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# The GLITTER of NEW GOLD

## The Lure that is Drawing Men into the Wildernesses of the World.

**N**OT long ago a cablegram, flashed from far-away India, stated that Sven Hedin, the Swedish traveler, had discovered rich gold fields in an almost unknown section of Tibet.

This announcement, such as started the remarkable rush of Forty-niners to California fifty-eight years ago and a frenzied dash to Alaska within recent memory, scarcely created a ripple of excitement—at least in this country. And yet the world today is busier delving for gold, and with greater success, than ever before.

Amazing, too, has been the increase in the world's output of gold of late. Last year it was about \$400,000,000—nearly double the figures of a decade before. Within a few years statisticians believe it will rise to the great flood of \$500,000,000 annually, and that the time is not far distant

when the output will be \$600,000,000.

It is difficult to appreciate such an enormous yearly increase in the world's wealth from one source alone. So busy is Old Earth, however, her energies galvanized into unprecedented activity in all lines of industry, that astonishment finds no place in her feelings. This is truly the golden age.

One hears less now of frantic rushes to new gold fields, but this is not because men's lust for the yellow metal has abated. More alluring than ever, the glitter of gold is tolling them to the world's out-of-the-way places, where they are struggling, suffering, starving, dying or winning fortunes as fate decrees, and writing new chapters in the great romance of human endeavor and adventure.

Gold! gold! gold!  
Bright and yellow, hard and cold.—Hood.  
A broad and ample road whose dust is gold.—Milton.

**G**OLD is more than the standard by which the value of other material things is measured; it is the magician's wand, which, playing upon the varied activities of the human race, determines by the boldness or timidity of its touch whether there shall be progress or stagnation.

So familiar—one almost says commonplace—has the search for gold become, that the world at large seems nearly to have lost interest in some of the most important and picturesque quests of the day.

Yet the unprecedented production of the present shows that more of her children are searching for fortunes in the ample bosom of Mother Earth—and are meeting success—than ever before.

In the western United States, in Alaska and Canada, in Mexico, in Australasia and bleak Siberia, in pest-ridden Africa, soldiers of fortune, drawn from all quarters of the globe, are crowding the territories where "strikes" have been made, and are toiling for a share of the vast wealth hidden away by nature.

One seldom hears, for instance, of the determined gold hunt now going on in Siberia. The field is not new—it was discovered away back in 1845—but today it holds out to the seeker after spontaneous wealth a lure altogether novel.

Only now is the full extent of its enormous possibilities being realized; now that the production in its chief field has grown to 80,000 ounces annually, and when experts are sure the amount may be doubled with up-to-date handling.

To the average American who may seek to keep in touch with the Siberian field, there comes a recurrence of a Russo-Japanese war-time trouble. One must tear one's self away from such good, comfortable, easy-sounding names as "Last Chance" and "Grubstake," and must get acquainted with such jawbreakers as Preobrazhenok and Alexandroffsky—these are samples of the names of Siberian mines.

Carried on in a region where the traveler from a warmer country shivers in furs, this Siberian mining is not permitted to lag even in blizzard weather.

The miners are injured to cold. They have to be. Work, incessant work, to them means simply staying off starvation—for the common

laborers receive no more than a mere living. There are fewer independent, free-lance miners there, perhaps, than anywhere else, as nearly all the gold hunters are miserable toilers, laboring for the enrichment of the mine owners.

Hardship unspeakable—hardship such as no other gold craze has developed—is their lot. Not suffering for the men alone. Other



Primitive Methods at Siberian Gold Mines.

gold fevers have sucked the lifeblood of men, but this makes women, too, its victims! Everywhere you see them, poor, broken, joyless women, patiently, stolidly washing the yellow lumps free of base accretions. Toiling,



Prospectors on Way to Siberian Fields.

Far From the Madding Crowd Working a Claim in the Klondike.



The Rush to Siberian Fields—A Crowded Posthouse.



Prospectors on a New Klondike Claim.

day in and day out from dawn till dark, under the most rigorous conditions. At home their children may be crying, hungry, sick, miserable—what matters it! One must live!

And for this what do the Siberian women receive? Reduced to American currency, about \$2.50 a week. Even the men who do the mining receive on an average no more than \$4 a week.

A curious feature of this field is an antiquated method of developing gold mines, which exists side by side with more modern means. There is a class of people known there as tributors. A tributor is a poor man who gets the landlord's permission to mine gold on his land. This he may do, provided he sells the gold he digs to the landlord himself at about \$10.00 an ounce, and pays about \$10 a day for the use of the landlord's mills.

But even at that, tributors might strike it rich at times; so further restrictions are imposed. A tributor may go to the depth of water level, and no further. At this point the mine becomes the property of the owner, to develop for its more valuable deposits.

Despite the system which prevents the mass of workers from getting more than a living, the Siberian gold fields are being energetically developed. You pass through desolate forests and poverty-stricken villages to reach the field, and find yourself in a wonderland of activity.

Mining works are on all sides, big mills—hundreds of them—puff and grind night and day. Sundays are included in the Russian year of toil for gold.

For miles around are mines and mills. Seemingly out of place, or, at least, out of accord

with one's impressions of the centre of Siberia, there are electric lights throughout most of the forty square miles of the principal gold field, and the mine owners have luxurious homes, fitted with modern conveniences.

Yet, in spite of this modern side, one may see in many parts of the region the "horse-whim," or windlass for hauling the ore from the shaft. A boy sits astride a horse, which, traveling around and around in a small circle, winds about the drum the pulley rope.

To the Siberian fields rush constantly increasing crowds of adventurers, who think that the mere presence of gold holds for them the magic thing, opportunity, the word which now pervades all Russia.

Posthouses are crowded with these pilgrims. The snowy roads to the field are dotted with them—for many are too poor to go by train. Passenger traffic there is enormous. Indeed, it was principally the opening up of the Transiberian Railroad which gave the great impetus to gold seeking.

It is not only in the Siberian portion of Russia that the lure of gold holds out the coveted prize to its devotees; in the entire nation, according to a recent estimate, the annual output is more than \$25,000,000.

Still, Russia, or, indeed, Europe as a whole, cannot lay claim to leading rank in the output of gold. No complete figures are available later than 1905, but these place Europe fourth on the list, and Africa second.

Of course, North America is first, with an output for the year of \$118,176,774. The figures for the other continents are: Africa, \$113,236,971; Australasia, \$85,970,779; Europe, \$27,668,111; Asia, \$24,446,336; South America, \$10,069,942.

In three years the continent which had shown at that time the most marvelous increase in gold production was Africa, which had produced but \$68,036,423 in 1904, and even a lesser amount by almost two millions in 1904. In the same period North America's production was increased over \$13,000,000.

While dealing with figures it might be well to absorb a little general information at this point regarding the wonderful increase of the world's output.

Examining the records, the first startling fact that we find is that during the first half of the nineteenth century the total production amounted to \$787,000,000, while during the second half it aggregated \$6,900,000,000.

Here is an even more striking fact: For the eleven years, 1896-1906, both inclusive, the harvest of yellow metal amounted to \$3,319,000,000, or much more than had been mined in all the world from the year of Columbus' voyage down to 1850. From 1492 to 1895, a little over 400 years, the world's gold product had aggregated \$8,700,000,000.

For the decade ending with 1850 the average annual production was \$36,000,000. This was all the entire world could do. But with California yielding up its riches the average for the following five years was \$122,000,000.

It was not until the 1891-1900 period that the annual output rose over the \$200,000,000 mark, and not until 1899 did it reach over \$300,000,000. In 1903 over \$325,000,000, in 1905 about \$375,000,000, and last year estimated at \$400,000,000, the upward movement shows no signs of ceasing.

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