

## CŒUR D'ALENE GOLD FIELDS.

It is many years since the Northwest Coast has witnessed such a mining furore as is now raging over the newly discovered gold fields of Cœur d'Alene. Not desiring to aid in creating a boom, for the mines have already been advertised to the extent of their merit, but simply as a matter of general information and interest, THE WEST SHORE presents a brief description of them, accompanied by appropriate illustrations and an outline map showing their location and surroundings.

The Cœur d'Alene Range extends from Lake Pend d'Oreille, a distance of 200 miles southeastward, until it disappears in the main ridge of the Rocky Mountains, being called at the southern end the Bitter Root Mountains, the summit ridge of the whole range forming the boundary line between Idaho and Montana. Near the western base of the extreme northern end lies Lake Cœur d'Alene, one of the most beautiful sheets of water in the world, and into this pour the Cœur d'Alene and St. Joseph rivers, flowing down from the mountain summits. At the northern end of the lake is Fort Cœur d'Alene, a United States military post, the land on the east, south and west side of the lake being embraced in an Indian reservation. Thirty miles up the Cœur d'Alene River, at the extreme northeast corner of the reservation, is the Cœur d'Alene Mission, a Catholic institution of long standing. The United States military road laid out in 1862, from Walla Walla to Fort Benton, by Captain John Mullan, and known as the Mullan Road, runs from Spokane Falls to the Fort, thence to the Mission, and thence across the mountains into Montana. A military telegraph line connects the Fort with Spokane Falls.

The mines, such as are located, are on the north fork of Cœur d'Alene River and its affluents, such as Eagle, Pritchard and Beaver creeks, and the many gulches that put into them. At the junction of Eagle and Pritchard creeks is Eagle City, the present metropolis, a bustling mining camp of brush shanties and log cabins, which has sprung up during the fall and winter, and which is rapidly increasing in size by the stream of adventurers who are daily struggling in through the snow.

The routes of travel are numerous, and as usual there is great rivalry between the towns lying along the Northern Pacific as to which shall become the favorite point of departure for the mines and the transshipping point for supplies. On the west side of the mountains Spokane Falls and Rathdrum aspire to this honor, each of which has a daily stage line to the Fort. From the former it is twenty-seven miles and from the latter ten. From the Fort there are two routes—one by the way of the Mullan Road to the Mission, a distance of thirty miles, and thence by trail thirty-five miles to Eagle City, and the other by steamer across the lake and up the river. Cœur d'Alene City is a town laid out on a beautiful site near the Fort, from which the steamer line will run. Two steamers are being constructed, which will be placed on the line by the 1st of April, and are expected to take passengers up the river to within eight miles of

Eagle City. Cœur d'Alene City is expected to be the great depot for supplies, the rallying point in winter and the outfitting and final starting point for the mines. A transportation company has been organized at Spokane Falls, which will build a good road from the Mullan Road to Eagle City, and will run daily stages from Spokane Falls, making the trip in twenty-three hours. As Spokane Falls is the largest place on the railroad within reach of the mines, this will no doubt be a favorite route. Rathdrum, in Idaho, is a few miles nearer the Fort than its rival, and has always been the railway station for that section. There is much talk of constructing a road across the mountains and make a short cut to the mines, instead of following the circuitous route by the way of the Fort and Mission. Sand Point, at the foot of Lake Pend d'Oreille, also enters the list, proposing to put on a line of steamers, running forty miles south, from which place it will be only a few miles to the mines.

On the Montana side, Heron, Trout Creek (or Tone City) and Belknap, all stations on the Northern Pacific, are rival starting points to the mines, with which they are connected by trails only. Heron is the nearest, as the crow flies, but not by the trail. Trout Creek, or Tone City, where there is much excitement over town lots, has until recently been considered the most accessible point, being about thirty-five miles from Eagle City by the trail. Belknap is ten miles south of Trout Creek, and has been put forward by the Northern Pacific as a railroad town, from which it is claimed a good trail exists, which makes the distance to Eagle City but twenty-eight miles. Projected wagon roads will soon furnish numerous ways of reaching the mines with ease.

As to the richness and extent of these mines, there is no question about their having been overestimated by enthusiastic individuals; yet beyond doubt these are the richest placer diggings which have attracted public attention for years, while valuable gold and silver quartz ledges have been discovered and located. There is also a large tract of unprospected country, which will no doubt be examined from end to end the coming summer. Great preparations are being made to take in saw mills, quartz mills and large stocks of goods as soon as the trails are passable for them. Various estimates are made of the number of men who will crowd into the gold fields in the spring, some being satisfied with 20,000, while others place it as high as 100,000. One thing is certain, there is great excitement from Colorado to California and from Washington to Arizona, and the hundreds already defying the drifts of snow and inclement weather indicate the rush of thousands as soon as spring sets in. The various transportation companies, those who administer to the physical necessities of the crowd, the dealers in supplies, and a certain percentage of the miners, will probably profit largely by the excitement, but that a majority of those who hasten thither without any definite plan will pay dearly for their experience is equally probable. The growth of a prosperous mining district and the increasing demand for our products which it will create, will be highly beneficial to our people in every avenue of trade.