[illegible] you, and whether it can be kept open and maintained is indeed a very big guess. None but Uncle Sam would have risked $75,000,000 on such a venture. But more of this later.

Alaska is "the wild." It is a country of few pleasures and many perils. It is a horseless, womanless country. Over the whole land is brooding silence and mystery. It is full of hardship, sadness, homesickness. It is a land without comforts, a land without laughter. One long night in winter, one long day in summer with perpetual twilight, bright green and mysterious.

Yet men come here and stay here become Gypsy followers of the trail, lured on by the gamblers' hope of "a strike." It's a land where life is reduced to elementals, where men "let go" and raise whiskers and hell. It's a country of "what-the-hell-do-we-care," where the bars are let down and men descend toward the brutal.

From Tananna down the river I had a state room companion, a young fellow with an old face, scared with the wrinkles of hardship and exposure. He told me he had been in Alaska nine years and had been vainly trying for the last nine months to get out.

"I go up against it harder than a 'Cheechako,'" said he, "and if this bunch of tourists wants to reach St. Michael they had better chuck me overboard. I'm sure out of luck and I'll hoodoo the boat. I hit the trail over to Forty Mile last September and missed the last boat down by an hour. I blowed about all I had, then mushed back and went to work on the railroad at Fairbanks with a surveying gang. Two weeks ago I came over again and just missed the boat. Now I am going to make one last jump for the outside and if I miss this chance I'm going to marry an Eskimo and be a squaw man."

I saw this man stand at the bar and drink one after another full glasses of raw whiskey, then suddenly fall like a dead man. I have seen several men fall this way — suddenly collapse in a heap—and the only explanation I got was "they do that way in Alaska." But I deduced a better explanation — the whiskey may be uncertain in percentage but its potency is unquestioned. It has the "kick."

Later, as I became acquainted with this man, I found he had had two years in college, and was a very agreeable roommate.

He said he took engineering but since he had been in Alaska he had only worked at it to get grub stakes and had prospected most of the time.

"I've seen fellows strike it above me, below me, both sides of me and underneath me, but I never found a yard of rich ground yet. A pay streak would get up and drag it if it saw me coming. I've had a bellyful—me for the outside, if I can ever make it."

I got acquainted with another fellow, a miner, thru the exchange of reading matter. He had been 22 years in Alaska, came in before the stampede, and he had never made a strike worth while. Last year he said he located a claim that looked like a shiner, and took out a few hundred dollars, then it "went phlooie."

"It's a 'pocket' country — there's no figuring it out. You may take out a few buckets from bed rock that will run $500 to the bucket, then it goes dry and you can thaw acres of ground without finding another ounce. Damn such a country."

This man was about half dead from the excessive use of tobacco. Snuff, cigarettes, cigars pipe, plug—he took them down the line in succession. He said he was on his way to eastern Oregon, to the hot springs, where he was going to boil out and quit, then he was going to invest his few hundred dollars in a little piece of land and remember Alaska only as a nightmare.

Below Marshall two miners boarded the boat in the night. They had a beautiful jag on, and occupying an adjoining room they [illegible] sleep for me. In the morning one of them, a Swede, [illegible] opposite me at breakfast, and he told me the other fellow had "made his strike," cleaned up a [illegible] and was going "out on a [illegible]." I [illegible] dead with [illegible] and I wondered if his "strike" was worth the awful price he had paid for it—15 years of alternate river work and prospecting — and I wondered how long that money would stay with him when he got among the wolves in Seattle.

And one more: A man about 32 a Swede, a quiet, gentlemanly, educated fellow, with a something about him that attracted. And he told the same old story — years of the hardest labor and worst of exposures. He was one of the lucky ones at Willow Creek, made his "strike" and had sold out for a nice roll. "I have seen too many men made beasts of in this country to stay any longer," he said.

Later, when I told him I was from Corvallis, Ore., he said: "When you see Editor E. T. Reed again, tell him you met his former student in Minnesota, Stephen L. Bergh, and ask him if he remembers me."

In the interior of Alaska a man without a trade or profession — the working man who can stand the grief—stands a far better chance. There is little demand for the trades. The miner, the experienced "sour dough" man, can get better pay for his labor than in any other part of the United States. He can get $5 a day and board, seven days in the week, but the work is the kind that wears a man's heart out.

These men will go out to the mines, work like mules and live like dogs. For weeks, perhaps months they will practice the most rigid economy, mending, making and patching their clothes. Then they will go in to a river town and blow every last dollar, from $500 to $1,000, in three or four days. Drunken on the poisonous whiskey, they simply sow their money broadcast. Then go back to the mines.

There are some exceptions, perhaps many, where the men instead of blowing their money at the bars, put it into grubstakes and go out prospecting, and after weeks, sometimes months, they mush back, exhausted and disappointed.

There is one trade, carpenter, that pays high wages in Alaska—when there is any work, when a new strike shows enough permanency to guarantee a town at the nearest river point. Then carpenters can get all the way from $1 to $2 per hour. But the work does not last long.

Here are a few prices that miners have to pay in the new strikes, before the camp gets settled enough to build trails for freighting. These are prices in the places hard to reach: Flour $19 per hundred; potatoes $22 per hundred; eggs $30 per crate, and all other provisions in proportion. From which you can readily see that a miner must have rich dirt or he can't stay long. Twelve cents a pound is often paid for having provisions packed into the new strikes on the small streams far back from the Yukon.

And it is these awful expenses that hold men back from prospecting territory that may cover many another Bonanza.

Note—This letter is rather out of its turn in the series. It was written weeks after I left Dawson, and is based on reliable information obtained from miners and from personal observation in many of the river towns and mining camps. The next letter will start from Dawson and the following letters will relate the interesting incidents and stories of an 1800-mile trip down the river to St. Michael and to Nome.

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Sign Boards on the Up-road

By Hamilton B. Williams

The Roman poet, Horace, was "converted" by seeing a lightning flash leap out of the apparently clear sky, to a belief in the Gods. This conversion, however, in common with all unnatural forms of religious phenomena, is not valid. The approach to God is not by superstition and mystery, but by the Open Roads.

The Father of Lights and Mercies will be found on the light-roads and by mercy's trails. Every quality of the being of God is a signboard to Him. He, in whom we live and move and have our being is not difficult to get at.

A mother is not hard to approach. She would be deemed a very unnatural, unmotherly mother who must be approached with dread and uncertainty. He would be a strange God who must be placated by sacrifice and offering. I should, personally, have no desire to meet such a one.

Jesus is the Man of the Open Roads. He interpreted life in symbols of light, and had no other business than creating a hunger for life and more abundant life. He fought desperately the false, the unbeautiful, the wrong, and cleared God and Man for ever, the one from being a clan-God, the other from being a crawling worm. God is a Father, men are brethren; Love is the law of Life.

The greatest thought possible is to believe that God's is the most welcoming heart in the universe. He honors God who magnifies Him, and as we honor men by believing in their immortality—and treating them as such.

The wickedest of all evil is deliberate injury to a human soul. It is the outcome of treason to light, of a broken contract of responsibility. The hurt may be as subtle a withholding cheer and comfort. If one should praise God and does not, his silence is blasphemy. If one should play the friend and does not his failure is a deadly bludgeon. And God suffers most the human pang and sorrow.

There is no doubt that Jesus suffered the load of human guilt on the cross and that over His heart swept all human sorrows. He suffered as a Friend, not as a sop, as a close Friend, not as a mechanical propitiation. He suffers still with the uttermost man and the victims of cruelty and hate and unmercy and unsympathy.

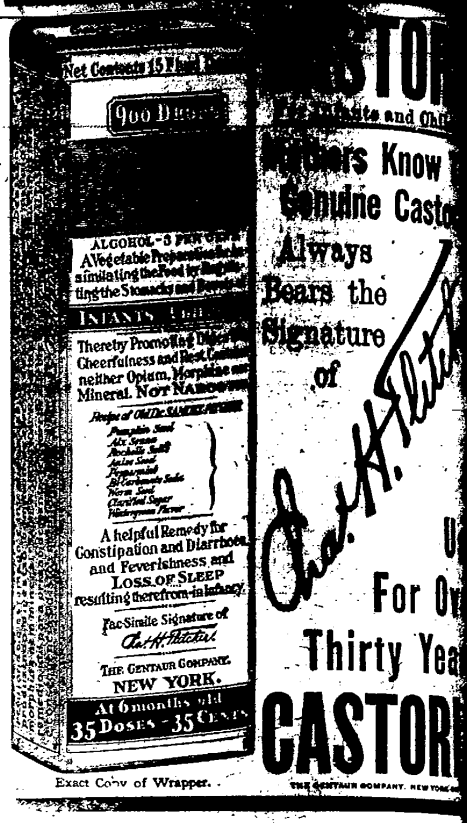
And because he is our Friend we may be sure that upon whatever roads we travel—if we seek God—He will give what the human heart needs. And his friends are so proved by their lending a hand.

JUST GOT OVER A COLD?

Look out for kidney troubles and backache. Colds overtax the kidneys and often leave them weak. For weak kidneys — well, read what an Andover woman says:

Mrs. P. J. Doherty, W. Center St., Andover, says: "A cold, which settled in my kidneys brought on an attack of kidney complaint. A heavy, dull pain in my kidneys and across my loins made me feel in constant misery and every step I took seemed to jar my whole system. I was tired and dragged out, too, and it seemed as though I would never get around. I had a dull pain in the back of my head. One of the family told me about Doan's Kidney Pills and I procured a supply. Two boxes gave me wonderful relief and did me lots of good."

Price 60c, at all dealers. Don't simply ask for a kidney remedy—get Doan's Kidney Pills — the same that Mrs. Doherty had. Foster-Milburn Co., Props., Buffalo, N. Y.



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Wayne county is sharply divided over the selection of a tuberculosis hospital site.

Rochester's society for the prevention of cruelty to children had 292 cases last month.

Dansville vineyards report finer and more plentiful yields than in many other years.

Silver Springs merchants have decided to discontinue soliciting orders and delivering goods.

Buffalo has fewer cases of communicable diseases, among its school children than ever before.

The Roman Meal company of Tacoma, Wash., plans to establish a branch in North Tonawanda.

NOT ENOUGH CHI[illegible]

ever receive the proper balance to sufficiently nourish both [illegible] brain during the growing period [illegible] nature's demands are greater [illegible] mature life. This is shown in [illegible] pale faces, lean bodies, frequent [illegible] and lack of ambition.

For all such children we [illegible] unmistakable earnestness: The [illegible] Scott's Emulsion, and need it [illegible] possesses in concentrated form [illegible] food elements to enrich their [illegible] changes weakness to strength; [illegible] them sturdy and strong. No [illegible]

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