

A CHINESE KLONDIKE.

The present rush to the Klondike gold fields revives interest in the diggings in the Sheltuga valley, whose reputed wealth caused many adventurers to plunge into the little-known regions of Manchuria. A German-Russian paper, the 'Tageblatt, Riga, relates how these gold fields were discovered, and why the world suddenly failed to hear any more about them. The Russian government, we are told, did not like the establishment of a "republic" which attracted Russian diggers. We take the following from our contemporary's account:

"In 1883 a Russian prospector discovered gold in the Sheltuga valley, in Northern Manchuria. He told an engineer named Lebedkin of his discovery, and the latter started with a party of workmen to exploit the rich mines. He was, however, an intemperate man, and died of alcoholism. The men, left to themselves, began to work the mines on their own account. The news of the wealth of Sheltuga soon was told in the countries watered by the Amur and in Transbaikalia, and thousands of men started for the new El Dorado. Among them were adventurers from all parts of the world—Americans, Germans, Frenchmen, Englishmen—altogether some 12,000 men gathered there in 1895, among them about 500 Chinese. Drunkenness, immorality, robbery, and murder reigned supreme. At last the diggers got tired of anarchy, and elected an energetic, honest, but very strict man as their head, forming a little republic for the purpose. The gold-bearing country was divided into five districts; for each the newly elected dictator appointed a chief. His laws were extremely draconic. Thus theft was punished by 500 blows with a cat-o'-nine-tails, studded with nails—hence the culprit died under the lash. Men caught importing lewd women received 400 blows with a cane. Two hundred blows were administered for disturbing the camp at night, 100 blows for drunkenness. Thirty men were hanged at the dictator's orders on the first day of his term, and for two weeks the cat-o'-nine tails never rested. After that the camp was as orderly as a Sunday-school picnic. All those who felt that a community where order is maintained did not suit them, left for pastures new, and there was every hope that the little republic would prosper. But the Russian government did not like it. The Russian workmen ran away from the government mines, and the government did not receive its usual amount of precious metals. Russia, therefore, induced the Chinese government to break up the republic, which had been established without the knowledge and consent of the mandarins. A force of 2,000 horsemen and 1,000 infantry, with two guns, was sent to the Sheltuga valley. The diggers would not leave. A battle took place, and

the adventurers were killed almost to a man; only 27 escaped. Five hundred Chinese were left to garrison the place, and the Sheltuga gold is now dug by the almond-eyed subjects of the 'Son of Heaven' only."

NOTORIOUS BOOMERS.

The Victoria Colonist continues, *conte que conte*, to boom Klondike by exaggerating enormously its utmost possibilities of wealth-earning, whilst Seattle and Victoria correspondents vie with one another in telegraphing to New York and cabling to England quite fabulous estimates of the gold and bank drafts "brought home" by returning Yukoners, many of whom are possessed of little enough. A day of reckoning will surely come for these things. Apart from considerations of morality, it were surely better far for these boomers to stay their hands and pens, as already more than enough would-be Yukon gold seekers have determined to take chances and make for dreary Dawson. To cater for these men will tax the utmost resources of Victoria, Seattle and Vancouver, the people of which last city have, fortunately for their good repute, largely held their hands and restrained themselves from booming. So, too, has hitherto the press of the Terminal City.

SANDON INCORPORATED.

This busy Slocan mine center will this month elect its first city council and begin a career of local self-governing existence in lieu of dependence upon the decisions of men in office in distant Victoria. Distinctly a change for the better. The less any provincial administration has to do with the purely local development and improvement of an urban district the better. The best of provincial governments will find more than enough to do in controlling the broad general administration of the country and in promoting wise and necessary legislation.

THE LE ROI SMELTER.

The Le Roi's foreign smelter at Northport is now ready to receive ore, and will begin treating Rossland ores next week. The smelter has two furnaces, each of 150 tons capacity, but only one will be started at first.

AN AMALGAMATION.

It is stated that the Monte Cristo and Colonna mining companies are about to be amalgamated, a matter not difficult to arrange, as the mines adjoin each other and are under the same manager.

The number of those in Vancouver bound for the Yukon is being daily augmented. Several parties have lately reached the city and are making arrangements to go north in February.