

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

*1821. August 17.*

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

*August 19.*

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

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

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

Soon after our departure to-day, a sealed tin-case, sufficiently buoyant to float, was thrown overboard, containing a short account of our proceedings, and the position of the most conspicuous points. The

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

*August 23.*

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

Our encampment being near to the place where we killed the deer on the 11th, almost the whole party went out to hunt, but they returned in the evening without having seen any game. The berries, however, were ripe and plentiful, and, with the addition of some country tea, furnished a supper. There were some showers in the afternoon, and the weather was cold, the thermometer being 42 deg, but the evening

and night were calm and fine. It may be remarked that the mosquitoes disappeared when the late gales commenced.

*August 25.*

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

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

The wind continued in the same direction until we had rounded Point Wollaston, and then changed to a quarter, which enabled us to steer for Hood's River, which we ascended as high as the first rapid and encamped. Here terminated our voyage on the Arctic sea, during which we had gone over six hundred and fifty geographical miles. Our Canadian voyagers could not restrain their expressions of joy at having turned their backs on the sea, and they passed the evening

talking over their past adventures with much humour and no little exaggeration. The consideration that the most painful, and certainly the most hazardous, part of the journey was yet to come, did not depress their spirits at all. It is due to their character to mention that they displayed much courage in encountering the dangers of the sea, magnified to them by their novelty.

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

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

*August 26.*

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

Embarking at eight A.M. we proceeded up the river, which is full of sandy shoals, but sufficiently deep for canoes in the channels. It is from one hundred to two hundred yards wide, and is bounded by high and steep banks of clay. We encamped at a cascade of eighteen or twenty feet high, which is produced by a ridge of rock crossing the river, and the nets were set. A mile below this cascade Hood's River is joined by a stream half its own size, which I have called James' Branch. Bear and deer tracks had been numerous on the banks

of the river when we were here before, but not a single recent one was to be seen at this time. Credit, however, killed a small deer at some distance inland, which, with the addition of berries, furnished a delightful repast this evening. The weather was remarkably fine, and the temperature so mild, that the mosquitoes again made their appearance, but not in any great numbers. Our distance made to-day was not more than six miles.

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

The river being surveyed from the summit of a hill, above these falls, appeared so rapid and shallow, that it seemed useless to attempt proceeding any farther in the large canoes. I therefore determined on constructing out of their materials two smaller ones of sufficient size to contain three persons, for the purpose of crossing any river that might obstruct our progress. This operation was accordingly commenced, and by the 31st both the canoes being finished, we prepared for our departure on the following day.

The leather which had been preserved for making shoes was equally divided among the men, two pairs of flannel socks were given to each person, and such articles of warm clothing as remained, were issued to those who most required them. They were also furnished with one of the officers' tents. This being done, I communicated to the men