

KING OF THE KLONDIKE.

Such Is Major Walsh of Her Majesty's Government.

IGNORANCE OF THE SITUATION.

Dangers of the Trail to Dawson—The Boundary Question—A Difference in Methods of Measurement—Lake Bennett a Typical Boom Town.

[From Our Special Correspondent.]
 LAKE BENNETT, Alaska, March 28.
 I have just had a long talk with Major Walsh, administrator of the Yukon for the Canadian government. I found him at his own headquarters, a little back from the tented town of Lake Bennett, and busy with a mass of correspondence. He impressed me by his soldierly bearing and a modest and unassuming manner which is usually the concomitant of real merit. Few men now living have had a more varied experience in frontier life or with hostile Indians. He spoke in complimentary terms of General Miles, whom he knows personally, and also referred feelingly to the late General A. H. Terry and to General Phil Sheridan, whom he likewise knew on the border.

Major Walsh seemed a bit surprised when he learned my wife was with me. "But you are not going to take her to Dawson City with you?" he asked. "That is my plan," I replied, "and why not?"

"Simply because if you do you will be impaled on one of the three horns of an uncomfortable dilemma," said he. "You will either be obliged to hire Indian guides to either drag you up to the Yukon from the shore or pole you up to the lakes, which must be done late, say in October, and at considerable expense, for you can never get up that swift current yourself, or you will be obliged to stand your chance of going home by the way of St. Michael's in a vessel that you would not trust your life in for a moment on the ocean, and at a heavy

food for this animal in this locality I have been unable to find much of it."

What Alaska Needs.
 Major Walsh is of the opinion that what Alaska needs most at present is the means of securing provisions at the cost of ordinary transportation. He thinks this will be consummated a little later by the Canadian government by means of the railroad from Glenora into the interior, and that the country will then be a good one for the prospect or who is satisfied with a modest income, say from \$5 to \$10 a day. He says that while it may be doubted that many more rich strikes may be made there are fields capable of supporting hundreds of thousands of people provided the cost of living can be reduced so that the independent miner may find it profitable to wash out \$5 per day.

As to the boundary line question, he said, the Chilkoot pass line, where the mounted police are now stationed and are collecting duty, is not disputed territory. "The case in a nutshell is this," he continued—"your government measures from inland waters and ours from the sea; or, if you please, you may put it in this way—your government claims that the inland waters are the sea and we claim that they are not. This is all the dispute there is or ever can be concerning the boundary question."

Dawson City High Prices.
 We are already beginning to get a taste of Dawson City high prices, because from here on, when the ice breaks up, it is an unbroken waterway to that place and the cost of transportation is not exorbitant considering the distance. For instance, meals consisting of beans, rice, bread, ham or bacon and coffee, are \$1.50 each. Lodging in a bunkhouse, where all sleep in one room and each provides his own blankets, is from 50 cents to \$1 per night. I had occasion to buy an ordinary crosscut hand saw the other day and was obliged to pay \$8 for what would probably cost \$1.50 in the States. Flour is worth \$45 per barrel today, or rather \$12 for a sack of 50 pounds.

Lake Bennett is one of the most lively settlements we have seen thus far on the trail. It has two or three bunkhouses, called hotels, the ubiquitous sa-

SUNSET GATES AJAR.

Tonight, as I sat by my window,
 When the west was all aglow
 With that strange and wonderful splendor
 That is felt as a dream,
 I thought that the hands of the angels
 Had flung open heaven's gateway wide,
 And I caught a glimpse of the glory
 From the hills on the other side.

Is it not a beautiful fancy,
 This sunset thought of mine,
 That the gates of heaven are always
 Flung open at day's decline?
 That those whose day is ended
 Of earthly woes and life
 May pass to the morning sunshine
 That dwells on the heavenly hill?

Then for me the sunset gateway
 Shall at day's decline disclose,
 And I pass in through its portals
 To that long and sweet repose.
 I know that I shall remember
 In this city so fair and far,
 My strange and beautiful fancy
 Of the sunset gates ajar.

Perhaps while I sat there dreaming
 Of the gateway to the west,
 Some poor soul went through its portals
 To a long and endless rest—
 Passed through the sunset gateway
 To that "city paved with gold."
 Passed into the new life's gladness
 To be no longer old.

—Frank C. Holliday in Good Housekeeping.

A PACIFIC SLOPE HOLLAND.

Richness of the Swinomish Flats in Skagit County, Wash.

In this great western country, where there is so much wild land, where millions of acres of soil have never felt the touch of the plowman's ax, it does not seem that it would be necessary to reclaim land from the sea to obtain acres for cultivation. But that has been done, and in Skagit county, almost in the very northwestern corner of the state, can be found scores of the finest ranches in the world, lying behind dikes built to keep out the sea and the overflows of the Skagit river, the largest stream that empties into the sound.

This is the veritable Holland of Washington. In Skagit county are situated the famous Swinomish flats, the Beaver marsh, the Olympic marsh and the Sanish flats, all surrounded by dikes ranging in height from 2 to 15 feet. There are tide gates along the seashore which act automatically, and which drain the land so perfectly that crops are raised on land below the sea level with safety. And such crops!

For ages the big river has been bringing down from the hills the richest sediment, and there is really no bottom to the soil. If a farmer in the east plows a little too deep, he turns up clay or rocks. If the Beaver marsh rancher holds his plow handles too high, he simply digs up more of the rich loam that raises every year without fail such crops that the old ranchers of other sections cannot believe the stories. One hundred and twenty-five bushels of oats to the acre, a ton and a half of hops or five tons of hay are common yields, while all sorts of root crops give equally large results.

In order to plow this land, which, of course, is soft and spongy, the ranchers often put "tuley" shoes on their horses, the shoes consisting of wide wooden blocks to prevent the animals from sinking into the loam.

There are at present eight diking districts in the county, and nearly every ranch of any size is in one or another of these districts. Fully 100 miles of dikes are in use in the county, and many of them are used also as roads. Very picturesque are these embankments in many places as they wind around through the trees. When the Skagit is having a freshet, as has been the case this week, the people turn out to watch their dikes, and by repairing them save their lands from inundation. Sometimes a very high tide will go over a dike and cover a number of ranches with salt water. If the water does not stand too long this does no particular damage.

As there is nothing but sand and black loam to construct the dikes of, no permanent work has ever been done and cannot be until the river is so improved that it has a reasonably straight channel to the sea. Five or six forks or mouths discharge the water into the sound, and the delta thus formed is excellent farming land. If the water should be confined to one channel, thousands of acres of land would be reclaimed and the danger of overflow reduced to a minimum. By this improvement a magnificent navigable river, teeming with fish and flowing through a wealth of timber and mineral land, would be opened up and would provide employment for countless numbers of people.—Seattle Post Intelligence.

A Pirate In Bad Luck.

Mr. Frank R. Stockton, writing of "The Buccaneers of Our Coast" in St. Nicholas, says of the celebrated Bartholomew Portuguese: "In the way of well defined and conspicuous ups and downs few lives have surpassed that of Bartholomew. He had many adventures after the desperate affair in the bay of Campeachy, but they must all have turned out badly for him, and consequently very fortunately for divers and sundry Spanish vessels, and during the rest of his life he bore the reputation of an unfortunate pirate. He was one of those men whose success seemed to have depended entirely upon his own exertions. If he happened to be the least chance of his doing anything, he generally did it. Spanish cannon, well armed Spanish crews, manacles, imprisonment, the dangers of the ocean to a man who could not swim, bloodhounds, alligators, wild beasts, awful forests impenetrable to common men—all were bravely met and triumphed over by Bartholomew. Yet when it came to ordinary good fortune, such as any pirate might expect, Bartholomew the Portuguese found that he had no chance at all. But he was not a common pirate and was therefore obliged to be content with his uncommon career. He eventually settled in the island of Jamaica, but nobody knows what became of him."

Thoughtful.

Mrs. Greene: My husband is such a thoughtful man! He always goes down into the basement kitchen to smoke.
 Mrs. Gray: And lets the snails come up stairs into the dining room through the dumb waiter.

Mrs. Greene: Yes, but that's because he is absentminded, poor man! That has nothing to do with his thoughtfulness, you know.—Boston Transcript.

Exercise all the muscles every day of your life for ten minutes. Stop before you feel thoroughly tired. Never overtax the muscles, or they will revenge themselves.

A simple and very efficient disinfectant to pour down a sink is a small quantity of charcoal mixed with clear water.

The streets of London, placed end to end, would stretch from New York to San Francisco.

FROM FOREIGN LANDS.

Interesting Topics That Engross the Attention of Europe.

According to a recent report made by H. Bueker, the commissioner of education in Switzerland, there are now 614 young women taking courses in Swiss universities. Geneva has 331 female students, Zurich 166, Lausanne and Bern each 60, Bale 2, while the universities of Neuchâtel and Freiburg have none.

While France is congratulating herself on the increase of her population over her death rate—a condition shown by the last census that had not been equalled for many years—Belgium has come out with most remarkable figures concerning her population. The last national census in Belgium was completed in May, 1897, and its figures have recently been made public. Within the last 93 years the population of Belgium has doubled itself, rising from 3,000,000 to 6,000,000. But the records of the larger cities make a still more interesting showing. Antwerp in a century has risen from 33,000 to 257,000, an increase of 383 per cent. Liege has advanced from 46,000 to 160,000; Ghent, from 55,000 to 155,000; Brussels, from 66,000 to 187,000.

The Politische Correspondenz of Vienna recently published a letter from a personage high in court circles in St. Petersburg saying that the physicians in the suit of Grand Duke George, heir presumptive to the throne of Russia, now had every hope of the permanent recovery of the duke. His improvement is so marked as fairly to astonish the doctors. The czarowitz has been spending a few months at Batoum, on the Black sea. He will shortly leave that place on his yacht and go to the French Riviera. While there he will be visited by his mother, the Dowager Czarina Maria Fedorovna. Together they will proceed on the yacht to Ajaccio, in Corsica, where they will pass the early spring months. Toward the end of May the grand duke's party will start by slow stages for St. Petersburg, going by the way of Marseilles and Paris.

Royal commissions have been taking evidence on the improvident old age of the inhabitants of New Zealand and Victoria, with the idea of providing for the old and poor. In New Zealand a law has recently been passed to devote \$900,000 yearly to the aged poor. But citizens who would be provided for in this way must not only be poor and aged, but honest and virtuous as well. To have been convicted, for example, of drunkenness four times in four years before reaching the age of 65 will cost a New Zealand citizen his pension. The maximum pension is \$90 a year. It is to be reduced by \$5 per annum for every \$5 of private income in excess of \$170 per annum which the pensioner possesses. In Victoria the law is similar, but the age limit is placed at 60. In each colony the number of citizens entitled to these pensions is about 10,000.

While the bubonic plague seems to be spreading in India and threatens almost to equal in fatality the epidemic of a year ago, the French physicians in Algeria have discovered a disease in Africa which, if the meager reports which have been received prove true, is none the less fatal. It is a mysterious disease, and no satisfactory diagnosis has yet been made of it. It first shows itself by the patient having an inordinate desire to sleep. Its symptoms resemble those manifested in laudanum poisoning. If the patient be not at once aroused, he soon falls into a stupor, which is succeeded by death. From its symptoms it has been called by the correspondents of French medical journals in Algeria "la maladie du sommeil" (the disease of sleep). Europeans are not susceptible to it, Arabs only slightly, but the negro falls a ready victim. Two doctors of the University of Coimbra have a theory that the disease is malarious. With some bacilli in serum obtained from the blood of a young negro who had died from the disease they inoculated half a dozen rabbits. The little animals became drowsy and soon died, betraying all the symptoms of the disease.

The chamber of deputies of the grand duchy of Luxembourg has recently voted the budget for 1898, which makes the receipts 11,500,000 francs and expenses to the amount of 9,800,000 francs. The little duchy owes its financial prosperity to participation in the German revenues, certain parts of which were allotted to it by treaty under conditions that have now become obsolete. Luxembourg had a population in 1895 of 217,583, of which 109,232 were males and 108,351 females. The budgets of the last four years have been as remarkable as that of 1898. In 1893 the receipts exceeded the expenses by 1,572,314 francs; in 1894 by 1,628,188 francs, in 1895 by 1,841,526 francs and in 1897 by 1,145,550 francs. In 1899 the public debt amounted to 3,500,000 francs and bore interest at 5 per cent. Now it is 12,000,000 francs, and bears interest at 3½ per cent. The army is composed of 150 men, three horses and a band of music.—New York Times.

The Chaplain's Prayer.

This is how the chaplain of the Illinois house of representatives prayed the other day: "And if it be thy will that a barbarous, bloodthirsty nation shall be wiped from the map of the world, we will submissively say: 'Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints!' Amen."—New York Tribune.

Editing by the Golden Rule.

A country editor puts the old question in new shape and says to his subscribers: "Brother, don't stop your paper just because you don't agree with the editor. The last cabbage you sent us didn't agree with us either, but we didn't drop you from our subscription list on that account."—Gordon (Nab.) Journal.



CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE.

expense likewise. The third horn of this dilemma is wintering in Dawson City, which I do not suppose you will care to do."

I thanked him for his advice, but have not yet changed my plans.

Ignorance About the Situation.

"As to getting in or out of Dawson City," continued Major Walsh, "there is yet an astounding amount of ignorance as to its actual difficulties, and I wonder that your government entertained the thought of a relief expedition for an instant. Of course anything like a so-called snow and ice engine is out of the question, and, as for horses or mules, after they have been packed with the 600 pounds of forage, which is the least which can be provided for their use to Dawson City, and the food and blankets and camping utensils necessary to the man who accompanies them, they cannot be relied to take a single pound for relief. Indeed I ques-

tion whether any one can come out of Dawson City to the coast or go in during winter unless he strikes a spell of the most favorable weather."

"But people have come out the past winter," I interposed.

"Yes, but how did they do it? In every case, so far as I know, they were given food, shelter and good cheer as well as information concerning the next post by our police. They have come into our posts well nigh exhausted, and we have helped them on repeatedly when without our assistance they must have perished. The reindeer idea is also a chimerical one, for if there is any

loam, a takeshop, two or three stores of general merchandise and several places where outfits are bought and sold. This last named business is becoming quite common along the trail. When a poor devil gets discouraged or ill and resolves to go no farther, he can always find some one to take his outfit off his hands and pay him—not a fair price, but possibly a little addition to what it cost him in the States. Then the outfit is sold piecemeal or complete to whomever may want it and at a handsome profit. In fact, any one who has a speculative nature and a disposition to profit by his fellow creatures' misfortune can easily make considerable money here. There are "corners" in a small way that are in every way as shrewd and quite as daring as any perpetrated in Wall street. For instance, there may be a shortage in flour or coffee or candles or kerosene oil or any other article of prime necessity. The shrewd speculator goes quietly around and buys up all he can get hold of. Then if no more comes in he sells out at about any profit he chooses to ask.

A Wood Famine Imminent.

Timber and wood promise to be scarce articles here ere long if the rate of devastation continues. Our party has carted firewood three miles for use in our tent, and timber for boatbuilding is becoming almost extinct. Lumber at present is worth \$500 per 1,000 feet, and a sawmill company has received a grant of a large portion of the timber in the locality. The price of boats thus far is from \$200 to \$400 each, but no rational being would care to trust his life in any of those which sell at the first named figures. Two steamboats are to run on the lake this season, but from present indications they will not be clear of ice under two months at least.

I have made diligent inquiry to learn the destination of the majority of those who are on their way to the Yukon and find that a large number intend going through to the American side. There will also be quite a number go to the Big Salmon and Stuart rivers, and a good many, perhaps the majority, have no fixed ideas whatever as to their destination. They will "follow the crowd"—go anywhere if there be a possibility of their finding the much sought for gold. Some indeed imagine they can pick up nuggets almost anywhere. It is a pity but such a golden dream must have a rude awakening sooner or later.

A. A. HILL.



MAJOR J. M. WALSH.

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