

THE GOLD FIELDS.

The gold fields of Alaska, placer and lode, are extensive. The Yukon placers are as rich as any in the known world, while the quartz deposits are of unknown extent. The United States Geological Survey expeditions have traced the lead for 500 miles. The Treadwell Mill, near Juneau, is located in a vast region interlaced with low-grade free-milling quartz and veins containing rich values in gold. There are nine other smaller mills along the coast and development has only begun. The placers of the Yukon will doubtless repeat the history of California and Australia, and add largely to the world's volume of yellow metal.

Gold was discovered in the quartz district of which Juneau is the center, by Richard Harris and Joseph Juneau, in 1880. They organized the Harris Mining District, and staked off a townsite which they called Harrisburg. They returned to Sitka with \$14,000 in gold and a rush followed. In 1881 the town was renamed Rockwell, in honor of a United States naval lieutenant, but next year the miners voted to call it Juneau. The discovery of placer and quartz on Douglas Island was made in 1881, and several thousand dollars taken out each season until 1884, when the chief claims were bought by John Treadwell, the beginning of the famous mines from which enough ore has been taken to pay the original cost of the country. The mill now runs 240 stamps, the largest battery in the world, and the ore in sight cannot be exhausted in 100 years at the present capacity of 1,500 tons a day, yielding a net profit of \$1.70 a ton, the cost of milling per ton being \$1.25. The mill never stops except for repairs. The Mexico Mill near by runs 120 stamps. There are eight other gold stamp mills along the coast.

The existence of gold has been known for several years in the Yukon district, and mines have been working with varying success along Birch, Miller, American and other streams south of Circle City. One claim on Miller Creek has yielded over \$100,000. Mining methods are very primitive and the work is carried on under difficulties. The ground is frozen and the progress is slow. The discoveries on the Klondike were so rich that miners worked during the winter by building wood fires and melting the frozen earth, and in that way reached bed rock and made tunnels through the pay streaks. Blasting will do no good, the charge not cracking off, but blowing out of the hole. The gravel is taken out as it melts and piled up till spring, when the water comes and it is panned or cradled, and only the coarse grains and nuggets are secured, the fine gold escaping. By this laborious method fortunes were taken out. It is proposed now to introduce oil blowers after the style of those used in putting down asphalt pavements, which make intense heat and will vastly facilitate the labor. Improved machinery of every kind will no doubt be taken into the country next season.

Wm. Ogilvie, the well-known Dominion Surveyor and Boundary Commissioner, says in a report to his government that the Klondike region alone will yield hundreds of millions of dollars, to judge from present outlook. Claims have only been worked in spots over a large territory, and if the pay dirt continues as rich throughout as it does where work has been done, and there is no reason why it should not, Mr. Ogilvie's assertion will be verified. A single pan of gravel has yielded as high as \$500, and four men took out of a space 28 feet square \$90,000 in ten days. Before the boats left Dawson City in the spring of 1897 tons of gold lay unguarded in cabins of the miners. It is estimated that at least \$8,000,000 went out in sums of \$5,000 to \$100,000 belonging to men who had wrested these fortunes from the frozen ground during the preceding winter. The mines are not on the Klondike proper, but on Bonanza, Hunker, Bear and other small tributaries. Bonanza empties into the Klondike about a mile from its mouth. Hunker Creek is 14 miles above, and Eldorado is a branch of Bonanza. It was on Gold Bottom Creek, a branch of Hunker, that the first discovery was made. It must not be imagined that the Klondike includes all or even a considerable part of an immense country. As a stream it was not of sufficient importance to secure a place on the early maps.

John Muir, for whom the great glacier is named, and whose knowledge of that country is extensive, is of the opinion that the gold yield of Alaska will exceed the output of California, a state that has already produced an amount in excess of \$500,000,000.

Gen. W. W. Duffield, Chief of the United States Geodetic Survey, reports that enormous deposits of quartz exist and can be easily reached in the future, and his belief is that stamp mills in the future will find a profitable employment at many points.

"On Annette Island, in the Archipelago, the richest gold mother lodes in the world. At present the reservation occupied by Indians under the commissionary, Henry Duncan." The law setting aside the reservation was passed March 3, 1891, and is as follows:

"That until otherwise provided by law, the body of land known as Annette Island, situated in Alexander Archipelago, in Southeastern Alaska, be and the same is hereby set aside for the use of the Metlakatla Indians and those people who have recently emigrated from British Columbia, and other Alaskan natives as may join them, to be held and used under such rules and regulations and subject to such restrictions from time to time by the Secretary of the Interior."

Unless these alien Indians, who have no title to the soil, are accorded different or better treatment than that accorded by American Indians, with whom we have treated the soil, the mineral land upon Annette Island, from that which is used by the Indians for fishing purposes, and then opened to exploration and mining under the mineral laws of the United States. This has formerly been done in cases where valuable minerals were located on lands in Indian reservations, even where reserved by treaty, the Indians being the original owners of the soil, and there can be no doubt that this will be done on Annette Island. A movement is now under way to open it up.

YUKON SETTLEMENTS

Mining operations have been carried on in the Yukon for a dozen years. In 1894 about 300 men were entered; in 1896, over 1,000. In 1897 it is probable that 5,000 went in to seek riches, while several reached the pass entrances too late to get to the settlements on the Yukon are Forty-Mile, Circle City, Dawson City and Weare. Circle City was founded in 1894 and is the distributing point for a large number of miners, Miller, Birch, American and other gold-bearing streams. It is also a trading post at Fort Selkirk. Dawson City is the headquarters of the Klondike, and was founded in September, 1896, and named in honor of a well-known explorer. It is close to Fort Reliance, seen on many of the mountains. It was headquarters for fur traders and trappers who wandered over the rich placer grounds without finding any. Fort Cudahy is named for J. C. Cudahy, of the firm of Cudahy Bros., the Chicago meat packer. It is in the North American Transportation and Trading Company has two boats on the Yukon and will be in service next season. The Alaska Commercial Company has two boats running from St. Michael up the Yukon to Weare, named after Porteus B. Weare, a leader of the Chicago and one of the North American Transportation and Trading Company, is located on the Yukon at Tanana River, the latter draining a large deposit of placer and quartz deposits. Circle City and Weare are on the American side of the line, while the others are on the Yukon side. Buildings in all the places are of logs and brush. Weare is talked of as the capital of the proposed Yukon Territory, which is to include the Yukon country.

HOW TO REACH THE YUKON

SEATTLE is the gateway to Alaska. It is the only Alaskan port than San Francisco. It is nearer to the Great Northern, than any other city. It is prepared, from long experience, to furnish outfit for prospectors.

To reach Seattle, take the trains of the Great Northern from St. Paul, Minneapolis or Duluth, which have Depots with lines from the East and South.

Steamers will leave Seattle daily for Juneau, Dyea; about twice a week for St. Michael and Wrangell. There are five known passes from the south to the interior, viz.: Up Stikine River from Taku Inlet from Juneau; over Chilkoot Pass from Skagway; over White Pass from Skagway; over Chilkoot Pass from Skagway; over Chilkoot Pass from Skagway.