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KLONDIKE AND CALIFORNIA COMPARED.

The expected rush to the Klondike is already well under way, and judging from the present indications, it is probable that the army of fortune-hunters which will enter this inhospitable region during the coming season will far exceed in numbers the emigration to California in the days of forty-nine.

According to this authority, one claim in Calaveras County produced \$250,000 from an area 100 feet long by 40 feet wide, and ninety pounds of gold were taken out in twenty-four hours. One claim in Placer County yielded \$500,000 and another in the same county \$2,000,000, and near Springfield, Tuolumne County, single car loads of "pay dirt" panned out one thousand dollars each.

THE UNITED STATES CIVIL SERVICE.

There were, in 1897, in the civil service of the United States government, 178,717 positions, of which 87,107 were in the classified list, to be filled by competitive examinations, and 91,610 unclassified, two-thirds of whom were fourth-class postmasters, the others ranging down to mere laborers.

From a recent revision of the manual of examinations for the classified civil service we note a few of the leading particulars. The examinations are arranged for according to the following divisions of the service:

1, departmental; 2, custom house; 3, post office; 4, government printing; 5, internal revenue. In all, except the first of these divisions, the designation indicates, perhaps, sufficiently the nature of the positions to be filled, but it may be remarked that the departmental service covers the railway mail and Indian attaches, the pension agencies, steamboat inspection and light-houses and life-saving, the mints and assay offices and sub-treasuries, and the engineer and ordnance departments at large, as well as civil, steam and electrical engineers, draughtsmen, etc.

The general examinations are held twice a year, in March and April and in September and October, at designated places in all the States, and applications must be received by the commissioners at least ten days prior to the date of examination, such applications being made on special forms prepared therefor.

vacancies occur. John R. Procter, Washington, D. C., is at present the president of the Civil Service Commission.

The civil service law has met with not a little opposition from the politicians of both parties, many of whom have desired to dispose of official positions as the rewards of effective work at the polls, irrespective of the fitness of employes for their places; but it is safe to say that the great majority of the people of all parties are strongly in favor of the law, and would prefer to see it extended in its operations, to include a still larger number of those who work for the public.

THE COMPLETION OF THE BROOKLYN NAVAL DRY DOCK.

In our issue of December 25, 1897, we gave an illustrated description of the methods which have been adopted in repairing Dry Dock No. 3, at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. It was expected at the time that repairs would be completed in a very few weeks, and this sorely needed work placed at the disposal of the navy.

The greatest possible force was crowded upon the work, the new lines of sheet piling being driven with all possible speed and the flooring laid on so as to enable the dock entrance to be partially flooded, with a view to reducing the flow of the springs and stopping the disastrous undermining. This has now been done, and two lines of 12 x 12 sheet piling driven as deep as it will go now extend across the entrance, one at the outer edge of the apron and the other at the outer sill.

The value of this dock to the country just now is simply inestimable in view of our critical foreign relations; for it is our only dock on the Atlantic coast which will safely admit our first-class battleships, such as the "Iowa" and the "Massachusetts."

OUR TRADE WITH EUROPE.

A study of the statistics of our foreign trade for the past year shows that while the United Kingdom is our largest customer it does not take so large a proportion of our exports as formerly. Ten years ago the total value of our exports to the United Kingdom was \$359,734,531, or over 50 per cent of our total exports; whereas in 1897 the proportion had fallen to about 44 per cent.

The large increase in our exports, amounting to \$94,000,000 over the previous year, was, of course, chiefly due to the increased demand for our wheat and corn, the increased export of all cereals amounting in value to some \$70,000,000. The increase in exports of iron and steel was \$14,000,000; in bicycles it was \$3,000,000; in copper, \$3,000,000; and in lumber and manufactured articles in wood, \$5,500,000.

BURNING FIELDS OF ICE.

BY E. B. KNERR.

It seems a somewhat surprising statement to make that on the ice-covered surface of a Kansas lake it is possible to build bonfires by simply breaking through the ice and applying a match to the surface of the water. The flames will shoot up as high as a man and