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## PUGET SOUND.

Two thousand miles of zigzag shores, running south and running north, branching east and branching west,—no wonder that the chartless De Fuca, sailing between them day after day, believed himself to be exploring a vast river. Abler navigators than he, coming later still, clung to the idea, and it is not yet a hundred years since the majestic waters received their true name and place in the ocean family tree. No possible accuracy of naming, however, no completeness of definition, can lessen the spell of their fantastic wandering course. No matter if one were to commit their maps to heart and know their charts like a pilot, he would never lose a vague sense of expectation, surprise, and half bewilderment in cruising among their labyrinths. Bays within bays, inlets on inlets, seas linking seas,—over twelve thousand square miles of surface, the waters come and go, rise and fall, past a splendid succession of islands, promontories, walls of forest, and towering mountains. Voyaging on them, one drifts back into their primitive past, and finds himself unconsciously living over the experiences of their earliest navigators. The old Indian names which still haunt the shores heighten the illusion; and even the shrill screams of the saw-mill cannot wholly dispel it. The wilderness is dominant still. Vast belts of forest and stretches of shore lie yet untracked, unroaded, as they were a century ago, when Vancouver's young Lieutenant Puget took the first reckonings and measurements of their eminent domain. But the days of the wilderness are numbered. It is being conquered and taken possession of by an army of invaders more irresistible than warriors,—men of the axe, the plow, the steam-engine; conquerors, indeed, against whom no land can make fight.

The siege they lay is a siege which cannot be broken; for all the forces of nature are on their side. The organic secrets of the earth are their allies, also the hidden things of the sea; and the sun and the rain are loyal to the dynasty of their harvests. There is, in this might of peaceful conquest of new lands by patient tillers of the soil, something so much grander than is to be seen in any of the processes of violence and seizure that one could wish there were on this globe limitless uninhabited regions, to make endless lure and opportunity for pioneer men and women so long as the human race shall endure. Once, and not so very long ago, we thought we had such a limitless region on our own continent. In the United States government's earlier treaties with the Indians, the country "west of the Mississippi" is again and again spoken of as beyond the probable reach of white settlement. In 1835, when the Cherokees were removed from Georgia to their present home in Indian Territory, the United States government by treaty guaranteed to them "a perpetual outlet west, and a free and unmolested use of all the country west of their western boundary,"—"as far west as the sovereignty of the United States and their rights of soil extend." And as late as 1842, one Mr. Mitchell, a superintendent of Indian affairs, said in a report, "If we draw a line running north and south, so as to cross the Missouri about the mouth of the Vermilion River, we shall designate the limits beyond which civilized men are never likely to settle. At this point the Creator seems to have said to the tides of emigration that are annually rolling toward the west, 'Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther.'" To read such records as these to-day is half comic, half sad.