

THE GOLD- SEEKER'S MANUAL

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The Gold-Seeker's Manual by David T. Ansted

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DAVID T. ANSTED

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SEEKER'S MANUAL**

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GOLD-SEEKER'S MANUAL.

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THE
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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

THE occurrence of gold in large quantities in a district hitherto little visited by civilized man, and only known by the accounts of a few travellers, has naturally produced great excitement in the public mind and much anxiety as to the possible results.

It has seemed to the author that some account of the general distribution of gold in the world, of the statistics of gold generally, and of the physical peculiarities of that new country to which all eyes are now turned, together with a short and popular, but practical, statement concerning the mode of treatment of this valuable metal, will probably be found interesting to the public at large, and cannot fail to be useful to those who have it in contemplation to journey in search of the mineral

riches so temptingly offered to the adventurer. It is proposed in the present manual to give an account, first, of the chief districts in which gold has hitherto been found, including California itself; to explain then the way in which the metal usually occurs in nature, and the modes by which it may be certainly distinguished from other substances resembling it; to describe afterwards the modes which have been generally adopted to separate the metal from associated stones and earths, and reduce it to a convenient form for transport; and lastly, to discuss the highly important question of the probability of permanence in the supply thus commenced, and the result such an influx must produce on the value of gold in the various markets of the world. I shall not waste the time of the reader by any general remarks not strictly belonging to the subject, but endeavour in every way to render this little work a practical manual that may be useful to the emigrant and instructive to those who may be inclined to join in the speculations that will no doubt be set on foot immediately in this country and America.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE GENERAL DISTRIBUTION OF GOLD.

OF all metals, gold is, with the exception of iron, the most widely distributed over the earth; but it differs from the latter metal in being present usually in a nearly pure state, but in exceedingly small quantities, whereas iron is abundant as well as generally diffused, and is never found unmixed with other substances. Owing to the very minute proportion in which gold is often associated with rocks and mineral substances, it does not generally pay the cost of working; and the districts therefore known as *auriferous* or "gold-producing," in the commercial sense of the term, are not so numerous as the foregoing remarks might seem to suggest. Nearly all the gold of commerce has for a long time been obtained from Asiatic Russia, Brazil, Transylvania, Africa, the East Indian islands, and Carolina in the United States; the whole annual supply being estimated at about 80,000 pounds weight, and its value being about five millions sterling. This however must be regarded as only an approximate value of the average of several years, as the supplies have for some time been increasing rapidly from the Russian mines.

We will now consider a little in detail the districts above-mentioned; first of all saying a few words on the reports of valuable gold-mines in the British Islands.

These refer chiefly to Wales and Ireland, but include the stream works of Cornwall and the alluvial soil in the mining field of Lead-hills in Scotland. In the time of Queen Elizabeth, extensive washings were carried on in the latter district for the purpose of collecting this precious metal. It also occurs in Glen Turret in Perthshire, and Cumberhead in Lanarkshire. Of late years serious attempts have been made to commence workings on a large scale in North Wales, where quartz veins containing gold have been long known to exist. Although from time to time lumps and small accumulations of the precious metal have been found in all the spots above mentioned, and even in many others, there has nowhere been any regular prospect of success from continued working, except in the county Wicklow in Ireland.

Towards the close of the last century native gold was accidentally found to occur disseminated in the bed of the streams which descend from the northern flank of Croghan Kinshela, a mountain which lies on the confines of Wicklow and Wexford, and at the junction of the granitic ridge