

day, he dropped the bagful of nuggets for them to pass around, finger, and stare at. He went off down to the barn and hid.

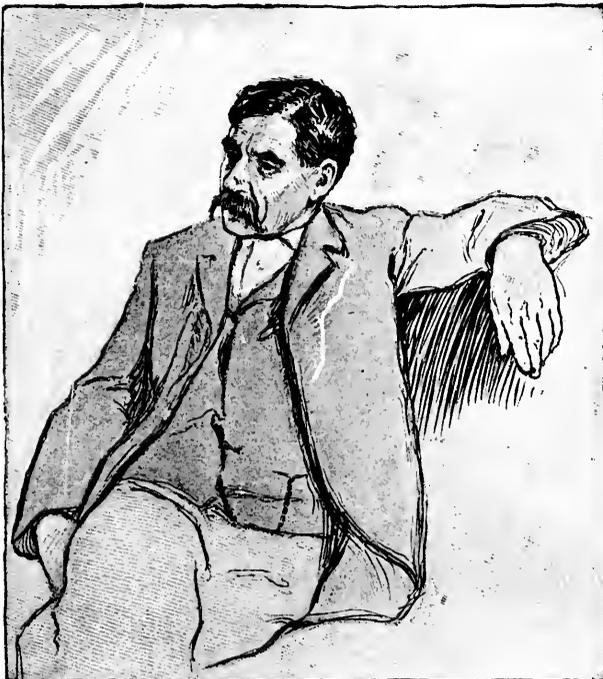
He is about forty-five years old. Twenty-five years ago he started away from the woods of Lake Champlain, going to Colorado, Wyoming, Dakota, chasing each rumor of gold, and working—for nothing. His old friend, Mr. Lobdell, "staked him" when he failed, and, at last, some fifteen years ago, he went into Alaska, trading with the Indians, prospecting, milling, building, moving on, working hard all the time. The gold was there. Everybody knew it was somewhere near, that they were walking over it, and some men were finding it. I was in Alaska myself in 1888, and I met miners who were bringing out gold year after year. But Joe Ladue had to stay there till he could dig it out, risking what others met—failure and death. Now he has the gold. What of it? Everybody wished to know how much he got.

"Enough," he told them, dryly. And he sighed as he saw the listeners' eyes sparkle with sordid imaginings. He seemed to covet, as they did the gold, their desire for it.

Why was he going back in the spring, then?

"I have to," he answered. "I've got so many interests to look after. There's the sawmill and the logging and Dawson and a couple of claims staked out that have to be worked. You've got to attend to things, you know." So it was not a mere matter of picking up a fortune and coming back to spend and enjoy it.

The whole interview was in the tone of this answer, simple, plain, colorless, almost lifeless. His description of an outfit, his guide to the route, a remark about the shooting of Miles Cañon, the proper way to stake out and work a claim, his view of miners' meetings—all were given in even mood. Yet it was not indifference or bored patience. He was painstaking in his offerings of facts not asked for, which he thought should be included in an ac-



JOE LADUE, THE PIONEER OF ALASKA AND FOUNDER OF DAWSON.

count of the Klondike. His interest was altogether in the men who might be going there, and what he put into the article was framed for actual use. The information which would help no one directly he gave because it was asked for, but briefly, and with a side glance at the trail of the gold-seekers. Some of the crossings of our purposes were worth while. Once, for instance, when he was making his list of the equipment of a Yukon miner on the way in, I pointed out to him that he had forgotten his "gun," and I meant that he had omitted to mention the revolver which plays such a conspicuous part in the life of most mining camps.

"You don't need a gun," he answered. "There's no game to speak of."

"But you surely take a revolver."

"No use; it only adds weight to the pack."

"What do you have, then—knives?"

"Yes, you must have knives and forks and spoons, of course."

When I made my meaning clear, Mr. Ladue gave an interesting glimpse of the order maintained by the miners of the Yukon in their lawless communities, but he was unable to explain it. Most of the men were good fellows, he said. Were