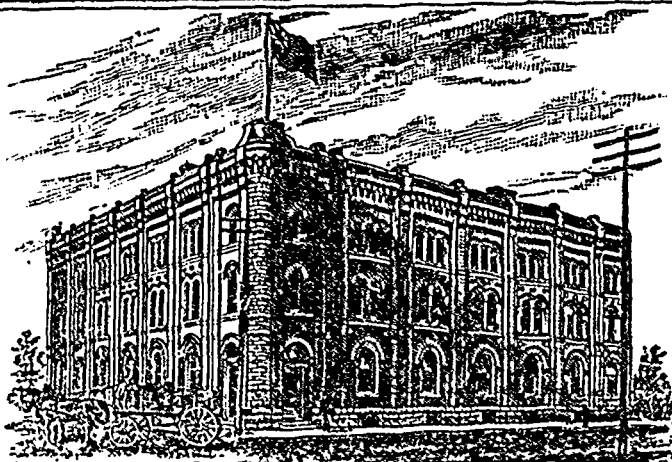


GOODS SOLD TO THE
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Gold in British Columbia.

British Columbia may one day rank among the richest mineral districts of the world. The first gold rush to this country took place in 1858, and since that time more than fifty million dollars worth of "dust" has been exported by the local banks. When it is considered that only a small portion of its 350,000 square miles has yet been explored, it is impossible to estimate what store of precious metals may be lying there. It must be remembered, moreover, that nearly all the gold found has been "placer" mined, i.e., taken out of the bed and banks of rivers and creeks. The mountains have been scarcely touched as yet. Quartz mining will certainly follow in the steps of the alluvial discoveries, as it has done in California, and when this takes place it will probably exercise an extraordinary influence on the growth of the province, and Victoria may yet become a second San Francisco. At present the mining operations of the country have been almost entirely carried on by diggers—men of little money and less scientific knowledge—and it only requires the introduction of capital and skilled prospectors to pave the way to much greater results.

The principal "find" which set the gold excitement on foot was at the Cariboo district, about 150 miles north of the present railway. There was not even a trail, much less a wagon road to that point in the old days, but before long, several hundred miners had braved the perils of the journey and were busily at work there. At William's Creek as much as 400 ounces were taken out daily, representing a value of some £1,440; at Antler Creek the amount was still larger, and at several claims over £500 a day was the average yield. In this wild, untrodden region, the cost of living was naturally tremendous. The only enterprising storekeeper who settled there at first managed to amass a small fortune. Five dollars (about £1 sterling) was the modest sum charged for a meal of beans and bacon; flour cost a dollar a pound, and was hard to get even at that price; and whisky, for which the demand was, of course, inexhaustible, was retailed at the rate of half a dollar a glass. Three pioneers

were the first to reach the district. Two only returned to Victoria; the third, it was charitably rumored, had been eaten by his comrades on the way. The Fraser and Columbia rivers are the two principal natural highways to the mining country. The Government has been very energetic in making roads and trails wherever the prospects of a district warranted it, but considerably more will have to be done before the province is properly opened up. Labor is now cheaper than in the old days, and the cost of supplies is also much lower; but the expense of sending ore to be smelted is still a great drawback to the advancement of quartz mining. British Columbia is divided into six main districts for mining purposes—viz., Cariboo, Cassiar, Kootenay, Lilloet, Yale and Omineca. These are again split up into divisions, each of which is under the control of a Gold Commissioner appointed by the Government, whose duties consist in recording claims, settling disputed titles, and generally acting as local magistrate. The mining laws are very simple. Any male over 16 years of age can take out a "free miner's license" for five dollars, and may then enter on and mine any unappropriated lands. His "claim" may consist of a plot a hundred feet square, and must be marked out by stakes and recorded or registered. If he leaves it for more than 72 hours, unless for sickness or other reasonable cause, anyone else may step in and take possession, otherwise nobody can interfere with his operations.

For the benefit of the uninitiated it may be advisable to give a brief account of the methods adopted in this country for obtaining gold. The principal of nearly all forms of "placer" mining is to separate the gold from the gravel or earth among which it is scattered by means of water, as owing to its weight it sinks to the bottom of the ves. ls in which it is washed. For this reason also, the largest quantity of gold in a paying claim is always found nearest the bed-rock of rivers, where it has sunk and lies mixed with and covered by several feet of gravel, silt, and boulders. If the bed of a creek is dry, as is usual in the summer months, a shaft is sunk until the rocky bottom is

JAMES PYE,

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A Manitoba Testimonial.

PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE, Dec. 8th, 1887.

JAMES PYE, Esq., Minneapolis, Minn., U.S.A.:
DEAR SIR,—In handing you our check for \$1,301.24, in full for balance on your contract for building and enlarging our mill, we without solicitation wish to state, that you have done your work in a manner highly satisfactory to this company. The capacity which you guaranteed at 275 barrels, we find considerably under the mark, as we are at present making over 300 barrels, and the quality of the flour is all that we could wish for. Some of our largest purchasers frankly tell us, it is equal to any flour made in either Minnesota or this province. The yield also we find very satisfactory. We must also bear testimony to your pleasing and gentlemanly manner, and your willingness at all times to meet our wishes. This has made our business relations pleasant and we can honestly say, that we recommend you to any person, requiring anything in the mill building or mill furnishing line. Wishing you the success that a straight dealing merits, we are
Yours very truly,

THE PORTAGE MILLING CO.
Jas. MacLennan, Managing Director.

reached when all the earth taken out is carefully washed. This is accomplished by means of a series of long troughs, open at each end, and shaped so that they can be fitted into one another. The dirt is thrown into the troughs, and a stream of water is directed through them, washing all the lighter particles away, but allowing the gold to sink to the bottom, where it is caught by pieces of wood called "riffles" nailed across at short intervals. Sometimes when the "dust" is very fine, mercury is poured behind the riffles to catch and amalgamate the particles, which the force of the water might otherwise be strong enough to wash away. Once every day or week, or as the richness of the find warrants it, the troughs are "cleaned up," and the residuum scraped into pans, where it is separated by careful hand-washing. British Columbia gold is of a very pure quality, and usually fetches about \$18 (£3 15s.) per ounce. Not unfrequently shafts have to be sunk for a considerable depth before the rock-bed is reached, and then pumps have to be employed to keep the water out of the workings. Sometimes a sudden flood will destroy the work of months at a mine. One of these took place last year at McCulloch Creek, drowning an American gentleman named Maule, who was visiting the claim. But want of water is often a more serious drawback than too much of it, as without it "placer" mining cannot be carried on at all.

Miners are usually represented as a rough lot all the world over, but there is far more respect for life and limb in the camps of British Columbia than over the border in California. And, although a gold rush in any new locality is sure to attract a certain number of American miners, their native aggressiveness soon gets toned down when they discover that the law is pretty rigidly administered. All nationalities are represented there, and all seem to share a thorough contempt for the refinements of civilization. There is a story told of a young Englishman fresh from Oxford who accosted a party of miners on the way to their morning's work with the artless question, "I say, you fellows, where's the best place to dig here?" The party stopped with one accord, took in at a glance the white