

Northwestern News and Information.

IN WESTERN ALASKA.—The *Alaskan* publishes the following from the notes of Governor Swineford while with the government cruiser *Thetis* in the western part of the territory last summer: "I was particularly desirous of calling at Green island, which is one of the group in the entrance of Chugach gulf, for the purpose of securing a mummy from one of the caves there for the national museum, but the absence of an experienced pilot made it impracticable to do so. In a cave, or caves, on the island mentioned, as also in those on the Four Mountain islands west of Ounalaska, I am told by those who have seen them, there are numerous corpses of a race of people believed to have inhabited these islands long anterior to the coming of those found here when the Russians first came. They are said, those in the Green island caves, to be closely and tightly wrapped in several thicknesses of fur skins, while those in the Four Mountain caves are simply clothed in dogskin parkas, a garment like a shirt, with a hole made in the upper part just large enough for the head to go through. They differ from any of the native people of the present day in that their hair and beards were red, and the skins of their bodies black. Who and what these people were, and whence they came, is a question which will probably never be solved. A cattle and sheep ranch has been started on Long island, which lies a few miles to the eastward from St. Pauls, and also a fox ranch, with the intention of breeding the valuable silver gray, the pelts of which are worth all the way from \$40.00 to \$100.00 in the market. Thursday morning, June 7th, we bade good-bye to St. Pauls and steamed away for Cook's inlet, which we entered while it was yet daylight. We encountered, during the day, a large number of whales, principally finbacks, which are not of sufficient value for either oil or bone to be sought. One of these was being chased by a thrasher, the whale evidently making frantic endeavors to elude his small but persistent enemy. The thrasher, which is a large species of the shark family, would, whenever the whale came up to blow, raise nearly his whole length perpendicularly out of the water, poising himself, as it were, for an instant on his caudal fins, and then throw himself bodily and with great force upon the monster's head, whereupon the whale would go down, lashing the water into foam with his enormous tail. The fight was kept up till both were out of sight, though I must say it appeared to be all fight on the one side and a desperate attempt to escape on the other. I have since been told by old whalers that such fights are of frequent occurrence, the sword-fish assisting the thrasher and making his attack from below, thus driving the whale back to the surface whenever he attempts to go down, thereby preventing his escape. It is claimed that when thus attacked the whale, if not killed outright, is certain to be blinded and driven into shallow water, where he runs aground and is certain to die before released by the rising tide. To the thrasher and sword-fish the natives of this northwestern coast owe a large part of their subsistence. The tides in Cook's inlet are, perhaps, more rapid and violent than at any other point on the Pacific coast, frequently running at the rate of eight to ten miles an hour, with an average rise and fall of twenty-five to twenty-eight feet. The flood rolls in one vast volume and with a thundering noise, carrying everything before it, increasing in speed and violence as the shores approach nearer to each other. As

a consequence, the tidal currents are very dangerous, rendered none the less so by the existence of numerous conically-shaped rocks rising from the bottom uncomfortably close to the surface, and which in themselves render the navigation of its waters more or less perilous. The distance from the entrance to the head of the inlet is very nearly two hundred miles, but in the absence of surveys its navigation beyond Kenai, the most northerly point on its shores reached by the *Thetis*, is altogether too dangerous to be lightly attempted by vessels of deep draft. During the evening we passed in plain sight of Cherna-boura volcano, which I failed to see on our way up the inlet. This volcano appears on the government charts as Augustin island, and is situated on the west side of the inlet about fifty miles from the entrance. It is about twenty-five miles in circumference at the base, and low on the sea side, whence it rises in regular, though steep, ascent into a lofty conical mountain, presenting nearly the same appearance from every point of view, and clothed with perpetual snow and ice down to the water's edge. A few years ago this isolated peak, without warning, broke out into violent eruption, with a thundering sound and a rumbling and shaking of the earth which frightened the natives for hundreds of miles in every direction. For a time it vomited forth a great shower of ashes, which fell upon and covered the ground miles away to a depth of several inches, finally settling down to a steady emission of flame and smoke, lasting for a period of a year or more. Now it emits a thin, vapory smoke only, which could be seen rising in considerable volume from its peak as we passed along, though at no time did we approach nearer than thirty miles to it. That night I remained up till 1:00 o'clock, to see for myself how much darkness there might be on a June night in the latitude of sixty degrees north. I found that I could see to read ordinary print quite readily at half past twelve, and that at one o'clock there was perfect daylight, so that there was no absolute darkness, only a little deeper shade of twilight between twelve and one than that which prevailed in the hours immediately following sunset. The next morning on rising we found ourselves in Shelikoff straits, which lie between the islands of Kodiak and Afognak and the Alaska peninsula, and for a hundred miles we steamed along through mountain scenery inconceivably grand and awe-inspiring. My feeble pen may not attempt a word picture of scenery such as that which encloses this wide strait; it failed to give an adequate description of the St. Elias Alps, and in this case it will not attempt to portray that which is beyond the skill of artist, and in depicting which even the most fervent imagination may not charge itself with exaggeration. It is simply grand and beautiful beyond the power of pen to describe. It must be seen to be appreciated."

THE UNION PACIFIC'S MOVEMENTS.—The Union Pacific company appears to be preparing for important extensions of its lines in the west, as was noted in the December number. Thus far the Union Pacific in its own name has not reached far this side of the Rockies, the only instance where it has pushed fairly through those mountains being its line to Ogden, in Utah. The Utah & Northern, from Ogden northward in Idaho and Montana and the Oregon Short Line from Granger, in Wyoming, to Huntington, Oregon, are two important roads which