

ADDRESS

BY

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THE NATIVE TRIBES OF ALASKA.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:—It is now sixteen years since I read my first ethnological paper before this association, at the Salem meeting in 1869. That paper sketched the distribution of the native tribes of Alaska and adjacent territory, together with some of their most salient characteristics, and formed a summary of what advances had been made in the knowledge of such matters in that region since 1855, when Holmberg published his ethnographic sketch of the people of Russian America.

On this occasion I propose to return to the same subject, to indicate the principal investigations which have added to our knowledge since 1869 and to briefly sum up its present state, adding a few remarks on the directions in which future study may be most profitably employed. That the present is a particularly suitable time to call attention to the subject I am led to believe for several reasons.

At the time when my paper of 1869 was read, anthropological study in Alaska had passed through several phases and was entering upon another. The first period in which material for such study had been collected began with the expedition of Bering and Chirikoff and lasted during the remainder of the eighteenth century. It was characterized by maritime discovery and the preliminary mapping of the coast by the early navigators, often men of keen observation, whose accounts of the inhabitants of the coasts they explored are still of great value, and for the most part quite reliable within obvious limits. To this period belong the names of Cook, Vancouver, Bodega, Maurelle, Gray, Meares, Dixon, Portlock, Vasilieff, Krenitzin and Levasheff, and a host of lesser

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