



swamp to live in; gold-dust and nuggets in profusion, and yet the negroes in the cabins of a Southern plantation live better than the richest man in the country. Our arrival at Dawson was at a very critical time. We had brought with us nearly four hundred tons of provisions, and this fact served to allay the anxious fears of many who were becoming panic-stricken at the idea that there would be a scarcity of food during the winter. No news had come to us by way of the ocean of later date than June 10, but newspapers had been received over the summit at Dawson of date as late as July 26; and so the report that crowds were swarming into the gold-fields had reached them, but was news to us. The town was thoroughly scared, and was over-run with men who had come down from the diggings, often twenty and twenty-five miles, to make sure of their outfits for the winter; and so determined were they to procure them that they sat themselves down calmly in line, like men waiting to buy seats at a first-night performance, determined to wait until the goods were put up and set aside in their names. An outfit for a miner means everything that he uses during the winter, and this, being reduced to its lowest terms, means bacon and beans. There are other things, of course, in tins and in gunnysacks,—flour, sugar, salt, pickles, dried fruits, desiccated potatoes,—to suit the taste; but the work is done, and the gold is found and cleaned up, and miles and miles of the wilderness conquered, and cold weather and wintry winds withstood, on bacon and beans. It is the easiest food to pack, the quickest to prepare, and the most lasting and sustaining. The miner usually reckons on getting his outfit in November, because he can carry on a sledge, after the snow has set in, four times as much as he can pack on his back, and if he is fortunate enough to have dogs he can draw much more.

From Dawson the trail to the mines leads over a steep hill to the creek made so famous by its tributaries; for there is not a single mine on the principal stream, which in the miners' slang is called Klondike. And yet this stream does in reality bear a characteristic name given it by the Indians, which is utterly murdered by this pronunciation, now so common.

The Indians name the creeks throughout the country from some characteristic in connection with the stream itself; and as this one is so swift that in order to set their salmon-traps or -nets they were obliged to use a hammer to drive the stakes to anchor them,

the creek was named by them Hammer Creek, or, in their language, phonetically, *Troan-Dik*. The spelling Klondike means absolutely nothing, but has been accepted, so I learn, by the Board of Geographical Names of the United States. On going down the hill you come to the Klondike; and here there are two ferries, run by means of wire cable, and worked by hand. You are carried across this swift stream, and on the opposite bank you come to a little town formed about the ferry. You pay the ferryman, as you pay up there for everything you get, in gold-dust. Neither coin nor currency is known, but in all dealings the miner's pocket-book is his sack of buckskin containing the dust. This is handed over, scales are produced, and the dust to the required amount weighed out. Then the sack is tied up and handed back to the owner. Some strange things happen in the weighing of the dust. One man told me that he carefully weighed out his dust before starting out on a tour, and found he had sixty dollars. On his return, after purchasing eleven dollars' worth of various things, he was two dollars and forty cents short.

Gold-dust, with iron, quartz, or sand mixed in small proportion, passes at seventeen dollars for the ounce. A friend of mine once handed over his sack to pay for his breakfast at the Dawson restaurant, and the young woman in charge emptied some of his dust into the blower, as the receptacle on the scales is called, intending to weigh it, but she spilled it on the sawdust floor. «How unfortunate!» she said; then she deliberately weighed out the price of the meal from his sack a second time! On the next day the proprietor of the restaurant paid to the victim of this carelessness fifteen dollars in dust, assuring him that she had washed out the sawdust about the scales, and found this amount. The boot-blacks at Dawson make upward of two dollars every morning by washing out the sawdust from under the weighing-scales. In some places the salesman turns his back on you when he weighs out the price of anything, leaving you to guess how much he takes. But everything «goes» on the Yukon.

Across the ferry one encounters a notorious Alaska product known as «sour-dough» beer. I do not know how or of what they make it, but I have no wish to come across it again.

The trail, as it was called, was a miserable excuse for a path, leading over rough hummocks, up hills and over bogs, through sticky, oozy muck, by brambles and bushes, across creeks and corduroy paths. The charge for