

of distant subjects. The exclusive right of hunting and fishing in the American dominions of the Czar was granted to the Russo-American Fur Company, in 1779, by the Emperor, Paul VIII. This company exported annually 25,000 skins of the seal, sea-otter, beaver, etc., besides about 20,000 sea-horse teeth. The country was governed by the company through its chief director, till 1862 when its charter expired.

Now came a memorable day; the satisfaction of all liberty-loving North America may not have been unalloyed when the stars and stripes were raised over Baranoff Castle, but certainly no one was sorry to see removed from the map of the continent every suggestion of the knout and Siberian horrors. The United States made a superb bargain in 1867, in purchasing Alaska for \$7,200,000 in gold, and the Russian bear, in selling, showed that his possessions in the new world were a thorn in his side. The Czar's experience tended to convince him that there was little to expect from the territory discovered by Vitus Behring, and his reverses in Crimea had, no doubt, left him in need of gold, but, in the mind of his Imperial Highness, a more cogent reason for parting with Alaska must have been the probability that his ill-disguised project of extending his frontier in Europe and Asia, would sooner or later give some British naval commander a claim to distinction, for having ended Russian rule in America.

Bancroft gives as the principal reasons for the transfer, the appreciation, by the Americans, of the natural wealth of Alaska, and the amicable relations of the contracting parties. The first reason is admirable; but to see a parade of amicable relations between an American or a European republic, whose citizens claim to consider liberty and refinement as choicest gifts, and a country where stalk the ugly twins, despotism and uncouthness, recalls the proverb:—"Consistency, thou art a jewel." Let the purchaser of Alaska and England's ally at Sebastopol, envy, if they will, flourishing foreign possessions, not theirs, but Britain's, but let them, by pen and sword, rather urge the tyrannous Czar to better the lot of his present subjects, than prostitute these

noble weapons in procuring him other serfs.

Come back to our trip northward, reader; the study of Bancroft's pages must be suspended for a short time, when your steamer reaches historic Sitka, or a little farther to the northeast, on the mainland, Juneau, so young that it is not generally indicated on our maps. The capital has less than a thousand inhabitants; Juneau now surpasses it in importance, having a population of about three thousand, and is still growing rapidly. You cannot be long in this interesting territory embracing over 500,000 square miles without seeing evidence of magnificent resources. Juneau largely owes its foundation and growth to the recent development of the gold-bearing ledges of southeastern Alaska. The largest quartz mill in the world crushes away in the Treadwell Mine, Douglas Island, whose annual output is \$1,800,000; another mine is said to have yielded \$10,000 a day during the past season; in addition to these several wonderful mines might be mentioned, and yet the gold-finding industry is only in its infancy. It was brought out before the Behring Sea Commission a few years ago, that the Pribyloff Island herd of seals, numbers at least one million, likely five millions. One hundred thousand or more skins might probably be placed on the market annually without decreasing the seal herd. Besides the seal, animals in Alaska, valuable for their skins, are the fox, sable, beaver, lynx, wolverine, bear and deer. Its immense fisheries were what the Americans had principally in view in buying the territory. The cod (not the true cod of the Atlantic) and herrings abound; so does the oulchan, a smelt which may be used as a torch, so copious is the supply of oil that it contains. Whitefish, much resembling those of the Great Lakes, and many species of salmon are caught, and whale-fishing is extensively carried on in Behring Sea and the Arctic. The ivory of the walrus is also an article of export. Much valuable timber exists, as the noble yellow cedar, balsam-fir and hemlock, but lumber kings have, up to the present, hardly begun to thin the stately forests of Alaska. In 1887, two decades after the purchase of the territory, the commerce