

repacking the equipage, laying and removing the cloth, boiling and frying, eating and drinking; and while the preliminaries were arranging, the hardier among us would wash and shave, each person carrying soap and towel in his pocket, and finding a mirror in the same sandy or rocky basin that held the water. About two in the afternoon we usually put ashore for dinner; and as this meal needed no fire, or at least got none, it was not allowed to occupy more than twenty minutes or half an hour."

Their course through Lake Superior was to some extent impeded by ice; but they at length arrived at Fort William, at its extremity, and exchanged their vessels for two smaller canoes, better adapted for the shallower and more intricate river navigation that was to follow. The following is a picture on the route:

"The river, during the day's march, passed through forests of elm, oak, pine, birch, etc., being studded with isles not less fertile and lovely than its banks; and many a spot reminded us of the rich and quiet scenery of England. The paths of the numerous portages were spangled with violets, roses, and many other wild flowers; while the currant, the gooseberry, the raspberry, the plum, the cherry, and even the vine, were abundant. All this bounty of nature was imbued, as it were, with life by the cheerful notes of a variety of birds, and by the restless flutter of butterflies of the brightest hues. Compared with the adamantine deserts of Lake Superior, the Kamun-taquoia presented a perfect paradise." Here is another, for the sake of contrast: "On the morrow, towards noon, we made a short portage from the Macan to a muddy stream falling into Lac la Pinié. As we were passing down this narrow and shallow creek, fire suddenly burst forth in the woods near us. The flames, crackling and clambering up each tree, quickly rose above the forest; within a few minutes more, the dry grass on the very margin of the waters was in a running blaze; and before we were well clear of the danger, we were almost enveloped in clouds of smoke and ashes. These conflagrations, often caused by a wanderer's fire, or even by his pipe, desolate large tracts of country, leaving nothing but black and bare trunks, and even these sometimes mutilated into stumps—one of the most dismal scenes on which the eye and the heart can look. When once the consuming element gets into the thick turf of the primeval wilderness, it sets everything at defiance; and it has been known to smoulder for a whole winter under the deep snow."

After traversing Lac la Pinié, Sir George was presented with a letter, congratulating him on his arrival, and soliciting an audience. The letter was written in English, and in good set terms, by one of about a hundred Salteaux warriors; but as soon as a favourable answer was received, his red children set themselves to work to "pelt away at him with their incantations." Gathering round a fire, they endeavoured to bend his mind to their wishes by charms, rattles, and burnt offerings, and closed the performance by marching round the circle, singing, whooping, and drumming. The object of these literary savages was to obtain a renewal of the abolished gift of rum!

On reaching Red River settlement, they had accomplished a voyage of two thousand miles. This was founded by Lord Selkirk in 1811, in pursuance of his plans of British emigration; but after his death, in 1820, it received no encouragement from government. The census, notwithstanding, numbers at present five thousand souls; and the population, consisting of Scottish Highlanders, Orkney-men, and half breeds from the Swampy Cree Indians, doubles itself every twenty years. "Fort Garry, the principal establishment in the place, is situated at the forks of the Red River and the Assiniboine, being about fifty miles from Lake Winnipeg, and about seventy-five from the frontier; and it occupies, as nearly as possible, the centre of the settlement. This, which is the official residence of the governor of the colony, is a regularly-built fortification, with walls and bastions of stone. Nearly opposite, on the right bank of the united streams, is the Roman Catholic cathedral. The principal Protestant church is about two miles further down, on the left bank.

"In the immediate neighbourhood of this last mentioned place of worship, stands the Red River academy, a large and flourishing school, kept by Mr. and Mrs. Macallum, for the sons and daughters of gentlemen in the service. Below Fort Garry, many respectable dwellings, most of them of two storeys, belong to the wealthier class of inhabitants. The lower fort, which is about four times the size of the upper establishment, is in process of being enclosed by loopholed walls and bastions. This is my own head-quarters when I visit the settlement; and here also resides

Mr. Thom, the recorder of Rupert's Land—so named in the royal charter."

From this place their journey lay over a series of plains, diversified by a constant succession of small lakes, and occasionally sand hills, but terminating near the settlement of Carlton in scenes like this: "In the afternoon we traversed a beautiful country, with lofty hills and long valleys, full of sylvan lakes, while the bright green of the surface, as far as the eye could reach, assumed a foreign tinge under an uninterrupted profusion of roses and blue-bells. On the summit of one of these hills, we commanded one of the few extensive prospects that we had of late enjoyed. One range of heights rose behind another, each becoming fainter as it receded from the eye, till the farthest was blended, in almost undistinguishable confusion, with the clouds, while the softest vales spread a panorama of hanging copses and glittering lakes at our feet." Here a story is told of certain unsophisticated savages who had never seen Europeans before, and who were greatly puzzled by the appearance among the strangers of a negro. "This man they inspected in every possible way, twisting him about, and pulling his hair, which was so different from their own flowing locks; and at length they came to the conclusion that Pierre Bungo was the oldest specimen of a white man that they had ever seen."

Leaving Fort Carlton on the 19th of July, they enjoyed a buffalo hunt, which appears to be a game of mere slaughter; and then came into play the science and art of curing what has been killed. Sometimes dried meat is preferred, the bones being taken out, and the flesh hung up in the sun; but if pemmican be the order of the day, the lean, after being dried, is pounded into dust, which, being put into a bag made of the hide, is enriched with nearly an equal weight of melted fat." On this food the traveller lives very well; although occasionally there are scenes of famine as well as repletion. "In the year 1820, when wintering at Athabasca Lake, our provisions fell short at the establishment, and on two or three occasions I went for three whole days and nights without having a single morsel to swallow; but then, again, I was one of a party of eleven men and one woman who discussed three ducks and twenty-two geese at a sitting. On the Saskatchewan the daily rations are eight pounds of meat a-head, whereas in other districts, our people have been sent on long journeys with nothing but a pint of meal and some parchment for their sustenance."

Fort Edmonton is the capital of a district as large as England, yet containing a population of less than 17,000 natives. Leaving this place, the ground began to rise more perceptibly, and the scenery to assume a wilder character, while even the willow and poplar disappeared, "and nothing was to be seen but the black, straight, naked stem of the pine, shooting up to an unbroken height of eighty or a hundred feet; while the sombre light, as it glimmered along numberless vistas of natural columns, recalled to the imagination the gloomy shades of an assemblage of venerable cathedrals." At length, "about seven hours of hard work brought us to the height of land, the hinge, as it were, between the eastern and the western waters. We breakfasted on the level isthmus, which did not exceed fourteen paces in width, filling our kettles for this our lonely meal at once from the crystal sources of the Columbia and the Saskatchewan, while these feeders of two opposite oceans, murmuring over their beds of mossy stones, as if to bid each other a long farewell, could hardly fail to attune our minds to the sublimity of the scene."

The descent of the mountains towards the Pacific is beautifully described, but with little of human interest, if we except the scantiness of the travellers' supplies of food, only indifferently assisted by boiled moss and "cakes of hips and haws," and of an almost tasteless bulb called kamma. These delicacies are gathered and prepared by the women, while the men occasionally do worse than lounge. "In one tent a sight presented itself which was equally novel and unnatural. Surrounded by a crowd of spectators, a party of fellows were playing at cards, obtained in the Snake Country from some American trappers; and a more melancholy exemplification of the influence of civilisation on barbarism could hardly be imagined, than the apparently scientific eagerness with which these naked and hungry savages thumbed and turned the black and greasy pasteboard." After passing Fort Colville, they embarked on the Columbia, and suffering much from the heat, arrived in due time at the embouchure of the river in the Pacific.