

## TRIP TO COLD ALASKA.

### MRS. E. E. SHAFFER AND LITTLE DAUGHTER BACK.

**Returned from Dawson in Three Weeks—Saw the Diggings and the Dust—Canadian Authorities Censured—Interesting Account.**

Mrs. E. E. Shaffer and her little daughter, Lucille, who was only 5 years old when the start was made for the cold North, have returned from Alaska. They went to the Klondike gold fields several months ago, and there joined Mr. Shaffer, who is sum on the lookout for the yellow nuggets about which so many stories, true and otherwise, have been told. The little girl, who was very young to endure the fatigue of such a journey, and the rigors of a severe climate, came out perfectly well, but her mother's health failed. Mrs. Shaffer, who resides at No. 960 East Forty-seventh street, gave the following interesting account of her trip. She is not dissatisfied with the country, but censures the Canadian authorities for what, in her opinion, is an effort to prevent Americans from obtaining good claims:

"I left Los Angeles on May 17, 1899, and went to Seattle by rail," said Mrs. Shaffer. "My five-year-old daughter accompanied me. We then took the steamer City of Seattle, landed at Skagway, where we were joined by Mr. Shaffer. From there we went by



LITTLE LUCILLE SHAFFER.

The Los Angeles girl who visited the Klondike gold fields.

schooner to Dyca. We walked over the Chilcoot Pass, which was, perhaps, the most tiresome part of the journey. From the base to the summit is about 1200 feet, and very steep. Steps are cut in the frozen snow as a foothold could not be gotten without them. Every ten feet, small landings have been made with benches to sit on. My little girl did not appear to mind this climb, but the most of us were very tired.

"We made our camp on the Klondike River, about two miles from the Dawson postoffice. This city has all of the modern improvements, and is conducted in an orderly manner. The police force is well organized, and all of the streets are well patrolled. An extensive electric-light plant is operated and gives the city a metropolitan appearance. Their water system is thorough, and improvements are being made by Col. Word. In order to keep the pipes from bursting during cold weather, they are incased in sawdust. The city has six churches, the saloons and gaming-houses are closed on Sundays. About sixteen large hotels are kept open, some of them being fitted out with the best of accommodations. There is no fear of a food famine in that vicinity, as the Alaskan Commercial Company has about eight large warehouses filled with provisions, and the North American Transportation Company four.

"I saw Dawson immediately after the destructive fire on April 25, 1899. The best part of the town was destroyed, but built up very quickly. A week after the fire you could not notice any difference, only that the buildings were better. The mails are very irregular, which causes a great deal of annoyance. There is no reason why this should be, and is mostly due to the carelessness of those having the matter in charge. At one time, I saw thirty-six sacks of mail that had remained unopened for three weeks.

"I think the country is all right, and many would not be so disappointed if they did not go up there with a wrong impression. You can get gold, but it is not lying around waiting to be picked up. Every ounce of dust you get must be worked for. The summer climate is much the same as in Southern California. I really like it better there than here. You can sit on the porch until 12 o'clock at night without feeling uncomfortable.

"Yes, I was in the gold fields and staked several claims that may prove very valuable. I went to the twelve-mile camp in February of this year, and staked out three claims. The weather was bitterly cold. On my way back to Dawson, both feet were frozen, but by careful attention nothing serious resulted. This place is expected to prove very rich in quartz mining. Last July our party went to Magnet Gulch, a small tributary of the Bonanza River. Here we staked four placer claims. Several rich mines are now being worked there. The shafts are up about 100 feet on a steep bank. The dirt is carried down to the river below in chutes, and sluiced. Some of the miners are making considerable money here. In the trip, I covered about thirty miles of uneven ground in just a few hours. We were anxious to get there, and had to hurry.

"I saw a great many people in the Klondike who came there from Los Angeles. Sometimes I thought there must be more people from our city than any other place. A great many more are leaving than are going in. Nearly every passenger steamer carries out about seven hundred people, who are leaving, disgusted with their fortune. They are mad at the offensive manner in which the Canadian authorities treat Americans.

"The officials use every force to keep Americans from securing good claims. Their methods are unfair, and would hardly stand a close investigation. I tried to record three mines, but they told me the country had not yet been opened. They consented to my filing an application at \$15 per mine. Several have tried this same plan, but when a clear title was wanted, they were informed that some one else had got in ahead of them. When these people wanted their money refunded, the clerk refused, on the ground that he was entitled to it for filing the application.

"On the boat that carried us home was considerable gold dust. One party had a box containing about 150 pounds and another 200. Two men were necessary to handle the valuable boxes.

"Mr. Shaffer intends to remain in the country until he makes a strike. He feels confident that it is there, and is going to get it, if ten years' hard work will do it. I feel just the same, and had my health not failed I would still be searching for treasure. Everything found in that country needs lots of hard labor, and this is the plan my husband follows."