

the rapid there is a swift current; not swift enough, however, to prevent the ascent of a steamboat of moderate power; and the rapids themselves I do not think would present any serious obstacle to the ascent of a good boat. In very high water warping might be required.

Nothing whatever was seen here of the "hundreds of gulls," which have their breeding grounds on these rocky points, noticed by Schwatka. These, as well as the "dense swarms of the omnipresent mosquito," were conspicuous by their absence.

With regard to the mosquitoes on the Yukon, Lieut. Schwatka has expressed his mind freely. He says:—

"The mosquitoes were now (5th July) thick beyond anything I have ever seen. As we crossed boggy places, or the marshy rims of the numerous inland lakes, they rose in dense swarms. Hunting, the only object one could have in inland excursions, became impossible on account of these insects; their stings could not be endured, and in looking through such swarms, it was not possible to take sure sight at the game.

* * * I believe this part of the Yukon country (foot of the Canon) to be scarcely habitable in the summer, on account of these pests, and think their numbers sufficient reason for the complete absence of game during that part of the year. On the lower river, beyond Fort Yukon, their numbers appreciably decrease.

* * * It is not until the first severe frost comes—about the first of September—that this annoyance is abated completely."

I passed the Cañon less than three weeks later in July than Lieut. Schwatka, but saw very few mosquitoes there; and even as far as the boundary, though a few were seen here and there, we certainly suffered no inconvenience whatever from them.

I believe the exact reverse of what is stated above with reference to the decrease of mosquitoes below Fort Yukon, to be the case. Below Fort Yukon the country along the river becomes flat, and great areas of tundra, or frozen morass, occur. These tundra becoming soaked with summer rains, which can only penetrate to a depth of a few inches, become regular swamps, the natural breeding-grounds for all kinds of insect life; so that if mosquitoes abound on any part of the

river, it would be natural to suppose that it would be in the vicinity of the tundra lands. As I did not go below the boundary, however, I can only speak with certainty of the upper part of the river. Practically speaking, there were, when I passed, no mosquitoes there. There is an operation, known in French cookery as *farcing*, commonly practised by small school-boys upon credulous companions, and capable of furnishing much mild amusement when indulged in to a limited extent. I have found the miners of the Yukon to be particularly fond of this amusement; and this may account for the highly colored stories of Esquimo dogs, and even of bears, having been killed by mosquitoes, which were gravely related to the gallant lieutenant by these accomplished *farceurs*.

After getting a couple of snap-shots at the rapids, we ran through and camped for dinner on a little shelving point on the east bank.

About a mile and a half below our camping-place, a small, dark-colored stream, the Tatshun, enters the river from the east. To this spot I directed the basemen, after dinner, to proceed. As they neared the point, I took up my station at the telescope, and was idly watching them, when a sight met my view that sent the blood in an instant tingling through my veins with excitement. The canoe was within a few yards of the shore, when suddenly, as if by magic, the bank above became literally alive with Indians. Shouting, gesticulating wildly, and flourishing their arms about, they came charging furiously down the sloping side of the river.

Now we had not seen an Indian for three hundred miles, and, indeed, with the exception of a solitary one near the mouth of the Tahk-heena, and the few miserable Tagish encountered at the Teslin-too, we had seen none since we entered the country. Our apprehensions of trouble had gradually subsided the farther we advanced; but