

the continent. So far as that of California has yet been discovered, it is nearly equal in extent to the other, its length being 600 miles, and its width over 100. The two regions differ more in the quantity of gold which they yield than in its quality, or in any other circumstance with which we are acquainted connected with them in their auriferous capacity.

There can be little doubt but that the origin of the gold found in the valleys of the San Joachim and the Sacramento, is the Sierra Nevada. It has for ages been washed down into the plain by the torrents descending from the mountains. That the whole range is rich in the precious ore is evident from the extent to which it has been found in the valleys, and the quantities in which it has been discovered in the rocks and amongst the hills. Whether mines will yet be opened in the mountains and worked, it is very difficult to say. The rich treasures which they enclose may lie beyond the line of perpetual congelation, where they will bid defiance to the approaches of man. It is by no means improbable that the great interior basin is skirted on the west by an auriferous belt, for the golden torrents may have flowed down both slopes of the Sierra.

Many are prone to believe that the gold of California is only to be found on the surface, and that its stock will soon be exhausted. The state in which it is discovered in the valley, is no criterion of the nature or productiveness of the mines in the mountains. So far as the gold has been discovered, not in the position to which it has been washed by successive torrents, but imbedded in the rock at the bases of the Sierra, it certainly comes very near the surface. But if we are guided by the analogy afforded by almost