

THE KLONDIKE AND THE ROAD TO IT DESCRIBED.

In the November number of the *Strand Magazine* is a most interesting description of a visit to Alaska, paid last summer by a well-known English traveller, Mr. Harry DeWindt, who has been interviewed by the magazine.

Mr. De Windt left New York in May, 1890, his preparations having taken quite a year. He travelled to Montreal by rail, and from there to Vancouver by the C.P.R. The trip from Vancouver to Victoria, B.C., was made in a little steamer, and then there was a two days' voyage to Juneau, the metropolis of Alaska, which contains 3,000 people, and consists of wooden houses. Its streets are generally knee-deep in mud during the summer, on account of the incessant rainfall. A busy place, with two hotels. Good shops (especially fur shops); a theatre, and electric light everywhere. Miners fit out here for the Yukon region, and houses are springing up everywhere to accommodate them.

"When you leave Juneau," Mr. De Windt said, "there is no more food for 800 miles, and gold won't buy it. Why, I heard of miners stretched on the ground dying of starvation in the camps, with a sack of gold-dust for their pillow! It is madness to think of starting, say, from England, with less than £300 capital. You've got to get yourself and perhaps half a ton of stores over thousands of miles of awful country—snow mountains, stormy lakes, and raging rapids.

"Dyea, which is 100 miles from Juneau, and which he reached in June by steam launch, consists of a rude log store and a movable town of tents, occupied by diggers bound for the gold fields.

"Things won't be quite so bad in the spring of '98," remarked Mr. De Windt, "for then the recently-discovered White Pass will be open. Travelling by the White Pass route, you go to Skagway Bay, at the head of the Lynn Canal. The total distance by this route from Victoria, B.C., to the Klondike river is 1,400 miles, as against 4,000 miles by the sea route to St. Michael's. Besides, the latter is only available for three months of the year, while the White Pass is open for nine months. However, all those who have already made their fortunes on the Klondike, or are still making them, have travelled over the Chilcoot, as I did."

The Chilcoot Pass is 4,000 feet high, and difficult, dangerous, climbing it is. "I have roughed it" says the English traveller, "in Siberia and in Chinese Tartary, but I can safely describe that climb over the Chilcoot as the severest physical experience of my life." * * * The head of Lake Linderman, the first of a chain of five lakes, is about nine miles from the summit of the pass. The distance across Lake Linderman is five and a half miles. Next comes Lake Bennett, 26½ miles long. The journey down the lakes occupied ten days, four of which were passed on Lake Bennett. All these Alaskan lakes are dangerous, by reason of the sudden storms that spring up. In winter, Lake Bennett is crossed on sleighs. The scenery is wild and beautiful, the shores being fringed with well-timbered slopes, sheltering grey wolves and black, brown, and grizzly bears. * * *

Leaving the lakes on June 26th, we entered the Lewes River, and next day reached the Grand Canon Rapid, which is nearly a mile long, and dashes through perpendicular walls of rock from 50 ft. to 100 ft. high. The fall is 100 ft. wide, and so swift that the stream is 4 ft. higher in the centre than at the sides!

Next we dashed down a perfect mill-race for six miles to the White Horse Rapids—a place so fatal as to have received the name of the 'Miner's Grave.' Not a day passed that we did not see a cairn, or a rude wooden cross, marking the last resting place of some drowned pilgrim to the land of gold. At Fort Selkirk, the Lewes River down which we journeyed from the lakes unites with the Pelly. On the twenty-fifth day out from Juneau we reached Forty-Mile City, one of two settlements on the Yukon that have sprung into existence since the gold rush;

and there we beached for the last time the tiny craft that carried us safely for over 600 miles."

Forty Mile City is the central point of the new El-Dorado. It is in British territory. It was in Forty Mile Creek that the first "coarse" gold was found. "Any visions of civilized comforts inspired by the name," said Mr. De Windt, "were rudely dispelled. Forty Mile is (or was, a few months ago) a collection of eighty or ninety dismal log huts, scattered about anyhow. Though bread is often scarce, whiskey is never lacking, and yet the place is a miracle of law and order. A detachment of the Canadian Mounted Police, under Inspector Constantine, have their barracks here, but could well be dispensed with.

"The spring of '98 will see the great rush," said Mr. De Windt, "but there's plenty of room. A hundred thousand miners might go prospecting in the Yukon Valley and be lost to one another. My impression is that there are streams richer even than the Klondike—the Pelly, the Lewes, the Porcupine, the Big Salmon, the Tanana, the White, the Hootalinqua, and the Stewart Rivers, for example—especially the last-named. All are navigable tributaries of the Yukon."

"Thus there is the appalling journey, the awful cold of winter, the terrible mosquitoes in summer, and a scarcity of decent food at all times. Transportation companies are being formed, however, and doubtless things will be different next spring, when, among other things, the British Yukon Co. will place twenty stern-wheel steamers on the great river, and probably construct a narrow-gauge railway over the White Pass. But that there will be much suffering among the gold-seekers, no one doubts.

Mr. De Windt has been approached whilst in London by all classes, seeking information about the Yukon diggings. "A titled lady wanted to set up a store at Forty Mile; and an aged clergyman said he'd like to send his sons out if there was a railway and a postoffice nice and handy in the district. Letters poured in upon me at the rate of seventy a day, and at length I protested against it."

Circle City (so-called from being within the Arctic Circle), was Mr. De Windt's next stopping place. "Last year," remarked Mr. De Windt, "Circle City contained 1,100 inhabitants, but that population might be doubled in a week. This being American territory 'Stars and Stripes' of various sizes wave from many of the dingy camp dwellings."

"As to the Klondike 'rush' next spring," he said, in conclusion, "there is no doubt it will alter the face of the entire region, the climate notwithstanding. Railways and steamships, and telegraphs will soon be established. Fortunes will be made, and the unlucky forced to the wall. Sensational reports may be expected daily, for the place is a real Tom Tiddler's ground, honeycombed by rivers and creeks with sands of gold. There is plenty of room for all between the Klondike and the Cassiar. Let the gold seekers take their time and make prudent preparations." Mr. De Windt, who has travelled to Siberia, is an agent of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, was in Montreal last week, en route to the United States, where he proposes to undertake a lecturing tour.

BUSINESS AND ADVERTISING.

The action of an association of business men in New York in protesting against false advertisements in the papers simply to attract attention is another evidence of the value of newspaper advertising, and a hopeful indication of the tendency toward truthful representation. Advertisers who have commodities to dispose of are learning that a statement of the facts and honest representations of their goods are a better paying investment than statements that cannot be substantiated. This fact has long been recognized by experts, few of whom will be found to advocate exaggeration.—*Troy Press*.

CONSUMPTION OF WINE.

The consumption of wine in the United States does not increase in the same ratio as the population. In England, on the contrary, close upon a million more gallons of wine were consumed in 1890 than in 1895. Of this total quantity, 463,000 gallons was French, red and white, 100,000 Portuguese, 100,000 Spanish, and 200,000 from other countries. Sherry shows a deficiency of 100,000 gallons consumption, as compared with previous years, although the quality is better and the price less than formerly. The use of brandy is largely on the increase. This is attributed to the skill now employed in blending the various brands. This manipulation has driven out of the market almost all the low-priced Cognac brandies formerly imported from Charente. The decline in wine-drinking in the United States is due to excessive duties imposed upon foreign products, the crude quality of California wine, and the enormous consumption of beer, which may now be called the national beverage of this country. The cost of the better grades of whiskey will always restrict their use. The French claim that newly-distilled liquors are safer to drink than those ripened by age.—*N.Y. Sun*.

THE DEPARTMENT CLERK.

The following story of the habits of department clerks is from the *New Orleans Times-Democrat*. We are not aware that this correspondent has ever been in Ottawa, but it is by no means impossible that he might find points of resemblance in the Ottawa Government clerks to his Washington cousin:

"Life in the departments at Washington," said a Government clerk at home on his vacation, "despite the fever, is certainly a delightful sort of thing if you have a good position. The hours are easy, 9 to 4 o'clock, and you are allowed thirty days' annual and thirty days' sick leave. Or leave you can take by the hour, day, or in a lump. Of course, you are not expected to take the sick leave unless you are sick, but then it is much easier to be sick under the Government than in a commercial house. Nobody asks any unpleasant questions. You put in a slip; that is the end of the matter. I know a chief of a division in the patent office who regularly every year goes off to Nova Scotia. After he has used his thirty days' annual leave he gets a physician's certificate to cover his sick leave. The physician states that it is necessary for his patient's health that he stay in Nova Scotia. Such is life. Of course there are those who are scrupulous even about Government sick leave, but they are too rare to mention long. Two months in the departments modify most consciences in this respect. But this little matter aside, you have exceptional facilities to study human nature."

—The Stanstead and Sherbrooke Mutual Fire Insurance Company reports the losses paid during the year amounted to \$34,165, as follows: Agricultural class, \$15,268.62, and commercial class, \$18,796.61.

—At the recent cinchona auction in Amsterdam, the bark sold at an advance of 45 per cent. The quantity of quinine represented by the bark sold was 19,571 kilos, the quantities being secured by the principal buyers being: American and English manufacturers, 3,439 kilos; Auerbach, 3,701 kilos; Brunswick, 2,752 kilos; Mannheim and Amsterdam 5,391 kilos; Frankfort-on-Main and Stuttgart, 1,633 kilos; various other buyers, 2,835 kilos.

—"Have you any good sweet cider?" asked Mr. Franktown of his grocer. "Yes," replied the man of tea and sugar. "I have some genuine anarchistic cider." "Anarchistic. It is likely to make trouble, isn't it?" "I don't mean it in that sense. I call it anarchistic cider because it is guaranteed not to work!" —*Pittsburg Chronicle-Telegraph*.