

gold, the miners find it necessary to dig into the gravel formation.

Formerly they stripped the gravel off until they came to the gold. Now they sink a shaft to the bottom of the gravel and tunnel along underneath in the gold-bearing layer. The way in which this is done is interesting, as it has to be carried on in cold weather, when everything is frozen.

The miners build fires over the area where they wish to work, and keep these lighted over that territory for the space of twenty-four hours. Then, at the expiration of this period, the gravel will be melted and softened to a depth of perhaps six inches. This is then taken off, and other fires built until the gold-bearing layer is reached. When the shaft is down that far fires are built at the bottom, against the sides of the layer, and tunnels made in this manner.

Blasting would do no good, on account of the hard nature of the material, and would blow out just as out of a gun. The matter taken out containing the gold is piled up until spring, when the torrents come down, and is panned and cradled by these. It is certainly very hard labour.

Mr. W. Ogilvie, Dominion Land Surveyor, after describing the ordinary process of washing for gold by the pan, the rocker, and the use of mercury, says:—

A great many of the miners spend their time in the summer prospecting, and in the winter resort to a method lately adopted and which is called "burning." They make fires on the surface, thus thawing the ground until the bed rock is reached, then drift and tunnel. The pay dirt is brought to the surface and heaped in a pile until spring, when water can be obtained. The sluice boxes are then set up and the dirt is washed out, thus enabling the miner to work advantageously and profitably the year around. This method has been found very satisfactory in places where the pay streak is at any great depth from the surface. In this way the complaint is overcome which has been so commonly advanced by the miners and others, that in the Yukon several months in the year are lost in idleness. Winter usually sets in very soon after the middle of September and continues until the beginning of June, and is decidedly cold. The mercury frequently falls to 60 degrees

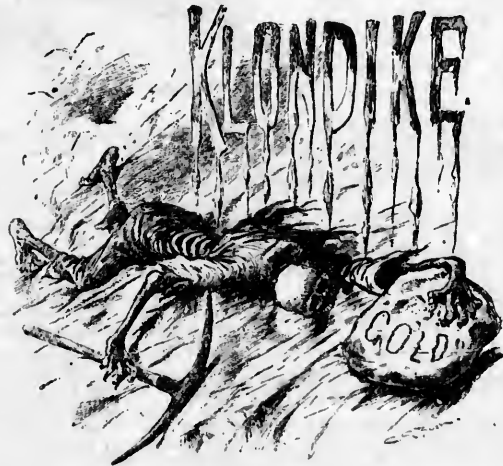
below zero; but in the interior there is a little humidity in the atmosphere that the cold is more easily endured than on the coast. In the absence of thermometers, miners, it is said, leave their mercury out all night. When they find it frozen in the morning they conclude that it is too cold to work, and stay at home.

Another miner says:—

The bed rocks are three feet apart. In the lower bed the gold is as black as a black cat, and in the upper bed the gold is as bright as any you ever saw.

No more miners are going to Klondyke this year, and before long we shall hear many sad and terrible tales of the hardships which have been endured by those who have got in and who cannot get out.

The Canadian Government appears to have taken a wise and liberal view of its duties. There has been no attempt to play the part of dog in the manger, nor even to apply to the miners from the United States the same rule as to alien labour as is enforced against Canadians in the Union. There was at one time some talk of levying a royalty of ten or fifteen per cent., but this has been dropped. It remains to be seen whether the proposal to reserve for the Government alternate strips of the auriferous territory can be carried out. The probability is that it will fail. The Canadian authorities in the Klondyke can hardly assert the rights of the State, at least until they are in a better position to fulfil its obligations. The problem is an interesting one. Miners in places as far away as the Klondyke will probably display an ignorant impatience of taxation whenever it is levied in excess of the necessities of meeting the cost of local administration. This would be manifested with equal decision whether the seat of the taxing power were Ottawa, Washington, or St. Petersburg. It is only at Johannesburg that a prosperous mining community allows itself to be fleeced without mercy to fill the coffers of a hostile and alien Government.



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WHAT PROFITETH IT?

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