

packing is thirty cents a pound to No. 1 El Dorado, about fifteen miles from Dawson.

And here let me make a confession: I, with others, rode a horse. No one can imagine what a sensation this created along the creek. No one had ever indulged in such extravagance before. Though a man should wash out twenty thousand dollars in a day, he would be content to walk. But I rode at thirty cents per pound to El Dorado, and thirty cents to return, or 186 pounds for \$111.60. They did not, however, put me on the scales like a sack of gold-dust. Still, it was cheap, according to an Irishman coming over the summit, who remarked that he had had his goods packed over by Indians. "An' I got it chape," said he. "How much did you pay?" some one inquired. "I don't know," said he. "Then how do you know it was cheap?" "Oh, anything would be chape over that place!" he replied.

The famous Bonanza Creek and the more famous El Dorado Creek are very like ordinary, every-day creeks in appearance—a little less civilized, perhaps, than creeks to be met with in the East. There are men living in Alaska to-day who have hunted moose over these creeks dozens of times; but, as the old miners say, there were no surface indications to lead any one to suppose that gold might be found in them, so hundreds of miners passed by in their boats, going to Forty Mile and Circle City. The finding of such gold is always an accident, and the old hands are usually the last to realize the truth. "Stick George" Cormack and his squaw's relatives camped on the creek for dinner one day, and somehow got to digging, and washed out some gold. He went to Forty Mile and made claim for discovery, and soon the news spread like wild-fire.

Keeping the trail which leads along the hillside, you soon come upon the mines. Cabins are scattered here and there; and in trying to discover how far you have gone you call out, "What number is that?" "Fifty-two below," is the reply. You puzzle a little at first over this, and are informed that the claims are numbered either above or below the point called "Discovery," where gold was first found. But you soon learn to talk of "twenty above" and "fifty below" like an old-timer.

The claims succeed one another on Bonanza Creek at the rate of about ten claims to the mile, beginning somewhere in the nineties below, on Bonanza, and reaching up to Discovery, and then on for miles above. The numbers far below are not considered of

much account, and it is only the claims between the forties "below" and the forties "above" that are supposed to contain great wealth. On El Dorado Creek, which empties into Bonanza, there was no discovery claim, and the miners began at the mouth and staked straight up. Claims are staked, measured, and registered, the length allowed each claimant being five hundred feet along the bed of the stream. It is easy enough to settle the base and top lines of a claim, and not difficult to measure out the five hundred feet; but the side lines are troublesome. The side limits of a placer or creek claim begin where the side of a hill or rim rock leaves off. It is the edge of the hill or the beginning of the creek, or *vice versa*. This matter becomes important when a neighbor has a bench claim up the hill, his line beginning where the creek claim leaves off. The gold commissioner will have several knotty points between the bench claims and the creek claims to decide this year.

Sluicing for gold, the only method used, requires a good supply of water with a sufficient head or fall and conveniently near to the spot where the arduous and expensive preliminary work is done. The miner is at the mercy of the season. If the water comes down in sufficient quantities, he wins; but if, for some reason, the elements withhold the needed water, he loses the fruits of his winter labor.

The sluice-boxes are made of boards, machine or whip sawed, and roughly nailed up into troughs or boxes, and fitted together like stovepipes. Cleats are nailed into the last boxes, called "rifles," or, in some instances, shallow auger-holes are bored into the bottom boards. The boxes are then set up in line on a gentle slope, and the pay-dirt is shoveled in at the top, and a stream of water, controlled by a dam, sluices over the dirt and gold. The weight of gold is so great that it falls, and the dirt and useless gravel washes off, the gold being caught upon the cleats or in the holes scattered about. In the last boxes quicksilver is put in to catch the very fine gold. When the gold is taken from the boxes it is called a "clean-up."

On the day I was there (August 17), at No. 30 El Dorado twenty thousand dollars was "cleaned up" in twenty-four hours, with only one man shoveling in the dirt. Such wonderful results may mean, however, months of expensive work; but "when it comes, it comes quick," as the saying is among the miners.

In the diagrams (see pages 682 and 683) I