

# City of Dawson

## Before the Fire

(Copyright, 1900, by Cy Warman.)  
 While the world is filled with sorrow,  
 And hearts must break and bleed,  
 It's day all day in the daytime,  
 And there is no night in Creede.

A green garden set high on a hill, like a picture on an easel, was the strange sight I saw from my stateroom window as Dawson dawned upon my view at 5:30 of an August morning, and, of course, before the fire that recently devastated the place.

It had rained in Dawson the day before. The hills were all washed clean. The little garden, facing the east, bathed in sunlight, smiled down on me like a pretty girl in the gallery. Klondike City was slipping by us, and just below, over a wide gravel bar, the crystal Klondike rushed in, making a wide, green path far out in the gray waters of the Yukon. Just below the mouth of that far-famed river the city of Dawson begins. It has all come into view so suddenly and we sweep down the swift stream so rapidly that one finds it bewildering. After 500 miles of almost houseless shore, this imposing camp, with its shipping, floating wharfs and great iron warehouses was a revelation. At the upper end of the town are the government buildings, the prison and the barracks, where the mounted police live.

Almost a mile of houses, all sorts, shapes and sizes, are ranged along the embankment facing the river. These are the principal business establishments of the town—hotels, shops of all kinds, saloons, dance halls, banks and barber shops. It is a weird picture, a wonderful panorama that passes our window as we drop down stream. There goes a milk wagon drawn by seven dogs, a perfect little wagon, and the dogs have harnesses with collars and hames, like the harness of a horse. It reminds me of Austria and Bohemia, only there are no women in harness here. A tall girl in a red wrapper and a miner in a white hat are waltzing on the sidewalk in front of a dance hall. Although it is barely 6 o'clock, all the shops are open. The clerks and shopkeepers are out looking at the steamer as she glides down to her dock. Men are hurrying down to the wharf to meet friends and loved ones they left behind. A well dressed woman looks anxiously up at the purser as the boat ties up. The purser shakes his head, and a shadow settles on the hopeful, almost happy face, as the woman turns away.

### Diversified Greeting.

Now the women, who have made the long journey of thousands of miles to join their husbands, come from their cabins clad in neat traveling gowns that have not been worn on the whole trip. A new hat, a fresh ribbon here and there, a happy smile, all kept back for this one joyful moment. "Huh," I heard a woman say; "How funny he looks in that horrid hat." A man kissed his child, held it off and gazed at it through tear-dimmed eyes, and tried hard to realize that this big boy was "baby."

The boat had scarcely ceased rocking when Jim and I walked ashore. Two handsome, clean-faced young soldiers of the mounted police force were toiling along the strand with a drunken man between them. These fine young men do the police duty in Dawson. It is not a pleasant duty, but, since they must perform it, they do it well, and win the respect and sympathy of all classes of citizens. Verily, there is no night in Dawson. The men at the gaming tables are changing shift, but the games go on. "They hanged two Indians and a white man last week and started a daily paper." That was a news item given the captain of our boat by a man who came on board. Just as we entered our hotel a Swede flagged us: "Have yeh seen yaller-hair woman w' wan kid on des boat?" "Yes," said Thompson. "Freckled kid with his nose skinned." "Val, ha's been baby when a see 'em last, but a tank he would have ha's nose skin by des time."

### Hotel Life in Dawson.

"There is no lock on my door," said I to the young woman who was head clerk and half owner in the hotel. "Oh, well—we'll give you a better room as soon as one is vacant." "But in the meantime," I explained, "anyone can come up the back stairs and step into my room—it won't even latch." The clerk smiled. "Well," she said, as she changed a \$100 bill, taking out \$1.50 for the man's breakfast. "I guess we'll have to put locks on all our doors. People seem to expect it. The fact is," she went on, "we have been in such a rush that we had not thought of it. But things are changing. People are coming in from the east and now—I suppose we'll have to lock up."

She did not mean to be discourteous. She simply indicated a well known condition. So long as a mining camp is occupied by miners, mountaineers, pioneers and prospectors, no one ever thinks of locks. It is the coming of the cultured tenderfoot, the Cheechawko, that makes bolts necessary. Even the Indians were reasonably honest with each other until we began to civilize them.

I see nothing here marked less than a quarter. That is the price of a four-page paper. At Seattle the penny passes out of use, at Skagway the nickel, and at Dawson the dime. But prices are dropping rapidly here. Fresh signs in the restaurants read: "Meals only one dollar." In some places they are but 75 cents, with drinks. In one of the best hotels in town I pay \$5 a day for

"It is a grim country, a country of extremes."

Despite the recent rain, the Klondike is crystal clear, the trail is washed clean. In a picturesque cabin beside the path a woman is singing her baby to sleep, and over the willows is wafted the sound of

shoulder of the big hill that curves around Dawson. At the summit we find some rustic seats beside the trail. We wonder who ever took the time to build them, when labor in the mines, until recently, had been worth \$15 a day. Near by there is a sun dial, with the marks N. W. M. P., and we know

## A Holly and Mistletoe Ranch

"Yes, I think we have about the first and only holly and mistletoe farm in the country, or in the world, for that matter." The speaker was Miss Lucy Cartledge, the elder of the two young women who three years ago began to raise holly and mistletoe for market.

"You ask how it began—the farm, you mean? Why, it all started from my going to New York to study art. My mother, who is my only living parent, by many sacrifices, finally saved enough money for me to make the venture. I did not achieve much in the way of art, but I learned what a big world of smart people this is and how much I had to improve before there was any chance of setting it afire with any brilliancy. Once convinced that I had little or no artistic ability I set about to find some way to earn a living. The high price paid for holly and mistletoe in New York City was one of many revelations and on inquiry I found that the prettiest pieces were brought over from England. This gave me an idea and I wrote home about it to my sister, who is a very practical person.

"She began at once to go over our 500 acres and cleared away the underbrush around every holly bush. In some instances, with those around the house, she had gone so far as to trim away all the dead limbs and have the earth about the roots enriched and spaded up.

"For the preservation of the mistletoe she cut off the muscadine and jasmine vines climbing over every tree where there was a sprig of it growing. She also declared her intention of trying to plant the seeds in the hollows and forks of old oaks, where she saw a chance of its taking root and growing.

"During the next summer we had little to do besides sit and wait for what the autumn would bring forth, but this energetic sister of mine was careful to see that no harm came to the numerous little holly trees which she discovered about the roots of the large trees. She stated that she intended transplanting them 'n winter and for the first time we realized it might not be such an easy matter to get a holly farm as we anticipated.

### Fearful Luck.

"Negroes are so superstitious that it is almost impossible for a white person to keep up with the numerous queer things they believe. When our old cook heard us talking about transplanting young holly she was horrified and told us it was the worst kind of luck, and that whoever did it, the minute the bush grew and cast a shadow large enough to cover their grave they would die. We found the superstition quite general among the negroes, so, of course, we realized at once that none of them could be depended on to plant our holly grove. According to their advice the only way to obtain such trees was by placing a lot of berries on a stump near where we wished the tree and allow the wind to blow them. Only fancy what a stupid idea. Still, it was most serious to us, as we were entirely dependent on them as laborers.

### Selling the Crop.

"However, our first harvest came before transplanting time. As soon as the berries were sufficiently grown to judge of we sent specimens on to several firms in Washington and New York. Almost by return mail we received surprisingly large orders, but at different prices. The best came from the Washington firm which supplies the White House.

"At Christmas we found there were two distinct grades of holly. Branches gathered from trees around the house, which had been trimmed and fertilized, were more beautiful than the others. The foliage was richer and the berries larger, more numerous and very much more brilliant. My sister fancied the same improvement was to be observed in the mistletoe, but we finally decided that the most beautiful specimens of this were taken from post-oak trees. And now, after three years' experience, we still consider it a fact.

"Our profits for the first year were gratifying, and as soon as there was sufficient cold to send the sap down into the roots of the tree we began our transplanting. But do you know my sister and I were compelled to do it with our own hands. The negroes would dig the holes and put in the fertilizer, but when it came to actually planting the little trees we had to do that ourselves. We worked early and late all during the months of January and February and managed to set out ten acres of holly.

"This last season we cut out every other one of these young trees and sold them as Christmas trees. They were well shaped, had fine foliage, with large, rich berries, so, of course, they brought the very best price.

"For our mistletoe we select old oak trees, preferably post-oaks, and insert well-ripened berries under the bark in the fork or hollow, where they will have a chance to germinate and catch hold. Just how old the plant has to be before it bears berries we have not been able to decide as yet.

"This last season we added to our farm products by shipping quantities of bamboo and Christmas berry vines. In the north the bamboo is known as the southern smilax and makes a charming decoration.

"We have no trouble in getting orders for our goods, and as our farm is on a trunk line railroad shipment is easy. We first began by crating; now we simply pack the trees and branches in the railroad cars and they go straight through to their destination."



FRONT STREET, DAWSON CITY, AT TIME OF ITS GREATEST ACTIVITY.

a small room, but it is clean. Meals are \$1.50, table d'hot, but they are excellent. If you want a spring chicken it will cost you \$6. It costs 50 cents to quench at all first-class bars. Here is a copy of a typewritten bill of fare, verbatim et literatim.

Anheuser Busch or Schlitz Beer, per quart.....\$1.00  
 Labatt's English Ale, per pint.....\$2.50  
 Guinnesses Extra Stout, per pint.....\$2.50

### GRILL ROOM AND CAFE.

Cox & Gates, Prop'rs.  
 Dinner 5 to 8 P. M. \$1.50.

### SOUP.

Beef broth Anglaise, consommé.

### FISH.

Boiled king salmon hollandaise.

### ENTREES.

Curried Lobster with rice.  
 Breast of lamb with French peas.  
 Bell fritters, maple sauce.

### ROASTS.

Prime ribs of beef au jus.  
 Veal with dressing.

### VEGETABLES.

Boiled and mashed potatoes.  
 Green peas.

### DESSERT.

Assorted pies. Assorted cakes.  
 Lemon ice cream.

### EXTRAS.

Cucumbers 50c. Radishes 50c.  
 Lettuce.

### DELICACIES OF THE SEASON.

#### A Dawson Garden.

I spoke to Dr. B. enthusiastically about the little green garden on the hill, and now we are going up the Klondike to see it. It costs a quarter to walk across the suspension bridge that spans the little river. The day is delightful, but my mind is constantly reverting to a powerful, beautifully worded description that I have been reading of the Klondike by a gifted author who has never seen the country. I shall quote bits of his description as I go, setting them side by side with the thing as I see it.

tinkling bells. In front of a little roadside shop a man is candling a crate of eggs—holding them one by one between him and the sun. They are worth \$1.50 a dozen.

"There is little vegetable mould, and plant life is sparse."

Here, in the Klondike vale, I find a miniature field of oats. The well-filled heads come up to my shoulders. The grain is in the dough—it will be ripe in a week. Since this was written I have seen a news dispatch which read as follows: Recent experiments with grain-growing and market-gardening in the Yukon valley, not far from Dawson and the center of the Klondike region, give promise of fresh vegetables for the miners, before long, produced in their own neighborhood. Wheat, oats, and barley, all planted late in May and harvested about the middle of August, have reached Duluth, as a sample of what has been done in the Klondike region. All of the grain is fully matured, and of good quality. Of course, many vegetables can be grown still more readily than such cereals.

"Gnats and mosquitoes move to and fro in dense clouds during the summer and add to the many discomforts and discouragements of the region."

The burro, the husky and the siwash are the only insects I have seen thus far in or about Dawson. Not a gnat. Not so much as one widowed, melancholy mosquito have I seen here.

"Life is a warfare."

Sitting in the hillside garden, overlooking the beautiful Klondike, with its picturesque ferry and trim boats gliding down stream; the song of a brook nearby, the murmur of the river below, the soft winds freighted with the fragrance of flowers, the scent of sweet peas and the perfume of the pine, it seems to me that if man had money enough to keep him from pining for the "creeks" and mosquitoes enough to keep him from brooding, life here, in summer at least, would be one grand, sweet song.

Leaving the garden we climb up over a

that the police, who are always doing something—blazing a trail, bridging a stream or marking a mud hole—have put these things here.

### Overlooking Dawson.

Our trail lies along an almost level stretch of table land. There are a great many cabins along the trail, but very few people. Some of the cabins are very pretty. Many have double walls, filled with dirt between. Over the door of one rustic letters are fixed to spell "Iowa."

Here under the aspen trees or cottonwood and spruce, moss is found in thick tufts, like green bunches of swamp grass near the edge of a swamp. It is this thick blanket of moss that keeps the sun from the earth and holds the frost in the ground. When the moss is removed the earth thaws out in the summer, for the days are long here and as warm as they are in Colorado.

Now we come out on the brow of the hill overlooking Dawson. The view is unbroken. Here, to our left, rushes the clear Klondike and yonder, at the farther end of the town, the mighty Yukon, curving with a sweep sublime, glides away among the hills on the long journey to the ocean, nearly 2,000 miles away.

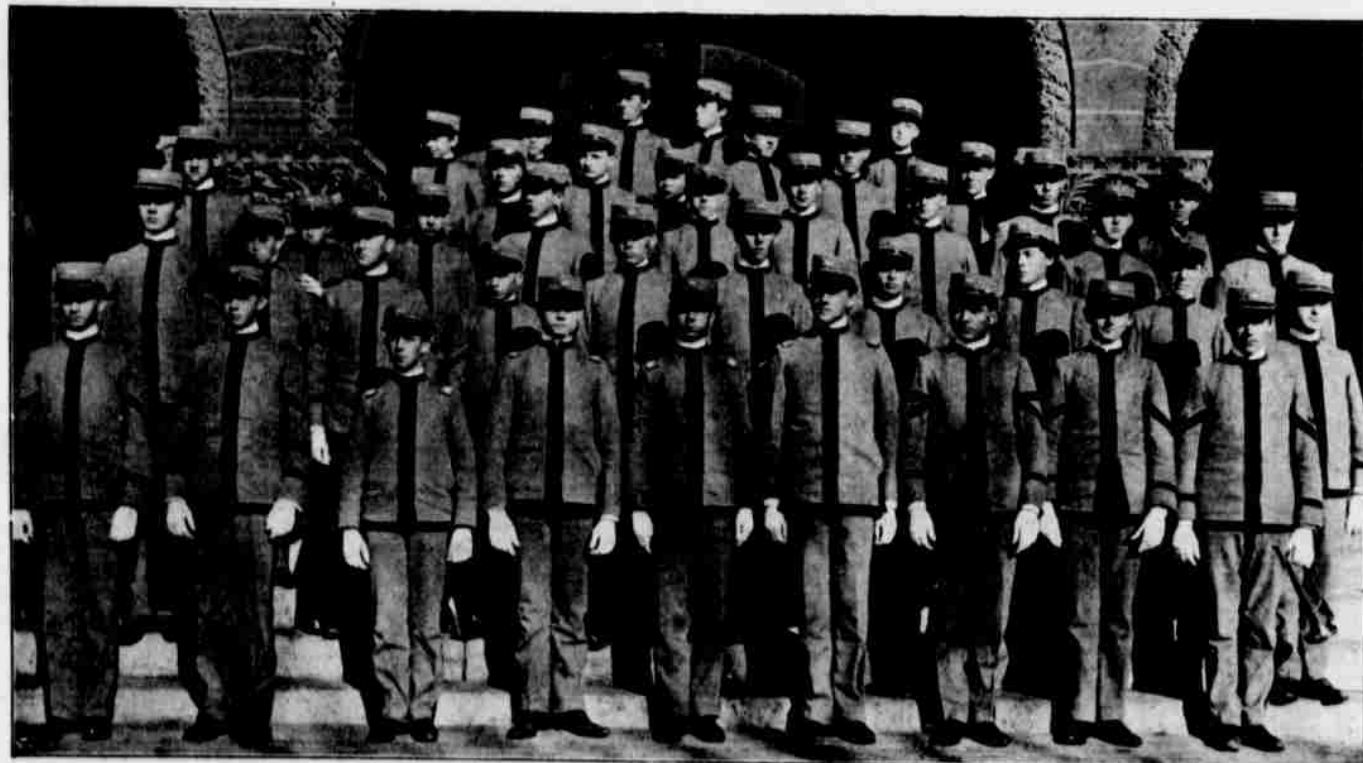
Between the town and the foot of the hill there is a wide stretch of level, marshy land. This was a quagmire a year ago. Now it has all been drained—we can see the drains and ditches from the hilltop—and you can walk or ride all about.

My friend and companion, Dr. B., points out two hospitals—that have cost over \$50,000—both empty. One is for typhoid fever patients. Only three cases there. "Why," said the doctor, "Dawson today is the most vulgarly healthy town on the continent."

CY WARMAN.

"Now, Dicky, don't you want to give up taking sugar with your medicine during Lent?"

"No, ma; but I tell you what—I'll give up takin' the med'cine."



HIGH SCHOOL CADETS—KEARNEY, NEB.