

MY OLD FRIENDS.

by Mrs. Raley.

It is eventide, I wish those people who wonder how we can fill in our days in this lone place, could hear a recital of our labours to-day. Nanukwa is in full swing. I have had several proofs presented for correction in the midst of washing dishes, and all sorts of work. And now I must get into shape a few thoughts. If there be a dullness about them, criticize kindly. Ada has been ill a week with a pulso at 160 several nights, Emsley had a prolonged siege of croup so none of us have slept well, however we feel equal to a good deal still, and thankful the children are better. There is nothing causes us to feel the isolation of Kitamaat so much as having people sick and not knowing exactly what the trouble is.

You hear much about the girls and boys, something about the middle aged men and women, and very little concerning the old people, but my old friends are not to be set aside. I have just counted them up, and have about thirty. You do not know how interesting they are. My conversations with them usually consist in a few nods or shakes of the head, with prolonged ahs and ohs, but in spite of the difficulties of language I like going to see them.

The old people until laid aside by infirmities are most industrious, but when once they have let go the active duties of life, they are content to spend their days beside the fire. The men make paddles and canoes and look after their fishing nets. The women dry a great deal of salmon, and always gather nettles at the proper season to procure material for twine which they spin themselves, then weave into nets. They also walk long distances over rough trails to get suitable bark of which cedar mats and baskets are made. One rarely finds them unemployed. It is wonderful also how many berries they pick and dry.

Sad to say loss of eyesight is quite common amongst them; even then they accomplish a good deal.

Some of the old people attend service on Sabbath, and especially when the younger people are away. They all seem to have faith in the "Chief of the Above"; Mr. Raley has baptized several, and there is something very touching when they receive the sacrament of baptism. One of the oldest women in the village is about

to receive it, also her daughter, our renowned huntress.

They occasionally bring me some native food when they want matches, a little tea or sugar. From our point of view they have little of comfort or ease, but while they have health I believe they are happy. Some of them have days they spend grieving and crying but no wonder when they remember the many who have left them in the long years, and often on their fingers counting, they tell me of their dead children. As I look at them in their homes, I am led to say, what a revelation it will be when their mortal bodies no longer rest beside the smoking logs in the old fashion-houses and their spirits are in that Wonderful Holy City.

THE KITAMAAT ROUTE.

Some of my friends in the East have written me for the information which I strive to give here in a condensed form.

Three facts.

1st That rich placer gold fields exist in the great North land is proved beyond all doubt.

2nd. It is intensely sad that numbers of lives have been sacrificed, and countless hardships endured by thousands who have striven to reach the gold discoveries by impracticable routes.

3rd. The comparative failure of the St Michaels, Stikeen, Juneau, and Ashcroft routes.

The question is still an open one.—

Where is the highway to be built which will give the world safe and easy access to the North land of treasure, locked up in the rock under glacier covered mountains and frozen morasses for untold ages?

Providence says:— Look for a highway which nature has made. Up the deep channels cleaving the mountains far into the Interior, thence along the broad valleys and old river beds to the land of the gold.

Commerce says:— Look for a highway where the largest vessels can safely be piloted on the blackest night, or where continental trains can fly with all safety through fertile valleys.

Common sense says:— Look for a highway which will have for a terminus, a site fit for a metropolis, with large safe harbours, and good anchorage. A port where iron horse can meet ocean grayhound.

We firmly believe the suggested Kitamaat Route fulfils these requirements.