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## PREFACE.

In the following pages I have not made even a pretence of writing a scientific or historical work. It is not of special interest to those for whom I write to know the exact pressure to the square inch which propels the seas of ice as they furrow their way from the Arctic regions through the mountain gorges down to the softening influences of the Japanese stream, nor to trace the vicissitudes of Alaska from the voyages of Captain Cook down to the purchase by Mr. Seward in 1867, nor yet to familiarize themselves with the ethnology of the various tribes of Indians who inhabit the Aleutian Islands. All this has been better done than I could ever hope to do it. My sole object is to put on paper, for the benefit of others, the impressions made upon me by the voyage, and to explain how this delightful excursion can be enjoyed without the slightest fatigue or discomfort, and at a trifling expense. I want them to know, as I know, that the ship is a yacht, of which the Captain is the host, the passengers his guests, and the object of the cruise the pursuit of pleasure; and if I succeed in inducing my countrywomen to follow my example and postpone Paris and London, Rome and Vienna, the Rhine and the Alps, to some future day, they will always have reason to be grateful to me, and I shall always have reason to be satisfied with my effort.

SEPTIMA M. COLLIS.