The Fraser and the Klondike

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Donald Fraser on the Fraser River Gold Rush

Donald Fraser[1] (c. 1810 – 1897) was a special correspondent for the *Times* of London, reporting on the California gold rush of 1849, the Fraser River gold rush of 1858, and the Cariboo gold rush of 1862.

News of the rush reaches San Francisco[2] (April, 1858)

SAN FRANCISCO, APRIL 19

The news of the discovery of gold on the "Frazer" and on Thompson's Rivers, in the British territory to the north of the Oregon and Washington territories, is confirmed by every arrival from those countries. The following extracts from the Oregon papers which have come to hand within the last few days (the latest arrival being yesterday) are corroborated by several persons who have just arrived from the north, and who have brought with them "glittering vouchers" in the shape of bags of gold dust and solid "lumps" or nuggets of the truth of their representations. None of this gold has been yet assayed, but it appears of good quality, in scales, and lumps unmixed with quartz, and "clean," and is reported of the value of $16 the ounce.

The following accounts reached San Francisco on the 15th inst. The *Puget Sound Herald* (Steilacoom), of April 12, has the following on the subject of the diggings :-

"By the arrival of the steamer Sea Bird (now plying in the American and British waters in the north) we are placed in possession of intelligence respecting the recently discovered gold fields on Frazer's and Thompsons's Rivers. From gentlemen who came passengers in the Sea Bird, we learn that the Hudson's Bay Company at Victoria have received within the last month about 110 lb. of gold dust from the Indians. This was obtained merely from surface diggings, without the aid of anything more than the rude articles – such as pans and willow baskets – possessed by the Indians.

"Colonel Fitzhugh has not had a man to work for him the past six weeks; all his hands have left. Numerous desertions have taken place from the military posts on the lower part of the Sound. Parties are arriving daily on sailing vessels from San Francisco, bound to the mines.

"FURTHER FROM THE FRAZER AND THOMPSON RIVER GOLD MINES

"Captain A. L. Hyde, of the American revenue cutter Jeff. Davis, which vessel has just arrived from Washington Territory, informs us that the reports which have been in circulation relative to the gold mines on Frazer and Thompson Rivers are substantially true. A few days before he left, Captain Connor, of the steamer Sea Bird, arrived from Victoria, Vancouver's Island, who informed him that the day he left the

[1] Fraser's anonymity was lost after complaints that his coverage of the Cariboo rush was more enthusiastic than warranted by reality. For a full length account of the controversy, see Storey, K. (2017). Donald Fraser, the London Times, and the Gold Rushes of British Columbia. *BC Studies*, *193,* 65-88.

[2] From Fraser, D. (1858, May 31). OREGON AND CALIFORNIA. *The London Times*, p. 10.

Hudson's Bay Company had shipped 200 lb. weight of gold dust to London. This was collected entirely by one of their traders from the Indians at Fort Hope, since January 1, 1858. The gold discoveries have caused a general stampede at Vancouver's Island for the mines. Captain Hyde further informs us that he has seen a number of letters from parties who have gone to the mines this spring, and who can be relied upon. They write favourably, and advise all their friends to follow them; but to be sure and bring provisions, as they are very scarce and high. They write, also, that they are making from $8 to $20 per day at surface diggings. As yet they have nothing but pans to wash with. They think that with toms they could average as high as $50 a day.

"Captain Hyde has no doubt, from all the information he has collected, but that these mines will prove extensive, and be found on the American side as rich as they are on the British side; and that they will remunerate any person who goes to them with the intention of working. He informs us that the discoveries have caused great excitement in Washington Territory, as well as at Vancouver's Island. Farmers are leaving their farms with but half a crop in. The hands employed at various mills on Puget Sound have all caught the fever, and a large portion of them are bound for the mines. He has no doubt that the discovery of gold in this section will open both to the business man, mechanic, labourer and farmer, a great field, as wages must advance, and the demand for every article increase rapidly. Captain Hyde has in his possession some of the gold dust; also some quartz from the region. The quartz was given to him by Dr. M'Curdy, who took it from the bed rock. It is very rich, and it is said that it can be found in any quantity.

"All trade is in the hands of the Hudson's Bay Company."

There is much more information given in the Oregon newspapers, but, as it is all of the same tenour and to the same effect as the preceding extracts, I will not occupy your space by quoting it. Yesterday one of our coasting steamers arrived here from Puget Sound, bringing newspapers from Olympia and Steilacoom to the 9th, and private letters from Port Townsend dated the 13th inst.

A person on his way to the mines writes on the 23d of March, from a place called Fort Langley, a letter which has been published in the *Olympian Pioneer*. He says, -

"There is quite an excitement here about the mines, and there are said to be from 150 to 200 miners at work in them. They are all at work, at present, on Fraser's River. The Indians are working on Thompson's River. I have seen $800 that three men said they procured by 10 days' labour.

"It is 150 or 200 miles from Bellingham Bay to the mines. It is 40 miles from Bellingham Bay to Semiamoo; 20 to the mouth of Fraser's River, 40 to Fort Langley, 50 to Fort Hope, and 40 to the mines on Fraser's River, &c."

The *Pioneer* says editorially :-

"The extravagant reports are repeated concerning the richness of the diggings – that parties are making $8, $10, $15, $20, and $50 per day each, and we have heard it confidently asserted as a belief, founded upon prospecting and extensive practical examination, that the gold-bearing region extends throughout a large extent of

country in both the British and American possessions, from Fraser's River to Fort Colville.

"The Hudson's Bay Company had within a few months traded from the Indians some 110 lb. of coarse gold dust, of their own procuring from surface washing, with their own crude appliances. This statement, we understand, is fully confirmed by officers of the Hudson's Bay Company, which leaves no doubt as to its truth. All the hands that Colonel Fitzhugh had in his employ in his coal mine, except three, had left for the gold region."

From a letter written at Port Townsend, in Washington Territory, and published this morning in one of the San Francisco papers, I will extract a few passages which possess general interest :-

"By the arrival of reliable persons from the Fraser and Thompson Rivers, we are put in possession of late and authentic information in relation to the new gold mines. There can be no doubt that gold in paying quantities can be easily obtained at almost any point from Fort Hope to Colville Valley. Considerable quantities of the dust have been brought down the river; it has been principally taken from the bars of the streams, and is heavier than bar gold usually is. It is pronounced by experienced California miners to be a 'tall specimen of coarse gold,' many pieces weighing from $10 to $15 each. It is estimated that there are from 600 to 800 persons already in these mines, and by some it is thought that $15 per man is a fair estimate of a day's operations; I am of opinion that there is certainly $8 per day being panned out to the man. This is better (if true) than California in her best days. I do not imagine that California in any single year since the discovery of her gold mines has yielded on average $5 to every one operating in the mines. The best day's work on Fraser's River that I have yet heard of is by two men, who washed out in one day $213 75c.; this was in surface diggings.

"THE ROAD TO THE MINES

"The travelled route from this point to the mines is now altogether by way of Frazer's River, in boats and canoes. The Hudson's Bay Company's steamer Otter finds no difficulty in going some 50 miles up the stream, and her captain thinks he can easily run his boat to the locality of the present mining operations (20 miles above Fort Hope at the Rapids). The Frazer is a large stream, larger than the Sacramento, having its source in the Rocky Mountains and draining a vast extent of country; its principal tributary, Thompson's River, comes in from the south, having its source in this territory.

"The citizens of Bellingham Bay are cutting out a pack trail from that place to the river near Fort Hope. By this trail the distance from the coast to the mines will not be more than 75 miles, while it is 150 miles by Frazer's River. The road will be open about the 15th of May, and Bellingham Bay will become the great starting-point for the mines.

"The Frazer River mines will doubtless exert a powerful influence on the Sound country. It is true that these gold deposits are on British soil, but what of that? If gold is found on abundance on the line, or just north of it, why not just south of it? It has already been proved that gold does exist, in small quantities at least, in all the

streams that flow from the Cascade range of mountains. If there is gold north and south of us, why not in our own territory?

"I predict that at no distant day the eastern portion of Washington Territory will be found to be rich in the precious metals, and instead of being an out-of-the-way and neglected place it will have a dense population."

This writer is sanguine of the effect of these gold discoveries, and thus speculates on their results :-

"THE PACIFIC RAILROAD

"Then will be realized the dream of the importance of our inland sea as the western terminus of the great highway from the Atlantic to the Pacific. 'It would seem that a special Providence has placed this magnificent inland sea of harbours precisely where it is placed for the special purpose of a national depot for the shipping of the world, on the western terminus of our great highway for all nations across the continent.' Flourishing States have been built up where there were fewer sources of wealth (aside from gold) than can be found in Washington Territory, but it seems to be a settled point on the Pacific coast that gold places are the only sure magnets to draw together a large population. In this heretofore we have not come to the scratch, and consequently have been left far in the rear by the more fortunate possessors of the *oro*.

"THE TRADE OF ASIA

"It is a conceded point, that the Pacific coast will soon command the trade of the vast regions of China, Japan, and the Asiatic Archipelago, which has always been the great commercial prize in ancient as well as modern times. 'Persia, Assyria, Carthage, and Rome, swayed the world as it controlled the commerce of the East. Venice, Genoa, Lisbon, Amsterdam and London each in its turn obtained commercial supremacy, as it became the disposer of Eastern luxuries to the Western world.' To this grand inheritance the Pacific coast is to succeed, and that point where the railway terminates on the Pacific is to be the place. As yet there are but two rivals for this proud destination, San Francisco and Puget's Sound. It may seem absurd to some to think even of placing the latter in competition with the mistress of the Golden Gate."

He concludes his glowing prophecy with the expression of his conviction that his country, from its central position, is destined to command the vast trade of the Atlantic and European cities across the Pacific to the commercial marts of Canton, Shanghai, Singapore, Jeddo, Calcutta, Manilla, etc.

The receipt of the previous accounts and of all this exciting news recently, has induced a considerable exodus of miners and labourers from California to the north. Some 500 persons leave San Francisco for the same quarter in a few days, and no doubt many more will follow.

Gold diggers always give a preference to newly discovered placers, independently of their love of change and adventure, from the fact that there is an efflorescence of gold towards the surface of all gold mines, which of course makes the first workings less laborious and more profitable.

I give all these reports as I find them, for what they are worth. Of the existence of gold in considerable quantity, I cannot doubt, for, as I have already said, some of it is in San Francisco; but of the richness or extent of the mineral region we are as yet ignorant.

In view of the colonization of Vancouver's Island, and of other British territory on the neighbouring mainland, by English subjects this gold discovery acquires additional importance, and it was from this consideration that I have said so much about it. As germane to the same subject, I avail myself of the opportunity of making a few cursory remarks upon the price which the English Government has fixed for the public land in the colonies.

I believe it is settled that the rule of the Hudson's Bay Company will soon cease over the fine island of Vancouver and a portion of their territory on the mainland on the Pacific coast. In anticipation of this result the question of the price of the land should not be neglected by the Government, for it is one of the utmost importance, and one which I hope to see revised so as to make the terms more favourable to settlers. The fixed price of the Crown land is 1*l.* an acre, and although this will appear to many in England who have no practical knowledge of the settlement of new countries by emigrants from great distances – often from the Antipodes – a low price, yet in fact it is far too high. It is well known that the English emigrant to Australia and New Zealand has too often to wait a long time before he can obtain possession of his land, owing to the delays incidental to the various Government offices – a delay which frequently has compelled the farmer to expend his means in supporting himself and family while waiting for surveys and other peculiarities of the "Circumlocution Office." I have met victims of this delay in England, and we have many of them in California, who left Australia in despair, and who have reluctantly renounced their allegiance for the sake of obtaining a "location" cheaply and speedily.

The contrast to ours presented by the American land system is palpably in favour of the emigrant. Every American citizen (or foreigner who declares his intention of becoming one) is entitled, under the pre-emption laws of the United States, to "settle" upon 160 acres of the public domain unoccupied, wherever he chooses, on complying with certain simple formulas as to recording his claim. These 160 acres he can hold the possession of as a "homestead" against all the world – paying nothing for them until the land shall have been surveyed by the United States' Government surveyors. He then gets a valid legal title on paying the Government price of one dollar and a quarter per acre, or 5s. sterling. It frequently happens (and California is apt illustration of the fact) that the squatter on the public land holds it for several years before he is called upon to pay for his homestead, and that he cannot alone pay for it out of the profits realized from its produce, but that he has become rich by the same means – all this time holding [land] by a legal tenure in a state of perfect independence. It may with truth be said that the pre-emption laws, by the facility, certainty, and cheapness which they provide for the acquisition of land, have peopled the vast wilderness of America.

To me it is quite obvious that the price of our public land is too high, knowing the necessities of the settlers in a new country *for a considerable quantity of land* to

support their stock, and their general poverty when they come to purchase a farm. Person unacquainted with the subject may ask, "Why buy so much as 160 acres? 20 acres would make a snug farm to begin with." In an old country, where the farmer has all the benefit of the effects of civilization, [and] such resources as artificial grasses and green crops to support his cattle, a small quantity of land would answer; but here it will not. He must have a large tract for his stock to range over, as they are to be supported entirely by the natural grass of the soil – no grain, no hay, no straw, nor green crops – nothing but what they can browse on in the forest, in addition to what they can pick up in the wilderness. For these reasons a farmer must have a considerable quantity of land, and 1*l.* an acre for his farm, - say 160 acres, which is not more than he requires, - added to the price of stock, or agricultural implements, and of a year's provisions, makes up an amount in the aggregate which few can command. Unless, therefore, the price of our public land on the Pacific be lowered, the consequences will be that, the advantages of the settler on American soil over the English terms being so obvious, emigrants will give a preference to the American territory on the mainland, near Vancouver, [Washington,] where they can obtain lands of equal fertility upon the easy terms which I have stated. Of this there can be no doubt, for the attraction will be too great to be resisted. Most of the Britishers who will come out with the intention of settling on the possessions at present belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company will "cast their lines" within the neighbouring American territory, and in a worldly point of view they would be very foolish not to do so.

The subject is worthy of the attention of the Colonial office. As the object of the Government must be to fill up the country with an industrious population who will retain their allegiance, the price should be so reduced as to put the necessary quantity of land within the reach of the greatest number of emigrates. If the success of Australia under the system which I condemn be quoted against my argument, I can only say that no reasoning can convince me, for I know the whole land system in that country to be as bad, in its present circumstances, as could be devised.

Vancouver's Island is about to get a very unexpected addition to her population from California. A Bill to prohibit the immigration of negroes, and to place the coloured people now in the country under rather severe restrictions, is on its passage through our very enlightened Legislature. The coloured people, not wishing to submit to the degradation of this most unjust and unnecessary law, in case it passes, have determined to abandon a country which refuses to afford them ordinary protection; and after discussing the plan of founding a small black colony in Sonora (in Mexico), they have abandoned this scheme, from the fear that Sonora is soon destined to be "absorbed" into the American Union, and have resolved to emigrate to the British possessions, where they hope to enjoy a freedom and a security churlishly denied them by their own countrymen. 200 of them have arranged to leave to-morrow for Victoria, Vancouver's Island. The movement is as yet confined to the coloured people in San Francisco, but it is probable that it will spread throughout the country, and that a general exodus will take place.

The same Bill prohibits the immigration of Chinese, and debars those already here from working in the mines after six months from its passing. This monstrous

measure has, I believe, passed both Houses, but has not yet become law. Perhaps the Governor may smother it. But this is doubted by persons who know his sentiments. This country is languishing for lack of labour. Labour is so high in price that the general improvement is retarded in consequence; and from the same cause domestic comforts can only be commanded by the rich. The principal families – many of them – are compelled to herd together in hotels "at board," and several families are obliged to live or "mess" together in one house, to save the expense of servants. Yet our Solons must needs deprive us of the services of the only classes who would consent to work at wages a little under the current rates of white labourers. No criticism is required to show the character of such legislation. It is a libel to call such a measure "legislation." What faults were to be found with the poor blacks, no one can divine.

Tales of the diggings[3] (May, 1858)

SAN FRANCISCO, MAY 19.

Two vessels have arrived here from the British possessions in the north-west since the dispatch of my last letter on the 8th inst. The last steamer from Vancouver's Island arrived the day before yesterday. The richness of the new gold mines is fully confirmed. The accounts, both private and public, are so voluminous that I can only venture to give the salient points. First, I will quote a few facts to show the productiveness of the mines.

"A returned miner," writes the special correspondent of. San Francisco newspaper from Fort Langley, on the Fraser River, whose name is given, and who was two months in the diggings, "earned from $15 to $20 per day in his 'claim.' He brought down with him $2,500 worth of gold dust, which he sold at Fort Langley. There are numbers of men here with gold. They all intend to return to the mines with provisions, which they came down for."

From Victoria, Vancouver's Island, a gentleman writes on the 9th inst. :-

"Yesterday the Hudson's Bay Company's steam propeller Otter arrived here from Fort Langley, one of their trading posts on the Fraser River, and brought gold dust valued at $35,000 – judging from the fact that its weight was as much as one man could conveniently carry. Heavy gold is found 10 miles from the mouth of the Thompson River, at a place called Necowman. The heaviest nugget yet found was $8 25c. Bank and river mining is going on between the forks and big falls of Fraser River, into which Thompson River runs, or, in other words, is a tributary to the former. The number of miners now working is estimated by one of their number, from whom I received the above, at 1,000 men – all of whom, he assured me, were doing well. To quote his figures, they were making from $10 to $40 per day."

From other sources we learn that miners located near the forks of Thompson River, about 200 miles distant from the mouth of the Fraser River, are successfully at work. One man writes that he is getting out $35 a day. The higher up the richer

[3] From Fraser, D. (1858, June 26). THE DISCOVERY OF GOLD IN VANCOUVER'S ISLAND. *The London Times*, p. 5.

the diggings, it would appear; for at Fort Yale, some 85 miles lower down, the "yield" is only from $8 to $16 a day to the men. From the last named place[4] we have the following information :-

"Some 50 or more are at work a few miles above Fort Yale. Mr. M'Caw ascended the river some 20 miles above Fort Yale, and assures us that the diggings are rich along the whole of that distance, the mines yielding an average of not less than $12 per day per man. The gold is found on and within six inches of the surface. Mr. M'Caw brings 50 ounces of the gold with him, the largest pieces of which are worth $3 or $4. He received this in trade with the Indians."

From a new town just springing up, called Whatcom, near Bellingham Bay, on the Gulf of Georgia, a correspondent writes[5] :-

"From the mines the news is quite as favorable as any heretofore received. Mr. Giddings estimates that upwards of $20,000 had been received at Whatcom by merchants within the week preceding his departure, in payment for goods. Miners were arriving and departing every day; those arriving invariably making their stay as short as possible. A party had returned to Whatcom a few days previous to Mr. Gidding's departure, who had proceeded as far as Fort Hope, where they met a large company just from the mines, to whom they disposed of provisions at about 400 per cent. above cost. The miners instantly retraced their steps, while the others returned to Whatcom.

"We were shown by Mr. Giddings a specimen of the gold brought from the mines. It is very fine, and of the kind known as 'scale gold.' By those familiar with it we are informed that it is very similar to the 'placer gold' of California. Among the dust shown us, which amounted to some $200, were several large lumps, beautiful specimens, which were probably worth from $2 50c. to $5 each. The gold is of a dark red colour."

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[4] Originally published in the Puget Sound Herald of May 11th, 1858. One extant source for this cable item is California News. (1858, June 18). *The Sunbury American*, p. 3. This version contains additional details: "We learn from Samuel McCaw, Esq, who came passenger in the Sea Bird, and who recently left Fort Yale, that miners in that locality are making from $8 to $16 per day each. [Fraser's quote follows.] The Indians are friendly, and will continue so as long as they remain unmolested. The Hudson's Bay Co.'s officials are said to be very accommodating, and furnish every facility to miners to reach their destinations, with a view to promoting immigration. The water in Frazer's [sic.] river has risen upwards of twenty feet within the past fortnight, and at last accounts was steadily rising at the rate of two feet per day."

[5] The original article was published in the Olympia Pioneer. An extant version of the first paragraph quoted is found in THE FRAZER RIVER GOLD REGION. (1858, June 17). *The Washington Union*, p. 3, which adds by way of preface: "Whatcom, on Bellingham bay, […] has all the appearance of San Francisco in 1848. Mr. Giddings, just returned from there, gives the subjoined description of affairs to the editors of the Olympia Pioneer: 'Houses were going up in every direction, on lots, streets, alleys and water flats. Many new buildings were in the course of construction, and hurried as rapidly as possible towards completion. Lumber so far had been abundant, and had been selling at $16 per thousand feet. Very recently, however, it had advanced to $20 per thousand. Upwards of twenty-five houses or firms had sprung into existence since the gold discoveries in that region, where miners' goods were sold.'" This article does not include the second paragraph, which is however found included in Two weeks later from California. (1858, June 15). *The Alexandria Gazette*, p. 2 in much the same form as it is quoted by Fraser.

On the last day of April, a miner, writing from M'Caw's Rapids, beyond Fort Yale, on his way up, says-

"We have prospected on several bars, and on one of them we got from 6c. to 25c. to the pan, and took only the top dirt. On another we got from 5c. to 10c. to the pan. We could not stop at the former place, as the Indians would not allow us, and we were not strong enough for them.

"The Indians were all at work themselves, and we saw two or three pans with about 50c. in each. At the latter place we cannot work to advantage without a quicksilver machine. An old California miner says that this place very closely resembles the north fork of the American river in California, and that he believes richer mines will be discovered in California.

"A few miles below this there is a party of whites, who were to have a sluice in operation either to-day or to-morrow. An Indian has just arrived in a canoe, and he tells me the sluice is in operation, and that they are taking out '*hi-yu* (or plenty) gold.' Major Tidd and Mr. Finnigan have both started to see them."

There is no necessity to multiply instances of individual gains, "strikes," or "luck," to prove that gold exists in abundance. The area of the auriferous country is as yet unknown. It seems to be, in fact, a continuation of the great Californian gold-field running through Oregon (where its treasures have for years past been dug up) and the intermediate American territory of Washington to the extensive British possessions washed by the waters of the Gulf of Georgia and of Puget Sound on the west, and extending northwardly and eastwardly to the Rocky Mountains.

There are at present difficulties to be encountered in getting to the mines, owing to the swollen state of the Fraser River and to the country near its banks being inundated by the freshets which prevail at this season from the melting of the snows of the Rocky Mountains, and in consequence of the "rapids," which necessitate long and wearisome "portages." Several persons have been drowned by the upsetting of canoes, which they were not acquainted with the management of. Indians are to be had in plenty to perform this labour, however, and at moderate wages - $1 a day and meals.

The following are given as the distances from Victoria to the trading posts of the Hudson's Bay Company, *en route* to the goldfields – viz., from Victoria, Vancouver's Island, to Fort Langley, 80 miles; from the latter to Fort Hope 60 miles; Fort Hope to Fort Yale, 15 miles; Fort Yale to mouth of Thompson River, 110 miles; thence to Big Falls on the Fraser, 75 miles; total 340 miles to the diggings as yet found to be the richest. The means and expense of getting from the coast to the lower and nearest mines are thus described by a person at Port Townsend :-

"The mines commenced about 15 miles above Fort Hope. Fraser River can be navigated by sailing vessels of considerable size as far as the mouth of the Harrison River, or half-way between Fort Langley and Fort Hope. Vessels sailing from Port Townsend charge $10 passage to Fort Langley, and $15 to Harrison River, allowing each passenger to take three months' provisions without charge for freight. At the mouth of the Harrison River the rapids commence, but form no very serious

obstruction. Light steamers can go up to the very gold mines, 15 miles above Fort Hope."

Some rival routes to that of the ascent by the Fraser River have been tried, but experience is proving that this river affords the safest and easiest route.

The Pacific Steam Navigation Company's boats, which leave San Francisco twice a month for Puget Sound, will call to land passengers and freight on every trip either at Victoria or Esquimalt Harbour (close to the former), Vancouver's Island, in terms of an arrangement made last week with the Governor; and it is understood that the Hudson's Bay Company will make provision for the conveyance of passengers up the Fraser River by means of suitable steamers. This river is navigable a distance of 150 miles for vessels drawing four feet of water, all which will greatly facilitate getting to the new Eldorado.

The Indians are said to be behaving, on the whole, very well, engaging themselves in the labour of working canoes and trading freely. In a few cases they prohibited white men from "digging" in their placers, but in other instances showed a spirit of commendable liberality.

A miner on the spot says, "The Indians are friendly, and will continue so as long as they remain unmolested." This report is corroborated by others. The fact is, these Indians are brave and warlike, well armed with "shooting irons," and skilled in the use of them. They have been accustomed to just treatment from the Hudson's Bay Company, and will exact "justice" from their new neighbours. The only vice they are charged with is that they give a very loose interpretation to the doctrine of *meum* and *tuum* – certainly an inconvenient weakness to travelers adrift among them. They seem, however, to be very civil and obliging thieves.

The quantity of gold brought by the last steamer from the new mines to San Francisco, as manifested, was only 200 ounces; but the passengers brought a good deal more. From the quantity offered for sale to-day it is judged that about $15,000 worth was brought altogether.

A strong desire is evinced here and at the North to ascertain the spot where the chief city, which is certain to spring up, is to be located. The Americans will make a strong effort to have the city in their territory – at Bellingham Bay, probably. They are great adepts at this sort of thing, and unless the English take immediate steps to secure the city on British territory, they may find themselves cut out by their "faster" neighbours, who have one advantage in the fact that the majority of the emigrants will be Americans, who will prefer to "locate" on American soil.

The site once selected, much capital will be attracted to it for speculation in "real estate," to use a slang phrase of ours. Present appearances would point to the mainland as a more convenient location for a town to be dependent upon the mines in the interior, rather than to Vancouver's Island, separated as it is from the coast by the Gulf of Georgia, although from the following flattering notice of the island it also has peculiar advantages :-

"The situation for a large town here is almost unequalled – the climate equal to the south of France. Living is cheap, the resources of the country good. There is a wide grass common on the prairie land here, the root of which is an onion-like bulb,

as large as a good sized thumb, on which pigs feed and keep fat all the year round. The keeping of pigs is a very profitable business. Cattle and Stock raising is very profitable – cows and oxen are worth now $100 a head. There is an abundance of wood of almost every description found in these latitudes. Vegetables are quite equal to, if not better than, those of Nova Scotia. There is a vast abundance of fish of the very finest quality – salmon, cold, halibut.

"J. H. D.

"P.S. – In Vancouver's Island there is no street-tax, no house tax, no land tax, no school tax, no Church tax (the money box is not handed round for money), no poll tax, no license tax – except that for selling liquor, which is $600 a year. In fact, there is no tax of any description. The colony is supported by the sales of public lands. This supports the churches, the public schools, and all the public expenses of governing the colony. Also, there is no tax or duty on any merchandise of any description from any country, so that foreign goods coming here from San Francisco must be taken out of bond there, to save the American duty.

"J.H.D."

Ground down as all of us who own anything are in San Francisco by heavy taxes, suffering from bad laws loosely administered, living in the midst of crimes and recklessness of human life, the perusal of the above refreshing description of Vancouver's Island is enough to make a man "pull up stakes and leave."

The desire to emigrate, which I formerly mentioned, is fast increasing in California. Several hundreds have left in the last fortnight, and many thousands more are preparing to leave. This hegira is already causing inconvenience to the employers of labor. At Grass Valley 600 miners are waiting a favourable report from 20 of their fellows, who have been sent on to explore, to depart in a body. These are all, or nearly all, Cornishmen, who came to this country from England and Australia. Indeed, all British subjects who are not well off or bound down by engagements will leave. They are delighted at the opportunity of getting once more under the protection of the "old flag that, &c." Several of the quartz-mills at Grass Valley have had to stop for want of hands, and others are only able to continue working by an increase of wages to the miners.

I mentioned in one of my late letters[6] that the coloured people of this State, stung by the injustice and illiberality of the legislation attempted to be introduced to their prejudice, had sent a deputation of their own "colour" to Vancouver's Island, with the view of ascertaining what prospects would be afforded them of emigrating thither.

The Governor received them with great benignity and promised them protection, and, altogether, as far as I can judge from their own account of their reception, in a manner worthy of the representative of an enlightened and humane Government. The consequence is that they are busily preparing to leave in great numbers, and no doubt nearly every coloured person in California will soon depart for the British possessions.

[6] Published in the *Times* on May 31, 1858.

You will probably and naturally ask, what is all this emigration going to entail upon California? I answer, great inconvenience to employers, an increase in the rate of labour, increased earnings to the miners who may be wise enough to remain, an advantage to the farmers, who will have an additional market for their produce, and considerable increase or prosperity to San Francisco, whence all the supplies to the new country will be drawn, and to which many of the miners will return from the North to spend and to invest their money. Our inland towns will suffer, and so will all the interests which supply our inland locomotion, after a time, when our own miners cease to travel to this place on their way northward.

This is the time for emigrants to come to California. They never had better prospects. Labour will be high, and the expense of living lows, - the former effect will be caused by the scarcity of labourers, and the latter by the extraordinary impetus given to breeding and to grain-growing on a soil of almost fabulous fertility.

The effect on California's population[7] (June, 1858)

SAN FRANCISCO, JUNE 4.

From the Fraser River country the news of the existence of gold on a large scale, that is, extending over a large area, continues to be confirmed. Since the date of my last letter very little gold has found its way from the diggings to San Francisco. A steamer is hourly expected which may bring a considerable quantity; but we cannot expect to receive much until the population increases, and trade is established with the new gold country; so that the non-arrival of gold here is no proof of its non-existence in the British possessions in the abundance reported.

From California the exodus of miners continues. Some thousands have left by sea, and great numbers are going overland; starting from Shasta and from Yreka, in the northern portion of this State, and travelling through Oregon to the new El Dorado. This is a perfectly practicable route, and the journey can be accomplished in about 18 days.

The excitement in the interior is universal. I was up the country this week, and returned only last night; so that I had the 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.

In fact, I found the interior quite in a ferment, the whole floating population either "on the move" or preparing to start; while traders, cattle-dealers, contractors,

[7] Fraser, D. (1858, July 14). CALIFORNIA AND OREGON. *The London Times*, p. 5.

and all the enterprising persons in business who could manage to leave, were maturing arrangements to join the general exodus. Persons travelling in the mining region reckon that in three months 50,000 souls will have left California.

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.

I was informed by a gentleman from the interior, who observed the exodus now taking place with much interest, that the greater part of it was composed of idlers and vagabonds who had been hanging about the different mining towns and camps "out of luck," doing nothing, and ready for anything that might "turn up" – a motley gathering of the "Micawber" tribe. This is to a great extent true; but now industrious foreigners, French and German, are departing in great numbers. That there has been no diminution in the numbers of the gold producers as yet, however, is proved by the fact that there has been no diminution in the production. The receipts of "dust" in San Francisco have been unusually large during the last fortnight, and the remittance to-morrow will be as large as usual.

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 be very great. Companies of men who have large amounts of money invested in mining of a variety of sorts, such as "tunneling," "sluicing," and "quartz crushing," on a large scale, are not going to abandon well-developed properties which produce profitable returns for the uncertainties of new discoveries. 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.

A very large immigration to the new mines is expected from the Canadas and from the Western United States overland; and if the means of cheap transit by way of Panama existed, no doubt a vast emigration would set in for this coast from Europe, particularly from Germany and France. The new gold country being British territory will favour emigration from these countries. In fact, so disgusted have Americans become by the misgovernment of California, that most of *them*, even, who are going to the north give a preference to the country on this account. They feel they will have

greater security of life and property, greater order, and better management generally. Of this preference they make no secret.

From Australia, too, the emigration will be large. In that country the cream has already been skimmed off the "placers." The efflorescence of gold near the surface has been dug out, hence the results of individual exertions are becoming less promising; and the miner is a restless, excitable creature, whose love of freedom and independence indisposes him to associate himself in enterprises requiring an aggregation of capital and labour. He prefers to work "on his own hook" or with one or two "chums" at most. This is the feeling in this country. There is another cause which will bring vast numbers of miners from Australia, and that is the great scarcity of water – a desideratum of the first importance. This first necessary for mining operations exists in abundance at all seasons in the new El Dorado, and this fact alone will attract additional miners to it from every mining country and locality in which water is scarce. Another great objection to Australia is the impossibility of acquiring land in fee in small parcels at or near to the mines. Many men take to mining as a means of making sufficient money to buy farming implements and stock with. As soon as this object is accomplished, they abandon mining for farming. Did not California afford the means of gratifying this wish, thousands of our miners would have left the country. As it is, with abundance of good land to be had cheap, I have found that a large proportion of the farms in the interior of this country are owned by farmers who bought them with the produce of their labour in the mines. The same advantages can be obtained in the new gold country, there being plenty of good land in the British territory in the neighbourhood and on Vancouver's Island. It is to be hoped that the Government will make the price reasonable.

The prospect of the great migration from Europe and elsewhere which will be induced by this discovery suggests the necessity of supplying the means of communication. At present the carrying trade is in the hands of the company – the Pacific Mail Company – whose high rates of charge, both for freight and passage, act as a bar to emigration and trade on a large scale. No one comes to and no one leaves California who can avoid it. But were the means provided, the immigration to this coast would be enormous, and at paying rates too. […]

Trade has revived considerably of late, owing in a measure to the business done for Puget Sound. Ships suffer great inconvenience from the scarcity of sailors, who are all taking themselves off to the new mines. Wages hence to Puget Sound for able-bodied seamen have risen to $35 a-month, and will soon advance beyond this rate.

The crop this year will not be very abundant, but sufficient for home consumption and for supplying Fraser River, should the miners winter there. The harvesting of barley has commenced.

Labour of all kinds continues high, and carpenters find additional employment in making wooden houses for transportation to the new gold mines.

"The effect on California has been astounding"[8] (June, 1858)

SAN FRANCISCO, MONDAY, JUNE 14.

In the present stirring times events are flowing in upon us with such rapidity and in such volume that, unless I begin to write in advance of the usual day of writing for the mail for Europe, a great portion of my matter must be omitted for want of time to arrange it – I allude to the news pouring in from the North.

On the morning of the 5th, just as the last mail steamer was about to leave for Panama, a steamer arrived from Vancouver's Island with further news of the most glowing and extravagant tenour as to the richness of the new gold country in the British possessions. My last letter was then posted, and my first impulse was to write another and give the "very latest intelligence;" but second thoughts determined me to wait a confirmation or refutation of all this good news, because I have sufficient experience of the frequent fallacies of suddenly made "rich discoveries," and of the disappointment ensuing from the "tremendous excitements" caused by them so often in this country, to make me cautious in reporting unconfirmed news. The effect of such news when not warranted by facts might be so much more serious if they should excite multitudes and unsettle communities in Europe, as they have done and are doing in this country, that I mean not to make myself an accessory to any such effect or results.

I may now, however, state that all the arrivals of individuals and of correspondence in the interval not only confirm all the information conveyed in my late letters, but bring further intelligence of a still more flattering character than anything I have hitherto reported, and of a more precise and practical nature than we before knew.

The effect in California has been astounding; but, instead of describing this at present, I will give the facts which have produced it.

The only way in which I can give an intelligible statement in a moderate compass is to *sift the facts* from the mass of correspondence and personal details at hand. The following is the experience of a man from San Francisco, well known here, connected with a business firm in this place, and whose statement is worthy of credit. He left San Francisco in April, and, in company with seven others, ascended the Fraser River 275 miles. I will let him tell his story in his own way, interposing only such remarks of my own as will be explanatory of his "terms" and of the localities mentioned. "We prospected all along coming up from Fort Hope to Sailors' Bar, several days' travel, and in some places got two bits to the pan and in some places five cents." Two "bits" may be set down as of the value of a shilling sterling. "We camped and commenced mining at Sailors' Bar," about 25 miles above Fort Yale, "which has rich diggings, in some places paying as high as six bits to the pan." The "pan," most readers know by this time, is a small tin basin with which the miner "washes" the gravel containing the gold. "When I arrived miners were making as high as six ounces a day to the rocker." These are enormous earnings. Six ounces of gold,

[8] From Fraser, D. (1858, August 4). BRITISH COLUMBIA. *The London Times*, p. 10.

at its market value of $16 the ounce, would be nearly 20*l.* sterling as the product of the daily labour of two men, which a "rocker" should have to work it efficiently – one to "fill" and another to "rock," and not hard work either, barring the inconvenience of being in the water. Such results were frequent in the times of California mining, when the soil was "virgin." "We mined along the banks of the river (the Fraser), and the average was from two to three ounces per day to the rocker. Miners are at work all along the banks of the river," for 25 miles above Fort Yale. "They average from two to four ounces a-day." These returns refer to mining carried on on such "bars" of the Fraser River as were exposed; but the rise of all of the water from the melting of the snow in the mountains far up rendered the work uncertain till August, when the waters subside for the season. "The river sometimes rises three feet in a night," and, as a consequence, "a man cannot make his expenses there."

It appears from the concurrent testimony of all who have been up the Fraser and Thompson rivers that the higher they go up the more plentiful the gold becomes. This corresponds exactly with Californian mining experience. The gold is retained where the bed of the stream is gravelly.

The man describes the country as "very rich and beautiful, but high and mountainous. You are surrounded by mountains entirely. There is plenty of timber, and everything a miner can wish for except game and provisions." This is rather a grave *desideratum*, as even miners cannot eat gold. However, there is some "balm in Gilead." "There are plenty of salmon in the river, and brown bears in the woods. They (the bears) are very good eating." They are much more accommodating "bears" than their "grizzly" brethren of California, whose flesh is as tough as shoe-leather. "Wherever we 'prospected' (above Fort Yale) we found gold – at some places more, at others less; but we found gold *everywhere*." "At the Rapids or Falls" 20 odd miles above Fort Yale, "where the water fell nearly 15 feet over the rocks and prevented ascending higher (in their canoe) we prospected and found gold very plenty." "Near the Falls and from Sailor's-bar up, many miners were at work, all with rockers. Gold very fine – requiring blankets[9] to be spread in the bottom of the rockers to save the fine particles." "There are, undoubtedly, plenty of 'bars' containing gold." "By the use of quicksilver twice as much gold could be saved, as some of it is as fine as flour." The person from whose narrative I have been quoting left his mining "claim" in charge of two partners. He brought down to San Francisco some of the "dust" dug by him above Sailor's-bar. It is in fine scales of a dark brownish colour, as if alloyed with copper. He has returned to the Fraser River with supplies of provisions, &c.

The special correspondent of the *San Francisco Bulletin*, a reliable authority, writes from Fort Langley, 25 miles up the Fraser, under date May the 25th, that he had just come down from Fort Yale – the locality above spoken of – where he found 60 men and 200 Indians, with their s——ws[10], at work on a "bar" of about 500 yards in length, called "Hill's bar," one mile below Fort Yale and 15 miles from Fort Hope, all trading posts of the Hudson's Bay Company. "The morning I arrived two men (Kerrison and Co.) cleaned up 5½ ounces from the rocker, the product of half a day's

[9] A similar technique would be used years later by gold prospectors on the Saskatchewan.
[10] An offensive term for Indigenous women.

work. Kerrison and Co. the next day cleaned up 10½ 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 15½ ounces of gold, worth $247½, or 50*l.* 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; 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 every vessel.

"At Sailor Diggings, above Fort Yale, they are doing very well, averaging from $8 to $25 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 of coarse gold from Thompson River in pieces averaging $5 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 this partner, has made some $600 on it in almost 16 days' work. Three men just arrived from Sailor Diggings have brought down $670 in dust, the result of 12 days' work. Gold very fine." Rising of the river driving the miners off for a time.

Another authority, a California miner, known in San Francisco, also lately returned from the Fraser and Thompson Rivers, testifies to the existence of gold in great quantity. "This statement," he says, "is true; gold does exist in this new country, and there is no doubt in my mind that the upper mines are much like the upper mountain mines of California. The first diggings are not far from the Sound (Puget Sound); but there, as in California, the richest mines will be found far up in the mountains."

He advises the multitudes now rushing up in such mad haste "to be the first there," that "there is no occasion to hurry, as the gold won't run away, nor be dug up in a day, nor in years."

Correspondents from several places on the Sound, both in the English and American territories, men of various nationalities, write that the country on the Fraser River is rich in gold, "and equal to any discoveries ever made in California." Here are clippings from the mass of correspondence which has been made accessible to me:- "The mines are good, rich, easily worked; surface and bar-digging only as yet." "The goldfield shows indications equal to those of California of early date." "how extensive they are no one knows, but no one returns save those who went without provisions, and come back for supplies." "There is abundance of rich places for the thousands on the way." "No one says anything of them but good." "All who come down from the mines bring more or less gold, and all report there is plenty of it." This is the burden of every song from Victoria, Vancouver's Island; Port Townsend, Bellingham-bay, Olympia, Whatcom, Sehome, Portland, and other places. Wherever a letter can be posted, or a steamer boarded in the north-western countries of Oregon, Washington, and the British territory the same news is wafted to San Francisco.

Of the existence of gold as reported I have no doubt, but I have no information as to the extent of the auriferous country except what I can gather from two letters written at Bellingham-bay, describing and advocating a land route or "trail" from the coast to Thompson's river and the higher portions of the Fraser. The writer of one of these letters asserts that "there are rich diggings in the Cascade Mountains, between Fort Hope and Fort Yale, as well as to the southward and eastward of Fort Hope." And the writer of the other letter reports that "Mines have also been discovered in the interior, at a great distance inland from the Fraser River," – some 190 miles to the north and east of the mouth of that river, as well as I can make out the locality from the description. He augurs that when a route by land shall have been opened to them, "these mines will cause the Fraser River mines, which only last some six months in the year, owing to the freshets of the ice, to be almost forgotten." This is most important, if true, as upon the extent of mineral region must depend its ultimate success and permanency as a field for the labour and support of a large mining population. In short, we have no reliable information of the existence of a goldfield in the interior, as we have of the existence of gold in quantity on the rivers. I cannot suppose that the gold is confined to the beds of the rivers; and believing it to exist in the latter leads one to the conclusion, judging from California experience, that there is a goldfield in shape of "placers," "ravines," and "hill-diggings" in the country traversed by these same rivers. Of its extent I can say nothing at present, but the problem will soon be solved.

The preceding imperfect sketch describes the sunny side of the picture. But the sun does not always shine upon the miner in New Caledonia; and so, to be impartial, we must have a look at the shady side. Overlooking the disagreeables and risks of the voyage from San Francisco, made, at high rates of fare, in crazy[11] old vessels, not one of which is really seaworthy, where men and women are crowded "like herrings packed in a barrel," to borrow a comparison from one of the "cargo," as a misery of short duration – only five to six days – we come to where the miner finds himself dropped on the beach at Victoria, Bellingham-bay, or elsewhere.

Now his real difficulties and hardships commence, and his helplessness becomes painfully apparent. He is from 100 to 250 miles from the mines, without food and without shelter, in a variable climate. Several of his fellows tell the tale of his troubles in a few short but significant items:- "Canoes are very scarce; the price has risen from $50 and $80 to $100 each. Many parties have built light boats for themselves, but they did not answer." "We have got up, but we had a hard time coming." "Joran is a hard road to travel; lost all our outfit, except flour. Our canoe was capsized in the Falls, and was broken to pieces. Six other canoes capsized, and smashed the same day near the same place. Four whites and two Indians belonging to these six canoes drowned." Provisions high up the river are exorbitant, of course, as they can only be brought up in canoes requiring long "portages." Here's the tariff at Sailor's Bar and other bars:- "Flour, $100 a-barrel, worth in San Francisco $11 to $12; molasses, $6 a-gallon; pork, $1 per lb.; ham, $1.25c. per lb.; tea at one place, $1 per lb.; picks, $6; and shovels, $2 each. There were no fresh provisions." I should have

[11] In its archaic sense of unsafe or riddled with cracks.

been greatly surprised to hear that there had been. "At Fort Hope there was nothing to be had but dried salmon." "At Fort Langley plenty of black flour at $9 a-hundred, and salt salmon flour for $1." What lively visions of scurvy these provisions conjure up! The acme of extravagance was not arrived at, however, until the poor miner came to purchase auxiliaries to his rocker. At Sailor's Bar "rocker irons were at an ounce of gold each ($16), and at Hill's Bar $30 each." This "iron" is simply a plate of thin sheet-iron measuring 18 inches by 20 inches, perforated with round holes to let the loose dirt pass through. I priced one of them, out of curiosity, at a carpenter's shop in Sn Francisco this morning - $2½. In England this thing would be worth 2s. At Sailor's Bar it would be worth 3*l.* 4s., and at Hill's Bar it would fetch 6*l.* Quicksilver was also outrageously high, but not being of such prime necessity as "rocker irons" didn't come up to their standard of value. At one place it was sold at $10 per lb.; but at Fort Langley a man bought one pound, paying $15 for it, and had to carry it a great distance. The price in San Francisco is 60c. the pound (half-a-crown), and on the Fraser River 3*l.* "Nails brought from $1 to $1 50c. per lb. One lot of a dozen pounds brought $3, or two bits a-nail," which, being interpreted into Queen's English, means 1s. a-nail! These are some of the outgoings which tax the miner's earnings in a new unpeopled country; but these are not his only drawbacks. "There being no boards to be had, we had per force to go in the woods and fell and hew out our lumber to make a rocker," causing much loss of time. Then came the hunt for nails and for the indispensable perforated "iron," which cost so much. But, worst of all the ills of the miner's life in New Caledonia are the jealousy and the audacious thieving of the Indians, "who are nowise particular in seizing on the dirt of the miners." "The whites," being in the minority, and the Indians being a fierce athletic set of rascals, "suffered much annoyance and insult" without retaliating. What a trial to the temper of Oregon men who used to shoot all Indians who came within range of their rifle as vermin in California in 1848 and 1849!

The difficulties of access to the mines will soon be ameliorated, as small steamers are to be put on the river, to ply as far up as the rapids will permit them; but as to the Indian "difficulties," it is much to be feared they will increase until a military force is sent into the country to overawe them. The prices of provisions and of mining tools and other necessaries will soon be regulated by the competition of the San Francisco merchants, and the minters will not be long subjected to exorbitant rates. They have a vast advantage in the proximity of San Francisco, abounding, as it does, in supplies for all their wants. When I recall our early troubles and victimizings I almost cease to pity the victims of the "rocker irons," at 6*l.* a-plate. In 1849 I paid $1 50c. for the simple luxury of a fresh egg. I might have had one laid on the Atlantic board, or in Chilhi[12] or the Sandwich Islands, for less, it is true; but these required French cookery to "disguise" their true state and condition, and I being them "fresh" myself was somewhat particular. Even this did not cap the climax, for I paid a sum in American currency equal to 16*l.* sterling for a pair of boots the day I was burnt out by the first fire in the same year. And such a pair! They were "navvy's"

[12] Chile

boots, and worth in England about 15s. The New Caledonians must not complain, for we have endured more (and survived it too) than they are likely to suffer.

WEDNESDAY, 16.

In connexion with this gold discovery circumstances are occurring between the traders and the Hudson's Bay Company which are already of considerable importance to the commercial community, both English and foreign, in this part of the world, which must soon interest likewise merchants and shipowners in England and elsewhere, when the news of the discovery will induce consignments of merchandise to this new market, and which, finally, may assume some national importance as involving questions between the English and American Governments.

For these reasons I wish to draw the particular attention of the home Government to this matter. It has very likely already received information upon the subject, as a special messenger from Vancouver's Island went on to England by last mail.

I formerly stated that a tax of 1*l.* a-month had been imposed upon every miner. To this imposition no objection is made, and the Company is eulogized for the leniency with which it has hitherto taken into consideration the destitute condition of some of the miners on their first arrival. It is also allowed that the Company does not charge exorbitant rates for its goods. But it is seriously objected that they have established a close monopoly in their own favour, under colour of the provisions of their charter.

I will state the case as accurately and as concisely as I can.

No vessel is allowed to enter the Fraser River without first obtaining a permit in Victoria. Here is a copy of the permit, or sufferance, as it is styled:-

GENERAL SUFFERANCE, FORT VICTORIA, VANCOUVER'S ISLAND.

These are to certify, all whom it doth concern, that sufferance for the present voyage is granted on the conditions annexed, to ———, master of the ———, burden ——— tons, mounted with ——— guns, navigated with ——— men, to proceed on a voyage to Fort Langley, with passengers, their luggage, provisions, and mining tools; the above-mentioned register being deposited in the Custom-house at Victoria, hath here entered and cleared his vessel according to law.

Given under my hand, at Victoria, this – day of ———, 1858.

(L.S.) W. J. M'DONALD, Collector.

R. Finalyson, for Hudson's Bay Company.

CONDITIONS OF SUFFERANCE

1. That the owner of the boat does bind himself to receive no other goods on board but such goods as belong to the Hudson's Bay Company.

2. That the said owner also binds himself not to carry or import gunpowder, ammunition, arms, or munitions of war, except from the United Kingdom.

3. That he also binds himself to receive no passengers, except the said passengers do produce a gold mining license from the Government of Vancouver's Island.

4. That the said owners also binds himself not to trade with Indians.

We are informed that the sufferance costs $12 for a decked vessel, and $6 for open boats. All vessels of every nationality must take out this permit and pay these fees. No exceptions of any kind are made in favour of British vessels; and the British man-of-war Satellite is stationed off the entrance of the river to enforce the conditions of the sufferance, "to stop all vessels or boats of any description from entering without a permit."

A person writing on the 23rd of May says:- "Her Britannic Majesty's steamship Satellite, Captain Prevost, has received orders to maintain a close blockade of Fraser's River, with a view to prevent the further ascent of trading vessels."

A gentleman connected with the press of San Francisco, lately returned from Victoria, which he left on the last day of May, says:- "Parties wishing to trade in the mines can only do so by purchasing from the Hudson's Bay Company;" and he concludes that there is not much to be done in that way by adventurers, "as the company is receiving large supplies by every steamer from San Francisco." "However," it is proper for me to mention that he adds, "some such trade is being carried on by miners in connexion with their mining operations. Supplies of provisions, mining tools, &c., for miners' own use are allowed, whether bought from the Hudson's Bay Company or elsewhere."

This regulation, and the proceedings consequent upon it, in which Her Majesty's ship Satellite and her boats, which have overhauled several vessels going up the river, are involved, have given rise to much comment. The press has discussed the matter pretty freely, but with great good sense and temper, having a confident conviction that the British Government will take such prompt and judicious action on the premises, as will be just and liberal, and settle the question satisfactorily.

The Company, as I am informed, claim the right to impose this restriction upon trade in virtue of their charter. I have a copy of this instrument now before me, and I cannot see that any such power can be construed from the recital therein contained of a former charter, or that any such authority is granted in the text of the previous charter. The power given to the company as to the matter of trade is "the exclusive privilege of trading *with the Indians*." British subjects (other than the Company) are excluded from trading with the Indians; but there is no exclusion of *white men trading with white men* of any nation – the charter gives the Company no power or authority to prevent whites trading with whites.

This is the view taken of the question by the merchants here, who feel deeply interested in the matter, and by the press, which is the exponent of the sentiments of the miners and others who are immediately affected by the company's prohibitory measures.

It is likely enough that the intention of the parties to the charter, at the time it was granted, was to exclude all persons from trading in the Company's territory in opposition to its interests and views; and the Company will, no doubt, justify its present proceedings on the ground of its consideration for the good of the Indians – whose "moral and religious improvement" which it undertook "to promote" would not be advanced by the unrestricted sale of merchandise of all sorts, even between white men inhabiting the Indian territory.

A much more practical view of the question was taken by a 'cute Yankee captain the other day, which amused me a great deal when I heard it. This enlightened gentleman "claimed that the Great Bend of Fraser River comes down below the 49th parallel, and consequently runs through American territory." Having settled this important geographical fact to his own satisfaction, he then "claimed" that he was going up the river *"to the American side;"* that go he must, and go he did, after intimating to the English officers, who overhauled him and read the Governor's proclamation to him, that "they might fire into him and sink the schooner and all hands," an alternative which, as he had upwards of 100 miners on board, seems to have been rather too much for the officers, or, in the classical language of the historian of this occurrence, "knocked them cold." The "claim" and the "49th parallel" are rather far-fetched, and one would think rather threadbare by this time, but the idea is clever enough at a pinch. This captain bears the appropriate name of Dodge – Captain Dodge, of the schooner Matthew Vassar.

I give no opinion upon the measures of the Hudson's Bay Company. From all I have learnt they have behaved with liberality and in an accommodating manner to the emigrants hitherto.

This permit business is the first ground of complaint, and they may be in the right for aught I know at present. But, were it for nothing more than for Captain Dodge's "claim," I feel justified in directing attention to it. Matters cannot long rest in peace and quietness as they are now. The Government will act wisely in taking prompt measures to meet the emergency which has so suddenly arisen, for they may depend upon it that Captain Dodge will have imitators, and that Captain Prevost will have perplexing duties to perform.

I believe I stated in a former letter that Victoria was a free port. No duties are levied on merchandise. This, independently of its favourable position, carries all British and other foreign goods, liable to American duties, to Victoria, in preference to all the American ports on the North-West Coast, an important fact which will be duly appreciated in England by "the men who go down to the sea in ships."

When I add to the statement of facts from the Fraser River already given in this letter that we have received many more accounts of mining having been carried on in April and May in several other places besides those mentioned in my statement, and with the like good results; that sundry persons have reported having seen returned miners on the coast of Puget Sound and elsewhere in the British and American territories with considerable quantities of gold, the usual "parcels of dust," "big lumps," "bags of gold, fine and coarse," "rich specimens," "sums of from $300 to $500 worth" in the hands of so many persons, "exchanging gold for goods to take back into the mines;" and when I add, further, what two of the principal San Francisco papers have told us – namely, that the truth of the stories of the fabulous richness of these mines was verified by ocular demonstration – "glittering evidences" in the possession of two or three passengers who arrived here on the 5th inst.; that two (other) miners had $6,000 between them one of whom said his last day of work amounted to $144, both statements given as ascertained facts; that one man had a shot bag filled with gold, and another 50 ounces, the two latter statements given on

hearsay – when I add all this to my statement I shall have given a pretty complete summary of all that is known here as yet concerning the new gold country.

My own conclusion is that the Fraser and its tributary, the Thompson, are rivers rich in gold, and that I have no reliable evidence of the existence of a goldfield beyond these rivers.

Only a very inconsiderable quantity of gold has come down to San Francisco in the regular channels of trade – there have been very trifling consignments, and the bulk having come in private hands; but the paucity of consignments, although it has caused some suspicion of the truth of the reported wealth of the mines in the minds of the more cautious (I must confess a small class with us), yet the stories of what was seen, and heard, and could be earned, have sufficed to unhinge the masses, and to produce an excitement which results in an unparalleled exodus.

The fever all over the State is intense, and few have escaped its contagion. From Yreks in the north, bordering on Oregon, to San Diego in the extreme south, the masses are in commotion; and from Shasta, one of the northern, to Mariposa, one of the southern mining counties, miners and others are flocking to San Francisco in thousands on their way to New Caledonia. From all points in the interior the reports are uniform to the effect that "the masses are unsettled," and that the "rush" is unabated. Many have gone from the northern portions of California overland, through Oregon, with cattle, horses, mules, provisions, and mining tools, but the "rush" from San Francisco knows no cessation.

From the 1st of this month till to-day (June 17th), seven sailing vessels and four steamers have left San Francisco, all for the new mines. They all went to Victoria, except two of the sailing vessels, which went to Port Townsend and Bellingham Bay, but the final destination of all was the same, - "Fraser River." All took passengers in crowds. One of the steamers carried away 1,000 persons, and another upwards of 1,200, and multitudes are left behind waiting for the next departure. There are still 13 vessels on the berth for the same destination, all filling with passengers and goods. One of these is a steamer, five of them are large clippers, three ships of considerable size, and the rest barks, brigs, and schooners, so that if the next news from the North is favourable this fleet will carry away a goodly crowd.

The eagerness to get away is a mania – a physiological phenomenon – traceable to the peculiarly mercurial temperament of the Californian. In fact, we do everything in a hurry; all our movements are "rushes." We "live fast," emphatically, in the widest sense of the term. As an instance, no sooner does good news arrive than it spreads like wildfire, and the whole community is suddenly worked up into an intense pitch of excitement. A steamer is reported to be on the berth, and the steam company's office is besieged by applicants for passages, hundreds fighting and scrambling to be the first to secure tickets. So serious is "the pressure from without" that a posse of policemen has to be on the spot, sometimes to preserve order and to keep the applicants in line, according to the priority of their arrival at the door.

From San Francisco itself a great many have gone and more are going. Common labourers, bricklayers, carpenters, printers, cabinetmakers, &c. – in short, all the mechanical arts are already represented in Vancouver's Island. Other classes

go as well; in fact, the major portion whose interests can permit are going. People seem to have suddenly come to the conclusion that it is their fate to go. "Going to Fraser's River!" "Yes; oh, of course, I must go." "You going?" "Yes, Sir, I'm bound to go." None are too poor and none are too rich to go; - even the decrepit go. Many go with money, many go without; some to invest in "real estate," that arrant representative of humbug and swindling on this continent; some to see what may turn up – these are men cunning in the "Micawber" theory; some out of curiosity, some to gamble, and some to steal, and, unquestionably, some to die.

Merchandise of all sorts, building materials, mules, and sundry necessaries to supply immediate wants are, of course, being sent on in ample quantities. People of all nations are going. Men who can't speak a word of English are going, accompanied by interpreters. These are mostly theoretical gentlemen of lively imaginations, of Gallic parentage, who see visions of rapid fortunes to be realized out of splendid cities – *on paper*. The only class which has not yet given evidence of having caught the infection is that of the clerks. I have not heard of any of them going. But domestic servants have the "yellow fever" strong upon them. They leave good places and high wages to go, they don't know why, and really they don't know where.

Miners are making great sacrifices to go, leaving claims which produce $40 a-day, to develop which they have disbursed some money. Small tradesmen and small property owners are borrowing small sums at enormous interest, and pledging productive property in San Francisco to enable them to go. The French are the deepest players at this game of hazard,

Naturally, the business derangements and the social inconveniences of this general and sudden exodus will be considerable. An old country would be prostated by them for a time. Here were are more self-reliant from habit. The first bad effects will be felt by the commercial community in this way:- As the miner takes "French leave" and then "evacuates" in debt to the up-country shopkeeper, the latter cannot pay the jobber, and the jobber cannot pay the San Francisco merchant. Then, again, capital will come to a standstill. The quartz mills are stopping for lack of hands, and all new enterprises of every kind must be suspended from the same cause. I have myself work for three classes of mechanics, as it unluckily happens, at this moment – men cunning in building houses and other devices of which civilized man is the victim. Two of these classes I can do nothing with, for one of the masters has lost his workmen, and the other master I can't find. The third, whom I have to coax and soft-sawder, tells me, "My dear Sir, I'll give you one day in three. I must distribute my time so as to do a little for each of my *friends*." This man is a tinman skilled in roofing houses. I used to call him a tinker in joke. He calls me now by familiar epithets, and I address him "Mr. Snooks." My joking days are over, or at any rate suspended. The ordinary relations of life are being reversed. We are becoming primitive. "When Adam delved and Eve span, where was then the gentleman" If our Eves would spin, we would not complain so much, but our domestic Eves are going to Vancouver's Island to become ladies. It is a great reproach upon our gallantry, but we can't keep the women.

This feverish state of the public mind cannot last long. As the rivers had risen so that the "bars" could not be worked after the latter part of May, and as the waters will not abate till the beginning or middle of August, and as thousands of miners who went up without spare money are idle on the coast, we shall, no doubt, soon hear that many of them are dying of hunger. This will cool the ardour of many in this country.

The fares for the steamers are – for the "nobs" $60, and for the "roughs" $30; the fare so so; and the attendance and other comforts can easily be guessed when I state that the decks of the steamer which I left to-day were so crowded with passengers that it was almost impossible to move through them. I suppose the waiters will have to fight their way when serving "the quality."

A gentleman who went down to the wharf and on board to see the sight says the crush actually lifted him off the deck. It resembled a crowed at one of the London theatres on a "Star" night. The paper of to-day says, "She appeared perfectly black with human beings, crowded in every part of her when she drew away from the wharf." Her proper complement is 800, and she would not be comfortable with more than 600 passengers. She took to-day 1,600 "at least," it is commonly said. Persons in the way of knowing the fact estimate that of the labourers in every class in the State all the unemployed and one-half of the employed have already gone.

Wages, provisions and transport[13] (June, 1858)

[JUNE 16]

I have already drawn an unusually heavy draught on your space, and, I fear, on the patience of your readers also; but my excuse is that the new country being British territory, the emigration to it, and other matters connected with it, are English subjects, which must excite a lively interest in England. Under cover of this excuse for my garrulity I will show how little reason there is in so general a flight of labourers from California, where they are more highly paid than in any other country in the world. I will do this by showing the difference between the price of labour in this country and Australia, another gold-producing country.

I take the wages in Australia from a Melbourne paper of March 16th[14], which gives the wages current in Melbourne at that time. I received it direct a few days ago.

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[13] From Fraser, D. (1858, August 5). BRITISH COLUMBIA. *The London Times*, p. 8.

[14] The Melbourne *Age* of March 16th, 1858, has the following account on page 4: "The numerous arrivals from the diggings, and the almost daily arrival of passenger ships are fast bringing things to a crisis. We may quote the general rate of wages from fifteen shillings to a pound, but work for the masses is not obtainable. A large proportion of the labouring classes are fast approaching destitution. Mechanics are nearly in the same category, their wages figure largely per diem, but the weekly results make but a sorry figure; they are nothing like fully employed. Females in good demand; wages exorbitantly high – in many instances they get more than men. Married couples without families, £60 to £70 per annum; do, with families, £55 to £60; gardeners, £60; grooms, £50; […] farm laborers, 15s to 20s per week: […] shepherds, £30 to £35; […] waiters, 20s to 25s per week; blacksmiths and shoeing smiths, 40s per week; carpenters, 35s per week; rough carpenters, 25s to 30s per week. Without rations:- Blacksmiths, £4 per week; carpenters, 11s to 13s per day; masons, 15s to 16s do; bricklayers, 15s to 16s do, […] compositors, 1s 3d per thousand; (not general in the trade): female thorough servants

I reduce our American currency into sterling at 48d. to the dollar, that being about its current value here:-

MELBOURNE WAGES

"Married couples (servants), 60*l.* to 70*l.* per annum; female servants, 25*l.* to 30*l.* per annum; gardeners, 55*l.* to 60*l.* per annum; grooms, 40*l.* to 50*l.* a-year; carpenters, 12s. to 14s. per day; ditto, rough, 25s. to 30s. per week; masons and bricklayers, 10s. to 15s. per day; waiters, 20s. to 25s. per week; compositors, 1s. 4d. per 1,000; blacksmiths, 40s. per week; farm laborers, 15s. to 20s. per week; shepherds, 20*l.* to 25*l.* a-year."

CALIFORNIA WAGES

"Married couples (servants), 192*l.* per annum, and found; female servants, 80*l.* to 96*l.*, and kept; gardeners, 120*l.* a-year, and found; by the day, $3, now $4; young men in stables as grooms, 120*l.* a-year and found, 16*l.* a month and find themselves; carpenters, with us till lately 1*l.* a-day, now 28s. a-day; 'rough' and smooth, I never knew any difference – and all bad; masons and bricklayers, at lowest time, 25s. a-day here at present 35s. a-day; waiters, 6*l.* to 8*l.* a-month in San Francisco; compositors 2s. 10½d. per 1,000 type, our types double size; blacksmiths, 3*l.* 12s. to 6*l.* a-week; general rate, $5 a-day; farm labourers, 6*l.* a-month, and found, and only work from 7 o'clock to 6 o'clock, with two hours for meals; shepherds, 144*l.* 10s. a-year, and found; a competent shepherd worth 240*l.* a-year, and found; or, to serve on shares of increase of stock, on very liberal terms."

All provisions, except animal food, are cheaper in San Francisco than in Melbourne.

With these enormous, almost fabulous, rates of wages, I think you will agree with me that persons who desert such good places do not deserve much pity if they die of the "yellow fever," as many of those who go to Fraser River will. I advise emigrants from Europe for New Caledonia to try California on their way. They can take it *en route*. In California labour is king, and a very bad monarch he has been, retarding the general improvement of the country by his exactions.

From all I can learn, as much gold has come down from the California mines as would have been expected had not so many miners left for the North. This appears strange, but as the remittance promises to be as large as usual, and an increase on that of the same period last year, there seems to be no doubt that the receipts of dust are still as large as usual. I think the remittance by this mail will be increased by the number of miners going North remitting their savings to the Atlantic States and Europe. The amount of gold hoarded in the interior is immense, as the miners have not deposited in the banks for the last four years.

One of the up-country bankers, of long and extensive relations with the miners, gives it as his opinion, that the exodus of 20,000 miners will not lessen the production of gold, as he calculates there were as many "loafers" who were non-producers. There is much truth in this estimate, for it was astonishing to see such crowds of idle miners as inhabited all the mining towns and camps. I never could understand how they

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£35 to £40; housemaids £30 to £35; laundresses £35 to £40; cooks £35 to £40; nurse-maids £18 to £26; needlewomen £26 to £30."

lived, their only occupations being to eat, drink, read the papers, and discuss the "big strikes" that other and luckier miners made. Those who ought to know say all these idlers had made their "piles," as they call being independently wealthy in their own vernacular.

The Fraser River mines will solve an important problem to this part of the world, - which is to become the great city, - the emporium of the Pacific – San Francisco or Victoria? As yet we have not sufficient data to form an opinion, and such facts as we know only tend to puzzle us, for during the fortnight we have received news of exceedingly rich diggings newly brought into work in California, and of others long in work yielding unusually large returns. […]

If a modicum of the excitement which exists in California and all over the North-Western portion of this coast extends itself to the Atlantic States and to Europe, and spreads with the intensity with which it has spread on this continent, there can be no doubt that an unprecedented emigration will soon set out from these countries for New Caledonia, Vancouver, and California. It is to be borne in mind that it is not the newly discovered gold-producing country on the Fraser River alone which will afford strong inducements to emigrants.

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 organization. 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 realized 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. […]

SATURDAY, JUNE 19.

Business has been very active in provisions, liquors, and other articles for the new gold regions during the fortnight. The interior trade has naturally languished during the same period owing to the exodus.

Prices of Atlantic imports have increased considerably, but India produce continues very dull. Raw sugars and rice have declined sensibly, and teas are a perfect drug.

It is as well for me to inform English manufacturers and merchants in view of the speculation likely to be caused by this new market of New Caledonia that there are now enormous shipments on the way to San Francisco of every species of merchandise sufficient to supply the demand for some time to come. It is to be borne in mind that there is really no accession of consumers. San Francisco customers have merely changed their location, and any immediate addition to the supplies before the new country receives additions of population from Europe and other distant countries must leave losses to the shippers.

The amount of Fraser River gold received at the mint in San Francisco since the 19th of May was only 385 oz.; average fineness, 837; worth $17 30c. the oz., making in all $6,676 59c. in value. […]

One hour ago […] a tenant of mine came in. His countenance displayed a curious expression of mingled excitement and sheepishness. He handed me a written notice of his intention to quit an office he rents of me. I didn't at all like this, for this man is an Englishman – a fellow whom I prized as a Highland chieftain would a trusty henchman. I asked no questions, for no one takes any step now except what is contingent upon Fraser River. I knew his intentions without being told. "You'll find the key in the door, Sir; on Monday I'll pay you the rent." "What do you expect to do there?" -not an unreasonable question, for the man is old, gray, and very fragile-looking. "Well, Sir, two newspapers are going to be established. My men are leaving, and if I lose my best hands it's no use staying." Then followed some familiar eulogies on "English colony;" "Protection of British Government;" "Our own people;" "Just administration of the law," and other saws flavoured with English honey. My *late* tenant belongs to the right worshipful craft of printers.

The printer's conversation sent me out to look at some of my other "tenements, hereditaments, and appurtenances." To my dismay I found the iron door of one of the stores which claim me as owner shut. "What's the matter here?" I asked of another of my feudatories, who was leaning against the doorpost of the adjoining store, chewing his "weed." "Attached," says he, as unconcernedly as if being "attached" were an everyday occurrence. A vulgar man, falling into the humour of the thing, would perhaps have given a whistle, after the fashion of Dickens's coalheaver, but I stroked my moustache. "An execution on the goods – sheriff in possession," adds my friend, by way of explanation. I peered in through the window, and saw three men, one with a pen behind his ear, and the others rummaging among the goods and chattels. But why pursue the theme? Another case of Fraser River. The poor storekeeper lost his customers, his creditors lost confidence in him, and he resolved to follow his customers. I left this scene a little wiser and a good deal sadder, and very considerably disgusted with Fraser River.

Everything is redolent of Fraser River, the boxes and cases at all the doors have it painted on them. No one speaks of anything else. Wages have jumped to-day from $4 to $7 in consequence of it. The editor of the *Bute Record*, an up-country paper, says waggingly of his fellow-townsmen, "every joke that is cracked is mixed in Fraser River water, and Fraser forms a part and parcel of everybody's meat, drink, and apparel."

But to return to myself, at the risk of being charged with egotism, I had not gone far when I was accosted by a man in broken English for what he called "advice" respecting "Fraziers Reever." This took me rather a-back, but on explanation the man's application was natural enough. He had been informed that I was the discoverer of the river – the work of some wag, who knew that I had been very much teased on the same subject under the idea that I must know something "special" about it. I had but just "advised" my client with the broken English not to venture on the trip until next advices, when the Marine Telegraph announced – "The steamer

Republic, from Fraser River, outside." In two minutes the announcement was posted outside all the newspaper offices. And if it didn't produce a commotion! The pavement suddenly became impassable with the crowds at the bulletin boards. Presently the long looked for steamer arrived. I started off to one of the newspaper offices, but had no luck. "One of our attaches is on board getting items; when he comes we'll show you his manuscript." I didn't wait for the "items," but went to the steamboat office, cogitating as I went. My cogitations were not pleasant, nor are they of the least importance, except that they show how many others think and act in this curious emergency. "Well," I thought, "no rents to come in – what's the use of staying here to be teased and bothered about this confounded gold discovery? A laird without tenants! What an ignominious position! No man of spirit would stand it. I shall soon decide." On getting to the office I went to the agent. "News?" "Yes. Just opened my letter." "Good?" "Yes, first rate – out and out good accounts." "When does your next vessel leave? "On Wednesday." "Book me for a passage." "Certainly; we'll take good care of you, too." This assurance was refreshing after my worry of the morning. I thought to myself, I wish I had you for a tenant. You won't' leave so long as the crop of fools lasts. I soon found that the securing of a passage was not so simple as it looked. On getting into the hands of the *employés* it required some diplomacy to arrange the affair satisfactorily. A man who doesn't chew tobacco seldom covets a very close companionship with a man who does, because chewing involves a corollary, but no matter what; the clerk made a good practicable suggestion, - "Take two berths, and you can then choose your companion." This was so reasonable a proposition that I acquiesced.

I thought I had conducted this matter very quietly, as I was inside the counter away from the crowd, but I was mistaken. As I moved to leave a rough, jolly, miner-like fellow said, "D—n the expense." I couldn't join in this impious wish, but asked him if he was going. "Shure," says he, "Shure as you're born." Well, I'll have one jolly fellow-passenger any way. The only thing remarkable about this fellow was that he had a knot in his beard – rather, his beard in a knot – a facial ornament I never saw before.

I now essayed to buy a newspaper to get the particulars. This wish was easier made than gratified. On getting into the office to wait until the first issue should appear I made for the counter. Presently the place began to fill. Now to get hot; then a slight pressure. Now pressure increased so as to place the front rank close against the counter. Suddenly nearly all began to shout that theirs was the first turn to be served. More people in from the street, and such a crush that a man near me said to those behind that they were pressing him into a pancake. I hoped not, but felt myself a difficulty in breathing. About half an hour passed in the "black hole." My nether garments began to stick to my skin. Before I got flattened up against the counter I took out my money, and, as I could not put down my arms to the side, I kept them over the top of the counter. At last about six papers appeared from an inner room. I made a grab, but lost. Another batch appears. I grabbed one with my left hand, stuck it between my teeth, and waited an opportunity to snatch another. This forestalling of the market (as the Scotch lawyers would call it) met with great disapprobation and

raised a tremendous hubbub; but another paper I would have, and finally another I did get. How I got out I really don't know, but I do know that I feel fevered and that I ache a good deal all over. As I was making my way back to the office the telegraph office was crowded with miners speeding messages of the "good news from Fraser" to all parts of the mining regions. So much for a "gold excitement."

If you expect I'm going to give you the news brought by the Republic just now, I'm very sorry, but you will be disappointed. I shall not read my own paper until I have ridden 21 miles into the country, where I go of a Saturday to "take mine ease at mine inn." The second paper, which cost me so much trouble, and made me so unpopular to procure, is for the landlord.

SUNDAY, JUNE 20.

[…] I must now give a summary of the news which arrived yesterday. The most favourable reports heretofore given are fully confirmed. Gold is found in abundance in the river, on its banks, "and as far back as the miners have prospected." How far, not said. This leaves us still in uncertainty as to extent.

I shall not give much of what the papers and some private letters report, for I disbelieve it. Many exaggerated stories are given by land and other speculators to seduce persons to go up to be fleeced.

Only five passengers came down in the Republic – a fact that is made much of as a proof of the richness of the mines. She brought down $10,000 of gold manifested to one house, but not much more.

We learn the important fact that the Fraser is navigable as far up as Fort Hope. The Governor and his son-in-law, Mr. Dallas, one of the directors, and Captain Prevost of the Satellite, went up in the American steamer, the Surprise (sent from San Francisco), to Fort Hope. The voyage was quite successful. "There was a large body of water in the river, and the current very rapid, running in some places six knots and in others four."

The steamer carried up some 250 miners as passengers. Another steamer, the Sea Bird (also from San Francisco), tried it, but failed to get up.

The Governor was well received by the miners, and he was delighted with his warm reception, and one of the reports adds, "it evinces the feeling existing towards him on the part of the miners, who have experienced in many instances his kindness."

There was more peace and quietness than might have been expected. A "difficulty" occurred between a white man and an Indian chief on the river 2½ miles below Fort Hope, in which the Indian was shot through the body; whether killed or not I don't know. The Indians returned the fire and killed a white man, - not the aggressor, or rather not the same who shot the Indian; this caused a great commotion, but the company's agent at Fort Hope pacified the Indians.

All the mining is confined to Fraser river. The Indians prohibit miners from approaching the Thompson. It is at present too much flooded to work any way.

As a proof of the richness of the mines it is said the Indians work it out of the ground with a stick. No one doubts its existence now.

It takes five days to go up from San Francisco to Victoria; but a steamer can come down in four, and sometimes in three days.

The scenery of the Fraser is described as very beautiful. I have an account of it, but it is such a strange conglomeration that I could not make it readable without much sifting, a process I have no time for.

The single fact which has struck me as the most interesting of all the news is, that "an Indian piloted the steamer which carried the Governor up the river." Something may be made of Indians who produce such a man. I have taken rather a fancy for these Indians from what I have heard of them. In about a week from next Wednesday, if the good steamer Oregon behaves well, I hope to see them and judge for myself. You shall next hear from me from British or Indian territory.

A visit to Vancouver's Island[15] (July, 1858)

SAN FRANCISCO, JULY 15.

In my last letter I stated that I purposed going up to Vancouver's Island, with the view of satisfying myself by personal observation as to the all-absorbing topic of the gold discovery on Fraser River. I have carried that intention into execution, and propose now to give you a few notes from my itinerary:-

Left San Francisco on Thursday, the 24th of June, at 4½ p.m., and arrived in Esquimalt Harbour, near Victoria, on the following Tuesday, at 6 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 quarter-deck 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 18 headlands which just out into the ocean all along the coasts of California, Oregon, and Washington Territory serve 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. […]

[15] From Fraser, D. (1858, August 27). A TRIP TO VANCOUVER. *The London Times*, p. 7.

Having for several years entertained a conviction of the vast importance to England of the possession of Vancouver's Island, both politically and commercially, and of the absence of any other point on the coast which can ever rival it north of San Francisco, I watched with much interest the different bays and anchorages as we passed them. There is not a safe harbour, not a spot adapted for a commercial port, between San Francisco and the island. Humboldt Bay is capacious, and vessels can lie with tolerable safety when once in, but it is inaccessible in heavy weather, and is difficult of exit.

There are several harbours along the coast which are good enough in summer, during the prevalence of the north-west winds; but in winter the south-east winds blow up the coast, and make them all unsafe and difficult of access. The captain's remark was, "There is either a heavy swell or the access is difficult." There are no hidden dangers on the coast. Steamers can keep close in shore, where the sea is smooth and little current, but sailing vessels should keep a good offing, particularly from April to October, when the wind blows from the northward and westward and causes a strong current.

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, showing 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, properly 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 40 miles to Esquimalt 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 Esquimalt is a circular bay, or rather a basin, hollowed by nature out of the solid 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 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 a railway communication with which to connect the Atlantic with the Pacific?

Our steamer swings, and I obtain a new view which reveals another and larger portion of the Bay of Esquimalt, in which ride at anchor Her Majesty's frigate Satellite and the Plumper surveying vessel. How grateful the sight of the old familiar flag modestly and gently flapping in the slight morning breeze, *in British Waters!* I felt more free and more comfortable when the sight of these grateful objects realized the fact that I was once more in my own country.

If any of your readers should think this a weakness, I will, in anticipation, propound a question by way of answer. Critical reader, have you passed the best years of your life absent from England while your heart yearned to return home year by year, but the force of circumstances kept you still absent; and have you passed nine years of your time in the hands of the Philistines? If you have, you can appreciate my feelings. If you have not, be thankful that your fate has not given you my experience.

A survey of the bay satisfies one that it is a capacious harbour capable of containing a large fleet – hundreds of vessels when its capacity is made available by engineering – the building of wharves, throwing out of jetties, scarping the rocky shores, &c. And it has the natural advantages of a good bottom for anchorage, is almost land-locked, and by a little building at the entrance can be made completely so; deep water, five, six, seven and eight fathoms, easy of access, Victoria-bay, over which vessels pass in entering, being itself a safe anchorage, and of great capacity. The harbour is admirably adapted for fortifications, which could be built at its entrance in such a manner as to make it impregnable. Guns could so be placed on the promontories and on an island just outside, in Victoria-bay, as to completely command the entrance, and under the fire of which no vessel could live; and – what is of infinite importance – there is a portion of the harbour which could not be shelled, and which is well adapted for the building of a dockyard. The ground on two sides of the harbour is eligible for a city, and – what is a curious feature in the landscape, and may become yet of great commercial importance – an arm of the sea, called the Victoria Arm, runs up into the country from Victoria several miles to within 600 yards

of Esquimalt harbour. This is navigable for small vessels; and, should Victoria continue to be the capital of the colony and the commercial city, nothing is easier than to carry merchandise in a variety of craft from the harbour to the city by the Victoria Arm (which would be an inland navigation) free from the swell of the open sea between the two places. A short cut or canal would join this arm to the harbour.

I am indebted to Captain Prevost, of the Satellite, and to Captain Richards, of the Plumper, for much information regarding the harbour, which I dare not trespass upon your space with *in extenso*. The principal portion I have condensed above. I have the authority of both these officers for writing that the harbour is capacious and safe. Captain Richards has surveyed it, and is preparing a splendid chart, for which he has collected all the materials. When it is finished I shall get a perusal of it, and will at some later period give such information from it as will be useful. […]

Captains Prevost and Richards are our commissioners for settling the ocean boundary line (north-west) between England and America. They have been long waiting for the arrival of the American commissioners and of Her Majesty's ship Havannah from Panama, with a detachment of Sappers and Miners, Engineers, &c., to proceed to define the land line of the boundary, the location of which on the 49th parallel is already fixed.

The Havannah passed us on the day we left, the 12th inst., a few miles outside of Esquimalt, with troops on board, but not close enough to hail her.

The American Commissioner is in San Francisco, and leaves in the Active, a small United States steamer, in a few days for Vancouver's Island.

I endeavoured to inform myself of the merits of this disputed ocean boundary question when at Victoria, and have formed a decided opinion thereon, which, however, I intend not to breach until I shall have visited and sailed over the very ground of the dispute, which I hope to do in two or three weeks, as I return to Vancouver's Island in a few days.

I take this opportunity of correcting an error into which the reports of the local newspapers led me in my last letter. I stated that an American captain named Dodge had sailed up Fraser River, in defiance of the remonstrances of the officers of the Satellite, without a license. Lieutenant Peile, the first lieutenant of the Satellite, who was in charge of the boat at the mouth of the river, informed me that the whole story was a fabrication. Captain Dodge did not enter the river at all, and did not desire to enter. He visited the English man-of-war, received some civilities from her officers, which, judging from my own treatment, were freely and hospitably rendered, and both parties parted the best of friends. The mis-statements of the American newspapers on all matters touching the Fraser River gold mines are quite monstrous. Persons from this place, at Victoria, and on the river give most perverted statements upon every subject, all of which get into the papers here, and make much of what they publish unreliable. I was 13 days in Victoria, and heard in that time more lies told than I ever heard before.

To return to the period of arrival in Esquimalt harbour. Our first impression of solitude was soon dissipated. Shoals of canoes filled with Indians, several sailboats manned by Italian fishermen from San Francisco, and about six or seven shoreboats

surrounded the steamer, all ready to take us and our goods and chattels on shore. The Indians interested me much. I saw at once that they were far superior in the scale of humanity to the Californian aborigines. They are *industrious*. This alone established their superiority. They are better formed and more intellectual, too; not good looking, certainly, but not hideous. How they do manage their canoes; with what ease and grace and skill! They shot out in the bay from behind promontories which conceal many coves and inner harbours with the easy sailing of a swan, and made for their point with unerring aim, although they use but small, short paddles. The form and construction of the canoe is perfection, and these Indians may be said to live on the water. Some of the canoes had two rowers, or rather paddlers. Some had four and some had whole families in them – father, mother, and children in one frail-looking canoe – but yet ready and willing to receive the heavy carcasses of three or four stout miners, together with their tools, arms, and baggage.

In three or four instances the young girls showed evidences of Anglo-Saxon crossing which a sinister mind might think reflected upon the chastity of their mothers. The men were all Indian in every feature. One girl attracted my notice from her strange equipment. Her hair was parted with much precision on the very top of the head, and hung down over her ears and on her shoulders with some grace. The hair itself is much finer than that of many Indians, and is free from the taint of frizzling or curling – "kinking" as the Americans call it – peculiar to the poor negro. Along the division formed by the parting of the hair of this young girl's head was drawn a line of bright red paint, which extended down the forehead. Another red line crossed from both sides of the head, and passed along the eyebrows, till it met over the nose. This painting looked pretty. Her hands were small and pretty, and she paddled with much grace. She would allow the canoe to get under the bows of the steamer, and near the wheels, as if on purpose, and then dexterously extricate it with an easy movement of the paddle which was really beautiful to see. She wore a brass armlet on a well-turned arm, but no other ornament. She was evidently a lady in her way – the belle of the tribe, perhaps. Her mother was in the canoe with her, and she did all the touting for hire, in so far as eager looks can be called solicitation without a word being spoken. Other girls now appear, and a few have the red paint lines on the head and across the forehead, but none of them equal in grace and tidiness my first attraction. The fops among the lads also affect paint on the face, drawing lateral lines on the checks which give them a zebra sort of look. They all appeared to me harmless; many industrious; but many others fast becoming corrupted by the influx of emigrants and the abundance of money, - the men getting drunk on the sale of their strawberries, fish, &c., and the girls getting fast corrupted by the coarse and idle ruffians hanging round Victoria.

I had an interview with a chief – a great chief of the Cowitchin [sic.] tribe – the Catholic Bishop of Victoria being the interpreter. I got waylaid by the great chief and the holy man in the passage of the public offices to my great surprise one day. The bishop opened the interview. The chief had heard that I had bought land in his Fief of Cowitchin. I admitted the soft impeachment. The bishop felt a little difficulty. He wanted to keep the chief and the stranger both in good humour. After the chief had

gurgled out some sentences, as is the custom of his tribe, and of all other tribes also – an utterance which resembles hiccupping very much, and pronounced very low, in as low a voice as is ever heard in polite London society – the good bishop brought about a good understanding. The Indian feared that the influx of strangers would bring spirits into his dominions and corrupt his people. Upon this head I set him quite at ease, as far as I was concerned; and I was quite sincere in promising not to carry spirits into his country, and to conform to all his laws. The bishop asked me to accompany him into the Cowitchin country, where he is soon going on a missionary visitation, and invitation I would most gladly have accepted had my engagements allowed. The bishop has great influence over the Indians of the island, and speaks their language fluently.

This chief was a lad about 25 years of age, of middle height, square built, a big flat head, a stupid inexpressive face, a dull inconstant eye, which I could not get him to fix upon me at all. A bad feature was that eye, denoting insincerity and treachery. His appearance was altogether very mean; no native dignity, no *presence*, such as some high-born Indians possess. He was dressed in a red flannel shirt, and had some sort of apology for a pair of trousers. This completed his attire. No shoes and no covering for the head. His feet were large and flat, but his hands small and well formed. He emitted such an odour in the hot noon-day sun as made me very thankful when the interview was over.

The number of Indians on the island is considerable – as many as 18,000, I have been informed. Most of them live by fishing, but some tribes follow the chase; and that represented by my friend, of whom I have been speaking, among the number, raise very large quantities of potatoes. Those around Victoria depend almost entirely upon fish, of which there is great abundance, but which is now neglected since the gold discovery.

Victoria is distant from Esquimalt, 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 wester 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.

As we are rowing up the bay, all impatience to catch a sight of the future capital of another English colony, of which our heads are full, we meet four stout hairy miners paddling a canoe – an ugly cradle of a thing built impromptu by some Yankee carpenter, or perhaps by the miners themselves – but how inferior in shape and construction to the native vessel! "Hurrah, for the Frazer!" yelled the miners as they passed, with a will that made the mountains echo. "Poor fellows!" remarked the captain of the steamer, "you little know the voyage of 70 miles you have left before you cross the Gulf of Georgia; if a storm arises you will have a sneezer." The love of gold and of adventure will make men dare anything. A thousand such canoes similarly freighted out with provisions have been paddled out of Victoria – perhaps a great many more, for it is calculated that there were a thousand of them on the river last week, all built within the last two months at Victoria. Some are supposed to have been lost on the passage.

I bring you at last to Victoria. It 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 Esquimalt, 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, &c., 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 Rainer, in Washington Territory. Such are a few – and I am quite serious when I say only a few – of the beauties which surround Victoria.

The prominent object in making the approach by water is the Hudson's Bay Company's fort, built on a rocky bluff, in the foreground of the picture. Properly speaking, this is not a fort. A high wooden enclosure of palisades has wooden bastions at two diagonal corners, where several guns are mounted in two galleries. One of the bastions enfilades the front and south side of the square, and the other defends the buildings for the transaction of the company's business and for the residence of some of its officers. A certain degree of military *régime* is maintained. The gates are closed at night, and perfect order and a complete division of labour exist throughout the establishment. The arrangements are simple enough, and the men who conduct them quiet and unassuming to a degree. But to me personally the place had a peculiar interest from the fact that several of my schoolfellows entered the Company's service, whom I had not seen and of most of whom I had not heard, for 25 years, owing to my own life having been rather erratic. I entered the gate with mixed feelings of hope and fear; now hoping to find some of my old chums high in office – in posts of trust and honour, but fearing to be disappointed. I asked names, scanned faces, and

interrogated all the officers I could muster. Not a face here that I had ever seen; not a name I knew. Out of about a dozen fine young fellows not one left. "Dead;" "Gone wrong;" "Left," and so on – a sad reckoning.

The fort must have had a monastic look before the influx of the gold-hunters, when it was in its primitive loneliness. Now it is busy enough, selling goods and issuing licenses to the miners, besides having a Custom-house and a post-office establishment.

The fort possesses an interest of its own independently of the natural beauty of its position. Those plain, whitewashed wooden walls acquired an importance in my eyes when I reflected that this was the place where was concentrated the moral power, the tact, energy, and firmness of purpose by which a few well-instructed Englishmen and Scotchmen rule 80,000 savages, and turn their labours to profitable account. While tribes of these savages are at war with America almost continually, and at this moment, when a fierce and bloody contest is actually going on between them and the Federal forces, whom they have lately beaten, the meanest of the Company's servants has a safe passport and hearty welcome wherever he goes – not a hair of his head will the Indians touch.

The system, or treatment, or whatever it is which has produced this good result deserves some consideration, and I will by and by revert to it.

The hostility of the Indian to the American is due to the cruelty and injustice of the latter entirely. The American Government treats, or wishes to treat, the Indian well. It gives him food, shelter, and raiment on the reservations set apart for the remnants of the tribes; but the individual American treats the poor Indian with the ferocity and cruelty of a bulldog. One's blood boils with indignation at the conduct of wretches who pretend to respect the principles of *equality*, but who violate every principle of humanity. Their policy towards the Indian is simple *extermination*.

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 forest 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; 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 goldfield 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, pulverized, 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, show 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, &c.

I visited seven farms within short distances of Victoria. The crops were oats, barley, wheat, peas, 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, &c. – 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 each (20*l.*) 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 Aemrican, 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. These long days – the protracted daylight eking out the

day to 9 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 10 miles round Victoria – the landscape is dotted with extensive croppings of rock, which interfere with the labours of the husbandman. Few cornfields are without a lot of boulders or a ridge or two of rock 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 1,000 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" [sic.] 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 show 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 respsects the parallel may hold good; but there is no question that Vancouver has more steady fine weather, is 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 the eye of a European the timber is very fine and well-grown; but to a Californian, accustomed to the gigantic forms which prevail further south, the trees appear of very ordinary stature.

I said there were no streams. My good friends the islanders are rather tender upon this score, and so, not to hurt their feelings, I will allow that I saw one stream about six miles out in the forest, but it was fast drying up under the influence of summer heat. Comparatively little of the island has been explored, so that the quantity of open land fit for cultivation is not known. If it is as limited as I suspect it is, the island will never provide sufficient cereals for the consumption of a gold-producing population.

The known locations which are well adapted for farming are, first, the district of Saanich, some 17 miles northerly from Victoria; second, Cowitchin district, joining it on the northern side of the island, opposite the mainland at Fraser's River; and third, Soeke [sic.] district, in the north-west part of the country. The land in all these

districts is said to be pretty free from trees, or rather not to be overrun with forest, and to be of good quality, and the scenery beautiful.

What I ought to have begun by stating I may mention now, that Vancouver's Island lies between 48°17' north, and from 123° 10' to 128° 30' west, which position would entitle it to a mild climate, as all the countries on the Pacific are more temperate than those on the same parallels in the northern hemisphere[16].

I could have written a pretty correct account of the state of Victoria without going out of my office. It is the San Francisco of 1849 reproduced, and the republication of one of my letters of that period would save me the trouble of sketching the new city. The same hurry-scurry, hurly-burly, dust, dirt, inconvenience, bad living, bad housing, cheating, and lying. The sudden metamorphosis from a quiet little hamlet of some 400 souls, to a huge hive of some 6,000 to 7,000 brigands, produced by the same causes, confirms the comparison. The life is very primitive, tents being the habitations of the majority. The life (and soul) of the place is imparted to it by the Californians, who have flocked to it with the view of bettering their broken fortunes. They have run up the price of land to an absurd figure. 20*l.* a front foot I was asked for a lot in a side street, - that is to say, for a clay bank, 100 feet by 70 feet, $10,000. I told the owner that "I wished he might get it;" but after all I paid pretty high with a purchase which I made, considering the original price to the first holder. I bought three lots, each which cost a little time ago $100 each. I was offered a profit on my bargain two days after I made the purchase; but now I understand there is a revulsion, and my "water lots," as they are called in the slang of the "real estate" business, would not fetch what I gave for them. So much for gambling in land. Everything has risen to famine prices. Flour is $30 a barrel. In San Francisco it is worth $12. Lumber, $100 per 1,000 feet; in San Francisco less than one-fourth that price. A man with a horse and cart will earn 10*l.* a-day. At least, I know of one who did earn $40, or 8*l.* in a day, and another man told me that if he hadn't broken his cart on a certain day last week he would have 60 feet by 120 feet, on the Bay, for $1,000 each, made 10*l.* All this will soon pass away.

The style of living is rather unique. I slept on a trestle, rolled up in rough blankets in a small room, where two others also slept – a place you would not think too good for your dog. I washed my face *al fresco* – that is, in an open meadow – and brushed my boots in a tiny room, which served for kitchen, laundry, refectory, and sitting-room for my land-lady and her husband. My visitors said, I was housed luxuriously by comparison with their accommodations. Americans sleep three and four, or more, in a bed. TO have a bed to oneself was thought quite aristocratic, "exclusive" they called it.

But the feeding is the most disgusting part of the campaign. I went into a place to have coffee one morning early, for I rose betimes, in compliance with the ancient maxim – that "the early bird catches the worm;" my spirits fell when I saw three Frenchmen drinking out of one cup. I asked timidly, if I could have a cup to myself, and I got one, but no saucer. Such coffee! What a strong flavour of burnt beans or pease. I abandoned this nasty house in disgust, and next morning patronized a tent

[16] Presumably, Fraser meant 'than those on the Atlantic'.

kept by a lady. The wind was high, the tent open at both ends, and the cooking done in the open air, over a sort of oven improvised in the bushes. The table – rough, unplanned deal boards – was so covered with dust and sand that I could have written my order for breakfast upon it with my stick. The plates were turned upside-down, to keep their insides clean. All this did not look propitious; but a hungry man must eat. I grasped a loaf of bread and stroked the sand off it with the sleeve of my shooting jacket, which, luckily, was a rough-spun garment, and answered admirably. I broke off a hunk, and, having turned my back on the wind, placed the bread and the beefsteak in my bosom, as I may say – that is, I leaned over them and the plate they were on, to keep off the dust, and, doubling my body as to bring my face down on the plate at each mouthful grabbed, made a clean and an excellent meal. You used to be eloquent once upon the adulteration of food. Do you remember what the wretches adulterated butter[17] with?

The secret must have travelled to Victoria or San Francisco.

Two cities were attempted to be founded in Bellingham Bay, in Washington Territory, on Puget Sound, in opposition to Victoria, but owing to the only safe route to the mines being by way of Fraser River they have not succeeded. In the language of an American who tried his hand at "real estate" in both, Whatcom has "caved in," and the "bottom has fallen out" of Sehorne. The riff-raff of San Francisco of both sexes congregated there, and converted them into Pandemoniums. A good deal of the same material, but chiefly vermin of the masculine gender, has settled in Victoria, but the place doesn't agree with them. Perfect order is preserved, and a strong police force is being organized by the Governor, all of whose measures give satisfaction to the well-disposed who have nothing to lose.

Twenty thousand persons are supposed to have left California and 10,000 to have gone from Oregon and Washington territory, all for Fraser River. The majority passed through Victoria. There are some 15,000 at least in the mines. The rest are, the most of them, dispersed between Victoria and places across the Straits in American territory, and perhaps 1,000 disappointed miners have returned to California.

You can imagine the severe tax which the sudden influx of such a multitude, composed of such materials, must have imposed upon the representatives of the Hudson's Bay Company. The full weight of it fell upon the Governor, for he is not only Governor of the Colony, administering the Government as the representative of the Crown, but he is also chief factor for the Hudson's Bay Company, intrusted [sic.] with the direction of its affairs. His is no enviable position, I can assure you – no sinecure. Plenty of work, of annoyance, of worry, of unjust and unreasonable blame, of great responsibility and anxiety. I was curious to see how he bore himself under it all –

[17] "[T]here is a set of men […] who are making a business of adulterating butter, and selling it as genuine to the cheesemongers of London, […] the adulteration being often from forty to fifty per cent. I am informed that the way this adulteration is effected, is by melting butter down to the liquid point, and in that state it absorbs water and flour, &c., to the above amount of adulteration. So dexterously is this counterfeit compound now made to resemble real butter, that even in the trade, many parties who know that such a spurious article exists, are often deceived with it." HONESTY. (1849, May 20). ADULTERATED BUTTER. *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*, p. 6.

whether he was flurried or calm. He cultivates the latter virtue. My next query was, does he do his work well? A short enumeration of his measures must answer this question. I soon saw through his system – that is, I saw what enabled him to work his way easily and quietly through such maxes of difficulties as were continually recurring. He has long been accustomed to power, to the direction of affairs, to command, to assume responsibility, and to direct others. His present duties, suddenly multiplied as they are day by day, and distracting as they would be to many less trained officers, come easy to him. He is an old hand at this sort of thing, in short, and he is a man of unquestionable talent – "mighty clever," as a middy remarked.

One of the first measures taken was to license the miners; British and foreign were treated alike. The tax is 21s. sterling, commuted to $5 a-month. The license is not transferable. Mining is not allowed where it would destroy roads, impede access to houses, &c. The proper observance of the Sabbath is enjoined. Claims are allotted in sizes varying with the nature of the ground, arranged so that each miner shall have sufficient space to work in, and to prevent monopoly. These rules have been modified for the better accommodation of the miner, and his labours are facilitated by the change.

The next matter which required attention was the means of transport to the mines: this was rather puzzling. There were no British vessels to be had to navigate inland waters in British territory. But the demand was imperative. The miners came in by thousands and were clamorous for passage to "the land of hope." How was the letter of the law to be observed? It was, in short, impossible. In the emergency American steamers were licensed on assuming the British flag – a privilege which few shipowners like to avail themselves of, as, if they once change the American flag they can't regain it for the same vessel. Miners were allowed to carry provisions for private use free of all duty restriction. The Governor went up to the mines in person, settled disputes between Whites and Indians, instructed both parties in their mutual duties and conduct, appointed authorities, such as peace officers, to administer justice on the spot, explained the law to the American miners, and set matters generally in the best order the circumstances would admit of.

Two steamers were plying from Victoria to Fort Hope for some time, but one of them, the Sea Bird, took the ground in the river several weeks ago, and still remains below Fort Hope, useless for the present. The other, the Surprise, continues to ply, and several sailing vessels of small size run as far up as Fort Langley.

The Governor was on a second trip up the river when I left Victoria on the 12th inst., carrying out administrative measures in person; and I am informed that, finding as many as 10,000 to 12,000 miners on the ground in dread of a scarcity of provisions, it has been determined, or soon will be, to throw open the trade and navigation of the Fraser River to all vessels of every nation. This measure is rendered the more imperative as the Surprise must soon cease to go as far up as Fort Hope owing to the falling of the water. Therefore small boats (of which there are none British) must supply her place.

To talk of the strict observance of the rules of international law in this emergency, or to deny or even restrict the means of life to 12,000 hungry, reckless,

and self-willed miners, is idle. “Necessity has no law.” The apothegm was never more applicable to any case than it is to the present one. The Governor humanely and wisely takes the responsibility of departing from the letter of the law, and form his instructions also for aught I know, in acting as he does for the best; and trust to the Government to approve his acts. But the fact is, to speak plainly, he cannot help himself. Apart from the calls of humanity and necessity which impel his line of action, he has no force to maintain an opposite policy. Therefore there is no room for argument or discussion on his measures. It seems to me, from what I have seen and learnt on the spot, that the Governor has done quite right. His acts may be judged differently at a distance; that I care nothing about. I give my opinion without prejudice or partiality.

In Victoria a commissioner of police and men under him have been appointed, and the peace and good order of the place are really perfectly preserved; the crowds of all nations there assembled in a state of squatation, to use a new paraphrase, behaving very peaceably. I have walked several times through the encampments of tents, filled with weary sleepers, at late hours – 11 at night to 1 o’clock in the morning – without the least molestation, the only sound heard being that of such of the sleepers as “drive their pigs to market” o’nights.

Trade is licensed on a scale graduated to the character of the business, wholesale and retail. The only heavy license is upon the sale of liquors, which is $600 a-year, and none too high, particularly as its proceeds are to go to the support of schools, of which one is established already. Victoria is a free port, and I hope, for the general good, it will so continue. The rule is liberty to all, but no violation of law and order. All such are promptly punished with severity.

The effect of the measures adopted and of which I have given but an imperfect sketch, are appreciated by all well-disposed persons. The general policy of the Hudson’s Bay Company is commented upon by an American merchant, who writes from Victoria to the *San Francisco Bulletin* as follows:-

“The Hudson’s Bay Company have adopted the wise and humane policy of selling provisions at very small profits, and but for this many here and in the mines would perish for lack of the necessaries of life. The monopolists, who are ever ready to speculate on the life-blood of their species, grind their teeth in vain against a body of men which their cupidity cannot influence, while the thousands ere are loud in their praises, and justly so, of the course pursued by the Hudson’s Bay Company.”

My tale of the Fraser River Mines is soon told. The water is too high to permit more than a very few miners to work on the river. The mass of them lies idle on its banks, waiting for the water to fall. Those who have monopoly to pay for provisions can have enough on the spot, for which they have to thank the humane and liberal policy of the Hudson’s Bay Company.

Those who have no money must starve. The alternative is as clear as the sun at noon day. They can neither buy food nor leave the place. They cannot spread themselves over the country for the following reason:- The banks of the river, high up

where the miners are congregated, are steep and lofty perpendicular walls of rock which cannot be scaled. The other portions of its banks are covered with impenetrable forests, without a track or a trail, which they dare not penetrate for fear of the Indians.

There is a trail above Fort Hope known to the Hudson's Bay Company's people which leads up to Thompson's River and adjacent country, and which are supposed to be very rich in gold, but there are no means of transport available as yet. Some miners have gone up, and their story is this:- A man has to carry his provisions in his blankets, on his back, up a laborious ascent in hot weather. He cannot carry over 50lb. in weight besides his traps, and tools, and firearms. He takes several days to perform the journey. At its termination one-third part or more of his stock of provisions has been used on the tramp. He digs and digs successfully, but, as he is in a wilderness where his supplies cannot be renewed, after a few days' work he must hurry down before his little stock of eatables is exhausted; or if he remains until he shall have it it all he dies of hunger. There is no relief for him. So he comes back with some, but no much, gold. Several are said to have perished of hunger in this upper region, but I could only trace this horrid fate to two men. Unfortunately for themselves, the California miners would not listen to advice to defer their departure till the usual season of low water in the river, but rushed up unreflectingly, and reached the place long before they could work. The result is misfortune and disaster to most, and disappointment to nearly all. [18]

On the other hand, I have the most satisfactory testimony to the fact, that wherever a miner can work on the Fraser or on the Thompson Rivers, or elsewhere, gold is obtained in abundance.

The river (the Fraser) will fall in September low enough to admit of washing in its bed, and miners can work in it till March, as I was informed by old residents.

In these untoward circumstances several parties are returning to California, while others are still going up. I have myself done all I could, in a limited circle of course, to dissuade them, but it is advice thrown away.

My object in going north was to ascertain if a goldfield really exists, and its extent if there does. I have not succeeded in my object. I could not travel in the interior alone, and I could not obtain an escort. I tried hard, but the thing was simply impossible. An old friend, Mr. Dallas, one of the directors of the Hudson's Bay

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[18] This led some miners to leave with a narrative of the Fraser River gold rush being a "humbug". A private letter from Victoria dated June 20, 1858 and published in the New York Times is representative of the genre: "As regards gold mines, that is all humbug. You can get Indians to work for fifty cents per day, and plenty of white men for fifteen dollars per month. You may thank your lucky stars you did not come to this d----d country. I shall return by the next steamer. You may expect to see me in about ten days. If any of your friends think of coming here, tell them they had better stay where they are. Employment of any kind is not to be had here, and it is all nonsense to think of trading here, as the Hudson['s] Bay Company claim the exclusive right to trade with the miners, and have sufficient force to drive off any American that would try trading. I really believe the gold mines are a grand humbug. I never was in a country where money was so scarce, and as regards "gold dust," that is all nonsense; you never see a particle. Thank God, I have money enough to get back." W. (1858, July 28). FRASER'S RIVER MINES. *The New York Times*, p. 2.

Company, whom I had the pleasure of meeting at Victoria, where he is engaged in assisting Governor Douglas in administering the company's business, most kindly offered to take me with him on a trip which he contemplates making in a month or so. In such company, and with the advantage of the company's protection, I expect to learn the true state of this *terra incognita;* and with this view I go up again to Vancouver's Island in about a week, to prepare for the journey.

I did not go to Fraser's River. As there is no mining, or only a very little, there was nothing to see which would repay me for the voyage. The statement I give of the state of matters on the river is, however, correct.

I may add that I have the distinct authority of Governor Douglas and one of the chief factors who has long resided in the interior for stating publicly that for several years back they have had evidences of the existence of gold being found in many places extending over hundreds of miles of the country to which the notice of the world is now attracted, and that both these gentlemen believe the auriferous country to be rich and extensive.

I have to apologize for the unreasonable length of this letter. The fault is not entirely mine. The letters from Vancouver's Island prepared for the last European mail arrived in San Francisco too late, and are still here. I am therefore obliged to cram the substance of two letters into the present one.

SAN FRANCISCO, JULY 20.

[…] News received last night from Victoria rather depressing. Prices had fallen for all articles of merchandise, and that absurd puff which they call "real estate" would not go off at any price. Long may it continue in this state, so that poor men can purchase small lots of land to erect dwellings on!

The *Times* on their correspondent[19] (August, 1858)

At length we are in possession of a clear and graphic account, not of the golden region of Fraser and Thompson Rivers, but of the harbour, capital, and scenery of that noble island which lies at the portal of the new El Dorado. Our Californian correspondent has been disappointed in his attempt to reach the gold-diggings themselves, but he has given us an account of Vancouver's Island, its rising capital, and its splendid harbour, which cannot fail to be of the highest interest, commercially and geographically. Of the country of Fraser River there seems little to know, except that the river abounds in rapids, that its banks higher up are perpendicular rocks which it is impossible to scale, and that the miners dare not venture far from the stream into the thickly-wooded interior for fear of the attacks of the Indians. The river will not be fit for gold-washing till September, and in the meanwhile the miners who have provided themselves with provisions or money are waiting in impatient and compulsory inaction the drying up of the snow-fed torrent, and those who have not sufficient stores have either gone away to seek employment elsewhere, or have

[19] From At length we are in possession. (1858, August 28). *The London Times*, p. 8.

remained to starve to death, - a fate which has actually overtaken some of the unfortunate men who have ventured without suitable preparation into these vast and almost inaccessible solitudes. We have established a Colony, but before it can be colonized it seems absolutely necessary to provide access to its deep and remote valleys, and for this purpose we doubt not the corps of Sappers and Miners which has been sent out will prove one of the most eminent advantage.

The greater part of our correspondent's letter is devoted to an account of Vancouver's Island, its capital, Victoria, and its harbour, Esquimalt, and certainly it would be difficult for the ghost of Mr. George Robins himself to draw a more delightful or alluring picture than that which we receive from an experienced and intelligent writer, whom a Californian residence of nine years must have made into a thoroughly good judge of new countries and projected settlements. With scenery which reminds a Scotchman very forcibly of the mountain ranges and beautiful salt-water lakes of his native land – with a climate strongly resembling that of England, but less variable in summer and less severe in winter – Vancouver's Island seems to present peculiar attractions to a long expatriated European. That portions of tolerably good land are to be found on its surface there is no doubt, though the backward state of survey, and even of exploration, leaves it doubtful how much of its surface is adapted for the purposes of agriculture. There is no doubt, however, that the island possesses abundance of good coal, excellent spars for ships, copper, gold, and potter's clay. Iron and limestone may also be counted among its mineral treasures. But that in which Vancouver's Island is pre-eminent over all the Russian station of Sitka down to California, is the wonderful harbour of Esquimalt. The mainland of this immense coast is peculiarly destitute of harbours, and this gives to the beautiful inlet of Esquimalt a value compounded partly of its own natural advantages and partly of the defects of its rivals. The harbour is described as a circular bay, scooped by nature out of the solid rock. On passings its narrow entrance the ship exchanges at once the long roll and swell of the great Pacific for the calmness of a land-locked Highland lake. It has deep water, varying from five to eight fathoms, good holding-ground, and an extent sufficient to contain any number of ships. Whatever be the fate of the gold-diggings of Fraser River, no one can doubt that this harbour, now that attention has once been drawn to the remote country in which it is placed, will become the emporium of a vast trade, where the productions of North and South, of East and West, will meet in a great and central mart. Many other circumstances besides the recent discovery of gold tend to bring about this result. The opening of trade with China, of which we have just received intelligence, must attract the attention of men of capital and enterprise to the Northern Pacific, and the thriving settlement which Russia has formed at the mouth of the Amoor River, and thrown open with praiseworthy liberality to settlers of all nations, will probably increase this tendency. The harbour appears to be easily defensible, and, being placed on an island, the Mistress of the Seas may very reasonably look upon it as a durable possession. The site of the city of Victoria, distant a few miles from Esquimalt harbour, seems to be admirably well chosen, and presents a prospect equally beautiful and commanding, extending over woods, bays, and inlets to the distant mountains of Washington

Territory, rising to the height of the loftiest Alps, and covered with perpetual snow. The only drawback in the glowing picture of Vancouver's Island is that it has no rivers, but this want is in some degree supplied by arms of the sea running deep into the land, by a very moist winter, and by very heavy dews, which refresh the herbage during the heats of summer.

It is pleasant to see that the Government of a country which has suddenly found itself changed by the magic influence of gold from an obscure fishing and hunting station to the resort of tens of thousands of eager and not very orderly colonists has been found fully equal to the emergency. Mr. Douglas, who combines the apparently incompatible offices of chief factor of the Hudson's Bay Company and Governor of Vancouver's Island, seems, by the confession of all parties, to have discharged his arduous and novel duties in a manner worthy of the highest approbation. The officers of the Hudson's Bay Company have exercised for many years a quiet and undisputed sway over 80,000 Indians inhabiting Vancouver's Island and the adjacent colony of New Columbia. This seems to have been an admirable training for the present emergency. The Governor has obtained the habit of command, of forethought, and arrangement, and has learnt not to be afraid of heavy responsibility, while he curbs with a strict and heavy hand the six or seven thousand brigands who have suddenly descended upon Victoria as a permanent increase to her population, and the 30,000 miners who have passed through the town on their way to Fraser River. He has allowed the miners to carry up provisions for their own use, and, instead of availing himself of the opportunity of extorting money from the necessities of the new comers, he has sold provisions to them at a very small profit, and thus conciliated to himself to himself and his government the good will and obedience of his turbulent guests. He is said to be about to throw open the trade altogether – a wise resolution, which we trust speedily to learn has been executed. Equally agreeable is it to find that the rude miners of California have, upon the whole, submitted with a very good grace to the sway of the representative of Her Majesty. To be sure, Mr. Douglas is not one of those monarchs who trust only to fear for the execution of their mandates. Amid so many conflicting duties he found time to travel to the distant and inaccessible gold-diggings, settled disputes between the Indians and the whites, and explained to the American miners the law under which they came to live. Whether it be from this novel and sensible step on the part of one who might have stood on his authority and dignity, or whether the Californians had had enough of the sweets of a Democratic Government, acting under the inspection of a Vigilance Committee, certain it is that they have conformed in an exemplary manner to the laws of the Colony, and even seem to have imbibed a taste for a strong Executive, which has established a vigilant and efficient police, and protects with a firm hand both life and property.

With Governor Douglas to the mainland[20] (October, 1858)

VICTORIA, VANCOUVER'S ISLAND, OCT. 6.

In my last letter from San Francisco I stated that I would visit the Fraser River gold mines, and report upon them from personal observation. An opportunity occurred of my doing so in the following manner:-

In consequence of rumours of an alarming collision between the miners and the Indians, the Governor determined to visit the interior in person; and the account of the collision which was brought to him by a deputation from the miners at Fort Yale and Fort Hope was given with such minuteness, detailing the massacre of 45 white men and the commission of other atrocities, and the demand for assistance was so pressing, that the Governor made a requisition upon Her Majesty's naval and military officers on the station for men to accompany him to support the civil authorities if necessary.

I accompanied the party, and now give you the jottings of the trip.

I regret the delay in forwarding this letter, but I could not help it, for the last mail, which I intended to convey it, left a few hours before I got back to Victoria.

The Governor had with him 22 non-commissioned officers and men of the Royal Marines, and Lieutenant Jones, R.M., in charge, from the Satellite; and 14 non-commissioned officers and men of the Royal Engineers, and Major J. S. Hawkins, R.E., who commanded the party. Mr. Bannerman, the geologist of the British Boundary Commission now engaged in this country in "fixing" the line of demarcation between ourselves and our "cousins," accompanied the party.

We left Esquimalt Harbour, near Victoria, late in the evening of August 30, and early next morning anchored off Point Roberts, near the mouth of Fraser River. Point Roberts is a narrow peninsula which runs into the Gulf of Georgia, and some interest attaches to it at present from the fact that the 49th parallel of of north latitude, which is the boundary line between the British and American possessions, crosses the point, giving to America a small portion of the northern extremity of it, as determined by the astronomers of the two nations on the commission. A joint national monument is to be erected here.

Some of us landed on Point Roberts, and visited the spot marked as the boundary. The first portion of the new colony of British Columbia which I touched promised to justify the high eulogiums I had heard passed upon the country. The scenery of Point Roberts is rich to a degree – almost tropical in luxurience and in colouring. The land rises gently from the shore of a long, graceful, crescent-shaped bay, covered with blue shingle, first to a strip of narrow plateau, from which it runs up into a high bank, impenetrable from the rankness of the vegetation; Douglas pine, cedar, sycamore, maple, alder, birch, dogwood, snowberry-covered with round white wax-like flowers, - the wild cherry in full bearing – the fruit tempting to the eye but bitter as quinine to the taste, - willows, wild gooseberry, chrysanthemums of a light

[20] From Fraser, D. (1858, November 30). BRITISH COLUMBIA. *The London Times*, p. 4.

violet, very delicate, Michaelmas daisy, sand reeds, and many other plants hustling one another for room.

The first light frost of autumn had just tinged this mass of foliage, and produced the most resplendent colouring imaginable. The combination was made up of masses of dark green, the colours of the alder and pine; clumps of the rich canary, of the broad-leaved maple; the deep red of the logwood, and the light green of the cedars – quite as gorgeous, but without the glare, of tropical colouring.

The entrance to Fraser River, between Point Garry and Point Pelly, is nine miles north of the 49th parallel and of Point Roberts. The views obtained of the mainland as we approach the river are very fine. The horizon is bounded by a curved line of lofty mountains of all shapes – some extending into a chain, others thrown into a congeries [sic.] of peaks, crags, and bluffs, speckled with snow, and broken by great gaps and chasms, - the whole at first appearing as if enveloped in a cloud of blue gauze. On nearer approach we found that all these mountains were covered from base to summit with pines. To a height of 3,000 feet the mountains of Fraser River are covered with timber.

The change from Vancouver's Island is at once manifest. Everything on the continent is on a grand scale.

I must try and give you some idea of the river, which is fast becoming so famous. The entrance proper is between Point Pelly on the north and Point Garry on the south bank. An extensive flat belt of low alluvial land intervenes between the mountains I have just mentioned and the Gulf of Georgia. The river runs through this delta, a considerable portion of which it overflows. Outside the mouth of the river the navigation is rendered difficult and tedious by shallows, but Captain Richards, of Her Majesty's surveying ship Plumper, has discovered a deep and safe passage, which, when buoyed, will afford easy access to large vessels. The Satellite entered by this channel lately. The width of the river at and for some little distance beyond the entrance is about two miles. The river is more remarkable for its depth than for its breadth. The impediment to its navigation for many hundreds of miles is caused by the strength of its current and its rapids. The water is clear and pure, of excellent quality, cool and agreeable to drink, without filtration.

The soil on both sides is evidently rich from the exuberance of the vegetation. The south bank is covered with a crop of long coarse grass and shrubs, grouped into dense thickets; while the north side produces bulrushes in the marshes, and belts and clumps of Douglas pine and other conifers on the elevated dry spots. An Englishman is astonished at seeing the pine family select such rich soils as it does here. It indulges the same taste on the north coast of California and elsewhere on the Pacific. This fact puzzled the hon. and learned members whose labours are given in the blue-book on the Hudson's Bay Company, if I mistake not. In British Columbia the pine takes the matter very indifferently. It spreads itself in one unbroken sheet from the bottom of the deepest valley to the top of the highest hill. Rich soil and poor, deep soil and thin, black vegetable mould and gray clay, seem to suit it equally well; and sometimes, as if to show its contempt of luxurious feeding, it flourishes in the clefts of rocks without any sort of soil that I could distinguish, nourished by moisture.

A few miles up the river narrows to a mile. The body of water is immense; the depth must be equal to that of the ocean. […] Side wheel boats can go up for 35 miles to Fort Langley. There, owing to the strength of the current and of the rapids a stern wheel boat is required. The stern wheel gets over the shoals better, too, because it displaces less water than the side wheels. As we ascend some 10 miles up, the country on both sides becomes clothed with trees, and the view is confined to the glades that pierce the profuse and tangled thickets. The current gets strong, too strong for sailing vessels, which could only warp up. On the coast, at or near the mouth of the river, and for many miles up, there is not a site eligible for a town. Except a solitary otter, which gave us a passing stare, we saw no signs of life for many miles. The absence of birds is remarkable. The scene is rich, soft and luxuriant, but very lonely.

Fifteen to twenty miles up the pines recede in long straggling belts, and give place to a foreground of alder, poplar, and sycamore, and the edges of the river's banks are feathered with willows and shrubs. The river continues to contract, about the width of the Thames at Greenwich, and the vegetation thickens and grows ranker until the banks become impenetrable walls of foliage, in places having the appearance of artificially trained rows as seen in the clipped avenues in England, the trees very tall and slender, and so lithe that they bend low to every passing breeze. The effect is very graceful. You can see the same sort of thing on the river San Juan in Nicaragua if you take that route when you pay us a visit. But I'm getting prosy and must hasten on with my narrative. Half and hour's steaming and we leave the narrows, the banks recede, and the river expands into a wide lake – the current disappears. The water seems to be reposing on its way down, and the surface is clear and placid as the face of a mirror. On emerging from this basin we open the highlands and come under the shadow of the mountains, which appear bolder and assume an aspect of greater grandeur than on the first view.

It is really difficult to say which gratifies the eye most on this beautiful river, the rich varying hues of the foliage on either side, which change so frequently as to dispel monotony, or the foreground of cerulean mountains clothed in their tall graceful pines. While feasting upon these beauties a picture of a different character presents itself – a fleet of 13 canoes (I was prosaic enough to count them as they flitted by), a boy and girl in each, fishing for salmon.

How skilfully these young creatures managed their frail, tiny barks! They rush them through the fiercest rapids, wind and coax them along the stony, devious belts in shore, and glide them over the broad currents with equal safety. Besides their skill, they display a grace in their management which is unattainable by civilized man. A turn of the Reach brings the village in view – a single parallel line of huts built of reeds and thatched with leaves, on the white sandy beach; a long line of canoes staked in single file in front, cunningly placed out of reach of the steamer's swell; a few of the patriarchs of the tribe, gentlemen who once were "braves," sunning themselves among their dogs, enjoying their *otium cum dignitate* after the fashion of the Youcloulyets; and the ladies grilling the salmon (flattened and boned) in a cleft stick stuck upright before the fire; - a perfect picture of savage life.

A little way beyond the Indian village the scenery presents a new phase. Pines, of a more commanding height than any yet seen, resume their place on the banks and run down to the verge of the water, their boughs bearing festoons of the tillandsia or Spanish moss, the first I have seen in this country. The effect of this elegant gossamer drapery trailing, as it does, among the trees, must be seen to be appreciated. I have seen hundreds of miles of it in California, but cannot find similitudes to describe it by.

Now for a little *practical* episode. We stop our boat alongside the brigantine Recovery, which is anchored in the middle of the river doing duty as a revenue cutter. We deliver to the Recovery something "for the comfort of the inner man;" and we pick up Dr. Wallace, the assistant-surgeon of the Satellite, to accompany Major Hawkins' military party, - a happy exchange for us. The Governor transacts some business. Our party gets three cheers that "make the welkin ring" from the Recovery's men, which we, of course, politely return; and we start in the dusk, which soon changes to darkness – most fortunately for you and your readers, for you are saved from further description, save and except a few particulars touching the Recovery, which will be brief.

The Recovery is not a man-of-war, but a private vessel, belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company. She has a revenue officer (a civilian) on board and a complement of 30 sailors and marines from the Satellite, in charge of the second-lieutenant of the latter ship, Mr. Roach, and two midshipmen. The force does the State some service in guarding the river against the ascent of unlicensed spirits to poison the poor Indians with, and in looking after other matters of a fiscal nature, - more particularly the suppression of smuggling from the American embryo towns which have sprung up in mushroom haste on Puget Sound and at Semiahmoo Bay, near Point Roberts, since the discovery of gold. Our kind neighbours boasted publicly that the "*city of Semiahmoo"* would acquire "a rapid development" from its facilities for carrying on a contraband trade with the new colony, which John Bull would be too sleepy-headed, good, easy [a] man, to put a stop to. Some, deeply read in *Vattel*, even doubted, or rather pretended to doubt, John's *right* to interfere. What! Stop a free and independent Yankee in the exercise of trading in what, where, and with whom he pleased, subject only to the impulses of his own sovereign will and pleasure! This doctrine was enunciated partly from natural obliquity of mind, partly from a spirit of bullying, and from what is vulgarly called "trying it on," and partly for the use and edification of Bunkum. It was initiated in Washington City, and travelled, *via Washington Territory,* to Semiahmoo, and other kindred places. But alas for human hopes and aspirations! One of the qualifications of Mr. Douglas is that he lived among our good cousins long before he became Governor; that for years he has had business transactions with them; and that he *knows* them, consequently. "He knows them like a book," said a politician, the other day, in the street to another man. "Like a *book!* Yes, like a small *library*," rejoined his interlocutor. "Lost money by them, too, at that." It is clear they can't come over the Governor. He'd sooner smother them with politeness. But to my tale. The well laid speculation in smuggling has been nipped in the bud. With all his blustering and ostentatious wearing of arms (always the sign of

a coward), the Yankee is, of all men, the easiest brought under the correction of the law.

There have been a few cases of attempted "running," but the whiz of a rifle bullet "over the bow" has always brought the gentleman to with wonderful alacrity.

There has not been a single case of collision. But without the little Recovery we should not have been allowed, I believe, to call the Fraser River our own.

SEPT. 1.

Passed last night at Fort Langley, a post of the Hudson's Bay Company. From the late debates in Parliament one can gather that the Company's beds in London have not been "beds of roses." I never tried such a bed, and cannot speak of its qualities, but I have used many a hard bed, and from experience, I can say that the Langley beds bear away the palm in this quality. Mine suggested a hint for Mr. Roebuck's benefit. Let him get a director as a scapegoat, to pass some night on one of their own beds out here, and all the sins of the Company will be expiated. The welcome was kind and hearty, and the hospitality generous, for which I am most grateful, but the bed rather primitive.

While the Governor is transacting a heavy budget of business I stroll about and look at the place.

The Fort is a stockade of strong pickets enclosing a quadrangle which contains the buildings for the transaction of business and for residences. Everything has been designed for use and nothing for ornament; the gentleman in charge, like all "servants," is well-educated, intelligent, very civil, obliging, and gentlemanly; no show, fuss, or ostentation. All the arrangements are with a view to business, and great order and regularity reigns throughout the establishment. One may be taken as a sample of all their establishments.

The soil at Langley is rich, and wherever it has been cleared of trees it has produced an abundant crop of grass – most excellent pasture, of which the good quality of the dairy produce gives ample testimony. The ground is actually matted with grass – so thick is it – and it is long and green even at this season, while that of Vancouver's Island is dried up. The climate is moist, and the atmosphere is at present quite grateful, warm and balmy. In summer the mosquitoes are very tormenting.

The Fort is surrounded by forest, chiefly the universal Douglas pine, some of which have attained gigantic proportions here. Fruit and vegetables are very abundant, and the apple trees are bending under the weight of their golden crop. This is by far the most eligible place for settlement I have yet seen on the continent. The Company have a farm four miles in the interior, on which horses and cattle thrive well, but not sheep – there is too much forest for them.

The view from the Fort is very fine. It embraces the river, which washes the base of the little plateau upon which the Fort stands; takes in an Indian village on the opposite side of the Fraser, the valley of the Keitsay watered by the Pitt River, a tributary of the Fraser, and a great clump of lofty mountains, being a portion of the coast range lying eastward at a distance of some 15 or 20 miles from Langley. The Keitsay valley, which runs from Fraser River at Langley to the mountains on the east, is a portion of a greater valley lying between the 49th parallel, the Gulf of

Georgia, and the coast range, and which is said to contain a tract of rich, flat bottom land, 100 square miles in extent, fit for cultivation. The Fraser River runs through it. Like the rest of the continent, it is unexplored. Its situation would indicate that the soil was alluvial. It seemed to me well suited to rice growing. Like the rest of the country, it is heavily timbered.

I had here some little opportunity of seeing the relation of the Indians to the Company. The fact is that every "fort" forms a small nucleus of civilization, around which the effect of the Company's treatment is quite apparent. The Indians in these localities have all made a step in advance of the more remotely placed savages. Here were young Indians employed as porters, coopers, boatmen, menials in the houses, all earning wages, paid chiefly in commodities; while some find employment as pilots. One of these piloted our boat into the entrance of the river. They are most efficient pilots. I was informed that some of the Indians were so intelligent as to have risen to the important position of interpreters. I could not test their accomplishments, but I did meet an Indian boy who spoke very fair English. Taken young, there is no doubt but that the Indian is susceptible of being reclaimed; but in order to civilize him he must be removed from the influences of savage life. Their natural intelligence and acuteness I had seen displayed on several occasions.

The solitude of Langley has been invaded and the Company's business engagements disturbed by the intrusion of the gold hunters, who at first were very saucy. The gentleman in charge complained of the Yankees having been very intrusive, impertinent, and lawless when they first came up the river in force, and when they fancied they were beyond control of the authorities. They invaded his cornfields, ate the green peas, stole the oats, tore down the fences for firewood, and misconducted themselves in other ways. How strange that the natural coarseness, the bad manners, and the vulgarity of this people will cling to them wherever they go! For my own part, I take this to be an illustration of the effect of bad Government upon national manners and morals. A stop must be put to these unseemly and brutal displays of their customs in this country. Our own self-respect calls for their repression. If these people don't know the practice of decency, they must be taught it; and if they don't choose to learn it, they must go back to their own country, where they can indulge their propensities. I, of course, allude to the "Hoosier" class – the great Yankee "unwashed," and do not include in my denunciation any Americans who deserves the epithet of gentleman.

In front of Fort Langley a narrow island, called Manson's Island, about two miles long, divides the river. The smaller branch is the one on which the Fort is built. It is the south channel. It has a depth of three fathoms in the middle, but along the shore it shoals to about seven feet. The tide raises the water from 18 inches to 2 feet.

The town of Langley consists of about a dozen tents, used for all the purposes of life – decency excepted. "Growler House" is a tent where brandy is sold on the sly under cover of permission to "furnish meals at all hours." "Our House" is in the same business. Other tents are occupied by wayfaring miners "loafing" away time, which, if well employed in the mines, would yield them a good return. The scene was strange enough, full of antithesis, but so little edifying, that I had better suppress it. This

canvass town is on the beach; but, as a new town is to be laid out under authority two miles lower down the river on a good site, I suppose this rapscallionry will "quit" soon.

Our steamer is now off up the river, and I must start. The day is sweltering hot, and the boat is even hotter than the day – a floating oven. It makes me perspire to look at her, and she is so crowded with passengers that there is no elbow room. The only place to stand in even is the wheel house. I hope the mosquitoes will behave themselves, for if they make free with one at such a disadvantage they will mar my enjoyment of the scenery.

A short distance beyond Fort Langley we passed through a group of seven islands of fanciful shapes – some triangular, and one the exact shape of a heart – covered with sycamores, their silvery leaves glittering in the sun as they fluttered to the lightest breath of air that stirred. The river here is expanded into a wide glittering lake and is rather sluggish, but a short distance beyond the islands the current begins to be felt, the steamer begins to labour and fails to keep up her speed. The captain gives the current at 5 knots an hour. At seven miles above Langley sounded and found 10 fathoms. This depth is found for 80 miles up from the mouth of the river. 10 to 15 miles from Langley the river assumes the form of a series of magnificent reaches, winding round the headlands of a succession of long strips of valleys and bottom land which run in lateral lines along the banks at intervals. Some of these valleys recede for miles, and run into the distant mountains. One would suppose their soil to be rich, judging from the luxuriant growth of maple and deciduous shrubs which succeed the pine forests, now left behind. For many miles we have a noble foreground of lofty mountains, from 2,000 to 3,000 feet in height, variously shaped – great round mounds, long serrated ridges, and snowy peaks. None of them bald, all covered with timber, the narrow strips of bottoms at their base growing the softer woods – maple, sycamores, alder, wild cherry, &c. – while the mountains themselves yielded no other trees than pines. The vegetation is much fresher here than on the Gulf of Georgia. No autumnal tints yet. The season is later than on the coast.

A few miles steaming, and the scene is considerably changed. Banks of clay succeed to the vegetable mould which produced the trees above mentioned; and we have a dense growth of cedars.

Twenty-three miles form Langley the Smess River empties into the Fraser on the south side. About 15 or 20 miles up the Smess there is a party of Sappers and Miners and others, under the charge of Captain Haig, R.E., encamped. This party belongs to the Boundary Commission, and is detached to verify the line of the 49th parallel, as ascertained by the American astronomers. Both parties (the American and English) agree in their work. The American party traced the parallel from Semiahmoo to the Smess Valley, and the English party verified the work at both ends. Captain Haig walked along the line, which had been delineated by notching the trees by the Americans, from Smess to Semiahmoo. The journey was terrible, from the denseness of the forest, and took him three days to perform, - the distance about 50 miles, I think, he said. He describes the country as a tangled thicket, all except Smess Valley, which is a rich open plain, covered with the tallest grass he ever saw, - a fact which some of our keen neighbours have not been slow to discover and to take

advantage of. An Americanized Swiss and a true live Yankee are squatted in it, feeding their worn-out mules. For the present they are quite welcome; better turn the grass to some account than let it rot. I believe the authorities think so, and do not entertain "a dog-in-the-manger" policy.

A little way beyond the Smess we come upon another cluster of islands covered with tall sycamores and spruces – which grow in thick belts as close as artificial hedges – in a reach of the river wide enough to justify the appellation of a small bay.

Five miles from the Smess the river Chilwaiuck (pronounced as if written "Chilwayack") falls into [the] Fraser, also on the south side. The river drains a large lake some 20 miles up the country. Both it and the Smess are at all seasons navigable by large canoes, and in the high stages of water in summer by the *batteaux* of the Hudson's Bay Company, which carry 30 to 40 tons.

At the mouth of the Chilwaiuck there is a fishing station of the Company, now deserted in consequence of the idleness of the Indians. They neither have caught sufficient salmon this season for their own winter supply, nor have they worked as heretofore for the Company.

From the mouth of the Smess the Smess plains extend back into the interior, and run along the river for some distance. They are spoken of as being extensive and having good soil. Likely enough, though I cannot speak with certainty, not having landed. They appeared buried in wood like the rest of the country. There is great diversity of opinion as to the quantity of good soil in the country available for settlement by farmers. I shall only speak positively upon this subject when I know the fact from my own observation.

The sunset this evening was the most glorious imaginable. None of our party has ever seen anything like it. As the sun withdrew behind the mountains they became enveloped in thin airy clouds of deep violet, the edges tinged with a rich rose colour. Presently the two colours united and overspread the whole series of mountains in a colour quite indescribable by so poor a hand at these matters as your correspondent.

We encamped for the night on a little ledge covered with reeds, on the bank of the Harrison River, another tributary of the Fraser. This river drains a series of lakes in the Lilooett country – an extensive district which lies to the north-east of the river, and which contains two vast chains of mountains – portions of the coast range running inland from the gulf of Georgia, and another spur of the same range called the Lilooett Spur. These two ranges run north-east from the coast to the Fraser River, leaving a great stretch of country between them which contains the lakes drained by the Harrison. The Harrison is a large river, and its water is remarkable for the deep blue of its colour – a striking contrast to that of the Fraser, which is very light – almost grayish. It falls into the Fraser on the north side, 45 miles from Langley.

It was amusing and instructive also to see the facility with which most of our passengers adapted themselves to circumstances. No sooner had the boat stopped her engine than a crowd of miners sprang on shore, each with his blanket, his frying-pan, and his little kit. While I was gaping about me and gazing at the scene these "old hands" had made themselves comfortable. In a few minutes fires had been lit and the

frying-pans brought into play to cook their bacon; coffee was preparing, and some of the fellows were actually asleep. Evidently old campaigners, these fellows! No strife and no noise.

The state of the gold bars[21] (September, 1858)

VICTORIA, VANCOUVER'S ISLAND, SEPT. 2

The Fraser River runs between two chains of mountains, known as the Fraser River range, for a distance of some 200 miles. These mountains terminate within some 20 miles of Langley. Towards their extremities they sink to something like 200 feet in height, but as the river is ascended they rise in elevation till some of them attain an altitude of 3,000 feet. We are now bringing the higher portions in sight as the morning mist clears off. To describe the effect as we run up in a winding course through these mountain gorges would require powers of the highest order. It would be a fitting task for your friend Mr. Russell. I shall not make the attempt, but shall content myself with a few plain jottings as I pass.

The mountains are clothed to their summits with pines, *como siempre*, as a Spaniard on board remarked as he threw himself on his back to look at them. Fine patches of park scenery on the banks are interspersed with umbrageous trees, huge things with broad green leaves, contrasting with tall slender aspens, growing in a rank grass as tall as ordinary shrubs. We pass a gigantic pile of drift wood thrown on a bank laid bare by the falling of the river. There was not an inch of bark on the whole pile. The trees were all bare and bleached white, and looked like a collection of old dried bones. The pile would supply London with fire wood for some time. Some of the trees were enormous, going to show the strength of the current when the river is full, and the inroads it makes yearly upon the alluvial banks.

We pass a valley studded with detached hills. It looks like a dried up lake which once had islands. Double rows of poplars of the kind called by the Americans Cotton wood, from the seed pods containing cotton. These rows have all the straightness and regularity of artificial training and clipping, and bear a close resemblance to an avenue which shades a walk at Lord Hopetoun's place near Edinburgh. This regularity of growth is frequently seen in this wilderness of forest. Another remarkable sight is the suddenness with which the character of the timber changes. Here you have poplars, by the side of them firs, then cedars, then alders, very large, and many other sorts of trees in quick succession. Perhaps the soil varies, but then in other places seven and eight different kinds of trees grow together.

The current gets stronger, reducing the boat's speed to 5 knots, and to get this rate out of her the steam is at high pressure. The heat is intolerable from the fires. It is one continued vapour bath for us, and we are smothered and nearly set on fire by the sparks from the funnel. My hat is burnt with round spots like a face marked with the smallpox. On shore the temperature must be delightful. We envy the gentle quivering of the leaves from a low wind just sufficient to set them in motion.

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[21] Fraser, D. (1858, December 1). BRITISH COLUMBIA. *The London Times*, p. 9.

Another mountain of bleached drift wood. A fleet of rowboats with 50 miners going up. An interchange of "chaff" between them and our passengers. Pass innumerable Indian encampments on the banks. This is the fishing season. The river swarms with salmon and sturgeon.

The plains of Smess terminate in a sharp wedge-like point which intrudes itself into the river, shutting off our view upwards. Some of the mountains begin to show scarps running down their sides, bare of trees for a wonder. Peaks of 3,000 feet, having great patches of snow in deep ridges near their tops. As we turn the angle of one of these we almost run upon an Indian village, built upon a low sand spit which runs into the river. The whole scene is in perfect keeping. The rudeness of the habitations, the squalor of the naked Indians – young, old, and middle-aged – the hungry dogs and a few other concomitants make a fine picture from nature. A few crooked sticks, a few ragged mats, and a few sprawling branches, of which the dried foliage (when fresh it gave little shade) is now crumbling in the sun, compose the "dwellings;" in comparison with which an eagle's nest would be a comfortable abode. Very picturesque but very desolate!

The river gets more rapid, the mountains come down closer to the water, and the scenery gets bolder and grander all the way up to Fort Hope, 65 miles from Langley.

I should have mentioned that the double range of mountains through the defiles of which the Fraser River runs are supposed to be the lower spurs of the Great Cascade Range which intersects the country from north to south, and which lie far to the westward of the Fraser River. The spurs, or, as we call them now, the Fraser River Mountains, have a general direction of north and south trenching eastwardly. Their direction of north and south makes it very difficult to traverse them in journeying from the Pacific to the Atlantic, which is a course of west to east, for these mountains cannot be crossed owing to their steepness and ruggedness. Many of them are perpendicular walls. This is the great difficulty of making a road from this country to the eastern side of the Rocky Mountains. The Hudson's Bay Company opened their communications by following the courses of the rivers which break through the chain; but this route involves rowing, walking, and riding, is very tedious and very expensive, demanding the maintenance of water craft, the repair of roads, and causing the loss of horses. From what I have seen I shall certainly not take shares in the railroad I heard talked of from Lake Superior to the shores of the Pacific.

I have detained you so long from the principal subject of this letter – namely, an account of the gold mines, by my having been seduced by the beauty of the river which leads to them, that I must now hasten to visit the diggers. I will merely add the following memorandum on the character of the Fraser River, obligingly given to me by Mr. Bauerman, the geologist, whose name I mentioned at the commencement:-

"Metamorphic slaty rocks, principally gneiss and mica slate, with intrusive granite and syenite dykes. As a rule mica is rather scarce. The felspar is common potash felspar, usually tolerably compact and not much weathered."

Opinions and counter opinions have been advanced on this coast, from California to Vancouver, upon the subjects of the richness and poverty of the Fraser

River gold mines, until the subject has become a *sore one* with Newspaper editors and with private combatants.

Since the time when Columbus illustrated his argument by standing the egg on end there has not been so much incredulity displayed in the world – in the world of the west and north-west coast of the Pacific at any rate; and I doubt not the question has travelled to Europe, and that this communication will find the Old World puzzled and scratching its head. I do not intend to enter the lists in this tournament. I will, instead, copy my jottings as I took them down from the miners themselves, and entered them in their presence, standing by them at their work.

All the mining locations on the river are called "bars" by the miners. This is a misnomer. The mining is carried on on sandy and gravelly spits, left dry by the falling of the river. These spits run parallel with the stream, and sometimes run into it, but never entirely across the river, which is too deep ever to get dry.

SEPT. 9

Visited *Murderer's Bar,* three to four miles below Fort Hope. Most of the miners Cornish men, from California. This bar is a mile long. Width unequal. Gets wider as the river falls. Twenty log cabins erected. This looks well. Log cabins put up only in rich diggings. 125 miners. Gave their average earnings at one ounce a-day to the couple of hands. An ounce of gold is worth at the Bank of England 3*l.* 17s. 2d., or some such fraction. Here the miners get $16 an ounce for their gold. On the upper edge of the bar (I shall call the diggings all "*bars*," to prevent confusion) five miners were making no more than $3, $3½, and $5 a-day each, and one man complained that he made only "six bits" (equal to 3s. sterling). The only mode of "washing" here is with the "rocker," an inefficient, laborious, and slow implement. A great portion of the gold is lost, being very fine, and the process of washing too rude to retain it. All the gold is subjected to quicksilver to amalgamate it. It cannot be separated without – not being sufficiently coarse to "clean." The space allotted to each miner is 25 feet in width, running from the highwater mark down into the river as far as he chooses to go. The miners are all satisfied with this arrangement, and all are quite ready to pay a license to Her Gracious Majesty of 1*l.* a-month. At this bar, which the Governor christened "Cornish Bar," in lieu of its first ominous name, the miners merely washed surface soil to a depth in most places of 6 or 7 inches. In a few spots, where the earth has been penetrated to a depth of 2, 3, and 7 feet, gold is found as abundant as in the surface dirt. The river falls 30 feet in the season; its lowest stage is in late autumn and early winter, when the early frosts congeal the snow on the mountains. When this bar and the peninsula which adjoins it come to be properly worked with "sluices," for which there is water accessible close by, enormous yields will be produced. This is the opinion of the miners. The stratum in which the gold is found is called the "pay streak." I observed this stratum running into the shore at a depth under the sand bank of two feet, and asked if they had "prospected" this "pay streak." Yes, they found it auriferous some yards inland. It is just as likely to be auriferous for miles. The miners all intend to winter on this bar in their log cabins. Provisions are cheap and abundant. They can buy plenty of salmon and potatoes from the Indians. The cost of living is $1 a-day to each man.

My memorandum of my visits to the other bars are short. The above is a little explanatory.

MONDAY, SEPT. 12.

Left Fort Hope, with the Governor and his party, military and civil, on our way up the river, intending to visit the different mining bars on the route. Took large *bâteaux*, which answered our purpose admirably.

The first bar above Fort Hope, three miles, Mosquito Bar, a name it does not deserve. – If there are mosquitoes on the river, they are very well-bred, for they never intruded their company on us. This bar [is] poor; $1, $1½, and $4 a-day to each miner; 25 men; growled horribly. Two of their number made $40 a-piece per week at first, but these days are gone. Very doleful lot this. There are hills inland a little way, upon which the miners "prospected" at a height of 100 feet, and found gold – the "colour," as they call the evidence of a successful trial. We found gold in the "tailings," or rejected dirt, which these miners had thrown away. Their loss is considerable. Next bar is called, or rather was called, "54 deg. 40." You know[,] the allusion to the Yankee's claim to this line before we were weak enough to give him up Oregon and Washington territory. The impudent assumption of this name was too much for Major Hawkins. We made a joke of it, but the patriotism of the party was ardent enough to pull the placard down and throw it in the river. This bar only just opened. Lots of miners, but could give no "returns." Met one of my old tenants from San Francisco here. He couldn't tell what he was doing. Very likely not. I never could tell what he did in San Francisco; "gammoned the flats," I suspect.

Union Bar extends about half a mile on the same spit as the last two. 150 miners, $2 to $3 a-day to the man. They told us our friends on Mosquito Bar had humbugged us, that they were making $5 to $6 a-day to the man. The miners of Union Bar have a military turn. They built a stockade of palisades flanked with bastions, for "protection," they said. The "protection" turned out to be protection from the expected cold winds of winter. They named the stockade "Fort Union." Their neighbours, who were content with log huts, irreverently called it a "corral," which means a cattle pen. It will accommodate 100 men, and the miners erected it in their spare time, while waiting for the fall of the river to expose their bar. Sergeant Anderson, of the Engineers, a Crimean hero, was vastly amused at the "Fort." All the miners intended to winter here – a sure sign that they were doing well. The Governor is engaged endeavouring to trace the murders committed on the river. The information received goes to implicate white men. Indians complain that the whites abuse them sadly, take their s——ws away, shoot their children, and take their salmon by force. Some of the "whites" are sad dogs.

Canada Bar. – Abandoned this morning for better diggings higher up. A vast deal of work had been done here, as testified by the state of the ground. Three or four miners, just arrived, are going to try their luck. Two more are squatted on the ground in a happy state of idleness, "thinking what next to do." All this is on the right bank. On the opposite bank a few huts and tents pitched and several miners at work, whom we did not visit. The current fierce, rolling down in angry ridges of troubled water and foam. Width of river here 300 yards, about 4½ miles beyond Fort Hope.

We proceeded up, struggling hard against the current, the speed of which our boatmen guessed at 5 miles an hour. Passed two camps of 25 miners on left bank; "Doing pretty well" was the answer to our hail. *Santa Clara Bar*. – 250 miners. Building huts for winter. Several straggling miners at the lower end of the bar acknowledged to $6 each on an average. Told us that higher up a man's earnings were $35. The *rich* places are always either "down" or "up," never where you are at the moment. Got into the thick of the miners and questioned them individually. 1st gang, $6 a-day to the man. 2d gang, $8. 3d gang, only 12 yards off, $3. 4th gang, $5, but last week made $53 to the hand for the week. 5th gang; here's their answer *verbatim*, "Last Friday we took out $36 to the couple of hands," one "filling" and the other man "rocking." "Saturday, $20 to the couple of hands. We are now 'cleaning up,' and it looks as good." 6th gang, digging out the "pay streak," 8 feet below a sandbank, well back from the water; averaged their earnings for the last three weeks at $5 a-day to each man; three compose this gang. Their gold very fine, and losing a good deal of it. 7th gang, also 8 to 9 feet down, "reckoning the time lost in excavating the bank," returned their earnings at $3 a-day to the man. The return is always per day per man when I don't state it otherwise. 8th gang, if one man can be called a gang, which I suppose he cannot be, out of Ireland; "first day I have worked here; haven't cleaned up yet." Paid $75 to another miner for his claim. 9th gang, $4; "except to do better, claim getting richer. Gold so fine, lose half of it." They certainly lost a great deal, for we could trace gold, visible to the naked eye, in the "tailings." 10th gang, $16 a-day – sometimes more, sometimes less - $16 the average. Last Saturday two men made $11 each. One of the miners "cleaned up," in our presence, $10-worth of amalgam for his half-day's work.

The work is not heavy; any ordinary man can do it. The time at work is generally 10 hours. Every man works much or little, according to the dictates of his own sweet will. This independence is one of the chief charms of the miner's life. Independence and hope make up the sum of his happiness. The cost of living is $1 a-day. To wash 250 buckets of "dirt" is a short day's work. They "guessed" their amalgam worth $21 to $22. From this place 16 men [have] gone home. Left the other day. "Made anything?" "Guess so." A great many go back to California on making a little money. They have ties there[,] no doubt. Gang No. 11. – "Sometimes one, sometimes the other." The spokesman of this jolly gang was jocose. Took the change out of him in his own coin. "What do you call one?" "Four dollars," he replied. "What do you call 'the other'?" "Half an ounce." They are droll fellows, some of those miners. I have travelled so much in the mines of California, that I know them as my friend below said the Governor knew the Americans, "like a small library." Gang 13 – "Fair wages." "What do you call fair wages?" "$8 a-day to the head last week." Theirs were easy diggings, a low bank, and the surface-gravel on the shore. Santa Clara Bar dovetails here with another "location" not named. 14th gang, of seven men, working together; they made $6 a-day last week. To-day they "reckon" on $8, or "perhaps $60 for the lot." 15th gang – "Diggings spotted." Asked me to "guess" their earnings. Guessed $8 to $9 a-day. "Yes, you've about hit it." 16th gang, of two men – "Like the country first rate." They were digging only 7 or 8 inches under the surface; in fact,

the top shingle. Averaged an ounce a man for five weeks. "Last week made $550 70c. exactly," having had eight extra men employed. The expenses for the week were $175. Read off those figures from a book. Wages $3 a-day and board, $4 when the man boards himself. Charge for board is $1 a-day. And this ends Santa Clara Bar, and its nameless adjunct. The Deputy Gold Commissioner says the miners have all understated their earnings. Very likely. Seeing me in company with the Governor and a suite, although I generally spoke to them out of hearing, they thought I was after no good. They smelt taxation in the air, I dare say. The Commissioner gives the average earnings on this bar, which is a rich one, at $17 a-day to the man. He has known $25 a-day to be made, and he has been told of $75 and $100 a-day to the rocker having been made last week. I wish they would all make $100 each, poor fellows. Their civility should enlist my good values.

American Bar. – A gang of two men made 2[oz.? - illegible] a-day to the rocker last week. To-day they had another man, and made $100. I saw the gold. One of them, an old California miner, expects, when he digs down to the "bed rock," that "a foot of it will be worth more an acre of this surface stuff." "Believes" in richness of the country – equal to any yet discovered. Finds "gold everywhere, more or less, and on the river pretty regular." A lot of Chinese at work here on hire. Wages, $3 a-day, and find themselves in tools and food.

The next gang made $10 a-day each, sometimes more. The third and last gang that I'll torture to-night, consisting of two masons, who abandoned the trowel and plummet for the shovel and rocker, are making $20 a-day each. "For two months we made only *grub*." They are now in clover, and I sincerely wish they may reap a good crop.

A crowd of miners encamped for the night on their way up. They are winging their way "up" in flocks. They have very vague ideas of their destination. With them it is all "up." They will go "up" as far as they can paddle, or until they smash their canoes in their awkwardness in the rapids of the gorges above Fort Yale. Then it will be all "down" with some of them, poor fellows. Some of them will never get "up" until they learn to manage their canoes better.

A lovely little dell pours a meandering stream of limpid water into the river through the middle of American Bar. The scene is purely English – so sylvan, so serene; lofty umbrageous trees, bearing a rich dark foliage, growing on gently sloping banks covered with grass, lilies and wild berries – the "salal" of the Indians. In the uncertain twilight the resemblance to familiar spots at home is almost startling. But while I'm dreaming on the bank the bâteaux are gone. Here comes one labouring along, luckily. The other two have gone on with the soldiers to select a camping place. What splendid boatmen these half-breeds and Indians are! They take this great heavy bateau across a wide expanse of fierce rapids and boiling whirlpools and curling eddies that is quite awful to look at with unerring skill. And I'm very glad they do it with as much rapidity as skill, for I am ready for my own bed of cedar branches. Digging may be hard work, but I'm certain that pumping diggers all day on foot is equally fatiguing.

SEPT. 12

Slept last night on a sandbank. If the Emperor of the French slept as soundly as I did, he is a happier man than his subjects on Frazer's [sic.] river believe him to be. Awoke at dawn by the harsh grating sound of the miners' rockers. As the Governor determined to pay an early visit to some of the mining localities which we left behind us last night, we slipped away from the camp (leaving the sodgers, [sic.] and other "men of the sword" asleep) with the gold commissioner, and shot down the river for two miles in an Indian canoe to Puget Sound Bar, which is one mile and three quarters long; about 350 men. The first gang I sought information of consisted of three men. Yesterday they "cleaned out" 1oz. a-piece. Unless their diggings continue to yield an ounce of gold to the man per day they will go "up." The 2d gang, $4 to $10 a-day; 3d gang, $4, $5, and $6 a-man; 4th gang, an Irishman, the sole representative at present, worked yesterday by himself, "rocking and filling;" weighed the day's earnings in our presence, $17 in gold. He had an accumulation of 8oz., worth $128. The 5th gang of 11 men, a Frenchman the spokesman, $6 a-man; all French. They complain that their American neighbours "speculate" in mining claims to the prejudice of the mining body. This is one of the budget of grievances preparing for the Governor's broad shoulders. 5th gang working in a clay bed mixed with stones – the first clay diggings I have seen – result, 10c. to the bucket, value about $20 a-day to the "rocker" for two men. 6th. – As many men as served seven rockers reported themselves "satisfied." 7th to 15th gangs. – Lowest and highest amounts of the returns of all, $4 and 1 oz. a-day. Next gang employs Chinamen on hire, each 2 oz. a-day and 4 oz. to the rocker. The following were their own remarks on their earnings and prospects:- "The 2 oz. a-day we think *nothing*. The 4 oz. 'strikes' we oftener than not make in a day; but we worked along for weeks at $1 a-day to the hand before we struck rich diggings." In the gang following the last, I was recognized by a Mr. Robert Lansden, an old California miner, an intelligent and reliable man. He makes half an ounce a-day. He makes the average on the bar, good and bad together, at $7 a-day to the man. In no part of California can gold be earned with so little labour as here, where it is found in the very surface dirt. Intends to winter here. 18th gang. – A company of four, at work on the margin of the river, $10 a-man. One of this company gave me the average yield of the bar at $8 per man per day. 19th gang. – Two men; made $14 for the two yesterday. From the "washing" of 300 buckets a-day they make $20 generally. 20th gang. – Very rich claim, $25 to the hand. Putting up water-wheels to lift the water from the river for "sluicing." There are some very quiet, intelligent, orderly men, chiefly Americans, on this bar. They are putting up winter quarters and preparing a place for the performance of public worship. Here the shore of the river is strewn with scattered quartz fragments. There are probably quartz ledges in the mountains in[-]shore. Adjoining is Victoria Bar, loyally named by a Scotchman in honour of his Queen. Poor John Scott has not been rewarded as his loyalty merited. He is evidently not in favour with the fickle goddess, for he makes only $2, while his neighbour makes $20 a-day. This inequality of fortune is very frequent. 3d and 4th gangs. – "Good wages, and a little more;" "over an ounce a-day to the rocker." The rocker takes two men, one to fill and fetch, and one to rock; sometimes more, one or two to pick and shovel, one to carry, &c. 5th gang. - $3, $5, $7 and $8 a-man. 6th. –

Matthew Lynch alone. His highest day's earnings were 2½ ounces. He can "wash out" 250 buckets a-day. He values the bucket at 6c., which would make $15 a-day. 7th to 10th. – Three gangs of several miners at work in the middle of the bar, on a point of the spit which just well out into the river. All on this point make six ounces of "amalgam" a-man per day, which they value after retorting as worth three ounces of gold. This is $48 a man a-day. Enormous earnings – over 9*l.* sterling a-day for one man's work. This is their own report, however. 11th gang. – Lowest earnings $2, highest $7 a-day; another instance of the inequality of the division of the good things of this life. Met a man here who reminded the sub-gold commissioner of the luck of a miner on the American Bar below - $158 in 2½ days. The commissioner corroborated the fact. He weighed the gold in a case of dispute submitted to him. Miners agree that this bar is improving. They are nearly all British, from California. Great boulders cover the upper portion of the bar – gold found round their bases, and at a depth of 20 feet on the shore. Observed that the British miner does not wear a revolver at his work, while the American always does. All intend to winter here, except John Scott, the discoverer, who "did'na ken." I wish I could improve his position, but beyond a modicum of cheat sympathy I had nothing in my power.

All this talking and joking and walking in the fresh morning prepare the "inner man" for other exercise, so we must fight our way back against the current and cross the river to our quarters. When we get back we find the officers as spruce as officers should be, and that the camp had already breakfasted, the tents been struck and packed, and all ready for a start. We didn't detain the party long. A hasty breakfast *al fresco*, under a wide-spreading alder, and we jump in, to be rowed, poled, and towed against this terrible current for a few miles to the next "bar" we are to stop at. As we proceeded up we passed a long line of miners at work on the left bank, considered far inferior to the right bank, which latter was the scene of all my investigations. The water-sets and the eddies curl and work towards the right bank for some 12 miles from Fort Hope upwards, which the men wise in riverain mining assert to have drawn the greater quantity of gold to this bank. We occasionally hailed the miners on the left, "the unlucky," bank. They were a forlorn lot. Their responses were lugubrious, beginning with "nothing," "poor," "$3 a-day," "grub diggings," which the initiated interpret to mean just enough to pay for food; "a few bits," " a cent to the pan," "enough to swear by," "$1," "$2," and the like. We passed a good deal of ground yet unbroken on the right, the "lucky" side of the river, which will no doubt be found as rich as any yet worked.

My object in going into this tedious detail is to lay the present state of the gold question fairly before the world. I had no other means of doing so than by applying to the miners themselves for information. You have here their answers so far, and every reader must judge of their value for himself. I am certain that some of these answers are correct, and I believe that others of them understate the miners' earnings. Many miners are disappointed, and are leaving the country "in disgust," as they say. The steamer from San Francisco is expected to arrive here every hour, and as she will not remain here over an hour or two I must close this letter, and defer the completion of my account of the mines and the miners till the next mail. In my next letter I will

have some things to say upon the agricultural prospects of this new colony, and upon matters generally affecting it.

The immigration from California having ceased, few steamers come here now; and this letter will not leave San Francisco till the 20th inst.

The great bulk of the Californian miners have left this country, but many remain for the winter – probably 4,000 to 5,000 miners.

It is possible another opportunity may soon occur by which I can send another letter to San Francisco, to be in time to go forward with this one on the 20th from that place.

The mail steamer just in, October the 11th, [sic.] brings the news of a peace having been concluded between the Americans and the Indians of Oregon, with whom they had been fighting for some months. This is a very important news for this colony, for the Indians of Fraser river, and the Conteau country getting very unsettled in consequence of the war; and the old settlers, who understand their character and know the bad effects of a neighbouring Indian war, are much gratified at hearing of the peace. The American forces intercepted the horses of the Indians and shot a great herd of them, - some accounts say 500, others 1,200, which so crippled the resources of the savages that they could no longer resist. About 400 Indians were slain and all the chiefs of note are said to have been shot. This information I had from an American now here on his way back, with General Clark, the Commander of the Forces, and his staff, &c., to San Francisco.

Her Majesty's steamer Satellite, Captain Prevost, and the Plumper, surveying vessels, Captain Richards, are both in Esquimalt Harbour, near Victoria. The Plumper came in only a few days ago from a surveying expedition on the east and north-east end of Vancouver's Island, and she in all probability goes to San Francisco to be docked.

From letters just received we learn that Admiral Baynes may soon be expected here.

Perfect quiet and order prevail throughout this colony and British Columbia. But still we shall be most happy to receive the contingent of troops which we learn the Government has been so considerate as to have despatched. "Prevention is better than cure." With the advent of a fresh stream of immigration in spring their presence may be desirable.

Barracks are being erected at Esquimalt, the present station of the corps of Engineers engaged on the Boundary Commission, which I have no doubt will be ready for the reception of any troops now on the way by the time they get here.

A silver mine has been discovered within the last few days, on Fraser's River, about nine miles below Fort Langley. When the samples from it shall have been analyzed, I shall state the value of the ore.

Miners continue to return to California. About 500 left within the last few days, and about 300 go down by the mail steamer which leaves to-morrow morning. They seem to dread the severity of the coming winter – a dread which the old settlers here laugh at.

We are much indebted to the Pacific Mail Company, of San Francisco, for sending us steamers, for if they did not we should not have had mail communication regularly in the absence of British shipping. As it is, we are promised a steamer for every mail that enters and leaves San Francisco.

"I resume my report on the mining"[22] (October, 1858)

VICTORIA, VANCOUVER'S ISLAND, OCT. 26.

I resume my report of the mining on Fraser River where I left off in my last letter, dated the 6th-11th of the present month[23]. In that letter I endeavoured to carry your readers up from Fort Hope to Victoria Bar on the 13th of September. Starting upwards from Victoria Bar, we pass an Island named in Indian, "Sctlaheness." The island is covered at both ends with miners. Next comes Texas Bar, on the same side – the right sid e – of the river, which we did not visit till our return. From this bar the river makes a reach of 2½ miles to Emory's Bar. Opposite to the above island with the unpronounceable name we guessed the width of the stream to be 250 yards – great depth and strong current, seven knots an hour. A great deal of mining has been done at the upper end of Texas Bar, but now most of the miners have gone higher up the river. The cry is, "Up." Higher, and higher still the nervous, unsettled miner trudges, in the hope of finding the real "Dorado," the source of all the "float gold" which enriches the lower banks. That many are disappointed you may well conclude; but, then, why should not the miner go "up?" Is he not a free agent who knows no master, whose best employed time is spent grubbing in slush for "dross" and "filthy lucre;" and is not "push on," "keep moving," the motto of humanity in the present age?

There is not much mining being done in the reach from Texas Bar to Emory's; only one small camp on the right side. The banks are very steep here – sheer, and of sand, not a favourite "location" with the miner; he selects a gravelly bank and sloping beach.

Emory's Bar. – A great deal of work has been done, and much active mining is now going on here. Our first meeting was with a gang of miners dining on fried bacon and potatoes cooked *à la Maitre d'Hôtel*, eating out of the frying-pan in which the edibles were prepared, set upon the stump of a tree. Many log huts and shingle cabins were being put up for winter. The miners were a jolly lot. Little mixtures of "chaff" and drunkenness are evidences of success. Here is the first case we have met with – an old rascal from Australia in that state of brandy and water known as "mellow." The water of a running stream has been diverted into a canal two miles long cut by the miners, and supplies two long sluices for "washing" – a great labour-saving invention, which supplants the rocker. Five more sluices are going up, to run the bank to the river; and waterwheels – undershot – are being rigged, to raise the water from the river to sluice with where the canal does not "serve." Great things are expected from this bar; but its brilliant prospects cannot restrain the restless. "Many miners

[22] Fraser, D. (1858, December 24). British Columbia. *The London Times*, p. 7.
[23] The last published letter is the one of December 1, and matches the subject matter described.

left this bar for up the river. Got capsized, a lot of them, and lost their tools and provisions." Such slight mishaps don't stop the upward exodus. "12 left to-day." Now, for the "results." 1st Gang. – "Moderate wages" – a favourite answer when the miner wishes to be enigmatical. "Put moderate wages into American currency" brought forth the explanation of "$8 to $10 a-man a-day. That's what I call moderate wages for an experienced California miner who comes up here." The true Yankee pretends to think that he does the country a *great favour* to "come up here," and carry off as much of its treasure as he can bag. He's quite welcome to the gold, but as to the *compliment* involved in his visit it is not very clear.

There is a sandbank here, well back from the river; 10 to 15 feet below the surface of which there is a gravel "pay streak," three and four feet thick. This superincumbent sand is to be washed down into the river during winter, so as to lay bear the gravelly bed which contains the gold. The whole shore, exposed down to the edge of the water, is auriferous from the surface. It has been "washed" to a depth of from 6 inches to 7 feet. 2d Gang whose earnings I inquired about – four men to a sluice-head. – Sometimes three ounces, sometimes an ounce a-man per day. 3d Gang. – 6c. to the bucket; can wash 400 in a day; two men in the gang. "This will make your earnings $24 for the two of you." "Yes, we *have* made $30 per day to the rocker."

I asked the miners if they had any notion or theory upon the extent of the gravelly stratum, or "pay streak," which underlies the sandbank. They said, "It may extend for miles, or underlay the whole country – who knows?" Met here a miner who had "prospected" for gold four miles inland, on an elevated bench, 200 feet high, on the opposite (left) side of the river, and found gold, "the colour," as they call the result of a "prospect." 4th Gang – of three men at work in one small hole – a very lucky hole, too – as their statistics verified. – This ground has already been "worked" by these men. They first "washed" the surface, or "top dirt," about 6 inches to 9 inches deep. From this they got ½oz. each man per day. The ground was 25 feet wide by about 40 feet long, as well as I could guess it. They then "prospected" for deeper diggings, and struck the "hole," where they found 35c. to the pan. Here was a real mine, which would yield $140 a-day, supposing they could wash 400 buckets a-day; an easy task, as it happens, for the water is convenient. Here are their own returns:- The first day they got 10 ounces of amalgam, and left a lot of stuff over. Next day they washed out this "balance," and it produced $20 of gold-dust. "Amalgam and gold worth close upon $130." As to the interval of their time between the opening of the hole and the present time, they did "very well," according to the other; and had "no reason to find fault with the country," according to the third. When I was with them they retorted a portion of the amalgam of this day's work - $6 40c. in value of gold, at $16 per ounce; and I made them weigh the rest of the lump of amalgam, 11 ounces. They expect soon to make double the amount yet earned. They over-value their gold. It is not worth $16, but from $15 to $15½, and when a miner comes to Victoria "hard up," he is often obliged to take $14 50c. for "quicksilver" – *i. e.*, amalgamated gold.

Several of the miners gave me the average earnings of the bar as one ounce of gold a-day to the man, and that frequently the rocker washes $100 a-day to two men.

As we get up the river I find the "yields" of gold greater. General mining opinion corroborates this fact, which accounts for the flight upwards – 250 men on the bar.

Here a deputation of miners wait upon the Governor to get his exposition of mining law. The opening of the case was quiet enough, drawled out in measured terms with a Yankee twang of great power; but the statement of facts of the first speaker was "demurred" to by a defendant in the outer ring of the circle. The demurrer was taken up by a third man before it could be discussed. A fourth and a fifth came into the arena, and they all set to tooth and nail. They certainly did tear the argument to rags with a will. The hubbub brought up other miners, until the judge of this curious court leet [sic.] was surrounded by a crows which one of themselves called "the rummest picture!" Such assertions, denials, arguments, explanations, and replications were never heard before. One quoted Californian laws, another Australian, and a third "the law of all creation." And as they all spoke at once it seemed as if it would puzzle an Eldon to untie the gordian knot. The Governor endured it all like a stoic. He seemed to think the best way to get hold of the end of the skein was to let the fellows run down – expend themselves in talk. I was in hopes that the heat of the day would hasten this desirable consummation; but the miners, being half-naked, suffered nothing from the sun. I could barely endure the heat of the sand, but they had the advantage of me, for many of them stood in water. At length one of the disseizors generously offered to "cave in" if the Governor "would say the word." This fellow was a reckless gray-headed old blade who had mined in all the mining districts of California, gone to Australia, made lots of money there and spent it, returned to his first love, but got out of luck, and came to Fraser River, where he was making his "pile," to be squandered as soon as accumulated. Violent as this hurly-burly seemed, the discussion was carried on with good feeling, with much reason, and in excellent temper.

The point in dispute was simple enough: how far back from the water's edge can a miner work his river claim! Decided – that he can work back on the shore to high water mark, and that beyond high water mark (inland from the bank) comes under the division of mining laws known as "dry diggings" – a decision which all acquiesced in, and sent the miners away in good humour. The old Australian's reason for acquiescing in it was of the oddest. He said he liked "a Governor who was *down upon sour flour-sellers*."

Next above Emory's bar we come upon a party of Frenchmen who made $2 a-day yesterday, and expect to make $5 to-day to the man. Immediately adjoining a party of 11 Americans and Irish, only five days at work, $4 a-day. Grumbled terribly, but full of hope of doing better as the river falls.

Next scene is an Indian fishing village, redolent of drying salmon, of which vast numbers hang from every stick in the village. Legions of wasps. Went into a hut. Couldn't hear a word owing to the buzzing of the wasps. Couldn't sit from filth, nor stand from suspended fish, but moved out pretty quickly on being seized round the ankles by a strong detachment of fleas. Indian wigwams are to be looked at, not entered. A village orator appeals to the Governor for relief against the miners, who are intruding upon the Indian domain. The poor creatures! They were very modest in

their demand. They only asked for a small spot to draw up their canoes, and to dry their fish upon, to be exempted from mining. Their request was granted by the Governor, and the boundaries marked by the sub-commissioner.

Just beyond the village a party were "prospecting" in a cairn of big stones; result, $1 to $3 a-day, and so unsatisfactory that they intended to "move up." The gold hereabouts is mixed with garnets.

Half-a-mile above Emory's is Trinity Bar; 24 men, "making grub only." Beyond this there is a long spit of ground which has been worked and abandoned. Found two men lately arrived "prospecting" the worked-out ground at a result of less than $2 a-day to each of them. For a mile further up several straggling miners at work. They answered to our hails as to their earnings, "pretty fair," "very low," "middling," "first-rate," "grub," the latter meaning just enough to live upon. Since we started met only one man who complained of bad health. To-day a miner said he had a "bad head," and asked for the army doctor.

On the left bank of the river between Emory's and Ohio Bar there is a long string of miners at work, whom we do not visit, as we must keep the right side, owing to the current. The miners number several hundreds, and are all busy, most of them in the bank, which they are burrowing into a great many tunnels, following the "lead" or "pay dirt" inland. At Ohio Bar the miners reported $4 a-day as their average earnings daily to the man.

The miners very generally expressed their hopes that the party of Marines and Engineers which accompanies the Governor on his visit to the mines are to be "located permanently" for the preservation of order in the mining country. The soldiers keep most of the time in the bâteaux while we are yarning with the miners, but they sometimes come on shore and mix with them. The soldier has no great fancy for the life of a digger. Some sailors and two engineers, I believe, ran away from Esquimalt some time ago to the American territory on the opposite coast. They have sent word to their officers that if they will be forgiven they will return. They have become quite penitent, and say the Yankee crimps deceived them. The officers returned the very proper answer, that if they returned they would be tried by court-martial.

I would here remark that the miners, as a body, are quite willing to pay the license fee of 1/. a month. The expenses peculiar to a mining country – the making of roads, building of bridges, surveying of new lines of communication, exploring, the ordinary administration of justice, extra peace officers for the miner's own protection where his earnings are so much exposed in tents and insecure huts, - all require a considerable outlay; and miners have sense enough to see that a tax of some kind must be raised to defray all these expenses; and that they ought to contribute a larger portion of such tax than the residents of Victoria, the only other community upon which the screw could be put. The invariable remark was "Give us protection, and we'll pay the license willingly."

We have not yet seen any prairie or open land upon the river. The vegetation is rank and thick. Between the full grown trees there is always an undergrowth of young pines or of deciduous plants, and in most places so thick that I cannot thrust my arm through the plantation. I never saw so thick a crop of trees or of anything

else. The ground is literally *covered* with growing trees. How so many derive sustenance from a soil which looks rather poor, a yellowish clay mixed with gravel, is a marvel. A little way above Emory's Bar, where the mountain range recedes, there is a plateau rather open, - that is less thickly overgrown than the rest of the country; this strip might be cultivated, but such desirable spots for tillage are very few, - a fact much to be regretted, for the labour of clearing the forest is so severe and so tedious that few farmers will attempt it.

All the mining locations which I visited, and of which I have given you such details as I collected, to enable your readers to judge of their present value and future prospects, between Fort Hope and Hill's Bar are on the right side of the river (*i.e.*, the right hand side, looking down stream, as taken by geographers, but the left side going up.) The gravelly spits exposed and called in mining parlance "bars" are on the first-mentioned side. The banks of the other (the left) side are more sheer and the river flows close to them, generally, leaving few spots on the shore dry. The current being thrown on this side, navigators avoid it in ascending. The current can be shot, but it is hard work to pull against it. Small canoes get into smooth water between the currents and the bank, and can thread their way where our large bâteaux cannot venture. For perhaps eight miles of the way there is a string of miners at work, in various places on this side also, but far fewer than on the right side. The nature of the ground has induced a different kind of mining. There being but few "bars" to wash, the bank has been penetrated and the gravelly bed extracted to be washed in the river, and in two places streams of inland water have been turned and led to the diggings by the miners to "sluice-wash" with. This side is considered much poorer in gold than the opposite, but I should think that 800 miners are at work on the eight miles of it below Hill's Bar, and they were all engaged most industriously. Certainly there are fewer "loafers" – that is, idlers, on the poor side than I found on the "lucky' one. Perhaps poverty begets industry here, as it has done in many of the countries of the Old World.

The next bar we come to in our progress upwards is Hill's Bar, to which we only pay a flying visit. A young fellow, of such solid proportions as plainly betokened his nationality, and who, I am sorry to say, was in a very patriotic state of brandy and water, was waiting on shore to be "the first Englishman to receive the Governor," a duty which he performed with more warmth than dignity. So as not to monopolize the honour of the reception, he introduced a boozy friend in a fustian jacket, as "a Sebastapol man, who had served *five years* in the Crimean war!" It was distressing to hear this scapegrace mention his father, a man of respectable position in London.

Before I had time to look about me the sons of Mars had crossed the "Bar," and were steadily making for a point on the edge of the forest, whither they were attracted by the sight of a petticoat – the first seen on the river since we left Fort Hope. The wearer of this attraction was a fair-haired comely little woman who sported a signboard of white calico, which bore a strong resemblance to a bit of a nether garment, which may be guessed without being named, having scrawled on it, "Boarding by the Meales." The fair hostess was very well pleased with all the world in general and with herself in particular, and paid a compliment to her neighbours,

which I doubt not they deserved. “The men were all very brotherly,” she said; but on asking after the sisterhood the answer was not so satisfactory, - “There are not many sisters to be sisterly;” an evasive answer, but characteristic, as a married man of our party remarked. I had only time to note one other instance showing that “the schoolmaster was abroad,” – a sign painted over a bakery, “Brad and pajes,” which is a sort of French-English for “bread and pies,” – when Major Hawkins hurried us away, so as to get to Fort Yale before nightfall, to give his men time to prepare their encampment, a duty which he would not neglect for all the gold, fun, and petticoats on Fraser’s River.

Fort Yale is a collection of wooden houses and tents improvised on a long curved shelf of land rising gently from the river, the shore about a mile being in the hands of the miners, who are working it by means of rockers and sluicers. The place acquired a certain importance from the belief that it would be the head of steamboat navigation, and that an up-river town of some size would in consequence spring up. This hope has not yet been justified. The current has proven too strong for the steamers, none of them being able to come so far. One tried it but had to put back, and their terminus is now Fort Hope. I am informed by competent judges that iron boats with screw propellers can be built in England which can run all the way from Victoria to Fort Yale. This is a desideratum not yet supplied by any of the steamers on these waters, for those which ply on the river are stern-wheel boats, which are not fit to navigate the Gulf of Georgia and other waters intervening between Victoria and the mouth of Fraser River. The present arrangement, therefore, is, that side-wheel boats carry the freight from Victoria to Langley, where it is transferred to the stern-wheel boats, to be taken to Fort Hope. From the latter place it is carried in boats and canoes to Yale, and from the latter by small canoes, higher up still, through the rapids called the little and bit “Cañones,” and by land – packed on horses and mules and on men’s backs – to the Forks, being the junction of Fraser’s and Thompson’s rivers, where there is a considerable mining settlement. I will give the distances of all these places before I finish this letter. Meanwhile let us retrace our steps to Fort Yale. This place had acquired a very bad reputation for gambling, drinking, and violence of every kind, and gave the Governor more concern than the whole of the rest of the mining country. Nearly all the vices of the place were due to the presence of a set of professional gamblers from California, who plied their trade openly and in defiance of law. The failure or “caving in” of the American towns attempted to be established in Puget Sound and in Bellingham Bay, in opposition to Victoria, sent a large additional force of these harpies to Yale; and they spoke of making a last stand for their order here. The operation of the law of the land has driven them from California, and the operation of the law of supply and demand has sent them, as rats desert a falling house, from the embryo towns on the coast. They have no other place to retire to, and they will make a dying struggle at Fort Yale, defy the legal authorities, and fight for their privileges. If they are worsted here they will pitch their tents and open “hells” on every mining bar on the river, and resist interference in each and every case until they weary out the authorities. This was the doctrine preached to the justice and constable up to the time the Governor reached Fort Yale with the

detachment of Engineers and Marines. Other kindred spirits had become inoculated with this pestilent doctrine. Peaceably-disposed men were kept in a state of discomfort and alarm, every man was armed, and slight quarrels became dangerous frays. The Governor's visit was none too soon. His physical force was not large – only a handful of Marines and Engineers and two officers – but its moral effect was great.

Messieurs the gamblers kept very "shady," lowered their crests considerably, and before we started to return, 50 of them left the place in "disgust;" their trade had fallen off. They became convinced, somehow, although no overt act whatever had been taken against them, that "the game was up." They were afraid *something* would happen, and, instead of favouring the "bars" with their presence, they "made tracks" for a more congenial country.

Some of them do still remain and ply their illegal trade, for the simple reason that the Governor is too cautious to run into an encounter out of which he is not sure to come victorious. I am very happy to see that a judge has been dispatched from England for the new colony. If he is "the right man" his very presence will soon create and elicit so much wholesome public opinion from the well-disposed portion of the inhabitants as will speedily send the remnant of the gamblers after their departed brethren.

We had one little episode – a legal episode I might call it, - rather amusing. A ruffianly Irishman refused to pay some small licence money imposed on his calling. All his fellow-dealers paid theirs, but the Irishman had graduated in the "free and independent" country of our good neighbours, and he would pay no d——— Queen's dues, while his better half backed him up with most vociferous energy, threatening to split the constable's head open with an axe. Tax-gatherers are unpopular everywhere, and the virago had public sympathy on her side for a while.

The Governor was appealed to by the outraged and deforced officers; but, it being a case of which he could not take direct cognizance, he referred the matter to the law officer of the Crown, who accompanied him. The Irishman was summoned before the justice, and on a hearing it was decreed that he should pay the license or go to prison. He didn't like either alternative; but determining to become a martyr, he chose the latter. In this he made a terrible mistake, for, there being no prison nearer than Victoria, and the judge being too much of a formalist to commit to any but a legally constituted gaol, remitted him to Victoria, about 135 miles off. This didn't seem to appeal to him, and he declared his readiness to start at once, and would go without waiting for his coat, although the officer offered to fetch it from his house. No; a martyr of the highest grade he would be. And now comes the funniest part of the Irishman's case. The man was not poor. He had plenty of money, but was stubborn and would not pay the State her just dues. As he was on his way down the river he bethought him of the "unprotected female" he left behind, and sent a man with a bag of money to her. This fellow, having the fear of the violent Irish woman before his eyes, came into the justice's office for advice, as bad luck would have it for the refractory debtor. A little consultation, a slight whispering, a little shuffling, and the money was "garnished." As if by the stroke of a magician's wand the debt was secured without the owner's will or consent, and the Irishman unwittingly became free. The

canoe was recalled, and he was told he might pursue his calling in peace, his licence having been made "all right."

Having found the laws to be too much for him, it is to be hoped the Irishman will keep out of its clutches and play no more with edged tools. I think the whole thing was capitally done. I tried to speak to the fellow, and expected a civil reception, as I had nothing to do with his case, but I found him such a brute that I was fain to withdraw.

Since this example was made I learn that the inhabitants of Fort Yale are piously conforming themselves to the Divine command by "giving unto Caesar that which is Caesar's;" but I fear Caesar is not much benefitted in his exchequer thereby, for the unavoidable outgoings with such a community are heavy. Indeed, I fear it will be some time before the new colony will realize the happy consummation so devoutly wished for by Radicals and rulers at home – namely, support itself.

Hill's Bar and an account of the Fraser Canyon War[24] (October, 1858)

VICTORIA, VANCOUVER'S ISLAND, OCT. 26

Fort Yale is on the right bank of the Fraser. We found the place and its "surroundings," as an American termed the neighbourhood, so filthy and unsavoury – so exactly like its inhabitants, in short, that we could not pitch our tents in or near it; so we shot across the river, shook the dust of this modern Sodom from off our feet, and camped on a clean sandpit on the opposite side, away from the ruffianism of the town, - a fortunate choice in more ways than one, but particularly happy in saving the men from contamination.

We remained here from the 13th to the 20th of September. During this period I visited Hill's Bar, about 1½ or 2 miles below Yale, and on the opposite side of the river, three times, and will here give such information as I picked up from the miners. This Bar is one of the earliest worked, and one of the most famous for its richness – the bar of bars, the Ophir of Fraser's River. Mr. Hill, the discoverer, left for California with his "pile" some time ago, having first sold out his claims at good round prices, a practice which I much deprecate, and which, if I were a lawgiver in these parts, I would put a stop to .A man who sells a claim sells "what isn't his." The licence does not give the miner the fee of the land, but merely the privilege of working it for gold, the property of the Crown; and when a miner abandons his claim it should be open to the next man who comes and is ready to work it.

The first miner I met at Hill's Bar was a very green miner – a young gentleman who came up from San Francisco with me in June. His profession is that of a merchant, and he came to Victoria to go into business. Finding things overdone there, he resolved to turn miner and came up to Hill's Bar, bought a "claim" for $350; and has been working it, with a partner, for nearly three months. They employ five men to work with them at wages ranging from $6 to $8 a-day each man. To show both the division of labour and the prospects of labouring men who may think of coming out to

[24] From Fraser, D. (1858, December 25). BRITISH COLUMBIA. *The London Times*, p. 7.

this country I will give a detail of the labour and pay:- Two men shovelling, at $5 a-day; three men rocking, one of them at $6, the second at $7, the third at $8 a-day. These were all good hands, experienced miners; but the two who received the highest pay were choice hands. The earnings he gave me as an ounce of gold a-day to each man's work on an average. On calling for details this gentleman said, his men would wash 1,000 buckets a-day, and that a bucket of "dirt" would produce 8c. This would give $80 as the earnings of the five men; just $16 each man. But the "dirt" does not always yield as much as 8c., although on the other hand it sometimes yields more. He has had as high as 33c. to the bucket, which would give the five men washing 1,000 buckets an aggregate of $330, or $66 each a-day – 13*l.* sterling per man per day. I cross-questioned his testimony, and he offered to show his books in proof of his assertion. His character is a sufficient voucher for any statement he makes. He is very well known in San Francisco, where he long held a situation of trust.

As a test of the value of this famous bar, I may state that he knows of $1,000 having been given for one-half of a claim of 25 feet wide, and of $1,200 for one-third interest in another claim of the same size, and of $1,000 having been offered the other day, and refused, for one-half of a claim. This gentleman went back to San Francisco the other day well satisfied with the result of his mining adventure. His case proves two facts – that a person of sedentary habits, who never worked at rude outdoor occupations, can improve his pecuniary condition by taking a spell at mining, and that an intelligent man can find efficient labour at high prices to assist him in making his "pile."

I found an Englishman here whose story is instructive – George Cade, from Bethnal-green, London. He had mined in California for three years and upwards. Came up the river without money, and worked at first on hire; then took to construting rockers for the other miners, by which he saved some money, as his outgoings were limited to the cost of food, about $1 a-day; no rent and no taxes to pay. Finally, he bought a quarter interest in a mining claim for $400. The first week he worked [he] made $800 to his own share, or "cheek," as he put it, which made him "free of debt and left some encouragement over." I know the man of whom he purchased. *He* bought Hill, the discoverer, out for $1,400, including some debts on the claim, which he assumed. The claim measures 25 feet, being the usual size, running from the bank to the water, and a small portion of an adjoining claim.

There are six men in "the company," four of them hired at wages of $5 a-day each. In two days last week they took out $800. The average of the week's earnings [for] both Cade and his partner returned at 4lb. of gold amalgam a-day, got out by the labour of all six. One pound of amalgam they value roughly as worth $100. This is evidently a low estimate.

Some of the miners have carried a small stream a distance of 1½ mile, and sell the water for sluicing at $2 5c. an inch – that is to say, a superficial inch of water on a vertical section. By means of sluicing ground which will not pay by "rocking," and which has been once "washed," will remunerate this outlay in water; and I don't consider the charge high at the present high price of labour.

About the centre of the bar, which is considered its richest part, I met another miner from San Francisco whom I knew. His story is, "three weeks at work on his present claim, all of which has been already washed by rocker, and which he and his party are now sluicing, make 2 ounces a-day to the hand." This is the average for the whole time they have been at work.

Stories are told of enormous sums having been realized on this bar; but as these are "lucky strikes," few and far between, and which would not give a fair average of earnings, I shall not repeat them. There are probably 400 men on the bar. I counted 64 houses.

Many make as much as the earnings given above; probably one half the number of miners; the other half not so much. Several of the miners gave their earnings at from $3 to $8 a day.

The Commissioner who collects the licenses says that every man who chooses to work will make $5 a-day at the lowest. He should be good authority from his means of information.

At a point a short distance above Hill's Bar, which had the fanciful name of "Shirt-tail Bend," to designate it, on a long pole, I found several miners and three rockers at work, making $5 to $6 a-day each rocker.

I omitted to mention that most of the older miners on Hill's Bar stated that for the last four months it was common to get five and six ounces of gold a-day to each rocker. A rocker may require two or three men to feed and work it, according to the location.

At Hill's Bar I ascertained the important fact that there are "dry diggings" inland "at the back of the bar." This is on a plateau covered with forest, elevated 30 feet above the level of the river. "Close to the surface the ground prospected 12½ cents to the pan." The plateau is extensive, as I found out by walking across a portion of it. It extends from Hill's Bar to Yale, and opposite of the latter place gold has recently been found on a portion of this same plateau. The constable from Fort Yale told me so, and his information is confirmed by Mr. Pemberton, the colonial surveyor, who has just returned from Yale.

Opposite to Hill's Bar a good deal of mining is carried on at the lower end of the bend or crescent upon which Fort Yale stands. I did not visit this spot, at which there are perhaps 250 miners. Higher up comes the Fort Yale diggings. I spoke to many of the miners here – not less than 100, certainly, on several occasions – who gave their earnings at every sum, from $2 5c. (say 3s. sterling) to two ounces (say 6*l.* sterling) a man per day. The most common return from sluicing was one ounce a man per day. They are a lazy, coarse, grumbling, good-for-nothing set. Hundreds squat in tents, and do nothing but complain of the badness of the times, and lament the falling off in the produce of the bar. It does not yield so much as it did at first, but it is very inefficiently worked, and the sluices are half the time idle, while the owners are drinking and gambling. Many "loafers" hang about, ostensibly waiting for the fall of the river to "go up," but in reality on the lookout for plunder. I never saw so many sinister countenances collected in one place – ill-bred curs, as cruel as they are dishonest. Here is the nest whence issues the wretch who will shoot an Indian in the

back when he finds one alone and unarmed, and who is the first to run, even out of a crowd, when he sights a body of Indians, armed or unarmed; and here is the Alsatia to which the coward flees for shelter.

We ascended the river for some miles beyond Fort Yale, and found miners encamped and at work all over the left bank. Here we found the largest sized scale gold yet seen – the "coarse gold" so much prized by the miner, because he gets more of it for the same amount of labour bestowed on "fine gold," which does not weigh so much. The "prospects" all along this, the first gorge of the river, [are] good, and expected to improve. In some other letter I will copy my notes of this portion of the river.

I must now hurry this tedious narrative to a close.

On our return down the river we visited Texas Bar (September 21), which we omitted on our way up. We found miners making $4 a-day and $8 to the rocker each. This is an extensive mining settlement, log cabins and other evidences of success being abundant. I copy from my notebook:-

"A gang at the upper end of bar make $5 and $6 a-day, working the third stratum of gravel from the surface. The first stratum paid high, the second stratum thrown aside for future sluicing, as it only produced $3 a-day to the hand; too poor for rocking. This bar evidently rich, as proved by the vast amount of digging done. The auriferous stratum runs back into the shore under a bed of fine sand 10 feet thick. An extensive flat between the river and the mountains. Miners say rich, and the sand easy of removal by sluicing. Gang of six men washed the surface gravel; gave $16 and $20 a-day to the hand; now washing the 'tailings' of the same gravel, which yields $5 and $6 a-day to the hand. A month's work averaged $16 to $20 a-day, digging a gravel bed underneath a thin ledge of rock easily penetrated."

This is the "hard rock" of the miner, to which it is his aim always to dig down.

Contrary to the opinion of the gang alongside, this gang think the auriferous stratum does not extend more than 250 yards from the water's edge. At this extreme point it pays $5 to $6 a-day to the hand. This is one of the rich claims.

John Daly, from Cork, an old California miner, has his wife with him, "the only leddy on the bar." Worked for some time for the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Hope, "then worked for others, carrying dirt at $6 a-day." The turning point of John's fortune he dates as on the 17th of July. Bought a claim of 25 feet frontage of another miner, "an Irishman born in America!" for $32 5c.; has since made $2 5c. a-day often; calls his earnings now $10 to $12 a-day. "Can you give me the average, Mr. Daly?" "Faith, I can; 10 to 12 dollar; an' ye can put it down and show it to the Governor if ye like." [He] is building a log house, three times too big for him and his "leddy;" but why shouldn't Paddy indulge his whim? He's in luck, is "making money, and manes to save it." This I much doubt. "Likes the country, for it brought him luck." This I don't doubt.

Next [I] met three blackguards drunk in honour of the Governor's visit, all hot-headed Yankees. One was very high-spirited and independent; "wouldn't uncover for the best man," &c. I pulled the fellow's hat off with a jerk, to try him. He looked very sheepish, and, after a pause, drawled out, "Why – then – you're – been – and – done

it." How suddenly the valour oozes out of these braggarts when they are confronted with a little firmness. I look upon every man who wears a revolver at his work as an arrant coward. When the Governor came up (for our little encounter was out of sight of the party), the free citizen was disposed to be very obsequious indeed.

These fellows had a rich claim, which yielded $100 a-week, and sometimes more to teach of them; 40*l.* a-week very ill bestowed. Another rich claim sluiced by a stream of water, worked by 10 men, five by day and five by night – make the ounce to $25 a-day to the hand. Much of the gold [is] lost from imperfection of sluice. This claim cost the present owner, William H. M'Guire, $1,450, having bought out his former partners. Strange arrangements the miners make. This claim had been divided into single shares, half shares, one-tenths, and one-twentieths. It measures 250 feet in width, and was originally located by 10 miners. All the original owners have left except M'Guire. They all carried money with them - $30,000 in gross – and have all gone to the Atlantic States. The claim was commenced to be worked on the 27th of last May. They worked so irregularly (off and on) and had so many interruptions that I could not fix the period it took to make this money. Mr. Bauerman, the geologist of the Boundary Commission, who is with us, examines the gold hereabouts for platina, of which he collected some, taken out of Thompson River gold.

Other miners on Texas bar gave me their returns at $5, $6, and up to $10 a-day. No growlers here. All regret that the troops are not left in the mines. The American miners have a slavish fear of the Indians. Their pipes are always groaning out the doleful tune, protection against the red skins. We have met Russians, Swedes, Danes, French, Norwegians, Austrians and other Germans, English, Scotch and Irish, and other nationalities besides, for aught I know; but none of these dreaded the Indians as did the Americans. As for us, the Indians were, of course, our friends, and hung about us, always ready to serve us. The majority of the miners are not American.

Two hundred and fifty police stationed at Fort Hope, the same number at Yale, with three or four gunboats for the river, would preserve perfect order and compel absolute obedience to the law. Such is the opinion of an officer whom I consider good authority. He would, when a proper system is established, disarm the population. I would agree with him were it not for the existence of the Indians. They cannot be depended upon, and men may require arms in self defence. As to the silly argument, so fashionable in Downing-street and St. Stephen's, that we mustn't do this, that, or the other for fear it would be disliked by our neighbours, I would have but one answer – "Let those who dislike our laws keep away."

From Texas bar we slip down to Strawberry Island, so named for the very good reason that it is covered with strawberry vines. This is the "Sctlaheness" of the Indians, which I told you we had passed visiting on our way up on the 13th of September. The first gang we encountered was composed of nine California miners, who had "rocked" the shore to the tune of $9 and $10 a-man per day, and who are now busy making a wheel to raise water for sluicing. They intend to winter on the island. Nine of the handsomest men I have seen. One half of them – no, the nine could

not well be divided, - but five of them might have stood for models of Hercules; - all Americans, State of Maine.

A little below the Maine men, on the shore of the island, [we] came upon a huge water-wheel of 40 feet diameter, for raising water for "hydraulic washing." The wheel is set upon a wooden float, movable, to be shoved out into the river as the water falls. The wheel is, of course, under-shot.

I asked Major Hawkins, who understands engineering and mechanics, what he thought of the wheel. The major thought it would fall to pieces as soon as the water set it in motion. We now meet the owner of this "wheel of fortune." He is full of hope from the effects to be produced in the island by his wheel; and told us that a man left these diggings for California last Saturday with $2,000 – a fact which adds fervour to his hopes.

The owner of the wheel is Mr. C. D. Burlinson, a native of Ohio and citizen of California, where he has been a trader and a publican, last at Amador. He is so pleased with the country and his own prospects that he "Shouldn't wonder a particle if he'd become a British subject, and spend the balance of his days here[25]." And, in furtherance of this laudable intention, [he] is about to send for his wife and family. He has dug a hole or shaft to "prospect" what is in the bowels of the island. The first four feet of the shaft is sand, which produced no gold. Then comes a "streak" of gravel, which appears of great thickness, for four to five feet in depth of it is already exposed without going through it. This gravel has paid him $10 to $12 per day to the hand, the dust very find, the lower portion of the stratum paying the best. His intention is to "ground sluice" first, and then to wash down, after making "a face," as far as the "dirt" will pay. To carry out this intention is the object of the wheel. He may fail at first, but that's nothing; he'll try again, and succeed at last. These diggings of Mr. Burlinson's, and of others on the island, are dry diggings, of much importance in a miner's estimation, because they are likely to endure after the river, or wet diggings, become exhausted. We have reason to expect that plenty such will be found.

One such was discovered lately on an elevated flat 50 feet above the river and 250 yards inland, on the right side, some miles above this island, and close to our last night's encampment. Early this morning 13 Scotchmen sent a deputation to Mr. Douglas, with a "prospect" in a pan, for permission to work, and to appropriate the water of a neighbouring stream for "sluicing." The thing looked so feasible that the Governor granted both requests, and promised that if they are successful he will give them double allowance of ground in reward for their discovery. I have lately had a good account of the Scotchmen. The Governor christened their claims "Prince Albert's Diggings." I hope they will succeed. They have got a lucky name, any way.

Back to Fort Hope for the night. The houses have increased in our absence. Miners have also multiplied near by. On our way down the river [we] fund a large accession of miners, and the ground actually worked greatly extended.

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[25] I found no records of a C. D. Burlinson living in British Columbia during the appropriate time period. This may be the same C. D. Burlinson who was appointed a Notary Public in Sacramento, California, in 1897. See Notaries Public. (1897, January 21). *The Sacramento Record-Union*, p. 5.

[We] camped (Sept. 22d) nine miles below Fort Hope, on a strip of rich bottom land covered with long bunch grass, the soil well adapted for farming or gardening. This is the first wet day we have had since the 30th of August. During that period we have had two slight showers of short duration. The weather was lovely the whole of the time.

To-night wet feet, &c., but with a fire that would have roasted 10 oxen, and in good humour with all the world and ourselves, we passed a night that an Emperor might have envied.

The English are great on climatology, and like to discuss what they have very little of. Well, to gratify such as are enthusiasts on the subject, I will give the temperature of one of our days at Fort Hope, - a place surrounded by mountains:- 11th September, by Fahrenheit's thermometer, in the shade under a tree, noon, 82 deg.; at 2 o'clock, 85 deg.; 4, 81 deg.; 6, 68 deg; 8, 56 deg.; 10, 53 deg.; 12, 50 deg. The 12th. – 2 a.m., 58 deg.; 4, 57 deg.; 8, 65 deg.; 10, 67 deg.; 12, 79 deg. At night the temperature sometimes fell to 30 deg., and frequently ranged from 40 deg. To 43 deg. Midday is oppressive in tents and in the open air, but the mornings and evenings are charming. No climate can be more healthy.

Here are the distances I spoke of somewhere in this letter. Victoria to Sand Heads, or mouth of Fraser River, 65 miles; ditto to Langley, 35 miles; ditto to Fort Hope, 70 miles; ditto to Fort Yale, 15 miles; ditto to Fort Dallas (forks of Fraser and Thompson), 90 miles; Fort Dallas to La Fontaine, 65 to 70 miles.

Late news from this upper region encouraging, but provisions very dear.

OCT. 27.

The whole party, soldiers and civilians, roused by the sound of the bugle at 5 a.m.; tents struck, all packed in the bateaux, and away by 6 o'clock. On a journey recommend me to an engineer, clever, handy, intelligent, and full of resources. These are your true pioneers – to a new country invaluable. Our party of them, as well as the Marines, behaved admirably, barring the misfortune that two of the latter gave their officer the slip at Fort Yale. "No great loss. They had only just joined the Satellite," was a criticism I had heard upon this circumstance.

We procured at Fort Hope the best bread (baked by a Frenchman) I have tasted since I was in Paris. Supplied with this, and with salmon, so abundant in the river, we breakfasted on the beach near the mouth of the Harrison River; and, after duly "fortifying the inner man," dropped down to Smess River, where Major Hawkins left us to pay a flying visit to his party of the Boundary Commission encamped in Smess Valley, some 12 miles inland. Left the soldiers encamped on the bank of the river opposite the mouth of the Smess, and we, that is, the "carpet knights," pursue our voyage to Fort Langley. While we drop down the stream, some enjoying the scene and others reading with much interest the last news from England, I will explain how the affair of the reported collision between the miners and the Indians turned out, which induced the Governor to ask for the military escort. A Frenchman stole away and deforced an Indian girl of the "Kequeloose" tribe, or of some other Indian community on the Fraser, above Langley. After the endurance of much indignity, the Indians retaliated, caught the Frenchman, and cut his head off and sent his body down the

river as an example, perhaps, to all poachers on other men's manors. Altogether four headless trunks came down from the upper waters, and were picked up by miners between Fort Yale and Fort Hope. The sight naturally roused the inhabitants to action, and a fellow named Graham, a Californian, burning to distinguish himself, raised a company of volunteers to fight the Indians. His plan was very simple. He was to commence killing the Indians at the nearby village, just beyond Fort Yale, and keep killing as he went up the river as far as the Forks, 90 miles. No investigation, no discretion, no segregation of the guilty from the innocent. It was to be an exterminating raid. This fellow as not only a beast but a vain fool. One tribe of these Indians would have sent him and his party of ragamuffins after the lecherous Frenchman. But he was accustomed to Oregon practice, and he would try his hand at it here. The bulk of the Yale miners were guided by more humane and prudent counsels. Some 50 of them enrolled themselves under a Major Snyder, "a free and independent citizen" of the great and glorious Republic which produces such abundant crops of military knights.

Snyder exercised some degree of common sense in his proceedings. He called at the several Indian villages on his way up, sending a flag of truce before him, declared amity with all the tribes who had not been guilty of murdering white men, and made peace and brought about a good understanding "generally," as he himself summed up his exploits. In his grandiloquence he called his very commonplace and vulgar palaver with the Indians "treaties."

He must have concealed the fact of his being a "Boston," or he would have had but poor success with the Indians. However, he has the merit of having had sufficient discretion to prevent bloodshed. It may be well for fiery spirits of this class, who pant for glory, at the same time to know that it is a very dangerous proceeding to make war on any of Her Majesty's subjects, and that she has not yet delegated to any "citizen," however "distinguished," the treaty making power. A message from the Governor or a visit from one of the Hudson's Bay Company's officers would have produced a better effect upon the Indians than all Major Snyder's eloquence, backed though it might have been by a display of physical force. Now matters are more amicable, and the establishment of law and order as far as possible with miserably inadequate means is progressing slowly, but surely and firmly. Any way, we do not want the services of any military adventurers. If they will, contrary to good advice, enter the lists, they may depend upon it they do so with a halter round their necks. Experience shows that the Indians do not require these irregular and illegal displays of force, and humanity demands that the Government shall protect them.

Turn we now to the other "man in buckram," the brave Major Graham. He offered to unite his forces with those of Major Snyder, but the latter prudently "repudiated." In this dilemma Major Graham proceeded on his own hook. He seemed to have been firmly convinced of the truth of the trite apothegm, that "prudence is the better part of valour," and to have acted upon it. In going up he cautiously avoided all the Indian villages, and sneaked along through the forest for some 40 miles above Yale. Here he and his party were encamped one fine night, when about midnight some one of the "braves," hearing a rustling in the bushes, cried out "Indians!" As

they had set no guard, and were, like most mobs, great cowards, the scum of Yale soon became as much frightened as they were disorderly. On the first alarm the Major, as was proper, jumped up and fumbled with his revolver. A shot immediately followed, and the doughty Major fell to rise no more. By this time his Lieutenant got upon his legs; another shot, and he too fell dead. The camp was now a scene of ludicrous confusion; some fired right, some fired left, some fired "all round," and some ran away. Among the latter was an Irishman, who was so horribly frightened that he never pulled foot until he got to Yale, where he told a tale which harrowed the feelings of that refined population to a degree of intensity altogether indescribable. The Indians had massacred the whole party but him, and had then mutilated the bodies of these Christian men in a manner too horrible to mention. Here was the "fiery cross" brought by an accredited henchman, and it had its effect. Late at night "indignation meetings" were held; resolutions of great power and energy and breathing vengeance were passed, and the crowd of blackguards proceeded to the Hudson's Bay Company's house, and demanded arms and ammunition to go and fight the Indians with.

The officer in charge told them he would not admit a mob into his house, neither would he give arms, or anything else, under threats such as were being made by this enlightened "deputation;" that if they broke into the house they would do so at their peril; but that, as he was armed, the first man who entered, and "likely enough the second," would be shot; that as he had a sick child in the house, wife alarmed, other children disturbed, &c., he begged they would make less noise; and finally, that if they retired and sent "a reasonable deputation of their number, say two or three," he would admit it and see what could be done. This suggestion was adopted, and the officer counted out a number of muskets which wouldn't go off, as he candidly told them, and, taking a receipt for them, closed the door and returned to bed. Of course, he knew that these fellows were more frightened than hurt, and that their present valour was of the Bob Acres' quality. The "excitement" once aroused, however, must be kept up. They sent a deputation with the Irishman's tale down to Fort Hope, where the same scene was re-enacted to the great astonishment of the Company's "servant" there, and the deputation, now charged with the united suffrages of the good citizens of Yale and Hope, started off without delay in a canoe for Victoria, with a most piteous cry for help. They effected the passage in a marvelously short time, and looked, certainly, when they presented themselves before the Governor, like men who believe their own story. Soon other wayfarers from "above" drop in, and they more than confirm the tragic story. One of these deliberately and circumstantially told, to my knowledge, that he had seen 14 headless trunks pricked up beyond Yale. Every horrible detail was given with a minuteness that carried conviction. It was now the Governor asked for and obtained the soldiers. Before we started a letter arrived from the Gold Commissioner at Fort Yale with a denial of the massacre, but I only learned the facts when I got up.

The important question of "Who killed Major Graham and his lieutenant" is still unanswered. Their fate looks like a just retribution. The unlucky major being a "politician" and not a sodger handled his pistol so clumsily that he shot himself by accident. His wound proved this. The lieutenant was killed by one of the stray shots

of his own men, which were discharged "all round." *There were no Indians in the case.* There was a suspicion that the men shot both the major and his lieutenant, and the "balance" of the party which came back to Yale reported that there really were Indians who fired upon them when asleep; but that the Indians ceased firing when they were informed that Major Snyder had made "a treaty" with their chief.

This is the fable which found its way into the papers, and which has made a wide circuit before my contradiction will appear. I refrained form writing on the subject until I had investigated the matter personally.

A moral may be drawn from the story. We want forces, civil, judicial, and military, to maintain the law. It is not for me to suggest what these should be; but if we are not to be made a laughing stock of, and if we are to save ourselves from the disgrace which the neglect of good government has brought upon California, we must have such means as will enforce the execution of the law. This accomplished order will follow. There is not the slightest reason to fear a general outbreak of our American visitors in the mines. The majority of them are well disposed, and do not wish their labours interrupted by raids or forays, and they will always be found on the side of law and order, and ready to lend a hand in their maintenance. If I had to extirpate American rowdies I would enlist their own countrymen.

On the whole, there has not been much crime in the mines. A few murders, one of which was promptly taken cognizance of, and the murderer punished; and another man charged with a similar offence is now about to be tried by due course of law. Insufficient as the legal machinery is, no punishment takes place except by its agency.

OCT. 28.

I am obliged to cut my letter short here, as the mail steamer, which came in an hour ago, leaves in a few minutes unexpectedly.

A party of engineers have arrived, under Captain Parons, this morning. It was said half of them had deserted in San Francisco. However this was, they are all here now.

The Ganges, 84, with Admiral Baynes, is here. She arrived on the 17th from Callao, in 47 days. Satellite and Plumper also in port, all well.

The mining continues successful; although vast numbers of miners have left for California, dreading the winter, and for other causes.

Agriculture on Vancouver's Island[26] (November, 1858)

VICTORIA, VANCOUVER'S ISLAND, NOV. 11.

Had my time permitted, I would have made some remarks on the agriculture and on the capabilities of the soil of this island in my last letter.

Here is the experience of a gentleman who was for years a farmer in Essex, in England, and who has farmed a tract of land about two miles from Victoria for the last six years. The notes which I have taken of his operations will convey to the agricultural mind abroad an idea of the quality of the soil, the character of the

[26] From Fraser, D. (1859, January 19). BRITISH COLUMBIA. *The London Times*, p. 6.

seasons, and the results of farming operations conducted with skill in Vancouver's Island.

This farmer has not established, as yet, any fixed rotation. His general course has been, when he first breaks up the land, to sow it with peas, which tend to "clean" and "open" the ground; next year wheat, next oats, and the fourth year peas again, or turnips. The virgin soil is too rich to require or to bear manure for a few years, unless on poor stony spots not yet cultivated. The essential point is to keep the land *clean*, free from brakes and weeds. In a state of nature the best of the land is covered with a thick crop of ferns, which attain an enormous size, - 5,6, and 7 feet in height, strong in stem and tough in roots. This is the system, and its results:-

Wheat, sown after turnips fed off by sheep, or after potatoes; sows 1½ bushels to the acre, broadcast. Return, 38 to 35 bushels to the acre, according to quality of soil; but the produce depends chiefly on the freedom of the soil from weeds. *Cleaning* makes the heavy crop. His wheat averages 64lb. to the bushel. Considers the quality very good. Wheat may, of course, be sown after potatoes; but after turnips gives the best crop.

Oats. – Sows 2 bushels, broadcast, to the acre. Return, from 50 to 70 bushels to the acre; not heavy; grain rather small. None yet made into meal. An oatmeal mill is on the way for the use of the farmers in the neighbourhood.

Barley. – Sows very little. Market hitherto limited; now increasing, with the advent of troops of mules and horses for "packing" in the adjacent mining country of British Columbia. The soil is well adapted for growing barley.

Peas. – Sows 2 bushels to the acre. Return, 30 to 40 bushels to the acre from the dun pea and the scimitar (blue) pea; seeds sent from England. They grow larger than in the old country, but he can't give the weight.

Potatoes. – The ground prepared by two or three ploughings and well cleaned, and (such fields as have already been cropped) manured by about 20 cartloads of farmyard dung to an acre; plants about three-fourths of a ton to the acre in rows, three feet apart. Return, 8 to 10 tons an acre; the produce large in size, mealy, and well-flavoured; the quality of all kinds good, but the white oval-shaped kidney excellent. This last fact I can vouch for. They are smaller in size, but superior in flavour to the California potato. In some few instances the produce is enormous, - 56 tubers from one seedling, of which number 40 were large-sized potatoes, choice and fit for market.

Talking of potatoes, let a successor worthy of the immortal Soyer, ambitious of fame in culinary science, come out here and learn from the Indians their method of cooking them, carry home the art, and his fortune is made. Considering that the savages have neither pot nor pan nor oven, the result is marvellous. It is attained by steam, generated by heating stones from a little water in a wooden box, sewed (or held together) by withes. But to resume my friend's story of his *Turnips*, which he sows in fallowed land, sometimes manured and sometimes not. Gets good crops from a variety of seeds, hybrids, &c. Cannot give the produce per acre; but the crops are quite as good as he ever saw in England. I saw very large ones the other day grown in rather a thin soil on a hill close to Victoria.

Clover does well. Not much land yet laid down in clover. The land, when freed from growing timber, is laid down often in timothy for pasture, to save the great labour and expense in clearing out the stumps of the trees – an arduous task, until machinery is had to wrench them out of the earth. I hear of such a machine being in use in America, and it is to be hoped it will travel to Vancouver's Island.

The sowing and reaping seasons are, for wheat, the latter part of October and in November; also, in spring, as soon after February as the weather permits; all to be in the ground before the end of March, harvested in August. Oats, barley, and peas sown in March and April, harvested about August to middle of September. Potatoes planted as early in May as can be. None should be put in later than May, and they would do better if planted earlier, so as to be ripe before the early frosts set in; taken up in October. Turnips sown in June, July, and August. The swedes in June; the white sort will do to be sown down to the end of August.

The soil of this farm I should take to be a fair sample of that of the island generally, although I do know some much better soil, scattered about, within a few miles of Victoria, than any yet cultivated on this farm.

A writer in a California paper, who visited several portions of this island, reports that "the soil throughout consists of a warm vegetable mould, resting on a substratum of sandy or gravelly clay. This mould is generally not more than three or four inches deep, except on the bottoms, where the depth is much greater." He is mistaken as to the *depth* of the mould. In all the land thought worth the trouble of being cultivated the mould is deeper than three or four inches. It is deeper than the depth of an ordinary furrow; but in *some* situations is thin, as he says. The writer proceeds to describe the quality:- "This soil is very quick and fertile, but not durable, as after a few ploughings the land begins to show signs of impoverishment, the upper and more productive stratum of earth becoming mixed with the poorer material below; hence, after three or four crops the yield is sensibly diminished, unless manure be meantime applied." As to productiveness, from actual results, he says, "Wheat, barley, and oats generally give what would be considered two-thirds of an average crop in California," but "peas do even better here than there." The comparison with California may be correct, for, except the delta of the Nile, I have not heard of any soil yielding such large amounts of grain as that of California.

The quality of the crops pleased him better than the quantity. "The straw, which generally looks clean and healthy, is short and slender, and stands thin on the ground; but the berry of the grain is much larger and heavier than with us; in truth, I have in no part of the United States seen such plumpness of kernel as the wheat and oats here exhibit, and I doubt not most excellent crops of these cereals will always be grown on the alluvial bottoms, and also on the woods and uplands, when the latter shall receive the benefits of careful husbandry." I think this gentleman is correct in his conclusions. He has travelled over a considerable portion of the south and easterly districts, and made good use of his time. The only drawback to the cultivation of the soil is the scarcity and high price of labour. There is a ready market for all produce. […]

I may here remark that I find from several letters which I have late received from England there is great misconception abroad on the subject of the climate of this island, which it is as well to remove. The farmer whose report of his farming operations I have given above tells me – "The seasons are very much the same as in England as to general character, wet in winter, but decidedly miler." The fact is, there is no better or healthier climate in the world. It is just an English climate tempered, modified, and improved; the east wind being soft and genial, instead of cold and cutting as in England. The only cold winds here are the northerly winds, and they are merely bracing – a little sharp, but without the sting so trying in England and in Scotland. They only prevail during the summer season.

The summer is drier and more steady, only a few showers of rain falling during the hot season, and the winter milder. The climate, in short, is safe for the delicate and invigorating for the robust in health. These remarks apply more strictly to the southern portion of the island. At the north, about Fort Rupert, the climate is moister, and somewhat colder.

As a proof of the genial effect of the climate, I may mention that the rains which fell occasionally during the last month have caused the grass to spring up with such vigour that at present the meadows are fresher and greener than they were in June and July. In fact, a lawn or grass field preserved from cattle is now, on the 11th of November, just as green as our best kept lawns in England are at any season. This is seen under the walls of the fort at Victoria, in an enclosed paddock, and in confirmation of my own assertions I quote the experience of a Californian gentleman – a hostile critic too – writing of this place for a publication in San Francisco, who, in speaking of the climate of Victoria, reports that – "This year we have had one entire rainy day in July, and two thus far in August, besides several showers. These rains keep the grass green, and all kinds of vegetation fresh and growing throughout the summer. The meadows and pastures now look as verdant here as in California. From May until the middle of July the wind blows fresh every day. After this it ceases, and until the winter rains set in the weather is delightfully calm, and the temperature subject to very little variation, the thermometer not changing more than 15 or 16 degrees night or day during this period. From April to November it rarely ever falls below 50 or goes above 75. In this respect it is the most even climate I have ever seen." To this testimony I will only add, that apple and peach trees are at present, partially in blossom, after having delivered themselves of abundant crops of fruit within the past weeks. I prefer this climate myself to that of California, simply because it is not so enervating. With more streams meandering through the meadows and prairies than they have, the country would be cultivated into one grand garden for many miles all round Victoria.

On the other hand, the climate of British Columbia, the new colony, on the mainland, is hotter in summer and much colder in winter than that of the island. The climate of the mainland, as I learn from old residents in the Hudson's Bay Company's service, is, however, quite healthy, and certainly, from my experience of it during the month of September last, the whole of which I passed in the open air and under canvas, nothing can be more delightful. Among the thousands of miners and others,

all exposed by day and night, with whom I gathered, I did not meet a sick person, and only one man who complained of a headache. The winter is cold and frosty, but the air is clear and bracing.

I now come to speak of the town of Victoria, as it has grown since I last noticed it. Situated on a rocky plateau, which rises form the bay, it runs along the top of the bank fronting the water in a north-easterly direction till it embraces a portion of the Victoria Arm, which runs up to Esquimalt, and the principal portion runs back from the water till it joins the open prairie and forest country which forms the south-eastern portion of the island, bounded by Cadboro Bay and the Straits of De Haro. The south-western portion of the town is divided from the inhabited and business part by James's Bay, a small arm of the harbour, running inland in a south-easterly division for about a quarter of a mile, or less. The town extends, on paper, south and west of this bay, following the sinuosities of Victoria Bay towards the Straits of Fuca, so as to embrace the whole of the northern and eastern sides of the harbour, and to which side the town is confined. The situation is extremely fine, commanding, as I before stated, extensive views of sea and mountain at a distance, and picturesque glimpses of forest scenery close at hand, with charming peeps of the innumerable little bays and inlets indenting the shores of the waters which wash the base of the plateau on which the town is laid out.

The ground laid off for the town is about one and a half square miles, subdivided into blocks and lots; the lots measure 60 by 120 feet each, and 20 of these compose a block, except in one suburb, where the blocks contain only 18 lots, and in other parts forming narrows strips and angles which did not afford sufficient space to form blocks of such large size. These exceptional parts are made into smaller blocks. The width of the streets varies from 60 feet to 100 feet, and the principal thoroughfares are at present being graded and macadamized, for which there is abundance of rock in the neighbourhood. The total number of lots in the whole town is 1,552, a few of them, on the outside, being a little larger in area than 60 by 120 feet, and the total number sold is 1,142, leaving only 410 lots unsold, and of this remainder several lots are already bespoken. This quick sale is a remarkable instance of the avidity displayed for the acquisition of town property in so remote a part of the world, and it is fair to assume that it shows great public confidence in the future growth and prosperity of Victoria as well as in the prospects of the country generally. Another cause of the eagerness to invest here is the confidence placed in the security of the title, and in the protection of life and property afforded by the administration of English law, and, in short, a reliance upon everything real and personal being placed under the guardianship of the British flag.

The subdivision into such small lots has been keenly objected to by speculators whose operations were defeated by the entirety of the blocks having been broken by the purchase of single lots by persons of small means, who bought their lots for actual occupation. In no case of any other new town do I know of so many small proprietors who own their own houses on their own land. Victoria is emphatically a town laid out for the benefit of the poor man.

The objection to the smallness of the lots fronting on the water is well founded. The size is too small for shipping and general commercial purposes, and the few traders in the place are cramped for room in their waterside premises. A wharf cannot be erected to any useful purpose on a frontage of 60 feet. A few frontages of greater widths than this do exist in the hands of two or three of the older settlers, but the greater portion is dribbled away in lots of only 60 feet wide, and there is not a single property on the bay fit to build a capacious and convenient wharf upon.

Another objection is the paucity of streets. Each of the blocks should have been intersected in the middle by cross streets, or at least by alleys, both for convenience and for easy and prompt access in cases of fire.

Three spaces have been reserved for public uses, one of them for the church, one for the church, one for a school, and the third for a park. The latter is a fine rising round, running southerly and westerly from near the inner angle of James's Bay to the sea, and contains Beacon-hill, a prominent object by which mariners steer to make the mouth of the harbour, and from which it is not far distant. The ground is a natural park, interspersed with oaks of the true "ancestral" aspect, their jagged bark and gnarled branches bearing sufficient evidence of their antiquity, while two sides of the space are beautified and protected by thick belts of the Douglas pine and other trees and shrubs. The sward is good; and when the ferns are removed, and the shrubbery is trimmed, the ground needs only roads and walks to be made to perfect the park. The view from Beacon-hill is magnificent, embracing an immense semicircle of snowy mountains in Washington territory, on the opposite coast, the whole length and breadth of the Straits of Fuca, and the entrance to the inland sea now called Puget Sound.

The increase of buildings is astonishing; it excites my surprise even, although I have seen the speedy rebuilding of San Francisco five different times. Houses – small and rude, most of them, it is true – are continually going up. The sounds of the hammer and the saw are never out of my ears except when I escape for a few hours into the country. The houses are all of wood.

The population is about 3,000 residents, and I should think 500 more are constantly floating about on the way to and from the mines and various parts of the coast. This looks like Falstaff's commissariat, a small quantity of bread for so much sack; but small things and great things are relative terms. An old colonist told me the other day that at this time last year there were not 300 inhabitants in Victoria.

These 3,000 inhabitants are kept in order by 20 policemen, regularly organized under the authority of a commissioner, who is also police magistrate and a justice of the peace. The policemen are clothed and provided with batons, and perambulate the streets much after the fashion of your London police; and the peace and good order of the town is perfectly preserved. The other day an inspector was added to the force; and, with some drilling, I have no doubt it will become efficient in detective service.

The administration of justice is carried on in this wise. There is only one court of law, professionally speaking – the Supreme Court of Civil Justice of the Colony, established by an order in Council in 1856; and one judge, who tries all civil cases.

Criminal cases are tried by three magistrates, appointed by commission issuing from the Governor, who always have a jury. The plan adopted is quite constitutional, and, as a temporary expedient, rendered absolutely necessary by unlooked-for circumstances, works very well. The magistrates are gentlemen of known respectability of character, who try prisoners with fairness and impartiality, and whose sentences are more tinged with mercy than with severity, and who are guided by the rules of natural justice rather than by strict principles of law. Bar there is none, there being only one gentleman in the colony who is eligible for its privileges, and he, being but a visitor, has been compelled to decline the very kind and courteous offer of the Chief Justice to admit him.

I have visited a great many places, great and small, but this is the first place I remember to have found without a member of the long robe. Is the privation a blessing or an evil? Lawyers are often considered great evils, and I am ready to admit that the charge is sometimes well-founded; but I fear the old saying is true, that they are "necessary evils." Their want in Victoria is supplied by the courtesy of the Chief Justice allowing parties, litigants, to have advisers, who are permitted great latitude in his court by their taking powers of attorney from their clients to appear for them. The duty has hitherto been performed by two American citizens, lawyers from San Francisco, who I hope are having what is commonly called in the classical language of the place they come from "quite a fine time of it."

In the criminal court the accused are allowed to have the assistance of a lawyer or friend, who is permitted every facility except the privilege of pleading, which latter privilege, to be fair and put both parties on an equal footing, is denied to the Crown as prosecutor. Not exactly denied either: the Crown solicitor refrains from pleading – an advantage which he cannot well help foregoing, as he is also ineligible to the privileges of the bar. This state of matters will, no doubt, soon be remedied. The Government will do what is required to supply present deficiencies, both as respects the judiciary and bar, to the extent necessary to represent the Crown. In view of this result, as I know from direct correspondence that legal gentlemen in England desire to come out and try their fortunes in this country, I trust you will allow me to explain to my professional brethren which of them are eligible for admission to practice. Such are, as barristers, "such persons only as shall have been admitted as barristers in England or Ireland, or advocates of the Court of Session of Scotland, or to the degree of doctor of civil law at the University of Oxford, Cambridge, or Dublin." […]

It has been almost universally supposed that the home Government committed a mistake, so serious a mistake as to have retarded the growth of the colony, by appointing the local head of the Hudson's Bay Company the Governor of the Queen, both offices in one person being incompatible. […] This very unpopular [measure] I will try to justify in a few words. The Hudson's Bay Company owned the whole island; the fee of the soil was in them absolutely. They were the lords paramount. No one else could sell or buy or appropriate an inch of land. The earth and its fulness belonged to them. They had the only establishments in the land. All the houses were theirs. They owned the ships, the batteaux, and the canoes that kept communication with the rest of the world open, that brought the necessaries of life to the island, and

that rendered its inland waters accessible to the traveler for all purposes of business or of pleasure. The horses to be ridden, the cows to give milk, and the sheep to supply mutton for the table were theirs. The trade was theirs, and the traders were their debtors; the farmers were their tenants; the other residents were their servants and dependents. There were a few who claimed to be independent. This small tribe was composed of some old "servants" who had retired on bits of land – good, decently conducted persons, who left the service under the company's sanction; some equally old servants, but of bad habits, given to the bottle, who were discarded; and one or two wrong-headed adventurers who bought farms of the company, but never paid for them, and were consequently "independent" only in so far as they did not wear the company's livery. The Indians were not exactly the company's vassals, for the policy was to pay the savages for every service they performed, however trivial; but the authority which the management and tact of the company had established placed the Indians under their control.

Now, just fancy the position of a gentleman in no way connected with the body which owned all these worldly goods, wielding all the power incidental to such ownership, coming out to govern the island, of which this body in its corporate capacity was the lord and master – the owner, sole and entire. Who was he to govern? If he were to exercise the duties of his office at all he must govern the Hudson's Bay Company's people; for the Governor tells us himself that, after nearly two years' residence, when he left there were only 30 settlers on the island, and some of these were "servants" who had purchased lands.

Under the circumstances I cannot well conceive of a more difficult task than to govern the Company's people – men composed of various classes; but the upper "servants," nearly all gentlemen by education, association, and habits, and some of them gentlemen by birth, allied to ancient and proud families in the old country, accustomed all their lives to look for rules of conduct from the "chief" of their own society, call it "council," "committee," "directory," or any technicality by which it was known, would naturally look askance if they should be required to obey a new Governor unconnected with the company. Besides the awkwardness of these "subjects" there were other elements which made the position of a Royal Governor anything but a dignified one. The company, being bound to defray all the expenses of the possession of the island by their arrangement with the Colonial office, had to pay the Governor his salary, his passage out, and such like vulgar details.

I have been informed that the company's people who came in contact with the [first] Governor[27] were very civil, polite and respectful in their intercourse with him. This was natural from men of their breeding. They were good friends on the whole, a little sparring with the chief factor excepted. But without a staff; without civil or military support; without a house, a horse, or an ass, a boat, gig, or canoe, except what the company gave him; *in the company's territory* – to be paid by the company (I say *"to be"* paid, because he says he never did receive his salary, which I think very wrong) – obliged to solicit the company for everything, it is clear that the Governor was in a false position, and that he acted sensibly in going home. It is equally clear

[27] Richard Blanshard, governor from 1849-1851.

to me that the home Government supplied his place in a sensible, practical and judicious manner, by making, with a good grace, having been satisfied of his fitness, the man Governor *de jure,* who was by force of circumstances, and who could not well help being, Governor *de facto.* The union of the offices of Governor and chief factor was a necessity of the times, and justified by circumstances. Now, that the times and the circumstances are changing, the union, being no longer desirable, is not to continue.

Winter and scarcity[28] (December, 1858)

VICTORIA, VANCOUVER'S ISLAND, DEC. 17.

Since I despatched my last letter, dated the 1st and 4th inst., the winter of Vancouver's island has fairly set in. […] The Fraser River is now at its lowest stages of water in consequence of the freezing of the snow in the upper regions of the Cascades and Rocky Mountains, the consequence of which is that the two American steamers which plied on the river got aground some days ago and are still hard and fast, the Maria about 10 miles below the confluence of the Harrison River, and the Enterprise several miles higher up, both lying on sand-pits in the Fraser. The want of sufficient power in the machinery of these boats is partly the cause of their predicament.

A good deal of ice had formed in the lower portion of the Fraser, between its mouth and Langley, which stopped the navigation of the river for about ten days, but it is now open again.

Considerable hardship is being suffered in the upper country from the scarcity of provisions. At Bridge River, a tributary of the Fraser, the miners are reduced to horseflesh procured from the Indians at one to one dollar and a half the pound, and the severity of the cold of course increases their sufferings. A few, in attempting the passage down to Langley in open boats, are said to have perished from frost bite. So say current reports; but although I have spoken to several persons from the upper country, I cannot trace the story to an authentic source. Many have *heard,* but none have *seen* these melancholy occurrences. Sometimes the victims have become a pretty to cold and sometimes to hunger. No one can tell which fate befell them.

All accounts, however, go to confirm what I have heretofore reported in my several letters of the richness of the upper Fraser River country at and about the forks of the Fraser and Thompson, Bridge River, and the country bordering on New Caledonia, far up in the interior. The only drawback is the difficulty of communication – a difficulty which will be removed next summer when the Lilooet route is perfected. This route, which obviates the dangers of the rapids and removes the delays of the Fraser River route from the mouth of Harrison River up to the Forks, will be fully available next summer and will enable sufficient stores of provisions to be thrown into the upper country before the approach of next winter. The corps of Sappers and Miners which the home Government has most judiciously sent out will lend efficient

[28] From Fraser, D. (1859, February 17). BRITTISH COLUMBIA. *The London Times*, p. 9.

aid towards the opening up of the interior – a work of the first importance to the new colony.

One important fact seems clearly established from the information of returning miners – namely, that the severity of the winter need not drive the miners out of the country. From all I can learn the suspension of labour will be short in the upper mining regions of British Columbia – certainly not longer than I have seen in the mountainous mining region of California. All the miners agree that if they had sufficient provisions they would have remained in the interior all through the winter, and those now leaving for California intend to return in the spring. Batches of them come down here occasionally, some of whom remain in Victoria for a couple of months, while others disperse themselves over the neighbouring countries of Washington and Oregon, and others go to California, where they have ties of various kinds; but nearly all with the avowed intention of returning. In another year a good deal of this winter migration will be stopped by the comforts, employment and amusements which the rapid growth of Victoria will afford to the weary miner, jaded by his summer campaign. No man seeks amusement with a keener zest; the theatre and dancing saloon have peculiar charms for him.

The majority of the returned miners are satisfied with their earnings. On Bridge River many were making the enormous sum of $30 a-day each. Indeed, the abundance of gold in that region is confirmed by the quality of dust which comes to Victoria. I am informed that gold of a finer quality than any yet found in the lower country has been lately discovered near the confluence of the Thompson and Fraser and on Bridge River, while we have abundant evidence of the finding of "coarse" gold in that region. There is a considerable quantity of this kind of gold at present in Victoria in the shape of chunks and flakes of some size, which is the more valuable (being of a higher ley) than the fine dust, as it can be washed out without the aid of quicksilver. […]

DECEMBER 25.

The arrival of the mail steamers which ply between San Francisco and this place is so uncertain that I think it advisable to avail myself of the opportunity afforded by the departure to-day of the Pacific, one of the private steamers which makes an occasional trip, to forward a letter. […]

Owing to the cold weather in the mining country, mining is generally suspended for the present. About the middle of February it is expected the winter will be over, and that miners can resume their operations throughout the interior, while in many places more favoured in point of climate, work can be resumed earlier.

A correspondent of the *Victoria Gazette,* who has been for some time and is still traveling in the mineral region, has supplied that paper with several communications which have been published here, and from which, as I believe the information to be reliable, and that it will be useful to persons intending to emigrate, I will make some extracts. His first letter was written at the Lower Fountain, a place situated many miles – say 50 to 55 – beyond – that is, north-west of – the forks of Thompson and Fraser Rivers. He reports nothing but what he has seen and heard in his journey, and the proprietors of the *Gazette* vouch for his veracity.

In speaking of the country extending for about 200 miles to the northward and westward of the junction of Fraser and Thompson Rivers, and including the mining country about Bridge River, he reports very favourably. Of the country on the Fraser River, at a distance from its mouth of about 220 miles, he remarks:-

"The two banks of the river at this place, and to a great extent for a long distance above and below, consist of benches, or table lands, rising with great regularity the one above the other. Seen at a distance, they resemble terraces, and from the uniformity of the slopes and level surfaces, look like works of art rather than of nature. They are covered, as are also the adjacent mountains and bottoms, with a luxuriant growth of bunch grass, and beautified with scattering pine trees. Over these plateaus it is easy and pleasant traveling, they being so clear and level that wagons can pass with facility over them everywhere, except where they are cut by water-courses. In some places, you may travel over them for miles without deviating from a direct line, or meeting with the slightest obstruction."

In this neighbourhood he found miners making as follows:-

"A Frenchman earning $20 a-day; 15 to 20 men working with rockers variously making from $3 to $15 a-day to the hand. With sluices they think $10 could be made at all seasons of the year. Going on 12 or 15 miles, and passing some 20 miners scattered along the river making from $4 to $8 per day, I reached 'Rose's Bar,' on which there are now 30 or 40 miners making $3 to $15 a-day. The average pay is at least $5 a-day to the hand."

He then passes to "Foster's Bar," of which he says:-

"Many rich spots were found upon it at low water, and as high as $50 to the hand was taken out for many days in succession. It still pays moderately well with the rocker. Large wages can hereafter only be made by sluicing. About 50 men on the Bar working with rockers."

The next place visited was

"Fountain Bar, lying in an indentation of the table land on which the town of Fountainville is situated, and about two miles below it:- A good deal of work has been done here with rockers, the dirt paying even when carried several hundred yards to the water. Last fall, a company composed of Germans, French, and Italians, having claims here, dug a ditch to bring water from a small lake a few miles east of the fountain. This ditch at present supplies three or four sluice-heads, and could easily be made to furnish more. It was the first work of the kind completed in this vicinity, and cost about $5,000, more than half of which consisted of their own labour. They paid their hands $6, and the whip-sawyers $8 a day and board, while at work on it. The company have put up comfortable cabins, and are now running three sluices, and working 15 men, with an average yield of $12 a-day to the hand. They have dirt enough to last them for years, the entire top dirt paying 3 feet down, and if well managed, the enterprise can hardly fail to enrich its owners. I was informed by one of their number that they took out $1,500 in one day in October, a statement I found confirmed in other quarters."

I never want a better criterion of the riches of a mining location than the rate of wages. Here the miners were paying $6 and $8 besides board, costing at least $1

a-day more, for assistance, a clear proof that the "claim" would give the miner a return sufficient to pay such high wages and leave a profit to himself. Passing numerous isolated camps for 30 miles beyond Fountain Ville, the traveler found the miners realizing $10 a-day to the hand, $5 and $6 a-day, from $3 to $6 a-day, until he arrived at a place bearing the euphonous title of Dancing Bill's Bar. Here the miners told him they could make $40 a-week to the man with ease. At Strangler's Bar the men were doing about the same as at the place last mentioned. Coming down he fell in with two men prospecting along the water's edge, a little above the mouth of the Bridge River. They had been at work three hours, and on cleaning up found $21 and a bit in the rocker. He then gets to Bridge River, of which we have lately heard a good deal of favourable character, on account of the gold on it being coarser than that found on the Fraser. This river is a tributary of the Fraser and falls into it on the west side, midway between Upper and Lower Fountain villages, some 60 miles beyond the junction of Thompson's River. The correspondent discourses of the river and its product very intelligently:-

"On arriving at Bridge River I proceeded up it some 20 miles, making inquiries and inspecting operations everywhere as I went along. This is an impetuous stream, rushing through a canal-like channel worn deeply into a hard slate rock, leaving little chance for bars to form upon it. There are about 200 men now on this river working with various results, a man making $20 or $30 one day, and hardly as many cents the next. The gold here lies much in pockets and crevices, causing great variations in the daily yield. The dust is coarser than that generally found on the Fraser, though the average pay is not so large. Four dollars a day would probably be a fair estimate of the wages made here with rockers. There are five or six parties working with sluices and making about double that sum. The gold found here consists of thin scales quite uniform in shape and much resembling small shot flattened out. It assays better than the Fraser dust, a lot of it lately sent to the Mint giving, as I am informed, $16 60c. to the ounce, while the latter assayed but $14 90. This is owing not likely to any differences in the quality of the dust itself, but to the fact that Fraser River dust, being finer, is worked with quicksilver while the other is not." […]

Returning from Bridge River, and pursuing his course down the west bank of the Fraser, he

"Encountered no more miners until reaching French Bar, two miles below. This bar, like Rose's, Foster's, Mormon, and some others, has been pretty well worked over, and, like those, paid largely at an early day. A ditch has just been completed, bringing water on this bar sufficient to work three or four sluices. There is no work being done now with rockers, but those working with sluices make from $12 to $14 a-day to the hand. The bar is large and the pay dirt will probably last a long time."

This gentleman concludes his letter, from which I have been quoting, with the following remarks:- […]

"I consider these diggings extremely variable and uncertain. I have seen one man making large wages in his claim, while another but a few yards distant could make nothing. And it frequently happens that a party, by striking a lead or pocket, will take out several ounces in a day, and not make half an ounce for a week after.

This feature of the diggings, while it tends to stimulate the more hopeful and sanguine, is equally calculated to dishearten those of an opposite temperament, and hence the conflicting opinions entertained as to the character of these mines even by those who have worked in them, and the difficulty arriving at a fair average of wages. I do not desire to become the ardent advocate of these mines, or to encourage any one to come to them at this late stage of the season. The weather here is growing cold; some snow has fallen even in the valleys, and there are indications that winter is at hand. It still remains to be seen whether men can work at mining here during the winter months or not. I fear they will be able to do but little."

This letter was written on the 22d of November.

On the 28th of November the same gentleman writes a second letter from Pavilion village, a place still higher up on Fraser River. This second letter agrees so perfectly with accounts which I have had from reliable persons of the locality spoken of, conveys so much information of an interesting character, and so completely overturns the depreciatory accounts published of British Columbia by the California press, that I think it ought to be generally circulated as a fair statement of facts. I therefore copy it *in extenso*:-

Pavilion, Upper Fraser River, Nov. 28, 1858

In my last letter, written at the Fountain two days since, I gave you a brief account of a tour through this section of the mines, promising in my next to say something as to their probable extent, duration, and productiveness. This promise I proceed to redeem:-

MAGNITUDE OF THE GOLDFIELDS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

That the auriferous deposits of this region are spread over a considerable scope of country is apparent from the fact that paying diggings have already been found on the Fraser River, extending from Fort Hope almost to Fort Alexander, a continuous distance of nearly 400 miles. Among the tributaries of this stream, Thompson and Bridge rivers are known to be auriferous, the latter sufficiently so to have already highly rewarded those who have laboured upon it as high up as 35 or 40 miles from its mouth, while the former has been ascertained to have many bars that will pay in its bed. On two of its confluents – Nicholas and Bonaparte Rivers – good diggings are reported to have been recently discovered. How many more of the numerous branches of these streams shall yet be found abounding in gold remains to be seen, little or no prospecting having thus far been done upon them.

Nor is the extent of this goldfield likely to be limited to those rivers and their sources. Coarse gold was found about six weeks since by some packers while exploring for a mule route around Lake Seton. It was discovered on a large creek flowing into the outlet of the lake at a point about 15 miles from the Fraser. The dust was apparently of high standard value. At two places on the Lillooet River bars have been found that will warrant working with a sluice. The first of these is on the east side of the stream, 10 miles above Port Douglas, where a party are now washing with sluices with very satisfactory results. When I passed the spot they had been at work but two days; the first day three men took out $14 50c., the next day, $18. They showed me

the gold, which was fine, like that found on the Lower Fraser. The other bar is 20 miles above Port Douglas. It is very extensive, and promises to pay as well as the one first named, though it has not yet been worked. Bars similar to these are abundant on the Lillooet, and the fact of them having been prospected was owing to the accident of a log cabin having been built near them, and not because they seemed more likely to contain gold than the others. For 100 miles above the Pavilion, and beyond what is termed the Canoe Country, the banks of Fraser River have been proved to pay even better than below, the gold being coarser and more easily saved, as well as more plentiful.

It will thus be seen that the goldfields of British Columbia, ascertained to be paying, to say nothing of rumoured discoveries beyond, are tolerably extensive. They do not, it is true, rival those of California or Australia in magnitude, but that they cover a large scope of country, and will give employment to a large population, is settled beyond controversy or question.

RICHNESS OF THE MINES

To claim that the Fraser River mines are rich, or that labour has been generally as well rewarded in them as in the mines of California at an early day, would be idle. I might say much in explanation of the numerous failures that attended the first adventurers to these mines, without making myself their apologist – how the miners came too soon and in too great numbers – how the river kept up, and of the many disadvantages under which they laboured; all might be enlarged upon were it not now well known to the public. In regard to this section, however, I may say those pioneers who worked here last winter and spring uniformly made large wages, and that those who came in since have been able to remain, paying the enormous prices they have done for provisions, proves that they must have had good paying claims most of the time. The cost of living here, with other necessary expenditures, could not have been less than $4 a-day to the man, yet I find all have been able to defray their current expenses, while many have accumulated large sums – sufficiently large, in a majority of cases, with those who have been here any length of time, to lay in a winter's stock of provisions, even at the present high prices.

That better average wages can be made here than in any part of California at present there is no doubt. This can be done even with the present want of ditches and indifferent appliances for taking out the gold. These diggings, owing to the fineness of the dust and the difficulty of saving it, require to be worked with sluices – a mode that has been introduced to but a limited extent as yet, owing to the want of lumber, as well as of wheels or ditches for supplying water. When sluices shall have been generally brought into use more than twice the amount now realized can be taken out of hand.

Another cause that will tend to render these mines highly remunerative in the aggregate is, that every man will be able to secure a claim, and that but little capital will be required for starting operations; hence every one will enjoy the full fruits of his own labour and none need remain idle. For this winter, owing to the lateness with which provisions have been got in, not much will be done; no one here expects it; the utmost that will be aimed at, as a general thing, will be to make enough to pay

expenses of living, to prospect a little, and be on hand at the breaking up of winter. With the coming of spring large operations will be entered into, and all here entertain the most sanguine anticipations, or rather, I should say, fullest confidence as to the results.

THEIR DURABILITY

That these mines will be found not only rich and extensive, but also lasting, I am fully satisfied. Apart from their vast extent of surface, the diggings, at one time thought to be shallow, are now known to run downward in many localities to a good depth. It has lately been ascertained that not only the bars along the river, but many of the lower benches or table lands contain sufficient gold to pay, where water can be brought upon them, which, in most cases, can easily be done. These benches are not only numerous, but often of great extent, and would afford employment for a large number of men for many years to come. Little or no search has been made as yet for drift diggings or quartz, though there are abundant indications that both, of a paying character, exist. Fine ledges of quartz, in fact, present themselves almost everywhere, though no thorough examination has been made of their quality. The banks oof Bridge River consist of alternate strata of slate and quartz rock, the most favourable possible geological formation for gold. I would venture then, after having seen considerable of the mines in this quarter, to express the confident opinion that they will prove sufficiently extensive, productive, and lasting to warrant a large immigration to this country in the ensuing season, and that British Columbia is destined to become another great gold-producing region, ranking next to California and Australia in the amount she will hereafter annually yield of this precious commodity.

The only criticism I will make upon this letter is, that other published accounts recently received from Fort Yale confirm much of what it and the first letter contain.

The same correspondent writes a third letter from Port Douglas on the Lillooet route, of which I lately spoke, as now traveled to the Upper Fraser River country, because it avoids the delays and dangers of the navigation of that river. He says many of the miners are coming down from the interior and abandoning mining for the winter, owing to the cold and the high price of provisions – "some to spend a couple of months at Port Douglas or at Victoria, returning to the mines in February – others going to Washington Territory, Oregon, or California, most of these also intending to come back in the spring, their convictions almost uniformly being favorable to the country as a mining region." He says Port Douglas is increasing rapidly, and, notwithstanding the very exorbitant prices of provisions and clothing, and the unreasonable rates of freight and land-carriage, "several parties, some of them formerly prominent business men in San Francisco, are now making preparations for establishing themselves in trade at Port Douglas." This is a significant fact. Finally, this observant and enterprising traveler winds up with the following opinion of the prospects of the country:-

"In closing I cannot refrain from repeating the language of encouragement I have already held. Let none be discouraged – let none whose lot has been cast in and

whose interests have been linked with those of British Columbia despair. After carefully and somewhat extensively surveying this vast field I am satisfied it is destined soon to become the theatre of great enterprises and industrial operations – the scene of activity and business, the home of a great and thriving people. Just at present trade is a little stagnant, and the labour market depressed. But this is not to last – the end is nigh. 'Now is the winter of our discontent.' A few months will initiate a new order of things, and the sun of prosperity will arise, not soon to set, on the industry and progress of British Columbia."

Very considerable quantities of gold-dust are continually arriving in Victoria, but I have no means of ascertaining the amount. The productiveness of the mines is now quite settled in the affirmative.

Immigrants have not yet arrived in large numbers, and it is much to be wished that the arrivals will be gradual, so as not to overstock the population suddenly. […]

At Victoria business is pretty brisk. There are two, and sometimes three, steamers engaged in carrying merchandise to Langley. Immigrants are coming in by every vessel from San Francisco, and full confidence is entertained in the future growth and prosperity of the place. The Orestes, with 500 passengers from Australia for Victoria, had to put in for refreshment at Honolulu, and may be soon expected. The major portion of the immigrants for this place and British Columbia are bullied into remaining in San Francisco by the prejudicial stories told them of the failure of the gold mines, and of the frightful severity of the climate. For my own part, I am glad that population does not pour into the country prematurely, as happened in California in its early days. All classes of emigrants will find spring and summer the best seasons to arrive in. Work will be more abundant in and about Victoria, money will more freely circulate than at present, and the mills will be accessible and the weather agreeable. A sudden influx of population into a new country is a thing I view with horror.

"An uninterrupted flow of good news"[29] (April, 1859)

[APRIL 10.]

The site of the future capital of British Columbia is on the north side of Fraser River, at a point distant from what mariners call the mouth of the river, and more particularly known as the Sand Heads, about 20 miles, and actually 15 miles up the river, reckoning the distance from Point Garry, which is its entrance proper. The site has been selected for military reasons chiefly. It has a considerable extent of level land in its rear in a valley which runs back to the coast range of mountains; and on both sides of Pitt River, only four miles distant (higher up the river) there are extensive prairies, open land, described to me by a gentleman who has been on the spot, as producing "luxuriant meadow grass," the extent of which he estimated roughly at 8 to 10 square miles.

[29] From Fraser, D. (1859, June 3). BRITISH COLUMBIA. *The London Times*, p. 12.

Colonel Moody, the Lieutenant-Governor, has been so busy for many weeks preparing the site of the town, with the assistance of his corps of engineers, that he has not yet been able to have any of the country lands surveyed. The surveys will be commenced next month. As a rule no land is permitted to be occupied in the colony until it has been first surveyed, and until the Government officers are in a situation to give the purchaser a muniment of title for his protection.

This is a very proper and necessary rule in principle, but, as its rigid application might involve delay, disappointment, and loss to persons wanting farming lands to cultivate immediately, a discretion is to be exercised in relaxing the rule in favour of such applicants for land, so that they can get immediate possession pending the surveys.

The town lots will be sold in about a month. The capital has been named Queenborough, after Her Majesty, who, it is believed in this country, is graciously pleased to take a warm interest in the new colony.

APRIL 12.

Since the date of my last letter there has been an uninterrupted flow of good news from the mines. The miners are flocking to the more remote regions, the Upper Fraser River country, the Thompson River, Bridge River, and Canoe districts, where new goldfields, each richer than the least, are continually being discovered, and in all of which the gold is coarser (of larger size) and pays better than the fine "dust" of the lower portions of the Fraser River. We have abundant evidence in Victoria of the truth of the glowing accounts brought down in the sight of the gold itself, and the fact that all the miners who come down return again to the diggings with fresh supplies of provisions, except some who leave for California with their "piles," as they call a good haul, or a competency, according to the relative notions of the lucky fortune-hunters. Further proof is afforded by the activity of trade, by the gold taken by the merchants, the express offices, and conveyed by the steamers.

I quite believe it when I hear of individual miners making all sorts of earnings, from $10 to $50 a day; and there is no doubt of the wealth and extent of the gold region.

The Brother Jonathan steamer carried away $98,736 in gold dust yesterday to San Francisco. This is only a fortnight's accumulation, and is independent of what the regular (mail) steamer will take, hourly expected to arrive.

An important discovery in gold seeking has lately been made on Fraser River, the exact locality of which is kept secret, but it is known to be on the Lower Fraser, and not far from Fort Hope. A quantity of what the miners call "black sand" has been found on the shore, which on having been tried here was found to produce at the rate of $7,000 of pure gold to the ton of black sand – an enormous yield. This stuff is composed entirely of iron pyrites and gold, the former being easily removed by amalgamation, leaving a product of gold worth $16 to $17 an ounce.

As I have said, the exact locality of this deposit is not known, ,except to a few. It has been left by the stream of the river on the shore, where it lies exposed, now that the river is at its lowest stage, in long ridges of considerable extent. One ton of it is to be sent to San Francisco to be tested fully on a large scale.

The recent success of the miners has carried away nearly all the able-bodied men from Victoria, and labour of a common kind has, in consequence, risen to prices far above its value to employers. All mechanics get $6 a day. Labourers ask $5, and many of them get $3, and some $4. Servants are worth anything, according to the necessities of the helpless master. Forty dollars a-month and "found" is the ordinary rate for a man who knows nothing in particular – who can do nothing well – such as you are accustomed to in happy old England, but who will profess to make himself generally useful. A woman servant gets $30 a-month. This is pretty well for the "servant gals" of a place only a few months old, commercially speaking.

Provisions are also very high, owing to the sudden increase of population, which continues to arrive in more or less numbers by every steamer from San Francisco, and more particularly owing to the loss by starvation of great numbers of cattle in Oregon, whence our supplies of beef came. And it is to be feared prices will continue high, for the last winter, being unusually severe on this coast, has destroyed many cattle in California as well as in Oregon. This island does not contain stock sufficient to supply a moiety of the consumption.

This is really the dark side of the picture of a gold country. Persons who do not and cannot benefit by the production of gold suffer sharply by what enriches traders and labourers. My two servants cost me at the rate of 324*l.* a-year, including their board, but not calculating interest on the cost of the house they occupy. How Government officers, particularly those gentlemen who are married, are to weather the next year, I really cannot well conceive.

Labourers and mechanics of every sort and class and house servants and gardeners are much wanted, and all who can come will find ready employment at high wages. Clerks, and such persons as have to depend upon their mental accomplishments, on the other hand, will not do well unless they have engagements beforehand. We want thews and sinews for the rough work of a new country, and are not yet ripe for the aids and accessories of refined life, except to a limited extent. I ought to except teachers, however, who are much wanted in all branches, and of both sexes.

I might have stated that the lucky miners themselves pay highly in consequence of the state of things which their success has produced. Freights, labour and mule packing are so high at present that it costs 52*l.* per ton to convey provisions to some of the more remote mining locations in the canoe country and other distant regions. To enable the non-commercial reader to appreciate this charge I would mention that the freight on a ton of merchandise from London to Vancouver's Island is only 5*l.* What a commentary on the amount of their earnings! The ability of the miners to pay Victoria prices for their provisions, with this enormous inland freight superadded, is indubitable proof of the richness of the mines. […]

Her Majesty's ship Tribune, Captain Hornby, has just returned from Johnson's Straits on the north side of the island, to which point she conveyed numerous tribes of northern Indians from Victoria, who had sojourned here during the winter, and who were beginning to make themselves rather troublesome to the citizens by their raids on cattle, turnip stealing, and petty thefts generally.

"No more agreeable place to settle"[30] (May, 1859)

VICTORIA, VANCOUVER'S ISLAND, MAY 10.

The following is a summary of the mining news for the last fortnight:-

The correspondent of the *Victoria Gazette*, at present traveling in the mines on a tour of inspection, writes that the mining locations which extend from about 15 miles below Fort Hope to that place on Fraser river yield an average of $5 a day to the hand, but that the miners, not satisfied with so small a return, had gone higher up, to the Canoe Country, in search of richer diggings. The town of Fort Hope is growing rapidly. Close to the town dry diggings were producing such results as 6s. to the pan of earth. Several of the "bars" on the river were yielding $5 to $8 a day to the man. One man, with a rocker, made $39 in five days, and the week after made $21 in three days. "This is a little above the average, none making less than $5 per day, and some reaching $8." Of the mining between Fort Hope and Fort Yale, a distance of 15 miles, we learn that-

"This side of Yale many of the miners are taking out big amounts of gold daily, some of them almost fabulous. Victoria Bar is, at present, the source of some as profitable mining as any reasonable man could desire. Puget Sound Bar is also yielding a handsome return to several companies. On Texas, Emory's, and other bars, where the 'pay-dirt' lies high up, so that the work will not be retarded by the high water, many of the miners will, doubtless, stop the entire season. And "on Union, American, Puget Sound, Victoria, and Hill's Bars good wages are made; and upon the latter, which works 40 sluice heads, it is safe to put down the receipts at $6,000 per day, or $42,000 per week, clear of all expenses. A few sluices are taking out from $300 to $500 per day each; on miner on Hill's Bar, who has been laid up with sickness for some time, says his share has paid him $100 per day for the last month, he hiring a man to work in his place. I think Hill's Bar more nearly resembles the richer bars of California in its general features, location, &c., than any I have seen on this river, and induces the opinion that the gold is there deposited by the downward tending current."

Of the town of Fort Yale, which contains 152 houses, the writer says:-

"The appearance of the settlement as we approach from below is somewhat imposing, although there are no large or prominent buildings to attract the eye. Some of the houses are tastefully painted, and have an air of decided comfort as well as permanency. The Court-house, Gaol, (now empty), Post-office and Gold Commissioner's office are the only public edifices here at present, and I am told most of the structures now occupied for these purposes are temporary, it being the intention of Government to erect more suitable and substantial buildings on the Government reserve at a future day. The lower flat,now the site of the principal street, it is said, will also be vacated, with a view to the introduction of a string of sluices and washing for gold."

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[30] From Fraser, D. (1859, June 28). BRITISH COLUMBIA. *The London Times*, p. 10.

The streets of Yale may be said, without a stretch of the imagination, to "be paved with gold." But far more interesting and important is the pleasing account of a Sunday at Yale:-

"Every Sunday morning a sermon is preached by the Rev. Mr. Robson, Wesleyan Missionary, in the Court-house. In the afternoon, this zealous Christian preaches at one of the bars on the river, and again in the evening at Fort Hope, where he is about to erect a church and parsonage. One of the novelties of missionary labour on this river consists in the preacher paddling his own canoe up the rapid stream from Hope on Saturday, and returning, preaching at intervals, on the Sabbath, to the place of starting, with the current. The town is much more quiet and orderly than I had expected to find it; not a broil or disturbance of any description having marred the harmony of the place since my arrival, if I may except the not unmusical chant of the savages last Wednesday, upon the occasion of celebrating the nuptials of their medical tyhee and a dusky maiden."

The account of Fort Yale is wound up with the following remarks. The "Little Canon"[31] mentioned is the first gorge of Fraser river, which opens a short way beyond the town:-

"Considerable excitement is created here to-day by the development of more auriferous wealth near the little Canon, where parties are said to be taking out a bit to the pan, with pay-dirt five feet deep. The more I see of this country the more thoroughly I am convinced that it has not been even prospected as yet, and every man who now leaves it I believe tramples his own fortune in the dust."

The journey has been continued up the Fraser river; and for the first 20 miles beyond Fort Yale the writer reports at all the mining locations much more than average wages are being made, and that any man who is willing to work gold under the surface of the ground can find it. The word "under" is emphasized in allusion to the numbers of idle men who "wait on Providence," "speculating on the chances of something turning up," without labour, on the surface. Like Mr. Micawber, they will have "to wait" a long time. At one place at which the writer had arrived "one party of five men weighed $118, the result of the day's labour."

Higher up he came to a mining location of which the following is in his report:-

"Island Bar is one of the richest localities of the Lower Fraser. During the month of March a company of three men took out the snug little sum of $10,000, and last winter, when they were compelled to build bonfires upon the claim in order to thaw the ground, they averaged $25 per day to the man. Several parties are possessed of good claims, and when the water recedes all the modern improvements will be brought into use to wing-dam the river here. The last pan of dirt taken out of the claim while the water was rising a short time since paid four dollars. It is believed by many old California miners that the river has deposited this vast bed of wealth, and they will stick to the claims until the now rising water again recedes."

Of the mining country many miles beyond the places just mentioned, near the junction of the Fraser and Thompson rivers, we are informed on good authority that the dry diggings are producing from $8 to $10 a day. Several "flats" in this vicinity

[31] In modern spelling, canyon.

are being profitably worked – a fact corroborated by the announcements that "the miners are bringing in a ditch of some miles in length for the purpose of working them, that they have located themselves permanently, and have a good season's work before them." Of several other "bars" on the Fraser, near this place, it is also reported that some "are paying handsomely" and others "paying well," while on the Thompson river, at several of the "locations," the miners "are making $15 to $30 per day to the man." Such is the tenour of the intelligence received from British Columbia during the last 14 days.

In my last letter I mentioned that a general exodus of the miners was taking place from the Lower Fraser to the Canoe Country. This country begins at a distance of about 120 miles north-west of the Forks of Thompson and Fraser rivers. It is distant about 300 miles from the mouth of Fraser river, by which it is watered; and it extends to New Caledonia. It is a level country affording abundant pasture and capable of much agricultural improvement. Being beyond the coast range of mountains, it is drier and milder than the country lower down, and is, on the whole, supposed to be a desirable place for settlement where agricultural produce could be raised for the supply of the mineral regions of British Columbia. Some short time back the most extravagant reports of its mineral wealth got spread among the mining population of the Fraser and Thompson rivers, which had the effect of exciting the fervid imaginations of the miners to a degree which impelled them thither from their paying locations – from such places as I have just above described, and which ought to have satisfied ordinary cupidity – in search of the fabulous wealth of the new [El] Dorado.

The remoteness of the Canoe Country, in a country without roads, carried the miners beyond the reach of supplies. The traders could not follow them with sufficient despatch to meet their daily wants; their own small stocks, carried on their backs, soon became exhausted, and they, in consequence, soon became "disgusted," to use their own term when they wish to express dissatisfaction, and they returned in shoals "sadder" and, it is to be hoped, "wiser men" than they went to the Canoe Country; some complaining that they "were taken in," others reproaching themselves for having left good paying "locations" for a will-o'-the-wisp, and a large number hurling anathemas on the "merchants" for overcharging in the prices, and on the muleteers for "laying it on so thick" on the freight of provisions. The merchants and newspaper writers gave the complaint another turn. They blamed "the Government" for not making roads. "Roads," "roads to the mines," "roads to the Upper Country," "roads" everywhere, are the burdens of the songs sung at present, and I suppose they will continue in vogue until a "new grievance" is started. The Government has made one road, and it cost 14,0000*l.*, and if it had the means it would extend and improve this road and make more; but when I hear side by side the cry for roads, the refusal to pay the miners' license fee, and a strong censure upon all taxation of a feasible and just character, I really cannot see how "the Government" is to get the money to "make roads" with. Roads, like other good things, will come in time; and until their advent it would be well that the miners should remain on the Lower Fraser river, where they can, with ordinary industry and perseverance, make such earnings as I have reported

in the first portion of this letter on the authority of an eye-witness, and whose testimony is corroborated by gentlemen who have very lately traversed the same ground. […]

The one universal conclusion that every one arrives at – those who, like myself, have been in the mines, and those who derive reliable information from miners and travelers – is that there is plenty of gold in British Columbia, and that population alone is wanting to get it out.

Several miners have lately left the country for California. The croakers are disheartened at this circumstance, and prognosticate dire effects from it – stagnation of business, and the stoppage of immigration. For my own part, the fact gives me no uneasiness. The departures have not been much in excess of the arrivals for the last three months. Some go away for the best of all reasons, that they have made their "piles," and that they prefer enjoying the fruits of their toil in their own country in a more agreeable calling than mining. Some go to return; and others go whose absence is preferable to their company; in short, the account is nearly balanced. Miners, like all men who lead a life of excitement, are very easily dissatisfied with their lot. I am quite certain that if in the first years of California mining-life the miners in that country had had a place of refuge so near to them as San Francisco is to Victoria, with the same facilities of conveyance, thousands of "disgusted" miners would have left California.

The gold shipped in April from Victoria to San Francisco by two express companies amounted to 168,236 dollars. How much was sent by merchants and others in business, and how much taken by private hands, I have no means of ascertaining. $125,000 have been shipped this month in the last two steamers; and the Northerner, hourly expected, will take about $100,000.

To show the "chances" of mining, I may mention that two miners from Fraser river brought down with them to Victoria a few days ago "$5,000, the result of 13 days' sluice-washing of dirt which they had been throwing up for 40 days previous at Hill's Bar," already so frequently alluded to; nearly 19*l.* a-day. Such results, extravagant as they seem, agree with what I saw at Hill's Bar in September. The statement is corroborated by the deposit of the $5,000 above-mentioned in a house of business here. Another miner came down some short time ago with $4,000, the fruits of his labour in the Canoe Country.

These are instances of "lucky hits," but where all can make a *minimum* of 1*l.* a-day, all should be satisfied.

All kind of labour has risen in Victoria in consequence of the success of the miners, the miners' average earnings being the standard of value for all other labour. For instance, an Essex labourer whom I employ refused 16s. a rod for trenching my garden the other day; 1*l.* a rod was the lowest rate he would accept, which, for working 10½ [square feet] of land, ought to make him [wealthy] quickly.

Mechanics and labourers are in great demand, as considerable improvements are in progress at Victoria. […] There was a sale by auction of some land belonging to Government in Victoria last Tuesday, which brought such high prices as would evince a strong confidence in the future growth of the town. […]

Batches of Chinamen are beginning to find their way to Victoria, bound for the mines. I trust the prejudices which exist against their countrymen both in Australia and in California will not spring up in this country. It is a great mistake to think that these persons do no good to the country. They are, in fact, considerable consumers, and they practice a "good faith" in keeping their engagements that many Christians might imitate with advantage to their own morality, and to their creditors' profit and loss account.

It is to be hoped the Imperial Government will do something to assist labourers to emigrate from England, Ireland and Scotland to this country where they are so much wanted, where such high rates of wages prevail, and where the scarcity of labour sadly impedes the progress of the colony. I believe the usual course is for a colony to [disburse] funds to defray the expenses of immigrants, but at first this is out of the question in the cases of Vancouver's Island, and of British Columbia, for neither colony has any money. All the funds of the former have been applied rigidly to internal improvements, and the latter has not had time to collect any revenue; nor, indeed, is it possible to extract much from so small a population. I am quite sure, however, that both colonies would willingly agree to tax themselves to defray gradually any debt which would be contracted to the home Government in sending out emigrants of a suitable class. Both the colonies are at present sadly in want of more people to develop their very abundant resources, and profitable employment awaits all who come to settle in a country abounding in a rich soil, and blessed with a healthy and agreeable climate.

I can say that, after some considerable wandering in some of the finest climates of the world, I know no more agreeable place to settle in than Vancouver's Island.

More Tales of the Fraser River Gold Rush

The "first discovery of gold on the Fraser"[32] (1908)

Henry De Groot, explorer, prospector, and writer states that Chief Trader Maclean at Kamloops procured gold dust from the natives in that vicinity as early as 1852, but not enough to awaken suspicion as to its being in paying quantities, and that various parties at different times prospected the banks of the Thompson between 1855, the date of the discovery of the Colville mines, and 1858.

It was at Nicomen, on the Thompson near its junction with the Fraser, according to some authorities, that the first gold was found in paying quantities. James Douglas gives a very circumstantial account of it, writing in 1860. He says:

"Gold was first found on the Thompson River by an Indian, a quarter of a mile below Nicomen. He is since dead. The Indian was taking a drink out of the river; having no vessel, he was quaffing from the stream, when he perceived a shining pebble, which he picked up, and it proved to be gold. The whole tribe forthwith began to collect the glittering metal." […] Gold was found in the Fraser and its tributaries in 1856 and more substantially in 1857[33] and […] the news of these finds, conveyed through various channels, brought the rush of 1858. […] John Work, […] who had been in the Hudson's Bay Company's service on the Columbia River, in a letter dated from Victoria, the 6th of August, 1856, says: "Gold has been discovered at Colville, and even some found at Thompson's River and at Fort Hope about 80 miles above Langley. Some of the diggings are reported to have done well and high expectations are entertained, though it has not created much excitement among our men, and, owing to a destructive war that the Oregon and Washington territory citizens got themselves in with the Indians, which is not entirely over yet, it was not safe to go by the way of the Columbia, so that many adventurers from that quarter could not go, but we have lately learned that plenty are on their way there now and there are grounds to anticipate favorable results should, as is expected, gold be found plentiful."

There is living at Hope an old Hudson's Bay Company official named Yates, who came to Fort Langley in 1854, and has been on the river ever since. He joined the company away back in the forties in his native island of Scotland, where so many others were recruited, came up the Saskatchewan in 1849, crossed the Rockies in 1851 and came down to Fort Langley in 1854, at the time Mr. Yale was factor. […] This is his story of the first gold-mining, as taken from his lips verbatim:

THE FIRST EXCITEMENT

"The three men who took the first gold out of the Fraser I remember well. They went to Kamloops. They were going from there to Kootenay. They came up from Bellingham Bay and were going in with the Hudson's Bay Company train. They were too late. The train had gone before that. McLean of Kamloops, who was here with the

[32] From Gosnell, R. E. (1908, July 4). FIRST DISCOVERY OF GOLD ON FRASER. *The Province*, p. 21. Written by Robert Edward Gosnell (1860 – 1931).

[33] By John Ross and a group of Kanaka Indians, as detailed elsewhere in this chapter.

fall train afterwards – with ten or fifteen horses taking little stuff, such as medicines and so forth – McLean said 'you can come in with me to Kamloops. You can winter there, and I will pack your grub in from here, what you have with you (they went up in canoes). I will send enough horses to take you into the interior in the spring if you want to go.'

"Well, they agreed to go. And during the winter time – it was a very open winter – they thought they would go prospecting and they struck down the Tranquille and struck the Thompson and mined along as they went. They found gold, a little all the way down, and they called it Foster's bar and settled there. They were Joe Foster, Charles Adams and another, a Norwegian, I cannot remember his name. During the spring they made about $2000 on this bar and they came down then by the Fraser. There were no roads or anything then, but they worked their way down and took a canoe at Yale and came here to Hope. I saw the gold myself. That was where the excitement came from.

THE SHOOTING OF ADAMS

"From Hope they went down to Bellingham Bay to buy supplies, intending to come up here again and go through the canyon. They found they could get through the canyon by getting Indians. Charlie Adams, he got an Indian woman around Semiahmoo Bay somewhere. It appeared that there was a h——— that had had this woman, and it was from him that Adams took the woman. The h——— followed them to Keltchee, a place below Langley, where the two had some words and Adams was shot and killed. The h——— was hanged at Port Townsend. The coal miners there got word that Charlie Adams had been shot and they got the h——— and hanged him on the spot. There was no military or any other kind of law there then. I never heard of what became of the other men after that.

"After that the excitement raised and for days and days there were twenty and thirty boats and canoes coming – coming – coming all the time. Then came Governor Douglas who placed a steamboat a little below Fort Langley as a Custom-house to collect tolls – five dollars from every boat. There was no Fort Yale then. There were no houses there. They did not build a stockade at Yale, only a trading-house.

GOLD HAD NO VALUE

"In the three years before the gold excitement there were millions of dollars under my feet and I never knew it. I never saw the gold. We did not know the value of it, nor did the Indians. In 1857 Charlie Adams, after getting his gold, wanted to pay the Indians who brought him from Yale with gold dust. They knew nothing about it. All their business was done by barter. I had never seen a cent of money before 1858. Charlie Adams then wanted me to take the gold as an equivalent for goods with which to pay the Indians. He gave me an amount of gold dust worth about three dollars. It was the first I had ever seen. There was no talk about gold on the Fraser River before these men came down. I did not know where they had gone when they passed through the post the previous fall, and I was astonished when I saw them coming down again."

Hawaiians and early gold discoveries on the Fraser[34] (1908)

Thomas M. Seward of Victoria, who is enjoying a rest after years spent on the frontier, says that he is able to give information as to the first discovery of gold on the Fraser. The honor, he says, belongs to John Ross and a party of Kanakas[35] who had been driven out of the mountains by an early winter setting in, in the year 1857. Mr. Seward gives this information on the statements made to him by those who were on the spot at the time. The indication of this gold was at a point twelve miles below Lytton, the place being still known as Kanaka Bar. […]

Ross entered the employment of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1856[36]. At that time the company's boats, the Beaver and the Otter, were accustomed in the general trading done by them to run from Victoria up the Fraser to Fort Langley. From Fort Langley the carrying was done by batteau to Fort Hope, then under the charge of Factor Walker[37]. From Hope pack-trains were necessary to carry the supplies over the Hope Mountains to Kamloops. This packing was put in the charge of Ross.

The Hudson's Bay Company were jealous of the Indians entering any other trade except that of trapping and hunting. To have them engage in the carrying trade would have meant withdrawing them from the occupation of hunting, which, to the company, was the more lucrative. Accordingly, Mr. Seward points out the company assisted in the bringing in of a number of Kanakas, who had been found useful in California and elsewhere. These were employed in the carrying trade under Ross, packing supplies by means of cayuses over the Hope Mountains for six or seven months in the summer, when the snow of the passes permitted it.

The winter of '57, however, set in early, and to that fact is due the discovery of Kanaka Bar, the first finding of gold in the Fraser, according to the narrator.

Winter set in a month earlier than usual in the year '57. In consequence the passes on the line of carriage had to be deserted much sooner than expected. The party, of necessity, started on foot down the Thompson River for Lytton. At the mouth of the river a boat was got from the Indians, and the voyage continued until twelve

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[34] From GOLD FIRST FOUND ON FRASER BY ROSS AND KANAKAS. (1908, July 13). *The Province*, p. 3.

[35] Native Hawaiians, from the Hawai'ian kānaka ʻōiwi. The Hudson's Bay Company would at the time regularly employ Hawaiian workers in its Pacific operations. The names of Hawaiian pioneers can be found commemorated on bricks in downtown Victoria, British Columbia, to this day.

[36] In a 2012 pamphlet on Hudson's Bay Company servants, Boyd C. Pratt writes that "John Ross (c.1822 – 1863) [of mixed descent] was born into the fur trade and worked as a middleman at Forts McLoughlin and Victoria." The Hudson's Bay Company archives' biographical sheets do not mention his 1856 employment, but list a John Ross, native, as being employed as a middleman at Fort McLoughlin from 1840 to 1843, and a middleman and trader at Fort Victoria from 1843 to 1848.

[37] Donald Walker (d. 1912) "was an old Hudson's Bay factor, and crossed the Rockies in 1849, from York Factory." MR. DONALD WALKER, HUDSON'S BAY FACTOR, CROSSES THE DIVIDE. (1912, November 19). *The Vancouver Sun*, p. 5. He resigned from the Hudson's Bay Company in 1859 and joined the Cariboo gold rush in 1862. Of him, Isaac Coolidge (1837 – 1907) wrote in 1898, "He is one of the pioneers, having been in the Cariboo gold excitement, and used to drive a dog sleigh for the Hudson['s] Bay Co. over the old Telegraph trail." Coolidge, I. (1898, April 20). A RUN THROUGH YALE. *The Vancouver World*, p. 6.

miles below Lytton, where gold was struck. The bar was called Kanaka Bar, and has ever since been so known. […]

The clean-up of Ross was taken to Fort Langley, and thence sent on to Victoria to be in turn forwarded to San Francisco. Mr. Seward was in California at the time that the news of the discovery was announced there. The rush for the new fields was tremendous. Mr. Seward in '58 started [for Victoria]. He could not get passage by the regular boat, which refused any after the 700 [passenger] limit had been reached. But the D. M. Hall, a barque, long condemned, was pressed into the service, and this 600-ton vessel started out with 275 on board. It took three weeks to reach Victoria, which was a city of tents. Mr. Seward estimates that 30,000 people came from California for the new fields.

The trip to the Fraser was made by open canoe loaded practically to the gunwales. At Plumper's Pass a stop was made until the weather was declared suitable for the pull across the open strait. Mr. Seward had been a sailor, and his word was law with respect to the boat he occupied. The trip was made safely, but "God only knows how many were lost in crossing those waters," he says. From that time on he was clearly identified with the miners of British Columbia. Connection with the early days and the men of that time gives him an assured feeling that he is correct in placing the honor for the discovery of gold in the Fraser on John Ross and his Kanakas.

Governor Douglas on the Discovery of Gold[38] (1895)

Where and when gold was first found in paying quantities in British Columbia is still an open question. I have heard the hallowed spot located in various places, but I am disposed to accept the late Governor Douglas as the best authority on the question. His long connection with the Hudson's Bay Co. and his official capacity as Governor ought to qualify him to speak on such a subject. Talking the matter over with him, he assured me that the first gold was discovered by accident about a quarter of a mile below Nicomen on the Thompson River. An Indian, while drinking wine from the stream, observed some shining pebbles strange to him. He took them to Factor McLean at Kamloops by whom their value was a once recognized.

This version of the story is borne out by J. W. McKay – as to location, at least. According to this gentleman, who is an excellent authority, it appears that an Indian woman of the Nikaomin tribe married a French-Canadian and with him went to Walla Walla where they took up their abode. While there a few American miners happened to bring in some nuggets and indulged in very wonderful tales as to the richness of their discovery, which they magnified into mountains of gold. The K——n[39], upon seeing the shining metal, seemed somewhat surprised that any value was attached to it and declared that there was [an] abundance of similar stuff to be found in the streams of her country. This was good news for her French-Canadian and his

[38] From ODD TALKS WITH OLD TIMERS. (1895, June 8). *The Province*, p. 9.

[39] Chinook for 'woman', used at the time to refer to an Indigenous woman; currently offensive.

friends. A party was at once formed and headed by the K——n tracks were made for the Nicomen or Nikaomin. True to her word, the Indian brought her party to a bend in the river where the gold was found.

It is claimed by many that Pend d'Oreille was the site of the first gold discovery in B.C. and that the region would have forestalled the Fraser but for the hostility of the natives. From the Thompson prospectors naturally made their way to the Fraser and exaggerated reports quickly spread over Puget Sound and thence to California. This it was that create the Fraser River gold excitement.

"Just as she seemed ten years ago" (June, 1858)

An American perspective on the early Fraser River rush and the Indigenous people of British Columbia (then called New Caledonia).

SAN FRANCISCO, June 21, 1858

The "Golden Age" carried East the freshest accounts from Fraser River, the "Panama" having arrived here the very day of her departure. What the effect of the wondrous news may have been upon the Atlantic world we can only judge from the vast commotion created in California. Throughout this State the new gold fever has continued for nearly two months to rage with increasing violence, and no one believes the climax has yet been reached. Thousands of our citizens have been deploring for years past that the halcyon days of 1849 had gone forever, when, all of a sudden, they are back again in full blast. San Francisco looks like a mining city – just as she seemed ten years ago. Her streets were alive with red, blue, and grey-shirted men – rough, stalwart fellows, ranging about in squads, with picks, shovels, pans, blankets and primitive little rockers on their shoulders. Almost a decade has passed since such scenes were witnessed here. Shop-keepers are overrun with customers they never dreamed of seeing at their counters. This is the grand purchasing point of all sorts of miners' supplies, for the vast hordes of people congregating here from every part of California, bound for Puget Sound. To complete their outfit a Colt's revolver (generally a pair of them) is deemed indispensable.

There are thousands of Indians in New Caledonia, very different from our miserable Digger species, and every one who goes there is prepared for self-protection. Some of the papers, among other vain efforts to check the universal stampede northward, have suggested that there was danger to be feared from these savage tribes, so brave and strong; but nobody is frightened. Civilization in its advancing squadrons, has never yet encountered any obstacle from that source, which was not speedily overcome. Government may prolong so-called Indian wars with a few savages scattered over almost unsettled wastes, like Florida, and make a great bugbear of the business, squandering millions before it is finished; but there is no serious trouble to be feared on Fraser River, with its cordon of camps of well-armed miners. Men who have worked for years in the mountains of California, know how to manage the [Indians] better than any regular in the world.

The tale of John McIver[40] (1908)

John McIver, who lives at Port Hammond, is one of the few old Hudson's Bay Co. officials who are still alive. […] He was born in the Shetland Islands 76 years ago. […] McIver would stand up in his excitement of telling a story, and you could see the eye sparkle and flash as though the scene was being enacted for the first time. […] I could have sat till the cows came home drinking it all in, had the clock not warned me that the train from the east was about due and I had to cut it short and refuse the offers of unfailing Highland hospitality to reach the station by the shortest cut.

THE FIRST PARTY

McIver joined the Hudson's Bay Company in the forties, [and] came out with a party of recruits in the usual way via Hudson Bay to the western trading posts. He crossed the Rockies in 1852 and in 1857 came to the coast with the fall brigade, his five-year term of service being just about to expire. McLean, who had succeeded "Big Fraser," was in command of Kamloops. While there, three men had come from Whatcom, on the other side, intending to go through to Colville. There were Charlie Adams, whose real name was Wishart, Jimmy Houston and another man. They had come up to Kamloops from Fort Langley and were staying at the fort. They had been in the California diggings, and expressed the belief that there was plenty of gold on the Fraser River and its tributaries. The brigade had to stay for about ten days at Kamloops, and a party including John McIver, Donald Gunn and Kenneth Morrison – three Hudson's Bay Company men – and the three miners in question, went prospecting on Tranquille Creek, where they god good prospects. The brigade after ten days had to move on to Langley, but the miners stayed and paid in the gold dust to McLean for supplies. None of the company's men, however, knew the value of the gold, and McLean kept it and placed it to the credit of the miners, so many ounces. McIver and his fur-trading partners […] were obliged to go on to Langley before receiving their discharge. Adams and party came slowly down the Thompson to the Fraser, prospecting as they came. The Indians, seeing these men washing the gold with their rockers, followed their example, using their hats for the purpose. Adams bought their gold, giving them various trinkets and supplies in exchange. In this way he could do a profitable business on the side, and came to Langley and bought supplies to carry on the trade, and returned up the river.

ANOTHER CONTINGENT

In the spring of 1858 three men came up the river – Alexander Robinson, a Scotchman; R. Baker (Boulanger was his real name), a Frenchman, and a chap named "ben," who was another Frenchman – all from Quebec. […] With the arrival of the Quebec contingent we reach an episode in the career of McIver and his associates. They had received their discharge, and started in prospecting. It was arranged that Robinson and his associates would go with them up the river, and following the

[40] From Gosnell, R. E. (1908, July 11). BY-GONE DAYS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA. *The Province*, p. 12. Written by Robert Edward Gosnell (1860 – 1931).

example of Adams, bought supplies with which to trade with the Indians for gold dust. They also bought a canoe, in this case from the Indians. McIver, Morrison and Gunn left in another canoe on the 12th of February, 1858, the Canadians to join them later on. On the […] 18th, they got to Yale. Above Yale they made a portage.

It was late in the evening and the weather had turned very cold. It was with difficulty they could get sticks to make a fire. In the morning there was over two feet of snow. On the second day after their arrival there, the spray over the falls had frozen into a beautiful arch, over which the Indians crossed. It kept getting bitterly cold, and freezing harder all the time, and they could neither get out nor in. They were limited to the most meagre diet consisting of salt pork, which had come from England, and a sack of flour. Here they were imprisoned until about the middle of March, when it began to turn fine again. It was now decided to make a break for liberty and go on.

"To show how cold it was that spring," said Mr. McIver, "the steamer Otter came up to Fort Langley to take salmon. The steamer froze in, and two men had their feet frozen. She had to lie up for six weeks before she could get out. The hospital, where the two men were treated for their frozen feet, was at Dick Bailey's – a man who had built a house near the fort." […]

"The river was not yet clear," continued Mr. McIver, "but we decided to start. There was no ice where the water was running, but thick where it was still. To get over this we put sticks under the boat to act as runners when we got to the ice, and in this way we got along. The second day we hired two Indians, and went all the way to Lytton, passing all the rich bars on the way. We were greenhorns, and knew very little about prospecting, but we had been told by the Indians that a white man was working at Lytton and taking out a lot of gold. This man was called Mormon, and for that reason the place was called Mormon's Bar." […]

TROUBLE WITH THE INDIANS

"Here we made a rocker. We had brought along sheet-iron from the Hudson's Bay Company stores at Langley, and a plane. The Hudson's Bay Company people were all very handy at anything, and full of resource, so that we were never stuck when our heads or hands could get us out of a difficulty. The Indians, who had been good to us, began to be troublesome, and wanted to take everything we had. One of the party – Donald Gunn – had married an Indian woman at Fort Langley, who was with us. She said the Indians wanted to kill us, and advised us very strongly to get away. This we could not believe, as they had been very friendly to us all along. However, she saved our lives. One morning a big, tall b——— came into our tent and kicked away the bannocks which were being baked. Another time an Indian kicked a frying-pan with salt pork off the fire. There were about twenty or thirty Indians, washing gold on the bar, and we were sure now that they were unfriendly." […]

"I saw there was a good bar on the other side of the river," said McIver, "and in order to get out of the way of the Indians it was suggested that we should go over there. We built a raft, and so as not to excite suspicion as to our intention I went over alone, paddling with a shovel. I prospected on the bar but got no results, and then moved the raft up a couple of hundred yards further, where as luck would have it, it was carried away with drifting ice. […] I thought every moment would be my last,

but […] a big sheet of ice, covered with earth and limbs of trees, which had broken away above by the rush came sweeping by, and in a flash I determined to save myself." […]

To proceed: "Coming back to camp I found everything topsy-turvy, as they say. All but one pair of blankets had been stolen by the Indians. We wanted to escape that night. Morrison and I proposed to cross the river and walk down to Boston Bar along the shore. The woman and Gunn shipped us across in a canoe and came to China Bar, which Morrison and I had already reached. Our main object in going to China Bar was to get near a tribe of Indians who were at enmity with the Thompson, and not because they were friendly to us. […] The chief of the Canyons, at China bar, […] made very well of us. We stopped nine days and did fairly well. Then the Chief began to get bad. He wanted a pair of green blankets we had, but we would not give them to him, because we could not spare them. Then he got hostile. He wanted a pistol, and we could not keep it from him. The next day he asked for something else. He wanted flour, but we could not get along without it. He got hold of a gun and took that away. As we had no ammunition of any kind the firearms were not dangerous, and we did not resist."

TIMELY HELP

"We were now out of grub and only had a day's supply left, [when] – lo and behold –a canoe with seven white men hove in sight. It was like heaven coming down to earth to us. We told the strangers about the Indian chief – he always came alone, as though he did not want the rest of the tribe to see us – we waited all that day, but he did not come. The strangers were dying to get ahold of the Indians, they said. We waited all night, but he never came again. The miners went up on the river waving good byes to us, and we never saw them again. These were the first white miners that came up the river. In three weeks thousands were on the river coming and going. We went back to Langley and took on again with the Hudson's Bay Company for three years."

McIver had told me about three Canadians whom they had left at Fort Langley and whom they expect always to catch up to them. […] It was discovered upon return to the fort that they had never left at all.

Another account of the Fraser Canyon War[41] (1908)

The trouble with the Indians [during the early Fraser River gold rush] has been much discussed under various versions. One side sympathizes with the natives as standing upon their rights and as being incited to resistance by a disregard of those primitive ethics so well understood and so rigidly observed by the Hudson's Bay Company, by the early miners. On the other hand, the latter, who came almost exclusively from the United States side of the line, where it is popular to regard the only good Indian as a dead Indian and where his rights were not a matter of much

[41] From Gosnell, R. E. (1908, July 18). TALES OF BYGONE DAYS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA. *The Province*, p. 17. Written by Robert Edward Gosnell (1860 – 1931).

moment, did not take stock of sentimental considerations. There was a country to possess, and they proposed to come in and possess it. That there were Indians in that country who were natives of it and whose forbears had been in it for many generations, did not matter. So far as that was concerned, the whole American continent had been originally populated by Indians, and had they counted, the white man would never have obtained a footing.

The whole question was one of [the] white man's rights to come and go, explore, prospect, possess and dominate. He asked neither leave nor license. To his mind, […] it was absurd to consider any claims on the part of the Indians. It didn't even occur to him to look at the R——— Man's point of view. His attitude was one of absolute independence and freedom of action. He didn't propose […] to interfere with the Indian, if the Indian did not come in his way. In the latter event, so much worse for the Indian. He even regarded it as legitimate to traffic with the Indian women.. With a seasoned miner, there were no scruples on that score.

Statements have been made that the first offense came from the miners; but the evidence on that point is very conflicting. In the case of Mr. McIver's party of Hudson's Bay Company men, one of whom was accompanied by a s——— as his wife, the aggressors were undoubtedly the Indians. The members of this party knew all the ethics of dealing with Indians and their training and commercial instincts, as well as considerations of self interest, were all adverse to anything calculated to arouse the antagonism of the natives, and as the latter behaved badly to them, it is fair to assume, though there may have been faults on both sides, they first behaved badly to the American miners.

We must, however, be just to the Indian and take into consideration his attitude of mind, and also his standard of morals. The white men were the invaders of a country for all time previously exclusively his own. It is true the Hudson's Bay Company's servants had for some time occupied the Indian territory by virtue of Imperial license, but the Hudson's Bay Company were regarded not as usurpers, but as friendly traders who wanted nothing but what they wished to buy from him and pay for. The white miners were coming in as adventurers and exploiters, wanting not furs but gold, which they extracted from the bars of the river, part of the eminent domain, and for which they offered no recompense to him, and recognised no right of the Indian to assert sovereignty over the soil. […]

[THE MINERS' SIDE OF THE STORY]

No one, perhaps, knows exactly how all the fus came about, but […] I have this story from an eyewitness. […] In 1858, after having followed prospecting and mining in California, a number of miners and prospectors came to Whatcom on a sailing vessel, the "Live Yankee," and landed at Seaholme. A coal mine had been operated there by the Hudson's Bay Company, although closed at the time. Some of the men, however, h——— and their s———, still were there. […] Those who came searching for gold in British Columbia in those days were from Oregon Territory, Washington and California. They were not all Americans, however; there were lots of Cornishmen, Scotch, Germans, French and English. "The very flower of California," said an old-timer, "came into this country. It was because they had money that they came, and

they had money because of their habits of living. They had saved it. I did not have much, but I had $600 in gold dust." These men, a number of them, outfitted at Whatcom. […] "The Indian showed a disposition to annoy us, and were around our camps all the time," remarked the old-timer. "We had to submit to all kinds of indignities from them, and they would take anything in our camps they took a notion to, and to show their meanness and ugliness would sometimes spit in our bakepans. They were preparing for trouble from the very start.

"While we were on the Thompson one morning, a k——n came along and told us that the Indians had killed a number of whites down below, and warned us to get out of the country as they were coming after us. She was in love with one of our men and was friendly to us for that reason. As soon as the k——n told us about the massacre, we gathered our blankets and a little grub and started down for China Bar. We had to fight our way through and we burned every rancheria and salmon box that we could get hold of. They shot at us whenever they got a chance and we did the same. The Indians did their best to cut us out, and we had a very hard trip as we had to keep clear of the river as much as possible. A number of our men were killed and wounded. On the way down we came across an Indian who stood on a rock and waved defiance at us. He was shot by one of our men. When we got to China Bar we were exhausted for want of food.

"This determined action on our part was one of the real reasons why the war came to an end so soon. We taught the Indians to respect us. At China Bar we fell in with Capt. Schneider and his men, and we were glad to find them. When the Indian trouble began, volunteer companies were formed at Yale. Capt. Schneider was in charge of one company and Capt. Grahame of the other, and they set out from Spuzzum, where a crossing was made by boats, one on the right and the other on the left bank of the river. At the Big Canyon, Capt. Grahame and McCormick were killed. I do not know just how many white men were killed during these fights, but there were thirty-six at least.

"The first notice which came of the trouble was one morning when nine dead bodies drifted down the river past Yale. The heads were severed and the bodies were horribly mutilated. The expedition, headed by Grahame and Schneider, set out to find where the massacreing had been done. Capt. Grahame's men, after the death of their captain, passed up the canyon to Boston Bar, it being thought that the miners had been slain there. Capt. Schneider and his men, when they descended on China Bar, found five Chinamen there washing gold, and suspicion arose that the Chinamen had something to do with inciting the Indians to the outrage, as there seemed to be evidence suggestive of the Chinamen rather than of the Indian in the way in which the bodies had been mutilated. No proof, however, could be found of this, and the Chinamen were allowed to pursue their work unmolested. We heard from the k——n on Thompson River that one Frenchman was killed at Boston Bar, and that at Mariner's Bar four miners were killed.

"Schneider's men followed on up the Boston Bar and there met Grahame's men. There was a warm dispute between them, and the men nearly came to war among themselves. Grahame's men wanted to exterminate the Indians, root and branch, and

Schneider's men wanted to make peace. Finally, it was agreed to make peace. My own conviction is," said the old man, " that the Indians were not put up to this; it is the nature of the r———, and that is all there is about it. They thought the white men were coming to take their country. Among the Indians, even to the present day, there is a great curiosity to know who the white men were who came down the river and burned their rancheries and salmon traps. So strong is the idea of revenge implanted in their nature, that I fully believe the descendants of the Thompson River Indians to-day would find some way of killing any of the remaining members of that party.

"After peace was made with the Indians, every S——— passing the Bars waved a white flag. Before this, the Indians called the white men "klootchmen," because they seemed to show no fight, […] but after the trouble was over they had much more respect for us. About thirty-six whites were killed during this little Indian war. […] A great many more Indians, however, were killed, but there was no means of counting the dead, as their bodies were taken away by the Indians as soon as shot."

This, in substance, is the miner's side of the story. […] If a few men could execute vengeance in such a dire way upon so many Indians, what would be their fate if the thousands of miners already on the river in the vicinity of Yale were to follow their example? As a matter of fact, simultaneous action was taken by the miners at Yale under the command of captains already referred to, and the Indians, whose means of communication from tribe to tribe was excellent, soon saw the force that was to be opposed to them, and were willing to make peace.

[THE OTHER SIDE OF THE QUESTION]

I shall now give the story of Mr. James Yates of Fort Hope. […] His story is interesting because it takes the other side of the question, to some extent, and sympathizes in a measure with the Indians.

"I went with the party up the river from Yale [at] the time of the Indian trouble. We went up through the canyon and took with us an interpreter. […] We started from Yale, about 150 of us, with a white flag to give to each of the Indian chiefs along the river as a guarantee not to bother the whites in any shape or form. We got about a mile and a half below Spuzzum in the evening. By this time we had picked up about 250 men. Capt. Schneider then learned that an opposition party had gone by the old trail near the mountain, and that they were going to the lodges to kill the Indians and wipe them out as they went along. He then rushed me ahead of the party with twenty-five men to the Indian village where Capt. Grahame was with a party of about fifty. They were going to attack the Indians.

"We told Capt. Grahame that we were sent from Capt. Schneider to tell him there was to be no attack upon the Indians, and to hold on until he came up to talk to him. Grahame said he was going to wipe out the Indians if he could. We expostulated with him, telling him that it was not the right thing to do, and to wait until Capt. Schneider came up in order to have an understanding. Before we got through talking, Capt. Schneider came. It was then nearly dusk. Capt. Schneider got Grahame calmed down and told him to wait, and that by being rash he was endangering the lives of all the white men by his proposed action. They stacked their arms and lay down for the night.

"The next morning, Grahame and Schneider had a consultation by themselves. Capt. Grahame then agreed to fall back and not go ahead, and that if any depredation was committed by the Indians during the time they were going through the canyon he would bring his men up and join with Capt. Schneider. We then had two canoes taken up the river about two miles to cross our party. When we arrived ready to embark the canoes to cross the river, Capt. Grahame and his party had crossed at the mouth of the Spuzzum to the opposite side. Capt. Schneider saw him and called to him to halt, but he kept on going. He then sent me with a party of twenty-five men to follow him (Grahame) up and ask him what he meant by not sticking to his promise. Grahame told the head of my party to tell Capt. Schneider that he was going to "hell," and hoped he would follow him. We then sent back five of our party to meet Capt. Schneider and tell him what Grahame had said. We then watched their manoeuvres from our side of the river. The Indians, hearing of these parties, had all left the river and gone up the hills.

"It was then getting late, and Capt. Grahame's party camped on a large shelving rock close to the river and put guards on the upper side of where they were sleeping, and also a guard on the lower side. It was moonlight, but the moon was shut out at times by clouds. About 2 o'clock in the morning we heard parties rushing down, singing out that they were being murdered by the Indians. We got up and made inquiries about it. Some of Capt. Grahame's men rushed right through where we were lying and said that the Indians had been shooting at them, and that there were a great many of their men lying up there with balls in them. We found one or two dead bodies in the morning. We came to the conclusion that it was not Indians at all, and that it was their own party that had got into a panic through nervous fear and started shooting in the night. Some of the men were drowned in the river in their excitement, and some were wounded and killed by pistols, and not by Indians at all. The Indians had nothing but the old-fashioned Hudson's Bay Company's guns those days. Afterward there were quite a few bodies picked up from Yale downward, supposed to be Capt. Grahame's men. Our party broke up and went back to Yale. Capt. Schneider's men went over the mountains over the old Anderson road to Beaton Bar, expecting that Capt. Grahame would be coming by the river and intending to stop them there. Our party, I may explain, laid back watching Capt. Grahame.

"That night his men came running by us like wild animals. Capt. Grahame was killed, a sad sequel to the boast. It was not known at the time, however, although he was missed. His body was found afterward. It was supposed, and I believe, that his men were startled during the night by one of them moving about for some purpose, and that they commenced shooting among themselves in the dark. A month or six weeks afterward, over thirty bodies were picked up in the eddy in the river below Fort Hope. There may have been fifteen or twenty men shot to death or wounded. It was hard in those days to know who were killed or how many. Some of the men came into Yale with wounds made by five-shooters and dragoon pistol balls, pointing clearly to the real cause of the disaster.

"The trouble arose something like this. The white miners were all saying that the Indians were committing depredations on the miners going through the canyon.

A meeting was called, and it was agreed to send out a party to see each chief to [convince him to] show the whites coming along that he was friendly to them. They wished to have an interpreter to state this to the Indians, and that was the reason I was sent along. We only went as far as Chapman's Bar and returned back to Yale. Capt. Schneider's and Capt. Grahame's men were all miners. There were no regular soldiers or anything like that. […] Some of the miners with the Indians did not treat them well and were insolent and rude to them."

"Incidents of '58"[42] (1887)

Nearly thirty years ago, (in 1858), there occurred the great rush to Victoria, *en route* for the Fraser River gold diggings. The city was quickly populated (mostly by the gender male) from all parts of the world. Only those who came in that year, or subsequently in the rush of '62, can properly realize or fully appreciate the many changes, of faces, times, and places now observable. All the available places within and outside of the present city limits were dotted, and, in places, covered with tents, brush-houses and frame shanties. With the influx of population, it would only be natural to expect an enhancement in values of real estate; but no, the invariable price of fifty dollars for a full sized lot was maintained until June. But in July of the same year, thousands took the place of hundreds, and the boom in real estate was lively and most exciting. The weather, as usual at that time of the year, was delightful, and the encamped miners, who were awaiting news and the river falling, suffered no inconvenience, although impatient of the delay.

The cost of living was naturally high, but the prices of provisions were kept in check by the commendable and unvarying policy pursued by the H. B. Co. Whatcom, on the American side, it was thought by many, would eclipse Victoria; but the unfortunate death of a mule – (whereby hangs a tale) – left that embryo city in the shade as an *entrepot*.

Old-timers will recall the familiar cry of "Oh, Joe!" which was heard every evening, and at intervals during the night, from the occupants of the tents in the ravines, roads and streets, extending from James' Bay to beyond Finlayson's Bridge - a prolonged "Oh" and a snapped off "Joe," – but few know the origin of this peculiar call or cry. It happened in the California diggings that an old miner, returning to camp from a whiskey tussle, in which he had been worsted, fell into an old and dry shaft, and being unable to extricate himself shouted for his partner "Joe" to help him out. But, although his cry was heard during the night and till morning, his partner and the boys thought it best to let him remain and sober off. The moral, or application of the ejaculatory "Oh, Joe!" to the miners at Victoria, or subsequently on the Fraser, was never explained, and certainly not justifiable, for the boys were good – perhaps from necessity – and did not fall into old dry shafts for obvious reasons. Whiskey was scarce, (or the wherewithal to procure it) and there were no old dry shafts.

[42] From J.K. (1887, December 31). INCIDENTS OF '58. *The Victoria Daily Times*, p. 5.

Off for Fraser! The river is falling, and away steams the old propeller Otter, ladened heavily with freight and crowded with human passengers. In due time the captain calls from the pilot house, "stop her," and the word is passed from the wheel to the engineer's hatchway. (The Otter had no bells, and many a joke was played by the boys crying, "go ahead," "half speed," "stop her.") At the Sandheads – mouth of the Fraser – passengers and freight were transferred to the sternwheel steamer Umatilla, thence proceeding to Langley, at which place miner's certificates were issued to all going up the river, irrespective of calling or nationality – price five dollars each.

Fort Langley (or Derby) derived its name from the H. B. Co.'s fort and store a mile below at old Langley on the spit. Here in November, '58, the town lots were sold by order of the government, realizing from one hundred to one thousand dollars each, according to location. The purchasers relied upon official representations that "Derby" should be the port of entry, etc.; but in May, '59, purchasers of Derby lots were allowed to apply the sums invested to the changed town site, New Westminster, some miles below, by order of the government. Lieut. Colonel Moody was then in charge of the civil engineers, acting under Governor James Douglas. Derby was allowed to resume its primitive name and position as an Indian rancheria and prolific cranberry patch.

Rapidly the stern wheel revolves, yet slowly the Umatilla steamed her way up the winding river, 'gainst a five mile current, stopping occasionally at mosquito infested Indian rancheries and wood piles, till at length the mouth of the Harrison is reached. Here the clear deep emerald green mixes with the grey murky water of the turbulent Fraser, and here the steamer discharges freight and lands passengers, mostly road builders, for the Douglas-Lillooet trail which was being cut by the government.

Off again, and in twenty-four hours the prettily located town of Fort Hope (on the left bank of the Fraser) is reached. At that time Hope was the head of steamboat navigation, or at least as far as the steamers would venture, and became a town of considerable importance. […] Here also is located the H. B. Co.'s fort and stores, with surrounding enclosures for protection against the Indians, (no longer needed). From Hope there is a road to the Similkameen and Okanagan districts; here also is the terminus of the celebrated Brigade trail, over which the company's fur traders annually packed their valuable freights.

In July, '58, the Umatilla went up as far as Yale, the falls of Spuzzum obstructing further progress. The steamer Williamette also tried it, but neither ever again ventured up to Yale, the captains declaring the river to be too dangerous for steamboat navigation. But in April, 1860, the citizens of Yale formed a company, subscribed sufficient capital and had the stern-wheel steamer Fort Yale built at Victoria. She made the trip successfully, and other steamers came after, thus proving, first, that the river could be navigated by steamboats; second, the pluck and indomitable energy of Yale's people, and third, established Yale as *the* head of steamer navigation. […]

How the recollections come crowding thick and fast as names and deeds are recalled! How the first impression of the majestically grand and awfully sublime scenery along the Fraser, as seen from the deck of a steamer or in the S——— canoe, from the low swampy estuaries below Langley to the cloud-kissing peaks of Yale, still linger, and indeed never can be obliterated from the tablets of memory. But a truce to moralizing and dreaming, or we shall never get to Cariboo, the modern Ophir, albeit we have yet three years before us, writing from the days of '58.

During the early summer months of that year an Indian war seemed imminent at Yale and on the bars below. At sunrise one morning the miners, who encamped at Hope waiting for canoes, were startled with a peremptory demand for ammunition. Several parties refused to give up their powder and their refusal came very near causing trouble. The explanation was given that the ammunition was required at Yale immediately, and that they – the men demanding it – were a committee sent from there for it. Everything was done by meetings and committees in those days. Fortunately a direct conflict was averted, the Indians being overawed by superior numbers and weapons. Tradition has it that the Indians were encamped in formidable numbers on the left bank in the canyons of the Fraser, below Spuzzum, whilst the white men were on the right, or Yale side. A young Indian buck stood upon a projecting rock and defied the miners to come over. One of the latter had a Henry's rifle with a telescopic sight. Taking a good rest and deliberate aim, Mr. S——— felt suddenly called upon to join the tribe in the happy hunting ground beyond. This virtually closed the war. Their primitive guns could not cope with the superior weapons in the hands of the Boston men. The story of the elongated, brass-buttoned, flint lock, muzzle-loading guns, which it is said were made long for trading purposes[43] – i.e., piling up skins the full length of the weapon – has been oft repeated to newcomers and has grown to be an old and threadbare chestnut.

Paddling, pushing, poleing and pulling a large canoe, or, worse yet, a whale boat, heavily freighted and overcrowded with passengers, from Hope to Yale, was not as pleasant as sitting in the cabin of the Rithet or riding in a Pullman car. So also in regard to time. Fourteen hours were considered good for as many miles, not to speak of the risk and danger unavoidable in crossing and recrossing the river to avoid the most threatening riffles, notably at Emory's and Hill's bar, Hell Gate and Yale. From the miners at work with rockers on the bars came one continuous cry, "Go back, Oh! Joe," which at last became rather monotonously disheartening to the up-river-bound voyageurs.

The town of Fort Yale is picturesquely located on the right bank of the Fraser, completely surrounded by mountains, some of which are snow-capped during the entire year. It is only, or rather was only, accessible over these mountain summits, or by the river. The beach was covered with tents, brush and shake houses, and presented a most animated scene. Very many who were disappointed in not being able to find rich bar and placer diggings, made preparations to return before the depleted treasury became entirely exhausted. The history of the influx and exodus has been told and written, and the cry of "Go back! Oh! Joke," was only too willingly

[43] A myth, as explained in an article in the Fur chapter of this volume.

obeyed and echoed back to the working miners whom they passed on their way down with the stream. Poor fellows! The danger in going down was in many places worse than in ascending. The riffles, eddys and whirlpools, ordinarily requiring the greatest of caution, became to inexperienced men doubly dangerous. Floating trees have been seen to disappear in the whirls and afterwards were thrown up divested of foliage, limbs and bark. Even crossing the Gulf of Georgia, or skirting the island shore with whaleboats or canoes, were better done under the guidance of Indian pilots, who knew the sheltering coves and the portents of coming storms.

Those miners and traders who remained did somewhat better. The still falling river exposed new and auriferous bars and benches. The mountain trail led to Spuzzum, and a rope ferry enabled them to cross the river, thus avoiding the rock bluffs where now the railway track is laid.

The old residents of Yale will recall with pleasure the recollections of many happy days spent in boating, fishing, and pic-nic excursions during the long summer days and delightful evenings; even the long snappy winter, with the Fraser frozen and all intercourse with Victoria cut off for weeks at a time, with music, songs and dances passed merrily along. And then the practical, innocent jokes that were perpetrated. The mysterious initiation of candidates in the Order of the Great Louhee; spiritual seances and table rappings, which made one's hair curl; a celebrated case, breach of promise[44]; the Yale brass and string serenading band; the bogus express, which took weeks of preparation and was brought over the ice by an Indian sent down with it; the indignation of parties receiving letters demanding an immediate settlement of accounts; or to suit the case, letters from young ladies to their absent lovers, and so on *ad infinitum.* There was old Griff, the father of practical jokers, who could give and take except once when some one broke fresh eggs into his new silk tile at Ringo's, and as he wiped his face Griff wanted to shoot. Then there was Conger, who had the only book of statistics in the place, fresh from which he would confound his listeners with unanswerable questions. Another, who shall be nameless, had the only copy of Webster's Unabridged, but he came to grief by asking the meaning of an obsolete word when his dictionary was found open on an empty nail keg in his cabin with a marker on the word.

Then we had the experienced packer, who would kindly offer to make blanket packs for men going up the trail and who in opening their rolls at night would find a ten or fourteen pound boulder in the middle, when would ensue a violation of the 3rd Commandment. Even the S———s perpetrated a grave joke upon the Celestials, when the latter had their first funeral feast for the dead, and innocently left the roast porker – (salmon fed) – at the grave. Needless to add that King George's got away with Boston S———s, as they termed the Chinamen.

To beguile the time an occasional visit to the rancheria above the town was not only amusing but instructive, as illustrating the manners and customs of the natives. The Indians have a natural penchant for gambling, and the stakes were often heavy, the loser retiring with an air of non chalance – *sans chicamen et sans culottes.* The

[44] Possibly that of Eliza Ord v. Robert Drinkall, detailed elsewhere in this chapter, though that case was tried in 1872, in the Cariboo.

commencement of the Indian fishing season was also an interesting event. Thus, after an incantation and distribution of blanket shreds, the size corresponding with the rank of the recipient, an Indian Virgin (the tyhee's daughter "Emmett") was dipped into the river, and after fasting two days she was fed on the first catch of salmon, but should the fish fail to respond in sufficient numbers, she would be placed in a cage of wickerwork and again with pathetic appeal, in which the old Klootchmen assisted, try to cajole the delectable fish into their nets. When a large salmon was caught the Indians crossed themselves, but not otherwise. "Thankful for small favors" was not orthodox with them. During the winter the Indians lived under ground. (The past tense is used, as they now live in houses of their own construction.) The change from their tents to the circular mole hills was usually inaugurated with feasting and dancing during the first week, day and night.

At certain times the Indians would have a grand *passie* mammok, or blanket potlatch. The representatives of nine tribes would assemble in the little canyon, where a stage two hundred feet in length accommodated the tyhees and over two thousand pairs of blankets, besides shawls, calicoes, etc., whilst the plebeian S——— s were squatted upon the flats and surrounding elevation. After some preliminary services, in all of which there is a "similarity of sameness," blankets and other iktas were presented to the old and feeble, conspicuously amongst their old enemies from the Thompson River. The manner of distributing was by throwing blankets amongst a crowd, and when by cutting and slashing with their long knives, one severed a piece, he hastened to lay it at the feet of his k——n or sweetheart, for which an approving smile or grunt rewarded him.

[An Indigenous guide once approached a hungry miner and offered his expertise.] "Nika kumtux klup hiyiu tzum salmon," [he said in the Chinook jargon] – "I know where you can catch plenty of trout." He was engaged at once, and taking canoe started up creek and commenced fishing, but meeting with indifferent success until the S——— baited the hooks for him with salmon roe. This he did by fastening the roe with hair pulled from his own head and dexterously twisted on the hooks. The fish at once bit voraciously, and in a few hours an immense number of the tsum (spotted) trout had been landed. Suddenly the Indian stopped baiting the hooks. "Hyack! hyack!" cried the now excited fisherman. "Helo tipso la-tete," was the guttural response; but not understanding the meaning of "Helo tipso la-tete," he impatiently turned to look at the Indian behind him. He was bald! "Helot ipso" meant – "no more hair on the head" (with which to fasten the bait on). The baldheaded S——— still lives at Yale, but needless to add his hair has since grown out again. […]

Pages could be filled with the recital of the many doings, sayings and practical jokes played upon the "innocents abroad"; but as so many of the vendors and buyers are still living, it would be treading on delicate ground to give details and mention names. Suffice it that the long winters were smoothed over and the summers made pleasant by the good natured bits of fun and social amusement, the miners finding ample resources within themselves, and harmonizing as a whole.

As before stated, the falls of Spuzzum make further steamboat navigation impracticable, but in whaleboats and canoes a great many made the trip, portaging

the falls and bad riffles, but by far the greater number went by the Indian mountain trail, prospecting and locating claims on the auriferous benches, bars and hill sides, noticeably at Boston Bar, Yankee Flat (now North Bend), where quite a neat little town was built. Good placers were also found at Nicaragua Slide and China Bar.

In September, '59, the first freight boat left Yale via the canyons for the Forks of the Thompson and Fraser rivers. Subsequently, and in illustration of the hazardous venture, a boat was lost on long portage, near Boston Bar. Two white men, Ed. Bullen and Dutch Jack, and twelve Indians went down with her, and not a vestige of them has ever been seen.

Reaching Lytton (at the forks), where quite a busy town of that name had already its main street built up in a substantial manner, large numbers of miners were found to have located themselves. Yet "Excelsior" was the motto, and Nicomin Falls, Thompson River, where the first gold in the Province is reported to have been discovered, was reached and thoroughly prospected. Still up, and up, until in the summer of '59, the miners had reached the Quesnelle River *via* the Fraser, but the high cost of provisions made prospecting a very expensive luxury.

In June '60, the Cariboo country, (so named from the Cariboo, an animal of the reindeer species, inhabiting a portion of the northwest coast of America – in this instance found and shot by miners on the margin of a lake – which was then christened Cariboo) was reached. In quick succession rich, marvelously rich, diggings were discovered on Quesnelle river, Keithley's Harvey, Antler, Williams, Grouse, Jack o' Clubs, Lowhee, and Lighting creeks, and the gulches and ravines intersecting them. The news soon reached Victoria, and in '62 the rush for Cariboo was in full swing. The fountain head, as it were, had been found. The yield is under- rather than over-estimated at fifty million dollars! At most of these creeks towns sprang like magic. Traders followed the miners in rapid succession, and on Williams creek three towns, viz., Richfield, Barkerville and Camerontown sprang into existence.

The history of the rise and fall of these mining towns, of the enormous yield and extravagant prices of claims, of the trials, labor and heart stinging disappointments, has been so often written that this mere allusion will vividly bring to mind the reminiscences of early days in Cariboo – of old Barkerville in '70, with its rickety sidewalk, doubtful steps and slanting houses – its innumerable flagstaffs and "Oh, Joe" dry shafts – the meandering creek, full of tales and tailings – the old court house on the hill, and in significant proximity the solid little log cabined jail, and old Bald mountain looking cheerily down the avenue of closely cropped side hills to where the creek loses its identity and co-mingles with Willow river.

Tappan Adney on the Klondike Gold Rush

Tappan Adney (1868 – 1950) was a special correspondent for *Harper's Weekly* covering the Klondike gold rush. His work was widely reprinted, and his Klondike accounts would be collected and published as *The Klondike Stampede* in 1900. The following article was published as "Marvelous Klondike," in five parts, in the *Regina Leader* from June 22 to July 20, 1899.

Dame Fortune was never in more capricious mood than when the golden treasures of the Klondike were ripe for discovery. Such, indeed, has been the history of mining. But although somewhat over a year has elapsed since the full significance of the strike became generally known, and more than two years since the discovery itself, the story of that time, so far as it has been heard, is still obscured by the mists of uncertainty and contradiction.

This may seem strange to those who have observed no apparent lack of information from the very start regarding the Klondike; but those familiar with the difficulty of obtaining reliable information in a country like Alaska, and even of conveying it accurately through most popular channels of publication, will not be surprised at all. In making this contribution to the history of that time, I am animated not only by a desire to gather together the scattered ends of report and hearsay, but that tardy credit may be given to the men, and in particular one man, whom Fortune, never more unkind, has deprived thus far of material compensation for a generous act and years of patient work. It is a fascinating story, but to understand better its significance, and, indeed, that of the present Klondike, it is necessary to go back somewhat in time and to sketch briefly, events that, step by step, led up to the memorable summer and fall of 1896.

For us the story begins with the purchase of Alaska by the United States from Russia in the year 1867, and the instalment of a powerful company, known as the Alaska Commercial Company, into the seal-hunting rights of the Pribyloff Islands, and a practical monopoly of the fur trade of the whole of Alaska, then solely a fur-producing country. The Alaska Commercial Company was something more than a monopolist of the fur trade; it virtually stepped into the place of the Russian government, sharing for many years with the Greek Church alone the absolute control of a large native population of Indians and Eskimo.

THE SALMON-CANNERS

on the coast, then the pelagic sealers, gradually broke down this authority. Then, after twenty years, they were supplanted in the Seal Islands by the North American Commercial Company.

Of the interior of Alaska little is known. It is a matter of history that in 1843 one Robert Campbell, an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company, crossed over from the head of the Liard to a stream which he named the "Pelly," which he descended to its junction with another stream, which he called the "Lewes," and, after many dangers, established in the year 1848, a fort at the confluence of the two rivers, known as Fort Selkirk. In 1847 another Hudson's Bay employee, A. H. Murray, crossed over

from Fort McPherson on the Mackenzie to what is called the Porcupine River, and established a post – Fort Yukon – at the confluence of the Porcupine and another larger river, which, however, was not proved to be the same as the "Pelly" of Campbell until 1850, when Campbell dropped down to Fort Yukon. Fort Selkirk was burned to the ground in 1852 by Chilkats from the coast, who thereby expressed their displeasure at interference with their own exclusive rights to the trade of the so-called "Woods," or "Stick," Indians. In 1869 the company were ordered by the United States to leave Fort Yukon, it having been discovered by our observations that it was within American territory. They did so in a leisurely way, building what is now called "old" Rampart House; but this also was found to be in American territory, so they moved to their present location, about twenty miles farther up the Porcupine. Supplied by the slow and tedious Mackenzie River route, they are no longer a factor in the Yukon, almost the only signs of their existence being the names of their posts, now occupied by others.

TWENTY-SIX YEARS AGO

three notable men entered the Yukon. They came from Norhwest Canada by way of the Porcupine River – LeRoy N. McQuesten, known commonly as "Jack" McQuesten; Arthur Harper, scarcely known except as "Old Man" Harper, and Al. Mayo. These three men, and some others not so well known, located at several points on the river as agents of the Alaska Commercial Company. This company, from their main distributing-points, Unalaska and Kadiak Island, supplied St. Michael's Island, the site of the old Russian post, and from there a small steamer took up supplies to the traders and brought down the Marten, silver-gray fox, and other furs taken in barter. The Indian population was larger than it is now, and the furs from the valley of the Yukon were very high grade, the marten being second to those from Kamtchatka, the celebrated Russian sable.

While the traders provided for the physical welfare of the natives in the interior in return for furs, and a few missionaries of the Russian, English, and Catholic churches were doing what they could for their souls, factors were at work elsewhere to change the history of the Yukon. As early as 1857 gold had been discovered on Fraser River, in British Columbia; in 1860 the "Caribou" district; and then, in 1874, the "Cassiar" district, the latter two immediately south of the headwaters of the all but unknown Pelly and Lewes Rivers. Thousands of miners rushed there, disclosing some of the richest placers of the world. And as these became exhausted, it was but natural that the hardy prospectors should push farther along the coast.

Thus in 1880, just back of the present town of Juneau, Dick Harris and Joe Juneau discovered the Silver Bow Basin, and the town of Juneau, first called Harrisburg, was founded. From time to time, previously, reports of gold having been found in the interior by employees of the trading companies reached the outside. But the pass which led over the mountains to the head-waters of the Lewes was guarded by the Chilkat Indians, who monopolized the trade with the "Stick," or "Woods," Indians, holding them indeed in a state of slavery, and opposed all white men who attempted to enter the country. The year of the Silver Bow strike a party of miners went over, the first party of white men whom the Indians had allowed to go in. This

party brought back good reports from the bars of the Lewes River and from now on parties began climbing over the pass, building their boats on the other side, and descending the river farther and farther, working the bears – generally returning to the coast the same year.

THE GOLD WAS "FINE" GOLD,

and it lay in the gravel near the surface, on the heads of what the miners termed "bars." A "bar" is simply the accumulation of gravel and dirt on the inside of the bends of the winding river. They are built up by the wearing down of the high banks against which the current cut at high water.

They are covered, like the rest of the valley, with a growth of cottonwoods or fairly good-sized spruce. The work on them was done only in summer, after the freshet, winter work being then considered impossible, not only on account of the severity of the climate but by reason of freezing of the water needed to separate the gold. The method of saving the gold was by means of the "rocker." The "rocker" was simply a box on rockers, like a cradle, with a perforated metal top, and a sloping blanket inside. The rocker was set at the edge of the river and the dirt shovelled into the perforated hopper. Water was dipped up in a long-handled dipper and poured in with the dirt, the "rocker" being energetically rocked at the same time by means oif an upright handle. The larger stones were removed by hand, the gold falling through perforations and lodging upon the blanket, which at intervals was cleaned, the contents being placed in a bucket with quicksilver until all the fine particles of gold were taken up. The amalgam formed, was squeezed in a cloth filter, and the remaining lump heated over a fire until practically all trace of the quicksilver disappeared. In this manner comfortable sums were taken out – Cassiar Bar, discovered in 1886, yielded to five men

SIX THOUSAND DOLLARS

for thirty days' work.

Harper and McQuesten were at Fort Reliance, nearly two hundred miles below Fort Selkirk, from 1873 to 1882, and afterwards at other posts above and below. As the miners worked down stream, many of them, either disinclined or unable to get back the distance of four hundred to six hundred miles to the posts, wintered at the posts, where they could procure provisions. So year by year, as the miners became more numerous, the traders began to cater more and more to the miners' trade.

The winter was a season of enforced idleness. The spring freshet at one end and freezing at the other shortened the working season to about sixty-five days, during which time an average of eight or ten dollars a day had to be made for the next year's grub stake. Every man was a prospector and a hard worker, skilled at boating, accustomed to hardship, rough, yet generous to his fellows. Beyond a few quarrels that would be laughed off by the others, there was no trouble among them. One custom in particular that shows this feeling was that when the 1st of August came, and there were any who had failed to locate a bar, they were given permission to go upon the claims of such as had struck it and to take out enough for the next season's outfit. This peaceable condition has in general characterized the Yukon.

In 1885 the rich bars of the Stewart River were discovered, and with the rush of miners there the next summer Harper, McQuesten & Co., established a post at the mouth of that river. During the winter which followed there was a shortage of provisions, and the little camp of seventy or eighty men was on the verge of starvation. McQuesten himself had gone to San Francisco. What caused this shortage was the report that

COARSE GOLD

had been discovered on Shitanda Creek, a corruption of the Indian name "Zit-zehn-duk," now called "Forty Mile" Creek, from its being that distance below Fort Reliance. It was late in the fall when report came that Mickey O'Brien, Jim Adams, and two others, named Lambert and Franklin, had found coarse gold. A stampede for the new diggings follows; for the miner does not bother with fine gold when he can get coarse gold. Coarse gold, being heavier, is not carried so far by water as fine gold, and is nearer its source. Those miners who thought they had not enough for the winter bought all the trader would sell them and started for Forty Mile. It was the late comers from up river who suffered in consequence.

A letter with the news of the find was sent out from Stewart River in January, by a man named Williams, with an Indian boy and three dogs. On the summit of Chilkoot they were overtaken by a storm, and were buried for three days in the snow. When the storm abated Williams could not walk, and was carried on the back of the Indian boy four miles to Sheep Camp, where he was sledded in to Dyea by some Indians, and died in the store of John J. Healy. The dogs were never seen again. The miners congregated from all parts to know what had brought the man out, for the winter journey was considered almost certain death. The Indian boy, picking up a handful of beans, said, "Gold all same like this." The excitement was intense, and that spring over two hundred miners poured in over the pass to Forty Mile.

Forty Mile, unlike other streams that had been prospected, proved to be what the miners call a "bed-rock" creek.

THE HEAVY GOLD, OF COURSE,

would only lie on or near bed-rock, instead of on top the bars. On Forty Mile bed-rock came to or quite near the surface. Then Franklin Gulch, tributary of Forty Mile, was discovered. In the bed of the small brook the gold was found under several feet of gravel; other tributaries of Forty Mile were discovered, all with good pay. Some of this gold is very beautiful. I have seen a quantity of the gold from Napoleon Gulch, as regular as pumpkin seeds in size and shape. Nuggets weighing five hundred dollars [sic.] have been found.

In the spring the traders moved to Forty Mile, and now, with the post for a base of operations, still richer placers were discovered – in 1893 on Sixty Mile, and in 1894 on Birch Creek.

The discovery of heavy gold led to the first change in the method of working. Strings of narrow sluice-boxes, with "riffles" of poles for catching the gold, supplanted the rocker. A dam was built above the claim to obtain the necessary head of water, a "drain ditch" dug to bed-rock, a line of sluice-boxes set up, and the dirt shovelled in; but no quicksilver was used, and whatever fine gold there might be was lost.

The country is one of eternal frost. True, the summers, though short, are warm, the temperature reaching 80 degrees, and by reason of the almost continuous daylight at that season, the warming power of the sun is much increased. But the earth is overlaid with a carpet of moss, which the sun's rays do not penetrate, and the roots of the stunted spruce rest upon perpetual ice.

As the top layer of earth was moved by the miner, a foot or so would thaw out each day. The diggings being shallow, it was not difficult to open up a claim in the smaller gulches. On the bars in the larger water-courses it was not feasible to thus turn the water aside.

THE GOLD WAS FOUND TO EXTEND

in many places underneath the water. Unable to follow this pay streak, such claims had to be abandoned.

Fire, as a means of thawing spots not touched by the sun's rays had been tried without success at Cassiar bar. The idea was regarded as only a boy's wild notion, though now there are claimants for the credit of the first use of the method that was to revolutionize mining in the Yukon. A certain miner on Forty Mile, Fred Hutchinson by name, was working on a bar where the pay extended under the water, so that he had to abandon it. Being loath to do so, however, and besides being of a practical turn, like all the old timers, he conceived the following plan: after the stream had begun to freeze, Hutchinson began to chop the ice above that part of the bar he wished to work, being careful not to break through. As the ice froze downward he continued to pick. Whenever the pick accidentally went through he left it, and used another pick till the first one was frozen in solid. When he reached the gravel he had a perfect coffer-dam of ice around him. Then he built a fire on the ground and thawed the gravel. Hutchinson did not put his discovery to much practical use. The next winter, however, his neighbors took it up, and from that time a few miners began to work in winter. Even these were regarded as fools by the rest, who preferred the dull idleness of the cabins. Some of the miners used to say, "It's getting to be as bad in here as it was outside – work winter and summer both."

But this was the first value of the new method, that it made twelve months' work possible instead of two. Then as deeper diggings were discovered, it became impracticable to elevate the dirt, for it was necessary for the sluice-boxes to be above the level of the claim. As the art of burning became better known, it became possible to work these deep claims, and from now on claims came to be respectively divided into

"SUMMER" DIGGINGS AND "WINTER" DIGGINGS.

The first "drifting" was done by O. C. Miller, the discoverer of Miller Creek. Not only was a hole thawed down to bed-rock, but a tunnel was run, and the whole lower gravel of the claim taken out. Burning may be said to have become of practical use only two or three years before the Klondike discovery, so it can be understood how rapid changes have been since then.

In 1890, an old-timer, Joe Ladue, built a trading-post in the Yukon at the mouth of Sixty Mile River. Having a belief that other streams would be discovered in that neighborhood as rich as Forty Mile, he advised every miner who stopped at his

post to try some other streams. He particularly recommended Indian River, a stream of no great size, entering the Yukon from the east about twenty-five miles below his post and thirty-six miles above Fort Reliance.

In the summer of 1894, a miner by the name of Robert Henderson stopped at Sixty Mile Post. He was a newcomer, lately from Aspen, Colorado, but a Canadian by birth, having been a fisherman at Big Island, Pictou County, Nova Scotia. He was a rugged, earnest man, some six feet tall, with clear blue eyes. Henderson had but ten cents in his pocket, and knowing Ladue's belief in Indian River, he said to him: "I'm a determined man. I won't starve. Let me prospect for you. If it's good for me, it's good for you." Ladue gave him a grub stake, and Henderson went upon Indian River and found that it was as Ladue had said. He could make wages. On that account, he did not desert it for the just then more popular fields of Forty Mile and Birch Creek, but determined to try again. With the experience of the miner, he knew that farther towards the heads of the tributaries of Indian River he should look for, and probably find, coarse gold, though perhaps not on the surface, as it was on the river. Accordingly, the next summer found Henderson again on Indian. He pushed on, and

FOUND "LEAF" GOLD

on what is now known as "Australia," one of the main forks seventy-five or eighty miles from the Yukon, one piece being, he says, as large as his thumb-nail. Had he gone up the other fork sufficiently far, he would have discovered the rich diggings of Dominion and Sulphur creeks. Returning, he went back to Sixty Mile. When winter came he put his goods on a sled and went up Quartz Creek, which puts into Indian forty miles from the Yukon. He had no dogs to help him, and it was a very hard trip, taking thirty days for him to reach Quartz Creek, and took out about five hundred dollars, another one hundred dollars, and more being taken out later by other parties. In the spring he went back up toward Australia Creek, getting only fair prospects, nothing that warranted the opening up of a claim. During that time Henderson was living mostly on the game that fell to his rifle. He was alone and had no partner. Returning from the head of the river, he went up Quartz Creek again. This time he cast eyes longingly toward the ridge of [the] hill at the head of Quartz Creek separating the waters of Indian from those of the then almost unknown Klondike. Crossing over the short sharp divide (it is so sharp that if a cupful of water was poured upon the crest, one half would run one way, the other half the other way), he dropped down into a deep-cleft valley of a small stream running northward. He prospected, and found eight cents to the pan! That meant wages; such a prospect was then considered good. Enthusiastic over the find, Henderson went back over the divide. There were about twenty men on Indian working, mostly at the mouth of Quartz, some of them doing fairly well. Henderson persuaded three of the men, Ed. Munson, Frank Swanson, and Albert Dalton, to go back with him.

The four men took over whip-saws, sawed lumber, built sluice boxes, and opened up a claim in regular fashion about a quarter of a mile below the forks – the spot plainly visible from the divide – and went to

SHOVELING IN THE GOLD-BEARING DIRT.

The stream was the present Gold Bottom (since relegated to the position of a fork of Hunker Creek, running parallel with present Bonanza, and entering the Klondike about nine miles up from its mouth. Hunker Creek was not named or known then). The amount that they shoveled in on Gold Bottom was seven hundred and fifty dollars. And that gold was the first gold taken on the Klondike. It was equally divided between the four men. At that time, if any one had stood on the divide and looked to the westward, he would have seen the valley of a large creek. That creek was known as "Rabbit" Creek – so close to Gold Bottom that if one knows just the right spot on that divide a cup of water would not only have run both ways into Indian and Gold Bottom, but also into the source of this Rabbit Creek. For in this manner are the heads of a number of streams gathered together, as the spokes of a wheel lead to the hub.

Early in August, Henderson ran out of provisions, and leaving the others at work, went down Indian River and back to Sixty Mile. There were about a dozen men at the post and at Harper & Ladue's saw-mill, also a party who were on their way to Stewart River. Henderson told them what he had found. He persuaded the Stewart River party to turn back, telling them they would have to look for it, whereas he had found it. Ladue at once sent two horses overland with supplies, and all the others went with them excepting Ladue. Henderson fixed up his boat, and with some supplies started down river, leaving Ladue to follow him. On account of low water, he was unable to return up Indian River, and besides, being nearer, he dropped down to the mouth of Klondike.

It was the midst of the fishing season. The salmon in the Yukon are very plentiful during their run in August. And some of them are fine fish, the king salmon in particular, even with the great loss in weight they sustain from a journey of sixteen hundred miles from salt water, [they] often weigh

AS MUCH AS FIFTY POUNDS.

Chief Isaac's village were encamped at the mouth of the Klondike, on the north side, taking the salmon in weirs and drying them on racks in the sun. The Klondike takes its name from its being the river where the fish weirs are set.

It happened at this time there were also a white man with a s——w, two Indian men, and a boy fishing, but with a stationary net. They were camped across from the Indian village. The white man's name was George Carmack, the s——w was his wife, the Indian men were respectively Skookum Jim and Cultus ("worthless"), or "Tagish" Charlie, while the boy was named K'neth – all Tagish Indians. Charlie was a big chief of the Tagish. Jim would have been chief, but among the Tagish the descent is through the chief's sister. Jim and Charlie therefore, though called brothers, were really cousins, and were brothers-in-law of Carmack. This Carmack was originally a sailor on a man-of-war, but had taken up his abode with the Chilkoots at Dyea, and married a Tagish wife. Carmack liked the life with the Indians. It is said that one wouldn't please him more than to say, "Why, George, you're getting every day more like a S——h!" "S——h[45] George" is the name by which he became generally known.

[45] A Chinook term used to denote an Indigenous person. Offensive.

Carmack had been over the pass years before, and both he and the Indians, who were his inseparable companions, knew something of mining, though they could hardly be called miners.

Carmack was outfitted by John J. Healy at Dyea to do trading with the Tagish and other interior Indians. Carmack built a post which is called "McCormick's" post. (Be it observed that this is the universal but erroneous pronunciation of the name Carmack.) It is situated on the bank of the Yukon about twenty miles above Five Finger Rapids. If any one, on that wild stampede into Dawson in the fall of 1897, had taken the trouble to stop there, he would have seen fastened against one of the rough log buildings a paper with the writing upon it, "Gone to Forty Mile for grub." Under the floor they could have found a bear-skin robe and some other things. This notice had been put up in the summer of the year 1895. The occupants evidently intended to return.

The white man and the Indians secured their outfit at Fort Selkirk from Mr. Harper. The following year – that of the strike – Carmack dropped down to Forty Mile, but soon returned as far as the mouth of the Klondike for the fishing, where he was joined by his Indians. They had their nets set in the Yukon just below the mouth of the Klondike- and were drying and curing their catch, Indian fashion, when Henderson on his way back to Gold Bottom, came along.

When Henderson's boat touched shore he saw Carmack. "There," he thought, "is a poor devil who hasn't struck it." He went down to where Carmack was, told him of his

PROSPECTS ON GOLD BOTTOM,

and told him he had better come up and stake. At firs Carmack did not want to go, but Henderson urged. At length Carmack consented to go, but then he wanted to take the Klondike Indians up also, as well as his own. Henderson demurred at that, ,and, being frank, may have said something not complimentary about "S——hes" in general. It has been reported that he said that he "didn't intend to stake the whole S——h tribe," and he added, "I want to give the preference to my old Sixty Mile friends." What effect this may have had on subsequent events I do not know, I can only surmise that it may have had some.

Next morning Henderson went on up by way of the mouth of Gold Bottom. Carmack with his three Indians followed soon, but instead of taking the rather more roundabout way, went up "Rabbit" Creek, the mouth of which is a mile from the Yukon. Henderson reached Gold Bottom first. When Carmack arrived, he showed some colors of gold that he himself had found on "Rabbit" Creek. Colors are single grains of gold; they are found everywhere in the Yukon Valley – "colors" and "pay" are by no means to be confounded. I have found them on top of ice cakes in the Yukon. The Indians and Carmack staked each a claim on Gold Bottom. When they were ready to go, Henderson asked Carmack if he intended to prospect on the way back, to which he replied that he did. Then Henderson asked him, if he found anything, would he not send back one of his Indians that he had gold, and [Henderson] would pay him for the trouble, to which, Henderson asserts, Carmack said he would.

Leaving Henderson and his partners at work, we will follow Carmack homeward.

A few miles' walk along [the] bald crest of the divide brings one into the forks of "Rabbit" Creek, some distance from its head. Five miles more in the thick spruce-timbered valley, a large tributary puts in on the left-hand side. Edges of rock extending from the hill-sides show the rock formation of the country. The stream winds over a bed muck, in which the only stones or rocks are those that have tumbled down from the crumbling ledges. Bedrock, the solid bottom of the creek, is no one knows how far down below this muck.

About half a mile below the large tributary just mentioned the party stopped to rest. They had been panning here and there. Carmack dropped off to sleep, it is said. Skookum Jim, taking the pan, went to the rim of the creek, at the foot of an old birch-tree, and filled it with dirt. Washing it in the creek, he

FOUND A LARGE SHOWING OF GOLD.

Right under the grass-roots, Jim said, he found from ten cents to one dollar to the pan. In a little while, it is said, they filled a shot-gun cartridge with coarse gold. The strangest thing was that this gold was not from the creek-bed proper, but had slid down from an ancient creek-bed on the "bench," or hill-side, diggings that were unknown and not discovered until a year later. Carmack staked off Discovery claim for himself, and five hundred feet above and below for his two Indian companions, Skookum Jim taking No. 1 above Discovery and Cultus Charlie No. 1 below. The date of this is variously given as the 16th and 17th of August.

After staking, they rushed off for Forty Mile, or rather Fort Cudahy, established by the North-American Transportation and Trading Company on the opposite side of Forty Mile Creek. The recorder, or acting gold commissioner, was here in the person of Inspector Constantine of the detachment of North-West Mounted Police. The creek was named Bonanza.

Carmack's story of $2.50 to the pan was not believed, though it was not doubted that he had found gold. A stampede followed. Drunken men were thrown into boats. I knew of one man who was tied and made to go along. But there was no excitement beyond what attends a stampede for locations on any creek on which gold has been found. It differed in no respect, apparently, from scores of other stampedes. There are always persons about a mining camp ready to start on a stampede simply as a chance, whether good prospects have been found or not. Whole creeks have been staked out on the belief that gold would subsequently be found. So the excitement of this earlier stage was of small significance. It was that of the professional stampeder, so to speak – rounders about the saloons, some new arrivals, but few old miners, the latter being still in the diggings up the creek.

The first to arrive at the scene of the new discovery began staking down stream. That was also a stampeder's custom. The chances were considered better there than above. It is all nonsense the talk tone has begun to hear of persons, who would have one believe

because of their superior foresight. It was blind luck. The staking went on down stream for six miles, and then began above, continued for seven or eight miles up stream, before the side gulches were thought of seriously.

Laddue, who had started for the mouth of the Klondike behind Henderson, was among the first to reach the heart of the strike. Ladue staked the town site on a broad flat, below the mouth of the Klondike. There already was one building there – a fish-drying shed belonging to Fritz Klote. Then Ladue started for Forty Mile, but meeting a man who wanted some lumber, he sent his application by another party, returned to the mill at Sixty Mile, and soon after returned to the mouth of the Klondike with nails, spikes and lumber, built a warehouse of lumber just opposite the present Alaska Commercial Company's warehouse, 22 by 40 feet, and built a cabin – the first in Dawson – the name given the new town in honor of the Canadian geologist. It was torn down last winter on account of being in the middle of the front street. The Alaska Commercial Company steamer Arctic having arrived at Forty Mile, bound for Fort Selkirk, hurried on to the new town, arriving in September. The ice was running in the river. After discharging, she hurried back to Forty Mile, but was frozen in before she could be placed in a safe place and the next spring, in trying to get her free of the ice before she was crushed, as tick of dynamite intended for the ice, destroyed the steamer.

Among the first to hear of the strike were four men who came in from above – Dan McGilvray, Dave McKay, Dave Edwards and Harry Waugh – and they located Nos. 3, 14, 15 and 16 below Discovery. These men did the first sluicing that was done on the creek, and they made the first clean-up with five boxes set. The figures are lacking for their first shoveling, but on the second they cleaned up thirteen and a half ounces of gold, $329.50, being five hours' work of one man shoveling. The gold varied from the size of pin-heads to nuggets, one of $12 being found. Now the Klondike magnifier began his work with this curious result, that the lies of to-day were surpassed by the truth of to-morrow, until it came to be accepted that "You can't tell no lies about Klondike." McGilvray and the rest had perhaps fifteen hundred dollars, surely a large sum in that country and for the time they had worked. Ladue weighed the gold, and as he came out of the store he said to some assembled miners, "How's that for two and a half days' shoveling in - $4,008?" Next time it was an even

$4,000, TWO DAYS' SHOVELING.

The liability to exaggeration about a mining camp is so great that it is impossible for any one to escape who writes or speaks in the midst of affairs concerning any specific find. A man with a town site must also be allowed a great deal of latitude in such matters. But soon the joke was on the other side. Men who were on the spot would not believe anything they heard. Two of the men working on Indian River, came down, [and] heard of the strike. Says one to his partner, "Shall we go up and stake?" Replied the other, "Why, I wouldn't go across the river on that old S——h's word," meaning Carmack. They wish now they had, but they went on down to Forty Mile.

There were a few old-timers in the procession up from Forty Mile. They knew all about Klondike. It was nothing but a moose pasture. It was not like some other

place where they had seen gold, and so there could be none there. They climbed the hills and walked along the divide until they could look down into the valley of Bonanza. Here many of them stopped and threw up their hands in disgust. Others went the round of the creek, cursing and swearing at those who told them to come there. One old-timer got up as far as 20 above, where the last stakes were. He surveyed the prospect, and as he turned away remarked, "I leave it to the Swedes." The Swedes were supposed to be willing to work the poorest ground. Another, or it may have been the same, is said to have written on the stakes of 21, not the usual, "I claim," etc., but, "This moose pasture is reserved for Swedes and Cheechahkoes," new-comers. Louis Rhodes staked it right afterwards. When he had written his name, he said to his companions, being ashamed of staking in such a place, that he "would cut his name off for two bits," twenty-five cents. From that claim the next summer he took out

FORTY-FOUR THOUSAND AND ODD DOLLARS.

But all that and much more was hidden in the future. A Klondike claim was not considered worth anything. One-half interest in one of the richest El Dorado claims was sold for a sack of flour. A few thousand dollars could have bought up the creek from end to end.

Some who had provisions remained to prospect, others returned to Forty Mile, just as the miners were beginning to come in form the diggings, to learn for the first time of a strike on Klondike. Among these was a Swede of the name of Charlie Anderson. Anderson must have heard something favorable about the prospects. A person approached him, and said, "Charlie, don't you want to buy a claim on Klondike?" "I don't care if I do. How much do you want?" "I'll let you have 29 on El Dorado for $800." "I'll take it," replied Anderson, and weighed out the dust. The enterprising salesman went about boasting how he had played Charlie for a "sucker," only he wanted some one to kick him for not having asked for $1,200. He believed he could have got it just as easily as he did the $800. The man who sold the claim was in Dawson last winter, and had he cared he could have watched Charlie Anderson getting out his

THIRD ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS

with the probability of at least another hundred thousand to come out of ground yet unworked. El Dorado was not liked as well as Adams Creek, just below it. A late comer went up Adams, [and] found a man staking for himself and family. By this time the real excitement had begun. Said the latecomer: "I've come a good way. What you are doing is illegal, and I want a claim and mean to have one." The man who was staking told him he would like to have his friends near him, and offered him stakes on 15 El Dorado, if that would do as well. It was accepted. Nothing has yet been found on Adams.

How was the news of the Klondike discovery received on the lower river? Forty Mile, being the seat of the recorder, was of course the first to hear all the reports and rumors. This can best be told in the words of one who was there in Forty Mile town at the time. "Nobody believed any of the first reports about gold on the Klondike. You see, there never was any money in the lower country. A man would come in after a

hard summer's work with a poke, a poke is a gold-sack, that a man would be ashamed of here in Dawson. They owed the stores for their last year's outfit, and they'd pay for that, and get credit on next year's outfit. The stores had rather have it that way than not. They were sure a man would not leave the country without paying, or with a small stake, so they'd be sure sooner or later of getting all he made. They were a pretty good class of men in the lower country, and most of them could get credit. A man would come into a saloon, and all he'd have would be one drink or one dance. You'd never see them asking up three or four at once to drink. Why, there weren't but three men in Forty Mile that could afford to get drunk. They did nothing all winter but sit around where it was warm, playing Pedro, solitaire, and casino. Word came to Forty Mile that Louis Rhodes had two men working for him, and was getting good pay. "That's a lie," says one man. "Louis Rhodes! When was he able to hire two men?" Next, word came down that Ben Wall was getting two-bit dirt. "Hell!" says N——— Jim; "I've known Ben Wall these ten years, and he's the all-firedest liar in the Yukon." When they heard that Berry was getting one dollar to the pan, they laughed. Klondike was a bunco – nothing but a bunco." These words were spoken in what the miners call "josh," but they were true, nevertheless.

Circle City, 230 miles farther away than Forty Mile, did not get the news so soon. The first report that reached Circle was of a discovery on Klondike – an ounce to the "shovel," shoveling off the surface. This, in miner's parlance, means that one man had shoveled into the sluice boxes gold to the value of one ounce – seventeen dollars – per day. The next news was when Sam Bartlett came down with a raft of logs which he had failed to land at Forty Mile. Bartlett said it was a "bilk;" that Joe Ladue was only trying to get men up to his town site – he had stopped there, but would not stake. The next news came to Oscar Ashby from a friend, about the middle of November. The river was then closed, and the letter came down over the ice. There were about seventy-five men in Oscar's saloon when the letter was read. It was somewhat to this effect, telling Ashby to buy all the property he could on Klondike; it did not make any difference what the prices were: "This is one of the

RICHEST STRIKES IN THE WORLD.

It is a world-beater. I can't tell how much gold we are getting to the pan. I never saw or heard of the like of such a thing in my life. I myself saw $150 panned out of one pan of dirt, and I think they are getting as high as $1000." The crowd in the saloon had a big laugh, and thought so little of it that they never spoke of it again. "It disgusted them that men were so crazy as to write that way," to quote the words of one who was present. Soon after another letter came. This time it was to Harry Spencer and Frank Densmore, from a party with whom they were well acquainted. Densmore at once fitted out a dog team and went up. After he got up he wrote back to Spencer, relating the whole particulars. He repeated the words of the others – namely, that he really could not tell what they were finding: it was immensely rich; he had never seen anything like it. Now Spencer and Densmore had large interests in Circle City, so the men knew it could be no lie; they were compelled to believe it. The wildest stampede resulted. Every dog that could be bought, begged, or stolen was pressed into service, and those who could not get dogs started hauling their own sleds,

men and even women, until in two weeks there were not twenty people left in Circle, and of those part were cripples and could not travel. In a short while there were not even that number left, a report giving the actual number as two men and one woman. No. 31 El Dorado sold for $100; in six months it resold for $31,000. It may be

WORTH $150,000 NOW.

All hands left for Klondike, 208 miles away. Those who had claims deserted them, and those who had outfits took a few things and left the rest in a cache ,where they are to this day. One man alone, William Farrel, of 60 above on Bonanza, left a thousand dollars' worth of provisions, five full claims on one creek, fully a dozen other interests, all considered good prospects; and, says he, "I haven't paid any attention to them since." By the time the Circle City crowed arrived Bonanza was staked to 60 below and into the 60's above, and also the side creeks, El Dorado and Adams. So that the late comers had to go into the smaller side gulches or else buy in, which latter many of them did, so that on such as El Dorado it soon came about that a few of the original stakers were left, having sold out at ridiculous prices. The lower country was nearly deserted. The Klondike, or rather that spot of it where the first finds were made, was undeniably richer than anything yet discovered in the lower country. But still another fact contributed to the completeness of the stampede, namely, that water was troubling them badly that summer in the Birch Creek district. There were between three hundred and four hundred miners about Circle City, some of whom were as far back as eighty miles distant, on the head of Birch Creek. In August, as soon as they heard of the Klondike strike, they packed their goods back, sold them for what they would bring, bought dogs, and started for Klondike, not a few arriving with enough money to buy in at once. In the whole country – Birch, Miller, and Forty Mile Creek – there were not less than fifteen hundred people.

The miners built their cabins, and, when the water in the creeks was frozen, drifting began on all but those claims that the owners did not care to work, or preferred working the next summer. Though shallow enough in many places for summer work, the diggings began to prove deeper than those in the lower country.

The first mail that went out carried the news to friends and relatives, advising them that a big strike had been made. It reached them in January and February, and they started. Crossing the pass in spring, they came down on the high water in June, and though unable to get in on the main creeks, many of them located over creeks that are showing up rich. That the report of the great strike should have been common property six months before the excitement outside is hard to understand. One scarcely knows whether to attribute the world's acute attack of insanity to the

SIGHT OF THE GOLD DISPLAYED

in the windows of San Francisco and Seattle or to the adroit manipulation of the story of the miner's arrival by certain sensational newspapers – in one case to boom the Alaska outfitting business, in the other as the result of the rivalry of New York and San Francisco newspapers.

But, where, during the time that Bonanza and El Dorado were being staked, were Bob Henderson and his partners? They were shoveling and digging away on their claims on Gold Bottom. Henderson had also been up on another fork of the

stream and made another discovery, one panful showing as high as thirty-five cents to the pan.

After Bonanza was staked into the 80s above and El Dorado to 33 – or over three miles – a party of miners, including George Wilson and James McNamee, came over the divide to Gold Bottom.

Henderson asked them where they were from. They replied, "Bonanza Creek."

Henderson says that he did not want to display his ignorance. He had never heard of "Bonanza" Creek. At length he asked where Bonanza Creek was. They pointed over the hill.

"'Rabbit' Creek! What have you got there?"

"We have the biggest thing in the world."

"Who found it?"

"McCormick."

It is said Henderson threw down his shovel and went and sat on the bank, so sick at heart that it was some time before he could speak.

Another man than Henderson would have been discouraged. He was still entitled, according to the custom and usage prevailing on the Canadian side, to his discovery claim on Gold Bottom, and has discoverer he was entitled to still another. On the other fork just spoken of he was entitled to a discovery claim and one more. He staked all four of these. The ice was commencing to form. Having made his clean-up and divided the money, he started to record. On the way he met Andy Hunker, who told him he had made a discovery on the same creek where Henderson had made his second discovery, and he thought Henderson would not be able to hold discovery there. The whole creek was now called Hunker Creek, and Gold Bottom was a fork of Hunker Creek. Hunker had found the splendid prospect of three dollars in the pan. Henderson, therefore, being uncertain, and seeing the latter was probably richer, staked No. 3 above Hunker's discovery, which was two miles below his own. A discovery had been made by Solomon Marpak on Bear Creek, which enters Klondike between Hunker and Bonanza. Being entitled to a location here also, Henderson staked another claim. When he reached Forty Mile and applied to record, he learned that the law had just been changed; that he could hold but one claim in the whole Klondike. So, as it seemed to be the best, he recorded No. 3 above on Hunker Creek. Henderson was sick all the following winter. In the spring, far from being disheartened by the ill luck that had befallen him, he went up the Klondike prospecting, finding some gold on Flat Creek, then known as "Too Much Gold". By mistake in description, a smaller stream below it was recorded as "Too Much Gold," and now bears that name. Returning, he went up to Stewart, making a discovery on

HENDERSON CREEK,

which was named after him, and after going a long distance up Stewart River and staking a site at the mouth of the McQuesten, he returned. He applied to Ottawa for the grant of the town site, but his application was never answered.

From an injury he received on Indian River he was laid up, and started out of the country; but the steamer upon which he took passage was frozen in at Circle City, where he remained all winter under the doctor's care. He was in Dawson the summer

of 1898, but was unable to work or to prospect, as before. I met Henderson then, and was impressed by the earnestness of the man. I asked him if he was not discouraged by all that had happened. "No," replied he; "there are rich mines yet to be discovered as any that have been found." I am not quite sure that he believed that, but it was characteristic of the man to say so. He was obliged to sell his Hunker claim for a fraction of its value.

Again, in Seattle, I saw Henderson. He had just come from Dawson. Unsuspicious and trusting, he had been robbed on the steamer of all the money he had – eleven hundred dollars. He had but one thing left. It was the golden square and myrtle leaves of the badge of the Yukon Order of Pioneers, of which he was a member. For some reason he insisted on pinning it himself to my vest, saying: "You keep this. I will lose it too. I am not fit to live among civilized men." He is now back at Aspen, Colorado, at the same mine he worked six years ago, before he went into the Yukon. The miners who knew have always given Henderson the credit that is due him. "S——h George would be fishing yet at the mouth of the Klondike if it hadn't been for Bob Henderson," is what one may hear.

From the moment the discovery on Bonanza was known at Forty Mile, even the most trustworthy report of Mr. Ogilvie, who was making the survey of the boundary, left Henderson entirely out. [The] reason was obvious – nothing was told about Henderson. But in a recent speech in Victoria, Mr. Ogilvie used these words:

"The Klondike was prospected for forty miles up in 1887, without anything being found, and again in 1893, with a similar lack of result; but the difference is seen when the right course is taken, and this was led up to by Robert Henderson. This man is a born prospector, and you could not persuade him to stay on even the richest claim on Bonanza. He started up in a small boat to spend this summer and winter on Stewart River prospecting. This is the stuff the true prospector is made of, and I am proud to say he is a Canadian.""

Henderson himself sums it up in a letter that is almost pathetic: "That is all I have got after two and a half years' prospecting, living on meat straight."

HOW EL DORADO CAME TO BE STAKED AND NAMED

The large fork spoken of before, came into Bonanza at No. 7 above Discovery, but none of the side gulches – or "pups," as they were called – were favored by the stampeders until Bonanza had been staked as far below and as far above Discovery as was considered, in the light of past experience, to be worth while. The middle of the creek was considered the best part. Obviously, as there was small time to prospect, chance predominated. But as soon as the first holes to bed-rock began to show a richness greater than anything ever known in the Yukon, many of those who had staked blindly, as a mere speculation, without plan or knowledge, laughed, and all but cried, in their overflowing joy. Then, when the novelty of sudden wealth wore off, not a few began to think just as men do the world over. As the extent of the richness became more known, the more wisdom they displayed in picking out such choice locations [as] became evident to themselves. They looked wise when the cheechahko arrived, and tapped their heads with their finger, so to speak, as if to say that any one might have had as good as they if they had known where to look. There

is no end of stories of the curious luck that accompanied the filling up of Bonanza and El Dorado. The following account of how El Dorado came to be staked has more interest than ordinary in that it is told by one who was not only one of the first who staked there, but also who supplied the readers of Harper's Weekly with the first direct news and photographs from the new diggings – namely, William D. Johns. Mr. Johns was in the neighborhood of Forty mile when word of Carmack's discovery arrived, and was one of those who did not believe in the truth of it. He was therefore not in the first stampede. Confirmation of the strike was being daily received.

"Bonanza was staked as far down as the 80's and as far up as the 70's, but I determined to go away and try some of the 'pups,' believing it is never too late in a camp as new as this.

"Fred Bruceth, the man with whom I planned to go, said it was no use. So when, on the morning of the day that we were to start from Forty Mile, we found that our boat had been stolen, he threw up his hands and refused to go. But upon inquiry I found that it was still possible for us to go. I found some men who owned a boat, and they told us that if certain parties to whom they had promised the use of it did not return in fifteen minutes

WE COULD TAKE THE BOAT.

"The men did not turn up, and in half an hour we were towing the boat up the Yukon. Only two weeks before we had passed the mouth of the Klondike, and camped on the site of the present Dawson; at the very time S——h George was making his discovery on Bonanza – of course unknown to us. On the third day we reached the mouth of the Klondike, and camped in our old camping-place, and the next morning, after making a cache of our supplies and taking a pack, we crossed the mouth of the Klondike to the Indian village, where Klondike City now is, and then took the trail which leads over the hills and along the ridge parallel with Bonanza – a trail that is used at times even now in preference to the more recent trail in the valley of the creek. After a hard tramp we reached Discovery in the afternoon. S——h George and three Indians were working at the side of the bank, sluicing with two boxes in the crudest sort of way. I took a pan, and panned my first gold in Klondike, off the side of the bank, getting fifty cents. We went on to No. 3 above Discovery, and made camp under a brush shelter. That night two men, Antone – his full name is Antone Standard, an Austrian – and Frank Keller, whom we had seen before on the Yukon, came to our camp, and sat for an hour and a half talking. Antone told us their camp was further up – on upper Bonanza, we inferred. They said they had found ten cents to the pan on upper Bonanza, and they advised us to try there.

"Next morning we took our packs, and with two others, Knut Halstead and John Ericson, two Norwegians, prospected along till we got into the 30's. There we left everything but picks, shovels and pans, and went up into the 70's, a distance of rather more than seven miles from Discovery. We prospected as we went, but found nothing. The boys agreed in declaring that if the ground had not been already staked they would not take the trouble to do so themselves. We returned to camp, and decided that we would prospect the large 'pup' that came in just above on No. 7. Our

attention had been drawn to this 'pup' before we got to Discovery, on the day of our arrival, by meeting two men

GOING DOWN THE CREEK.

"They were of a party of four Miller Creek men. We had asked them, "How's the creek?"

"'No good,' 'Skim diggings,' 'Bar diggings,' 'Moose flat,' were the answers received.

"'Did you stake on the creek?' we asked.

"'No,' they replied.

"'Where are Demars and Louis Empkins?' we asked, referring to the two other members of hteir party.

"'Oh, ,they have gone up a pup to stake.'

"'Why didn't you stake?'

"'Oh, to h—l with the pups,' was their answer as they went away down the creek.

"Pretty soon we met Demars and Empkins. 'Where have you been?' we asked.

"'On that pup,' they replied.

"'Any good?'

"'Don't know anything about it; as long as we were up, we thought we might as well stake somewhere,' and they hurried on after their companions. They were rich men, but they did not know it.

"Next morning, before we were ready to start, Keller came down to our camp dressed in corduroys, and with a rifle on his shoulder, as if he were starting out on a hunt. He inquired how we had made out. We told him we had found nothing. He still favored upper Bonanza; he thought it was all right. We asked him where his camp was; we had not seen it the day before. 'Over on the other side,' he replied, indicating the way, and we thought no more of it then. 'Where are you going to-day?' he asked us.

"'To prospect that pup,' I replied. 'Do you know anything about it?'

"'Oh, I found a five-cent piece on rim-rock, a mile up.'

"He left us. We still thought he was off on a little hunt.

"We started toward the 'pup.' When we reached the mouth, we followed the tortuous course of the stream. Fred Bruceth stopped and pointed to the brook.

"'Some one is working; the water is muddy,' said he.

"Like hunters who have scented game, we lapsed into silence, and, with eyes and ears alert, kept on. We had gone only a little ways, when suddenly we came upon four men. Three of them were standing around the fourth, who was holding a gold-pan. All were intently looking into the pan. The man with the pan was Antone, and the other three were J. J. Clements, Frank Phiscater, and old man Whipple. When they looked up and saw us, they acted like a cat caught in a cream-pitcher. Seeing that we had found them out, they loosened up and

TOLD US ALL THEY KNEW.

They showed us then what they had in the pan. There was not less than fifty cents. While we were talking, along came Keller. He had taken off his corduroys and was in

his working-clothes, his attempt to steer us away having been a failure. The five men had staked off their claims. Antone's was the highest up the creek. Above his were the two claims that Empkins and Demar had staked.

"Antone told Ericson that he might hae his claim, as he was going to take [the] Discovery claim. We all went up to tstake. Pretty soon Antone came all a-sweating, and begged and pleaded with Ericson for his claim back, as the old man Whipple had declared that no one should have Discovery but himself. Ericson cut his name off the stakes, and Antone restaked the claim – the present No. 6 El Dorado. Ericson went above Empkins and Demars, 7 and 8, and staked 10. Bruceth and I went on far enough to be out of the way of a clash, and staked, he taking 11, and I 12.

"Regarding the discovery, it was the custom in the lower country – not only on the American side, but within Canadian territory – to allow a discovery, consequently a double claim, upon each gulch. But the edict had recently gone forth from Forty Mile that there could be but one discovery on a creek, and none on a 'pup' of a main creek. The discovery had been allowed to S———h George, so there could be no discovery claim on El Dorado.

"Another custom was that if a person, after having staked in one place, wished to locate in another, he must, before he could hold the second, cut his name off the other stakes. Antone, Keller, et al., had already staked on upper Bonanza, and so might have been sincere in recommending that part of the creek as good. While according to old custom they might have held a discovery on El Dorado, they could not legally do so now. Consequently Halstead promptly jumped the so-called 'Discovery' claim that Whipple was trying to reserve for himself, still leaving him, however, with one claim on El Dorado, besides his Bonanza claim. He was stoutly

TRYING TO HOLD ALL THREE.

"A party of Finns soon came along, headed by a man named Cobb. The did not stake, but went on and turned up Bonanza. They were the only other persons on the creek that day. That night in camp we discussed naming the new creek Old man Whipple wanted it called 'Whipple Creek.' But we were rather hot at the Whipple crowd for having used us so ill in trying to steer us away from the creek; and, besides, old man Whipple had tried once to jump Halstead and Ericson's claim on American Creek. After several names were mentioned, Knut Halstead suggested 'El Dorado,' and that was the name determined upon. I make this point as certain later newcomers have claimed the honor of naming the creek.

"Next morning Fred Bruceth got up at five o'clock and went down after McKay, whom the miners had appointed as their recorder, letting out the news on the way. Among the first to arrive were Cobb and his crowd. Hearing of the prospect, and knowing that the Whipple crowd had staked Bonanza also, Cobb stated emphatically to Whipple that unless his crowd took their names off Bonanza, he would jump their claims here. Just then Antone, Clements and Keller came up to where we were talking, and Bruceth and I, who felt that though they had tried to job us, yet they really had made that discovery, and were entitled to the ground, tried our best to persuade them to go up and cut off their names, or they would lose their El Dorado

claims – they certainly could not hold both. Whipple kept insisting that they could. At this juncture Phiscater came along.

"He treated with disdain Cobb's threat to jump the claims, and said he would go and see the recorder. McKay arrived on the scene, and the recorder told them that if they cut their names off Bonanza, he would put their names down on the new creeks. This Clements, Antone and Keller did.

"The first of a gang of stampeders, who had come to Dawson on the steamer, arrived. Among those were William Scouse and William Sloan, who took 14 and 15. Some one staked 13 in a fictitious name, to try to hold for a friend, perhaps, and this was afterwards jumped by a man of the name of Hollingshead.

"We all went over to the creek, and began to measure and record.

"Cobb jumped Phiscater's claim, as he had not taken his name off Bonanza. The name of the creek was formally declared to be 'El Dorado,' as agreed upon at the meeting the night before.

"Cobb lost his claim, for Constantine decided that 'at the time he jumped there was plenty of as good ground farther up the creek, and that it was hoggish, to say the least, to jump ground where a discovery of gold had been made.' Had all the five claims been jumped, instead of only one, and this been done after the creek had been staked, there is a chance whether Antone, Keller, and company would

NOT HAVE LOST THEIR CLAIMS,

to which they had not the slightest legal right until they had taken their names off Bonanza, and the reasons that barred Cobb would not have applied to late comers, when there was no more ground on the creek above.

"The spot where the gold was discovered was, like the discovery of Bonanza, at the edge of the creek on the line of Nos. 2 and 3. It was taken from a cut in the bank, and was practically surface gold that had slid down from the old channel on the hill-side. It was nothing more or less than 'bench' gold, the existence of which was not even suspected at that time. From a hole eighteen inches deep in the creek-bed, and under water, as high as two dollars was taken out. Bed-rock where the real richness lay, and the real creek-bed, was fifteen or sixteen feet below the surface, under muck and gravel.

"The next morning, at six o'clock, we started back, and reached the Indian village at one p.m., crossed over to our cache, and had dinner. Then we started for Forty Mile, which we reached at ten-thirty that night, and next day we recorded again, and finally at Constantine's office."

Johns, like so many others, little knew the value of the claim he had staked. After some days, a favorable report must have been received from the new diggings. He was offered $500 for the claim, and sold it to Knut Langlows and Mrs. Healy. One half was cash, the other half to be paid when bed-rock was reached. In the case of the man who staked 29, and played Charlie Anderson for an easy mark, he too simply judged Klondike values like others in that country. Those who sold were by no means fools. They simply had a chance to sell for a grub stake, which was about all a man

usually got from a year's work. And if the truth were confessed, the reason why there were not more sales at that time was that

THERE WERE FEW BUYERS.

For this happened; first claims were of no value; then, as gold was found, they rose in value slowly first, then with great leaps. The seller would want, say, a thousand dollars; by the time the buyer found that it was really worth a thousand, the claim owner had discovered it to be worth ten thousand; and when the buyer was willing to buy at that price, the value had jumped to twenty thousand, and so on. The buyers were just one lap behind the sellers.

No. 31 El Dorado was sold by the original staker for $100, $80 being cash. Within six months it was sold for $31,000, and one year later the owner refused $150,000.

One-half of 30 El Dorado, it is said, was sold for a sack of flour. The owners, big Alec. McDonald and Billy Chappel, did not think enough of it to work it themselves, but rather late in the season put it out on a lay, and took a lay themselves on another claim. The laymen struck it the first hole, and out of thirty burnings took out $40,000.

Antone went to Forty Mile after staking. He was short of grub, and wanted to work his claim. Ordinarily any man could get credit in the lower country, but when Antone applied to the Alaska Commercial Company, the temporary agent would not let him have it unless it was guaranteed. One Clarence Berry came forward, guaranteed Antone's bill, and received in return a one-half interest in the claim. Berry was sometimes spoken of as a "tin-horn gambler," was not supposed to have much money and he was never called upon to make the guarantee good. It was whispered about the camp that the agent expected to profit by the transaction. As a matter of fact, he did not. Afterwards Antone and Berry bought controlling interests in Nos. 4 and 5, and a fraction between 5 and 6. Their group of claims became known, through the public press, as "the Berry claims," about which there was a little romance of a winter trip, a young bride, and nuggets by the handful.

The length of the claims here, as elsewhere in the Canadian Yukon, was five hundred feet, instead of [the] one hundred feet allowed by the general law of Canada. The modification in favor of the larger claim was brought about in 1894 through the agency of Captain Constantine, who recognized that, on both sides of the international line, which crossed the heart of the Forty Mile diggings, mining conditions were precisely the same; indeed, the exact location line was unknown until 1896. On the American side the miners

MADE THEIR OWN LAWS,

and might make the claim any length they chose, up to something over thirteen hundred feet; but upon nearly all the gulches it had been fixed at five hundred feet as the smallest claim that could be worked, at the same time being large enough to afford return for the labor of prospecting. At least five hundred feet were required to give a sufficient drop of water for the sluice-boxes. This wise act was one of many indications at that time of Canada's sincere desire to govern her growing territory in the best interests of the country and the miners.

Another right which the miners had under United States law was that of appointing one of their own number, and one recorder for each gulch. The Canadian system, however, provided one man in a mining district, appointed by Ottawa, whose sole business was to act as recorder, or gold commissioner. Where the diggings were near at hand, this was no great inconvenience, but where they were distant no less than sixty miles, as the new diggings of the Klondike, the miners themselves were under the necessity of appointing a temporary recorder, as Mr. Johns has mentioned, so as to avoid the long trip, as well as to straighten out at once disputes that inevitably occur. They paid the recorder $2 for each claim, agreeing at the same time to pay to Captain Constantine in due season the $15 required by Canadian law.

When they began to measure the claims, by some trick, a forty-foot rope was introduced, instead of a fifty-foot one. This had the effect of reducing the five hundred foot claims by fifty feet or more, which left fractions between that by this time were of great value. These were seized upon and staked the same as full claims, but upon the deception being found out, there was a big row, and Mr. William Ogilvie, the Canadian Boundary Commissioner, who happened to be in the country at the time locating the international line, was called from Forty Mile to settle the trouble. Mr. Ogilvie, being a magistrate, took testimony; the men confessed, were repentant, and were forgiven; and then Mr. Ogilvie made a partial survey of Bonanza and El Dorado. But many of the claims on Bonanza were short.

One of these short claims was not the fault of the official measurer. It was on lower Bonanza, I never found out just where, but it was staked by a mounted policeman. The creek winds very much there, and

THE VALLEY IS BROAD.

He should have measured the five hundred feet in the direction of the valley, but he was not able to see the direction, perhaps on account of the thick woods, and followed the creek in its winding. When the surveyor came along and threw lines across the valley corresponding to his upper and lower stakes, the poor policeman, instead of having a claim was in debt six feet.

One of the claims near Discovery on Bonanza was staked by Micky Wilkins. Micky was not one of those who were thrown into boats and brought along nolens volens from Forty Mile in the first stampede, but he was one of a party who did help tie a drunken man and throw him into the boat. Micky, like a wise man, sold out for a few hundred dollars. When they came to survey the claim, the new owner found only a few inches. I felt sorry for all who sold at the very start until I met Micky.

A fraction of a claim would hardly seem worth having, at least except in ground like Klondike. No. 2 above was staked long. John Jacob Astor Dusel was a good miner and he wanted to take in the mouth of Skookum Gulch. Dick Low put the tape to Dusel's claim and found it about eighty-five feet too long, and took a narrow slice directly opposite the mouth of Skookum. He did not think so much of it at the time. He wanted $900 for it. No one was so foolish as to pay that much for the narrow strip of ground. He tried to let it out on a lay, but no one wanted to work it for an interest. He had to work it himself, poor man! The first hold was put down by his present foreman, and he did not find a cent. Further account of what is probably the richest

piece of ground in the whole Klondike must be left till later, when there are pack-horses to carry the gold down to Dawson.

On El Dorado the claims were almost all excessively long. It looked as if they were measured by guess while on the run, and then a lot more added to make sure. One fraction, 37 A, is four hundred and twenty feet long – almost a whole claim! Several are from one hundred to one hundred and sixty feet in length. Sometimes the second man has been in a hurry and not measured his fraction correctly, and a third man comes along and

FINDS ANOTHER TINY SLICE.

Nothing was too small on El Dorado. There was one ten-foot fraction. It was thought to be worth ten to twenty thousand dollars. A thirteen-foot fraction was found next to 14. It was so narrow that the owner had to take a lay of thirty-seven feet on an adjoining claim in order to work it.

Nor was all the luck confined to the mines. A butcher by the name of "Long Shorty," otherwise Thorp, had driven in some cattle, and was trying to reach Forty Mile late in the fall, in the ice with the meat on a raft. He was frozen in at the mouth of the Klondike, only to discover there a big mining camp. That beef was a godsend to the miners that winter. It is considered essential to prevent scurvy. Provisions were very scarce. The transportation company had been able to bring enough up to supply the camp. Flour had to be freighted with dogs from Forty Mile, and sold at from forty to sixty dollars for a fifty-pound sack. Beef was one to two dollars a pound. Mining tools were scarce also, shovels bringing seventeen and eighteen dollars each. But wages were proportionately high – one dollar and a half to two dollars an hour for common labor, and often not to be had at that price. The price of wages corresponded to the opportunities afforded by prospecting.

The first hole to be put down by burning is credited to Skookum Jim. Pages could be filled with the finds that day by day were made on those claims that were worked that winter. The personage not unknown to fame, "Swiftwater Bill," with William Leggett and six others, took a lease, or lay, of 13 El Dorado. Several holes were put down before the pay was struck, though many think there was pay in one of the first holes, and that they filled it up. At any rate, they asked the price - $45,000 – bought the claim, paid $10,000 down, put in a rocker, and paid for the claim in six weeks.

On account of the distance to Forty Mile, sixty days were allowed in which to record. Any claims not recorded within the sixty days were open for relocation. There were several such claims, left vacant by men who considered them no good, and recorded elsewhere. Such a claim was No. 40 above on Bonanza. It was known to a large number that the claim was open, and a Mounted Policeman was there, with watch in hand to announce when exactly twelve o'clock midnight came.

IT WAS IN JANUARY.

There were several parties on foot, and two men who had dog outfits. Promptly at twelve o'clock all hands staked and started. Lereaux and a companion, Vaughan, ran to No. 48 above, where one team was waiting. Lowerie, the other dog-man, put down the trail on the run for Dawson, where an Indian with five or six dogs was in waiting.

Lereaux had the same number. At Dawson they were not far apart. The men had good dogs. But dogs are poor things to race with, as every one knows. A dog has no ambition to pass ahead like a horse; he prefers to follow. Besides, when the trail is narrow, it is hard for one team to pass another. How they did manage to pass each other at all is a marvel, but it happened that every time they passed a cabin the leading team insisted on turning out, whereupon the hind team would seize the opportunity and dash by. It was a great advantage to have a man run ahead of the dogs. When they reached Forty Mile, Lowerie and the Indian were ahead. The recorder's office was across the creek, at Fort Cudahy. The Indian did not know this, or else the dogs determined to turn into Forty Mile. Lowerie saw the mistake, jumped from his sleigh, and made for the recorder's office on the dead run, with Lereaux just with him. Both men reached the office at the same moment, and fell against the door. They were both so exhausted that for a moment they could not say what they had come for. When they recovered sufficient breath to announce their business, Captain Constantine told them he would wait to see if there were others behind; and no one else coming, he divided the claim between them.

A detachment of Mounted Police came up to Dawson in the late winter or spring, bringing the record-books with them. The certificates of registry at that time were in manuscript, there being no printed blanks available. A military reservation was set apart between Ladue's town site and the Klondike River. A rectangle of log houses, for barracks, was built on a piece of ground somewhat higher than the general level of the flat, and facing the Yukon, and from a tall pole was set up the union-jack in the red flag of Great Britain.

The clean-up was already under way, and preparations being made for the summer ground-sluicing, when the river broke, and the new-comers, who had received the news from friends inside, began to pour in. Wild scenes followed the clean-up. Men with never a penny to spare in their lives were

SUDDENLY MADE RICH.

There was no real disorder, no shootings, no hold-ups, none of the things associated in the popular mind with a real live mining-camp. Something in the Yukon air discourages all that. It could not be the presence of the police, for there are no police at Circle City, and a baker's dozen were at Dawson. Gold flowed, and when it would not flow it was sowed, literally sowed, broadcast over sawdust floors, in drunken debauch, as if there was no end to the supply. Gold was panned out of the sawdust on the floors of the saloons; whole saloonfuls of men would be asked up to drink, at half a dollar a drink. Sometimes orders were given to call in the town, and then the bartender would go out into the street and call everybody in, and they would have to drink. Whenever one of the new millionaires was backward in treating, which was not often, the crowd – always a good-natured one – would forthwith pick him up like a battering-ram against the side of the house until he cried out, "Enough," or "I seen you first! I seen you first!" and the new millionaire had to treat. There had never been anything like it before, nor was anything quite equal to it the second year.

The afore-mentioned "Swiftwater Bill," whose chief claims to the attention of posterity seems to have been the way he "blew" in money, spent $40,000, and had to

borrow $5,000 to go outside with. His claim was good for it, though. He quarreled with a woman, and observing her order eggs in a restaurant, he bought up every egg in town – at a cost of one dollar each.

How much gold came out of the ground that first summer can never be known. Two and one-half millions is probably not far from the mark. The richness of the fifteen miles reported by Mr. Ogilvie was much exaggerated. The pans of dirt that were washed out gave him reason for believing, upon computation, that there might be actually four million dollars in each claim. But these were not averages. Far, from it. Even if they were, the enormous cost of working the richest, yet costliest, diggings in the Yukon was not taken into consideration as it should have been.

Clements panned out of four pans $2000, the largest being reported at $775. Clarence Berry showed gold in bottles that he said represented, respectively, $560, $230 and $175 pans. There were many others like these. Of course they were picked up and scraped off bed-rock and did not represent average dirt. Five dollars, even one dollar, "straight," as it is called, would be.

ENORMOUSLY RICH.

If [the] pay streak were 100 feet wide and 3 feet deep, there would be 150,000 cubic feet, equal to, say, 675,000 pans of dirt. Think what an average of a dollar to the pan, or even twenty-five cents, would be! On some claims the streak is wider; on others, less.

One hundred and thirty thousand dollars came out of the Berry-Antone claims, 6 and the fraction. There were spots on Bonanza as rich as El Dorado, but not so even and regular. One thousand dollars to the foot is the top figure, on average, for the best of El Dorado, but the cost is one third for taking out.

The first year showed nuggets of all sizes up to one of $585, estimated at 1 oz. for $17, from 36 El Dorado.

The fortunate ones started for civilization with their new wealth. Not all. Many remained to work their claims, and these, perhaps not less happy nor exultant, were not heard of outside in the excitement that accompanied the breaking of the good news to the world. The bulk of the gold, amounting to not over $1,200,000, went out, of course, down river to St. Michael, where waited the good steamer Portland of the N.A.T. & T. Company, crowded with friends and relatives of the returning miners, who had sent word home of their coming. Others preferred the up-river trip, and in parties of three and five took to their poling-boats, and it was some of these, and still others, fleeing for their lives from the threatened famine, that we ourselves met on our way in last year.

More Tales of the Klondike Gold Rush

An interview with the founder of Dawson City[46] (September, 1897)

I am willing to tell all I can think of about the Klondike and the great Northwest country, so long as it is understood that I am not advising anybody to go there. That I will not do. It goes pretty hard with some of the men who go in. Lots of them never come out, and not half of those who do make a stake. The country is rich, richer than anyone has ever said, and the finds you have heard about are only the beginnings, just the surface pickings, for the country has not been prospected, except in spots. But there are a great many hardships to go through, and to succeed, a man has to have most of the virtues that are needed in other places not so far away and some others beside.

This winter I expect to hear that there is starvation on the Klondike on account of the numbers that have rushed in without sufficient supplies, for I know that the stores there have not enough to go around, while the men who laid in provisions have only enough for themselves. They will divide up, as they always do, but that will simply spread the trouble and make things worse. Next spring, from the 15th of March on, is the time to go.

What you call the Klondike, we speak of as the Throndike. I don't know exactly why. The Klondike creek, which names the district where the richest streaks have been struck, was the Throchec to the Indians, which means salmon, not reindeer, as I have read since I came out in the spring. There is sense in that name, because the stream, which is about the size of the Saranac river up here in the Adirondacks, is chock-ful of salmon, and you never see a reindeer there, not even a moose. In fact, game is very scarce on the Klondike, as it is all along the Yukon.

No guns or pistols or anything of that kind are needed. Here is what ought to be put in an outfit: A camp-stove, frying-pan, kettle, coffee-pot, knives and forks and spoons, and a drill or canvas tent, an ax, a hatchet, a whipsaw, a handsaw, a two-inch auger, a pick and shovel and 10 lbs. of nails. For wear, heavy woolen clothes are best – not furs – and the stoutest overshoes you can get, with arctic socks. Then, there is a "sleigh," as we call it, really a sled, six or eight feet long and 16 inches in the run. It is safest to buy this in Juneau, for those you pick up in other places won't track. I don't take a canoe unless I am late going in, but they make the lightest and strongest in Victoria, at about 160 to 200 lbs. weight. The simplest thing to go down the river on is a raft, but to make that or a boat, you need, besides the nails and tools I named, two pounds of oakum and five pounds of pitch. A year's supply of grub, I think, is: 100 sacks of flour, 150 lbs. of sugar, 100 lbs. of bacon, 30 lbs. of coffee, 10 lbs. of tea, 100 lbs. of beans, 50 lbs. of oatmeal, 100 lbs. of mixed fruits, 25 lbs. of salt, about $10 worth of spices and knick-knacks, and some quinine to break up colds. The total cost

[46] From Steffins, J. L. & Ladue, J. (1897, September 2). *The Vancouver World*, p. 6. Interview with Joseph Ladue (1855 – 1901), founder of Dawson City, by American journalist Lincoln Austin Steffins (1866 – 1936).

of this outfit is about $200, but no man should start with less than $500, and twice that is ten times as good.

The easiest way to get there is by boat, which will take you around by St. Michael's at the mouth of the Yukon, and transferring you there to the side-wheeler, carry you 1,700 miles up the river to Dawson. But that isn't independent. If a man wants to go in with his own provisions, free of connections with the transportation companies, which will sell but will not let anybody take along his own supplies, then the Chilkoot Pass route is the best. And that isn't so bad. You start from Juneau and go by steamer to Chilkat, then to Dyea, eight miles, where you hire Indians to help you to the summit of this pass. From Dyea you walk 10 miles through snow to Sheep Camp, which is the last timber. From there it is a climb of six miles to the summit, 4,100 feet high, and very often you or the Indians have to make two or three trips up and down to bring up the outfit. Leaving the Indians there, you go down, coasting part way, 14 miles to Lake Linderman. That is five miles long, with a bad piece of rapids at the lower end. But if it is early in the season, you sled it on the lake and take the mile of rapids in a portage to Lake Bennett, which is a 28-mile tramp. It is four miles' walk to Caribou Crossing, then a short ride or tramp to Takoon Lake, where, if the ice is breaking, you can go by boat or raft, or if it is still hard, you must sled it 21 miles to the Tagish river and lake, four miles long. Take the left bank of the river again, and you walk four miles to Marsh Lake, where you may have to build a raft or boat to cover its 24 miles of length. If not, then you must at the bottom, for there begins the Lynx river, which is usually the head of navigation, for unless the season is very late or the start very early, the rest of the way is almost all by water. Thirty miles down the Lynx River you come suddenly upon Miles Canon[47], which is considered the worst place on the trip. I don't think it is dangerous, but no man ought to shoot the rapids there without taking a look at them from the shore. The miners have put up a sign on a rock to the left just before you get to it, so you have warning and can go ashore and walk along the edge on the ice. It is 60 feet wide and seven-eighths of a mile long, and the water humps in the middle, it goes so fast. But very few have been caught there, though they were killed, of course.

Below the canyon there are three miles of bad river to White Horse rapids, which are rocky and swift, with falls, but taking chances is unnecessary, and I consider it pretty good dropping. After the rapids it is 30 miles down to Lake Labarge, the last of the lakes, which is 30 miles to row, sail or tramp, according to the condition of the water. From there a short portage brings you to the head of the Lewis River, really the Yukon, though we do not call it that till, after drifting, poling, or rowing 200 miles, the Pelly River flows in and makes one big, wide stream. I must warn men who are going in to watch out for Five Fingers Rapids, about 141 miles down the Lewis, where they must take the right-hand channel. That practically ends the journey, for, though it is 180 miles from the junction of the Pelly and Lewis, it is simply a matter of drifting. And I want to say for the hardness of this whole trip, that I have brought horses in that way, using a raft. And it is curious to see how soon they

[47] Now spelled 'canyon'.

learn to stand still while you are going, and to walk on and off the raft mornings and evenings at camping places.

When I left Dawson in the spring there were some 2,000 white men, 40 families and 200 Indians in the Klondike district, most of them living in cabins or tents on claims. The town, which I named after the man who fixed the boundary between the American and Canadian possessions, is new, having only a few houses in it, and is chiefly a source of supplies and a place of meeting. The Alaska Commercial Company has the store there, and the Canadian Government has a reservation with a squad of 60 mounted police and a civil officer or two. The site is on the east bank of the Yukon and the north bank of the Klondike river, which comes into the Yukon at that point. The boundary line is 70 miles southwest.

The gold has been found in small creeks that flow into the Klondike. First comes Bonanza Creek, a mile and a half back of Dawson. It is 30 miles long and very rich, but its tributaries are still better. Ten miles up it the Eldorado, for example, is the most productive streak that has been turned up; it is only six miles long, and is all staked out in claims, but $250 has been taken out in a pan there, and I estimate that the yield will be $20,000,000. Seven miles above Bonanza the Klondike receives the waters of Bear Creek, which is also good, but its six miles of length is claimed by this time. Hunker Creek is 15 miles up the Klondike, and up that is a little stream about the size of a brook, which is called Gold Bottom. All these streams flow from the south, and they come from hills that must have lots of gold in them, for other creeks that run out of them into Indian river show yellow, too. Indian river is about 30 miles south or up the Yukon from Dawson. Stewart river and Sixty-mile Creek with their tributaries, all south, and Forty-mile creek with its branches, off to the northwest – all have gold, and though they have been prospected some, they have not been claimed like the Klondike.

Claims have to be staked out, of course, according to Canadian laws, which I think are clear and fair. The only fault I find with them is that they recognize no agreements that are not in writing, and they do not give a man who "stakes" a prospector, any share in a claim. But I suppose these difficulties can be got around all right by being more careful about having things in writing hereafter. Another point that is hard to get over is that you have to swear that no man before you took gold off that claim, which you can't do, not knowing whether there was anybody ahead of you or not.

The rest of the requirements are sensible. All you have to do is to find gold, to which you must swear, then you mark off about 500 feet along the bed of the creek where no one has a claim, and stick up four stakes with your name on them, one at each corner of your land. Across the ends you blaze the trees. This done you go to the registrar of claims, pay $15, and, after awhile, the surveyor will come along and make it exact. Claims run about ten to the mile, and are limited practically only by the width of the ground between the two "benches," or sides of the hills that close in the stream. The middle line of a series of claims follows the "pay streak," which is usually the old bed of the creek, and it runs across the present course of the water several times, sometimes, in a short distance.

Working a claim can go on at all seasons of the year, and part of the process is best in winter, but prospecting is good only in summer, when the water is flowing and the ground loose. That is another reason why it is useless for new hands to go in now. They cannot do anything except work for others till spring. Then they can prospect with water flowing and the ground soft. If they strike it, they can stake out their claim, clear a patch of trees, underbrush, and stones, and work the surface till winter sets in. We quit the "pan" or "hand" method then. The "rocker" is almost never used except in "sniping," which is a light surface search on unclaimed land or on a claim that is not being worked for enough to pay expenses or to raise a "grub-stake." As soon as the water freezes so that it won't flow in on a man, we begin to dig to the bedrock, sometimes 40 feet down. The ground is frozen, too, in winter, of course, but by "burning" it, as we say, we can soften it enough to let pick and shovel in. All the dirt is piled on one side, and when spring opens again, releasing the water, we put up our sluices and wash it all summer or till we have enough. There has not been any quartz mining yet on the Yukon, but back of the placers, in the hills which have not been prospected, the original ledges must be holding good things for the capitalist.

Life on the Klondike is pretty quiet. Most of the men there are hard workers; but the climate, with the long winter nights, forces us to be idle a great deal, and miners are miners, of course. And there is very little government. The point is, however, that such government as there is, is good. I like the Canadian officers, the Canadian laws, and the Canucks themselves. The captain [of the police] was a fine man, but he had more than he could do this last season, when the rush for the Klondike came. That began in August a year ago, and as the rumor spread up and down the Yukon, the towns and mining camps were deserted by everybody who could get away. Men left the women to come on after them, and hurried off to the Klondike to lay out claims. Circle City was cleaned out. There wasn't room enough on the steamer to take all who wanted to get away to new diggings, and many a good-paying claim was abandoned for the still better ones on the creeks that make the Klondike. The captain of the police had only a few men without horses to detail around over the claims, and besides his regular duties, he had to act as registrar of claims and settle disputes that were brought to him. And there were a good many of these. The need of civil officers is very great, especially of a surveyor.

Outfitting Klondikers in Vancouver[48] (April, 1898)

He were an indifferent man indeed who could walk through our busy city these days without being deeply stirred and interested by the hundreds of strange and eager faces which throng our streets. The mass of men, irregular as it is, might be likened to an attacking army, in that its members are banded together for one single

[48] From Zaylin, C. (1898, April 25). AMONG THE OUTFITTERS. *The Vancouver Daily World*, p. 3. 'C. Zaylin' is almost certainly a pseudonym. Though mentioned as a resident of Vancouver in this and a handful of other articles, she does not appear in the census, city directories, or B.C. birth, marriage or death records.

purpose, to attain one single end. In the nobler, the unanimous hope is glory; in the latter, gold; and in both life is risked freely for that hope. Twice have the hills of northern Canada been besieged by the great army of gold-seekers, so that the fair Dominion, like a woman, need not complain of the fickleness of man, while anything remains hers to give. At present Klondike is the golden key which is to open the door of prosperity to all those whom the great cities have hitherto held obscure in the midst of their teeming thousands, and it is towards Klondike that the many new faces in our city are really turned. By virtue of her geographical position, Vancouver is the proper Gate of Entry into the Yukon, and practically controls the bulk of the Klondike trade. That this fact is recognized in all the four quarters of the globe is demonstrated by the presence here of the hundreds of strangers who are outfitting among our local tradesmen.

What a motley crew it is! It is worth one's while to make an expedition into town for the purpose of observing it. Outside the H. B. Company's block, on Granville street, is a group of French-Canadians, squatting on the sidewalk, old habitants, who have never before, perhaps, been ten miles away from their own little plot of land. Their grizzled brown faces, with sharp black eyes, surmounted by very old and very greasy fur caps, nod and gesticulate in time to the stream of patois which flows out from their midst into the sweet spring air. Inside the store are half-a-dozen of their party making the final purchases. They know how to bargain, these habitants; all life has been for them one dreary, monotonous struggle, well-calculated to teach them the value of every five-cent piece.

Upstairs in the woman's department are three women waiting to interview the busy Mrs. Ormond, who is engaged with a fourth in the fitting-room. The regulation Klondike dress for women is worthy of description. First comes an underwear suit of silk, since silk wears well and is not heavy. The minimum of weight and the maximum of comfort is the object striven for. Over the silk suit is worn a corresponding one of wool. The bloomers are made of corduroy, the most serviceable material for the purpose, and finished with two linings, the one of heavy felt, the other and adjustable lining. The bodice, plain and tight-fitting, is usually of heavy serge. The coat, which matches the bloomers, is made long with a roll collar of fur. The skirt, when there is one, is to the knee and of fur. Three pairs of stockings, the first silk, the other two woolen, leggings and heavy boots complete the costume, while for headgear the old French capot in blanket is found to be the most desirable.

These women – cultured women, some of them – all have schemes which they mean to perfect in the Klondike. One young woman, only just married, is going in with her husband to buy claims to "float" on the London market. Another, also with her husband, intends to prospect. Then there is Mrs. Gladys Egerton, who was a familiar figure in Mrs. Ormond's parlors a few weeks ago. Mrs. Egerton came from the Transvaal where, during the Jameson raid – which our poet laureate in some way failed to immortalize – she founded the Rhodes Hospital for those wounded in the conflict. Her object in going to Dawson is also nursing. Like the other women who have gone and are still going, Mrs. Egerton is quite undaunted by tales of hardship and privation. Feminine "push" and independence are dangerous forces when roused,

and the Klondike is a better field for their exercise than a conventional home on a city street. The masculine portion of the population will be only too glad to take advantage, in the Yukon, of those forces which, in a civilized country, they would unhesitatingly condemn. So much for masculine consistency!

Standing outside the store one sees the restless human sea, far down the street, moving back and forth. The post-office is so crowded that one can barely elbow one's way from door to door. Dressed in their uniform are three Klondikers from Seattle, seated on the ledge below the letter-boxes penning, or rather penciling, a few last words to the dear ones for whom they go to work. There is eagerness, humor, tenderness, expressed on the different faces of the writers – but no regret, for the men who toil and win are the men who go forth with happy hearts, knowing no fear. On the window-sill some more men have placed themselves, waiting for their turn at the wicket. There are some Englishmen among them, easily distinguished. One is a strongly built, broad-shouldered man, whose muscular hands and square jaw speak silently of the strength which compels success. Foreign suns, South Africa, I imagine, have burned his skin to a swarthy hue. Sitting erect at this feet is a large brindled bull-terrier, doing his part towards expressing the power and superiority of the Britisher, whether man or dog. I am reminded of a picture[49] that was exhibited in a window on Cordova street lately, a bull-dog sitting in the centre of Britain's flag – which is our flag, too, thank God – with a background of boundless sea. Beneath the picture were the words "What we have, we'll hold." The brindled bull-terrier seems to say the same, and the steady eyes might add, "and what we want, we'll get!"

In the money order office, a Klondiker is heard arguing mildly. Perhaps he is a little "under the influence," poor chap, for he insists on having the order made out to "My beloved Mary." A visit to the post-office well repays the student of human nature at any time. It is one of the few places where each man unconsciously lays aside the mask which society commands him to wear among his fellows.

It is impossible, in one afternoon, to visit all the Klondike outfitters. Some of the stores are too crowded for a non-purchaser to enter, although two sturdy Australians, with the firm swinging stride which I have begun to recognize as denoting their race, manage to make the crowd give them room. In one store is a group of Americans "getting prices." A clerk, for their amusement, winds up a musical clock which ripples off tunefully into Home Sweet Home.

"Mister, I want that clock," says one of their number, coming forward. He is a man of 45, probably just turning gray. Not a romantic figure, perhaps, to the hero-hunting novelist, but there are tears in his eyes, as he packs up that clock and sends it off to the wife and little ones at home. "We've never been parted for more'n a day or two since we've been married," he says to the clerk, who looks sympathetic, "but this seemed just my one chance." Thereupon he draws out the photo of a woman and two children, plain-looking people enough, no one would turn to look at them twice, yet that man's whole life lies in that woman's hands, back in old Kentucky. "Just his

[49] "What We Have We'll Hold" (1896), painted by Maud Earl (1864 – 1943). The dog pictured is Dimboola, a champion bull dog.

one chance!" and so it is for the most of those whom we see on our streets to-day, their one chance, on which they have staked their all, to win or to lose, as the Fates decree.

On the trail to the Klondike[50] (August, 1898)

We are growing very western in our speech out here. We talk of "corralling" this or that, of "rounding up" our party or property, of tightening our "cinch" up on a person, or securing a firmer hold with "a diamond hitch." Profanity of the ordinary emphatic type we listen to as calmly as though it were current Queen's English; while the extraordinary type – the pack driver's profanity – when filtered through a moderate degree of distance, fails to do more than lift our hair, a mild effect compared to its original intention, that of subduing the bucking cayuse.

Transportation is the problem of our present position. It is impossible to live in the midst of pack trains, to have them every day with us – before and behind, and all about us – without becoming on easy terms with the lingo and code of ethics indigenous to the life. The packer is a law to himself, as well as to his employers, and every one about him. The first dictum of this or any trail is: "Keep in with the packer; for in this command lies all the law and profits." You may have the money, and own the goods. You may strike a hard and fast agreement, attested in many oaths and written in black and white, but from the moment your possessions disappear up the trail, borne on the swaying backs of the cayuse train, the packer is king and you are only a humble petitioner.

The professional packer may own one train, or several. Sometimes he is a capitalist, and has as many as a hundred animals on the trail. Then he selects other men to work under him. Each packer has full control of his train and his packmen, usually four, including the cook, for a train of 30 animals. But whether he be capitalist or the modest owner of a dozen mules, whether he work for himself or another, the professional packer is the same – the most unique specimen of the genus cowboy, rough sir, and tough sir, as free as the mountain air, and as absolutely independent.

A good "boss" packer can always make his $100 per month. When packing rates are high he commands more. He doesn't care an emphasis whether you engage him or not. He refuses to brook interference, and, if engaged, intends to do all he likes in all matters of detail. If he tells you so with fluent emphasis, so much to your advantage. He will probably not only fulfil his agreement, but go one better. But if he submits to your dictation without pungent speech, be assured that manifold will be the misadventures of your particular pack train, and it will probably reach the trail end minus your favorite or most essential piece of luggage, if not with greater loss.

Some of the best-known packers in the west are at present in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company, packing the Yukon force supplies over the Teslin trail, consequently we see a good deal of them as they move back and forth from one trail depot to another. When in camp at either end, or any station between, they usually

[50] From Fenton, F. (1898, August 26). THE TRAIL IMPROVED. *The Vancouver World*, p. 6. Written by Alice Freeman (1857 – 1936), schoolteacher and journalist, writing as Faith Fenton from Tahltan, Teslin Trail.

pitch their tarpaulins – they rarely use tents – and cook-fires just outside our own lines. They live in the roughest open-air fashions of housing or clothes, but [care] much for the manner of their food. A good cook means a contented set of packers, as a rule.

MURPHY'S TRAIN

Murphy's Train pulled in "light" last night, returning from a trip to the "post," 25 miles beyond our present depot. It had pulled out four or five days before with a train-load of supplies and Company No. 2. There had been three days' continuous rain; the trail was heavy, and Murphy was tired. A good meal – and probably something less desirable from the "saloon" – a tented affair planted a few hundred yards outside our lines – had warmed him up into a mood both genial and courageous. He ventured over to our camp fire, and, seating himself upon the end of the long "black log," dropped in to reminiscences.

Murphy stands six feet four in his stockings. He is weather-burnt, unkempt and has the largest hands I ever saw. They are more than a trifle grimy also; packing and the packer's life does not conduce to cleanliness. It is currently reported of Murphy that he came out of a surface hand and face bath which left both showing grimier than before with the appreciative comment, "Ah----h! a good wash once in a while does freshen a fellow up, don't it, boys?"

Murphy did his best to be agreeable and to show us that he knew how to play the gallant; but his efforts were a curious revelation of the crudeness of his thought regarding women in this country. Murphy has got no further than the S——h, whose s——w is simply a beat of burden.

"White women are not much good," says Murphy, "savin' your presence. They won't work. A k——n (Indian woman) is best. She don't ask no questions, and she does what she's ordered. A k——n's worth five dollars a day to any man out in these parts."

He looked across the camp fire meditatively.

"Can you cook?" he queried. "Can you wash blankets? An' I suppose you couldn't round up cayuses? No? Well, you see, you really won't be no use to a packer. A k——n 'ud be far better."

And Murphy is a bachelor.

But Murphy is a good packer – one of the best on the trail. He makes good time; yet treats his animals well and rarely lises [sic.] any of them, except for a reason and with malice prepense. He is the biggest hearted of fellows, full of good will toward those he likes, and equally full of the other thing for the other sort. It is not hard to earn Murphy's regard. He only wants the generosity and good-will that go to make the fellowship of the trail; but the man who does not proffer these in his dealings with our man finds the trail an unaccountably mysterious place. If he wants to hire a horse Murphy has not one to spare. If he would like a lift by the way Murphy's animals are all full ladened. If he dictates that the train resume march at a certain hour, Murphy discovers that several cayuses have strayed over the hills, and the pack train cannot possibly move without them; and it is a singular thing that the animals are never found until Murphy is ready to go on.

His yarns are amusing when not roughly phrased, and he makes an honest effort to smooth his speech. […]

"I don't like packin' corpses," says Murphy, drawing at his pipe; "but I had to last year, way up in Cariboo. The feller didn't look very strong when I tuk hold of him. He wanted to go up 50 miles into the mountains prospectin' at a place where he suspicioned there was gold, and he was goin' alone. Well, I packed his stuff, and he rode with me most of the way, getting' sicker all the time. When we got there he took to his bed. I tended him best I could, but darned if the feller didn't go and die on me, after all my trouble and before he paid me, too. I packed his corpse back – strung the box between my mules – so's it could have a decent buryin'. I didn't want the priest down on me, nor the feller's ghost ahauntin'. An' I never got a cent for the trip."

Murphy's face belies the rough speech. We easily read between the lines something of the lonely mountain vigil beside the sick man, the lonelier return journey with that silent, solemn pack, and the heart kindness that prompted it. […]

ON THE TRAIL

Up and down, down and up again, along hillside edges and in the valleys, over newly-constructed bridges and miles of tall black-scarred trees the tinkling train wound its way, disturbing the strange burnt-forest silence with the pack driver's stentorian "Hoy! Hoy!" Returning packs trains from Teslin or the Post met them here and there, traveling light, and crowded aside to let them pass, as the rule of the trail orders. They exchange news concerning the state of the trail, the camps or campers ahead, the food supply and the fortunes or mischances of the road, tossing the comments to each other without pausing, for no one thinks of stopping a moving cayuse train except for serious cause, since the animals break line instantly and dive into the bushes. Once started they never pause until they have reached their camping place for the night. A pack train never travels beyond from six to eight hours per day. It is too hard on the animals. And packers take but two meals, at the start and at the finish of the day's journey. There is one exception. The packer's life knows no Sunday, in the matter of cessation from labor. But he marks the day by giving himself and his men three meals instead of two.

Up and down the hills, over a most excellent trail, we mark as we journey where bits of the old trail have been forsaken for dryer ground, where stumps have been uprooted and edges banked. Substantial bridges of corduroy cross every stream and hollow; two exceptionally good bridges span the rushing branches of the Tahltan. We realize something of the work these 200 men are putting on this Teslin trail, which, when it is completed in another month, will be the finest trail in the Yukon district.

Sixteen miles is our stint for this second day's journey; we had climbed the previous day to the Summit, a point 12 miles beyond Telegraph Creek, and high above it, sleeping at night under blankets four deep, yet not one was too warm. This 16 miles has been up and down, but chiefly down, with a precipitate descent that made the small cat cling to his mistress, and the mistress grasp her slipping blankets in an endeavor to prevent herself falling over. […] It was a weary leader and a glad pack team that spent the evening in the military tents in the belt of cleared ground ahead.

[…] Company No. 2 had arrived several hours before – their sturdy step far out-marching the pack train. Camp fires were burning and the bugles were calling their invitation "to the cook-house door," and there was Tahltan salmon for tea, fresh caught in the babbling river that runs beside the camp.

Such salmon, pink and tender, and delicate in flavor, rivalled only by the pearl-flecked trout. There will be no chafing among our sportsmen over the days of delay beside this rushing mountain stream. Every morning, armed with the bending, slender elder pole and line, or with spear and gaff hook, they stroll over a few hundred yards to the river bank, and from the deep water nooks below the rippling rapids draw out great fearless beauties, who fight and struggle until the angler's arms ache with the strain before giving up the game. Splendid play they make, frequently snapping the pole under the pull and flashing away to die in deep waters, or perhaps live to leap again for the bait. Yesterday four of our men brought in 19 great fellows on a pole, while at evening the catch of the day was capped by the 20th, a king of the Tahltan, weighing 50 pounds. We snapshotted them, as they stood, for the sake of our reputation for veracity. A curious incident occurred yesterday, when the cook on opening one big fellow, found a plump field mouse, evidently just swallowed, lodged in the stomach. How the fish and the small animal came within reach of each other remains a mystery.

AN EXCITING INCIDENT

A curious accident occurred on the Teslin trail a few days ago, near a point called "the Summit," a mountain height some 4,000 feet above the Etikine river, and 12 miles from Telegraph Creek. The trail wends slowly up the height, occasionally narrowing into a made path of well-banked gravel, curving around the edge of steep cliffs that give a precipitous fall into the valley below. A week of almost continuous rain had loosened the gravel, and made the foot-hold precarious for careless stepping. A pack train of green mules, belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company, plump, frisky young animals, packed with Yukon force supplies, were climbing around one of these spots, when one suddenly bucked, crowded his fellows, and four of the animals were forced over the trail edge. They rolled over and over, their well secured packs remaining firmly attached, never stopping until they reached the stream that ran through the valley centre, 250 feet below. Halfway down, the bare gravel surface ceased, and tall, slender fir trees, black from forest fires, stood with all underbrush burnt away, each distinct from his fellows. By the time the animals reached these, they had acquired such impetus that they went crashing through them, snapping each black trunk as though it had been a twig. One little cayuse rolled plump into the centre of the stream, where it lay upon its back – or rather, upon its pack, which was still secure – and pawed the air frantically. From the height above it was a unique spectacle to see the animals, three on the bank, one in the stream, all kicking lively tattoos in the empty air, but held fast to the ground by their packs. Upon releasing them, it was found that only one was hurt, and that to a trifling extent. The packers considered the escape of the animals from death or serious injury little short of miraculous under the circumstances.

The Social Scene at Dawson City[51] (October, 1897)

If there is one place in the whole world where money has no value it is on the Klondike. You see this exemplified in the social life – if such it may be called – of the mining camps as you see it nowhere else. On the Klondike gold is a common commodity. Much has been written of this desolate region, but the historians have, as a rule, dwelt almost entirely upon the mineral development of the country. It is my intention to give you a glimpse of the people, their customs, their amusements, and their utter disregard for the value of money.

The principal diversions of Dawson City are the gambling saloons and the dance halls. The most profitable industry is the sale of liquor, the saloons paying no revenue to the government. Beer and whisky sell for fifty cents a drink. The gambling saloons are run wide open, day and night, and the dance halls never close until daylight. It may be remarked, incidentally, that there are two churches, one a Catholic and the other a Protestant Episcopal. I fancy it would make some of your Fifth-avenue congregations stare to see the collection plates heaped up with nuggets and dust on Sundays.

I often wonder, out in this wild spot, what the rounders who used to think themselves high rollers in the days of the old Tenderloin would think of Dawson. The winning or losing of from $1,000 to $3,000 at a sitting excites no comment here. I was in the Golden Palace the other night (and the Golden Palace is by no means what its name implies) when Swiftwater Bill, a young man who hails from Spokane, Wash., came in and announced with a whoop that he was going to "bust the bank."

Swiftwater Bill owns some of the richest claims on El Dorado Creek, and when he breaks loose the dust is sure to fly. Bill took a seat at the faro table and in just one hour he had lost $7,500 in gold nuggets. "Things don't seem to be coming my way to-night," he remarked as he rose from his seat and stretched himself. "Let the house have a drink at my expense."

There was a rush for the bar, and waiters carried drinks to the various tables where games were in progress. That round cost Bill $112. Then he lighted a dollar and a half cigar and strolled out.

The gambling saloons, in external appearance, are very much like all the other buildings in Dawson, except that they are larger. They are built of logs hewn on three sides and solidly chinked with heavy moss. The roofs are made of poles, on which a layer of moss fully ten inches thick is laid, and then a layer of dirt about twelve inches deep serves to keep out the cold. Heavy embankments of earth piled up against the huts on the outside serve as additional protection against the chilling blasts of the Arctic winter gales. A few saloons are built of lumber, with double walls, between which sawdust and moss are tightly packed, but old Yukoners tell me that such constructed buildings are inadequate against the severe cold weather.

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[51] From GAMBLING AT KLONDIKE. (1897, December 1). *The Ottawa Journal*, p. 5. Despite the publication date, this article by an anonymous correspondent of the New York Herald is dated Oct. 18, 1897.

Last year logs sold for $1.40 apiece, and now they bring as high as $4. To build the commonest kind of a log cabin, say eighteen by twenty-four feet, costs in the neighborhood of $4,500.

Games involving $5,000 and $10,000 are running night and day. Professional dealers of "banking games" receive $20 a day. The manner of hazarding money is unique, even in a mining camp. The player takes his seat at a faro table, and passes over his sack of gold dust to the dealer, who drops it into a small pigeon-hole. The chance of "overplaying his sack" devolves upon the player's honor. He is given full credit and can call for as many chips from the check rack as he desires.

As the checks are passed out a tab is dropped on his sack. At the conclusion of the play the chips on hand are credited to the account of the sack. The dealer hands the player a slip of paper showing the condition of the account, and the latter takes it and his sack of gold to the bar. If he has lost he weighs out his gold dust, or, in the event of winning, the barkeeper does the paying.

About four o'clock one morning a miner known as "Shorty" left his seat at the table where he had been playing all night, saying that he had gone broke. The dealer handed him his bag of dust and his slip, the latter corresponding almost to a grain with the value of the gold. "Shorty" waked over to the bar and invited a couple of other miners to have a drink. Then he was seized with a fatal fit of forgetfulness.

He edged toward the door and was about to put it open when the bartender called to him: "Say, Shorty, haven't you forgot something?"

"Forgot hell!" exclaimed Shorty, and the door swung out. When it rebounded it stopped half way, obstructed in its inward passage by the body of a dying man. A flash of flame and the report of a pistol from somewhere in that low-ceilinged, smoke-laden room, explained the draught of cold air that came in through the half-open door. "Shorty" was buried the next day.

In the effete east there is a fine distinction drawn between the society man and the club man. The same distinction is drawn there. The club man is the gambling saloon; society is the dance hall. I wish some of the matrons who lend dignity to the Patriarchs' ball could have been with me last night when I attended a "soiree" at the Morning Star.

I got in about midnight, although the dancing begins as early as seven o'clock in the evening. The building is a large one, built of logs, but with a floor of rough boards. It answers every purpose, however, for the mazy waltz and the two-step are not popular with these boisterous revelers. They prefer the old-fashioned Virginia reel, or the plain quadrille, with lots of room to throw their feet about.

You could cut the tobacco-laden atmosphere with a knife. Through the blue haze the figures of a couple of musicians could be faintly distinguished fiddling away for dear life and calling out, "Sashay all!" "Swing yer pardners!" "Ladiees through!" as the occasion demanded. They received $20 a night for doing this, and they earned every penny of it.

To one side, extending the whole length of the room, was the bar, and the three dispensers of drinks were kept quite as busy as the fiddlers. Beer, whiskey and cigars

were retailed at fifty cents. A poor quality of champagne sold at $30 a pint, and somewhat better brandy brought $40.

Of course, the men greatly outnumbered the women. There were probably a dozen of the latter, some of them young and quite pretty. They have little or no time to rest between the dances, and when the morning peeps over the eastern mountains he finds them a jaded and somewhat bedraggled lot. But they charge a dollar for every dance, and Cripple Creek Carrie, the acknowledged belle of the "dancing set," has been known to make as much as $100 a night tripping the light fantastic toe.

A young fellow whom they called "Pinkey" was pointed out to me as the social leader of Dawson City. He was the only man in the room who wore a boiled shirt. When he goes out to dance, which is almost every night, he carries a pair of pumps with him. He leaves his boots behind the bar, dons his patent leathers and sails in on a wild career of terpsichorean dissipation. "Pinkey" has been known to buy $120 worth of dances in three successive nights.

Most of the men worse their ordinary working clothes, with top boots, or heavy, spike bottom shoes. Their heads were covered by broad brimmed hats, which they never removed, and in their mouths were cigar butts, which seemed equally stationary.

Fist fights form a mild sort of diversion at these affairs, usually brought about by a dispute over who shall dance with the women. Occasionally the evening's festivities will conclude with a shooting affray, and along toward morning, when the corn juice has commenced to get in its fine work, a popular sort of amusement is shooting out the lights. But as a rule fisticuffs find the greatest favor.

With all this talk about drinking and gambling saloons and dance halls, I dare say you are wondering if the inhabitants of Dawson City ever eat. I assure you they do, but it is quite as expensive of a luxury as are the other forms of dissipation. Eating here is really a dissipation. If you don't believe it, I'll tell you what my dinner consisted of to-day. I had sour dough bread, with molasses instead of butter; fried salt pork, stewed apples, oatmeal much and tea. For supper I had tea, oatmeal mush, stewed apples and sour dough bread with molasses. For breakfast I shall have graham pancakes, fried oatmeal, mush and coffee.

I must tell you about the dogs. It is my honest conviction that no community of this size ever had so many dogs. It is estimated that there are nearly 1,500 of the animals in Dawson City, and as many more in the mines. The most of them are fine appearing fellows, and in the cold season net their owners handsome profits by hauling sleds heavily laden with supplies to the adjacent mining camps. In town they travel in companies ranging from ten to twenty, and the moment they catch sight of another dog away from his company, the pack will give chase. Dog fights are so common as not to excite a passing glance.

Personal vanity in the matter of dress is an item of no small expense in Dawson City. I paid $1.75 for having a white shirt washed and ironed the other day, and then I couldn't wear it. The misguided laundress had not only starched and ironed the bosom, but had subjected the entire garment to that operation. It might have been all

right for a suit of mail, but as an article of fin de siècle wearing apparel it was quite out of the question.

Aside from the two stores, three or four barber shops, half a dozen laundries, five or six restaurants, a second-hand store or two, two sawmills, three butcher shops, two jewelry shops, a dozen physicians and dentists, [and] a couple of real estate offices, the principal business engaged in is the sale of intoxicants.

The receipts of sixty days last spring in one season amounted to $124,500, and the day the successful miners were taking their departure by the first steamer of the season the receipts amounted to $6,500. Hardly a saloon in town is receiving less than $300 a day, besides winning large sums of money at the gambling games. Barkeepers are paid from $12.50 to $20 a day, and even the porters, where such luxuries are deemed necessary, are paid from $7.50 to $10. A rumor has emanated from official sources and is going the round to the effect that a Canadian official will arrive shortly and enforce a law permitting only hotel and innkeepers to engage in selling liquors.

"Henderson's hard luck"[52] (1901)

The men from New Brunswick and Nova Scotia seem to be in the direct line of discoveries on this continent. Not only were the Klondike goldfields discovered by a Nova Scotian, but according to Mr. Ogilvie, a Nova Scotian named Ferguson was the discoverer of hill claims in Yukon territory and the man who first staked and worked the rich benches on Bonanza creek (above Carmack's discovery claim), thus nearly doubling the annual output of the Klondike gold creeks.

I have taken the trouble to compile the following brief narrative of the discovery of the Klondike-Indian River goldfields by Robert Henderson, a native of Pictou, Nova Scotia. It is substantiated by Mr. Ogilvie, who was at Fortymile at the time. […] Some people are disposed to give Carmack or Skookum Jim credit for the discovery of the goldfields, but it will at once be realized that while they discovered gold on Bonanza Creek, a small portion of these goldfields, yet even that discovery was entirely due to Henderson's previous work on Hunker-Gold Bottom Creek, and his generous invitation to Carmack to "come up and stake on Gold Bottom." […]

DISCOVERY OF THE KLONDIKE GOLDFIELDS

Robert Henderson of Pictou, Nova Scotia, arrived at Sixtymile Post (now Ogilvie) in July, 1894 [and] determined to prospect Indian River, whose mouth is half-way between Sixtymile and Dawson. A few days after his arrival at Joe Ladue's[53] post he outfitted from Joe, and taking one man, Jack Collins, with him, boated down the Indian River, poled up it to the mouth of Quartz Creek and […] explored Quartz Creek up to the divide between the Indian and Klondike Rivers. They waited too long, were

[52] From Woodside, H. J. (1904, February 25). THE GREAT FIND IN THE NORTH. *The Province*, p. 5. Written by Henry Joseph Woodside (1858 – 1929). I have borrowed the title from another article on the subject, HENDERSON'S HARD LUCK. (1901, April 9). *The Province*, p. 8, probably also published by Woodside.

[53] The founder of Dawson city.

caught by the ice and had a terribly rough trip along the bank of the rivers to Sixtymile, where they arrived in a starving condition.

Not long after this trip, Henderson, having got a fresh supply of "grub," went back alone over the ice to Quartz Creek and spent the remainder of the winter in sinking holes to bedrock and drifting tunnels in search of the paystreak, which had been indicated to him by the summer's prospecting. He found only a few colors in the gravel.

In March he made a laborious trip through the deep melting snow farther up Indian River to Australia Creek, where he had been during the previous summer. He was sixty-four days traveling to and fro with his supplies. He prospected some creeks near Australia Creek to their heads, and was then preparing to go up the latter when a terrible and almost fatal accident nearly ended his work. IN a fall from a freshly trimmed tree laid across a creek, he had one of the sharp bough stubs penetrate through the calf of his leg, and hold him suspended, his head almost in the water. By sheer grit he extricated himself from the hooked end, and had to remain in his tent for two weeks while the ragged wound healed to some extent. The effects of the wound followed since then and have crippled him during hard trips alone.

He spent the remainder of the summer in prospecting streams flowing into the Indian River, and returned in the fall to Quartz Creek, where he built a dam and sluiced, but without success. He then boated down the Indian River and up the Yukon to Sixtymile, and having got a fresh supply of grub from Ladue, he returned to Quartz, accompanied by William Redford. They ground-sluiced for some weeks and then went back to Sixtymile for supplies.

Henderson had to return alone with his winter's supply of grub to Quartz Creek over the ice. He was able to shoot caribou and moose when he wanted fresh meat. Here he worked the whole winter alone, never missing a day's work. Early in the spring Allan Day and a companion from Sixtymile found him sluicing out his dumps of gravel. He washed up about $620.

Then he must needs finish up Australia Creek, where he spent some twenty-six days prospecting in almost constant rain. The prospects were poor as he returned to Quartz Creek, and then proceeded over the divide to Gold Bottom, or Hunker[54] Creek, in the Klondike valley. On Gold Bottom Creek, so named by him, he found a 10 cent pan, which was very encouraging. Returning to Sixtymile for more grub, which Joe Ladue backed him up with, he had difficulty in inducing any of the miners there to accompany him to his new find. Munson, Dalton and Swanson returned with him. Antone Strander (now of Eldorado Creek) came up later. Henderson's party worked on Gold bottom from the middle of July until the 22nd of September, rocking and sluicing. In that time they secured $750, which was equally divided among

[54] Henderson had been on this branch before [Hunker] and staked a claim. Hunker staked at a place three claims below Henderson's claim, and […] then started for Fortymile to record. This was the only recording office in the Yukon at the time. The Recorder refused to pay any attention to Hunker's statement that the main creek was called Gold Bottom. He named it Hunker from the mouth on and gave Hunker the discovery claim where he had staked, saying he had no knowledge of Henderson's work. -HJW

themselves. While at this work their provisions ran low and Henderson had to return to Sixtymile for more. He found the water so low in Indian River, that with his loaded boat, in returning he determined to try the Klondike instead.

At the mouth of the Klondike, […] he found Carmack with his brothers-in-law, fishing for salmon. Henderson invited Carmack to come up and stake on the new strike, and then poled up the Klondike to the mouth of Hunker Creek, which he named Gold Bottom. Here he landed and packed his grub up to the claim on Gold Bottom, where he found Carmack with his two brothers-in-law, Skookum Jim and Tagish Charlie, who had come up by a shorter route, up Rabbit, now Bonanza Creek, and over the divide into Hunker valley. When they had staked and enjoyed Henderson's hospitality, they started back the way they came. Henderson's last injunction to Carmack, when telling him to test the gravel on Bonanza Creek, was: "If you find anything good, send back one of the Indians to tell me, and I will pay him for it." How well Carmack kept his word and repaid Henderson's hospitable invitation will be seen.

When they arrived at what is now called Discovery, just below the present town of Bonanza (Grand Forks), they camped, and while Carmack slept Skookum Jim panned the gravel, which, coming from the bench above, showed rich gold. It was a mere accident, for, as Mr. Ogilvie points out, had he panned almost anywhere else on either Bonanza or Eldorado, it is hardly likely that he would have got more than a few colors. It is now a well known fact [that with] this exception, these wonderfully rich creeks show no surface indication of their wealth.

Without thinking of Henderson, the party went down the Yukon to Fortymile, and recorded three claims, including discovery on Bonanza. At first none of the miners believed Carmack's story, as he was not considered a miner at all. Mr. William Ogilvie was there at the time, and on his advice a couple of well-known miners started up to investigate. When the news of their departure became known, the whole population of Fortymile rose up and followed them, and Bonanza was staked to the head. Then the usual "fool" staked on Eldorado, which had been reserved for "a moose pasture" and without the first indications of gold on the creek, it was also staked to its head. After the folly of the proceeding became apparent to the stampeders, some of them began to unload, and one claim, which has since produced a couple of million in gold, was sold for $500, considered a very fortunate sale at the time.

After some of the stampeders had staked, they dropped over into Hunker or Gold Bottom valley, to see what Henderson was doing. This was the first intimation that he and his party had of the rush. It is said that Henderson stopped long enough at his shoveling to give, in warm and specific terms, his opinion of Carmack's gratitude. But everything had then been staked on the new field.

"She told where millions lay"[55] (1900)

This account[56] of the discovery of gold in the Klondike gives most of the credit to Kate Carmack.

Hollister, Cal., Oct. 31. – A suit has been filed against Millionaire George Carmack by his Indian wife. She prays for divorce and a share of the community property.

Behind this announcement there is a romance of love and perfidy that dates back to the discovery of the Klondike, back to the days when George Carmack, sick at heart, with courage ebbing, wandered through the land of plenty – a beggar.

To-day he has a fortune deposited in the banks of California. He owns claims on El Dorado and Bonanza, creeks worth millions.

The key to them was once locked in the hands of a woman.

Love wrested it from her. And, behold, George Carmack became the discoverer of the Klondike gold fields.

His name is celebrated in every history of the Klondike region. He came there shortly after Joe Juneau discovered the Silver Bow Basin. He was there long before Joseph Ladue built his trading post in the Yukon and long before Robert Henderson began to think of prospecting on Indian river.

But the little Tagish woman, whose courage buoyed his to the sticking point, was there before him. Her part in the history of the Klondike will be written in the divorce courts of Hollister, where the wonderful suit of Kate Carmack versus George Carmack will claim the attention of the civilized world.

Eighteen years ago George Carmack made his first trip to the wilds of Alaska. He came buoyant with hopes of youth and inexperience. It was a new country and he meant to conquer it. In his eyes burned the fire of ambition, in his heart the spirit of one who had never been rebuffed.

He had come to the northern land to try his hand at anything that offered in order to keep body and soul together. He had come there lured by the belief that somewhere in its trackless snows and n———head swamps there were mounds of hidden gold.

Through all the long years of his search he carried a pickaxe in order to be ready for any sudden emergency of good fortune, and a gun, that he might live in spite of bad. Many a meal he shot and cooked for himself there in the primeval forests that clothe the mountain slopes. Many a night he spent stretched out on the dense herbage, dreaming of the gold that would furnish him with a bed of down.

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[55] From SHE TOLD WHERE MILLIONS LAY. (1900, October 31). *The Province*, p. 8.

[56] Its veracity was disputed by at least one writer, who claimed "The elaborate story as to Carmack's native wife conveying the secret of gold deposits on Bonanza creek to her husband is picturesque but false in toto." HENDERSON'S HARD LUCK. (1901, April 9). *The Province*, p. 8. This was probably written by Henry Joseph Woodside (1858 – 1929), a champion of Henderson's claim to discovery.

Through many a spring and summer he tramped over miles and miles of that splendid, silent country. Occasionally he fell in with men, who, like himself, were filled with the desire to find gold. At night, by the camp fires, which they lighted to ward off mosquitoes and grizzlies, they would tell each other tales of home, glorying in the remembrance that they had ever owned such a luxury.

George Carmack came to be pretty well known in the Yukon. He was handsome, big, daring and generally accounted square.

There was nothing so far to test his dealings with women. The little k——n who held the key to the great gold mine had not yet crossed his path. Meanwhile he endeared himself to his companions by his modesty and simplicity. He boasted that he had learned both before the mast, where he had also added a fund of strength and endurance that in this land of eternal frost stood him in good stead.

Thus, when winter came he settled down in Sheep camp, and lived by doing whatever he could to come by an honest penny. It was in those days that he made himself popular. He was uniformly good-natured when he could have been forgiven for being otherwise. The gold he had come after had not materialized.

The prospector's hope, however, springs eternal. Some time before a man had started for Forty-Mile creek. He had been overcome by a storm and carried on the back of an Indian into Sheep camp. The miners crowded in from every part of the country to know why the man had attempted a journey in winter. The Indian who had rescued him picked up a handful of beans to explain. "Gold all same like this!" he cried. It was enough.

A few weeks later, when the snow was scarcely melted on the ground, George Carmack joined a party of adventurous spirits and started off on a rough boat of their own make across Lake Lindeman, over the now explored Chilkoot Pass, two hundred miles or more to Forty-Mile.

They had miscalculated their distance and the length of time it would take to make their way over the steep, rocky ledges of the east wall between Sheep camp and the Scales. They ran short of food and Carmack was one of those who lived to tell the tale of a terrific storm on Chilkoot which tore the clothes from his back and left his courage weakened.

Incidents of that sort became common in his experience. Year in and year out he tried new diggings, sometimes with a partner, sometimes alone, and sometimes with an Indian. In his canoe he drifted into parts unknown to the white man. He circled from the mouth of the Great Tanana, through the Yukon up to Birch creek and back again to Sheep camp. He tried the Lewis and the Pelly and the Porcupine and all the creeks in the neighborhood of Circle City. He explored the rushing Kiskaquin down to the very borders of the sea. Hungry often, ragged always, he searched in vain for a glint of the hidden gold of which men whispered and boasted and lied.

He learned to understand the language of the r——— man as well as his own. He had been in the Klondike 12 years. He had his gun and his axe and the rags that passed for clothes. He had set up countless claims that were worthless. For his pains he had years of hardships and bitter disappointment to look back upon.

George Carmack had in his eye the look of a man beaten and discouraged. He no longer talked of gold, no matter what his dreams. His chief ambition was to return to the States whence he came, to the seafaring life he had deserted.

In this spirit he drifted one night, dull and listless, into a s——— dance.

He smoked his pipe and watched while his companions joined in. In 12 years George Carmack had changed. His smile was as rare as it had once been frequent. He was still undeniably good-looking. His wanderings had made him no less strong and stalwart. His eyes were sad but big. His mustache was black, still, and his hair heavy and dark. He was good to look upon as he stood against the side of the smoke-filled cabin while the Indians hooted and their maidens danced in the firelight.

One suddenly slipped into the shadow and joined him. Her voice was low and soft and she spoke in her own tongue that he understood. She asked him why he was sad.

George Carmack laughed scornfully. What was there to be glad about in that God-forsaken country?

The little klootch, who was called "Tagish Kate," tried to cheer him by urging him to join her in the dance. She asked him to eat first. She had some food in the next room. She offered it because she knew that without it men were miserable. She longed to make George Carmack happy.

"Why do you care?" he asked. And the little maid had won her first victory, since he cared to know.

It is no shame to Tagish Kate that she began the courting that has finally led to her appeal to the divorce courts of Hollister. She saw a man alone and lonely, sad and disappointed. With the heart of a true woman she sought to comfort him. In the fulfilment of her task, again like a true woman, civilized or s———, she fell in love.

George Carmack, on that night of the s——— dance, with the thumping of the sticks, and the noise of Indian music in his ears, allowed himself to be led into the room beyond, where the little Tagish maid fed him with a concoction of her own, made from the birds of the forests steeped in herbs unfamiliar to the white man.

There, in the dim light of a tall candle, he saw that she was young, with eyes as black as his own, and cheeks that were the color of the red berries she had strung about her neck in honor of the dance.

It was twelve years since George Carmack had caught a glimpse of a white woman, and twelve years since any woman had tried with soft notes and tender glances to give him sympathy.

He yielded to the music of the Tagish maiden's voice.

He reviewed to her the tale of his hardships. She listened, with wide-eyed admiration that was nectar to his hungry soul, to his adventures. She heard of the skill with which he had warded off danger, and the courage with which he had confronted it. Unconsciously, with the manner of any man in the same position, he became the hero of every tale he told. And the little maid grew wondrous fair in his estimation, as she listened with eyes that believed before he had spoken.

She clapped her hands to hear how he had killed the grizzly that came up on him unawares. She fell into tears when he related his experiences in the storm where

two of his comrades had perished. She laughed aloud to hear how familiar he was with the land where she knew every trail and creek. She hung upon his words in a way to delight the heart of a man lonely and crestfallen.

She was loath to leave him now that she had found him. But even s——— dances in that mysterious land of the north have an end, and other s——ws and other maids brought their men in to sup. Among them came Skookum Jim, a brother of Kate, and Tagish Charlie, another brother, and a big chief among the Indians named Cultus, and a boy named K'neth.

They crowded into the place chattering and gesticulating and laughing.

In the midst of the noise and confusion, Tagish Kate crowded close to him. "Meet me to-morrow," she whispered, "on the left bank of the Melozikaka, just beyond the bend, and I will tell you things to make you glad."

The next day, since a fair-haired woman wasn't to be found in this northern wilderness, he went to keep tryst with Tagish Kate. The clouds which she had dissipated the night before had gathered again. Not only were they in such skies, making the day one of gloom, but they were reflected in the form with which he greeted her.

Unlearned in her business, poor child of the forests, she was there before him, waiting.

He took her presence for granted, and whistled from where he stood. She came in her canoe to fetch him, smiling radiantly with unconcealed rapture. He did her the honor to step in and let her pilot him with all the strength of her ruddy, muscular arms, under overhanging hemlocks festooned with long streamers of moss, and branching birch and cottonwood.

They drifted up the river, he leaning back wearily waiting for her to tell him of that which would make him glad.

But in this she was not so prompt. She made him tell her again of his adventures, of his hopes and of his discouragement.

At the latter, instead of weeping, she smiled.

George Carmack accused the Indian maid of being heartless. And then she did but smile the more. Finally, a bit mystified, he told her he had been beaten in the fight and meant shortly to go back among his own people.

"Don't go," cried Tagish Kate, "stay here and I will make you rich. I will give you more than the pale face can. I will love you if you will stay"—

George Carmack smiled.

"I will show you the place where gold nuggets are as plentiful as sands on the seashore."

Big and powerful were the brothers of the red maid, and George Carmack's wedding day was named and celebrated according to the most authentic Indian rites and customs.

Tagish Charlie, a power among the tribes, invited chiefs from far and near to whom he praised the integrity and courage of the white man who had taken his sister for s———.

Among the Indians George Carmack became a hero. He had done the right thing by the nut brown maid, and they celebrated it with a feast of plenty and a glory of festivities that lasted three days.

At the end of them Tagish Kate surrendered to her husband the key that opened up the land of gold.

Four years later George Carmack had founded his claims on El Dorado and Bonanza creeks, which this year aggregated him $250,000.

George Carmack had married his Indian wife in the autumn of 1894. All that winter he waited for the snows to die; waited till a time when Tagish Kate could guide him to the land where the sands were gold.

The following summer they started out with Skookum Jim and Tagish Charlie. Easily enough George Carmack, who had been a wanderer for many years, fitted into life with the Indians.

During those early days of her married life, before the great fortune, to which Tagish Kate held the key, had passed into the hands of George Carmack, the little Indian maid was happy.

There Henderson, Joseph Ladue's partner, saw Carmack drying and curing a catch of fish after the most approved Indian fashion.

"There," he thought, "is a poor devil who hasn't struck it." So he went to Carmack and urged him to follow in his trail. Carmack's little Indian wife stood silently listening at his side.

Her eyes flashed when she heard him urge her husband to desert his S——— friends, and she shook her head defiantly. George Carmack had grown accustomed to consulting her about every move, for she had sworn to land him in the midst of plenty, and Carmack knew that she would keep her word. She advised him to follow Henderson to Gold Bottom by way of Rabbit creek, the mouth of which is a mile from the Yukon. On Rabbit creek, Carmack was rewarded with a find of some single grains of gold, which struck joy to his heart.

It is marked in Tagish Kate's remembrance as one of the happy days of her life.

After staking off three claims on Gold Bottom, Carmack's Indian guides led the way back through five miles of a thick spruce timbered valley region, past edges of rock to a great unnamed, unexplored tributary of Rabbit creek.

Here, there, everywhere, they stopped to pan. First it was the duty of one of them, and then another. Always the most diligent, the most anxious, was the little Indian wife whose p———[57] had been left at a friendly wigwam a month before, that she might follow her husband.

Beside the unnamed creek, worn out with his day's march, Carmack dropped off to sleep. Tagish Kate watched him with the light of happiness in her eyes, strengthened by the thought of the baby girl to whom she would soon return.

Then, with the eye of a connoisseur she began to examine her surroundings. From that she came to testing them. She went down to the edge of the water, and

[57] A Narragansett word for 'child,' later used by settlers to refer to any Indigenous child in a way that is often considered offensive.

taking a pan, filled it with dirt from the foot of a spreading birch tree. The next minute she had washed it clear.

Her cry awoke Carmack. On her knees she held out her treasure to him. In that first pan Carmack received $3 worth of gold.

With it Tagish Kate presented him the key to Bonanza creek.

George Carmack staked off a claim by the right of discovery and another by right of location. Above and below, his Indians each [staked] claims.

In a wigwam that was fine and solid, George Carmack now established his s–——— with her little girl. From out of his mines he gave nuggets to hang about her neck, and to have made into trinkets for the little one.

With time, just a very little time, it seemed to Tagish Kate, George Carmack had an astonishing amount of business that took him away on trips that lasted sometimes for months.

On one of them at last he took her with him, and established her among white people in Hollister, where she would have been lonely if she hadn't still believed that he loved her. He did this because she refused to remain alone in the north country from where he drew his gold without the need of any longer being present.

As soon as George Carmack had fully established his Indian wife at Hollister, his trips away from home began again.

She reproached him with simple directness.

Plainly he told her that the fortune that was his demanded his presence among them. He told her not of the women whom she had learned to fear.

Tagish Kate began to long for the days before she had bestowed gold and unrest upon George Carmack.

On some breath of wind that boded no good was finally borne to her ears the name of a woman in Seattle. The train her husband now took after rare intervals at home carried him there.

The blood of all her Indian forefathers coursed in Kate Carmack's veins. They had been proud and free. She had her child to fight for.

George Carmack warded off her questions and then vowed he'd take her on his next trip. She followed him to the depot, but as the train pulled out he grasped her hand, shook it, [then] jumped on one of the moving cars, leaving her and her little one behind.

It was months before Tagish Kate realized that she and her child were deserted.

The paleface, even without the key to a fortune, had won George Carmack. The bitterness of the thought drove the Indian woman to the divorce courts of Hollister, where she demands a division of the fortune that she holds has been her undoing.

If she had never relinquished the key she believes she might have kept the white man's love.

There are philosophers who will agree with her.

"One of the richest Klondikers"[58] (August, 1898)

Two of the most interesting passengers that arrived on the steamer Roanoke today are George W. Carmack, the discoverer of Bonanza creek and the first claim locator in the Klondike mining district, and his Indian partner, "Skookum Jim." Carmack is the cause of the whole Klondike trouble. His discovery has helped San Francisco, wakened up the whole world and been the making of Seattle. It has sent hundreds of men scurrying towards the northern gold fields, some of whom are now coming back much poorer than when they went. It has been the death of hundreds of unfortunate dogs, and has imprisoned many thousands in the cold, uncomfortable country in which Carmack was unkind enough to find gold, and gold in such quantities that the whole world has felt the thrill.

Carmack has made good use of his find and comes back one of the richest Klondikers of the year. The amount of gold he has with him is difficult to estimate and can only be done when six figures are used. His Indian partner is also well heeled and sticks to Carmack as faithfully as would a dog.

The story of his discovery has been told before, but […] worth retelling. A party of old Klondikers, up on all the details, told it in a down town hotel to-day, practically as follows:

In August, 1896, the wonders of the Klondike were unknown. Gold in small quantities had been found on Hunker and Gold Bottom creeks, but claims at Forty-Mile and Circle City were considered much better. Among the men who roamed the Yukon from Juneau to St. Michael on [the] Behring Sea was George W. Carmack. He was a Californian by birth, but for twelve years previous to the eventful month had been in Alaska. For most of his time, two Indians, "Tagish Charley" and "Skookum Jim," had been his almost constant companions. They were with him when he went salmon fishing on the Klondike river.

On August 17 the strangely assorted trio started across the country towards Gold Bottom, where reports of small gold strikes had originated. They had gone about 12 miles up Bonanza creek, when they rested around an old birch tree. Carmack was carrying a shovel, and for no reason at all stuck it into the gravel at the foot of the tree. The dirt was put in a pan and several coarse colors found. The three men worked for half an hour and washed out a shotgun cartridge full of gold. Carmack staked discovery claim, commencing at the big birch. "Skookum Jim" took No. 1 above and "Tagish Charley" No. 1 below. Then all three started for Forty-Mile to record.

Prospectors had tramped the snowy banks of Bonanza creek before, and had the discovery been made by anyone else than George Carmack, whose reputation throughout the country was of the best, it would hardly have been believed. Eight worn-out miners who had been prospecting on the upper river were met soon after the lucky trio started for the recorder's office and advised of the find. On the Yukon two Frenchmen were met coming down in a boat. They started off like the others, but in even a greater hurry, for they forgot to tie their boat.

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[58] From WITH FOUR MILLIONS. (1898, August 31). *The Victoria Daily Times*, p. 3.

Carmack proceeded to celebrate his discovery on arrival at Forty-Mile by getting the entire camp on a drunk. The golden news that the long-looked-for Bonanza had been struck was received with shouts, and almost the entire camp stampeded in spite of the advice of real estate men, who said the new discovery amounted to nothing. Circle City heard of it a few weeks later, and Birch creek was soon deserted. Bonanza was soon located from top to bottom, and those who did not get claims on the creek began to locate on El Dorado. This proved even richer, and since then Klondike has been rapidly growing into the greatest gold camp of the century.

Carmack has looked well after the interests of his two s——— partners, and the 1,500 feet of placer ground they own has turned out to be about the richest spot in the whole Klondike. Had it not been for Carmack, "Tagish Charley" and "Skookum Jim" would have been without claims to-day. He simply would not let them sell out to scheming white men and compelled them to work their claims. The Indians are brothers, but "Skookum Jim" is much the taller of the two. The Klondikers say that "Tagish Charley" is a great "spender," although both have good reputations for that sort of thing in Dawson gambling houses.

Carmack is a fine specimen of western manhood. He is over six feet tall and has remarkably broad shoulders. A drooping black moustache adorns his firm face. He is well educated for a frontiersman, and his cabin on Discovery, Bonanza, is well stocked with late books and magazines. A small organ is one of the most out-of-place-looking things it contains. To some of his friends he has confided the idea of having a yacht built for a trip to Paris. He was born on a cattle [ranch] near Port Costa, Cal., September 24, 1860. His people came to California in '49.

"From Klondike to Paris"[59] (September, 1898)

George Carmack, the discoverer of Klondike, who is registered at the Seattle hotel, is a subject of much interest to everybody who sees him. He is accompanied by his Indian wife and baby, and his brothers-in-law. Carmack does not look like a man who would discover a gold mine. He says that he deceives his looks, just like a good many other men in the world. He knows pay dirt when he sees it.

Carmack is not one of those individuals who believe in coming out of the Klondike and leaving his wife behind to look after the children. He says: "When you go off on a little journey, take your wife with you. The change will do her good, and civilization will not harm the children so long as they don't get too much of it." They can visist the States and still be honest, according to Carmack's way of looking at it.

Just now Carmack has a great trip in view. He is going to the Paris exhibition. He will take his Indian wife and baby with him, and if Skookum Jim and his other brother-in-law wish to accompany him, he will be very glad to have them. They're good company, he says, and he would not care to go to Paris to see all the sights knowing that they were missing it all.

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[59] From FROM KLONDIKE TO PARIS. (1898, September 3). *The Province*, p. .2.

"Back to poverty"[60] (1920)

On her northern trip Mrs. Cameron met Kate Carmack, the Indian wife of George Carmack, who is generally known as the discoverer of gold in the Klondike. But if what Kate told Mrs. Cameron was true, she and not Cameron was the finder, and the honor of starting the historic rush belongs to a woman.

BACK TO POVERTY

Kate lived in great luxury for years in San Francisco and other coast cities after her husband became wealthy, but when seen by Mrs. Cameron she had returned to her old home at Carcross and was living miserably in a small shack there.

"It was two miles to her hut, and in a lot covered with weeds stood the house," said Mrs. Cameron. "When Kate opened the door some S——— dogs came dashing out. These animals were her only companions. She seemed to be about forty-five years old then and certainly appeared anything but happy. Nor were her surroundings of a kind to alleviate her depression. In one corner of the dreary little room in which she lived was a rusty Yukon stove. On the wall hung a cheap mirror, and in another part of the room was a wooden settee. That and the bed were about all the furnishing in the room occupied by this woman who had once lived in splendor in the best hotels in Seattle and San Francisco, and who had been called the petted wife of the millionaire discoverer of the Klondike.

"I had quite a long chat with Kate. She showed me a picture of a new dress she had owned once, the bodice of which was entirely covered with gold. The discovery of gold, as she told it, came about in this way: she and her husband and two h———s, Skookum Jim and Tagish Charlie, were prospecting along Bonanza Creek. Kate took up a pan and began washing for gold in the creek. IN this she was more successful than she had hoped, and running excitedly up to where the men were, she showed them the precious yellow layer on the bottom of the pan.

LIVED LIFE OF LUXURY

"Carmack and the others went to work with their pans and confirmed the presence of the gold, after which they staked out claims. Carmack became very wealthy indeed, and took Kate with him when he went on a trip to the States. At San Francisco Kate lived at the Palace Hotel and had all the luxuries that money could buy. Afterward she and Carmack separated, and she returned to her old home. She died there about two months after I saw her."

[60] From Prince, A. (1920, December 12). Having the World to Choose From, Where Would You Live? *New York Tribune*, p. 71. Interview with Mrs. Charlotte Cameron, explorer and author, written by Arnold Prince (1883 – 1956).