THE NEW GOLD FIELDS

THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT INVESTIGATES THE YUKON.

Uncle Sam Sent an Expedition to Gather Precise Knowledge as to the Character of the New Mines—Photographs Show Methods of Transportation—The Distinguished Scientist J. Edward Spurr, Chief of the United States Geological Survey to Alaska, Tells Interesting Facts.

WASHINGTON, July 31.—The arrival of the Portland, the modern treasure ship, at Seattle freighted with gold, and the consequent natural excitement and demand for precise information, has directed attention to the fact that the United States government recently sent an expedition into Alaska after the very knowledge that is now so widely sought.

The expedition consisted of members of the United States geological survey and was headed by that distinguished geologist and man of science, Prof. J. Edward Spurr. The following information and photographs gathered by Prof. Spurr are of the greatest possible interest. It might be said to be the first official knowledge and the first photographs.

Close to the waters of the Yukon river in far-away Alaska, the northernmost of Uncle Sam's possessions, lies what the government now pronounces the coming gold mining center of the world. Here for the first time is told by Mr. J. Edward Spurr, chief of the party sent out by the government geological survey to thoroughly examine the gold fields, the truth concerning what has hitherto been largely veiled in mystery.

There is little about the country besides its mineral wealth to invite. In the short summer clouds of mosquitoes descend on the yellow land, like the pestilence of ancient Egypt. In the long winter the cold is so severe that mining can only be carried on during the sunshiny days. Yet Prof. Spurr tells us in the accompanying statement that this is a country, which, for placer mining, will exceed California's palmiest days. To gather the gold, however, and wean it from the surroundings where nature has placed it, much valuable machinery is necessary.

So it will be seen that it is going to be a hard fight the seeker of wealth will have who tries his chances with fortune in the Yukon gold fields. This is what Prof. Spurr says:

"To the Editor: Much has been written of late concerning the possibilities of Alaska as a gold-producing country. As a matter of fact, the production of the present year may be roughly estimated at $3,000,000. This amount, however, comes from an immense region of half a million square miles, or about one-quarter as large as the United States. Of the mines which produce this gold, some are in the bedrock, while others are placer diggings.

"The bedrock mines are few in number and situated on the southeast coast, which is the most accessible part of the territory. The chief one is the great Treadwell mine, near Juneau, and there are also important mines at Berner's bay, at the island of Unga and other places. The latest strike is the Clondyke. Most of these mines, however, are in low grade ores, and the production is only made profitable by means of careful management and operations on a very large scale.

"The placer mines are those which occupy the most prominent place in the popular mind, since they are remote from civilization and in a country about which little is known, and which is, on account of this uncertainty, dangerously attractive to the average man. This gold-producing country of the interior is mostly in the vicinity of the Yukon river or of some of its immediate tributaries. The most productive districts hitherto have been the Forty-Mile district, which lies partly in American and partly in British territory, and the Birch Creek district, which lies in American territory. Some gold diggings are also supposed to exist on Stewart river, and some gold has been shipped from the Kuykuk. During the latter part of the past season diggings were also found on the Clondyke and Indian rivers, near Forty-Mile.

"Another place concerning which there have been many vague rumors of gold, causing a stampede of many unprepared and unfitted men, is the Cook inlet country, which lies on the coast above the mouth of Copper river, a situation remote alike from the mines near Juneau and from the placer mines on the Yukon.

"In all this immense country over which placer digging is carried on, or has been carried on, I estimate that there are about 2,000 miners. They are mostly in the Yukon districts. These districts lie in a broad belt of gold-producing rocks, having a considerable width and extending in a general east and west direction for several hundred miles. Throughout this belt occur quartz veins which carry gold, but so far as yet found out, the ore is of low grade, and a large proportion of the veins have been so broken by movements in the rocks that they cannot be followed. For this reason the mines in the bed rock cannot be worked except on a large scale with improved machinery, and even such operations are impossible until the general conditions of the country, in reference to transportation and supplies, are improved.

"Through the gold-bearing rocks the streams have cut deep gullies and canyons, and in their beds the gold which was contained in the rocks which have been worn away is concentrated, so that from a large amount of very low grade rock there may be formed in places a gravel sufficiently rich in gold to repay washing. All the mining which is done in this country, therefore, consists in the washing out of these gravels.

"In each gulch prospectors are at liberty to stake out claims not already taken, the size of the claim being determined by vote of all the miners in each gulch, according to the richness of the gravel. The usual length of a claim is about 500 feet along the stream, and the total width of the gulch bed, which is ordinarily narrow. When a prospector has thus staked out his claim, it is recorded by one of the miners, who is elected by his fellows in each gulch for that purpose, and this secures him sufficient tiue. The miners' laws are practically the entire government in these districts, for the remoteness prevents any systematic communication being carried on with the United States. All questions and disputes are settled by miners' meetings, and the question in dispute is put to popular vote.

"In prospecting, the elementary method of panning is used to discover the presence of gold in gravel, but after a claim is staked and systematic work begun, long sluice boxes are built of boards, the miners being obliged to fell the trees themselves and saw out the lumber with whip saws, a very laborious kind of work. The depth of gavel in the bottom of the gulches varies from a foot up to twenty or thirty feet, and when it is deeper than the latter figure it cannot be worked.

"The upper part of the gravels is barren, and the pay dirt lies directly upon the rock beneath, and is generally very thin. To get at this pay dirt all the upper gravels must be shoveled off, and this preliminary work often requires an entire season, even in a very small claim. When the gravel is deeper than a certain amount—say ten feet—the task of removing it becomes formidable. In this case the pay dirt can sometimes be got at in the winter season when the gravels are frozen hard by sinking shafts through these gravels and drifting along the pay dirt.

"The pay dirt thus removed is taken to the surfaces and washed out in sluices when the warm weather begins. This underground working is done by burning instead of blasting and picking. A fire is built close to the frozen gravel, and when it is sufficiently thawed, it is shoveled out and removed. The stripping off of the upper gravels which has been mentioned, can be done only in the comparatively short summer season when the surface thaws.

"The ordinary method of getting into the Yukon country is by crossing the Chilkoot pass from Juneau, down the Lewes and Yukon rivers to the gold districts. The usual time for starting is in April, and a large part of the journey is made over ice which fills the lakes and rivers at this time of year. By this early starting a large part of the season available for working is obtained. Not every comer can find new diggings which are profitable, and many of them are glad to work for wages.

"The ordinary wages in summer are $10 per day, but sixty days is considered about the average number for summer work, so the total earnings are not so great as will appear at first sight; and the prospects for work during the remainder of the year are slight. The journey over the pass and down the Yukon is one of great difficulty and hardship, especially as all supplies have to be carried along. The pass itself is difficult to cross, the lakes are subject to violent gales, and there are a number of very dangerous rapids. Once in the country the newcomer finds himself no more comfortable.

"During the summer season, when the days are sometimes really hot, there are swarms of mosquitoes and gnats, which have not their equal in the world, and which are enough alone to discourage most men. I have heard stories, which I can readily believe to be true, of strong, hardy men being so tormented by these pests while on the trail through the swamp to the Birch creek diggings that they broke down and sobbed in utter despair. The method of reaching these and other diggings consists partly in pulling a loaded boat against a swift stream, and often over rapids, and partly in trudging through the swamp or over a rough mountain trail with a heavy load on one's back. In winter the thermometer falls so low that it cannot be measured by any available means. It is certain, however, that it reaches 70 degrees below zero. During all this winter season very little can be done, and as darkness exists most of the time, life often seems intolerable.

"The actual expenses of getting into the country are considerable. Indians must be hired to do a part or the whole of the transportation of supplies across the Chilkoot pass at very high wages, and the cost of the necessary outfit is in itself considerable. On arriving at the diggings provisions are often not obtainable at any price; or if they are to be had, the variety is slight. The supply is always uncertain, depending upon the lateness of the spring and of the fall.

"Owing to the difficulty in bringing in supplies, prices are very high at the river posts and much higher in the diggings. The freight alone from the coast to the diggings costs as high as 50 cents a pound, so that when one eats potatoes at $1 a pound and bacon at $5 cents a pound, other things in proportion, the cost of living is enormous, and even employment at $10 per day for sixty days out of the year will not enable a man to grow rich very rapidly. Even employment for wages, moreover, is scarce, there being several applicants for every job. Owing to the high price of supplies, no claim that does not pay at least $10 a day to each man working can be worked except at a loss. Many competent men who engage in mining here and work faithfully experience failures, and are unable to earn enough to buy provisions.

"In such a situation it is very difficult to make one's way out of the country, for the journey up the river along the usual route requires upwards of thirty days' hard work, and provisions must be bought for the trip. The trip down the river and back to civilization by steamer, is very expensive, and of late years the number seeking to get out in that way exceeds the carrying capacity of the few steamers. Last year fully 150 men who wished and intended to leave the country by steamer, were unable to do so, and are still there.

"Under the conditions which now exist, there are quite enough in the Yukon district already and the object of this article it to discourage people from rushing there without due consideration. Probably ninety-nine out of every 100 men are unfitted by nature for such a life as Yukon mining necessitates, and had much better never make the attempt. The hundredth man must be a miner and frontiersman by nature, strong and patient, a hard worker, and a lover of secluded life. Even such a man will likely fail on account of the large element of chance, and the most successful miner obtains only a few thousand dollars in profit after a number of years patient work.

"Any great increase in the number of men going into the Yukon district would be disastrous, on account of the strict limits of the food supply and facilities for transportation. The result would be famine, disorder and failure. Several years ago this actually happened when the Forty-Mile miners were without food and were obliged to travel down the Yukon over the ice to St. Michaels in the dead of winter, a terrible journey of nearly 2,000 miles. At that time there were only a few men in the country, but if the number had been very much larger, even this resource would have been possible.

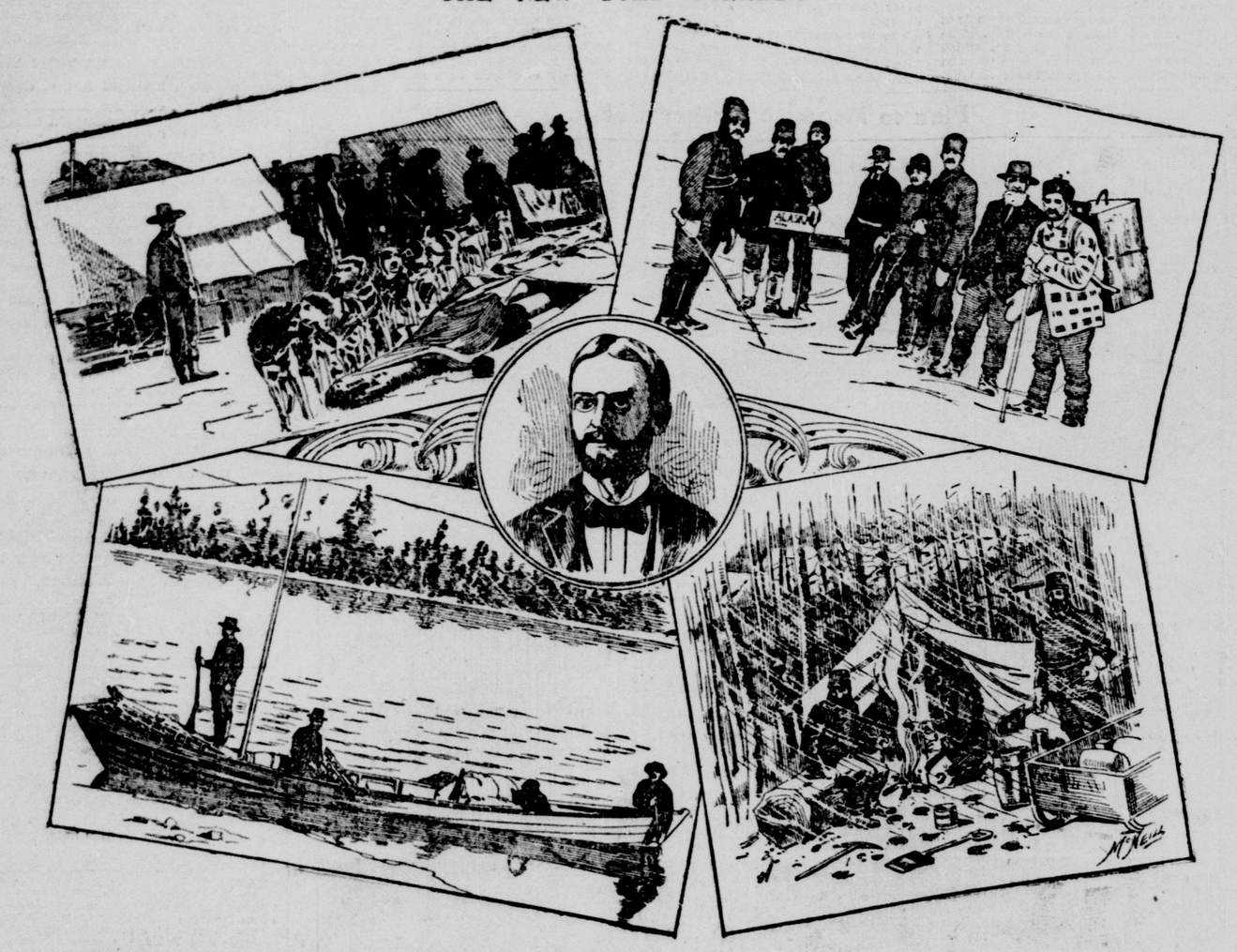
"My general advice to the average man intending to go to the Yukon gold district is—to stay out. Many men go there every year and suffer hardship, failure, loss of capital, and sometimes of health. If any one undertakes the trip he should take with him enough supplies to last as long as he intends to stay—one year, two years, or whatever amount. He should have money enough to land him in the country and out again, if necessary, and should start early enough in the season to enable him to return up the river if he intends to come out the same year, for the facilities for transportation by steamer are likely to be entirely inadequate.

"J. EDWARD SPURR.

"United States Geological Survey."

The accompanying illustrations, which are drawn from photographs taken by members of Mr. Spurr's party, show exactly what sort of country and what people one sees in that desolate region, where Mammon in chill and hideous garb holds sway over all. It is more than probable that the next five years will see an army of adventurers and a host of legitimate miners brave the dangers and the discomforts of this locality, which, unlike California, will never be made to blossom like the rose, though it may yield the riches of the Indies.

THE NEW GOLD FIELDS!



These Pictures, Drawn From Photographs, Will Be Received With Great Interest, as They Are the First Ones Published of the Great New Gold Fields. They Tell of the Hardships, and Were Taken by J. Edward Spurr, United States Geological Expert.

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OUR BLACK DIAMONDS

FACTS ABOUT UNITED STATES COAL FIELDS AND MINERS.

Where Our Coal Comes From—How It Was Discovered—The Anthracite Regions and Their Enormous Output—Our Coal Product Worth More Than All Our Gold and Silver—The Coal Fields of the World—English Coal and How the Mines Are Playing Out—The Horrors of the English and Belgian Mines—How Women and Children Have Slaved in Them—Boys in the Mines of America and Europe—Some Dangers of Mining.

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WASHINGTON, July 31.—I have spent the last few days at the United States geological survey looking up facts about coal and coal mining. The geologists know more about coal than any one else. They can tell you just how the world looked when coal was made, and they describe how there were ages of luxuriant growth consisting of pine trees, fir trees and all kinds of mosses and plants, which, dying down year after year, became a great matted bed of vegetation. They tell you how this bed was bottled up by being covered up with rocks and how it finally turned into coal. They can tell you just when this happened and how long it came to pass before Noah was a baby or Cain killed little Abel outside the Garden of Eden.

How Coal Was Discovered.

Men lived for thousands of year upon the earth before they knew that coal was good to burn. All the iron made before the days of the middle ages was with charcoal, and a fairy tale is told in Belgium of how a poor blacksmith discovered the first black diamonds. He found that he could not get along, for it took so much time to make his charcoal for his furnace. He was just about to commit suicide when a white-bearded old man appeared at his shop and told him to go to the mountains near by and dig out the black earth and burn it. He did so, and was able to make a horse shoe at one forging. This is the Belgian story of the discovery of coal. The first coal found in America was near Ottawa, Ill. It is mentioned by Father Hennepin, a French explorer, who visited there in 1679. The first mines worked were about Richmond, Va. This coal was discovered by a boy while out fishing.

He was hunting for crabs for bait in a small creek, and thus stumbled upon the outcroppings of the James river coal bed. Our anthracite coal fields have perhaps paid better than any other coal fields of the world. They were discovered by a hunter named Nicho Allen when George Washington was president. Allen encamped one night in the Schuylkill regions, kindling his fire upon some black stones. He awoke to find himself almost roasted. The stones were on fire, and anthracite was burning for the first time. Shortly after this a company was gotten up to sell anthracite coal. It was taken around to the blacksmiths, but they did not know how to use it, and it was very unpopular. Some of it was shipped to Philadelphia by a Col. Shoemaker and sold there. It was not at all satisfactory, and a writ was gotten out from the city authorities denouncing the colonel as a knave and scoundrel for trying to impose rocks upon them as coal. Still Philadelphia has largely been built up by anthracite coal, and 50,000,000 tons of this coal were taken out of the Pennsylvania fields in 1896.

Since then some of these coal lands have been sold as high as $1,200 an acre, and the Philadelphia and Reading Company in 1871 paid $40,000,000 for 100,000 acres of coal land in this region. As a sample of the amount of business done in anthracite coal, the Deleware and Hudson Canal Company paid $5,000,000 in one year for mining, and their coal sales that year amounted to more than $10,000,000.

We Beat the World.

It is hard to estimate the enormous amount of money the United States makes out of its coal. We get more than three times as much out of our coal mines as out of our gold mines, and the silver metal is not in it with the black diamonds. There is a little region in eastern Pennsylvania, about 125 miles from Philadelphia, and not more than 200 miles from New York, which produces every year coal to a greater value than all the gold mines of the Rockies, Canada and Alaska. It is our anthracite coal fields which turn out between 50,000,000 and 60,000,000 tons of anthracite every year. We have in addition to this a hundred and thirty odd million tons of bituminous coal annually. We have, in short, the biggest and best coal measures on the globe. It is estimated that our coal east of the Rocky mountains covers 192,000 square miles, and within the past few years coal has been found in many parts of the far West. Colorado will eventually be a great manufacturing state on account of its coal.

Utah has large coal fields, and so have the states of Montana, Washington and Wyoming. We are now getting something like 20,000,000 tons of coal a year out of Indiana, Kentucky and Illinois, and the great Appalachian field produces more than four times this amount. There is more good burnable earth in the Appalachian mountains than anywhere else in the world. The coal is easy to get at, the veins are thick, and in some mines they are almost on the top of the ground. They are better than any other coal fields in this respect, with one single exception. This is the new coal field of Alaska, which, one of the geological survey men tells me, comes right out over the water, so that the coal can be dug down and almost fall into the ships below. This Alaskan coal will probably be used to supply the Pacific trade, and its importance will be appreciated when it is remembered that the largest fleet that sails the Pacific is the coal fleet. Most of the coal from that region comes from Australia and Japan. Much Australian coal is brought to San Francisco. During my travels in Japan I visited one coal mine which had fifty miles of tunnels under the sea, and I learned that the Japanese were making a great deal of money out of their coal.

They were shipping it to China, notwithstanding the fact that geologists say that China has some of the largest coal fields in the world. I doubt the extent of the Chinese fields. The people are thrifty, and it is curious that they do not use the coal if they have it. They are among the most economical of people, and in the different Chinese cities coal is so valuable that it is ground to dust and then mixed with dirt, being sold in balls about the size of a biscuit. It is interesting to know the coal fields of the world, as estimated by the geologists. Here they are:

China, 200,000 square miles; United States east of the Rockies, 192,000 square miles; Canada, 65,000 square miles; India, 35,500 square miles; New South Wales, 24,000 square miles; Russia, 20,000 square miles; United Kingdom, 11,500 square miles; Spain, 5,500 square miles; Japan, 5,000 square miles; France, 2,080 square miles; Austria-Hungary, 1,780 square miles; Germany, 1,770 square miles; Belgium, 510 square miles.

England's Coal Playing Out.

From the above table it will be seen that the English coal area is small. Still England has for years been the center of the coal production of the world, and for years it mined more than half the total amount used in the world. The United States is now probably ahead of it, and we are increasing our product every year. The English coal veins are thin. The miners have to lie on their sides to work many of them. They have dug out the surface coal and they are now working at great depths. One English vein, fourteen and a half inches wide, is already down over 1,200 feet. Such a vein would not be worked to any great depth in America. The Newcastle coal field, which is the richest in England, has veins from three to six feet thick, while the Wales coal veins are less than three feet in thickness. Some of our Pennsylvania anthracite veins run from thirty feet to sixty feet in thickness, while the Pittsburg bituminous coal veins are from eight to sixteen feet thick. At the present rate of mining it is estimated that all the English coal will be exhausted in 212 years if it is worked down to 4,000 feet, and this will be 113 feet deeper than any of the English mines now worked. Notwithstanding the enormous amounts of coal which have been taken out of our anthracite region it is estimated that we could go on at the present rate for 616 years.

As England goes farther down her coal mining will become more expensive, and her days as a manufacturing nation are, consequently, numbered. Already we surpass her a great deal in manufacturing, and there is no doubt that we, with our vast supplies of coal and iron, are to be the chief manufacturing nation of the future.

Our Wealth in Black Diamonds.

Our Appalachian coal fields alone could supply the world with fuel for centuries. They are the largest and richest known, and they are so situated that the coal can be shipped from them long distances by water. From Pittsburg coal can be carried for 18,000 miles on navigable streams, and the grate fires of the South blaze with the rays from the black diamonds from Pennsylvania. The Ohio river is the great coal chute for the Mississippi valley. The coal is carried down it in great barges pushed by little steamers, and so fastened together that a single steamer will push acres of coal. Loads of 20,000 tons are taken. A vast amount of coal is carried on the canals and the great lakes form one of the chief highways of the coal traffic.

The Coal Miners of Our Country and Europe.

One would think that there would be a lot of money in coal for the miners. There is not and it is a question whether the present strike will materially better matters. As far as strikes have gone in the past, they have been against the working men. Some years ago Carroll D. Wright, the United States commissioner of labor, figured up the profit and loss of ten years of striking in all branches of labor. He estimated that the employes during this time lost $59,000,000, an average of $40 to each striker involved, while the employers lost a little more than half the amount or $30,000,000.

The coal miners live as poorly as any other class of workmen in the country. For the most part they are in dirty villages, with narrow streets, their houses blackened by coal smoke. In many mining districts the houses belong to the company owning the mines, and the miners pay rent for them, so that when a strike occurs and they are out of money they are given orders to leave. Many of the homes have nothing more than two rooms and a kitchen, and in some places the only stores at which the miners can trade are the company's stores. With all this the American miners are far better off than the miners of other countries. The coal miners of Japan receive only a few cents a day. Both women and men work in the mines, and the foreign ships, which get coal at Japan are always loaded by women, who pass the coal up the sides of the ship in baskets.

Women and Children in Mines.

Women are still used in the coal mines of Belgium. They dress in trousers, just like the men, and they do much the same work. They help load the coal, and in some of the mines they drag the cars from the tunnels to the bottom of the shaft. L. Simonin, a Frenchman, describes the horrors of their life in the mines. For a long time women were used in this way in England and Scotland, and it was not until about twenty-five years ago that parliament passed an act keeping them out.

Children are employed in the Belgium mines today. The English and Scotch used them for years. They were taken into the mines at 7, eight and 9 years of age, and were kept there until they grew up. The English coal veins are very thin and the tunnels were not more than a yard high. These children were used as beasts of burden. They were harnessed to little carts filled with coal, and had to crawl along on all fours with belts about their waists and chains between their legs dragging the coal carts to the surface. Women became deformed by this work. They were dressed in trousers and shirts like men. They learned to fight and swear like the men and became bad characters. At the age of 50 they were usually worn out. In Scotland young women were employed to carry the coal on their backs out of the mines. They dragged the coal to the foot of the ladders and then loaded it on their backs, holding it there by a strap around the forehead while they climbed up the ladders to get it to the surface. They worked from twelve to fourteen hours a day, and would do work, it is said, which the men would not do, tramping through the water with their loads of coal. According to law women cannot be employed in our mines.

Boys, however, have been largely used. They drive the mules, and in the anthracite regions they pick over the coal, taking the slate and refuse out of it. They get from 50 to 60 cents a day for bending over the dusty coal, roasting in the summer and almost freezing in the winter. They are frequently hurt, though it is by no means as bad with our children as it was with those of Europe a few years ago, when in one investigation it was stated: "That they seldom slept with a whole skin, and that their backs were cut with knocking against the roof and sides of the tunnels, and that the walking in the water covered their feet with festering sores."

Some Dangers of Mining.

Have you ever been down in a coal mine? If so you can appreciate some of the dangers of mining. A coal mine is like a great catacomb. It is a city under ground, the walls of which in many cases are upheld by timbers. Now and then you come to rooms out of which the coal has been cut. The coal is taken down with blasting powder, and there is danger of the wall falling and of the miners being crushed.

There is also danger from fire damp, or the union of the gases of the mine brought together by the light from a lamp or candle. This causes a great explosion. It comes like a stroke of lightning, and with a clap of thunder. As the explosion occurs a roaring whirlwind of flame goes through the tunnels, pulling down the timbers and caving in the walls. It burns everything within reach. Miners are blinded, scorched and sometimes burned to cinders. Hundreds have often been killed at a time by such explosions, and by the flood of carbonic acid gas, which follows them. The statistics show that even in the United States one miner is killed for every 100,000 tons of coal mined, and those who are injured number many times this proportion.

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LUXURIOUS SLEEPING CARS

FROM THE

PACIFIC TO THE ATLANTIC

WITHOUT CHANGE.

UPHOLSTERED TOURIST CARS to St. Paul, Wednesdays to Boston, Sundays to Toronto, without change.

TRAINS LEAVE SEATTLE DAILY 9 A. M.

MAGNIFICENT STEAMERS ON Lake SUPERIOR, leaving Fort William and Owen Sound on Thursdays and Sundays for Windsor every Tuesday. Meals and berth included on steamers without extra charge on all first-class tickets.

MONTHLY STEAMERS to Honolulu and Australia, and every three weeks to China and Japan.

For rates and other information apply to E. W. McGINNIS, Freight and Passenger Agent, 609 First avenue. Or to E. J. COYLE, District Passenger Agent, Vancouver, B. C.

THE EVERETT & MONTE CRISTO RAILWAY.

The only route to the popular and active mining districts of Gold Basin, Goodrich Creek, Martin Creek, Silverton, Dubuque Creek, Goat Lake and Monte Cristo. The scenic route for tourists, fishing and camping parties.

Commencing Monday, April 26, the Everett & Monte Cristo Railway Company will inaugurate a daily train service.

Trains will leave Everett for Monte Cristo every morning, except Saturday and Sunday, at 7:45 a. m.

Train will leave Monte Cristo for Everett at 7:45 a. m. every morning except Sunday and Monday.

On Tuesdays and Thursdays No. 2 will run to Silverton only, and on Wednesdays and Fridays between Silverton and Everett only.

S. N. BAIRD, G. F. & T. A.

SPOKANE FALLS & NORTHERN, NELSON & FORT SHEPPARD, RED MOUNTAIN RAILWAYS.

The only all rail route without change of cars between Spokane, Rossland and Nelson. Also between Nelson and Rossland.

DAILY EXCEPT SUNDAY.

Leave		Arrive
8:00 a. m.	Spokane	6:40 p. m.
11:00 a. m.	Rossland	3:40 p. m.
9:10 a. m.	Nelson	5:35 p. m.

Close connections at Nelson with steamer for Kaslo and all Kootenay Lake Points.

Passengers for Kettle River and Boundary Creek connect at Marcus with stage daily.