



CHETKOE INDIANS.

## WILD LIFE IN OREGON.

BY WILLIAM V. WELLS.

**E**ARLY in October, 1855, with an old companion of my peregrinations—one of those golden-tempered, delightful traveling-companions with whom to associate is a perpetual treat—I found myself on board the stanch steamship *Columbia*, bound from San Francisco to Oregon.

On the evening of the second day we came in sight of Trinidad, a little hamlet situated about two hundred miles north of San Francisco. It was quite dark as the steamer came to, near a black, sea-beaten rock, through whose caverns the sea roared with a dismal moan. An inhospitable coast is that of California and Oregon, where, from San Diego to Puget Sound, a distance of thirteen hundred miles, there is found but one port—that of San Francisco—to which the dismantled ship may fly for refuge in a gale from seaward. Trinidad is a "port;" but justly regarded with terror by the mariner in times of tempest. The fog limited our observations from the quarter-deck to a few dimly-discerned huts far up the bank, and the only sound of civilization was the distant crying of a child ever and anon mingling with the surf's roar. Freight was discharged, and a speedy leave taken of sorry-looking Trinidad.

On the following morning the discharge of a gun from the bows brought us to the deck, when we found the steamer heading into the bay or roadstead of Crescent City. This, like most of the harbors on this coast, can only boast of its capacity. It extends from the houses of

the inhabitants entirely across the Pacific. It is proposed to build a breakwater here, and so form a natural harbor. An indefinite number of millions of dollars are named as an estimate of the cost. Crescent City is three years old, situated on the sea-beach, backed by a dense mass of pine and cedar forest, inhabited by several hundred traders, packers, Indians, dogs, and mules. A brisk ride to Cape St. George, taken during our stay here, satiated our curiosity. The country becomes uninteresting after the forest and green undergrowth of coast-trees have ceased to be novelties. The men were mostly "Pikes" of an exceedingly rough cast, and the Indians, who were the first specimens of the Oregon savage we had met with, were decidedly to us the lions of the town. Wandering out toward a rocky promontory north of the town, and designated as the Battery, we found an encampment of the Chetkoe tribe. Three old women among them were quite blind, and, squatting in the sand, were feeling nervously around for some bits of willow which they were fashioning into baskets—time out of mind the Indian's occupation. Several young squaws accosted us in broken English. One of them was really pretty, and but for some barbarous tattooing, nose and ear pendants, and a villainous smell of decayed salmon, would have been a very *Fayaway*. This young lady was in *dishabille* as we passed, and, though making her toilet with otter fat, glass beads, and shells, did not shrink at the unexpected visit. The entire party wore a dress composed of equal parts of cheap blankets, cast-off coats and shirts, and

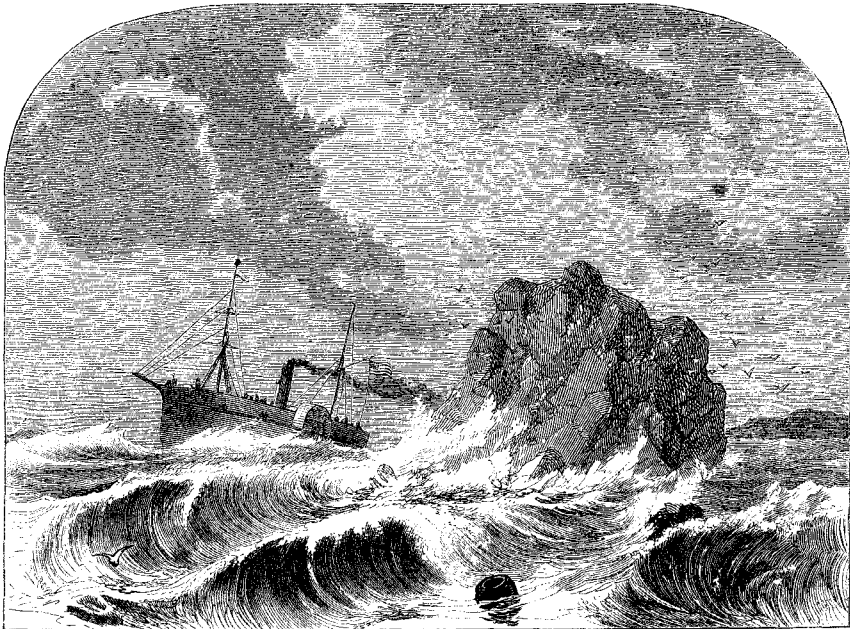
the usual savage finery. The men sported the bow and arrow armor with a *coyote* or fox-skin for a quiver. All had the ears or nose slit, and one or two coquettish young jades of squaws wore fish-bones through their nostrils, and were otherwise scarified and marked.

On the same afternoon we bade adieu to Crescent City, and were quickly again on our way to the northward. On the following morning the ship's reckoning showed us to be opposite Port Orford, and this being our proposed landing-place, we watched with some curiosity for the lifting of an impenetrable veil of fog which shut out all view of the coast. The speed was slackened, and the "blue pigeon" kept constantly moving. Suddenly, on our starboard bow, appeared a lofty rock looming out of the mist. It was a grand and startling spectacle. Though the sea was comparatively calm, the ground swells surged up around its base in piles of boisterous foam, roaring among the caverns and gulches, and rushing up to the height of forty feet; then, as the swell receded, the whole surface presented a bold front of yeasty rivulets, white as milk, and trickling down the rough sides of the rock in hissing cascades, as one might imagine they would down the furrowed cheeks of some awful giant of Scandinavian romance. Clouds of birds hovered around the peak, screaming and dipping down to the waves, and scolding at our sudden intrusion. Our new acquaintance disappeared astern almost as soon as we had desiered it. It is the southwestern point of Port Orford harbor, and is one of the enormous boulders rolled by some convulsion of nature from the steeps of

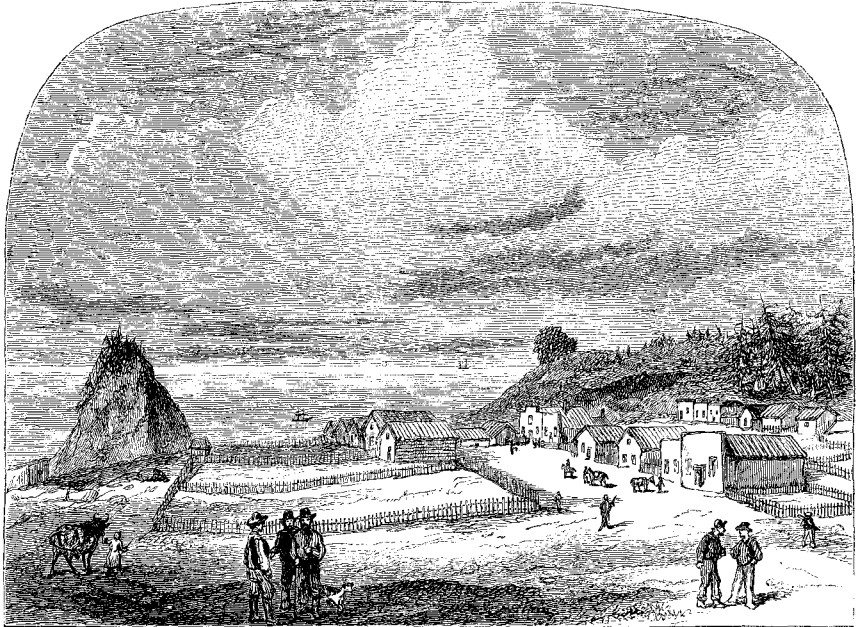
Humbug Mountain, which rears its head far above the surrounding country. We could now run with some degree of certainty, and heading boldly in, a gun was fired, the echo of which had scarcely done rattling through the coast-range when it was answered from on shore. A moment after the shrill scream of a rooster came across the water, and the fog lifting, opened to our view a bluff bank, perhaps forty feet high, upon which was situated a small town, with some forty houses, half-deserted, and standing at the verge of a bank of lofty foliage, forming the great fir and pine region which skirts the Oregon coast from the California line to Puget Sound.

From under the lee of a promontory known as "Battle Rock," and the history of which we shall presently review, a boat put forth through the surf, into which we bundled, and grasping the hands extended in kindly parting, we had soon made our first landing on the Oregon coast. As we rounded the point we looked back upon the steamer heading out to sea, and pursuing her way to the Columbia River.

We landed at a little lumber wharf, whence a short walk brought us to the United States Barracks; and entering the house of Dr. Glissan and Lieutenant Kautz, we were soon engaged in conversation with a party of educated gentlemen, whose cultivated talents shone the more conspicuously in the wild region that duty had made their place of residence. About three hundred yards from the Government reserve, and hidden from it by an intervening range of hills, is situated the little town of Port Orford. Its history is that of the sudden and too ephemeral growth of the coast villages of Oregon.



PORT ORFORD ROCK.



PORT ORFORD.

In 1851 a party of men from Portland, Oregon, selected this spot for the site of a town, depending upon its roadstead and the facility of communication with the interior for the basis of its success and growth. The discovery of the auriferous sands of Gold Bluff, which were found to extend along the entire coast, from Rogue River to Cape Arago, also augmented the progress of the place. The original party consisted of eighteen men; but finding their stock of provisions becoming exhausted, and there being no means of supplying the deficiency, half returned to Portland, leaving nine of their number to await their return. At that time the character of the country between the California line and the Columbia River was unknown. Its deep rivers, bays, tribes of Indians, and topography, were a sealed book, save to a few venturesome old hunters and trappers who had wandered down the coast even to the Humboldt; but their accounts, vague and uncertain, were unknown.

This section of Oregon contained about two thousand Indians, divided into numerous tribes, who soon became aware that the whites had settled their country, and, with savage hostility, determined to crush the band at Port Orford. Their rapidly increasing numbers alarmed our little garrison, who retreated upon what is now known as "Battle Rock"—a natural fort showing three precipitous sides toward the ocean, and only accessible from land by a regular causeway. The parapet of this fortification stands not less than fifty feet above the tide. Here they encamped, and barricading the only vulnerable point, they directed a brass six-pounder field-piece from a port-hole left for the pur-

pose, and, loading their rifles, prepared for the worst. The precaution was well timed. The day following this removal, the tribes from the Umpqua, Coquille, and Rogue River, congregated, and mustered nearly a thousand braves. Armed with bows and arrows, and ignorant of the deadly qualities of the American rifle, they advanced up the passage-way with yells that made the little band within quail with apprehension. The besieged were under the command of a Tennessean, who restrained the men until their tattooed assailants had approached in an irregular mass, four or five deep, to within a few yards of the field-piece, when the order to fire was given. My informant, who was one of the party, described the scene in Texan vernacular, which I regret I am unable to repeat. It would depict the scene a thousand-fold more graphically than I could write it.

In loading the gun, which was done with slugs, stones, and bits of iron, to the muzzle, they had exhausted their slender stock of powder to two rounds of pistol and rifle charges. As the eyes of the savages gleamed through the chinks of the brushwood barricade, the death-dealing discharge tore through their ranks. This, followed by a well-directed volley from the rifles and revolvers, of which every shot told, sent such of the Indians as were not wounded pell-mell back. What with the roar of the cannon, the cracking of the fire-arms, and the yells of the wounded, the whole mass took to their heels and fled affrighted into the forest. Numbers were dashed into the boiling surf below, or killed among the rocks in their descent. This was the first and last volley. No estimate was made of

the slain. Indeed they staid not to count, but after a hurried consultation, and fearful of the return of the Indians in still greater force, and knowing their own want of ammunition, they abandoned the fort, and, taking to the forest, traveled for several weeks, entering the Willamette Valley, and so reaching Portland.

It was a bright sparkling morning, the sun pouring down a flood of radiance after the rain of the previous night, when we mounted two shaggy but strong Indian ponies, and set out for Empire City, at Coos Bay. Every leaf seemed to glitter in the light, and dew-drops sparkled in every bush. It was a morning to make one "love to live," as the lungs expanded with the respiration of the cold and bracing air. One rides through the undulating country of Oregon with an exhilaration of spirits like that following the inhalation of laughing gas. The characteristic dryness of the autumn months of California is not found among these verdant woods. Green and fragrant heath-blossoms adorned the sides of the road, and at times we crossed some noisy rivulet, scolding its way toward the sea, half concealed by an overhanging drapery of verdure fed by its waters.

This continued for some miles, when we came out upon the sea-shore; and now, joined by a couple of horsemen bound to some point above, we scampered over a hard sand beach, until we reached the Elk River. H— having passed this way about a year before, and anxious to display his knowledge of the route, selected the ford, and dashed in, but was soon up to his middle, and reached the opposite banks, having partaken of a cold bath much against his will.

The rest, more cautious, mounted the tops of their saddles, and escaped with only wet feet. This river during the winter months is impassable. The distance from a log-house standing on the bank to the Sixes River is some six miles, the road leading through a thickly-wooded country. On the route we crossed Cape Blanco, which, until the completion of the recent coast reconnoissance, was supposed to be the most westernmost point of the United States. Cape Mendocino, however, in California, is believed to be a mile or two farther seaward. Our new friends had left us, and we galloped along the verge of the beetling cliff, where we paused to "breathe our horses," and gaze off into the blue ocean beyond.

Here, since the creation, these foaming breakers have chafed, and the rocks skirting the base of the precipice have dashed them defiantly back. From the pitch of the Cape a dangerous reef of rocks, standing high above the water, stretches out to sea; the rocks, as we stood and held our hats on in the face of the sea-breeze, were sometimes hidden in the toppling foam. A line carried directly west from where we stand would nearly touch Jeddo, and meet with no impediment on the way. All is "deep blue ocean" between. Here the footsteps of Young America must pause a while. From this point we may look back upon the continent. The Cape is a prominent landmark to the mariner, and from here the land trends away to the northeast, giving to the headland the appearance of a shoulder thrust far into the sea. The bluff, crested with pine-trees, standing almost upon the very brink, and sloping thence inland, forms



FIGHT ON BATTLE ROCK.



CAPE BLANCO.

a plateau, or piece of table-land, finely wooded, across which the sharp sea gales whistle with unchecked fury. From the Cape to "the Sixes" is about two miles. The country slopes to the northward, forming a valley through which the river flows to the ocean. The Sixes has not yet been traced to its source, though it takes its rise not above forty miles in the interior. It can be ascended with canoes about twelve miles, and is said to wind among fertile bottoms and reaches of prairie land hitherto only traversed by Indians and wild beasts. It empties into the ocean under the lee of a huge rock, but the bar is impassable even for a canoe. From seaward no entrance can be discerned. At its mouth stands Dan's cabin.

"Dan" is an old Norwegian sailor, whose half century of adventures have carried him thrice around the world. He has sailed under every flag in Christendom, has fought in numerous naval engagements, and has been often wounded. Among the otter and bear hunting community in which he is now located, and who never saw salt-water or ship until their journey across the continent to the Pacific shores, he is regarded as a curious ocean monster, to be listened to respectfully, and heeded with more than ordinary awe. His fearful oaths—almost unintelligible, from the Dutch jargon with which he mingles them—his rough, outlandish appearance, his undisputed courage, and kind simplicity, have made him notorious, and the traveler along the coast looks forward with sharpened appetite to the roasted salmon or broiled bear-steak at "Dan's."

We arrived at the ford at dead low-water, and

H— determined to push across, though the quicksands are said to be dangerous at that point. However, we plunged in, and by dint of spurring and shouting, reached the opposite side. Dan's hut is about two hundred yards from the northern bank. We rode up to the door of a log-cabin situated at the mouth of a ravine, and partly embowered in its tangled foliage. From this issues a rivulet discharging into the river; and here the old Northman has decided to pass the rest of his days, within hearing of the ocean's roar—just near enough to be reminded of his many adventures, and yet secure from its dangers.

Dismounting, we tied our horses to a post, while the door opened, and a long-haired, sober-faced trapper, with a face like leather and with the seriousness of a parson, gazed out upon us with Indian stoicism. He was about thirty-five years of age. Around his head was a dirty handkerchief, the ends of which hung negligently down his face. Slashed buckskin pants, hunting-shirt, and moccasins, made up his apparel, while the short black pipe, which he held firmly between his teeth, showed that our arrival had disturbed him in the enjoyment of the hunter's elysium. He regarded our operations with silent indifference, and when we inquired for Dan, replied by throwing open the door, which hung on wooden hinges, and re-entered the cabin, leaving us to follow if we pleased. After fastening our animals we entered, and found the trapper already stretched before the fire, gazing immovably at the smoky rafters, and pulling gently at the digestive pipe. It was evident that an attempt to disturb our new

acquaintance again would be useless, so we shouted, "Dan! Hallo there, Dan!" whereupon a savage growl from one of the hide beds in the corner announced that the lord of the manor was taking an early snooze.

"Can you get us something to eat, Dan?" said I, in my blandest tone.

"Are you Coos Bay people?" asked the voice from the bed.

It flashed across me that a slight fib in such a strait would be excusable, and thinking that the Norwegian might have a peculiar regard for the denizens of Coos Bay, I replied "Yes!"

"Well, get out o' my cabin den, you bloody sneaks! Da don't no Coos Bay man get no grub in my cabin—they're mean enough to pack their own grub!"

It was evident I had made a mistake, and I hastened to explain, when H—, who had known Dan, came to the rescue.

"Dan! don't you know me? It's the Doctor; Dr. H—, that cured you of the rheumatics last year. Don't you remember me, old fellow?"

At this the heap of bed-clothes began to move, and the old Norwegian, grunting with pain, came out of his lair. He speedily knew the Doctor, and welcomed him, but without deigning me a word or look. The sight of a fat haunch of elk hanging from the ridge pole obliged me to smother my feelings.

Without a dozen words he got to work, and in another ten minutes was roasting several fine steaks before the fire, which crackled in a huge chimney of mud and stones. Silence seemed the order of the day in this hermit's abode, so,

without saying, By your leave, I stepped over the prostrate body of the trapper, and took down from the fire-place notch a soot-begrimed pipe, half filled with the "dear weed," coolly lit it by an ember, and puffed away.

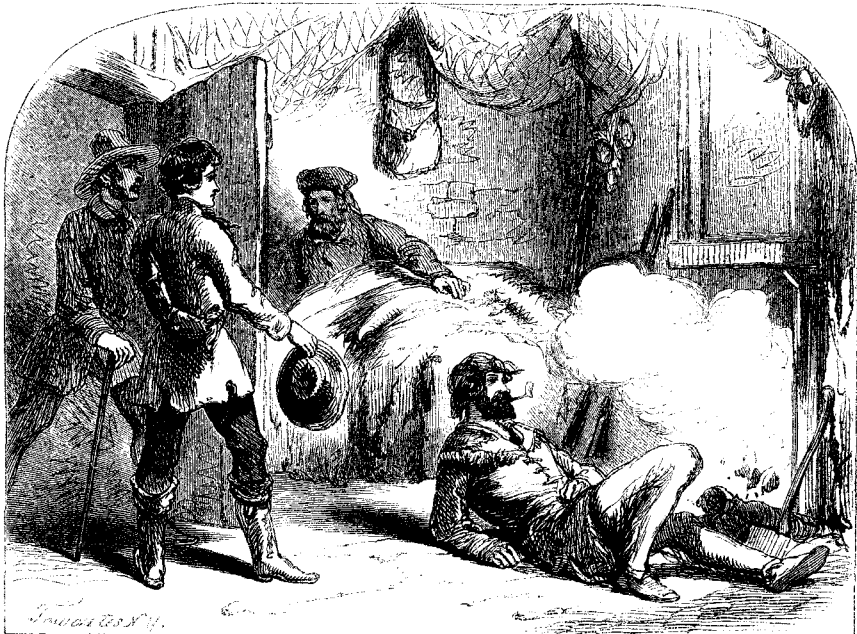
Dan said nothing. Thus encouraged, I addressed a few words to him with a view of opening a conversation, but without success, and a garrulous attempt upon the still motionless trapper was equally without avail. Foiled so far, and determined to draw the old fellow out, as I learned he had a fund of anecdote, I produced a flask of brandy, saved as a precious relic of San Francisco, and taking a swallow to prove it was not poisoned, passed it silently to the old sailor. He smelt at the mouth, and immediately took a strong pull at its contents, uttering a prolonged and satisfactory "A—h!" as he returned it. The fountains of his loquacity were opened at once, and turning a curious glance toward me, he observed,

"You didn't get dat at Port Orford, no how!"

"You say right," replied H—.

And therewith commenced a conversation of an hour's duration; but the trapper, though paying his respects to the flask, said nothing. Throughout this class of men it will be observed, that being alone and in the silent forests or mountain solitudes the greater part of their lives, they acquire a taciturn habit, which seldom leaves them.

We found, by actual experiment, that the sand in the bottom of the rivulet near the house contained gold in fine particles. Dan hobbled out and washed a pan of earth, in which were hundreds of minute specs of the precious metal.



DAN'S CABIN.

The whole ocean beach of Oregon is thus impregnated with gold, to a greater or less extent. Among other facts, Dan stated that a law went into operation last winter in Oregon, prohibiting the sale of liquors except by the payment of a quarterly license of fifty dollars. No sooner had the law gone into effect than the deputy sheriff started from Coos Bay, and traveling rapidly through the country before the law could become generally known, had taken every place in his route where liquor was sold, and imposed the fine for selling without a license. Dan's was among the proscribed number, and to this day he heaps anathemas on Coos Bay and its entire population, not one of whom need apply at his door for entertainment. This explained his ominous question on our entrance,

"Are you Coos Bay people?"

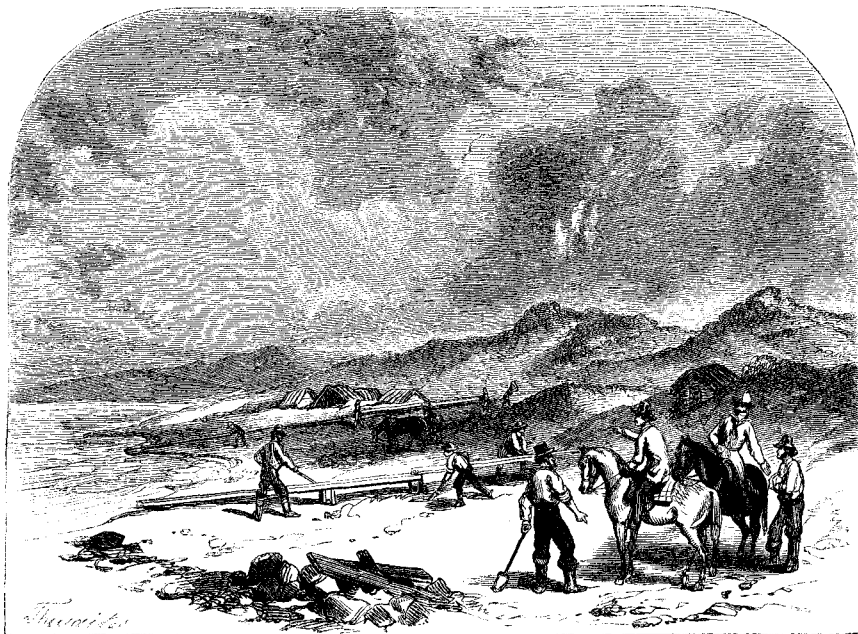
We gradually grew to be good friends with both Dan and the trapper, and both took particular pains to direct us on our route. By the time our horses were rested we had learned all the necessary facts regarding the country, and paying our score, we mounted and started away to the northward, Dan's old white mare breaking away as we dashed past, and he and his companion performing a series of indescribable gyrations to arrest her evident intention of following us. We soon reached the ocean beach, where the nature of the sand admits of no faster motion than a walk. The sky to seaward began to thicken, and soon we were riding through a fog so dense that the banks of surf, a few hundred yards from us, were scarcely visible. After an hour H——'s black beard was sparkling like hoar-frost—the glittering drops standing upon his mustaches as in a winter's morning in New England. The fog was driven inland by a keen wind that searched every seam and opening. It was like riding in the rain. Such weather may be counted on two-thirds of the year along the Oregon beach.

While on the route we met Ben Wright, the sub-Indian agent, an experienced hunter and trapper, whose life has been passed in the mountains and on the Western frontier. He was a man of some thirty-two years, with black curling hair, reaching, beneath a slouched Palo Alto hat, down to his shoulders; a Missouri rifle was slung across his back, and he rode a heavy black mule with bearskin *machillas*. Altogether, he was a splendid specimen of a backwoodsman, of noble stature, lithe as an eel, of Herculean strength, and with all the shrewdness and cunning acquired by a lifetime passed among the North American Indians. Almost disdaining the comforts of civilized life, and used to the scanty fare of the hunter, he seemed peculiarly fitted for the office he held. I am thus particular in the description of Ben Wright, as his name has just been published among those who were butchered by the Chetkoe tribe at Rogue River in February last. He was in company, when we met him, with several others, any one of whom would nearly answer to this description. Some of them have shared his fate in the massacre above referred to.

Our next crossing was at Flores Creek, which we now easily forded; but in winter it becomes a formidable stream, and during the heavy rains is impassable. The ford is two miles above the mouth. This crossed, we again struck the monotonous ocean beach. The route for many miles is one of the most uninteresting that can be imagined. The scenery is the same for twenty miles. A shouting conversation must be maintained to be intelligible against the high wind. Even the romantic associations attending the tumbling in of a heavy ocean surf is in part denied—the mist often entirely hiding the outer breakers, and leaving one to imagine their force by the half acre of foam, which, rushing up the slant of the beach, expends itself in tiny ripples around the horses' hoofs. Presently we observed something in the distance resembling machinery, and a nearer inspection introduced a veritable gold-beach washing apparatus in full operation, under the brow of a tall sand-bank, and superintended by three stout, contented-looking fellows, who assured us, in answer to our queries, that they were making from \$12 to \$25 per day "to the hand." Not unused to the "tricks of the trade," as practiced in the California gold regions, we were disposed to be incredulous until, by a few fair "prospects" of the gold sand, and an explanation of the *modus operandi*, we were finally convinced of the truth of the statement. In a word, the entire seabeach, from Rogue River to Cape Arago, is more or less impregnated with fine gold sand, much of it an impalpable dust, and only to be extracted by the use of quicksilver. It is precisely the same thing as quartz mining—minus the labor and expense of crushing the rock preparatory to the amalgamating process. A stream of water, conducted from a neighboring ravine, is led through wooden flumes to the "tom heads," and the workmen "stripping," or clearing away the drift, leave nothing to do but shovel tons of the black sand into the sluices, the trickling stream performing the process of separation, the fine dust escaping over these miniature *riffles* being arrested and amalgamated in a series of quicksilver deposits below. The greater part, however, is caught in the upper *riffles*. The stream was stopped a few minutes for our accommodation, and we found the bottom of the trough sparkling with innumerable minute specks of gold, and in half an hour the quantity had so increased that we could distinguish the fine gold sand glittering through the volume of water. It was a crystal brook, with golden pavement.

The sand from the beach, however, drifted rapidly over their works, urged by the diurnal gales which sweep with full force across the place, and obliging the miners to erect high brush and board fences to prevent being buried by a slow process. I had often heard and read of these diggings; but until now had never realized the fact of a "golden ocean beach." The Oregonians assert that, notwithstanding the constant working of these sands, they are found to be quite as rich





BEACH GOLD DIGGINGS.

the succeeding year—a fact which we could scarcely doubt when we learned that the present is the third working over of the “Stacy claim.”

Bidding adieu to our friends, and leaving them to their solitary fate of washing gold, we spurred onward, and another two miles brought us to the famous Coquille River, discharging from the southeast into the ocean. An abrupt descent brought us to the bank, where we found two log-houses of considerable pretensions, and owned by a Yankee and an Englishman, who have here established a ferry “for man and beast.”

Descending the bank, we stopped at the house—a couple of blooded dogs issuing from the yard and smelling suspiciously around our horses. The owners of the establishment made their appearance directly after, and the scow being hauled to the beach, we entered, horses and all, and were soon ferried across the river, which is above one hundred yards in width. The bar has about seven feet at low water. Availing ourselves of the directions given us by the ferry-men, we pursued our journey along a bluff bank overlooking the sea some fifty feet—occasionally getting close to the brink, where we looked down upon abandoned claims and gold-washing machines until, at nightfall, we came to the now deserted town of Randolph.

A few lines will suffice to narrate the rise and fall of Randolph. Captain Smith, U. S. A., while on a visit to this part of Oregon, in the winter of 1853, discovered gold mingled with the sands of the beach. The story got wind, and thousands crowded from all parts of Oregon and California to these shores of the latest El Dorado. On the bluff immediately above the

most thoroughly worked claims, a town (Randolph) was commenced in the following June, and by the next winter about two hundred persons were located here, awaiting the breaking-up of the southeast gales to prosecute their labors. Their efforts, however, were not crowned with the success they anticipated. Some abandoned the place and left for California; others went to Rogue River, and soon the place was deserted.

We found two or three disconsolate families collected in the public pound, or corral, making an “arbitration,” as a very talkative lady informed us, of the cattle of a couple who, having been married a year, had found the hymenial chains to hang heavily, and were about separating for life. Leaving nearly the entire population, consisting of nine men and women and a number of children, to this occupation, we drew up at the door of the least ruined house, and dismounted, to the satisfaction of a flock of flax-haired urchins, to whom our arrival was evidently a matter of great moment. A very pretty and interesting woman welcomed us, and was soon busily engaged preparing our supper. Meanwhile we strolled out to see the lions of Randolph. Several vacant lots in a “streak” of deserted pine dwellings attracted my curiosity enough to inquire what had become of the houses; when our hostess responded that they had fallen a sacrifice to the fuel-gathering hands of the remaining population—in a word, they had been used up as fire-wood. What a picture! A town springing from nothing—growing—culminating in its career of prosperity, and burned as fuel in its decadence!

In another year not a clapboard will remain



to tell the whereabouts of Randolph. Our hostess—whom we thought far too pretty to be wasting the bloom of her beauty in this bleak corner of Oregon—soon spread before us an excellent supper, to which we did such extreme justice that even she, not unused to the voracity of her Oregon visitors, stared up from her sewing at the rapid disappearance of the edibles. The master of the house announcing that our beds were ready, we tumbled into our blankets and slept soundly until daybreak, when the adjacent frizzing of some elk-steaks operating upon the olfactories of H—, he opened his eyes, sprang out of bed, and hastened to array himself. Breakfast dispatched and the bills paid, we remounted, and leaving the silent town to its requiem of the eternal surf, we struck off from the coast, and plunged directly into the woods. The most interesting part of our ride had now commenced.

The forest we were entering extends along the Oregon coast from Rogue River to Washington Territory, except where broken by rivers or belts of other timber. It is composed of spruce, fir, and yellow and white pine, and forms a mass of motionless woods of giant growth and dark as a Gothic cathedral. Five minutes took us beyond the sound of the restless surf, and even the waving of the pines, as they wagged their tops in the gale, ceased as we penetrated deeper into the solemn silence of this grand old forest. The path, which had been cut through it at public expense, just wide enough to admit a horseman, was crossed in every direction with gnarled and crooked roots, forbidding our passage at a rate faster than a walk. The view, unobstructed by jungle or shrubbery, was bounded on every side by a perspective of great trunks, not twisted into knees, or protruding unsightly branches like the oak, but straight as arrows, and reaching, in some instances, an altitude of nearly three hundred feet.

No sound save the rustling of our stirrups against the low whortleberry bushes and blackberry vines disturbed the impressive stillness of the scene. Here and there lay the decayed form of some ancient monarch of the glade, and of such age that the twisted roots of pines not far from a century old were straddled athwart their trunks, and which had evidently sprung into life since the fall of the older tree. We thus estimated the age of several fallen cedars, which must have been growing centuries before Columbus discovered the continent. The soil over which we were passing was a rich loam, extending to an unknown depth, and the face of the country slightly undulating, not unlike the surface of the Pacific still heaving with the long swells of a past tempest. Occasionally, in the deepest of these dells, appeared a growth of oak or myrtle, among whose more extended foliage the sunlight glimmered in fine contrast to the darkening woods around; but every tree grew straight upward, as if shunning the deep shadows below, and following their instincts by stretching their arms toward the only point where sun

and blue sky were visible. As we got deeper into the timber we gradually ceased conversation, and each occupied with his own thoughts was speculating, perhaps, upon the probable time when the advance of civilization should sweep away this cloud of foliage, when we came suddenly upon a large tree lately fallen across the trail, its broken limbs piled high before us, and offering an impassable barrier to our further progress.

An impenetrable growth of thickly-matted bushes prevented our tracing the trunk to the stump, and thus regaining the path on the opposite side, while toward the left the path, having been cut along the edge of a steep glade filled with young myrtle and hemlocks, gave little encouragement for our passage by that route. While we were calculating the chances of forcing a way through to the right, H—, who had ever prided himself upon his woodcraft, discovered a newly-made path to the left, which he at once pronounced to be the track of two horsemen whom our hostess at Randolph informed us had gone to Coos Bay some days before. "It is evident," said he, with a peculiar logical accent common to most professional men—"it is evident that this tree has fallen previous to the passage of these two men, and, depend upon it, we shall come out right if we follow their trail."

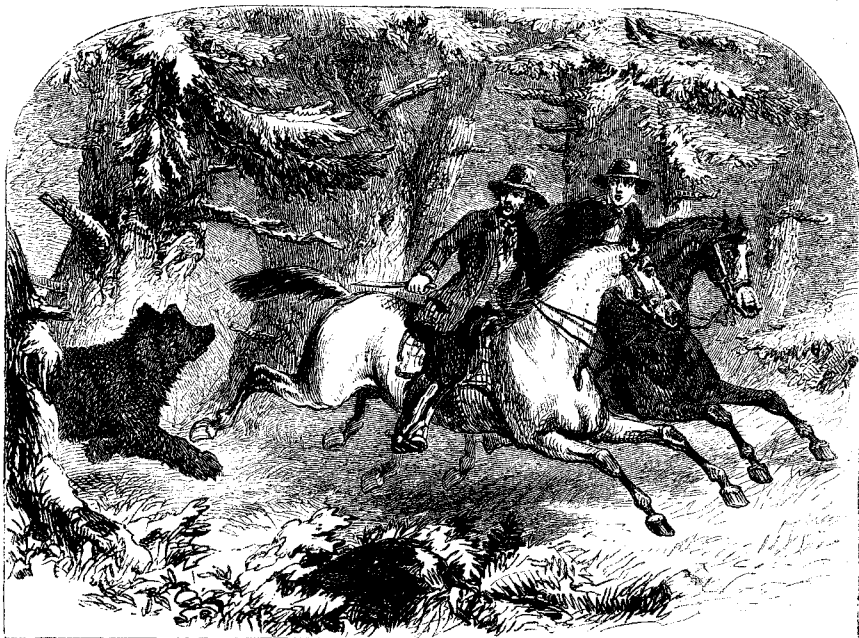
H— was generally right in his conclusions, and as this appeared a reasonable one, and none better suggested itself, we spurred the unwilling horses down the descent, slowly breaking our way through the thick bushes, and following as near as possible the direction of the road. We were soon at fault, however, as the opening disappeared after a few yards, and my companion, who was in front, had just signified his intention of retracing our steps, when his horse suddenly started, and, with a snort of terror, reared into the air, and plunging up the hill at a pace which defied the impediments of bush or briars, dashed into the road, and back in the direction to Randolph, H— shouting,

"Good G—d, see that bear! Whoa! Look out! Whoa, boy! Look out for yourself W—! he's coming this way!"

The whole occurred so quickly, that before I could collect my thoughts my horse had sprung up the hill, and now the animals, somewhat removed from the immediate vicinity of his bearship, stood facing the jungle, and with nostrils distended and ears erect, stared wildly at the spot where Bruin had been seen.

Neither of us were bear-hunters or trappers, and as little acquainted with the method of attacking so formidable an animal as any good citizens alone in an Oregon forest. In the few bear stories I could recall at the moment, the main feature which presented itself to my recollection was climbing a tree, but the enormous trunks around offered very dubious facilities for such an operation.

"Now then," said H—, "we must pass that tree, and how to avoid a fight is the question. I'd certainly rather retrace our steps than



AN UNWELCOME ENCOUNTER.

hazard a pistol battle with the monster I just saw."

For my part I had not yet seen the enemy, and with my rifle ready in my hand, was wondering where he would next make his appearance, when the crackling of the bushes showed that he was on the move. With eyes fixed upon the copse, we awaited his appearance. Luckily, however, Bruin was as little disposed for a battle as ourselves, and probably overrating our forces, made his way out above us, and disappeared in the woods.

By noon we had penetrated fourteen miles into the forest, sometimes crossing elk and bear trails, now cantering along an even tract of country, bereft of shrubbery, and overshadowed by the same huge trees, or plodding slowly through green copses of underbrush, the vines clambering up the mighty trunks, hanging in long green festoons from the branches, and forming natural arbors through which the path was barely discernible. A small log-hut, erected in an open space, and nearly in ruins, is known as the "Half-way House," and is the only sign of civilization along the route. Here we dismounted, and tying our horses by their *riattas*, allowed them to nibble a while at the grass, while we attacked the whortleberries, hanging in profuse clusters upon the bushes.

We were a month too late for the blackberries, the vines of which spread in all directions, and showed traces of the visits of numerous beasts, who are decidedly epicures in their taste for fruit. Here we began to discover evidences of the great coal deposits, which are eventually

to make this section of Oregon the Newcastle of the Pacific, and as effectually terminate the importation of that article around Cape Horn as has already nearly been done with flour.

Remounting, we struggled along through the labyrinth of trunks, until at sundown a slight rise in the ground gave us a glimpse of daylight through the forest. A citizen of Empire City suddenly appeared, and paused aghast in his route at sight of two strangers. The grip on his trusty rifle was a little tightened as we approached, but seeing we were immigrants, and probably not connected with any of the local issues of the Coos Báy country, he shouted,

"Dern my skin, but when I heered the brush a-crackin', I thought I had ketched that cow at last. How are ye strangers—bound to Coos?"

We replied, and after a brief interchange of news, we pursued our way. He pointed out, as we parted, the graves of five children who had been crushed by the falling of a tree some twelve months before.

After the discovery of the coal deposits, there was "a rush" of some twenty families to the mineral region, most of whom cleared and claimed, under the law of 1847, six hundred and forty acres of land each. To avoid the danger of falling trees, it is necessary to burn and fell all suspicious ones within a few hundred yards of the dwelling. One night the father heard an ominous crackling in the direction of a giant pine which had been steadily consuming under the action of fire for a week past. The family was asleep, but like lightning the danger flashed upon the settler, and arousing his wife, they

seized two of the children, and hurried the bewildered little flock into the night air. But the warning had come too late. As they issued from the hut, the tree—a monstrous pillar of wood, little lower than the cross of Trinity Church in New York—toppled from its centre and fell to the earth. The cabin was directly in a line with its descent, and was smashed to atoms. A little mound, over which clamber a few black-berry vines, marks the lonely grave.

As we neared the edge of the forest, the regular strokes of an ax resounding in echoes through the shadowy silence, showed we were nearing our place of destination. The horses, now quite worn down with the wearisome route, pricked up their ears at the sound, and quickening their pace, we issued from the woods upon the banks of a beautiful and spacious bay, stretching some three miles directly beyond us, and about five to the right and left. The surrounding woods were clearly depicted in its glassy surface, while the swelling tide swept nobly up to the spot where we stood. It was the famous Coos Bay, of which some indistinct accounts had reached San Francisco, but which, passed over in the reconnoissance of the United States Coast Survey, had remained unexplored and almost unknown. Indeed, no maps or charts, save the one afterward made by myself from rough sketches, exist of this fine sheet of water.

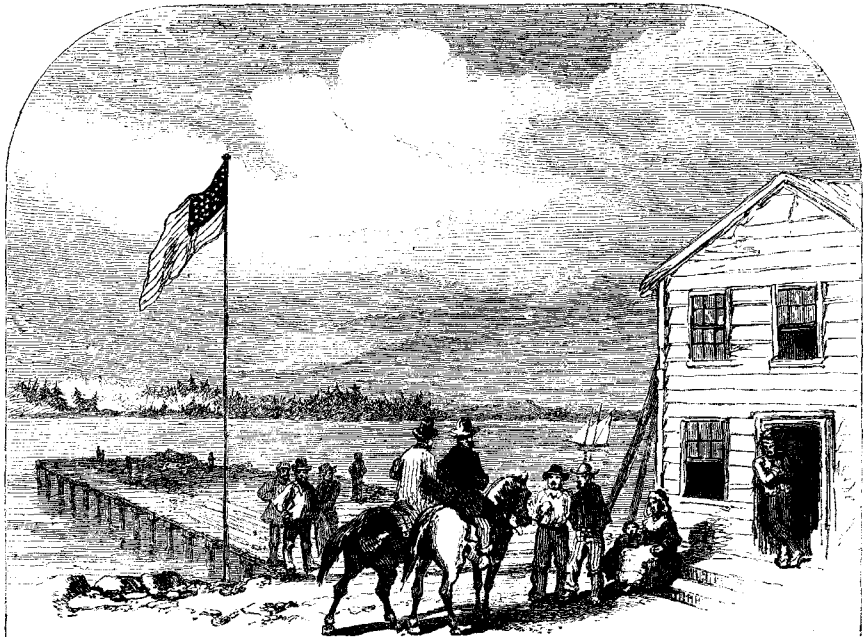
To the right lay the little town of Empire City—every collection of dwellings in Oregon and California is a city—composed of some thirty houses, mostly of boards, and from the midst of which a half finished wharf projected into the bay. A hasty glance at the scene suf-

ficed; for our animals were already gazing wistfully at the place, with visions of corn or barley, doubtless, rising in the dim perspective. So with as brisk a gait as we could assume, we entered the town—the entire population completely electrified by our arrival, and crowding around us as curious specimens of humanity, which, in truth, we were.

Our friend, Mr. Rogers, hastened out to meet us; and, rescuing his visitors from the crowd, hurried us into his store, where we were not long in making ourselves at home.

Behold us now before a crackling fire of pine-knots, alternately sipping the contents of a copious bowl of whisky-punch—and such whisky, shade of Bacchus!—and detailing to the attentive listeners the news from “Frisco,” as San Francisco is here familiarly termed. The mail facilities between Coos Bay and the great commercial metropolis of the Pacific are extremely uncertain and by no means regular; so our arrival was a matter of the greatest moment.

Mr. Rogers's store is the commercial and political head-quarters of Coos Bay. The stout proprietor himself, a rosy-cheeked, educated Vermonter, has held some of the most important offices in the gift of the people, and his hearty manners and good-natured laugh have won for him the reputation of the most popular man at Coos. The store is the resort of the inhabitants for many miles around on Sundays; when, seated on the counter, they discuss the most important topics, and select goods from the assortment of our host. A glance around the shelves revealed the extent of his stock, which, as a racy informant remarked in answer



EMPIRE CITY, COOS BAY.

to my look of inquiry, consisted of "green groceries"—*i. e.*, black thread and vinegar!

As the fire lighted up the interior of the rough dwelling, and brought into bold relief the stalwart forms of men whose tastes and occupations had led them into this corner of the world for a livelihood, it was difficult to realize that four years ago the bare existence of such a place as Coos Bay was unknown.

The evening wore away with songs and stories; jolly great pipes of tobacco black as "sooty Acheron" were smoked and refilled; more logs were piled upon the fire, and rough jokes flew around the merry circle. At last, weary with the ride, and perhaps a little overcome by the hospitality of our entertainers, we were shown to a species of shed, the sign over the door of which read thus:

PIONEER HOTEL,  
Donuts—Wom. Meets.

and denoted the sole public house of Empire City. Here we addressed ourselves to sleep, and, after a round twelve hours, came out on the following day, brisk as larks and prepared to see the lions.

Coos Bay is about twenty miles in length and from three to four in width. It is entered from the ocean—or, rather, the ocean discharges into it, as the inhabitants affirm—by a narrow channel, perhaps half a mile wide from land to land. The navigation is somewhat intricate, but not dangerous. There is depth of water for vessels loaded to ten or twelve feet, and numerous cargoes of coal have been taken to San Francisco—a distance of about four hundred miles. The mines are some twenty miles from the bar or entrance, and facilities already exist for the rapid loading of vessels. The coal, which extends over a country some thirty miles by twenty, is abundant, accessible, and of good quality. As yet only a few banks have been opened. An immense trade—that of supplying the Pacific coast with coal—is destined to spring up between this point and California.

During our four months' stay at Coos and vicinity, we took frequent advantage of the numerous offers of our acquaintance to make excursions across and up the bay—sometimes to join in the excitement of the chase, salmon-fishing, or surveying the interesting country about us. The scenery around the bay is made up of deep, silent pine and fir forests, often relieved with the gayer-tinted foliage of the birch and maple. Toward the ocean, where the northwest winds prevailing in the summer months have heaped up symmetrical mounds of sand, all traces of vegetation disappear, and a desolate expanse of white mingles in the horizon with the blue line of the sea. An incessant roar, mellowed by the distance into a hoarse murmur, marks where the surf chafes among the rocks skirting the entrance to the bay.

Days and weeks may pass away, and if you go beyond the small circle of civilization around

the town, you will meet with no living thing but the passive Indian squaw dragging her load of fish to the cabin, or some startled wild beast, quickly darting out of sight into the depth of the woods.

Early one morning I was roused out by appointment, to join in a tramp to the South Heads in search of otter. This trade has already assumed an importance among the whites of Lower Oregon, who purchase these and other peltries of the Indians. We made a party of three, and taking a narrow path, which to me became utterly lost in five minutes, we were soon traversing a dense mass of woods, in which the crinkling of our steps among the leaves were the only disturbing sounds. An hour's walk brought us out upon the coast, which here makes into numerous tiny inlets and bayous, formed by the large rocks around, and among which the sea lashes with resistless fury. Beyond us the surf made out in high successive banks of foam, any one of which would have proved the death-warrant of the stoutest ship afloat. A stiff breeze blew from seaward, and as the roaring walls of water toppled inland before the increasing gale, I could scarcely imagine how otter or any other living creature could be shot, much less captured in such wild commotion.

My companions, among whom was an Indian known as Chu-wally, bid me have my rifle in readiness. Cautiously descending toward a battlement of dripping rocks, serving to break the force of the sea, but still streaming with thousands of milk-white rivulets of foam, we halted, while Chu-wally, stripping himself to the buff, crawled to the ledge and looked over into the little calm space of water under the lee of the rocks. For some moments he remained motionless, and then, without changing his position, raised his hand in signal to us. "Down! close down!" whispered Billy Romanes, the best rifle-shot in the country, as we moved silently toward the spot. Slowly we crept up the steep crags, the booming surf wetting us to the skin as we ascended.

We reached the summit, and peering over the brink, gazed down upon four beautiful otter sporting in the little nook beneath. A single unguarded motion would have alarmed these timid creatures, and the utmost caution was necessary; for while the deafening roar of the ocean is a noise they are accustomed to, the click of a lock, or the bungling hitting of a rifle-stock against a rock, sends them out of sight in an instant. There were apparently two old females, each with a young one, though the difference in size was scarcely perceptible to a novice. At times, in the long smooth swell of the cove they would gracefully throw their entire forms out of the water; but this is rare, and the hunter is only too glad to get a moment's sight at the head above the surface. These appeared to be in a frolicsome mood, chasing each other about, now swimming rapidly on their backs, and disappearing to shoot up again in another moment. We lay perfectly quiet until



OTTER HUNTING.

both could bring our rifles to bear, when, as the two appeared together, they received our fire. Simultaneously with the flash of our rifles they disappeared, but leaving a streak of blood to prove the accuracy of one or both of us.

After a few moments we were gratified to observe one of them floating dead upon the water, and scarcely had we reloaded when a second, badly wounded, showed his head; both fired, and the game was our own, and Chu-wally plunged in and dragged them successively to the shore. They were of the silver-gray species, the most valuable fur, except that of the marten, taken in this section of Oregon, and worth in San Francisco about \$35 each. We soon had them skinned, and throwing away the flesh, which is unfit for eating, we trudged homeward, quite satisfied with our good fortune. These furs, which, when dressed, are extremely beautiful and soft, are fast becoming rare and more valuable. The Chinese in San Francisco pay the highest price for them for shipment to the celestial regions, furs being a mark of dignity and power in China.

On the smooth ocean beach the marksmen of Oregon sometimes shoot the otter through the surf. As the bank of water moves majestically toward the shore, the otter, who understands better than all other animals how to manoeuvre in the breakers, spreads himself flat on the outer or seaward side, and moves rapidly in to the land. His form is plainly visible through the thin water, as through a plate of glass. The hunter stands beyond the force of the surf, and when the game has been borne to within rifle-shot, the unerring bullet cuts through the transparent element, and it is rarely that the shot is

not rewarded with the much-coveted prize. The land otter has a smaller and less valuable fur, and, like the beaver, is often taken in traps on the Coquille, Umpqua, and Rogue rivers. The rifle, however, that unflinching reliance of the frontiersman, is the common weapon used against the entire brute creation in Oregon.

The world offers no better hunting-grounds than these wild woods of the north. Here are found a variety of deer, and the brown and black bear (the grizzly is not seen north of the California line). The stately elk, with such antlers as the hunters of the Eastern States have no conception of, runs in bands of hundreds in the interior; the black, gray, and white wolf, and the numberless little delicately furred creatures who are made to contribute their soft coverings to the rich robes now so fashionable in the Northern United States, are all found in this region.

In mid-winter, when the huntsman plods his way amidst the world of pines, bending their lofty tops beneath a continuous roof of snow, the muffled echo of a rifle will sometimes indicate the presence of man, when no other sound than the hungry howl of the wolf, or the sudden rush of the elk, disturbs the silence. Let the wanderer issue from the forest, and climbing the nearest hill, gaze through the rarified atmosphere toward the north. If he is beyond the Sciuslaw, he will see a blue cone far away, rising into the clouds, and traced in feathery outline against the sky. It is Mount Hood, the fourth loftiest peak in the world. Apparently near by, but yet weary days' travel apart, as the traveler will find, should he make the journey,

stand two others, Adams and Jefferson. At early dawn these huge landmarks present a deep indigo color; but as the ascending sun flashes against their steep declivities, the blue suddenly changes into a glitter of eternal ice, white as a glacier, and of all spectacles in the great north the most splendid. But let not my unworthy pen desecrate these grand old mountains with an attempt at description. Descend we again to the game.

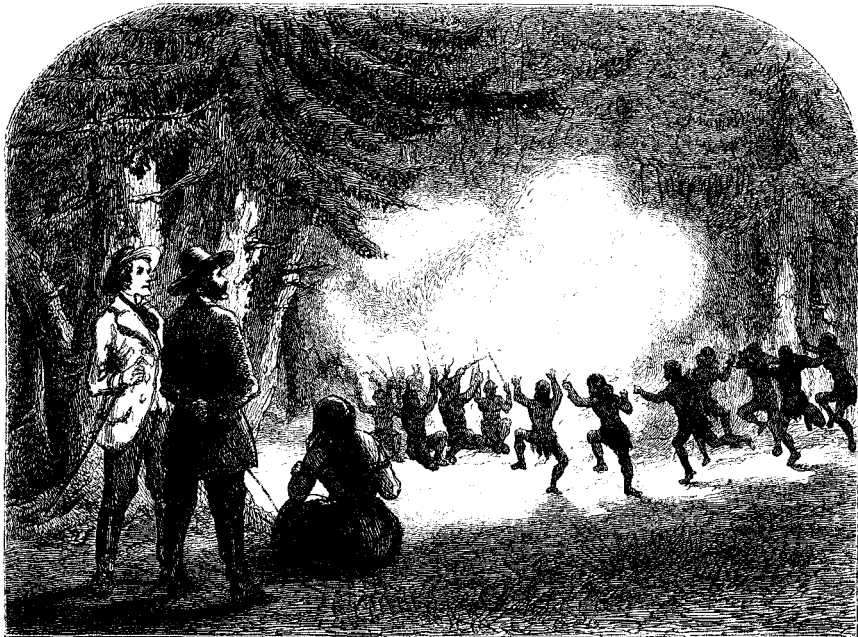
Partridges, quails, woodcocks, or prairie hens have never yet been seen, but the clouds of curlew, snipe, teal ducks, and geese, greedily feeding along the marshes and river banks are incredible. Some sportsmen deny the existence of the canvas-back duck on the Pacific coast; but the *punt loads* which our party slaughtered last winter would soon convince them of their error.

The Indians of this section of country are by no means the fierce and warlike race found further to the northward in Upper Oregon and Washington Territory. Although viciously disposed, they have long since learned to estimate the character of the whites at its proper value. Under the protection or rule of the Indian agents they are furnished with a certain amount of blankets and food throughout the year, and from their association with the whites, have lost much of their savage ferocity.

An Indian dance or merry-making having been announced near the bay, the whole available population turned out to "assist" at it. Entering an open space in the woods toward midnight, we found about thirty braves and squaws gathered around an immense fire of

pine logs, the flames from which lit up their grotesque accoutrements and hideously painted faces, while the surrounding forest echoing their monotonous chants, was dimly illumined with the red glare. For a space of twenty yards around the fire the scene was a blaze of light, but from that point the woods receded into an impenetrable gloom. We dismounted, and fastening our horses to the limbs, entered at once among them. Here an old squaw, whose leathern hide, naked from the waist up, lay like the folds of oiled parchment over her attenuated form, sat rocking herself to and fro, mumbling an indescribable jargon. She was stone blind. There a bevy of young ones, tattooed and be-daubed beyond all description, joined their voices to a jumping, jolting dance, hand in hand, back and forth, toward and away from the fire. Beyond, were seated as near to the flames as the heat would allow, a row of Indians all fantastically dressed, beating time to the chant with sticks, which they held crossways in their hands, and at given signals rattled nervously together.

Several old chiefs seemed to act as leaders in the festivities, and at their signal a wild, unearthly yell arose, which, but for the presence of my companions, I might easily have construed into a war-whoop. All were in motion; rocking, dancing, jumping, or stepping, in uncouth gait, to the time of the music or chant. Perspiration flowed in streams, and the decidedly careless display of female animated nature would have driven less interested, and perhaps more scrupulous, spectators than ourselves from the scene. As the flames roared their chorus with the hideous noise of these creatures, it



INDIAN DANCE.



ELK HUNT.

seemed like a dance of fiends incarnate in some orgie of Pandemonium. Hanging up in clongated wicker-baskets, so closely woven as to be water-proof, were some dozen papooses strapped to the straight back of these portable cradles, and nothing but the head of the little imps visible from among the firs and dirt.

An Indian burial is scarcely a less remarkable scene. Formerly the body was burned, and the wife of the corpse killed and interred with the body. This, and numerous other like horrible practices, have been summarily abolished by the settlers. When one of the community begins to show signs of dissolution (which is usually hastened by the sweating or other sanitary process to which the sick are submitted), the whole tribe commences a terrible outcry, which generally lasts through the dying agony of the sufferer. The body is then stretched upon the ground and sprinkled with sand and the ashes of sea-weed or kelp. The legs are forcibly doubled up toward the head, and the ankles tied as closely as the rigidity of the corpse will permit, to the neck. The relatives of the deceased shave their heads and place the hair upon the body—thus rolled into a heap—together with some shells and nutritive roots for the dead to subsist upon. The body is then lowered into the grave, which is made of a length to accommodate the diminution of size to which the defunct has been submitted. The earth being thrown in, the whole tribe jump alternately upon it until the ground becomes quite solid. The baskets, clothing, spears, and all personal property, is formed into a heap,

packed upon the grave, and covered securely with sticks and stones. With a chief, the ceremonies are more impressive and lengthy.

The wolf of Southern Oregon is the fiercest animal—not even excepting the bear—to be found in the country. These prowling fellows, when driven to extremities, will approach a herd of cattle, and a band of three or four spring upon a cow, and in a short time completely devour the victim. The white wolf, which is considered the most dangerous, is about five feet in length, and nearly as high as a yearling calf. The strength and ferocity of this beast is wonderful, and many a mortal struggle has occurred between the wounded white wolf and the hunters. On two occasions, while at Coos Bay, we heard of the depredations of wolves, and joining parties to start in chase, were disappointed by the incredible cunning which seems to guide them from all pursuit. Once a party of four left Empire City, in a small sail-boat, for Wap-palo, or Isthmus Creek, in the upper part of the bay, where two large wolves had been seen for several days.

With plenty of provisions and ammunition, we shot away from the wharf, and, giving the sail to the wind, were soon scudding "like mad" before a staggering westerly breeze, rapidly passing the wood-crowned headlands, and awakening the echoes with an occasional rifle-report, at which some doomed pelican or eagle came tumbling from their proud elevation. Arrived "at point proposed," we found a couple of friends awaiting us, and swelling our number to six. The chase lasted all night, but was un-

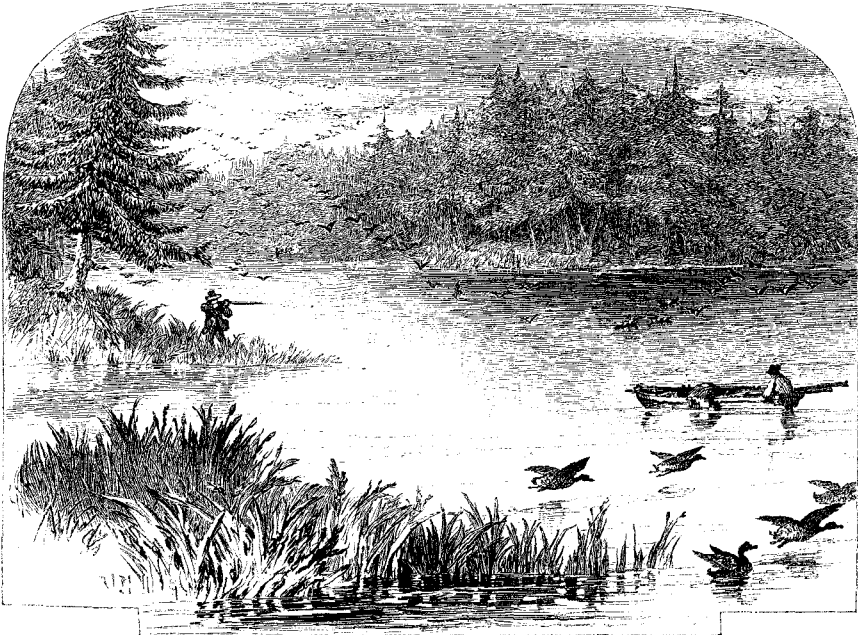


successful. We had just seated ourselves under an immense pine, and had commenced an assault upon the eatables with all the earnest vigor of hungry men, when F—, one of the best hunters in the bay, suddenly sprang up and whispered "Silence!" But we needed no such admonition, for already the ground began to tremble beneath us with the tread of an approaching band of elk. Quick as thought we had dispersed to a distance of two hundred yards apart, and, squatting low in the underbrush, had scarcely time to breathe free before the low growth of trees toward the mountains separated, and the form of a noble elk appeared, advancing proudly toward the stream we had just left. He stopped as he thrust his head from among the leaves, snuffed and stamped impatiently, and evidently smelt danger; but he had already passed our most distant outpost, and to return was equally hazardous. With daintily lifted feet and nose protruded he brushed past, and in another moment was followed by a herd, one, two, six, ten—it was impossible to count them. I had determined to await the signal of F—'s shot, and had my own target singled out when the sharp ring of a rifle awoke the forest echoes. The herd started and dashed past the ambush, while the woods resounded with five reports in quick succession. Like light the beautiful animals vanished, but with the thundering tread of a troop of cavalry. Two of their number lay plunging on the earth, and a third, grievously wounded, was making a succession of agonizing springs to follow in the path of his companions. Another shot brought him down, and now dispatching the others, we

felt that at least our wolf-hunt had not been in vain.

My companions had promised me a shot at an elk, but even they had not anticipated such luck. The meat was soon packed to the boat, and at midnight we were again in Empire City.

Marsh bird-shooting is mere slaughter, though J— was "innocent of duck blood" to the last. We once loaded a boat with water-fowl, the result of but two hours' shooting. Starting at early dawn, we sailed rapidly toward a creek extending several miles inland from the bay, and reaching its head-waters, drifted leisurely down. The stream, some two hundred yards wide, dimly reflected in its bosom the sombre shadows of the pines and firs skirting its margin. An intense silence reigned. The cry of the sedate crane, as he stood "knee-deep" in some shallow pool watching patiently for his prey, or the quick twir-r-r of a flock of blue-winged teal or mallard cutting hurriedly through the air, and settling quietly upon some reedy shore below, alone disturbed the stillness. We landed on a grassy meadow, and leaving one in the boat to follow the stream, the others occupied the space between the two lines of woods. The first shot fired rolled with a thousand echoes through the forest, and in a moment arose ten thousand winged creatures from the "plashy brink" of creek and bayou, embracing every style of marsh bird and duck that can be mentioned. With every discharge these flights from place to place continued. At times they would settle down in our immediate vicinity, and apparently offer themselves voluntary sacrifices. Unable, owing to their low flight, to pass



DUCK SHOOTING.



AN OREGON FASHIONABLE BALL.

beyond the woods guarding the banks, they followed the line of water, and never failed to pass over the ambush below. We only ceased this "pot hunting" when, weary of the slaughter, we found our boat loaded with game.

The hunters in this vicinity seldom use the shot-gun, and consider such shooting as the above quite unworthy the waste of powder.

For some weeks previous to Christmas great preparations had been made for the observance of that time-honored anniversary. Now, in Oregon, where people reside ten miles apart, and call a man neighbor who lives half a day's journey away, it is not so easy to make up a fashionable party, for sundry reasons, as in Fifth Avenue, or any other of the "close settlements" in New York. If a hop is to take place, weeks must be given to prepare in; the "store clothes" taken out, aired and brushed, old bonnets furbished up, horses driven in from distant pasture, and saddles made ready. Then the nearest settlement must be applied to for a proper amount of whisky and sugar, raisins and flour. But on the occasion above alluded to, great efforts were made to have matters go off with *éclat*. Deacon L—, residing on the ocean beach, about twenty miles to the southward of Coos Bay, and known as the most liberal, warm-hearted old gentleman of Southern Oregon, had appropriated, some time in advance, the right to give the Christmas ball. It was to last two days and two nights. Oceans of whisky, hills of venison and beef, no end of pies and "sech like." The ladies of all Coos County were to be there, and a fiddler from the distant point of Port Orford itself engaged. To this feast did

all hands look forward with secret longing and hope. Two days beforehand the exodus for Deacon L—'s began to take place, and among the invited guests were the two "Frisco chaps," *i. e.*, H— and myself. And on Christmas-eve the ball commenced. There were gay roystering blades from Port Orford, gallants from Coos Bay, select men and distinguished individuals from all over the country, and belles from every where. Such a *recherché* affair had not occurred since the settlement of the Territory. For two nights and days the festivities continued; and after all the dancing, riding, drinking, singing, and laughing—and all this without sleeping, and with a determination to "never give up"—there were buxom forms and brilliant eyes that dared us to another break-down!

I snap my fingers at all civilized Miss Nancys henceforth and forever. Give me, for the essence of fun and the physical ability to carry it out, a corn-fed, rosy-cheeked, bouncing Oregon lass, with eyes bright as the rivers that sparkle merrily on their way to the sea from those snow-clad mountains, and hearts light as the fresh breezes of that northern climate! I may forget the Central American excitement; sooner or later I shall have forgotten the birth of an heir to the French throne; the siege of Sebastopol may fade away, but that Oregon ball will be ever fresh in my memory.

On recovering from this, we had made up our minds to start for California; but one day, while firing at a target—the same being a tenpenny nail driven half way to the head in a pine-tree—a long, lanky Missourian informed me that a whale had drifted ashore near the Heads, and

that the Indians, agreeably to their custom, had commenced devouring him.

"That's very extraordinary," said I.

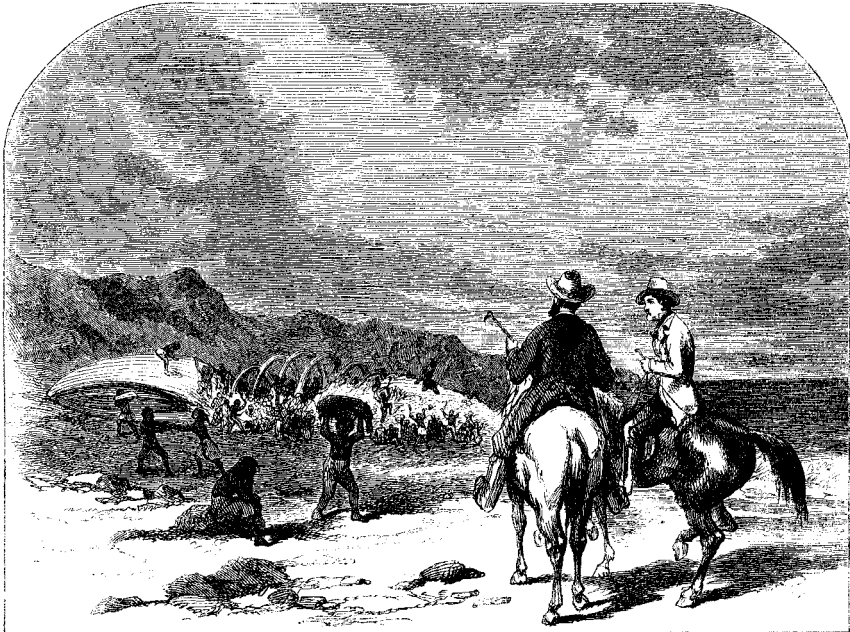
"Wal, hoss, replied my informant, "jest you mount and ride thar, and ef you don't see 'em eatin' that thar leetle fish, thar's no snakes;" and his nostrils dilated with anger at my look of incredulity.

So we mounted and rode, and after an hour's scamper along a level ocean coast, a vile smell began to demonstrate the truth of at least one part of my friend's information. At a distance, and forming a hillock on the white beach, lay an unwieldy mass of something, around which we could see at least a hundred Indians hasting from place to place. We clapped spurs to the horses, and arriving at the spot, found a scene which I almost despair of depicting. The whale, which I believe was a large "humpback," had, as is often the case on this coast, got into shallow water, and in his struggles and alarm presenting his body broadside on, had been rolled by the mighty surf high up the beach, like a cask or log of wood. He must have lain there some time, as all the air was a putrid stench, such as I hope never again to inhale. The huge creature lay on his side, and the sand had already buried a portion of the carcass so as to render it immovable. The surf at high-water had broken entirely over it, but now there remained a considerable space of bare beach outside.

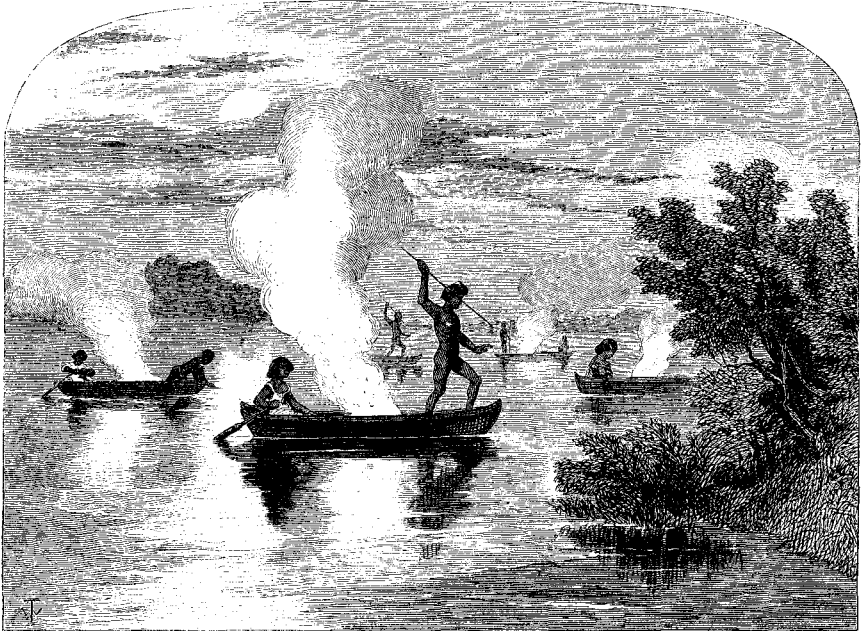
This space, and the ground for twenty yards around, was occupied by the Indians, who seemed to consider this some special dispensation of the Great Spirit in their behalf. A

deafening row disputed possession of the air with the stench. Nearly all were naked, and attacking the whale like ants. Here appeared a little, pot-bellied child, whose limbs seemed scarcely capable of sustaining the swelling paunch that overtopped them, staggering up the beach with an armful of putrid blubber, the oily substance trickling down over his little body in a hundred glistening streams; there a lusty fellow with a knife, carving away as for dear life—dissecting the huge subject before him—cutting his way into the interior. Farther on are two squaws, fighting for the proprietary right to a square chunk of whale, in shape something like a cake of ice as sold in New York, the said chunk coated with sand half an inch thick, as the delicious morsel has been rolled about in the squabble. Beyond, an old creature has overburdened herself with the treasures of the deep, and, in pure exhaustion, decides to rest awhile, seated upon the jealously-guarded prize. Still another group represents the Laocoon, the father and sons being three members of a family, and the avenging serpent a long string of the unctuous blubber, under and with which they are struggling up the beach. Every body is busy. Even the chiefs have thrown aside their dignity in the excitement of the moment, and join the general assault.

We proceeded up the beach to where some fires were burning, near a few temporary huts. Here several women were roasting the fish, which they devoured apparently before it was well warmed through. No fair in England ever produced, in proportion, a greater noise. My companion said they would stick by the



A BLUBBER FEAST.



SALMON SPEARING BY TORCH-LIGHT.

wreck until not a plank (nautically speaking) remained, when, gorged with marine matter, they would take to the mountains, and diet on berries and young hornets. I saw the latter cooked and eaten, which is done in the following manner: A hornet or wasp's nest, perforated, as usual, with hundreds of little cells, where the young are deposited, is obtained from the hollow of some decayed tree, where they are easily found. My lady Squaw brings this cake, which is here nearly a foot in diameter, to the fire, and deliberately roasts the juvenile occupants of the cells alive. She concludes by turning the cake upside down, patting it briskly on the back, and eating the baked tenants, like whortleberries, as they tumble out! This is considered an excellent corrective after over-indulgence in blubber. Pike, who spoke the jargon, attempted to get into conversation with some of these Indians, but they only replied with gestures. The occasion of a whale ashore was too rare and momentous for frivolous discussion.

The salmon fisheries of Oregon are yet scarcely known. Even in San Francisco, where the resources of the Pacific coast should be well understood, there seems to be but little attention given to this subject. There are two "runs" of salmon every year in all the rivers and bays of Oregon, from the Chetkoe to the Umpqua inclusive. But one attempt has been made in Oregon to use the seine, which was on the Rogue River. With imperfect apparatus and every disadvantage to work against, above five thousand of these fish were hauled from the river in two days with the assistance of the Indians. These

were packed with refuse salt, and in so hurried a manner that the fish were not cured, and hence the statement, believed by many intelligent persons, that salmon can not be salted on the Pacific coast owing to certain atmospheric causes. The English, however, with a better knowledge of affairs, have already sent two full cargoes from Vancouver's Island to China, for the salmon are found as far north even as the Russian possessions. These form the chief article of food for the Indians in Coos Bay as well as on the entire coast, and their method of catching them with hooks and spears is often an interesting spectacle.

I had intimated to my friend, Mr. Rogers, my desire to witness a torchlight salmon excursion, and with his usual courtesy he organized an expedition for my special benefit. The Indians collected at a point a mile below Empire City, and were nearly one entire day making their preparations. The canoes were first cleaned out and furnished with a barbed spear of wood tipped with iron or glass. A pile of pitch-pine knots were also placed in each, and other arrangements made, the nature of which I did not understand. Determined to see the whole performance, I embarked in a frail affair—a species of dug-out—having for my crew an old squaw, whose bleared eyes and skinny, wrinkled hideousness, illumined with the glare of the torch she had stuck in the bow of the canoe, reminded me of the gaunt features of some foul witch from regions damned. But I soon found that my female Charon was not to be despised, for she plied her paddle with the dexterity of a—for aught I know—century's experience. We

soon reached a little bend in the bay where the fleet was congregated, and the sport commenced.

The operation was simple enough. Each canoe contained two persons, a squaw squatting in the stern to take the fish from the spear and replenish the fire; and an Indian, who, from the bows, darted his weapon with absolute certainty at the fish. The light of the fire seemed to possess some attraction for the finny denizens of the bay; for as the glare passed along the surface of the water, they would dart upward toward it and become the sure prey of the spearman. In a trice, the drumming of captured salmon was heard from a dozen boats, and my *crew* became so excited thereat that she nearly threw me out of the cockle-shell in gesticulating and screaming to her grandson, who was not displaying any remarkable dexterity on that night. The cold was severe, my hands and feet were soon benumbed, and yet this apparently bloodless old creature, almost naked, showed no signs of suffering.

The scene was one of the most remarkable I ever witnessed, and but for the cold would have been superb. At my request the squaw paddled me alongside a canoe, the proprietor of which lent me his spear; but though he pointed out dozens of salmon, some of them glorious fellows, three feet long, my unpracticed hand met with no success.

In an hour the novelty of the thing had passed, and I gave the signal to return. There were about five hundred fish taken in that time.

Another method is to use the common fishhook. The fleet of canoes start for some favorable locality where the bight of the land leaves

the water free from the action of the current, and the surface is speedily covered with dozens of little reels, on each of which are wound about ten yards of line. There are generally about half a dozen hooks attached to the end, which are allowed to hang from ten to twelve feet below the surface, being suspended at that gauge by a float. The salmon bite greedily at the bait, and swim away, unwinding the line as they go. The reel spins around with great velocity, which is the signal for the proprietor to paddle up, haul in the captive, and administer a stinging tap on the head with a small stick provided for the purpose. There are often a dozen canoes engaged at once in this fishery—all gliding swiftly about, and more than busily engaged by the rapidity of the bites. These salmon are, beyond comparison, the most delicious in the world, even surpassing the famous ones taken in the Sacramento River in California.

The coal deposits of Coos Bay should be the subject of a separate article, and require more space than could be devoted to them in the limits of these pages. A report, recently published by myself in San Francisco, contains the outlines of what will doubtless become hereafter widely discussed. That the importation of coal to California *via* Cape Horn, from Europe and the Eastern States must eventually cease, few who are acquainted with the facts will deny. A space of country about the size of Rhode Island is a solid bed of coal, outcropping wherever a ravine or break occurs. The veins are from six to ten feet thick. The coal has been repeatedly and satisfactorily tested, and proved to be well adapted to steamship purposes. It is in quality



SALMON FISHING.

not unlike the Scotch cannel, but lighter, and when unmixed with foreign substances, burns to clear red ashes. But these are only a few of the boundless treasures of the unexplored regions of the Pacific, and which, as the country becomes populated, are destined to teach the inhabitants of the extreme West to rely on their own resources. California and Oregon produce nearly every article necessary to the comfort and subsistence of man, and it needs but the construction of the great avenue of population—the national railroad—to bring the country to the pinnacle of greatness and wealth. Shall we live to see it built?

#### PASSAGES OF EASTERN TRAVEL. BY AN AMERICAN.

**M**OHAMMED HASSAN had been sent on from El Kab to Edfou to order sundry provisions that were necessary, and especially charcoal, which we could not obtain above here. In the morning after leaving El Kab I awoke and saw a group of horses on the bank, keeping along with the boat, which was tracking slowly. It appeared that the governor had sent them down for us to ride up to Edfou in advance of the boat; and accepting them willingly, I mounted one and was off over the fields, attended by Abd-el-Atti and the governor's messengers. Six miles brought us to the village, but long before reaching it we saw the lofty towers of the propylon standing against the sky, and the walls of the temple, covered with Arab hovels, towering above the rest of the village. We rode in at the back of the temple and around the rear, dismounting on the top of the outer wall of the grand court, down into which I looked before I ascended the propylon.

Every stone of this temple has elegant sculptures on it, and the propylon towers are covered with gigantic figures of gods and goddesses. While I was on the summit of the tower the governor approached through the village, attended by his suite—a one-eyed scribe, an eight-fingered cawass, and half a dozen Arabs. He was a hard-looking specimen of a Turk, and I took no fancy to him. After examining the temple and its environs, and a small portion of another temple which stands near it, I shook off the governor and got away from him. I then returned to the temple, sat down under the shadow of its walls, and negotiated for antiques, of which I got about as many as at El Kab. Coins were more plenty here, and I found twenty or thirty that were curious and valuable. I bought one small vase or plate, cut from dark translucent stone, on the bottom of which were carved two Cupids holding a heart. It was as modern as possible in design, but there was no doubt of its antiquity, as it cost me but five piastres, or less than a quarter of a dollar. Returning to the boat, I was rejoined by the governor, who rode down with me a mile or so to the river. Here I found Jacques in the hands of another governor of higher rank than my friend. They were seated on carpets under a

tree, taking coffee and pipes very quietly, and the new official turned out to be, on the whole, one of the pleasantest men we had met on the river.

The form of government of Egypt is somewhat of a puzzle to the natives and to the governors themselves, but Mohammed Romali, the governor with whom I found Jacques, informed me of its general nature, and it is somewhat thus:

Every thing here is autocratical. The Viceroy is supreme, and makes laws as he pleases, appointing and dis-appointing, moving and removing, as his will inclines. Next to him are the superintendent governors of the three great sections of Egypt. The first section reaches from the sea to a point not far above Cairo. The second section from this point to Semneh, just above the second cataract, and the last from Semneh as far south as the Viceroy can collect taxes. Of the second section, which covers all that part of the Nile that travelers ordinarily go over, Latif Pacha is the superintendent governor, and exercises supreme power. Although the law requires all sentences of death to be submitted to the Viceroy, he does not wait for this, but executes when he pleases. Under him, and as a sort of associate, but in fact an inferior officer, is Abd-el-Kader Bey, who is governor of the same section, under the superintendence of Latif Pacha. Under him again are governors of minor sections, as, for example, Abd-el-Rahman, who is governor from Wady Halfeh to the first cataract, and Suleiman Effendi, who is governor from the first cataract to Thebes. Under these governors are a sort of traveling governors, who go along the river from place to place, examining the conduct of various villages and cities, hearing appeals from the local magistrates and judges, and attending to similar business. Besides these, each village and city has its local governor, whose power extends only to the next village; every city and village has its sheik, as also has each separate trade or business. Thus the boatmen have their sheik in every large place; the laborers in the field have their sheik; the merchants, the donkey owners, and every class. The office of sheik is hereditary, descending from father to son.

Mohammed Romali was *nazir* or traveling governor from Esne to Assouan. He had arrived at Edfou in his boat, and was engaged in hearing cases, which the chief justice was reciting to him in the presence of the various litigants, and which he disposed of summarily, or reserved for consideration, as he thought proper.

He accepted an invitation to come to the boat, accompanied by the chief justice, who, by the way, wished a prescription for a chronic disease with which he was affected, and which I gave him as cautiously as I could, knowing nothing about the proper treatment. I recommended what I knew would not hurt him, and, as it afterward turned out, I was very fortunate, for on my return to Edfou, three weeks later, he pronounced himself a well man, and, wonderful to relate, attributed it to the medicine.