

while we scramble a second look is more assuring, and though the shaggy head rests as if asleep in the warm sunshine, something in the expression and attitude induced us to utter a trial shout which elicited no response from Brer Bear. Instantly relieved, and laughing at our fears, we slid down the slope and landed beside a huge specimen of the most formidable of all the wild animals of the Rockies—a silver-tip grizzly—whose long claws and sharp teeth gave evidence of having done good service. As fat as butter, and possessing a thick coat of fur that would have sold for a small fortune in a New York furrier's, he seems ready for his long winter's nap. Rolling him over, we could find no bullet-holes, no mark of violence; the only signs of injury being a few drops of blood beneath his glistening black nose. That he had been dead but a short time was certain, for there were no flies, and the carcass was fresh and natural-looking.

How had he met his death? was the question we asked each other, and at first it seemed an enigma. But, stranger still, beside him lay the decaying remains of yet another bear, also grizzly, and above this a few yards up the gulch, the fur and bones of other bears, five skeletons being counted, besides the ribs and shoulder blades of an elk. While looking at the strange sight, reminding one of the death-chamber of the Chinese or the burial place of the Parsees, we find ourselves faint and dizzy, and suddenly realize our own danger. Climbing quickly up the slope until the fresh breeze restores our strength, the mystery is solved. It is carbonic acid gas that had filled our lungs, and, had it overcome us, might have added our skeletons to those of its victims now lying in the gulch. Descending again, we risk possible asphyxiation to test the gas with a strip of lighted paper, which it quickly extinguishes—confirming our belief as to its presence. Above the elk bones we found several dead birds, a rock hare and numerous lifeless butterflies, besides a red squirrel—a pretty little fellow, suffocated, like the others, while crossing the gulch.

The explanation is now simple enough. The hot springs which once flowed from these slopes are now things of the past, but leave their record in their deposits and the white slopes of decomposed rock; but they are succeeded by invisible emanations of gas, mainly, no doubt, carbonic acid. This, as is well known, is heavier than air, and if emitted abundantly, will collect in hollows and depressions in the slope, and any animal unwary enough to venture into the ravine, when the air is still, risks suffocation by gas. It was doubtless the remains of some such unfortunate that tempted the first bear, whose remains served in turn to attract another, and his yet another, until seven in all have perished. The gulch is, therefore, a veritable death-trap, a charnel house, whose victims are unnumbered.

Hastening from this scene of desolation to the beach above, we are in thick pine timber, whose balsam odor is refreshing to our lungs, while the shrill chirrup of a squirrel, scolding at our intrusion of his estate, and the noisy call of a Canada jay, assure us that we are beyond the reach of the invisible hand of Death, and again in the land of the living.

THE SALMON PACK.

THE salmon season on the Columbia came to an end by law at midnight on the 31st of July, and the season's pack approximated 330,000 cases, the smallest pack for many years. In several respects this has been the poorest season known on the river. The cost of a case of salmon to the packer has been in excess of any previous year, reaching a total of \$6.00, being at least \$1.00 more than last year. This has been caused chiefly by the forced raise in the price paid for fish, \$1.40 each, the highest previous price being \$1.00. Notwithstanding this increase in price, fishermen have not done well, the average catch for the season being but 360 fish to the boat. Neither have the traps and pound nets done as well as was expected. Taken altogether, the outlook is not bright for this industry so long as natural propagation is relied upon. Happily, this fact has been recognized by the state legislature and the officers of the U. S. fish commission, and an appropriation made by the former placed the Clackamas hatchery in operating condition, and this year millions of fry were turned into the river by the employes of the latter, who had charge of the hatchery. Preparations are being made to largely increase the number of fish hatched, and the indications are that in a few years the Columbia and its tributaries will again swarm with the toothsome salmon. Meanwhile, as the fish do not return to the river for four or five years after being hatched, two or three more seasons of a light run may reasonably be anticipated. Reports from Alaska are to the effect that more canneries are at work there than last season, and the total pack will probably reach 500,000 cases. Quite a contrast with the Columbia is Fraser river, where the run of salmon seems to be the largest known for many years, and the canneries are literally swamped with fish. The pack will be nearly 300,000 cases and 2,000 barrels of salt salmon. It is too early in the season to state anything definite about the pack on the other streams and bays of Oregon and Washington, where the season lasts until late in the fall. Figures of the California pack are not yet at hand, but it would seem that the total pack of the coast this year will approximate 1,500,000 cases, having a total value approximating \$7,000,000.