

tions they observed believed they were near it at their turning point.

In the spring they prospected around the mouth of the Stewart river, but finding nothing to satisfy them, turned their boat down stream, and on the lower river found their associates from British Columbia, and also found McQuesten and his associate, Mayo, who had followed them down the Mackenzie and crossed to the Porcupine in September. Space forbids further reference to the antecedents of these two men than to say that they were Americans—McQuesten from the state of Maine—and that they had for several years previously been fur trading and trapping in the Athabasca and Peace river districts.

McQuesten entered the service of the Alaska Commercial Company, and in that company's employ came up the river on their steamer "Yukon" to where in August, 1874, he built Fort Reliance within sight of the golden Klondike, which he and his partner Harper called "Tron-deg"—very nearly the Indian name for it, "Tron-dik."

Harper prospected around the mouth of the Koyukuk for some time, and in 1875 joined McQuesten at Reliance and entered into a partnership with him which lasted fourteen years. Trading for many years at the doorstep of hidden millions of the now world-famous creeks over which they often hunted, but never looked for gold, or if they did, never dreamed of the buried treasures. Had they done so, we ask again, how differently might the history of the Yukon have been written.

In the fall of 1877 Harper crossed overland from Reliance to the head of Sixtymile river and found prospects which assured him of \$20 per day, but bad weather and unfavorable

conditions stopped his work, which he intended to resume next year, but was ordered by the company to the lower river, and he could not afford to disobey his orders.

When one reflects on how nearly this man a generation ago came to startling the world with the discovery of Koyukuk, Tan-an-ah (on which he prospected), Fortymile, Sixtymile, the Klondike, and Stewart and the White river copper deposits, how he lived to witness others completing the work he had begun, and how he died a comparatively young man (62) just as the Klondike was opening its golden gates to him, one cannot but wonder at the vagaries of fate.

His faith and confidence in the country were almost prophetic, and his correspondence with old acquaintances had much to do with its development.

We come now to a short statement of the golden discoveries in the Territory and adjoining region. In the early eighties a few miners made their way into the region by the old Dyea pass and prospecting along the main river reached the Stewart, where they worked several years with such success and in such numbers that Harper, in the summer of 1886, erected a trading post for their accommodation. Hitherto all the gold found in the country was fine and required mercury to save it, which is hardly to be wondered at when we consider that all the mining done was bar and surface digging. In 1886, however, coarse gold was discovered on Fortymile river about 24 miles up, and the following year the Stewart was abandoned and Harper & McQuesten started the town of Fortymile in September, 1887, and it remained the principal emporium on the Yukon river for ten years, and is by no means dead yet, though its mining region is much smaller,

and poor when compared with the Dawson district.

I call the attention of the croakers who predict the speedy extinction of Dawson to this fact:

In those early days from 200 to 400 miners came into the country every year, but as freighting accommodations were then very limited and not more than enough provisions for 75 to 100 men could be got up, only about that number would winter in the country, the others making their way out by poling up or going down to St. Michael, and from there to Seattle or San Francisco. The reports of those men kept alive the interest in the country which led to its gradual exploration and development. Rich finds were made on Birch creek in 1891 and Circle City sprang into existence; good dirt was found on Mission creek and its tributary (American creek) two or three years later, and about the same time the rich creeks (Miller and Glacier) on the head of Sixtymile were exploited. Many now began to turn their attention to other regions, and in 1897 Robert Henderson, from Prince Edward Island, down by the sea, and his associates, Munson and Swanson, discovered rich dirt on Gold Bottom creek (since named Hunker), and Henderson's invitation to George W. Carmack, of California, to join them on Gold Bottom led to the discovery of gold on Bonanza and Eldorado, and to the world-wide fame of the Klondike. In 1887 two men spent the summer prospecting this river but pronounced it worthless; and again in 1893 three men spent the season on it and returned the same verdict, and strangely enough, one of them located in 1896 a good claim on Bonanza, and acquired a comfortable competence. We might multiply these disappointments or mistakes, but