

Hagemeister spent a year investigating the records. Not a discrepancy was discovered. Baranof, with the opportunity to have made millions, was a poor man. Without explanation, Hagemeister then announced the fact — Baranof was to be retired. Between voluntarily retiring and being retired was all the difference between honor and insult. The news was a blow that crushed Baranof almost to senility. He was found doddering and constantly in tears. Again and again he bade good-by to his old comrades, comrades of revel with noble blood in their veins, comrades of the hunt, pure-blooded Indians, who loved him as a brother, comrades of his idleness, Indian children with whom he had frolicked — but he could not bear to tear himself from the land that was the child of his lifelong efforts. The blow had fallen when he was least able to bear it. His nerve was gone. Of all the Russian wreckages in this cruel new land, surely this wreck was the most pitiable — the maker deposed by the thing he had made, cast out by his child, driven to seek some hidden place where he might die out of sight. An old sea-captain offered him passage round the world to Russia, where his knowledge might still be of service. Service? That was the word! The old war-horse pricked up his ears! Baranof sailed in the fall of 1818. By spring the ship homeward-bound stopped at Batavia. There was some delay. Delay was not good for Baranof. He was ill, deadly ill, of that most deadly of all ailments, heartbreak, conscious-