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EXPLORATION OF ALASKA.

To the army more than to any other single agent do we owe the transformation of the "great American desert" into the "great empire of the west," says the Army and Navy Register, and it is quite natural, therefore, that the army should be looked to explore the only part of our domain which remains unknown and unexplored. During the quarter of a century that has passed since the purchase of Alaska the government has done nothing to ascertain what it had acquired. The country seems a bare, snow-covered and inhospitable Arctic province, of value only because of its fur trade. This impression has been proved untrue, and we are beginning to realize that unwittingly we had made a very good bargain and got a valuable possession. The mineral, lumber and fishing industries of Alaska are taking rank as the richest in the world; and yet it is only with the little strip of coast lying to the southeast of Mount St. Elias that we are as yet acquainted. The territory is nearly as large as all of the United States lying east of the Mississippi river and of the resources and capabilities of the territory as a whole we know next to nothing.

For these reasons the secretary of war has approved a bill making an appropriation to send an exploring expedition into the interior of Alaska, and has strongly indorsed the measure in his annual report. The amount required is estimated at \$100,000, and if the objects of the expedition can be accomplished with this sum or several times as much, it will be money well invested. The work is needed to be done, and the wonder is that it has not been done before this.

THERE is no able thinker who cannot readily perceive a slight coloring of inconsistency in the step the national farmers' alliance has taken looking towards the forcing of the public press into harmonious action with its cause. That organization cannot afford in this stage of its existence to resort to such turgid means to accomplish its desired ends. If as a party it proves itself as worthy as it purports to be, and if it will not allow itself to be controlled and managed by disreputable campaign sharks and designing politicians, as have characterized every other political organization, then it will find plenty of willing support in the press without bringing into use the means it has adopted. But if on the contrary, it will persist in warring or boycotting the press, it has encountered a cumbersome and dangerous task, which if it is not successful in conquering, can but result in its own final destruction.—Oregon City Enterprise.

It will be remembered that just before election, some two months ago, the New York importers were sending circulars stating that their prices would soon be raised from 10 to 25 per cent on account of the new tariff laws. Now they declare that if they are compelled to withdraw their imports from the bonded warehouse in February, according to law, prices will go down to ruinously low figures. Either they lied in their circulars or they are lying now. There has certainly been big lying somewhere.

The London Times is discouraged over the outlook. It remarks that "it will be difficult to go on much longer proclaiming the world-wide triumph of free trade, or the impending ruin of protectionist nations, in the face of great and continued prosperity of the United States, the most resolute and impertinent of them all." How sad.

MONEY IN THE COUNTRY.

There are times in the experience of every community when money appears to be scarce and hard to get. Business men, as well as private individuals, pass through similar experiences. It is not always the scarcity of money that forces these conditions upon the people, though the want of it is just as keenly felt as if it were in limited supply. It is known that the volume of national bank notes is not so large as formerly, but few realize that other forms of money have come in more than enough to fill the vacuum caused by such retirements. A recent compilation by the Treasury Department at Washington shows a decrease of \$21,000,000 in these notes during the past twelve months, and yet in the same interval the net increase in money in the country, according to the same authority, has been nearly \$103,000,000. The gross increase for the year is about \$124,000,000, of which \$35,000,000 has been in gold and about \$89,000,000 in silver. A country that is increasing its volume of money at the rate of \$100,000,000 per annum cannot be said to be in a bad way. We doubt if there be another country that can show such an increase for the past year. Any talk about contraction of the currency in the light of these facts is sheer nonsense.

The late reverses in stock and business circles on the Atlantic seaboard cannot be charged to any shrinkage in the volume of money in the country. If there had been a net loss of \$100,000,000 in the past year, instead of a net gain of that amount, the shrinkage of values incident to such loss would easily account for the embarrassments in business circles. But when these reverses occur in spite of such a liberal accumulation in the money supply, we must look elsewhere for the cause. The primary reason is easily traced to stock speculations. These cannot be kept up for any length of time without settlements, else everybody who engaged in that line of business would get rich. The very prosperity of the country has drawn many into the whirlpool of stocks. Some engaged in legitimate mercantile pursuits have become embarrassed through the troubles in Wall street because they have been putting some of their available assets there, or have been on the paper of those who have become thus involved. Merchants who confine themselves strictly to their line of business escape these snares, and so maintain their honor, and, eventually, achieve success.

Few realize that the money of all kinds in this country exceeds \$2,000,000,000. There is an average of \$34 per capita, calling the population of the country 62,500,000. Most of this large amount is money in the best sense of that term, consisting of gold and silver coin, or certificates backed with coin. If there be trouble in business circles anywhere it is not because there is not enough money in the country. The scarcity in isolated cases is the result of exceptional causes. If the amount of money in the country were as large again as it is, these conditions would occur quite as frequently and be just as hard to bear. Overtrading, like overeating, must pay the penalty in some way. Of course, when business troubles are in the air the case is likely to be aggravated from too much conservatism on the part of those who have money to lend. The true heroism of the hour is wisely to discriminate between the good and the bad, and to promptly extend aid when and where it will do the most good, because in times of a general want of confidence the strongest and soundest firms suffer with the weak and irresponsible. The indications show that the troubles at the east are being adjusted and the new year will probably open with brighter financial skies.—San Francisco Bulletin.

BEATING THE LAW.

American ingenuity is of course most useful when engaged in perfecting labor saving machines, but it is brilliant everywhere and never shines with a gayer or more electric glitter than when employed in defeating the law. One of the neatest, and at the same time the gaudiest, of recent examples of this employment of this ingenuity comes from Minnesota. In the lovely village of Sibley, in that State, the virtuous villagers determined to indulge themselves in that compromise between free whisky and prohibition which is known as high license.

Accordingly they fixed the license for selling liquor in this village at \$500 a year. Seven saloons were opened under this law, and the thrifty people were felicitating themselves that taxes might be lowered and the village run mainly upon the income from licenses. The wicked saloon men, however, got the village council to stand up to the cleverest racket that was ever played in American politics. The council elected every saloon-keeper a policeman at a salary of \$300 a year and assigned each of them to duty in his own saloon. This was practically a reduction of the license to \$200 a year. We are compelled to add that the grand jury of Green Isle does not appreciate the intricacies of American politics and the complexity of holding office. They have indicted the council for violating the law, and the courts will now have an opportunity of showing how far the legal fraternity can rival in ingenious technicalities this unparalleled feat of keeping the law and breaking it at the same time.—San Jose Mercury.

IMPORTING EGGS.

What a spectacle! The Oregon wheat raiser continues to buy eastern ham and eggs. Harnessed to the duty of raising square miles of wheat, how can he find time to attend to such trifling jobs as the raising of pork and poultry involves? He works hard to make both end meet, and he gets enough out of his square miles to afford his family bread and butter! He cannot venture take time to notice the financial prosperity of the man next door, who doesn't work so hard, cultivates less ground, but raises considerable pork and poultry. Pause a moment, Oh weary wheat raiser! Wipe from your brow the sweat that half blinds you, and compare yourself with the man of pork and poultry. He is a live man in a healthy market, while you are a tired man in a market that is pretty sick. While you are hardly getting ahead, and waiting for a "raise in wheat," he is taking in the coin. What a sad spectacle is that of a man raising square miles of wheat and realizing no more than bread and butter for his family! And yet one can see it in every county or township where the supply of ham and eggs comes from the store instead of the farm. It is a sad spectacle to note the wheat raiser purchasing vegetables at the store and hauling them home for family use. His time is too much occupied in raising square miles of wheat to be bothered with raising garden truck. Even the butter he spreads on his bread is bought at the store, to be paid for when he disposes of his wheat.—Ex.

After the elegant holiday number of West Shore one would scarcely look for anything specially fine soon again, but that splendid journal seems to have got its hand in and intends to keep it going, for the last number for 1890, just at hand, shows some beautiful work. It also contains an announcement of the publisher that the paper during the coming year will maintain this high standard, which rivals the best work of any illustrated paper in the country. It is the only genuine illustrated weekly in the United States published outside of New York city. Its subscribers will be given an opportunity to compete for many valuable prizes during the year, among which will be a trip to the National Park of the Yellowstone, particulars of which will be published in a few weeks.

R. A. Bessell, collector of customs at Newport, passed through Corvallis this week on his way to Salem and Portland.

The danger attending a sudden departure from life-long habit is signalized in the recent death while in the bathtub in an Eastern Oregon town of an immigrant lately from Missouri. The man, who had lost his wife and was without means, had solaced himself in the despondency incident upon such a condition by chewing up and swallowing a plug of tobacco with a relish that showed that he was not unaccustomed to such diet. The county had him in charge, and all would doubtless have gone well with him had he not rashly determined to try a bath, with the result above noted. The incident conveys its own warning. A man can eat tobacco with impunity, but he should approach the bathtub with caution. There is everything in being "used to it."—Oregonian.

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