

cidents are often culled from several such journeys and incorporated in the one which the reader is invited to take.

Here, as indeed throughout the book, the author has availed himself of any sources of information to his hand that might add to the interest of the description, but his own diaries have been the chief source because it has long been his habit to note therein whatever attracted his attention of local history or tradition as well as the details of voyages. In the extraction and digestion of such notes care has been exercised to verify and supplement what has been given of dates and circumstances of record, and in the course thereof he has read over again, he believes, every published account of Alaskan exploration except the Russian.

It has been borne in mind, however, that the chief purpose of this book is a narrative that should interest the general reader and convey a just impression of the country and its inhabitants, and in some cases a brief sentence, a date or a name, may be all that stands for hours of such reading, or there may stand nothing at all.

Scientific instruments, such as thermometers and barometers, are said to be least reliable at the extremes of their scales; so it may be said that what a man writes is least valuable when he is writing up to the limit of what he knows, and lessens in value as it approaches that limit. It follows that to deal thoroughly with the literature of any subject it is not only necessary to read a great deal, but it is also necessary to be content not to use a great deal that is read.