

until California had been drained of half a hundred thousand of its population.

Victoria, Port Townsend, Whatcome, Sehome, and all the other ports in the vicinity of Fraser River, felt the extraordinary impulse of this emigration. Lots in Victoria and Esquimaux went up to fabulous prices faster than those of Sacramento had gone down. Excepting the gold dust, Mexican dollars, and the gambling, San Francisco in 1849 was reproduced on Vancouver's Island.

Up to the time of writing, the emigration from the Atlantic States has not been very large, though it is rapidly increasing. The last few California steamers have gone out crowded to overflowing, and the tickets, suffered to get into the hands of speculators, have doubled and trebled upon the usual price. Companies for Fraser River are forming in all the large seaport and inland cities, and in many of the smaller towns. Every commercial paper has its advertisements of Fraser River ventures.

St. Louis has sent out several companies over-land to the new mines; Philadelphia and Chicago, likewise; and St. Paul, in Minnesota, while doing the same thing, is urging the importance of a Northern Pacific Railroad, and threatening to help the British build one through the valley of the Saskatchewan, unless the needs of the North-west are fairly considered, as they notoriously have not been hitherto, in the determination of its eastern terminus.

The approach to the gold regions from the Pacific is through the Straits of Juan de Fuca, to the north of which lies Vancouver's Island, and to the south Washington Territory. The southern shore of the Straits, which are named after an ancient mariner who visited these seas in advance of Captain Cook, is in latitude 48° , one degree south of the international boundary. The entrance of the Straits is twelve miles across. At the south-eastern part of Vancouver's Island they are near twenty miles wide. These distances, however, seem smaller from the high, bold character of the hills or mountains on either side. About one hundred miles from the Pacific, on the inside of Vancouver's Island, and the north side of the Straits, is Victoria, the seat of government. Nearly the same distance from the Pacific, on the opposite side, in Washington Territory, is Port Townsend, the port of entry for the Puget Sound district, and the recent unsuccessful rival of Victoria for the honors of the metropolis of the region.

Both places are equally near to Fraser River and Bellingham Bay, the latter distant about fifty-five miles. The Gulf of Georgia separates Vancouver's Island from the mainland on the west. Into this Gulf Fraser River empties, a few miles north of latitude 49° , the international boundary, and fifty miles from Bellingham Bay. For a few miles from its mouth, its course is nearly east and west, and for the remaining part, it deflects very considerably to the north, taking its rise in the western slope of the Rocky Mountain range. One of its principal tributaries, flowing in from the south, is Thompson's River, where also gold is said to exist.