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STORIES OF THE KLONDIKE.

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NEW YORK, August 10th, 1897.

New York has the Klondike gold fever. Every one is talking of Alaska and its mines, and there will be a big emigration from here to the gold fields in the spring. The extent of the craze is almost inconceivable. The people are ready to believe anything, and to invest in anything which bears the title of Alaskan gold. This is the case with some apparently cool-headed business men. Already a number of one-dollar-a-share companies with a face stock value of millions of dollars have been formed, and the indications are that there will be similar enterprises started in the other cities of the United States before spring. I had a chat today with Mr. W. J. Arkell, the proprietor of Frank Leslie's Weekly Newspaper and "The Judge," giving some of his experiences, which illustrate the craze for gold.

Mr. Arkell has laid claim, you know, by right of discovery, to a large part of the Klondike gold fields for the estate of E. J. Glave and others. Mr. Glave headed the expedition which Mr. Arkell sent to Alaska seven years ago for Frank Leslie's Weekly. During this time he made the first report, it is said, as to the existence of these wonderfully rich gold deposits, and filed a map and certain claims with the State Department at Washington. This was about 1891. Glave intended to go back to Alaska and engage in mining, but in the meantime failing to raise the money, he took an exploring expedition to cross Africa, and died in the attempt. Now that his discoveries are known to have been of great value the capitalists who refused to believe him are ready to kick themselves for rejecting the fortune he offered them, and Mr. Arkell, I doubt not, is one of the number. As to the claim of the region by right of discovery, I believe Mr. Arkell is too practical a man to base much hope upon such a foundation. There are, however, hundreds of people all over the country who have so little doubt of his success that they are willing to join him to any moderate financial extent in the prosecution of it. He tells me he has been pointed out upon the street as "The King of the Klondike," and that the attentions he gets and the remarks his presence calls out are somewhat annoying, to say the least, to a man of his modest and bashful temperament.

Today, for instance, he was dining at Delmonico's with William Walter Webb of the Vanderbilt family, when Mr. Webb said: "Arkell, I wish you would tell me if there is anything the matter with my clothes. Nearly every one in

the restaurant is looking at and talking about me."

"No they are not," said Arkell, "they are talking about me. They are discussing my Klondike claim and the enormous amount of money I shall get out of it."

I called at the Judge building, on the corner of 5th avenue and 16th street, this afternoon, and had a chat with Mr. Arkell about his Alaskan expedition. Said Mr. Arkell: "The expedition was planned by E. J. Glave, the African explorer. Glave had been in Africa as one of Stanley's lieutenants, and having gone through the unknown hot regions of the globe he was then anxious to explore some of the unknown colder lands. He made me believe that I could get a large amount of reputation and circulation and news for Frank Leslie's by sending an expedition of ten men to explore the unknown regions of Alaska. There were from 3,000 to 4,000 miles of the interior of Alaska which had never been touched by the foot of a white man, and it was his idea to go over the mountains and push his way north to the Arctic sea.

"When I asked Glave what the trip would cost" Mr. Arkell continued, "he said he would not need more than \$5,000." Said he "I will get ten white men to go with me. We will have a number of scientists, photographers and writers. When we get to Alaska we will hire ten Indians and a number of dogs, and there is no doubt that we can make it for that sum." "All right," said I, "provided the cost is not over \$5,000."

"But did you get out for that?" I asked as the editor stopped for a moment and a cloud came over his usually placid brow.

"No, indeed I did not," he said. "It cost me over three times \$5,000. In the first place, we advertised for men to go with Mr. Glave on the expedition. The result was 3,000 applicants. From these we selected A. B. Schantz and E. H. Wells, and these two with Glave became the leaders of the party, and signed the contract with me to do the work for \$5,000. Well, they started. They traveled altogether about 5,000 miles. They sent a lot of pictures of Indians, of new rivers and mountains, of new glaciers and new lakes, one of which they named after me. It is, I am told, ten miles wide and forty miles long, and during most of the year it contains 400 square miles of ice, but the only good I got out of it was publishing a picture of it in the Weekly."

"These pictures kept coming in for about seven months," Mr. Arkell went on, "and then they stopped, and I did not hear of my expedition for over a year. They had gotten snowed in on the other side of the mountains, not

very far from the gold region. They had to send back for Indians and new dogs and sleds, and the result was that when they returned to New York they brought a bill with them from the Alaska Commercial Company for \$8,000. I had already paid the \$5,000. I had to pay his additional, which made \$13,000, and then I got another bill for \$3,000 for three Indians who had died while acting as carriers during the journey. A thousand dollars seemed a good deal for a dead Indian, but I paid it. I was thoroughly disgusted with Alaska, however, and for a long time I trembled every time I opened a letter, for fear it might contain another bill for my Alaska expedition's expenses."

"But how about the gold fields, Mr. Arkell?"

"I am coming to that now," was the reply. "Glave and Wells and Schantz brought back a lot of gold with them. They had several bags of specimens and nuggets and they reported that there were gold fields along the Yukon and its branches of wonderful richness. Glave said that he had found one hundred and fifty miners washing out gold in one camp, and that there was lots of it. Glave wanted me to back him up and organize an expedition to go to Alaska and mine this gold, and he never gave up the idea of returning to Alaska. He expected to go back there as soon as he had finished his African trip, but, you know, he died there."

"Why did you not go in and organize a company?" said I.

"I had no faith in the stories," replied Mr. Arkell. "I was so disgusted at having had to pay that \$16,000 that I did not believe a word of what they said. I thought they were trying to bunco me, and that they had done so. Their stories of new mountains and rivers, and especially those of the gold, I considered lies, and I suspected they had bought their gold nuggets in San Francisco and were palming them off upon me as Alaskan gold. It is now evident that they told the truth, and that what I considered one of the chief follies of my life might have been turned to my advantage had I used it in the right way. You see the Glave party went right through these Klondike gold regions, and Schantz made a map of them, which was filed in the State Department. They sent to me weekly sketches and photographs of these fields, and so we have today the only true map and sketches which have been made there. We will, of course, republish them now."

"How about your claims to the gold fields?"

"I had no idea of making any claim until Mr. Schantz telegraphed me to look out for his interests, and that we ought