

that it was already maintaining itself with difficulty in its last unmolested retreat. The winter there was severe, and at that season the sea-cow became so thin that every bone was clearly visible. It appears by nature to have been intended for some less rigorous climate, but from all such places it had already been driven by man and other predaceous animals. Thus it proved easy to extinguish the survivors of this interesting and ancient but nearly effete race, and without any intention or knowledge of what they were about, this extinction was accomplished by the ignorant Russian traders.

In 1755, Jakovlev, a mining engineer who was sent to report on the occurrence of copper on Copper Island, noted that the sea-cow had already disappeared from that island, and according to the best information, the last of the race was killed on Behring Island, (which from the first knowledge had been its chief haunt) about the year 1768. Nordenskjöld who visited Behring island in 1879, thought he had ascertained from enquiry among the Aleut people there that a single specimen of the sea-cow was seen on the coast as lately as 1854,* but Stejneger, who visited the island more recently and who re-examined the same men with whom Nordenskjöld had spoken, has shown that this was probably a mistake.†

Thus it happens, that at the present day Steller's sea-cow, instead of browsing still upon the kelp along the shores of Behring Island, is known to science only by its bones. When Nordenskjöld visited the island he made a special search for remains of the sea-cow and found that the bones were occasionally discovered by the natives along the shores, generally in a low sandy tract slightly above the present high-water mark. By prodding in this sandy ground with iron instruments the presence of the buried bones might be detected, and in this way he secured enough to make up a nearly complete skeleton. Since that time other skeletons have been collected and a certain number of detached skulls, and there can be no doubt that more will be found from time to time.

*Voyage of the Vega. English Ed. Vol. II. pp. 272-276.

† Proc. U.S. Nat. Mus. Vol. VII. (1884) p. 181. American Naturalist Vol. XXI. p. 1047. Am. Geographical Soc. Bulletin, No. 4. 1886.