

Messenger and Visitor.

THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER,
VOLUME LX.

{ THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR,
VOLUME XLIX.

Vol. XIII.

ST. JOHN, N. B., WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1897.

No. 50.

Facts About the Klondike.

A correspondent of the New York Herald, Mr. John D. McGillivray, an expert in gold mining, has been sent by that journal to investigate and report upon the Klondike region as a gold producing country. A letter written by Mr. McGillivray to the Herald, from Dawson City, under date of Oct. 17, may be accepted as presenting trustworthy information and an intelligent view of present conditions and probabilities in the gold region which is now attracting thousands of fortune hunters. The gold is found on tributaries of the Yukon and tributaries of those streams, of which the most noted as gold producers are the Eldorado and Bonanza Creeks. All the locations, Mr. McGillivray says, do not exceed 1,800. Under the mining laws a man may locate one claim in each division of the Yukon district; there are eight divisions and many men have claims in several of them, so that it is safe to say that about one thousand men own all those claims. When he wrote there were 5,000 men in Dawson City and the mines of the adjacent district. Two thousand more, it is estimated, were on the way. About one thousand men are mine owners. About two thousand others may find employment in the mines on wages or on shares. Not more than another thousand will work on claims, prospecting and developing them. This estimate leaves a large number for whom the chances of earning a living are but slim. Mine owners consider \$1.00 per hour the limit of what they can afford to pay in wages. Men cannot work more than seven hours a day, and when the great cost of living is considered, it will be seen that the laborer will not accumulate a fortune with great rapidity. As winter is the most favorable time for mining, there will be much less demand for labor in the mines when spring opens. Speaking of the Yukon country, apart from the Klondike, Mr. McGillivray says that while many men have braved the rigors of the climate in search of gold, hundreds have gone away poor in pocket and broken in health, and none have made large fortunes. Up to two years ago but one of all these men had made a respectable amount at mining, and that was only \$50,000, made by John Miller, who in three years took that out of his mine on Miller Creek in Forty-Mile district. Since then probably half a dozen men have made that much in the Birch Creek district. And in the Klondike region, so far as is now known, there are but few mines that will do better, and there are not more than two hundred and fifty mines in the district that have been proved to be of sufficient value to work at a profit under present conditions. Of course it seems quite possible that other mines may be discovered of as great richness as those of Eldorado and Bonanza Creeks, but that is wholly a matter of uncertainty. It is to be expected that under more developed conditions very large aggregates of gold will be taken from mines which, as things are now, would not yield a profit. While the amount of gold that has been produced by the Klondike mines is very large for the number of cubic yards of ground drifted and sluiced, it is much less than has been generally reported. It is safe to say that the total yield so far has been less than \$3,000,000 from Bonanza and Eldorado creeks. Correct figures might show less than \$2,500,000.

As to the product of the Klondike mines for the past year, Capt. Healy, manager of the North American Transportation and Mining Company, estimates that the output of gold from winter drift mining was about \$2,000,000, and that from summer sluicing, between \$500,000 and \$700,000. As to the probable yield for the coming winter and summer, the estimates depend upon the number of men that will be employed. If wages shall not exceed \$1 an

hour and no rich discoveries draw many men away, Edgar Mizner, the secretary of the Mine Owners' Association, says the yield should reach \$11,000,000 from these sources: Eldorado, \$4,000,000; Bonanza, \$4,000,000; Hunker, \$1,500,000; small creeks and branches of these and side hill claims, \$500,000, and from other creeks in the district, \$1,000,000. Captain Healy says that with wages at \$15 a day the yield may not exceed \$5,000,000, for in that case the richest mines would make small outputs, while the poorer mines, being worked on lays, would not be affected.

President McKinley's Message.

The opening of the United States Congress took place on Monday, December 6. President McKinley's message contains nothing of a startling character. The principal topics discussed are the Tariff, the Currency question, Cuba, Hawaiian Annexation, the Sealing question, the Navy and its Docks, Alaska and the Yukon. There are allusions also to the Nicaragua Canal, Reciprocity negotiations, the Bimetallic Commission and International Arbitration. The Cuban question and the present situation as between Spain and her colony are discussed at considerable length. Respecting the United States' attitude toward Cuba, the President dismisses the idea of forcible annexation as involving criminal aggression, and therefore not to be thought of. Of the untried measures, he says: there remain only recognition of the insurgents as belligerents, recognition of the independence of Spain, neutral intervention to end the war by imposing a rational compromise between the contestants and intervention in favor of one or the other party. The President argues against present recognition of the insurgents, proposes to give Spain time to work out, if possible, her present scheme of pacification, and concludes that "the near future will demonstrate whether the indispensable condition of a righteous peace just alike to the Cubans and to Spain, as well as equitable to all our interests so intimately involved in the welfare of Cuba, is likely to be attained. If not, the exigency of further and other action by the United States will remain to be taken. When the time comes that action will be determined in the line of indisputable right and duty. It will be faced without misgiving or hesitancy." The President strongly favors the annexation of Hawaii and commends to the consideration of Congress the treaty on that subject submitted to the Senate last June. The subject of Reciprocity is discussed in a brief and general way, and it is announced that negotiations on the subject are in progress with several countries through Hon. John A. Kasson, who has been appointed a special commissioner in that matter. In reference to the tedious Seal question the president recites the well-known facts as to negotiations between his government and those of other countries. Mr. McKinley re-endorses the principle of international arbitration and says that treaties embodying the principle, "without in any way imperiling our own interests or our honor," will have his constant encouragement.

* Across the Sub-Arctic of Canada.

Under the above title Mr. Tyrrell tells the story of a journey of 3,200 miles through the northern wilds of Canada, undertaken in the spring of 1893 by himself and his brother, Mr. J. Burr Tyrrell, of the Canadian Geological Survey. It was at the instance of the Geological Survey department of the Dominion Government that the journey was undertaken, for the purpose of exploring a great tract of country more than two hundred thousand square miles in extent, lying north of the 59th parallel of latitude, between Lake Athabaska, Great Slave Lake and Hudson Bay,—a great and mysterious region, popularly known (or rather unknown) as the Barren Lands. The trip occupied between seven and eight months. The Messrs. Tyrrell left Toronto for Edmonton, their point of departure for their northern

journey, on May 16, 1893, and it was the evening of January 1, 1894, when their dog-team trotted up the streets of West Selkirk—a town on the C. P. Railway—on their return trip from Hudson Bay. The great journey, which was made by canoe, snow-shoe and dogsled, afforded an abundance of exciting incident, of which the author has made good use. His graphic narrative enables the reader to follow the fortunes of the expedition almost day by day through the whole course of its eventful, and sometimes perilous trip. Besides the Messrs. Tyrrell, the party consisted of six men, three of whom were Iroquois Indians from Caughnawaga, Quebec, and the others western half-breeds. They proved to be men well fitted for the arduous and difficult work required of them. The Iroquois brothers—especially the elder of them, named Pierre—were expert canoe-men, and they had abundant opportunity to display their skill and courage in shooting the numerous rapids encountered on their course from Athabaska Landing (some two days journey north of Edmonton) to Hudson Bay. Their course was first by the Athabaska River and then by the Telzoa. Both these streams run through numerous lakes, some small and some of considerable size. Often the water was shallow and rapids had to be shot or avoided by a portage. Early in their trip the explorers met the Hudson Bay Company's steamers plying on the Athabaska. Farther north they found the Chippewyan Indians, and leaving these behind, they entered a lonely and uninhabited land which probably no white man had ever before traversed; and then, as they approached the sea, they found the Eskimos. None were unfriendly, and the Eskimos, whom the Chippewyans had represented as being fierce and inclined to cannibalism, treated the travellers with the greatest kindness. In their journey northward there were many difficulties to be faced. There was the torment of flies and mosquitoes, the perilous shooting of rapids, the toilsome portaging around rapids quite unavigable and the delay and discomfort from great storms of wind and rain. These, with the absence of firewood and sometimes scarcity of food, made up conditions which sufficiently tried the mettle of the men and showed that they were not to be conquered by trifles. It was, however, after they had reached the sea, having passed through Chesterfield Inlet into Hudson Bay, that their most serious trouble began. It was now the 13th of September and the Arctic winter was at hand. It was 500 miles to Fort Churchill, the first objective point on their homeward journey, and these 500 miles were to be made by coasting the Bay in their canoes. This they could easily do if the weather held fine. For a few days they were favored. Then terrible storms came, during which they could only wait. Much time was thus consumed and progress was slow and difficult. Game was scarce and the food supply failed. The frost became severe, thick ice formed along the shore and made further progress by the canoes both difficult and dangerous. Still, with hollow cheeks and enfeebled strength, they struggled on, paddling when they could by day and camping on the shore by night. At last there came one terrible night, the 14th of October, when, by reason of the ice, they could not land. The long dark night was spent in the canoes amid great peril and extreme misery. The canoes were leaking badly, and for seventeen hours Mr. J. B. Tyrrell had to sit or lie in the icy water. When they were able at last to effect a landing, he was in a perishing condition and one man's feet were badly frozen. They judged they could not now be more than 50 miles from Fort Churchill, but further progress in the canoes was impossible and most of the party were in no condition to walk. Two of the strongest were sent out to find the Fort and bring help, while the rest, having camped, waited for their return. After a tramp of 30 miles, the two men reached Fort Churchill, and the next day returned with dog-teams and help, and the following day all the party safely reached the Fort. Here they found hospitality, and, with the exception of the man whose feet were badly frozen, soon recovered health and strength. At Fort Churchill they remained until November 6, when, with the aid of a dog-team and a guide, they set out on their long southward journey, by snow-shoe and dog-team, to Selkirk, where, as we have seen, they arrived on New Year's day. The southward journey was by way of York Factory, the Oxford House and the Norway House—Hudson Bay Company stations—and, though involving much labor and hardship, was comparatively uneventful. The cold was intense, but the travellers probably suffered less from that cause than they had from the black flies and mosquitoes on their northern journey. Two very interesting chapters of the book are occupied with accounts of the Eskimos, their general character, mode of living, etc. An appendix of twenty pages gives the reader a classified list of the plants found by Mr. Tyrrell, and their locality. The book affords a great deal of interesting information concerning a great region of Canada, of which little has hitherto been known, and it affords abundant entertainment. The reindeer, the musk-ox and the polar bear come into the narrative. The reindeer were found sometimes in great numbers, and the bear afforded one of the party some exciting and perilous sport. Numerous fine illustrations adorn the pages of the book. The mechanical part is a credit to the publisher. The volume is altogether of a wholesome character and very suitable as a Christmas or birthday present for a young man or boy.

* By J. W. Tyrrell, C. E., D. L. S., Toronto: William Briggs