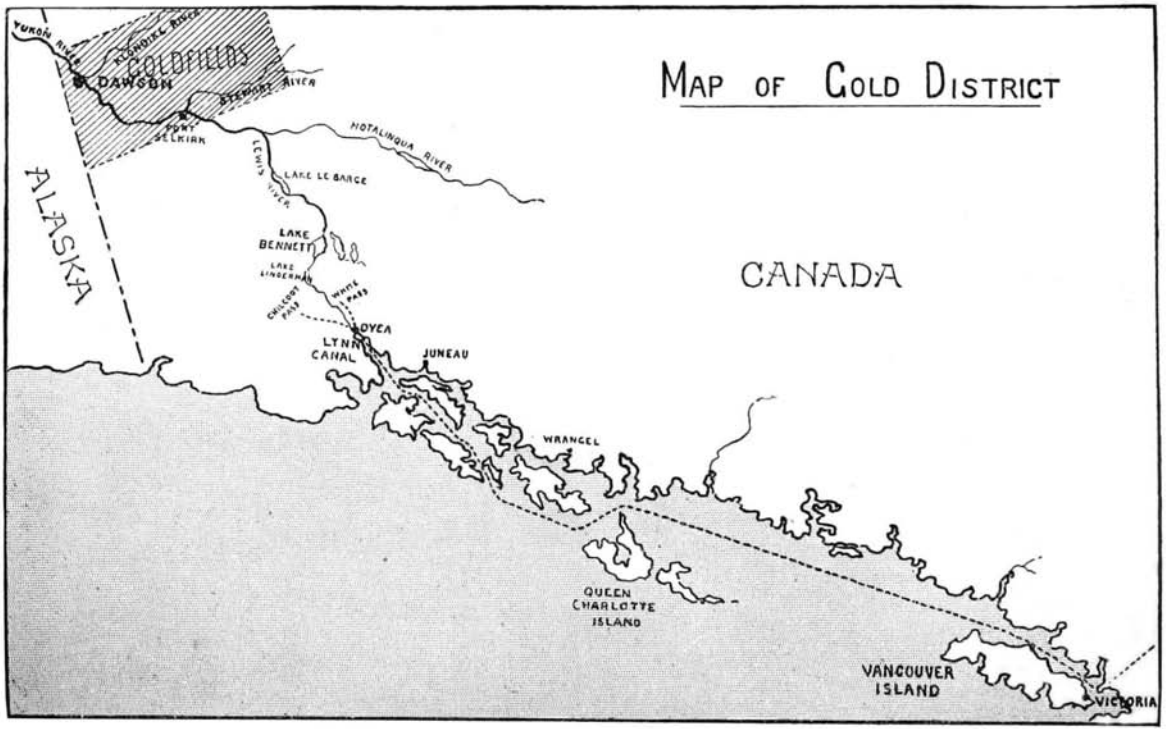
MAP OF GOLD DISTRICT
YUKON RIVER
KLONDIKE RIVER
GOLDFIELDS
DAWSON
STEWART RIVER
FORT SELKIRK
HOTALINQUA RIVER
LEWIS RIVER
LAKE LE BARGE
ALASKA
LAKE BENNETT
LAKE LINDERMAN
CHILCOOT PASS
WHITE PASS
DYEA
LYNN CANAL
JUNEAU
CANADA
WRANGEL
QUEEN CHARLOTTE ISLAND
VANCOUVER ISLAND
VICTORIA

ALL ABOUT KLONDIKE.

With Full Particulars by a Returned Miner.

The Goldfields Fully Described and Illustrated.

Edited by
H. A. BELCHER.

Illustrated by
E. W. BARKER AND J. A. ADSHEAD.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.
(*With Map and* 8 *Illustrations*).

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PATERNOSTER ROW.

PREFACE.

THE present excitement concerning the newly-discovered vast Goldfields of Klondike, together with the natural desire of the public for unbiassed information, is expected to be sufficient apology for the publication of this book. If information be found herein of any value to an intending emigrant, or of interest to other classes, who may feel concerned to know something of the rights and wrongs of the "boom," our object will be accomplished. All details have been gathered from quite reliable sources, much of the contents being the actual experience of a returned successful miner.

The public cannot be too strongly urged to place little reliance upon information and "facts" circulated, or published, at the instance of any Company whatever, directly or indirectly interested in the development of the district, or the capitalization of any undertaking connected with the goldfields.

THE EDITOR.

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PART I.

INTRODUCTORY.

GOLD!—sticking out of the ground like stones on a country road—only waiting to be picked up! Fifty million dollarsworth in plain sight! and much more to the same effect.

No wonder there is intense excitement about *Klondike*, the region of which all these startling statements have, within the past few weeks, been made, contradicted, re-affirmed; contradicted afresh in a regular see-saw manner. To get at the "fire" of truth amidst such dense clouds of newspaper "smoke" may well be impossible to the ordinary mortal, whose natural desire to find out all about the chances of *his* making a pile is at one moment inflamed with assurances of the ease of this desirable feat, at the next quietened to death by the croaking wailer, who would transform the gold-seeking journey into a winding funeral pageant. And so the game of "'Tis!" "'Tisn't!" goes on until the aforesaid mortal finds himself able to determine nothing more definite than that there must be *some* fire to produce such universal lust-irritating smoke.

In order to enable the reader to form some proper conclusion as to the position of affairs, we give a brief sketch of the events which have led to the present excitement concerning the Yukon Goldfields—more especially Klondike.

In July last a steamer arrived at San Francisco, having on board forty miners, with 750,000 dollarsworth of gold from the Klondike district, just newly discovered. A few days afterwards another steamer brought away sixty-eight miners with a million dollarsworth of bullion. One of these men had taken 10,000 dollarsworth from a mere surface—not larger than that of an ordinary small

sitting-room—whilst many diggers had washed out 5,000 dollarsworth of gold dust daily.

As much as 200 dollars to the pan has been yielded by the rich "pay-dirt" of this district, and five dollars is a common average. The Government Surveyor reported that from five dollars to seven dollars per pan was the average on the claims at Bonanza Creek, which is in the same neighbourhood as Klondike, and that the gold-bearing country between the Stewart River and Klondike was considered, by all the old miners, the best and most extensive gold-country ever yet discovered. Along the easterly watershed of the Yukon, experts conclude that there exists a gold-bearing belt upwards of 300 miles long, and of indefinite width—without running into the British Columbia portion of it.

The pan used by miners, it should be explained, is an ordinary tin instrument, about a foot and a-half across, with a depth of some five inches. There are about ten pans to the cubic foot of soil, and the "pay-dirt" may average five feet in depth, which would make the possible value of a 500-foot claim work out at no less than 4,000,000 dollars. At this creek (Bonanza) one miner got 800 dollars from one pan, and offered to back himself to take out, within twenty minutes, twice as much more. Another had employed several men all the winter getting out dirt to wash when the spring came. After paying each of these hands 15 dollars a day, by the simple means of picking out from the heap of "pay-gravel" such nuggets as were necessary for the purpose, he had, on the dump, from 100,000 to 150,000 dollarsworth ready to wash out when the water should flow in the summer.

Such instances might be multiplied indefinitely, but it would be a mere repetition of marvellous stories of rich finds.

There is, then, plenty of gold at Klondike.

The known gold-bearing region comprises territory, in the Canadian Dominion alone, rather larger in extent than *France;* but the district, in which the rich finds were recently made, is that of the Klondike, a tributary

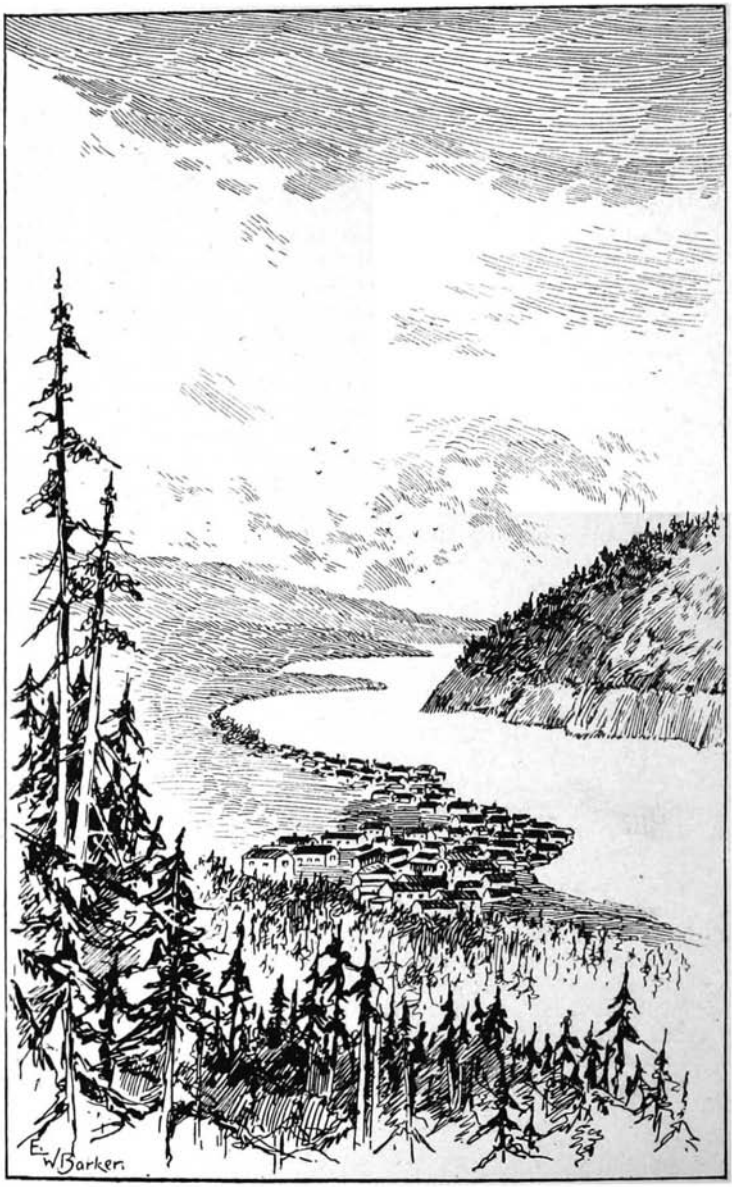
of the Yukon river. Naturally, everyone has been making for that one spot, and with undoubted success, so far as finding gold is concerned; but it must not be inferred from this that all likely claims will soon have been taken up. Hundreds of times more remain to be taken than have already been staked.

Where the Klondike runs into the Yukon—about forty miles, in a bee-line, within the British boundary—the town of Dawson City, of about 5,000 inhabitants, has arisen, chiefly during the last few months, and is the centre of the district. Some eighty miles further south, the Stewart river runs into the Yukon, and there again, even more recently than in the case of Klondike, very rich finds have been made; as also on another tributary of the Yukon—called the Hotalinqua.

Until quite recently the only inhabitants of the district were a few Esquimaux and half-breeds, with wandering bands of Indians of the Flat-Head type; and some few hundreds of white prospectors and trappers, scattered, here and there, through this vast region.

The climate is not by any means unhealthy, though the goldfields are situated in a most rigorous zone, where the country for eight months in the year is frozen up. But, though the thermometer often falls to 60 deg. below zero, the cold is not acutely trying to a sound, healthy person—properly and sufficiently clothed—except when there is a strong wind blowing. Those who have been to the colder parts of Canada, for instance, will know how much worse the degrees of frost look in print than is the real experience of them. On the other hand, the heat in summer is often very great, and then the chief discomfort of residence there is caused by the swarms of mosquitoes which abound, and bite, to an extent impossible to realise, except from actual experience.

Potatoes and oats may be grown in some places, and grass food, to some extent, for animals. The value of fresh provisions in such a spot cannot be over-estimated, and there is little doubt that such things will be grown to a much larger extent when this is realised, and the first rush to any particular spot is over. The rivers and



DAWSON CITY.

lakes abound in fish, which has been the principal food of the natives, and at some seasons wild-fowl, moose, bears, and other wild animals may be shot or trapped. Such sources of supplies are by no means to be depended on, and emigrants must take with them large quantities of provisions, as explained further on in these pages.

Coal is reported to exist in many places, which fact is of the utmost importance, as large supplies of fuel are required for use in mining, and wood is not plentiful.

The reports which have appeared in the papers concerning various syndicates, who are arranging to send all sorts of mining machinery to the goldfields, and to introduce cheap labour there, may be dismissed as unlikely, if not impossible, so far as they are likely to affect the prospects of a genuine miner, for the Mining Laws—upon the observance of which the Government are determined to insist—would appear to make it impossible for such companies to take up more than one claim, or to look for any advantage beyond what a private person would enjoy.

PART II.

How to Get There.

(The Map, at the beginning of the book, will be found of great service for reference).

IN the first place, it must be clearly understood by intending emigrants to the Goldfields, that it would be utter folly to arrive in British Columbia (Victoria or Vancouver) before the beginning of April. Any statement to the contrary may be found a dangerous and expensive misrepresentation.

In starting from England for the Gold District, the best way is to go to Montreal, and thence by the Canadian Pacific Railway to Vancouver or Victoria—about 15 days journey. (Fares: Steerage, £15 18s. 9d.; second cabin, £17 18s. 9d.; saloon and first class railway, £25 2s. 10d.)

From Victoria or Vancouver there are Three Routes, which will be explained in order, viz.:—

(I.) By steamer to the mouth of the Yukon, in Alaska, and thence up the Yukon to the Goldfields. Distance, 4,000 miles.

(II.) By steamer to the mouth of the Lynn Canal, viâ Juneau City, thence by the Chilcoot Pass and the lakes, to the head of the Yukon, and down this river to Klondike. Distance, 1,500 miles.

(III.) Same as II, but through the White Pass instead of the Chilcoot. Distance, 1,400 miles.

Route I. may be dealt with in a very few words. It is only possible to get up the Yukon from July to September in each year, and the journey is, at least, 2,500 miles longer than either of the other ways. A further drawback is found in the fact that only 150lbs. baggage is allowed to be taken by each passenger by the Steamboat Companies. On the other hand, there is

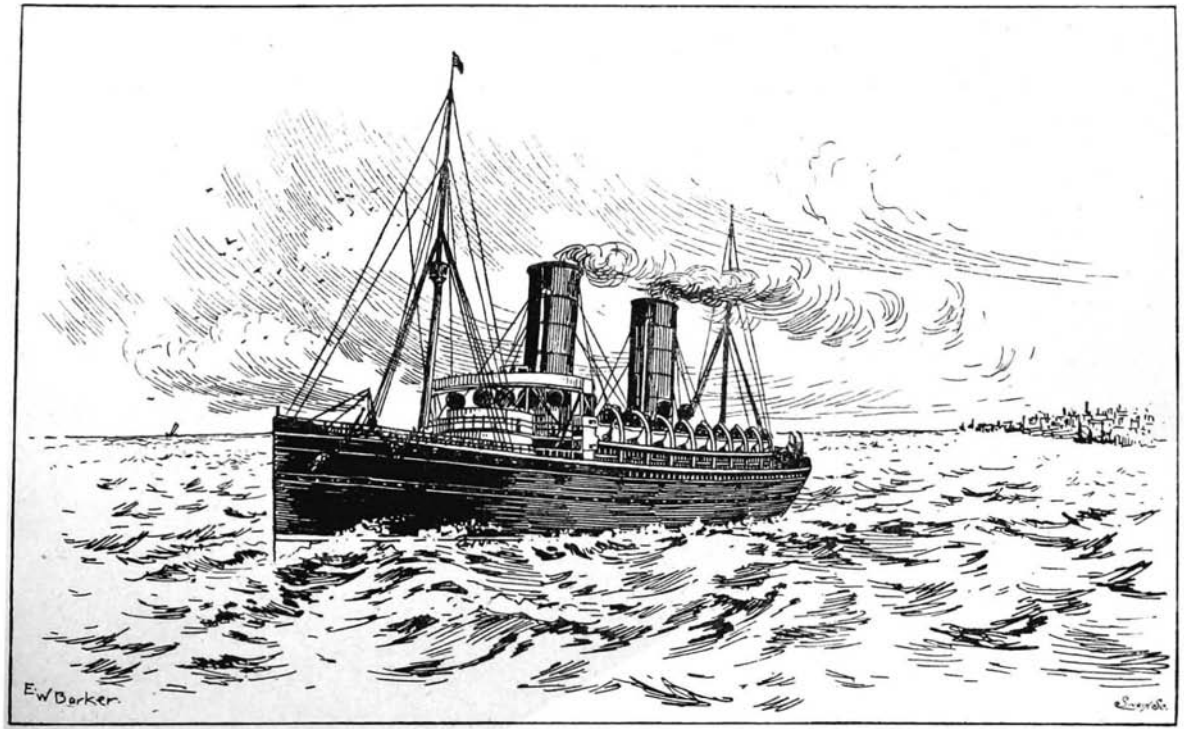
comparatively little of "roughing it" *en route*, yet, it is estimated that not more than 10 per cent. have gone in by this way.

ROUTE II., by which far the greater number of wealth seekers have journeyed, though so much shorter in mileage, is one of great difficulty, and occasionally danger. The way in will be best described from actual experience.

From Victoria a passage is booked by steamer to Juneau. You go aboard, and make yourself as much at home as the great piles of freight, a choppy sea, and the howling of several scores of dogs will permit. Getting first meals on these boats is no joke, entailing, if not an actual fight, much waiting and discomfort. You take your chance also about sleeping. The odds are you will receive from the steward a mattress and pillow upon which to sleep, on the floor of the dining-room—that is, sleep as much as possible after eleven at night, up to which time card-playing renders the feat difficult, and before five in the morning, when you will be turned out. On through Seymour Narrows and into the open sea, where the pitching of the ship is not an unmixed evil, as it enables those who feel fit to get meals without such crushing. There is music in the evenings, which livens things up considerably. The third day the scenery becomes very fine, and, as you sail between Queen Charlotte Island and British Columbia, the high mountains, with their snowy peaks vanishing right up through the clouds, present a view of great grandeur. About the middle of the next day—the fourth from Victoria—Fort Wrangle should be reached. Here you may get off and stretch your limbs a bit, yet not a great while, for Juneau is to be made this night.

At Juneau the outfit must be purchased, which is a most important task. It has been imperatively necessary up to now to buy, in addition to mining tools, cooking utensils, clothes, guns, etc., large quantities of provisions, as much, in fact, as you would expect to require for at least six months.

In all probability the need for taking in, at such effort, large supplies of food will not be so urgent by next spring,



LEAVING VICTORIA.

as the road, in the course of construction across the White Pass, will make it comparatively easy to transport stores, which may then be purchased at the gold diggings at something like reasonable rates. The most reliable information on this point will be gained, not here in England, but at Victoria itself.

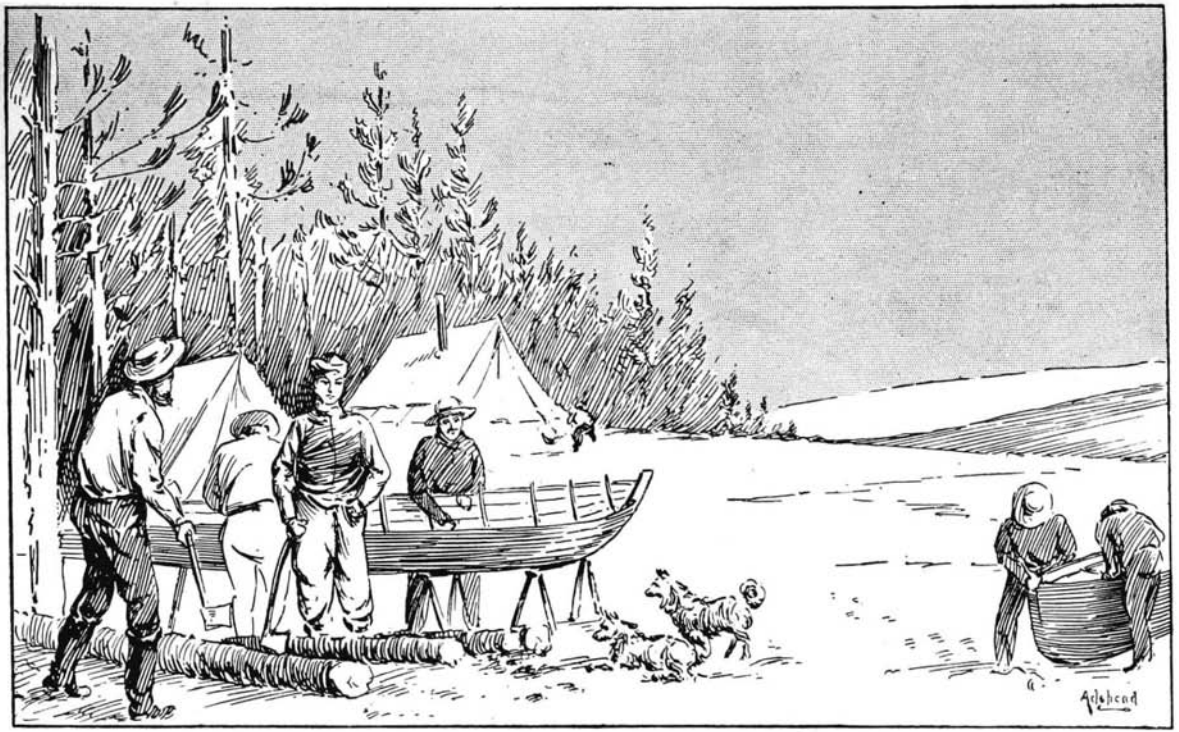
The problem is to get every necessary without taking a grain more. This would be anything from half a ton to a ton. If you are alone, now is your time to pick up with a suitable partner, for mutual assistance and company. If you can get an old hand to join you, so much the better, provided he be straight.

From Juneau to Dyea, by boat, is the next stage, which is easy enough until it comes to landing. The anchorage is very bad, even a steam launch being unable to get within a good distance of the shore. Consequently the traveller is frequently compelled to wade a great way in water up to the knees. All the help which steamers can give is here at an end, and you have to help yourself. You must now rig up your hut and sleep under canvas, the reverse of cheerful at the prospect of journeying over terrible country, with a little load of some 1,500 lbs. or so to lug with you. Arising early next morning, you prepare to reach the Canyon, which is some nine miles off, the first thing being to get someone to transport your stores to the foot of the Canyon, which costs you some thirty dollars. You have now to get through, and, taking as much of your stores as you can drag in a sleigh, you start up—it is all up-hill and in some places steep—and find that the *three* miles you have to go before camping will take you as many hours—that is allowing that you are pulling some 250 lbs. each. You must fetch the stores up piecemeal like this, but it is well, if possible, to get help from Indian carriers this bit. It will take you two days, under fair circumstances, to get from Dyea up the Canyon with your belongings to Pleasant Camp. Your next object is to reach Sheep Camp, some two and a half miles further on, at which you may hope to arrive, with the final instalment of your load, in another two days. You may well imagine, from the apparent slow-

ness of the travel that the going is no child's play; on the contrary, it is frightfully hard, straining work—up mounds, through three feet of slush, and over countless other obstacles, till, even in the cold, you are wet through and through with perspiration.

Arrived at Sheep Camp, the difficulty is to get wood to make your fire, but this is just possible here, though there will be none for the next thirteen miles; and the hardest pull of the journey lies in the next three miles to the summit, the last part of the way being a sheer ascent of the greatest difficulty, even to the unloaded traveller. There is no saying how long you may have to wait at the foot of the summit, for it is impossible to cross in the face of the blizzards and driving ice storms, which are so frequent there as to be almost chronic; whilst you may have to make shift to roll yourself up and sleep on your sleigh, as there are no boughs round about with which to make a carpet on the snow inside your tent. Two or three days delay, under these conditions, is about as wretched an experience as may well be imagined, as, with feet wet, through long standing in snow, and shivering with cold, the storm renders it impossible for you to get wood for a fire. Though it may be barely two miles since you left timber, it is not possible to go even that distance without imminent danger of losing your life.

At last arrives a fine morning, and you get your stuff on the wire cable, on which, for a cent. per pound, it will be drawn up the steepest part of the summit, where you will find it sufficiently hard to look after yourself. Once on top, there is a precipitous descent of over a quarter of a mile, down which your sleigh must be allowed to drop, for there could be no holding it back. Thus the cache at Crater Lake is reached; and then, after getting a meal, the chief anxiety is to reach timber once more, the distance—some ten miles—with half your load on the sleighs, taxing the endurance to the utmost. The next morning you go back for the other half of your load. It is just this constant going back for part of your provisions which makes these stages—terribly hard and difficult at



MAKING BOATS AT LAKE LINDEMAN.

the best—doubly trying ; in fact, in order to reach camp at all, it is frequently necessary to abandon—for a time —part of the load, so that, finally, you will have travelled over some parts of the route three or four times even.

Lake Lindeman is soon reached, and the sleighs reloaded for crossing on the ice, for which a sail on the sleigh is of great assistance, provided there is a fair wind. After a night in a comparatively comfortable camping place, a portage (carrying the stores on the back) has to be made towards Lake Bennett, at which you may arrive, with your stores complete, in two more days. Now comes the work of building a boat—felling trees and cutting planks for the purpose—unless one can be bought at the saw-mills, some two and a half miles away. If the purchase is possible, it will mean an outlay of, perhaps, 60 or 70 dollars.

The next stage of the journey is, on sleighs, twenty-five miles, with the help of any fair wind that may blow, across Lake Bennett, where the boat must be launched to cross some open water. Tagish is the next lake to be reached, after some stiff pulling at the sleighs; and so on, day by day, alternate sailing and pulling, with frequent retracings for portions of the load which have to be left behind. Camping anywhere, wet and miserable, past Tagish to Lake Marsh, and on to Mud Lake; always the same, tired and wretched, with only the prospect of piles of gold to bear you up. It depends on the state of the ice how long it takes to get clear of this lake and to the Lewes River. When the ice is just breaking vexatious delays occur, perhaps a fortnight being occupied in getting from one end of Mud Lake to the other.

From this point, for nearly thirty miles, is plain sailing down the Lewes till the canyon is reached; the excitement and danger of shooting this is an experience not soon to be forgotten. The waves run high, and the danger is from swamping, as, when this occurs, there is little chance of getting out, the sides being steep rock. The water from here to the White Horse Rapids is very bad, if not actually dangerous, and portage is again the

bugbear. At one place the boat is let down by a rope held on to by a number of men, whilst in the boat two are busily engaged keeping it off the rocks with poles.

Lake Le Barge is next reached, the thirty odd miles across this, there being no current here, taking a day and a-half at least; but, after the recent experience at Mud Lake, where the camping is simply atrocious, Le Barge is quite lovely, and camping ground on its islands or shores a pleasant change indeed.

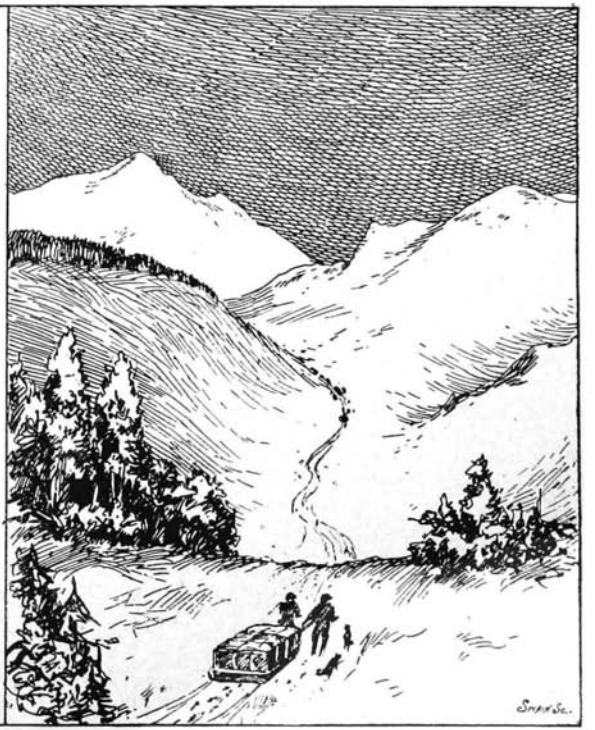
The journey now is down river, with a strong current and occasional rapids, sixty to seventy miles being a fair day's run. On past Little Salmon River, until Five Finger Rapids comes as an "event," the swell here being six feet high, through a channel a quarter of a mile long and only a hundred feet wide. Rush Rapids, a few miles lower, being comparatively innocent, the same being true of Rink Rapids, whilst the whole matter or journeying has become less wretched, and if the mosquitoes would only let you alone—which they won't—things would be fairly tolerable.

Fort Selkirk, where the Polly River joins the Lewes, is quite a young settlement of cabins, and a store. Another day, on past Sixty Mile Island, and then—*Klondike* at last.

ROUTE III. The White Pass. If all that is promised of this Route proves true, most of the dangers and hardships, inseparable from entry by the Chilcoot, will be eliminated, and by the time it is possible to start next Spring, the journey will be one of comparative ease. This Pass is controlled by a Company, which exacts toll in return for the work they have undoubtedly already accomplished, of making the trail less rough and easier of transit. But, up to the present, though the Route is vigorously advertised, very little mention is made of what these charges may be. It is understood that the Canadian Government are considering the advisability of making a waggon road, to supersede this Company's trail, over the White Pass, and the construction of a mountain railway is mentioned as likely.

To arrive at the White Pass, steamer is taken from

SHOOTING A CANYON.



EN ROUTE TO KLONDIKE.

Vancouver or Victoria, up the coast to the head of the Lynn Canal, to a spot called Skagway Bay, where a wharf, at which steamers may lie in any state of the tide, has been made.

The Pass, which has an altitude of over 1,000 feet less than that of the Chilcoot, and in no part above the snow line, commences at this spot, and comes out at the Windy Arm of Lake Tagish. It will thus be seen that the terrible experiences of getting to Lake Tagish *viâ* the Chilcoot (which includes the most trying portion of the journey that way) may be avoided by taking the White Pass, through which, in important addition, such stores as are necessary may be carried by animals with comparative ease. The distance through is about thirty-six miles, and may be accomplished in two days, so that, expense being equal, this may be fairly described as by far the most practicable of the three routes.

From Tagish the route would be similar to that described in II. from the same point. It is also projected to avoid the dangerous parts of the river (Grand Canyon and White Horse Rapids) by making a road to circumvent these.

At Skagway Bay, stores, for the supply of tools and necessaries of all kinds, have been opened by the Company, which controls this route, and it will be possible to ascertain at Victoria whether everything may not be purchased there—at the head of the Lynn Canal—as reasonably as at Juneau, the trouble being certainly less.

Latest intelligence points to the fact that Canada is trying two new routes to see whether a practicable way, entirely in British territory, may be found, it being at present undecided whether Dyea and Skagway are in United States or Canadian dominion. One of these proposed routes is by way of the Stikeen River to Telegraph Creek, and thence to Teslin Lake, from which the way is by no means difficult. The point to be decided is whether the country between Telegraph Creek and Teslin Lake is easy to travel, as is believed. (See Appendix V.: "Routes to Klondike.")

PART III.

What to do When There.

HAVING now arrived at Klondike, which is on the right bank of the river, the first feeling is one of utter disappointment. A miserable-looking, swampy place: a few log cabins; two or three "saloons"; an indefinite number of tents; and caches of stores! And this is what you have spent such infinite labour and encountered such discomfort and danger to reach! But that feeling soon passes as the recollection urges that you came after "Gold," and not in search of a desirable residence.

Dawson City is opposite, on the other bank of the Klondike river, perhaps 400 yards away, but sufficiently difficult to reach on account of the strong current. The mines at El Dorado and Bonanza Creeks are some ten miles away.

The whole Klondike region is well within British territory, and, beside being very much more extensive, is infinitely richer than the older known diggings at Circle City (Alaska), or Forty Mile (near the boundary between Canadian and the United States territories). Much has been said of the possibility of the Government excluding from these diggings all except British subjects. But, whilst their right to do so cannot be questioned, it is most improbable that such exclusion will be attempted, having regard to the fact that goldfields all over the world have been open to persons of all nationalities, without discrimination.

The regulations relating to mining are very properly favourable to genuine miners rather than to companies, who might, with their large capitals, otherwise control the profits of working the diggings. Each individual may take up a claim of 500 feet square, for the purpose

of actually working it; but no further area may be staked in respect of nominees. Before taking a fresh claim, the miner is required to notify his abandonment of any existing one he may hold. There is nothing, of course, to prevent any miner employing others to assist him in his mine, and as the claim allowed is unusually large, such help is often advisable. Miners hired in this way are paid from £2 to £3 a day.

A mining license has to be taken out by each miner; the charge made by the Government for this being 15 dollars yearly.

A royalty or tax has also been imposed upon the gold taken from each claim, at the rate of 10 per cent. on the first £100 worth, taken in a week, and 20 per cent. upon all above that value.

The tax, in addition to the Customs charges levied on all miners' stores taken into the country, is exciting the greatest opposition, on account of its unreasonable magnitude, and the Canadian Government will have a pretty rough job collecting it. At least, a large body of men will be necessary to enforce the payment of this due, such a tax being something never previously heard of. It is also understood that the Dominion will keep every alternate 500 feet square, to be worked for the benefit of the State. Hence, it appears that Canada is intending to make a rather good thing out of the discoveries, and though it will be only fair to collect some sort of revenue to pay for administering the country, it is a question whether such imposition may not prove to be a case of over-reaching. Order is well preserved by the Canadian police, and there is an entire absence of those lawless scenes which made the doings of miners formerly notorious. This better state of things is largely due to the miners themselves, for they are a vastly improved type from the typical American desperado, to whom the easiest method of settling a drunken quarrel was the shooting of his antagonist. Claim jumping is impossible, and theft a thing almost unknown.

A habit to be avoided at all costs is the utter carelessness, displayed chiefly by new hands, in the matter of

GOING PROSPECTING.

INTERIOR OF A MINER'S HUT.

food. There is a temptation to eat only such things as require little or no cooking, and in the busy summer season to work very long hours, without paying much attention to this matter of eating and drinking, for which time is grudged. This neglect leads to the break up of many constitutions, through scurvy and debility, and, as health is more important than any quantity of gold, the beginner will do well to take a hint from the experienced miners, who well know the value of taking care of their bodies. Fresh vegetables cannot be procured, though this lack may be in some measure made up if the miner will avail himself of such wild fruits as grow plentifully in the summer.

Considerable rain falls during the summer months, and, owing to the verdure, which makes evaporation slow, the ground is swampy, necessitating drainage.

If you have well chosen the time, it is now the beginning of June, and you have three months of summer before you. The job is to know what to start at and where to begin. The existing mines are about eight miles off, but the difficulty lies, not in having too little space to prospect, but too much. There is some work, at from ten to fifteen dollars a day now, but much more chance of that in the winter. The best plan, if you are well enough off to follow it, is to start prospecting whilst the summer lasts, and, having found a likely claim, take it, get work through the winter if necessary, and work for yourself, on your own place, when next spring arrives.

In starting "prospecting" it is necessary to take with you as much in the way of supplies as may be carried on the back—that being the only method of getting about—which may be about enough for a fortnight. It is at this season light the whole twenty-four hours, so you may sleep during the heat of the day and work at night. The method employed here in prospecting for gold is the simple one of sinking holes. The ground is thawed to a depth of some four feet during the summer, but below that, up to, perhaps, twenty-five feet, is perpetually frozen, and, in order to get the gravel out, fires are

lighted in the hole and allowed to burn all night or all day, according to the time chosen for working. In this way the gravel is gradually removed to bed rock, with which the placer miner cannot deal. "Pay-dirt," which is known by the increased weight of the shovelful of gravel, is reached at from four feet to, perhaps, thirty feet from the surface, the depth beyond twenty-five feet being less trouble in removing, as it would not be frozen. The average thickness of the gold-bearing deposit may be five feet.

Nuggets, of which so much is heard, are not commonly found of any size, though it is not unusual to find gravel from which small pieces of gold—worth two or three dollars—may be picked out.

Rich quartz ledges have been discovered in many parts of the district, but these cannot be treated by the ordinary miner; scientific mining, with large plant of machinery, involving an enormous outlay of capital, being necessary. The only way in which such a discovery will affect the miner is to make his claim valuable for selling when all the "placer," or alluvial, deposit has been dealt with.

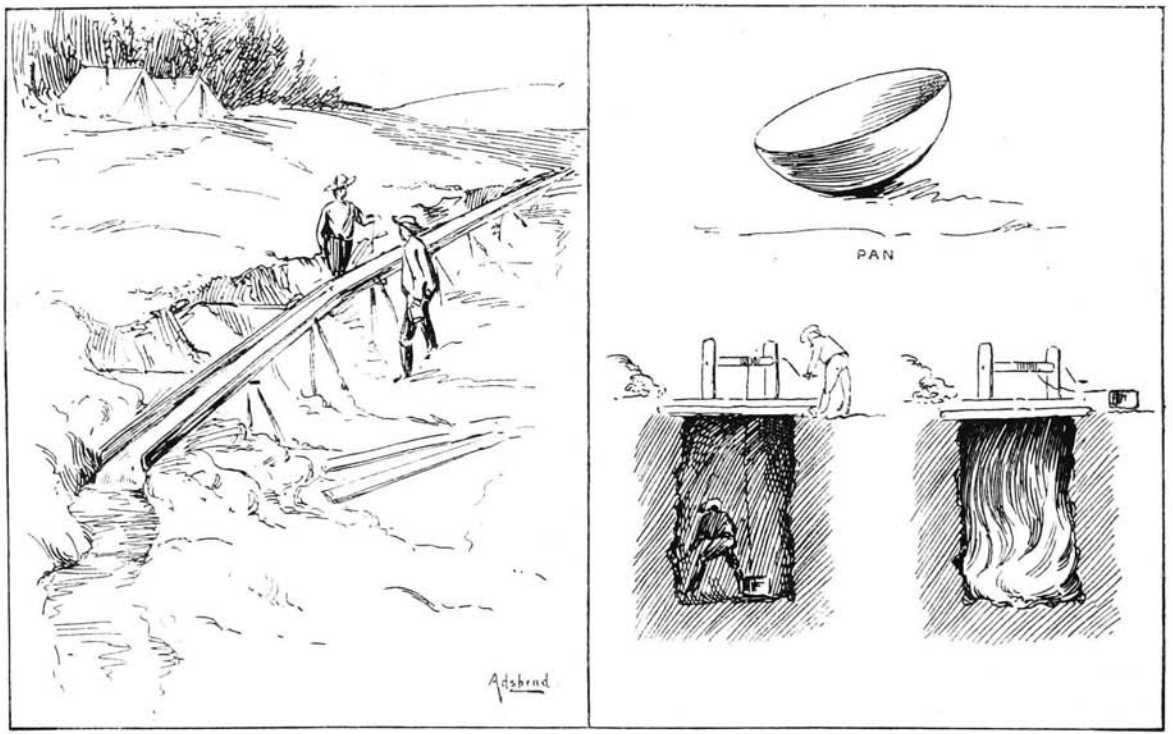
When a likely place is struck, the claim must be measured up—staked—and a log hut built near by. The usual size of these huts is about 15 feet long by 12 feet in width, the walls being some six feet in height, with the centre of the roof about two feet higher. The roof is thickly covered with earth, and all cracks in the walls carefully stopped up, which renders the cabin a warm abode for the two, three, or four men who may live in it, though the question of ventilation is not taken into account.

The methods employed in separating the gold from the earth are dependent upon the weight of that precious metal being greater than that of equal-sized portions of waste—"tailings" is the technical term applied to the useless matter—or, more correctly, upon the high specific gravity of gold. Every apparatus used is, therefore, made on this principle—that the waste matter will mix, and run off with, the water, whilst the heavy gold will remain behind.

The most elementary mode of getting the gold out from the "pay-dirt" is that of washing in the pan. A quantity of the gravel is put into the pan, covered over with water, with which it is mixed, by crumbling it thoroughly between the hands. Stones are first taken out—care being used not to throw away nuggets of gold —and then the pan, held in the right hand, is given a rotatory motion, which causes a portion of the contents to fly out. The quantity of sand having considerably lessened, a little more water is poured in, and the pan, rotating more slowly, is held obliquely, whilst a quick snatching motion is added to facilitate the expulsion of the waste. It takes only two or three minutes to perform the whole operation.

"Sluicing" is a somewhat more advanced method of obtaining the gold, yet, by no means complicated. The sluice is a water-channel or race, down which flows the "wash" (the mixture of "pay-dirt" and water), and is fitted with "riffles," which are obstructions placed to catch the gold. In order to obtain satisfactory results, by this method, it is necessary to sluice only fine "wash," and there should be a sufficient fall in the channel for carrying off the waste.

In conclusion it should be said that the best way of leaving the Gold District is by steamer down the Yukon, though it will be remembered, this way is only possible from July to September. The pirate ships, which were to swoop down and plunder the returning miners, have not yet appeared, and are, doubtless, mere phantoms of newspaper creation.



SKETCHES OF PLACER CLAIMS.

APPENDIX.

I.—Gold in British Columbia.

The *Standard* of July 16 prints the following from its New York correspondent:—

"Gold in British Columbia.

"The steamer *Excelsior* brought from Alaska and landed at San Francisco forty miners and seven hundred and fifty thousand dollarsworth of gold dust from the newly-discovered Klondike district in British Columbia. This is believed to be the source of the placer gold found previously in the Yukon district. One man and his wife had sixty thousand dollarsworth of gold, which they have secured since April last year. Another miner took forty thousand dollarsworth from a small portion of his claim."

II.—The Goldfields in British Columbia.

The *Standard* of July 19 prints the following:—

"The Goldfields in British Columbia.

"Another steamer has brought from the Klondike goldfields in British Columbia sixty-eight miners, with over a ton of bullion, equivalent to about a million dollars in gold. The miners say that the production of gold this season will approach five million dollars, and that next season hundreds of miners will be digging where only scores have been so employed this year. Seattle, San Francisco, and Vancouver have gold fever victims in numbers which are over-taxing the existing means of transportation. Dawson City, whose inhabi-

tants now number only a few hundreds, is expected to grow to a place of thirty thousand population next season, although the difficulties of transport are such that food for over ten thousand cannot be sent into the district where gold has been found. It should not be forgotten that the country produces nothing, and to show the high price of living, bacon this year brought 75 cents. per pound, and flour 20 cents. . . .

"That dirt is found worth four dollars each shovelful is attested by scores of witnesses, whose present wealth is as certain as was their recent poverty. Clarence Berry, from a single box length measuring 12 by 15 feet, took ten thousand dollars' worth of gold, and from 30 box lengths the aggregate gold taken was worth one hundred and thirty thousand dollars, and the surface of the claim was scarcely scratched. There are said to be hundreds of similar claims and miles of such territory."

III.—Mr. de Windt's Letter.

The Alaskan explorer, Mr. Harry de Windt, had a letter in *The Times* of July 23, as follows:—

"Sir,—The discovery in Alaska within the past few months of gold in large quantities has attracted considerable attention, not only throughout the United States but also in Canada and British Columbia. The auriferous deposits are of extraordinary richness; forty pounds to the pan has been obtained on Bonanza Creek, which is equal to the best records of California or Cariboo, and although the output of gold throughout the Yukon district in 1895 amounted to only $3,000,000, these figures show an increase in 1896 of $1,670,000, while further important discoveries have been made since the publication of these statistics. It is possible that the very favourable report of Inspector Constantine (published in *The Standard* a few weeks ago) may attract capital and labour from this country, but although the inspector very rightly dwells upon the possibilities offered by this new El Dorado he does not mention the difficulties that at present attend the journey to the goldfields—

difficulties which should not be overlooked by intending prospectors. The report concludes: 'A route from the South to the headwaters of the Yukon is required'; but this scarcely conveys a correct impression of the hardships, and even perils, that at present encompass the voyage into the interior of Alaska from the sea.

"There are two ways of entering Alaska—one by sea from San Francisco, Vancouver, Victoria, and other southern ports to St. Michael's in Behring Sea; the other, which I chose, and which is taken by fully 90 per cent. of the gold-seekers, by crossing the mountains further south, and descending a chain of lakes and rapids to the headwaters of the Yukon River. The distance saved by adopting the overland journey is no less than 2,500 miles. The difficulties of this voyage are only realised at Dyea, 100 miles from Juneau, where the land journey commences, and where a bad anchorage frequently compels the traveller to wade knee-deep for a considerable distance before landing. Dyea consists of a rude log store and a movable town of tents occupied by diggers bound for the goldfields. A delay of several days occurs here while Indians are procured to carry tents and baggage to the lakes 24 miles distant over the Chilcoot Pass, nearly 4,000 feet high. Provisions must be brought from Juneau, for there is nothing to be had here, or, indeed, anywhere this side of Forty Mile City, 600 miles away.

"The Chilcoot Pass is difficult, even dangerous, to those not possessed of steady nerves. Towards the summit there is a sheer ascent of 1,000 feet, where a slip would certainly be fatal. A this point a dense mist overtook us, but we reached Lake Lindeman—the first of a series of five lakes—in safety, after a fatiguing tramp of 14 consecutive hours through half-melted snow. Here we had to build our own boat, first felling the timber for the purpose. The journey down the lakes occupied ten days, four of which were passed in camp on Lake Bennett during a violent storm which raised a heavy sea. The rapids followed. One of these latter, 'The Grand Canon,' is a mile long, and dashes through walls of

rock from 50ft. to 100ft. high; six miles below are the 'White Horse Rapids,' a name which many fatal accidents have converted into the 'Miner's Grave.' But snags and rocks are everywhere a fruitful source of danger on this river, and from this rapid, downward, scarcely a day passed that one did not see some cairn or wooden cross marking the last resting-place of some drowned pilgrim to the land of gold.

"The above is a brief sketch of the troubles that beset the Alaskan gold prospector—troubles that, although unknown to the Eastern States and Canada, have for many years past associated the name of 'Yukon' with an ugly sound in Western America.

"The journey to the Alaskan Goldfields is a hard one for the well-equipped explorer, who travels in light marching order. The gold prospector, on the other hand, must carry a winter's supplies, dearly purchased at Juneau, to be transported at ruinous prices over the Chilcoot Pass. He must construct his own boat (often single-handed) on Lake Lindeman, and, assuming that he arrives at his destination, must secure lodgings at a price that would startle a West-End landlord. All this on, perhaps, a capital of 1,000 dols., not including a ticket to Juneau from the Golden Gate or elsewhere. No wonder that the annals of the Alaska Commercial Company bear witness to the fact that, within the past five years, hundreds of starving miners have been sent out of the country at the Company's expense, and these, as I can testify, are but a percentage of those who have perished from actual starvation in the dreary purlieus of Circle City and Forty Mile Creek.

"There is, however, a brighter side to this gloomy picture, for there are fortunately other approaches to the Yukon Valley besides the dreaded Chilcoot. The chain of mountains of which the latter forms a part is cut by three other passes. The Taku, the Chilkat, and the White Pass. Of these, the two former may be dismissed as being, on account of their length and other difficulties, almost as impracticable as the Chilcoot, over which it would be quite impossible to lay a bridle path; but the

White Pass offer no serious obstacles to the construction of a railway. The White Pass is at least 1,000 feet lower than the Chilcoot, and, unlike the latter, is timbered the entire length. The salt water terminus of this pass is in Skagway Bay, 85 miles from Juneau. Here ocean steamers can run up at all times to a wharf which has been constructed in a sheltered position, and there is an excellent town site with protection from storms. The Pass lies through a box canyon surrounded by high granite peaks and is comparatively easy. It has already been used by miners, who report very favourably upon the trail, and when it is considered that the adoption of this route obviates the dangers and expenses of the Chilcoot, avoids Lakes Lindeman and Bennett (the stormiest and most perilous of the whole chain), shortens and greatly diminishes the expenses of the journey to the Yukon Valley, and, above all, can be used throughout the year (the interior of Alaska is now completely cut off from the world for nine months in the year), there can be little reasonable doubt that the White Pass is the best and most practicable route to the Yukon goldfields.

"It is said that a scheme is now in progress to open up the White Pass and facilitate the transport of miners and stores to the mining settlements, and this is earnestly to be wished. An English company, the British Columbia Development Association, Limited, has already established a landing wharf, and is erecting a store and saw-mills at Skagway, whence it is proposed (as soon as may be feasible) to lay down a line of rail some 35 miles long, striking the Yukon River at a branch of the Teslin Lake, about 100 miles below Lake Lindeman, which is the *débouchure* of the Chilkoot Pass. By this means the tedious and difficult navigation between these two points will be avoided, and the only dangerous parts of the river below—viz., the Grand Canon and White Horse Rapids —will be circumvented by a road or rail portage. Light draught steamers will be put on from Teslin Lake to the canyon, and from the foot of the latter to all the towns and camps on the river. Arrangements will also be

made for direct communication with Skagway by the existing lines of steamers, which now only call at Juneau, whence transhipment is necessary.

"It is stated that this route will be open for use and traffic in a few months' time, when the cost of transporting freight and passengers will be very considerably reduced, and the difficulties of the transit practically eliminated. Much, however, depends upon the Canadian Government, which, in view of the increasing rush of miners to the Yukon Valley (many of whom must, under existing conditions, inevitably starve during the coming winter), should lose no time in constructing a waggon road over the White Pass.

"When the above scheme has been carried out the prospector (even of limited means) may reasonably hope to reach his claim in safety, and at a comparatively moderate outlay. At present I should certainly recommend all those intending to try their luck in Alaska to defer their journey until a less hazardous route than that *viâ* the Chilcoot Pass is open to them. It is with the object of warning Englishmen, who may be deceived by the alluring advertisements of unscrupulous agents, that I have addressed you this letter. That there is gold in large quantities on the Yukon has been conclusively proved, but the wealth of the Indies would not compensate the risks attendant on the journey. As an old Yukon miner remarked to me at Juneau, 'One thousand dollars a day would not fetch me over the Chilcoot again, but, open up the "White Pass," and we will soon have another Johannesburg at Forty Mile Creek.'

"I am, Sir,

"Yours truly,

"HARRY DE WINDT."

[The reader should remember several points in considering the above—first, many of the conditions that Mr. de Windt considers necessary are already fulfilled; secondly, the repetition of "Alaska" is misleading, the goldfields dealt with in this book being well within

British territory; and, thirdly, Forty Mile Creek cannot compare in richness with the Klondike district.—ED.]

IV.—A WARNING TO EMIGRANTS.

The Emigrants' Information Office have issued the following warning:—

"The gold discoveries on the Klondike River are situated in a distant and desolate region. Trustworthy reports state that the district is extremely rich in gold. The mining carried on is placer mining, but gold-bearing quartz has also been found in places. Regulations, governing placer mining there, are those of May 21, 1897, and may be seen at this office. The winter is very severe, and lasts from October to the end of May, the thermometer going down to as much as 50 deg. and 60 deg. below zero. During this time work is only possible to a limited extent, where firewood is available to thaw the frozen gravel and make it ready to be washed as soon as the flow of water in the spring will permit.

"The Klondike River falls into the Yukon in the North-West Territories of Canada, about 100 miles from the frontier between Canada and Alaska. There are two routes to it:—

"(i.) By steamer to Quebec and thence by the Canadian Pacific Railway to Victoria or Vancouver (fifteen days, lowest fare £15 8s. 9d.), thence by steamer to the mouth of the Yukon in Alaska, which is not open till about the 1st of July, and thence up the Yukon for 1,800 miles, taking eighteen to twenty days. This route is only open from June to September, and the total time taken from England to the Klondike would be six or eight weeks at least.

"(ii.) By steamer from Victoria or Vancouver by Juneau to the head of the Lynn Canal (about 1,000 miles from Victoria), thence by the Chilcoot Pass or the White Pass (two days) and the Lakes of the Lewes, or head waters of the Yukon River, and through the White Horse Rapids, thence down the Yukon, which is navigable by steamers to the Klondike. Baggage

and provisions can be taken by horses or Indian carriers across the Chilcoot or White Pass, and canoes or boats must be procured or built for the water part of the journey. This rout is only practicable from June to September, when the water is clear of ice, and would take five or six weeks from England.

"The above facts show that both journeys are long and expensive, and can only be undertaken during the summer, after the ice has diappeared. Provisions are very scarce and dear, if procurable at all. It is too late for anyone to start now, and all persons are strongly warned against attempting it. Under the most favourable conditions, and supposing that steamboats, canoes, and food supplies were all ready and available, the journey would take from five to eight weeks, and the traveller would reach the gold-diggings just as winter was closing in and mining was to a great extent stopped.

"Persons going to the diggings should leave here next April, so as to reach Vancouver or Victoria in time to start for the north as soon as the routes and rivers are open. The journeys, though not exactly dangerous, are difficult and expensive, and no one should think of going there who is not strong and well supplied with money for the journey and for food. Nor should any one go who has not some considerable experience in prospecting and in roughing it in wild and unsettled countries. All others are strongly warned against going there."

[NOTE.—The information contained in the above warning is considerably out of date as to Routes. It will be seen that the "Chilcoot" and "White" passes are mentioned together, as though of equal difficulty, which error a perusal of Part II. of this book should rectify.—ED.]

V.—ROUTES TO KLONDIKE.

The *Daily Telegraph*, of September 23, prints the following:—

"All roads may lead to Rome, but not to Klondike. Now that the fact of the newly-discovered goldfields

being in Canadian territory has been established once and for all, there is a healthy rivalry between the American and Dominion Governments for the possession of the most practicable route to the remote region. At present three routes are used. Travellers by the first and second proceed to either Seattle, Vancouver, or Victoria, and thence by steamer to Dyea or Skagway, situated on the Lynn Canal. There the disputed question as to the boundary of Alaska arises, but the subject is now being investigated by Great Britain and the United States, and will probably be submitted to arbitration later on. In one event Dyea and Skagway will be deemed Canadian territory, in the other their possession will be confirmed to Uncle Jonathan. Adventurers from Dyea utilise the Chilcoot Pass, whilst those from Skagway travel through the White Pass, and the two trails converge at the head waters of the navigation, which are in British territory. Those people who prefer the third available route take a trip through the Gulf of Alaska and the Behring Sea on the Norton Sound, which, as a rule, cannot be entered until July on account of the ice. At St. Michael the wayfarers are transferred to steamers of light draught and conveyed up the Yukon River, which is only navigable until September; and in this manner they reach Dawson City, named after the director of the Canadian Geological Survey. England, under the Treaty of Washington, possesses the right of free navigation over the Yukon up to the American boundary, whence there is little difficulty in reaching the gold mines.

"Canada, however, is exploiting two new routes on her own account, both entirely in Dominion territory. One is by way of the Stikeen River, which is navigable for ordinary flat-bottom boats to Telegraph Creek, and thence to Teslin Lake runs through what is believed to be flat and not difficult country. About this district not much is known as yet, but it is being surveyed in all haste, and the practicability of the route is expected to be settled by the autumn. From Teslin no obstacles whatever present themselves, there being navigation

for stern-wheelers right down to the mouth of the Yukon. The second of the all-Canadian routes is overland from Edmonton, and should the practicability of either the one or the other became certain, the accessibility of the gold-fields will be greatly facilitated, inasmuch as the matter will receive the prompt attention of the Canadian Government. Neither of these routes can at present be exactly described as easy and comfortable, passing, as they do, through a country which is sparsely inhabited and contains no accommodation for travellers, who have no alternative, therefore, but to take everything required for their subsistence on the way. But such inconveniences can be speedily overcome when once the Dominion authorities take the task seriously in hand."

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