

there every year for the trading-posts and missions on the river. During the months at the opening and closing of the season of navigation, St. Michael's presents an air of bustle and business activity not found at any other of the frontier Alaskan towns.

A new company, the North American Transportation and Trading Company, is making arrangements to build warehouses and a trading-post about a mile south of the former town. This company has established trading quarters at Fort Cudahy, near where the international boundary crosses the Yukon. As might be expected, the life artery of this western division is the river from which it takes its name, which has served as the highway of nations and tribes for many centuries, long before the white man, with his improved means of transport, accomplished the feat, marvellous in their eyes, of traversing in one brief season the distance from its deltoid mouth to the Hudson Bay Fort at the junction of the Yukon and Porcupine rivers.

The natives inhabiting the banks of the great river belong to two tribes. The Indians of the interior, of the Athabaskan stock, occupy the banks of the Yukon and its tributaries eastward of the Anvik river. These are called Ingalits. The hardy Eskimo, or Innuits, on the other hand, live along the coast of Norton Sound and on the lower Yukon and the Kuskokwim delta. At an early period, the Eskimo advanced across the divide between the great river and the sea, and followed its course up nearly to Nulato, settling along the banks of the Chageluk river; but they were not allowed to hold peaceable possession, for the Ingalits rallied from all directions and drove the intruders back, far down the river. From time to time the Eskimo advanced again, and many are the traditional tales of bloody battles and years of war between the tribes. The result is that no Eskimo will ascend beyond the mouth of the Anvik, at the present time, nor will an Ingalit descend beyond that point unless accompanied by white men.

When passing up or down the river during the busy season—that is, the brief summer—the traveller would form an incorrect estimate of the population were he to base it on the number of those living on the banks of the river, for he would find, were he to make a short excursion into the almost impenetrable forests and over the hills and mountains, that along the river only exist the conditions necessary for life throughout the year. The small rivulets of the interior, and the vast swampy plains, covered with snow for seven or eight months of the year, are only visited by the trapper, when the skins of the marten, mink, and musk-rat are in their prime. Along the upper reaches of the Yukon and the Tanana the inhabitants are less dependent upon the river, and fish and game are more abundant.

A recent writer says:—"For hundreds of miles from the sea the Yukon flows through low, level tundras, or mossy morasses, resting upon a foundation of clay. The shifting current of the river eats away the shores on either side with astonishing rapidity; the dull thud of caving banks is constantly heard by the traveller. Stepping upon the shore the explorer must jump from hummock to hummock, or wade around from knee to waist deep. In many places the ice never disappears within