

gold needing to be refined (as distinguished from 'fine gold' or placer gold, which needed no subsequent treatment), iron ores and brass ores are won underground. The miner presses to the very boundary of the darkness, and searches, to that limit, the rocks as dark as death. Down and away from human abodes he sinks his shaft, in which, forgotten by the feet that pass overhead, he swings suspended. Above him, the earth produces food; but underground, ploughed by fire, it has gems for grain, and gold for clods in the soil. His trail is invisible even to the keen-eyed birds of prey; nor has it ever been traveled by prowling beasts—even the bold lion, who goes fearlessly everywhere.

2. *Surface mining.* (Described in the following three verses).—Again, the miner attacks the hard rock, overturning even the mountains by the roots, and cutting new channels, to lay bare the river-beds, in which his eye discovers every precious particle. He prevents the streams from leaking, and he brings forth the hidden treasure.

The rest of the poem declares that Wisdom can neither be won, as wealth is won by mining, nor even purchased with the products of human enterprise. The list of such things as cannot buy Wisdom comprises: Gold; silver; gold of Ophir (apparently placer gold of very high grade, possessing a special value); precious onyx and sapphire; gold wrought into cups; cups of crystal, ornamented with gold or coral; pearls; and Ethiopian topaz. Finally, it is declared that the price of Wisdom cannot be "weighed with" (or valued with) pure gold; that is, it has no legal-tender standard of value.

The particular gems, especially the ruby, named in the King James version, must be accepted with some hesitation. The revisers suggest, instead of 'ruby', either 'red coral' or 'pearls'. Corals and pearls are quite appropriate to the poet's purpose, since they may be considered as the products of a sort of mining in the sea. Sapphires may also have been found in alluvial deposits then, as they have been found in the Montana placers. And it is not impossible that they might have been discovered in veins underground, as in the Jenks corundum mine of North Carolina. But it is highly improbable that this was then an important source of supply for them.

The foregoing paraphrase is justified in the main by either the text or the margin of the 'revised version'. Where it differs from both, it is based upon good authority. The chief defect of the King James version which it corrects is the absurd rendering of verse 4: "The flood breaketh out from the inhabitant; *even the waters* forgotten of the foot; they are dried up; they are gone away from men". This totally destroys the meaning and continuity of the poet's description, which the revised version measurably restores. But both versions miss the magnificent contrast between the farmer's crops above and the agriculture of the miner below.