

The explanation of this is, that there had been no conflict between American or English traders and the Russian-American Company except on this particular coast. The exclusive dominion of Russia over the Aleutian and Kurile islands was not disputed, and her territorial right on the coast of the North Pacific to the 55th parallel was tacitly, at least, assented to by all the powers, the United States included.

It seems clear to me, that if the protest and negotiations related to the southern belt of Russian territory, both land and water, and that the contention was not confined to the coast of the North Pacific ocean proper, there would have been some reference made to the Alaska peninsula and the group of Aleutian islands which, in their prolongation, extend far south of 55° north latitude. Yet, we look in vain for any intimation anywhere questioning Russia's title to that peninsula and group of islands which she had held in undisputed possession from the date of their discovery; and when, in his instructions to Mr. Middleton, Mr. Adams stated: "We are willing to agree to the boundary line within which the Emperor Paul had granted exclusive privileges to the Russian-American Company; that is to say, latitude 55°," he had reference to a locality in relation to whose title and boundary there was a dispute; or, as he stated the case to Mr. Poletica, "that, in assuming now the latitude of 51° a new pretension is asserted." And it was to this new pretension that he entered his protest; yet, at the same time, and from the date of discovery until the cession of Alaska, there was a large extent of territory, both land and water, comprising a part of Russian America, extending south of the 54th parallel, that was in the undisputed possession of Russia, and which the United States in 1867 purchased from Russia and paid for.

Not only this, but, as we shall see further on, by the treaty which followed (1824), Russia stipulated that she would form no establishments on the northwest coast south of 54° 40' north latitude. And yet her title to Alaska peninsula and the Aleutian islands, extending hundreds of miles south of that parallel, were, and always had been, undisputed.