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were that falling off of the hair occasioned by performing extra labour, it is natural to think that instances of it would be more frequent than there are; as it is rare to see one of them in the course of seven or ten years. I have seen a whole house of those animals that had nothing on the surface of their bodies but the fine soft down; all the long hairs having molted off. This and every other deviation from the general run is undoubtedly owing to some particular disorder.

## C H A P.   V I I I .

Transactions and Remarks from our Arrival on the South Side of the Athapuscow Lake, till our Arrival at Prince of Wales's Fort on Churchill River.

*Cross the Athapuscow Lake.—Description of it and its productions, as far as could be discovered in Winter, when the snow was on the ground. Fish found in the lake.—Description of the buffalo;—of the moose or elk, and the method of dressing their skins.—Find a woman alone that had not seen a human face for more than seven months.—Her account how she came to be in that situation; and her curious method of procuring a livelihood.—Many of my Indians wrestled for her.—Arrive at the Great Athapuscow River.—Walk along the side of the River for several days, and then strike off to the Eastward.—Difficulty in getting through the woods in many places.—Meet with some strange Northern Indians on their return from the Fort.—Meet more strangers, whom my companions plundered, and from whom they took one of their young women.—Curious manner of life which those strangers lead, and the reason they gave for roving so far from their usual residence.—Leave the fine level country of the Athapuscows, and arrive at the Stony Hills of the Northern Indian Country.—Meet some strange Northern Indians, one of whom carried a letter for me to Prince of Wales's Fort, in March one thousand seven hundred and seventy-one, and now gave me an answer to it, dated twentieth of June following.—Indians begin preparing wood-work and birch-bark for canoes.—The equinoctial gale very severe.—Indian method of running the moose deer down by speed of foot.—Arrival at Thebeleyaza River.—See some strangers.—The brutality of my companions.—A tremendous gale and snow-drift.—Meet with more strangers;—remarks on it.—Leave all the elderly people and children,*  
and

## A JOURNEY TO THE

*and proceed directly to the Fort.—Stop to build canoes, and then advance.—Several of the Indians die through hunger, and many others are obliged to decline the journey for want of ammunition.—A violent storm and inundation, that forced us to the top of a high hill, where we suffered great distress for more than two days.—Kill several deer.—The Indians method of preserving the flesh without the assistance of salt.—See several Indians that were going to Knapp's Bay.—Game of all kinds remarkably plentiful.—Arrive at the Factory.*

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**A**FTER expending some days in hunting beaver, we proceeded to cross the Athapuscow Lake; but as we had lost much time in hunting deer and beaver, which were very plentiful on some of the islands, it was the ninth of January before we arrived on the South side.

This lake, from the best information which I could get from the natives, is about one hundred and twenty leagues long from East to West, and twenty wide from North to South. The point where we crossed it is said to be the narrowest. It is full of islands; most of which are clothed with fine tall poplars, birch, and pines, and are well stocked with Indian deer. On some of the large islands we also found several beaver; but this must be understood only of such islands as had large ponds in them; for not one beaver-house was to be seen on the margin of any of them.

The lake is stored with great quantities of very fine fish; particularly between the islands, which in some parts



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A WINTER VIEW in the ATHA

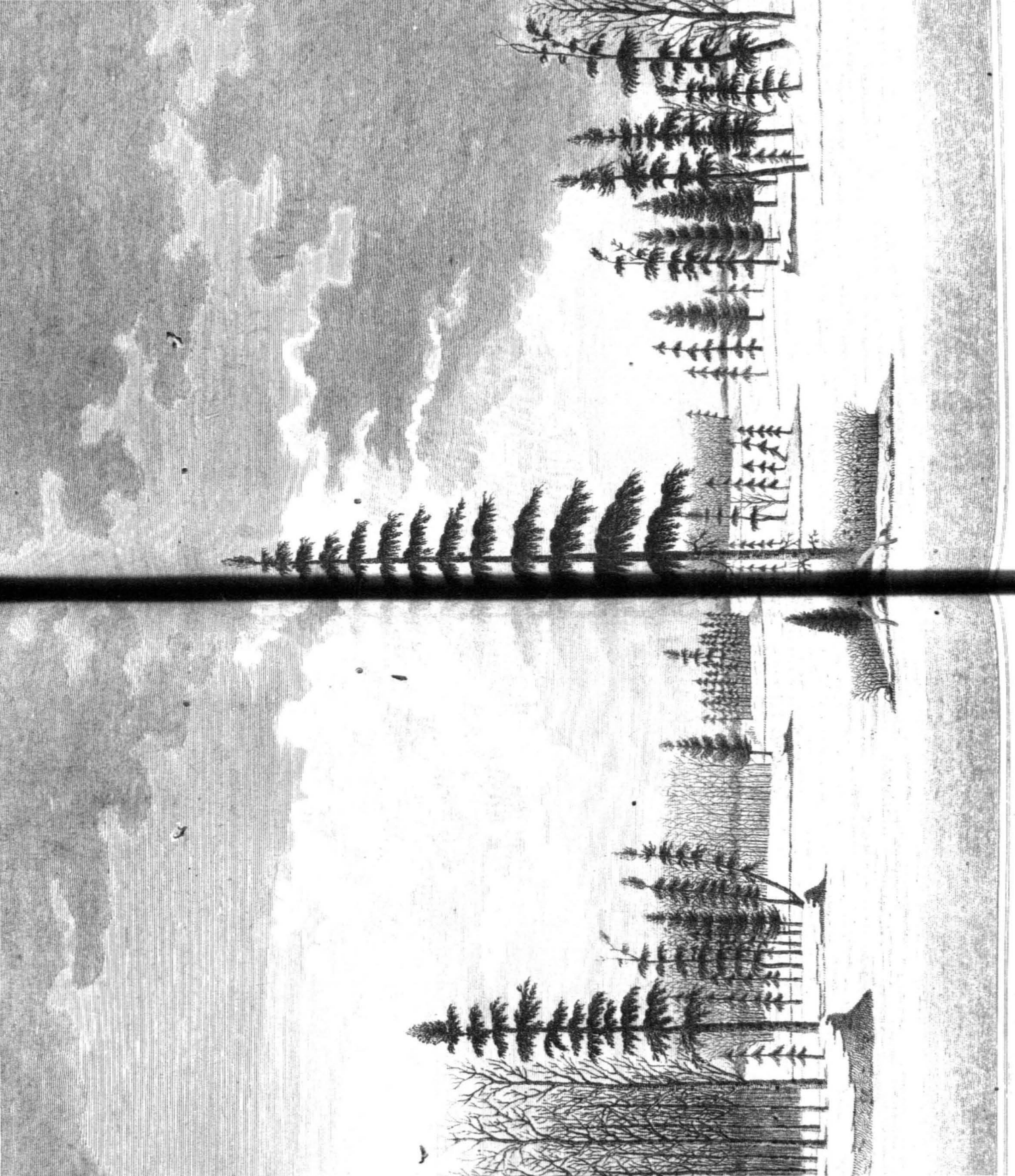




J. Saunders sculp.

LAKE, by SAM<sup>L</sup> HEARNE, 1771.

J. & Davis, Strand.



parts are so close to each other as to form very narrow channels, like little rivers, in which I found (when angling for fish) a considerable current setting to the Eastward.

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The fish that are common in this lake, as well as in most of the other lakes in this country, are pike, trout, perch, barble, tittameg, and methy; the two last are names given by the natives to two species of fish which are found only in this country. Besides these, we also caught another kind of fish, which is said by the Northern Indians to be peculiar to this lake; at least none of the same kind have been met with in any other. The body of this fish much resembles a pike in shape; but the scales, which are very large and stiff, are of a beautifully bright silver colour: the mouth is large, and situated like that of a pike; but when open, much resembles that of a sturgeon; and though not provided with any teeth, takes a bait as ravenously as a pike or a trout. The sizes we caught were from two feet long to four feet. Their flesh, though delicately white, is very soft, and has so rank a taste, that many of the Indians, except they are in absolute want, will not eat it. The Northern Indians call this fish Shees. The trout in this lake are of the largest size I ever saw: some that were caught by my companions could not, I think, be less than thirty-five or forty pounds weight. Pike are also of an incredible size in this extensive water; here they are seldom mo-

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lest, and have multitudes of smaller fish to prey upon. If I say that I have seen some of these fish that were upwards of forty pounds weight, I am sure I do not exceed the truth.

Immediately on our arrival on the South side of the Athapuscow Lake, the scene was agreeably altered, from an entire jumble of rocks and hills, for such is all the land on the North side, to a fine level country, in which there was not a hill to be seen, or a stone to be found: so that such of my companions as had not brass kettles, loaded their sledges with stones from some of the last islands, to boil their victuals with in their birch-rind kettles, which will not admit of being exposed to the fire. They therefore heat stones and drop them into the water in the kettle to make it boil.

Buffalo, moose, and beaver were very plentiful; and we could discover, in many parts through which we passed, the tracks of martins, foxes, quiquehatches, and other animals of the furr kind; so that they were by no means scarce: but my companions never gave themselves the least trouble to catch any of the three last mentioned animals; for the buffalo, moose, and beaver engaged all their attention; perhaps principally so on account of the excellency of their flesh; whereas the flesh of the fox and quiquehatch are never eaten by those people, except when they are in the greatest distress, and then merely to save life.



life. Their reasons for this shall be given in a subsequent part of my Journal.

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The buffalo in those parts, I think, are in general much larger than the English black cattle; particularly the bulls, which, though they may not in reality be taller than the largest size of the English oxen, yet to me always appeared to be much larger. In fact, they are so heavy, that when six or eight Indians are in company at the skinning of a large bull, they never attempt to turn it over while entire, but when the upper side is skinned, they cut off the leg and shoulder, rip up the belly, take out all the intestines, cut off the head, and make it as light as possible, before they turn it to skin the under side. The skin is in some places of an incredible thickness, particularly about the neck, where it often exceeds an inch. The horns are short, black, and almost straight, but very thick at the roots or base.

The head of an old bull is of a great size and weight indeed: some which I have seen were so large, that I could not without difficulty lift them from the ground \*;

It is remarked by Mr. Catesby, in his description of this animal, that no man can lift one of their heads. Those I saw in the Athapuscow country are such as I have described; and I am assured by the Company's servants, as well as the Indians who live near Hudson's House, that the buffalos there are much smaller; so that the species Mr. Catesby saw, or wrote of, must have been much larger, or have had very large heads; for it is well known that a man of any tolerable strength can lift two and a half, or three hundred pounds weight. I think that the heads of his buffalos are too heavy for the bodies, as the bodies of those I saw in the Athapuscow country appear to have been of equal weight with his.

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but the heads of the cows are much smaller. Their tails are, in general, about a foot long, though some appear to be, exclusive of the long brush of hair at the end, longer. The hair on the tails of the bulls is generally of a fine glossy black; but the brush at the end of the cows' tails is always of a rusty brown, probably owing to being stained with their urine.

The hair of the body is soft and curled, somewhat approaching to wool; it is generally of a sandy brown, and of an equal length and thickness all over the body: but on the head and neck it is much longer than it is on any other part.

The Indians, after reducing all the parts of the skin to an equal thickness by scraping, dress them in the hair for clothing; when they are light, soft, warm, and durable. They also dress some of those skins into leather without the hair, of which they make tents and shoes; but the grain is remarkably open and spongy, by no means equal in goodness to that of the skin of the moose: nor am I certain that the curriers or tanners in Europe could manufacture these skins in such a manner as to render them of any considerable value; for, to appearance, they are of the same quality with the skins of the musk-ox, which are held in so little estimation in England, that when a number of them was sent home from Churchill Factory, the Company issued out orders the year following, that unless they could be purchased from the Indians at the rate of four skins



skins for one beaver, they would not answer the expence of sending home; a great proof of their being of very little value.

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The buffalos chiefly delight in wide open plains, which in those parts produce very long coarse grafs, or rather a kind of small flags and rushes, upon which they feed; but when pursued they always take to the woods. They are of such an amazing strength, that when they fly through the woods from a pursuer, they frequently brush down trees as thick as a man's arm; and be the snow ever so deep, such is their strength and agility that they are enabled to plunge through it faster than the swiftest Indian can run in snow-shoes. To this I have been an eye-witness many times, and once had the vanity to think that I could have kept pace with them; but though I was at that time celebrated for being particularly fleet of foot in snow-shoes, I soon found that I was no match for the buffalos, notwithstanding they were then plunging through such deep snow, that their bellies made a trench in it as large as if many heavy sacks had been hauled through it. Of all the large beasts in those parts the buffalo is easiest to kill, and the moose are the most difficult; neither are the deer very easy to come at, except in windy weather: indeed it requires much practice, and a great deal of patience, to slay any of them, as they will by no means suffer a direct approach, unless the hunter be entirely sheltered by woods or willows. The flesh of the buffalo

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is exceedingly good eating; and so entirely free from any disagreeable smell or taste, that it resembles beef as nearly as possible: the flesh of the cows, when some time gone with calf, is esteemed the finest; and the young calves, cut out of their bellies, are reckoned a great delicacy indeed. The hunch on their backs, or more properly on their shoulders, is not a large fleshy lump, as some suppose, but is occasioned by the bones that form the withers being continued to a greater length than in most other animals. The flesh which surrounds this part being so equally intermixed with fat and lean, is reckoned among the nicest bits. The weight, however, is by no means equal to what has been commonly reported. The tongue is also very delicate; and what is most extraordinary, when the beasts are in the poorest state, which happens regularly at certain seasons, their tongues are then very fat and fine; some say, fatter than when they are in the best order: the truth of which, I will not confirm. They are so esteemed here, however, that many of them are brought down to the Company's Factory at York as presents, and are esteemed a great luxury, probably for no other reason but that they are far-fetched; for they are by no means so large, and I think them not so fine, as a neat's tongue in England.

The moose deer is also a large beast, often exceeding the largest horse both in height and bulk; but the length of the legs, the bulk of the body, the shortness of the neck, and

and the uncommon length of the head and ears, without any appearance of a tail, make them have a very aukward appearance: The males far exceed the females in size, and differ from them in colour. The hair of the male, which is long, hollow, and soft, like that of a deer, is at the points nearly black, but a little way under the surface it is of an ash-colour, and at the roots perfectly white. The hair of the female is of a sandy brown, and in some parts, particularly under the throat, the belly, and the flank, is nearly white at the surface, and most delicately so at the root.

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Their legs are so long, and their necks so short, that they cannot graze on level ground like other animals, but are obliged to brouze on the tops of large plants and the leaves of trees during the Summer; and in Winter they always feed on the tops of willows, and the small branches of the birch-tree; on which account they are never found during that season but in such places as can afford them a plentiful supply of their favourite food: and though they have no fore-teeth in the upper-jaw, yet I have often seen willows and small birch-trees cropped by them, in the same manner as if they had been cut by a gardener's sheers, though some of them were not smaller than common pipe-stems; they seem particularly partial to the red willow.

In Summer they are generally found to frequent the banks of rivers and lakes, probably with no other view than

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than to have the benefit of getting into the water, to avoid the innumerable multitudes of muskettoes and other flies that pester them exceedingly during that season. There is also a variety of water-plants, of which the moose are very fond, and which are adapted to their necessities in a peculiar manner during the Summer season, as they can easily browse on them when nearly emerged in water, to avoid the torment of the flies.

The head of the moose is, as I have observed, remarkably long and large, not very unlike that of a horse; but the nose and nostrils are at least twice as large. The ears are about a foot long, and large; and they always stand erect. Their faculty of hearing is supposed to be more acute than either their sight or scent; which makes it very difficult to kill them, especially as the Indians in those parts have no other method of doing it but by creeping after them, among the trees and bushes, till they get within gun-shot; taking care always to keep to leeward of the moose, for fear of being overheard. In Summer, when they frequent the margins of rivers and lakes, they are often killed by the Indians in the water, while they are crossing rivers, or swimming from the main to islands, &c. When pursued in this manner, they are the most inoffensive of all animals, never making any resistance; and the young ones are so simple, that I remember to have seen an Indian paddle his canoe up to one of them, and take it by the poll without the least opposition: the poor harmless

harmless animal seeming at the same time as contented along-side the canoe, as if swimming by the side of its dam, and looking up in our faces with the same fearless innocence that a house-lamb would, making use of its fore-foot almost every instant to clear its eyes of muskettoes, which at that time were remarkably numerous.

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I have also seen women and boys kill the old moose in this situation, by knocking them on the head with a hatchet; and in the Summer of one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five, when I was on my passage from Cumberland House to York Fort, two boys killed a fine buck moose in the water, by forcing a stick up its fundament; for they had neither gun, bow, nor arrows with them. The common deer are far more dangerous to approach in canoes, as they kick up their hind legs with such violence as to endanger any birch-rind canoe that comes within their reach; for which reason all the Indians who kill deer upon the water are provided with a long stick that will reach far beyond the head of the canoe.

The moose are also the easiest to tame and domesticate of any of the deer kind. I have repeatedly seen them at Churchill as tame as sheep \*, and even more so; for they

The moose formerly sent to his Majesty was from that place. A young male was also put on board the ship, but it died on the passage, otherwise it is probable they might have propagated in this country.

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would follow their keeper any distance from home, and at his call return with him, without the least trouble, or ever offering to deviate from the path

The flesh of the moose is very good, though the grain is but coarse, and it is much tougher than any other kind of venison. The nose is most excellent, as is also the tongue, though by no means so fat and delicate as that of the common deer. It is perhaps worth remarking, that the livers of the moose are never found, not even at any time of the year; and, like the other deer, they have no gall. The fat of the intestines is hard, like suet; but all the external fat is soft, like that of a breast of mutton, and when put into a bladder, is as fine as marrow. In this they differ from all the other species of deer, of which the external fat is as hard as that of the kidneys.

\* Since the above was written, the same Indian that brought all the above-mentioned young moose to the Factory had, in the year 1777, two others, so tame, that when on his passage to Prince of Wales's Fort in a canoe, the moose always followed him along the bank of the river; and at night, or on any other occasion when the Indians landed, the young moose generally came and fondled on them, in the same manner as the most domestic animal would have done, and never offered to stray from the tents. Unfortunately, in crossing a deep bay in one of the lakes, (on a fine day,) all the Indians that were not interested in the safe landing of those engaging creatures, paddled from point to point; and the man that owned them, not caring to go so far about by himself, accompanied the others, in hopes they would follow him round as usual; but at night the young moose did not arrive; and as the howling of some wolves was heard in that quarter, it was supposed they had been devoured by them, as they were never afterward seen.

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The moose in all their actions and attitudes appear very uncouth, and when disturbed, never run, only make a kind of trot, which the length of their legs enables them to do with great swiftness, and apparently with much ease; but were the country they inhabit free from under-wood, and dry under-foot, so that horsemen and dogs might follow them, they would become an easy prey, as they are both tender-footed and short-winded: But of this more hereafter

The skins of the moose, when dressed by the natives, make excellent tent-covers and shoe-leather; and in fact every other part of their clothing. These, like the skins of the buffalo, are of very unequal thickness. Some of the Indian women, who are acquainted with the manufacture of them, will, by means of scraping, render them as even as a piece of thick cloth, and when well dressed they are very soft; but not being dressed in oil, they always grow hard after being wet, unless great care be taken to keep rubbing them all the time they are drying. The same may be said of all the Indian-dressed leather, except that of the wewaskish, which will wash as well as shammy-leather, and always preserve its softness.

Mr. Du Ratz, in his description of this animal, says, it is never found farther North than Cape Breton and Nova Scotia; but I have seen them in great numbers in the Athapuscow Country, which cannot be much short of 60° North latitude.

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The female moose never have any horns, but the males have them of a prodigious size and weight, and very different in shape from those of the common deer. The extremity of each horn is palmated to the size of a common shovel, from which a few short branches shoot out; and the shaft of the horn is frequently as large as a common man's wrist. They shed them annually like the common deer. The horns of the moose are frequently found to exceed sixty pounds weight; and their texture, though of a large size and of such rapid growth, is much harder than any other species of deer-horns in those parts.

Though the flesh of the moose is esteemed by most Indians both for its flavour and substance, yet the Northern Indians of my crew did not reckon either it or the flesh of the buffalo substantial food. This I should think entirely proceeded from prejudice, especially with respect to the moose; but the flesh of the buffalo, though so fine to the eye, and pleasing to the taste, is so light and easy of digestion, as not to be deemed substantial food by any Indian in this country, either Northern or Southern. The moose have from one to three young at a time, and generally bring them forth in the latter end of April, or beginning of May.

Soon after our arrival on the South-side of Athapuscow Lake, Matonabee proposed continuing our course in the  
South

South West quarter, in hopes of meeting some of the Athapuscow Indians; because I wished, if possible, to purchase a tent, and other ready-dressed skins from them; as a supply of those articles would at this time have been of material service to us, being in great want both of tents and shoe-leather: and though my companions were daily killing either moose or buffalo, the weather was so excessively cold, as to render dressing their skins not only very troublesome, but almost impracticable, especially to the generality of the Northern Indians, who are not well acquainted with the manufacture of that kind of leather:

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To dress those skins according to the Indian method, a lather is made of the brains and some of the softest fat or marrow of the animal, in which the skin is well soaked, when it is taken out, and not only dried by the heat of a fire, but hung up in the smoke for several days; it is then taken down, and well soaked and washed in warm water, till the grain of the skin is perfectly open, and has imbibed a sufficient quantity of water, after which it is taken out and wrung as dry as possible, and then dried by the heat of a slow fire; care being taken to rub and stretch it as long as any moisture remains in the skin. By this simple method, and by scraping them afterwards, some of the moose skins are made very delicate both to the eye and the touch.

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On the eleventh of January, as some of my companions were hunting, they saw the track of a strange snow-shoe, which they followed; and at a considerable distance came to a little hut, where they discovered a young woman sitting alone. As they found that she understood their language, they brought her with them to the tents. On examination, she proved to be one of the Western Dog-ribbed Indians, who had been taken prisoner by the Athapuscow Indians in the Summer of one thousand seven hundred and seventy; and in the following Summer, when the Indians that took her prisoner were near this part, she had eloped from them, with an intent to return to her own country; but the distance being so great, and having, after she was taken prisoner, been carried in a canoe the whole way, the turnings and windings of the rivers and lakes were so numerous, that she forgot the track; so she built the hut in which we found her, to protect her from the weather during the Winter, and here she had resided from the first setting in of the fall.

From her account of the moons past since her elopement, it appeared that she had been near seven months without seeing a human face; during all which time she had supported herself very well by snaring partridges, rabbits, and squirrels; she had also killed two or three beaver, and some porcupines. That she did not seem to have been in want is evident, as she had a small stock of provisions

provisions by her when she was discovered ; and was in good health and condition, and I think one of the finest women, of a real Indian, that I have seen in any part of North America.

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The methods practised by this poor creature to procure a livelihood were truly admirable; and are great proofs that necessity is the real mother of invention. When the few deer-sinews that she had an opportunity of taking with her were all expended in making snares, and sewing her clothing, she had nothing to supply their place but the sinews of the rabbits legs and feet ; these she twisted together for that purpose with great dexterity and success. The rabbits, &c. which she caught in those snares, not only furnished her with a comfortable subsistence, but of the skins she made a suit of neat and warm clothing for the Winter. It is scarcely possible to conceive that a person in her forlorn situation could be so composed as to be capable of contriving or executing any thing that was not absolutely necessary to her existence ; but there were sufficient proofs that she had extended her care much farther, as all her clothing, beside being calculated for real service, shewed great taste, and exhibited no little variety of ornament. The materials, though rude, were very curiously wrought, and so judiciously placed, as to make the whole of her garb have a very pleasing, though rather romantic appearance.

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Her leisure hours from hunting had been employed in twisting the inner rind or bark of willows into small lines, like net-twine, of which she had some hundred fathoms by her; with this she intended to make a fishing-net as soon as the Spring advanced. It is of the inner bark of willows, twisted in this manner, that the Dog-ribbed Indians make their fishing-nets; and they are much preferable to those made by the Northern Indians

\* Five or six inches of an iron hoop, made into a knife, and the shank of an arrow-head of iron, which served her as an awl, were all the metals this poor woman had with her when she eloped; and with these implements she had made herself complete snow-shoes, and several other useful articles.

Her method of making a fire was equally singular and curious, having no other materials for that purpose than two hard sulphurous stones. These, by long friction and hard knocking, produced a few sparks, which at length communicated to some touchwood; but as this method was attended with great trouble, and not always with success, she did

\* The Northern Indians make their fishing-nets with small thongs cut from raw deer-skins; which when dry appear very good, but after being soaked in water some time, grow so soft and slippery, that when large fish strike the net, the hitches are very apt to slip and let them escape. Beside this inconvenience, they are very liable to rot, unless they be frequently taken out of the water and dried.

not



not suffer her fire to go out all the Winter. Hence we may conclude that she had no idea of producing fire by friction, in the manner practised by the Esquimaux, and many other uncivilized nations; because if she had, the above-mentioned precaution would have been unnecessary.

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The singularity of the circumstance, the comeliness of her person, and her approved accomplishments, occasioned a strong contest between several of the Indians of my party, who should have her for a wife; and the poor girl was actually won and lost at wrestling by near half a score different men the same evening. My guide, Matonabee, who at that time had no less than seven wives, all women grown, besides a young girl of eleven or twelve years old, would have put in for the prize also, had not one of his wives made him ashamed of it, by telling him that he had already more wives than he could properly attend. This piece of satire, however true, proved fatal to the poor girl who dared to make so open a declaration; for the great man, Matonabee, who would willingly have been thought equal to eight or ten men in every respect, took it as such an affront, that he fell on her with both hands and feet, and bruised her to such a degree, that after lingering some time she died.

When the Athapuscow Indians took the above Dog-ribbed Indian woman prisoner, they, according to the universal custom of those savages, surprised her and her party in

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the night, and killed every soul in the tent, except herself and three other young women. Among those whom they killed, were her father, mother, and husband. Her young child, four or five months old, she concealed in a bundle of clothing, and took with her undiscovered in the night; but when she arrived at the place where the Athapuscow Indians had left their wives, (which was not far distant,) they began to examine her bundle, and finding the child, one of the women took it from her, and killed it on the spot.

This last piece of barbarity gave her such a disgust to those Indians, that notwithstanding the man who took care of her treated her in every respect as his wife, and was, she said, remarkably kind to, and even fond of her; so far was she from being able to reconcile herself to any of the tribe, that she rather chose to expose herself to misery and want, than live in ease and affluence among persons who had so cruelly murdered her infant\*. The poor

\* It is too common a case with most of the tribes of Southern Indians for the women to desire their husbands or friends, when going to war, to bring them a slave, that they may have the pleasure of killing it; and some of these inhuman women will accompany their husbands, and murder the women and children as fast as their husbands do the men.

When I was at Cumberland House, (an inland settlement that I established for the Hudson's Bay Company in the year 1774,) I was particularly acquainted with a very young lady of this extraordinary turn; who, when I desired some Indians that were going to war to bring me a young slave, which I intended to have brought up as a domestic, Miss was equally desirous that one might

poor woman's relation of this shocking story, which she delivered in a very affecting manner, only excited laughter among the savages of my party.

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In a conversation with this woman soon afterward, she told us, that her country lies so far to the Westward, that she had never seen iron, or any other kind of metal, till she was taken prisoner. All of her tribe, she observed, made their hatchets and ice-chisels of deer's horns, and their knives of stones and bones; that their arrows were shod with a kind of slate, bones, and deer's horns; and the instruments which they employed to make their wood-work were nothing but beavers' teeth. Though they had frequently heard of the useful materials which the nations or tribes to the East of them were supplied with from the English, so far were they from drawing nearer, to be in the way of trading for iron-work, &c. that they were obliged to retreat farther back, to avoid the Athapuscow Indians, who made surprising slaughter among them, both in Winter and Summer.

On the sixteenth, as we were continuing our course in the South West quarter, we arrived at the grand Atha-

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might be brought to her, for the cruel purpose of murdering it. It is scarcely possible to express my astonishment, on hearing such an extraordinary request made by a young creature scarcely sixteen years old; however, as soon as I recovered from my surprise, I ordered her to leave the settlement, which she did, with those who were going to war; and it is therefore probable she might not be disappointed in her request. The next year I was ordered to the command of Prince of Wales's Fort, and therefore never saw her afterward.

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piscow River, which at that part is about two miles wide, and empties itself into the great lake of the same name we had so lately crossed, and which has been already described.

The woods about this river, particularly the pines and poplars, are the tallest and stoutest I have seen in any part of North America. The birch also grows to a considerable size, and some species of the willow are likewise tall; but none of them have any trunk, like those in England.

The bank of the river in most parts is very high, and in some places not less than a hundred feet above the ordinary surface of the water. As the soil is of a loamy quality, it is very subject to moulder or wash away by heavy rains, even during the short Summer allotted to this part of the globe. The breaking up of the ice in the Spring is annually attended with a great deluge, when, I am told, it is not uncommon to see whole points of land washed away by the inundations; and as the wood grows close to the edge of the banks, vast quantities of it are hurried down the stream by the irresistible force of the water and ice, and conveyed into the great lake already mentioned; on the shores and islands of which, there lies the greatest quantity of drift wood I ever saw. Some of this wood is large enough to make masts for the largest ships that are built. The banks of the river in general are so steep as to be inaccessible to either man or beast, except in some slacks, or gulleys, that have been wore down by heavy rains, back-waters,

waters, or deluges; and even those flacks are, for the most part, very difficult to ascend, an account of the number of large trees which lie in the way.

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January.

There are several low islands in this river, which are much frequented by the moose, for the sake of the fine willows they produce, which furnish them with a plentiful supply of their favourite food during the Winter. Some of those islands are also frequented by a number of rabbits; but as larger game could be procured in great plenty, those small animals were not deemed worthy our notice at present.

Beside the grand river already mentioned, there are several others of less note, which empty themselves into the great Athapuscow Lake: There are also several small rivers and creeks on the North East side of the Lake that carry off the superfluous waters, some of which, after a variety of windings through the barren grounds to the North of Churchill River, are lost in the marshes and low grounds, while others, by means of many small channels and rivulets, are discharged into other rivers and lakes, and at last, doubtless, find their way into Hudson's Bay. These rivers, though numberless, are all so full of shoals and stones, as not to be navigable for an Indian canoe to any considerable distance; and if they were, it would be of little or no use to the natives, as none of them lead within several hundred miles of Churchill River.

Agree-

1772.

January.

Agreeably to Matonabee's proposal, we continued our course up the Athapuscow River for many days, and though we passed several parts which we well knew to have been the former Winter-haunts of the Athapuscow Indians, yet we could not see the least trace of any of them having been there that season. In the preceding Summer, when they were in those parts, they had set fire to the woods; and though many months had elapsed from that time till our arrival there, and notwithstanding the snow was then very deep, the moss was still burning in many places, which at first deceived us very much, as we took it for the smoke of strange tents; but after going much out of our way, and searching very diligently, we could not discover the least track of a stranger.

27th.

Thus disappointed in our expectations of meeting the Southern Indians, it was resolved (in Council, as it may be called) to expend as much time in hunting buffalo, moose, and beaver as we could, so that we might be able to reach Prince of Wales's Fort a little before the usual time of the ships arrival from England. Accordingly, after having walked upwards of forty miles by the side of Athapuscow River, on the twenty-seventh of January we struck off to the Eastward, and left the River at that part where it begins to tend due South.

In consequence of this determination of the Indians, we continued our course to the Eastward; but as game of all kinds was very plentiful, we made but short days journies,



journies, and often remained two or three days in one place, to eat up the spoils or produce of the chase. The woods through which we were to pass were in many places so thick, that it was necessary to cut a path before the women could pass with their sledges; and in other places so much of the woods had formerly been set on fire and burnt, that we were frequently obliged to walk farther than we otherwise should have done, before we could find green brush enough to floor our tents.

1772.

January.

From the fifteenth to the twenty-fourth of February, we walked along a small river that empties itself into the Lake Clowey, near the part where we built canoes in May one thousand seven hundred and seventy-one. This little river is that which we mentioned in the former part of this Journal, as having communication with the Athapuscow Lake: but, from appearances, it is of no consequence whence it takes its rise, or where it empties itself, as one half of it is nearly dry three-fourths of the year. The intervening ponds, however, having sufficient depth of water, are, we may suppose, favourable situations for beaver, as many of their houses are to be found in those parts.

February  
15th—24th.

On the twenty-fourth, a strange Northern Indian leader, called Thlew-sa-nell-ie, and several of his followers, joined us from the Eastward. This leader presented Matonabbee and myself with a foot of tobacco each, and a two-quart  
keg

24th.

1772.

February.

keg of brandy, which he intended as a present for the Southern Indians; but being informed by my companions, that there was not the least probability of meeting any, he did not think it worth any farther carriage. The tobacco was indeed very acceptable, as our stock of that article had been expended some time. Having been so long without tasting spirituous liquors, I would not partake of the brandy, but left it entirely to the Indians, to whom, as they were numerous, it was scarcely a taste for each. Few of the Northern Indians are fond of spirits, especially those who keep at a distance from the Fort: some who are near, and who usually shoot geese for us in the Spring, will drink it at free cost as fast as the Southern Indians, but few of them are ever so imprudent as to buy it.

The little river lately mentioned, as well as the adjacent lakes and ponds, being well-stocked with beaver, and the land abounding with moose and buffalo, we were induced to make but slow progress in our journey. Many days were spent in hunting, feasting, and drying a large quantity of flesh to take with us, particularly that of the buffalo; for my companions knew by experience, that a few days walk to the Eastward of our present situation would bring us to a part where we should not see any of those animals.

The strangers who had joined us on the twenty-fourth informed us, that all were well at Prince of Wales's Fort

when they left it last ; which, according to their account of the Moons past since, must have been about the fifth of November one thousand seven hundred and seventy-one. These strangers only remained in our company one night before the Leader and part of his crew left us, and proceeded on their journey to the North Westward ; but a few of them having procured some furs in the early part of the Winter, joined our party, with an intent to accompany us to the Factory.

1772.  
February.

Having a good stock of dried meat, fat, &c. prepared in the best manner for carriage, on the twenty-eighth we shaped our course in the South East quarter, and proceeded at a much greater rate than we had lately done, as little or no time was now lost in hunting. The next day we saw the tracks of some strangers ; and though I did not perceive any of them myself, some of my companions were at the trouble of searching for them, and finding them to be poor inoffensive people, plundered them not only of the few furs which they had, but took also one of their young women from them.

28th.

Every additional act of violence committed by my companions on the poor and distressed, served to increase my indignation and dislike ; this last act, however, displeased me more than all their former actions, because it was committed on a set of harmless creatures, whose general manner of life renders them the most secluded from society of any of the human race.

1772.

February.

Matonabee assured me, that for more than a generation past one family only, as it may be called, (and to which the young men belonged who were plundered by my companions,) have taken up their Winter abode in those woods, which are situated so far on the barren ground as to be quite out of the track of any other Indians. From the best accounts that I could collect, the latitude of this place must be about  $63\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ , or  $63^{\circ}$  at least; the longitude is very uncertain. From my own experience I can affirm, that it is some hundreds of miles both from the sea-side and the main woods to the Westward. Few of the trading Northern Indians have visited this place; but those who have, give a pleasing description of it, all agreeing that it is situated on the banks of a river which has communication with several fine lakes. As the current sets to the North Eastward, it empties itself, in all probability, into some part of Hudson's Bay; and, from the latitude, no part seems more likely for this communication, than Baker's Lake, at the head of Chesterfield's inlet. This, however, is mere conjecture; nor is it of any consequence, as navigation on any of the rivers in those parts is not only impracticable, but would be also unprofitable, as they do not lead into a country that produces any thing for trade, or that contains any inhabitants worth visiting.

The accounts given of this place, and the manner of life of its inhabitants, would, if related at full length, fill a volume: let it suffice to observe, that the situation

is

1772.  
February.

is said to be remarkably favourable for every kind of game that the barren ground produces at the different seasons of the year; but the continuance of the game with them is in general uncertain, except that of fish and partridges. That being the case, the few who compose this little commonwealth, are, by long custom and the constant example of their forefathers, possessed of a provident turn of mind, with a degree of frugality unknown to every other tribe of Indians in this country except the Esquimaux.

Deer is said to visit this part of the country in astonishing numbers, both in Spring and Autumn, of which circumstances the inhabitants avail themselves, by killing and drying as much of their flesh as possible, particularly in the fall of the year; so that they seldom are in want of a good Winter's stock.

Geese, ducks, and swans visit here in great plenty during their migrations both in the Spring and Fall, and by much art, joined to an insurmountable patience, are caught in considerable numbers in snares\*, and, without

\* To snare swans, geese, or ducks, in the water, it requires no other process than to make a number of hedges, or fences, project into the water, at right angles, from the banks of a river, lake, or pond; for it is observed that those birds generally swim near the margin, for the benefit of feeding on the grass, &c. Those fences are continued for some distance from the shore, and separated two or three yards from each other, so that openings are left sufficiently large to let the birds swim through. In each of those open-

1772.  
February.

out doubt, make a very pleasing change in the food. It is also reported, (though I confess I doubt the truth of it,)

ings a snare is hung and fastened to a stake, which the bird, when intangled, cannot drag from the bottom; and to prevent the snare from being waisted out of its proper place by the wind, it is secured to the stakes which form the opening, with tender grass, which is easily broken.

This method, though it has the appearance of being very simple, is nevertheless attended with much trouble, particularly when we consider the smallness of their canoes, and the great inconveniency they labour under in performing works of this kind in the water. Many of the stakes used on those occasions are of a considerable length and size, and the small branches which form the principal part of the hedges, are not arranged without much caution, for fear of oversetting the canoes, particularly where the water is deep, as it is in some of the lakes; and in many of the rivers the current is very swift, which renders this business equally troublesome. When the lakes and rivers are shallow, the natives are frequently at the pains to make fences from shore to shore.

To snare those birds in their nests requires a considerable degree of art, and, as the natives say, a great deal of cleanliness; for they have observed, that when snares have been set by those whose hands were not clean, the birds would not go into the nest.

Even the goose, though so simple a bird, is notoriously known to forsake her eggs, if they are breathed on by the Indians.

The smaller species of birds which make their nest in the ground, are by no means so delicate, of course less care is necessary to snare them. It has been observed that all birds which build in the ground go into their nest at one particular side, and out of it on the opposite. The Indians, thoroughly convinced of this, always set the snares on the side on which the bird enters the nest; and if care be taken in setting them, seldom fail of seizing their object. For small birds, such as larks, and many others of equal size, the Indians only use two or three hairs out of their head; but for larger birds, particularly swans, geese, and ducks, they make snares of deer-sinews, twisted like packthread, and occasionally of a small thong cut from a parchment deer-skin.

that



that a remarkable species of partridges as large as English fowls, are found in that part of the country only. Those, as well as the common partridges, it is said, are killed in considerable numbers, with snares, as well as with bows and arrows.

1772.  
February.

The river and lakes near the little forest where the family above mentioned had fixed their abode, abound with fine fish, particularly trout and barble, which are easily caught; the former with hooks, and the latter in nets. In fact, I have not seen or heard of any part of this country which seems to possess half the advantages requisite for a constant residence, that are ascribed to this little spot. The descendants, however, of the present inhabitants must in time evacuate it for want of wood, which is of so slow a growth in those regions, that what is used in one year, exclusive of what is cut down and carried away by the Esquimaux, must cost many years to replace.

It may probably be thought strange that any part of a community, apparently so commodiously situated, and happy within themselves, should be found at so great a distance from the rest of their tribe, and indeed nothing but necessity could possibly have urged them to undertake a journey of so many hundred miles as they have done; but no situation is without its inconveniences, and as their woods contain no birch-trees of sufficient size, or perhaps none of any size, this party had come so far to the  
West-

1772.

February.

Westward to procure birch-rind for making two canoes, and some of the fungus that grows on the outside of the birch-tree, which is used by all the Indians in those parts for tinder. There are two sorts of these funguses which grow on the birch-trees; one is hard, the useful part of which much resembles rhubarb; the other is soft and smooth like velvet on the outside, and when laid on hot ashes for some time, and well beaten between two stones, is something like spunk. The former is called by the Northern Indians Jolt-thee, and is known all over the country bordering on Hudson's Bay by the name of Pesogan \*, it being so called by the Southern In-

\* The Indians, both Northern and Southern, have found by experience, that by boiling the pesogan in water for a considerable time, the texture is so much improved, that when thoroughly dried, some parts of it will be nearly as soft as sponge.

Some of those funguses are as large as a man's head; the outside, which is very hard and black, and much indented with deep cracks, being of no use, is always chopped off with a hatchet. Besides the two sorts of touchwood already mentioned, there is another kind of it in those parts, that I think is infinitely preferable to either. This is found in old decayed poplars, and lies in flakes of various sizes and thickness; some is not thicker than shamoy leather, others are as thick as a shoe-sole. This, like the fungus of the birch-tree, is always moist when taken from the tree, but when dry, it is very soft and flexible, and takes fire readily from the spark of a steel; but it is much improved by being kept dry in a bag that has contained gunpowder. It is rather surprising that the Indians, whose mode of life I have just been describing, have never acquired the method of making fire by friction, like the Esquimaux. It is also equally surprising that they do not make use of skin-canoes. Probably deer-skins cannot be manufactured to withstand the water; for it is well known that the Esquimaux use always seal-skins for that purpose, though they are in the habit of killing great numbers of deer.

dians.

dians. The latter is only used by the Northern tribes, and is called by them Clalte-ad-dee.

1772.

March.

By the first of March we began to leave the fine level country of the Athapuscow, and again to approach the stony mountains or hills which bound the Northern Indian country. Moose and beaver still continued to be plentiful; but no buffaloes could be seen after the twenty-ninth of February.

1st.

As we were continuing our course to the East South East, on the fourteenth we discovered the tracks of more strangers, and the next day came up with them. Among those Indians was the man who had carried a letter for me in March one thousand seven hundred and seventy-one, to the Chief at Prince of Wales's Fort, and to which he had brought an answer, dated the twenty-first of June. When this Indian received the letter from me, it was very uncertain what route we should take in our return from the Copper River, and, in all probability, he himself had not then determined on what spot he would pass the present Winter; consequently our meeting each other was merely accidental.

14th.

These Indians having obtained a few furs in the course of the Winter, joined our party, which now consisted of twenty tents, containing in the whole about two hundred

1772.

February.

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1772.

March.

dred persons ; and indeed our company had not been much less during the whole Winter.

From the strangers who last joined us we received some ready-dressed moose-skins for tenting and shoe-leather ; also some other skins for clothing, for all of which the Chief at the Factory was to pay on our arrival.

I cannot sufficiently lament the loss of my quadrant, as the want of it must render the course of my journey from Point Lake, where it was broken, very uncertain ; and my watch stopping while I was at the Athapuscow Lake, has contributed greatly to the misfortune, as I am now deprived of every means of estimating the distances which we walked with any degree of accuracy, particularly in thick weather, when the Sun could not be seen.

16th.

The Indians were employed at all convenient times in procuring birch-rind and making wood work ready for building canoes ; also in preparing small staves of birch-wood, to take with them on the barren ground, to serve as tent-poles all the Summer ; and which, as hath been already observed, they convert into snow-shoe frames when the Winter sets in. Here it may be proper to observe, that none of those incidental avocations interfere with, or retard the Indians in their journey ; for they always take the advantage of every opportunity

portunity which offers, as they pass along, and when they see a tree fit for their purpose, cut it down, and either strip off the bark, if that be what they want, or split the trunk in pieces; and after hewing it roughly with their hatchet, carry it to the tent, where in the evenings, or in the morning before they set out, they reduce it with their knives to the shape and size which is required.

1772,  
March.

Provisions being plentiful, and the weather fine, we advanced a little each day; and on the nineteenth took up our lodgings by the side of Wholdyeh-chuck'd Whoie, or Large Pike Lake. In our way we crossed another small lake, where we caught some trout by angling, and killed a few deer and one moose.

19th.

On the twentieth we crossed Large Pike Lake, which at that part was not more than seven miles wide; but from North North West to the South South East is much longer. The next day we arrived at Bedodid Lake, which in general is not more than three miles wide, and in several places much less; but it is upward of forty miles long, which gives it the appearance of a river. It is said by the Indians to be shut up on all sides, and entirely surrounded with high land, which produces vast quantity of fir trees, but none of them grow to a great height in those parts: their branches, however, spread wider than those of firs of three times their height and thickness do in Europe: so that they resemble an apple-tree in shape,

20th.

1772.

March.

more than any species of the pine. They seem rich in tar, as the wood of them will burn like a candle, and emit as strong a smell, and as much black smoke, as the staves of an old tar-barrel; for which reason no Indians chuse to burn it in their tents, or even out of doors, for the purpose of cooking their victuals.

The thaws began now to be very considerable, and the under-woods were so thick in these parts as to render travelling through them very difficult; we therefore took the advantage of walking on the ice of the above-mentioned Lake, which lay nearly in the direction of our course; but after proceeding about twenty-two miles on it, the Lake turned more toward the North, on which account we were obliged to leave it, striking off to the Eastward; and after walking fourteen miles farther, we arrived at Noo-sheth Whoie, or the Hill-Island Lake, so called from a very high island which stands in it.

31st.

From the twenty-eighth to the thirty-first of March, we had so hard a gale of wind from the South, as to render walking on lakes or open plains quite impossible, and the violence with which the trees were blown down made walking in the woods somewhat dangerous; but though several had narrow escapes, no accident happened.

April  
1st

From the middle to the latter end of March, and in the beginning of April, though the thaw was not general, yet

1772:

April.

yet in the middle of the day it was very considerable: it commonly froze hard in the nights; and the young men took the advantage of the mornings, when the snow was hard crufted over, and ran down many moose; for in those situations a man with a good pair of snow-shoes will scarcely make any impression on the snow, while the moose, and even the deer, will break through it at every step up to the belly. Notwithstanding this, however, it is very seldom that the Indians attempt to run deer down. The moose are so tender-footed, and so short-winded, that a good runner will generally tire them in less than a day, and very frequently in six or eight hours; though I have known some of the Indians continue the chase for two days, before they could come up with, and kill the game. On those occasions the Indians, in general, only take with them a knife or bayonet, and a little bag containing a set of fire-tackle, and are as lightly clothed as possible; some of them will carry a bow and two or three arrows, but I never knew any of them take a gun, unless such as had been blown or bursted, and the barrels cut quite short, which, when reduced to the least possible size to be capable of doing any service, must be too great a weight for a man to run with in his hand for so many hours together.

When the poor moose are incapable of making farther speed, they stand and keep their pursuers at bay with

1772.

April.

their head and fore-feet; in the use of which they are very dexterous, especially the latter; so that the Indians who have neither a bow nor arrows, nor a short gun, with them, are generally obliged to lash their knives or bayonets to the end of a long stick, and stab the moose at a distance. For want of this necessary precaution, some of the boys and fool-hardy young men, who have attempted to rush in upon them, have frequently received such unlucky blows from their fore-feet, as to render their recovery very doubtful.

The flesh of the moose, thus killed, is far from being well-tasted, and I should think must be very unwholesome, from being over-heated; as by running so many hours together, the animal must have been in a violent fever; the flesh being soft and clammy, must have a very disagreeable taste, neither resembling fish, flesh, nor fowl.

The Southern Indians use dogs for this kind of hunting, which makes it easier and more expeditious; but the Northern tribes having no dogs trained to that exercise, are under the necessity of doing it themselves.

\* Though I was a swift runner in those days, I never accompanied the Indians in one of those chases, but have heard many of them say, that after a long one, the moose, when killed, did not produce more than a quart of blood, the remainder being all settled in the flesh; which, in that state, must be ten times worse tasted, than the spleen or milk of a bacon hog.

On



On the seventh we crossed a part of Thee-lee-aza River : at which time the small Northern deer were remarkably plentiful, but the moose began to be very scarce, as none were killed after the third.

1772.

April.  
7th.

On the twelfth, we saw several swans flying to the Northward ; they were the first birds of passage we had seen that Spring, except a few snow-birds, which always precede the migrating birds, and consequently are with much propriety called the harbingers of Spring. The swans also precede all the other species of water-fowl, and migrate so early in the season, that they find no open water but at the falls of rivers, where they are readily met, and sometimes shot, in considerable numbers

12th.

On the fourteenth, we arrived at another part of Thee-lee-aza River, and pitched our tents not far from some families of strange Northern Indians, who had been there some time snaring deer, and who were all so poor as not to have one gun among them.

14th.

The villains belonging to my crew were so far from administering to their relief, that they robbed them of almost every useful article in their possession ; and to complete their cruelty, the men joined themselves in parties of six, eight, or ten in a gang, and dragged several of their young women to a little distance from their tents, where

1772.

April.

where they not only ravished them, but otherwise ill-treated them, and that in so barbarous a manner, as to endanger the lives of one or two of them. Humanity on this, as well as on several other similar occasions during my residence among those wretches, prompted me to upbraid them with their barbarity; but so far were my remonstrances from having the desired effect, that they afterwards made no scruple of telling me in the plainest terms, that if any female relation of mine had been there, she should have been served in the same manner.

Deer being plentiful, we remained at this place ten days, in order to dry and prepare a quantity of the flesh and fat to carry with us; as this was the last time the Indians expected to see such plenty until they met them again on the barren ground. During our stay here, the Indians completed the wood-work for their canoes, and procured all their summer tent-poles, &c.; and while we were employed in this necessary business, the thaw was so great that the bare ground began to appear in many places, and the ice in the rivers, where the water was shallow and the current rapid, began to break up; so that we were in daily expectation of seeing geese, ducks, and other birds of passage.

25th.

On the twenty-fifth, the weather being cool and favourable for travelling, we once more set out, and that day

day walked twenty miles to the Eastward ; as some of the women had not joined us, we did not move on the two following days.

1772.

April,

On the twenty-eighth, having once more mustered all our forces, early in the morning we set out, and the next day passed by Thleweyaza Yeth, the place at which we had prepared wood-work for canoes in the Spring one thousand seven hundred and seventy-one.

As the morning of the first of May was exceedingly fine and pleasant, with a light air from the South, and a great thaw, we walked eight or nine miles to the East by North, when a heavy fall of snow came on, which was followed, or indeed more properly accompanied, by a hard gale of wind from the North West. At the time the bad weather began, we were on the top of a high barren hill, a considerable distance from any woods : judging it to be no more than a squall, we sat down, in expectation of its soon passing by. As the night, however, advanced, the gale increased to such a degree, that it was impossible for a man to stand upright ; so that we were obliged to lie down, without any other defence against the weather, than putting our sledges and other lumber to windward of us, which in reality was of no real service, as it only harboured a great drift of snow, with which in some places we were covered to the depth of two or three feet ; and as the night was not very cold, I found myself,

and

May  
1st.

1772.

May.

and many others who were with me, long before morning in a puddle of water, occasioned by the heat of our bodies melting the snow.

The second proved fine pleasant weather, with warm sunshine. In the morning, having dried all our clothing, we proceeded on our journey. In the afternoon we arrived at the part at which my guide intended we should build our canoes; but having had some difference with his countrymen, he altered his mind, and determined to proceed to the Eastward, as long as the season would permit, before he attempted to perform that duty. Accordingly, on the third, we pursued our way, and as that and the following day were very cold, which made us walk briskly, we were enabled to make good days' journies; but the fifth was so hot and sultry, that we only walked about thirteen miles in our old course to the East by North, and then halted about three-quarters of a mile to the South of Black Bear Hill; a place which I had seen in the Spring of one thousand seven hundred and seventy-one.

On the sixth, the weather was equally hot with the preceding day; in the morning, however, we moved on eleven miles to the East, and then met several strange Indians, who informed us that a few others, who had a tolerable cargo of furs, and were going to the Factory that Summer, were not far distant.

On receiving this intelligence, my guide, Matonabee, sent a messenger to desire their company. This was soon complied with, as it is an universal practice with the Indian Leaders, both Northern and Southern, when going to the Company's Factory, to use their influence and interest in canvassing for companions; as they find by experience that a large gang gains them much respect. Indeed, the generality of Europeans who reside in those parts, being utterly unacquainted with the manners and customs of the Indians, have conceived so high an opinion of those Leaders, and their authority, as to imagine that all who accompany them on those occasions are entirely devoted to their service and command all the year; but this is so far from being the case, that the authority of those great men, when absent from the Company's Factory, never extends beyond their own family; and the trifling respect which is shown them by their countrymen during their residence at the Factory, proceeds only from motives of interest.

1772.  
May.

The Leaders have a very disagreeable task to perform on those occasions; for they are not only obliged to be the mouth-piece, but the beggars for all their friends and relations for whom they have a regard, as well as for those whom at other times they have reason to fear. Those unwelcome commissions, which are imposed on them by their followers, joined to their own desire of being thought men of great consequence and interest with the English,



1772.

May.

make them very troublesome. And if a Governor deny them any thing which they ask, though it be only to give away to the most worthless of their gang, they immediately turn sulky and impertinent to the highest degree; and however rational they may be at other times, are immediately divested of every degree of reason, and raise their demands to so exorbitant a pitch, that after they have received to the amount of five times the value of all the furs they themselves have brought, they never cease begging during their stay at the Factory; and, after all, few of them go away thoroughly satisfied\*.

After

\* As a proof of this assertion I take the liberty, though a little foreign to the narrative of my journey, to insert one instance, out of many hundreds of the kind that happen at the different Factories in Hudson's Bay, but perhaps no where so frequently as at Churchill. In October 1776, my old guide, Matonabee, came at the head of a large gang of Northern Indians, to trade at Prince of Wales's Fort; at which time I had the honour to command it. When the usual ceremonies had passed, I dressed him out as a Captain of the first rank, and also clothed his six wives from top to toe: after which, that is to say, during his stay at the Factory, which was ten days, he begged seven lieutenants' coats, fifteen common coats, eighteen hats, eighteen shirts, eight guns, one hundred and forty pounds weight of gunpowder, with shot, ball, and flints in proportion; together with many hatchets, ice-chisfels, files, bayonets, knives, and a great quantity of tobacco, cloth, blankets, combs, looking-glasses, stockings, handkerchiefs, &c. besides numberless small articles, such as awls, needles, paint, steels, &c. in all to the amount of upwards of seven hundred beaver in the way of trade, to give away among his followers. This was exclusive of his own present, which consisted of a variety of goods to the value of four hundred beaver more. But the most extraordinary of his demands was twelve pounds of powder, twenty-eight pounds of shot and ball, four pounds of tobacco, some articles of clothing, and several pieces of iron-work, &c. to give to two men who had hauled his tent and other lumber the

preceding

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May.

11th.

After stopping four days at this place, Matonabee, and all the Indians who were to accompany me to the Fort, agreed to leave the elderly people and young children here, in the care of some Indians who were capable of providing for them, and who had orders to proceed to a place called Cathawhachaga, on the barren grounds, and there wait the return of their relations from the Factory. Matters of this kind being settled, apparently to the entire satisfaction of all parties, we resumed our journey on the eleventh of May, and that at a much brisker pace than we could probably have done when all the old people and young children were with us. In the afternoon of the same day we met some other Northern Indians, who were also going to the Fort with furs; those joined our party, and at night we all pitched our tents by the side of a river that empties itself into Doo-baunt Lake. This day all of us threw away our snow-shoes, as the ground was so bare in most places as not to require any such assistance; but sledges were occasionally serviceable for some time, particularly when we walked on the ice of rivers or lakes.

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preceding Winter. This demand was so very unreasonable, that I made some scruple, or at least hesitated to comply with it, hinting that he was the person who ought to satisfy those men for their services; but I was soon answered, That he did not expect to have been *denied such a trifle as that was*; and for the future he would carry his goods where he could get his own price for them. On my asking him where that was? he replied, in a very insolent tone, "To the Canadian Traders." I was glad to comply with his demands; and I here insert the anecdote, as a specimen of an Indian's conscience.

1772.

May.

18th.

19th.

21st.

The weather on the twelfth was so exceedingly hot and sultry, and the water so deep on the top of the ice of the above-mentioned river, as to render walking on it not only very troublesome, but dangerous; so after advancing about five miles we pitched our tents, and the warm weather being likely to continue, the Indians immediately began to build their canoes, which were completed with such expedition, that in the afternoon of the eighteenth we again set forward on our journey, but the day being pretty far spent, we only walked about four miles, and put up for the night.

The morning of the nineteenth was fine pleasant weather; and as all the water was drained off from the top of the ice, it rendered walking on it both safe and easy; accordingly we set out pretty early, and that day walked upwards of twenty miles to the East North East on the above-mentioned river. The next day proved so cold, that after walking about fifteen miles, we were obliged to put up; for having left Doo-baunt River, we were frequently obliged to wade above the knees through swamps of mud, water, and wet snow; which froze to our stockings and shoes in such a thick crust, as not only rendered walking very laborious, but at the same time subjected us to the danger of having our legs and feet frozen.

The weather on the twenty-first was more severe than on the preceding day; but the swamps and ponds being

by that time frozen over, it was tolerable walking: we proceeded therefore on our journey, but the wind blew so fresh, that we had not walked sixteen miles, before we found that those who carried the canoes could not possibly keep up with us, so that we put up for the night. In the course of this day's journey we crossed the North West Bay of Wholdyah'd Lake; which, at that part, is called by the Northern Indians A Naw-nee-tha'd Whoie. This day several of the Indians turned back, not being able to proceed for want of provisions. Game of all kinds indeed were so scarce, that, except a few geese, nothing had been killed by any of our party, from our leaving the women and children on the eleventh instant, nor had we seen one deer the whole way.

1772.

May.

The twenty-second proved more moderate, when all our party having joined, we again advanced to the North East, and after walking about thirteen miles, the Indians killed four deer. Our number, however, had now so increased, that four small Northern deer would scarcely afford us all a single meal.

22d.

The next day we continued our journey, generally walking in the North East quarter; and on the twenty-fifth, crossed the North bay of They-hole-kye'd Whoie, or Snow-bird Lake; and at night got clear of all woods, and lay on the barren ground. The same day several of the Indians struck off another way, not being able to proceed

23d.

25th.

1772.

May.

ceed to the Fort for want of ammunition. As we had for some days past made good journies, and at the same time were all heavy-laden, and in great distress for provisions, some of my companions were so weak as to be obliged to leave their bundles of furs \*; and many others were so reduced as to be no longer capable of proceeding with us, having neither guns nor ammunition; so that their whole dependence for support was on the fish they might be able to catch; and though fish was pretty plentiful in most of the rivers and lakes hereabout, yet they were not always to be depended on for such an immediate supply of food as those poor people required.

Though I had at this time a sufficient stock of ammunition to serve me and all my proper companions to the Fort, yet self-preservation being the first law of Nature, it was thought advisable to reserve the greatest part of it for our own use; especially as geese and other smaller birds were the only game now to be met with, and which, in times of scarcity, bears hard on the articles of powder and shot. Indeed most of the Indians who actually accompanied me the whole way to the Factory had some little ammunition remaining, which enabled them to travel in times of real scarcity better than those whom we left behind; and though

\* All the furs thus left were properly secured in caves and crevices of the rocks, so as to withstand any attempt that might be made on them by beasts of prey, and were well shielded from the weather; so that, in all probability, few of them were lost.

we assisted many of them, yet several of their women died for want. It is a melancholy truth, and a disgrace to the little humanity of which those people are possessed, to think, that in times of want the poor women always come off short; and when real distress approaches, many of them are permitted to starve, when the males are amply provided for.

1772.

May.

The twenty-sixth was fine and pleasant. In the morning we set out as usual, and after walking about five miles, the Indians killed three deer; as our numbers were greatly lessened, these served us for two or three meals, at a small expence of ammunition.

26th.

In continuing our course to the Eastward, we crossed Cathawhachaga River, on the thirtieth of May, on the ice, which broke up soon after the last person had crossed it. We had not been long on the East side of the river before we perceived bad weather near at hand, and began to make every preparation for it which our situation would admit; and that was but very indifferent, being on entire barren ground. It is true, we had complete sets of Summer tent-poles, and such tent-cloths as are generally used by the Northern Indians in that season; these were arranged in the best manner, and in such places as were most likely to afford us shelter from the threatening storm. The rain soon began to descend in such torrents as to make the river overflow to such a degree as soon to convert our first place

30th.

place.