

# The Resources of British Columbia.

"Westward the Star of Empire takes its way."

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## The Polar Bear.

In marked contrast with the genial temperature and almost perennial verdure of this fairest Isle of the Pacific, we present on this page a picture, strikingly illustrative of the life and climatic conditions prevailing on this coast only a few hundred miles farther north the polar bear on Herald Island in the Arctic Ocean. Excepting this solitary specimen of the *ursus maritimus* standing on an ice block, no other sign of life appears, neither animal nor vegetable, in this cold and dreary region. It is a frigid pic-

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The polar bear is the largest of the *quadrumana* inhabiting those northern regions, being from five to eight feet in length and of the proportions shown in the engraving. The shore range of these animals in Alaska lies chiefly beyond Behrings Strait but specimens are encountered every year on Norton Sound, and even far down the Yukon delta. Saint Mathew's Island, uninhabited, seems to be a favorite resort of these animals. He is not opposed to working for his living, and, when the season permits, will

plow up whole hillsides with his claws in search of roots or small rodents, but as his principal food supply is procured from the sea, he is said to be an expert and skillful fisherman, displaying in this his favorite pursuit much ingenuity and perseverance. Indeed it would seem to require the possession and active exercise of all these qualities in order to obtain a living in so cold dreary and outlandish a region.

**NEW USE FOR THE POTATO.** If what the *Agricultural Gazette*, of Vienna, gravely states is true, Ireland may potentially possess a gigantic fortune in her ability to raise innumerable potatoes. That pa-

per says that the humble but indispensable tuber may be transformed into meerschaum pipes of the first quality, and likewise into any article now made of ivory, by subjection to the following treatment: Having been carefully peeled and suffered extraction of its "eyes," the potato is boiled steadily for 36 hours in a mixture of sulphuric acid and water, after which it must be squeezed in a press until every drop of natural or aquired moisture is extracted from it. The residuum of this simple process is declared to be a hard block of a delicate, creamy, white hue, every whit as suitable to the manufacture of ornamental and artistically executed pipe-heads as the finest clay, and unsurpassed as a material for brush and umbrella handles, billiard balls, fans and chessmen.