

northernmost turn of the river is the apex. All the territory lying north of the C. P. R., between the river flowing north and the river flowing south is filled with snow-capped mountains, numerous creeks, and one or two larger streams flowing into the Columbia on both the eastern and western slopes, with here and there a pleasant valley and fertile beaver meadows. It is on these western tributaries, as well as the Columbia itself, that the rich placer ground has been worked at intervals since 1865.

Thirty years ago Big Bend was a busy place, a population, variously estimated at from eight to ten thousand miners and prospectors, being busily engaged in extracting the precious metal from its ancient bed. And many of them were successful, as it is stated that between four and five million dollars worth of gold was taken out by placer miners in 1865 and 1866. Only placer claims were worked. No one thought of looking for gold in the benches or in quartz. Besides the methods of hydraulicing in those days were crude and unsatisfactory. Placer claims that did not pan out more than \$10 a day per man were unprofitable. Provisions were dear, and the scenes enacted in the old Cariboo days—so often published—were applicable to Big Bend.

A steamer, the '49, was fitted out at the Little Dalles, with a cargo of supplies and some passengers, made what must then have been a most venturesome voyage up the River as far as Laporte, where further progress was barred by Priest's Rapids and the terrible Death Rapids, 50 miles north of Revelstoke—as far north as ever steamer went on the Columbia. The '49 afterwards came to grief on a sunken rock in what is now known as Steamboat Rapids, just below Downie Creek.

The gold-seekers in the Bend, too impatient and perhaps too impecunious (with provisions at famine prices) to try the deep diggings, began to hear rumors of rich gold finds in other parts of the world, chiefly in Australia, and then there was an exodus, only a small percentage of the population being left to continue scratching the surface gravel here and there, mostly on McCulloch and French Creeks, tributaries of Goldstream, which empties into the Columbia about 54 miles north of Revelstoke.

It would occupy a great deal of space to enumerate the various placer claims which have been staked during the past ten years, active operations having been recommenced in the Bend in 1886. The Consolation gold mine, on French Creek, has been a large producer of placer gold for the past five years, averaging, some seasons, \$100 a day per man, but a great deal of this profitable work has been neutralized by expenses in repairing damages from high water. The gold from this mine is as pure as it is possible for the crude metal to be, and fetches \$18.50 per ounce at the San Francisco mint. The average season's output, with four or five men at work, has been about \$20,000 in round numbers. The output for the last four months amounted to \$4,000. Some big nuggets have been found in this mine. John Sweeney, who came down to Revelstoke on a holiday last month, brought with him a fine showing of Consolation gold, the largest nugget being worth \$50, another \$43, while \$20 and \$10 nuggets were quite plentiful. The mine at present is looking better than ever before in its history, and the owners expect large returns this summer, as the gold is getting coarser all the time.

There are other placer claims in the Bend with a similar history; the Gold Hill, lately sold by Vandale & Beaton for a big sum, being one of the best producers of the past two or three years. Placer mining is the poor man's mining. There is no expensive machinery required, no hauling or smelting of ore. The miner can carry his output in his strong chamois leather bag,

and the only expense entailed after he has secured his ore is the sending of it to the mint. Numbers of men are engaged in this industry in Big Bend who have no capital but their labor, and most of them expect to strike it rich when they reach bedrock.

It goes without saying that where the shallow ground is rich in fine gold and small nuggets the heavier nuggets will be found on bed rock, *i. e.*: the rocky bottom of the bed of the ancient stream which brought the gold from its original resting place—trundled the big nuggets along in its swift waters till they caught fast in some crevice, to remain there till in the course of millions of years the whole channel silted up with sand and gravel, and lighter gold, and eventually the stream sought another channel and formed another bed, to continue the same process of eroding the gold from the mother rock and deporting it safely in some nook below.

That this process is still going on is evidenced by the fact that sometimes large nuggets are seen on the rocky bed of some swift flowing stream, so swift flowing that it is seldom an effort to land such nuggets with a long-handled shovel is successful, the current washing it off the shovel before it can be brought above the surface of the water.

But I am digressing. Great attention is being paid to hydraulic mining in Big Bend just now, and there are several outfits engaged in washing the benches, not only on the smaller creeks, but also on Gold Stream and the Columbia itself. The Columbia River Hydraulic Company who are operating on the Columbia just above Smith Creek, are about to go in largely for this kind of mining, having faith in their location through the report of Prof. Nason, an American expert, who spent the whole of last summer prospecting the ground, and who is about to return to superintend the erection of an up-to-date plant, the first carload of machinery having arrived at Revelstoke from Chicago, and will be taken up as soon as the water is high enough for Tom Horne's large boat to navigate the upper river.

Besides placer and hydraulic mines, rich quartz has been discovered in the Bend, and several claims located. For several years it has been known that there was considerable gold quartz in the mountains near the source of the larger creeks, but the expense of getting up mining machinery has been too great to permit of its being worked by poor prospectors, and even capitalists have been dismayed at the cost of packing machinery 75 miles on horseback. But recently, Gus Lund, who located two quartz claims—the Jenny Lind and Ole Bull—some four or five years ago, has been fortunate enough to dispose of one of them, at a good figure, I believe, and some samples of quartz from this claim (the Ole Bull) were exhibited in Spokane last fall by one of the purchasers, and were said to be worth over \$600 per ton. Mr. Lund had already taken up a small mill, and proved that it would pay to mine gold quartz, even in Big Bend.

There can be little doubt that the mother lode, or vein, or ledge, or whatever you please to call it, from whence the gold was eroded in ages past (with the process probably still going on) is somewhere in that district, and while it may be in a river and scattered condition, it will, when found, be the richest piece of ground brought to light on this continent. The only thing that prevents Big Bend from ranking with Cariboo, as a placer and hydraulic camp is the costliness of getting up anything heavy, such as machinery. Cariboo has a wagon road, while Big Bend has only a pack trail, and for two or three months in the year, the river, as far as Laporte. But some means will yet be found to overcome this impediment to the district's prosperity. A light railway or tramway from Revelstoke would be the