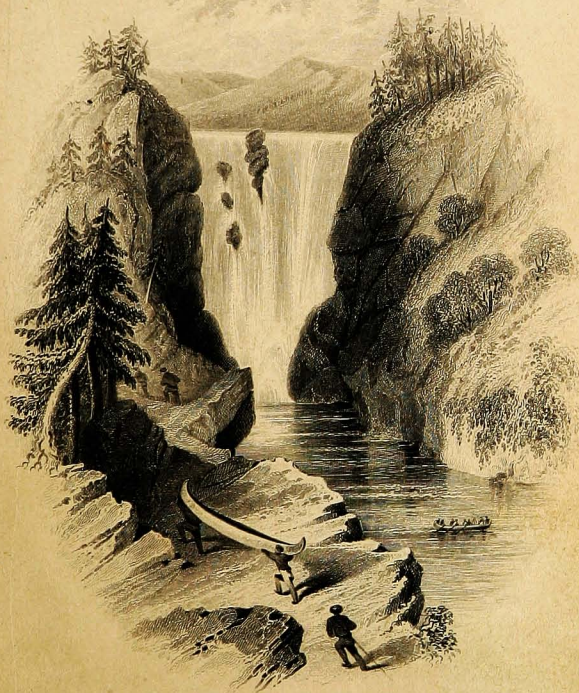


Northern Coasts of America
and the
Hudson's Bay Company's
Territories



KAKABEKA OR MOUNTAIN FALL

Page 266

T. NELSON AND SONS. LONDON AND EDINBURGH.

THE
NORTHERN COASTS OF AMERICA,

AND
THE HUDSON'S BAY TERRITORIES.

By Patrick Fraser Tytler, Esq.

WITH CONTINUATION, BY R. M. BALLANTYNE,
AUTHOR OF "HUDSON'S BAY; OR, EVERY-DAY LIFE IN THE WILDS OF
NORTH AMERICA."

London:
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MDCCLIV.

P R E F A C E.

THE progress of Discovery has ever been regarded with the deepest interest by mankind. Whether viewed with reference to its bearing upon the commercial interests of nations, its valuable additions to the acquisitions of science, or regarded as bringing to light many of the hidden wonders with which the Great and Good Creator has so plentifully stored our world, it is fraught with interest and instruction. Among the various Expeditions of Discovery by land and sea, none have claimed our attention or enlisted our sympathies more powerfully than those into the Arctic Regions. Nowhere has the navigator to contend with difficulties so formidable; nowhere is nature presented more vividly under so terrific and beautiful an aspect—now howling in the fury of elemental strife, and anon reposing in all the fairy-like brilliancy peculiar to the icy oceans of the north; and nowhere has been more strikingly exemplified at once the power and the impotency of man. In the volume of this series entitled *POLAR SEAS AND REGIONS*, full and interesting details are given of the

various expeditions by *sea* to these frozen regions. But before we could be said to have obtained a complete view of the efforts made to explore the extreme north by the nations of Europe, there remained to be completed another branch of adventure, equally arduous, and more varied in character. We allude to the expeditions undertaken, partly by land and partly by lake and river navigation, to trace the Northern Coasts of America. This desideratum the present volume will supply, and in combination with the work alluded to, will be found to give a complete account of the whole series of Northern Discoveries by land and water, from the earliest period down to the present time.

The beautiful and romantic scenery through which the successive adventurers passed, the wild uncultivated natives with whom they came into contact, the manifold dangers they encountered among the lakes and foaming cataracts, and the stirring rencontres they frequently had with the ferocious animals that inhabit the North American wilderness, form a large portion of the following pages.

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drawn by W. Johnson, Jan. Surveyor

PROGRESS OF DISCOVERY

ON THE

NORTHERN COASTS OF AMERICA.

CHAPTER I.

Discovery of North America—Early Voyages of the Portuguese, French, and Spaniards.

First Discovery of North America by John Cabot—Voyages of Sebastian Cabot—Of the Cortereals—Discovery of Labrador—French Discoveries—Voyages of Verazzano—Of Jacques Cartier—Discovery of Canada—Spanish Voyages of Discovery—Cortes—Ulloa—Alarchon—Viscaino.

WHEN we peruse the lives of such men as De Gama and Columbus, and consider the complicated difficulties overcome by these early navigators, their imperfect means, and the dark and defective state of their knowledge, it is difficult to repress astonishment at the success which attended their exertions, and the magnitude and splendour of their discoveries. In reflecting, indeed, upon so great a theme as the revelation of a new world, it becomes us to raise our minds from the region of second causes to the awful contemplation of that Almighty Being, who confounds the calculations of man by bringing stupendous results out of the feeblest human preparations; and it is one of the finest features in the character of Columbus, that he invariably

acted under the conviction of being selected by God for the task which he at length accomplished; but the admiration with which we regard this great man—and that belongs, though in an inferior degree, to many of his contemporaries in the field of discovery—is enhanced rather than diminished by this union of simple and primitive faith with ardent genius and undaunted resolution.

A former volume* has been devoted to the description of the daring efforts which have been made to explore the Polar Seas; and we now proceed to direct our attention to another, and a no less interesting and important chapter in the history of human enterprise—the discovery of North America, and the progress of maritime adventure on the more northern coasts of this vast continent. Without detracting in any degree from the fame of Columbus, it may be mentioned as a remarkable circumstance, that although the admiral landed in Hispaniola as early as the 4th of February 1493, he did not ascertain the existence of the continent of South America till the 30th of May 1498; whilst there is certain evidence that, almost a year before, an English vessel had reached the shores of North America. As much obscurity hangs over the circumstances of this early voyage, and as I have arrived at a conclusion completely at variance with that adopted by a late acute writer,† it will be necessary to dwell with some minuteness on the history of this great event.

* Discovery and Adventure in the Polar Seas and Regions, by Sir John Leslie, &c. London, 1853.

† The author of the *Memoir of Sebastian Cabot*, pp. 50, 51, an anonymous work (London, 1831), which contains much ingenious criticism and valuable research. It is, however, unhappily confused in its arrangement, and written throughout in a tone of asperity which, in the discussion of a subject of remote biography, is unpleasant and uncalled for. The author has been unjustly severe in his animadversions on the labours of Hakluyt, of whom a brief Vindication will be found at the end of this volume.

The attention paid to navigation by the commercial states of Italy, and especially by the republics of Genoa and Venice, is familiar to all acquainted with the history of Europe during the fifteenth century. Italian merchants and agents of opulent commercial houses were found settled in every European state; and the impetus communicated to the human mind by the discoveries of the Portuguese and the Spaniards rendered the sciences of cosmography and navigation the most popular subjects of instruction which were taught in the schools. A devotion to them became fashionable among the noble and ardent youths, who associated with them all that was romantic and delightful; they were considered as the certain guides to daring and successful maritime adventure, and the handmaids to wealth and fame. It was about this momentous period, in the year 1494, that we find a Venetian, named John Cabot, or Gabota, residing in the opulent city of Bristol. At what precise time he settled in England is not now discoverable; we only know that he left Italy for the purpose of devoting himself to the mercantile profession. He was one of those enthusiastic spirits upon whom the career of Columbus made a deep impression; and about a year after the return of the great Genoese from his first voyage, the merchant of Bristol appears to have embraced the idea that new lands might be discovered in the north-west, and a passage in all probability attained by this course to India.* Animated by such a project, Cabot addressed himself to Henry VII., and found immediate encouragement from that monarch, who, though of a cold and cautious disposition, was seldom slow to listen to any proposal which promised an increase of wealth to his exchequer. On the 5th of March 1495, the king granted his royal commission

* Tiraboschi, *Storia della Letter. Ital.*, vol. vi. b. i. cap. vi. § 24.

to John Cabot, citizen of Venice, and his sons, Louis, Sebastian, and Sanchez, committing to him and them, and to their heirs and deputies, full authority to sail to all countries and seas of the East, West, and North, under the banner of England, with five ships of whatever burden and strength in mariners they might choose to employ. The equipment of this squadron was cautiously stipulated to be made "at their own proper costs and charges;" and its object stated to be the discovery of the isles, regions, and provinces of the Heathen and Infidels, which hitherto had been unknown to all the nations of Christendom, in whatever part of the globe they might be placed. By the same deed the Cabots were empowered to set up the banners and ensigns of England in the newly discovered countries; to subdue and possess them as lieutenants of the king; and to enjoy the privilege of exclusive trade;—the wary monarch, however, annexing to these privileges the condition, that he was to receive the fifth part of the capital gain upon every voyage, and binding their ships to return to the port of Bristol.*

Two important facts are ascertained by this authentic document. It proves that John Cabot, a citizen of Venice, was the principal author of, and adventurer in, the project; and that no voyage with a similar object had been undertaken prior to the 5th of March 1495.

The expedition, however, did not sail till the spring of 1497, more than a twelvemonth subsequent to the date of the original commission. What occasioned this delay it is now difficult to determine; but, as the fleet was to be equipped at the sole expense of the adventurers, it is not improbable that Cabot had required the interval to raise the necessary capital. It is much to be regretted that in no

* I have nearly followed the words of this important document, which is still preserved. Rymer, *Fœdera Aneliæ*. vol. xii. p. 595

contemporary chronicle is there any detailed account of the voyage. We know, however, that it was conducted by John Cabot in person, who took with him his son Sebastian, then a very young man. Its result was undoubtedly the discovery of North America; and although the particulars of this great event are lost, its exact date has been recorded by an unexceptionable witness, not only to a day, but even to an hour. On an ancient map, drawn by Sebastian Cabot, the son, whose name appears in the commission by the king, engraved by Clement Adams, a contemporary, and published, as there is reason to believe, under the eye of Sebastian, was written in Latin, the following brief but clear and satisfactory account of the discovery:—"In the year of our Lord 1497, John Cabot, a Venetian, and his son Sebastian, discovered that country, which no one before his time had ventured to approach, on the 24th of June, about five o'clock in the morning. He called the land *Terra Primum Visa*, because, as I conjecture, this was the place that first met his eyes in looking from the sea. On the contrary, the island which lies opposite the land he called the Island of St. John—as I suppose, because it was discovered on the festival of St. John the Baptist. The inhabitants wear beasts' skins and the intestines of animals for clothing, esteeming them as highly as we do our most precious garments. In war their weapons are the bow and arrow, spears, darts, slings, and wooden clubs. The country is sterile and uncultivated, producing no fruit; from which circumstance it happens that it is crowded with white bears, and stags of an unusual height and size. It yields plenty of fish, and these very large; such as seals and salmon: there are soles also above an ell in length; but especially great abundance of that kind of fish called in the vulgar tongue *Baccalaos*. In the same island, also, breed hawks, so black in their colour that they wonderfully

resemble ravens; besides which, there are partridges and eagles of dark plumage." *

Such is the notice of the discovery of North America; and as some doubt has lately been thrown upon the subject, it may be remarked that the evidence of the fact contained in this inscription is perfectly unexceptionable. It comes from Clement Adams, the intimate friend of Richard Chancellor; and Chancellor lived, as is well known, in habits of daily intercourse with Sebastian Cabot, who accompanied his father on the first voyage of discovery. Unfortunately, both the original map and the engraving are lost; but happily Purchas has preserved the information, that the engraved map by Adams bore the date of 1549; † at which time Sebastian Cabot was in such great reputation at the court of Edward VI., that for his services he had received a princely pension. This young monarch, as we learn from Burnet, showed a peculiar fondness for maritime affairs. He possessed a collection of charts, which were hung up in his cabinet, and amongst them was the engraving of Cabot's map. The inscription, therefore, must have been seen there and elsewhere by Sebastian; and, when we consider that the date of the engraving corresponds with the time when he was in high favour with the king, it does not seem improbable that this navigator, to gratify his youthful and royal patron, employed Adams to engrave from his own chart the map of North America, and that the facts stated in the inscription were furnished by himself. The singular minuteness of its terms seems to prove this; for who but he, or some one personally present, after the lapse of fifty-two years, could have communicated the information that the discovery was made about five o'clock in the morning of the 24th June? If, however, this is questioned as being

* Hakluyt, vol. iii. p. 6.

† Purchas' Pilgrims, vol. iii. p. 807.

conjectural, the fact that Sebastian must have seen the inscription is sufficient to render the evidence perfectly conclusive upon the important point of John Cabot being the discoverer of North America. That he had along with him in his ship his son Sebastian, cannot, we think, in the opinion of any impartial person, detract from or infringe upon the merit of the father. But, to complete the proof, a late writer has availed himself of an imperfect extract from a record of the rolls, furnished by the industrious Hakluyt, to discover an original document which sets the matter altogether at rest. This is the second commission for discovery, granted by Henry VII. on the 3d of February, and in the thirteenth year of his reign, to the same individual who conducted the first expedition. The letters are directed to John Kabotto, Venetian, and permit him to sail with six ships "to the land and isles of late found by the said John in our name and by our commandment."* It presents a singular picture of the inability of an ingenious and otherwise acute mind to estimate the weight of historical evidence, when we find the biographer of Sebastian Cabot insisting, in the face of such a proof as this, that the glory of the first discovery of North America is solely due to Sebastian, and that it may actually be doubted whether his father accompanied the expedition at all.†

Immediately after the discovery, the elder Cabot appears to have returned to England; and on the 10th of August we find, in the privy purse expenses of Henry VII., the sum of ten pounds awarded to him who found the New Isle, which was probably the name then given to Newfoundland. Although much engrossed at this moment with the troubles which arose in his kingdom in consequence of the Cornish rebellion, the war with Scotland, and the

* Memoir of Sebastian Cabot, p. 76.

† Ibid. p. 50.

attempt upon the crown by Perkin Warbeck, the king determined to pursue the enterprise, and to encourage a scheme for colonization under the conduct of the original discoverer. To this enterprising navigator he, on the 3d of February 1497,* granted those second letters-patent just alluded to, which conferred an ampler authority and more favourable terms than the first commission. He empowered John Kabotto, Venetian, to take at his pleasure six English ships, with their necessary apparel, and to lead them to the land and isles lately found by him according to the royal command. Cabot was also permitted to receive on board all such masters, mariners, pages, and other subjects as chose to accompany him; and it seems probable, from some entries in the privy purse expenses, that Launcelot Thirkil of London, Thomas Bradley, and John Carter, embarked in the adventure.†

When about to set sail on his second voyage, John Cabot, who had previously received from Henry the honour of knighthood, appears, from some cause not now discoverable, to have been prevented from taking the command;‡ and though the name of Sebastian was not included in the second royal commission, he was promoted to the situation left vacant by his father. He must still, indeed, have been a young man; but he had accompanied the first voyage, and at an early age developed that genius for naval enterprise which afterwards so remarkably distinguished him. We know from his account of himself that, at the time his parents carried him from Venice to London, he had attained some

* Old style—1498, new style.

† See Mr. Nicholas' excellent collection entitled *Excerpta Historica*, pp. 116, 117.

‡ The cause might be his death, but this is conjecture; of the fact there is no direct proof: of the knighthood it is not possible to doubt. See, in the *Vindication of Hakluyt*, the remarks on the errors of the biographer of Cabot in his chapter on this subject.

knowledge of the sphere; and when about this period the great discovery of Columbus began to be talked of in England as a thing almost more divine than human, the effect of it upon his youthful imagination was to excite "a mighty longing," to use his own words, "and burning desire in his heart that he too should perform some illustrious action."* With such dispositions, we may easily imagine how rapid must have been his progress in naval science, with the benefit of his father's example and instructions. It is not matter of surprise, therefore, that though probably not more than twenty-three years old, the conduct of the enterprise was intrusted to him. He accordingly sailed from England with two ships in the summer of 1498, and directing his course by Iceland, soon reached Newfoundland, which he called Terra de Baccalaos, from the great quantity of fish of that name.

Of this remarkable voyage a short account is preserved by Peter Martyr, the historian of the New World, a writer of high authority, and so intimate a friend of the navigator, that, at the time he wrote the passage which we now give, Sebastian was in the habit of paying him frequent visits at his house: "These northern seas," says this writer, "have been navigated and explored by Sebastian Cabot, a Venetian by birth, whom his parents, when they were setting out to settle in Britain, according to the common custom of the Venetians, who for the sake of commercial adventure become citizens of every country, carried along with them when he was little more than an infant.† He fitted out two ships in England at his own charges, and first,

* Ramusio, *Viaggi*, vol. i. p. 414.

† Cabot was born in England, and carried by his father into Italy when four years old. He was afterwards brought back to England when a youth, "*assai giovane*."—Ramusio, vol. i. p. 414. *Memoir of Cabot*, p. 69.

with three hundred men, directed his course so far towards the North Pole, that even in the month of July he found great heaps of ice swimming in the sea, and almost continual daylight. Yet he saw the land free from ice, which had been melted by the heat of the sun. Thus observing such masses of ice before him, he was compelled to turn his sails and follow the west; and, coasting still by the shore, was brought so far into the south, by reason of the land bending much to the southward, that it was there almost equal in latitude with the sea called *Fretum Herculeum*. He sailed to the west till he had the Island of Cuba on his left hand, almost in the same longitude. As he passed along those coasts, called by him *Baccalaos*, he affirmed that he found the same current of the waters towards the west which the Spaniards met with in the southern navigations, with the single difference that they flowed more gently. From this circumstance it appears to me," says Martyr, "not only a probable, but an almost necessary conclusion, that there must exist, between both the continents hitherto unknown, great gaps or open places, through which the waters continually pass from the east to the west. * * * Sebastian Cabot himself named these lands *Baccalaos*, because in the seas thereabout he found such an immense multitude of large fish like tunnies, called *baccalaos* by the natives, that they actually impeded the sailing of his ships. He found also the inhabitants of these regions covered with beasts' skins, yet not without the use of reason. He also relates that there are plenty of bears in these parts, which feed upon fish. It is the practice of these animals to throw themselves into the midst of the shoals of fish, and, each seizing his prey, to bury their claws in the scales, drag them to land, and there devour them. On this account he says that these bears meddle little with men. * * * Cabot is my intimate

friend, and one whom it is my delight to have frequently under my roof; for, being called out of England by the command of the King of Castile after the death of Henry VII., he was made one of our council and assistants relating to the affairs of the new Indies; and he looks daily for ships to be fitted out for him, that he may discover this hidden secret of nature. I expect," concludes Peter Martyr, "that he will be able to set out on his voyage during the course of the next year, 1516, and in the month of March." * When it is known that Sebastian Cabot's second voyage-† from England to North America did not take place till 1517, it becomes certain that the above passage, written in 1515, must relate to the expedition of 1498; and remembering that the author was personally intimate with this navigator, and wrote only seventeen years after the voyage had taken place, we are inclined to set a high value on such an authority. It is deeply to be regretted that the original maps drawn by so eminent a discoverer, and the discourses with which he illustrated them, are now lost; ‡ but in this deficiency of original materials, the work of Ramusio—a collector of voyages who was a contemporary of Cabot—supplies some valuable information.

In the first volume of his *Voyages*, this amusing writer has introduced a discourse upon the different routes by which the spices of the East were conveyed in ancient times to Europe; and towards the conclusion of the essay he brings

* Peter Martyr, *De Orbe Novo*, 3d decad. cap. 6. Edition by Hakluyt, p. 232.—Eden's Translation in Willes' *Hist. of Travayle*, p. 125.—The hidden secret, or natural phenomenon, of which Cabot was expected to penetrate the cause, is stated by Martyr at p. 231. It was to resolve the question, "Why the seas in these parts run with so swift a current from the east to the west?"

† Although the son accompanied the father, I consider the voyage of 1497 as solely conducted by John Cabot.

‡ Memoir of Cabot, p. 41.

in a subject which then deeply occupied the attention of learned men—the project, namely, for discovering a passage to the kingdom of Cathay and the coasts of India, by the north-west. In the discussion of this point, Ramusio minutely describes a conversation which took place at the villa of the celebrated Italian physician and poet, Fracastoro, between Ramusio himself, Fracastoro, an architect named St. Michael, and a certain philosopher and mathematician, who gave them an account of an interview which he once had with Sebastian Cabot in the city of Seville. The whole passage is interesting, whether we look to the information regarding Cabot, or to the pleasing picture it brings before us of the great Fracastoro in his philosophic and classical retreat at Caphi. No apology, therefore, need be made for presenting it to the reader. “Having thus given you,” says the Italian writer, “all that I could extract from ancient and modern authors upon this subject, it would be inexcusable in me if I did not relate a high and admirable discourse, which, some few months ago, it was my good fortune to hear, in company with the excellent architect, Michael de St. Michael, in the sweet and romantic country-seat of Hieronymo Fracastoro, named Caphi, situated near Verona, whilst we sat on the top of a hill, commanding a view of the whole of the Lago di Garda. * * * Being then, as I said, at Caphi, where we had gone to visit our excellent friend Hieronymo, we found him on our arrival sitting in company with a certain gentleman, whose name, from motives of delicacy and respect, I conceal. He was, however, a profound philosopher and mathematician, and at that moment engaged in exhibiting to Fracastoro an instrument lately constructed to show a new motion of the heavens. Having reasoned upon this point for a long time, they, by way of recreation, caused a large globe, upon which the world was minutely

laid down, to be brought; and having this before him, the gentleman I have mentioned began to speak to the following purpose." Ramusio, after this introduction, gives us, as proceeding from the stranger, a great mass of geographical information, after which he introduces him discussing with Fracastoro the probability of a north-west passage to India. "At this point of his conversation," says he, "after the stranger had made a pause for a few moments, he turned to us and said,—‘Do you not know, regarding this project of going to India by the north-west, what was formerly achieved by your fellow-citizen the Venetian, a most extraordinary man, and so deeply conversant in everything connected with navigation and the science of cosmography, that in these days he hath not his equal in Spain, insomuch that for his ability he is preferred above all other pilots that sail to the West Indies, who may not pass thither without his license, on which account he is denominated *Piloto Mayor*, or *Grand Pilot*?’ When to this question we replied that we knew him not, the stranger proceeded to tell us, that being some years ago in the city of Seville, he was desirous to gain an acquaintance with the navigations of the Spaniards, when he learnt that there was in the city a valiant man, a Venetian born, named Sebastian Cabot, who had the charge of those things, being an expert man in the science of navigation, and one who could make charts for the sea with his own hand. ‘Upon this report of him,’ continued he, ‘I sought his acquaintance, and found him a pleasant and courteous person, who loaded me with kindness, and showed me many things; among the rest a large map of the world, with the navigations of the Portuguese and the Spaniards minutely laid down upon it; and in exhibiting this to me, he informed me that his father, many years ago, having left Venice and gone to settle as a merchant in England, had taken him to

London when he was still a youth; yet not so backward, but he had then acquired the knowledge of the Latin tongue, and some acquaintance with the sphere. It so happened, he said, that his father died at that time when the news arrived that Don Christopher Columbus had discovered the coast of the Indies, of which there was much talk at the court of Henry VII., who then reigned in England.'” The effect of this discovery upon Cabot's youthful ambition, which we have already alluded to, is next described by Ramusio from the report of the stranger, and he then proceeds in these remarkable words:—“ ‘Being aware,’ said Cabot to me, ‘that if I sailed with the wind bearing me in a north-westerly course, I should come to India by a shorter route, I suddenly imparted my ideas to the king, who was much pleased with them, and fitted out for me three caravels with all necessary stores and equipments. This,’ he added, ‘was in the beginning of the summer of the year 1496, and I began to sail towards the north-west with the idea that the first land I should make would be Cathay, from which I intended afterwards to direct my course to the Indies; but after the lapse of several days, having discovered it, I found that the coast ran towards the north, to my great disappointment. From thence sailing along it, to ascertain if I could find any gulf to run into, I could discover none; and thus having proceeded as far as 56° under the Pole, and seeing that here the coast trended towards the east, I despaired of discovering any passage, and after this turned back to examine the same coast in its direction towards the equinoctial—always with the same object of finding a passage to the Indies—and thus at last I reached the country at present named Florida, where, since my provisions began to fail me, I took the resolution of returning to England. On arriving in that country, I found great tumults, occasioned by the rising

of the common people and the war in Scotland; nor was there any more talk of a voyage to these parts. For this reason I departed into Spain to their most Catholic Majesties, Ferdinand and Isabella, who, having learnt what I had accomplished, received me into their service, provided for me handsomely, and despatched me on a voyage of discovery to the coast of Brazil, where I found an exceeding deep and mighty river, called at present La Plata, into which I sailed and explored its course into the continent more than six score leagues. * * * This,' continued the stranger gentleman, addressing himself to us, 'is the substance of all that I learnt from the Signor Sebastian Cabot.' ''*

Such is the passage from Ramusio; and from it we have another proof, that of this second voyage, which probably took place after the death of the original discoverer, Sebastian Cabot had the sole command; that its object was to find a north-west passage to India, and that the highest latitude which he reached was 56° . I am quite aware some of the statements in this extract are erroneous, and that Gomara, an author of good authority, carries Sebastian as far as 58° north;† but, considering the particular circumstances under which the information is conveyed, there is no reason to doubt that the general sketch of the voyage is correct; and it establishes the important fact, that as early as 1498, the coast of North America, from the latitude of 56° or 58° north to the coast of Florida, had been discovered by the English. The domestic affairs of Henry, however, and the involved political negotiations with France and the continent, undoubtedly prevented the king from holding out to Sebastian that encouragement with which so great a discovery ought to have been re-

* *Viaggi del Ramusio*, tom. i. pp. 413, 414.

† *Memoir of Cabot*, p. 87.

warded; and after an interval of fourteen years, of which we have no certain account, this great navigator left England and entered into the service of Spain.

The Portuguese, a nation to whose genius and perseverance the sister sciences of geography and navigation owe some of their highest triumphs, were at this period in the zenith of their fame, animated with an enthusiastic spirit of enterprise, and ready to consider every discovery not conducted by themselves as an encroachment upon their monopoly of maritime glory. Inspired with this jealousy, Gaspar de Cortereal, of whose expedition notice has already been taken in this Library,* determined to pursue the track of discovery opened by Cabot in the north-west, and in 1500, sailed with two ships from Lisbon, animated by the desire of exploring this supposed new route to India.† Cortereal touched at the Azores, where he completed his crews, and took in provisions. He then steered a course never, as far as he knew, traced by any former navigator, and came upon a country to which he gave the name of Terra Verde, but which is carefully to be distinguished from that called Greenland. This was in truth the coast of Labrador, denominated in an old map published at Rome in 1508, Terra Corterealis. It lay between the west and north-west; and, after having explored it for upwards of

* Discovery and Adventure in the Polar Seas, 3d edition, p. 184, and Lives and Voyages of Drake, Cavendish, and Dampier, p. 24.

† Cortereal had been educated in the household of the King of Portugal before he came to the throne, and when he still bore the title of Duke de Beja.—Damiano Goes, *Chronica del Rey Dom. Manuel*, c. 66, cap. 66, p. 187. His character, as given by this ancient and contemporary chronicler, is brief and forcible: “Gaspar de Cortereal, son of John Vaz Cortereal, was a man of an enterprising and determined character, ardently thirsting after glory; for which reason he proposed to set out on a voyage of discovery, seeking countries in northern latitudes, we (the Portuguese) having at this time discovered many in southern parts.”

six hundred miles without reaching any termination, Cortereal concluded that it must form part of the mainland, which was connected with another region discovered in the preceding year in the north—evidently alluding to the voyage of Sebastian Cabot in 1498.* The most curious and authentic account of this remarkable expedition of the Portuguese navigator is to be found in a letter, written by Pietro Pasquiligi, the Venetian ambassador at the court of Portugal, to his brothers in Italy, only eleven days after the return of Cortereal from his first voyage. “On the 8th of October,” says he, “there arrived in this port one of the two caravels, which were last year despatched by the King of Portugal for the discovery of lands lying in the north, under the command of Gaspar Cortereal. He relates that he has discovered a country situated between the west and north-west, distant from this about two thousand miles, and which before the present time was utterly unknown. They ran along the coast between six hundred and seven hundred miles without arriving at its termination, on which account they concluded it to be the same continent that is connected with another land discovered last year in the north, which, however, the caravels could not reach, the sea being frozen, and a vast quantity of snow having fallen. They were confirmed in the same opinion by finding so many mighty rivers, which certainly were too numerous and too large to have proceeded from an island. They report that this land is thickly peopled, and that the houses are built of very long beams of timber, and covered with the furs of the skins of fishes. They have brought hither along with them seven of the inhabitants, including men, women, and children; and in the other caravel, which is looked for every hour, they are bringing fifty more. These people, in colour,

* Memoir of Sebastian Cabot, p. 241.

figure, stature, and expression, greatly resemble gipsies; they are clothed with the skins of different beasts, but chiefly of the otter, wearing the hair outside in summer, and next to the skin in winter. These skins, too, are not sewed together, nor shaped to the body in any fashion, but wrapt around their arms and shoulders exactly as taken from the animals; whilst the slight and partial covering which they wear is formed with strong cords made of the sinews or entrails of fishes. On this account their appearance is completely savage; yet they are very sensible to shame, gentle in their manners, and better made in their arms, legs, and shoulders, than can be expressed. Their faces are punctured in the same manner as the Indians;—some have six marks, some eight, some fewer; they use a language of their own, but it is understood by no one. Moreover, I believe that every possible language has been addressed to them. They have no iron in their country, but manufacture knives out of certain kinds of stones, with which they point their arrows. They have also brought from this island a piece of a broken sword inlaid with gold, which we can pronounce undoubtedly to have been made in Italy; and one of the children had in his ears two pieces (*todini*) of silver, which as certainly appear to have been made in Venice—a circumstance inducing me to believe that their country belongs to the continent, since it is evident that if it had been an island where any vessel had touched before this time, we should have heard of it. They have great plenty of salmon, herring, stockfish, and similar kinds of fish. They have also abundance of timber, and principally of the pine, fitted for the masts and yards of ships; on which account his Serene Majesty anticipates the greatest advantage from this country, both in furnishing timber for his shipping, of which he at present stands in great need, and also from the men who inhabit it, who

appear admirably fitted to endure labour, and will probably turn out the best slaves which have been discovered up to this time. This arrival appeared to me an event of which it was right to inform you; and if, on the arrival of the other caravel, I receive any additional information, it shall be transmitted to you in like manner.' '*

Nothing could be more cruel and impolitic than the conduct of Cortereal, in seizing and carrying into captivity these unfortunate natives; and it is difficult to repress our indignation at the heartless and calculating spirit with which the Portuguese monarch entered into the adventure, contemplating the rich supplies of slaves that were to be imported from this new country.† It is an ingenious conjecture of the biographer of Cabot, to whose research we owe our acquaintance with this letter, that the name Terra de Laborador was given to the coast by the Portuguese slave merchants in consequence of the admirable qualities of the natives as labourers, and in anticipation of the profits to be derived from a monopoly of this unchristian traffic.

But distress and disaster pursued the speculation. On the 15th May 1501, Cortereal departed on a second voyage with a determination to pursue his discovery, and, as we may plausibly conjecture, to return with a new cargo of slaves and timber; but he was never again heard of. A similar dark and unhappy fate befell his brother, Michael de Cortereal, who sailed with two ships in search of his lost relative, but of whom no accounts ever again reached Portugal. The most probable conjecture seems to be, that

* Memoir of Sebastian Cabot, pp. 239, 240.

† I observe that in the *History of Discovery and Adventure in the Polar Seas*, Mr. Murray has questioned the accuracy of the opinion stated by the biographer of Cabot, "that the objects of Cortereal's second voyage were timber and slaves." The letter, however, of Pasquilli seems to me decisive, that, if not the sole, they were at least very principal objects in the second voyage.

they both fell victims to the just indignation of the natives, whose wives, children, and fathers had been stolen away during their first visit to the coast. "The king," says Goes, "felt deeply the loss of these two brothers, so much the more as they had been educated by him; and on this account, moved by royal and gracious tenderness, in the following year, 1503, he sent at his own expense two armed ships in search of them; but it could never be discovered where or in what manner either the one or the other was lost, on which account this province of Terra Verde, where it was supposed the two brothers perished, was called the Land of the Cortereals."* The description of the inhabitants, as given by this contemporary chronicler, contains a few additional particulars to those mentioned by Pasquiligi. "The people of the country," says he, "are very barbarous and uncivilized, almost equally so with the natives of Santa Cruz, except that they are white, and so tanned by the cold, that the white colour is lost as they grow older, and they become blackish. They are of the middle size, very lightly made, and great archers. Instead of javelins, they employ sticks burnt in the end, which they use as missiles to as good purpose as if they were pointed with fine steel. They clothe themselves in the skins of beasts, of which there are great plenty in the country. They live in caverns of rocks, and in houses shaped like nests (*choupanas*). They have no laws, believe much in auguries, live in matrimony, and are very jealous of their wives, in which things they much resemble the Laplanders, who also inhabit a northern latitude under 70° to 85°, subject to the kings of Norway and Sweden."†

Upon these voyages of the Cortereals the Portuguese attempted to establish a claim to the discovery of Newfoundland and the adjacent coasts of North America, though

* Damiano Goes, *Chronica del Rey Dom. Manuel*, part i. c. 66.

† *Ibid.*, c. 66, p. 87.

there is ample historical evidence that both had been visited by the two Cabots three years prior to the departure of Cortereal from Lisbon. Maps appear to have been forged to support this unfair assumption; and in a volume published by Madrignan at Milan in 1508, which represents itself to be a translation of the Italian work entitled "*Paesi Nuovamente Ritrovati*," the original letter of Pasquilligi, describing the arrival of Gasper Cortereal, is disgracefully garbled and corrupted, for the purpose, as it would seem, of keeping the prior discoveries of the Cabots in the background, and advancing a fabricated claim for the Portuguese.* It is unfortunate that this disingenuous process of poisoning the sources of historic truth has succeeded, and that many authors, not aware of its apocryphal character, which has been acutely exposed by the biographer of Cabot, have given currency to the fable of Madrignan.

About fourteen years after his return from the voyage of 1498, we have seen that Sebastian Cabot was induced to enter the service of Spain; but, though highly esteemed for his eminent abilities, appointed one of the Council of the Indies by Ferdinand, and nominated to the command of an expedition to the north in search of a north-west passage, he appears to have been baffled and thwarted in his plans by the jealousy of the Spaniards, and was at last compelled to abandon them on the death of Ferdinand. He then returned to England; and, indefatigable in the prosecution of that great object which formed the prominent pursuit of his life, induced Henry VIII. to fit out a small squadron for the discovery of the north-west passage to India. Unfortunately, however, for the success of the voyage, Sir Thomas Pert, at this time Vice-Admiral of England, was intrusted with the supreme command, whose want of courage

* Memoir of Sebastian Cabot, pp. 251, 252.

and resolution was the cause of its ultimate failure. The object of Cabot was to proceed by Iceland towards the American coast, which he had already explored as far as 56°, according to Ramusio, or, if we follow Gomara, 58° north. This would lead him, to use the expression of Thorne,* by the back of Newfoundland; and from this point, pursuing his voyage farther to the northward, he expected to find a passage to the kingdom of Cathay. The ships accordingly set sail, and on the 11th of June they had reached the 67½° of northern latitude. They here found the sea open, and Cabot entertained a confident hope of sailing through a bay, or "fret," which they had then entered, to the shores of the Eastern Cathay, when a mutiny of the mariners, and the faintheartedness of Sir Thomas Pert, compelled him, much against his inclination, to desist from the farther prosecution of the voyage, and return home.† From the high latitude reached by this enter-

* Letter of Robert Thorne.—Hakluyt, edition of 1589, p. 250.—"And if they will take their course, after they be past the Pole, towards the Occident, they shall goe in the back side of the Newfoundland, which of late was discovered by your Grace's subjects, until they come to the back side and south seas of the Indies Occidental: And so, continuing their voyage, they may return thorow the Straight of Magellan to this country, and so they compass also the world by that way; and if they goe this third way, and after they be past the Pole, goe right toward the Pole Antarticke, and then decline towards the lands and islands situated between the tropicks and under the equinoctial, without doubt they shall find there the richest lands and islands of the world, of gold, precious stones, balmis spices, and other thinges that we here esteem most, which come out of strange countries, and may return the same way." See also Gomara, as quoted in the Memoir of Sebastian Cabot, p. 21.

† It is evidently to this third voyage that the passage in Ramusio, vol. iii. p. 4, of the "Discorso sopra il terzo volume," applies. Memoir of Cabot, p. 117. It is valuable, as this author, though he appears by mistake to have put the name of Henry VII. for that of Henry VIII., quotes in it a letter which many years before he had received from Sebastian Cabot himself. He (Ramusio), in speaking of the discoveries subsequently made by Verrazzano, and of the country of New France, remarks, that of this land it is not certain as yet whether it is joined to

prising seaman, as well as from the expressions employed by Sir Humphrey Gilbert in speaking of the voyage, it appears certain that Cabot had entered the great bay afterwards explored by Hudson, and since known by his name.* It is an extraordinary fact, therefore, but it rests upon evidence which it would be difficult to controvert, that ninety years before the first voyage of Hudson, he had been anticipated in his principal discovery by an early navigator, to whose merits the world have done little justice.

Whilst the Portuguese, the Spaniards, and the English, had early entered upon the career of discovery, the French, a people undoubtedly of the highest genius and enterprise, evinced an unaccountable inactivity upon this great subject, and appeared to view with indifference the brilliant suc-

the continent of Florida and New Spain, or whether it is separated into islands, and may thus admit of a passage to the kingdom of Cathay. "Come," he proceeds, "come mi fu scritto gia molti anni sono, dal Signor Sebastian Gabotto nostro Vinitiano huomo di grande esperienza et rara nell' arte del navigare, e nella scienza di cosmografia: il quale avea navigato disopra di questa terra della Nuova Francia a spese del Re Henrico VII. d'Inghilterra e me diceva, come essendo egli andato lungamente alla volta de ponente e quarta di Maestro dietro queste Isole poste lungo la delta terra fini a gradi sessanta sette e mezzo sotto il nostro polo a xi. di Guigno e trovandosi il mare aperto e senza impedimento alcuno, pensava fermamente per quella via di poter passare alla volta del Cataio Orientale, e l'avrebbe fatto, se la malignita del padrone e de marinieri sollevati non l'havessero fatto tornare a dietro." This discourse is dated 20th June 1553.

* Hakluyt, vol. iii. p. 16. It must be recollected that Sir Humphrey Gilbert had the advantage of having examined the charts of Sebastian Cabot, which, he tells us, were then to be seen in the Queen's privy gallery at Whitehall. It has also been acutely remarked by a late writer (*Memoir of Cabot*, p. 29), that Ortelius, who died nine years before Hudson undertook his first voyage, in the map of America, published in his great geographical work, the "*Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*," has laid down the form of Hudson's Bay with singular precision. Now, we know by the list of authorities cited by Ortelius, that he was in possession of a map of the world by Sebastian Cabot. The source, therefore, from which he derived his information is evident.

cesses of other nations. At length Francis I., a monarch who was deeply smit with the love of glory, caught the enthusiasm for maritime discovery, and eager to cope upon equal terms with his great rival Charles V., fitted out a squadron of four ships, the command of which he entrusted to Giovanni Verazzano, a Florentine navigator of great skill and celebrity. The destination of the armament, however, appears to have embraced the purposes of plunder as well as of discovery; and in a cruise, three of his vessels were so much damaged in a storm, that they were compelled, for the purpose of refitting, to run into a port in Brittany, from which, impatient of the delay, the admiral, in a single vessel named the *Dauphin*, set sail with a determination to prosecute discoveries. He first steered his course for Madeira, and thence sailed in a westerly direction for twenty-five days, making in that time five hundred leagues. A storm now attacked him, in which his little vessel had nearly perished; but he at last weathered the gale, and proceeding onwards for four hundred leagues, arrived upon a coast that, according to his own account, had never before been visited.* It is probable that this shore belonged either to North or South Carolina;† and the appearance of many large fires on the beach convinced him that the country was inhabited. Verazzano, however, in vain sought for a port; and after exploring the coast both to the south and north without success, he was compelled to anchor in the open sea, after which he sent his boat on shore to open an intercourse with the natives. This he effected not without some difficulty; for as soon as the French landed, the savages fled in great trepidation; yet they soon after stole back, exhibiting signs of much wonder and curiosity. At

* Ramusio, *Viaggi*, vol. iii. p. 420.—“Dovi scopsimmo una terra nuova, non piu da gl'antichi ne da moderni vista.”

† “Sta questa terra in gradi 34°.”—Ramusio, vol. iii. p. 420.

last, being convinced that they had nothing to fear, they completely recovered their confidence, and not only brought provisions to the French, but assisted in drawing their boat on shore, and carefully and minutely scrutinized everything belonging to the vessels and the crew. They admired the white skin of the strangers, handled their dress, and exhibited the utmost astonishment and delight. They themselves were a handsome race of people, their eyes dark and large, their expression bold, open, and cheerful; their chests were broad, and they combined middle stature and symmetry of limbs with great nimbleness and swiftness of foot. Their colour was tawny, not unlike the Saracens, and they wore their hair, which was black and thick, tied behind their head in a little tail, and sometimes ornamented with a garland of birds' feathers. Their bodies were not disfigured or tattooed in any way, and they walked about perfectly naked, except that they wore short aprons of furs fastened round their middle by a girdle of woven grass. In the immediate vicinity of the coast the country was sandy, rising into gentle undulations; as they proceeded it became more elevated, and was covered by noble woods, consisting, not of the usual forest trees, but of the palm, laurel, cypress, and others then unknown in Europe, which grew to a great height, and diffused a delicious perfume that was discerned far out at sea. "The land also," says Verazzano in his letter to Francis I., "is full of many animals, as stags, deer, and hares, which were seen sporting in the forests, and frequenting the banks of pleasant lakes and rivers; nor were there wanting great plenty and variety of birds of game, fitted to afford delightful recreation for the sportsman. The sky was clear, the air wholesome and temperate, the prevalent wind blowing from the west, and the sea calm and placid. In short, a country more full of amenity could not well be

imagined.”* An excellent author and navigator thinks it probable that the spot where Verazzano first landed was on the coast of Georgia, near the present town of Savannah.†

From this he proceeded along the shore, which turned to the eastward, and appeared thickly inhabited, but so low and open, that landing in such a surf was impossible. In this perplexity a young sailor undertook to swim to land and accost the natives; but when he saw the crowds which thronged the beach, he repented of his purpose, and although within a few yards of the landing-place, his courage failed, and he attempted to turn back. At this moment the water only reached his waist; but, overcome with terror and exhaustion, he had scarcely strength to cast his presents and trinkets upon the beach, when a high wave cast him stupified and senseless upon the shore. The savages ran immediately to his assistance, and carried him to a little distance from the sea, where it was some time before he recovered his recollection; and great was his terror when he found himself entirely in their power. Stretching his hands towards the ship, he uttered a piercing shriek, to which his friends of the New World replied by raising a loud yell, intended, as he afterwards found, to encourage him. But, if this was sufficiently alarming, their farther proceedings proved still more formidable. They carried him to the foot of a hill, turned his face towards the sun, kindled a large fire, and stripped him naked. No doubt was now left in the mind of the unhappy man that they were about to offer him as a sacrifice to the sun; and his companions on board, who watched the progress of the adventure, unable, from the violence of the sea, to lend him assistance, were of the same opinion. They thought, to use Verazzano's own words, that the natives were going

* Ramusio, vol. iii. p. 420.

† Forster's Discoveries in the North, p. 433.

to roast and eat him.* But their fears were soon turned into gratitude and astonishment; for they only dried his clothes, warmed him, and showed him every mark of kindness, caressing and patting his white skin; and on observing that he still trembled and looked suspicious, they assisted him to dress, conducted him to the beach, tenderly embraced him, and, pointing to the vessel, removed to a little distance, to show that he was at liberty to return to his friends. This he did by swimming to the ship's boat, which had been put out to receive him, followed by the kind gestures of the savages, who gazed after him till they saw him safe among his friends. The spot where Verazzano found this amiable people is conjectured by Forster to have been somewhere between New Jersey and Staaten Island.

From this the Florentine sailed onward, observing the coast trending to the northward, and after a run of fifty leagues, came to anchor off a delightful country covered with the finest forests. The trees, although equally luxuriant, did not emit the same perfume as those before seen; but the region was rich, covered with grass, and thickly peopled, although the natives appeared more timid than the last, and avoided all intercourse. The sailors, however, discovered and seized a family who had concealed themselves in the underwood, consisting of an old woman, a young girl of a tall and handsome figure, and six children. The two younger of the little ones were squatted on the shoulders of the old woman, and another child hung behind her back, whilst the girl was similarly loaded. On being approached, both the females shrieked loudly; but having succeeded in pacifying them, the sailors understood, by their signs, that all the men had escaped to the woods on the appearance of the ships. Much persuasion was now used to induce them

* Ramusio, vol. iii p. 421.

to go on board; but although the elderly lady showed symptoms of acquiescence, and eagerly ate the food which was offered her, no entreaties could soften the obstinacy and rage of the younger. She uttered piercing cries, cast the meat indignantly on the ground, and rendered the task of dragging her through the thick woods so tedious and distressing, that they were obliged to desist and leave her, only carrying with them a little boy, who could make no resistance.* The people of this country possessed fairer complexions than those whom they had just left, and were clad with large leaves sewed together with threads of wild hemp. Their common food was pulse, but they subsisted also by fishing, and were very expert in catching birds with gins. Their bows were made of hard wood, their arrows of canes headed with fish-bone, and their boats constructed of one large tree hollowed by fire, for they appeared to have no instruments of iron or other metal. Wild vines crept up the trunks of the trees, hanging in rich festoons from the branches, and the banks and meadows were covered with roses, lilies, violets, and many sorts of herbs different from those of Europe, yielding a fresh and delightful fragrance.

Verazzano now proceeded one hundred leagues farther, to a sheltered and beautiful bay surrounded by gently rising hills, and discovered a large river, which from its depth seemed navigable to a considerable distance. Fearful, however, of any accident, they ascended it in boats; and the voyage conducted them through a country so full of sweetness and attraction, that they left it with much regret.† Prosecuting their discoveries fifty leagues eastward, they reached another island of a triangular shape, covered with rich wood, and rising into gentle hills, which reminded them of

* Ramuiso, vol. iii. p. 421.

† Ibid.

Rhodes, both in its form and general aspect. A contrary wind, however, rendered it impossible to land, and pursuing their course about fifteen leagues farther along the coast, they found a port where there was an excellent anchorage. Here they were soon visited by the natives, who came in a squadron of twenty boats, and at first cautiously kept at the distance of fifty paces. Observing, however, the friendly gestures of the strangers, they ventured nearer, and when the French threw them bells, mirrors, and other trinkets, they raised a loud and simultaneous shout expressive of joy and security, no longer hesitating to row their boats to the ship's side and come aboard. They are described by Verazzano, in his account of the voyage sent to Francis I., as the finest and handsomest race, and the most civilized in their manners, of any he had yet met in America. Their colour was fairer than that of the more southern people, and in the symmetry of their forms, and the simplicity and gracefulness of their attitudes, they almost vied with the antique. They soon became exceedingly friendly and intimate, and conducted the French into the interior of the country, which they found variegated with wood, and more delightful than can be easily described. Adapted for every sort of cultivation, whether of corn, vines, or olives, it was interspersed with plains of twenty-five or thirty leagues in length, open and unencumbered with trees, and of such fertility, that whatever fruit might be sown, was certain to produce a rich and abundant return. They afterwards entered the woods, which were of great size, and so thick that a large army might have been concealed in them. The trees consisted of oaks and cypresses, besides other species unknown to Europe. They found also apples, parsley, plums, and filberts, and many other kinds of fruit different from those of Italy. They saw likewise many animals, such as harts, roes, wolves, and stags, which the natives

caught with snares, and destroyed with bows and arrows, their principal weapons of offence. The arrows were made with great neatness, and at the point, instead of iron they inserted flints, jaspers, hard marble, and other kinds of cut stones. These they also made use of in felling trees, and in excavating their boats, which, with great skill, were made of a single trunk, yet large enough to hold ten or twelve men commodiously. Their oars were short and broad at the extremity, which they plied in the sea without any accident happening, trusting solely to their strength of arm and skilful management, and seeming able to go at almost any rate they pleased. Their houses were constructed in a circular shape, ten or twelve paces in circuit, built of boards, and separated from each other without any attention paid to architectural arrangement, covered with tiles made of clay, of excellent workmanship, and effectually protected from the wind and rain.* On one subject alone they showed suspicion, being extremely jealous of the least intercourse between the French and their women. These they would on no persuasion allow to enter the ship, and on one occasion, while the king came on board, and spent some hours in curiously examining every part of the vessel, his royal consort was left with her female attendants in a boat at some distance, and strictly watched and guarded.†

The French now bade adieu to this kind people, and pursued their discoveries for one hundred and fifty leagues, exploring a coast which extended first towards the east and afterwards to the north. The country still presented an agreeable and inviting aspect, although the climate became colder, and the regions along which they passed more hilly. A pro-

* Ramusio, vol. iii. p. 422.

† This country, according to Verazzano, was situated in $41\frac{1}{3}^{\circ}$ of latitude (Ramusio, vol. iii. p. 422), which, if correct, would point it out as the present flourishing state of Massachusetts.

gress of other fifty leagues brought them to a more mountainous district than any yet seen, covered with dark and dense forests, and possessed by a people whose habits and temper seemed to partake of the severer nature of their country. On attempting to open an intercourse, Verazzano found them as fierce and sullen as those with whom he had lately dealt were agreeable and generous. Twenty-five of the crew who landed were received with a shower of arrows; and although the exhibition of articles of barter overcame their scruples, and tempted them to agree to an interchange of commodities, the manner in which this was effected evinced a striking mixture of avidity and suspicion. They came down to the beach, choosing the spot where the surf was breaking most violently, and insisted that the French boat should remain on the other side; a rope was then passed from it to the shore, and the different articles were swung along it. Strings of beads, toys, or mirrors, they utterly despised; but eagerly received knives, fishing-hooks, swords, saws, or anything in the shape of cutting-metal, to be used in war or in the chase, though such was their savage temper, that during the process of exchange they expressed their aversion to the strangers by uncouth gestures of contempt and derision. It seems probable that the country, now for the first time visited by Europeans, was the present province of Maine—as we are told by Verazzano, that a farther run of fifty leagues along the coast brought him to a cluster of thirty islands separated by narrow channels—a description which points out, in precise terms, the Bay of Penobscot.*

* Murray's *North America*, vol. i. p. 79. The veracity of the Florentine navigator, in his description of the ferocious habits of the natives, is strikingly corroborated by the determined and rancorous hostility evinced afterwards by the Indians of this district in opposing every attempt at settlement.

From this point he pursued his indefatigable course for one hundred and fifty leagues farther, till he reached the land already discovered, as he says, by the Britons, in the latitude of 50° , which is evidently Newfoundland. Here his provisions began to fail, and thinking it prudent to sail for France, he reached home in safety in the month of July 1524.

Verazzano had thus completed the survey of a line of coast extending for seven hundred leagues, and embracing the whole of the United States, along with a large portion of British America. It was undoubtedly an enterprise of great magnitude and splendour, and deserves to be carefully recorded, not only as comprehending one of the widest ranges of early discovery, but as making us for the first time acquainted with that noble country whose history is so important, and whose destinies, even after a progress unrivalled in rapidity, appear at this moment only in their infancy. The Florentine gave to the whole region which he had discovered the name of New France; he then laid before the king a plan for completing his survey of the coast, penetrating into the interior, and establishing a colony; and he appears to have met with encouragement from Francis I., who embraced his proposals for colonization. From this moment, however, his history is involved in obscurity. Hakluyt affirms that he performed three voyages to North America, and gave a map of the coast to Henry VIII. The biographer of Cabot asserts, that he was the "Piedmontese pilot" who was slain on the coast of America in 1527,* not aware that Verazzano was a Florentine, and alive in 1537; and Ramusio could not ascertain the particulars of his last expedition, or even discover in what year it took place. All that is certainly known is, that it proved fatal to this great navigator.

* Memoir of Cabot, p. 278.

Having landed incautiously upon the American coast, he and his party were surrounded and cut to pieces by the savages; after which they barbarously devoured them in the sight of their companions.*

The death of Verazzano appears to have thrown a damp over the farther prosecution of discovery by the court of France; but at length, after an interval of ten years, Jacques Cartier, an enterprising and able mariner of St. Malo, was chosen by the Sieur de Melleraye, Vice-Admiral of France, to conduct a voyage to Newfoundland, which, since its discovery by Cabot, had been seldom visited, and was imperfectly known. Cartier departed from St. Malo on the 20th of April 1534, with two ships, each of 60 tons burden, and having on board a well-appointed crew of sixty-one men.† The voyage appears to have been limited

* Such is the account of Ramusio in his Discourse upon New France, vol. iii. p. 417. But Cardenas, in a work entitled "*Ensayo Cronologico para la Historia de la Florida*" (p. 8), has committed an error similar to that of the writer of Cabot's Life. He believes that Verazzano was the same as Juan the Florentine, a pirate in the service of France, who was taken by the Spaniards in 1524, and hanged. The evidence which overturns the theories of both these authors is to be found in a letter of Annibal Caro, quoted by Tiraboschi, *Storia della Letteratura Ital.*, vol. vii. part i. pp. 261, 262, from which it appears that Verazzano was alive in 1537. *Lettere Familiari del. Comm. Annibal Caro*, vol. i. p. 11. In his great work, Tiraboschi has collected all that is known regarding the life of this eminent discoverer; but this all is extremely little. He was born about the year 1485; his father was Pier Andrea Verazzano, a noble Florentine, his mother Fiametta Capelli. Of his youth, and for what reasons he entered into the service of Francis I., nothing is known. The only published work of Verazzano is the narrative in Ramusio, addressed to Francis I., written with much simplicity and elegance. But in the Strozzi Library at Florence is preserved a manuscript, in which he is said to give, with great minuteness, a description of all the countries which he had visited during his voyage, and from which, says Tiraboschi, we derive the intelligence that he had formed the design of attempting a passage through these seas to the East Indies. It is much to be desired that some Italian scholar would favour the world with the publication of this MS. of Verazzano.

† Ramusio, vol. iii. p. 435.

to a survey of the northern coast of Newfoundland, of which he gives a minute description, dwelling particularly on the zoological features of the country. He found the land, in most parts, extremely wild and barren, "insomuch that he did not see a cart-load of good earth; and the inhabitants were of stout make, but wild and unruly." They wore their hair tied on the top like a bunch of hay, fixed with a wooden bodkin, and ornamented with birds' feathers. Like their companions whom Cabot had described, they were clothed in beasts' skins, and ornamented their bodies by painting them with roan-colours. They paddled about in boats made of the bark of birch trees, in which they carried on a constant trade of fishing, and caught great numbers of seals. After having almost circumnavigated Newfoundland, Cartier stood in towards the continent, and anchored in a bay, which, from the extreme heat, was denominated *Baye du Chaleur*. The description of the inhabitants of this spot is striking and interesting. "Taking our way," says he, "along the coast, we came in sight of the savages, who stood on the borders of a lake in the low grounds, where they had lighted their fires, which raised a great smoke. We went towards them, and found that an arm of the sea ran into the lake, into which we pushed with our boats. Upon this the savages approached in one of their little barks, bringing along with them pieces of roasted seals, which they placed upon wooden boards, and afterwards retired, making signs that this was intended as a present for us. We immediately put two men ashore, with hatchets, knives, garlands for the head, and such like wares. On seeing these articles they appeared much delighted, and crowded to the bank where we were, paddling their barks, and bringing skins and other articles, which they meant to exchange for our merchandise. Their number, including men, women, and children, was upwards of

three hundred. Some of the women, who would not venture nearer, stood up to the knees in water, singing and dancing. Others, who had passed over, came to us with great familiarity, rubbing our arms with their hands, which they afterwards lifted up to heaven, singing all the while, and making signs of joy; such at last was their friendliness and security, that they bartered away everything they had, and stood beside us quite naked; for they scrupled not to give us all that was on them, and indeed their whole wardrobe was not much to speak of. It was evident that this people might be, without difficulty, converted to our faith. They migrate from place to place, and subsist themselves by fishing. Their country is warmer than Spain, and as beautiful as can be imagined—level, and covered even in the smallest spots with trees, and this although the soil is sandy. It is full also of wild corn, which hath an ear similar to rye. We saw many beautiful meadows full of rich grass, and lakes where there were plenty of salmon. The savages called a hatchet, *cochi*; and a knife, *bacon*.”* All the navigators who had hitherto visited Newfoundland, on reaching its northernmost point, appear to have sailed across the Straits of Belleisle to Cape Charles, upon the coast of Labrador; but the course of Cartier led him through the straits into the great Gulf of St. Lawrence, now for the first time visited by any European. His predecessor, Verazzano, after reaching the shore of the Bay of Fundy, had probably sailed along the coast of Nova Scotia until he reached Cape Breton. Cartier, on the contrary, saw before him a wide and extensive field of discovery to the west, which he pursued for some time, directing his course along the coast of the Bay of St. Lawrence; but as the season was far advanced, and the weather became precari-

* Ramusio, vol. iii. p. 438.

ous, he determined to reserve a more complete examination of this unknown country for a second voyage, and returned safely to France, coming to anchor in the port of St. Malo upon the 5th of September 1534.*

Having been received with favour and distinction, Cartier, after a short interval, embarked upon a second voyage. His squadron consisted of three ships—the *Gréat Hermina*, of which Cartier himself was master, being a vessel of about 120 tons; the *Little Hermina*, of 60 tons; and the *Hermirillon*, of 40 tons burden. The crews solemnly prepared themselves for their voyage by confession and the reception of the sacrament; after which they entered in a body into the choir of the cathedral, and stood before the bishop, who was clothed in his canonicals, and devoutly gave them his benediction. Having fulfilled these rites, the fleet weighed anchor on the 15th of May 1535, and the admiral steered direct for Newfoundland. His ships, however, were soon after separated in a storm, and did not again join company till the 26th of June; after which they proceeded to explore the large gulf which he had already entered. “It was,” to use the words of the navigator himself, “a very fair gulf, full of islands, passages, and entrances to what wind soever you pleased to bend, having a great island like a cape of land stretching somewhat farther forth than the others.” This island is evidently that named by the English *Anticosti*, being merely a corruption of *Naticotec*, the appellation at this day given it by the natives. To the channel between it and the opposite coast of Labrador, Cartier gave the name of *St. Lawrence*, which has since been extended to the whole gulf.

On reaching the eastern point of the island of *Anticosti*, the French, who had along with them two of the natives

* Ramusio, vol. iii. p. 440.

of the country, whom they had induced in their former voyage to accompany them to France, requested their advice as to their farther progress. The savages stated, that the gulf in which they now lay gradually contracted its dimensions till it terminated in the mouth of a mighty river named Hochelaga, flowing from a vast distance in the interior of a great continent; that two days' sail above Anticosti would bring them to the kingdom of Saguenay, beyond which, along the bank of the same river, was a populous territory, situated at its highest known point, where the stream was only navigable by small boats. Having received this information, Cartier sailed onwards, exploring both sides of the river, and opening a communication with the inhabitants by means of the natives whom he carried along with him. The good effects of this arrangement were soon seen; for at first they fled in great alarm upon the approach of any of the ships' crews; but on hearing the interpreters cry out that they were Taïnaogny and Domagaia—names which seemed to inspire immediate ideas of friendliness and confidence—they suddenly turned back; after which they began to dance and rejoice, running away with great speed, and soon returning with eels, fishes, grain, and musk-melons, which they cast into the boats with gestures expressive of much kindness and courtesy.* This soon led to a more intimate and interesting intercourse; and on the following day the lord of the country, who was named Donnaconna, made a formal visit to the admiral's ship, accompanied by twelve boats, in which were a great multitude of his subjects. On approaching the vessel, he ordered ten of these boats to ship their paddles and remain stationary, while he himself, with the other two boats, and attended by a suite of sixteen of his subjects, advanced over

* Ramusio, vol. iii., p. 441.

against the smallest of the French ships, and standing up, commenced a long oration, throwing his body into a variety of strange and uncouth postures, which were afterwards discovered to be signs indicating gladness and security. Donnaconna now came aboard the admiral's ship, and an enthusiastic interview took place between him and the two savages who had been in France.* They recounted with much gesticulation the extraordinary things which they had seen in that country, dwelling on the kind entertainment they had experienced; and after many expressive looks of wonder and gratitude, the king entreated the admiral to stretch out his arm, which he kissed with devotion, laying it fondly upon his neck, and showing, by gestures which could not be mistaken, that he wished to make much of him. Cartier, anxious to evince an equal confidence, entered Donnaconna's boat, carrying with him a collation of bread and wine, with which the monarch was much pleased; and the French, returning to their ships, ascended the river ten leagues, till they arrived at a village where this friendly potentate usually resided, and which was named Stadacona. "It was," according to the original account of Cartier, "as goodly a plot of ground as possibly might be seen, very fruitful, and covered with noble trees similar to those of France, such as oaks, elms, ashes, walnut trees, maple trees, citrons, vines, and white thorns which brought forth fruit like damsons, and beneath these woods grew as good hemp as any in France, without its being either planted or cultivated by man's labour."†

From this time the intercourse between the French and Donnaconna continued with every expression of friendliness but on hearing that the admiral had determined to go to Hochelaga, a sudden jealousy appeared to seize him lest he

* Ramusio, vol. iii. p. 443. *Seconda Relatione di Jacques Cartier.*
† Hakluyt, vol. iii. p. 216.

and his people should be deprived of the advantages of an uninterrupted communication with the white strangers, and every possible device was put in execution to deter them from their purpose. One of these stratagems was so ludicrous, that we may be permitted to give Cartier's account of it in an abridgment of the quaint translation of Hakluyt: "The next day, being the 18th of September, these men still endeavoured to seek all means possible to hinder us from going to Hochelaga, and for this purpose devised a pretty guile: They went and dressed three men like devils, being wrapped in dogs' skins, white and black, with their faces besmeared as black as a coal, and horns upon their heads more than a yard long." These figures they caused to be secretly put into one of the boats, which they concealed within a winding of the wooded bay, waiting patiently for the tide. When the proper moment had arrived, a multitude of the boats, crowded with natives and conducted by Taignaogny, suddenly emerged from the creek; on a signal given, the boat in which were the counterfeit devils came rushing out of its concealment, and the middlemost devil standing up, made a long oration, addressed to the French ships, of which of course every syllable was unintelligible. "Then," to resume the words of Hakluyt, "did King Donnaconna with all his people pursue them, and lay hold on the boat and devils, who, so soon as the men were come to them, fell prostrate as if they had been dead; upon which they were taken up and carried into the wood, being but a stonecast off, at which time every one of the savages withdrew himself into the wood, and when there began to make a long discourse, so loud that it was easy for the French to hear them even in their ships. When this oration or debate, which lasted for half an hour, was ended, Cartier and his crew espied Taignaogny and Domagaia coming towards them, holding their hands joined together,

carrying their hats under their upper garment, showing a great admiration, and looking up to heaven. Upon this the captain hearing them, and seeing their gestures and ceremonies, asked them what they ailed, and what was happened or chanced anew, to which they answered that there were very ill tidings befallen, saying in their broken French, '*Nenni est il bon,*' that is to say, it was not good. Our captain asked them again what it was, and then they answered that their god Cudraigny had spoken in Hoche-laga, and that he had sent those three devils to show unto them that there was so much ice and snow in that country, that whosoever went there should die; which words when the French heard, they laughed and mocked them, saying that their god Cudraigny was but a fool and a noddie, for he knew not what he said or did. They bade them also carry their compliments to his messengers, and inform them that the god whom they served would defend them from all cold if they would only believe in him."*

Having thus failed in the object intended to be gained by this extraordinary masquerade, the savages offered no farther opposition, and the French proceeded in their pinnace and two boats up the River St. Lawrence towards Hochelaga. They found the country on both sides extremely rich and beautifully varied, covered with fine wood, and abounding in vines, though the grapes, from want of cultivation, were neither so large nor so sweet as those of France. The prevalent trees were the same as in Europe—oaks, elms, walnut, cedar, fir, ash, box, and willow; and the natives on each side of the river, who appeared to exercise principally the trade of fishermen, entered into an intercourse with the strangers as readily and kindly as if they had been their own countrymen. One of the lords of the country did not

* Hakluyt, vol. iii. p. 218; and Ramusio, vol. iii. p. 444.

scruple, after a short acquaintance, to make a present to Cartier of two of his children, one of whom, a little girl of seven or eight years old, he carried away with him, whilst he returned the other, a boy, who was considered too young to travel. They saw great variety of birds, almost all of which were the same as those of Europe. Cranes, swans, geese, ducks, pheasants, partridges, thrushes, blackbirds, turtles, finches, red-breasts, nightingales, and sparrows of divers kinds, were observed, besides many other birds.

By this time the river had become narrow, and in some places dangerous in its navigation, owing to the rapids; and the French, who had still three days' sailing before them, left their pinnace and took to their boats, in which, after a prosperous passage, they reached the city of Hochelaga. It consisted of about fifty houses, built in the midst of large and fair corn-fields near a great mountain, which the French called Mont Royale, corrupted by time into Montreal, which name the place still retains; whilst the original American designation of Hochelaga has been long since forgotten. The city, according to Cartier's description, was round, compassed about with timber, and with three courses of ramparts, one within another, framed like a sharp spire, but laid across above. The enclosure which surrounded the town was in height about two roods, having but one gate, which was shut with piles, stakes, and bars. Over it, and also in various parts of the wall, were places to run along, and ladders to get up, with magazines or heaps of stones for its defence. The houses were entirely of wood, with roofs of bark very artificially joined together. Each house had a court in the midst of it, and consisted of many rooms, whilst the family lighted their fire in the centre of the court, and during the day all lived in common; at night the husbands, wives, and children, retired to their several chambers. At the top of the house were garnerers where

they kept their corn, which was something like the millet of Brazil, and called by them *carracony*. They had also stores of pease and beans, with musk-melons and great cucumbers. Many large butts were observed in their houses, in which they preserved their dried fish; but this, as well as all their other victuals, they dressed and ate without salt. They slept upon beds of bark spread on the ground, with coverings of skins similar to those of which their clothes were made.*

The reception of the French by the inhabitants of Hochelaga was in a high degree friendly; and indeed such was the extent of their credulity and admiration, that they considered the strangers as possessed of miraculous power, and their commander a divine person. This was shown by their bringing their king, Agonhanna, an infirm paralytic about fifty years of age, to be touched, and, as they trusted, cured by the admiral, earnestly importuning him by expressive gestures, to rub his arms and legs; after which the savage monarch took the wreath or crown which he wore upon his head, and gave it to Cartier. Soon after this they brought with them all the diseased and aged folks whom they could collect, and besought him to heal them; on which occasion his conduct appears to have been that of a man of sincere piety. He neither arrogated to himself miraculous powers, nor did he altogether refuse their earnest request; but read, from the Gospel of St. John, the passion of our Saviour, and praying that the Lord would be pleased to open the hearts of these forlorn pagans, and teach them to know the truth, he laid his hands upon them, and making the sign of the cross, left the issue of their being healed or not in the hand of their Creator.†

* Ramusio, vol. iii. p. 445; and Hakluyt, vol. iii. pp. 220, 221.

† Ramusio, vol. iii. p. 448.

On inquiring into their religious tenets, he found that they were buried in the deepest ignorance and superstition, unacquainted with the existence of the only true God, and substituting in his place a capricious and horrid being of their own imaginations, named Cudraigny. They affirmed that he often spoke to them, and told them what kind of weather they were to have; but, if angry, would punish them by throwing dust in their eyes. They had a strange and confused idea regarding the immortality of the soul, believing that after death they went to the stars, and descended like these bright sparks by degrees to the horizon, where they wandered about in delicious green fields, which were full of the most precious trees, and profusely sown with fruits and flowers. Cartier explained as well as he could the folly of such a creed, persuaded them that Cudraigny was no god, but a devil, and at his departure promised to return again, and bring some good and holy men, who would instruct them in the knowledge of the true and only God, and baptize them in the name of his Son, with which they declared themselves well pleased.* "There groweth here," says Cartier, "a certain kind of herb, of which during the summer they collect a great quantity for winter consumption, esteeming it much, and only permitting men to use it in the following manner: It is first dried in the sun; after which they wear it about their necks, wrapped in a little skin made in the shape of a bag, along with a hollow piece of stone or of wood formed like a pipe; after this they bruise it into a powder, which is put into one of the ends of the said cornet or pipe, and laying a coal of fire upon it at the other end, they suck so long that they fill their bodies full of smoke till it comes out of their mouth and nostrils, even as

* Ramusio, vol. iii. p. 449.

out of the tunnel of a chimney. They say that this keeps them warm and in health, and never go without some of it about them." It is not impossible that the reader, perplexed by this laboriously minute description, may have failed to recognise in it the first acquaintance made by the French with the familiar and far-famed plant of tobacco.*

Not long after this the ships' crews were seized with a loathsome and dreadful disease, caught, as they supposed, from the natives, which carried off twenty-five men, reducing the survivors to a state of pitiable weakness and suffering. The malady was then new to Europeans; but the symptoms detailed by Cartier—swollen legs, extreme debility, putrified gums, and discoloration of the skin and blood—leave no doubt that this "strange, unknown," and cruel pestilence, was the scurvy, since so fatally familiar to the European mariner. Providentially, however, they discovered from the savages a cure in the decoction of the leaves and bark of a species of tree called in their language hannida, and since well known as the North American white pine. "This medicine," says Cartier, "worked so well, that if all the physicians of Montpellier and Louvain had been there with all the drugs of Alexandria, they would not have done so much in one year as that tree did in six days."†

The French began now to make preparations for their departure; but a dishonourable plot was first carried into execution, by which they succeeded in seizing Donnacona, whose usefulness and liberality to them during their residence in Canada merited a more generous return. The monarch, however, with the exception of a slight personal restraint to prevent escape, was treated with kindness, and

* Ramusio, vol. iii. p. 449.

† Ibid. p. 451.

soon became reconciled to his journey to Europe, although his subjects, inconsolable for his loss, came nightly howling like wolves about the ships, till assured he was in safety. Along with Donnaconna were secured Taignaogny and Domagaia, who had already been in France; and after a prosperous voyage, the French ships arrived at St. Malo on the 6th July 1536.* It might have been expected that, after a discovery of such magnitude and importance, immediate measures would have been adopted to appropriate and colonize this fertile, populous, and extensive country. This seemed the more likely, as the arrival of Cartier and the introduction of the Indian king at court created an extraordinary sensation; yet notwithstanding the manifest advantages, both commercial and political, likely to result from a settlement in Canada, the weak and shallow prejudice which at this time prevailed in most of the nations of Europe, that no countries were valuable except such as produced gold and silver, threw a damp over the project, and for nearly four years the French monarch would listen to no proposals for the establishment of a colony.

Private adventure at length came forward to accomplish that which had been neglected by royal munificence, and the *Sieur de Roberval*, a nobleman of Picardy, requested permission of Francis I. to pursue the discovery, and attempt to form a settlement in the country. This the king readily granted; and as Roberval was opulent, the preparations were made on a great scale. He was created by Francis, on the 15th January 1540, Lord of Norimbega, Lieutenant-General and Viceroy in Canada, Hochelaga, Saguenay, Newfoundland, Belleisle, Carpon, Labrador, the Great Bay, and Baccalaos—empty and ridiculous

* Ramusio, vol. iii. p. 453.

titles, which, if merited by any one, ought to have been conferred upon Cartier. This eminent navigator, however, was only permitted to accept a subordinate command; and as Roberval, who wished to appear with splendour in his new dominions, was detained in fitting out two vessels which were his own property, Cartier was ordered to sail before him with the five ships already prepared. He accordingly did so; but Donnaconna, the Canadian king, had died in France, and the savages, justly incensed at the breach of faith by which they lost their sovereign, received the French with an altered countenance, devising conspiracies against them, that soon led to acts of open hostility. The French now built for their defence, near the present site of Quebec, a fort, which they named Charlesbourg, being the first European settlement formed in that part of America. After a long interval, Roberval arrived at Newfoundland; but a jealousy had broken out between him and Cartier, who took the first opportunity during the night to part from his principal, and return with his squadron to France. This of course gave a death-blow to the whole undertaking, for Roberval was nothing without Cartier; and, after some unsuccessful attempts to discover a passage to the East Indies, he abandoned the enterprise, and returned to his native country. The passion for adventure, however, again seized him in 1549, and he and his brother, one of the bravest men of his time, set sail on a voyage of discovery; but they shared the fate of Verazzano and the Cortereals, being never again heard of. These disasters effectually checked the enthusiasm of France, whilst in England, the country to whose enterprise we have seen Europe indebted for her first acquaintance with the American continent, the spirit of maritime discovery appeared for some years almost totally extinct.

The plan of this historical disquisition now leads us to the examination of some remarkable enterprises of the Spaniards for the extension of their immense dominions in the New World, along the more northern coasts of America. The bold and comprehensive mind of CORTES, the conqueror of Mexico, not content with the acquisition of that noble empire, formed the most extensive projects of discovery. Alarmed at the attempts of the English to discover a northern passage to China and Cathay, he resolved to make a careful survey of the whole coast, extending from the River Panuco in Mexico to Florida, and thence northwards to the Baccalaos, for the purpose of ascertaining whether there might not exist in that quarter a communication with the South Sea. At the same time a squadron in the Pacific was to sail along the western coast of America, and by these simultaneous researches he trusted to find a strait affording a far shorter and easier route to India and the Moluccas, and connecting together the vast dominions of the Spanish crown.* Charles V., to whom these proposals were presented, although willing to encourage every scheme for the extension of his power, ungenerously threw upon their author the whole expense of the undertaking; in consequence of which, the idea of the voyage for the discovery of a north-west passage was abandoned, and the magnificent designs for the conquest of many great and opulent kingdoms sunk at last into the equipment of two brigantines on the coast of the South Sea, the command of which was intrusted to Diego de Hurtado. This expedition ended calamitously in a mutiny of one of the crews, who brought back their ship to Xalisco: the fate of Hurtado was still more unfortunate, for, although he continued his voyage, neither he nor any of

* Ramusio, vol. iii. p. 295. Memoir of Cabot, p. 263.

his crew were ever more heard of. A second expedition, intrusted by Cortes to two Spanish captains, Grijalva and Mendoza, was scarcely more fortunate: The vessels were separated on the first night of their voyage, and never again joined company. Grijalva penetrated to an island which he denominated Santa Tome, supposed to have been situated near the northern point of California, after which he returned to Tehuantepec; whilst Mendoza, by his haughty and tyrannical temper, having rendered himself odious to his crew, was murdered by the pilot, Ximenes, who assumed the command. Afraid of returning to Mexico, the traitor sailed northward, and discovered the coast of California, where he was soon after attacked and slain, along with twenty of his crew, by the savage natives.*

The survivors, however, brought the vessel back to Chiametta, with the tempting report that the coast abounded in perils. Cortes now set out himself with a squadron of three ships; and, although his vessels were dreadfully shattered in a storm, pursued his voyage with his accustomed energy, till compelled to return by a summons from Mexico, where the breaking out of serious disturbances required his immediate presence. He intrusted, however, the prosecution of the voyage to Francisco de Ulloa, and this enterprising navigator, though at first obliged by want of provisions to return to Mexico, re-victualled his ships, and again set sail. The pious solemnity with which these ancient mariners were accustomed to regard their proceedings, is strikingly shown by the first sentence of his journal:—"We embarked," says he, "in the haven of Acapulco, on the 8th of July, in the year of our Lord 1539, calling upon Almighty God to guide us with his holy hand to those places where he might be served, and his holy faith ad-

* Hakluyt, vol. iii. p. 364; and Ramusio, *Viaggi*, vol. iii. p. 355

vanced; and we sailed from the said port by the coast of Sacatula and Motin, which is sweet and pleasant, owing to the abundance of trees that grow there, and the rivers which pass through these countries, for which we often thanked God, their Creator."* A voyage of twenty days brought the squadron to the harbour of Colima, from which they set out on the 23d of August; and after encountering a tempest, in which their ships were severely shattered, they stood across the Gulf of California, and came to the mouth of the River St. Peter and St. Paul. On both sides of it were rich and extensive plains, covered with beautiful trees in full leaf; and farther within the land exceeding high mountains, clothed with wood, and affording a charming prospect; after which, in a course of fifteen leagues, they discovered two other rivers as great, or greater than the Guadalquiver, the currents of which were so strong that they might be discerned three leagues off at sea.

Ulloa spent a year in examining the coasts and havens on each side of the Gulf of California. In some places the Spaniards found the inhabitants of great stature,† armed with bows and arrows, speaking a language totally distinct from anything they had hitherto heard in America, and admirably dexterous in diving and swimming. On one occasion the crews, who had landed, were attacked with fierceness by two squadrons of Indians. These natives were as swift as wild-goats, exceedingly strong and active, and leaped from rock to rock, assaulting the Spaniards with their arrows and javelins, which broke and pierced their armour, and inflicted grievous wounds. It is well known that this nation had introduced the savage practice of employing bloodhounds in their wars against the Mexicans, and Ulloa now used some of these ferocious animals. The

* Ramusio, vol. iii. p. 339. Murray's North America, vol. ii. p. 68.

† Ramusio, vol. iii. p. 342.

Indians, however, discharged a shower of arrows against them, "by which," says Ulloa, "Berecillo, our mastiff, who should have assisted us, was grievously wounded by three arrows, so that we could by no entreaty get him to leave us; the dog was struck in the first assault of the Indians, after he had behaved himself very gallantly, and greatly aided us, having set upon them and put eight or ten of them out of array. But the other mastiffs did us more harm than good, for when they attacked the Indians, they shot at them with their bows, and we received hurt and trouble in defending them."*

From this unfriendly coast the Spanish discoverer proceeded to the Baya del Abad, about a hundred leagues distant from the point of California, where he found a more pacific people, who, though they exhibited great symptoms of suspicion, were prevailed upon to traffic, exchanging pearls and parrots' feathers for the beads and trinkets of the strangers. So little, however, were they to be trusted, that they afterwards assaulted the ships' crews, compelling them to retreat to their vessels and pursue their voyage. They now discovered, in 28° north latitude, a great island, which they denominated the Isle of Cedars, taking possession of it in the name of the Spanish monarch. It was inhabited by a fierce race of Indians, powerful and well-made, and armed with bows and arrows, besides javelins, and long staves thicker than a man's wrist. With these they struck at the sailors, braving them with signs and rude gestures, till at last it was found necessary to let loose the two mastiffs, Berecillo and Achillo; upon which they suddenly took to flight, flying over the rough ground with the speed of wild horses.† Beyond this island the Spaniards attempted to continue their discoveries along the coast of California; but

* Hakluyt, vol. iii. p. 409. Ramusio, vol. iii. p. 345.

† Ramusio, vol. iii. p. 351. Hakluyt, vol. iii. p. 419.

a tempest having driven them back and damaged their vessels, they determined to return to New Spain. In their homeward voyage they were in danger from a new and extraordinary enemy; for, when sailing in the main ocean at a rapid rate, above five hundred whales, in separate shoals, came athwart them within one hour's space. Their monstrous size created great astonishment, some of them approaching so near the ship, as to swim under the keel from one side to the other, "whereupon," says Francis Preciado, who wrote the relation of the voyage, "we were in great fear lest they should do us some hurt; but they could not, because the ship had a prosperous and good wind, and made much way, so that it received no harm although they touched and struck her."*

In this voyage, which for the first time made the world acquainted with the Gulf of California, or Sea of Cortes, Ulloa had not been able to spend sufficient time either in a survey of the coast, or in establishing an intercourse with the natives. But not long after his return, Mendoza, the viceroy of New Spain, despatched Friar Marco de Nica, upon an expedition of discovery from Culeacan, at that time the most northerly Spanish settlement, to a province called Topira, situated in the mountains. The account brought back of the riches and extent of the country, proved so tempting to the ambition of the Spaniards, that soon after Vasquez de Coronado, an officer of great courage and experience, was appointed by Mendoza to the command of a large force, for the reduction of the new territory, whilst, to co-operate with this land expedition, a naval armament was fitted out, of which Ferdinand de Alarchon was appointed admiral, with orders to explore the Gulf of California. As far as conquest was intended, these mighty preparations

* Hakluyt, vol. iii. p. 424.

conducted to no permanent results ; but the voyage of Alarchon led to some important discoveries.

After a survey of the lower part of the coast of the gulf, he penetrated with much difficulty and hazard to the bottom of the bay, where he found a mighty river, flowing with so furious a current, that they could hardly sail against it.* This was evidently the noble river now known by the name of the Colorado, which has its rise in the great mountain-range near the sources of the Rio Bravo del Norte, and after a course of nine hundred miles falls into the head of the Gulf of California. Alarchon determined to explore it; and taking with him two boats, with twenty men and some small pieces of artillery, he ascended to an Indian village, the inhabitants of which, by violent and furious gestures, dissuaded the Spaniards from landing. The party of natives, at first small, soon increased to a body of two hundred and fifty, drawn up in warlike fashion, with bows and arrows, and displayed banners. The Spanish admiral appeased them by signs, throwing his sword and target into the bottom of the boat, and placing his feet upon them. "They began," says he, in his letter to the viceroy Mendoza, "to make a great murmuring among themselves, when suddenly one came out from among them with a staff, upon which he had fixed some small shells, and entered into the water to give them to me. I took them, and made signs to him that he should approach. On his doing so I embraced him, giving him in exchange some trinkets, and he returning to his fellows, they began to look upon them and to parley together; and within a while many of them cheerfully approached, to whom I made signs that they should lay down their banners and leave their weapons; which they did immediately." Alarchon gives a minute description of the

* Ramusio, *Viaggi*, vol. iii. p. 363.

dress, weapons, and appearance of these Indians. They were decked after sundry fashions: the faces of some were covered with tattooed marks, extending lengthwise from the forehead to the chin; others had only half the face thus ornamented; but all were besmeared with coal, and every one as it liked him best. Others carried vizards before them, which had the shape of faces.* They wore on their heads a piece of deerskin two spans broad, like a helmet, ornamented by various sorts of feathers stuck upon small sticks. Their weapons were bows and arrows, and two or three kinds of maces of wood hardened in the fire. Their features were handsome and regular, but disfigured by holes bored through the nostrils, and in many parts of the ears, on which were hung pendants, shells, and bones. About their loins was a girdle of divers colours, with a large bunch of feathers in the middle, which hung down like a tail. They cut their hair short before, but allowed it behind to grow down to their waist. Their bodies were tattooed with coals, and the women wore round their waist a great wreath of painted feathers, glued together, and hanging down both before and behind.†

Having procured by signs a pacific reception from this new people, Alarchon found to his mortification that they did not understand his interpreter; but after a little intercourse, observing that they worshipped the sun, he unscrupulously intimated to them by significant gestures, that he came from that luminary; "upon which they marvelled," says he, "and began to survey me from top to toe, and showed me more favour than they did before." Soon after this a man was found among them who could speak the language of the interpreter; and an intercourse of a very

* Such is the translation of Hakluyt; but the passage in the original is obscure.

† Ramusio, vol. iii. p. 364.

extraordinary nature took place, in which the honesty and simplicity of the Indians are strikingly contrasted with the false and unprincipled policy of the Spaniards. The passage is uncommonly graphic and interesting: "The Indian first desired to know what nation we were, and whence we came? Whether we came out of the water, or inhabited the earth, or had fallen from the heaven?" To this the admiral replied, that they were Christians, and came from far to see them, being sent by the sun, to which he pointed. "After this introduction, the Indian," continues Alarchon in his account of the voyage, "began again to ask me how the sun had sent me, seeing he went aloft in the sky and never stood still, and for these many years neither they nor their oldest men had ever seen such as we were, and the sun till that hour had never sent any other. I answered him, it was true the sun pursued his course aloft in the sky, and never stood still, but nevertheless they might perceive that at his setting and rising he came near the earth, where his dwelling was, and that they always saw him come out of one place; and he had created me in that land whence he came, in the same way that he had made many others whom he sent into other parts; and now he had desired me to visit this same river, and the people who dwelt near it, that I might speak with them, and become their friend, and give them such things as they needed, and charge them not to make war against each other. On this he required me to tell them the cause why the sun had not sent me sooner to pacify the wars which had continued a long time among them, and wherein many had been slain. I told him the reason was, that I was then but a child. He next inquired why we brought only one interpreter with us who comprehended our language, and wherefore we understood not all other men, seeing we were children of the sun? To which our interpreter answered, that the sun had also begotten

him, and given him a language to understand him, his master the admiral, and others; the sun knew well that they dwelt there, but because that great light had many other businesses, and because his master was but young, he sent him no sooner. The Indian interpreter," continues Alarchon, "then turning to me, said suddenly, 'Comest thou, therefore, to be our lord, and that we should serve thee?' To which I answered, I came not to be their lord, but rather their brother, and to give them such things as I had. He then inquired whether I was the sun's kinsman, or his child? To which I replied I was his son, but those who were with me, though all born in one country, were not his children; upon which he raised his voice loudly and said, 'Seeing thou doest us so much good, and dost not wish us to make war, and art the child of the sun, we will all receive thee for our lord, and always serve thee; therefore we pray thee not to depart hence and leave us.' After which he suddenly turned to the people, and began to tell them that I was the child of the sun, and therefore they should all choose me for their lord."* The Indians appeared to be well pleased with this proposal, and assisted the Spaniards in their ascent of the river to the distance of eighty-five leagues; but finding it impossible to open a communication with the army under Coronado, Alarchon put about his ships, and returned to Mexico.†

After the expeditions of Coronado and Alarchon in 1542. the spirit of enterprise amongst the Spaniards experienced some check, owing probably to the feeling of mortification and disappointment which accompanied the return of these officers. Yet Mendoza, unwilling wholly to renounce the high hopes he had entertained, despatched a small squadron under Rodriguez Cabrillo, which traced the yet undiscovered

* Hakluyt, vol. iii. p. 429. Ramusio, vol. iii. p. 356.

† Hakluyt, vol. iii. pp. 438, 439.

coast of North America some degrees beyond Cape Mendocino; and in 1596 and 1602, Sebastian Viscaino extended these discoveries along the coast of New Albion to a river which appears to have been the present Columbia. It has even been asserted by some authors, that, four years prior to the voyage of Viscaino, Juan de Fuca, a veteran Spanish pilot, conducted a ship beyond the mouth of the Columbia, and doubling Cape Flattery, entered the Straits of Georgia, through which he passed till he came to Queen Charlotte's Sound. De Fuca imagined, not unnaturally, considering the imperfect and limited state of geographical knowledge, that he had now sailed through the famous and fabulous Strait of Anian; and that, instead of being in the Pacific, as he then actually was, he had conducted his vessel into the spacious expanse of the Atlantic. With this information he returned to Acapulco; but the Spanish viceroy received him coldly, and withheld all encouragement or reward—a circumstance to which we may perhaps ascribe the cessation from this period of all farther attempts at discovery by this nation upon the north-west coast of America. The whole voyage of De Fuca, however, rests on apocryphal authority.

CHAPTER II.

Russian and English Voyages.

Behring—Tchirikow—Cook—and Clerke—Meares—Vancouver—
Kotzebue.

As the zeal of the Spanish Government in extending their discoveries upon the north-west coast of America abated, another great nation, hitherto scarcely known to Europe,

undertook at a later period the task which they had abandoned. Russia, within little more than half a century, had grown up from a collection of savage, undisciplined, and unconnected tribes, into a mighty people. Her conquests had spread with amazing rapidity till they embraced the whole of the north of Asia, and under the energetic administration of Peter the Great, this empire assumed at once that commanding influence in the scale of European nations which it has continued to preserve till the present times. Amongst the many great projects of this remarkable man, the solution of the question, whether Asia, on the north-east, was united with America, occupied a prominent place; and it appears that during his residence in Holland in 1717, he had been solicited by some of the most eminent patrons of discovery amongst the Dutch to institute an expedition to investigate the subject. The resolution he then formed, to set this great point at rest by a voyage of discovery, was never abandoned; but his occupation in war, and the multiplicity of those state affairs which engrossed his attention, caused him to delay its execution from year to year, till he was seized with his last illness. Upon his death-bed he wrote, with his own hand, instructions to Admiral Apraxin, and an order to have them carried into immediate execution. They directed, first, that one or two boats with decks should be built at Kamtschatka, or at any other convenient place; secondly, that with these a survey should be made of the most northerly coasts of his Asiatic empire, to determine whether they were or were not contiguous to America; and, thirdly, that the persons to whom the expedition was entrusted should endeavour to ascertain whether on these coasts there was any port belonging to Europeans, and keep a strict look-out for any European ship, taking care also to employ some skilful men in making inquiries regarding the name and situation of the coasts which they

discovered—of all which they were to keep an exact journal, and transmit it to St. Petersburg.

Upon the death of Peter the Great, which happened shortly after these instructions were drawn up, the Empress Catherine entered fully into his views, and gave orders to fit out an expedition for their accomplishment. The command was intrusted to Captain Vitus Behring. Under his orders were two lieutenants, Martin Spangberg and Alexi Tchirikow; and, besides other subaltern officers, they engaged several excellent ship-carpenters. On the 5th of February 1725 they set out from St. Petersburg, and on the 16th March arrived at Tobolsk, the capital of Siberia. After a survey of the rivers Irtisch, Ob, Ket, Jenesei, Tungusca, and Ilim, they wintered at Ilim, and, in the spring of 1726, proceeded down the river Lena to Jakutzk. The naval stores and part of the provisions were now intrusted to Lieutenant Spangberg, who embarked on the *Juduma*, intending to sail from it into the *Maia*, and then by the *Aldan* into the *Lena*. He was followed by Captain Behring, who proceeded by land with another part of the stores, whilst Lieutenant Tchirikow stayed at Jakutzk, with the design of transporting the remainder overland. The cause of this complicated division of labour was the impassable nature of the country between Jakutzk and Ochotzk, which is impracticable for waggons in summer, or for sledges during winter. Such, indeed, were the difficulties of transporting these large bales of provisions, that it was the 30th July 1727 before the whole business was completed. In the meantime a vessel had been built at Ochotzk, in which the naval stores were conveyed to Bolscheretzkoi in Kamtschatka. From this, they proceeded to Nischnei Kamtschatkoi Ostrog, where a boat was built similar to the packet-boats used in the Baltic. After the necessary articles were shipped, Captain Behring, determining no

longer to delay the most important part of his enterprise, set sail from the mouth of the River Kamtschatka on the 14th of July, steering north-east, and for the first time laying down a survey of this remote and desolate coast. When they reached the latitude of $64^{\circ} 30'$, eight men of the wild tribe of the Tschuktschi pushed off from the coast in a leathern canoe, called a baidar, formed of seal-skins, and fearlessly approached the Russian ship. A communication was immediately opened by means of a Koriak interpreter; and, on being invited, they came on board without hesitation. By these natives Behring was informed that the coast turned towards the west. On reaching the promontory called Serdze Kamen, the accuracy of this information was established, for the land was seen extending a great way in a western direction—a circumstance from which Behring somewhat too hastily concluded, that he had reached the extremest northern point of Asia. He was of opinion that thence the coast must run to the west, and therefore no junction with America could take place. Satisfied that he had now fulfilled his orders, he returned to the River Kamtschatka, and again took up his winter-quarters at Nischnei Kamtschatkoi Ostrog.*

In this voyage it was conjectured by Behring and his officers, from the reports of the Kamtschadales, that in all probability another country must be situated towards the east, at no great distance from Serdze Kamen; yet no immediate steps were taken either to complete the survey of the most northerly coasts of Ochozkoi, or to explore the undiscovered region immediately opposite the promontory. In the course of a campaign, however, against the fierce and independent nation of the Tschuktschi, Captain Pawlutzki penetrated by the Rivers Nboina, Bela, and Tcherná,

* Harris's *Collection of Voyages*, vol. ii. pp. 1020, 1021; Coxe's *Russian Discoveries*, pp. 23, 24, 94.

to the borders of the Frozen Sea; and, after defeating the enemy in three battles, passed in triumph to a promontory supposed to be the Tgchukotzkoi Noss. From this point he sent part of his little army in canoes, whilst he himself conducted the remaining division by land round the promontory, taking care to march along the sea-coast, and to communicate every evening with his canoes. In this manner Pawlutzki reached the promontory which is conjectured to have been the farthest limit of Behring's voyage, and thence by an inland route returned, on 21st October 1730, to Anadirsk, having advanced an important step in ascertaining the separation between America and the remote north-westerly coast of Asia.

Although the separation of the two continents had been thus far fixed, a wide field of discovery yet remained unexplored; and in 1741, Behring, Spangberg, and Tchirikow, once more volunteered their services for this purpose. These offers were immediately accepted; the captain was promoted to the rank of a commander, the two lieutenants were made captains, and instructions drawn up for the conduct of the expedition, in which it was directed that the destination of the voyages should be eastward to the continent of America, and southward to Japan, whilst, at the same time, an endeavour was to be made for the discovery of that northern passage through the Frozen Sea which had been so repeatedly but unsuccessfully attempted by other European nations. The voyage to Japan, under the command of Captain Spangberg and Lieutenant Walton, was eminently successful; and one of its material results was the correction of a geographical error of considerable magnitude, by which that island had hitherto been placed under the same meridian as Kamtschatka instead of 11° more to the westward. The expedition of Behring, no less important and satisfactory, was destined to be fatal to its

excellent commander. After a winter spent in the harbour of Awatscha, or Petropalauska, on the west side of the great peninsula of Kamtschatka, Behring got his stores on board the two packet-boats built at Ochotzk, expressly for the intended American discoveries. The first of these, the *St. Peter*, was that in which the commander embarked; the second, the *St. Paul*, was intrusted to Captain Tchirikow. Along with Behring went Lewis de Lisle de la Croyere, Professor of Astronomy, whilst Mr. George William Steller, an experienced chemist and botanist, accompanied Tchirikow.

All things being ready, a council of officers was held, in which the question regarding the course they should steer was considered, and it happened, unfortunately for the expedition, that an important error had crept into the map presented by the Academy of Sciences at St. Petersburg to the Senate, in laying down a coast south-east from Awatscha, extending fifteen degrees from west to east, whilst no land was marked due east. At this spot were written on the map the words "*Land seen by Don Jean de Gama;*" and, trusting to the accuracy of this information, it was determined to steer first south-east by east, in the hope of discovering this continent; after which they might follow its coasts as a guide towards the north and east. On the 4th of June 1741 they accordingly weighed anchor, and steered south-east by south, till, on the 12th, they found themselves in latitude 46° , without the slightest appearance of the coast of De Gama. Convinced at last of their error, they held on a northerly course as far as 50° north latitude, and were just about to steer due east, with the hope of reaching the continent of America, when the two ships were separated in a violent storm accompanied by a thick fog. Behring exerted every effort to rejoin his consort; but all proved in vain. He cruised for three days between

50° and 51° north latitude, after which he steered back to the south-east as far as 45°; but Tchirikow, after the storm, had taken an easterly course from 48° north latitude, so that they never met again.

Both, however, pursued their discoveries simultaneously, and on the 15th of July, being in 56° north latitude, Tchirikow reached the coast of America. The shore proved to be steep and rocky, and in consequence of the high surf, he did not venture to approach it; but anchoring in deep water, despatched his mate, Demetiew, with the long-boat and ten men, on shore. The boat was provisioned for some days, the men armed and furnished with minute instructions as to their mode of proceeding, and the signals by which they were to communicate with the ship. But neither mate, men, nor barge, were ever again heard of. This was the more mysterious, as all at first appeared to go well with them. The barge was seen from the ship to row into a bay behind a small cape, and the appointed signals were made, intimating that she had landed in safety. Day after day the signals agreed on continued from the shore. The people on board began at last to think that the barge had probably received damage in landing, and could not return till she was repaired; and it was resolved to send the small boat on shore, with the boatswain Sawelow and six men. Amongst these were some carpenters and a careener, well armed and provided with the necessary materials; and the boatswain had orders to return with Demetiew in the long-boat the moment the necessary repairs were completed. But neither mate nor boatswain ever came back; and the most dark surmises of their fate were excited by the cessation of the signals, and the continual ascent of a large volume of smoke from the landing-place. Next day, however, a revival of hope was felt at the sight of two boats which were observed rowing from the land towards

the ship. It was believed to be Demetiew and Sawelow; and Tchirikow ordered all hands on deck, to prepare for setting sail on a moment's warning. A few minutes changed these cheerful anticipations into sorrow; for, as the boats approached, it was discovered that they were filled by American savages, who, seeing many persons on deck, instantly shipped their paddles and remained at a cautious distance. They then stood up, and crying with a loud voice "Agai, agai!" returned with great speed to the shore. A strong west wind now rose, and threatened to dash the vessel on the rocky coast, so that they were obliged to weigh anchor and put to sea without the slightest hope of hearing any farther intelligence of their men; for they had no more small boats, and all communication with the shore was cut off. Tchirikow, however, cruised some days in the neighbourhood, and when the weather became milder, returned towards the spot where his people landed; but all appeared silent, lonely, and uninhabited; and in a council of the officers, it was determined to set out on their return, though with the most poignant regret at being obliged to leave this remote and desolate coast without hearing the slightest account of their companions. They arrived at Kamtschatka on the 27th of July.* No news of the fate of Demetiew and Sawelow ever reached Russia; but it is evident that they had been successively attacked and murdered by the savages. "The natives of this part of the north-west coast of America," says Captain Burney, "live principally by hunting and catching game, in which occupations they are in the continual practice of every species of decoy. They imitate the whistlings of birds,—they have carved wooden masks resembling the heads of animals, which they put on over their own, and enter the woods in

* Muller, *Découvertes faites par les Russes*, vol. i. p. 244.

masquerade. They had observed the signals made to the ship by the Russian boat which first came to land; and the continuance of signals afterwards seen and heard by the Russians on board were doubtless American imitations."*

Exactly three days after Tchirikow descried land, it appears that Commodore Behring also got sight of the continent in $58^{\circ} 28''$, or, according to another account 60° north latitude. The prospect was magnificent and awful, exhibiting high mountains covered from the summits with snow. One of these, far inland, was particularly remarked: It was plainly discernible sixteen German miles out at sea; and Steller says in his journal, that in all Siberia he had not met with a more lofty mountain.† The commodore, being much in want of water, approached the coast with the hope of being able to land. He accordingly reached the shore on the 20th July, and anchored under a large island not far from the continent. A point of land projecting into the sea at this place they called St Elias. Cape, as it was discovered on that saint's day; whilst another headland was denominated St. Hermogenes; and between these lay a bay, in which, if it became necessary to take shelter, they trusted they would find security. Two boats were now launched, in the first of which, Kytrof, the master of the fleet, was sent to examine the bay, whilst Steller proceeded with the other to fetch water. Kytrof found a convenient anchorage; and on an adjacent island were a few empty huts formed of smooth boards, ornamented in some places with rude carving. Within the huts they picked up a small box of poplar, a hollow earthen ball in which a stone rattled, conjectured to be a child's toy, and a whetstone, on which it appeared that copper knives had been sharpened.‡ Steller,

* Burney's History of North-eastern Voyages of Discovery, p. 180.

† Ibid. p. 164.

‡ Cox's Russian Discoveries, pp. 42, 43.

on the other hand, near the spot where he landed, discovered a cellar in which was a store of red salmon, and a sweet herb dressed for food in the same manner as in Kamtschatka. Near them were ropes, and various pieces of household furniture and of domestic utensils. At a short distance he came to a place where the savages had recently dined; beside which they found an arrow, and an instrument for procuring fire exactly similar to that used for the same purpose in Kamtschatka. The sailors who fetched the fresh water had found two fire-places with the ashes newly extinguished, and near them a parcel of hewn wood, with some smoked fishes like large carp. They observed also marks of human footsteps in the grass, but no natives were seen. In case, however, they should return, some small presents, such as it was conjectured might be suited to their taste or their wants, were left in the huts. These consisted of a piece of green glazed linen, two iron kettles, two knives, two iron Chinese tobacco-pipes, a pound of tobacco leaves, and twenty large glass beads. Steller, an enthusiastic naturalist, entreated that he might have the command of the small boat and a few men, to complete a more accurate survey of this new coast; but Behring, who was from his advanced age rather timid and over-cautious, put a decided negative upon the proposal; and his scientific companion, having climbed a steep rock to obtain a view of the adjacent country, found his progress interrupted by an immediate order to come aboard. "On descending the mountain," says he in his journal, "which was overspread with a forest without any traces of a road, finding it impassable, I reascended, looked mournfully at the limits of my progress, turned my eyes towards the continent which it was not in my power to explore, and observed at the distance of a few versts some smoke ascending from a wooded eminence. * * * Again receiving a posi-

tive order to join the ship, I returned with my collection."*

Having put to sea next day, the 21st of July, they found it impossible, according to their original intention, to explore the coast as far as 65° north latitude, as it seemed to extend indefinitely to the south-west. It was studded with many small islands, the navigation through which, especially during the night, was dangerous and tedious. On the 30th of July they discovered, in latitude 56° , an island, which they called Tumannoi Ostrog, or Foggy Island; and soon after the scurvy broke out with the most virulent symptoms in the ship's crew: so that, in hopes of procuring water, they again ran to the north, and soon discovered the continent, with a large group of islands near the shore, between which they came to anchor. These they called the Schumagins, after the name of one of their men who died there. Whilst at this anchorage the weather became boisterous, and some brackish water procured from one of the largest islands increased the virulence of the disease, which prevailed to an alarming degree. All attempts to put to sea proved for some days unsuccessful, owing to the strong contrary winds; and at length one morning they were roused by a loud cry from one of the islands, upon which they saw a fire burning. Soon after, two Americans rowed towards the ship in their canoes, which in shape resembled those of Greenland and Davis' Strait. They stopped, however, at some distance, and it was discovered that they not only understood the language of the Calumet, or Pipe of Peace, employed by the North American Indians, but had these symbolical instruments along with them. They were sticks with hawks' wings attached to one end. It was at first impossible to induce the natives to come on

* Coxe's Russian Discoveries, pp. 40, 41.

ard; and Behring, anxious to establish a communication, and to become acquainted with the country, despatched lieutenant Waxel in the boat, with nine men well armed, amongst whom was a Tschuktschian or Koriak interpreter. It was found, however, that the savages were utterly ignorant of his language; and Waxel having sent some men to shore, who fastened the boat by a long rope passed round a rock on the beach, commenced a friendly intercourse by means of signs. The Americans were disposed to be on the most amicable terms with their new acquaintances, giving them whales' flesh, the only provision they appeared to possess; and at last one of them so far overcame his fears as to join the Russian lieutenant in the boat, which still lay a little way from the shore. Anxious to conciliate his favour and treat him with distinction, Waxel somewhat thoughtlessly presented him with a cup of brandy; but the effect proved the reverse of what was expected. He made the most ludicrous wry faces, spit violently out of his mouth all that he had not swallowed, and cried aloud to his companions on the shore, complaining of the treatment he had experienced. "Our men," says Mr. Steller in his journal, "thought the Americans had sailors' stomachs, and deavoured to remove his disgust by presenting him with a lighted pipe of tobacco, which he accepted; but he was usually disgusted with his attempt to smoke. The most civilized European would be affected in the same manner if presented with toad-stool, or rotten fish and willow bark, which are delicacies with the Kamtschadales." It was evident he had never tasted ardent spirits or smoked tobacco at this moment; and although every effort was made to soothe him and restore his confidence, by offering him needles, glass beads, an iron kettle, and other gifts, he would accept of nothing, and made the most eager and imploring signs to be set on shore. In this it was judged right to gratify

him, and Waxel, at the same time, called out to the sailors who were on the beach to come back; the Americans made a violent attempt to detain them, but two blunderbusses were fired over their heads, and had the effect of making them fall flat on the ground, whilst the Russians escaped and rejoined their companions.

This adventure gave them an opportunity of examining this new people, now for the first time visited by Europeans. "The islanders were of moderate stature, but tolerably well proportioned; their arms and legs very fleshy. Their hair was straight, and of a glossy blackness; their faces brown and flat, but neither broad nor large; their eyes were black, and their lips thick and turned upwards; their necks were short, their shoulders broad, and their bodies thick, but not corpulent. Their upper garment was made of whales' intestines, their breeches of seals' skins, and their caps formed out of the hide of sea-lions, adorned with feathers of various birds, especially the hawk. Their nostrils were stopped with grass, and their noses as flat as Calmucks'; their faces painted, some with red, others with different colours; and some of them, instead of caps, wore hats of bark, coloured green and red, open at the top, and shaped like candle-screens, apparently for protecting the eyes against the rays of the sun. These hats might lead us to suppose that the natives of this part of America are of Asiatic descent; for the Kamtschadales and Koriaks wear the like, of which several specimens may be seen in the Museum at St. Petersburg."*

At this time, Behring being confined by severe sickness the chief command fell on Waxel, who was preparing to sail, when seven Americans came in their boats to the ship's side, and two of them, catching hold of the entrance

* Coxe's Russian Discoveries, p. 63.

adder, presented their bonnets, and a carved image of bone, bearing some resemblance to a human figure. They likewise held up the calumet, and would have come aboard, but the sailors were taking up the anchor, and the breeze freshening, they were under the necessity of making towards the shore as quickly as possible. There was time, however, to give a few presents, and as the ship passed by the point where they stood, she was saluted with loud and friendly houts.*

They had now to struggle against a tedious continuance of westerly winds, accompanied with thick fogs, which rendered the navigation in these unknown seas perilous in the extreme. On the 24th of September the mist cleared away, and disclosed a high and desolate coast, which a strong south wind made it dangerous to approach. The majority of the crew were by this time disabled by the scurvy, and the rest so weak, that to manage the vessel during the tempestuous weather was almost impossible. A violent gale soon after began to blow from the west, which gradually increased, and drove the ship far to the south-east. The storm continued for seventeen days—a fact to which there are few parallels in the history of shipwrecks; and the pilot, Andrew Hesselberg, who had served for fifty years in several parts of the world, declared he had never witnessed so long and terrible a gale. Meanwhile they carried as little sail as possible, and were driven for a fortnight at the mercy of the wind, under a sky as black as midnight, so that all the time they saw neither sun nor stars. When the storm abated, they found themselves, by the ship's reckoning, in 48° 18" north latitude. Steller, in his journal, draws a striking picture of their extreme misery:—"The general distress and mortality," says he,

* Burney's North-Eastern Voyages of Discovery, p. 170.

"increased so fast, that not only the sick died, but those who still struggled to be numbered on the healthy list, when relieved from their posts, fainted and fell down dead, of which the scantiness of water, the want of biscuits and brandy, cold, wet, nakedness, vermin, fear, and terror, were not the least causes."* In these circumstances, it became difficult to determine whether they should return to Kamtschatka or seek a harbour on the nearest American coast. At last, in a council of officers, they embraced the first of these alternatives, and again sailed north, after which they steered towards the west.

On the 29th of October they approached two islands resembling the two first of the Kurilian group. The long-wished-for coast of Kamtschatka, however, did not appear, and the condition of the vessel and crew began to be deplorable. The men, notwithstanding their diseased state and want of proper food, were obliged to work in the cold; and as the continual rains had now changed into hail and snow, and the nights shortened and grew darker, their sufferings were extreme. The commodore himself had been for some time totally disabled by disease from taking an active command, his wonted energy and strength of mind left him, and he became childishly suspicious and indolent. Amongst the seamen the sickness was so dreadful, that the two sailors whose berth used to be at the rudder, were led to it by others, who themselves could walk with difficulty. When one could steer no longer, another equally feeble was supported to his place. Many sails they durst not hoist, because no one was strong enough to lower them in case of need, whilst some of the sheets were so thin and rotten, that a violent wind would have torn them to pieces. The rest of this interesting but

* *Captain's Journal*, p. 10.

deeply affecting voyage may be given in the excellent abstract of Captain Burney:—"On November 4th, at eight in the morning, they once more saw land; but only the tops of the mountains at first appeared, and the shore was so distant, that although they stood towards it the whole day, night came on before they could get near enough to look for anchorage. At noon that day they made their latitude by observation to be 56° north. On the morning of the 5th, it was discovered that almost all the shrouds on the starboard side of the ship were broken, which happened from contraction and tenseness caused by the frost; for, without other mention made of the weather, it is complained that the cold was insupportable. In this distress, the commodore ordered the lieutenant to call all the officers together, to consult on their best mode of proceeding; and the increased numbers of the sick, with the want of fresh water, determined them at all hazards to seek relief at this land. The wind was northerly, and they had soundings at the depth of thirty-seven fathoms, with a sandy bottom. They now steered in towards the land, west-south-west and south-west, and two hours after, at five in the evening, they anchored in twelve fathoms, the bottom sand, and veered out three-quarters of a cable. The sea now began to run high, and at six the cable gave way. Another anchor was let go, yet the ship struck twice, though they found by the lead five fathoms depth of water. The cable quickly parted; and it was fortunate a third anchor was not ready, for whilst they were preparing it, a high wave threw the ship over a bank of rocks, where all at once she was in still water. They now dropt their anchor in four fathoms and a half, about six hundred yards from the land, and lay quiet during the rest of the night; but in the morning they found themselves surrounded with rocks and breakers. They were certain that the coast of Kamts-

chatka was not far distant; but the condition of the ship and the crew, with the advanced season of the year, rendered it apparent that they must remain upon this land all winter. Those who were able to work went on shore to prepare lodgings for the sick. This they accomplished by digging pits or caverns between some sand-hills near a brook which ran from a mountain to the sea, using their sails as a temporary covering. There was no appearance of inhabitants; nor were any trees seen, although drift-wood was found along the shore. No grass nor anti-scorbutic herbs were discoverable; the island, indeed, was so deeply covered with snow, that even if it produced any antiseptic plants, the patients had not strength to lay them open; and at this time the Russians were little acquainted with the proper remedies for this dreadful disease. On the 8th of November they began to transport the sick to the miserable habitations which had been prepared for them; and it was remarkable that some who seemed the least reduced expired the moment they were exposed to the fresh air, and others in making an attempt to stand upon deck.”*

On the 9th of November, Behring himself was carried ashore by four men on a hand-barrow, carefully secured from the air. The ship had been cast on the east side of the island, and the coast was examined both to the north and south; but no traces of inhabitants were found. Along the shores were many sea-otters, and the interior swarmed with blue and white foxes. “We saw,” says Steller in his

* “It must,” says Captain Burney, “be within the memory of many, the great care with which the apartments of the sick were guarded against the admission of fresh air, and in few instances more than in what was called the sick-berth on board a ship of war, where it was customary to keep a number of diseased persons labouring under different maladies enclosed and crowded together; and fortunately, since the date of this expedition, the management of the sick with respect to air has undergone a very essential reform.”

journal, "the most dismal and terrifying objects: the foxes mangled the dead before they could be buried, and were even not afraid to approach the living and helpless who lay scattered here and there, and smell at them like dogs. This man exclaimed that he was perishing of cold; the other complained of hunger and thirst; and their mouths were so much affected by scurvy, that their gums grew over their teeth like a sponge. The stone-foxes, which swarmed round our dwellings, became so bold and mischievous, that they carried away and destroyed different articles of provision and clothing. One took a shoe, another a boot, a third a glove, a fourth a coat; and they even stole the iron implements; whilst all attempts to drive them away were ineffectual."*

Lieutenant Waxel, on whom, since the illness of the commodore, the command devolved, and Kytrow, the ship-master, continued healthy at sea; and the necessity for exertion, in seeing everything sent on shore, had a favourable effect in repelling the attacks of the disease. At last, however, they too were laid up, and soon became so weak, that on the 21st of November they were carried ashore like the rest. During this dreadful residence on the island, the men lived chiefly on the flesh of the sea-otters, which was so hard and tough that it could scarcely be torn to pieces by the teeth. The intestines were mostly used for the sick; and Steller, in his descriptions of the marine animals of these regions, reckons the flesh of the sea-otter as a specific against the scurvy. When not wanted for food, they were killed for their fine skins, nine hundred being collected on the island, and equally divided among the crew. A dead whale, which was thrown upon the coast, they called their magazine, as it proved a resource when nothing better could

* Coxe's Russian Discoveries, pp. 73, 74.

be got. The flesh was cut into small pieces, which they boiled a long time, to separate the oil from it as much as possible, and the remaining hard and sinewy parts they swallowed without chewing.

In this miserable manner they continued to support life; but some of the crew sunk daily under the disease, and on the 8th of December the commodore expired. Behring was an officer of extraordinary merit; and, until reduced by the disease of which he became the victim, endowed with unshaken perseverance and energy. His voyage set at rest the disputed point regarding the separation of the two continents of Asia and America; and he has deservedly bequeathed his name to the strait which he was the first to explore, and the desolate island on which he died. It is melancholy to think, that after the exertions he had made in the cause of naval discovery, his life terminated so miserably; for it may almost be said that he was buried alive. The sand rolled down continually from the side of the cavern in which he lay, and at last covered his feet; nor would he suffer it to be removed, saying he felt warmth from it, when he was cold in all other parts. It thus gradually increased upon him, till his body was more than half concealed; so that, when he at last expired, it was found necessary to unearth him previously to his being interred. "Behring," says Steller, who was by no means disposed to exaggerate the good qualities of his commander, "displayed in his illness the most affecting resignation to the will of the Supreme Being, and enjoyed his understanding and speech to the last. He was convinced that the crew had been driven on an unknown land; yet he would not terrify others by declaring his opinion, but cherished their hopes and encouraged their exertions. He was buried according to the Protestant ritual, and a cross was erected over his grave to mark the spot, and to serve also as an evi-

dence that the Russians had taken possession of the country."*

Soon after the death of the commodore, the whole crew were sheltered from the severity of the winter in subterranean dwellings contiguous to each other, and recovered so much strength by the use of sweet and excellent water, and the flesh of the sea-animals killed in hunting, that their existence became comparatively comfortable. Of the manner in which they passed their time during the dreary winter months, from December to May, Steller has left us in his journal a minute and interesting account. In March the sea-otters disappeared, either from the instinct of changing their abode at particular seasons of the year, or banished by continual persecution; but their place was supplied by other marine animals, which, in their turn, also left them. "To supply ourselves with fuel," says Steller, "was likewise a considerable labour: As the island produced nothing but willow-bushes, and the driftwood was often deeply buried in the snow till the end of March, we were compelled to bring it from a distance of even fifteen or sixteen versts; and our load upon these expeditions amounted to from sixty to eighty pounds, besides our hatchets and kettles, with the necessary implements for mending our shoes and clothes. In April, however, we were relieved from this labour by the thaw and breaking up of the vessel. An anecdote of an escape made by them in hunting, as it is given by the same lively writer, presents us with a striking picture of their manner of life upon the island. "On the 5th of April," says he, "during a gleam of favourable weather, Steneser and myself, with my Cossack and a servant of Behring, went on a hunting expedition. Having killed as many sea-otters as we were able to carry, we made a fire

* Coxe's Russian Discoveries, p. 79.

in a cliff, where we proposed to pass the night. At midnight a violent hurricane arose, and the snow fell in such quantities that we should have been buried had we not run continually backwards and forwards. In the morning, after a long and fruitless search for shelter, we resigned ourselves to our fate; but the Cossack fortunately discovered a large cavern, which seemed to have been formed by an earthquake, where we entered with our provision and wood. It afforded a secure retreat from the weather, contained a cavity in which we could hide our provisions from the depredations of the stone-foxes, and was provided with an aperture which served the purpose of a chimney. The cave and bay, which were named in compliment to me, were inhabited by numerous foxes, which retired on our approach through the chimney; but the smoke from our fire caused such a spitting and sneezing amongst them, as gave no small diversion to the party. At night, however, they occasionally returned into the cavern, and amused themselves with taking away our caps, and playing other similar gambols. On the 4th we returned to our abode with a rich booty, and were received with great delight by our companions, who thought us lost.”*

On the 6th of May, such of the crew as were able to work began to build from the relics of the wreck a vessel, which was intended to carry the survivors to Kamtschatka. Their number was now reduced to forty-five, thirty having died on the island, including the three carpenters; but a Siberian Cossack named Starodubzow, who had for some time worked as a shipwright at Ochotzk, superintended the building of the new ship. At first they were put to great inconvenience from a deficiency of tar; but by an ingenious contrivance it was extracted from the new cord-

* We have availed ourselves of Coxe's translation of this passage, as published in his *Russian Discoveries*, pp. 85. 86.

age which they had to spare. After being cut and picked, they put it into a large copper kettle, having a cover fitting close, with a hole in the middle. They then took another vessel with a similar cover, which they fixed firm in the ground, and upon this set the copper kettle turned upside down, the apertures in the lids being placed exactly against each other. Part of this machinery was then buried in the earth, and a fire kindled round what was above ground, by which means the tar of the new cordage melted, and ran into the inferior vessel. This contrivance having removed their greatest difficulty, by the 10th of August the new vessel was launched, and on the 16th Lieutenant Waxel set sail with the melancholy remnant of his crew; but, owing to contrary winds, they did not make the coast of Kamtschatka till the 25th, although from Behring's Island the distance was not more than thirty German miles. On the 27th they anchored in Awatchka Bay; and the Cossack, Starodubzow, to whose efforts in constructing the vessel the preservation of the crew was mainly owing, received the rank of sinbojarski, a degree of Siberian nobility. Such is an account of the celebrated and unfortunate expedition of Commodore Behring, of which the results were highly important to geographical science, although dearly bought by the death of so many brave men.

Although Lord Mulgrave had failed in his attempt to discover, by a northerly course, a communication between the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans,* the British Government did not abandon all hope; and in 1776, Captain James Cook, who had already established his reputation as the greatest of modern navigators, was selected by the Admiralty to conduct another expedition, reversing only the

* Polar Seas and Regions, 3d edit. p. 327-335.

plan, and endeavouring to sail from the Pacific into the Atlantic, instead of from the Atlantic into the Pacific.

In prosecution of this plan, on the 12th of July 1776, Cook sailed from Plymouth Sound in the *Resolution*, leaving instructions for the *Discovery*, the command of which was intrusted to Captain Charles Clerke, to join him at the Cape. From that place the two ships proceeded, in a course marked by important discoveries, through the Southern Hemisphere, by Van Diemen's Land, New Zealand, Otaheite, and the Sandwich Islands. They then steered north-eastward, and on the 7th of March, in latitude $44\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ north, came in sight of the American continent at the coast of New Albion. Owing to unfavourable winds, which forced the ships to the south, it was the 29th before Cook anchored in Nootka Sound, where he was soon visited by thirty boats of the natives, carrying each from three to seven or eight persons, both men and women. At first none of the Americans would venture within either ship; and from the circumstance of their boats remaining at a short distance all night, as if on watch, it was evident they regarded the arrival of the strangers with much suspicion. A friendly intercourse, however, was soon established; and although theft, particularly of any iron utensil, was unscrupulously committed, they were pretty fair and honest in their mode of barter. "They were," says Cook, "docile, courteous, and good-natured; but quick in resenting what they looked upon as an injury, and, like most other passionate people, as soon forgetting it. Their stature was rather below the common size of Europeans; and although at first, owing to the paint and grease which covered their skins, it was believed that they were of a copper complexion, it was afterwards discovered that they were in reality a white people. They were well armed with pikes, some headed with bone, and many with iron: besides

which they carried bows, slings, knives, and a short club, like the patow of the New Zealanders; their arrows were barbed at the point, and the inner end feathered." A dispute occurred after the arrival of the English, between the inhabitants of the northern and southern coasts of the sound; but a pacific treaty was concluded, and the event celebrated by a species of music, in which they bore alternate parts. "Their songs," says Captain Burney, who was himself present, "were given in turn, the party singing having their pikes erected. When the first finished, they laid down their pikes, and the other party reared theirs. What they sung was composed of few notes, and as wild as could have been expected; yet it was solemn and in unison, and what I thought most extraordinary, they were all well in tune with each other. The words were at times given out by one man, as a parish-clerk gives out the first line of a psalm."*

It appeared evident to Captain Cook, that previous to this the inhabitants had never entertained any direct communication with Europeans. "They were not startled," says he, "by the report of a musket, till one day, upon endeavouring to prove to us that arrows and spears would not penetrate their war-dresses, a gentleman of our company shot a musket-ball through one of them folded six times. At this they were so much staggered, that their ignorance of fire-arms was plainly seen. This was afterwards confirmed when we used them to shoot birds, the manner of which confounded them." On the ships leaving Nootka Sound, the natives accompanied their farewell with a singular exhibition:—"When the anchor was heaving up," says Burney, "they assembled in their boats, which covered the cove, and began a song, in which they flour-

* Burney's North-Eastern Voyages of Discovery, p. 213.

ished the swords, saws, hatchets, and other things, which they had obtained from us. In the midst of this valedictory chorus, one man, mounted on a stage of loose boards, which was supported by the people in the nearest canoes or boats, danced with a wooden mask on, which he occasionally changed, making himself resemble sometimes a man, sometimes a bird, and sometimes an animal. Of these masks they have great variety, and they parted with them willingly, except those of the human face; if they sold any of these, it seemed to be with some repugnance, as if they were parting with the image of a friend or a relation, and were ashamed to be seen so doing.”*

From Nootka Sound Captain Cook made a survey of the coast by Mount Saint Elias, till he arrived at a cape which turned short to the north, to which he gave the name of Cape Hinchinbroke. Thence he proceeded to Prince William's Sound; after which he pursued the coast to the west, which was found to take a southerly direction, as described by Behring and Tchirikow. These navigators, however, as we have seen, had not made a very particular examination; and although the tenor of Cook's instructions did not permit him to devote much time to the exploring rivers or inlets, till he reached the latitude of 65° , still that eminent officer deemed himself at liberty to complete an accurate survey of this hitherto undiscovered coast, from the arm of the sea afterwards denominated Cook's Inlet, round the great Peninsula of Alaska, terminating in Cape Oonamak. He thence proceeded along the shores of Bristol Bay, till he doubled Cape Newenham, from which he steered in a north-easterly direction, and anchored in Norton Sound. Leaving this, the ships entered Behring's Strait, and followed the coast to the north-west, till they

* Burney's North-Eastern Voyages of Discovery. pp. 217. 218.

doubled a promontory situated in $65^{\circ} 45''$ north latitude, which they named Prince of Wales' Cape, regarding it as the western extremity of all America hitherto known. Soon after, in the evening, they discerned the coast of Asia, and standing across the strait came to anchor in a bay of the Tschuktschi country, near a village, from which the natives crowded to the shore. Observing this, Cook landed with three boats well armed, and was received by the Tschuktschi with cautious courtesy. About forty men, armed each with a spontoon, besides bow and arrows, stood drawn up on a rising ground close by the village; and as the English drew near, three of them came down towards the shore, politely taking off their caps and making low bows. On seeing some of the English leap from their boats, they retired, and expressed by signs their desire that no more should land; but when Cook advanced alone, with some small presents in his hand, their confidence was restored, and they exchanged for them two fox-skins and two seahorse-teeth. All this time they never laid down their weapons, but held them in constant readiness, except for a short time, when four or five persons disarmed themselves to give the English a song and a dance; even then, however, they placed them in such a manner that they could reach them in an instant, and evidently for greater security they desired their audience to sit down during the dance. This Asiatic people, although dwelling within fifty miles of the American coast, were evidently a different race from the inhabitants of the shores of Behring's Strait. All the Americans whom the English had seen since their arrival on the coast were low of stature, with round chubby faces and high cheek-bones. The Tschuktschi, on the contrary, had long visages, and were stout and well made. Several things which they had with them, and more particularly their clothing, showed a degree of ingenuity surpassing

what one could expect among so northern a people. Their dress consisted of a cap, frock, breeches, boots, and gloves, all made of leather or skins extremely well dressed, some with the fur on, some without it, and the quivers which contained their arrows were made of red leather neatly embroidered, and extremely beautiful.*

From this bay the ships again stood over to the north-east, and continuing their examination of the American coast, Cook soon found himself surrounded by the dreary features which mark the scenery of the Polar latitudes; a dark and gloomy sky, thick showers of snow and hail, and immense fields and mountains of ice, covered in some places by the huge forms of the walrus or seahorse, which lay in herds of many hundreds, huddling like swine one over the other. The flesh of these animals, when new killed, was preferred by the crew to their common fare of salt meat, but within four-and-twenty hours it became rancid and fishy. From a point of land, which was denominated Cape Mulgrave, they now explored the coast to the latitude of $70^{\circ} 29''$, where their progress was arrested by an unbroken wall of ice apparently stretching from continent to continent.† At this time the nearest land was about a league distant, and the farthest eastern point seen a low headland much encumbered with ice, to which Cook gave the name of Icy Cape, and which, till the recent discoveries of Captain Beechy, constituted the extreme limit of European discovery in that quarter of the globe. It was now the end of August; and as nothing farther could be attempted at that season on the American coast, the ships returned to the Sandwich Islands, with the intention of resuming in the succeeding summer the attempt for the discovery of a communication between the Pacific and the

* Cook's Voyages, vol. vi. pp. 409, 410, 411. † Ibid. pp. 415, 417.

atlantic—an object which their great commander did not ve to execute, having been killed in an unfortunate scuffle ith the natives of Owhyhee, on the 11th of February 1779. he farther conduct of the expedition now fell to Clerke and King, and an attempt was made to penetrate beyond y Cape; but the continued fields of ice rendered it utterly bortive. The ships therefore, having repassed Behring's trait, came to anchor in the Bay of St. Peter and St. 'aul, in Kamtschatka. Here Captain Clerke, who had ong been in a declining state, died; upon which, to the reat satisfaction of the crews and officers of both ships, ho were sick of the dreary navigation in these inhospitable titudes, they returned home.

Subsequent to the voyages of Cook and Clerke, the orth-west coast of America was visited at different periods y Meares, Vancouver, and Kotzebue; and though the mit of discovery was not extended beyond Icy Cape, the hores were more minutely examined, and a beneficial ommercial intercourse established with the natives. Of aptain Meares' voyages, the great object was to establish trade between China and the north-west coast of America. or this purpose an association of the leading mercantile en in Bengal fitted out two vessels—the Nootka, com- anded by Meares himself, and the Sea-otter, by Lieu- nant Walter Tipping. The Sea-otter in the first instance ook a cargo of opium to Malacca, thence she proceeded to erica, and is known to have made Prince William's ound; but after leaving that harbour, no accounts of her ere ever received, and it appears certain that she and her ew perished at sea. The fate of Meares in the Nootka as scarcely more tolerable: After a tedious and perilous avigation in the China seas, they made their way through e straits between Oonamak and Oonalaska against a cur- nt running seven knots an hour, from which they sailed

across to America by the Schumagin Islands, and anchored under Cape Douglas.* Thence they proceeded to Prince William's Sound to winter; and their residence here during October, November, and December, though dreary and tedious, was not without its comforts. The natives were friendly, and brought them provisions; they caught plenty of excellent salmon, and the large flocks of ducks and geese afforded constant sport to the officers, and a seasonable supply for the table. But the horrors of an Arctic winter began soon to gather round them. The ice closed in upon the ship; the snow fell so thick that all exercise became impossible; the ducks and geese collected into flocks, and passed away to the southward; the fish totally deserted the creeks; and the natives, a migratory race, imitating the instinct of these lower species, travelled off in a body with their temporary wigwams to a more genial district. To add to these distresses, the scurvy made its appearance; whilst the sun described weekly a smaller circle, and shed a sickly and melancholy light. Even at noon, through an atmosphere obscured by perpetual snows, "tremendous mountains forbade almost a sight of the sky, and cast their nocturnal shadows over the ship in the midst of day." The decks were incapable of resisting the intense freezing of the night, and the lower part of them was covered an inch thick with a hoar frost that had all the appearance of snow, notwithstanding fires were kept constantly burning twenty hours out of the twenty-four. Between the months of January and May, twenty-three men died of the scurvy, and the rest of the crew were so disabled as to be incapable of any labour; but the sun's return and the commencement of more genial weather produced an instantaneous effect on the health and spirits of the crew. The natives returned,

* Meares' Voyages, vol. i. p. 19. Introductory Voyage.

and assured the poor sufferers that the cold must soon be gone, making them understand by signs that the summer would commence about the middle of May; and the sun, which now began to make a larger circle over the hills, not only chased away the huge and gloomy shadows that like a funeral pall had covered the ship, but brought back the fish to the rivers, and the migratory birds to the shore; so that they soon enjoyed an ample supply of fresh food. On the 17th of May, a general breaking up of the ice took place throughout the cove, and the feeling that they were once more in clear water, with the prospect of soon leaving the scene of so much distress and horror, cheered the minds of the crew with inexpressible comfort.* These happy anticipations were soon realized by their sailing from Prince of Wales' Sound on the 21st June, and reaching the hospitable cluster of the Sandwich Isles, where such was the effect of the genial climate, that in ten days' residence every complaint had disappeared. On the 2d of September they left the Sandwich Islands, and arrived on the 20th October at Macao in China.

It may easily be imagined, that during so disastrous a sojourn on the American shore, little or no progress could be made in the survey of the coast, which was rugged; and that no great distance were mountains, covered with thick woods for about two-thirds of their ascent, beyond which they terminated in immense masses of naked rock. The black pine grew in great plenty, and a few black currant bushes were noticed, but no other kind of fruit or vegetable. The number of savages seen by Meares did not exceed five or six hundred, and these had no fixed place of abode, but wandered up and down as fancy or necessity impelled them. They were strong and athletic, rather

* Meares' Voyages, vol. i. Introductory Voyage, p. 47.

exceeding the common stature of Europeans, with prominent cheek bones, round flat faces, eyes small and black and hair, which they cut short round the head, of the same jetty colour. A slit in the under lip, parallel to the mouth and a perforation in the septum of the nose, in which was inserted a large quill or a piece of bark, gave them a hideous look; whilst a singular practice of powdering their hair with the down of birds, allowing the frostwork and icicles to hang from the beard, and painting the neck and face with red ochre, increased the savage singularity of their appearance. Their clothing consisted of a single frock of the sea-otter skin reaching to their knees. When employed in their canoes, they used a dress made of the entrail of the whale, which covered the head, and was so disposed that it could be tied round the hole in which they sat, so as to prevent the water from getting into the canoe, whilst it kept the lower part of the body warm and dry. Their hardihood and capacity of enduring pain astonished the English, and was remarkably evinced upon an occasion mentioned by Meares:—"In the course of the winter," says he, "among other rubbish, several broken glass bottles had been thrown out of the ship, and one of the natives, who was searching among them, cut his foot in a very severe manner. On seeing it bleed, we pointed out what had caused the wound, and applied a dressing to it, which he was made to understand was the remedy we ourselves applied on similar occasions; but he and his companions instantly turned the whole into ridicule, and at the same time taking some of the glass, they scarified their legs and arms in a most cruel and extraordinary manner informing us that nothing of that kind could ever hurt them."*

* Meares's Voy.

The disastrous result of this first expedition did not deter either Meares or his liberal employers from hazarding a second voyage to the same coast, which was attended with more important results. The *Felice*, of 230 tons burden, and the *Iphigenia*, of 200, were fitted out on this adventure; the command being given to Captains Meares and Douglas. Both vessels were copper-bottomed and strongly built, and their crews consisted of Europeans and Chinese, among whom were some excellent smiths, shipwrights, and other artisans. The taking the Chinamen aboard was an experiment. Before this time they had never formed part of the crew of an English merchant-ship; and it is but justice to say that they proved hardy, good-humoured, and industrious. Two other very interesting passengers were on board of Captain Meares' ship—Teanna, a prince of Atooi, one of the Sandwich Isles, who had volunteered to leave his native country when Meares visited it during his former expedition, and Comekala, a native of King George's Sound, who had at the same time entreated to be carried to China. Of these two specimens of savage life, Teanna was by far the finest, both in moral and in physical qualities. He was about thirty-two years old, near six feet five inches in stature, and in strength almost Herculean. His carriage was dignified, and, in consequence of the respect paid to his superior rank in his own country, possessed an air of distinction, to which his familiarity with European manners had not communicated any stiffness or embarrassment. Comekala, on the other hand, though cunning and sagacious, was a stranger to the generous qualities which distinguished the prince of the Sandwich Isles. He was kind and honest when it suited his own interest; but stole without scruple whatever he wished to have, and could not procure by fairer means. Brass and copper were metals which he might almost be said to worship. Copper halfpence, but-

tons, saucepans—all possessed in his eyes the highest charms. It was evident that he coveted the brass buttons of the captain's uniform; and his mode of fixing his eyes on the object of his desire, and the pangs of ungratified avarice, as exhibited in the contortions of his countenance, proved matter of much amusement to the crew. The cause of his insatiable thirst for copper became afterwards apparent.

In the meantime, Captain Meares found it necessary to separate from his consort, whose slow sailing threatened to impede his progress; and, after a long and hazardous passage, the ship anchored in Friendly Cove, in King George's Sound, abreast of the village of Nootka, on the morning of the 13th of May. Comekala, who for several days had been in a state of high excitation, now enjoyed the genuine delight of once more beholding his native shore; and when his intention of landing was made known, the whole inhabitants poured forth to give him welcome. The dress in which he chose to appear for the first time after so long an absence was very extraordinary. On a former occasion, when visited by Hannapa, a brother chief, he contented himself with an ordinary European suit; but he now, says Meares, arrayed himself in all his glory. His scarlet coat was decorated with such quantities of brass buttons and copper appendages of one kind or other, that they could not fail to procure him profound respect from his countrymen, and render him an object of unbounded admiration to the Nootka damsels. At least half a sheet of copper formed his breastplate; from his ears copper ornaments were suspended; and he contrived to hang from his hair, which was dressed with a long pig-tail, so many handles of copper saucepans, that their weight kept his head in a stiff upright position, which very much heightened the oddity of his appearance. For several of the ornaments with which he

was now so proudly decorated, Comekala had lived in a state of continual hostility with the cook, from whom he purloined them; but their last and principal struggle was for an enormous spit, which the American prince had seized as a spear to swell the circumstances of that splendour with which he was preparing to dazzle the eyes of his countrymen. In such a state of accoutrement, and feeling greater delight than ever was experienced on the proudest European throne, the long boat rowed Comekala ashore, when a general and deafening shout from the crowd assured him of the universal joy felt on his return. The whole inhabitants moved to the beach, welcomed the traveller on shore, and afterwards conducted him to the king's house, which none but persons of rank were permitted to enter, and where a magnificent feast of whale blubber and oil was prepared. On the whole, Comekala's reception, and the impression made by his extraordinary costume, evinced his intimate knowledge of the character of his countrymen; for though to the English the effect was irresistibly comic, the natives regarded him with a mixture of silent awe and wonder, which after a while broke forth into expressions of universal astonishment and delight.

Not long after this exhibition, two Nootka princes,—Maquilla and Callicum, paid a visit to the English. Their little squadron, consisting of twelve canoes with eighteen men each, moved with stately parade round the ship. The men wore dresses of beautiful sea-otter skins, covering them from head to heel; their hair was powdered with the white down of birds, and their faces bedaubed with red and black ochre, in the form of a shark's jaw and a kind of spiral line, which rendered their appearance extremely savage. Eight rowers sat on each side, and a single man at the bow; whilst the chiefs, distinguished by a high cap, pointed at the crown, and ornamented with a small tuft of feathers,

occupied a place in the middle. All this was very striking ; but the most remarkable accompaniment was the air which they chanted, the effect of which is described by Meares as uncommonly pleasing. " We listened," says he, " to their song with an equal degree of surprise and pleasure. It was indeed impossible for any ear susceptible of delight from musical sounds, or any mind not insensible to the power of melody, to remain unmoved by this solemn unexpected concert. The chorus was in unison, and strictly correct as to time and tune ; nor did a dissonant note escape them. Sometimes they would make a sudden transition, from the high to the low tones, with such melancholy turns in their variations, that we could not reconcile to ourselves the manner in which they acquired or contrived this more than untaught melody of nature. There was also something for the eye as well as the ear, and the action that accompanied their voices added very much to the impression which the chanting made upon us all. Every one beat time with undeviating regularity against the gunwale of the boat with their paddles ; and at the end of every verse they pointed with extended arms to the north and south, gradually sinking their voices in such a solemn manner as to produce an effect not often attained by the orchestras of European nations." This account of the impressive music of the people of Nootka Sound is, the reader may remember, corroborated by Captain Burney.* The ceremony, however, did not end with the song ; but after rowing twice round the ship, rising up each time as they passed the stern, and vociferating " Wacush ! Wacush !" (friends), they brought their canoes alongside, and the two chiefs came on board. Both were handsome men of the middle size, possessing a mild but manly expression of countenance. They accepted

* Supra, p. 79.

a present of copper, iron, and other articles, with signs of great delight; and throwing off their sea-otter garments, laid them gracefully at the feet of the English, and stood on the deck quite naked. Each of them was presented with a blanket, which they threw over their shoulders with marks of high satisfaction, and descending into their canoes, were paddled to the shore.

A brisk trade in furs now commenced, which, though interrupted occasionally by the petty thefts of the savages, was highly favourable to the commercial interests of the expedition. Skins of the sea-otter, beaver, martin, sable, and river-otter, of the ermine, black-fox, gray, white, and red wolf, wolverine, marmot, racoon, bear, and mountain-sheep, and in addition to all these, of the furred, speckled, and common seal, sea-cow, and sea-lion, were all procured, though some in greater abundance than others. Of these, by far the most beautiful and valuable was the skin of the sea-otter. The taking of this animal is attended with considerable hazard; but constant practice has taught the natives both skill and courage. "When it is determined to hunt the sea-otter," says Meares, "two very small canoes are prepared, in each of which are seated two expert hunters. The instruments they employ are bows and arrows, with a small harpoon, which differs somewhat from the instrument of the same kind used in hunting the whale, the shaft being much the same, but the harpoon itself of greater length, and so notched and barbed that when it has once entered the flesh it is almost impossible to extricate it. It is attached to the shaft by several fathoms of sufficient strength to drag the otter to the boat. The arrows employed are small, and pointed with bone formed into a single barb. Thus equipped, the hunters proceed among the rocks in search of their prey. Sometimes they surprise the animal when sleeping on his back on the surface

of the water; and if they can approach without awakening him, which requires infinite caution and skill, he is easily harpooned and dragged to the boat, when a fierce battle often ensues between the otter and the hunters, who are frequently severely wounded by his teeth and claws. The more usual manner of taking him, however, is by pursuit, and the chase is sometimes continued for hours. As the animal cannot remain long under water, the skill is here chiefly exerted to direct the canoes in the same line which the otter takes when under water, at which time he swims with a celerity that greatly exceeds that of his pursuers. The moment he dives, therefore, the canoes separate, in order to have the better chance of wounding him with their arrows at the moment he rises, although it often happens that this wary and cunning animal escapes, and baffles the utmost skill of his persecutors. Should it happen that the otters are overtaken with their young ones, the instinct of parental affection comes out in its most deep and interesting shape; all sense of danger and of self-preservation is instantly lost, and both male and female defend their cubs with the most furious courage, tearing out with their teeth the arrows and harpoons fixed in them, and often attacking the canoes themselves. On such occasions, however, their utmost efforts are unavailing, and they and their offspring never fail of yielding to the power of the hunters.'''*

The hunting the whale, however, is a still nobler sport; and nothing can exceed the skill and intrepidity with which the Americans of Nootka engage in it. When it is determined to proceed against this mighty creature, the chief prepares himself with great ceremony. He is clothed in the sea-otter's skin, his body besmeared with oil and painted with red ochre; the canoes selected for the service are of a

* Meares, vol. ii. p. 56.

size between those used in war and the ordinary kind, and contain eighteen or twenty men, the bravest and most active that can be found. When the whale is discovered, the chief himself throws the first harpoon; but all the people in the various attendant canoes are armed with the same instrument, to be employed as occasion may require. As soon as the huge fish feels the smart of the first weapon, he dives, and carries the shaft with all its bladders along with him, on which the boats follow in his wake, and as he rises continue to fix their weapons till he finds it impossible to sink, from the number of floating buoys attached to his body. The whale then drowns, and is towed on shore with great triumph and rejoicing.* He is immediately cut up, part being dedicated to the feast which concludes the day, and the remainder divided among those who shared the dangers and glory of the chase.

The ingenuity of the Nootka savages in many mechanical arts was very remarkable. Their manufacture of harpoons, lines, fish-hooks, bows and arrows, their skill in tanning and preparing furs, their ingenious manner of forging the metals procured from the English into various ornaments for their wives or favourites, and above all, their art in constructing canoes, astonished the European and Chinese artisans. Of the iron received in exchange for furs they made tools; and it was seldom they could be prevailed on to use European utensils in preference to their own, with the exception of the saw, the utility of which in abridging labour was immediately perceived and made available. They formed of the same metal a species of tool for hollowing out large trees, which purpose it served far better than any instrument the carpenters of the Felice could give them. In this operation a flat stone was employed in place

* Meares, vol. ii. pp. 52, 55.

of an anvil, whilst a round one served for a hammer; and with these rude implements they shaped the red-hot iron into a tool resembling a cooper's adze, which they fastened to a wooden handle with cords made of sinews; it was then sharpened, and proved admirably adapted for the purposes for which it was intended.*

After the English had been for some time in King George's Sound, the Americans began to make use of sails formed of mats, in imitation of Captain Meares' ship. Hannapa got the sailors to rig one of his war-canoes in the English style, of which he was extremely proud, never omitting the ceremony of hoisting his pendant whenever he approached, to the great amusement of the crew. Not long after this, the English were waited upon by Wicananish, a prince of greater wealth and power than any they had yet seen, who invited them to visit his kingdom, which lay at some distance to the southward, that a commercial intercourse might be established for the advantage of both parties. The invitation was accepted, and Wicananish himself met the Felice at some distance from the shore with a small fleet of canoes; and, coming on board, piloted them into the harbour. They found the capital to be at least three times the size of Nootka. The country round was covered with impenetrable woods of great extent, in which were trees of enormous size. After the king and his chiefs had been entertained on board, the English were in return invited to a feast by Wicananish; and it is not easy to conceive a more interesting picture of savage life than is given by Meares on this occasion:—"On entering the house," says he, "we were absolutely astonished at the vast area it enclosed. It contained a large square, boarded up close on all sides to the height of twenty feet, with planks of an un-

* Meares, vol. ii. pp. 58, 59.

common breadth and length. Three enormous trees, rudely carved and painted, formed the rafters, which were supported at the ends and in the middle by gigantic images, carved out of huge blocks of timber. The same kind of broad planks covered the whole to keep out the rain; but they were so placed as to be removable at pleasure, either to receive the air and light, or to let out the smoke. In the middle of this spacious room were several fires, and beside them large wooden vessels filled with fish-soup. Large slices of whales' flesh lay in a state of preparation, to be put into similar machines filled with water, into which the women, with a kind of tongs, conveyed hot stones from very fierce fires, in order to make it boil. Heaps of fish were strewed about; and in this central part of the square, which might properly be called the kitchen, stood large seal-skins filled with oil, from whence the guests were served with that delicious beverage. The trees that supported the roof were of a size which would render the mast of a first rate man-of-war diminutive on a comparison with them; indeed, our curiosity as well as our astonishment was at its utmost stretch, when we considered the strength which must have been required to raise these enormous beams to their present elevation, and how such strength could be commanded by a people wholly unacquainted, as we supposed, with the mechanic powers. The door by which we entered this extraordinary fabric was the mouth of one of these huge images, which, large as it may, from this circumstance, be supposed to have been, was not disproportioned to the other features of its colossal visage. We ascended by a few steps on the outside; and, after passing the portal, descended down the chin into the house, where we found new matter for wonder in the number of men, women, and children who composed the family of the chief, which consisted of at least eight hundred persons.

These were divided into groups according to their respective offices, which had distinct places assigned them. The whole of the interior of the building was surrounded by a bench, about two feet from the ground, on which the various inhabitants sat, ate, and slept. The chief appeared at the upper end of the room surrounded by natives of rank, on a small raised platform, round which were placed several large chests, over which hung bladders of oil, large slices of whales' flesh, and proportionable gobbets of blubber. Festoons of human skulls, arranged with some attention to uniformity, were disposed in almost every part where they could be placed; and, however ghastly such ornaments appeared to European eyes, they were evidently considered by the courtiers and people of Wicananish as a very splendid and appropriate decoration of the royal apartment." When the English appeared, the guests had made a considerable advance in their banquet. Before each person was placed a large slice of boiled whale, which, with small wooden dishes filled with oil and fish-soup, and a muscle-shell instead of a spoon, composed the economy of the table. The servants busily replenished the dishes as they were emptied, and the women picked and opened some bark, which served the purpose of towels. The guests despatched their messes with astonishing rapidity and voracity, and even the children, some of them not above three years old, devoured the blubber and oil with a rapacity worthy of their fathers. Wicananish in the meantime did the honours with an air of hospitable yet dignified courtesy, which might have graced a more cultivated society.

At the conclusion of the feast, it was intimated to the English that the proper time had arrived to produce their presents. Upon this a great variety of articles were displayed; among which were several blankets and two copper

tea-kettles. On these last, considered to be almost inestimable, the eyes of the whole assembly were instantly riveted; and a guard was immediately mounted, who kept a jealous watch over them till curiosity was gratified; after which they were deposited in large chests, rudely carved and fancifully adorned with human teeth. About fifty men now advanced into the middle of the apartment, each holding up a sea-otter skin nearly six feet in length; and while they remained in that position the prince delivered a speech, during which he gave his hand in token of friendship to the captain, and informing him that these skins were the return he proposed to make for the present he had just received, concluded by ordering them to be immediately conveyed on board.

The English now opened a brisk trade, procuring the finest furs, whilst they were supplied with excellent provisions. Salmon, cod, halibut, rock-fish, and herrings, were brought to them fresh from the water; and the women and children sold them berries, wild onions, salads, and other esculent plants. Wicananish, however, was anxious to establish a rigid monopoly, and evinced the utmost jealousy lest any neighbouring princes should be admitted to trade with the English. None were allowed to go on board without his license; and one unfortunate stranger was detected without a passport, hurried into the woods, and, as was strongly suspected, instantly put to death. At last two chiefs, who had already entered into some transactions with Captain Meares, remonstrated against such illiberality; and Wicananish, rather than go to war, concluded a treaty, which had the effect of restoring a good understanding by mutual sacrifices. Hanna and Detooche agreed to resign to Wicananish all the otter-skins in their possession, on condition of receiving the two copper tea-kettles already mentioned. These last articles, however ludicrous it may

appear in the eyes of European diplomatists, formed the grand basis of the treaty, and the terms of exchange were not arranged without much difficulty. During these proceedings the English had little opportunity to examine the country; but everything which they saw was inviting. An archipelago extended from King George's Sound to the harbour of Wicananish, most of the islands being covered with wood, with few clear spots. The soil was rich, producing berries and fruits in abundance, and the timber of uncommon size and beauty, consisting chiefly of red oak, large cedar, black and white spruce-fir. In their expeditions into the interior they met with frequent groves, where almost every second tree was fit for masts of any dimensions.*

From Wicananish Captain Meares sailed southward along a coast not visited by Cook, of which the chart by Maurelle was so inaccurate, that it seemed almost certain he had never surveyed it in person. During this voyage they were visited by a small fleet of canoes, filled with people far more savage than those hitherto met with. The face of the chief was bedaubed with black ochre, and powdered with a glittering sand, which communicated a singular fierceness of expression; whilst his manners were rude, and gave no encouragement to any more intimate intercourse. Meares continued his survey of the coast as far north as latitude $49^{\circ} 37'$; after which he retraced his progress, and on reaching the Strait of Juan de Fuca, took possession of it, with all the usual ceremonies, in the name of the King of Great Britain. The existence of this channel, which had been doubted since its discovery in 1592, was now positively ascertained, and the long-boat was despatched up the strait under the command of Mr. Duffin, first officer

* Meares' Voyages, vol. i. p. 239.

of the *Felice*. Her crew consisted of thirteen sailors, well armed, and provisioned for a month. In a week, however, they returned—with their full complement indeed, but every one of them wounded. They had been attacked by the natives with a ferocity and determination which set at naught the usual terror of fire-arms. The assailants used their bows and arrows, clubs, spears, stone-bludgeons, and slings, with great skill and courage. The boat itself showed this, being pierced in numerous places with the barbed arrows, many of which were still sticking in the awning, which, by intercepting the heavy showers of these missiles, and breaking the fall of the large stones discharged from the slings, was the principal means of preserving the lives of the crew.

On returning down the strait, they were met by a canoe paddled by two subjects of Wicananish; and after purchasing some fish, were about to bid them farewell, when the savages made them aware that they still had another commodity to dispose of, and to their inexpressible horror exhibited two human heads still dripping with blood. "They held up these detestable objects by the hair," says Meares, "with an air of triumph and exultation; and when the crew of the boat discovered signs of disgust and detestation at so appalling a spectacle, the savages, in a tone and with looks of extreme satisfaction, informed them that they were the heads of two people belonging to *Tatootche*, the enemy of their own king *Wicananish*, whom they had recently slain."*

This last occurrence threw a gloom over the spirits of the ship's company, and caused them to make more minute inquiries into the habits of the savages, which brought to light some very extraordinary circumstances. Mild and

* Meares' *Voyages*, vol. i. p. 289.

amiable as were the general manners of the inhabitants of Nootka Sound, it was discovered, by their own confession, that they not only tortured captives with every refinement of cruelty, but feasted on human flesh. Callicum, a chief described by Meares as a model of kindness and even of delicacy in his intercourse with the English, acknowledged that he slept nightly on a pillow filled with human skulls, which he often exhibited as trophies of his valour. Maquilla betrayed his cannibal propensities in a manner still more decided:—"It so happened that the chief, in ascending the side of the ship, by some untoward accident received a hurt in the leg. Orders were immediately given to the surgeon to attend, and when he was about to apply a plaster to the wound, Maquilla absolutely refused to submit, but sucked himself the blood which freely flowed from it; and when we expressed our astonishment and disgust at such conduct, he replied by licking his lips, patting his belly, and exclaiming, 'Cloosh, cloosh!' or 'Good, good!' Nor did he now hesitate to confess that he ate human flesh, and to express the delight he took in banqueting upon his fellow-creatures; not only avowing the practice, but informing the crew, as they stood shuddering at the story, that not long before this the ceremony of killing and eating a slave had taken place at Friendly Cove."* This acknowledgment was confirmed by Callicum and Hannapa, who, protesting they had never tasted the smallest bit of human flesh themselves, described Maquilla as peculiarly fond of it, and in the practice of killing a slave once a month to gratify his unnatural appetite. Perhaps there might be some exaggeration in this; but the ghastly ornaments of Wicananish's dining-room, the extraordinary pillow of Callicum, the exposure of men's heads and limbs for sale,

* Meares' Voyages, vol. ii. p. 49.

and the admission of the chief himself, sufficiently prove the existence of this atrocious custom, whatever might be the extent to which it was carried.

For a long time the English thought the inhabitants had no religious belief whatever. To the huge misshapen images seen in their houses they address no homage; they had neither priests nor temples, nor did they offer any sacrifices; but an accidental circumstance led to the discovery that, though devoid of all superstitious observances, and wholly ignorant of the true God, they were not without a certain species of mythology, including the belief of an existence after death. "This discovery," says Meares, "arose from our inquiries on a very different subject. On expressing our wish to be informed by what means they became acquainted with copper, and why it was such a peculiar object of their admiration, a son of Hannapa, one of the Nootkan chiefs, a youth of uncommon sagacity, informed us of all he knew on the subject; and we found, to our surprise, that his story involved a little sketch of their religion." When words were wanting, he supplied the deficiency by those expressive actions which nature or necessity seems to communicate to people whose language is imperfect; and the young Nootkan conveyed his ideas by signs so skilfully as to render them perfectly intelligible. He related his story in the following manner:—"He first placed a certain number of sticks on the ground, at small distances from each other, to which he gave separate names. Thus, he called the first his father, and the next his grandfather: he then took what remained, and threw them all into confusion together, as much as to say that they were the general heap of his ancestors, whom he could not individually reckon. He then, pointing to this bundle, said, when they lived, an old man entered the Sound in a copper canoe, with copper paddles, and every-

thing else in his possession of the same metal; that he paddled along the shore, on which all the people were assembled to contemplate so strange a sight, and that, having thrown one of his copper paddles on shore, he himself landed. The extraordinary stranger then told the natives that he came from the sky, to which the boy pointed with his hand; that their country would one day be destroyed, when they would all be killed, and rise again to live in the place from whence he came. Our young interpreter explained this circumstance of his narrative by lying down as if he were dead, and then, rising up suddenly, he imitated the action as if he were soaring through the air. He continued to inform us that the people killed the old man and took his canoe, from which event they derived their fondness for copper, and he added that the images in their houses were intended to represent the form, and perpetuate the mission, of this supernatural person who came from the sky.” *

As the objects of this voyage were principally of a commercial nature, Captain Meares had better opportunities to observe the character of the natives than to explore the coast or the interior of the country. The range of his navigation, extending only from Nootka Sound to the latitude of $49^{\circ} 37'$ north, disclosed no regular continuity of land, but in every direction large islands, divided by deep sounds and channels. The time which this intelligent seaman could spare was not enough to complete the survey; but judging from what he did see, he was led to the belief that the entire space from St. George's Sound to Hudson's Bay and Davis' Strait, instead of a continent, was occupied by an immense archipelago, through which might reach a passage from the Pacific into the Atlantic Ocean. “The

* Meares' Voyages, vol. ii. pp. 70, 71.

channels of this archipelago," says he, in his memoir on the probable existence of a north-west passage, "were found to be wide and capacious, with near two hundred fathoms depth of water, and huge promontories stretching out into the sea, where whales and sea-otters were seen in an incredible abundance. In some of these channels there are islands of ice, which we may venture to say could never have been formed on the western side of America, which possesses a mild and moderate climate; so that their existence cannot be reconciled to any other idea, than that they received their formation in the Eastern Seas, and have been drifted by tides and currents through the passage for whose existence we are contending." *

To determine this great question, and complete an accurate survey of the north-west coast of America, Captain Vancouver, an excellent officer, who had received his professional education under Cook, was despatched in 1790; and commencing his voyage at Cape Mendocino, in latitude 41° , he sailed northward two hundred and nineteen leagues to the Strait of Juan de Fuca, never losing sight of the surf which dashed against the shore, taking once or twice every day the meridional altitude, and minutely noting the position of the most conspicuous points. The whole coast presented an impenetrable barrier against approach from the sea, and no opening was found to afford his vessels the smallest shelter. He then explored the Strait of Juan de Fuca; and having satisfied himself that no passage across America was to be discovered there, devoted his time to the survey of the labyrinth of islands, sounds, and inlets, between 50° and 60° of latitude. After a series of patient and scientific observations every way worthy of the school in which he had been bred, he ascer-

* Meares' Voyages, vol. ii. p. 242.

tained the grand fact that the coast was throughout continuous, and thus dispelled all hope of a north-west passage in this quarter. It was his fate to encounter not a little unreasonable scepticism when the result was made public; and, like many other travellers and navigators, he found too much reason to complain of those lazy closet-philosophers who refuse to admit any testimony which happens to contradict their own preconceived theories. Time, however, has done him justice, and fully confirmed the accuracy of his report.

After the disastrous result of the expedition of Behring, more than eighty years elapsed before Russia thought proper to pursue the career of discovery on the extreme coasts of North-western America. At length Count Romanzoff, a scientific and patriotic nobleman, determined to despatch Lieutenant Kotzebue on a voyage to the straits which bear the name of that great mariner. His equipment consisted of a single vessel, the *Rurick*, 100 tons burden, with twenty-two sailors, a surgeon, and a botanist. Having doubled Cape Horn, he arrived on the 19th June 1816 at Awatscha. Continuing his course, he passed the boundary explored by Behring, and on the 1st of August descried on his right, in latitude 68° , a broad opening, which he trusted would prove the long-sought-for passage. Having entered, he landed on the beach, ascended a neighbouring hill, and saw nothing but water as far as the eye could reach. Full of ardent expectation, he employed a fortnight in examining this sound, making a complete circuit of its shores. No outlet, however, was discovered, except one, which it appeared almost certain communicated with Norton Sound, and Kotzebue resumed his voyage, which, however, was attended with no new or important results. To this arm of the sea, the discovery of which forms the principal feature in

his enterprise, he has very properly communicated his name.

With Kotzebue terminates our account of the progress of discovery upon the north-western shores of America; for an outline of the survey made by Captain Beechey belongs to a future portion of this disquisition. It is a pleasing reflection, that almost exclusively to the British navy belongs the hard-earned praise of having explored nearly the whole of this coast, with an accuracy which leaves nothing to be desired by the most scientific navigator.

CHAPTER III.

Hearne and Sir Alexander Mackenzie.

Colonization of Canada—French Fur-Trade—Rise of Hudson's Bay Company—Hearne's Three Journeys—North-West Fur Company—First Journey of Sir Alexander Mackenzie in 1789—His Second Expedition in 1792.

HAVING completed a brief sketch of the progress of discovery along the wide extent of the eastern and western shores of North America, from the first expedition of Cabot to the latest attempts of Kotzebue, two important subjects present themselves—the rise of the fur-trade, and the great discoveries which were achieved by British subjects connected with this branch of commercial enterprise. The expedition of Cartier conferred on the French that title to the countries round the St. Lawrence which results from priority of discovery; and other circumstances combined to direct their efforts chiefly to the colonization of the more northern tracts of America. Amongst these causes may be reckoned the disastrous failure of their attempt to establish a settlement in Florida, the great power of the Spaniards

in that quarter, and the pre-occupation of the middle regions of the continent by the English. In 1598, the Sieur de la Roche, a Breton gentleman of ancient family, obtained from Henry IV. a patent, equally unlimited with that granted by Elizabeth to Gilbert and Raleigh. He was nominated Lieutenant-General of Canada, Hochelaga, Newfoundland, Labrador, and of the countries lying on the River of the great Bay of Norimbega (meaning the St. Lawrence), and the supreme command, both civil and military, was concentrated in his single person. His preparations were singularly disproportionate to these high-sounding titles, and the whole expedition was unfortunate. La Roche, with a small squadron, and crews consisting principally of convicted felons, landed on Sable Island, near the coast of Nova Scotia. From this barren spot, ill adapted for a settlement, he reached the opposite shore, which he surveyed; and having intrusted the temporary command of the colony to an inferior officer, he returned to France to procure additional supplies. On arriving in Brittany, a dispute arose between him and the Duke de Mercœur, a nobleman enjoying the confidence of the French monarch, by whose influence the royal favour was wholly withdrawn from La Roche. That adventurer, deprived of all means of prosecuting his enterprise in the New World, soon after died of a broken heart.

Meantime the colony on Sable Island were exposed to famine and disease, and totally neglected by the king, amid the occupation and excitement of his vast political schemes. Their existence was at length accidentally recalled to the mind of Henry, who, in deep remorse for his forgetfulness, despatched a vessel, which on its arrival found only twelve survivors. They had formed a hovel of the planks of a shipwrecked Spanish vessel, supported themselves by fishing, and replaced their worn-out European

garments with the skins of the sea-wolf. On their return to France, the monarch was greatly moved by the account of their sufferings, corroborated as it was by their emaciated and haggard aspect, matted hair, beards which almost swept the ground, and singular dress. He hastened to compensate for his neglect, by granting to such as were felons a free pardon, and presenting to each a sum of fifty crowns.*

These disasters were followed soon after by an attempt of Chauvin and Pontgrave, two fur-merchants, to establish a colony at Tadoussack, on the mouth of the Saguenay, which proved abortive, and gave place to an expedition on a more enlarged scale, planned and conducted by De Monts, a gentleman of Saintonge, whose squadron consisted of forty vessels. His first settlement was on the Island of St. Croix, from which he removed to Port Royal, now known by the name of Annapolis, where he appears to have abandoned his more pacific designs for the superior excitement and profits of piracy. The complaints of the merchants engaged in the Newfoundland fishery terminated in the recall and disgrace of De Monts; but Champlain, on whom the command devolved, showed himself every way worthy of the trust. From Tadoussack he removed the principal settlement to Quebec, where he built and fortified a town, reduced the surrounding territory into cultivation, and became the founder of the government of Canada, or New France. Leaving his infant settlement, he next determined to penetrate into the interior; and his emotions of wonder and astonishment may be easily conceived, when, ascending the St. Lawrence, the majestic forests of Canada first met his eye, encircling in their bosom the greatest lakes known to exist in the world. Surveying first the southern bank of the river, and of the Lakes Ontario and

* *Histoire General des Voyages*, vol. xiv. pp. 589, 591.

Erie, he found that he had reached the very cradle of savage life, surrounded by nations whose manners, occupations, and superstitions, were as new as they were bold and terrific.

To pursue the discoveries of the French into the interior of North America does not properly fall within the limits of this work ; and it is sufficient at present to observe, that after a long and sanguinary struggle between the arms of France and England, in the war which broke out in 1756, Canada was at last subdued by the English, and the possession of the province confirmed to Great Britain by the treaty of 1763. During the war between the United States and the mother country, Upper Canada once more became the theatre of an obstinate contest, which concluded, however, unfavourably for the American troops ; and the country has since remained an integral part of the British dominions. Under the French, the fur-trade, notwithstanding the restrictions with which commerce was oppressed, was carried to a great height, and embraced an immense extent of country. It was conducted by a set of hardy adventurers, who joined the savages in their hunting-parties, and thus collected large cargoes of furs, with which they supplied the merchants. Their distant inland expeditions sometimes occupied twelve or even eighteen months ; and during this period their uninterrupted familiarity with the natives almost transformed them into as wild and barbarous a condition as that of the tribes with whom they associated. " It requires less time," says Sir Alexander Mackenzie, " for a civilized people to deviate into the manners and customs of savage life, than for savages to rise into a state of civilization. Such was the event with those who thus accompanied the natives on their hunting and trading excursions ; for they became so attached to the Indian mode of life, that they lost all relish for their former

habits and native homes. Hence they derived the title of *Coueurs de Bois*, became a kind of pedlars, and were extremely useful to the merchants engaged in the fur trade, who gave them the necessary credit to proceed on their commercial undertakings. Three or four of these people would join their stock, put their property into a birch-bark canoe, which they worked themselves, and would then either accompany the natives in their excursions, or penetrate at once into the country. At length these voyages extended to twelve or fifteen months, when they returned with rich cargoes of furs, and followed by great numbers of the natives. During the short time requisite to settle their accounts with the merchants, and procure fresh credit, they generally contrived to squander away all their gains, when they returned to renew their favourite mode of life, their views being answered, and their labour sufficiently rewarded, by indulging themselves in extravagance and dissipation during the short space of one month in twelve or fifteen. This indifference about amassing property, and the pleasure of living free from all restraint, soon brought on a licentiousness of manners, which could not long escape the vigilant observation of the missionaries, who had much reason to complain of their being a disgrace to the Christian religion, by not only swerving from its duties themselves, but bringing it into disrepute with those of the natives who had become converts to it, and consequently obstructing the great object to which these pious men had devoted their lives. They therefore exerted their influence to procure the suppression of these people; and accordingly no one was allowed to go up the country to traffic with the Indians without a license from the French Government." * This change of system was not at first attended with the

* Sir Alexander Mackenzie's *History of the Fur Trade*, prefixed to his *Voyages*, pp. 1-3.

expected benefits; for the licenses were sold in most instances to retired officers or their widows, who again disposed of them to the fur merchants, and they of necessity recalled to their service the Coureurs de Bois as their agents: thus matters assumed, though by a somewhat more circuitous process, the same aspect as before. At last military posts were established at the confluence of the great lakes, which repressed the excesses of the wood-runners, and afforded protection to the trade; whilst under this new system, a body of respectable men, usually retired officers, introduced order and regularity in the traffic with the natives, co-operated with the efforts of the missionaries, and extended their intercourse with the various tribes to the distance of two thousand five hundred miles, from the most civilized portion of the colony to the banks of the Saskatchewan River in 53° north latitude, and longitude 102° west.* Of these trading commanders two individuals attempted to penetrate to the Pacific Ocean, but appear to have been unsuccessful.

The discoveries of the English in Hudson's Bay, and the latest attempts of Fox and James to reach the Pacific through some of its unexplored channels, have been sufficiently enlarged upon in a former volume;† but though unsuccessful in their great design, the accounts brought home regarding the rich furs of these extreme northern shores excited the attention of Grosseliez, an enterprising individual, who undertook a voyage to survey the country, and laid before the French Government a proposal for a commercial settlement upon the coast. The minister, however, rejected it as visionary; and Grosseliez, having obtained an introduction to Mr. Montagu, the English resident at Paris, was introduced to Prince Rupert, who,

* Mackenzie's Travels, Gen. Hist. of the Fur Trade, p. 6.

† Polar Seas and Regions, chap. vi.

struck by the probable advantages of the project, eagerly patronized it. By his interest with the English king, he obtained the grant of a ship commanded by Captain Zachariah Gillam, who sailed with Grosseliez in 1668, and, penetrating to the top of James' Bay, erected Fort Charles on the bank of the Rupert River. In the succeeding year, Prince Rupert, with seventeen other persons, were incorporated into a company, and obtained an exclusive right to establish settlements and carry on trade in Hudson's Bay. Their charter recites, that those adventurers having at their own great cost undertaken an expedition to Hudson's Bay, in order to discover a new passage into the South Sea, and to find a trade for furs, minerals, and other commodities, and having made such discoveries as encouraged them to proceed in their design, his Majesty granted to them and their heirs, under the name of "the Governor and Company of Adventurers trading into Hudson's Bay," the power of holding and alienating lands, and the sole right of trade in Hudson's Strait, and with the territories upon the coasts of the same. They were authorized to fit out ships of war, to erect forts, make reprisals, and send home all English subjects entering the bay without their license, and to declare war and make peace with any prince or people not Christian.*

Instituted with such ample powers, and at first placed under the management of enlightened men, this company soon arrived at considerable prosperity. They have, indeed, been severely censured, as exhibiting little zeal to promote discovery, and for uniformly opposing every attempt on the part of their servants to solve the long-agitated question of a north-west passage. There appears to have been much personal pique in these accusations; and the expedition of Knight, in 1721, fitted out on the most liberal scale at the

* Macpherson's *Annals of Commerce*, vol. ii. pp. 555, 556.

company's expense, and the tenor of their original instructions to their governor, certainly prove that they were not enemies to the cause of discovery; whilst the failure of the voyages of Middleton in 1742, and of Captains Moore and Smith in 1746, must at length have convinced the bitterest opponents of the company, that if they had not discovered the long-expected passage in some of the straits leading into Hudson's Bay, it was for the very sufficient reason that such did not exist. But the most remarkable refutation of these allegations is to be found in the important and interesting journey of Hearne, from Prince of Wales' Fort to the Northern Ocean, brought to a successful termination in 1772, which, in its origin and progress, merits our particular attention.

The native Indians, who range over rather than inhabit the large tract of country north of Churchill River, having repeatedly brought specimens of copper ore to the company's factory, it was plausibly conjectured that these had been found not far from the British settlements; and as the savages affirmed that the mines were not very distant from a large river, it was imagined, most erroneously as was proved by the result, that this stream must empty itself into Hudson's Bay. In 1768, the Indians, who came to trade at Prince of Wales' Fort, brought farther accounts of this river, exhibiting at the same time samples of copper, which they affirmed to be the produce of a mine in its vicinity. The governor now resolved to despatch an intelligent person across the continent to obtain more precise information. Samuel Hearne was chosen for this service, a man of great hardihood and sagacity, bred in the employment of the company, and who, without pretensions to high scientific attainments, possessed sufficient knowledge to enable him to construct a chart of the country through which he travelled. His instructions directed him to proceed to the

borders of the country of the Athabasca Indians, where it was expected he would meet with a river represented by the Indians to abound with copper ore, and to be so far to the north that in the middle of summer the sun did not set. It was called by the natives Neetha-san-san Dazey, or the Far-off Metal River; and Mr. Hearne was directed to explore its course to the mouth, where he was to determine the latitude and longitude, to ascertain whether it was navigable, and to judge of the practicability of a settlement. He was enjoined also to examine the mines alleged to exist in that district, the nature of the soil and its productions, and to make every inquiry and observation towards discovering the north-west passage.*

On the 6th of November 1769 he set out from Prince of Wales' Fort, Hudson's Bay, upon this perilous journey. He was accompanied by two Englishmen only—Ilbester, a sailor, and Merriman, a landsman; by two of the Home-guard Southern Indians—a name given to those natives residing as servants on the company's plantation, and employed in hunting; and by eight Northern Indians, under the command of Captain Chawchinahaw and Lieutenant Nabyah. He was provided with ammunition for two years, some necessary iron implements, a few knives, tobacco, and other useful articles. As to his personal outfit, his stock consisted simply of the shirt and clothes he wore, one spare coat, a pair of drawers, as much cloth as would make two or three pairs of Indian stockings, and a blanket for his bed. "The nature of travelling long journeys," he observes, "in these countries will not admit of carrying even the most common article of clothing; so that the traveller is obliged to depend on the district he traverses for his dress as well as his sustenance." The baseness and treachery of the

* Hearne's Journey, Introduction, p. 40.

Indians, however, soon put a period to the first journey, and the desertion of Chawchinahaw, with his whole escort, rendered it absolutely necessary for the little party to make the best of their way back to the fort, where they arrived on the 8th of December, after penetrating only two hundred miles into the interior.

It was now determined to resume the expedition with greater precautions against failure. The Indian women who accompanied their husbands in the first journey were left behind, as were the two Englishmen, who had been of little service; and instead of the treacherous Chawchinahaw, Hearne selected an Indian named Connequeesee, who affirmed he was acquainted with the country, having once been near the river, the discovery of which formed one great object of the journey. Attended by this man, along with three Northern Indians and two of the Home-guard natives, the traveller once more set out on the 23d February, whilst the snow was so deep on the top of the ramparts of the fort, that few of the cannon could be seen. After undergoing the severest extremities from hunger and fatigue, Mr. Hearne reached in August the River Doobaunt, in latitude $63^{\circ} 10'$ north. The progress thus far, however, had been painful beyond measure, owing to the difficulty of pushing forward through a wild unexplored country, intersected with rivers, lakes, and woods, at the outset thickly covered with snow; and on the approach of the warmer months so flooded and marshy, as to render travelling on foot inexpressibly fatiguing. To add to this, the voracity, improvidence, and indolence of the Indians, subjected the party to repeated distress. If from fishing or hunting a larger supply than usual was procured, instead of using it with moderation, and laying up a store for future necessities, all was devoured by the savages, who, like the boa after he has gorged his prey, coiled themselves up, and remained

in a state of sleepy torpor till the call of hunger again roused them to activity.

At first the party subsisted without difficulty on the fish which abounded in the lakes and rivers; but in the beginning of April they entirely disappeared; and as the "goose season," or period when the geese, swans, ducks, and other migratory birds, resort to these latitudes, was yet distant, they began to suffer grievously from want of provisions. Occasionally they were relieved by killing a few deer or musk-oxen; but the ground and the brushwood were so saturated with moisture from the melting of the snow, that to kindle a fire was impossible. With their clothes drenched in rain, and their spirits depressed, they were compelled to eat their meat raw—a necessity grievous at all times, but in the case of the flesh of the musk-ox, which is rank, tough, and strongly impregnated with the sickening substance from which it derives its name, peculiarly repulsive and unwholesome.*

The simple and modest manner in which these severe sufferings are described by Hearne is peculiarly striking. "To record," says he, "in detail each day's fare since the commencement of this journey, would be little more than a dull repetition of the same occurrences. A sufficient idea of it may be given in a few words, by observing that it may justly be said to have been either all feasting or all famine; sometimes we had too much, seldom just enough, frequently too little, and often none at all. It will be only necessary to say, that we fasted many times two whole days and nights, twice upwards of three days, and once, while at Shenanhee, near seven days, during which we tasted not a mouthful of anything, except a few cranberries, water, scraps of old leather, and burnt bones." On these pressing

* Hearne's Journey, p. 31.

occasions, Hearne often saw the Indians examine their wardrobe, which consisted chiefly of skin clothing, considering attentively what part could best be spared, when sometimes a piece of half-rotten deer-skin, and at others a pair of old shoes, would be sacrificed to alleviate extreme hunger. "None of our natural wants," he observes, "if we except thirst, are so distressing or hard to endure as hunger, and in wandering situations like that which I now experienced, the hardship is greatly aggravated by the uncertainty with regard to its duration, and the means most proper to be used to remove it, as well as by the labour and fatigue we must necessarily undergo for that purpose, and the disappointments which too frequently frustrated our best concerted plans and most strenuous exertions. It not only enfeebles the body, but depresses the spirits, in spite of every effort to prevent it. Besides which, for want of action, the stomach so far loses its digestive powers, that, after long fasting, it resumes its office with pain and reluctance. During this journey I have too frequently experienced the dreadful effects of this calamity, and more than once been reduced to so low a state by hunger and fatigue, that when Providence threw anything in my way, my stomach has been scarcely able to retain more than two or three ounces without producing the most oppressive pain."*

On 30th June they arrived at a small river called Cathawhachaga, which empties itself into White Snow Lake, in 64° north latitude. Here, as the guide declared they could not that summer reach the Coppermine River, Hearne determined to pass the winter, with the intention of pushing on to his destination in 1771. They accordingly forsook their northward route, and taking a westerly course, were joined in a few days by many troops of wandering Indians ;

* Hearne's Journey, p. 33.

so that by the 30th July they mustered about seventy tents, containing nearly six hundred souls, and on moving in the morning the whole ground seemed alive with men, women, children, and dogs. The deer were so plenty that, though lately five or six individuals had almost perished from hunger, this numerous body supported themselves with great ease, and often killed their game for the skins, leaving the carcass to be devoured by the foxes.* In this manner, engaged alternately in hunting and fishing, making observations on the country, and studying the extraordinary manners of his associates, the English traveller was preparing for his winter sojourn, when an accident rendered his quadrant useless, and compelled him, on 13th August, to set out on his return to the fort.

The hardships he endured on his route homeward were various and accumulated: He was plundered by the Northern Indians, who, adding insult to injury, entered his tent, smoked a pipe which they filled with the white man's tobacco, asked to see his luggage, and without waiting for an answer, turned the bag inside out, and spread every article on the ground. The work of appropriation was equally rapid, and the empty bag was flung to the owner; but a fit of compunction seizing them, they restored a knife, an awl, and a needle. On begging hard for his razors, they consented to give up one, and added enough of soap to shave him during the remainder of his journey, making him understand that the surrender of these articles called for his warmest gratitude.

As the cold weather approached, the party thus plundered suffered grievously from want of that warm deer-skin clothing used by the Indians at this season. A dress of this kind is rather costly, requiring the prime parts of from

* Hearne's Journey, p. 40.

eight to eleven skins. These Hearne at last managed to collect; but as the Indian women alone could prepare them, he was compelled to carry this load along with him from day to day, earnestly begging the natives at each successive resting-place to permit their wives to dress his skins. He met, however, with a surly and uniform refusal; and at last, after bearing the burden for several weeks, was forced to throw it off, and sustain the cold as he best could, without either skin-clothing or snow-shoes. When continuing their course in this forlorn condition to the south-east, they met with Captain Matonabbee, a powerful and intelligent chief, who was then on his way to Prince of Wales' Fort with furs and other articles of trade. It was this person who brought the accounts of the Coppermine River, which induced the company to fit out the expedition, and he was naturally interested in its success. He evinced the utmost activity in relieving their wants, furnished them with a warm suit of otter and other skins; and, not being able to provide them with snow-shoes, directed them to a small range of woods, where they found materials for both shoes and sledges. Matonabbee then treated the party to a feast, and took occasion, in his conversation with Hearne, to explain the causes of his failure, and to offer his assistance in a third expedition. He attributed all their misfortunes to the misconduct of the guide, and to their having no women with them. "In an expedition of this kind," said he, "when all the men are so heavily laden that they neither can hunt nor travel to any considerable distance, in case they meet with success in hunting, who is to carry the produce of their labour? Women were made for labour; one of them can carry or haul as much as two men can do. They also pitch our tents, make and mend our clothing, keep us warm at night; and, in fact, there is no such thing as travelling any considerable dis-

tance, or for any length of time, in this country without them; and yet though they do everything, they are maintained at a trifling expense; for, as they always act the cook, the very licking of their fingers in scarce times is sufficient for their subsistence."* Assisted by this friendly chief, the English traveller again set forward, and after experiencing an intense degree of cold, by which the favourite dog in his sledge was frozen to death, he reached the fort on 25th November, having been absent eight months and twenty-two days. Matonabbee arrived a few days after.

Though twice compelled to return, Hearne, whose spirit was not to be overcome by fatigue or disappointment, offered his services to proceed on a third journey, which was ultimately crowned with success. For this he engaged Matonabbee as guide, and declined taking any Home-guard Indians. Their place, however, was occupied according to the principles already laid down, by seven of Matonabbee's wives, who, by the assistance they afforded, did no disparagement to the singular picture of female activity which he had drawn. They set out on the 7th of December, and notwithstanding frequent privations, want of food, and intense cold, their sufferings were not so aggravated as in the former attempts. The country through which they passed towards the west was wild and barren, occasionally covered with thick shrubby woods of stunted pine and dwarf juniper, studded with frequent lakes and swamps whose sides were fringed with willows. Through this ground they travelled in high spirits, but rather on short commons, owing to the scarcity of deer and the improvidence of the Indians, who consumed everything in the store during the first days of their march, trusting to find

* Hearne's Journey, p. 55.

a stock of provisions which they had hid in a certain spot on their way to the fort. On reaching the place, however, they discovered that the provisions had been carried off; and the equanimity with which the Indians bore the disappointment, and travelled forward under the conjoined miseries of hunger and fatigue, was very striking. At last they succeeded in killing a few deer, and halted to take some refreshment. For a whole day they never ceased eating, and an additional repast on two large buck-deer, which they killed a few days after, at last fairly overcame Captain Matonabee, who, after devouring at one sitting as much as would have satisfied six moderate men, seemed somewhat unreasonably astonished to find himself indisposed.

Having recovered from the effects of this surfeit, they proceeded from Island Lake towards the main branch of the Cathawhachaga, which they crossed, and directing their course by Partridge Lake and Snow Bird Lake, arrived on the 2d March at a large tent of Northern Indians, not far from the Doobaunt Whoie River. Although these people had remained in the same spot since the beginning of winter, they found a plentiful subsistence by catching deer in a pound. Their mode of accomplishing this is to select a well-frequented deer-path, and enclose with a strong fence of twisted trees and brushwood a space about a mile in circumference, and sometimes more. The entrance of the pound is not larger than a common gate, and its inside is crowded with innumerable small hedges, in the openings of which are fixed snares of strong well-twisted thongs. One end is generally fastened to a growing tree; and as all the wood and jungle within the enclosure is left standing, its interior forms a complete labyrinth. On each side of the door, a line of small trees, stuck up in the snow fifteen or twenty yards apart, form two sides of an acute angle, widening gradually from the entrance, from which they

sometimes extend two or three miles. Between these rows of brushwood runs the path frequented by the deer. When all things are prepared, the Indians take their station on some eminence commanding a prospect of this path, and the moment any deer are seen going that way, the whole encampment — men, women, and children — steal under cover of the woods till they get behind them. They then show themselves in the open ground, and, drawing up in the form of a crescent, advance with shouts. The deer finding themselves pursued, and at the same time imagining the rows of brushy poles to be people stationed to prevent their passing on either side, run straight forward till they get into the pound. The Indians instantly close in, block up the entrance, and whilst the women and children run round the outside to prevent them from breaking or leaping the fence, the men enter with their spears and bows, and speedily despatch such as are caught in the snares or are running loose.*

M'Lean, a gentleman who spent twenty-five years in the Hudson's Bay territories, assures us that, on one occasion, he and a party of men entrapped and slaughtered in this way a herd of three hundred deer in two hours.

On the 8th of April they reached an island in a small lake named Thelewey-aza-weth, and pitched their tent; and as the deer were numerous, and the party, which had been joined by various wandering Indians, now amounted to seventy persons, they determined to remain for some time, and make preparations for their enterprise in the ensuing summer. They were busily employed during their intervals from hunting, in providing staves of birch about one and a quarter inch square and seven or eight feet long, which served for tent-poles all the summer, and

* Hearne's Journey, p. 78-80.

were converted into snow-shoes in winter. Birch-rind, with timbers and other wood for canoes, formed also objects of attention; and as Clowey, the place fixed upon for building their canoes, was still many miles distant, all the wood was reduced to its proper size, to make it light for carriage. At this place Matonabee solaced himself by purchasing from some Northern Indians another wife, who for size and sinews might have shamed a grenadier. "Take them in a body," says Hearne, "and the Indian women are as destitute of real beauty as those of any nation I ever saw, although there are some few of them when young who are tolerable; but the care of a family, added to their constant hard labour, soon make the most beautiful amongst them look old and wrinkled, even before they are thirty, and several of the more ordinary ones at that age are perfect antidotes to the tender passion. Ask a Northern Indian what is beauty? he will answer, a broad flat face, small eyes, high cheek-bones, three or four broad black lines across each cheek, a low forehead, a large broad chin, a hook nose, and a tawny hide. These beauties are greatly heightened, or at least rendered more valuable, if the possessor is capable of dressing all kinds of skins, and able to carry eight or ten stone in summer, and to haul a far greater weight in winter. Such and similar accomplishments are all that are sought after or expected in an Indian Northern woman. As to their temper, it is of little consequence; for the men have a wonderful facility in making the most stubborn comply with as much alacrity as could be expected from those of the mildest and most obliging turn of mind."*

Before starting from this station, Matonabee took the precaution of sending in advance a small party with the

* Hearne's Journey, pp. 89, 90.

wood and birch-rind; they were directed to press forward to Clowey, a lake near the barren ground, and there build the boat, to be ready upon their arrival. When the journey was about to be resumed, one of the women was taken in labour. The moment the poor creature was delivered, "which," says Hearne, "was not till she had suffered a severe labour of fifty-two hours," the signal was made for setting forward; the mother took her infant on her back, and walked with the rest; and though another person had the humanity to haul her sledge for one day only, she was obliged to carry a considerable load in addition to her little one, and was compelled frequently to wade knee-deep in water and wet snow. Amidst all this, her looks, pale and emaciated, and the moans which burst from her, sufficiently proved the intolerable pain she endured, but produced no effect upon the hard hearts of her husband and his companions. When an Indian woman is taken in labour, a small tent is erected for her, at such a distance from the encampment that her cries cannot be heard, and the other women are her attendants, no male except children in arms ever offering to approach; and even in the most critical cases no assistance is ever given—a conduct arising from the opinion that nature is sufficient to perform all that is necessary. When Hearne informed them of the assistance derived by European women from the skill and attention of regular practitioners, their answer was ironical and characteristic: "No doubt," said they, "the many hump-backs, bandy legs, and other deformities so common amongst you English, are owing to the great skill of the persons who assisted in bringing them into the world, and to the extraordinary care of their nurses afterwards."*

* Hearne's Journey, p. 93.

In eleven days they travelled a distance of eighty-five miles, and on 3d May arrived at Clowey, where they were joined by some strange Indians, and commenced the important business of building their canoes. The party sent ahead for this purpose arrived only two days before, and had made no progress in joining the timbers they had carried along with them. The whole tools used by an Indian in this operation, in making snow-shoes and all other kinds of wood-work, are a hatchet, a knife, a file, and an awl; but in the use of these they are very dexterous. In shape, their canoes bear some resemblance to a weaver's shuttle, having flat-bottoms, with straight upright sides, and sharp at each end. The stern is the widest part, being constructed for the reception of the baggage; and occasionally it admits a second person, who lies at full length in the bottom of the little vessel, which seldom exceeds twelve or thirteen feet in length, and about twenty inches or two feet in breadth at the widest part. The forepart is unnecessarily long and narrow, and covered with birch-bark, which adds to the weight without contributing to the burden of the canoe. The Indians, for the most part, employ a single paddle; double ones like those of the Esquimaux are seldom used unless by hunters, who lie in ambush for the purpose of killing deer as they cross rivers and narrow lakes. Upon the whole, their vessels, though formed of the same materials as those of the Southern Indians, are much smaller and lighter; and, from the extreme simplicity of build, are the best that could be contrived for the necessities of these poor savages, who are frequently obliged to carry them upon their back a hundred and sometimes one hundred and fifty miles, without having occasion to launch them.

At Clowey the expedition was joined by nearly two hundred Indians from various quarters, most of whom

built canoes there; and on the 23d May, Mr. Hearne and Matonabee, whose character and consequence effectually protected the white man from plunder, proceeded northward. For some time they met with no distresses, except those occasioned by the intense cold, which had been preceded by thunder-storms and torrents of rain. Misfortune, however, now attacked Matonabee on the tender side of his eight wives, the handsomest of whom eloped in the night, accompanied by another woman. Both having been carried off by force, it was suspected they had fled to the eastward, with the plan of rejoining their former husbands. Scarce had the savage polygamist recovered from this blow, when he experienced a fresh mortification: An Indian of great strength, from whom Matonabee a short time before had purchased a stout, and therefore valuable wife, insisted on taking her back, unless he instantly surrendered a certain quantity of ammunition, a kettle, some pieces of iron, and other articles. The hardship of this case arose from an extraordinary custom, by which the men are permitted to wrestle for any woman to whom they are attached, the victorious party carrying off the prize. It is for this reason that the greatest emulation prevails in all athletic exercises among the young Indians; and the children are perpetually seen trying their powers in wrestling, under the idea that this is the education which will chiefly benefit them when they grow up. A weak man seldom long retains a wife whose services another wants; for when the help-mates of an able-bodied savage are too heavily laden with furs or provisions, he makes no scruple of seizing the spouse of his weaker neighbour, and transferring part of the burden to her back; whilst, if the injured party cannot challenge the aggressor to a wrestling-match, he must not otherwise complain. The distress, therefore, of Matonabee upon this occasion may be easily accounted for, as he was wounded

in his pride and in his property, if not in his affections. But a personal contest was out of the question, and he was obliged to purchase his favourite over again, by yielding up all that was demanded by his antagonist. This affair had nearly proved a serious obstacle to the expedition; for so bitterly did the chief resent the affront, entertaining the highest ideas of his personal consequence, that he had resolved, like a Coriolanus of the New World, to renounce all farther alliance with his countrymen, and join the Athabasca Indians, among whom he had formerly resided. But Hearne strenuously opposed this project, and at last succeeded in dissuading him from it.*

Having agreed to proceed, Matonabee, for the better prosecution of the enterprise, determined to make some new arrangements: He selected his two youngest wives, who were unencumbered with children, as alone worthy to accompany him, whilst the remainder, with all their luggage and a considerable number of the men, were commanded to await the return of the party from the Coppermine River. This change of plan, however, was not carried through without difficulty. When the hour of separation came, and Matonabee and Hearne set out in the evening of 31st May, a low murmur of lamentation proceeded from the tents of the women who were left behind, which, running through all the notes of increasing grief, at last burst into a loud yell. This continued as long as the party were in sight; nor was it without much angry expostulation that some of them were prevented from following their husbands. The Indians, however, regarded all this, which deeply affected their European associate, with indifference, walking forward without casting behind them a single look or word of sympathy, and joyfully congratulating themselves on

* Hearne's Journey, pp. 111, 112.

getting rid of the women, dogs, children, and other encumbrances, which added so greatly to the toil of the journey. One article they all carried, although to Hearne it appeared unnecessary, considering the expedition to be pacific: this was a target of thin boards two feet broad, and about three feet long. On inquiring for what purpose these shields were to be used, he discovered that the main consideration which reconciled the Indians to this expedition was the hope of attacking and murdering the Esquimaux who frequented the Coppermine River, between whom and the other Indian tribes there had long existed a deadly enmity. All the arguments employed by Hearne were insufficient to dissuade them from these hostile intentions.

The party having crossed the Arctic circle, arrived at Cogead Lake, which they found frozen over; so that they traversed its creeks and bays without the aid of their canoes. Thence they directed their course due north, till they met with a branch of the Congecathawhachaga River, where some Copper Indians received them with great kindness, and readily sent all their canoes to their assistance—a piece of courtesy particularly seasonable, as the ice had now broken up. To these Indians Hearne explained the object of his journey, and his guide being personally known to them, they treated the party, which consisted of one hundred and fifty persons, with distinguished honour. A feast was given, the English traveller smoked with them his calumet of peace, and their chiefs expressed the greatest anxiety that a European settlement should be established in the neighbourhood of the Coppermine River. They acknowledged they had never found the sea at the mouth of the river free from ice; but with singular simplicity seemed to consider this a very trifling objection, observing that the water was always so smooth between the ice and the shore that even small boats could sail there with great

ease; and inferring that what a canoe could do, a large ship must be sure to accomplish. As Hearne was the first white man they had seen, he was surrounded by numbers, who examined him with the utmost minuteness. The result, however, was satisfactory; for they at last pronounced him to be a perfect human being, except in the colour of his hair and eyes. The first, they insisted, was like the stained hair of a buffalo's tail, and the last, being light, were compared to those of a gull. The whiteness of his skin, also, was a circumstance on which they demurred a little, observing that it looked like meat which had been sodden in water till all the blood was extracted. He continued, however, to be viewed with a mixture of curiosity and admiration, and at his toilet was generally attended by a body of the Indians, who, when he used his comb, asked for the hairs which came off. These they carefully wrapped up, saying, "When I see you again, you shall again see your hair."*

On reaching Congecathawhachaga, in latitude $68^{\circ} 46'$ north, Matonabee deemed it expedient to leave all the women, taking the precaution to kill as many deer as were necessary for their support during his absence. The flesh was cut into thin slices and dried in the sun—a frequent mode of preserving it in these high northern latitudes, by which it is kept palatable and nourishing for a twelve-month. Having completed these arrangements, the party resumed their journey on the 1st of July, proceeding amidst dreadful storms of snow, and occasional torrents of rain, which drenched them to the skin, through a barren and desolate country, where it was impossible with the wet moss and green brushwood to kindle a fire. Compelled to take shelter in caves at night—for they had no tents—

* Hearne's Journey, p. 122.

obliged to eat their meat raw, with the enjoyment of no higher luxury than a pipe, they yet pushed forward with unshaken perseverance, and, after a week of great suffering, had the comfort to observe a complete change in the weather, which first became moderate, and soon after so sultry that it was sometimes impossible to move at all.

Early on the morning of the 13th July, the expedition crossed a long chain of hills, from the top of which they discerned a branch that joins the Coppermine, about forty miles from its influx into the sea. Here the Indians killed a few fine buck-deer, procured some excellent firewood, and, as it was not certain that so favourable an opportunity would soon occur again, they sat down with appetites sharpened by long privation, spirits raised by the recollection of hardships overcome, and the almost certain prospect of ere long accomplishing the great object of their expedition, to the most cheerful and comfortable meal they had enjoyed for a long period. The reader will be amused with Hearne's description of this delicious repast, and of the mysteries of Indian cookery:—"As such favourable opportunities of indulging the appetite," says he, "happen but seldom, it is a general rule with the Indians, which we did not neglect, to exert every art in dressing their food which the most refined skill in Indian cooking has been able to invent, and which consists chiefly in boiling, broiling, and roasting; but of all the dishes cooked by these people, a *becatee*, as it is called in their language, is certainly the most delicious (at least for a change) which can be prepared from a deer only, without any other ingredient. It is a kind of Scotch 'haggis,' made with the blood, a good quantity of fat shred small, some of the tenderest of the flesh, together with the heart and lungs, cut, or more commonly torn, into small shivers—all which is put into the stomach and ~~roasted, by being suspended~~ over the fire

by a string. Care must be taken that it does not get too much heat at first, as the bag would thereby be liable to be burnt, and the contents let out. When it is sufficiently done, it will emit a rich steam, in the same manner as a fowl or a joint of meat, which is as much as to say, 'Come, eat me now!' and if it be taken in time, before the blood or the contents are too much done, it is certainly a most delicious morsel, even without pepper, salt, or any other seasoning."*

Having regaled themselves in this sumptuous manner, and taken a few hours' rest, they once more set out, and, after a walk of nine or ten miles, at last arrived at the Coppermine. Scarcely had Hearne congratulated himself on reaching the great object of his mission, unpacked his surveying instruments, and prepared to follow its progress to the great Arctic Ocean, when one of those dark and terrible scenes occurred which are so strikingly characteristic of savage life. As soon as Matonabee and his party gained the banks of the river, three spies were sent out to discover whether any Esquimaux were in the neighbourhood. After a short absence, they returned with intelligence that they had seen five tents, about twelve miles distant, on the west side of the river. All was now warlike preparation: the guns, knives, and spears, were carefully examined; and as they learned that the nature of the ground would render it easy to advance unperceived, it was determined to steal upon their victims in this manner, and put them to death. This plan was executed with the most savage exactness; and nothing could present a more dreadful view of human nature in its unenlightened state, than the perfect unanimity of purpose which pervaded the whole body of Indians upon this horrid occasion, although at other times they were in no respect amenable to discipline.

* Hearne's Journey, p. 144.

Each man first painted his target, some with a representation of the sun, others of the moon, and several with the pictures of beasts and birds of prey, or of imaginary beings, which they affirmed to be the inhabitants of the elements, upon whose assistance they relied for success in their enterprise. They then moved with the utmost stealth in the direction of the tents, taking care not to cross any of the hills which concealed their approach. It was a miserable circumstance that these poor creatures had taken up their abode in such ground that their enemies, without being observed, formed an ambuscade not two hundred yards distant, and lay for some time watching the motions of the Esquimaux, as if marking their victims. Here the last preparations for the attack were made: The Indians tied up their long black hair in a knot behind, lest it should be blown in their eyes; painted their faces black and red, which gave them a hideous aspect; deliberately tucked up the sleeves of their jackets close under the armpits, and pulled off their stockings; whilst some, still more eager to render themselves light for running, threw off their jackets, and stood with their weapons in their hands quite naked, except their breech-clothes and shoes. By the time all were ready it was near one o'clock in the morning; when, finding the Esquimaux quiet, they rushed from their concealment. In an instant, roused by the shouts of the savages, the unfortunate wretches, men, women, and children, ran naked out of the tents, and attempted to escape; but the Indians had surrounded them on the land side, and as none dared to leap into the river, all were murdered in cold blood; whilst Hearne, whom a regard for his personal safety had compelled to accompany the party, stood a short way off rooted to the ground in horror and agony.

"The shrieks and groans of the poor expiring wretches," says he, in his striking account of this dreadful episode in

savage life, "were truly distressing; and my horror was much increased at seeing a young girl, about eighteen years of age, killed so near me that when the first spear was struck into her side she fell down at my feet and twisted round my legs, so that it was with difficulty that I could disengage myself from her dying grasp. As two Indian men pursued this unfortunate victim, I solicited very hard for her life; but the murderers made no reply till they had stuck both their spears through her body, and transfixed her to the ground. They then looked me sternly in the face, and began to ridicule me by asking if I wanted an Esquimaux wife, whilst they paid not the smallest regard to the shrieks and agony of the poor wretch, who was turning round their spears like an eel. Indeed, after receiving from them much abusive language on the occasion, I was at length obliged to desire that they would be more expeditious in despatching their victim out of her misery, otherwise I should be obliged out of pity to assist in the friendly office of putting an end to the existence of a fellow-creature who was so cruelly wounded. On this request being made, one of the Indians hastily drew his spear from the place where it was at first lodged, and pierced it through her breast near the heart. The love of life, however, even in this most miserable state, was so predominant, that though this might be justly called the most merciful act which could be done for the poor creature, it seemed to be unwelcome; for, though much exhausted by pain and loss of blood, she made several efforts to ward off the friendly blow. My situation and the terror of my mind at beholding this butchery cannot easily be conceived, much less described. Though I summoned all the fortitude I was master of on the occasion, it was with difficulty that I could refrain from tears; and I am confident that my features must have feelingly expressed how sincerely I was affected at the barbarous scene I then wit-

nessed. Even at this hour I cannot reflect on the transactions of that horrid day without shedding tears." *

After making an accurate survey of the river till its junction with the sea, Hearne proceeded to one of the copper mines, which he found scarcely to deserve the name, it being nothing more than a chaotic mass of rocks and gravel, rent by an earthquake, or some other convulsion, into numerous fissures, through one of which flowed a small river. Although the Indians had talked in magnificent terms of this mine, after a search of four hours a solitary piece of ore was all that could be discovered; and instead of pointing out the hills entirely composed of copper, and the quantities of rich ore with which they had affirmed it would be easy to freight a large vessel, they now told a ridiculous story of some insults offered to the goddess of the mine, who in revenge declared that she would sit upon it till she and it sunk together into the earth. In consequence of this threat, they next year found her sunk up to the waist, and the quantity of copper much decreased, whilst the following summer she had entirely disappeared, and the whole mine along with her.

In reaching the sea, Hearne had accomplished the great object of his journey, and his homeward route did not vary materially from his course to the Arctic Ocean. On 31st July they arrived at the place where the Indians had left their families, and on 9th August resumed their course to the south-west; travelling, with frequent intervals of rest, till, on 24th November, they reached the northern shore of the great Athabasca Lake. In this latitude, at this season, the sun's course formed an extremely small segment of a circle above the horizon, scarcely rising half-way up the trees; but the brilliancy of the stars, and the vivid and

* Hearne's Journey, pp. 154, 155.

beautiful light emitted by the aurora borealis, even without the aid of the moon, amply compensated for the want of the sun, so that at midnight Hearne could see to read very small print. In the deep stillness of the night, also, these northern meteors were distinctly heard to make a rushing and crackling noise, like the waving of a large flag in a fresh gale of wind.* According to the information of the natives, the Athabasca Lake is nearly one hundred and twenty leagues long from east to west, and twenty wide from north to south. It was beautifully studded with islands, covered with tall poplars, birch, and pines, which were plentifully stocked with deer, and abounded with pike, trout, and barble, besides the species known by the Indians under the names of tittameg, methy, and shees.

The country through which they had hitherto travelled had been extremely barren and hilly, covered with stunted firs and dwarf willows; but it now subsided into a fine plain, occasionally varied with tall woods, and well stocked with buffalo and moose-deer. The party spent some days with much pleasure in hunting; and as the flesh of the younger buffaloes was delicious, their exhausted stock of provisions was seasonably supplied.

The bison or buffalo is, in appearance, one of the most terrific animals in America, and perhaps in the whole world. It roams the boundless prairies in immense herds, and its flesh forms the principal food of the Indian tribes who dwell there; while its hide, covered with long shaggy hair, supplies them with bedding and raiment. It is hunted on foot, but more frequently on horseback, and a more exciting species of chase can scarcely be imagined. Catlin, who spent several years among the Indians at the head-waters of the Missouri, gives many animated accounts

* Hearne's Journey, p. 224.

escaping, with the intention of returning to her own nation; but the great distance, and the numerous winding rivers and creeks she had to pass, caused her to lose the way, and winter coming on, she had built a hut in this secluded spot. When discovered, she was in good health, well fed, and, in the opinion of Hearne, one of the finest Indian women he had ever seen. Five or six inches of hoop made into a knife, and the iron shank of an arrow-head which served as an awl, were the only implements she possessed; and with these she made snow-shoes and other useful articles. For subsistence she snared partridges, rabbits, and squirrels, and had killed two or three beavers and some porcupines. After the few deer-sinews she had brought with her were expended in making snares and sewing her clothing, she supplied their place with the sinews of rabbits' legs, which she twisted together with great dexterity. Thus occupied, she not only became reconciled to her desolate situation, but had found time to amuse herself by manufacturing little pieces of personal ornament. Her clothing was formed of rabbit-skins sewed together; the materials, though rude, being tastefully disposed, so as to make her garb assume a pleasing though desert-bred appearance. The singular circumstances under which she was found, her beauty and useful accomplishments, occasioned a contest among the Indians, as to who should have her for a wife; and the matter being decided, she accompanied them in their journey. On 1st March they left the level country of the Athabascas, and approached the stony hills bounding the territories of the Northern Indians, traversing which they arrived in safety at Prince of Wales' Fort on the 29th of June 1772, having been absent eighteen months and twenty-three days.

The journey of Hearne must be regarded as forming an important era in the geography of America. For some

time it had been supposed that this vast continent extended in an almost unbroken mass towards the Pole; and we find it thus depicted in the maps of that period. The circumstance of Hearne having reached the shore of the great Arctic Ocean at once demonstrated the fallacy of all such ideas. It threw a new and clear light upon the structure of this portion of the globe, and resting upon the results thus distinctly ascertained, the human mind, indefatigable in the pursuit of knowledge, started forward in a career of still more enlarged and interesting discovery.*

Whilst the Hudson's Bay Company, by the mission of Mr. Hearne, vindicated their character from the charge of indifference to the cause of geographical discovery, another institution had arisen, under the title of the North-West Fur Company, which, though it did not rest on a royal charter, and had experienced in its earliest exertions many severe reverses, at last arrived, by the intelligence and perseverance of its partners and servants, at a degree of prosperity which surpassed the chartered companies of France and England. In the counting-house of Mr. Gregory, a partner of this company, was bred a native of Inverness, named Alexander Mackenzie. In conducting the practical details of the fur trade, he had been settled at an early period of life in the country to the north-west of Lake Superior, and became animated with the ambition of penetrating across the continent. For this undertaking he was eminently qualified, possessing an inquisitive and enterprising mind with a strong frame of body, and combining the fervid and excursive genius which has been said to characterize the Scots in general, with that more cautious and enduring temperament which belongs to the northern Highlander.

* Murray's Discoveries and Travels in North America, vol. ii. p. 149.

On 3d June 1789, Mackenzie set out from Fort Chipewyan, at the head of the Athabasca Lake, a station nearly central between Hudson's Bay and the Pacific. He had resided here for eight years, and was familiar with the difficulties of the journey, as well as aware of the most likely methods of surmounting them. He took with him four canoes. In the first he embarked with a German and four Canadians, two of the latter being accompanied by their wives. A Northern Indian, called the English Chief, who had been a follower of Matonabee, the guide of Mr. Hearne, occupied the second, with his two wives. The third was paddled by two stout young Indians, who acted in the double capacity of hunters and interpreters; whilst the fourth was laden with provisions, clothing, ammunition, and various articles intended as presents for the Indians. This last canoe was committed to the charge of Mr. le Roux, one of the company's clerks.

On 4th June the party reached the Slave River, which connects the Athabasca and Slave Lakes, in a course of about one hundred and seventy miles; and on the 9th of the same month they arrived at the Slave Lake, without experiencing any other inconveniences than those arising from the attacks of the mosquitoes during the heat of the day, and the extreme cold in the morning and evening. In the river were frequent rapids, which obliged them to land and transport their canoes and luggage over the carrying-places—a toilsome process, but attended with no danger, as the path had been cleared by the Indians trading with the company. The banks were covered with various kinds of trees; but owing to its inferior level and its rich black soil, the western side was more thickly wooded than the other. On the eastern bank, composed of a yellow clay mixed with gravel, the trees were smaller, but in full leaf, though the ground was not thawed above fourteen inches in depth. At a little

distance from the river were extensive plains frequented by herds of buffaloes; the woods bordering its sides were tenanted by moose and rein-deer; and numerous colonies of beavers built their habitations on the small streams which fed the lake.

The situation of beaver-houses is found to be various. When the animals are numerous, they inhabit lakes, ponds, and rivers, as well as those narrow creeks which connect the lakes together. Generally, however, they prefer flowing waters, probably on account of the advantages presented by the *current* in transporting the materials of their dwellings. They also prefer deepish water; no doubt because it affords a better protection from the frost. It is when they build in small creeks or rivers, the waters of which are liable to dry or be drained off, that they manifest that beautiful instinct with which Providence has gifted them—the formation of dams. These differ in shape, according to their particular localities. When the water has little motion, the dam is almost straight; when the current is considerable, it is curved, with its convexity towards the stream. The materials made use of are drift-wood; green willows, birch, and poplars; also mud and stones intermixed in such a manner as must evidently contribute to the strength of the dam; but there is no particular method observed except that the work is carried on with a regular sweep, and all the parts are made of equal strength. “In places,” says Hearne, “which have been long frequented by beavers undisturbed, their dams, by frequent repairing, become a solid bank, capable of resisting a great force both of ice and water; and as the willow, poplar, and birch, generally take root and shoot up, they by degrees form a kind of regular planted hedge, which I have seen in some places so tall, that birds have built their nests among the branches.”

The beaver-houses are built of the same materials as the dams, and seldom contain more than four old, and six or eight young ones. There is little order or regularity in their structure. It frequently happens that some of the larger houses are found to have one or more partitions, but these are only parts of the main building left by the sagacity of the beavers to support the roof; and the apartments, as some are pleased to consider them, have usually no communication with each other, except by water. Those travellers who assert that the beavers have two doors to their dwellings, one on the land side, and the other next the water, manifest, according to Hearne, even a greater ignorance of the habits of these animals, than those who assign to them an elegant suite of apartments—for such a construction would render their houses of little use, either as a protection from their enemies, or as a covering from the winter's cold.

It is not true that beavers drive stakes into the ground when building their houses; they lay the pieces crosswise and horizontal; neither is it true that the wood-work is first finished and then plastered; for both houses and dams consist from the foundation of a mingled mass of mud and wood, mixed with stones when these can be procured. They carry the mud and stones between their fore-paws, and the wood in their mouths. They always work in the night, and with great expedition. They cover their houses late every autumn with fresh mud, which freezes when the frosts set in, and becomes almost as hard and solid as stone; and thus neither wolves nor wolverenes can disturb their repose. When walking over their work, and especially when about to plunge into the water, they sometimes give a peculiar flap with their tails, which has no doubt occasioned the erroneous belief that they use these organs exactly as a mason uses his trowel. Now, a tame beaver will flap by the fireside,

where there is nothing but dust and ashes; and it therefore only uses the trowel in common with the water-wagtail; in other words, the quadruped, as well as the bird, is characterized by a peculiar motion of its caudal extremity.

The food of this animal consists chiefly of the root of the plant called *Nuphar luteum*, which bears a resemblance to a cabbage-stalk, and grows at the bottom of lakes and rivers. It also gnaws the bark of birch, poplar, and willow trees. In summer, however, a more varied herbage, with the addition of berries, is consumed. When the ice breaks up in the spring, the beavers always leave their houses and rove about until a little before the fall of the leaf, when they return again to their old habitations, and lay in their winter stock of wood. Hearne gives the following account of some tame beavers which belonged to him:—"In cold weather they were kept in my own sitting room, where they were the constant companions of the Indian women and children, and were so fond of their company, that when the Indians were absent for any considerable time, the beavers discovered great signs of uneasiness, and on their return showed equal marks of pleasure, by fondling on them, crawling into their laps, lying on their backs, sitting erect like a squirrel, and behaving like children who see their parents but seldom. In general, during the winter, they lived on the same food as the women did, and were remarkably fond of rice and plum-pudding; they would eat partridges and fresh venison very freely, but I never tried them with fish, though I have heard they will at times prey on them. In fact, there are few graminivorous animals that may not be brought to be carnivorous."

The lake was covered with ice, which had not given way except in a small strip round the shore, where the depth, nowhere exceeding three feet, was scarcely sufficient to float the canoes. Though now the 9th of June, there

was every appearance that the ice would detain the expedition for a considerable time; and it was thought necessary to pitch their tents. The nets were now set; the Indians went off in different directions to hunt; the women gathered berries of various sorts, which abounded in the neighbouring woods; and their larder was soon supplied with plenty of geese, ducks, and beaver, excellent trout, carp, and white fish, and some dozens of swan and duck eggs, which were picked up in an adjacent island. Their stay, therefore, was far from unpleasant, combining the novelty of a residence in a strange country with the excitement and variety of a hunter's life; and on the 15th, after a rest of six days, as the ice had given way a little, they resumed their journey.

Numerous flocks of birds of all kinds flew around them and filled the air with their wild plaintive cries; while, far away, perched on a dead tree, might be seen here and there a solitary owl or an eagle, watching for prey. A large and very impudent bird of this kind which inhabits the American wilderness is the bald-eagle. Fish is its favourite food, and the way in which it obtains it is curious and interesting. "Elevated," says Wilson, "on the high dead limb of some gigantic tree that commands a wide view of the neighbouring shore and ocean, he seems calmly to contemplate the motions of the various feathered tribes that pursue their busy avocations below. The snow-white gulls, slowly winnowing the air; the busy *tringæ*, coursing along the sands; trains of ducks, streaming over the surface; silent and watchful cranes, intent and wading; clamorous crows, and all the winged multitudes that subsist by the bounty of this vast liquid magazine of nature;—high over all these hovers one whose action instantly arrests all his attention. By his wide curvature of wing, and sudden suspension in the air, he knows him to be the fish-hawk,

settling over some devoted victim of the deep. His eye kindles at the sight, and balancing himself, with half-opened wings, on the branch, he watches the result. Down, rapid as an arrow from heaven, descends the object of his attention; the roar of its wings reaching the ear as it disappears in the deep, making the surges foam around! At this moment the eager looks of the eagle are all ardour, and levelling his neck for flight, he sees the fish-hawk once more emerge, struggling with his prey, and mounting in the air with screams of exultation. These are the signal for our hero, who, launching into the air, instantly gives chase, and soon gains on the fish-hawk; each exerts his utmost to mount above the other, displaying in these rencontres the most sublime aerial evolutions. The unencumbered eagle rapidly advances, and is just on the point of reaching his opponent, when, with a sudden scream, probably of despair and honest execration, the latter drops his fish; the eagle, poising himself for a moment, as if to take a more certain aim, descends like a whirlwind, snatches it in his grasp ere it reaches the water, and bears his ill-gotten booty silently away to the woods."*

Since leaving Athabasca, the twilight had been so bright, owing to the short disappearance of the sun below the horizon, that even at midnight not a star was to be seen; but as they glided along the lake they were greeted by the moon, which rose beautifully above the woods, with her lower horn in a state of eclipse. The obscuration continued for about six minutes in a cloudless sky.† Coasting along the shore, they came to a lodge of Red Knife Indians, so denominated from their using copper knives. One of these men engaged to conduct them to the mouth of the river, which was the object of their search; but such were the

* American Ornithology, vol. i. p. 23.

† Mackenzie's Travels, p. 11.

impediments encountered from drift-ice, contrary winds, and the ignorance of the guide, whom the English Chief threatened to murder for engaging in a service for which he was unfit, that it was the 29th of the month before they embarked upon the river since known by the name of the traveller who now first ascended it. On leaving the lake, the Mackenzie River was found to run to the westward, becoming gradually narrower for twenty-four miles, till it diminished into a stream not more than half a mile wide, with a strong current, and a depth of three and a half fathoms. A stiff breeze from the eastward now drove them on at a great rate, and after a rapid run of ten miles, the channel gradually widened till it assumed the appearance of a small lake, which proved to be the utmost limit known to their guide. They now came in sight of the chain of the Horn Mountains, bearing north-west, and had some difficulty in recovering the channel of the river.

Having resumed their course on 1st July, they met with no interruption for five days, when they observed several smokes on the northern bank. On landing they discovered an encampment of five families of Slave and Dog-ribbed Indians, who, on the first appearance of the party, fled into the woods in consternation. The entreaties of the English Chief, whose language they understood, at length dissipated their apprehensions; and the distribution of a few beads, rings, and knives, with a supply of grog, reconciled them entirely to the strangers. Their account of the difficulties in the farther navigation of the river was not a little appalling. They asserted that it would require several winters to reach the sea, and that old age would inevitably overtake the party before their return. Monsters of horrid shapes and malignant disposition were represented as having their abodes in the rocky caves on the banks, ready to devour the presumptuous traveller who approached;

and the more substantial impediment of two impassable falls was said to exist about thirty days' march from where they then were.

Though such tales were treated with contempt by Mackenzie, the Indians, already tired of the voyage, drank them in with willing ears, and they could scarcely be persuaded to pursue their journey. On consenting to proceed, one of the Dog-ribbed Indians was induced, by the present of a kettle, an axe, and some other articles, to accompany them as a guide; but when the time of embarkation arrived, his love of home came upon him with such violence, that he used every artifice to escape from his agreement, and at last was actually forced on board. Previous to his departure, a singular ceremony took place: with great solemnity he cut off a lock of his hair, and dividing it into three parts, fastened one to the upper part of his wife's head, blowing on it thrice with the utmost violence, and uttering certain words as a charm. The other two locks he fixed with the same ceremonies to the heads of his two children. These Indians were in general a meagre, ugly, and ill-favoured race, particularly ill-made in the legs. Some of them wore their hair very long, others allowed a tress to fall behind, cutting the rest short round their ears. A few old men had beards, whilst the young and middle-aged appeared to have pulled out every hair on their chin. Each cheek was adorned by two double lines tattooed from the ear to the nose, of which the gristle was perforated so as to admit a goose-quill or a small piece of wood. Their clothing consisted of dressed deer-skins. For winter wear these were prepared with the fur, and the shirts made of them decorated with a neat embroidery, composed of porcupine-quills and the hair of the moose-deer, coloured red, black, yellow, or white. Their shirts reached to the mid-thigh, whilst their upper garments covered the whole

body, having a fringe round the bottom. Their leggins, which were embroidered round the ankle and sewed to their shoes, reached to mid-thigh. The dress of the women was nearly the same as that of the men. They wore gorgets of horn or wood, and had bracelets of the same materials. On their head was placed a fillet or bandeau, formed of strips of leather, embroidered richly with porcupine-quills, and stuck round with bears' claws or talons of wild fowl. Their belts and garters were neatly constructed of the sinews of wild animals and porcupine-quills. From these belts descended a long fringe composed of strings of leather, and worked round with hair of various colours, and their mittens hung from their neck in a position convenient for the reception of their hands.* Their arms and weapons for the chase were bows and arrows, spears, daggers, and a large club formed of the rein-deer horn, called a pogamagan. The bows were about five or six feet long, with strings of sinews; and flint, iron, or copper, supplied barbs to the arrows. Their spears, nearly six feet long, were pointed with bone, whilst their stone-axes were fastened with cords of green skin to a wooden handle. Their canoes were light, and so small as to carry only one person.

Some of the men wore collars made of the claws of the barren-ground bear, an ornament much coveted and gloried in by them, as being incontestible proof of their courage and prowess in slaying an animal of which Indians generally are exceedingly afraid. It is narrated, that as Keskarrah, an old Indian, was one day seated at the door of his tent near Fort Enterprise, a large bear suddenly made its appearance on the opposite bank of a small stream, and remained stationary for some time, curiously eyeing the old gentleman, and apparently deliberating whether to eat

* Mackenzie's Travels, p. 35-37.

him up at that moment or wait till supper-time. Keskarrah, thinking himself in great jeopardy, and having no one to assist him but a wife as old as himself, immediately gave utterance to the following oration:—"Oh, bear! I never did you any harm; I have always had the highest respect for you and your relations, and never killed any of them except through necessity: go away, good bear, and let me alone, and I promise not to molest you." Bruin instantly took his departure; and the orator, never doubting that he owed his safety to his eloquence, on his arrival at the fort frequently favoured the company with his speech at full length. In the stomach of one of these animals which Dr. Richardson dissected, he found the remains of a seal, a marmot, a large quantity of the long sweet roots of some *Astragali* and *Hedysara*, with some wild berries and a little grass.

On 5th July the party re-embarked. Continuing their course west-south-west, they passed the Great Bear Lake River; and steering through numerous islands, came in sight of a ridge of snowy mountains, frequented, according to their guide, by herds of bears and small white buffaloes. The banks of the river appeared to be pretty thickly peopled; and though at first the natives uniformly attempted to escape, the offer of presents generally brought them back, and procured a seasonable supply of hares, partridges, fish, or rein-deer. The same stories of spirits or manitous which haunted the stream, and of fearful rapids that would dash the canoes to pieces, were repeated by these tribes; and the guide, upon whom such representations had a powerful effect, decamped in the night during a storm of thunder and lightning. His place, however, was soon supplied; and, after a short sail, they approached an encampment of Indians, whose brawny figures, healthy appearance, and great cleanliness, showed them to be a superior race to

those lately passed. From them Mackenzie learnt that he must sleep ten nights before arriving at the sea, and in three nights would meet the Esquimaux, with whom they had been formerly at war, but were now in a state of peace. One of these people, whose language was most intelligible to the interpreter, agreed to accompany the party, but became dreadfully alarmed when some of the men discharged their fowling-pieces. It was evident none of this race had ever heard the report of fire-arms. To reconcile him to his departure, his two brothers followed in their canoes, and diverted him with native songs, and other airs said to be imitations of those of the Esquimaux. The triumph of music was never more strikingly exhibited; from deep dejection the Indian at once passed into a state of the highest and most ludicrous excitement, keeping time to the songs by a variety of grotesque gesticulations, performed with such unceasing rapidity, and so little regard to the slenderness of the bark, which quivered under his weight, that they expected every moment to see it upset. In one of his paroxysms, shooting his canoe alongside of Mackenzie's, he leaped into it, and commenced an Esquimaux dance. At last he was restored to some degree of composure, which became complete on their passing a hill, where he informed them that three winters ago the Esquimaux had slain his grandfather.*

Mackenzie soon after reached the tents of a tribe named Deguthee-Dinees, or Quarrellers, who justified their name by the menacing gestures with which they received the strangers' approach. A few presents, however, reconciled them to the intrusion; and they communicated the gratifying intelligence that the distance overland to the sea, either by an easterly or westerly route, was inconsiderable. The

* Mackenzie's Travels, p. 51.

party now pushed on with renewed hopes; and the river soon after separating into several streams, they chose the middle and largest, which ran north. This shortly brought in sight a range of snowy mountains, stretching far to the northward; and, by an observation, Mackenzie found the latitude to be $67^{\circ} 47'$, which convinced him that the waters on which their frail barks were then gliding must flow into the great Hyperborean Ocean.* At this moment, when within a few days of accomplishing the great object of their journey, the Indians sunk into a fit of despondency, and hesitated to proceed. The guide pleaded his ignorance of the country, as he had never before penetrated to the shores of the Benahulla Toe, or White Man's Lake. Mackenzie assured them he would return if they did not reach it in seven days, and prevailed on them to continue their course.

It was now the 11th of July, and the sun at midnight was still considerably above the horizon, whilst everything denoted the proximity of the sea. On landing at a deserted encampment, still marked by the ashes of some Esquimaux fires, they observed several pieces of whale-bone, and a place where train-oil had been spilt. Soon after they came to three houses recently left by the natives. The ground-plot of these habitations was oval, about fifteen feet long, ten feet wide in the middle, and eight feet at either end; the whole was dug about twelve inches below the surface, one-half being covered with willow-branches, and probably forming the bed of the whole family. In the middle of the other half, a space four feet wide, which had been hollowed to the depth of twelve inches, was the only spot where a grown person could stand upright. One side of it was covered with willow-branches, and the other

* Mackenzie's Travels, p. 54.

formed the hearth. The door, in one end of the house, was about two feet and a half high by two feet wide, and was reached through a covered way about five feet long; so that the only access to this curious dwelling was by creeping on all fours. On the top was an orifice about eighteen inches square, which served the triple purpose of a window, a chimney, and an occasional door. The under ground part of the floor was lined with split wood, whilst cross pieces of timber, laid on six or eight upright stakes, supported an oblong square roof; the whole being formed of drift-wood, and covered with branches and dry grass, over which was spread earth a foot thick. On either side of these houses were a few square holes, about two feet deep, covered with split wood and earth, excepting one small place in the middle, which appeared to be contrived for the preservation of the winter stock of provisions. In and about the houses lay sledge-runners, and bones, pieces of whalebone, and poplar-bark cut in circles, used evidently to buoy the nets; and before each habitation a great number of stumps of trees were driven into the ground, upon which its late possessors had probably hung their nets and fish to dry in the sun.

The signs of vegetation were by this time scarcely perceptible; the trees had dwindled into a few dwarf willows, not more than three feet high; and though the foot-marks on the sandy beach of some of the islands showed that the natives had recently been there, all attempts to obtain a sight of them proved unavailing. The discontent of the guide and of the Indian hunters was now renewed; but their assertion that on the morrow they were to reach a large lake in which the Esquimaux killed a huge fish, and whose shores were inhabited by white bears, convinced Mackenzie that this description referred to the Arctic Sea, with its mighty denizen, the whale. He accordingly pressed

forward with fresh ardour, and the canoes were soon carried by the current to the entrance of the lake, which, from all the accompanying circumstances, appears to have been an arm of the Arctic Ocean. It was quite open to the westward, and by an observation the latitude was found to be 69° . From the spot where this survey was taken, they now continued their course to the westernmost point of a high island, which they reached after a run of fifteen miles, and around it the utmost depth of water was only five feet. The lake appeared to be covered with ice for about two leagues' distance, no land was seen ahead, and it was found impossible to proceed farther. Happily, when they had thus reached the farthest point of their progress northward, and were about to return in great disappointment, two circumstances occurred which rendered it certain that they had penetrated to the sea: The first was the appearance of many large floating substances in the water, believed at first to be masses of ice, which, on being approached, turned out to be whales; and the second, the rise and fall of the tide, observed both at the eastern and western end of the island, which they named Whale Island.* Having, in company with the English Chief, ascended to its highest ground, Mackenzie saw the solid ice extending to the eastward; and to the west, as far as the eye could reach, they dimly discerned a chain of mountains apparently about twenty leagues' distance, stretching to the northward. Many islands were seen to the eastward; but though they came to a grave, on which lay a bow, a paddle, and a spear, they met no living human beings in these arctic solitudes. The red-fox and the rein-deer, flocks of beautiful plovers, some venerable white owls, and several large white gulls, were the only natives. Previous to

* Mackenzie, pp. 64, 65.

setting out on their return, a post was erected close to the tents, upon which the traveller engraved the latitude of the place, his own name, the number of persons by whom he was accompanied, and the time they had spent on the island.

It was now the 16th of July, and they re-embarked on their homeward voyage. On the 21st the sun, which for some time had never set, descended below the horizon, and the same day eleven of the natives joined them. They represented their tribe as numerous, and perpetually at war with the Esquimaux, who had broken a treaty into which they had inveigled the Indians, and butchered many of them. Occasionally a strong body ascended the river in large canoes, in search of flints to point their spears and arrows. At present they were on the banks of a lake to the eastward, hunting rein-deer, and would soon begin to catch big fish (whales) for their winter stock. They had been informed that the same Esquimaux, eight or ten winters ago, saw to the westward, on White Man's Lake, several large canoes full of white men, who gave iron in exchange for leather. On landing at a lodge of natives farther down the river, the English Chief obtained some other particulars from a Dog-ribbed Indian, who had been driven by some private quarrel from his own nation, and lived among the Hare Indians. According to his information, there was a much larger river to the south-west of the mountains, which fell into White Man's Lake. The people on its banks were a gigantic and wicked race, who could kill common men with their eyes, and sailed in huge canoes. There was, he added, no known communication by water with this great river; but those who had seen it went over the mountains, and it flowed towards the mid-day sun. This description proceeded, he acknowledged, not from personal observation, but was taken from the report of others who inhabited the opposite mountains. Mackenzie

having fallen in with one of these strangers, by a bribe of some beads prevailed upon him to delineate the circumjacent country and the course of the unknown river upon the sand. The map proved a very rude production. He traced out a long point of land between the rivers without paying the least attention to the courses. This isthmus he represented as running into the great lake, at the extremity of which, as he had been told by Indians of other nations, there was built a Benahulla Couin, or White Man's Fort. "This," says Mackenzie, "I took to be Oonalaska Fort, and consequently the river to the west to be Cook's River, and that the body of water or sea into which the river discharges itself at Whale Island communicated with Norton Sound."

Mackenzie now endeavoured to procure a guide across the mountains, but the natives steadily refused; and any additional intelligence which they communicated regarding the country only consisted of legends concerning the supernatural power and ferocity of its inhabitants. They were represented as a sort of monsters with wings, who fed on huge birds which, though killed by them with ease, no other mortal would venture to assail. Having gravely stated this, they began, both young and old, to jump and dance with astonishing violence and perseverance, imitating the cries of the rein-deer, bear, and wolf, in the hope of intimidating Mackenzie; but when he threatened with an angry aspect to force one of them along with him across the mountains, a sudden fit of sickness seized the whole party, and in a faint tone, which formed a ludicrous contrast to their former vociferation, they declared they would expire the instant they were taken from their homes. In the end, the traveller was compelled to leave them without accomplishing his object.*

* Mackenzie, p. 87.

On 1st August, as the expedition approached the River of the Bear Lake, the stars, which hitherto, from the extreme clearness of the twilight, had continued invisible, began to twinkle in the sky, and the air from being oppressively sultry became so cold, that perpetual exercise could scarcely keep the men warm. At nights they lay shivering and wakeful, looking up into the cold sky, or dreamily listening to the solemn cry of the horned-owl. This ill-omened bird of darkness seldom fails to serenade the arctic traveller during the silent hours of night. "Its loud nocturnal cries," says Dr. Richardson, "issuing from the gloomiest recesses of the forest, are said to bear a resemblance to a hollow and sepulchral human voice, and have thus been the frequent source of alarm to the benighted traveller. A party of Scottish Highlanders, in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, happened in a winter journey to encamp after nightfall in a dense clump of trees, the dark tops of which, and their lofty stems, gave a solemnity to the scene, strongly excitable of superstitious feelings. The solemn effect was heightened by the discovery of a tomb, which, with a natural taste not unfrequently exhibited by the Indians, was placed in the centre of this secluded spot. The travellers had finished their evening repast, and were trimming their fire for the night, when for the first time the slow and dismal tones of the horned-owl fell on their ear. They at once concluded that a voice so mysterious and unearthly must be the moaning spirit of the departed, whose hallowed fane they had disturbed by inadvertently making a fire of the timber of his tomb. They consequently passed a long night of sleepless fear, and gladly quitted the ill-omened spot with the earliest dawn." The women were now constantly employed in making shoes of moose-skin, as a pair did not last more than a day, whilst the hunters brought in supplies of geese, rein-deer, and beaver; and on

one occasion a wolf was killed, roasted, and eaten with great satisfaction. On 22d August they reached the entrance of the Slave Lake, after which their progress homeward presented no feature of interest, and on 12th September they arrived in safety at Fort Chepewyan, after an absence of one hundred and two days. The importance of this journey must be apparent, on considering it in connection with the expedition of Hearne. Both travellers had succeeded in reaching the shores of an arctic sea; and it became not only an established fact that there was an ocean of great extent in the north of America, but it was rendered extremely probable that this sea formed its continuous boundary.

Mackenzie concluded his first journey in September 1789, and about three years afterwards undertook a second expedition, which proved still more difficult and hazardous, and equally important and satisfactory in its results. His object was to ascend the Peace River, which rises in the Rocky Mountains, and crossing these, to penetrate to that unknown river which in his former journey had been the subject of his unwearied inquiry. This he conjectured must communicate with the sea; and, pursuing its course, he hoped to reach the shores of the Pacific. Setting out accordingly on 10th October 1792, he pushed on to the remotest European settlement, where he spent the winter in a traffic for furs with the Beaver and Rocky Indians. Having despatched six canoes to Fort Chepewyan with the cargo he had collected, he engaged hunters and interpreters, and launched the canoe in which he had determined to prosecute his discoveries. Her dimensions were twenty-five feet long within, exclusive of the curves of stem and stern, twenty-six inches hold, and four feet nine inches beam. She was at the same time so light, that two men could carry her three or four miles without resting. In this

slender vessel they not only stowed away their provisions, presents, arms, ammunition, and baggage, to the weight of three thousand pounds, but found room for seven Europeans, two Indians, and the leader himself. On embarking, the winter interpreter left in charge of the fort could not refrain from tears when he anticipated the dangers they were about to encounter, whilst they themselves fervently offered up their prayers to Almighty God for a safe return.

The commencement of their voyage was propitious; and under a serene sky, with a keen but healthy air, the bark glided through some beautiful scenery. On the west side of the river the ground rose in a gently-ascending lawn, broken at intervals by abrupt precipices, and extending in a rich woodland perspective as far as the eye could reach. This magnificent amphitheatre presented groves of poplar in every direction, whose openings were enlivened with herds of elks and buffaloes; the former choosing the steeps and uplands, the latter preferring the plains. At this time the buffaloes were attended by their young ones, which frisked about, whilst the female elks were great with young. The whole country displayed an exuberant verdure; the trees which bore blossoms were rapidly bursting into flower, and the soft velvet rind of the branches reflected the oblique rays of a rising or a setting sun, imparting a cheerfulness and brilliancy to the scene, which gladdened the heart with the buoyant influences of the season.* “The transition,” says Dr. Richardson, “is so sudden from the perfect repose, the deathlike silence of an Arctic winter, to the animated bustle of summer; the trees spread their foliage with such magical rapidity, and every succeeding morning opens with such agreeable accessions of feathered songsters to swell the chorus—their plumage as gay and unimpaired as when

* Mackenzie's Travels, pp. 154, 155.

they enlivened the deep green forests of tropical climes—that the return of a northern spring excites in the mind a deep feeling of the beauties of the season, a sense of the bounty and providence of the Supreme Being, which is cheaply purchased by the tedium of nine months of winter. The most verdant lawns and cultivated glades of Europe, the most beautiful productions of art, fail in producing that exhilaration and joyous buoyancy of mind which we have experienced in treading the wilds of Arctic America, when their snowy covering has been just replaced by an infant but vigorous vegetation. It is impossible for the traveller to refrain, at such moments, from joining his aspirations to the song which every creature around is pouring forth to the Great Creator.” After a few days the air became colder, the country more desolate, and the weather was occasionally broken by storms of thunder and lightning. The track of a large grizzly bear was discerned on the banks. The Indians treat this monster of the woods with considerably more respect than they do most other animals, owing to his great ferocity, and the readiness with which he resents an insult, or accepts a challenge. An amusing adventure occurred to Catlin one morning after he had passed the night on the banks of the Missouri. “In the morning,” says he, “before sunrise, as usual, Bogard (who was a Yankee, and a wide-awake fellow, just retiring from a ten years’ siege of hunting and trapping in the Rocky Mountains) thrust his head out from under the robe, rubbed his eyes open, and exclaimed as he grasped for his gun, ‘By darn, look at old Cale, will you!’ Ba’tiste, who was fonder of his dreams, snored away, muttering something that I could not understand, when Bogard seized him with a grip that instantly shook off his iron slumbers. I rose at the same time, and all eyes were turned at once upon *Caleb* (as the grizzly bear is familiarly called by the

trappers in the Rocky Mountains—or more often ‘*Cale*,’ for brevity’s sake). She was sitting up in the dignity and fury of her sex, within a few rods, and gazing upon us, with her two little cubs at her side! Here was a fix, and a subject for the painter; but I had no time to sketch it. I turned my eyes to the canoe, which had been fastened to the shore a few paces from us, and saw that everything had been pawed out of it, and all eatables had been without ceremony devoured. My packages of dresses and Indian curiosities had been drawn out upon the banks, and deliberately opened and inspected. Everything had been scraped and pawed out to the bottom of the canoe; and even the raw-hide thong with which it was tied to a stake, had been chewed, and, no doubt, swallowed, as there was no trace of it remaining. Nor was this peep into the secrets of our luggage enough for her insatiable curiosity: we saw by the prints of her huge paws that were left in the ground, that she had been perambulating our humble mattresses, smelling at our toes and noses, without choosing to molest us—verifying a trite saying of the country, ‘that man lying down is *medicine* (*i. e.*, mystery) to the grizzly bear,’ though it is a well-known fact that man and beast, upon their feet, are sure to be attacked when they cross the path of this monster, which is the terror of all the country, often growing to the enormous size of eight hundred or one thousand pounds. Whilst we sat in the dilemma which I have just described, each one was hastily preparing his weapons for defence, when I proposed the mode of attack; by which means I was in hopes to destroy her, capture the young ones, and bring her skin home as a trophy. My plans, however, entirely failed, though we were well armed; for Bogard and Ba’tiste both remonstrated with a vehemence that was irresistible, saying that the standing rule in the mountains was ‘never to fight Caleb except in self-

defence.' I was almost induced, however, to attack her alone, with my rifle in hand and a pair of heavy pistols, and a tomahawk and scalping-knife in my belt, when Ba'tiste suddenly thrust his arm over my shoulder, and, pointing in another direction, exclaimed in an emphatic tone, 'voila! voila! un corps de reserve, Monsr. Cataline, voila sa mari!' to which Bogard added, 'These darned animals are too much for us, we had better be off!' at which my courage cooled, and we packed up and re-embarked as fast as possible, giving each one of them the contents of our rifles as we drifted off in the current."*

From this time till the 21st of May, the passage was attended with difficulties that would have disheartened a less energetic leader. The river being broken by frequent cascades and dangerous rapids, it was necessary to carry the canoe and luggage till they could resume their voyage in safety. On their nearer approach to the Rocky Mountains, the stream, hemmed in between stupendous rocks, presented a continuance of frightful torrents and impracticable cataracts. The dangers to which they had already been exposed had greatly disheartened the men, and they began to murmur audibly, so that no alternative was left but to return. Indeed, there was some reason for this irresolution: by water farther progress was impossible, and they could only advance over a mountain whose sides were broken by sharp jagged rocks, and thickly covered with wood. Mackenzie despatched a reconnoitring party, with orders to ascend the mountain, and proceed in a straight course from its summit, keeping the line of the river till they ascertained that it was navigable. During their absence his people repaired the canoe, whilst he took an altitude which ascertained the latitude to be $56^{\circ} 8'$. At

* Catlin's North American Indians, vol. i. pp. 71, 72.

at sunset the scouts returned by different routes. They had penetrated through thick woods, ascended hills, and dived into valleys till they got beyond the rapids, and agreed, that though the difficulties to be encountered by land were alarming, it was their only course. Unpromising as the task appeared, their spirits had risen, and their murmurs were forgotten; so that a kettle of wild rice sweetened with sugar, with the usual evening regale of rum, renewed their courage; and after a night's rest, they proceeded at break of day on their laborious journey.

In the first place, the men cut a road up the mountain where the trees were smallest, felling some in such a manner as to make them fall parallel to the road without separating them entirely from the stumps, in this way forming a kind of railing on either side. The baggage and the canoe were then brought from the water-side to the encampment—an undertaking exceedingly perilous, as a single false step must have been followed by immersion into the river, which flowed here with furious rapidity. Having accomplished this labour, the party breathed a little, and then ascended the mountain with the canoe, having the line or rope by which it was drawn up doubled, and fastened successively to the stumps left for this purpose, whilst a man at the end hauled it round a tree, holding it on, and shifting it as they advanced. In this manner the canoe was warped up the steep; and by two in the afternoon everything had been carried to the summit. Men were then despatched to cut the road onwards; and the incessant labour of another day could only penetrate about three miles, whilst mountains much more elevated raised their snowy summits around in every direction. These, however, were at a distance; and another day's exertion brought them through a wood of tall pines to the banks of the river above the rapids. Before again embarking, Mackenzie left

attached to a pole a knife, a steel, flint, beads, and other trifles, as a token of amity to the natives; and one of his Indians added a small round stick of green wood, chewed at one end in the form of a brush, used to pick marrow out of bones—an instrument which he explained to be intended as an emblem to the people of a country abounding in animals.*

They now resumed their voyage, enclosed on all sides by mountains whose summits were covered with snow, and one of which to the south rose to a majestic height. The air became chill; the water, through which they frequently waded towing or pushing their bark, was intensely cold; and on 31st May they reached a point minutely described to them before setting out by an old Indian warrior. Here the river separated into two streams, one running west-north-west, and the other south-south-east. The first of these they had been warned to avoid, as it soon lost itself in various smaller currents among the mountains; and the steersman accordingly proceeded into the eastern branch, which, though not so broad as the other, was far more rapid. The course of their journey now led them through many populous beaver settlements. In some places these animals had cut down several acres of large poplars; and they saw multitudes busy from sunrise to sunset erecting houses, procuring food, superintending their dykes, and going diligently through all the labours of their little commonwealth. Perceiving soon after a smoke in the forest which lined the banks, and hearing the sounds of human voices in great confusion, they became aware that they were near an Indian encampment, from which the inhabitants were retreating. Accordingly, on approaching the shore, two ferocious-looking men sprung from the woods,

* Mackenzie, p. 181.

and took their station on a rising ground, brandishing their spears with loud vociferations. A few words of explanation from the interpreter, and some presents, pacified them, and Mackenzie made anxious inquiries regarding the nature of the country, and the great river which formed the object of his search. To his mortification, he found that they were unacquainted with any river to the westward; they had just arrived over a carrying-place of eleven days from another stream, which was nothing else than a large branch of the one the expedition was then navigating. Their iron, they said, was procured in exchange for beaver and dress moose-skins from the people there, who travelled during a moon to the country of other tribes living in houses, and these in their turn extended their journeys to the ocean, or, to use their disparaging epithet, the Great Stinking Lake, where they traded with white people, who came in canoes as large as islands. Their knowledge of the country, however, appeared so vague, that all hope of procuring a guide was vain, and the heart of the traveller sunk within him as he felt that his favourite project was on the point of being utterly disconcerted.

Amidst this despondency, a faint hope remained that the natives, under the influence of suspicion, timidity, or from imperfectly understanding the interpreter, had not communicated all they knew; and after a night sleepless from anxiety, the traveller rose with the sun to repeat his inquiries. At first nothing satisfactory could be elicited; but suddenly Mackenzie, who stood beside the interpreters, understood, from the few words he knew of their language, that one person mentioned a great river, whilst he pointed significantly to that which lay before them. On a strict inquiry, the interpreter, who had been tired of the voyage, and of whose fidelity some suspicion was entertained, ac-

knowledge that the Indian spoke of a large river whose course was towards the mid-day sun, a branch of which flowed near the source of the stream they were now navigating. This branch, he added, it would not be difficult to reach, there being only three small lakes and as many carrying-places on the way to it; but he also insisted that the great river did not discharge itself into the sea.* This last assertion was imputed to his ignorance of the country, whilst a rude map, which he delineated with a piece of coal on a strip of bark, convinced them that his information, so far as it went, was to be relied on. A new ray of hope now arose; and having induced an Indian to go forward as a guide to the borders of the small lakes, Mackenzie resumed his journey on 10th June, promising, if successful in his object, to revisit these friendly Indians in two moons.

These people were of low stature and meagre frame, owing probably to the difficulty of procuring subsistence; round faces, high cheek-bones, black hair hanging in elf-locks over their shoulders, and a swarthy yellow complexion, combined to give them a forbidding aspect; whilst their garments of beaver, rein-deer, and ground-hog skins, dressed with the hair outside, having the tail of this last animal hanging down the back, might, when seen at a distance, occasion some doubt whether they belonged to the human race. Their women were extremely ugly, lustier and taller than the men, but much inferior in cleanliness. Their warlike weapons were cedar bows, six feet long, with a short iron spike at one end, so that they might also be used as spears. The arrows were barbed with iron, flint, stone, or bone, from two to two feet and a half long, and feathered with great neatness. They had two kinds of

* Mackenzie, pp. 203, 204.

spears, both double-edged, of well-polished iron, and with shafts from eight to six feet long. Their knives were of iron worked by themselves, and their axes resembled a carpenter's adze. They used snares of green skin, nets, and fishing-lines of willow-bark, hooks of small bones, and kettles of watape so closely woven as not to leak. Besides these they had various dishes of wood and bark, horn and wooden spoons and buckets, and leathern and net-work bags. Their canoes, of spruce-bark, calculated to hold from two to five persons, were propelled by paddles six feet long, with the blade shaped like a heart.*

Pursuing their journey under the direction of the new guide, they reached a small lake in latitude $54^{\circ} 24'$, which Mackenzie considered as the highest or southernmost source of the Ungigah, or Peace River. They passed two other lakes, and again entered the river, the navigation of which, from its rapidity and the trees and rocks in its channel, now became dangerous. The canoe struck on a sharp rock, which shattered the stern, and drove her to the other side, where the bow met the same fate. To complete the disaster, she passed at this moment over a cascade, which broke several holes in her bottom, and reduced her to a complete wreck, lying flat upon the water. All hands now jumped out, and clinging desperately to the sides, were hurried several hundred yards through a foaming torrent beset with sharp rocks, upon which they were every instant in danger of being dashed to pieces. Being carried, however, into shallow water, where the canoe rested on the stones, they were relieved from their perilous situation by their companions on shore.

After this escape, a consultation was held regarding their future proceedings. Benumbed with cold, and intimidated

* Mackenzie's Travels, pp. 205, 206.

by their recent dangers, the Indians proposed an immediate return; but the remonstrances of their leader, enforced by the usual arguments of a hearty meal and an allowance of rum, banished their fears. It was next proposed to abandon the wreck, to carry the baggage to the river, which the guide affirmed to be at no great distance, and there to construct a new vessel. But as it was suspected that this representation was not to be relied on, a party was despatched to reconnoitre, and brought back a very confused and unpromising account of the country. It was therefore determined to repair the canoe, and proceed as before. For this purpose bark was collected, which, with a few pieces of oil-cloth and plenty of gum, restored their shattered boat to something like a sea-worthy condition. Her frail state, however, rendered it necessary to carry part of the lading on men's shoulders along the banks; and as a road had to be opened with hatchets, their progress was extremely slow.

On 16th June, Mr. Mackay and two Indians were despatched with orders to penetrate if possible to the great river in the direction indicated by the guide. They succeeded; but returned with a discouraging account of the interminable woods and deep morasses which intervened. These gloomy prospects were increased by the desertion of their guide; but nothing could repress Mackenzie's ardour. Cutting a passage through the woods, carrying the canoe round the rapids and cascades, they held on their slow and toilsome way, till at last, after passing a swamp, in many places wading to mid-thigh, they enjoyed the satisfaction of reaching the bank of the great river, which had been the object of so much anxious expectation and protracted hope.*

Embarking anew, they were borne along by a strong

* Mackenzie's Travels, p. 228.

current, which, slackening after a short time, allowed them to glide gently between banks of high white cliffs, surmounted with grotesque and singularly-shaped pinnacles. After some progress, the party were alarmed by a loud whoop from the thick woods ; at the same moment a canoe, guided by a single savage, shot out from the mouth of a small tributary stream, and a number of natives, armed with bows and arrows, appeared on an adjacent rising ground, uttering loud cries, and manifesting by their gestures that instant death would be inflicted on any one who landed. Every attempt to conciliate them proved unavailing ; and a canoe was observed to steal swiftly down the river, with the evident design of communicating the alarm and procuring assistance. At this critical moment the courage and prudence of Mackenzie providentially saved his party. He landed alone, with two pistols stuck in his belt ; having first, however, given orders to one of his Indians to steal into the woods with a couple of guns, and to keep near him in case of attack. " I had not been long," says he, " in my station on the bank, with my Indian in ambush behind me, when two of the natives came off in a canoe, but stopped when they got within a hundred yards of me. I made signs for them to land, and as an inducement displayed looking-glasses, beads, and other alluring trinkets. At length, but with every mark of extreme apprehension, they approached the shore, taking care to turn their canoe stern foremost, and still not venturing to land. I now made them a present of some beads, with which they were going to push off, when I renewed my entreaties, and after some time prevailed on them to come ashore and sit down by me. My Indian hunter now thought it right to join me, and created some alarm in my new acquaintance. It was, however, soon removed, and I had the satisfaction to find that he and these people

perfectly understood each other. I instructed him to say everything to them which might tend to soothe their fears and win their confidence. I expressed my wish to conduct them to our canoe; but they declined this offer; and when they observed some of my people coming towards us, they requested me to let them return, and I was so well satisfied with the progress which I had made in my intercourse with them, that I did not hesitate a moment in complying with their desire. During their short stay, they observed us, and everything about us, with a mixture of admiration and astonishment. We could plainly perceive that their friends received them with great joy on their return, and that the articles which they carried back with them were examined with a general and eager curiosity. They also appeared to hold a consultation which lasted about a quarter of an hour, and the result was an invitation to come over to them, which we cheerfully accepted. Nevertheless, on our landing they betrayed evident signs of confusion, which arose probably from the quickness of our movements, as the prospect of a friendly communication had so cheered the spirits of the people that they paddled across the river with the utmost expedition. The two men who had been with us appeared very naturally to possess the greatest share of courage on the occasion, and were ready to receive us on our landing; but our demeanour soon dispelled their apprehensions, and the most familiar communication took place between us. When I had secured their confidence by the distribution of trinkets among them, and had treated the children with sugar, I instructed my interpreters to collect every necessary information in their power to afford me.”*

The intelligence procured from this tribe was discourag-

* Mackenzie's Travels, pp. 244, 245.

ing. They stated, indeed, that the river ran towards the mid-day sun, and that at its mouth white people were building houses; but that the navigation was dangerous, and in three places absolutely impassable, owing to the falls and rapids. The nations through whose territories the route lay, they represented as ferocious and malignant, especially their immediate neighbours, who dwelt in subterranean houses. Unappalled by this description, Mackenzie re-embarked, and he was accompanied by a small canoe, with two persons who consented to act as guides. Coming to a place where some savage-looking people were seen on a high ground, it was thought expedient to land, and an amicable interview took place, which led to important consequences. On explaining the object of the journey, one of the natives, of superior rank and intelligence, drew a sketch of the country on a piece of bark, appealing during his labour to his companions, and accompanying the rude but perfectly intelligible map by details as to their future voyage. He described the river as running to the east of south, receiving in its course many tributary streams, and broken every six or eight leagues by dangerous falls and rapids, six of which were altogether impracticable. The carrying-places he represented as of great length across mountains. He depicted the lands of three tribes in succession, who spoke different languages; and concluded by saying that beyond them he knew nothing of the country, except that it was still a great way to the sea, and that there was a lake of which the natives did not drink.*

Whilst the route by water was thus said to be impracticable, they asserted that the road across the country to the ocean was short in comparison, and lay along a valley

* Mackenzie's Travels, p. 253.

free from wood, and frequently travelled. Other considerations combined to recommend this latter course to Mackenzie:—Only thirty days' provisions were left, and the supply procured by hunting was very precarious. The ammunition was nearly spent; and if the prosecution of the voyage appeared perilous, a return would have been equally so. Under these circumstances, it was resolved to abandon the canoe, and to penetrate overland to the Western Ocean.

To arrive at the spot where they were to strike off across the country, it was necessary to return a considerable way up the river—a service of great danger, owing to the shattered condition of the boat and the hostile dispositions of the natives, who were apt to change in an instant from the greatest friendliness to unmitigated rage and suspicion. The guides deserted them, and it became absolutely necessary to build a new canoe. She proved better than the old one, and they at last reached the point whence they were to start overland. “We carried on our back,” says Mackenzie, “four bags and a half of pemmican, weighing from eighty-five to ninety-five pounds each, a case with the instruments, a parcel of goods for presents, weighing ninety pounds, and a parcel containing ammunition of the same weight; each of the Canadians had a burden of about ninety pounds, with a gun and ammunition, whilst the Indians had about forty-five pounds' weight of pemmican, besides their gun—an obligation with which, owing to their having been treated with too much indulgence, they expressed themselves much dissatisfied. My own load and that of Mr. Mackay consisted of twenty-two pounds of pemmican, some rice, sugar, and other small articles, amounting to about seventy pounds, besides our arms and ammunition. The tube of my telescope was also slung across my shoulder; and owing to the low state of our

provisions, it was determined that we should content ourselves with two meals a-day.”*

Thus laden, they struck into the woods, and travelling along a tolerably beaten path, arrived before night at some Indian tents, where they were joined by an elderly man and three other natives. The old man held in his hand a spear of European manufacture, like a serjeant's halberd, which he stated he had lately received from some people on the sea-coast, to whom it had been given by white men. He added, that those heavily laden did not take more than six days to reach the tribes with whom he and his friends bartered their furs and skins for iron, and that thence it was scarcely two days' march to the sea. He recommended also that, whilst they retired to sleep, two young Indians should be sent forward to warn the different tribes whose territories they were approaching—a precaution which had the best effects. Another pleasing distinction between their present hosts and the other savages whom they had passed soon presented itself. When the weary travellers lay down to rest, the Indians took their station at a little distance, and began a song in a sweet plaintive tone, unaccompanied by any instrument, but with a modulation exceedingly pleasing and solemn, not unlike that of church music. The circumstance may remind the reader of the descriptions of American music given by Mr. Meares and Captain Burney, whom it strikingly corroborates.

Having procured two guides, they now proceeded through an open country sprinkled with cypresses, and joined a family of the natives. The father, on hearing their intention of penetrating to the ocean, pointed to one of his wives who was a native of the sea-coast; her appearance differed from the females they had hitherto seen. She was of low

* Mackenzie's Travels, p. 285.

stature, inclined to corpulency, with an oblong face, gray eyes, and a flattish nose. Her garments consisted of a tunic covered with a robe of matted bark, fringed round the bottom with the beautiful fur of the sea-otter. She wore bracelets of brass, copper, and horn, whilst her hair was braided with large blue beads, and her ears and neck adorned with the same. With these people age seemed to be an object of great veneration: they carried an old woman by turns upon their backs, who was quite blind and infirm. The country appeared well peopled, and the natives, though at first alarmed, were soon conciliated by the guides. In some places they observed chains of small lakes, the valleys were verdant and watered with pleasant rivulets, and the scenery varied by groves of cypress and poplar, in which they were surprised to see no animals. The inhabitants indeed seemed to live exclusively on fish; and the people of one small settlement containing thirteen families were denominated, in the language of the country, Sloacuss-Dinai or Red Fish Men. They were healthy looking, and more provident, cleanly, and comfortable, than the neighbouring tribes.

One of Mackenzie's greatest and most frequent perplexities arose out of the sudden fits of caprice and change of purpose which characterize most savages, but none more than the Americans. An example of this now occurred. The guides, upon whose fidelity the success of the expedition mainly depended, were advancing apparently in the most contented and friendly manner, when, in a moment, without uttering a word, they sprang forward, and disappeared in the woods, leaving the party, who were utterly unacquainted with the route, in a state bordering on despair.* Pushing forward, however, at a hazard, they per-

* Mackenzie's Travels, p. 302.

ceived a house situated on a green spot by the edge of a wood, the smoke of which curled above the trees, intimating that it was inhabited. Mackenzie advanced alone, as his party were too much alarmed to second his intrepidity ; and so intent were the inhabitants upon their household labours, that he approached unperceived. Nothing could exceed the terror and confusion occasioned by his sudden appearance. The women and children uttered piercing shrieks, and the only man about the place sprung out of a back-door with the rapidity of a wild-cat, and fled into the woods. Their dismay arose from the belief that they were surprised by enemies, and would be instantly put to death—an atrocity too common among the Indian tribes. The conduct of the man who had fled was amusing. By degrees he crept sufficiently near to watch the party ; and on observing the kindness with which the women and children were treated, came cautiously within speaking distance. His eyes were still staring in his head. No assurances of the interpreters or the women could persuade him to return ; no beads, knives, or presents of any kind, had the effect of restoring his confidence. On being approached, he kept dodging about behind large trees, brandishing his bow and arrows, grinning hideously, and displaying a variety of strange antics, till at last, in one of his paroxysms, he dived into a thicket and disappeared. As suddenly he emerged in an opposite quarter, and becoming pacified, after a succession of parleys, agreed to accompany them as a guide.

On advancing from this station they travelled over an elevated tract, and at length gained the summit of a hill, affording a view of a range of mountains covered with snow, which, according to the guide, terminated in the ocean. Passing along the borders of several small lakes, through a swampy country, they arrived at a lodge of natives, who received them with hospitality, and minutely

scrutinized their appearance. The hair of the women was tied in large loose knots over the ears, and plaited with great neatness from the division of the head, so as to be included in the knots. Some had their tresses adorned with beads, producing a very graceful effect; whilst the men were clothed in leather, their hair nicely combed, their complexion fair, and their skin cleanly. One young man was at least six feet four inches in height, with a prepossessing countenance, and affable and dignified manners. All, not excepting the children, carried a burden proportioned to their strength, consisting of beaver-coating and parchement, skins of the otter, marten, bear, and lynx, besides dressed moose-skins. These last they procured from the Rocky Mountain Indians; and for the purposes of trade the people of the sea-coast preferred them to any others.

They now continued their journey through a beautiful valley, watered by a gentle rivulet, to a range of hills which they ascended till surrounded by snow so firm and compact that it crunched under their feet. Before them lay a stupendous mountain, whose summit, clad with the same spotless coronet, was partly lost in the clouds. Between it and the route they were to follow flowed a broad river; and descending from their present elevated ground, they plunged into woods of lofty and umbrageous cedars and alder trees.* As they got lower into these primeval forests, they were sensible of an entire change of climate. The guides pointed out to them, through the openings in the dark foliage, the river which flowed in the distance, and a village on its banks, whilst beneath their feet the ground was covered with berries of an excellent flavour, and completely ripe. The effect of sunset upon this noble scenery was strikingly beautiful; but their admiration was inter-

* Mackenzie's Travels, pp. 316, 317.

rupted by the decampment of their guides, who, as the shades of evening began to fall, pushed forward at such a pace that the party were soon left without conductors, in darkness and uncertainty. The men, who were much fatigued, now proposed to take up their quarters for the night; but their indefatigable leader groped his way forward, and at length, arriving at the edge of the wood, perceived the light of several fires. On coming up, he entered a hut where the people were employed in cooking fish, threw down his burden, and shook hands with the inmates, who did not show any surprise, but gave him to understand by signs that he should go to a large house, erected on upright posts at some distance from the ground. A broad piece of timber, with steps cut in it, led to a scaffolding on a level with the floor; and ascending these, the traveller entered the apartment, passed three fires at equal distances in the middle of the room, and was cordially received by several people seated on a wide board at the upper end. Mackenzie took his place beside one whom, from his dignified look, he took to be the chief. Soon after the rest of the party arrived, and placed themselves near him; upon which the chief arose and brought a quantity of roasted salmon. Mats were then spread, and the fish placed before them. When the meal was concluded, their host made signs which they supposed to convey a desire that they should sleep under the same roof with himself; but as his meaning was not sufficiently plain, they prepared to bivouac without. Everything was done to render their repose agreeable:—A fire was kindled, boards placed that they might not sleep on the bare ground, and two delicate dishes of salmon-roe, beat up to the consistency of thick cream, and mixed with gooseberries and wood-sorrel, were brought for supper. On awaking in the morning, they found all their wants anticipated in the same hospitable

manner: a fire was already blazing, a plentiful breakfast of roasted salmon and dried roes was provided, and a regale of raspberries, whortleberries, and gooseberries, finished the meal.*

Salmon was so abundant in this river that the people had a constant supply. They had formed across the stream an embankment for placing fishing-machines, which were disposed both above and below it. For some reason, however, they would permit no near inspection of the weir; but it appeared to be four feet above the water, and was constructed of alternate layers of gravel and small trees, fixed in a slanting position. Beneath it were placed machines into which the salmon fell in attempting to leap over; and on either side was a large timber frame six feet above the water, in which passages were left leading directly into the machines, whilst at the foot of the fall dipping-nets were successfully employed. These people were observed to indulge an extreme superstition regarding their fish, refusing to taste flesh, and appearing to consider such an act as a pollution. One of their dogs having swallowed a bone which the travellers left, was beaten by his master till he disgorged it; and a bone of a deer being thrown into the river, a native dived, brought it up, consigned it to the fire, and carefully washed his hands. They would not lend their canoes for the use of the party, having observed some venison which they concluded was to be stowed on board; and they alleged that the fish would immediately smell it and leave them. Although generous in furnishing the strangers with as much roasted fish as they could consume, they would part with none in a raw state:—They believed salmon to have an invincible antipathy to iron, and were afraid that, if given raw to the

* Mackenzie's Travels, p. 318–320.

white men, they might take serious offence at being boiled in a vessel of this ominous metal. In other respects nothing could exceed their friendliness; and at a neighbouring village belonging to the same tribe, the reception of Mackenzie was if possible still more kind. The son of the chief took from his own shoulders a beautiful robe of sea-otter skin, and threw it over the traveller, whilst the father expressed the utmost satisfaction in being presented with a pair of scissors to clip his beard—a purpose to which, with the eager delight of a child, he instantly applied them.

The houses in this village were constructed in the same way as those already described, and remind us of the lively account given by Mr. Meares. At a little distance, Mackenzie observed some singular wooden buildings, which he conjectured to be temples. They consisted of oblong squares, about twenty feet high by eight broad, formed of thick cedar-planks beautifully joined. Upon these were painted hieroglyphics and figures of various animals, with a remarkable degree of correctness. In the midst of the village was a large building, at first supposed to be the unfinished frame-work of a house. Its dimensions, however, were far greater than those of an ordinary dwelling, the ground-plot being fifty feet by forty-five, each end formed by four stout posts fixed perpendicularly in the earth. The corner posts were unornamented, and supported a beam of the whole length, having three intermediate props on each side. Two centre posts at each end, about two feet and a half in diameter, were carved into colossal human figures, supporting ridge-poles on their heads; the hands were placed on the knees, as if they felt difficulty in sustaining the weight, whilst the figures opposite to them stood in an easy attitude, with their hands resting on their hips. The posts, poles, and figures were painted red and black, and the carving was executed with

a truth and boldness which bespoke no little advancement in sculpture.* In the mechanical arts they had arrived at considerable perfection. The chief's canoe was of cedar, forty-five feet long, four wide, and three feet and a half deep. It was painted black, and ornamented with drawings of various kinds of fish in white upon the dark ground, and the gunwale, both fore and aft, was neatly inlaid with the teeth of the sea-otter. In this vessel, according to the old chief's account, he undertook, about ten winters before, a voyage towards the mid-day sun, having with him forty of his subjects; on which occasion he met with two large vessels full of white men, the first he had seen, by whom he was kindly received. Mackenzie very plausibly conjectured that these might be the ships of Captain Cook.

It was now the 18th of July, and, surrounded by friendly natives, with plenty of provisions, pleasant weather, and the anticipation of speedily reaching the great object of their wishes, they resumed their voyage in a large canoe, accompanied by four of the Indians. The navigation of the river, as they approached the ocean, was interrupted by rapids and cascades; but their skill in surmounting these impediments was now considerable, and on the 20th, after a passage of thirty-six miles, they arrived at the mouth of the river, which discharges itself by various smaller channels into an arm of the Pacific Ocean. The purpose of the expedition was now completed, and its indefatigable leader painted in large characters, upon the face of the rock under whose shelter they had slept, this simple memorial:—"Alexander Mackenzie from Canada by land, the twenty-second of July, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-three." The inscription was only written in vermillion, and has probably long ago been

* Mackenzie's Travels, p. 331.

washed away by the fury of the elements; but the name of Mackenzie is enduringly consecrated in the annals of discovery, as the first person who penetrated from sea to sea across the immense continent of North America. His return by the same route it is unnecessary to pursue.

CHAPTER IV.

Discoveries along the Shores of the Arctic Ocean.

First and Second Expeditions of Franklin—Voyage of Captain Beechey.

THE discoveries of Hearne and Mackenzie established the great fact that there is a northern coast in America, washed by the Arctic Ocean, which forms, in all probability, its continuous boundary; and they demonstrated the practicability of reaching this limit by passing over the vast plains which stretch northward from Canada and Hudson's Bay. The voyages of Captain Parry, also, which have been already detailed,* fully corroborated this opinion; and it appeared evident that another expedition, properly conducted, might reach this shore, and more fully examine its whole extent. Such an expedition, accordingly, sailed from England on the 23d of May 1820, its command being entrusted to Lieutenant, now Sir John Franklin, assisted by Dr. Richardson, an able mineralogist and natural historian. During the first portion of their journey, they followed the chain of the great lakes, instead of the more eastern track pursued by Hearne; and having descended the Coppermine River, arrived, on 21st July, at the shore of the Arctic Ocean, where they commenced their career of

* Polar Seas and Regions, 3d edit. p. 263—323.

discovery. Important as were the particulars of their survey, when considered in relation to the furtherance of geographical science, a minute detail is here unnecessary, and we shall attempt only a general sketch.

Paddling along the coast to the eastward, on the inside of a crowded range of islands, they encamped on shore after a run of thirty-seven miles, in which they experienced little interruption, and saw only a small iceberg in the distance, though that beautiful luminous effulgence emitted from the congregated ices, and distinguished by the name of the ice-blink, was distinctly visible to the northward. The coast was found of moderate height, easy of access, and covered with vegetation; but the islands were rocky and barren, presenting high cliffs of a columnar structure. In continuing their voyage, the dangers which beset a navigator in these dreadful polar solitudes thickened gloomily around them. The coast became broken and sterile, and at length rose into a high and rugged promontory, against which some large masses of ice had drifted, threatening destruction to their slender canoes. In attempting to round this cape the wind rose, an awful gloom involved the sky, and the thunder burst over their heads, compelling them to encamp till the storm subsided. They then, at the imminent risk of having the canoes crushed by the floating ice, doubled the dreary promontory, which they denominated Cape Barrow, and entered Detention Harbour, where they landed. Around them the land consisted of mountains of granite, rising abruptly from the water's edge, destitute of vegetation, and attaining an elevation of fourteen or fifteen hundred feet; seals and small deer were the only animals seen, and the former were so shy that all attempts to approach within shot were unsuccessful. With the deer the hunters were more fortunate, but these were not numerous; and whilst the ice closed gradually around

them, and their little stock of provisions, consisting of pemmican and cured beef, every day diminished, it was impossible not to regard their situation with uneasiness. Rounding Cape Kater, they entered Arctic Sound, and sent a party to explore a river upon the banks of which they expected to find an Esquimaux encampment. All, however, was silent, desolate, and deserted; even these hardy natives, bred amidst the polar ices, had removed from so barren a spot, and the hunters returned with two small deer and a brown bear, the latter animal so lean and sickly looking, that the men declined eating it; but the officers boiled its paws, and found them excellent.

Proceeding along the eastern shore of Arctic Sound, to which they gave the name of Bankes' Peninsula, the expedition made its painful way along a coast indented by bays, and in many places studded with islands, till, on 10th August, they reached the open sea; and sailing, as they imagined, between the continent and a large island, found to their deep disappointment that, instead of an open channel, they were in the centre of a vast bay. The state of the expedition now called for the most serious consideration upon the part of their commander. So much time had already been spent in exploring the sounds and inlets, that all hope of reaching Repulse Bay was vain; both canoes had sustained material injury; the fuel was expended; their provisions were sufficient only for three days; the appearances of the setting in of the arctic winter were too unequivocal to be mistaken; the deer, which had hitherto supplied them with fresh meat, would, it was well known, soon disappear; the geese and other aquatic birds were already seen winging their way to the southward; while the men, who had up to this moment displayed the utmost courage, began to look disheartened, and to entertain serious apprehensions for their safety. Under these circumstances,

Franklin, with the concurrence of his officers, determined not to endanger the lives of his people by a farther advance; and after spending four days in a minute survey of the bay, it was resolved to return by Hood's River to Fort Enterprise. Franklin's researches, as far as prosecuted at this time, favoured the opinion of those who contended for the practicability of a north-west passage. It appeared probable that the coast ran east and west in the latitude assigned to Mackenzie's River, and little doubt could, in his opinion, be entertained regarding the existence of a continued sea in that direction. The portion over which they passed was navigable for vessels of any size; and the ice met with after quitting Detention Harbour would not have arrested a strong boat, whilst the chain of islands afforded shelter from all heavy seas, and there were good harbours at convenient distances. Having, with much severe privation, completed their course, from Point Turnagain in Melville Bay to the entrance of Hood's River, they ascended as high as the first rapid, and encamped, terminating here their voyage on the Arctic Sea, during which they had gone over six hundred and fifty geographical miles.

On the prospect of commencing their land journey, the Canadians could not conceal their satisfaction; and the evening previous to their departure was passed in talking over their past adventures, and congratulating each other in having at length turned their backs upon the sea, little anticipating that the most painful and hazardous portion of the expedition was yet to come. Before setting off, an assortment of iron materials, beads, looking-glasses, and other articles, was put up in a conspicuous situation for the Esquimaux, and the English union was planted on the loftiest sand-hill, where it might be seen by any ships passing in the offing. Here also was deposited in a tin box,

a letter containing an outline of the proceedings of the expedition, the latitude and longitude of the principal places, and the course intended to be pursued towards Slave Lake. They now proceeded up the river in their canoes, and though upon a short allowance of provisions, the produce of their nets and fowling-pieces furnished for a few days enough to ward off absolute want; but they were often on the very brink of it. Their progress was much interrupted by shoals and rapids, and one evening they encamped at the lower end of a narrow chasm, the walls of which were upwards of two hundred feet high, and in some places only a few yards apart. Into this the river precipitates itself, forming two magnificent cascades, to which they gave the name of Wilberforce Falls. On taking a survey of its farther course from a neighbouring hill, it was discovered to be so rapid and shallow, that all progress in the large canoes seemed impossible. Two smaller boats were therefore constructed; and on 1st September they set off, with the intention of proceeding in as direct a line as possible to the part of Point Lake opposite their spring encampment—a distance which appeared comparatively trifling, being only one hundred and forty-nine miles. Their luggage consisted of ammunition, nets, hatchets, ice-chisels, astronomical instruments, clothing-blankets, three kettles, and the two canoes, each so light as to be carried easily by a single man. But disaster attacked them in their very first stage. A storm of snow came on, accompanied by a high wind, against which it was difficult to carry the canoes, that were damaged by the falls of those who bore them. The ground was covered by small stones, and much pain was endured by the carriers, whose soft moose-skin shoes were soon cut through. The cold was intense; and on encamping they looked in vain for wood; a fire of moss was all they could procure, which served them to cook their supper, but gave

so little heat that they were glad to creep under their blankets.*

Having ascended next morning one of the highest hills, they ascertained that the river took a westerly course, and Franklin, thinking that to follow it farther would lead to a more tedious journey than their exhausted strength could endure, determined to quit its banks and make directly for Point Lake. Emerging, therefore, from the valley, they crossed a barren country, varied only by marshy levels and small lakes. The weather was fine, but unfortunately no berry-bearing plants were found, the surface being covered in the more humid spots with a few grasses, and in other places with some gray melancholy lichens. On encamping, the last piece of pemmican, or pounded flesh, was distributed, with a little arrow-root, for supper. The evening was warm; but dark clouds overspread the sky, and they experienced those sudden alternations of climate which occur in the polar latitudes at this season. At midnight it rained in torrents; but towards morning a snow-storm arose, accompanied by a violent gale. During the whole day the storm continued, and not having the comfort of a fire the men remained in bed, but the tents were frozen; around them the snow had drifted to the depth of three feet, and even within lay several inches thick on their blankets. Though the storm had not abated, any longer delay was impossible, for they knew every hour would increase the intensity of an arctic winter; and though faint from fasting, and with their clothes stiffened by frost, it was absolutely necessary to push forward. They suffered much in packing the frozen tents and bedclothes, and could hardly keep their hands out of their fur mittens. On attempting to move, Franklin was seized with a fainting

* Franklin's Journey, p. 399.

fit, occasioned by hunger and exhaustion, and on recovering refused to eat a morsel of portable soup, which was immediately prepared for him, as it had to be drawn from the only remaining meal of the party. The people, however, kindly crowded round, and overcame his reluctance. The effect of eating was his rapid recovery; and the expedition moved on.

Disaster now crowded on disaster. The wind rose so high, that those who carried the canoes were frequently blown down, and one of the boats was so much shattered as to be rendered unserviceable. The ground was covered with snow; and though the swamps were frozen, yet the ice was often not sufficiently strong; so that they plunged in knee-deep. A fire, however, was made of the bark and timbers of the broken canoe; and, after having fasted three days, their last meal of portable soup and arrow-root was cooked. Each man's allowance at this melancholy dinner was exceedingly scanty; but it allayed the pangs of hunger, and encouraged them to press forward at a quicker rate. They had now reached a more hilly country, strewn with large stones, and covered with gray lichen, well known to the Canadians by its name *tripe de roche*. In cases of extremity, it is boiled and eaten; but its taste is nauseous, its quality purgative, and it sometimes produces an intolerable griping and loathing. The party not being aware of this, gathered a considerable quantity. A few partridges also had been shot; and at night some willows were dug up from under the snow, with which they lighted a fire and cooked their supper.

Next day they came to Cracroft's River, flowing to the westward over a channel of large stones, that rendered it impossible to cross in the canoe. No alternative was left but to attempt a precarious passage over some rocks at a rapid; and in effecting this, some of the men, losing their

balance, slipt into the water. They were instantly rescued by their companions; but so intense was the frost, that their drenched clothes became caked with ice, and they suffered much during the remainder of the day's march. The hunters had fallen in with some partridges, which they shot, and they found enough of roots to make a fire; so that their supper, though scanty, was comparatively comfortable. Next morning they pushed forward with ardour, and passed the River Congecathawhachaga of Mr Hearne. The country which lay before them was hilly, and covered with snow to a great depth. The sides of the hills were traversed by sharp angular rocks, where the drifted snow, filling up the interstices, presented a smooth but fallacious surface, which often gave way and precipitated them into the chasms with their heavy loads. In this painful and arduous manner they struggled forward several days, feeding on the tripe de roche, which was so frozen to the rocks, that their hands were benumbed before a meal could be collected, and so destitute of nutritive juices, that it allayed hunger only for a very short time. At length reaching the summit of a hill, they, to their great delight, beheld a herd of musk-oxen feeding in the valley below; an instant halt was made, the best hunters were called out, and whilst they proceeded with extreme caution in a circuitous route, their companions watched their proceedings with intense anxiety. When near enough to open their fire, the report reverberated through the hills, and one of the largest cows was seen to fall. "This success," says Franklin, in that simple and beautiful account of his journey which any change of language would only weaken, "infused spirit into our starving party. The contents of its stomach were devoured upon the spot; and the raw intestines, which were next attacked, were pronounced by the most delicate of the party to be excellent. A few willows, whose tops were seen peeping

through the snow in the bottom of the valley, were quickly grubbed, the tents pitched, and supper cooked and devoured with avidity. It was the sixth day since we had had a good meal. I do not think that we witnessed, through the course of our journey, a more striking proof of the wise dispensation of the Almighty, and of the weakness of our own judgment, than on this day. We had considered the dense fog which prevailed throughout the morning as almost the greatest inconvenience which could have befallen us, since it rendered the air extremely cold, and prevented us from distinguishing any distant object towards which our course could be directed. Yet this very darkness enabled the party to get to the top of the hill, which bounded the valley wherein the musk-oxen were grazing, without being perceived. Had the herd discovered us and taken alarm, our hunters, in their present state of debility, would in all probability have failed in approaching them." *

On the following day a strong southerly wind blowing with a snow-drift, they took a day's rest, and as only enough remained of the musk-ox to serve for two days, they contented themselves with a single meal. Next morning, though the gale had not diminished, they pushed forward, and notwithstanding their rest and recent supply of animal food, the whole party felt greater weakness than they had hitherto experienced. The weather was hazy, but after an hour's march the sky cleared, and they found themselves on the borders of a lake, of which they could not discern the termination in either direction. In these circumstances they travelled along its banks to the westward, in search of a crossing-place. Credit, one of the Canadians, left the party in hopes of falling in with deer, but did not return; and on encamping in the evening, hungry and fatigued,

* Franklin's Journey, vol. iv. p. 13, small edition of 1829.

they had to divide for supper a single partridge and some tripe de roche. This weed from the first had been unpalatable, but now became insupportably nauseous, and began in many to produce severe pains and bowel-complaints, especially in Mr. Hood, one of the young officers attached to the expedition. This solitary partridge was the last morsel of animal food that remained; and they turned with deep anxiety to the hope of catching some fish in the lake, but discovered that the persons intrusted with them had improvidently thrown away three of the nets and burnt the floats on leaving Hood's River. Things now began to look very gloomy; and as the men were daily getting weaker, it was judged expedient to lighten their burdens of everything except ammunition, clothing, and the instruments necessary to guide them on their way. The dipping-needle, the azimuth compass, the magnet, a large thermometer, and the few books they carried, were therefore deposited at this encampment, after they had torn out from these last the tables necessary for working the latitude and longitude. Rewards also were promised by Franklin to such of the party as should kill any animals, and in the morning they prepared to go forward.

At this moment a fine trait of disinterestedness occurred: As the officers assembled round a small fire, enduring an intense degree of hunger which they had no means of satisfying, Perrault, one of the Canadians, presented each of them with a piece of meat out of a little store which he had saved from his allowance. "It was received," says Franklin, "with great thankfulness, and such an instance of self-denial and kindness filled our eyes with tears." Pressing forward to a river issuing from the lake, they met their comrade, Credit, and received the joyful intelligence that he had killed two deer. One of these was immediately cut up and prepared for breakfast; and having sent some of

the party for the other, the rest proceeded down the river, which was about three hundred yards broad, in search of a place to cross. Having chosen a spot where the current was smooth, immediately above a rapid, Franklin and two Canadian boatmen, St. Germain and Belanger, pushed from the shore. The breeze was fresh, and the current stronger than they imagined, so that they approached the very edge of the rapid; and Belanger employing his paddle to steady the canoe, lost his balance, and overset the bark in the middle of it. The party clung to its side, and reaching a rock where the stream was but waist-deep, kept their footing till the canoe was emptied of water, after which Belanger held it steady, while St. Germain replaced Franklin in it, and dexterously leaped in himself. Such was their situation, that if the man who stood on the rock had raised his foot, they would have been lost. His friends therefore were compelled to leave him, and after a second disaster, in which the canoe struck, and was as expeditiously righted as before, they reached the opposite bank. Meanwhile Belanger suffered extremely, immersed to his middle, and enduring intense cold. He called piteously for relief, and St. Germain re-embarking, attempted to reach him, but was hurried down the rapid, and on coming ashore was so benumbed as to be incapable of farther exertion. A second effort, but equally unsuccessful, was made by Adam: they then tried to carry out a line formed of the slings of the men's loads, but it broke, and was carried down the stream. At last, when he was almost exhausted, the canoe reached him with a small cord of one of the remaining nets, and he was dragged to shore quite insensible. On being stripped, rolled in blankets, and put to bed between two men, he recovered. During these operations Franklin was left alone upon the bank, and it seemed a matter of the utmost doubt whether he should be ever rejoined by his companions. "It is im-

possible," says he, "to describe my sensations as I witnessed the various unsuccessful attempts to relieve Belanger. The distance prevented my seeing distinctly what was going on, and I continued pacing up and down the rock on which I stood, regardless of the coldness of my drenched and stiffening garments. The canoe, in every attempt to reach him, was hurried down the rapid, and was lost to view amongst the rocky islets, with a fury which seemed to threaten instant destruction; once, indeed, I fancied that I saw it overwhelmed in the waves: such an event would have been fatal to the whole party. Separated as I was from my companions, without gun, ammunition, hatchet, or the means of making a fire, and in wet clothes, my doom would have been speedily sealed. My companions, too, driven to the necessity of coasting the lake, must have sunk under the fatigue of rounding its innumerable arms and bays, which, as we learned afterwards from the Indians, are extensive. By the goodness of Providence, however, we were spared at that time, and some of us have been permitted to offer up our thanksgiving in a civilized land for the signal deliverance we then and afterwards experienced." *

On setting out next morning, Perrault brought in a fine male deer, which raised the spirits of the party, as it secured them in provisions for two days; and they trusted to support themselves for a third on the skin which they carried with them. Having ascended the Willingham Mountains, they entered upon a rugged country, intersected by deep ravines, the passage of which was so difficult, that they could only make ten miles with great fatigue. The deer was now picked to the last morsel, and they ate pieces of the singed hide with a little tripe de roche. At other

* Franklin's Journey, pp. 410, 411.

times this meal might have sufficed; but, exhausted by slender food and continued toil, their appetites had become ravenous. Hitherto events had been so mercifully ordered, that in their utmost need some little supply in the tripe de roche had never failed them; but it was the will of God that their confidence should be yet more strongly tried; for they now entered upon a level country covered with snow, where even this miserable lichen was no longer to be found; and a bed of Iceland moss, which was boiled for supper, proved so bitter that none of the party, though enduring the extremities of hunger, could taste more than a few spoonfuls. Another distress now attacked them: the intensity of the cold increased, while they became less fit to endure it. Their blankets did not suffice to keep them warm, and the slightest breeze pierced through their debilitated frames. "The reader," says Franklin, "will probably be desirous to know how we passed our time in such a comfortless situation. The first operation after encamping was to thaw our frozen shoes, if a sufficient fire could be made; dry ones were then put on. Each person then wrote his notes of the daily occurrences, and evening prayers were read. As soon as supper was prepared it was eaten, generally in the dark, and we went to bed, and kept up a cheerful conversation until our blankets were thawed by the heat of our bodies, and we had gathered sufficient warmth to enable us to fall asleep. On many nights we had not even the luxury of going to bed in dry clothes; for, when the fire was insufficient to dry our shoes, we dared not venture to pull them off, lest they should freeze so hard as to be unfit to put on in the morning, and therefore inconvenient to carry."*

Hunger, fatigue, and disappointment, began now to have

* Franklin's Journey, p. 414.

a calamitous effect upon the tempers of the men. One, who carried the canoe, after several severe falls, threw down his burden, and obstinately refused to resume it. It was accordingly given to another, who proved stronger, and pushed forward at so rapid a rate that Mr. Hood, whose weakness was now extreme, could not keep up with them; and as Franklin attempted to pursue and stop them, the whole party were separated. Dr. Richardson, who had remained behind to gather tripe de roche, joined him, and on advancing they found the men encamped among some willows, where they had found some pieces of skin and a few bones of deer which had been devoured by the wolves. On these they had made a meal, having burnt and pounded the bones, boiled the skin, and added their old shoes to the mess. With this no fault could be found; but on questioning the person to whom the canoe had been intrusted, it was discovered that he had left the boat behind, it having, as he said, been broken by a fall, and rendered entirely useless.

To the infatuated obstinacy of the men in refusing to retrace their steps and fetch it, even in its shattered state, is to be ascribed much of the distress of their subsequent journey. Every argument and entreaty seemed entirely thrown away; and they had apparently lost all hope of being preserved. When the hunters, who had been out for some time, did not make their appearance, they became furious at the idea of having been deserted, and throwing down their bundles, declared they would follow them at all hazards, and leave the weakest to keep up as they best could. The remonstrances of the officers at length opened their minds to the madness of such a scheme; and on encamping in the evening, they found some pines seven or eight feet high, which furnished a comfortable fire, when they made their supper on tripe de roche. Next morning a herd of deer came in sight, and they killed five—a

supply which, considering the extremity of hunger and despair to which they were reduced, was especially providential. It was evident that He, without whom not a sparrow falls to the ground, was with them in their extremity of distress; and, casting themselves upon his care, every heart expanded with hope and gratitude.

The Canadians now earnestly petitioned for a day's rest. They pleaded their recent sufferings, and that the enjoyment of two substantial meals, after eight days' famine, would enable them to press forward more vigorously. The flesh, the skins, and even the stomachs of the deer, were accordingly equally divided among the party, and some of them suffered severely from too free an indulgence in the use of this food after so long an abstinence. Next morning the party resumed their journey, and after a walk of three miles, came to the Coppermine River. Its current was strong; but with a canoe there would have been no difficulty in crossing; and the reckless folly of the men, in abandoning their only means of transport, was now brought strongly to their mind. No ford could be discovered, and the plan was suggested of framing a vessel of willows, covered with the canvass of the tent; but the most experienced boatmen declared the willows were too small to bear the weight, and no pines could be found. Nothing remained but to resume their march along the borders of the lake; and looking out eagerly, but in vain, for some fordable place, they encamped at the east end. Anxious to adopt every possible means for preserving the party, Franklin sent Mr. Back forward with the interpreters to hunt. He was directed to halt at the first pines, and construct a raft; and if his hunters had killed animals sufficient to provision them, he was to cross immediately, and send the Indians with supplies of meat to the party behind.

At this time it was discovered that two of the men had stolen part of the officers' provision, though it had been doled out with the strictest impartiality, and they saw their leaders suffering more acutely than themselves. To punish this was impossible, except by the threat that they should forfeit their wages, which produced little effect. Despondency had deeply seized upon the party, and in the morning strict orders could not prevent them from straggling in search of the remains of animals; in consequence of which much time was lost in halting, and ammunition in firing guns to collect them. The snow, however, had disappeared, and pressing forward with more alacrity, they came to an arm of the lake running north-east. The idea of making the long circuit round it was distressing; and having halted to consult what was to be done, some one discovered in a cliff the carcass of a deer which had fallen into a chasm. It was quite putrid, but even in that state appeared delicious, and a fire being kindled, a large portion was rapidly devoured; whilst the men, cheered by this unexpected breakfast, regained their confidence, and requested leave to return to the rapid, insisting on the practicability of making a sufficiently strong raft of willows, though they had formerly pronounced it impossible. Their advice was followed; and having sent off Augustus, one of the interpreters, to inform Mr. Back of this change of plan, they commenced their retrograde movement, and encamped at night in a deep valley among some large willows, where they supped on the remains of the putrid deer.

Next day they regained the rapids, commenced cutting willows for the raft, and a reward of three hundred livres was promised by Franklin to the person who should convey a line across the river strong enough to manage the raft and transport the party. The willows when cut were

bound into fagots, and the work completed; but the greenness of the wood rendered it heavy, and incapable of supporting more than one man at a time. Still they hoped to be able to cross; but all depended on getting a line carried to the opposite bank, through a current one hundred and thirty yards wide, strong, deep, and intensely cold. Belanger and Benoit, the two strongest men of the party, repeatedly attempted to take the raft over, but for want of oars were driven back. The tent-staves were then tied together, and formed a strong pole; but it was not long enough to reach the bottom even at a short distance from the shore. Dr. Richardson next produced a paddle he had brought from the coast, but which was found not powerful enough to impel the raft against a strong breeze. The failure of every attempt occasioned a deep despondency, which threatened to have the most fatal effects, when Dr. Richardson, with a disinterested courage that made him forget his own weakness, threw off his upper garments, and attempted to swim with a rope to the opposite bank. Plunging in with a line round his middle, he at first made some way, but the extreme cold was too much for him, and in a few moments his arms became powerless; still, being an expert swimmer, he not only kept himself afloat, but made way by turning on his back and using his legs, so that he had nearly reached the other side, when, to the inexpressible anguish of those who watched his progress, his limbs became benumbed, and he sank. All hands now hauled on the line, and drew him ashore almost lifeless; but, placed before a fire of willows and stripped of his wet clothes, he gradually revived enough to give directions as to the mode of treating him. His thin and emaciated limbs, which were now exposed to view, produced an involuntary exclamation of compassion and surprise:—"Ah, que nous sommes maigres!" said the French Canadians; but it is

probable that few of them would have presented so gaunt and attenuated an appearance as the brave and excellent man who had thus nearly-fallen a sacrifice to his humanity, for it was discovered about this time that the hunters were in the practice of withholding the game which they shot, and devouring it in secret.*

Soon after this the party were joined by Mr. Back, who had traced the lake about fifteen miles farther up without discovering any place where it was possible to get across; and towards evening, Credit, who had been out hunting, returned without any game of his own killing, but brought the antlers and backbone of a deer shot during the summer. These relics had been already picked clean by the wolves and birds of prey, but the marrow remained in the spine; and though completely putrid, and so acrid as to excoriate the lips, it was not the less acceptable. The bones were rendered friable by burning, and the whole eagerly devoured. St. Germain, one of the voyagers, now suggested that a canoe might be made of the painted canvass used to wrap up the bedding, and offered to construct it upon a framework of willows. For this purpose he and Adam removed to a clump of willows, whilst another party proceeded to the spot where they had encamped on the 25th, to collect pitch amongst the small pines to pay over the seams. A snow-storm at this moment came on, and the sufferings of the men hourly increasing, a deep gloom settled upon their spirits. Mr. Hood was by this time reduced to a perfect shadow; Mr. Back required the support of a stick; Dr. Richardson was lame; and Franklin so feeble, that, after a struggle of three hours, he found himself utterly unable to reach the spot where St. Germain was at work, a distance of only three quarters of a mile, and

* Franklin's Journey, pp. 423, 424.

returned completely exhausted. The Canadian voyagers had now fallen into a state of despondency which bordered on despair, and, indifferent to their fate, refused to make the slightest exertion. The officers were unable to undergo the labour of gathering the tripe de roche, and Samandré, the cook, sullenly declined continuing his labours. At this miserable crisis the conduct of John Hepburn, an English sailor, was especially admirable, presenting a striking contrast to the gloomy selfishness of the Canadians. His firm reliance on the watchful goodness of God, and a cheerful resignation to his will, never for a moment forsook him; and, animated by this blessed principle, his strength appeared to be preserved as the means of saving the party. He collected the tripe de roche for the officers' mess, cooked and served it out, and showed the most indefatigable zeal in his efforts to alleviate their sufferings.

A gleam of hope at length arose, when St. Germain completed the canoe. It was impossible not to feel that their last chance of escape seemed to hang upon this little bark; would it prove sufficient for its purpose? or, constructed of such wretched materials, would it not at once sink to the bottom? Amid this conflict of contending emotions it was launched on the river, and every heart bounded with exultation when it floated and St. Germain transported himself to the opposite side. It was drawn back, and, one by one, the whole party were ferried over, though, from the leaky state of the little bark, their garments and bedding were completely drenched. Franklin immediately despatched Mr. Back and three men to push on to Fort Enterprise in search of the Indians, whilst he himself followed with the rest.

Nothing could exceed the joy of the Canadian voyagers at this unlooked-for deliverance. Their spirits rose from the deepest despondency into tumultuous exultation. They

shook the officers by the hand, cried out that their worst difficulties were at an end, and expressed a confident hope of being able to reach Fort Enterprise in the course of a few days—a boisterous and sudden confidence, to which the silent gratitude and quiet resolution of the pious Hepburn presented a striking contrast.

Their tents and bedclothes were so much frozen, and the men, who had kindled a small fire, so weary, that it was eight in the morning before the bundles were packed, and the party set forward. They travelled in single files, each at a small distance from his neighbour. Mr. Hood, who was now nearly exhausted, was obliged to walk at a gentle pace in the rear, Dr. Richardson kindly keeping beside him; whilst Franklin led the foremost men, that he might make them halt occasionally till the stragglers came up. Credit, hitherto one of their most active hunters, became lamentably weak from the effects of tripe de roche on his constitution, and Vaillant, from the same cause, was getting daily more emaciated. They only advanced six miles during the day, and at night satisfied the cravings of hunger by a small quantity of tripe de roche mixed up with some scraps of roasted leather. During the night the wind increased to a strong gale, which continuing next day, besides being piercingly cold, filled the atmosphere with a thick snow-drift. Having boiled and eaten the remains of their old shoes, and every shred of leather which could be picked up, they set forward at nine over bleak hills separated by equally barren valleys.

In this manner they journeyed till noon, not without much straggling and frequent halts, at which time Samandré came up with the melancholy news that Credit and Vaillant had dropt down and were utterly unable to proceed. Dr. Richardson went back, and discovering Vaillant about a mile and a half in the rear, assured him a fire was kindled

a little way on, and that he would recover if he could but reach it; the poor fellow struggled up on his feet, and feebly tried to advance, but fell down every step in the deep snow. Leaving him, Dr. Richardson retraced his steps about a mile farther in a fruitless search for Credit. In returning he passed Vaillant, who had fallen down, utterly unable to renew his efforts to rejoin the party. Belanger went back to carry his burden and assist him to the fire; but the cold had produced such a numbness that he could not speak or make the slightest exertion. The stoutest of the party were now implored to make a last effort to transport him to the fire, but declared themselves utterly unable for the task. They eagerly requested leave to throw down their loads, and proceed with the utmost speed to Fort Enterprise—a scheme projected in the despair of the moment, and which must have brought destruction upon the whole.

Matters had now reached a dreadful crisis; it was necessary to come to an immediate decision regarding their ultimate measures, and a plan proposed by Mr. Hood and Dr. Richardson was adopted. These gentlemen consented to remain with a single attendant at the first spot where there were sufficient firewood and tripe de roche for ten days' consumption, whilst Franklin and the rest were to proceed with all expedition to Fort Enterprise, and to send immediate assistance. This scheme promised to relieve them of a considerable portion of their burdens—for one of the tents and various other articles were to be left; and it gave poor Credit and Vaillant a fairer opportunity, should they revive, of regaining their companions. On the resolution being communicated to the men, they were cheered with the prospect of an alleviation of their misery, and pressed forward in search of a convenient spot for the proposed separation. Near nightfall they encamped under the lee

of a hill amongst some willows, which furnished a small fire, but not sufficiently strong to thaw their frozen clothes ; and no tripe de roche having been found during the day, they lay down hungry, cold, and full of the gloomiest apprehensions, whilst sleep fled from their eyelids, and the images of their dying companions rose before their imagination in colours which made them shudder for a fate that might so soon become their own.* Next morning the weather providentially was mild, and setting out at nine they arrived towards noon at a thicket of willows, in the neighbourhood of some rocks bearing a pretty full supply of tripe de roche. Here Dr. Richardson and Mr. Hood determined to remain. The tent was pitched, a barrel of ammunition and other articles were deposited, and Hepburn, who volunteered the service, was appointed to continue with them. The rest of the party now had only to carry a single tent, the ammunition, and the officers' journals, in addition to their own clothes and a single blanket for Captain Franklin. When all was ready, the whole party united in thanksgiving and prayers to Almighty God for their mutual preservation, and separated with the melancholy reflection, that it might in all probability be the last time they should ever again meet in this world.

On leaving their friends, Captain Franklin and his party descended into a more level country ; but the snow lay so deep, that they were so little able to wade through it that they encamped, after a painful march of only four miles and a half, in which Belanger, and Michel, an Iroquois, were left far behind, yet still struggling forward. In the evening they came in dreadfully exhausted, and Belanger, till now one of the strongest of the party, could not refrain from tears as he declared he was totally unable to proceed,

* Franklin's Journey, pp. 431, 432.

and implored permission to return to Dr. Richardson and Mr. Hood. Michel made the same request, and it was agreed that they should do so. The cold of the night was excessive, and the men were so weak that they could not raise the tent; from its weight it was impossible to transport it from place to place, and it was cut up, the canvass serving them for a covering; but though they lay close together, the intense frost deprived them of sleep. Having no tripe de roche, they had supped upon an infusion of the Labrador tea-plant, with a few morsels of burnt leather. Michel and Belanger, being apparently more exhausted in the morning than over night, were left, whilst the rest moved forward. After a very short progress, Perrault was attacked with a fit of dizziness; but on halting a little, again proposed to proceed. In ten minutes, however, he sunk down, and weeping aloud, declared his total inability to go on. He was accordingly advised to rejoin Michel and Belanger—a proposal in which he acquiesced. These examples of the total failure of the strongest in the party had a very unfavourable effect on the spirits of the rest, and the exertion of wading through the snow and crossing a lake on the ice, where they were frequently blown down, was so severe, that Fontano, after having repeatedly fallen, piteously complained that he was utterly unable to go farther. Being not two miles from the others, it was thought best that he also should attempt to rejoin them;* and as he was much beloved, the parting was very distressing. They watched him for some time, and were comforted by seeing that, though his progress was very slow, he kept his feet better than before.

The whole party was now reduced to five persons, Captain Franklin, Adam, Peltier, Benoit, and Samandré,

* Franklin's Journey, pp. 436, 437.

the interpreter Augustus having pressed forward by himself during the late frequent halts. They made that day only four miles and a half, and encamped for the night under a rock, supping again on an infusion of the Labrador tea-plant and some shreds of boiled leather. The evening was comparatively mild, the breeze light, and having the comfort of a fire, they enjoyed some sleep. This was of infinite advantage; it gave them new spirits, which were farther invigorated by a breakfast of tripe de roche, this being the fourth day since they had a regular meal. On reaching Marten Lake they found it frozen over—a circumstance which they knew would enable them to walk upon the ice straight to Fort Enterprise.

It may be easily imagined what were the sensations of the party in approaching the spot which they trusted would be the end of all their toils and privations. From the arrangements previously made, it was judged certain that they would here find relief, and be able to send assistance to their unfortunate companions. It was a spot where they had enjoyed at a former period of the expedition the greatest comfort; but it was possible, though they scarcely permitted themselves to contemplate so dreadful an idea, that circumstances might have occurred to defeat their present expectations. On approaching the house their minds were strongly agitated betwixt hope and fear, and contrary to their usual custom, they advanced in silence. At length they reached it, and their worst apprehensions were realized. It was completely desolate. No provisions had been deposited—no trace of Indians could be discovered—no letter lay there from Mr. Wentzel to inform them where the Indians might be found. On entering, a mute despair seized the party. They gazed on the cold hearth, comfortless walls, and broken sashes, through which the wind and snow penetrated, and awakening to a full sense

of the horrors of their situation, burst into tears.* On recovering a little, and looking round with more attention, a note was found from Mr. Back, stating that having two days before this reached the house, he had proceeded in search of the Indians; but described his party as so debilitated that it was doubtful whether they would be able to reach Fort Providence. The sufferings endured by this meritorious officer and his little party, one of whom was frozen to death, were equally dreadful with those which fell to the share of his excellent commander.†

The poor sufferers thus grievously disappointed, now examined the deserted habitation for the means of subsistence, and found several deer-skins thrown away during their former residence at the fort. The heaps of ashes were carefully raked, and a considerable collection of bones discovered, which were hoarded up for the purpose of being pounded and manufactured into soup. The parchment originally employed instead of glass had been torn from the windows, and the place was exposed to all the inclemency of an arctic winter; but they succeeded in filling the sashes with loose boards, and as the temperature of the outer air was now from 15° to 20° below zero, this precaution was especially necessary. To procure water, they melted the frozen lumps of snow, and the flooring of the neighbour-
ing apartment was broken up for fuel.

Having completed these arrangements, they assembled round the fire, and were busy singeing the hair off a deer-skin, when they were cheered by the entrance of the interpreter, who had made his way to the fort by a different route, through a country he had never traversed before. Though by far the strongest of the party, he was now so enfeebled by famine that he could not follow two deer

* Franklin's Journey, pp. 438, 439.

† See Mr. Back's interesting Narrative, Franklin's Journey, p. 477.

which he had seen on his way. Next morning there was a heavy gale from the south-east, and the snow drifted so thick that no one ventured abroad. On the evening of the succeeding day, a figure covered with ice, benumbed with cold, and almost speechless, staggered into the house. It was one of the Canadians, who had been despatched with a note by Mr. Back, and having fallen into a rapid narrowly escaped being drowned.* To change his dress, wrap him in warm blankets, and pour some soup over his throat, was their first care; and after a little he revived enough to answer the anxious questions with which he was assailed. From his replies but little comfort was derived. Mr. Back had seen no trace of the Indians, and the messenger's recollection appeared confused with regard to the part of the country where he had left his officer, who, as he stated, intended to proceed to the spot where the Indian chief Akaitcho had encamped last summer—a distance of about thirty miles. Thither he proposed to follow when he was a little recruited; and, though dissuaded from the attempt, persisted that as the track was beaten he would be able to make it out, and to convey intelligence of the situation of Captain Franklin's party. Accordingly, the fifth day after his arrival, he departed from the fort with a small supply of singed hide.

Not long after, Adam, one of the five men who now remained with Captain Franklin, became so ill that he was utterly incapable of moving, and it was discovered that he had been for some time afflicted with œdematous swellings in various parts of his body, which he had hitherto generously concealed, from a wish not to impede the movements of his companions. As it was impossible for this poor man to travel, it was necessary to abandon the original intention

* Franklin's Journey, pp. 440, 441.

of proceeding with the whole party to Fort Providence, and Peltier and Samandré, who were in almost as weak a state, having expressed a wish to remain with Adam, Captain Franklin, along with Augustus and Benoit, determined to press on to Fort Providence, and to send relief to their companions by the first party of Indians they should meet.

Having accordingly given directions regarding the journals and charts which were left in their custody, and the best mode of forwarding succour to Mr. Hood and Dr. Richardson, Franklin set forward with his two attendants; but so feeble had they become, that the distance accomplished in six hours was only four miles. They encamped on the borders of Round Rock Lake, and, unable to find any tripe de roche, made their supper upon fried deer-skin. The night proved intensely cold, and although they crept as close to each other as possible, they shivered in every limb, and the wind pierced through their famished frames.* Next morning was mild, and they set out early, but had scarce proceeded a few yards, when Franklin fell between two rocks, and broke his snow-shoes, an accident which incapacitated him from keeping up with Benoit and Augustus. In a very short time his attempt to press forward completely exhausted him; and as the only hope of preserving the lives of the party appeared to rest on their speedily reaching Fort Providence, he determined, rather than retard them, to retrace his steps to the house, whilst they proceeded for assistance. Calling a moment's halt, he addressed one note to Mr. Back, requesting an immediate supply of meat from Rein Deer Lake, and another to the commandant at Fort Providence, with urgent entreaties for assistance. This done, Augustus and Benoit resumed their journey, and Franklin returned to the house.

* Franklin's Journey, p. 444.

On arriving, he found Adam, Samandré, and Peltier still alive; but the two first, whose minds seemed quite enfeebled, could not be prevailed on to leave their bed, and their nervous weakness was so great that they scarcely ceased shedding tears all day. It was even with difficulty that they were prevailed on to take any nourishment; and the labour of cutting and carrying fuel, gathering the *tripe de roche*, and cooking, fell entirely upon Franklin and Peltier. The frost was now so severe, that it was evident this lichen would soon be bound up in ice, and as their strength daily declined, every exertion became irksome. When once seated, it required a painful effort to rise up, and not unfrequently they had to lift each other from their chairs. This miserable condition could not last long. Peltier soon became almost incapable of holding the hatchet; the bone-soup had become so acrid as to corrode the inside of their mouths; the *tripe de roche*, covered with ice, defied all efforts to detach it from the rock; and though the reindeer sported on the banks of the river, no one had strength to go after them, or to hold a gun so steadily as to secure an aim.

Still the hopes and cheerfulness of Franklin did not desert him. From his knowledge of the places mostly frequented at that season by the Indians, he was sanguine as to the likelihood of their being found; and their speedy arrival formed a constant subject of conversation. At length, on the evening of the 29th, when talking of his long-looked-for relief, and sitting round the fire, Peltier suddenly leapt up and uttered a joyful exclamation, imagining he heard the bustle of the Indians in the adjoining room. It was not the Indians, however, but Dr. Richardson and Hepburn, who came in, each carrying his bundle. The meeting was one of mingled joy and sorrow. Poor Hood's absence was instantly perceived, and their saddest

anticipations were confirmed by Dr. Richardson declaring that this young officer and Michel were dead, and that neither Perrault nor Fontano had reached the tent, or been heard of. Such news could not fail to create despondency. All were shocked at the emaciated countenances and hollow voices of Dr. Richardson and his companion, while Captain Franklin and his fellow-sufferers, having become gradually accustomed to the dreadful effects of famine upon each other, were not aware that, to the eyes of their friends who had just arrived, the alteration upon themselves was equally melancholy. "The doctor," says Franklin, "particularly remarked the sepulchral tone of our voices, which he requested us to make more cheerful if possible, not aware that his own partook of the same key."*

The arrival of these friends, however, was soon attended with a favourable change. Though greatly reduced, they were still in a better condition than their unfortunate companions, and it was not long till Hepburn shot a partridge. Dr. Richardson speedily tore off the feathers, and having held it for a few minutes at the fire, divided it into six pieces: Franklin and his companions ravenously devoured their portions, "being the first morsel of flesh that any of them had tasted for thirty-one days;" and Dr. Richardson cheered them with the prospect that Hepburn might possibly bring in a deer in his next expedition. The counsels and example of this pious and intelligent man produced the best effects on the spirits of the party. He had brought with him his Testament and Prayer-book, and by reading portions of Scripture appropriate to their situation, and encouraging them to join in prayer and thanksgiving, he led them to the only source whence, under the awful circumstances in which they were placed, they could derive hope

* Franklin's Journey, p. 447.

or consolation. He taught them the necessity of exertion, whatever pain it might at first cost; roused them to pay some attention to the cleanliness of their apartment, and insisted particularly, that during the day they should roll up their blankets, which they had been in the practice of leaving beside the fire where they slept. Their several tasks were now allotted to each: Hepburn and Richardson went out in search of deer; while Franklin, being unable to walk far, remained nearer the house, and digged under the snow for skins, which, during their former happy winter residence at this station, when they killed and ate abundance of game, were thrown away as useless, but now in their almost putrid state formed their principal support. The cutting of firewood was intrusted to Peltier and Samandré; but both were so weak and dispirited, that it was generally performed by Hepburn on his return from hunting; as for Adam, his legs were still so severely swollen that he kept his bed, though an operation performed by Dr. Richardson gave him some ease. In the midst of these necessary cares, all seemed for a while to dread approaching the subject of Hood and Michel's death; but at length one evening, on the return of the doctor from hunting, and after having despatched their usual supper of singed skin and bone-soup, they requested him to relate the particulars, and a more afflicting, or, in some respects, a more terrific story, as it appears in his published narrative, could not well be conceived.

He stated, that after being left by Captain Franklin, they remained beside the fire as long as it lasted. Having no tripe de roche, they supped on an infusion of the country tea-plant, which was grateful from its warmth, but afforded no nourishment, and retired to rest. Next day proved stormy, and the snow being so deep that a fire could not be kindled with the green willows, they lay in bed reading

some religious books with which the party had been furnished before leaving England by the affectionate and pious care of a lady. "They proved," says Richardson, "of incalculable benefit to us. We read portions of them to each other as we lay in bed, in addition to the morning and evening service, and found that they inspired us on each perusal with so strong a sense of the omnipresence of a beneficent God, that our situation in these wilds appeared no longer destitute; and we conversed not only with calmness, but with cheerfulness, detailing with unrestrained confidence the past events of our lives, and dwelling with hope upon our future prospects."*

The weather clearing up, Dr. Richardson went out in search of *tripe de roche*, leaving Mr. Hood in bed, and Hepburn cutting willows for a fire; but the rocks were covered with ice and snow, and he was unsuccessful. On his return he found Michel, the Iroquois, who delivered the note from Franklin.† All were surprised to see him alone; but he stated that Belanger had separated from him, and, as he supposed, lost his way, he himself having wandered far from the straight road. They had afterwards good reason to suspect the truth of this story, but believed it at that moment, and were rejoiced to see him produce a hare and a partridge—an unlooked-for supply, which they received with humble thankfulness to the Giver of all good. Franklin's note advised them to advance to a little wood of pines which would afford better fuel; and to this they removed under the guidance of Michel, who led them straight to the spot.

As he had declared himself so little acquainted with the country as to lose his way, it seemed strange that he should at once conduct them to the thicket. This roused their

* Franklin's Journey, p. 449.

† Ibid. p. 449.

attention, and made them feel rather uneasy as to his honesty; and various circumstances occurred to increase their suspicions. He requested the loan of a hatchet, when any other hunter would have taken only his knife. He remained abroad all day without any definite employment. He brought them some raw meat, saying it was part of the carcass of a wolf, but which they had afterwards reason to believe was a portion of the bodies of Belanger and Perrault, whom they suspected him to have murdered. He shunned the society of Dr. Richardson and Mr. Hood, refusing to sleep in the tent, and preferring to lie alone at the fire. On going out with the purpose of remaining a whole day, he often returned abruptly, and when questioned gave vague answers. In a few days he began to regret that he had left Captain Franklin's party, refused to take any share in the labour of cutting wood, talked in a surly and insolent manner, and could scarcely be prevailed upon to go out and hunt at all. These symptoms of gloomy dissatisfaction increased; he resisted all entreaties, and when Mr. Hood, who was now reduced by famine to the last extremity, remonstrated with him, he flew into a violent passion, and exclaimed, "It is of no use hunting; there are no animals; you had better kill and eat me." He afterwards, however, consented to go out, but returned upon some frivolous pretence; and on the succeeding day that dreadful catastrophe took place, which will be best given in the words of Dr. Richardson's Journal.

"In the morning," says he, "being Sunday, October 20th, we again urged Michel to go a-hunting, that he might, if possible, leave us some provision, to-morrow being the day appointed for his quitting us; but he showed great unwillingness to go out, and lingered about the fire under the pretence of cleaning his gun. After we had read the morning service, I went about noon to gather some tripe

de roche, leaving Mr. Hood sitting before the tent at the fireside arguing with Michel. Hepburn was employed cutting down a tree at a small distance from the tent, being desirous of accumulating a quantity of firewood. A short time after I went out, I heard the report of a gun, and about ten minutes afterwards Hepburn called to me in a voice of great alarm to come directly. When I arrived, I found poor Hood lying lifeless at the fireside, a ball having apparently entered his forehead. I was at first horror-struck with the idea that in a fit of despondency he had hurried himself into the presence of his Almighty Judge by an act of his own hand; but the conduct of Michel soon gave rise to other thoughts, and excited suspicions which were confirmed, when, upon examining the body, I found that the shot had entered the back part of the head and had passed out at the forehead, whilst the muzzle of the gun had been applied so close as to set fire to the nightcap behind. The gun, which was of the longest kind supplied to the Indians, could not have been placed in the position to inflict such a wound except by a second person. Upon inquiring of Michel how it happened, he replied that Mr. Hood had sent him into the tent for the short gun, and that during his absence the long gun had gone off, he did not know whether by accident or not. He held the short gun in his hand at the time he was speaking. Hepburn afterwards asserted, that previous to the report of the gun, Mr. Hood and Michel were speaking to each other in an elevated, angry tone;—he added, that Mr. Hood being seated at the fireside, was hid from him by intervening willows; but that on hearing the report he looked up, and saw Michel rising up from before the tent-door, or just behind where Mr. Hood was seated, and then going into the tent. Thinking that the gun had been discharged for the purpose of cleaning it, he did not go to the fire at first;

and when Michel called to him that Mr. Hood was dead, a considerable time had elapsed. * * * Bickersteth's Scripture Help was lying open beside the body, as if it had fallen from his hand, and it is probable he was reading it at the instant of his death."*

Such was the melancholy fate of Mr. Hood, a young officer of the highest promise, who, by his conduct, had endeared himself to every member of the expedition, and whose sufferings, as they were more intense, from the peculiarity of his constitution, were borne with a placid and unpretending fortitude, which it was impossible to contemplate without emotion. Both Dr. Richardson and Hepburn were convinced he had met his death from the hands of Michel; but to have accused him at that moment would have been the extremity of rashness. They were so reduced by famine that he could easily have overpowered both. His appearance showed that he possessed secret supplies of food; he was of great bodily strength, and was armed to the teeth, carrying, besides his gun, a brace of pistols, an Indian bayonet, and a knife. To have hinted a suspicion, therefore, might have been instantly fatal, and they affected to consider the death of their companion entirely accidental. As his weakness had been the chief cause of delaying their journey, they now set out for the fort, having first paid the last rites to the dead in the only way which their situation would permit. The ground was so hard, and their strength so exhausted, that to dig a grave was impossible; so they carried the body into the willow grove behind the tent, and returning to the fire, read the funeral service in addition to their evening devotions.

In the morning, having singed the hair off a portion of Mr. Hood's buffalo robe, they boiled and ate it for break-

* Franklin's Journey, vol. iv. 12mo ed. p. 109-112.

fast. Meanwhile, the conduct of Michel was so extraordinary, that had they not been already convinced of his guilt, no doubt of it could have remained. Though not a breath of their suspicions reached his ears, he repeatedly protested that he was incapable of committing such an act; he kept constantly on his guard, appeared fearful of leaving Dr. Richardson and Hepburn alone even for the shortest time, and when Hepburn spoke he listened anxiously, though very imperfectly acquainted with the English language, fixed his eyes keenly upon him, and asked fiercely if he accused him of the murder. He evinced great unwillingness to set out for the fort, and wished Dr. Richardson to proceed to the Coppermine River, where he said the woods would supply plenty of deer. On finding this advice disregarded, his conduct became more and more alarming; he muttered to himself, fell into sullen fits of abstraction, and used those convulsive and abrupt gestures often involuntarily exhibited by a person whose mind is full of some dreadful purpose. Suddenly awakening from this reverie, he again expressed his unwillingness to return to the fort, and renewed his solicitations to Dr. Richardson to repair to the southern woods, where they would find ample subsistence. On being requested to pursue his own plan alone, and leave them to continue their journey, he broke into an ungovernable fury, accused Hepburn of having told stories against him, and assumed such airs of superiority as showed that he knew they were both in his power, at the same time giving vent to expressions of hatred against the white people, calling them deadly enemies, and affirming they had killed and eaten his uncle and two of his relations.

None of these menaces were lost upon Richardson and Hepburn; both felt they were not safe in this man's company; and these dreadful surmises rose into certainty when he threw out hints that he would free himself from all

restraint on the morrow. Being now convinced that, as he had cruelly murdered Hood, he was resolved also to sacrifice them, they ascribed his not having already done so to the circumstance of his not knowing the way to the fort, and requiring their guidance. They came to this conclusion without any communication with each other; for their fierce companion would not leave them a moment, watching them with a malignant look, and frequently muttering threats against Hepburn. Towards evening, as they approached the spot where it would be necessary to stop for the night, Michel halted to gather *tripe de roche*, and to their surprise bade them walk on, and he would soon overtake them. Hepburn and Dr. Richardson, now left alone together for the first time since Mr. Hood's death, rapidly opened their minds to each other. In addition to the facts already mentioned, others came to light, which left not the slightest doubt as to Michel's guilt; and so convinced was Hepburn of there being no safety for them but in his death, that, though a man of extreme benevolence and deep religious principle, he offered to be the instrument of it himself. "Had my own life," says Dr. Richardson, "alone been threatened, I would not have purchased it by such a measure; but I considered myself as intrusted also with the protection of Hepburn's, a man who by his humane attentions and devotedness had so endeared himself to me, that I felt more anxiety for his safety than for my own." Animated by such feelings, and convinced that Michel's death was necessary to self-preservation, he determined that it ought to be by his own and not by Hepburn's hand, and on his coming up shot him through the head with a pistol. It appeared that he had gathered no *tripe de roche*, and had halted to put his gun in order, no doubt with the intention of attacking them when in the act of encamping.*

* Franklin's Journey, pp. 457, 458.

Dr. Richardson and Hepburn now pursued their way to the fort; but fatigue, and want of food and fuel, had nearly proved fatal to them. They remarked, however, that repeatedly when death seemed inevitable, an unexpected supply of provisions again restored them; and the confidence that, when no human help was nigh, they were supported by a merciful God, inspired them with renewed hope. At last they had the delight of beholding from an eminence the smoke issuing from the chimney of the fort, and immediately after, embracing those friends for whose fate they had entertained so many melancholy forebodings. So ended this interesting narrative.

The whole party were now once more united, but under circumstances of the most distressing privation; all emaciated to such a degree as to look like living skeletons; their hands shook from weakness, so that to take an aim was impossible; and the rein-deer, partridges, and other game, flew or bounded past in joyousness and security, whilst the unhappy beings who beheld them were gaunt with hunger. The winter was closing in with all its horrors; it became daily more difficult to procure fuel, the labour of cutting and carrying the logs being so grievous that only Dr. Richardson and Hepburn could undertake it; and to scrape the ground for bones, and to cook this miserable meal, was all Captain Franklin could accomplish. On 1st November the doctor obtained some tripe de roche; and as Peltier and Samandré were in the last stage of exhaustion, it was hoped a little of the soup might revive them. All was in vain; they tasted a few spoonfuls, but soon complained of a soreness in their throats, and both died in the course of the night, apparently without pain. To inter the bodies, or even carry them to the river, was a task for which the united strength of the survivors was inadequate; all they could do was to remove them into an

opposite part of the house; and the living and the dead remained in awful contiguity under the same roof.

The party was now reduced to four—Franklin, Richardson, Hepburn, and Adam. The last had become dreadfully low since the death of his companions, and could not bear to be left alone for a moment. Their stock of bones was exhausted, and in a short time it was evident that the severity of the frost must render the gathering of the *tripe de roche* impossible. Under these circumstances, with death by famine approaching every hour, this little band of pious and brave men were supported by an unwavering reliance on the mercy of God. “We read prayers,” says Captain Franklin, “and a portion of the New Testament in the morning and evening, as had been our practice since Dr. Richardson’s arrival; and I may remark, that the performance of these duties always afforded us the greatest consolation, serving to reanimate our hope in the mercy of the Omnipotent, who alone could save and deliver us.”* It seemed as if it were the mysterious design of the Almighty to permit them to be reduced to the lowest depth of suffering, that his power might be magnified at the very moment when every human effort appeared utterly impotent. Hitherto Dr. Richardson and Hepburn had been the healthiest of the party, but they had overwrought themselves, and both sunk rapidly. Owing to their loss of flesh, the hardness of the floor, from which they were only protected by a single blanket, rendered the whole surface of their bodies sore; yet the labour of turning from one side to the other was too much for them. As their strength sunk, their mental faculties partook of the weakness of their frame; and, to employ the candid and simple expressions of the excellent leader, “an unreasonable pettishness

* Franklin’s Journey, p. 464.

with each other began to manifest itself, each believing the other weaker in intellect than himself, and more in need of advice and assistance." During this gloomy period, after the first acute pains of hunger, which lasted but three or four days, had subsided, they generally enjoyed the refreshment of sleep, accompanied by dreams which for the most part partook of a pleasant character, and very often related to the pleasures of feasting.*

Help, however, was now near at hand, and we shall not impair the affecting description of their deliverance by giving it in any other than Captain Franklin's own words:—"On November 7th, Adam had passed a restless night, being disquieted by gloomy apprehensions of approaching death, which they tried in vain to dispel. He was so low in the morning as scarcely to be able to speak, and Captain Franklin remained by his bedside to cheer him as much as possible, whilst the doctor and Hepburn went out to cut wood. They had hardly begun their labour when they were amazed at hearing the report of a musket, and could scarcely believe that there was any one near till they heard a shout, and espied three Indians close to the house. Adam and Franklin heard the latter noise, and were fearful that some part of the house had fallen upon one of their companions—a disaster which had been thought not unlikely. The alarm was only momentary; for Dr. Richardson came in to communicate the joyful intelligence that relief had arrived. He and Captain Franklin immediately addressed their thanksgivings to the Throne of Mercy for this deliverance; but poor Adam was in so low a state that he could scarcely comprehend the information. When the Indians entered, he attempted to rise, but immediately sank down again. But for this seasonable interposition

* Franklin's Journey, pp. 465, 466.

of Providence, his existence must have terminated in a few hours, and that of the rest probably in not many days."*

The Indians who had been despatched by Mr. Back had travelled with great expedition, and brought a small supply of provisions. They imprudently presented too much food at first; and though aware of the effects which might arise from a surfeit, and warned by Dr. Richardson to eat very sparingly, the sight of the venison was irresistible; and it was devoured by them all, not excluding the doctor himself, with an avidity that soon produced the most acute pains, which during the night deprived them of rest. Adam, whose weakness rendered him unable to feed himself, was not subjected to the same inconvenience, and taking moderate meals revived hourly. All now was thankfulness and cheerful activity. Boudel-kell, the youngest Indian, after an hour's rest, returned to the encampment of Akaitcho, the Dog-rib chief, carrying a note from Captain Franklin, and a request for another supply of provisions. The two others, named in their familiar manner Crooked Foot and the Rat, remained to nurse the white men. Under their care the apartment lately so desolate, and something between a sepulchre and a lazar-house, assumed a gladdened look, which had the best effect. The dead bodies were removed, the room cleaned of its filth and fragments of pounded bones, and large cheerful fires produced a sensation of comfort to which they had long been strangers. The poor sufferers had often cast a wishful eye on a pile of dried wood near the river, but were utterly unable to carry it up the bank. When pointed out to the Indians, they fetched it home with a rapidity which astonished their feeble friends. "They set about everything," says Franklin, "with an

* Franklin's Journey, p. 467.

activity which amazed us. Indeed, contrasted with our emaciated figures and extreme debility, their frames appeared to us gigantic, and their strength supernatural."

Under the care of the Indians, and the blessing of wholesome and regular meals, the strength of the party was so far restored, that, although still feeble, on the 16th, after having united in prayer and thanksgiving to God for their deliverance, they left Fort Enterprise—a spot where, as they had formerly enjoyed much comfort if not happiness, they had latterly experienced a degree of misery scarcely to be paralleled.* The Indians treated them with unremitting kindness, gave them their own snow-shoes, and walked at their side to be ready to lift them up when they fell. In this manner they pushed forward to the abode of Akaitcho, the Indian chief, who welcomed them with the utmost hospitality. Soon after they received letters from their friends at Fort Providence, and the messenger also brought two trains of dogs, a package of spirits and tobacco for the Indians, and a supply of shirts and clothes for Captain Franklin and his companions. The gratification of changing their linen, which had been uninterruptedly worn ever since their departure from the sea-coast, is described as conveying an intensity of comfort to which no words can do justice. From this spot their progress to Fort Providence and thence to Montreal was prosperous and easy; and thus terminated their long, fatiguing, and disastrous travels in North America, having journeyed by water and by land, including their navigation of the Polar Sea, 5550 miles.

So disastrous had been the result of his first expedition, and so appalling the sufferings with which it was accompanied, that nothing assuredly can convey a more honour-

* Franklin's Journey, p. 470.

able testimony to the enthusiastic zeal and unshaken perseverance of Captain Franklin, than the statement of the simple fact, that towards the close of 1823, having learnt the determination of government to make another attempt to effect a northern passage by sea between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, he, to use his own words, "ventured to lay before his Majesty's government a plan for an expedition overland to the mouth of the Mackenzie River, and thence by sea to the north-western extremity of America, with the combined object also of surveying the coast between the Mackenzie and the Coppermine Rivers."

It was the opinion of this able officer that, in the course he now proposed to follow, reverses similar to those which had surrounded his first journey were scarcely to be apprehended; and his views having met the approbation of government, he received directions for the equipment of the expedition, and was nominated its commander. He had the satisfaction also of being once more accompanied by his valued friend Dr. Richardson, who, untappalled by his former dreadful sufferings, again offered his services as naturalist and surgeon, and volunteered to undertake the survey of the coast between the Mackenzie and Coppermine Rivers, while Captain Franklin was occupied in an attempt to reach Icy Cape.* Previous to the departure of the ships, a correspondence was opened with the governor and directors of the Hudson's Bay Company, who transmitted injunctions to their officers in the fur-countries, to provide depots of provisions at the stations pointed out by Franklin.

The building of proper boats for the navigation of the Arctic Sea, as well as the passage of the rapids between York Factory and Mackenzie River, formed the next

* Franklin's Narrative of a Second Expedition to the Shores of the Polar Sea. Introductory Chapter. p. 10.

object of attention. It was evident that the canoes or birch-bark employed by Sir A. Mackenzie, and by Captain Franklin in his first journey, though excellently adapted for the American rivers, uniting lightness and facility of repair with speed, were yet, from the tenderness of the bark, little fitted to resist the force of the arctic waves, or the collision of the sharp-pointed masses of ice. Captain Franklin accordingly obtained the Admiralty's permission to have three boats constructed at Woolwich under his own superintendence. "They were built," says he, "of mahogany, with timbers of ash, both ends exactly alike, and fitted to be steered either with a ship-oar or a rudder. The largest, being twenty-six feet long and five feet four inches broad, was adapted for six rowers, a steersman, and an officer; it was found to be capable of carrying three tons weight in addition to the crew, and could be transported with ease on the shoulders of six men. The two other boats were twenty-four feet in length, four feet ten inches broad, and held a crew of five men, besides a steersman and an officer, with an extra weight of two and a half tons. In addition to these, another little vessel was constructed at Woolwich, which reflected great credit upon its inventor, Lieutenant-Colonel Pasley of the Royal Engineers. Its shape was exactly that of one of the valves of a walnut-shell, and it was framed of well-seasoned planks of ash, fastened together with thongs, and covered with Mackintosh's prepared canvass. It weighed only eighty-five pounds, and when taken to pieces could be made up in five or six parcels, and again put together in less than twenty minutes, although it was nine feet long by four feet four inches in breadth."* Each person on board was provided with two suits of waterproof dresses,

* Franklin's Second Journey, Intro. Chap. pp. 15, 18

prepared by Mr. Mackintosh of Glasgow; the guns, which were of the same bore as the fowling-pieces furnished by the Hudson's Bay Company to the Indian hunters, had their locks tempered to resist the cold—each being fitted with a broad Indian dagger similar to a bayonet, which, on being disjoined, could be used as a knife. Ammunition of the best quality, and a store of provisions sufficient for two years, were also supplied.

The expedition sailed from Liverpool on 16th February 1825, and after a favourable passage to New York, proceeded to Albany, travelled through Utica, Rochester, and Geneva, crossed the Niagara and Lake Ontario, coasted the northern shore of Lake Superior, and thence pushed forward through Rainy Lake, the Lake of the Woods, Lake Winipeg, Saskatchewan River, and arrived at Cumberland House on 15th June. From this station, proceeding northward to Isle a la Crosse, and passing through Deep River and Clear and Buffalo Lakes, they overtook their boats in Methye River on the morning of 29th June. The advanced period of the season rendered it impossible to embark on the Mackenzie before the middle of August, so that it became necessary to postpone the great expedition till the ensuing summer. They accordingly established their winter quarters on the banks, erecting a habitation and store, which they named Fort Franklin. The superintendence of these buildings was committed to Lieutenant Back, while Captain Franklin determined to descend the river, take a view of the state of the Polar Sea, and return to winter quarters before the extreme cold should set in. In this voyage there occurred nothing worthy of particular notice till the arrival at Whale Island, where, though Mackenzie had the strongest reasons to conclude that he had reached the sea, he appears not to have been completely satisfied on that point. Probably his doubts arose from the fresh taste of

the water. Franklin, however, proceeded beyond Whale Island, and reached the shore of the great Arctic Ocean. "Embarking," says he, "at eleven A.M., we continued our course along the shore of Ellice Island, until we found its coast trending southward of east. There we landed, and were rejoiced at the sea-like appearance to the northward. An island was now discovered to the north-east, looking blue from its distance, towards which the boat was immediately directed. The water, which for the last eight miles had been very shallow, became gradually deeper, and of a more green colour, though still fresh, even when we had entirely lost sight of the eastern land. In the middle of the traverse we were caught by a strong contrary wind, against which our crews cheerfully contended for five hours. Unwilling to return without attaining the object of our search, when the strength of the rowers was nearly exhausted the sails were set double-reefed, and our excellent boat mounted over the waves in a most buoyant manner, whilst an opportune alteration of the wind enabled us in the course of another hour to fetch into smoother water under the shelter of the island. We then pulled across a line of strong ripple, which marked the termination of the fresh water, that on the seaward side being brackish; and in the farther progress of three miles to the island, we had the indescribable pleasure of finding the water decidedly salt. The sun was setting as the boat touched the beach; we hastened to the most elevated part of the island, about two hundred and fifty feet high, to look around; and never was a prospect more gratifying than that which lay open to us. The Rocky Mountains were seen from S.W. to W. $\frac{1}{2}$ N., and from the latter point, round by the north, the sea appeared in all its majesty, entirely free from ice, and without any visible obstruction to its navigation. Many seals and black and white whales were seen sporting on its waves, and the

whole scene was calculated to excite in our minds the most flattering expectations of our own success and that of our friends in the *Hecla* and the *Fury*."* Franklin pronounces a high encomium on the accuracy of Mackenzie, and considers him as completely entitled to the praise of having reached the Arctic Sea, although, owing to the frail construction of the Indian canoes, it was impossible for him to sail to the point where the water became salt.

Having accomplished his design in this preliminary journey, Franklin returned on 5th September to his winter quarters on Great Bear Lake. About the same time Dr. Richardson arrived from his excursion to the north-eastern shores of the same extensive sheet of water, having completed his survey as far as the influx of Dease's River, and ascertained that the first rapid was the best point to which the eastern detachment of the expedition should direct its course on their return from the Coppermine in the following season. Meantime the people were so busily employed that time never hung heavy on their hands, and the shortest day came almost unexpectedly upon them. The Canadians and Indians were engaged in fishing and hunting for the support of the whole party, and during the autumn the nets yielded daily eight hundred fish of the kind called herring-salmon. Four Dog-rib Indians, along with the two interpreters, Augustus and Ooligbuck, were employed in hunting rein-deer, and the sailors were divided into different parties, to whom separate duties were allotted; such as attending on the nets, bringing home the venison killed by the hunters, felling, carrying, and splitting wood, and exercising themselves in running as letter-carriers on snow-shoes between Fort Franklin and two other small posts established on the Mackenzie and Slave Lake. A

* Franklin's Second Journey, p. 34-36.

school also was opened, in which, during the long winter evenings, the officers instructed the sailors in reading, writing, and arithmetic ; and during the hours of relaxation the hall was given up to the men to divert themselves with any game they chose ; on which occasions they were always joined by the officers. Sunday was invariably a day of rest, and the whole party attended divine service morning and evening. Besides this, the officers had ample employment in noting down the thermometrical, magnetical, and atmospherical observations, in writing their journals, finishing their charts and drawings, and arranging the objects of natural history which had been collected.* They were amused by occasional visits of the Dog-rib Indians, and various other tribes ; and Christmas-day falling on a Sunday, they on the succeeding evening gave a dance and supper, which was attended by sixty persons, including savages. "Seldom," says Franklin, "in such a confined space as our hall, or amongst the same number of persons, was there a greater variety of character, or greater confusion of tongues. The party consisted of Englishmen, Highlanders (who mostly conversed with each other in Gaelic), Canadians (who spoke French), Esquimaux, Chepewyans, Dog-ribs, Hare Indians, Cree women and children, all mingled together in perfect harmony, whilst the amusements were varied by English, Gaelic, and French songs."†

The spring now approached, and the migratory animals, which observe with beautiful exactness their periods of departure and arrival, began to appear, gladdening the yet wintry face of nature. On 5th October the last swan had passed to the southward, and on the 11th the last brown duck was noticed. On 6th May the first swan was seen, and on the 8th the brown ducks reappeared on the lake.

* Franklin's Second Journey, p. 54-56.

† Ibid., p. 67.

The mosses began to sprout, and various singing birds and orioles, along with some swifts and white geese, arrived soon after. It is remarked by Dr. Richardson, that the singing birds, which were silent on the banks of the Bear Lake during the day, serenaded their mates at midnight; at which time, however, it was quite light. On 20th May the little stream which flowed past the fort burst its icy chains, and the laughing geese arrived to give renewed cheerfulness to the lake. Soon after this the winter green began to push forth its flowers; and under the increasing warmth of the sun's rays the whole face of nature underwent a delightful change. The snow gradually melted, the ice broke up from the shores of the lake, the northern sky became red and luminous at midnight, the dwarf-birch and willows expanded their leaves, and by the 3d June the anemones, the tussilago, the Lapland rose, and other early plants, were in full flower.*

Admonished by these pleasing changes, Captain Franklin prepared to set out, and on 15th June the equipments for the boats were completed. Fourteen men, including Augustus, the Esquimaux interpreter, accompanied the commander-in-chief and Lieutenant Back in the two larger boats, the *Lion* and the *Reliance*; whilst nine men, and Ooligbuck, another interpreter, attended Dr. Richardson and Mr. Kendall in the *Dolphin* and the *Union*. Spare blankets, and all that could be useful for the voyage, or as presents to the Esquimaux, were divided between the eastern and western parties. On the Sunday before their departure, the officers and men assembled at divine worship, and, in addition to the usual service, the special protection of the Almighty was implored for the enterprise upon which they were about to be engaged. All was now

* Richardson's Meteorological Tables.

ready, and on Tuesday, 28th June, they embarked upon the Mackenzie, with the navigation of which the reader is already familiar. On the 4th July they reached that part where the river divides into various channels, and the two parties had determined to pursue different directions. The expedition which was to follow the western branch, commanded by Captain Franklin, embarked first, at Dr. Richardson's desire, with a salute of three hearty cheers from their companions; and as they dropt down the river and passed round a point of land, they perceived their friends who were to follow the eastern branch employed in the bustle of embarkation. All were in high spirits, and it was impossible not to contrast their present complete state of equipment with the circumstances of their first disastrous journey.

On reaching the mouth of the Mackenzie, the western expedition came almost immediately into contact with the Esquimaux. Captain Franklin observed an encampment upon a neighbouring island, and instantly proceeded to open a communication. A selection of presents was made, and at the same time every man was directed to have his gun ready for use. Having adopted these precautions, they steered direct for the island with their ensigns flying. The boats touched ground when about a mile from the beach. Signs were made to the Esquimaux to come off, and the English pulled back a little to await their arrival in deeper water. Three canoes, each carrying only a single person, pushed off, and these were followed rapidly by others; so that in a few minutes the whole space between the boats and the shore was alive with those little vessels which they name kayaks. An attempt was at first made to count them, and the sailors got the length of seventy; but they increased in such quick succession as to baffle their farther efforts.

At first everything proceeded in a friendly manner. Augustus, after delivering a present, informed them, that if the English succeeded in finding a navigable channel for large ships, an advantageous trade would be opened. This intimation was received with a deafening shout, and the sight of the presents which had been carried away by the three foremost kayaks inflamed the cupidity of their companions; so that the boats were in a moment surrounded by nearly three hundred persons, offering for sale their bows, arrows, and spears, with a violence and perseverance which became at last exceedingly troublesome, and Captain Franklin directed the boats to be put to seaward. At this moment a kayak was upset by one of the oars of the *Lion*, and its unhappy possessor was stuck by the accident with his head in the mud, and his heels in the air. He was instantly extricated, wrapt in a warm great-coat, and placed in the boat, where, although at first excessively frightened and angry, he soon became reconciled to his situation, and looking about, discovered many bales and other articles which had hitherto been carefully concealed. His first impulse was to ask for everything he saw, his next to be indignant that his requests were not granted; and on joining his companions, as they afterwards learned, he harangued on the inexhaustible riches of the *Lion*, and proposed a plan for a general attack and pillage of both the boats. This scheme was immediately carried into execution; and although the plunderers at first affected to be partly in sport, matters soon assumed a serious complexion. Two of the most powerful men, leaping on board, seized Captain Franklin, forced him to sit between them, and when he shook them off, a third took his station in front to catch his arm whenever he attempted to raise his gun or lay his hand on the broad dagger which hung by his side. During this assault the two boats were violently dragged to

the shore, and a numerous party, stripping to the waist and brandishing their long sharp knives, ran to the *Reliance*, and commenced a regular pillage, handing the articles to the women, who, ranged in a row behind, quickly conveyed them out of sight. No sooner was the bow cleared of one set of marauders, than another party commenced their operations at the stern. The *Lion* was beset by smaller numbers, and her crew, by firmly keeping their seats on the canvass cover spread over the cargo, and beating off the natives with the butt-end of their muskets, succeeded in preventing any article of importance from being carried away. Irritated, at length, by their frequent failure, the Esquimaux made a simultaneous charge, and, leaping on board, began to wrest the daggers and shot-belts from the sailors, and to strike with their knives. In the midst of this attack, when the crew in the *Lion* were nearly overpowered, and their commander disarmed, all at once the natives took to their heels, and concealed themselves behind the drift timber and canoes on the beach. This sudden panic was occasioned by Captain Back, whose boat at this time had been got afloat, commanding his crew to level their muskets—a proceeding which was immediately observed by the Esquimaux, though not noticed by Captain Franklin's men, who were wholly occupied in defending themselves. The *Lion* happily floated soon after; and as both boats pulled off, Captain Franklin desired Augustus to inform some of the Esquimaux, who manifested a disposition to follow and renew the attack, that he would shoot the first man who ventured to approach within musket-range.*

In the evening, Augustus anxiously entreated permission to attend a conference of his countrymen on the shore, to

* Franklin's Second Journey, p. 101-107.

which he had been formally invited. The courage and fidelity of this person had much endeared him to the English, and it was not without hesitation that Captain Franklin agreed to his request, as he stated his determination to reprove the natives for their disgraceful conduct. He was at length allowed to go, and by the time he reached the shore the number of Esquimaux amounted to forty, all of them armed. On landing, he walked undauntedly into the middle of the assembly, and addressed them in the following animated speech, which he afterwards repeated to his English friends:—"Your conduct," said he, "has been very bad, and unlike all other Esquimaux. Some of you even stole from me, your countryman; but that I do not mind. I only regret that you should have treated in this violent manner the white people, who came solely to do you kindness. My tribe were in the same unhappy state in which you now are before the white people came to Churchill; but at present they are supplied with everything they need; and you see that I am well clothed, I get everything I want, and am very comfortable. You cannot expect, after the transactions of this day, that these people will ever bring any articles to your country again, unless you show your contrition by returning the stolen goods. The white people love the Esquimaux, and wish to show them the same kindness that they bestow upon the Indians. Do not deceive yourselves, and suppose that they are afraid of you; I tell you they are not, and that it is entirely owing to their humanity that many of you were not killed to-day, for they have all guns with which they can destroy you either near or at a distance. I also have a gun, and can assure you that if a white man had fallen, I would have been the first to have revenged his death." During this speech, which was delivered, as they perceived from the boats, with much energy and spirited gesticula-

tion, the Esquimaux expressed their approbation by frequent shouts, and on its conclusion made a very penitent, though somewhat singular apology: "They had never seen white men before," they said, "and really all the things in the boats were so beautiful and desirable that it was impossible not to steal them. As they were very anxious, however, for the friendship and trade of the white men, they solemnly promised never to repeat such conduct, and, at the request of Augustus, sent back the large kettle, the tent, and some pairs of shoes which they had carried off." * The interpreter was afterwards invited to a dance, and a friendly understanding seemed to be established; but Captain Franklin soon discovered that the professions of the natives were hollow and treacherous, and nothing but his jealous precautions saved him and his companions from massacre, in which it had been resolved to include the faithful Augustus.

Their voyage along the coast in the direction of west-north-west, after a progress of twelve miles, was impeded by the ice stretching from the shore far to seaward. The boats were in consequence hauled up; and as the frozen masses were piled round to the height of thirty feet, it became necessary to await the breaking up of this formidable barrier. Having gone to sleep, the officers were startled at midnight by the guard calling to arms: Three Esquimaux, belonging to a larger party encamped at some distance, had stolen forward, and been only discovered when close at hand. Alarmed at the appearance of the men, who stood to their arms, the strangers were on the point of discharging their arrows, when they were arrested by the loud voice of Augustus, who explained the object of the expedition, and dilated upon the advantages which they

* Franklin's Second Journey, pp. 108, 109.

would derive from it. A present confirmed his statement, and an amicable intercourse was opened—a line, however, being first drawn at a certain distance from the tents, across which no Esquimaux was to pass, under the penalty of being instantly shot. Against this they made no remonstrance, only remarking, when informed of the treacherous conduct of the natives at the mouth of Mackenzie River, that “these were bad men, altogether different from them, and never failed either to steal or quarrel whenever an opportunity was offered.” The delight exhibited by these people, including the most elderly among them, on receiving any little present, was exactly similar to that of children when they get hold of toys. They ran from one thing to another; examined with restless curiosity every part of Augustus’ dress, who, to gratify his vanity, had put on his gayest apparel; and, ignorant of the uses of the articles presented to them, they walked about with cod-fish hooks and awls dangling from the nose, and copper thimbles strung to their trousers or rein-deer jackets. The men were robust, and taller than those seen on the east coast by Captain Parry, though their manner of life appeared to be nearly the same. With the broad nose and small eyes, which peculiarly distinguish the whole Esquimaux tribes, they had the cheekbones less projecting than those of the eastern coast. From a constant exposure to the glare of the ice and snow, the whole party were afflicted with sore eyes, and two of the old men seemed nearly blind. They wore the hair on the upper lip and chin, and every man had pieces of bone or shells thrust through the septum of the nose, whilst holes were pierced on each side of the under lip, in which were placed circular pieces of ivory with a large blue bead in the centre—ornaments which they valued highly, and declined selling. Their clothes consisted of a jacket of rein-deer skin, with a skirt behind and

before, and a small hood; breeches of the same material, and large seal-skin boots. The dress of the females differed from that of the men only in their wearing wide trousers, and in the size of their hoods, which did not fit close to the head, but were made large for the purpose of receiving their children: these were ornamented with stripes of different coloured skins, and round the top was fastened a band of wolf's hair, made to stand erect. The women were from four feet and a half to four feet three quarters high, and some of the younger, though too corpulent, were pretty; their black hair was tastefully turned up from behind to the top of the head, and braided with strings of white and blue beads and cords of white deer-skin. Both men and women were much pleased by having their portraits sketched by Captain Back; and one young lady, who sat for a full-length, and chose the extraordinary attitude of stuffing both hands into her breeches-pockets, interrupted the labours of the draughtsman by repeatedly jumping into the air, and smiling in a very ludicrous and irresistible manner. The men were armed with bows and arrows, long knives, which they concealed in the shirt-sleeve, and spears tipped with bone.*

The Esquimaux had predicted, that as soon as a strong wind began to blow from the land it would loosen the ice; and on 12th July a heavy rain with a pretty high gale set in, and opened up a passage. The boats accordingly were launched; and, passing a wide bay named by the commander after his friends Captains Sabine and King, they were suddenly arrested by a compact body of ice, and enveloped at the same time in a dense fog. On attempting to pull back for the purpose of landing, they discovered that the ice had closed between them and the shore. In this

* Franklin's Second Journey, pp. 118, 119.

situation only one alternative was left, which was to pull to seaward and trace the outer border of the ice. This they at last effected; though a sudden change of wind brought on a heavy swell, and surrounded them with floating masses of ice, which threatened to crush the boats to pieces. They succeeded, however, after five hours employed in pulling in and out between these floating icebergs, in reaching the shore and landing a little to the west of Point Sabine. After a detention of two days they proceeded as far as Point Kay; but being here again impeded by a compact body of ice, which extended to seaward as far as the eye could reach, they were obliged to encamp and wait patiently for the first strong breeze from the land.

The time of their sojourn in these arctic solitudes was pleasantly occupied in making astronomical observations, collecting specimens of the plants in flower, sketching scenery, and completing charts of the coast. Augustus went in search of his countrymen, and returned at night with a young Esquimaux and his wife, who, after a few presents, became loquacious, and informed them that the ice would soon break up. Symptoms of this desirable change were accordingly observed next day, and with great labour they reached Herschel Island. At the moment they made the shore a herd of rein-deer came bounding down to the beach, pursued by three Esquimaux hunters, and immediately took the water, whilst the natives, startled at sight of the strangers, gazed for a moment, consulted amongst themselves, changed the heads of their arrows, and prepared their bows. Their hostile intentions, however, were laid aside when they were addressed by Augustus; and in the evening a large party arrived, bringing dried meat, fish, and game, for which they received presents in exchange, which set them singing and dancing round the encampment for the greater part of the night.

From these people was collected some curious information. They stated that they procured beads, knives, and iron, principally from Esquimaux residing far away to the west, and also from Indians who came annually from the interior by a river directly opposite the encampment, to which Captain Franklin gave the name of Mountain Indian River.* Whence the Indians or the Esquimaux obtained these goods they could not tell, but supposed it was from Kabloonacht or white men, at a great distance to the west. The articles were not of British manufacture, from which Captain Franklin concluded that the Kabloonacht must be the Russian fur-traders.

It was with great difficulty that the boats made even a short distance from Herschel Island. The ice repeatedly closed in upon them, leaving only a narrow channel, often too shallow to float the boats; and dense fogs now became frequent, rendering their navigation peculiarly hazardous. These dreary curtains hanging over the ice gave it the appearance of water, and exposed them to the danger of being shut in by an impenetrable barrier when they expected an open sea. They continued their course, however, till they came abreast of Mount Conybeare, when they encamped, and crossing a swampy level, ascended to the summit, from which they enjoyed a striking view into the interior. Three noble ranges of mountains were seen parallel to the Buckland chain, but of less altitude, whilst the prospect was bounded by a fourth range, mingling their pyramidal summits with the clouds, and covered with snow. From this last encampment their advance was extremely slow. The boats were pushed forward through small lanes, the utmost vigilance being necessary to prevent their being entirely shut in, as a few hours often made essential

* Franklin's Second Journey, pp. 130, 131.

changes, and their frail craft could only be saved by being frequently hauled upon the beach. The calm weather also retarded them, and they earnestly longed for a strong gale to break up the compacted fields of ice, and permit them to continue their voyage.

After a detention of some days their wishes seemed about to be gratified. At midnight, on the 25th July, a strong south-westerly breeze sprung up, accompanied by thunder and lightning; but in the morning an impenetrable fog hung over the sea. On the land side the prospect was equally dreary; an extensive swamp, in which they sunk ankle-deep at every step, prevented any excursions into the interior, and the clouds of mosquitoes which for ever buzzed around them kept them in a perpetual irritation. At length, however, the fog dispersed, disclosing an open lane of water about half a mile from shore; following its course for eight miles, they came to the mouth of a wide river, which had its rise in the British range of mountains. Its course approached near the line of demarcation between the American dominions of Great Britain and Russia, and Captain Franklin named it the Clarence River, after his present Majesty, then Lord High Admiral. On the most elevated part of the coast near its mouth they erected a pile of drift wood, under which was deposited a tin box, containing a royal silver medal, and an account of the proceedings of the expedition; after which the Union flag was hoisted with three hearty cheers.

They now continued their voyage, though often beset by ice and interrupted by fogs; and passing the boundary between Russian and British America, descried an encampment of natives on a low island, surrounded by many oomiaks and kayaks guarded by Esquimaux dogs, whilst their masters were fast asleep in the tents. The interpreter being despatched to rouse them, a singular scene

took place. At his first call a little squabby woman rushed out in a state of perfect nudity, uttered a loud yell, and instantly ran back again to rouse her husband, who, shouting out that strangers were at hand, awoke the whole band. In a moment all seized their arms, and without waiting to put on their deer-skin breeches or jackets, swarmed out upon the beach, which in an instant was covered with fifty-four grown-up persons, completely naked, very outrageous, dirty, and ugly. A short parley quieted their fears, an interchange of presents took place, and the boats crossed Camden Bay, having in view the noble range of the Romanzoff Mountains, whose peaks were covered with snow.

Soon after they arrived at the mouth of a river, which discharged into the sea so great a volume of water, that even three miles from land the taste was perfectly fresh; and having reached latitude $70^{\circ} 7'$, farther progress was prevented by ice closely packed on the outer border of a reef, and they discovered that the great chain of the Rocky Mountains either terminated abreast of their present situation, or receded so far to the southward as to fade away in the distance. During their detention, Captain Back, to whose pencil we are indebted for many admirable drawings of arctic scenery, made a sketch of the most western mountain, which they named Mount Copleston.* Various circumstances now warned them that much farther progress along this inhospitable coast was impracticable. The fogs became more frequent and perilous, the water was often so shallow that even at two miles from shore the boats grounded, and on getting into deeper soundings, the repeated shocks received from masses of floating ice severely injured their timbers, especially those of the *Lion*, which was very leaky. Still they struggled on from Flaxman

* Franklin's Second Journey, p. 150.

Island along a low desolate shore, rendered more dreary by the stormy weather, till on the 10th a gale brought along with it a thick fog, and they hauled up the boats, encamping on a low spot, which they named Foggy Island. Here they kindled fires, dried their clothes, which were completely wet with the moisture of the atmosphere, and amused themselves in their murky prison by proceeding in search of rein-deer. The fog caused frequent and sometimes ludicrous mistakes; and on one occasion, after the men had spent a long time in stealing upon some deer, and were congratulating themselves on coming within shot, to their amazement the animals took wing and disappeared in the fog, with a scream and cackle which at once declared their genus, and seemed to deride the credulity of their pursuers. "We witnessed with regret," says Captain Franklin, "in these short rambles, the havoc which this dreary weather made among the flowers. Many which had been blooming upon our arrival were now lying prostrate and withered, and these symptoms of decay could not fail painfully to remind us that the term of our operations was fast approaching. Often at this time did every one express a wish that we had some decked vessel, in which the provisions could be secured from the injury of salt water, and the crew sheltered when they required rest, that we might quit this shallow coast and steer at once towards Icy Cape."* So frequently did they attempt to fulfil this desire, and so perpetually were they driven back by the fog closing in upon them, that the sailors declared the island was enchanted. Indeed, to a superstitious mind, the appearances furnished some ground for believing it. The fog would often disperse, and permit a short glimpse of a point about three miles distant, bearing north-west by west; in a moment

* Franklin's Second Journey, p. 154.

every hand was at work, the boats were launched, the crews embarked ; but before they could be dragged into deep water, the spirit of the mist once more drew his impenetrable curtain round them, and after resting a while on their oars, they were compelled to pull back to their old quarters. Scarcely had they kindled a fire and begun to dry their clothes, soaked with wading over the flats, when the fog again opened, the boats were launched, and the desired point almost gained ; but their tormentor once more enveloped earth and ocean in a thicker gloom than before. "Fog is, of all others," says Captain Franklin, "the most hazardous state of the atmosphere for navigation in an icy sea, especially where it is accompanied by strong breezes ; but particularly so for boats where the shore is unapproachable. If caught by a gale, a heavy swell, or drifting ice, the result must be their wreck, or the throwing their provisions overboard, to lighten them so as to proceed in shoal water. Many large pieces of ice were seen on the border of the shallow water, and from the lowness of the temperature we concluded that the main body was at no great distance."*

The nights were now lengthening ; the grasses and the whole aspect of the vegetation was autumnal ; their stores of drift-wood had been so much drawn upon, that though the tents were wet through, and they were for warmth obliged to wrap their feet in blankets, no fire was allowed except to cook the victuals. The provisions were barely sufficient for the support of the party on their return, whilst the frequency of the fogs, the shallowness which prevented the boats from floating, the heavy swell, that, as the wind freshened, rose upon the flats, compelled them to haul farther from land ; and the danger which in doing so they

* Franklin's Second Journey, p. 156.

necessarily incurred from the drift-ice, formed an accumulation of difficulties which rendered their progress from Point Anxiety across Prudhoe Bay to Return Reef the most discouraging and painful part of the whole voyage. It was now the 16th of August, and the boats, though the exertions of the crews had been unwearied, were only half-way between the mouth of Mackenzie River and Icy Cape. The young ice had already begun to form at night on the pools of fresh water, and the mind of the commander recurred naturally and wisely to his former experience. He recollected that only one day later, and in a latitude two degrees more southerly, he had in his first voyage encountered severe storms of wind and snow, and that in another fortnight the winter would set in with all its horrors. Already the sun began to sink below the horizon, and with this change the mean temperature of the atmosphere rapidly decreased; the deer were hastening from the coast; the Esquimaux had ceased to appear; no winter houses gave indications that this remote coast was inhabited; and the autumnal parties of geese hourly winging their flight to the westward, indicated that winter had already surprised them in their polar solitudes. It had been Franklin's great object to double Icy Cape, and meet the expedition under Captain Beechy in Kotzebue's Inlet; but from the distance and the advanced season this was now impracticable. On the other hand, his instructions directed him, "if, in consequence of slow progress, or other unforeseen accident, it should remain doubtful whether the expedition should be able to reach Kotzebue's Inlet the same season, to commence their return on the 15th or 20th of August." To relinquish the great object of his ambition, and to disappoint the confidence reposed in his exertions, was a sacrifice which cost him no ordinary pain; and had he been then aware of the fact (with which the reader will be

immediately acquainted) that the barge of the Blossom was at that moment only one hundred and forty-six miles distant, we have his own authority for stating that no difficulties or dangers would have prevailed on him to return; but under the circumstances in which he was placed, to make any farther effort in advance was incompatible with the higher duties which he owed to his officers and crew. After a mature consideration of everything, he formed the reluctant conclusion that they had reached the point where perseverance would have been rashness, and their best efforts must have only led to a more calamitous failure.* It was resolved therefore to return; and on the morning of the 18th August they began their retreat to the Mackenzie River, which, without any material danger, with the exception of a severe gale encountered off Point Kay, they regained on the 4th of September. Thence they proceeded to Fort Franklin, where they met Dr. Richardson, Mr. Kendall, and their friends of the eastern expedition, who, after a prosperous and interesting voyage to the mouth of the Coppermine, had returned to the Fort on the 1st September.

Of this interesting journey our limits will only permit a very cursory glance. Fortunately for the eastern expedition, the coast between the mouths of the Mackenzie and the Coppermine Rivers presented none of those serious obstacles which at every step were starting up in the dreary and protracted route of the western party; and they consequently accomplished a voyage of about five hundred miles between the 4th of July and 8th of August. It was eminently successful in the accurate survey of this hitherto unexplored coast, but unvaried by any remarkable incidents. The Esquimaux on various parts of the coast were more numerous, pacific, comfortable, and wealthy, than the

* Franklin's Second Journey, pp. 161, 162, 165.

western tribes; but their civilization had not eradicated the propensities for thieving. On one occasion the boats were surrounded by a fleet of about fifty kayaks, and an attack was made exactly similar to that upon Franklin; but though the object was the same, it was pursued with less vigour, and the moment the sailors levelled their muskets the whole party dispersed with precipitation.

On arriving at Atkinson Island they discovered, under shelter of a chain of sand-hills drifted by the wind to the height of thirty feet, a small Esquimaux town, consisting of seventeen winter houses, besides a larger building, which Dr. Richardson at first conjectured to be a house of assembly for the tribe. Ooligbuck the interpreter, however, whose ideas were more gross and commonplace, pronounced it to be a general eating-room. "This large building," says Dr. Richardson, "was in the interior a square of twenty-seven feet, having the log roof supported on two strong ridge-poles two feet apart, and resting on four upright posts. The floor in the centre formed of split logs, dressed and laid with great care, was surrounded by a raised border about three feet wide, which was no doubt meant for seats. The walls, three feet high, were inclined outwards, for the convenience of leaning the back against them, and the ascent to the door, which was on the south side, was formed of logs. The outside, which was covered with earth, had nearly a hemispherical form, and round its base were ranged the skulls of twenty-one whales. There was a square hole in the roof, and the central log of the floor had a basin-shaped cavity one foot in diameter, which was perhaps intended for a lamp. The general attention to comfort in the construction of the village, and the erection of a building of such magnitude, requiring a union of purpose in a considerable number of people, were evidences of a more advanced progress towards civilization than had yet been

found amongst the Esquimaux. Whale-skulls were confined to the large building, and to one of the dwelling-houses, which had three or four placed round it. Many wooden trays and hand-barrows for carrying whale-blubber were lying on the ground, most of them in a state of decay.”*

On making the traverse of Harrowby Bay, land was seen round the bottom; and on nearing shore twelve tents were distinguished on an adjoining eminence. When the boats appeared, a woman who was walking along the beach gave the alarm, and the men rushed out, brandishing their knives, and employing the most furious expressions. In vain Ooligbuck endeavoured to calm their apprehensions, explaining that the strangers were friends; they only replied by shouts, leaps, or hideous grimaces, intended to inspire terror, and displayed great agility, frequently standing on one foot and throwing the other nearly as high as their head. Dr. Richardson, nothing intimidated by these gesticulations, bethought himself of enouncing, at the highest key he could reach, the word “Noowœrlawgo,” meaning, “I wish to barter,” and the sound operated like a spell. The savages instantly became quiet; one of them ran to his kayak, paddled off to the boats, and was followed by crowds, who fearlessly came alongside, readily exchanging bows, arrows, spears, and dressed seal-skins, for bits of old iron-loop, files, and beads. “The females,” says Richardson, “unlike those of the Indian tribes, had much handsomer features than the men; and one young woman of the party would have been deemed pretty even in Europe. Our presents seemed to render them perfectly happy, and they danced with such ecstasy in their slender boats as to incur more than once great hazard of being overset. A bundle of strings of beads being thrown into an oomiak, it

* Franklin's Second Journey, p. 217.

was caught by an old woman, who hugged the treasure to her breast with the strongest expression of rapture; while another elderly dame, who had stretched out her arms in vain, became the very picture of despair. On its being explained, however, that the present was intended for the whole party, an amicable division took place; and to show their gratitude, they sang a song to a pleasing air, keeping time with their oars. They gave us many pressing invitations to pass the night at their tents, in which they were joined by the men; and to excite our liberality, the mothers drew their children out of their wide boots, where they are accustomed to carry them naked, and holding them up, begged beads for them. For a time their entreaties were successful; but being desirous of getting clear of our visitors before breakfast-time, we at length told them the stock was exhausted, and they took leave."*

The voyage, owing to the clear atmosphere, the unencumbered state of the coast, and the abundant supply of provisions, was pursued with ease and comfort; and on 8th August having made a bold cape, rising precipitously from the sea to the height of three hundred and fifty feet, Dr. Richardson and Mr. Kendall climbed the promontory, and descried in the distance the gap in the hills at Bloody Fall, through which the Coppermine holds its course. Delighted with the prospect of so near a termination of their labours, they communicated the intelligence to the crew, who received it with expressions of profound gratitude to the Divine Being for his protection during the voyage. On reaching the river the men were in excellent condition, fresh and vigorous for the march across the barren grounds on their return to Fort Franklin, which, as already mentioned, they reached in safety on the 1st of September.

* Franklin's Second Journey, p. 226.

On approaching within a few days' journey of the fort, a pleasant adventure occurred, characteristic of Indian gratitude and friendship. The party had supped, and most of the men were retired to rest, when Mr. Kendall, in sweeping the horizon with his telescope, descried three Indians coming down a hill towards the encampment. More moss was thrown on the fire, and the St. George's ensign hoisted on the end of a musket, to show the comers that they were approaching friends; but they hid the youngest of their number in a ravine, and approached slowly and with suspicion. Mr. Kendall and Dr. Richardson immediately went unarmed to meet them, and as they came up one held his bow and arrows ready in his hand, and the other cocked his gun; but as soon as they recognised the doctor's dress, the same he had worn the preceding autumn in his voyage round Bear Lake, and which was familiar to most of the Hare Indians, they shouted in an ecstasy of joy, shook hands most cordially, and called loudly for the young lad whom they had hid to come up. "The meeting," says Dr. Richardson, "was highly gratifying to ourselves as well as to the kind natives; for they seemed to be friends come to rejoice with us on the happy termination of our voyage."*

It had naturally occurred to government, that if the expeditions under Captains Parry and Franklin should be successful, their stores would be exhausted by the time they reached Behring's Strait. It was certain also that Franklin would be destitute of any means of conveyance to Europe; and to supply these wants, government resolved that a vessel should be sent out to await their arrival in Behring's Strait. For this purpose, accordingly, Captain F. W. Beechey sailed in the Blossom from Spithead on the 19th May 1825. The vessel was a twenty-six gun

* Franklin's Second Journey, p. 274.

ship; but on this occasion mounted only sixteen. She was partially strengthened, and adapted to this peculiar service by increasing her stowage. A boat was also supplied to be used as a tender, built as large as the space on deck would allow, schooner-rigged, decked, and fitted up in the most complete manner. Cloth, beads, cutlery, and various other articles of traffic, were put on board, and a variety of anti-scorbutics were added to the usual allowance of provision. Aware that he must traverse a large portion of the globe hitherto little explored, and that a considerable period would elapse before his presence was required on the coast of America, Captain Beechey was instructed to survey the parts of the Pacific within his reach, of which it was important to navigators that a more correct delineation should be laid down. These observations were not, however, to retard his arrival at the appointed rendezvous later than the 10th of July 1826; and he was directed to remain at Behring's Strait to the end of October, or to as late a period as the season would admit, without incurring the risk of spending the winter there. During this interval he was to navigate from Kotzebue's Sound northward, and afterwards to continue in an easterly course along the main shore as far as the ice would allow. Captain Beechey's survey of various portions of the Pacific does not fall within the plan of this work.

On the 2d of June, having left the Sandwich Isles, he shaped his course for Kamtschatka, and on the 27th was becalmed within six miles of Petropalauski. The best guides to this harbour are a range of high mountains, on one of which, upwards of eleven thousand feet in height, a volcano is in constant action. It was a serene and beautiful evening when they approached this remote quarter of the world, and all were struck with the magnificence of the mountains capped with perennial snow. and rising in solemn

grandeur one above the other. At intervals the volcano emitted dark columns of smoke; and from a sprinkling of black spots upon the snow to the leeward it was conjectured there had been a recent eruption. From Petropalauski Captain Beechy sailed on the 1st of July for Kotzebue's Sound. "We approached," says he, "the strait which separates the two great continents of Asia and America, on one of those beautiful still nights well known to all who have visited the arctic regions, when the sky is without a cloud, and when the midnight sun, scarcely his own diameter below the horizon, tinges with a bright hue all the northern circle. Our ship, propelled by an increasing breeze, glided rapidly along a smooth sea, starting from her path flocks of aquatic birds, whose flight, in the deep silence of the scene, could be traced by the ear to a great distance." Having closed in with the American shore some miles northward of Cape Prince of Wales, they were visited by a little Esquimaux squadron belonging to a village situated on a low sandy island. The natives readily sold everything they possessed, and were cheerful and good-humoured, though exceedingly noisy and energetic. Their bows were more slender than those of the islanders to the southward, but made on the same principle, with drift-pine, assisted with thongs of hide, or pieces of whale-bone placed at the back, and neatly bound with small cord. The points of their arrows were of bone, flint, or iron, and their spears headed with the same materials. Their dress was similar to that of the other tribes on the coast. It consisted of a shirt, which reached half-way down the thigh, with long sleeves, and a hood of rein-deer skin, and edged with gray or white fox fur. Besides this they had a jacket of eider-drake skins sewed together, which, when engaged in war, they wore below their other dress, reckoning it a tolerably efficient protection against an arrow or a spear-

thrust. In wet weather they threw over the fur dress a shirt made of the entrails of the whale, which, being well saturated with oil and grease, was water-tight; and they also used breeches of deer's hide, and seal-skin boots, to the upper end of which were fixed strings of sea-horse hide. It was their fashion to tie one of these strings round the waist, and attach to it a long tuft of hair, the wing of a bird, or sometimes a fox's tail, which, dangling behind as they walked, gave them a ridiculous appearance, and may probably have occasioned the report of the Tschuktschi recorded in Muller, that the people of this country have tails like dogs.*

On the 22d July the ship anchored in Kotzebue's Sound, and after exploring a deep inlet on its northern shore, which they named Hotham Inlet, proceeded to Chamisso Island, where the Blossom was to await Captain Franklin. A discretionary power had, however, been permitted to Captain Beechey, of employing the period of his stay in surveying the coast, provided this could be done without the risk of missing Captain Franklin. Having accordingly directed the barge to keep in-shore on the look-out for the land-party, he sailed to the northward, and doubling Cape Krusenstern, completed an examination of the coast by Cape Thomson, Point Hope, Cape Lisborn, Cape Beaufort, and Icy Cape, the farthest point reached by Captain Cook. As there were here strong indications of the ice closing in, and his instructions were positive to keep in open water if possible, he determined to return to Kotzebue's Sound, whilst he despatched the barge under Mr. Elson and Mr. Smyth, to trace the coast to the north-eastward, as far as they could navigate.

On this interesting service the barge set out on 17th

* Beechey's Voyage, vol. i. p. 341.

August, whilst Beechey returned towards Kotzebue's Sound. On the night of the 25th they beheld, for the first time in these northern latitudes, a brilliant display of the Aurora Borealis. "It first appeared," says Captain Beechey, "in an arch extending from west by north to north-east; but the arch, shortly after its first appearance, broke up and entirely disappeared. Soon after this, however, a new display began in the direction of the western foot of the first arch, preceded by a bright flame from which emanated coruscations of a pale straw colour. An almost simultaneous movement occurred at both extremities of the arch, until a complete segment was formed of wavering perpendicular radii. As soon as the arch was complete, the light became greatly increased, and the prismatic colours, which had before been faint, now shone forth in a very brilliant manner. The strongest colours, which were also the outside ones, were pink and green, on the green side purple and pink, all of which were as imperceptibly blended as in the rainbow. The green was the colour nearest the zenith. This magnificent display lasted a few minutes; and the light had nearly vanished, when the north-east quarter sent forth a vigorous display, and nearly at the same time a corresponding coruscation emanated from the opposite extremity. The western foot of the arch then disengaged itself from the horizon, crooked to the northward, and the whole retired to the north-east quarter, where a bright spot blazed for a moment, and all was darkness. There was no noise audible during any part of our observations, nor were the compasses perceptibly affected."* During the voyage back to Chamisso Island, where they arrived on 27th August, they had repeated interviews with the Esquimaux, whose habits and disposition

* Beechey's Voyage, vol. i. p. 387.

were in no respect different from those of the natives already described. They found them uniformly friendly, sociable, devotedly fond of tobacco, eager to engage in traffic, and upon the whole honest, though disposed to drive a hard bargain. On some occasions they attempted to impose upon their customers, by skins artfully put together, so as to represent an entire fish; but it was difficult to determine whether they intended a serious fraud or only a piece of humour, for they laughed heartily when detected, and appeared to consider it a good joke. Their persons, houses, and cookery, were all exceedingly dirty, and their mode of salutation was by a mutual contact of noses; sometimes licking their hands, and stroking first their own faces, and afterwards those of the strangers.* The rapidity with which these people migrated from place to place was remarkable. On one occasion the motions of two baidars under sail were watched by the crew of the Blossom. The people landed at a spot near Choris Peninsula, drew up the boats on the beach, turning them bottom upwards, pitched tents, and in an incredibly short time transferred to them the whole contents of their little vessels. On visiting the encampment an hour after, everything was found in as complete order as if they had been domiciliated on the spot for months; and the surprise of the sailors was raised to the highest by the variety of articles which, in almost endless succession, they produced from their little boats. "From the two baidars they landed fourteen persons, eight tent-poles, forty deer-skins, two kayaks, many hundred-weight of fish, numerous skins of oil, earthen jars for cooking, two living foxes, ten large dogs, bundles of lances, harpoons, bows and arrows, a quantity of whalebone, skins full of clothing, some immense nets made of hide, for taking

* Beechey's Voyage, vol. i. pp. 345, 391.

small whales and porpoises, eight broad planks, masts, sails, paddles, &c., besides sea-horse hides and teeth, and a variety of nameless articles always to be found among the Esquimaux."*

In the meantime, Mr. Elson in the barge proceeded along the shore for seventy miles, as far as a promontory, denominated by Beechey Cape Barrow, which was afterwards discovered to be only distant one hundred and forty-six miles from the extreme point of Franklin's discoveries. Upon this new line of coast posts were erected at various distances with directions for Captain Franklin, should he succeed in pushing so far to the westward. A frequent communication was opened with the inhabitants, who were found to resemble the other Esquimaux, with the unpleasant difference that their manners were more rude and boisterous, and their conduct in some instances decidedly hostile. Point Barrow, the most northerly part of America yet discovered, formed the termination to a spit of land jutting out several miles from the more regular coast line. The width of the neck did not exceed a mile and a half; on the extremity were several small lakes, and on its eastern side a village. The danger of being shut in by the ice was now great, and Mr. Elson determined to land, obtain the necessary observations, erect a post, and deposit instructions for Franklin. This plan, however, was frustrated by the violent conduct of the natives, who assembled in formidable numbers, and threatened to attack the crew of the barge, which consisted only of eight men. It was therefore judged prudent to proceed as speedily as possible to the rendezvous at Chamisso Island, which they reached on the 9th of September, not without considerable difficulty, having been obliged to track the barge round

* Beechey's Voyage, vol. i. p. 405.

Cape Smyth, through a sea thickly beset with ice, that threatened every moment to close with its impenetrable walls, and cut off their return. The result of Captain Beechey's voyage, and of the expedition undertaken under his orders by Mr. Elson and Mr. Smyth, was the addition of a new and extensive line of coast to the geography of the polar regions. The actual distance between the extreme points reached by Captain Franklin and Mr. Elson being so small, there is every reason to believe that the navigation of this remaining portion will not be attended with any very formidable or insurmountable obstacles.

In the following year, Beechey, in obedience to his instructions, returned to Kotzebue's Sound, and recommenced his examination of the coast in the hope of extending his survey beyond Cape Barrow, and either joining Franklin or collecting some certain intelligence regarding his enterprise. In both objects he had the mortification to fail. He found the posts erected the preceding year and the buried bottles remaining untouched, and the state of the weather rendered it necessary to put about before reaching Icy Cape. It had been previously arranged, that the signal to be used by Franklin, if he arrived on an unknown coast during the night, should be a beacon kindled on the cliffs; and on passing Cape Krusenstern after dark, their attention was arrested by a large fire blazing on an eminence. Every eye on board was fixed on the welcome light, and every bosom beat with the delightful expectation of soon seeing their friends. The ship was brought to, and hope almost passed into certainty, as a boat was seen pulling from the shore. On examining her through the telescope by the light of the Aurora Borealis, some sanguine spirits declared they could discern that she was propelled by oars instead of paddles, and it needed only a slight additional exertion of the fancy to be assured that the dress

of the crew was European. In the midst of these excited and enthusiastic feelings, the harsh and boisterous voices of the natives suddenly broke on their ear, and the pleasing picture which their imagination had been so busy in constructing faded away in a moment, leaving nothing before them but two sorry Esquimaux baidars and their unlovely occupants.

From this point Captain Beechey's voyage presented few features of new or striking interest. In Behring's Strait they were visited by a splendid exhibition of the *Aurora Borealis*, and under its coruscations of pink, purple, and green rays, which shot up to the zenith in the shape of a gigantic cone, they anchored off Chamisso Island. After the discovery of two capacious harbours, which they named Port Clarence and Grantley Harbour, they took their final departure from the Polar Sea on the 6th October 1827. On the 29th, a flight of large white pelicans apprized them of their approach to the coast of California; and after touching at Monterey and San Blas, they arrived at Valparaiso on the 29th April 1828. On the 30th June they passed the meridian of Cape Horn in a gloomy snow-storm, and made Rio on the 21st July. Their voyage from Rio to England was completed in forty-nine days, and they arrived at Spithead on the 12th October 1828. He found that the expedition of Franklin had preceded him in his return by more than a year, having reached Liverpool on the 26th September 1827; its transactions occupied two years and nearly eight months, whilst Beechey had been absent on his voyage three years and a half.

CHAPTER V.

Recent Discoveries.

Captain Back's Overland Journey to the Arctic Sea, 1833-35.

WHILE Captain Franklin, with that persevering energy which forms one of the prominent features in his character, was struggling against innumerable difficulties in surveying the northern coasts of America by land, as narrated in the last chapter, two expeditions, in addition to the one under the command of Captain Beechey, were fitted out and despatched from England to aim at the accomplishment of the same object by sea. The first, commanded by Captain Parry, sailed in 1824, with the view of exploring the bottom of Prince Regent's Inlet, through which, it was hoped, a passage might be found leading into the Polar Sea. It consisted of two ships, the *Hecla* and *Fury*—the first being commanded by Captain Parry, the second by Commander Hoppner. After spending a long, dreary winter in the arctic seas, they returned to England in the autumn of 1825, having abandoned the *Fury*, which was so severely damaged by the ice as to be quite unfit for sea.

The second expedition referred to was that of Captain Lyon, who sailed in the "*Griper*," in June 1825, and after a voyage, in which he and his gallant crew experienced the most dreadful sufferings and danger, returned to England the same year. As these attempts, however, were made by sea, and are described in another volume of this series, we pass them over without further detail, and hasten to notice the overland journeys which form more specially the object of the present volume.

From the year 1826 to 1833, no attempt had been made by land to continue the survey of the northern coasts of America. But about 1832 great anxiety began to be felt

about the fate of Sir John Ross, who sailed from England in the year 1829, and had not been heard of since. He commanded a small vessel called the *Victory*, which was fitted out entirely at the expense of himself and the late Sir Felix Booth, for the purpose of continuing his northern discoveries, and enabling him to vindicate his reputation as an able and enterprising navigator, which latter had been somewhat doubted in consequence of the ill success of a previous voyage to Baffin's Bay.

It was accordingly resolved by the friends of Captain Ross to send an expedition overland to the shores of the Arctic Sea in search of him, and a fitting leader for it was found in the well-tried and experienced Captain Back, who no sooner heard of such a project being contemplated, than he hastened from Italy, where he happened to be at the time, and offered his services. Mr. Ross, the brother of Sir John, and father of Captain James Ross, drew up a petition to the king, "praying his Majesty's gracious sanction to the immediate despatch of an expedition for rescuing or at least ascertaining the fate of his son and brother;" and Captain Back's name being inserted as a leader, the petition was forwarded, and shortly after received the royal assent. A grant of £2000 was also made by government, while a public subscription soon placed at the disposal of Captain Ross's friends a sum that was more than sufficient to defray all the expenses of the undertaking.

So great was the anxiety felt by the public and private friends of the Arctic explorer, that everything was done that could be devised for the furtherance of the searching expedition. The Hudson's Bay Company, besides supplying a large quantity of provisions, two boats, and two canoes, gratis, took the expedition under their special protection, by issuing a commission under their seal to Captain

Back as its commander, thereby securing to him the effectual co-operation of all parties throughout their extensive territories. It was also deemed expedient on many accounts, but more especially to give Captain Back additional authority over the men under his command, that the mission should be taken under the direction of his Majesty's government; and accordingly he received the following instructions from the Colonial Office:—"The Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty having been pleased to lend your services to this office, that you may conduct an expedition now preparing to proceed to the Polar Sea in search of Captain Ross, you are hereby required and directed to undertake this service, placing yourself for the purpose at the disposition of the governor and committee of the Hudson's Bay Company, who have undertaken to furnish you with the requisite resources and supplies. You are to leave Liverpool early in the present month [February 1833], and proceed with your party by way of New York to Montreal, and thence along the usual route pursued by the Northwest traders to Great Slave Lake. * * * You are then to strike off to the north-eastward, or in such other direction as you may ascertain to be most expedient, in order to gain the Thlew-ee-choh-desseth, or Great Fish River, which is believed either to issue from Slave Lake, or to rise in its vicinity, and thence to flow with a navigable course to the northward, till it reaches the sea. On arriving on the banks of this river, you are to select a convenient situation for a winter residence, and immediately appoint a portion of your force to erect a house thereon; but, if possible, you are to proceed yourself, with an adequate party, and explore the river to the coast the same season, erecting a conspicuous landmark at its mouth, and leaving notice of your intention to return the ensuing spring, in case Captain Ross should be making progress along this part of the

shore." After directing him to construct two boats, with which to proceed to the sea, and explore the coast of the Arctic Ocean, and especially to examine the coast around Cape Garry, where the *Fury* was wrecked, and on the stores of which it was known that Captain Ross in some measure relied, the instructions go on to say: "Devoting the summer, then, to the interesting search in contemplation, it is unnecessary to recommend to you to make it as effectual as possible, consistently with a due regard for the health and preservation of your party." * * * "Subordinate to your object of finding Captain Ross, or any survivors or survivor of his party, you are to direct your attention to mapping what yet remains unknown of the coasts which you will visit, and making such other scientific observations as your leisure will admit, for which purposes the requisite instruments will be supplied to you." * * * *

Armed with this authority, as well as by that given to him by the Hudson's Bay Company, Captain Back, Mr. King (surgeon and naturalist to the expedition), and three men, two of whom had served in a former expedition under Captain Franklin, embarked in the packet-ship *Hibernia*, Captain Maxwell, from Liverpool, and on the 17th February 1833 sailed for America.

Eight months after their departure, Captain Ross and the survivors of his party, whom a merciful God had brought in safety through dangers and privations unparalleled in arctic story, arrived in England after an absence of four years and five months. During this protracted period they had made very important geographical discoveries; fixed the position of the northern magnetic pole, and experienced hardships and privations, and encountered dangers, that

* Back's Journal, pp. 13, 16.

fill us with admiration and wonder at the endurance and fortitude of the men who dared and overcame them all. Their little vessel, the *Victory*, having become unfit for use, had been abandoned, and the wanderers were at last providentially discovered by a whaler, the *Isabella* of Hull, which conveyed them from the icy regions, where they had been so long immured, to the sunny shores of their native land. Although the principal object of the expedition under Captain Back was thus obviated, yet the despatches containing the intelligence did not overtake him until after he had reached his winter quarters in the sterile and romantic regions of the north; so that, even had it been desirable, he could not have returned home. As it was, however, he received the intelligence early enough to prevent his wasting time in the now unnecessary search; and he accordingly turned his undivided attention to the second object of the expedition.

Following, then, in the wake of our enterprising explorer, let us wing our way over the heaving surges of the wide Atlantic; let us track him and his gallant companions as they thread their way through the forests of Canada, and dive fearlessly into the wild unpeopled solitudes of the far north, casting a glance to the right and left as we go, and noting the wonders of a land, than which there is not another on this fair earth more fraught with interest, or more prolific of strange and wild adventure.

After spending a few days in Montreal, where he engaged three artillerymen for the service, Captain Back and his party went to Lachine, a small village on the banks of the Ottawa, a short distance below the confluence of that noble river and the St. Lawrence. Here they found that the Hudson's Bay Company's agent had made every preparation for their voyage; and here they were introduced to the first tangible bit of north-west life, in the shape of

their two bark canoes, manned by Canadians and Iroquois. Into these the travellers stepped. After bidding adieu to their friends at Lachine, who, along with a number of the officers of the garrison at Montreal, and a large concourse of the villagers assembled to see them depart, "we embarked," says Back, "amidst the most enthusiastic cheers and firing of musketry. The two canoes shot rapidly through the smooth water of the canal, and were followed by the dense crowd on the banks. A few minutes brought us to the St. Lawrence, and, as we turned the stems of our little vessels up that noble stream, one long loud huzza bade us farewell!"

One of the canoes in which they commenced their journey was of the kind used by the fur traders while travelling on the great lakes of Canada. They are much larger than those afterwards used in ascending and descending the innumerable lakes and rivers of the interior, and are capable of carrying fourteen or sixteen men as a crew, besides their provisions for many weeks; yet can be carried, when necessary, on the shoulders of four men. At the head of Lake Superior, the last of the great Canadian chain, these large canoes are usually changed for "north canoes," which, being much smaller, are more manageable in shallow and intricate waters; taking only eight men as a crew, two of whom are capable of carrying them many miles overland. They are made of birch bark, cut into oblongs, and sewed over a framework of exceedingly thin timbers, the seams being covered over and rendered water-tight by a coating of gum. The bow and stern are nearly alike, being sharp and turned up at the ends, which ends are fancifully, and sometimes tastefully painted by the *voyageurs*, and, combined with the bright yellow colour of the bark, give to the fragile boat a light and pleasing, though somewhat gaudy appearance. They are very elegant and rapid when in motion, and it is quite

impossible to give an adequate idea of the fairy-like buoyancy of the north canoe as it bounds upon the surging rapids, or skims over the lovely lakes, urged forward by the vermilion-coloured paddles of eight stalwart *voyageurs*, whose swart countenances, wild locks, glittering eyes, and gaudy habiliments, harmonize in character with the rapid yet melodious and peculiarly plaintive songs with which they fill the air and awaken the echoes of the wilderness. Canoes are very shaky machines, however, and are easily upset or broken, especially those used by the Indians, which are much smaller than north canoes, being often made so small as to be capable of carrying but two persons, and sometimes only one. The following description of a paddle over an American lake will convey some idea of the buoyancy and portability of the Indian canoe. The writer, who had been spending the afternoon with some friends who lived on the shores of a small lake in the woods, says:—

“In the evening I began to think of returning to the fort, but no boat or canoe could be found small enough to be paddled by one man, and as no one seemed inclined to go with me, I began to fear that I should have to remain all night. At last, a young Indian told me that he had a hunting canoe, which I might have, if I chose to venture across the lake in it, but it was very small. I instantly accepted his offer, and, bidding adieu to my friends at the parsonage, followed him down to a small creek overshadowed by trees, where, concealed among the reeds and bushes, lay the canoe. It could not, I should think, have measured more than three yards in length, by eighteen inches in breadth at the middle, whence it tapered at either end to a thin edge. It was made of birch-bark, scarcely a quarter of an inch thick, and its weight may be imagined, when I say that the Indian lifted it from the ground with one hand and placed it in the water, at the same time handing

me a small light paddle. I stepped in with great care, and the frail bark trembled with my weight as I seated myself, and pushed out into the lake. The sun had just set, and his expiring rays cast a glare upon the overhanging clouds in the west, whilst the shades of night gathered thickly over the eastern horizon. Not a breath of wind disturbed the glassy smoothness of the water, in which every golden-tinted cloud was mirrored with a fidelity that rendered it difficult to say which was image and which reality. The little bark darted through the water with the greatest ease, and as I passed among the deepening shadows of the lofty pines, and across the gilded waters of the bay, a wild enthusiasm seized me; I strained with all my strength upon the paddle, and the sparkling drops flew in showers behind me, as the little canoe flew over the water, more like a phantom than reality; when, suddenly, I missed my stroke; my whole weight was thrown on one side; the water gurgled over the gunwale of the canoe, and my heart leapt to my mouth, as I looked for an instant into the dark water. It was only for a moment; in another instant the canoe righted, and I paddled the remainder of the way in a much more gentle manner—enthusiasm gone, and a most wholesome degree of timidity pervading my entire frame. It was dark when I reached the fort, and upon landing I took the canoe under my arm, and carried it up the bank with nearly as much ease as if it had been a camp-stool!"

The canoe here spoken of is a hunting canoe, and is only used by the native of these regions when away from his wigwam on a hunting expedition. Those generally used are somewhat larger, and, when the natives are changing their place of residence, and travelling by water in search of another, are so stuffed with men, women, children, furs, guns, kettles, blankets, and dogs, as to leave little more than two or three inches out of the water. Nevertheless,

they rarely upset, their owners being accustomed to them from the tenderest years of infancy. Many a good ducking, however, have these same canoes given to the servants of the Hudson's Bay Company, especially during their first year's sojourn in the country; and oftentimes have bragging young fellows—just landed, fresh from the restraints of the old country, and big with thoughts of daring deeds and wild adventure—ventured into these unsteady conveyances; and, after galvanically heaving about their arms and jerking their bodies to and fro, in the vain attempt to recover their equilibrium, have been obliged to souse into the water, and splutter ingloriously to the shore.

The scenery through which Captain Back and his companions here passed was varied and beautiful. Sometimes the canoes were glancing over the calm waters of a little lake, whose unruffled bosom reflected, with softened outline, the luxuriant verdure on its shore. At other times the picturesque *voyageurs* were slowly stemming the current of a brawling rapid, or, when a foaming cascade intercepted them, carrying canoe and baggage on their shoulders; tearing through break and over plain, sometimes on good ground, and often over the ankles in mud or swamp, with the light-hearted indifference peculiar to Canadian *voyageurs*. Now, they were crossing a traverse in one of the great lakes, whose boundless horizon, rolling waves, and pebbly shore, gave it all the appearance of the ocean; and anon they were driven to seek shelter from the thunder-storm or the tempest in some bay or inlet, where, under the canopy of the forest trees, their tents were pitched, their fires kindled, and soon crackling and blazing up into the heavens; their kettles bubbling; their tobacco pipes smoking, and themselves reclining on their blankets, the very picture of terrestrial happiness, in spite of wind and weather! They were not exempt from real discomforts, however. Occa-

sionally they were detained by head winds, and, during the first part of the journey, Captain Back was much annoyed by the tendency of his men to desert; the fickle Canadians being much addicted to change their minds, especially when the voyage on which they enter is likely to prove long or arduous.

They proceeded up the Ottawa, passing several of the Hudson's Bay Company's establishments, at which they were always most hospitably entertained, and the detached, thinly scattered dwellings of the bush farmers and woodcutters, who may be looked upon as the pioneers of civilization. Leaving the Ottawa, they diverged to the left, up a deep black stream, so overhung by sombre rocks and trees, and so bleak and lifeless, that it seemed the very home of melancholy and despair. It took them to Lake Nipising, whence they descended by the *Rivière des Français* into Lake Huron, where their progress was so impeded by fogs and head winds, that it was not until the 11th of May that they reached the Sault de Ste Marie, at the head of the lake, and the extreme point to which civilization has yet extended.

Here they purchased a third canoe to carry additional provisions, and commenced coasting along the northern shores of Lake Superior—a distance of upwards of three hundred miles—and arrived on the 20th May at the Hudson's Bay Company's establishment, Fort William. It was here that the large canoes were to be exchanged for the smaller, and a short delay took place in consequence of the difficulty the men had in dividing the lading among them.

“An entire day,” says Back, “was now devoted to the examining and repacking of our various stores and instruments. Our ‘north canoe,’ brought from Montreal, was also repaired; for, lumbered as we were with provisions, it

was found impracticable to ascend the shallow waters of the Kamenistaquoia without taking her, in addition to the two new ones; and I did this the less reluctantly as no extra expense was thus incurred, and there were hands enough to manage the three.

"The Canadian *voyageur* is, in all respects, a peculiar character; and on no point is he more sensitive, or rather, to use an expressive term, more *touchy*, than in the just distribution of 'pieces' * among the several canoes forming a party. It must be admitted, at the same time, that he has very substantial reasons for being particular in this matter, for he well knows that, supposing the canoes to be in other respects equally matched, a very small inequality of weight will make a considerable difference in their relative speed, and will occasion, moreover, a longer detention at the portages. The usual mode is for the guide to separate the pieces, and then to distribute or portion them out by lots, holding in his hand little sticks of different lengths, which the leading men draw. From the decision so made there is no appeal, and the parties go away laughing or grumbling at their different fortunes."†

Having settled these preliminaries to the satisfaction of those concerned, they bade farewell to their host at Fort William, and began the ascent of the Kamenistaquoia River, encamping at night near the Kakabeka or Mountain Fall. This fall is as high, if not a few feet higher, than the Falls of Niagara, and surpasses them in picturesque effect, although it is a much smaller body of water.

Passing the height of land which separates the waters which flow into Lake Superior from those which enter Hud-

* All packages or bales, whether of provisions or goods, in these countries, are made as nearly as possible 90 lbs. weight, and each package of this kind, whatever be its contents, is called a "*piece*."

† Back's Journal, p. 38.

son's Bay, the three canoes proceeded rapidly on their ever-changing and romantic route, sometimes careering down the rapids, or hurrying over the portages—crossing the small lakes, and not unfrequently sticking or making but slow progress in numberless small and shallow rivers. While descending one of the latter, called the Savannah, which is rendered almost impassable by the great number of fallen trees which bridge it across, William Malley, one of the artillerymen, slipped off a floating tree, as he was attempting to open a passage for the canoes, and narrowly escaped being drowned; but he bore the accident with so much indifference and good-humour as to call forth the admiration of Paul, the Iroquois guide, who at once predicted that he would make a good *voyageur*. Accidents of this kind are of frequent occurrence among these dangerous rapids—sometimes of a ludicrous, and sometimes of a more serious nature.

On one occasion, not many years ago, a north canoe was pursuing its way quietly down one of the streams through which the arctic exploring party was now passing. It was approaching one of the many portages with which these streams abound, and the bow and steersmen were standing erect at stem and stern, casting quick glances ahead and on either side as they neared the waterfall which obstructed their progress. The approach to the landing-place was somewhat difficult, owing to a point of rocks which projected into the stream in the direction of the fall, and round which point it was necessary to steer with some dexterity in order to avoid being drawn into the strong current. The fearless guides, however, had often passed the place in former years in safety, and, accordingly, dashed at the point with reckless indifference, their paddles flinging a circle of spray over their heads as they changed them from side to side with graceful but vigorous rapidity. The swift stream carried them quickly round the point of danger, and they

had almost reached the quiet eddy near the landing-place, when the stem of the canoe was caught by the stream, which in an instant whirled them out from the shore, and carried them downwards with fearful rapidity. Another moment, and the gushing waters dragged them, despite their most frantic efforts, to the verge of the waterfall, which thundered and foamed among frightful chasms and rocks many feet below. The stem of the canoe overhung the abyss, and now the *voyageurs* plied their paddles with the desperation of men who felt that their lives depended on the exertions of that terrible minute. For a second or two the canoe remained stationary, and seemed to tremble on the brink of destruction, and then, inch by inch, it began slowly to ascend the stream. The danger was past! A few more nervous strokes, and the trembling bark shot like an arrow out of the current, and floated in safety on the still water under the point. The whole thing, from beginning to end, was the work of a few seconds; yet who can describe or comprehend the tumultuous gush of feelings created, during these short seconds, in the bosoms of the careless *voyageurs*! The sudden, electric change from tranquil safety to the verge of almost certain destruction—and then—deliverance! It was one of those thrilling incidents which frequently occur to those who tread the wildernesses of this world, and was little recked of, by those to whom it occurred, beyond the moment of danger; yet it was one of those solemn seasons, more or less numerous in the history of all men, when the Almighty speaks to his careless, reckless creatures, in a way that cannot be mistaken, however much it may be slighted, awakening them, with a rough grasp, to behold the slender cord which suspends them over the abyss of eternity.

There are lights as well as shadows in every picture. The rippling streams and the waving trees have their spots

of shadow and their checkered gleams of light; and, as it is in the physical aspect of nature, so it is in the every-day history of men, more especially of those men who travel in the wilds of North America, where grave succeeds to gay, and rain to sunshine, with a violence and frequency that renders a life in the woods at once captivating and instructive. The preceding anecdote illustrates one of the dangers to which the traveller is sometimes exposed; the following extract from the journal of one who resided in these solitudes, will exhibit one of the many ludicrous incidents that tend to enliven the voyage and furnish food for agreeable reminiscence in after years:—

“One cold frosty morning,” says he, “(for the weather had now become cold from the elevation of the country through which we passed), while the canoe was going quietly over a small, reedy lake or ford, I was awakened out of a comfortable nap and told that the canoe was aground, and that I must get out and walk a little way to lighten her. Hastily pulling up my trousers (for I always travelled barefoot), I sprang over the side into the water, and the canoe left me. Now, all this happened so quickly that I was scarcely awake; but the bitterly cold water, which nearly reached my knees, cleared up my faculties most effectually, and I then found that I was fifty yards from the shore, with an unknown depth of water around me, the canoe out of sight ahead of me, and my companion (who had been turned out while half asleep also), standing with a rueful expression of countenance beside me. After feeling our way cautiously—for the bottom was soft and muddy—we reached the shore; and then, thinking that all was right, proceeded to walk round to join the canoe. Alas! we found the bushes so thick that they were nearly impenetrable; and, worse than all, that they, as well as the ground, were covered with thorns, which scratched and

lacerated our feet most fearfully at every step. There was nothing for it, however, but to persevere; and, after a painful walk of a quarter of a mile, we overtook the canoe, vowing never to leap before we looked upon any other occasion whatsoever."

On the 6th of June the canoes arrived at Fort Alexander—situated at the southern extremity of Lake Winnipeg. Here Captain Back found it necessary to remain a few days, to await the arrival of Governor Simpson, who was expected daily. During this period he and Mr. King employed themselves in making a set of observations for the dip of the needle, while the men busied themselves in unpacking and drying the provision and packages, which had got slightly damp during the voyage. Any spare time they had, one would almost suppose, had been devoted to the destruction of mosquitoes; which tormentors Captain Back speaks of as being awfully numerous. This voracious little insect is fully two-eighths of an inch long, exclusive of the proboscis, or trunk, with which its head is armed; and it would be highly amusing, were it not tremendously irritating, to watch the vigorous way in which it goes to work. Alighting, it may be, on the hand, it applies its trunk instantly to the skin, and with surprising rapidity finds out the tender points which occur where the lines of the skin intersect each other. For an instant the villain's head remains ominously still, as if collecting all its energies for the plunge, and then down goes the probe, full quarter of an inch, up to the very butt. Having performed this feat, it retracts the weapon a little, and begins to suck, which it continues doing till quite surfeited. On close inspection the proboscis is found to be enclosed in a sheath, which is split all the way up on one side, and does not penetrate into the wound, but doubles conveniently away to one side when the probing is going on. So numerous and tormenting are

these insects, that they drive the deer into ponds of water for shelter, where the agonized animals remain for hours, with their noses alone out of the water; and it is said that bisons are not unfrequently suffocated by the swellings in their nostrils and mouths caused by the unremitting assaults of mosquitoes. Poor Back speaks feelingly on the subject. The men had been making a portage.

"The laborious duty," says he, "which had been thus satisfactorily performed, was rendered doubly severe by the combined attacks of myriads of sand-flies and mosquitoes, which made our faces stream with blood. There is certainly no form of wretchedness, among those to which the checkered life of a *voyageur* is exposed, at once so great and so humiliating, as the torture inflicted by these puny blood-suckers. To avoid them is impossible; and as for defending himself, though for a time he may go on crushing thousands, he cannot long maintain the unequal conflict; so that at last, subdued by pain and fatigue, he throws himself in despair with his face to the earth, and, half suffocated in his blanket, groans away a few hours of sleepless rest."*

On the 10th of June the governor arrived, and communicated the measures which had been taken for the furtherance of the object of the expedition. Letters were given to Captain Back, addressed to various experienced gentlemen who resided near to the remote scene of intended operations, urging them to lend all the assistance in their power to the exploring party, and, if required, to accompany it. Provisions were laid up at several stations on the route for their use, and all that could possibly be accomplished was done by the agents of the company, with a zeal and alacrity which called forth Captain Back's warmest expressions of gratitude.

* Captain Back's Journal, p. 117.

As the most of the men for the expedition were yet to be engaged, it was necessary that they should proceed to Norway House—a depot of the company near the opposite extremity of Lake Winnipeg—where the brigades of boats from the distant regions of the interior converge on their way to the sea; and, as they have all to repass this establishment on their return, there is a constant succession of arrivals and departures. From these brigades Captain Back hoped to engage men for his arduous undertaking; and accordingly left Fort Alexander on the 11th of June, and coasted Lake Winnipeg towards Norway House, at which place he arrived on the 17th, and met with a cordial reception from the gentlemen who were staying there at the time.

Engaging men, however, was not so easy a matter as had been anticipated. “The bulk of the people from the more remote stations had already passed the depot, and those who remained were either reluctant to expose themselves to the hazard of what was justly considered an enterprize of danger, or, influenced by the strong desire of gain, demanded the same privileges and emoluments which had been granted to the men employed on the two government expeditions under Sir John Franklin.” Difficulties of another kind also arose. Two Canadians who had engaged to go, on returning to their tents were met by their wives, who resorted to different, though, as it turned out, equally efficacious methods of diverting their husbands from their purpose. The one, a good strapping dame, cuffed her husband’s ears with such dexterity and good will that he was fain to cry *pecavi*, and seek shelter in a friendly tent; the other, an interesting girl of seventeen, burst into tears, and with piteous sobs clung to the husband of her love as if she would hold him prisoner in her arms! At length, however, the requisite number of able and experienced hands were engaged (eighteen in all), part of whom were sent off in advance with

Dr. King, while Captain Back, retaining sufficient to man his canoe, remained a few days longer; and then, on the 28th June 1833, started for Cumberland House, where two boats and a large supply of stores and provisions awaited him.

"This," says he, "was a happy day for me; and as the canoe pushed from the bank, my heart swelled with hope and joy. Now, for the first time, I saw myself in a condition to verify the kind anticipations of my friends. The preliminary difficulties had been overcome. I was fairly on my way to the accomplishment of the benevolent errand on which I had been commissioned; and the contemplation of an object so worthy of all exertion, in which I thought myself at length free to indulge, raised my spirits to a more than ordinary pitch of excitement."

"We paddled along with little respite, until 5 P.M., when a small speck was seen under the steep sandy cliffs round Mossy Point, on the northern boundary of Lake Winipeg. It was coming towards us, and was at first taken for an Indian canoe; but as we approached, I had the satisfaction to find that it was the company's light canoe from Athabasca, with Messrs. Smith and Charles, two gentlemen whom I had long wished to see. From the latter I now learnt that he had made every endeavour to obtain, by inquiries from the Indians, a tolerably correct notion of the situation of the River Thlew-ee-choh; the result of which was an opinion that it ran somewhere to the north-east of Great Slave Lake, in a position not far from that which had been speculatively assigned to it by my friend Dr. Richardson and myself. Mr. Charles had further been informed by an Indian chief, called the 'Grand Jeune Homme,' whose hunting grounds were in the neighbourhood of Great Slave Lake, that the Thlew-ee-choh was so full of rapids, as to make it doubtful if

boats, or indeed large canoes, could descend it; but that by pursuing a different course to a large river, called Teh-lon, such difficulties would be avoided; whilst the distance between the mouths of the two rivers was so trifling, that the smoke of the fire made at one was distinctly visible at the other. * * * The waters were described as abounding in fish, and the country in animals; and, what was not less gratifying, the chief and some others were willing and desirous to accompany me."*

The voyage thus auspiciously commenced was not destined to continue long, however, without evolving some of those ills to which the flesh is heir; and the joyous exultation with which Captain Back and his party set out, was changed into chagrin on the second day, when a breeze sprang up, and, freshening into a gale with that peculiar pertinacity with which breezes do freshen when particularly wanted not to blow, obliged them to run the canoe into shoal water in order to prevent their being swamped in deep; and then getting out, they waded to the shore with the baggage on their shoulders. Now, this is one of the severest species of annoyance to which arctic travellers are subjected. To bear the discomforts of wet feet and pained muscles while tracking the boats or canoes up muddy streams, which appear to have no end, or across rivulets which have no bottom (or at least not till the cooling element embraces the waist or armpits), is nothing. To scramble through bushes that interlace with almost impenetrable firmness, and when forced through, give way with a crash that pitches the traveller forward on his head, and recoil with a sharp switch on his face as he staggers to his feet again, is less than nothing, so long as under these, or any other imaginable species of disagreeable circumstances,

* Back's Journal, pp. 57-59.

he can only *advance*; but, to be stopped for days on a rocky point running out into a lake, or on the shores of a swampy bay, with the storm yelling in his teeth and upsetting his tent, with the rain putting out his fire, and obstinately searching for, and finding holes in his oil-cloths, whereat to enter and soak his blankets or flood his provisions—and this, too, with the knowledge perhaps that an hour or two of fair sailing would bring him to a river where he might pursue his voyage in spite of wind and weather; to be thus situated, we say, is a species of annoyance which quite overcomes his philosophy—and Back said so too upon the present occasion, when, to relieve his aggravated spirits, he put on his Esquimaux boots, shouldered his gun, and sallied forth in search of game among the deep, soft swamps which lay around. After expending his energy pretty effectually in this way, he returned to his tent so thoroughly tired as fully to enjoy repose, and feel a placid interest in the objects that surrounded his tent. His own graphic language describes the scene well. “I amused myself,” says he, “with observing the odd assemblage of things around me. At my feet was rolled a bundle in an oil-cloth, containing some three blankets, called a bed; near it a piece of dried buffalo, fancifully ornamented with long black hairs, which no art, alas! can prevent from insinuating themselves between the teeth as you laboriously masticate the tough, hard flesh; then a tolerably clean napkin spread, by way of table-cloth, on a red piece of canvass, and supporting a tea-pot, some biscuit, and a salt-cellar; near this a tin plate, close by a square kind of box or safe of the same material, rich with a pale greasy ham, the produce of the colony at Red River; and last, the far renowned pemmican, unquestionably the best food of the country for expeditions such as ours. Behind me were two boxes containing astronomical instruments, and a sextant lying on

the ground; whilst the different corners of the tent were occupied by washing apparatus, a gun, Indian shot pouch, bags, basins, and an unhappy-looking japanned pot, whose melancholy bumps and hollows seemed to reproach me for many a bruise endured upon the rocks and portages betwixt Montreal and Lake Winipeg. Nor was my crew less motley than the furniture of my tent. It consisted of an Englishman, a man from Stornoway, two Canadians, two Metifs (or half-breeds), and three Iroquois Indians. Babel could not have produced a worse confusion of unharmonious sounds than was the conversation they kept up.”*

Entering the Saskatchewan River, they ascended its stream, and on the 5th July arrived at Cumberland House, where they were received by Mr. Isbister, the company's agent, and Mr. King, who had arrived without accident. Here the greater number of the party embarked in two new *bateaux*, each being laden with a cargo of sixty-one pieces of 90 lbs. each, making for both 10,980 lbs., exclusive of men, bedding, clothes, masts, sails, oars, and other spars. They sailed, under the command of Mr. King, on 6th July, while Captain Back, still retaining his canoe, remained behind to take some observations and write despatches for England. Although this occupied him a few days, yet in a very short time he overtook the boats in his light canoe, and proceeded on his way, leaving them to advance more slowly to their wintering ground.

On the 17th July the canoe reached Isle à la Crosse, where arrangements were made for the boats receiving additional supplies of pemmican, and a few dogs to be afterwards used in hauling wood, &c. during the winter. Dogs in this part of the world are by no means permitted to lead the lazy life that they spend in other climes. They

* Back, pp. 61-62.

are invaluable in the arctic regions, where horses are utterly useless, owing to the depth of snow which covers the earth for so large a portion of the year. The comparatively light weight of the dogs enables them to walk without sinking much, and even when the snow is so soft as to be incapable of supporting them, they are still able to sprawl along more easily than any other species of quadruped could do. Four are usually attached to a sledge, which they haul with great vigour, being followed by a driver on snow shoes, whose severe lash is brought to bear so powerfully on the backs of the poor animals, should any of them be observed to slacken their pace, that they are continually regarding him with deprecatory glances as they run along. Should the lash give a flourish, there is generally a short yelp from the pack, and should it descend amongst them with a vigorous crack, the vociferous yelling that results is perfectly terrific. These drivers are sometimes very cruel, and when a pack of dogs have had a fight and got their traces hopelessly ravelled (as is often the case), they have been known to fall on their knees, in their passion, seize one of the poor dogs by the nose with their teeth, and almost bite it off. Dogs are also used for dragging carioles, which vehicles are used by gentlemen in the company's service, who are either too old or too lazy to walk on snow shoes. The cariole is in form not unlike a slipper bath, both in shape and size. It is lined with buffalo robes,* in the midst of a bundle of which the occupant reclines luxuriously, while the dogs drag him slowly through the soft snow, and among the trees and bushes of the forest, or scamper with him over the hard beaten surface of a lake or river, while the machine is pre-

* Skins of the bison, dressed on one side till the skin becomes like rough chamois leather, and the hair left on the other. When lined with cloth they make excellent travelling wrappers.

vented from capsizing by a *voyageur* who walks behind on snow shoes, holding on to a line attached to the back part of the cariole. This kind of travelling, luxurious though it be however, is not without its discomforts and annoyances. The weather during winter is so cold, that it is often a matter of the greatest difficulty for the traveller to keep his toes from freezing, despite the buffalo robes; and sometimes, when the dogs start fresh in the morning with a good breakfast, a bright, clear, frosty day, and a long expanse of comparatively open country before them, where the snow, from exposure, has become quite hard, away they go with a loud yelp, upsetting the driver in the bolt, who rises to heap undeserved and very improper epithets upon the poor brutes, which, careering over the ground at the rate of eleven miles an hour, swing the miserable cariole over the snow, tear it through the bushes, bang it first on one side, then on the other, against stumps and trees, yelling all the while, partly with frantic glee at the thought of having bolted, and partly with fearful anticipation of the tremendous welting that is yet to come; until at last the cariole gets jammed hard and fast among the trees of the forest, or plunges down the steep banks of a river, head over heels, till they reach the foot—a horrible and struggling compound of dogs, traveller, traces, parchment, buffalo robes, blankets, and snow!

Leaving Isle à la Crosse, the travellers pursued their romantic and truly interesting journey. Keeping to the left of Clear Lake, they coasted it, and entered Buffalo Lake, in which they experienced one of the dangerous gales for which that sheet of water is famous. On the 21st of July they arrived at Portage La Loche, the high ridge of land which divides the waters running into Hudson's Bay from those flowing into the Arctic Ocean. Here they had to carry their canoe and baggage over the ridge, a

distance of fourteen miles—a piece of work which tried the poor fellows to the utmost of their strength. Scarcity of water during a part of the way, and myriads of bull-dogs (a large ferocious fly), combined to aggravate their sufferings. Mr. King, who arrived at this place with the loaded boats nearly three weeks later, tells us that his men suffered very severely from heat and thirst. The boats were left at the end of the portage where they first arrived, two others having been provided at the farther end. Eight days were consumed in passing Portage La Loche, during which period each man of the party carried twelve pieces in six journeys, and thus travelled one hundred and fifty-four miles, during eighty-four of which he had one hundred and eighty pounds attached to his back.

The beauty of the scenery at this place was superior to anything that had been seen hitherto. “Within a mile of the termination of the portage,” says Mr. King, “a most extensive and magnificent scene burst upon our view, and we discovered ourselves, through an opening in the trees, to be on a hill upwards of a thousand feet high, and at the brink of a tremendous precipice. We were certainly prepared to expect an extensive prospect, but the beautiful landscape before us was far superior to anything that could be anticipated from the nature of the country we had hitherto seen. At a depth of two hundred fathoms below the summit on which we stood, the Clear Water River was to be seen winding its serpentine course in beautiful meanders for thirty miles, broken here and there, and interrupted by intervening woods; while

——— ‘The tall pines dwindled as to shrubs,
In dizziness of distance!’

The valley, at once refreshed and adorned by the smooth pellucid stream, was embanked by two parallel chains of

hills extending towards the west, till it became lost in the purple hue of distance. The inclining heights, here and there covered with stately forests, and occasionally interspersed with barren spots or promontories of the most luxuriant verdure, were beautifully contrasted with the incinerated tinge which overspread vast tracts of country where once the dense forests had been consumed by fire. We sat down awhile to contemplate the magnificent scene, the picturesque and diversified appearance of which awakened in our minds mingled sensations of wonder and delight; while the calmness of the view infused an equanimity into our souls which it would be difficult to describe. We tore ourselves at length from this enchanting spot; and having descended to the banks of Clear Water River, we encamped."*

But to return to Captain Back. On the 23d July the last loads were brought down to the water's edge, and the weary men threw themselves down on the earth, where they remained quite motionless for an hour, after which they gummed the canoe, and again proceeded on their journey. At the Pine Portage they met Mr. A. R. M'Leod, one of the gentlemen who had been appointed by the governor to accompany the expedition. This gentleman no sooner heard of the appointment, than he expressed his willingness to go, and during the following year Captain Back had reason to rejoice in the acquisition of a man who was eminently qualified for the service in all respects. The party now proceeded with the additional load of Mr. M'Leod, his wife, and three children; not, however, without some grumbling from the guide, who did not at all relish this addition to his already well-laden canoe. On the 29th July they reached Fort Chepewyan.

* King's Arctic Ocean, pp. 86, 88.

Here some slight, though vague, information was obtained from the Indians, regarding the position of the river of which they were in search. They also completed their stock of provisions, leather for making moccasins, guns, and implements for building an establishment in which to pass the winter. Another canoe was also obtained, which, it was thought, might prove convenient in the event of finding shoal rivers to the north; and further instructions having been left for Mr. King on his arriving with the *bateaux*, they left the fort late on the evening of the 1st of August.

On reaching the Salt River, they met with a large body of Slave Lake Indians, who notified their approach by horrible and discordant sounds. As it was hoped some information might be obtained from them, a council was called by Mr. M'Leod, which was ceremoniously opened by passing round the pipe according to Indian custom, from which each councillor drew a few puffs in solemn silence, and with imperturbable gravity; after which there was a very large amount of talk, resulting in a very small amount of information.

"The *tout ensemble* of these 'people,' as they, with some vanity, style themselves," says Back, "was wild and grotesque in the extreme. One canoe in particular fixed my attention: it was small even for a canoe; and how eight men, women, and children managed to stow away their legs in a space not large enough for more than three Europeans, would have been a puzzling problem to one unacquainted with the suppleness of an Indian's unbandaged limbs. There, however, they were, in a temperature of 66°, packed heads and tails like Yarmouth herrings—half naked—their hair in elf-locks, long and matted—filthy beyond description—and all squalling together. To complete the picture, their dogs, scarce one

degree below them, formed a sort of body-guard on each side of the river; and as the canoe glided away with the current, all the animals together, human and canine, set up a shrill and horrible yell."*

On the 8th of August they reached Great Slave Lake, and arrived at Fort Resolution. At this post they remained some days to arrange about an interpreter, complete their stock of necessaries, and repair the canoes; and then, launching forth again, they coasted along the northern shores of Great Slave Lake.

At the eastern extremity of this lake, a river entered it which, it was supposed, flowed from the country where the Thlew-ee-choh took its rise; and towards this river Captain Back directed his course with increasing hope, notwithstanding the account given of it by the Indians, who assured him that it was full of rapids and waterfalls. On the way he experienced the usual alternations of storm and calm, rain and sunshine, while his route was enlivened by occasional meeting with Indians. One of these fellows, to show his respect for the white men, put on a *surtout* which he had purchased at the fort; and, as the *surtouts* sent out for the fur trade are made of snuff-coloured brown cloth, in the cut of the last century—with a rolling collar about four inches wide reaching half-way up the back of the head, single breast, particularly long skirt, and peculiarly short waist, the buttons behind being in close proximity to each other, and looking as if they wished to creep up the back, and make acquaintance with the collar—it may be supposed the awkward son of the forest did not improve his appearance by the adoption of such a garb. Being allowed to remain unbuttoned, it disclosed the fact that he was unprovided with inexpressibles, which produced an irresistibly comical effect.

* Back, p. 79.

One evening, as they were paddling among the tall reeds that grew in a bay of the lake, winding out and in among them, and obtaining through their occasional openings a partial view of the scene beyond, the sharp-eyed Indians descried the ponderous antlers of a moose deer; and La Prise, a Chepewyan, being expert at approaching these quick-eared animals, went in pursuit. Meanwhile they dropped silently down a small stream until a place was found dry enough for encamping. The night was clear and bright; and the men were earnestly watching the boiling of a kettle of meat, when they were startled by a long shrill whoop, which Louison, the interpreter, immediately answered, announcing at the same time that it was the small canoe, and that La Prise had killed his game. The splash of paddles was soon heard in the still night air, and in a few minutes the canoe, with its inmates, glided against the long grass on the bank of the encampment, under the broad shade of which nothing was visible but the dark heads of the Indians, as they appeared and vanished with the motion of their canoe. On being interrogated, the Indian, according to a curious custom among them, said that he had been unsuccessful; but in a few minutes he produced the nose and tongue of a fine moose, exclaiming at the same time, "There, I shot it through the heart through an opening in the bushes not wider than my hand, and the rest lies at the bottom of the canoe for your disposal."

On another day they shot a bear, which, with a few fish caught in their nets during the night, served to keep them in a supply of fresh provisions.

In chasing the moose during winter in some parts of these countries, where the ground is broken and rugged, the hunters are not unfrequently exposed to the danger of falling over the precipices which the deceptive glare of

the snow conceals from view, until, too late, he finds the treacherous snow giving way beneath his feet. On one occasion, a young man, in the service of the company, received intelligence from an Indian that he had seen fresh tracks of a moose, and being an eager sportsman, he sallied forth, accompanied by the Indian, in chase of it. A long fatiguing walk on the Chepewyan snow shoes, which are six feet long, brought them within sight of the deer. The young man fired, wounded the animal, and then dashed forward in pursuit. For a long way the deer kept well ahead of them. At length they began to overtake it; but when they were about to fire again, it stumbled and disappeared, sending up a cloud of snow in its fall. Supposing that it had sunk exhausted into one of the many hollows which were formed by the undulations of the ground, the young man rushed headlong towards it, followed at a slower pace by the Indian. Suddenly he stopped and cast a wild glance around him as he observed that he stood on the very brink of a precipice, at the foot of which the mangled carcass of the deer lay. Thick masses of snow had drifted over its edge until a solid wreath was formed, projecting several feet beyond it. On this wreath the young man stood with the points of his long snow shoes overhanging the yawning abyss; to turn round was impossible, as the exertion requisite to wield such huge snow shoes would, in all probability, have broken off the mass. To step gently backwards was equally impossible, in consequence of the heels of the shoes being sunk into the snow. In this awful position he stood until the Indian came up, and taking off his long shash, threw the end of it towards him; catching hold of this, he collected all his energies, and giving a desperate bound threw himself backwards at full length. The Indian pulled with all his force on the belt, and succeeded in drawing him out of danger, just as

the mass, on which he had stood a moment before, gave way, and thundered down the cliff, where it was dashed into clouds against the projecting crags long before it reached the foot.

Continuing their route along the hard and rocky line of the northern shore, the canoes passed a picturesque torrent, which from a thread of shining silver in the distance, came gambolling down the steep declivities, and then mingled gently with the broad waters of the lake. Near it was the Rocky Point River, just beyond which they encamped at the close of a beautiful day, in which the thermometer had stood at 52°.

They now approached the eastern extremity of Great Slave Lake, where was the river whose sources, it was said, rose near the springs of the Thlew-ee-choh. Captain Back had great difficulty here in getting a satisfactory answer from the Indians who accompanied him, as to the whereabouts of this river. Many of them said that it existed, but only one admitted that he had ever seen it; and as that was long ago, when he was a little boy, while hunting with his father in the barren grounds, he expressed great doubts as to his being able to find it. We cannot but admire the steady persevering energy of Captain Back, in facing and overcoming the innumerable and often vexatious difficulties which were thrown in his way by these lazy natives. They thwarted him continually; told lies with imperturbable gravity, and sometimes, under pretence of paying a visit to their relations, deserted him altogether.

On the 18th of August they at last reached the object of their search—the river which was to conduct them to a chain of lakes leading to the Thlew-ee-choh. It broke upon them unexpectedly, when rounding some small rocks which shut out from their view a bay, at the bottom of which was seen a splendid fall, upwards of sixty feet high,

rushing in two white and misty volumes into the dark gulf below. Here they landed, and set about thoroughly repairing the small canoe which was to proceed up the rapids, while the other, and the greater part of the baggage, was left in charge of La Prise, who undertook to deliver them to Mr. McLeod; that gentleman having been deputed to choose a convenient situation, at the eastern extremity of Great Slave Lake, whereon to build a winter residence, while Captain Back should proceed in his light canoe as far down the Thlew-ee-choh as was practicable, returning again to the establishment before the winter fairly set in.

The observations here gave the latitude $62^{\circ} 50' 15''$ N.; longitude $109^{\circ} 47' 54''$ W.; and variation $36^{\circ} 52'$ E.

The true work of the explorers had now fairly begun. Before them the gushing stream, which was called the Hoar Frost River, roared down the scattered rocks like the thundering cannonade that streams through the breach of a stormed fortress, while the forlorn hope of *voyageurs* below prepared to storm the stream, and take possession of the unknown barren grounds that lay beyond.

"A new scene," says Back, "now opened upon us. Instead of the gentle paddling across the level lake, by which we had been enabled to penetrate thus far, we had to toil up the steep and rocky bed of an unknown stream, on our way to the high lands, from which the waters take an opposite course. The labours which had hitherto been so cheerfully undergone, were little more than those to which *voyageurs* are accustomed; but in what was to come, it was evident that extraordinary efforts and patient perseverance would be required to overcome the difficulties of our route." Up this stream, then, they went, carrying canoe and provisions over rocks, mountains, and plains, in order to avoid a succession of rapids which intercepted them all the way up the river. Their old friends the sand-flies,

too, assailed them here with extreme vehemence, and, to add to their miseries, Maufelly, the interpreter, fell sick. Having only a box of common pills, and a bottle of brandy, Captain Back at first refused the Indian's request to doctor him, but, being much pressed, he at last indulged him, first with the contents of the box, which made him worse, and then with the contents of the bottle, which made him better.

The scenery here was exceedingly wild. High beetling cliffs overhung dark gorges, through which the water rushed impetuously, while here and there lay quiet sheets of clear water, reflecting in their bosoms the bold outlines that towered overhead, and the variously-coloured mosses that covered the rocks and enriched the scene.

Among these wild rapids, De Charloît, the bowman, exhibited admirable adroitness and dexterity. In the midst of dangers the most imminent from rapids or falls, he was cool, fearless, and collected; and often when the pole or paddle was no longer available, he would spring into the curling water, and, with a foot firmly planted, maintain his position, where others would have been swept away in an instant. But in spite of all his care and exertion, the canoe was sorely buffeted, and the bark hung in shreds along its sides, ripped and broken in every quarter.

One day, on entering upon a magnificent lake, a reindeer appeared, running at full speed, chased by a large white wolf, which, though it seemed to have little chance in swiftness, was nevertheless resolute in pursuit. The deer gradually made for a pass below the rapid, at the other side of which another wolf was perceived, crouching down, with his eyes fixed on the chase, evidently prepared to spring on the poor animal should it take the water. Fortunately, however, it flew past, near to where Captain Back was standing, who, shouting loudly as the wolf approached, succeeded in scaring the rascally animal away.

On the 29th of August, while the men were out scouring the country in search of the Thlew-ee-choh, which, it was supposed, must be in the neighbourhood of the spot where their tent was pitched, Captain Back sallied forth with his gun. "Becoming anxious," says he, "about the men, I took my gun, and following a N.N.W. direction, went out to look for them. Having passed a small sheet of water, * * * I ascended a hill, from the top of which I discerned, to my great delight, a rapid, evidently connected with the stream which flowed through the narrow channel from the lake. With a quickened step I proceeded to trace its course, and, in doing so, was farther gratified at being obliged to wade through the sedgy waters of springs. Crossing two rivulets whose lively ripples ran due north into the rapid, the thought occurred to me that these feeders might be tributaries of the Thlew-ee-choh; and, yielding to that pleasing emotion which discoverers, in the first bound of their transport, may be pardoned for indulging, I threw myself down on the bank, and drank a hearty draught of the limpid water."

That this was actually the source of the river of which they were in search, was speedily confirmed by the men, who returned soon afterwards saying that they had discovered it on the second day, and described it as being large enough for boats. Proceeding across some small lakes and portages, they travelled towards the river until their canoe, which had been showing unmistakable symptoms of a broken constitution, became at last so rickety as to render it advisable to return. From the appearance of the country, and especially of some blue hills in the distance, it was conjectured that the river was full of rapids, and that their work of next summer would not be child's play.

The observations gave the latitude $64^{\circ} 40' 51''$ N.; longitude $108^{\circ} 08' 10''$ W.; variation $44^{\circ} 24'$ E.

Their route back to winter quarters was even more harassing than their advance. The rickety canoe having nearly gone to pieces in several rapids, was finally abandoned, and her cargo strapped to the backs of the men, who set off to walk back over land. The account of this journey, as given by the indefatigable leader, is particularly interesting, but our limits forbid our entering upon it in detail. Over hill and dale, through swamp, jungle, and morass, they pursued their toilsome march; now crashing with their heavy loads down the tangled and bushy banks of a small creek, and then slowly clambering up the craggy sides of the opposite bank; sometimes plodding through a quaking swamp, at other times driving through a wood of stunted trees; and all the while assailed by a host of sand-flies and mosquitoes, in a way that mortal combatants never did and never will assail their foes! Talk of heroism! no band of Spartans ever left their black soup to rush tumultuously on certain death—no forlorn hope ever dashed up the crashing ruins of a blazing breach, with half the determination, or half the obstinacy, with which these same sand-flies and mosquitoes rushed upon destruction! Thousands flew, with ready darts, straight in the eyes, noses, and ears, of the frantic *voyageurs*—thousands fell under the withering force of one tremendous slap of their ever-moving hands—down they go, millions at a sweep, while millions more supply their places, coolly, calmly, but decidedly, with as much indifference to death as if it were a mere joke—nay, they even came on with a merry hum and buzz, as if they revelled in the wholesale slaughter of themselves, while their luckless foes rolled their heads in the very dust in agony. At last, however, their sorrows, for a time, came to an end. “We had now,” says Back, “reached the lake where, in my letter of the 19th of August, I had directed Mr. M’Leod to build an establishment. Proceed-

ing onward, over the even and mossy surface of the sandbanks, we were one day gladdened by the sound of the woodman's stroke; and, guided by the branchless trunks that lay stretched along the earth, we soon came to a bay, where, in agreeable relief against the dark green foliage, stood the newly-erected framework of a house. Mr. McLeod was walking under the shade of the trees with La Prise, and did not hear us till we were within a few yards of him. We were ranged in single file, the men having, of their own accord, fallen into that order; and, with swollen faces, dressed and laden as we were, some carrying guns, others tent poles, &c., we must have presented a strangely wild appearance, not unlike a group of robbers on the stage."*

Captain Back and his hardy companions had now reached their winter quarters. In the cold heart of the wilderness, thousands and thousands of miles from the dwellings of civilized men, between whom and them lay the almost impassable barriers of broad foaming rivers and sea-like lakes, whose waters were becoming crusted with the fine intersecting needles of ice, which, ere long, would solidify them nearly to the bottom—high, broken, rugged mountains, dreary morasses, boundless prairies, and dense, dark, interminable forests. In the cold heart of the northern wilderness they built their little huts, and took up their abode for nine dreary months—surrounded by a few scattered, starving families of Indians, and solitude; depending for food upon the success of their Indian hunters and the produce of their nets, both of which often fail, and neither of which were likely to do more than furnish a meagre subsistence for the party. There is something truly grand in the courage and energy of men who thus, with the humane motive of delivering their fellow-men from impending

* Back, p. 181.

destruction, or for the purpose of adding to the geographical knowledge of the human race, leave friends, and home, and country, to face the rigours and overcome the difficulties of a hyperborean winter—rigours and difficulties comprehended in their full extent and terrible reality only by those who have endured them. And our admiration deepens into respect, when we see the heroic leader of the band, whose stern courage and unflinching resolution endured and conquered all, recording his gratitude and trust in God in the following simple, humble language :—“ The following day,” says he, “ being Sunday, divine service was read, and our imperfect thanks were humbly offered to Almighty God for the mercies which had already been vouchsafed to us ; and though in this imperious climate, with everything to do, time was certainly precious, yet, feeling that the first opening of the sacred volume in this distant wilderness ought not to be profaned by any mixture of common labour, I made it a day of real quiet and repose.”

Mr. King, who, as has been previously mentioned, was left behind with the two boats, rejoined the party on the 16th September, having incurred not a little difficulty in consequence of his want of experience in these climes, and had been occasionally imposed upon by the *voyageurs*. The whole party now set briskly to work to complete their buildings. Trees were soon felled, branched, squared, and put together, with a celerity peculiar to Canadians and half-breeds, who, being all but born with the axe in their hands, become very expert in the use of it. Though the trees were small, a sufficient number for their purpose were speedily procured ; slabs and planks were sawn, stones chipped, mud and grass collected for mortar ; and, in a few days, as if by magic, a dwelling-house was raised, sufficiently weather-tight to shelter the whole party during

a winter that was to last fully eight months. All establishments in the Indian country, however lowly and innocent in appearance, being dignified with the title of *Fort*, Captain Back thought proper to call this one Fort Reliance. Its exact position was in latitude $62^{\circ} 46' 29''$ N., longitude $109^{\circ} 0' 38.9''$ W. It consisted of a house fifty feet long by thirty broad, having four separate rooms, with a spacious hall in the centre for the reception and accommodation of Indians. Each of the rooms had a fireplace and a rude chimney. A miserable apology for a room, with many a yawning crevice inviting the entrance of the cold elements, was, out of courtesy, called a kitchen; and another house, standing at right angles to this one on the western side, formed a dwelling for the men. An observatory was also constructed at a short distance from the establishment, wherein certain mysterious and complicated instruments were fixed and erected; iron in all forms being carefully excluded, and a fence run round it to guard it more effectually from the men, as they walked about with their guns, ice chisels, and axes. Here Captain Back and Mr. King used to sit in solemn conclave for many an hour during the winter, closely observing the various and interesting phenomena of earth and sky; and awfully mysterious did this building appear to the simple Indians and *voyageurs*. They would approach as near as they dared, and with their arms folded, brows knit, and heads down, would stand for hours wondering at the dead silence of its occupants, broken only at long intervals by such exclamations as "now"—"stop"—insomuch that they at last, after very mature and grave deliberation, came to the conclusion that they were "*raising the devil!*"

The site of the establishment was a level bank of gravel and sand, covered with rein-deer moss, shrubs, and trees, looking more like a park than an American forest. It

formed the northern extremity of a bay, from twelve to fifteen miles long, and from three to five miles broad, which was named after Mr. M'Leod. The Ah-hel-dessy fell into it from the westward, and another small river from the east. Granitic mountains of gray and flesh-coloured felspar, quartz, and in some places large plates of mica, surrounded the bay, and rose from five to fifteen hundred feet in height. These hills, however, instead of proving a shelter, acted as conductors to the wind, which occasionally blew from E.S.E. and W.S.W. with great violence.

Here they took up their abode, and the miseries through which they were doomed to pass during that dreary winter began even at this time. Fish, upon which they depended in a great measure, began to fail at the very commencement of the season. From one place to another the nets were shifted, with the hope of finding a larger supply; but, so far from succeeding in this, the men who were sent found that there was scarce sufficient to maintain themselves from day to day, and on more than one occasion returned to the fort, being unable to support themselves. Deer also failed them; for, although there were plenty of these animals in the country, they kept so far away from the fort, and continued so long among the barren grounds, where it was exceedingly difficult to approach them, that very few were obtained, and these at long intervals. The bags of pemmican which Mr. King had brought in his boats were intended for the expedition of the following summer; and as it could not be carried on without that article of food, nothing but the utmost extremity would induce Captain Back to break upon it. During all this period, and for months afterwards, the fort was besieged by starving Indians, who flocked to it in the vain hope of obtaining assistance from its almost equally unfortunate inmates. As this, however, was a disposition which it would have been

ruinous to the expedition to encourage, Captain Back positively refused any assistance in the shape of food, except to those of them who, from infirmity or sickness, were absolutely incapable of going forth to hunt. One of this class was picked up in the woods and brought to the fort. A miserable old woman, "clad," says Back, "in deer-skin, her eyes all but closed, her hair matted and filthy, her skin shrivelled, and feebly supporting, with the aid of a stick held by both hands, a trunk which was literally horizontal, she presented, if such an expression may be pardoned, the shocking and unnatural appearance of a human brute. It was a humiliating spectacle, and one which I would not willingly see again. Poor wretch! Her tale was soon told: old and decrepit, she had come to be considered as a burden even by her own sex. Past services and toils were forgotten, and, in their figurative style, they coldly told her, that 'though she appeared to live, she was already dead,' and must be abandoned to her fate. 'There is a new fort,' said they, 'go there; the whites are great medicine men, and may have power to save you.' This was a month before; since which time she had crawled and hobbled along the rocks, the scanty supply of berries which she found upon them just enabling her to live." This pitiable object was brought to the fort, fed and taken care of—being permitted to live in the hall, where she crawled about on all fours at will, moaning over the fire, or creeping into Mr. King's room, whom she found to be the only one who could alleviate her sufferings. These, however, had been greater than she could bear. Notwithstanding all their care, she sank from day to day, until she appeared a living skeleton, and was found dead at last in a tent, beside the ashes of a small fire. O! there is something that thrills to the very soul in this picture of misery and cruelty. The feeling of affectionate pity with which one usually regards these poor

Indians, is turned to bitter indignation as we read of the unnatural, cold-hearted cruelty of those who would thus forsake their feeble, helpless *mother* in her old age;—the mother who had borne them in her arms over many and many a weary mile of that waste howling wilderness—whose breasts had once sustained them with the stream of life, and, though all withered and shrunk now, still covered the poor, trembling, timid old heart, which oftentimes had beat more warmly and powerfully with love for those whom she watched departing, as they left her to her fate, than it beat for fear as she gazed upon the cold wintry woods, and slowly realized her desolation. It is past now, and she's at rest. How many more such scenes shall occur to raise a wail of indignation, a burning tear of sympathy, and prompt the earnest prayer that the blessed Gospel of Jesus Christ may soon shine upon the dark places of the earth? God knows!

Famine in its worst form now began to stare them in the face. Day after day brought fresh intelligence from the various fisheries of their ill success, while parties of starving natives arrived from the hunting grounds, in the hope of getting a few scraps of food at the fort. Captain Back, with characteristic benevolence, imparted to them as much as could be spared from his own little stock, endeavouring to revive their drooping spirits and urge them on to action. It was in vain, however. The scourge was too heavy, and their exertions were completely paralyzed. No sooner had one party been prevailed on to leave the fort, than another, still more languid and distressed, feebly entered, and confirmed, by their half-famished looks and sunken eyes, their heart-rending tale of suffering. They spoke little, but crowded in silence round the fire, as if eager to enjoy the only comfort remaining to them. And, truly, fire was a comfort of no ordinary kind, when it is remembered that

the temperature during that terrible winter fell to 70° *below* zero of Fahrenheit!

It is difficult for those who have not experienced it, to comprehend the intensity of this degree of cold. Captain Back and his friend Mr. King made a few experiments during their long dreary winter, which will serve to convey some idea of it. A bottle of sulphuric ether was placed on the snow when the temperature was 62° below zero. In fifteen minutes the interior upper surface of the bottle was coated with ice, while the ether became viscous and opaque. A small bottle of pyroligneous acid froze in less than thirty minutes at a temperature of 57° minus; and a surface of four inches of mercury exposed in a saucer became solid in two hours, at the same temperature. On the 4th of February so intensely cold was it, that a higher temperature than 12° above zero could not be obtained in the house, even although there were eight large logs of wood blazing in the chimney of a small room. As might be imagined, cold, of such a peculiarly sharp nature, used to prove inconvenient in more ways than one, and Captain Back tells us that his ink froze, and that in making an attempt to finish a water-colour sketch he signally failed—the material becoming frozen even while he sat so close to a huge fire as considerably to endanger the legs of his trousers! All metal implements, on being brought into the house in such weather, become instantly covered with a species of hoar frost; and oftentimes have the eyes of a novice on returning from a day's shooting been opened to their utmost width in undisguised astonishment at beholding his gun, which a few minutes before he had placed on his table glittering in all its pristine freshness, gradually become dim and then pure white with a coat of hoar-frost! At an establishment near the shores of Hudson's Bay, a very curious phenomenon occurred which further illustrates the intensity of the cold in these regions.

A ball was given to the Indians about the place—being New Year's day—and, during its progress, the heat of the room, and violent exercise of the guests, besides the steam from a pan of water placed on the stove, so moistened the atmosphere as to cause moisture to run in streams down the walls and hang in drops from the ceiling. During the night the fires were allowed to die out, and in the morning the whole room was covered with white crystals of ice!

During this period of suffering, that which tried Captain Back's benevolent nature most severely, was the longing looks of the poor little Indian children, as they stood watching him and his men eating their small daily allowance of pemmican. "Often," says he, "did I share my own plate with the children, whose helpless state and piteous cries were peculiarly distressing. Compassion for the full-grown may or may not be felt; but that heart must be cased in steel which is insensible to the cry of a child for food. I have no reserve in declaring the pleasure which it gave me to watch the emotions of these unfortunate little ones, as each received its spoonful of pemmican from my hand."

On the 25th of April 1834, while the snow still lay deep on the ground, and everything wore the same unchanging, and seemingly unchangeable, aspect that it had worn ever since October, the winter packet arrived, bringing intelligence of the safe arrival of Sir J. Ross and his crew in England. To those who were to have devoted the ensuing summer to the search, this was a subject of unmixed pleasure, both as assuring them of the safety of their enterprising countrymen, and as setting them free to devote themselves entirely to the secondary object of the expedition; and that night, Captain Back, resolving to devote himself to the enjoyments of social intercourse, invited all the world within his reach (*i. e.* Mr. King) to sup with him, and indulged in a generous bowl of punch. The men were treated

to an additional allowance of food, wherewith to warm the cockles of their half-starved hearts.

Part of the men were now sent to the only clump of pines which afforded trees of a sufficient size to saw up into planks for building a boat—this conveyance being deemed better than a canoe for the summer journey. The famine still continued to press heavily upon them. Many of the natives died, while some of them tried to allay the cravings of hunger by eating parts of their deer-skin shoes and coats. At the fisheries little or nothing was caught, and at the fort they were obliged reluctantly to break upon the supply of pemmican. The solitude and desolation of the establishment was extreme, and perhaps no better idea of it could be conveyed than by the quotation of a paragraph from Back's journal in which he speaks of the death of two tame ravens. "For the last fifteen days," says he, "our habitation had been rendered more cheerful by the presence of two ravens, which having, by my express direction, been left unmolested, had become so tame as scarcely to move ten paces when any one passed them; they were the only living things that held communion with us, and it was a pleasure to see them gambol in their glossy plumage on the white snow. A party of men had arrived overnight, and amongst them an Iroquois, who, perceiving the birds together, and being ignorant of my wishes, could not resist the temptation of a double shot, and so killed them both. In any other situation such an event would, perhaps, have seemed too trifling to be noticed; but in our case the ravens were the only link between us and the dreary solitude without, and their loss therefore was painfully felt. * * * When they were gone, I felt more lonely, and the moaning wind seemed as if complaining of the barbarity."

Towards the end of winter one of the men, called Williamson, was lost. He had been an invalid during greater

part of the winter, and had been discharged from the service in consequence; but while travelling to the next establishment, he separated from his companions, lost himself in the woods, and was found long after dead upon the snow.

Winter, with its cold, dreary, deathlike stillness, at last began to give way and melt beneath the warm touch of spring. The lumps of snow and bits of ice, which had lain so long around the fort as to have acquired all the familiarity of household objects, at last began to diminish in size and change in appearance. The door, which it had been customary to keep closed with jealous care, was allowed occasionally to stand open, and soon a few pools of water formed on the ice, and the unusual sound of tinkling rills was heard as the great fields of snow began to melt and send forth the first few tiny threads of water, which, ere long, were to gush in volumes throughout the land, and help to burst the icy barriers of lake and stream. On the 13th May the first goose of the season was seen. On the 18th Mr. M'Leod arrived; and on the 7th of June, things being considered in a sufficiently advanced state to permit of operations being commenced, Captain Back and his party set out once more upon their travels.

The boat, which was thirty feet long, was placed upon runners, and dragged over the yet unmelted ice of the lakes and swamps, across many of which they had to pass ere they could launch upon the Thlew-ee-choh. The men had each a small sled, or runner, on which to drag a certain amount of the baggage and provisions—averaging about one hundred pounds—and away they went with great merriment at the grotesque appearance they cut as they stumbled and slipped over the jagged surface of the ice. In a very short time this work began to tell upon the runners of the sledges, which peeled up, and otherwise evinced symptoms of very speedy dissolution. In this dilemma

the captain bethought himself of two pitsaws which they had with them. These were got out, cut into stripes, nailed to the runners, and in a few hours away they went again with increased speed, and very much diminished tear and wear.

Mr. M'Leod, with a party of Indians, was sent on ahead of the main body to hunt, and make *caches* of the meat, to be picked up as the party behind came up to them. An encamping place of this advance guard was fallen upon by Captain Back while he was straying a little from his party. As he stood looking at it, he observed a tin kettle half buried in the snow, which on examination was found to contain thirty-four balls, a file broken in three pieces, an awl, a fire-steel, and a crooked knife. This, the most valuable portion of an Indian's possessions, had been thrown away, according to a custom prevailing among that people, either as an expiatory sacrifice for some calamity, or as a token of extreme affliction for the loss of a wife or child. The captain usually kept ahead of his party, being desirous of finding the caches, and laying the meat on an exposed place in his track, so as to avoid waste of time in collecting it. In this way they continued their route for many days, over every sort of lake, pond, river, swamp, creek, or pool that can or cannot be imagined; sometimes comfortably, and sometimes miserably. The want of fire was their chief discomfort. "The thermometer," says Back, "stood at 33°, with snow, and a raw cold wind that pierced through us in spite of cloaks and blankets. It was two o'clock in the morning; and as I had not yet dined, certain internal gnawings began to intimate the propriety of supplying the organs of digestion with some occupation which might keep them from quarrelling among themselves. O! thought I, for a cheerful fire and a warm, comfortable meal! Accordingly, having managed to collect a beggarly account of

wet branches, we applied ourselves with laudable zeal to ignite and blow them into a flame. The moss and shrubs were saturated, and would not burn; but it was fondly imagined that, by dint of perseverance, and relieving each other quickly, the dwarf birch might be importuned into a blaze. We puffed, and it smoked—again, and it lighted—still more, and it went out: the puffing was renewed—it looked cheerful, and wanted only a *little more* coaxing. ‘The least thing in the world,’ said one, blowing gently, though at the distance of a yard. ‘Mind what you’re about,’ cried another—‘there! it will go out—it’s all over’—‘O! get out of the way, let me come,’ bawled a third; and thrusting himself forward, applied himself to the work with such vigour and force of lungs, that the few embers yet living flew scattered about like the sparks of an exploded cracker.” That day, and on many others, the captain dined on “some pemmican and a little cold water.”

Towards the middle of June the weather became very cold and boisterous, especially Midsummer’s-day, which was the coldest, blackest, and most wintry day they had. On the 22d of June, being Sunday, divine service was read in the tent, where, to the credit of the men, be it mentioned, they all came clean and shaved, notwithstanding the discomforts to which they were exposed.

On the 28th they arrived near the banks of the Thlew-ee-choh, and on the afternoon of the same day were fairly launched upon its head waters. These, however, were full of ice, and it was not until several days afterwards that Captain Back felt it safe to dismiss his extra hands, and the Indians who had accompanied him thus far to carry provisions. On the 3d of July, however, having assembled them on the banks of the river, he relieved them of their burdens, and arranged the party which was to accompany him to the Polar Sea. And greatly did it surprise the

Indians to see a boat manned by Europeans, and stored with the provision of the southern country, after having been hauled, carried, and dragged over every imaginable kind of obstacle for full two hundred miles, at last fairly launched on the clear waters of the barren lands. Mr. M'Leod was dismissed at this point, with instructions to collect provisions against their return, and to meet them again in September on the banks of the Thlew-ee-choh.

While he and his party were debating as to which part of the country would be best to return by, provisions being somewhat scarce, the fog cleared away, and discovered the branching antlers of twenty rein-deer spread over the summits of the adjacent hills. "To see and pursue was the work of a moment, and in a few minutes not an active hunter remained in the encampment. It was a beautiful and interesting sight; for the sun shone out, and lighting up some parts, cast others into deeper shade; the white ice reflected millions of dazzling rays; the rapid leapt and chafed in little ripples, which melted away into the unruffled surface of the slumbering lake; abrupt and craggy rocks frowned on the right, and, on the left, the brown landscape receded until it was lost in the distant blue mountains. The foreground was filled up with the ochre-coloured lodges of the Indians, contrasting with our own pale tents; and to the whole scene animation was given by the graceful motions of the unstartled deer, and the treacherous crawling of the wary hunters."

The very first day introduced them to the perils which they were to encounter in that rugged river. Coming up to a strong rapid and fall, down which the boat could only be run in a light state, all the baggage was carried over the rocks, and four good hands left in the boat. They pushed off into the stream, and ran the first fall in safety; but having steered too much to the left, they were drawn

on to a ledge of rock, forming part of the second; this brought the boat up with a crash which threatened immediate destruction, and called forth a shriek from the prostrate crew. The steersman jumped out on the rock and tried to lift her off, but without success. Another moment, and the fierce current swung her stern round, and it seemed as if nothing could save her from descending in a gush of green water straight on to a sharp rock below, against which a wave of five feet high was breaking. Happily the steering oar had been left projecting out astern, and, as the boat swung, it caught a rock, which pitched her out broadside to the current, when she was carried down in safety.

The party now consisted of eight boatmen, Mr. King, and the commander, and seldom has so small a band of adventurers experienced such a hazardous, comfortless, and truly rough-and-tumble journey as they did. The weather, which had been all along boisterous and cold, became worse and worse as they went on, so that they were frequently wet all day, and, owing to the want of firewood, they were of necessity wet all night. Nevertheless, they kept up their spirits—not ‘by pouring spirits down’—fortunately for them they had but little “fire-water,” and cared little for it—but by being contented and cheerful under all circumstances. Captain Back, too, in the midst of discomforts which might have damped the ardour of most men, cheered up his party by word and action—keeping ever before their minds, that, however well man may order his plans, the disposal of all is in the hands of God.

The river expanded sometimes into immense lakes, which often detained, and sometimes threatened to arrest them altogether; at other places it narrowed into a deep and rapid stream, which gushed in a black boiling mass through

between high cliffs, or foamed over a rugged bed of broken rocks and boulder-stones—terminating not unfrequently in a stupendous fall. Obstacles of this kind, however they may interrupt the progress of ordinary men, are no barriers in the way of nor'-westers; so they swept through the gorges, manœuvred skilfully down the rapids, and made portages to avoid the falls, with a degree of facility and safety that was little short of miraculous. In one place they had a narrow escape, which is but a specimen of what was of daily occurrence. "A little sheet of water," says Back, "bounded to the right by mounds and hills of white sand, with patches of rich herbage, where numerous deer were feeding, brought us to a long and appalling rapid, full of rocks and large boulders; the sides hemmed in by a wall of ice, and the current flying with the velocity and force of a torrent. The boat was lightened of her cargo, and I stood on a high rock, with an anxious heart, to see her run it. I had every hope which confidence in the judgment and dexterity of my principal men could inspire; but it was impossible not to feel that one crash would be fatal to the expedition. Away they went, with the speed of an arrow, and, in a moment, the foam and rocks hid them from my view. I heard what sounded in my ear like a wild shriek, and saw Mr. King, who was a hundred yards before me, make a sign with his gun, and then run forward. I followed, with an agitation which may be conceived; and, to my inexpressible joy, found that the shriek was the triumphant whoop of the crew, who had landed safely in a small bay below. This was called Malley's Rapid, in consequence of one of the party, so called, having lost himself in the adjacent willows for some time."

On the 13th July, a glimpse of sunshine tempted the captain to halt for the purpose of taking observations, and, while he was thus engaged, the men were permitted to

scour the country in pursuit of deer and musk-oxen, which literally swarmed in the barren grounds, and infused life and animation into many a wild picturesque scene. The hunters soon returned with four fine bucks, which afforded them an agreeable change from the customary meal of pemmican.

The latitude was $65^{\circ} 38' 21''$ N., and longitude $106^{\circ} 35' 23''$ W. At this place the river began to take an easterly bend, which perplexed and annoyed them much; causing great anxiety as to whether it would ultimately lead them to the frozen sea, or terminate in Hudson's Bay. In any case, they had nothing for it but to push on, and their labours were rewarded afterwards by their finding that the river trended again in a northerly direction, and their hopes were further increased by the discovery, on the 16th July, of some old Esquimaux encampments. Once, indeed, they thought they saw tents of the Esquimaux ahead, but on a nearer approach they turned out to be some luxuriant clumps of willows, which were inhabited by thousands of geese. They had selected the spot as being a convenient one for the operation of casting their feathers.

Geese, while in this condition, are most superb runners, and put the hunters to their utmost metal sometimes to catch them; leading them through bog, pool, and swamp, with a dexterity that often brings their pursuers into many an awkward and watery predicament, leaving it oftentimes a point in dispute whether the chasers or the chased were the greatest geese! They observed thousands upon thousands of the most excellent quills scattered over the sand.

A curious feature in this part of the country was the number of huge boulder-stones scattered around, not only in the river, but on the very pinnacles of the highest hills.

On the 28th July they met the first Esquimaux, who,

as usual on their first seeing Europeans, exhibited at once their consternation and astonishment, by shouts, yells, antics, and gesticulations of the most inhuman sort; labouring under the impression, apparently, that by so doing they would frighten their new visitors away. As is also usual on such occasions, of course they found themselves mistaken, for the boat continued to approach the shore despite the brandishing of spears and other belligerent demonstrations; whereupon the whole nation formed in a semi-circle round the spot where the boat grounded, and stood on the defensive. Captain Back, however, soon established friendly relations with them, by walking boldly up, unarmed and alone, at the same time calling out *Tima*—peace—with great emphasis, tossing up his arms in true Esquimaux style, and, finally, shaking hands all round. This quieted them, and they soon mingled with the men, from whom they received a few buttons with great delight. They evidently had not souls *above* buttons; indeed, were one to judge from the joy occasioned on receipt of these ornaments, it might be doubted whether their souls had yet attained to such a height of savage felicity as ever to have *come up* to buttons before!

A portage had to be made at this place; so, to divert the attention of the poor natives, and prevent their being tempted to steal, Captain Back went up to their tents and sketched them. He describes them as being neat and well-made, not so cunning as those further to the west, and altogether a harmless, inoffensive race. The crew of the boats pronounced the girls to be “bonnie creatures;” but really, upon turning to an engraving from the captain’s portrait of one of these ladies, one can only come to the conclusion that the crew’s notion of *bonnie creatures* was, to say the least of it, peculiar! His description of the taking of this portrait is so humorous that we give it in his

own words: "The only lady," says he, "whose portrait was sketched, was so flattered at being selected for the distinction, that, in her fear lest I should not sufficiently see every grace of her good-tempered countenance, she intently watched my eye; and, according to her notion of the part I was pencilling, protruded it or turned it, so as to leave me no excuse for not delineating it in the full proportion of its beauty. Thus, seeing me look at her head, she immediately bent it down, stared portentously when I sketched her eyes; puffed out her cheeks when their turn arrived; and, finally, perceiving that I was touching in the mouth, opened it to the full extent of her jaws, and thrust out the whole length of her tongue!" From these friendly natives they received assistance in carrying the boat over a very bad portage—a task to which the men were quite unequal; so that to them Captain Back was indebted for aid, without which he would not have reached the sea at all.

Leaving these interesting denizens of the north, the party pursued their way, and, on the 29th July, were gladdened with a sight of the first headland in the Polar Sea, which was named Victoria Headland. This, then, was the mouth of the Thlew-ee-choh, which, after a violent and tortuous course of five hundred and thirty geographical miles, running through an iron-ribbed country, without a single tree on the whole line of its banks, expanding into fine large lakes with clear horizons, most embarrassing to the navigator, and broken into falls, cascades, and rapids, to the number of no less than eighty-three in the whole, pours its waters into the Polar Sea in latitude $67^{\circ} 11' 00''$ N. and longitude $94^{\circ} 30' 0''$ W.

The mouth of the Thlew-ee-choh opened into a broad firth, the western shore of which was so beset by ice, that they resolved on coasting to the eastward, which was more

open, till some favourable opportunity offered for crossing over. So stormy was the weather, however, that they succeeded in this at length with great difficulty, after having been detained several days on an island which they mistook for the main. This they called Montreal Island. By slow degrees they proceeded along the ice-girt shore, sometimes advancing a few miles, when a favouring breeze opened a lane in the ice, but more frequently detained in their dreary encampments, in which they suffered much from cold and rain. In reading the graphic account of the journey by Captain Back, one cannot fail to be struck by the constant repetition of such sentences as the following : "The morning set in with rain, for which, custom had now taught us to look as a thing of course; but a faint hope was excited by the view of a narrow lane of water, which had opened, how or from what cause we knew not, outside, between the grounded ice and the main body; and preparations were already making for a start at high water, when the wind suddenly chopped round from S.E. to N.W., and fixed us once more to the spot;" and, again: "A wet fog ushered in the morning of the 14th August, and left every object dark and indefinable at eighty or ninety paces distant. The breeze increased, and was fast packing the seaward body of ice, which now came with considerable velocity towards the shore, and threatened to lengthen our tedious and most annoying detention." To render their position even more deplorable, scarcely any fuel was to be found, and they experienced the greatest difficulty in procuring sufficient to cook their food, often being obliged to breakfast, dine, and sup on a morsel of dry pemmican and a cup of cold water. One day three deer came within shot, and were killed. No savoury steaks, however, tickled their olfactory nerves with pleasant fumes, or gratified their palates with an unaccustomed meal;—they could not

be cooked for want of dry fuel!" The low flat country, too, was the picture of desolation. "It was one irregular plain of sand and stones; and had it not been for a rill of water, the meandering of which relieved the monotony of the sterile scene, one might have fancied one's self in one of the parched plains of the East, rather than on the shores of the Arctic Sea."

Nevertheless, with unflinching ardour did Captain Back and his gallant crew push forward, in the hope of reaching a more open sea, and connecting their discoveries with those of Captain Franklin at Point Turnagain. Indeed, a spirit of endurance and cheerfulness distinguished the whole party, which nothing seemed capable of damping. On the 7th of August they reached the extreme point of land, which terminates the wide mouth of the river, and whence the coast trends to the westward. This was named Point Ogle, and another cape, seen far to the west, was named Point Richardson. Several portions of the coast of Boothia Felix were also seen in the distance to the northward. Here they were completely baffled in every attempt made to advance. The ice became more firmly wedged every day; one of the men fell sick; the season was far advanced, and any further attempts to proceed would have been foolhardy; so, under these untoward circumstances, Captain Back resolved to retrace his steps. Before doing so, however, the British flag was unfurled, and the land taken possession of, with three enthusiastic cheers, in the name of His Most Gracious Majesty William IV. The latitude of the place was $68^{\circ} 13' 57''$ N., longitude $94^{\circ} 58' 1''$ W., and variation, as well as the sluggishness of the instruments would allow it to be determined, $1^{\circ} 46'$ W.

Our limits do not permit us to follow the adventurous *voyageurs* as they retrace their route up the foaming cataracts of the Thlew-ee-choh. In the middle of August they

left the cold precincts of the Arctic Sea, and on the 17th September met Mr. M'Leod, according to appointment, at Sand-Hill Bay. He had long been expecting them, and had spent many an anxious hour in watching the distant objects in the direction of their route. With this gentleman they returned to Fort Reliance, "after an absence of nearly four months; tired, indeed, but well in health, and truly grateful for the manifold mercies we had experienced in the course of our long and perilous journey."

Preparations were soon set on foot to spend another winter in the wilderness. Once more the woods resounded with the woodman's axe, and the little rooms glowed with the blazing fires of wood. Again the nets were set and the guns loaded, and the white man and the red ranged the woods in company; while Captain Back and Mr. King found ample and interesting occupation in mapping their discoveries and writing their journals.

On the 28th of May 1835, Captain Back bade adieu to the polar regions, and returned to England, where he arrived on the 8th September, after an absence of two years and seven months. The remainder of the party returned by the Hudson's Bay Company's ship in October.

CHAPTER VI.

Recent Discoveries.

Dease and Simpson's Overland Journey to the Polar Sea, 1837-38-39.

THE joyous whoop and plaintive song of Captain Back's retreating party had hardly ceased to reverberate among the hills and valleys of the barren grounds—the echoes had scarce rolled their last faint murmur across the clear waters of the far north, and the startled deer had scarcely

ventured to indulge in a feeling of security, or ceased to gaze around in bewildered astonishment at the unexpected intrusion on their sterile domain, when the echoes were re-awakened, and the antlered monarchs of the waste re-disturbed, by another adventurous party of white men, whose restless curiosity and insatiable thirst for knowledge led them once more to attempt the completion of the survey of the northern coasts of America. On this occasion the expedition was conducted by two gentlemen in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company—Messrs. Dease and Simpson, men eminently qualified for the arduous task given to them to accomplish—the one from his long acquaintance with the nature and resources of the country to be explored, and his thorough experience in arctic travelling; the other from his scientific attainments, super-added to an experience of nor'-west life of some years' standing, his youth, and energetic resolution in encountering and overcoming difficulties.

The instructions for the guidance of these gentlemen were conveyed to them in a letter from Sir George Simpson, the governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, dated Norway House, 2d July 1836, the substance of which was as follows:

The expedition, which was to consist of twelve men, was to be conducted to Fort Chepewyan or Great Slave Lake, as might be considered expedient, where they were to pass the winter of 1836-7. On the opening of the navigation in June, they were to proceed by boat down the Mackenzie River to Fort Norman, and there leave four men, with directions to proceed to Great Bear Lake, and, on the most convenient position, erect buildings, establish fisheries, and collect provisions for the maintenance of the party during the winter of 1837-8. In the meantime, Messrs. Dease and Simpson were to continue their journey down the Mackenzie to the sea, along the shores of which they were to

explore, as far as to the most easterly point reached by Captain Beechey's barge in 1826. Returning to their winter quarters on Great Bear Lake, they were to make preparations for another voyage of discovery in the summer of 1838. The object of that voyage was to trace the coast, from Franklin's Point Turnagain, eastward to the mouth of the Thlew-ee-choh, or as much farther as the nature of the ground, their resources, and the advanced state of the season, would admit.

The necessary outfit of provisions, clothing, astronomical instruments, &c., being completed, Mr. Dease and his *voyageurs* took their departure for the far north, in the Athabasca brigade, 'on the 21st July—reaching Fort Chepewyan, where they were to winter, on the 28th of September; while Mr. Simpson proceeded to the colony of Red River, there to spend as much time as he had to spare in brushing up his scientific knowledge, (which, amid the care and bustle of a trader's life, had got somewhat rusty,) and in making preparations for his journey.

As the long summer journey performed by Mr. Dease to Fort Chepewyan has been, at least in its principal features and characteristics, described in the similar journey accomplished by Captain Back, we shall leave him for the present, and follow the fortunes of Mr. Simpson—accompanying him to the Red River settlement, and thence, in a winter journey, to Fort Chepewyan.

It were foreign to our purpose to enter into a minute account of Red River settlement, yet we think that a cursory glance in passing at this oasis in the desert, may not be uninteresting to the reader.

Red River settlement is situated on the banks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, both of which unite their streams at a point about the centre of the colony, and nearly opposite Fort Garry, the principal establishment of

the Hudson's Bay Company. From this point they roll their united waters into Lake Winnipeg, watering, in their course, the wooded slopes, covered with luxuriant vegetation, amid which the wooden cottages of the settlers are picturesquely embedded. The colony is well supplied with schools and churches, is salubrious and productive, and were it not for the fact that there is no market beyond that which is furnished by the Hudson's Bay Company, it would be a flourishing settlement. As it is, the company, of course, can purchase but a comparatively small quantity of the produce; so that the remainder, if not consumed at home, must either be lost, or conveyed, at great risk and expense, over the prairies some hundreds of miles, to the American town of St. Peter's, through the country of the Sioux and other warlike tribes of Indians.

Three races of men compose the population of this sequestered spot: the descendants of Scotch Highlanders, who originally emigrated under the auspices of the Earl of Selkirk; Indians of the Cree and Salteaux tribes, who have been induced to give up the chase, and settle under the pastoral wing of a clergyman of the Church of England; and Canadian half-breeds, who are the wildest, gayest, and most reckless set of dare-devils that ever scattered death and destruction among the terrified buffalo of the prairies, or with hilarious revelry startled the outraged echoes of the wilderness. These half-breeds spend their time in hunting the buffalo, at which they are very expert, or in conveying the company's goods from post to post in boats, up rapids, over cataracts, lakes, and portages that would seem to defy the utmost powers of man. Nothing daunts them, nothing quiets them (but sleep), nothing tires, and nothing tames them!

Great quantities of that delicious compound of dried buffalo meat, fat and hairs, called pemmican, is used by the

servants of the company; and as this calls for a pretty extensive supply of beef, these wild fellows find their interest and inclination felicitously conjoined in the chase of the buffalo. Owing to the regularity of this hunt, the buffaloes, labouring, doubtless, under that trepidation which self-love is apt to engender in the presence of dangerous society, have retired to some distance from the colony, so that the hunters have to make a journey of upwards of three days, and sometimes longer, ere they meet with their game. And a wild, interesting sight it is, to behold these demi-savages assembling on the banks of the Assiniboine in large bands, with waggons, carts, guns, and horses, preparatory to setting out for one of their periodical hunts. Being fond of gaudy show, and restrained by no Parisian code of fashion, the half-breeds dress in light blue cloth capotes, fastened round the waist with bright scarlet or parti-coloured worsted sashes. Very broad and conspicuous belts of the same colour, ornamented sometimes with white beads, cross their breasts and backs, to which they append powder-horns and shot-pouches. Leggings of variously coloured cloths, all more or less ornamented by the women, with beads or silk thread according to taste, clothe their legs. Moccasins, garnished with porcupine quills, dyed red, blue, and yellow, defend their feet, while their heads are decked with hats, caps, bonnets, and nightcaps, or nature's own covering, all of which are covered profusely with tinsel hat-cords, gold and silver tinsel tassels, ribbons of every hue in the rainbow, and a good many more that the rainbow never displayed.

Imagine some fifty or sixty of these fellows dashing over the prairies with their black hair streaming; dark eyes flashing; swart faces glittering; loud voices shouting; guns glancing in the sun, and dust flying in clouds from the hoofs of their buffalo runners, as they prance, rear,

gallop, and curvette in a species of frenzy—imagine it, we say, and if you think that you have *realized* it, we assure you that you are mistaken! Let us join them in a hunt.

Far away over the undulating prairies the line of march extends, carts, waggons, horsemen, and pedestrians, looking from a distance like the great sea-serpent, coiling its lazy length over the waves of a petrified ocean. The carts are taken for the purpose of conveying the pemmican home, and the women and children are taken for the purpose of compounding it. Arrived at a little clump of trees, near which a herd of buffalo have been observed, the women begin to unharness their cattle and pitch their camp; while the men, having mounted their buffalo runners, trot off in a band, with the design of surrounding their prey; now descending and now rising on the swells of the prairie. The buffalo runners are usually good, fleet nags, well trained to the work; so that, when they see the buffalo, it is unnecessary to use whip, spur, or rein, as they set off at full speed of their own accord, apparently as much interested in the chase as their riders; a propensity of no small advantage to the hunters, who have both hands fully occupied in loading and firing their guns. As they cautiously ascend the brow of a swell, a sudden halt among the foremost apprizes those in the rear that game is at hand; and as they press eagerly forward, they behold an immense herd of buffalo browsing quietly down in a hollow. A few hurried exclamations take place. Priming is examined, and away they go, down the slope like a legion of demons. Soon the unsuspecting herds toss their ponderous heads in the air; and, beholding this host of rushing monsters, away they go with a heavy lumbering gait, which, however, soon increases to a sharp run, as a shot or two from the more impatient spirits helps to quicken their perceptions. Soon the pursuers gain on the animals, every fibre of whose bulky

frames quiver as they strain to distance them; but in vain. A few minutes more, and the hunters are up with them. Shots begin to fly in quick succession, and here and there a black spot on the prairie tells that the work of destruction has begun. That big fellow with the red nightcap is an old hand at the work. Already he has dropt two fat cows, on each of which as he passed her he threw a mitten to mark it his. He now nears another. The terrified animal, with starting eye-balls, spurns the earth behind it at a rate that makes the hunter's nag stretch to its utmost, and gain but slowly even then. He is within ten yards; and, pointing the gun without placing it to his shoulder, he lets fly. The buffalo staggers, falls; one last struggle of its vast frame, and it falls dead—shot clean through the heart—while the hunter, reloading his gun, dashes past at full speed, pitching his red nightcap at the dead animal as he bounds away. All around, the same scene, with slight modifications, is being enacted. Horsemen and buffalo, mingled together, dash wildly over the ground, while shouts and yells, the bellowing of animals, incessant rattling of shots, and thunder of hoofs, combined with clouds of dust and smoke, make up a confusion of sights and sounds absolutely bewildering; while the great number of black spots that cover the whole land give promise of rich, marrow-bone suppers, and lots of greasy occupation to the squaws, who follow in the rear for some days to come. The pemmican compounded from the meat thus obtained is very well adapted for travelling provision, being compact and nutritious, and will keep good for years. It has proved invaluable to all arctic explorers in their long, perilous journeys.

At this settlement, then, Mr. Simpson remained till the commencement of winter; and then bethinking himself that it was time to set out for Fort Chepewyan, that post

being distant about 1277 miles, all of which had to be traversed on foot, he prepared for the journey.

In the afternoon of the 1st December 1836, he left Red River on horseback, the ground being still free from snow and not well adapted for the use of sleighs, three of which and a cariole were therefore left to follow, drawn light by the dogs, until their arrival at a frozen lake, or a fall of snow, should render them available. Several young friends from the colony conveyed him to his first encampment, and on their way fell in with a wolf, after which they had a spirited hunt. It was unsuccessful, however, as might have been expected, on hard frozen ground.

Wolf-hunting is a favourite pastime with some of the settlers, and is practised in spring when the first thaws begin. These soften the surface of the snow, so that the wolves can no longer bound rapidly over it, as they did in winter, but sink deep at every step, while the long legs of the pursuing horse enables him to plunge rapidly through it, and so gain upon the wolf, which may be easily shot with gun or pistol.

At the first encampment Mr. Simpson and his friends spent a few hours together, and then the latter, bidding him adieu, returned to Fort Garry, while he and his party laid their heads on their saddles and sank into repose under the starry canopy of the winter sky.

The waning moon shone brilliantly when they awoke; and taking an early breakfast, they all started on foot. The morning was cold, but exhilarating: the sun, rising in cloudless splendour, threw his horizontal rays across the wide plain, and, illuminating the hoar-frost upon the long dry grass, gave to the expanse around them the appearance of a silver-spangled sea. At noon they halted for a short time at a cluster of trees, in whose shade they obtained sufficient snow for their horses and dogs, in lieu of water, a

luxury not to be found in these arid plains. The country over which they passed was studded with a few copses of poplar and dwarf oak; but a great part of it having been swept by the running fires, so frequent and terrible in the prairies, presented a blackened and dismal aspect. These fires are often occasioned by the carelessness of Indians, who sometimes leave the lighted embers of their camp-fires burning, and the first breeze of wind that springs up sets the surrounding grass in a blaze. Lightning occasionally ignites the dry grass in summer, and sometimes the warring tribes that infest the prairies set them on fire for the purpose of driving away the buffalo from the hunting grounds of their enemies. In any case, whether kindled by the flashing flames of heaven, or set on fire by the hands of savage men, the results are most terrific; especially in those places where the grass is long and luxuriant, affording food of the most inflammable nature to the fire, and which burns with a fierce rapidity that bids defiance to the utmost efforts that human power can make for its extinction, as it rolls its smoke-capped volumes along the undulating ground, with a speed that soon overtakes the fleetest courser in the land. Well does the savage know this, and when the distant roar of the devouring element is borne faintly to his ear upon the breeze, the sudden start of alarm, the distended nostril, the glaring eye-ball, and the deeply attentive ear, tell eloquently of the terrible character of the dreaded enemy that approaches; while the bound on to his horse, and the burst away across the prairie, show that life and death are pending on the race. An ingenious method is often resorted to by the natives on occasions of this kind, if they happen to have the materials for producing fire along with them. Hastily tearing up the grass around them, they clear a space as well as they can, and, getting into the middle of it, set fire to the grass

to leeward. In a few minutes a large space of ground is burnt bare, on which they take their stand in safety, well assured that when the flames reach the spot they will naturally die out for want of fuel. It may be imagined, however, that it is no easy matter to clear a space sufficiently large where the grass is long and matted; and sometimes, ere this can be accomplished, the fire rushes in upon and consumes them. The particular part of the prairie, however, over which Mr. Simpson and his party now walked, had been covered with grass of a shorter growth, which, although it burns fiercely enough, and leaves a melancholy blackened tract behind, is not dangerous to the traveller; a good rush and a light spring being generally sufficient to carry him over the fiery billow.

On the 3d December they reached Manitobah Lake, which had but recently assumed its icy covering. It presented so formidable an appearance of rough, broken, and jagged peaks, as to induce some of the party to suggest the propriety of trying another route. This, however, Mr. Simpson would not do; so, dismissing the wheeled vehicles and horses, they packed their baggage upon the dog-sledges, and started after them on foot. The dog-sledge is a thin, light slab of wood, turned up at one end, and is usually drawn by four dogs, whose feet are covered with little cloth shoes for the purpose of protecting them from the snow, which, when slightly frozen on the surface, soon cuts and maims the poor animals if not thus defended. A cariole had been provided for Mr. Simpson, who, however, preferring the more manly conveyance of a pair of excellent legs, used it to carry his books and instruments. "Then began," says he, "the flourishing of whips, the shouts of drivers, and the howling of refractory dogs—all blending together in one horrible outcry. For some distance we found the ice almost impracticable, but on doubling a point

the broken rugged masses gave place to a smooth and glassy level. To walk on such a surface with the moc-casins, or soft leather shoes of the country, was next to impossible; we were, however, provided with iron cram-pets, which we strapped on much in the same manner as the Kamtschatdales wear their "posluki," or ice shoes. Thus secured from many an awkward fall, we advanced rapidly, but found it no easy matter to keep pace with our dogs, who, rejoicing in the ease with which they now dragged their burdens, scampered along at a great rate. The young ice, as yet but a few inches thick, crashed and rumbled like thunder under our tread. About noon a violent storm of snow-drift suddenly arose, and compelled us to seek shelter among the spreading oaks and elms that ornament the banks of this extensive lake."*

On the 5th they travelled thirty-four miles across a series of gently rounded bays fringed with rushes. The wind blew piercingly cold, so that when they stopped to cut a hole in the ice for water, after being a good deal overheated, their clothes, gloves, and caps immediately became solid, and they were glad to run again in order to reproduce caloric.

It is difficult for those who have not experienced it to comprehend the intensity of the cold in these regions in the depth of winter, especially if it be accompanied (and driven vigorously into the eyes, up the nose, and down the throat) by a stiff nor'-west breeze! Let it be ever so cold—even forty degrees *below* zero—and it is bearable so long as there is no wind; but should the wind rise in such weather, it is next to impossible to face it. No language can convey a correct idea of its bitter intensity. Cold—biting cold—doesn't come near it: frost—bitter, withering frost—is

* Simpson's Discoveries, p. 30.

rather a warm, balmy idea than otherwise, compared with it. It is, in fact, beyond all description, and the only thing that it is *not* beyond is, being thoroughly understood and appreciated when *felt*! During their long and tedious journey the travellers experienced a good deal of this cold weather. In speaking of it one night, on which the frost seems to have been more peculiarly vicious than usual, Mr. Simpson says: "The night was intensely cold, and I literally *burned* my fingers with the sextant while taking the usual observations." This *burning* of the fingers is no figure of speech, at least as far as *effect* goes. The consequence of touching cold metal at such a temperature is somewhat similar to that which follows on coming into contact with metal at a red heat. As an instance of this, we may mention the case of a traveller in these regions, who, having been out with his gun, got so benumbed in his right thumb as to be incapable of opening the catch of his powder-flask. Several grouse were sitting temptingly before him within shot; but, do what he would, the only result of his frequent attempts to open the flask was to double up his awkward and utterly useless thumb. In this dilemma he seized the flask with his teeth and effected his object, at the expense, however, of a large piece of the skin of his tongue, which adhered to the cold metal!

There is a proverb which asserts that extremes meet, and, certainly, if *frost* and *fire* may be called extremes, they did meet, and verified the proverb, in the experience of Mr. Simpson's party, on the night of the 13th December. The men, after travelling all day over a country which became at every step more difficult to traverse, owing to the fast falling snow, laid their shivering frames beneath the shelter of a fine wood of elms, when the dry grass, on which they lay, caught fire, and before they were aroused, their blankets were in a blaze. Fortunately they were not burned; so,

with characteristic indifference to all things sublunary, they bundled up their scorched blankets on the following morning, and resumed their march.

During the journey they saw numbers of grouse of various kinds, as also a great many white hares, which afforded them some sport as they walked over hill and dale, and proved an agreeable addition to their evening meals, as they encamped, night after night, under the trees, and made their beds upon the snow. Beds, in this world, are of various, and not unfrequently of curious kinds; and, in the Hudson's Bay territories, more, perhaps, than in any other part of this world, beds are *uncommonly* various, and *particularly* curious. There is first the bed of moss; which, adapting itself to the various outlines of the human figure, approximates more nearly than any other to the feather bed, and many a good sleep have weary *voyageurs* had upon such a couch. Then there is the bed of pine branches, which is a very excellent one, full of spring, and if carefully spread, so as to prevent the ends of the branches from boring into the ribs, is quite luxurious. Sometimes, however, pine branches are not to be had, and moss *is not*; in which case a flat rock forms a pretty good, though undoubtedly a *hard* bed. If, however, as is sometimes the case, the only spot of level ground on which the luckless traveller can prostrate his exhausted limbs, be a bank of sand, or a place covered with rounded stones, varying in size from a marble to a cannon shot, the case is very deplorable. The latter may be somewhat improved by carefully removing the largest stones, but in any case it will be found to be unmitigated misery; and, whether the sand or the stones be preferred, the inevitable result will be, that the traveller will sincerely wish he had preferred the other. There is also a species of hydraulic bed very much used in these parts. This, however, is not so much a bed of choice,

as a bed of necessity, being oftentimes unavoidable in consequence of frequent showers of rain rendering a dry spot of ground unattainable. Besides these, there are infinite varieties of what may with propriety be called *composite* beds, partaking, in part, of all the different kinds; but among the various descriptions, the snow beds on which the arctic *voyageurs* nightly reposed were certainly not the worst.

During the greater part of the journey, troops of prairie wolves followed them, for the purpose of devouring anything that happened to be left in the encampments; and they grew so bold at last, as to menace the dogs, when exhaustion induced the latter to lag behind the party. "Our dogs," says Simpson, "began to knock up one by one, and three were untackled all day. These lagged behind, unobserved, in the afternoon; and I had to send a man back to look for them. He met them just as our pertinacious followers, the wolves, were coming up; and saved the poor animals, who were in no condition to resist such powerful adversaries. In the plain districts, many horses fall a prey to their voracity." Of the different varieties of wolves that infest the plains and forests of North America, the large gray one is the most voracious and daring. "On the barren grounds through which the Coppermine River flows, I had more than once an opportunity of seeing a single wolf in close pursuit of a rein-deer; and I witnessed a chase on Point Lake when covered with ice, which terminated in a fine buck rein-deer being overtaken by a large white wolf, and disabled by a bite in the flank. An Indian, who was concealed on the borders of the lake, ran in and cut the deer's throat with his knife, the wolf at once relinquishing his prey, and sneaking off. In the chase the poor deer urged its flight by great bounds, which for a time exceeded the speed of the wolf; but it stopped so frequently to gaze on

its relentless enemy, that the latter, toiling on at a long gallop, with its tongue lolling out of its mouth, gradually came up. After each hasty look, the poor deer redoubled its efforts to escape; but, either exhausted by fatigue or enervated by fear, it became, just before it was overtaken, scarcely able to keep its feet."*

During their march they seldom met with Indians, and the whole country appeared a vast solitude. On the 28th, however, they met with two hunters who were visiting their traps. On that morning a strong, cold, north wind blew, driving in their faces a storm of snow which almost blinded them. About breakfast-time they fell in with a Chepewyan hunter, and invited him to share their breakfast. A cup of tea and a handful of biscuit were given to him after he had messed with the men, the former of which he swallowed, and put the latter into his pouch to carry to his little ones at home. At noon they met another belonging to the same camp, who had just killed a badger, which he was taking home. These red children of the woods were well clad, and living, in the midst of plenty—supplied by the hand of Him who giveth liberally, and upbraideth not, alike to the dweller in the city, and the inhabitant of the wilderness.

New Year's day arrived! What a flood of associations rush in upon us when we think of New Year's day! The day that seems from time immemorial to have been dedicated to mirth and joy, and good feeling and hearty fellowship among men! The day, of all others, famous for huge fires, and cold frosty weather, and happy faces hurrying to and fro, not very well knowing with what purpose in view, but with a confused sort of intention of shaking everybody by the hand, and wishing them a "happy New Year." The

* *Fauna Boreali Americana*, vol. i. p. 63.

sun of New Year's day arose too, according to its ancient custom; and, as it rolled up the eastern sky, how many happy homes and merry faces did it shine upon in old England! what a stir did it create throughout the length and breadth of that thickly-peopled land! It rose red and bright on the wilderness, and sending its horizontal rays through the frosty air, tipping the white mounds of snow; and penetrating the dark branches of the shrubs and trees, it shone upon the figures of our arctic wanderers, as they rose from their cold couches, and prepared to resume their long, long journey. There was a smile upon their faces too on that morning, as if its joyous influence penetrated even there. And so it did, for that night they hoped to reach Fort Carlton, and there—with the comfort of a dozen new faces and fresh voices, with whom to interchange the good wishes of the season—spend the opening days of the New Year. On the day following their arrival at Carlton, a ball was given at the fort, whereat all the inmates, young and old, gave free vent to their passion for dancing, if the motions of the performers may be so designated. Both the women and men in these climes, being very much accustomed to snow shoes, and very much unaccustomed to dancing-pumps, draw much more largely on the services of the heels than the toes, and the effect of this, combined with a peculiar inaptitude to graceful action generally, is to produce a motion something between that of an elephant's head and a boat in a heavy sea, which *may* be pleasant, but undoubtedly doesn't seem so.

Allowing themselves a rest of three days here, they started again on the 4th, reinforced with fresh men and dogs. The succeeding part of their journey was very much a repetition of the first. Lake and river, hill and valley, plain and woodland, were traversed—with difficulty sometimes, it is true, but always with cheerfulness and per-

severance—Mr. Simpson undertaking the trying task of opening the track, that is, leading the way; and, in so doing, beating down the deep snow into a sort of path, which very much relieves those who follow behind. During the whole month they travelled thus; and on the 1st of February, the very day on which it had been calculated before they set out they expected to conclude their journey, they arrived at Fort Chepewyan; having performed, in two months, a journey of 1277 miles, every inch of which, with the exception of the first day, had been traversed on foot by the whole party. On the route they touched at three of the company's establishments: Forts Pelly, Carlton, and Isle à la Crosse. At Fort Chepewyan, which is situated on Lake Athabasca, they were cordially welcomed by Mr. Smith, the gentleman in charge of the post, and Mr. Simpson's colleague in the expedition, Mr. Dease.

Here they remained until the end of May. Among other preparations that were made for the voyage, two substantial boats were built, of twenty-four feet keel and six feet beam—each carrying two lug-sails. They were built for shallow navigation, and were each provided with a small, oiled canvass canoe, and portable wooden frame; and being exactly similar in size and appearance, they were respectively named Castor and Pollux; while a capacious bateau, intended for Great Bear Lake, gloried in the name of Goliath.

On the 1st of June 1837 the expedition left Fort Chepewyan, under a salute, which they returned, in genuine British style, with three hearty cheers; and, with beating hearts and high hopes, they congratulated each other on having at length fairly commenced their voyage of discovery, anticipating a success in their enterprise which was afterwards fully realized.

Traversing the western extremity of Athabasca Lake, they entered Rocky River, its principal outlet, and encamped.

"We formed," says Simpson, "a small but happy party; and as our white tents glittered in the rays of the sun, now declining to the horizon after his long diurnal course, with the broad river running in front, and around us the green woods, the view was pleasing if not picturesque." On the following morning they were afloat by three o'clock; and passing the confluence of Peace River, entered Great Slave River, where they were much struck with the advanced state of vegetation, as compared with the country they had just left, which was retarded in consequence of the chilling influence of the lake. Bright green poplar and willows, blending with the sombre verdure of the pine, clothed the banks of the stream. Not far from this place they overtook their hunters, who had been sent on two days ahead, squatted, along with a party of Chepewyans, like so many beaver, on the banks of the Salt River. As a supply of salt could be obtained at a plain in the vicinity of this river, Mr. Simpson got three of the largest Indian canoes and ascended it. The distance to the opening of the plain exceeds twenty miles, following the tortuous course of the stream, which is shallow, and, as they advanced, became salt as brine. They had not the good fortune to fall in with buffaloes, though their tracks, and those of the moose and bears, were numerous; but they consoled themselves by making a terrific assault on the swans, geese, and ducks, which were attracted thither in great numbers by the briny waters. They did not search long for salt. A single mound on the plain furnished them with thirty bags of the finest quality, and seemed undiminished by the removal of a quantity sufficient for their own wants, and for the supply of the Athabasca and Mackenzie River districts! A mountain, which terminates the plain at the distance of four or five miles, glistened as if incrustated with the same pure white substance, and yet, although the whole land seemed to be

saturated with salt, delicious springs of fresh water gushed from the mountain sides.

Having finished their work, they bivouacked and feasted under as lovely an evening sky as fancy could paint. A sudden gust of wind, which bent the tall poplars like wands, cleared off the mosquitoes, and permitted them to enjoy a few hours of refreshing rest in the soft twilight; for there was no longer any night in these regions.

On the morning of the 10th they reached Great Slave Lake, and every eye was eagerly bent upon the horizon of that great inland sea, but to their chagrin they saw an unbroken line of ice barring their further progress. On advancing to its edge, it was found to be firm and solid, and likely to remain so for some time. There was nothing for it, however, but patience; so, calling as much of this virtue as they possessed to their assistance, they made their way to Fort Resolution that evening, by the help of canoes, and dragging the boat light over the shallows. From the 10th to the 21st of June they were kept prisoners at this establishment, and amused themselves as they best could with dances and games. Wherever we go in this world we shall find something or other which will tend to elevate our eyebrows! and we doubt not that it will surprise our readers a little to learn, that the men of the expedition chose the hour of *midnight* for their out-door sports and games; this being the coolest and most agreeable part of the day! The dances were conducted in the most approved Indian style; venison and fish being the food, and tea the only beverage—the remnants of the supper being carried off by the ladies, at least by such of them as had an atom of muscular energy left in their dusky frames. Mr. Dease took the opportunity of vaccinating all the young people at the place; half-breeds and Indians, all underwent the operation, and felt the benefit of it in after years, when the smallpox

swept off the North American Indians by hundreds. The same benefit had been previously conferred upon the whole concourse of natives at Fort Chepewyan.

The ice at length opened sufficiently on the 21st to enable them to advance; and accordingly they set off once more, having embarked a cargo of twenty-one dogs in the *Goliah*. This was deemed a sufficient number of dogs for seven sledges. At midnight on the 24th they reached the head of the great Mackenzie River, and encamped upon its banks.

The travelling here became pretty easy. The noble stream, on whose broad and rapid bosom they now floated, was so deep as to permit of their *drifting* down the current at night, instead of going on shore to encamp as heretofore, so that they made much more rapid progress; travelling, on one occasion, two hundred and fifty miles in forty-eight hours. Numerous camps of Dog-rib Indians were passed on the route, all of whom were exceedingly friendly, and testified the utmost delight at beholding white men. On the 1st of July they arrived at Fort Norman. Here the *Goliah* was despatched to the north-eastern extremity of Great Bear Lake, where winter quarters were to be established, in charge of John Ritch, a boat-builder, who took with him John Morquay, Lawrent Cartier, and Francois Framond, besides three Dog-ribs to guide them and complete the crew. The exploring party then made their final arrangements, before leaving Fort Norman, in the way of laying in provisions and a few trifles as presents to the Esquimaux on the coast. Three pounds of pemmican was the allowance to each man per day, and it was afterwards found that, although the provisions were used without any restriction, the average daily consumption had been exactly two pounds per man. The crews of the two boats consisted of twelve men, three of whom had accompanied Captain Back in 1834, and one had been with Franklin in 1826.

At sunset they left the fort, and descended the rapid stream, travelling, as usual, all night. On either hand rose the rocky mountains and the eastern hills, from whose snowy peaks the dazzling sunshine was brilliantly reflected. A few Hare Indians were seen fishing in the eddies along a part of the shore called the Ramparts. As soon as they observed the boats, they embarked in their small canoes, and followed them down the stream till they arrived at Fort Good Hope, where they were welcomed by a son-in-law of Mr. Dease. This establishment was entirely destroyed in June 1836, at the disruption of the ice, "which rushed down with such overwhelming force as to sweep almost completely over the island, though several miles in extent, cutting down the timber like grass before the scythe, and burying the place under two fathoms' water. The terrified residents took to their boat, and escaped, almost miraculously, into a small lake in the centre of the island. There the ruins of the overthrown wood averted the fury of the inundation, and in this place of refuge they remained, with ice tossed up in huge fragments, forming a gigantic wall around them, till the danger was past."* It is difficult to conceive of a position more terrible than that in which these men were placed; especially when we consider that the river in which the island stood was the deep, broad Mackenzie, whose rapid stream was at that time swelled into a roaring torrent by the melting snows of spring, which poured into it from every creek and crevice in its banks, while the masses of ice that rolled impetuously down the swollen current with irresistible force were nearly six feet thick!

There are few things in nature more awfully grand than the disruption of the ice near the mouths of the great

* Simpson's Journal, p. 99.

North American rivers that flow into the arctic seas. The rapidity with which the spring sets in converts the deep snows of winter so quickly into water, that the icy covering of the rivers, notwithstanding its great strength and thickness, is unable to withstand the tremendous pressure, and bursts at last with a crash that equals the thunder of the artillery of heaven and earth combined ; and, carrying all before it, rushes towards the sea, tearing up the banks, sweeping completely over the smaller islands, grinding itself to atoms, and throwing up piles which seem as if they would rival the hills in height ; till, becoming top-heavy, and being pressed upon by the accumulating masses, they fall, with a fearful crash, into the boiling water. Sometimes the mouths of the rivers become choked with the ice, which then remains at rest, in all its broken, jagged, and fantastic shapes, even for two or three days, till the ever-increasing flood again asserts its superiority ; and, once more bursting the frozen barriers, sweeps it with irresistible violence into the ocean.

After taking some observations, which gave the latitude $66^{\circ} 16' N.$, they took their final departure for the sea, and soon crossed the arctic circle. They were now approaching the Esquimaux country, and as these people have frequently proved to be a treacherous race, guns and ammunition were given to the men. On passing the mouth of Peel's River, the sun was seen at midnight, elevated more than his own diameter above the horizon.

On Sunday the 9th, upon turning a sharp point, they came suddenly upon an Esquimaux oomiak, containing four women and a couple of dogs. No sooner did the ladies behold the unwonted apparition of two boats full of white men, than they threw off their coverings, leaped ashore, and fled through the willows with the utmost precipitation. Being under sail, and running before a good breeze, the

boats passed on. The same evening they met with an old fellow in his canoe, who told them that it was he who interfered to stop the plunder of Franklin's party by his countrymen at Pillage Point. He was presented with an axe, a knife, and several other articles, besides a share of their repast; but, notwithstanding the generosity of his entertainers, he was detected concealing a knife and fork in his breast, having previously secreted a tin dish among the willows. The old rascal only laughed on being found out, considering it, apparently, to be an excellent joke! Immediately after parting with this inhabitant of the ice-bound north, the Arctic Ocean burst upon their view, and drew from them three hearty cheers.

Scarcely had they floated upon the northern sea, when a band of its noisy inhabitants paddled up to the boats in their kayaks, shouting and gesticulating as they came. A few presents were distributed, which, however, instead of satisfying them, only made them more vociferous in their desire to barter.

"One lively youngster," says Simpson, "attracted our notice by his activity in the noisy barter. He shot his arrows and lance repeatedly on the water to show us their excellence, at the same time shouting 'Neittuke' and 'Took-took'—the seal and rein-deer. On receiving a hatchet and some other things for his weapons, he beat upon his breast, laughed, whooped, and capered in the utmost extravagance of animal joy. He was afterwards employed by several of his less adroit friends to exchange their goods. A fine-looking young man, whose face was not disfigured by the labrets, was remarkable for his modesty, but did not fare the worse on that account. There was only one old man of the party. They appeared to us a stout, well-looking people, with complexions considerably fairer than the Indian tribes. Having finished

our transactions with them, and satisfied our curiosity, we told the strangers to return to their village; upon which they gave us to understand that they wished to accompany us to our encampment, and to spend the evening in our society. To this, however, we had a decided objection. Already had they made several unsuccessful attempts to pilfer out of the boats; fresh numbers would soon have joined them, stimulated by the remembrance of their former success; and we had Escape Reef, and a shallow, bad navigation, before us. We therefore peremptorily ordered them back, but to no purpose. Two or three guns were shown, which alarmed them a little. They held up their hands deprecatingly, calling out 'Caw-caw!'—but persisted in following at a short distance, even after one or two blank shots, till I fired with ball over them; upon which they instantly ducked their heads, veered round, and after paddling out of reach, halted to hold a consultation—more canoes now appearing in the distance. Thus delivered, we continued our course under sail, with a light, close wind, passing the reefs and shoals about four miles from the land, the weather dark and threatening. At ten o'clock a violent squall took us, and it was with the utmost exertion that we were able to gain the shore at midnight."*

This part of the coast proved to be a very interesting portion of their voyage—interesting, at least, in so far as dangers and adventures could make it. They had scarcely escaped the clutches of the Esquimaux and weathered the squall, when they reached the edge of the ice, which seemed to defy their further progress; however, "we twisted and poled our way through it," says Simpson, "the transparent masses exhibiting every variety of fantastic shapes—altars, caverns, turrets, ships, crystal fabrics—which changed as

* Simpson's Journal, pp. 109–111.

we gazed upon them; and often rolling over or breaking down, with a thundering noise, tossed our little boats on the swell caused by their fall. In the small open spaces, and on the floes, numberless seals were sporting; one of which would every now and then follow in our wake, rising breast-high to gratify his curiosity, and then giving place to another." In the afternoon the ice blocked up the passage altogether, and they were under the unpleasant necessity of encamping on the bleak shores; and there, while masticating their pemmican beside the fire, ruminated on the possibility of being detained until the season was far advanced. To add to their annoyance, a band of Esquimaux found them out. They proved, however, to be much less troublesome than were their predecessors, and took their departure quietly in the evening, after they had twisted their greasy countenances into every variety of contortion, indicative of the quintessence of joy upon receiving a few presents. It is truly amusing to read of the delight of these poor creatures on receiving a gift of the most insignificant description. A few beads produce raptures; a knife or an axe, unspeakable felicity!

While detained here, they made long excursions over the green hills, which were clothed with innumerable flowers, whose brilliant tints enriched the scene and furnished specimens for their botanical boxes. Their guns, too, were not silent on these occasions; and oftentimes the echoes awoke to the unwonted sound, as the water-fowl flew past, unsuspecting, doubtless, the vicinity of blood-thirsty man in these cold, icy regions. A row of marks was observed extending across a point, evidently designed to lead the rein-deer to the edge of a steep bank; over which, pursued by one party of hunters, they dash into the sea, where they fall an easy prey to another party stationed in canoes below.

Beset by ice and tossed by storms, the party pursued their

toilsome way along the coast. Sometimes they were detained by wind and weather—sometimes proceeded slowly, and at much hazard, through lanes of water in the ice; often in the cold water all day, occasionally all night, and suffering all the time from severe colds brought on by their being so constantly wet; but always in good spirits and determined to advance in spite of all difficulties. Indeed, it were vain to have attempted a voyage of discovery in such a land, unless the men composing the party were of that stamp who set difficulties at defiance, and *rejoice* in the midst of danger. In reading the interesting narratives of such men as Hearne, Mackenzie, and Franklin, we cannot but be struck by the indomitable energy, the untiring perseverance, which characterized not only the leaders, but the men who acted under them, in the face of difficulties apparently insurmountable.

Dease and Simpson were not less resolute than those who had preceded them in arctic discovery. They pushed energetically through and over all obstructions. On one occasion, while beset by ice, they were tempted by the partial clearing away of the fog, which revealed some lanes of open water, to try once more to push forward; but hardly had they advanced a few miles, when the wind rose, and blowing the ice together, placed them in great jeopardy. "The boats were repeatedly squeezed," says Simpson, "and mine, which was foremost, was only saved from entire destruction by throwing out everything it contained upon the floating masses. By means of portages made from one fragment to another, the oars forming the perilous bridges, and after repeated risks of boats, men, and baggage being separated by the motion of the ice, we at length succeeded, with infinite labour, in collecting our whole equipage upon a small floe, which being partially covered with water, formed a sort of wet dock. There we hauled up our

little vessels, and momentarily liable as we were to be overwhelmed by the overturning of our icy support, trusted to a gracious Providence for the event. We were three miles from land; the fog again settled round us, and the night was very inclement."

On shore the Esquimaux continued to give them annoyance, keeping them constantly on the alert to guard against their unconquerable propensity to appropriate their neighbours' goods. On Sunday, the 23d of July, they reached the Return Reef of Franklin, from which point their discoveries began; and as they encamped on the shore, and looked anxiously out upon the unknown land before them, they offered their humble thanks to the Omnipotent Being whose arm had guarded them so far, and fervently implored a continuance of his gracious protection. Simpson attributes their early arrival at this point to inflexible perseverance in *doubling* the great icy packs, any of which might have detained them a fortnight on the beach, had they waited for their breaking up.

Their progress after this was somewhat more rapid. The land was generally very low, consisting of mud and gravel; but it is a curious fact, that not a rock or boulder-stone was seen during the whole journey, except one near an inlet not far from Point Barrow. A glimpse was obtained of a magnificent range of mountains, about fifty miles from Point Milne, which they named the Pelly Mountains—after the governor of the Hudson's Bay Company. No chronometers had been furnished to the party by the company, but fortunately they obtained an excellent watch from one of the chief factors in the country, which answered their purpose almost equally well. Running along the coast, and naming the several bays and headlands as they passed, they arrived on the 24th at Point Comfort, so called in consequence of the satisfaction with which they

partook of a warm supper round a cheerful fire after having fasted for twenty-five hours; during which they had run nearly half-way between Return Reef and Point Barrow. This was ascertained by an observation which a short glimpse of sunshine enabled them to take, and showed the latitude to be $70^{\circ} 43' N.$, longitude $152^{\circ} 14' W.$, variation $43^{\circ} 8\frac{1}{2}' E.$

The country here, between the Pelly Mountains and the shore, consists of plains clothed with a very short grass and moss, the favourite pasture of rein-deer, of which large herds were frequently seen. The immediate coast-line is formed of frozen mud-banks, from ten to fifteen feet high. Several large rivers were passed, and named; and one of these, called after Nicholas Garry, Esq., is one mile wide at its mouth, the banks of which were thickly covered with drift timber, brought down the stream; and, though the tide was full, the water tasted fresh for several miles.

Notwithstanding that it was the height of summer, the weather was bitterly cold. The spray froze on the oars and rigging, and the earth was impenetrably frozen at the depth of four inches, so that the tent pegs could not be driven home. Yet, even here, a few flowers raised their modest heads; with the frozen earth below, the bleak ocean and the cold icebergs around, and the bitter blasts, laden with the withering frost of these hyperborean climes, sweeping over them, they struggled for existence; their only comfort being an occasional ray of sunshine, which pierced the leaden clouds, and bathed their drooping petals in a cheering glow. Not unlike were they to many tender flowers of the human family, who struggle for a bare existence in this frigid earth of ours, surrounded by the chilling atmosphere of apathy; swept by the bitter winds of adversity, but gladdened sometimes by the Sun of Righteousness,

whose warm beams, piercing through the surrounding gloom, reminds them that the winter is passing and the summer drawing nigh; that the earth shall yet be bathed in light from pole to pole; that the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.

Dense fogs delayed the expedition very much during the whole voyage; and, in the middle of one of these, they reached a cape which appeared to be covered over with white tents. These turned out to be the points of a great many icebergs which towered over the land on the northern side of the point, which was named Cape George Simpson, after the resident-governor of the Hudson's Bay Company. It is situated in latitude $70^{\circ} 59' N.$, longitude $154^{\circ} 21' W.$ The rise of the tide here was ten inches, which, small though it was, enabled them to advance some distance; but on the 31st they found that their progress was so slow, and the ice in such great quantities, that it was resolved to give up the attempt to penetrate farther with the boats, and perform the remainder of the journey to Point Barrow on foot. For this service Mr. Simpson volunteered, while Mr. Dease agreed to remain with some of the men in charge of the boat. As Point Barrow was now distant about two degrees of longitude, ten or twelve days were considered sufficient to accomplish the distance and return. Five of the best men of the party were therefore selected for the journey; and at 8 A.M., on the 1st of August, they left the encampment.

"My little party," says Simpson, "quitted Boat Extreme on foot at 8 A.M. Our provisions consisted of pemmican and flour; besides which each man carried his blanket, spare shoes, gun, and ammunition. A single kettle and a couple of axes sufficed for us all; and a few trinkets were added for the natives. I carried a sextant and artificial horizon; and one man was charged with a

canvass-canoe stretched on its wooden frame, which proved not the least important part of our arrangements. The whole amounted to forty or fifty pounds per man. * * * The day was dark and dismal in the extreme; a cutting north wind bearing on its wings a fog that hid every object at the distance of a hundred yards. We were therefore under the necessity of closely following the coast-line, which much increased the distance and fatigue."

Slowly and with difficulty they pursued their way, winding out and in with every curvature of the coast, and crossing rivers and streams in their canvass-canoe—the water, through which they often waded, at the freezing point—the ground, on which they slept, hard and damp, and the dark sky their curtain. One evening, as they were slowly pushing their way over the muddy shore, the land turned off to the eastward of south, and a boundless inlet lay before them. At the same moment, to their inexpressible joy, their eyes fell upon four Esquimaux tents, round which the natives were moving; but no sooner did they observe the white men approaching them, than they rushed incontinently into their canoes, and shoved out from the shore. A few conciliatory words, however, soon brought them back. They were chiefly women and children, the men being out hunting.

From a sketch made by one of the most intelligent females, Mr. Simpson concluded that Point Barrow lay on the other side of the inlet; so, borrowing from the Esquimaux one of their oomiaks, or women's boats, they embarked in it and rowed out to sea. No sooner had they done so, than the east wind rose and brought back the fog, obliging them to direct their course by compass. The waves ran high, but the light boat surmounted them with wonderful buoyancy. On the opposite shore they encamped, and spent the night under the oomiak, sleeping

on ground which was frozen to within two inches of the surface. The inlet was named after Mr. Dease.

On the morning of the 4th August, about one o'clock, they reached Elson Bay. The sun, which had shone but little upon them during the greater part of their journey, now broke forth in full splendour, and revealed to the delighted gaze of Mr. Simpson and his men, *Point Barrow*, stretching out to the northward. The goal that was to crown the enterprise was nearly won. Step by step the way had been traced between Return Reef and Elson Bay, and a few hours more would complete the survey.

"We had now only to pass Elson Bay," says Simpson, "which is for the most part shallow. It was covered with a tough coat of young ice, through which we broke a passage, and then forced our way amid a heavy pack, nearly half a mile broad, that rested upon the shore. On reaching it, and seeing the ocean spreading far and wide to the south-west, we unfurled our flag, and, with three enthusiastic cheers, took possession of our discoveries in his Majesty's name."

The first object that met their gaze here was an immense Esquimaux cemetery, where great numbers of dead bodies, covered with the seal-skin dresses which had clothed them when alive, lay exposed to the voracity of dogs and wild animals. So fresh were many of them, that the party were alarmed, lest the cholera or some other dire disease was raging among the natives. A village of Esquimaux was also observed not far from this place; and the loud huzzas that greeted the planting of the British standard on their inhospitable shores, brought them out of their tents in a state of great trepidation and amazement. Like their countrymen to the west, they were soon reassured, by Simpson advancing with four of his men and calling out that their visit was a friendly one. One man was left with

the canoe to guard it. After a little animated barter, the party returned to the canoe, followed by the whole village; and after the bartering was concluded, and a large supply of seal-skin boots, jackets, &c. obtained, the Esquimaux ladies treated the white men to a dance; in which, however, elegance of motion was not displayed in a very high degree of perfection.

While they were thus pleasantly occupied, Mr. Simpson took an observation, which placed the Point in $71^{\circ} 23' 33''$ north latitude, and $156^{\circ} 20' 0''$ west longitude.

Although the natives seemed friendly, a strict watch was kept upon the things in the canoe; but, upon going down to embark, the oars were not to be found. They were restored, however, after some trouble, and the party finally left Point Barrow on their return to Boat Extreme; their only regret being that there was nothing more to discover!

On reaching the camp of the Esquimaux who had lent them the oomiak, they re-borrowed it for the purpose of rowing round to Boat Extreme, and engaged four of their men to accompany them, so as to take back the canoe. At Point Tangent, however, they refused to go farther, and determined to remain with several of their friends whom they found encamped there, demanding an axe for the canoe. "I immediately," says Simpson, "gave them one of our axes, together with all the tobacco we had left; and my bowman was in the act of shoving off, when the strangers, nine in number, seized the canoe with the intention of dragging it ashore. On my pointing my gun at them they desisted; but, quick as thought, they snatched their bows and quivers, expecting to take us by surprise. When, however, they saw the whole crew ready for the combat, they lowered their tone of defiance; and I remarked with a smile, that, as sometimes happens in more civilized communities, the most blustering, turbulent fellow was the first

to show the white feather. * * * When the threatened fray was blown over, I explained, as well as I could, to the aggressors, that the visit and intentions of the whites were altogether friendly; but we parted in mutual distrust."

On the following morning, at five o'clock, the pedestrians rejoined their comrades at Boat Extreme, and the re-united party, turning their boats' heads to the eastward, retraced their route to the Mackenzie.

Our limits will not permit us to detail their return journey up the Mackenzie to winter quarters at Great Bear Lake, which occupied them during the month of August and the greater part of September. Their progress was as tedious as heretofore; ice, wind, rain, and natives combining to interrupt and detain them. On the 28th August they reached Fort Good Hope, where their party was pleasantly increased by the wife, niece, and grand-daughter of Mr. Dease.

Leaving this post, they proceeded on their way up the rapid Mackenzie, and arrived at Fort Norman, where they received despatches from England, and answered them; after which they proceeded to Great Bear Lake, picking up the batteaux and hunters with their outfit on the way. The whole of this part of the journey was excessively stormy, and everything gave indication of the approach of an arctic winter. The magnificent sheet of water, on whose shores they were to spend so many dreary months, was reached on the 14th September, and presented a black, frowning surface, under the influence of a stiff easterly breeze. Several showers of snow fell while they crossed its stormy waves, and proved to be the first white coat of permanent snow that clothed the country till the following spring.

On the 25th the establishment was reached; and then it was found that the party which had been sent to build the fort had been delayed so much by ice in the lake, that they

did not arrive at the appointed wintering ground till the 17th of August; consequently, all that presented itself to the gaze of the weary travellers was, a small store, and the skeleton of a dwelling-house! Thankful, however, to have at last reached the end of their journeying for the present, they hailed its appearance with delight; and, with feelings of sincere gratitude to their Almighty Protector, named their infant establishment Fort Confidence. It was situated in latitude $66^{\circ} 53' 36''$ N., longitude $118^{\circ} 48' 45''$ W. "The situation judiciously chosen for the establishment was a wooded point, on the northern side of a deep and narrow strait formed by a large island. It commands a fine view of the lake to the east and west, and the rocks form a natural landing-place for the boats at the very door." Here, then, they prepared to spend the long, long winter, in a small wooden hut, thousands of miles from the haunts of civilized men; provided with but a slender stock of provisions, and dependent for food, to a great extent, on the activity and friendship of Indian hunters. Unfortunately, they found on their arrival that most of these poor men were laid up with influenza; and, so far from being of any assistance to them, proved, at least for a long period, to be a burden. "To commence a winter," says Simpson, "within the arctic circle, with a considerable party destitute of provisions, and the Indians, upon whom we mainly depended for subsistence, requiring *our* aid and support, was an alarming condition, which demanded the utmost exertion of our personal resources." Accordingly, Mr. Simpson exchanged his sextant and astronomical instruments for the gun and snow shoes, and personally led the Indians in the chase; crossing the rugged barren grounds after the rein-deer; stretching beside the red men at nights by the camp-fire on the snow, without any other protection from the weather than was afforded by a slight tent made of skins, and the

deer-skin that he used as a blanket. He also visited the sick in their encampments, to administer medicine, and cheer them in their distress. During these excursions he was pretty successful in obtaining rein-deer, which were not scarce, although somewhat difficult to approach, owing to their keeping long in the open grounds. "Our tents," says he, "were usually pitched in the last of the stunted straggling woods, whence we issued out at daybreak among the bare snowy hills of the 'barren grounds,' where the deer could be distinguished a great way off, by the contrast of their dun colour with the pure white of the boundless waste. * * * On one occasion I witnessed an extraordinary instance of affection in these timid creatures. Having brought down a fine doe at some distance, I was running forward to despatch her with my knife, when a handsome young buck bounded up, and raised his fallen favourite with his antlers. She went a few paces, and fell; again he raised her, and continued wheeling round her, till a second bull—for hunger is ruthless—laid him dead at her side." As the winter advanced, however, they managed, by unremitting perseverance in the chase, to accumulate a sufficient quantity of food to enable them to keep a week's supply always in store.

The cold, as usual in these climes, was very intense. The lowest point to which the thermometer fell was 60° below zero on the 11th of February. All the streams flowing into Great Bear Lake were frozen to the bottom, and Simpson mentions casting a pistol bullet of quicksilver, when the thermometer stood at 49° below zero, which he fired through an inch plank. From the 17th of October till the 24th April the temperature never rose to the freezing point—a period of six months and a week—the mean temperature for the whole winter being 14° below zero. During forty-three days of this dismal

period the sun did not rise over a small hill which stood in front of the fort.

The winter packet, in these solitary regions so ardently longed for, and the contents of which are so fervently gloated over, arrived on the 29th December, in charge of a Canadian, whose comrade had perished by the way. They had left Fort Norman in a small canoe, but were soon set fast by ice, and finally abandoned her, and took to their snow shoes. Soon, however, poor Taylor, who was affected with a pulmonary complaint, began to complain of weakness; upon which his friend, Le Sourd, with considerate kindness, carried his provisions and spare clothing. At last he became unable to walk farther, and Le Sourd made a comfortable encampment, in which he tended his dying companion; and, when he expired, carefully laid his body in a grave, made by thawing the frozen earth with fire. He even placed, with Indian superstition, a valuable gun, that the grateful sufferer had given him, beside the remains of its former owner. After performing this act of kindness to his deceased companion, he pursued his solitary way to Fort Confidence.

During the whole winter divine service was performed on Sabbath, at which all the people regularly attended; and the few books that they had with them were diligently perused, while the monotony of their life was occasionally relieved by the arrival of Indians, sometimes *with* provisions, but oftener *for* them. Among others, a family arrived, the youngest member of which, a boy scarcely two years old, and still unweaned, walked on snow shoes! and this precocious piece of copper-coloured humanity not only *used* the snow shoes from necessity, but *rejoiced* in them to such an extent that he began to bellow lustily when his mother attempted to take them from him. Towards the end of winter Indians flocked in greater numbers than

ever to the fort, in a state of starvation. One poor, old blind man was hauled there on a sledge, or led with a string, and sometimes carried by his wife and daughter.

May—bright, warm May, the month of flowers and glad sunshine—opened upon the dwellers in arctic land, as upon the inhabitants of the sunny south; but it came not in “with flowers.” The only flowers to be seen there were those traced by the frost on the window-panes; while the thermometer stood at zero! The snow-clad earth, the wintry sky, the lurid sun, were still unchanged; but about the beginning of June the genius of the spring began to put forth his power. His warm fingers touched the land, and straightway the snows melted, the rivers flowed, the lakes burst their icy coats, the ducks and geese and all the wild denizens of the marshes began to arrive from the regions of the south; supplying the hitherto scantily furnished tables of the party, and filling the surrounding air with wild harmony. Smile not, gentle reader, at the idea of harmony in the hoarse cries or the wild cackling of geese or ducks. Hadst thou spent nine long, dreary months in a land of solitude, where no sound broke upon the ear save the howling of the arctic storm, or the sighing of thine own voice, or the hoarse croak of an adventurous raven, the trumpet tones of the Canada goose and the plaintive cry of wild-fowl would sound as music in thine unaccustomed ear!

It will be remembered that Governor Simpson’s instructions to the leaders of the expedition enjoined them to devote their second summer in the north to the exploring of the coast from Franklin’s farthest—Point Turnagain—eastward to the mouth of the Thlew-ee-choh; or as much farther as they thought proper to advance. Accordingly, on the 6th of June 1838, they started to cross over the land that separated them from the Coppermine River, down

which they purposed to descend to the sea. During this journey, about one hundred miles of unexplored coast was traced by Mr. Simpson and a party on foot; the boats being set fast by ice near Point Turnagain. As, however, the greater part of their route on this occasion was ground which had been traversed by former explorers, we shall merely glance at a few of the more interesting events that occurred by the way.

Leaving Ritch, one of the men, in charge of Fort Confidence, they commenced the ascent of Dease River in their two boats, which were manned by four men each—two others having been sent forward some days' journey to watch a quantity of provisions which they were to pick up in passing. The water, in which they had often to walk waist deep, was bitterly cold, and laden with ice, which rose in blue walls on either side of them. Not unfrequently these masses came tumbling down with great violence; and, on one occasion, a ponderous mass of snow fell from the banks so close to the boats as nearly to swamp them. The river was at length safely ascended, and, after making a portage of six miles long, they arrived at the Dismal Lakes. Dismal, indeed, did these lakes seem, covered as they were entirely over with the thick and still unbroken coat of winter. Although the rivers break up early in spring, owing to the sudden flush of water caused by the melting snow, the lakes are much longer of delivering themselves from the bondage of winter, as the ice does not give way until thoroughly decayed; but this was well known to the party, and they had provided for emergencies of the kind. Two stout iron-shod sledges were placed under the boats, which were then dragged on the ice; a rope was fixed to their bows which the crews laid hold of; the *sails* were set, the colours hoisted, and away they went over the frozen lake at the rate of two miles an hour, to the inexpressible sur-

prise of a band of natives, who happened to be in the neighbourhood when they arrived. In this curious way they proceeded till a stream of open water enabled them once more to commit the boats to their native element.

At the Dismal Lake portage, Mr. Simpson came upon a white wolf's den, where were four fine pups. Without asking their mother's permission, he took possession of them, intending to send them to Fort Confidence by the Indians. Their dam, attracted by their cries, rushed to the rescue, and was shot, while the more cowardly male contented himself with howling all night on a neighbouring eminence.

Deer and musk-oxen were numerous. One of the latter, which was espied by the quick-sighted hunters among the willows, was fired at several times without effect, when he started off in the direction of the boats; but, stumbling into a deep creek, swam out into the river, where he was wounded in the act of crossing. The animal instantly turned about and endeavoured to climb the bank where they stood, his eyes darting fire, and his nostrils distended with pain and rage; but ere he ascended it many steps, several well-aimed bullets stretched him lifeless on the ground.

On arriving at the Coppermine River, which they reached on the 20th of June, they found it still frozen over, and were detained a couple of days on its banks, after which a narrow stream opened in the centre of it. Into this they launched, and swept rapidly down the swollen tide. Much difficulty was experienced in avoiding the huge masses of ice, which, having now become thoroughly broken up by the rising of the spring floods, descended with great impetuosity, as if resolved to dispute with them the passage to the sea. "Shortly before noon," says Simpson, "we came in sight of Escape Rapid of Franklin, and a

glance at the overhanging cliffs told us that there was no alternative but to run down with full cargo. In an instant we were in the vortex; and, before we were aware, my boat was borne towards an isolated rock, which the boiling surge almost concealed. To clear it on the outside was no longer possible; our only chance of safety was to run between it and the lofty eastern cliff. The word was passed, and every breath was hushed. A stream, which dashed down upon us over the brow of the precipice more than a hundred feet in height, mingled with the spray that whirled upwards from the rapid, forming a terrific shower-bath. The pass was about eight feet wide, and the error of a single foot on either side would have been instant destruction. As, guided by Sinclair's consummate skill, the boat shot safely through those jaws of death, an involuntary cheer arose."

After a rough and hazardous journey, they reached the sea-coast at the beginning of July, having been detained five days by ice at the Bloody Fall. Here, however, a gloomy prospect opened upon them. Ice lay in thick masses all along the coast and far out to sea, and they were compelled to wait as patiently as they could for its disruption. When Captain Franklin reached the same spot, twenty days later in the season in 1821, he found a clear sea—so greatly do the seasons vary in these uncertain climes. This unfortunate state of the coast Mr. Simpson attributes to the calmness of the season—rain and tempest being, in his opinion, the most favourable accompaniments of arctic discovery.

With the utmost difficulty they reached a small bay on the 9th of August, which they called Boathaven, and which is situated about three miles west of Point Turnagain. Here they were detained till the 19th, and at last, finding that there was no chance of doing more that season with

the boats, Mr. Simpson set off for ten days to the eastward, on foot, accompanied by seven of the men. Each man carried a load weighing about half a hundredweight, which consisted of food, blankets, cooking utensils, a canvass-canoe, tent, &c.; in short, as Simpson says, their "food, lodging, bedding, arms, and equipage." The walking proved to be very fatiguing, owing to the softness of the ground in many places, and one or two of the men began to knock up before the termination of the journey. They persevered, however, and succeeded in tracing about a hundred miles of the coast eastward of Point Turnagain.

The coast was generally of the same low and swampy character, intersected here and there by streams of various sizes. Fortunately the weather continued clear during the whole time, enabling Mr. Simpson to take repeated observations, and lay down the coast very correctly. An extensive line of coast, seen to the north, was named after Queen Victoria, and an elevated cape on which they stood was called Cape Alexander, after a brother of the adventurous discoverer. From this cape, situated in latitude $68^{\circ} 56'$ N., longitude $106^{\circ} 40'$ W., an extensive open sea was seen, rolling its free waves at their feet and beyond the reach of vision to the eastward. On the 25th they reached a small stream, whose waters ran into a bay of such extent, that it was deemed prudent to terminate their journey here for the present, the more especially that their time was expired. The stream was called the Beaufort, and the latitude of the place was $68^{\circ} 43' 39''$ N., longitude $106^{\circ} 3' 0''$ W., and variation $60^{\circ} 38' 23''$ E.

A pillar being erected, the Union Jack hoisted, and the country taken possession of in her Majesty's name, the party then retraced their steps to Boathaven, where they arrived in safety; and, re-embarking in the boats, commenced the ascent of the Coppermine. The ascent was

found to be very laborious; but, after running many risks and making many hair-breadth escapes, they happily arrived, through the preserving goodness of God, at Fort Confidence, on the 14th of September, having left the boats on the banks of the Coppermine.

At Fort Confidence they spent the winter of 1838-9 in much the same routine as before. Although much had been accomplished during the summer, it was but a small portion of what they had hoped to achieve; so, having permission from the governor to devote another summer to the same object, they resolved to do so, and made the requisite preparations accordingly. A great accession was made to the expedition towards spring in the person of Ooligbuck, the Esquimaux interpreter who had accompanied Franklin in a former expedition.

During the winter, starvation again stared them in the face, and the poor natives, who seem to lead a truly miserable life in those inhospitable realms, were constantly throwing themselves for the means of subsistence on the generosity of their white brothers, who could ill afford them such assistance. Towards spring, however, things improved. Deer became more plentiful, and fish were taken in the nets. In June the frost entirely gave way; the temperature at mid-day was sometimes up to 70° in the shade, causing the snow to melt, the brooks to run, the willows to bud forth, and the birds to sing, or, at least, to pour forth the wild notes and cries which constitute the songs of the tuneless feathered tribes of America. The genial influence of the weather had its effect too upon the lonely, but ever cheerful, party at Fort Confidence. The men, and even the Indians, amused themselves with out-of-door games, of which foot-ball seemed to be the favourite; and Mr. Dease's violin, oftener than heretofore, sent its thrilling tones through the hearts of the whole party, causing them to

shake the entire fabric of the fort as they vigorously danced and capered about in the hall.

On the 15th of June they started on foot for the place where they had left the boats at the Coppermine, with renovated hopes and thankful hearts, resolved to try their fortunes a third time on the Polar Sea.

Their second descent of the Coppermine was accomplished without much difficulty; but the sea, which they reached on the 24th, was found quite solid. It was therefore resolved that Mr. Simpson should examine Richardson's River, while the rest of the party remained at the Bloody Fall. During their detention at this place, the men amused themselves by angling. Like everything else in these extraordinary regions, this was conducted in a somewhat outlandish manner. The setting-poles, with which they were in the habit of pushing the boats against the roaring torrents, were converted into ponderous fishing-rods; and with hooks baited with fat meat, they succeeded in luring to their destruction several arctic salmon, in the boiling eddies at the foot of the fall. Throughout the country generally, the fish display a singular indifference to the clumsiness of the tackle with which they are tempted. River trout are often caught with large cod hooks, converted into flies by means of a duck's feather and a thread of a scarlet worsted belt, the rod being a stout branch of a tree, and the line a bit of coarse twine! We need scarcely add that the anglers do not *play* their fish.

Emerging from the Coppermine on the 3d of July, their first day's progress was only five miles, the first week's but twenty; and it was the 18th ere they reached Cape Barrow. Running before a fresh breeze off the land, they made Cape Franklin on the 20th, just one month earlier than on the previous summer; and instead of a sea covered with an unbroken sheet of ice, as it was then, they

found an open channel, nearly two miles wide, extending all along the main shore. On the 27th they reached the point where their discoveries had terminated in 1838; and, putting ashore to exhume the portable canoe which had been buried there, entered upon ground till then untrodden by the foot of civilized man.

From the Minto group of islands, seen by Mr. Simpson the previous season, a view of the coast was obtained. It was bold, rocky, and indented; running far away to the south, and skirted by numerous islands. These latter, from their numbers, continued to perplex them during the greater part of their voyage. As they proceeded, threading their tortuous way among islands and round bays and points, the coast gradually lost its bold character, becoming low and stony; obliging them to ascend every little eminence to prevent their being involved in its intricacies. The weather was often foggy and always variable—one peculiar feature in its variability being, that it usually turned from bad to worse; but, with bold hearts and strong muscles, they pursued their way, until, on the 11th of August, they penetrated a strait through which the tide rushed with such force as to leave no longer any room to doubt the neighbourhood of an open sea leading to the mouth of Back's Great Fish River. From an eminence here Mr. Simpson first beheld this much-desired eastern sea.

"That glorious sight," says he, "was first beheld by myself from the top of the high limestone islands. * * * The joyful news was soon conveyed to Mr. Dease, who was with the boats at the end of the island, about half a mile off; and even the most desponding of our people forgot, for the time, the great distance we should have to return to winter quarters." Point Seaforth, the eastern outlet of this remarkable strait, is situated in latitude 68° 32' N., longitude 97° 35' W.

At this place they were visited with one of the most terrific thunderstorms they ever experienced. Travelling onwards as rapidly as the weather would allow, they reached Back's Point Ogle on the 13th of August, where, directed by M'Kay, they found the two bags of pemmican, several pounds of chocolate, two canisters of gunpowder, and a box of percussion caps, which had been deposited there by their enterprising predecessor five years before! The pemmican was *alive!* and the chocolate rotten; nevertheless, enough of it was extracted to produce a kettle-full, wherewith the men celebrated the grand event of the day.

All the objects for which the expedition was undertaken had now been accomplished; but Messrs. Dease and Simpson were not quite satisfied. They had determined the northern limits of America to the *westward* of the Thlew-ee-choh; but it still remained a question, whether Boothia Felix might not be united to the continent to the east of that river. The men were therefore summoned, and the importance of proceeding some distance farther explained to them, when they agreed to advance without a murmur.

On the evening of the 16th they crossed over the river's wide mouth. "It was a lovely night," says Simpson. "The fury of the north lay chained in repose. The Harp, the Eagle, the Charioteer, and many other bright constellations, gemmed the sky, and sparkled on the waters, while the high Polar Star seemed to crown the glorious vault above us." A six hours' pull brought them to a bluff cape, from which Mr. Simpson, who climbed to its summit, saw the coast turn sharply and decidedly eastward; while round to the north-west stretched a sea free from all ice, and devoid of all land, except what looked like two very distant islands. The point was named Cape Britannia.

The wind now began to prove adverse, and on the 19th they were almost tempted to give up farther advance as

hopeless, when the land suddenly turned more towards the north-east; so, hoisting their sail, they made a fine run of thirty miles, and landed at 4 P.M. to breakfast, on a cape which was named Cape Selkirk. They then advanced six miles farther; but after being buffeted by wind and waves, and making very little progress, they were compelled to take shelter in a small river, which they named, after their boats, the Castor and Pollux River.

It now became quite evident that the time was come for commencing their return to the distant Coppermine; so orders were given to the men to erect a pillar in commemoration of their visit, while the two leaders walked to an eminence three miles off, whence they saw the coast trending off more to the right. Far without lay several lofty islands, and in the north-east, more distant still, appeared some high blue land, which was designated Cape Sir John Ross, and was supposed to be the southern shores of Boothia. The latitude of their farthest encampment is $68^{\circ} 28' 23''$ N., longitude $94^{\circ} 14'$ W., variation $16^{\circ} 20'$ W. They turned their faces once more homewards on the 21st of August.

The stormy winds, which obstinately resisted their progress to the eastward, lent wings to their retreat. Point after point, bay after bay, were rapidly passed and left behind. Crossing over to Victoria Land, they explored a hundred miles of its coast, denominating the eastern and western visible extremes respectively Point Back and Point Parry; then, recrossing the strait and continuing their voyage along the main, they finally reached the mouth of the Coppermine on the 16th of September, in a bitter frost, and the surrounding country covered with snow, after by far the longest voyage ever performed in boats on the Polar Sea, the distance they had gone being not less than 1408 geographical, or 1631 statute miles.

The Coppermine was ascended in safety, the only thing of an unusual kind that they saw being a huge grizzly bear, to which Mr. Dease and Mr. Simpson gave chase, and fired several shots without effect. The monster's foot-prints in the snow measured fifteen inches by six!

This is the most formidable animal of the American continent. When full-grown, it equals in size the large polar bears, and is not only more active, but of a fiercer and more vindictive disposition. Its strength is so great that it will drag the carcass of a buffalo, weighing a thousand pounds. The following story of its prowess is well authenticated:—A party of *voyageurs* had been occupied all day in tracking a canoe up the Saskatchewan, and had seated themselves round a fire in the evening. They were engaged in the agreeable task of preparing their supper, when a huge grizzly bear sprang over the canoe, which they had tilted behind them, and seizing one of the party by the shoulder, carried him off. The remainder fled in terror, with the sole exception of a *metif* named Bourasso, who, grasping his gun, followed the bear, as it was deliberately retreating with the man in its mouth. He called out to his unfortunate comrade that he was afraid of hitting him if he fired at the bear; but the latter entreated him to fire instantly, because the animal was squeezing him to death. On this he took a steady aim, and lodged a ball in the body of the brute, which immediately dropped its original prey, that it might revenge itself upon Bourasso. He escaped, however, and the bear soon after retreated into a thicket, where they were too happy to let him lie unmolested. The rescued man had his arm fractured, and was otherwise severely bitten, but he ultimately recovered.

Dr. Richardson tells us that a man is now living, in the vicinity of Edmonton House, who was attacked by a grizzly bear, which suddenly sprang out of a thicket, and scalped

him by a single scratch of his tremendous claws, laying bare the skull, and pulling down the skin of the forehead quite over his eyes. Assistance being at hand, the beast was driven off; but the unfortunate man, although his life was saved, never recovered his sight after the event.

Mr. Drummond, who made a botanical trip to the Rocky Mountains, frequently met with these disagreeable companions. When he happened unintentionally to come suddenly upon them, they would rear themselves upright on their hind legs, and utter a loud, harsh, and rapid breathing. From what is known of the habits of these animals, it is certain that, had he lost his presence of mind and attempted to flee, he would have been pursued, overtaken, and torn to pieces. But the bold Forfar-man stood his ground to an inch, and beating a huge botanical box, made of tin, his discordant music so astounded the grizzly monsters, that, after eyeing the Scottish Orpheus for a few minutes, they generally wheeled to the right-about, and galloped away. On one occasion he observed a male caressing a female, and soon after the couple came towards him, but whether by accident or design, he was uncertain. However, he thought there was no great harm in climbing a tree; and as the female drew near, he very ungallantly fired at and mortally wounded her. As usual in such cases, she uttered some loud screams, which threw the male into a most furious rage, and he reared himself up against the trunk of the tree on which Mr. Drummond was perched. Fortunately, it is so ordained that grizzly bears either can't or won't climb; and the female in the meantime having retired to a short distance, lay down, while the male, following to condole with her, was also shot.

Winter had fairly set in ere the expedition reached the head of the Coppermine, which they did on the 20th, and

then proceeded across the country on foot to Fort Confidence, where they arrived in safety on the 24th of September, just as the shades of night were casting their sable mantle over the wintry scene.

Here, however, they were not to rest. The little fort in which they had, through the goodness of God, successfully struggled through so many dreary months, was to be abandoned; and the scene that ensued soon after their arrival was at once amusing and sad. "I despair," says Simpson, "of conveying an idea of the scene enacted by the natives during the two following days, which were occupied in settling with them, and packing up our own goods. They hurried in from all quarters; and as everybody wanted everything, the distribution of our commodities was rather a difficult problem. As for the clamour of young and old, Bedlam itself cannot match the ordeal we underwent. * * * Our spare guns, kettles, ironwork, dogs, and sledges, were given to the most deserving. All were furnished with ammunition, for hunting their way to the regular trading-posts on the Mackenzie. Our old clothes graced the persons of our young fellow-travellers; and last, not least, the whole assemblage was abundantly fed. In the afternoon of the 26th this noisy scene was brought to a close, and we took a last leave of Fort Confidence. Larocque Maccaconce, and some of the old men and youths who had been most about us, appeared affected as we shook hands with them; but all the rest were too busily engaged in rifling our forlorn abode to notice our departure. Even before finally quitting the house, the parchment windows were cut out by the women and children; the legs of the few miserable chairs and tables were torn off; and by the time we were out of sight, I verily believe that not a single nail remained undrawn, or a scrap of any sort unappropriated, on the premises."

In concluding this sketch of Messrs. Dease and Simpson's expedition, we think it right to give a brief account of the early and violent death of the spirited young man to whose energy and perseverance its successful termination must be partly attributed.

After leaving Fort Confidence, Mr. Simpson proceeded to Fort Simpson, on the Mackenzie, and thence, over the country on foot, to Red River settlement, at which place he arrived on the 2d February 1840, having traversed 1910 miles on foot in sixty-one days.

At Great Slave Lake, Mr. Simpson drew up a plan for an expedition to complete the survey of the coast between the extreme east of the discoveries of 1839, and the Straits of the Fury and Hecla, which he transmitted to the directors of the Hudson's Bay Company in London; at the same time offering to assume the command of the expedition without a moment's respite. At Red River he anxiously waited for letters in reply, which would authorize him to undertake it; but in consequence of his despatches not having reached England in time to be acknowledged by the spring canoes, he received no communication from the directors. Deeply disappointed at this, and unwilling to remain idly at Red River for a year until his offer could be accepted, he resolved to proceed to England.

With this end in view, he left Red River settlement on the 6th of June, intending to cross the prairies to St. Peter's, on the Mississippi, and proceed thence to England.

On leaving the settlement he was accompanied by a party of settlers and half breeds; but becoming impatient of their slow movements, he started ahead with four men. He travelled with great rapidity, as was learned from a chart, which was found with his other papers after his

death; on which their day's journey on the 11th of June was traced as forty-seven miles in a straight line.

"Subsequent to that date," writes Mr. Alexander Simpson in his brief memoir of his brother's life, "every circumstance is involved in mystery. All that can be ascertained with certainty is, that, on the afternoon of the 13th or 14th of June, Mr. Simpson shot two of his companions; that the other two mounted their horses and rejoined the larger party, a part of which went to the encampment where Mr. Simpson was alone, on the next morning; and that Mr. Simpson's death then took place. Whether he shot these men in self-defence, and was subsequently put to death by their companions; or whether the severe stretch to which his faculties had been subjected for several years brought on a temporary hallucination of mind, under the influence of which the melancholy tragedy took place, is known only to God and to the surviving actors in that tragedy."

Many different opinions exist on this point; some thinking that Mr. Simpson committed suicide, while others maintain that he must have been murdered by his half-breed companions. The latter opinion is more generally received, as the half-breeds are a fierce, vindictive race, and Mr. Simpson had incurred their animosity, some years before, by inflicting a chastisement on one of them who grossly insulted him. But whether by his own hand, or that of an assassin, the young traveller's short but brilliant career terminated thus violently in the wilderness, and his body now rests in the distant settlement on the borders of the wide and lonely prairie.

CHAPTER VII.

Recent Discoveries.

Expedition of Dr. Rae, 1846-7.

THE stormy shores of the Arctic Sea had now been surveyed from Behring's Straits, on the west, to Castor and Pollux River (the farthest point reached by Dease and Simpson), and, from the shores of Hudson's Bay, on the east, to the Straits of the Fury and Hecla. Betwixt these two points a *terra incognita* of between two and three hundred miles existed, regarding which there was much variance of opinion among scientific men; some asserting that, from the nature of things, Boothia Felix must be a peninsula—others holding as confidently that it must needs be an island. To set this question at rest—which, by the way, involved the existence or non-existence of the north-west passage, at least in that direction—the Hudson's Bay Company resolved to fit out another expedition, which should proceed to Repulse Bay, and from that point start overland to survey the large bay which, it was supposed, separated the two extreme points of discovery.

Hitherto the expeditions which had been despatched to the polar seas by land, had carried on their operations chiefly during summer; depending upon supplies of pemmican and flour for their maintenance during the long winter of the arctic regions, should all other resources in the shape of fish and game fail them. The expedition now sent out, however, was conducted on quite a different principle. Spring, or, more correctly speaking, the latter end of winter, was the season during which its operations were to be carried out. Only four months' provisions were taken,

although it was anticipated that the objects for which it was sent could not be accomplished in less than eighteen months, if not longer. The net and the gun were to be the only hope of the little band of adventurers who thus ventured to penetrate into a land so barren, and of whose resources so little was known, that it was feared, even by those who were long accustomed to a desert life, that the whole party would infallibly starve; and all the more was this thought probable, when it was remembered that little or no fuel could be obtained there, with the exception of a small quantity of oil from the Esquimaux. Starve, however, they did not. Under the command of Dr. Rae, a man of practical experience in arctic life, of scientific attainments, and indomitable resolution, the expedition was brought back in safety, after a long sojourn in these lands of ice and darkness, where they suffered privations, and encountered dangers out of which the Father of light and love alone could have delivered them.

In the following pages we shall follow the footsteps of Dr. Rae and his hardy associates, as they pursue their devious and interesting journey—interesting, whether we view it in connection with the long-disputed passage which has tried the metal and cost the lives of so many of Britain's sons during the last two hundred years, or look at it in the light of a daring and novel incursion into the regions of the far north.

The instructions given to him by Sir George Simpson, directed Dr. Rae to proceed to Fort Churchill, the most northerly establishment of the company on Hudson's Bay, with two boats and twelve men, and to proceed thence to the scene of his labours; devoting as much time as he could, without occasioning serious delay, to ascertaining the latitudes and longitudes of the most remarkable points within the range of his operations, noting the incidents

of the journey, and, generally, to registering the various peculiarities and phenomena of the regions he was about to explore. Having achieved the object of his journey, he was to return, according to his own discretion, either by his original course to Churchill, or by Back's Great Fish River, to Great Slave Lake. "In conclusion," writes Sir George, "let me assure you that we look confidently to you for the solution of what may be deemed the final problem in the geography of the northern hemisphere. The eyes of all who take an interest in the subject are fixed on the Hudson's Bay Company; from us the world expects the final settlement of the question that has occupied the attention of our country for two hundred years; and your safe and triumphant return, which may God in His mercy grant, will, I trust, speedily compensate the Hudson's Bay Company for its repeated sacrifices and its protracted anxieties."*

Rae was just the man for such an expedition. He was surgeon, astronomer, steersman, and leader to the party; had spent several years in the service of the company; and added to his other attainments the by no means insignificant accomplishments of a first-rate snow-shoe walker and a dead shot!

On the 8th of October Dr. Rae landed at York Factory, on the shores of Hudson's Bay, after a canoe journey of about two months' duration, through the interior from Canada. Here he took up his residence for the winter, purposing to sail for Fort Churchill in the following spring, so soon as the icy bands, which lock up the waters there for nearly eight months, should give way. The two boats were fine-looking, strong, clinker-built craft, twenty-two feet long by seven feet six inches broad, each capable of

* Rae's Expedition, p. 17.

carrying between fifty and sixty *pieces* of goods, of 90 lbs. weight per piece. They were each rigged with two lug sails, to which jibs were afterwards added, and were named the "North Pole" and the "Magnet." Besides the usual amount of sails, oars, cordage, and ballast, the boats were laden with twenty bags of pemmican, two bags of grease, twenty-five bags of flour, and four gallons of alcohol for fuel, with a good supply of sugar, chocolate, and tea, four gallons of brandy, and two gallons of port wine; amounting in all to little more than four months' provisions at full allowance. To these were added a small sheet-iron stove for each boat, a set of sheet-iron lamps for burning oil after the fashion of the Esquimaux; several small kettles, called conjurers, having a little basin and perforated tin stand for burning alcohol, a seine net, and four small window frames, with double panes of glass in each. This method of glazing windows, besides rendering the room to which they are attached warmer, prevents the heated air within from congealing on the glass, and so rendering it opaque. Windows glazed with single panes soon become covered with moisture, which freezes the instant it settles upon the cold glass, and accumulates frequently to the thickness of an inch. An oiled canvass canoe was also taken, and one of Halkett's portable air boats, which latter was large enough to carry three persons.

About the beginning of May 1846, the increasing power of the sun began to work a rapid change over the whole land, which, since October, had lain in that cold, dead, and seemingly unconquerable stillness, of which none but arctic travellers can form an adequate conception. Gradually at first, and as if unwillingly, the ice gave way before the genial beams of the spring sun, till at last it melted away and left the released earth and streams to rejoice in their deliverance; reminding one forcibly of the manner in

which the Sun of Righteousness, by the all-powerful influence of His bright beams of forbearance and protracted love, thaws and sets free the icy heart and frozen soul of unregenerate man.

On the 5th of May, Hayes River began to break up, but it was not until the 12th of June that the coast was sufficiently free from ice to permit the exploring party to commence their voyage. On that day, however, it was reported practicable, and on the 13th, after saying farewell to their friends at York Factory, they set sail in the "North Pole" and "Magnet," along the shores of Hudson's Bay.

The crews of the two boats consisted of twelve men, six to each boat; but small though the party was, it embraced no less than six different races of men—Orkneymen, Canadians, Indians, half-breeds, Zetlanders, and Highlanders; and to these was afterwards added an Esquimaux interpreter, who rejoiced in the name of Ooligbuck, and his son, who rejoiced in an incurable habit of thieving, which afterwards proved to be no small annoyance to the party. A foretaste of the difficulties which this strangely assorted crew were afterwards to experience, was afforded them on the day of their departure, in the shape of a stiff head wind. They had scarcely proceeded a mile down the river in the direction of the sea, and the smoke of the guns, with which they had been saluted at departure, was still floating in the air, when the wind chopped round directly in their teeth and blew a gale. Dr. Rae, however, was much too sanguine to think of turning back after having fairly started; he therefore ordered the sails to be close reefed, and the boats' heads turned out to sea, despite the ugly cross sea which was occasioned by the meeting currents of the river and tide. A good deal of water was shipped, but he succeeded in making good his point; cleared the shallows that jutted out from the end of the Point of Marsh; and after a good

deal of difficulty in forcing a passage through the ice which drove along the coast with the current, finally anchored for the night near Sam's Creek, to which place the lonely inhabitants of York Factory send a party every spring and autumn to shoot and salt geese for their winter consumption. Here being unable to land, they slept in the boats. "The night," says Rae, "was beautiful, and as all my men had gone to sleep, nothing interrupted the stillness around but the occasional blowing of a white whale, the rather musical note of the 'caca wee' (long-tailed duck), or the harsh scream of the great northern diver. Yet I could not close my eyes. Nor was this wakefulness caused by want of comfort in my bed, which I must own was none of the most inviting, as it consisted of a number of hard packed bags of flour, over which a blanket was spread, so that I had to accommodate myself the best way I could to the inequalities of the surface. To a man who had slept soundly in all sorts of places, on the top of a round log in the middle of a swamp, as well as on the wet shingle beach, such a bed was no hardship; but thoughts now pressed upon me which during the bustle and occupation of preparation had no time to intrude. I could not conceal from myself that many of my brother officers, men of great experience in the Indian country, were of opinion that we ran much risk of starving; little was known of the resources of that part of the country to which we were bound; and all agreed that there was little chance of procuring fuel, unless some oil could be obtained from the natives. Yet the novelty of our route and of our intended mode of operations had a strong charm for me, and gave me an excitement which I could not otherwise have felt."*

The shores of Hudson's Bay between York Factory and

* Rae's Expedition, pp. 7-8.

Fort Churchill are low, flat, and uninteresting. Not a single rock is to be seen in all its dreary length, though here and there boulder-stones, of various sizes, were observed. A short distance from the sea, were numerous small lakes and swamps, which were filled with ducks, geese, and other water-fowl, whose wild cries served in some degree to break the monotony of the way, while their fat little bodies helped nightly to fill the kettles, and tickle the palates of the miscellaneous crew that invaded their usually undisturbed domain. Ice, with its unfailing attendant, fog, floated in abundance on the ocean, now compelling them to pursue a devious track among the open lanes of water; then causing them to bore slowly through its closely packed but broken masses; anon, vanishing as if by magic, leaving them in an open sea, and oftentimes interrupting their progress altogether. Notwithstanding these difficulties, however, they pursued their route along the coast, and landed at Churchill on the 27th of June.

Here they remained a few days repairing the boats and examining the provisions, this being the last establishment they would meet with. Some tobacco and salt, being looked upon as unnecessary luxuries, were exchanged for additional supplies of pemmican and flour, and everything was finally arranged for the voyage.

The people at the fort were engaged in killing white whales when they arrived. These fish abound in the polar seas, and are often seen rolling their unwieldy forms up the rivers that flow into Hudson's Bay. They are used by the fur-traders as food for the dogs, the house in which their flesh is kept being called the blubber-house; to find which house, especially in summer, no other direction would be necessary than the trite one of "follow your nose!" The method of killing the white whale is very simple. A boat, having a harpooner both at bow and stern, sails out among

the shoal, and being painted white, it does not alarm them. When close enough, the harpoons are thrown, and the whales dive under the water. They do not, however, run any great distance in one direction, but dart about much in the way that a trout does when hooked. Indians employ another method of killing them. They erect a stage in the water, as far from shore as they can, and sit perched upon this, gun in hand, till the whales pass, when they shoot them with ball, and afterwards fish up their carcasses in their canoes.

Having taken on board Ooligbuck, the Esquimaux, and his son, and said farewell to the inhabitants of Churchill—the last civilized beings whom they were to see for a year and a half—Dr. Rae and his men started on their voyage of discovery on the 5th of July 1846. The weather was fine, and the coast, fortunately, free from ice, so that they sailed cheerily along under the influence of a light breeze from the N.N.E. The men were in excellent health and spirits; and, like most men of daring, adventurous spirits, rejoiced at the prospect of facing and overcoming difficulties and dangers. The general brightness and liveliness of the whole scene at their departure had doubtless some influence in producing the exuberance of joy with which they left the last settlement of the white man. The broad expanse of Hudson's Bay lay stretched out before them; its calm surface flickering in the beams of a bright sun, and enlivened with the wild cry and splash of water-fowl, as they bathed their plumage, or pursued each other over the surface, and down into the blue depths of the ocean. Up in the clear sky flocks of gulls sailed calmly on apparently motionless wings, giving to the beholders a strange, irresistible desire to be up there too, disporting in the atmospheric ocean; while from among the happy revellers every now and then, would dart one or two of their number,

and descending, with collapsed wings, from their giddy height, plunge into the water in pursuit of unsuspecting fish. The peculiar characteristics of arctic scenery also tended to heighten the wild beauty and interest of the scene. Far away in the distance might be seen the white pinnacles of a gigantic iceberg—huge, firm, and solid in appearance, like the snow-clad summits of the everlasting hills, but in reality brittle and unstable, liable to drift and change with every ray of sunshine, and every breath of wind, and ready, without a moment's warning, to lose its balance, and, like the airy castles erected in the mind of man, bury its towering heights and fair battlements in the unsteady gulf from which it rose. White whales rolled their uncouth forms about, and ruffled the otherwise calm bosom of the sea, coming frequently within a few yards of the boats; while here and there the bullet head of a seal bobbed suddenly up to the surface, its grave countenance and wide goggle eyes seeming to inquire what new wonders of creation had come to invade the Arctic Sea—already sufficiently well peopled with hyperborean monstrosities!

During the day they passed a river whose name was in keeping with the wild land through which it flows, being called the Pauk-a-thau-kis-cow. The shore was flat and low, obliging them to keep six miles out to sea in order to avoid being stranded at the ebb tide; but this mattered little in such fine weather. As the night was clear, and the wind fair, they continued their course without interruption, till the forenoon of next day, when it was found that they had made a run of ninety-five miles. Here they were overtaken by three Esquimaux in their kayaks. These little canoes were propelled by their vigorous owners so swiftly, that they overtook, and easily kept up with the boats, while sailing at the rate of four miles an hour. The kayak "is about twelve feet in length, and two feet in

breadth, tapering off from the centre to the bow and stern, almost to a mere point. The frame is of wood, covered with seal-skin, having an aperture in the centre, which barely admits of the stowage of the nether man. These canoes are calculated for the accommodation of one person only; yet it is possible for a passenger to embark upon them, if he can submit to the inconvenience and risk of lying at full length without stirring hand or foot, as the least motion would upset the canoe. Instances, however, have been known of persons being conveyed hundreds of miles in this manner. The kayaks are used solely for hunting; and, by means of the double paddle, are propelled through the water with the velocity of the dolphin. No land animal can possibly escape when seen in the water; the least exertion is sufficient to keep up with the rein-deer when swimming at its utmost speed."*

Some Esquimaux have the power of righting themselves after being upset, while others are utterly helpless, and would infallibly be drowned, were no assistance at hand. Such assistance, however, is seldom wanting, as accidents of the kind rarely occur except in the excitement of the chase, when a number of comrades are always present, ready to replace the luckless diver once more on his centre of gravity. The *oomiak*, or women's boat, is much clumsier, slower, and safer, more in the form of a boat than a canoe, and is used to convey the female portion of the community and their families from one part of the coast to another, being propelled by the women, who use small paddles for the purpose.

Dr. Rae took advantage of these Esquimaux going to Churchill, to write a few lines to Sir George Simpson.

In the afternoon the wind increased, and the water began

* M'Lean's Hudson's Bay Territory, vol. ii. pp. 49, 50.

to grow shallow. The boats' heads were instantly put out to sea, but the ebb tide proved too quick for them, and they grounded about ten miles from the shore. This was all the more aggravating that the wind was fair. There was nothing for it, however, but patience; which virtue they exercised as they best could until two o'clock the next morning, when the rising tide once more set them free. How strikingly, in these regions, the power and helplessness of man is brought under our observation! An inch more of the mighty deep, and he roams at will over its wide expanse; an inch less, and he lies a helpless log upon its surface! A clear sea and a favouring breeze, and his huge ship, obedient to every impulse of his will, ploughs bravely over the waves, dashing the spray from her swelling bows, and seeming as if nothing could check or interrupt her course. A slight current sweeps the icy mountains of the polar seas down upon her course, with all the slow, resistless majesty and power that marks the operations of the works of God—and his sturdy bark is crushed, carried hither and thither on its icy cradle, a helpless hulk, at the mercy of the wind and sea.

A good deal of rough weather was experienced as they coasted along shore, and Dr. Rae had cause to congratulate himself on having taken Orkneymen as part of his crews; for the Indians, half-breeds, and Canadians, albeit inferior to none as boatmen in river, lake, or rapid, are the veriest children when fairly launched on the billows of the salt sea. "The boats," says Rae, "fully realized the good opinion we had of them; but being so deeply laden, the sea broke frequently over them, and kept us continually baling. At last the Magnet shipped a heavy sea, and the steersman, either from losing his presence of mind, or from not knowing how to act, allowed the boat to broach to. Fortunately no other sea struck her whilst thus placed, else both she

and the crew must inevitably have been lost." The gale continued to increase, and at last became so violent, that they were forced to run for shelter under the lee of a large island. On a neighbouring island, a number of Esquimaux tents were seen, but it could not be discovered whether or not they were inhabited. Rain poured down in torrents, but, rather than recline in lazy luxuriance on his wet blanket, Dr. Rae seized his gun and proceeded, after the manner of Robinson Crusoe, to make a survey of the island. Like him, too, he discovered a footprint in the sand, but it was that of a large white bear, which, from the havoc made in the nests of the wild-fowl, had evidently been dining on a few hundred eggs. He also fell in with a number of Esquimaux graves, protected, though not very effectually, from the depredations of wild animals by arches of stone. Among these graves were found a number of spear heads and knives; but Esquimaux do not generally destroy all the property of the deceased, as do most of the Indian tribes.

In the evening the wind moderated, and they received a visit from five Esquimaux, from the tents before mentioned. They each received a small piece of tobacco, of which they seemed remarkably fond. A large, deep river, which empties itself into the sea not far from the island they had landed on, abounds in white whales, seals, and salmon. One of the latter, weighing ten pounds, was caught, and proved an acceptable variety to their supper of pemmican. Salmon, however, are not always, in these wild countries, partaken of with the gusto that might be supposed by those who dwell in more civilized climes. There is a great truth enunciated when it is said, a man *may* have "too much of a good thing." There is a river called the Moisé, which flows near the Labrador coast, and empties itself into the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Go there, reader—you will find

dwelling in a solitary trading establishment, about twenty miles from the banks of that river, a lonely clerk of the Hudson's Bay Company. One other human being, a Canadian, helps him to inhabit the spot; all the rest of his party, eight or ten in number, being away at a salmon-fishery on the Moisé. He has just risen from a breakfast of *roasted* salmon, and now takes down his gun and sallies forth into the woods behind the house. For the last three weeks he has done so, and has returned, day after day, with the same charge in his gun; for it is summer, and the water-fowl are away north, and everything else has vanished, no one knows where—away south, probably! He empties his piece into the blue sky, however, and calls for dinner. Several large cuts of *boiled* salmon are brought and set before him. "No hardship this," you will say. Perhaps not; but it certainly approximates to discomfort, when *fried* salmon appears at tea, and *kippered* salmon graces the table next morning at breakfast, and so on unceasingly for weeks together, till at last he loaths salmon, kippered, fried, roasted, or boiled, with a frenzied intensity that can scarcely be understood by those who purchase the delicacy in a British market at two shillings per pound! This is no ideal case, got up to show how a good thing *might* be detested when one had too much of it. It is a well-authenticated instance in which salmon once *was* actually superabundant, and *was* heartily abhorred.

The relish with which Dr. Rae and his party ate their supper was not, however, blunted on the present occasion, by having too much of it; nor was the doctor's appreciation of rest at all lowered by the uncomfortable condition in which he found his couch upon retiring to it after the evening meal. "When about to go to bed," says he, "I found my blankets quite wet by the seas that washed over me in the morning. This, however, made them

keep out the wind better, and did not certainly affect my rest!"

The island and its neighbourhood, they found, was a favourite resort of the natives. The following day was more moderate, but not sufficiently so to permit of their venturing out of harbour. On the 9th, however, the wind shifted, and they were enabled to lie their course. The sea was studded with numerous islets, the resort of immense flocks of birds, which the travellers used as food (although not very palatable) to save their pemmican. A few of the birds called guillimots were also observed here. The weather was very variable, with calms and light breezes alternating. Nevertheless they made good way, taking advantage of every favouring puff to spread their sails and court the winds, and continuing steadily at the oars, often by night as well as by day. The shores had become steep and rugged; the whole coast being lined with bare primitive rocks, and the sea dotted occasionally with rocky islands, from among which were obtained constant and large supplies of eggs and water-fowl. Several deer were also shot by the men, so that their larder was usually overflowing with the fat of the land.

On the 13th Chesterfield Inlet was passed. Here they were visited by a solitary Esquimaux, one of a band which resorts to this place for the purpose of spearing deer whilst swimming across the inlet in autumn. A number of walruses were seen here. "They were grunting and bellowing," says Rae, "making a noise which I fancy would much resemble a concert of old boars and buffaloes." During a two days' detention at an inlet into which they had run for shelter, Dr. Rae and one of his men traced eight miles of the course of a considerable river which flows into the bay. At its mouth upwards of thirty seals were observed basking in the sun, among whom a bull was sent, which

had the effect of sending them walloping into the water in ludicrous haste. During their walk a hen partridge and her brood were found. This bird afforded them an interesting instance of the strong power of love in overcoming natural timidity and weakness when it exists strongly in the breasts even of the lower animals. "I have seen," says Rae, "many birds attempt to defend their young, but never witnessed one so devotedly brave as this mother: she ran about us, over and between our feet, striking at our hands when we attempted to take hold of her young, so that she herself was easily made prisoner. Although kept in the hand some time, when let loose again she continued her attacks with unabated courage and perseverance, and was soon left mistress of the field, with her family safe around her."

The rest of their voyage along the coast was unmarked by any incident of peculiar interest. Light winds and sunshine succeeded to stiff breezes and clouds; and they experienced the usual vicissitudes attendant upon arctic travelling, in the shape of ice, fogs, rain, and snow. Towards the end of July they drew near the scene of future operations; and, on the 25th of that month, landed at the head of Repulse Bay. Here they met a party of Esquimaux, who, as usual, received their pacific advances with some distrust. Under the influence of Ooligbuck's persuasive tongue, however, they soon threw aside their fears, and became communicative, informing their interrogators that the bay (called Akkoolee) of which they were in search was not much more than forty miles distant from the spot where they stood, in a N.N.W. direction, and that about thirty-five miles of this distance was a chain of deep lakes. This decided Dr. Rae in his resolution to penetrate to the sea in his boats, in preference to a method, which he had once contemplated, of going round and de-

scending into the bay by the Straits of the Fury and Hecla. Accordingly, the boats were hauled up on the beach, and a reconnoitring party went off to examine a small stream which falls into Repulse Bay not far from the spot on which they landed.

The Esquimaux were good-looking fellows, of low stature, and much more cleanly than those of Hudson's Straits. One of the men had a formidable beard and whiskers, and another, a youth with ruddy cheeks and sparkling black eyes, which beamed with fun and good-humour, was dressed somewhat fancifully even for an Esquimaux, and seemed to entertain a high opinion of his personal appearance.

Having ascertained that the little river rose in a lake about five miles from its mouth, they commenced, on the following day, to drag the North Pole up the stream, having first secured the cargoes, and placed them, with the Magnet, in a place of security, with a guard to protect them from the natives, who assembled to the number of twenty-six to welcome their visitors. From these people was obtained a seasonable supply of seal-skin boots, which, being perfectly waterproof, are well adapted for travelling over wet ground. These boots are made of undressed seal-skin, the sole being made of walrus hide. They are so hard, that it is impossible to get them on until after being thoroughly soaked, outside and in, with water, in which state they are pliable, and after being rubbed dry with a cloth, are ready for use. If parts of them have not been sufficiently softened during the soaking, the natives hasten the process by chewing the refractory portions between their teeth. "When about to put on a pair of Esquimaux boots," says Rae, "one of our female visitors, noticing that the leather of the foot was rather hard, took them out of my hands, and began chewing them with her strong teeth!"

The work of discovery now commenced. No white

man had ever penetrated into the interior of the land on whose shores they now stood. All beyond the shores of Repulse Bay was an unknown wilderness, except in so far as it had been described to them by the natives; and it was with renewed energy and freshened hope that they began the difficult ascent of the little river before mentioned. The bed of this stream was extremely rocky and broken, obliging the men to be constantly up to their waists in the ice-cold water; and, despite their utmost endeavours to prevent it, the boat got severely rubbed and bruised—not, however, so as to damage her materially. They soon passed the river, and entered upon a lake whence it flows, where they encountered a gale of wind. This did not arrest, although it impeded their progress, and, in a few hours, they came to the end of the lake, which, with the river that flowed out of it, was named after the boat. A narrow channel conducted them into another lake towards evening, on whose treeless shores they encamped for the night. No wood of any kind was to be found; but they were so fortunate as to discover a kind of plant which, although it did not make the cheerful, bright, crackling blaze which affords so much comfort and enjoyment to the *voyageur* in the thick-wood lands, still served the purpose of cooking their supper and warming their fingers.

Next morning (the 28th) they started at six, and continued their journey. The banks of the lake were low and without rocks, being covered with short grass in many places. At ten o'clock they arrived at a neck of land about half a mile broad, which separates this lake from another; and while part of the crew were occupied in carrying the goods over it, some were busily engaged in preparing breakfast. Here they were in some doubt as to what course ought to be pursued, having got confused in the intricacies of the lake. After some difficulty in conveying the boat over

one or two of the portages, which being covered with granite stones, the boat's keel stuck to them like glue, they reached a point whence was obtained a view of the Arctic Sea, bearing north, at a distance, apparently, of about twelve miles. Not a pool of open water, however, was to be seen upon its broad expanse, the whole of which was covered to the horizon with immense fields of ice. Crossing two more portages and another small lake, they entered upon a body of fresh water of nearly six and a half miles in length, and not more than half a mile broad. Its banks were steep and rugged, being in many places upwards of three hundred feet high. At the end of this lake they found a portage, the most difficult to surmount that had yet obstructed their passage. A short passage from Dr. Rae's interesting work will give some idea of the difficulties encountered at this place, which was little worse after all than the rest of the route. "The following morning was cloudy, with a cold, north breeze, which was not at all unfavourable for the work we had to do. We went to work at an early hour, but our advance was very slow, as the portage fully realized the bad opinion that we had formed of it. Hitherto, by laying the anchor out some distance ahead, and having a block attached to the bow of the boat by a strop, or what sailors call a swifter passing round her, we could form a purchase sufficiently strong to move her with facility; but here our utmost exertions were required, and the tracking line was frequently broken. A piece of iron, an eighth of an inch thick, which lined the keel from stem to stern, was actually drawn out and doubled up, so that it was necessary to remove the whole. At half-past ten, when half way across, we breakfasted, after which we met with a bank of snow, over which we went at a great rate. * * * Near the extremity of the portage there were some ponds of water deep enough to float the

boat, that helped us not a little. The descent of a steep bank fully a hundred feet high brought us into another fine lake eight miles long and one mile broad, lying nearly north and south, with steep rocky shores on its west side. * * * This lake was named 'Miles,' after a friend. As it was quite calm, we pulled up due north, and entered a narrow inlet, out of which there was no passage. * * * It was now too late, however, to look for another exit, and we all betook ourselves to rest after a hearty supper, for which the fatigues of the day gave us an excellent appetite. Some of the men had large pieces of skin stripped from their backs whilst lifting the boat over the various obstructions on the portage."*

Perseverance at last overcame all obstacles; and, on the 2d of August, they launched upon the salt waters of a lake which communicated, through a narrow channel, with the sea. Here they found two Esquimaux tents; and while the men put ashore to prepare breakfast, Dr. Rae walked up to them to pay a morning call and introduce himself to the inmates, if any there were. On reaching the tents he found all quiet inside, but, after calling once or twice outside the door of one, the lady of the house suddenly made her appearance, apparently just out of bed, as she was very composedly drawing on her capacious boots, whilst she surveyed the doctor without showing the slightest symptom of alarm, although, as he afterwards learned, she had never seen a white man before. Immediately afterwards an old man popped out his head, and stood beside his better half in great perplexity. He was evidently a cipher, and seemed utterly incapable of putting forth a single effort to check the torrent of volubility with which his lady assailed her visitor. It was all expended in vain, however, until

* Rae's Expedition, pp. 46, 47.

Ooligbuck's opportune arrival, when, with the help of a few presents, all parties came to a friendly understanding. Their report of the state of the ice in the large bay was sufficiently discouraging. They said that there was seldom enough of open water to float one of their small canoes; and, from the appearance of it at the time, Dr. Rae was inclined to believe they spoke truth. The remainder of their party, consisting of two sons and their wives, had gone a day's journey inland to hunt the musk-ox. After breakfast they proceeded on their way; and, the same evening, launched their boat on the waters of the Polar Sea, in latitude $67^{\circ} 15'$ N. From this point Dr. Rae sent three of his men back to Repulse Bay on foot, a distance of forty-three miles, for the purpose of making every possible preparation for the winter; instructing them to be particularly careful to keep up a friendly intercourse with the natives. With the remaining seven men he proceeded to survey the coast to the north-westward in his boat.

It was now the 3d of August; yet the ice filled the bay in such quantities that they were completely set fast in the evening, and had to put ashore. A wooden sledge was found, which was evidently made of the planks of a vessel (probably the *Fury* or Sir John Ross's steamer the *Victory*). It furnished them with a seasonable supply of fuel. On landing they were much disappointed to find that the only fresh water to be obtained was so bad as to be nearly undrinkable. It resembled chocolate in appearance; but arctic travellers are not nice, and the dirty water was swallowed without comment after the first disapproving growl. The coast was generally low and flat, being in some parts lined for miles with mud banks, from eight to ten feet high, frozen quite solid, and, in other parts, broken by rocky capes and headlands. Although desolate enough, as far as man was concerned, there was no lack of animal

life to enliven the scene. Wolves serenaded them by night; marmots chattered at them by day, standing up on their hind-legs, as the exploring party passed, to gaze (it is presumed) in wonderment at the unwonted sight. Foot-prints of musk cattle and deer were observed in the sand, while the air thrilled with the wild music of hundreds of golden plovers and sand-pipers. One morning a young buck was observed on a piece of ice half a mile to seaward. It had been forced to take to the water to escape the wolves, one or two of which were seen skulking along shore, awaiting the poor animal's return. The boat instantly started in pursuit, as the state of their larder did not allow them to be merciful; and after a long chase, the poor deer was shot whilst swimming from one floe to another. The weather was very unsettled. Fogs continued to retard them constantly, while they tracked and poled amongst the masses of ice which beset them on every side. It also rained continually; so that, besides being wet all day, their fuel was so saturated as to render it impossible to make a fire, obliging them to sleep in wet clothes and wet beds night after night. "Fortunately," says Rae, with characteristic coolness, "the weather was mild, so that we did not feel much inconvenience from this!" Besides being surrounded by ice, they were constantly exposed to the danger of being overwhelmed by the ponderous masses under which they were compelled frequently to pass. Some of these masses were twenty feet up in the air, and they were crashing into the sea all round them, without a moment's warning to give indication of the approaching catastrophe! What a position! How utterly futile the power or precaution of man in such a case. How eminently conspicuous the protecting goodness of God.

Finding that there was no possibility of tracing the western shore in the direction of Dease and Simpson's

farthest, owing to the ice, Dr. Rae resolved, on the 5th, to retrace his route, and endeavour to proceed along the eastern shore towards the Straits of the Fury and Hecla. In this attempt, however, he failed, in consequence of the ice blockading that coast as thickly as it did the other. A gale which blew on the 7th failed to clear it away; and from this circumstance he felt convinced that Akkoolee Bay must be completely blocked up.

On the 8th the flood-tide carried the ice down upon them so as to render their position unsafe; and as it was impossible to advance, the boat's head was unwillingly turned towards the point whence they had set out; at which place Dr. Rae resolved to await some favourable change in the state of the ice, and ascertain how things were going on at Repulse Bay.

On arriving opposite the tents of their Esquimaux friends, they beheld them running down to the beach, led on by the old lady whose volubility of utterance has been already noticed. On the present occasion she seemed to have added an additional spring to her tongue, which went like the clapper of a mill; and, for riotous noisiness, threw all the others entirely into the shade, as she rushed towards the party with loud shouts of joy at their return. The ox hunters had returned, and brought information that the deer had commenced migrating to the southward, which determined the doctor to walk over to Repulse Bay, to see what his men were doing towards procuring a supply of venison for the winter.

Leaving three men and Ooligbuck's son in charge of the boat, he set out on his journey with the remainder, intending to cross the isthmus in a S.S.E. direction; "but it was impossible," says he, "to keep this course for any great distance, as we were forced to make long circuits to avoid precipices and arms of the lake. After a most

fatiguing day's march over hill and dale, through swamp and stream, we halted at half-past 6 P.M., close to the second portage crossed on our outward route. To gain a distance of twenty miles, we had travelled not less than thirty. Our supper was soon finished, as it was neither luxurious, nor required much cooking, consisting of our staple commodities, pemmican, cold, with water. The morning (of the 10th) was raw and cold, with some hoar frost, and there not being a blanket among the party, and only two coats, our sleep was neither long, sound, nor refreshing. In fact, I had carried no coat with me except a thin Mackintosh, which being damp from the rain of yesterday, had become an excellent conductor of caloric, and added to the chilly feeling instead of keeping it off. There is one advantage in an uncomfortable bed, it induces early rising; and it proved so on the present occasion, for we had finished breakfast and resumed our journey by half-past 2 A.M. The travelling was as difficult as that of yesterday, but we had the advantage of a cool morning, and got on more easily. At seven o'clock we arrived at the narrows which separate Christie and North Pole Lakes, where we found the greater number of the Esquimaux we had seen, encamped, waiting for the deer crossing over."* At two o'clock in the afternoon they arrived at Repulse Bay, with enviable appetites, but rather foot-sore, having completely worn through their socks and shoes on the journey.

Here the men were found to be living from hand to mouth, having only enough of salmon and deer to prevent them from starving. As the lives of the whole party depended on their success in fishing and shooting, Dr. Rae, after mature consideration, resolved to give up the idea of

* Rae's Narrative, pp. 59, 60.

prosecuting the survey that autumn—a resolution which was strengthened by the fact, that the immense quantities of ice in the bay, and the prevalence of northerly winds, rendered it more than probable that the objects of the expedition could not have been completed during that year; and as they should have no means of subsistence on returning to Repulse Bay, it would have been necessary to pass the winter at Churchill.

Having once formed his plans, the doctor lost no time in putting them into execution. A house had to be built, provision stores and observatories erected, fisheries established, hunting parties sent out, fuel collected, and all the multifarious preparations for a winter campaign in the regions of ice, fog, snow, and desolation, attended to. Accordingly, a party of the men were immediately despatched to bring over the boat, and place her in a place of safety, while Dr. Rae, shouldering his gun, sallied forth to look for an eligible site whereon to erect his dwelling. After a lengthened search, no better place could be found than a deep valley, about a hundred and fifty yards to the eastward of North Pole River, and not far from the spot where they had originally landed. Besides being the best locality as regarded shelter, there was the additional advantage of several large bays close at hand, which were likely to produce fish. During his survey, Dr. Rae fell in with a covey of ptarmigan, out of which he bagged eighteen brace in a couple of hours, an earnest of the plentiful supply of food which they afterwards obtained.

At this time it became a matter of serious consideration what was to be done for fuel. There was not a single tree in the whole land; and even willows were scarce and small-sized. Of these, however, they set vigorously to work to collect as many as possible, and it was hoped that, by dint of economy and a supply of oil from the

natives, they should be able to keep the fire going all winter.

On the 2d September the house was finished. The walls, formed of mud and clay, were fully two feet thick; three small openings were left, into which a like number of windows were fixed, having two panes of glass each. The door was made of parchment deer-skins, stretched over a wooden frame. The roof was in keeping with the other parts of this palace, being constructed of the oars and masts of the boats with a moose-skin and oiled-cloth covering. The entire edifice measured, internally, twenty feet long by fourteen wide; height in front, seven and a half feet, sloping to five and a half at the back. One end of this space was partitioned off with a screen of moose-skins; and besides forming the library, parlour, and bed-room of Dr. Rae, also served as a store-room for the pemmican which was to be the travelling provision of the party on the following spring, or their last hope in case of starvation. A meat store was built close to the dwelling-house, and afterwards, when the snow became sufficiently consolidated to form slabs, two observatories were built with a pillar of ice in each—one for the dip circle, the other for a horizontally suspended needle on which to try the effect of the Aurora. The establishment, when completed, was called Fort Hope, and truly a more hopeful band of men have seldom tenanted a house or dwelt in a land less hopeful in *appearance* than was the little fort of Dr. Rae and his *voyageurs* on the well-named shores of Repulse Bay.

The whole time and energies of the party were now devoted to providing themselves with the means of sustaining life and caloric; and in accomplishing this, they found themselves full occupation. The following is a description of their procedure:—

“The routine of our day’s work,” says Rae, “was as fol-

lows: In the morning we were up before daylight; the men got orders for the several duties they had to perform, which were principally carried on out of doors, and at which they set to work immediately after rolling up their bedding and taking breakfast. This meal usually consisted of boiled venison, the water with which it was cooked being converted into a very excellent soup by the addition of some deers' blood, and a handful or two of flour. Our dinner, or rather supper, consisted of the same materials as our breakfast, and was taken about four or five o'clock; after that, my time was employed in writing my journal, or making calculations, whilst the men were busy improving themselves in reading, arithmetic, &c., in which I assisted them as much as my time would permit. Divine service was read every Sunday when practicable."

Towards the end of September, the pools of water were frozen over, and a considerable portion of the bay set fast, its smooth surface being broken here and there by the thick heads of the seals, who did not seem to relish the idea of being debarred from an occasional visit to the atmospheric world, and took this method of keeping air-holes open during the winter. The deer also became numerous at this time, and often tempted the doctor, who pleads guilty to the charge of being much addicted to field-sports, to exchange the sextant for the rifle, an exchange which was certainly advantageous to the larder, for he tells us that, out of ten deer shot one day, seven were killed by himself within a few miles of the house. The sporting-book for September showed that they had been diligent and successful: 63 deer, 5 hares, 1 seal, 172 partridges, and 116 salmon and trout, having been brought in.

About the beginning of October the cold became sufficiently intense to penetrate within doors; but this, strange

though it may appear, added to, rather than diminished, their comfort—for a time at least—as it froze the clay-walls of the building, which had at first been disagreeably damp. The frost, however, effectually removed this, until the succeeding spring thawed them down again.

On the 19th the doctor very narrowly escaped an unpleasant rencontre with a deer. “When out shooting,” says he, “having killed one deer, I went in pursuit of another (a large buck) that had been wounded, and put four balls through him. Thinking that the last ball had settled the business (for he had fallen), I went carelessly up to him without reloading my rifle, and when within a few yards I exclaimed, ‘Ah! poor fellow, you are done for at last,’ when the deer, as if he understood what I said, and thought I was adding insult to injury, sprang to his legs in a moment, and, at a couple of bounds, his horns were within a foot of me. Circumstanced as I was, I thought with Falstaff, ‘that discretion was the better part of valour,’ and beat a hasty retreat, laughing heartily all the time at the strange figure we must have cut. Taking the deer by the horns could have been of no use, and might have cost me some troublesome bruises and scratches.”

Notwithstanding the strenuous exertions that had been made, it was found, towards the middle of November, that they could not afford fuel to dry their clothes; warm food being considered more essential to health and comfort than dry clothing. They therefore adopted the plan of taking them under the blankets at night, and drying them by the heat of their bodies! As may be supposed, this was not agreeable, particularly when the cold became so great as to freeze the moisture which collected in the house during the day, depositing it in a thick coat on the blankets, which were found sparkling with *hoar frost* when they retired to rest at night; and these blankets were not entirely free

from ice till the first of March, when the sun first became powerful enough to dry them! Dr. Rae tells us that his waistcoat became so stiff at last, owing to the constant deposit of moisture from his breath, which was frozen as soon as deposited, that he could scarcely manage to button it; and, as the fuel became more scarce, the heat raised in Fort Hope was never sufficient to thaw this said garment. On the 1st of February, however, the waistcoat experienced a temporary disenchantment from its sad condition, on the occasion of its wearer paying a visit to the snow habitation of an Esquimaux, which edifice was so warm that the waistcoat actually thawed! As time wore on, things grew more and more desperate; and one cannot help smiling at the cool way in which Dr. Rae speaks of his discomforts. The room in which they lived was so constantly filled with tobacco smoke, that it was not quite certain whether it or atmospheric air predominated. "Of course," says the doctor (who was no smoker), "I might to a great extent have put a stop to this, but the poor fellows appeared to receive so much comfort from the use of the pipe, that it would have been cruelty to do so for the sake of saving myself a trifling inconvenience." In speaking of the cold, he says, "Of oil our stock was so small that we had been forced to keep early and late hours, namely, lying occasionally fourteen hours in bed, as we found that to sit up in a house in which the temperature was *some degrees below zero*, without either light or fire, was not very pleasant!" Nevertheless, the whole party seemed actually to enjoy themselves under these circumstances; and one poor fellow who had his knee frozen while in bed, only got laughed at for his effeminacy, instead of being commiserated, when he made known the fact!

On the 28th of January 1847, North Pole River was frozen to the bottom, so that it became necessary to go to

lake about half a mile from the house for water. During the constant gales which swept the snow-drift in thick volumes round their little dwelling, the boat became completely drifted over, so that not a trace of her was to be seen. She was found at last; and after the greater part of the men had been employed for fourteen days in clearing her of snow, she was at length extricated from a hole more than twelve feet deep.

Wolves were exceedingly numerous during the whole winter. One morning Ooligbuck shot one, not more than ten yards from the door of the house, and six or eight more were seen not far off. When pressed by hunger, these fierce but cowardly brutes, if strong in numbers, will sometimes attack a man. Early one morning, before day-light, Dr. Rae met a pack. "I observed," says he, "a band of animals coming over a rising ground at a quick pace directly towards me. I at first supposed them to be deer, but on a nearer approach they proved to be wolves, seventeen in number. They continued to advance at full speed until within forty yards, when they formed a sort of half circle to leeward. Hoping to send a ball through one, I knelt down and took what I thought a sure aim at a large fellow that was nearest; unfortunately it was not broad day-light, and the rascals all kept end on to me, so that the ball merely cut off a line of hair and a piece of skin from his side. They apparently did not expect to meet with such a reception, for, after looking at me a second or two, they trotted off, no doubt as much disappointed at not making a breakfast of me, as I was at missing my aim. Had they come to close quarters, which they sometimes do when hard pressed for food, I had a large and strong knife which would have proved a very efficient weapon."

The winter passed slowly away; and, towards the month of March, the weather became somewhat milder, and the

deer began to migrate northward again. Still there were many weeks to pass away before the massive cakes of ice, which bound river, lake, and sea, would yield to the power of spring and set the waters free. Dr. Rae had determined to prosecute part of his discoveries on the ice, and accordingly about this time he began to make preparations for setting out. Two sledges were constructed of the batens which lined the inside of the boat, three of which were nailed together to form runners of sufficient thickness. It had been intended to start on the 1st of April, but this was prevented by an accident which happened to Ooligbuck. He had been out hunting one day, and happened accidentally to stumble. In falling, a large dagger, which he usually carried, ran completely through his arm, and caused such a flow of blood that he had scarcely strength left to return to the fort. A little care, however, soon restored him; and preparations were made for setting out finally on the 5th of April.

The men who went on this winter expedition were, Dr. Rae, George Flett, John Corrigan, William Adamson, Ooligbuck's son, and Ivitchuk, an Esquimaux. The provisions, &c., were drawn on two sledges, to each of which four dogs were harnessed. Their provision for the journey consisted of three bags of pemmican, seventy rein-deer tongues, half a hundredweight of flour, some tea, chocolate, and sugar, besides a little alcohol and oil for fuel. Each man had a blanket and a supply of moccasins and socks. Thus equipped, they started from Fort Hope early in the morning, in the midst of a gale of wind, with clouds of drifting snow. Towards breakfast-time, however, the weather smiled propitiously on them. The clouds dispersed, leaving the deep blue of the wintry sky to spread a gladdening influence over the scene and over the spirits of the arctic travellers. *Five* suns shone forth with dazzling

brilliancy ! four of which, however, were parhelia, or mock suns, and they rivalled in brightness the orb of day himself. The track followed was that formerly pursued in the boat ; their intention being to cross the isthmus that separates Akkoolee from Repulse Bay, and coast along the former on the ice until they reached Lord Mayor's Bay, which was the most southerly part of Boothia Felix discovered by Sir John Ross.

During the day's march, numerous bands of deer crossed their path, which served greatly to enliven the scene, and proved a capital stimulus to the dogs, which, from the bad state of the roads, were frequently inclined to lag. Towards seven o'clock in the evening the whole party began to feel inclined for rest, and finally called a halt on the eastern shore of Christie Lake, where they prepared to pass the night.

In this world of wonders, we become so much accustomed to hear of and to behold astounding facts, that they cease very much to make any impression upon us. Nevertheless, we do think that it is somewhat calculated to make an impression on the most obtuse minds, to be told that Dr. Rae and his men built a house *every evening* during their journey, and forsook it, without the smallest feeling of regret, *every morning* ! But let the doctor speak for himself. "Our usual mode," says he, "of preparing lodgings for the night was as follows:—As soon as we had selected a spot for our snow-house, our Esquimaux, assisted by one or more of the men, commenced cutting out blocks of snow. When a sufficient number of these had been raised, the builder commenced his work, his assistants supplying him with the material. A good roomy dwelling was thus raised in an hour, if the snow was in a good state for building. Whilst our principal mason was thus occupied, another of the party was busy

erecting a kitchen, which, although our cooking was none of the most delicate or extensive, was still a necessary addition to our establishment, had it been only to thaw snow. As soon as the snow-hut was completed, our sledges were unloaded, and everything eatable (including parchmentskin and moose-skin shoes, which had now become favourite articles with the dogs) taken inside. Our bed was next made, and by the time the snow was thawed or the water boiled, as the case might be, we were all ready for supper. When we used alcohol for fuel (which we usually did in stormy weather), no kitchen was required."

They sat rent-free, however, which no doubt reconciled them in some degree to their cold dwelling, which, besides being unheated by ought save the animal caloric of the inmates, was but dimly illuminated by a small window of clear ice placed in the roof. These truly primitive edifices were usually erected in a couple of hours, and are spoken of as being "*very snug!*" Be this as it may, the whole party spent the night in one of these snow-huts, and on the following morning emerged, like bees out of a huge white hive, to resume their toilsome journey.

A little before noon they arrived at a snow-hut inhabited by two Esquimaux, one of whom, Kei-ik-too-oo, agreed to accompany them for a short way with his sledge, to help them over the isthmus. Some of the party were slightly affected with snow-blindness, a disease very common in arctic regions, especially in spring, when the intense brilliancy of the sun causes such a glare upon the white snow as to produce severe inflammation of the eyes. The Indians do not take any precautions to prevent snow-blindness, although they suffer very much from it; but the Esquimaux, who are every way more ingenious than their red neighbours, make wooden blinds or spectacles, which very effectually prevents this unpleasant malady. On the 7th

they reached the sea. The weather was dark and gloomy, though somewhat milder, the thermometer standing five degrees above zero. The coast was found to be so rough with broken ice, that the men and dogs had great difficulty in dragging the sledges over it; and a stiff breeze, which dashed the snow-drift continually in their faces, prevented them from picking their way along the smoothest parts. One of the dogs also became so much exhausted as to be quite useless; so it was unharnessed, and allowed to walk behind. Even this it was not able to do long, and at last it lay down. Rather than leave it to the mercy of the wolves, they shot it. At a small river, near which they encamped on the 9th, a number of loose stones were found, which enabled them to form a "*cache*" of provisions for the homeward journey.

The coast varied much in appearance, being in some places low and flat, at other parts more elevated and broken. Several hills were also observed a few miles inland, one of which appeared to be fully five hundred feet high. The latitude was observed here, $67^{\circ} 53' 24''$, and the coast turned off to the westward, forming a point, which was named Cape Weynton.

Thus they proceeded, sometimes making rapid progress, when the ice on the sea was smooth and the weather calm; at other times struggling slowly against biting winds and driving snow, or stumbling over the broken ice along the shore. Dr. Rae frequently fell behind the party to take the bearings and observations, on which occasions he had considerable difficulty sometimes in preventing his face and fingers from freezing. The scarcity of fuel annoyed them not a little. Their alcohol and oil ran so low at last, that it could not be used to cook the pemmican; and for the purpose of economising it still further, they gave up using it to melt snow for water, and obtained this indis-

pensable fluid by filling two small kettles and a bladder with snow, which they took to bed with them! Strange bed-fellows, and somewhat unpleasant too, for on one occasion the fastening of the bladder came off, and the natural consequences followed. Severe work had now given the dogs such strong appetites, that they became perfectly ravenous, and although they received a fair allowance of provisions, devoured everything that came in their way—shoes, leather mitts, and even a worsted belt, was eaten, much to the chagrin of the owners, and the merriment of the others. The party usually supped on pemmican and cold water, as they could only afford one hot meal in the day, and preferred taking it in the morning.

On the 12th, being informed by the Esquimaux that, by crossing over the land in a north-west direction, to a large bay which he had formerly visited, the way would be shortened considerably, it was resolved to do so; and accordingly, leaving the coast at latitude $68^{\circ} 18'$ N., longitude $88^{\circ} 26'$ W., they struck across the land. Here the walking was found to be much more laborious, and the snow too soft to support the sledges, so that they were obliged to encamp an hour after noon on the borders of a small lake, as the dogs were quite knocked up. During the day they passed a small river, which was frozen to the bottom; but the ice on the lake was found to be only four feet eight inches thick, so that they cut through it, and enjoyed, for once, the luxury of drinking fresh water *ad libitum*. Ivitchuk drank with an intensity of zest that was of itself quite refreshing to behold. This part of the country was miserably barren. No signs of deer or musk-oxen were seen, the tracks of a few foxes alone indicating that the desolate spot was inhabited.

For several days after this, the weather became extremely stormy, and on the 14th it blew a complete storm

all night; nevertheless, Dr. Rae assures us that they were as comfortable in their snow-hive as if they had been lodged in the best house in England. Next day they reached the sea again, on the shores of a large bay upwards of twenty-three miles broad, which was named Pelly Bay, and encamped under the lee of a group of islands six miles from the shore. On the 16th the gale increased, with snow-drift from the north-west, so that it was impossible to advance. This did not much matter, however, as the doctor had intended to rest a day here to recruit the men and dogs, and at the same time to send out in search of the Esquimaux, whose tracks had been discovered in the neighbourhood, and from whom he hoped to procure some seals' flesh and blubber; the first for food, and the latter for fuel. In this they were not successful, the drift being so thick that the men who were sent out could not see any distance. In the meantime Corrigan and Adamson had been collecting fuel, and Dr. Rae obtained an observation for latitude, which gave $68^{\circ} 53' 44''$, from which he concluded that Sir John Ross's most southerly discoveries could not be distant more than two days' journey.

It was now resolved that part of the men should be left here, while Dr. Rae should proceed the remainder of the way in company with two of the men. Flett and Corrigan were chosen for this service, being the strongest of the party, and the remainder were instructed to kill seals if they could; to trade with the natives, if they saw any; and, above all, to moderate their appetites to the lowest possible ebb, whether they could or not. Having made these arrangements, Dr. Rae and his men set off, and travelled briskly over the snow.

Being lightly laden, they made good progress. A brisk walk of seventeen miles brought them, an hour before noon of the 17th, to the shore, near a high point formed of dark

gray granite, which was named Cape Berens; and at 3 P.M. they came to two narrow points in a small bay, which were called the Twins, and between which they built their snow-hut for the night.

The morning of the 18th was fine, but hazy, with a light wind from the N.W., the thermometer 3° below zero, and the walking good, so that they soon traversed twelve miles of country, when they reached what proved to be the head of a deep inlet, whose western shores they had been tracing. It was named Halkett's Inlet. Two rein-deer were seen here. As there could be no doubt that they were now in the vicinity of Lord Mayor's Bay, they immediately struck across the land instead of following the coast. The walking proved to be very tiresome, however; and after floundering three miles through the deep snow, Dr. Rae ordered his men to halt and prepare their night's lodgings, while he proceeded on alone to search for the coast.

A walk of twenty minutes brought him to an inlet, not more than quarter of a mile wide, which he traced upwards of a league, when his course was again obstructed by land. There were some high rocks near at hand which he ascended, and from their summits thought he could discern rough ice in the desired direction. With renewed hopes, he slid down a declivity, plunged among snow, scrambled over rocks and through rough ice, until he gained a rising ground close to the sea-shore, from whose summit he beheld Lord Mayor's Bay stretching out before him far as the eye could reach, clothed with ice and studded with innumerable islands. These were the islands named *the sons of the clergy of the Church of Scotland* by Sir John Ross, to whose discoveries Dr. Rae had now joined his own; thus completing a link which had long been wanting in the chain of arctic geography, and going far to settle the

disputed point as to whether Boothia Felix is an island or a peninsula. There is still, however, a doubt hanging over this question. In his journey northward, Dr. Rae tells us that he was on the eve of making a survey of Pelly Bay, when he was informed by one of the natives that a complete view of its shores could be obtained from the island on which they were encamped. He accordingly ascended to the highest point, the evening being beautifully clear, and "obtained a distinct view of the whole bay, *except a small portion immediately under the sun.*" Dr. Rae does not appear to have entertained a doubt of this being a more distant part of the coast line; yet it is possible that this portion of the supposed bay may be a narrow strait, which perhaps communicates with the large bay seen by Messrs. Dease and Simpson from their farthest point of discovery, and from which it cannot be distant more than a hundred miles.

Having taken possession of his discoveries, Dr. Rae and his men returned to the companions they had left behind, whom they found in a fat and flourishing condition. They had taken advantage of the doctor's absence to supply themselves more largely from the pemmican bags than was at all necessary or expedient. Fortunately, however, a quantity of seals' flesh, blood, and blubber, was obtained from a party of Esquimaux whom they encountered during their march; and being thus reinforced, it was resolved to trace the shores of the peninsula across which they had formerly cut in their anxiety to reach Lord Mayor's Bay. This object was successfully accomplished after a severe walk, when they experienced the usual alternations from heat to cold, and storm to calm, in which the weather in these hyperborean climes seems to take such peculiar delight. The increasing power of the sun, too, rendered walking so difficult and painful during the day that they

were fain to reverse the ordinary course of things, and travel during the night, devoting the day to rest.

It was now approaching the end of April; and as it was desirable, if possible, to survey the shores of the Akkoollee (named by Dr. Rae Committee) Bay, before the breaking up of the ice, no time was lost in retracing their route to the fort at Repulse Bay. All the *caches* of provisions which had been made during the outward journey were found quite safe, and thus afforded them a plentiful supply of food. On the morning of the 5th of May they reached some Esquimaux dwellings on the shores of Christie's Lake, about fifteen miles from Fort Hope. "At 2 P.M. on the same day," says Rae, "we were again on the march, and arrived at our home at half-past 8 P.M., all well, but so black and scarred on the face from the combined effects of oil, smoke, and frost bites, that our friends would not believe but that some serious accident from the explosion of gunpowder had happened to us. Thus successfully terminated a journey little short of six hundred English miles, the longest, I believe, ever made on foot along the arctic coast."

During the absence of the exploring party, things had gone on prosperously at winter quarters. Provisions, although not superabundant, had been procured in sufficient quantities to prevent the necessity of breaking upon the pemmican, which they were so anxious to preserve for travelling fare. Once, indeed, after consuming all they had in store, and scouring the neighbourhood fruitlessly in search of game, they were obliged to have a dinner of tongues; but soon afterwards the deer became more numerous, the hunters more successful; and, during the remainder of their stay at Fort Hope, they never wanted fresh provisions. At the time of Dr. Rae's return with the exploring party, the meat store was well filled. This was a

happy circumstance, as they arrived as ravenous as wolves. The short but hearty congratulations over, they made a vigorous assault on the venison, and ate, according to their own confession, a great deal more than would have been good for them had the food been other than venison; as it was, however, they gormandized with impunity.

Several families of Esquimaux had taken up their residence about a quarter of a mile from the fort. Here they erected a city of snow, and occupied themselves in paying visits to the white men, when not engaged in killing seals or trapping deer. The way in which they approach seals is somewhat amusing. The hunter lays himself flat on his face upon the ice, and, by a series of motions, resembling those of the unsuspecting animal that sits enjoying the winter sun beside its ice-hole, approaches it with such seal-like grace that the animal is actually deceived into the belief that a friend desires his company, and, with commendable politeness, approaches to meet him. When near enough, the deceiver jumps to his feet, and the deceived bolts for his hole, but is generally intercepted and slain. The women are said to be particularly *au fait* at this work, and on such occasions arm themselves with a stout club with which to knock the seals on the nose. Deer were taken by the natives in pits dug in the snow, over which a thin cake of snow was spread; over this the deer walked, and were precipitated to the bottom of the hole. Wolves were also taken in this way.

Having recruited themselves at Fort Hope for some days, preparations were now made for another journey along the western shore of Melville Peninsula as far as the Straits of the Fury and Hecla. On this occasion Dr. Rae was accompanied by four of his men, who each carried a load of 70 lbs. weight, while the doctor himself carried his books, instruments, &c., which weighed altogether about 40 lbs.

Some of the party who were to remain behind, accompanied them to the shores of the bay, which they reached on the 16th of May, and then, bidding adieu to their comrades, commenced their journey.

Bad as the walking had been in their former expedition, it was nothing to what they experienced now. As soon as they had rounded a cape, designated Cape Thomas Simpson, after the distinguished arctic traveller of that name, the land turned to the eastward, and the walking became shockingly disagreeable. The whole shore was indented with deep, narrow inlets, which were so packed with rough and jagged masses of ice, that it cost the travellers many a deep sigh and ludicrous scramble. "At one moment," writes the energetic leader of the band, "we sank nearly waist-deep in snow, at another we were up to our knees in salt water, and then again on a piece of ice so slippery, that, with our wet and frozen shoes, it was impossible to keep from falling. Sometimes we had to crawl out of a hole on all fours like some strange-looking quadrupeds; at other times falling backwards, we were so hampered by the weight of our loads, that it was impossible to rise without throwing them off, or being assisted by one of our companions. We therefore found it better to follow the shores of the inlets than to cross them, although by so doing we had double the distance to go over."

At half-past three in the morning they encamped for the night! if we may be allowed the somewhat paradoxical expression. As usual, they constructed a snow-hut to sleep in, and another in which to cook their food. The walking became so bad, however, that they were ultimately obliged to curb their appetites, as, had they lived on full allowance, there would not have been enough food left for the return journey; and as comparatively few tracks of animals were seen, it was resolved on the 21st of May to content them-

selves in future with one meal per day, and that not over-abundant. Truly we cannot but admire the resolution of these iron-built men. It is bad enough to walk through and over slush, snow, ice, gravel, and rocks, on one's head, knees, neck, and shoulders (for these parts, from continual falls, seem to have come in contact with the ice very nearly as much as did their feet), with a full allowance of good provisions; but to be under the necessity of doing this with empty stomachs, is *so* bad, that we can find no term by which to characterize it! To add to their discomforts, the weather, during the greater part of the journey, was stormy, and heavy showers of snow fell continually, which rendered the walking, if possible, still more difficult. Still, there were occasional gleams of sunshine, which enabled the doctor to find his latitude and longitude, and cast a pleasant glow across their desolate track; creating also a sympathetic gleam of sunshine in their hearts. Among other pleasant things, too, there was one which caused a sunny ray of hope to warm their empty stomachs, and cause their longing mouths to water: this was the shooting of a fine buck, which, fortunately for them, and unfortunately for itself, crossed their path early on the morning of the 22d. Their first shot only wounded him, and he led them so long a chase that they were on the point of giving it up in despair, when Dr. Rae raised his rifle, and although far out of ordinary range, succeeded in sending a ball through its head. This proved a seasonable supply, and served to strengthen them greatly. Fuel was very scarce during the whole journey, and they were frequently under the necessity of taking their old friends—the kettles of snow—to bed with them, in order to save as much as possible their small supply of alcohol.

The general features of the coast along which they travelled were rough and varied; being in some places

quite level, and consisting of mud, shingle, and fragments of limestone; in other parts rising into bold rocky capes and headlands, and receding into deep bays and inlets, which were all more or less studded with rocky islands. As they advanced northwards, this became a more prominent feature in the landscape; the islands becoming so numerous at times, both in the bays and out to seaward, as to cause them some trouble in following the proper route. A few miles beyond Cape W. Mactavish, a large island of table-land was seen without a single rock *in situ* upon it. It is in latitude $67^{\circ} 42' 22''$ N., and longitude $86^{\circ} 30'$ W.; the strait that separated it from the mainland being not more than a mile and a half wide. It was named after his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. A few miles north of this they came to a bay, on the north shore of which were two strangely-shaped rocks of granite, which had the appearance of an old ruin or portion of a fortress, of a square form, and each of about twenty-five feet high. On the 25th they reached a bay, to which was given the name of Garry, after one of the Hudson's Bay Company's directors. It was the most curiously-shaped and irregular in outline of any that had been seen, and was crowded with islands. Five miles inland was a range of hills varying from five to eight hundred feet high. The latitude here was $68^{\circ} 59' 15''$ N., and longitude $84^{\circ} 48'$ W.

At this point the provisions began to fail, a circumstance all the more to be regretted that a day or two would have brought them to the Straits of the Fury and Hecla.

On the 25th Dr. Rae had left two of his men behind, for the purpose of procuring some venison, while he and the other two advanced with a small stock of provisions. As this was now nearly finished, they could only advance half a night farther; so, leaving another of the men behind, the doctor pressed forward with the remaining one, and found

himself, on the morning of the 28th of May, on the south shore of a large bay, from which he obtained a distinct view of the coast for about twelve miles. To the most distant visible point was given the name of Cape Ellice, after one of the directors of the company. It lies in latitude $69^{\circ} 42' N.$, longitude $85^{\circ} 8' W.$ The bay was named after the celebrated Sir Edward Parry, and the headland on which they stood was called Cape Crozier. From Cape Ellice the Straits of the Fury and Hecla could not be distant more than ten miles; but from want of provisions, it was impossible to proceed; so Dr. Rae and his man took formal possession of their discoveries, and, once more, turned their faces homeward.

Thus terminated the discoveries of 1846-47, which have left but a few links of the chain incomplete. The few miles yet unsurveyed between Cape Ellice and the Straits of the Fury and Hecla, are scarcely worth speaking of as unknown ground; since, from the nature of the coast, and the immense extent of the neighbouring sea, there can be no doubt that they consist of a line of coast similar to that already traversed by Dr. Rae. The only portion of the North American coast that now remains to be surveyed is that which lies between Rae's farthest western, and Simpson's farthest eastern discoveries, comprehending a space of about one hundred miles; which, though not great in extent, has occasioned more dispute perhaps than any other part of the coast; as, within this *terra incognita* lies, either the isthmus which connects, or the strait which flows between, Boothia Felix and the mainland.

During the homeward journey nothing of particular interest occurred. It was but a repetition of the same rough walking, snow-hut building, neck-or-nothing scrambling, and short commons, that had characterized their advance northward; with, now and then, an incident, chiefly of a

ludicrous kind, which served to enliven the way. On one occasion their snow-house, owing to the increasing power of the sun, gave way, and proved its evanescent character by tumbling down about their ears; and a few days afterwards the same melancholy instance of decay took place while they were sitting at supper. Dr. Rae speaks of this journey as being the most fatiguing he had ever undergone. He had often walked on snow shoes, with a day's provisions, axe, and blanket, on his back, forty, fifty, and on one occasion sixty-five miles; but this out-did all his former experience. This, doubtless, was as much owing to the want of food as anything else; for he speaks of his belt coming in *six inches* during the journey! The whole party, however, seem to have enjoyed wonderfully good spirits in the midst of these hardships, and the only time they were fairly floored, and induced to grumble at their fate, was when they ran short of tobacco, and had to retire to rest after the day's toil without the comfort of a soothing pipe.

On the 9th of June the travellers once more arrived at Fort Hope. Here everything was found in a prosperous condition. The stores were loaded with venison, the house, though somewhat damaged in consequence of the immense weight of snow which had accumulated on its roof in spite of all efforts made to prevent it, was still in good repair; and the weather began to give indubitable indications of the speedy departure of aged winter, and the hilarious advent of youthful spring.

In narrating the progress of events in these regions of our world, we feel that it is necessary occasionally to check the imaginations of those readers who, having passed their days in the sunny regions of the south, or in the more equable climates of the temperate zones, will naturally form erroneous conceptions of things, if not sometimes

reminded of the peculiarities of the seasons in the icy north; and it may not be out of place here to state, that the indications of approaching spring, of which we have made mention, were *not* the chirping of birds among the budding trees, or the trickling of rills among the green meadows. It was June, and well might the incautious reader imagine such things; but we have already said it is necessary to check this erroneous tendency of the imagination. The wide sea still presented its cold, solid surface of ice, in protracted defiance of the sun. Snow covered the landscape, and hung in masses on the drooping willows. Water, except in the profound depths of the laboriously excavated waterbole, was unknown; and all around, above, below, was winter—cold, obdurate, adamant winter! The only signs of the approach of spring were the increasing power of the sun, and consequent warmth of the atmosphere, and softening of the surface of the snow; the occasional falling of a drop of water from an icicle—an event full of interest to those who know how painfully long an icicle retains a *dry* point in these climes; the apparition of an adventurous sand-piper, and the cackle of a solitary laughing-goose.

These and similar occurrences increased and became more frequent every day, though it was long ere a spot of verdant green refreshed their eyes, and brought to remembrance other lands and bygone days. Dr. Rae mentions in his journal, that on the 21st of June the ice on the lakes was still four feet thick, though very porous and unsafe.

On the 13th, divine service was read, and thanks returned to God for His protection throughout the winter, and during the late journey.

During the latter part of this month the weather was exceedingly stormy and variable, but the destruction of winter's power continued to progress rapidly, and they finally deserted their dwelling, which had become disa-

greeable from the thawing and consequent dampness of the clay, of which it was chiefly formed, for the less substantial but more agreeable habitation of a tent. Esquimaux continued to visit and trade with them from time to time, supplying them with seal-skin boots, and other articles of savage clothing. It is recorded to the honour of these poor creatures, that they were not guilty of stealing during all the transactions they had with the party—a vice which characterizes, more or less, all the other tribes on the North American coast. One incorrigible rascal, however, annoyed them by his depredations. This was Ooligbuck's son, who not only appropriated all the tobacco belonging to the men on which he could lay hands, but cleared off all the buttons from their trousers, and consummated his wickedness by twice opening his father's bale and eating the old man's sugar.

On the 23d the sun was seen at midnight, his lower limb touching the high grounds to the northward; but the weather still continued cold, notwithstanding the advanced state of the season, and it was not till the end of July that the ice on the bay began to give way before the gushing torrents that issued from the swollen current of North Pole River. Out at sea it looked firm and white as ever.

The 25th of July was the anniversary of their arrival at Repulse Bay, which appeared in a very different garb at that time. Dr. Rae remarks, that "last summer at this date there was no ice to be seen in Repulse Bay; the snow had nearly all disappeared, and the various streams had shrunk to their lowest level. *Now* there was not a pool of water in the bay, except where the entrance of a river or creek had worn away or broken up the ice for a short distance. There was much snow on the ground in many places, and most of the streams were still deep and rapid."

To add to this incongruous jumble of summer and winter,

heat and cold, the mosquitoes made their appearance; "but this," says Rae, "I was not sorry for, as the Esquimaux said that the ice in the bay would soon break up after these tormentors made their appearance."

About this time Dr. Rae observed that a number of large boulder-stones made their appearance on the top of the ice in the bay. "I was much puzzled," says he, "to make out how they came there. They could not have fallen from the shore, as the beach was sloping at the place, nor had they been carried in by drift ice of the previous season. The only way that I could account for it was this: At the commencement of winter, the ice, after acquiring considerable thickness, had become frozen to the stones lying on the bottom, and raised them up when the tide came in. The stones would get gradually enclosed in the ice, as it grew thicker by repeated freezings, whilst by the process of evaporation, which goes on very rapidly in spring, the upper surface was continually wasting away, so that in June or July there was little of the first formed ice remaining; and thus the stones, which at first were on the under surface of the ice, appeared on the top. This may perhaps in some measure account for boulders, sand, shells, &c. being sometimes found where geologists fancy they ought not to be."

A severe storm arose on the 10th of August, accompanied by rain and snow. It had the happy effect of creating great havoc among the ice in the bay, which, when it abated, presented a clear sea as far as the point. All was now bustle and preparation for sea. The boats were overhauled and got ready; one of the anchors and chain were missed, and at last it was recollected that they had been placed on a spot of ground which, at an earlier period of the previous year, was exposed to view, but was now buried under a mass of ice eight feet thick! Out of this tomb it

was speedily dug, and removed to the boat. The natives crowded round them at seeing these vigorous preparations for departure, and Dr. Rae, in the fulness of his heart, began to distribute among them all the files, knives, and axes that could be conveniently spared. The weather continued to improve rapidly. Nibitabo was despatched to procure venison for the voyage, and succeeded in shooting two young deer, while St. Germain and Mineau set the nets for a supply of salmon; and, on the 12th of August, all being got ready, the boats were launched, and the party floated once more on the salt sea. Dr. Rae was about to distribute among the Esquimaux their spare kettles and some hoop iron, before taking final leave of them, when it was discovered that one of the boat's compasses was missing. Search was made, but no compass was to be found. At last it was discovered under some heather, where it had been concealed by one of the women. The farewell gifts were then distributed, and some of the men appeared to be really sorry at parting, wading into the water to shake hands with the doctor as the boat moved slowly from the shore.

A light air of N.E. wind carried them slowly from the desolate scene of their recent home; and, leaving Repulse Bay to the swarthy hunters of the walrus and the seal, they shaped their course for York Fort, at which place they arrived on the 6th of September 1847, having been absent nearly fifteen months in the dark and stormy regions of the north.

The northern coasts of America were not again visited from the landward side until the year 1848, when the increasing anxiety regarding the fate of the gallant veteran, Sir John Franklin, induced Government to despatch an overland searching expedition under the

command of Sir John Richardson. Dr. Rae was chosen as a fitting companion to the well-known colleague of Franklin in his former voyages; and in March 1848 they sailed from Liverpool, and proceeded through the United States and Canada to the scene of their operations at the mouth of the Mackenzie. As the ground over which they travelled, however, is the same with that explored by former discoverers, the details of whose exploits have been already recounted in this volume, it is not necessary to do more than say that, during the years 1848, '49, and '50, Drs. Richardson and Rae made a minute but unsuccessful search for the missing ships along the various parts of the arctic coast, where it was considered probable they might have been wrecked. A short account of these journeys, along with a concise and graphic description of the various searching expeditions sent out from time to time, will be found in "Polar Seas and Regions."

The little spot of unknown territory which has already cost the British nation so much, is soon to be surveyed, we understand, by Dr. Rae, whose fitness for the object has been amply attested by his energetic and successful explorations in 1846. Should he be successful, a question of considerable importance will be finally settled, and the narrative of his travels and exploits in the regions of perpetual ice and snow will form another chapter in the interesting annals of arctic story.

THE END.