

took themselves to labor, and having thus escaped from the thralldom of a vicious indolence, will be likely, in most cases, to recover their lost standing, and do something for themselves hereafter. And hence, however much individual injury may have resulted from this Fraser river movement, it was not all a loss to the public at large. Deeply as we may deplore certain of its effects, it still left traces of good behind it. Like the winds that sweep over our city, it carried away the pestilential effluvia that otherwise stagnating, become the pregnant agents of disease and death. And it would hardly be matter for regret were our large towns more frequently the subjects of these visitations, so effectual in purging the social atmosphere, and relieving community of its vagrant and vicious members.

IMPROVED PROSPECTS.

Notwithstanding the difficulties in the way of reaching the gold fields of British Columbia are still formidable enough, there is no doubt that they have been greatly diminished since last year, and that the chances for success in mining are manifold better this season than they were last. The locality and character of the diggings are now understood; the peculiarities of the seasons and climate are known; the Indian annoyances have ceased; new routes have been opened, and steamboats placed on the rivers, adding security to life, and cheapening transportation and travel; while comfortable places of entertainment have been opened at all the central points, and at convenient distances along the principal thoroughfares. Of provisions, if not over cheap and abundant, there will always be a sufficient supply to insure the miner from starvation, and at reasonable prices. Lumber, an article so necessary for successful mining, will hereafter be procurable, as also will fresh vegetables, on a due supply of which health is so dependent; ditches and reservoirs will be, and to some extent have already been constructed, affording a steady and ample supply of water on bars where otherwise nothing could be done. Men becoming familiar with the periods of high and low water, will be able to take advantage of the same for the purpose of mining; while acquaintance with the eddies and rapids will enable them to avoid many of the dangers of river navigation. Trade monopolies, so far as any existed, having ceased; and mining licenses having been practically abrogated; what with courts and peace officers at all the more populous points, and the prospect of escorts for the transportation, with places of deposit for the safe keeping of the miner's gold dust, we cannot see what ground there can be for complaint as to existing regulations, or the manner in which life and property are protected in these mines.

Comparing this year with last, there is hardly a single view in which the mining interest and the prospect for success has not greatly changed for the better. This is not said with the remotest view to encouraging parties who may

have a tolerable business or situation, or even a good prospect of such in California, to leave the same and repair to these distant gold fields in the hope of bettering their condition. Let no one who has a living business here, or employment at fair wages, or the means of securing either, think for a moment of abandoning the same and resorting to Fraser river. We are not writing for such. Nelt her are we writing for speculators and traders, or the non-producing fraternity, who seek to live by their wits rather than hard work. To this class the inducements for migrating northward are indeed slender. But to the ill-rewarded hard worker, the unemployed, to all such in fact as come within the category before mentioned, we have thought fit to say British Columbia opens, perhaps, for you as good a labor-field just now as California; venturing to indicate, at the same time, the improved condition of things in that quarter as warranting the suggestion. In the opinion that these mines will better reward any class of laborers whatever, than those of our State, we may be mistaken; but there is little ground for mistake in what has been said as to the increased facilities for travel, and the improved chances for success this season as compared with the past. If we examine the condition and progress of affairs last year a little more in detail, the truth of this remark becomes fully apparent.

In the first place, a large proportion of the miners; on reaching Victoria, were delayed at that point a long time; some waiting for the river to fall, but more because they were unable to proceed, either from want of means to go on the steamers, or the inability of the latter to carry them. Here they idled away their time doing nothing, or engaged in building boats in which, when completed, they embarked for the mines. These craft being small and badly constructed, and as a general thing, still more badly navigated, met with many disasters, often of a fatal character, in crossing the gulf or attempting to ascend the rivers, and were no longer of any value after the owner had reached his point of destination. Taking into the account the original cost of these boats and canoes, varying from fifty to a hundred dollars each, together with the loss of time and property, to say nothing of life, occasioned by this species of navigation, the damage sustained by the miner in being forced to resort to it, was incalculable.

Having reached the mines, or, rather, got as far up the river as practicable, the adventurer found all the bars worth working completely occupied or under water. Thus conditioned, he had either to return, remain an indefinite period doing nothing, or attempt forcing his way further up. A majority chose to come back; many staid until the water went down—a part doing well and a part very little, owing to the impossibility of all getting claims. Of those who pushed on to the Upper Fraser, some going by the Brigade Trail, and others through the cañons, or over the Lillooet route,