THE GREAT MIGRATTION

pointed out. The black bear, in this normal state, is altogether frugivorous a true vegetable feeder. The other is   
carnivorous and piscivorous at one season killing and eating marmots and mice, at another frequenting the sea coast and  
subsisting upon fish. In a word the bears are as unlike as may be they are distinct species. To compare the barren ground  
bear with the ursus arctos. The former is certainly much more like this species than he is to the ursus americanus; but  
again we encounter notable points of difference; and were it not for a certain resemblance in colour, it is possible the  
kinds would never have been brought into comparison. It is easy, however, to prove them also distinct species by simply  
observing that their habits are altogether unlike. The ursus arctos is a tree climbing wood bear; the barren ground species  
is not. The former prefers a vegetable diet the latter likes better fish, flesh, and insects though he will also fill his stomach  
with a farrago of vegetable matters. But to say nothing of the very different habits of the animals, there is a yellowish  
tinge over the fur of the american species, that is not observed in the brown bears of european countries except,  
perhaps, in those of the of the pyrenees and at certain seasons this tinge turns so pale, as to give a whitish appearance to the   
animal; hence, by the indians, they are often termed white bears. It is besides, altogether improbable, that the brown bear  
of europe should turn up in the barren grounds of the hudson’s bay territory an isolated treeless tract quite unlike his   
habitat in the old world; and to which no line of migration could be traced with much probability. We might suppose  
such a migration through siberia and russian america; and certainly there is some probability in this view; for although it  
has been hitherto stated that the barren ground bear is only found within the limits of the peculiar distict so called, it is   
very certain that his range extends beyond these boundaries. The brown bear of russian america and the aleutian islands   
appears to be identical with this species; and these is a suspicion, that the brown species of kamschatka is no other than  
the barren ground bear of the hudson’s bay. The fishing habits of the former go some ways towards an identification of   
the species at the same time separating both from the ursus arctos of scandinavia. It needs hardly to be argued, that the   
barren ground bear is quite a distinct animal from the grizzly though writers have often confounded them. They are   
different in size and colour. Though the grizzly is sometimes brown, it is always with a mixture of white tipped hairs; but   
the most essential distinction is to be found in the greater ferocity of the latter, and his far longer and more curving  
claws. Many other points might be mentioned showing them to be animals of separate species besides, their range is  
altogether distinct. The barren ground bear, then, is not the ursus arctos, americanus, or ferox. What then has he  
received no specific name from the naturalists not yet. Alexix, however, bestowed one upon him. He named him after  
the man who has given the clearest account of his country and his habits; and whom alexis deemed most worthy of the  
honour. In his journal we find the record. There it is written, that the barren ground bear is the ursus richardsonii Bruin  
taking a bath. To seek the haunts of this new species of bear, i have said that our hunters would have a long journey to  
make even so far as the great slave lake for although the barren grounds extend many degrees to the south of this water,  
the ursus richardsonii; rarely wanders to a lower latitude. Upon the shores of the slave lake, however, they would be  
certain to encounter him; and thither they repaired. They were fortunate in the time of the year. The annual brigade of  
boats belonging to the great fur company was just setting out from york factory, for norway house on lake Winnipeg;  
and thence a division of it would proceed to the posts still futher northward on lake athapescow and the waters of the  
mackenzie river passing through the slave lake itself. Their object of course, in their annual journey is to distribute at the  
fur stations, the goods, brought from england by the company’s ships, and in return bring back the peltries collected  
throughout the winter. With the brigade, then, went our hunters; and after enduring in common with the others, the  
hardships and perils incidental to such a long inland voyage, they at length found themselves at the point of their  
destination fort resolution, on the great slave lake, near the mouth of the river bearing the same appellation. The canoe  
of an indian fisherman of which there are many dwelling around the shores of this great inland sea was soon pressed into  
service; and with the fisherman (who of course was a hunter also) for their guide and companion, they could make  
convenient excursions along the shores of the lake, land whenever they pleased, and search for bruin in the localities  
where he was most likely to be encountered in this they were assisted by their hired guide; who was not long in putting  
them upon the trail of the bear. in fact, in the very first excursion which they made, one of the true breed was discovered  
and captured. The circumstances attending his capture were of no very particular interest; but as they illustrate one of  
the habits of this species, we shall give them as recorded in the journal of alexis. They were paddling gently along the

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