

of which the Northwest Trading company of Portland has opened establishments.

The once productive whale fisheries are almost exhausted under the great inroads committed for several decades. In 1850 some three hundred whaling-vessels visited Alaskan waters. Two years later the north Pacific catch was estimated at \$14,000,000, among 278 ships. After this it declined to less than \$800,000 in 1862, and with fluctuations stood at about the same figure in 1883. The fish have been driven away from the waters of the Aleutian range, even to Greenland. Most of the north Pacific whaling-vessels, reduced in 1882 to forty, now enter the Arctic ocean, where the catch is fairly profitable.

The mines may assist to enlarge the demand for timber, which is abundant even as far north as the Yukon, with a sprinkling of stunted vegetation even to the Arctic sea. Spruce of different kinds ranks first in extent, but the yellow cedar of the south is the most valuable. The remainder, as birch and willow, is of little worth save for the bark. So far the cheapness and greater accessibility of the timber of Puget sound and other districts are overshadowing Alaska, so that by 1880 only three sawmills were there in operation for a portion of the year. Whipsawing was early introduced by the Russians, in connection with the construction of buildings and of vessels. In 1842 the first steamer and steam-tug were launched here, but after this the business of the ship-yards, latterly concentrated at Sitka, decreased to very small proportions, owing to the supply of cheaper vessels from abroad.