

the United States than all the commerce with what is called the East, and in two years there had been added to the national wealth, from this source alone, more than eight million dollars."

With reference to the minerals, Sir John Richardson says: "I have little doubt of many of the accessible districts abounding in metallic wealth of far greater value than all the returns which the fur trade can ever yield." In fact, the whole of the Mackenzie River Valley—and from that testimony we can equally judge of the other localities west—is a mass of minerals, the banks of the river being composed of deep beds of bituminous shale associated with alum and beds of iron clay. The soil is, in parts, actually plastic with the transfusion of mineral tar. Mr. Isbister often drove a pole into one of the natural pits in which it occurs, ten feet deep without finding any bottom. The river itself is of great depth, and will admit vessels of the largest class.

On some of the newly-discovered islands, northward, the natives were found to have all their implements made of copper, their spears and arrows barbed with the same, the ore being remarkably fine.

At the south-east corner of Norton Sound, upon a peninsula, is situated Fort St. Michael, or Michaelowski, a principal Russian port, and several other ports are on the Kvihpak, the Darabin, and along the coast.

The northern part of the territory, about the coast, is low and full of small lakes or pools of fresh water to a distance of about fifty miles from the shore, where the surface becomes undulating and hilly, and, further south, mountainous. The level part is a peat-like soil covered with moss and tufted grass, interspersed with brushwood, perfectly free from rocks and stones, and only a little gravel is occasionally seen in the beds of rivers. The bones of the fossil elephant and other animals are found in many localities, particularly in Escholtz Bay.

The land is intersected by several rivers which frequently unite, or so connect by channels, that large boats can go from bay to bay without risking the sea pass-

age. Four of the largest of these rivers take their rise far to the south-east, in a mountainous country, inhabited by the Indians. The most northerly is the Kang'e-a-nok, which, after receiving on its right bank two tributaries, flows northward, and, at about one hundred miles from the sea, divides into two streams, the one known as the Colville, which is two miles wide at its mouth, and the other as the Tu-tu-a'-ling, or Kok. This latter flows through the level country nearly due west into Wainwright Inlet, ninety miles south-west of Point Barrow.

The Mu-na-tak is the next large river, and has its source close to that of the Colville, going to the west, direct through the country until, with a curve, it falls into Hotham Inlet, Kotzebue Sound. By the natives, it is considered their most important river, as boats can ascend it and be transported across the intervening land to the Colville in two days.

The river Ko'-wak is next in size and importance, and is prized for a few mineral substances procured in its neighborhood. The Si'-la-wik comes next, and empties into a large lake which communicates with the eastern extreme of Hotham Inlet. This lake is twenty-five miles in length from east to west, and fifteen in breadth from north to south, of an irregular oval form.

Large pine-trees border these rivers in many parts, especially at their embouchures. Some that were measured had a girth of sixty inches at not less than six feet from the ground.

There are many settlements of natives at, or near these rivers, and along the coast; but the principal are at Point Barrow, Cape Smyth, Point Hope, and Cape Prince of Wales. This latter, or close to it, at King-ing, or King-a-ghee, is the great trading-place with the Asiatic or Tehoutki tribes who, after midsummer, cross the straits in boats from East Cape to the Diomed Islands, and thence to the Cape. From there, after trading with the people belonging to the Southern Districts, the boats proceed along the shore of Kotzebue Sound until the high land near Cape Krusenstern comes into view,