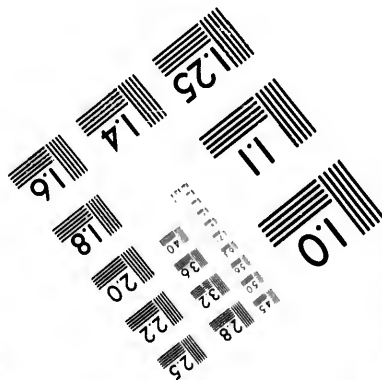
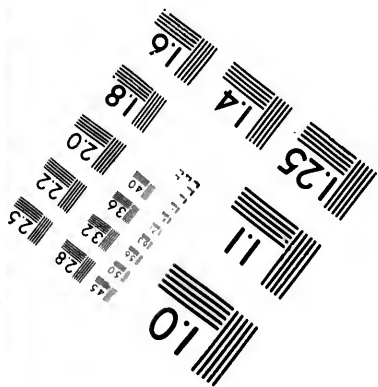
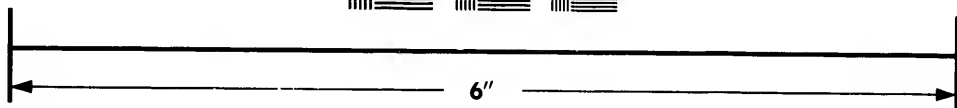
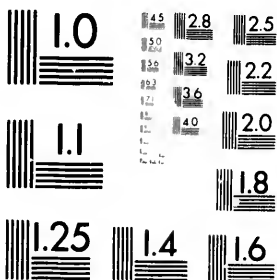


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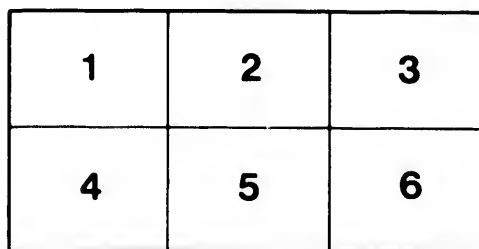
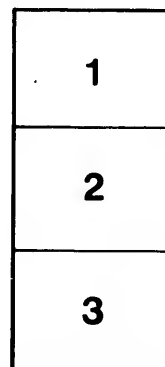
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BY

BUSHROD W. JAMES.

PHILADELPHIA, PA.

1894.

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Alaska's Great Future.

The Decision Regarding Bering Sea.

THE question has been settled by arbitration, that for the first time since the United States became an independent nation, it has laid a claim to that in which it had no right! Perhaps the government is satisfied with the decision, and undoubtedly the debts that have been acknowledged by this false position will be honorably paid. But there are thousands of far-seeing citizens who will feel that this is only the beginning of a series of losses, in which that produced by pelagic seal fishing will be but as a drop of rain in a summer shower.

The seal industry, beyond its extreme importance to the commercial company and to the Aleuts, or the inhabitants of the islands in Western Alaska, is but a minor consideration when com-

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pared with the valuable salmon, cod, halibut and other fisheries, which, if extensively cultivated as they should be, would yield surprising returns for all necessary expenditure. If all other nations have privileges of sealing in Bering Sea, they will soon discover means by which to obtain possession of a good part of its other products, or if that is not practicable, their presence in the waters will greatly interfere with the propagation of those more numerous, and consequently more valuable denizens of the sea. Other large animals, the walrus, whale, sea otter and sea lion, who are periodic sojourners in that neighborhood, are extremely timid and wary and must therefore suffer from the presence of the sealing vessels, and their numbers will soon be lessened, if they are not entirely exterminated from their haunts, thereby depriving the natives on some of the remote and lonely islands, of the greater part of their livelihood. It must naturally follow that with greatly augmented forces toward the securing of seal skins and the frightening away, if not the capture, of those other mammals, together with the unwonted interference with the food fishes and the fisheries for the same

(which if carefully protected would produce an almost unlimited supply for home consumption as well as for foreign trade, both in salted and canned varieties), the time must soon come when the island populations will be reduced to positive suffering for want of food. There should be immediate legislation for the protection of those distant people who may some day become a very important class of citizens, for to them must be in considerable part intrusted the development of the great future industries of the territory ; because they are native to the climate and they thoroughly understand the location and habits of the furbearing wild animals and of the numerous kinds of superior food fishes. We can not resist the antagonism which will in the future naturally arise against the decision of that Arbitration.

Had England purchased Alaska from Russia her usual shrewdness of diplomacy is an evidence that she would never have submitted so plausible a right to any arbitration whatever. She would have sent war ships to guard the pass, between Attoo and Copper islands ; she would have demanded Russia's co-operation in protecting their co-equal interests ; she would have defied

the world to gainsay that one half of the whole expanse of Bering Sea and its contents, animals or islands, and its inflowing streams were not properly purchased by her and legally ceded to her by the Czar of Russia! And now what has been opened to her acute diplomacy in this conclusion of European International Arbitration?

Bering Sea is the Pacific Ocean, the Pacific Ocean is open to all nations to explore and if any unprotected property therein is discovered or rather, re-discovered, the attempt may be made to claim it and possession may be undertaken by the government under which such "discoverers" sail. It is only a question of time until it will be seen that the expanse of "cold, green water" so scornfully mentioned by some one in argument, is not so unimportant, and that those who have been so anxious upon the "seal question" knew that it was only the pivot upon which far superior and most vital American questions are incumbent.

There is but one plan for the United States to pursue now, in order to secure her natural rights, and that is to fit out more good vessels and honest,

loyal seamen, and to continue sending them into the Bering Sea as she is doing. Let us hold possession of every island and islet which is not already possessed by Russia, or within the legal distance of the Russian coast; let the world know that the Stars and Stripes float over every foot of Alaskan land that we purchased, and that no part of it is for sale or gift or sacrifice, and let the government and its navy see to it that no marauder shall interfere!

All this for Bering Sea and the Fur Seals? No! but to guard the pass that will one day be one of the most important commercial factors in the world! Bering Strait is the slender key which will one day open the door to overland commerce between the Old World and the New. England, always alert, sees it, and the settlement of the Seal Arbitration so favorable to her, has given the one step forward—the long aggressive stride—for which she was looking.

The seals are not so important to England. She obtains a good large revenue from them already, and has done so, ever since English dyeing and dressing gained a world-famed superiority over all others. But an islet or two in Bering Sea,

or a tract of coast land, if only large enough upon which to plant a flag-staff and conduct a cannery, will be sufficient ground upon which to base another arbitration scheme, and upon that right a claim to the enormous revenue which ought some day to accrue to the United States from the commerce between the Eastern and Western Hemispheres, which is inevitable to occur across the Bering Strait! It is true that this railroad communication between the populated portions of Russia and America seems so distant as to be chimerical, but so appeared the Telegraph, the Telephone and the Electric Motor in years past.

Russia is already building her railroad to Bering Sea, and American capitalists are planning the construction of an Alaskan railway, so that it can easily be seen what vast commercial and national interests are at stake in this quarter.

It is plausible to conclude that the United States must hereafter take the settlement of her claims into her own hands as sister nations have always done. There is no need for war or threats of war, for the Republic is old enough and strong enough to guard her own without the force of arms!

Let her see to it that her flag is planted, and remains, at every point at which there is danger of infringement upon that which is legally her rights, and then let her be ready to protect them as did the thirteen little colonies theirs a century ago. Let Russia and the United States join hands across the narrow strait and in peace with all nations, let the young Republic secure by good statesmanship, full national and commercial importance in that region. And one very important act of that statesmanship should be this positive refusal to sell, cede, or in any manner part with a single foot of that Territory to any foreign power, or to any individual other than a loyal citizen of the United States. Let the Country be thoroughly explored and its intrinsic value made known. Canadian interests are English interests, and if tracts even of almost unexplored land are sold to them we place in their hands a legal force against our own most preponderant rights in the North-west which the new century will censure and deplore, when the great wealth of Alaska is fully realized. Alaska is the very keystone of the grandest commercial enterprise that has ever been developed! Will not our wise diplomats and statesmen guard

it with just, liberal and protective legislation, and bestow upon it, naval, military, judicial and educational support ? And will they not, for the benefit and credit of our national welfare in the brilliant future, refuse to part in any manner with even a small portion of its valuable purchase ?

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