

RESOURCES OF ALASKA.

NOT THE ICY WASTE IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE WHEN BOUGHT.

It Has Rich Gold Mines, Magnificent Forests, Waters Teeming with Fish and Other Sources of Wealth.

The general impression in 1867 when the United States purchased Alaska from the Russians, was that we had been saddled with a white elephant, and Messrs. Seward and Sumner, through whose representations the bargain had, in a large measure, been made, came in for a good round share of abuse. As time went on, however, and its magnificent mineral, lumber and fishing resources became better understood, popular prejudice was gradually overcome. People began to appreciate the newly-acquired territory, and the only wonder to-day is that the government should be so apathetic in its administration.

Alaska to-day has not the dignity of a Territory, it is simply a judicial district, governed by the laws of Oregon that were in vogue before 1854, and then, too, only such laws as are applicable to Alaska, the applicability being left to the judge of the district to determine.

Alaska is separated from Oregon by a thousand miles, the natives are different in every way from those of Oregon. The Russian-speaking people who chose to remain in Alaska cannot be compared with any portion of the population of Oregon. The whites who came and are coming are largely from the East.

The natives from Cape Fox to Copper River, on the islands and upon the coast are improperly called Indians. All with the exception of a few upon the lower part of Prince of Wales Island call themselves Thlinkit. They speak a rather harsh guttural language, have a decided Mongolian cast of face and figure, live in permanent settlements just above high-tide mark and build large communal houses. They are divided into tribes or classes, each one taking some bird or animal for an emblem, such as the raven, eagle, brown bear or whale. The members of each totemic tribe regard each other as brothers and sisters.

The Kok-wan-tan tribe is most powerful in many settlements, and they have either the eagle or the bear for their badge. Members of the same tribe are not permitted to marry. An eagle must marry a raven. If a raven man marries an eagle woman all the children will belong to the mother's tribe and will be eagles. The idea appears to be to keep property privileges and power as much in the tribe as possible. If a man dies his sister's son may step into the house, take his uncle's place at the fire, own all the property and slaves, even take his uncle's wife for his own. Sometimes a lad of sixteen or seventeen years will be seen with a wife of sixty or seventy years. The old woman will often be proud of her young husband. It is a theory with the Thlinkit that a young man should have an old woman for a wife; he is uneducated in the ways of trade and barter, and of conduct generally; she will be his constant, persistent teacher, drawing always from her own fund of observation and experience. When an old man marries he usually selects as young and beautiful a wife as it is possible for him to obtain through family influence and diplomacy.

The woman really enjoys an exalted position among these people. There is nearly always mutual consent concerning the sale or purchase of any object.

The Thlinkit do not now, and it is probable that they never did, worship idols. Their religion has been Shamanism. The sorcerer of shaman is in their tongue called Icht. When he was born he had a curly lock of hair, a supernatural sign that he was to be set apart to perform the offices of an Icht. His hair was never cut; he was not to eat clams, crabs, nor any food gathered upon the beach, and when he grew up to be a strong man he was to undergo an ordeal of an absolute fast for eight days, and if he endured he would be possessed by a spirit called a yake. Hereafter this spirit would be more to him than ever Ariel was to Prospero.

Before or during the fast he made up a wonderful paraphernalia of masks, necklaces, headdresses, rattles, buckskin aprons and charms carved out of ivory, bone and horn, each piece having a deep significance. At the end of his fast he gave a performance around the fire in one of the large communal houses. He would work himself up to a state of frenzy and violence, whereby the onlookers would be inspired with a sense of awe and fear. He was looked upon as the home and temple of the spirits which had entered into him. All of his knowledge and power was hereafter completely under the control of the familiar, or yake. Up to the advent of the missionaries this power of the shaman seems never to have been called in question nor doubted by any native.

The yake never performs a service gratuitously. It is only the well-to-do who seek the aid of the Icht. If, for instance, a chief is sick and he sends for the sorcerer a fee is tendered, but usually the yake tells him it is not enough, for he knows how much property the chief has. After the yake is satisfied with the increase of the fee the Icht, making careful preparations, then begins his incantation to overcome and drive out the evil spirits or influences which are overpowering and destroying the sick man. These performances are weird in the extreme. The Icht may continue for hours, until he is exhausted. If it is some abdominal complaint he may clap the head of a hideously carved monster upon the sore place, then begin to pull

and get others to help him haul out the demon. Then the Icht will give a loud puff upon birds down which he has ready and will command the sick one to arise for he is cured.

The more we know of mental influence over bodily functions the less there is room to doubt that these men wrought astonishing cures in certain kinds of complaints; and doubtless faith in their power was fostered by the fact that the cases of healing would be talked about and remembered, while the failures would be thought of in silence and after a while forgotten.

The yake is almost but not quite all-powerful. It is right here that his ability to do mischief comes in. In an aggravated case, for instance, consumption, he cannot counteract the sinister influences of witches. These beings are ever malignant and no torture or punishment can be too severely dealt out to them. They are believed to go to dead houses and to the carcasses of dogs to get particles which they secretly put into the food of sick persons, finally causing their death.

The yake tells the Icht who the witches are. He makes it known to the family of the sick man. The witch is seized at once, securely bound with leather thongs, and put to torture. The awful cruelty that was constantly practiced is too horrible to relate. The most merciful way was to tie the victim to a stake at low tide and let him drown.

The waters of Alaska teem with fish. Herring, cod, halibut and salmon are very abundant, especially the latter. The gold mines are drawing hundreds of prospectors. The placers on the Yukon and its tributaries and upon the headwaters of Cook's Inlet promise rich rewards than the fabled of which Jason dreamed. Many kinds of craft have left ports upon Puget Sound and have sailed direct for the Inlet. The first party that reached there found six feet of snow upon the beach when they landed from the steamer Bertha. Not one of the party quailed and returned. For the most part they are a fine lot of fellows, and have made up their minds to endure hardship. The Yukon appears to draw the largest number. It is probable that one million dollars was cleaned up in the Yukon district during the season of 1895. The rich diggings on the Inlet were not struck until late in the season, but a few men came out with their buckskin wallets well loaded with the yellow dust.—The Chautauquan.

Windmills in New York.

The landscape within view of the roof of a ten-story downtown office building in this city is not of a kind to conjure up thoughts of the rural districts, but anyone who cares to look about him from such an airy perch can find within his range of vision several windmills of the variety in use all over Long Island and up in Westchester County.

The windmills are on the roofs of buildings and are used to pump water from the Croton mains into tanks placed either on the roof or in the attic story. They do the work as well as steam pumps, and it costs practically nothing to run them. All of the mills are so arranged that when the tank is full a lever falls which locks the mechanism and prevents further pumping.

There is scarcely a day in the year, not even excepting the sultry days of midsummer, when there is not sufficient breeze abroad to keep one of these mills in operation. They are so nicely balanced that very little wind sets them agoing. Nearly all of the mills are made in the West, but there are several New England manufacturers who construct mills on patent lines. These are much affected by New York business men, who take a pride in the proper equipment of their country places.—New York Mail and Express.

Remarkable Case of Second Childhood.

"The most remarkable case of 'second childhood' I ever knew," said Dr. T. K. Mason, of Grand Rapids, at the Westminster, "is that of John Adams, of Cooperville, Mich. There are many instances of regaining eyesight, a few of cutting new teeth, although these are quite rare, but Adams when he was eighty years old could scarcely see, he was bald, and his teeth were all gone. He can now see nearly as well as he ever could, he has cut several new teeth, and his hair has grown out again. The new hair is dark brown, his eyes are clear as though he was still young, and at a glance he would be taken for a man of forty years. But a little closer look makes him seem even older than he really is, although now nearly ninety. The brown hair and bright eyes seem to emphasize the wrinkles and his skin looks like parchment. He has an idea that new skin will come, and the wrinkles disappear, but, of course, that would be impossible."—Washington Star.

California Oil Wells.

The growing popularity of asphaltum for street-paving uses has awakened a new interest in the crude oil production of California, aside from its very general use for generating steam for power and manufacturing purposes.

The total annual product of crude oil in California is conservatively estimated at 1,440,000 barrels, divided as follows: Los Angeles City, 710,000 barrels; Newhall, Los Angeles county, 170,000, making a total of 885,000 barrels; Santa Barbara county, 180,000 barrels; Ventura county, 365,000 barrels, aggregating 1,440,000 barrels, as given above.

The most profitable well ever drilled in the State is in Ventura county, and was sunk to a depth of 2700 feet, at a cost of \$18,000. This well has a record of having produced 1,000,000 barrels.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

There were 65,000 polling places in the United States at the recent election. Texas had a larger number than any other State—4,022. Delaware had the fewest.

The almost unlimited acreage of the level coast lands of southeastern Texas is beginning to attract the attention of rice-planters. Some of it has already been planted with rice, and the success of the experiment has been great enough to justify high hopes for the future of the industry.

A British publication reports that forty-four bicycle manufacturing companies were started in Great Britain during the past year, with a capital of nearly \$72,000,000, out of which they took \$40,000,000 in cash. The same authority believes that American wheels will drive out the high priced British articles—as they probably will, being lighter and stronger. In that case the forty-four new companies are likely to follow a number of their American predecessors out of sight.

While trade between the United States and Mexico is increasing rapidly, there is still room for improvement, thinks the magazine, Modern Mexico. In the foreign commerce of the United States Mexico occupies the eleventh place in imports, being preceded in rank by Great Britain, Germany, Brazil, France, Canada, Cuba, Japan, Italy, China, and India. In exports it holds the seventh place, following Great Britain, Germany, Canada, France, the Netherlands, and Belgium.

"The Florida Agriculturist" says that the orange groves of the State are rapidly recovering, and it will be only a short time now before the growers who have "given their trees care and attention will begin to realize the fruits of their labors." "The Agriculturist" says that the great freeze was in no sense a "blessing in disguise," as some have said, but was a positive calamity; nevertheless, the State is rapidly recovering from it, and will before a great while be sending as many oranges to the markets as ever before, provided no other similar calamity comes along to mar all of the present bright prospects.

A man in Narbonne, France, lost a 100-franc note (twenty dollars) in a funny way recently. He was in a restaurant and took the note from his pocket to pay for his dinner, when as the note lay upon the table, a gust of wind flopped it into the soup. Fishing it out, he placed it upon the edge of the table to dry, whence it slipped to the floor. Just then along came a hungry little poodle, and sniffing at the note, he got a good whiff of the soup, snatched up the note and swallowed it. The owner of the note then sued the owner of the poodle for the 100 francs, and the courts have decided that the latter must pay.

Six women students of Bellamy who are employed in the American paper goods factory at Kensington, Conn., have put their principles in active operation. These young women have leased a house, in which they live and have their being. Everything except their clothing is owned in common, and they take turns in doing the housework. Two of them do it for one week, then another pair assumes the responsibility. So successful has this plan proved that more have applied than can be accommodated, and it is proposed to lease the Hotelkias House, engage a servant, and enlarge the scope of usefulness and happiness. One of the rigidly enforced rules of this colony is that no male company shall be admitted to the house.

Holders of mineral leases in Tennessee were greatly disturbed a few months ago by a judicial decision of Chancellor Fisher that oil was not a mineral, and that the actual possession of the surface of the land would include the mineral title if held more than seven years without reservation. The Court of Chancery Appeals has now reversed the Chancellor on both propositions. It holds that oil is a mineral, and that possession of the surface of land does not include the title to the mineral thereunder, because the possession of the surface of land is not a possession of any part of the mineral title, and no cause of action accrues to the owner of the mineral title until there is an encroachment on said title by working the same.

It has taken a long time for the International Marine Conference held in Washington six or seven years ago, to bear fruit. But it is now expected that the revised rules governing the movements of vessels at sea will go into effect on July 1 next. Nearly two score nations have accepted the rules and agreed to abide by them, and these nations represent about five-sixths of the world's shipping. With such a moral influence back of them, it is fair to assume that these rules will soon become universal. The safety of shipping of all kinds will be materially increased thereby. For a time it looked as if the labors of the conference had been in vain, but at length the value of its work has been recognized by all but a few of the maritime Powers, and these will no doubt soon give their assent.

The discovery has been made in St. Paul, Minn., that ladies' aid societies, in their methods of raising funds for church support, have been taking the bread and butter from poor women. The easy and pleasant way adopted by the ladies was to spend afternoons in pleasant chat, while they made aprons or knotted quilts for the large stores. Before their entry into this field of labor, this work had been done by poor women for barely living wages. The church ladies, putting little value on their time, were doing the work for less money than had been paid to the poor women. Even if their price had been

equal to or larger than that received by the needy workers, the work would probably have been given to them, as the store proprietors would be loth to refuse some of their best customers. Of course, when the discovery was made, the church ladies at once abandoned the work, and it went back where it was needed. But the question arises, is this condition of things confined to St. Paul, or would an investigation disclose a like injustice elsewhere?

To judge from the report of the Paris Mint, this is an age of medals, and a large proportion of the world's medals are made in Paris. At the beginning of the century the value of the medals turned out from the Paris mints was only 200,000 francs, or about \$40,000. Last year this amount had been increased more than five times, and this year over 1,000,000 francs' worth of medals have already appeared. Of last year's product, the largest number, as well as the greatest value, were the silver ones, of which there were 178,770, while there were only 3,452 of the aristocratic gold ones, a disproportion that should fill the followers of Bryan with joy. To be sure, their value was half that of their more numerous rivals, but, then, so many more people were made happy by the latter. This increase in the circulation of medals is due in the main to the immense increase of late years in international and local expositions. With a world's fair almost every summer, and with side shows all the year round, it is no wonder that the mints in Paris are kept busy. When the climax is reached at the end of the century with the exposition in Paris herself, there will probably be a bear movement in the medal market.

On the subject of "Education in the Trades" the Inland Printer for November calls attention to the thoroughness of German training, in contradistinction to the technical training given in the trades in England and America. On technical schools in America it says: "We have a number of technical schools, which are chiefly supported by private enterprise, but the good work they are doing is not encouraging as it should be, nor is the vast importance of their plan appreciated by workmen generally. For pioneer work in technical education the technical club movement is the readiest means at hand, and the effort originating among workmen themselves is assured of more favor from them than if it was the creature of the manufacturers or others whose capital is invested in the arts and manufactures. Nevertheless, the development and extension of technical clubs throughout the arts and crafts will require the aid of employers as well as the countenance and good will of the employed, and when the fruits of the trade club have been tasted, the establishment of trade schools, or other plans of trade education, will be no longer the subjects of suspicion and jealousy, as they are very largely at present."

How Eagles are Captured.

Eagles are captured by expert mountaineers, who spy upon the parent bird building her nest, and wait for the breeding season. After a due time they scale the mountains, and well armed for the inevitable fight with the parent birds, go to these mountain crannies. Oftentimes four men are required to let one of them down a steep precipice or cliff, while two of them, dead shots with a rifle, shoot and kill the old birds upon their first approach, for it fares ill with the daring robber who attempts to secure the young birds with none to protect but himself. In this way are many of the old birds killed for the taxidermists or for feathers, while the eaglets are borne away and caged for a good sale. An eagle captured at first is an uninteresting prisoner. Frequently they utter coarse cries, sullen and savage, breathing heavily and fiercely all the while. Their eyes dart fire and their low brows and flat foreheads are contorted into hateful expressions. They will dart fiercely at the bars of their iron cages, and, finding themselves unable to reach their hated captors, draw themselves up and utter terrific plaints and whines. They are always restless while in captivity, due, of course, to their natures. Rarely an eagle is captured in a huge trap baited with a small lamb. Attempts have been made, too, in the Tennessee mountains, to capture them in nets, but this is impracticable, or else the mountaineers prefer to capture them when young by visiting their nests.

A New Leg.

A European experimenter has produced an artificial leg. It is nearly as good as a human member as any that can be devised. This artificial leg is a curious contrivance of hinges, screws and elastic bands. Extending downward from about what in the human leg is the ankle, to a point midway between the heel and the instep, are two steel rods, placed one in front of the other.

One rests on a sort of roller hinge, and allows the foot to give or bend with each step. The other serves the purpose of bringing the foot back into place after the step is taken.

Any lateral movement of these rods is prevented by the sides of the slot through which they move. A screw and a nut at the top of the rod also prevent the rod from turning, and thus give trouble in walking. An artificial heel tendon is placed within the foot, behind the ankle joint, and extends loosely through a hole in the leg, where it connects with a nut at about midway up the limb.—New York Journal.

During the Franco-Prussian war the Venus de Milo was placed in an immense padded oak coffin and buried in the courtyard of the prefecture of police in Paris.

FARM AND GARDEN NOTES.

ITEMS OF TIMELY INTEREST TO THE FARMERS.

Rid the Fields of Big Boulders...Stolen Broods...Woman on the Farm...About Feathers...Bee Houses.

FOREST LEAVES.

It is often advised by agricultural writers to go into the forests and secure leaves for bedding for horses and other stock. There is no objection to this if other bedding cannot be easily obtained. But the leaves are procured with the idea that they are a valuable addition to the manure heap. On the contrary they are of very little value there, as when rotted down a very large heap of leaves will make only an insignificant amount of leaf mold, whose chief value is in the potash it contains. But in the forest the leaves serve an important purpose, keeping the soil moist under them.—American Cultivator.

WOMAN ON THE FARM.

Will the "new woman" desire to be a farmer, and do the work on a farm that it has been supposed that men alone could do? asks The Ploughman. Why not? Modern farming does not depend upon strong muscles nor an iron constitution, as it once did. We doubt whether it is any harder to ride a mowing machine than to bend over a sewing machine or washtub all day. If she can run a sulky plow she can as easily operate a disk harrow, a corn planter or a riding cultivator. She can hire boys to do the rough work as well as the men can. She has long been allowed the privilege of doing the irksome, tedious work of milking, churning and caring for the butter, and so, with the aid of modern appliances, what is left that woman cannot do on the farm? There are thousands of women in our congested cities who are working vastly harder, and putting in more hours in close, air-poisoned quarters than the hardest work on a farm would entail. While we believe the highest work of woman is homemaking, yet if it is her destiny to be compelled to work for the living the world is said to owe her, we would rather see her co-operate with nature than greedily, avaricious men.—Farmer's Voice.

STOLEN BROODS.

Most farmers pay very little attention to stolen broods of chickens which are brought out from some hiding place late in the autumn. They are scarcely considered worth raising, are neglected, get wet and muddy, are half starved, and as a natural consequence, do not amount to anything. They live a miserable little existence and perish, usually, before Christmas. This is a waste of the good gifts of nature.

It is possible to raise such birds and make them highly profitable by a little care and forethought. An old barrel, fastened up against the side of a shed or barn and covered with paper on the outside, may be used as a home for such chicks. The barrel should be raised from the floor, and ought to have a door or some cross sticks to keep the hen in. The chicks could jump down from the box, and in pleasant weather could run about for their food. When it storms they should be shut in. After they are the size of quail they may roam at their pleasure, even though the ground be frozen, unless there is snow, when they should be kept in. Snowstorms and young chickens do not affiliate, and should never be brought in contact. An abundance of good food and a perfectly dry place will keep chickens growing at any time of the year.

It is a mistaken idea to sacrifice these late fall broods just for lack of a little judicious care.—New York Ledger.

RID THE FIELDS OF BIG BOULDERS.

Those huge stones that lay in the field may be easily got rid of by a little practical use of the spade. They seldom extend more than a foot below the surface of the ground. The larger part of such stones are exposed. To deal with such a stone in a way to be rid of it for all times, just dig a hole so as to include one-third of its volume, and make the hole big enough and deep enough to take the entire stone in and sink it below the reach of the plow. When the hole is finished, undermine the stone till it gives way and falls into the pit. Be sure that you take no chances with the rock, as it may slip before you expect it. Keep out of the hole and use a crow, or sharpen a long hardwood pole to pike away the dirt till the stone falls. Be careful and keep the rich surface soil by itself, and replace it on top when you fill the pit. It will be best to haul the soil away that will be left. Put it in that sink in the road near your house, and the traveling public will be grateful. Small favors are thankfully received. Where such boulders are in a field it is expensive business to be dodging around them with the plow, harrow, harvester and mower. They often prove very costly to a farmer. Many a valuable machine has been wrecked on such stones.—The Silver Knight.

ABOUT FEATHERS.

Farmers who possess waterways in the form of small lakes, creeks, ponds and branches often neglect the opportunity that they have to increase the income of their farms by stocking up to some extent with ducks and geese. The raising of feathers is too generally overlooked, where such natural advantages exist.

When the country was first explored and settled up the watercourses were found stocked with wild water fowl, especially in the fall and winter. They have disappeared before the advance of civilization. We still have the water resources and have domestic ducks and geese, and yet the very men and sons of the men who formerly would spend a whole day hunting wild ducks and geese, and who enjoyed one when killed and baked, now pass the lakes and creeks without a thought of their former inhabitants.

The feathers from the wild fowl when captured were carefully saved, and either made into nice beds and pillows, or sold at a good price.

The market for feathers is still active, and the price is good, and there is no earthly reason why there should not be ten tame ducks and geese raised to-day where one wild one was found twenty years ago.

There is the Pekin duck, a fine, large, purely-white duck with yellow legs and beak, a really beautiful specimen of the water fowl and one that yields a great lot of its soft and pretty feathers at each picking. These ducks should be raised where there is no large stream or lake, as they thrive nearly as well without it.

There is money in Pekin ducks. They are prolific layers, hardy and rapid growers.

There are several other varieties of domestic ducks, such as the Rouen, Aylesbury (the great English duck), and the ayza—the latter very much like the wild mallard species.

In tame geese there are several varieties, the Embden, Toulouse, White China and the common old grey goose, all productive of an abundance of feathers and all large and hardy.

It is just as easy to grow feathers in and about our waterways as to grow weeds and reeds, and in these hard times we should advise the farmers to pay more attention to waterfowl, and thereby add another source of profit to the farm.—Farm, Field and Fireside.

BEE HOUSES.

There are many advantages in keeping bees in a house. While there are many apiarists who use bee houses exclusively, the majority do not. There are also many different kinds and varieties of houses used. A bee house need not be an expensive one, and almost any kind of house will answer the purpose. None is better than an old dwelling house, and two or more rooms is the more convenient, providing they have an outside face of one end or side, or both. Perhaps a two-room house with one partition is the best. Such a house, with two ordinary sized rooms, say fourteen feet square, will give 112 feet of outside surface; but take off twelve feet for doors, etc., and the 100 feet left will accommodate fifty colonies of bees, by setting the hives two feet apart from center to center, which will give ample working room. The entrances to the hives arc cut through to the outside, and made to correspond with the entrance to the hives. The hives may be set directly on the floor, but would prefer them set on the usual bottom boards, nailed to cleats at each end, that would raise the hives some four inches from the floor. This for the purpose of chaff-backing in winter. Bees thus kept in a house are very easily prepared for winter, and the extra protection thus afforded them brings them through the winter in prime order.

A very cheap bee house, and a very convenient one, that I have used and which I make exclusively for bees, is a small house, ten feet long, six feet wide and six feet high. This building accommodates eleven colonies, and the expense does not exceed \$1 per colony. This is no more than chaff hives will cost for each colony outside. Floor space for the hives to rest on only is used, as a ground floor in the center is preferred. The objection to a much longer house on the same plan, is that it is not convenient to move, and also that bees become more or less contented together so many entrances are close together and all have the same appearance. This has always been the objection to bee houses, but small buildings such as these, located around at different places, overcome this objection.

It has always been the practice in outdoor apiaries to face the hives south or east, and bee houses have been objected to on this account, as the house would necessitate facing all directions. I think there is but little to this except the practice, at least, in some localities. It may make some perceptible difference in some of the extreme Northern States in certain times of the season, but the damage at other times may offset it. I find no disadvantage to speak of, and many advantages in handling bees in a house. The work is all indoors and out of the sun and rain, and much work can be done in weather that would not permit it on the outside. The whole apiary can be closed in an instant by the turning of a key, and all extracting, and handling of honey, implements, etc., make a bee house a thing of convenience.—Kansas Farmer.

A Discovery of Perpetual Motion.

At Freeport, Ill., a new industry is to be started. On a quarter section of land an enterprising Kansas farmer will establish 1,000 black cats and 5,000 rats, on which to feed the cats, estimating that the cats will increase 15,000 in two years, their skins being worth \$4 each. The rats will multiply five times as fast as the cats and will be used to feed the latter, while the skinned cats will furnish food for the rats. Thus has perpetual motion been discovered at last.

The phylloxera is working havoc in the vineyards in the Sacramento and Napa valleys in California.