

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