

THE

ATLANTIC MONTHLY:

A Magazine of Literature, Science, Art, and Politics.

VOL. LXXXII. — NOVEMBER, 1898. — No. CCCCXCIII.

COLONIAL LESSONS OF ALASKA.

"And there's never a law of God or man runs
north of Fifty-Three."

KIPLING.

THE United States is about to enter on an experience which the London Speaker cleverly describes as "compulsory imperialism." Wisely or not, willingly or not, we have assumed duties toward alien races which can be honorably discharged only by methods foreign to our past experience. In the interests of humanity, our armies have entered the mismanaged territories of Spain. The interests of humanity demand that they should stay there, and the duties we have hastily assumed cannot be discharged within a single generation.

It is an axiom of democracy that "government must derive its just powers from the consent of the governed." This has been the fundamental tenet of our political system. But government by the people is not necessarily good government. It can never be ideally good until individual intelligence and patriotism rise to a higher level than they have yet reached in any nation whatever. It is possible that government by the people may be intolerably bad. This is the case where individual indifference and greed make effective coöperation impossible. Such a condition exists in several of the so-called republics of the New World, for whose independence our Monroe Doctrine has been solicitous in the past. Such will be the case with the Spanish colonies of to-day, if we leave them to their own devices. For the civic ideas of these peo-

ple and of their self-constituted leaders rise to no higher plane than those of the vulgar despots from whom they have so long suffered.

In such cases as these, a government, for the time at least, may "derive just powers" otherwise than from the consent of the governed. It may justify itself by being good government. This is, indeed, the justification of the excellent paternal despotism by which "Diaz holds Mexico in the hollow of his hand." It is the foundation of the imperialism of Great Britain. Wherever the flag of England floats it teaches respect for law. There is but one political lesson more important, and that lesson is respect for the individual man. To teach the one has been the mission of England; to teach the other has been the glory of the United States.

The essential function of British imperialism is to carry law and order, "the Pax Britannica," to all parts of the globe. This function has been worked out in three ways, corresponding to England's three classes of tributary districts or colonies. The first class consists of regions settled and civilized by Englishmen already imbued with the spirit of law, and capable of taking care of themselves. In our day such colonies are self-governing, and the bond of imperialism is little more than a treaty of perpetual friendship. Over the local affairs of Canada, for example, England exerts no authority, and claims none. The sovereignty of the home government rests on tradition, and

it is maintained through mutual consideration and mutual respect.

A second class of colonies consists of military posts, strategic points of war or of commerce, wrested from some weaker nation at one time or another in the militant past. In the control of these outposts "the consent of the governed" plays no part. The justification of England's rule lies in the use she makes of it. The inhabitants of Gibraltar, for instance, count no more than so many "camp followers." They remain through military sufferance, and the forms of martial law suffice for all the government they need.

The third class of colonies is made up of conquered or bankrupt nations, — people whose own governmental forms were so intolerable that England's paternalism was forced to take them in hand. These countries still govern themselves in one fashion or another, but each act of their rulers is subject to the veto of the British colonial office. "Said England unto Pharaoh, 'I will make a man of you;'" and with Pharaoh, as with other irresponsibles of the tropics, England has in some degree succeeded. But this success has been attained only through the strictest discipline of military methods; not by the method by which we have made a man of Brother Jonathan, not by the means through which republics make free citizens out of the masses of which they are constituted. England has thus become the guardian of the weak nations of the earth, the police force of the unruly, the assignee of the bankrupt. England, as Benjamin Franklin said a century and a half ago, is an island which, "compared to America, is but a stepping-stone in a brook, with scarce enough of it above water to keep one's shoes dry." Yet, by the force of arms, the force of trade, and the force of law, she has become the ruler of the earth. It is English brain and English muscle which hold the world together, and have made it an Anglo-Saxon planet. The final secret of England's

strength lies, as I have said, in her respect for law. Good government is the justification of British imperialism. If victories at sea, happy accident, the needs of humanity, "manifest destiny," or any combination of events force foreign dominion on the United States, American imperialism must have the same justification.

It is a common saying of the day that the American flag, wherever once raised, must never be hauled down. This would have the ring of higher patriotism, were another resolve coupled with it: the stars and stripes shall never bring bad government, — shall never wave over misrule, injustice, waste, or neglect. Whatever lands or people may come under our flag, they are entitled to good government, the best that we can give them. This should be better than we give ourselves, for it is not accompanied by the advantages of self-government.

Imperialism can succeed only along lines such as England has already laid down. In the hands of all other nations — except thrifty Holland — the colony has been a source of corruption and decay. It will be so with us, if we follow the prevalent methods of waste and neglect. It is not for the colonies to make us wealthy through taxation and trade. That is the outworn conception which we have forced Spain to abandon. It is for us to enrich them through enterprise and law. There are duties as well as glories inherent in dominion, and the duties are by far the more insistent.

For an object lesson illustrating methods to be avoided in the rule of our future colonies we have not far to seek. Most forms of governmental pathology are exemplified in the history of Alaska. From this history it is my purpose to draw certain lessons which may be useful in our future colonial experience.

Thirty years ago (1867) the United States purchased from Russia the vast territory of Alaska, rich in native re-

sources, furs, fish, lumber, and gold, thinly populated with half-civilized tribes from whose consent no government could "derive just powers" nor any other. In the nature of things, the region as a whole must be incapable of taking care of itself, in the ordinary sense in which states, counties, and cities in the United States look after their own affairs. The town meeting idea on which our democracy is organized could have no application in Alaska, for Alaska is not a region of homes and householders. The widely separated villages and posts have few interests in common. The settlements are scattered along a wild coast, inaccessible one to another; most of the natives are subject to an alien priesthood, the white men knowing "no law of God or man." With these elements, a civic feeling akin to the civic life in the United States can in no way be built up.

It is a common saying among Americans in the north that "they are not in Alaska for their health." They are there for the money to be made, and for that only; caring no more for the country than a fisherman cares for a discarded oyster-shell. Of the few thousand who were employed there before the mining excitement began, probably more than half returned to San Francisco in the winter. Their relation to the territory was and is commercial only, and not civil.

Alaska has an area nearly one fifth as large as the rest of the United States, and a coast line as long as all the rest. Outside the gold fields the permanent white population is practically confined to the coast, and only in two small villages, Juneau and Sitka, can homes in the American sense be said to exist. Even these towns, relatively large and near together, are two days' journey apart, with communication, as a rule, once a week.

When Alaska came into our hands, we found there a native population of about 32,000. Of these, about 12,000 —

Thlinkits, Tinnehs, Hydas, etc. — are more or less properly called Indians. Of the rest, about 18,000 — Innuits, or Eskimos, and some 2500 Aleuts — are allied rather to the Mongolian races of Asia. There were about 2000 Russian Creoles and half-breeds living with the Aleuts and Innuits, and in general constituting a ruling class among them, besides a few Americans, mostly traders and miners.

Then, as now, the natives in Alaska were gentle and childlike; some of them with a surface civilization, others living in squalid fashion in filthy sod houses. They all supported themselves mainly by hunting and fishing. Dried salt salmon, or *ukl*, was the chief article of diet, and the luxuries, which as time went on became necessities of civilization, — flour, tea, sugar, and tobacco, — were purchased by the sale of valuable furs, especially those of the sea otter and the blue fox. The Greek Church, in return for its ministrations, received, as a rule, one skin in every nine taken by the hunters. The boats of the natives outside the timbered region of southeastern Alaska were made of the skin of the gray sea lion, which had its rookeries at intervals along the coast. With the advent of Americans the sea lion became rare in southern Alaska, great numbers being wantonly shot because they were "big game;" and the natives in the Aleutian region were forced to secure sea lion skins by barter with the tribes living farther to the north. This process was facilitated by the Alaska Commercial Company, which maintained its trading-posts along the coast, exchanging for furs, walrus tusks, and native baskets the articles needed or craved by the natives.

Of all articles held by the latter for exchange, the fur of the sea otters was by far the most important. Since these animals were abundant throughout the Aleutian region thirty years ago, and the furs were valued at from \$300 to \$1000 each, their hunters became relatively wealthy, and the little Aleut villages be-

came abodes of comparative comfort. In the settlement of Belkofski, on the peninsula of Alaska, numbering 165 persons all told, I found in the Greek church a communion service of solid gold, and over the altar was a beautiful painting, — small in size, but exquisitely finished, — which had been bought in St. Petersburg for \$250. When these articles were purchased, Belkofski was a centre for the sea otter chase. With wise government, this condition of prosperity might have continued indefinitely. But we have allowed the whole herd to be wasted. The people of Belkofski can now secure nothing which the world cares to buy. As they have no means of buying, the company has closed its trading-post, after a year or two of losses and charity. The people have become dependent on the dress and food of civilization. Suffering for want of sugar, flour, tobacco, and tea, which are now necessities, and having no way of securing material for boats, they are abjectly helpless. I was told in 1897 that the people of Wosnessenski Island were starving to death, and that Belkofski, the next to starve, had sent them a relief expedition. I have no information as to conditions in 1898, but certainly starvation is imminent in all the various settlements dependent on the company's store and on the sea otter.¹ Some time ago it was reported that at Port Etches the native population was already huddled together in the single cellar of an abandoned warehouse, and that other villages to the eastward were scarcely better housed. However this may be, starvation is inevitable along the whole line of the southwestern coast. From

¹ In 1897, the trading-posts of Akutan, San-nok, Morjovi, Wosnessenski, Belkofski, Chernofski, Kashaga, Makushin, and Bjorka were abandoned by the Alaska Commercial Company, while the stores at Atka and Attu were turned over to a former agent.

² In Unga the Aleuts find work in the gold mines, at Unalaska in the lading of vessels. Very lately extensive shipyards have been established at Unalaska, and natives from the

Prince William's Sound to Attu, a distance of nearly 1800 miles, there is not a village (except Unalaska and Unga²) where the people have any sure means of support. "Reconcentrado" between Arctic cold and San Francisco greed, these people, 1165 in number, have no outlook save extermination. For permitting them to face such a doom we have not even the excuse we have had for destroying the Indians. We want neither the land nor the property of the Aleuts. When their tribes shall have disappeared, their islands are likely to remain desolate forever.

The case of the sea otter merits further examination. The animal itself is of the size of a large dog, with long full gray fur, highly valued especially in Russia, where it was once an indispensable part of the uniform of the army officer. The sea otters wander in pairs, or sometimes in herds of from twenty to thirty, spending most of their time in the sea. They are shy and swift, and when their haunts on land are once disturbed they rarely return to them. Any foreign odor — as the smell of man, or of fire, or of smoke — is very distasteful to them. Of late years the sea otters have seldom come on shore anywhere, as the whole coast of Alaska has been made offensive to them. The single young is born in the kelp, and the mother carries it around in her arms like a babe.

In the old days the Indians killed the otters with spears. When one was discovered in the open sea, the canoes closed upon it, and the hunters made wild noises and incantations. To the Indian who actually killed it the prize was awarded ;

various settlements in the Aleutian Islands, from Akutan to Attu, are temporarily employed there. It has been found necessary to build vessels destined for the Yukon River at some port in Bering Sea, as none of those constructed to the southward have survived the rough seas of the North Pacific. But this ship-building industry must be of very short duration.

the others, who assisted in "rounding up" the animal, getting nothing. In case of several wounds, the hunter whose spear was nearest the snout was regarded as the killer. This was a device of the priests to lead the Indians to strike for the head, so as not to tear the skin of the body.

Originally, the sea otter hunt was permitted to natives only. By their methods there were never enough taken seriously to check the increase of the species. The Aleut who had obtained one skin was generally satisfied for the year. If he found none after a short hunt, the "sick tum-tum" or "squaw-heart" would lead him to give up the chase.

Next appeared the "squaw-man" as a factor in the sea otter chase. The squaw-man is a white man who marries into a tribe to secure the native's privileges. These squaw-men were more persistent hunters than the natives, and they brought about the general use of rifles instead of spears. A larger quantity of skins was taken under these conditions, but the numbers of sea otters were not appreciably reduced.

The success of squaw-men in this and other enterprises aroused the envy of white men less favorably placed. A law was passed by Congress depriving native tribes of all privileges not shared by white men. This opened the sea otter hunt to all men, and thus forced the commercial companies, against their will, to enter on a general campaign of destruction.

Schooners were now equipped for the sea otter hunt, each one carrying about twenty Indian canoes, either skin canoes or wooden dugouts, with the proper crew. Arrived at the Aleutian sea otter grounds, a schooner would scatter the canoes so as to cover about sixty square miles of sea. It would then come to anchor, and its canoes would patrol the water, thus securing every sea otter within the distance covered. Then a station further on would be taken and

the work continued. In this way, in 1895, 1896, and 1897, every foot of probable sea otter ground was examined. At the end of the season of 1897 only a few hundred sea otters were left, most of them about the Sannak Islands, while a small number of wanderers were scattered along remote coasts. Of these, two were taken off Año Nuevo Island, California, and two were seen at Point Sur. One, caught alive on land, was allowed to escape, its captor not knowing its value. One was taken in 1896 on St. Paul Island, in the Pribilof, and one in 1897 on St. George.

The statistics of the sea otter catch have been carefully compiled by Captain Calvin N. Hooper, commander of the Bering Sea Patrol Fleet, a man to whom the people of Alaska owe a lasting debt of gratitude. These show that in the earliest years of American occupation upwards of 2500 skins were taken annually by canoes going out from the shore, and this without apparent diminution of the herd. Later, with the use of schooners, this number was increased, reaching a maximum of 4152 in 1885. Although the number of schooners continued to increase, the total catch fell off in 1896 to 724, these being divided among more than 40 schooners, with nearly 800 canoes. Very many of the hunters thus obtained no skins at all.

At the earnest solicitation of Captain Hooper, this wanton waste was finally checked in 1898. By an order of the Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Gage, all sea otter hunting, whether by white men or by natives, was limited to the original Indian methods. In this chase, no one is now allowed "the use of any boat or vessel other than the ordinary two hatch skin-covered bidarka or the open Yakutat canoe."

This simple regulation will prevent any further waste. Had it been adopted two years ago, it would have saved \$500,000 a year to the resources of Alaska, besides perhaps the lives of a

thousand people, who must now starve unless fed by the government, — a tardy paternalism which is the first step toward extermination. The loss of self-dependence and of self-respect which government support entails is as surely destructive to the race as starvation itself.

Our courts have decided that the Aleuts are American citizens, their former nominal status under Russian law being retained after annexation by the United States. But citizenship can avail nothing unless their means of support is guarded by the government. They have no power to protect themselves. They can have no representatives in Congress. A delegate from Alaska, even if such an official existed, would represent interests wholly different from theirs. They cannot repel encroachments by force of arms, nor indeed have they any clear idea of the causes of their misery, for they have cheerfully taken part in their own undoing. In such case, the only good government possible is an enlightened paternalism. This will be expensive, for otherwise it will be merely farcical. If we are not prepared to give such government to our dependencies, we should cede them to some power that is ready to meet the demands. Nothing can be more demoralizing than the forms of democracy, when actual self-government is impossible.

In general, the waste and confusion in Alaska arise from four sources, — lack of centralization of power and authority, lack of scientific knowledge, lack of personal and public interest, and the use of offices as political patronage.

In the first place, no single person or bureau is responsible for Alaska. The Treasury Department looks after the charting and the patrol of its coasts, the care of its animal life, the prohibition of intoxicating liquors, and the control of the fishing industries. The investigation of its fisheries and marine animals is the duty of the United States Fish Commission.

The army has certain ill-defined duties, which have been worked out mainly in a futile and needless relief expedition, with an opera bouffe accompaniment of dehorned reindeer. The legal proceedings within the territory are governed by the statutes of Oregon, unless otherwise ordered. The Department of Justice has a few representatives scattered over the vast territory, whose duty it is to enforce these statutes, chiefly through the farce of jury trials. The land in general is under control of the Department of the Interior. The Bureau of Education has an agent in charge of certain schools, while the President of the United States finds his representative in his appointee, the governor of the territory. The office of governor carries large duties and small powers. There are many interests under the governor's supervision, but he can do little more than to serve as a means of communication between some of them and Washington. It is to be remembered that Alaska is a great domain in itself, and, considering means of transportation, Sitka, the capital, is much further from Attu or Point Barrow than it is from Washington.

The virtual ruler of Alaska is the Secretary of the Treasury. But in his hands, however excellent his intentions, good government is in large degree unattainable for lack of power. Important matters must await the decision of Congress. The wisest plans fail for want of force to carry them out. The right man to go on difficult errands is not at hand, or, if he is, there is no means to send him. In the division of labor which is necessary in great departments of government, the affairs of Alaska, with those of the customs service elsewhere, are assigned to one of the assistant secretaries. Of his duties Alaskan affairs form but a very small part, and this part is often assigned to one of the subordinate clerks. One of the assistant secretaries, Mr. Charles Sumner Hamlin, visited Alaska in 1894, in order to

secure a clear idea of his duties. This visit was a matter of great moment to the territory, for the knowledge thus obtained brought wisdom out of confusion, and gave promise of better management in the future.

To this division of responsibility and confusion of authority, with the consequent paralysis of effort, must be added the lack of trustworthy information at Washington. Some most admirable scientific work has been done in Alaska under the auspices of the national government, notably by the United States Coast Survey, the United States Fish Commission, and the United States Revenue Service. But for years a professional lobbyist has posed as the chief authority in Alaskan affairs. Other witnesses have been intent on personal or corporation interests, while still another class has drawn the longbow on general principles. Such testimony has tended to confuse the minds of officials, who have come to regard Alaska chiefly as a departmental bugbear.

Important as the fur seal question has become, its subject matter received no adequate scientific investigation until 1896 and 1897. Vast as are the salmon interests, such investigation on lines broad enough to yield useful results is yet to be made. The sole good work on the sea otter is that of a revenue officer whose time was fully occupied by affairs of a very different kind.

Thus it has come to pass that Alaskan interests have suffered alike from official credulity and official skepticism. Matters of real importance have been shelved, in the fear that in some way or other the great commercial companies would profit by them. At other times the word of these same corporations has been law, when the department might well have asserted its independence. The interest of these corporations is in general that of the government, because they cannot wish to destroy the basis of their own prosperity. To protect them in their

rights is to prevent their encroachments. These facts have been often obscured by the attacks of lobbyists and blackmailers. On the other hand, in minor matters the interests of the government and the companies may be in opposition, and this fact has been often obscured by prejudiced testimony.

Another source of difficulty is the lack of interest in distant affairs which have no relation to personal or partisan politics. The most vital legislation in regard to Alaska may fail of passage, because no Congressman concerns himself in it. Alaska has no vote in any convention or election, no delegate to be placated, and can give no assistance in legislative log-rolling. In a large degree, our legislation at Washington is a scramble for the division of public funds among the different congressional districts. In this Alaska has no part. She is not a district filled with eager constituents who clamor for new post-offices, custom-offices, or improved channels and harbors. She is only a colony, or rather a chain of little colonies; and a colony, to Americans as to Spaniards, has been in this case merely a means of revenue, a region to be exploited.

Finally, the demands of the spoils system have often sent unfit men to Alaska. The duties of these officials are delicate and difficult, requiring special knowledge as well as physical endurance. Considerable experience in the north, also, is necessary for success. When positions of this kind are given as rewards for partisan service, the men receiving them feel themselves underpaid. The political "war-horse," who has borne the brunt of the fray in some great convention, feels himself "shelved" if sent to the north to hunt for salmon-traps, or to look after the interests of half-civilized people, most of whom cannot speak a word of English. A few of these men have been utterly unworthy, intemperate and immoral; and occasionally one, in his stay in Alaska, earns

that "perfect right to be hung" which John Brown assigned to the "border ruffian." On the other hand, a goodly number of these political appointees, in American fashion, have made the best of circumstances, and by dint of native sense and energy have made good their lack of special training. The extension of the classified civil service has raised the grade of these as of other governmental appointments. The principles of civil service reform are in the highest degree vital in the management of colonies.

As an illustration of official ineffectiveness in Alaska, I may take the control of the salmon rivers by means of a body of "inspectors." In a joint letter to the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, in 1897, Captain Hooper and I used the following language:—

"At present this work is virtually ineffective for the following reasons: The appointees in general have been men who know little or nothing of the problems involved, which demand expert knowledge of salmon, their kinds and habits, the methods of fishing, and the conditions and peculiarities of Alaska. For effective work, special knowledge is requisite, as well as general intelligence and integrity. These men are largely dependent upon the courtesy of the packing companies for their knowledge of the salmon, for their knowledge of fishing methods, for all transportation and sustenance (except in southeastern Alaska), and for all assistance in enforcing the law. The inspectors cannot go from place to place at need, and so spend much of their time in enforced inaction. They have no authority to remove obstructions or to enforce the law in case of its violation. For this reason, their recommendations largely pass unheeded.

"To remedy these conditions, provision should be made for the appointment only of men of scientific or practical training, thoroughly familiar with fishes

or fishery methods, or both, and capable of finding out the truth in any matter requiring investigation. For such purposes, expert service is as necessary as it would be in bank inspection or in any similar specialized work. The department should provide suitable transportation facilities for its inspectors. It should be possible for them to visit at will any of the canneries or salmon rivers under their charge. They should be provided with means to pay for expenses of travel and sustenance, and should receive no financial courtesies from the packing companies, or be dependent upon them for assistance in carrying on their work. The inspectors should be instructed to remove and destroy all obstructions found in the rivers in violation of law. They should have large powers of action and discretion, and they should have at hand such means as is necessary to carry out their purposes."

Under present conditions, the newly appointed inspector, knowing nothing of Alaska, and still less of the salmon industry, is landed at some cannery by a revenue cutter. He becomes the guest of the superintendent of the cannery, who treats him with politeness, and meets his ignorance with ready information. All his movements are dependent upon the courtesy of the cannerymen. He has no boat of his own, no force of assistants, no power to do anything. He cannot walk from place to place in the tall, wet rye-grass, and he cannot even cross the river without a borrowed boat. All his knowledge of the business comes from the superintendent. If he discovers infraction of law, it is because he is allowed to do so, and he receives a valid excuse for it. It is only by the consent of the law-breaker that the infraction can be punished. The law-breaker is usually courteous enough in this regard; for his own interests would be subserved by the general enforcement of reasonable laws. The most frequent

violation of law is the building of a dam across the salmon river just above the neutral tide water where the fish gather as if to play, before ascending the stream to spawn. Such a dam, if permanent, prevents any fish from running, and thus shuts off all future increase. Meanwhile, by means of nets, all the waiting fish can be captured. This is forbidden by law, which restricts the use of nets to the sea beaches. Yet dams exist to-day in almost every salmon river in Alaska; even in those of that most rigidly law-abiding of communities, New Metlakatla, on Annette Island. The lawlessness of the few forces lawlessness on all.

All that the inspector can do in the name of the government is to order the destruction of an unlawful dam. He has no power to destroy it; and if he had, he must borrow a boat from the company and do it himself. Then, in the evening, as he sits at the dinner table, the guest of the offending superintendent, he can tell the tale of his exploits.

The general relation of the salmon interests to law deserves a moment's notice. Most of the streams of southern and southwestern Alaska are short and broad, coming down from mountain lakes, swollen in summer by melting snows. The common red salmon, which is the most abundant of the five species of Alaska, runs up the streams in thousands to spawn in the lakes in July and August. One of these rivers, the Karluk, on the island of Kodiak, is perhaps the finest salmon stream in the world, having been formerly almost solidly full of salmon in the breeding season. The conditions on Karluk River may serve as fairly typical. A few salmon are smoked or salted, but most of them are put up in one pound tins or cans, as usually seen in commerce. This work of preservation is carried on in large establishments called canneries. One of these factories was early built at Karluk, on a sand-spit at the mouth of

the river. All Alaska is government land. The cannery companies are therefore squatters, practically without claim, without rights, and without responsibilities. The seining-ground on this sand-spit of Karluk is doubtless the best fishing-ground in Alaska. The law provided that no fish should be taken on Saturday, that no dams or traps should be used, that no nets should be placed in the river, and no net set within one hundred feet of a net already placed. This last clause is the sole hold that any cannery has on the fishing-ground where it is situated. Soon other factories were opened on the beach at Karluk by other persons, and each newcomer claimed the right to use the seine along the spit. This made it necessary for the first company to run seines day and night, in order to hold the ground, keeping up the work constantly, whether the fish could be used or not. At times many fish so taken have been wasted; at other times the surplus has been shipped across to the cannery of Chignik, on the mainland. Should the nets be withdrawn for an hour, some rival would secure the fishing-ground, and the first company would be driven off, because they must not approach within a hundred feet of the outermost net. With over-fishery of this sort the product of Karluk River fell away rapidly. Some understanding was necessary. The stronger companies formed a trust, and bought out or "froze out" the lesser ones, and the canneries at Karluk fell into the hands of a single association. All but two of them were closed, that the others might have full work. Under present conditions, Alaska has more than twice as many canneries as can be operated. Some of these were perhaps built only to be sold to competitors, but others have entailed losses both on their owners and on their rivals.

Meanwhile, salmon became scarce in other rivers, and cannerymen at a distance began to cast greedy eyes on Karluk.

In 1897 a steamer belonging to another great "trust" invaded Karluk, claiming equal legal right in its fisheries. This claim was resisted by the people in possession, — legally by covering the beach with nets, illegally by threats and interference. More than once the heights above Karluk have been fortified; for to the "north of Fifty-Three" injunctions are laid with the rifle. On the other hand, "Scar-Faced Charley" of Prince William's Sound and his reckless associates stood ready to do battle for their company. In one of the disputes, a small steamer sailed over a net, cast anchor within it, then steamed ahead, dragged the anchor, and tore the net to pieces. In another case, a large steamer anchored within the fishing-grounds. The rival company cast a net around her, and would have wrecked her on the beach. The claim for damages to the propeller from the nets brought this case into the United States courts. Fear of scandal, and consequent injury to the company's interests in the East, is doubtless the chief reason why these collisions do not lead to open warfare. The difficulty in general is not due to the lawlessness of the companies, nor to any desire to destroy the industry by which they live. Our government makes it impossible for them to be law-abiding. It grants them no rights and no protection, and exacts of them no duties. In short, it exercises toward them in adequate degree none of the normal functions of government. What should be done is plain enough. The rivers are government property, and should be leased on equitable terms to the canning companies, who should be held to these terms and at the same time protected in their rights. But Congress, which cannot attend to two things at once, is too busy with other affairs to pay attention to this. The utter ruin of the salmon industry in Alaska is therefore a matter of a short time. Fortunately, however, unlike the sea otter, the salmon cannot be exterminated, and a few years

of salmon-hatching, or even of mere neglect, will bring it up again.

Of the marine interests of Alaska, the catch of the fur seal is by far the most important, and its details are best known to the public. Whenever the fur seal question promises to lead to international dispute, the public pricks up its ears; but this interest dies away when the blood ceases to "boil" against England. The history of this industry is more creditable to the United States than that of the sea otter and the salmon, but it is not one to be proud of. When the Pribilof Islands came into our possession, in 1867, we found the fur seal industry already admirably managed. A company had leased the right to kill a certain number of superfluous males every year, under conditions which thoroughly protected the herd. This arrangement was continued by us, and is still in operation. If not the best conceivable disposition of the herd, it was the best possible at the time; and to do the best possible is all that good government demands.

We were, however, criminally slow in taking possession of the islands after their purchase from Russia. In 1868, about 250,000 skins of young males (worth perhaps \$2,000,000), the property of the government, were openly stolen by enterprising poachers from San Francisco. As only superfluous males were taken, this onslaught caused no injury to the herd. It was simply the conversion to private uses of so much public property, or just plain stealing. After 1868 the Pribilof Islands yielded a regular annual quota of 100,000 skins for twenty years, when "pelagic sealing," or the killing of females at sea, was begun, and rapidly cut down the herd. This suicidal "industry" originated in the United States; but adverse public opinion and adverse statutes finally drove it from our ports, and it was centred at Victoria, where, as this is written, it awaits its *coup de grâce* from the Quebec commission of 1898.

During the continuance of this monstrous business,¹ the breeding herd of the Pribilof Islands was reduced from about 650,000 females (in 1868-84) to 130,000 (in 1897). It is not fair to charge the partial extinction of this most important of fur-bearing animals to our bad government of Alaska, inasmuch as it was accomplished by foreign hands against our constant protest. Yet in a large sense this was our own fault, for the lack of exact and unquestioned knowledge has been our most notable weakness in dealing with Great Britain in this matter. The failure to establish as facts the ordinary details of the life of the fur seal caused the loss of our case before the Paris Tribunal of Arbitration. Guesswork, however well intended, was met by the British with impudent assertion. British diplomacy is disdainful of mere opinion, though it has a certain respect for proved fact. Moreover, it was only after a long struggle that our own people were prevented (in 1898) from doing the very things which were the basis of our just complaint against Great Britain.

The other interests of Alaska I need not discuss here in detail. The recent discovery of vast gold fields in this region has brought new problems, which Congress has made little effort to meet. If we may trust the newspapers, our colonial postal system is absurdly inadequate, and the administration of justice remains local or casual. The Klondike adventurers make their own law as they go along, with little responsibility to the central government. Lynch law may be fairly good law in a region whence criminals can escape only to starve or to freeze; but martial law is better, and the best available when the methods of the common law are out of the question.

The real criminals of Alaska have been the "wild-cat" transportation com-

panies which sprang up like mushrooms with the rush for the Klondike. There are three or four well-established companies running steamers to Alaska, well-built, well-manned, and destined to ports which really exist. But besides the legitimate business there has been a great amount of wicked fraud. A very large percentage of the Klondike adventurers know nothing of mining, nothing of Alaska, little of the sea, and little of hard-ship. These people have been gathered from all parts of the country, and sent through foggy, rock-bound channels and ferocious seas, in vessels unseaworthy and with incompetent pilots, their destination often the foot of some impossible trail leading only to death. I notice in one circular that a graded railroad bed is shown on the map, through the tremendous ice-filled gorges of Copper River, a wild stream of the mountains, in which few have found gold, and from whose awful glaciers few have returned alive. In the height of the Klondike season of 1898, scarcely a day passed without a shipwreck somewhere along the coast, — some vessel foundering on a rock of the Alaskan Archipelago or swamped in the open sea. Doubtless most of the sufferers in these calamities had no business in Alaska. Doubtless they should have known better than to risk life and equipment in ships and with men so grossly unfit. But the public in civilized lands is accustomed to trust something to government inspection. The common man has not learned how ships may be sent out to be wrecked for the insurance. In established communities good government would have checked this whole experience of fraud; but in this case no one seemed to have power or responsibility, and the affair was allowed to run its own course. The "wild-cat" lines have now mostly failed, for the extent of the Klondike traffic is

¹ Monstrous in an economic sense, because grossly and needlessly wasteful; monstrous in a moral sense, because grossly and needlessly

cruel; withal perfectly legal, because not yet condemned by any international agreement in which Great Britain has taken part.

far less than was expected, and the Alaska promoter plies his trade of obtaining money under false pretenses in some other quarter.

The control of the childlike native tribes of Alaska offers many anomalies. As citizens of the United States, living in American territory, they are entitled to the protection of its laws; yet in most parts of Alaska the natives rarely see an officer of the United States, and know nothing of our courts or procedures. In most villages the people choose their own chief, who has vaguely defined but not extensive authority. A Greek priest is furnished to them by the Established Church of Russia. He is possessed of power in spiritual matters, and such temporal authority as his own character and the turn of events may give him. The post trader, representing the Alaska Commercial Company, often a squawman of some superior intelligence, has also large powers of personal influence, which are in general wisely used. The fact that the natives are nearly always in debt to the company¹ tends to accentuate the company's authority. The control of the Greek priest varies with the character of the man. Some of the priests are devoted Christians, whose sole purpose is the good of the flock. To others, the flock exists merely to be shorn for the benefit of the Church or the priest. But there are a few whom to call brutes, if we may believe common report, would be a needless slur on the bear and the sea lion.

On the Pribilof Islands, an anomalous joint paternalism under the direction of the United States government and the lessee companies has existed since 1868.

¹ The credit system has been almost wholly abandoned recently, as the future of the sea otter leaves no hope of payment of debts.

² For example, some ten or twelve years ago N. K. was fined fifty dollars by the government agent in charge of the Pribilof Islands, for "disturbance of the peace." His fault was a too vehement remonstrance against the violation of his young wife by American scoundrels

The lessees furnish houses, coal, physician, and teacher, besides caring for the widows and orphans. The government agent has oversight and control of all operations on the islands, and is the official superior of the natives, having full power in all matters of government. This arrangement is not ideal, and is in part a result of early accident. It has worked fairly in practice, however, and the natives of these islands are relatively prosperous and intelligent. The chief danger has been in the direction of pampering. With insurance against all accidents of life, there is little incentive to thrift. Outside of the seal-killing season (June and July) the people become insufferably lazy. There are records of occasional abuses of power in the past,²—abuses of a kind to be prevented only by the sending of men of honor as agents. In general, self-interest leads the commercial companies to send only sober and decent men to look after their affairs; and the government cannot afford to do less, even for Alaska. Of this the appointing power at Washington seems to have a growing appreciation.

Among the irregular methods of government in Alaska we must mention one of the most remarkable experiments in the civilization of wild tribes yet attempted anywhere in the world. I refer to the work of William Duncan, the pastor and director of a colony of Simisian Indians at New Metlakatla. I can only mention Duncan's work in passing, but his methods and results deserve careful study,—far more than they have yet received. The single will of this strong man has, in thirty years, converted a band of cannibals into a sober, law-

temporarily employed on the island. The case was a most flagrant one, but the weak-minded agent felt unable to cope with it. With the plea that "boys will be boys" he excused the culprits, visiting the punishment on the injured husband. The ill feeling resulting from this action is still a source of embarrassment on St. Paul Island.

abiding, industrious community, living in good houses, conducting a large salmon cannery, navigating a steamer built by their own hands, and in general proving competent to take care of themselves in civilized life.

One of the least fortunate acts of the United States Congress in regard to Alaska has been the enactment of a most rigid prohibitory law as to alcoholic liquors. This is an iron-clad statute forbidding the importation, sale, or manufacture of intoxicants of any sort in Alaska. The primary reason for this act is the desire to protect the Indians, Aleuts, and Eskimos from a vice to which they are excessively prone, and which soon ruins them. But a virtuous statute may be the worst kind of law, as was noted long ago by Confucius. This statute has not checked the flow of liquor in Alaska, while it has done more than any other influence to subvert the respect for law. Usually, men who "are not in Alaska for their health" are hard drinkers, and liquor they will have. It is shipped to Alaska as "Florida water," "Jamaica ginger," "bay rum." Demijohns are placed in flour barrels, in sugar barrels, in any package which will contain them.¹ With all this there is a vast amount of outright smuggling, which the Treasury Department tries in vain to check. All southeastern Alaska is one vast harbor, with thousands of densely wooded islands, mostly uninhabited. Cargoes of liquors can be safely hidden almost anywhere,

to be removed piece by piece in small boats. Many such cargoes have been seized and destroyed; but the risk of capture merely serves to raise the price of liquor. Once on shore the liquor is safe enough. Upwards of seventy saloons are running openly in Juneau, and perhaps forty in Sitka. There are dives and groggeries wherever a demand exists. Most of the tipling-houses are the lowest of their kind, because, as they are outlaws to begin with, the ordinary restraints of law and order have no effect on them.

In 1878, it is said, a schooner loaded with "Florida water" came to the island of St. Lawrence, in Bering Sea, and the people exchanged all their valuables for drink. The result was that in the winter following the great majority died of drunkenness and starvation, and in certain villages not a person was left. Sometimes the stock in trade of whiskey smugglers is seized by the Treasury officials. But high prices serve as a sort of insurance against capture, and there are ways of securing a tip in advance when raids are likely to occur. This traffic demoralizes all in any way connected with it. But one conviction for illegal sale of liquors has ever been obtained in Alaska, so far as I know; and it was understood that this was a test case for the purpose of determining the constitutionality of the law.² A jury trial in any case means an acquittal, for every jury is made up of law-breakers, or of men in sympathy with the law-breaking.

¹ It is said that when the Umatilla foundered off Port Townsend, August, 1896, those who took away her cargo found in each of the sugar barrels consigned to Alaska only a demijohn of whiskey, the sea having dissolved the sugar.

² The appeal of this case (*Endleman et al. vs. the United States*) has proved a matter of the greatest importance in relation to the government of American colonies. It was contended (according to the *New York Evening Post*) "that the law on which the prosecution was based was unconstitutional, because the government of the United States can exercise only those specific powers conferred upon it by the

Constitution; that the Constitution guarantees to the citizen the right to own, hold, and acquire property, and makes no distinction as to the character of the property; that intoxicating liquors are property, and are subject to exchange, barter, and traffic, like any other commodity in which a right of property exists; that inasmuch as the power to regulate commerce was committed to Congress to relieve it from all restrictions, Congress cannot itself impose restrictions upon commerce by prohibiting the sale of a particular commodity; and that if Congress has the power to regulate the sale of intoxicating liquors within the territories

This fact vitiates all other criminal procedure in Alaska. It should secure the entire abolition of jury trials and other forms of procedure adapted only to a compact civilization.¹

Whatever laws are made for the control of the liquor traffic in Alaska should be capable of enforcement. They should be supported, if need be, with the full force of the United States. To impose upon a colony laws with which the people have no sympathy, and then to leave these people to punish infraction for themselves, is to invite anarchy and to turn all law into a farce.

Whiskey is the greatest curse of the people of Alaska, — American, Russian, and native. I have not a word to say in favor of its use, yet I am convinced that unrestricted traffic, that any condition of things, would be better than the present law, with its failure in enforcement. The total absence of any law would not make matters much worse than they are. In fact, law would hardly be missed. In any case, Alaska gets along fairly well, — much better than any tropical region would under like conditions.

as a police regulation, it can only enact laws applicable to all the territories alike.”

Judge W. W. Morrow, of the United States Circuit Court of Appeals for California, declaring the decision of the court upon these claims, said: —

“The answer to these and other like objections urged in the brief of counsel for the defendant is found in the now well-established doctrine that the territories of the United States are entirely subject to the legislative authority of Congress. They are not organized under the Constitution, nor subject to its complex distribution of the powers of government as the organic law, but are the creation exclusively of the legislative department, and subject to its supervision and control. The United States, having rightfully acquired the territories, and being the only government which can impose laws upon them, have the entire domain and sovereignty, national and municipal, federal and state. Under this full and comprehensive authority, Congress has unquestionably the power to exclude intoxicating liquors from any or all of its territories, or limit their sale under such regulations as it may prescribe.

Cold disinfects in more ways than one, and Alaska gets the benefit of it.

We cannot throw blame on the officials at Washington. They do the best they can under the circumstances. The dishonest men at the capital are not many, and most of them the people elect to send there. The minor officials in general are conscientious and painstaking, making the best possible of conditions not of their choosing. The primary difficulty is neglect. We try to throw the burden of self-government on people so situated that self-government is impossible. We impose on them statutes unfitted to their conditions, and then leave to them the enforcement. Above all, what is everybody's business is nobody's, and what happens in Alaska is generally nobody's business. No concentration of power, no adequate legislation, no sufficient appropriation, — on these forms of neglect our failure chiefly rests.

If we have colonies, even one colony, there must be some sort of a colonial bureau, some concentrated power which shall have exact knowledge of its people,

It may legislate in accordance with the special needs of each locality, and vary its regulations to meet the circumstances of the people. Whether the subject elsewhere would be a matter of local police regulations or within the state control under some other power, it is immaterial to consider; in a territory, all the functions of government are within the legislative jurisdiction of Congress, and may be exercised through a local government or directly by such legislation as we have now under consideration.”

In other words, the colonies are under the absolute control of Congress, subject to no restrictions of any sort, and free from the operation of any form of constitutional checks and balances. Only through such freedom is colonial government under the United States possible.

¹ These facts were stated in detail a few years ago by a special agent of the United States Treasury. As a result, this truthful witness was indicted by the grand jury at Sitka for slander, — a futile act, but one which was the source of much annoyance.

its needs, and its resources. The people must be protected, their needs met, and their resources husbanded. This fact is well understood by the authorities of Canada. While practically no government exists in the gold fields of Alaska, Canada has chosen for the Klondike within her borders a competent man, thoroughly familiar with the region and its needs, and has granted him full power of action. The dispatches say that Governor Ogilvie has entire charge through his appointees of the departments of timber, land, justice, royalties, and finances. "The federal government believes that one thoroughly reliable, tried, and trusted representative of British laws and justice, and of Dominion federal power, can better guide the destinies of this new country than a number of petty untried officials with limited powers, and Ogilvie thinks so himself."¹

Under the present conditions, when the sea otters are destroyed, the fur seal herd exterminated, the native tribes starved to death, the salmon rivers depopulated, the timber cut, and the placer gold fields worked out, Alaska is to be thrown away like a sucked orange. There is no other possible end, if we continue as we have begun. We are "not in Alaska for our health," and when we can no longer exploit it we may as well abandon it.

But it may be argued that it will be a very costly thing to foster all Alaska's widely separated resources, and to give good government to every one of her scattered villages and posts. Furthermore, all this outlay is repaid only by the enrichment of private corporations,² which, with the exception of the fur seal

lessees, pay no tribute to the government.

Doubtless this is true. Government is a costly thing, and its benefits are unequally distributed. But the cost would be less if we should treat other resources as we have treated the fur seal. To lease the salmon rivers and to protect the lessees in their rights would be to insure a steady and large income to the government, with greater profit to the salmon canneries than comes with the present confusion and industrial war.

But admitting all this, we should count the cost before accepting "colonies." It is too late to do so when they once have been annexed. If we cannot afford to watch them, to care for them, to give them paternal rule when no other is possible, we do wrong to hoist our flag over them. Government by the people is the ideal to be reached in all our possessions, but there are races of men now living under our flag as yet incapable of receiving the town meeting idea. A race of children must be treated as children, a race of brigands as brigands, and whatever authority controls either must have behind it the force of arms.

Alaska has made individuals rich, though the government has yet to get its money back. But whether colonies pay or not, it is essential to the integrity of the United States itself that our control over them should not be a source of corruption and waste. It may be that the final loss of her colonies, mismanaged for two centuries, will mark the civil and moral awakening of Spain. Let us hope that the same event will not mark a civil and moral lapse in the nation which receives Spain's bankrupt assets.

David Starr Jordan.

¹ San Francisco Chronicle, August 15, 1898.

² The interests of Alaska, outside of mining, are now largely in the hands of four great companies, — the Alaska Commercial Company,

the North American Commercial Company, the Alaska Packers' Association, and the Pacific Steamer Whaling Company.

THE INTELLECTUAL MOVEMENT IN THE WEST.

ONE of the chief services of education is to show us our position in the line of historical development, to make us aware of what has been done, and to give a true point of departure. The educated man avoids waste of time and strength in repetition of work already done; he accepts the race experience as a background for his own life, and continues the story of spiritual unfolding from the point where his predecessors left off. There are new points of departure in the history of the race, but there is no new beginning. History opens fresh chapters from time to time; there has been but one introductory chapter. The race goes on telling the marvelous story of its life, with additions and elaborations, and the introduction of new characters, and the shifting of the narrative to new places; but the modern effect still appears related to the ancient cause, and he who listens attentively is constantly aware of the play of forces as old as man, and of the influence of actors who passed off the stage thousands of years ago. There is never any real break with the past, although there are at times abrupt changes of direction. That past, which survives in vital rather than in formal conditions, constantly reasserts itself; and the race can no more break away from it than a man can cut himself loose from what he has been. This spiritual continuity of race history makes real progression possible, and contains both the promise and the potency of spiritual evolution.

Some of the men who settled this continent probably felt that they were beginning all things new, although we must beware of reading into their consciousness the somewhat rhetorical interpretations of our later enthusiasm for their courage and political sagacity. As a matter of fact, they concerned themselves very little with abstract statements or general

conceptions of their various motives and enterprises; they were absorbed in the work in hand, which was of a peculiarly pressing character. There was, it is hardly necessary to remind ourselves, no general plan for the settlement of the continent; in fact, there was no thought of a continent. The successive groups of colonists established themselves at points along the coast by the accident of sighting land at those points, or for local reasons. There was not only no concert of action; there were suspicion, rivalry, and in many cases animosity between the settlements. Differences of race, religion, politics, and standards of life made the settlers distrustful of one another. These differences were brought from Europe, and the early history of the continent is mainly an expansion of European history. The picturesque struggle which dramatically culminated in the fall of Montcalm and Wolfe on the Plains of Abraham was an incident in the long trial of strength between England and France; and the debate which passed from stage to stage, until the war for independence was seen to be the only final solution, was the extension to the colonies of the radical discussion which was to modify the form of the English government. The colonists found a New World awaiting them, but they brought the Old World with them; and the history of America has been a continuation of the story of that older world. So far below the surface are the deeper currents of racial interaction that it is probably no exaggeration to say that the struggle between the Anglo-Saxon and the Spaniard, begun by Drake, was ended by Sampson.

All attempts to break this historical continuity, to sever the present from the past, are not only futile, but would be spiritually disastrous if they could be