

# BRITISH COLUMBIA :

## ITS SOIL, CLIMATE, RESOURCES, &c.

Having spent the greater part of the past seven months traveling through the interior of British Columbia, in the capacity of newspaper correspondent, the writer has since his return been frequently applied to for information touching that region, by parties desirous of emigrating thither, or by others willing to canvass the inducements for doing so. As a means of answering those inquiries, and embodying the latest authentic intelligence from a quarter which, despite their recent disappointments, has not ceased to interest our people, he has determined to publish a short series of articles on the soil, climate and natural resources of that country, selecting as the medium the columns of our oldest and most widely extended journal. The writer engages in this task the more readily from the fact that he has, hitherto, found little inducement to publish any considerable portion of the copious notes kept while journeying over Vancouver's Island and the main land; and for the further reason, that his views as heretofore exhibited are lacking in entireness, several lengthy letters designed for publication having failed of that end through the uncertain modes of transmission incident to the remote localities where they were written.

This purpose, then, of placing before the public the information gleaned during his travels in a summary and consecutive shape, will form the author's excuse should certain of his ideas seem familiar to the reader, or should something of repetition appear in what he may now have to say. It will be his aim, however, to avoid reiterating what is already well known, and to adduce as many new facts in the present writing as he shall have in possession or be able to command. It constitutes no part of his plan to write a formal "Vindication of the Fraser River Mines;" or to frame apologies for the failures that have so frequently attended their working. This is a business to which he has not felt called—a work, the performance of which, in the absence of any disposition or motive on his part, must necessarily be left to others.

Yet it is but just a proper exposition should be given of the causes that led to these failures so continuous, general and disastrous, as to have well nigh destroyed all confidence in the mineral wealth of a country, which, but ten months ago, was, by many, deemed a rival, if not the peer, of California. Candor compels

the admission that these untoward results were attributable to the precipitate action of the adventurers themselves, coupled with manifold and all but insuperable obstacles interposed between them and their field of operations, quite as much as to the limited area or non-productive character of the mines. A slight examination of the country to be penetrated, and of the circumstances under which this immigration took place, can hardly fail to confirm this opinion, and impress its justness upon every candid and dispassionate mind. No special pleading should be tolerated in behalf of these mines, nor should any attempts be winked at for glossing over the fearful perils and fatal catastrophes that attended their opening. We have had enough of this—and too much, as the thousands returning empty-handed, and the hundreds who will no more return at all, can testify. Still, it is meet the public be possessed of all the facts, to the end, that being fully advised they may fairly judge and intelligently act for themselves.

It is, moreover, important that the residents of California properly understand the relative position of their own State and these new communities about being planted on their northern border, and that they fully appreciate the reciprocal advantages likely to arise therefrom in the future. This is a point on which, owing to a perverted sentiment of patriotism, or a narrow feeling of national jealousy, or, perhaps, to the low stand-point from which the subject has been viewed, there is much misapprehension in the minds of our citizens. We have been apt to consider these colonies of British Columbia and Vancouver as necessarily antagonistic to the interests and progress of California. It has been our wont to regard them simply as rivals—competitors entering the field to bid for population—decoying sojourners from our midst, and diverting newcomers from our shores. Some have even affected to see in these distant provinces, so situate on the outer verge of the British empire, the instruments wherewith England hopes to check our growth and impede our march to greatness, if indeed they may not be the germs of a power which is one day to arise and overshadow our Pacific Republics.

That England has great purposes to effect in this part of the world, is no doubt true; that she has grand projects on foot, looking to a union of her North American colonies, and