

John Franklin - Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea

Journey across the barren Grounds - Difficulty and delay in crossing Copper-Mine River - Melancholy and fatal Results thereof - Extreme Misery of the whole Party - Murder of Mr. Hood - Death of several of the Canadians - Desolate State of Fort Enterprise - Distress suffered at that Place - Dr. Richardson's Narrative - Mr. Back's Narrative - Conclusion.

1821. August 17.

MY original intention, whenever the season should compel us to relinquish the survey, had been to return by the way of the Copper-Mine River, and in pursuance of my arrangement with the Hook to travel to Slave Lake through the line of woods extending thither by the Great Bear and Marten Lakes, but our scanty stock of provision and the length of the voyage rendered it necessary to make for a nearer place. We had already found that the country, between Cape Barrow and the Copper-Mine River, would not supply our wants, and this it seemed probable would now be still more the case ; besides, at this advanced season, we expected the frequent recurrence of gales, which would cause great detention, if not danger in proceeding along that very rocky part of the coast. I determined, therefore, to make at once for Arctic Sound, where we had found the animals more numerous than at any other place ; and entering Hood's River, to advance up that stream as far as it was navigable, and then to construct small canoes out of the materials of the larger ones, which could be carried in crossing the barren grounds to Fort Enterprise.

August 19.

We were almost beaten out of our comfortless abodes by rain during the night, and this morning the gale continued without diminution. The thermometer fell to 33 deg. Two men were sent with Junius to search for the deer which Augustus had killed. Junius returned in the evening bringing part of the meat, but owing to the thickness of the weather, his companions parted from him and did not make their appearance. Divine service was read. On the 20th we were presented with the most chilling prospect, the small pools of water being frozen over, the ground being covered with snow, and the thermometer at the freezing point at mid-day. Flights of geese were passing to the southward. The wind however was more moderate, having changed to

the eastward. Considerable anxiety prevailing respecting Belanger and Michel, the two men who strayed from Junius yesterday, the rest were sent out to look for them. The search was successful, and they all returned in the evening. The stragglers were much fatigued, and had suffered severely from the cold, one of them having his thighs frozen, and what under our present circumstances was most grievous, they had thrown away all the meat. The wind during the night returned to the north-west quarter, blew more violently than ever, and raised a very turbulent sea. The next day did not improve our condition, the snow remained on the ground, and the small pools were frozen. Our hunters were sent out, but they returned after a fatiguing day's march without having seen any animals. We made a scanty meal off a handful of pemmican, after which only half a bag remained.

The wind abated after midnight, and the surf diminished rapidly, which caused us to be on the alert at a very early hour on the 22d, but we had to wait until six A.M. for the return of Augustus who had continued out all night on an unsuccessful pursuit of deer. It appears that he had walked a few miles farther along the coast, than the party had done on the 18th, and from a sketch he drew on the sand, we were confirmed in our former opinion that the shore inclined more to the eastward beyond Point Turnagain. He also drew a river of considerable size, that discharges its waters into Walker's Bay; on the banks of which stream he saw a piece of wood, such as the Esquimaux use in producing fire, and other marks so fresh that he supposed they had recently visited the spot. We therefore left several iron materials for them. Our men, cheered by the prospect of returning, embarked with the utmost alacrity; and, paddling with unusual vigour, carried us across Riley's and Walker's Bays, a distance of twenty miles before noon, when we landed on Slate-Clay Point, as the wind had freshened too much to permit us to continue the voyage. The whole party went to hunt, but returned without success in the evening, drenched with the heavy rain which commenced soon after they had set out. Several deer were seen, but could not be approached in this naked country; and as our stock of pemmican did not admit of serving out two meals, we went dinnerless to bed.

Soon after our departure to-day, a sealed tin-case, sufficiently buoyant to float, was thrown overboard, containing a short account of our

proceedings, and the position of the most conspicuous points. The wind blew off the land, the water was smooth, and as the sea is in this part more free from islands than in any other, there was every probability of its being driven off the shore into the current ; which, as I have before mentioned, we suppose, from the circumstance of Mackenzie's River being the only known stream that brings down the wood we have found along the shores, to set to the eastward.

August 23.

A severe frost caused us to pass a comfortless night. At two P.M. we set sail, and the men voluntarily launched out to make a traverse of fifteen miles across Melville Sound, before a strong wind and heavy sea. The privation of food, under which our voyagers were then labouring, absorbed every other terror; otherwise the most powerful persuasion could not have induced them to attempt such a traverse. It was with the utmost difficulty that the canoes were kept from turning their broadsides to the waves, though we sometimes steered with all the paddles. One of them narrowly escaped being upset by this accident, happening in mid-channel, where the waves were so high that the mast-head of our canoe was often hid from the other, though it was sailing within hail. The annexed plate, from Mr. Back's sketch, will convey to the reader an accurate idea of the peril of our situation. The traverse, however, was made; we were then near a high rocky lee shore, on which a heavy surf was beating. The wind being on the beam, the canoes drifted fast to leeward; and, on rounding a point, the recoil of the sea from the rocks was so great that they were with difficulty kept from foundering. We looked in vain for a sheltered bay to land in ; but, at length, being unable to weather another point, we were obliged to put ashore on the open beach, which, fortunately, was sandy at this spot. The debarkation was effected in the manner represented in the plate; and, fortunately, without further injury than the splitting of the head of the second canoe, which was easily repaired.

Our encampment being near to the place where we killed the deer on the 11th, almost the whole party went out to hunt, but they returned in the evening without having seen any game. The berries, however, were ripe and plentiful, and, with the addition of some country tea,

furnished a supper. There were some showers in the afternoon, and the weather was cold, the thermometer being 42 deg, but the evening and night were calm and fine. It may be remarked that the mosquitoes disappeared when the late gales commenced.

August 25.

Embarking at three A. M., we stretched across the eastern entrance of Bathurst's Inlet, and arrived at an island, which I have named after Colonel Barry, of Newton Barry. Some deer being seen on the beach, the hunters went in pursuit of them, and succeeded in killing three females, which enabled us to save our last remaining meal of pemmican. They saw also some fresh tracks of musk oxen on the banks of a small stream, which flowed into a lake in the centre of the island. These animals must have crossed a channel, at least, three miles wide, to reach the nearest of these islands. Some specimens of variegated pebbles and jasper were found here imbedded in the amygdaloidal rock.

Re-embarking at two P.M., and continuing through what was supposed to be a channel between two islands, we found our passage barred by a gravelly isthmus of only ten yards in width ; the canoes and cargoes were carried across it, and we passed into Bathurst's Inlet through another similar channel, bounded on both sides by steep rocky hills. The wind then changing from S.E. to N.W. brought heavy rain, and we encamped at seven P.M., having advanced eighteen miles. Starting this morning with a fresh breeze in our favour, we soon reached that part of Barry's Island where the canoes were detained on the 2d and 3rd of this month, and contrary to what we then experienced, the deer were now plentiful. The hunters killed two, and we were relieved from all apprehension of an immediate want of food. One would suppose the deer were about to retire to the main shore from their assembling at this time in such numbers on the islands nearest to the coast. Those we saw were generally females with their young, and all of them very lean.

The wind continued in the same direction until we had rounded Point Wollaston, and then changed to a quarter, which enabled us to steer for Hood's River, which we ascended as high as the first rapid and encamped. Here terminated our voyage on the Arctic sea, during

which we had gone over six hundred and fifty geographical miles. Our Canadian voyagers could not restrain their expressions of joy at having turned their backs on the sea, and they passed the evening talking over their past adventures with much humour and no little exaggeration. The consideration that the most painful, and certainly the most hazardous, part of the journey was yet to come, did not depress their spirits at all. It is due to their character to mention that they displayed much courage in encountering the dangers of the sea, magnified to them by their novelty.

The shores between Cape Barrow and Cape Flinders, including the extensive branches of Arctic and Melville Sounds, and Bathurst's Inlet, may be comprehended in one great gulf, which I have distinguished by the appellation of George IV.'s Coronation Gulf, in honour of His Most Gracious Majesty, the latter name being added to mark the time of its discovery. The Archipelago of islands which fringe the coast from Copper-Mine River to Point Turnagain, I have named in honour of His Royal Highness the Duke of York.

It may be deserving of notice that the extremes in temperature of the sea water during our voyage were 53 deg and 35 deg, but its general temperature was between 43 deg and 48 deg. Throughout our return from Point Turnagain we observed that the sea had risen several feet above marks left at our former encampments. This may, perhaps, be attributed to the north-west gales.

August 26.

Previous to our departure this morning, an assortment of iron materials, beads, looking-glasses, and other articles were put up in a conspicuous situation for the Esquimaux, and the English Union was planted on the loftiest sand-hill, where it might be seen by any ships passing in the offing. Here also, was deposited in a tin box a letter containing an outline of our proceedings, the latitude and longitude of the principal places, and the course we intended to pursue towards Slave Lake.

Embarking at eight A.M. we proceeded up the river, which is full of sandy shoals, but sufficiently deep for canoes in the channels. It is from one hundred to two hundred yards wide, and is bounded by high and steep banks of clay. We encamped at a cascade of eighteen or

twenty feet high, which is produced by a ridge of rock crossing the river, and the nets were set. A mile below this cascade Hood's River is joined by a stream half its own size, which I have called James' Branch. Bear and deer tracks had been numerous on the banks of the river when we were here before, but not a single recent one was to be seen at this time. Credit, however, killed a small deer at some distance inland, which, with the addition of berries, furnished a delightful repast this evening. The weather was remarkably fine, and the temperature so mild, that the mosquitoes again made their appearance, but not in any great numbers. Our distance made to-day was not more than six miles.

The next morning the net furnished us with ten white fish and trout. Having made a further deposit of iron work for the Esquimaux we pursued our voyage up the river, but the shoals and rapids in this part were so frequent, that we walked along the banks the whole day, and the crews laboured hard in carrying the canoes thus lightened over the shoals or dragging them up the rapids, yet our journey in a direct line was only about seven miles. In the evening we encamped at the lower end of a narrow chasm through which the river flows for upwards of a mile. The walls of this chasm are upwards of two hundred feet high, quite perpendicular, and in some places only a few yards apart. The river precipitates itself into it over a rock, forming two magnificent and picturesque falls close to each other. The upper fall is about sixty feet high, and the lower one at least one hundred, but perhaps considerably more, for the narrowness of the chasm into which it fell prevented us from seeing its bottom, and we could merely discern the top of the spray far beneath our feet. The lower fall is divided into two, by an insulated column of rock which rises about forty feet above it. The whole descent of the river at this place probably exceeds two hundred and fifty feet. The rock is very fine felspathose sandstone. It has a smooth surface and a light red colour. I have named these magnificent cascades Wilberforce Falls, as a tribute of my respect for that distinguished philanthropist and Christian. Messrs. Back and Hood took beautiful sketches of this majestic scene, which are combined in the annexed plate.

The river being surveyed from the summit of a hill, above these falls, appeared so rapid and shallow, that it seemed useless to attempt

proceeding any farther in the large canoes. I therefore determined on constructing out of their materials two smaller ones of sufficient size to contain three persons, for the purpose of crossing any river that might obstruct our progress. This operation was accordingly commenced, and by the 31st both the canoes being finished, we prepared for our departure on the following day.

The leather which had been preserved for making shoes was equally divided among the men, two pairs of flannel socks were given to each person, and such articles of warm clothing as remained, were issued to those who most required them. They were also furnished with one of the officers' tents. This being done, I communicated to the men my intention of proceeding in as direct a course as possible to the part of Point Lake, opposite to our spring encampment which was only distant one hundred and forty-nine miles in a straight line. They received the communication cheerfully, considered the journey to be short, and left me, in high spirits, to arrange their own packages. The stores, books, &c., which were not absolutely necessary to be carried, were then put up in boxes to be left en cache here, in order that the men's burdens might be as light as possible.

The next morning was warm, and very fine. Every one was on the alert at an early hour, being anxious to commence the journey. Our luggage consisted of ammunition, nets, hatchets, ice chisels, astronomical instruments, clothing, blankets, three kettles, and the two canoes, which were each carried by one man. The officers carried such a portion of their own things as their strength would permit; the weight carried by each man was about ninety pounds, and with this we advanced at the rate of about a mile an hour, including rests. In the evening the hunters killed a lean cow, out of a large drove of musk-oxen; but the men were too much laden to carry more than a small portion of its flesh. The alluvial soil, which towards the mouth of the river spreads into plains, covered with grass and willows, was now giving place to a more barren and hilly country; so that we could but just collect sufficient brush wood to cook our suppers. The part of the river we skirted to-day was shallow, and flowed over a bed of sand; its width about one hundred and twenty yards. About midnight our tent was blown down by a squall, and we were completely drenched with rain before it could be re-pitched.

In the morning of the 1st of September a fall of snow took place; the canoes became a cause of delay, by the difficulty of carrying them in a high wind, and they sustained much damage from the falls of those who had charge of them. The face of the country was broken by hills of moderate elevation, but the ground was plentifully strewn with small stones, which, to men bearing heavy burthens, and whose feet were protected only by soft moose skin shoes, occasioned great pain. At the end of eleven miles we encamped, and sent for a musk-ox and a deer, which St. Germain and Augustus had killed. The day was extremely cold, the thermometer varying between 34 deg and 36 deg. In the afternoon a heavy fall of snow took place, on the wind changing from north-west to south-west. We found no wood at the encampment, but made a fire of moss to cook the supper, and crept under our blankets for warmth. At sun-rise the thermometer was at 31 deg, and the wind fresh from north-west; but the weather became mild in the course of the forenoon, and the snow disappeared from the gravel. The afternoon was remarkably fine, and the thermometer rose to 50 deg. One of the hunters killed a musk-ox. The hills in this part are lower and more round-backed than those we passed yesterday, and exhibited but little naked rock; they were covered with lichens. Having ascertained from the summit of the highest hill near the tents, that the river continued to preserve a west course; and fearing that by pursuing it further we might lose much time, and unnecessarily walk over a great deal of ground, I determined on quitting its banks the next day, and making as directly as we could for Point Lake. We accordingly followed the river on the 3d, only to the place where the musk-ox had been killed last evening, and after the meat was procured, crossed the river in our two canoes lashed together. We now emerged from the valley of the river, and entered a level, but very barren, country, varied only by small lakes and marshes, the ground being covered with small stones. Many old tracks of rein-deer were seen in the clayey soil, and some more recent ones of the musk-ox. We encamped on the borders of Wright's River, which flows to the eastward; the direct distance walked to-day being ten miles and three-quarters. The next morning was very fine, and, as the day advanced, the weather became quite warm. We set out at six A. M., and, having forded the river, walked over a perfectly level country, interspersed

with small lakes, which communicated with each other, by streams running in various directions. No berry-bearing plants were found in this part, the surface of the earth being thinly covered in the moister places with a few grasses, and on the drier spots with lichens.

Having walked twelve miles and a half, we encamped at seven P.M., and distributed our last piece of pemmican, and a little arrow-root for supper, which afforded but a scanty meal. This evening was warm, but dark clouds overspread the sky. Our men now began to find their burdens very oppressive, and were much fatigued by this day's march, but did not complain. One of them was lame from an inflammation in the knee. Heavy rain commenced at midnight, and continued without intermission until five in the morning, when it was succeeded by snow on the wind changing to north-west, which soon increased to a violent gale. As we had nothing to eat, and were destitute of the means of making a fire, we remained in our beds all the day ; but the covering of our blankets was insufficient to prevent us from feeling the severity of the frost, and suffering in-convenience from the drifting of the snow into our tents. There was no abatement of the storm next day ; our tents were completely frozen, and the snow had drifted around them to a depth of three feet, and even in the inside there was a covering of several inches on our blankets. Our suffering from cold, in a comfortless canvass tent in such weather, with the temperature at 20 deg, and without fire, will easily be imagined; it was, however, less than that which we felt from hunger.

The morning of the 7th cleared up a little, but the wind was still strong, and the weather extremely cold. From the unusual continuance of the storm, we feared the winter had set in with all its rigour, and that by longer delay we should only be exposed to an accumulation of difficulties; we therefore prepared for our journey, although we were in a very unfit condition for starting, being weak from fasting, and our garments stiffened by the frost. We had no means of making a fire to thaw them, the moss, at all times difficult to kindle, being now covered with ice and snow. A considerable time was consumed in packing up the frozen tents and bed clothes, the wind blowing so strong that no one could keep his hands long out of his mittens.

Just as we were about to commence our march, I was seized with a fainting fit, in consequence of exhaustion and sudden exposure to the wind; but after eating a morsel of portable soup, I recovered, so far as to be able to move on. I was unwilling at first to take this morsel of soup, which was diminishing the small and only remaining meal for the party; but several of the men urged me to it, with much kindness. The ground was covered a foot deep with snow, the margin of the lakes was incrustured with ice, and the swamps over which we had to pass were entirely frozen; but the ice not being sufficiently strong to bear us, we frequently plunged knee-deep in water. Those who carried the canoes were repeatedly blown down by the violence of the wind, and they often fell, from making an insecure step on a slippery stone; on one of these occasions, the largest canoe was so much broken as to be rendered utterly unseizable. This was felt as a serious disaster, as the remaining canoe having through mistake been made too small, it was doubtful whether it would be sufficient to carry us across a river. Indeed we had found it necessary in crossing Hood's River, to lash the two canoes together. As there was some suspicion that Benoit, who carried the canoe, had broken it intentionally, he having on a former occasion been overheard by some of the men to say, that he would do so when he got it in charge, we closely examined him on the point; he roundly denied having used the expressions attributed to him, and insisted that it was broken by his falling accidentally; and as he brought men to attest the latter fact, who saw him tumble, we did not press the matter further. I may here remark that our people had murmured a good deal at having to carry two canoes, though they were informed of the necessity of taking both, in case it should be deemed advisable to divide the party; which it had been thought probable we should be obliged to do, if animals proved scarce, in order to give the whole the better chance of procuring subsistence, and also for the purpose of sending forward some of the best walkers to search for Indians, and to get them to meet us with supplies of provision. The power of doing this was now at an end. As the accident could not be remedied we turned it to the best account by making a fire of the bark and timbers of the broken vessel, and cooked the remainder of our portable soup and arrow-root. This was a scanty meal after three days' fasting, but it served to allay the pangs of

hunger, and enabled us to proceed at a quicker pace than before. The depth of the snow caused us to march in Indian file, that is in each other's steps; the voyagers taking it in turn to lead the party. A distant object was pointed out to this man in the direction we wished to take, and Mr. Hood followed immediately behind him, to renew the bearings, and keep him from deviating more than could be helped from the mark. It may be here observed, that we proceeded in this manner throughout our route across the barren grounds.

In the afternoon we got into a more hilly country, where the ground was strewn with large stones. The surface of these was covered with lichens of the genus *gyrophora*, which the Canadians term *tripe de roche*. A considerable quantity was gathered, and with half a partridge each, (which were shot in the course of the day,) furnished us with a slender supper, which we cooked with a few willows, dug up from beneath the snow. We passed a comfortless night in our damp clothes, but took the precaution of sleeping upon our socks and shoes to prevent them from freezing. This plan was afterwards adopted throughout the journey.

At half past five in the morning we proceeded; and after walking about two miles, came to Cracroft's River, flowing to the westward, with a very rapid current over a rocky channel. We had much difficulty in crossing this, the canoe being useless, not only from the bottom of the channel being obstructed by large stones, but also from its requiring gumming, an operation which, owing to the want of wood and the frost, we were unable to perform. However, after following the course of the river some way, we effected a passage by means of a range of large rocks that crossed a rapid. As the current was strong, and many of the rocks were covered with water to the depth of two or three feet, the men were exposed to much danger in carrying their heavy burthens across, and several of them actually slipped into the stream, but were immediately rescued by the others. Junius went farther up the river in search of a better crossing place, and did not rejoin us to-day. As several of the party were drenched from head to foot, and we were all wet to the middle, our clothes became stiff with the frost, and we walked with much pain for the remainder of the day. The march was continued to a late hour, being anxious to rejoin the hunters who had gone before, but we were obliged to encamp at the

end of ten miles and a quarter, without seeing them. Our only meal to-day consisted of a partridge each, (which the hunters shot,) mixed with tripe de roche. This repast although scanty for men, with appetites such as our daily fatigue created, proved a cheerful one, and was received with thankfulness. Most of the men had to sleep in the open air, in consequence of the absence of Credit, who carried their tent; but we fortunately found an unusual quantity of roots to make a fire, which prevented their suffering much from the cold, though the thermometer was at 17 deg.

We started at six on the 9th, and at the end of two miles re-gained our hunters, who were halting on the borders of a lake amidst a clump of stunted willows. This lake stretched to the westward as far as we could see, and its waters were discharged by a rapid stream one hundred and fifty yards wide. Being entirely ignorant where we might be led by pursuing the course of the lake, and dreading the idea of going a mile unnecessarily out of the way, we deter-mined on crossing the river if possible; and the canoe was gummed for the purpose, the willows furnishing us with fire. But we had to await the return of Junius before we could make the traverse. In the mean time we gathered a little tripe de roche, and breakfasted upon it and a few partridges that were killed in the morning. St. Germain and Adam were sent upon some recent tracks of deer. Junius arrived in the afternoon, and informed us that he had seen a large herd of musk-oxen on the banks of Cracroft's River, and had wounded one of them, but it had escaped. He brought about four pounds of meat, the remains of a deer that had been devoured by the wolves. The poor fellow was much fatigued, having walked throughout the night, but as the weather was particularly favourable for our crossing the river, we could not allow him to rest. After he had taken some refreshment we proceeded to the river. The canoe being put into the water was found extremely ticklish, but it was managed with much dexterity by St. Germain, Adam, and Peltier, who ferried over one passenger at a time, causing him to lie flat in its bottom, by no means a pleasant position, owing to its leakiness, but there was no alternative. The transport of the whole party was effected by five o'clock, and we walked about two miles further, and encamped, having come five miles and three quarters on a south-west course. Two young alpine hares were shot by St. Germain,

which, with the small piece of meat brought in by Junius, furnished the supper of the whole party. There was no tripe de roche here. The country had now become decidedly hilly, and was covered with snow. The lake preserved its western direction, as far as I could see from the summit of the highest mountain near the encampment. We subsequently learned from the Copper Indians, that the part at which we had crossed the river was the Congecatha-wha-chaga of Hearne, of which I had little idea at the time, not only from the difference of latitude, but also from its being so much farther east of the mouth of the Copper-Mine River, than his track is laid down. He only making one degree and three quarters difference of longitude, and we, upwards of four. Had I been aware of the fact, several days harassing march, and a disastrous accident would have been prevented by keeping on the western side of the lake, instead of crossing the river. We were informed also, that this river is the Anatesy or River of Strangers, and is supposed to fall into Bathurst's Inlet; but although the Indians have visited its mouth, their description was not sufficient to identify it with any of the rivers whose mouths we had seen. It probably falls in that part of the coast which was hid from our view by Goulburn's or Elliot's Islands.

September 10.

We had a cold north wind, and the atmosphere was foggy. The thermometer 18 deg at five A.M. In the course of our march this morning, we passed many small lakes; and the ground becoming higher and more hilly as we receded from the river, was covered to a much greater depth with snow. This rendered walking not only extremely laborious, but also hazardous in the highest degree; for the sides of the hills, as is usual throughout the barren grounds, abounding in accumulations of large angular stones, it often happened that the men fell into the interstices with their loads on their backs, being deceived by the smooth appearance of the drifted snow. If any one had broken a limb here, his fate would have been melancholy indeed; we could neither have remained with him, nor carried him on. We halted at ten to gather tripe de roche, but it was so frozen, that we were quite benumbed with cold before a sufficiency could be collected even for a scanty meal. On proceeding our men were somewhat

cheered, by observing on the sandy summit of a hill, from whence the snow had been blown, the summer track of a man; and afterwards by seeing several deer tracks on the snow. About noon the weather cleared up a little, and, to our great joy, we saw a herd of musk-oxen grazing in a valley below us. The party instantly halted, and the best hunters were sent out; they approached the animals with the utmost caution, no less than two hours being consumed before they got within gun-shot. In the mean time we beheld their proceedings with extreme anxiety, and many secret prayers were, doubtless, offered up for their success. At length they opened their fire, and we had the satisfaction of seeing one of the largest cows fall; another was wounded, but escaped. This success infused spirit into our starving party. To skin and cut up the animal was the work of a few minutes. The contents of its stomach were devoured upon the spot, and the raw intestines, which were next attacked, were pronounced by the most delicate amongst us to be excellent. A few willows, whose tops were seen peeping through the snow in the bottom of the valley, were quickly grubbed, the tents pitched, and supper cooked, and devoured with avidity. This was the sixth day since we had had a good meal. The tripe de roche, even where we got enough, only serving to allay the pangs of hunger for a short time. After supper, two of the hunters went in pursuit of the herd, but could not get near them. We were detained all the next day by a strong southerly wind, and were much incommoded in the tents by the drift snow. The temperature was 20 deg. The average for the last ten days about 24.5 deg. We restricted ourselves to one meal to-day as we were at rest, and there was only meat remaining sufficient for the next day. The gale had not diminished on the 12th, and, as we were fearful of its continuance for some time, we determined on going forward; our only doubt regarded the preservation of the canoe, but the men promised to pay particular attention to it, and the most careful persons were appointed to take it in charge. The snow was two feet deep, and the ground much broken, which rendered the march extremely painful. The whole party complained more of faintness and weakness than they had ever done before; their strength seemed to have been impaired by the recent supply of animal food. In the afternoon the wind abated, and the snow ceased; cheered with the change we

proceeded forward at a quicker pace, and encamped at six P. M., having come eleven miles. Our supper consumed the last of our meat. We set out on the 13th, in thick hazy weather, and, after an hour's march, had the extreme mortification to find ourselves on the borders of a large lake, which we subsequently learned from the Indians was named Contwoy-to, or Rum Lake; neither of its extremities could be seen, and as the portion which lay to the east seemed the widest, we coasted along to the westward portion in search of a crossing-place. This lake being bounded by steep and lofty hills, our march was very fatiguing. Those sides which were exposed to the sun, were free from snow, and we found upon them some excellent berries. We encamped at six P. M., having come only six miles and a half. Credit was then missing, and he did not return during the night. We supped off a single partridge and some tripe de roche; this unpalatable weed was now quite nau-seous to the whole party, and in several it produced bowel com-plaints. Mr. Hood was the greatest sufferer from this cause. This evening we were extremely distressed, at discovering that our im-provident companions, since we left Hood's River, had thrown away three of the fishing-nets, and burnt the floats ; they knew we had brought them to procure subsistence for the party, when the animals should fail, and we could scarcely believe the fact of their having wilfully deprived themselves of this resource, especially when we considered that most of them had passed the greater part of their servitude in situations where the nets alone had supplied them with food. Being thus deprived of our principal resource, that of fishing, and the men evidently getting weaker every day, it became necessary to lighten their burthens of every thing except ammunition, clothing, and the instruments that were required to find our way. I, therefore, issued directions to deposit at this encampment the dipping needle, azimuth compass, magnet, a large thermometer, and a few books we had carried, having torn out of these such parts as we should require to work the observations for latitude and longitude. I also promised, as an excitement to the efforts in hunting, my gun to St. Germain, and an ample compensation to Adam, or any of the other men who should kill any animals. Mr. Hood, on this occasion, lent his gun to Michel, the Iroquois, who was very eager in the chase, and often successful.

September 14.

This morning the officers being assembled round a small fire, Perrault presented each of us with a small piece of meat which he had saved from his allowance. It was received with great thankfulness, and such an act of self-denial and kindness, being totally unexpected in a Canadian voyager, filled our eyes with tears. In directing our course to a river issuing from the lake, we met Credit, who communicated the joyful intelligence of his having killed two deer in the morning. We instantly halted, and having shared the deer that was nearest to us, prepared breakfast. After which, the other deer was sent for, and we went down to the river, which was about three hundred yards wide, and flowed with great velocity through a broken rocky channel. Having searched for a part where the current was most smooth, the canoe was placed in the water at the head of a rapid, and St. Germain, Solomon Belanger, and I, embarked in order to cross. We went from the shore very well, but in mid-channel the canoe became difficult to manage under our burden as the breeze was fresh. The current drove us to the edge of the rapid, when Belanger unfortunately applied his paddle to avert the apparent danger of being forced down it, and lost his balance. The canoe was overset in consequence in the middle of the rapid. We fortunately kept hold of it, until we touched a rock where the water did not reach higher than our waists; here we kept our footing, notwithstanding the strength of the current, until the water was emptied out of the canoe. Belanger then held the canoe steady whilst St. Germain placed me in it, and afterwards embarked himself in a very dexterous manner. It was impossible, however, to embark Belanger, as the canoe would have been hurried down the rapid, the moment he should have raised his foot from the rock on which he stood. We were, therefore, compelled to leave him in his perilous situation. We had not gone twenty yards before the canoe, striking on a sunken rock, went down. The place being shallow, we were again enabled to empty it, and the third attempt brought us to the shore. In the mean time Belanger was suffering extremely, immersed to his middle in the centre of a rapid, the temperature of which was very little above the freezing point, and the upper part of his body covered with wet clothes, exposed in a temperature not much above zero, to a strong breeze. He called piteously for relief, and St. Germain on his return endeavoured to embark him, but in vain. The canoe was hurried

down the rapid, and when he landed he was rendered by the cold incapable of further exertion, and Adam attempted to embark Belanger, but found it impossible. An attempt was next made to carry out to him a line, made of the slings of the men's loads. This also failed, the current acting so strongly upon it, as to prevent the canoe from steering, and it was finally broken and carried down the stream. At length, when Belanger's strength seemed almost exhausted, the canoe reached him with a small cord belonging to one of the nets, and he was dragged perfectly senseless through the rapid. By the direction of Dr. Richardson, he was instantly stripped, and being rolled up in blankets, two men un-dressed themselves and went to bed with him; but it was some hours before he recovered his warmth and sensations. As soon as Belanger was placed in his bed, the officers immediately sent over my blankets, and a person to make a fire. Augustus brought the canoe over, and in returning he was obliged to descend both the rapids, before he could get across the stream; which hazardous service he performed with the greatest coolness and judgment. It is impossible to describe my sensations as I witnessed the various unsuccessful attempts to relieve Belanger. The distance prevented my seeing distinctly what was going on, and I continued pacing up and down upon the rock on which I landed, regardless of the coldness of my drenched and stiffening garments. The canoe, in every attempt to reach him, was hurried down the rapid, and was lost to the view amongst the rocky islets, with a rapidity that seemed to threaten certain destruction; once, indeed, I fancied that I saw it overwhelmed in the waves. Such an event would have been fatal to the whole party. Separated as I was from my companions, without gun, ammunition, hatchet, or the means of making a fire, and in wet clothes, my doom would have been speedily sealed. My companions too, driven to the necessity of coasting the lake, must have sunk under the fatigue of rounding its innumerable arms and bays, which, as we have learned from the Indians, are very extensive. By the goodness of Providence, however, we were spared at that time, and some of us have been permitted to offer up our thanksgivings, in a civilized land, for the signal deliverances we then and afterwards experienced.