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which it deposits along its banks. The present bed of the river pays for the whole distance which it has been explored, from 5 to 100 dollars per hand per day; but the 'benches,' which extend along the whole length of the Frazer's course, and which vary from one to five or six miles in length, have been recently proved to be highly productive. 'Every spadeful of the soil,' says a recent explorer, 'I believe to be auriferous. I am convinced that the "dry diggings" on the banks of the Frazer are on a most enormous scale.\* The only impediment to the almost unlimited production of gold is the want of water; but as soon as the remunerative character of the work is conclusively established, hydraulic machinery of great power will, it is said, be immediately applied.

The gold of British Columbia is not limited to one region. There are valleys separated from the Frazer by mountains which preclude the possibility of the same river having flowed through them, and these valleys are, in many places, highly auriferous. Alluvial diggings of extraordinary richness have been discovered on Quesnel River, a tributary of the Frazer. 'Last year,' writes the Governor in confirmation of the general opinion entertained of the wide extent of the gold region, 'an impression was generally entertained by the miners that the gold deposits had been made mainly by the Frazer, and that the gold was brought down by the stream from a source existing somewhere in the range of the Rocky Mountains; but they have since discovered that not only the bed, but also the higher banks of the Frazer, which rise terrace-like one above another as they recede towards the hills on either side, are composed of auriferous earth and beds of water-worn gravel,—a circumstance that has led them not illogically to the conclusion that the river occupied at some former period a much higher level than its former bed, and that the water has been drained off by its gradual deepening, through the natural process of attrition, or by volcanic agency; and Mr. Douglas states, as a proof of the richness of the gold deposits, that he had been informed by a respectable merchant residing at Fort Yale, that he saw 71 ounces of gold dust taken out of one mining claim at Boston Bar by three men in twenty-four hours, and that the same claim yielded regularly from 48 to 50 ounces of gold a-day for about four weeks, when the holders were driven out by a sudden rise in the river, the claim being only accessible at

extreme low water for about four weeks in the year.\*

California does not possess any gold deposits that resemble those on the raised benches and elevated table-lands of British Columbia. The gold of California is derived principally from the great existing mountain ranges, but the geological disturbances have been there wanting that raised the river beds in Columbia. Californian gold is found chiefly on the banks of existing streams; and, ground finer and finer as it is carried forward, year after year, by torrents, it is at last deposited as 'dust of gold' in the ooze or sand of the broad and tranquil rivers. There is, therefore, considerable reason to believe that the productive gold-fields of California will be exhausted in a comparatively short period; and although the gold is derived from mountains yet rich in the precious metal, ages must elapse before they will again impregnate the beds and banks of the Californian rivers with the golden particles which are diffused throughout the quartz of the Sierra Nevada.

The wide distribution of gold in British Columbia is unquestionable: the Frazer traversing the country diagonally from north to south everywhere passes through a gold region. The same may be said of Thomson River and of the Columbia, the upper portion of which, north of the 49th parallel, is in British territory. The aggregate length of these rivers is more than a thousand miles. As a rule, the gold is found in much smaller particles, and less in quantity, near the mouths of the streams; and it increases both in size and quantity as their sources are approached. Instances of great success are numerous; and miners have been known to realize £400 or £500 each in a season. In 1858, the greatest monthly shipment of gold was 235,000 dollars, and the smallest was 6000; and the total produce of the mines was estimated at 1,495,211 dollars, and in the following year at 2,000,000. The yield of the Californian mines has been ascertained, with tolerable accuracy, to be 50,000,000 dollars, or £10,000,000 annually, while the average earning of each mine is estimated at only £50; the mining population is consequently always ready on the vaguest rumour, to rush to neighbouring and even distant countries, at the prospect of a higher remuneration. The surface gold of California is now believed to be much diminished. The early miners collected what nature had been quietly hoarding through countless thousands of years. By the action of

\* Report of the Chief Justice of British Columbia to the Governor.

\* Despatch from Governor Douglas, C.B., to his Grace the Duke of Newcastle. Dec. 1859.