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SOME NOTES ON SOUTH-EASTERN ALASKA AND ITS PEOPLE.

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(*With a Map.*)

ALASKA is no longer an end of the world; distance is of so little account in these days of railroads and fast steamers, that far-away lands, such as Alaska and Siberia, are almost at our door. A week's travel by rail carries the tourist from New York to Tacoma on Puget Sound; in two, or at most three, weeks more he can visit the wild coast of British Columbia and South-eastern Alaska and return comfortably back to Tacoma; while if he be willing to spend another month, a steam launch will take him from Sitka to Oonalaska, and give him full opportunity of seeing the Aleuts in all their native unattractiveness. The excursionist to Sitka visits the Muir and Taku glaciers, and catches glimpses of many others; but he who takes in addition the Oonalaskan trip has the advantage of seeing, even though he may not explore, the noble glaciers of the Mount St. Elias group, and others beyond, with which Russell and Hayes have made us familiar.

The ready accessibility of South-eastern Alaska is due to the great expansion of commercial interests within the last decade; immense canneries have been established at many localities where salmon, cod, and halibut abound; mining for gold and silver, though only recently begun, is already important; and the Indians have shown an unexpected readiness to adopt the ways of civilisation: while those living in British America, away from the coast, have proved themselves thoroughly capable of making good bargains. The insignificant population of Alaska provides business for two large steamers throughout the year, while during the summer a third steamer makes two round trips each month. Thus Alaska is no longer an unknown land, and we are not now dependent on the indefinite statements made by early voyagers or on the records of the old Russian priests. Dall, Elliott, Russell, Hayes, Reid, and Wright have explored different parts of the region during late years, and have told of its people, its seals, and its glaciers. Comparatively little is known with certainty respecting its mineral resources, but prospectors are abroad in the land, and their discoveries will render a careful geological study necessary.

The route from Tacoma, in the State of Washington, near the head of Puget Sound, is practically inland, following the longitudinal bays, and winding among the islands which form an almost continuous archipelago from the Strait of San Juan de Fuca to Glacier Bay. Open sea is crossed at but few places, Queen Charlotte Sound, sixty miles wide, Milbank Sound, about ten miles, and Dixon's Entrance, about twenty miles, being the most serious; but short as these distances are, they suffice for susceptible passengers. Usually, however, Queen Charlotte Sound is crossed at night, when sleep renders passengers less liable to sea-sickness.

The rapid growth of cities on the west coast is exemplified by three towns on Puget Sound. Tacoma and Seattle are less than a score of