

Uncle Sam's Valuable but Little Known Islands

(Copyrighted, 1899, by Frank G. Carpenter.)
ISABELLA SEGUNDA. Isle of Vieques, Aug. 8.—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—I have spent the past week in gathering information about some of Uncle Sam's unknown islands. By our treaty with Spain we secured scores of islands in addition to Porto Rico. Some of these are points of rock built up by coral insects, forming little more than spots on the face of the sea. Others are of considerable value and, among them, those which I describe in this letter. I am writing now on Vieques, the island of crabs, which lies thirteen miles east of Porto Rico and not very far from St. Thomas. It is sixty-four miles from San Juan, and is connected with the mainland by the little government steamer, the Slocum, which comes to it with supplies for the soldiers and the mail once every week. Through the kindness of the quartermaster at San Juan I was allowed to pass on the Slocum during its present voyage, and by it was landed in Isabella Segunda.

We began to pass islands which belong to Uncle Sam as soon as we left San Juan. We sailed by several on our way out of the harbor, and then turned to the east and steamed for hours along the north coast of Porto Rico, just outside a reef of low coral islets upon which the blue waves lashed themselves, casting up a line of white foam. Behind this snowy fringe we could see the blue mountains rising in a rolling line of beauty which was now and then lost in the clouds. We saw more clouds as we proceeded. They hung about the islands, wrapping the mountains with their nebulous humidity. This region is very moist and clouds are one of the peculiar features of all Porto Rican scenery. They are full of rain which now and then drops in a needle-like spray and at times falls in sheets and streams. There are clouds everywhere. They hang so close to the mountains as to make you think that you could be climbing the hills turn on the spigots of the heavens and have shower baths to order.

Our New Leper Island.

We saw islands in front of us shortly

completely isolated from the rest of the world.

Down the East Coast of Porto Rico.

Sailing by this island, our little steamer skirted the island of Palominos, steaming southward toward Vieques. Afar off in front of the ship we could see Vieques, a hazy blue line of low mountains floating, as if were, upon the sea apparently about twenty or thirty miles away. We did not go direct, but first entered the harbor of the town of Fajardo, on the northeastern coast of Porto Rico, and then made our way south to the harbor of Humacao. We were so close to the mainland that we could see the sugar plantations which line the shores. They were great squares of light green shining out of the brown fields about them. Back of the green rose the navy blue mountains of the Porto Rican backbone, with the peak El Yunque, the highest mountain of the island, towering above them. At the port for Humacao we came to anchor in a bay surrounded by coconut trees. Here we landed a hogshead of ice for some of our army officials, who are stationed about six miles back from the coast, and then turned and steamed eastward toward Vieques.

It took us little more than an hour to come from Porto Rico into the harbor of Isabella Segunda. This is on the north coast of the island, about midway between its two ends. Vieques consists of a mountain ridge about twenty-one miles long and six miles wide. It is beautifully green and the low mountains rise and fall, forming a rolling country, in which are some of the most fertile lands of our West Indian possessions. The soil is such that it will grow all kinds of vegetables and fruits. The island has a number of large sugar plantations and it raises the best cattle of the West Indies.

The chief harbor is that of Isabella Segunda, although there is a port on the south which gives a better landing place. The harbor here is surrounded by hills and it is unsafe at the time of the northerly winds. As it was, our little steamer had to anchor



A SCENE NEAR LARAMIE ON THE UNION PACIFIC.

Wyoming as a Vacation Resort for Tourists

There is no better district in the Rocky Mountains for a holiday or camping tour than Wyoming. The stillness of the mountains soothes and quiets those who have become mentally exhausted from prolonged strain and anxious cares or absorbing occupations. Its summer is cool and in the higher parks the nights are cold. Autumn is an unbroken stretch of cool and sunny days. Game and fish are abundant. The Union Pacific Railroad carries one to within a short ride, by horse or wagon, through yet unbroken wilderness. From June to October is the season for roughing it. With restoration to health, Wyoming does not say, "Now return to your home," but rather welcomes the restored invalid and holds out to him many inducements to remain. The varied resources of the state are only beginning to be appreciated. Agriculture, stock-raising and mining offer a wide field for investment and development. Besides all these things, he does not expatriate himself, but is at home in his own land, surrounded by his own countrymen, observing the same laws and practicing the manners and customs of the community in which he was reared.

Land of Sunshine.

There is no region of equal area that is possessed of more abounding and diversified richness of resource and possibility. It is almost as limitless in undeveloped opportunities as it was when Bonneville first broke his way into Jackson Hole—now the wonderland of the United States. Much more in praise of the richness of this young commonwealth could be given without vain repetition or exaggeration. The climate of this region of mountains, plains, parks and valleys, of this land of sunshine, azure sky and bracing and tonic air, calls for a more wide-spread appreciation than now prevails. From what has been said of the physical features of Wyoming, variety of climate would be expected. On the mountain peaks, 13,000 feet above sea level, perpetual snow abounds. In the lower valleys, apples, grapes and smaller fruits are grown. Three things are common to all of Wyoming—dry air, sunshine and blue sky. All over the state—except at high altitudes—one may, even in midwinter, sit in comfort in the sunshine in any sheltered corner.

It is the glory of perpetual sunshine which has perhaps more to do with the exhilarating effect of Wyoming climate, on both sick and well, than anything else. It is the sparkling, dry air which makes life happier and more satisfactory than it could be under the clouded skies of the east and south. Diminished barometric pressure, small rain-fall, low atmospheric humidity, intense sunshine on account of the dry and thin air, and absence of cloudiness, make this the ideal abode of those suffering from pulmonary troubles.

Climatic Conditions.

The heat is never intense. In the hottest summer weather it is but a step from the heat of the sunshine into the shade, which is always cool. Sunstroke is unknown. The air in winter is clear and sharp, but easily borne and even pleasant. In the shade there is the tingle of northern cold, and heavy clothing is none too warm. Its tonic effect upon nutrition is from its coolness the more marked. It is the brilliant and continuous sunshine which is much praised by mountain residents, and which is misunderstood to refer to air. The invalid who goes to Wyoming for a winter is not going to a climate of balmy warmth, but rather, and better, to one where the bracing cold is flooded for more than three-fourths of the day with bright sunshine. The sun in this region is almost a constant equation, reaching about 82 per cent of the total days of the year. The chief advantage in the eastern belt of Wyoming is the early morning sun. There are no high walls for the sun to climb, therefore the sun is up and spreading his genial rays before the invalid is awake, warming the atmosphere for his out-door exercise, without the long wait until midday

which is required in other high altitudes. Here we have the good, exhilarating effects of nine hours of sunshine. And as Dr. M. C. Barkwell, member of the State Board of Medical Examiners says:

"In describing a climate which presents so many anomalies, the dryness of an inland desert, the cool, bracing air of the far north, an atmosphere so clear that mountains 130 miles distant can be seen distinctly without the aid of a glass, the sun of the tropics, a sky that surpasses that of Italy in loveliness, and scenery which exceeds that of Switzerland, one may justly stand in dread of being charged with indulging in language of the imagination, yet it is all true. From September till the latter part of April little or no rain falls; there are no fogs, no mists."

Mineral Springs.

Wyoming is pre-eminent for her mineral springs. If we take into our estimate the Yellowstone Park, this alone surpasses the rest of the world in the number and magnificence of its waters. The mineral springs include hot, cold, sulphur, iron and the alkaline earths, and genuine mud springs.

Fish Culture.

While most of the streams and lakes of Wyoming had a natural supply of trout and other food fishes, there were others entirely devoid of fish of any description, and the success attending the stocking of streams containing native fish as well as the barren waters of the state has been very gratifying. Under the fostering care of the legislature, the fish hatchery at Laramie has been enabled to accomplish the most satisfactory results. The state is under obligation to the United States fish commissioner for frequent donations of valuable varieties of fish. Over a half million fish have been annually distributed in the streams of Wyoming for a number of years and many streams that were barren have been stocked and found well adapted to the raising of trout and other superior fish.

Among the streams already stocked is the Big Laramie, which runs through Albany county and empties into the Platte near old Fort Laramie. There are seventy-five miles of splendid trout fishing on this stream, from Laramie City southwest. The Little Laramie, fifteen miles from Laramie City, Horse creek, Pale creek and the Chugwater, all within easy distance, are fine districts for fishermen. Twelve miles south from Laramie are lakes Hulton and Creighton, which are now open for black and rock bass fishing, German carp and lake trout. The fish commissioner has placed three boats here for public use. Lake Hattie, twenty-five miles west of Laramie, contains a gamey variety of lake trout, weighing from four to six pounds. The fishing grows finer every year. It being the aim of the fish commissioner to keep the streams and lakes thoroughly stocked. The season in Wyoming wherein it is lawful to fish with hook and line is from June 1 to October 15.

The Union Pacific railroad traverses Wyoming its entire length, from east to west, and those contemplating a trip to this state should not fail to ask ticket agents about the magnificent train service offered by the Union Pacific. There are Pullman palace sleepers, buffet smoking and library cars, dining cars, with meals served a la carte, and Pullman tourist sleepers, etc., etc.

For time tables, or any information, apply to your local agent, who can sell you a ticket via the Union Pacific, the great Overland route.

Skillful Swindling

The latest scheme of imposition invented by the ingenious Frenchman is that of artificial eggs; and high prices are paid for them. They manufacture penguin eggs that cannot be distinguished from the genuine out of nothing but plaster of Paris. One that came from these forgers had been ordered by a woman who wished to present it to her betrothed for his collection, and with such skill that it requires

an expert to prove their falsity. The eggs of the common gnat-snapper, which are very cheap, are chemically colored a brilliant bluish-green and sold at high prices, as are eggs of the rare chatterer. Common duck eggs are metamorphosed into falcon eggs by dyeing them a silvery green. Out of pigeon and ring-dove eggs rare eggs are also manufactured. Especially high prices are paid for nightingale eggs, which are so hard to get; these are nothing but lark eggs dyed dark brown. The originator of this kind of forgery was formerly an assistant in a natural history museum in Provence, where he learned all about the rarest eggs and their peculiarities. The industry pays very handsomely, and as most of the eggs are not bought for hatching, but merely to complete collections, the danger of detection is reduced to a minimum.

Story of Veretschagin

The famous painter of battle scenes, Veretschagin, tells a story of when he was in Paris some years ago and what happened to him and Skobelev. General Skobelev, who wanted to pass a few days in the French capital with his Adjutant Ushakow and the artists of that city, went with them to the "Hotel des Invalides" to see the tomb of Napoleon I. A worthy old warrior, a pensioner of the house, acted as guide to the Russian party. They stood before the monument; Skobelev looked at it long in silence and then turned to the old soldier, asking: "Did you know him, my son?" "I was with him at Moscow," answered the veteran. Skobelev put his hand into his pocket and gave the old man a piece, saying: "Here, my man, is a memento of the Russian general, Skobelev!" "I was at Jena, at Marengo," began the veteran. "At Austerlitz I saw the Pyramids." Skobelev looked at the old man in astonishment and reached in his pocket for another piece of gold—but here Veretschagin interposed. "You are a fine fellow, old man! You were with Napoleon in Egypt—that was in 1799, and now it is 1881, so you are 102 years old if you were 29 at that time. You have certainly taken good care of yourself, for you don't look over 60." Skobelev turned as red as a peony and walked away without a word.

Time from the Station

Chicago Post: He showed plainly that he was disgusted. "You told me," he said to the real estate dealer, "that this house was only five minutes' walk from the station." "On the contrary," replied the real estate man, "I was careful to say nothing about 'walk' in either my advertisements or my conversation. I said it was only five minutes from the station, but I meant with a bicycle."

H. L. Burket for Coroner



Howard L. Burket is a member of the firm of Burket & Dodder, undertakers, 23rd and Cuming street. He has been a resident of Omaha and the Eighth ward for about eight years and has always been an active worker in the republican party. He has been a delegate to nearly every county or city convention during his residence in the city and he is now a member of the Republican City Central Committee. He has given much time to further the success of the republican party, but has never held an office in the county. He is sometimes confused with his brother, Henry K. Burket, who was a county official about two years ago. Mr. Howard L. Burket is a candidate for coroner, subject to the action of the Republican Convention, and invites all his friends to call on him at the above address.



ON THE PHOSPHATE ISLANDS.

after we left the capital, and after steaming for several hours we passed Cape San Juan at the northeastern end of Porto Rico proper and had the Culebra islands almost directly in front of us. The Culebra islands are quite large. Some contain hundreds of acres of rolling land rising like mountains out of the sea. One of them is of especial interest just now, because it has been chosen as a home for the leper population of Porto Rico.

There are a number of lepers scattered throughout the country, and Uncle Sam is doing all he can to gather them together and isolate them. The lepers are very eccentric and it is difficult to find out just who they are. The poor herd together to such an extent that the danger of contamination is great and so the government has chosen this island. At present there are eleven lepers in the hospital at San Juan and four more have been reported as living in different parts of Porto Rico.

As we passed the Culebra group I could see the island which has been chosen. It is known as "Louis Pena." It rises about 400 feet above sea level, contains 400 acres, is covered with a dense growth of tropical vegetation. About one-half of it can be cultivated, and there are now cattle and goats upon it. It will raise all kinds of vegetables and the tropical fruits peculiar to Porto Rico. There are plenty of fish in the waters about it. Its woods contain parrots and also game birds much like our American pheasants. There are also turtles and shell fish in the waters about the coast and it is believed that the leper colonies will be largely self-supporting. The government expects to build a hospital on the island. It will give the lepers houses and will supply them with seeds and farming tools and will stimulate them in every way to form a society of their own.

The government boats will visit the island at regular intervals with supplies for the lepers, but otherwise the colony will be

far out from shore and I climbed down a rope ladder into a boat, which carried me to the wharf. It was a ride of perhaps two miles and the landing at the little pier which runs out into the ocean was by no means easy.

Isabella Segunda nestles among the hills right on the beach. At one side of it there is a lilac-colored lighthouse and on the hill back of the town is a moss-grown fort, built by the Spaniards, which is now a barracks for our soldiers. The town has about 1,000 population. It is made up of square one-story cottages with galvanized iron roofs. The houses are built along wide unpaved streets, which cross one another at right angles. The streets are shaded beautifully by great trees. Many of the homes have pretty gardens about them. There are benches on the sides of the front doors and altogether everything looks thrifty and clean. In the center of the town there is a plaza, with a public cistern for the poor.

The people of Vieques number, all told, about 6,000. They are not like the Porto Ricans. The island during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries belonged to the English and French, and, although for the last 100 years it has been under Spanish rule, it still has English and French among its people. It has many negroes, who speak English, most of whom have come from the island of St. Thomas to labor on the plantations. The richest of the planters are French, and the French language is largely used throughout the island.

Vieques has several large horse ranches. The animals are allowed to run out all the year round. The grass is good and no grain is required. It is the same with the Vieques cattle, which are raised for export to Porto Rico and Cuba. Those which I have seen are much larger than the ordinary run of cattle in the United States. Many of the 2-year-old steers will weigh 1,100 or 1,200 pounds. The prices of cattle are lower

(Continued on Eighth Page.)