

## WOMEN COUNTERFEITERS.

Every Gang Ever Arrested Had at Least One Female Member.

Women have a weakness for counterfeiting. The first person ever executed for that crime was a woman. She was an English woman named Barbara Spencer, and was put to death in 1721 for making false shillings. She was strangled and burned at the stake. Curiously enough, her accomplices were acquitted.

Nancy Kidd was one of the most remarkable female counterfeiters ever known in this country. She carried on her nefarious trade for more than 30 years in Chicago, and was arrested there many times. On one of these occasions a lot of fiber paper was discovered on her person.

The government officials were completely at a loss to know how she had obtained this. Finally she confessed that a chemical solution had been used to wash the faces of the notes and make them perfectly clean. Thus she was in the habit of taking one-dollar bills and changing them into large denominations.

One of the cleverest tricks ever played on Uncle Sam was invented by a woman who lived in Philadelphia. Her plan was to take \$10 and \$20 gold pieces, and with a small drill worked by steam power to bore out the insides and then refill them with some base metal, being very careful that they should weigh exactly the right amount when she had finished.

In this way she made \$7.50 on every eagle and about \$16 on every double eagle.

Women teach their husbands how to make false money. This is what happened when Ben Boyd married Mary Ackerman, of Indiana. Her father was one of the most successful counterfeiters of his day, and his daughter had a thorough acquaintance with the art. Mrs. Boyd carefully taught her husband all the secrets of the trade, and became one of the most famous forgers of the age.

They carried on the business with such a high degree of skill that they were not captured for years, and, when at last the secret service Hawksaws did run them down, not a single counterfeit plate, note or coin was found in their possession. When their house was searched \$8,000 in good money was found.

Afterward sufficient evidence was secured to convict them and they were sent to prison. They both claimed to be converted while in state prison, and after their release settled in Chicago, where they apparently lived an honest life.

Practically every gang of counterfeiters ever arrested has had women associates. In the office of the secretary in Washington there is a large frame four feet square, filled with the photographs of women who have either made or passed false money. Men almost always employ their wives or daughters for the purpose of "shoving" their counterfeiters.—Washington Post.

## LAND IN ALASKA.

Crops May Be Grown in a Limited Way and Live Stock Will Thrive.

Dr. Evans and Benton Killin, commissioners appointed to investigate the agricultural possibilities of Alaska, have submitted their reports to Secretary of Agriculture Wilson. The reports agree that while comparatively little agriculture exists there it is possible that enough of certain crops and animals may be grown to sustain a considerable population, provided proper methods are pursued. While Director True, of the division of experiment stations, does not regard as feasible the establishment of agricultural experiment stations there, he believes that experiments may be carried on in a number of lines with great success.

The two commissioners spent three months investigating the southern coast region of Alaska. The reports say cultivated areas in Alaska are confined to small kitchen gardens, in which are grown many of our earlier and harder vegetables. Stock raising is carried on to a very limited extent. The possible extension of the pasture and gardening area is quite considerable. Estimates are made of an expense of \$200 per acre in preparing the soil for cultivation. What agriculture there will be in Alaska will be subsidiary to fishing and other industries, according to Mr. Killin's separate report. Fishermen will locate on Alaska lands and make homes. At the present rate Mr. Killin says the salmon will soon be destroyed. They are being fished for in the spawning waters to such an extent that they have no opportunity to propagate. Halibut, cod and herring will last forever. Timber will not go into the market until the yellow fir or Douglas pine of the Pacific coast is exhausted, as it is superior to the Alaskan spruce or hemlock.

As fast as the timber is taken off small fruits and green vegetables can be grown, and grass will be furnished for the domestic animals. Grasses grow to great perfection. Little was seen of the cultivation of cereals and small fruits and berries abound, though practically no attention is paid to their cultivation.

As to the country from the southern boundary to Kodiak and Long islands and from the Pacific to the coast or Alaskan mountains, the climate is extremely wet, but not cold; winters are very long, and the feeding period will be at least seven months. The cereals will not ripen and the vegetables will not mature.—Chicago Tribune.

## Costly Suits Over Trifles.

A hog out in Missouri caused a litigant a loss of \$4,000 in costs. Now a Nebraska man had to pay \$200 for a ten-dollar horse. Such cases are very old. Lady Anne Clifford used to assess her tenants for contributions of chickens. One tenant refused to send a hen and was sued. Lady Anne got the hen, but it cost her over £200.—Chicago Inter Ocean.

## OUR OCEAN EMPIRE.

Pacific Islands That Belong to the United States.

Sixty of Them Annexed by the Government Under a Law Which Still Remains in Force—Rights of Discoverers.

The proposed annexation of the Hawaiian Islands has induced a writer to examine the archives of the state department in regard to the possessions which we already hold in the Pacific ocean.

Distributed over the mid-Pacific, in the neighborhood of the equator, are quite a lot of small islands that belong to the United States. Most of them are from 1,000 to 2,000 miles to the south and southwest of Hawaii. Some of them are near the Gilbert archipelago, and there is a considerable cluster just about the lesser distance mentioned and directly south of the Hawaiian group, including America, Christmas, Palmyra and other islands of large size.

Christmas island is about 35 miles long. It got its name originally from the fact that the famous Capt. Cook stopped there on Christmas day for the purpose of observing an eclipse. It is an atoll, or ring, of coral formation, enclosing a lagoon of water that has become so salty through evaporation as to be a veritable brine. Fishes thrown over the reef by storms are pickled in it, and remain perfectly preserved, and good to eat for months.

Thereupon the conductor, with infinite wrath, seizes the crumpled bill, jams it into his pocket and gives change. Not the original crumpled bill, however, for during the search for change he has contrived to substitute a new one-dollar bill, equally crumpled, for the five dollars, and the conductor in nine cases out of ten doesn't think to unroll and examine the bill which he has just seen to be five dollars. At the end of the day's work he discovers that he is five dollars out. Shoulders he discerns the substitute, the crook simply says:

"Is that the smallest you got?"

"I think it is," says the crook. "Wait a minute and I'll see."

Crumping the bill up in his hand—the game is usually played with crisp new bills, as they crumple more obviously—he goes through his pockets in search of change. Not wanting to find any, he doesn't find any.

"Sorry, but that's all I've got," he says.

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These isles of the Pacific belonging to Uncle Sam number 60 in all. They have all been annexed to the United States under an act of congress which became a law August 18, 1866. This law, which remains in force to-day, declares that whenever any citizen of the United States shall discover deposit of guano on any island, rock or key not within the lawful jurisdiction of any other government, he shall be at liberty to take peaceful possession thereof, and such island, rock or key may, at the discretion of the president, be considered as pertaining to the United States.

The discoverer is required to give due notice to the department of state, with affidavits, describing the island and showing that possession of the same has been taken in the name of this country. He is obliged at the same time to give a bond, which is filed in the treasury.

The discoverer, at the pleasure of congress, enjoys the exclusive right to occupy his island for the purpose of obtaining guano, and for this product he is allowed to charge only a certain fixed price; namely, eight dollars a ton for guano delivered at the ship's side, or four dollars a ton for the privilege of digging it where it lies. Furthermore, he gives guarantee by his bond to deliver the guano only to citizens of the United States, and to be used in the United States.

The law also provides, curiously enough, that all offenses and crimes on such island by persons who may land thereon or in waters adjacent shall be deemed as committed on the high seas, on board a merchant ship of the United States, and shall be punished accordingly.

The president is authorized to use the land and naval forces of the neighboring country are completely frozen over. Lake Salawik becomes so warm that it is really pleasant to bathe in it. On the other hand, in the summer time the water is extremely cold.

This peculiarity makes it in the winter time a Mecca for fishermen. The abundance of fish in the lake is so great that a person can almost catch them with the hand, and can kill large quantities with a club. Here for the miners is a source of food supply which certainly will contribute to diminish the cost of living, especially during the winter, in that inhospitable region.

The lake, which is 90 miles long, and about 15 miles wide, is perhaps the only one in all that extreme northern region which does not freeze over during the winter. No communication has been discovered between it and the sea, nevertheless, at high water upon the coasts of the northern ocean, the level of the lake rises, and it falls again at low tide.

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