

them, and carefully avoid their haunts. Besides, the white men usually had boats and always sought to follow routes where wood could be had for fuel; this confined them to the wooded valleys of the Coppermine, Kendall, and Dease, all of which (in so far as they are wooded) the Eskimo pretty rigidly avoid, through fear of the Indians. A journey made the summer of 1910 along the routes of Dease and Simpson, Richardson, Rae, or Hanbury would have revealed not a single Eskimo, nor would a coasting voyage of Great Bear lake have done so either. The Eskimo frequent the barren highlands, camp usually among mottled boulders where their mottled little tents are seldom discernible with the naked eye at over half a mile; they do not often make fire and never make large ones, and they keep a remarkably keen watch day and night, always ready to flee on hearing the report of a gun or seeing a man, a smoke, or a fresh trail or other sign of human presence. Even after we had been with them four months it was hard to keep them from fleeing precipitately on sighting a tipi camp, which proved to be that of the English travellers Melvill and Hornby (September, 1910), near the eastern treeline of the Dease river.

The Eskimo themselves say they "always" hunted to the shore of Great Bear lake (eastern part of the north shore of McTavish bay). The oldest of the active hunters (perhaps 45 or 50 years old) told us that, when they first remember, people in greater number than now used to hunt to the lake shore. Some had never seen signs of the immediate presence of Indians; one man had twice been in a party which had had occasion to flee from the very beach of the lake—once on hearing the report of a gun; another time on seeing smoke. (It may have been through hearsay from Hudson bay that they were able to identify the report of a gun as a sign of the nearness of Indians, for this happened when a man now forty years old, at least, was a small boy, and most of them had never seen a gun fired until we hunted with them. It is possible, of course, that the memory of firearms was preserved by the Pällirmiüt (?) whom Richardson and Rae met some fifty years ago).

As the object is woodgathering rather than trade, the people who frequent the district never have occasion to come together

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