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ABOUT NEWARK.

THE average American citizen knows less about Newark than he does about any other point of equal interest in the United States.

This statement will take the average American citizen by surprise, and the mere fact that it will, is, in some sense, proof of its correctness. He does not even know that Newark possesses any interest. His first impulse is to pish at such a statement. He will demand to know what there is worthy of the average American citizen's attention in a little suburban city—or village, if it is a village—he is not entirely certain even on that point—nine or ten miles from the great American metropolis, and used principally as an out-of-town residence for New-Yorkers. This being the extent and accuracy of his information about Newark, no wonder that he pishes at my statement. That was, in fact, very nearly my own idea of Newark two weeks previous to the moment at which I am penning this article. I knew that one or two pleasant writers made it their home, and that General Phil Kearny's chateau was somewhere in the vicinity; and the fact that Newark held in its bosom Marion Harlan, Miss Douglas, and the editor of the NORTHERN MONTHLY, was sufficient to make the town interesting to a degree.

always fond, and to the improvement and embellishment of his grounds, in which he always took so much pleasure and pride. In 1825, he was appointed one of the commissioners, on the part of the State of New-Jersey, to negotiate the settlement of the territorial controversy with the State of New-York; and the very able argument, appended to the report of the New-Jersey Commissioners, was the production of his pen.

He died at Princeton, on the 7th of March, 1828, in the sixty-fourth year of his age. He was the father of nine children, none of whom, however, are now living. The "gallant son" alluded to in his speech was the late Commodore R. F. Stockton, who, after an honorable career in the navy, succeeded in identifying himself with that system of internal improvement which has contributed so much to the development of the resources of his native State.

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## RUSSIAN AMERICA.

THE discovery and early history of the Russian Possessions in America, until the late action of Congress, attracted but little attention; but with a prospect of its becoming a part of our national domain every fact connected with it becomes interesting. The object of this paper is not to describe the country as it at present exists, but to go back to the beginning and show how it was discovered and by whom. Our chief sources of information are found in *An Account of the Russian Discoveries between Asia and America*, by the Rev. William Coxe; and *A History of Russian Discoveries*, by Gerard Frederick Müller, written in German, but translated into French and English; and both of these works as quoted by Captain James Burney, of the British Navy, in his *Chronological History of North-Eastern Voyages of Discovery, and of the Early Eastern Navigations of the Russians*, published in London in 1819. We are indebted also to the *Voyage Round the World*, by Otto Von Kotzebue, of the Russian Navy.

The desire to discover a north-east passage from Europe to Asia, was early expressed by the Russians; and this desire was very natural, first, on account of the benefit that would accrue to

that empire from an easy passage round their coasts from the European to the Indian ocean; and, secondly, on account of the greater facilities possessed by them, especially the inhabitants of Siberia, and from their being inured to the hardships of an arctic climate.

As early as 1558 the Czars of Muscovy assumed the title of Lords of Siberia, including all the northern portions of Asia. The conquests of the Russians over the nations of Siberia and Tartary opened the way for the advance of adventurers and fur hunters, and in the early part of the seventeenth century these Russian adventurers began to push their way eastward across the continent for the purposes of trade. These traders were called *Promyschleni*, and their great object was to gather up the rich furs which everywhere abounded, and the teeth of the sea-horse, which were in great demand. Forming themselves into independent companies, they gradually gained possession of the whole of Eastern Siberia.

It was not until the year 1646 that the first voyage was undertaken from the Asiatic coast, by a company of *Promyschleni*, under the direction of a man named Isai Ignatiw. Without chart or compass they sailed from a port in the sea of Ochotsk, rounded the point of Kamtschatka, and passed toward the north. They disembarked on a point of land, placed their merchandise on the strand, and retreated; the natives then approached and took what they pleased, leaving in return sea-horse teeth, both whole and in carved pieces. The success of this voyage induced others, and in June, 1647, four vessels departed from the same port, on board of one of which we find the Cossack, Semoen Deschnew, who afterward became famous as a voyager; but the ice proving too great an obstacle, the enterprise was abandoned.

The next year Deschnew ventured to make another attempt in behalf of the crown, and in 1648 a fleet of seven vessels sailed from the same port. Four of these vessels returned, but the other three continued on their course. The course of these vessels was along the coasts of Kamtschatka; but on account of their small size, when the wind was strong, driving the ice in toward the shore, they were compelled to take refuge in the entrances to rivers and creeks, and could only proceed when the south wind drove the ice to sea again. Deschnew has left a journal of this voyage, which is preserved among the archives of the Russian Government at St. Petersburg, which was examined and a part

published by Müller in his *Discoveries*. It is not necessary to enter into the particulars of this voyage, as their only discoveries were upon the Asiatic shore.

During the succeeding five or six years, Deschnew and another Russian named Duchail Staduchim made various voyages, but with little success, worth recording. From this time until 1697 little was accomplished in the way of discovery, but in that year Wolodimer Atlassow, a Cossack officer, headed an expedition under the direction of the Siberian government, for the purpose of conquering Kamtschatka for the Russian crown. This expedition was made overland. Near the coast they found villages of Russians having formerly been in Kamtschatka; and it was a kind of traditional report among the natives that strangers had arrived among them who had married women of the country and settled there. These were, no doubt, traces of the expeditions sent out early in the century.

Up to this time the Russian government in Europe had taken but little interest in the affairs of this remote region; but after the beginning of the eighteenth century, Peter the Great sent directions to the governor of Iakutzk, the capital of Siberia, to prosecute the discovery of new lands in the Arctic Sea, but little seems to have resulted from this order. Passing by the numerous independent voyages undertaken during the next twenty years, which are devoid of special interest, we strike upon the name of one whose discoveries were highly important—Captain Vitus Bering, a Dane by birth, but in the service of the Russian Czar. Toward the close of the reign of Peter the Great, the question which had early engaged the attention of navigators, whether the continents of Asia and America were united or separated by water, again arose. In order to ascertain this point, Peter, who entered warmly into the question, drew up with his own hands a set of instructions, which he delivered to Captain Bering, who assumed the command of the projected expedition. But the first attempt was unsuccessful, one of the vessels employed being disabled by the ice, and the other was never heard of after her departure. It was only a few days after the departure of Captain Bering that the Czar died. The instructions which he drew up for this expedition were included under these three heads:

1. To construct at Kamtschatka, or other commodious places, one or two vessels.

2. With them to examine the coasts to the north and toward the north-east, to see whether they were not contiguous to America.

3. To see whether there was any harbor belonging to Europeans in those parts, and to keep an exact journal of all that should be discovered.

In 1728, Captain Bering started upon another voyage, with two vessels built on the bay of Okutzk; one was called the *Fortunata*, the other the *Gabriel*. They sailed on the 14th of July, and in September arrived in the river of Kamtschatka. From the fact that the coast of Asia, in the most northern part of this discovery, trended toward the west, Captain Bering came to the conclusion that the continents of Asia and America were certainly separated by water. Neither in going nor returning did he catch even a glimpse of the American shore.

While this expedition was in the northern seas, another was started by the Russian government, under the command of Colonel Schestakow. A part of the plan was the same with that of Captain Bering, namely, to discover the American coast. On his arrival at Ochotsk, he found the vessels *Fortunata* and *Gabriel*, lately returned from the expedition under Captain Bering. Placing his men on board these vessels, he set sail; but shortly after leaving Ochotsk the *Fortunata* was driven on shore a hopeless wreck. Schestakow, who escaped with one hundred and fifty men, proceeded toward the north by land, but, in a skirmish with the natives, he was killed by an arrow, and his men routed. Three days previous to this event, Schestakow had dispatched a messenger to one of the Russian settlements in the south, to a Cossack officer named Krupischew, directing him to equip a vessel, and sail northward along the coast of Kamtschatka. Schestakow associated with him in this enterprise a Russian named Gwosdew, and, having repaired the wreck of the *Fortunata*, set sail. To these two men is due the honor of first discovering the north-west coast of America. When in latitude  $65^{\circ} 67'$  north, they came upon an unknown shore opposite to Asia, which they found inhabited, but could hold no intercourse with the natives for lack of an interpreter. This, therefore, was the first sight of the continent in the north-west by Europeans.

The discovery, when it became known at St. Petersburg, caused a great sensation. Bering and the other officers engaged in the discovery were promoted, and various plans were formed for new

expeditions. The Academy of Sciences was consulted, and men eminent for science were appointed to proceed to the new world. The persons thus chosen were denominated *Le Société des Savans*. Müller, to whom we are indebted for much of the information in this paper, was one of the corps, and the province undertaken by him was to write a civil history of Siberia, to describe the manners and customs of the inhabitants, to search for and examine records, to describe the antiquities, and also to write a history of the expeditions undertaken. The members of this expedition were long delayed after their arrival at Ochotsk; but at last, in September, 1740, set out in two vessels called respectively the St. Peter and the St. Paul, under the command of Captain Bering; but owing to the heavy ice, they were obliged to winter in Awatcha Bay, on the coast of Kamtschatka, and it was not till June, 1741, that they really directed their course toward the American continent. On the 4th of the month they were in lat.  $46^{\circ}$  N.; but not finding the expected land, Bering directed the course north-east to lat.  $50^{\circ}$  N., and then east. On the 20th the ships parted company. Captain Bering, in the St. Paul, cruised near the spot for several days, hoping to fall in with his consort, but at length determined to advance alone. On the 15th of July, they caught an indistinct glimpse of the land; and on the 18th, the low coast line of the American continent showed itself before them in lat.  $60^{\circ}$  N. Far inland they saw the snow-capped summit of a lofty mountain, to which they gave the name of Mount St. Elias, and a projecting point of the coast they named Cape St. Elias; another cape to the westward they called St. Hermogenes; the bay lying between these two points has since been called Prince William Sound. One armed boat was sent to examine the bay, and another to seek fresh water. Among the islands that studded the bay they found a secure anchorage in very deep water. Upon the shore were discovered a number of cabins built of smooth boards; and in one which they entered, they found pieces of cordage; a whetstone, upon which copper instruments had been sharpened; an arrow; some articles of household furniture; a hollow ball of baked clay, in which a stone rattled, and which was probably a toy for children; and, in the cellar, some dried salmon; but the inhabitants had all taken flight upon their approach.

Captain Bering did not think it advisable to enter the bay with his vessel, but, having procured a fresh supply of water, he

proceeded up the coast, and toward the end of August found himself among a cluster of islands now known by the name of the Aleutian group. At one of these islands they were approached by some boats filled with natives, but they would not trust themselves on board. During the next two months the *St. Paul* cruised among these islands, the crew suffering the most intense anguish from scurvy and exposure, until at last, through the exhaustion of the crew, the vessel was stranded. And to complete their misery, Captain Bering, who had been for some time sick, having been carried ashore, after a few days expired.

During the winter thirty out of the crew of seventy died on the same island. The remainder, from the materials of the *St. Paul*, constructed a frail vessel, and, on the 27th of August, after a tedious voyage, anchored in Awatchka Bay.

We will not dwell longer on these early discoveries of the Russians, but step across thirty-six years, and glance at a voyage of the celebrated Captain Cook in these waters. In July, 1776, he left England, having two ships under his command, the *Resolution*, commanded by himself, and the *Discovery*, commanded by Captain Charles Clerke. In December of this year they sailed from Society Islands on their voyage, and on the 18th of January 1777, discovered that since celebrated group of islands, to which were given the name of the Sandwich Islands; and on the 7th of March, in latitude  $44^{\circ} 30'$  north, they sighted the American continent, but soon lost sight of it again. After being driven out to sea by adverse winds, they again made land in latitude  $49^{\circ} 28'$  north, and on the 22d entered a sound of deep, placid water, where they were soon surrounded by the boats of the natives. This sound was called by the inhabitants Nootka Sound. The natives were of short stature, armed with pikes pointed with bone and iron, and bows and arrows. Their language was harsh and difficult of utterance. The shore appeared to be studded with their villages. The men were eager to exchange their furs for the beads and trinkets offered them.

On the 25th of May, they left the sound and proceeded toward the north, to discover, if possible, the north-west passage. On the 4th of June, they came in sight of Mount St. Elias, which they mistook for an island, no other land being in view. This mountain is the continuation of the Sierra Nevada range of California, and rises to the height of more than 17,000 feet above the sea. Upon the 25th, they found themselves surrounded by rocky

islands, which proved to be the Aleutian Islands. From this time until September they were coasting the shores of America, going as far north as latitude  $70^{\circ} 30'$ .

Soon after this voyage of Captain Cook, the Empress Catharine II. of Russia planned an expedition for making northern discoveries, which was placed under the command of Captain Joseph Billings. Captain Billings received his instructions in the autumn of 1785, and in October set out, having chosen his own officers, and been supplied with all necessary instruments, and with charts and journals of all former navigators from the year 1724. Among the instructions which he received, showing the liberality and sense of justice of the empress, were the following: "Such coasts and islands as you shall discover, and which can not be disputed by, and are not subject to, any European power, you are, with the consent of the inhabitants, (if any,) to take possession of in the name of her imperial majesty." And still again: "When you bring under Russian subjection newly discovered and independent nations or people, you are to observe the following directions: As such people have most probably never been insulted by any Europeans, your first care must be to give them a good opinion of the Russians." This voyage of Billings accomplished little; but in 1790 we find him at the Aleutian Islands, protesting, in the name of his government, against the injustice and cruelty practiced against the natives by the Promyschlenies who had subjugated them. The natives were held in the most abject slavery and treated with the greatest barbarity by these traders, so that it was calculated that, in the short space of fifteen years, in consequence of compulsory labor, exhausting efforts in hunting, the violation of all rights, insurrections, and the perpetual anguish attending such evils, more than two thirds of the inhabitants had perished. Captain Billings in his protest says: "There is no name so dreadful to the natives as the leader of a gang of hunters. Immediately on their arrival they send the natives out on the chase, and then take by force the youngest and most handsome of the women for their companions." The journal of another officer says: "When two different parties of hunters meet, they sometimes fight for the possession of the natives, and sometimes join in one company. The barbarity of these subduers to the crown of Russia is not to be described." Captain Burney writes: "Russian fur-hunters, trained in ferocious habits of robbing and destroying at their pleasure and with impunity,



having the ready pretense, if pretense is ever thought necessary, of collecting tribute for their sovereign; men careless of justice or the welfare of others, yet esteeming themselves pious, and making lowly reverence at every turn to images or to crosses; these are the men who share the gains made by such barbarous usurpation, while the government of Russia, by permitting a continuance of this progress of depopulation, not blindly, but with the evidence of its iniquity in their possession, are losers. What might palliate or be a reasonable motive for conquering the Americans is wholly wanting, the possession of one acre of American territory being no way necessary to the security of the Russian empire. The plain and efficient remedy for the evil in its present state is for the Russian government to restore the remaining Aleutian Islanders and the conquered Americans to their independence, and to admit the subjects of Russia to have intercourse with them in future only on a footing of equality and friendship."

In 1797, this evil had become so great, and the overbearing of these free-traders so notorious, that the Emperor Paul of Russia interfered, and ordered the formation of a trading company to be called the "Russian-American Company," which was to supersede all the independent companies who had so long preyed upon the inhabitants. To this company was given the exclusive privilege of carrying on trade and forming settlements. Two directors appointed to administer its affairs were to reside at St. Petersburg, and be responsible to the government and under its control. Through the energy of this company trade soon began to increase, until, at last the sea-otter, the great object of their trade, had almost disappeared. The company, therefore, were compelled to extend their settlements further south, and in 1804 they established a colony upon the Island of Sitka. This island (or rather these three islands) is separated from the main-land by a narrow channel. The coast is intersected by many deep creeks, and the neighboring waters thickly shielded with little rocky islands, which are a protection against the storms, and present a strong wall of defense against the waves. The natives of Sitka were called by the Russians *Kalushes*.

A bold, enterprising man named Baronof, was appointed superintendent of the company's establishment. He immediately set to work to build dwelling-houses, make intrenchments, and propitiate the inhabitants. Having accomplished this, he left the col-

ony, having confided the government to a few Russians and Aleutians. For a time things went on swimmingly; but suddenly, the garrison, believing itself to be in perfect safety, was attacked and murdered, with the exception of a few Aleutians, who were out in their boats. Baronof, hearing of the disaster, returned with three vessels, accompanied by the Russian man-of-war *Neva*, which happened to be in those waters, and the revolters, after a sharp conflict, were subdued. Baronof immediately commenced rebuilding and repairs, and gave as a name to the town *New-Archangel*, which became the capital of the Russian Possessions in America.

The climate of Sitka is not so severe as might be expected from its latitude. In the middle of winter the cold is not excessive, and never lasts long. Agriculture, however, is not successful here. There is not, perhaps, in the world a spot where so much rain falls; a dry day is rare; and this itself would account for the failure of grain. The nature of the ground is, however, equally inimical to it.

There are no plains of any extent, the small valleys being everywhere surrounded by high, steep rocks of granite, and consequently overshadowed the greater part of the day. Some vegetables, such as cabbages, turnips, and potatoes, grow very well; the latter are raised even by the Kalushes, who have learned from the Russians the manner of cultivating them, and consider them a great delicacy. Upon the main-land the climate under the same latitude is said to be incomparably better than on the island of Sitka, although the cold is rather more severe. Great plains are there to be found where wheat can be profitably cultivated. The forests of Sitka, consisting principally of fir and beech, are lofty and thick. Some of the trees are a hundred and sixty feet high, and from six to seven feet in diameter. From these noble trunks the Kalushes form their large canoes, which sometimes carry from twenty to thirty men.

Wild and unfruitful as the country appears, the soil is rich, so that its indigenous plants, of which there is no great variety, attain a very large growth. The sea near the coast and the bays abound in fish and in mammalia; of herring, salmon, and cod there is a superfluity. Captain Kotzebue, from whose journal the above is extracted, approaching New-Archangel on the 23d of February, writes: "The nearer we approached the land, the milder the weather became; and we were astonished, in so northern a country,

to see the mountains at this season of the year entirely free from snow to a considerable height. Throughout the winter, which, however, has been peculiarly mild, the snow in many of the valleys had never lain above a few hours together. Here under 57° north latitude, the climate is much milder, than in European countries similarly situated."

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### A TRANSLATION OF A BALLAD OF FRIEDRICH SCHILLER.

I HAVE tried as far as possible, in the absence of the inspiration of like genius, to be faithful to both letter and spirit of the original. To that end I have used the same kind of rhythm. I have not attempted rhyme.

R. W. W.,

(Of the Claytonian Literary Society.)

#### THE DIVER.

"Who will dare it—knight or squire?  
Dare into this gulf to dive?  
Lo! into its mouth a golden cup  
I cast; and the black abyss devours.  
Whoe'er shall show me the cup again  
May keep it: it shall be his own."

Thus speaks the king; and casts the cup  
From the height of the cliff, which, rocky and steep,  
Hangs beetling over the boundless sea,  
Down into the howling Charybdis' rage,  
Saying, "Who is the brave heart, I ask once more,  
Who into this depth below will plunge?"

And the knights and the squires who stand around  
The challenge hear, and are still.  
They look below at the angry sea,  
And no one will win the golden cup.  
And the king the third time repeats the word:  
"Is there none the peril to dare?"

Still silent all stand as before,  
Till a fair youth, gentle and bold,  
Steps out from the trembling ranks of the squires;  
And his belt and his mantle he casts away.  
And the soldiers around, and the women fair,  
On the noble youth with wonder gaze.