

tion, it must always have the cache, or storehouse, propped upon posts to keep the supplies out of reach of the dogs; for these dogs can bite through a tin can and almost climb a greased pole in search of food. The cache should have a place on the coat of arms of Alaska; it is universal. As you push up along this never-ending river, and pass Fort Yukon, you come to a stretch of over two hundred miles where the river spreads out over the surrounding flat country for twenty-five miles: four feet draft to a vessel is perilous; anything over that is fatal. In place of a river there is a lake of oozy mud and shifting sand. Innumerable islands surround you on all sides, cutting the water here and there into blind sloughs; the swift current turns and eddies about, the whole forming a perfect maze. The Indian pilots are at fault, and no channel has been found that «handles the water,» as the river-men express it; but another year may lead to the discovery of a passage sufficiently safe to do away with this obstruction and furnish a channel to the deeper river beyond. There we spent seven weary days, and not until the draft of barge and steamer was reduced to about three feet did we get away. The water fell after we passed on, and since our time reports show that steamer after steamer got this far, only to stop, fast bound, unable to push over the mud, and utterly powerless to carry on its precious freight to the hungry souls beyond. On account of low water, the *Hamilton* unloaded her cargo at Fort Yukon and returned to St. Michael. Afterward the water rose sufficiently to allow the *Weare* and the *Bella* to get through to Dawson, according to advices from there dated October 15.

The first river bearing gold encountered on the way up the Yukon is the Kuikuk. This stream has been prospected for gold five hundred miles to the forks, and also along the forks for a short distance. As much as one hundred dollars a day has been made on the bars of the river by using a rocker, a hand-washer about the size of an ordinary cradle. The gold found was coarse gold, indicating that there must be creeks near by

in which gold in large quantities might be found, for the gold found in rivers is always very fine gold. Very little prospecting has been done on this river so far, and nothing whatever was done until within the last three years. Then the steamer *New Racket*, which was brought into the country originally by the Schiefelins, who founded Tombstone, Arizona, carried a party of miners up to the



DRAWN BY C. M. RELYEA.

JACK McQUESTEN'S STORE AT CIRCLE CITY.

forks. This year two men named Holly and Folger are in there, and several of the miners who have been in that country expect to hear of rich strikes. The Kuikuk River is shallow, with low water at its mouth, and for a long distance up the river is very similar to the Yukon and the Tanana. For the first hundred miles the river has low, swampy flats; but above and beyond this the mountains begin to approach the water, and gradually the banks grow more and more precipitous, and approach nearer and nearer to the river's edge, until at length you pass up a succession of cañons. This river is navigable for