanish mine is now in first class working order, owing to the able management of the general Superintendent, Mr. J. P. Corrigan; the slight damage done by the inundation having been thoroughly repaired. In the matter of bracing and timbering the mine, an improvement upon the old plan has lately been added, which makes a large saving in the bill of expenses. This improvement consists in building the stations wider and higher, and filling up a wall of them here and there with refuse rock. Expenses are not only lightened thus, but such walls never rot, are never in danger of caving, need never be removed, and are altogether the strongest supports that a mine can have.

Intelligent people can understand, now, that about a hundred dollars a day may be saved in this way, without even taking into consideration the costly job of re-timbering every two or three years, which is rendered unnecessary by it—and by way of driving the proposition into heads like the Unreliable's, which is filled with oysters instead of brains, we will say that by building these walls, you are saved the time and labor of lowering heavy timbers 300 feet into the earth and hoisting up refuse rock the same distance; for you can leave the one in the woods, and pile the other into boxed-up stations as fast as you dig it out.

However, it is time to speak of the rich strike, now. This charming spot is two hundred and forty feet below the surface of the earth. It extends across the entire width of the ledge—from twenty-five to thirty feet—and has been excavated some twenty feet on the length of the lead, and to the depth of twenty-one feet. How much deeper it reaches, no man knoweth.

The face of the walls is of a dark blue color, sparkling with pyrites, or sulphurets, or something, and beautifully marbled with little crooked streaks of lightning as white as loaf sugar. This mass of richness pays from eight to twelve hundred dollars a ton just as it is taken from the ledge, without "sorting." Twenty thousand dollars' worth of it was hoisted out of the mine last Saturday; about two hundred and fifty tons have been taken out altogether.

The hoisting apparatus is about perfect: when put to its best speed, it can bail out somewhere in the neighborhood of a hundred and fifty tons of rock in daylight. The rich ore we have been talking about is sacked up as soon as it reaches the surface of the Territory, and

shipped off to the Company's mill (the Silver State) at Empire City. The Silver State is a forty-stamp arrangement, with a thundering chimney to it, which any one has noticed who has traveled from here to Carson. Mr. Dorsey is the superintendent, and Mr. Janin assayer.