

ton Territory, the southern part of the inland passage: "Washington Territory possesses a great multitude of harbors, perhaps more than any other country of equal extent on the globe. Puget sound, which has an average width of two miles, never less than one nor more than four, and a depth never less than eight fathoms, runs one hundred miles inland in a southward direction from the Straits of Fuca, and Hood's canal, twelve miles farther west, with half the width, runs in the same general direction about sixty miles. These two great estuaries, or arms of tide water, have depth sufficient for the largest vessels, and numerous bends and corners, where the most perfect protection may be found against the winds." Captain Wilkes, in the report of his famous exploring expedition, writes of Puget sound: "I venture nothing in saying there is no other country in the world that possesses waters equal to these." The Coast range and Cascade range of mountains are plainly visible from the sound. Near the Columbia river, the Coast range is not very high, but west of Hood's canal it rises, in abrupt, beetling ridges, seven to nine thousand feet high, called the Olympian mountains, many of the peaks being snow-crowned throughout the year. The Cascade range fairly bristles with snow-clad peaks, from eight thousand to over fourteen thousand feet in height, and in every direction, almost, may be seen the grandest Alpine scenery in the distance. The difficult thing for the tourist to do in regard to Alaska, is to describe for the general reader what is seen. Everything is on such an immense and massive scale, that words are diminutives for expression, rather than—as travelers have been credited with using them—for exaggerated descriptions. For example, people cross the continent to gail for an hour or two among the Thousand Islands of the St. Lawrence, and word-painting has been exhausted in exultation of their beauties. But here is a thousand miles of islands, ranging in size from an acre to the proportions of a state, covered with evergreen forests of tropical luxuriance, yet so arctic in character as to be new to the eye, and in regard to which botanical nomenclature but confuses and dissatisfies. And in all this vast extent of mountain scenery, with summits ranging from one thousand to fifteen thousand feet in height, there is not enough level land visible to aggregate one prairie county in Western Missouri or Kansas. Day after day there is a continuous, unbroken chain of mountain scenery. I can not better impress the character of the landscape, as seen from the vessel's deck, than to ask the reader to imagine the parks, valleys, canyons, gorges and depressions of the Rocky mountains to be filled with water to the base of the snowy range, and then take a sail through them from Santa Fe to the northern boundary of Montana. Just about what could be seen on such an imaginary voyage, is actually passed through in the sail now completed by our party of enthusiastic tourists for the past ten days. You may divide the scenery into parts by the days, and just as it was successively passed through, and any one of the subdivisions will furnish more grand combination of mountain and sea than can be seen anywhere on the globe. It is this vast profusion of mountain scenery, this daily and hourly unrolling of the panorama, that overwhelms and confuses the observer. It is too great to be separated into details, and everything is platted on such a gigantic scale that all former experiences are dwarfed, and the imagination rejects the adjectives that have heretofore served for other scenes. To employ them here is only to mislead. As one gentleman, a veteran traveler, remarked to me, as we were looking north at the entrance to Glacier bay, with the St. Elias Alps in full view, and Mounts Crillon and Fairweather overtopping the snow-covered peaks of that remarkable range: "You can take just what we see here, and put it down on Switz-

land, and it will hide all there is of mountain scenery in Europe." Then he added: "I have been all over the world, but you are now looking at a scene that has not its parallel elsewhere on the globe." I cite this incident, as it is more descriptive and gives a better idea of contrast than anything of my own could do, giving, as it does, to the reader, a conception of the vastness and immensity of the topographical aspect of the shores of these inland seas. FREDERICK SCHWATKA.

OVER THE SWITCHBACK.—The Northern Pacific train, upon which I was journeying, reached St. Paul February 14th, six hours late. The delay was caused by an old-fashioned Dakota blizzard, which fell with relentless fury, soon after the train entered that inhospitable territory. The mercury, while it did not fall so low as upon former occasions, reached thirty-two degrees below zero; and the cold wind which moaned and whistled around the train, prevented the engine from "steaming" rapidly, and of course, delayed our progress. Little snow was encountered until Minnesota was reached. Here the whole face of Nature wore a covering of white, to the depth of two feet, and the fences were almost hidden. The railroad track, however, was kept clear, and had not the elements conspired against us, we would have arrived at St. Paul on time. I wish, here, to say a deservedly good word for the train service of the Northern Pacific. The managers of this popular transcontinental route seem to have selected their train men with a special view to their gentlemanly qualities, and I can heartily testify to the many kind attentions bestowed upon the passengers in their charge. Leaving St. Paul, I went east over the "Royal Route," that splendid thoroughfare of travel between Chicago and the West, and over which T. W. Teasdale, Esq., has a fostering care as its general passenger and ticket agent. I shall ask the reader to go back with me to the Cascade division of the Northern Pacific, and together we will cross the Cascade mountains, over the switchback, and as we scale the dizzy heights, seated in a comfortable car, contemplate with wonder the great power of man to overcome seeming impossibilities. Our train left Tacoma early on the morning of February 10th, and taking its course through the fertile hop fields of Puyallup valley, soon commenced the ascent of the mountains. The engine pulled us along with labored groans, sending up great clouds of smoke, which formed into rolling, black rings, small at first, but enlarging as they rose, until the circle broke, and the vaporized carbon once more returned to Mother Earth. The railroad crosses the mountains through what is known as the Stampede pass, a succession of deep gorges and canyons, down which course turbulent waters, forming Green and White rivers, and several smaller streams. Two of these—Boise and Sunday creeks—are small streamlets in summer, but at this season, the melting snow in the mountains has filled their banks with clear, sparkling water, which rolls and tumbles over the rocks and precipices in its eager haste to reach the sea. The road follows up White river for several miles, crossing and recrossing it many times, until Green river is reached; it then takes the course of this river. Seven miles west of Green river station, the road enters Eagle gorge, a narrow defile through which the river has forced a channel for itself. A roadway of sufficient width to accommodate the track has been cut in the side of the precipitous bluff, over which, in a zig-zag manner, the train speeds along; not very rapidly, however, as the curves are many and the grade is steep, being from one to two hundred feet to the mile. A dense forest of fir and pine covers the sides of the mountains, some of the trees attaining a height of three hundred feet, their branches piercing the lowering clouds which hang upon the mountain sides. Near