Two Thousand Men Idle Ir try, capital and the kind of push and Dawson City.

OF THE MINES

The Wages Paid to Laborers Are About Sufficient to Defray the Expenses of bined." Their Board-Alaska the Greatest Mining Country In the World.

[From Our Special Correspondent.]

Dawson, June 25. Unless conditions change there will be much suffering in this country before another winter has passed. And the change of conditions must be as material as it will be unexpected.

The town swarms with newcomers, and not one-quarter of them have cash enough to pay their fare back to the with scores of them as they throng the principal street and, like Wilkins Mithought their work was ended when down before the country will forge

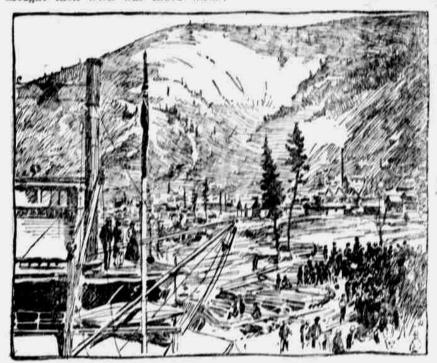
other day when I asked him what he MINERS' DARK OUTLOOK thought of it. "Why, this is the greatest mineral country in the world. For its development it needs brains, indusenterprise that developed the far west in the States. It can't all be done in a day nor a year nor in five years, of course, but the Almighty has put the mineral wealth here, and man will sooner or later dig it out. It offers a good field for capital, a better one for labor and the best for capital and labor com-

"But the placer mines will soon be worked out?"

"Not until long after you and I are dead and gone, my boy.

"And is there any quartz mining?" "More than in any country on earth." "But have not too many men come in here this year?"

"Possibly, although the country will soon take care of them, provided they are willing to work at whatever their hands find to do. Our company is offer-States at present prices. I have talked ing \$5 a cord to woodchoppers, yet many of them refuse to go to work at these terms. But I have chopped wood cawber, "wait for something to turn on the border for \$1 per cord. The prices up." Strange to say, many of them of both food and labor must come



THE HILLS BACK OF DAWSON CITY. [Copyright, 1898, by L. E. Robertson, photographer, Chicago.]

they reached Dawson. Alas, it had but ahead in its developing process, and I just begun! When I first reached town am inclined to think this result will be some three weeks ago, there was work accomplished shortly, for transportaenough for all. Now work is extremely tion facilities both by river and overscarce and at a reduction of from one- land are being rapidly increased." quarter to one-half. True, the mines would give employment to many- tous one just now, the scarcity being so though not to a tithe of those that are great that the outlits of individuals here and need it-but water is low out coming down the river find ready purat the creeks, and in many cases this chasers. But they are scarcely a "drop has resulted in suspending work alto- in the bucket." Whisky, however,

No Country For a Workingman.

the edge of the board sidewalk on the main thoroughfare of Dawson, while his feet hung over to the street below. at the time, some talking, some whit- the hour was near midnight. tling, some reflecting. "There's nothing in it for me, and I'm going to get out. "How long have you been here?"

"Oh, about a week."

"Been up the creek yet?" "Yes. I've just got back, and you don't catch me up there again. Everything has been staked within 100 miles of here."

"Yes, but if you want work you can get it at \$10 per day," I suggest.

"Well, what's \$10 a day in a country where they charge you \$7.50 a day for grub and \$1.50 for a bunk? What have you got left for clothes and tobac-

Very few of those who came into the country this year are at work. Possibly 50 have secured employment to represent claims at \$500 each, without board, for the three months' work. As many more are cutting wood into four foot lengths for the transportation companies. The pay is \$5 per cord, and the wood is so soft that the ax is easily driven to the eye with a sturdy blow. But wood is scarce, and it must all be hauled within easy access of the river's bank, so that the Yukon steamers may load it easily. Some-a score or morehave found employment in the stores, restaurants, saloons or sawmills in town, but this demand was supplied long ago. I noticed one tall, fine looking young man carrying water from the spring to the business center of the town. For this he gets 50 cents per bucket, and by hard work he can make \$8 or \$10 per day. He wears a well fitted yoke across his broad shoulders, and it is no easy matter to pack the two bucket load along the street and rough trail. He is well educated and has the appearance of a gentleman. Another bright young man has secured employment as waiter in a restaurant.

### The Brighter Side.

But a large proportion of this year's inflow to Dawson City will return to the States before cold weather sets in, provided they can get there. Some are preparing to get out already, and more will follow suit as soon as they al conscientionsness, but I see no reacan stiffe their pride.

But there is a brighter side. Captain John J. Healey, vice president and manager of the North American Transportation and Trading company, presents it as fercibly as any one I have seen here. Captain Healey is not only the best known man in Alaska, but he knows Alaska better than any one here. He is likewise easily the leading spirit in Dawson City. Modest and unaccoming in manner and having the manner of a gentleman, no one would take him for an old frontiersman, Indian fighter and miner. He lived in Montana for several years and was county sheriff on that border when the position required both discretion and courage.

"Alaska's future?" he said to me th

The food problem is indeed a momenseems to be plenty since the advent of the three steamers that wintered below "I tell you this ain't no country for in the ice. The first one to arrive was a workingman," said one of the new- the May West, a small craft well known comers to me this morning. He sat on along the river. When she was first sighted below, the shout, "Steamboat!" went up from all over town, and soon several thousand people were at the There were 2,000 idle men in the street dock ready to welcome her, although

> "I wonder what she's got for grub?" savs one. 'I'm getting tired of beans and bacon."

Dawson Does Not Worry.

Thus speculation and anticipation were rife. But when the steamer was made fast the expectant multitude learned her entire cargo consisted of whisky. Thus Dawson continues her diet of flour, beans and bacon, but she is again supplied with whisky, and "all goes merry as a marriage bell." Meantime the river is falling day by day, and probably but few of the boats that are now at St. Michael's loaded with food will be able to reach here this season. But don't think for a moment that Dawson worries. Are not her 16 or 18 gambling houses as well thronged as ever? And can any town have so many of these establishments and not be prosperous? Not but what these places could not get all the gold dust in town in a week if they chose, for the gentle art of gaming has advanced so rapidly in the past decade that the expert faro dealer can win at his own sweet will. But he does not do this. Oh, no! It would kill the business. So if a new place is opened and it is not a "square game" the balance of the game house keepers direct the Canadian officials to close it forthwith. Thus the business is fostered, and the poor miner has "a better show for his money.'

Just one word about Canadian officials and Canadian law. Three-quarters of the people seem unable to find words severe enough to express their condemnation of them. The balance denounce the law, but have nothing against the officials. As it has not been my method to rely upon the statements of others for my facts, I can only say that at the gold commissioner's office I know cases where some have been permitted to look at maps showing what ground has been located and what ground has not, while others were refused the same favor. It is openly charged that \$5 or \$10 is the price of these special favors. Of this I know nothing. The commissioner himself has the manner of a man of unususon why he should not allow access to the papers showing the ground already located. It seems as much his duty as it is that of a government land agent to allow prospective actions access to maps showing what is for sale and where it is located. But if these officials were remiss in nothing else the whole lot deserves to be called back to Ottawa for their incapacity to handle the Dawson. mails and their indifference to the publie demand for better service. Letters lie piled up in this dark little postoffice for weeks with scarcely an effort to distribute them. The last mail in here has been lying over a week, and it yet remains unopened. Truly, "the offense is

rank; it smells to heaven."

## OFF FOR ST. MICHAEL'S.

Disadvantages of Starting a Journey on Friday.

SCENES AND INCIDENTS EN ROUTE.

Be the Best For Miners This Year It Is

[From Our Special Correspondent.] ST. MICHAEL'S, July 10.

One Friday morning we set sail, And on our port from land

With a comb and a glass in her hand. We might have waited until Saturday before we set sail from Dawson and thus averted all of our misfortunes. or, better yet, we might have got away Thursday, but we were all anxious to rules apply to navigating the Yukon as take the treasure ship, and thus we philandered with fate. And what was the outcome? We lost three passengers. lay 36 hours on a sand bar, broke a hog chain, disabled our rudder, nearly starved for want of food, and our boilers caught cold and had congestion of the lungs. Of course we could account for the breaking of the hog chain; that was caused by the weight of treasure in the hold. But the other misfortunes were solely due to sailing on Fgiday.

Circle City Deserted.

It was 5 o'clock in the afternoon when we got away, and the whole town of Dawson turned out to see us off. Speculation was rife as to the amount of gold dust we were taking out, and due to the weight of the arctic treasure, some of the more cautious were sure we would be waylaid and the steamer scuttled and robbed by river outlaws or Spanish pirates. The fare from Dawson to Seattle or San Francisco had been fixed at \$300, but if it had been twice that sum the steamboat would have been overcrowded. As it was, there were about three times as many passengers as there were accommodations for. It is something less than 80 miles down the river to the American side and 105 miles to Eagle City, the camp at the gate of the new diggings where gold has been found in paying quanti-These are all on the American The more promising creeks are Seventy Mile, Forty Mile, American and Miller. It seems to be the prevailing opinion that Eagle City will soon

Circle City, 290 miles from Dawson, has been practically deserted. Most of left it? the miners left it long ago for the at

become one of the most important min-

ing camps on the Yukon. There are big

quartz leads along the mountains in the

locality, but their value is yet to be test-

the marks of his fine Italian hand are plainly visible upon every human crea-

Returning to the mines, I should not fail to state that the American side is the place for the miner this year, both because of its far more favorable mining laws and because the Klondike region is already congested. True, there is a lack of law on the American side, and capital will be slow to enter the Sailing Down the Mighty Yukon-Alaska's field until after Uncle Sam has supplied Universal Pests-The American Side Witt the much needed military or police and civil authority. Early in the season there was a rush from the American side to the Klondike region, but at present the trend is the other way. Although the general mining laws of the United States permit the entry of 20 acres, the miners themselves, by adopting local regulations of their own, have limited the extent of claims greatly.

> Burial of the Young Civil Engineer. The first of our misfortunes incident to setting sail on Friday occurred just below Rampart City. Now, the same on the great voyage of life. It is easy enough so long as you go with the current and keep out of shallow water. But we did neither and suddenly found ourselves, as many a poor mortal has aforetime, stuck fast on a sand bar. Here we lay for 36 hours. Finally, by dint of constant swearing and cigarette smoking on the part of the mate, together with a hawser fastened to a piece of timber stuck fast in a neighboring island, we slowly swung off, but we had not proceeded far before there were a violent shock, a quick settling of the stern of the steamer and a sudden stop of the machinery. The hog chain had broken, and our steamer was totally disabled. It would make a good story to declare that the accident was to the weight of gold dust we had on board, but I am not so sure of this, and it may have been caused by nothing more nor less than a poorly constructed steamer. After lying helpless for a few hours we were overtaken by another steamer of the same line, which, after some persuasion, took us in tow. That night death sent his messenger aboard and called for a poor fellow who had but recently come into the country and was returning on account of illness. He was a civil engineer and a young man of decided promise. The next day we stopped at one of the wood stations, and up the hillside from the river's bank strong arms succeeded in thawing out the frozen ground and after hours of hard work in making a shallow grave. The ship's carpenter made a nicely planed coffin, and then a little procession walked up the hill, where the Masonic burial service was held. It was about as desolate an affair as could be imagined. But what does it matter where the body rests when the soul has

Our next misfortune was due to the



DAWSON CITY IN A FLOOD-THE CENTER HOUSE IS THE GOLD RES CORDER'S OFFICE.

[Copyright, 1898, by L. E. Robertson, photographer, Chicago.]

that time more auspicious field of Dawson, but I fancy many would like to get back, although it has thus far developed no mines of much richness. I should judge there were not 50 white men in the whole town, and there were a score or more log cabins one could move intheir owners having abandoned them long ago.

In fact, the only mines on the American side that are in any way attractive enough to allure gold seekers from the Klondike district are at Rampart City. where probably \$175,000 has already been taken out from No. 1 to No. 10 above discovery on Little Minook.

The Mosquito Pest, On Alder creek nothing worth mentioning has been found, but Russian creek looks favorable, both above and below discovery. I judge there are not more than 100 men working on all these claims. Wages are lower than up in the Klondike, and as the miners of Little Minock are only six miles from camp packing costs only 10 to 15 cents per pound. The town site of Rampart City struck me as the best of any on the upper Yukon river. It is high, fairly dry and gently slopes toward the stream. A spring of palatable water is also near at hand. Of course it has the inevitable mosquito post, and the better I get acquainted with this pest the more I am inclined to affirm that it is the country's worst beto noire. There may be apologists for Robespierre and Marai, some may claim that Tiberius was a great and good ruler and that Caligula wasn't to blame, but I would like to see any one apologise for the guosed little arctic mosquito, which revols in cold weather and in hot, in sun and in shado, in woods and in open, by day and by night. Why, there's not a tree nor a shrub here in St. Michael's, and the winds howl across its shorn wastes at all times, yet the pesky mosquito is but the woodchoppers as well.

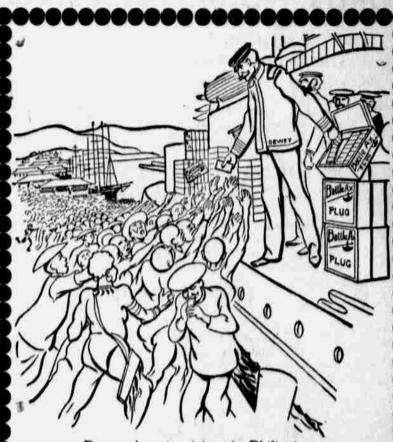
A. A.

sudden indisposition of the boilers of the steamer that had us in tow, and they had to be doctored for a half day before they could do their work without a wheezing sound. That night there was another death aboard, the victim being a woman who was returning with her little girl from Dawson to the States. She was buried at the little Russian mission settlement of Andreafski and her little girl taken in charge by two Indian women passengers. Just before we reached St. Michael's the third death occurred.

On the whole, I can't say that this trip down the Yukon will be a pleasant memory. The stream itself is brownish yellow, with mud and clay, and it passes through a country of great desolation. A few Indians-perhaps 200 from Circle City down-live along the river's bank. Death carries them away early, few living to be over 45 years old. Scarcely any game is to be had, salmon forming three-fourths of their diet. At Circle City and north of the Arctic circle we mw the sun above the horizon at midnight. In fact, there is no darkness in that locality, or even as

far south as Dawson, for a month. Of the 30 or more steamers that are due at St. Michael's and are advertised for a trip up the river to Dawson not a dozen will reach their destination. Even if they could secure pilots, which they cannot, they have no wood along shore for the use of their engines, and if they attempt to cut it as it is needed the river will be frozen long before they can make half the distance. It requires over 100 cords of wood to supply the engines on the trip down the river. Going up four times, this amount will not suffice. Further, the two great trading and transportation companies now existing in Dawson have not only "cor-ralled" about all the convenient wood,

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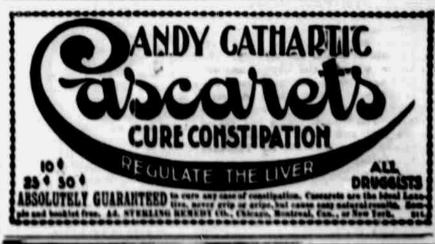
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