

he has not as yet gone nor is likely to go until the inducement is something of far more value than wild-fowl eggs.

## DESTRUCTION OF DEER.

The destruction of deer in southeastern Alaska and in all the timbered portion of the Territory from Cape Fox to Port Moller, a distance of, say, 1,200 to 1,500 miles, is carried to such excess that it would hardly be credited in a civilized community.

I saw bales of the dried deerskins at many of the trading posts awaiting shipment, and when I asked what use had been made of the carcasses, I was told the deer were shot for their hides only.

I was informed by many men—officers and citizens—that, as the weather became warmer in the early spring, the smell from decaying deer carcasses became horribly offensive around the towns and villages. White men go out and kill the animals for fun, just to see who can knock down most in a given time. The natives kill them, because they can get a drink of whisky, valued at 25 cents, for every skin secured.

That such things have been allowed to continue at any time is to be deeply regretted; but that it is still allowed to continue after the natives on the seal islands have become a burden on the Government, and other tribes to the northward soon will be because of the wanton waste of their natural food supply on land and water, passes the comprehension of every sensible citizen who understands the present situation.

To the northward we are endeavoring to procure and foster the reindeer for a future food supply for the natives of that barren region, and it is a very laudable enterprise; but at the same time we allow the continued wanton destruction of the deer that covers the whole timbered part of Alaska—an empire as large as Texas. In the winter, when the snow is deepest and the animals can not make a way through the dense undergrowth beneath the timber, the so-called sportsmen assemble, and with dogs drive them out on the seashore, whose beaches are kept clean by the tides, where riflemen are ready, stationed in boats offshore, to begin the manly sport of shooting down helpless creatures, who can neither resist nor escape.

The following letter from an eyewitness explains itself:

STEAMER ALBATROSS, *Unalaska*, August 28, 1895.

MY DEAR SIR: I have not been able to unearth the notes I had on deer killing in Alaska. Briefly, their slaughter has been very great. During the winter of 1894 deer were killed and wasted in southeastern Alaska. Snow was unusually deep and the deer were forced to the benches, which were left clear by the tides. Shooting was done from boats and canoes by both whites and Indians. I know of three Indians killing 175 deer from canoes in two days. Many whites shot for hides alone, and at many places hides could be bought for 35 cents each. I do not think that Indians should be prevented from shooting all kinds of game for their own needs, but killing for hides alone is certainly reprehensible, and if the rate of slaughter that has been going on for the past few years is continued, there will be very few deer left.

As the hides are of comparatively little value, their exportation might be stopped without causing any serious hardship to anyone, and of course when the hides become unsalable, the Indians will not kill many more than they need.

I have never heard of any destruction of birds or birds' eggs and can not imagine how there could be any remarkable waste of that nature, although I am familiar with the natural history of a considerable portion of the Territory.

Very truly, yours,

C. H. TOWNSEND.

Col. JOSEPH MURRAY.