

while on a prolonged missionary journey in the north of Newfoundland, the writer was called upon to undergo excessive toil and hardship, which reached a climax on the 14th of March. On that day I had a journey of 21 miles before me. I was early astir, and perceived with gratitude that the weather was fine. About 8 a. m. I started, being accompanied by two Kammutiks, each possessing a team of wretchedly poor dogs and a driver. The day was calm, and although the cold was pretty severe, we scarcely felt it, the sky was a rich blue and cloudless. We were journeying to the North-West, and for the first six or eight miles of the way we progressed satisfactorily and with sufficient comfort. We observed that a few black clouds were beginning to rise in the west, but we never imagined them to be what we too quickly discovered they were, the precursors of a raging storm. In the space of a few moments afterwards, the sky was overcast, the heavy clouds frowned sullenly, and the storm fell upon us. The drifting snow was too dense to allow the leading dogs of the Kammutik to be seen by the driver. It must be remembered that snow was falling as well as drifting. The ground was too slippery for walking, and although stern necessity demanded that we should be on our feet and moving as much as was possible, still we were compelled, notwithstanding its danger, to sit on our sleighs from time to time. The cold was almost insufferable and painfully penetrating. We battled vigorously with the elements, and for a few miles kept straight on our course, in the teeth of the bitter wind. We were all frozen on our faces, and to make matters worse, our dogs were well nigh exhausted, and the drivers were rapidly growing dispirited. The merciless elements at last prevailed, and I was forced to abandon the hope of reaching the settlement at which I had hoped to arrive in the afternoon, and so, instead of continuing our journey to the North-West, we steered due north, in order, if possible, to find shelter in the miserable dwelling of a poor man, which was distant from us eight, and from any other human habitation twelve miles. There we arrived late in the afternoon, worn out and very much cast down, after the most appalling experience of many hours' duration, and there we put up for the night. The dwelling and its surroundings were alike repulsive and forbidding, but we were heartily thankful for the refuge from the storm which it afforded us. Had this help not existed, our only means of salvation would have been to have bivouacked in the nearest snow bank and wait in patience for the morning. Our escape from death was truly remarkable, as the following touching incident will prove.

A Newfoundland clergyman was recently called to the bedside of a dying parishioner, the way to whose residence lay across an extensive bay, which, as the season was winter, was frozen over. The house was reached in safety as the day was beautifully fine, and spiritual consolation was administered to the dying man. Upon the good clergyman's return-

ing home, he was overtaken by a storm and perished out on the open bay, where his frozen corpse was discovered the following morning. The following remarks of one of the most intrepid and indefatigable travellers of the century* may here be quoted:—"On the coast, although the thermometer usually stands rather higher than in the interior, the climate is really more felt. Nearly all the cases of frost-bite among our men occurred whilst travelling in and north of Norton Sound. Again, whilst clear ice—that is, ice free from a covering of snow—is scarce on the rivers, except very early in the winter, it is common, for a long period, on the coast. When your sledge arrives at such ice, the dogs will often start off at a great rate, although but a few minutes before they have been proceeding with difficulty. At such a time, however warm you may be from previous exercise, you chill very readily. Under exactly such circumstances as these the Russians at St Michael's were once horrified at the arrival of a sledge with an Indian on it—sitting erect—but perfectly dead. Unable to stop his dogs, the poor fellow had jumped on his sledge and had probably frozen to death in a few minutes. It has been the universal testimony of Arctic travellers that comparatively moderate cold, with wind, was more to be feared than the most extreme temperature without it."

In the west and north of North America, snow usually covers the ground for a period of six months, and although winter may not be said to reign all that time, still, so long as snow is visible, the weather cannot be otherwise than winter-like. April is the season of thaws, and water and dirt prevail. The lakes and rivers break up, and the latter make the most heroic exertions, which sometimes extend over many weeks, to throw off and carry away the heavy masses of ice which had hemmed them in on every side and exercised such a subduing influence over them during the winter months. The flow of ice down the rivers is sometimes very picturesque. It passes onward to the ocean in an unbroken stream, now rising into mountains and forming impassable barriers as it meets with some obstruction, now grinding and crashing on its way and sweeping everything before it. It not unfrequently happens that whole trees and large portions of the banks of rivers are carried away in its powerful embrace. At the end of May or beginning of June summer is born, and the weather throughout the months of June, July and August is lovely. Summer is followed by a brief but glorious period, called the Indian summer, at which time the verdure of the maple and birch disappears and gives place to the most gorgeous tints of crimson, gold and russet, and the forests are transformed into oceans of glory.

As to the climate of the Arctic regions proper. Spring, summer, autumn and winter are there, it is true, as in lower and more favored latitudes, but four months of day light, four months of

* Mr. Whympere. "Travels in Alaska."