

OUR GOLDEN TERRITORY.

It is almost thirty years since the foresight of one man secured for the United States a land whose value is every day becoming more and more known and appreciated by the people of the Union. He braved ridicule and opposition of every sort from every source, and with a pertinacity born of inward conviction, he never rested until he had seen Alaska become the property of the United States. The name of Secretary Seward will be forever associated with that remarkable purchase, by which we secured from Russia for seven million two hundred thousand dollars a territory nine times the size of the New England states; teeming with gold mines, rich in furs, abounding in fish, and clothed with forests. But at that time no one, not even the Russians themselves, knew what a rich country Alaska was, and many were the jokes made at the expense of Secretary Seward's enthusiasm. The papers sneered at it, one of them suggesting to President Johnson that he visit "this land of valuable snow and merchantable ice," for the general impression was that it was an ice-bound country, access to which was crowded with Siberian-like difficulties, the people as a whole knowing very little about it, and not stopping to consider that its thousand miles of coast was washed by the warm waters of the Japan current, thus modifying the climate, so that winters in Sitka are scarcely more severe than those in New York, while the summers are refreshingly cool. Secretary Seward worked with almost a seer's vision to accomplish his heart's desire, and he was ably seconded by Charles Sumner, whose speech in the senate on "the occasion of Russian America" was one of the finest efforts of his life, and at length the vast district became the property of the United States.

Then came the puzzling question of naming the territorial baby, because its old name, "Russian America," was no longer appropriate. The wits exercised their inventive powers, suggesting such appellations as "American Siberia," and "Zero Islands," but Charles Sumner showed his fine taste by suggesting "Alaska" (the great land), a name which the Indians used in connection with the southern part of the peninsula. The ceremony of the transfer was very simple. Had one been in Sitka a certain bright October morning in 1867 he would have seen beautiful Sitka bay gay with the fluttering Stars and Stripes on three United States warships, while from every staff and roof of the village waved the emblem of Russia's power. In front of the old castle on its lofty, natural elevation were drawn up the troops of both countries, who silently awaited the first salute from one of the United States ships, at which signal the order was given to lower the Russian flag. Scarcely had the sound of the American guns lost themselves in echo, when the Russian batteries boomed forth, and the American flag gayly

flashed, and forests centuries old are constantly presenting themselves. The Yosemite seems but the child of this vast, grand congregation of rocks, while Pike's Peak is but a strayed little brother, for one after the other, on all sides, mountains that lose themselves in the sky's snow banks rise perpendicularly from the smooth, level surface of the water, Neptune demanding no tribute during this voyage, as one meets the open sea only while crossing Queen Charlotte Sound and Dixon Entrance. A bird flying high over head, or a seagull skimming the water's mirror-like face, give evidence of the feathered inhabitants of these unexplored wildernesses, while a birch-bark canoe filled with Indians darting across the water, add the last touches of wildness to the scene. But the "noble red man" is nobler at a distance than upon nearer acquaintance, for the first settlement where the water carriage lands, Fort Wrangell, disclosing the natives freed from all picturesque, their totem poles alone calling out admiration. Before almost every bay are seen these stately emblems, symbolical of the natives' pride—a pride which humanity shares, for does not everyone respect a coat-of-arms? The savage and white man here meet on common ground, for each desires influence, and in Indian affairs he erects the most splendid pole is reckoned a man of wealth, for these heraldic emblems cost the owners from \$1,000 to \$2,000 of our money. A fine cedar log, perhaps fifty feet long, is chosen, and this, after it has been stripped of the bark, is carved with the faces of men, beasts and birds, which may or may not be painted, and to every Indian this true genealogical tree relates a plain story of the owner, showing his descent (which is reckoned on his mother's side), the powerful alliances made by his family, and the great events in the tribe's history. The day of its erection is a proud one for the savage, as the event is celebrated by the entire tribe, and that host who can make the greatest display by lavishly feasting all his guests on the delicacies of this land, by giving them expensive blankets as souvenirs, is counted the most important, and takes a correspondingly high rank, even if he beggars himself in the operation—a parody on modern civilization.

Having exchanged good United States money (of which they seem to know the value) for silver spoons on the handles of which they have carved totem poles, and having reveled in their old art work baskets made of the split rods of the cedar, woven together by hand so tightly that they would hold water, and painted with native colored clay in rude geometrical figures, the tourist finds himself once more drifting through a never ending panorama of nature's arranging and painting, until the glaciers begin to make their appearance, each one of which seems more beautiful than its predecessor, until that queen of glaciers, the Muir, is

Carrara marble by master artists in days of yore. Even the sun seems to raise and smile more genially as he sees himself reflected in a thousand brilliant ice-facets which separate its rays into their prismatic hues. But linger as he may, the time comes when only the moon and stars see the wonderful beauty of the place, for boats must say good-by when Sol's chariot passes on, as it is not safe for a vessel to be overtaken by night in that ice-dotted bay, which is so unlike that other bay which caresses the banks of Sitka, the most interesting settlement in Alaska. A single street, at the head of which is the old orthodox Greek church, with its picturesque green minarets, chime of bells and fine clock, divides the village into two parts—civilization and heathenism. On the one side is the Indian ranche or settlement, for the government now compels the natives to live in houses or huts which front the beach in a double row, each place being whitewashed and numbered. The inside consists of one large room with a hole in the middle of the roof, through which the smoke of the fire escapes, the seat on the ceiling forming black stalactites of the most fascinating shape and form. In this common living room, the entire family, including herds of dogs, eat and sleep, while the only touch of picturesque about the ranche is the beautiful canoe covered with gay blankets, which are drawn up on the beach. On the other side of the gravelled highway are the trading store, custom house, barracks, mission schools and governor's castle, which is a most interesting square old structure made of huge logs held together by iron bolts, its foundation being a rocky elevation which is surrounded on three sides by water, while the fourth springs abruptly from the surrounding land, thus forming a natural and impregnable fortress. The view from this commanding height discloses a semi-circular bay which might be the twin of the beautiful bay of Naples, not even the fire mountain being absent, for the extinct volcano, Edgecumbe, far in the distance to the right, wrapped in a royal purple mantle, guards the hundreds of emerald islands which stud the silvery, glittering expanse of water. Back of the town are the everlasting hills, whose rising slopes as blue as lapis lazuli, gradually hide themselves in veils of filmy, fleecy clouds until they change their gowns to the pure whiteness of perpetual snow.

Nature seems to be "setting for her picture," for everything about Sitka presents views to fill a water color artist with rapture. Even the sun lingers long before closing his eyes on this perfection, for 9 o'clock in August finds him still out of bed, flooding the scene with glorious mellow light, which gradually fades through the red of regret, and the gray of resignation, to the tender amethyst of hope, for the gentle afterglow which tints the snow-capped mountains, and is reflected by the island-set bay, seems to be a promise of tomorrow's return, and one secretly envies him the sight, for ere that time comes the steamer will have carried his human freight many miles from this haven of perfect beauty, on the homeward voyage from this land of poetic loveliness—America's Switzerland.

Helium in a Mine.

Helium, it will be recollected, is a chemical element which was known to exist in the sun and some of the stars long before it had been discovered on the earth. When found on our globe, two years ago, it was discovered in a rare mineral of Norway named cleveite. Since then cleveite has been in demand in chemical laboratories, and its rarity has made it costly. Recently a mine was opened near Ryfylke, Norway, containing an abundance of cleveite, together with several other rare minerals. The cleveite from this mine, examined in London, has been found rich in helium, and it sells for about \$5 a pound.

Present Population of Johannesburg. Johannesburg, according to the latest figures, has now 136,000 inhabitants, 51,000 of whom are whites. There are 16,265 British, 3,335 Russians, 2,263 Germans, 819 Dutch, 442 Frenchmen, 311 Swedes and Norwegians, 206 Italians, and 648 from other non-African countries; the others come from the Orange Free State and the British South African colonies.

FIGS AND THISTLES.

The ring of the dollar is not heard in the death chamber. Kind acts find a dozen friends before kind wishes get an introduction. The truthful are youthful though their cheeks are withered with age. The rich man in hell didn't ask to be taken out. He wanted to be made comfortable where he was. Convince a sinner that you are concerned about him, and he will soon be concerned about himself. There is some difference between hope-so religion and assurance, that there is between muggy twilight and clear sunshine. A eucyre playing, dancing, theater-going, beer drinking church member can do more to demoralize the young than a full fledged devil. The preacher who is not caring whether anybody is being brought to repentance by his preaching has misunderstood the Lord. According to the critics of emotional religion, the penitents on the day of Pentecost should have been "cut to their logical faculties," instead of "cut to the heart." People who would bow, and scrape, and walk on their knees for the sake of being presented to Queen Victoria, excuse themselves from the Wednesday night levee of the King of Kings—the prayer meeting.—Ram's pen.

BANCROCHE.

(Translated from the French of N. S. de Forge.)



His real name was Simon Martin, but when a child he had fractured his hip, which accident had crippled him for life, and his comrades at school and nicknamed him Bancroche (twisted leg). The name stuck to him. He was a fine fellow, muscular, with broad shoulders, an open face and clear eyes. More than one of the pretty country girls would have liked to know him, but he hardly addressed a word to them, held back by timidity and shame of his poor leg. He never complained, and when he watched his friends dancing at the fair, with their arms about their partners' waists, he accepted his position with the philosophy of a country fatalist. But one day he suffered the sorrow of a great disappointment. He wanted to serve in the army, but first he must pass the examination with the others. He marched limping along the road with them, his hat ornamented with long tri-colored ribbons which floated in the breeze, and sang at the top of his voice with an animation which made him forget he was not like the rest of the world. But his joy was short-lived.

"Unfit for service; deformity of the hip," pronounced the officer. "It is unfortunate," added the general, "without that he would have made a splendid soldier." Bancroche departed alone, his heart full of sadness and feeling the flower of courage and loyalty which had sprung up in him wither from lack of nourishment. He reached the farm where he was employed without meeting anyone, and going to the bed where he slept he threw himself down and wept uncontrollably.

Some time after this Bancroche was employed on the farm of a certain Benoit, a well-to-do farmer, who had a very pretty daughter named Mariette. Her white teeth made a line of ivory behind two rosy lips always parting in a smile. Her figure was dainty, her arms strong, her feet untiring; altogether she was the picture of vigorous beauty. She might have been a Ceres of Rubens, in all the strength and freshness of her 20 years. And, of course, Bancroche fell madly in love with her. She was not long in perceiving her victory and, as she was something of a coquette, she did all she could to encourage him. She was so good to him, looked at him with eyes so sweet and bright that the cripple was fired with love and hope, letting himself dwell on happy dreams of the future, in which he saw himself departing from the church with Mariette, his wife, leaning on his arm. He said many tender things to her, and once, putting her mouth very close to his ear, she had whispered: "Bancroche, I love you!"

And after all, why not? he had asked himself. To be sure he was a cripple, but he invented a thousand reasons to persuade himself that this was not an obstacle. In marrying one thinks only of the qualities of the heart. He had



"SEIZE THE WOMAN ALSO!" came of a good family. He was held in esteem by M. Benoit and was second to him in command at the farm. All these thoughts reassured him and he spoke to Benoit of his hopes. To his joy, Benoit gave him his hand willingly and said he would talk to his daughter, who had just gone into the hay field. Bancroche followed at a distance, and himself unseen watched the farmer approach Mariette and address her in a low voice. Then, after a moment, he saw her throw back her head with a peal of laughter and heard her cry: "With his leg? And I would be a Mme. Bancroche? No! No! No!"

Poor Bancroche did not return until evening and then he took his place at supper without noticing the sad looks of Mariette, nor the haughty glances of Benoit, who was willing to be loved, but angry that he, a cripple, should have dared to ask her hand. "I understand, M. Benoit," he said, after supper; "we will say no more about it. I was wrong in forgetting my leg." And more than this he would not say, going on with his work as usual, always brave, sometimes sad, but never troubling either father or daughter. And when, three months after, Mariette married Sylvain Gillet, proprietor of the Coq-d'Argent hotel, he assisted at the wedding and no one noticed that his eyes were red.

There was great excitement in the village of Saint Georges. The Prussians were coming. They had already occupied the neighboring village and twenty times an hour each person looked anxiously down the road to the forest, the direction from which the enemy was expected to come. All the able-bodied men had gone to war, with the exception of Sylvain Gillet, who trembled at the thought of being killed. A drinker and a braggart, deceitful and

wicked, he had made his wife terribly unhappy, and Mariette, made wiser by time, had often thought regretfully of the honesty and sweetness of Bancroche. Gillet knew his townspeople looked upon him disapprovingly for remaining so quietly at home, instead of going to fight for his country, and he determined to win, by one bold strike, their appreciation and gratitude. So, taking a rifle, he hid himself in the bushes at the roadside in the forest, and when the advance guard passed he fired and killed one soldier. The result of the deed was not long delayed. Two hours afterward a Prussian battalion occupied the village and the inhabitants, men and women, were ordered to assemble in the public square. He fairly plain French the commandant addressed them:

"One of you has shot one of our soldiers. I give you one hour to produce the murderer. The village is surrounded and no one can leave. If in an hour the assassin is not in my hands I will set fire to your village at its four corners. Now go home, and at the first beat of the drum come back here."

The peasants turned away, asking each other in frightened whispers who had fired the shot. Bancroche entered the inn of Coq d'Argent, and as soon as he saw the white, fearful face of Gillet he said, brusquely:

"It was you."

Gillet tried to answer, but Bancroche interrupted him authoritatively:

"Don't take the trouble to lie; it was you."

Mariette and two or three others, who heard his words, stepped in startled surprise.

"What would they do to him if they knew it?" asked one.

"They would shoot him. And if they do not know it they will burn the village."

All were silent, terrified, except Gillet, who cried, with chattering teeth:

"In the name of pity, do not give me up."

"Wretch, would you have us all burned?"

At this instant the drum sounded. "Listen," said Bancroche, rising; "listen a moment. You, Sylvain Gillet, must not die, for you have a wife. But neither must the village be burned. I think I see a way. Stay where you are, Gillet, and you others, swear to keep silent. I will take care of the rest." And they all departed, leaving Gillet.

"Who is guilty?" cried the officer, in a terrible voice.

Bancroche made a step forward and said quietly, "It was I."

"You," said the officer, "a cripple!"

"That does not prevent my firing a gun."

"Your name?"

Simon Martin, but on account of my leg I am called Bancroche."

"You confess that you killed the soldier."

"Yes."

"Do you know you will be shot?"

"I do."

The commander could not but admire the calmness of Bancroche's speech. The crowd listened, breathless, amazed that Bancroche, known to be so peaceable, could have fired the shot, but glad, nevertheless, that the village would be saved.

"Eight men; behind the church!" commanded the officer.

At this moment Mariette, forcing her way through the crowd, ran toward the officer crying, "Stop! he lies! It was not he."

"What are you saying?"

"I tell you he is not guilty. It was not he."

"Hurry with the man," cried the officer.

Mariette escaped from the soldiers who tried to hold her and threw herself on her knees before the officer.

"Monsieur, I pray you, do not kill him! He is innocent! Do not kill him! Oh, I beg you!"

THE BUSHMAN'S TACTICS.

How the Apache of Africa Hunts the Ostrich.

The Bushman divests himself of all his incumbrances; water vessels, food, cloak, assegai and sandals are all left behind. Stark naked, except for the hide patch about his middle, and armed only with his bow, arrows and knife he sets forth. The nearest ostrich is feeding more than a mile away, and there is no covert but the long, sundried, yellow grass, but that is enough for the Bushman. Warming himself over the ground with the greatest caution, he crawls flat on his belly toward the bird. No serpent could traverse the grass with less disturbance. In the space of an hour and a half he has approached within a hundred yards of the tall bird. Nearer he darts not creep on this bare plain, and, at more than twenty-five paces he cannot trust his light reed arrows. He lies partially hidden in the grass, his bow and arrows ready in front of him, trusting that the ostrich may draw nearer. It is a long wait under the blazing sun, close on two hours, but his instinct serves him, and at last, as the sun shifts a little, the great ostrich feeds that way. It is a magnificent male bird, jet black as to its body plumage, and adorned with magnificent white feathers upon the wings and tail. Kwanet's eyes glisten, but he moves not a muscle. Thirty paces, twenty-five, then twenty. There is a light musical twang upon the hot air and a tiny, yellowish arrow sticks well into the breast of the gigantic bird. The ostrich feels a sharp pang and turns at once. In that same instant a second arrow is lodged in its side, just under the wing feathers. Now the stricken bird raises its wings from its body and speeds forth into the plain. But Kwanet is quite content. The poison of those two arrows will do its work effectually. He gets up, follows the ostrich, tracking it, after it has disappeared from sight, by its spoor, and in two hours the game lies there before him amid the grass, dead as a stone.

GENERAL BLISS AS A HUNTER.

Believes in Snake Poison Antidote and Its General Diffusion.

Col. Zenas Bliss, who has just been made a brigadier-general in the regular army, was for several years commander at Fort Hayes, Kansas, where he is well remembered for his many exceptional qualities. He was an enormously fat man, weighing more than 300 pounds, and had a proverbial good nature that lurks in avoidipolis. He was a great sportsman, and a fine shot with both shotgun and rifle. He loved to hunt prairie chickens, and always went into the fields seated in a low barouche, with a soldier for a driver. When his dogs came to a "point" he would have the driver put his horses ahead of the dogs and flush the game at which he would shoot without dismounting from the carriage. It was a great privilege among the private soldiers to be permitted to go with the colonel as a driver. He invariably had a comfortable supply of snake antidote under one of the seats, and was always careful to antidote the driver every time he antidoted himself. At short distance off-hand shooting Col. Bliss was undoubtedly the champion of the army. The writer once saw him win every dollar in the pockets of the officers of his regiment at a picnic, where shooting was made part of the program. He put a silver half dollar up in a forked stick at a distance of seventy-five yards and offered to wager that he could hit it with an ordinary army rifle. The young lieutenants fell over each other in covering that bet, and when the gun cracked they lost. It tickled the colonel so immensely that he spent all he had won and twice that sum over in getting these officers and certain friends from Hays City a Munn's extra dry supper. There never was a regular army officer who possessed so much of the love of his subordinates as Col. Bliss.

Staving Off Consumption.

An Indiana man who claims to be 115 years old and in the enjoyment of robust health has informed a reporter that his parents died of consumption before they were 30 and that he has used whisky and tobacco exclusively for fifty years.

FOR CYCLISTS.

A good and cooling beverage is made by straining and beating a fresh egg and adding to a bottle of ginger beer. Water-proof road maps are now to be obtained and if one is caught in a sudden shower they make a good protection for one's head. When the muscles are tired and lame a fine liniment to use is made of 5 cents' worth of castor oil added to 5 cents' worth of hartshorn. Shake well and keep tightly corked. Soap is sold in book form and when needed a leaf can be torn out. This is a handy and almost necessary article for bicycle tourists to take if a long out-of-town run is contemplated. The latest novelty in handle-bars is made hollow and contains those articles usually relegated to the tool bag. This removes the fear of having the bag stolen if the wheel is left alone by its owner. Dust is worse for a bicycle than mud, for the latter can be cleaned off at once, but dust gets into every corner and hides. A pair of good bellows can be used with marvelous effect after a run over country roads. The Japanese begin building their houses at the top. The roof is first built and elevated on a skeleton frame. Then it affords shelter to the workmen from storms.



WHITE HORSE RAPIDS, YUKON RIVER.

mounted to the top, while both country's guns sounded a duet, after which the Russian governor formally resigned his badge of office to America's representative, and the land belonged to Uncle Sam. That night there was a banquet and ball at the castle, and then the Russian families, many of whom were cultured, educated people, prepared to leave the country in possession of the new owner, so that in a few months the natives and United States troops, together with unscrupulous adventurers, were the sole occupants. Gradually the latter class was superseded by honest prospectors and rugged pioneers, whose accounts of the beauty of the land attracted the tourists who now annually flood the coast region, where some of the grandest scenery of the world can be seen.

Leaving Victoria, the boat begins its serpentine passage among the innumerable islands which, necklace-like, encircle the coast. In verity and truth, they are the spurs of that unbroken mountain range which forms a wall along the Pacific coast from north to south. At first, one begins to count these islands, but is soon lost in a maze of figures, for there is a goodly company of about 1,100, varying in size from small, delicate patches of green to great tracts of land as large as the state of Massachusetts. As the boat glides in and out of this labyrinth of nature, the scene becomes kaleidoscopic, for new combinations of turquoise water, fleecy-flecked sky, granite moun-

reached. Like a shy maiden, it has been chary of its beauty, hiding itself in a bay which is rather formidable of entrance, as it is usually filled with a fleet of icebergs and flocs which persist in keeping three-fourths of their bodies under water, so that a vessel wishing to make their acquaintance must be shod in iron. The grating of the ice under the ship's metal heel, the fierce rushing in and out of the tides, and the distant booming of nature's artillery as the icebergs break away from the glacier's face and fall into the water, make one's blood tingle, and expectation has reached its climax when a sudden turn into an inlet brings one face to face with one of the most novel, awe-inspiring sights in all this great round world—Muir glacier—unlike any other of its fellows. Across the bay Mount Crillon and Mount Fairweather, towering 1,500 feet above the water, like giant sentries, guard this frozen gem. It does not stoop down to reach the sea, but boldly, fearlessly approaches the edge of the water, presenting a solid wall of ice over 200 feet high, and three miles across its face—a sight to dazzle and fascinate mankind.

Leaving the ship, the boats land the aspiring tourists in a ravine at the side of this ice river, and the ascent through sand and boulder is begun—a scramble rich in reward, as the top of the glacier is a congregation of ice-pinnacles, many of which are as beautiful and symmetrical as if they were cut from