

ANCIENT AND MODERN SUPPLIES OF GOLD AND SILVER.

In commenting upon a recent work by M. Babelon on "The Origin of Money," M. De Foville says in l'Economiste Francais that the author has given entirely too much credence to those ancient writers who describe the treasures of their time in hyperbolic terms, and according to whom Rome, Greece and Persia must have held far greater stocks of gold than are now in existence. In all ages writers have spoken freely and largely of treasures of gold and silver; it costs nothing and sounds well. But when we read that the Ethiopians made chains of gold to secure their slaves because the metal was more abundant than iron or brass, or that Harpalos was sent to Athens by Alexander the Great with 5,000 talents, or 150,000 kgs. of gold, we cannot accept these statements otherwise than as wild hyperbole.

Undoubtedly some great treasures of gold and silver were accumulated in the ancient palaces and temples; but it is not at all probable that the entire stock of the ancient world was equal to the amount now stored in the vaults of the Bank of France, for instance. The distribution and uses of the metals are very different now, but the stock is enormously greater.

It is curious to enquire whence the gold of the ancient world came. At the present time the chief supplies are from North America, Australia, Siberia and South Africa, all countries unknown to the ancients—unless, indeed, we find in the ancient mines of Mashonaland the Tharsis from which the Tyrian ships brought gold to King Solomon; and the Jewish writers evidently exaggerated the quantity of their gold quite as much as their heathen authors did their treasures. The classical writers speak of gold as brought from Nubia, Arabia, India, the Caucasus, Asia Minor, Thrace, Macedonia, Dalmatia, the Alps, the Pyrenees, Britain, Spain and Numidia. But all these countries today produce very small amounts. It may be said that the mines were exhausted by the old workings; but nowhere do we find evidences of very extensive mining, and it is certain that metallurgical knowledge was very much less in those days than now.

It is only necessary to refer to a few of the ancient histories. Thus the Terbelli, the Gascons of antiquity, claimed that in the basin of Arcachon, and in the valleys of the Rhone and the Ariege, it was only necessary to use the plow to turn out nuggets of gold from the soil. The Taurisci Novici, at the head of the Adriatic, one day found a placer so rich that gold in Italy lost one-third of its value. In the country of the Dardæ, Megasthenes, who accompanied there the engineer Gorgas on a mission from Alexander the Great, gravely tells us that people did not dig for gold, but simply caught the foxes and shook out from their tails the grains of gold which stuck to them as they trailed through the sand. Diodorus the Sicilian, a serious historian, says that Philip of Macedon obtained from Mount Bermion yearly 1,000 talents—30,000 kg.—of gold. But what has become of this mine which then furnished 100,000,000 fr. a year?

These and many authors are quoted to show how great were the quantities of gold and silver in use in various forms; but the citations only show that no reliance is to be placed on such statements as expressing actual facts.

One might almost believe that he was reading a West Australian company's prospectus.

The truth is that exact statistics are of modern and very recent growth. The ancient authors spoke of 1,000 talents when they meant a large quantity of gold, of 100,000 men when they meant simply a large number, without definitely indicating the actual figures, of the magnitude of which they had only a vague conception, and to use these figures as definite today is absurd.

A recent utterance of note regarding British Columbia is that of Mr. Walter R. Horncastle, of London, England, who, with his unique experience of company advertising, etc., may be well looked upon as an authority on these matters and well qualified to express an opinion. In his monthly circular he says, apropos of British Columbia, that the boom "will dim the lurtre of West Australia and South Africa."

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TRIUMPH MINERAL CLAIM.

Where located: On Sophie Mountain, in the Trail Creek Mining Division of West Kootenay District of British Columbia.
TAKE notice that I, A. R. Macdonald, acting as Secretary of Victory-Triumph Gold Mining Company, Limited Liability, free miner's certificate number 7779, intend, sixty days from the date hereof, to apply to the Mining Recorder for a certificate of improvements for the purpose of obtaining a Crown grant of the above claim.

And further take notice that action under section thirty-seven must be commenced before the issuance of such certificate of improvements.

Dated this 1st day of December, 1896.
12-2-96. A. R. MACDONALD.

CERTIFICATE OF IMPROVEMENTS.

VICTORY MINERAL CLAIM.

Where located: On Sophie Mountain, in the Trail Creek Mining Division of West Kootenay, District of British Columbia.
TAKE notice that I, A. R. Macdonald, acting as Secretary of Victory-Triumph Gold Mining Company, Limited Liability, free miner's certificate number 7779, intend, sixty days from the date hereof, to apply to the Mining Recorder for a certificate of improvements for the purpose of obtaining a Crown grant of the above claim.

And further take notice that action under section thirty-seven must be commenced before the issuance of such certificate of improvements.

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Arrives at Trail	8:00 a. m.
No. 4, PASSENGER, Daily, except Sunday—	
Leaves Rossland	4:00 p. m.
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Leaves Trail	8:45 a. m.
Arrives at Rossland	10:00 a. m.
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