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MINES & MINING.

The First of a Series of Articles on the Geological Construction and the Formation of Mineral Zones of the Pacific Coast.
[CONTRIBUTED.]

The Mountain system that borders the Pacific from Cape Horn to the Arctic sea covers an arc of nearly half the great circle of the globe and has its widest expansion about the latitude of San Francisco, California, where it is 1200 or 1400 miles wide. This mountain system ranks next in physical importance to that of the east and west system which traverses Asia and Europe, but unlike that system it is an empire of mines, and its geology besides having a high abstract interest lies at the basis of the knowledge of minerals for this immense area. The quantities involved in this system of the Cordilleras are great almost beyond belief. They involve the superposition of strata amounting to over 120,000 feet in actual measured thickness; they involve a history from very near the dawn of the geological record, absolutely until today of enormous dynamic action and effect, and this dynamic action has consisted in the upheaval, in the depression, in the crushing and folding together in the dislocation of enormous blocks of this great territory. The sedimentary series, which have been said to amount to over 100,000 feet, are derived from the older igneous rocks in their immediate neighborhood. So far as we have been able to see, these sediments have never traveled to very great distances. Sometimes a series of strata amounting, in all, to 40,000 feet, have been piled up consecutively and without break, but all these series of various episodes of sedimentation have ended in the destructive dynamic period, and they have been crushed, uplifted or depressed, and then the process of sedimentation has begun under new terms. It is in these periods of stress and strain to which the rocks and whole distances and enormous areas and ranges and whole mountain ranges have been subjected that the crushing, straining and fracturing and fissuring takes place which is the birth of a mining district. I do not mean to indicate that every crushed area or every fissure or block of country is the birth place of a mining district, but because mineral veins owe their origin to two processes, one is the fissuring of the rocks or the solution of soluble rocks on lines of fissure, and the second process is the deposition of mineral matter on, in, along and near these fissures so that a mining district requires the two periods. I mean a block of country requires the two classes and periods of action to bring it from an amorphous mountain pass into a mineral district. These periods of crushing have never occupied a very great part of the geological history; they are sudden, convulsive episodes, which follow periods of upheaval and periods of depression, but short as they are they have ended in deluging enormous tracts of this Cordilleras system with eruptive rocks, molten when they came out and which have cooled under or upon the surface. There are fields of these eruptive rocks which cover many thousands of square miles. There are other fields which are extremely small. This is true of the Bohemia district as well as many other active mining districts along the coast and, as I say, these periods began in the earliest geological ages and have gone on practically to the present. The study of these rocks which have been erupted in these various periods has resulted in a fine classification as to species, and in a certain measure as to origin, and also to a rougher classification in time; that is to say rocks which we know to be earlier than the dawn of life, which we will put at the base of the Cambrian, are of a different class from those which are erupting now from present volcanoes. They have shades of difference in texture and in composition and in the relative properties of their different elements, but chiefly their distinction is in decomposition; that is to say, it is very rarely we get from the earliest periods any form of lava which is as fresh and as new as those which are being erupted now. They have undergone chemical decomposition more or less, so that in a general rough sort of way the ocular examination of a district of erupted rocks usually gives rise to a fair judgment of about when the district was built.

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Chicago-Portland special 9:15 a m	Salt Lake, Denver, Ft. Worth, Omaha, Kansas City, St. Louis, Chicago and East.	4 p m
Atlantic Express 6:30 p m Via Huntington	Salt Lake, Denver, Ft. Worth, Omaha, Kansas City, St. Louis, Chicago and East.	8 a m
Atlantic Express 6:30 p m Via Spokane	Walla Walla, Lewiston, Spokane, Minneapolis, St. Paul, Duluth, Milwaukee, Chicago and East.	8 a m
8 p m	OCEAN STEAMSHIPS All sailing dates subject to change. For San Francisco—Sail every 5 days	4 p m
Daily Ex. Sunday 8 p m Saturday 10 p m	COLUMBIA RIVER STEAMERS To Astoria and Way-Landings.	4 p m Ex. Sunday
8 a m Ex. Sunday	WILLAMETTE RIVER Oregon City, Newberg Salem, Independence and Way-Landings.	4:30 p m Ex. Sunday
7 a m Tues, Thur. and Sat.	WILLAMETTE AND YAMHILL RIVERS Oregon City, Dayton and Way-Landings.	3:30 p m Mon. Wed. and Fri.
8 a m Tues, Thur. and Sat.	WILLAMETTE RIVER Port and to Corvallis and Way-Landings.	4:30 p m Mon. Wed. and Fri.
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