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NOTES

OF A

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS' SERVICE

IN THE

HUDSON'S BAY TERRITORY.

BY JOHN M'LEAN.

11

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET,

Publisher in Ordinary to Her Majesty.

1849.

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PREFACE.

THE writer's main object in first committing to writing the following Notes was to while away the many lonely and wearisome hours which are the lot of the Indian trader;— a wish to gratify his friends by the narrative of his adventures had also some share in inducing him to take up the pen.

While he might justly plead the hackneyed excuse of being urged by not a few of those friends to publish these Notes, in extenuation of the folly or presumption, or whatever else it may be termed, of obtruding them on the world, in these days of "making many books;" he feels that he can rest his vindication on higher grounds. Although

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several works of much merit have appeared in connexion with the subject, the Hudson's Bay territory is yet, comparatively speaking, but little known; no faithful representation has yet been given of the situation of the Company's servants—the Indian traders; with the degradation and misery of the many Indian tribes, or rather remnants of tribes, scattered throughout this vast territory, the public are little acquainted; erroneous statements have gone abroad in regard to the Company's treatment of these Indians; as also in regard to the government, policy, and management of the Company's affairs. On these points, he conceives that his plain, unvarnished tale may throw some new light.

Some of the details may seem trivial, and some of the incidents to be without much interest to the general reader; still as it was one chief design of the writer to draw

a faithful picture of the Indian trader's life, —its toils, annoyances, privations, and perils, when on actual service, or on a trading or exploring expedition ; its loneliness, cheerlessness, and ennui, when not on actual service ; together with the shifts to which he is reduced in order to combat that ennui ;—such incidents, trifling though they may appear to be, he conceives may yet convey to the reader a livelier idea of life in the Hudson's Bay Company's territories than a more ambitious or laboured description could have done. No one, indeed, who has passed his life amid the busy haunts of men, can form any just idea of the interest attached by the lonely trader to the most trifling events, such as the arrival of a stranger Indian,—the coming of a new clerk,—a scuffle among the Indians,—or a sudden change of weather. No one, unaccustomed to their " short commons, " can conceive the intense, it may be said fearful, interest and excitement

with which the issue of a fishing or hunting expedition is anticipated.

Should his work contribute, in any degree, to awaken the sympathy of the Christian world in behalf of the wretched and degraded Aborigines of this vast territory; should it tend in any way to expose, or to reform the abuses in the management of the Hudson's Bay Company, or to render its monopoly less injurious to the natives than hitherto it has been; the writer's labour will have been amply compensated. Interested as he still is in that Company, with a considerable stake depending on its returns, it can scarcely be supposed that he has any intention, wantonly or unnecessarily, to injure its interests.

GUELPH, CANADA WEST,

1st *March*, 1849.

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NOTES

OF A

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS' SERVICE

AT THE

HUDSON'S BAY TERRITORY.



CHAPTER I.

THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY AND TERRITORIES.

THAT part of British North America known by the name of the Hudson's Bay territory extends from the eastern coast in about 60° W. long. to the Russian boundary in 142° W.; and from the Gulf of St. Lawrence, along the Ottawa River and the northern shores of Lakes Huron and Superior, and thence to the boundary line of the United States; extending in latitude thence to the northern limit

of America; being in length about 2,600 miles, and in breadth about 1,400 miles. This extensive space may be divided into three portions, each differing most materially in aspect and surface. The first and most extensive is that which is on the east, from the Labrador coast, round Hudson's Bay, northward to the Arctic region, and westward to the Rocky Mountains. This is entirely a wooded district, affording that plentiful supply of timber which forms so large a branch of the Canadian export trade. These interminable forests are principally composed of pines of large size, but which towards the northern boundary are of a very stunted growth. Another portion is the prairie country, reaching from Canada westward to the Rocky Mountains, and intersected by the boundary line of the United States. In general, the soil is rich alluvial, which being covered with luxuriant herbage, affords pasturage for the vast herds of wild buffaloes which roam over these extensive plains. The western part is that which lies between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Ocean, including the Oregon territory, which

was likely to have led to a serious misunderstanding between Great Britain and the United States.

These extensive portions are divided by the Hudson's Bay Company into four departments, and these departments are again subdivided into districts. At the head of each department and district a chief factor or chief trader generally presides, to whom all the officers within their respective jurisdictions are amenable. Those in charge of posts, whatever may be their rank, are subject to the authority of the person at the head of the district; and that person receives his instructions from the superintendent of the department. The whole affairs of the country at large are regulated by the Governor and Council, and their decisions again are referred, for final adjustment, to the Governor and Committee in London.

The Montreal department comprehends all the districts and posts along the Gulf and River St. Lawrence; also the different posts along the banks of the Ottawa and the interior country. The

depôt of the department is at Lachine, where all the returns are collected, and the outfits prepared.

The southern department has its depôt at Moose Factory, in James's Bay; it includes the districts of Albany, Rupert's House, Temiscamingue, Lake Huron, and Lake Superior, together with several isolated posts along the shores of the Bay.

The northern department is very extensive, having for its southern boundary the line which divides the British from the American territories, sweeping east and west from Lac La Pluie, in 95° W. long. and 49° N. lat. to the Rocky Mountains in 115° W. long.; then, with the Rocky Mountains for its western boundary, it extends northward to the Arctic Sea. The whole of this vast country is divided into the following districts: Norway House, Rainy Lake, Red River, Saskatchewan, English River, Athabasca, and McKenzie's River. The depôt of this department is York Factory, in Hudson's Bay, and is considered the grand emporium; here the grand Council is held, which is formed of the Governor and such chief

factors and chief traders as may be present. The duty of the latter is to sit and listen to whatever measures the Governor may have determined on, and give their assent thereto, no debating or vetoing being ever thought of; the Governor being absolute, his measures therefore more require obedience than assent. Chief traders are also permitted to sit in council as auditors, but have not the privilege of being considered members.

The Columbia department is bounded on the east by the Rocky Mountains, and on the west by the Pacific Ocean. An ideal line divides it on the south from the province of California, in lat. $41^{\circ} 30'$; and it joins the Russian boundary in lat. 55° . This, although a very extensive department, does not consist of many districts; New Caledonia is the principal, situated among the Rocky Mountains, and having several of its posts established along the banks of the Fraser River, which disembogues itself into the Gulf of Georgia in nearly 49° lat. and 122° W. long. The next is Colville, on the Columbia River,

along with some isolated posts near the confluence of the same river. The *forts*, or trading posts, along the north-west coast, have each their respective commander. The shipping business is conducted by a person appointed for that purpose, who is styled, *par excellence*, the head of the "Naval department." The Company have a steamboat and several sailing vessels, for the purpose chiefly of trading with the natives along the coast. The primary object, however, is not so much the trade, as to keep brother Jonathan in check, (whose propensity for encroaching has of late been "pretty much" exhibited,) and to deter him from forming any establishments on the coasts; there being a just apprehension that if once a footing were obtained on the coast, an equal eagerness might be manifested for extending their locations into the interior. Strong parties of hunters are also constantly employed along the southern frontier for the purpose of destroying the fur-bearing animals in that quarter; the end in view being to secure the interior from the encroachments of foreign interlopers. The depôt of

this department is at Fort Vaucouver, on the Columbia River.

The Hudson's Bay Company, as it at present exists, was incorporated in the winter of 1820—21, a coalition having been then formed with the North-West Company. Upon this taking place, an Act of Parliament was obtained which gave them not only the possession of the territory they had originally held by virtue of their royal charter, but also investing them with the same rights and privileges conferred by that charter in and over all the territories that had been settled by the North-West Company for a term of twenty-one years.

The Governor, Deputy-Governor, and managing Committee, are, properly speaking, the only capitalists. The stock is divided into one hundred shares; sixty of which their Honours retain for themselves; and the remaining forty are divided among the chief traders and chief factors, who manage the affairs in the Indian country. A chief factor holds two of these shares, and a chief trader one; of which they retain the full interest for one

year after they retire, and half interest for the six following years. These cannot be said to be stockholders, for they are not admitted to any share in the executive management; but according to the present system they are termed Commissioned Officers, and receive merely the proceeds of the share allotted to them. They enjoy, however, one very superior advantage,—they are not subjected to bear their share in any losses which the Company may sustain. It is generally reckoned that the value of one share is on an average about 350*l.* sterling a-year. By the resignation of two chief traders, one share is at the Company's disposal the year after, which is then bestowed on a clerk. When two chief factors retire, a chief trader is promoted in like manner. Promotion also take place when the shares of the retired partners fall in.

CHAPTER II.

I ENTER THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY'S SERVICE—PADRE
GIBERT.

I ENTERED the service of the Company in the winter of 1820—21, and after passing my contract at Montreal in the month of January, I took up my residence for the remainder of the season with a French priest, in the parish of Petit le Maska, for the purpose of studying the French language. The Padre was a most affable, liberal-minded man, a warm friend of England and Englishmen, and a staunch adherent to their government, which he considered as the most perfect under the sun. The fact is, that the old gentleman, along with many others of his countrymen who had escaped from the horrors of the French Revolution, had

found an asylum in our land of freedom, which they could find nowhere else; and the personal advantages that had accrued to him from that circumstance, naturally induced a favourable disposition towards his benefactors, their laws, and their institutions. Though the Padre was extremely liberal in his political opinions, his management of his worldly affairs bore the stamp of the most sordid parsimony. He worshipped the golden calf, and his adoration of the image was manifest in everything around him. He wore a cassock of cloth which had in former times been of a black colour, but was now of a dusky grey, the woollen material being so completely incorporated with dust as to give it that colour. His table was furnished with such fare as his farm produced, with the addition, on particular occasions, of a bottle of *black strap*. A charming nymph, of some fifty years of age or so, had the management of the household, and discharged all her duties with strict decorum and care. I have the beauties of her person in my mind's eye to this day. She was hump-backed, short-necked, and one-eyed, and

squinted bewitchingly with the remaining one: she had a short leg and a long one, a high shoulder and a low. In short, the dear creature seemed to be formed, or rather deformed, by the hand of nature on purpose to fill the situation of housekeeper for a priest,—so that whatever might be his age, no scandal could possibly attach itself to him from such a housekeeper. The manservant was directly the counterpart of the charming Marguerite; he also was far advanced in the vale of years, and was of a most irascible temper. To stir up Joseph to the *grinning point* was a very easy matter; and his frantic gesticulations, when thus goaded to wrath by our teasing pleasantries, (there were two other young gentlemen beside myself,) were of the most extraordinary description, and afforded infinite amusement. We never failed to amuse ourselves at Joseph's expense, when the Padre's absence permitted our doing so with impunity,—especially as a small present of tobacco, which was always kept at hand for such occasions, soon made us friends again. But it sometimes happened that such jokes were carried

too far, so as to render the offering of *incense* quite unacceptable, when the touch of *metal* could alone produce the desired effect.

I remained with Father Gibert until spring, and shall take leave of him by relating an anecdote or two illustrative of his loyalty and benevolence. Some time during Madison's unprovoked war with Great Britain, an alarm came from the upper part of the parish of which Father Gibert was *curé*, that a party of Americans had been seen marching down the country. The *Capitaine* of militia, who was the *curé's* next door neighbour, was immediately sent for, and by their joint influence and authority a considerable number of *habitans* were soon assembled under arms, such as they were. The Father then shouldering his musket, and placing himself at the head of his parishioners, led them into his garden, which was enclosed by a picket fence, and bordered on the highway. Here the loyal band took their stand under cover of the fence, waiting to give Jonathan a warm reception the moment he came within reach. The supposed Americans

proved to be a small detachment of British troops, and thus the affair ended.

On another occasion during the same period the Padre's loyalty and good humour were manifested, though in a different manner. While amusing himself in the garden one day, he overheard two Irish soldiers engaged in conversation to this effect:—

“You know that the ould boy asks every body afore he gives any praties, if they belong to St. Patrick; well, is it a hard matter to tell him we do, agrah?”

“Sure you'd be telling a lie, Paddy!”

“Never mind that,” said Paddy, “I'll spake.”

The old gentleman immediately returned to the house, and entering by a back door, was snugly seated in his arm-chair, book in hand, when the two Hibernians were admitted.

“Well, my boys, what is your business with me?”

“We would be wanting a few praties, if your Riverence could spare them.”

“Aha! you are from Ireland, I perceive.

Irishmen very fond of potatoes! Well, my boys, I have a few remaining, and you shall have some if you belong to St. Patrick."

"Faith, and it is all as your honour says; we are Irishmen, and we belong to St. Patrick."

The old gentleman ordered Joseph to supply them with the "blessed root," without any further parley. Then addressing the speaker in a voice of assumed choler, exclaimed:—

"You are a great raskail! does your religion teach you to tell lies? You are Protestant both of you. However, if you do not belong to St. Patrick, you belong to the King of England, and I give my potatoes for his sake. But you must never try to impose upon an old priest again, or you may not come so well off."

CHAPTER III.

ON SERVICE—LAKE OF TWO MOUNTAINS—OPPOSITION—
INDIANS—AMUSEMENTS AT THE POSTS.

I ARRIVED at Montreal about the beginning of May, and soon learnt that I was appointed to the post at Lake of Two Mountains. The Montreal department was headed at that time by Mr. Thane, a man of rather eccentric character, but possessed of a heart that glowed with the best feelings of humanity. I was allowed to amuse myself a few days in town, having directions however to call at the office every day, in case my services should be required. The period of departure at length arrived. I was one evening accosted by Mr. Thane in these terms:—"I say, youngster, you have been trifling away your time long enough

here ; you must hold yourself ready to embark for your destination to-morrow morning at five o'clock precisely. If you delay one moment, you shall have cause to remember it." Such positive injunctions were not disregarded by me. I was of course ready at the time appointed, and after all the hurry, had the honour of breakfasting with my commander before departing ; but the woful and disheartening accounts of the hardships and privations I was to suffer in the country to which I was to proceed, fairly spoiled my appetite. I was told that my only lodging was to be a tent, my only food Indian corn, *when I could get it* ; and many other *comforts* were enumerated with the view of producing a certain effect, which my countenance no doubt betrayed, whilst he chuckled with the greatest delight at the success of his jokes. I took leave, and found myself that evening at the Lake of Two Mountains. On my arrival, a large building was pointed out to me as the Company's establishment, to which I soon found admittance, and was, to my great surprise, ushered into a large well furnished apartment. Tea had just been served,

with a variety of substantial accompaniments, to which I felt heartily disposed to do ample justice, after my day's abstinence. This was very different entertainment from what I had been led to expect in the morning; would it had been my lot to be always so agreeably deceived!

The village of the Lake of Two Mountains is inhabited by two distinct tribes of the aborigines—viz. the Iroquois and the Algonquins; the latter are a tribe of the Sauteux nation, or Ojibbeway, and live principally by the chase. The former cultivate the soil, and engage as voyageurs, or in any other capacity that may yield them the means of subsistence. They are a very hardy industrious race; but neither the habits of civilized life, nor the influence of the Christian religion, appear to have mitigated, in any material degree, the ferocity that characterized their pagan ancestors. Although they do not pay great deference to the laws of God, they are sufficiently aware of the consequences of violating the laws of man, and comport themselves accordingly.

The Catholic seminary and church, along with

the gardens of the establishment, almost divide the village into two equal parts; yet this close proximity does not appear to encourage any friendly intercourse between the two tribes. They in fact seldom pass their respective limits, and, with few exceptions, cannot converse together, the language of the one being unintelligible to the other.

The Company established a post here in the spring of 1819, and when I arrived it was in charge of Mr. Fisher, then a senior clerk. He had two other clerks under him, besides myself, a like number of *attachés*, two interpreters, two servants, and a horse to ride upon. With such an establishment to rule over, need it be matter of surprise that our *bourgeois* was in his own estimation a magnate of the first order? *N'importe*,—whatever might be his vanity, he possessed those qualities which constitute a first-rate Indian trader, and he required them to fill successfully his present situation. A number of petty traders were settled in the village, who, whenever the Company entered the lists against them, laid aside

the feuds that subsisted among themselves, and joined to oppose their united efforts against the powerful rival that threatened to overwhelm them all. The spring fur campaign was about to open when I made my *début* at the post. The natives being daily expected from the interior, all parties watched their arrival night and day. This was not a very harassing duty to us, as we relieved each other; but the situation of our superior was exceedingly irksome and annoying. The moment an Indian canoe appeared (the Indians always arrived at night), we were ordered to apprise him of it; having done so, he was immediately at the landing-place, our opponents being also there, attending to their own interests. Some of the natives were supplied by the Company, others by the petty traders; and according as it happened to be the customers of either that arrived, the servants assisted in unloading the canoes, conveying the baggage to their houses, and kindling a fire. Provisions were furnished in abundance by both parties. While these preliminary operations were being performed by the servants, the traders

surrounded the principal object of their solicitude—the hunter; first one, then another, taking him aside to persuade him of the superior claims each had on his love and gratitude. After being pestered in this manner for some time, he, (the hunter,) eventually allowed himself to be led away to the residence of one of the parties, where he was treated to the best their establishment afforded; the natives, however, retaining their furs, and visiting from house to house, until satiated with the good cheer the traders had to give them, when they at length gave them up, but not always to the party to whom they were most indebted. They are generally great rogues; the sound of the dollars, which the Company possessed in abundance, often brought the furs that were due to the petty trader to the Company's stores; while some of our customers were induced by the same argument to carry their furs to our rivals.

For a period of six weeks or so, the natives continued to arrive; sometimes in brigades, sometimes in single canoes; during the whole

of this period we were occupied in the manner now described, day and night. So great was the pressure of business, that we had scarcely time to partake of the necessary refreshment. When they had at length all arrived, we enjoyed our night's rest, if indeed our continually disturbed slumbers could be called rest:—what with the howling of two or three hundred dogs, the tinkling of bells with which the horses the Indians rode were ornamented, the bawling of the squaws when beaten by their drunken husbands, and the yelling of the savages themselves when in that beastly state, sleep was impossible,—the infernal sounds that continually rent the air, produced such a *symphony* as could be heard nowhere else out of Pandemonium. No liquors were sold to the natives at the village, but they procured as much as they required from the opposite side of the lake. Some wretches of Canadians were always ready, for a trifling consideration, to purchase it for them; thus the law prohibiting the sale of liquor to the Indians was evaded. After wallowing in intemperance for some time, they ultimately submitted

to the authority of the priests, confessed their sins, received absolution, and became *good Christians* for the remainder of the season. If any indulged in the favourite vice—a few always did—they were confined to their quarters by their families. After attending mass on Sundays, they amused themselves playing at ball, or running foot races; and it was only on such occasions they were seen to associate with their neighbours the Iroquois. They took opposite sides in the games; small stakes were allowed, merely to create an interest in the issue of the contest. The chiefs of both tribes sat smoking their pipes together, viewing the sports in silent gravity, and acting as umpires in all cases of doubt between the parties. They, in fact, led a glorious life during the three months they remained at the village; that period was to them a continued carnival. The best fare the country afforded—the best attire that money could procure—all that sensuality, all that vanity could desire—their means permitted them to enjoy. Their lands not having been hunted on during the war, the beaver multiplied at an extraordinary

rate, and now swarmed in every direction. Every individual belonging to the tribe might then have acquired an independent fortune. They arrived at the village, their canoes laden with furs; but the characteristic improvidence of their race blinded them to future consequences. Such was their wasteful extravagance, that the money obtained by the sale of their furs was dissipated ere half the summer season was over. The traders supplied them afterwards with all requisites at a *moderate* per centage; and when they embarked in autumn for their hunting grounds, they found themselves deeply involved in debt, a few only excepted.

In the course of this summer, some of our opponents foreseeing the probable issue of the contest they were engaged in, proposed terms of capitulation, which were in most instances readily assented to by the Company; the inventories and outstanding debts were assumed at a certain valuation. They retired from the field, some with annuities for a stipulated period, while to others a round sum of money was granted; in either case

the party bound himself, under certain penalties, not to interfere in the trade for a stated period of time.

In this manner the Company got rid of all petty opponents, with the exception of two who continued the unequal contest. By the latter end of August the natives had all started for the interior, leaving behind only a few decrepit old men and women. The scene was now completely changed; a death-like stillness prevailed where but a few days before all was activity, bustle and animation. Two of my brother scribes were ordered to the interior; one* to the distant Lake Nipissingue, the other to the Chats. Mr. Fisher set off to enjoy himself in Montreal, Mr. Francher, the accountant, being appointed *locum-tenens* during his absence. Another young Scot and myself, together with two or three non-descripts, formed the winter establishment. Having just quitted the scenes of

* This gentleman's name was Cockburn;—he met his end a few years afterwards in a very melancholy manner, while on his way to Montreal (having retired from the service). He rolled over the canoe on a dark night, and disappeared for ever!

civilized life, I found my present solitude sufficiently irksome; the natural buoyancy of youthful spirits, however, with the amusements we got up amongst us, conspired to banish all gloomy thoughts from my mind in a very short time. We—my friend Mac and myself—soon became very intimate with two or three French families who resided in the village, who were, though in an humble station, kind and courteous, and who, moreover, danced, fiddled and played whist.

There was another family of a different status from the others, that of Capt. Ducharme, the king's interpreter, a kind-hearted, hospitable man, who frequently invited us to his house, where we enjoyed the charms of polished society and good cheer. The captain's residence was in the Iroquois division of the village; this circumstance led us to form another acquaintance that for some time afforded us some amusement, *en passant*. We discovered that a very ugly old widow, who resided in that quarter, had two very pretty young daughters, to whom we discoursed in Gaelic; they answered in Iroquois; and in a short time the

best *understanding* imaginable was established between us, (Mac and myself, be it always understood.) No harm came of it, though ; I vow there did not ; the priests, it seems, thought otherwise. Our acquaintance with the girls having come to their knowledge, we were one day honoured with a visit from the Iroquois padre ; the severe gravity of whose countenance convinced us at a glance of the nature of his mission. I must do him the justice to say, however, that his address to us was mild and admonitory, rather than severe or reproachful. I resolved from that moment to speak no more Gaelic to the Iroquois maidens ; Mac continued his visits.

We always amused ourselves in the evenings with our French *confrères*, (whom I have mentioned as “ nondescripts,” from the circumstance of their being under no regular engagement with the Company,) playing cards or fiddling and dancing. We were on one occasion engaged in the latter amusement *en pleine midi*—our *Deputy* Bourgeois being one of the party, and all of us in the highest possible glee, when lo ! in the midst of

our hilarity, the hall door flew open and the *great man* stood sternly before us. The hand-writing on the wall could scarcely have produced a more startling effect on the convivial party of old, than did this unexpected apparition upon us. We listened to the reprimand which followed in all due humility, none more crest-fallen than our worthy Deputy. Mr. Fisher then opened his portmanteau and drew forth a letter, which he presented to my friend Mac, exclaiming in a voice of thunder, "Read that, gentlemen, and hear what Mr. Thane thinks of your conduct." We read and trembled; Mac's defiance of the authority of the priests offended them mortally; a formal complaint was consequently preferred against the innocent and the guilty, (although there was no guilt in fact, unless *speaking Gaelic* to the wood-nymphs could be so construed,) and drew upon us the censures this dreadful missive conveyed. The magnate remained a few days, and on his departure for town, we resumed our usual pastimes, but selected a different *path* to Captain Ducharme's. The Fathers had requested,

when this establishment was first formed, that some of the Company's officers should attend church on Sundays for the purpose of showing a good example to the natives. I did so, on my part, very regularly until Christmas Eve, when having witnessed the ceremonies of the midnight mass, I determined on remaining at home in future. I shuddered with horror at the idolatrous rites, as they appeared to me, which were enacted on that occasion. The ceremonies commenced with the celebration of mass; then followed the introduction of the "Infant Jesus," borne by four of the choristers, attired in surplices of white linen. The image being placed by them on a sofa in front of the altar, the superior of the seminary made his *début*, retiring to the railing that surrounds the altar, when he knelt, and bending low his head apparently in devout adoration, he arose, then advanced two steps towards the altar and knelt again; he knelt the third time close to the side of the image, which he devoutly embraced, then withdrew: the younger priests performed the same ceremonies; and after them every one of

their congregation : yet these people protest that their religion has no connexion with idolatry, and that the representations of Protestants regarding it are false and calumnious. If we credit them, however, we must belie the evidence of our own senses ; but the fact is, there are not a few Roman Catholics who speak with very little *respect* themselves of some of these mummeries.

CHAPTER IV.

PORTAGE DES CHATS—TACTICS OF OUR OPPONENTS—TREACHERY
OF AN IROQUOIS—FIERCE, YET LUDICROUS NATURE OF THE
OPPOSITION.

MR. FISHER returned from town in the month of March; he had learnt that our opponents intended to shift the scene of operations to the Chats, (where the greater number of the Indians pass on their way going to or returning from their hunting grounds,) and were making preparations of a very extensive nature for the spring competition. The Company were not tardy in adopting such measures as were deemed the most efficient to meet them on their own terms. We understood that they had hired two *bullies* for the purpose of deciding the matter *par voie de fait*. Mr. Fisher

hired two of the same description, who were supposed to be more than a match for the opposition party. On the 28th of April, 1822, our opponents set off in two large canoes, manned by eight men in each; we followed in three canoes with twenty-four men, under the command of three leaders—namely, Captain Ducharme, who had volunteered on the occasion, Mr. Lyons, a retired trader, and myself. Nothing occurred worthy of description on our passage to the Chats.

The Ottawa is at this point interrupted by a ledge of rock, which extends across its whole breadth. In forcing a passage for itself through this barrier, it is divided into several channels, which form as many beautiful cascades as they fall into the extensive basin that receives them below. On one of the islands thus formed, the natives make a portage. Here, then, we took our station close to a cascade: our opponents commenced building a hut on one side of the path, we on the other. While this operation was in progress, basilisk looks denoted the strength of feeling that pervaded the breasts of either party, but not a

word was exchanged between us. Our hut was first completed, when our champion clambered aloft, and crowed defiance; three times he crowed (aloud), but no responding voice was heard from the opposite camp. This act was altogether voluntary on the part of our man, but it did not displease us, as the result convinced us that we stood on safe ground, should any violence be attempted. Our opponents were enraged at the want of spirit evinced by their men, and determined on being revenged upon *us* in a manner that showed the virulence of their animosity. A number of lumber men were making up their rafts within a short distance of us at the time, who were for the most part natives of the Emerald Isle. Paddy's "knocking down for love" is proverbial. Our opponents immediately sent them word that the Hudson's Bay Company had brought up a *bully* from Montreal who defied "the whole of the Grand River." "By my faith, does he thin," said Pat; "let us have a look at him, any how."

On the succeeding evening (after the occurrence of the circumstance above related) we were sur-

prised to see the number of canoes that arrived at the portage from all directions. The crew of each canoe as they landed went direct to our opponents, where they appeared to be liberally supplied with spirits. Their object was sufficiently evident, as the potent agent they had employed, in a short time, produced the desired effect. Oaths and execrations were heard amid crowing and yelling. Our Canadians all took to their heels, except our noble game-cock and two others; and now the drama opened. A respectable good looking fellow stepped out from the crowd, accompanied by another man, a Canadian, and advancing to our champion, asked him "if he would not sell his feathers" (his hat being decorated with them). It is unnecessary to state the reply. An altercation ensued, and blows would undoubtedly have succeeded, had I not then interfered. I invited the stranger to my tent, and having opened my *garde de vin*, produced some of the good things it contained. A little conversation with my guest, proved him to be a shrewd sensible man; and when I explained the nature of our dispute with our rivals, he com-

prehended in an instant the object they had in view in circulating the reports which induced him and others to assemble at the portage. The consanguinity of the sons of Erin and Caledonia was next touched upon, and the point settled to our mutual satisfaction ; in short, my brother Celt and I parted as good friends as half-an-hour's acquaintance and a bottle of wine could make us. At the conclusion of our interview he departed, and meeting our champion, cordially shook him by the hand ; then addressing his companions, remarked, " This, my lads, is a quarrel between the traders, in which we have no right to interfere at all ; for my own part, I am very much obliged to the jintlemin on both sides o' the road, for traiting me so jintaily ; but Jack Hall shall not be made a tool of by anybody whatsumdever."

Jack Hall embarked with his crew, and was soon afterwards followed by the others. Both parties were thus again in their previous positions, and a little tact saved us from the fatal consequences that might have ensued, had their villainous design proved successful. The daring

insult was keenly felt by us all, and accordingly one of our trio despatched a message to the only individual of the opposite party who had any pretension to the title of gentleman, soliciting the pleasure of his company to take the air next morning. The invitation was accepted. Our party kept the appointment, and remained for two hours on the ground, awaiting the arrival of their *friends*; but the friends allowed them the sole enjoyment of the morning air.

A few days afterwards the natives began to make their appearance, and scenes of a revolting nature were of frequent occurrence. Rum and brandy flowed in streams, and dollars were scattered about as if they had been of no greater value than pebbles on the beach. The expenses incurred by both parties were very great; but while this lavish expenditure seriously affected the resources of the petty traders, the coffers of the Company were too liberally filled to be sensibly diminished by such outlay. Nevertheless, the natives would not dispose of their furs until they reached the village.

We remained at the portage until the 7th of June, when the natives having all passed, we embarked, and arrived at the lake on the 10th, where we were shocked to learn that our Bourgeois* had had a very narrow escape from the treachery of an Iroquois during our absence, the particulars of which were thus related to us. Mr. Fisher had advanced a sum to this scoundrel two years before, and seeing him pass his door the ensuing spring after the debt had been contracted, with his furs, which he carried to our opponents, he watched his return, and calling him in, demanded payment; an insolent reply was the return for his kindness, which so much exasperated him, that he kicked him out in presence of several other Indians. The insult was not forgotten. Soon after his arrival this spring, he sent for Mr. Fisher, who complied with the invitation, expecting payment of his debt. The moment he entered the house, however, he discovered that he had been inveigled. The Indian stood before

* The term Bourgeois is used for Master throughout the Indian country.

him, his face painted, and a pistol in his hand, which he presented. In an instant Mr. Fisher bared his breast, and staring his enemy fiercely in the face, exclaimed, "Fire, you black dog! What! did you imagine you had sent for an old woman?"

Mr. Fisher's knowledge of the Indian character saved his life; had he betrayed the slightest symptom of fear, he was a dead man; but the undaunted attitude he assumed staggered the resolution of the savage; a new bias seemed to operate on his mind, probably through a feeling of respect for the determined courage displayed by his intended victim. He could not brace his nerves to a second effort; his hand dropped listlessly by his side; his gaze was fixed on Mr. Fisher for a moment; then dashing the pistol violently on the ground, he beckoned him to withdraw.*

Immediately after the close of the spring trade, the most formidable of our opponents *hinted* that

* At that period some of the Iroquois made good hunts, trapping beaver along the main rivers and outskirts of the Algonquin lands.

he might be induced to quit the field; a negotiation was accordingly opened with him, which soon terminated in a favourable issue, on very advantageous terms to the retiring party.

The solitary being who remained behind was thus thrown upon his own resources, and his efforts to maintain the unequal contest unaided, were so feeble and ineffectual, that the Company might be said to hold a monopoly of the fur-trade at this period; but thereafter they paid dearly for their triumph, as further sacrifices had yet to be made ere they could enjoy it in quiet. A Canadian merchant, in easy circumstances, who dwelt opposite to the village, having learned the advantageous terms obtained by the petty traders from the Company, addressed a very polite note to Mr. Fisher, stating his intention to try his fortune as a trader, but that he would have no objection to postpone the attempt for five years, provided the Company would allow him 150% per annum, during that period. The proposal was submitted to Mr. Thane, who laconically replied, "Let him do his worst, and be"

Accordingly, St. Julien immediately commenced operations. He hired one end of an Indian house, which he fitted up as a trader's shop: Fisher hired the other end. St. Julien then removed to another: Fisher occupied the other end of that house also. St. Julien next rented a *whole* house: Fisher purchased a house, placed it upon rollers, and wheeled it directly in front of that of his rival, rearwards, scarcely leaving sufficient room for one person to pass between the premises. This caused great amusement to the Indians; not so to St. Julien, who had not anticipated so excessive a desire on the part of any of the Company's officers for so close an intimacy; and at the end of six weeks he took his departure without pay or pension from the Company.

In the course of this summer our Algonquins received a visit from a party of Ottawas, (this tribe occupies the hunting grounds in the vicinity of Michimmakina or Makinaw, and speaks the Sauteaux language,) which created considerable alarm in the village, as they came for the purpose of demanding satisfaction for the murder of one

of their tribe, which had been perpetrated two years before by an Algonquin. The details of the atrocious deed were communicated to me as follows. The Ottawas and Algonquins, with their families, were proceeding in company to the Lake, in the spring of 1819, when being encamped in the neighbourhood of the long Sault rapid, the Algonquin sprang upon his unsuspecting companion, and cleft his skull with his tomahawk, without the least apparent provocation; then dragging the body to the water's edge, he cut it up into small pieces, and threw them in. He next despatched the woman, and mutilated her body in the same savage manner, having first committed the most horrible barbarity on her person; (the recital of which curdled my blood; and yet our Christianized (?) Algonquins laughed heartily on hearing it!) The demon in human form, with the yet reeking tomahawk raised over the heads of his wife and children, made them swear that they would never divulge the horrid deed; but they did disclose it; and it was from the wife the tale of horror was elicited. The object of the

Ottawas was not revenge. Compensation to the full estimated value of the lives of a man and woman was all they demanded; and that they received to an amount that far exceeded their expectations. Had the murderer been in the village the chiefs declared they would have given him up; but they had already delivered him over to the proper authorities, and he was then in prison waiting his sentence.

It has been already mentioned, that the Company had assumed the outstanding debts of the petty traders. When the accounts were closed this autumn, the aggregate amount of liabilities due to the Company exhibited the enormous sum of seventy-two thousand dollars—not a shilling of that sum has ever been repaid.

Soon after the departure of the natives for the interior, I was notified of my appointment to the charge of the Chats post. My friend Mac also received marching orders; and after parting with him I took leave of the Lake of Two Mountains on the 20th of August.

CHAPTER V.

ARRIVAL AT THE CHATS—INSTALLED AS BOURGEOIS—FIRST
TRADING EXCURSION—BIVOUAC IN THE WOODS—INDIAN
BARBARITY.

I ARRIVED at the Chats on the 26th of August, 1822. As we approached the establishment, the crew struck up a song which soon attracted the notice of its only inmate ; a tall gaunt figure, who was observed moving toward the landing-place, where it remained stationary. With the exception of this solitary being, no sign of animation was perceptible. We landed, and found the recluse to be the gentleman whom I was to succeed. The men belonging to the post were at the time employed elsewhere ; fire-arms were therefore discharged, to

summon them to return. An old interpreter and two men, constituting the force at this station, soon made their appearance. Such an uncommon event as an *arrival* seemed to produce an exhilarating effect upon them. Immediately after my landing the charge was made over to me; and on the following day my predecessor, Mr. Macdonald, took his departure, leaving me to the fellowship of my own musings, which for a time assumed but sombre hues; but I was then young, and the hopes and aspirations of an ardent mind threw a halo around the gloomy path that lay before me, and resting upon the bright spots that glimmered in the distant background, concealed from my view the toils and miseries I had to experience in the intermediate passage.

On assuming the responsibility of this post, I found myself in a position which gratified my vanity. I was Bourgeois of the Chats; had an interpreter and two men subject to my orders; and could make such arrangements as my own inclinations dictated, without the surveillance of a superior. I was, in fact, master of my own time and

of my own actions; could fiddle when I pleased, and dance when I had a mind with my own shadow; no person here dared to question my actions.

About the beginning of September the natives began to pass for the interior, and to my great surprise appeared to be in want of further supplies, although they had left the Lake amply provided with everything necessary. Some of them took advances here again to a considerable amount. I learned from them that a petty trader who had just then sprung into existence, intended to establish a couple of posts in the interior of the district—(this post being subject to the Lake of Two Mountains.) This was rather an unpleasant piece of intelligence, and quite unexpected by my superiors or myself. I despatched a messenger to head-quarters to give the alarm, and was soon joined by a reinforcement of men conducted by a junior clerk and an interpreter. Preparations were then made to follow up this new competitor the moment he appeared. He did not allow us to remain long in suspense. A few days afterwards his party was observed passing in two

cañoes; our people were immediately in their wake, and I remained with but one man and the old interpreter during the winter. I had only two Indian hunters to attend to; one in the immediate vicinity of the post, the other about three days' journey distant. Late in autumn I was gratified by a visit from the superintendent of the district, who expressed himself perfectly satisfied with my arrangements. As soon as the river *set fast* with ice, I resolved on paying a visit to my more remote customer, and assumed the snowshoes for the first time. I set out with my *only* man, leaving the old interpreter sole occupier of the post. My man had visited the Indian on several occasions during the previous winter, and told me that he usually halted at a Chantier,* on the way to his lodge. We arrived late in the evening at the locality in question, and finding a quantity of timber collected on the ice, concluded that the *shanty* must be close at hand. We accordingly followed the lumber-track until we

* The hut used by the lumbermen, and the root of the well-known "shanty."

reached the hut which had formerly afforded such comfortable accommodation to my companion. Great was our disappointment, however, to find it now tenantless, and almost buried in snow. I had made an extraordinary effort to reach the spot in the hope of procuring good quarters for the night, and was now so completely exhausted by fatigue that I could proceed no further. The night was dark, and to make our situation as cheerless as possible, it was discovered that my companion had left his "fire-works" behind—a proof of his inexperience. Under these circumstances our preparations were necessarily few. Having laid a few boughs of pine upon the snow, we wrapped ourselves up in our blankets, and lay down together. I passed the night without much rest; but my attendant—a hardy Canadian—kept the wild beasts at bay by his deep snoring, until dawn. I found myself completely benumbed with cold; a smart walk, however, soon put the blood in circulation, and ere long we entered a shanty where we experienced the usual hospitality of these generous folks. Here we borrowed

a "smoking-bag," containing a steel, flint, and tinder. With the aid of these desiderata in the appointments of a voyageur, we had a comfortable encampment on the following night.

The mode of constructing a winter encampment is simply this:—you measure with your eye the extent of ground you require for your purpose, then taking off your snow-shoes, use them as shovels to clear away the snow. This operation over, the finer branches of the balsam tree are laid upon the ground to a certain depth; then logs of dry wood are placed at right angles to the feet at a proper distance, and ignited by means of the "fire-works" alluded to. In such an encampment as this, after a plentiful supper of half-cooked peas and Indian corn—the inland travelling fare of the Montreal department—and a day's hard walking, one enjoys a repose to which the voluptuary reclining on his bed of down is a perfect stranger.

We reached our destination on the following day about noon, where we found but little to recompense us for our journey. Both our own

people from the outpost and our opponents had already traded all the furs the Indian had to dispose of, although his supplies at the Lake of Two Mountains and at my post amounted to a sum that would have required his utmost exertions to pay. We remained that night at his lodge, and very early on the succeeding morning, started on our return. With the exception of a couple of trips I made to the inland posts, nothing disturbed the monotony of my avocations during the remaining part of the winter. Petty traders swarmed all over the country; the posts which were established in the interior to cope with them traded freely with the natives, in order to secure their furs from competitors. Thus the immense sacrifices which the Company had made to obtain a monopoly, as they imagined, yielded them no advantage whatever; and repeated defalcations on the part of the natives, induced them to curtail their advances at their principal station. The natives, however, found no difficulty in procuring their requisites in exchange for their furs, either from the posts belonging to the Company in the interior, or from

the opposition ; for they were, with few exceptions, of the same character as the individual already alluded to.

The Indian whom I mentioned as residing in the neighbourhood of the establishment arrived, late in autumn, from the Lake, where he could not obtain a charge of ammunition on credit. I supplied all his wants liberally, knowing him to be a good hunter, though a notorious rogue ; and he set out for his hunting grounds, to all appearance well pleased.

In the course of the winter a Yankee adventurer opened a "grog shop," within a short distance of the depôt, who appeared to have no objection to a beaver's skin in exchange for his commodities. My Indian debtor returned in the month of March, with a tolerable "hunt," and pitched his tent midway between the post and my Yankee neighbour. I called upon the Indian immediately for payment, which he told me I should receive no the morrow. I went accordingly at the time appointed, and was annoyed to find that he had already disposed of a part of his furs for the Yan-

kee's whiskey ; and I therefore demanded payment in a tone of voice which clearly indicated that I was in earnest. To-morrow was mentioned again ; but having come with the determination of being satisfied on the spot, I seized, without further ceremony, what furs remained, and throwing them out of the wigwam to my man, who was placed there to receive them, I remained within, to bear the brunt of the Indian's resentment, should he show any, until my man had secured the prize. I was well prepared to defend myself, in case of any violence being offered. Nothing of the kind was attempted, however ; and I took my leave, after sustaining a volley of abuse, which did me no harm. The Indian paid me a visit next morning, for the purpose of settling accounts, a small balance being due to him, which, at his own request, was paid in rum. I soon after received another visit, for nectar, on credit ; this request I granted.

The visits, however, were repeated so often for the same purpose, that I at length found it advisable to give a denial, by proxy, not wishing to part on bad terms with him, if possible, on account of the

spring hunt. I absented myself from the house, having instructed my interpreter how to act. I took my station in a small grove of pines, close by, watching for the appointed signal to apprise me of the departure of the Indian. My attention was suddenly arrested by most doleful cries at the house; and presently the voice of my interpreter was heard, calling me loudly by name. I ran at the top of my speed, and arrived just in time to save the life of a poor old woman, who had been making sugar in my neighbourhood. I found the father and two sons, both approaching manhood, in a complete state of nudity, dancing round the body of their victim (to all appearance dead), their bodies besmeared with blood, and exulting in the barbarous deed they had committed. My interpreter informed me, that as soon as they observed the old woman approaching the house, the Christian father told his sons that now was the time to take revenge for the death of their brother, whose life had been destroyed by this woman's "bad medicine." We drove the wretches away, and carried the miserable woman into the house; and so

dreadfully bruised and mangled were her head and face, that not the least trace of her features could be distinguished. At the end of a month she recovered sufficiently to crawl about. Her son passed in the spring, with an excellent hunt. When I related to him the manner his mother had been treated by the Indians, and the care I had taken of her, he coolly replied that he was sure they were bad Indians. "It was very charitable of you," said he, "to have taken so much care of the old woman. Come to my wigwam next winter, and I shall trade with you, and treat you well." In the meantime every skin he had went to our opponents, although he was deeply indebted to the Company.

CHAPTER VI.

TRIP TO FORT COULONGE—MR. GODIN—NATIVES.

A LARGE canoe arrived from Montreal about the latter end of June, by which I received orders to proceed to Fort Coulonge, situated about eighty miles higher up the Ottawa, to relieve the person then in charge of that post. I accordingly embarked in the same canoe, accompanied by my young friend Mr. MacDougal, who joined me last autumn, and who kindly volunteered to proceed along with me to my destination. This canoe was under the charge of people hired for the trip, and directed by the bowsman, or guide. I soon discovered that I was considered merely as a piece of live lumber on board. My companion and my-

self were reduced to the necessity of cooking our own victuals, or of going without them. We pitched our tent as best we could, and packed it up in the morning without the slightest offer of assistance from the crew.

No incident worthy of notice occurred until we reached the Grand Calumet Portage, the longest on the Ottawa River. The crew slept at the further end of the portage, whither the canoe and part of the cargo had been carried during the day, and we pitched our tent there also in the usual awkward manner. The weather was very fine in the evening, but soon after night-fall a tremendous storm burst upon us: our tent was blown about our ears in an instant. We endeavoured to compose ourselves to rest underneath, but found it impracticable. We then attempted to pitch it anew, but our strength and ingenuity were not sufficient for the purpose. We tried afterwards to find shelter under the canoe (the rain pouring in torrents), but the crew were already in possession, and so closely packed, that not an inch was unoccupied. Thus baffled on

every hand, we passed the night completely exposed to the "pelting of the pitiless storm," learning a lesson of practical philosophy which I have not yet forgotten.

We arrived at Fort Coulonge early the next day, when a portly old gentleman, bearing a paunch that might have done credit to an Edinburgh baillie, came puffing down to the landing-place to receive us. We soon discovered that Mr. Godin was only "nominally" in charge of the establishment, for that his daughter, a stout, masculine-looking wench, full thirty summers blown, possessed what little authority was required for the management of affairs.

We arrived on Wednesday. The father proposed setting out for Montreal on Friday; the daughter objected the ill luck of the day: it was finally determined that they should embark on Thursday, however late. The necessary preparations were immediately commenced under her ladyship's superintendence, and being completed late in the evening, they embarked, leaving me perfectly alone. The contracts with the men had

just expired, which I proposed to renew, but the answer from one and all was, "I shall follow my bourgeois." This was the result of the old gentleman's arrangements (having been ordered off contrary to his wishes), and which might have been anticipated by those who appointed me to the situation; but it would have been derogatory to the exalted rank of their highnesses to bestow any consideration on such trivial matters as related to the comfort or convenience of a paltry apprentice! Their neglect, however, might have been attended on this occasion with serious consequences to the Company's interests, as I had never seen any of the Indians of that quarter before, and knew very little of their mode of trading. It was a fortunate circumstance for myself that I understood the language sufficiently well to converse with the natives, otherwise my situation would have been disagreeable in the extreme. I remained alone until the latter end of July, when I was joined by an English lad, whom I induced by the promise of high wages to leave his former employers (lumbermen) and share my solitude.

The history of my predecessor being rather singular, a few words here regarding him may perhaps not be considered out of place. He commenced his career as a hired servant, or Voyageur, as they are termed in the country, and was thirty years of age before he knew a letter of the alphabet. Being a man possessed of strong natural parts, and great bodily strength withal, he soon distinguished himself as an under trader of uncommon tact,—his prowess as a pugilist also gave him a very decided advantage in the field of competition. Endowed with such qualifications, his services were duly appreciated by the traders, and he knew full well how to turn them to his own advantage. He served all parties alike; that is, he served each in turn, and cheated and deceived them all.

After the organization of the North-West Company, he entered their service; and returning to the same quarter, Temiscamingue, where he had wintered for his last employer, he passed the post unperceived, and falling in with a band of Indians, whom he himself had supplied the pre-

ceding autumn, told them he still belonged to the same party, and traded all their furs on the spot. The North-West Company gave him charge of a post, when his subtle management soon cleared the country of opposition.

The natives of Temiscamingue were in those times very treacherous, as they would be at this day, did they not dread the consequences; several men had been murdered by them, and they at length became exceedingly bold and daring in deeds of violence. One example is sufficient:—Godin happened, on one occasion, to remain at his post with only one man, who attended the nets,—fish being the staff of life in that quarter. Visiting them regularly every day to procure his own and his master's subsistence, his return was one morning delayed much beyond the usual time. Godin felt so anxious, that he determined on going to the fishery to learn the cause; and just as he had quitted the house with that intention, he met an Indian who had been for some time encamped in the vicinity, and asked him—

“ What news ? ”

“ I have killed a white dog this morning,” was the reply.

“ Indeed !” said Godin, feigning ignorance of the Indian’s meaning : “ Pray, to whom did he belong ?”

“ He was a stray dog, I believe.”

Conversing with him in this strain, he threw the Indian completely off his guard, while he approached him until he was sufficiently near him for his purpose, when, raising his powerful arm, he struck the savage a blow under the ear that felled him to the ground,—he fell to rise no more. The next moment, a couple of well-disposed Indians came to inform Godin of the murder of his man, which it appeared they could not prevent. “ My children,” said he, with the utmost composure, “ the Master of life has punished your kinsman on the spot for taking the life of a white man ; he told me just now that he had killed a white dog, and had scarcely finished the sentence when he fell down dead at my feet. Feel his body, it must be still warm ; examine it, and satisfy yourselves that he has suffered no

violence from me, and you see that I have no weapons about me."

Godin was soon afterwards removed to Fort Coulonge, and was allowed a high salary by the North-West Company. Here he learned to read and write, and married a fair countrywoman of his own, who resided the greater part of the time in Montreal, where, to make the gentleman's establishment complete, he had the good taste to introduce his mistress. A circumstance that presents his character in its true colours made his wife acquainted with his infidelity. Writing to both his ladies at the same time, he unwittingly addressed his mistress's letter to his wife, by which she learnt, with other matters, that a present of ten prime otters had been sent to her rival. The enraged wife carried the letter to Mr. Thane, from whom, however, she met with a very different reception to what she had anticipated. After perusing the letter, he ordered her immediately out of his presence. "Begone, vile woman!" he exclaimed: "What! would you really wish to see your husband hanged?"

The Company were well aware of Godin's tricks, but winked at them on account of his valuable services. He was removed from Fort Coulonge in consequence of mismanagement, (occasioned by aberration of his mental faculties,) and was allowed by the Company to retire with a pension of 100*l.* per annum. The transcript of a public letter, addressed to Mr. Thane, will show his attainments in literature; and with this I shall close my sketch of Mr. Godin:—

“ Mon^r Tane,

“ Cher Mon^r,

“ Vot letre ma té livie par Guiaume dean aisi qui le butin tout a bon ord le Shauvages on ben travaie set anne et bon aparans de bon retour st. anne Dieu merci je ne jami vu tant de moustique et de maragoen com il en a st anne je pens desend st anne ver le meme tan com l'anne pasé.

“ Je sui,

“ Cher Mon^r, &c.

“ JOSEPH GODIN.”

The Indians attached to this post speak the Sauteux language, and are denominated “Tetes des Boules” by the French, and “Men of the Woods” by the other Indians. Although so near to priests and ministers, they are still Pagans, but are nevertheless a quiet harmless race, and excellent hunters. The greater part of them originally belonged to Temiscamingue, and were drawn to this quarter by Mr. Godin. A considerable number of Algonquins also trade here, where they pass the greater part of their lives without visiting the Lake. The people appear to me to differ in no respect from their heathen brethren, save in the very negligent observance of certain external forms of worship, and in being more enlightened in the arts of deceiving and lying.

About the middle of August, I was gratified by the arrival of Mr. Godin’s interpreter, and three men, by whom I received letters from head-quarters, informing me that my neighbours of last winter intended to establish posts in this quarter also, and that I should soon be joined by a strong reinforcement of men, to enable me to cope suc-

cessfully with them. We complain of solitude in the Indian forests, yet the vicinity of such a neighbour is considered the greatest evil; and instead of cherishing the feelings enjoined in the Decalogue, one hates his neighbour as the d—l, and employs every means to get rid of him.

The natives having been all supplied, had taken their departure for their hunting-grounds by the latter end of August; I then commenced making the arrangements requisite for the coming contest.

CHAPTER VII.

SUPERSEDED—FEELINGS ON THE OCCASION—MORE OPPOSITION
—E. MACDONELL—TACTICS—MELANCHOLY DEATH OF AN
INDIAN.

ABOUT the middle of September, I observed a north canoe paddling in for the landing-place, having a gentleman passenger on board, who immediately on landing ordered his servant to carry his baggage up to the Fort. On his entering the house, the apparent mystery was soon unfolded. Mr. Siviright handed me a letter from Mr. Thane, conveying the agreeable intelligence of my being superseded by the bearer,—commanding me to obey him as my bourgeois, and to conduct myself in such a manner as to give Mr. S.

every satisfaction. The latter injunction I felt very little inclination to comply with at the time; in fact, the slight put upon me caused my northern blood to rise to fever heat; and in this excited frame of mind I sat down to reply to the "great man's" communication, in which I gave vent to my injured feelings in very plain language. What he may have thought of the epistle, I know not, as he never deigned to reply. It was inconsiderate in me, however, to have so acted; but prudence had not yet assumed her due influence over me.

Mr. S. had been at that time twenty-four years in the service, I only three; he had therefore a superior claim to any I could advance: but why not inform me at once that my appointment to the charge was merely temporary? This double dealing manifested a distrust of me, for which no cause could possibly be assigned: that excited my resentment, and not the circumstance of being superseded.

Towards the latter end of the month of September, our opponents made their appearance in

three small canoes, while I embarked in pursuit with the same number. One of my north canoes was in charge of three men, the others contained two, counting myself as a man. Having become rather expert as an amateur voyageur, I considered myself capable of undertaking the real duty now, and accordingly volunteered my services as steersman, as no additional hand could be spared, without great inconvenience to my bourgeois. A little experience convinced me, however, that my zeal exceeded my ability. My opponent was in a light canoe, and moved about with a celerity that my utmost exertions could not cope with; for as soon as an Indian canoe appeared, he paddled off for it; I of course attempted to compete, but generally arrived just in time to find that he had already concluded his transaction with the hunters.

We reached Black River on the third day from Fort Coulonge, where it appeared my opponent's intention to remain for some time, to await the arrival of certain Indians who were expected down by that river. I determined therefore to

despatch a canoe to Fort Coulonge, to acquaint Mr. S. with the particulars above related; and sent back therewith such of the property as I thought could be dispensed with at the time, as it was quite evident we could not keep up with our opponent in the portages with such a quantity of baggage as we then had, and we could obtain no information that could be depended upon as to their ultimate destination—it might be at the distance of a hundred miles, or only ten.

My messengers were but two days absent; and I was not a little mortified to learn from them, that Mr. S., instead of attending to my suggestions, not only returned all the property I had sent, but nearly an equal quantity in addition. He wrote me his reasons for doing so; but I felt assured that he had no other object in view than to show me that he was the superior, I the subordinate; and I resolved from that moment, to perform no more extra duty.

After continuing a fortnight at our encampment, we again embarked, when I ordered the third man

in the large canoe into my own, and tossing my paddle down stream, took my station in the middle of my canoe. A few hours' paddling brought us to an old shanty in the island of Allumette, where, to my great joy, I perceived my opponent intended to fix his winter quarters. We accordingly commenced erecting a couple of huts, a store, and dwelling-house, in close proximity to him. This being the best season of the year for the natives to hunt, it was the interest of all parties not to molest them; and we therefore employed our time in preparing suitable accommodation for the winter.

On the completion of our arrangements, I set out, about the beginning of October, on a visit to Fort Coulonge; and on the day after my arrival there we observed a north canoe paddling slowly past, and distinguished the features of every individual on board through a telescope, but could recognise no one: however, to clear up the doubt, the interpreter was sent after them in a small canoe, with instructions to make a close scrutiny. They no sooner discovered that he was in pursuit,

than they ceased paddling. After a long confabulation he learned that they were proceeding to Sault St. Marie, where they intended to settle. I passed two days with my bourgeois, and returned home, where we—our opponents and ourselves—watched each other's movements, being our only occupation until the end of November, when Mr. S. paid me a visit, which proved anything but gratifying.

He (Mr. S.) had learned from some lumbermen, that the "Settlers for the Sault Ste. Marie" were an opposition party conducted by Mr. Æneas Macdonell, my predecessor at the Chats; and that he purposed to *settle* for the winter near Lac des Allumettes. This gentleman's engagement had been cancelled at the earnest solicitation of his father, whom death had lately deprived of another son; and who now, to requite the favour granted to him by the Company, sent this son in opposition! We had barely a sufficient number of men to perform the necessary duties of the two posts already established; we were, therefore, completely at a loss to meet this

emergency. Mr. S. could spare one man only from his own post, whom he brought up to me.

I embarked early next morning with one of my own men, in search of the "settler." On reaching Lac des Allumettes on the same evening, our attention was arrested by the voices of Indians, singing on an island. We immediately pulled in for the spot, and found a large camp of Algonquins, men, women and children, all in a state of intoxication; from whom I learned, though with much difficulty, the whereabouts of Macdonell's retreat. Quitting this disgusting scene as speedily as possible, we resumed our paddles, and soon afterwards discovered the opposition post. When we landed, my quondam messmate advanced to receive me, and, after a cordial shake of the hand, kindly invited me to pass the night with him. I gladly accepted the offer; and was not a little concerned to perceive that his preparations for winter were already complete; a circumstance which gave him a decided advantage. Happening in the course of conversation to express my surprise at seeing him in

the character of an opponent, he told me that nothing could be farther from his intention than to oppose the Company. He came to this quarter for the purpose of preparing timber for the Quebec market; in provincial phrase, "to make a shanty." But I knew well enough his designs.

I started early next morning on my return, and immediately thereafter prepared a small outfit; and re-embarked next evening with five men in two canoes, leaving the interpreter in charge of the post, with one man to assist him.

Having experienced very bad weather on our way, and consequently some delay, we did not reach our new station until late in the evening of the fourth day. I immediately sent back two of the men to the interpreter, and retained three with myself, which placed me on a par with my opponent in point of numbers. But he was now ready for active operations, while I had every thing to prepare. I resolved, however, to forego every personal comfort and convenience rather than allow him to enjoy any advantage over me. I accordingly assisted in erecting a small hut,

which I intended should serve for dwelling-house for myself and men, trading-shop, store and all.

A couple of days after our arrival, Macdonell was seen walking down to the water's edge with a very cautious step, accompanied by one of his men, bearing his canoe, basket fashion, on one arm, and a large bundle on the other, from which, notwithstanding his steady pace, the jumbling sound of liquor was distinctly heard.

“Holla, Mac, where are you going with your basket?”

“Why, I am going across to Herd's shanty, to get my axes ground.”

“My dear fellow, how can you think of risking yourself in such a gimcrack contrivance as that? I must absolutely send a couple of my men along with you to see no accident happens to you.”

Having a parcel of goods ready for emergencies of this kind, my men started in a moment, and embarked at the same time as my neighbour. I continued with my only man completing my castle; but the earth being already hard frozen, no clay could be obtained for the purpose of

plastering; the interstices between the logs were therefore caulked with moss; a large aperture being left in the roof to serve the double purpose of chimney and window. I had formerly seen houses so constructed—somewhere—but let no one dare to imagine that I allude to “my own, my native land.” Stones were piled up against the logs, to protect them from the fire. The timber required for floor, door, and beds, was all prepared with the axe; our building being thus rendered habitable without even going to the extent of Lycurgus’ frugal laws, for the axe was our only implement.

My opponent returned in four days, having been at an Indian camp, not far distant, where both he and our people traded a considerable quantity of furs. This was our only trip by open water. As soon as the river became ice-bound, we were again in motion.

To enter into minute details of our various movements would but prove tedious; I shall therefore present a general sketch of our mode of

life at this period, and such occurrences as I may consider worthy of note.

Macdonell had chosen his situation with great judgment. The majority of the Algonquins take their start from the Grand River at this place for their hunting-grounds. Some of them not being more than a day's journey distant from us, the joyful intelligence soon spread amongst them that an opposition party had been established in their neighbourhood; they accordingly flocked about us as soon as travelling became practicable on the ice, and generally brought with them the means of ensuring a friendly reception. One party came in at this early season with all their fall hunts, which they bartered for liquors and provisions, and encamped close by, enjoying themselves, until an event occurred that alarmed them so much, (being with some reason considered by them as a punishment for the wicked life they had led,) that with the utmost precipitation they struck their camp.

I was joined early in the month of January by

a party of men and a clerk, whom Mr. S. had ordered, or rather "requested," from Montreal; and having, on the day of their arrival, received an invitation from one of our Algonquin chiefs to pay him a *trading* visit, I started next day, leaving Mr. Lane in charge, accompanied by two men, and reached the chief's wigwam late in the evening. As soon as I was seated, he asked me if I had not met the Matawin Indians. On my replying in the negative, he informed me that they had passed his place early in the morning, loaded with furs, and that they expressed their intention of proceeding to the post before they halted. These Indians had all been supplied by myself in autumn to a large amount; so that the intelligence acted on my nerves like an electric shock. I felt much fatigued on entering the lodge, but I now sprung to my feet, as fresh for the journey as when I had commenced it; and ordering one of my men to return with me, left the other, an experienced hand, to manage affairs with the chief.

I arrived at my post about two next morning, when I found the Indians, some at our hut, some at our opponent's, all of them approaching the climax of Indian happiness, and Mr. Lane in a state of mind bordering on distraction. Neither he nor any of the men had ever seen any of these Indians before, nor did they understand a word of the language. The Indians were honest enough, however, to give him their furs in charge till my return; reserving only a small quantity to dispose of at discretion. My arrival was soon announced at my neighbour's, and brought the whole bevy about me in an instant, only one individual remaining behind. On inquiring into the cause of his absence, his companions replied that he had fallen asleep immediately after he had supped, and that they did not wish to disturb him.

A few hours afterwards I was not a little surprised to see my neighbour entering our hut hurriedly, who addressed me thus:—

“ My dear Mac, it is true we are in opposition,

but no enmity exists between us. A dreadful misfortune happened in my house last night.—Come and see !”

I instantly complied with his request ; proceeded to his hut, and saw the Indian who was said to be asleep, with his eyes closed—for ever ; a sad spectacle, for it was evident that the death of the poor wretch had been caused by intemperance ; he was found in the morning lying on his face, and his body already stiff. We were both alike involved in the same awful responsibility, for the Indians drank as much at one house as the other, though his death occurred at the establishment of the other party. The Company only permit the sale of liquors to the natives when the presence of opponents renders it an indispensable article of trade, as it is by this unhallowed traffic that the petty traders realize their greatest profit. Yet this plea of necessity, however satisfactory it may appear in a certain quarter, will not, I feel assured, be accepted in our vindication by the world, nor hereafter in our justification at that tribunal where worldly con-

siderations have no influence. Information soon reached the camp of the calamity that had happened, which promptly silenced the clamorous mirth that prevailed; and the voice of mourning succeeded—the Indians being all in good crying trim, that is, intoxicated; for I have never seen an Indian shed a tear when sober.

No more liquor was traded; the relatives of the deceased departed with the body to the Lake of Two Mountains, and the other Indians started for their hunting-grounds—thus granting us a short respite from the arduous duties in which we had been engaged. While the Indians remained about us we never enjoyed a moment's refreshing rest, our hut being crowded with them night and day. It was at times with difficulty we could prepare our victuals, or, when cooked, command sufficient time to partake of a hasty meal, in the midst of the "living mass" that environed us. All this was extremely annoying; but other comforts must be added ere this picture of the life we then led is complete. The motions of our opponents must needs be attended to, at dawn of day; each morn-

ing every path was carefully examined, to ascertain that no one had started during night: these precautions were also punctually taken by our opponents; and every stratagem that could be devised to elude each other's vigilance put in practice, it being the "interest" of each party to reach the Indians alone.

CHAPTER VIII.

ACTIVITY OF OUR OPPONENTS—VIOLENT CONDUCT OF AN INDIAN
—NARROW ESCAPE—ARTIFICE—TRIP TO INDIAN'S LODGE
—STUPIDITY OF INTERPRETER.

WHEN we discovered that our opponents had outwitted us, we would despatch messengers in pursuit; and I need scarcely add, the same means were resorted to by our neighbours, when inquisitive about our movements. We had now the advantage in point of numbers, being nearly two to one; yet it so happened that we seldom could perform a trip unattended; very frequently by a single man against two or three—still he got his share; for the system of trade in this quarter does not allow violent means being employed to obtain

possession of the products of the hunt. The mode of procedure is this:—On entering the lodge of an Indian, you present him with a small keg of nectar, as a propitiatory offering; then, in suppliant tones, request payment of the debt he may owe you, which he probably defers to a future day—the day of judgment. If your opponent be present, you dare not open your lips in objection to the delay; for you may offend his dignity, and consequently lose all his furs. This you are aware of, and accordingly proceed to untie your pack, and exposing its contents to view, solicit him to give, at least, the preference in trade. Your opponent, on the other side of the fire-place, having also poured out his libation, imitates your example in every respect; and most probably he may secure the wife, while you engage the husband as customers.

A few weeks elapsed without the arrival of any hunters, and we were beginning to recover from the effects of our late fatigues, when a numerous band arrived from a considerable distance, and encamped on the same spot that had been

occupied by those lately noticed, and the same riotous scenes were again enacted, although these new comers were fully aware of the misfortune that had already occurred in consequence of similar disgusting intemperance.

Among this band was a son of the principal sachem of the Algonquins, who was acknowledged heir apparent to his *dad's vermin*, and who assumed the airs of a man of great consequence, in virtue of his prospective dignity. The father bore a respectable character; the son was a sot. In consideration of his furs, however, I paid him some little attentions, though much against my inclination. He came one evening reeling into our hut, more than "half-seas over," having been thus far advanced on his voyage to Elysium through the insinuating influences of my opponent's "fire-water;" and seating himself on a three-legged stool, close to the fire-place, he soon began to nod; then, losing his equilibrium, ultimately fell at full length on the floor. I could not suppress a smile at sight of his copper highness's prostrate position, when springing up in a furious passion, he

seized an axe, and proceeded to demolish the seat. I wrested the axe from his grasp, and reprimanded him sharply for his insolence. This exasperated him to the utmost: he swore I was in league with the stool to insult him; but that he should be revenged on us both before morning. Uttering these menaces, he set out for the camp.

It so happened that a strong party of men arrived on that evening from Fort Coulonge with supplies, and were huddled together with myself and my men, all under the same roof. The greater part of them lay down to rest; but a few still continued the vigil, indulging in the favourite luxury of smoking, and chatting about the enjoyments of "Mont-rial,"—when, all of a sudden, the dread-inspiring war-whoop echoed through our little hut; the next instant the door flew off its wooden hinges, and fell with a crash on the floor, exhibiting to view the person of the Indian, standing on the threshold, holding a double-barrelled gun in his hand, with blackened face and his eyes flashing fire.

The men had now all started to their feet, as

well as myself. The moment the eyes of the savage fell upon me, in the midst of the crowd, he brought the piece to bear upon me, or at least attempted to do so; but I sprang upon him with a bound, and beat the muzzle down; instantly the discharge followed: we then struggled for the possession of the gun, which I quickly wrested from his grasp; and applying the butt end of it "gently" to his ear, laid him sprawling at my feet.

On the discharge of the gun, I heard a voice calling out, "Mon Dieu!" and another, in a plaintive tone, exclaiming, "Ah mon garçon!" This was all I heard distinctly, when every voice joined in one cry, "Tueons le crapaud;" and presently the wretched Indian was kicked and cuffed by as many as could press round him. I called on them to desist—as well have spoken to the wind!—not a soul heeded my orders. At length one of them observed, "What occasion is there for more beating of him—the black dog is dead enough."

I looked about for the person whom I supposed to have been wounded, in vain—the whole mass

was in motion. As soon as the tumult had subsided, however, I was glad to find that no one had received any serious injury; the ball had grazed the thigh of a youth (who had arrived from Montreal on a visit to his father), and lodged in a log of the building.

The uproar occasioned by the men soon brought the Indians from the camp about the hut; and perceiving the apparently lifeless body stretched on the floor, they raised a yell that was reverberated by the surrounding hills. "Revenge! revenge!" shouted every savage present. We mustered too strong, however, to permit their threats being put into execution without great hazard to themselves; which fact pressed itself so powerfully on their minds, that for the present they discreetly vented their rage in abuse, and returned to their quarters. Satisfied by the feeble beating of the Indian's pulse that the vital spark was not extinct, I would not allow his kinsmen to remove him. Towards morning, recovering the use of speech, he inquired, in a voice scarcely audible, if he

“had shed the blood of a white man?” I replied in the affirmative. “Then,” said he, “it would have been better had you despatched me at once, for I shall certainly be hanged.”

With the view of pacifying the natives, I deemed it advisable to represent the young man’s wound as very severe, and exercised my wits to give my representation the semblance of truth. I caused the young man’s leg to be carefully bandaged; and, luckily, happening to have a fresh beaver in the house, the bandage was speedily besmeared with its blood, and the sound patient placed in bed, with instructions how to act his part. The Indians returned early on the following morning to inquire after their young chief, and being all perfectly sober, I descanted on the calamity of the ‘previous night, describing *my* young man’s case to be of such a serious nature as to induce the apprehension that death, or at least amputation of the limb, would be the consequence. In confirmation of the veracity of this statement, the afflicted leg was exposed to

view, while the patient's groans, which impressed on the minds of the bystanders the conviction of the pain he endured, prevented too close a scrutiny.

"Alas!" they exclaimed, "it is all very true. Wagh! this is indeed a sad business; but the bad fire-water is to blame for it all."

My stratagem had succeeded. Most of the natives acknowledged the justice of the punishment inflicted on their young chief, who had a brother present, however, whose sullen countenance betrayed the vindictive feelings in his breast, although he maintained a profound silence.

The Fort Coulonge party started early next day, dragging their wounded companion on a sled, until they were out of sight. The relatives of the chief removed him to the camp, where he soon recovered. All the other Indians took their departure on the day following the affray. Shortly afterwards we were favoured with a visit from one whose hunting-grounds bordered on Rice Lake, a distance of 150 miles. I had

advanced this Indian all the supplies he required previous to Mr. Sivrigh's arrival, which formed a pretty large amount. On examining the books, he animadverted upon the advance in terms of disapprobation, as being very imprudent to risk so much with an Indian. Most gratified and happy was I then to learn from the hunter that he had sufficient to liquidate the debt, and nearly as much more to trade. On making out his requisition for the latter purpose, it was found that four sleds at least would be required for the transport of all the property. To employ this number in one direction, however, would leave my neighbour at liberty to prosecute his views in another quarter without the necessary attendance. Still, I determined on risking a point, and securing at all hazards the valuable prize now offered. Obtaining a *piece* at the sacrifice of a *pawn* is considered good play.

I proceeded accordingly with the Indian, accompanied by four men, all with heavily laden sleds, with a pack of goods strapped over my shoulders weighing eighty pounds. Macdonell

did not follow, as the Indian gave him no encouragement. We reached the Indian's lodge on the eleventh day from the post, when the abundant display of furs I beheld gave assurance of being amply remunerated for my trip. There were eleven packs of beaver piled upon a scaffold, besides some others, amounting to at least 600*l.* sterling. My hospitable customer detained me two days with him to partake of his good cheer. After settling accounts with him, together with payment of the sum he owed, seven of the eleven packs were placed in my possession, with which I started on my return, as proud as if I had been advanced to a share in the Company.

We arrived at the post after an absence of twenty-five days; and I was mortified to learn that my substitute had most stupidly bungled affairs. A number of Indians had come in during my absence who were considered our best friends, and entering our hut without noticing our opponent, threw down their bundles, thereby clearly indicating, according to the usual

custom, their intention of trading with one party only. On the other hand, should they leave a bundle at the door, it shows that they intend to divide its contents between two parties. With these particulars the interpreter's experience rendered him perfectly well acquainted, but he "cau'd na be fasht."

It is customary when the Indians arrive, to present each with a pipe, a plug of tobacco, and, though last, not least in their estimation, "a dram." The usual *politesse* was expected as a matter of course on this occasion. Seeing it was not forthcoming, the Indians demanded it. They were answered that no instructions had been left to that effect.

"Very well," said they, "we shall soon find it elsewhere." And away they went.

Macdonell received them with open arms. His reception not only induced them to trade every skin they had brought with them, but they also invited him to their camp; and he consequently returned with his own and his men's sleds laden with furs.

I learnt all these particulars from himself; for he and I were on as good terms as the nature of our occupation and our relative positions would admit. I was, moreover, made acquainted through him that the Indians had expressed regret at my absence, and that an immense quantity of "beaver" still remained at their camp.

The spring was now fast approaching, the ice so bad as to render travelling dangerous, and but little snow on the ground. Still, I determined on paying a visit to these Indians, in order to retrieve the loss, if possible, sustained through the mismanagement of the interpreter. They might yet be in want of some supplies, poor fellows; and we were all so anxious they should want for nothing we could spare for their accommodation;—we, therefore, good, humane souls, supplied them even at the hazard of our lives.

CHAPTER IX.

EXPEDITION TO THE BEAR'S DEN — PASSAGE THROUGH THE SWAMP — CUNNING OF THE INDIANS — A SCUFFLE — ITS RESULTS.

I SET off on this trip accompanied by another interpreter recently sent from Montreal, and one of my men, all with heavy burdens on our backs, the season not allowing the use of sledges. The second day we arrived at an Indian lodge about half-way to the Bear's Camp, where I learned that our opponent at the lower outpost had given our people the slip, but had been induced to return from the supposition that the extensive swamp in his way was impassable, being so inundated as to present the appearance of a lake.

Urged on, however, by youthful ardour and ambition, I determined to make at least one attempt ere I relinquished the enterprise ; although I acknowledge that the idea of overcoming difficulties deemed insurmountable by an opponent, had as much to do with the resolution as the desire of doing my duty. Followed by my men, I accordingly plunged in, along the margin of the marsh ; the water reached our middle, but we found it to decrease in depth as we proceeded, though never below the knee. The water being very cold, our legs soon became quite benumbed ; nevertheless we moved onward. A certain passage in history occurred to my mind, which records the perseverance of a great man in a like situation. I too persevered, though with a different object in view. We all have our hobbies. I waded for furs, he for glory. We occasionally met with large trunks of trees as we proceeded, on which we mounted, and restored the circulation to our limbs by stamping upon them ; and thus, after five or six hours' painful exertion we reached dry

land, where a rousing fire and a hearty breakfast made us soon forget the miseries of the swamp.

We reached the old *bear's den* next evening, who, with his party, expressed much surprise to see me at such a season, and in recompense for my exertions, "traded" * every article of goods I had.

There were here seven Indians, who, notwithstanding the frequent visits that had been paid them, in the course of the winter, by the people of the lower posts, had still upwards of forty packs of beaver. I got one pack, with which I set off on my return, pleased enough. We found the water in the swamp so far subsided as to permit an easy passage; but the ice on the Grand River was so much worse that we were compelled to travel in the woods the greater part of the way.

On arriving at the post, I found the opposition party in active preparation for their departure, Macdonell having received orders from his father

* *Anglicè*,—bought.

to that effect. He embarked as soon as the navigation became practicable. Opponent as he was, I experienced some painful sensations at parting with him; but soon had the *consolation* to see our opponent at the lower post occupy his place,— a measure which he ought to have adopted at a much earlier period, as even then it gave him a much better chance for a share of the spring trade than below, where he might be said to be placed between two fires. His removal, however, enabled us to concentrate our whole strength against him, so that he could not move a foot without a strong party at his heels. Thus circumstanced, he chose to await the arrival of the natives quietly at his post, and we were happy to follow his example.

The spring passed in a happy state of quiescence, which was scarcely disturbed by the arrival of the Indians, who, this year, had all taken a fancy to visit their ghostly fathers at the Lake,* and had, consequently, no time to spend with us; some

* Of the Two Mountains.

intending to get married, some having children to be baptized, and some carrying their dead, in order that the last sacred rites for the benefit of their departed spirits might be performed upon them. A few *têtes de boules* remained for some time, but under so strict a surveillance that they could seldom communicate with our opponents without being observed, and the discovery subjected them to some chastisement.

I shall here relate a circumstance that occurred at this time, as an example of the cunning of the Indians in devising plans to evade us. Soon after their arrival, an old squaw brought to our house several casseaux * of sugar, and pointing out one, which she said was left open for immediate consumption, said she would return for it presently. She came next day and took the casseaux down to the tent of the Algonquin chief, who had passed the spring close by, and was now building a canoe, preparatory to his departure for the Lake. Soon after I went to have a chat with the chief,

* Packages made of bark.

and found only his squaw at home. I observed the casseau, and asked for what purpose it was brought there. "Mine hostess" smiled, and answered, "You ought to know everything about it, when it has just quitted your house and passed the night with you. You whites pretend to be very cunning," she continued, "but when an Indian, or even an old squaw tries to cheat you, your 'white' knowledge is no match for her. Now look into that casseau, Anamatik,* and see what is in it."

I looked, and found, instead of sugar, a very valuable bundle of furs.

"What do you think of the sugar?"

"Oh, it is very fine indeed; so much finer than any that I have, that I must take it along with me."

"Your white neighbour will be angry with you, for it is left here for him."

"Let him come to my house if he wants any."

* My Indian cognomen.

I set off with my prize, and as soon as it was deposited in a place of safety, took up a favourable position to watch my opponent, whom I soon perceived making for the tent with long and rapid strides. I could not help laughing heartily at the idea of his disappointment, when told what had happened. The "fair deceiver," to whom the bone of contention had belonged, soon made her appearance with downcast looks, humbly entreating payment for her furs, and I paid her the full amount, after lecturing her severely on the treachery of her conduct *in doing "what she willed with her own."*

My opponent embarked on the 10th June, and I immediately followed him to the lower post, which he left in charge of one man, and then set off for Montreal. I kept him company as far as Fort Coulonge, where I met with a very friendly reception from my bourgeois,—the collected trade of the different posts having far exceeded his most sanguine expectations. He set out for Montreal with returns of the value

of 5,000*l.* sterling, and left me in charge for the summer at Fort Coulonge, and Mr. Lane at the outpost. Only one family of Algonquins passed the summer inland,—the same miscreants that had nearly murdered the old woman at the Chats; a deed which I had neither forgotten, nor could divest myself of the feelings of indignation it had awakened in my breast.

In the course of the summer, the interpreter of the post being in want of some paddles, employed this exemplary father to make them, and paid for them in rum. The quantity was so small, however, that it only had the effect of exciting their thirst, and they returned early in the night for more, which was peremptorily refused. The doors were bolted, and we retired to rest; but rest they were determined we should not have that night; and they continued knocking at the doors and windows, and bawling out at the top of their lungs, “Rum,—more rum!” until daylight next morning. I rose very early, in not the best humour possible, and taking the key of

the store in my hand—I know not for what purpose—went out, and was followed by the Indian, still demanding more rum. I told him he should have none from me. “But I must have some.” “Then you shall go elsewhere for it;” and without more ado, I turned him out, pushing him with some violence from the door. He fell on his face on the platform that ran in front of the building, and leaving him there to recover his footing at leisure, I returned towards the dwelling-house; but had scarcely reached the end of the platform, when the yell of defiance, “Hee-eeep, hoo-aw!” resounded in my ears. I instantly wheeled round, and found myself face to face with the Indian. The old villain attempted to collar me, but, enraged to madness, I now grappled with him, and with all my might hurled him from the platform to the ground.

I stood for a moment hesitating whether I should strike him while down, but had little time to deliberate,—the savage was again on his legs.

He rushed towards a gun that stood against a furpress hard by; I instantly comprehended his intention, and finding a stick at hand, in the twinkling of an eye, I struck him a blow that laid him senseless on the ground. Being scarcely aware of what I was doing, I was about to repeat the blow, when I found the uplifted weapon seized from behind. It was Primeau, my interpreter, who addressed me in a soothing tone, telling me I had already "done for" the Indian.

This startling announcement restored me to reason. Was I indeed guilty of the blood of a fellow-creature? The thought chilled me with horror. I dashed the stick to the ground. It was instantly picked up by one of his three sons, whom the noise of the scuffle had now brought all up; brandishing it aloft, he aimed a blow at my head, which I parried with my arm, the limb dropping senseless to my side. My men, however, were now on the spot to defend me, and a fierce scuffle took place between them and the

Indian's sons. Had they been the stronger party on this occasion, my fur-trading career would have terminated that morning. They, however, got a sound drubbing ; while their wretched father, who had been the cause of the disturbance, lay unheeded and unconscious on the spot where he had fallen, not exhibiting the least sign of life.

A place of temporary accommodation being prepared by his family, he was borne thither on a blanket, and I retired to my quarters in a state of mind not easy to be described. Soon after, the interpreter came in with a message from the Indians, entreating me to come and advise with them touching the manner in which they should dispose of their father's body. I went, and just as I stepped within the camp, to the astonishment of all present, the dead man sprang upon his feet. Seeing me at his side, he exclaimed, " You shall have cause to repent this ! " The words were scarcely out of his mouth, when he sank down again, and for a period of six weeks after he

remained as helpless as an infant. He was subsequently carried down to the Lake of Two Mountains, where he recovered from the effects of this castigation, to die, two years after, in a fit of drunkenness.

CHAPTER X.

PÈRE DUCHAMP — MR. S.'S INSTRUCTIONS — UNSUCCESSFUL—
—TRADING EXCURSION—DIFFICULTIES OF THE JOURNEY—
LOSE OUR WAY—PROVISIONS FAIL—REACH THE PORT—VISIT
TO AN ALGONQUIN CHIEF — HIS ABUSIVE TREATMENT—
SUCCESS.

MR. SIVIRIGHT arrived about the latter end of August, accompanied by another junior clerk, and a few days afterwards the opposition were seen passing. I embarked with my fellow-scribe, and arrived next day at the lower outpost, when I was much disappointed to find my old interpreter, whom I had with me at the Chats, in the service of our opponents. He was my Indian tutor, and took every pains, not only to teach me the language, but to initiate me in the mys-

teries of the trade, in which he was justly considered an adept. Our opponents offered him a high salary, which he would not accept until he had previously made a tender of his valuable services to the Company, whom he had faithfully served for a period of thirty years and upwards. He requested a small addition to his salary, which was refused.

My regard for the worthy old man, however, was not in the least diminished by the circumstance of his being in opposition. Père Duchamp and I had still our friendly *tête-à-tête* whenever we had an opportunity. The autumn passed without any incident having occurred worthy of note, I and my opponent being occupied in the usual way,—watching each other night and day, chasing each other, and circumventing each other when we could.

Late in the month of October, I was surprised to observe a couple of middle-sized canoes, deeply laden, put ashore at our opponent's, where the crews, five in number, passed the night. Next morning, as soon as they were gone, I called

on my old friend, who happened to be alone at the time, to inquire about his visitors.

He demurred for a little, and at length said: “For your sake, and to you only, would I disclose the secret of these people’s object and destination. They called at Fort Coulonge yesterday, and gave themselves out for a party of hunters, bound for the Temiscamingue quarter;—they are a party of Iroquois, supplied with a valuable assortment of goods for trade, and their destination is Lac de la Vieille, in the very centre of the Algonquin hunting-grounds.”

This was a most important piece of intelligence: some of these Indians had been supplied at Fort Coulonge, some at my post, and all of them were deeply indebted at the Lake of Two Mountains. I passed the day in the anxious expectation of seeing Mr. S., or at least receiving instructions from him with reference to these people. No one coming, I resolved to proceed to Fort Coulonge, and communicate *viva voce* the information I had received.

Late in the evening, I embarked in a small

canoe, with two men, and reached the Fort at early dawn; and rousing Mr. S. from his slumbers, I at once announced the object of my visit.

“ Well,” said he, “ this requires consideration : retire to rest, and I shall think about it.”

I retired accordingly, and slept till breakfast-time, when the subject was discussed ; and his decision was, that I should send one of the two young men who were at my post in pursuit of the Iroquois, with instructions to follow them up, until the season should be so far advanced as merely to admit of his return by open water, unless the Iroquois pitched their tent before then.

I volunteered myself to go after them with an outfit; but no; it would be dividing our forces, thereby allowing an advantage to our more formidable opponents; besides, we had not much to apprehend from the Iroquois with their trifling means. “ *Très bien,*” I said to myself, and set off on my return forthwith. I of course lost no time in executing the orders I had received.

My bourgeois had his opinion of the matter, and I had mine; I knew that the Iroquois, when left to themselves, would make their own prices for their goods, and thus, even with the small outfit they had, fleece the Indians of the principal part of their furs.

Among the Indians whom I had supplied, was an individual whose advances amounted to a heavy sum. I felt extremely anxious about him, and resolved to pay him a visit as soon as travelling was practicable; meantime, Swanston, who had been in pursuit of the Iroquois, returned from his disagreeable voyage on the 28th November, having learned nothing more than we already knew.

I set off the next day, ostensibly on a visit to Mr. S., but really with the intention of starting from his post on my intended "derouine,"* arrived at Fort Coulonge among the drift ice, and on the 1st December started, accompanied by the interpreter Primeau and another man, all of us with heavy burdens on our backs.

* "Derouine,"—a trading visit to the Indians.

This proved the most toilsome trip I had yet undertaken; the smaller lakes only were passable on the ice, and the rivers were nearly all open. The difficulties we thus encountered necessarily retarded our progress, and occupied so much more time than we had calculated upon, that our provisions were nearly consumed by the time we reached the first Indian camp, where we expected to procure a guide to conduct us to the party we were in search of. We succeeded in hiring a young man, but we only obtained a small supply of flour, the Indians having no other kind of provision to spare.

Three days travelling brought us to the borders of the Indian's lands, where we soon discovered one of his early winter encampments; had we been a few days sooner we could have easily traced him from this spot, but the snow, which had recently fallen to a great depth, had nearly obliterated the marks he had left behind him.* My interpreter, accustomed to

* When Indians remove in winter, in passing on rivers and lakes, they stick, at intervals, in the snow, branches of balsam,

“tracking,” followed the *scent* for two days; our guide, discontented with the short allowance, gave no assistance, till coming to an extensive “brulé,”* he was completely *at fault*, as no marks of any kind could be discovered.

Our situation was now extremely critical; we were reduced to one solitary meal of flour and water per diem, and but a few handfuls of this poor fare remained; to return by the way we came was out of the question, to proceed to the post was in truth our only alternative, and none of us was sufficiently acquainted with that part of the country to be sure of finding it; while the Indian, positively refusing to keep us company any longer, turned back, and left us to get out of our difficulties as we best could.

The interpreter proposed that another attempt should be made to find the Indian’s encampment, and volunteered to go alone; this proved the poor inclining in the direction they may have gone. In the woods, small saplings are cut or broken down; if there is no under-wood, an occasional “blaze” serves as a sign-post to the experienced woodsman.

* “Brulé,” a part of the forest consumed by fire.

fellow's zeal, but he returned to our encampment next morning unsuccessful ; we therefore resolved to go back, and, finding our way without much difficulty for a couple of days, we reached the upper end of a long portage leading to the Ottawa River, where we encamped late in the evening, and supped on the *hope* of getting to the post next forenoon.

We started early in the morning, the Canadian leading, and about noon fell on fresh snowshoe tracks—the tracks, we supposed, of some of our people who had come to seek us ; and feeling assured that our sufferings would terminate with the day, we pursued our route with renovated vigour and speed ; when lo ! our encampment of the preceding night came in view, the excitement of our minds having prevented us from discerning our mistake, as we might have done, sooner. The sun was still high, but the circumstance of the encampment being already prepared, induced us to put up there again for the night. It was a sad disappointment, and I

felt it as such, though I affected a gaiety that was far from my heart; while with downcast looks and heavy hearts my poor fellows betook themselves to rest at a very early hour.

Next morning we set off determined to be more cautious; the mistake of the previous day was ascribed to the sound of a high cascade at the head of the rapid, which we had mistaken for another considerably farther down; our Canadian still acted as guide—the blind leading the blind—and after two hours' walk we fell upon our own tracks again;—the poor fellow had yielded so completely to despair, that he walked about mechanically, scarcely knowing or caring whither he went; he was therefore ordered to the rear, and Primeau succeeded as leader. We saw nothing more of our tracks, but encamped in the evening with much the same prospects as before. I felt extremely weak, having carried Primeau's pack along with my own, as the old man could scarcely move when beating the track in the deep snow. Having a few fresh beaver

skins, we cut off the thicker parts about the head and legs, and made a *bouillon* of them, which we drank, and then turned in.

In the morning it became a subject of serious debate what direction we should proceed in; the sky, however, having been clear the preceding evening, I observed the sun setting, and determined in my own mind the proper course; both my companions differed from me, but readily agreed to follow me. I therefore took the lead, and was so fortunate as to discover an old track, soon after leaving our encampment, which we followed until it brought us in sight of the Grand River—the long-looked for object of our fast failing hopes. Tears of joy burst from my eyes, as I beheld before me the wide expanse of the noble stream: although covered with ice and divested of the beauties of summer, it never appeared more lovely to me. We reached the post after night-fall; opening the door cautiously, I threw in my snow-shoes, then bolting in myself, was gratified with the sight of a table garnished with the best things the

country afforded, which my two friends had prepared for their Christmas dinner; the sight, however, was all that prudence allowed us for the present to enjoy, our long abstinence rendering it necessary to confine ourselves, for a time, to a very weak diet.

Next day I despatched a messenger to Fort Coulonge with the narrative of my adventures; and as soon as my strength was sufficiently recruited I set off again, accompanied by a *tête de boule* as my guide, who led us direct to the camp of the Indian I had so long been in search of; where I had the mortification to learn, that on my first attempt I had returned from within a day's journey of him, and that if I had then succeeded in finding him, I should have secured the whole of the valuable hunts of him and his people, which were now in possession of the Iroquois traders. On my return to the post I communicated my sentiments freely to Mr. S. in writing, regarding the oversight that had led to consequences so injurious to the Company, and went afterwards, at his own request, to talk

over the matter with him. It was now decided that I should go with a party of men to establish a post against them, *i.e.* to shut the stable-door after the steed was stolen. To accomplish this object supplies of every kind must be hauled on sledges by the men, at an enormous expense, and after all we could not furnish the means of competing with the Iroquois with any prospect of advantage. I however lost no time in executing the orders of my superior, and set off with as many men as could be spared for the purpose.

On arriving at our destination, we built a temporary hut for our own accommodation, and a small store for the goods; but I soon discovered that the Iroquois had not only already secured all the Indians' furs, but had so completely ingratiated themselves with them that we were scarcely noticed. I remained two months in this wretched situation, and, as Mr. S.'s instructions left me in some measure to the exercise of my own judgment, I resolved on transferring the *honourable* charge to persons

less sanguine than myself, and returned to my post, where I knew my services could be turned to better account. In returning I happened to fall in with a small band of Indians, who had not yet been visited by the Iroquois, one of whom was the brother of the Algonquin chief, who had been so severely chastised the preceding winter. At his lodge I passed the night, and was not only treated with the usual Indian hospitality, but received a very pressing invitation to return with a supply of goods, which he promised to trade.

Such invitations are never neglected. The moment I arrived at my post I laid aside the articles required by the Indians, and after one day's rest, started, myself and two men, carrying everything on our backs. It being late in the season, we encountered every possible difficulty on our way: the small streams overflowed, and the ice was so bad on the rivers as to preclude travelling on them. We were therefore under the necessity of taking to the woods, through a horridly rugged country, now ascending hills

so steep that we could only scramble up their sides by holding on by the branches and underwood, the descent on the opposite side being equally difficult and laborious; now forcing our way through deep ravines overgrown with underwood, all but impervious; sinking to the ground at every step, and raising on our snow-shoes a load of half-melted snow, which strained the tendons of the legs and caused acute pain.

Early in the morning of the sixth day we arrived at the camp, but, to our astonishment, neither heard the voice nor saw the form of a human being, though there were infallible signs that the camp was inhabited. It was the sugar season. I entered the great man's hut with a cautious step, and found every soul in it fast asleep. I marked with surprise the confusion that prevailed around,—sugar kettles upset, pots, pans, wearing apparel, blankets, and other articles, scattered about in every direction;—what could it mean? I awoke the chief, and the mystery

was solved. He appeared to be just recovering from the effects of the night's debauch,—the Iroquois were in the camp. Mine host “grinned horribly a ghastly smile” as he placed himself, rather unsteadily, in a sitting posture in his bed, and in a hoarse tremulous voice bade me welcome, at the same time rousing his better-half, who appeared to be in the same *happy* state as himself.

A clatter ensued that soon set the whole household in motion, and I hastened to make the customary offering of a small keg of rum to the chief, and another of shrub to the squaw, who immediately ordered a young woman (the family drudge) to prepare my breakfast. Meanwhile the chief, along with two of his relatives, amused himself quaffing his nectar, which evidently began to have its usual effects, and from the expressions I overheard, I could gather that he had neither forgotten his brother's treatment last winter, nor forgiven me the part I had acted on the occasion. I listened with affected indifference for a time to the taunts he began to throw out,

and at last, to get rid of them, went to visit the other huts, where I found the Iroquois preparing for their departure; they had several parcels of beaver, which they took no pains to conceal from me, but there was still much more remaining.

After seeing them depart I returned to my chief, who received me with a volley of abuse, in which he was joined by his associates. The women, who were sober, observing by my looks that I was getting excited, requested me to withdraw. I did so, but was followed by the chief to the next hut, which I quitted immediately; I found myself still pursued by the same insufferable insolence. My philosophy being unequal to so severe a trial, I turned upon my tormentor, and seizing him by the throat, dashed him to the ground, and left him there speechless. I then made for a hut a short distance apart from the others, belonging to a *tête de boule*, where I remained in quietness for about the space of fifteen minutes; when suddenly my Canadian came rushing into the hut, his countenance

betraying the utmost alarm, and staring me wildly in the face, he stammered out, "Les sauvages! les sauvages, monsieur, prennent leurs armes! Sauvons-nous! Sauvons-nous!" The Iroquois, coming in the next instant, confirmed his report; but I had, in fact, been flying the whole morning, and thought it now high time to take my stand. My Iroquois appearing quite calm, I told him I was determined not to stir from the spot, and asked if he would remain with me.

"I came here for that purpose," said he, "and shall stand by you to the last."

Our *tête de boule* had two guns, which he loaded; Sabourin had his, which he promised to use in his own defence: thus prepared, we awaited the expected attack. The remainder of the day, however, passed without molestation, and after night-fall, I sent out my trusty Iroquois to reconnoitre; he soon returned with the welcome intelligence that the Indians had all retired to rest. We did the same.

Next morning I went to the chief's lodge, and

found him perfectly sober; I saluted him according to custom, which he returned with a scowl, repeating my words in a contemptuous manner; this exasperated my yet excited feelings to the highest degree. I felt assured that the fellow had invited me on purpose to insult me, if not for a worse purpose; and, addressing him in language that plainly bespoke my feelings, I immediately ordered my men to prepare for our departure. He remained silent for a moment, and then whispered in his wife's ear; she turned round to me, smiling, and asked if I had not brought the goods, my men were packing up, to trade?

“ Yes,” I replied.

“ Then,” said she, “ you must not be in such a hurry to go away.”

The husband now spoke to me in a conciliatory tone, begging me to place all that had happened to the account of the “ fire-water,” and for heaven's sake not to acquaint his father with his conduct.

This I readily assented to; we entered upon business, and nearly all the goods I had were exchanged for their full value in beaver. We found the travelling much better on our return, the small streams having subsided, and the snow so much diminished, that we could walk without snow-shoes.

CHAPTER XI.

SUCCESS OF THE IROQUOIS TRADERS — APPOINTED TO THE CHARGE OF THE CHATS — CANADIAN DISPUTES POSSESSION— BIVOUAC WITHOUT A FIRE—RUSE TO BAFFLE MY OPPONENTS —ROMAN CATHOLIC BIGOTRY.

THE Iroquois passed early in spring with eighteen Indian packs in their canoes,—each pack might be estimated at 60 $\%$,—our other opponent started for Montreal about the same time as last year, and I was ordered down to Fort Coulonge to take Mr. S.'s place for the summer. He returned from Montreal about the end of August, and I was much gratified to learn from him that I had been again appointed to the charge of the Chats, so that all the merit or demerit of good or bad management would now be entirely my

own. A few days after, a middle-sized canoe arrived, manned by three Canadians, with whom I embarked for the scene of my first essay as an Indian trader.

On arriving at the post, I was surprised to find an old Canadian and his *cara sposa* in possession, —a circumstance of which I had had no previous intimation. This worthy pair seemed determined to maintain their position in defiance of me; and not wishing to employ violent means to dispossess them if it could possibly be done otherwise, I passed the night in the hall. Having, however, obtained possession of the outworks, I was determined to carry the citadel; and, summoning the contumacious occupants into my presence next morning, I demanded, in a peremptory tone, the immediate surrender of the keys.

“ Show me your authority,” said he.

“ If I do not show it, you shall feel it presently !”

Seeing that I ordered my men to put my threat into execution, Jean Baptiste assumed a more humble attitude, and requested me, as a favour,

to permit him to remain in the kitchen until he could find a passage to Montreal ;—with this request I willingly complied.

My old opponent had still a post in this district, and I was directed to send a party in opposition to him ; which being done, I remained quiet until the winter communication became practicable, when I determined on paying a visit to my friends in the Fort Coulonge district. The distance being short, and my object having no connexion with the Company's interests, I set off on my pleasure jaunt alone. I put up the first night at a sort of tavern just then opened by an American at the upper end of the Chats' Lake, the only habitation at that time in the quarter, whence I started at early dawn, expecting to reach Fort Coulonge before night. The lumbermen having commenced sledging their winter supplies, the road formed by these vehicles presented a hard, smooth surface, on which I made good speed, as I had nothing to encumber me, save my blanket and tomahawk.

Arriving at a long bend of the river about

2 P.M., I put on my snow-shoes "to cut across the point and meet the road again, flattering myself that I should thus shorten the distance some two or three miles. The weather being mild, and the sun overcast, I was as much at a loss to find my way in the woods as if I had been blindfolded; I nevertheless continued my onward course, and again came on the road. I proceeded in high spirits for a considerable time, when I perceived a man before me going in the same direction with myself; quickening my pace I soon came up with him, and asked him if he was bound for the Fort?

"I guess I don't know of any fort in this part of the world," said he.

"What! not know of Fort Coulonge, and you so near to it? are you not going there?"

"I have heard of such a place," said Jonathan; "but I'd take a tarnation long time to get to it, I calculate, if I followed my nose as it points now."

I told him who I was, whither bound, and where I slept last night.

“ I guess then you had better sleep there again, for it is not quite three miles off.”

This was the result of making a short cut, and I resolved to follow the long and sure road in future.

A shanty that had been recently occupied, afforded me comfortable lodgings for the night, and I arrived at Fort Coulonge about noon next day, where I passed the night, and started for the outpost. Here I remained two days, and would have remained still longer, had it not been discovered one morning that our opponents were off in the direction of my outpost on the Bonne Chere. As the Indians in that quarter were excellent hunters, and owed me much, I deemed it advisable to follow them; my friends, too, sent an interpreter and three men along with me, for the purpose of trading what they could on account of their own post—*chacun pour soi* being the order of the day.

We soon overtook our opponents, and I resolved, if possible, to give them the slip by the way. Accordingly, when within a day's

journey of the establishment, I pretended to have sprained my foot so badly, that I walked with the greatest seeming difficulty. My men, who were aware of the ruse, requested me to place my bundle on their sledges, to enable me to keep up with them. This farce commenced in the evening. Next morning my leg was worse than ever, until we came on the river at about ten miles' distance from the post. I was delighted to find but little snow upon the ice, so that I had a fair opportunity of putting the metal of my legs to the test, and the opposition party having sledges heavily laden, I walked hard, my foot on a sudden becoming perfectly sound, in order to tire them as much as possible before I bolted. Having apparently effected my purpose, I set off at the top of my speed, and never looked behind me until I had cleared the first long reach, when turning round, I saw a man in pursuit about half-way across; I started again, and saw no more of my pursuer.

On arriving at the post I was gratified to learn that the Indians, whom I was so anxious

about, had been in a few days previously, while our opponents were off in another direction; so that they had been seen by none save our own people. Finding two men at home, I proceeded with them to the Indian camp, and arrived at dawn of day. I met with a very friendly reception, and had the good fortune to prevail upon the Indians to deliver me their furs upon the spot, which formed a very heavy load for both myself and men. We met our opponents in returning; but though they had ocular proof of my success, they nevertheless went on to the camp.

Having arrived at the post, I found some Indians there all intoxicated; I was also mortified to find the person in charge in the same state. I immediately displaced him, and made over the charge, *pro tempore*, to one of the men. The conduct of my worthless deputy hurt me so much that I could not remain another night under the same roof with him. I therefore set off on my return to the Chats, although already late in the

afternoon, expecting to reach the first shanty in the early part of the night.

The Bonne Chere river is very rapid in the upper part, and does not "set fast"* until late in the season, unless the cold be very intense. I arrived at this part soon after night-fall, and perceiving by the clear light of the moon the dangers in my way, I deemed it imprudent to proceed farther; and having nothing to strike fire with, I cut a few branches of balsam and strewed them under the spreading boughs of a large cedar, and wrapping myself up in my blanket, lay down. The weather being mild, I thought I could sleep comfortably without fire; but was mistaken. When I awoke from my first sleep, which must have been sound, I found my limbs stiff with cold, while my teeth chattered violently in my head. To remain in this condition till daylight was almost certain death; I resolved, therefore, at all hazards to find my way to the shanty, which might be about ten

* Freeze.

miles distant. The light of the moon being very bright, enabled me to avoid the openings in the ice, and by moving on cautiously, about three o'clock in the morning I reached the shanty; which belonged to a warm-hearted son of Erin, who received me with the characteristic hospitality of his countrymen, placing before me the best his cabin afforded, and with his own blankets and those of his men making up a comfortable bed, on which I slept till late in the day, and next night in my own bed.

As the greater part of my customers wintered in the vicinity of the outpost, and I had no longer any confidence in the person in charge there, I resolved on passing the remainder of the winter at it myself; I therefore requested that a person should be sent up from the Lake of Two Mountains to take care of the establishment during my absence. On the arrival of this person, I proceeded to the outpost, but shall pass over the transactions that occurred there, being similar in all respects to those already narrated. One circumstance, how-

ever, occurred, which, though not in my vocation, I think worthy of notice.

Two itinerant missionaries called at the Lake of Two Mountains and distributed a number of religious tracts among the natives, together with a few copies of the Gospel according to St. John, in the Indian language. My Algonquin interpreter happened to get one of the latter, and took much pleasure in reading it. Towards the latter end of the season I received a packet from my superior at the Lake, and, to my surprise, found in it a letter with the seal of the Church affixed, addressed to my interpreter, which I put into his hands, and observed him perusing very attentively. Soon after he called me aside, and told me that the letter in question conveyed a peremptory command from the priest to destroy the bad book he had in his possession, or else his child that died in autumn would be denied the rites of christian sepulture.

We are told that the age of bigotry is past: facts like this prove the contrary. I asked him

if he intended to obey the commands of his ghostly father. "Not exactly," said he; "I shall send the book to him, and let him do with it what he pleases; for my part, I have read it over and over again, and find it all good, very good; why the 'black coat' should call it bad is a mystery to me."

CHAPTER XII.

JOURNEY TO MONTREAL—APPOINTMENT TO LAC DE SABLE—
ADVANTAGES OF THIS POST—ITS DIFFICULTIES—GOVERNOR'S
FLATTERING LETTER—RETURN FROM MONTREAL—LOST IN
THE WOOD—SUFFERINGS—ESCAPE.

EARLY in spring I returned to the Chats, and after the close of the trade took my departure for Montreal, having finished my apprenticeship. I renewed my contract for three years, and was appointed to the charge of Lac de Sable, a post situated on a tributary of the Ottawa, called *Rivière aux Lièvres*, two hundred miles distant from Montreal.

I embarked on the 15th August, 1826, and arrived at the post on the 1st September; where

I was gratified to find a comfortable dwelling-house, and a large farm with pigs, poultry, and cattle in abundance. All this was very well, but there was also a powerful opposition, and I had experience enough to know that the enjoyment of any kind of comfort is incompatible with the life we lead in opposition.

The difficulties of my situation, moreover, were from various causes extremely perplexing. The old North-West agents, acting for the Hudson's Bay Company in Canada, had declared a bankruptcy the preceding winter; the principal manager having quitted the country rather precipitately, as was supposed, and forgotten to appoint a successor; the management devolved in consequence upon the head accountant, Mr. C——e, who, however well he might be qualified for the duties of the situation, felt the responsibility of acting without authority to be too great, and confined himself accordingly to such measures only as he was confident would subject him to no inconvenience when the day of reckoning arrived. Meantime the business of this department sus-

tained a serious check; the old hands of the post, having been tampered with by the opposition in the course of last winter, quitted the service to a man, and I now found the establishment to consist of a clerk, interpreter, and one man only. I was given to understand that three men additional would join me as soon as they could, and that I must not expect any more; thus our number would be seven against twenty-two.

A disparity so vast precluded all hopes of maintaining the contest with advantage to the Company or credit to myself. Fortune, however, declared in our favour; dissensions arose in the ranks of our opponents, clerks and men deserted, supplies for trade ran short, and from being the weaker party we were now the stronger.

Governor Simpson having taken up his residence at La Chine in autumn, men and goods were furnished in abundance, and the petty traders were made to see, ere the winter passed, the futility of entering the lists in competition with a Company possessing so vast resources.

Mr. MacD——l having wintered two years at

this post, and being consequently well acquainted with the natives, I entrusted the direction of affairs against the opposition entirely to him, and remained quietly at home, having only the few Indians that wintered in the neighbourhood of the post to attend to; my situation, however, was often far from agreeable, being frequently reduced to the company of my pigs and poultry for weeks together, and obliged to act as trader, cook, hewer of wood, and drawer of water.

In the course of the winter I was favoured with a visit from Mr. F——r, to whose district this post had just been annexed, and had the gratification to receive, through him, a letter from Governor Simpson, conveying, in very flattering terms, his approbation of my conduct. I was told that I was in the direct road to preferment—that my merits should be represented to the Council on his arrival in the interior—and that he should be happy to have an opportunity of recommending me to the Governor and Committee, when he returned to England. We shall see, in the sequel, how these promises were fulfilled.

I embarked, on the 15th June, 1827, for Montreal, and found Mr. K——h, a chief factor in the service, at the head of affairs; and my outfit being prepared in a few days, I re-embarked, taking my passage, as formerly, on board of a large canoe, deeply laden. The last rapid and portage on the Rivière aux Lièvres is within eight miles of the establishment, and generally takes the men a day to pass it. Arriving at this place late in the evening, I resolved on going on a-foot; it being fine moonlight, I felt confident of finding my way without difficulty. The weather having been immoderately hot for some time past, I had sat in the canoe divested of my upper garments, and thought I might, without inconvenience, dispense with them now, as I expected to reach the house ere the night air could prove injurious to me.

Setting off, therefore, in “light marching order,” I immediately gained the high grounds, in order to keep clear of the underwood that covers the banks of the river; and just as the moon appeared above the surrounding hills, arrived on the banks of a small stream, where I observed a

portage path sunk deep in the ground, a circumstance which proved it to be much frequented—by whom or for what purpose I could not say, for I had seldom passed the limits of my farm during last winter, and was nearly as ignorant of the topography of the environs as the first day I arrived. I had not heard of the existence of a river in the quarter, nor did I imagine there was any; the conclusion I arrived at therefore was, that I had lost my way, and that my most eligible course was, to endeavour to find the main stream, and by following it, retrace my course to the portage.

I soon fell on the river, but my retrograde march proved exceedingly toilsome; at every step I was obliged to bend the branches of the underwood to one side and another, or pressing them down under my feet, force my way through by main strength: some short spaces indeed intervened, that admitted of an easier passage; still my progress was so slow that the sun appeared before I reached the upper end of the portage. Finding an old canoe here, belonging to the post, I resolved on crossing to the opposite side of the river, where I knew there was

a path that led to the house, by which the Indians often passed when travelling in small canoes. I accordingly ran to the lower end of the portage for a paddle, where I found my men still asleep; and having heard that the lower end of this path came out exactly opposite to the upper end of the portage, I struck out into the woods the moment I landed, fancying that I could not fail to discover it.

The sun got higher and higher as I proceeded, and I went faster and yet faster, to no purpose;—no path appeared; and I at length became convinced that I was lost—being equally in difficulty to find my way back to the river as forward to the post.

The weather was very sultry; and such had been the drought of the season that all the small creeks were dried up, so that I could nowhere procure a drop of water to moisten my parched lips. The sensations occasioned by thirst are so much more painful than those we feel from hunger, that although I had eaten but little the preceding day, and nothing on that day, I never thought of food. While my inner man was thus tortured by thirst, my outer man scarcely suffered less from another

cause. The country through which I passed being of a marshy nature, I was incessantly tormented by the venomous flies that abound in such situations,—my shirt, and only other habiliment, having sustained so much damage in my nocturnal expedition, that the insects had free access *partout*.*

I came to the foot of a high hill about two o'clock P.M., which I ascended, and got a very good view of the surrounding country from its summit; hills and lakes appeared in every direction; but the sight of these objects only served to impress my mind with the conviction, that, unless Providence should direct my steps to the establishment, the game was up with me. Having descended, I sauntered about the remainder of the day, my ideas becoming more and more bewildered, and

* There are three different kinds of these tormenting insects, viz. the mosquito, the black-fly, and the gnat—the latter the same as the midge in N. Britain—who relieve each other regularly in the work of torture. The mosquitoes continue at their post from dawn to eight or nine o'clock, A.M.; the black-flies succeed, and remain in the field till near sunset; the mosquitoes again mount guard till dark, and are finally succeeded by the gnats, who continue their watch and incessant attacks till near sunrise.

my strength declining ; and passed the night sometimes sitting, sometimes standing, sometimes moving about ;—but sitting, standing, or moving about, subjected to the same tortures.

I endeavoured during the night to compose my mind as much as possible ; some happy thought might perchance suggest itself, which might lead to my deliverance. Nor were my efforts without some success : I called to mind the position of the post with respect to the rising and setting sun ; another circumstance of importance also recurred to me.

A Canadian hunter, who received his supplies at my post, had told me that such Indians as did not wish to pay their debts at the post, frequently passed unperceived by a chain of small lakes that ran parallel to the river, and extended from Lac de Sable to somewhere near the rapid, whence I had taken my departure. I recollected, too, his having mentioned that some Indian families occasionally made sugar on the borders of these lakes, and that a good path lay from their camp to the post. Having passed the night in a deep

valley, the sun did not appear until late in the morning, when I shaped my course, to the best of my judgment, for the post. Two or three hours' walk brought me to the foot of a high hill, nearly destitute of wood on one side; and expecting that some discovery might be made from the top which might be of use to me, I resolved on attempting the ascent—an undertaking of no small difficulty in my enfeebled state. I succeeded in gaining the top, and to my unspeakable joy, perceived a chain of lakes within about two miles of me, exactly corresponding to the description given me by the Canadian hunter. I also heard the reports of guns, but so indistinctly that I could not determine the direction the report came from. Noting with the utmost care the course that would lead me to the lakes, I descended the steep declivity with a degree of speed that surprised myself,—such is the powerful influence the mind exercises over the body.

I expected an hour's walk would bring me to the lakes, but the sun being in the zenith, and my way lying through a dense forest of pine,

I could not keep a straight course. I proceeded onward, however, as well as *reason* could direct me, and most willingly would I have exchanged a little of that *faculty* for the *instinct* that leads the brute creation with unerring certainty through the pathless depths of the forest.

The sun was rapidly declining, and my hopes with it, when suddenly I fancied I heard the murmuring sound of running water. Could it be really so? What a delightful feast I should have! for I had passed the day, like the preceding, without a drop of water to allay my raging thirst. I listened; the sound became more distinct—it was no illusion. I quickened my pace, and soon came upon a charming rivulet, flowing rapidly over a bed of white pebbles, its water clear as crystal. I rushed into the midst of it, and fervently thanking the Giver of all good, threw myself on my knees, and drank draught after draught till my thirst was quenched. I felt refreshed to an extraordinary degree, and concluding that the stream would lead me to the river, or to some lake communicating with it,

I followed its course, wading in the water that there might be "no mistake," and soon came out on the border of a small lake, where I had the additional satisfaction of hearing the report of guns so distinctly as to convince me that the party firing them could be at no great distance. I walked round the lake, and at its far end fell on a portage path that soon conducted me to another lake. This, then, must be the chain of lakes I was in search of! I was transported at the thought.

But an incident soon occurred that served to damp at once my spirits and my person: a distant peal of thunder was heard; peal after peal succeeded; the heavens were obscured, and heavy drops of rain, the harbingers of an approaching storm, fell from the dark clouds. I strained every nerve to reach the firing party ere the storm should burst upon me. I reached the foot of the hill, but the firing had ceased. I nevertheless ascended as quickly as my wearied limbs would carry me, but on reaching the spot found no one there.

The storm now burst upon me in all its fury. Flash followed flash in quick succession, and the rain fell in torrents, which, however, as the few clothes that still adhered to my person were already saturated by the previous rain, caused me but little additional inconvenience. I descended to the lake, and by the time I reached the far end of it the darkness had increased so much, that I could proceed no farther. Perceiving an old encampment—a few half-decayed branches of balsam, at the foot of a large hemlock—I took up my quarters there for the night. The tufted branches of this tree render it a much more secure retreat in a thunder-storm than the pine, whose pointed branches and spiral shaped top frequently attract the electric fluid.

Towards morning the storm seemed to have expended its fury ; and, strange to say, in the midst of it I enjoyed two or three hours' sleep. Nature had been so exhausted by protracted sufferings, that (though the flies were driven to their covert) I believe I could have slept upon

a bed of thorns, covered with gnats and mosquitoes. As soon as it was sufficiently clear to enable me to find my way, I quitted my hemlock and fell on the portage path, which soon led me to another small lake, and which I proceeded to circumambulate as usual, keeping a sharp look-out for the path that led to the post; when suddenly the report of a gun burst from an adjoining hill. At the same instant, I observed a net pole standing in the water at the bottom of a small bay close by, and directed my steps towards it; when on approaching it I discovered a broad path ascending from the water's edge, and immediately after the buildings of a sugar camp.

Allowing the party on the hill to blaze away, I followed the path, and in less than half-an-hour came out upon the Rivière aux Lièvres, immediately opposite the house. I perceived the men of the establishment, with some Indians, all in a bustle; some preparing to embark in a canoe, others firing. I sat down to gaze for a moment on the most interesting scene I had ever

witnessed, and then gave a loud cry, which it was evident nobody heard, although the river is not more than a stone-cast across. I made a second effort with better success. The Indians raised a shout of triumph; the men hallooed,

“Le voilà! le voilà! Je le vois! Je le vois à l'autre bord! Embarquez! embarquez!”

A few minutes more, and I found myself restored to at best a prolonged life of misery and exile. Let it not be inferred from this expression that I felt ungrateful for my deliverance; on the contrary, my escape from a death so lingering and terrible made a deep impression upon my mind. I afterwards gave a holiday to my men in remembrance of it, and made them all happy for one day.

CHAPTER XIII.

NARROWLY ESCAPE DROWNING—ACCIDENT TO INDIAN GUIDE—
AM NEARLY FROZEN TO DEATH—MISUNDERSTANDING BE-
TWEEN ALGONQUINS AND IROQUOIS—MASSACRE AT HANNAH
BAY.

NOTHING occurred this year out of the usual routine, save an accident that happened to myself, and had nearly proved fatal. A couple of hounds had been presented to me by a friend, for the purpose of hunting the deer that abounded in the neighbourhood. The dogs having one day broken loose from the leash, betook themselves to the hills; and the first intimation we had of their being at liberty, was the sound of their voices in full cry on an adjacent hill. I instantly seized my gun, and following a beaten

track that led to a small lake at the base of the hill, I perceived a deer swimming towards an island in the middle of the lake, and only a little beyond the range of gun-shot. An old fishing-canoe happening to be at hand, I immediately launched it, and gave chase, without examining the condition it was in. I proceeded but a short distance, however, when I perceived that it leaked very much. I continued, nevertheless, to paddle, till I got nearly half-way across to the island; but by this time the quantity of water in the canoe had increased so much, that my ardour for the chase began to give way to anxiety for my own safety. I perceived a large hole in the stern of the canoe, now almost level with the surface of the lake, through which the water gushed with every stroke of the paddle. The fore-part appearing free from injury, I immediately inverted my position,—a movement necessarily effected with much difficulty in so small a craft; and having thus placed myself, the stern was consequently raised a little higher. I then paddled gently towards a long point projecting

from the mainland, much nearer me than the island; and although I used the utmost caution in paddling, the canoe sunk under me some distance from the shore. The lake, however, was fortunately shallow at this place, so that I soon found bottom. Had there been the least ripple on the water, I could not have escaped; but the weather was perfectly calm, and the lake smooth as glass.

In the early part of next winter, I went again in pursuit of the deer; and although I incurred no great risk of losing my life, I yet experienced such inconveniences as seldom fall to the lot of amateur hunters in other parts of the world. I left the house early in the morning, and, starting a deer close by, gave chase, following the track over hill and dale, until I reached a high ridge bordering on Lac de Sable. Here the deer slackened his pace, and appeared, by his track, to have descended slowly into a valley, where he remained until I started him a second time. I still continued the pursuit, without thinking of time or distance from the establishment. At

length the night evidently began to close, and I felt faint and exhausted from want of food, and the exertions I had made during the day. I therefore gave up the chase; but to retrace my steps by the devious path by which I had pursued the deer, would have occupied the greater part of the night; I therefore resolved on returning by a more direct course; but the upshot was, that, after wandering about for some time, and repeatedly falling on my own tracks, I passed the night in the woods. Although nearly overcome with fatigue, I durst not think of lying down, well knowing what the consequence would be; I therefore walked backwards and forwards, on a beaten track, the whole night; and next morning adopted the sure course of finding my way by my tracks of the preceding day. Meeting an Indian by the way, who had been sent in search of me, he led me by a short cut, and we arrived at the house about two o'clock, P.M.

In the autumn of 1829, another opponent entered the lists against us, — an enterprising Canadian, who had been for a long time in the

Company's service. This adventurer proceeded some distance inland, and I need scarcely say that a party was sent to keep him company. Understanding that the new competitor gave our people more trouble than had been anticipated, I determined on taking an active part in the game; and as I had only two men with me at Lac de Sable, whose services were required there, I set off alone, intending to take with me an Indian who had an encampment by the way, as I was unacquainted with the route. I slept at the Indian's wigwam, who readily accompanied me next morning; but the weather being intolerably cold, the poor fellow got both his ears frozen, *et aliud quidquam præterea*, in crossing a large lake not far from his camp. The moment he perceived his mishap, he assailed me in the most abusive terms, and swore that he would accompany me no farther; which, being conscious that I was partly the cause of his misfortune, I bore with as much equanimity as I could; and arriving at the opposite side of the lake, we

kindled a fire, and I proceeded to treat his case according to the usual practice; that is, rubbing the part affected with snow, or bathing it with cold water until it is thawed, and the circulation restored. Having happily succeeded, I forthwith dismissed him, and determined to find my way alone; and having a tolerable idea of the direction in which I should go, and the weather being clear, I entertained no doubt of falling somewhere on the river whereon the post is situated. I came upon it, as it seemed to me, a considerable distance below the establishment, just as the sun was setting.

Having travelled in deep snow the whole day, I felt so much fatigued that I could scarcely exert myself sufficiently to keep my body warm, the cold being intense. I walked as briskly as my diminished strength would allow; but at length became so weak, that I was obliged to lay myself down at short intervals. In this wretched state,—my limbs benumbed with cold, and thinking I should never see daylight,—I

suddenly came upon a hard beaten path: this inspired me with new vigour, as it indicated the close vicinity of a shanty. I soon discovered the desired haven, and crawling up the steep bank that led to it, I knocked at the door with my snow-shoes, and was immediately admitted.

The noise I made roused the inmates, who had been sound asleep; and who, seeing my helpless condition, exerted themselves in every possible way to relieve me. I was nearly in the last stage of exhaustion, being unable to take off my snow-shoes, or even articulate a word. One of these noble woodsmen guided me next day to the post; when, as a small mark of gratitude for his generous kindness, I presented him and his companions with what is always acceptable to a shanty-man, a liberal allowance of the "crathur," to enjoy themselves withal.

If it be asked why I did not make a fire, when I had the necessary apparatus; I answer, that I had but a very small axe, quite unfit for felling so large timber as grew on the banks

of this river; and I was, besides, so benumbed and exhausted as to be unequal to the task even of lighting a fire.

Sometime after my return from Montreal in the autumn of 1830, I went to pay a visit to one of my customers whose lands were at a considerable distance. I was accompanied by one man in a small canoe; and as it was necessary that one of us should carry the canoe over the portages, and the other the property, I chose the former, being the lightest though by far the most inconvenient load. I found it very oppressive at first, but use rendered it more easy. This was the first time I carried a canoe.

On our return from the Indian's camp we met with rather a disagreeable accident, while ascending a small and very rapid river. In pushing forward the canoe against the stream, my pole happened to glance off a stone, and the canoe swinging round came in contact with the trunk of a tree projecting from the bank, and we, or at least I, was upset in an instant. Fortunately

the current, though strong, was smooth and free from whirlpools; so that, after swimming down a short distance in search of a landing-place, I rejoined my companion, whom I found standing on the bank perfectly dry. On inquiring of him how he happened to avoid a ducking, he told me he sprang ashore while I was attempting to parry off the tree; doubtless his having done so was in a great measure the cause of the accident. He, however, acted a very prudent part after landing, having caught hold of the canoe in the act of upsetting, and thus preserved the goods from being lost or damaged.

In the course of this year, the Iroquois and Algonquins were nearly coming to blows on account of the hunting-grounds. This quarrel originated from a speech which Colonel McKay, then at the head of the Indian department, had addressed to the Iroquois, in which, making use of the metaphorical language of the people, he observed that Indians of all tribes ought to live together in the utmost concord and amity, seeing

they inhabited the same villages, "and ate out of the same dish." This the Iroquois interpreted in a way more suitable to their own wishes than consistent with its real meaning. "Our father," said they, "tells us we eat out of the same dish with the Algonquins;—he means that we have an equal right to the hunting-grounds." They proceeded, accordingly, to avail themselves of the supposed privilege. The consequence was a very violent quarrel, in which Government was ultimately obliged to interfere.

The Indians informed us, this spring, of a dreadful murder that had been committed in the early part of the winter by some of the natives of Hudson's Bay. The particulars of this tale of blood I since learned from an individual that escaped from the massacre. The Indians attached to the posts established along the shores of Hudson's Bay are comparatively civilized; most of them speak English, and are employed as voyageurs by the Company. Few or no precautions are taken at these posts to guard against

treachery ; the gates are seldom shut, and some of the posts are destitute of palisades or defence of any kind. Of this description was the post where the catastrophe occurred which I am about to relate.

The post of Hannah Bay is situated about sixty miles to the north of Moose Factory, and was at this time under the charge of a Mr. Corrival. His establishment consisted of two or three half-breeds, and an Indian who had been brought up by the whites. He and some of the men had families. In the course of the winter five Indians came in with their "hunts," and agreeably to their usual practice encamped close by. Those Indians are designated "Home Guards,"—a term generally applied to the Indians attached to a trading post ; they hunt in winter at a convenient distance from the post, and are employed in summer as voyageurs, or in performing any other necessary duty. Notwithstanding their thus being frequently in company with white men and Christians, they still retain many of the barbarous habits, and much

of the superstitious belief of their forefathers, aggravated, I regret to say, by some of the vices of the whites.

Among the number of those just mentioned was an individual who had acquired considerable influence among his tribe, from his pretending to be skilled in the art of divination. This man told his fellows that he had had a communication from the Great Spirit, who assured him that he would become the greatest man in Hudson's Bay if he only followed the course prescribed to him, which was, first, to cut off their own trading post, and then with the spoil got there to hire other Indians, who should assist in destroying all the other posts the Company possessed in the country. Accordingly, it was determined to carry their design into execution, whenever a favourable opportunity occurred. This was not long in presenting itself. They came one day to the establishment, and told the people that the "man of medicine" had come for the purpose of performing some extraordinary

feat that would astonish them all. The silly creatures believed the story, and went to the borders of the lake, where they observed the sorcerer showing off a variety of antics very much to their amusement. The conspirators, seeing this part of the stratagem succeed, rushed into the house, and immediately despatched Mr. Corrigal and his family. The men, hearing the report of the guns, hastened back towards the house. The two that first arrived were saluted by a volley of balls; the one fell dead, the other fled. The third, seeing what had happened, seized his youngest child, and also fled. The murderers pursued. The poor fellow, encumbered by the weight of his child, necessarily fell behind. A ball from the pursuers killed the child, and wounded him in the hand. Dropping, then, the lifeless body, he soon came up with his fellow, and both escaped without further injury.

It was about noon when they began their flight. One of them reached Moose Factory next day about noon, the other soon after. The distance—

nearly sixty miles—travelled in so short a space of time, may appear incredible; but fear gave them wings, they fled for their lives and never halted. One of them, my informant, lost all the toes of one of his feet by the frost.

Measures were immediately adopted to frustrate the further diabolical designs of the Indians, as well as to avenge the innocent blood that had been shed. Messengers were despatched with all possible haste to Rupert's house, the nearest post, to give the alarm, and a party of men, under an efficient leader, was sent to seize the murderers. This expedition, however, proved unsuccessful, as the Indians could not be found in that direction; but, in the meantime, two of them who had come to Rupert's house to "spy the land," were seized and sent bound to Moose Factory, and one of them was compelled to act as guide to another party. Led by him, they approached the camp without being perceived, and found the "man of medicine" sitting very composedly in his tent, surrounded by the spoils he had taken from the

fort. He was secured, and the rest of his associates, who were absent hunting, were soon "tracked," and secured likewise. They then all underwent the punishment they deserved.

The fort presented a horrible spectacle. Men, women, and children shared the same fate, and the mangled limbs of their victims were scattered among the articles of property which the wretches, not being able to carry off with them, had attempted to destroy.

CHAPTER XIV.

FALL THROUGH THE ICE—DANGEROUS ADVENTURE AT A RAPID
—OPPONENTS GIVE IN—ORDERED TO LA CHINE—TREATMENT
ON MY ARRIVAL—MANNERS, HABITS, AND SUPERSTITIONS OF
THE INDIANS—FEROCIOUS REVENGE OF A SUPPOSED INJURY
—DIFFERENT METHODS OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC AND PRO-
TESTANT MISSIONARY —INDIAN COUNCILS —TRADITION OF
THE FLOOD—BEAVER-HUNTING—LANGUAGE. '

FINDING that my presence was more wanted at the outpost than elsewhere, I resolved on taking up my residence there for the winter 1831-32. Our active opponent gave us much annoyance, causing great expense to the Company, without any benefit to himself; on the contrary, it ultimately ruined him.

While accompanying our party on a trading excursion in the beginning of winter, I had a

very narrow escape. We were travelling on the Catineau, a very rapid stream that joins the Ottawa, a little below Hull. A young lad, interpreter to the opposition, and I, had one morning gone considerably in advance of the others, walking smartly to keep ourselves warm, when I suddenly broke through the ice. The current here running strong, I should soon have been swept under the ice, had I not, by extending my arms upon it on either side of me, kept my head above water. At the hazard of his own life, my companion came to my assistance; but the ice was too weak to admit of his approaching sufficiently near to reach me his hand; he therefore cut a long pole, and tying his belt to it, threw it to me; and laying hold of it, I dragged myself on the sound ice. But the danger was not yet over; the weather was intensely cold, so that my clothes were soon frozen solid upon me, and having no means of lighting a fire, I ran into the woods; and in order to keep my body from being frozen into the same mass with my clothes, continued running

up and down with all my might, till the rest of the party arrived.

I had a still more narrow escape in the month of March ensuing. I had been on a visit to the post under my own immediate charge, termed head-quarters *par excellence*; returning to the post alone, I came to a place where our men, in order to avoid a long detour occasioned by a high and steep hill coming close to the river, were accustomed to draw their sledges upon the ice along the edge of a rapid. About the middle of the rapid, where the torrent is fiercest, the banks of the river are formed of rocks rising almost perpendicularly from the water's edge; and here they had to pass on a narrow ledge of ice, between the rock on the one side, and the foaming and boiling surge on the other. The ledge, at no time very broad, was now reduced, by the falling in of the water, to a strip of ice of about eighteen inches, or little more, adhering to the rock. The ice, however, seemed perfectly solid, and I made no doubt that, with caution, I should succeed in passing safely this formidable strait.

The weather having been very mild in the fore-part of the day, my shoes and socks had been saturated with wet, but were now frozen hard by the cold of the approaching night. Overlooking this circumstance, I attempted the dangerous passage; and had proceeded about half-way, when my foot slipped, and I suddenly found myself resting with one hip on the border of ice, while the rest of my body overhung the rapid rushing fearfully underneath. I was now literally in a state of agonizing suspense: to regain my footing was impossible; even the attempt to move might precipitate me into the rapid.

My first thought indeed was to throw myself in, and endeavour by swimming to reach the solid ice that bridged the river a short distance below; a glance at the torrent convinced me that this was a measure too desperate to be attempted;— I should have been dashed against the ice, or hurried beneath it by the current. But my time was not yet come. Within a few feet of the spot where I was thus suspended *in sublimis*, the rock projected a little outward, so as to

break the force of the current. It struck me that a new border of ice might be formed at this place, under and parallel to that on which I was perched; exploring cautiously, therefore, with a stick which I fortunately had in my hand, all along and beneath me, I found my conjecture well founded; but whether the ice were strong enough to bear me, I could not ascertain. But it was my only hope of deliverance; letting myself down therefore gently, I planted my feet on the lower ledge, and clinging with the tenacity of a shell-fish to the upper, I crept slowly along till I reached land.

This autumn, I had the satisfaction of seeing all my opponents quit the field, some of whom had maintained a long and obstinate struggle; yet, although I had reason to congratulate myself on their departure, as it promised me relief from the painfully toilsome life I had led, I must do one of the parties, at least, the justice to say, that, in different circumstances, I should have beheld their departure with regret. Dey and McGillivray carried on the contest longer than

the others, and did so without showing any of that rancorous feeling which the other petty traders manifested towards the Company. Mac-Gillivray and myself, when travelling together, often shared the same blanket, and the same kettle; and found, that while this friendly feeling was mutually advantageous to ourselves, it did not in any way compromise the interests of our employers. I parted from him, wishing him every success in *any other* line of business he might engage in.

After the removal of my competitors, I found the time to hang heavily on my hands; and the ease I had so often sighed for, I now could scarcely endure; but I was not allowed long time to sigh for a change. On the 5th of April an Iroquois came up from Montreal with a packet conveying orders to me to proceed forthwith to Lachine, whence I should embark by the opening of the navigation for the northern department. I was alone at the post when these unexpected orders came to hand, all the men being absent at the outpost; and as it behoved me to use the utmost

diligence in order to get away ere winter travelling should break up, leaving an old squaw in charge, I set out for the outpost in quest of Mr. Cameron, who was appointed my successor; and on the 7th of April took my departure.

On arriving at the Grand River, I found travelling on the ice to be attended with great danger, and several accidents had already happened; but I had the good fortune to reach Grenville at the head of the Long Sault in safety; here, however, my farther progress was arrested for a fortnight, the roads being impassable. I arrived at Lachine in the end of April, and after handing in the documents relative to my late charge, Mr. K—— told me I was at liberty to spend the intervening time until the embarkation, where and how I pleased. Gratified by this indulgence, I was about to frame a speech expressive of my gratitude, when he continued,—“for, Sir, you are to understand we do not keep a boarding-house here.” This stopped my mouth, and I reserved my thanks for a future occasion; for I could not out feel, that being an officer of the Company, it

was robbing me of a part of my pay under the pretext of an indulgence. Availing myself, however, of this ungenerous grant of freedom, I spent some halcyon days in the company of relatives most dear to me, and expected no interruption to my enjoyment until the time appointed for the embarkation: but a few days after I had joined my relatives in the vicinity of Montreal, I received a letter, commanding me, in the most peremptory manner, to repair to Lachine,—“circumstances not foreseen at my arrival from the interior required my departure without further delay.” I accompanied the bearer of Mr. K——’s letter, and found, on arriving at Lachine, that I had been appointed to conduct some of Captain Back’s party, who proved rather troublesome to him at Montreal, to the Chats, and there to await my passage to the north by the Brigade.

I had now served the Hudson’s Bay Company faithfully and zealously for a period of twelve years, leading a life of hardship and toil, of which no idea can be formed except by those whose hard lot it may be to know it by experience.

How enthusiastically I had laboured for them, may be better gathered from the foregoing narrative than from any statement I could here make. And what was my reward? I had no sooner succeeded in freeing my district from opposition, than I was ordered to resign my situation to another, who would enjoy the fruits of my labour:—when I arrived at the Company's head-quarters to take my departure for a remote district, I was ordered to provide for myself until I embarked; and when enjoying myself in the bosom of my family, to suit the convenience of one of their correspondents, I was torn away from them prematurely, and without warning,—treatment, which caused one of them so severe a shock as nearly to prove fatal!

Before I take leave of the Montreal department, it may be well to allude more particularly to the manners and customs of the natives. The mode of life the Algonquins lead, while at their village, has been already touched upon; within these few years a great change has taken place, not in their morals, but in their circumstances.

The southern and western parts of their hunting-grounds are now nearly all possessed by the white man, whose encroachments extend farther and farther every year. Beaver meadows are now to be found in place of beaver dams; and rivers are crossed on bridges formed by the hand of man, where the labours of the beaver afforded a passage for the roving Indian and hunter only a few years before.

Happy change, it may be said; but so say not the Indians; the days of happiness are gone for them, at least for those of the present generation; though I have no doubt that their posterity may, in course of time, become reconciled to, and adopt those habits of life which their altered circumstances may require. A few have done so already, but many of them still remain on the most remote parts of their lands, having no longer the means of enjoying themselves at their village, or of satisfying the avarice of priests and traders. Here they pursue, without restraint or interruption, the mode of life most congenial to their habits.

I have already observed, that I could discover

but little difference between the (so called) Christian Indians, and their unbaptized countrymen, when beyond the surveillance of their priests. They practise all the superstitious rites of their forefathers, and place implicit confidence in the power of magic, although they admit that the same results cannot be obtained now, as formerly, in consequence, as they say, "of the Cross having come in contact with the Medicine." They have their genii of lakes, rivers, mountains, and forests, to whom they offer sacrifice. I was present at the sacrifice of a beaver, made by an Algonquin to his familiar, or "totem," in order to propitiate him, because he had been unsuccessful in hunting. The beaver was roasted without being skinned, the fur only being appropriated to the spirit, whilst the flesh afforded a luxurious feast to the sacrificer; and in this part of the ceremony I willingly participated.

When any of them is taken ill, the indisposition is ascribed to the effects of "bad medicine;" and the person is mentioned whom they suspect of having laid the disease upon them. Many violent deeds are

committed to revenge these supposed injuries. An Algonquin, who had lost a child, blamed a *tête de boule*, who was domiciled at Lac de Sable, for his death. The ensuing spring the *tête de boule* took a fancy to visit the Lake of Two Mountains, and set off in company with the Algonquins.

On arrival of the party at the Grand River, he who had lost his child invited the *tête de boule* to his tent, and entertained him in the most friendly manner for a time, then suddenly drawing his knife, he plunged it into the side of his unsuspecting guest. The poor wretch fled, and concealed himself in a pig-sty, where his groans soon discovered him to the Algonquin, who, again seizing him, thrust his knife into his throat, and did not withdraw it until he ceased to live.

“Now,” exclaimed his murderer, “I am avenged for the death of my child. You wanted to go to the Lake to be baptized, and here I have baptized you in your own blood.”

Many other instances might be adduced to

prove that the savage disposition of these Indians has not been greatly ameliorated by their profession of Christianity ; they have, in fact, all the vices with but few of the virtues of their heathen countrymen.

They are immoderately fond of ardent spirits, men, women and—shocking to say—children. This hateful vice, which contributes more than any other to the debasement of human nature, seems to produce more baneful effects upon the Indian, both physically and morally, than upon the European. The worst propensities of his nature are excited by it. While under the influence of this demon he spares neither friend nor foe ; and in many instances the members of his own family become the victims either of his fury or his lust.

The crime of incest is by no means unknown among them ; rum, the greatest scourge and curse of the Indian race, is undoubtedly the principal cause of this dreadful corruption : but is it not strange that religion should have so little effect in reforming their manners ? The

Mississagays, the neighbours of the Algonquins, who speak the same language, were only converted a few years ago by the Methodists, and from being the most dissipated and depraved of Indians, are now become sober, industrious and devout.

It seems, therefore, impossible even for the most unprejudiced to avoid the conclusion that the difference in manners must in a great measure be ascribed to the different methods adopted by the Roman Catholic and Protestant missionaries in converting the natives. The Roman Catholic convert is first baptized, then instructed in the forms of worship, taught to repeat Pater noster and Ave Marias, to make the sign of the cross, and to confess. He is now a member of the Church, and is dismissed to his woods—a Christian, can we say? The Methodists pursue a different course. Their converts must not only reform their lives, but give indubitable proofs that they are reformed; they are taught so as to understand thoroughly the sound principles of Christianity; and they must give an

account of their faith, and a reason for the hope that is in them, before they are admitted as members of the Christian community. "The tree is known by its fruits."

The Sachems, or chiefs of the Algonquins, possess little or no authority, but their advice is of some weight. There are gradations of rank in the chieftainship; the Kitchi Okima, or great chief, takes precedence at the Council, and propounds the subject of discussion; the inferior chiefs (Okimas) speak in turn, according to seniority; every old man, however, whether chief or not, is allowed to give his opinion, and the general voice of the assembly decides the question at issue. It is seldom, however, that any question arises requiring much deliberation in the present times of peace. When a party of strange Indians arrives at the village, a council is called to ascertain the means the community may possess of discharging properly the rites of hospitality; each individual states the modicum he is willing to contribute, in cash or in kind, and the proceeds, which are always sufficient to entertain the guests

sumptuously, according to Indian ideas, while they remain, are placed at the disposal of the Kitchi Okima.

Councils are held and harangues delivered when they receive their annual presents from Government; these consist of blankets, cloth, ammunition, and a variety of small articles, all of which in their present impoverished state are highly valued by them. They profess an attachment to the British Government; but, like certain more civilized nations, they will fight for the cause that is likely to yield them most advantage. Their loyalty to Britain, therefore, is less to be depended on than their hatred to America. A general idea has gone abroad regarding their taciturnity which does not accord with my experience. Far from being averse to colloquial intercourse, they delight in it; none more welcome to an Indian wigwam than one who can talk freely. They pass the winter evenings in relating their adventures, hunting being their usual theme, or in telling stories; and often have

I heard the woods resound with peals of laughter excited by their wit, for they too are witty in their own way.

Their tradition of the flood (*kitchi a te-soka*, or "great tale,") is somewhat remarkable. The world having been overflowed by water, all mankind perished but one family, who embarked in a large canoe, taking a variety of animals along with them. The canoe floated about for some time, when a musk-rat, tired of its confinement, jumped overboard and dived; it soon reappeared, with a mouthful of mud, which it deposited on the surface of the water, and from this beginning the new world was formed.

When the veracity of an Indian is doubted, he points to heaven with his forefinger, and exclaims:—

"He to whom we belong knows that what I say is true."

No white man trusts more firmly in the validity of a solemn oath than the Indian in this

asseveration. Still it must be confessed that they are prone to falsehood; but they seem to allow themselves a much greater licence in this respect in their intercourse with the whites than amongst themselves.

When an Indian is about to enter a wigwam, he utters the word or sound "Quay" in a peculiar tone; the word repeated from within is considered as an invitation to enter. Should he neglect to announce himself in this way he is considered as ill-bred—an unmannerly boor. The left-hand side of the wigwam as you enter is considered the place of honour; here the father of the family and chief squaw take their station, the young men on the opposite side, and the women next to the door, or at the upper end of the fire-place, both ends being alike plebeian. When a person of respectability enters, the father, moving towards the door, resigns his place to his guest, places skins under him, and otherwise pays every attention to his comfort. They are extremely hospitable, and cheerfully share

their last morsel with the stranger who may be in want. Hospitality, however, is a virtue which civilization rarely improves.

A good hunter always leaves his lodge by dawn of day, and seldom tastes food till he returns late at night. Hunting beavers is a most laborious occupation, and becomes more so in proportion to the scarcity of these animals; for this reason, that when a great number of beavers occupy a lake, their places of retreat are in closer proximity to each other, and for the most part inhabited; if the number be reduced, it is likely they will have the same places of retreat, and the hunter must bore through the ice, before he can ascertain whether they are inhabited or not.

The sagacity of their dogs is truly surprising. The beaver house being first destroyed by the hunter, the dogs are urged by a peculiar call to scent out their retreats, which they never fail to do, whatever may be the thickness of the ice. They keep running about the borders of the lake, their noses close to the ground, and the moment

they discover a retreat, begin to bark and jump on the ice; the hunter then cuts a hole with his trench, and with a stick which he carries along with him feels for the beaver; should he find one, he introduces his bare arm into the hole, and seizing his prey by the tail, drags it out on the ice, where it is dispatched with a spear. There is less danger in this operation than one would imagine, for the beaver allows itself to be seized without a struggle, but sometimes inflicts severe wounds on his captor after he is taken out of the water.

When the retreat is not inhabited, the entrance to it is barred by sticks, and the hunter proceeds to chisel again, and continues his operations until the beaver is either taken, or shut out from all his haunts, in which case he is compelled to return to the house to take breath, where he is either shot or caught in a trap.

The language of these Indians is a dialect of the Sauteux or Bungee, intermixed with Cree, and a few words of French derivation. The greater part of them have a smattering of French

or English; but the acquisition of a foreign language is extremely difficult to them, from the peculiar formation of their own, which wants the letter r. An Algonquin pronounces the word "marrow" "manno" or "mallo." Their dialect has all the softness of the Italian, but is extremely poor and defective.

CHAPTER XV.

EMBARK FOR THE INTERIOR — MODE OF TRAVELLING BY CANOES—LITTLE RIVER—LAKE NIPISSING—FRENCH RIVER — OLD STATION OF INDIAN ROBBERS—FORT MISSISSAGA— INDIANS — LIGHT CANOE-MEN.—SAULT STE. MARIE —LAKE SUPERIOR — CANOE-MEN DESERT — RE-TAKEN — FORT WILLIAM—M. THIBAUD—LAC LA PLUIE AND RIVER INDIANS— WHITE RIVER—NARROW ESCAPE—CONVERSATION WITH AN INDIAN ABOUT BAPTISM.

ON the 25th April, 1833, I embarked on board of a steamboat at Lachine, and reached Hull on the 27th. Here the regular conveyance by land carriages and steamboat ended, and the traveller in those days was obliged to wait his passage by the canoes of shanty men, or hire a boat or canoe for himself. I had recourse to the latter expedient, and reached the post of the Chats, then in charge of my esteemed friend

Mr. McD——l, on the 30th. Captain Back arrived on the 1st of May, put ashore for a few supplies and my wards, and immediately re-embarked.

The brigade arrived on the 2d, and the guide delivered me a letter from Mr. K——, informing me that I was to consider myself merely as a passenger, the command of the men being entrusted to the guide by Governor Simpson's orders. This arrangement relieved me of much anxiety and trouble; though I would rather have preferred undergoing any personal inconvenience to being placed under the command of an ignorant Canadian, who might use his "brief" authority in a way very offensive to my feelings, without being guilty of anything that I could complain of.

My fears, however, were disappointed, as he showed every deference to my wishes, as well as the utmost courtesy to the other passengers, most of whom were of a rank not likely to find much consideration from a Canadian boatman; they consisted of a young priest not yet ordained,

an apprentice clerk, three youths who had been at their education in Lower Canada, and myself.

The brigade consisted of three Montreal canoes, laden with provisions for the trip, and some tobacco for the southern department; and manned by sixty Iroquois and Canadians, the latter engaged to winter, the former for the trip.

The day was far spent when we left the portage of the Chats, and we encamped in the evening near the head of the rapids. The mode of travelling in canoes being now well known, I shall not detail the occurrences of each day, but confine myself to the narration of such incidents as may be most worthy of notice throughout the voyage. The moment we landed the tent was pitched by men employed for the purpose; the other men unloaded the canoes, and carried the goods beyond high-water mark, where it was piled and covered with oil-cloths.

It is the particular duty of the bowsman to attend to the canoe, to repair and pitch it when

necessary, and to place it in security when the cargo is discharged. In consideration of these services he is exempt from the duty of loading or unloading, his wages are higher than those of the steersman, and he ranks after the guide. The latter generally messes with the gentlemen, his canoe always takes the lead in the rapids, but in still water the post of honour is held by the best going canoe. The guide rouses the men in the morning; the moment the call is heard, "Lève, lève!" the passengers spring upon their feet, tie up their beds, and if they are not smart about it, the tents go down about their ears, and they must finish the operation in the open air.

Several of our men having already deserted, we encamped upon islands, when they could be found, or kept watch on the mainland. Our hour of departure was three o'clock, A.M.; when the weather permitted we breakfasted at seven, dined at one or two o'clock, P.M., and encamped at sunset. In calm weather the canoes went abreast, singing in chorus and keeping time with the paddles. All was then gaiety, and, to appear-

ance, happiness; but this is one of those bright spots in a voyageur's life which are few and far between.

We reached Fort Coulonge on the 3d, and it being late, I took up my quarters with my worthy old bourgeois, Mr. S. Here we received some additional supplies of provisions for the crews and passengers. We arrived at Lac des Allumettes on the 5th, where I put ashore merely to say *bon jour* to an old acquaintance. We encamped rather early this evening, to allow the men a little extra rest, on account of the laborious duty they had performed for some days before. Next day, when ascending the rapid of Roche Capitaine, the canoe in which I was passenger came in violent contact with another; but mine only sustained damage. The bow being stove in, the canoe began to fill; we however gained the shore, to which fortunately we were close, at a leap, and lost no time in discharging the cargo. Drying the goods and repairing the canoe occupied us a good part of the day.

We reached the Forks of Mattawin on the

8th, where we found a small outpost belonging to the Fort Coulonge district, recently established for the purpose of securing the hunts of the Indians of this quarter, who were in the habit of trading with shanty men. Being no longer under any apprehensions of the men deserting, we now discontinued the watch and slept in comfort.

The passage of the Little River was effected with much toil and difficulty, from the shallowness of the water. We entered Lake Nipissing on the 10th; descended French River, a rapid and dangerous stream, without accident, and entered Lake Huron on the morning of the 12th. The guide pointed out to me a place near the mouth of the river where the Indians used to waylay the canoes on their passage to and from the interior; a sort of rude breastwork still marks the spot. After much destruction of life and property by the savages, they were eventually caught in their own toil; the voyageurs, instead of descending the river at this place, passed by land, and coming unawares on the Indians killed them all.

We reached the post of the Cloche early on

the 13th, and spent two hours in the company of Mr. McB——u, who entertained us most kindly; and on the 14th looked in at Mississaga post, an establishment which appeared to possess but few attractions as a place of residence; consisting of a few miserable log buildings, surrounded by a number of pine-bark wigwams, the temporary residence of the natives; several of whom came reeling into the house after our arrival, there being an opposition party there.

These Indians were, without comparison, the most uncouth, savage-looking beings I ever beheld; mouth from ear to ear, cheek-bones remarkably high, low projecting forehead, hair like a horse's mane, and eyes red and swollen by continual intoxication. American whisky had no doubt contributed to increase their natural deformity.

After leaving this post we had a strong breeze of adverse wind for the remainder of the day, and encamped in consequence earlier than usual. On the following morning we were very early roused from our slumbers by the call of "Canot à lège," (light canoe). Our beds were tied up, tents

packed, canoes launched and loaded in an instant ; and we set off in pursuit of the mail, which we overtook at breakfast time, and found Mr. G. K——th in charge, who had just returned from England, and was now proceeding to assume the charge of Lake Superior district. Mr. K——th exchanged some of his men, who were found incapable of performing light canoe duty, for some of our best ; an arrangement that did not appear to please our guide much.

The duty which the crew of a light canoe have to perform is laborious in the extreme, and requires men of the greatest strength and vigour to stand it. They are never allowed to remain more than four hours ashore by night, often only two or three ; during the day they are constantly urged on by the guide or person in command, and never cease paddling, unless during the few moments required to exchange seats, or while they take their hasty meals ashore. They are liberally plied with grog, well paid, and well fed, and seldom quit the service until it is hinted to them that the duty is become too hard for them. A

light canoe-man considers it quite a degradation to be employed in loaded craft.

We arrived early on the 16th at the Company's establishment at Sault Sainte Marie, where there is a large depôt of provisions for the purpose of supplying the canoes passing to and from the interior and the surrounding districts. The south side of the river is occupied by the Americans as a military post, and it was gratifying to see the friendly intercourse that subsisted between the American officers and the gentlemen in the Company's service. Would that the same good feeling were more universal between two nations of one blood and the same language!

The rapid which unites the waters of Lakes Huron and Superior is avoided by making a portage. The carrying of the canoes and goods to the upper end of this portage occupied the men till about noon, when we embarked on the "Sea of Canada," having Messrs. Bethune and McKenzie on board as passengers. We proceeded about fifteen miles and encamped. We were ready to embark at the usual hour next

morning, but being prevented by the high wind, to make the best of the time we turned in again, and after a most refreshing nap got up to breakfast.

The weather moderating soon after, all hands were ordered to embark, but all hands were not there; four of them had deserted during the night, and were not missed until the crews mustered for embarkation.

While we were holding a consultation regarding this unpleasant matter, an Indian canoe luckily cast up, and it was determined to despatch a party of Iroquois, conducted by a passenger in disguise, in pursuit of the fugitives. Another party was sent by land, and after an absence of about three hours returned with their prisoners. No criminals ever appeared more dejected than they; so humble did they seem, that they got off with a slight reprimand.

We reached the post of Michipikoton early on the morning of the 19th, and passed the remainder of the day waiting for despatches which Mr. K—— was preparing for the interior. We

left on the 20th, put ashore at the Pic on the 23d, where we dined with Mr. McMurray, and after experiencing much bad weather, adverse winds, together with showers of snow, we reached Fort William on the 28th, about noon.

We found the grand *depôt* of the North-West Company falling rapidly to decay, presenting in its present ruinous state but a shadow of departed greatness. It is now occupied as a petty post, a few Indians and two or three old voyageurs being the sole representatives of the crowded throngs of former times. It must have been a beautiful establishment in its days of prosperity; but the buildings certainly do not appear to have been erected with a view to durability. We here exchanged our large Montreal canoes for those of the North, (the former carrying seventy packages of ninety pounds, the latter twenty-five, exclusive of provisions;) and each of the passengers had a canoe for his own accommodation—an arrangement that seemed to increase in no small degree the self-importance of some of our number. Our guide was now obliged to

perform the duty of bowsman, still, however, retaining his authority over the whole brigade.

We bade adieu to Fort William and its hospitable commander on the 29th. Mr. McI——h had supplied all our wants most liberally, but the men were now allowed only Indian corn and a small quantity of grease ;—a sad and unpleasing change for poor Jean Baptiste ; but he had no help but to submit, though not perhaps with the utmost “ Christian resignation.”

Our men being now well disciplined, and our canoes comparatively light, we sped over our way at an excellent rate. We encamped on the 4th of June at one of the Thousand Lakes, and the canoes were drawn up before M. Thibaud (the priest) arrived. I was surprised to observe his frowning aspect on landing, and ascribed it to the circumstance of his being the “ harse,” or harrow, a term of derision applied to the slowest canoe. Calling me aside, however, he explained the cause of his discontent, which was very different from what I had surmised : his crew, whenever they found themselves sufficiently far in the rear to be

out of hearing, invariably' struck up an obscene song, alike unmindful of his presence and remonstrances; and this day had not only sung, but indulged in conversation the most indecent imaginable. This announcement appeared to me the more strange, that most of these young men had never before quitted home; and I had always understood the authority of the priest to be, at least, equal to that of the parent. Although, therefore, I never had any very great reverence for the (so-called) successors of St. Peter, I yet felt for my fellow-traveller, and addressed the miscreants who had insulted him in terms of grave reprehension, threatening them with severe punishment if such conduct should again be repeated.

We arrived at the post of Lac de la Pluie, on the 8th of June; and, after a short halt, and carrying our *impedimenta* across the portage on which the fort is situated, commenced the descent of Lac de la Pluie river,—a beautiful stream, running with a smooth, though strong current, and maintaining a medium breadth of about 200 yards. Its banks, which are clothed with verdure to the

water's edge, recede by a gradual slope until they terminate in a high ridge, running parallel to the river on both sides. This ridge yields poplar, birch, and maple, with a few pines, proving the excellence of the soil. The interior, however, is said to be low and swampy.

We passed the residence of an old retired servant of the Company, on the 9th, who, if I may judge from the appearance of his farm and the number of his cattle, must vegetate very much at his ease.

Observing in the evening a large Indian camp, I requested the guide to put ashore for a little. We were received kindly, but in a manner quite different to what I had been accustomed. The young men were drawn up on the shore, and eyed us with a savage *fiercé* in their looks, returning our salutation in a way that convinced us that we were at length among the "wild men of the woods." The weather being extremely hot, we found them in almost a complete state of nudity, with only a narrow shred of cloth around their loins. They speak the Sauteux language; and I had much

difficulty in making myself understood by them. In their physiognomy and personal appearance they exhibit all the characteristic features of the genuine aboriginal race; and this party certainly appeared, one and all, to be "without a cross;" but there had been long a trading post at Lac la Pluie, and I noticed, in a neighbouring camp, a lass with brown hair and pretty blue eyes. Where did she get them? After bartering some sturgeon with the Indians, and presenting them with a little tobacco, we parted good friends, and encamped so near them as to be annoyed the whole night by the sound of their drum.

On the following morning we entered the Lake of the Woods, and next morning White River, a very violent stream, full of falls and dangerous rapids. The portages are innumerable, and often close together. After crossing one of these portages, we observed, with astonishment, a number of people on the next portage, La Cave, about pistol-shot distance from us. They proved to be Mr. Hughes, formerly partner of the North-West Company; Mr. Berens, a member of Committee,

and suite: they were painfully situated, in consequence of the loss of their bowsman, who, by missing a stroke with his pole, fell into the rapid, and was drowned: the steersman was saved with great difficulty.

We got safe through this dangerous river, on the 15th; but two of the men had a narrow escape in one of the last portages. Our guide here, as everywhere else, having a picked crew, pushed on, and left us considerably in the rear. Approaching a fall, Le Bonnet, where no traces of a portage could be discovered, the men unloaded the canoes, and commenced carrying the goods through the woods; but the *boutes* (bowsmen and steersmen) determined on wading down with the canoes, the water being shallow, until they should come close to the fall; where, by lifting them across a narrow point, they could place them in the smooth water beneath. The attempt was made accordingly, by the leading canoe; but the rock over which the current flows being smooth, and covered with a slimy moss, the men slipped, and were in an instant precipitated over the fall. When we saw the

canoe rushing over the brink, with the poor fellows clinging to it, we all concluded they had reached the end of their voyage. Running down to the foot of the fall, which was about eleven feet high, having previously ordered a canoe to be carried across the point, and some shots to be fired to recall the guide, who was now nearly out of sight, I was astonished to find the canoe had not upset, although the men had got into it, and it was half full of water, and so near the shore that I extended my arm to lay hold of the bow. The next moment, however, the stern having come within the influence of a whirlpool, it was hurried out into the middle of the stream, and dashed with such violence against a rock, that the crashing of the timbers was distinctly heard from the shore. This shock, which had nearly proved fatal to the men, threw the canoe into an eddy, or counter-current, which whirled it to the opposite shore, where it was about to sink when assistance came.

In the evening, we arrived at the post of Bas de la Rivière, in charge of an Orkney-man, by name Clouston, who had risen from the ranks,

and who, seeing what small fry he had to deal with, treated us somewhat superciliously. Our stock of provisions being exhausted, we applied to *Maister* Clouston for a fresh supply: he granted us what I thought very inadequate to our wants; but he said it was all that was allowed by the Governor for the passage of the Lake. Here M. Thibaud found two men with a small canoe, who had been sent by the Bishop of Red River to convey him to his destination, waiting his arrival. We parted with feelings of mutual regret.

We left this post late on the 16th, and had proceeded but a short distance on the Lake, when a strong head wind compelled us to put ashore. We now experienced constant bad weather, never completing a day's sailing without interruption from some cause or other; and in consequence of these delays, it was found necessary to curtail our allowance of provisions. On the 20th, we pitched our tents near a camp of Sauteux, from whom the men procured a small quantity of sturgeon, in exchange for some

articles of clothing. I was surprised to find Indians, in a quarter so remote from those tribes with whom I had hitherto been conversant, speaking a dialect which I understood perfectly: their erratic habits, and intercourse with the Crees and Algonquins, may perhaps account for this similarity of dialect.

I entered into conversation with a shrewd old fellow, who had been often at Red River settlement. Among other questions, I asked him whether he had not been baptized?

“Baptized!” he exclaimed; “don’t speak of it, my brother. Baptized—that I may go to the devil! Indians think a good Indian goes to the good place when he dies; but the priests send *all* to the evil one.”

I asked him how he made that out?

“Why, I learned it from the priests themselves. When I first went to Red River, I met a French priest, who earnestly besought me to be converted. I heard him attentively, and his words had a great effect upon me; but I had been told there was another priest there, who

had different thoughts about religion, and I thought I would go to him too. He was very kind to me, and spoke nearly the same words as the French priest; so that I thought there was no difference in their religions. He asked me if I would be baptized? and I told him that I would; but I wanted to learn the French prayer. ‘Ah! my son,’ he said, ‘that must not be: if you adopt that bad religion, you will be burned for certain.’ And he spoke so strong, that I almost thought he was right. But before I would do anything, I went to the French priest again, and told him what the English priest said to me; and then said I would learn the English prayer. ‘Ah! my son,’ said he, ‘if you do so, it will lead you to perdition: all that pray after the English manner go to the fire.’ And he said much more, and his words were very strong too; so I saw that I could be no better by forsaking the belief of my fathers, and I have not gone to French or English priest since.”

This is by no means a solitary case; and it is one of the sore evils which arise from the cor-

ruption of Christianity, and the divisions of Christians. Nor, in the case of creeds so opposite as those of Protestants and Roman Catholics—creeds as opposite as light and darkness—is it easy to point out a remedy. After all, it is surely better for these poor Indians to adopt some form of Christianity, however corrupt, than to remain in the darkness and debasement of heathenism. And if our missionaries would act upon the noble maxim of the greatest of the Apostles—“never to enter upon the sphere of another man’s labours,”—consequences so injurious would be avoided. If they have not so much Christianity and good sense as to do so of themselves, where there is the power, they should be compelled to do it. The Company have the power, but are too much occupied with matters which they deem more momentous, to waste a thought upon this.

CHAPTER XVI.

CONTINUATION OF THE VOYAGE—RUN SHORT OF PROVISIONS—
 DOGS' FLESH — NORWAY HOUSE — INDIAN VOYAGEURS—
 ORDERED TO NEW CALEDONIA—LAKE WINNIPEG—MACIN-
 TOSH'S ISLAND SUBMERGED—CUMBERLAND HOUSE—CHIP-
 PEWEYAN AND CREE INDIANS — PORTAGE LA LOCHE —
 SCENERY—ATHABASCA—HEALTHINESS OF THE CLIMATE.

HIGH winds detained us in camp on the 21st. The crews of two canoes, having finished their last meal to-day, bartered some more of their clothes for dogs. We reached a small outpost called Berens House on the 23d, where we procured a couple of sturgeon, and a dog valued at ten shillings, for which I gave my note of hand. I had a *preein* of this cynic mutton at breakfast; and could not help thinking it would have made a most appropriate and *philosophical* addition to

the larder of the wise man of the tub. The men, however, having been for some time on short commons, seemed to relish it. We supped lightly enough on the remainder of Mr. Clouston's bountiful supply, giving a share to the men.

After a most tedious and miserable passage, we reached the outlet of Lake Winnipeg on the 24th, and arrived next morning at Norway House. Here the men were liberally supplied; and I found myself at breakfast with a number of chief factors and chief traders, just arrived from their respective districts, and on their way with their valuable returns to York Factory. Captain Back was also here, having sent on his men and baggage under the command of Dr. King, intending himself to follow in a light canoe, after having forwarded his despatches to Europe.

The day after my arrival, I was notified by one of the officials, that it was arranged that I should pass the summer here, giving such assistance to the gentleman in charge as might be required of me; and that my future destination should be determined upon at York Factory.

I now passed my time very agreeably, having just enough employment in the day-time to keep off *ennui*, and the company of several gentlemen, and, what I thought still better, that of a fair countrywoman,* in the evening. I was gratified to find that there existed here a far greater degree of intimacy between gentlemen of different ranks in the service, than in the Montreal department, where a clerk is considered as a mere hireling; here, on the contrary, commissioned officers look upon clerks as candidates for the same rank which themselves hold, and treat them accordingly.

The Governor, having taken up his residence for some years past in England, crosses the Atlantic once a year, and during his brief sojourn, Norway House forms his head-quarters. Here it is that the sham Council is held, and everything connected with the business of the interior arranged. Here also is the depôt for the districts of Athabasca and McKenzie's River, which supplies all the provisions required for inland transport. These provisions are furnished

* Mistress of the establishment.

by the Saskatchewan district, or are purchased by the Company from the colonists of Red River, who have no other customers.

The natives of this quarter speak a jargon of Cree and Sauteux, which sounds very harshly. They all understand English, and some of them speak it fluently. Many of them are constantly employed as voyageurs between Norway House and York Factory; and none perform the trip more expeditiously, or render their cargoes in better condition than they. Of Christianity, they have learned just as much as enables them to swear; in other respects, they are still Pagans.

On the 20th of July, I received a letter from Mr. Chief Factor Cameron, who acted as President of the Council in the Governor's absence, conveying orders for me to proceed to New Caledonia; Mr. Charles being instructed to furnish me with a passage to Athabasca, and to forward me afterwards to Fort Dunvegan, on Peace River, where I was to wait the arrival of the party sent annually from New Caledonia for a supply of leather.

The brigade having been despatched on the 27th, Mr. C. and I embarked on the 28th, and overtook it at the entrance of Lake Winnipeg. The crews being ashore, and enjoying themselves, we passed on; but did not proceed far, ere the wind blew so violently as to compel us to put ashore. After a delay of about four hours, we "put to sea" again; and the wind gradually abating as we proceeded, we encamped in the evening nearly opposite to McIntosh's Island.

This island, some years ago, presented an extensive surface of land covered with wood: there is not now a vestige of land to be seen; the spot where it existed being only known to voyagers by a shoal which is visible at low water. But not only have the islands been swept away, but the mainland along the west end of the lake seems gradually being encroached upon and engulfed by the waves; an undeniable proof of which is, that the old post of Norway House, which formerly stood at a considerable distance from the water's edge, is now close to it, and the burial-ground is nearly all submerged.

We arrived at the foot of Grand Rapid late on the 29th of July, and passed the portage on the 30th, assisted by the natives—Sauteux, Crees, and half-breeds. These live luxuriously on sturgeon, with little toil. Among them I observed two or three old Canadians, who could scarcely be distinguished from the natives by language, manners, or dress; such persons, when young, having formed an attachment to some of the Indian young women, betake themselves to their half-savage mode of life, and very soon cannot be persuaded to quit it.

We arrived on the 5th of August at Rivière du Pas, where an old Canadian, M. Constant, had fixed his abode, who appeared to have an abundance of the necessaries of life, and a large family of half-Indians, who seemed to claim him as their sire. We breakfasted sumptuously on fish and fowl, and no charge was made; but a gratuity of tea, tobacco, or sugar is always given; so that M. Constant loses nothing by his considerate attentions to his visitors.

We reached Cumberland House on the 8th.

Here I was cheered by the sight of extensive corn-fields, horned cattle, pigs and poultry, which gave the place more the appearance of a farm in the civilized world, than of a trading post in the far North-West; and I could not help envying the happy lot of its tenant, and contrasting it with my own, which led me to the wilds of New Caledonia—to fare like a dog, without knowing how long my exile might be protracted.

We arrived at the post of Isle à la Crosse, where we were detained a day in consequence of bad weather. This post is also surrounded by cultivated fields, and I observed a few cattle; but the voice of the grunter was not heard.

The Indians who frequent this post are chiefly Chippeweyans, with a few families of Crees. The former differ in features, language, and manners from any I had yet seen. Their face is of a peculiar mould, broad; the cheekbone remarkably prominent, chin small, mouth wide, with thick lips, the upper covered with beard; the body strongly built and muscular. They appear

destitute of the amiable qualities which characterise the Crees. Whenever we met any of them on our route, and asked for fish or meat, "Budt hoola,"* was the invariable answer; yet no Indians were ever more importunate than they in begging for tobacco. On the contrary, when we fell in with Crees, they allowed us to help ourselves freely, and were delighted to see us do so, receiving thankfully whatever we gave them in return. The features of the Crees are not so strongly marked as those of the Sauteux, although they are a kindred people; yet they are as easily distinguishable from each other, as an Englishman from a Frenchman.

We left Isle à la Crosse on the 12th, and without meeting with any adventure worthy of notice, reached the end of Portage la Loche about two o'clock P.M. of the following day, with canoe and baggage. In this, as in every other part of their territories, the Company use boats for the transport of property; but by a very

* There is none.

judicious arrangement, much time and labour are saved at this portage, which is said to be twelve miles in length. Boats are placed at the upper and lower ends, so that the men have only to carry across the property, which, in truth, of itself is a sufficiently laborious operation for human beings. The people from the district of McKenzie's River come thus far with their returns, and receive their outfit in boats manned by half-breeds, who are hired at Red River for the trip.

The prospect which the surrounding country presents from the upper end of the portage is very striking; and the more so from the sudden manner in which it bursts upon the view. You suddenly arrive at the summit of a remarkably steep hill, where, on looking around, the first object that attracts attention is a beautiful green hill standing on the opposite side of the deep glen, through which the clear Water River flows, forming the most prominent feature of an extensive range, cut up by deep ravines, whose

sides are clothed with wood, presenting already all the beautiful variety of their autumnal hues; while, at intervals, a glimpse was caught of the river meandering through the valley. In former times these hills were covered with herds of buffaloes, but not one is to be seen now.

We once more proceeded down the stream, and arrived at Athabasca on the 21st of August, where we found Dr. King, who had been delayed some days repairing his boats; Capt. Back having proceed onwards in a light canoe to fix on a winter residence.

Fort Chippeweyan was, in the time of the North-West Company, next in importance to Fort William. Besides having several detached posts depending immediately upon itself, and carrying on a very extensive trade with the Chippeweyans, (the best hunters in the Indian country,) it served as depôt for the districts of McKenzie's River, and Peace River.

The trade of this district, although it bears no comparison to that of former times, is yet

pretty extensive. It is still the depôt for Peace River, and commands the trade with the Chipeweyans. Trade is carried on in this quarter solely by barter, which secures the Company from loss, and is apparently attended with no inconvenience to the natives, who used formerly to take their supplies on credit.

Beaver is the standard according to which all other furs are rated; so many martens, so many foxes, &c., equal to one beaver. The trader, on receiving the Indian's hunt, proceeds to reckon it up according to this rule, giving the Indian a quill for each beaver; these quills are again exchanged at the counter for whatever articles he wants. The people of this post subsist entirely on the produce of the country, fish, flesh, and fowl, of which there is the greatest abundance. Both soil and climate are said to be unfavourable to the cultivation of grain or vegetables; the attempt is made, however, and sometimes with success.

I took my departure from Athabasca on the

24th of August, accompanied by Mr. Charles Ross, who had passed the summer there as *locum tenens*, and was now proceeding to assume the charge of his own post, Fort Vermillion, where we arrived on the 1st of September.

This post is agreeably situated on the right bank of Peace River, having the river in front, and boundless prairies in the rear. The Indians attached to it are designated Beaver Indians, and their language is said to have some affinity to the Chippeweyan. This is, however, the only point of resemblance between them. The Beavers are a more diminutive race than the Chippeweyans, and their features bear a greater resemblance to those of the Crees. They are allowed to be generous, hospitable and brave; and are distinguished for their strict adherence to truth.

Most Indians boast of the murder of white men as a glorious exploit; these, on the contrary, glory in never having shed the blood of one, although they often imbrue their hands in the

blood of their kindred; being very apt to quarrel among themselves, chiefly on account of their gallantry. When an illicit amour is detected, the consequence is frequently fatal to one of the parties; but the unmarried youth, of both sexes, are generally under no restraint whatever.

I bade adieu to Mr. Ross, a warm-hearted Gael, on the 3d, and arrived at Fort Dunvegan on the 10th of September, then under the charge of Mr. McIntosh, chief factor, where I met with a Highland welcome, and passed the time most agreeably in the company of a well educated gentleman. The Indians here are of the same tribe as those of Fort Vermillion, but are not guiltless of the blood of the whites. This post is also surrounded by prairies. A large farm is cultivated, yielding in favourable seasons a variety of vegetables and grain: but the crops are subject to injury from frost; sometimes are altogether destroyed. When the wind blows for some time from the west, it cools in its passage

across the glaciers of the Rocky Mountains, to such a degree, that the change of temperature caused by it is not only severely felt in the vicinity of the mountains, but at a great distance from them, as far even as Red River.

From the great age attained by many of the retired servants of the Company, who pass their lives in this country, the salubrity of the climate may fairly be inferred. Meeting a brigade of small canoes between Fort Vermillion and this place, and observing an old man with a white head and wrinkled face, sitting in the centre of one of them, I made up to him, and after saluting him *à la Française*, presented him with a piece of tobacco—the Indian letter of introduction. I inquired of him how long it was since he had left home.

“Sixty-two years, Monsieur,” was the reply; and as the canoes assembled around us, he pointed out to me his sons, and his sons’ sons, to the third and fourth generation.

I heard of no malady which the white inhabitants are liable to, except the goîtres; caused,

it is presumed, in part by the use of snow-water, and in part by the use of the river-water, which is strongly impregnated with clay, so much so, as sometimes to resemble a solution of the earth itself.

CHAPTER XVII.

ARRIVAL OF MR. F. FROM CALEDONIA—SCENERY—LAND-SLIP—
MASSACRE AT FORT ST. JOHN'S—ROCKY MOUNTAIN PORT-
AGE — ROCKY MOUNTAINS — MAGNIFICENT SCENERY —
M'LEOD'S LAKE — RECEPTION OF ITS' COMMANDER BY THE
INDIANS.

MR. PAUL FRASER, a senior clerk, arrived from Caledonia with three canoes, on the 26th of September, and on the 28th we took our departure. Above Fort Dunvegan the current becomes so strong that the canoes are propelled by long poles, in using which the men had acquired such dexterity that we made much better progress than I could have expected. As we ascended the river, the scenery became beautifully diversified with hill and dale and wooded valleys, through which there generally flowed streams of limpid water.

I observed at one place a tremendous land-slip, caused by the water undermining the soil. Trees were seen in an inverted position, the branches sunk in the ground and the roots uppermost; others with only the branches appearing above ground; the earth rent and intersected by chasms extending in every direction; while piles of earth and stones intermixed with shattered limbs and trunks of trees, contributed to increase the dreadful confusion of the scene. The half of a huge hill had tumbled into the river, and dammed it across, so that no water escaped for some time. The people of Dunvegan, seeing the river suddenly dry up, were terrified by the phenomenon, but they had not much time to investigate the cause: the river as suddenly reappeared, presenting a front of nearly twenty feet in height, and foaming and rushing down with the noise of thunder.

On the 3d of October we reached the tenantless Fort of St. John's, where a horrid tragedy was enacted some years ago—the commander of the post with all his men having been cut off by the

Indians. The particulars of this atrocious deed, as related to me by the gentleman at the head of the district at the time, were as follows :—

It had been determined that the post of St. John's should be abandoned, and the establishment removed to the Rocky Mountain portage, for the convenience of the Tsekanies, who were excellent hunters, but who could not be well supplied from this post, on account of the greatness of the distance. Unfortunately a quarrel had arisen about this time between the Indians of St. John's and the Tsekanies. The former viewed the removal of the post from their lands as an insult, and a measure that gave their enemies a decided superiority over them, and they took a very effectual method of disappointing them.

Mr. Hughes, having sent off his men with a load of property for the new post, remained alone. This was the opportunity the Indians sought for, and they did not fail to take advantage of it. The unfortunate man had been in the habit of walking daily by the river side, and was taking his usual promenade the day after the departure

of his men, when he was shot down by two of the assassins. They then carried his body to his room and left it, and his blood still marks the floor. The men, altogether unconscious of the fate that awaited them, came paddling toward the landing-place, singing a voyageur's song, and just as the canoe touched the shore a volley of bullets was discharged at them, which silenced them for ever. They were all killed on the spot. The post has remained desolate ever since. Fort Dunvegan was also abandoned for some years, which reduced the natives to the greatest distress.

As soon as intelligence was received of the catastrophe, a party of half-breeds and Crees, under the command of one of the clerks, was fitted out in order to inflict deserved punishment on the murderers; but just as the party had got on the trail, and within a short distance of the camp, they received orders from the superintendent to return.

These orders were no doubt dictated by feelings of humanity, as Mr. McIntosh had learned that some Indians, who were not concerned in the

murder, were in the same camp, and he was apprehensive the innocent might be involved in the same punishment with the guilty. The most of them, however, were afterwards starved to death; and the country having been abandoned by the Company, gave the natives occasion to remark, that the measure was dictated more by fear of them than by motives of humanity.

The Rocky Mountains came in view on the 8th of October, and we reached the portage bearing their name on the 10th, the crossing of which took us eight days, being fully thirteen miles in length, and excessively bad road, leading sometimes through swamps and morasses, then ascending and descending steep hills, and for at least one-third of the distance so obstructed by fallen trees as to render it all but impassable. I consider the passage of this portage the most laborious duty the Company's servants have to perform in any part of the territory; and, as the voyageurs say, "He that passes it with his share of a canoe's cargo may call himself a man."

In the passage we came upon a large camp of Tsekanies, Mr. Fraser's customers. Their dialect is similar to that of the Beaver Indians, but they understand the Cree, which is the medium of communication between Mr. F. and them. It thus appears that this language is understood from the shores of Labrador to the foot of the Rocky Mountains.

After passing the portage, the Rocky Mountains reared their snow-clad summits all around us, presenting a scene of gloomy grandeur, that had nothing cheering in it. One scene, however, struck me as truly sublime. As we proceeded onward the mountains pressed closer on the river, and at one place approached so near that the gap seemed to have been made by the river forcing a passage through them. We passed in our canoes at the base of precipices that rose almost perpendicularly above us on either side to the height of 3,000 or 4,000 feet! After passing through these magnificent portals, the mountains recede to a considerable distance, the space intervening

between them and the river being a flat, yielding timber of a larger growth than I expected to find in such a situation.

We arrived at McLeod's Lake—Mr. Fraser's post—on the 25th, where a number of Indians were waiting their supplies. They received us quite in a military style, with several discharges of fire-arms, and appeared delighted at the arrival of their chief. They seemed to be on the best possible terms together—the white chief and his *red "tail."* They are Tsekanics, and are reputed honest, industrious, and faithful.

The outfit for this post is conveyed on horseback from Stuart's Lake. A more dreary situation can scarcely be imagined, surrounded by towering mountains that almost exclude the light of day, and snow storms not seldom occurring, so violent and long continued as to bury the establishment. I believe there are few situations in the country that present such local disadvantages; but there is the same miserable solitude everywhere; and yet we find natives of England, Scotland, and Ireland devoting their lives to a

business that holds forth such prospects! I remained with my new friend one day, enjoying the comforts of his *eyry*, and then set off for the goal of my long course, where I arrived on the 28th of October.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ARRIVAL AT NEW CALEDONIA—BEAUTIFUL SCENERY—INDIAN HOUSES—AMUSEMENTS AT THE FORT—THREATENED ATTACK OF INDIANS—EXPEDITION AGAINST THEM—BEEF-STEAKS—NEW CALEDONIAN FARE—MODE OF CATCHING SALMON—SINGULAR DEATH OF NATIVE INTERPRETER—INDIAN FUNERAL RITES—BARBAROUS TREATMENT OF WIDOWS.

FORT ST. JAMES, the depôt of New Caledonia district, stands near the outlet of Stuart's Lake, and commands a splendid view of the surrounding country. The lake is about fifty miles in length, and from three to four miles in breadth, stretching away to the north and north-east for about twenty miles; the view from the Fort embraces nearly the whole of this section of it, which is studded with beautiful islands. The western shore is low, and indented by a number of small

bays formed by wooded points projecting into the lake, the back-ground rising abruptly into a ridge of hills of varied height and magnitude. On the east the view is limited to a range of two or three miles, by the intervention of a high promontory, from which the eye glances to the snowy summits of the Rocky Mountains in the distant back-ground. I do not know that I have seen anything to compare with this charming prospect in any other part of the country; its beauties struck me even at this season of the year, when nature having partly assumed her hybernal dress, everything appeared to so much greater disadvantage.

The Indian village is situated in a lovely spot at the outlet of the lake, and consists of only five or six houses, but every house is occupied by several families. These buildings are of a very slight and simple construction, being merely formed of stakes driven into the ground; a square piece of timber runs horizontally along the top of this wall, to which the stakes are fastened by strips of willow bark. This inclosure, which is

of a square form, is roofed in by placing two strong posts at each gable, which support the ridge pole, on which the roof sticks are placed, one end resting on the ridge pole, and the other on the wall, the whole being covered with pine bark: there is generally a door at each end, which is cut in the wall after the building is erected. These apertures are of a circular form, and about two and a half feet in diameter, so that a stranger finds it very awkward to pass through them. In effecting a passage you first introduce a leg, then bending low the body you press in head and shoulders; in this position you will have some difficulty in maintaining your equilibrium, for if you draw in the rest of the body too quickly, it is a chance but you will find yourself with your head undermost: the natives bolt through them with the agility of a weasel.

For some time after my arrival here, I had very little employment, there being a scribe already in the establishment, whose experience and industry required no assistance from me.

I thus found myself a supernumerary—a character that did not suit me, but I was obliged to content myself for the present. We were joined early in winter by some of the gentlemen in charge of posts, when we managed to pass the time very agreeably. Mr. D——, superintendent of the district, played remarkably well on the violin and flute, some of us “wee bodies” could also do something in that way, and our musical soirees, if not in melody, could at least compete in noise, numbers taken into account, with any association of the kind in the British dominions. Chess, backgammon, and whist, completed the variety of our evening pastimes. In the daytime each individual occupied himself as he pleased. When together, smoking, “spinning yarns” about *dog* racing, canoe sailing, and *l’amour*; sometimes politics; now and then an animated discussion on theology, but without bitterness; these made our days fly away as agreeably as our nights.

While thus pleasantly occupied, a piece of intelligence was received, which caused the

breaking up of our little society, and created some alarm. A party of seven or eight Indians having been drowned on their way to Alexandria, in autumn, their relatives imputed the misfortune to the whites. "Had there been no whites at Alexandria," said they, "our friends would not have gone there to trade; and if they had not gone there, they would not have been drowned:" *ergo*—the white men are the cause of their death, and the Indians must be avenged.

Nothing, however, was known of their hostile intentions until winter, when Mr. F. had occasion to send a man to Stuart's Lake with despatches, who, on arriving opposite to the Indian camp, found himself suddenly surrounded by the natives. They advanced rapidly upon him, brandishing their arms, and uttering horrid yells, and would have dispatched him on the spot but for the interference of one of themselves, who nobly threw himself between the Canadian and the muzzles of the guns that were levelled at him, and beckoned him to flee. He took to his heels

accordingly, and never looked behind him till he reached the fort.

A little before Mr. Fisher had learned from his home guards that an attack on the fort was intended, and that they had been solicited by their neighbours to join in it, but had refused. So far, indeed, from wishing to injure the whites, they consented to carry the despatches which conveyed the information I have just mentioned. As Mr. F. urgently requested that assistance should be afforded him with as little delay as possible, it was determined that I should forthwith proceed to Alexandria, accompanied by Waccan, the interpreter, and eight men well armed.

Passing Fraser's Lake and Fort George posts, we arrived at the Indian winter camp, which we found abandoned; but a well beaten track led from it in the direction of Alexandria, a circumstance which made us apprehensive that our aid might come too late, and prompted us to redouble our speed. Our party consequently was soon

very much scattered—a most unmilitary procedure—which might have proved fatal to ourselves, while we thought of relieving our friends.

The interpreter, myself, and two Iroquois, forming the advanced guard of the *grand army*, which consisted of full six men, still considerably in the rear, on turning a point found ourselves immediately in front of the camp. We were thus as much taken by surprise as those whom we wished to surprise; but without hesitating a moment we rushed up the bank, and were instantly in the midst of the camp. The uproar was tremendous, the Indians seized their arms with the most threatening gestures and savage yells, and it would have been impossible for us to execute our orders—which were to seize the ringleader only—without a fierce struggle and bloodshed on both sides; and though more resolute, perhaps, than our enemies, we were by far the weaker party, their numbers being at least ten to one of ours.

Happily, however, there was an Indian (one

of our friends) from Alexandria, in the camp, who, as soon as he could make himself heard, informed us that the affair had been already arranged to the satisfaction of both parties. Thus terminated our expedition, without bloodshed and without laurels. A few days earlier it might have been otherwise; nor was Mr. F. without blame in neglecting to advise us of the arrangement.

We continued our course towards Fort Alexandria, and reached it late in the evening. My unexpected appearance gave my old bourgeois of Two Mountains an agreeable surprise. Having eaten nothing since morning, we made sad havoc of his beefsteaks and potatoes.

“ Well, Mac,” said he, “ to judge from your appetite, the air of New Caledonia seems to agree wonderfully with you. Pray how do you like the beef-steaks ? ”

“ Never tasted anything better,” said I.

Next morning he requested me to accompany him to the store, as he said, to see a hind-leg

of the steer which had furnished me with my steaks. I approached it, and lo! it was the hind-leg of a horse! The beef-steaks, or rather *horse-steaks*, were again presented at breakfast, and I confess I had not the same relish for them as at supper, but my repugnance—such is the effect of habit—was soon overcome.

I remained a few days here for the sake of repose, and then returned. On the approach of spring, my fellow-subordinate, Mr. McKenzie, dissatisfied with the service, left for the east side of the mountains, and I took his place at the desk, the duties of which, although by no means harassing, left me but little leisure. The accounts of all the posts in the district, eight in number, were made up here; I had also to superintend the men of the establishment, accompany them on their winter trips, and attend to the Indian trade. But even if the duty had been more toilsome, I had every inducement to perform it cheerfully, as Mr. Dease was one of the kindest and most considerate of men.

On the 5th of May Mr. Dease took his departure for Fort Vancouver, with the returns of his district, which might be valued at 11,000*l*. The outfit, together with servants' wages and incidental expenses, amounted to about 3,000*l*., leaving to the Company a clear profit of about 8,000*l*.

I was appointed to the charge of Stuart's Lake during the summer, with four men to perform the ordinary duties of the establishment—making hay, attending to gardens, &c. A few cattle were introduced in 1830, and we now began to derive some benefit from the produce of the dairy. Our gardens (a term applied in this country to any piece of ground under cultivation) in former times yielded potatoes; nothing would now grow save turnips. A few carrots and cabbages were this year raised on a piece of new ground, which added to the luxuries of our table. Heaven knows, they were much wanted, for the other fare was scarcely fit for dogs! In the early part of the season it consisted entirely of salmon, which this

year was of the worst quality, having been two years in the store. A few sturgeon, however, of enormous* size, were caught, whose flesh was the most tender and delicious I had ever eaten, and would have been considered a delicacy by Apicius himself; it need not be wondered at then that the capture of one caused universal joy.

The salmon (the New Caledonian staff of life) ascend Frazer's River and its tributaries, from the Pacific in immense shoals, proceeding towards the sources of the streams until stopped by shallow water. Having deposited their spawn, their dead bodies are seen floating down the current in thousands; few of them ever return to the sea; and in consequence of the old fish perishing in this manner, they fail in this quarter every fourth year. The natives display a good deal of ingenuity in catching them. Where the current and depth of water permit, they bar it across by means of stakes driven into the bottom with much labour, and standing about six inches

* Belluga?

apart; these are strongly bound to a piece of timber, or "plate," running along the top; stays, or supporters, are placed at intervals of ten or twelve feet, the upper end bearing against the plate so as to form an angle with the stream. Gaps are left in the works of sufficient size to admit the *varveaux*, or baskets, in which the fish are taken. After the whole is finished, square frames of wicker-work, called keys, are let down against the upper side, to prevent the fish from ascending, and at the same time to allow the water a free passage. The keys must be kept entirely free from filth, such as branches, leaves, &c., otherwise the whole works would soon be swept away. The baskets are of a cylindrical form, about two and a half feet in diameter at the mouth, and terminate in a point of four or five inches. When the fishing is over, all the materials are removed, and replaced the ensuing year with equal labour.

To preserve the fish for future consumption the following process is adopted. The back being

split up, and the back-bone extracted, it is hung by the tail for a few days ; then it is taken down and distended on splinters of wood ; these are attached to a sort of scaffold erected for the purpose, where the fish remains till sufficiently dry for preservation. Even in dry seasons, during this process, the ground all round the scaffold is thickly covered with large maggots ; but in wet seasons the sight becomes much more loathsome.

I have already observed that the salmon fail periodically, and the natives would consequently be reduced to the utmost distress, did not the goodness of Providence furnish them with a substitute. Rabbits are sent to supply the place of the salmon ; and, singular as it may appear, these animals increase in number as the salmon decrease, until they swarm all over the country. When the salmon return, they gradually disappear, being destroyed or driven away by their greatest enemy, the lynx, which first appear in smaller, then in greater numbers ;— both they and their prey disappearing together. As to the

cause that induces those animals to appear and disappear in this manner, I cannot take upon myself to explain.

In the course of this summer one of our interpreters, a native, lost his life in rather a singular manner. He had made a bear-trap, and wishing to ascertain how it would work, tried his own weight on the spring, which yielded but too readily, and crushed him in so dreadful a manner that he only survived his experiment but a few hours. As he had withdrawn from the Company's service this year, his body was disposed of after the manner of his own people, except that it was buried instead of being burned; this, however, was the first instance of an interment, it being introduced through our influence in pity to the unfortunate widows, who are exposed to the cruellest tortures at the burning of the body. I never beheld a more affecting scene than the present. Immediately as the coffin was lowered into the grave, the widow threw herself upon it, shrieking and tearing her hair, and could only be

removed by main force: several other females, relatives of the deceased, were also assembled in a group hard by, and evinced all the external symptoms of extreme grief, chanting the death-song in a most lugubrious tone, the tears streaming down their cheeks, and beating their breasts. The men, however, even the brothers of the deceased, showed no emotion whatever, and as soon as the rites were ended, moved off the ground, followed by the female mourners, who soon after were seen as gay and cheerful as if they had returned from a wedding. The widow, however, still remained by the grave, being obliged to do so in conformity with the customs of her nation, which required that she should mourn day and night, until the relatives of the deceased should collect a sufficiency of viands to make a feast in honour of his bones.

As already observed, the bodies were formerly burned; the relatives of the deceased, as well as those of the widow, being present, all armed: a funeral pile was erected, and the body placed

upon it. The widow then set fire to the pile, and was compelled to stand by it, anointing her breast with the fat that oozed from the body until the heat became insupportable : when the wretched creature, however, attempted to draw back, she was thrust forward by her husband's relatives at the point of their spears, and forced to endure the dreadful torture until either the body was reduced to ashes, or she herself almost scorched to death. Her relatives were present merely to preserve her life ; when no longer able to stand they dragged her away ; and this intervention often led to bloody quarrels ! The body being burned, the ashes were collected in a box and given in charge to the widow, who carried them about with her until the feast was prepared, when they were taken from her, and deposited in a small hut or placed upon the top of a wooden pillar neatly carved, as their final resting-place.

During this interval she was in a state of the most wretched slavery ; every child in the village

might command her and beat her unmercifully if they chose, no one interfered. After the feast, however, she regained her freedom, and along with that the privilege of incurring the risk of another scorching. Our interference relieved them from the most cruel part of the ceremony; the temporary state of slavery is still continued.

CHAPTER XIX.

INDIAN FEAST—ATTEMPT AT DRAMATIC REPRESENTATION—RELIGION—ORDERED TO FORT ALEXANDRIA—ADVANTAGES OF THE SITUATION—SENT BACK TO FORT ST. JAMES—SOLITUDE—PUNISHMENT OF INDIAN MURDERER—ITS CONSEQUENCES—HEROIC ADVENTURE OF INTERPRETER.

MR. DEASE arrived from Fort Vancouver on the 5th of September, and expressed himself highly gratified with the appearance our “gardens” presented; an ample stock of salmon had also been laid in, so that we had nothing to fear from want, which sometimes had been severely felt. In the beginning of November, our despatches from the east side of the mountains came to hand, usually a joyful event, but saddened this year by the intelligence we received, that our excellent superintendent was about to leave us, having

obtained permission to visit the civilized world for medical advice;—the doctor was only 5,000 miles off!

In the beginning of the winter we were invited to a feast held in honour of a great chief, who died some years before. The person who delivered the invitation stalked into the room with an air of vast consequence, and strewing our heads with down, pronounced the name of the presiding chief, and withdrew without uttering another syllable. To me the invitation was most acceptable: although I had heard much of Indian feasts, I never was present at any.

Late in the evening we directed our steps towards the “banqueting house,” a large hut temporarily erected for the occasion. We found the numerous guests assembled and already seated around “the festive board;” our place had been left vacant for us, Mr. Dease taking his seat next to the great chief, Quaw, and we, his Meewidiyazees (little chiefs), in succession. The company were disposed in two rows: the chiefs and elders being seated next the wall, formed

the outer, and the young men the inner row; an open space of about three feet in breadth intervening between them. Immense quantities of roasted meat, bear, beaver, siffleu or marmot, were piled up at intervals, the whole length of the building; berries mixed up with rancid salmon oil, fish roe that had been buried underground a twelve-month, in order to give it an *agreeable* flavour, were the good things presented at this feast of gluttony and flow of oil. The berry mixture, and roes were served in wooden troughs, each having a large wooden spoon attached to it. The enjoyments of the festival were ushered in with a song, in which all joined:—

“ I approach the village,
 Ya ha he ha, ya ha ha ha ;
 And hear the voices of many people,
 Ya ha, &c.
 The barking of dogs,
 Ya ha, &c.
 Salmon is plentiful,
 Ya ha, &c.
 The berry season is good,
 Ya ha, &c.

After the song commenced the demolition of the mountains of meat, which was but slowly

effected, notwithstanding the unremitting and strenuous exertions of the guests. The greatest order, however, was maintained; the relatives of the deceased acted as stewards, each of them seizing a roasted beaver, or something else, squatted himself in front of one of the guests, and presenting the meat, which he held with both his hands (males and females officiating), desired him to help himself. If the guest appeared backward in the attack, he was pressed, in the politest terms, to eat. "Now, I pray you, tear away with a good will;"—"I am glad to see you eat so strongly;"—"Come now, stuff yourself with this fine piece of fat bear." And stuff himself he must, or pay a forfeit, to avoid a catastrophe. But having paid thus, and acknowledged himself fairly overcome by his host's politeness, he is spared any further exertions, and his viands are no longer presented to him in this way, but placed in a dish beside him.

Well aware of our inability to maintain the honour of our country in a contest of this kind, we paid our forfeit at the commencement of the

onslaught, reserving our portions to be disposed of at home.

The gormandizing contest ended as it began, with songs and dances; in the latter amusement, however, few were now able to join; afterwards ensued a rude attempt at dramatic representation. Old Quaw, the chief of Nekaslay, first appeared on the stage, in the character of a bear—an animal he was well qualified to personate. Rushing from his den, and growling fiercely, he pursued the huntsman, the chief of Babine portage, who defended himself with a long pole; both parties maintained a running fight, until they reached the far end of the building, where they made their exit. Enter afterwards a jealous husband and his wife, wearing masks (both being men). The part these acted appeared rather dull; the husband merely sat down by the side of his “frail rib,” watching her motions closely, and neither allowing her to speak to nor look at any of the young men. As to the other characters, one personated a deer, another a wolf, a third a strange Tsekany. The bear seemed to give the spectators most delight.

The scene was interesting, as exhibiting the first rude attempts at dramatic representation of a savage people ; and it served, in some measure, to efface the impression made by the somewhat disgusting spectacle previously witnessed. The affair concluded by an exchange of presents, and the party broke up.

Two young men, natives of Oregon, who had received a little education at Red River, had, on their return to their own country, introduced a sort of religion, whose groundwork seemed to be Christianity, accompanied with some of the heathen ceremonies of the natives. This religion spread with amazing rapidity all over the country. It reached Fort Alexandria, the lower post of the district, in the autumn ; and was now embraced by all the Nekaslayans. The ceremonial consisted chiefly in singing and dancing. As to the doctrines of our holy religion, their minds were too gross to comprehend, and their manners too corrupt to be influenced by them. They applied to us for instruction, and our worthy chief spared no pains to give it. But, alas ! it is for the most part labour in

vain. Yet, an impression seemed to have been made on a few ; and had there been missionaries there at the time, their efforts might have proved successful. But the influence of the “men of medicine,” who strenuously withstand a religion which exposes their delusive tricks, and consequently deprives them of their gains,—together with the dreadful depravity everywhere prevalent,—renders the conversion of the Tekallies an object most difficult to accomplish.

It is a general opinion among Christians, that there exists no nation or people on earth who are entirely ignorant of a Supreme Being. I shall contrast the language of this tribe with that of the Sauteux or Ojibbeway, and let the reader judge for himself.

I have heard a heathen Ojibbeway, when giving a feast, express himself thus : “The great Master of Life, he who sees us and whom we cannot see, having done me charity, I invite you, my brother, to partake of it.” On a like occasion, a Takelly describes the manner in which he killed his game, but never alludes to a deity.

When an Ojibbeway wishes to confirm the truth of what he says beyond a doubt, he points to heaven and exclaims, "He to whom we belong hears that what I say is true." The Takelly says, "The toad hears me." You ask a Takelly what becomes of him after death, he replies, "My life shall be *extinct*, and I shall be dead." Not an idea has he of the soul, or of a future state of rewards and punishments. The Ojibbeway answers, "After death my soul goes either to a happy land, abounding with game and every delight; or to a land of misery, where I shall suffer for ever from want. Whether it go to the good or bad place depends on my good or bad conduct here."

In fact the Takelly language has not a term in it to express the name of Deity, spirit, or soul. When the Columbia religion was introduced among them, our interpreters had to invent a term for the Deity—Yagasita—the "Man of Heaven." The only expression I ever heard them use that conveyed any idea whatever of a superior Being is, that when the salmon fail, they

say, "The Man who keeps the mouth of the river has shut it up with his red keys, so that the salmon cannot get up." One of our gentlemen, a member of the Roman Catholic Church, teaching the Takellies to make the sign of the cross, with the words used on the occasion, his interpreter translated them, "Au nom du Père, de son Frère, et puis de son petit Garçon!" (In the name of the Father, his Brother, and his little Boy!)

The accompts and despatches for head-quarters being finished in the beginning of March, I was ordered to convey them to Fort Alexandria, to the charge of which post I was now appointed. This post is agreeably situated on the banks of Frazer's River, on the outskirts of the great prairies. The surrounding country is beautifully diversified by hill and dale, grove and plain; the soil is rich, yielding abundant successive crops of grain and vegetable, unmanured; but the crops are sometimes destroyed by frost. The charming locality, the friendly disposition of the Indians, and better fare, rendered this post one of the most agreeable situations in the Indian country. In spring,

moreover, the country swarms with game—pheasants and a small species of curlew in the immediate vicinity, and ducks and geese within a short distance. The sport was excellent, and, with the amusement the cultivation of my garden afforded me, enabled me to vegetate in great comfort—a comfort I was not destined long to enjoy.

Mr. Ogden, chief factor, arrived from Fort Vancouver about the end of May, and Mr. Fisher from Stuart's Lake a few days afterwards; and having consulted together, determined that I should retrace my steps to Stuart's Lake without delay. When I arrived at Fort St. James its dreadful solitude almost drove me to despair. I found myself sitting alone in the hall where my late excellent bourgeois and friends had passed the time so happily, and I felt a depression of spirits such as I never experienced before. Fortunately for me, my old friend Mr. Fraser, a gentleman of a gay and lively disposition, arrived soon after, and continued with me for the remainder of the season, and his company soon drove melancholy away.

The particulars of an affair which had occurred here some years before, and threatened the most serious consequences to the post, were about this time related to me by Waccan, the interpreter.

A native of Frazer's Lake had murdered one of the Company's servants, and, strange to say, no steps were taken to punish him; he concealed himself some time, and finding he had nothing to apprehend, returned to his village. At length he was led by his evil genius to visit Stuart's Lake, then under the command of a Douglas. Douglas heard of his being in the village, and though he had but a weak garrison, determined that the blood of the white man should not be unavenged. The opportunity was favourable, the Indians of the village were out on a hunting excursion, the murderer was nearly alone. He proceeded to the camp accompanied by two of his men, and executed justice* on the murderer. On their return in the evening, the Indians learned what had happened, and enraged, determined to re-

* "Wild justice,"—BACON.

taliate. Aware, however, that Douglas was on his guard, that the gates were shut and could not be forced, they resolved to employ Indian stratagem.

The old chief accordingly proceeded to the Fort alone, and knocking at the gate desired to be admitted, which was granted. He immediately stated the object of his visit, saying that a deed had been done in the village which subjected himself and his people to a heavy responsibility to the relatives of the dead ; that he feared the consequences, and hoped that a present would be made to satisfy them ; and continuing to converse thus calmly, Mr. Douglas was led to believe that the matter could easily be arranged. Another knock was now heard at the gate : “ It is my brother,” said the chief, “ you may open the gate ; he told me he intended to come and hear what you had to say on this business.”

The gate was opened, and in rushed the whole Nekasly tribe, the chief’s brother at their head ; and the men of the Fort were overpowered ere

they had time to stand on their defence. Douglas, however, seized a wall-piece that was mounted in the hall, and was about to discharge it on the crowd that was pouring in upon him, when the chief seized him by the arms, and held him fast. For an instant his life was in the utmost peril. Surrounded by thirty or forty Indians, their knives drawn, and brandishing them over his head with frantic gestures, and calling out to the chief, "Shall we strike? shall we strike?"

The chief hesitated; and at this critical moment the interpreter's wife* stepped forward, and by her presence of mind saved him and the establishment.

Observing one of the inferior chiefs, who had always professed the greatest friendship for the

* This woman is the daughter of Mr. James MacDougal, a gentleman who had a chief hand in the settlement of the district. He served the Company for a period of thirty-five years, enduring all the hardships that were in his time inseparable from an Indian trader's life; and was dismissed from their service, in old age, without a pension, to starve on such little savings as he had effected out of his salary. He is still alive (1841), struggling with adversity.

whites, standing in the crowd, she addressed herself to him, exclaiming, "What! you a friend of the whites, and not say a word in their behalf at such a time as this! Speak! you know the murderer deserved to die; according to your own laws the deed was just; it is blood for blood. The white men are not dogs; they love their kindred as well as you; why should they not avenge their murder?"

The moment the heroine's voice was heard the tumult subsided; her boldness struck the savages with awe; the chief she addressed, acting on her suggestion, interfered; and being seconded by the old chief, who had no serious intention of injuring the whites, was satisfied with showing them that they were fairly in his power. Mr. Douglas and his men were set at liberty; and an amicable conference having taken place, the Indians departed much elated with the issue of their enterprise.

A personal adventure of Waccan's is worth recording. An interpreter, a Cree half-breed, had been murdered by the Indians of Babine post with circumstances of great barbarity; and

the perpetrators of the deed were allowed to exult in the shedding of innocent blood with impunity, one feeble, ineffectual attempt only having been made to chastise them. Waccan, however, determined that the matter should not end thus, the victim being his adopted brother. Having been sent to Babine post with an Indian lad, he learned from him that the murderers were encamped in a certain bay on Stuart's Lake, and resolved to seize the long wished-for opportunity of revenge; but fearing for his companion's safety more than his own, he landed him at a considerable distance from the camp, directing him to make the best of his way home if he should hear many shots.

He then paddled down as near the camp as he could without being discovered, and landing, threw off every article of clothing save a shred round his loins; and with his gun in the one hand, and dagger in the other, proceeded to the spot. Having approached sufficiently near to see all that passed in the encampment, he squatted among the bushes, and watching his opportunity,

“picked off” the ringleader; then rushing from his covert, and giving the war whoop, he planted his dagger in his heart almost before the Indians had time to know what had happened. Seeing the infuriated “avenger of blood” in the midst of them, they fled precipitately to the woods. Waccan dared them to revenge the death of the “dead dog” who had murdered his brother.

“Come,” said he, “you that were so brave at Babine Lake, and danced round the body of him whom you did not face, but knocked down when his back was to you, now is your time to show yourselves *men*.”

No one answering the challenge, he shouldered his gun, walked along the beach to his canoe, and paddling leisurely off from the shore, sang the Cree song of triumph.

CHAPTER XX.

APPOINTED TO THE CHARGE OF FORT GEORGE—MURDER OF MR. YALE'S MEN — MYSTERIOUS LOSS OF MR. LINTON AND FAMILY—ADVENTURES OF LEATHER PARTY† — FAILURE OF CROPS—INFLUENZA.

IN the beginning of September, Mr. Ogden arrived from Fort Vancouver, and I was appointed by him to the charge of Fort George, whither I proceeded forthwith. Mr. Linton, my predecessor, was directed to wait the arrival of the party sent to Jasper's house for a supply of leather, ere he took his departure for Chilcotin, an outpost of Fort Alexandria.

Fort George was established a few years ago, and passed through the bloody ordeal ere yet the buildings were completed. The gentleman in

charge, Mr. Yale, had left his men at work, and gone on a visit to Fort St. James, where he only remained a few days; on his return he found his men had been treacherously murdered by the Indians during his absence. Their mangled bodies were found in one of the houses, with one of their own axes by their side, which evidently had been the instrument of their destruction. The poor men were in the habit of retiring to rest during the heat of the day, and were despatched while they slept.

A great change has come over this people since that time; they are now justly considered the best disposed and most industrious Indians in the district. The situation of the post is exceedingly dreary, standing on the right bank of Frazer's River, having in front a high hill, that shades the sun until late in the morning, and in the midst of "woods and wilds, whose melancholy gloom" is saddening enough. Yet it has its *agrémens*, its good returns,—the *ne plus ultra* of an Indian trader's happiness,—its good Indians, and its good fare; the produce of the soil and dairy.

Poor Linton had remained with me till late in autumn; when the cold weather setting in with unusual rigour, the ice began to drift on the river, rendering the navigation already dangerous; and no accounts having been received of the leather party, he determined to embark for his destination without further loss of time. He, alas! had already waited too long. Having occasion in the beginning of winter to send down a messenger to Fort Alexandria, I was surprised to see him two days after enter the fort, accompanied by one of Mr. Fisher's men, who brought me the melancholy tidings of Mr. L.'s death, part of his baggage having been found by the natives among the ice. Eight souls had perished, no one knows how; Mr. L., his wife and three children, an interpreter, his wife and one child.

Some suspicions attached to a disreputable family of Indians who were known to be encamped on the banks of the river at the time; but it is more probable that the catastrophe occurred in a rapid not far from this post, as a dog which the party had with them came back at an early hour

the day after their departure. This misfortune threw a gloom over the whole district, where Linton was much beloved, and his death, so sudden and mysterious, made the blow be felt more severely.

Before this sad intelligence reached us, the safety of the leather party had become a source of deep anxiety. They had been expected in October, and no accounts had been received of them in the month of December. Having forwarded Mr. Fisher's despatches to head-quarters, I received orders from Mr. Ogden to proceed to Jasper's house, in order, if possible, to obtain information regarding them; which I eagerly obeyed, setting off with five men, and sledges loaded with provisions, drawn by dogs. We had not proceeded far, however, when we met the truants all safe and sound. Their non-arrival in the fall was occasioned by the winter setting in unprecedentedly early.

They experienced the utmost difficulty in crossing the Rocky Mountains, from the great depth of snow that had already fallen; and when

they reached the heights of Frazer's River, they found the ice beginning to form along its shores. They persevered, however; sometimes forcing their way through the ice, sometimes carrying the canoes and property overland where the passage was blocked up by the ice. But all their efforts proved unavailing, for they were at length completely frozen in.

Their prospects were now most disheartening. Their remaining provisions would only suffice for four days on short allowance, and they had a journey of fifteen days before them, whichever way they should direct their course. Some of the men yielded to despair, but the greater part cheerfully embraced Mr. Anderson's views. Those only who are unacquainted with the Canadian voyageurs will deny them the possession of qualities of the highest value in this country—ready obedience to their superiors, patience of fatigue and hardship, and unyielding perseverance under the most trying difficulties, so long as their leaders show them the way. Mr. Anderson having secured the property *en cache*, determined to

return to Jasper's house, in order to procure at least a part of the much wanted supply of leather. On their way back they had the good fortune to light upon a stray horse, which they converted into provender : they also shot a moose deer ; and thus providentially supplied, they suffered little from want.

On arriving at the post, they found to their sad disappointment that nothing could be got there, except some provisions ; it was therefore necessary to proceed to Fort Edmonton, at least 400 miles distant, with but one intermediate post. They succeeded in reaching it, though in a most deplorable condition, half starved and half frozen, none of the party being provided with winter clothing ; but they were most hospitably received by the kind-hearted bourgeois Mr. Rowand ; and, after remaining a few days to recruit their strength in this land overflowing with fat and pemmican, and receiving their supplies, they set off on their return, and reached their destination without accident.

Farming on a small scale had been attempted here by my predecessor, and the result was such as to induce more extensive operations. I received orders, therefore, to clear land, sow and plant, forthwith. These orders were in part carried into effect in the autumn. Four acres of land were put in a condition to receive seed, and about the same quantity at Fort Alexandria. Seed was ordered from the Columbia, and handmills to grind our grain. Pancakes and hot rolls were thenceforward to be the order of the day; Babine salmon and dog's flesh were to be sent—"to Coventry!" The spring, however, brought with it but poor prospects for pancakes; the season was late beyond all precedent; the fields were not sown until the 5th of May; they, nevertheless, promised well for some time, but cold weather ensued, and continued so long that the crops could not recover before the autumn frosts set in, and thus our hopes were blasted. The farm at Alexandria had not much better success, owing to the neglect of the good people themselves;—not having en-

closed their fields, the cattle destroyed the greater part of the crops. Here, however, notwithstanding the failure of our grain crops, we had abundance of vegetables and a large stock of cattle, so that our fare was far superior to that of the other *exiles* in the district.

Mr. Ogden returned from Fort Vancouver about the usual time, and was mortified to find that our grand agricultural experiment had so completely failed. He, however, had brought a supply of flour sufficient to afford each commander of posts a couple of bags, and thus the inconvenience arising from our disappointment was, in some degree, obviated.

From his first arrival amongst us, Mr. Ogden evinced the most earnest desire to ameliorate the condition of his subordinates in this wretched district, and all felt grateful to him for his benevolent intentions. To Mr. Dease, however, the praise is due of having introduced this new order of things: he it was who first introduced cattle from Fort Vancouver; it was he who first

introduced farming, and recommended it to others.

Late in autumn, the natives being all about the post, the dread influenza, that had made such fearful havoc among the Indians in other quarters, broke out here also. The poor creatures had a great deal of confidence in my medical skill, from the circumstance of my having saved the life of a boy who had eaten some poisonous root, when despaired of by their own mountebanks.

On the present occasion I tried my skill on one of the subjects best able to bear my experiments, by administering a strong emetic and purge, and causing him afterwards to drink a decoction of mint. He was cured, and I afterwards prescribed the same medicine to many others with a like success; so that my reputation as a disciple of *Æsculapius* became firmly established.

Having last year applied to the Governor for permission to visit head-quarters, for a purpose which will be noticed hereafter, I received a

favourable answer, and, in the month of February, set off for the dépôt of the district preparatory to my departure, where I remained for a month in company with Mr. Ogden and several fellow-scribes.

CHAPTER XXI.

CLIMATE OF NEW CALEDONIA—SCENERY—NATURAL PRODUCTIONS—ANIMALS—FISHES—NATIVES—THEIR MANNERS AND CUSTOMS — DUELLING—GAMBLING—LICENTIOUSNESS—LANGUAGE. .

ERE I proceed on my long journey, I must pause for a little to describe more particularly the country, which I am about to quit, perhaps for ever, and the manners of its savage inhabitants.

The climate of New Caledonia is exceedingly variable at all seasons of the year. I have experienced at Stuart's Lake, in the month of July, every possible change of weather within twelve hours ; frost in the morning, scorching heat at noon ; then rain, hail, snow. The winter season is subject to the same vicissitudes, though not in so extreme a degree : some years it continues mild

throughout. These vicissitudes may, I think, be ascribed to local causes—proximity to, or distance from the glaciers of the Rocky Mountains, the direction of the winds, the aspect of the place, &c. Fort St. James is so situated as to be completely exposed to the north-east wind, which wafts on its wings the freezing vapours of the glaciers. The instant the wind shifts to this quarter, a change of temperature is felt; and when it continues to blow for a few hours, it becomes so cold that, even in midsummer, small ponds are frozen over. The surrounding country is mountainous and rocky.

Frazer's Lake is only about thirty miles distant from Fort St. James (on Stuart's Lake), yet there they raise abundance of vegetables, potatoes and turnips, and sometimes even wheat and barley. The post stands in a valley open to the south-west,—a fine champaign country, of a sandy soil; it is protected from the north-east winds by a high ridge of hills. The winter seldom sets in before December, and the navigation is generally open about the beginning of May.

Few countries present a more beautiful variety of scenery than New Caledonia. Stuart's Lake and its environs I have already attempted to describe, but many such landscapes present themselves in different parts of the country, where towering mountains, hill and dale, forest and lake, and verdant plains, blended together in the happiest manner, are taken in by the eye at a glance. Some scenes there are that recall forcibly to the remembrance of a son of Scotia, the hills and glens and "bonnie braes" of his own poor, yet beloved native land. New Caledonia, however, has the advantage over the Old, of being generally well wooded, and possessed of lakes of far greater magnitude; unfortunately, however, the woods are decaying rapidly, particularly several varieties of fir, which are being destroyed by an insect that preys on the bark: when the country is denuded of this ornament, and its ridges have become bald, it will present a very desolate appearance. In some parts of the country, the poplar and aspen tree are to be found, together with a species of birch, of whose bark

canoes are built; but there is neither hard wood nor cedar.

Such parts of the district as are not in the immediate vicinity of the regions of eternal snow, yield a variety of wild fruit, grateful to the palate, wholesome, and nutritious. Of these, the Indian pear is the most abundant, and most sought after, both by natives and whites; when fully ripe, it is of a black colour, with somewhat of a reddish tinge, pear-shaped, and very sweet to the taste. The natives dry them in the sun, and afterwards bake them into cakes, which are said to be delicious; for my own part, having seen the process of manufacturing them, I could not overcome my prejudices so far as to partake of a delicacy in whose composition filth formed so considerable an ingredient. When dried, the cakes are placed in wooden vessels to receive the juice of green fruit, which is expressed by placing weights upon it, in wooden troughs, from which spouts of bark draw off the liquid into the vessels containing the dry fruit; this being thoroughly saturated, is again bruised with

the unclean hand, then re-formed into cakes, and dried again; and these processes are repeated alternately, until the cakes suit the taste of the maker. Blue berries are plentiful in some parts of the district; there is a peculiar variety of them, which I preferred to any fruit I ever tasted; it is about the size of a musket-ball, of a purple colour, translucent, and in its taste sweet and acid are deliciously blended.

The district is still rich in fur-bearing animals, especially beavers and martens, which are likely to continue numerous for many years to come, as they find a safe retreat among the fastnesses of the Rocky Mountains, where they multiply undisturbed. This is the great beaver nursery, which continues to replace the numbers destroyed in the more exposed situations; there is, nevertheless, a sensible decrease in the returns of the fur since the introduction of steel traps among the natives: there are also otters, musk-rats, minxes, and lynxes. Of the larger quadrupeds bears only are numerous, and in all their varieties, grizzled, black, brown, and chocolate: numbers

of them are taken by the natives in wooden traps. A chance moose or reindeer is sometimes found. The mountain sheep generally keeps aloft in the most inaccessible parts of the mountains, and is seldom "bagged" by a Carrier, but often by the Tsekanies. I have before observed that rabbits sometimes abound. Another small animal, whose flesh is delicious in season, the marmot, is found in great numbers. In the neighbourhood of Fort Alexandria, the jumping deer, or chevreuil, is abundant. To these add dog and horse flesh, and you have all the varieties of animal food the country affords to its inhabitants, civilized or savage.

A most destructive little animal, the wood-rat, infests the country, and generally nestles in the crevices of the rocks, but prefers still more human habitations; they domicile under the floors of out-buildings, and not content with this, force their way into the inside, where they destroy and carry off every thing they can; nor is there any way of securing the property in the stores from their depredations but by placing it in strong boxes.

When fairly located, it is almost impossible to root them out. They are of a grey colour, and of nearly the size and form of the common rat, but the tail resembles that of the ground squirrel.

The birds of this country are the same as in Canada. I observed no strange variety, except a species of curlew that frequents the plains of Fort Alexandria in the summer. Immense flocks of cranes are seen in autumn and spring, flying high in the air; in autumn directing their flight towards the south, and in spring towards the north.

Some of the Lakes abound in fish; the principal varieties are trout, carp, white fish, and pike. Stuart's Lake yields a small fish termed by the Canadians "poisson inconnu;" it seems as if it were partly white fish and partly carp, the head resembling the former; it is full of small bones, and the flesh soft and unsavoury. The sturgeon has been already mentioned, but they are unfortunately too rare; seldom more than five or six are captured in a season; they weigh from one hundred to five hundred pounds. A beautiful small fish of the size of the anchovy, and shaped

like a salmon, is found in a river that falls into Stuart's Lake; it is said they pass the winter in the lake, and ascend their favourite stream in the month of June, where they deposit their spawn. They have the silvery scales of the larger salmon, and are exceedingly rich; but the natives preserve them almost exclusively for their own use. There are four varieties of salmon, distinguished from each other by the peculiar form of the head; the largest species seems to be the same we have in the rivers of Britain, and weighs from ten to twenty pounds; the others do not exceed half that weight.

New Caledonia is inhabited by the Takelly or Carrier nation, and by a few families of Tsekanies on the north-eastern extremity of the district. The Takellies are divided into as many tribes as there are posts—viz. eight, who formerly were as hostile to each other as if they had been of different nations. The presence of the whites, however, has had the beneficial effect of checking their cut-throat propensities, although individual murders still occasionally occur among them.

Before the introduction of fire-arms, the *honourable* practice of duelling prevailed among them, though in a fashion peculiar to themselves. One arrow only was discharged, by the party demanding satisfaction, at his opponent, who, by dint of skipping about and dodging from side to side, generally contrived to escape it; fatal duels, therefore, seldom if ever occurred; and the parties, having thus given and received satisfaction, retired from the field reconciled.* They appear more prone to sudden bursts of passion than most Indians I have seen, and quarrel often and abuse each other in the most scurrilous terms. With the Sauteux, Crees, and other tribes on the east side of the mountains, few words are uttered before the blow, often a fatal one, is given; whereas, with the Takellies, it is often

* I would recommend this mode of conducting "affairs of honour" to *honourable* gentlemen using the hair-trigger, as an improvement. Though practised by savages, it must be allowed to be somewhat less barbarous than ten paces' distance, and standing still! If the exhibition should appear somewhat ludicrous, both parties would have the additional "satisfaction" that their morning *exercise* had given a keener zest to their breakfast. It would be a sort of Pyrrhic dance.

many words and few blows. In the quarrels which take place among them, the ladies are generally the *causa belli*—a cause which would soon lead to the depopulation of the country, were all husbands to avenge their wrongs by shedding the blood of the guilty.

Their chiefs have still considerable authority; but much of the homage they claimed and received in former times is now transferred to the white chiefs, or traders, whom they all esteem the greatest men in the universe. "After the Man of heaven," said old Quaw to Mr. Dease, "you are next in dignity." Owing to the superstitious notions of the people, the chiefs are still feared on account of the magical powers ascribed to them; it is firmly believed they can, at will, inflict diseases, cause misfortunes of every kind, and even death itself; and so strong is this impression, that they will not even pass in a direction where the shadow of a chief, or "man of medicine," might fall on them, "lest," say they, "he should bear us some ill-will and afflict us with some disease."

These conjurors, nevertheless, are the greatest bunglers at their trade of any in the Indian territory; they practise none of the clever tricks of the Sauteux sorcerers, and are perfectly ignorant of the medicinal virtues of herbs and plants, with which the Sauteux and other Indians often perform astonishing cures. The Takellies administer no medicine to the sick; a variety of ridiculous gesticulations, together with singing, blowing, and *beating* on the *patient*, are the means they adopt to effect their end; and they, not seldom, effectually cure the patient of "all the ills of life." Whether they effect a cure or not, they are sure to be well recompensed for their expenditure of wind, an article of which they are not sparing: they, in fact, exert themselves so much that the perspiration pours from every pore. The only real remedy they use, in common with other Indians, is the vapour-bath, or sweating-house. The house, as it is termed, which is constructed by bending twigs of willow, and fixing both ends in the ground, when finished, presents the appearance of a bee-hive, and is carefully covered to

prevent the escape of the vapour; red-hot stones are then placed inside, and water poured upon them, and the patient remains in the midst of the steam thus generated as long as he can bear it, then rushing out, plunges into the cold stream. This is said to be a sovereign remedy for rheumatism, and the natives have recourse to it in all cases of severe pain: I myself witnessed its efficacy in a case of paralysis.

The salubrity of the climate, however, renders disease of every kind extremely rare, except such as are caused by the excesses of the natives themselves. The venereal is very common, and appears to have been indigenous. At their feasts they gorge themselves to such a degree as to endanger their lives; after a feast many of the guests continue ill for a considerable time, yet this does not prevent them from gormandizing again whenever an opportunity presents itself. Old and young, male and female, are subject to severe inflammation in the eyes, chiefly, I believe, from their passing the winter in hovels underground, which have no outlet for the smoke,

and passing from them into the glare of sunshine upon the snow. What with the confined smoke and tainted atmosphere of these abominable burrows, I found it painful to remain even for a few minutes in them.

It has been remarked by those who first settled in the district, that the Indians are rapidly decreasing in numbers since their arrival—a fact which does not admit of a doubt: I myself have seen many villages and encampments without an inhabitant. But what can be the cause of it? Here there has been neither rum nor small-pox—the scourges of this doomed race in other parts. Yet, on the banks of the Columbia, which, when first visited by the whites a few years ago, literally swarmed with Indians, a disease broke out which nearly exterminated them. Has the fiat, then, gone forth, that the aboriginal inhabitants of America shall make way for another race of men? To my mind, at least, the question presents not the shadow of a doubt. The existence of the present race of Indians at some future, and by no means distant period, will only

be known through the historical records of their successors.

The Takellies do not use canoes on their hunting excursions, so that they are necessitated to carry all their conveniences on their backs; and it is astonishing to see what heavy loads they can carry, especially the women, on whom the transport duty generally devolves. Among this tribe, however, the women are held in much higher consideration than among other Indians: they assist at the councils, and some ladies of distinction are even admitted to the feasts. This consideration they doubtless owe to the efficient aid they afford in procuring the means of subsistence. The one sex is as actively employed during the fishing season as the other. The men construct the weirs, repair them when necessary, and capture the fish; the women split them up—a most laborious operation when salmon is plentiful—suspend them on the scaffolds, attend to the drying, &c. They also collect berries, and dig up the edible roots that are found in the country, and which are of great

service in years of scarcity. Thus the labour of the women contributes as much to the support of the community as that of the men.

The men are passionately addicted to gambling, staking everything they possess, and continuing at it night and day, until compelled to desist by sheer hunger, or by the loss of all. I could not understand their game; we, in fact, used our best endeavours to abolish the pernicious custom, and, to avoid countenancing it, were as seldom present as possible. It is played with a few small sticks, neatly carved, with a certain number of marks upon them, tied up in a small bundle of hay, which the player draws out successively, throws up and catches between his hands; and when all are drawn, they are taken up one by one, and dashed against a piece of parchment, and rolled up again in the hay.

The whole party appear merry enough at the commencement of the game, all joining chorus in a song, and straining their lungs to such a degree, that hoarseness soon ensues, when they continue their amusement in silence. When the

game is ended, some of them present a sad spectacle; coming forth, their hair dishevelled, their eyes bloodshot, and faces ghastly pale, with probably nothing to cover their nakedness, save perhaps an old siffleux robe, which the winner may be generous enough to bestow. They never shoot or hang themselves, let their luck be ever so bad, but sometimes shoot the winning party.

Dogs, if not held sacred, are at least as much esteemed by them as their own kindred. I have known an instance of a quadruped of the cynic sect being appointed successor to a biped chief, and discharging the duties of his office with the utmost gravity and decorum; appearing at the feast given in honour of his deceased predecessor, and furnishing his quota—(this of course by proxy)—of the provisions. This dog-chief was treated by his owner with as much regard as if he had been his child! All, indeed, treat their dogs with the greatest respect, calling them by the most endearing epithets:—"Embark, my

son;" "Be quiet, my child;" "Don't bark at the white men, they will not harm you."

The lewdness of the Carrier women cannot possibly be carried to a greater excess. They are addicted to the most abominable practices; abandoning themselves in early youth to the free indulgence of their passions, they soon become debilitated and infirm; and there can be no doubt that to this monstrous depravity the depopulation of the country may, in part, be ascribed.

They never marry until satiated with indulgence; and if the woman then should be dissatisfied with the restraint of the conjugal yoke, the union, by mutual consent, is dissolved for a time; both then betake themselves to their former courses. The woman, nevertheless, dare not, according to law, take another husband during this temporary separation. Whoever infringes this law, forfeits his life to the aggrieved party, if he choose, or dare to take it.

Polygamy is allowed; but only one of the women is considered as the wife. The most

perfect harmony seems to subsist among them. When the favourite happens to be supplanted by a rival, she resigns her place without a murmur, well pleased if she can only enjoy the countenance of her lord in a subordinate situation. Yet a rupture does sometimes occur, when the repudiated party not unfrequently destroys herself. Suicides were frequent among the females in the neighbourhood of Fort Alexandria.

The Takellies are a sedentary people, remaining shut up in their huts during the severer part of the winter. You may then approach a camp without perceiving any sign of its vicinity, until you come upon their well, or one of their salmon *caches*. They are very social, congregating at each other's huts, and passing their time talking or sleeping. When awake, their tongues are ever in motion,—all bawling out at the same time; and it has often surprised me how they could possibly make themselves understood in the midst of such an uproar.

All Indians with whom I have come in contact, Christian as well as Pagan, are addicted to false-

hood ; but the Takellies excel ; they are perfect adepts in the art, telling their stories with such an appearance of truth, that even those who know them well are often deceived. They were the greatest thieves in the world when the whites first settled among them. The utmost vigilance failed to detect them. Some of our people have been known to have their belts taken off them, without perceiving it till too late ; and many a poor fellow, after passing a night in one of their encampments, has been obliged to pass the remainder of the winter with but half a blanket—the other half having been cut off while he slept.

Theft, however, is not quite so prevalent as formerly ; and, strange to say, no Indians can be more honest in paying their debts. It would indeed be desirable that this credit system, long since introduced, were abolished ; but if this were done, the natives would carry the greater part of their hunts to another quarter. Some of the natives of the coast, having become regular traders of late years, penetrate a considerable

distance into the interior; in this manner the goods obtained from the Company's posts along the coast, or from foreign trading ships, pass from hand to hand in barter, until they eventually reach the borders of New Caledonia, where the trade still affords a very handsome profit to the native speculator.

These Indians are not given to hospitality in the proper sense of the word. A stranger arriving among them is provided with food for a day only; should he remain longer, he pays for it; for that day's entertainment, however, the best fare is liberally furnished. Strangers invited to their feasts are also provided for while they remain.

There is much more variety and melody in the airs they sing, than I have heard in any other part of the Indian country. They have professed composers, who turn their talent to good account on the occasion of a feast, when new airs are in great request, and are purchased at a high rate. They dance in circles, men and women promiscuously, holding each other by the hand; and

keeping both feet together, hop a little to a side all at once, giving at the same time a singular jerk to their persons behind. The movement seems to be difficult of execution, as it causes them to perspire profusely; they, however, keep excellent time, and the blending of the voices of the men and women in symphony has an agreeable effect.

The Takelly, or Carrier language, is a dialect of the Chippewayan; and it is rather a singular fact, that the two intervening dialects of the Beaver Indians and Tsekanies, kindred nations, should differ more from the Chippewayan than the Carrier; the two latter nations being perfectly intelligible to each other, while the former are but very imperfectly understood by their immediate neighbours, the Chippewayans.

An erroneous opinion seems to have gone abroad regarding the variety of languages spoken by the Indians. There are, in reality, only four radically distinct languages from the shores of Labrador to the Pacific: Sauteux, Chippewayan, Atna and Chinook. The Cree language is evi-

dently a dialect of the Sauteux, similar in construction, and differing only in the modification of a few words. The Nascopies, or mountaineers of Labrador, speak a mixture of Cree and Sauteux, the former predominating.

Along the communication from Montreal to the foot of the Rocky Mountains, following the Peace River route, we first meet with the Sauteux tribes, who extend from the Lake of the Two Mountains to Lake Winnipeg; then the Crees to Isle à la Crosse; after them, Crees and Chippewayans to Athabasca; and along the banks of Peace River, the Beaver Indians occupy the lower, and the Tsekanies the upper part. The Chippewyan is evidently the root of the Beaver, Tsekany and Carrier dialects; it is also spoken by a numerous tribe in the McKenzie's River district—the Hare Indians.

On the west side of the Rocky Mountains the Carrier language is succeeded by the Atna, which extends along the Columbia as far down as the Chinooks, who inhabit the coast. The Atna language, in its variety of dialects, seems to

have as wide a scope as either the Sauteux or Chippewayan.

New Caledonia is one of the richest districts in the Company's vast domain; its returns average about 8,000 beavers, with a fair proportion of other valuable furs. When the district was first settled, the goods required for trade were brought in by the winterers from Lac la Pluie, which was their *dépôt*. The people left the district as early in spring as the navigation permitted, and returned so late that they were frequently overtaken by winter ere they reached their destination. Cold, hunger, and fatigue, were the unavoidable consequences; but the enterprising spirit of the men of those days—the intrepid, indefatigable adventurers of the North-West Company—overcame every difficulty. It was that spirit that opened a communication across the broad continent of America; that penetrated to the frost-bound regions of the Arctic circle; and that established a trade with the natives in this remote land, when the merchandise required for it was in one season transported from Montreal to

within a short distance of the Pacific. Such enterprise has never been exceeded, seldom or never equalled. The outfit is now sent out from England by Cape Horn, to Fort Vancouver, thence it is conveyed in boats to Okanagan, then transported on horses' backs to Alexandria, the lower post of the district, whence it is conveyed in boats to Fort St. James.

There are generally two commissioned gentlemen in this district,—a chief-factor and chief-trader, with six or seven clerks in charge of posts; and about forty men, principally Iroquois and half-breeds. The fare at the different posts depends entirely on local circumstances. In some places it is tolerable, in others, scarcely fit for dogs. For the year's consumption, the Company allow a clerk two bags of flour, sixty pounds of sugar, twelve pounds of tea, and a small quantity of wine and brandy. Butter is now produced in abundance in the district. Where there are no gardens, the men have only dried salmon,—as poor fare as civilized man subsists on in any part of the world. It has at first the same effect on

most people as if they fed on Glauber salts. Nevertheless, the men generally continue in this wretched condition for many years, apparently contented and happy; the indulgence they find among the females being, I grieve to say, the principal inducement.

END OF VOL. I.

NOTES

OF A

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS' SERVICE

IN THE

HUDSON'S BAY TERRITORY.

BY JOHN M'LEAN.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET,

Publisher in Ordinary to Her Majesty.

1849.

LONDON :
R. CLAY, PRINTER, BREAD STREET HILL.

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NOTES

OF A

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS' SERVICE

IN THE

HUDSON'S BAY TERRITORY.



CHAPTER I.

JOURNEY TO NORWAY HOUSE.

I STARTED from Stuart's Lake on the 22d of February, and arrived at Fort Alexandria on the 8th of March. Although the upper parts of the district were yet buried in snow, it had disappeared in the immediate neighbourhood of the establishment, and everything wore the pleasing aspect of spring.

Mr. F—— was about to remove to a new post he had erected on the west bank of the river. Horses were provided for us to perform the journey overland to Okanagan. We left on the 13th; on the 15th we encamped on the borders of Lac Vert, having experienced a violent snow-storm in the early part of the day. The lake and circumjacent country presented a beautiful scene; the spurs of the Rocky Mountains bounding the horizon and presenting a rugged outline enveloped in snow—the intervening space of wooded hill and dale clothed in the fresh verdure of the season; and the innumerable low points and islands in the lake contributing to the variety of the landscape.

Hitherto we had found much snow on the ground, and our progress in consequence was very slow. Our hardy horses subsisting on whatever they could pick during the night, or when we halted for our meals, began to falter, so that we were under the necessity of stopping to allow them to feed wherever any bare ground appeared.

On the evening of the 18th we came in sight of Kamloops' Lake, which, to my great surprise,

was not only clear of ice, but the valley in which it is situated appeared clothed with verdure, while the heights on the other side were still covered with snow. The valley looks to the south, and is protected from the cold winds by the neighbouring high grounds.

On arriving at Kamloops' post we found two Canadians in charge, Mr. B—— having set off a few days before for the *dépôt* at Fort Vancouver. We met with a cordial reception from his men, who entertained us with horse-flesh and potatoes for supper; and next day we bountifully partook of the same delicacies, my prejudice against this fare having completely vanished.

Fort Kamloops is situated at the confluence of Thompson's River and its north branch; the Indians attached to it are a tribe of the Atnahs. Their lands are now destitute of fur-bearing animals, nor are there many animals of the larger kind to be found; they however find subsistence in the variety of edible roots which the country affords. They have the character of being honest, quiet, and well-disposed towards the whites. As

soon as the young women attain the age of puberty, they paint their faces after a fashion which the young men understand without explanation. They also dig holes in the ground, which they inlay with grass or branches, as a proof of their industry; and when they are in a certain state they separate from the community and live in small huts, which they build for themselves. Should any one unwittingly touch them, or an article belonging to them, during their indisposition, he is considered unclean; and must purify himself by fasting for a day, and then jumping over a fire prepared by *pure* hands.

We left Kamloops on the 20th, and after traveling about twenty miles found the ground covered with snow, which increased in depth as we advanced. The track left by Mr. B——'s party was of great service to us.

We encamped at the extremity of Okanagan Lake, where we found a small camp of natives nearly starved to death; the unfortunate creatures passed the night in our encampment, and we distributed as much of our provisions amongst them

as we could possibly spare. This encampment afforded me as miserable a night's lodging as I had ever met with; a snow-storm raged without intermission till daylight, when we set out so completely benumbed that we could not mount our horses till we had put the blood in circulation by walking.

We overtook Mr. B—— on the 25th, his horses completely jaded and worn out by the fatigues of the journey; the great depth of the snow indeed would have utterly precluded travelling had he not adopted the precaution of driving a number of young horses before the loaded horses to make a track.

The country through which we have travelled for the last few days is exceedingly rugged, and possesses few features to interest the traveller.

We arrived at the post of Okanagan on the 28th, situated on the left bank of the Columbia River. The ground was still covered with snow to the depth of two feet, and had been five feet deep in the course of the winter—an extraordinary

circumstance, as there generally falls so little snow in this quarter, that the cattle graze in the plain nearly all winter. The Indians are designated Okanagans, and speak a dialect of the Atnah. Their lands are very poor, yielding only cats, foxes, &c. ; they subsist on salmon and roots.

Messrs. F—— and D—— arrived from Fort Vancouver on the 7th of April, and we embarked on the 8th in three boats manned by retiring servants. Mr. B—— accompanied us, having obtained permission to cross the Rocky Mountains.

We arrived at Colville on the 12th, where we met with a most friendly reception from a warm-hearted Gael, (Mr. McD.) The gentlemen proceeding to the dépôt in charge of the accounts of the Columbia department generally remain here a few days to put a finishing hand to these accounts—an operation which occupied us till the 22d, when we re-embarked, leaving Messrs. D—— and B—— behind ; the former being remanded to Fort Vancouver ; and the latter, having changed his mind, in an evil hour for

himself, returned to his old quarters; where he was murdered sometime afterwards by an Indian who had lost his father, and thought that the company of his old trader would solace him for the absence of his children.

CHAPTER II.

ARRIVAL AT YORK FACTORY—ITS SITUATION—CLIMATE—
NATIVES—REIN-DEER—VOYAGE TO UNGAVA—INCIDENTS OF
THE VOYAGE — ARRIVAL AT UNGAVA — SITUATION AND
ASPECT.

I ARRIVED at York Factory, the dépôt of the Northern department, early in July. This establishment presents a more respectable appearance than any other that I have seen in Rupert's Land, and reflects no small credit on the talents and taste of him who planned, and partly executed, the existing improvements, all which have been effected since the coalition. When Mr. McT. first assumed the command, the buildings were of the most wretched description—the apartments had more the appearance of cells for criminals, than of rooms for gentlemen.

The yielding nature of the swampy ground on which the buildings were to be erected rendering it necessary to lay a solid foundation, the object was accomplished in the face of every difficulty, and at a great expense; and the present commodious buildings were commenced, but not finished by the projector. Other improvements have been made since then, so that they afford every comfort and convenience that could be expected in so unfavourable a situation.

The *dépôt* is at present under the charge of a chief factor, assisted by a chief trader, a surgeon, and two clerks. Here there is always a sufficient supply of goods and provisions on hand to meet the demand of the trade for two years—a wise precaution, as in the event of any accident happening to prevent the vessel from reaching her destination, the trade would not be interrupted. The very emergency thus provided for occurred last autumn; the ship, after dropping anchor in her usual mooring ground, was compelled by stress of weather to bear away for England, after loosing her anchors, and sustaining other serious

damages. Yet notwithstanding this untoward event, the gentlemen in charge of the different districts set off for the interior with their outfits complete.

The climate, although extremely disagreeable, is not considered unhealthy. In summer the extremes of heat and cold are experienced in the course of a few hours ; in the morning you may be wearing nankeen, and before noon, duffle. Were the heat to continue for a sufficient length of time to thaw the ground thoroughly, the establishment could not be kept up save at a great sacrifice of life, through the mephitic exhalations from the surrounding swamps. The ground, however, seldom thaws more than eighteen inches, and the climate therefore is never affected by them to such a degree as to become unhealthy.

One of Mr. McT——'s most beneficial improvements was to clear the swamps surrounding the factory of the brushwood with which they were thickly covered ; and the inmates are now in a great measure relieved from the torture to which they were formerly exposed from the mosquitoes.

These vampires are not so troublesome in the cleared ground, but whoever dares to intrude on their domain pays dearly for his temerity. Every exposed part of the body is immediately covered with them; defence is out of the question; the death of one is avenged by the stings of a thousand equally bloodthirsty; and the unequal contest is soon ended by the flight of the tormented party to his quarters, whither he is pursued to his very door.

There seems to be no foundation for the opinion generally entertained that the natives do not suffer from the stings of these insects. The incrustation of filth with which their bodies are covered undoubtedly affords some protection, the skin not being so easily pierced; but no incrustation, however thick, can be a defence against the attacks of myriads; and in fact, the natives complain as loudly of the mosquitoes as the whites.

The Indians of this quarter are denominated Swampies, a tribe of the Cree nation, whose language they speak with but little variation, and in their manners and customs there is a great

similarity. But the Swampies are a degenerate race, reduced by famine and disease to a few families; and these have been still farther reduced by an epidemic which raged among them this summer. They were attacked by it immediately on their return from the interior with the produce of their winter hunts, and remained in hopes of being benefited by medical advice and attendance. Their hopes, however, were not realized; they were left entirely in charge of a young man without experience and without humanity; and the disease was unchecked. Every day the death of some poor wretch was made known to us by the firing of guns, by which the survivors fancied the evil spirit was frightened away from the souls of their departed friends.

Not many years ago this part of the country was periodically visited by immense herds of rein-deer; at present there is scarcely one to be found. Whether their disappearance is owing to their having changed the course of their migrations, or to their destruction by the natives, who waylaid them on their passage, and killed

them by hundreds, is a question not easily determined. It may be they have only forsaken this part of the country for a time, and may yet return in as great numbers as ever: be that as it may, the present want to which the Indians are subject, arises from the extreme scarcity of those animals, whose flesh and skins afforded them food and clothing. Their subsistence is now very precarious; derived principally from snaring rabbits and fishing; and rabbits also fail periodically.

Their fare during summer, however, soon obliterates the remembrance of the privations of winter: fish is then found in every lake, and wild-fowl during the moulting season become an easy prey; while young ducks and geese are approached in canoes, and are destroyed with arrows in great numbers, ere they have acquired the use of their wings. The white man similarly situated would undoubtedly think of the long winter he had passed in want, and would provide for the next while he could;—so much foresight,

however, does not belong to the Indian character.

Fishing and hunting for the establishment affords employment to a few Indians during summer, and is an object of competition among them, on account of the incomparable gratification it affords—grog drinking—to which no earthly bliss can be compared in the Indian's estimation. To find the Company serving out rum to the natives as payment for their services in this remote quarter, created the utmost surprise in my mind: no excuse can be advanced which can justify the unhallowed practice, when the management of the native population is left entirely to themselves. Why then is it continued? Strange to say, while Indians were to be seen rolling drunk about the establishment, an order of Council appeared, prohibiting the sale of ardent spirits in any quantity exceeding two gallons to the Company's officers of whatever rank, with the view of preventing the demoralization of the natives!

Most of the natives have a smattering of English, and are said to be a quiet, harmless race, addicted to few bad habits. Their remote situation and impoverished country protect them from the hostile inroads of neighbouring tribes; hence the tame and pacific demeanour by which they are distinguished. The poor Swampy often retires to rest without a morsel to eat for himself or family, and that for days together; yet he is under no apprehension from his enemies, and enjoys his night's rest undisturbed; whereas, the warrior of the plain, while he revels in abundance, seldom retires to rest without apprehension; the hostile yell may, in fact, rouse him from his midnight slumber, either to be butchered himself, or to hear the dying groans of his family while he escapes. Thus chequered is the life of man with good and evil in every condition, whether civilized or savage.

Every preparation for our departure being now completed, I took leave of Fort York, its fogs, and bogs, and mosquitoes, with little regret.

We embarked on the 22d of August, in a brig that had fortunately escaped the mishaps of the other vessels last autumn; and after being delayed in port by adverse winds till the 26th, we finally stood out to sea, having spoken the Prince Rupert just come in. The fields of ice, that had been observed a few days previously, having now entirely disappeared, the captain concluded that the passage was clear for him, and accordingly steered for the south. He had not proceeded far in this direction, however, when we fell in with such quantities of ice as to interrupt our passage; but we still continued to force our way through. Convinced at length of the futility of the attempt, we altered our course to a directly opposite point, standing to the north, until we came abreast of Churchill, and then bore away for the strait, making Mansfield Island on the 7th of September. We encountered much stream ice on our passage, from which no material injury was sustained; although the continual knocking of our rather frail vessel against the ice created

a good deal of alarm, from the effect the collision produced, shaking her violently from stem to stern.

We were thus passing rapidly through the straits without experiencing any accident worthy of notice, when I inquired of our captain, one evening, how soon he expected to make the Island of Akpatok. He replied, "To-morrow morning about nine o'clock." We retired to rest about ten, P.M., and I had not yet fallen asleep, when I heard an unusual bustle on deck, and one of the men rushing down to the captain's room to call him up. I instantly dressed and went on deck, where I soon learned the cause;—a dark object, scarcely distinguishable through the fog and gloom of night, was pointed out to me on our lee beam, two cable-lengths distant, on which we had been rushing, propelled by wind and current, at the rate of thirteen knots an hour, when it was observed. A few moments more, and we had been launched into eternity. Had the vigilance of the look-out been relaxed for a minute, or had the slightest accident occurred

to prevent the vessel from wearing at the very instant, our doom was certain.

The western extremity of the Island of Akpatok, terminating in a high promontory seemingly cut down perpendicular to the water's edge, formed the danger we had so providentially escaped. Next day we saw the dismal spot in all its horrors. The island was still partially covered with snow, and no traces of vegetation were discernible; but a fresh breeze springing up we soon lost sight of this desolate spot, and made the mouth of the Ungava, or South River, about an hour after sunset. The captain was a perfect stranger on the coast, and had but a very imperfect chart to guide him; he nevertheless stood boldly in for the land, and fortunately discovered the mouth of the river, which we entered as darkness closed in upon us.

By this time the breeze, that had carried us on so rapidly, increased to a gale, so that if we had not entered the river so opportunely, the consequences might have been serious. We were utterly unacquainted with the coast, which pre-

sented a thousand dangers in the shape of rocks and breakers, that were observable in every direction, as far as the eye could reach to seaward; we therefore congratulated ourselves on our fancied security—for it was only fancied, as will presently appear. We kept firing as we approached the land, with the view of apprizing the people of the post, who were directed to await us at the mouth of the river. No sound was heard in reply until we had advanced a few miles up the river, when we were gratified with hearing the report of muskets, and presently several torches were visible blazing a little ahead.

The night was uncommonly dark, the banks of the river being scarcely perceptible; and although it appeared to me we were much nearer than than prudence would warrant, we still drew nearer, when our progress was suddenly arrested. The vessel struck violently on a sunken rock, and heeled over so much that she was nearly thrown on her beam-ends. Swinging round, however, with the force of the current, she soon got off again;

and our captain, taking the hint, instantly dropped anchor. Soon after a couple of Esquimaux came alongside in their canoes, who gave us to understand by signs that they were sent to pilot us to the post.

Next day, as soon as the tide proved favourable, our Esquimaux made signs to weigh anchor, which being done, one of them took his station by the side of the helmsman, and never moved a moment from the spot, pointing out the deep channel, with which he appeared well acquainted; although the utmost anxiety appeared depicted in his countenance, lest any accident should happen. Once or twice we touched slightly, when he expressed his dissatisfaction by a deep groan; he managed so well, however, that he brought us to good anchoring ground ere nightfall. From 10 A.M. until late in the evening we had only advanced twenty-five miles, although we pressed against the current with top-gallant sails set and a strong wind in our favour.

Immediately we anchored, Captain Humphrey

and myself determined on rowing up to the post, where we arrived about four, P.M. I need scarcely say with what joy our arrival was hailed by people so seldom visited by strangers, in a situation which had no regular communication as yet with any other part of the world.

I was much gratified by the appearance of every thing about the establishment. The buildings had just been finished with materials sent out from England, through the considerate and kindly feeling of the Committee, whose compassion had been excited by the accounts they had heard of the miserable hovels in which the people were lodged when the place was first settled. After passing an hour or two examining the fort, (as it is called *par excellence*,) we returned to the ship, and weighing anchor at an early hour the next morning, (11th September,) we were soon brought up to the establishment, and landed without loss of time amid a violent snow-storm. It afforded us no small consolation, however, to reflect that we had no further cause to apprehend danger from

icebergs or rocks, and that the post afforded us greater comfort as to living and accommodation than we had been led to expect.

The vessel, having discharged cargo, dropped down with the stream on the 15th, leaving us to reflect in undisturbed solitude on the dreary prospects before us. The clank of the capstan, while the operation of weighing was being executed, echoing from the surrounding hills, suggested the question, "When shall that sound be heard again?" From the melancholy reverie which this idea suggested I was roused by the voice of my fellow exile, "the companion of my joys and sorrows," in whose society such gloomy thoughts could not long dwell.

This post is situated in lat. $59^{\circ} 28'$, standing on the east bank of South River, about thirty miles distant from the sea, surrounded by a country that presents as complete a picture of desolation as can be imagined; moss-covered rocks without vegetation and without verdure, constitute the cheerless landscape that greets the

eye in every direction. A few stunted pines growing in the villages form the only exception ; and at this season of the year, when they shed their leaves, contribute but little to the improvement of the scene.

CHAPTER III.

EXPLORING EXPEDITION THROUGH THE INTERIOR OF LABRADOR—DIFFICULTIES—DEER-HUNT—INDIAN GLUTTONY—DESCRIPTION OF THE COUNTRY—PROVISIONS RUN SHORT—INFLUENZA.

THE Company having learned, through a pamphlet published by the Moravian missionaries of Labrador, that the country produced excellent furs, were induced by the laudable desire of “ameliorating the condition of the natives,” to settle it; and a party was accordingly sent overland from Moose Factory to take possession in the summer of 1831. The Moravians, finding their intention thus anticipated, left both the cure of souls and trade of furs to the Company.

Whatever may have been the Company’s real motives in forming a settlement in this quarter,

the profits derived from it added but little to the dividends; the substance that glittered at a distance like gold proved to be but base metal. Beavers were nowhere to be found; and although the martens brought an extraordinary high price, they were far from plentiful; while the enormous expense of supplying the district by sea, and supporting it on imported provisions, rendered the "Ungava adventure" a subject of rather unpleasant discussion among the partners, most of whom were opposed to the measure from the first.

Mr. Simpson was, in fact, the prime mover of the project, and aware of the discontent caused by its failure, determined on making every effort to reduce the expense, and, if possible, to increase the returns. Accordingly, I was directed to push outposts into the interior, to support my people on the resources of the country, and at the same time to open a communication with Esquimaux Bay, on the coast of Labrador, with the view of obtaining in future my supplies from thence by inland route; "there being no question of the practicability of the rivers." So said not he who had seen those rivers.

Mr. Erlandson had traversed the country in the spring of 1834, and represented to me the utter impossibility of carrying my instructions into effect. Meantime, the Committee, having learned by despatches from York Factory that the vessel intended for the business of the district had been lost, and the other, in which I made my passage, placed in so critical a situation as to render her safety in spring a very doubtful matter, considered it advisable to provide for the worst by freighting a small schooner to carry us out our supplies. This vessel very unexpectedly made her appearance on the 22d of September, and we thus found ourselves supplied with goods and provisions for two years' consumption.

Having, as above mentioned, learned from Mr. Erlandson the difficulties of the inland route, and also that a great number of the natives had gone to Esquimaux Bay, with the intention of remaining there, I considered it incumbent upon me to visit that quarter at an early period of the winter, and I accordingly set out from Fort Chimo on the 2d of January. I submit the following narrative of my journey to the reader.

“ *Tuesday, the 2d of January, 1838.*—I left Fort Chimo at eleven A.M., accompanied by the following men, *viz.* :—

“ Donald Henderson, Henry Hay, and two Indian guides, who are to accompany me throughout the journey; Pierre Neven and M. Ferguson go part of the way, each driving a sled of two dogs, loaded with provisions, the other men having sleds drawn by themselves.

“ *Wednesday, the 3d.*—Left our encampment before dawn of day. Excessively cold—some of us got frost-bitten, but not severely. Our principal guide, finding his companion unable to keep up with us, set off to his lodge in quest of a substitute. Encamped early, having proceeded about nine miles.

“ *Thursday, the 4th.*—Started at seven A.M. Reached High Fall Creek at nine A.M. Halted to wait for our guide, who soon joined us, alone, finding no person willing to accompany him. Resumed our march at half-past nine; had not proceeded far, when we perceived that our young guide, Pellican, was left considerably in the rear.

We waited till he overtook us, and the miserable creature appearing completely exhausted with fatigue, we encamped at an early hour. Eight miles.

“ *Friday, the 5th.*—Lightened Pellican’s sled, and set off at five A.M.; fine weather, though sharp. Advanced sixteen miles.

“ *Saturday, the 6th.*—As the ice was covered with water close to our encampment, it was deemed advisable to await the light of day. Set off at eight A.M., but found it impossible to move forward in consequence of the immense quantity of snow that had fallen during the night. It continuing still to snow, and blowing a violent gale at same time, I gave up the struggle. Advanced about a mile.

“ *Sunday, the 7th.*—Got up about three A.M., literally buried in snow. Our blankets being wet, we waited in our encampment drying them till eight o’clock, when we started with only half loads, with which we intended to proceed to the first lake, and then return for the remainder; but to our great satisfaction we soon discovered that the tempest which had incommoded us so much

last night had cleared the ice of snow; we therefore returned for the property we had left; then proceeding at a fine rate, having beautiful weather, we soon reached the lake; when my guides, discovering a herd of deer on an adjacent hill, immediately set off at a bound, followed by Pellican and my two *brules*. I saw at once my day's journey was at an end, and accordingly directed my encampment to be made. Our hunters joined us in the evening with the choice parts of three deer they had killed. Proceeded eight miles.

“ *Monday, the 8th.* — Very cold, tempestuous weather. Our progress was much retarded by the great depth of snow in the woods through which our route lay. Thirteen miles.

“ *Tuesday, the 9th.* — Blowing a hurricane; the cold being also intense, we could not venture out on the ice without incurring the risk of being frost-bitten; we therefore remained in our quarters, such as they were, until the weather should moderate.

“ *Wednesday, the 10th.* — My guides appeared very unwilling to quit their encampment this morning, pretending indisposition. They might

have been really ill; but the beastly manner in which they had been gorging themselves for the past two days being well known to be the cause of their illness, no one felt disposed to pity them. I therefore sprang into their encampment, and pitching the remainder of their choice morsels into the snow, drove them out before me. Travelled through woods the whole day. Encamped at half-past three. Eighteen miles.

“*Thursday, the 11th.*—Started at five, A.M. Soon fell on a large lake, on which we travelled till three, P.M., when we encamped. Thus far the lake extends S.E. and N.W., being about two miles in width. As Mr. Erlandson was the first European who had traversed these inhospitable wilds, I had the gratification of giving his name to the lake. It is reported by the natives to abound in fish of the best quality; rein-deer are also said to be numerous at certain seasons of the year. Proceeded fifteen miles.

Friday, the 12th.—Being immoderately cold, and the wind blowing direct in our faces, we could not attempt travelling on the lake.

“*Saturday, the 13th.*—Weather fine. Left

Erlandson's Lake about one, A.M.; it still stretched out before us as far as the eye could reach, and cannot be less than forty miles in length; its medium breadth, however, does not exceed two miles and a half. The circumjacent country is remarkably well wooded, even to the tops of the highest hills, and is reported by the natives to abound in martens. A few industrious Indians would not fail to turn such advantages to good account; but they can avail the Company very little, while the natives alone are in possession of them. Went on twenty-four miles.

“*Sunday, the 14th.*—Set off at five, A.M. Passed over several small lakes; the country well wooded. Entered upon a small river about noon, the banks covered with large pine. Encamped at three, P.M. Advanced sixteen miles.

“*Monday, the 15th.*—Took our departure at seven, A.M. Travelled without halting the whole day. Eighteen miles.

“*Tuesday, the 16th.*—Decamped at five, A.M.; the snow very deep in the woods. Fell on Whale River at ten, A.M. The face of the country

presents scarcely any variety; from Erlandson's Lake to this river it is generally well wooded, but afterwards becomes extremely barren, nothing to be seen on both sides of the river but bare rocks. Proceeded sixteen miles.

“ *Wednesday, the 17th.*—Started at five, A.M. Our route in the morning led us through a chain of small lakes, and brought us out again on Whale River, on which we travelled till four, P.M. The appearance of the country much the same as described yesterday. Proceeded eighteen miles.

“ *Thursday, the 18th.*—P. Neven being unable to travel from indisposition, I resolved on passing the day to await the issue, deeming his malady to be of no very serious nature. In the meantime I took an exact account of my provisions which I found to be so far reduced, that no further assistance was required for its conveyance. I accordingly made the necessary arrangements to send the men back.

“ *Friday, the 19th.*—Early in the morning, P. Neven (being now convalescent) and Mordoch

Ferguson set off on their return, whilst I and my party proceeded on our onward route. I retained a sled of dogs, intending to drive them myself. We travelled eleven miles on Whale River, then struck across the country to the eastward. Encamped at four, P.M. Fourteen miles.

“ *Saturday, the 20th.*—The moon affording no longer light to find our way in the night, we must now wait till daylight. Started at seven A.M.; crossed a point of wood, chiefly larch, of a miserably small growth; then came out on a large lake (comparatively speaking), on which we travelled till four, P.M. Thirteen miles.

“ *Sunday, the 21st.*—Set off at seven A.M. About eleven, we fell on the fresh tracks of a large herd of deer, which my guides carefully examined; their experience not only enabling them to determine the precise time they had passed, but the very spot where they were likely to be found, which they affirmed was close to us. My dogs being very much reduced, and not having the means of increasing their present modicum of food, I determined on availing my-

self of an opportunity which might not again occur of procuring a supply. The Indians accordingly set off in quest of them, desiring us at their departure to make no fire until the sun had reached a certain position in the heavens which they pointed out to us. We made our encampment at the time appointed, and were soon joined by our hunters, dragging after them a fine doe; they had got only one shot at the herd, which immediately took to the bare hills, where pursuit was in vain. Our guides being encamped by themselves, I was curious to ascertain by ocular evidence the manner in which the first kettle would be disposed of, nor did I wait long till my curiosity was gratified. The cannibals fell upon the half-cooked flesh with a voracity which I could not have believed even savages capable of; and in an incredibly short space of time the kettle was disposed of;—and this, too, after their usual daily allowance, which is equal to, and sometimes exceeds, that of the other men, who say they have enough. Proceeded seven miles.

“*Monday, the 22d.*—On examining the remains

of the deer this morning, I found my quadrupeds would benefit but little by my good intentions and loss of time, our guides having applied themselves so sedulously to the doe during the night, as to leave but little for their canine brethren. We started at seven, A.M., the travelling very heavy in the woods. About noon we came upon a large lake, where we made better speed. Thirteen miles.

“ *Tuesday, the 23d.*—Travelled through woods the greater part of the day; encamped at four o'clock. Sixteen miles.

“ *Wednesday, the 24th.*—Decamped at seven, A.M. Our route lay through swamps and small lakes, with strips of wood intervening. Martens appear to be numerous, but beavers must be extremely rare, for we have discovered no traces whatever of their existence anywhere along our route, though innumerable small lakes and rivers, such as beavers frequent, are to be met with in every direction; but the country produces no food for them. At ten A.M. we arrived at a considerable lake, where my guides told me we had reached the highest land. On asking them if this were

the lake where we intended to build, they pointed to the south-west, saying it was four days' journey off in that direction!—so far had I been led from the route I intended to have followed, notwithstanding the perfect understanding I had with my perfidious guides prior to our departure from the establishment. Encamped at three, P.M. Twelve miles.

“ *Thursday, the 25th.*—Immediately on leaving our encampment, we fell on a large river flowing to the north-east, which I took to be George's River. We followed it for a short distance, and then directed our course over bare hills. Encamped at three, P.M. Eleven miles.

“ *Friday, the 26th.*—Having passed the night in a clump of small pines, which sheltered us from the inclemency of the weather, we were not aware of the violence of the storm which was raging round us, until, pursuing our route over a ridge of bare hills, we were completely exposed to its fury. We found the cold intense, the wind blowing in our faces, so that it was impossible to proceed. Observing a hummock of wood close

to us, we shaped our course for it, where we were no sooner arrived, than it began to snow and drift. The few trees to which we had retreated being far apart, and the wind blowing with the utmost violence, we experienced the greatest difficulty in clearing an encampment. The storm continuing unabated, we passed a miserable day in our snow burrow. Two miles.

“ *Saturday, the 27th.*—Arose from our comfortable *couché* at half-past four. The snow having drifted over us, and being melted by the heat of the fire in the early part of the night, we found our blankets and capotes hard frozen in the morning. Thawing and drying them occupied us till nine A.M., when we set off. Snow very deep. Proceeded nine miles.

“ *Sunday, the 28th.* — Set off at seven, A.M. Snow still increasing in depth, and our progress decreasing in proportion. At one, P.M., we came upon a large river flowing to the north, on which we travelled a short distance; then followed the course of a small stream running in an easterly direction. Leaving this stream, our

route lay over marshes and small lakes; the country flat, yielding dwarf pine intermixed with larch. Encamped at half-past four; advanced eight miles.

“ *Monday, the 29th.*—Started at seven. Appearance of the country much the same as yesterday. Fifteen miles.

“ *Tuesday, the 30th.*—Decamped at seven. Weather mild, and walking heavy. Our principal guide appears rapidly declining in strength, which does not surprise me, considering the laborious duty he has had to perform; always beating the track a-head, without being once relieved by his worthless associate. Fourteen miles.

“ *Wednesday, the 31st.*—Started at seven. Still very mild. Observed a few small birch trees. Encamped at four, P.M. Fifteen miles.

Thursday, the 1st of February.—Started at the usual hour. We have been travelling through a very rough country for these two days past. The fact is, that our guides, having only passed here in summer, are unacquainted with the winter track. We are, therefore, evidently pursuing a

circuitous course, which, with every other disadvantage, subjects us to the risk of running short of provisions,—a contingency which our reduced stock warns us to prepare for ere long. We can afford no more food to the dogs; their load is now transferred to the men's sleds. Fifteen miles.

“*Friday, the 2d.*—Decamped at seven, A.M. Pursued our route over extensive swamps and small lakes, where there is scarcely any wood to be seen. The face of the surrounding country being level, the least elevation commands a most extensive view; but the eye turns away in disgust from the cheerless prospect which the desolate flats present. I deemed it expedient to curtail our allowance of provisions this evening. Eighteen miles.

“*Saturday, the 3d.*—Set off at seven, A.M. Reached Michigama Lake at one, P.M.; on which we travelled till five o'clock, when we encamped on an island. Proceeded twenty miles.

“*Sunday, the 4th.*—Left our encampment at the usual hour. Halted for our scanty meal at

ten, A.M. After an hour's delay we resumed our march, and encamped at four, P.M., on an island near the mainland on the east side of the lake, having performed about twenty miles. I here repeated to the Indians my earnest wish to proceed to Esquimaux Bay, by North River, which takes its rise in this lake. They replied that nothing could induce them to comply with my wishes, as inevitable starvation would be the consequence; no game could be found by the way, and we would have, therefore, to depend solely on our own provisions, which were barely sufficient for the shortest route. I had thus the mortification to find, that I should entirely fail in accomplishing the main object I had in view in crossing the country.

Monday, the 5th.—Decamped at seven, A.M. Reached the mainland at half-past eight; then ascended a river flowing from the north-east, which discharges itself into Michigama Lake, Pellican taking the lead, being the only one acquainted with this part of the country. The Indians shot an otter. No wood to be seen,

but miserably small pine, thinly scattered over the country. Encamped at Gull Lake. Fifteen miles.

“ *Tuesday, the 6th.*—Left our encampment at seven. Our guide lost his way about noon, which after an hour’s search, he succeeded in finding; when we resumed our slow march, Pellican proceeding at a snail’s pace, which neither threats nor entreaties could in the least accelerate. Encamped at five, P.M. Eleven miles.

“ *Wednesday, the 7th.*—Started at half-past six, A.M. Arrived at the site of an extensive Indian camp, which appeared to have been recently occupied. Our guides knowing the Indians to be their friends from Ungava, and their trail leading in the direction of our route, required no longer to be urged on. An immediate impulse was given to Pellican’s sluggish motions, increasing his speed to such a degree, that it required our utmost exertions to keep up with him. Encamped near a high fall on North-West River, which is here walled in by inaccessible precipices

on both sides. The view above the fall is interrupted by stupendous rocks; the natives say that the appearance of the river and surrounding country is the same from this fall to Michigama Lake; the river is deemed to be impracticable for any kind of craft. Eighteen miles.

“*Thursday, the 8th.*—Set off at seven, A.M. Fine travelling on the river. We passed two portages and rapids. Encamped at forty-five minutes past five. Twenty miles.

“*Friday, the 9th.*—Decamped at seven. Travelling good; the banks of the river high and precipitous, and almost destitute of wood. We observed, however, a few birches. Encamped at six, P.M. Twenty miles.

“*Saturday, the 10th.*—Started at eight, A.M. About noon we arrived at a wide expansion of the river, where it suddenly bends to the west. Here we again quitted the river, directing our course to the eastward. The navigation of this part of the river is represented by the natives to be impracticable, and similar to the upper

part. Our snow-shoes being the worse for wear, we encamped at an early hour for the purpose of repairing them. Advanced fifteen miles.

“ *Sunday, the 11th.*—Decamped at seven, A.M. Pursued our course through the roughest country I ever travelled. The appearance of it struck me as resembling the ocean when agitated by a storm, supposing its billows transformed into solid rock. We commenced ascending and descending in the morning, and kept at it till night. The men complained much of fatigue. Proceeded fourteen miles.

“ *Monday, the 12th.*—The weather being so much overcast that we could not find our way, we remained in our encampment till eight, A.M. Encamped at a quarter past five. Fifteen miles.

“ *Tuesday, the 13th.*—Set off at half-past seven, amidst a tremendous snow-storm, which continued without intermission the whole day; we sunk knee-deep in the snow, and found it not the most pleasant recreation in the world. About noon we passed a hut, which my guide told me had been the residence of a trader, two years ago. Late in

the evening we arrived at another hut, on North West River, where we found two of Mr. McGilivray's people, who were stationed there for the purpose of trapping martens. Nine miles.

“ *Wednesday, the 14th.*—The weather being unpropitious, and finding ourselves very snug in our present quarters, we passed the day enjoying the comfort of a roof.

“ *Thursday, the 15th.*—Left our Canadian hosts at early dawn; the snow very deep on the river. Proceeded till ten, A.M., when D. Henderson was suddenly seized by a violent fit, which completely incapacitated him from travelling. Discovering a hut close by, a fire was immediately kindled in it, and a place prepared for our invalid to lie down; in our present circumstances nothing more could be done. I waited by him till two, P.M., then pursued my route, accompanied by the Indians, leaving H. Hay to take care of him. Accomplished fourteen miles.

“ *Friday, the 16th.*—Set off at four, A.M. Arrived at dusk at Fort Smith, where, although I was well known, my Esquimaux dress and

long beard defied recognition, until I announced myself by name.

“*Saturday, the 17th.*—An Indian was despatched early in the morning, to meet my men with a supply of the north-west panacea, Turlington Balsam; and I was glad to see them arrive in the evening, more in want of food than medicine.”

Two days after our arrival, all the Nascopie or Ungava Indians, at present residing in this part of the country, numbering seventy or eighty souls, came to the establishment, with the produce of their winter hunts. Mr. McGillivray and myself having come to an understanding regarding them, we both addressed them, representing to them the advantages they would derive from having posts so conveniently situated on their lands, &c. After some deliberation among themselves, they expressed their intention to be guided by our advice, and to return forthwith to their lands. Having sent off my despatches by Indian couriers, for Mashquaro, on the 3d of March, to be forwarded thence to Canada, *via* the Company's posts along the Gulf and River St. Lawrence, I sent H. Hay

for my guides (who had gone to pay the *kettles* of their friends a visit), preparatory to my departure hence, which has been deferred to a much later period than I had calculated upon, from the prevalence of excessively bad weather for a fortnight.

Hay, having met the Indians on the way, returned the same evening; but they were so emaciated that I could scarcely recognise them, looking like so many spectres—a metamorphosis caused by the influenza, at that time prevalent in the country. My principal guide, however, declared himself able to proceed on the journey, with a light load; and it was arranged that Pellican should accompany his relative. Two young men, who came in with my guide, appearing not quite so much reduced as the others, I proposed to them to accompany me as far as Michigama Lake, to assist in hauling our provisions, which they consented to do; and they accordingly took their departure along with my guide, on the 4th of March. Myself and two men, along with my “husky” interpreter, followed next morning; but as we are to retrace our steps by the same way we came, it

will be unnecessary to narrate the occurrences of each day.

We arrived in the evening at the first Indian camp, where I found one of the young men I had hired, relapsed into his former malady, and unable to proceed further. This, although a disappointment, did not much affect me, as I had hopes my guide would be able to continue his route, from the circumstance of his having passed on to the farthest camp. When we arrived, about noon next day, and found, not only our guide, but every individual in the camp, suffering under the fatal malady,—this was the climax to my disappointment. I determined on returning to Fort Smith, with my guide, where, by proper treatment, I hoped he might yet recover in time to admit of my returning before the end of the season.

I accordingly returned, accompanied by H. Hay, who conducted the dog-sledge, on which I had placed my sick Indian, leaving D. Henderson in charge of the provisions, along with the Esquimaux. On the morning of the 9th, I despatched H. Hay to join Henderson, with directions to haul

the provisions on to McGillivray's hut, there to await further orders.

My guide, for a few days, appeared to be in a hopeless state, refusing sustenance of any kind, and became delirious. This was the crisis of the malady; for he soon began to take some food, and recovered strength daily. He at length proposed to attempt the journey, to which I joyfully assented; and once more took leave of Fort Smith, on the 19th of March, and joined my men next day.

Remaining two days, to give the guide time to recruit his strength, I started on the morning of the 23d; the Indians had recovered strength enough to enable them to proceed towards their winter deposit of provisions, near Michigama Lake, leaving us an excellent track. We overtook them on the 26th. I found it impossible to separate my guide from his relatives while we pursued the same route. We arrived on the 30th at their last stage, and encamped together.

Next morning as we were about to start, a message arrived from my guide, announcing his

determination to proceed no farther, unless Pellican were permitted to accompany us. I sent for him immediately, and endeavoured to impress on his mind the unreasonableness of such a proposition, our provisions being scarcely sufficient for ourselves—that it would expose the whole party to the risk of starvation ; but I addressed a thing without reason and without understanding, and was accordingly obliged, once more, to yield.

We reached the highest land on the 2d of April, where, on examining our remaining stock of provisions, the alarming fact that it was altogether insufficient to carry us to the establishment, was but too apparent. It was therefore necessary to take immediate measures to avert, if possible, an evil that threatened so fearful consequences ; and the only course that presented itself was to divide into two parties,—the one to proceed with all possible despatch to the fort, by the shortest route, and to send forward a supply to the other, which it was anticipated would reach them ere they were reduced to absolute want.

Pursuant to this resolution I set off, accom-

panied by the guide and H. Hay ; leaving D. Henderson to make the best of his way, with the Esquimaux and Pellican. Having taken but a very small share of the provisions with us, and meeting with no game on the way, we were soon reduced to the utmost extremity. One of our dogs being starved to death, we were ultimately obliged to knock the surviving one on the head, to supply ourselves with what we considered, in present circumstances, " food for the gods." Such as it was, it enabled us to keep soul and body together till we reached Fort Chimo, on the 20th of April, where we found all the Nascopies of this part of the country assembled to greet the arrival of their long-expected friends—our guides. I immediately selected a couple of smart-looking lads to go to meet my rear-guard,—the other servants about the establishment, who were accustomed to snow-shoes, being absent, watching the deer.

On the third day after their departure the couriers returned, with Pellican. On inquiring of the latter what had become of my men, he

replied that he had left them encamped at a lake about sixty miles distant, where the Esquimaux, abandoning himself to despair, could not be prevailed upon to go a step farther; and that he (Pellican) had been sent forward by Henderson to urge on the party whom they expected. They were within a day's journey of them; and yet the wretches returned immediately on meeting Pellican, leaving the others to their fate. No Indians I had ever known would have acted so basely; yet these are an "unsophisticated race" of aborigines, who have but little intercourse with the whites, and must, of course, be free from the contamination of their manners. Our hunters being now arrived, were sent off, without delay, in quest of the missing; and I had the satisfaction to see my famished *compagnons de voyage* arrive, on the 26th of April.

CHAPTER IV.

DISTRESSING BEREAVEMENT — EXPLORING PARTY — THEIR REPORT — ARRIVAL OF ESQUIMAUX — ESTABLISH POSTS — POUNDING REIN-DEER—EXPEDITION UP GEORGE'S RIVER—ITS DIFFICULTIES—HAMILTON RIVER—DISCOVER A STUPENDOUS CATARACT—RETURN BY GEORGE'S RIVER TO THE SEA —SUDDEN STORM, AND MIRACULOUS ESCAPE.

HAVING thus ascertained the impracticability of the inland communication, I transmitted the result of my observations to the Governor—a report which, I doubt not, proved rather unpalatable to his Excellency, unaccustomed as he is to have any of his movements checked by that impudent and uncompromising word—impossible. I was much gratified to find that the deer-hunt had proved uncommonly successful; so that I had now the means of carrying into effect the

Governor's instructions on this point. On the approach of spring, preparations were made for establishing a post inland; guides were hired for the purpose, and every precaution taken to insure success.

At this time I was visited by a very grievous affliction, in the loss of my beloved wife, whose untimely death left me in a more wretched condition than words can express. This was truly an eventful year for me;—within that space I became a husband, a father, and a widower;—I traversed the continent of America, performing a voyage of some 1,500 miles by sea, and a journey by land of fully 1,200 miles, on snowshoes.

As soon as the navigation became practicable (June 18), Mr. Erlandson set off for the interior, with his outfit, in three small canoes, and after much toil reached his destination on the 10th of July. On the return of the men who had assisted in the transport, I fitted out an expedition to explore the coast to the westward, with the view of ascertaining the capabilities of that quarter,

for the extension of the business. The party was absent about a month; and their report was entirely unfavourable to the project of carrying our "ameliorating system" so far. The navigation of the coast is exceedingly dangerous, from the continual presence of ice, and the extraordinary force of the currents. While the coast proved so inaccessible, the interior of the country wears a still more dreary and sterile aspect; not a tree, nor shrub, nor plant of any kind, is to be seen, save the lichens that cover the rocks, and a few willows. The native Esquimaux, whom our people had seen, evinced the same amicable disposition by which their whole race is distinguished. They received our people with open arms, and some of the young damsels seemed disposed to cultivate a closer intimacy with them than their ideas of propriety, or at least their olfactory nerves, would sanction. The effluvia that proceeds from their persons in the summer season is quite insufferable; it is as if you applied your nose to a cask of rancid oil.

In the course of the summer, several Esqui-

maux arrived from the westward, with a considerable quantity of fox-skins, — the only fur this barren country yields. Some of these poor creatures had passed nearly two years on their journey hither, being obliged to hunt or fish for their living as they travelled. They set off on their return with a little tobacco, or a few strings of beads;—very few having the means of procuring guns and ammunition.

Nothing worthy of notice occurred till the month of September, when I was gratified by the arrival of despatches from Canada, by a junior clerk appointed to the district. By him we received the first intelligence of the stirring events that had taken place in the colonies during the preceding year. The accounts of the triumphs of my countrymen's arms over French treachery and Yankee hatred, diverted my thoughts, for the first time, from the melancholy subject of my late bereavement; the thoughts of which my solitude served rather to cherish than dispel.

Having learned from the natives that a river fell into the bay, about eighty miles to the east-

ward, that offered greater facilities for carrying on the business in the interior than our present communication, I ordered the men who had assisted Mr. Erlandson, to descend by this river,—an enterprise which was successfully accomplished. Their report confirming that of the natives, I forthwith determined on establishing a post there; and the season being now far advanced, I had no sooner decided on the step than I set about carrying it into execution. A party was despatched with every requisite for the purpose, about the 15th of September; and I received a communication from them in October, informing me that they had discovered a convenient situation for erecting the buildings. The materials being found on the spot, and the men aware of the approach of winter, and straining every nerve to secure themselves against its rigours, the buildings, such as they were, were raised and already occupied.

In the early part of winter, being, I may say, entirely alone,—for there remained only one man and an interpreter with me,—I amused myself by

shooting partridges, which abounded in the neighbourhood that season ; but the cold became so excessive as the winter advanced, that I was compelled to forego that amusement, and confine myself to the four walls of my prison, with the few books I possessed as my only companions. My despatches for the civilized world being completed, I was altogether at a loss how to forward them, as none of the natives could be induced, even by a high reward, to undertake the journey. At length one was found who consented to accompany one of my men to Mr. Erlandson's post, but no farther.

My couriers were absent six weeks, and I had the mortification to learn on their return that the packet remained at the outpost, owing to an accident that befel one of the Indian guides, and which incapacitated him for the trip. Our friends would thus remain in ignorance of our fate for nearly two years. The report received regarding the inland adventure proved very satisfactory as far as the trade was concerned ; but the privations suffered by those engaged in it, it was painful to

learn ; their sole subsistence consisted of fish, rendered extremely unpalatable from the damage it had sustained from the heat of the sun, and a few rabbits and partridges. Who would not be an Indian trader ?

Early in the month of March the rein-deer made their appearance again, and every countenance brightened up at the thoughts of the approaching pastime. I fell on a plan, however, that divested the sport of much of its attractions, although calculated to ensure greater success. A favourable position being selected, a certain extent of ground was fenced in so as to form a "pound" of nearly a circular shape, a gap being left in it to admit the game from the river side. This done, I caused branches to be placed on the ice above and below the deer pass, which the animals observing, became alarmed, and running from side to side of the open space between the lines of branches, at length made a dash at the opposite side of the river, and entered the trap prepared for them at a gallop, continuing at the top of their speed until stopped by the upper

part of the "pound," when they wheeled round, and making for the entrance, were received with a volley of balls from the huntsmen; a continual fire being kept up upon them in this manner until they all dropped.

The scene presented by the slaughter was anything but agreeable, yet stern necessity compelled me to continue the butchery; and the success that attended my scheme far exceeded my expectations. The first herd that entered, in number about fifty, burst through the fence; but our works were immediately strengthened, so as to defy their efforts in future to escape. A herd of 300 was soon after entrapped, and in the course of two hours all were killed.

Having thus obtained an ample stock of provisions, the different parties employed at the fishing and hunting stations were recalled, and preparations were begun for our summer campaign, in which I determined to take an active part. The favourable report of last summer respecting the East or George's River, combined with reports that had reached me since of another large river

flowing a short distance to the south of Esquimaux Bay, suggested the possibility of carrying on our business on this line of communication. With the view, therefore, of carrying this design into effect, I had a boat built in the course of the winter, in which I embarked with a strong crew on the 25th of June, the river not being clear of ice at an earlier period; and sweeping down on the top of the current at railroad speed, reached the sea in about three hours.

It being still early in the day, and no ice to be seen, we pulled for the opposite side of the bay, in the hope of reaching it ere dark. The weather being perfectly calm we advanced rapidly, and had proceeded about seven miles with every prospect of effecting our purpose, when lo! the tide was observed to be making against us; and the ice returning with it, apparently in a compact body, we were placed in rather a critical situation. The sun was declining, while the coast presented a solid wall of ice, which precluded the possibility of landing anywhere nearer than the mouth of South River.

Towards that point, therefore, the head of the boat was directed, and the crew, seeing the imminence of the danger, rowed with all their might; and by dint of strenuous exertions, we made good our landing ere the ice closed in around us. A few minutes after not a speck of water could be descried.

Next morning, the ice still covered the bay, leaving only a narrow strip of open water along the shore; into this channel we pushed our boat, and for some time made but little progress, being continually interrupted by pieces of ice, which the high tide detached from the shore. Our channel, however, soon widened, and in a short time not a particle of ice could be seen, disappearing as if by magic; for in a few minutes after it began to move, no traces of it could be discovered as far as the eye could reach to seaward. We reached East or George's River, without further interruption, on the 3d of July, where we were detained by unfavourable weather until the 5th.

The post established here last autumn is situ-

ated in a still more cheerless spot than Fort Chimo, being surrounded by rugged hills, whose sides are covered with the *débris* of rock, which appears to have been detached from the hills by the process of decay. The post stands at the foot of one of those frightful hills, while another rises immediately in front; the intervening valleys, or cavities, present nothing to enliven the scene, save a few stunted pines, and here and there a patch of snow.

The few Esquimaux who inhabit this region of sterility and desolation, at first appeared delighted with the idea of having whites among them: finding, however, that our presence yielded them no advantage, they soon became indifferent about us, and proceeded to the Moravian settlement with the produce of their hunts, where they obtained their little wants at a far cheaper rate than our tariff allowed.

My crew, leaving Fort Siviright, consisted of ten able men; and an Indian guide accompanied us in his canoe. As we ascended, our difficulties increased at every step, the water being

much lower than last year. I found myself engaged in a more laborious work than I had ever yet undertaken—towing the boat day after day against a current flowing in a continuous rapid, so as to admit of not one moment's relaxation, unless during the short interval allowed for rest to such as could take it—no easy matter when myriads of sand-flies and mosquitoes filled the air and tortured us incessantly.

We continued to advance in this manner, hauling, pulling, carrying, and even launching the boat for about fifteen days, when we reached an expansion of the river, without any perceptible current, and sufficiently deep to admit of the use of the oar.

Our labour was now supposed to be at an end by those who had explored the river; no further doubts were entertained as to our soon reaching Esquimaux Bay, where letters from our friends and news from all quarters would reward us for all our toils. Let not him who knows not what it is to be shut out from his friends, society, and the great world, year after year, think lightly

of the reward which the solitary trader, in his remote seclusion, values so highly. Our hopes, however, were soon dissipated. Having reached the upper extremity of the still water, we encountered difficulties that defied every attempt to surmount.

The lake just referred to proved to be the source of the lower stream; the rivulet that flowed into it from above being so shallow as scarcely to admit of the passage of a small canoe. It was therefore impossible to proceed with the boat, a circumstance that placed me in a rather perplexing position; for I had the outfit for the interior in charge, without which the business, so lately established with every prospect of success, would fail.

There was, however, no time to be lost in vain regrets; the advanced period of the season required instant decision, and our stock of provisions was diminishing rapidly. I therefore determined on proceeding to the outpost in the small canoe belonging to our guide, taking two of the men with me, and leaving the rest of the crew to erect

a temporary post; and in the mean time sent my guide to apprise the Indians in the vicinity of the steps I had taken to supply their wants next winter.

These arrangements completed, I embarked in an eggshell of a canoe, so small as not to admit of anything save the smallest possible supply of provisions,—tent, basket, &c. remaining behind. Soon after leaving our encampment, we came to a portage some ten miles in length, and struck the river again, where, from the report of the men, I expected no further difficulties would impede our progress. But the event did not answer my expectations; from the continual drought of the season the water proved so low that we had to drag along our canoe, wading in the water, where a boat would have passed with ease last year. In this manner we continued our toilsome voyage without relaxation for several days, carrying our canoe and baggage overland, or wading in the water from early dawn until late at night, when we threw ourselves down on the ground to pass the night without shelter from the weather or

protection from the stings of our merciless persecutors the mosquitoes, who pursued their avocation with unwearied assiduity, so that our rest was small, and that little afforded us but scanty refreshment.

Our progress, but slow, from the difficulties of the route, was rendered still slower by our frequent deviations from our course; my guides having paid but little attention to their instructions last year. We at length reached the post on the 16th of August, half starved, half naked, and half devoured. A friendly reception, and the good cheer the place afforded, soon restored our spirits, if not our "inexpressibles;" and although much annoyed that no Indians could be induced to guide us to Esquimaux Bay, I determined on making the attempt with such assistance as Mr. Erlandson could give me, who was well acquainted with the upper part of the river.

After one day's rest, we embarked in a canoe sufficiently large to contain several conveniences, to which I had been for some time a stranger,—a tent to shelter us by night, and tea to cheer us

by day; we fared, too, like princes, on the produce of "sea and land," procured by the net and the gun. We thus proceeded gaily on our downward course without meeting any interruption, or experiencing any difficulty in finding our way; when, one evening, the roar of a mighty cataract burst upon our ears, warning us that danger was at hand. We soon reached the spot, which presented to us one of the grandest spectacles in the world, but put an end to all hopes of success in our enterprise.

About six miles above the fall the river suddenly contracts, from a width of from four hundred to six hundred yards, to about one hundred yards; then rushing along in a continuous foaming rapid, finally contracts to a breadth of about fifty yards, ere it precipitates itself over the rock which forms the fall; when, still roaring and foaming, it continues its maddened course for about a distance of thirty miles, pent up between walls of rock that rise sometimes to the height of three hundred feet on either side. This stupendous fall exceeds in height the Falls of Nia-

gara, but bears no comparison to that sublime object in any other respect, being nearly hidden from the view by the abrupt angle which the rocks form immediately beneath it. If not seen, however, it is felt; such is the extraordinary force with which it tumbles into the abyss underneath, that we felt the solid rock shake under our feet, as we stood two hundred feet above the gulf. A dense cloud of vapour, which can be seen at a great distance in clear weather, hangs over the spot. From the fall to the foot of the rapid—a distance of thirty miles—the zigzag course of the river presents such sharp angles, that you see nothing of it until within a few yards of its banks. Might not this circumstance lead the geologist to the conclusion that the fall had receded this distance? The mind shrinks from the contemplation of a subject that carries it back to a period of time so very remote; for if the rock, syenite, always possessed its present solidity and hardness, the action of the water alone might require millions of years to produce such a result!

After carrying our canoe and baggage for a

whole day through bogs, and swamps, and wind-falls, in the hope of finding the river accessible, we at length gave up the attempt ; and with heavy hearts and weary limbs retracing our steps, we reached the outpost, without accident, after an absence of fifteen days. Finding it impossible to remove either the returns, or the small quantity of goods remaining on hand, I determined on leaving a couple of the men to pass the winter here ; and Mr. Erlandson accompanied me to assume the charge of the temporary post, where I had left his outfit. Here we arrived on the 1st of September, and I was delighted at finding my men living in the midst of abundance ;—the surrounding country apparently abounding with rein-deer, and the lake affording fish of the best quality. I remained with the men two days to expedite the buildings which were yet unfinished ; and in the meantime a party of Indians arrived, whom we persuaded to carry our despatches to Esquimaux Bay.

After seeing my couriers off, I left Mr. Erlandson with two men to share his solitude, and

reached the sea without experiencing any adventure worth notice. Proceeding along the coast, I was induced, one evening, by the flattering appearance of the weather, to attempt the passage of a deep bay; which being accomplished, there was little danger of being delayed afterwards by stress of weather. This step I soon had cause to repent. The sea hitherto presented a smooth surface; not a breath of wind was felt, and the stars shone out brightly. A few clouds began to appear on the horizon; and the boat began to rise and fall with the heaving of the sea. Understanding what these signs portended, we immediately pulled for the shore; but had scarcely altered our course when the stars disappeared, a tremendous noise struck upon our ears from seaward, and the storm was upon us. In the impenetrable obscurity of the night, not a trace of land could be discovered; but we continued to ply our oars, while each succeeding billow threatened immediate destruction.

The horrors of our situation increased; the man on the out-look called out that he saw breakers

a-head in every direction, and escape appeared to be next to impossible. My crew of Scottish Islanders, however, continued their painful exertions without evincing the apprehensions they must have felt, by a murmur. The crisis was now at hand. We approached so near to the breakers that it was impossible to avoid them; and the men lay on their oars, expecting the next moment would be their last.

In such a situation the thoughts of even the most depraved naturally carry them beyond the limits of time; and by these thoughts, I believe, the soul of every one was absorbed; yet the men lost not their presence of mind. Suddenly, the voice of the look-out was heard amid the roar of the breakers, calling our attention to a dark breach in the line of foam that stretched out before us, which he fancied to be a channel between the rocks. A few desperate strokes brought us to the spot, when, to our unspeakable joy, we found it to answer the man's conjecture; but, so narrow was the passage, that the oars on both sides of the boat struck the rocks; a minute

afterwards we found ourselves becalmed and in safety. The boat being moored, and the men ordered to watch by turns, we lay down to sleep, as we best could, supperless, and without having tasted food since early dawn.

The wind still blew fresh on the ensuing morning; but we found, to our great satisfaction, that we had entered a kind of channel that lay along the shore, where we were protected from the storm by the innumerable rocky islets that stretched along the mainland. Regarding the labyrinth of islands through which we had effected a passage in the darkness, we were struck with wonder at our escape; and felt convinced that the hand of Providence alone could have guided us through such perils in safety.

CHAPTER V.

ESQUIMAUX ARRIVE FROM THE NORTH SHORE OF HUDSON'S STRAIT, ON A RAFT—DESPATCH FROM THE GOVERNOR—DISTRESS OF THE ESQUIMAUX—FORWARD PROVISIONS TO MR. E——. RETURN OF THE PARTY—THEIR DEPLORABLE CONDITION.

WE reached Fort Chimo on the 20th September. A greater number of Esquimaux were assembled about the post than I had yet seen; and among them I was astonished to find a family from the north side of the Strait, and still more astonished when I learned the way they had crossed—a raft formed of pieces of drift wood picked up along the shore, afforded the means of effecting the hazardous enterprise.

On questioning them what was their object in

risking their lives in so extraordinary an adventure, they replied, that they wanted wood to make canoes, and visit the Esquimaux on the south side of the Strait.

“And what if you had been overtaken by a storm?” said I.

“We should all have gone to the bottom,” was the cool reply.

In fact, they had made a very narrow escape, a storm having come on just as they landed on the first island.

The fact of these people having crossed Hudson's Strait on so rude and frail a conveyance, strongly corroborates, I think, the opinion that America was originally peopled from Asia. The Asiatic side of Behring's Strait affording timber sufficiently large for the purpose of building boats or canoes, there seems nothing improbable in supposing that, when once in possession of that wonderful and useful invention—a boat, they might be induced, even by curiosity—that powerful stimulus to adventure—to visit the nearest island; and from thence proceed to the continent

of America; and finding it, perhaps, possessed of superior advantages to the shores they had left, settle there. My voyageur was evidently induced as much by curiosity as by the desire of procuring a canoe, to visit the south side of Hudson's Strait, where the passage is as wide as between the island in Behring's Strait and the two continents.

At an early period of the winter I was gratified by the arrival of despatches from the civilized world. The packet was found by the Indians at Esquimaux Bay, whither I had sent them, and forwarded to me by Mr. Erlandson's two men. By his letters I was grieved to learn that starvation stared him in the face; the fishing, that promised so well when I passed, having entirely failed, and no deer were to be found. He wrote me, however, that he would maintain his post while a piece of parchment remained to gnaw!

The Governor's letters conveyed the thanks of the Governor and Committee for my "laudable exertions;" while his Excellency intimated, in language not to be misunderstood, that my pro-

motion depended on my successful management of the affairs of Ungava, "which he regretted to find were still in an unpromising state."

What effect this announcement had on my feelings need not be mentioned—after a painful servitude of eighteen years thus to be compelled to make renewed, and even impossible exertions ere I obtained the reward of my toil, while many others had reached the goal in a much shorter time without experiencing either hardship or privation,—the injustice I had suffered, or the deceit that had been practised on *me*. As a balm to my wounded feelings, my correspondents in the north informed me that seven clerks had been promoted since I left Norway House.

Many of the Esquimaux referred to in a preceding page passed the winter in this quarter, not daring to return in consequence of an hostile rencontre they had had with some of their own tribes on their way hither. The quarrel, like most Indian quarrels, originated in an attempt to carry off women: both parties had recourse to arms,

and a desperate struggle ensued, in which our visitors were completely defeated, with the loss of several lives.

They remained about the post for a short time, admiring its wonderful novelties—wonderful to them—and then proceeded some distance up the river to waylay the deer that had already crossed unobserved by them. The poor creatures, unaware of this fact, remained on the ground until every article that afforded any kind of sustenance was consumed; when they started for the post, leaving the weaker of the party to follow as they best could. They all arrived the same day except two widows, who had lost their husbands in the fray. I sent off two young men with a supply of provisions to meet them, but the wretches, having devoured the food, returned without the women, although I had previously supplied their own wants. Next morning I sent off one of my own men, accompanied by an Esquimaux; but, as might have been expected, the women were found lying dead on the ice near each other.

Although Mr. Erlandson did not particularly

request any assistance from me, the report he communicated as to the failure of provisions was sufficient to induce me to use my best endeavours to relieve his wants. With this view I hired an Indian lad to act as guide to a party whom I despatched overland with the necessary supplies. The guide assured me they would perform the journey, going and coming, in a month. The appointed period passed, and no accounts of them; and week after week, until I at last despaired of ever seeing them in life. At the end of about two months they made their appearance, but in so deplorable a state of emaciation that we could scarcely recognise them.

The roads proved so bad that they were nearly a month on their way going, and consequently they had consumed almost all the provisions they had for the whole trip. Mr. Erlandson's scanty supply not allowing him to afford them any assistance for their return, they commenced their journey homeward with one meal a day, which they continued until all was gone, when they fed on their dogs; and they finally arrived at the

house without having tasted any kind of food for three days. Their spectre-like forms excited the greatest pity; the interpreter, who came to tell me of their arrival, was in tears. No time was lost in administering relief; but the greatest caution was necessary in administering it, or the consequences might have been fatal.

I was mortified to find, on the approach of spring, that my stock of goods did not admit of supplying the interior; and I was consequently compelled to relinquish the advantages that had cost us so much to acquire. Without goods we could not, of course, maintain our position in that quarter.

CHAPTER VI.

TRIP TO ESQUIMAUX BAY—GOVERNOR'S INSTRUCTIONS—MY REPORT TO THE COMMITTEE—RECOMMEND THE ABANDONMENT OF UNGAVA SETTLEMENT—SUCCESS OF THE ARCTIC EXPEDITION, CONDUCTED BY MESSRS. DEASE AND SIMPSON—RETURN BY SEA TO FORT CHIMO—NARROWLY ESCAPE SHIPWRECK IN THE UNGAVA RIVER—INHUMAN AND IMPOLITIC MEASURE OF THE GOVERNOR—CONSEQUENT DISTRESS AT THE POST.

IMMEDIATELY on the opening of the navigation I started for Esquimaux Bay, with two Indians, in a small canoe, and without any of the usual conveniences. Mr. Erlandson having been ordered to the southern department, followed in another canoe.

Arrived at the post, we were gratified by the receipt of despatches just come to hand by the ship.

The Governor's letter apprized me that a vessel would be sent round to Ungava every alternate year; and strictly enjoined me to have no further communication with Esquimaux Bay *overland*, "as much unnecessary expense was incurred by these journeys." Thus were we consigned to our fate for a period of two years with as little feeling as if we had been so many cattle, and debarred from all communication with our friends, by word or letter, merely to save a trifling expense!

Could the Honourable Company be swayed by so paltry a consideration in subjecting us to so grievous an inconvenience? Surely not; a body of men so respectable could neither have authorized nor sanctioned such sordid parsimony. The generous proposition originated with Mr. Simpson alone, and to him be the honour ascribed.

Being fully persuaded in my own mind of the utter hopelessness of the Ungava adventure, I transmitted a report to the Governor and Committee on the subject; recommending the abandonment of the settlement altogether, as the enormous expense of supplying us by sea pre-

cluded the idea of any profit being ever realised; while it was quite evident the Company's benevolent views toward the Esquimaux could not be carried into effect. The extreme poverty and barrenness of their country, and their pertinacious adherence to their seal-skin dresses, which no argument of ours could induce them to exchange for the less comfortable articles of European clothing, were insurmountable obstacles. The Honourable Company, while they wished to supply the wants of the Esquimaux, still urged the expediency of securing the trade of the interior.

A circumstance that came to my knowledge in the course of the winter promised the attainment of that object. I learned from an old Indian, that the fall and rapid I met with on my way to the sea the preceding season, could be avoided, by following a chain of small lakes. My informant had never seen those falls himself, and could, from the oral report he had heard, give but a very imperfect description of the route. Still, I determined on making another attempt

to explore the whole river, knowing well, that if I succeeded in discovering the new route, there could be no further difficulty in supplying the interior. Meantime, I was gratified to learn, by letters from my friend Mr. Dease, that the expedition in which he had been engaged was crowned with success;—the long sought-after north-west passage being at length laid open to the *knowledge* of mankind, and a question, that at one time excited the enterprise of the merchant and the curiosity of the learned, settled beyond a doubt.

While on this subject, I cannot help expressing my surprise at the manner Mr. Dease's name is mentioned in the published narrative of the expedition, where he is represented as being employed merely as purveyor. It might have been said with equal propriety that Mr. Simpson was employed merely as astronomer. The fact is, the services of both gentlemen were equally necessary; and to the prudence, judgment, and experience of Mr. Dease, the successful issue of the enterprise may undoubtedly be ascribed, no

less than to the astronomical science of Mr. Simpson.

Having finished my correspondence, I embarked for Fort Chimo, on board a brig that had been recently built for the trade of this district and that of Esquimaux Bay. Our passage afforded no adventure worthy of notice; icebergs we saw in abundance, whose dimensions astonished us, but having no desire to form a close acquaintance with them, we kept at a respectful distance; and finally entered the Ungava River, on the 24th of August, at so early an hour of the day, that we expected to reach the post ere night-fall.

We were doomed to disappointment. As we ascended the river, the breeze fell, and darkness set in upon us; yet we still pressed on. Presently, however, so dense a fog arose, that nothing could be seen a yard off. In this dilemma our safest course would have been to anchor, but unfortunately that part of the river was the most unfavourable possible for our purpose, from the extraordinary strength of the current, and the rocky nature of the bottom. Our skipper seemed

quite at a loss, but accident decided. The vessel struck, altered her course a little, struck again, put about, and struck again and again. The anchor was dropped as the only chance of escaping the dangers in which we were involved. The anchor dragged a short time, and finally caught apparently in a cleft of the rocks.

Soon after the tide began to flow, and we fancied our dangers over; but the crisis was not yet come. The ebb-tide returned, rushing down with the current of the river with such overwhelming velocity, that we expected the vessel would be torn from her moorings. Two men were placed at the helm to keep her steady, but, in spite of their utmost exertions, she was dashed from side to side like a feather, while the current pitched into her till the water entered the hawse-holes. Pitching, and swinging, and dashed about in this fearful manner for some time, the anchor was at length disengaged, and dragged along the bottom with a grating noise, which, with the roaring of the rapid, and the whistling of the wind through the rigging, formed a combination of

sounds that would have appalled the most resolute. The fog having cleared away, we discovered a point projecting far into the river, some two hundred yards below, towards which we were drifting broadside, and rapidly nearing. The boats were got ready, to escape, if possible, the impending catastrophe, when the vessel was suddenly brought to with a tremendous jerk, and instantly swung round to the tide. By this time, however, its strength was considerably abated, and daylight soon appearing, I sent on an Esquimaux who had come on board, with a note to the post, requesting that a pilot should be sent us with the utmost despatch.

Meantime, seeing our way clear before us, we weighed anchor, and advanced to within three miles of the establishment, when a boat was seen approaching, rowed by six stout islanders. On coming along-side, a rope was thrown to them, and made fast to the fore-stem. Four of the men had scrambled on board, when a sudden blast swelled our sails, and propelled us through the water with such force, that the fore-part of

the boat was torn away, leaving one of the men floundering in the water, and the other clinging to the rope. The latter was dragged on board, severely bruised; but the former remained in the water for at least two hours, and would have perished before our eyes, had he not got hold of a couple of oars, by which he managed to keep himself afloat. We soon anchored opposite the post, and every exertion being made to expedite the departure of the vessel, we were in the course of a few days left to vegetate in quiet.

On examining the quantity of provisions I had received, I was not a little alarmed to find it scarcely sufficient for the consumption of one year, his Excellency's communication having acquainted me that it was a supply for two years! Thus we were thrown on the precarious resources of the country for life or for death; for if those resources should fail us, we must either remain and starve on the spot, or, abandoning the settlement, endeavour to escape to Esquimaux Bay and run the risk of starving by the way. Economy so ill-timed argued as little in favour of the Gover-

nor's judgment as of his humanity. Admitting our lives were of so trifling a value, the abandonment of the settlement, with all the goods and furs in it, would have subjected the Company to a very serious loss. Every precaution, however, was taken to provide against a contingency which involved such serious consequences; the men were dispersed in every direction to shift for themselves, some being supplied with guns and ammunition, others with nets, a lake of considerable extent having been lately discovered, which the natives reported to abound with fish. Early in the month of December my fishermen came in with the mortifying intelligence of the entire failure of the fishery; and soon after a messenger arrived from the hunting party to beg a supply of provisions, which my limited means, alas! compelled me to deny. Not a deer had been seen, and the partridges had become so scarce of late that they barely afforded the means of sustaining life. All I could therefore do for my poor men was to supply them with more ammunition and send them off again.

While their lot was thus wretched, mine was not enviable; one solitary meal a day was all I allowed myself and those who remained with me; and I must do them the justice to say, that they submitted to these privations without a murmur, being aware that it was only by exercising the most rigid economy that our provisions could hold out the allotted time; the arrival of the ship being an event too uncertain to be calculated upon. By stinting ourselves in this manner, we managed to eke out a miserable subsistence, without expending much of our imported provisions, until the arrival of the deer in the month of March, when we fared plentifully if not sumptuously.

CHAPTER VII.

ANOTHER EXPLORING EXPEDITION—MY PROMOTION—WINTER
AT CHIMO — OBTAIN PERMISSION TO VISIT BRITAIN—UN-
GAVA ABANDONED.

1841.—ON the opening of the navigation I set out on another exploring expedition. Without entering into particulars so devoid of interest, I would merely observe that, with patience and perseverance, we ultimately succeeded in making good our passage by the Hamilton, or Grand River, and found it to answer our expectations in every respect.

On arriving at Esquimaux Bay, we found the vessel from Quebec riding at anchor—a joyful sight, since it gave assurance that we should hear

from friends and relatives, and receive intelligence of the events that had occurred in the world for the last twelve months. The Governor's communication acquainted me with my promotion, and *sincerely* congratulated me on the event. Whether I had reason or not to doubt his sincerity, let the reader judge who knows the treatment I had experienced at his hands. Fifteen years ago I was assured of being in the "direct road to preferment,"—twenty years of toil and misery have I served to obtain it.

Considering myself, therefore, under no obligation to his Excellency, I addressed a letter to the Directors, expressing my thanks for the benefit they had conferred upon me, and requesting permission to visit the land of my nativity next year.

I was fortunate enough to find a couple of canoes at Esquimaux Bay, sufficiently large to admit of conveying an outfit to the interior, and equally fortunate to find Mr. Davis, the gentleman in charge of the district, possessed the will and ability to promote my views. All my arrangements at this place being completed, I set off on

my return, and was happy to find, on my arrival at the outpost, that the outfit was rendered in safety, not the slightest accident having occurred on the way.

I arrived at Fort Chimo in the beginning of October. The dreary winter setting in immediately, we commenced the usual course of vegetative existence; and I consider it as unnecessary as it would be uninteresting to say anything further concerning it than that this season passed without our being subjected to such grievous privation as during the last. The greater part of the people being distributed among the outposts, reduced our expenditure of provisions so much, that I felt I had nothing now to fear on the score of starvation; and the precautions I had taken the preceding winter enabled us not only to indulge occasionally in the *luxuries* of bread-and-butter, but also to contemplate the possibility of the non-arrival of the ship without much anxiety.

1842.—On the opening of the navigation I again set out for Esquimaux Bay, where I found

letters from the Secretary, conveying the welcome intelligence that my request for permission to visit Britain had been granted, and that the Directors, agreeably to my recommendation, had determined on abandoning Ungava, the ship being ordered round this season to convey the people and property to Esquimaux Bay.

CHAPTER VIII.

GENERAL REMARKS.

CLIMATE OF UNGAVA—AURORA BOREALIS—SOIL—VEGETABLE PRODUCTIONS—ANIMALS—BIRDS—FISH—GEOLOGICAL FEATURES.

It need scarcely be observed that, in so high a latitude as that of Ungava, the climate presents the extremes of heat and cold; the moderate temperature of spring and autumn is unknown, the rigour of winter being immediately succeeded by the intense heat of summer, and *vice versâ*.

On the 12th of June, 1840, the thermometer was observed to rise from 10° below zero to 76° in the shade, the sky clear and the weather calm; this was, in fact, the first day of summer. For ten days previously the thermometer ranged

from 15° below zero to 32° above, and the weather was as boisterous as in the month of January, snowing and blowing furiously all the time. The heat continued to increase, till the thermometer frequently exhibited from 85° to 100° in the shade. This intense heat may, no doubt, be owing in a considerable degree to the reflection of the solar rays from the rocky surface of the country, a great part of which is destitute of vegetation. When the wind blows from the sea the atmosphere is so much cooled as to become disagreeable. These vicissitudes are frequently experienced during summer, and are probably caused by the sea's being always encumbered by ice. It is remarkable that the severest cold in this quarter is invariably accompanied by stormy weather; whereas, in the interior of the continent, severe cold always produces calm.

The winter may be said to commence in October; by the end of this month the ground is covered with snow, and the rivers and smaller lakes are frozen over; the actions of the tide,

however, and the strength of the current, often keep Ungava River open till the month of January. At this period I have neither seen, read, nor heard of any locality under heaven that can offer a more cheerless abode to civilized man than Ungava. The rumbling noise created by the ice, when driven to and fro by the force of the tide, continually stuns the ear; while the light of heaven is hidden by the fog that hangs in the air, shrouding everything in the gloom of a dark twilight. If Pluto should leave his own gloomy mansion *in tenebris tartari*, he might take up his abode here, and gain or lose but little by the exchange.

“The parched ground burns frore, and cold performs
The effect of fire.”—MILTON.

When the river sets fast, the beauties of the winter scene are disclosed—one continuous surface of glaring snow, with here and there a clump of dwarf pine, or the bald summits of barren hills, from which the violence of the winter storms sweep away even the tenacious lichens.

The winter storms are the most violent I ever experienced, sweeping every thing before them; and often prove fatal to the Indians when overtaken by them in places where no shelter can be found. The year previous to my arrival, a party of Indians ventured out to a barren island in the bay in quest of deer, taking their women along with them. While engaged in the chase, a sudden storm compelled them to make for the mainland with all possible speed. The women were soon exhausted by their exertions, and, unable to proceed farther, were at length covered by the snow, and left to their fate. As soon as the fury of the storm abated, the men went in search of them; but in vain; they were never found.

During winter the sky is frequently illuminated by the Aurora Borealis even in the day-time; and I have observed that when the south wind, the coldest in this quarter, (traversing, as it does, the frost-bound regions of Canada and Labrador,) blows for any length of time, the sky becomes clear, and the aurora disappears. No sooner,

however, does the east wind blow, which, being charged with the vapours of the Atlantic, induces mild weather even in midwinter, than they again dart forth their coruscations—more brightly at first, afterwards more faintly, till, if the wind continue, they again disappear.

These phenomena seem to warrant the conclusion that the aurora is produced by the evolving of the electric fluid, through the collision of bodies of cold and warm air. The same phenomena are observable in New Caledonia; the east wind, passing over the glaciers of the Rocky Mountains, cools the atmosphere to such a degree as to cause frost every month in summer; the west wind, on the contrary, causes heat; and there, as in Ungava, the change of winds is followed by what may be termed the Mountain Aurora (*Aurora Montium?*)

During my residence of five years at Ungava, the thermometer fell twice to 53° below zero; and frequently ranged from 38° to 48° for several days together; the extreme heat rose to 100° at noon in the shade.

The soil of Ungava consists principally of decayed lichens, which form a substance resembling the peat moss of the Scottish moors. In this soil the lily-white "Cana" grows, a plant which I have not seen in any other part of the continent, although it may elsewhere be found in similar situations. In the low grounds along the banks of rivers, the soil is generally deep and fertile enough to produce timber of a large size; in the valleys are found clumps of wood, which become more and more stunted as they creep up the sides of the sterile hills, till at length they degenerate into lowly shrubs. The woods bordering on the sea-coast consist entirely of larch; which also predominates in the interior, intermixed with white pine, and a few poplars and birches. The hardy willow vegetates wherever it can find a particle of soil to take root in; and the plant denominated Labrador tea, flourishes luxuriantly in its native soil. In favourable seasons the country is covered with every variety of berries—blueberry, cranberry, gooseberry, red currant, strawberry, raspberry, ground raspberry (*rubus arcticus*), and the

billberry (*rubus chamæmorus*), a delicious fruit produced in the swamps, and bearing some resemblance to the strawberry in shape, but different in flavour and colour, being yellow when ripe. Liquorice root is found on the banks of South River.

To enumerate the varieties of animals is an easy task; the extremely barren nature of the country, and the severity of the climate, prove so unfavourable to the animal kingdom, that only a few of the more hardy species are to be found here: viz.—

Black, brown, grisly, and polar bears.

Black, silver, cross, blue, red, and white foxes.

Wolves, wolverines, martens, and the beaver (but extremely rare).

Otters, minks, musk-rats, ermine.

Arctic hares, rabbits, rein-deer; and the lemming, in some parts of the interior.

When we consider the great extent of country that intervenes between Ungava and the plains of the "far west," it seems quite inexplicable that the grisly bear should be found in so insulated a situation, and none in the intermediate country:

the fact of their being here, however, does not admit of a doubt, for I have traded and sent to England several of their skins. The information I have received from the natives induces me to think that the varieties of colour in bears mark them as distinct species, and not the produce of the same litter, as some writers affirm. Why, otherwise, do we not find the different varieties in Canada, where the grisly bear has never been seen? The sagacious animals seem to be well aware of their generic affinity, since they are often seen together, sharing the same carcass, and apparently on terms of the most intimate fellowship.

It is a singular circumstance, that she-bears with young are seldom or never killed; at least it is so extraordinary a circumstance, that when it does happen, it is spoken of for years afterwards. She must, therefore, retire to her den immediately after impregnation; and cannot go above three months with young; as instances have occurred of their being found suckling their young in the month of January, at which period they are not larger than the common house-rat, presenting the appearance

of animals in embryo, yet perfect in all their parts.

Bruin prepares his hybernal dormitory with great care, lining it with hay, and stopping up the entrance with the same material; he enters it in October, and comes out in the month of April. He passes the winter alone, in a state of morbid drowsiness, from which he is roused with difficulty; and neither eats nor drinks, but seems to derive nourishment from sucking his paws. He makes his exit in spring apparently in as good condition as when he entered; but a few days' exposure to the air reduces him to skin and bone.

The natives pay particular attention to the appearance presented by the unoccupied dens they may discover in summer: if bruin has removed his litter of the preceding winter, he intends to reoccupy the same quarters; if he allows it to remain, he never returns; and the hunter takes his measures accordingly.

The black bear shuns the presence of man, and is by no means a dangerous animal; the grisly bear, on the contrary, commands considerable

respect from the "lord of the creation," whom he attacks without hesitation. By the natives, the paw of a grisly bear is considered as honourable a trophy as the scalp of a human enemy.

The reports I have had, both from natives and white trappers, confirm the opinion that certain varieties of the fox belong to the same species,—such as the black, silver, cross, and red; all of which have been found in the same nest, but never any of the white or blue. The former, too, are distinguished for their cunning and sagacity; while the latter are very stupid, and fall an easy prey to the trapper; a circumstance of itself sufficient to prove a difference of species.

There are two varieties of the rein-deer,—the migratory, and the stationary or wood-deer: the latter is a much larger animal, but not abundant; the former are extremely numerous, migrating in herds at particular seasons, and observing certain laws on their march, from which they seldom deviate. The does make their appearance at Ungava River generally in the beginning of March, coming from the west, and directing their course

over the barren grounds near the coast, until they reach George's River, where they halt to bring forth their young, in the month of June. Meantime the bucks, being divided into separate herds, pursue a direct course through the interior, for the same river, and remain scattered about on the upper parts of it until the month of September, when they assemble, and proceed slowly towards the coast. By this time the does move onward towards the interior, the fawns having now sufficient strength to accompany them, and follow the banks of George's River until they meet the bucks, when the rutting season commences, in the month of October; the whole then proceed together, through the interior, to the place whence they came. In the same manner, I have been informed, the deer perform their migratory circuits everywhere; observing the same order on their march, following nearly the same route unless prevented by accidental circumstances, and observing much the same periods of arrival and departure.

The colour of the rein-deer is uniformly the same, presenting no variety of "spotted black

and red." In summer it is a very dark grey, approaching to black, and light grey in winter. The colour of the doe is of a darker shade than that of the buck, whose breast is perfectly white in winter. Individuals are seen of a white colour at all seasons of the year. The bucks shed their antlers in the month of December; the does in the month of January. A few bucks are sometimes to be met with who roam about apart from the larger herds, and are in prime condition both in summer and winter. These *solitaires* are said to be unsuccessful candidates for the favours of the does, who, having been worsted by their more powerful rivals in *contentione amoris*, withdraw from the community, and assuming the cowl, ever after eschew female society; an opinion which their good condition at all seasons seems to corroborate.

The rein-deer is subject to greater annoyance from flies than any other animal in the creation; neither change of season nor situation exempts them from this torture. Their great persecutor is a species of gad-fly, (*æstries tarandi*), that

hovers around them in clouds during summer, and makes them the instruments of their own torture throughout the year. The fly, after piercing the skin of the deer, deposits its eggs between the outer and inner skin, where they are hatched by the heat of the animal's body. In the month of March, the chrysalides burst through the skin, and drop on the ground, when they may be seen crawling in immense numbers along the deer paths as they pass from west to east.

The only birds observed in winter are grouse, ptarmigan, a small species of wood-pecker, butcher-bird, and the diminutive tomtit. We are visited in summer by swans, geese, ducks, eagles, hawks, ravens, owls, robins, and swallows. The eider-duck, so much prized for its down, is found in considerable numbers. The geese are of a most inferior kind, owing, I suppose, to the poor feeding the country affords; when they arrive in summer the ice is often still solid, when they betake themselves to the hills, and feed on berries.

The lakes produce only white fish, trout and carp. We took now and then a few salmon in the river, and there is no doubt that this fish abounds on the coast.

In the sea are found the black whale, porpoise, sea-horse, seal, and the narwal or sea unicorn; the horn of the latter, solid ivory, is a beautiful object. The largest I procured measured six feet and a half in length, four inches in diameter at the root, and a quarter of an inch at the point. It is of a spiral form, and projects from near the extremity of the snout; it presents a most singular appearance when seen moving along above the surface of the water, while the animal is concealed beneath.

The geological features of the country present so little variety, that one versed in that interesting science would experience but little difficulty in describing them; a mere outline, however, is all I can venture to present.

Along the sea-coast the formation is granitic syenite; then, proceeding about forty miles in the direction of South River, syenite occurs, which,

about sixty miles higher up, runs into green stone: very fine slate succeeds. At the height of land dividing the waters that flow in different directions, into Esquimaux and Ungava Bays, the formation becomes syenitic schist, and continues so to within a short distance of the great fall on Hamilton River; when syenite succeeds; then gneiss; and along the shores of Esquimaux Bay syenitic gneiss, and pure quartz: lumps of black and red hornblend are met with everywhere. The country is covered with boulders rounded off by the action of water, most of which are different from the rocks *in situ*, and must have been transported from a great distance, some being of granite—a rock not to be found in this quarter.

The rugged and precipitous banks of George's River are occasionally surmounted by hills; at the base of all these elevations, deep horizontal indentures appear running in parallel lines opposite each other on either side of the river,—a circumstance which indicates the action of tides and waves at a time when the other parts of the land were submerged, and the tops of those hills

formed islands. Along certain parts of the coast of Labrador rows of boulders are perceived lying in horizontal lines; the lowest about two hundred yards distant from high-water mark, while the farthest extend to near the crest of the adjacent hills. Several deep cavities and embankments of sand are observed in the interior, bearing unequivocal marks of having been, at one time, subject to the influence of the sea.

I shall conclude these few remarks by observing that, whatever conclusions the geologist may arrive at as to the remote or recent elevation of this country, the tops of the higher hills appear to have been formerly islands in the sea; and I doubt not but the same may be said of the higher lands on every part of the Arctic regions. Admitting this to have been the case, it contributes to confirm the theory of that distinguished philosopher, Sir Charles Lyell, as to the cause of the changes that have taken place in the climate of the northern regions.

CHAPTER IX.

THE NASCOPIES—THEIR RELIGION—MANNERS AND CUSTOMS—
CLOTHING—MARRIAGE—COMMUNITY OF GOODS.

THE Indians inhabiting the interior of Ungava, or, it may be said with equal propriety, the interior of Labrador, are a tribe of the Cree nation designated Nascopies, and numbering about one hundred men able to bear arms. Their language, a dialect of the Cree or Cristeneau, exhibits a considerable mixture of Sauteux words, with a few peculiar to themselves. The Nascopies have the same religious belief as their kindred tribes in every other part of the continent. They believe in the existence of a Supreme Being, the Ruler of the universe, and the Author of all

good. They believe, also, in the existence of a bad spirit, the author of all evil. Each is believed to be served by a number of subordinate spirits. Sacrifices are offered to each; to the good, by way of supplication and gratitude; to the evil, by way of conciliation and deprecation. Their local genii are also supposed to be possessed of the power of doing good, or inflicting evil, and are likewise propitiated by sacrifices; the "men of medicine" are viewed in nearly the same light. A few of them who visit the king's posts, have been baptized, and taught to mutter something they call prayers, and on this account are esteemed good Christians by their tutors; while every action of their lives proves them to be as much Pagans as ever; at least, to those who look for some *fruit* of faith, and who may be ignorant of the miraculous efficacy of holy water, and can form no idea of its operation on the soul, they appear so.

Of all the Indians I have seen, the Nascopies seem most averse to locomotion; many of them grow up to man's estate without once visiting a

trading post. Previously to the establishment of this post they were wont to assemble at a certain rendezvous in the interior, and deliver their furs to some elderly man of the party, who proceeded with them to the King's posts, or Esquimaux Bay, and traded them for such articles as they required. So little intercourse have this people had with the whites, that they may be still considered as unsophisticated "children of nature," and possessed, of course, of all the virtues ascribed to such; yet I must say, that my acquaintance with them disclosed nothing that impressed me with a higher opinion of them than of my own race, corrupted as they are by the arts of civilized life.

The Nascopie freely indulges all the grosser passions of his nature; he has no term in his language to express the sensation of shame; the feeling and the word are alike unknown. Many circumstances might be adduced in proof of this, but I have no desire to disgust the reader. Previously to our arrival here, there was not such an article of domestic utility known among them as a spoon; the unclean hand performed

every office. They take their meals sitting in a circle round a kettle, and commence operations by skimming off the fat with their hands, and lapping it up like dogs; then every one helps himself to the solids, cutting, gnawing, and tearing until the whole is devoured, or until repletion precludes further exertions, when, like the gorged beast of prey, they lie down to sleep.

The Nascopies practise polygamy more from motives of convenience than any other — the more wives, the more slaves. The poor creatures, in fact, are in a state of relentless slavery; every species of drudgery devolves upon them. When they remove from camp to camp in winter, the women set out first, dragging sledges loaded with their effects, and such of the children as are incapable of walking; meantime the men remain in the abandoned encampment smoking their pipes, until they suppose the women are sufficiently far advanced on the route to reach the new encampment ere they overtake them.

Arrived at the spot, the women clear the ground of snow, erect the tents, and collect fuel;

and when their arrangements are completed, their lords step in to enjoy themselves. The sole occupation of the men is hunting, and, in winter, fishing. They do not even carry home the game; that duty also falls to the lot of the female, unless when the family has been starving for some time, when the men condescend to carry home enough for immediate use.

The horrid practice still obtains among the Nascopies of destroying their parents and relatives, when old age incapacitates them for further exertion. I must, however, do them the justice to say, that the parent himself expresses a wish to depart, otherwise the unnatural deed would probably never be committed; for they in general treat their old people with much care and tenderness. The son or nearest relative performs the office of executioner,—the self-devoted victim being disposed of by strangulation.* When any

* “*Quidam parentes et propinquos, priusquam annis et macie conficiantur, velut hostias cædunt, eorumque visceribus epulantur.*” The Nascopies do not feast on the “viscera” of their victims, nor do I believe the inhabitants of India, or of

one dies in winter, the body is placed on a scaffold till summer, when it is interred.

The Nascopies depend principally on the reindeer for subsistence,—a dependence which the erratic habits of these animals render extremely precarious. Should they happen to miss the deer on their passage through the country in autumn, they experience the most grievous inconvenience, and often privations, the succeeding winter; as they must then draw their living from the lakes, with unremitting toil,—boring the ice, which is sometimes from eight to nine feet thick, for the purpose of setting their hooks, and perhaps not taking a single fish after a day's hard work. Nevertheless, they must still continue their exertions till they succeed, shifting their hooks from one part of the lake to another, until every spot is searched. They understand the art of setting nets under the ice perfectly. Towards the latter end of December, however, the fish gain the

any other country under heaven, ever did. Yet the coincidence is singular, in other respects, at such a distance of time and place.

deep water, and remain still to the latter end of March. Not a fish enters the net during this period.

Partridges are very numerous in certain localities, but cannot be trusted to as a means of living, as every part of the country affords them food, and when much annoyed at one place they move off to another.

It will be seen from the foregoing remarks, that the Nascopies, like all other erratic tribes, are subject to the vicissitudes their mode of life necessarily involves; at one time wallowing in abundance, at another dying of want. Fortunately for themselves, they are at present the most independent of the whites of any other Indians on this continent, the Esquimaux excepted. The few fur-bearing animals their barren country affords are so highly prized, that the least exertion enables them to procure their very limited wants; and the skin of the rein-deer affords them the most comfortable clothing they could possess. They have a particular art, too, of dressing this skin, so as to render it as soft

and pliable as chamois, in which state it becomes a valuable article of trade.

As trading posts, however, are now established on their lands, I doubt not but artificial wants will, in time, be created, that may become as indispensable to their comfort as their present real wants. All the arts of the trader are exercised to produce such a result, and those arts never fail of ultimate success. Even during the last two years of my management, the demand for certain articles of European manufacture had greatly increased.

The winter dress of the Nascopie consists of a jacket of deer-skin, close all round, worn with the hair next the skin, and an over-coat of the same material reaching to his knees, the hair outside. This coat overlaps in front, and is secured by a belt, from which depends his knife and smoking-bag. A pair of leather breeches, and leggings, or stockings of cloth, protect his legs, though but imperfectly, from the cold; his hands, however, are well defended by a pair of gauntlets that reach his elbows; and on his head he wears a

cap richly ornamented with bear's and eagle's claws. His long thick hair, however, renders the head-gear an article of superfluity,—but it is the fashion. The dress of the women consists of a square piece of dressed deer-skin, girt round them by a cloth or worsted belt, and fastened over their shoulders by leather straps; a jacket of leather, and cloth leggings. I have also observed some of them wearing a garment in imitation of a gown. The leather dresses, both of men and women, are generally painted; and often display more taste than one would be disposed to give them credit for.

The travelling equipage of the Nascopies consists of a small leather tent, a deer-skin robe with the hair on, a leather bag with some down in it, and a kettle. When he lies down he divests himself of his upper garment, which he spreads under him; then, thrusting his limbs into the down bag, and rolling himself up in his robe, he draws his knees up close to his chin; and thus defended, the severest cold does not affect him.

Considering the manner in which their women are treated, it can scarcely be supposed that their courtships are much influenced by sentiments of love; in fact, the tender passion seems unknown to the savage breast. When a young man attains a certain age, and considers himself able to provide for a wife—if the term may be so debased—he acquaints his parents with his wish, and gives himself no further concern about the matter, until they have concluded the matrimonial negotiations with the parents of *their*, not *his* intended, whose sentiments are never consulted on the occasion. The youth then proceeds to his father-in-law's tent, and remains there for a twelve-month; at the end of this period he may remain longer or depart, and he is considered ever after as an independent member of the community, subject to no control. Marriages are allowed between near relatives; cousins are considered as brothers and sisters, and are addressed by the same terms. It is not considered improper to marry two sisters, either in succession or both at the same time.

The Nascopies have certain customs in hunting peculiar to themselves. If a wounded animal escape, even a short distance, ere he drops, he becomes the property of the person who first reaches him, and not of the person who shot him; or if the animal be mortally wounded and do not fall immediately, and another Indian fire and bring him down, the last shot gains the prize.

In their intercourse with us the Nascopies evince a very different disposition from the other branches of the Cree family, being selfish and inhospitable in the extreme; exacting rigid payment for the smallest portion of food. Yet I do not know that we have any right to blame a practice in them, which they have undoubtedly learned from us. What do they obtain from us without payment? Nothing:—not a shot of powder, —not a ball, —not a flint. But whatever may be said of their conduct towards the whites, no people can exercise the laws of hospitality with greater generosity, or show less selfishness,' towards each other, than the

Nascopies. The only part of an animal the huntsman retains for himself is the head; every other part is given up for the common benefit. Fish, flesh, and fowl are distributed in the same liberal and impartial manner; and he who contributes most seems as contented with his share, however small it may be, as if he had had no share in procuring it. In fact, a community of goods seems almost established among them; the few articles they purchase from us shift from hand to hand, and seldom remain more than two or three days in the hands of the original purchaser.

The Nascopies, surrounded by kindred tribes, are strangers to the calamities of war, and are consequently a peaceful, harmless people; yet they cherish the unprovoked enmity of their race towards the poor Esquimaux, whom they never fail to attack, when an opportunity offers of doing so with impunity. Our presence, however, has had the effect of establishing a more friendly intercourse between them; and to the fact that

many of the Esquimaux have of late acquired fire-arms, and are not to be attacked without some risk, may be ascribed, in no small degree, the present forbearance of their enemies.

CHAPTER X.

THE ESQUIMAUX — PROBABLE ORIGIN — IDENTITY OF LANGUAGE FROM LABRADOR TO BEHRING'S STRAITS—THEIR AMOURS — MARRIAGES — RELIGION — TREATMENT OF PARENTS—ANECDOTE—MODE OF PRESERVING MEAT—AMUSEMENTS — DRESS — THE IGLOE, OR SNOW-HOUSE — THEIR CUISINE—DOGS—THE SLEDGE—CAIAK, OR CANOE—QUIMIAK, OR BOAT—IMPLEMENTS—STATURE.

THE Esquimaux are so totally different in physiognomy and person, in language, manners, and customs, from all the other natives of America, that there can be no doubt that they belong to a different branch of the human race. The conformation of their features, their stature, form, and complexion, approximate so closely to those of the northern inhabitants of Europe, as to indicate, with some degree of certainty, their identity of

origin. In the accounts I have read of the maritime Laplanders, I find many characteristics common to both tribes: the Laplander is of a swarthy complexion,—so is the Esquimaux; the Laplander is distinguished by high cheek-bones, hollow cheeks, pointed chin, and large mouth,—so is the Esquimaux; the Laplander wears a thick beard,—so does the Esquimaux; the Laplander's hair is long and black,—so is that of the Esquimaux; the Laplanders are, for the most part, short of stature,—so are the Esquimaux; and the dress, food, and lodging of both peoples are nearly the same. The last coincidence may possibly arise from similarity of location and climate; and, taken by itself, would afford no certain proof of identity of origin; but taken in connexion with the aforementioned characteristics, I think the conclusion is irresistible that the Laplanders and Esquimaux are of the same race.

That the Esquimaux and the natives of Greenland are also of a kindred race, is a fact ascertained beyond a doubt, from the reports of the Moravian Missionaries, who have settlements among both.

The way in which they must have passed from the one continent to the other, must now be left to conjecture. There is nothing improbable in the supposition that some of them might have been drifted out to sea by stress of weather, and wafted to the shores of Greenland; whence some might, in course of time, remove to the opposite coast of America. From the southern extremity of Labrador to Behring's Straits, the Esquimaux language is the same, differing only in the pronunciation of a few words. We had a native of Hudson's Bay with us, who had accompanied Captain Franklin to the McKenzie and Coppermine Rivers, and who assured us that he understood the Esquimaux of that quarter, and those of Ungava, although some thousands of miles apart, as well as his own tribe.

In manners, customs, and dress, there is a like similarity. The Esquimaux have ever remained a distinct people; the other natives of America seeming to consider them more as brutes than human beings, and never approaching them unless for the purpose of knocking them on the

head. Every one's hand is against them. I have seen Esquimaux scalps, even among the timid *têtes des boules* of Temiscamingue; yet no people seem more disposed to live at peace with their neighbours, if only they were allowed. Circumstanced as they are, however, they are likely to suffer hostile aggression for a long time. Even a coward, with a musket in his hand, is generally an overmatch for a brave man with only a bow or a sling; but once possessed of fire-arms, they will teach their enemies to respect them, for they will undoubtedly have the advantage of superior courage and resolution.

The Esquimaux is not easily excited to anger; but his wrath once roused, he becomes furious: he foams like a wild boar, rolls his eyes, gnashes his teeth, and rushes on his antagonist with the fury of a beast of prey. In the winter of 1840, a quarrel arose between two individuals about the sex, which led to a fight; the struggle was continued for a time with tooth and nail; when one of the parties at length got hold of his knife, and stabbed his adversary in the belly. The bowels

protruded, yet the wounded man never desisted, until loss of blood and repeated stabs compelled him to yield the contest and his life. Gallantry seems to be the main cause of quarrels among them. Strange ! that this passion should exercise such an influence in a climate, and, as one would be led to suppose, on constitutions so cold ; yet nothing is more certain than that the enamoured Esquimaux will risk life and limb in the pursuit of his object.

With unmarried women there is no risk, as they are entirely free from control ; not so with the married, who are under strict surveillance ; but the husband's consent asked and obtained—which not seldom happens—saves the gallant's head, and the lady's reputation.

Their courtships are conducted in much the same manner as among the inland Indians, the choice of partners being entirely left to the parents. Some are affianced in childhood, and become man and wife in early youth : I have seen a boy of fourteen living with his wife who was two years younger. There are no marriage festivals, and no ceremonies of any kind are observed

at their nuptials. Polygamy is allowed, *ad libitum*; and the husband exercises his authority as husband, judge, or executioner; no one having any right to interfere. Should, however, the woman consider herself ill-treated, she flees to her parents, with whom she remains till an explanation takes place. If it lead to a reconciliation, the parties are reunited; if not, the woman may form a new connexion whenever she pleases.

I know not whether the Esquimaux can be said to have any idea of religion, as the term is generally understood. The earth, say they, was in the beginning covered with water, which having subsided, man appeared — a spontaneous creation. Aglooktook is the name of the man who first created fish and animals: chopping a tree which overhung the sea, the chips that fell into that element became fish; those that fell on the land, animals. Their paradise is beneath the great deep; those who have lived a good life, proceed to a part of the sea abounding with whales and seals, where, free from care and toil, they fare sumptuously on raw flesh and blubber, *in secula*

seculorum. The wicked, on the contrary, are condemned to take up their abode in a "sea of troubles," where none of the delicacies enjoyed by the blessed are to be found; and even the commonest necessaries are procured with endless toil, and pain, and disappointment. Although the "tomakhs," or dead men, become the inhabitants of the sea, they indulge in the pleasures of the chase on their old element, whenever they please; and are often heard calling to each other while in pursuit of the deer.

The Esquimaux have their "men of medicine," in whose preternatural powers they place the most implicit confidence; by working on the superstitious fears of the people, these impostors obtain much authority. They are allowed to take the lead in every affair of importance; and, in short, all their movements are, in a great measure, regulated by these harlequins, who appear to be the only chiefs among them.

They dispose of their dead by placing them on the rocks, and covering them over with ice or stones; these tombs prove but feeble barriers

against the wolves and other beasts of prey, who soon carry off the bodies. The property belonging to the deceased is placed by the side of his grave;—his caiak, or skin canoe, his bows, arrows, and spears. Thus equipped, the *emigrant* spirit cannot find itself at a loss on arriving at a better country!

It is said by some that the Esquimaux abandon their aged parents: from inquiry, as well as observation, I am led to believe there is no foundation for the charge. It is not reasonable to expect that the more refined feelings of humanity should be found in the breast of a savage, or that he should honour his father and mother in the same degree as he whose principles are moulded by the precepts of Christianity; yet I must do them the justice to say, that they appeared to me to treat their parents with as much kindness, at least, as any other savage nation I have met with. They do not deny, however, that old people no longer able to provide for themselves, and without any relative to care for them, are sometimes left to perish.

No people suffer more from hunger than the Esquimaux who inhabit the shores of Ungava Bay; seals being extremely scarce in the winter season, and no fish to be found; so that the poor creatures are often reduced to the most revolting expedients to preserve life. An Esquimaux, who had been about the post for two years, proceeded, in the winter of 1839, to join some of his relatives along the coast. When he returned in the ensuing spring, I observed that his mother and one of his children were missing. On inquiring what had become of them, he replied, that they had been starved to death, and that he and the rest of his family would have shared their fate, had it not been for the sustenance the bodies afforded.

The Esquimaux always pass the winter near the element that yields them their principal subsistence; and as they are unacquainted with the use of snow-shoes, they cannot follow the deer any distance from the coast. As soon as the rivers are free from ice in summer, they

proceed inland and find abundance of food. Their manner of preserving their meat is quite characteristic. When an animal is killed the bowels are extracted, then the fore and hind quarters are cut off, and being placed inside the carcass, are secured by skewers of wood run through the flesh. The whole is then deposited under the nearest cleft of rock, and stones are built round so as to secure it from the depredations of wild animals until the hunters return to the coast; when the meat is in high flavour, and considered fit for the palate of an Esquimaux epicure.

The Esquimaux do not share their provisions as the Nascopies do, although they relieve each other's wants when their means can afford it: each individual engaged in the chase retains his own game, his claim being ascertained by distinctive marks on the arrows. When a whale is killed a rigid fast is observed for twenty-four hours, not in gratitude to Providence, but in honour of the whale, which is highly displeas-

when this is neglected, studiously avoiding the harpoon afterwards, and even visiting the offender with sickness and other misfortunes.

Should the summer and fall hunt prove successful, the Esquimaux is one of the happiest animals in the creation. He passes his dreary winter without one careful or anxious thought; he eats his fill and lies down to sleep, and then rises to eat again. In this manner they pass the greater part of their time; night and day are the same, eating and sleeping their chief enjoyments. When, however, they do rouse their dormant faculties to exertion, they seem to engage with great good-will in the few amusements they have, the principal of which is playing ball, men and women joining in the game. Two parties are opposed, the one driving the ball with sticks towards the goal, the other driving it in the opposite direction; in short, a game of shinty. They have dancing too,—ye gods! such dancing! Two rows of men and women, sometimes only of one sex, stand opposite to each other, exhibiting no other motion in their dancing than raising

their shoulders with a peculiar jerk, bending their knees so as to give their whole bodies, from the knee upwards, the same motion, and grinning horribly at each other, while not a foot stirs.

As to the music to which this *dance* is performed, I know not well how to describe it. By inflating and depressing the lungs so as to create a convulsive heaving of the breast, a sound is produced, somewhat similar to the groans of a person suffering from suffocation; and it is to this sound they grin, and jerk their shoulders. The whole performance is quite in keeping; the music worthy of the dancing, the dancing worthy of the music. They have boxing too, but do not practise the art after the fashion of the Cribs and Coopers; they disdain to parry off the blow; each strikes in turn with clenched fist; the blow is given behind the ear, and, as soon as one of the parties acknowledges himself defeated, the combat ceases. They are also adepts at wrestling; I have witnessed frequent contests between them and the inland Indians, when the latter were invariably floored.

No one enjoys a joke better than an Esquimaux, and when his risibility is excited he laughs with right good will, evincing in this, as in every other respect, the difference of disposition between them and the Indians, whose rigid features seldom betray their feelings. Much the same diversity of character and disposition is to be observed among the Esquimaux as among other barbarous tribes. Some instances of disinterested kindness and generosity fell under my notice while residing among them, that would have done honour to civilized man.

An Esquimaux who had attached himself to the establishment from the time of our first arrival at Ungava, kept a poor widow and her three orphans with him for several years, and seemed to make no difference between them and the members of his own family. It must be acknowledged, however, that the unhappy widows seldom fall into so good hands; their fate is the most wretched that can be imagined, unless they have children that can provide for them. In years of scarcity

they are rejected from the community, and hover about the encampments like starving wolves, picking up whatever chance may throw in their way, until hunger and cold terminate their wretched existence.

Whatever may be said of the awkwardness of the Esquimaux dress, it must be allowed to be the best adapted to the climate that could be used: a pair of boots so skilfully sewed as to exclude the water, and lined with down, or the fine hair of the rein-deer, protects the feet from wet and cold; two pairs of trousers, the inner having the hair next the skin; and two coats or tunics of deer or seal skin, the outer having a large hood that is drawn over the head in stormy weather, and a pair of large mits, complete the dress. The women also "wear the breeks," their dress being similar to that of the men in every respect, with this difference, that the female has a long flap attached to the hind part of her coat, and falling down to her heels; a most extraordinary ornament, giving her the appearance of an enormous

tadpole. This tail, however, has its use; when she has occasion to sit down on the cold rocks she folds it up and makes a seat of it.

In the winter season the Esquimaux live in huts built of snow; and we may imagine what must have been the necessity and distress that could first have suggested to a human being the idea of using such a material as a means of protecting himself from cold. Be that as it may, the snow *igloe* affords not only security from the inclemency of the weather, but more comfort than either stone or wooden building without fire. The operation requires considerable tact and experience, and is always performed by the men, two being required for it, one outside and the other inside.

Blocks of snow are first cut out with some sharp instrument from the spot that is intended to form the floor of the dwelling, and raised on edge, inclining a little inward around the cavity. These blocks are generally about two feet in length, two feet in breadth, and eight inches thick, and are joined close together. In this manner the edifice

is erected, contracting at each successive tier, until there only remains a small aperture at the top, which is filled by a slab of clear ice, that serves both as a keystone to the arch, and a window to light the dwelling. An embankment of snow is raised around the wall, and covered with skins, which answers the double purpose of beds and seats. The inside of the hut presents the figure of an arch or dome; the usual dimensions are ten or twelve feet in diameter, and about eight feet in height at the centre. Sometimes two or three families congregate under the same roof, having separate apartments communicating with the main building, that are used as bedrooms. The entrance to the igloe is effected through a winding covered passage, which stands open by day, but is closed up at night by placing slabs of ice at the angle of each bend, and thus the inmates are perfectly secured against the severest cold.

The Esquimaux use no fuel in winter; their stone lamps afford sufficient heat to dry their boots and clothes, or warm their blubber and raw

meat when they are so inclined. They are inured to cold by early habit; the children are carried about in the hoods of their mothers' jackets until three years of age; during this period they remain without a stitch of clothing, and the little things may be sometimes seen standing up in their nests, exposing themselves in the coldest weather, without appearing to suffer any inconvenience from it. The Esquimaux never sleep with their clothes on, not even when without any other shelter than the cleft of a rock.

It is well known that they eat their food, whether fish or flesh, generally in a raw state; hence their appellation, "Ashkimai," in the Cree and Sauteux, means, eater of raw meat, and is doubtless the origin of the name Esquimaux first applied by the earlier French discoverers, and since then passed into general use. They sometimes, indeed, warm their food in a stone kettle over a stone lamp, but they seem to relish it equally well when cut warm from the carcass of an animal recently killed, which they may be seen devouring while yet quivering with life.

In winter they prefer raw meat, especially fish, which is considered a great delicacy in a frozen state; the Esquimaux stomach, in fact, rejects nothing, raw or boiled, that affords sustenance. Like the inland Indians, they can bear hunger for an amazing length of time, and afterwards gorge themselves with more than brutal voracity without suffering inconvenience by it.

The Esquimaux breed of dogs are wolves in a domesticated state, the same in every characteristic, save such differences as may be expected to result from their relative conditions; the dog howls, never barks. These animals are of the most essential service to their masters, and are maintained at no expense. How they manage to subsist appears inexplicable to me; not a morsel of food is ever offered to them at the camp, and when employed hauling sledges on a journey, a small piece of blubber given them in the evening enables them to perform the laborious work of the ensuing day.

From ten to fifteen dogs are employed on a long journey. They are harnessed separately by a

collar and a single trace passing over their back, and fastened to the fore-part of the sledge. The traces are so arranged that the dogs generally follow in a line, conducted by a leader, who is trained to obey the word of command in an instant; the least hesitation on his part brings the merciless whip about his ears. The lash is about fifteen feet in length, the handle eighteen inches; continual practice enables the Esquimaux to wield this instrument of torture with great dexterity. The sledges are about five feet in length and two in breadth; the runners generally shod with whalebone or ivory, and coated over with a plaster of earth and water, which becomes very smooth, and is renewed as often as it is worn out.

The Esquimaux *carak*, or canoe, is about twelve feet in length, and two feet in breadth, and tapers 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 accom-

modation 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 on his belly, without ever stirring hand or foot, as the least motion would upset the canoe. Instances, however, have been known of persons conveyed hundreds of miles in this manner. These canoes 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. When the animal is overtaken, it is driven towards the spot where the huntsman wishes to land, and there despatched by a thrust of the spear.

The Esquimaux of this quarter have not the art of recovering their position, when they upset. An accident of this kind is, therefore, sure to prove fatal, unless aid be at hand. It is seldom, however, that aid is wanting, for these accidents never happen except in the excitement of the

sport, especially harpooning whales, when there are always a number present. The *ouimiack*, or skin-boat, is a clumsy-looking contrivance, but not to be despised on that account; from the buoyancy of the materials of which it is built, the *ouimiack* stands a much heavier sea than our best sea-boat. This kind of craft is rowed by women, and used for the purpose of conveying families along the coast.

The few implements these people use for hunting or fishing, display much taste and ingenuity. Their *caia*ks are proportioned with mathematical exactness, the paddles often tastefully inlaid with ivory; their spears are neatly carved, and their bows are far superior to any I have seen among the interior tribes, combining strength and elasticity in an eminent degree.

Their mode of capturing the white whale is extremely ingenious. A large *dan*, or seal-skin inflated with wind, is attached to the harpoon by a thong some twenty feet in length. The moment the fish is struck the *dan* is thrown overboard, and being dragged through the water,

offers so great a resistance to the movement of the fish that it soon becomes exhausted by the exertion, and when it emerges lies exposed on the water, to take rest ere it dive again. The Esquimaux then approaches from behind, and often secures his game with one thrust of the spear. The Esquimaux also uses a javelin with considerable skill, and some are so dexterous in the use of the sling as to bring down wild fowl on the wing.

The complexion of the Esquimaux is swarthy; I have seen some of their children, however, as fair as the children of the fairest people in Europe, yet these become as dark as their parents when advanced in years. This circumstance cannot be accounted for by filthiness or exposure to the weather; for I have observed, on the coast of Labrador, the descendants of an Esquimaux mother and a European father of the third generation as dark as the pure Esquimaux; and these, too, enjoyed the comforts of civilized life, were cleanly in their persons, and not more exposed to the weather than others.

The Esquimaux are low of stature, but I do not think the epithet "dwarfish" applies to them with propriety. With the view of ascertaining this point, I once took five men promiscuously from a party of twenty, and found their average height to be 5 feet 5 inches. Some individuals of the remainder measured 5 feet 7 or 8 inches, and one exceeded 6 feet. The fact is, the Esquimaux are generally thicker than Europeans; their peculiar dress also adds greatly to their bulk, so that they appear shorter than they really are. They are so bound up in their seal-skin garments that their movements are necessarily much impeded by them, we can, therefore, form no idea of their agility; but I do not hesitate to say that their strength exceeds that of any other nation on the continent.

The Esquimaux features are far from being disagreeable; some females I observed among them whose expression of countenance was extremely prepossessing, and who would pass for "bonnie lasses" even among the whites, if divested of their filth and uncouth dress, and rigged out in

European habiliments. The women fasten their hair in a knot on the crown of the head, and anoint it with rancid oil in lieu of pomatum; they also tattoo their faces, with the view, no doubt, of enhancing their charms in the estimation of their blubber-eating lovers. Their teeth are remarkably white and regular; the eyes are black, and partake more of the circular than the oval form; the cheek-bones are prominent, forehead low, mouth large, and chin pointed.

The Esquimaux generally enjoy good health, and no epidemic diseases, as far as I could learn, are known among them.

CHAPTER XI.

LABRADOR—ESQUIMAUX HALF-BREEDS—MORAVIAN BRETHREN
—EUROPEAN INHABITANTS — THEIR VIRTUES—CLIMATE—
ANECDOTE.

THE country denominated Labrador, extends from Esquimaux Bay, on the Straits of Belleisle, to the extremity of the continent, Cape Chudleigh, at the entrance of Hudson's Strait. The interior is inhabited by two tribes of Indians, Mountaineers and Nascopies, members of the Cree family. The coast was inhabited at one time by Esquimaux only, but the southern part is now peopled by a mongrel race of Esquimaux half-breeds, a few vagabond Esquimaux, and some English and Canadian fishermen and trappers, who are assimilated to the natives in manners and in mode of life. While the European inhabitants adopt from necessity some of the native customs,

the natives have adopted so much of the European customs that their primitive characteristics are no longer distinguishable; they cook their victuals, drink rum, smoke and chew tobacco, and generally dress after the European manner, especially the females, who always wear gowns. They have also a smattering of French and English, and are great proficient in swearing in both languages; nor do they seem ignorant of the more refined arts of cheating, lying, and deceiving. Taking everything into account, however, we may be surprised that their manners are not more corrupt than they are.

A number of small trading vessels from the United States hover about the coast during summer; the accursed "fire-water" constitutes a primary article in their outfit, and is bartered freely for such commodities as the natives may possess. These adventurers are generally men of loose principles, and are ever ready to take the advantage of their customers. The natives, however, are now so well instructed that they are more likely to cheat than be cheated.

The Esquimaux inhabiting the northern parts of the coast differ in every respect from their neighbours of the south. They have acquired a knowledge of the Christian religion, together with some of the more useful arts of civilized life, without losing much of their primitive simplicity. The Moravian Brethren, those faithful "successors of the Apostles," after enduring inconceivable hardships and privations for many years, without the least prospect of success, at length succeeded in converting the heathens, collecting them in villages around them, and at the same time not only instructing them in things pertaining to their eternal salvation, but in everything else that could contribute to their comfort and happiness in the present life. There are four different stations of the Brethren; Hopedale, Nain, O'Kok, and Hebron. At each station there is a church, store, dwelling-house for the Missionaries, and workshops for native tradesmen. The natives are lodged in houses built after the model of their *igloes*, being the best adapted to the climate and circumstances of the country, where scarcely

any fuel is to be had: the Missionaries warm their houses by means of stoves.

The Brethren have much the same influence with their flocks as a father among his children. Whatever provisions the natives collect are placed at their disposal, and by them afterwards distributed in such a manner as to be of the most general benefit; by thus taking the management of this important matter into their own hands, the consequences of waste and improvidence are guarded against, and the means of subsistence secured.

In years of great scarcity the Brethren open their own stores, having always an ample supply of provisions on hand, so that through their fostering care the natives never suffer absolute want. The Brethren have also goods for trading, which they dispose of at a moderate profit; the profits accruing from the business are thrown into the general funds of the institution. It is said they carry on trade in every part of the world where they have missions. Their object is not to acquire wealth for selfish purposes, but to

extend the kingdom of Christ on earth; to enlighten the nations; and by instructing them in the knowledge of Divine truth, to "ameliorate their condition" in this life, and secure their eternal happiness in the life to come.

From the paternal anxiety with which these good people watch over the morals of their flocks, they discourage as much as possible the visits of strangers; fearing that intercourse with them might open their eyes to the allurements of vice. In spite of all their vigilance, however, they have sometimes to deplore the loss of a stray sheep. It is an established rule, moreover, with them, never to allow a stranger to sleep within their gates; he is hospitably received and treated with kindness and attention, but on the approach of evening he is apprised that he must shift for himself: care is taken, however, to provide him with lodgings in one of the native huts, where he can pass the night in tolerable comfort. Should he not be pleased with his treatment, he is at liberty to depart when he pleases.

The European inhabitants of Labrador are for

the most part British sailors, who, preferring the freedom of a semi-barbarous life and the society of a brown squaw, to the severity of maritime discipline and the endearments of the civilized fair, take up their abode for life in this land of desolation.

In course of time the gay frolicsome sailor settles down into the regular grave father of a family; and by sobriety and good conduct, may ultimately secure a comfortable home for his old age. Jack's characteristic thoughtlessness, however, sometimes adheres to him even when moored on dry land; and when this is the case, his situation is truly miserable.

They pass the summer in situations favourable for catching salmon, which they barter on the spot with the stationary traders for such commodities as they are in want of. When the salmon fishing is at an end, they proceed to the coast for the purpose of fishing cod for their own consumption, and return late in autumn to the interior, where they pass the winter trapping fur animals.

The planters, as they are designated, live in houses which they call "tilts," varying in shape and size according to the taste or circumstances of the owner. These buildings are generally formed of stakes driven into the ground, chinked with moss, and covered with bark; they are always warmed with stoves, otherwise the *igloe* would afford more comfort.

The half-breeds live in much the same way as their European progenitors; they are generally sober and industrious; and although unacquainted with any particular form of religious worship, they evince, in their general deportment, a greater regard to the precepts of Christianity than many who call themselves Christians. They are entirely free from the crimes that disgrace civilized life, and are guilty of few of its vices; should a frail fair, however, make a *faux pas*, it is no bar to her forming a matrimonial connexion afterwards. The women are much fewer than the men, and on this account a greater indulgence may be extended to their faults than otherwise would be.

I was surprised to find them all able to read

and write, although without schools or schoolmasters. The task of teaching devolves upon the mother; should she (what seldom happens) be unqualified, a neighbour is always ready to impart the desired instruction.

The Esquimaux half-breeds are both industrious and ingenious; they are at a loss for nothing. The men make their own boats, and the women prepare everything required for domestic convenience; almost every man is his own blacksmith and carpenter, and every woman a tailor and shoemaker. They seem to possess all the virtues of the different races from which they are sprung—except courage; they are generally allowed to be more timid than the natives. But if not courageous, they possess virtues that render courage less necessary; they avoid giving offence, and are seldom, therefore, injured by others.

The Hudson's Bay Company obtained a footing here a few years ago, by buying out some of the petty traders, whose operations extended to the interior, and consequently interfered with the hopeful Ungava scheme; independently, however,

of this consideration, expectations were entertained that Labrador might become the seat of a profitable branch of the business, from its various resources in fish, oil, and furs. These expectations were not realized, owing to the strong competition the Company met with; while their interference in the trade subjected them to the charge of "grasping ambition," a charge which appears but too well founded, considering the monopoly they possess of the whole fur trade of the continent. "Plus le D——e a, plus il voudrait avoir," is an old adage; nor have we any reason to believe that any other mercantile body would be less ambitious of increasing their gains, than their *honours* of Fenchurch-street.

There are several establishments along the coast, belonging chiefly to merchants from Plymouth and Dartmouth, who carry on the salmon and cod fisheries on an extensive scale, and traffic also with the planters. This business was at one time considered very lucrative; of late years, however, competition has increased from all quarters, and prices in the European market

have diminished, so that the profits are now greatly reduced.

The climate of the southern section of Labrador is by no means severe; the thermometer, even in the coldest months of the year, seldom falling lower than 30° below zero. Along the shores of Esquimaux Bay, a few spots have been found favourable for agriculture, and potatoes and other culinary vegetables have been raised in abundance. Grain, especially oats and barley, would doubtless also thrive; it so happens, however, that the inhabitants are under the necessity of devoting their attention to other pursuits during the season of husbandry; so that the few that attempt "gardening," derive small benefit from it. They sow their seed before starting for the coast, and leave nature to do the rest.

I shall close my description of Labrador by narrating a rather tragical event that occurred a few years ago. An old fisherman, formerly a sailor, and his only son by an Esquimaux squaw, lived together in the greatest amity and concord. The son, after the death of his mother, attended

to domestic affairs, and also assisted his father at out-door's work. As the fishing season approached, however, it was considered expedient to hire a female, so that they might give their undivided attention to the fishing. The girl had not remained long with them, when her charms began to make an impression on Jack's still sensitive heart; the son also became enamoured; both paid their addresses, and, as a matter of course, the young man was preferred.

The demon of jealousy now took possession of the father's breast; and his conduct became so violent and cruel, that his son determined on parting company with him and carrying off the girl. Seizing the only boat that belonged to his father, he slipped away under cover of night with his companion, and put ashore on the first island they found. A violent storm arose in the course of the night, and either dashed the boat to pieces on the rocks, or carried her out to sea; and thus the unfortunate lovers were left to their fate. This event happened late in autumn. The winter passed without any word being heard of the

lovers; in the ensuing spring their bodies were found clasped in each other's arms, and the young man's gun close by with fifteen notches cut in the stock, supposed to mark the number of days they suffered ere relieved by death.

CHAPTER XII.

VOYAGE TO ENGLAND—ARRIVAL AT PLYMOUTH—REFLECTIONS
—ARRIVE AT THE PLACE OF MY NATIVITY—CHANGES—
DEPOPULATION—LONDON—THE THAMES—LIVERPOOL—EM-
BARK FOR NEW YORK—ARRIVAL—THE AMERICANS—ENGLISH
AND AMERICAN TOURISTS—ENGLAND AND AMERICA—NEW
YORK.

1842.—I EMBARKED for England on the 18th of August, on board a small schooner of sixty tons, deeply laden with fish and oil. It is scarcely necessary to observe, that the accommodations the craft afforded were of the meanest kind; but the inconveniences weighed lightly in the scales, when compared with the anticipated delight of visiting one's native land. We had a very fine passage; a steady fair breeze carried us across the broad Atlantic in a fortnight. The green hills of Cornwall came in view on the 1st of September, and I had the satisfaction of treading the soil of England early on the 3d.

I remained a few days at Plymouth, to feast my eyes on scenery such as I had long been a stranger to;—scenery, I may say, unrivalled by any I had ever beheld at home or abroad. What spot in the world, in fact, can present such varied charms, as the summit of Mount Edgecumb? where the most refined taste, aided by the amplest means, has been employed for a thousand years in beautifying the glorious landscape. To me, just arrived from *Ungava*, the beauties of the scene were undoubtedly heightened by the contrast; and one short visit to Mount Edgecumb effaced from my mind the dreary prospect of bleak rocks, snow banks, and icebergs, with which it had been so long and so sadly familiar, and inspired it with a rapture and delight to which it had long been a stranger. Yet this terrestrial paradise, I am informed, belongs to a noble lord, who is a miserable invalid. Alas, for poor humanity! neither wealth nor grandeur preserve their possessors from the ills that flesh is heir to: and this nobleman may, perhaps, envy the lot of the

humblest individual that visits his enchanting domain.

Bidding adieu to Plymouth, and its delightful environs, I set out for London on the 11th of September. The desire of home, however, now urged me forward; so that even the wonders of this wonderful city could not detain me. Passing over the uninteresting incidents of steamboat and railroad travelling, I arrived on the 20th of September at the spot from which I had started twenty-three years before. The meeting of a mother with an only son, after so long an absence, need not be described, nor the feelings the well-known scenes of youthful sports and youthful joys gave rise to. These scenes were still the same, as far as the hand of Nature was concerned:—there stood the lofty Benmore, casting his sombre shades over the glassy surface of Lochba, as in the days of yore; there were also the same heath-covered hills and wooded dells, well stocked with sheep and cattle; but the human inhabitants of the woods and dells—where were they?—far distant from their much-

loved native land in the wilds of America, or toiling for a miserable existence in the crowded cities of the Lowlands, — a sad change ! The bleating of sheep, and lowing of cattle, for the glad voices of a numerous population, happy and contented with their lot, loyal to their sovereign, and devotedly attached to their chiefs ! But loyalty and attachment are but fancies, which, in these utilitarian and trading days, are flat and unprofitable ; yet the aristocratical manufacturers of beef and mutton may live to feel the truth of the lines of Goldsmith :—

“ But a bold peasantry, their country’s pride,
When once destroyed, can never be supplied.”

I remained about six weeks in my native country, and set out for London, where I arrived early in November,—“ the beginning of the gay season ;” but it appeared to me the reverse. The city was shrouded in a cloud of condensed smoke and fog, that shut out the light of heaven. During three whole days the obscurity was so great that the steamboats were prevented from plying on the Thames, and the gas-lights were

seen glimmering through the windows at noon-day. How applicable is the description of the Roman historian to the Rome of our day:—
“*Caput orbis terrarum, urbis magnificentiam augebant fora, templa, porticas, aquæductus, theatra, horti denique, et ejus generis alia, ad quæ vel lecta animus stupet.*” My time was too limited, however, and the weather too unfavourable, to admit of my seeing all the “lions;” but who would think of leaving London without visiting that wonderful work—the Tunnel,—that lasting monument of the genius of a Brunell, and of the wealth and enterprise of British merchants!

A Cockney may well boast of his great city, its wealth, its vast population, and its magnificent buildings; but with regard to the Thames, of which he is equally proud,—he that has seen the St. Lawrence, the Hudson, the McKenzie, and many others, compared to which the Thames is but a rivulet, may be excused if he cannot view its not very limpid waters with the same extravagant admiration as the Londoner, who calls the Serpentine a river, and dignifies a pond of

a few roods in extent with the name of a lake. Yet there is one feature about the Thames, of which he can scarcely be too proud, and which is unparalleled perhaps in the world,—the often-noticed “forest of masts,” extending farther than the eye can reach, and suggesting,—not the silence and solitude of the forests with which I have been familiar,—but the countless population, the wealth, and the grandeur of Britain; and the might and the majesty of civilized and industrious man.

I took leave of London on the 12th of September, and set out for Liverpool by railroad, and reached it in six hours. I had sufficient time to visit its docks, crowded by the ships of every nation; its warehouses containing the produce of every clime; and, though last, not least in my estimation, the splendid monument erected to the memory of Nelson. No monument of stone or brass is necessary to perpetuate our hero's fame; he lives in the heart of every true Briton, and will ever live, till British oak and British prowess shall cease to “rule the waves.”

I embarked on the 15th of December on board a sailing-packet bound for New York. These vessels are so punctual to the hour of sailing advertised, that, if the wind proves contrary, and blows fresh, they are towed out to sea by steam-boats. This proved to be our case, and we kept tacking about in the "chops" of the Channel for six days, when a fair wind sprung up that soon carried us out of sight of England. England! great and glorious country, adieu! I shall probably never see thee more; but in quitting thy white-cliffed shores, I quit not my ardent attachment and veneration for thee;—and now for *thy* eldest daughter beyond the ocean!

To me, who had spent so much of my lifetime in solitude, the tedium of the voyage so much complained of was gaiety itself; with three fellow-passengers besides the captain, the time passed very agreeably. On board these floating palaces a passenger, in fact, finds everything that can contribute to his comfort; the best of accommodation, the best of fare, and the best of attendance; so that there is nothing wanting but

stability, to make him fancy himself in a first-class hotel on shore.

The weather proved extremely favourable throughout the passage; not an incident occurred worthy of notice; and on the 17th of January, 1843, I landed safely at New York, and thus found myself for the first time in a foreign land; and, since fate has so decreed, among a foreign people. Yes! they are foreigners, if being called by another name, and living under a different form of government can make them so; yet in language, in laws, in religion, and in blood, we are the same. Their ancestors brought abroad with them the same sentiments of regard and attachment to their native land as we feel; they rejoiced in the prosperity of Britain; felt proud of her victories, and grieved at her misfortunes. Alas, how different the feelings of the present race! Britain may, in fact, reckon the Americans of the present day her most inveterate foes; those who are of our own kindred, and whom therefore we might expect to stand by us in our hour of need, regard us with more envy and hatred than

the "hereditary foes" with whom we have been for centuries engaged in mortal strife.

In resisting the arbitrary acts of a misguided government, the American people only proved themselves possessed of the same noble spirit that procured for their English progenitors the confirmation of Magna Charta, and that hurled a tyrant from his throne. The heroes of the American revolution nobly fought and conquered; they entered the arena with fearful odds against them; they continued the struggle under every disadvantage, save the sacredness of their cause; and finally won the prize for which they contended. Of that prize the Americans of the present day have undisputed possession; and nothing can be more certain than that the Britons of the present day have no wish to deprive them of it—even if they could. What cause, then, can there be for still cherishing those feelings of animosity which the unhappy disruption gave rise to? If our fathers quarrelled, cannot we be friends? But are not the British themselves to blame, in some measure, for the continuance of

these irritated feelings? The mercenary pens of prejudiced, narrow-minded individuals contribute daily to add fuel to the flame. Our "Diaries," and our "Notes," replete with offensive remarks, are, from the cheapness of publication, disseminated through the length and breadth of the Union, and are in everybody's hands; and those foolish remarks are supposed to be the sentiments of the British nation; when they are in fact only the sentiments of individuals whose opinions are little valued at home, and ought to be less valued abroad.

Circumstances taken into consideration, I think it very unfair to draw comparisons between the social condition of young America, just become a distinct nation, and of old England, whose empire has lasted a thousand years. The American people are still too much occupied with the necessaries of life to devote much of their time to its elegancies; they are still engaged in the pursuits that ultimately ensure wealth and real independence. Those results attained, what is there to prevent the American gentleman from

becoming as polished and accomplished as his cousin in Britain? Can it be supposed, with the least shadow of reason, that the short period that has elapsed since the Revolution can have been sufficient to produce that alteration in the character and manners of the Americans, which our travellers love to exercise their wit upon? It is impossible. The Americans “ guessed,” and “ calculated,” and “ speculated,” while they were British subjects, just as they do now; nor have they learned to chew, and spit, and smoke tobacco since the 4th of July, 1782.

As to the peculiar phrases the Americans use in conversation, I am convinced that their forefathers brought the greater part of them from Britain, as many of those phrases are to be found in the works of old English authors still extant. The English language as spoken in America, is elegance itself, compared to the provincial dialects of Britain, or even to the vile slang one hears in the streets of London. This is a fact that every unprejudiced person who has travelled in America must admit.

It appears Americans find leisure, of late years,

to travel and take notes, as well as their transatlantic brethren; and, in return for the polite attentions of our travellers, describe England and Englishmen in the bitter language of recrimination and retort; and thus the enmity between the mother and daughter is kept alive and perpetuated. A publication of this kind fell lately into my hands, entitled, "The Glory and Shame of England." The writer, said to be a *Christian minister*, with the malignity of baser minds, sinks and keeps in the background her "glories," and brings into relief and dwells upon her shameful parts; representing in the most sombre colours the misery of the "squalid" population of our cities. Would to God there were not so much truth in the picture! His reverence, however, seems to have lost sight of the clergyman; and in gratifying his resentment against England, and in his zeal to kindle the same unchristian feeling in the breasts of his countrymen, has not hesitated to sacrifice the truth;—and he a clergyman, whose office it is to "proclaim peace on earth, and good-will to men!"

That there is much misery and wretchedness

in England, none can deny; but will not the well-informed philanthropist consider it rather as our misfortune than our reproach?—consisting mainly, as that mass of wretchedness does, of those ills which neither “kings nor laws can cause or cure.” What plan would this philanthropic divine recommend to remove those evils, which, while he affects to deplore, he yet glories over? Strip the nobility and land-owners of their possessions—convert our monarchy into a republic—and the church into a “meetin ouse?”

These *reforms* effected, would the people of England be permanently benefited by them? Supposing the whole arable soil of England were divided in equal portions among its crowded inhabitants, (passing by the injustice of robbing the present proprietors of their lawful possessions—many of them acquired by the same hard labour or skill by which an artisan gains his weekly wages,) would the equality of property long continue? Would not the sloth, improvidence, and imprudence, that ever distinguish a great proportion of mankind; and the industry,

foresight, and ambition that characterise others, soon bring many of the equal lots into one, thus forming a great estate, the property of an individual,—when matters would just be at the point where his reverence found them? And then, of course, would follow another “equitable adjustment,” to relieve the wants of the poor, whose progenitors had squandered their patrimony. Or, admitting that the lots remained in possession of the families to whom they were originally granted, would the produce be equal to the maintenance of their numerous descendants, when the property became divided and subdivided into fifty or a hundred shares?

The present proprietors of the soil of England have, undoubtedly, large incomes; but what becomes of those incomes? Do they not flow back into the hands of the merchants, tradesmen, servants, &c.?—the greater proportion, at least; for the sums expended by our tourists on the continent form so inconsiderable a portion of those incomes, as not to be worth mentioning. The same may be said of the *alleged* wealth of

the clergy; for (admitting the allegation) it all flows back into the channels whence it issued; and, although neither belonging to the Church of England, nor approving of her forms of government, I do not think that her downfall would improve the *temporal* condition of the people. If we wish to remain a Christian nation, we cannot dispense with the services of the clergy; and in order that those services may be efficient, they must be maintained in independence and respectability.

As to a republican form of government, that experiment has been already tried in England, and failed; it may be tried again with no better success. The circumstances in which the American people found themselves after the Revolution, rendered the adoption of republican institutions both safe and beneficial. They had learned by experience that the remote position of their country secured their independence from the ambitious projects of any power in Europe; while they had nothing to fear from any power in America. Thus situated, any form of go-

vernment, consistent with the due maintenance of good order at home, answered their purpose. The nascent republic might, at the period in question, have adopted as its motto, "Liberty and Equality," with the utmost propriety; for all enjoyed equal liberty, and nearly equal fortunes. Experience, however, shows that liberty and equality cannot long exist under any form of government; industry procures wealth, wealth induces ambition, and ambition sighs after distinction and power.

While America feels secure from the aggression of her neighbours, Great Britain is surrounded by powerful states, some of whom afford her daily proofs of their envy of her greatness and their hatred of her power; and only want the ability, not the will, to annihilate both. Those states are, for the most part, ruled by absolute or despotic governments, who can call fleets and armies into action without losing a moment in debating the justice or injustice, policy or impolicy, of their movements. With such neighbours as these, would the Messenger of Peace recommend the "Britishers" to adopt a form of government

which would necessitate them to debate and consult while their enemies were acting; and to remit to the people to discuss the question of peace or war, when they should be enlisting and drilling them?

Columbia, happy land! the broad Atlantic intervenes between thee and the envy or hatred of Europe; thy wide domain, presenting millions of acres of untenanted land, stands open to the industry and enterprise of thy citizens. How thankful, then, ought they to be for the blessings they enjoy, compared with the condition of their brethren "beyond the water," confined as they are to the narrow limits of their sea-girt isle, whose soil is no longer sufficient for the support of its over-crowded inhabitants, and surrounded by hostile nations, who have long since pronounced the sentence, "*Delenda est Britannia!*"

"Boz" has already told his countrymen all that is worth telling about New York, and something more. What the "Dickens" brought him to the "Five Points?" Did he never visit Wapping with the same views, whatever they might be? If he

did, did he observe nothing in that sink of filth and wickedness equal to the scenes that shocked him so much in the outskirts of New York? One just arrived from England finds little in this city to excite wonder or admiration, unless it be the extraordinary width of some of the streets. Were those streets kept clean, and the liberty of the pigs a little restrained, the citizens might well boast of their superiority to most of the streets of our British cities; and as their taste improves, everything unsightly will be removed.

Nature has done much for New York: she possesses one of the finest harbours in the world; her climate is pleasant and salubrious; and one of the noblest rivers of America gives her the command of the commercial resources of a country which equals in extent nearly all Europe. New York will undoubtedly become one of the first cities in the world; in commerce, in wealth, in population, she has advanced at a prodigious rate within the last fifty years, and her progress is not likely to be arrested.

The aqueduct that supplies the town with water,

pure, wholesome, and abundant, is well worth the notice of a stranger. This stupendous work was executed at a cost of nine millions of dollars, and conveys the water from a distance of forty miles!—the genius of the engineer and the power of money overcoming every obstacle. The two great reservoirs, near the city, present splendid specimens of that kind of architecture. Happening in company to express my opinion of this work, as reflecting the highest credit on the enterprise of the citizens, a gentleman present, evidently an American, in reply to the compliment, observed, “It is very much to their advantage, no doubt, and it will also be much to their credit, if they pay the debt they incurred in constructing it.” The fact is, that this and many other public works in the United States, have been executed by British capital. Would to heaven that our *sympathising* friends, who are so jealous in regard to the honour of America, where a few thousand acres of worthless land are concerned, were equally jealous in regard to it when, under the newly-invented name of *repudiation*, the honour of their country is

tarnished by a vast system of unblushing robbery ! Would to heaven that their *sympathies* were extended to the thousands who are involved in misery and ruin by this audacious system of national perfidy !

If the art or ingenuity of the good citizens of New York has not produced very many objects worthy of admiration, the faces of their lovely fair make ample amends for it. Among the crowds of charmers who throng the fashionable promenade of Broadway, scarcely an ordinary face is to be seen. I, in fact, saw more pretty faces there in one hour than in all my tour in Britain.

I landed in New York without any prejudice against the Americans, and I now take leave of their commercial capital with feelings of esteem and regret. In the society I frequented I neither saw nor heard anything unworthy of, or unbecoming the descendants of Britons. Some little peculiarities, the natural result of circumstances, I certainly noticed ; some differences also in their social life ; but I shall leave it to those who are disposed to find fault to criticise these matters.

CHAPTER XIII.

PASSAGE FROM NEW YORK TO ALBANY BY STEAMER—THE PASSENGERS—ARRIVAL AT ALBANY—JOURNEY TO MONTREAL.

THE navigation of the Hudson not being yet interrupted by ice, I determined on proceeding to Albany by steamboat, in preference to the railroad, with the view of seeing the far-famed scenery of the country through which the river flows. I accordingly embarked on the 5th of February. We had not proceeded far, however, when we found the face of the country covered with snow; and thus the pleasure I had anticipated from my aquatic trip was in a great measure lost.

Winter had set in in earnest, and the cold became so severe as we ascended, that the deck was abandoned, and the nearest seat to the stove

was considered the best. The passengers being now all crowded below, the group presented a complete epitome of American society: here were members of the legislature proceeding to the capital on parliamentary duty; here also were congregated in the same cabin, merchants, mechanics, and farmers, messing at the same board, and at first mixed up promiscuously together. They did not, however, long continue so; the more respectable part, separating from the crowd, occupied one end of the cabin, the plebeians occupied the other. Thus the homogeneous ingredients of the mass having united, no further mixture took place during the passage.

It is true, one of patrician rank might occasionally be observed stepping beyond the ideal boundary, and sitting down among the plebeians, probably some of his constituents,—would call for a pipe, and, stretching out his legs, commence to puff, spit, and debate, like one of themselves; and having by these means convinced them that he still considered them as his *equals*, would retire again *ad suos*.

The Americans are accused by Europeans of being cold and reserved towards strangers ; for my part, I found them sociable and communicative in the extreme. A few hours after I had embarked on board the steamboat I found myself quite at home. I was much pleased to observe the rational manner in which the passengers amused themselves. Little groups were formed, where religion, politics and business matters were discussed with excellent sense and judgment. These seemed to be the common topics of discourse in both ends of the cabin. I frequented both, and saw nothing indecorous or improper in either, save the spitting and the outrageous rush to the table ; such a scene as the latter is only to be seen in America.

The servants bawl out at the top of their lungs :—

“ Time enough, gentlemen ! time enough ! No hurry, no hurry ! ”

Onward they rush, however, crowding, pushing, elbowing, until they take their seats. I was, however, particularly struck with the attention shown

to the ladies, the great sobriety of all classes, and the total absence of impure or profane expressions in conversation. How unlike the scenes one witnesses on board our steamboats in Britain, where the meaner sort of passengers seem to travel on purpose to indulge in drinking!

I arrived at Albany late on the 7th, our progress having been much retarded by the quantity of ice drifting in the river. Finding that the mail was to start for Canada in the course of the night, I decided on going with it, without seeing the capital of New York. Owing to the mildness of the season up to the present time, the roads were in the worst possible condition, and the motion of the carriage passing rapidly over the rugged surface of the muddy roads recently frozen solid, was not only disagreeable, but even painful.

We continued, however, to jolt on night and day, without rest, save during the short time necessary for changing or baiting cattle. The roads became worse, if possible, as we proceeded. A considerable quantity of snow had fallen lately,

which rendered travelling in a wheeled carriage not only disagreeable in the extreme, but also dangerous. We broke down several times, but without serious inconvenience. On one of these occasions we picked ourselves up opposite a farm house, in which we took shelter while the driver was putting matters to rights. It being yet early, the inmates were still in bed; we nevertheless found a rousing fire blazing on the hearth, and seated ourselves around it.

All of a sudden the door of a small apartment flew open, and a large black cat sprang in amongst us.

“Ha! what do you think of that, now?” said one of the passengers, addressing himself to me. “What do you think of the ingenuity of our Yankee cats? Had Boz witnessed that feat, we should have had a page or two more to his notes; and I am sure it would have proved at least as interesting to the reader as the nigger driver’s conversation with his cattle.”

“That’s a fact,” said I.

After being jolted and pitched about until every

bone in my body ached again, I reached St. John's on the 12th; and the snow being now sufficiently deep to admit of travelling with sleighs, the remainder of the journey to Montreal was accomplished in comparative comfort.

CHAPTER XIV.

EMBARK FOR THE NORTH — PASSENGERS ARRIVE AT FORT WILLIAM — DESPATCH FROM GOVERNOR — APPOINTED TO MACKENZIE'S RIVER DISTRICT — PORTAGE LA LOCHE — ADVENTURE ON GREAT SLAVE LAKE — ARRIVE AT FORT SIMPSON — PRODUCTIONS OF THE POST.

I SPENT the remainder of the winter enjoying the 'good things of this life, and on the 28th of April received orders to proceed to Lachine, preparatory to embarking for the north. I embarked on the 29th, but the crews were so intoxicated that we were compelled to land on an island near by, to allow them to recover from the effects of their carousals.

I was joined here by Captain Stalk of the 71st, and Lieutenant Lefroy of the Artillery; the former accompanying us on a jaunt of pleasure, the latter on a scientific expedition. There were

also four junior clerks in the Company's service. Our brigade consisted of three large canoes manned by about fifty Canadians, and Iroquois Indians.

We were detained in our insular encampment by stress of weather until the 2d of May, when we set out. Our crews being now perfectly sober, plied their paddles with the utmost goodwill, singing and whooping, apparently delighted with their situation. Ignorance here was bliss; they little dreamed of the life that awaited them. I may here premise, that as I have already narrated the particulars of a similar voyage, I shall pass on to the different stages of our route without noticing the uninteresting incidents of our daily progress.

We arrived at Fort William on the 28th of May, where we exchanged our large Montreal canoes for smaller. Here Captain S. remained to await his passage back to Canada; not much disposed to try such a jaunt of pleasure again, I suspect,—and Lieutenant L., taking a canoe for himself with a view of prosecuting his scientific

researches more at leisure than our go-a-head mode of travelling admitted, left us also. We were detained a day at Fort William, repairing canoes, arranging crews, &c., and on the 30th, I took leave of my excellent *compagnons de voyage* with sincere regret.

On descending Lac la Pluie River, we landed at an extensive Sauteux camp, where we found a Protestant (Methodist) Missionary, with a native interpreter as his only companion. I learned with much regret, that this gentleman's exertions in his vocation had been attended with little or no success, although he had been two years engaged in it; while the Romish priests, in the same space of time, had converted numbers.

The natives were occupied with the sturgeon fishing, and had apparently been tolerably successful. Having procured a supply for the use of our crews by barter, we set off, and without experiencing any accident, reached Bas de la Rivière on the 13th of June, where I found letters from the Governor, directing me to proceed with all possible speed to York Factory.

Having learned on my way coming up, that one of the gentlemen in McKenzie's River district had resigned, and would quit the country this year,—I felt convinced I should be appointed his successor; that being one of the most wretched parts of the Indian country, it was quite a matter of course that I should be sent thither. Knowing from dear-bought experience, however, that my constitution could no longer bear the hardships and privations to which I had been so long subjected, I wrote the Governor on the subject, and requested that he would grant me an appointment where I might enjoy some degree of comfort—a favour which I humbly conceived my former services entitled me to—otherwise I should retire from the service. We had a fine passage across Lake Winnipeg, and I landed at Norway House with all my party safe and sound, on the 18th of June. I remained there till the 21st, and then set out for York Factory, where I had been about ten days, when an express arrived from Norway House with the Governor's final orders to me, and also his reply to my

last communication, which I here insert at full length.

“ Red River Settlement,
“ June 22, 1843.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ My eyes are so completely worn out, that I cannot give you a single private line under my own hand. I have perused with attention your private letter of the 14th instant, and should have been glad had it been in my power to have met your wishes in regard to an appointment; but from the few commissioned gentlemen disposable this season, it was quite impossible to consult wishes. You were, therefore, long before receipt of your letter, appointed to McKenzie’s River. That is now one of the finest fields we have for extension of trade, and I count much on your activity for promoting our views in that quarter. But while directing your attention to the extension of *your district*, you must likewise use your best endeavours to curtail the indents, as they have of late been on a most alarming scale, comprehending nearly as many articles as appear in our Columbia

requisition ; if you look on my notes on the last requisition, you will find that I have been under the necessity of making some further curtailments. I am sorry the idea of retiring has entered your mind, as I was in hopes we could count upon some efficient services out of you while still young and vigorous.

“The Company have of late declined making any purchases of retired interests; it would be therefore quite unnecessary to make any application on that head, as they have lost money by all the recent purchases they have made in that way.

“I am at the Lower Fort, where Mr. Ross came in on me very unexpectedly, just as we were preparing to get on horseback for the upper part of the settlement, so that I am much pressed for time, which will account for the brevity of this communication.

“Pray let me hear from you in Canada by the last canoes, as I shall not then have taken my departure from Montreal.

“I remain, &c. &c.

(Signed)

“GEORGE SIMPSON.”

Judging, from the instructions contained in the above communication, that I was appointed to the charge of the district, I made up my mind to try how far my health could endure the hardships of which I already had had more than my share; and without a moment's delay, set out for Norway House in a light canoe, where I arrived on the 16th of July. My friend Mr. C—— arrived with his returns from Athabasca a few days afterwards, and his arrangements being completed on the 24th, I embarked as a passenger with him.

We reached the small river Mithai on the 4th of September, when we found the water so low as barely to admit of the passage of the light boats. It happened most fortunately that there were a number of Chippewayan Indians encamped on the spot at the time, else we should have been completely at a nonplus. The crews, good souls! hired those Indians at their own expense, to carry the greater part of the property in their small canoes to the upper part of the river. At the portage we found a number of half-breeds, with their horses, from the Saskatchewan, awaiting

our arrival, in the expectation of being employed to transport the goods. Nor were they disappointed; sooner than undergo the harassing toil of carrying the outfit across a portage of twelve miles, the men hired the half-breeds, parting with their most valuable articles in payment.

Several propositions have been made, of late years, to the Governor, for sparing the men the inhuman labour of this portage, which they must either perform, or sacrifice a considerable part of their paltry wages to avoid it. It was suggested, for instance, that a sufficient number of horses should be stationed at a certain locality, with the requisite conveniences, near the portage, and a couple of men hired on purpose to take care of them, whose wages the winterers should pay out of their own pockets, which they readily assented to; as the transport, by this arrangement, would only cost them one-third of what it cost them to employ the half-breeds. His Excellency, however, was quite "sick" of the Portage La Loche subject; he knew as much about it as anybody,

and felt quite assured that it was the easiest part of the men's duties throughout the voyage! While canoes were used, the duty at Portage la Loche was not nearly so severe as at present; a canoe carried only twenty-five pieces, and was manned by six men; a boat's crew consists only of seven men, while the cargo consists of from sixty to seventy pieces.

The descent of the Clear Water and Athabasca rivers was effected without any accident, and we arrived at Athabasca on the 16th of September; whence I set out again, after a few days' delay, for Fort Resolution, on Great Slave Lake, where I was detained by stress of weather until the 29th.

I left the post late in the evening, and intended to encamp on an island at a convenient distance; but the season being far advanced, I felt anxious to proceed, and inquired of my pilot whether he thought there would be any risk in travelling all night? "Not the least," was the reply; and we rowed on accordingly till morning; when lo! the only objects to be seen

were sea and sky. In vain we strained the organs of vision to discover land; there we were, as if in the midst of the ocean, surrounded on all sides by the unbroken circle of the horizon. I do not know that I ever felt more seriously alarmed than at this moment, thus to find myself exposed on an unknown sea, as it might well be termed, in an open boat, and at such an advanced period of the season, without any means of ascertaining what course to steer for land. It would appear our steersman had been napping at the helm in the course of the night, and thus allowed the boat to deviate from her course without noticing it; hence the awkwardness and even the danger of our present situation.

While considering with myself what was best to be done, a fine breeze sprang up; I ordered the sail to be hoisted immediately, determined on going before it until we made land, no matter where. Fortunately the wind continued steady all day, and we at length reached the land a little after sunset, having run at least forty miles. We put ashore at the first convenient landing we could

find, and encamped for the night. Having consulted a map I had with me, and observing by the sun the direction in which we had crossed the lake, (for we had actually crossed it at its greatest width,) I could make out pretty clearly that we had turned our backs to our true course! We had, however, a good supply of provisions, and a voyageur is never discouraged while he has the provender before him. Having now learned, to my cost, what confidence my pilot was entitled to, I determined on keeping land in view for the future.

We embarked early next morning, and, after a tedious and laborious passage of seven days, arrived at Big Island fishery at the outlet of the Lake on the 8th of October, where I found a boat ready to start with a cargo of fish, in which I embarked; and landing finally at Fort Simpson on the 16th, my long trip of five months *per mare et terram*, was brought to a close; and high time it should, for the weather was become excessively cold, and the ice was forming along the beach.

I was much grieved to find Mr. Lewis confined

to bed in consequence of a shocking accident he had lately met with, his right hand being blown off by the accidental discharge of his fowling-piece.

Having perused the governor's official letter to Mr. Lewis, I found the following paragraph in it relating to myself:—"On retiring from the district next season, you will be pleased to invest Mr. McLean with the management, handing to that gentleman all correspondence, papers, &c., connected with the public business." This paragraph, taken in conjunction with the instructions I had previously received, confirmed both Mr. L. and myself in the opinion that I was to succeed him in the charge; and we took our measures accordingly.

I was very agreeably surprised to find that the high latitude of this locality (61° north) did not prevent agricultural operations from being carried on with success. Although the season had been rather unfavourable, the farm yielded four hundred bushels of potatoes, and upwards of one hundred bushels of barley; the barn-

yard, with its stacks of barley and hay, and the number of horned cattle around it, had quite the air of a farm standing in the "old country." It is to be regretted that the gentlemen here should have paid so little attention to the cultivation of the soil in former times, as the produce would, ere now, not only have contributed to the support of the establishment, but have afforded assistance to the natives in years of scarcity.

For these three years past the distress of the natives in this quarter has been without parallel; several hundreds having perished of want—in some instances, even at the gates of the trading post, whose inmates, far from having it in their power to relieve others, required relief themselves. Here, as in most other parts of the wooded country, rabbits form the principal subsistence of the natives, and when they fail, starvation is the sure and inevitable result; but no former period has been so productive of distress, to so fearful an extent, as the present. With the produce of the farm, Mr. L. was enabled to save the lives of

all those who resorted to his own post; but at Forts Good Hope, Norman, and De Liard, no assistance could be given; as those posts, like most others in the Indian country, depend entirely on the means the country affords in fish, flesh, and fowl, for their subsistence.

CHAPTER XV.

STATEMENTS IN THE EDINBURGH CABINET LIBRARY—ALLEGED KINDNESS OF THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY TO THE INDIANS—AND GENEROSITY—SUPPORT OF MISSIONARIES—SUPPORT WITHDRAWN—PREFERENCE OF ROMAN CATHOLICS—THE NORTH-WEST COMPANY—CONDUCT OF A BRITISH PEER—RIVALRY OF THE COMPANIES—COALITION—CHARGES AGAINST THE NORTH-WEST COMPANY REFUTED.

A VOLUME of the Edinburgh Cabinet Library, in which the Company's territories are described, came lately into my hands. It is there remarked, that "the Company's posts serve as hospitals, to which the Indians resort during sickness, and are supplied with food and medicine; that when winter arrives, the diseased and infirm are frequently left there; that the Company have made the most laudable efforts to instruct and civilize them, employing, at a great expense, Missionaries and Teachers," &c.

I am well aware that the author of this valuable production took it for granted that the information he had obtained, relative to our treatment of the Indians, and other matters, was correct, or he would not have permitted it to go forth to the world under the authority and sanction of his name. But without intending any disrespect to the author, I take leave to state that the above quotations have not the slightest foundation in fact. Our posts serve as hospitals! I have now passed twenty-four years of my life-time in the country; I have served in every quarter of it; and I own that I have never yet known a single instance of an Indian being retained at any inland post for medical treatment. The knowledge the natives possess of the medicinal virtues of roots and herbs, is generally equal to the cure of all their ailments; and we are, in fact, more frequently indebted to them, than they to us, for medical advice. I may mention, however, by way of exception to the general rule, that the dépôts along the coast are well supplied with medicines, and that there are medical men there who admi-

nister them to the natives when they apply for them.

In the interior we are allowed to doctor ourselves as we best can. What with the salubrity of the climate, and our abstemious fare, we are enabled, with the aid of a little Turlington balsam, and a dose of salts, perhaps, to overcome all our ailments. Most of us also use the lancet, and can even "spread a plaster, or give a glister," when necessary; but the Indians seldom trouble us.

As to the instruction the natives receive from us, I am at a loss to know what it is, where imparted, and by whom given. "A tale I could unfold!" But let it pass: certain it is, that neither our example nor our precept has had the effect of improving the morals or principles of the natives;—they are neither more enlightened, nor more civilized, by our endeavours, than if we had never appeared among them. The native interpreters even grow old in our service as ignorant of Christianity as the rudest savages who have never seen the face of a white man.

The Church Missionary Society has had two

Missionaries stationed at Red River settlement for some years past, one of whom is designated the Company's Chaplain, and is allowed 100%. per annum; the Roman Catholic bishop, too, receives his 100%, and doubtless understands, without any inspiration, the Company's policy in granting the annuity. The gentleman who conducts the academy has also 100% a-year; thus we have 300%, forming the sum total of the "great expenses" the Company are at. It is quite true there are thirteen schools at Red River; there are also eighteen windmills, and the Company furnishes just as much wind for the mills as funds for the support of the schools or teachers. Other teachers than those above specified I have neither seen nor heard of.

Some years ago five Missionaries were sent out to the Hudson's Bay territory by the Wesleyan Missionary Society. After having laboured for some time in the territory, by a decision of the Council the rank of commissioned gentleman, together with the usual allowances attached to that rank, was conferred on them.

The Missionaries had every reason to be grateful for these acts of kindness, and they both felt and expressed their gratitude. Their object, however, in coming to the country was to serve God, not the Hudson's Bay Company; and they proceeded to discharge their duty in the manner their conscience approved, instructing and enlightening the natives with the zeal and perseverance for which their sect is so eminently distinguished. The good fruits were soon apparent; in some parts of the country successful attempts were made to collect the natives: they were taught to cultivate the soil, to husband their produce, so as to render them less dependent on fortuitous circumstances for a living; they were taught to read and write, and to worship God "in spirit and in truth," and numbers "were daily added to the Church;" when, lo! it was discovered that the time devoted to religious exercises, and other duties arising out of the altered circumstances of the converts, was so much time lost to the fur-hunt; and from the moment this discovery was made, no further encouragement was given to the

innovators. Their labours were strictly confined to the stations they originally occupied, and every obstacle was thrown in the way of extending their missions. Even after some of them had travelled into the remotest parts, and opened up an amicable intercourse with the natives, they were told that collecting the Indians into villages was a measure not to be thought of, as the habitual indolence of the natives precluded the idea of their being induced to cultivate the soil; that even if they were so inclined, the country presented few localities fit for the purpose, &c.

Notwithstanding the high authority whence these allegations emanated, I think I can show the reader that they are in a great measure without foundation.

Here (in lat. 61° north)* we raise crops of barley and potatoes—the former in abundance every year,—the latter, however, are sometimes cut off by the frosts; but this is no more than happens in Canada, and many parts of the United States. The fact is, that there are many favour-

* On the banks of the McKenzie River.

able situations for agriculture to be found in every district of the Company's territories, except perhaps one or two on the shores of Hudson's Bay. The banks of the Athabasca, Peace, Slave, and McKenzie rivers present many localities fit for farming operations; and in the more southern districts they are, of course, far more frequent.

Had the Protestant ministers been allowed a free scope, and the encouragement they at first received been continued, they would ere now have had Missions established in many districts; and there can hardly be a doubt that they would have succeeded here, as elsewhere, in overcoming the natural sloth of the natives. Their good intentions, however, have been frustrated, and they have now the additional mortification of finding themselves supplanted by Romish priests, who, no later than last year, were allowed a free passage in the Company's craft, even to a district where a Protestant Missionary had been settled for several years previously, and had made considerable progress in converting the natives. Not only was he allowed a passage to the district, but

he was lodged and entertained in the Company's establishment.

The consequences of this strange procedure are obvious: the poor ignorant natives, hearing such conflicting doctrines, are at a loss what to think or what to believe; and, naturally enough, conclude that both are alike impostors, and therefore in many cases decline their instructions. It must be acknowledged, however, that the Romish priest is often more successful than the Protestant missionary, and that for obvious reasons. With the former, the Indian needs only profess a desire to become a Christian, and he is forthwith baptized; whereas with the latter, a probationary course—a trial of the proselyte's sincerity—is deemed indispensable. The peculiar dress, moreover, of the Romish ministers, and their imposing ritual, make a great impression on the senses of a barbarous people.

“*He* indeed,” say the Indians, when speaking of the priest, “he indeed looks like a great ‘man of medicine;’ but these others are just like our traders; we can see no difference.”

The fact, too, need not be disguised, that we ourselves find the priests far more accommodating than these meddling parsons. The priests, for instance, allow us to amuse ourselves in any manner we think fit, week-day or Sunday; and far from finding fault, ten to one if they don't join in the sport; the Protestant minister, on the contrary, never allows a violation of the sacred day to pass unnoticed, nor fails to warn the delinquent of the consequences. The priest connives at the Indian's hunting on Sunday—the minister strictly forbids it: the priests are single—the ministers are generally married, and their maintenance of course involves a far heavier expense. Considering these things, no reasonable person can surely find fault with us for preferring those who allow us to put what construction we please on the moral law, and at the same time oppose no obstacles to the advancement of our temporal interests.

And here I cannot but express my regret that our Protestant churches should have so long neglected the cultivation of a field that promised such rich harvests as the interior of America.

The superstitions of the aborigines scattered through the Hudson's Bay Company's territories are so gross, and so inconsistent with unsophisticated common sense; and their prejudices in favour of them have been so much shaken by their intercourse with the gentlemen of the trading posts and the other Europeans, whom they are accustomed to look up to as beings of a superior race, that there could be but little difficulty in removing what *remains* of these prejudices; and thus one of the greatest obstacles to the success of a Missionary in other parts of the heathen world, can scarcely be said to exist among them.

The Church of England, it is true, has done a little, but she might have done more—much more. Had the Missionaries at Red River exerted themselves, from the time of their first arrival in the country, in educating *natives* as Missionaries, and sent them forth to preach the Word, the pure doctrines of Christianity would, ere now, have been widely disseminated through the land. But nothing of this kind has been attempted: nor

could it be attempted—now that I think of it—the laying on of “the hands of a Bishop” being indispensable.

As to the diseased and infirm being frequently left at our posts in winter, all I can say is, that I have never seen any such at any of the posts I wintered at, or at any of the posts I visited; nor is it likely that, when we ourselves depend on the natives for a considerable part of our subsistence, we can do much to support them. We support neither old nor young, diseased nor infirm—that is the truth.

In the work above quoted I find the following paragraph relating to the North-West Company.

“Although the rivalry of the North-West Company had the effect of inspiriting and extending the trade; it was carried by them in many respects beyond the legitimate limits, not scrupling at open violence and bloodshed, in which Europeans and natives were alike sufferers.”

The controversy between those rival companies has long since been forgotten; but the subject being again obtruded on the public notice, evi-

dently in the spirit of prejudice, there can be nothing improper, I presume, in representing matters in their true and proper light. Many of the individuals thus calumniated are still alive and settled in the civilized world, where they are esteemed for qualities diametrically opposite to those ascribed to them by their slanderer.

It is well known that the chief advantages the Hudson's Bay Company now possess, they owe to the adventurous North-West traders; by these traders the whole interior of the savage wilds was first explored; by them the water communications were first discovered and opened up to commercial enterprise; by them the first trading posts were established in the interior; by them the natives were first reconciled to the whites; and by them the trade was first reduced to the regular system which the Hudson's Bay Company still follows. When all this had been done by the North-West Company, and they had begun to reap the reward of their toils, and hardships, and dangers, and expenditure—then did the Honourable Hudson's Bay Company, led on by a British

peer, step forward and claim, as British subjects, an equal right to share the trade.

Their *noble* leader appeared first in Montreal in the guise of a traveller, where he was received by the North-Westerns with open arms, was kindly and hospitably entertained by them, his minutest inquiries regarding their system of trade were candidly and freely answered; and the information thus obtained in the character of a traveller, a guest, and a friend, he forthwith proceeded to use to effect their ruin. Had, however, the North-West Company continued true to themselves, all his arts and attempts would have failed. Had not dissension arisen in the ranks, it is clear that *they*—not the Hudson's Bay Company—would have granted the capitulation. Unfortunately for themselves, however, the partners in the interior, seeing the contest continue so long, and the expenses swallow up all the profits, despaired of the success that was almost within their grasp, and commencing a correspondence among themselves, finally determined on opening a negotiation with their rivals. Two of their

number were accordingly sent home, invested with full powers to act for the general interest. Those gentlemen arrived just as the Directors of the North-West Company in London were about to conclude a most advantageous treaty—a few days more, and the articles had been ratified by the signatures of both parties. At this conjuncture the Delegates arrived, and instead of first communicating with their own Directors, went straight to the Hudson's Bay House, and presented their credentials. The Hudson's Bay Company saw their advantage, and instead of receiving, now dictated the terms; and thus the name of the North-West Company was merged in that of its rival, and the Canadian people were deprived of all interest in that trade which owed its origin to the courage and enterprise of their forefathers.

Such were the relative circumstances of the Hudson's Bay and North - West Companies. From 1674 to 1813 the Hudson's Bay Company slumbered at its posts along the shores of Hudson's Bay, never attempting to penetrate beyond the banks of the Saskatchewan, until the North-

Westers had led and cleared the way; and in this manner began their rivalry. That collisions should follow, marked by violence and outrage, need not be wondered at. But violence and outrage were not confined to one side; both parties exceeded the limits prescribed by law. Yet while stern justice alike condemns both, which is the more guilty party? or which has the greater claims on our sympathy?

As to the North-West Company being guilty of the blood of innocent Indians,—the charge is as false as it is invidious. When the blood of their servants was shed without cause or provocation, as frequently happened when they first encountered the fierce savage, they punished the aggressors as the law of God allows, demanding “blood for blood.” But while the author (or rather his informant, whose *ribbon* I can plainly distinguish, although he strikes in the dark) so freely censures the North-West Company for avenging the murder of their people, does he mean to insinuate that nothing of the kind is done under the *humane* and *gentle* rule of the

Hudson's Bay Company? What became of the Hannah Bay murderers? They were conveyed to Moose Factory, bound hand and foot, and there shot down by the orders of the Chief Factor. Did the murders committed by the natives at New Caledonia, Thompson's River, and the Columbia, pass unavenged? No! the penalty was fully paid in blood for blood.

But since the author's informant seems disposed to "rake up the smouldering embers" of days bygone, I shall take the liberty of telling him of a tragedy that was enacted at the ancient date of 1836-7. In that winter, a party of men, led by two clerks, was sent to look for some horses that were grazing at a considerable distance from the post. As they approached the spot they perceived a band of Assineboine Indians, eight in number (if I remember aright), on an adjacent hill, who immediately joined them, and, delivering up their arms, encamped with them for the night. Next morning a *cour martial* was held by the two clerks and some of the men, to determine the punishment due to the Indians for

having been found near the company's horses, with the *supposed* intention of carrying them off. What was the decision of this mock court martial? I shudder to relate, that the whole band, after having given up their arms, and partaken of their hospitality, were condemned to death, and the sentence carried into execution on the spot,—all were butchered in cold blood!

With the exception of the massacre of the Indians in McKenzie's River district in 1835, no such deed of blood had been heard of in the country. Yet our author's *impartial* informant, perfectly acquainted as he was with all the circumstances of the case, and ready enough as he is to trumpet to the world the alleged crimes of the North-West Company, takes no notice of it! It may be said that the Company are not answerable for crimes committed by their servants without their knowledge. True; but when they are made fully acquainted with those misdeeds, and allow the perpetrators to escape with impunity, the guilt is transferred to their own head; "invitat culpam qui peccatum præterit." The

proceedings of this court-martial were reported at head-quarters, and the punishment awarded to these murderers was—a reprimand! After this, what protection, or generosity, or justice, can the Indians be said to receive from the Hudson's Bay Company?

The Indians to this day talk of their North-west "fathers" with regret. "Our old traders, our fathers, did not serve us so," is a remark I have frequently heard in every part of the country where the North-West Company had established posts. Had their rule been distinguished by oppression or injustice, the natives would rather have expressed their satisfaction at its suppression; had it been tyrannical or oppressive, it would not have been long tolerated. The natives in those times were numerous and warlike; the trading-posts were isolated and far apart; and in the summer season, when the managers proceeded to the *dépôts*, with the greater part of their people, were entirely at the mercy of the natives, who would not have failed to take advantage of such opportunities to

avenge their wrongs, had they suffered any. The posts, in fact, were left entirely to their protection, and depended on them for support during the absence of the traders, who, on their return in autumn, found themselves surrounded by hundreds of rejoicing Indians, greeting their "fathers" with every manifestation of delight;—he who had not a gun to fire strained his lungs with shouting.

The native population has decreased at an extraordinary rate since those times. I do not mean to affirm that this decrease arises from the Hudson's Bay Company's treatment of them; but, from whatever cause arising, it is quite certain they have greatly decreased. Neither can it be denied, that the natives are no longer the manly, independent race they formerly were. On the contrary, we now find them gloomy and dispirited, unhappy and discontented.

As to our vaunted "generosity" to the natives, I am at a loss to know in what it consists. When a band of Indians arrive at a trading post, each individual is presented with a few inches of tobacco :

here (at Fort Simpson) in winter we add a fish to each. After their furs are traded, a few flints, awls, and hooks, and a trifle of ammunition is given them, in proportion to their hunts, and then—"Va-t-en." This is about the average amount of "generosity" they receive throughout the country; varied, however, by the differences of disposition observable in the Hudson's Bay Company's traders, as among all other mortals. Some of us would even withhold the awls and hooks, if we could; others, at the risk of being "hailed up" for extravagance, would add another hook to the number.

Were the Company's standing rules and regulations acted upon, we might perhaps have some title to the generosity we boast of. In these rules we are directed to supply *poor* Indians with ammunition and fishing tackle, gratis. This looks very well on paper; but are we allowed the means of bestowing these gratuities? Certainly not.*

* When the Israelites were ordered to provide straw for their bricks, the material *could* be procured in Egypt, although at the expense of great additional toil;—not so the supplies for the Indian trade; in the event of a deficiency, neither money nor labour can procure them.

Our outfits, in many cases, are barely sufficient to meet the exigencies of the trade ; they are continually reduced in proportion to the decrease in the returns ; and the strictest economy is not only recommended, but enforced. On the due fulfilment of these commands our prospects in the service depend ; and few indeed will think of violating them, or of sacrificing their own interests to benefit Indians. I repeat that, far from having it in our power to bestow anything gratuitously, we are happy when allowed sufficient means to barter for the furs the Indians bring us.

The Company also make it appear by their standing rules, that we are directed to instruct the children, to teach the servants, &c. ; but where are the means of doing so ? A few books, I have been told, were sent out for this purpose, after the coalition ; what became of them I know not. I never saw any. The history of commercial rule is well known to the world ; the object of that rule, wherever established, or by whomsoever exercised, is gain. In our intercourse with the natives of America no other object is discernible, no other object is thought of, no other object is allowed.

CHAPTER XVI.

ARRIVAL OF MR. LEFROY—VOYAGE TO THE LOWER POSTS OF THE MACKENZIE—AVALANCHE—INCIDENTS OF THE VOYAGE—VOYAGE TO PORTAGE LA LOCHE—ARBITRARY AND UNJUST CONDUCT OF THE GOVERNOR—DESPOTISM—MY REPLY TO THE GOVERNOR.

IN the early part of this winter several Indians came in, complaining that they were starving for want of food; and their emaciated forms proved that they did not complain without cause. Our means, however, were too limited to afford them any effectual relief. We were glad to learn afterwards, that although many suffered, none died from actual want; and the rabbits soon afterwards appearing in greater numbers than had been seen for years past, relief was obtained.

Towards the latter end of March, I was gratified by the arrival of Mr. Lefroy. This gentleman seems equal to all the hardships and priva-

tions of a voyageur's life, having performed the journey from Athabasca hither, a distance of at least six hundred miles, on snow-shoes, without appearing to have suffered any inconvenience from it; thus proving himself the ablest *mangeur de lard* we have had in the country for a number of years: there are many of our old winterers who would have been glad to excuse themselves if required to undertake such a journey.

The winter passed without any remarkable occurrence; and on the breaking up of the river, I set off for the lower posts, on the 23d of May, accompanied by Mr. Lefroy, whose zeal for scientific discovery neither cold, nor hunger, nor fatigue, seems to depress. We arrived at Fort Norman on the 27th of May; and after a few hours' delay, embarked, proceeding down stream, night and day.

We reached Fort Good Hope on the 29th, late in the evening; but evening, morning, midnight, and noon-day, are much the same here: I wrote at midnight by the clear light of heaven. The scientific reader need not be informed, that within the arctic circle the sun is but a very short time

beneath the horizon, during the summer solstice. The people of Fort Good Hope see him rising and setting behind the same hill; and in clear weather his rays shed a light above the horizon even after he is set; while during the winter solstice the same hill nearly conceals him from view. Yet the gentleman in charge of this post has passed two years without an inch of candle to light himself to bed; and his predecessor did the same; so that he has no reason to complain.

On our way down we observed a land-slip, or avalanche of earth, that had just tumbled into the river. Mr. Lefroy examined the bank whence it had been detached, and found, by measurement, that the frozen ground was forty-six feet in depth!

Our short sojourn at Fort Good Hope was rendered very unpleasant by the dismal weather; it continued snowing the whole time we remained. The storm abating, we embarked at an early hour, on the 31st of May, and had not proceeded above a few leagues, when a fair breeze sprang up, greatly to the satisfaction of all, but especially of the poor fellows whose toil it relieved. It continued in-

creasing ; reef after reef was taken in, till our sheet was finally reduced to a few feet in depth ; yet so furious was the gale that we ascended the strongest current with nearly the same velocity we had descended ; while the snow fell so thick, and the spray from the river was driven about so violently by the wind, that we could scarce see our way, and only escaped being dashed against the beach by keeping in the centre of the stream. It was also extremely cold ; so that our situation in an open boat was not the most enviable.

We arrived at Fort Norman on the 2d of June, about five, A.M., and remained until eleven, A.M., when we embarked, the gale still continuing with unabated violence. Immediately after leaving the Fort the gale carried away our mast ; fortunate it was for us that it gave way, else the boat must have capsized. We soon got another mast from the Fort, and sped on our way night and day, if it can be said there is any night here, when the light is so powerful as to throw the stars into the shade. Without experiencing much change in wind or weather, we arrived at Fort Simpson on the 8th of June ; having thus performed a voyage of about

1,400 miles (going and coming) in eleven days, including stoppages. I found Mr. Lewis so far recovered from the effects of his wound as to be able to take the same active part in the management of affairs as formerly.

The returns from the different posts being now received, we found them to amount to upwards of 15,000*l.* in value, according to the tariff of last year. Everything being ready for our departure, we left Fort Simpson on the 15th of June, Mr. Lefroy embarking with us. We proceeded to Great Slave Lake without interruption, the weather extremely fine. Within a day's rowing of Fort Resolution we encountered a field of ice that arrested our progress, till a change of wind carried it out to sea.

The moment a passage opened we observed a large canoe making for our encampment. It proved to be Mr. Lefroy's, which he had left with the most of his people at Athabasca. Mr. Lefroy embarked in his own craft, and we proceeded to Fort Resolution in company; and as he had determined on following a different route to Athabasca, we parted here, most probably never to meet again

in this life. Few gentlemen ever visited this country who acquired so general esteem as Mr. Lefroy; his gentlemanly bearing and affable manners endeared him to us all. We arrived at Athabasca on the 5th of July, and at Portage La Loche on the 25th, where we found an increased number of half-breeds waiting our arrival.

The brigade from York Factory arrived with the outfit on the 2d of August, and we exchanged cargoes with the utmost expedition, they receiving the returns of the district, and we the outfit brought by them. By this conveyance I received letters from the Governor, acquainting me "that another gentleman was appointed to the charge of McKenzie's River District, and that he (the Governor) could not conceive on what grounds I fancied myself to be the person so appointed, as he was certain I could not have arrived at such a conclusion from perusing the instructions I had received from him last year!" Until now I thought I understood the English language as well as most people; but the Governor makes it appear plainly enough that I ought still to confine myself to the old Celtic.

The instructions above referred to being given in the foregoing pages, I shall leave the reader to form his own opinion of one who, in the high and honourable position of a Governor, could treat so ungenerously one whom he admitted to be a faithful and meritorious servant, and whom he had acknowledged to be deserving of preferment: and that not on the present only, but on several former occasions.

This last insult I consider the climax to the wrongs I have so long suffered. First I am appointed in the usual terms to the charge of a district. I am allowed to continue in that opinion for a twelvemonth; I enter into correspondence with the gentlemen of the district as their future superintendent, and make my arrangements with them as such; and, *au bout du compte*, am ordered back to the same district to mix with the crowd, and submit to another master. I leave it to the reader to judge whether such a Governor could possibly have the interests of the Company at heart; even supposing for a moment there were no *injustice* in the case; I leave it to him to consider what effect a conduct and measures so

vacillating, unsteady and arbitrary, are likely to have on the service and interests of the Company.

This last act of the Governor made me completely disgusted with a service where such acts could be tolerated. In no colony subject to the British Crown is there to be found an authority so despotic as is at this day exercised in the mercantile Colony of Rupert's Land; an authority combining the despotism of military rule with the strict surveillance and mean parsimony of the avaricious trader. From Labrador to Nootka Sound the unchecked, uncontrolled will of a single individual gives law to the land. As to the nominal Council which is yearly convoked for form's sake, the few individuals who compose it know better than to offer advice where none would be accepted; they know full well that the Governor has already determined on his own measures before one of them appears in his presence. Their assent is all that is expected of them, and that they never hesitate to give. Many years pass without such a thing as a legally constituted

Council being held. A legal Council ought to consist of seven members besides the Governor ; three chief factors and four chief traders. The Council, however, seldom consists of more than five members and the Governor.

Some years ago, I happened to be at an establishment where a "Council" was about to be held. On inquiring of his Excellency's Secretary what subject of moment he thought would first engage their attention—

"Engage their attention!" he replied ; "bless your heart, man ! the minutes of Council were all drawn out before we arrived here ; I have them in my pocket."

Clothed with a power so unlimited, it is not to be wondered at that a man who rose from a humble situation should in the end forget what he was and play the tyrant. Let others, if they will, submit to be so ruled with a rod of iron. I at least shall not.

In reply to his favour, I addressed the following letter to his Excellency, a transcript of which I transmitted to the Committee.

“Portage La Loche,

“August 3, 1844.

“TO SIR GEORGE SIMPSON, GOVERNOR of Rupert's Land:—

“SIR—I have the honour to acknowledge your several favours from Lachine and Red River, and am mortified to learn by them you should think me so stupid as not to understand your letters on the subject of my appointment to the charge of the district; your language being so clear, in fact, as to admit of no other construction than the one I put upon it. By referring to the minutes of Council for 1843, I find myself appointed to Fort Good Hope for that year; but you wrote me subsequently to the breaking up of the Council, and used these words: ‘That is now the finest field we have for the extension of trade, and I count much on your activity for promoting our views in that quarter. But while directing your attention to the extension of *your district*, you must also use your best endeavours to curtail the indents.’

“Your letter to Mr. C. F. Lewis states, in

nearly these words, that I 'am appointed to succeed him;' and you beg of him 'to deliver into my hands all the documents that refer to the affairs of the district.' Mr. Lewis understood your letters in the same sense as myself, and so did every other person who perused them. What your object may have been in altering this arrangement afterwards, is best known to yourself; and whether such conduct can be reconciled with the principles of honour and integrity which you so strongly recommend in others, and which are so necessary to the well-being of society, is a question which I shall leave for the present to your own decision; while I cannot avoid remarking, that the treatment I have experienced from you on this and on many other occasions, is as unworthy of yourself and as unworthy of the high station you fill, as I am undeserving of it.

“ When in 1837, I was congratulated by every member of Council then present at Norway House on the prospect of my immediate promotion, (having all voted for me,) your authority was interposed, and I was, as a matter of course, rejected. You were then candid enough to tell

me that I should not have your interest until the two candidates you then had in view were provided for, and that it would then be my turn. With this assurance from you I cheerfully prepared for my *exile* to *Ungava*. *My turn* only came, however, after *seven* other promotions had been made, and I found myself the last on the list of three gentlemen who were promoted at the same time.

“ You are pleased to jest with the hardships I experienced while battling the watch with opposition in the Montreal department, and the privations I afterwards endured in New Caledonia. Surely, Sir, you ought to have considered it sufficient to have made me your dupe, and not add insult to oppression. While in the Montreal department I have your handwriting to show your approval of my ‘meritorious conduct,’ the course I was pursuing being ‘the direct road to preferment;’ and your intention, even then, ‘to recommend me to the favourable notice of the Governor and Committee;’—promises in which I placed implicit confidence at the time, being as yet a stranger to the ways of the world.—The result of these promises, however, was that the

moment opposition had ceased, I was ordered to resign my situation to another, and march to enjoy the 'delectable scenery' of New Caledonia; from thence you sent me to Ungava, where you say you are not aware I experienced any particular hardship or privation.

"You are aware of the circumstances in which I found myself when I arrived there: that consideration was not allowed to interpose between me and my duty, however; and I accordingly traversed that desolate country in the depth of winter,—a journey that nearly cost myself and my companions our lives. I then continued to explore the country during the entire period of my command, and finally succeeded in discovering a practicable communication with Esquimaux Bay, and in determining the question so long involved in uncertainty as to the riches the interior possessed, and by so doing saved an enormous expense to the concern. The Hon. Committee are aware of my exertions in that quarter, themselves, as I had the honour of being in direct communication with them while there.

"I have the honour, &c.

(Signed) "JOHN McLEAN."

CHAPTER XVII.

SITUATION OF FORT SIMPSON—CLIMATE—THE LIARD—EFFECTS OF THE SPRING FLOODS—TRIBES INHABITING MACKENZIE'S RIVER DISTRICT—PECULIARITIES—DISTRESS THROUGH FAMINE—CANNIBALISM—ANECDOTE—FORT GOOD HOPE SAVED BY THE INTREPIDITY OF M. DECHAMBAULT—DISCOVERIES OF MR. CAMPBELL.

MR. LEWIS embarked for York Factory on the 4th of August. I set out on my return on the 6th, and arrived at Fort Simpson on the 22d. Having prepared and sent off the outfit for the different posts with all possible expedition, I found myself afterwards at leisure to note down whatever I thought worthy of being recorded with reference to this section of the country.

There are seven posts in this district; three on the River Liard and its tributaries; three on the banks of McKenzie's River, and one on Peel's River. About two degrees to the north of Good

Hope, Fort Simpson, the dépôt of the district, is situated at the confluence of the Liard and McKenzie, in lat. 61° north. Heat and cold are here felt in the extremes; the thermometer frequently falls to 50° minus in winter, and rises sometimes to 100° in the shade in summer. The River Liard has its source in the south among the Rocky Mountains: its current is remarkably strong; and in the early part of summer, when swollen by the melting of the snow, it rushes down in a foaming torrent, and pours into the McKenzie, still covered with solid ice, when a scene ensues terrific and grand:—the ice, resisting for some time the force of the flood, ultimately gives way with the noise of thunder, and clashing, roaring and tumbling, it rolls furiously along until it accumulates to such an extent as to dam the river across. This again presents, for a time, a solid barrier to the flood, which is stopped in its course; it then rises sometimes to the height of thirty and forty feet, overflowing the adjacent country for miles, and levelling the largest trees with the ground. The effects of this frightful conflict are visible in all the lower grounds along the river.

The trading posts are situated on the higher grounds, yet they are not secure from danger. Fort Good Hope was swept clean away some years ago, and its inmates only saved themselves by getting into a boat that happened fortunately to be at hand. The McKenzie opens about the end of May, and is ice-bound in November.

The tribes who inhabit the banks of the McKenzie, and the interior parts of the district, are members of the powerful and numerous Chippewyan family, and are known by the names of Slaves, Dogribs, Rabbitskins, and Gens des Montagnes. The Loucheux, or Squint-Eyes, frequent the post on Peel's River, and speak a different language; their hunting-grounds are within the Russian boundary, and are supposed to be rich in fur-bearing animals. The Loucheux have no affinity with the Chippewyan tribes, nor with their neighbours, the Esquimaux, with whom, however, they maintain constant intercourse, though not always of the most friendly kind, violent quarrels frequently occurring between them. The various dialects spoken by the other tribes are intelligible to all; in manners, customs,

and personal appearance, there is also the closest similarity.

In one point, however, these tribes differ, not only from the parent tribe, but from all the other tribes of America;—they treat their women with the utmost kindness, the men performing all the drudgery that usually falls to the women. Here the men are the hewers of wood and drawers of water; they even clear away the snow for the encampment; and, in short, perform every laborious service. This is indeed passing strange;—the Chippewayans, and all other Indians, treat their women with harshness and cruelty; while the women on the banks of the McKenzie—Scotticé—“wear the breeks!” The Rabbitskins and Slaves are in truth a mild, harmless, and even a timid race; could it be this softness of disposition that induced the weaker sex first to dispute, and finally to assume the supremacy?—or what cause can be assigned for a trait so peculiar in this remotely situated portion of the Indian race?

These tribes clothe themselves with the skins of rabbits, and feed on their flesh; when the

rabbits fail, they are reduced to the greatest distress both for food and raiment. I saw a child that remained naked for several days after its birth, its parents having devoured every inch of their miserable dress that could be spared from their bodies: it was at last swaddled in crow's skins!

These two tribes generally live near the banks of the great rivers, and seem disposed to pass their pilgrimage on earth with as little toil, and as little regard to comfort, as any people in being. They pass summer and winter in the open air; they huddle together in an encampment, without any other shelter from the inclemency of the weather than what is afforded by the spreading branches of some friendly pine, and use no more fire than what is barely sufficient to keep them from freezing. Their wants are few, and easily provided for; when they have killed a few deer to afford them sinews for making rabbit-snares, they may be said to be independent for the remainder of the season. Their work consists in setting those snares, carrying home the game caught in them, eating them when cooked, and

then lying down to sleep. A taste, however, for articles of European manufacture is gaining ground among them, and to obtain those articles a more active life is necessary, so that some tolerable fur-hunters are now to be found among them.

The Dogribs occupy the barren grounds that are around Great Bear Lake, and extend to the Copper-mine River. That part of the country abounds in rein-deer, whose skin and flesh afford food and raiment to the natives. They are a strong, athletic, well-formed race of Indians, and are considered more warlike than their neighbours, who evidently dread them.

None of the Indians who frequent the posts on McKenzic's River have hereditary chiefs; the dignity is conferred by the gentlemen in charge of posts on the best hunters. On these occasions a suit of clothes is bestowed, the most valued article of which is a coat of coarse red cloth, decorated with lace; and, as the reward of extraordinary merit, a felt hat is added, ornamented in the same manner, with a feather stuck in the side of it. Thus equipped, the new-made

chief sallies forth to receive the gratulations of his admiring friends and relatives, among whom the coat is ultimately divided, and probably finishes its course in the shape of a tobacco-pouch. In course of time, the individuals thus distinguished obtain some weight in the councils of their people, but their influence is very limited; the whole of the Chippewayan tribes seem averse to superior rule.

Like the Esquimaux and Carriers, they seem to have had no idea of religion prior to the settlement of Europeans among them; all the terms they at present use in reference to the subject seem of recent origin, and invented by the interpreters. They name the Deity, "Ya ga ta-that-hee-hee,"—"The Man who reclines on the sky;" angels are called "the birds of the Deity,"—"ya gat he-be e Yadzé;" the devil, "Ha is linee," or, "the sorcerer."

The Slaves and Rabbitskins have also their magicians, whom alone they fear and reverence. Polygamy is not common, yet there are instances of one man having two *female masters*. In times of famine the cravings of hunger often drive these

poor Indians to desperation, when the feelings of humanity and of nature seem utterly eradicated.

During the fearful distress of the two past years, a band of Slaves came to Fort Simpson in a condition not to be described. Many of them had perished by the way; but the history of one family is the most shocking I ever heard. The husband first destroyed the wife, and packed her up as provision for the journey. The supply proving insufficient, one of the children was next sacrificed. The cannibal was finally left by the party he accompanied with only one child remaining—a boy of seven or eight years of age. Mr. Lewis immediately despatched two men with some pemmican, to meet him; the aid came too late,—they found the monster roasting a part of his last child at the fire. Horrified at the sight, they uttered not a word, but threw the provisions into the encampment, and retreated as fast as they could. A few days afterwards this brute arrived strong and hearty, and appeared as unconcerned as if all had gone on well with him and his family. Cannibalism is more frequently known among the Slaves and Rabbitskins than any other of the

kindred tribes; and it is said that women are generally the perpetrators of the crime; it is also said, that when once they have tasted of this unhallowed food they prefer it to every other.

All the Chippewayan tribes dispose of their dead by placing them in tombs made of wood, and sufficiently strong to resist the attacks of wild beasts. The body is laid in the tomb at full length, without any particular direction being observed as to the head or feet. Neither they, nor any other Indians I am acquainted with, place their dead in a sitting posture.

It is affirmed by some writers that the Indians have a tradition among them of the migration of their progenitors from east to west. I have had every opportunity of investigating the question, and able interpreters wherever I wintered; but I never could learn that any such tradition existed. Even in their tales and legends there is never any reference to a distant land; when questioned in regard to this, their invariable answer is, "Our fathers and our fathers' fathers have hunted on these lands ever since the flood, and we never heard of any other country till the

whites came among us." These tribes have the same tradition in regard to the flood, that I heard among the Algonquins at the gates of Montreal, some trifling incidents excepted.

Unlike most other Indians, the Slaves have no fixed bounds to their hunting-grounds, but roam at large, and kill whatever game comes in their way, without fear of their neighbours. The hunter who first finds a beaver-lodge claims it as his property, but his claim is not always respected.

Besides the Indians enumerated in the preceding pages, a number of stragglers, but little known to us, occasionally resort to the post. A band of these—nine in number—made their appearance at Fort Norman this summer; and, after trading their furs, set out for Fort Good Hope, with the avowed intention of plundering the establishment, and carrying off all the women they could find. On arriving at the post they rushed in, their naked bodies blackened and painted after the manner of warriors bent on shedding blood; each carrying a gun and dirk in his hands.

The chief, on being presented with the usual gratuity—a piece of tobacco, rudely refused it; and commenced a violent harangue against the whites, charging them with the death of all the Indians who had perished by hunger during the last three years; and finally challenged M. Dechambault, the gentleman in charge of the post, to single combat. M. Dechambault, *dicto citius*, instantly sprung upon him, and twisting his arm into his long hair, laid him at his feet; and pointing his dagger at his throat, dared him to utter another word. So sudden and unexpected was this intrepid act, that the rest of the party looked on in silent astonishment, without power to assist their fallen chief, or revenge his disgrace. M. Dechambault was too generous to strike a prostrate foe, even although a savage, but allowed the crest-fallen chief to get on his legs again; and thus the affair ended.

The Company owe the safety of the establishment to Mr. D.'s intrepidity: had he hesitated to act at the decisive moment, the game was up with him, for he had only two lads with him, on whose aid he could place but little reliance. Mr. D.

has been thirty years in the Company's service, and is still a *clerk*; but he is himself to blame for his want of promotion, having been so inconsiderate as to allow himself to be born in Canada, a crime which admits of no expiation.

This district is at present by far the richest in furs of any in the country; this is owing partly to the indolence of the natives, and partly to the circumstance of the beaver in some localities being, through the barrenness of the surrounding country, inaccessible to the hunter. When the haunts of the animal become overcrowded, they send forth colonies to other quarters.

At the first arrival of the Europeans, large animals, especially moose and wood rein-deer, were abundant everywhere. In those times the resources of the district were adequate to the supply of provisions for every purpose; whereas, of late years, we have been under the necessity of applying for assistance to other districts.

A new field has lately been laid open for the extension of the trade of this district. An enterprising individual—Mr. R. Campbell—having been for several years employed in exploring the in-

terior, last summer succeeded in finding his way to the west side of the Rocky Mountain chain. The defile he followed led him to the banks of a very large river, on which he embarked with his party of hardy pioneers; and following its course for several days through a charming country, rich in game of every description—elk, rein-deer, and beaver, he eventually fell in with Indians, who received them kindly, although they had never seen Europeans before. From them he learned that a party of whites, Russians of course, had ascended the river in the course of the summer, had quarrelled with the natives, and killed several of them; and that the whites had returned forthwith to the coast. These friendly Indians entreated Mr. C. to proceed no farther, representing that he and his party were sure to fall victims to their revenge. This, however, could not shake his resolution; he had set out with the determination of proceeding to the sea at all hazards, and no prospect of danger could turn him from it; till his party refused to proceed farther on any conditions, when he was compelled to return.

The returns of this district have, for years past, averaged 12,000*l.* per annum; the outfit, including supplies for officers and servants, has not exceeded as many hundreds. The affairs of the different posts are managed by seven or eight clerks and postmasters; and there are about forty hired servants—Europeans, Canadians, and half-breeds; Indians are hired for the trip to the portage. The living for some years past has not been such as Gil Blas describes, as “fit to tickle the palate of a bishop;” at Fort Simpson we had, for the most part of the season, fish and potatoes for breakfast, potatoes and fish for dinner, and cakes made of flour and grease for supper. The fish procured in this quarter is of a very inferior quality.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MR. MACPHERSON ASSUMES THE COMMAND—I AM APPOINTED TO FORT LIARD, BUT EXCHANGE FOR GREAT SLAVE LAKE—THE INDIANS—RESOLVE TO QUIT THE SERVICE—PHENOMENA OF THE LAKE.

ON the 2d of October Mr. McPherson arrived from Canada, and I forthwith demitted the charge. I was now appointed to Fort Liard, but the season being far advanced, it had been found necessary to appoint another previously, whose arrangements for the season being completed, it was deemed expedient that I should pass the winter at Great Slave Lake; and I embarked for that station accordingly on the 4th, and arrived on the 16th.

This post formerly belonged to Athabasca, but is now transferred to McKenzie's River district. The natives consist of Chippewayans, properly so

called, and Yellow Knives, a kindred tribe; the former inhabit the wooded parts of the country, extending along the northern and eastern shores of the lake; and the latter, the opposite side extending towards the Arctic regions, where there is no wood to be found; it abounds, however, in rein-deer and musk oxen. The Yellow Knives were at one time a powerful and numerous tribe; but their number has been greatly diminished by a certain disease that lately prevailed among them, and proved peculiarly fatal. They also waged a short but bloody war with the Dogribs, that cost many lives. They muster at present between sixty and eighty men able to bear arms.

The Chippewayans in this quarter are a shrewd sensible people, and evince an eager readiness to imitate the whites. Some years ago a Methodist Missionary visited Athabasca; and although he remained but a short time, his instructions seemed to have made a deep impression. They observe the Sabbath with great strictness, never stirring from their lodges to hunt, nor even to fetch home the game when killed, on that day; and they carefully abstain from all the grosser vices to

which they formerly were addicted. What might not be expected of a people so docile, if they possessed the advantages of regular instruction!

Having fortunately a supply of books with me, and other means of amusement, I found the winter glide away without suffering much from ennui; my health, however, proved very indifferent; and that circumstance alone would have been sufficient to induce me to quit this wretched country, even if my earlier prospects had been realized, as they have not been. From the accout current, I find my income as chief trader for 1841 amounts to no more than 120%: “*Sic vos non vobis mellificatis apes;*” and since things are come to this pass, it is high time I should endeavour to make honey for myself, in some other sphere of life. I therefore transmitted my resignation to head-quarters.

I cannot close this chapter without mentioning a singular phenomenon which the lake presents in the winter season. The ice is never less than five feet in thickness, frequently from eight to nine; yet the water under this enormous crust not only feels the changes in the atmosphere, but

anticipates them. An approaching change of wind or weather is known twenty-four hours before it occurs. For instance, while the weather is perfectly calm, if a storm be at hand, the lake becomes violently agitated the day before; when calm weather is to succeed, it is indicated in like manner by the previous stillness of the lake, even when the gale is still raging in the air. In summer there is no perceptible current in the lake; in winter, however, a current always sets in the direction of the wind, and indicates a change of wind by running in a different direction. These curious points have been ascertained by the long observation of our fishermen, who, in the beginning of winter, bore holes in the ice for the purpose of setting their lines, and visit them every day, both in order to keep them open, and to take up what fish may be caught.

In consequence of the frequent shifting of the current, they experience no little difficulty in adjusting their lines, the current being occasionally so strong as to raise them to an angle of forty degrees. Thus, if the lines were too long, and the current not very strong, they would

drag on the bottom ; if too short, and the current strong, they would be driven up upon the ice. The approach of a storm is indicated, not by any heaving of the ice, but by the strength of the current, and the roaring of the waves under the ice, which is distinctly heard at a considerable distance, and is occasionally increased by the collision of detached masses of broken ice, which, in the earlier part of the season, have been driven under the main crust.

CHAPTER XIX.

REFLECTIONS—PROSPECTS IN THE SERVICE—DECREASE OF THE GAME—COMPANY'S POLICY IN CONSEQUENCE—APPEAL OF THE INDIANS—MEANS OF PRESERVING THEM, AND IMPROVING THEIR CONDITION—ABOLITION OF THE CHARTER—OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

THE history of my career may serve as a warning to those who may be disposed to enter the Hudson's Bay Company's service. They may learn that, from the moment they embark in the Company's canoes at Lachine, or in their ships at Gravesend, they bid adieu to all that civilized man most values on earth. They bid adieu to their family and friends, probably for ever; for if they should remain long enough to attain the promotion that allows them the privilege of revisiting their native land—a period of from twenty to twenty-five years—what changes does

not this life exhibit in a much shorter time? They bid adieu to all the comforts and conveniences of civilized life, to vegetate at some desolate, solitary post, hundreds of miles, perhaps, from any other human habitation, save the wigwam of the savage; without any other society than that of their own thoughts, or of the two or three humble individuals who share their exile. They bid adieu to all the refinement and cultivation of civilized life, not unfrequently becoming semi-barbarians,—so altered in habits and sentiments, that they not only become attached to savage life, but eventually lose all relish for any other.

I can give good authority for this. The Governor, writing me last year regarding some of my acquaintances who had recently retired, observes — “ They are comfortably settled, but apparently at a loss what to do with themselves; and sigh for the Indian country, the squaws, and skins, and savages.”

Such are the rewards the Indian trader may expect;—add to these, in a few cases, the acquisition of some thousands, which, after forty years’

exile, he has neither health, nor strength, nor taste to enjoy. Few instances have occurred of gentlemen retiring with a competency under thirty-five or forty years' servitude, even in the best days of the trade; what period may be required to attain that object in these times, is a question not easily solved. Up to 1840, one eighty-fifth share had averaged 400*l.* per annum; since then, however, the dividends have been on the decline, nor are they ever likely to reach the same amount, for several reasons,—the chief of which is the destruction of the fur-bearing animals.

In certain parts of the country, it is the Company's policy to destroy them along the whole frontier; and our general instructions recommend that every effort be made to lay waste the country, so as to offer no inducement to petty traders to encroach on the Company's limits. Those instructions have indeed had the effect of ruining the country, but not of protecting the Company's domains. Along the Canadian frontier, the Indians, finding no more game on their own lands, push beyond the boundary, and not only

hunt on the Company's territory, but carry a supply of goods with them, which they trade with the natives. Their Honours' fiat has also nearly swept away the fur animals on the west side of the Rocky Mountains; yet I doubt whether all this precaution will ensure the integrity of their domains. The Americans have taken possession of the Columbia, and will speedily multiply and increase: ere many years their trappers will be found scouring the interior, from the banks of the Columbia to New Caledonia, and probably penetrating to the east side of the Rocky Mountains. Should they do so, that valuable part of the country embraced by the Peace and McKenzie Rivers would soon be ruined; for the white trapper makes a clean sweep wherever he goes. Taking all these circumstances into consideration, I do not see any great probability—to say the least—that the trade will ever attain the prosperity of days bygone.

Even in such parts of the country as the Company endeavour to preserve, both the fur-bearing and larger animals have of late become so scarce, that some tribes are under the necessity of quit-

ting their usual hunting-grounds. A certain gentleman, in charge of a district to which some of those Indians withdrew, on being censured for harbouring them in his vicinity, writes thus:—
“ Pray, is it surprising, that poor Indians, whose lives are in jeopardy, should relish a taste of buffalo meat? It is not the Chippewayans alone that leave their lands to go in search of food to preserve their lives; the Strongwood Crees and Assineboines are all out in the plains, because, as they affirm, their usual hunting-grounds are so exhausted that they cannot live upon them. It is no wish of mine that those Indians should visit us—we have trouble enough with our own,—but to turn a poor Indian out of doors, who arrives at the Company's establishment nearly dead with hunger, is what I am not able to do.”

In the work already quoted I find it stated “that the Company have carefully nursed the various animals, removing their stations from the various districts where they had become scarce, and taking particular care to preserve the female while pregnant! instead, therefore, of being in a state of diminution, as generally supposed, the

produce is increasing throughout their domains." Fudge! It is unnecessary to say, that if this statement were correct, we should not hear such distressing accounts of starvation throughout the country. No people can be more attached to their native soil than the Indians; and it is only the most pressing necessity that ever compels them to remove.

In 1842 the Governor and Committee issued positive orders that the beavers should be preserved, and every effort made to prevent the Indians from killing them for a period of three years. This was, in a great measure, "shutting the stable door after the steed was stolen." The beavers had already been exterminated in many parts of the country; and even where some were yet to be found, our injunctions to the natives to preserve them had but little weight. To appease their hunger they killed whatever game came in their way, and as we were not permitted to buy the beaver skins, they either converted them into articles of clothing for themselves or threw them away. Now (1845) the restriction is removed, and the beavers have sensibly increased; but

mark the result: the natives are not only encouraged but strenuously urged to hunt, in order that the parties interested may indemnify themselves for their lost time; and ere three years more shall have elapsed, the beaver will be found scarcer than ever.

It is thus evident that whatever steps their Honours may take to preserve the game, the attainment of that object, in the present exhausted state of the country, is no longer practicable.

As to the Company's having ever issued orders, or recommended any particular measures for the preservation of the larger animals, male or female, the statement is positively untrue. The minutes of the Council are considered the statutes of the land, and in them the provision districts are directed to furnish so many bags of pemmican, so many bales of dry meat, and so many cwt. of grease, every year; and no reference whatever is made to restrictions of any kind in killing the animals. The fact is, the provisions must be forthcoming whatever be the consequence; our business cannot be carried on without them.

That the natives wantonly destroy the game in

years of deep snow is true enough; but the snow fell to as great a depth before the advent of the whites as after, and the Indians were as prone to slaughter the animals then as now; yet game of every description abounded and want was unknown. To what cause then are we to ascribe the present scarcity? There can be but one answer—to the destruction of the animals which the prosecution of the fur-trade involves.

As the country becomes impoverished, the Company reduce their outfits so as to ensure the same amount of profit,—an object utterly beyond their reach, although economy is pushed to the extreme of parsimony; and thus, while the game becomes scarcer, and the poor natives require more ammunition to procure their living, their means of obtaining it, instead of being increased, are lessened. As an instance of the effects of this policy, I shall mention what recently occurred in the Athabasca district.

Up to 1842 the transport of the outfit required four boats, when it was reduced to three. The reduction in the article of ammunition was felt so severely by the Chippewayans, that the poor crea-

tures, in absolute despair, planned a conspiracy to carry off the gentleman at the head of affairs, and retain him until the Company should restore the usual outfit.

Despair alone could have suggested such an idea to the Chippewayans, for they have ever been the friends of the white man. Mr. Campbell, however, who had passed his life among them, conducted himself with so much firmness and judgment, that, although the natives had assembled in his hall with the intention of carrying their design into execution, the affair passed over without any violence being attempted.

The general outfit for the whole northern department amounted in 1835, to 31,000*l.*; now (1845) it is reduced to 15,000*l.*, of which one-third at least is absorbed by the stores at Red River settlement, and a considerable portion of the remainder by the officers and servants of the Company throughout the country. I do not believe that more than one half of the outfit goes to the Indians.

While the resources of the country are thus becoming yearly more and more exhausted, the

question naturally suggests itself, What is to become of the natives when their lands can no longer furnish the means of subsistence? This is indeed a serious question, and well worthy of the earnest attention of the philanthropist. While Britain makes such strenuous exertions in favour of the sable bondsmen of Africa, and lavishes her millions to free them from the yoke, can nothing be done for the once noble, but now degraded, aborigines of America? Are they to be left to the tender mercies of the trader until famine and disease sweep them from the earth? People of Britain! the Red Men of America thus appeal to you;—from the depths of their forest they send forth their cry—

“ Brethren! beyond the Great Salt Lake,
we, the Red Men of America salute
you :—

“ Brethren!

“ We hear that you are a great and a generous people; that you are as valiant as generous; and that you freely shed your blood and scatter your gold in defence of the weak and

oppressed; if it be so, you will open your ears to our plaints.

“ Brethren! Our ancients still remember when the Red Men were numerous and happy; they remember the time when our lands abounded with game; when the young men went forth to the chase with glad hearts and vigorous limbs, and never returned empty; in those days our camps resounded with mirth and merriment; our youth danced and enjoyed themselves; they anointed their bodies with fat; the sun never set on a foodless wigwam, and want was unknown.

“ Brethren! When your kinsmen came first to us with guns, and ammunition, and other good things the work of your hands, we were glad and received them joyfully; our lands were then rich, and yielded with little toil both furs and provisions to exchange for the good things they brought us.

“ Brethren! Your kinsmen are still amongst us; they still bring us goods, and now we cannot want them; without guns and ammunition we must die. Brethren! our fathers were urged by the white men to hunt; our fathers listened to

them; they ranged wood and plain to gratify their wishes; and now our lands are ruined, our children perish with hunger.

“ Brethren! We hear that you have another Great Chief who rules over you, to whom even our great trading Chief must bow; we hear that this great and good Chief desires the welfare of all his children; we hear that to him the white man and the red are alike, and, wonderful to be told! that he asks neither furs nor game in return for his bounty. Brethren! we feel that we can no longer exist as once we did; we implore your Great Chief to shield us in our present distress; we desire to be placed under his immediate care, and to be delivered from the rule of the trading Chief who only wants our furs, and cares nothing for our welfare.

“ Brethren! Some of your kinsmen visited us lately; they asked neither our furs nor our flesh; their sojourn was short; but we could see they were good men; they advised us for our good, and we listened to them. Brethren! We humbly beseech your Great Chief that he would send some of those good men to live amongst us:

we desire to be taught to worship the Great Spirit in the way most pleasing to him : without teachers among us we cannot learn. We wish to be taught to till the ground, to sow and plant, and to perform whatever the good white people counsel us to do to preserve the lives of our children.

“ Brethren ! We could say much more, but we have said enough,—we wish not to weary you.

“ Brethren ! We are all the children of the Great Spirit ; the red man and the white man were formed by him. And although we are still in darkness and misery, we know that all good flows from him. May he turn your hearts to pity the distress of your Red Brethren ! Thus have we spoken to you.”

Such are the groans of the Indians. Would to Heaven they were heard by my countrymen as I have heard them ! Would to Heaven that the misery I have witnessed were seen by them ! The poor Indians then would not appeal to them in vain. I can scarcely hope that the voice of a humble, unknown individual, can reach the ears, or make any impression on the minds of those who have the supreme rule in Britain ; but if there are

there men of rank, and fortune, and influence, whose hearts sympathise with the misery and distress of their fellow-men, whatever be their country or hue—and, thank God! there are not a few—it is to those true Britons that I would appeal in behalf of the much-wronged Indians; the true and rightful owners of the American soil.

If I am asked what I would suggest as the most effective means for saving the Indians, I answer: Let the Company's charter be abolished, and the portals of the territory be thrown wide open to every individual of capital and enterprise, under certain restrictions; let the British Government take into its hands the executive power of the territory, and appoint a governor, judges, and magistrates; let Missionaries be sent forth among the Indians;—already the whole of the Chippewayan tribes, from English River to New Caledonia, are disposed to adopt our religion as well as our customs, so that the Missionaries' work is half done. Let those of them who manifest a disposition to steady industry be encouraged to cultivate the ground: let such as evince any aptitude for mechanics be taught some handicraft, and congre-

gated in villages, wherever favourable situations can be found—and there is no want of them. Let schools be established and supported by Government—not mere *common* schools, where reading, writing, arithmetic, and perhaps some of the higher branches may be taught; but *training* and *industrial* schools. Where the soil or climate is unfit for husbandry, other means of improving their condition might be resorted to. In the barren grounds, bordering on the Arctic regions, rein-deer still abound. Why should not the Indians succeed in domesticating these animals, and rendering them subservient to their wants, as the Laplanders do? I have been informed that the Yellow Knives, and some of the other tribes inhabiting these desert tracts, have the art of taming the fawns, which they take in great numbers while swimming after their dams, so that they follow them like dogs till they see fit to kill them.

Such, in brief, are the measures which, after much experience, and long and serious consideration, I would venture to propose in behalf of the Indians; and most happy shall I be if anything I have said shall have the effect of awakening the

public interest to their condition ; or form the groundwork of any plan which, by the blessing of God, may have the effect of preserving and christianizing the remnants of these unhappy tribes.

It may be objected, that the Company have had their charter renewed for a period of twenty-one years, which does not expire till 1863 ; and that Government is bound in honour to sustain the validity of the deed. But if Government is bound to protect the *interests* of the Hudson's Bay Company, is it less bound to protect the *property* and *lives* of their weak, ignorant, and wronged subjects ? The validity of the original charter, the foundation of the present, is, however, more than questioned ; nay, it has been declared by high authority to be null and void. Admitting its validity, and admitting that the dictates of honour call for the fulfilment of the charter in guarding the *profits* of the few individuals (and their dependants) who assemble weekly in the old house in Fenchurch Street ; are we to turn a deaf ear to the still small voice of justice and humanity pleading in behalf of the numerous tribes of perishing Indians ? Now, now is the time to apply

the remedy; in 1863, where will the Indian be?

If it is urged that the measures I propose violate the charter, deprive the Company of their sovereignty, and reduce them to the situation of subjects; still, I say, they will have vast advantages over every other competitor. Their ample resources, their long exclusive possession of the trade, their experience, the skill and activity of their agents, will long, perhaps permanently, secure to them the greatest portion of the trade; while the Indians will be greatly benefited by a free competition.

If it be urged that the profits will be so much reduced by competition, that the trade will not be worth pursuing; I answer, that competition has certainly a natural tendency to reduce profits; but experience proves that it has also a tendency to reduce costs. A monopolist company never goes very economically to work; and, although much economy, or rather parsimony, of a very questionable and impolitic kind, has been of late years attempted to be introduced into the management of the Hudson's Bay Company's affairs, a free and

fair competition will suggest economy of a sounder kind—the facilitating of transport, the improvement of portages, and the saving of labour. Where are the evils which interested alarmists predicted would follow the modification of the East India Company's charter?

I have spoken of restrictions to be imposed on those who engage in the trade. These are;—that no one be allowed to engage in it without a licence from Government;—that these licensed traders should be confined to a certain locality, beyond which they should not move, on any pretext;—and that no spirituous liquors should be sold or given to the Indians under the severest penalties—such as the forfeiture of the offender's licence, and of their right to participate in the trade in all time coming.

CHAPTER XX.

WESLEYAN MISSION—MR. EVANS—ENCOURAGEMENT GIVEN BY THE COMPANY—MR. EVANS'S EXERTIONS AMONG THE INDIANS—CAUSES OF THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE COMPANY'S SUPPORT—CALUMNIOUS CHARGES AGAINST MR. EVANS—MR. E. GOES TO ENGLAND—HIS SUDDEN DEATH.

ALLUSION has been made in a former chapter to the Company's encouragement of Missionaries ; I shall now add a few facts by way of illustration.

The Rev. Mr. Evans, a man no less remarkable for genuine piety than for energy and decision of character, had been present at several of the annual meetings of the Indians at Manitoulin Island, and had felt his sympathy deeply awakened by the sight of their degradation and spiritual destitution. While thus affected, he received an invitation from the American Episcopal Methodists to go as a Missionary among the Indians resident

in the Union. Feeling, however, that his services were rather due to his fellow-subjects, he resolved to devote his labours and his life to the tribes residing in the Hudson's Bay territory. Having made known his intentions to this Canada Conference, he, together with Messrs. Thomas Hurlburt, and Peter Jacobs, was by them appointed a Missionary, and at their charges sent to that territory. No application was made to the Company, and neither encouragement nor support was expected from them. Mr. E. and his brother Missionaries began their operations by raising with their own hands, unassisted, a house at the Pic; themselves cutting and hauling the timber on the ice. They obtained, indeed, a temporary lodging at Fort Michipicoton, but they not only found their own provisions, but the comforts of the establishment were materially increased by Mr. E.'s and his interpreter's success in fishing and hunting. Late in the fall, accompanied by two Indian boys in a small canoe, Mr. E. made a voyage to Sault Ste Marie for provisions: and on this expedition, rendered doubly hazardous by the lateness of the season, and the inexperience

of his companions, he more than once narrowly escaped being lost.

Returning next season to Canada for his family, he met Sir G. Simpson, on Lake Superior. Having learned that the Mission was already established, and likely to succeed, Sir George received him with the utmost urbanity, treating him not only with kindness but with distinction; he expressed the highest satisfaction at the establishment of the Mission, promised him his utmost support, and at length proposed that arrangement, which, however apparently auspicious for the infant Mission, was ultimately found to be very prejudicial to it.

The caution of Mr. E. was completely lulled asleep by the apparent kindness of the Governor, and the hearty warmth with which he seemed to enter into his views. Sir George proposed that the Missionaries should hold the same rank and receive the same allowance as the wintering partners, or commissioned officers; and that canoes, or other means of conveyance, should be furnished to the Missionaries for their expeditions; nor did it seem unreasonable to stipulate

that in return for these substantial benefits, they should say or do nothing prejudicial to the Company's interests either among the natives, or in their Reports to the Conference in England, to whose jurisdiction the Mission was transferred. The great evil of this arrangement was, that the Missionaries, from being the servants of God, accountable to Him alone, became the servants of the Hudson's Bay Company, dependent on, and amenable to them; and the Committee were of course to be the sole judges of what was, or was not, prejudicial to their interests. Still, it is impossible to blame very severely either Mr. E. or the Conference for accepting offers apparently so advantageous, or even for consenting to certain restrictions in publishing their Reports:—with the assistance and co-operation of the Company great good might be effected;—with the hostility of a Corporation all but omnipotent within its own domain, and among the Indians, the post might not be tenable.

For some time matters went on smoothly: by the indefatigable exertions of Mr. E. and his fellow-workers, aided also by Mrs. E., who devoted much

of her time and labour to the instruction of the females, a great reformation was effected in the habits and morals of the Indians. But Mr. Evans soon perceived that without books printed in the Indian language, little permanent good would be realized : he therefore wrote to the London Conference to send him a printing press and types, with characters of a simple phonetic kind, which he himself had invented, and of which he gave them a copy. The press was procured without delay, but was detained in London by the Governor and Committee; and though they were again and again petitioned to forward it, they flatly refused. Mr. E., however, was not a man to be turned aside from his purpose. With his characteristic energy he set to work, and having invented an alphabet of a more simple kind, he with his penknife cut the types, and formed the letters from musket bullets; he constructed a rude sort of press; and aided by Mrs. E. as compositor, he at length succeeded in printing prayers, and hymns, and passages of Scripture for the use of the Indians. Finding their object in detaining the press thus baffled, the Governor and

Committee deemed it expedient to forward it; but with the express stipulation, that every thing printed should be sent to the commander of the post as *ensor*, before it was published among the Indians. This was among the first causes of distrust and dissatisfaction.

Another source of dissatisfaction was Mr. E.'s faithfulness in regard to the observance of the sabbath. As the Indians became more enlightened they ceased to hunt and fish, and even to carry home game on the sabbath day; and, as a matter of course, they would no longer work for the Company on that day. But Mr. E. was guilty of equal faithfulness in remonstrating with those gentlemen in the service with whom he was on terms of intimacy in regard to this point of the Divine law; and several gentlemen, convinced by his arguments, determined to cease from working and travelling on the sabbath.

One of them, Mr. C—l, while on a distant expedition, acted in accordance with his convictions; and rested on the sabbath. The voyage turned out unusually stormy, and the water in the rivers was low, so that it occupied several days longer

than it had formerly done ; and the loss of time, which was really owing to the adverse weather, was charged on his keeping of the sabbath. From that day forth, the encouragement given to the Missionaries began to be withdrawn ; obstacles were thrown in their way, and although nothing was openly done to injure the Missions already in operation, it would seem that it was determined that, if the Company could prevent it, no new stations should be occupied—at least by *Protestant* Missionaries.

Not long after, Mr. E., finding that the Missions he had hitherto superintended were in such a state of progress that he might safely leave them to the care of his fellow-labourers, resolved to proceed to Athabasca and establish a mission there. Having gone, as usual, to the Commander of the post to obtain the necessary provisions, and a canoe and boatmen, he was received with unusual coldness. He asked provisions,—none could be given ; he offered to purchase them,—the commander refused to sell him any. He begged a canoe,—it was denied him ; and finally, when he intreated that, if he should be able to

procure those necessaries elsewhere, he might at least be allowed a couple of men to assist him on the voyage, he was answered that none would be allowed to go on that service. Deeply grieved, but nothing daunted, Mr. E. procured those necessaries from private resources, and proceeded on his voyage. But a sad calamity put a stop to it; in handing his gun to the interpreter it accidentally went off, and the charge lodging in his breast killed him instantaneously. He was thus compelled to return, in a state of mind bordering on distraction.

Mr. E.'s zeal and piety promised the best results to the spiritual and eternal interests of his Indian brethren. His talents, energy, and fertility of resource, which seemed to rise with every obstacle, had the happiest effects on their temporal well-being; and his mild and winning manners greatly endeared him to all the Indians. But his useful and honourable career was drawing to a close. The mournful accident already alluded to had affected his health, and he now received his death-blow.

Yet, obnoxious as he had become to the Com-

pany, and formidable to their interests as they might deem one of his talents and indomitable resolution to be, the blow was not struck by them. It was dealt by a *false* brother; by one who had eaten of his bread: by a "familiar friend, with whom he had taken sweet counsel." Charges affecting his character, both as a man and a minister, of the foulest and blackest kind, were transmitted to the Conference by a brother Missionary. To answer these charges, as false as they were foul, he was compelled to leave the churches he had planted and watered, to bid adieu to the people whose salvation had been for years the sole object of his life, and to undertake a voyage of 5,000 miles to appear before his brethren as a *criminal*. As a criminal, indeed, he was received; yet after an investigation, begun and carried on in no very friendly spirit to him, truth prevailed. He was declared innocent, and the right hand of fellowship was again extended to him. He made a short tour through England, and was everywhere received with respect, and affection, and sympathy.

But anxiety, and grief, and shame had done

their work. Scarce three weeks had elapsed, when, having spent the evening along with Mrs. E. in the family of a friend, whose guest he was, with some of his wonted cheerfulness, Mrs. E. having retired but a few minutes, she was summoned to the room where she had left him in time to see him pass into that land where "the wicked cease from troubling." The cause of his death was an *affection of the heart*. And that man—the slanderer—the murderer of this martyred Missionary—what punishment was inflicted on him? He is to this day unpunished! and yet lives in the Hudson's Bay territory, the disgrace and opprobrium of his profession and his church.

Such are a few facts connected with the establishment of the Wesleyan Mission in the Hudson's Bay territory, and illustrative of the sort of encouragement given by the Committee to Protestant Missionaries. By way of rider to these, I may just remind the reader that Roman Catholic Missionaries have since been freely permitted to plant churches wherever they pleased, even in districts where Protestant Missions were already established.

After all, this is not much to be wondered at, since Sir G. Simpson openly avowed to Mr. Evans his preference of Roman Catholic Missionaries ; one reason for this preference being, that these never interfered with the Company's servants, nor troubled them with any precise or puritanical notions about the moral law.

CHAPTER XXI.

SKETCH OF RED RIVER SETTLEMENT.

RED RIVER — SOILS — CLIMATE—PRODUCTIONS—SETTLEMENT OF RED RIVER, THROUGH LORD SELKIRK, BY HIGHLANDERS —COLLISION BETWEEN THE NORTH-WEST AND HUDSON'S BAY COMPANIES—INUNDATION —ITS EFFECTS — FRENCH HALF-BREEDS — BUFFALO-HUNTING—ENGLISH HALF-BREEDS—INDIANS — CHURCHES—SCHOOLS—STORES—MARKET FOR PRODUCE—COMMUNICATION BY LAKES.

RED RIVER rises in swamps and small lakes in the distant plains of the south ; and after receiving a number of tributary streams that serve to fertilize and beautify as fine a tract of land as the world possesses, discharges itself into the eastern extremity of Lake Winnipeg in lat. 50°. The climate is much the same as in the midland districts of Canada ; the river is generally frozen across about the beginning of November, and open about the beginning of April. The soil

along the banks of the river is of the richest vegetable mould, and of so great a depth that crops of wheat are produced for several years without the application of manure. The banks produce oak, elm, maple, and ash; the woods extend rather more than a mile inland. The farms of the first settlers are now nearly clear of wood; an open plain succeeds of from four to six miles in breadth, affording excellent pasture. Woods and plains alternate afterwards until you reach the boundless prairie. The woods produce a variety of delicious fruits, delighting the eye and gratifying the taste of the inhabitants; cherries, plums, gooseberries, currants, grapes, and sasgatum berries in great abundance. Coal has been discovered in several places, and also salt springs.

Lord Selkirk having been made acquainted with the natural advantages of this favoured country by his North-West hosts in Montreal, determined forthwith on adopting such measures as might ensure to himself and heirs the possession of it for ever. Accordingly, on his return to England, he purchased Hudson's Bay Company's

stock to an amount that enabled him to control the decisions of the Committee; and thus, covered by the shield of the charter, he could carry on his premeditated schemes of aggression against the North-West Company, with some appearance of justice on his side.

With the view of carrying out these schemes, he proceeded to the North of Scotland, and prevailed on a body of Highlanders to emigrate to Red River. To induce them to quit their native land, the most flattering prospects were held out to them; the moment they set their foot in this land of promise, the hardships and privations to which they had hitherto been subject, would disappear; the poor man would exchange his "potato patch" for a fine estate; the gentleman would become a ruler and a judge in—Assiniboine! Who could doubt the fulfilment of the promises of a British peer? His Lordship, therefore, soon collected the required number of emigrants—for the Highlander of the present day gladly embraces any opportunity of quitting 'a country that no longer affords him bread.

At the period in question, Red River district

furnished the principal part of the provisions required by the North-West Company, and was a wilderness, inhabited only by wandering Indians, and abounding in the larger animals—elk and rein-deer in the woods, and buffalo in the plains.

As Red River flows into Lake Winnipeg, which discharges itself by Neilson's river into Hudson's Bay, and could therefore be included within the territory granted by the charter, our noble trader concluded that, by taking formal possession of the country, he would obtain the right of expelling other adventurers, merely by warning them off the Company's grounds; and that, if the warning were disregarded, he could claim the aid of Government to enforce his rights, and thus ruin the North-West Company at a blow. His Lordship's Governor was therefore instructed to issue a proclamation, prohibiting the North-West Company by name, and all others, from carrying on any species of trade within Red River district, and ordering such establishments as had been formed to be abandoned.

The North-Westerners read the proclamation, and—prosecuted their business as before. In such

circumstances quarrels were unavoidable, but they were generally settled with *ink*; a collision ultimately took place that led to the shedding of blood. The North-Westerns had collected a large supply of provisions at their *dépôt*, and were about to forward it to the place of embarkation, when they were informed—falsely, as it afterwards appeared,—that the Governor intended to waylay and seize the provisions. A report, equally false, was brought to the Governor, that the North-Westerns had assembled a strong force of half-breeds to attack the fort. These lying rumours led to an unhappy catastrophe.

The Governor sent out scouts to watch the North-West party; and ascertaining that they were on their march with an unusual force,—which they had brought in order to repel the attack which they supposed was to be made upon them,—he seized his arms, and marched with his whole party to meet them. The North-Westerns seeing them approach, halted, and standing to their arms, sent forward one of their number to demand whether Mr. Semple and his party were for peace or war.

During the interview a shot was fired—it is a matter in dispute to this day who fired it—the half-breeds immediately poured a volley into the ranks of their opponents, and brought down nearly all the gentlemen of the party, including the unfortunate Governor; the remainder fled to the fort, so closely pursued, that friend and foe entered together. Thus the poor settlers found themselves suddenly surrounded by all the horrors of war; their anticipated paradise converted into a field of blood; husbands and brothers killed; their little property pillaged, and their persons in the power of their enemies.

An arrangement, however, was entered into by the rival Companies, that allowed the emigrants to take possession of the lands allotted to them, and in the course of a few years their labour had made a sensible impression on the forest. Cattle were sent out from England; pigs and poultry followed, and honest Donald was beginning to find himself at his ease, when, lo! all his dreams of future wealth and happiness vanished in a moment. Red River overflowed its banks, and inundated the whole settlement. This extraordi-

nary flood caused immense loss ; it overthrew houses, swept away the cattle, and utterly ruined the crops of the season. The buffaloes, however, proved abundant, and afforded a supply of provisions enough to prevent starvation, and the settlers soon recovered from the effects of this misfortune. Another calamity followed—the caterpillar appeared—at first in small numbers, afterwards in myriads, covering the whole land, and eating up “every green thing,” and thus the crops were destroyed a second time ; but the consequences were not so severely felt as formerly ; the preceding season had proved extremely abundant, and a sufficient quantity remained to supply the failure of this year. Since that time the colony has advanced rapidly, enjoying undisturbed peace ; industry has its sure reward in the abundance of all the necessaries of life which it procures.

Since the coalition took place, Red River has become the favourite retreat of the Company’s servants, especially of those who have families ; here they obtain lands almost at a nominal price. A lot of one mile in length and six chains in

breadth, costs only 18*l.*; and they find themselves surrounded by people of congenial habits with themselves, the companions of their youth, and fellow-adventurers; those with whom they tugged at the oar, and shared the toil of the winter march; and when they meet together to smoke the social pipe, and talk of the scenes of earlier days, “nor prince nor prelate” can enjoy more happiness.

The last census, taken in 1836, gave the population at 5,000 souls; it may now (1845) amount to 7,000. Of this number a very small proportion is Scotch, about forty families, and perhaps 300 souls. The Scotch carried with them the frugal and industrious habits of their country; the same qualities characterise their children, who are far in advance of their neighbours in all that constitutes the comforts of life. These advantages they owe, under the blessing of Providence, to their own good management; yet, notwithstanding this, and notwithstanding that they are a quiet and a moral people, they are objects of envy and hatred to their hybrid neighbours; and thus my industrious and worthy countrymen, in the possession of almost every

other blessing which they could desire, are still unhappy from the malice and ill-will they meet with on every side; and being so inferior in numbers, they must submit to the insults and abuse they are daily exposed to, while the blood boils in their veins to resent them. Thus situated, many of them have abandoned the settlement and gone to the United States, where they enjoy the fruits of their industry in peace.

The French half-breeds and retired Canadian voyageurs occupy the upper part of the settlement. The half-breeds are strongly attached to the roving life of the hunter; the greater part of them depend entirely on the chase for a living, and even the few who attend to farming take a trip to the plains, to feast on buffalo humps and marrow fat. They sow their little patches of ground early in spring, and then set out for the chase, taking wives and children along with them, and leaving only the aged and infirm at home to attend to the crops.

When they set out for the plains, they observe all the order and regularity of a military march; officers being chosen for the enforcement of dis-

cipline, who are subject to the orders of a chief, whom they style "M. le Commandant." They take their departure from the settlement about the latter end of June, to the number of from 1,200 to 1,500 souls; each hunter possesses at least six carts, and some twelve; the whole number may amount to 5,000 carts. Besides his riding nag and cart horses, he has also at least one buffalo runner, which he never mounts until he is about to charge the buffalo. The "runner" is tended with all the care which the cavalier of old bestowed on his war steed; his housing and trappings are garnished with beads and porcupine quills, exhibiting all the skill which the hunter's wife or belle can exercise; while head and tail display all the colours of the rainbow in the variety of ribbon attached to them.

The "Commandant" directs the movements of the whole cavalcade: at a signal given in the morning by sound of trumpet—*alias*, by blowing a horn,—the hunters start together for their horses; while the women and servants strike the tents, and pack up and load the baggage. The horses being all collected, a second blast forms the order

of march; the carts fall in, four abreast; the hunters mount; and dividing into their different bodies, one precedes the baggage, another closes the line, and a third divides in both flanks. The third blast is the signal for marching. They halt about two hours at noon, for the purpose of allowing their cattle time to feed; and the same order is observed as in starting in the morning. When they encamp at night, the carts are placed in a circle; and the tents are pitched within the enclosed space, so as to form regular streets; the horses are "hobbled" and turned loose to graze.

All the arrangements for the night being completed, guards are appointed to watch over the safety of the camp, who are relieved at fixed hours. In this manner they proceed until they approach the buffalo grounds, when scouts are sent out to ascertain the spot where the herd may be found. The joyful discovery being made, the scouts apprise the main body by galloping backwards and forwards, when a halt is immediately ordered. The camp is pitched; the hunters mount their runners; and the whole being formed into an extended line, with the utmost regularity,

they set forward at a hand gallop; not a soul advances an inch in front of the line, until within gun-shot of the herd, when they rein up for a moment. The whole body then, as if with one voice, shout the war whoop, and rush on the herd at full gallop; each hunter, singling out an animal, pursues it until he finds an opportunity of taking sure aim; the animal being dispatched, some article is dropped upon it that can be afterwards recognised. The hunter immediately sets off in chase of another, priming, loading, and taking aim at full speed. A first-rate runner not unfrequently secures ten buffaloes at a "course;" from four to eight is the usual number. He who draws the first blood claims the animal, and each individual hunter is allowed whatever he kills.

The moment the firing commences, the womer set out with the carts, and cut up and convey the meat to the camp; where it is dried by means of bones and fat. Two or three days are required for the operation, when they set out again; and the same herd, perhaps, yields a sufficient quantity to load all the carts, each carrying about one thousand pounds,—an enormous quantity in the

aggregate ; yet the herd is sometimes so numerous that all this slaughter does not seem to diminish it.

The buffalo hunt affords much of the excitement, and some of the dangers, of the battle-field. The horses are often gored by the infuriated bulls, to the great peril—sometimes to the loss—of the rider's life ; serious accidents too happen from falls. There are no better horsemen in the world than the Red River “brulés ;” and so long as the horse keeps on his legs, the rider sticks to him. The falls are chiefly occasioned by the deep holes the badger digs all over the prairies ; if the horse plunges into one of these, both horse and man roll on the ground. Fatal accidents, also, occasionally happen from gun shots in the *melée* ; and it is said, I know not with what truth, that a wronged husband, or a supplanted lover, sometimes avails himself of the opportunity presented by the *melée* to miss the buffalo, and hit a friend—by *accident*.

A priest generally accompanies the camp, and mass is celebrated with becoming solemnity on Sundays. The “brulés” attend, looking very serious and grave until a herd of buffaloes appear ; when the cry of “La vache ! la vache !” scatters the

congregation in an instant; away they scamper, old and young, leaving the priest to preach to the winds, or perhaps to a few women and children. Two trips in the year are generally made to the prairie; the latter in August. The buffalo hunter's life assimilates more to that of the savage than of the civilized man; it is a life of alternate plenty and want—a life also of danger and inquietude. The Indians of the plain view the encroachment of the strange race on their hunting grounds, with feelings of jealousy and enmity. They are, accordingly, continually on the alert; they attack detached parties and stragglers; they also set fire to the prairies about the time the “brulés” set out for the hunt, and by this means drive the game beyond their reach. Owing to this circumstance, the “brulés” have returned with empty carts for these two years past; and their only resource has been to betake themselves to the woods, and live after the manner of the Indians. Could they find a sure market for the produce of the soil, so as to remunerate their labour, there can be little doubt but that they might be gradually detached from the half-savage

life they lead, and become as steady and industrious as their neighbours.

The English half-breeds, as the mixed progeny of the British are designated, possess many of the characteristics of their fathers; they generally prefer the more certain pursuit of husbandry to the chase, and follow close on the heels of the Scotch in the path of industry and moral rectitude. Very few of them resort to the plains, unless for the purpose of trafficking the produce of their farms for the produce of the chase; and it is said that they frequently return home better supplied with meat than the hunters themselves.

The Indians who have been converted to the Protestant religion, are settled around their respected pastor at the lower extremity of the settlement, within twenty miles of the mouth of the river. The Sauteux, of all other tribes, are the most tenacious of their own superstitions; and it would require all the zeal and patience and perseverance of the primitive teachers of Christianity to wean them from them. But when convinced of his errors, the Sauteux convert is the more steadfast in his faith; and his

steadfastness and sincerity prove an ample reward to his spiritual father for his pains and anxiety on his behalf.

The Indian converts are entirely guided by their Missionary in temporal as well as in spiritual things. When he first came among them, he found their habits of indolence so deep-rooted, that something more than advice was necessary to produce the desired change. Like Oberlin, therefore, he set before them the example of a laborious and industrious life; he tilled, he sowed, he planted, he reaped with his own hands, and afterwards shared his produce with them. By persevering in this, he succeeded in finally gaining them to his views; and, at the present moment, their settlement is in as forward a state of improvement as any of the neighbouring settlements.

They have their mills, and barns, and dwelling-houses; their horses, and cattle, and well-cultivated fields:—a happy change! A few years ago, these same Indians were a wretched, vagabond race; “hewers of wood and drawers of water” for the other settlers, as their pagan brethren

still are ; they wandered about from house to house, half-starved, and half-naked ; and even in this state of abject misery, preferring a glass of “ fire-water ” to food and raiment for themselves or their children.

There are at present three ministers of the episcopal communion at Red River. The Scotch inhabitants attend the church regularly, although they sigh after the form of worship to which they had been accustomed in early youth ; they, however, assemble afterwards in their own houses to read the Scriptures, and worship God after the manner of their fathers. There are also three Roman Catholic clergymen, including a bishop ;—good, exemplary men, whose “ constant care ” is not “ to increase their store,” but to guide and direct their flocks in the paths of piety and virtue. But, alas ! they have a stiff-necked people to deal with ;—the French half-breed, who follows the hunter’s life, possesses all the worst vices of his European and Indian progenitors, and is indifferent alike to the laws of God and man. There are, in all, seven places of worship, three Roman

Catholic, and four Protestant, including two for the Indians.

The education of the more respectable families, particularly those of the Company's officers, is well provided for at an institution of great merit; the gentleman who presides over it being every way qualified for the important trust. The different branches of mathematical and classical learning are taught in it; and the school has already produced some excellent scholars. In addition to the more useful branches of female education, the young ladies are taught music and drawing by a respectable person of their own sex. Thus we have, in the midst of this remote wilderness of the North-West, all the elements of civilized life; and there are there many young persons of both sexes, well educated and accomplished, who have never seen the civilized world. There are also thirteen schools for the children of the lower class, supported entirely by the parents themselves.

The Company have here two shops (or stores), well supplied with every description of goods the

inhabitants can require ; there are besides several merchants scattered through the settlement, some of whom are said to be in easy circumstances. The Company's bills constitute the circulating medium, and are issued for the value of from one to twenty shillings. Of late years, a considerable amount of American specie has found its way into the settlement, probably in exchange for furs clandestinely disposed of by the merchants beyond the line. The petty merchants import their goods from England by the Company's ships ; an *ad valorem* duty is imposed on these goods, the proceeds of which are applied to the payment of the constabulary force of the colony. The Company's charter invests it with the entire jurisdiction, executive and judicial, of the colony. The local Governor and Council enact such simple statutes as the primitive condition of the settlement requires ; and those enactments have hitherto proved equal to the maintenance of good order. A court of quarter sessions is regularly held for the administration of justice, and the Company have lately appointed a Recorder to preside over it. It is gratifying to learn, that this functionary has had

occasion to pass judgment on no very flagitious crime since his appointment.

In the work to which I have so frequently referred, it is mentioned, that a "certain market is secured to the inhabitants by the demand for provisions for the other settlements." If by "settlements" the miserable trading posts be meant, as it must be, I know not on what grounds such an affirmation is made. A sure market, forsooth! A single Scotch farmer could be found in the colony, able alone to supply the greater part of the produce the Company require; there is one, in fact, who offered to do it. If a sure market were secured to the colonists of Red River, they would speedily become the wealthiest yeomanry in the world. Their barns and granaries are always full to overflowing; so abundant are the crops, that many of the farmers could subsist for a period of two or even three years, without putting a grain of seed in the ground. The Company purchase from six to eight bushels of wheat from each farmer, at the rate of three shillings per bushel; and the sum total of their yearly purchases from the whole settlement amounts to—

600 cwt. flour, first and second quality.

35 bushels rough barley.

10 half-firkins butter, 28 lbs. each.

10 bushels Indian corn.

200 cwt. best kiln-dried flour.

60 firkins butter, 56 lbs. each.

240 lbs. cheese.

60 hams.

Thus it happens that the Red River farmer finds a "sure market" for six or eight bushels of wheat—and no more. Where he finds a sure market for the remainder of his produce, Heaven only knows—I do not. This much, however; I do know,—that the incomparable advantages this delightful country possesses are not only in a great measure lost to the inhabitants, but also to the world, so long as it remains under the domination of its fur-trading rulers. In the possession of, and subject to the immediate jurisdiction of the Crown, Assineboine would become a great and a flourishing colony—the centre of civilization and Christianity to the surrounding tribes, who would be converted from hostile barbarians into a civilized and loyal people;—and thus Great Britain would extend and establish her dominion

in a portion of her empire that may be said to have been hitherto unknown to her, while she would open a new field for the enterprise and industry of her sons.

In describing the advantages of this country, candour requires that I should also point out its disadvantages. The chief disadvantage is the difficulty of the communication with the sea, interrupted as it is by shoals, rapids, and falls, which in their present state can only be surmounted with incredible toil and labour. Yet there cannot be a doubt that the skill of the engineer could effect such improvements as would obviate the most, if not the whole, of this labour, and that at no very great cost. The distance from the mouth of Red River to York Factory is about 550 miles; 300 miles of this distance is formed of lakes—(Lake Winnipeg, 250 miles in length, is navigable for vessels of forty and fifty tons burden). The greater part of the river communication might be rendered passable by Durham boats, merely by damming up the rivers. Along the line of communication, many situations may be found suitable for farming operations.

CHAPTER XXII.

SIR G. SIMPSON—HIS ADMINISTRATION.

SIR GEORGE SIMPSON commenced his career as a clerk in a respectable counting-house in London, where his talents soon advanced him to the first seat at the desk. He was in this situation when first introduced to the notice of a member of the Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company, who were at that time engaged in the ruinous competition with the North-West Company already referred to. While the contest was at its height, the Company sent out Mr. Simpson as Governor of the Northern department;—an appointment for which, by his abilities natural and acquired, he was well qualified. Mr. Simpson combined with the prepossessing manners of a gentleman all the craft and subtlety of an intriguing courtier; while his cold and callous heart

was incapable of sympathising with the woes and pains of his fellow-men. On his first arrival, he carefully concealed from those whom he was about to supersede, the powers with which he was invested; he studied the characters of individuals, scrutinized in secret their mode of managing affairs, and when he had made himself fully acquainted with every particular he desired to know, he produced his commission;—a circumstance that proved as unexpected as it was unsatisfactory to those whose interests it affected.

Making every allowance for Sir George's abilities, he is evidently one of those men whom the blind goddess "delighteth to honour." Soon after assuming the supreme command, the North-West wintering partners undertook the mission to England, already mentioned, which led to the coalition; and thus Sir George found himself, by a concurrence of circumstances quite independent of his merits, placed at the head of both parties; from being Governor of Rupert's Land his jurisdiction now included the whole of the Indian territory from Hudson's Bay to the shores of the Pacific Ocean; and the Southern department, at

that time a separate command, was soon after added to his government. Here, then, was a field worthy of his talents; and that he did every manner of justice to it, no one can deny. Yet he owes much of his success to the valuable assistance rendered him by Mr. McTavish; at his suggestion, the whole business was re-organized, a thousand abuses in the management of affairs were reformed, and a strict system of economy was introduced where formerly boundless extravagance prevailed. To effect these salutary measures, however, much tact was required: and here Sir George's abilities shone conspicuous. The long-continued strife between the two companies had engendered feelings of envy and animosity, which could not subside in a day; and the steps that had been taken to bring about the coalition, created much ill-will even among the North-West partners themselves. Nor were the officers of the Hudson's Bay Company without their dissensions also. To harmonize these elements of discord, to reconcile the different parties thus brought so suddenly and unexpectedly together into one fold, was a task of the utmost difficulty to accomplish;

but Sir George was equal to it. He soon discovered that the North-West partners possessed both the will and the ability to thwart and defeat such of his plans as were not satisfactory to themselves; that they were by far the most numerous in the Council—at that time an independent body—and the best acquainted with the trade of the Northern department, the most important in the territory; and finding, after some experience, that while those gentlemen continued united, their power was beyond his control, and that to resist them openly would only bring ruin on himself, without any benefit to the concern, he prudently gave way to their influence; and instead of forcing himself against the stream, allowed himself apparently to be carried along with it.

For a time, he seemed to promote all the views of his late adversaries; he yielded a ready and gracious acquiescence in their wishes; he lavished his bows, and smiles, and honied words on them all; and played his part so well, that the North-Westerners thought they had actually gained him over to their own side; while the gentlemen of the

Hudson's Bay Company branded him as a traitor, who had abandoned his own party and gone over to the enemy.

The Committee received several hints of the Governor's "strange management," but they only smiled at the insinuations, as they perfectly understood the policy. His well-digested schemes had, in due time, all the success he anticipated.

Having thus completely gained the confidence of the North-West partners, his policy began gradually to unfold itself. One obstreperous North-Wester was sent to the Columbia; another to the Montreal department, where "their able services could not be dispensed with;" and thus in the course of a few years he got rid of all those refractory spirits who dared to tell him their minds.

The North-West nonconformists being in this manner disposed of, Sir George deemed it no longer necessary to wear the mask. His old friends of the Hudson's Bay, or "sky-blue" party, were gradually received into favour; his power daily gained the ascendant, and at this moment Sir George Simpson's rule is more absolute than

that of any governor under the British crown, as his influence with the Committee enables him to carry into effect any measure he may recommend. That one possessed of an authority so unbounded should often abuse his power is not to be wondered at; and that the abuse of power thus tolerated should degenerate into tyranny is but the natural consequence of human weakness and depravity. The question is—Is it consistent with prudence to allow an *individual* to assume and retain such power? Most of the Company's officers enter the service while yet very young; none are so young, however, as not to be aware of the privileges to which they are entitled as British subjects, and that they have a right to enjoy those privileges while they tread on British soil. The oft repeated acts of tyranny of which the autocrat of "all Prince Rupert's Land and its dependencies" has lately been guilty, have accordingly created a feeling of discontent which, if it could be freely expressed, would be heard from the shores of the Pacific to Labrador.

Unfortunately, the Company's servants are so situated, that they dare not express their senti-

ments freely. The clerk knows that if he is heard to utter a word of disapprobation, it is carried to the ears of his sovereign lord, and his prospects of advancement are marred for ever ; he therefore submits to his grievances in silence. The chief trader has probably a large family to support, has been thirty or forty years in the service, and is daily looking forward to the other step : he too is silent. The chief factor has a situation of importance in which his vanity is gratified and his comfort secured ; to express his opinion freely might risk the sacrifice of some of these advantages ; so he also swallows the pill without daring to complain of its bitterness, and is silent.

A very valuable piece of plate was, some years ago, presented to Sir George by the commissioned gentlemen in the service, as a mark of respect and esteem ; and this circumstance may be adduced by Sir George's friends, with every appearance of reason, as a proof of his popularity ; but the matter is easily explained. Some two or three persons who share Sir George's favour, determine among themselves to present him with some token of their gratitude. They address a circular

on the subject to all the Company's officers, well knowing that none dare refuse in the face of the whole country to subscribe their name. The same cogent reasons that suppress the utterance of discontent compelled the Company's servants to subscribe to this testimonial ; and the subscription list accordingly exhibits, with few exceptions, the names of every commissioned gentleman in the service ; while two-thirds of them would much rather have withheld their signatures.

Sir George owes his ribbon to the successful issue of the Arctic expedition conducted by Messrs. Dease and Simpson. His share of the merit consisted in drawing out instructions for those gentlemen, which occupied about half-an-hour of his time at the desk. It is quite certain that the expedition owed none of its success to those instructions. The chief of the party, Mr. Dease, was at least as well qualified to give as to receive instructions ; and Sir George is well aware of the fact. He knows, too, that Mr. Dease was engaged in the Arctic expedition under Sir J. Franklin, where he acquired that experience which brought this important yet hazardous

undertaking to a successful issue; he knows also that in an enterprise of this kind a thousand contingencies may arise, which must be left entirely to the judgment of those engaged in it to provide against.

Sir George, nevertheless, obtained the chief honours; but the bauble perishes with him; while the courage, the energy and the perseverance of Mr. Dease and his colleague will ever be a subject of admiration to those who peruse the narrative of their adventures.

Sir George's administration, it is granted, has been a successful one; yet his own friends will admit that much of this success must be ascribed to his good fortune rather than to his talents. The North-West Company had previously reduced the business to a perfect system, which he had only to follow. It is true he introduced great economy into every department; but the North-West Company had done so before him, and the wasteful extravagance which preceded his appointment was entirely the result of the rivalry between the two companies, and under any governor

whatever would have ceased when the coalition was effected.

Not a little, too, of Sir George's economy was of "the penny-wise and pound-foolish" kind. Thus it has been already observed, that the lives of the Company's servants, and the property of an entire district, were placed in extreme jeopardy by his false economy; and a contingency, which no prudent man would have calculated upon, alone prevented a catastrophe which involved the destruction of the Company's property to a large amount, as well as of the lives of its servants. But independently of this, he has committed several errors of a most serious kind. Of these the chief is the Ungava adventure, an enterprise which was begun in opposition to the opinion of every gentleman in the country whose experience enabled him to form a correct judgment in the matter; and this undertaking was persisted in, year after year, at an enormous loss to the Company. Finally, he has not even the merit of correcting his own blunders. It was not till after a mass of evidence of the strongest kind was laid

before the Committee, that they, in his absence, gave orders for the abandonment of the hopeless project.

His caprice, his favouritism, his disregard of merit in granting promotion, it will be allowed, could not have a favourable effect on the Company's interests. His want of feeling has been mentioned: a single example of this will close these remarks. A gentleman of high rank in the service, whose wife was dangerously ill, received orders to proceed on a journey of nearly 5,000 miles. Aware that his duty required a prompt obedience to these orders, he set off, taking her along with him. On arriving at the end of the first stage, she became worse; and medical assistance being procured, the physicians were of opinion that in all probability death would be the consequence if he continued his journey. A certificate to this effect was forwarded to Sir George. The answer was, that Madame's health must not interfere with the Company's service; and that he must continue his journey, or abide the consequences.

In consequence of this delay, he only reached

Montreal on the day when the boats were to leave Lachine for the interior. He hurried to the office, where he met Sir George, and was received by him with the cool remark—

“ You are late, Sir ; but if you use expedition you may yet be in time for the boats.”

He earnestly begged for some delay, but in vain. No regard was paid to his entreaties ; and he was obliged to hurry his wife off to Lachine, and put her on board a common canoe, where there is no accommodation for a sick person, and where no assistance could be procured, even in the last extremity.

VOCABULARY OF THE PRINCIPAL INDIAN DIALECTS IN USE AMONG
THE TRIBES IN THE HUDSON'S BAY TERRITORY.

| ENGLISH. | SAUTEU, or OGIBOIS. | CREE. | BEAVER INDIAN. | CHIPPEWYAN. |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| One | Pejik | Pay ak | It la day | Ittla hē. |
| Two | Neech | Neecho | Onk shay day | Nank hay. |
| Three | Nisway | Nisto | Ta day | Ta he. |
| Four | Neowin | Neo | Dini day | Dunk he. |
| Five | Nā nan | Nay nā nan | Tlat zoon e de ay | Sa soot la he. |
| Six | Ni got as way | Nigotwassik | Int zud ha | L'goot ha hé. |
| Seven | Nish was way | Tay pa goop | Ta e wayt zay | Tluz ud dunk he. |
| Eight | Shwas way | Ea naneo | Etzud een tay | L'goot dung he. |
| Nine | Sang | Kay gat me tā tat | Kala gay ne ad ay | Itla ud ha. |
| Ten | Quaitch | Me ta tat | Kay nay day | Hona. |
| Eleven | Aji pay jik | Payak ai wak | Tlad ay may day | Itla, ja idel. |
| Twelve | Aji neech | Neech way ai wok. { | Onk shay day may } day. | Nank hay, ja idel. |
| Twenty | Neej ta na | Neech tan ao | Onk ka gay nay day . | Ta he, ja idel. |
| Thirty | Nisway mittana | Neo meatanao | Tao gay nay day. | |
| Forty | Neo mittana | &c. | Deo gay nay day. | |
| Fifty | Nanan mittana | &c. | | |
| Sixty | Nigot asway mittana | | | |
| Seventy | Nish was way mittana | | | |
| Eighty | Shwas way mittana | | | |

| ENGLISH. | SAUTEU, or OJIBOIS. | CREE. | BEAVER INDIAN. | CHIPPEWYAN. |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Ninety | Sang mittana | Me ta tin mittanao | Kay may tay | Ila honan nanana. |
| One hundred | Ni goot wack | Tan mat ta to | Tan ay tien | Ila hon eeltay. |
| How often | Anin. tas ink | Tan ay ta tik | Tan ay tien | Ila elday. |
| How many | Anin ain tas ink | Ta ispi aspin | A shay doo yay | Ila hon il tao. |
| How long since | Anapé | Ta is pi | Dee ad doo yay | Itao. |
| When | Nongum. kajigack | Anootch kee je gak | Doo jay nee ay | Deerd sin e gay. |
| To-day | Wabunk | Wa bakay | Ghad ay zay | Campay. |
| To-morrow | Chenāngo | Ta goosh ick | Ghagh ganno | Hozud singay. |
| Yesterday | | Anootch egee kee } wang } | Doo la | Do uz sin e gay. |
| This year | Nongum egee wang } { | | | |
| This month | Wā á. Keésis | Awa pee shum | Teeay tee za | Dirius a gay. |
| A man | Ininé | Nā bay o | Taz eu | Dinnay you. |
| A woman | Ikway | Isk way o | lay quay | Tzay quay. |
| A girl | Ikway says | Isk way shish | Id az oo | Ed dinna gay. |
| A boy | Quee we says | Na bay shish | Taz yuz é | Dinnay yoo azay. |
| Interpreter | Oten way ta ma gay | On tway ta ma gay o | Nao day ay | Dinnay tec ghaltay. |
| Trader | Ata way ini niu | Ataway ininiu | Meeoo tay | Ma kad ray. |
| Moose-Deer | Moze | Mozwa | Tlay tchin tay | Tunnehec hee. |
| Rein-Deer | Attick | Attick | May tzee | Ed hun. |
| Beaver | Amick | Amisk | Tza | Tza. |
| Dog | Ani moosh | Attim | Tlec | Tlec. |
| Rabbit | Waboose | Waboose | Kagh | Kagh. |
| Bear | Maqua | Masqua | Zus | Zus. |

| | | | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| Wolf | Ma ing an | Mahigan | Tshee o may | Noo nec yay. |
| Fox | Wa goosh | Ma kay shish | E. yay thay | Nag hee dthay. |
| I hunt | Ni ge oz ay | Ni mā tehin | Na o zed | Naz uz ay. |
| Thou huntest | Ki ge oz ay | Ki ma tehin | Nodzed | Nan ul zay. |
| He hunts | Ge oz ay | Ma tehio | Nazin zed | Nal zay. |
| We hunt | Ni ge oz ay min | Ni ma tehinan | Naze zedeo | Na il zay. |
| Ye hunt | Ki ge oz aim | Ki ma tehinauao | Nazin zedeo | Nal zin al day. |
| They hunt | Ge oz ay wok | Matchiwog | Owadié tzed | Na hal zay. |
| I kill | Ni ne ta gay | Ni mi na hou | Uz. éay gha | Zil tir. |
| Thou killest | Ki ne ta gay | Ki mi na hou | Uz éay ghan | Zil hil tir. |
| He kills | Ne ta gay | Minaho | Ud zeay gba | Tla in il tir. |
| We kill | Ni ne ta gay min | Ni mina honan | Uz ugho-ghay uzin | Tla in il dir. |
| Ye kill | Ki ne ta gaim | Kim in a honawa | Uz ugho ghay uzin | Zee ool dir. |
| They kill | Ne ta gay wok | Minahowog | Utza ghay agho | Tla in il tay. |
| I laugh | Ni baap | Ni baap in | Utzay rad lotsh | Naz-lo. |
| Thou laughest | Ki baap | Ki baap in | Utlint lotsh | Na-id-lo. |
| He laughs | Baapé | Baapio | Utroz lotsh | Nad-lo. |
| We laugh | Ni baap imin | Ni baap in an | Utlow lotshay | Tlo a-ec-el-tee. |
| Ye laugh | Ki baapim | Ki baapin a wao | Tlodzud udzec | Tlo gha ce-el-tee. |
| They laugh | Baap ewog | Baapiwog | Tlodzud udzee | Tlo-gha-cc-el-tee. |
| I trade | Ni da ta way | Ni da dā wan | Mata oz lay | Naz nec. |
| Thou tradest | Ki da ta way | Ki da dā wan | Mata an celay | Na el nec. |
| He trades | Ataway | Atawayo | Kita od eenla | Na el nec. |
| We trade | Ni da ta way min | Nin da tā wān an | Mata ad oz id la | Na-da-ell nec. |
| Ye trade | Ki da ta way min | Ki da tā wan o wa | Mata a la ozayo | Na ool nec. |
| They trade | A ta way wok | Ata way wok | Ma tā a leccay la | Eghon a el nec. |
| I fight | Ni me gaz | Ni no ti ni gan | Magad ay a | Dini gun as tir. |

| ENGLISH. | SAUTEU, or OGIHOIS. | CREE. | BEAVER INDIAN. | CHIPPEWAYAN. |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Thou fightest | Ki me gaz | Ki no ti ni gan | Magad osee ya la | Dini gun a ce dthir. |
| He fights | Mi gazo | No ti ni gay o | — — — — — | — — — — — |
| We fight | Ni me gazomin | Nino ti ni gan an | — — — — — | — — — — — |
| Ye fight | Ki me gazom | Ki no ti ni gan a } wao | — — — — — | — — — — — |
| They fight | Mi guz o wog | Notini gay wok | — — — — — | — — — — — |
| I set a net | Ni bug-é ta wa | Ni bug e ta wan | Zoo meet la uz loo | Tloo e kanistan. |
| Thou settest a net | Ki bug-e ta wa | Ki bug-e ta wan | T'oo meet lan itlo | Tloo é kan e than. |
| He sets a net | Bug-e ta wa | Bug-e ta wao | Ta eet loon | { Tloo e kan ethan } loay. |
| We set a net | Ni bug-e ta wa min | Ni bug-e ta wanan | Ta ghoo loo loon | Tloo e kan oodthan. |
| Ye set a net | Ki bug-é ta wam | Ki bug-e ta-wan a } wao | Ta ghoo loo uz éo | Tloo e kan cethan. |
| They set a net | Bug-e ta wā wog | Bug-e-ta-wa wog | T'oo milt at la } oozoon. | — — — — — |
| I sail | Ni be mash | Ni be mashin | — — — — — | — — — — — |
| Thou sailest | Ki be mash | Ki be mashin | — — — — — | — — — — — |
| He sails | Bi mash é | Be mash eo | — — — — — | — — — — — |
| We sail | Ni bi mishimin | Ni bi mashinan | — — — — — | — — — — — |
| Ye sail | Ki bi mash im | Ki bi mashin a wao | — — — — — | — — — — — |
| They sail | Bi mash i wog | Be mash i wog | — — — — — | — — — — — |
| I sleep | Ni ni ba | Ni ni ban | Zus tee ay | Thee id gbee. |
| Thou sleepest | Ki ni ba | Ki ni ban | Zin tee ay | Theend gbee. |
| He sleeps | Ni ba | Ni ba o | Na gho tee azay | Thad gbee. |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| We sleep | Ni ni bā min | Zat ic tsho | Theed ghāz. |
| Ye sleep | Ki ni bam | Tsuz ic tsho. | Thood ghaz. |
| They sleep | Ni ba wog | Tsugh ien tiez | Hay ud' ghaz. |
| I drink | Ni minik way | Uzto | Haysta. |
| Thou drikest | Ki minik wan | Nadho | Nad-ha. |
| He drinks | Ki minik wan | Ughiehedo | Ee ed ha. |
| We drink | Ni minik way min | May ce ta | Ieel tell. |
| Ye drink | Ni minik way min | May lee ta la | Hool tell. |
| They drink | Minikway wog | May atta | Ile el tell. |
| I want to drink | Ni we miniquay | O'ghoz to | Oz ta in is tan. |
| Drink | Minik quaine | Lhad ho | Ned ha. |
| Eat | Wiss in | In izits | Zinbud hee. |
| Sleep | Ni bān | Njuz ti ay | Dthin ghee. |
| Go away | Eko kūn | E' yow é lshay | E you issay. |
| Come here | Undass is han | Tee ad zay | E youk uz ay. |
| Tell him | Wid da ma o | Tee ay tin day | Ihal in nee. |
| Trade | Atawaine | Tee ay gho tsho | Na il nee. |
| Whence do you } come? } | Andé wentchipai an | Tee ay g'hay dzin } aglon dee ay } | Eil luzeet gho adzee an adee. |
| Where are you } going? } | Andé aish ac an | Tee ay g'hay de āza | E'd luzeet hee hee ya. |
| Be quick | Wee weep é tan | Dzag g'lay | Ee-gha. |
| I shoot | Ni bas giss é gan | A jes tee o | A vous kay. |
| Thou shootest | Ki bas giss é gan | A tee tshe etsh | Ahil kay. |
| He shoot's | Bās giss e gay-o | Agha tee et yetsh | Ahil guth. |
| We shoot | Ni bas gisse gān au | Ateed yetsh | Ahel keeth. |

| ENGLISH. | SAUTEU, or OGIBOIS. | CREE. | BEAVER INDIAN. | CHIPPEWYAN. |
|------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Ye shoot . . . | Ki bas gisse game . . . | Ki bas giss é gan ā wao . . . | Atad yetsh . . . | Er. ool keeth. |
| They shoot . . . | Bās gisse gray wog . . . | Bas giss é gay wog . . . | Aza du ghad yetsh . . . | Tay ar el keeth. |
| A Gun . . . | Bās gisse gan . . . | Bas giss é gan . . . | Tié yaz o o . . . | Tel git hay. |
| Powder . . . | Makatay . . . | Kas, ki tay o . . . | Al aizay . . . | Tel ge gouna. |
| Shot . . . | She shep ass nin . . . | Nisk ass in ee a . . . | Noo tay ad-o o . . . | Telt hay. |
| Give me . . . | Meesh ish in . . . | Mee an . . . | Tee yay . . . | Daz ce. |
| I give you . . . | Ki mee nin . . . | Ki mee ni tin . . . | Nan uz lay . . . | { Na gha on in in nee. |
| Look . . . | In ā bin . . . | Etā bi . . . | Ag gan eetha . . . | Ghon el lee. |
| Wait . . . | Pee ton . . . | Pay ho . . . | Ad oog-a . . . | Gad day. |
| Tobacco . . . | Na say ma . . . | Na stay ma . . . | Aday ka yazé . . . | Sel tooe. |
| Pipe . . . | Poagan . . . | Os poagan . . . | Tšee ay . . . | Dthay. |
| Net . . . | Assup . . . | A he apee . . . | Too me . . . | Dtha bill. |
| Fish . . . | Kee kó . . . | Kee no shay o . . . | Tloo . . . | Tloo-ay. |
| Flesh . . . | Wee-ass . . . | Wee ass . . . | Ad zun . . . | Berr. |
| River . . . | See pé . . . | See pé . . . | Za ghay . . . | Dáz. |
| Lake . . . | sa ka i gan . . . | Sa ka i gan . . . | Meet hay . . . | Nad hoo at ta. |
| Water . . . | Nee pee . . . | Nee pee . . . | Too . . . | Too. |
| Summer . . . | Nee been . . . | Nee been . . . | Ad o lay . . . | Seen nay. |
| Winter . . . | Pay poon . . . | Pay pun . . . | Ealk hay ay . . . | Ghā e yay. |
| Spring . . . | See goau . . . | Me as gamin . . . | Do o . . . | Tloo guth. |
| Autumn . . . | Tag wā gin . . . | Tag wā gin . . . | Edoo aidlosin . . . | Ghao ud azay. |