

The Rothschilds, the Montefiores, and the Victorian Gold Rush by Angus Trumble, 30 October 2017



Forest Creek, Mount Alexander Diggings, 1852 by S. T. Gill

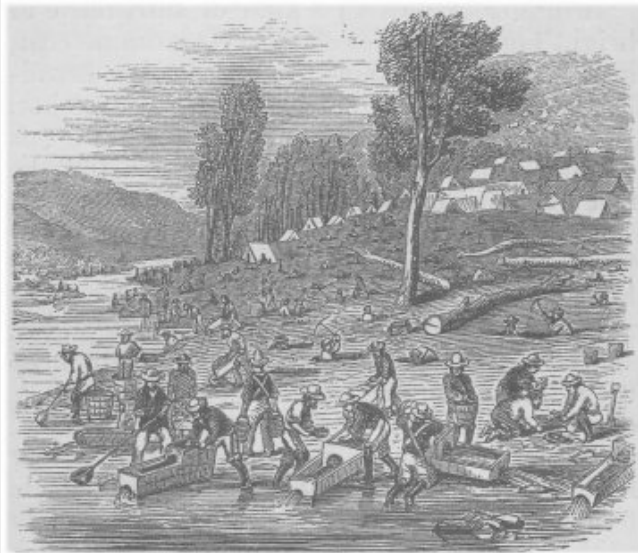
Some years ago my colleague Andrea Wolk Rager and I spent several days in the darkened basement of the Rothschild Bank in New Court, St. Swithin's Lane, in the City of London, inspecting almost every one of the nearly 700 autochromes created immediately before World War I by the youthful hobbyist Lionel de Rothschild. A small selection of the best of these was, in due course, reproduced in our exhibition at Yale *Edwardian Opulence: British Art at the Dawn of the Twentieth Century*. After we had finished, the Rothschild Archivist Melanie Aspey^[1] asked me to examine a box of correspondence, which she thought might have "something to do with Australia." She was fairly certain that nobody apart from she had looked in it for at least 25 years. Upon further, careful inspection (and a subsequent visit of several days) this sizeable cache of letters turned out to be something of a revelation because they document the close involvement of the firm of N. M. Rothschild & Sons, through their Montefiore cousins, with every aspect of the Gold Rush in colonial Victoria. It is the only bona fide, fully paid-up card-carrying "discovery" that I have ever made in an archive. In due course, I was invited to contribute an article about this to *The Rothschild Archive Review of the Year* (2012). However, that piece was necessarily shorn of much detail of particular interest to Australian readers. I regretted those inevitable losses at the time, but not long ago I came across the longer, finished draft, which seems to me worth reproducing here:

In January 1851, gold was discovered near Bathurst in New South Wales, and six months later at Mount Alexander (near modern Castlemaine) and in August at Ballarat and Sandhurst (Bendigo) in the neighbouring colony of Victoria. It was immediately obvious that huge concentrations of quartz, surface and deep alluvial gold were embedded in the south-eastern corner of Australia, and both British colonies immediately braced for a rush at least equal to, and, as it turned out, even greater than

the one that had been in full swing since 1849 in California. The Rothschilds were intimately involved in both from the very beginning.

In Victoria a licensing system for individual prospectors came into effect on 1 September 1851, a little less than two months after the discovery at Mount Alexander.^[2] At this date the population of Victoria was only about 77,400, not including Aborigines, and, prior to the arrival of a relatively small party of reinforcements from New South Wales, Lieutenant-Governor Charles La Trobe had at his disposal only 44 troopers of decidedly mixed quality. These were fully occupied guarding the first gold escorts, the powder magazine, and the gaol in Melbourne. During the ensuing rush it proved impossible to recruit mounted policemen, or indeed to prevent the mass desertion of hundreds of ordinary government officials and private employees of every description, above all domestic servants. When in December 1852 he went to pay a call on the famous author William Howitt, recently arrived from London, Chief Justice William à Beckett had no option but to go in a bath chair that was pulled along by his son—the servants had all evaporated.^[3]

Everyone headed for the diggings, even the crews of in-bound ships, which accumulated in huge numbers, stranded in Hobson's Bay and Port Melbourne. Many of these brought experienced prospectors across the Pacific from California, where the 1849 diggings were by then over-crowded.





Among the tens of thousands of passengers converging on Melbourne through the last quarter of 1851 was the seasoned colonist and businessman Joseph Barrow Montefiore (1803–1893), lately returned from London, who lost no time in sending the following detailed report to his kinsmen in New Court, St. Swithin's Lane. "As you were kind enough to express a desire to hear from me," he wrote on 18 December,

I feel much pleasure in informing you of my safe arrival on the 2nd inst[ant], after a pleasant and speedy passage of 92 days. I was astonished to find I had arrived at a second California producing Gold in greater abundance and purity than ever that prolific Gold Region. I found realised here all the incredible tales we have heard respecting that place, nearly every labouring man gone to the Diggings and returning from time to time sometimes after only an interval of a few days to sell in the Town the Gold they have amassed, the whole nature of things in this Colony is completely altered, male labour it is impossible to obtain at any price, all the lower classes becoming suddenly wealthy, the females sharing in this renders it almost impossible to obtain servants, the difficulties that one is exposed to from such a state of things can better be imagined than described. There is an immense field now open for the labouring class of our Mother Country and I would urge you using your powerful influence in aid of emigration.

It is now about 3 months since the first discovery of Gold took place and the yield of Gold is now upwards of £100,000 per week, the Diggings are at a place called Ballarat about 70 miles and Mount Alexander about 75 miles from here and extend over a surface of nearly 20 miles and it is reported there are indications of Gold much nearer the Town. [This turned out not to be true.] My son [Leslie Montefiore, 1830–1909] was one of the first who visited the Diggings and did exceedingly well for the time he was there, but his mercantile occupations obliged his speedy return—he intends going out there again in about a week. The Escort brought down last week from Ballarat 2,550 oz and from Mount Alexander 1,148 lbs besides about £5,000 cash (paid for licences) for the Government and there remains upward of 2 Tons in the hands of the Commissioners

to convey down by the next Escort besides large quantities coming down daily by private hands. By this opportunity my Firm have forwarded you a small parcel of Gold amounting to 182 ozs and I have valued against the same in favour of the Manager of the Bank of New South Wales at 30 days sight for the sum of £500, I have taken the liberty to advise the transaction feeling assured you would not object to it, the Gold has proved to be above Standard value, you will consequently have a Balance in hand after disposal of the same.

I have made some large Purchases of Gold which I have forwarded to my agents in London and Liverpool. On my first arrival the price was about £3/1/6 per oz but since the large arrivals from the Diggings the price has receded to £2/16. The Bank make advances on Gold at the rate of £2/15/0 per oz taking it as a collateral security against drafts on London at 7 per cent discount. It is impossible they can go on advancing and I expect to see the discount on Bills down to 12 or 15 per cent discount. I could with facility purchase 50 to £60,000 per week. I should be glad to act for you here on your own account by your furnishing us with a letter of credit also one through one of the Banks (my operations here are through the New South Wales Bank, their Agents in London, the London Joint Stock Bank) to any extent you may think proper or being furnished with the said letters of credit I would conduct the business on my own account valueing [sic] on you for such rate per oz as you might deem advisable to limit but such limit must be near the value of the Gold per oz as the Banks here are exceedingly liberal and will always make a fair advance. Please inform me if it would be agreeable to you to lay out the surplus of the Gold I may consign [sic] to you in Goods to my order, such Goods being limited to articles of easy Purchase such as Spirits and Brandy. Martells Brandy in H[ogs]h[ea]ds being now at 7/6 per Gallon and Rum in H[ogs]h[ea]ds Leeward Island (Demarara preferred) 10 over proof being now at 3/6 per Gallon and both with a rising Market and I doubt that these articles will obtain good prices for a long time to come. Many other articles would just now obtain high prices. Tin Plates for making the dishes etc for miners, Gunpowder, Pistols, Pickles and watches, for every Gentleman who has got Gold must have a watch, and Satins, for every become lady will have her Silk and Satin Dresses with a smart Parasol. I am daily expecting some large Cargos which will arrive to a famous Market. The staple commodity of the Colony, Wool, is hardly spoken of yet we expect to export 60 or 70,000 Bales at a value of 20 to £25 per Bale. It is a bad time for the Settlers and may for a period bring ruin on many on account of the high price of labour, in fact the difficulty of obtaining any—men are asking £1 per day for getting in the Harvest, Bread is 1/4 per Quartern loaf not for want of Grain (for nature has been most plentiful for we have a most splendid Harvest) but want of labour to get it in. All the young men are leaving the Government offices and running up to the Diggings.

There appears a tolerably respectable Congregation of our own people here amounting to 40 or 50 families of about 200 to 220 in all. I attended the Synagogue [at 472 Bourke

Street] on Saturday last the service was exceedingly orderly conducted having a very good reader...

I need not point out to you how much more advantageous it would be to send out Sovereigns for the Bank have reduced their discounts on Bills to 10 per cent and it is impossible to say what they may reduce it to and the charge on Sovereigns is only about $1\frac{3}{4}$ to 2 per cent for freight and insurance—or Bank Bills could be obtained when I left at 2 per cent premium.^[4]

Duplicate
(Original of Melbourne Melbourne 18th Dec 1851
Messrs N M Rothschild & Sons
London
Dear Sir
As you were kind enough
to express a desire to hear from me, I feel much plea-
sure in informing you of my safe arrival in this
city after a pleasant & speedy passage of 93 days.
I was astonished to find I had arrived at a second
California producing Gold in greater abundance
& spirit than ever that prolific Gold Region. I found
realised here all the incredible tales we have heard
respecting that place nearly every labouring man
from the diggings returning from home to some
extent after only an interval of a few days to
sell to the firm the Gold they had discovered. The
wild nature of things in this territory completely
afforded, that labour it is impossible to obtain at
any price all the lower classes becoming suddenly
wealthy the females share in this wonder it
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has that one is exposed to from such a situation
can better be imagined than described. There is an
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our Mother Country and, would it were possible
employ your powerful influence toward
Immigration.

Letter from Joseph Barrow Montefiore to N M Rothschild & Sons, 18 December 1851 RA XI/38/7

This and the ensuing, at times frenzied, correspondence between the bank in London and Montefiore and his brothers Jacob Levi Montefiore (1801–1895) and Eliezer Levi Montefiore (1820–1894) through 1852 until 1855 forms a remarkable capsule of letters

housed in the Rothschild Archive. Some of these are written in English transliterated into Hebrew script (a security measure). All relate to the earliest stages of the Victorian gold rush, and shine new beams of penetrating light upon Rothschilds' close but covert involvement—far closer than has hitherto been understood. Indeed here in Australia, Rothschilds' activities have rarely if ever before even been noted.⁵



This first and most important letter in the long series is especially notable for the accuracy of its contents, its comprehensiveness, and its firm grasp upon the realities and shortcomings of the local banking infrastructure, which Montefiore knew well. As well as having being a member of the board of the South Australian Mining Company (copper), Joseph Montefiore was a trustee of the Savings Bank in Adelaide. Jacob (“Jack”) became a director of the Bank of Australasia in 1855, and Eliezer (“Levi”) was secretary

of the Australian Insurance Company—all neatly interlocking interests that for a while served the siblings' various other inter-colonial family businesses exceedingly well.

The granularity of the information about the various prices set out in Joseph's letter was partly to emphasize their enormous inflation under the pressure of so much new, almost instantaneous local wealth, and the temporary incapacity of the Australian banks even to furnish enough local currency to support the huge new income from gold. Montefiore's report was also prescient, because the Bank of England had yet to pronounce upon the quality of the gold flowing out of the Victorian diggings, yet they soon did so: Victorian gold was of astonishingly high quality. In the second half of 1851, diggers mostly earned £3 per ounce, which was the official insurance valuation applied to gold escorts, and very close to the Royal Mint price for gold, £3 17s. 10½*d*. However, following the arrival of the good news from the Bank of England the price rose sharply, and £4 is said to have become standard by the end of 1852—and only in this respect was Montefiore's initial assessment of £2 16s. at all misleading. By 1854, scarcely two years later, 8,425,700 ounces of gold (more than 235 tons) were exported from Melbourne. He was right about the wool industry suffering in the short term. He was right about the urgent need for labour and commodities. And he was right about the reliability of gold sovereigns, as against bills and notes.

The close association between the Rothschild and Montefiore families was founded on the marriage on 22 October 1806 of Nathan Mayer Rothschild (1777–1836) to Hannah (1783–1850), the daughter of Levi Barent-Cohen (1747–1808), and her sister Judith (1784–1862), to the future Sir Moses Montefiore (1784–1885). In subsequent generations there were a number of other Rothschild–Montefiore marriages that further strengthened these ties of kinship; Joseph, Jack and Levi Montefiore were first cousins of Sir Moses Montefiore, whose wife was the aunt of Lionel and Anthony de Rothschild, the two principals who were most closely involved in the bank's London operations at this date. Rothschilds had had a longstanding business relationship with all three Montefiores since at least 1838—in Adelaide, South Australia, Hobart Town, Sydney, and Brisbane. Intriguingly, writing from Hobart Town on January 8, 1839, “[Joseph] Montefiore, Surtado & Co.” begged “to acknowledge the receipt of your favor of 3rd August advising us of your Circular letter of Credit for fifteen hundred pounds in favor of Baron Camillo de Solzbeck to which we will pay due attention on presentation.” Nothing at all is known about this exotic gentleman—what on earth was he up to in Hobart Town?—but the transaction was straightforward enough.^[6] In other words the association between the Rothschilds and the Montefiores was as rock solid as could be expected of any agency arrangement in the radical new circumstances of a gold rush. Yet there were problems, which in the long run proved insurmountable.

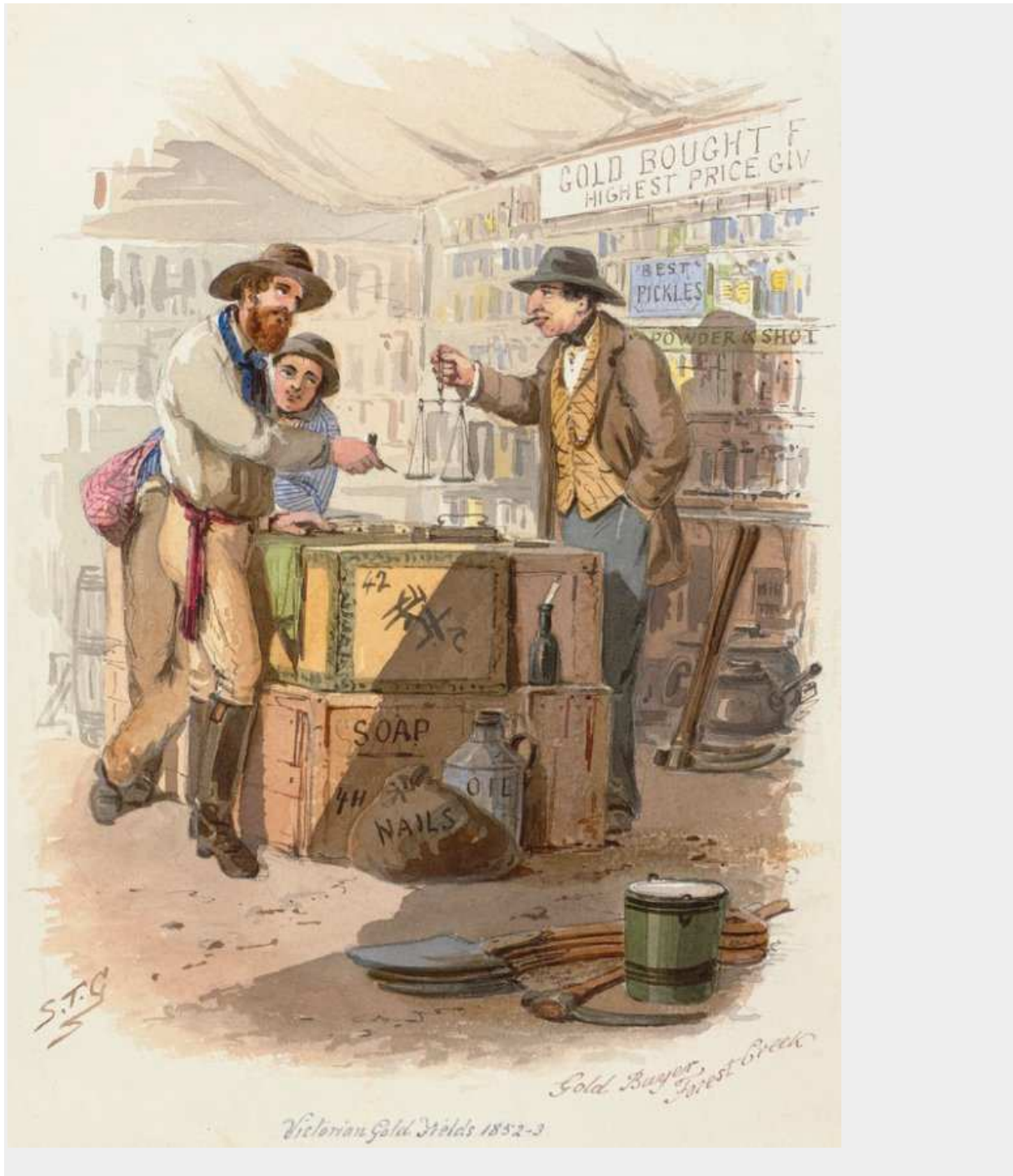
Many migrants were shocked in 1851–52 to find that upon disembarkation at Port Melbourne sterling notes issued by the Bank of England were not only not legal tender in

Victoria, but that they could only be exchanged in the four Melbourne banks for local pounds, shillings and pence at a discount of one fifth. (By the time Joseph Montefiore reported to New Court this had eased to one tenth). In other words at first £1 sterling bought only 16s. in Melbourne. This automatically increased by 20% local prices, which were already soaring as a result of the discovery of gold. In 1852 bank deposits alone (in the form of "gold dust") increased from £820,000 to £4,330,000, and in 1852–53 the price of a four-pound loaf of bread more than quadrupled, rising from 6d. to more than 2s., while the cost of vegetables and dairy produce trebled. Rents were far worse: In 1852, a colonist was offered £2,200 to walk away from a slum in Bank Place for which he had been paying £9 a week. Developments as rapid and chaotic as these made any business communications flowing back and forth between London and Melbourne almost instantly obsolete.

In the early 1850s ships carrying the mail from Britain to Australia via the Cape of Good Hope took between 87 and 119 days to reach their destination. The average duration of the voyage was therefore a fraction more than 98 days, a little more than three months—slightly longer on the return voyage via Cape Horn. To these periods one should add up to four extra weeks because the dates of embarkation from Gravesend or Plymouth were often delayed for weeks pending the sale of berths, the loading additional cargoes, even a change in the weather. Before the opening of the Suez Canal (1869) and the advent of the overland telegraph, which finally reached Adelaide in 1872, an exchange of correspondence could therefore take as long as six months. This applied no less to official confidential despatches between the governor and the Colonial Secretary in Whitehall, as it applied to the Rothschilds and the Montefiores—during which time local events leaped ahead beyond the capacity of anyone to keep track of them. Letters crossed, and their contents were often based on imperfect presumptions about new developments. Parcels, increasingly secure strongboxes of gold, letters of credit, boxes of gold sovereigns, reports of the sale of Rothschilds' goods (together with receipts from wholesalers in Melbourne and even retailers at the diggings) shuffled confusingly back and forth, often overlapping unhelpfully. Montefiore was usually pressed to write quickly in order to catch a departing vessel, the better to acquire commercial advantage from its eventual arrival at New Court ahead of any rivals. In the circumstances, he did remarkably well.

In January 1852, Montefiore was able to report the accelerating production of gold, new discoveries at Ballarat, Bendigo, and on the Ovens River farther distant near modern Beechworth and Yackandandah. He noted the astounding growth of the population of diggers; the spread of a damaging infectious disease from which many suffered throughout the diggings (including the Pre-Raphaelite sculptor Thomas Woolner who was then digging with his friend Bernhard Smith on the Ovens and at Devil's River),^[7] and a continuing shortage of gold sovereigns in the banks.

In June, Montefiore sent a receipt for a ton and a half of flour, and a document undertaking to deliver this to a Mr. T. O. Foote at Forest Creek, Mount Alexander (modern Chewton), to insure against damage on the road (a distinct possibility—the roads were terrible). He even obtained a signed undertaking from the carter in this instance, Thomas Cunningham, *not* to carry spirits in his dray. There followed receipts from the same Foote & Co., Melbourne, for various goods: “sundries,” boots, drapery, butter, raisins, candles, an iron hoop, 3 coils of rope, a cask of bacon, and a cross-cut saw. There are many such receipts in the Archive, which correspond almost uncannily with almost every detail in this and many other views of the by then blighted *Forest Creek, Mount Alexander Diggings*, 1852, by the itinerant lithographer S. T. Gill. Rothschilds were not just buying up the gold, but effectively supplying and provisioning the diggings, and shoring up the banking arrangements, indeed directly financing both.



Gold buyer, Forest Creek, 1852-3 by S. T. Gill

At the end of July, Montefiore reported the receipt of £10,000 by one ship, quoted the local gold price (relatively high, though still apparently not yet reflecting the Bank of England's extremely positive assessment), and the latest yield figures. This he scribbled hurriedly, and in a wobbling hand, in order to catch the mail that was due to sail in a matter of hours. In October, Montefiore reported that conditions for business in South Australia were good, money plentiful, local credit sound, and "business carried on a firm foundation." This was certainly true—and probably reassuring in the sense that Montefiore could demonstrate that not every Australian colony was as volatile or unpredictable as Victoria. In December 1852, he passed on news from, his agent at

Forest Creek John Allan, namely that it was impossible to hold cash on account for “strangers” [i.e. gentiles] [181](#), and of purchasing anything of value without more funds and more credit. Of course, this implied that Allan was holding cash on account for the small handful of Jewish gold buyers and merchants at Forest Creek, such as the subject of S. T. Gill's ugly caricature. In any case, the mantra from Melbourne was increasingly desperate: More, more, more—more of everything to sell, more money with which to invest, and all of it as soon as possible!

The following month Montefiore reported the unwelcome introduction of tariffs and duties on “tea, spirits and liquors, cordials and perfumes, tobacco snuff cigars &c., wine and coffee.” Of course in the meantime all such commodities and many others had been despatched, many from Rothschilds' own warehouse, against the Montefiores' London account. On 3 January 1853, Montefiore duly received at Geelong:

20 H[ogs]h[ea]ds Martells dark Brandy
15 Q[uar]r C[as]ks Martells pale Brandy
15 H[ogs]h[ea]ds Demarara Rum 100 P[roof].
200 Red Cases Geneva in 4 Gallons Dutch Proof
100 cases Pale Brandy ea / dozen
50 cases dark Brandy ea / dozen
50 ditto “Altona” Old Tom
20 H[ogs]h[ea]ds Taylors Stout
20 H[ogs]h[ea]ds Bass's or Allsops Ale
200 Casks Byass Beer, ½ ale ½ porter, each 4 dozen
10 H[ogs]h[ea]ds Sandamans Port Wine
10 Q[uar]r C[as]ks Sandamans Port Wine
10 H[ogs]h[ea]ds Sandamans pale Sherry fair middling quality
50 cases Port Wine ea / doz
50 ditto Sherry ditto
50 ditto Champagne ditto
10 Tierces [= 1½ hogsheads] Zante Currants
200 Boxes Eleine Raisins ea 28 lbs Boxes
100 Boxes Muscatel Raisins packed in cases

30 Bags Barcelona Nuts packed in tierces
20 Half Tierces "Barrets" Negrohead Tobacco
3 Tons Loaf Sugar, put up in 10 lb loaves, packed in tierces
2 tons Crushed Sugar, packed in Barrels [= 2 hogsheads]...
150 Cases each 3 doz ass[orte]d Pint Pickles
50 ditto ditto 2 doz ass[orte]d Q[uar]t Pickles
20 cases each 3 doz Pt Salad Vit.
15 ditto ditto 6 ½ doz ditto
25 ditto ditto 2 doz ass[orte]d Bottled Fruits
10 ditto ditto 3 doz ass[orte]d Jams and Jellies.^[89]

Order

Mr Eagle Melbourne 15th August, 1852
 Messrs N M Rothschild & Sons

Brandy 30 Hds Waxbills dark color
 Rum 30 Hds to 15 may proof dark color
 Gin 300 Cases Rotterdam in Red Cases
 in 4 Gallons Witch proof
 Bottled Beer - 200 Cases Bye of Sanchurch
 half Porter half Witch 4 doz
 Stout 20 Hds True Witch
 30 Hds Taylor's
 Port Wine 3 Hds Port Wine ♦
 10 D. Casks Do ♦
 5 Hds Do ♦♦
 10 D. Casks Do ♦♦
 5 Hds Do ♦♦♦
 10 D. Casks Do ♦♦♦

Montefiore & Co

NB - The Wines of a good quality -
 Hunts and Sandemans are preferred - but
 any other good brand will do - especially
 in - enough care must be taken that all
 liquids are well covered to prevent
 leakage - The Freight as low as possible
 the rule is so much of the Job -

List of beer, wines and spirits shipped by N M Rothschild & Sons to Montefiore. 'NB - The wines of a good quality - Hunts and Sandemans are preferred.' RA XI/38/7

Upon most if not all of these vital necessities the diggers depended, and there were many such shipments. While Rothschilds could supply these goods at favourable

London prices, and take advantage of the margin afforded by the dizzying rate of inflation in Victoria, the Montefiores were hit hard by the excessively high costs of doing business there. They were also hit hard by the accumulating cost of borrowing more and more from London in order to convey the goods from Melbourne to the diggings, and to cover a multitude of exorbitant overheads.

Montefiore may have been careful to maintain strict confidentiality in his dealings with New Court, but other merchants in Melbourne certainly caught wind of their relationship. In an unsolicited démarche on 1 January 1852, for example, Reuben (or Rheuben) Barnett consigned three boxes of “gold dust” directly to “Baron Rothschild,” effectively by-passing the Montefiores. Perhaps cheerfully inspired by some New Year’s resolution, Barnett was a lessee of ships on the Bass Strait (Van Diemen’s Land) run and, for the time being, also innkeeper of the Exchange Hotel in Collins Street, Melbourne. In his covering note, Barnett sought from them the safest form of remittance, but also boldly raised the possibility of representing Rothschilds in Melbourne into a glorious future, full of potential. The mark on Barnett’s boxes—the letter “B” inside a Magen David—together with his signature in fairly hesitant Hebrew, made an obvious claim upon the Rothschilds’ attention. This he reiterated a little later in a separate follow-up letter, explicitly claiming in a postscript that he was once well known to Nathan Mayer Rothschild himself—a claim that was presumably impossible either to disprove or to verify. It is not clear whether this Rheuben or Reuben Barnett is the same “Polish Jew” a watchmaker, who was convicted in 1843 in the Central Criminal Court of receiving £100 of India silks and sentenced to seven years’ hard labour and afterwards transported to Van Diemen’s Land. It is possible. We know very little else about Barnett’s Melbourne business, except that he brought criminal charges against the master of his vessel the *Jenny Lind* (*Argus*, Saturday, March 26, 1853), but not long afterwards appeared several times in the Insolvent Court in Melbourne in 1853 and again in 1856 (*Argus*, Tuesday, July 5, 1853, and Thursday, June 26, 1856).^[10]

Evidently, for the time being the Rothschilds preferred to deal with the Montefiores instead—and they were wise to do so—but their confidence in their Melbourne cousins was not limitless. To obtain an independent assessment of the progress of their investments in Victoria, the bank despatched from California to Melbourne a trusted employee, the peripatetic clerk John Luck. His brief was discreetly to monitor the Montefiores’ transactions—even to the point of furnishing unofficial audits—while, at the same time, scouting independently for new business opportunities, and also trading on his own account, using a line of credit naturally furnished by the bank on the basis of equal caution. These practices were identical in California, South America, and many other places where the bank sustained relatively informal agency arrangements, so the Montefiores were not at all unusual in being watched closely. In the end, they became hopelessly over-extended, and in 1855 faced bankruptcy, defaulting on substantial

advances from the London branch. The Rothschilds' agent Jeffrey Cullen sailed out to Melbourne to act as fireman.^[11]

What is now clear is that the decision of the firm of N. M. Rothschild & Sons in 1852 to secure the lease on the Royal Mint Refinery in London must have been driven at least in part by the immense flow of gold from Victoria. The Paris branch had in any case refined bullion since 1827, when James de Rothschild opened his smelter in the quai de Valmy. Indeed Michel Benoît Poisat, James's business partner in that venture, eventually oversaw the technical aspects, equipment and staffing of the London refinery.^[12] In 1835, the bank drew up a contract with the Kingdom of Spain to market the output of the Almadén mercury mines, thereby securing a vital ingredient in the gold-refining process. And it is no accident that many of the Montefiores' reports from Melbourne were translated and sent to Paris, presumably to assess the viability of extending to London the firm's production of gold bullion. And in the broadest sense, what this capsule of Australian correspondence so deftly illustrates is the capacity of the bank to think and act globally, on a dizzying scale as well as on the almost microscopic, the better to reinforce, support and nourish a growing network of mutually sustaining, and enormously profitable interests. In the ten years from 1851 to 1861 most of the 25.2 million ounces (787 tons) of gold extracted by hand from the creek beds, escarpments, gravel pits and stony hills of central Victoria passed through the hands of N. M. Rothschild & Sons in London. This was worth far more to the firm than every one of those shipments of hogsheads of middling-quality Sandamans pale sherry, pickles, Barcelona nuts, raisins, and currants, and even the losses incurred by their well-meaning and by no means incompetent Melbourne cousins by marriage.

Footnotes

[1] I am most grateful to Melanie Aspey and all the staff of the [Rothschild Archive in London](#) for their warm hospitality and generous assistance in preparing this article.

[2] The best concise histories of the gold rush in Victoria are still Geoffrey Serle, *Golden Age: A History of the Colony of Victoria, 1851–1861*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1963, and Geoffrey Blainey, *The Rush That Never Ended: A History of Australian Mining*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1963. To these may now be added Bruce Moore, *Gold! Gold! Gold! A Dictionary of the Nineteenth-Century Australian Gold Rushes*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2000, and a host of more specialist books and articles.

[3] Mary Howitt Walker, *Come Wind, Come Weather: A Biography of Alfred Howitt*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1971, p. 37.

[4] Rothschild Archive, London, XI/38/7/6.

[5] Except by Niall Ferguson, *The World's Banker: The History of the House of Rothschild*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1998, pp. 578–80. For the Montefiore brothers, see Israel Getzler, "Montefiore, Joseph Barrow," in Douglas Pike, ed., *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, vol. 2, 1967, pp. 250–51; Martha Rutledge, "Montefiore, Jacob Levi," in Douglas Pike, ed., *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, vol. 5, 1974, pp. 270–71; George F. J. Bergman, "Montefiore, Eliezer Levi," in Douglas Pike, ed., *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, vol. 5, 1974, p. 269.

[6] RA XI/38/7/1.

[7] Amy Woolner, *Thomas Woolner, R.A., Sculptor and Poet: His Life in Letters*, London: Chapman and Hall, 1917, and New York: E. P. Dutton, 1917, repr. New York: AMS Press, 1971. My new edition of Thomas Woolner's goldfields journal with introduction and scholarly apparatus awaits publication.

[8] In Exodus 22:21 and Deuteronomy 10:19 we find, "love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt" (KJV). Nevertheless it seems far more likely that Montefiore used the term here to describe gentiles (the vast majority). I am grateful to Rabbi John S. Levi for his assistance on this point.

[9] RA XI/38/7/5.

[10] See "Barnett, Reuben (Rheuben)," in John S. Levi, *These Are the Names: Jewish Lives in Australia, 1788–1850*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press (The Miegunyah Press), 2006, pp. 68–69.

[11] Ferguson, p. 578.

[12] Michele Blagg, "The Royal Mint Refinery, 1852–1968," *The Rothschild Archive, Review of the Year: April 2008 to March 2009*, London: The Rothschild Archive, 2009, pp. 48–49.

By Angus Trumble