

THE COPPER RIVER COUNTRY.

This stream is about 400 miles long and very erratic in its course among the mountains. The Indians of this region do considerable mining and have a process of hardening copper, which is said to make it as hard as steel. They have brought in nuggets of gold to the trading station and the belief is that rich discoveries of the metal will yet be made. The country has been very little explored. The river has a delta mouth 5x30 miles on the coast, about 450 miles west of Sitka. The upper waters of the river can be reached by trail from Cook Inlet. Boats leave Seattle at regular intervals for Copper River and Prince William Sound. The Steamer "Townsend" will leave Port Townsend February 1 and every twenty days thereafter for same ports.

A LARGE LAND.

Alaska is the Russian America of the old maps. The first white men, Bering and his associates, to reach its shores in the seventeenth century, in search of furs, gave Russia title under right of discovery. Pribilof discovered the Seal Islands in 1796. The Russian American Fur Company was chartered by the Czar in 1800. Sitka was founded in 1801. The mainland is estimated to contain 580,000 square miles, the islands of Alexander Archipelago, 31,200, and the Aleutian Islands, 6,400, making a grand total of 617,600 square miles, an area greater than the entire Union east of the Mississippi. The United States bought the country in 1867 for \$7,200,000, two cents an acre, the largest real estate deal of history.

IMMENSE WEALTH.

An eminent authority upon Alaska in an address recently delivered in an eastern city has this to say about the future of the Yukon region:

"Bonanza and Eldorado creeks afford between them 278 claims; the several affluents will yield as many more, and all of these claims are good. I have no hesitation in saying that 100 of those on Bonanza will yield upwards of \$30,000,000. Claim thirty on Eldorado will yield a million in itself, and ten others will yield from \$100,000 upward. These two creeks will, I am quite confident, turn out from \$60,000,000 to \$75,000,000 and I can safely say that there is no other region in the world of the same extent that has afforded in the same length of time so many homestakes—fortunes enabling the owners to go home and enjoy the remainder of their days." * * * "We must have from 90,000 to 100,000 square miles, which, with proper care, judicious handling and better facilities for the transportation of food and utensils, will be the largest, as it is the richest gold field the world has ever known." * * * "That country offers to men of great fortitude and some intelligence and steadiness an opportunity to make more money in a given time than they possibly could make anywhere else. They will have, of course, a good deal to contend with." * * * "I object to the use of the name Klondike, because that is so small a portion of the territory up there in the Yukon region, in comparison with which the area of the Klondike would not compare any more than my hand would with that blackboard, and nearly all that vast stretch of country has yet to be prospected."

CLIMATE OF ALASKA.

The climates of the coast and interior are unlike in many respects. A strip of the mainland back to the mountains and its fringe of islands has a temperate climate not unlike Norway, with little zero weather but a heavy rainfall and a profuse vegetation. The interior has a wide range of heat and cold. The mildness of the coast is due to the Japan current, a warm stream in the Pacific Ocean that strikes the coast of British Columbia, and dividing, sends one branch northward to meet another branch which strikes the Aleutian Islands and expends its force in Bering Sea. The mean winter temperature of Sitka is about that of Washington, D. C., but the annual range is less, running from 32 degrees above zero in winter to 75 degrees above in summer. There is a good deal of foggy and cloudy weather on the coast, the clear days averaging about 66 in the year. The climate of the interior is one of rigorous cold in winter, with a short hot summer, especially days when the sky is clear. The day of mid-winter on the upper Yukon has the sun in sight less than four hours, while in mid-summer it hardly gets dark. The records of the Canadian mounted police at Fort Constantine during the winter of 1896-7 showed the first zero weather on November 10, and the last on April 29. It never rose above zero from December 19 to February 6. The lowest temperature was 65 degrees below on January 27, and on 24 days it went 50 below. The cold is not difficult to bear when a man is suitably clothed, and the winter season is better to travel in with dog sleds over snow and ice than during the summer, when the moss, which covers the whole face of the country, is wet and the low places are swampy and mosquitoes troublesome.