

certain routes of travel more feasible than others; the character of the natural resources of the different districts; and the distribution of the peopled areas (as well as the degree of friendliness of their inhabitants).

In the Eskimo country the great highway of travel is the sea. This is generally known and frequently reiterated by students of the subject, but so habituated are many of us to mentally defining a sea route as a water route, that in making the above statement we speak a fact while we think a fiction. The sea is indeed the commercial highway, not, however, as water but as ice; not as a medium for boat travel so much as (in many districts) the *sine qua non* of rapid sled travel and the hauling of heavy loads by dog teams. Nowhere between Baffinland and Smith sound on the east and Cape Bathurst on the west, did boats probably ever play a considerable part in trade; certain portions of the Greenland coast were about the only localities where the boat completely supplanted the sled. From Cape Bathurst west to Mackenzie delta the use of boats was not interfered with so much by ice conditions as by the fact that the summer season here was the harvest season more absolutely than in most districts, not only because of the annual coming of the caribou, but chiefly because the various sorts of whales, upon which the Eskimo depended for food, fuel, and light, frequented the coast during most of the summer and engrossed the people's attention, while in winter and spring they had plenty of leisure for travel and for trading. The whales pass the Alaska coast earlier in the season and people there have the summer freer; but without sleds such journeys as those of the Point Barrow people east to Barter island and back again, could not have been accomplished. They, therefore, hauled both boats and trading gear on sleds well towards the Colville river as well as a greater or lesser part of the way back, except in the most favourable seasons. It might be hastily concluded that on Bering strait at least, in the commerce between Asia and Alaska, the boat supplanted the sled entirely. It did not, however. In our camp, as I write, is a young man of Port Clarence, Alaska, whose father and older brothers, up to a few years ago, made