

frost and of fire, of air and water, she has been slowly wearing down the primitive mountains in which the precious metal was originally formed, washing away the lighter matter, and condensing the gold thus derived from cubic miles of granite and quartz within a few feet of sand at the bottom of the water-courses. A miner may thus take from a river bed in one day an amount of gold which he could not have extracted from the rocks in a year.

While the mines of California will probably diminish in productiveness from year to year, there is every reason to expect that those of British Columbia will increase; since the peculiar formations to which we have adverted give a geological character of permanence to the workings. The Chinese immigration has recently set in, and the movement is a strong corroboration of the mineral wealth of British Columbia. That sagacious people, as is well known, do not emigrate in large numbers, without having first ascertained that they will improve their position by the change. Their agents have carefully investigated the mining districts, and have reported on them most favourably; and British Columbia is found a far more attractive field for the emigrants from the Celestial Empire than California, where they have long been treated with harshness and illiberality. In the British colony they receive the same protection as other settlers; and the existing population hail their arrival with satisfaction, labour of all descriptions being greatly in demand.

The colony is yet destitute of one indispensable element of progress. There is no productive class, the population consisting entirely of miners and persons employed in the Government departments. The miner is an unceasing consumer; and the fair face of nature is scarred by marks of his devastations. The merchant may be allured to the most remote of the British colonies by the hope of gain; but the substantial wealth of the country can only be derived from the cultivation of its soil. Without agriculture, British Columbia must be dependent on other countries for its daily food. A farming population forms the solid basis of every prosperous State. It is as much the interest as it is the duty of Government, on the first establishment of a colony, to open up the country as speedily as possible for the reception of such a class. Roads, therefore, are the first necessity in a new colony; without them, indeed, there can be no real progress, and the most fertile soils are as valueless as sandy deserts.

As British Columbia has been only partially surveyed, it is impossible to state, with

any degree of accuracy, the quantity of land which is available for cultivation, or to determine its agricultural value; but wherever explorations have been made, they have resulted in the discovery of tracts of rich land, even in places where they were least expected. There is, therefore, no probability that a settler will experience any difficulty in selecting a good location. There is an abundant supply of timber for fencing, buildings, and fuel; and the produce of the forest may be made a source of immediate profit in the export of its valuable woods; and the production of potash, which finds a ready market, will partly pay the cost of clearance.\* The flora and vegetation of the country are in a very high degree luxuriant. The richness of the soil in the neighbourhood of the gold-bearing rocks is, Mr. Pemberton says, most remarkable, as shown in the production of gigantic roots and vegetables. Turnips as large as hassocks, radishes as large as man-golds, and a bushel of potatoes from a single stalk, are, he says, far from uncommon. This exuberant fertility of soil is common to almost the coast of the Pacific as far south as San Francisco, where, at agricultural exhibitions, pumpkins weighing from 200 lbs. to 250 lbs. have been displayed, and pears are produced, 'to eat one of which requires the united efforts of five guests.'† 'An acre of land,' says the Surveyor-General of the colony, 'planted with apple trees, would, at the end of three years, on a minute calculation, have cost the proprietor from L30 to L40; and their lowest selling price would then be L200.' Hops succeed admirably. Native hemp, quite equal to the best Russian, grows freely, and is found in a wild state near every Indian hut. The general agricultural advantages of the country are thus stated by Mr. Pemberton:—

'Open grass lands can, of course, be ploughed up at once, and a crop obtained. Fern lands require to be ploughed in the heat of summer, in order, by fermentation, to kill the fern, and to destroy by exposure bulbous roots, such as crocuses, kamass, etc., for which purpose pigs make admirable pioneers. To clear pine lands is not very difficult: being very resinous, they burn up readily, and are easily overturned, as the roots do not descend but creep along the ground; in which respect these trees stand like pawns upon a chess-board. Oak is more difficult to eradicate, as the roots go straight down. Marsh lands are usually easily drain-

\* In Canada, two acres and a half of wood will produce a barrel of potash, worth, after paying all expenses, about L7, 10s.

† This is stated, it must be observed, on the authority of an Englishman, not of an American.