

black clouds approach the earth, and are hurried along by the blast. There is nowhere any sign of life now; the Indians crowd together in their houses, and the birds huddle behind the sheltering rocks. Speaking generally, however, navigators, since the publication of the Admiralty charts, do not consider the coast dangerous in average weather; they find anchorages in the Sounds, and the channels from the ocean are deep—too deep rather—and are free from rocks and rapid currents. The severest gales that I remember occurred in November, but during the whole winter there are heavy storms; in summer calms and fogs prevail—March and October being considered the foggiest months.\*

Of the country along this coast, a short description will suffice. The whole surface, as far inland as I have penetrated, is rocky and mountainous, and is covered with thick pine-forests, without any of the oak-openings that enliven the scenery near Victoria in the southern part of the island. From some of the eminences near Alberni a great expanse of country can be seen on a clear day; but the view, looking inland, is not varied, consisting for the most part of narrow valleys and steep hills, weathered peaks with bare stony tops; here and there glimpses of shining lakes or rain-pools, and in the distance snow-covered mountains. "The back of the world, brother," with some truth the Gaelic-

\* The kelp is one of the most extraordinary marine productions on the coast. It is found in masses which spread over the surface of the sea, and through these great weeds it is difficult for a small vessel to make way unless with a strong breeze. I do not know the greatest length of the stems of this plant, but I have seen it growing in twenty-five fathoms of water, and remember measuring a piece of kelp on the beach near the Ohyaht village, in Nitinaht Sound, that was fifty-five yards in length and an inch and a half in diameter at the thickest part.