

The Hood River Glacier.

It's a Cold Day When We Get Left.

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THE NEW ELDORADO

THE GOLD FIELDS OF ALASKA AND THE YUKON.

Geography, Climate and Resources of the New Famous Region of the Far North—Great Extent of Ground to Be Prospected.

Special Correspondence.]

Purchased from Russia in 1867 for \$7,200,000, Alaska was a portion of the United States for 30 years without attracting the attention of its resources and wealth merit. Everywhere apathy and ignorance prevailed in regard to this latest territorial acquisition. Suddenly this was changed. In a single day the eyes of the entire world were turned to Klondike, and there they remain fixed. On the 17th of last July the steamer Portland sailed into port with \$800,000 of gold on board, and to the ends of the earth was telegraphed the story of the rich placer diggings discovered along the Klondike and its tributaries. Then began that rush to the new mines which has filled the news columns of the press with its varied experiences for four months. Ten thousand men joined in it. Some are now at the mines; others are scattered all along the trails from the coast to the Klondike; still others are at Juneau, Dyea and Skagway, awaiting a more favorable time for the journey, while not a few have returned to civilization, satisfied with their experience or to make a fresh start under better circumstances. Great and exciting as was this first rush, it was but the advance ripple of the great wave of gold hunters that will roll in upon the Alaskan coast the coming spring. Probably not less than 50,000 men will start for the Yukon next year, and possibly four times this number may go. For this reason a clear and succinct description of Alaska and its resources, with a brief review of its routes of travel must be of interest even to those who have no intention of seeking the northern wilderness.

In the first place, it must be understood that the Yukon river flows partly through Canada and partly through the United States, and that the Klondike region is on the Canadian side of the boundary line, though good placers, possibly as good as those of the Klondike, exist on the American side of the line. Beginning at the Arctic ocean, the boundary line runs due south along the 141st meridian as far as Mt. St. Elias, 10 marine leagues from the Pacific, whence it follows the coast line, preserving a distance of 10 marine leagues from it, in a southeasterly direction to the latitude of 54 degrees and 40 minutes, which becomes the southern limit. All east of that line belongs to Canada, part being in the Northwest Territory and part in the province of British Columbia, the dividing line running east and west across both lakes Bennett and Teslin. The present gold discoveries are all north of the British Columbia line, but no one can tell what may be revealed in the future.

That portion west of the boundary line and belonging to the United States constitutes Alaska proper, and contains a total area of 617,703 square miles, of which 37,596 square miles consist of islands along the coast. It is only on these islands and a narrow strip of the adjacent mainland that settlements have been made and industries developed, except the gradual development of gold placers along the Yukon, ending with the recent startling discoveries. The towns of Alaska consist of but half a dozen of any prominence, besides the new places on the Yukon. They are Sitka, the capital, Juneau, Wrangel, New Metlakahla, Kodiak and Dutch Harbor. Sitka is on Baranof island, off the southeast coast, and has a population of about 500. Juneau is on the mainland, about 100 miles further north. It is the chief commercial city and during the winter season its population exceeds 3,000. New Metlakahla is a mission and trading point near the southern extremity, and Wrangel is a trading point on the coast at the mouth of the Stikine river. Kodiak is on the island of the same name south of the Alaskan peninsula, and is the seat of the salmon packing industry. Dutch Harbor is on the island of Unalaska, one of the Aleutian group, where vessels pass from the Pacific into Behring sea.

Alaska is a region of mountains, there being no great valleys nor plains. Along the coast a high range of mountains rises almost abruptly from the water's edge, deeply indented with long arms of the sea. These present a series of Alpine peaks of the most picturesque description, the highest being the Fairweather alps, exceeding 15,000 feet, St. Elias and Logan exceeding 18,000 feet, and Wrangel, further to the northwest, said to be still higher. Down the canyons of these coast mountains many tremendous living glaciers flow steadily to the ocean, filling the bays and inlets with great masses of floating ice. Beyond this coast range the mountains are lower, but almost continuous as far north as the Arctic, and as far east as the great plains of Mackenzie river region. Yet there are many fine mountain valleys, with occasional stretches of rolling table land, in sum-

mer time brilliant with a carpet of grass, mosses and flowers.

The coast mountains divide the climate of Alaska into two distinct classes. A branch of the warm Japan current skirts the coast, its influence modifying the climate of the islands and adjacent mainland. The average temperature for July at Sitka is but 55 degrees, while the mean winter temperature is as high as 32 degrees. This is the most equable climate in the United States. The same causes produce copious rains or continuous drizzles, there being but an average of 66 clear days in a year. Across the summit of the coast range conditions are very different. The rains are cut off by the high mountains, and the warm ocean air is not felt. From November to April the mean temperature remains continuously below the freezing point, often remaining for weeks at a time below zero and occasionally going as low as 60 or 70 degrees below zero. It snows about one-third of the time in winter, but the snow does not become excessively deep, though frequently the storms are very severe.

The mean temperature of the interior during the summer months is 60 to 70 degrees, there being many very warm days. The Yukon region, being so far north, has the long summer days and long winter nights of that latitude, though, being south of the Arctic circle, it just misses the continuous day and continuous night of the Arctic summer and winter.

Aside from gold, the chief resources of Alaska are timber, fish and fur-bearing animals, including the famous fur seals which are giving the United States, Great Britain, Russia and Japan so much trouble. Salmon are plentiful in all the streams of the islands and mainland, and millions are annually packed for market. Halibut and cod, herring and smelt, or oolachon, abound and have become of great commercial importance. The seal and sea otter in the water, and the fox, bear, lynx, otter, beaver, etc., on land, contribute thousands of their skins annually to the world's fur supply. The fur trade is handled by the Alaska Commercial Company and the Northwest Trading and Transportation Company, both of which have headquarters on St. Michaels island, near the mouth of the Yukon, while the Hudson's Bay Company operates on the Canadian side of the line.

Coal and coal oil have both been discovered and may be of future value. The timber of the coast and islands grows very large, owing to the humid atmosphere. It is chiefly cedar, spruce and hemlock. It has been little used thus far, though several small mills have cut it for local purposes. The timber of the interior is much smaller, and is found only along the lakes and water courses. It is chiefly spruce, alder, cottonwood and willow. Several small mills have been taken in for cutting this timber. Agriculture is as yet an experiment, but little having been attempted. Conditions on the islands are favorable for grass and such vegetables and cereals as mature quickly. Even along the Yukon region summer vegetables may be grown and possibly wheat. A few years will show what can be done in agriculture and stock raising.

The great interest in Alaska at the present time centers in the Yukon placers on both sides of the boundary line. Prospecting on the Yukon began in 1881. In the fall of 1883 the first gold was brought to Juneau from the interior. The next year 300 men crossed the mountains and the number of miners steadily increased each year. The first work was on Stewart river and then Big Salmon, both in Canada. In 1886 the Forty-Mile creek placers, also in Canada, were discovered, and the next year the famous Franklin gulch, on the same stream. In 1892 the Miller creek diggings were found, also a tributary of Forty-Mile, and on the Canadian side of the line. The next year there was a large influx of miners, fully 300 working in the Forty-Mile district.

In 1893 the first important discoveries on the American side of the line were made on Birch creek, and the town of Circle City, now having 500 log houses, was started on the Yukon as a supply point. The next year over \$400,000 were taken out along Birch creek and Forty-Mile. In 1895 Eagle and Porcupine creeks began to produce in the Birch creek district. The total output of that year exceeded \$700,000. In August, 1896, it was reported at Forty-Mile and Circle City that wonderfully rich placers had been discovered on the Klondike, a small tributary of the Yukon entering that river about 50 miles southeast of the international boundary and on Canadian territory. There was a great rush to the new diggings, the older ones being nearly deserted. In a few days \$1,000 were taken out on Bonanza creek, a tributary of the Klondike. By January 1, 1897, 400 claims had been located on Bonanza and Eldorado creeks, and 200 on Hunker creek, and later many others on Bear, Gold Bottom and Too-Much-Gold creeks and their tributaries. Fully \$1,400,000 were taken from the Yukon placers in 1896.

It was not so much the amount of gold brought out by the first steamer to come down last summer, as the news that this was the result of but a little work in a few claims only, and that there would have been many times as much had the hundreds of other claims been worked in time to send the gold out, which caused the excitement. The

method of working these mines is to sink a shaft into the frozen ground in winter, taking out the rich gravel near bed-rock and piling it up to be washed out when the water runs in summer time. For this reason the gold washed out last summer could not be sent away, and will not be brought down until next July, when it is expected that several millions of dollars will come out as the result of the first year's work along the Klondike. The commercial point for the Klondike district is the new town of Dawson City, situated on the Yukon just below the mouth of the Klondike and reached by river steamers.

The Yukon gold fields extend for a thousand miles along the stream, with a width of 500 miles. In this vast area there are hundreds of streams and gulches, offering ample room for the thousands of gold seekers to prospect for new diggings. The new discoveries reported this year are on Dominion creek and on the tributaries of the Stewart river, on the Canadian side, and on Munook creek and its tributaries on the Alaska side, near the mouth of the latter the new town of Rampart City having sprung up.

Not all of the thousands who go to Alaska next year will seek fortune on the Yukon. Some will go further north to the streams flowing into Kotzebue sound, where discoveries are reported. Others will go to Copper river, flowing south into Prince William sound and heading in the same region as the Munook and Birch creeks, and still others will prospect along the streams falling into Cook's inlet, where rich placers have been worked for several years. The region where prospecting will be done is as large as the entire Pacific coast west of the Rocky mountains, and should many new discoveries be made a population of half a million people may be expected in a few years.

NEWS IN BRIEF.

A Farmington, Me., man 92 years old took a friend 84 years old out riding the other day behind a horse 34 years old.

It is said that were it not for our atmosphere, the oceans would become boiling hot from the rays of the sun in the course of a year's time.

In a railway collision in North Carolina, a four-year-old child at an open car window was thrown out of the window by the shock and escaped injury.

Experiments have proved that if fish get beyond a certain depth in the sea they die from the pressure of the water, which they are unable to support.

Ten judges of the English supreme court continue on the bench, though they have passed the period at which they are by law entitled to retire on a pension.

In a total population of a little over 8,000,000, Switzerland now has over 1,000,000 depositors in savings banks, with an average for each family of \$275 in cash deposits.

A whale recently captured in Arctic waters was found to have imbedded in its side a harpoon belonging to a whaling vessel that had been out of service nearly half a century.

The flag carried by Cortez, the Spanish conqueror of Mexico, nearly 400 years ago, was until recently preserved at a little church in the capital of the state of Tlaxcala.

Five ordinary men can hold a lion to the ground, but it takes nine of the same kind of human beings to hold a tiger. One man can hold a horse by the head so he cannot rise.

Nevada is the most sparsely settled state in America. There are nearly two and a half square miles to each inhabitant; next comes Idaho, with one inhabitant to each square mile.

A French man politely passed toothpicks to a Turk at a banquet in Paris, who declined, saying: "No; thank you! I have already eaten two of the accursed things, and I want no more!"

Kaiser Wilhelm's Russian Borsoi hound travels in a third-class railroad carriage with an attendant, ten tickets being bought for him, as he will not go in a baggage car, and objects to strangers.

Professor Palazzi has made experiments which show that smoke kills the microbes of various diseases in one to four hours, and he therefore recommends it as a disinfectant superior to gases.

The hand of Jim Stevenson, a Lexington, Ky., colored man, is said to measure 11 inches from the wrist to the tip of the middle finger. The thumb nail is described as of the size of half a dollar.

Godalming, Surrey, England, has a remarkable cat, which after being taken out to Leeds by railroad, returned to its former home on foot, taking six weeks to make the journey of over 200 miles.

The emblem of the French empire was a golden bee, chosen for the reason that more than 100 of those busy little creatures were found in the tomb of Childeric, king of the Franks, when it was opened in 1653.

Mrs. Felix B. Brunot of Pittsburg, has informed the board of foreign missions of the Episcopal church that she will build and endow a hospital for lepers in any part of China the board may select, the hospital to be under the direction of the mission board.

CURRENT EVENTS OF THE DAY

Epitome of the Telegraphic News of the World.

TERSE TICKS FROM THE WIRES

An Interesting Collection of Items From the New and the Old World In a Condensed and Comprehensive Form

A dispatch from Hawarden says that Mr. Gladstone, concerning whose health an alarming rumor was widely circulated, is in his usual health, and Sunday morning walked to the village church, where he attended services.

Passengers on the steamer Mascotte, which has arrived in Tampa, report that Engel Pasee, who betrayed General Castillo to the Spaniards for \$5,000, was captured by insurgents on his way to Cienfuegos, court-martialed on a drum-head and hanged.

A great fire broke out at Melbourne, Australia, and in a very short space of time did enormous damage. It is estimated that the loss will reach £1,000,000, while the trade in soft goods has received a serious setback. Hundreds of employes of all sorts have been thrown out of employment.

Changing its name and principles the American Railway League has become a full-fledged political organization. Hereafter it will be known as the Railway Employes and Telegraphers' Political League of America. Its object is to deal entirely in state and national politics, chiefly on legislative lines.

A big masonry wharf, having a frontage of 300 meters on the river Tagus, opposite the custom-house in Lisbon, suddenly subsided and completely disappeared in the riverbed. The wharf, which was recently constructed at a cost of £50,000, rested on mud. Fortunately, no one was hurt in the collapse.

The hostility between the Christian socialists and the social democrats, which exists in all parts of Austria and frequently leads to sharp collisions between the rival partisans, has resulted in serious rioting at Graz, the capital city of Styria, and the seat of important cotton and woolen manufactures.

The official programme for the reception of 1898 at the White House by President and Mrs. McKinley has been issued. All of the events, excepting New Year's reception and the public reception, will be by card invitation. Only those invited will be given an opportunity to be present at least once during the season. The avoidance of excessive and dangerous crowding will add to the attractiveness of all the receptions.

The theosophists of San Francisco are taking very active interest in the fate of Durrant. It is a tenet of their faith that capital punishment is wrong, and they are getting up a petition praying Governor Budd to stay the execution and to commute his sentence to life imprisonment. The petition was prepared by Dr. Jerome A. Anderson, president of the San Francisco Theosophical Society, and it has already received a number of signatures.

The commission appointed to revise the criminal code of the United States, in the partial report which it will make to the president and congress, will present a code for criminal justice in Alaska. The commission is authorized to do this in the act which creates it as a territory. At present the laws of Oregon are made applicable to Alaska, and these will be revised, codified and amended by the commission to suit the present conditions, and will be submitted as a partial report for the basis of legislation by congress.

The final act upon the part of the government in the ratification of the treaty adopted by the recent universal congress was taken Tuesday, when President McKinley signed the formal convention or treaty and Secretary of State Sherman had the government seal affixed. Postmaster-General Gary had already signed it. The treaty takes effect January 1, 1898.

At a session of the Knights of Labor council, at Louisville, it was voted unanimously to set apart the last Sunday in June as labor memorial day. This day will be observed by all the district assemblies in the United States. It was expressly stated that the day should not be regarded in the light of a holiday. It was fixed upon Sunday so it could not be made a holiday, with its attendant festivities.

An immense claim, embracing 7,000,000 acres of land in the Northwest, including the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, has been brought before Commissioner Hermann, of the general land office, and the assistance of the government in securing official data is called for. The claimants are C. B. Holloway, of Holland, O., and A. Gunn, of Momee, O. They are making an examination of the general land office records with a view to securing copies of certified paper, which, they assert, will establish their title to the lands claimed by them. Their ancestor, through whom they claim title, was Jonathan Carver, an Englishman, a well known explorer in the last century.

AGAIN ON FREE SOIL.

The Competitor's Crew Out of the Jaws of Death.

New York, Nov. 24.—The steamer Saratoga, from Havana, having on board the released men of the Competitor crew, has been reported entering the harbor. The men are:

Captain Alfredo Laborde.
William Gildea.
Ona Melton.
William Keavitt.

Charles Bennett, an Englishman. The five men were in fairly good health and excellent spirits on reaching quarantine. Captain Laborde suffers somewhat from paralysis, which he contracted during his long confinement in the Cabanas fortress. Joseph A. Springer, the United States vice-consul at Havana, was also a passenger on the Saratoga. Mr. Springer declined to talk for publication.

The released men wore the clothes in which they were clad at the time of their capture, on April 25, 1896, at Berracoa, San Catalino, Cuba.

Another happy passenger on the Saratoga was Julio Arago y Quesada, the young Cuban insurgent who was ordered to be shot by Weyler, but was pardoned by General Blanco, a friend of the prisoner's father.

The six men who had escaped the fate of the Virginis captives were greeted upon their arrival by an enthusiastic crowd, who gave them a hearty welcome, but the poor wretches were too weak to respond to the cheers which had been given in their honor.

TO RESTRICT SILVER OUTPUT.

Alleged Object of the Proposed Smelter Combine.

New York, Nov. 24.—Representatives of several silver mining and refining works of the United States and Mexico will meet in New York this week to form, if possible, a combination agency to control the price of silver futures.

The price of silver for future delivery is always less than the price of cash silver, and the smelters want to equalize prices. It is said that the smelters hope by their combination to stiffen the price of silver and eventually reduce the output, although they deny the report that they intend to form a silver trust.

Among the works to be represented at the conference are the International Metal Company, of New York; the Omaha & Grant Smelting Company, of Omaha; the Mexican Smelting Company, of Monterey; the Philadelphia Smelting & Refining Company, of Pueblo, and the Guggenheim Smelting Company, of Port Amboy, N. J.

A POPULAR TICKET.

The Sebastian Internegotiable Mileage Book in Great Demand.

Chicago, Nov. 24.—The new form of internegotiable mileage ticket is proving very popular. The Sebastian ticket was placed on sale November 15, and 25,000 tickets were printed, as it was thought this would be sufficient for the demand that would be made. This number is exhausted, however, and another 25,000 has been ordered. The Western roads declare that they will reduce still further the rates between Chicago and Northwest points if necessary to maintain their traffic against the competition of steamship lines and Southwestern railroads doing business at Gulf ports. It has become a serious matter for some of the roads, and they have been seen during the last three months a very large amount of tonnage go through the Gulf of Mexico, which otherwise they would have handled.

POSTAL SAVINGS BANKS

Postmaster-General's Proposition Receiving Many Indorsements.

Washington, Nov. 24.—Postmaster-General Gary is receiving many letters regarding the postal saving bank proposition strongly urged by him in his annual report. Many people throughout the country have written, commenting on the projected radical extension of the postal service, and have submitted some suggestions calculated in their opinion to make the correspondents indicate a rather general commendation, and some well-known economists and financiers numbered among the postmaster-general's friends, who have heretofore opposed measures of this character, have in letters just received given a qualified indorsement. Postmaster-General Gary expects some legislation by congress on this question, possibly at the next session, and free discussion of it throughout the country will render material assistance to this end.

Money Paid Over.

Washington, Nov. 24.—The treasury received today from the reorganization committee of the Union Pacific \$13,645,250 in cash and turned over to the committee that amount in bonds, which have been on deposit with the government in the sinking fund of the road.

Trouble in Uruguay.

New York, Nov. 24.—As a result of the attempted revolutionary movement in Montevideo, Uruguay, says the Herald's correspondent there, five prominent army officers have been arrested. Many arrests of civilians and politicians have also been made.

CUBA AN ISLAND OF DEATH

Terrible Condition of the Reconcentrados.

SCORES STARVING IN MATANZAS

Even the Spanish Soldiers Are in Want of Food—Smallpox Adds to the Terrors, Carrying Off Hundreds.

Havana, Nov. 23.—La Lucha, in a recent published editorial, expresses doubt as to the sincerity of the friendship for Spain professed by the American government, and adds:

"If the American government cannot prevent the sailing from that country of expeditions in aid of the insurgents, and does not respond in other ways to Spain's efforts to come to favorable terms, it is useless for Spain to maintain friendly relations with America."

Reports from Matanzas say that the conservatives, having become enraged at the change in the government's policy, are disturbing public order. Ex-Mayor Crespo initiated the disorderly conduct by publicly giving offense to Senator Armas, the new civil governor of the province. The chief of police followed Senator Crespo's lead by endeavoring to prevent aid being given to the suffering reconcentrados by newspaper correspondents and others.

Of the reconcentrados in Matanzas, numbering more than 50,000, 79 died in two days, 36 perishing from hunger. Yesterday 17 deaths were reported, a large proportion the result of starvation. In Jaraco, about 65 per cent of the deaths are caused by starvation, and the same is true of many other towns. Owing to the lack of proper clothing and blankets, the situation of the reconcentrados is becoming worse as the winter season approaches, despite the efforts made to relieve them.

Horrible episodes are of daily occurrence among the reconcentrados. After lying for three days upon the sidewalk in front of a house in Matanzas, a poor negro woman, who was suffering terribly and was unable to move, was carried away by a flood caused by a heavy downfall of rain. A short time afterward her dead body was discovered a few blocks away, and at last report was still lying in the gutter.

A cabdriver, who was carrying a sick man to a hospital, observed that his passenger was dying. He dragged him from his cab, leaving him on the curbstone, where he finally died.

Cases similar to these are of frequent occurrence. Reports from Candelaria say that a man who was suffering from smallpox was driven by the authorities into the insurgent camp at Cojadal Negro, Pinar del Rio, where threats were made to hang him if he was not taken away.

On Wednesday the remaining cane fields on the plantation of Portuquellata, owned by Manuel Galvo, were destroyed by fire.

Marshal Blanco has appointed 34 new employes at the customs-house. Of these, five are native Cubans and the remainder Spanish reformists. The autonomists are greatly disgusted by their appointments.

Sixty persons employed about the docks and 500 others in various parts of the island have joined the revolutionists, and a number of pioneers at Guines, who were pardoned under the recent proclamation, have returned to the insurgents.

Smallpox is raging in the neighborhood of the insurgent headquarters in Pinar del Rio, and there are in the hospitals and the hills 1,700 persons suffering from the disease.

It is stated by a prominent resident of Pinar del Rio, according to an official report there, there are 1,300 armed insurgents in the province, including the bands which have recently entered the province under Maria Rodriguez Velasco confirms the statement that insurgents in Pinar del Rio are abundantly supplied with ammunition. Seventy of General Velasco's men have arrived at Pinar del Rio suffering from wounds received in recent engagements. The financial condition of the military administration is bad. The soldiers have not been paid in eight months.

There is a scarcity in the meat supply in the hospitals, and in many towns no meat has been obtainable for many days.

General Losada, subinspector of the health department, said recently to the correspondent of El Imparcial, in Madrid, that there were actually 35,000 soldiers in the hospitals in Cuba, and that about 15,000 of these were not suffering from any disease, but simply from need of nourishment.

The police recently went to the house of George W. Hyatt, chief of the relief department of the United States consulate, at 12 o'clock at night, to make inquiries as to the destination of a quantity of food which had been taken in the previous day. The female inmates, becoming frightened, refused to open the door, and insisted upon being informed of the object of the officer's visit. The police subsequently retired upon learning that the inmates were Americans.

The insurgents, it is stated, have captured 150 mules from the Consalieron del Sur government reservation.