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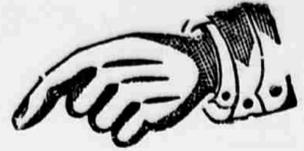
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SEAL HUNTING IN ALASKA.

How a Monopoly of the Business Was Obtained.

IS OUR UNCLE SAM A TYRANT?

What a Sea Captain Had to Say About the Seizure of Certain Vessels—The Annual Slaughter.

Alaska's Big Monopoly.

VICTORIA, B. C., May 3.—[Special Correspondence of THE BEE.]—Do you know anything about the origin of the Alaska Commercial company?

This was a question asked me by an old sealer while in Port Townsend one day last week. I replied that it was a subject about which I was little acquainted.

"Well, sir," said he, "General Rousseau was United States commissioner at the time of the transfer of Alaska, and there was at Sitka certain buildings belonging to the old Russian Fur company. General Rousseau, on account of his official position, could not become a party to any private transaction that grew out of his relations with the government, but there happened to be a young man by the name of Hutchinson near at hand, who had accompanied the general to Alaska in the capacity of private secretary, and it did not take him long to improve a golden opportunity. Of course the sale of this territory to the United States ended the existence of the Russian Fur company, and Mr. Hutchinson conceived the idea of taking possession of the fur trade of Alaska, together with the seal islands, and he readily found a partner in the person of a Mr. Kohl, an Englishman, whose home was in Victoria. The firm, I believe, still exists under the name of Hutchinson, Kohl & Co., although I have understood Mr. Hutchinson died some six years ago in Washington, D. C., leaving a cool million as the result of his interest in the enterprise.

"The firm of Hutchinson, Kohl & Co., however, is putting into execution their plans for taking control of the fur and seal trade of Alaska, encountered a rival in their new enterprise in the person of a Captain Morgan of Connecticut, who was already in the field with experienced sealers, and just as a fight seemed imminent, a truce was declared and the season's catch was equally divided.

"While the above combination was quietly pursuing its capture of the seals, numerous attempts were made by organized parties to break in upon this valuable ground, but the combined efforts of Hutchinson and Morgan drove all new comers from the field. The attention of the government was at this time attracted to the islands of St. Paul and St. George which constitute the Pribiloff group, and which were said to contain the only extensive seal rookeries in the world, and in 1868 congress passed an act designed to preserve those rookeries from indiscriminate slaughter. In 1870 the Alaska Commercial company secured a lease from the United States for a term of twenty years at an annual rental of \$55,000, and a tax of \$2.00 on each skin, and the company were limited to 100,000 skins

year. The amount paid Russia by the United States for the whole of Alaska territory was about \$7,000,000. Thus it will be seen that Secretary Seward's purchase was not such a poor investment for the United States, after all.

"Does the Alaska commercial company control the fur trade of the territory outside of the fur seals, by virtue of any contract or lease from the United States," I inquired?

"The Alaska commercial company attempt to control the fur trade of Alaska, and they have trading posts all over the territory, but they assume this authority without the least color of right or protection from the United States government. Their franchise is confined absolutely to the islands of St. Paul and St. George in Behring sea, and in this they are protected by the government. Any man can take into any portion of Alaska territory outside of the islands referred to, any class of goods, with the exception of guns, ammunition and liquor, and carry on a traffic with the same freedom that he could in any part of the United States."

"Is the generally accepted theory that the only seal rookeries in the world are at St. Paul and St. George islands in Behring sea, true?"

"If I were to answer your question from the Alaska commercial company's standpoint, I should say yes, with the exception of a small rookery somewhere near Peru, South America, but if I should answer you with a proper regard for the truth, I should say not by any manner of means. Cape Horn furnishes yearly, if not quite as many, seals each year as do the islands of St. Paul and St. George. I am aware that the idea generally prevails that seal hunting is today a thing of the past, outside of Behring sea, so far as a specific occupation is concerned, but the cause of the prevalence of this belief can be traced to the door of the Alaska Commercial company, which has spared no pains to make it an established fact. Why, I understand a text book has been recently published in which the question is asked: 'Where is the only place in the world that the fur seal is known to live?' and the answer is given, 'In St. George and St. Paul islands in Behring sea.' I hope the parents of the American youth who are supposed to gather this as a part of their education, will ascertain that such is not a fact, and instruct their children never to make such an assertion to any one not under pap from the Alaska Commercial company."

"How do you regard the position taken by the United States towards American and English vessels sealing in Behring sea? Was the seizure of those vessels in 1890 and 1887 justified?"

"Come on deck a moment. You see yonder schooner? The one with a man near the top of the main-mast painting? That is one of the vessels seized by the United States revenue cutter Corwin in 1887. She was captured in Behring sea out of sight of land, her cargo confiscated and the vessel sold a short time ago by order of the court for \$1,500. Her purchaser immediately sold her for \$5,000, and she is now being refitted, and will henceforth sail under the American flag, with her name changed from Grace to that of Lucy Lowe. It is an old proverb that says, 'A country may claim as its waters such distance from its land as can be protected by its guns on shore,' and this is generally conceded to be a marine league, or three miles. The Grace was captured at a distance of sixty miles from the nearest land, and its hunters had not taken a seal nearer than that distance from shore. Of course, I do not think the position of the United

States right. On the contrary, I think the seizure of English and American vessels in the waters of Behring sea one of the most arbitrary acts of which any nation was ever guilty. Such conduct might have been in keeping with the maritime law that prevailed about the year 1821, when the czar of Russia issued an imperial ukase claiming control of all the waters of Behring sea, but, if you remember, the burly Russian was prevailed upon to withdraw from that attitude by demonstrations made by the United States. The case is exactly similar, only the United States has changed position with Russia."

"Perhaps it makes some difference whose ox is gored?"

"Yes, and it may make some difference if the ox gored may prove to be a (Johnny) Bull."

"Well, what is going to be the outcome of this question? I saw a schooner with a crew of twenty-one men fully armed and equipped for an expedition to the sealing waters of Behring sea, and her sails last night and in the language of the captain, she proposed to 'beard the lion in his den.'"

"Yes, and I understand an English gunboat has been ordered into those waters for the purpose of seeing fair play in an open field. I believe it will evacuate in the government controlling the seal rookeries by placing officers upon St. George and St. Paul islands, and the seals captured in the open sea under certain restrictions. If there is a profit in this industry the government should receive the benefit of it. The rookeries should be preserved at all hazards. The fur seal is too valuable a luxury to be destroyed as would certainly occur were men allowed to go upon those islands and slaughter the seal without regard to age and sex. But they can be protected from annihilation, and at the same time men may be allowed to capture such seals as are found outside a certain limit. The lease of the Alaska commercial company expires May 1, 1890, and I believe the days of that monopoly are numbered."

"Captains, can you tell me something about the habits of the seal, the manner of their capture, etc.?"

"Yes, sir. The seal in June and July as regularly as the months come around may be seen in swarms approaching the Aleutian islands from the waters of the north Pacific ocean for the purpose of breeding and shedding its pelage. The old ones are known as bulls and cows, and the young pups. They approach the low sandy beaches of St. Paul and St. George islands and drag themselves along its shores where they lie in the sun or wander about seeking comfortable nooks where they await the hour that limits the period of their gestation. When their young are born they care for them much the same as a female doe does for its pups, and in a couple of months they are sufficiently large to paddle around the shallow coves, and in October and November are fully equipped to join the multitude of older seals in their exit from the rookeries."

Between the months of July and October natives are sent out upon the beach to drive the seal to the killing grounds. The men start in at the water's edge and by means of bells or other noisy device, slowly close in upon the seals, and when once headed toward these grounds they are easily guided along. When they arrive at their destination small detachments are cut off from the main herd, and the slaughter is commenced by beating them over the heads with clubs. A party of skimmers are then brought in, and in due time the skins are taken to the salt houses where they are salted and sorted, and soon they are ready for shipment. I will re-

mark here that no female seal is allowed to be killed, and none younger than one year. The killing with clubs is the only way they are dispatched on the islands, for the reason that the firing of guns is thought to have a tendency to frighten the seals from the rookeries. I have seen them on these steep without waiting upon them, and I am safe in placing the estimate at several million in number. You know it is only during the months of June, July, August and September that the killing is done, and that 100,000 seals must be taken in that time."

MINER W. BRUCE.

EDUCATIONAL.

Cornell university has put \$100,000 in new buildings the past year.

In Michigan university a larger proportion of women than men are taking by choice the full classical course.

More than 2,000,000 of the youth of India are to-day receiving an education in the English language.

Michigan university has now more students in attendance than any other American institution of learning.

The University of Michigan, with 1,882 students, probably has the largest number ever enrolled in an American college.

The opening of Clark university at Worcester, Mass., was announced to take place in October at a meeting of the trustees.

The authorities of Holland have decreed that women cannot serve on a school board. In Sweden it has been decided that they can.

Twenty-five state legislatures, besides the national government, have made scientific temperance a compulsory school study in their respective states and territories.

The city of Cleveland paid \$20,000 a year additional for the special instruction in German in the public schools, and a movement for the removal of this burden has been begun.

Madison university is to have a new library building, to accommodate 250,000 volumes. It will cost \$100,000, and J. H. Colgate has volunteered to give this sum.

Ground was broken last week for the new structure.

Garrett E. Winnants, of Bergen Point, N. Y., has New Brunswick, N. Y., that he will build a large and expensive dormitory for that ancient and honorable institution. The cost will probably be \$100,000.

Columbia college, in New York city, will permit young women to enter an "annex" by passing the same entrance examination as the young men. The ladies who have the "annex" in mind propose to furnish the money to rent or build it.

There is still some uncertainty about commencement at Columbia. Hitherto each department had its own commencement, but this year the trustees voted to combine the graduating exercises of the academic, mines and law schools, and fixed the commencement of these departments for June 12.

At the last session of congress \$5,000 was appropriated to pay the expenses of an expedition to the Arctic region, and the total expense of the expedition, which will occur December 22, 1890, and will be of unusual duration. Prof. Todd of the Amherst Astronomical department, has been appointed by the secretary of the navy to take command of this expedition. The Rev. Dr. W. H. Holladay, of Pittsburg, Pa., will accompany the expedition as naturalist.

MILLIONS IN IT.

There is a big fortune in those cash registers we see in all the ladies' shopping stores, says the New York Sun. One company has gobbled up all the best devices of the sort, and is reaping a great harvest, because no enterprising storekeeper pretends to get along without them. The owners will not sell the apparatus. They put it in a store under a lease at \$18 a year for a station, a station being each one of those stopping places over the clerks' heads whence the baskets are sent to the cash desk. Some New York stores have as many as 250 stations, and consequently pay \$4,500 or more a year for the use of the device.

TWO ARE LEFT FOR TORTURE

A Brutal Practice of the Government's Indian Agents.

RATION DAY AMONG THE SIOUX.

The Noble Red Men Purposely Wound Cattle to See Them Suffer and Then Eat the Livers Raw.

A Revolting Scene.

CHAMBERLAIN, S. D., May 10.—[Special Correspondence of THE BEE.]—Saturday is the great holiday among the Indians as on this day they draw their rations and provisions for the week. This is the only day in the week that they arise early. The Indians that live the farthest away from the agency come in the evening before and camp out. By 10 o'clock almost every Indian both large and small is at the agency ready to take his place in the line at the top of the bell. At 10 o'clock the line is formed and they pass through the ration house and draw their rations. They are divided off by families, bands and tribes, each head of a family having a card with his name, number in his family, number of the band he belongs to and what tribe.

The tickets are issued quarterly and have twelve numbers on them, one being punched every time he draws his rations.

At the ration house, sugar, coffee, flour, beans, crackers and pork are issued to him. After the provisions are all issued, the Indians all repair to the corral, about one-half mile from the agency, where about thirty head of wild Texas steers are waiting to be killed. The killing is done by one of the agency employes who stands in a box in the corral and shoots the cattle until all but one or two are dead when the Indians commence firing. They do not try to kill the remaining cattle but just wound and

ENLARGE THE POOR BEASTS who go tearing around the corral trying in vain to find something to wreck vengeance upon, the Indians meanwhile keeping up an unearthly yelling and howling. After having as much fun as they can out of the poor beasts they kill them and then everybody makes a scramble. The tongue is, in all cases, cut out first. After this ceremony is one through the steers are partitioned off to the different tribes and they immediately commence the division to the different families. No part of the beast is left unused, the entrails being a very delicate morsel for the noble red man. As soon as the liver is reached it is immediately divided and eaten raw. I saw one old hag with a piece of raw liver tied around her neck, one end of which was in her mouth. She was undoubtedly making time count, as she was eating and carving at the same time. This killing scene was the most sickening and disgusting one that I have ever seen in my life. The Indians are naturally of a very barbarous nature, and the sight of the blood and the poor tortured beasts is very gratifying to their sight. The government should furnish each agency with a butcher, who should have the cattle all killed and cut up for the Indians on ration day.

After the return to the agency from the corral, I had a long talk with number of prominent chiefs, includ-

AN INFANTILE AVENGER.

He Shoots a Burglar and Wonders What His Girl Will Think.

THE SIOUX RESERVATION BILL

as passed by the last congress, and signified their willingness to sign. There seems to be some misunderstanding between these chiefs and their followers on one side and the half-breeds on the other. The chiefs say that they want the commission to hurry up and get to work, and say that in the conferees they want to be heard as well as the half-breeds. These Indians seem to be pretty well posted on the principal events of the day, and I was surprised to hear them talk of things that happened twenty or thirty years ago. One of these Indians was saying that he didn't like one of the agency employes, whose folks reside in the south. I asked him if he didn't use him well, and he said he did. I then asked him why he didn't like him and he answered the unexpected answer that he was a rebel. I explained to him that the gentleman was not old enough to have served in the rebellion, and he answered that that might be, but that his parents had owned slaves and that he was a rebel. I thought that people with colored skins were not as good as white people, and he was afraid that they would want to make slaves of them.

This agency, Lower Brule, is situated about five miles below and opposite Chamberlain, and is reached by boat from this city. The agency consists of about twenty buildings, and is made up of residences for the officials, bars, a carpenter and blacksmith shop, store, a church, which is presided over by Rev. Luke Walker, a full-blooded Indian—a school employing five teachers, and other buildings. The Indians live mostly in log houses built by the government. They are very lazy and shiftless. Some of them are dressed in the government clothes that are furnished them, but the most of them dress the same as they did twenty-five years ago. There are a few who have been off to school who dress just the same as white people and who are quite smart. Most of the Indians understand and talk the English language. At this agency the Indians have organized a court, of which

PHILEAS THUNDER is chief justice and Spotted Horse prosecuting attorney. To illustrate their sense of justice I will tell you of a trial that took place here recently. A young Indian who lives on White river was arrested and brought before the court charged with rape. After examining a number of witnesses and consuming half a day in arguments the case was finally submitted to the judges and the prisoner found guilty and the chief justice was instructed to sentence him. He said that this being the first time that the prisoner had been before the court and as he was a young man the sentence would be light. He then sentenced him to three days in the guard house on bread and water.

The government furnishes a squad of policemen at each agency to keep the peace. These policemen are picked from the better class of Indians, and are furnished uniforms and revolvers and paid a monthly salary. These Indians would soon become civilized citizens if the proper course was pursued. They should be given a farm and their rations taken away from them. They know that as long as the government furnishes them provisions and clothes that they do not have to work unless they are forced to support themselves.

Prof. George S. Morris of the chair of philosophy in the Michigan state university, died Saturday night, after an illness of several weeks.

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