

the whole of the precious metal occurs as free and uncombined particles, evenly disseminated through the quartz. It is thus easy to extract it by the use of mercury alone, by far the greater part being saved, whereas in regions where the gold occurs in sulphurets, a greater portion is lost than saved.

Parties investing capital in the gold mines of Nova Scotia have the advantage of a history of mining operations extending over seven years successful working. The mining laws have required correct sworn returns to be made regularly every quarter by the lessees of all mines under pain of forfeiture of their claims. As a check upon this, sworn returns have also been required from all mill owners, specifying date of each crushing, weight of quartz, from whence obtained, weight of gold produced, and other particulars. From various causes these returns do not shew the whole amount of gold produced from the beginning, and are, therefore, under rather than over the actual yield. They shew, however, that from the beginning of mining, and taking the whole Province into consideration, an average of more than one ounce of gold, or \$20, has been obtained from every ton of quartz crushed; and this result has been attained, not by regular miners, but by fishermen, who had everything to learn while producing it.

Mere assays or crushings of small quantities do not constitute a safe guide to investors, especially if the gold occurs under exceptional conditions.

In the Sherbrooke District all the veins tried have been found to be more or less auriferous. Mining has here been going on for about six years, but more actively during the last two, and there has been a steady increase both in the profits and the amount of gold produced.

While it is interesting to know that the average returns of all the gold districts of Nova Scotia for the whole period during which they have been worked, have been more profitable than those of any other gold region in the world, it should be remembered that the extraordinary profits of the Sherbrooke field have contributed materially to bring up the returns to this high average.

The safest gauge by which to estimate the merits of any class of mining as an industrial pursuit is the average earnings of the men employed. In Sherbrooke these have been far in advance of any other district, amounting in both 1866 and 1867 to over \$1,600 annually per man. In 1866 the gross weight of gold produced in this district amounted to 5829ozs. 13dwts. 8grs., and in 1867 to 8522ozs. 8dwts. 11grs., which was exceeded only by Renfrew, which produced 9401ozs. 2dwts. 10 grs.; but this district employed an average of 189 men, while Sherbrooke employed only 99 (See Report of the Chief Commissioner for 1867, page 51). It should be borne in mind that in Sherbrooke an unusually large proportion of the men were last year engaged in operations not immediately productive of gold. During the five years from 1862 to 1866 inclusive, the average yield of gold per ton of quartz was no less than 2ozs. 5dwts. 18grs. (See Commissioner's Report for 1866.)

In the Sherbrooke district the gold is obtained altogether by quartz crushing—a kind of mining which possesses the advantage