

Nature has mined for us in gold. Deep in the rocky recesses of the earth lay the precious metal. It must be brought to the light of day. But Nature does not do this till the work of sowing sediments—the seeds of rocky growth—has been completed over all the areas destined to be inhabited by man. Had the deep-treasured gold been brought up in the Mesozoic Ages, the inundations and vicissitudes of later times would have scattered it over the breadth of the land and the sea before our race had made its advent. No such false step was taken. It is only after the Tertiary beds have been all deposited that Nature throws up innumerable veins of quartz, which bring along with them the glittering gold. This is well; but Nature possessed a quartz-crushing machine in the shape of a glacier a mile in thickness, and some hundreds, if not thousands of miles in horizontal extent, and this she drew over the projecting veins of auriferous quartz and ground them to powder. These, at least, are the general views put forward by Sir Roderick Murchison in regard to the principal gold regions of the world. The California geologists, however, aver that the great ice-plow never scored the ribs of the Sierra Nevadas. Nature may have pulverized the gold-quartz of our Western states and territories by some other agency. Nevertheless, it has been crushed and comminuted on a stupendous scale. When this work was done, by whatever means, she brought her gold-washing machine into requisition, and “jigged” the golden sands till the yellow particles were well assorted, and then strewed them along the narrow ravines to await the attentions of the coming man.

But we need not go to the golden sands of the Sacramento to read the anticipations of man in the arrangements of Nature. What is every well and spring but a subterranean stream that has been beguiled to light by the out-