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WOOD RIVER TIMES
HAILEY, IDAHO.

FRIDAY, MARCH 25, 1892

The April number of the Forum will contain a group of articles on "The Crisis of the Democratic Party," to which the Hon. William L. Wilson, Mr. Frederic R. Coudert, and Mr. Matthew Hale contribute.

THE EXPLORATION OF ALASKA.

About 18 months ago a syndicate composed of at least one of the leading newspapers in each of the northern, middle and western States, was organized to defray the cost of an expedition to Alaska which would thoroughly explore that extensive domain as much as this was possible during the summer season of 1891. Inasmuch as the New York Ledger originated the idea and paid the bulk of the necessary expenses of the expedition, it was named "after" that excellent literary weekly. Frederick Schwatka, the famous Arctic explorer, having resigned his commission as a lieutenant in the United States Navy, was given full charge of the expedition from its inception to the present time.

How will he discharged the trust reposed in him will be ascertained by reading the report of his explorations. This report will make 30 columns of minion type, and it will be published at the rate of four columns per week during the ensuing two weeks, but of only two columns weekly after that. The first installment appears to-day.

This matter will not appear in any other Idaho newspaper, the WOOD RIVER TIMES owning the exclusive right to publish it in this state. Any of our exchanges are, however, at liberty to reprint any part of it upon giving this paper the proper credit.

BUSINESS IN GENERAL.

Vast Supplies of Staples Produce Low Prices—Money Seemingly Abundant.

R. G. Dun & Co.'s Review of Trade for the week ending the 19th instant says:

"Storms, bad weather and bad roads, have much retarded trade during the past week, reducing the movement of grain and curtailing retail trade in many cities, but nevertheless reports indicate on the whole an improvement in the distribution of goods, and a fairly sustained demand, in some branches increasing, for manufactured products. There is no trouble anywhere about money, even at the South markets being fairly supplied with a light but rather better demand while at the West a more active demand is still met by an ample supply. Rates on call here have remained unchanged at 1 1/2 per cent. Sterling exchange has been unaltered, and at 48 1/2 is below the exporting

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point, and while imports of merchandise show a large increase over last year, for half of March 10.4 per cent, there also appears an increase in domestic exports, for two weeks of March about 6 per cent. But vast supplies of some great staples have produced phenomenally low prices during the past week, particularly 6 1/2 cents for cotton, 98 cents for wheat, 46 cents for corn, \$16 for No. 1 anthracite iron, and 28 cents for Ohio XX wool. These low prices cause not a little disheartenment in some branches of trade, although the movement of products continues active.

"The Treasury has been putting out \$1,600,000 more money than it has received in March, but some movement from New York to the interior is seen. The stock market has not been such as to encourage much foreign selling, but shows no such weakness as past shipments of securities from abroad might naturally have caused. Railroads are doing a heavy business, earnings in February and in March thus far exceeding last year's by 13 to 14 per cent. Speculation in industrial stocks has been stimulated by the Alabama iron combination, the reported purchase of sugar refineries, rumors of a copper alliance, and legal proceedings against the coal combination in Pennsylvania."

THE GOOD WORK GOES ON!

Secretary Rusk Proposes to Put Sixty Million Dollars More Into the Pockets of American Farmers—A Terse Summary of the Achievements of the World's Greatest Department of Agriculture.

Julian Hawthorne in Lippincott's Monthly Magazine.

The Secretary of Agriculture is not satisfied with wringing from the officials of foreign nations a reluctant consent to allow our good things to reach their hungry populations; he aims to appeal directly to the populations themselves. Until very lately, for example, the use of corn and cornmeal as human food was almost entirely unknown in Europe—the people imagined it was fed to animals only. Mr. Rusk dispatched agents to the other side to educate these benighted people. The success of these agents has been great. Corn bread is likely to become as popular on English breakfast tables as muffins and crumpets are now; and in Berlin "corn kitchens" have been arranged for, and a mixture of rye and corn is to constitute the bread ration supplied to the German army.

This is only the beginning of the good work in the case of a single cereal, in its relation to foreign consumers alone. The prospects for the future are obvious; and, as Secretary Rusk observes, an increase in our crop exports of only 10 per cent would put sixty million dollars a year more in the pockets of our farmers. The value of our crops for 1892 was seven hundred million dollars greater than it was for 1890.

This is a good showing, but, in numerous ways, the Department of Agriculture is working to make a better and still a better showing hereafter, not only improving the yield and the quality of the yield of land now under cultivation, but making more land cultivatable, and lowering prices by bringing the farmer and the consumer into closer relations, and thus eliminating the huge profits of the middleman. For one thing, experiments have been making in sugar manufacture, with a view to retaining for ourselves the hundred million dollars that we annually pay for the imported article. Sugar cane, sorghum, and beets, are the three sources of commercial sugar.

The Department has shown that the southern belt of our country can profitably produce the first, the middle belt the second, and regions farther north the sugar beets. A process has been discovered whereby sorghum, treated with alcohol, yields double the amount of sugar that it has been hitherto possible to obtain from it.

Our beet resources are incalculable; and altogether the prosperity of home made sugar is assured. Again, a thorough study of forage grasses has been made, in order to discover which varieties are best adapted to given localities, and especially to obtain a grass which will flourish in arid regions without irrigation. Such a grass has been found; it is as good as that in the moist lands, though it is slower in its rate of growth. In the course of a few years millions of acres, now barren, will have been given to agriculture by this discovery, which but for the Department of Agriculture might never have been made. Scarcely of less importance is the investigation of the best means whereby swamp lands may be reclaimed, and of the preservation and distribution of forests, so as to both prevent disastrous floods on the one hand and to restrict arid areas on the other.

SCHWATKA IN ALASKA

FIRST LETTER FROM THE EXPLORING EXPEDITION.

Observations In and Around Juneau—Up the Yakon River With Native Guides—Greeted With Hospitality—Crushing Through Ice Cakes.

[No. 1.—International Press Association.]
TAKON RIVER, May 26 1891.—On May 7, 1891, the Pacific Coast Steamship company's vessel, "City of Topeka," crossed Dixon Entrance and entered Alaskan waters, leaving behind those of British Columbia.

All of these waters, for a stretch of over a thousand miles along the Pacific coast are but deep inlets and channels, huge salt water rivers, so to speak, that, cutting in every direction, make a vast network of islands picturesque in the extreme and not even yet wholly explored. The most freely navigable of these many channels running parallel with the coast, is called "the inland passage to Alaska," and is yearly becoming more popular with summer tourists seeking rest and recreation here. One of the peculiar features of



this southwestern section of Alaska, and one that can only be appreciated by the explorer or hardy frontiersman, is the ease and pleasure with which one can travel the coast waters, only to plunge into the roughest of "roughing it," as soon as these are left, and the Alpe interior essayed.

On board the "Topeka" was the New York Ledger Alaskan expedition that had this prospect ahead of it, the subscriber being in command. One of our main objects was to cover as much unexplored country as possible, in any direction, yet a general plan had been formed to follow my old explorations of 1887, or near, the Pelly and Yukon river confluence, and there begin the work into the unknown interior westward and southward.

We had occasion to change this plan so as to cover more unexplored country than usual. It came about by discussing a new and unexplored route from Juneau with citizens of that lively metropolis of our distant colony, "the largest city in the largest territory in the largest republic in the world," as they used to patriotically boast. It was to go over what was called the Tahku trail that led to a large lake in the interior, and by its draining river, gain the Yukon, where I joined my old trail of 1883, and could then carry out the program as previously planned. It was believed an available commercial trail might be opened this way, that, with Juneau as a basis, could be made to supply the Yukon valley even to Behring sea, better than by any known route, while it would be no small feather in the cap of the New York Ledger expedition, to be able to do this preliminary pioneering. This belief was founded on information obtained from the interior Indians when bringing out their furs, and from prospectors who had searched this general line for precious minerals. It might be, also, that the present Yukon traffic would not pay, while the future might, and it was well to be prepared with the information. The many other reasons for or against this trail can be made clearer as we travel over it later. When we arrived in Juneau a corresponding interest was soon worked up by those on the steamer, the citizens pledging everything they could to make the enterprise a success, and so we disembarked here.

The first point we touched in Alaska was Tongass. After Tongass, we met nothing but salmon canneries for a few days, reaching Juneau on the 9th of May, where our freight is disembarked and we continue on, for this metropolis is of enough importance to be touched by the returning steamer, thus making a short round trip.

We wake up next day in Glacier Bay, on the first vessel of the season to esny it, as it is only visited in the interest of the summer tourists.

At Sitka we were crowded with passengers of the spring court term at Juneau. There were ten prisoners, only six of them being murderers, mostly confined to half-breeds and Indians. The naturally resulting conversation disclosed a statement that there had never been a simon-pure lynching, nor a legal execution, in Alaska. At Wrangell, in early days, a murderous gambler was made chairman of a vigilance committee, the chair was pulled out from under him and he broke this pea-fear record—also his neck; but any one familiar with frontier justice knows there is a wide chasm existing between this and lynching. In a somewhat similar action, an Indian murderer performed traction on a rope, to the satisfaction of the vigilance faction and the greater dissatisfaction of the lesser faction. Killisnoo is very agreeable to the eye but somewhat abominable to the nose, due to a flourishing herring fishery, and attendant gunno factory. The United States Marshal attempted to arrest a native here for trying to drown a squaw guilty of witchcraft. I have never yet seen anything bewitch-

ing about an Alaskan Indian woman, but I suppose tastes vary. This Alaskan, Cotton Mather had some inkling of the proceedings, so he secreted himself in the Alaskan woods, where the proverbial needle in a haystack would be as conspicuous as a circus poster by comparison. There were not eleven prisoners from Killisnoo to Juneau.

Juneau reached, preparations were begun at once, the first obstacle being the report that the Tahku river was not yet open. A big canoe, a two-ton or three-ton affair, was easy enough to get but packers themselves over the land trail were hard to obtain until a sort of sub-chief of the Tahkus, Yashnoosh by name, a local policeman, stimulated by the citizens, took a hand and recruits were slowly obtained. Even then I could only obtain half enough, at good stiff rates of course, and had to double packs (averaging 100 pounds each) over the trail of nearly 100 miles as it proved.

The 25th of May we got away, seven Indians and three white men, six of the natives being packers and one, Robert, the owner of the boat. On the recommendation of some citizens who believed in the horror of the average Indian for all legal papers I had a huge contract drawn up, resplendent with many colored seals and ribbons, and this they signed by touch of pen, while the United States District court interpreter read aloud its contents with a solemnity equal to that given a death-warrant. I still retain that page of legal lucubrations, and while admitting it may have done me much good, yet I can only compare it with the verdict of the frontier coroner's jury wherein, sitting on a man's body dragged from the river's bed and riddled with bullets, they concluded that the deceased had come to his death from drowning, caused by water pouring in through the bullet-holes.

So about noon of the 25th, with the American flag hanging from the peak, we got away in the beginning of a wind and drizzling rainstorm that later made our first day's trip one of the most unpleasant of the whole journey. An enthusiastic crowd of citizens lined the shore near the steamer's dock, and as we paddled away down the channel gave us a hearty cheer and many warm wishes.

Let us now take a hasty look at the little expedition that started, the Indians being naturally described to pass them over events call them up in detail. The commanding officer was the hero of the party and made excellent ballast in the rear part of the canoe.

The scientist of the expedition was Dr. C. Willard Hayes, representing also the U. S. Geological survey, through the courtesy of Major J. W. Powell, U. S. head of that government bureau. To Dr. Hayes also fell the photographic work in the main, as well as the topographic or map-making. I had hoped to get a professional photographer, and felt sure of success when Mr. Landerkin, one from Juneau, made an application for the place. He was caught on the grand jury, having already been sworn in, but we both thought that a mere bagatelle as an obstacle, but the Judge and District Attorney thought otherwise. Both were willing enough, but there was nothing in the law (the Oregon code prevails here, by act of Congress "so far as it is practicable") that would allow it. The only excuse whatsoever was one of severe sickness, attested under oath by a physician.

"But suppose a grand juror dies?" I asked the Judge.

"I could not excuse him from duty on that ground," he replied, slowly, shaking his head. So Mr. Landerkin remained and Dr. Hayes did double duty. Mark C. Russell was the only other white man in the party as we started, which I organized on the basis of all my previous expeditions, or just as few white men as possible, with natives to do about all the work of transportation, guiding, hunting, etc., etc., with which they are so familiar in their own country.

The Indians were very hilarious, evidently stimulated by the enthusiastic departure given us, and they showed their appreciation by "sparting" ferociously every little while instead of settling down to steady work.

We stopped about 2 o'clock in the afternoon in a pretty little sheltered cove for lunch, and really enjoyed ourselves for an hour, protected from the beating rain. Robert impressed me with the fact that the tide was then out, and asked me to note that when it was in, not a landing place was to be found anywhere along the shore for probably stretches of many miles. In a bright green prairie of a few acres in this ceaseless timber tract, and bordering the shore was picturesquely perched a Tahku town of ten houses, Ahk-kwan by name. It is not often a grave-yard is the most cheerful part of a place, but here the only enlivening thing in a view of dismal green, rendered doubly dreary by the rain, was a bright red flag that fluttered from a high staff at the corner of a grave. I was told it indicated that that particular native had just recently died.

About 4 o'clock we swung around into the Tahku inlet, and our change of course, now allowed us to set sails. Along we bowled, wing and wing, the ice-cakes we had met at the mouth of



IN TAKON CANON.

the inlet, growing larger as we ascended it towards the glacier, until they could well be dignified with the name of icebergs; certainly so in comparison with those from the Muir glacier that are thus styled. The Tahku glacier ice is the bluest I have ever seen either in or out of the Arctic or Alpine regions. It was really a deep bluish-black in many places though clear as crystal.

It was quite dark when we got to the mouth of the Tahku river, at a half-completed salmon fishery, the white men sleeping in it and the Indians in the smoke-house, all of us stiff as poker.

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