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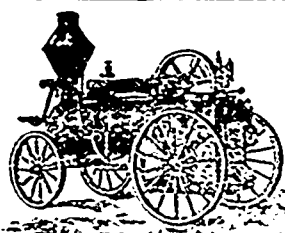
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## MINING.

THE GROSH BROTHERS.—A MYSTERIOUS PAIR.

Written for the Engineering and Mining Journal by Dan Do Quille.

Among the miners working in the Gold Canon placer mines the first to suspect the existence of silver in the "Washoe" region were undoubtedly the two brothers, Hosea B. and Ethan Allen Grosh. These young men arrived at the diggings in 1852, and worked on Gold Canon and in Nigger Ravine, the latter a tributary of the canon named. They were sons of Rev. A. B. Grosh, a Universalist clergyman, who was editor of a Universalist paper, published in Utica, N. Y. They were fairly successful in gold washing—the placers at that time paying from half an ounce to an ounce a day to the man—and soon erected a small stone cabin and settled down as miners.

The brothers being very quiet and reticent, they soon began to be looked upon as a mysterious pair. The majority of the gold diggers being rude and unlettered men the brothers did not find them congenial associates; therefore did not seek their companionship. Regarding themselves as being the best of good fellows, the diggers could see no reason for the brothers holding themselves aloof from their society except that they were secretly engaged in working out some abstruse mineralogical problem. The report that the young men had "books in their cabin" strengthened this belief, and it was soon said that the brothers possessed a large stock of chemicals and all kinds of assaying apparatus. The miners seem never to have in the least resented the exclusiveness of the young men, but to have respected them as a pair of dreamers of the alchemist order for whom the sort of hermit life they led was quite proper.

The cabin of the Grosh brothers stood at the base of a large mountain spur known as Grizzly hill, just at the south end of the present town of Silver City. Their cabin was not on Gold Canon, but a few rods above on a tributary called American Ravine. The brothers were well educated and appear to have had considerable knowledge of geology and mineralogy. They probably had a few books on these subjects, but they could have had nothing more in the way of instruments for assaying and testing ores than a blowpipe and gold scales, and probably did not have those aids. I am of the opinion that the only apparatus for testing ores they had was that made by themselves on the ground, when they discovered an ore which they believed to contain silver.

At first the brothers appear to have given their undivided attention to mining for gold in the gravel deposits, but in about 1853-54 they began to explore the surrounding country and prospect the many quartz veins cropping out in every direction among the hills encircling their cabin. They most likely began this work in the hope of finding some rich vein of gold bearing quartz—the source of the placer gold found in the canon—and while so employed probably found one or more veins containing argentiferous galena. Testing this in a rude way they were able to extract some buttons of silver—the first silver ever smelted and refined in the great silver fields lying between the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevada Range. They told a few persons that they had found silver ore in the country, but I have never found a man among the old Gold Canon miners to whom they showed any samples of it. Nevertheless I am quite sure, from evidences found by myself, mention of which will presently be made, that they did find an ore containing silver and that they extracted from it some buttons of the metal.

It has been claimed by some writers that the Grosh brothers were the first discoverers of silver in what is now known as the Comstock Lode, but there is no evidence that they ever obtained a particle of silver from that vein, or that they ever prospected it for silver. Their field of operations was to the southward, five miles away from the place where silver was first found on the Comstock. Doubtless in coming up Six-Mile Canon from Dayton, they frequently saw the masses of croppings of the Comstock Lode on the side of Mount Davidson, and may have even visited and examined some of the upheavals, but silver nowhere shows in the croppings, nor can much gold be found in those parts of the vein which project above the surface. The quartz composing the croppings of the lode is almost everywhere rather coarse and uninviting, being filled with small angular fragments of country rock. At Gold Hill, where the surface of the vein was decomposed in one place, gold was found at the "grass roots," and the ground there was at first mistaken for a placer deposit and located as such by the discoverers. In that part of the vein the black sulphuret of silver was not reached until the water-level had been attained.—150 ft. to 250 ft. below the surface. The ores of the Gold Hill mines were at first worked for gold. Although traces of silver may be found in places in the croppings of the Comstock Lode, yet there is nothing in their appearance that would have induced anyone to test them for that metal at the time the Grosh boys were alive—that is previous to the great discovery made on the vein in 1859. There is in the croppings no indication of the immense wealth that has been found at some depth under ground.

Some writers have given Comstock the credit of being the first discoverer of silver in the lode that bears his name, other have credited "Old Virginia" with the discovery, and some Joe Kirby and his partners, while one writer says that when the first Americans arrived in the country they found a party of Mexicans at work upon the croppings of the lode. The truth is that Peter O'Reilly and Patrick McLoughlin were the first who ever turned up to the light of day the rich silver ore of the Comstock. They happened to hit upon a place where the ore came near the surface, and the only such place on the whole line of the lode.

(To be continued.)