

SIZE OF ALASKA.

Alaska has an area of 531,400 square miles, equalling one-sixth of the United States or one-seventh of Europe, and being twice as large as Texas, the largest of the American States. It presents great varieties of climate, Southern Alaska, under the influence of the Japan stream which flows by it, having its climate moderated so that it has no great extremes of heat and cold, the mean temperature of Sitka being 54.2 degrees in summer and 31.9 degrees in winter. That part of the country is very humid and the rainfall is from 80 to 130 inches in a year.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS.

The general characteristics of the interior have been elsewhere described in the chapter on the Yukon Valley and the special one on the climate of the country. In Southeastern Alaska there are large forests, the principal tree being the Sitka spruce, which not infrequently reaches the height of 250 feet and covers thousands of square miles of the Alexander archipelago. Yellow cedar, a wood admitting of high polish and having a pleasant, perfumed odor, is one of the many excellent trees of this region.

THE ALASKAN COAST LINE.

The coast of Southeastern Alaska curves northward and westward from Dixon Entrance to Prince William Sound 550 miles and from there the shore-line extends southward and westward for 725 miles to the tip of Alaska. From