

PLAIN STATEMENT ABOUT KLONDIKE

LETTER FROM A FORMER JERMYN NEWSPAPERMAN.

Thomas Boudry, at One Time Editor of the Jermy Press, Gives His Impression of the Northern Gold Fields--If You Haven't Plenty of Money, Stay Away Is His Advice. Thousands of Men Waiting for Something to Turn Up.

Thomas Boudry, formerly editor of the Jermy Press, now a prospector in the Klondike, has written the following interesting and valuable letter to J. C. Taylor, superintendent of the public schools. It is one which should be read and thoroughly digested by every one who may be affected with the Klondike fever.

Dawson, N. W. T., July 6, 1898. Superintendent J. C. Taylor. Dear Sir--I promised to write you a letter from Klondike. Here it is. Its publication can do no harm; it may do good. For it is an unvarnished story from an unprejudiced mind. As an opening remark I may say that the great rush of 1898 ought not to have taken place. The rush of 1897 met all requirements, all statements to the contrary emanating from biased minds or from writers who have been dazzled by the sight of a few nuggets. Cool judgment, tempered by sufficient time for consideration, shows that it is about time the world knew the facts concerning the Klondike. I present the facts here as I have ascertained them.

EVERYTHING IS STAKED. This is the comforting salutation to every newcomer. In a general sense this is too true. The whole country within forty miles of Dawson has been explored and staked. In connection with this there has been much chicanery, crooked work and even murder. It is a known fact that men have gone into valleys single-handed and have staked ten or a dozen consecutive claims under the name of the same person. These claims have been duly recorded and are being worked, the greater number are unrecorded and worthless. Yet the whole country led to believe that they are valuable or they would not have been staked. They are also for sale, but with the usual unwary purchaser. Only the prospect of an immediate sale will induce the conscienceless staker to have such a claim recorded. And this must be done by proxy. Nevertheless, it is often done, a sale effected, the price multiplied by ten is made public and an unwarrantable boom given to claims in that locality.

The reader will probably suggest that a radius of forty miles from Dawson does not cover the whole of the Klondike west field and that beyond this area there are hills and valleys still unexplored and consequently unstaked. True, and this brings me to the second important point of my letter.

Transportation is difficult and expensive. At this season of the year there are but few trains. The only transportation available, packing on horses and on one's own shoulders. The former is expensive, the latter is a real hardship; the latter exceeds in hardship the slavery of ante-bellum days. Sulphur Creek is forty miles from Dawson, and the present rate of freight between the two places is \$125 per 100 pounds.

A man working on this creek must pay the price of carrying his food himself. If he is strong he can make a trip in four days and carry fifty pounds. He loses four days' wages, amounting at the old rate, to \$60. During the winter freighting is much cheaper, usually about one-third of the present rates. But the miner comes here to stay, and he must have a horse. This enables two men to move over the trail with 100 pounds of food besides tent and blankets. Thus the difficulty of freighting a little prospecting with the possibility that before winter they will have discovered something to their advantage.

When Joseph W. Miller visited the Klondike in 1897 he predicted a great influx of miners and employment for many thousands. His estimate was about one hundred persons to the mile. A variety of circumstances have converged to bring about a different state of affairs. There are already shown that many claims are unrecorded, and consequently unworked. These were all included in Miller's estimate. Thousands of men have staked and recorded since last July are unworked. Consequently what was expected to be a gold field teeming with busy men, is still comparatively a wilderness.

First, because the prospects of finding gold there are very slim; second, these claims were staked only to sell. It costs a claim holder about \$1,000 a year to hold his claim unworked; nevertheless it is done and the man who comes here expecting to immediately secure work has to wait an indefinite length of time.

Estimates of the spring rush vary from 15,000 to 25,000 persons. And still they come. Many are going down the river to streams on the American side of the boundary. Dawson is still crowded, crowded with men who are waiting for winter, waiting for something to turn up, waiting for the pioneer prospectors to turn up something, and then all will rush pell mell over each other to the new discovery, nine times out of ten to find that they have been cruelly deceived.

Reports of rich finds are very common; but--and I say it advisedly--in this country more than in any other that I have visited the prospector would have been justified in saying: "All men are liars." One consolation to the thousands who are waiting is that practically every man has a year's provisions on hand.

There is no destitution, nor is it likely that there will be any; but the fact cannot be gained that the rush of the fall of 1897 furnished all the men necessary for some time. All others are in excess of the demand.

During the past winter wages ranged from \$1 to \$1.50 an hour, according to distance from Dawson. The unprecedented influx of labor, and that, too, at a season when all work is practically suspended, has had a bad effect. A dollar an hour is the maximum, and I have heard of mine owners offering as little as 65 cents. It is just possible that this condition of the labor market may be modified by the rapid thinning of the population before winter sets in, and that the mine owners will still have to pay the old figures. But they claim, and with some show of reason, that under present conditions they cannot operate their mines to the mutual advantage of employer and employee.

One serious obstacle is the royalty of 10 per cent. demanded by the government. If this were levied only on the net profits the owners say they would have but little cause of complaint, but as it is on the gross output it comes as a hardship. The spring wash-up has shown that many claims on Bonanza have barely paid working expenses, and that when the royalty has been paid the mine owners will be in debt. Hence there is some righteous indignation, and many who would otherwise be extensive employers of labor assert that until this

ELEVENTH SAW ACTIVE SERVICE

ITS EXPERIENCE DESCRIBED BY LIEUTENANT DENTLER.

Took Part in an Engagement at a Small Town Called Hemagueros in Porto Rico and Was Hastening Forward to Participate in Another Fight When the Spaniards Broke and Fleed--Several Men Were Killed and a Number Wounded During the Fighting.

In a letter to relatives at Pittston from Porto Rico Lieutenant Clarence E. Dentler gives some details of the experience of the Eleventh Infantry at Porto Rico. The lieutenant recruited a large number of men in this and Luzerne county for the Eleventh and when that regiment went to Porto Rico he was in command of company K.

The letter is dated August 14 in a camp on the mountains ten miles from Mayaguez. The lieutenant says: August 10th we encountered the enemy at a small town called Hemagueros (the name of the town) and after an exciting battle of four hours' duration, from 3 p. m. till dark, we drove the enemy over the hills with considerable loss. One prisoner, who was a surgeon, that we captured, told us that the Spanish soldiers were more than a hundred. We lost several men killed and seventeen wounded. A man near me, in company D, was shot through the heart and killed, and three men in company D were wounded.

The company which I am in command, Co. K, was next to company D in column and got mixed up with D in the line of battle, but were soon straightened out and we advanced on the entrenchments of the Spaniards side by side on the left of the regiment.

ONE PACE BETWEEN MEN. "We marched in line of battle with one pace between men, going through a dense swamp, with the bullets whistling about us in a very ugly manner. Some of the men went into the water up to their necks. We could not fire because of the advance guard of our men being in the line of march, but after a severe struggle we also gained the ridge of the hill and opened fire and then we felt better.

"I was sent out with part of my company on two expeditions while the firing was going on, although we did the proper thing they did not prove successful. Darkness came down upon us on the field of battle, and dampness also, and we lay down on the ground, where we were to sleep. Coffee was made in a hollow some half mile back of our line, and with two hardtacks and a pint of coffee apiece we were content to await the break of day. At dawn we were up and on the march toward Mayaguez. Companies D and K advanced guard.

"We had out the most point and flankers, saw nothing but evidences of hurried flight on the part of the Spaniards. Stone houses were knocked away west by our artillery the day before. Dead horses and two dead Spanish soldiers, one an officer, were seen. That was left. The entire Porto Rico population of Mayaguez came out to meet us and we took the town without opposition, although it had been fortified for defense. We learned that the rear guard of the enemy had passed through the town in the night and camped about two miles the other side of the town to Lares.

BROKE CAMP IN HASTE. In the morning when Companies D and K marched out of the South, the Spanish rear guard broke camp in haste, leaving guns, helmets, belts, etc., on the roadside and fled toward Lares, where the main body of the enemy was. We went into camp near the main road and at night my company established outposts on the Lares road about two and a half miles out, on the very ground occupied by the Spanish rear guard the night before. We were up all night watching for spies and arrested several.

"The next morning Lieutenant Colonel Burke, of our regiment, with six companies of the Eleventh Infantry, light artillery, marched past our outposts on the trail of the enemy and Company K was ordered back to camp at Mayaguez. I believe my company and myself slept all the afternoon and all night, although the rain poured down all night and soaked us through and through, tents and all. It was a regular tropical downfall.

"The next morning we were up before light and after a hurried breakfast were once more on the march toward Lares. Companies F and B had advanced guard. Captain James Emery commands Company F, and he and I, with our companies, pounded along over the highest mountain and steepest road I ever saw, up, up, up, and the heat was horrible, but we struggled along as fast as we could, while several men in both companies fell fainting on the road. About noon we could hear the boom of cannon in the distance.

COULD SEE THE BATTLE. "Major Gilbreath, of the Eleventh, on horseback, overtook us just as we arrived at a large gap in the hills through which was a beautiful vista, with the little town of San Marcos, where a fierce battle was then raging between Lieutenant Colonel Burke's force and the Spanish. We were a little too far away to see much of it, but could hear it all right. Imagine my impatience when we were called to halt and await two more companies, that were being hurried up to make a battalion.

It was not long, however, before the four companies were hurrying along again, at a pace so fast that I thought I should melt, and a great deal of me did melt. When we were within a short distance of the mountain and the town, another halt was called and we were informed that it was all over. More

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THROW EVERYTHING AWAY. "Every day, when battle is anticipated, the horseback carries rations for three meals, but when the hurry begins and the troops march toward the ground--haversack, blanket, canteen and all, everything but rifle and ammunition--then when darkness comes or the fight is over, all is picked up by the wagons or the natives with bull teams that are hired to follow the column, and help haul the rations, ammunition, tents, etc.

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The details of the negotiations have been communicated to Judge in a letter from Skelly. Another letter from the latter to a Scranton friend and written Monday reads in part, as follows: "I have this day matched Jim with 'Mysterious Billy' Smith the recognized welterweight champion of the world. They are to box twenty rounds at 142 pounds, for the largest purse offered by any of the clubs throughout the country and a stake of \$1,000. I have offered in behalf of the American sporting club a purse of \$1,000. Jim and Smith are to box for the welterweight championship of the world.

Smith has fought Tommy Ryan four draws. Ryan can do the weight no longer; he is unable to box below 150 pounds. \*\* Jim will start at once to do some early training. I will keep him posted on the matter. "I am very sorry you were disappointed in that match between Doherty and Gans. The latter's manager is coming to time and will consent to a side bet of \$250 which I will post tomorrow. I am beginning to think that maybe we can close the match after all. If we had out the most it will be the greatest contest of the year."

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The frame with its contents was received by express yesterday and is now in the Phoenix parlors where it will be a permanent and handsome fixture. The following engrossed resolution appears among the photographs: Hampden Steam Fire Engine Company, of Reading, Pa. At a meeting of the company held on Thursday evening, October 21, 1897, it was on motion resolved that the cordial thanks of this company are due and hereby tendered to the Phoenix Chemical company, No. 1 of Scranton, Pa., for the courteous reception and kind hospitality shown it on the occasion of their recent visit to this city.

S. E. Ancona, President. Alfred Gumbel, Secretary.

WAS BORN ON THE SEA. Among yesterday's dominicks in the electoral contest was Dominick Mack, of Carbondale, Third ward, First district. He had voted as an American-born and bred but his examination developed the fact that he had been born at sea about a day's sail from Castle Garden and in consequence his vote was disqualified.

Fifty-one witnesses, all told, were examined. Many of them were Italians and had to have the assistance of an interpreter in giving their testimony.

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THE WORLD'S RECORD. The Lake Shore and Michigan Southern railroad is famous as the road which on October 24, 1895, won the world's record for fast long distance speed, making the famous run of 50 1/2 miles in 49 minutes and 28 seconds, or 63.7 miles per hour. Not only this but it is the road running the present daily 24 hour train between New York and Chicago. First in speed it is also first in comfort and safety, all experienced travelers agreeing that it is the best road between New York and Chicago and all points in the west and southwest.

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