

after the summer of 1849, says the historian, was certainly much less than \$1,000 a year, and he adds that there never was a year in the whole period when the average wages of white laborers in any other occupation were not double the return to the miner. That is to say, the great mass of the miners outside of the few who made the lucky finds, never realized more than a bare, hard living from their feverish adventure.

What, then, must be the prospects before the mass of men now rushing on to the Klondike region? It is not impossible that this excursion may equal in numbers the memorable '49 rush to California. There are already 8,000 or more people assembled at Dawson City and in that vicinity. Thousands more are on the Alaskan coast awaiting the advent of spring and the opening of the ice and rock-bound ways of the upper Yukon gold fields. Every vessel that now leaves the coast of California, Oregon, Washington and British Columbia, is loaded down with gold-seekers. A steamer sailing yesterday from Portland, Ore., carried 450 adventurers and refused passage to 300 other applicants. A schooner leaving Seattle yesterday carried as many as is could, including 25 women. A party of 70 left Connecticut yesterday bound for the Klondike. The railroads running from Chicago to Washington and Oregon are already enjoying a large traffic of this kind and preparing for a much greater rush as the spring draws near. Their stocks and bonds are strong in Wall street speculation on this prospect.

But if the event of the California bonanza proved that the great mass of the gold-seekers had been engaged in a wild-goose chase, what must be said of the probable results of this Klondike venture? The people of California have their celebration this week because it was fifty years ago this time that John Marshall found the gold nugget that set the country by the ears. That year of 1848 brought out \$10,000,000. But the \$10,000,000 or less of gold which came from the Klondike last summer and fall was the product not of a season, but largely of two or three years of diligent labor on the part of those who brought it out. One miner who has just arrived on the Alaskan coast from Dawson City reports that the whole long winter's work of the thousands now in the Klondike field will not yield more than \$6,000,000 in gold. It has been predicted by one of the more enthusiastic boomers recently coming from that quarter that the gold production for this year in Alaska and adjacent territory would reach \$50,000,000, but a later arrival whose words reached the newspapers yesterday, placed the probable yield of the year at \$20,000,000.

There is every prospect that from 20,000 to 50,000 people will be struggling for a share in this product before mid-summer, and if the yield should reach the largest estimate, obviously the return to the great mass of gold seekers must be beggarly indeed. And they must endure such hardships as the California miner never dreamed of to get that light return. But the chances are that the production will fall under the minimum estimate of \$20,000,000. The latest news from the gold region is that no new "strikes" have been made since early last year. The New York Times prints a letter received from Dawson City, under the date of the first of December, which gives the best and evidently most truthful account of the situation there that we have seen. It states that the entire district up and down the various creeks where gold has been found, has been staked out or pre-empted; that many of the so-called mines are of little or no value; that they are all worked under the most difficult conditions imagin-

ble; that food is scarce and must become scarcer, and must be extraordinarily high in price at all times because of the inaccessibility of the region; and that, in the absence of further discoveries beyond the occupied districts, the people who are now moving to the fields must become wage workers for those holding the claims, and must expend their high wages for equally high-priced food and endure great privation, cold and hardship in addition.

Nevertheless the rush to the Klondike will proceed. Let it be known that ten men in a company of 10,000 have picked up a sudden fortune in that field and gotten out safely, while the 9,990 have either starved to death or barely escaped with their lives, and the rush will still go on—justifying that celebrated foreign characterization that if you were to throw a dollar across the pit of hades the average Yankee would leap for it.—Springfield Republican.

STRANGER THAN FICTION.

St. Louis Globe-Democrat: If you ring the electric bell at 1129 North Grand avenue any afternoon between 2 and 6 o'clock, a polite, scholarly-looking old gentleman, with white mustache and imperial and a slight foreign accent, will open the door. In reply to questions he will tell you that he is Dr. Simon Pollak. He is the oldest practicing physician in this city, and probably in the state, but you'd never guess it from his appearance or his conversation.

If you impress Dr. Pollack favorably and there is no great rush of clients he will drop into a reminiscent vein and tell you stories of life in Tennessee and Louisiana fifty or sixty years ago, and of St. Louis in was times. Some are gray, some are gay, and all are interesting.

Probably the favorite recollection of Dr. Pollak is how he obtained a life-like portrait of a girl who had been dead six months. He declares that there was no tenderer sentiment than friendship involved, but through the narrative there is a constant suggestion of the "saddest words of tongue or pen."

The story has never been printed before. "It is fifty years ago," said the doctor to a Globe-Democrat reporter yesterday. "I was living on Sycamore creek, twenty-five miles from Nashville, Tenn., with the family of Samuel Watson, a prominent manufacturer and a member of the legislature. I was a young man then, not long in this country, and I spoke English so faulty I desired to improve in that particular before beginning the practice of my profession in Nashville."

"Sycamore creek was a beautiful stream, clear as crystal, as is most of the water in the limestone regions around Nashville. Samuel Watson had had dammed it and made a pond and a waterfall with sufficient force to run a grist mill, a saw mill and a cotton factory. He was a Rhode Island man, full of push and enterprise, and a son-in-law of Governor Morton of Massachusetts, the man who was elected by one vote in 1840.

"His brother, Matthew Watson, was a bank president in Nashville. Matthew had a daughter, Mary Frances Watson, the most charming creature I ever saw. She was a brunette, just bursting into the full bloom of young maidenhood, with eyes like deep shaded waters and a smile like the breaking of dawn.

"That summer five young ladies came down from Nashville to spend their vacation at Samuel Watson's house. Mary Frances was among them. I taught her to ride a black pony I had bought from a stranded circus, and to row and sail

a boat on the pond above the waterfall. The girls had great sport, riding, rowing and fishing in the day and singing and dancing at night. Mary Frances was the life of the company. High-spirited and active, she enjoyed all out-door sports, but nothing delighted her so much as a gallop on Apollo, the black pony.

"It was a time to be remembered, for its joys as well as the tragedy that ended it. In August, a few days before the girls were to return home, there was an accident on the pond. The boat upset and the five girls were thrown into the water. They were all rescued, and none experienced any evil effects but Mary Frances. I have decided since that she had the seeds of malignant malarial fever in her system, and that the wetting she got developed the disease. She was seized with a chill which was followed by a high fever.

"She was taken to my room, which was the most convenient for the purpose, and put to bed. There she lay for eleven days. I watched her till the end came, taking practically no rest. I am an old man and I have had my share of sorrow, but no grief I ever felt was keener than that which wrung my heart when I saw the child-woman's mother mourning over her. We feared Mrs. Watson would lose her reason, so poignant was her sorrow. 'Oh, if I only had a likeness of her,' she would say. 'Just something I could love as her image.'

"It was very sad, but the world does not stop for human sorrow. Mary Frances was buried in Nashville. I remained at Sycamore Creek till September of that year, then the place grew hateful to me. Everything about it reminded me of the dead girl. I removed to Nashville. I called frequently on Matthew Watson's family, and Mrs. Watson talked to me of her daughter. She often said it would be some mitigation of her grief if she only had a likeness of her child.

"Photographs, and even daguerreotypes, were unknown in those days, and minatures were rare in this country because of the scarcity of good artists.

"George W. Dodge was the most noted miniature painter of that day. It was he who painted the celebrated minatures of Henry Clay, Daniel Webster and Andrew Jackson. He lived about the time Polk was elected President. He came to Nashville shortly after I did and I met him.

"An idea struck me. I went to Dodge and said: 'Could you make a likeness of a person you never saw?'

"He laughed at me. I explained more fully. Mary Frances' face was just as vivid in my mind as though I were looking at her. I could describe her accurately, and I could get models of her features.

"Dodge became interested. 'It looks impossible,' said he. 'but I would like to try it. First, however, I must have a cast of her face.'

"'But she has been dead six months.'

"'I must have it,' said he. 'It is necessary for me to have the exact dimensions and proportions of the osseous structure. Without that no description would be of any service. With it I may get a likeness but it is doubtful.'

"'You shall have it,' I said. I went to Matthew Watson and unfolded my plan. It was to obtain a likeness of Mary Frances and present it to her mother. He agreed to aid me by giving his consent to the body's being exhumed.

"Dr. R. K. Martin, Mr. James E. Yeatman—now of St. Louis, and the only person living, except myself, who had any hand in the affair—Artist Dodge and I went to the cemetery at night, opened the grave and took out the corpse that had been put there six months before in a walnut coffin.