

BOOK REVIEWS

THE MINING ADVANCE INTO THE INLAND EMPIRE. By William J. Trimble, Professor of History and Social Science in North Dakota Agricultural College. (Madison, Wisconsin. The University of Wisconsin, 1914. Pp. 254.)

This monograph, which was written as a thesis for the doctor's degree while Mr. Trimble was a fellow at the University of Wisconsin, is an epic in spirit, though a work of historical and economic science and expressed in prose. It is the thrilling and romantic story of a movement which, because it eventuated in the creation of civilized society and political order, is of kin with the swarming of the Teutonic peoples into the Roman Empire.

Specifically, it is a study of the beginnings of mining for precious ores in the territories now known as the Inland Empire, and also in parts of the regions adjoining this territory. In addition, it studies laws and institutions originating from the mining industry. It is a significant symptom of appreciation of the Pacific Northwest and especially of this inland district by old institutions of learning east of the Rockies.

Investigation of the subject was rendered feasible through use of such libraries as those of the University of Wisconsin, the University of California, the Province of British Columbia, the Historical Society of Oregon, the Historical Society of Montana, the University of Idaho and the private collections of Mr. Bagley of Seattle, Mr. Howay of New Westminster, Mr. Justice Martin of Victoria and others; and through the generous cooperation of personal authorities on our northwestern history as Professor Frederick J. Turner of Harvard University, Judge Howay of New Westminster, Mr. Elliott of Walla Walla and others. It opens with the statement that the decade following 1858 brought the expansion of American mining on a large scale for gold and silver into many parts of our mountainous area.

Who first discovered gold here is not known. But the vicinity of Fort Colville, Washington, saw the occurrence of a movement in 1855 which ushered in the golden age of the Inland Empire. The miners labored under measureless disadvantages. Supplies were scant. From Puget Sound there were no suitable roads. Steamboating on the Columbia had only begun. The Indians frequently proved a baffling obstacle at first. But the friendship of the Nez Percés for the whites and

the policy of peace pursued by this tribe became a determining factor in the wars with the natives and the development of this new country. In justice to the Indians it is due to admit that conditions for which they were not responsible made the situation ripe for desperate measures on their part.

On November 23rd, 1857, the miners in the neighborhood of Colville effected a rude governmental organization. In 1858 the stern measures of Colonel George Wright brought just and lasting peace to the Indian country and cleared the way for pushing forward the frontier of civilization. In 1861 the final fixation of the boundary between British Columbia and Washington drew clearly the artificial line of different governments where, as Professor Trimble exhaustively and conclusively demonstrates, nature had made one country. Consequently, the political differentiation contributed to making the construction of the famous old Mullan Road in every way an important matter. This noble highway of empire, not unworthy of comparison with Rome's Appian Way, was completed in 1862 at a cost of \$230,000 for its 624 miles of length.

In a few years the carriers on the Columbia enjoyed an immense and profitable traffic in the transportation of miners and their supplies. Professor Trimble's description of steamboating on the rivers of the Inland Empire is intensely vivid and interesting. In 1861 came the great movement of miners into these new fields. Among the most important of the localities they entered were the Nez-Perce and Salmon-River districts in northern Idaho.

A swiftly accelerating stream of travel started in 1861 for the new mines. A new era of development began. The Portland Oregonian then predicted that there would follow "tremendous stampedes from California, a flood of overland immigration and vastly increased business on the Columbia." The shrewd forecast of the sagacious editor was fulfilled to the foot of the letter.

Of the total yield from the mining districts in northern Idaho it is impossible to secure exact figures. A conservative estimate would put the production from the time of discovery until 1900 at about \$50,000,000, of which probably \$35,000,000 were obtained before 1870. In this connection Dr. Trimble rightly directs attention to the fact that the mines of eastern Oregon have not yet received the study that their importance as builders of that part of the state would warrant.

The mines of the Boise basin in Idaho not only were rich and easily worked, but were so situated as to encourage homemaking and the upbuilding of a permanent community. Soon towns with stable interests and

staple industries arose. The mining founders of Boise showed themselves to be exceptionally enterprising and farsighted men.

As the Caribou, British Columbia, mines had shown that in placer fields the individual, once a camp was established, could do little except labor for some one else or in lieu of this prospect for new fields, some form of organized or cooperative effort being essential to the development of mining, even in its simpler stages; so now the War-Eagle quartz-mines of Idaho, remote and newly born, called for outside capital and for science.

The mining advance gave occasion for the creation of British Columbia, Idaho and Montana as political units. In considering the societies that owe their origin to mining it is essential to remember that almost from the moment of discovery cooperation is indispensable in the development of gold-fields and also that the individualism of placer-mining frequently is greatly exaggerated. In the period now under review "the lone prospector" was much of a myth. This and similar seemingly small matters are among the many observed by Dr. Trimble's microscopic eye, which also is not wanting in telescopic range, that show how thoroughly he has surveyed his field and with what scrupulous science he has interpreted all his facts.

Prospecting generally was done by organized parties numbering anywhere from five to fifty men. These companies consisted of experienced miners, who usually had already mined in California. Careful preparation in advance was made. An expedition might travel for weeks or even for many months, studying the geology of the land as carefully as professors from great universities and prospecting wherever promising indications presented themselves. When diggings that seemed to afford reasonable likelihood of profit were found, claims were staked out. The plan of the miners' camp corresponded more closely to that of a town than to that of a country district. This feature is another of several which prove that combination, cooperation and organization formed basic features in the work of the miner. It is not the least of the merits of Dr. Trimble's monograph that it enables and in fact compels the lay reader unacquainted with the ways of miners to see that their social and governmental activities were a seed of the political commonwealth and rendered its existence and growth inevitable.

The discoverers of pay-dirt as a rule had to return for supplies to some commercial center. Here the news of a find invariably leaked out and generated a stampede to the new field. Merchants and packers pushed freight-caravans ahead with strenuous but reasoned energy. The man who rushed a well supplied set of teams into a new community

was certain to reap great profits. Before much work was performed by the miners at their Eldorado they held a mass-meeting and organized the community. A judge, recorder and sheriff were elected, and laws for the camp enacted. The political instinct of the English and the Americans for government and ordered society was prompt to manifest itself.

Men who had been schooled in the Californian camps not only had learned to mine skillfully, but turned spontaneously to the form of political organization that the mines of that golden commonwealth had developed. This was the case no less in British than in American communities. Work on claims ceased and universally or almost universally in winter, but might stop at other times, such as seasons of drouth, when want of water handicapped operations. The arrangement gave the miners an opportunity to visit home or to pass the winter at such towns as Boise, Lewiston or Portland. Men seldom thought of making homes for themselves at the Mining camps. But a considerable number would usually remain there through cold weather, and in deep diggings actual mining could still be carried on.

The miner's lot was a most laborious life. It did not consist in picking large, loose nuggets from streams and in spending most of the time on fun or adventure. There were cabins to build—and the skill of American axmen, especially of the Missourians, was greatly admired by English observers—ditches to be dug, flumes and sluices to be constructed, and lumber to be obtained.

The skill of the pioneer Californians in every industry stood out preeminently. Everywhere their methods and judgment were held in high esteem. At Orofino they superciliously sneered that the Willamette farmers in the mines did not know how to sift gold from the dirt, but the Oregonians could have retorted that they were not Californian experts at losing their gold in gambling. But placer mining then, in spite of such skill as that of the Californians, was wasteful work. Men mined to make the maximum of money in the minimum of time. The enormous expensiveness of operation and transportation rendered it profitable to work only the richest gravel. In 1868 Ross Browne, who knew mining conditions better than any other American then living, declared that "since the discovery of our mines there has been an unnecessary loss of more than \$300,000,000 of precious metals. The question arises whether it is not the duty of government to prevent, so far as may be consistent with individual rights, this waste of a common heritage in which not only ourselves but posterity are interested."

The early mining communities whose economic basis was placer mines were unstable, and this is a fact of social importance. For the purpose

of overcoming this instability business men, the more substantial miners and governmental authorities everywhere turned their attention to quartz. Working quartz claims and building quartz mills required the use of capital and of corporate methods. The significant development of mining in the Inland Empire during 1860-70 consisted in the superseding of the surface methods of the placer by quartz mining and in the working of deep placers by corporations. The individual working in informal organization had had free play, but his day was passing. Individualism began to become submerged, capital to become foremost and corporate methods to enter.

What was the total of the product from the labor and capital invested in the mining advance? Until 1867 there was no governmental attempt in the Inland Empire, though there was in British Columbia, to gather statistics. Express companies, however, especially the Wells-Fargo, were a fairly trustworthy source of information. George M. Dawson's estimate for British Columbia and Ross Browne's for the Inland Empire are regarded by Dr. Trimble as falling well inside the truth. British Columbia during 1858-67 inclusive is believed to have produced \$26,110,000 of the precious metals; Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington together from the beginning of mining to the close of 1867 to have yielded \$140,000,000. Montana led with \$65,000,000. Idaho followed with \$45,000,000 and Oregon with \$20,000,000. Washington brought up the rear with \$10,000,000. After deducting the probable production in western Oregon, because this territory lies outside the regions considered by Professor Trimble, the grand total for British Columbia and these four American commonwealths during the decade of 1858-67 appears to have aggregated \$156,110,000.

In order to value this stupendous yield aright, it must be borne in mind that nearly all of it was an economic surplus and also in such shape as to be transformed with ease into the commodities of civilization. Consequently civilization's material body sprang forth full panoplied from those early mining communities. This aspect of the mining advance—a phase too frequently forgotten these days—gave the first civilization in the Inland Empire a compelling power and a vitalness that were out of all proportion to the relatively small number of the miners who originated that civilization. This life and energy contributed greatly to the swift development of this Inland Empire after the railroads arrived. The production of so huge and mobile an economic surplus as \$156,110,000 of the precious metals helps to explain the greatness of the immigration in the eighties into these mining commonwealths. The farmer, the manufacturer, the merchant and the banker of the Pacific Northwest during

the past generation owe a great debt to the miner of the sixties of the last century.

Nor these only. The nation also is deeply indebted to the economic development wrought here by mining in those far days. The Inland Empire's production of gold during the terrible years of 1861-5, when the republic was pouring out blood and treasure like water to save its life, had great effect in supplying those financial sinews of war on which so largely depended the credit of the United States.

Thus Dr. Trimble threshes out to the last straw the bearings of mining upon government in the Inland Empire, upon agriculture, grazing, transportation and many other interests. What he has done is really to write a history of civilization in these states during their intermediate era.

Every page presents evidence of his competence and trustworthiness. He inspires confidence thro his candid confession that "the student of the history of a section may overrate its importance. * * * It may be that revaluation by comprehensive historians will be necessary." There speaks the historical conscience that rates loyalty to the fact as the supreme good in writing history. But this student has done his work so judicially and with such scholarship, that it will not require to be done again. It is an honor to him and his university and an invaluable service to the Pacific Northwest.

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MASTERS OF THE WILDERNESS. By Charles Bert Reed, M. D. Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1914. Pp. 144.)

This beautifully printed and illustrated little book should find many readers among those who care for the beginnings of American history. Its scope and purpose are well revealed by the brief table of contents as follows: The Masters of the Wilderness, a study of the Hudson's Bay Company from its origin to modern times; The Beaver Club, some social aspects of the fur trade; A Dream of Empire, the adventures of Tonty in old Louisiana.

Dr. Reed has assembled his material in very readable and entertaining fashion. For the benefit of those who wish to pursue the subjects further he appends a brief but serviceable bibliography. The book is one of the Chicago Historical Society's Fort Dearborn Series.

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