

SALMON.



"Fish, sir?"
 "What kind?"
 "Salmon."
 "No!"

This is the sign of an Alaskan in the hotels. I want to make a few frivolous and desultory notes upon the subject.

In wandering about the British Columbia and Alaska coasts one may grow accustomed to the supernatural grandeur of the scenery, may get reconciled to living altogether in gum boots and oilskins and being wet besides, may cease to make lamentations at the non-delivery of all letters, may treat it as a matter of course to be cheated by the Indians in every transaction with them, may be quite uncon-

cerned at the imminent risk of getting drowned on seven days of the week, but there is one thing that from a delight rapidly becomes a nuisance and then an object of lifelong hatred and contempt. It is salmon.

I once spent six days at a cannery in southeastern Alaska, at the time of the "run" in the creek near by, of "sternorne," a small and inferior variety, of which the males are hump-backed. Out in the channel at night could be seen a most wonderful sight. Down in the black depths flashed pallid forms, all aglow with phosphorus, performing a dance, a weird ghost carnival, amid lights innumerable, in depth and space without end, such as makes my head reel to contemplate. They were dog fish—imitation sharks of gristle and gelatine, half translucent fiends, the grey wolves of the sea. These hang upon the great armies of the salmon. The estuary of the creek was black with the humps and dorsal fins of the "sternorne." They were crowded to suffocation. I went among them one day in a dory, and shoals breaking away heavily to avoid the oars, splashed me until I was wet. Despite their frantic efforts to escape, it was not easy to row through them. At the head of the estuary there is a cascade, and at the foot of it the throng was so dense that some of the fish appeared to be crowded up out of the water. It was curious to watch their tactics in climbing the steep slope of rocks, for they were too crowded to get impetus enough to leap the obstruction. Only a few could climb up at a time, and many of them fell back wounded in the attempt. Quite a large percentage were more or less wounded by the bites of dog fish and hair seals or by striking against the rocks, and many, although horribly mangled, were still attempting to ascend the stream with the crowd. Had the waters above been covered with blazing oil I don't think there would have been any hesitation in facing it, and as it was their actual danger was that of an army in battle.

At the head of the cascade it was quite easy to pick the salmon out of the stream by hand, for they were too crowded and too exhausted to resist or escape. An Indian was hooking them out at the rate of one every five seconds by my watch, as steadily as one swings a flail. My host would come down the beach a little before noon, remarking that the old woman would be wanting something for dinner. He would hook out a dozen or so of the best looking females and make a careful selection of one, leaving the rest to die on the gravel. But the most wonderful thing of all was the bringing to shore at high tide of a seine. The lines were hauled up and made fast to trees, and when the tide went down the salmon were left dead, ninety-nine out of every hundred expiring with their heads landward. The average weight seemed to be from five to seven pounds, although some of a larger variety weighed about thirty-five. They lay in one gleaming heap of silver and were estimated to number over six thousand. But apart from the legitimate supply for the cannery the waste was awful. The retreat of the salmon up that creek somehow suggested Napoleon's retreat from Moscow, so vast the movement, so terrible the destruction. But despite this curious interest, six days at the cannery was intolerable. The people were of a somewhat low grade and they talked of salmon exclusively. There was certainly little else to eat. Baked, boiled, stewed, fried, fricasseeed, hashed; pie, rissole, soup, the salmon was in form protean, but in flavor of ghastly monotony. The stench of refuse on the beach was intolerable. Despairing, I wandered off into the woods in an aimless way. I got lost. Then a breeze sprang up; at a distance of a mile and a half the stench from that beach was strong enough to guide me home. On the sixth day I escaped.

The salmon is not generally so objectionable. The presence of canneries leads one into the most unexpected and delightful of little bays, and if space permitted I could tell some very nice stories about spearing and shooting and trapping, even eating, these splendid fish, when they were not too numerous. I claim great credit for not administering here a dose of natural history and a description of the fishery processes, although sorely tempted. But there are some reflections which must inevitably occur to everyone seeing the great fishery.

How big is it? Between northern California and northern China, the rivers and streams entering the North Pacific and Behring sea probably drain an area, for the most part well watered, of about 3,000,000 square miles. Nearly all these streams are annually choked with salmon to their utmost capacity. Although differing in quality, all are good to eat, and by freezing, salting, smoking or canning can be easily preserved. How long will this last? Just so long as the spawn is properly cultivated in hatcheries, at the expense either of the government or of those interested in the industry. This has been conclusively proved by the brilliant success of artificial culture in the McCloud, Clackamas and Fraser rivers. And finally, of what use is it? A single district, that of Kodiak and Cook's inlet, produces half a million cases a year, and yet the Yukon, Kuskokoin and Amoor, three of the four great salmon rivers—the fourth being the Columbia—have not yet been touched by commerce. It surely appears from these facts that if the salmon fishery is intelligently handled the product will become one of the great factors in the food supply of mankind.

H. R. A. POCCOCK.

THE CITY OF ROSEBURG.

One of the leading towns in southern Oregon is Roseburg, the metropolis of the Umpqua valley and the seat of justice of Umpqua county. It is in a quite rough country, but the fertile valleys running in all directions between the hills contain the choicest of lands for fruit growing and general farming. The rougher portions afford the best of pasturage, and stock raising is an important industry in the country from the Calipooia mountains southward to the Umpquas. The timber lands are among the most valuable of the Pacific slope, both in the quantity of standing fir, pine, cedar, spruce, larch, etc., and in the exceptional quality of the timber.

Roseburg has been an important town ever since overland travel began between Oregon and California. The mountains that hemmed it in made it difficult to approach the city, and its commerce was rather restricted for a number of years. When the Oregon & California railroad was built through the Umpqua valley it opened many possibilities for that country, and it has since experienced gratifying growth. The improved train service given Roseburg during the past year has increased its opportunities for business. The Southern Pacific now owns and operates the road, and Roseburg is on its main line between Portland and San Francisco. This gives an advantage in the way of attracting the attention of prospectors and tourists that inures to its advantage in many ways. Pleasure seekers are induced by the scenery passed through before reaching the city, in approaching it from either direction, to stop at Roseburg and enjoy the beauties of the surrounding country. Business men also find it to their advantage to examine the resources of the valleys and hills and generally to invest in the industries being established on every hand.

The city of Roseburg is situated on the South Umpqua river, a stream affording an abundance of water power for factories, and of sufficient volume to float timber from the mountain fastnesses to the saw mills. Several valleys converge there and make it the natural market place for the whole region. It is also the natural supply point. The capitalists of Roseburg have enlisted outside railroad men to join with them in building a railroad from Roseburg to the sea through a marvelously rich country that is ripe for development, and which, strange to say, does not present very great difficulties in the way of construction. This road will open a tract of country that is particularly valuable to small farmers, though it will make possible the development of rich mining properties and afford a new field for many manufacturers.

THE WEST SHORE has in preparation an illustrated article descriptive of the features of the Umpqua country and Roseburg, which will appear in a few weeks. It will convey interesting information concerning a region that offers a choice field for enterprise and capital, and it should be read by all who wish to keep posted on the industrial features of the west.

The carcass of a sperm whale ninety-five feet in length was washed ashore on the beach near Cape Arrago, below Empire City, a few days ago. It was promptly located by its discoverers and preparations made to secure the oil and bone. The head gave 800 gallons, and the remaining portions 120 barrels of oil.