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QUEEN CHARLOTTE'S ISLANDS TWENTY-SIX YEARS AGO.

COLONIAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE.

Victoria, Vancouver Island, Nov. 15., 1859.

The following letter from Mr. William Downie, giving an account of his journey from Victoria to Queen Charlotte's Island, and thence by Fort Simpson to Fort St. James, Stuart Lake, is herewith published for general information.

STUART'S LAKE, Oct. 10th, 1859.

SIR,—I beg to make the following report of my trip to Queen Charlotte's Island, and my journey thence by Fort Simpson to the interior of British Columbia. I left Victoria on the 27th of July, in company with eighty-seven men, having stores, etc., for three months; we arrived in Gold Harbor, Queen Charlotte's Island, safely on the sixth of August, and immediately set about prospecting, as we expected to see the gold shining in the water.

We examined the spot where a large quantity of gold was formerly taken out, and discovered a few specks of gold in the small quartz seams that run through the slate, (two of the party blasting the rock) while others prospected around the Harbor.

I then proceeded in a canoe to Douglas Inlet, which runs in to the south of Gold Harbor, hoping to find traces there of the Gold Harbor lead, but without success. The nature of the rock is trap or horn-lead, with a few small seams of poor quartz straggling over the surface. Granite was found at the head of this inlet, but not a speck of gold could we discover. Next day we went up an inlet north of Gold Harbor, and here a white rock showed itself on a spur of a mountain, and like old Californians, up we went to see if this was the place where our fortunes were to be made. After a difficult ascent, we found it to be, however, nothing but weather-beaten,

sun-dried granite, instead of quartz. Further up the inlet we saw a little black slate and some talcose rock, but nothing that looked like gold. On our return, we found that the men engaged in blasting had given it up, the few surface specks being all the gold that could be found. The character of the rock is generally trap or hornblende.

The large amount of gold that was formerly found with so little difficulty, existed in what is called an offshoot or blow. The question then arises, how did the gold get here? Some of our party were of opinion that a gold lead existed close at hand. But it can only be put down to one of those extraordinary freaks of nature so often found in a mineral country. The offshoot in question is not uncommon; I have often seen them in California; on such a discovery being made, hundreds of miners would take claims in all directions over it, and test the ground in every way, nothing further could be found, except in the one spot, about seventy feet in length, running S. E. and N. W. On being worked about fifteen feet it gave out. Before it was worked I have blown the sand off a vein of pure gold. I then proposed to test the island further, so we started for the Skidegate channel, at the Cossver Indian village where we were wind-bound; the appearances were more favorable, talcose slate, quartz and red earth. We tried to discover gold but without success. Sulphuret of iron was found in abundance, and we discovered traces of previous prospectings. The Indians understand the search for gold well and detect it in the rocks quicker than I can.

The sea coast from Cossver village to Skidegate Channel is the wildest spot I have ever been in, and we did not care to hunt for gold in such a place. Five Indians were drowned here to-day while fishing.

At the Skidegate Channel we found black slate with quartz prevailing; further to the north granite