

was discovered. The dirt obtained was hoisted out by means of a crude log windlass, but as it froze again immediately upon reaching the air, it was laid aside until spring, when the sun thawed out the heap, or "dump." It was then shovelled into sluice-boxes. A result of the new discovery was the dividing of the diggings, according to their depth, into "summer diggings" and "winter diggings." Summer work is much less expensive than winter work, and the diggings at Forty-Mile and elsewhere in American territory are mostly summer diggings. At Klondike there is a much larger proportion of winter diggings. The American mines do not yet show the concentrated richness of the Klondike, and so perhaps may never startle the world with "show" pans; but the most careful observers (such as Mr. Sam Dunham, the United States Labor Statistician) believe that the mines in our own country will prove of more economic value to the country at large than the somewhat richer but more expensive mines of Klondike.

The hardships of the Yukon are in one sense over-estimated. The long, dark, cold nights of winter, when the mercury drops to nearly sixty below zero, are wearing in the extreme, and homesickness is the most serious malady. The chief hardships are mere discomforts, to which a person becomes accustomed. March is the pleasantest month. Then there are as many hours of sunlight as in the Northern United States. In June the sun dips for a few hours behind the mountain, and it is broad daylight at midnight. Even the birds, which make the woods and hillsides

resound with their songs, sleep during the heat of the day and hunt and sing at night. To avoid the glare, tents are frequently made, of dark blue denim. The miners work double shifts on the claims. There are hardly more than seventy days when water does not freeze. There is no night in Dawson during midsummer. Until the police requested the closing of the saloons on Sunday there was no Sunday either.

Until the past summer the social life of the mining camp centred in the saloon, and this was particularly true in winter. The saloons of a mining camp have no counterpart in the East, and the Yukon saloons have none anywhere. They contain a bar where whiskey and cigars are sold at half a dollar each; but there is also a barrel of clear, pure drinking water at the end of the bar, or to one corner, with a dipper on a nail—welcome to all. There might be tables covered with old, much-worn newspapers; and under the same roof, generally separated by a partition, elaborate gambling layouts, and perhaps a theatre and dance-hall. The play is a vaudeville, with short impromptu local "skits," on some prominent citizen or local occurrence. The original theatre, such as the Monte Carlo, was a high frame building fifty feet square, at the back of the main saloon and gambling-place, and admission was by the purchase of a drink or cigar only. The performance lasted three hours or more, the audience being seated on rude benches made of planks laid across stones, or else in the "boxes," which were ranged along both sides. There was an additional bar in the rear for supplying refreshments to the audience, but more especially

for the grand dance, which nightly followed the play. The theatre musicians remained in their places in front of the stage, the floor was cleared, the sawdust swept up, and the music began. The dancers were the feminine contingent of the show, who received one hundred and fifty dollars a week salary and a twenty-five per cent commission on each dance. The dances were short, and a girl could make twenty-five to thirty dollars a night. After the play there was no charge for admission, and the hall was filled with elbowing crowds of miners, brokers, officials of government, and every condition of man that composes a camp of upward of twenty thousand souls. Some might patronize the stall, but the majority were merely "rubberin'." That didn't make any difference. All were on the same footing, and every man fared for just what he was worth, and not at his own valuation. Now much of this is changed. So long as the spirit of the old timers dominates the camp, all men are more like members of a large family.

From the old-timer's point of view the Yukon is spoiled. The old-timer was a prospector pure and simple. The majority of the new-comers are not. The old-timer worked with pick and shovel. The new-comer with axe and pencil, staking claims. Of their value he is ignorant, and will remain so.

The Klondike is still a prospector's country, and the opportunities for men of courage and determination are still great. The disappointed ones are those who expect to find employment at day's wages, and are not the class of men who can make their own "job."