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be far distant from the place where we lay that night, as the woman and her two children joined us next morning, before we had taken down our tent and made ready for moving. Those people were the first strangers whom we had met since we left the Fort, though we had travelled several hundred miles; which is a proof that this part of the country is but thinly inhabited. It is a truth well known to the natives, and doubtless founded on experience, that there are many very extensive tracts of land in those parts, which are incapable of affording support to any number of the human race even during the short time they are passing through them, in the capacity of migrants, from one place to another; much less are they capable of affording a constant support to those who might wish to make them their fixed residence at any season of the year. It is true, that few rivers or lakes in those parts are entirely destitute of fish; but the uncertainty of meeting with a sufficient supply for any considerable time together, makes the natives very cautious how they put their whole dependance on that article, as it has too frequently been the means of many hundreds being starved to death.

23d.

By the twenty-third, deer were so plentiful that the Indians seemed to think that, unless the season, contrary to expectation and general experience, should prove unfavourable, there would be no fear of our being in want of provisions

provisions during the rest of the Winter, as deer had always been known to be in great plenty in the direction which they intended to walk.

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On the third of February, we continued our course to the West by North and West North West, and were so near the edge of the woods, that the barren ground was in sight to the Northward. As the woods trended away to the West, we were obliged to alter our course to West by South, for the sake of keeping among them, as well as the deer. In the course of this day's walk we saw several strangers, some of whom remained in our company, while others went on their respective ways.

February.

3d.

On the sixth, we crossed the main branch of Cathawhachaga River; which, at that part, is about three quarters of a mile broad; and after walking three miles farther, came to the side of Coffed Whoie, or Partridge Lake; but the day being far spent, and the weather excessively cold, we put up for the night.

6th.

Early in the morning of the seventh, the weather being serene and clear, we set out, and crossed the above mentioned Lake; which at that part is about fourteen miles wide; but from the South South West to North North East is much larger. It is impossible to describe the intenseness of the cold which we experienced this day; and the dispatch we made in crossing the lake is almost incredible, as it was

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performed by the greatest part of my crew in less than two hours; though some of the women, who were heavy laden, took a much longer time. Several of the Indians were much frozen, but none of them more disagreeably so than one of Matonabee's wives, whose thighs and buttocks were in a manner incruited with frost; and when thawed, several blisters arose, nearly as large as sheeps' bladders. The pain the poor woman suffered on this occasion was greatly aggravated by the laughter and jeering of her companions, who said that she was rightly served for belting her clothes so high. I must acknowledge that I was not in the number of those who pitied her, as I thought she took too much pains to shew a clean heel and good leg; her garters being always in sight, which, though by no means considered here as bordering on indecency, is by far too airy to withstand the rigorous cold of a severe winter in a high Northern latitude. I doubt not that the laughter of her companions was excited by similar ideas.

When we got on the West side of Partridge Lake we continued our course for many days toward the West by South and West South West; when deer were so plentiful, and the Indians killed such vast numbers, that notwithstanding we frequently remained three, four, or five days in a place, to eat up the spoils of our hunting, yet at our departure we frequently left great quantities of good meat behind us, which we could neither eat nor carry with us.

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This conduct is the more excusable among people whose wandering manner of life and contracted ideas make every thing appear to them as the effect of mere chance. The great uncertainty of their ever visiting this or that part a second time, induces them to think there is nothing either wrong or improvident in living on the best the country will afford, as they are passing through it from place to place; and they seem willing that those who come after them should take their chance, as they have done.

On the twenty-first, we crossed The-whole-kyed Whoie, or Snowbird Lake, which at that part was about twelve or thirteen miles wide, though from North to South it is much larger. As deer were as plentiful as before, we expended much time in killing and eating them. This Matonabbee assured me was the best way we could employ ourselves, as the season would by no means permit us to proceed in a direct line for the Copper-mine River; but when the Spring advanced, and the deer began to draw out to the barren ground, he would then, he said, proceed in such a manner as to leave no room to doubt of our arrival at the Copper-mine River in proper time.

21st.

On the second of March, we lay by the side of Whool-dyah'd Whoie or Pike Lake, and not far from Doo-baunt Whoie River. On the next day we began to cross the above mentioned Lake, but after walking seven miles on it to the West South West, we arrived at a large tent of Northern Indians,

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2d.

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Indians, who had been living there from the beginning of the Winter, and had found a plentiful subsistence by catching deer in a pound. This kind of employment is performed in the following manner :

When the Indians design to impound deer, they look out for one of the paths in which a number of them have trod, and which is observed to be still frequented by them. When these paths cross a lake, a wide river, or a barren plain, they are found to be much the best for the purpose ; and if the path run through a cluster of woods, capable of affording materials for building the pound, it adds considerably to the commodiousness of the situation. The pound is built by making a strong fence with brushy trees, without observing any degree of regularity, and the work is continued to any extent, according to the pleasure of the builders. I have seen some that were not less than a mile round, and am informed that there are others still more extensive. The door, or entrance of the pound, is not larger than a common gate, and the inside is so crowded with small counter-hedges as very much to resemble a maze ; in every opening of which they set a snare, made with thongs of parchment deer-skins well twisted together, which are amazingly strong. One end of the snare is usually made fast to a growing pole ; but if no one of a sufficient size can be found near the place where the snare is set, a loose pole is substituted in its room, which is always of such size and length that a deer cannot drag it
far

far before it gets entangled among the other woods, which are all left standing except what is found necessary for making the fence, hedges, &c.

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The pound being thus prepared, a row of small brush-wood is stuck up in the snow on each side the door or entrance; and these hedge-rows are continued along the open part of the lake, river, or plain, where neither stick nor stump besides is to be seen, which makes them the more distinctly observed. These poles, or brush-wood, are generally placed at the distance of fifteen or twenty yards from each other, and ranged in such a manner as to form two sides of a long acute angle, growing gradually wider in proportion to the distance they extend from the entrance of the pound, which sometimes is not less than two or three miles; while the deer's path is exactly along the middle, between the two rows of brush-wood.

Indians employed on this service always pitch their tent on or near to an eminence that affords a commanding prospect of the path leading to the pound; and when they see any deer going that way, men, women, and children walk along the lake or river-side under cover of the woods, till they get behind them, then step forth to open view, and proceed towards the pound in the form of a crescent. The poor timorous deer finding themselves pursued, and at the same time taking the two rows of brushy poles to be two ranks of people stationed

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to prevent their passing on either side, run straight forward in the path till they get into the pound. The Indians then close in, and block up the entrance with some brushy trees, that have been cut down and lie at hand for that purpose. The deer being thus enclosed, the women and children walk round the pound, to prevent them from breaking or jumping over the fence, while the men are employed spearing such as are entangled in the snares, and shooting with bows and arrows those which remain loose in the pound.

This method of hunting, if it deserve the name, is sometimes so successful, that many families subsist by it without having occasion to move their tents above once or twice during the course of a whole winter; and when the Spring advances, both the deer and Indians draw out to the Eastward, on the ground which is entirely barren, or at least what is so called in those parts, as it neither produces trees or shrubs of any kind, so that moss and some little grass is all the herbage which is to be found on it. Such an easy way of procuring a comfortable maintenance in the Winter months, (which is by far the worst time of the year,) is wonderfully well adapted to the support of the aged and infirm, but is too apt to occasion a habitual indolence in the young and active, who frequently spend a whole Winter in this indolent manner: and as those parts of the country are almost destitute of every animal of the furr kind, it cannot be supposed

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posed that those who indulge themselves in this indolent method of procuring food can be masters of any thing for trade; whereas those who do not get their livelihood at so easy a rate, generally procure furs enough during the Winter to purchase a sufficient supply of ammunition, and other European goods, to last them another year. This is nearly the language of the more industrious among them, who, of course, are of most importance and value to the Hudson's Bay Company, as it is from them the furs are procured which compose the greatest part of Churchill trade. But in my opinion, there cannot exist a stronger proof that mankind was not created to enjoy happiness in this world, than the conduct of the miserable beings who inhabit this wretched part of it; as none but the aged and infirm, the women and children, a few of the more indolent and unambitious part of them, will submit to remain in the parts where food and clothing are procured in this easy manner, because no animals are produced there whose furs are valuable. And what do the more industrious gain by giving themselves all this additional trouble? The real wants of these people are few, and easily supplied; a hatchet, an ice-chissel, a file, and a knife, are all that is required to enable them, with a little industry, to procure a comfortable livelihood; and those who endeavour to possess more, are always the most unhappy, and may, in fact, be said to be only slaves and carriers to the rest, whose ambition never leads them to any thing beyond the means of procuring food

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and clothing. It is true, the carriers pride themselves much on the respect which is shewn to them at the Factory ; to obtain which they frequently run great risques of being starved to death in their way thither and back ; and all that they can possibly get there for the furs they procure after a year's toil, seldom amounts to more than is sufficient to yield a bare subsistence, and a few furs for the ensuing year's market ; while those whom they call indolent and mean-spirited live generally in a state of plenty, without trouble or risque ; and consequently must be the most happy, and, in truth, the most independent also. It must be allowed that they are by far the greatest philosophers, as they never give themselves the trouble to acquire what they can do well enough without. The deer they kill, furnishes them with food, and a variety of warm and comfortable clothing, either with or without the hair, according as the seasons require ; and it must be very hard indeed, if they cannot get furs enough in the course of two or three years, to purchase a hatchet, and such other edge-tools as are necessary for their purpose. Indeed, those who take no concern at all about procuring furs, have generally an opportunity of providing themselves with all their real wants from their more industrious countrymen, in exchange for provisions, and ready-dressed skins for clothing.

It is undoubtedly the duty of every one of the Company's servants to encourage a spirit of industry among
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the natives, and to use every means in their power to induce them to procure furs and other commodities for trade, by assuring them of a ready purchase and good payment for every thing they bring to the Factory : and I can truly say, that this has ever been the grand object of my attention. But I must at the same time confess, that such conduct is by no means for the real benefit of the poor Indians ; it being well known that those who have the least intercourse with the Factories, are by far the happiest. As their whole aim is to procure a comfortable subsistence, they take the most prudent methods to accomplish it ; and by always following the lead of the deer, are seldom exposed to the griping hand of famine, so frequently felt by those who are called the annual traders. It is true, that there are few of the Indians, whose manner of life I have just described, but have once in their lives at least visited Prince of Wales's Fort ; and the hardships and dangers which most of them experienced on those occasions, have left such a lasting impression on their minds, that nothing can induce them to repeat their visits : nor is it, in fact, the interest of the Company that people of this easy turn, and who require only as much iron-work at a time as can be purchased with three or four beaver skins, and that only once in two or three years, should be invited to the Factories ; because what they beg and steal while there, is worth, in the way of trade, three times the quantity of furs which they bring. For this reason, it is much more for the interest of the Company that the an-

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nual traders should buy up all those small quantities of furs, and bring them in their own name, than that a parcel of beggars should be encouraged to come to the Factory with scarcely as many furs as will pay for the victuals they eat while they are on the plantation.

I have often heard it observed, that the Indians who attend the deer-pounds might, in the course of a Winter, collect a vast number of pelts, which would well deserve the attention of those who are called carriers or traders; but it is a truth, though unknown to those speculators, that the deer skins at that season are not only as thin as a bladder, but are also full of warbles, which render them of little or no value. Indeed, were they a more marketable commodity than they really are, the remote situation of those pounds from the Company's Factories, must for ever be an unfurmountable barrier to the Indians bringing any of those skins to trade. The same observation may be made of all the other Northern Indians, whose chief support, the whole year round, is venison; but the want of heavy draught in Winter, and water-carriage in Summer, will not permit them to bring many deer skins to market, not even those that are in season, and for which there has always been great encouragement given.

We stopped only one night in company with the Indians whom we met on Pike Lake, and in the morning of the fourth, proceeded to cross the remainder of that
Lake ;;

Lake ; but, though the weather was fine, and though the Lake was not more than twenty-seven miles broad at the place where we crossed it, yet the Indians lost so much time at play, that it was the seventh before we arrived on the West side of it. During the whole time we were crossing it, each night we found either points of land, or islands, to put up in. On the eighth, we lay a little to the East North East of Black Bear Hill, where the Indians killed two deer, which were the first we had seen for ten days ; but having plenty of dried meat and fat with us, we were by no means in want during any part of that time. On the ninth, we proceeded on our course to the Westward, and soon met with as great plenty of deer as we had seen during any part of our journey ; which, no doubt, made things go on smooth and easy : and as the Spring advanced, the rigour of the Winter naturally abated, so that at times we had fine pleasant weather over-head, though it was never so warm as to occasion any thaw, unless in such places as lay exposed to the mid-day sun, and were sheltered from all the cold winds.

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7th.

8th.

9th.

On the nineteenth, as we were continuing our course to the West and West by South, we saw the tracks of several strangers ; and on following the main path, we arrived that night at five tents of Northern Indians, who had resided there great part of the Winter, snaring deer in the same manner as those before mentioned. Indeed, it should seem

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20th.

seem that this, as well as some other places, had been frequented more than once on this occasion; for the wood that had been cut down for fuel, and other uses, was almost incredible. Before morning, the weather became so bad, and the storm continued to rage with such violence, that we did not move for several days; and as some of the Indians we met with at this place were going to Prince of Wales's Fort in the Summer, I embraced the opportunity of sending by them a Letter to the Chief at that Fort, agreeably to the tenor of my instructions. By summing up my courses and distances from my last observation, for the weather at that time would not permit me to observe, I judged myself to be in latitude $61^{\circ} 30'$ North, and about $19^{\circ} 60'$ of longitude to the West of Churchill River. This, and some accounts of the usage I received from the natives, with my opinion of the future success of the journey, formed the contents of my Letter.

23d.

26th.

On the twenty-third, the weather became fine and moderate, so we once more pursued our way, and the next day, as well as on the twenty-sixth, saw several more tents of Northern Indians, who were employed in the same manner as those we had formerly met; but some of them having had bad success, and being relations or acquaintances of part of my crew, joined our company, and proceeded with us to the Westward. Though the deer did not then keep regular paths, so as to enable the Indians to catch them in pounds, yet they were to be met with

with in great abundance in scattered herds ; so that my companions killed as many as they pleased with their guns.

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We still continued our course to the West and West by South, and on the eighth of April, arrived at a small Lake, called Thelewey-aza-yeth ; but with what propriety it is so called I cannot discover, for the meaning of Thelewey-aza-yeth is Little Fish Hill: probably so called from a high hill which stands on a long point near the West end of the Lake. On an island in this Lake we pitched our tents, and the Indians finding deer very numerous, determined to stay here some time, in order to dry and pound meat to take with us ; for they well knew, by the season of the year, that the deer were then drawing out to the barren ground, and as the Indians proposed to walk due North on our leaving the Lake, it was uncertain when we should again meet with any more. As several Indians had during the Winter joined our party, our number had now increased to seven tents, which in the whole contained not less than seventy persons.

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3th.

Agreeably to the Indians' proposals we remained at Thelewey-aza-yeth ten days ; during which time my companions were busily employed (at their intervals from hunting) in preparing small staves of birch-wood, about one and a quarter inch square, and seven or eight feet long. These serve as tent-poles all the Summer,
while

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while on the barren ground; and as the fall advances, are converted into snow-shoe frames for Winter use. Birch-rind, together with timbers and other wood-work for building canoes, were also another object of the Indian's attention while at this place; but as the canoes were not to be set up till our arrival at Clowey, (which was many miles distant,) all the wood-work was reduced to its proper size, for the sake of making it light for carriage.

As to myself, I had little to do, except to make a few observations for determining the latitude, bringing up my journal, and filling up my chart to the present time. I found the latitude of this place $61^{\circ} 30'$ North, and its longitude, by my account, 19° West of Prince of Wales's Fort.

13th.

Having a good stock of dried provisions, and most of the necessary work for canoes all ready, on the eighteenth we moved about nine or ten miles to the North North West, and then came to a tent of Northern Indians who were tenting on the North side of Thelewey-aza River. From these Indians Matonabee purchased another wife; so that he had now no less than seven, most of whom would for size have made good grenadiers. He prided himself much in the height and strength of his wives, and would frequently say, few women would carry or haul heavier loads; and though they had, in general, a very masculine appearance, yet he preferred them to those of a
more

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more delicate form and moderate stature. In a country like this, where a partner in excessive hard labour is the chief motive for the union, and the softer endearments of a conjugal life are only considered as a secondary object, there seems to be great propriety in such a choice; but if all the men were of this way of thinking, what would become of the greater part of the women, who in general are but of low stature, and many of them of a most delicate make, though not of the exactest proportion, or most beautiful mould? Take them in a body, the women are as destitute of real beauty as any nation I ever saw, though there are some few of them, when young, who are tolerable; but the care of a family, added to their constant hard labour, soon make the most beautiful among them look old and wrinkled, even before they are thirty; and several of the more ordinary ones at that age are perfect antidotes to love and gallantry. This, however, does not render them less dear and valuable to their owners, which is a lucky circumstance for those women, and a certain proof that there is no such thing as any rule or standard for beauty. Ask a Northern Indian, what is beauty? he will answer, a broad flat face, small eyes, high cheek-bones, three or four broad black lines across each cheek, a low forehead, a large broad chin, a clumsy hook-nose, a tawney hide, and breasts hanging down to the belt. Those beauties are greatly heightened, or at least rendered more valuable, when the possessor is capable of dressing all kinds of skins, converting them into the different parts

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of their clothing, and able to carry eight or ten * stone in Summer, or haul a much greater weight in Winter. These, and other similar accomplishments, are all that are sought after, or expected, of a Northern Indian woman. As to their temper, it is of little consequence; for the men have a wonderful facility in making the most stubborn comply with as much alacrity as could possibly be expected from those of the mildest and most obliging turn of mind; so that the only real difference is, the one obeys through fear, and the other complies cheerfully from a willing mind; both knowing that what is commanded must be done. They are, in fact, all kept at a great distance, and the rank they hold in the opinion of the men cannot be better expressed or explained, than by observing the method of treating or serving them at meals, which would appear very humiliating, to an European woman, though custom makes it sit light on those whose lot it is to bear it. It is necessary to observe, that when the men kill any large beast, the women are always sent to bring it to the tent: when it is brought there, every operation it undergoes, such as splitting, drying, pounding, &c. is performed by the women. When any thing is to be prepared for eating, it is the women who cook it; and when it is done, the wives and daughters of the greatest Captains in the country are never served, till all the males, even those who are in the capacity of servants, have eaten what they think proper;

* The stone here meant is fourteen pounds.

and

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and in times of scarcity it is frequently their lot to be left without a single morsel. It is, however, natural to think they take the liberty of helping themselves in secret; but this must be done with great prudence, as capital embezzlements of provisions in such times are looked on as affairs of real consequence, and frequently subject them to a very severe beating. If they are practised by a woman whose youth and inattention to domestic concerns cannot plead in her favour, they will for ever be a blot in her character, and few men will chuse to have her for a wife.

Finding plenty of good birch growing by the side of Theley-aza River, we remained there for a few days, in order to complete all the wood-work for the canoes, as well as for every other use for which we could possibly want it on the barren ground, during our Summer's cruise. On the twentieth, Matonabbee sent one of his brothers, and some others, a-head, with birch-rind and wood-work for a canoe, and gave them orders to proceed to a small Lake near the barren ground called Clowey, where they were desired to make all possible haste in building the canoe, that it might be ready on our arrival.

20th.

Having finished such wood-work as the Indians thought would be necessary, and having augmented our stock of dried meat and fat, the twenty-first was appointed for moving; but one of the women having been taken in labour, and it being rather an extraordinary case, we

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were detained more than two days. The infant, however, the poor woman was delivered, which was not until she had suffered all the pains usually felt on those occasions for near fifty-two hours, the signal was made formoving when the poor creature took her infant on her back and set out with the rest of the company; and though another person had the humanity to haul her sledge for her, (for one day only,) she was obliged to carry a considerable load beside her little charge, and was frequently obliged to wade knee-deep in water and wet snow. Her very looks, exclusive of her moans, were a sufficient proof of the great pain she endured, insomuch that although she was a person I greatly disliked, her distress at this time so overcame my prejudice, that I never felt more for any of her sex in my life; indeed her sighs pierced me to the soul, and rendered me very miserable, as it was not in my power to relieve her.

When a Northern Indian woman is taken in labour, a small tent is erected for her, at such a distance from the other tents that her cries cannot easily be heard, and the other women and young girls are her constant visitants: no male, except children in arms, ever offers to approach her. It is a circumstance perhaps to be lamented, that these people never attempt to assist each other on those occasions, even in the most critical cases. This is in some measure owing to delicacy, but more probably to an opinion they entertain that nature is abundantly

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dantly sufficient to perform every thing required, without any external help whatever. When I informed them of the assistance which European women derive from the skill and attention of our midwives, they treated it with the utmost contempt; ironically observing, “ that
“ the many hump-backs, bandy-legs, and other deformi-
“ ties, so frequent among the English, were undoubtedly
“ owing to the great skill of the persons who assisted in
“ bringing them into the world, and to the extraordinary
“ care of their nurses afterward.”

A Northern Indian woman after child-birth is reckoned unclean for a month or five weeks; during which time she always remains in a small tent placed at a little distance from the others, with only a female acquaintance or two; and during the whole time the father never sees the child. Their reason for this practice is, that children when first born are sometimes not very sightly, having in general large heads, and but little hair, and are, moreover, often discoloured by the force of the labour; so that were the father to see them to such great disadvantage, he might probably take a dislike to them, which never afterward could be removed.

The names of the children are always given to them by the parents, or some person near of kin. Those of the boys are various, and generally derived from some place, season, or animal; the names of the girls are chiefly
taken

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taken from some part or property of a Martin; such as, the White Martin, the Black Martin, the Summer Martin, the Martin's Head, the Martin's Foot, the Martin's Heart, the Martin's Tail, &c. *

23d.

May
3d.

On the twenty-third, as I hinted above, we began to move forward, and to shape our course nearly North; but the weather was in general so hot, and so much snow had, in consequence, been melted, as made it bad walking in snow-shoes, and such exceeding heavy hauling, that it was the third of May before we could arrive at Clowey, though the distance was not above eighty-five miles from Thelewey-aza-yeth. In our way we crossed part of two small Lakes, called Tittameg Lake and Scartack Lake; neither of which are of any note, though both abound with fine fish.

* Matonabbee had eight wives, and they were all called Martins.

C H A P. V.

Transactions at Clowey, and on our Journey, till our
Arrival at the Copper-mine River.

Several strange Indians join us.—Indians employed building canoes; description and use of them.—More Indians join us, to the amount of some hundreds.—Leave Clowey.—Receive intelligence that Keelshies was near us.—Two young men dispatched for my letters and goods.—Arrive at Peshew Lake; cross part of it, and make a large smoke.—One of Matonabee's wives elopes.—Some remarks on the natives.—Keelshies joins us, and delivers my letters, but the goods were all expended.—A Northern Indian wishes to take one of Matonabee's wives from him; matters compromised, but had like to have proved fatal to my progress.—Cross Peshew Lake, when I make proper arrangements for the remainder of my journey.—Many Indians join our party, in order to make war on the Esquimaux at the Copper River.—Preparations made for that purpose while at Clowey.—Proceed on our journey to the North.—Some remarks on the way.—Cross Cogead Lake on the ice.—The Sun did not set.—Arrive at Congecathawbachaga.—Find several Copper Indians there.—Remarks and transactions during our stay at Congecathawbachaga.—Proceed on our journey.—Weather very bad.—Arrive at the Stoney Mountains.—Some account of them.—Cross part of Buffalo Lake on the ice.—Saw many musk-oxen.—Description of them.—Went with some Indians to view Grizzle-bear Hill.—Join a strange Northern Indian Leader, called O'lye, in company with some Copper Indians.—Their behaviour to me.—Arrive at the Copper-mine River.

THE Lake Clowey is not much more than twelve miles broad in the widest part. A small river which runs into it on the West side, is said by the Indians to join the Athapuscow Lake.

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May.

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May
3d.

On our arrival at Clowey on the third of May, we found that the Captain's brother, and those who were sent a-head with him from Theley-aza River, had only got there two days before us; and, on account of the weather, had not made the least progress in building the canoe, the plan of which they had taken with them. The same day we got to Clowey several other Indians joined us from different quarters, with intent to build their canoes at the same place. Some of those Indians had resided within four or five miles, to the South East of Clowey all the Winter; and had procured a plentiful livelihood by snaring deer, in the manner which has been already described.

18th.

19th.

20th.

Immediately after our arrival at Clowey, the Indians began to build their canoes, and embraced every convenient opportunity for that purpose: but as warm and dry weather only is fit for this business, which was by no means the case at present, it was the eighteenth of May before the canoes belonging to my party could be completed. On the nineteenth we agreed to proceed on our journey; but Matonabee's canoe meeting with some damage, which took near a whole day to repair, we were detained till the twentieth.

Those vessels, though made of the same materials with the canoes of the Southern Indians, differ from them both in shape and construction; they are also much smaller and lighter,

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May.

lighter; and though very slight and simple in their construction, are nevertheless the best that could possibly be contrived for the use of those poor people, who are frequently obliged to carry them a hundred, and sometimes a hundred and fifty miles at a time, without having occasion to put them into the water. Indeed, the chief use of these canoes is to ferry over unfordable rivers; though sometimes, and at a few places, it must be acknowledged, that they are of great service in killing deer, as they enable the Indians to cross rivers and the narrow parts of lakes; they are also useful in killing swans, geese, ducks, &c. in the moulting season.

All the tools used by an Indian in building his canoe, as well as in making his snow-shoes, and every other kind of wood-work, consist of a hatchet, a knife, a file, and an awl; in the use of which they are so dextrous, that every thing they make is executed with a neatness not to be excelled by the most expert mechanic, assisted with every tool he could wish.

In shape the Northern Indian canoe bears some resemblance to a weaver's shuttle; being flat-bottomed, with straight upright sides, and sharp at each end; but the stern is by far the widest part, as there the baggage is generally laid, and occasionally a second person, who always lies down at full length in the bottom of the canoe. In this manner they carry one another across rivers and the narrow

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parts of lakes in those little vessels, which seldom exceed twelve or thirteen feet in length, and are from twenty inches to two feet broad in the widest part. The head, or fore part, is unnecessarily long, and narrow; and is all covered over with birch-bark, which adds considerably to the weight, without contributing to the burthen of the vessel. In general, these Indians make use of the single paddle, though a few have double ones, like the Esquimaux: the latter, however, are seldom used, but by those who lie in wait to kill deer as they cross rivers and narrow lakes*.

During our stay at Clowey we were joined by upward of two hundred Indians from different quarters, most of whom built canoes at this place; but as I was under the protection of a principal man, no one offered to molest

* See Plate IV. where Fig. A represents the bottom of the canoe, Fig. B being the fore-part. Fig. C is the complete frame of one before it is covered with the bark of the birch-tree: it is represented on an artificial bank, which the natives raise to build it on. Fig. D is an end-view of a set of timbers, bent and lashed in their proper shape, and left to dry. Fig. E is the representation of a complete canoe. Fig. F represents one of their paddles. Fig. G a spear with which they kill deer; and Fig. H, their mode of carrying the canoe.

The following references are to the several parts of the canoe: Fig. C.
1. The stem. 2. The stern-post. 3. Two forked sticks supporting the stem and stern-post. 4. The gunwales. 5. Small rods placed between the timbers and birch-bark that covers them. 6. The timbers. 7. The keelson. 8. Large stones placed there to keep the bottom steady till the sides are sewed on.

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me, nor can I say they were very clamorous for any thing I had. This was undoubtedly owing to Matonabee's informing them of my true situation; which was, that I had not, by any means, sufficient necessaries for myself, much less to give away. The few goods which I had with me were intended to be reserved for the Copper and Dog-ribbed Indians, who never visit the Company's Factories. Tobacco was, however, always given away; for every one of any note, who joined us, expected to be treated with a few pipes, and on some occasions it was scarcely possible to get off without presenting a few inches * to them; which, with the constant supplies which I was obliged to furnish my own crew, decreased that article of my stock so fast, that notwithstanding I had yet advanced so small a part of my journey, more than one half of my store was expended. Gun-powder and shot also were articles commonly asked for by most of the Indians we met; and in general these were dealt round to them with a liberal hand by my guide Matonabee. I must, however, do him the justice to acknowledge, that what he distributed was all his own, which he had purchased at the Factory; to my certain knowledge he bartered one hundred and fifty martins' skins for powder only; besides a great number of beaver, and other furs, for shot, ball, iron-work, and tobacco, purposely to give away among his countrymen; as he had certainly as many of these articles given to him as were, in

* The tobacco used in Hudson's Bay is the Brasil tobacco; which is twisted into the form of a rope, of near an inch diameter, and then wound into a large roll; from which it is taken by measure; of length, for the natives.

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his opinion, sufficient for our support during our journey out and home.

May
20th.

Matonabbee's canoe having been repaired, on the twentieth we left Clowey, and proceeded Northward. That morning a small gang of strangers joined us, who informed my guide, that Captain Keelshies was within a day's walk to the Southward. Keelshies was the man by whom I had sent a letter to Prince of Wales's Fort, from Cathawhachaga, in the beginning of July one thousand seven hundred and seventy; but not long after that, having the misfortune to break my quadrant, I was obliged to return to the Fort a second time; and though we saw many smokes, and spoke with several Indians on my return that year, yet he and I missed each other on the barren ground, and I had not seen or heard of him since that time.

21st.

As Matonabbee was desirous that I should receive my letters, and also the goods I had written for, he dispatched two of his young men to bring them. We continued our journey to the Northward; and the next day saw several large smokes at a great distance to the Eastward on the barren ground, which were supposed to be made by some parties of Indians bound to Prince of Wales's Fort with furs and other commodities for trade.

22d.

On the twenty-second and twenty-third, we proceeded to the North, at the rate of fourteen or fifteen miles a-day; and in the evening of the latter, got clear of all
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the woods, and lay on the barren ground. The same evening the two young men who were sent for my letters, &c. returned, and told me that Keeshies had promised to join us in a few days, and deliver the things to me with his own hand.

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The twenty-fourth proved bad and rainy weather, so that we only walked about seven miles, when finding a few blasted stumps of trees, we pitched our tents. It was well we did so, for toward night we had excessively bad weather, with loud thunder, strong lightning, and heavy rain, attended with a very hard gale of wind from the South West; toward the next morning, however, the wind veered round to the North West, and the weather became intensely cold and frosty. We walked that day about eight miles to the Northward, when we were obliged to put up, being almost benumbed with cold. There we found a few dry stumps, as we had done the day before, which served us for fuel *

24th.

The

* I have observed, during my several journeys in those parts, that all the way to the North of Seal River the edge of the wood is faced with old withered stumps, and trees which have been blown down by the wind. They are mostly of the sort which is called here Juniper, but were seldom of any considerable size. Those blasted trees are found in some parts to extend to the distance of twenty miles from the living woods, and detached patches of them are much farther off; which is a proof that the cold has been increasing in those parts for some ages. Indeed, some of the older Northern Indians have assured me, that they have heard their fathers and grandfathers say, they remembered the greatest part of those places where the trees are now blasted and dead, in a flourishing

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20th.
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The weather on the twenty-sixth was so bad, with snow and thick drifting fleet, that we did not move; but the next morning proving fine and pleasant, we dried our things, and walked about twelve miles to the Northward; most of the way on the ice of a small river which runs into Peshew Lake*. We then saw a smoke to the Southward, which we judged to be made by Keeshies, so we put up for the night by the side of the above-mentioned Lake, where I expected we should have waited for his arrival; but, to my great surprize, on the morrow we again set forward, and walked twenty-two miles to the Northward on Peshew Lake, and in the afternoon pitched our tents on an island, where, by my desire, the Indians made a large smoke, and proposed to stay a day or two for Captain Keeshies.

In the night, one of Matonabee's wives and another woman eloped: it was supposed they went off to the Eastward, in order to meet their former husbands, from

flourishing state; and that they were remarkable for abounding with deer. It is a well-known fact, that many deer are fond of frequenting those plains where the juniper trees abound near barren grounds, particularly in fine weather during the Winter; but in heavy gales of wind they either take shelter in the thick woods, or go out on the open plains. The Indians, who never want a reason for any thing, say, that the deer quit the thin straggling woods during the high winds, because the nodding of the trees, when at a considerable distance from each other, frightens them; but in the midst of a thick forest, the constant rustling of the branches lulls them into security, and renders them an easy prey to a skilful hunter.

Probably the same with Partridge Lake in the Map.

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whom they had been sometime before taken by force. This affair made more noise and bustle than I could have supposed; and Matonabee seemed entirely disconcerted, and quite inconsolable for the loss of his wife. She was certainly by far the handsomest of all his flock, of a moderate size, and had a fair complexion; she apparently possessed a mild temper, and very engaging manners. In fact, she seemed to have every good quality that could be expected in a Northern Indian woman, and that could render her an agreeable companion to an inhabitant of this part of the world. She had not, however, appeared happy in her late situation; and chose rather to be the sole wife of a sprightly young fellow of no note, (though very capable of maintaining her,) than to have the seventh or eighth share of the affection of the greatest man in the country. I am sorry to mention an incident which happened while we were building the canoes at Clowey, and which by no means does honour to Matonabee: it is no less a crime than that of having actually stabbed the husband of the above-mentioned girl in three places; and had it not been for timely assistance, would certainly have murdered him, for no other reason than because the poor man had spoken disrespectfully of him for having taken his wife away by force. The cool deliberation with which Matonabee committed this bloody action, convinced me it had been a long premeditated design; for he no sooner heard of the man's arrival, than he opened one of his wives' bundles, and, with the greatest composure,

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composure, took out a new long box-handled knife, went into the man's tent, and, without any preface whatever, took him by the collar, and began to execute his horrid design. The poor man anticipating his danger, fell on his face, and called for assistance; but before any could be had he received three wounds in the back. Fortunately for him, they all happened on the shoulder-blade, so that his life was spared. When Matonabee returned to his tent, after committing this horrid deed, he sat down as composedly as if nothing had happened, called for water to wash his bloody hands and knife, smoked his pipe as usual, seemed to be perfectly at ease, and asked if I did not think he had done right?

It has ever been the custom among those people for the men to wrestle for any woman to whom they are attached; and, of course, the strongest party always carries off the prize. A weak man, unless he be a good hunter and well-beloved, is seldom permitted to keep a wife that a stronger man thinks worth his notice: for at any time when the wives of those strong wrestlers are heavy-laden either with furs or provisions, they make no scruple of tearing any other man's wife from his bosom, and making her bear a part of his luggage. This custom prevails throughout all their tribes, and causes a great spirit of emulation among their youth, who are upon all occasions, from their childhood, trying their strength and skill in wrestling. This enables them to protect their property, and particularly their wives, from

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from the hands of those powerful ravishers ; some of whom make almost a livelihood by taking what they please from the weaker parties, without making them any return. Indeed, it is represented as an act of great generosity, if they condescend to make an unequal exchange ; as, in general, abuse and insult are the only return for the loss which is sustained.

The way in which they tear the women and other property from one another, though it has the appearance of the greatest brutality, can scarcely be called fighting. I never knew any of them receive the least hurt in these rencontres ; the whole business consists in hauling each other about by the hair of the head ; they are seldom known either to strike or kick one another. It is not uncommon for one of them to cut off his hair and to grease his ears, immediately before the contest begins. This, however, is done privately ; and it is sometimes truly laughable, to see one of the parties strutting about with an air of great importance, and calling out, " Where is he ? Why does " he not come out ? " when the other will bolt out with a clean shorn head and greased ears, rush on his antagonist, seize him by the hair, and though perhaps a much weaker man, soon drag him to the ground, while the stronger is not able to lay hold on him. It is very frequent on those occasions for each party to have spies, to watch the other's motions, which puts them more on a footing of equality. For want of hair to pull, they

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seize each other about the waist, with legs wide extended, and try their strength, by endeavouring to vie who can first throw the other down.

On these wrestling occasions the standers-by never attempt to interfere in the contest; even one brother offers not to assist another, unless it be with advice, which, as it is always delivered openly on the field during the contest, may, in fact, be said to be equally favourable to both parties. It sometimes happens that one of the wrestlers is superior in strength to the other; and if a woman be the cause of the contest, the weaker is frequently unwilling to yield, notwithstanding he is greatly overpowered. When this happens to be the case, the relations and friends, or other bye-standers, will sometimes join to persuade the weaker combatant to give up the contest, lest, by continuing it, he should get bruised and hurt, without the least probability of being able to protect what he is contending for. I observed that very few of those people were dissatisfied with the wives which had fallen to their lot, for 'whenever any considerable number of them were in company, scarcely a day passed without some overtures being made for contests of this kind; and it was often very unpleasant to me, to see the object of the contest sitting in pensive silence watching her fate, while her husband and his rival were contending for the prize. I have indeed not only felt pity for those poor wretched victims, but the utmost indignation, when I have

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have seen them won, perhaps, by a man whom they mortally hated. On those occasions their grief and reluctance to follow their new lord has been so great, that the business has often ended in the greatest brutality; for, in the struggle, I have seen the poor girls stripped quite naked, and carried by main force to their new lodgings. At other times it was pleasant enough to see a fine girl led off the field from a husband she disliked, with a tear in one eye and a finger on the other: for custom, or delicacy if you please, has taught them to think it necessary to whimper a little, let the change be ever so much to their inclination. I have throughout this account given the women the appellation of girls, which is pretty applicable, as the objects of contest are generally young, and without any family: few of the men chuse to be at the trouble of maintaining other people's children, except on particular occasions, which will be taken notice of hereafter.

Some of the old men, who are famous on account of their supposed skill in conjuration, have great influence in persuading the rabble from committing those outrages; but the humanity of these sages is seldom known to extend beyond their own families. In defence of them they will exert their utmost influence; but when their own relations are guilty of the same crime, they seldom interfere. This partial conduct creates some secret, and several open enemies; but the generality of their neighbours are deterred, through fear or superstition, from exe-

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cutting their revenge, and even from talking disrespectfully of them, unless it be behind their backs; which is a vice of which almost every Indian in this country, without exception, is guilty.

Notwithstanding the Northern Indians are so covetous, and pay so little regard to private property as to take every advantage of bodily strength to rob their neighbours, not only of their goods, but of their wives, yet they are, in other respects, the mildest tribe, or nation, that is to be found on the borders of Hudson's Bay: for let their affronts or losses be ever so great, they never will seek any other revenge than that of wrestling. As for murder, which is so common among all the tribes of Southern Indians, it is seldom heard of among them. A murderer is shunned and detested by all the tribe, and is obliged to wander up and down, forlorn and forsaken even by his own relations and former friends. In that respect a murderer may truly be compared to Cain, after he had killed his brother Abel. The cool reception he meets with by all who know him, occasions him to grow melancholy, and he never leaves any place but the whole company say, "There goes the murderer!" The women, it is true, sometimes receive an unlucky blow from their husbands for misbehaviour, which occasions their death; but this is thought nothing of: and for one man or woman to kill another out of revenge, or through jealousy, or on any other account, is so extraordinary, that very few are now existing

existing who have been guilty of it. At the present moment I know not one, beside Matonabee, who ever made an attempt of that nature; and he is, in every other respect, a man of such universal good sense, and, as an Indian, of such great humanity, that I am at a loss how to account for his having been guilty of such a crime, unless it be by his having lived among the Southern Indians so long, as to become tainted with their blood-thirsty, revengeful, and vindictive disposition.

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Early in the morning of the twenty-ninth, Captain Keelshies joined us. He delivered to me a packet of letters, and a two-quart keg of French brandy; but assured me, that the powder, shot, tobacco, knives, &c. which he received at the Fort for me, were all expended. He endeavoured to make some apology for this, by saying, that some of his relations died in the Winter, and that he had, according to their custom, thrown all his own things away; after which he was obliged to have recourse to my ammunition and other goods, to support himself and a numerous family. The very affecting manner in which he related this story, often crying like a child, was a great proof of his extreme sorrow, which he wished to persuade me arose from the recollection of his having embezzled so much of my property; but I was of a different opinion, and attributed his grief to arise from the remembrance of his deceased relations. However, as a small recompence for my loss, he presented me with four
ready-

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ready-dressed moose-skins, which was, he said, the only retribution he could then make. The moose-skins, though not the twentieth part of the value of the goods which he had embezzled, were in reality more acceptable to me, than the ammunition and the other articles would have been, on account of their great use as shoe-leather, which at that time was a very scarce article with us, whereas we had plenty of powder and shot.

On the same day that Keeshies joined us, an Indian man, who had been some time in our company, insisted on taking one of Matonabee's wives from him by force, unless he complied with his demands, which were, that Matonabee should give him a certain quantity of ammunition, some pieces of iron-work, a kettle, and several other articles; every one of which, Matonabee was obliged to deliver, or lose the woman; for the other man far excelled him in strength. Matonabee was more exasperated on this occasion, as the same man had sold him the woman no longer ago than the nineteenth of the preceding April. Having expended all the goods he then possessed, however, he was determined to make another bargain for her; and as she was what may be called a valuable woman in their estimation; that is, one who was not only tolerably personable, but reckoned very skilful in manufacturing the different kinds of leather, skins, and furs, and at the same time very clever in the performance of every other domestic duty required of the sex in this part of the world;

Matonabee was more unwilling to part with her, especially as he had so lately suffered a loss of the same

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May.

This dispute, which was after some hours decided by words and presents, had like to have proved fatal to my expedition; for Matonabee, who at that time thought himself as great a man as then lived, took this affront so much to heart, especially as it was offered in my presence, that he almost determined not to proceed any farther toward the Copper-mine River, and was on the point of striking off to the Westward, with an intent to join the Athapusco Indians, and continue with them: he being perfectly well acquainted with all their leaders, and most of the principal Indians of that country, from whom, during a former residence among them of several years, he said he had met with more civility than he ever did from his own countrymen. As Matonabee seemed resolutely bent on his design, I had every reason to think that my third expedition would prove equally unsuccessful with the two former. I was not, however, under the least apprehension for my own safety, as he promised to take me with him, and procure me a passage to Prince of Wales's Fort, with some of the Athapuscow Indians, who at that time annually visited the Factory in the way of trade. After waiting till I thought Matonabee's passion had a little abated, I used every argument of which I was master in favour of his proceeding on the journey; assuring him
not

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not only of the future esteem of the present Governor of Prince of Wales's Fort, but also of that of all his successors as long as he lived ; and that even the Hudson's Bay Company themselves would be ready to acknowledge his assiduity and perseverance, in conducting a business which had so much the appearance of proving advantageous to them. After some conversation of this kind, and a good deal of intreaty, he at length consented to proceed, and promised to make all possible haste. Though it was then late in the afternoon, he gave orders for moving, and accordingly we walked about seven miles that night, and put up on another island in Peshew Lake. The preceding afternoon the Indians had killed a few deer ; but our number was then so great, that eight or ten deer would scarcely afford us all a taste. These deer were the first we had seen since our leaving the neighbourhood of Thelewey-aza-yeth ; so that we had lived all the time on the dried meat which had been prepared before we left that place in April.

The thirtieth proved bad, rainy weather ; we walked, however, about ten miles to the Northward, when we arrived on the North side of Peshew Lake, and put up. Here Matonabbee immediately began to make every necessary arrangement for facilitating the execution of our design ; and as he had promised to make all possible haste, he thought it expedient to leave most of his wives and all his children in the care of some Indians, then in our company, who had his orders to proceed to the Northward

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ward at their leisure; and who, at a particular place appointed by him, were to wait our return from the Coppermine River. Having formed this resolution, Matonabbee selected two of his young wives who had no children, to accompany us; and in order to make their loads as light as possible, it was agreed that we should not take more ammunition with us than was really necessary for our support, till we might expect again to join those Indians and the women and children. The same measures were also adopted by all the other Indians of my party; particularly those who had a plurality of wives, and a number of children.

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May.

As these matters took some time to adjust, it was near nine o'clock in the evening of the thirty-first before we could set out; and then it was with much difficulty that Matonabbee could persuade his other wives from following him, with their children and all their lumber; for such was their unwillingness to be left behind, that he was obliged to use his authority before they would consent, consequently they parted in anger; and we no sooner began our march, than they set up a most woeful cry, and continued to yell most piteously as long as we were within hearing. This mournful scene had so little effect on my party, that they walked away laughing, and as merry as ever. The few who expressed any regret at their departure from those whom they were to leave behind, con-

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fixed their regard wholly to their children, particularly to the youngest, scarcely ever mentioning their mother.

Though it was so late when we left the women, we walked about ten miles that night before we stopped. In our way we saw many deer; several of which the Indians killed. To talk of travelling and killing deer in the middle of the night, may at first view have the appearance of romance; but our wonder will speedily abate, when it is considered that we were then to the Northward of 64° of North latitude, and that, in consequence of it, though the Sun did not remain the whole night above the horizon, yet the time it remained below it was so short, and its depression even at midnight so small at this season of the year, that the light, in clear weather, was quite sufficient for the purpose both of walking, and hunting any kind of game.

It should have been observed, that during our stay at Clowey a great number of Indians entered into a combination with those of my party to accompany us to the Copper-mine River; and with no other intent than to murder the Esquimaux, who are understood by the Copper Indians to frequent that river in considerable numbers. This scheme, notwithstanding the trouble and fatigue, as well as danger, with which it must be obviously attended, was nevertheless so universally approved by those people, that for some time almost every man who joined

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May.

us proposed to be of the party. Accordingly, each volunteer, as well as those who were properly of my party, prepared a target, or shield, before we left the woods of Clowey. Those targets were composed of thin boards, about three quarters of an inch thick, two feet broad, and three feet long; and were intended to ward off the arrows of the Esquimaux. Notwithstanding these preparations, when we came to leave the women and children, as has been already mentioned, only sixty volunteers would go with us; the rest, who were nearly as many more, though they had all prepared targets, reflecting that they had a great distance to walk, and that no advantage could be expected from the expedition, very prudently begged to be excused, saying, that they could not be spared for so long a time from the maintenance of their wives and families; and particularly, as they did not see any then in our company, who seemed willing to encumber themselves with such a charge. This seemed to be a mere evasion, for I am clearly of opinion that poverty on one side, and avarice on the other, were the only impediments to their joining our party; had they possessed as many European goods to squander away among their countrymen as Matonabbee and those of my party did, in all probability many might have been found who would have been glad to have accompanied us.

When I was acquainted with the intentions of my companions, and saw the warlike preparations that were carrying on, I endeavoured as much as possible to persuade

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May.

them from putting their inhuman design into execution ; but so far were my intreaties from having the wished-for effect, that it was concluded I was actuated by cowardice ; and they told me, with great marks of derision, that I was afraid of the Esquimaux. As I knew my personal safety depended in a great measure on the favourable opinion they entertained of me in this respect, I was obliged to change my tone, and replied, that I did not care if they rendered the name and race of the Esquimaux extinct ; adding at the same time, that though I was no enemy to the Esquimaux, and did not see the necessity of attacking them without cause, yet if I should find it necessary to do it, for the protection of any one of my company, my own safety out of the question, so far from being afraid of a poor defenceless Esquimaux, whom I despised more than feared, nothing should be wanting on my part to protect all who were with me. This declaration was received with great satisfaction ; and I never afterwards ventured to interfere with any of their war-plans. Indeed, when I came to consider seriously, I saw evidently that it was the highest folly for an individual like me, and in my situation, to attempt to turn the current of a national prejudice which had subsisted between those two nations from the earliest periods, or at least as long as they had been acquainted with the existence of each other.

June
18.

Having got rid of all the women, children, dogs, heavy baggage, and other incumbrances, on the first of June we pursued

purfued our journey to the Northward with great fpeed; but the weather was in general fo precarious, and the fnow, fleet, and rain fo frequent, that notwithstanding we embraced every opportunity which offered, it was the fixteenth of June before we arrived in the latitude of $67^{\circ} 30'$, where Matonabee had propofed that the women and children fhould wait our return from the Copper-mine River.

1771.

June.

16th.

In our way hither we croffed feveral lakes on the ice; of which Thoy-noy-kyed Lake and Thoy-coy-lyned Lake were the principal. We alfo croffed a few inconfiderable creeks and rivers, which were only ufeful as they furnifhed a fmall fupply of fifh to the natives. The weather, as I have before obferved, was in general difagreeable, with a great deal of rain and fnow. To make up for that inconvenience, however, the deer were fo plentiful, that the Indians killed not only a fufficient quantity for our daily fupport, but frequently great numbers merely for the fat, marrow, and tongues. To induce them to defift from this practice, I often interefted myfelf, and endeavoured, as much as poffible, to convince them in the cleareft terms of which I was mafter, of the great impropriety of fuch wafte; particularly at a time of the year when their fkins could not be of any ufe for clothing, and when the anxiety to proceed on our journey would not permit us to ftay long enough in one place to eat up half the fpoils of their hunting. As national cuftoms, however, are not eafily

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June.

overcome, my remonstrances proved ineffectual; and I was always answered, that it was certainly right to kill plenty, and live on the best, when and where it was to be got, for that it would be impossible to do it where every thing was scarce: and they insisted on it, that killing plenty of deer and other game in one part of the country, would never make them scarcer in another. Indeed, they were so accustomed to kill every thing that came within their reach, that few of them could pass by a small bird's nest, without slaying the young ones, or destroying the eggs.

20th.

From the seventeenth to the twentieth, we walked between seventy and eighty miles to the North West and North North West; the greater part of the way by Cogead Lake; but the Lake being then frozen, we crossed all the creeks and bays of it on the ice.

21st.

On the twenty-first we had bad rainy weather, with so thick a fog that we could not see our way: about ten o'clock at night, however, it became fine and clear, and the Sun shone very bright; indeed it did not set all that night, which was a convincing proof, without any observation, that we were then considerably to the North of the Arctic Polar Circle.

22d.

As soon as the fine weather began, we set out and walked about seven or eight miles to the Northward, when we came

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came to a branch of Conge-ca-tha-wha-chaga River ; on the North side of which we found several Copper Indians, who were assembled, according to annual custom, to kill deer as they cross the river in their little canoes.

The ice being now broken up, we were, for the first time this Summer, obliged to make use of our canoes to ferry across the river ; which would have proved very tedious, had it not been for the kindness of the Copper Indians, who sent all their canoes to our assistance. Though our number was not much less than one hundred and fifty, we had only three canoes, and those being of the common size, could only carry two persons each, without baggage. It is true, when water is smooth, and a raft of three or four of these canoes is well secured by poles lashed across them, they will carry a much greater weight in proportion, and be much safer, as there is scarcely a possibility of their oversetting ; and this is the general mode adopted by the people of this country in crossing rivers when they have more than one canoe with them.

Having arrived on the North side of this river, we found that Matonabee, and several others in our company, were personally acquainted with most of the Copper Indians whom we found there. The latter seemed highly pleased at the interview with our party, and endeavoured, by every means in their power, to convince our company of their readiness to serve us to the utmost ; so that by the
time

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time we had got our tents pitched, the strangers had provided a large quantity of dried meat and fat, by way of a feast, to which they invited most of the principal Indians who accompanied me, as well as Matonabee and myself, who were presented with some of the very best.

It is natural to suppose, that immediately after our arrival the Copper Indians would be made acquainted with the nature and intention of our journey. This was no sooner done than they expressed their entire approbation, and many of them seemed willing and desirous of giving every assistance; particularly by lending us several canoes, which they assured us would be very useful in the remaining part of our journey, and contribute both to our ease and dispatch. It must be observed, that these canoes were not entirely entrusted to my crew, but carried by the owners themselves who accompanied us; as it would have been very uncertain where to have found them at our return from the Copper River.

Agreeably to my instructions, I smoked my calumet of peace with the principal of the Copper Indians, who seemed highly pleased on the occasion; and, from a conversation held on the subject of my journey, I found they were delighted with the hopes of having an European settlement in their neighbourhood, and seemed to have no idea that any impediment could prevent such a scheme from being carried into execution. Climates and seasons

seasons had no weight with them; nor could they see where the difficulty lay in getting to them; for though they acknowledged that they had never seen the sea at the mouth of the Copper River clear of ice, yet they could see nothing that should hinder a ship from approaching it; and they innocently enough observed, that the water was always so smooth between the ice and shore, that even small boats might get there with great ease and safety. How a ship was to get between the ice and the shore, never once occurred to them.

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Whether it was from real motives of hospitality, or from the great advantages which they expected to reap by my discoveries, I know not; but I must confess that their civility far exceeded what I could expect from so uncivilized a tribe, and I was exceedingly sorry that I had nothing of value to offer them. However, such articles as I had, I distributed among them, and they were thankfully received by them. Though they have some European commodities among them, which they purchase from the Northern Indians, the same articles from the hands of an Englishman were more prized. As I was the first whom they had ever seen, and in all probability might be the last, it was curious to see how they flocked about me, and expressed as much desire to examine me from top to toe, as an European Naturalist would a non-descript animal. They, however, found and pronounced me to be a perfect human being, except in the colour of my hair

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and eyes: the former, they said, was like the stained hair of a buffaloe's tail, and the latter, being light, were like those of a gull. The whiteness of my skin also was, in their opinion, no ornament, as they said it resembled meat which had been sodden in water till all the blood was extracted. On the whole, I was viewed as so great a curiosity in this part of the world, that during my stay there, whenever I combed my head, some or other of them never failed to ask for the hairs that came off, which they carefully wrapped up, saying, "When I see you again, you shall again see your hair."

23d.

The day after our arrival at Congecathawhachaga, Matonabbee dispatched his brother, and several Copper Indians, to Copper-mine River, with orders to acquaint any Indians they might meet, with the reason of my visiting those parts, and also when they might probably expect us at that river. By the bearers of this message I sent a present of tobacco and some other things, to induce any strangers they met to be ready to give us assistance, either by advice, or in any other way which might be required.

As Matonabbee and the other Indians thought it advisable to leave all the women at this place, and proceed to the Copper-mine River without them, it was thought necessary to continue here a few days, to kill as many deer as would be sufficient for their support during
our

our absence. And notwithstanding deer were so plentiful; yet our numbers were so large, and our daily consumption was so great, that several days elapsed before the men could provide the women with a sufficient quantity; and then they had no other way of preserving it, than by cutting it in thin slices and drying it in the Sun. Meat, when thus prepared, is not only very portable, but palatable; as all the blood and juices are still retaining in the meat, it is very nourishing and wholesome food; and may, with care, be kept a whole year without the least danger of spoiling. It is necessary, however, to air it frequently during the warm weather, otherwise it is liable to grow mouldy: but as soon as the chill air of the fall begins, it requires no farther trouble till next Summer.

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We had not been many days at Congecathawhachaga before I had reason to be greatly concerned at the behaviour of several of my crew to the Copper Indians. They not only took many of their young women, furs, and ready-dressed skins for clothing, but also several of their bows and arrows, which were the only implements they had to procure food and raiment, for the future support of themselves, their wives, and families. It may probably be thought, that as these weapons are of so simple a form, and so easily constructed; they might soon be replaced, without any other trouble or expence than a little labour; but this supposition can only hold good in places where proper materials are easily procured, which was not the case here:

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if it had, they would not have been an object of plunder. In the midst of a forest of trees, the wood that would make a Northern Indian a bow and a few arrows, or indeed a bow and arrows ready made, are not of much value; no more than the man's trouble that makes them: but carry that bow and arrows several hundred miles from any woods and place where those are the only weapons in use, their intrinsic value will be found to increase, in the same proportion as the materials which are made are less attainable *.

To do Matonabee justice on this occasion, I must say that he endeavoured as much as possible to persuade his countrymen from taking either furs, clothing, or bows, from the Copper Indians, without making them some satisfactory return; but if he did not encourage, neither did he endeavour to hinder them from taking as many women as they pleased. Indeed, the Copper Indian women seem to be much esteemed by our Northern traders; for what reason I know not, as they are in reality the same people in every respect; and their language differs not so much as the dialects of some of the nearest counties in England do from each other.

It is not surprising that a plurality of wives is customary among these people, as it is so well adapted to

See Postlethwayt on the article of Labour.

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their situation and manner of life. In my opinion no race of people under the Sun have a greater occasion for such an indulgence. Their annual haunts, in quest of furs, is so remote from any European settlement, as to render them the greatest travellers in the known world; and as they have neither horse nor water carriage, every good hunter is under the necessity of having several persons to assist in carrying his furs to the Company's Fort, as well as carrying back the European goods which he receives in exchange for them. No persons in this country are so proper for this work as the women, because they are inured to carry and haul heavy loads from their childhood, and to do all manner of drudgery; so that those men who are capable of providing for three, four, five, six, or more women, generally find them humble and faithful servants, affectionate wives, and fond and indulgent mothers to their children. Though custom makes this way of life fit apparently easy on the generality of the women, and though, in general, the whole of their wants seem to be comprized in food and clothing only, yet nature at times gets the better of custom, and the spirit of jealousy makes its appearance among them: however, as the husband is always arbitrator, he soon settles the business, though perhaps not always to the entire satisfaction of the parties.

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Much does it redound to the honour of the Northern Indian women when I affirm, that they are the mildest and most virtuous females I have seen in any part of North America;

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America; though some think this is more owing to habit, custom, and the fear of their husbands, than from real inclination. It is undoubtedly well known that none can manage a Northern Indian woman so well as a Northern Indian man; and when any of them have been permitted to remain at the Fort, they have, for the sake of gain, been easily prevailed on to deviate from that character; and a few have, by degrees, become as abandoned as the Southern Indians, who are remarkable throughout all their tribes for being the most debauched wretches under the Sun. So far from laying any restraint on their sensual appetites, as long as youth and inclination last, they give themselves up to all manner of even incestuous debauchery; and that in so beastly a manner when they are intoxicated, a state to which they are peculiarly addicted, that the brute creation are not less regardless of decency. I know that some few Europeans, who have had little opportunity of seeing them, and of enquiring into their manners, have been very lavish in their praise: but every one who has had much intercourse with them, and penetration and industry enough to study their dispositions, will agree, that no accomplishments whatever in a man, is sufficient to conciliate the affections, or preserve the chastity of a Southern Indian woman

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Notwithstanding this is the general character of the Southern Indian women, as they are called on the coasts of Hudson's Bay, and who are the same tribe with the Canadian Indians, I am happy to have it in my power to insert a few lines to the memory of one of them, whom I knew from her infancy,

The Northern Indian women are in general so far from being like those I have above described, that it is very
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fancy, and who, I can truly affirm, was directly the reverse of the picture I have drawn.

MARY, the daughter of MOSES NORTON, many years Chief at Prince of Wales's Fort, in Hudson's Bay, though born and brought up in a country of all others the least favourable to virtue and virtuous principles, possessed them, and every other good and amiable quality, in a most eminent degree.

Without the assistance of religion, and with no education but what she received among the dissolute natives of her country, she would have shone with superior lustre in any other country: for, if an engaging person, gentle manners, an easy freedom, arising from a consciousness of innocence, an amiable modesty, and an unrivalled delicacy of sentiment, are graces and virtues which render a woman lovely, none ever had greater pretensions to general esteem and regard; while her benevolence, humanity, and scrupulous adherence to truth and honesty, would have done honour to the most enlightened and devout Christian.

Dutiful, obedient, and affectionate to her parents; steady and faithful to her friends; grateful and humble to her benefactors; easily forgiving and forgetting injuries; careful not to offend any, and courteous and kind to all; she was, nevertheless, suffered to perish by the rigours of cold and hunger, amidst her own relations, at a time when the griping hand of famine was by no means severely felt by any other member of their company; and it may truly be said that she fell a martyr to the principles of virtue. This happened in the Winter of the year 1782, after the French had destroyed Prince of Wales's Fort; at which time she was in the twenty-second year of her age.

Human nature shudders at the bare recital of such brutality, and reason shrinks from the task of accounting for the decrees of Providence on such occasions as this: but they are the strongest assurances of a future state, so infinitely superior to the present, that the enjoyment of every pleasure in this world by the most worthless and abandoned wretch, or the most innocent and virtuous

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uncommon to hear of their ever being guilty of incontinency, not even those who are confined to the fixth or even eighth part of a man.

It is true, that were I to form my opinion of those women from the behaviour of such as I have been more particularly acquainted with, I should have little reason to say much in their favour; but impartiality will not

virtuous woman perishing by the most excruciating of all deaths, are matters equally indifferent. But,

Peace to the ashes, and the virtuous mind,
Of her who lived in peace with all mankind;
Learn'd from the heart, unknowing of disguise,
Truth in her thoughts, and candour in her eyes;
Stranger alike to envy and to pride,
Good sense her light, and Nature all her guide;
But now removed from all the ills of life,
Here rests the pleasing friend and faithful wife.

WALLER.

Her father was, undoubtedly, very blamable for bringing her up in the tender manner which he did, rendering her by that means not only incapable of bearing the fatigues and hardships which the rest of her countrywomen think little of, but of providing for herself. This is, indeed, too frequent a practice among Europeans in that Country, who bring up their children in so indulgent a manner, that when they retire, and leave their offspring behind, they find themselves so helpless, as to be unable to provide for the few wants to which they are subject. The late Mr. Ferdinand Jacobs, many years Chief at York Fort, was the only person whom I ever knew that acted in a different manner; though no man could possibly be fonder of his children in other respects, yet as there were some that he could not bring to England, he had them brought up entirely among the natives; so that when he left the country, they scarcely ever felt the loss, though they regretted the absence of a fond and indulgent parent.

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permit me to make a few of the worst characters a stand for the general conduct of all of them. Indeed it is but reasonable to think that travellers and interlopers will be always served with the worst commodities, though perhaps they pay the best price for what they have.

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It may appear strange, that while I am extolling the chastity of the Northern Indian women, I should acknowledge that it is a very common custom among the men of this country to exchange a night's lodging with each other's wives. But this is so far from being considered as an act which is criminal, that it is esteemed by them as one of the strongest ties of friendship between two families; and in case of the death of either man, the other considers himself bound to support the children of the deceased. Those people are so far from viewing this engagement as a mere ceremony, like most of our Christian god-fathers and god-mothers, who, notwithstanding their vows are made in the most solemn manner, and in the presence of both God and man, scarcely ever afterward remember what they have promised, that there is not an instance of a Northern Indian having once neglected the duty which he is supposed to have taken upon himself to perform. The Southern Indians, with all their bad qualities, are remarkably humane and charitable to the widows and children of departed friends; and as their situation and manner of life enable them to do more acts of charity with less trouble

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than falls to the lot of a Northern Indian, few widows or orphans are ever unprovided for among them.

Though the Northern Indian men make no scruple of having two or three sisters for wives at one time, yet they are very particular in observing a proper distance in the consanguinity of those they admit to the above-mentioned intercourse with their wives. The Southern Indians are less scrupulous on those occasions; among them it is not at all uncommon for one brother to make free with another brother's wife or daughter*; but this is held in abhorrence by the Northern Indians.

* Most of the Southern Indians, as well the Athapuscow and Neheaway tribes, are entirely without scruple in this respect. It is notoriously known, that many of them cohabit occasionally with their own mothers, and frequently espouse their sisters and daughters. I have known several of them who, after having lived in that state for some time with their daughters, have given them to their sons, and all parties been perfectly reconciled to it.

In fact, notwithstanding the severity of the climate, the licentiousness of the inhabitants cannot be exceeded by any of the Eastern nations, whose luxurious manner of life, and genial clime, seem more adapted to excite extraordinary passions, than the severe cold of the frigid Zone.

It is true, that few of those who live under the immediate protection of the English ever take either their sisters or daughters for wives, which is probably owing to the fear of incurring their displeasure; but it is well known that acts of incest too often take place among them, though perhaps not so frequently as among the foreign Indians.

By

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1st.

By the time the Indians had killed as many deer as they thought would be sufficient for the support of the women during our absence, it was the first of July; and during this time I had two good observations, both by meridional and double altitudes; the mean of which determined the latitude of Congecathawhachaga to be $68^{\circ} 46'$ North; and its longitude, by account, was $24^{\circ} 2'$ West from Prince of Wales's Fort, or $118^{\circ} 15'$ West of the meridian of London.

On the second, the weather proved very bad, with much snow and fleet; about nine o'clock at night, however, it grew more moderate, and somewhat clearer, so that we set out, and walked about ten miles to the North by West, when we lay down to take a little sleep. At our departure from Congecathawhachaga, several Indians who had entered the war-list, rather chose to stay behind with the women; but their loss was amply supplied by Copper Indians, who accompanied us in the double capacity of guides and warriors.

2d.

On the third the weather was equally bad with that of the preceding day; we made shift, however, to walk ten or eleven miles in the same direction we had done the day before, and at last were obliged to put up, not being able to see our way for snow and thick drift. By putting up, no more is to be understood than that we got to leeward of a
great

3d.