

# **Handbook To The New Gold Fields**

**By  
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***Freeditorial*** 

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### **Introduction Handbook to the New El-Dorado**

The problem of colonisation in the north-western portion of British America is fast working itself out. The same destiny which pushed forward Anglo-Saxon energy and intelligence into the rich plains of Mexico, and which has peopled Australia, is now turning the current of emigration to another of the “waste-places of the earth.” The discovery of extensive goldfields in the extreme west of the territories now occupied by the Hudson’s Bay Company, is a great fact. It no longer comes to us as the report of interested adventurers, or the exaggeration of a few sanguine diggers, but with well-authenticated results—large quantities of gold received at San Francisco, and a consequent rush of all nations from the gold regions of California, as well as from the United States and Canada. The thirst for Gold is, as it always has been, the most attractive, the strongest, the most unappeasable of appetites—the impulse that builds up, or pulls down empires, and floods the wilderness with a sudden population. In those wild regions of the Far West men are pouring in one vast, gold-searching

tide of thousands and tens of thousands, into the comparatively unknown territory beyond the Rocky Mountains, for which our Legislature has just manufactured a government. How strange is the comparison instituted by the Times between the rush to Fraser River and the mediaeval crusades, which carried so large a portion of the population of Europe to die on the burning plains of Palestine! At Clermont Ferrand, Peter the Hermit has concluded his discourse; cries are heard in every quarter, "It is the will of God! It is the will of God!"; Every one assumes the cross, and the crowd disperses to prepare for conquering under the walls of the earthly, a sure passage to the heavenly, Jerusalem. What elevation of motive, what faith, what enthusiasm! Compare with this the picture presented by San Francisco Harbour. A steamer calculated to carry 600 persons, is laden with 1600. There is hardly standing room on the deck. It is almost impossible to clear a passage from one part of the vessel to the other. The passengers are not knights and barons, but tradesmen, "jobbers," tenants, and workmen of all the known varieties. Their object in of the earth, earthy—wealth in its rawest and rudest form—gold, the one thing for which they bear to live, or dare to die. Although in the comparison the crusades may have the superiority in many points, yet so little have ideal, romantic, and sentimental considerations to do with the current of human affairs, that while the crusades remain a monument of abortive and objectless folly, fatal to those who embarked in them, and leaving as their chief result a tinge of Asiatic ferocity on European barbarism, the exodus of San Francisco, notwithstanding the material end it has in view, is sure to work out the progress of happiness and civilisation, and add another to the many conquests over nature, which the present age has witnessed.

In a year more than ordinarily productive of remarkable events, one of the most noteworthy, and that which is likely to leave a lasting impression on the world, is this discovery of gold on the coasts of the Pacific. The importance of the new region as a centre for new ramifications of English relations with the rest of the world cannot well be exaggerated either in a political or a commercial point of view. It will be the first really important point we shall have ever commanded on that side of the Pacific Ocean, and it cannot but be of inestimable value in developing our relations with America, China, Japan, and Eastern Russia.

This new discovery must also tend to make the western shore of the American continent increasingly attractive, from Fraser's River down to Peru the rivers all bear down treasures of a wealth perfectly inestimable. Emigration must necessarily continue to flow and increase. Gold digging is soon learned, and there will be an immense demand for every kind of labour at almost fabulous prices.

It is further valuable as tending to open up a direct communication from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and from Europe across the continent of America to India and China. This is a grand idea, and the colonial minister who carries it out will accomplish a greater thing than any of his predecessors, for he will open up the means of carrying English civilisation to the whole of that vast continent and to the eastern world.

The pioneers in this movement will conquer the territory not with arms in their hands, but with the gold-rocker, the plough, the loom, and the anvil, the steam-boat, the railway, and the telegraph. Commerce and agriculture, disenthralled by the influences of free institutions, will cause the new empire to spring into life, full armed, like Minerva from the brain of Jupiter. Its Pacific ports will be thronged with ships of all nations, its rich valleys will blossom with nature's choicest products, while its grand rivers will bear to the sea the fruits of free and honest labour. Great as have been our achievements in the planting of colonies, we have never entered upon a more magnificent work than the one now before us, in which the united energies of the two great branches of the Anglo-Saxon race will be engaged, heart and hand.

While the present volume is intended chiefly for those desiring information on the subject of the gold discoveries, it also addresses itself to the general public, for the condition and character of the country and its inhabitants cannot fail to be a subject of inquiry with all who can appreciate the importance of its situation. The book lays claim to no merit but that of careful collation. Little information is given but what is derived from sources of general access; but it does profess to set forth the truth as far as that could be obtained from the conflicting statements of different parties.

While the following pages will be found to contain ample proof as to the extent and richness of the gold fields; as well as the salubrity of the climate, it is satisfactory to be able to state here that the country is proved to be easily accessible both for English and American merchandise. The public have now certain, though unofficial news, of the journey of the Governor of Vancouver's Island as far as Fort Hope, about one hundred miles above the mouth of the Fraser River and seventy above Fort Langley. This voyage has established the extremely important fact, that the river is navigable for steamers at least up to this point, where the mines are now known to be of extraordinary wealth, although it is reported that their yield regularly increases as the stream is ascended. It is now proved that these districts are actually within from fifteen to twenty-three hours steam of Victoria, the principal town of the Vancouver's Island colony. It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of this fact. It is true that the same voyage which the steamer carrying the Governor of Vancouver's Island successfully performed, was attempted without success by another

steamer about the same time—a fact which probably indicates that the river will be navigable only for vessels of small draught, and possibly, perhaps, not equally navigable at all seasons; for we must remember that in the early part of June, when this attempt was successfully made, the waters of the river had already begun to rise, in consequence of the melting of the snow from the Rocky Mountains, from which it springs. But they were then by no means at their full height; and even if the river be only navigable by vessels of small draught, that is a fact of very little importance as compared with the certainty that it is navigable at all to so considerable a height. Fort Hope is, as we have said, about one hundred miles up the river—that is to say, about one hundred and ninety from Victoria in Vancouver's Island, the voyage across the Gulf of Georgia being about ninety miles. The rich diggings between Fort Yale and Fort Hope are, therefore, not so far from the fertile land of Vancouver's Island as London from Hull and the distance from Victoria to the mouth of the river, where gold is at present found inconsiderable quantities, is not so great as the distance from Liverpool to Dublin. Now, as almost all the importance of a mining district depends on easy communication with a provision market—and the very richest will be rendered comparatively insignificant if provisions can only be carried thither at enormous cost and labour—no fact has yet been established of more importance than the easy navigability of the Fraser River. Immediately above Fort Yale, which is twelve miles higher up the river than the point reached by the steamer, a succession of cataracts begin, which, of course, interrupt all navigation, but thence even to “the Forks,” or junction between the Fraser and Thompson Rivers, there is certainly not more than one hundred miles of road, which, as we learn from the government map, are mostly practicable for loaded waggons. Hence it is evident that the new gold district will be easily accessible both for English merchandise from England, and for the provision market of Vancouver's Island.

In explanation and refutation of the prejudice which almost universally exists against the climate and soil of North America generally, but especially of the divisions included in the Hudson's Bay Company's Territories, we cannot do better than quote the following just remarks from the Reverend Mr Nicolay's treatise on Oregon. He says:—

“A predisposition towards one opinion, or bias to one side of an argument, too often warps both the judgment and the understanding; and one man in consequence sees fertile plains where another could see only arid wastes on which even the lizards appear starving, while the other looks forward to their being covered with countless flocks and herds at no very distant period of time. Both Cook and Vancouver, having previously made up their minds against the existence of a river near parallel 46 degrees, passed the Columbia without perceiving it, and the former even declared most decidedly that the

strait seen by Juan de Fuca had its origin only in the fertility of the pilot's brain. As they were discovered to be in error, so it is not impossible that others not less positive in their assertions may be convicted of the same carelessness of examination as those navigators, so remarkable in all other respects for their accuracy, and so indefatigable and minute in their researches, that little has been left to their successors but to check their work.

“With respect, however, to the attributed barrenness of great part of the territory, so peremptorily insisted on by many, there is some excuse for the earlier travellers from whom that opinion is derived. Ignorant of the best routes, and frequently famishing in the immediate neighbourhood of plenty, they most justly reflect back to others the impressions they received; but in so doing, though they speak truth, they give very erroneous ideas of the country they think themselves to be describing most accurately, and of this very pregnant examples are found in the travels of Lewis and Clarke, and the party who came overland to Astoria: both struck the head waters of the Saptin, both continued its course to its junction with the main stream, both suffered—the latter party intensely; but had they, by the fertile bottoms of Bear and Rosseaux Rivers, found access to the valley between the Cascade and Blue Mountains—or, keeping still further west, crossed the former range into that of the Wallamette, they would have found game, been banished from their pages, and the Oregon would have appeared in her holiday attire—

“A nymph of healthiest hue—”

and the depth of ravines and the elevation of rocks and precipices would have been changed into the unerring evidences of fertility and luxuriance of vegetation afforded by the dense forests and gigantic pine-trees of the coast district. We can scarce estimate the transition of feeling and change which would have been produced in their estimate of the country, if they could have been suddenly transported from their meagre horse-steak—cut from an animal so jaded with travel as to be in all probability only saved from death by starvation and fatigue, by being put to death to save over-wearied men from famine, and this cooked at a fire of bois de vache, with only the shelter of an overhanging rock—to the fat venison and savoury wildfowl of the woods and lakes, broiled on the glowing hardwood embers under the comfortable roof of sheltering bark, or the leafy shade of the monarch of the forest; while the cheerful whinny of their well-fed beasts would have given joyful token that nature in her bounty had been forgetful of nothing which her dependent children could desire.

“While such and so great is the power of circumstances to vary the impressions made upon the senses, some hesitation must be used in their reception until fully confirmed, or they must be limited by other accounts, as

unbiased judgment may direct, especially as the temperament of individuals may serve to heighten the colouring, whether sombre or sunny, in which circumstances may have depicted the landscape. It is not every traveller who can, with Mackenzie, expatiate on the beauty of scenery while in fear of treachery from fickle and bloody savages; or like Fremont, though dripping from the recent flood, and uncertain of the means of existence even for the day, his arms, clothes, provisions, instruments, deep in the whirlpools of the foaming Platte, stop to gaze with admiration on the ‘fantastic ruins’ Nature has ‘piled’ among her mountain fastnesses, while from his bare and bleeding feet he draws the sharp spines of the hostile cacti. Truth from travellers is consequently for the most part relative. Abstractedly, with reference to any country, it must be derived from the combined accounts and different phases of truth afforded by many.”

### **Chapter One.**

#### **Richness and Extent of the Gold Fields.**

“Destiny, which has lately riveted our attention on the burning plains of the extreme East,” says the Times of 9th July, “now claims our solicitude for the auriferous mountains and rushing rivers of the Far West and the shores of the remote Pacific. What most of us know of these ultra-occidental regions may be summed up in a very few words. We have most of us read Washington Irving’s charming narrative of ‘Astoria,’ sympathised with the untimely fate of Captain Thorn and his crew, and read with breathless interest the wanderings of the pilgrims to the head waters of the Columbia. After thirty years, the curtain rises again on the stormy period of the Ashburton Treaty, when the ‘patriots’ were bent upon ‘whipping the Britishers’ out of every acre of land on the western side of the Rocky Mountains. And now, for the third time, we are recalled to the same territory, no longer as the goal of the adventurous trader or the battle ground of the political agitator, but as a land of promise—a new El Dorado, to which men are rushing with all the avidity that the presence of the one, thing which all men, in all times and in all places, insatiably desire is sure to create.”

This El Dorado lies between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific; it is bounded on the south by the American frontier line, 49 degrees of latitude, and may be considered to extend to the sources of Fraser River, in latitude 55 degrees. It is, therefore, about 420 miles long in a straight line, its average breadth from 250 to 300 miles. Taken from corner to corner, its greatest length would be, however, 805 miles,—and its greatest breadth 400 miles, Mr Arrowsmith computes its area of square miles, including Queen Charlotte’s Island, at somewhat more than 200,000 miles. Of its two gold-bearing rivers, one, the Fraser, rises in the northern boundary, and flowing south, falls into the

sea at the south-western extremity of the territory, opposite the southern end of Vancouver's Island, and within a few miles of the American boundary; the other, the Thompson River, which rises in the Rocky Mountains, and flowing westward, joins the Fraser about 150 miles from the coast. It is on these two rivers, and chiefly at their confluence, that the gold discoveries have been made.

Fraser River is about as famous a point as there is today on the earth's surface—as famous as were the Californian diggings in 1848, or the Australian gold mines in 1853. It is now the centre of attraction for the adventurous of all countries. The excitement throughout the Canadas and Northern States of America is universal. In fact, the whole interior of North America is quite in a ferment—the entire floating population being either “on the move,” or preparing to start; while traders, cattle-dealers, contractors, and all the enterprising persons in business who can manage to leave, are maturing arrangements to join the general exodus. Persons travelling in the mining regions reckon that, in three months, 50,000 souls will have left the State of California alone. The rapidity and extent of this emigration has never been paralleled.

It is now established that the district of British Columbia, holding a relation to Puget's Sound similar to that of Sacramento Valley to the Bay of San Francisco, contains rich and extensive gold beds. The Fraser River mines have already been mentioned in the British Parliament as not less valuable and important than the gold fields in Australia, Geologists have anticipated such a discovery; and Governor Stevens, in his last message to the Legislative Assembly of Washington Territory, claims that the district south of the international boundary is equally auriferous.

The special correspondent of the San Francisco Bulletin, a reliable authority, writes from Fort Langley, twenty-five miles up the Fraser, under date the 25th May, that he had just come down from Fort Yale, where he found sixty men and two hundred Indians, with their squaws, at work on a “bar” of about five hundred yards in length—called “Hills Bar,” one mile below Fort Yale, and fifteen miles from Fort Hope, all trading posts of the Hudson's Bay Company. “The morning I arrived, two men (Kerrison and Company) cleaned up five and a-half ounces from the rocker, the product of half a day's work. Kerrison and Company the next day cleaned up ten and a-half ounces from two rockers, which I saw myself weighed. This bar is acknowledged to be one of the richest ever seen, and well it may be, for here is a product of fifteen and a-half ounces of gold, worth 247 and a half dollars, or 50 pounds sterling, from it in a day and a-half to the labour of two rockers. Old Californian miners say they never saw such rich diggings. The average result per day to the man was fully 20

dollars, some much more. The gold is very fine; so much so, that it was impossible to save more than two-thirds of what went through the rockers. This defect in the rocker must be remedied by the use of quicksilver to 'amalgamate' the finer particles of gold. This remedy is at hand, for California produces quicksilver sufficient for the consumption of the 'whole' world in her mountains of Cinnabar. Supplies are going on by every vessel. At Sailor Diggings, above Fort Yale, they are doing very well, averaging from 8 to 25 dollars per day to the man. I am told that the gold is much coarser on Thompson River than it is in Fraser River. I saw yesterday about 250 dollars of coarse gold from Thompson River, in pieces averaging 5 dollars each. Some of the pieces had quartz among them. Hill, who was the first miner on the bar bearing his name, just above spoken of, with his partner, has made some 600 dollars on it in almost sixteen days' work. Three men just arrived from Sailor Diggings have brought down 670 dollars in dust, the result of twelve days' work. Gold very fine. Rising of the river driving the miners off for a time."

Correspondents from several places on the Sound, both on the British and American territories, men of various nationalities, have since written that the country on the Fraser River is rich in gold, and "equal to any discoveries ever made in California." The Times' correspondent, writing from Vancouver's Island on 10th June, says, "The gold exists from the mouth of Fraser River for at least 200 miles up, and most likely much further, but it has not been explored; hitherto any one working on its banks has been able to obtain gold in abundance and without extraordinary labour; the gold at present obtained has been within a foot of the surface, and is supposed to have averaged about ten dollars per diem to each man engaged in mining. Of course, some obtain more, some less, but all get gold. Thompson River is quite as rich in gold as Fraser River. The land about Thompson River consists of extensive sandy prairies, which are loaded with gold also; in fact, the whole country about Fraser and Thompson Rivers are mere beds of gold, so abundant as to make it quite disgusting. I have already seen pounds and pounds of it, and hope before long to feast my eyes upon tons of the precious metal." And the same high authority writes on 17th June,—“There is no longer room to doubt that all the country bordering on Fraser River is one continuous gold bed. Miners abandoning the partially exhausted placers of California, are thronging to this new Dorado, and the heretofore tranquil precincts of Victoria are now the scene of an excitement such as was witnessed at San Francisco in 1849, or since in Melbourne. Land has run up to prices fabulously high; and patches that six months ago were, perhaps, grudgingly purchased at the colonial price of 20 shillings the acre, are re-selling daily at a hundred times that amount. The small number of steam ships hitherto found sufficient for the commerce between San Francisco and these vicinities no longer suffices to convey a tithe



of the eager applicants for passage. An opening for the enterprise of British capitalists such as was not anticipated has thus suddenly arisen, and the opportunity will, of course, be seized with alacrity.

“Lest I should appear too sanguine in my representations, I will cite one instance to illustrate the richness of these newly discovered diggings. Three men returned for provisions lately, after an absence of seven days; they had during this interval extracted 179 ounces of gold. I state this fact on the authority of Governor Douglas, who has just returned from the mining regions, whither he went with the view of establishing certain regulations for the maintenance of order. In short, all who have visited the mines are impressed with the conviction that their richness far excels that of California in its palmyest days.”

And, again, the correspondent of the New York Times, in a letter dated 21st June, gives the following corroborative testimony:—“The gold is found everywhere, and even during the extreme height of the river, parties are averaging from ten to twenty dollars per day, digging in the banks or on the upper edge of the bars, nearly all of which are overflowed. Big strikes of from fifty to two hundred and fifty dollars are frequently reported. Nearly all the work at present is carried on between Forts Langley and Yale, and for some twenty or thirty miles above the latter an entire distance along the river of about a hundred miles. Some few are digging on Harrison River, and other tributaries, where the gold is found in larger particles. Those who were engaged in mining on the forks of Thompson River shew still richer yields, but have been compelled to leave on account of the high stage of the water, the want of provisions, and the opposition of the Indians. The gold where the most men are located (upon the bars of the river), is found in very minute particles, like sand. No quicksilver has been used as, yet, but when that is attainable, their yield is sure to be greatly augmented. At Hill’s Bar those at work had averaged fifty dollars per day the whole time they had been there. The Indians all have gold, and are as much excited as the whites. It is of no use to cite various reports of individual successes in this or that locality. The impression of all who have gone is unanimous and conclusive as to the great facts of new gold fields now being explored equal to any ever yet developed in California or elsewhere. No steamer has yet returned with more than twelve or fifteen passengers, and nearly every one of these had come down to obtain supplies for himself or his party left behind in the diggings. They all say they are going back in a few weeks.”

The following personal testimony may also be cited:— “On Sunday,” says the San Francisco Globe, “we received a visit from Messrs Edward Campbell and Joseph Blanch, both boatmen, well known in this city, who have just returned

from the mines on Fraser River. They mined for ten days on the bar, until compelled to desist from the rise in the river, in which time they took out 1340 dollars. They used but one rocker, and have no doubt that they could have done much better with proper appliances. There were from sixty to seventy white men at work on Hill's Bar, and from four to five hundred Indians, men, women, and children. The Indians are divided in opinion with regard to Americans; the more numerous party, headed by Pollock, a chief, are disposed to receive them favourably, because they obtain more money, for their labour from the 'Bostons' than from 'King George's men', as they style the English. They have learned the full value of their labour, and, instead of one dollar a-day, or an old shirt, for guiding and helping to work a boat up the river, they now charge from five to eight dollars per day. Another portion of the Indians are in favour of driving off the 'Bostons,' being fearful of having their country overrun by them."

The proprietor of the San Francisco News Letter had determined to be at the centre of the present excitement in the El Dorado, and to judge for himself, or, rather to solve the problem of how much gold, how many Indians, and how much humbug, went on board the Pacific mail steam-ship Cortes, Captain Horner, and made the passage to Victoria, 840 miles, in five days. Although nine hundred persons were on board, yet no actual inconvenience was felt by the high-pressure packing; the greatest good humour and accommodating spirit prevailing, controlled by the gentlemanly conduct of Captain J.B. Horner and his officers. On the day of arrival, the operations of the Government Land Office at the fort in Victoria was 26,000 dollars. The importance of the amount can best be realised by comparing it with the prices, viz. 100 dollars per lot, 60 by 100 feet, unsurveyed. Some of these lots have been sold at 200 to 1000 dollars. Lots at first sale, surveyed price, 50 dollars; lots, second and last sale, 100 dollars each, are now being sold from 500 to 1000 dollars each. Six lots together in the principal street are valued at 10,000 dollars. The figures at Esquimault Harbour and lots in that vicinity assume a bolder character as to value, from the fact that the harbour is a granite-bound basin, similar to Victoria, with an entrance now wide and deep enough to admit the Leviathan. Victoria has a bar which must be dredged, dug, or blown away. We noted at Victoria that the most valuable lot, with a flat granite level, with thirty feet of water, sufficient for any ship to unload without jetty, is now covered by a large building constructed of logs, belonging to Samuel Price and Company. A ship was unloading lumber at this wharf at 35 dollars per M, which was the ruling price. At Victoria, on the 21st June, a Frenchman landed from the steamer Surprise, who came on board at Fort Langley with twenty-seven pounds weight of gold on his person, which we saw and lifted. Another passenger, whom we know, states that there are six hundred persons within eight miles of Fort Hope, who are averaging per man an ounce and a half of gold per day

minimum to six and a half ounces per day maximum. The largest sums seem to be taken out at Sailor's Bar, five miles above Fort Hope. The lowest depth as yet reached by miners is fifteen inches; these mere surface scratches producing often 200 dollars per day. At Fort Hope, potatoes were selling at 6 dollars per bag; bacon, 75 cents per pound; crackers, 30 cents. From Fort Hope to Fort Thompson the road is good, with the exception of twenty miles. For 20 dollars, the steamers will take miners from Victoria to the diggings at Fort Hope, and for three or four dollars more an Indian will accompany you to Fort Yale. Bowen, steward of the *Surprise*, says that about a hundred Indians usually ran after him to obtain little sweet cakes, which he traded off four or five for 1 dollar in gold dust. Sugar at Fort Langley, 1 dollar 50 cents per pound; lumber, 1 dollar 50 cents per foot; tea and coffee, 1 dollar per pound; pierced iron for rockers, 8 dollars; plain sheets, 2 dollars each; five pounds of quicksilver sold for 40 dollars—10 dollars per pound was the ordinary price. The actual ground prospected and ascertained to be highly auriferous extends to three hundred and fifty miles from the mouth of Fraser River. One hundred miles of Thompson River has been prospected, and found to be rich, south-east of Fraser River. The same will apply to all the tributaries of Thompson River. A large extent of auriferous quartz has been discovered ten miles from Fort Hope. Exceedingly rich quartz veins have been found on Harrison River.

The most astounding facts have yet to be divulged. A river emptying into the Gulf of Georgia, not a hundred miles north of Fraser River hitherto supposed to contain no gold, has proved fabulously rich. An Indian arrived at Victoria from this locality, having twenty-three pounds weight of pure gold, obtained solely by his own labour, in less than twenty days. In confirmation of our figures, and being short of space, we append the following statistics, derived from an official and authentic source of the strictest reliability. We deem the above facts sufficient to cause an exodus of a far more alarming character, and of higher proportions as to number, than any hitherto known in history. Suffice it to say, that the present furore is well founded; that it holds out busy times, high prices, speculations, contracts, and employments of a thousand kinds.

Fountain's Diggings (Fraser River, at 51 degrees 30 minutes north), month of June 1858.

Five rockers worked by half-breed Canadians.

June	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
dollars	dollars	dollars	dollars	dollars	dollars
1	38	50	42	40	50
2	40	51	38	29	51
3	41	53	39	51	52
4	28	55	18	33	56

5	32	60	54	54	53
6	64	62	39	58	55
7	52	58	48	52	64
Total	295	385	268	327	381
Average	42.14	55.50	38.70	46.72	54.40

A highly reliable correspondent sends the following from San Francisco, under date 5th July:—

The emigration for Fraser River has gone on for months with no signs of growing less. The best means of judging what grounds there are for the belief in the existence of gold in large quantities on its banks, is by letters received from persons who are engaged in mining. It is worthy of note that there is no discrepancy between the accounts given by different individuals, all their statements agreeing. The mines are reported to be exceedingly rich, and yielding large returns to those engaged in digging. The river is very high, and miners have been driven from several of the most lucrative bars until the water subsides. Mr Hill, from whom Hill's Bar took its name, is mining some distance above that point. He and six hands were making from an ounce to an ounce and a-half of gold dust a day to each man. For three weeks prior to the freshet, Mr Hill and one man averaged one hundred to one hundred and fifty dollars a day. The freshet, however drove him off for the time being. Mr E.R. Collins, who has spent some time in the Fraser River gold region, and who brought down last week a quantity of dust, has communicated the following intelligence to the Alta California. Mr Collins is a trustworthy gentleman. He left San Francisco in March last, and was at Olympia when the excitement first broke out. He then, in company with three others, proceeded to Point Roberts, from whence they proceeded up Fraser River to the mouth of Harrison River, about twenty-five miles above Fort Langley. This portion of the journey they performed without guides or assistance from the natives. The current was moderate, and occasionally beautiful islands were discovered with heavy timber, which presented a beautiful appearance. From Fort Hope to Fort Yale, a distance of fifteen miles, the river runs narrow, and the current running about seven miles per hour, though, in some places, it might be set down at ten or twelve. At Fort Yale, the first mining bar was reached. It extended out from the left bank a distance of some thirty yards, and was about half a mile long. Twenty or thirty squaws were at work with baskets and wooden trays, while, near by, large numbers of male Indians stood listlessly looking on. Here some of Mr Collins' companions, who had now increased to twenty, proposed to stop and try their luck, but the majority resolved to go on, having informed themselves satisfactorily that further up the "big chunks" were in abundance. After resting a while, therefore, the party went ahead. Two miles from Fort Yale they entered upon the commencement of the real difficulties and dangers of navigation on Fraser River, the water for a distance of thirty-five or forty

miles passing through deep gloomy cañons, and over high masses of rock. At this time the river had attained only a few feet above its usual height, so that by perseverance and the skill of the native boatman they were enabled to make slow progress. Numerous portages were made—one of them, the last, being four miles long. These portages could not be avoided, the cliffs rising perpendicularly on either side of the river, sometimes to a height of fifty or sixty feet, affording not the slightest footpath on which to tow. At other places the whirls, and rocks partly submerged, rendered a water passage utterly impracticable. At every bar and shallow spot prospected in these wild localities gold was obtained in paying quantities, all of very fine quality—rather difficult to save without the use of quicksilver. From the head of the cañons to the forks of Thompson's River, thirty-five miles more, the current and general appearance of the river seemed about the same as from Fort Hope to Fort Yale, gold also being found where there was an opportunity for a fair "prospect". At the Forks the party were told by Travill, a French trader, whom they met by accident, that the richest and best diggings were up Thompson's; but that river being navigable but a few miles up, it was thought best to keep on up Fraser, which they did for a distance of forty miles, encountering no serious obstacles beyond a few rapids, and they were passed by towing. Five miles above the Forks some twenty white men were at work, making with common rockers from ten to sixteen dollars per day. Arriving at a bar about ten miles below, where white men were congregating in numbers considered sufficient for mutual protection, they took up a claim and commenced digging. They worked here steady twenty-four days, averaging fifteen dollars per day to each man. The greatest day's work of one man was thirty-one dollars. These figures, it is thought, would apply to all the miners.

Our latest news from the new mines reach to the beginning of July. At that time there were immense numbers of miners on the banks of Fraser River, waiting for the stream to fall and enable them to go to work on the bars, which are said to be fabulously rich. Some dry diggings had also been discovered in the neighbourhood of the river; but owing to the presence of a large number of Indians, not of the most friendly disposition, the miners dared not then extend their researches far from the stream, where the bulk of the whites were congregated. The town of Victoria, on Vancouver's Island, has sprung rapidly into importance. Great advances have been made on real estate there. Lots, which a few months ago were sold by the Hudson's Bay Company at twelve pounds ten shillings, are now selling at over 250 pounds. A newspaper, called the Victoria Gazette has been started there; and an American steamer, The Surprise, is also running regularly between Victoria and Fort Hope, which is one hundred miles above the mouth of Fraser River. In the last week of June the arrivals by steamers and vessels at the various ports of British Columbia reached the large daily average of one thousand, while those who have lately

travelled through the mountains say that the principal roads in the interior present an appearance similar to the retreat of a routed army. Stages, express waggons, and vehicles of every character, are called into requisition for the immediate emergency, and all are crammed, while whole battalions are pressing forward on horse or mule back, and on foot. Of course, the shipments of merchandise from San Francisco and other ports are very large, to keep pace with this almost instantaneous emigration of thousands to a region totally unsupplied with the commodities necessary for their use and sustenance. Up to the present no outbreak or disturbance has occurred, and a certain degree of order has already been established in the mining region, through the judicious measures adopted by the governor. Justices of the peace and other officials have been appointed, and a system protective of the territorial interests organised. Licences, on the principle of those granted in Australia, are issued; the price, five dollars per month, to be exacted from every miner. There was a good deal of talk, as to the right or propriety of levying this tax when it was first proposed, and some of the Francisco papers were loaded in their denunciations; others took a calmer view. It is satisfactory to add that little difficulty has so far been experienced on this head. As a body, the miners are reported to be a steady set of men, well conducted, and respectful of the law.

## **Chapter Two.**

### **Climate, Productions, and Soil.**

Next to the extent and richness of the gold mines, the most important inquiry is as to the character of the climate and soil. And in this respect the Fraser River settlement does not lose any of its attractions, for, though seven hundred miles north of San Francisco, it is still one or two degrees south of the latitude of London, and apparently with a climate of a mildness equal to that of the southern shores of England, being free from all extremes, both of heat and cold. One hundred and fifty miles back from the Pacific, indeed, there lies a range of mountains reaching up to the regions of perpetual snow. But between that and the coast the average temperature is fifty-four degrees for the year round. Snow seldom lies more than three days. Fruit trees blossom early in April, and salad goes to head by the middle of May on Vancouver's Island. In parts of this region wheat yields twenty to thirty bushels to the acre. Apples, pears, pease, and grains of all kinds do well. The trees are of gigantic growth. Iron and copper abound, as does also coal in Vancouver's Island, so that altogether it bids fair to realise in a short time the description applied to it by the colonial secretary (Sir E.B. Lytton), of "a magnificent abode for the human race."

When introducing the "Government of New Caledonia bill," on 9th July, the Colonial Secretary said in his place in the House of Commons:—"The

Thompson River district is described as one of the finest countries in the British dominions, with a climate far superior to that of countries in the same latitude on the other side of the mountains. Mr Cooper, who gave valuable evidence before our committee on this district, with which he is thoroughly acquainted, recently addressed to me a letter, in which he states that ‘its fisheries are most valuable, its timber the finest in the world for marine purposes; it abounds with bituminous coal, well fitted for the generation of steam; from Thompson River and Colville districts to the Rocky Mountains, and from the 49th parallel some 350 miles north, a more beautiful country does not exist. It is in every way suitable for colonisation.’ Therefore, apart from the gold fields, this country affords every promise of a flourishing and important colony.”

The Times special correspondent, in a letter from Vancouver’s Island, published on 10th August, says, “Productive fisheries, prolific whaling waters, extensive coalfields, a country well timbered in some parts, susceptible of every agricultural improvement in others, with rich gold fields on the very borders—these are some of the many advantages enjoyed by the colony of Vancouver’s Island and its fortunate possessors. When I add that the island boasts a climate of great salubrity, with a winter temperature resembling that of England, and a summer little inferior to that of Paris, I need say no more, lest my picture be suspected of sharing too deeply of *couleur de rose*.”

Of the southern part of this district Lieutenant Wilkes, who commanded the late exploring expedition under the United States government, says, “Few portions of the globe are so rich in soil, so diversified in surface, or so capable of being rendered the happy homes of an industrious and civilised community. For beauty of scenery and salubrity of climate it cannot be surpassed. It is peculiarly adapted for an agricultural and pastoral people, and no portion of the world beyond the tropics can be found that will yield so readily with moderate labour to the wants of man.”

Perhaps the fullest account of the country yet given is that contained in “The Narrative of a Residence of Six Years on the Western Slopes of the Rocky Mountains,” by Ross Cox, one of the earliest explorers of British North America. He says, “The district of New Caledonia extends from 51 degrees 30 minutes north latitude to about 56 degrees. Its extreme western boundary is 124 degrees 10 minutes. Its principal trading post is called Alexandria, after the celebrated traveller Sir Alexander Mackenzie. It is built on the banks of Fraser River, in about latitude 53 degrees north. The country in its immediate vicinity presents a beautiful and picturesque appearance. The banks of the river are rather low; but a little distance inland some rising grounds are visible, partially diversified by groves of fir and poplar. This country is full of small

lakes, rivers, and marshes. It extends about ten days' march in a north and north-east direction. To the south and south-east the Atnah, or Chin Indian country, extends about one hundred miles; on the east there is a chain of lakes, and the mountains bordering Thompson River; while to the westward and north-west lie the lands of the Naskotins and Clinches. The lakes are numerous, and some of them tolerably large: one, two, and even three days are at times required to cross some of them. They abound in a plentiful variety of fish, such as trout, sucker, etcetera; and the natives assert that white fish is sometimes taken. These lakes are generally fed by mountain streams, and many of them spread out, and are lost in the surrounding marshes. On the banks of the river, and in the interior, the trees consist of poplar, cypress, alder, cedar, birch, and different species of fir, spruce, and willow. There is not the same variety of wild fruit as on the Columbia; and this year (1827) the berries generally failed. Service berries, choke-cherries, gooseberries, strawberries, and red whortleberries are gathered; but among the Indians the service-berry is the great favourite. There are various kinds of roots, which the natives preserve and dry for periods of scarcity. There is only one kind which we can eat. It is called Tza-chin, has a bitter taste, but when eaten with salmon imparts an agreeable zest, and effectually destroys the disagreeable smell of that fish when smoke-dried. Saint John's wort is very common, and has been successfully applied as a fomentation in topical inflammations. A kind of weed, which the natives convert into a species of flax, is in general demand. An evergreen, similar to that we found at the mouth of the Columbia, with small berries growing in clusters like grapes, also flourishes in this district. Sarsaparilla and bear-root are found in abundance. White earth abounds in the vicinity of the fort; and one description of it, mixed with oil and lime, might be converted into excellent soap. Coal in considerable quantities has been discovered; and in many places we observed a species of red earth, much resembling lava, and which appeared to be of volcanic origin. We also found in different parts of New Caledonia quartz, rock crystal, cobalt, talc, iron, marcasites of a gold colour, granite, fuller's earth, some beautiful specimens of black, marble, and limestone in small quantities, which appeared to have been forced down the beds of the rivers from the mountains. The jumping-deer, or chevreuil, together with the rein and red-deer, frequent the vicinity of the mountains in considerable numbers, and in the summer season they oftentimes descend to the banks of the rivers and the adjacent flat country. The marmot and wood-rat also abound: the flesh of the former is exquisite, and capital robes are made out of its skin; but the latter is a very destructive animal. Their dogs are of diminutive size, and strongly resemble those of the Esquimaux, with the curled up tail, small ears, and pointed nose. We purchased numbers of them for the kettle, their flesh constituting the chief article of food in our holiday feasts for Christmas and New Year. The fur-bearing animals consist of



beavers; bears, black, brown, and grizzly; otters, fishers, lynxes, martins; foxes, red, cross, and silver; minks, musquash, wolverines, and ermines. Rabbits also are so numerous that the natives manage to subsist on them during the periods that salmon is scarce. Under the head of ornithology we have the bustard, or Canadian outarde (wild goose), swans, ducks of various descriptions, hawks, plovers, cranes, white-headed eagles, magpies, crows, vultures, wood-thrush, red-breasted thrush or robin, woodpeckers, gulls, pelicans, hawks, partridges, pheasants, and snow-birds. The spring commences in April, when the wild flowers begin to bud, and from thence to the latter end of May the weather is delightful. In June it rains incessantly, with strong southerly and easterly winds. During the months of July and August the heat is intolerable; and in September the fogs are so dense that it is quite impossible to distinguish the opposite side of the river any morning before ten o'clock. Colds and rheumatisms are prevalent among the natives during this period: nor are our people exempt from them. In October the falling of the leaves and occasional frost announce the beginning of winter. The lakes and parts of the rivers are frozen in November. The snow seldom exceeds twenty-four inches in depth. The mercury in Fahrenheit's thermometer falls in January to 15 degrees below zero; but this does not continue many days. In general, I may say, the climate is neither unhealthy nor unpleasant; and if the natives used common prudence, they would undoubtedly live to an advanced age. The salmon fishery commences about the middle of July, and ceases in October. This is a busy period for the natives; for upon their industry in saving a sufficiency of salmon for the winter depends their chief support. Jub, suckers, trout, and white-fish, are caught in the lakes; and in the month of October, towards the close of the salmon-fishery, we catch trout of a most exquisite flavour. Large-sized sturgeon are occasionally taken in the vorveaux, but they are not relished by the natives."

Mr Dunn, in his valuable "History of the Oregon Territory," thus describes the country and climate:—"After the Columbia, the river next in importance is Fraser River. It takes its rise in the Rocky Mountains, near the source of Canoe River, taking a north-west course of eighty miles. It then turns to the southward, receiving Stuart's River, which rises in a chain of lakes in the northern boundary of the territory. It then pursues a southerly course, and after receiving many tributaries, breaks through the cascade range of hills in a series of falls and rapids; and after a westerly course of seventy miles, empties itself into the Gulf of Georgia, in latitude 49 degrees 7 minutes north. This latter portion is navigable for vessels that can pass its bar drawing ten feet of water. Its whole length is 350 miles. There are numerous lakes scattered through the several sections. The country is all well watered; and there are but four places where an abundance of water cannot be obtained, either from lakes, rivers, or springs.

“The climate of the western division is mild throughout the year, neither the cold of winter, nor the heat of summer predominating. The mean temperature is about 50 degrees Fahrenheit. The prevailing winds, in summer, are from the northward and westward, and in winter, from the west, south, and south-east. The winter lasts from about November till March, generally speaking. During that time there are frequent falls of rain, but not heavy. Snow seldom lies longer than a week on the ground. There are frosts so early as September, but they are not severe, and do not continue long. The easterly winds are the coldest, as they come from across the mountains, but they are not frequent. Fruit trees blossom early in April in the neighbourhood of Nasqually and Vancouver; and in the middle of May pease are a foot high, and strawberries in full blossom; indeed, all fruits and vegetables are as early there as in England. The hills, though of great declivity, have a sward to their tops. Lieutenant Wilkes says, that out of 106 days, 67 were fair, 19 cloudy, and 11 rainy. The middle section is subject to droughts. During summer the atmosphere is drier and warmer, and in winter colder than in the western section; its extremes of heat and cold being greater and more frequent. However, the air is fine and healthy; the atmosphere in summer being cooled by the breezes that blow from the Pacific.

“The soil of the western section varies from a deep black vegetable loam to a light brown loamy earth. The hills are generally basalt stone and slate. The surface is generally undulating, well watered, well wooded, and well adapted for agriculture and pasturage. The timber consists of pine, fir, spruce, oaks (white and red), ash, arbutus, cedar, arbor-vitae, poplar, maple, willow, cherry, &c., with underwoods of hazel and roses. All kinds of grain, wheat, rice, barley, oats, and pease, can be procured there in abundance. Various fruits, such as pears, apples, etcetera, succeed there admirably; and the different vegetables produced in England yield there most abundant crops.

“The middle section, which is about 1000 feet above the level of the western, is not so well wooded or fertile; yet in the southern parts of it, where the missionaries have established settlements, they have raised excellent crops, and reared large stocks of cattle. Notwithstanding the occasional cold, their cattle are not housed, nor is provender laid in for them in any quantity, the country being sufficiently supplied with fodder in the natural hay, that is everywhere abundant in the prairies, which the cattle prefer.”

Mr Wilkes says, “In comparison with the United States, I would say, that the labour necessary in this territory to acquire wealth or subsistence is in the proportion of one to three; or in other words, a man must work throughout the year three times as much in the United States to gain the like competency. The care of stock, which requires so much time with us, requires no attention there,

and on the increase only, a man might find support.” He further says, “There will be also a demand for the timber of this country at high prices, throughout the Pacific. The oak is well adapted for ship timber, and abundance of ash, cedar, cypress, and arbor-vitae may be had for other purposes, building, fuel, fencing,” etcetera. He also adds, “No part of the world affords finer inland sounds, or a greater number of harbours, than are found within the Straits of Juan de Fuca, capable of receiving the highest class of vessels, and without a danger in them which is not viable. From the rise and fall of the tides (eighteen feet) every facility is afforded for the erection of works for a great maritime nation. The country also affords as many sites for maritime power as any other.”

On the northern coast there are a number of islands which belong to the territory. The largest are Vancouver’s Island, and Queen Charlotte Island, both of which enjoy a mild and salubrious climate, with a soil well adapted to agriculture. They have also an abundance of fine fish in their waters. Coal of a very good quality is found there close by the surface, and they also contain numerous veins of valuable minerals.

All the rivers abound in salmon of the finest quality, which run twice a year, beginning in May and October, and appear inexhaustible. In Fraser River, the salmon are very numerous. The bays and inlets abound with several kinds of salmon, sturgeon, cod, carp, sole, flounders, perch, herring, and eels; also with shell-fish—crabs, oysters, etcetera. Whales and sea otters in numbers are found along the coast, and are frequently captured by Indians, in and at the mouth of the Straits of Juan de Fuca.

Game abounds in the western section, such as elk, deer, antelopes, bears, wolves, foxes, musk-rats, martins. And in the spring and fall, the rivers are covered with geese, ducks, and other water-fowl. Towards the Rocky Mountains buffaloes are found in great numbers.

From the advantages this country possesses, it bids fair to have an extensive commerce, on advantageous terms, with most parts of the Pacific. It is well calculated to produce the following staple commodities,—furs, salted beef and pork, grain, flour, wool, hides, tallow, timber, and coals. And in return for these—sugars, coffee, and other tropical productions may be obtained at the Sandwich Islands. Advantages that in time must become of immense importance.

Those districts of British America west of the lakes which by soil and climate are suitable for settlement, may be thus enumerated:—

Vancouver’s Island 16,200 square miles.

Fraser and Thomson Rivers 60,000 ditto

Sources of the Upper Columbia 20,000 ditto

Athabasca District 50,000 ditto

Saskatchewan, Red River, Assineboin, etcetera. 360,000 ditto

506,200

Under these geographical divisions we propose to give the results of a parliamentary investigation (just published) into the affairs of the Hudson's Bay Company, so far as they are descriptive of the foregoing districts:—

### **Vancouver's Island.**

This island is fertile, well timbered, finely diversified by intersecting mountain ranges, and small prairies, with extensive coal fields, compared by one witness to the West Riding of Yorkshire coal, and fortunate in its harbours. Esquimaux Harbour, on which Victoria is situated, is equal to San Francisco. The salmon and other fisheries are excellent; but this advantage is shared by every stream and inlet of the adjacent coast. The climate is frequently compared with England, except that it is even warmer. The winter is stormy, with heavy rains in November and December; frosts occur in the lowlands in January, but seldom interrupt agriculture; vegetation starts in February, rapidly progressing in March and fostered by alternate warm showers and sunshine in April and May—while intense heat and drought are often experienced during June, July, and August. As already remarked, the island has an area of 16,200 square miles.

### **Fraser and Thompson Rivers.**

Northward of Vancouver's Island the coast range of mountains trends so near the Pacific as to obstruct intercourse with the interior, but "inside," in the language of a witness, "it is a fine open country." This is the valley of Fraser River. Ascending this river, near Fort Langley, "a large tract of land" is represented as "adapted to colonists;" while of Thomson River, the same witness says that it is "one of the most beautiful countries in the world"—"climate capable of producing all the crops of England, and much milder than Canada." The sources of Fraser River, in latitude 55 degrees, are separated from those of Peace River (which flows through the Rocky Mountains, eastward, into the Athabasca) by the distance of only 317 yards.

## **Sources of the Columbia.**

A glance at the map will shew how considerable a district of British Oregon is watered by the Upper Columbia and its tributary, the McGillivray or Flat Bow river. It is estimated above at 20,000 square miles, and has been described in enthusiastic terms, by the Bishop of Oregon—De Smet—in his “Oregon Missions.” The territory of the Kootonais Indians would seem, from his glowing description, to be divided in favourable proportion between forests and prairies. Of timber, he names birch, pine of different species, cedar, and cypress. He remarked specimens of coal, and “great quantities of lead,” apparently mixed with silver. The source of the Columbia seemed to impress him as “a very important point.” He observes that “the climate is delightful”—that the extremes of heat and cold are seldom known, the snow disappearing as it falls. He reiterates the opinion “that the advantages nature seemed to have bestowed on the Columbia, will render its geographical position very important at some future day, and that the hand of civilised man would transform it into a terrestrial paradise.”

It is an interesting coincidence that Bishop De Smet published in a Saint Louis paper, a few months since, a similar description of this region, adding that it could be reached from Salt Lake City along the western base of the Rocky Mountains with waggons, and that Brigham Young proposed to lead his next Mormon exodus to the sources of the Columbia River. Such a movement is not improbable, and would exhibit far greater sagacity than an emigration to Sonora.

## **The Athabasca District.**

The valleys of the Peace and Athabasca Rivers, which occupy the eastern base of the Rocky Mountains from latitudes 55 degrees to 59 degrees share the Pacific climate in a remarkable degree. The Rocky Mountains are greatly reduced in breadth and mean elevation, and through the numerous passes between their lofty peaks the winds of the Pacific reach the district in question. Hence it is that Sir Alexander Mackenzie, under date of 10th May, mentions the “exuberant verdure of the whole country”—trees about to blossom, and buffalo attended by their young. During the late parliamentary investigation, similar statements were elicited. Dr Richard King, who accompanied an expedition in search of Sir John Ross, as “surgeon and naturalist,” was asked what portion of the country he saw was available for the purpose of settlement. In reply, he described as a “very fertile valley,” a “square piece of country,” bounded on the south by Cumberland House, and by the Athabasca Lake on the north. His own words are as follows:— “The sources of the Athabasca and the sources of the Saskatchewan include an enormous area of country; it is, in

fact, a vast piece of land surrounded by water. When I heard Dr Livingstone's description of that splendid country which he found in the interior of Africa within the equator, it appeared to me to be precisely the kind of country which I am now describing. ... It is a rich soil interspersed with well-wooded country, there being growth of every kind and the whole vegetable kingdom alive." When asked concerning mineral productions, his reply was,—“I do not know of any other mineral except limestone; this is apparent in all directions. ... The birch, the beech, and the maple are in abundance, and there is every sort of fruit.” When questioned further as to the growth of trees, Dr King replied by a comparison “with the magnificent trees round Kensington Park in London.” He described a farm near Cumberland House under very successful cultivation —“luxuriant wheat”—potatoes, barley, pigs, cows and horses.

### **Saskatchewan, Assineboin, and Red River District.**

The area of this continent, north-west of Minnesota, and known as the Saskatchewan district, is estimated by English authorities to comprise 368,000 square miles. North-west from Otter Tail Lake, the geographical centre of Minnesota, extends a vast silurian formation, bounded on the west along the eastern base of the Rocky Mountains by coal measures. Such a predominance of limestone implies fertility of soil, as in the north-western States, and the speedy colonisation of Saskatchewan would be assured if the current objection to the severity of climate was removed. On this point a few facts will be presented.

The Sea of Azof, which empties into the Black Sea, forming the eastern border of the Crimean peninsula, freezes about the beginning of November, and is seldom open before the beginning of April. A point less than one hundred miles north, but far down in southern Russia, namely, Catherineoslay, has been found, from the observation of many years, to be identical in summer and winter climate with Fort Spelling. Nine-tenths of European Russia, therefore, the main seat of population and resources, is further north than Saint Paul. In fact, Pembina is the climatic equivalent of Moscow, and for that of Saint Petersburg, (which is 60 degrees north), we may reasonably go to latitude 55 degrees on the American continent.

Like European Russia, also, the Saskatchewan district has a climate of extremes—the thermometer having a wide range; but it is well understood that the growth of the cereals and of the most useful vegetables depends chiefly on the intensity and duration of the summer heats, and is comparatively little influenced by the severity of winter cold, or the lowness of the mean temperature during the year. Therefore it is important to observe that the northern shore of Lake Huron has the mean summer heat of Bordeaux, in

southern France, or 70 degrees Fahrenheit; while Cumberland House, in latitude 54 degrees, longitude 102 degrees, on the Saskatchewan, exceeds in this respect Brussels and Paris.

The United States Army Meteorological Register has ascertained that the line of 70 degrees mean summer heat crosses the Hudson River at West Point, thence descends to the latitude of Pittsburg, but, westward, is traced through Sandusky, Chicago, Fort Snelling, and Fort Union, near latitude 49 degrees, into British America. The average annual heat at Quebec is experienced as far north as latitude 52 degrees in the Saskatchewan country.

Mr Blodget states that not only all the vicinity of the south branch of the Saskatchewan is as mild in climate as Saint Paul, but that the north branch of that river is almost equally favourable, and that the ameliorating influence of the Pacific, through the gorges of the Rocky Mountains, is so far felt on Mackenzie's River, that wheat may be grown in its valley nearly to the 65th parallel.

In the foregoing account of the districts of the interior, we have given faithfully, as in duty bound, the fact that have been elicited in the various investigations, public and otherwise, that have taken place. At the same time, we think it but fair to state, that large portions of these fine districts, especially the Athabasca and Saskatchewan, are at present very far beyond the reach of any civilised market, and overrun by hordes of warlike Indians.

We have thus given a brief survey of the position and resources, of the territory surrounding the new El Dorado. One observation we may be permitted to hazard. Perhaps there is no more striking illustration of the wisdom of that Providence which presides over the management of our affairs, than in the fact that emigration was first led to the eastern coast, rather than to the slopes or plains of the west. Had the latter been first occupied, it is doubtful whether the rocks and lagoons of the seaboard would ever have been settled. No man would have turned from the prairie sward of the Pacific to the seamed elopes of the Atlantic edge. As it is, we have the energy and patience which the difficult soil of the east generates, with that magnificent sweep of western territory, which, had it been opened to us first, might, from its very luxuriousness, have generated among those occupying it, an ignoble love of ease.

### **Chapter Three.** **Routes, etcetera.**

For some time to come, the great line of route to the new El Dorado will likely be by water from the different settlements along the coast of the Pacific. Steam

communication has long been established between Panama and San Francisco, and a line of vessels is now regularly plying between the latter port and Vancouver's Island, from whence easy access is had to the diggings, by means of small steamers. The steamers at present running on the coast make the voyage from Panama to Vancouver's Island in fourteen or fifteen days. The following statistics of fares and freights are supplied by the Times' correspondent:—

“The rates of passage at present from San Francisco to New York are—Steerage, 150 dollars; second cabin, 250 dollars; first cabin, 300 dollars per berth for each passenger. An entire state-room is the price of two passengers—600 dollars. From New York to San Francisco the fares are the same. San Francisco to Panama, sometimes the same as to New York, and sometimes one-third less. Freight on specie, 1 per cent, to New York; and three quarters per cent to Panama with a slight discount to shippers of large amounts. Freight on merchandise from Panama, 2 dollars 10 cents per foot. The quantity of freight is considerable in French silks, cloths, and light goods, but the bulk is in Havannah cigars, nearly all the supply for this market coming viâ Panama. The fares up by the steamers from San Francisco to Victoria are—Steerage, 30 dollars; cabin, 60 dollars.”

This route, besides being at present the most direct and expeditious, presents another great advantage. Passing along the coast of California, it gives passengers an opportunity of either settling there, or continuing their journey to British Columbia. That this is no unimportant advantage, will be at once conceded when it is borne in mind that it is not the gold-producing country on the Fraser River alone that offers strong inducements to emigrants.

In a letter published on 4th August, the Times' correspondent remarks:— “In a few weeks, with a continuance of the present drain upon our mining, mechanical, and labouring population generally, as good a field for labour of every kind will again be open in California as there was from 1849 to 1851, when the country became flooded with immigrants. In fact, the openings now being made in the mines and in labour of all sorts, and the rise of wages in consequence of the exodus hence, offer greater inducements to emigrants than existed in the first years of our organisation. Then there was little besides mining that a man could turn his hand to. Now the gradual development of the resources of the country has opened many avenues for labour of various kinds, and mining claims, which pay well, and in which a competency would be realised in a moderate space of time, are abandoned because they do not produce gold in bushels, as their owners hope to find the new mines to yield.” And in another letter, the same authority says:— “The excitement in the interior is universal. I was up the country this week, and returned only last



night; so that I had an opportunity of judging for myself. From every point of the compass squads of miners were to be seen making for San Francisco to ship themselves off; and I heard of arrangements having been completed for driving stock overland to meet the demands of the new population congregating in the Puget Sound country. One man had purchased a drove of mules, and another had speculated in 200 Californian horses, to supply the demand for 'packing.' These two 'ventures' were to proceed overland in two days hence. The speculator in horses had been at Fraser River, and returned convinced of the judiciousness of his 'spec.' He spoke of the overland trip with enthusiasm; plenty of game and of grass, a fine climate, and no molestation from Indians. As a natural result of all this emigration, business in the interior is becoming much deranged. The operations of the country merchants are checked; rents and the value of property in the interior towns are diminishing. Some of the merchants are 'liquidating,' and some have already moved their business to San Francisco, to take advantage of the business which must spring up between that port and the north-west. All the movements made in consequence of the new gold discovery have tended to benefit San Francisco, and she will, no doubt, continue to derive great advantages from the change. The increase of business will bring an increase of immigration to the city, for there is every reason to believe, judging from past experience, that a considerable proportion of the emigration from Europe, the Atlantic States, and Australia, will rest here; that the city will increase rapidly, and that an advance in the value of property must ensue in consequence. The fact is, that there is now in California so extensive an association of capital and labour engaged in mining successfully, that, happen what may in other countries, the 'yield' here must continue to be very great. Companies of men who have large amounts of money invested in mining of a variety of sorts, such as 'tunnelling,' 'sluicing,' and 'quartz crushing,' on a large scale, are not going to abandon well-developed properties which produce profitable returns. We have no fear of having to suffer any inconvenience from a scarcity of gold in California in consequence of the removal from the country of so many miners. I make these statements for the information of parties abroad engaged in business with this country."

The following is the journal of a traveller who lately proceeded on this route:

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"Left San Francisco on Thursday, the 24th of June, at 4 and a half p.m., and arrived in Esquimault Harbour, near Victoria, on the following Tuesday, at six in the morning—distance, 800 miles. The steamer was so crowded with gold-hunters, speculators, merchants, tradesmen, and adventurers of all sorts, that exercise even on the quarterdeck could only be coaxed by the general forbearance and good-humour of the crowd. Before starting there were stories

to the prejudice of the steamer, the Oregon, belonging to the Pacific Mail Company, rife enough to damp the courage of the timid; but she behaved well, and beat another boat that had five hours' start of her. The fact is we had a model captain, a well-educated, gentlemanly man, formerly a lieutenant in the United States navy, whose intelligence, vigour, and conduct inspired full confidence in all. With Captain Patterson I would have gone to sea in a tub. Whatever may be the sins of the company as monopolists of the carrying trade on this coast, justice must award them the merit of having selected a staff of commanders who atone for many shortcomings.

“The voyage from San Francisco to Vancouver's Island, which in a steamer is made all the way within sight of the coast, is one of the most agreeable when the voyager is favoured with fine weather. I know none other so picturesque out of the Mediterranean. The navigation is so simple that a schoolboy could sail a steamer, for a series of eighteen headlands, which jut out into the ocean all along the coasts of California, Oregon, and Washington Territory, served as landmarks to direct the mariner in his course. All he has to do is to steer from one to another; from Point Reyes outside the Golden Gate to Point Arena, the next in succession, and so on till he comes to Cape Flattery, upon rounding which he enters the Straits of Fuca, towards the end of his voyage.

“The northern portion of the coast of California and the whole length of the coasts of Oregon and Washington are thickly wooded. In fact, this vast stretch of country is one continuous pine forest. From the shore, where the trees dip into the sea, back to the verge of the distant horizon, over hills, down valleys, across ravines, and on and around the sides and tops of mountains, it is one great waving panorama of forest scenery. Timber—enough to supply the wants of the world for ages, one would think. Yet the broken character of the country relieves the scene from monotony, and it fully realises the idea of the grand and the beautiful combined. One spot in particular made an impression upon me which I wish I had the power to convey by words. Between Cape Mendocina and Humboldt Bay, on the northern limits of California, a grand collection of hills and mountains of every variety of size, shape, and form occurs. This grand group recedes in a gentle sweep from the coast far inland, where it terminates in a high conical mountain, overtopping the entire mass of pinnacles which cluster around it. The whole is well clothed with trees of that feathery and graceful foliage peculiar to the spruce and larch, and interspersed with huge round clumps of evergreens, with alternations of long glades and great open patches of lawn covered with rich grass of that bright emerald green peculiar to California. This woodland scene, viewed of an early morning, sparkling with dew-drops under the rising sun which slowly lifted the veil of mist hanging over it, surpassed in beauty anything I have seen on this continent. Here everything in nature is on a grand scale. All her works are

magnificent to a degree unknown in Europe. A trip to these regions will pay the migratory Englishman in search of novelty to his heart's content, and I will bear the blame if he is not well pleased with his journey. California alone should satisfy a traveller of moderate desires. Here he will find combined the beauty and loveliness of English landscape with the bolder and grander features of the scenery of the Western continent—a combination, perhaps, unequalled in any other country. On this, the northern coast, the bold and the picturesque predominate over the tamer park-like scenery of the interior valleys, which so nearly resemble the 'fine old places' of England."

Another route, which it is proposed to open on the other side of the country, from Minnesota to the Fraser River gold mines, would appear to be very feasible. From Saint Anthony the Mississippi is navigable for large steamers as far as the Sauk Rapids. Thence to Breckenridge, at the head of the navigation of the Red River of the North, is a distance of 125 miles. This part of the journey must be made overland; but already this district is being fast occupied by settlers, and a good road may easily be constructed. At Breckenridge a settlement has also been established. Here commences the fertile valley of the Red River, and from this point, as appears from Captain Pope's survey, the river, which runs due north, is navigable for steamers all the way to its mouth, at the southern extremity of Lake Winnepeg. It begins with four feet of water, and gradually deepens to fifteen feet Lake Winnepeg, which is long, narrow, and deep, receives near its northern end the Saskatchewan, flowing from the west, and having its sources in the Rocky Mountains. The river, and the country on its banks, have recently attracted attention as well fitted for colonisation. Taking the climate of the eastern portion of the continent, and of the region round Hudson's Bay, as a standard, it was long supposed that all the interior of North America, beyond the 48th or 49th degree of north latitude, was too cold to produce grain crops; and unfit, therefore, for the habitation of civilised men. Recent investigations, however, have fully established the curious and very important fact, that west of the western end of Lake Superior, at about the 100th degree of west longitude, a remarkable change begins to take place in the climate; to such an extent, that as we proceed westward the limit of vegetable growth, and of the production of grain, is extended far to the north, so as to include the whole valley of the Saskatchewan, which is represented as in other respects well fitted for settlement. The Saskatchewan is a river larger and longer than the Red River of the North; and, according to Governor Simpson, of the Hudson's Bay Company's Service, in his notes on its exploration, it is navigable by its northern branch, with only one rapid to obstruct navigation, for seven hundred miles in a direct line to the foot of the Rocky Mountains. How serious an obstruction this may be does not clearly appear. It can hardly be a perpendicular fall, since, according to Governor Simpson, canoes and flat-

boats pass over it in safety. From the head of navigation it is only about two hundred miles across the Rocky Mountains, of which the elevation here is much less than in Oregon and California, to the Thompson and Fraser Rivers.

The distance from Breckenridge to the mouth of the Red River is estimated at 450 miles. Thence through lake Winnepeg to the mouth of Saskatchewan is 200 miles. Allowing for windings, the navigation by that river may be set down at 1000 miles. Add 125 miles of land carriage at one end of the route, and 200 at the other, making in the whole a distance of about 2000 miles, from the starting point on the Mississippi.

So fully impressed are some enterprising people of Minnesota with the practicability and advantage of this route, that measures have been already taken for building a steamer at Breckenridge, designed to navigate the waters of the Red River, Lake Winnepeg, and Saskatchewan, and to be ready for that purpose by the opening of next spring. Meantime as the greater part of the route is within the territories of the Hudson's Bay Company, steps have been taken to open a communication with the Governor of that Company, and with other persons likely to assist in putting a line of steamers on these waters.

At present various measures are being taken by the Canadians to shorten this last route, and apparently with much success. They are making arrangements for passing around the headwaters of Lake Superior, and thus saving the détour in Minnesota. In a very short time it is said that an easy and inexpensive means of communication will be formed between Canada and the gold-fields; but, for the present, the Panama route is decidedly the preferable one for British emigrants.

#### **Chapter Four.**

##### **Description of Coasts, Harbours, etcetera.**

The Pacific coast extends from Panama westward and northward, without any remarkable irregularity in its outline, to the tropic of Cancer, almost immediately under which is the entrance of the great Gulf of California, separating the Peninsula of California from the main continent on the east. From the southern extremity of this peninsula the coast runs generally north-westward to Mount Saint Elias, a lofty volcanic peak, rising from the shore of the ocean under the 60th parallel, beyond which the continent stretches far westward, between the Pacific on the south, and the Arctic Sea on the north, to its termination at Cape Prince of Wales, in Behring's Straits, the passage separating America from Asia. The part of the coast south of the 49th degree of latitude (the American boundary) presents few indentations, and the islands in its vicinity are neither numerous nor large. North of the 49th degree, on the

contrary, the mainland is everywhere penetrated by inlets and bays; and near it are thousands of islands, many of them extensive, lying singly or in groups, separated from each other and from the continent by narrow channels.

From the mouth of the Columbia forty-five miles of unbroken coast reaches Whidbey's Bay, called by the Americans Bulfinches Harbour, and not unfrequently Gray's Bay, which, with an entrance of scarce two miles and a-half, spreads seven miles long and nine broad, forming two deep bays like the Columbia. Here there is secure anchorage behind Point Hanson to the south and Point Brown to the north, but the capacity of the bay is lessened to one-third of its size by the sand banks which encroach on it in every direction. Like the Columbia, its mouth is obstructed by a bar which has not more than four fathoms water, and as it stretches some three miles to seaward, with breakers on each side, extending the whole way to the shore, the difficulty of entrance is increased. It lies nearly east and west, and receives from the east the waters of the river Chikelis, having its rise at the base of the mountains, which, stretching from Mount Olympus in the north, divide the coast from Puget's Sound. From Whidbey's Bay to Cape Flattery, about eighty miles, but two streams, and those unimportant, break the iron wall of the coast, which rising gradually into lofty mountains is crowned in hoary grandeur by the snow-clad peaks of Mount Olympus. Cape Flattery, called also Cape Classet, is a conspicuous promontory in latitude 48 degrees 27 minutes; beyond it, distant one mile, lies Tatouches Island, a large flat rock, with perpendicular sides, producing a few trees, surrounded by rocky islets: it is one mile in length, joined to the shore by a reef of rocks, and a mile further, leaving a clear passage between them, is a reef named Ducan's Rock. Here commences, in latitude 48 degrees 30 minutes, that mighty arm of the sea, which has been justly named from its first discoverer, the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and which Captain Cook passed without perceiving. The entrance of this strait is about ten miles in width, and varies from that to twenty with the indentations of its shores, of which the northern, stretching to the north-west and south-east across the entrance, gives an appearance of continuity to its line on the Pacific. Running in a south-easterly direction for upwards of one hundred miles, its further progress is suddenly stopped by a range of snow-clad mountain, at the base of which, spreading abroad its mighty arms to the north and south, it gives to the continent the appearance of a vast archipelago.

Of the Straits of Fuca and surrounding shores, the latest and fullest information we possess is that contained in the letter of the 'Times' special correspondent, published on 27th August. He says:—

“We have now rounded Cape Flattery, and are in the Straits of Fuca, running up between two shores of great beauty. On the left is the long-looked-for

Island of Vancouver, an irregular aggregation of hills, shewing a sharp angular outline as they become visible in the early dawn, covered with the eternal pines, saving only occasional sunny patches of open greensward, very pretty and picturesque, but the hills not lofty enough to be very striking. The entire island, property speaking, is a forest. On the right we have a long massive chain of lofty mountains covered with snow, called the Olympian range—very grand, quite Alpine in aspect. This is the peninsula, composed of a series of mountains running for many miles in one unbroken line, which divides the Straits of Fuca from Puget Sound. It belongs to America, in the territory of Washington, is uninhabited, and, like its opposite neighbour, has a covering of pines far up towards the summit. The tops of these mountains are seldom free from snow. The height is unknown, perhaps 15,000 feet. We ran up through this scenery early in the morning, biting cold, for about forty miles to Esquimault Harbour—the harbour—which confers upon Vancouver's Island its pre-eminence.

“From the information of old miners, who pointed out some of the localities on the northern coast of California, and indicated the position of places in Oregon in which they had dug for gold, I had a strong corroboration of an opinion which I stated in one of my late letters—that the Fraser River diggings were a continuation of the great goldfield of California. The same miners had a theory that these northern mines would be richer than any yet discovered, because the more northern portions of California are richer than the central and southern portions.

“The harbour of Esquimault is a circular bay, or rather a basin, hollowed by nature out of the solids rock. We slid in through the narrow entrance between two low, rocky promontories and found ourselves suddenly transported from the open sea and its heavy roll and swell into a Highland lake, placid as the face of a mirror, in the recesses of a pine forest. The transition was startling. From the peculiar shape of the bay and the deep indentations its various coves make into the shore, one sees but a small portion of the harbour at a glance from the point we brought up at. We therefore thought it ridiculously small after our expectations had been so highly wrought in San Francisco.

“The whole scenery is of the Highland character. The rocky shores, the pine trees running down to the edge of the lake, their dark foliage trembling over the glittering surface which reflected them, the surrounding hills, and the death-like silence. I was both delighted and disappointed—delighted with the richness of the scenery, but disappointed at the smallness of the harbour. Can this little loch, imprisoned within natural ramparts of rocks, buried in the solitude of a forest, be the place which I hoped would become so famous, the great destiny of which has been prognosticated by statesmen and publicists,

and the possession of which is bitterly envied us by neighbouring nations; this the place where England is to centre a naval force hitherto unknown in the Pacific, whence her fleets are to issue for the protection of her increasing interests in the Western world; this the seaport of the Singapore of the Pacific; the modern Tyre into which the riches of the East are to flow and be distributed to the Western nations; the terminus of railway communication which is to connect the Atlantic with the Pacific?

“Victoria is distant from Esquimault, by land, about three miles round by sea, double the distance. The intervening ground is an irregular promontory, having the waters of the Straits of Fuca on the south, the Bay of Victoria on the east, and the Victoria arm encircling: it on the north. The promontory contains three farms, reclaimed from the forest of pines, oaks, alders, willows, and evergreens. The soil is good, and produces fair crops of the ordinary cereals, oats, barley, and wheat, and good grass, turnips, and potatoes.

“I came the first time to Victoria round by water. The rowing of our boat was much impeded by kelp. The shore is irregular; somewhat bold and rocky—two more facts which confirmed the resemblance of the scenery to that of the western coast of Scotland.

“The bay of Victoria runs in a zigzag shape—two long sharp promontories on the southward hiding the town from view until we get quite close up to it. A long low sand-spit juts out into it, which makes the entrance hazardous for large vessels at some little distance below the town, and higher up the anchorage is shallow. Twice at low tides I saw two or three ugly islands revealed, where ships would have to anchor. In short, Victoria is not a good harbour for a fleet. For small vessels and traders on the coast, it will answer well enough.

“Victoria stands nobly on a fine eminence, a beautiful plateau, on the rocky shore of the bay of the same name. Generations yet to come will pay grateful tribute to the sagacity and good taste of the man who selected it. There is no finer site for a city in the world. The plateau drains itself on every side by the natural depressions which intersect it, and there is space enough to build a Paris on. The views are also good. Across the straits you have the Olympian range washed by the sea; towards the interior, picturesque views of wooded hills; opposite, the fine woodland scenery of the country intervening between it and Esquimault, the Victoria arm, glimpses of which, as seen through the foliage, look like a series of inland lakes; while in front, just at one’s feet, is the bay itself and its tributaries, or arms rather—James’s Bay, etcetera, always beautiful; and behind, towards the south-east end of the island, is a view of great beauty and grandeur—a cluster of small islands, San Juan and others, water in different channels, straits and creeks, and two enormous mountains in

the far distance, covered from base to summit with perpetual snow. These are Mounts Baker and Rainier, in Washington territory. Such are a few—and I am quite serious when I say only a few—of the beauties which surround Victoria.

“As to the prospects of Vancouver’s Island as a colony, I would say that if it shall turn out that there is an extensive and rich gold-field on the mainland in British territory, as there is every reason to believe, the island will become a profitable field for all trades, industries, and labour. The population will soon increase from Canada, whence an immigration of many thousands is already spoken of, from Australia, South America, the Atlantic States,—and, no doubt, from Europe also. If this happens, the tradesman and the labourer will find employment, and the farmer will find a ready market, at good prices, for his produce.

“Should the gold suddenly disappear, the island will have benefited by the impulse just given to immigration, for, no doubt, many who came to mine will remain to cultivate the soil and to engage in other pursuits. If this be the termination of the present fever, then to the farmer who is satisfied with a competency—full garners and good larder, who loves retirement, is not ambitious of wealth, is fond of a mild, agreeable, and healthy climate, and a most lovely country to live in—the island offers every attraction. Its resources are, plenty of timber, towards the northern portion producing spars of unequalled quality, which are becoming of great value in England, and will soon be demanded in France, now that the forests of Norway and of Maine are becoming exhausted; limestone in abundance, which burns into good lime for building and for agricultural purposes; coal in plenty, now worked at Nanaimo, on the northern side of the island, by the Hudson’s Bay Company—the quality is quite good, judging from the specimens I saw burning—it answers well for steam purposes, and would have found a ready sale in San Francisco were it not subject to a heavy duty (of 30 per cent, I think) under the American tariff; iron, copper, gold, and potter’s clay. I have no doubt that a gold-field will be discovered on the island as it gets opened up to enterprising explorers. A friend of mine brought down some sand from the sea-beach near Victoria, and assayed it the other day. It produced gold in minute quantity, and I have heard of gold washings on the island. The copper is undeveloped. The potter’s clay has been tested in England, and found to be very good.

“The character of the soil is favourable to agriculture. It is composed of a black vegetable mould of a foot to two feet in depth, overlaying a hard yellow clay. The surface earth is very fine, pulverised, and sandy, quite black, and, no doubt, of good quality; when sharpened with sheep-feeding it produces heavy crops. The fallen trees, which are very numerous, shew that the substratum of clay is too hard to produce anything. The roots of the pine never penetrate it.



In some places the spontaneous vegetation testifies to the richness of the soil—such as wild pease or vetches, and wild clover, which I—have seen reach up to my horse’s belly—and a most luxuriant growth of underwood, brambles, fern, etcetera.

“I visited seven farms within short distances of Victoria. The crops were oats, barley, wheat, pease, potatoes, turnips, garden herbs and vegetables, fruits, and flowers; no clover, the natural grass supplying sufficient food for the cattle and sheep. The crops were all healthy, but not heavy. The wheat was not thick on the ground, nor had it a large head. It was such a crop as would be an average only in a rich, well-cultivated district of England or Scotland; far lighter than you would see in the rich counties of England and in the Carse of Gowrie. I was informed that the ground was very badly prepared by Indian labour—merely scratched over the surface. I believe that with efficient labour and skilful treatment, the crops could be nearly doubled. The oats and barley were very good crops, and the potatoes looked quite healthy, and I doubt not will turn out the best crop of all. The peas were decidedly an abundant crop. Vegetables thrive well, and all the ordinary fruits, apples, currants, etcetera, are excessively abundant, some of the currant-bushes breaking down with the weight of their fruit. Flowers of the ordinary sorts do well, but delicate plants don’t thrive, owing to the coldness of the nights.

“Sheep thrive admirably. I saw some very fine pure Southdowns. The rams were selling at 100 dollars each (20 pounds) to California sheep farmers. Other breeds—hybrids of Southdowns, merinos, and other stock—were also in good condition, and fair in size. Black cattle do well also. The breed is a mixture of English and American, which makes very good beef. The horses are little Indian breeds, and some crosses with American stock, all very clean limbed, sound, active, hardy, and full of endurance and high spirit, until they get into livery-stables.

“During my stay, the climate was charming; the weather perfection—warm during the day, but free of glare, and not oppressive; cool in the evenings, with generally a gentle sea breeze. The long days—the protracted daylight eking out the day to nine o’clock at night—the lingering sunset, and the ample ‘gloaming,’ all so different from what I had been accustomed to in more southern latitudes, again reminded me of Scotland in the summer season.

“So far as I wandered—about ten miles round Victoria—the landscape is totted with extensive croppings of rock, which interfere with the labours of the husbandman. Few corn-fields are without a lot of boulders, or a ridge or two of rocks rising up above the surface of the ground. Consequently the cultivated fields are small, and were sneered at by my Californian neighbours, who are accustomed to vast open prairies under crop. I have seen one field of 1000

acres all under wheat in California. But then no other country is so favoured as this is for all the interests of agriculture.

“The scenery of the inland country around Victoria is a mixture of English and Scotch. Where the pine (they are all ‘Douglass’ pines) prevails, you have the good soil broken into patches by the croppings of rock, producing ferns, rye-grass, and some thistles, but very few. This is the Scottish side of the picture. Then you come to the oak region; and here you have clumps, open glades, rows, single trees of umbrageous form, presenting an exact copy of English park scenery. There is no running water, unfortunately, but the meadows and little prairies that lie ensconced within the woods, shew no signs of suffering from lack of water. The nights bring heavy dews, and there are occasional rains, which keep them fresh and green. I am told that in September rains fall which renew the face of nature so suddenly, that it assumes the garb of spring, the flowers even coming out. The winter is a little cold, but never severe. I have heard it complained of as being rather wet and muggy. Frost and snow fall, but do not endure long.

“The climate is usually represented as resembling that of England. In some respects the parallel may hold good; but there is no question that Vancouver has more steady fine weather, is far less changeable, and is on the whole milder. Two marked differences I remarked—the heat was never sweltering, as is sometimes the case in England, and the wind never stings, as it too often does in the mother country. The climate is unquestionably superior in Vancouver.”

To resume our description of the coast, the southern shore of the Strait of Juan de Fuca is described by Vancouver as being composed of sandy cliffs of moderate height, falling perpendicularly into the sea, from the top of which the land takes a further gentle ascent, where it is entirely covered with trees, chiefly of the pine tribe, until the forest reaches a range of high craggy mountains which seem to rise from the woodland in a very abrupt manner, with a few scattered trees on their sterile sides, and their tops covered with snow. On the north the shore is not so high, the ascent more gradual from thence to the tops of the mountains, which are less covered with snow than those to the south. They have from the strait the appearance of a compact range. Proceeding up the strait about seventy miles, a long low sandy point attracted Vancouver’s attention; from its resemblance to Dungeness, on the coast of Kent, he named it New Dungeness, and found within it good anchorage in from ten to three fathoms; beyond this the coast forms a deep bay about nine miles across; and three miles from its eastern point lies Protection Island, so named from the position it occupies at the entrance of Port Discovery. Vancouver landed on it on the 1st of May 1792, and thus describes

its appearance:— “On landing on the west end, and ascending its eminence, which was a nearly perpendicular cliff, our attention was immediately called to a landscape almost as enchantingly beautiful as the most elegantly finished pleasure-grounds in Europe. The summit of this island presented nearly a horizontal surface, interspersed with some inequalities of ground, which produced a beautiful variety on an extensive lawn covered with luxuriant grass and diversified with abundance of flowers. To the north-westward was a coppice of pine trees, and shrubs of various sorts, that seemed as if it had been planted for the purpose of protecting from the north-west winds this delightful meadow, over which were promiscuously scattered a few clumps of trees that would have puzzled the most ingenious designer of pleasure-grounds to have arranged more agreeably. While we stopped to contemplate these several beauties of nature in a prospect no less pleasing than unexpected, we gathered some gooseberries and roses in a state of considerable forwardness.”

From this island, lying at the entrance of Port Discovery, commences the maritime importance of the territory, with, says Vancouver, as fine a harbour as any in the world, though subsequently he awards the palm to its neighbour Port Hudson. Its shores and scenery have been thus described by Vancouver:

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“The delightful serenity of the weather greatly aided the beautiful scenery that was now presented; the surface of the sea was perfectly smooth, and the country before us presented all that bounteous nature could be expected to draw into one point of view. As we had no reason to imagine that this country had ever been indebted for any of its decorations to the hand of man, I could not possibly believe that any uncultivated country had ever been discovered exhibiting so rich a picture. The land which interrupted the horizon below the north-west and north quarters seemed to be much broken, from whence its eastern extent round to south-east was bounded by a ridge of snowy mountains, appearing to lie nearly in a north and south direction, on which Mount Baker rose conspicuously, remarkable for its height and the snowy mountains that stretch from its base to the north and south. Between us and this snowy range, the land, which on the sea-shore terminated like that we had lately passed in low perpendicular cliffs, or on beaches of sand or stone, rose here in a very gentle ascent, and was well covered with a variety of stately forest trees; these, however, did not conceal the whole face of the country in one uninterrupted wilderness, but pleasantly clothed its eminences and chequered the valleys, presenting in many directions extensive spaces that wore the appearance of having been cleared by art, like the beautiful island we had visited the day before. A picture so pleasing could not fail to call to our remembrance certain delightful and beloved situations in Old England.” Both the approaches to this port, round the extremities of Protection Island, are

perfectly free from obstruction, and about a league in breadth.

Separated from Port Discovery only by a narrow slip of land from a mile and a-half to two miles broad, which trending to the east protects it from the north and west, is Port Hudson, having its entrance at the extremity of the point on the east side, but little more than one mile broad; from which the harbour extends, in a semicircular form, for about four miles westward, and then trending for about six more, affords excellent shelter and anchorage for vessels in from ten to twenty fathoms, with an even bottom of mud.

In latitude 48 degrees 16 minutes the waters of the strait are divided by a high white sandy cliff, with verdant lawns on each side; this was named by Vancouver Point Partridge. It forms the western extremity of an island, long, low, verdant, and well-wooded, lying close to the coast, and having its south end at the mouth of a river rising in those mountains which here form a barrier to the further progress of the sea. The snow-covered peak of the most lofty of these is visible soon after entering the strait. Vancouver named it Mount Baker, from the officer of his ship by whom it was first seen. This mountain, with Mount Olympus, and another further to the south, named by the same navigator Mount Rainier, form nearly an equilateral triangle, and tower over the rest, the giant wardens of the land. From Point Partridge he southern branch extends about fifteen miles below the island before mentioned; this Vancouver named Admiralty Inlet. Here the tides begin to be sufficiently rapid to afford obstruction to navigation; and hence it parts in two arms, one named Hood's Canal, taking a south-west course, and the other continuing a south course for forty miles, and then also bending to the west, terminates in a broad sound studded with islands, called by him Puget's Sound.

On the east coast of Admiralty Inlet, there is a broad sound with very deep water and rapid tides, but affording good anchorage in the mouth of the river. Here Vancouver landed and took formal possession of the country on Monday, the 4th of June, (with the usual solemnities, and under a royal salute from the ships), in the name of his Britannic Majesty King George the Third, and for his heirs and successors—that day being His Majesty's birthday—from latitude 39 degrees 20 minutes to the entrance of this inlet, supposed to be the Strait of Juan de Fuca, as well the northern as the southern shores, together with those situated in the interior sea, extending from the said strait in various directions between the north-west, north-east, and south quarters. This interior sea he named the Gulf of Georgia, and the continent bounding the said gulf, and extending southward to the 45th degree of north latitude, New Georgia, in honour of His Majesty George the Third. The sound he named, from this incident, Possession Sound. Of the country round the sound he thus writes:—“Our eastern view was now bounded by the range of snowy mountains from

Mount Baker, bearing by compass north, to Mount Rainier, bearing north 54 degrees east. This mountain was hid by the more elevated parts of the low land; and the intermediate snowy mountains, in various rugged and grotesque shapes, were seen just to rear their heads above the lofty pine trees, which appeared to compose an uninterrupted forest between us and the snowy range, presenting a most pleasing landscape; nor was our west view destitute of similar diversification. The ridge of mountains on which Mount Olympus is situated, whose rugged summits were seen no less fancifully towering over the forest than those of the east side, bounded to a considerable extent our western horizon; on these, however, not one conspicuous eminence arose, nor could we now distinguish that which on the sea-coast appeared to be centrally situated, forming an elegant biforked mountain. From the south extremity of these ridges of mountains there seemed to be an extensive tract of land, moderately elevated and beautifully diversified by pleasing inequalities of surface, enriched with every appearance of fertility.”

The narrow channel from Possession Sound, at the back of the long island lying at its mouth, which Vancouver named Whidbey’s Island, affords some small but convenient harbours; its northern entrance is so choked with rocks as to be scarcely practicable for vessels; but its southern is wide, and the navigation unimpeded.

The northern arm of the straits commences in an archipelago of small islands, well wooded and fertile, but generally without water; in one of them, however, Vancouver found good anchorage, though exposed to the south, having wood, water, and every necessary; this he named Strawberry Cove, from that fruit having been found there in great abundance, and the island, from the trees which covered it, Cypress Island. About this part the continental shore is high and rocky, though covered with wood; and, it may be remarked generally, that the northern shore of the gulf becomes more rocky and sterile, shewing gradually a less and less variety of trees, until those of the pine tribe alone are found.

Above the archipelago the straits widen, swelling out to the east in a double bay, affording good anchorage, beyond which the shores become low and sandy, and a wide bank of sand extends along them about one or two miles, closely approaching the opposite side of the gulf, leaving a narrow but clear channel. This bank, affording large sturgeon, was named by Vancouver after that fish; and keeping to the south around it, he did not observe that here the gulf receives the waters of Fraser River from the north. Here the gulf is open, and the navigation unimpeded, except by a few islands on the north shore; one of them, named by the Spaniards de Feveda, deserves notice; it is parallel with the shore, narrow, and about thirty miles long.

Among the natural features of this part of the north shore of the gulf, must not be omitted, on account of their singularity, the small salt-water lakes, which are found divided from the sea only by a narrow ledge of rock, having a depth over it of four feet at high-water. They are consequently replenished by the sea every tide, and form salt-water cascades during the ebb and rise of the tides; some of them, divided into several branches, run through a low swampy woodland country. Here also are streams of water, so warm as to be unpleasant to the hand; and every feature of this district evidences the violent effort of nature in its production. Except the coast and canals, nothing is known of it; but its mineral riches are scarcely problematical. The channels between the several islands which here obstruct the gulf are narrow, deep, and much impeded by the strength of the tide, which is sufficient in some places to stop the progress of a steam-vessel, as has been frequently experienced by the Hudson's Bay Company's steam-boat Beaver; yet Vancouver found no difficulty in working his vessels through Johnstone's Strait, the passage between these islands and the southern shore, against a head-wind; being compelled, as he says, to perform a complete traverse from shore to shore through its whole length, and without meeting the least obstruction, from rocks or shoals. He adds, "the great depth of water, not only here, but that which is generally found washing the shores of this very broken and divided country, must ever be considered a peculiar circumstance, and a great inconvenience to its navigation; we, however, found a sufficient number of stopping-places to answer all our purposes, and in general without going far out of our way." From this, archipelago, extending about sixty miles, the strait widens into a broad expanse, which swells to the north in a deep sound, filled with islands, called Broughton's Archipelago. This part was named by Vancouver Queen Charlotte's Sound; and is here fifteen miles broad, exclusive of the archipelago, but it contracts immediately to less than ten, and sixty miles from Johnstone Straits joins the Pacific, its northern boundary. Cape Caution, being in latitude 51 degrees 10 minutes. The entrance to the sound is choked with rocks and shoals.

Here, between Broughton's Archipelago and Cape Caution, another mountain, called Mount Stephen, conspicuous from its irregular form and great elevation, and worthy to be named with those to the south, seems to mount guard over the northern entrance to the straits.

From Cape Caution, off which are several groups of rocks to latitude 54 degrees 40 minutes, where the Russian territory commences, the coast has much the same character as that already described between the Gulf of Georgia and the sea, but that its harsher features are occasionally much softened, and its navigation less impeded. Throughout its whole length it is cut up by long and deep canals, which form various archipelagos of islands, and

penetrate deeply and circuitously into the land, which is high, but not so precipitous as about Desolation Sound, and generally covered with trees.

The islands lying close to the shore follow its sinuosities, and through the narrow channels thus formed the currents are rapid; those more detached are more fertile; they are all the resort of the natives during the fishing season. Their formation is granite, the prevailing rock north of latitude 49 degrees. Distant thirty miles at its nearest and ninety at its furthest point from the line of islands which cover this coast, and under parallels 52 degrees and 54 degrees, lies Queen Charlotte's Island, called by the Americans Washington. It is in form triangular, about 150 miles long, and above sixty at its greatest breadth, and contains upwards of 4000 square miles. Possessed of an excellent harbour on its east coast, in latitude 53 degrees 3 minutes, and another on the north, at Hancock's River (the Port Entrada of the Spaniards), it is a favourite resort of traders. The climate and soil are excellent, hills lofty and well wooded, and its coast, especially on the west side, deeply indented by arms of the sea, among which may be named Englefield Bay and Cartwright's Sound. Coal and some metals are said to have been found on this island.

On the whole the character of this coast seems to be well expressed by Lieutenant Wilkes, when he says—"Nothing can exceed the beauty of these waters, and their safety; not a shoal exists within the straits of Juan de Fuca, Admiralty Inlet, Puget's Sound, or Hood's Canal that can in any way interrupt their navigation by a 74 gun ship. I venture nothing in saying there is no country in the world that possesses waters equal to these."

## **Chapter Five.**

### **Native Tribes.**

Mr Nicolay, in his treatise on the Oregon Territory, gives a minute and graphic account of the aboriginal inhabitants of this district, from which we purpose making some extracts to enrich our pages.

The principal Indian tribes, commencing from the south, are the Callapuyas, Shaste, Klamet, Umqua, Rogues' River, and Chinooks, between the Californian boundary and Columbia, to the west of the Cascade Mountains; the Shoshones or Snake and Nezperces tribes about the southern branch of the Columbia, and Cascade Indians on the river of that name; between the Columbia and the Strait of Fuca, the Tatouche or Classet tribe; and the Clalams about Port Discovery; the Sachet about Possession Sound; the Walla-walla, Flat-head, Flat-bow Indians, and Cour d'Aleine or Pointed Heart, about the rivers of the same names; the Chunnapuns and Chanwappans between the Cascade range and the north branch of the Columbia; the Kootanie to the east,

between it and the Rocky Mountains; and to the north about Okanagan, various branches of the Carrier tribe. Of those on the coast to the north and on Vancouver Island not much is known.

Their numbers may be stated at a rough estimate as—

On the coast below the Columbia	2,500
About the Cascades	1,500
On the Snake River and its tributary	2,500
Between the Columbia and Strait of De Fuca	3,000
About Fort Vancouver	1,500
Walla-walla	1,500
Flat-head, etcetera	1,200
Okanagan	750
Northward	2,500
Vancouver's and Queen Charlotte's Island	5,000
Possession Sound	650
Fraser River	500
On the coast of the Gulf of Georgia	500
Total	23,500

This is, however, 6000 less than was reported to the Congress of the United States, and 4000 more than Mr Wilkes' calculation.

That there are errors in this there can be no doubt; and it is probable that some smaller tribes may be omitted in the above calculation; the number, therefore, between parallels 42 degrees and 54 degrees 40 minutes may be roughly estimated at 30,000.

Through the care of the Hudson's Bay Company and the semi-civilised habits they have adopted, the number of Indians to the north of the Columbia is not on the decrease; to the south it is; and the total must be very considerably less than it was before the settlement was made among them.

The Indian nations in Oregon may be divided into three classes, differing in habits and character according to their locality and means of sustenance—the Indians of the coast, the mountains, and the plains. The first feed mostly on fish, and weave cloth for clothing from the wool or hair of the native sheep, having to a great extent settled residences, though these last characteristics are rapidly disappearing; the second, trappers and hunters, wandering for the most part in pursuit of game; and the third, the equestrian tribes, who, on the great plains about the waters of the rivers, chase on their fleet horses the gigantic bison, whose flesh supplies them with food, and whose hide covers them. The former bear some resemblance to the native inhabitants of the islands of the Pacific. The two latter are in every respect Red men. Those on the coast were



first known, and when visited by the early voyagers had the characteristics which, from contiguity to White men, have deteriorated in the south, but which have been retained in the north—high courage, determination, and great ingenuity, but joined to cruelty and faithlessness; and as in the south Destruction Island obtained its name from their savage cruelty, so does the coast throughout its length afford the same testimony. Cook, who first discovered them, says, “They were thieves in the strictest sense of the word, for they pilfered nothing from us but what they knew could be converted to the purposes of utility, and had a real value according to their estimation of things.”

Their form is thick and clumsy, but they are not deficient in strength or activity; when young, their colour is not dark nor their features hard, but exposure to the weather, want of mental culture, and their dirty habits, soon reduce them all to the same dark complexion and dull phlegmatic want of expression which is strongly marked in all of them.

In Cook’s time, and till the White men settled among them, their dress was a flaxen mantle, ornamented with fur above, and tassels and fringes, which, passing under the left arm, is tied over the right shoulder, leaving the right side open: this is fastened round the waist by a girdle: above this, which reaches below the knee, a circular cape, perforated in the centre to admit the head, made of the same substance, and also fringed in the lower part, is worn: it covers the arms to the elbows. Their head is covered with a cap, conical but truncated, made of fine matting, ornamented at the top with a knot or tassels. Besides the above dress, common to both sexes, the men frequently throw over their garments the skin of a bear, wolf, or sea-otter, with the fur outwards: they wear the hair loose, unless tied up in the scalping-lock: they cover themselves with paint, and swarm with vermin; upon the paint they strew mica to make it glitter. They perforate the nose and ears, and put various ornaments into them.

But besides these common habits, they have official and ceremonious occasions, on which they wear beautiful furs and theatrical dresses and disguises, including large masks; and their war-dress, formed of a thick doubled leathern mantle of elk or buffalo skin, frequently with a cloak over it, on which the hoofs of horses were strung, makes an almost impervious cuirass. Their love for music, general lively dispositions, except from provocation, but determination in avenging insult or wrong, is testified by all.

Cook also gives a full description of their houses and manner of life. Of the former, he says they are made of split boards, and large enough for several families, who occupy small pens on each side of the interior. They have benches and boxes, and many of their utensils, such as pipes, etcetera, are

frequently carved; as are also gigantic human faces on large trunks of trees, which they set up for posts to their dwellings.

In their persons and houses they were filthy in the extreme; in their habits lazy; but the women were modest and industrious. Their principal food was fish, but they had edible roots and game from the land. A favourite article of food was also the roe of herrings, dried on pine branches or sea-weed. Their weapons were spears, arrows, slings, and clubs, similar to the New Zealanders; also an axe, not dissimilar to the North American tomahawk, the handle of which is usually carved.

They made garments of pine-bark beaten fine; these were made by hand with plaited thread and woollen, so closely wove as to resemble cloth, and frequently had worked on them figures of men and animals: on one was the whole process of the whale fishery. Their aptitude for the imitative arts was very great. Their canoes were rather elegantly formed out of trees, with rising prow, frequently carved in figures. They differ from those of the Pacific generally, in having neither sails nor outriggers; they had harpoons and spears for whale-fishing. Vancouver, when at Port Discovery, saw some long poles placed upright on the beach at equal distances, the object of which he could not discover, and it was not till the last voyage of discovery, despatched from the United States under Commodore Wilkes, that they were ascertained to have been used for hanging nets upon, to catch wild-fowl by night: their ingenuity in this and in netting salmon is very remarkable. They have two nets, the drawing and casting net, made of a silky grass found on the banks of the Columbia, or the fibres of the roots of trees, or of the inner bark of the white cedar. The salmon-fishing on the Columbia commences in June, the main body, according to the habit of this fish, dividing at the mouth of the tributary streams to ascend then to their sources. At the rapids and falls the work of destruction commences; with a bag-net, not unlike to an European fisherman's landing-net, on a pole thirty feet long, the Indians take their stand on the rocks, or on platforms erected for the purpose, and throwing their nets into the river above their standing-places, let them float down the rapids to meet the fish as they ascend. By this means many are caught; they have also stake-nets and lines with stones for leads; they also catch many with hook and line, and sometimes, now they have fire-arms, shoot them. Their mode of fishing for sturgeon is also peculiar. The line, made of twisted fibres of the roots of trees, is attached to a large wooden hook and let down over the side of a canoe; those used for this purpose are small, having only one or two men at most in them: having hooked a fish, they haul him gently up till he floats on the water, then, with a heavy mallet, with one blow on the head they kill him; with singular dexterity they contrive to jerk a fish of three hundred pounds over the lowered side of the canoe by a single effort. They catch whales also

by means of harpoons with bladders attached. The oil is sold to the Hudson's Bay Company. It has been said that their houses were made of boards, but some constructive art is displayed in their erection as was much ingenuity in procuring the materials before axes were introduced among them; for they contrived to fell trees with a rough chisel and mallet. The houses are made of centre-posts about eighteen feet high, upon which a long pole rests, forming the ridge of the roof, from whence rafters descend to another like it, but not more than five feet from the ground; to these again, cross poles are attached, and against these are placed boards upright, and the lower end fixed in the ground; across these again, poles are placed, and tied with cords of cedar bark to those inside of the roof, which are similarly disposed: the planks are double. These houses are divided on each side into stalls and pens, occupied as sleeping places during the night, and the rafters serve to suspend the fish, which are dried by the smoke in its lengthened course through the interstices of the roof and walls. In their superstitions, theatricals, dances, and songs they have much similarity to the natives of Polynesia. Debased now, and degraded even beneath their former portrait—fast fading away before the more genial sun of the fortunes of the White man—the Indians on the southern coast are no longer free and warlike, and being in subjection to the Hudson's Bay Company, English manufactures are substituted for the efforts of their native industry.

The mode of burial practised among the tribes on the coast is very peculiar. The corpse is placed sometimes in a canoe raised a few feet from the ground, with arms and other necessities beside it. These are not unfrequently spoiled beforehand, to prevent their being stolen, as if they thought they might, like their owner, be restored to their former state in the new world. Sometimes they are put in upright boxes like sentry-boxes—sometimes in small enclosures—but usually kept neat, and those of the chiefs frequently painted. Mount Coffin, at the mouth of the Cowelitz, seems to have been appropriated to the burial of persons of importance; it is about seven hundred feet high, and quite isolated: on it were to be seen the canoe-coffins of the natives in every stage of decay; they were hung between the trees about five feet from the ground. This cemetery of the Columbia is, however, destroyed, for the American sailors under Wilkes, neglecting to put out their cooking-fire, it spread over the whole mountain, and continued to rage through the night, till all was burnt. A few small presents appeased the Indians, who but a few years before could only have drowned the remembrance of such a national disgrace in the blood of those who caused it.

Among the tribes about the lower part of the Columbia the singular custom of flattening the head still prevails, though not to the extent it did formerly; Mr Dunn thus describes the operation:—

“Immediately after the birth, the infant is laid in an oblong wooden trough, by way of cradle, with moss under the head; the end on which the head reposes is raised higher than the rest; a padding is then placed on the infant’s forehead, with a piece of cedar-bark over it; it is pressed down by cords, which pass through holes on each side of the trough. As the tightening of the padding and pressure of the head is gradual, the process is said not to be attended with much pain. The appearance of the infant, however, while under it, is shocking,—its little black eyes seem ready to start from their sockets; the mouth exhibits all the appearance of internal convulsion; and it clearly appears that the face is undergoing a process of unnatural configuration. About a year’s pressure is sufficient to produce the desired effect; the head is ever after completely flattened;” and as slaves are always left to nature, this deformity is consequently a mark of free birth. The Indians on the north coast possess the characteristics of the southern, but harsher and more boldly defined—they are of fiercer and more treacherous dispositions. Indeed, those of the south have a disposition to merriment and light-hearted good humour. Their mechanical ingenuity is more remarkably displayed in the carving on their pipes, and especially in working iron and steel. The Indians of the coast are doubtless all from the same stock, modified by circumstances and locality. Those, however, to the south of the Columbia, about the waters of the rivers Klamet and Umqua, partake largely of the characteristics of the Indians of the plains, their country having prairies, and themselves possessing horses: they are remarkable for nothing but their determined hostility towards the Whites. Idleness and filth are inveterate among all three, but among the Indians of the plains there is a marked difference; there, their food consist of fish, indeed, and dried for winter, but not entirely, being more varied by venison than on the coast, and in the winter by roots, which they dig up and lay by in store. They live more in moveable tents, and to the south their great wealth is their horses. They are not, like the coast Indians, of small stature and inelegantly made, but remarkable for comeliness of person and elegance of carriage. They are equestrian in their habits, and shew to great advantage on horseback. The principal tribes are the Shoshones and Walla-walla, between whom, as between the former and the Blackfeet, there has been continual war. The Shoshones dwell between the Rocky and Blue Mountain ranges, the Walla-walla about the river of that fame; the Blackfeet at the foot of the Rocky Mountains, principally, but not entirely, on the eastern side. Warlike and independent, the Blackfeet had for a long time the advantage, having been earlier introduced to the use of fire-arms; but by the instrumentality of the Hudson’s Bay Company, they have been of late years more on an equality: they are friendly to the Whites, but the Blackfeet, their mortal enemies, and their hill-forts overhanging the passes of the Rocky Mountains, make the future safety of the journey to the United States depend on the temper of this

fickle and bloodthirsty nation, who have been well termed the Arabs of the West, for truly their hand is against every man, and every man's hand against them; and though seriously lessened in number by war and disease, they still dwell in the presence of all their brethren. The Shoshones feed frequently on horse-flesh, and have also large quantities of edible roots, which stand them in great stead during the winter. When the men are fishing for salmon, the women are employed in digging and preserving the roots. There is, indeed, one tribe inhabiting the country of the salt lakes and springs to the south of the head-waters of the Snake or Saptin River, who have no wish, beyond these roots, living in the most bestial manner possible: these, from their single occupation, have been named Diggers. Above the Walla-walla, also, there is a tribe called the Basket people, from their using a basket in fishing for salmon. The apparatus consists of a large wicker basket, supported by long poles inserted into it, and fixed in the rocks; to the basket is joined a long frame, spreading above, against which the fish, in attempting to leap the falls, strike and fall into the basket; it is taken up three times a day, and at each haul not unfrequently contains three hundred fine fish. The Flat-heads, dwelling about the river of that name, are the most northern of the equestrian tribes: their characteristics are intelligence and aptitude for civilisation; yet, in the early history of the country, their fierceness and barbarity in war could not be exceeded, especially in their retaliation on the Blackfeet, of which Ross Cox gives a horrible account. The usual dress of these tribes is a shirt, leggings, and mocassins of deer-skin, frequently much ornamented with fringes of beads, and formerly in the "braves" with scalps; a cap of handkerchief generally covers the head, but the Shoshones twist their long black hair into a natural helmet, more useful as a protection than many artificial defences: in winter a buffalo robe is added to the usual clothing. Horses abound among them, and they are usually well armed. Through the influence of the Hudson's Bay Company, these tribes are beaming amalgamated by intermarriage, and will, doubtless, from their pliability of disposition, readiness of perception, and capability for improvement generally, no less than their friendship for the Whites and devotion to the Company, gradually lose their identity in acquired habits and knowledge, and become the peaceful proprietors of a country rich in flocks and herds, even very much cattle. The more northern Indians inhabiting the mountainous country round the head-waters of Oregon River and the branches of the Columbia, evidence an origin similar to the Chippewayan tribes on the east of the Rocky Mountains. Mackenzie found but little difference, when travelling from one to the other, and his guides were generally well understood: like them, they have exchanged their shirts and robes of skins for European manufactures, and their bows and spears for fire-arms. Among them the greater part of the furs exported by the Hudson's Bay Company are procured, and the return of the traffic supplies all their wants:

they differ, however, in manners and habits; for among them is found the tribe of Carriers, whose filthiness and bestiality cannot be exceeded; whose dainties are of putrid flesh, and are eaten up with disease; nevertheless, they are a tall, well-formed, good-looking race, and not wanting in ingenuity. Their houses are well formed of logs of small trees; buttressed up internally, frequently above seventy feet long and fifteen high, but, unlike those of the coast, the roof is of bark: their winter habitations are smaller, and often covered over with grass and earth: some even dwell in excavations of the ground, which have only an aperture at the top, and serves alike for door and chimney. Salmon, deer, bears, and wild-fowl are their principal food: of the latter they procure large quantities.

Their mode of taking salmon is curious. They build a weir across the stream, having an opening only in one place, at which they fix a basket, three feet in diameter, with the mouth made something like an eel-trap, through which alone the fish can find a passage. On the side of this basket is a hole, to which is attached a smaller basket, into which the fish pass from the large one, and cannot return or escape. This, when filled, is taken up without disturbing the larger one.

Of the religion and superstitions of the Indians little need be said; the features of polytheism being everywhere as similar as its effects. Impudent conjurers are their priests and teachers, and exerted once unlimited sway; but under the satisfactory proofs of the value of scientific medical practice and the tuition of the missionaries, it is to be hoped both their claims to respect will be negatived; and as they have evinced great aptitude to embrace and profit by instruction, it may perhaps happen that secular knowledge may combine with religious to save them from the apparent necessary result.

In closing this brief account of the gold-fields of New Caledonia, we cannot avoid adverting to the great event which, has been, we may say, contemporaneous with these discoveries—the laying down of the Atlantic telegraph. The sources of an apparently boundless and dazzling wealth have been opened up in the Far West of America, and a mighty stream of thought has begun its perpetual flow backwards and forwards between her eastern shores and England. We hail the coincidence as an assurance that friendly communication, and peace, and good-will, shall go hand and hand with the getting of gold in, and the civilising of, these far off regions; and we believe that God will use both these new and mighty engines for the advancement of the blessed gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in the British possessions of North America.



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