

or '63 by the now Very Reverend Archdeacon McDonald, of Fort McPherson on Peel river, who labored for years among the Indians around Fort Yukon, and up as far as Fortymile.

The knowledge of his discovery was possessed by the people at Fort Yukon, soon after it was made, for in a letter to his father in Toronto a clerk at the fort writes under date of October 2, 1864, as follows: "I had some thoughts of digging gold here, but am not sure about it. I do not think it is in paying quantities at the fort, but if I could only get time to make an expedition up the Yukon, I expect we should find it in abundance, but I am always on the voyage or busy at the fort during the summer, and in the winter nothing can be done in the way of gold hunting. I think that next fall, after arriving from my trip down the Yukon, I shall be able to go up the river. There is a small river not far from here that the minister, the Reverend McDonald, saw so much gold on a year or two ago that he could have gathered it with a spoon. I have often wished to go but can never find time. Should I find gold in paying quantities I may turn gold digger, but this is merely a last resort when I can do no better."

Oh, ye miners of the Yukon! think of this young man on thirty or forty pounds (\$150-\$200) a year using such language. We know you will smile, and, well, — — ! ! — —\*\* ; you know as a last resort.

As far as we know it can be truthfully said that the first man who thought of gold mining in the extreme north was Arthur Harper. This gentleman, who hailed from the County of Antrim, Ireland, came to America when he was 18 years of age, about the middle of this century. Mining excitement carried

him to the West coast, and he drifted about as the golden tide rose or fell until he reached the northern parts of British Columbia.

A study of maps then extant led him to think the extensive Mackenzie and Yukon water systems—heading as both of them did in known auriferous regions—must have gold in more of their systems than was then known, and he determined to test his theory. Associated with him on his venture were Frederick W. Hart, from the County of Antrim, Ireland; Samuel Wilkinson, an Englishman; George Finch, a Canadian, and Andrew Kanselar, a German.

These five men left Manson creek on the headwaters of Peace river, in September, 1872; proceeded down the Peace to a small stream called Half-way river, which they learned had its source near one of the tributaries of the Liard. Up Half-way river they worked their way in dug-out canoes until winter set in, when they continued with sleighs of their own make, reaching and continuing down Nelson river (the tributary of Liard referred to) to a point they deemed safe for canoe navigation, where a halt was called until the river opened. Dug-out canoes were made and early in May the journey down the Nelson was continued in them to the junction with the Liard. Here another was met whose name will go down the course of time associated with the Yukon, Leroy Napoleon (better known as Jack) McQuesten. An acquaintance which was begun in the mining fields of British Columbia was renewed, confidences exchanged, and to better enable them to proceed McQuesten gave them his boat and took their dug-out canoes. Here Wilkinson determined to try his luck on the Liard and left the original five. The

remainder continued down the Liard to the Mackenzie and down it to the Peel from which by a series of small streams tributary to both water systems, which have quite recently become known as part of the Edmonton route, they made their way to the Porcupine. It was thus by this route that the first real miners who ever entered the Yukon valley came and they were not two years doing it, either. On the Mackenzie they were joined by a Scotchman named Nicholson and an American named McNiff, who continued with them to Fort Yukon.

At Fort Yukon Harper saw a piece of native copper which the owner, an Indian, informed him came from White river. He determined to make a search for the source of it, and here Kanselar determined to go down the Yukon instead of up.

Harper, Hart and Finch started on the 29th July (after a fifteen days' stay at Yukon) to prospect the Yukon and White rivers, ascending Fortymile river a short distance, as they found fair prospects on it, but the Indians in the vicinity frightened them away by describing a bad canon some distance up it. Had fate arranged it otherwise and they had continued and found the canon a very trifling obstacle which they were destined to pass and repass many times in the future, they would, in the nature of things, have discovered the gold on that stream, and if so, who can say how differently the history of the Yukon might have been written?

Continuing up the Yukon they reached White river on the 6th September, 1873, ascended it some distance, and, finding game plentiful, stopped some time securing winter supplies of meat. Space prevents further allusion to their doings than to say that they failed to find the copper, but from indica-