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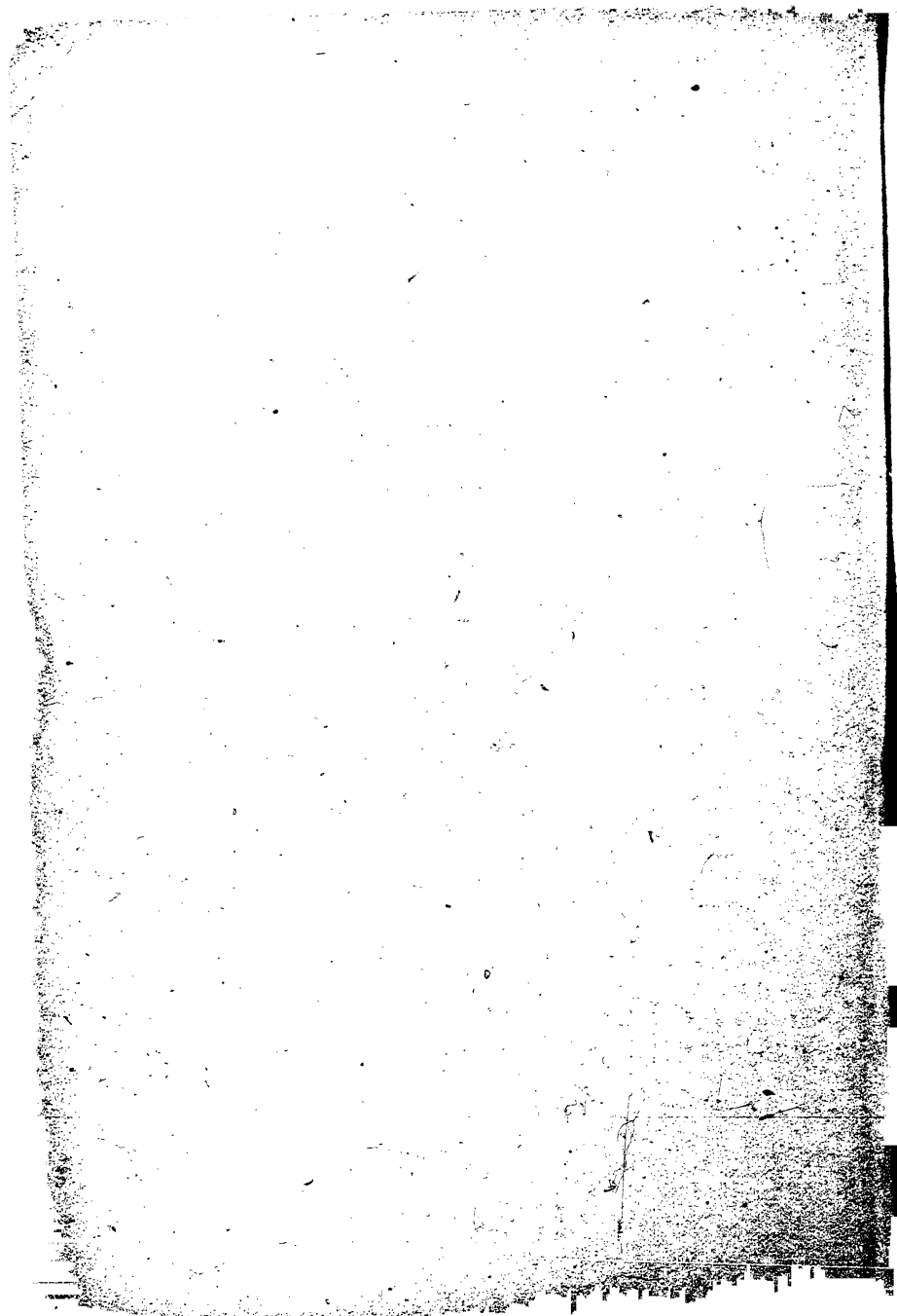
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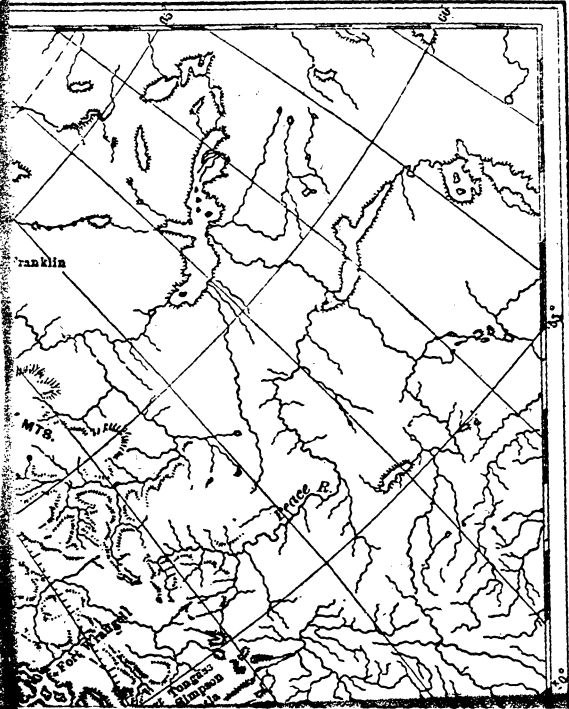
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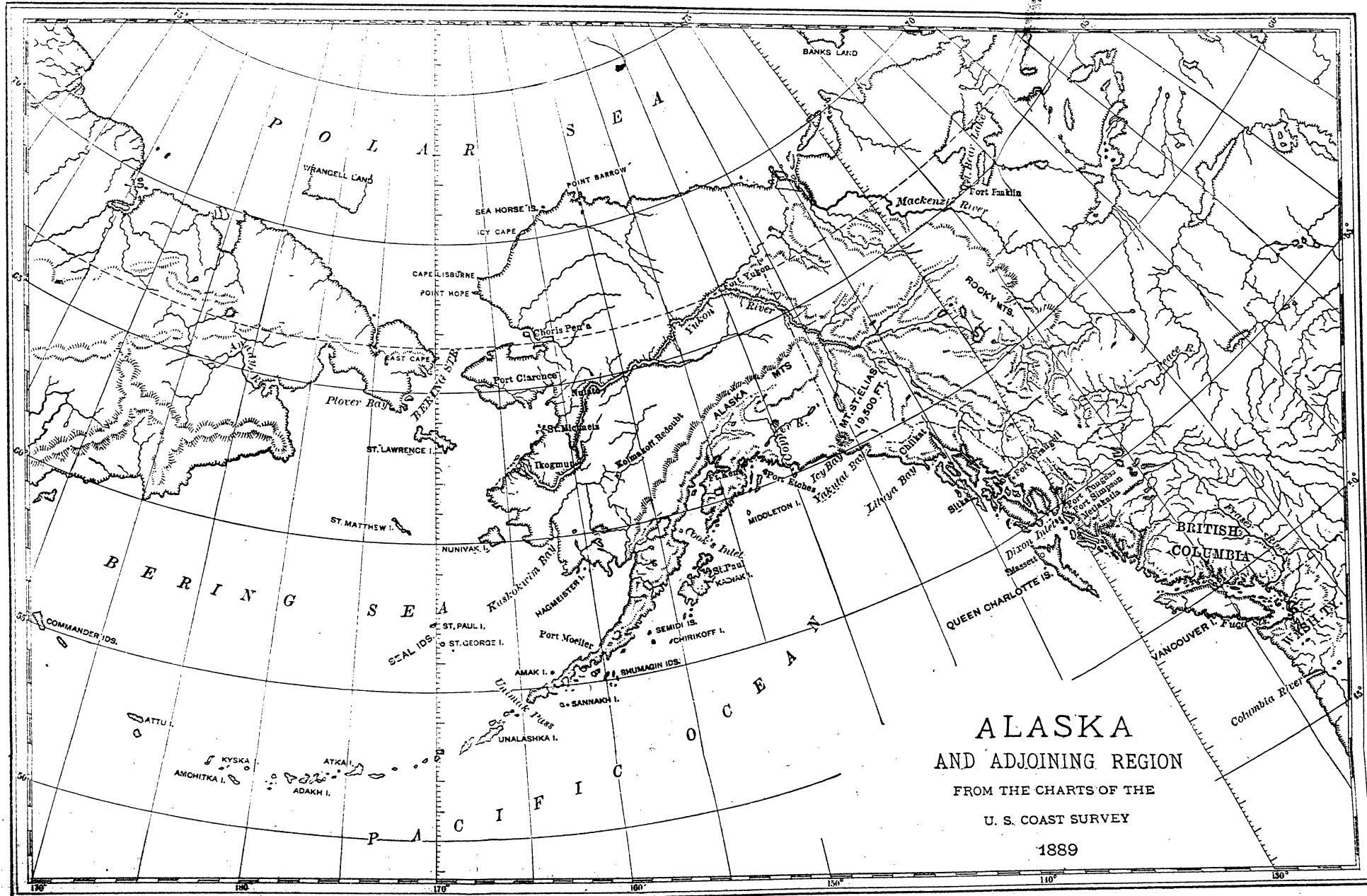
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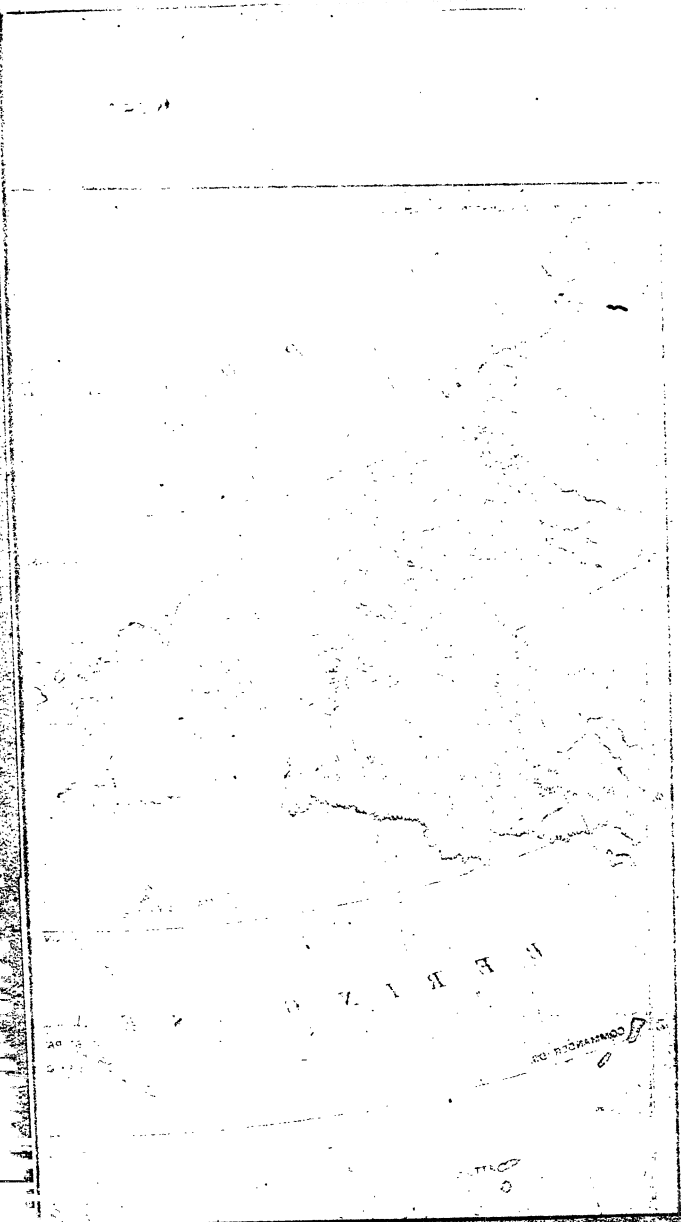


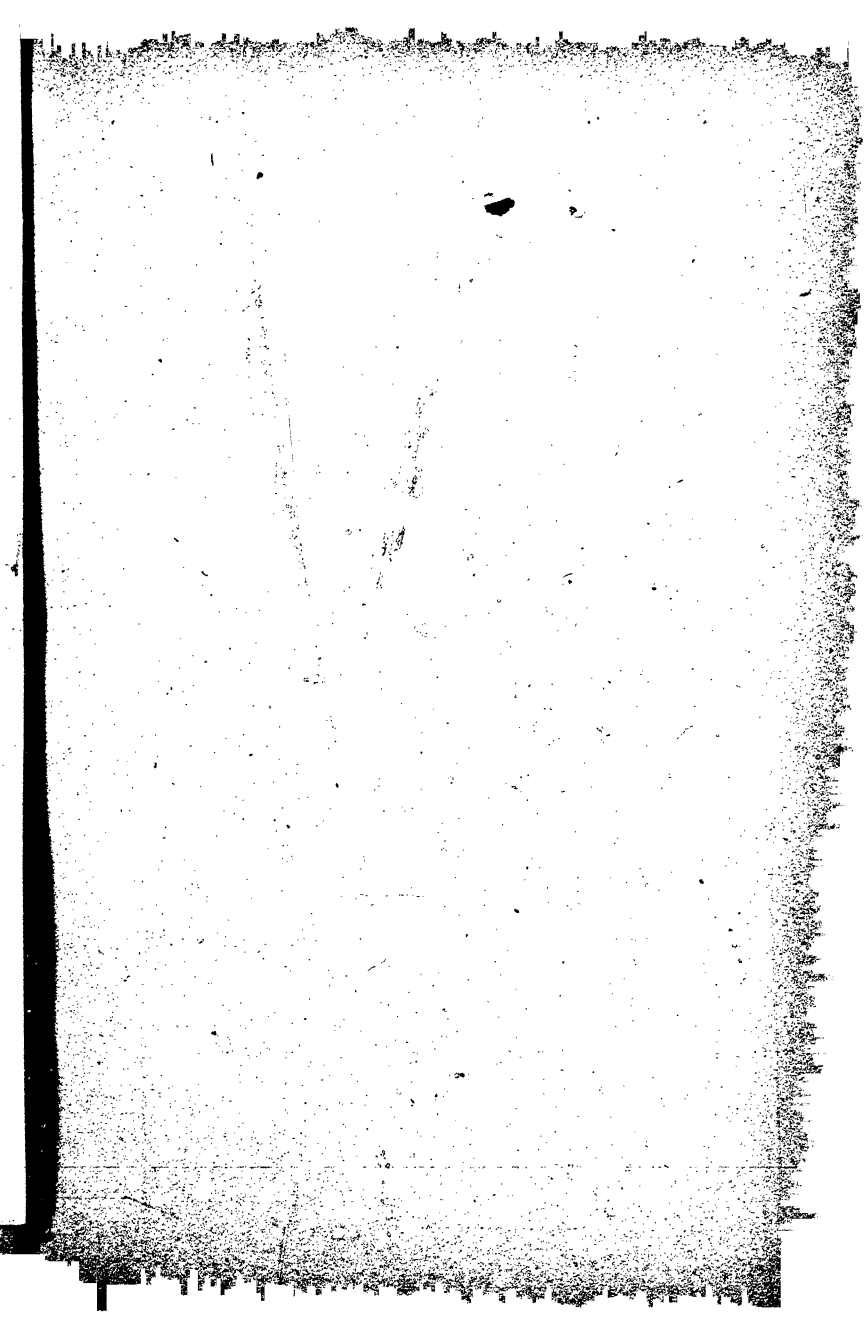
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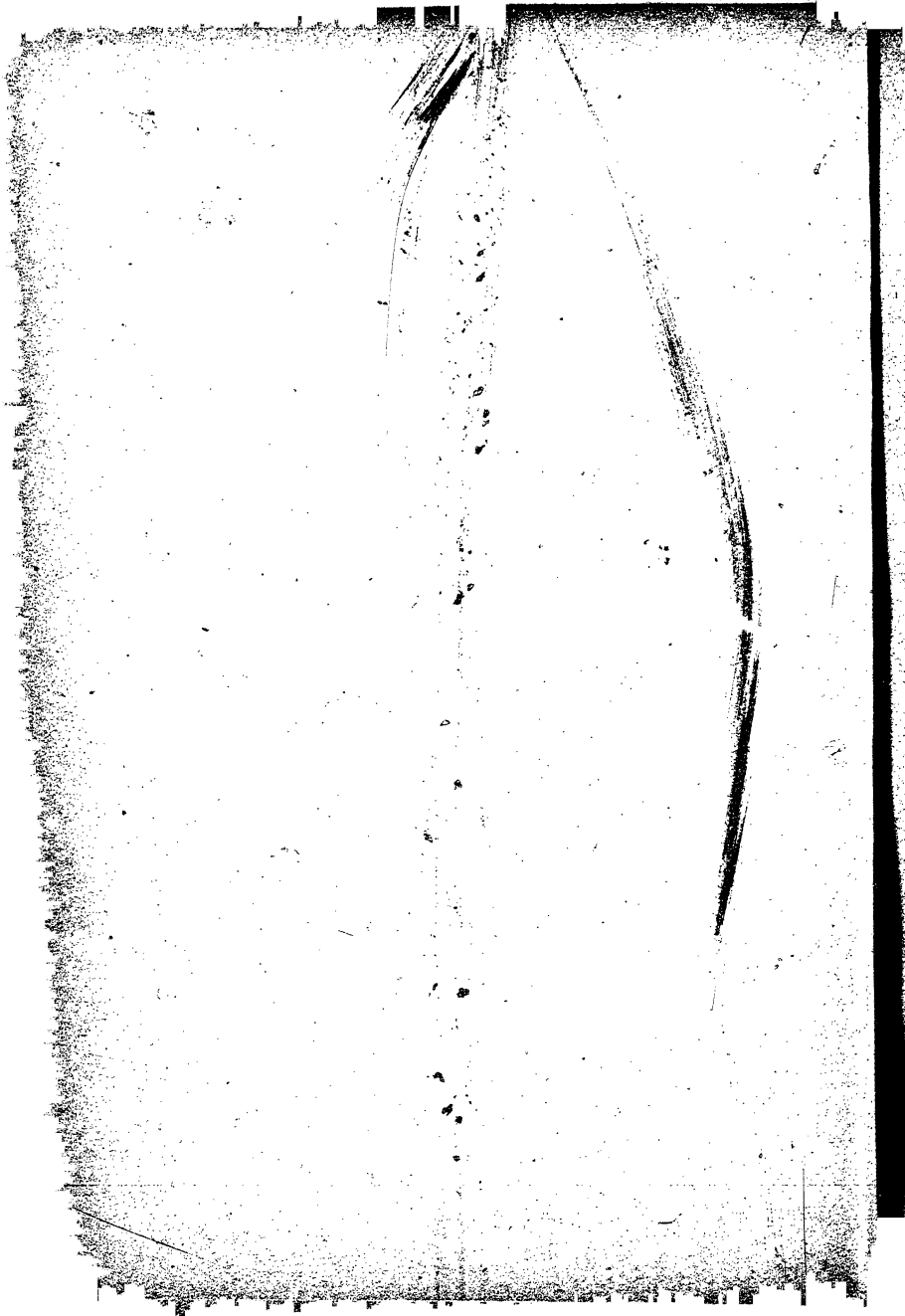
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1889





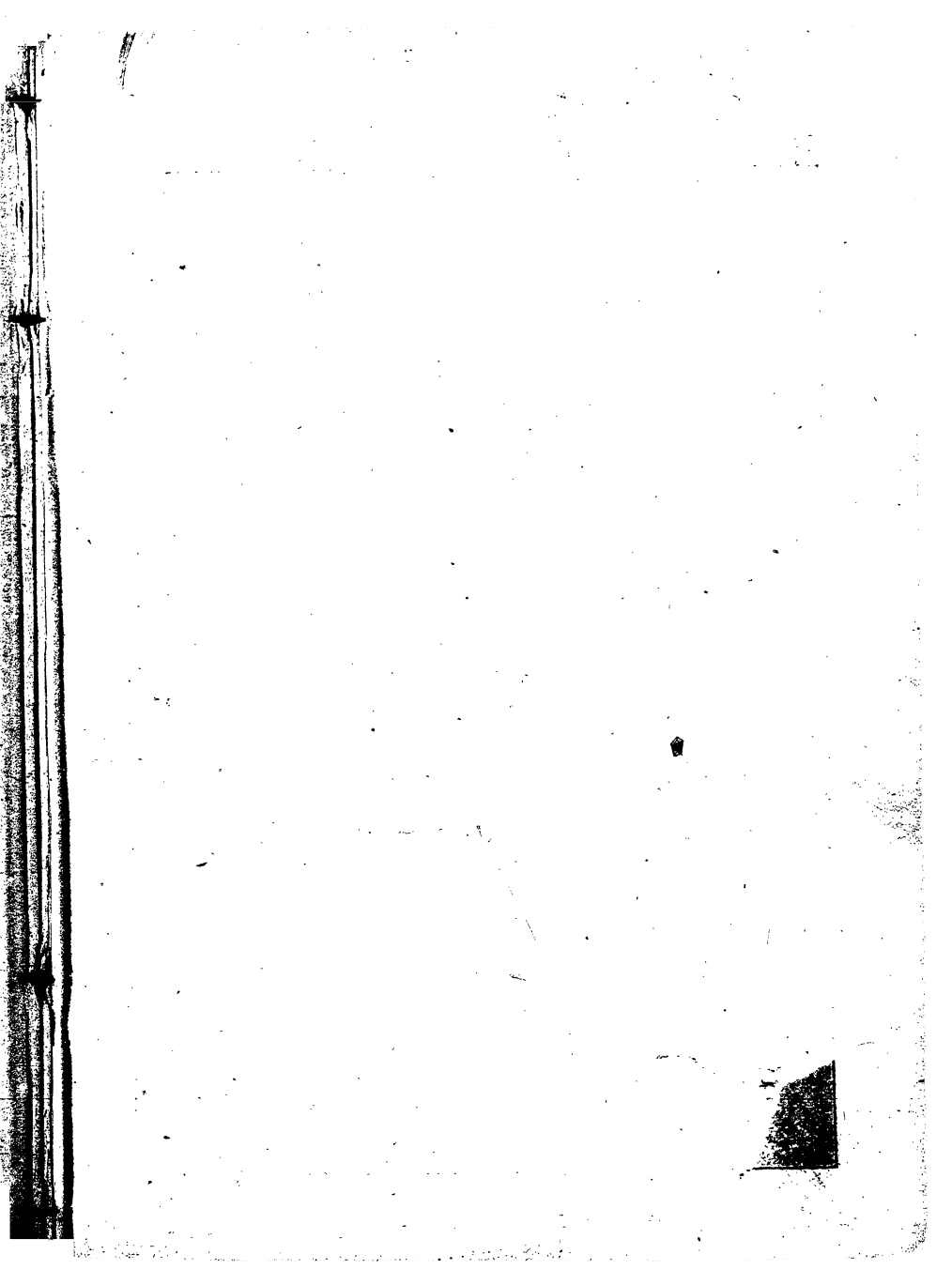


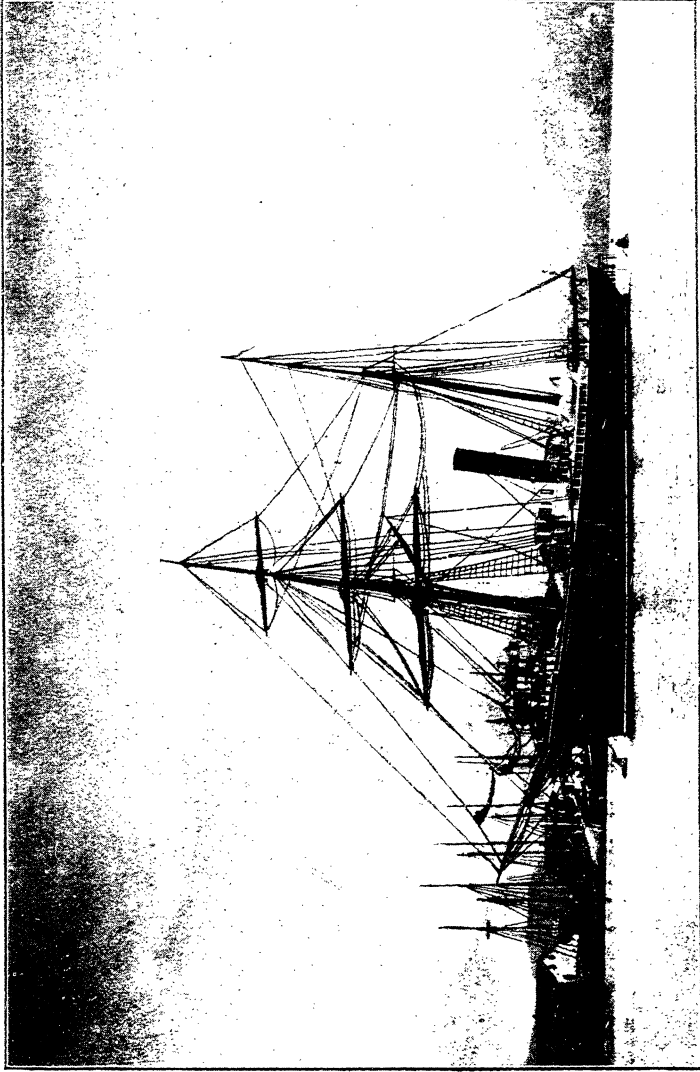


Cruise of the "Quaker"

SUMMER OF '89

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THE U. S. REVENUE STEAMER "RUSH," WITH HER PRIZES OF 1887, AT SITKA

THE  
CRUISE OF THE U. S. STEAMER

"RUSH"

IN  
BEHRING SEA

SUMMER OF 1889

"Lo! to the wintry winds the pilot yields  
His bark careering o'er unfathomed fields,  
Cold on his midnight watch the breezes blow  
From wastes that slumber in eternal snow,  
And waft across the waves' tumultuous roar  
*The wolf's long howl from Ounalaska's shore.*"

CAMPBELL—"Pleasures of Hope."

BY  
ISABEL S. SHEPARD

SAN FRANCISCO  
THE BANCROFT COMPANY  
1889



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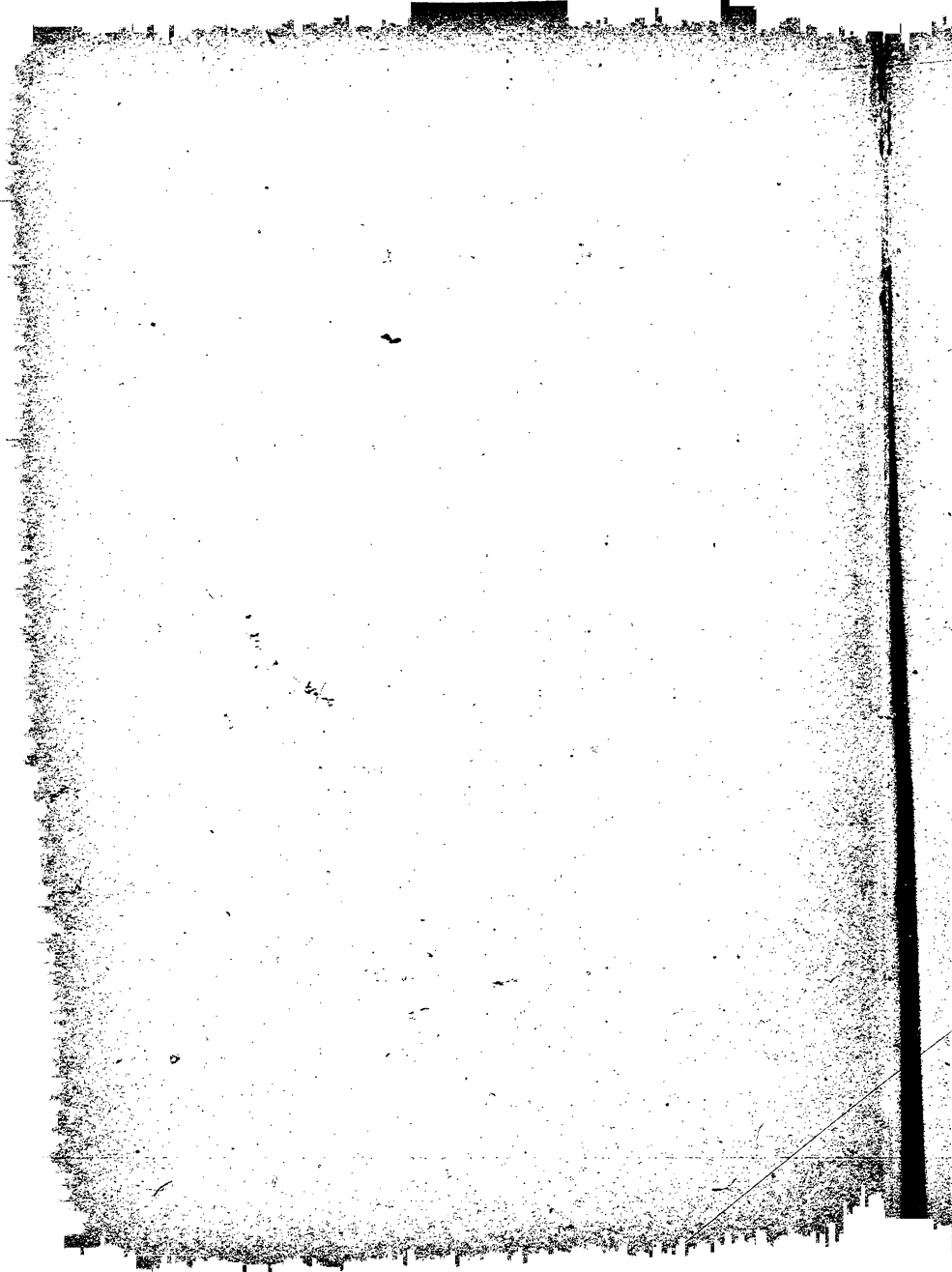
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## DEDICATION

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THIS LITTLE BOOK IS DEDICATED TO MY  
RELATIVES AND FRIENDS, FOR  
WHOM IT IS ESPECIALLY  
WRITTEN.

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## PREFACE

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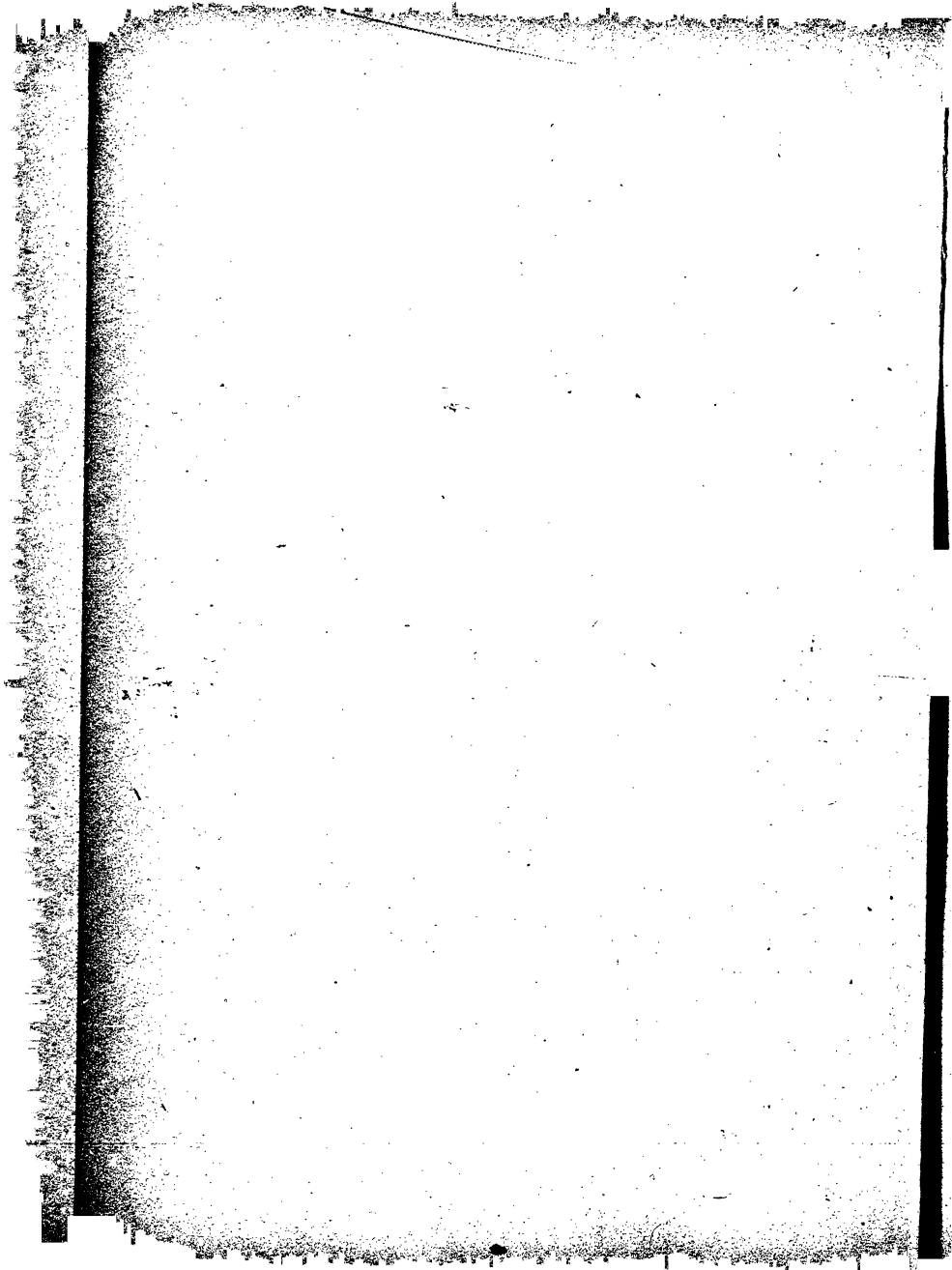
I beg the charity of the public, for this my first and only book. It is with fear and trembling I launch it on the stormy sea of criticism.

Several relatives and friends requested me to keep a diary of the trip to Oonalaska, whither I was allowed by the Treasury Department at Washington to accompany my husband, on his annual cruise in those waters, in command of the U. S. Steamer *Rush*. I did so, and it grew to such proportions as to become a book. On my return to San Francisco, I was urged to publish it, as containing matter perhaps of interest to all, pertaining, as it does, to a strange and unknown part of our country.

I make no claim to being "literary," therefore if the style be somewhat crude I will be exonerated from posing before the world as an author. I have simply tried to tell in a readable form the occurrences and incidents of a trip of four and a half months in Alaskan waters.

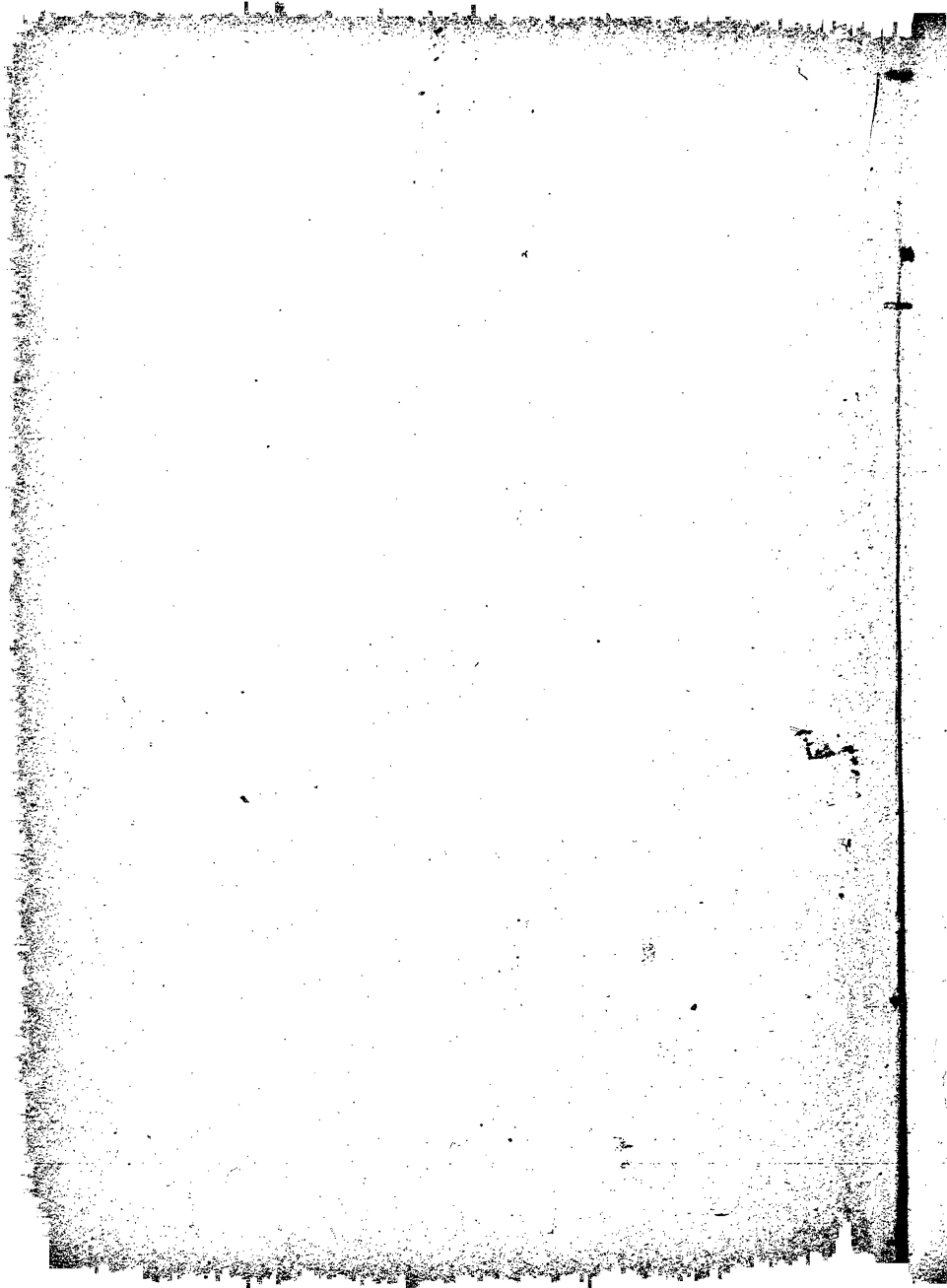
ISABEL S. SHEPARD.

NOTE.—The spelling of the Russian names adopted in this book is after Ivan Petroff, in his "Report of the Resources, Population, etc., of Alaska."



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CRUISE OF THE U. S. STEAMER

“RUSH”

IN

BEHRING SEA

SUMMER 1889

CHAPTER I.

THE START.

IT WAS MY GOOD FORTUNE, as one of those who like novelty in any form, to be permitted by the Treasury Department at Washington to accompany my husband, the Commander of the U. S. Steamer *Rush*, on his yearly cruise among the seal islands of Behring Sea, his object being to protect the seal fisheries.

At present the subject is much discussed by our American Press, as to our rights to claim the whole of Behring Sea as our private property, and thus including all the fur-bearing animals found within it. Naturally, the threats on the British side to resist the claim of the Americans, and the evident sanction given to sealers to start on their yearly depredations in that sea notwithstanding the proclamation of President Harrison to the effect that



any vessels found in the Behring Sea killing seal, or other fur-bearing animals, without an authorized right to do so, shall be captured and confiscated, etc., etc., added a little piquancy to the trip by the anticipation of perhaps a few harmless shots, and more menacing between the Revenue Cutters and Sealers, and it might be between the American and British Men-of-War, which were expected in Behring Sea during the summer.

We sailed Saturday, June 1st, at about 2 p. m., from San Francisco; out through our renowned "Golden Gate," through the almost inevitable mist or fog at that season of the year, towards the great Pacific. Day after day we sailed far out of the sight of land on this almost boundless expanse of water. Our little vessel was loaded heavily with one hundred tons of coal and five months' supply of provisions. We even rejoiced in livestock to the extent of four sheep and a little goat. The latter became quite a pet with my two little boys, though not for long, for a month later he came to an untimely end, to their great grief and that of the sailors as well. There was nothing that goat hesitated to eat, although well fed, too well fed, for he ate, the men said, twice his own size in hay every day. He tried burnt matches, cigarette stumps, pieces of rope yarn and everything else he could get hold of, till finally one day he ate an extra large quantity of waste cotton from the engine-room—this was too much, nature would no more, and the goat departed this life. It

was only after the *post mortem* examination by the men that the secret was discovered. Soon after his demise two infant gulls were caught and carried aboard by the men, in lieu of any other pets. They grew with surprising rapidity; their voracity equaled if not exceeded that of the lamented goat's. They were all bill and legs and were insatiable. To our great amusement the Dutch sailors aboard alluded to them as "chickens mit de swvim feets."

My digressions must be pardoned, I like to put things down when I think of them for fear of their escaping my memory entirely. To return to our sheep. These animals were to rusticate on a little barren island in the harbor of Oonalaska, for the summer, at our command yielding themselves for mutton.

Twenty tons of coal weighed down the after part of the main deck, and was allowed to remain there, "to keep her down by the stern," as I heard remarked, for the *Rush* has an uncomfortable habit of "kicking up," her propeller being lifted high and dry in the air, on the least pretext. Our quarters were "aft," and therefore I was glad of anything that would have a quieting effect on that end of the vessel, though it was rather inconvenient climbing over bags of coal, whenever it was necessary to go down into the cabin, or come up on deck.

I awaited my doom calmly and resignedly—it was not my first sea trip. I knew it would come—first, that horrible giddiness, then worse, that inex-

pressibly horrible sensation—nausea, *mal-de-mer*, much laughed at, but, nevertheless, only too real and incurable. When convalescing, jokes were numberless at my expense among the officers, "Well, Mrs. S—,," said one, one day, meeting me on the quarterdeck, "Do you still cling to your bucket?"

"Oh, no," answered I, I am way beyond buckets."

"What?" said he, "have you taken to tubs?"

Three decidedly uncomfortable days followed—as our friends the English would say—"beastly weather." It was aggravating, to say the least, to be told in a consolatory tone of voice by our Chief Engineer, "Splendid weather! have never seen it so smooth before at this time of year, and I've made the trip twelve times."

All this time the *Rush* was plunging her bow into great seas which threatened to engulf her, but which, when she reached them seemed to bend their lofty crests and quietly glide under.

After the first three days I was promised beautiful weather. For along the coast going north it is always apt to be rough, owing to the headwinds. The fourth day was calm, warm and bright, sky and sea of an exquisite blue. I recovered both my health and spirits, and the Doctor and myself passed a little of that day shooting, though ineffectually, much to my relief, at the poor, harmless gulls, wheeling about our ship in ever varying circles, and following us, ever on our track, seemingly the

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same birds, twelve or fourteen hundred miles on the wing.

That day we were already about five hundred miles out; one white sail was visible, the only one we saw on our lonely voyage, this part of the Pacific being so infrequently traversed, so out of the line of travel. Sailing vessels from San Francisco bound to Puget Sound leave the coast and go out three or four hundred miles or so to escape the prevailing headwinds, and then when opposite sail directly in.

Then followed three days of the blankest misery, all owing, the sailors thought, to our shooting at the gulls. We were pounded and banged about most unendurably every moment, whether waking or sleeping, and, worse than all, with a recovered appetite when *eating*. I cannot imagine anything more provoking and conducive to bad temper than when just as one is eying and preparing to swallow a coveted mouthful your chair slides away from under you, precipitating either you or the mouthful on the floor. No rest, no refuge anywhere. I vowed, as I vow every time, "I'll never go again."

The wind was blowing very hard, but it was "fair," and though all sails were set, which sailors say steadies a ship, still the *Rush* bounded about like a cork on the waves. Our conversations were extremely laconic, generally ending in the midst of a sentence with a smothered exclamation of some kind, a profound bow, a slip and a slide, and a frantic

lunge seaward, grasping wildly at anything within reach—at least such was my fate till I got my "sea legs" on. This, for more than a week, became somewhat monotonous; it was but little smoother the rest of the trip.

We were, all told, about fifty souls on board. Eight officers, besides my husband and children, four lieutenants, three engineers and the doctor—the rest, the crew, stewards and cabin boys. I the only woman, for even my two little children belonged to the opposite sex. Right royally, then, was I treated. All were ready at my beck and call, though really I was not the least despotic, and continued to be as little in the way as possible; respecting at all times the officers' right to smoke in the "chart-room," and chat among themselves, as when on other trips, without any of the "fair sex" aboard—I admit my tan and freckles hardly admitted me under that appellation—this was policy, profound tact, as I wanted to preserve my welcome.

There is an end to all things, and finally on the ninth day from San Francisco we sighted land. Up to this time not even a whale had been seen to vary the monotony of the voyage. Therefore the idea of land, anything in the shape of terra firma, whether barren or otherwise, was welcome. It was Simeonoff Island, sighted afar off at about four o'clock in the morning. Next, and at about eight, we saw near at hand Mountain Cape, Nagai Island, a bold promontory of an elevation of perhaps four or five hundred

feet, projecting into the sea. The morning was cloudy and rainy, "squally weather," the sailors called it, the rain and wind coming at intervals. The sudden sharp gusts that blow among the islands and in the little harbors, in Alaskan parlance, are termed "woollys."



## CHAPTER II.

### OUNGA.

**O**UR FIRST PORT WAS OUNGA, on the Island of Ounga, one of the Shumagin group of islands, and as we neared it the land became more and more interesting, owing to the difference in elevation, forms of the mountains, and the fantastic outlines of the shore. Many and varied were the shapes of the rocks worn by the action of the water. At the entrance to the little cove in which Ounga is situated there stands a large rock out in the water, about two hundred feet high, and perhaps a quarter of a mile in circumference, covered with a thick rich carpet of grass, like a padded cushion—from the ship it looked like moss—a fitting throne for old Neptune. Its sides were perpendicular, and in every little rift in the rock nestled a snow-white gull, while hundreds flew around and around, uttering their sharp little cries. At its base foamed and dashed the waves.

My knowledge of geology is slight, but the appearance of the rock suggested upright strata. Many believe all the Aleutian Islands are volcanic in their origin. Earthquakes are frequent, and there are a number of volcanoes scattered over the islands, two of which are at the present time active. The last one

showing much disturbance within was Akutan, on the island of the same name. Two years ago my husband saw it in eruption, as he passed the island on one of his yearly cruises. He said it burst forth with great violence—detonations as of thunder, or the discharge of artillery, were heard forty miles away; darkness spread over the sky, and ashes fell a distance of one hundred miles, while melted lava flowed in streams down its sides into the sea.

During the winter of '88 and '89 all the Aleutian Islands were greatly disturbed by a succession of earthquake shocks. The white inhabitants feared their houses would fall down about their ears. It was the severest shock felt for many years, and was especially severe at Ounga. There are hot springs on the Island of Akutan, and that of Oonalaska. About thirty miles from Oonalaska, in 1884 or '5, an island a mile in length, and near another larger island called "Bogosloff" (or Bogoslöv), which itself was thrown up some time in the early part of this century, appeared above the surface of the sea.

My husband visited it a year ago, and from the seams in the rocks there still emitted smoke and steam. The earth was of a white, chalky appearance. The inclemency of the weather prevented him from landing and examining it more closely. This all indicates especial activity under the thin crust separating the Aleutian Islands from the nether fires.

To return to Ounga, opposite this enormous rock on the other side of the entrance into the harbor



were two natural arches excavated in the rock by the action of the waves. But these are common in many places along a rocky sea coast. In other localities we saw plainly, so that even my little boys could recognize at a glance in the formation of the rocks, once, an elephant's head and part of the back; again, a crouching lion sleeping on the sea, massive and strongly calling to mind the Sphinx of Egypt, asleep for ages in a sea of sand.

It was raining when we came to anchorage; a boat was lowered into which my husband was jumping, regardless of me, when I said, "I'm going too!" He answered, "You are! didn't expect you would go in this rain." But rain had no terrors for me after being nine days a prisoner without any means of exercise. So as they were in a hurry I was coolly ordered down the ladder, instead of the gangway usually lowered for me, and hustled, unceremoniously, into the large whale-boat, manned by five men. We went slowly through the heavy sea in a blinding mist, with a strong wind blowing and at last gained the beach. We were greeted by no one, strange to say, having seen various figures flitting around before we landed. It is not that the Aleutes are devoid of that common failing, curiosity, but they are very shy, and as we neared them they retired. As we passed each little house we obtained glimpses of families of eight or ten, of all ages and sizes peering out the windows at us, the baby in its father's or mother's arms.

Ounga consists of about thirty extremely small houses, a diminutive Greek church and a store. We made our way into the church after arousing the whole population to get the key. On entering we found a copy in miniature of the not over large church at Sitka. So many tourists visit Sitka its church has become too well known for a description here. Where at Sitka the ornaments were of gold and silver, at Ounga was imitation in everything. Tawdry laces, ribbons, and cheapness in every form. The evident effort to beautify to the utmost their little sanctuary struck me as intensely pathetic. Wild-flowers filled such vessels as were available. I noticed particularly what was, no doubt, a piece of native workmanship, a wooden chandelier made in the conventional shape, holding six candles, and carved of different colors of wood, dark and light, in a not altogether tasty combination. The whole thing lacked grace and symmetry, but was probably the pride of the people. The acting priest, for I believe he was not altogether one, was a poor hunchback, almost a dwarf, with a sad look in his face and an humble demeanor. He did not talk English, at least to us, at all, and looked more like an Aleute than a Russian. He was probably of mixed parentage, as the Russians of these islands and Aleutes intermarry very extensively.

The population of Ounga consisted of about two hundred in all, in that number only nine white men or Americans, but no white women living

there at that time. The store was kept by a white man, Mr. H——, who was very gentlemanly and polite to us. In the store we found the usual conglomeration of groceries, hardware and dry-goods usually found in country shops. Two or three Aleutes were present, who stared at me in a stupid way, as if they had rarely ever seen a white woman.

While in the store I asked for a pair of mittens, my hands having suffered sadly from the cold, kid gloves and gauntlets being no protection. Mr. H—— hunted high and low, but could only produce one of each, of three different colored pairs, all so huge, really, though I was not over particular as to looks, I could not quite make up my mind to take color, size and texture not exactly coinciding with my notions of taste.

We shook hands, said good-bye, and left.

Having on close examination found us to be harmless we were followed through the town by most of the children, "their name is legion," to our boat.

Before embarking, accompanied by one of the lieutenants, I amused myself in picking wild-flowers. I noticed the natives seemed very fond of them, which must be owing to their Russian blood, for in his interesting articles G. W. Kennan speaks of the general fondness of the Russian, even in Siberia, for flowers, the meanest little hut always sheltering some flower, however simple. We noticed the ground was strewn with such as had been picked

and dropped again ; in the windows were tin cans, holding bunches, and on the graves in the small yard surrounding the church were others, freshly picked and strewn over them. Even there in that far-off dreary land the human heart is the same—"honor the dead."

The graves all had wooden crosses, the Greek cross, at their heads, and some were inclosed with palings painted white, as were also the crosses. These graves were in the heart of the yillage, constantly reminding the inhabitants, if they ever think, that "in the midst of life we are in death."

We had scarcely landed when, as if to show us what beauty really lay hid behind the clouds and gloom, the sun burst gloriously forth, flooding the heavens and earth with radiance. The sea looked deeply beautifully blue, edged with a white line of foam where it dashed against the rocks. The hills became a rich green where before they had looked so brown and somber.

The grass growing on the islands is peculiar : a broad blade about a foot long and emitting a sweet odor like that of growing corn. It was still too early for the mantle of vivid green, which in a month more covered everything. There were then no signs of the innumerable berry-bushes which we had been told abounded everywhere.

## CHAPTER III.

### SQUAW HARBOR AND SAND POINT.

**W**E LEFT DIRECTLY for a small place called "Squaw Harbor," about nine miles distant. Soon after leaving Ounga there appeared before us a school of whales, the first we had seen, sporting at a tantalizing distance. They are not sociable. those whales, and never would consent to come near enough to be looked at.

My husband as part of his duty visits all those little places while on the yearly cruise, being invested as it were, temporarily, with the offices of judge and jury also, in many cases. Complaints are brought to him from every direction, and of every description, there really being no other authority to appeal to. It is a novel position for him, and humorous cases are sometimes brought to his knowledge. Personal grievances, such as divorce cases, applications for naturalization papers and other questions of like nature were brought to this tribunal.

At Squaw Harbor there was a gold mine recently opened, and promising good results. Mr. B——, a mining engineer, who had spent the better part of two years there, and was interested in the mine, had had for the last eight months his wife and little girl, a child of ten, with him. There they had lived all

that time, their only companions two or three miners and a native woman called "Touchy Ann," or so her name was pronounced, who assisted Mrs. B—— in her housekeeping duties.

A good deal of ore had been secured, but just after the apparatus had been put in working order, a strange combination had been formed of a base material and the quicksilver, while the gold escaped, proving a total loss, much to the distress of all concerned. Mr. B—— had, therefore, made all preparations to go to San Francisco in search of some formula whereby to counteract the bad effect. There are a number of gold mines on the islands, but as yet they have not proved as rich as was anticipated.

Mrs. B——, who was in delicate health, was awaiting a steamer expected daily to take her to Oonalaska. In common humanity we could not leave her there, so my husband offered to take her there on the *Rush*. It was well we did so, for the steamer did not go to Squaw Harbor as expected, and she would have been left there probably to die, without any medical care. What a country for a poor wife and expectant mother to be left in, all alone and uncared for.

While at Squaw Harbor the men amused themselves by catching fish. These all proved to be cod. I also caught my first large fish there, and hauled him out with great pride and delight, and summoning the steward ordered him to cook that fish and no other for our dinner. It was delicious.

We were presented by some fisherman with a mag-

nificent salmon, called a king salmon, weighing thirty-two pounds. This fish differs from the salmon of commerce in that its flesh is white, while the salmon used for canning is red. It is also a much larger fish. We tried him for dinner the next day, and found he equaled if not exceeded in excellence the red salmon. Such deliciously fresh fish then was a novelty to me, and enjoyed accordingly, though I was warned it would prove the better part of our ménu during the summer.

Sand Point was our next port, where lived an agent (Mr. O'B——), of "Lynde & Houghs," of San Francisco—last year the hero of quite a tragedy. A man who was considered very dangerous had been handcuffed at Mr. O'B——'s orders, thus exciting his animosity. In some way he stole into his enemies' quarters, and succeeded in securing his revolver. Coming out he found Mr. O'B—— and fired at him, handcuffed as he was. The victim crouched behind some barrels and evaded two shots; the third struck home, entering above the nose and coming out at the throat, as it happened, not injuring any vital organs, and I saw him on that day a year afterwards, and was hardly able to detect any signs of the unfortunate event.

The murderer seemed bent on killing all at his mercy, and next shot and killed an inoffensive old man, who was peacefully smoking his pipe at his own door. The murderer escaped from the place only to find how useless it was for him to look for

shelter anywhere around these barren shores, and he finally came back and delivered himself up to justice, confessing at the same time that the face of the old man haunted him.

My husband had the unpleasant duty of taking him as a passenger and a prisoner to San Francisco on the *Rush*. When near there, just before arriving at port, and before it was yet day, the murderer, having been taken on deck, watched his opportunity and jumped overboard, evidently thinking himself nearer land than he actually was. A boat was lowered, and he was overtaken and brought back to await his merited punishment.

Codfish are caught near Sand Point in great numbers, salted and sent to San Francisco.

There were two schooners at anchor near Sand Point. One, the *Dashing Wave*, was about to sail for San Francisco, much to our satisfaction, thus affording us an unexpected chance to send news of ourselves to our impatient friends and families at home. We anchored there all night.

Our next port was "Pirates' Cove." There was to me a certain fascination about the name; and truly, if there were such marauders there, they could scarce have selected a fitter spot as a hiding-place. As we neared it we could see no signs of any habitation anywhere, yet behind a great arm of rock, which seemed to bend protectingly around them, were several little fishermen's houses, for it is a fishing station, where they catch salmon, cod and



other fish in great numbers. These are also salted and sent to San Francisco. We could from our position obtain no view of the houses. A boat was sent off with the doctor and First Lieutenant T——, carrying with them a letter or two for the fishermen—for we were, in those far-away regions, a "mail packet," and in fact acted in almost every other capacity as well.

The higher elevations among these islands are covered with snow. On the lower hills it remained in patches on the sides almost all summer, forming the most curious hieroglyphics, presenting to a vivid imagination a speaking picture language.

On the island of Ounga are two especially high mountains, with sharp, pointed peaks—we conjectured about from four to five thousand feet high. The whole island is very mountainous. The Aleutian Islands present a far different appearance from those fringing the shores of Alaska farther to the eastward and British Columbia. The latter are covered with dense vegetation down to the water's edge. A tangle of salmon berry bushes, tall ferns and many different shrubs form an impenetrable thicket through which one has to cut his way.

These bushes are but underbrush around the base of thick forests of trees, among which the spruce and pine are the most common. The red and yellow cedars, fir, balsam and hemlock are also found there. There is scarcely a road five miles in length in Alaska; all communication is by water, through channels

and rivers, of the latter, of which there are many, very large and navigable for long distances.

Back from the wooded hills along the coast are ranges of higher hills or mountains resembling the more elevated ranges of the Aleutian Islands because more bare and rugged and covered with snow. These are north of Sitka. Yet no mountains on the islands equal in grandeur Mts. Fairweather, Crillion and La Perouse at Glacier Bay.

The air was raw and chilly. As yet we had had but fitful bursts of sunshine only a few moments at a time, with intermittent showers of rain.

## CHAPTER IV.

### COAL HARBOR AND BELKOVSKY.

**A**T COAL HARBOR, another small port at which we stopped, lived Mr. and Mrs. T——. There is a coal mine there, as the name of the harbor implies. It is owned by Mr. T——. My husband had orders from Washington later in the season to test the coal and determine the practicability of its becoming the coaling station for the vessels coming into Behring Sea to cruise. The coal was not generally considered of a very good quality, nor was it very plentiful. It was not shipped anywhere, but used only in the vicinity.

On the beach about Coal Harbor is found a quantity of petrified wood.

Mr. and Mrs. T—— have a comfortable little home at this station. A year ago Mrs. T—— was the happy owner of one hundred and twenty-five chickens, but the hard and stormy winter killed off the round hundred and, to her grief, left only twenty-five. The sun, we were told, was not seen for two months during the winter of '88-9.

There is not an excess of snow on the islands, nor is the winter very long. The thermometer at that season never goes below the zero of Fahrenheit and sometimes in summer rises to seventy degrees above.

The climate is more uniform all the year round than farther east on the mainland and the interior of Alaska, where there are more decided extremes. Snow at Oonalaska and vicinity rarely falls over two feet in depth at a time, and not often so deep, while in some parts of California among the mountains snow falls to a depth of six or eight feet. The coast of Alaska and Aleutian Islands is tempered by the Japan current, which influences the climate there as does the gulf stream the coasts of France and England.

To return to Coal Harbor and Mrs. T——. Owing to the inclemency of the weather I did not go ashore and Mrs. T—— had the kindness to send me a bunch of purple pansies of which she had a number growing in her house. They were greatly appreciated, as much so, perhaps, as a pailful of the freshest of eggs, the contribution of the desolate and bereft little hens.

There was a schooner at Coal Harbor for which my husband had mail, and which in return had a box for our poor invalid, Mrs. B——.

As we steamed out of the harbor the line to which the patent log was attached got caught around our propeller, owing to the carelessness or forgetfulness of the quartermaster. Whereupon we had to stop and extricate it, and our poor quartermaster was required to resign his post in favor of some one else with a better memory, so strict must be the discipline.

Myriads of the small white seagulls resembling doves hovered about this island. There was also a beautiful bird called the sea-parrot, having a deep red, parrot-shaped bill, from which it derives its name. The body of the male is entirely black, that of the female differs only in its white breast. On the head are two small, erect, cream colored tufts, while the legs are of a bright red.

There are a few birds natives of these islands not found anywhere else. One of these is the "rosy finch," a very pretty small bird with pink or rose-colored feathers about its breast and under the wings. The rest of the body is a light brown. The only song-bird is the songster sparrow, which utters a few soft sweet notes. It is quite common. The "rock ptarmigan" or grouse, is also found, of a particular variety not common elsewhere. The latter change their plumage from brown to white in winter, as do so many of the birds near the Arctic.

There are numbers of other varieties of birds found about the coast and on the islands farther north, several of which of different kinds are occasionally found in the vicinity of Oonalaska, two of which I will mention. The loon or diver is a magnificent bird found about St. Matthew's Island. Its plumage is beautiful, about the neck it is shaded green like the throat of a humming bird, the rest of the body is black and white. The "snowy owl," like the ptarmigan, dons a winter robe of purest white and is a very handsome bird and very ornamental

when stuffed and well mounted. Myriads of ducks of many kinds fly around the shores of these islands ; most of them are migratory birds and are only found in these northern waters during the short summer. The lesser auk and muir or gillemot are the most plentiful of any bird. The Arctic turn is a beautiful bird found at St. Michael's, its plumage is a pale gray with deeper shades of the same color, and its distinguishing feature are the long feathers of the tail, which make it an exceedingly graceful bird. Dr. C——, at Oonalaska, had quite a collection which he had gathered and which he kindly showed me. It was from this source I received the most of my information concerning them.

In the vicinity of Oonalaska Island abound eagles—the bald eagle, and ravens or large black crows. Of the latter there are quantities about Sitka. I have also seen the eagle there.

In speaking of birds I am reminded of our canary aboard the ship, I say "our canary," though in reality it belonged to Mr. D——, our Chief Engineer, but on board ship any pet seems to be common property. Every once in a while he sang out so cheerily and sweetly we, by closing our eyes, almost felt transported back to our own dear homes. The song of a canary is so essentially a sweet, homelike sound, it also conveys to one the idea of a happy home.

On our way to Belkovsky we passed between the high mountain ridges of Illiasik Pass. To our right

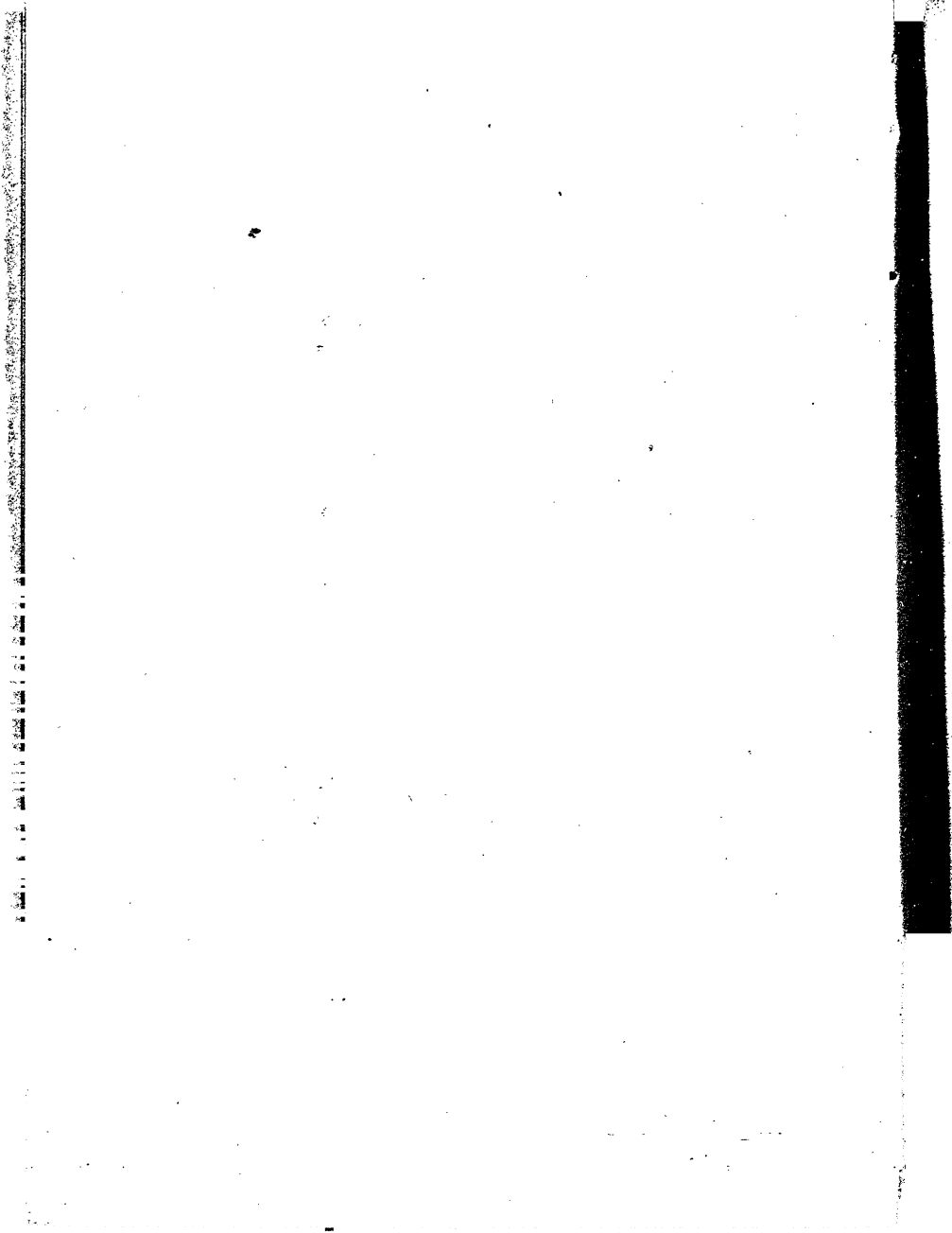
was the volcano of Pavloff, one of the most noted on the Aleutian Islands. Not extinct, but still smoking, though it was my misfortune not to see the top owing to a cloud which completely enveloped it. In fact almost all the highest peaks were thus cut off from view. Pavloff is about six thousand feet high. Not far from it is a village called Nikolaievsky. We did not stop there but kept on towards Belkovsky. In this wide pass, which is about ten miles across, we saw a number of "killers" as they are called by the sailors, or the grampus. They eat the seal. We could see their sharp-pointed fins projecting from the tops of their backs as they sported around in the water. Dr. P—— got his gun and tried to get a shot at them, but they did not stay above the water long enough to give him time to aim at them.

Belkovsky—the quaintest little place in the world, or so it looked to me as I viewed it through the glasses from the deck of the ship when we stopped. It was not so much so when we were fairly in it. I could not but think as I looked at it through the glass, of the children's little toy villages or Noah's Ark, which as every one remembers always has a number of stiff gayly painted little houses, probably for Noah and his family to live in after they landed on Mt. Ararat. The houses at Belkovsky appeared just such. The most prominent were painted blue with red roofs. There were some white with green roofs and yellow frames and so forth. Over the one store was hoisted, in honor of our arrival, a large



ESKIMO IN KYACK. ST. MICHAEL'S, ALASKA





United States flag. It seemed to be equally of a size with some of the houses near it, as it spread out to the breeze.

We "lay to," as it is called in nautical language, without dropping our anchor, for there is no good anchorage there. A boat was lowered and the doctor Lieutenant W., my husband and I went ashore. The *Rush* had stopped quite a distance out to be on the safe side, for the year previous my husband had experienced a severe blow while at Belkovsky. A "woolly" or a sharp gust of wind came up very suddenly and with such violence that the vessel was nearly lifted bodily out of the water and overturned. The wind shoots down the mountain sides and into the water, and at such times it is best to be out as far as possible from the land.

It was a long pull for the men, and the wind blew very fresh, causing quite a little sea, which we feared might make it difficult to land. However, it did not prove as bad as we had apprehended. The boat was pulled up as far as possible on the beach and one of the men coolly shouldered me—which proceeding by that time had become a matter of course—and set me down on dry land.

There is not the demonstrativeness and curiosity exhibited by the Aleutes that you find nearly everywhere else among Indians, and though the whole town knew of our advent there was scarcely a soul in sight. We walked up a beaten path to the aforesaid store, the center of the village.

## CHAPTER V.

### BELKOVSKY—CONTINUED.

**B**ELKOVSKY IS SITUATED AT the base of a very high and steep hill or mountain and the town itself seems to rest upon an incline of forty-five degrees. Our whole course was upwards. They are much more pretentious at Belkovsky than at Ounga, it is a larger place to be sure, but there is an air of thrift and neatness entirely lacking in the latter place. This neatness, however, applied only to the store and its surroundings, and was due to the skillful management of Mr. C——. There was a flight of steps leading up the steepest part of the bank, and as we neared the store a very kindly but stupid looking Aleute, quite neatly dressed in our style of costume, or rather the dress of our frontiersman, came slowly towards us and said, "Me chief!" We shook hands and said we were glad to see him and began making some inquiries of him. But "me chief" was about as far as he could get with his English.

Near by was his neat little wooden house, on one side of which was the first of the skin boats we had seen. It rested upon two wooden props and was evidently quite new. These boats, which are in general use among the Aleutes and Eskimos, are

called bydarkas. They differ from all other Indian boats as well as those of other Alaskan tribes. The boats of the latter are open and hewn out of trunks of trees. Necessarily, as there is no large timber found on the islands, the Aleutes had to adopt another style. A light frame is made of driftwood, with the skin of the hair seal stretched tightly over it, and over the top as well. According to the length and general size of the bydarka there are one or two and sometimes three openings left for the owners to occupy. Around these holes is fastened an open bag of skin with a drawstring around the top. They dexterously step into this mere eggshell and drawing the drawstring up tightly around their bodies, are by this means completely water tight and are thus also guarded against shipping any seas.

Sometimes they carry an extra passenger or two who are stowed away "between decks," as it were. The boat is rarely any deeper than two feet in the middle. A friend made the discovery in this way: A small bydarka came alongside the ship he was on, containing to all outward appearances but one occupant, who, leaving his boat, climbed aboard. Happening to glance over a few minutes afterward my friend saw a second figure wriggling itself through the hole and slowly emerging head first, at length attaining full size it sprang out. Shortly a second head appeared and after many contortions the body it belonged to succeeded in drawing itself to a more natural posture. My friend was actually alarmed

for fear there might be several more to follow, but was relieved on that score by the three soon taking their departure as they came, without further developments. In such air-tight compartments it is hard to see how they could live long. I have been told a man in a single boat will deliberately turn completely over and, in the words of the well-known song, "bob up serenely" on the other side.

They paddle long distances in these bydarkas going from one island to another, often as many as forty or fifty miles. The paddle is short with a blade at each end, which they use alternately on either side and with it also balance themselves. The larger and more pretentious bydarkas are used for hunting and are furnished with spears and extra paddles, which are slid under strings drawn tightly over the top. The Aleutes are very skillful in handling the spear and use it in hunting the seal and sea-otter.

For further protection the men wear skin coats. These are made of the lining of bears' entrails and of the sea-lion intestines and are perfectly impervious to water. They are very light and comfortable and are called kamlicas. They cost about five dollars, and are so expensive from the great care and time it takes to make them. Thus equipped the Aleute is ready for much danger and exposure during fishing and hunting the seal and sea-otter. They are driven on these expeditions only by hunger, for like most Indians they are lazy. The seal is their main standby, they put it to a thousand

uses. It is their food and was formerly their clothing. It furnishes them also with oil for greasing, as a light and as fuel in winter.

There is another kind of skin boat formerly used by the natives more. Few are found now; these are called "bydaräs." They are much larger and open, more like the ordinary boat in shape. They are large enough to contain eight or ten men. In these members of different tribes went about visiting one another, in gala array, the latter being whole suits of the fine skins of which their kamli-cas are made, trimmed in feathers. The Indians make fac-similes of these boats and their inmates in imitation of that custom. One of these was kindly presented to us by Col. B——, of Oonalaska. Were it not for these miniature boats all knowledge of this custom would have sunk into oblivion.

After this long digression I return to our old chief, who followed meekly in our wake, as we proceeded farther. Near his store Mr. C——, who was the happy possessor of this, the center of everything of the village, met us and greeted us very cordially, saying pointedly to the doctor, "I am very glad to see you," immediately telling us his little daughter was ill. They have no physician at Belkovsky at all, and but a year previous Mr. C—— had, for want of medical assistance, lost a little infant eight months old.

He carried the doctor off with him, after inviting us all to his house. We did not accept immedi-

ately, but went to the store and looked around there, while my husband delivered mail, made various inquiries and transacted other business.

Lieutenant W——, who had made several trips to these regions before, and was unmarried, and knew of a nice young Russian lady who lived in Belkovsky, asked me to accompany him to call on her. Her name, as do most of the Russian names, ended in "off," but her first name was Mattie, a combination very pleasing, but odd, for Mattie is a familiar name to me in my own family. I discovered it was the custom to address the Russian young ladies at once by their first names, without prefixing the "Miss," and that among the gentlemen as well as ladies.

We were directed to her house—literally hers, as I will explain farther on—by a bright looking girl, as we supposed, but who, we discovered later, was a bride of three weeks, and who talked very good English, having lived a great deal in San Francisco, and who was a cousin of Mattie. The latter was not at home at that moment, but as the distances were not extraordinary, even from one end of the village to the other, she was sent for.

The cousin ushered us into a neat little parlor, resembling, for all the world, some of our family sitting-rooms, only very primly arranged, as befitted such an imposing room as the parlor. The windows were neatly curtained with white muslin; the furniture was covered with the conventional unbleached linen covers, bound with red braid. On

the cover of one of the chairs was a great rent, in apologizing for which afterwards, Mattie said occurred the night of her cousin's wedding, and was allowed to remain there in remembrance of the happy occasion. Human nature is the same the world over, whether Russian, Aleute or American blood runs in one's veins.

There was on the table a little dish with wild flowers in it, a cabinet photograph or two beside it resting upon small brackets. One of them I recognized, a young Russian, with a very sweet tenor voice, I met a year ago in Sitka and who, I found, was Mattie's cousin. On the walls were hung crayon portraits of the family, *le pere, la mere, et la fille*. There had been a piano, on which Mattie was quite a proficient performer, but which now stood in the hall all boxed and ready to be sent to San Francisco, as it had to be retuned and repaired throughout.

These details we took in while waiting for mademoiselle to appear. The cousin told us Mattie's father had built the Greek church, which was directly opposite the house.

The father was born in Sitka and was a Russian priest, and had in one way and another amassed a considerable fortune, one method being the following, as published in the San Francisco papers: He pretended to have made the discovery of a new saint, an image of whom he caused to be placed in the church. He then commanded the people that many and rich offerings be brought to its shrine.



These offerings the shrewd father appropriated himself. He was not miserly, however, and disposed of his money as freely as he got it. It was also told that his wife succeeded in taking, unbeknown to him, a little at a time and carefully stowing away in a trunk the sum of five thousand dollars, though he found it before his death and disposed of it, summarily, on his various trips to San Francisco.

With the exception of the one at St. Paul this church at Belkovsky was the largest and most pretentious edifice in Aleutian Alaska. Mattie was now an orphan, her Aleute mother being also dead. She inherited all the property left, the house and a number of cows. She was the "belle" of Aleutian Alaska, I gathered, her popularity arising from three causes: she could dance, could speak good English and was quite intelligent, which, with the exception of dancing, could by no means be said of all.

Mattie being detained we had time to visit the church, whose exterior was not so artistic as that of the church at Sitka, lacking the dome and steeple. The roof was painted green, as is usual with the roofs of the Greek churches. On the top and center of the slanting roof was perched a small cupola with two ball-like protuberances on either end. The body of the church was painted white, with yellow window frames. What style of architecture it was I was unable to determine. The entrance was covered with a portico, above which hung a chime of bells. The interior was painted a dark blue, relieved

with trimmings of white, very new and fresh. In its general outlines it was almost a fac-simile of the main part of the Greek church at Sitka, and judging from the three or four I visited, but following out a plan after which all Greek churches are built. At the end opposite the door there is a platform, raised slightly above the level of the floor, across which is a partition extending from one side of the church to the other, dividing the platform into two parts. The inner part, or "Holy of Holies," no female is allowed to enter. There are three doors opening into this inner place, but the middle doors are always closed, and only open when the priest is officiating. He stands a little back and within them during the greater part of the service, with his back to the congregation, and dressed in his gorgeous robes of silk, brocaded in gold and silver. On these doors is expended the most lavish ornamentation. At Sitka the doors are of real bronze and very beautiful. At Belkovsky they were covered with gilt fretwork, within which were set six oil paintings, the heads of their favorite saints. There were other paintings on either side of the doors, such as of Christ baptized by John the Baptist, the Lord's Supper, etc., altogether presenting quite a gallery. Two velvet banners heavily embroidered in gold, were, I think, the most valuable things the church contained. There were a few silver candelabra and censers, perhaps imitation, placed here and there.

There are many points of resemblance between

the Greek and Catholic churches, and especially in the outward ceremonies. The former do not believe in the Pope, however.

The deacon, or he who displayed the church to us, proved to be brother to my Sitka friend of the tenor voice.

At last, in less time than it has taken me to tell this, we returned to the house where Mattie herself was waiting to receive us. She recognized Lieut. W—— at once, and having met my husband and eldest little boy a year ago, greeted me as one familiar to her. She was small, dressed neatly in a calico dress with a silk handkerchief folded diagonally across her breast, and a white apron. She talked in an easy, unembarrassed way and was very natural in her manners.

But in a few moments we had to excuse ourselves. We were to leave Belkovsky and go some distance that evening to a safe anchorage. It is impossible with the poor charts and inefficient surveying made among these islands to run at night.

We therefore said good-bye, but Mattie said she would go with us, and suiting the action to the word, she threw a small shawl over her head and accompanied us, saying, "Mrs. C—— hopes you will come and call on her and her little sick girl before you leave." We went to Mrs. C——'s accordingly and found her in the neatest and largest house in the village. We were requested to walk upstairs to the bedroom where the little invalid lay. It was a

cheery, comfortable room ; matting on the floor, a stove, a neat-looking dressing-case in a corner, and bright paper on the walls. The little girl was sitting up in the midst of blankets and pillows. Mrs. C—— was a large woman with a bright, fresh complexion, and a sweet, low voice ; as she spoke with a foreign accent it was particularly pleasing. Mr. and Mrs. C—— are Swedes. Mr. C—— came out to Alaska unmarried to seek his fortune, returning in time to Sweden for his bride, whom he brought immediately back with him. There they had lived for six years, away from home and friends. A dreary home enough, or so it appeared to me on the cold, bleak day I saw it. Belkovsky, it is true, commanded a magnificent stretch of sea and mountains to cheer the eye, but so lonely it could not cheer the heart.

The doctor had pronounced the little girl's ailment to be quinsy sore throat. We remained there talking till summoned by my husband, at the termination of the doctor's visits among the ailing, of whom there were at least a dozen.


Before leaving, however, Mr. C——showed us some very large sea-otter skins. They are such a lovely rich fur, the white-tipped hairs adding much to their beauty.

Mr. C—— and two men pulled off to the ship for the necessary medicines, after which we sailed away, feeling we had had a very pleasant time indeed.

At Belkovsky the condition of the Aleutes is terrible, owing to that frightful disease, scrofula, being so prevalent. Dr. Jackson, of Sitka, speaking of his visit there, said "He had not the face to ask to have missionaries sent there." In his estimation, as far as morality and sickness were concerned, they appeared to be worse off there than any other place he visited on the islands. As I mentioned before, there is no doctor in Belkovsky, neither is there a schoolmaster, nor missionary. A filthy looking monk with long hair was the arbiter of their fates. He went to Oonalaska later, on his way back to Russia, and a good riddance he was.

## CHAPTER VI.

### KING'S COVE AND EAST ANCHOR HARBOR.

E ARRIVED AT OUR ANCHORAGE at about ten o'clock P. M., at which time it still remained light, the nights, then the middle of June. being only two or three hours long. We expected to start again for Oonalaska at two A. M., and I went to bed in the firm belief that when I awoke we should be quite a distance on our way. But *L'homme propose et Dieu dispose*, and on awakening at six A. M., discovered the *Rush* laying as quietly as ever, fast at her anchorage. Dressing quickly, I rushed on deck to demand an explanation. To my amazement, my husband replied the barometer was lower than he had ever seen it before, and we were to await further developments in a safe place.

Still there were compensations for our forced delay. I had not tired of the wild grandeur of the snow-covered hills, in their multifarious forms, and they were almost enough to absorb my whole attention.

At breakfast, Captain S—— said, "I'm going out in one of the boats to take some soundings about the harbor." This was King's Harbor, a small indentation on the westernmost point of the mainland of Alaska, projecting into Behring Sea. There was

a unanimous chorus of "Me too, me too," from myself and children. As my husband does not like to refuse us anything reasonable, we were allowed to go. The cutter, one of the small boats, had already gone out, commanded by our gigantic but good-natured "bo'sun" (boatswain), and a crew of men, carrying with them the seine to make a "haul" of salmon if they could get them. Soon we were under way. My husband commanded, "Heave your lead!" and soundings were made. "Quarter less five!—mark five!—deep six!—mark seven!—ten fathoms and no bottom, sir!" sung out the man at the lead, showing the harbor to be deep enough for good anchorage till within a short distance of the shore.

We rowed around in a semicircle, and finally came upon the cutter, where the men were hauling the seine. The net was sixty-five fathoms long. The men rowed out, and stretched it in the form of a semicircle, open towards the shore. At the lines, at either end, pulled five or six men. They had just made a haul as we came up, but had not been successful. In several attempts they had caught only about a dozen fish—lovely salmon trout, green and silver.

On the coast of Texas, where I had accompanied my husband on similar expeditions, the men, in hauling the seine, made tremendous catches of fish of every conceivable kind, once or twice thus capturing a small shark, which created a terrible

excitement among both fish and men, therefore I was disappointed in this poor result, especially as I had been told the wonderful Alaska fish stories, such as there being so many in the streams as to crowd each other out on the banks, etc. It was too early, the wiseacres said, for salmon.

We walked around the pebbly beach for a distance, and picked up and examined the few shells and sea mosses strewn about. These were neither unusual nor uncommon. There is nothing of consequence in that department of zoology found about the Aleutian Islands.

When tired of that, we noticed that in a little ravine near by, the snow came down very low and quite within reach. We thought it would be amusing to make a snowball or two in the middle of June. Therefore at my husband's orders we were rowed over near it, across a little "bayou," as they would call it in the Gulf of Mexico, where the water was as clear as crystal and of a beautiful green color, through which we could see the bottom, all stones, moss and shells, gleaming white below. We readily climbed to the snow and my boys—and I admit it I also—had great fun with it. The snow was frozen hard and being a steep incline made a delightful coasting place. Having no sleds, we stood on our feet and by bending forward a little slid swiftly down that way, at a most exhilarating speed.

Underneath ran a stream of clear cold water, over which the snow was arched. Where here and there



it had broken through we could look down and see it rushing and plunging on its way to the sea. Far above we could see where it fell over the rocks in a beautiful cataract, and I longed to reach it, but it was too far and steep a climb to undertake just then.

All this time it had been raining incessantly, but not hard. Enveloped in "oilskins" and "sou'westers," we did not mind it. One gets used to rain among the Aleutian Islands and near Sitka. I found the "sou'wester," though a rather masculine head-gear, was the best for all purposes in rainy weather, and on occasions such as those I did not care much as to personal appearance.

A quarter of a mile or so from the stream was a good sized "barabara" or underground house, built by a Mr. King, from whose vicinity the harbor derived its name of "King's Cove." But Mr. K—— had evidently long deserted his two-roomed dwelling and gone to seek his fortunes elsewhere.

We were now ready enough for lunch, and jumping into our boat, hoisted sail, and hastened merrily back to our brave little craft, where we arrived in due time, cold, wet and hungry, but thoroughly convinced "it was lots of fun."

The evening of the same day we left our moorings to test the weather outside. After steaming about ten miles and encountering very strong winds and a high sea, with a prospect of much worse beyond, we ran into a safe little harbor called East Anchor Harbor, near Cape Pankoff, where we were completely

sheltered from the gale. The barometer fluctuated but little, continuing very low. That night the wind blew a perfect hurricane and we were glad to be so safe, though even there the extra anchor had to be "let go."

The following morning the weather continued about the same, and there was little to be done all day but wait patiently till the blow was over. The men were ordered to don their best blue clothes and were then drilled by Lieut. W—— in the first small arm tactics. The "green hands" were too amusing, looking so awkward and, to use an expressive phrase, "sheepish."

I read most of the day. Capt. S——, the doctor, and one or two others went ashore to prospect. They found some sponges on the shore, which the doctor said came in very nicely for any unlooked-for surgical operation he might have to perform, as his stock was small.

They also found several varieties of wild-flowers new to me, though they were not then nearly so plentiful as later in the summer. The walking over the hills is quite difficult in this part of the world, as the ground is covered with old growths of grass, perhaps a foot or two deep, into which the feet sink so far walking grows very tiresome.

The second day dawned and still the wind had not perceptibly abated. It was far better to remain in a good snug harbor than to brave the storm outside,

particularly as the wind was "dead ahead" on our course towards Oonalaska.

I begged permission to go ashore; my request was granted, a boat lowered and the family started, accompanied by our doctor, who was something of a "Nimrod," and who wanted to try his luck with gun and rod. There was little to shoot, but a trout stream was not far away.

It was difficult landing, for the tide was out, and the rocks, now above the surface of the water, were covered with the slimy seaweed, so that walking on them without slipping was almost an impossibility. The boat grounded at least ten yards from the beach and we had a difficult time in making our way to dry land. As we were in no hurry we had ample time to study the beautiful view spread out before us. The point of land sheltering us from the gale was an abrupt hill cutting the sea sharply like a wedge. This was Cape Pankoff. Running back, the land formed almost three-fourths of a circle, bounded by the soft outline of the hills, which here were less high and rugged than the greater part of the land we had seen. It had stopped raining a little, and only a soft mist spread veil-like over the landscape. Far back we could see through its transparent curtain bolder, loftier peaks, covered with snow. Our little vessel, as she lay in the harbor, looked lonely in that vast, silent nature, so forbidding, so chilling in aspect. She seemed a pleasing refuge in my eyes; the idea of living about here

made me shudder ; it seemed a vast tomb, over which I could not exult as Bryant does in his "Thanatopsis :"

"The hills, rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun, etc.,  
Are but the solemn decorations all  
Of the great tomb of man."

Arriving at the stream I determined to try my luck also at trout-fishing. We each sought what we considered the most likely little hollow the trout would select, and quietly bent all our attention to fishing.

Luck was with me at first, but after having caught five very small trout both luck and patience left me, and, surrendering hook and line to one of my little boys, I betook myself to the hills to hunt for wild-flowers. To my selfish satisfaction the doctor also caught only five, which, on our arrival at the ship, he gallantly presented to me. They proved an acceptable addition to our menu at lunch.

Near the stream we found two or three "barabaras," which we examined closely. The door or entrance to them is always low, the floor below the surface of the ground two or more feet. One has to stoop to enter. They are very warm, but without means of ventilation. In these we were told some hunters spent part of their time when hunting deer, a few being found among the hills, on the peninsula. The barabaras inside resemble an ordinary hut, floor, walls and ceiling being of wood. The most pretentious have a window or two set in

the front of them. They are usually dug out of the side of a hill. Those that are not, when nearing them from any other side but the front, look simply like mounds of earth, being entirely covered with it. This is usually grown over with grass, interspersed with wild-flowers, as is the surrounding earth. Those built on level ground are more deeply excavated, and one has to descend sometimes several feet below the surface of the ground on entering. They are often so low inside that it is impossible to stand erect.

The time at Oonalaska is three hours later than at San Francisco, and six hours later than at New York city, making San Francisco the center of the United States, Alaska being part, properly speaking. This is a new idea, for few realize the real geographical position of Alaska. In that latitude the daylight in midsummer lasts till nearly midnight; light comes again at about two. In midwinter lights have to be lit at four o'clock P. M. and darkness lasts till eight or nine A. M.

## CHAPTER VII.

### OONALASKA.

**A**T DAYBREAK, Sunday morning, the weather having become better and the barometer risen a little, we weighed anchor and started towards Oonalaska, or Iliuliuk, as the Russians call it. Fortunately for us the sea was not as rough as we had anticipated, yet the wind was ahead and the ship pitched and tossed in all directions as we breasted the seas, giving to the vessel a most uncomfortable and disagreeable motion. But we were bound, at last, to this the "metropolis" of the Aleutian Islands, Oonalaska, and therefore submitted cheerfully.

Soon we were in Oonimak Pass, which connects the Pacific Ocean with the Behring Sea. It is about ten miles broad, so there was not much certainty of smooth water, as in other and narrower passes. Very much to my regret the magnificent volcano, "Shishaldin," on the island of Oonimak, was completely enveloped in fog. This volcano is the most imposing and highest of the mountains on the Aleutian Islands and is over nine thousand feet high. We were rewarded to some extent by the view of several very pretty waterfalls, caused by the melting snow, coursing down the sides of the hills, at one moment

a thin line of silver, then, as the wind caught it, shaking it out into a silvery veil of spray. With the sun shining the scenery must be surpassingly beautiful.

We neared Akutan Island, on which the volcano of Akutan is situated. I could have indulged in a few tears when, as we came opposite an opening through which the volcano on a clear day is plainly visible, we beheld a solid curtain of fog shutting out every vestige of the mountain. But the hope still lingered within me of seeing it on our homeward journey. It is not often that these mountains are free from fog. Nature seems jealous of their grandeur.

Flocks of muir or gilletot, the first we had seen, floated on the waves, till approaching them too near, they simultaneously rose and flew in a horizontal line over the water far ahead, and then alighted again, preceding us thus a great distance; displaying in their flight their snow-white breasts, in strong contrast to the velvety blackness of their rapidly fluttering wings. These birds are very numerous about the islands, and lay quite a large and very pretty egg. These are of different colors, some white, others light green, dark green, and light brown, all spotted in a curious way with black and dark brown spots, so as to appear artificially done. They are a pretty pear shape.

At six o'clock P. M. we still had thirty-four miles to go to reach Oonalaska. It would therefore be near eleven before we arrived. At that time it

would be about dark so we could see nothing. Reflecting that there were two whole months before me I expected to spend in Oonalaska, and having overcome the wild impatience of extreme youth, I betook myself to bed, "to sleep, perchance to dream" till next morning, when there would be leisure to view the surroundings.

However, when we came to anchor, the sudden cessation of all motion caused me to awaken. I restrained my natural impulse to go on deck, and dosed off, to be re-awakened at three A. M. by little Emma, who, childlike, wanted to "see" as soon as possible. A few minutes more and I was thoroughly aroused by the news that the United States naval steamer *Thetis*, directly from Sitka, had come in shortly after the *Rush* and anchored near us. At this time it was already broad daylight. The clock crept slowly along, pointing an unconscionably long time at four, five and six—too early for civilized and ancient people like myself to think of arising. Half-past six, and my little boys began to stir. At last I might without impropriety get up, dress and go on deck. It was the work of but a few moments. Such a pretty, peaceful scene met my view. Was this quiet, land-locked, cosy little harbor really so far away from all outward communication with the civilized world? Although it was June, the hills were bare, and but just turning green—with a background of snow-covered peaks—and Oonalaska itself was but a little village, yet there were several vessels in



port, and the *Thetis* was alongside of us, as she had been not long before in San Francisco. All was life and bustle. The flags were unfurling themselves to the wind, and every one was talking and laughing in animated tones. Oonalaska was that day awaking from its long winter night of sleep and inactivity. A pleasant sight, truly, and one that will long remain in my mind.

The water was so calm it mirrored in its depths the green hills and snowy mountains, causing the harbor to look less large than its actual size and giving it the appearance of a basin, it was so round, deepest in the middle. The harbor is an excellent one, affording shelter to the largest ships, notwithstanding its diminutive size.

Moored at a buoy a short distance from shore lay a whale-ship, owned in New Bedford, Mass., but just returned from a disastrous voyage in the Arctic, in quest of whales. She had been crushed by the ice, and only by a miracle preserved long enough to be brought to Oonalaska. There was some uncertainty as to what course to pursue in regard to her; whether to attempt to repair her for another cruise or abandon her altogether.

Moored at the dock were the *St. Paul* and *Dora*, the Alaska Commercial company's steamers, which carry freight from San Francisco to all ports on the islands in which the company is interested. They are laid up all winter in Oakland Creek, California, running only during the summer months.

A bark, which we had seen the previous evening, was on her way, laden with coal, and was expected in every minute. The revenue steamer *Bear*, which was to have followed us in a few days from San Francisco, was also expected, and the steamer *Bertha*. No wonder Oonalaska was in an unusual state of excitement. It was not often so many vessels arrived in this port at once.

As soon as practicable the *Rush* was moored alongside the *St. Paul*, and nearer the wharf to be at hand for coaling the next day. Oonalaska is the chief and only coaling station on the islands. Steamers cruising in the Behring Sea, and those on their way to and from the Arctic, procure their coal there.

From the wharf to the company's house there was a good plank walk, an extravagant luxury unknown on most of the islands. It was at this house I was promised, through the kindness of the Alaska Commercial Company, a pleasant resting-place for the two months my husband would be cruising in the sea. Naturally I looked quizzically at it, its outward appearance suggested neatness and comfort inside, and I was not disappointed.

The company's house, called in Russian the "bull showy dome," according to the pronunciation, or "big house," was the nucleus of the village, about which centered all the interest of the place, at least in the estimation of all visitors. A tall flag-pole was reared in front, and at its base, pointing seaward, stood five little old Russian guns. An inclosed

space near by was proclaimed a croquet ground, to the left and nearest the wharf was a cunning little house, a billiard parlor ; on the right, the store of the village. On either side beyond these were rows of small four-roomed dwellings, built by the company and occupied by natives. They looked neat and comfortable from the outside. They were painted dark red, with now and then a white one. The most of them were divided so as to accommodate two families. Besides these there were three or four more large and elaborate houses, belonging to as many Russian or Creole families. Creole is a name by which those of mixed Russian and Aleute blood are called. The Russian priest and his family, and the widow and daughter of the late priest, formed the elite.

The little Greek church, more insignificant and smaller than the one we visited at Belkovsky, stands among the houses and barabaras, of the latter of which there are a few still left. The church has a blue cupola, a green roof and yellow walls, an odd feature in the landscape, yet not so shockingly homely as one might imagine from the description. Near the wharf, and grouped around it, are the warehouses belonging to the Alaska Commercial Company, and one to the Government, in which was stored the coal for the use of the men-of-war and revenue cutters.

But my eye had simply taken in these details at

a cursory glance. I was to learn more minutely all about Oonalaska later.

Soon after breakfast Mr. N—— came aboard and greeted us very cordially. I had met him a year before in Oakland. He invited us ashore and we accepted his invitation without delay.

Mr. N—— had delightful rooms on the first floor of the "big house." Several paintings by great masters hung on the walls; one by Vereshagin, "Blessing the Neva," a water color, was exquisite, and in this far-away once offspring of Russia seemed appropriate.

I understood the table was all that could be desired, allowing for the fact we were over two thousand miles from a market. If we had not fresh vegetables we had a good substitute, in my opinion, plenty of milk and cream, and, of course, deliciously fresh butter, for there were a number of cows, and almost more milk than could be used.

## CHAPTER VIII.

“THETIS”—“KRAY SAR”—“BEAR.”

TWO OR THREE DAYS passed quietly, but pleasantly, while we waited for the *Bear* to arrive, in calling and receiving calls from the different officers and captains of the ships in port, at which times I was more than entertained with accounts of their world-wide experiences.

Captain S—, of the *Thetis*, related some of his adventures on the islands of the south Pacific. He also told some amusing incidents connected with the selection of the navy-yard site on Puget Sound, a duty to which he was detailed previous to his coming north, which, related very humorously in his easy and happy style, were very entertaining. Seattle, Tacoma and Port Townsend were clamorous for the distinction, without taking into consideration the first requisite pertaining to a naval station. The recommendations by the different towns as to their particular suitability were especially funny.

One of our engineers, Mr. B—, and Captain S— met in Oonalaska, that far-northern port, after an interval of twenty years, having, when they last saw each other, been together aboard a man-of-war stationed at Honolulu, on the Sandwich Islands. They recognized one another immediately, and after-

wards recalled together many an incident which then happened.

One evening Mr. N—— invited my husband and myself to his rooms, where were assembled Captain S—— and a number of the officers of the *Thetis* besides one or two other gentlemen. It was a novel position for me, one lady among so many of the opposite sex. I was flattered so much by their kind attentions that I felt that for once in my life I had experienced what it was to be a "belle." I would not allow myself to reflect that it was because I was the *only* lady present.

We were entertained by the sweet strains of a zither, handled in a masterly manner by Paymaster L——, of the *Thetis*. Mr. N—— played an extensive repertoire from Beethoven's Sonatas to Skidmore Guards, on the "organette," which instrument is an improvement on a hurdy-gurdy, but requires not much more art in playing, though really rendered well by Mr. N——'s taste in using the stops for crescendo and diminuendo, forte and piano in their proper places. Songs of every description were sung—choice ones, such as "McCarty," "Mush Mush," "Give Us Some Time to Blow the Men Down," the latter a "shanty" peculiar to shipboard and really very effective with windlass accompaniment, as Captain S—— described it to me. Usually singing by the men is not allowed on board a man-of-war, only on merchant ships, yet occasionally, to cheer the men in some difficult duty, permission is

given ; often they ask for it. These songs were rendered with great spirit, accompanied by the zither ; the chorus was conducted by Mr. N——, with his cane as a baton, with the handle of which he brought any inattentive ones to order by hooking it around their necks. We retired early from the evening's festivities, realizing it was not merely in the society of San Francisco we could have a good time.

Finally my husband became impatient at the non-arrival of the *Bear*, and determined to start north to the Seal Islands immediately. We had already been in port a week, lacking one day. She was due the 20th of June. He set Saturday, seven A. M., for sailing day. Saturday dawned, and almost with the first gleams of light a sail appeared in the distance. As it neared us we discovered it was a small schooner ; but on arriving within hailing distance she reported a large steamer nearing port. Naturally we supposed her the long expected *Bear*, and my husband put off his time of starting, being also deterred by the accounts the captain of the schooner brought of rough weather and a heavy sea outside.

Shortly afterward the vessel steamed in, not the *Bear*, but a Russian man-of-war, the *Kraysar*, quite unexpectedly appeared. The Russians, as soon as their national flag was made out, evinced quite a state of excitement, for they expected the bishop was aboard, as news of his coming had reached them

some time before. They ran in and out of their houses not knowing exactly what to do first.

As soon as possible a boat put off from the *Rush* and one from the *Thetis*, containing each an officer in full uniform, to make their official calls, and on their return brought the news that the bishop was not aboard, which soon spread among the population, bringing relief to the agitated heart of the priest, for the present bishop was not a favorite, and his coming much dreaded. It seems he had lost all his property by a fire in the Greek church at San Francisco; his robes of office, and such things, robbed of which the bishop could not officiate with fitting solemnity in the pompous ceremonies as father of the church, conducted always by him when on his pastoral visits. He had therefore given up his trip.

The Russian steamer belonging to the Asiatic squadron was making a cruise in the sea, apparently with no especial object, and was bound for the Commander Islands, and had come to Oonalaska to procure coal. Her captain reported the fact that H. M. S. *Swiftsure* and perhaps the *Icarus* would be in the Behring Sea during the summer, having just left them at Victoria, B. C. We wondered if with hostile intentions, what would become of the little *Rush*, which, as one of our officers remarked, "the *Swiftsure* could hoist aboard for a steam launch with ease." Three little insignificant sealing-schooners lay hauled up on the beach not far away, trophies



of seizures made a year or two previous, and was it they, and such as they, that created all this correspondence between two such great nations as England and the United States? The rumor was, that the English ships were coming into the sea to protect their sealers.

A Russian officer soon after called aboard the *Rush* to return our officer's call. To our dismay he spoke not a word of English. We were not linguists aboard the ship. He spoke French and German; German was as familiar to my husband and I as Sanscrit; and French, what person taught French by an American teacher when young, for a year or two, after an interval of ten or more years of absolutely no practice, can *speak* it? Such was our case. After having launched bravely off with my one available phrase, "Je le comprends un peu, mais je ne le parle pas," learned by heart out of my first French book, I was so overcome by the relief expressed on his countenance, and the immediate torrent of French he deluged me with, I remained open mouthed and dumb. I smiled a sickly smile, and appealed to my husband in despair; but he answered not a word, for he spoke "little German and less French," and sat stonily staring at us both. But at length a bright idea occurring to him, he said, "Excuse me," and after disappearing a moment, soon returned, followed by one of our quartermasters, a German, who spoke good English. He acted as interpreter,

and we were soon able to obtain some news my husband desired to learn from him.

At about seven that evening we heard the cry of "Steamer!" "steamer!!" from the natives, and sure enough, away out on the horizon, at the entrance to the harbor, was a small speck, from which issued soft wreaths of smoke, and which gradually grew in size as it approached. That surely was the *Bear*. An hour after, she lay at anchor, and we had boarded her and received what mail she brought—half-a-dozen letters, not one of which was for me, but a number of papers containing news of the dreadful disaster at Johnstown, Penn., wherein so many thousands lost their lives. It was appalling, coming to us, as it did, all at once. Besides that, the large fire at Seattle; and the floods so general in the East: at Elmira, N. Y., and in Washington City, where Pennsylvania Avenue was three feet under water. It seemed so much had happened during the three weeks we had not heard a word of what was transpiring in our own dear native land. For we appeared to be in a foreign land while in Oonalaska, where only Russian and Aleute were spoken, except by those that visit it in ships now and then, and the four or five white men who live there permanently.

Captain H—— of the *Bear* reported a very rough passage. It was especially so for the *Bear*, laden as she was, with a load, the most of which being on deck made her roll very deeply; at times shipping

great seas, that poured down into the wardroom, or officers' quarters, making things uncomfortable for them generally.

The *Bear* was bound for Point Barrow, the most northerly point of Alaska. She had on board the materials with which to construct a house, to be put up there as a refuge for shipwrecked sailors. These were so put together in sections, after a prearranged plan, as to obviate the necessity for an architect, other than one of the officers, who was to superintend its erection.

The *Thetis* having received her necessary instructions from Washington, brought by the *Bear*, and for which she had been waiting, prepared to sail Monday, June 23d, at seven o'clock A. M. The *Rush* also left at the same hour for the Seal Islands, and the two ships sailed out of the harbor almost abreast. The *Thetis* was bound in the same direction on her way north to the Arctic, where she was to assist the *Bear* in the rescuing of and protecting the "whalers," touching first at St. Paul, then at St. Michael's, and so on at other ports, en route to Port Clarence, this side of Behring Straits, where she expected to await the *Bear*, which was to follow her in a few days. Here, too, was to meet her a collier from San Francisco with an extra supply of coal.

## CHAPTER IX.

### ALASKA HAPPENINGS.

**O**N SUNDAY MORNING, as the bells chimed out the hour for services at the little Greek church, passing under my room windows appeared several Russian officers in full uniform, with about fifty sailors, walking in procession, bound to church. "A most respectable practice and worthy to be followed by officers and men in our navy," I remarked severely to my husband, for no such sight ever met my eye among our own naval vessels.

The sailors wore wide sailor collars of pale blue cambric, I thought it. Some one told me that in Russia, on their best suits, they are made of silk. Their caps, like those of the officers, had white crowns. They did not, however, present so neat an appearance as our sailors.

The little church must have been full to overflowing with such an addition to the usual congregation, though more could crowd in than in our Protestant churches, owing to the fact that there are no seats. The body of the church is entirely empty. The congregation stands all through the service, except at certain parts, when they are required to kneel, bending clear over and touching their heads on the floor. As the congregation do not all do it simultaneously

it is very amusing to see the extraordinary bobbing up and down of so many heads, old and young, men, women and children. The men all stand on one side of the church and the women on the other, Quaker meeting style.

I have omitted to say that the Friday before the departure of the *Rush* I had taken up my quarters ashore at the "big house." My room commanded a fine view of the entrance to the harbor, where I could see each ship as it first appeared on the horizon. Adjoining my bedroom was a little apartment called the "Library," and really deserving the name. Here were kept about three hundred books, standard works, such as all of Dickens, Thackeray, Hawthorne, Irving, Cooper, Prescott, Motley, etc., besides a quantity of miscellaneous literature. These all belonged to the Alaska Commercial Company. I felt there was no need of my being lonely with so many old friends near.

The library made a pleasant sitting-room, where I spent many a quiet, peaceful hour reading, now and then recalled to my surroundings by lifting my eyes to the "eternal hills" about me, on every side, so unlike the environment of my home.

In the library was an organ, and though I cordially detest them, as a general thing, it was much better than no musical instrument at all.

The first real bright, sunny day after our arrival, inviting my small son and his playmate, little Emma, to accompany me, I wended my way to the

hills, the nearest of access, from which I hoped to get a good view of Oonalaska and surroundings. Our way lay along a narrow strip of pebbly beach for some distance, then across a piece of low land, where a herd of some fourteen cows was grazing, and beyond that, towards the little Russian and Aleute graveyard, on a slight elevation. There, among the abodes of the dead, burrow numbers of squirrels, introduced on the island by some one, and which are multiplying so as to prove a great nuisance. The graves were designated, as usual, by the wooden cross, and palings around them. I am reminded here of a custom the Aleutes and Russians are said to have: About once a month, on a certain day, they burn candles twenty-four hours on the grave of their dead.

The low hills were green and covered with flowers. As we crossed the pasture land it was almost impossible to so pick our way as to avoid crushing the myriads of purple violets springing up everywhere, and which here grow larger and more perfect than I have ever seen them elsewhere. They, of course, lack the sweet fragrance which makes the English violet so highly prized.

The most showy and common flower is called the "anemone." There are two varieties, one white, and a purple, different from the ordinary anemone. An orchid is also found very common, consisting of a cone-shaped cluster of Solferino flowers growing on a short stem, and dark brownish-green leaves, mottled.

with round black spots. There are many other varieties odd and very pretty. Purple and yellow are the prevailing colors.

The "monk's-hood," from which aconite is obtained, is common. The buttercup, dandelion and a species of daisy grow there also. Those, besides the violet and flag, were the only home flowers I found.

The variety of flowers which constantly sprang up on the hills, as the season advanced, was astonishing. Every few days I discovered a new one, often several in a day, and returned laden with large bouquets of them, with which I adorned my room. They were larger and more vaunting in their beauty than the wild-flowers of California and other States, barring the "escholtzia."

My interest being centered so wholly upon the flowers, and having my back turned to the general and larger view of Oonalaska, it was almost with surprise I suddenly turned, and beheld the landscape, as it spread out before my gaze. "How grand it is!" was my first thought. The mountains covered with snow stretched as far as the eye could reach in almost every direction, being more prominent from my then elevated position, than when on the level of the beach. The water of the harbor was as calm as a mountain lake, and appeared from where I viewed it, like an enormous river. I could see the entrance to the harbor, where the sea ran between two lines of hills for some miles; finally, after a sharp turn,

spreading into a round lake or the harbor, again contracting into a smaller channel, and disappearing at last behind the near hills. But this really was the salt sea, and all these hills but branches or arms of Oonalaska Island, for it is shaped like an octopus, with arms spreading in every direction, and a very small body. The low hills around the water's edge were as green as emeralds and set off the grim and snowy heights beyond, in their lofty grandeur, stern, yet protecting, as they overlook the quiet little town.

Directly in front of me an extinct volcano reared its crater, into whose depths I had a wild desire to look, being resolved if any opportunity offered itself to embrace it by all means. Back of Oonalaska, and making a decided peninsula of the land on which the town was situated (it was commonly called "the spit"), ran a very respectable sized stream, clear and shallow, and which about two miles from its mouth formed a beautiful fresh-water lake. This stream, of course, provides Oonalaska with a constant supply of fresh water for all purposes. The Alaska Commercial Company have laid pipes, conducting it to the "big house" and on down to the wharf, with which more conveniently to supply the vessels.

After feasting my eyes on the lovely scene, I returned with the children, a little late for dinner, and had to tender my excuses to my kind host, Mr. N——, for delaying them so long. For Mr. N——



is the very soul of politeness. He treated me with the most unfailing courtesy and kindness all the time I was in Oonalaska. He had been first at St. Michael's, then at Oonalaska for over sixteen years, spending only the summer season there, however, and the winter in San Francisco. He has led a varied life and has traveled extensively over the world, beginning in his youth with adventures in New Zealand. Mr. N—— is a Bavarian, and speaks many languages, and is especially fluent in Russian. To him I owe my sincerest thanks, as well as to Col. B—— and Dr. C——, for a most delightful visit to Oonalaska.

The company's warehouses, five or six in number, were, as I have mentioned, at the head of the wharf. In them were kept all the supplies for their various branch stations, and a fine stock of furs. Together with some officers from the *Thetis* we were shown through them a few days after our arrival in Oonalaska. The fur-house was the most interesting and the first one we visited. This was divided like the rest into two stories. At the entrance the first thing that met my eye was a scale, and jumping on, I discovered I had gained six pounds already, in four weeks' time, and felt alarmed for the future. All that go up to those regions share the same fate. But to more interesting matters. On our left as we entered was a great heap of the strangest looking stuff, piles of what looked like huge feathers, eight or ten feet long, the quill, however, being more

prominent than the feathery part, and these lashed together into great bundles. It was whalebone. This, as every one knows, is found only in the mouth of the whale, and the feathery or laminated part is used in the capacity of a sieve by the monster, through which he strains his food, ejecting the water and retaining the small fish which form his sustenance. There are in a full grown whale about three hundred of these. This large quantity, almost enough to fill a cart, was from only one whale, and was worth over three dollars a pound, altogether about five thousand dollars. I began to realize the immense profit in a good catch.

On our right were piled to the ceiling hundreds of hair-seal skins, from some of which the hair had been shaved, the rest still retaining it. These skins after they are shaved are used by the natives to cover their bydarkas, or skin boats, which I have already described.

Upstairs, suspended from the ceiling and completely hiding it, hung over a thousand skins, blue, silver gray, white and red fox, mink and marten. And in several boxes were more packed away. In a corner were some magnificent large silver-tipped sea-otter. It was a sight to make a furrier's heart glad. I threatened a raid on the premises some dark night. The most curious thing we saw was a segment of tusk of a mastodon of enormous size, unearthed in Alaska, near St. Michael's. It must have been two yards long, and at the base several

inches in diameter. The size of an animal able to wield two tusks of such extraordinary size is almost inconceivable to our finite minds. The largest elephant would dwindle into insignificance.

The other houses contained, one groceries, another dry goods, and so forth, but none so nearly to my liking as the fur-house.



## CHAPTER X.

### ALASKA HAPPENINGS—CONTINUED.

ALL THIS TIME the town swarmed with Russian officers and sailors, of whom there were sixteen of the former and one hundred and eighty of the latter. The officers promenaded up and down the length of the plank walk, apparently for exercise, while two or three, more energetic, climbed the hills in quest of game.

They were all more or less blond in complexion, exhibiting all shades of light hair and whiskers, except the first lieutenant, who was a decided brunette, and a giant in stature; their dress the prosaic European costume. Why is the world discarding all the picturesque for the useful and more convenient? All the great nations seem fusing into one, in customs, dress and manners, and those the English. Oh! that I had lived in the time of knee-breeches and powdered wigs, lace ruffles and silver buckles, in the time of the "immortal George."

On board the *Kraysar* was a Russian Prince. His title did not necessarily imply him to be connected with the royal family, but he belonged to one of the princely houses. He was but a sub-lieutenant and treated as the rest by his brother officers. Rank and birth make no difference aboard a man-of-war,

nor did he assume any superior airs. He called on me and was as talkative and affable as could be, in his imperfect English. His manners were very French.

Captain B——, of the *Kraysar*, with Mr. N——, also called, and the former invited me to visit his ship the following day. At ten, the next day, and at the appointed time, Captain B—— came after Mr. N—— and myself, conducting us to the wharf, where, at the boat-landing, we found an immense rowboat, manned by twelve men. The boat was cushioned and carpeted, as was the gangway leading aboard. On arriving at the ship's side—she was anchored but about one hundred yards from the wharf—I was ushered aboard with as much deference as if I had been a princess—attentions so grateful to any woman's heart. The manners of these Russian gentlemen much resembled those of the French in all their little gallantries, flattering attentions and extravagant compliments.

We were shown all over the ship, which was very complete in all her appointments. She had four enormous Russian-made guns, six-inch bore, four smaller Hotchkiss guns, several Gatlings and a torpedo; the latter being the first I had seen, interested me greatly. It was fired by means of compressed air. The ship was lighted throughout by the Edison light.

Lunch was served in true Russian style. I there first tasted the "black bread" of which we so often

read, besides several peculiar dishes unknown to me and essentially Russian.

On board the *Kraysar* was a piano, which I thoroughly enjoyed both listening to and playing on, with one of the officers, who was an excellent musician. Our duet playing was very amusing; being unable to understand each other we conveyed our ideas in pantomime. When counting he used the Russian and I the English. The nodding of our heads and keeping time that way was more intelligible to both. He treated me to several national airs, which were particularly pleasing, they were such joyous, tripping measures; some also from Glinka's "Life of the Czar," and the grand Russian national hymn, stirring as the "Marseillaise," though I fear me the downtrodden peasantry rarely exult in it. Was it the playful trick of a giant, when the huge first lieutenant of the *Kraysar*, on one of the sailors bungling over some part of a great gun he was exhibiting, slapped him right and left over the head with his enormous hands?

"Theirs not to make reply,  
Theirs but to do and die."

I was impressed with the really paternal feeling, however, the captain displayed for his officers, and men also, though it might have been affected. They seemed to look on him with real affection. Once in the small boat, when rowing back to shore, he leaned over and impulsively grasped the chin of one of the men who was rowing near him, in his

hand, in a caressing way, as one would that of a child to look in his face. None but a foreigner could have done it in so natural a way. Did any one ever see an English or American captain of a man-of-war condescend to an action of that kind? The sailor smiled as he did it. By accident the flag-pole on the rowboat was caught under a rope by which a vessel we had to pass was moored, and it broke short off. As it sank into the water the captain, clasping his hands, exclaimed, quickly, "Ah! the Russian flag!" seeing in it at once an evil omen. To my surprise he did not reprimand the "cox-ah," by whose carelessness it happened, as he was steering, and besides it, giving also the commands to the sailors.

The same day the *Kraysar* left, and it was with regret I watched them sailing past my window, waving their hats in adieu, for they had been very kind to me.

Captain H—— also entertained me aboard the *Bear*, showing me all over the ship, and revealing to me, for the first time, her storage capacity. I was astounded at the quantities of barrels she contained, filled with a number of different commodities, such as flour, corned beef, molasses, etc., one hundred and fifty of one, a hundred of another, and so on, supplies for a year for the house to be erected at Point Barrow, already referred to. Besides the house and provisions there was an immense amount of coal aboard.

Captain H— has been in command of the *Bear* three years. Last year he rendered great assistance to shipwrecked whalers, carrying back to San Francisco, on board of his vessel, one hundred and ten men, whom he rescued from several whale-ships wrecked in a dreadful storm off Point Barrow. From that disaster the necessity of some place of refuge for shipwrecked whalers in the Arctic was plainly proved, and the house and a year's supply of provisions for it the result.

Twenty years ago Capt. H— made his first trip to these regions. His knowledge of the Behring Sea and Arctic Ocean about the coast line of Alaska is perfect.

Not long after the *Bear* had sailed there arrived a party of twenty gentlemen from San Francisco on the company's steamer *Bertha*, having aboard, also, a welcome bag of mail. These gentlemen were commissioners bound to St. Michael's, at the mouth of the Yukon River. Their object was to determine the boundary between Alaska and the British possessions. St. Michael's was the starting point from where they were to navigate the river as far as possible to the boundary; arriving there the party was to divide, one-half going north the other south. These gentlemen were all Americans. Last year (1888) a party of Canadians came up on a similar journey and determined the boundary in their own way. The Americans now came up to see



if it was properly done, and in time it is to be decided by joint commission.

There were three vessels alongside the dock, on the arrival of the *Bertha*, for various purposes. They were all the Alaska Commercial Company's vessels. The *St. Paul*, bound soon to St. Michael's, and having aboard, beside other freight, a large boiler for a new vessel to be built there. This was for navigating the Yukon and made the fifth vessel built there for that purpose. Two cows and two calves were passengers aboard the *St. Paul*.

The *Dora*, also bound for St. Michaels with the commissioners aboard, accompanied by Mr. N—— on a three weeks' trip. Mr. N—— visits all of these places every summer in the interests of the company. The *Estelle*, a bark laden with coal for the Alaska Commercial Company. The *Bertha* was going to Kadiak with supplies, and thence to San Francisco direct. The *Bertha* ordinarily ran between San Francisco and Kadiak only, but had come to Oonalaska on some special purpose.

The whale-ship mentioned by me as having been nearly wrecked in the Arctic, had been repaired by the carpenter of the *Bear* and was towed out by the latter when she started. The poor crew of the whaler were very much averse to starting again on another necessarily hard cruise after whales, and at first refused to work at the repairs, till brought into a more tractable frame of mind, by being kept in irons two or three days, at the end of which time

they preferred work to imprisonment. Poor creatures! I did not blame them, they were much to be pitied I thought. Who would wish to start again on a whaling expedition after such hardships as they had endured, with the miserable pay they receive, which is a small proportion of the profits of the catch, hardly repaying them for their months of hard labor when the catch is greatest, and often losing all when unfortunate enough to secure nothing.

The life of a sailor in the "fo'castle" (forecastle) of most whale-ships is a dog's life. Their quarters little better than a kennel, into which they often have to creep almost on hands and knees, and when inside cannot stand erect. This hole is their only refuge from the weather, and here they often are compelled to sleep, cold and wet, with only coarse, unnutritious food; called up at all hours of the day and night, and subject to inhuman treatment from the notoriously brutal "mate." Yet strange to say these men will ship year after year; they seem to be driven to it by some mysterious fate. It may be a spirit of fascination in the adventures and perils encountered.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE ALEUTES

**R**USSIA TOOK POSSESSION of Alaska and these islands through right of discovery. This occurred in 1741. The islands were discovered by Behring, a Russian adventurer after whom the sea was named. Alaska remained in the possession of the Russians till the year 1867, when it was bought by the United States. Previous to that time the natives of these islands were in a state of slavery and cruelly treated by their masters. They were all Christianized by the Greek Church missionaries. They had been idolaters before their subjugation, and the missionaries found numbers of grotesque idols formed of bone and ivory, rudely carved, which they took good care to destroy, much to the distress of many an antiquarian.

The origin of the Aleutes is unknown. Dr. Jackson of Sitka, who has made the Indians of Alaska and natives of Aleutian Islands somewhat of a study, thinks the Aleutes—like the Thlinkets—the tribe inhabiting all the coast from Yakutat to Dixon's entrance—are of Asiatic origin, though differing as a Frenchman does from an Englishman. Such is the opinion of most of those who have lived among

them. They more nearly resemble the Japanese than any other nation now in existence.

The Aleutes and Koniagas, the latter inhabiting the Island of Kadiak and the peninsula of Alaska, are very much alike and together resemble in customs and habits the Eskimos, rather than the other tribes of Indians living on the mainland, the interior and more southern part of Alaska. The Aleutes really do not consider themselves Indians, though the difference is so slight it is hard to know where to draw the line between the "Siwash" at Sitka and the native of Oonalaska, except that the former as a rule are much heavier set.

The tradition in regard to the father of the race of Aleutes is, that he fell from heaven in the shape of a dog. The fathers of the Eskimo tribes seem to have been a bird and a dog. In Mr. Bancroft's "History of the Native Races of the Pacific States" may be found a history of the tribes of Alaska, their traditions and customs, etc., at the time of their subjugation by the Russians. It is about their present condition I am writing.

The language of the two tribes, Koniagas and Aleutes, is much the same; a slight difference of dialect is all. In both these dialects there is no distinction of gender. Verbs are conjugated by means of terminals. The chief difference between the dialects is in the formation of the plural of nouns. The Aleutes of the more eastern islands enunciate rapidly, at Oonalaska they drawl. It is from Mr. Ban-

croft's history I have quoted the last few facts concerning the language, not having been long enough among them to make any study of it myself. Most of the Aleutes speak a barbarous Russian, besides their own language. Very few even of the creole families speak pure Russian. This I was told by those who were conversant with that language.

The physical condition of most of the Aleutes is dreadful. There are a great many feeble men and women among them. They are bent and crippled with rheumatism; many die of pneumonia, and consumption is very general. There are few that seem strong and hearty, and well built. The constant dampness and their carelessness in regard to their health must be the cause. Little children go about, winter as well as summer, barefoot and half-clothed. Nature cannot be disregarded in this way, and will assert herself in time.

The lives of these poor people must be one long misery. If they fall ill they are left to die alone and uncared for, at least in places where there is no white physician. They do not seem to fear death and, when ill, make no effort to get well. The Aleutes do not now have a "medicine man," though I believe they did in former years.

I have mentioned the fact that vessels coal at Donalaska. When there are not sufficient men in the town—many go away in the summer to hunt and fish—the women lend a hand at coaling the ships. It looked oddly enough to see a long line of

them with their wheelbarrows, hard at work conveying the coal back and forth. Some carried it in baskets, which they rested on their hips.

Both men and women smoke cigarettes and drink an intoxicating liquor of their own concoction called "quass." It is made from yeast, produced from potatoes. This is allowed to ferment, forming a kind of beer, to which is added fruits of whatever kind can be had, principally berries. Currants and raisins are also used when they can be obtained. This "quass," I was told, if made in a cleanly manner, is a very palatable drink. It is made in barrels.

At the Seal Islands is made a liquor from sugar, therefore the latter is never allowed the natives, except on rare occasions, and then in small quantities. They often save this till enough is procured to make the liquor, when they have a grand carousal. Both kinds are very intoxicating. These Indians, like most others, are extraordinarily fond of liquor of any sort. They will give all they possess for a bottle of whisky. One man offered to pay two twenty-dollar gold pieces for one drink. But liquor is not sold on the islands at all. Sitka is governed by the same law, though there it has not been enforced.

The native customs are fast dying out. When by themselves the Aleutes fall back into their primitive habits, especially when under the influence of liquor. Their dances are very wild and absurd. In their antics they resemble monkeys more than human beings. They often personate animals of different

kinds. Birds are represented by attaching wings to their bodies. Thus attired they jump and spring about to weird music, produced by one of the audience, who plays on a rude instrument somewhat resembling a tambourine, made of a piece of skin drawn tightly over a frame. This is beaten in a rhythmic way with a stick.

The women sometimes join in the dance, the men circling around them, while they keep up a peculiar motion by balancing backward and forward on their toes. Such dances are observable among the Alaskan tribes generally. They are now almost obsolete among the Aleutes. Last year some rescued Indian hunters were being conveyed on board the *Rush* from Sitka to Victoria, on which occasion they were requested by the officers and men to give a war-dance. Diving under the "fo'castle," they appeared a few moments afterward streaked with paint, arrayed in wings and various other adornments. The dance was the most repulsive sight he ever witnessed, my husband said. These Indians were of the Nit-Nat and Clayquot tribes of Vancouver Island.

The weapons used by the Aleutes are the bow and arrow, and spear. The latter are tipped with bone. Attached to a string fastened on the handle of the spear is a small piece of ivory, obtained, usually, from walrus tusks, about two or three inches long, with several sharp teeth on one side like a saw. These are inserted in the end of the spear when

about to be thrown. They penetrate the skin of the seal and remain fastened to the body when the spear is drawn back. The seal, diving immediately, carries the tip of bone with him, but with the string fastened to the spear, and by which the hunter has already secured him, he is pulled again within reach. The men used to wear knives, the blades of which were of stone, sharpened to a very thin edge.

Not long since the Aleutes embalmed their dead. Mummies are occasionally still found in caves. Dr. C——, at Oonalaska, told me he himself had once found parts of several, but not in a sufficiently complete state of preservation to be kept. Their method of embalming mummies was very simple, being merely to stuff them with grass. They were then put into caves in an upright or sitting posture. Another form of burial was to elevate the bodies on poles above the ground, as the Eskimos dispose of their dead.

The dress of the Aleute women and men is not especially characteristic. The women wear calico dresses made in the plainest possible style and without much regard to fit, usually rather short, their nether garments—rags, rarely changed. Over their heads, in work-day costume, they wear little shawls, folded diagonally, and fastened under the chin. Their gala array consists of a calico, often a woolen, dress of a bright color, a shawl about their shoulders, folded diagonally, and a silk handkerchief on their



heads, secured also under the chin. They seem to revel in the latter, the more brilliant the color the more it is prized.

When grouped together, as one sees them at church, the array of color is truly bewildering. One will have a solferino colored dress, a red plaid shawl, and a grass-green handkerchief on her head. Thus arrayed she is the admiration and envy of all the rest.

Like most Indians they admire anything ornamented with beads. Many wear nets over their hair, on which are strung beads of bright colors.

The men attire themselves in the ordinary American dress, covered when hunting with the kamlica or skin-coat, I have described elsewhere. On rare occasions they wear a garment called a "parka"—usually pronounced parky—made of the skins of birds, which are nicely tanned, and deftly sewn together. These are also made of the skins of small animals, such as squirrels and the muskrat. The natives of Attoo and Atkha still wear these bird-skin and muskrat parkas to some extent.

Both men and women often wear a boot made of skin, extending to the knee. The sole is made of the flipper of the sea-lion, and the top of the boot of the lining of its entrails, so much used by them. They are called "mazinkas." The Eskimos wear a similar boot, called "trabasars," the leg of which is made of fur.

The men still wear at times immense hats, some

of which are of wood, but most of them made of skin stretched over a frame. The peculiarity of these is the very wide and pointed brim at the front, extending far out over the eyes. It is made thus, as a protection from the light of the sun, when it shines, for there is so much gloom the greater part of the year the sunlight appears to blind them.

Twenty years ago the Aleutes dressed and lived more as the Eskimos do now, farther north. Their contact with European life among the Russians has necessarily greatly modified and changed both their dress and customs.

The Aleutes do not have dogs among them as do all the other Alaskan tribes. The Indian dogs are a feature of every Indian village from Point Barrow to the Straits of San Juan de Fuca. They sleep and eat with their masters, and are of as much importance as the very children themselves. I can imagine no cause why this is so. The Eskimos utilize their dogs, but among the Thlinkets they are not even ornamental. On the Seal Islands no dogs of any kind are allowed, because they scare away the seals.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE ALEUTES—CONTINUED.

**T**HE FONDNESS THE ALEUTES have for raw fish is ineradicable. They are not an intelligent race and the quantity they eat of this article disproves the theory that "fish make brains." The flesh and blubber of the seal, sea-otter and parts of whales are bread and meat to them. They are epicures, preferring the flesh when "gamey." They also eat the sea-urchin and other shell-fish as we do raw oysters. The octopus or devil-fish, is considered a great delicacy; certain parts only are eaten. Jelly-fish are in demand, perhaps for dessert.

The Aleutes are fond of fat of any kind and greedily devour candles. Our chief-engineer told me he knew an Indian to drink the lard-oil used about the machinery in the engine-room. This fondness for fat is universal among the tribes of Alaska, including the Eskimos.

Even after living some time among white people, they will return to their old habits. The following incident was told me by a lady, who lived on one of the Aleutian Islands for several months: A white man had a native wife, who became a very good cook under his instructions, for he was a man of cultivated taste, having known plenty. She would

cook his meals and set the table nicely with cloth and dishes of various kinds. However, she could not be induced to sit at table and eat with him, but would wait till he was through and had gone away, then calling in her friends they would seat themselves on the floor, rejecting the well-cooked viands, and munch raw salmon with the greatest satisfaction. They retain these tastes all through life. Eating raw fish is a custom of other more southern islands of the Pacific. A similar incident was related to me of a woman who was a native of the Sandwich Islands.

The Aleutes are not a fierce and savage race, but seem quiet and docile. This, however, is said to be the effect of their long subjection and oppression by the Russians, for their original nature was warlike. They are very sullen at times, and will sit for hours gazing out on the water, motionless, as if carved from stone. This stolidity, as is generally known, is a peculiar trait of all aboriginal American races.

Mention has been made before of "Touchy Ann," Mrs. B——'s assistant at Squaw Harbor. She was of a very sullen disposition. After living a whole winter with her, the woman was as unapproachable as in the beginning. Mrs. B—— had at first tried to make friends with her, being the only woman within six or seven miles, but she would not speak when addressed, though seeming to understand. She uttered nothing beyond monosyllables but half-

a-dozen times in as many months. Once when working for a white man at Ounga, he was so incensed at her, after repeated efforts to make her answer him, he said, "I'll kill you if you don't speak." Then she said, "You can kill me and I won't."

Yet, generally speaking, the Aleutes, among whom I lived at Oonalaska for two months, appeared to me to be bright and lively in disposition. To be sure, there is such a mixture of Russian blood among them, it is difficult to select a genuine Aleute. The shyness being worn off, seeing me as they did daily, for any passing nod or word of greeting I gave them, they answered me with a bright smile, appearing to appreciate it. It was amusing to hear the younger children, in imitation of my two boys, address me as "Mamma." They evidently thought it my name.

During the rule of the Russians the natives were utterly cowed and subdued. They scarce dared look into their masters' faces when addressed, the lash was kept in such constant use. On the transfer of Alaska to the Americans, the Indians, little understanding their happy release, continued for some time to deport themselves in the old way to their new masters. Mr. D—— told me that twenty years ago on visiting any of the islands he was received with more deference and servility than if he had been an admiral. Emulating the example of Sir Walter Raleigh, they would spread their gar-

ments, or whatever was at hand, over the mud, that he might walk over it dry shod. Or again, he would be lifted on their shoulders, and in this triumphant manner be carried long distances. It was not many years, however, before they realized their independence. Now the motto is with them, as everywhere else throughout our broad land, "Liberty, equality, fraternity."

Old "Rufe," the former chief of the Oonalaska tribe, is quite a character. He is by birth a Siberian, from the vicinity of Behring Straits. A pompous, stout old fellow, who wore drawn over his other habiliments a huge yellowish woolen shirt, which doubled his already generous proportions. With, besides that, high top boots, a cap, and a pipe in his mouth he presented a most remarkable appearance. He has acquired European manners, and never failed to make me a profound bow, at the same time lifting his cap. His personal appearance and manners were so at variance the contrast was ludicrous. Rufe was a *bete noir* to the small fry of the village, who vanished at his approach.

The old chief is a pensioner of the company, and in remembrance of his past services they are all very kind to him. The old fellow often speaks of the good times now, as compared with the "Russian time," as he calls it, and shakes his head as if wishing to cast out some unpleasant remembrance of days gone by. He seldom becomes confidential except when under the influence of a goodly allow-

ance of "quass," when he will tell how one of the agents of the olden time used to hold him accountable for the good conduct of the other employes of the company, and would take him to the "big house" and whip him when any of them neglected their work.

The event of his life, however, was a visit to San Francisco. On his return he described the cable cars as being propelled by horses underneath the ground. He was ever after of much more importance in the eyes of his tribe.

I will relate here an anecdote of an Indian from the Thlinket tribe. Another Indian killed a white man, for which he was taken to Sitka, tried, found guilty and sent to San Quentin—a State's prison near San Francisco—for two years. On his return he expatiated, for the benefit of his brother Indians, on the wonders he had seen. Whereupon one of the Indians, seeking similar fame and wanting to see the world, attempted to kill another white man. He was prevented, however, and on inquiring of him what he wanted to kill him for, he replied "He wanted to go to San Quentin, too."

The ceremonies pertaining to the Greek church are strictly observed by all, both Aleutes and Russians. At Christmas time they go about from house to house singing carols, if so they may be called. This is kept up for several nights. Near that time they have a grand carnival, or something resembling one. Assuming various grotesque costumes and disguises

they are ready for excess of every kind. The "quass" flows freely. One style of costume is a suit made of coal-sacks sewn together. They also put on the skins of wild animals.

Immediately preceding Lent they walk in procession with lighted candles and burning incense, conducted by the priest, who sprinkles holy water on every door and on everybody he encounters.

At Easter they wander to and fro kissing one another promiscuously, with three kisses, one on each cheek and another on the mouth. The doctor at Onalaska relates that one Easter the priest came to him for some ointment to put on his lips, saying he had a great deal of kissing to do, and wanted to prevent any danger of contracting any lip disease they might have.

A Greek marriage ceremony is very quaint. The bride and groom hold lighted candles in their hands, and on their heads wear tinsel crowns. These are always of such an enormous size, unless the heads of the happy pair are unusually large, they are apt to slip over the ears down on the neck. They stand each with one foot on a red handkerchief, which afterward is claimed by the priest's assistant. The priest intones a long and monotonous service in the Russian language; at intervals the bride and groom say "da" (yes), while at every few sentences from the priest the choir of men chant a few words. Musical instruments are never used in the Greek church. Among these Russians no



female singers are said to be allowed. But at Sitka, while attending services there, I distinctly saw some two or three half-grown girls, barely hidden by the screen, behind which the choir is placed. The singing at the latter place is very good indeed, they have a really musical leader, which may account for it. At Oonalaska, while I was there, the leader was away, which was a fortunate circumstance, Doctor C—— told me, as the singing was worse when he was present. It was fairly excruciating as it was.

When baptized the infants are made to swallow a teaspoonful of the holy water. During this interesting operation the assistant holds the baby's head while the priest administers the dose.

For every death that occurs at Oonalaska a coffin has to be made, none being kept on hand. While I was there a poor woman lay dying of consumption. Anticipating her death, her husband began her coffin several days before she died. The funeral procession passed the "big house," and I caught a glimpse of a gaudily trimmed coffin, on which was festooned pale blue cambric, caught up with bows of ribbon. Over the body was thrown a colored cloth. Four Indians, the husband being one supported the coffin, while behind followed a few stragglers. Thus wended the sad procession to the burial-ground, a mile or so distant. They chanted funeral dirges all the way to the grave.

The moral condition of the Aleutes is very low. Most of them seem to have very little idea what

morality means. The Greek church does not sanction immorality exactly, but it does not interfere to any great extent, for it is a fact that it exists; and the church exists, and notwithstanding the many religious observances kept up, immorality does not decrease.

On the islands farther to the westward, such as Atkha and Attoo, are found a species of grass which the natives deftly weave into very pretty baskets. These they ornament in cross-stitch with different colors of wool or yarn. They are entirely different from the basket-work done by the tribes of Alaska proper. They use no dyes of any sort. This grass does not grow all over the islands, and the basket-makers are thus confined to very few of them.

In his report of "Population, Industries and Resources of Alaska," Ivan Petrof speaks of a basket made by an old woman of Atkha, on which she worked six years. It was a marvel of patient industry and beauty. The grass used in the finest work is often not much thicker than a thread. Exquisite cigarette cases are made thus, but these are very rare, because of the great length of time and labor necessarily taken to make them. Aside from that there is no market for them.

The natives are generally very ingenious at making fancy articles, of the silky skin obtained from the intestines of the sea-lion. We were shown by a gentleman the pericardium of a bear's heart, so carefully skinned it was intact. I never imagined a

bear's heart to be so large, inflated it was almost as large as a good-sized football.

With this thin skin they make tobacco pouches, needlework cases, and other fancy articles, ornamenting many of them with colored silk thread in a chain stitch embroidery, and fastening on them the finest of fleecy white feathers, obtained from the breast of the sea-gull and other birds, which they put on like a fringe. This is a favorite trimming with them, and gives a very light and pretty effect.

I was kindly presented by a gentleman Mr. B——, living at Oonalaska, and in the employ of the Alaska Commercial Company, with two beautiful cigarette cases made by the Indians of Atkha. One was of straw exquisitely braided, each strand being scarce thicker than a thread. It takes the maker an entire winter to finish one of them, so much time and care is required. They are for that reason very rare. The other case was ingeniously woven of colored embroidery silks in stripes of different colors. The warp was of the straw, the woof of the silk.

Aside from the above-mentioned articles very little else is now made on the Aleutian Islands in the line of curios, and these are becoming more scarce every year, there being no demand there for them, as at Sitka.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### GOVERNMENT OF THE ALEUTIAN ISLANDS.

**T**HE ALEUTIAN ISLANDS is the name only properly applied to the western half of that group of islands extending from the peninsula of Alaska to nearly the Asiatic coast, and dividing the Pacific Ocean from Behring Sea. The eastern half of the islands, not including Kadiak, are called the Shumagin group. They are commonly referred to, however, as the Aleutian Islands. The first group comprises Attoo, Atkha, Oonalaska and Akutan; the second group are Ounga, Nagai, Popoff, Seminoff and Senahk. The ones I have mentioned are the largest and most important.

Being part of Alaska the Aleutian Islands are under the jurisdiction of the Governor of Alaska, who lives at Sitka, its capital. But separate Government officials are appointed at Oonalaska and Kadiak.

At Oonalaska there is a deputy collector of customs appointed by the collector of customs at Sitka, a deputy marshal, appointed by the marshal at Sitka, and a justice of the peace, perhaps more properly speaking a United States Commissioner. The latter is empowered to try civil suits when less than \$250 is at stake. Any more serious cases are referred to

Sitka. In the case of the murderer at Sand Point who shot at Mr. O'B——, and also shot at and killed an old man, Mr. Dingley, on the same occasion, which circumstance I have already related, the murderer was taken to San Francisco, and before a United States Commissioner. The evidence being sufficient to warrant it on the statements of several witnesses, he was held for trial and taken from there to Sitka. As there is no direct means of communication between Oonalaska and Sitka, several months often elapse before anything can be done, the only recourse being to send the criminals to San Francisco, and from there to Sitka. No vessels run between San Francisco and Oonalaska during the winter, and only one once in every six or eight weeks during the summer months. Therefore justice is very dilatory.

At the Island of Kadiak there is appointed another deputy collector of customs. He is the only Government official at that place.

There is no physician at Kadiak, or rather St. Paul's, on Kadiak Island, though the town is more often referred to as Kadiak. It is strange that in a place of its importance, as compared with other towns in Alaska, there is no resident physician there. The Government appoints a school-teacher at St. Paul's, and the school is very good. There are no Protestant missionaries, but there is a Russian priest.

The Alaska Commercial Company have at the

different stations on the islands their own employes, who in a measure exercise an influence over the Indians. At all these places the company own a number of houses, and have therefore the right and can assume enough authority to compel them to keep their habitations clean. The company at their own expense support a doctor at Oonalaska, and also one on each of the islands of St. Paul and St. George. At Ounga and Belkovsky, not to mention a number of smaller places, there are no physicians at all.

The Seal, or Pribylof, Islands are in charge of a special Treasury agent and three assistants. These four live on the islands during the summer, but in winter only one agent remains on each island. The Alaska Commercial Company have a superintendent, formerly Dr. McI——, from Vermont, who for twenty years has held that position, but who lately resigned on account of ill health. He spent his summers at the Seal Islands and winters at home, in Vermont. Under him were several assistants, who besides performing other duties helped kill the seals.

An agent appointed by the Alaska Commercial Company resides at Oonalaska. This is Mr. N——, who is in charge of, and looks after, the company's interests at every station in that district, comprising the following places: Oonalaska, Ounga, Belkovsky and St. Michael's. These are the principal ones, the rest are of less importance.

There are stations as far away as Atkha and Attoo,

but they are visited only once a year. At each of these places are stores, the supplies for which are furnished by the Alaska Commercial Company. To these stations are brought the furs, gathered by the hunters of each island. Mr. N—— makes a yearly trip to each of the principal stations, gathering up all the furs secured during the year, which are conveyed to Oonalaska, and from there to San Francisco on the company's steamers, the only direct means of communication between there and the Aleutian Islands.

At Kadiak there is a similar agent and special communication with San Francisco by one of the company's steamers, running between these places only. At this center are gathered in all the furs from Kadiak Island, Cook's Inlet and other points in that vicinity, where foxes of different kinds and other animals are plentiful.

At Oonalaska the schoolmaster is supported by the Alaska Commercial Company, as are also those at St. Paul and St. George islands. At Belkovsky the schoolmaster is supported by the Greek Church. At Ounga by the United States Government. It is probably too poor to support one elsewhere.

Within the past few months the Methodist Missionary Society has sent a gentleman and his wife to Oonalaska. The gentleman is to be the schoolmaster, and his wife the missionary. The building to be erected is to cost \$2,000. Let us hope the poor benighted beings on the other islands may

soon have similar privileges offered them. There are no other missionaries on any of the islands, and none have ever been sent, to my knowledge, although the Aleutian Islands have been in our possession for over twenty years.

Atkha under the Russian regime was the central depot of the fur trade of the Aleutian Islands and then of more importance. The islands of Atkha and Attoo are now entirely neglected. They are visited only once a year 'by one of the Alaska Commercial Company's steamers. Formerly the revenue cutter paid a yearly visit there, when stationed for the summer in Behring Sea, but at present she is too fully occupied in bringing depredatory "sealers" to justice, to devote the time necessary to do so.

On these islands the people are very poor, destitute of nearly every earthly comfort, yet they cannot be persuaded to leave their homes, though they have been offered inducements to move farther east, nearer the more accessible parts of the islands.

They subsist chiefly on fish. Supplies of food and clothing are taken them on the yearly trip of the company's steamer. Their number is very small, the population of both Atkha and Attoo aggregating but about two hundred souls in all.

Attoo, the westernmost of the Aleutian islands, is but three hundred miles from Petropavlosky, a Russian possession on the Siberian coast.

In a late law, but just passed, it is required that the Governor of Alaska visit the Seal Islands once a



year. It is to be hoped he will not confine his visits to these islands alone. They are the most prosperous. The new Governor of Alaska impressed us all as an upright, noble Christian man, and we hope he will be enabled to do much good among these poor people, interceding in their behalf with the United States Government for a greater supply of funds, that they may have both teachers and preachers sent them.

After the transfer of Alaska to the United States, Government troops were stationed at the following four places : the Seal Islands, Oonalaska, Kadiak and Sitka. The vandalism displayed by them in the destruction of the old Russian property left behind was worthy of those old Vandals, who were such famous destroyers as to have left to us, for so many ages, their name, as a synonym for all acts of wanton destruction and pillage. Evidences still remain of their atrocious conduct, not only in visible outward signs but in the minds of many old residents of these places.

At the Seal Islands the natives have almost forgotten the military occupation of 1869-70. Not so, Mr D——, in whose mind remains vivid the picture of the lieutenant in command, "who in an awe inspiring manuer marshaled his army of five men, with all the pomp and display of a full-fledged brigadier. But the destruction by the revenue officers," Mr D—— went on to say, "of several barrels of liquor found on the island about that time will always be

remembered by the natives as the greatest calamity that ever befell their beloved country."

Each village has its "chief" or "toyon," who is exempt from labor, and is, to use a term expressive and generally understood, "the boss," as it were, to whom all minor difficulties are referred. He speaks for his tribe. In this capacity served "Old Rufe" till he was deposed, in favor of a younger man. He still, however, retains some authority.

The system and order kept up by the Alaska Commercial Company at all its stations, and the general politeness and gentlemanliness of its employees combine to make all who visit these islands hope that the company will have their lease renewed. It could not be in better hands.

The population of the Aleutian Islands, without including Kadiak, is estimated at about 2,200; that is the total number of whites, creoles and Aleutes together. The proportion of white men is comparatively very small. The Aleutes number about 1,800.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE FOURTH OF JULY AT OONALASKA.

THE FOURTH OF JULY dawned clear and lovely, strange to say, for it is so proverbially rainy. Put away somewhere in one of the warehouses of the company were found several packages of cannon crackers, which were kindly presented to Emma and my boys, to fire at pleasure, and with which the festivities of the day were opened. Crowds of the native children were attracted, and great was their delight on being allowed to have some to fire also.

About ten A. M. there was a drill with the guns aboard the *Rush*, preparatory to the salute to be fired at noon. Many of the men were novices, as they had but just shipped before leaving San Francisco. At twelve promptly, the principal gentlemen of Oonalaska having been invited aboard, a salute of twenty-one guns was fired by our four guns, ten seconds between each shot. The salute could not have been fired with more precision and absence of confusion by old men-of-war's men, and we felt a thrill of exultant pride in our country, in whose honor the guns boomed out on the still air, awakening echoes among the vast silent hills on every side, so long dumb under the tyranny and oppression of years.

Our salute was bravely answered by the five little Russian guns at the foot of the flag-pole.

Later in the afternoon our "Gatling gun" was put upon trial. First it was wheeled up the plank walk, mounted as it was on a carriage, in martial order by eight of our men, in command of Lieut. D—, and drawn up under the American flag in front of the company's house, where amid the hurrahs of the spectators, consisting of most of the inhabitants of the town and sailors from the different vessels, a volley of five hundred shots was fired. The thunder of the continuous rounds from the marvelous little gun was fairly deafening, as it swept in an arc from side to side over the water, tearing the rocks at which it was aimed, some three hundred yards distant. I shuddered as I thought of the destruction of human life it could cause should it be aimed at the deck of a vessel or a regiment of men on a field of battle. The destruction of man by man is becoming an art as implements of war are becoming more and more perfect. Perhaps, after a time we may leave it to the guns themselves, since they have invented *self-feeders* and pit against each other the finest of mechanisms, rather than the bravest of human beings.

Still later in the afternoon we were all on the *qui vive* at the news that three schooners were entering the harbor. There were now left in port only the *Rush* and a bark unloading coal from San Francisco. The schooners were unexpected arrivals and at first we

were at a loss to determine what they were, or what was their purpose in coming. They proved to be prudent and sagacious "sealers," who, rather than brave the arm of the law, in the shape of the undaunted little *Rush*, preferred to come in peaceably and discuss the extent of their liabilities, should they insist on venturing on prohibited ground in quest of seals.

My husband sent a lieutenant to board them and distribute the printed proclamation regarding the "catching of the seal in the waters of Behring Sea, as punishable by fines, and confiscation, etc." Reports were brought by them of forty or more sealers at Sand Point, of whom a number were British, and many intended running the risk of being caught, and sealing where they pleased. This was not pleasant news to Captain Shepard, who preferred to make no captures if possible, but who, as usual, was determined to do his duty. This he told them plainly.

The sealers were all American vessels. One captain remarked, "He would stay a week or more at Oonalaska if he thought there was any probability of the *Rush* bringing back a "Britisher," for the *Rush* soon sailed away again on one of her cruises. She was usually absent on her cruises to Seal Islands and vicinity about ten days or two weeks. Sure enough the three, and one or two who came in later, did stay in hopes of seeing a captive Englishman brought back.

The American sealers were so exasperated last

year by the policy of President Cleveland, who making it understood generally that seizures would be made in Behring Sea, as in the year previous (1887), and so discouraging them from coming north, gave sealed orders to the captains of the *Bear* and the *Rush*, to be opened on arriving at Oonalaska, to the effect that *no* seizures were to be made. At the same time, the Canadians being in some way informed the sea would be opened till further legislation in the matter. Thus the latter had the Sea to themselves, and made splendid catches, while our sealers remained at home. Therefore, this year many had started north in a vindictive mood, and with the idea, perhaps, the same game might be played in '89.

One day, while the *Rush* was away on one of her trips to the Seal Islands, Dr. C—— proposed we should go to "The Forest." My curiosity was aroused, as not a sign of such a thing as a tree was to be seen anywhere. It was a bright day, and with Emma, an unfailing companion, and my little boy, we started. We rowed across the harbor, landed, fastened our boat, and climbing a little elevation, what was my surprise to see a group of evergreens spreading their branches over a small area, carpeted with pine needles. How delightful to the eye seemed those lonely little trees. They were gnarled and stunted, but still trees, and growing, though slowly. They were planted some fifty or sixty years ago, but they do not spread. The cone does

not arrive at perfection. We seated ourselves under their shade, though not for protection from the sun, whose mild beams were more grateful than otherwise, but for the novelty of the thing. We then spread out and ate the scanty lunch I had provided at the last minute.

In these trees owls make their nests very early every spring, for they had abandoned them by the time we were there. Near the trees there was a small lake, which added to the pretty picture, inclosed, as it was, by the low, green hills. With the trees near by, it looked like a bit of home scenery.

On one of the clear days we had, a day such as the Neapolitans could scarce rival, I wandered to the hills. The sea, shimmering in the golden light of the sun, was of that deep turquoise blue one reads about, but so rarely sees. The sky above was one great opal of flaming fire about the horizon, deepening toward the zenith into the color of the sea. The sea was framed in by snow-covered mountains, glittering in their white purity, through the translucent atmosphere against the tinted background of the sky; at their feet nestled the lower hills, "clothed in living green." The shadows thrown by them and reflected in the clear blue water below, in varying shades of purple and gray, were indescribably beautiful.

In a warm, sheltered side of a hill overlooking the lovely harbor and surrounding hills, among

which the sea flowed calm and beautiful, I found a soft, dry seat on the rich, thick carpet of moss and dried grass, which covers the hills where I lay dreamily looking at the enchanting view spread out before me. I asked myself, could this be the same spot which, till within so short a time had been so cold, gloomy and wintry, so dreary and uninviting, now, by the magic of the sun's light, transformed, as if by the waving of a fairy's wand, in our childish fairy tales, to this scene of dazzling beauty? Wild-flowers bloomed at my feet and all around me in profusion. The sun's warm beams diffused a gentle heat, which made all nature seem to expand and grow—each little flower lifting its face to greet the unwonted blessing.



## CHAPTER XV.

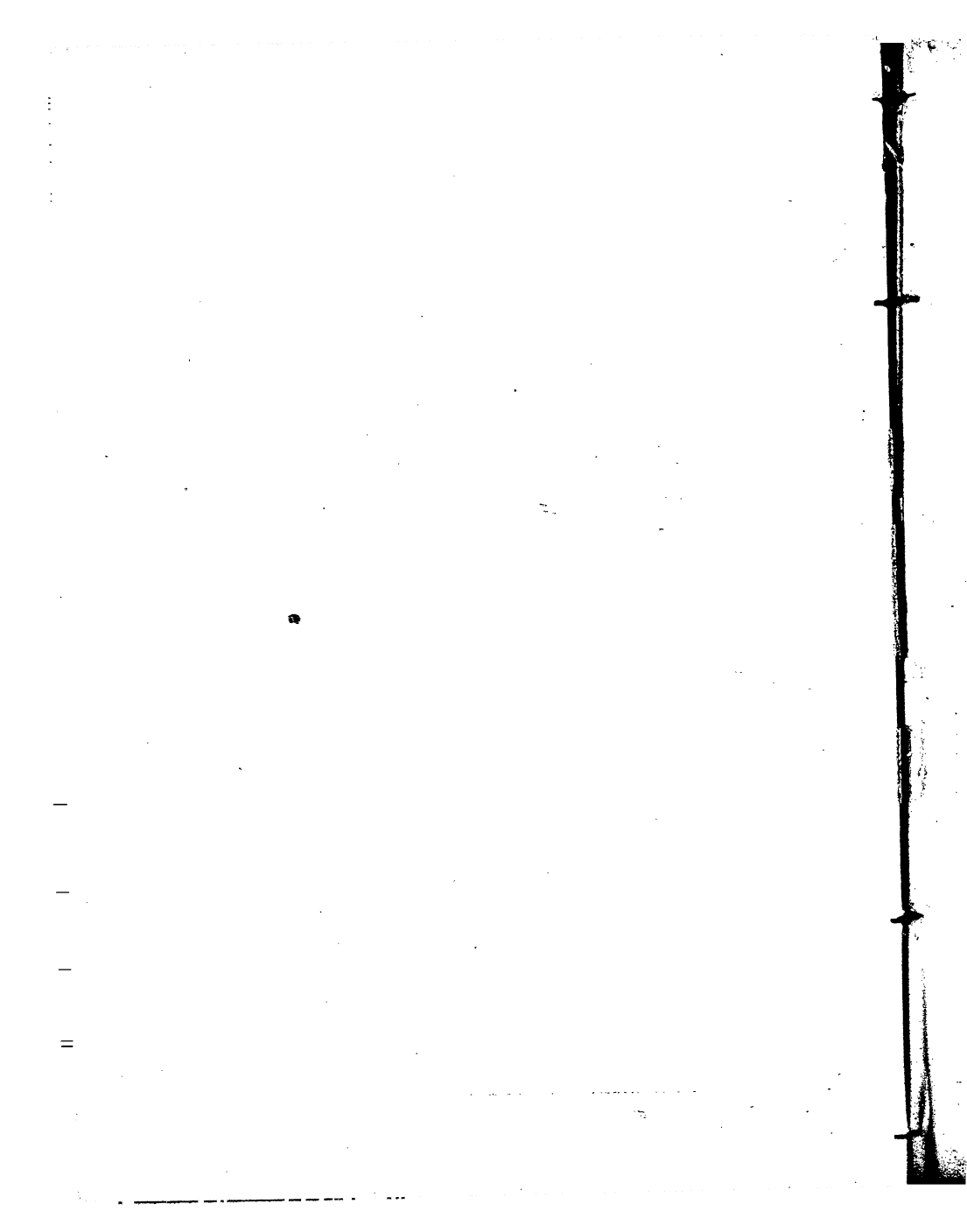
### THE FIRST SEIZURE AND OTHER MATTERS.

§ SATURDAY, JULY 13th, the *Rush* returned to Oonalaska from one of her cruises, and my husband informed me he had captured "a Britisher." This news afforded intense satisfaction to the awaiting American sealers in port. Her name was the *Black Diamond*. A sailor from the *Rush*, called Hakinson, was put aboard, all spears and weapons of every kind were taken from the hunters on board of her, and she was sent to Sitka for law proceedings. There were seventy-eight sealskins found aboard. Twenty Indian hunters from Vancouver Island and a few white sailors made up her crew. The former were not at all pleased to have their weapons taken from them.

The *Black Diamond* had refused at first to stop when commanded to do so, and two of the guns were ordered to be run out, on seeing which preparations, she surrendered at once. "That's the way we make 'em stop, ain't it, papa?" cried our little five-year old, who accompanied his father on that cruise, and jumping up and down, clapping his hands, when on running out the guns the *Black Diamond* "hove to." It was doubtful if with only one man aboard to take her to Sitka, he would not



COONAL VIKA HARBOR. Steamers *Osra* and *Rash* at the wharf; Schooners *Angel Betty*, *Matthew*, *Thomas*, and *Paul* at anchor in the Harbor, and British trading Schooners, *Chocoid*, *Cabellin*, and *Ubo*, were seized in 1886, on the beach in the background.



be overpowered and taken by the captain and crew to Victoria, B. C., instead of Sitka, a very natural move on their part. Still there was nothing else for my husband to do.

In various papers a great ado has been made of this act on the part of my husband, by those who, of course, imagine they know all about the situation. How could Capt. S—— have afforded to man six sealing-vessels with enough men from his own crew of thirty, sufficient to overpower the crews of each individual "sealer," on which the number of men on board equaled, if not exceeded, the whole number of men of the crew of the *Rush*? Was there anything else to be done? Two years before ('87) one man had sufficed and fifteen prizes awaited the arrival of the *Rush* in Sitka. Many imagine the *Rush* a man-of-war, manned with an even 500 men or so.

Another English sealer had been seen and boarded the same day, but no skins found aboard of her, though she was open to suspicion, owing to her being found where she would naturally hunt for them.

This was the *Triumph*, whose captain and crew boasted "triumphantly" on arriving at Victoria that they had been sharp enough to elude the vigilance of our first lieutenant, and had had several hundred skins hidden under the salt. It was a matter of no satisfaction whatever to find the skins, either to the officers or captain of the *Rush*. It was

not a personal matter and they were very glad when none were found.

The captain of the *Black Diamond* said he had been ordered by the owners of the vessel not to surrender unless forced to. He would not deliver up his papers; therefore my husband had to order the desk in which they were to be broken open. Altogether their policy seemed resistance to the end, and thus if any force had to be resorted to, the story of their abuse, etc., by the commander of the *Rush*, would appeal more strongly to the public in general.

Why cannot England yield without contesting such a small matter of revenue to her? By not doing so, perhaps involving our two great nations in a disgraceful wrangle over a few skins. The United States has paid for her rights.

I overheard Capt. S—— talking on deck with one of the captains of the sealers then in port. He said, "If you go into the sea, you will run the risk of being captured, I can show you no favor, and my advice is to keep out." This he said to all. Thus warned it would be to their great disadvantage if they were captured. Several prudently decided to devote themselves simply to fishing outside the Sea.

The Indians are more successful at catching seal than the white men. Their method is this: They imitate the cry of the young seal, by this means attracting the older seals, who, being very curious animals, crowd around the vessel. At a distance

of ten or twenty feet they throw their spears at them. The spears of the Vancouver Indians differ from those of the Aleutes. Those of the former are very long, about ten feet, and as large in circumference as a broomstick, with a prong at one end. They are sometimes tipped with bone. I could not understand how they used them, and had no opportunity of finding out, but supposed they stunned the seal with them by striking them on the head. They seemed too blunt to penetrate the skin. The skull of the seal is very easily crushed. The Indians lose a seal much less often than the white men, who kill them with guns.

I was delighted at the capture of the sealer, because that meant we would go to Sitka from Oonalaska in the fall, pending the trials going on there, thus affording me opportunity of seeing still more of that northern country.

The *Dora* arrived on the following Monday from St. Michael's. They had had, Mr. N—— said, a pleasant trip, though they had encountered a great deal of ice—a very unusual occurrence at that time of the year below Behring Straits. It was in the form of icebergs, which are uncommon in the Sea, in fact unknown, at least of the size of those found in the North Atlantic, but these were formed of great pieces of ice frozen together during the ice jams, and because of the long duration of the cold northerly winds had remained unmelted. They were thought to be

aground in the shallow water around the mouth of the Yukon.

At the same time the winter on the mainland in the vicinity of the Yukon had been the mildest on record. There had been much rain and the river had risen to a greater height than ever before, as shown by investigating the highest tide marks. Owing to this unprecedented behavior on the part of the river a great deal of gold ore, accumulated on the banks, which had been taken from its bed, had been washed away, and if not lost, at any rate requiring the long hard labor of months to get together again.

The *Dora* also brought news of the wreck and loss of life on the whale-ship *Little Ohio*, which up to this time had remained unheard from. She was one among the number supposed to have been lost, perhaps crushed in the ice, to whose assistance the *Bear* was proposed to be sent, in the fall of 1888. She was the only one not finally reported. Now at last was the fact made known, of the total loss of the vessel, and also the sad story of the death by drowning and starvation of thirty lives. This news was obtained by the *Thetis*. Mr. N—— met Captain S——, the commander of the *Thetis*, in St. Michael's. Captain S—— had then already been up in the Arctic, where he had found at Point Hope the eight remaining survivors of the *Little Ohio*. Two of them came on the *Dora* to Oonalaska, on their way to San Francisco. The *Little Ohio* had struck on a rock in

a terrible gale. At the time two vessels were near her and saw the signals of her distress, but were unable to render her any assistance. A boat was put off from the wreck, containing a large number of the crew, but had been capsized, or at least that was the supposition, as she was never seen or heard of again.

The reports of the details of the terrible disaster were very meager, as they were obtained from natives, and in stray fragments, which were put together as best they could be. The captain and two mates were lost.

A few days after the arrival of the *Dora* with this sad news the *Rush* returned again. We had discovered her at quite a distance, and besides her another vessel equally as large. Till she was within a short distance we were unable to make out what the companion of the *Rush* might be. She was too large to be a sealer, we thought. The *Rush* was towing her in. Our curiosity was soon satisfied; she was a whale ship, commanded by Captain Smith, from San Francisco, and had been several months on her way, cruising from place to place in search of whales, though she had found only one. When the *Rush* came across her she was sailing about in an aimless fashion among the islands trying to find Oonalaska, where her captain hoped to get a supply of fresh water and provisions. My husband offered to show the captain the way, and towed her into the harbor, for which favor he seemed very grateful.



In a conversation with Captain Smith he corroborated and added to the accounts of the wreck of the *Little Ohio* we had already received. He also told us the pitiful story of the terrible and agonizing suspense of eight months the wife of the captain of the *Ohio* had suffered. She was the mother of three little children, with no other means of sustenance than that provided by her husband's precarious success in whaling. She had nearly lost her mind in the awful suspense, and now the worst news that could be told would soon reach her. God pity and protect the poor widowed mother! The chief mate on board the whale-ship, from whom Captain S—— had learned these facts, lived next door to the sorrow-stricken woman.

The name of this whaler was the *Stamboul*. Thirty years ago my husband, while still a boy, saw her in the Mediterranean—after all these years again at Oonalaska. How interesting a history might be written about some of these old ships and their wanderings, trials and adventures, and different uses to which they have been put.

For instance, the *Harriet Lane*: At first she was a revenue cutter, then a side-wheel steamer. She accompanied several naval vessels on an expedition to Paraguay to settle some difficulty there. During the civil war she was transferred to the navy. While serving in the war she was captured by the Confederates. At the end of the war the *Harriet Lane* was found abandoned at Havana, unclaimed by any one.

A revenue cutter was sent after her by the President, and she was finally sold at auction and turned by her new owner into a sailing-vessel. In 1880 she was carrying ice and hay from Boston to Mobile, Ala., where I went aboard of her. During her career as a revenue cutter she had had the honor of carrying aboard the Prince of Wales when he visited this country in '59. She was named after Buchanan's beautiful niece, Harriet Lane.

The day the *Dora* arrived we had for dinner some delicious wild goose eggs Mr. N—— brought from St. Michael's. Wild geese are found there in immense numbers. These eggs were not at all fishy, as most of the sea-birds' eggs are.

Aboard the *Dora* was a poor Italian priest, a native of Sicily, who had spent a year on the Yukon, and had been thoroughly frozen out. His health had failed him owing to the rigor of the climate, and he had been compelled to leave. Poor fellow! Imagine the transition from Sicily to the banks of the Yukon! At the latter place the thermometer sinks to fifty and seventy degrees below zero. The houses, of course, are rudely built, wood stoves being the only means of heating them. Think and shudder, of slipping off to sleep after an almost vain effort to get warm, and awakening at four or five A. M. to find the fire out, and the thermometer seventy degrees below, with no alternative but to get up and make it. No wonder the blood froze in his veins and almost ceased to run. He showed his hard experience in

his face, which was gaunt and thin. He left afar in that lonely region several sisters (nuns), who have opened a school there. What endurance, what devotion these women show—they will have their reward.

It may be interesting to learn that on the upper Yukon birch-bark canoes are used by the Indians or that cold clime, as formerly did the "noble red man" theirs on the Hudson's swift flowing tide. Besides birch-trees, there are to be found on the banks of the Yukon the red and yellow cedar.

In their museum at the Alaska Commercial Company's office in San Francisco are to be seen a wonderfully varied collection of Alaskan curios, comprising many and rare pieces found among the Aleutes and Eskimos. Among them a pretty birch-bark canoe and, of course, the graceful bidarka. Also some beautiful bird-skin parkas.

Another passenger on the *Dora* was Dr. Mc. I——, from St. Paul's Island. He had been superintendent of the Seal Islands for twenty years, and now after this long service had resigned on account of ill health. He will be quite a loss to the company, as he was a very intelligent and able man.

News was brought by the *Dora* of six sealers seen in the sea on her way to Oonalaska. My husband was evidently to have his hands full, if he proved sufficiently vigilant.

Dr. C—— shot a magnificent eagle one day, the finest we had yet seen. Eagles might be seen every

day near the lofty hilltops—how glorious their flight, so calm, so majestic!

In one of *Harper's Magazines* of the spring of 1889, in an article on Russian life, is a picture of a family scene in Russia—"Around the Samovar." It reminded me of our table at the "big house." The samovar is universally used. Every Russian family must own a samovar, if nothing else. The "chi" (tea) is served in glasses, as is also the custom. Outside every little house at meal-time as one passed could be seen the samovar emitting its small wreath of smoke, in preparation for the making of the "chi."

Around our samovar was gathered not one family but members of several, of different nationalities. I have mentioned Mr. N——, a Bavarian, who presided. Mr. B—— was an Englishman, Mr. W—— a German, Dr. C——, Colonel B——, and myself all Americans, though from far different States. This made up the number. Questions of every sort were discussed; among them the political and other news of the day, such as was gleaned from the few papers arriving in one way and another at Oonalaska. All these gentlemen were literary and well read. Colonel B—— was a lawyer and a war veteran, and an authority on the civil war, Mr. N—— was well versed in the best literature of France and Germany, as was Mr. W——, the collector of customs. All discussed Russian politics and were conversant with Tolstoi. Therefore meal-time was a very pleasant one to me, a silent but appreciative listener.

I determined to provide myself with a samovar, now so popular at afternoon teas in New York. At one of the warehouses there were a number to choose from, of different sizes and shapes. These were directly from Russia, which enhanced their value. It behooves one to know how to use them, by no means lighting one in the house, as so many do on first attempt. The samovar is set out of doors, and when the water is boiling the fire is removed, and then it is brought in and put on the table, the tea already having been made in the teapot very strong. The water in the samovar is merely used to dilute it. They are not nearly so expensive at Oonalaska as at Sitka, where the price is double. At Oonalaska the brass ones cost \$1.15 a pound. They are quite ornamental, even if not put to use.

One bright day the latter part of June I took my first ride in a bydarka. It is the very poetry of motion. I imagined myself in a gondola, so softly and swiftly did we glide through the water, only the swish of the paddle breaking the stillness. My escort was Dr. C—, who was an expert at handling one, after an experience of five years at Oonalaska. It is strange there is not more loss of life among the natives, for the occupant is perfectly helpless, wedged in as he is while sitting in them. One has to sit with his feet stretched out perfectly straight and thrust under the top in such close quarters that it is almost impossible to move them. Getting in and out is very awkward. They are as light as birch-

bark canoes, and as risky to navigate in, a sudden gust of wind being almost enough to capsize them. The Indians living on these islands do not swim, the water is too cold, and thus they are powerless to help themselves if upset.

Sitting up at night as I used to, writing and reading in the little library at Oonalaska, I could hear and see, on looking out of the window at about ten or eleven o'clock, a solemn procession of all the cows on the "spit"—as they call the little peninsula on which Oonalaska is built—passing over the plank walks, directly under my window, silently, one by one. Every night, after the natives begin to salt their fish and hang them up to dry, these cows leave their pasture and wander around the town in diligent search of them, attracted no doubt by the salt. The natives hang their fish out near their houses, on lines and under sheds built for the purpose. These have to be fenced about to keep the cows off. The red salmon hanging everywhere in festoons, pendent like strings of Chinese lanterns, were more picturesque to the eye than pleasant to the smell.

## CHAPTER XVI.

MORE "SEALERS," ETC., ETC.

ON THE 15TH OF JULY the *Rush* bore down on the English sealer *Minnie*, from Victoria, and captured her. She had aboard four hundred and eighteen sealskins. The captain said, in a mournful tone, "She is all I own in the world," and added he had just married him a wife, with whom he had been able to leave but \$30, and now he would have to go home without anything. I thought he deserved to be allowed to keep his vessel, because of his truthfulness in regard to the sealskins he had aboard when captured. Instead of waiting till questioned, he said at once, without preliminaries, he had a number of skins aboard, all caught in the Sea. The majority of captains would have concealed the fact till the last minute before giving up their cargo, forfeiting at the same time their vessels. We expected he at least would be at Sitka.

A captain of one of the English "sealers" captured, on being told he had to give up his skins and that his vessel would be confiscated, remarked characteristically, "But it's so d——nably inconvenient, don't you know!" We mentally agreed it must be.

One or two others were boarded, but no skins found aboard.

There was a little excitement one of the four or five days the *Stamboul* was at Oonalaska over the escape from the ship of one of the crew. The captain had asked my husband to use his authority and forbid the landing of any of the crew of his vessel while at Oonalaska. The year previous there had been an Aleute killed in a row among the sailors who were ashore from a whale-ship. And on all occasions when the men had been allowed freely to land, a great deal of disturbance had been created. No liquor is to be obtained at Oonalaska, at least none is sold there. But in some unaccountable way the men seem to procure it, or it may be the native "quass," which answers all intents and purposes. Mr. N—— was most desirous not to have the whale-ships come to Oonalaska, on that account.

But the water-casks from the *Stamboul* had to be filled, and the men necessarily had to come ashore while working, one of them thus finding an opportunity of running away. On the discovery being made two parties of men from the *Rush* were sent out in different directions. One, in the whale-boat, to the mine a few miles away, the most likely place he would hide, while the other party went over the hills. The latter, in charge of the master-at-arms, soon saw a man in the distance, and started in pursuit. He seemed to be trying to evade them and they followed in hot haste, to find, to their disgust, he was the mate of the *Stamboul*, also searching for



the runaway. He thought to have a little sport by leading them on.

One of our engineers, Mr. C——, had started, out of desire for a little excitement, to aid in looking for him. As he walked along leisurely, suddenly he saw the man crouching, hidden in a small cavity in the side of the hill, who on perceiving he was discovered put his hand to his breast, as if to draw a revolver and frighten Mr. C——. But the latter held his ground. Again he stooped as if to draw from his boot a knife—sailors often carry them there—but still Mr. C——, notwithstanding the admonitions of some of our men who had come up and were standing near, did not retreat. At last seeing he had not produced the fright he intended, he let them take him, meekly enough. He was really quite harmless. His pockets were full of provisions, and his plan was, as he afterward admitted, to remain hidden till his ship left and then to apply at the company's office for work.

Several weeks after our arrival in Oonalaska, while the *Rush* was in port, Dr. C—— brought aboard with him one day all the fair Russian damsels of Oonalaska, Creoles, as they are called, numbering eight or ten. He told us privately he had hard work to induce them to renounce the little shawls in favor of hats, the former of which, with all the rest of the female portion of Oonalaska, they wear commonly on their heads. Dr. C—— is the only one whom they seem to take into their con-

fidence. They have not been able to withstand his social disposition, and having acquired the Russian language, so as to be able to express himself quite fluently, he had succeeded in finding his way to their hearts.

These maidens came aboard in solemn procession, and were formally introduced. They had very nice manners and bowed and smiled slightly at all remarks addressed to them, understanding English perfectly, but on no account uttering a word. Now and then the most wide-awake would utter a feeble "da" (yes) or "nieto" (no) in a pretty little drawling way. When they call separately they usually spend the afternoon, but during this time remain perfectly mute. One is in a condition to fairly tear one's hair before their visit is ended.

After being entertained in the wardroom by the officers they were ushered, at my request, into the cabin, martialed in by the doctor, who showed himself an expert in maneuvering his little company. It devolved on me to do the honors, of course, and I made frantic efforts to draw them into conversation wherewith to break the solemn stillness that pervaded the cabin, whenever the doctor's or my ideas flagged for want of encouragement. But my efforts were of no avail; they were sphinx like in their mute fixedness. At the proper time the doctor gave the word, whereupon they all rose simultaneously, made their bows and he martialed them out again.

They were then shown over the ship. Afterward

I proposed a little dance. We soon found one of the quartermasters an adept on the accordion, who, by the way, afterward petitioned to go to Sitka on one of the captured sealers, and so left us musicless. The decks were cleared and the ball began. These girls all dance very well, and like to. There were several dancers among the officers aboard, and soon they were whirling around in the mazy waltz, but in as solemn a manner as if it had been some religious celebration. In an hour, it then being near dinner-time, and the doctor probably having given them the hint, they seriously and demurely came up shook hands with me and departed, escorted by their quondam partners of the dance, to their respective domiciles, where they retired into their shells, as it were, and remained from that day unseen and unheard of for several weeks.

I was amused at the discovery that some of these young ladies had never seen that most common and useful animal, the horse, or even a mule, none ever having been taken to Oonalaska.

There was a mule at Ounga, which at first nearly frightened the natives to death. It was used at a mine near by. After they found out it was nothing supernatural they lost some of their awe, at least enough to employ themselves hitting it, and throwing things at it, whereas at first they had run from it in fear and trembling. After a while the sagacious beast seemed to realize the dread it inspired and began to chase its tormentors the moment they

appeared in sight, which soon had the desired effect, and it was allowed to roam in peace. Its acuteness in distinguishing an Aleute from a white man was remarkable. With his white owners he was the most docile animal in the world.

CRUISE OF THE "RUSH."



## CHAPTER XVII.

### A TRAMP OVER THE HILLS.

THERE WERE NOT MANY WAYS of employing one's time at Oonalaska, and one morning I awoke with the desperate resolution in my mind to do something or other, I did not care what, to break the monotony of my existence. I announced my firm resolve at breakfast. At every suggestion as to expeditions by boat or by land to places of interest, I met with opposition and remonstrance, owing to the weather and general humidity of land and atmosphere I was assured that August was the proper month in which to indulge in those things, at least, for a lady. That nettled me, and determined me to persist in my resolution. After breakfast I wended my way to the *Rush* on a recruiting expedition. I summoned the officers, laid my proposition before them, and endeavored to enlist some one or two in such a good cause.

I had heard of very beautiful falls an indefinite number of miles away; at least no two people seemed to agree as to the distance. These I proposed to the officers to find.

Of course the first question asked was, "How far is it?" I stated the shortest number of miles I had heard. "Well! that was rather far, and—well—he

had to write up the log." Another had had the "mid-watch" the night before and thought he would "turn in and take a little sleep." Others candidly said they never walked unless they had to. Lieutenant W—— said he would take a *little* walk with me; but Mr. D——, our chief engineer, spoke up bravely and said, "Though I'm the eldest man here, Mrs. S——, I'll go." I could always depend on Mr. D——. We took a forty-mile horseback ride in Southern California once, about a year ago, from which we have hardly yet recovered. I clinched the bargain on the spot, and would not let Lieutenant W—— back out either, after getting him to yield that much. Then hurrying them off to get ready, for my motto is, "Strike while the iron is hot," I hastened back to the house, donned my rubber boots, shortened my skirts, and took my umbrella for a possible shower, or to use as a walking-stick in case it did not rain.

As is generally the case with ladies, I was ready *first*, and had to wait what seemed to me an interminable length of time for my escorts. At last they appeared, Mr. D—— bearing a napkin containing "lunch," as he explained. They declared the latter the whole cause of the delay, which I rather doubted when at lunch-time I found a few slices of bread and bacon, and a box of sardines, unopened at that, the whole cause of the delay. However, it was enough they were there, and at last ready to start.

We walked cheerfully along for a mile or two, over a trail already known to us, and then struck the trail we sought. After following it a short distance a beautiful view met our eyes. A large valley spread out before us in the shape of a gigantic oak-leaf, the sharp spurs of the mountains making the deep indentations, and a little river forming the principal or mid vein, while numbers of other little streams running into it from off the mountain sides formed the smaller veins. Immediately before us spread out a lovely little lake, upon whose quiet bosom a few game ducks peacefully swam, unconscious of danger. They truly had no need to fear us, for our only firearm was a revolver, useless at that distance. We uttered exclamations of delight as our eyes roamed over the scene. On either side the mountains towered majestically, their sides covered with the still remaining snow.

We hurried along, eager to explore this lovely region farther. Ever and anon new wild-flowers met our eyes, dainty bluebells, pink daisies, blue flags, anemones, the moccasin plant, and so on, fairly carpeting the lower hills and low land with their bright colors, rivaling the broad "llanos" around San Antonio, Texas, in their brilliant beauty. We walked on and on; now the hills became more rugged, deeper canyons divided them, at the bottom of each of which roared and plunged the turbulent little mountain torrents. After exploring several of them we at last came to the

edge of a far deeper and sheerer precipice, and on glancing up we caught sight of the falls we were in search of. We could not be mistaken. It was now lunch-time and Mr. D—— proposed before we undertook to reach them we sit down and eat our lunch. Mr. D——, always thoughtful, had brought a United States army rubber blanket, which we spread out on the ground to sit on, for, as we had been told, everything was wet, wet, wet. My skirts were increased in weight by several pounds, owing to the amount of water they had absorbed in trailing them through the weeds, and several times in crossing the little brooks that obstructed our path.

We sat down in excellent spirits to our humble fare. Bacon is quite a delicacy to a hungry mortal, and sardines always palatable, with bread. But now arose a difficulty; we had forgotten a drinking utensil of any kind. Lieutenant W——, equal to the occasion, proposed a good, clean stone, on which the contents of the sardine-box were emptied, and then Mr. D—— proceeded to scrub it with the sand he found at the bottom of the stream beside which we were lunching. He soon brought it to me full of the clear, cold, sparkling water, which was very acceptable, and the sardine-can proved invaluable the rest of the trip.

Finishing our meager repast we wended our way to the falls. We followed the bed of the stream, climbing first on one side and then on the other, as



we best could pick our way. After a short but hard climb we came upon it suddenly, a torrent of water pouring over a perpendicular wall of rock over a hundred feet high. At the foot the water fell into a little basin, where it foamed and boiled away, rushing madly against the rocks deep-sunken in its bed as if to hurl them from its path. We watched with quiet pleasure the little cataract, and then, our instinct for further discoveries being aroused, we scrambled up the steep side of the precipice to the top of the falls. Here we found another and smaller valley spread out before us, at a much higher elevation. The tops of the mountains now seemed much more accessible. We found we had been slowly rising all the while, and now were many hundred feet probably two thousand, above the level of the sea. Beyond and looking through the valley, we could see Oonalaska far towards the setting sun. Its little colored scattered houses looking more like quiet cattle grazing than human habitations. We could see the *Rush*, a child's toy ship at that distance, and hills and mountains piled promiscuously on every side of the little harbor. We did not wish to retrace our steps homeward, so after holding a council of war, we decided to climb the nearest peak and "view the landscape o'er." We little knew what an arduous climb we then undertook, it looked so near, and yet it was so far. No sooner had we arrived at an eminence we felt sure on looking up was the top, than another appeared above that, and so on, till

both our courage and strength well nigh gave out. Still, with frequent pauses for rest, we toiled slowly on, and at length shouted, as did Balboa before us, "The sea! the sea!" this time on directly the opposite side of the island from that we had left, and now we had the view of mountains and sea on the one hand and sea and mountains on the other. A grand panorama! We sat watching that perfect beauty as long as we dared, for fear of contracting cold and rheumatism; for even when viewing the sublime we have to think of our poor, ridiculous little selves.

We then formed the resolution of keeping our high elevation, and so wend our way back rather than descend again to the valley.

We were aware of the deep ravines, or canyons, we had to cross, and the snow patches which impeded our way, but we were daring enough to brave all for the sake of adventure. We climbed, and stopped to rest and look, and climbed again incessantly up and down. At length we came to a standstill—an enormous area of snow spread out before our feet at a very steep incline. Get over that we must, or we would have to climb back again and around by another way, involving great loss of time. It was already three P. M. and we wanted to get back for dinner at five. Mr. D— bravely plodded over it in a diagonal line, stamping a hole in the snow with each step, and so gaining a footing, as he told us afterward. Lieutenant W— and

myself had sat down to rest a few moments before and had gotten behind. When we arrived at the snow we could not see him nor his tracks, and felt a little alarmed for his safety. After scanning the hillside closely we at length observed him, a little speck in the distance at the bottom of the gorge. We called to him and asked him how he got over. He shouted back, "Walked," but that seemed an almost impossible thing to do; the snow was frozen so hard it was difficult to get a footing. However, we started, I the advance guard, Lieutenant W—— having some difficulty in keeping his footing, owing to the broad, flat sole of his shoe. After walking a short distance, and yet not seeing the snow-line over a sudden swell in the bank, I determined to boldly sit on the snow and allow myself to slide down, as the easiest and speediest way to solve the problem; of the latter fact there was no doubt. No sooner said than done, and I found myself, after a ghastly breathless interval of a few seconds, at the end of my descent by a sharp collision with the bare ground. I picked myself up, a wiser and a sadder woman, but unhurt. Lieutenant W—— now ventured his life in a similar manner. Scrambling out of his way I watched his "rapid transit" down the steep incline of snow. Could he have been photographed in the act nothing could have afforded me more amusement. The expression of his face as he came down, not knowing what fate the next minute had in store for him, was a study. It was a

cross between fear and surprise, and a looking forward to probable consequences. He descended in safety and we were soon heartily laughing over our dangerous adventure, for had we been unable to stop ourselves on the steep, slippery, because frozen, ground we might have been dashed to pieces against the rocks at the bottom. It was equal to a toboggan slide in the middle of a Canadian winter, though our experience was in July.

A few moments more and we were again with Mr. D——, and all three went on our way rejoicing, having overcome the greatest of our difficulties. Now we began, however, to feel the effects of all our exertions, and home still seemed a long way off. But trudging along, interested as we were in our ever-varying walk, we managed at last to arrive at our starting-point, footsore and weary, but safe.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

SEAL, OR PRIBYLOF, ISLANDS—ST. GEORGE

THE NEXT DAY I packed my small trunk and took passage on the *Rush* for the Seal, or Pribylof, Islands. As was inevitable, I was afflicted with seasickness the moment the *Rush* steamed out of the harbor; however, when late in the afternoon a "sealer" was reported, I revived sufficiently to go on deck to witness the chase and capture. But it did not prove as wildly exciting as I had expected. The *Rush* swooped down upon the poor little schooner like a big hawk on a little bird, which meekly gives up after a faint struggle. So the schooner, at the shout of command from my husband, "Heave to! I want to board you!" hauled her jib to windward, which I learned was the proper way to express it and define "heave to." This she did without resistance of any kind. A whale-boat was lowered, and two officers, armed with revolvers, accompanied by several of the men, set off to board her. They did so, but found, after searching her thoroughly, no skins. We turned on our course again and she soon was but as a bird in the distance.

The same thing occurred later, about eight in the evening, and the following morning, all the sealers seemed sailing around the sea merely for a pastime.

The captain of one of the schooners boarded had been captured twice in previous seasons, '86 and '87, and, besides, had had quite a thrilling adventure last year. He, with two of his men, left his schooner in a small boat to go in search of the seal. A thick fog arose and they lost their bearings and were thus separated from their ship. They drifted about in the little open otter-boat two weeks, during which time they kept alive on raw seal meat. At last they managed to get to Kadiak Island, where they found friends, but no news of the schooner. From Kadiak the captain was taken by a chance steamer to San Francisco, the vessel had already arrived at Port Townsend and reported his loss and that of the boat's crew.

This occurrence is common in the Behring Sea, where the fog is liable to shut down, as in the twinkling of an eye, it so constantly shifts about. The same schooner had two men aboard, recently picked up, lost in the same way from a sister vessel.

About 3:30 p. m., July 24th, we arrived at the Island of St. George, the smaller of the Seal Islands, as they are commonly called. We saw it first through a curtain of shifting fog or mist, which one moment shut it out completely, and then cleared just long enough to show us where we were. But a surer means, of telling our near approach to the islands were the millions upon millions of the gillemot or muir which blacken the surface of the water for miles

around. As we neared them they flew and dove in every direction, just touching the surface of the water with their wings, beating it into foam, and producing a continuous indistinct sound, hard to describe, as the whole mass of floating birds were disturbed and took to flight. It would be hard to exaggerate their numbers. Immediately along the beach on the rocks hundreds of white gulls were perched. And in many places I thought them but the foam of the breakers dashing on the shore. It was only through their immobility I was able to detect the difference. We had to anchor quite a distance from shore, owing to the heavy swells which roll in from the sea, there being no harbor.

The Islands of St. Paul and St. George are both much lower in their general elevation than any of the Aleutian chain of islands we had visited. The highest elevation is but about 600 feet and is called Bogoslov, hardly deserving the name of mountain. St. Paul is the larger and more important of the two. They are covered with grass and flowers, during the summer season, but there are no bushes or trees of any kind. The flowers, to my surprise, differ on the two islands from each other, at least the most common were unlike, as well as from those growing around Oonalaska, though not so much. I could not account for it, as the difference in temperature and distance apart of the Aleutian and Pribylof islands did not seem to be sufficient to warrant it.

The average temperature during the month of July,

we found on consulting our log book, was at Oonalaska about fifty-seven degrees Fahrenheit, at the Seal Islands, about fifty degrees. At the former islands, on the third of July, we registered sixty-three degrees Fahrenheit, and it has been known to rise as high as seventy degrees, but this is rarely the case and only at long intervals, and then only for a short time, perhaps one day during a season.

Over the Seal Islands the sky is almost continually overcast. The sun once in a while looks through the mist, with pale sickly beams which soon fade away. It rains more or less all the time in summer, though it is not often much more than a fine mist, which, however, when lasting day after day, is more depressing than a good hard shower. The officers aboard the *Rush* generally concur in the statement, that after taking this cruise once it loses all its interest. Existence is most monotonous during the winter on and near the islands of Behring Sea; there is so much gloom, so little sunshine, so little life and variety. For a summer visit like mine it was not very bad.

No news is received at the islands for six months. They did not know who was elected President till seven or eight months afterward, and that too in a part of our own country. There is no means of communication between Sitka and Oonalaska. At the former place they hear from the rest of the world twice a month in winter. It is only through the Alaska Commercial Company there is any communi-



cation at all with the Aleutian and Pribylof Islands, the revenue cutters being sent up in the summer only to protect the fisheries.

The Island of St. Matthew, only a little over two hundred miles farther north, presents quite an Arctic aspect, as I was told by an officer aboard the *Rush*, who had been there. At St. Matthew's are found the polar bear, white owls and many other evidences of the life of the frigid zone. Formerly it was inhabited by Eskimos. It is now deserted. I tried to induce my husband to visit it while on my trip to the Pribylof Islands, but he answered, as usual, "That is not my business, it is out of my way, I am sent up to protect the seal fisheries, not on a pleasure trip." He is inflexible in carrying out his duty. Therefore I was denied the pleasure of seeing St. Matthew's, and shooting a white polar bear.

But to return to St. George Island. From the ship's deck, with the glasses, I was able to see the chief industry of the place—the seal-killing. Squads of men, with clubs, surround the seals while on their "rookeries," and making a noise by beating on tin cans scare them, urging them in that way in large numbers far up on the beach, where they are left struggling and squirming about in the grass. They utter a sound not unlike the "baa" of a sheep. The hair seal, judging from those on the rocks in front of the Cliff House at Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, make a noise more like the bark of a dog. The fur seal are a pretty animal in repose, but very awkward

when in motion. Huddled close together, the poor things await their fate. About twenty are singled out of the large group at a time, driven off a short distance and clubbed over the head, one blow of the lead-tipped pole crushing the skull, producing instant death, or insensibility, for I saw one breathe for some time after it was struck. The sight haunts me still. It seems so brutal to kill them, they are so harmless, and have such a human look about the eyes.

In driving them from the "rookeries" great care is taken to select them, those only being chosen that are of the proper age to kill. The full-grown males are preserved, and all the female seal. Fifteen hundred are often killed in one day by a handful of men. One hundred thousand are killed every year on both the islands together. The company is limited to that number. Including all seals killed outside in the sea, it is supposed the whole number reaches about one hundred and thirty thousand. They are growing more scarce every year, and eventually may be driven away from these islands to other haunts.

The blow on the head by one man, a stab with a knife to bleed the animals by another, while a third leans over and skins it, in scarce five minutes, completes the whole operation. It is a ghastly, sickening sight, to see the carcasses of those poor murdered animals covering the ground for a great distance, while the hungry birds flutter and quarrel over them. Then the stench is something dreadful! I wonder any one can ever accustom himself to it. Among

this squad of men who kill the seal are seen many native, or Aleute, women rushing greedily about securing the blubber, which they use for fuel in winter, and I was told also, eat. They are very fond of the seal meat. They carry it in quantities to their homes, where they keep it hung up out in the air, in all kinds of weather, till it becomes sufficiently "gamey" to be palatable to them, and then eat it. These women appeared like so many vultures, also reminding one of the robbers of the dead on a field of battle; it is a horrid sight.

After landing I walked nearer to look more closely at the dreadful scene, that I might describe it, and say I had seen it personally, but I am almost sorry I did. What a heartless sacrifice of so many thousands of harmless animals, that women may wear sealskin coats!

We landed at St. George in a rough sea, and had to take our chances of getting soaked, but much to our relief no casualty of that kind occurred. As our boat touched the beach we were met by Dr. N—, who is employed by the company, and Capt. L—, the Treasury agent of the island. We found the same characteristics, in the town, if I may so call it, as at Oonalaska. The natives live in houses built by the company. The Greek church, the store and the company's house were the principal buildings.

Soon after landing the dearest little woman, Capt. L—'s wife, ran up to me and kissed me, saying she had not seen a white woman for a year. I liked her



FUR SEAL ON THE BEACH AT ST. PAUL'S ISLAND, BEHRING SEA

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at once, and found her a quaint and true type of a "down-easter," with, I know, the kindest of hearts, and a world-wide experience. Her husband had been a sailor all his life, and since they were married she had traveled with him. He had commanded a "fruiter," she said, and she had sailed to many a storied foreign port, of France, Spain, Italy, Sicily and those places. "But after all they are of no account beside one's own country, and they pass out of your mind like anything else," she said, when I expressed my envy of her, and my longing to go. She told me she was fifty, and had a grown family and grandchildren, but she chatted and laughed so brightly, and walked so briskly along, it was hard to believe. They were to return to their own dear home, a farm near Bath, Maine, in the fall, and were looking forward to their cheerful fireside there, after the long gloomy winter on the island. I was loth to say good-bye to her and leave her again alone. As a souvenir of my visit Capt. L—— gave me a little trinket or two, carved out of walrus tusks, by his own nimble fingers, during the long dull winter days. He called himself "an old barnacle," and a flavor of his old sailor days still clung about him.

We all took dinner ashore. I half expected to be invited to eat a piece of seal meat, as I understood they had it there most of the time for dinner as a standby. Fortunately I escaped the pain of a refusal. After the sights I had seen, nothing less than starvation would induce me to taste seal meat. But I came

to the conclusion, that after a short residence on the islands one would become inured to most anything.

I was told that on the island of St. Paul, as a good joke, and with high encomiums as to its merit as a dish, that last winter a favorite mule, too old for further use, had been killed and eaten, and that by the white population. The mule went by the name of "Old Snooks," and it was related that at table the question was passed, "Which will you have, Mr. So-and-So, a piece of ham or Old Snooks?" A Mr. G——, with whom Old Snooks had been a great favorite, was caught eating a piece of him with great relish, at the same time silently dashing away a tear, and when asked the cause of his emotion, replied, "He was thinking of the many good times he had had behind Old Snooks."

In the winter a great many blue foxes are killed on the Pribylof Islands. Often as many as a thousand skins are obtained. These foxes are not natives of the islands, but were taken there some years ago by the Alaska Commercial Company. They have multiplied very rapidly. They are supposed to live chiefly upon birds' eggs, which are found in such quantities on the islands, that of St. George especially. In winter, when all food is scarce, they prowl around the dwellings, howling terribly, a dismal accompaniment to the moaning of the wind during the long, stormy winter. Those who spend their winters there are not to be envied, everything

must look so bare and bleak, for the islands are so low there is no protection from the wind.

A little blue fox, resembling in color very much a maltese kitten, was presented to one of my little boys by one of the natives, when on a trip to the island of St. George. We left him to winter at Oonalaska, in care of "Old Rufe," who, when the poor animal was of the proper size, was to send us his skin.





## CHAPTER XIX.

### SEAL ISLANDS—CONTINUED—ST. PAUL.

**A**BOUT 11:30 A. M., JULY 26th, we arrived at the island of St. Paul. This island is larger and the place more important than either Oonalaska or St. George. They kill by far the greater number of seal there. While at St. Paul we were pleasantly entertained by Mr. and Mrs. M—— and the gentlemen of the place.

The Greek church at St. Paul's, though not containing as many handsome things as that at Sitka, is said to be the wealthiest in the territory. The natives make considerable money in the employ of the Alaska Commercial Company by killing seal, a percentage of which is given to the priest. This is used by him in whatever manner he chooses.

There are half the number of natives at St. Paul that there are at Oonalaska. Their houses, as at Oonalaska, are all alike, though many more, because single and built by the company, there are also some few larger occupied by Creole families. These, with the store, which is very good, together with the company's house and warehouses, and I must not forget the school-house, make up the town, the most imposing in size we had seen.

St. Paul is situated on a slight elevation overlook-

ing the sea, and about a quarter of a mile back from it. At the time I was there the island was very green, and fresh, bright flowers bloomed everywhere. One in particular attracted my attention; it was a flower much resembling the California poppy, or *escholtzia*, in form, though of a paler yellow and a very vivid color, while the petals were of a more silky texture. It, however, had a very rank odor, which in a close room became absolutely sickening. I saw them nowhere else.

Standing on the porch of the house occupied by Mr. and Mrs. M—— one obtained a fine view of the sea. Three lonely graves, in a direct line from the house to the sea, on a little knoll, attracted my notice. On inquiry I found three men were buried there, lost from one of our revenue cutters while trying to effect a landing. It had happened some years previous. There was something mournful about the graves, so alone and uncared for, and so far from the dear ones who would perhaps keep them wreathed in flowers.

A great many more seals are to be found on St. Paul than on St. George Island; almost all the shore line of the island is covered with them. The "rookeries" are particular spots chosen by the seal to breed in. At St. Paul's Island I had a fine opportunity to see all the domestic system of seal-life in its entirety. We walked about a mile to a point of rocky land projecting into the water, inclining gradually from a bluff, the top of which was cov-

ered with grass and exquisitely green moss. We approached from the land side and walked carefully, so as not to frighten the seals, to the top of the bluff, where, climbing a single large rock, which commanded a fine view of the entire point and on both sides of it, we saw, covering an area of at least ten or twelve acres, myriads of seal of all sizes, varying from the huge male seal, often as large as an ox, to the little black baby seal, no larger than a cat. After watching some time I began to see, as I said above, into their domestic life. I found that each Mr. Seal had his harem around him, consisting of some eight or ten wives and their numerous progeny, and forming distinct groups. Each Mr. Seal and family occupied his own territory, which he guarded jealously, debarring all other seal of access to, and keeping all avenues of escape for, his wives blocked up. It was very amusing to see the general terror of the more timid females when disturbed by our sudden appearance, their struggles to get away, altogether checked by the irate paterfamilias, who, by flopping (no other word describes their motion) along in front of them, barred their way effectually by skillful maneuvering, and had his hands (or flippers) full to do so, too, with eight wives seeking to escape in all possible directions. Rather than attack the intruder the male seal's anxiety seems to be to keep his wives at home. He showed himself a perfect tyrant, scarce allowing them to move in his sight. We were told many peculiar things

in regard to them, almost too human to be true. One person related to me the following fact: Sometimes there are elopements among them, and if the wronged husband be able to recapture his faithless frau he will even condescend to kiss and make up. I actually saw with my own eyes what very much resembled such a caress. But woe! to the betrayer of his domestic happiness. It was "*guerre a la mort*" between them.

Another item in regard to their habits was this: Early in the breeding season the males come to the rookeries, choose their own particular habitations, if I may so call them, and keep them at the cost of many a battle. A little later the females come, then there ensues a regular game of grab; each one helps himself to as many wives as he can and drives them before him to his chosen abode, where he keeps them closely at home as I have already described.

Mr. G——, who took us to the "rookery," greatly to our amusement, although we were rather fearful for his safety, approached a family nearest to us and endeavored to secure a baby seal for us to look at closely. This family was reduced to only one wife, the other seven or eight evidently having been too much for his lordship to manage. As Mr. G—— approached them the female made frantic efforts to get away to the water. Her lord and master seemed beside himself with rage at Mr. G—— and anxiety about his wife's getting away. At last he

devoted his whole attention to the latter difficulty, and finally succeeded in driving her back. In the mean time the prize had been secured, and Mr. G—— brought it to us by the nape of the neck and put it down so we might pat it. It did not seem to be either afraid or savage; it was too young.

The male seal do not hesitate to attack a man, to defend themselves and their families. We watched their feuds and strifes for an hour or more and were constantly interested. The jealousy of the males was most amusing, and the submission of the wives most laudable.

The large seals or "bulls," as they are called, remain without sustenance the entire summer or breeding season, and are kept alive by their own fat.

The female seal make their escape to the water in search of fish, which is their food. The reason why so much opposition is made to the promiscuous killing of seal, is that thereby great numbers of females are destroyed, in that way exterminating them much more rapidly than if the females were preserved.

No seal under two, nor over five, years of age are killed, and no females. Yet one hundred thousand are secured every year. Aside from that, there is only one seal born to a mother a season, so that one can imagine the countless multitudes that inhabit the Behring Sea. They disappear in winter, and no one has been able to find out what becomes of them. About the first of May they return, a few at

a time, to their old haunts. The greatest number is found in July. By the first or middle of August the required number of seal have all been killed. About the first of December they have all disappeared. As an insight into the life of the lower order of animals it was the most interesting thing of the kind I ever saw. The noise or the cry made by the seals on the rookeries resembles the confusion of sounds heard in a barnyard among calves and sheep.

Aside from the Pribylof Islands seals are found on the Commander Islands, a group belonging to Russia and near the Siberian coast. They were, in former years, to be found about the southern end of South America; but, owing to the indiscriminate killing of them, they have been almost entirely exterminated in that portion of the world.

We remained at St. Paul only a day, though Mrs. M—— was very desirous I should remain a week or two with her, till the return visit of the *Rush*. She had spent two years on the island, and most of that time had had no white lady companion. But my plans were such I could not well accept her invitation. Mr. and Mrs. M—— were then preparing to go back with Captain and Mrs. L——, of St. George Island, to their homes in the East, to return no more forever.

## CHAPTER XX.

### CHASING THE "SEALERS."

**THE** NEXT SPENT several days in the vicinity of the Pribylof Islands searching for sealers. On the 27th of July we had an exciting chase after what proved to be the *Maggie Mack*, from Victoria, B. C. The Englishmen seemed bound to catch all the seal they pleased in defiance of the prohibition, and were less cautious, evidently, than the Americans. No doubt they expected protection from the *Swiftsure* and other English men-of-war reported to be coming into Behring Sea.

It was a stormy day, a high sea was running, and a stiff breeze blowing, while rain fell in a disagreeable drizzle. My husband, sweeping the horizon with his sharp eyes, discovered her, a small speck in the distance, hardly visible to the naked eye. Our course was changed, the engineer at his engine down below summoned and asked to give us "all the steam he could," and with all sails set we hurried in pursuit. The little *Rush* rolled badly as she breasted the big seas, but there was a certain exhilaration in the war of the elements, and the increase of speed, even if it were only chasing a poor little schooner, she was at any rate legitimate prey. The *Maggie Mack* scudded ahead with a fair wind and under full

sail, but the *Rush* slowly gained on her. At last, when all hope of escape was over, she "hove to," anticipating the order, and waited to be boarded. Now came the "tug of war," though Greeks did not meet. The sea ran so high the two vessels, and especially the *Maggie Mack*, rolled over terribly, first one side and then the other, almost going under water, wholly at the mercy of the waves. There was much danger of the whale-boat being smashed to pieces by being dashed against the side of the vessel. Still it was not for us to allow the prey to escape for such a cause as that, and it was lowered with great care amid the hoarse shouts of command from officers and "bo'son" (boatswain) just heard above the roar of the sea, and the wind as it whistled through the rigging. Those left aboard watched the small craft, as on her way to the schooner she disappeared at times in the trough of the sea, almost fearing we would never see her again. And yet politicians opposed to the retirement for Revenue-Marine officers say they never risk their lives! However, in a moment she would appear riding the crest of each wave, just as it threatened to engulf her. Finally they neared the sealer and a catastrophe of some kind seemed imminent, as they rolled and dashed, now away from, now against, each other. Instead, as would naturally be supposed, the English captain showed no enmity whatever, for he kindly threw a rope to assist them, and actually helped them aboard. This was effected without any



accident occurring, further than the loss of one oar, and the breaking of another. The captain was very polite, our lieutenants reported, all the time they were aboard. He said he had five hundred and sixty-one sealskins, but that none had been caught in the Sea. The last caught was four days before, near Copper Islands. Leaving one lieutenant aboard the schooner, to await the decision of my husband, our first lieutenant, Mr. T——, came back and reporting what the captain said, gave his opinion it was true, as the skins did not look fresh. He added, the captain was on his way to Petropavlosky. He had clearance papers from San Francisco there. My husband, always giving them the benefit of the doubt, let them go, but he rather doubted the story.

There had been up to that time seven or eight sealers found and boarded in the Behring Sea. Only two of these had been seized. The first having fresh seal aboard, to condemn her, the second, by the confession of the captain, that he had taken all he had in the Sea. The others had all either "just come in," or were "passing through," or some such story, and had no positive evidence of fresh catches aboard, though we strongly suspected the seal having been thrown overboard on finding the *Rush* after them, rather than give up their vessels. However, Captain S—— had to let them go.

We had begun to disbelieve the fact the *Swiftsure* ever intended to appear in the Sea. If she did, then was her opportunity, for my husband was chasing

every schooner, English or American, he saw in the Sea.

The 29th of July we chased, overtook and seized the British schooner *Pathfinder*. Her captain, without hesitation, acknowledged having secured eight hundred and fifty sealskins in Behring Sea. These were transferred to the *Rush*, together with all their firearms and ammunition. One of our quarter-masters Hunter by name, asked permission to take her to Sitka, which request my husband granted. We were sorry to have him go, as he was a very good man. Yet it was better to send one willing to go than one unwilling. There were so many skins it took several hours' time to complete the transfer.

The following day the American schooner, *James G. Swan*, was seized. One hundred and seventy-one skins were found aboard of her.

She was owned by the Neah Bay Indians of Washington (State), though her captain and mate were white men. The name of the owner was Chestoqua Peterson. The way in which he happened to receive that name was this: His father, the chief of the tribe, was named *Chestoqua Peter*. In making out the vessel's papers his name was put down as Chestoqua Peter's son, converted now into a Dutch name and transforming a North American Indian into a "Dutchman."

The *James G. Swan* was sent to Sitka as were the other prizes, however she did not appear there either,

but in Port Townsend, where Captain S—— found her on the arrival of the *Rush* at that place.

The vessel was named after a great friend of the Indians in that part of the country, Judge James G. Swan, of Port Townsend.

She was caught in the very act. It must have been awkward enough. She had two of her small boats out, containing her hunters, and they were unable to come up with their vessel before the *Rush* overtook her. The hunters were all Indians, and used their own canoes, or dugouts, as they are commonly called, also carrying their native spears, which I have already described. The Indian hunters were very wroth over giving up their weapons.

The guns taken from the vessels seized were in every case carefully marked with the individual owner's name attached to it, to be returned to them in Sitka. Thus it was to their interest to go there, if they desired to get them.

The next day a good joke happened on all of the officers as well as my husband. A schooner was reported by our sharp-eyed little sailor, "Nelson." The only gift he had was his good eyesight; further than that he had few merits, but he could spy anything as readily as the rest could with a glass.

The *Rush* started full speed, as usual, after the schooner. The whale-boat was all ready to be lowered, and the usual excitement prevailed. When being near enough to see the letters of her name it was simultaneously discovered to be the already

captured *James G. Swan* of the night before. Great was the fun and joking on the discovery. We were so near her before we made her out she had "hailed her jib to windward," supposing we had something more to communicate. Each officer had a good excuse as to why he did not recognize her sooner. What had rendered them so unsuspecting was the fact she had changed her course and not followed the one originally intended.

I asked my husband how many buckets of coal he was out, but he declined to answer the impertinent question.

The same day, in the morning, had been captured the *Juanita*, a British sealer. She had aboard six hundred and nineteen sealskins.

During the following days many other sealers were seen and boarded, some seized and some not, according to circumstances.

Two years before one of the sealers captured contained the large number of fifteen hundred skins.

The sealskin, in its raw state, the summer of 1889, was estimated at \$8 a skin. Multiply by 855, the number found on the *Pathfinder*, and we have an approximate loss of about seven thousand dollars, besides the vessel, to the owners. If, therefore, the schooners succeeded escaping detection, the profit would be enough to pay for the risk incurred. It is no wonder such as see no fairness in the prohibition take the chances.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### RETURN TO OONALASKA.

**A**FTER A SHORT TRIP of ten days I found myself again facing Oonalaska. It was with a greater degree of pleasure than I had anticipated that I reflected it was to be my abiding place for still another month. There I had nothing to do but read and dream the hours away, relieved by almost daily short walks and boat rides, when the weather permitted. No tiresome calls, no "at home" days and other wearisome society claims on one's time. I was once again in my little library, mine for the time being, picking over books, running over a few songs on the organ, and thoroughly glad my visit to the Seal Islands and dreaded sea trip was over, though altogether it had been very pleasant.

Little Emma came aboard the *Rush* promptly on our arrival, freighted with all the news, social and political, that had happened during our absence. The first fact was startling: "the missing woman had been found." I had omitted relating in its proper place the story of a poor native woman who, a few days after our arrival at Oonalaska, had been discovered to be missing, and had never been heard of since. A thorough search had been made for her, but no traces could be found. Her disappearance had

remained an entire mystery. Conjectures had been made, and many hinted at drowning, but no evidences were discovered. But at length, as Emma related, the mystery had been partially cleared by her dead body being washed up on the beach, as it were, at the very doors of the "big house." The sea had given up its dead. No clue to the means of her death had been found, whether voluntary or otherwise. We inclined to the belief it was an accident. Her life had gone out as a light by day, and been as little missed, to all outward appearance. Yet in some heart of sister, brother, husband or child, perhaps, a lament was made unknown to all but One.

We had several lovely, bright, sunshiny days at Oonalaska after our return. The sun was even oppressively hot, or it felt so, in our heavy clothing. It seemed more as August should be. To remain indoors was out of the question. Mr. N—— desecanted on the excellences of the "banana belt," as he laughingly calls Oonalaska. The sun does seem to concentrate his rays on this particular spot. The mornings were nearly always bright and sunny; later, in the afternoon, it would often cloud over. My husband said the sun never seemed to shine anywhere else on the islands as far as he had had experience.

At dinner we had fresh, delicious lettuce and sweet tender radishes from *the garden*. A bed of English daisies were in full bloom. I must not forget to mention the wild celery which abounds over the

hills, and which the natives eat. It is not unpalatable; one could cultivate a taste for it.

For a day or two after our return my husband had his hands full, superintending the careful storing of the sealskins he had taken, then numbering over two thousand. These are, when freshly caught, hastily salted and piled one upon another. After a week, or a little longer, they have all to be taken down and resalted separately, with the utmost care. Any carelessness, and too great economy of the salt, might entirely ruin the skins. They had to be transferred to the warehouse from the *Rush*, and stacked up there to await final disposal of them. They are sold at auction, and the proceeds go to the Government. The vessels captured are also sold in the same way. The sealskins are not, as many imagine, particularly valuable in their natural state. It no more resembles the sealskin as one sees it made up in the coat than the glossy hide of a gray horse does. The natural color is a dark gray, very smooth and shiny. This is hair. The fur is shorter and hidden by it. The outer gray hair is removed entirely, or plucked, as it is called. When removed it leaves the fur, which is then a light tan or fawn color. This is now dyed into the deep rich brown tint of the seal-skin of commerce.

The greatest number of sealskins are prepared in London, where they are most successfully dyed and finished. In the United States there are two or three establishments where sealskins are prepared, but not

with the success of the London firms. It is this, then, that makes the skins, or rather the finished furs, so valuable. The process through which they are put is a very tedious and difficult one, and this raises the price to such a disproportionate value. Again, the sealskin is not large, and many have to be used in one garment.

The natives are quite ingenious in the use of the natural sealskin, of which they make a number of things, such as blankets, mats, gloves, coats and caps. To make the blanket they take strips of the sealskin from the back of the seal, where it is darkest. Underneath, at the throat, it is nearly white. These strips are about six inches broad, and three-quarters of a yard long. For a good sized blanket they take about two dozen of these, and sew them neatly together. It makes, when lined, a very nice carriage robe. The mats are made much more elaborately. They cut into diamond shape pieces, the white and dark sealskin. These they sew together as one would patchwork, in alternate light and dark pieces. Around this they put a border of the plain dark skin. These make very pretty ornamental rugs. The gloves are somewhat too clumsy, though they are useful for Arctic wear, and during the winter time at Oonalaska, or for driving-gloves on an Eastern winter day. The entire coat is made of the sealskin lined neatly with red flannel, and frequently ornamented with buttons formed of seal's teeth. The caps are too heavy for comfort, except in extremely



cold weather, the sealskin with the hair on being much heavier than the plucked.

The magnificent sea-otter is by far the most valuable and elegant fur to be found. The poorest full-grown skin is valued at about one hundred dollars. The sea-otter is not very plentiful. The chief beauty of the skins is the silver hairs with which they are sprinkled. These are called the silver-tipped sea-otter. On only the older otter are these silver hairs found, and it is to them it owes its value. It is, in fact, a regal fur, fit, by its rarity and value, for kings and queens. An imitation is made very cleverly by fastening the white hairs into more inferior fur.

About the 3d or 4th of August seven bydarkas came into the harbor abreast. These contained two or three men apiece, as the case might be. They were sea-otter hunters from Oonalaska, who had been away on their yearly hunt. Their success had not been very great this year. But to us their coming was of great interest, from the fact they brought us mail. They had crossed the path of the schooner *Nicoline*, from San Francisco, aboard of which had been sent mail for the *Thetis*, *Bear* and *Rush*. The captain, hazarding that precious freight, had consigned it to several different bydarkas, so that it might not all be lost, if perhaps one be overturned. Mr. N—— said it was the first time he had had mail by those "fast ocean steamers." However, it arrived safely, and we were glad to get it.

I watched the bydarkas as they came in, so

swiftly and silently, like huge fish in the water. One landed almost under my window. The three inmates got out, shook themselves, as well they might after the many hours spent in that cramped position, raised their light little craft out of the water, walked a few yards up on the beach with it, put it carefully on the ground, sat down and took out their pipes and calmly began to smoke. This after an absence of at least two or three months from their wives and families. There was the stolidity of the genuine savage! The total absence of excitement, of enthusiasm or curiosity. Neither was there any particular excitement manifested on the part of the villagers. Imagine our feelings should we see our husbands and fathers returning from a long perilous voyage on the sea, exposed to every possible danger, and from whom in all that time we had not heard a word.

A fleet of eleven more bydarkas came in a few days later. The hunters belonged to Makushin, another village on Oonalaska Island.

We found the Alaska Commercial Company's schooner *Pearl* in Oonalaska on our return from the Seal Islands, and learned she had brought seventeen hundred cases of canned salmon from a cannery at Thin or Tin Point, as many call it, near Cape Pankoff on the peninsula. Each case contained four dozen cans. They had had splendid success at the salmon catch this year. There are no canneries on the Aleutian Islands, but quite a number on

the mainland of Alaska. The largest one is called Karluk and is on the northwest end of Kadiak Island. It was not doing so well this year (1889) as formerly. There they put up in a good season one hundred thousand cases. Quite a market is found in London for the canned salmon.

The canneries are a great source of wealth to many. The fish is found in abundance in these northern waters, along the coast of Alaska and in the Behring Sea, and are not surpassed in quality anywhere.

The *St. Paul*, whose return from St. Michael's was soon expected, was to deliver these cases in San Francisco. By her we had another opportunity of sending mail and much letter writing was in progress. The *Dora* was expected soon, also, from San Francisco, with, we hoped, still later news from home.

The bydarkas had brought a few newspapers from San Francisco as late as July second. The only item in which we took any particular interest was that about, our, the American, exhibition at Paris. We could have done very well without this item of news. Our faces did not light up with pride as we read of it. We read of our glorious nation; we think with pride of our inventions, our unsurpassable conveniences and luxuries in our private lives, and we look down on the foreigner. Yet how do we actually look as compared to him at the great Paris Exposition? With many millions in the Treasury and thousands of clear headed men in the country notwithstanding. Why is it?

## CHAPTER XXII.

### ITEMS IN BRIEF.

**A**FTER FOUR OR FIVE days in port the *Rush* again started off on her regular cruise to the islands. We bade them adieu, not expecting to see her for nine or ten days. That same evening a steamer was reported outside. It was then dusk and only the smoke was visible. A little later appeared the steamer, next, it was discovered she had a schooner in tow. The *Albatross* (Fish Commission) was expected there any time, and when the steamer was reported we immediately exclaimed: "The *Albatross!*" Yet, when the schooner was sighted, we said it must be the *Rush* with a sealer. On she came through the fast gathering darkness, and it was not till she was sailing past the "big house" we discovered the vessel in tow to be the company's schooner, the *Matthew Turner*, and that part of her foremast was gone and other evidences of a disaster were visible. Several days previous she had started for the island of St. Paul with freight and several passengers aboard, but had not been able to make the trip, owing to the accident. The *Rush* had found her drifting helplessly about, unable to make the harbor. When first spied the *Matthew Turner* was mistaken for a sealer, and with the usual

promptitude the course had been changed, and they had come up with her at full speed. A fortunate circumstance for her, as several days or more might have elapsed before being able to come into Oonalaska with the sail she had left, unless the wind was exactly favorable. The carpenter from the *Rush* was left behind to repair damages, and at daylight the *Rush* again started on her cruise.

Every day during August the natives were putting off by the boatfull, men, women and children, to different portions of the island, to fish and prepare their food for the coming winter. They catch the salmon in seines, and then selecting a spot near by where they are landed on the beach, the women spend the day cleaning them and hanging them up to dry. Here, there, everywhere one might see posts standing connected by horizontal pieces on which were strung the drying salmon. The natives enjoy this fully as much as the berry-hunting a little later.

The malina berry grows about Oonalaska in great numbers and is very nice indeed. It is the same as that called the "salmon berry," found at Sitka and vicinity. It is large, red and juicy, resembling a blackberry, though much larger. At Sitka yellow ones are also found, the same in flavor as the red. The natives are very fond of them. The blossom is a pretty pink bell-shaped flower about the size of a large thimble, such as men use, open at one end. Blueberries and huckleberries also grow there.

The berries ripen a little later in Oonalaska than in Sitka. At the latter place the first day of August the Indians term "Berry Day;" the berries are then all ripe. It has its appropriate celebration.

On the first day of August last year (1888) a friend, Mrs. E——, and myself pulled over to one of the pretty little islands in the harbor of Sitka. As we roamed around, busily picking the many berries we found there, we heard a faint sound of singing resembling a chant, of a strange weird character. It was a beautiful day, the sky and air clear, the sea blue and the sky blue. All else was still, and we listened, fairly holding our breaths, as gradually the sounds approached nearer and nearer. At last out from behind the island on which we were shot a large canoe filled with Indians, and gaily trimmed with strips of white and red cloth extended over a rude frame, erected somewhat like a canopy. They were still singing their strange and monotonous song, keeping time with their paddles. We stood as if entranced, watching them as they drifted away out of sight, their song growing fainter and fainter in the distance. There was something so distinctly primitive in the whole scene, we seemed to be taken back to the time when the only inhabitants of this land were the savages. It remained in my mind like a scene pictured on the page of a book, so unlike the common occurrences of our daily life did it appear—a page from Cooper's novels, or more like the dreamy picture of one's imagination.

On the 10th of August we found the first ripe malina at Oonalaska, therefore I inferred it must be warmer earlier and longer at Sitka.

One morning soon afterward I was startled by Gee (our chambermaid) coming to the door and announcing to me in great excitement, while I lay peacefully dosing in my bed, "Mrs. Sheppe (Chinese for Shepard) Mrs. Sheppe, steamer *St. Paul* light here, 'Lush' [*Rush*] comin' in!" This meant life and bustle for the next three or four days. The *St. Paul* was on her way to San Francisco with passengers and freight from St. Michael's and Seal Islands. Among the passengers were the two ladies, Mrs. L—— and Mrs. M——, I met at St. George and St. Paul respectively. It was very agreeable to be able to play hostess in my turn, and make their stay at Oonalaska pleasant. The *Rush* had been out on one of her customary cruises, and was just returning. They were both soon at anchor, the *St. Paul* on one side of the wharf, and the *Rush* right across the way on the other.

After calls were exchanged, the next two or three days being beautiful, rowing and walking were the order of the day.

It occurred to me now was just the time for a little dance aboard the *Rush*. After a short conversation with my husband I received permission to have one the next evening. The officers were also in the spirit of it, and we resolved to have it a partnership affair. Every available and congenial

person but the pure Aleute was invited, of those belonging to Oonalaska, and all aboard the *St. Paul*, besides the two ladies, there being several gentlemen aboard. The decks were cleared, the awning put up, while flags decorated the interior after an approved fashion, the work of our artistic lieutenants, M—— and D——. We were at our wits' end for music, but Mr. N—— kindly lent us the cabinet organ, and with an accordion the music was passable. On the latter, one of the natives played very well almost any kind of dance music desired; and Mrs. M——, a natural musician, helped us out on the organ beautifully.

The party was pronounced an entire success. To be sure, there was not much sociability between the Russian ladies and ourselves, but to dance was all that was necessary.



## CHAPTER XXIII.

### THE CAVE.

WE WERE NOW TALKING about our near departure for Sitka, which was to be in the course of two weeks' time, if nothing happened. My husband expected the *Bear* to arrive at Oonalaska before the 1st of September, to relieve the *Rush*; the *Bear* remaining in those regions till later in the fall. As soon as she arrived we were to start.

I begun to look about me and consider if I had thoroughly availed myself of everything in the way of adventure and novelty near Oonalaska.

At table we had often discussed the natural features of the island, among which one particular one took my fancy. Dr. C—— said there was a cave on the side of a mountain not a great distance by water from us, which had a curious legend concerning it, and which he had long wished to explore.

The legend was that in it long ago lived an old, old woman, who would steal her way into the town at dead of night and entice away the young men, one at a time, carrying him off to her almost inaccessible place of abode, from which time he was never heard of more. The story shows, evidently, a belief among the Aleutes in witches and witchcraft.

This cave also had its tradition among the Russians. In one of the old Russian books it is described as being of great length, extending through the mountain from one side to the other. At its mouth, on either side, lights were said to have been seen in the midnight gloom, together with many other signs of mysterious life within its cavernous depths.

There was also a report that it had been in past years a place of burial, and that there were mummies there. These mysteries had never been solved, by any white person at least, and therefore took hold of my fancy very strongly.

I proposed to the doctor that I obtain my husband's consent to furnish all the facilities, such as ropes, lanterns, men and a boat, if I could go too. The sailors were all through coaling ship, and it was a kind of holiday, so my husband said yes. This was at breakfast; at about ten we were all ready, and provided with everything we could think of for the expedition. We could see the cave from the vessel, a little black hole about as large as a plate at that distance, in a perpendicular wall of rock, three or four hundred feet high.

It seemed really inaccessible, but this added zest to the adventure. At least we could try.

Capt. S——, Chief Engineer D——, Lieut. W——, Dr. C—— and myself formed the party, accompanied by my two boys, who went in the boat and remained playing around on the beach where we

landed. There were, besides, four men—our sailors. We had a fair wind and sailed the boat over to the base of the mountain. It was a lovely sail in itself.

We saw, at a distance of a mile or two, a school of whales sporting and spouting about in the water like so many animated fountains. They were not a valuable whale—"fin-backs" they were called. The doctor was ready to shoot any kind of a bird that came in his way, but we only saw muir, and they flew away before he was near enough to shoot them. One of the men said afterwards, in his climbing he disturbed about fifty ptarmigan, or grouse, but he had no gun and the doctor was too far away to call, so they were lost to us.

We had, of course, a lunch, this time enough for two meals, if necessary, and a greater variety than on our former expedition, for I attended to it myself.

It was hard to determine the easiest mode of reaching the top of the rock, near where the cave was. Climbing up to it from below, was, at a glance, pronounced an impossibility. There was scarce a foothold for a bird on the face of the rock up to the cave. Above it the rocks were a little more broken. We divided our party, one-half going one way and the other half the other. Climbing was extremely difficult, we had to pull ourselves up, by the small bushes and grass, so steep was the entire side of the mountain, a distance of a thousand or twelve hundred feet, approaching the top by a slight circuit. It was hard work; we panted so we could scarce

speak, and were compelled to pause frequently. Still there seemed to be an irresistible attraction about that mysterious cave, alluring us ever on and on, and we would not give it up. We left the grass line and began our steepest and most dangerous climb, in a horizontal line across the face of the rock. Below us was instant death should we lose our hold, or should the crumbling mass give way under our weight, for we found the rock was untrustworthy owing to the action of the frost. Many solid looking pieces jutting out would, at a touch, fall, crashing to the foot of the cliff, so that each foothold or rest for the hand had to be tried previous to trusting one's life to it. It was therefore slow and difficult work. My companion and I had seemed when last we noticed to be nearer our destination than any of the rest. It was now my ambition to get there first, therefore I crept on slowly and carefully, spurred by the thought, till, pausing for a moment and thinking I must be directly over the cave, as nearly as I could tell, a voice said softly, "You're doing well!" It was the doctor, who had arrived a few moments before by another route, and who was about ten feet above me. He spoke gently, so as not to startle me. He helped me up and we shook hands in a congratulatory way, and sat down in a little hollow we found, where one could rest with some comfort and security, to discuss matters.

Soon we were joined by the sailors, one by one, and Lieut. W——. Mr. D—— was feeling so unwell

he had to give it up. The doctor would not allow me to stir a step farther, as I wished to do, to the very edge of the cliff, where I might look over. He so determinedly opposed me that I had to turn back. It was, I knew, a foolhardy thing to attempt.

Being unable to locate the cave from the top of the rock, we finally thought the best plan was for two of us to go down again to a position where we could see the cave from below, and point out as near as possible its whereabouts. So choosing what was pronounced the best way, by trial, for our descent, we climbed down again, slipping and sliding the most of the way. But we could not get a point from which we could see the cave sufficiently near to communicate what we saw. However, one of the men found at last a great rock projecting from the base of the cliff, at such an angle that he had a good view of it. After many struggles I managed to take his place, and he went back to the top of the rock to help lower the doctor to the mouth of the cave. They found a good solid rock, around which the rope was securely tied, as only sailors can tie ropes, and the other end was lowered directly over the cave. All was now ready, and "Mac," as my boys called him, one of our sailors, as kind-hearted, willing and energetic a Scotchman as one ever saw, and a great favorite with them, let himself down hand over hand, a distance of thirty or forty feet, getting a slight footing on the rocks. I watched him, holding

my breath the while, in my excitement and anxiety as to his fate, and the discovery about to be made.

He reached the mouth of the cave, disappeared, and in two moments was out again and shouted, "Nothing in there, ma'am!" Now who will dispute the fact that after all my trials and hard work and hopes of discovery, this was most trying and disappointing beyond anything. At any rate we had discovered there was nothing, and that was something. Another of the men went down for curiosity, but Dr. C—— did not think it worth while. The cave was only about twenty or thirty feet deep. Had there been a mummy there it was my determination to be lowered to the cave also. However, I was somewhat relieved that my determination had not to be carried into effect. We now all started back to the boat, ready for lunch. It was then about half-past two or three, and we were quite faint with hunger after our exertions. Our descent took about an hour and a half altogether, and we were quite ready for the good cheer speedily spread out before us. After eating a hearty lunch we felt very much refreshed.

Fortunately, after arriving at the boat, it was all plain sailing, and our exertions were at an end. We were soon at the wharf alongside the *Rush*, elated at the fact we had at least accomplished our purpose, though glad to be back.

Thus ended our memorable and long-talked-of expedition. Among one of the incidents of the

day was the hair's-breadth escape from death of the doctor, and I came near being the cause of it. In my upward ascent I grasped hold of a piece of rock about the size of a water-pitcher, which immediately gave way, and, for all I could do, rolled down the steep incline. The doctor was some hundred feet below, in a direct line, at the base of the cliff, and the rock, I knew, could not fail to strike him. I shrieked. "Doctor, doctor, look out!" almost losing my own hold in my agitation. He heard me just in time to leap under a little projection of rock before it reached him. Had it struck him it would have killed him instantly.

On Mac's return to the *Rush* he related to his shipmates a wonderful story concerning the cave. He told them it was two or three miles long, and contained two or three hundred mummies, etc., etc.; dilating on the difficulty of getting to it, for his own greater glory. This fired the ambition of several other sailors, who next day, being granted liberty, provided themselves with all the necessary paraphernalia, such as ropes, lanterns, and so forth, and though there was a driving mist and rain started also to explore the wonderful cave. But they did not arrive at their destination, owing to the slipperiness of the rocks, rendering it too dangerous an undertaking. Yet they had spent almost the entire day in the effort, and returned tired and hungry, to be greeted with shouts of laughter from their shipmates on board who were in the secret.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### LAST DAYS AT OONALASKA.

**A**UGUST TWENTIETH the *Dora* arrived from San Francisco, bringing plenty of mail, both of letters and papers, and, besides that, fresh fruit—watermelons, peaches, pears and apples; such a treat!

The latest papers had news that the first schooner captured, as we half anticipated, went to Victoria instead of Sitka, over which there was great rejoicing and jubilee at Victoria. We thought it was no great thing for a captain and crew to overpower one man, one poor sailor, Hakinson, and compel him to go to Victoria. He said the Indians threatened to kill him if he resisted.

We were forwarded numerous extracts from papers from different places with startling headings, such as "Great excitement over capture of sealing schooners," "The English men-of-war to the rescue," etc., etc. All very amusing to us, undisturbed as the *Rush* had been all summer. The whole of the English North Pacific Squadron was to be sent up to fight the little *Rush*, and protect their schooners. In another article "They had had immediate orders to sail to Behring Sea," etc. My husband said he guessed they must have gotten lost on the way, per-



haps he had better go and look them up, that being part of his duty. The English sealers were more surprised than we were at the non-appearance of their countrymen.

A bark arrived a few days after the *Dora*, bringing one thousand tons of coal for the use of the Government vessels stopping at Oonalaska. The coal was from Nanaimo.

The *Bear* and *Albatross* were daily expected, the latter, it was said, was coming up on an especial investigation in regard to the seal fisheries. Last year (1888) she was locating fish banks on the south coast of the Aleutian Islands and making other investigations in regard to the fish.

The fish this year ('89) had proved much more scarce than in former years to "the eastward," as we called it at Oonalaska, and the largest cannery at Karluk, on the island of Kadiak, was reported to be doing very little. This was owing to the scarcity of fish. At Oonalaska, on the contrary, the fish were said to be more abundant than usual. Our men caught hundreds of salmon in the seine at a haul during July and August.

One of the last days of August a canoe of Indians was found by one of the natives of Oonalaska on his return from a hunt. These poor creatures were lost from their vessel, an English sealer and had been ten days afloat in their frail canoe, living on the seal they were able to capture. They were Vancouver Island Indians of the Ahouset tribe. It was

all the Aleutes could do to persuade them to come into Oonalaska, where the *Rush* was, for fear they would be taken prisoners; but when convinced no harm would befall them, they consented. They were disabled from having been so long in the canoe, and almost unable to walk, their feet were so swollen. They were immediately attended to, a tent lent them, and they were served rations from the *Rush*, like the men. Later, we took them, canoes and all, on the cutter to Sitka.

Five days afterwards a second canoe came in with three other Indians, lost from the same schooner. They reported that a third canoe had capsized, and that the three Indians in her had been drowned. These men had been out fifteen days, and the last five days were in a heavy gale. The wind had been blowing almost a hurricane outside; we had had a very high wind in the harbor, and feared the *Rush* might break from her moorings. It was a miracle that in so severe a storm, out on the open sea, a mere cockleshell, such as that canoe, should have been safe. No one but an Indian accustomed to it from childhood could have so handled one, as to prevent its capsizing.

The weather had by that time, the end of August, become more changeable. More rain was beginning to fall and the winds to blow, and everything betokened the coming of fall and fall weather. Therefore I felt I was about ready to leave. My stay had been everything that I could have desired.

I had been agreeably disappointed in many things one being the weather. In two months and a half I was in Oonalaska by far the greater half of the time we had fine weather—beautiful days. The air was very exhilarating. On many days we did not need wraps when walking or exercising. The time passed very quickly and pleasantly by. I had not accomplished half the reading I intended in the long rainy days I anticipated when looking forward to my summer cruise in the Behring Sea. The rainy days had been so few and the fine ones too tempting to resist taking advantage of them in walking and boating. Almost every morning was pleasant, the rain usually came in the afternoon.

All preparations were being made for our trip to Sitka, and from there home to San Francisco. Coal was taken aboard from the lately arrived bark, and all stowed away in readiness for a two weeks' sea trip. We hoped the *Bear* would arrive, but my husband decided not to wait for her, her arrival being so uncertain. The *Dora* left a day or two before we started on a tour among the islands, to the different stations, taking with her Mr. N—— and Dr. C——

The summer was over and all things were soon to settle down to the long calm of winter.

Many little presents were made to me by one and another of the residents of Oonalaska, as souvenirs, such as baskets, and ornamental things made of the delicate seal intestine, also bydarkas in miniature,

all native work, besides these several spears and the skins of young seal.

We had an extra passenger aboard the *Rush* to accompany us as far as Sitka, my husband having been beseeched by the gentlemen living at Oonalaska to take him off of their hands. This was one of the most Irish Irishmen I ever saw, and afforded us an infinite amount of amusement with his "brogue" and ready wit. He was full of the grievous treatment he had received at the hands of one or two gentlemen, who had employed him to work on a mine lately located near Oonalaska. He had been brought to Oonalaska from St. Michael's, and soon put to work. After a few days he sent some black looking sand, quite rich in gold ore, to his employers, purporting to have been gotten from the mine. Mr. N——, an expert in such matters, was suspicious immediately, as no such sand was ever found in the vicinity of Oonalaska. The matter was investigated and Patrick could not produce any more just like it, nor identify the spot where he got it. Aside from that Mr. N—— recognized the sand as that found on the Yukon, so Pat was "bounced," after a little altercation with one of his employers, in telling of which afterward Patrick said, "An sure an I'd a knocked him down meself, could I've depinded on me legs," for he pretended to be afflicted with rheumatism, which disappeared miraculously whenever Patrick lost himself in the midst of a yarn so marvelous the fascinated sailors

could scarce work for listening. He poured his afflictions in the ears of any who would listen to him. and as he was a nuisance at Oonalaska my husband decided to take him to Sitka. He referred to Oonalaska as the "inimies' camp." It was his custom when he met Capt. S—— or one of the officers anywhere to come to a full stop, square his shoulders and make a most extraordinary military salute, reminding one in its mechanical precision of a figure in Mrs. Jarley's waxworks.

After landing him at Sitka, where he had a number of "frinds," he told us, he remained there an object of public charity, domiciling himself at the hospital till the steamer arrived, when he found himself sufficiently able to beg passage to Port Townsend, of his "frind, the capting." He disappeared, but to appear suddenly face to face with my husband on our arrival in Port Townsend two weeks later, not forgetting first to make his salute, then turning and accompanying him down the street—his appearance was anything but prepossessing—in friendly conversation, assailing him with questions in which he evinced an extraordinary interest in the movements of the *Rush*, and when she was going to San Francisco bemoaning the hard times he was having, and his absolute penury, etc., etc. To rid himself of him Capt. S—— informed him sharply, the *Rush* did not carry passengers, whereupon Patrick appeared scandalized that my husband should have imagined he desired such a thing. I met him later ;

he gave me a genial leer and inquired after the "captain's hilt." The first person to greet my husband as he jumped ashore on his arrival in San Francisco was Patrick, who rushes up and exclaims, pausing first for his salute, "Wilcome back to San Francisco." It was becoming highly embarrassing to my husband to be cornered at every possible opportunity in public by this son of Erin, therefore he gave him a broad hint which no doubt Patrick will profit by in the future.



## CHAPTER XXV.

### NEWS FROM THE NORTH.

**S**ATURDAY, THE THIRTY-FIRST of August, we were all ready to sail, and the hour had been appointed, but the wind continued to blow a gale, and, as we would make but little by starting, our departure was postponed. The next day was Sunday; the wind had calmed down considerably, but the sea was very high, therefore my husband deferred sailing till Monday.

All seemed favorable when Monday dawned for starting that day. Every last thing was aboard, and steam was ordered for two o'clock. But about ten o'clock a steamer was sighted, and lo! it was the *Bear*. We were delighted to see her and hear the latest news from the Polar regions, while Captain H—— was equally delighted at the opportunity to send mail by us; the quickest way then being to send all mail to Sitka by the *Rush*, and from there forward it by the steamers leaving every two weeks, perhaps just making connection with one.

There was a great deal of news from "up north." The house to be erected at Point Barrow had been landed safely, and by the end of three weeks was habitable. The carpenters of several whalers had lent assistance, and the *Thetis* had been there with

her steam launch. With this extra help the house and supplies had been landed in a very short time.

While at Point Barrow they had had ten days of beautiful weather, on one of which the thermometer rose to seventy degrees. This was very unusual, and over ten degrees warmer than any day at Oonalaska during the summer. But the summer, as a whole, had been very cold, and a great deal of ice had formed.

The *Bear* had almost been caught in the ice twice, and had been shut in for several days each time. Finding a small outlet Captain H—— had succeeded in getting out just in time to arrive at Oonalaska before the *Rush* sailed, and two months, to the day, from the time he left Oonalaska for Point Barrow.

The *Thetis* had been at Point Barrow a week, during the *Bear's* stay there, and then had gone to the mouth of the Mackenzie River. She was in danger of being closed in by the ice when the *Bear* left if she did not hasten. We should have been glad to have heard of her safety before we left.

The greatest calamity that occurred during the summer was the wrecking of a large new steamer for navigating the Yukon, at St. Michael's, about two or three hours after she started on her first trip. Necessity demanded a new steamer, for those then in use on the Yukon were in a very bad condition. She was also needed especially to carry supplies to the miners, of whom there were about one hundred and fifty up the Yukon; the nuns, or



sisters, who had opened a school some distance up the river, and who were in need of supplies; and lastly, the gentlemen of the Boundary Commission who had gone up, as I have before mentioned, on the *Dora* to St. Michael's, and thence up the Yukon as far as the boundary to determine its location. These gentlemen were dependent on the supplies to be sent by this steamer, named the *Arctic*, and failing which, the expedition would in all probability have to be abandoned this year. It was feared there would be much suffering, owing to the dependence placed upon this vessel, and its failure to appear, communication by any other means being almost impossible. Fortunately, by building rafts, with the swift current of the river, the miners, should they start before the ice formed, would be able to reach St. Michael's in a short time, though the danger was they would wait too long, and be unable to get down.

The wreck occurred in this way: The steamer started from St. Michael's about seven in the evening toward the mouth of the Yukon, and stopped at a place called Stebbins, about fifteen miles from there, to take on some wood. She was laden with supplies and all sorts of necessary articles that had been sent for for the use of miners, commissioners and others. The vessel was a stern-wheeler like the Ohio and Mississippi river steamboats. A strong wind began to blow, and she had to let go both anchors. At Stebbins there was no harbor, therefore she was unprotected from the wind, and

began to drag her anchors and drift toward the rocks on the beach. Her engines were started ahead to keep her up to the wind. Astern, fast to her by a coil of new rope, was one of her small boats. This boat was in danger of catching under the wheel. Someone attempted to throw the coil of rope into her and clear her of the vessel; it accidentally caught in the wheel, which immediately rendered it useless, and the machinery could not work. She continued to drift, till at last she struck the rocks and made a large hole, through which the water rushed and immediately sank her.

The pumps were set to work, and the *Bear's* small boats succeeded in pulling her off. This was some days after the accident had occurred, the *Bear* fortunately being at St. Michael's. Having cleared the wheel, the water having been pumped out, and the leak temporarily stopped, they again started her engines. But a patch on some part of the boiler blew off, and everyone was for a moment convinced the whole vessel had blown up. But though disabled for future use till extensive repairs were made she was not blown to pieces, and the *Bear* towed her back to St. Michael's where she was built, and there left her. Her boilers had been taken up but two months before on the *St. Paul* for I remembered seeing them at Oonalaska. Her career had been short. At least half her cargo was damaged.

Capt. H—— had in the Arctic picked up the "maimed, the halt and the blind," and was conveying

them to civilization and care. These were invalids from different whale-ships. Numbers of men unfit for their duties ship aboard the whalers. There is no medical examination enforced, and to many the exposure and hardship endured are fatal. There were paralytics, epileptics, and two or three insane men, all sailors from whale-ships and unable to work.

The catches on the whalers during the summer had been comparatively good, one vessel securing four whales, and whalebone rated at four dollars a pound. This was splendid luck.

Capt. H—— was presented at Point Barrow with an exquisite swan's-down blanket, the whitest, softest, most beautiful thing I ever saw. It was very large and reminded one of a mantle of freshly fallen snow.

The Eskimos are a heartless people. I heard several officers of the *Bear* tell dreadful things of the treatment of the old and infirm among them. When either old or infirm they are often allowed to starve to death. The women are put in a hut or hole of some kind and walled up, the men put on an icefloe, and allowed to drift away to die of cold and hunger. But they think little of dying. Capt. H—— said he inquired for a native whom he had seen on previous trips to Point Barrow, and one of the Eskimos replied, "I shoot him; he sick, want me shoot him." It was a friendly office performed for the sick man, at his own request. The most horrible thing I heard was the behavior of one of the chiefs towards his wife. He built an icehouse and walled her up in it, because he wished to rid himself of her

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### OUR DEPARTURE AND TRIP EASTWARD.

THE AFTERNOON of Monday, the day set for sailing, was very "thick." The fog had shut down so the entrance or exit to the harbor was entirely invisible till too late in the afternoon to sail that day.

There was a dangerous part of the coast on our way eastward, only to be attempted by daylight, and no good anchorage near, it was therefore advisable to sail at such a time as the dangerous coast could be reached during the day. Tuesday afternoon, then, was the earliest opportunity.

It was a perfect day, the sky blue and 'clear, and by that time the sea had become again pacific and lay shimmering in the sun, calm and beautiful. Everything was auspicious for a safe and speedy voyage. We sailed out of the harbor, while from every house fluttered the parting wave of handkerchiefs, and on the wharf a simultaneous raising of caps from the assembled officers of the *Bear*, and our kind friend, Col. B——, and other gentlemen resident on the island, while one of the gentlemen—a passenger with Capt. H—— on the *Bear*—took parting shots at us with his Kodak, and Oonalaska slowly faded from our sight. I scarce expected ever

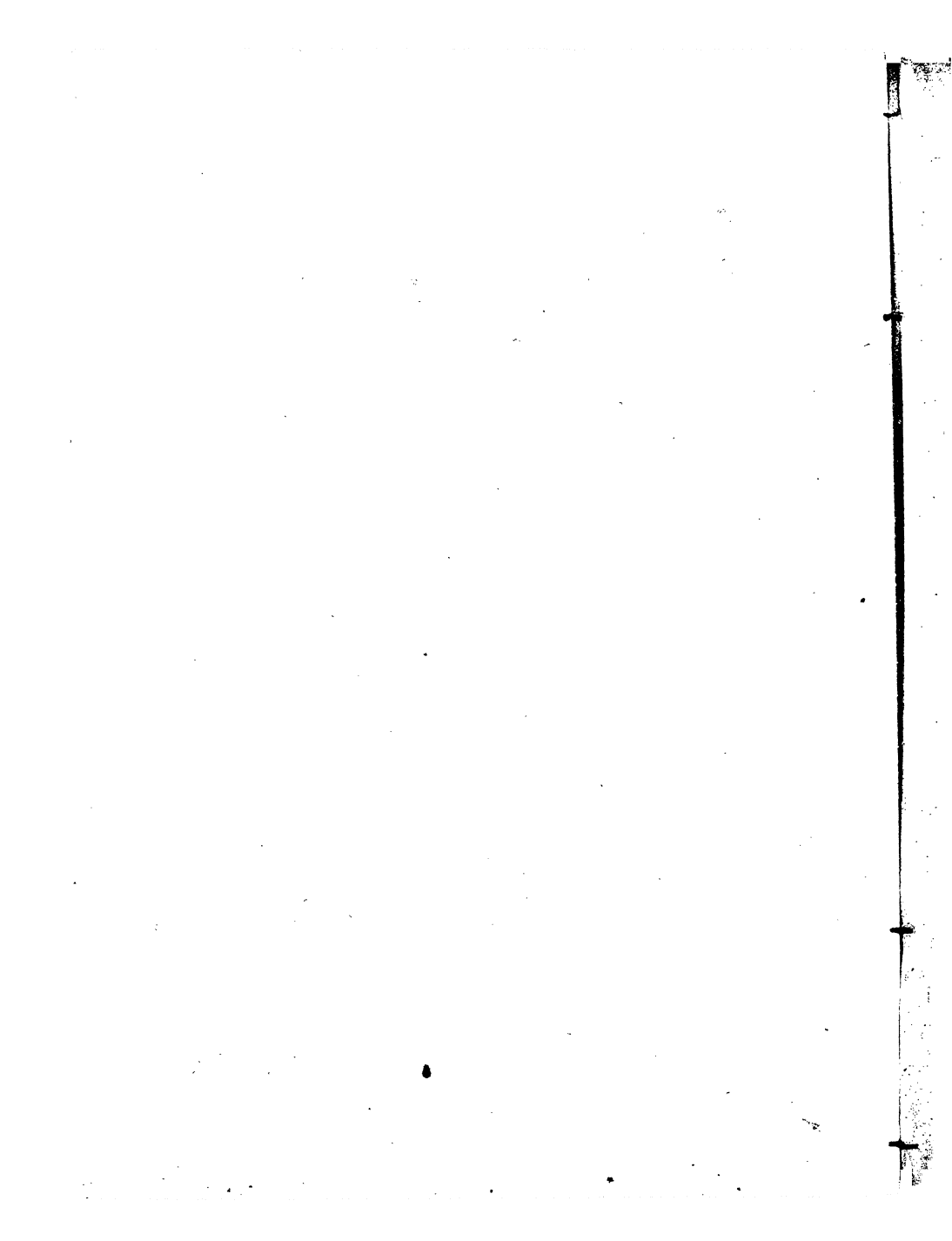
to see it again, and, as I stood watching it, my eye took in every detail, as I endeavored to form an indelible mental picture of the lovely and unusual scene.

The sea was so calm, for a now practised sailor as I was becoming, seasickness was not to be thought of. It was ideal—not "going to sea," but "yachting." The two expressions convey different ideas. The moon rose bright and beautiful, with a mellow, golden radiance hardly surpassed in the south, flooding sky and sea with her soft light, with Venus, her beautiful handmaid, close by at her right, a path of silver reaching from her to our ship. Not a cloud obscured the beauty of the night. I could scarce make up my mind to retire at half-past ten, the moon seemed so like an old friend, seen after a long interval, to whom I had much to tell, and more to ask. Only once in three months had she peeped out of the clouds about her, and greeted me with her bright smile.

At half-past four the next morning my husband aroused me suddenly: "B——," said he, "do you want to see Shishaldin, the top of the mountain is clear and you can see a wreath of smoke at the top?" Of course I did. In a few moments I was on deck. Dawn was at hand, and with soft masses of gray clouds draping his mighty shape I saw Shishaldin in all his majesty, rearing his grand proportions above them. It was a glorious sight! He was not alone. Near by an extinct volcano rivaled him in loftiness,



GROUP OF ESKIMO CHILDREN ST. LAWRENCE ISLAND, BEHRING SEA



but seemed bent and shriveled with age, so deep and furrowed were his sides, his crater jagged and broken. Shishaldin by him appeared trim and beautiful as the young sapling by the gnarled and stunted oak. Shishaldin is very symmetrical in shape; for a long distance the land slowly rises from the sea at the same gentle rise on all sides, and then suddenly turns upward at a sharper angle, the top as regular as the pyramid of Cheops. This mountain is 9,000 feet high, rising direct from the sea his entire height. It is on the island of Oonimak. On this island there are three volcanoes, from two of which curl soft wreaths of smoke, the only signs of life within those awful depths. The third was the extinct one I have mentioned. My boys were much interested in the "chimneys," as I called them, for their benefit, explaining how they acted in that capacity.

Shishaldin was covered with snow, as were most of the mountains around him. On the snow about his summit we could see a deposit of soot or cinders, which appeared to be recent. The crater seemed very small in comparison with the craters of other volcanoes I had seen, the top of the mountain was so pointed. Puffs of smoke would, one after another, at intervals, lazily roll forth and float away in the soft air.

About half past five the sun rose, and

"Morn in the white wake of the morning star  
Came furrowing all the Orient into gold."

With his powerful beams the "King of Day" soon

CRUISE OF THE "RUSH." 13



dispersed the clouds gathered about the tops of the mountains, and they appeared in glittering grandeur warmed and gladdened by the young light. An hour more and the veil of cloud had hidden them from my sight, perhaps forever, but it could not so hide them from my memory. How I thank memory.

The weather continued perfect for several days, sunshine all day and moonlight at night. The finest weather we had had. "We were out of the Behring Sea" said the officers. The Behring Sea being a synonym for all that was disagreeable in their minds.

We passed Cape Pankoff, the westernmost point of the peninsula of Alaska, and other points almost unrecognizable in their beauty as compared with their grim aspect when we first saw them.

At Belkovsky I did not go ashore. The *Dora* happened to arrive just as we did, from an opposite direction. Mr. N—— there first learned from my husband the disastrous news the *Bear* brought down about the loss of the *Arctic* and most of the supplies. In consequence other plans and arrangements had to be made for the immediate relief of the sufferers. We were but a short time at Belkovsky, then off again to Sand Point, where we came across the *Mary Ellen*, a schooner reporting to be from Kamkatcha, but owned in Victoria, bound for San Francisco, so the captain said, and by whom we sent mail. The Indians we picked up at Oona-

laska had told us they belonged to the *Mary Ellen*, so when we saw her we expected to ship them aboard of her, but she was not their vessel, as the captain said he had not lost any Indians and had had none aboard; therefore we had to keep them. Many are ignorant enough never to learn the name of their own vessel. They seemed to be perfectly content, lazily lying about on the deck, with plenty to eat and nothing to do. One talked very good English and called himself "Joe." He grinned with pleasure when I aired the little "Chinook" I had picked up at Sitka the year before.

The scenery was exquisite as we steamed quietly along on a sea as still as the famous "inside passage" tourists go wild over, on the coast of Alaska.

The mainland, or peninsula, of Alaska was on one hand, and innumerable islands on the other, among which we threaded our way. The difference between the part of Alaska I am now describing and the inside passage being the treeless condition of the islands in the former and the more extensive views, because of the greater expanse of water between them.

Pavloff, a volcano, next loomed up, an enormous snow-covered mass. To its right a sharp, slender peak, exquisitely symmetrical in outline and covered with an unbroken mantle of snow, but unnamed on the charts, as were many we saw. A peculiar feature about Pavloff is the crater, which is very low down on one side instead of at the top. We did not

see it smoking, but the deposit of cinders around it seemed to indicate recent activity. We saw Pavloff two days from two different directions. On the mainland a lofty range of snow-covered mountains stretched away in the distance.

We stopped at Coal Harbor to get some coal, as my husband had been ordered to do by the Department. There we saw the first trees that deserved the name, except "The Forest" at Oonalaska, since we had left home; for when at Coal Harbor before, it was very bad weather and I was unable to go ashore or to see through the fog and rain. We spent a few hours getting the coal aboard, about five tons.

Meanwhile one of the officers and myself wandered about in search of petrified wood, which was said to be plentiful on the beach. We found several very good specimens, the smaller of which we took aboard the ship. We also visited the coal vein. It was simply a bank from which the coal was loosened with a pick and wheeled down to the water's edge. It was very light in weight and the engineers said but one remove from lignite, the lowest form of coal, and worth very little. On starting again the fires were made with it, and the heat generated was so little we made very slow progress, while the firemen were kept busy shoveling in fresh coal and taking out ashes. Its only good quality being it did not make any smoke, but it certainly was not good coal with which to make steam.

Pirate's Cove, on Popof Island, was the next point

at which we stopped, a short distance from Coal Harbor, and the last before reaching Kadiak. As the day was superb I went ashore with my husband to explore the coast line, which there presented remarkable formations. How grand and beautiful the world seemed, flooded as the scene was with the golden sunlight.

Several fishermen live there alone, there were no women at all. Two great dogs bounded down the small wharf, barking madly, not knowing what to make of me. Doubtful of the reception I would have, my heart failed me on beginning to climb the perpendicular ladder leading from the boat to the top of the wharf, with those monsters barking above, but they proved entirely harmless. The fishermen seemed hardly to credit their senses when they saw me.

As it was not to see the fishermen nor their houses I went ashore I soon left them to talk to Captain S——, and betook myself to the "Elephant," a few rods away. This was a formation of the rock so remarkably like an elephant it required no stretch of the imagination to perceive it at a glance. I found a well-beaten trail leading to it, showing that even these rough men appreciated a little scenery in the intervals of rest from their hard labor. At a short distance the head and trunk of the elephant were especially lifelike. The trunk was separated from the rest of the body by a natural arch. Through this hole or arch one had an exquisite picture, already

framed, of sea, islands and blue sky. Around the base of the rock great boulders of conglomerate had fallen, of which the whole mass appeared to be composed. Other boulders seemed hanging by a thread, ready to fall at the first hard storm. The "Elephant" looked as if wading in the water up to his knees; a huge monster, such as no extinct species of mastodon could ever have hoped to rival in size. A trail led directly over another natural arch, connecting with and just making him a part of the mainland, and not an island, on, over his back to the top of the head. There I stood and looked around about me, drinking in with my eyes the beauty of the scene.

Laving his feet was the clear, pale-green seawater, through which I could see the white bottom, with here and there patches of moss and sea-weed. At a short distance away was the *Rush*, a little piece of home in that lone landscape; on either hand green islands dotted the sea; beyond, bounding the horizon was the lofty, snowy range of mountains on the mainland; Pavloff still grand and white in the distance; behind me green hills with precipitous, uneven sides, and the diminutive village, nestled in the little sheltered spot, behind the great arm of rock, which hid it from view. It was beyond description beautiful; none but the pen of a Ruskin could do it justice.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### KADIAK.

**A**FTER A RUN OF TWO DAYS of the most perfect weather imaginable we arrived at Kadiak, or rather St. Paul, on Kadiak Island. It commonly receives the former name.

The approach to Kadiak is most beautiful. We first sighted the Trinity Islands, contiguous to the main island of Kadiak. The latter is very irregular, and deeply indented with bays. The greatest length is about eighty-five miles; the greatest width fifty miles. Around its coast are numbers of pretty islands. Including the whole group clustered together they stretch over a distance of about one hundred and fifty miles, and are about twenty-five miles from the mainland or peninsula of Alaska.

There is no very high land on the island of Kadiak. The highest hills had only a slight sprinkle of snow on them. We could see over them, and beyond to the mainland, where distinctly on the horizon we saw a magnificent white mountain called on the chart "Four Peak Mountain," which by actual measurement was eighty-five miles away. The next day we saw the same mountain one hundred and five miles away, showing it to be extremely high. No height was given on the charts.

We came opposite to the westernmost end of the island of Kadiak about midnight, and sailed along the coast from that time till about 3:30 p. m. the next day. This was Sunday, September 9th, when we dropped our anchor in St. Paul harbor. St. Paul is on the eastern end of the island. We noticed that as we neared Kadiak the islands became more densely wooded with evergreen trees, not so tall or so large as at Sitka, but there were some, we were told, much larger in the interior. In fact the western end seemed as bare of trees as the Aleutian Islands. We were most fortunate in having such clear weather, the sunlight bringing out as it did in bold relief every beauty of the configuration of the land, as well as adding to the exquisite coloring of both land and sea.

We were unable to see St. Paul till right upon it, for it is hidden by two islands, one of which apparently shuts it in completely, till on sailing through the narrow passage dividing the smaller island from the large one suddenly the channel widens out into a little harbor, so calm and quiet that day, it seemed like a lake. The larger island is called "Woody Island," and used to be of some importance, for from there several years ago was shipped a great deal of ice to San Francisco. As we approached St. Paul we saw first the now deserted icehouses and a few small huts where live a number of natives, these we who had not been there before took to be the

town itself. There was a general disappointed exclamation of "Pshaw! is that St. Paul!" till our supposition was corrected by our Chief Engineer, who had been to Kadiak various times, the first time twenty years before, and who had seen it during different phases of its existence.

Mr. D—— had seen the icehouses when they were filled with that frozen article of commerce—ice—and when St. Paul was at the height of its prosperity.

On one of his visits, in '69 he told us, an artillery company was stationed there, after the transfer of Alaska from Russia to the United States, which company had an old sheep, a pet, brought to St. Paul from Virginia, that had been with them since the war, and remained in Kadiak the two years they were stationed there, and was taken away by the company when they left. What its subsequent history was he never learned.

Mr. D—— was an encyclopedia on all parts of Alaska, and a perfect treasure house of information, good-naturedly available at any time. To him I am indebted for a number of anecdotes and details of history here related.

On Woody Island he also told us, that when he was last there, in '82, they raised quite a variety of vegetables. We found that at Kadiak they raised potatoes, celery, radishes, cauliflower, lettuce and turnips. The potatoes were peculiar to the country, of a sweetish flavor and rather moist. I did not like them. They were a very good size, a little



larger than an egg. The celery was delicious. The cauliflower and turnips excellent. The temperature at Kadiak is very mild—surprisingly so, when one thinks of the latitude of the island. In the same latitude on the eastern coast of North America one would find everlasting snow and ice. The thermometer is rarely ever at zero, and a gentleman who had spent seven winters on the island, said he had never seen it below but once or twice, and then only two or three degrees. There is a better climate there than at Sitka and less rain falls. It is in fact called "The garden spot of Alaska." There is certainly much more available ground for cultivation about St. Paul, the hills being neither so high, so precipitous, nor so densely wooded as at Sitka, that is, in the immediate vicinity of the town.

We dropped anchor a mile or so from the landing, where there is a small wharf, at which the company steamers from San Francisco load and unload. Our largest boat was lowered, for here all the officers wanted to go ashore, it being a new place, unvisited before by them, except Mr. D—— and my husband. Those "on watch" chewed their mustaches in silent disgust.

We were met on the wharf by a small army of little boys. I don't think I saw a little girl while there. There either were none, or they were kept very closely at home. These little urchins were all mouths and eyes as we neared the wharf. I was struck with their generally neat and cleanly appearance, as

compared with the ragged little Aleute boys running around Oonalaska. One of the latter I remember particularly, whose costume consisted of a common merino shirt, very open about the neck, and a man's pair of pants, a mile too large, hitched up about his waist with a string. No shoes, hat or cap. In this array he rambled about with perfect unconcern, and really never appeared cold. Among the boys on the wharf there were two or three aged looking white men, with long, white beards, quite patriarchal in appearance.

A Mr. Sargent met us, and was introduced by Mr. D—— as an old acquaintance of twenty years standing, whom he had met at Kadiak that many years ago. I was interested in his history. He had lived at Kadiak twenty-three years, and never till the year previous ('88) been away from there or back to his home in the East. He found his father, a man of ninety, still living. He also found grown nieces and nephews he had never seen. His visit to the States must have been a revelation to him in more ways than one, twenty-three years making a great difference in this age of change.

Mr. and Mrs. W——, whom my husband had met two years before at Kadiak, had spent three summers at St. Paul. Mr. W—— was general agent for the Alaska Commercial Company at that place. We found he had left on a short trip that very morning, to go in search of a small schooner for whose safety some apprehension was felt. Mrs.

W—— was at home, and received us with a bright smile of welcome, in her pleasant rooms at what was there, also, the "bull showy dome," or "big house," of the Alaska Commercial Company.

We spent a pleasant half hour in chatting, and then wandered off to see the sights of the place.



## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### MORE ABOUT KADIAK.

**K**ADIAK IS MUCH MORE of a place than any we had visited, rivaling even Sitka in size, if minus the barracks and Government officers' houses. The houses at Kadiak, large and small were scattered over considerable space. There was a main avenue, *not* lined with houses, leading over a hill into the woods some distance, where Mrs. W—— told me she took her horseback rides, and that is more than one can do in Sitka, as I found after having given myself the trouble to take a riding-habit; and, where I was offered, if I wished very much to ride, a superannuated old Government mule that lived on glams about the beach, too old and disabled to work. Suffice it to say I did not unpack my habit. There were three good horses at Kadiak and a number of cows. We were told these animals could stay out of doors almost all winter and found enough to subsist on. Last winter they were out the whole time, with the exception of two weeks.

There are a number of Russian or Creole families, with the natives, perhaps, numbering two hundred in all. Among them are a few Indians from the

mainland, about whom Mr. D—— was told a story which runs in this way:

"Near Wrangel, on the mainland, lived a tribe of Indians who were very savage. They had a number of other Indians, captured in war, in their power, whom they subjected to slavery. The chief's wife, on the death of her husband, according to custom, prepared to put them to death, and placing them in a row began cutting their throats, each in turn; but some white men, a captain of a trading vessel and his crew, who happened to be witnesses to the inhuman deed, succeeded in rescuing them from the clutches of this female fiend and brought them over to Kadiak, where they have lived ever since." How true this may be I cannot say.

The inevitable Greek church we did not enter. From the outside it looked rather dilapidated and sadly needed a coat of paint. We heard the chimes, which are common to every little Greek church, ringing out sweetly on the quiet evening air.

Mr. W——, assistant agent, urged us to stay to supper, which invitation we gratefully accepted, as it was such a long pull out to the vessel and back.

Before supper Mr. W—— showed us through the "fur house," in itself a very interesting building. It was a large, solid-looking house built by the Russians. We were told they were seven years laying the foundation, and twenty-six years completing the whole edifice. This was obviously because of intermittent labor, neither its size nor style warrant-

ing so many years of work. But more than half of every week is taken up by feast days among the Russians, so we may safely call it perhaps twelve years. It was built of immense logs, cut from trees found on the island. The diameter of most of them, on an average, was about a foot and a half. These were closely and strongly fitted together into a building fifty or sixty feet high by one hundred and twenty long and fifty broad. It was divided into three stories. The two lower were used to keep supplies of various kinds for the station, the upper for furs. The greater part of the furs had then been sent away, but we saw a large number of magnificent sea-otter, many more than I saw at Oonalaska. There were other furs also, such as mink, marten, and foxes of different kinds, some wolverine, and the skins of several very large white swans. The sea-otter were by far the most valuable and interesting.

Later Mr. W — showed us his curios, of which he had made a large collection ; most of them were obtained on the mainland. There were several whole suits of dressed elk skin, very elaborately trimmed with beads. These consisted of the parka and trabasars, both women's and men's, and were cut after a very similar pattern, except the smaller size of the women's. The fringes of colored beads were made in very tasty patterns, and must have required much tedious labor to make. There were other elaborate articles, such as pouches and cases for

knives, moccasins and other things of that kind, heavily ornamented with beads. We were also shown spears, bows and arrows, and, most interesting of all, a *calendar*, consisting of two convex pieces of wood hollowed out and fitted together like a box and cover. On the inside of one piece were bored small holes for the weeks, on the other for the days, in systematic order; these were checked off with a little peg similar to a cribbage board. It was very ingenious. There were many other odd and valuable things, too numerous to mention. Mr. W—— kindly presented me with an elaborate skin bag from the mainland, ornamented with feathers and worsted in a very lavish way, as a souvenir of my visit.

I was very much interested with an account of Lord Lonsdale's visit to Kadiak. Being such a public character it will be no harm to mention his name. He sent two tons of curios home by way of Winnipeg, though his servant was employed when he was preparing to leave Kadiak several hours in the transfer of the additional curios procured after that, and taken to Kadiak, and from there down to San Francisco. I myself saw at Oonalaska various articles, such as a one-hatch bydarka, a pair of snowshoes, and other things labeled "Lord Lonsdale;" also to be sent to him. When at Kadiak Lord Lonsdale employed his time in writing a novel, and, he told them, he had written one or two others before. Whether the plot was laid in Alaska or on the banks of

the Mackenzie remains to be seen. Though no traces of his visit remain, and the Indians about Mackenzie River declare they never saw or heard of him he claims to have explored all that region. He made very large promises of gifts, had the half of which been sent it would have taken an extra steamer to convey to Kadiak. Among them were prizes to be awarded to the best scholars in the little school, on the non-arrival of which the children were very much grieved. Altogether his manners and promises were magnificent, as befitted a lord. A little joke at his expense, circulated in San Francisco, was as follows: In visiting a furrier's Lord Lonsdale, in his high-handed way, professed a superior knowledge of bears and undertook to determine their ages by an examination of their mouths or teeth. When arriving at a satisfactory conclusion as to the respective ages of those he saw in the store, he announced them to the amused furrier, who afterwards remarked that as they were all papier mache, he thought Lord Lonsdale "a most excellent judge."

We were pleasantly entertained by accounts of interesting people and events till eight or nine o'clock, when we said good-bye and started back to the ship.

The moon had arisen and was then full; the scene was one of the most beautiful I ever saw. There was scarce a ripple on the water and the moon was reflected as in a mirror on its calm surface. I wished the *Rush* were three times the distance she was away,



that our row might be prolonged, selfishly never giving a thought to our poor men who were doing the pulling. Before leaving, Mrs. W—— picked me an exquisite bunch of the finest pansies I almost ever saw, which were growing in her "garden," as she called it, a small bed at one side of the house. These had been planted the year before, and had remained in the ground all the year uninjured. There were candytuft, nasturtions and English daisies growing there besides, all blooming profusely. Mrs. W—— told me the wild-flowers were exquisite, but it was too late when I was there to see them. She showed me some she had pressed very prettily, and I recognized several varieties quite common at Oonalaska. But at Kadiak the most common and most beautiful wild-flower is the real blue forget-me-not, which covers the hills with such masses of its tiny blossoms that they are literally blue with them while they last. They do not grow on the Aleutian Islands at all. The only other place I remember their growing in such quantities is in Siberia, where G. W. Kennan says whole fields are covered with them, stretching out like a blue sea, as far as the eye could reach.

Mrs. W—— was very much amused at one of the officers remarking "the apple-trees reminded him of home." She looked rather puzzled at first—I happened to be present—and then said, "Those are not apple but cottonwood trees." It was rather a good joke on the officer, having been so long in Alaska—

three months, he had forgotten what an apple-tree looked like. We could not refrain from teasing him. There were several of the cottonwood trees growing here and there around the houses, and I admit I took them for apple myself, though no such fruit was visible on them.

I was told at Kadiak the natives on the island were called Aleutes, and spoke that language. They certainly resembled them much, though they appeared of a better class, generally, than those at Oonalaska.

Strange to say, there is no physician at Kadiak. We had to leave so early the next day to take advantage of the good weather on our way to Sitka, that our doctor did not have an opportunity to amputate a leg for some poor creature who had been injured. I noticed several who had been disabled in one way or another, but the people generally looked healthy and strong.

Bears are found on Kadiak Island, and a number of foxes of different kinds, but all the best furs are obtained on the mainland. I must not forget the little black bear, a pet at Kadiak, with its beautiful coat of long, silky black hair. The boys enjoyed playing with him, and teased and excited him so he would growl and run at them as if in rage, but they said he would not bite.

Kadiak, or rather St. Paul, was formerly important as being the headquarters for the Governor of Russian Alaska. Later, Baranoff pushed farther

east and established himself at Sitka, which has ever since remained the seat of government.

We remained all night anchored quietly in the harbor, every one taking a good night's rest, and started at daylight en route for Sitka, five hundred and fifty miles away.

We had a *remarkably* smooth passage from Oonaska to Sitka. So many days of fine weather, with so smooth a sea, were almost unparalleled in the experience of the oldest sailors in that part of the world. The ship was so still one could write with perfect ease. One day was like another, still and bright, the whole distance.

The thermometer rose to eighty degrees one morning. That was the 10th of September. In the middle of the day I was perfectly comfortable without a wrap of any kind. It was hard to believe we were not off the coast of Southern California, rather than in latitude fifty-seven degrees fifteen minutes off the coast of Alaska.

The days were so clear that, when one hundred and fifty-six miles away, we saw Mounts Fairweather, Crillion and La Perouse, near Glacier Bay. Mount St. Elias was a little too distant to be seen well, but all who looked agreed they saw the outline of that most magnificent of all mountains in North America. It was then, by actual measurement on the chart, one hundred and ninety miles away from us.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### SITKA.

**S**ITKA LOOKED its prettiest when we steamed in sight of it, and really quite imposing in size. I was surprised at how much more important and larger it looked than when I first saw it last year. Our arrival was full of interest and pleasant surprises to us, and perhaps, I say it modestly, we were of interest to the inhabitants, who certainly received us with great cordiality.

We first sighted Mount Edgecumb, associated in my mind as a prominent feature in the loveliest sunsets I ever saw, for I remember when the sun went down it was always behind Mount Edgecumb, setting forth his rounded contour with a background of exquisitely brilliant tints of red and gold, while from his lava-covered sides they were reflected in hues of deepest crimson and purple. Mount Edgecumb is a sort of barometer to the Thlinkets of Sitka. They study his appearance at different times and so determine what the weather is to be.

Soon after passing Edgecumb, which is some fourteen miles from Sitka, the little fairy islands in the harbor kept emerging one by one, green with trees and grass, and soon we saw "The Castle" peeping at us, and then the green dome and spire of the Greek

church, with their gilt crosses shining in the sun. And suddenly one of our lieutenants shouted: "There's a steamer, sir," to my husband, at which there was a general excitement, for the last thing we expected to see was a steamer, the last one having been due on the 5th and the next on the 20th of September. It was then only the 12th of September. Something unusual was the cause we surmised at once.

We swung around the island directly in front of Sitka, and shutting it out almost completely from view, till quite near, when the wharf came in sight, gay with a crowd of people, the passengers from the steamer and inhabitants of the place. It was very exciting to behold such a multitude after seeing for so long only the few handfuls so sparsely scattered over the Aleutian Islands.

Soon a boat came off to us and we heard all the news. The *Ancon* had sunk and was a total loss—no lives lost. All baggage and mail saved, for which we were devoutly thankful. The accident occurred on her trip down at Loring, where she drifted on the rocks. The *George W. Elder*, the steamer at Sitka when we arrived, had taken her passengers aboard and carried them back to Port Townsend, in that way causing the delay in her arrival at Sitka.

However, not one of the captured sealers had come to Sitka. We had expected at least one—the *Minnie*—her captain had seemed so honest. It appeared to be a preconcerted arrangement among

them, that if captured and sent to Sitka under the same circumstances as two years before they would return to Victoria. Two years previous the *Rush* had found a goodly array of fifteen prizes, both American and English, awaiting her in port, on her arrival at Sitka. Experience had made them wiser.

We had noticed a sailor in the uniform of the service on the wharf while passing. This was Hakinson who next appeared, and who was the "hero" of the *Black Diamond* affair. From Victoria he had taken passage on the *Ancon*, the ill-fated vessel, and finally arrived safe and sound at Sitka.

The *Elder*, by the way, and her captain were old friends of mine. It was on the *Elder* I had made my passage both to Sitka and back the year before, and Captain H—— had been extremely kind to me both times, therefore, I was delighted to see him, and shake hands and congratulate him on the fact it was not the *Elder* that was sunk, to which he replied, "It may be our turn next!"

The mail for us came aboard soon after, Lieut T.——, in command of the Marine Guards, kindly sending it off as soon as possible after our arrival. There was the usual eager putting together of heads over the precious pile of manuscript, and exclamations of delight or disappointment as it was finally distributed. Then we went ashore, only waiting to read the dearest and most important letters.

We were met with curious glances from the many passengers of the *Elder*. Tourists consider

everything and every one in the light of "curios" when in an out-of-the-way place. The most impulsive were for boarding the *Rush* immediately, and our shore-boat might have been swamped had it not prudently pushed off before the rush for it. A party finally succeeded in getting aboard, however, and amused themselves, ransacking every nook and corner, and asking questions. I know all the masculine gender reading this will exclaim, "Just like the women!" but I have not said they were women.

Soon I met the familiar faces, on every side, of those I had spent my month with the year before. They seemed like old friends, and their kind greetings were most grateful.

All was bustle and gaiety. Up and down the one street promenaded the whole population. The Indian women, displaying themselves and their wares in all their bright colors along the sidewalk, talking and laughing in their hoarse guttural language and tones. ' Mrs. Tom," as usual the center of attraction, adorned with "rings on her fingers," I am not positive about the "bells on her toes," but I am about the bracelets on her arms. All these sights are so familiar through the number of descriptions written, Miss Scidmore's especially, and the flocks of visitors of several years, that it will interest no one to read another description, therefore I refrain.

Sounds of martial music fell on my ear, and I beheld a large band of Indian boys with brass

instruments. I felt like shouting hurrah! These were the Metlakatlah Indian boys, sent up by Mr Duncan from his Mission at Metlakatlah a year ago, to finish their educations at Dr. Jackson's school, and whom I remembered seeing when in Sitka before. I attended services at the Mission, and became quite familiar with their faces, especially so once at an entertainment they gave on the anniversary of the founding of the new Metlakatlah Mission, and an idea entirely their own. There were sleight-of-hand performances, minstrel songs, recitations, etc., displaying a good deal of ingenuity and originality. A recitation of several pages, a short classic story, was very well given. For the occasion they drew a figurative picture, in which they signified their persecution under the British lion, and their security under the American Eagle.

The band played very well, at least it certainly sounded pleasantly on our ears, and added to the interest and excitement of the occasion.

But our pleasure was soon cut short by the doleful news, that we must get under way in an hour. At first we did not know what to make of it; we had anchored for a week or ten days' stay at least. We soon learned: a schooner, the *Alpha*, with fifteen people aboard was reported lost, near Yakutat, and Governor Knapp had asked my husband to go in search of her. We were all cross; of course no one dared express himself as freely as I did, yet on reflection I was cheered by the idea of going to



a thoroughly new place—Yakutat, where all the finest basket-work came from, and in the near vicinity of Mt. St. Elias. I prayed for a continuation of the fine weather that we might be able to see something of the latter.

In an hour both the *Elder* and the *Rush* left almost simultaneously, and Sitka must have felt deserted. There was a cheer for the *Elder* and a cheer for the *Rush*, and a waving of handkerchiefs from everybody to everybody else, with an inspiring tune from the band, and Sitka soon seemed but a vision of the night. However, we were to return in a few days, so I consoled myself.

## CHAPTER XXX.

### YAKUTAT.

**W**E HAD INDICATIONS of rain and wind that evening, and the next morning was dimly cold and rainy; such a contrast to the bright, lovely days we had been having for so long. The mountains on the coast were almost obscured by the clouds of mist and the rain, though occasionally we could see the nearer ones, covered with snow. The distance to Yakutat from Sitka was two hundred and ten miles, and was farther north than the latitude of the Seal Islands. At about 5 p. m. the next day we arrived in sight of the Indian village of Yakutat. We were soon at anchor in a beautiful little bay as quiet and smooth as a lake, but all about looked cold and wintry. The day had lightened a little and we could see on the tops of several snowy mountains, a streak of gold, where, hidden from us in the clouds, the sun poured forth his bright rays upon them. It was beautiful. All around was gloom and darkness. Indistinctly through the mist we saw the outlines of a glacier. We had seen several on the way up the coast in the deep depressions between the mountains, many presenting a bold jagged front to the water's edge. It was strange we saw no icebergs floating around in

the vicinity. We were now in a latitude of eternal snow and ice, for the whole coast is lined with snow-covered mountains all the year round.

Every one wanted to go ashore, late as it was, for we had all heard of the Yakutat basket-work and mountain-goat skins, and possibly a bearskin or two to be found at this place. As far as we could discover I was the first white woman that had ever been to Yakutat.

We landed on the beach in front of half a dozen solidly built log cabins; constructed after the style of most of the Indian houses farther to the "so'thard." These were generally about thirty feet square. Inside was a bench resembling a counter, but lower, and extending around the four sides of the room, used to sit and lie on—a species of divan—which served as chair, sofa and bed, and from this level opened, though rarely, an extra room or two, not much larger than a closet. The architecture of the whole house greatly resembles a huge dog kennel, even to the door, which is simply a round hole large enough to comfortably admit the body. I was surprised at the size of the houses and the small number of people that occupied them, but still more surprised when I heard that in these half dozen houses lived about three hundred Indians, then all away hunting and fishing. Imagine fifty or sixty persons of all ages and sizes living in one room.

We found some good basket-work, but at high prices. These Indians seemed as shrewd as those at

Sitka at bargaining. Several of the lieutenants found some pretty baskets at the small store just opened, three mountain-goat skins, and one of them a blanket of eagle's breast-feathers, which made the rest of us green with envy. It was the only one to be found.

But I must tell of the schooner *Alpha* and her crew. No sooner had we anchored than there appeared two beautifully shaped light canoes, or dugouts, in which there were four Indians, two in each, paddling rapidly toward us. We had aboard two men from Sitka acting as pilots, and well acquainted with that part of the country. One of them hailed the nearest Indians, whom he recognized to be from the missing schooner, and in a few words we had the satisfaction of learning of the safety of the vessel as well as of all hands aboard. Later we discovered it was not shipwreck but a complication of other causes that led to her delay, giving rise to the fear of her possible loss, she being known to be unfit for heavy weather. There had been a lack of provisions, which led to disputes and conflicting plans between the various parties aboard—the captain, a trader, and a photographer, Mr. H——, from Taber's, of San Francisco. The affair ended thus: The *Alpha* was abandoned and the *Rush* took crew and all, including several Indians, to Sitka.

We had besides, a distinguished couple and their family aboard, Yanatcho, chief of the Yakutat clan and his wife. His "Boston" name (Boston is

United States to the Indians, because one of the first vessels from the United States to visit those regions hailed from Boston), being "Billy Merryman," named after a captain in the navy who had once been there. Yanatcho was a haughty looking man, who spoke as one having authority. He begged, or rather expressed, his desire to go to Sitka in a somewhat peremptory manner. He first asked my husband to take him down to Sitka. Captain S—— said, "All right." Next he asked if he could take his wife. My husband said, "Yes." Then he wanted to take a box of seal oil. Next he wished know if he could take his son. "Yes," good-naturedly repeated my husband. It was then necessary to add another box of seal oil (which they use as a condiment for everything). "Yes." "But he had three children he did not want to leave behind!" My husband's patience, though he has a great deal, was coming to an end, and he told him "No more!" However, at the time appointed for their embarkation, just before our departure, three canoes, full of men, women and children with all their goods and chattels, a most incongruous mixture, appeared. It was too late to single them out. Two canoes full were bundled aboard and off we started.

The next two or three days must have been trying even to them, for the poor creatures had no shelter but such as they could get under the "fo'castle," and an awning put up to keep the rain off. For, besides the rain, we had a heavy gale on our way.

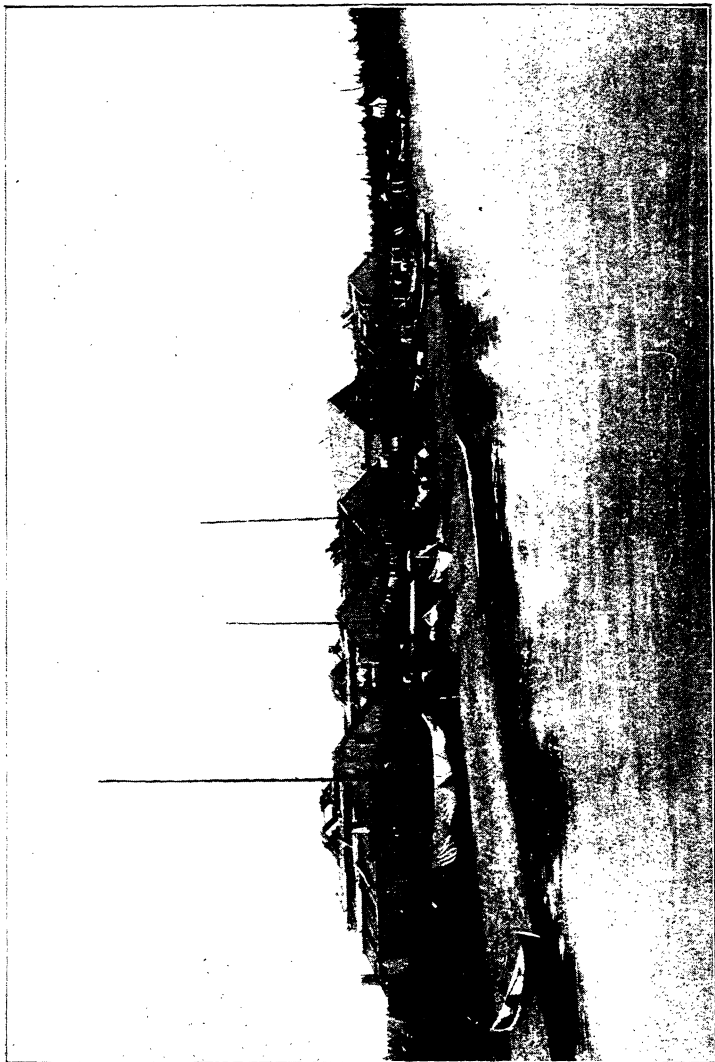
back to Sitka. The ship thrashed about most unmercifully. Mr. D—— played the good Samaritan and took the chief, with his wife and children, under his protection in the engine-room, where they were at least warm. Yanatcho made his tribe believe the "gunboat" had come after him especially, so we learned from those that understood the Thlinket aboard the schooner.

One of the Indians, the second chief, was as amiable a looking person as one could wish to see, for I saw him afar off, when paddling toward the ship, with a countenance such as the moon is said to have when particularly jovial, and what a little street gamin might express as a "gash" extending from ear to ear, exhibiting two long rows of strong white teeth. With this stereotyped expression he remained as long as I saw him, except when he drew the corners of his mouth together, and extended it at right angles with its former position, in an enormous yawn, looking one straight in the face, the meanwhile, in the most natural and unconcerned manner imaginable.

Both Yanatcho and the second chief had letters of recommendation from one gentleman and another who had strayed to that far northern port on business, or for pleasure, which they presented to my husband. It was customary among the Indians to ask for these. Unable to read, but confident of their flattering contents, they presented them with a great deal of pride to the person whose favor they wished

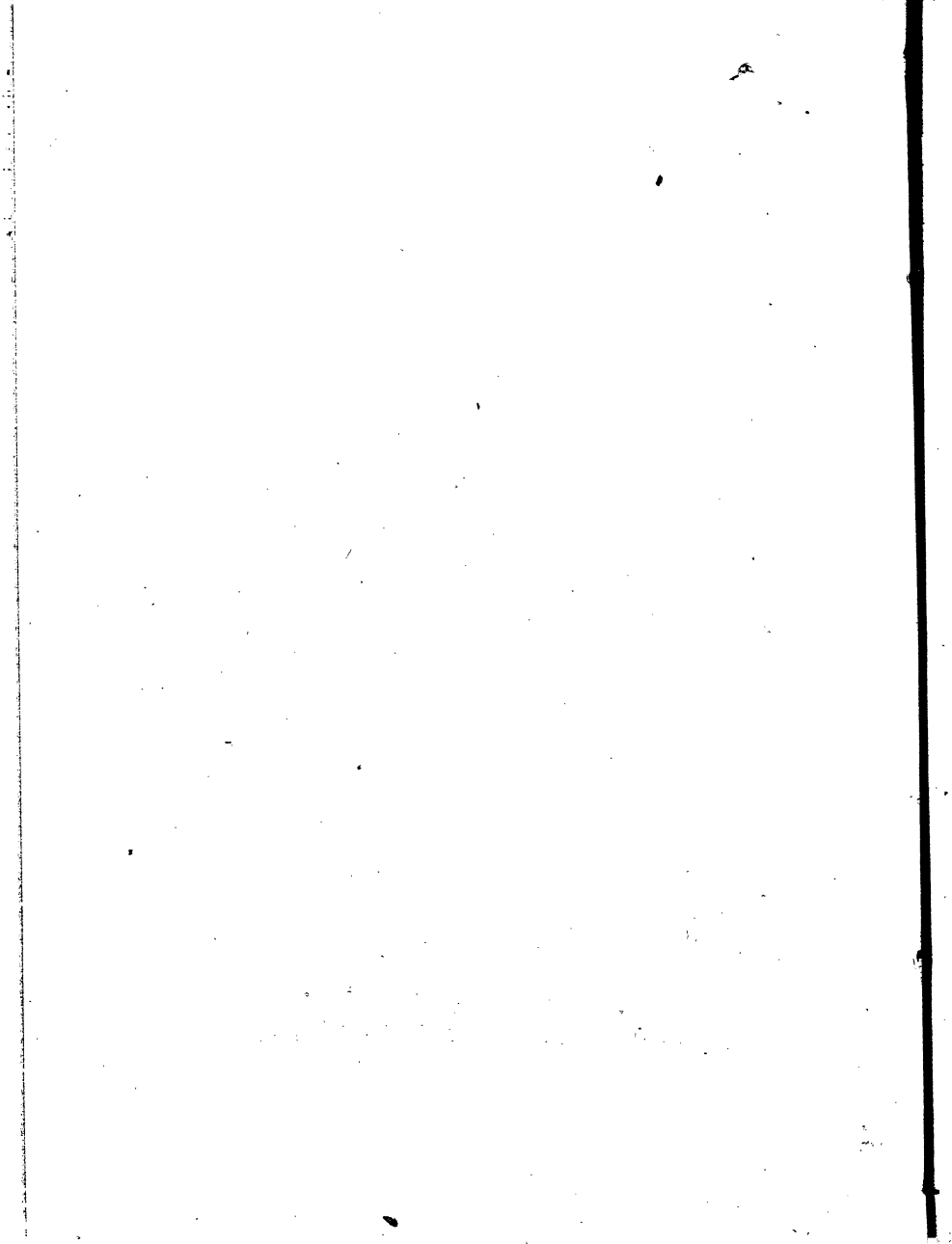
to secure. A laughable story was told us of a chief who called himself "Me-no-lie." He desired some one who knew him to write a letter of recommendation. The gentleman did so. The letter ran thus: "Me-no-lie is a chief, and the greatest liar and scoundrel to be found; do not trust him under any circumstances." With an air of conscious merit, though affecting modesty, he presented his letter to all with whom he happened to be associated.

I will mention here that the Indians in the village spent all of the time we stayed in the harbor aboard the *Rush*. On more intimate acquaintance they grew bolder and would follow us into our private apartments in a most provoking manner. We were surrounded by a whole fleet of canoes, going and coming all day, after our first raid on the village, the evening before, in search of baskets. These were laden with curios of every variety known to the savage breast. But the most unexpected and amusing of all were half a dozen *hair switches*, which the officers hinted "just about matched my hair." I was of course indignant. Who, we wondered, had been in this region after false hair?



CHIEF VANATCHOO'S VILLAGE. WAR CANOES. YAKUTAT, ALASKA  
MOUNT ST. ELIAS IN THE DISTANCE TO THE RIGHT





## CHAPTER XXXI.

### INDIANS OF YAKUTAT.

A NUMBER OF INDIAN children, mostly boys, were running around in the cold and wet in summer attire—a cotton shirt, occasionally a *whole* suit, but we understood it was summer with them all the time as far as a change of costume is concerned. They plunge into the breakers when it is blowing, snowing and sleeting; this is their recreation. They slide on the snow barefoot all day long and they don't die.

They often live to a good old age, notwithstanding the terrible exposure they suffer. A missionary at Yakutat told me he knew of two old Indians whom, he said, were over eighty, for they remembered the time when a party of Russian missionaries had come to Yakutat, and had all been murdered. This, he said, had occurred as many as eighty years ago.

The Yakutat Indians speak Thlinket, as do those of Sitka, but the former were originally of the tribe of Copper River Indians. A number left their home in the region of Copper River and emigrated to Yakutat, where a tribe of Thlinkets already lived. The two tribes amalgamated and became one and the same, and at present the Indians of Yakutat speak the same language and are considered Thlinkets.

Only the oldest among them remember and speak their former dialect, that of the present Copper River Indians.

For this fact I am indebted to Lieutenant E——, an officer of the United States Navy, and son of the late Admiral Emmons, also of the United States Navy. Lieutenant E—— has spent two or three years in Sitka, traveling continuously among the Thlinkets, or, as he says, the correct spelling is Thlingits. He has made an extensive collection of rare and valuable curios. These he obtains by traveling far up the rivers in Indian canoes, taking with him a faithful Indian interpreter, though he himself has acquired their language sufficiently to be able to make himself understood.

He has already made one collection worth several thousand dollars, which has been placed in the Smithsonian Institute at Washington, and is at present at work on a second collection, in which there are already several hundred pieces.

In this collection are to be found some very elegant and expensive carved wooden dishes, inlaid fancifully with mother of pearl from shells, and used at feasts; they are large enough to hold a good-sized roast pig, and probably used by them to contain venison, so plentiful in Alaska. There are also knives, with elaborately carved handles of bone; there were also some with copper blades. Copper was used by them before the invasion of the whites. They knew nothing about the use of iron, however,

until after the arrival of white men among them. The most grotesque masks are made of carved wood, painted in vivid colors, such as red, green and blue, the three often on one mask ; some are made of copper. Other extraordinary looking objects are found, the use of which is unknown, but of interest because of the skill and care evidently expended on them. The Thlinkets are much more ingenious in the devising and making a variety of articles than the Aleutes, probably because they have better and more materials at hand. Though the former are gradually ceasing to make them, as they come in contact with civilization.

Lieut. E—— has made this tribe, the Thlinkets, their customs and habits, his study for several years. He also has some valuable Russian books, almost a century old, on the discovery of Alaska and the condition of the Indians at that time.

“On Kow” is their term for chief. In teaching them of God He is called “On Kow”—it is the only term possible to be used in their language. “Kan-Kow” is the appellation of the evil one.

The Yakutat Indians, like those at Sitka, all understand what “How much?” means, and never by any chance make a mistake and confuse two and three dollars. They dislike to change money, the greater the number of small pieces the more they imagine they have.

There were no “totem poles” about the houses, though I was told inside the chief's house there

were two or three ; but when he goes away he locks his door behind him with a padlock and takes the key, and was not at home when we called. Every nook and cranny through which we might have peeped was filled up in some way or other.

Yakutat consists of an Oakland and a San Francisco. On one side of the bay lives one chief and part of the clan, and on the other side the other ; communication is entirely by water.

These Indians cremate their dead. We saw several little houses like sentry-boxes, with a window on one side, in which were set, sometimes one and two, often three, elaborately ornamented leathern chests, in which we were told the ashes of the dead reposed. In one more pretentious than the rest there was a small clock ; it was not running and I could not imagine their idea in putting it there.

We were told by a person who understood Thlinket, that when the *Rush* first appeared at Yakutat there was great alarm among the Indians for fear of punishment, the making of liquor being prohibited. Their consciences troubled them. Some little time before a party of Copper River Indians had come on a visit : they had made a great deal of "hoochinoo" (the native liquor) and had had a grand time. Each chief was anxious to lay the blame on the other.

We rowed among the small wooded islands that there, as at Sitka, make the harbor so pretty. At a sudden turn we came upon some white men and

Indians hauling the seine in one of the channels, so surrounded by islands as to almost form a lake. The salmon, great huge fellows, were jumping out of the water in every direction, evidently much disturbed by the assault made upon them. We watched till tired of the sport and then continued our row. We landed on one of the islands, where we found evidences of the "good time," in the shape of several empty bottles, hidden in a hole in the trunk of an old tree. We also found a deserted log hut, a canoe, and a small square inclosure, tightly boarded over, but into which we managed to peep. In it we saw a bundle of what we thought were skins, and a large chest or leathern trunk. It was a lovely little island, round as a dollar, carpeted with rich green moss and ferns, in which the scarlet of the bunch-berries gleamed brightly. Old trunks of trees were scattered here and there, covered with the fern-like moss; all was fresh, green and moist, a fairy island, had it not been so cold.

All the islands and woods on the coast of Alaska present the same appearance. Beyond the mountains (the range which seems to be immediately on the coast) it is flat prairie-land, covered with grass and a few bushes, but no trees.

At Yakutat are found the most delicious wild strawberries, of a very fair size, larger than the ordinary wild strawberry of the Eastern States. A wild cranberry is also found, smaller than our common cranberry, but of a far superior flavor. The

cranberry pie made with them is in my estimation better than any other fruit pie.

I saw growing in the small gardens belonging to the missionaries, of whom I will speak later, beets, turnips, and potatoes, which, with carrots, all do very well. The soil at Yakutat is very sandy, but is enriched by the quantities of decayed seaweed. If there is dry weather for two or three days it has to be irrigated, or the vegetables would be spoiled.

A branch store from Sitka had been opened recently at Yakutat and was doing well. It was a god-send to the missionaries, who could now rely on the store for supplies, instead of having to send away for everything themselves. We inquired of the store-keeper if he could trust the Indians? he said "Yes." and added, "in almost every case where he had allowed them to have clothing with an agreement to pay when they had the money they had faithfully fulfilled their promise. I remember the second chief appearing on board with a brand new ulster, on which he had allowed to remain in a very prominent position the tag on which the price was marked. The days of the blanket have departed. The women cling to that custom still to some extent, but more often use shawls instead.

The customs of the Yakutat Indians are those of the Thlinkets of Sitka, about whom so much has been written that it will be unnecessary to mention them here.

The missionaries I have already referred to were

two Swedes, who had been in Yakutat about a year; kindly looking, noble men. From them I received most of my information regarding the Indians and their manner of living at Yakutat. Previous to their arrival there had never been any missionaries among this tribe, except the Greek or Russian murdered by them so many years before.

These Swedes had much trouble in establishing their mission; there was a scarcity of lumber and their house was too small. At the time I was there they were able to accommodate only five Indian boys. The only way to do the Indians any good was, as has been proved, to keep them entirely under their supervision. There is no direct communication with Yakutat, only trading schooners coming up once in a while. The *Pinta*, the naval vessel stationed at Sitka, runs up occasionally, that is all.

I could not but admire those humble good men, so far from their native land, staking their very lives for the salvation of these poor degraded beings. I asked one of them, "Mr. H——, do you feel safe among these Indians?" "Hardly safe," he replied, "though I do not fear them. One day not long ago," he continued, "one of them came to me and wanted to use my grindstone; it was Sunday, so I refused him, whereupon he said he would kill me. He had an axe in one hand and a knife in the other. I told him he could kill me, I was helpless; and he walked away. They are like dogs; had I shown fear he would have killed



me." When I visited his Mission at Metlakatlah, Mr. Duncan told me of a similar experience of his. These Indians admire courage and will seldom kill but the craven or coward, right out in the broad light of day. Their usual method is to steal upon the victim unawares and shoot from behind an ambush.

Two years ago there were two white men wantonly murdered a few miles from Yakutat. They, with two Indians, had gone out on a hunting expedition. Their wood gave out and the two white men went a short distance from their camp, together in a boat, to procure some, leaving their guns behind them. On returning they were met by the two Indians, who fired upon them with their own guns, killing one of them instantly, the other, still partially alive, was finished with the stab of a knife. One of the Indians was caught, taken to Portland, tried and hanged; but the principal one, it is rumored, is still at large. The second chief of the Yakutat tribe (I did not learn his name), of the smiling countenance, went to Portland and testified against the murderer who was hanged. It was an event which forever afterward raised him to pre-eminence in the eyes of the rest of the tribe.

But alas! we did not see Mt. St. Elias. It was a severe disappointment when so near, and as we thought that just behind those clouds he stood grand and still in the awful silence of nature. The missionaries told us from their own little home, on

a clear day, the view was superb. It rained steadily almost all of the time we remained there, which was two nights and a day.

A stiff wind blew "dead ahead" all the way back to Sitka. We "hove to" for several hours, till the worst was over, and then had to "tack ship" for some distance. We were twenty-four hours longer making the trip back to Sitka than we were going from there to Yakutat.

On arriving at Sitka we were met with cheers and other expressions of satisfaction, especially after it was made known that the missing party were all safe and aboard the *Rush*.



## CHAPTER XXXII.

### SITKA AGAIN.

**HE** REMAINED IN SITKA about ten days, during which time nothing of importance occurred. The investigation and law proceedings in regard to the captured sealers were carried on very quietly, and there was little to be done, besides the ordinary routine of ship life, but amuse oneself, or at least it was all I had to do. Walks to the Indian River, a visit to the Ranche, and the services at the Greek church, besides the exchanging of calls took up the most of my time. Also a visit to the Mission.

With two friends I visited the Ranche one day. This Ranche, as it is called, is where the Indians live outside the stockade. Though the latter is now but a memory, all of it but a few yards having been removed, or fallen to decay. We were in search of a set of paddles. It was Saturday, and a bright, warm day. Saturday was employed in much the same way as in the more civilized part of our country, namely, as cleaning day. The whole Ranche had a certain air and smell of cleanliness and soapsuds. We met Indian women with streaming locks, and a fresh, clean look about the face, betokening a recent but perhaps only the weekly wash, in readiness for

Sunday. Many a papoose was receiving a thorough scrubbing in the clear light of day under the warm rays of the September sun—sixty degrees Fahrenheit.

I found a handsomely painted pair of small paddles, just a good length to lay in my trunk, and a number of other smaller things. These curios lose their value in one's mind when one reflects they are made by the Indians simply for sale, after the most approved patterns.

We paid an interesting visit to "Jeweler Jim," an Indian, who is very clever at converting gold and silver money into ornaments of various kinds. His latest effort was a set of after-dinner coffee spoons, each one made out of a half dollar, and a very pretty shape. He will make you for three dollars, in two days' time, a gold ring, with an Indian design, out of a ten dollar gold piece. He had a handsome silver napkin ring well under way when we interrupted him.

Between "steamer days" at Sitka it is almost impossible to buy curios from the Indians. They get such extravagant prices from the tourists it pays them to keep them till then. Mrs. Tom displayed a Chilkat blanket, made up for a dance robe, at the modest sum of only sixty dollars. It was not the real mountain-sheep's wool and native-dyed blanket either, but a wretchedly cheap imitation.

I found the Mission to be in a very flourishing condition. The school was full to overflowing, and

measures were being taken to build a new chapel for the especial use of the Indians. Quite a village of neat little houses was springing up all around the Mission, tenanted by married couples of Indian boys and girls from there. The houses were built by the boys themselves. They were all alike, more or less, and painted white, similar in appearance to the smaller cottages one sees at "Cottage City" on the island of Martha's Vineyard. There was also among the new buildings a hospital for the boys, built since last year, and similar to the one erected for the girls. The dormitories accommodate about a dozen or so beds. There are always a number of little patients afflicted with loathsome maladies—poor unfortunates. A generation will have to pass away before the general health of these degraded creatures can be materially benefited. Much is being done.

A prettier site could scarce be found for a village at the foot of Vestovia, the Arrow Head Mountain back of Sitka, with the view out over the island-dotted harbor, and the pretty crescent-shape sweep of the beach, around which Sitka lies in picturesque carelessness, the green-spired Greek church in the midst.

The missionary work at Sitka is certainly meeting with great success. The Indians take a pride in the fact they are Christian Indians, and look down on such as have not their advantages.

The Indian boys and girls are fond of singing or music of any kind. It was certainly very inspiring to

listen at their Sunday morning service, to the spirit and harmony with which the Moody and Sankey or gospel hymns were rendered. They would put many a white Sunday school to shame. An Indian boy played the organ, and the services were begun by an elaborate voluntary, sung by about half a dozen of the boys and girls. It made the tears come into my eyes as I listened, thinking of those poor degraded beings, hardly, by some, allowed to have souls, singing thus, in that hearty fashion, our most sacred songs.

The sermon, though in reality short, is made to a visitor somewhat long and tedious, by having to be interpreted sentence by sentence by the Indian interpreter. This is more for the benefit of the congregation of Indians who come to the services, the relatives mostly of the children at the Mission, than the scholars. These relatives, generally women, appear in their gala array every Sunday; silk handkerchiefs on their heads, bright shawls on their shoulders, over perhaps, as one woman I noticed had on, a pea-green silk dress. These Indians are far from being poverty stricken. The tourists are a boon to them. The Indian mother takes her papoose to church with her, and the services are varied frequently by loud wailings here and there, but that is nothing to the initiated.

In teaching a Sunday school class once or twice I found these Indian children read quite as well as

an average boy or girl of eight or ten, after a year's study.

During a call on Dr. J—— and his wife and daughter, he showed us a very handsome circular piece of Alaskan cedar, about thirty inches in diameter, of exceedingly fine smooth grain, on which was elaborately carved a design which to us was meaningless till explained by Dr. J—— to represent a beaver cutting down a tree. I must admit it required some imagination to understand it after we found out what it was. But the carving was beautifully done, and by one of the Mission boys. Dr. J—— contemplated having a table made of it. The wood itself was a good advertisement of the quality of cedar to be found in the vicinity of Sitka.

Miss J——, Dr. J——'s daughter, kindly showed us an exquisitely painted collection in water colors of the wild-flowers in the vicinity of Sitka. Many were similar to the flowers growing on the Aleutian Islands.

Gambling is a vice of the Sitka Indians. They will keep it up for days, hardly ceasing day or night. While at it they present the wildest appearance. Often their faces are streaked with red paint, which looks like blood. By some a white cloth, frequently a red one, is tied about the head. Many are stripped to the waist, and when in the midst of a game their fierce, wild looks displayed in their intense interest in it are horrible to behold. It is a game of guess. Small sticks, which are unlike, are changed from

hand to hand by a member of one side, while some one on the opposite side guesses a certain one. If right, the guesser and his side win, the other loses. They sit in a double row of three or four on a side, facing each other, in a squatting posture, a rough board or two between them. There is a continuous noise kept up by the beating of sticks on this board, at the same time keeping the whole body in constant motion. Together with this a monotonous but not unmusical cry is uttered. The guessing side is always quiet, while their opposites keep up their wild antics, as if to confuse them. It is a fascinating thing to watch them, and marvelous what an amount of endurance they display, and indifference to all fatigue when at this game. They gamble away the very clothes off their backs, if they are so fortunate as to have them.

The Indians are very mercenary. They will go to the Mission and ask for medicine for a sick wife or child, and then want to know how much they will be paid to take it to them.

Yet, I heard a gentleman (Lieut. E——), who had lived in Sitka for several years, and who had been much among the Indians, say, that taking them as a whole, they were as good or better than so many white people of the rougher sort living in one community.



## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### HOMEWARD BOUND.

**B**UT MY FAITH in the good weather of Sitka was sadly shaken by the constant rain, almost the entire time of our stay there. For three days and nights, I solemnly affirm, it did not stop a moment, not drizzling, but pouring. We had one or two fine sunsets, not entirely clear, however. One evening from out the gloomy clouds, and back of Edgecumb, the sun shot out a few vivid rays like flames of fire for a few moments, and again "the world was left to darkness and to *rain*." A lady, the wife of a naval officer stationed at Sitka, after having lived there a year, said, "She felt like a jelly-fish."

The evening before we left Sitka we were delighted to receive an invitation to a concert to be given for the benefit of our two pilots to Yakutat, in search of the *Alpha*. After the concert there was dancing. It varied the monotony of the rainy days and nights. In walking up the street we almost needed our small boat to reach the building in which it was given, but we arrived undissolved and in a fairly good condition, considering all things.

The chief feature of the evening's entertainment was a topical song sung by Lieut. T——, the sentiment of which was composed by Sitka's pride in that

line, Mr. H——, who is ready on all occasions with a poem or a rhyme exactly to the point. This song was sung to the music of Nat Goodwin's comic song, "That's-All." The first verses ran after this fashion; while being sung meaning glances were directed at my husband:

The "Shepard" came into our bay with a *Rush*,  
That's all, that's all.

He had swept Behring Sea with a revenue brush,  
That's all, that's all.

And our Johnny Bull cousins who live in B. C.  
Are shaking their fists at the flag of the free,  
That's all, that's all.

The *Black Diamond* was captured, but she ran away,  
That's all, that's all.

Mistaking Victoria for Sitka's fair bay,  
That's all, that's all.

And vain was the talk of the gallant prize crew,  
He was one against many, so what could he do?  
He did what he had to—so would I, so would you.  
That's all, that's all.

etc., etc.

The next day we sallied out bravely in spite of lowering barometer and threatening looking weather. We could not realize what the weather was at sea, while anchored in "Sitka's fair bay," but after passing Mount Edgecumbe, seaward, we were audaciously opposed by fierce winds in our very faces, and mountain-like seas, which the little *Rush* attacked bravely and climbed over with the greatest dexterity, though not entirely to our enjoyment. Such boisterous conduct was not to be endured, and the order

being given to "hard-a-port" we slyly stole back to our comfortable anchorage, to await a more favorable time. The next day, my husband being determined to proceed, and thinking to run through what he thought to be perhaps only a local storm, braved the southeaster again, after taking the precaution to take ten tons more coal aboard.

We had silently and in secret prayed and hoped by some combination of circumstances we might go down the inside passage, but my husband did not desire to lengthen our homeward-bound trip any more than necessary, and the pilots did not present themselves, so we put out to sea after a feeble remonstrance on my part, and a suggestion we could get a pilot from the *Corunna*, one of the passenger steamers then in port. But I was kept thoroughly in subjection by the quiet reminder that I was *not* on a yachting party. However, I think that by the fourth day after we left, if it had not been for his pride, Capt. S— would have acknowledged the inside passage preferable.

We had a strong headwind most of the time, and a tremendous sea running. A moment's quiet was not to be found. Braced as best I could be in my steamer chair, with my feet up against the wheel in the pilot room, for the pilot house was my sanctum sanctorum, being unused at sea, for the steering was done at the wheel aft, I clung desperately for those five days. There I even ate my meals. Eating was an acrobatic feat to be performed only

after practice. On one occasion the waiter in my lap slid off, the blanc mange (made out of condensed milk diluted, by the way) sailed across the floor. I scrambled after it, the steamer chair toppled over me, and on top of all rolled an empty bucket. The reason why the latter was at hand I'll not mention. The "debris" was picked up as soon as the opportunity offered itself. That was nothing.

When on the fifth day we arrived at Port Townsend at 8 P. M. I declined to go ashore. I felt as if I had been stretched on a rack. My sleep that night was disturbed, it was so still.

The day before, we landed, or rather dropped, our crew of rescued Indians we had brought from Oon-alaska. This was effected in mid-ocean, opposite to their native village of Nootka on Vancouver Island, and about ten miles distant. Their two canoes were lowered with difficulty, for the sea was rough, and they were in danger of being overturned. But in a marvelously short time and with the greatest dexterity they paddled off from the ship, and two of the Indians who had acquired civilization enough, waved their caps in farewell.

They put up their small sails and bounded away over the water, skimming over the waves like sea-gulls, often hidden entirely in the trough of the sea. They, no doubt, like Yanatcho, chief of the Yakutat tribe, to whom with his extensive family we gave passage on the *Rush* to Sitka, impressed the fact on the rest of their tribe, that the *Rush* was

employed especially for the purpose of taking them from Oonalaska to their home on Vancouver Island.

That night to end off with a fitting flourish in keeping with the greater part of our trip from Sitka, we had a rousing gale of wind, which nearly beached us on Vancouver Island, and on the discovery of which we had to "put about" promptly and make out to sea. The rain fell in sheets, the sea swept over the decks, and altogether we had a lively time of it. The next morning scarcely dawned at all, it was so dark and foggy, and we had lost our bearings. There were anxious peerings through the fog, and conjectures by all, as to our whereabouts, but though we were told by one of the officers that he had once spent five days in that vicinity trying to find the way in; after a few hours the clouds rolled by and we made a lighthouse, and were soon shooting through calm, still water—the straits of San Juan de Fuca—bound for Port Townsend.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### PUGET SOUND.

**A**S I SAID BEFORE, we arrived at Port Townsend at about eight P. M. This was October 2d. It was perfectly dark, but the many lights showed us our anchorage. We almost fancied we had arrived at San Francisco, the lights seemed so many and so bright to us, as they led from the water's edge up over the high bluff. There were frequent passings to and fro of tugs and small steamers. The *Corunna* was moored at one of the wharfs. She had arrived from her trip down the inside passage the day before.

Newspapers were soon brought off, in one of which we discovered that we had unwittingly incurred a great danger, for the *Rush* was menaced with dark and secret threats of vengeance, by the baffled crews of the captured sealers, who were to commit all sorts of outrages on my unoffending husband and his command, for strictly performing his duty in Behring Sea. How little we knew what we escaped, when kind Providence intervened and decreed we should leave the rescued Indians at their desire, near their home at Nootka Sound, instead of Victoria, as at first we intended. On our way to Port Townsend and about opposite Victoria an

English torpedo-boat passed swiftly by us (out for practice we supposed), and did not sink us. We passed the English revenue cutter *Douglass*, but neither did she show any signs of hostility.

Therefore we enjoyed the sport of reading these threats in undisturbed security.

Among the papers the following extract from one of them caught our eye: It was entitled "Purely a Matter of Gall." "A friend rushed into our office in a breathless state of excitement this afternoon to inquire if there was any truth in the report, that the *Rush* had seized the *Swiftsure* in Behring Sea. "Tut" said the editor, "they wouldn't have the gall to do that." Wouldn't have the gall? Look here, said he, those Yankees have gall enough for anything."

But we were particularly amused on reading the premature obituary in the daily *Examiner* of San Francisco on Mr. H——, employed by Mr. Taber as photographer, who was "lost in wild waters," and who at the time we read the article we knew to be safe and sound in Seattle, and that he had not even been in danger of losing his life. The recital of his loss, however, made an attractive and exciting column in that newsy paper, though his friends were no doubt glad to know later that he that was lost is found.

After a day's visit, and being entertained pleasantly the same evening by the Key City Club, at a reception given at the opening of their new building,

we left next morning early, at four A. M., for Olympia, the capital of Washington State (Territory no longer).

The day was beautiful, and a more delightful sail in contrast to our recent rough experience could not have been desired, on that beautiful body of water, Puget Sound. Mt. Tacoma (or Reyneer), Mt. Baker, and one or two other eternal snow-covered peaks shone now and then clear and white in the distance, as the various windings in the channels disclosed them to sight, now opening, now closing. At times the Sound is like a wide river. The various greens and occasional dashes of bright yellow and scarlet of the autumnal tinted foliage on the banks, reflected in the still glassy depths, made an exquisite picture. I decided that with all its beauty I preferred the more civilized scenery of Puget Sound to the harbor of Oonalaska.

We arrived at Olympia about 4 P. M. the same day, the distance being about ninety miles from Port Townsend. Our pilot was Mr. T——, our first lieutenant, once stationed at Port Townsend on the Revenue Cutter *Walcott* (whose headquarters are at that place), and who was familiar with the Sound. Our object was to "beach" the *Rush*, and clean the copper on her bottom, taking advantage of the tide, which here rises to fourteen feet at highest tide, an economical piece of work, for there were no drydock-bills to pay; no one had to be consulted; and no time wasted in lengthy preparations and preliminaries, as is apt



to be the case at a navy yard. Nature simply was utilized. Lieutenant T—— had superintended the same thing before, and preparations proceeded quietly and methodically.

I felt a little uneasy myself, but did not say anything, when I understood we were to be hauled up as close as possible in shore at high tide, and when the tide fell were to be left high and dry, with the deck in a verticle position. All this was to occur in the silent midnight watches. I went to bed with a determination to be alive to any unforeseen occurrence, and if she listed over all at once to be ready, for I did not wish to be unceremoniously thumped on the floor out of my bunk, in the midst of some pleasant wanderings in dreamland. However my worst fears were not realized, for we listed the other way, and so gradually that I awoke to find myself not quite on my head, but tending that way, on the ship's side.

I managed to right myself, and took various naps till time to "turn out" in the morning. On arising and endeavoring to dress, I found myself in the most comical situation I ever was placed in. It was "up-hill" work dressing. In attempting to cross the cabin floor upward you slid back two steps to one you went forward. We looked as if we were making the most violent and unwonted efforts to get at something just out of reach. I realized how "Sisyphus" must have felt when he tried to roll the stone up hill. Tables, chairs, clothes and other

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movable articles were all accumulated in a heap on the lower side, as the debris at the bottom of a landslide.

Breakfast was served under difficulties. In the ward-room, where the table is a fixture fastened to the floor, the ordeal was most trying. On the lower side the chairs had a tendency to keep at an immoderate distance from what you wanted to get at; on the opposite side, they were too persistent the other way. Little casualties such as the absently loosening one's hold on one's coffee-cup, were apt to end disastrously to the great discomfort not of you but of your *vis-a-vis*. Our novel position afforded a great deal of amusement and merriment to all.

We could walk down the gangway over the ship's side and land on dry ground, which seemed a novel thing in its way, and much better in my estimation than landing in the water, or in an unstable small boat. After the trial of four months I came to the conclusion I preferred dry land any time.

Running up from the beach were woods, where, in riotous profusion grew evergreens—the beautiful arbor vitæ among them—maples and other trees with berry bushes, ferns and moss-covered logs in one wild, delightful tangle. Maiden-hair fern was abundant, and with knife and basket I soon had unearthed quantities, root and all, with rich green moss, for hanging-baskets.

Over the top of the hill and back a little way was a large fruit orchard, where Mr. C——, one of our

engineers, found an abundance of various kinds of delicious ripe plums, for almost nothing. The country all about is very finely adapted to fruit-growing purposes. How we reveled in all these fresh things after our long banishment.

We had to be rowed to Olympia, two miles or so distant, and found it a larger and a far prettier place than Port Townsend. A very large, handsome hotel was going up, on a beautiful site, where from two sides of it one could have a lovely view of Puget Sound and surrounding country. The various buildings of most prominence were so situated as to deceive us, on looking at Olympia from the water front, into thinking it a larger and more populous city than it really was. It may never become of great commercial importance, but it is certainly a lovely place for a quiet home. Olympia's fate seems to hang on the decision as to where the future state capital be established.

The scenery about Olympia is very fine. A beautiful stream flows back of the town, emptying into the Sound. On the way it roars and tumbles over its rocky bed, forming beautiful waterfalls in several places. One is especially beautiful, where the precipitous banks seem to hem in its impetuous body of water, as it plunges with terrible force over great, black rocks, on which, in places unexposed to the fury of the waters, grow lovely green moss and ferns. Directly in front of the falls a little foot-bridge has been placed in such a way as to afford one a very

near view. While on the bridge and directly in front of this great flow of water you feel a cold rush of air dashed with spray, while your ears are filled with the surging roar and plunge of falling waters, filling you with a wild exultation.

After spending two days there, resting quietly during the Sabbath that intervened, we left Olympia and stopped at Tacoma for a few hours, on our way to Seattle, at which latter place we expected to take on coal and fresh water for our final sea voyage to San Francisco.

Tacoma presented the appearance of a rapidly growing city. The Tacoma, the principal hotel, was everything that could be desired in its architectural beauty and complete appointments in every way.

The city spread already over a great deal of ground. Streets were laid out broad and straight two and three miles back from the water's edge, while those parallel with the water-front were still longer. Many handsome residences were yet surrounded by primeval forests, or what not long ago were, in the form of charred remains of fallen trees and stumps, but just cleared by the busy woodcutters.

Tacoma is set upon a hill, and by no means easy of access, though a road of a gradual incline was just being completed, upon which we saw a street-car track had been laid, leading from the water's edge to the top of the bluff. It is in the same way Port Townsend is reached, though the latter place has a greater water-front of solid ground.

Tacoma affords, however, a magnificent and far-reaching view of Puget Sound, especially from the many elegant homes fairly overhanging the steep cliff, at the top of which the city lies.

The greatest drawback to its speedy growth seems to be the exceeding shallowness of the water, for some distance, at the base of the hill. To be sure it was low tide, but even in our small boat, the cutter, we had difficulty in pulling up to the boathouse and landing at the foot of the cliff, right above which was situated the Tacoma Hotel. Half of the time it was dragged by main force over the slimy, muddy bottom, by the sturdy arms of our strong crew, almost breaking the oars in their exertions.

Wharves extended in every direction besides numbers of parallel lines of spiles, which, we were told, were where visionary people had staked out claims, sanguine that in the near future this would all be filled in, and the land valuable, being on the waterfront.

A steam-dummy pulls a car out the greatest length of the city and back every twenty minutes, for ten cents.

A few hours from Tacoma, after a beautiful sail between the picturesque shores of the Sound, found us at Seattle. At every few miles we saw on the banks, near the water's edge, tents, sawmills and lone farm-houses. Now and then canoes full of Indians, in bright array, paddling quietly along,

with a background of the green, red and gold, with deep blue and brown shadows, in the transparent water a double world of color and beauty.

Among the characteristic features of all the towns we visited on the Sound, Tacoma, Olympia, Seattle, and Port Townsend, were the numbers of Indians promenading the streets, perfectly at home, and meeting you at every turn, or else squatting in rows along the inside of the sidewalks, or huddled together on a doorstep; stalwart, long-haired, smooth-faced Indian men; bare-headed and bare-footed women, with bright blankets and basket-work to sell, in the midst of the hubbub of a city.



## CHAPTER XXXV.

### SEATTLE AND HOME AGAIN.

SEATTLE! WHAT VISIONS of rain, mud, slush and general discomfort the name suggests. beside blocks and blocks of tents and rough wooden structures, stories and half-stories of brick buildings just going up, twisted iron rods, blackened timbers, half-burnt treacherous wooden sidewalks, over which one constantly stumbled. Crowds of busy men hurrying hither and thither, whose umbrellas kept hooking onto or into everybody and everything, under the low overhanging awnings, hastily put up.

Trafficking was going on as busily as ever in the canvas-tent stores ; where piled up to the top were stacks upon stacks of dry-goods, seemingly none the worse for the constant rain, rain, rain, on the almost transparent roofs.

The sound of the hammer mingled loudly with the other busy sounds, such as the driving to and fro of heavy carts, the constant whirr of the cable, and buzz, buzz, buzz of human voices, in this human hive of human bees, improving every hour, whether shiny or not.

We found at Seattle various lines of cable-cars, and an electric road, the only one I had seen, which proved a success. These all ran several miles in

different directions, one connecting the city with that beautiful sheet of water, Lake Washington, on the shores of which there was some discussion as to its being a suitable place to establish the navy yard, if only connected with the Sound by a canal, its waters being deep enough to float the largest ships. However, the scheme was abandoned, and Port Orchard recommended in its place.

Queen Anne Town was reached by the electric railway. The name probably arose from the style of the pretty houses at the end of the line, built after the Queen Anne style.

Seattle, with its deep water and long line of wharves and greater accessibility, seemed more certain of growth and prosperity than any of the other places we visited on the Sound. Soon all signs of the mighty fire will be obliterated, and larger, finer buildings take the place of the old.

Coaling ship took but a short time, the coal being shot down from above through chutes on to the deck by the carload, and busily shoveled into the bunkers. After the water had also been taken aboard we left for Port Townsend, arriving there that evening at dark.

We found the United States steamer *Pinta* there, en route from San Francisco to Sitka, at the latter of which places she is stationed. She had been at Mare Island Navy Yard all summer undergoing repairs. She was at Port Townsend awaiting the *Patterson*, whose pilot for the inside passage they



expected to take. The *Patterson* had been doing coast survey work on different parts of the inside passage, and was then also bound for San Francisco. During the day after we arrived she steamed into port. The following morning, October 10th, we took our several ways, the *Pinta* towards the north, the *Patterson* and the *Rush* to the "so'thard," and San Francisco.

The barometer was high, and we had all the indications of fine weather, besides the satisfactory reflection that in October we were apt to have the finest weather of the year for a trip down the coast. We were not disappointed. There was quite a heavy swell at first, all that remained to remind us of our recent stormy experience when last at sea, a few days previous, but the sky was blue and fair, with a light breeze.

The breeze increased little by little, but added nothing to our speed till the day before we arrived in San Francisco. That day, with all sails set and a fair wind, we fairly flew (for the *Rush*) through the water, increasing our speed hourly, till by night we made twelve knots an hour. This was better time than we had before made during the summer, except when chasing the sealers. It seemed as if the good ship knew she was nearing her accustomed anchorage. Point Reyes flashed out clear and bright at about seven o'clock, at which sight we involuntarily smiled at the thought that crossed our minds of home and dear ones now so near, after

our long and adventurous trip. Four hours after we dropped anchor in front of the city, on the beautiful moonlit night of October 13, '89, at least twelve hours sooner than we had anticipated the day before.

It was estimated the *Rush* had steamed during the summer the long distance of over eleven thousand miles.

San Francisco seemed to be illuminated especially for us, it looked so aglow with lights spreading far and wide over the hills. The harbor was dotted everywhere with ships, just visible in the dim light, by the twinkling of the lamps at their mast-heads.

It was not yet too late to catch the last ferry-boat from Oakland. and the officers whose families lived there rushed hurriedly and excitedly away, anxious to reach home as soon as possible.

I breathed a sigh of satisfaction on looking around to think my journey safely over at last, feeling the richer for all the new, strange and beautiful sights I had seen and novel experiences I had had.

It was, however, with feelings of regret that the next morning I packed my trunk and bid adieu to my shipmates of four and a half months, and the free, untrammelled life I had led during that time, returning again to the conventionalities of the life of a city.

\* \* \* \* \*

Thus ended the cruise of the *Rush* in the summer of '89.

FINIS.