

been found. Adjacent to the region traversed by it, and lying between the same mountain ranges were extensive placeres, that had been successfully worked for years. What was there then, so preposterous in supposing an auriferous region existed along the banks of this stream? Was it not reasonable to conclude such was the case? Was not this a fair deduction—an inference warranted by geological science and our gold mining experience? Of course it was; and herein the press has ample justification for the course it pursued, and every Fraser-river adventurer a sufficient reason for the hope that was in him. It must be admitted we were mistaken—possibly in our estimate of the magnitude and value of these mines, though this remains to be proved; but certain it is, we misapprehend their precise locality, and the difficulties we should have to encounter in reaching them. Apart from this, no very great blunder was committed after all. We had what seemed safe data for action; and however we may now speak of it as a delusion, or denounce it as a humbug, it is not always our people have so sound a basis for their financial and commercial speculations, or industrial projects, as had this widely execrated and sufficiently unfortunate Fraser river movement. And although it has become the fashion to rank it with Gold lake expeditions and South sea schemes—projects purely speculative or wholly visionary—it may safely be affirmed that before two years more shall have passed, these mines will redeem themselves from the odium of the comparison, if they do not fully realize the expectations of the pioneer crowd, all of whom sought them too early, and many of whom left them too soon. That this opinion of their future may not seem too sanguine, let us examine for a moment.

#### THEIR PRODUCTIVENESS AND EXTENT.

If we begin at Fort Hope, and follow up Fraser river to the vicinity of Fort Alexander, we shall have passed over a stretch of country more than 300 miles long, all of which is auriferous. Some pay diggings have been found below Fort Hope, and to what extent the country above the highest point mentioned may be gold producing, has not yet been ascertained. Nearly all the bars within this scope, some of which are very extensive, contain a large amount of pay dirt. The high banks in some places have also shown a good prospect, while gold in small quantities has been found even on the table lands and sides of the mountains. But the gold fields of British Columbia are not confined to the banks of the Fraser. Several of its tributaries are known to abound in the precious metal; the yield of some having been quite as prolific as any part of the main stream itself. The banks of Bridge river, for forty miles up, have furnished very satisfactory diggings, the dust being coarse, of good quality and easily saved. The bars on Thompson's Fork, as high up as Nicholas river, have uniformly paid fair wages. Above that they have not generally, thus far, proved remunerative. Along Nicholas, Bonaparte and Tran-

quille rivers, all branches of the Fork, the diggings that will pay moderate wages—say four or five dollars per day—may be measured by the acre. On the latter stream parties mining with rockers, averaged five dollars a day, during all last autumn. It has been prospected for forty or fifty miles, showing dirt along all that distance that would pay equally well. Gold has also been found in other directions, and on waters far separated from the Fraser. On the Lillooett river, reaching from one end to the other, are numerous bars on which small wages can be made. The extreme fineness and levity of the dust, however, together with the long continued stage of high water, the bars being generally low, will preclude any chance of successful mining on this stream, unless carried on by some improved process, or during the three or four months preceding the commencement of cold weather.

Such are the limits of the Fraser river gold fields as ascertained by actual exploration. How much they may be enlarged by future discoveries, or how rich these partially prospected streams may eventually prove, is matter for conjecture. That the multitude who resorted to them have been put poorly rewarded for their loss of time and outlay of money—that capital has met with indifferent returns, and merchandise netted but sorry profits, is lamentably true. Yet all this loss, disappointment and disaster, is not to be set down to the narrow limits or poverty of the mines. As has been said, the laborer could not reach the actual mining district until too late in the season for successful operations. Besides, a very large percentage of those who went to Fraser river were either mere speculators and adventurers, or persons mentally indisposed to, if not physically incapable of doing hard work. As to the pecuniary loss attending investments in that quarter, let us ask ourselves how much of this may be traced to the most wild and absurd kind of speculation—to building towns, erecting wharves, and cutting trails where nature never intended, and the requirements of business never called for such improvements? Thousands and hundreds of thousands of dollars were thus spent in futile attempts at building up cities where none were needed, and in ridiculous endeavors at forcing trade into costly and impracticable channels. Let the forced growth of Port Townsend, and the unwholesome impetus giving to nearly every other place on the Sound, producing overtrade and a fictitious rise in real estate—let the acres of ruins and piled water lots at Whatcom, the foolish outlays at Point Roberts, Semiahmoo and Sehome, together with the spirit of reckless expenditure and insane speculation everywhere exhibited, come in for their proper share of the losses incurred by these unfortunates, and which have so generally but unjustly been charged to the account of Fraser river.

#### INDUCEMENTS TO EMIGRATION.

It being evident, then, that the scope of pay diggings in British Columbia is sufficiently