

to the southward of us, distant four hundred miles.⁴ We had the light of the sun, in sufficient quantity for all purposes, during the whole twenty-four hours. The redness of his rays reached far above the horizon.

We were in expectation of a particular band of Indians, and as few others made their appearance, we resolved on ascending the river to meet them, and even, in failure of that event, to go as far westward as Lake Arabuthcow,* distant, according to the Indians, four hundred and fifty miles.

With these views, we embarked on the sixteenth, with six Canadians, and also one Indian woman, in

* Called also *Athapuscov*, and *Athabasca*.⁵

⁴ The Churchill River, rising in Methly Lake and flowing easterly nearly 1,100 miles, is the most important river emptying into Hudson's Bay. It is a beautiful clear stream of great volume, draining a long stretch of country lying between the watersheds of the Saskatchewan and Athabaskan Rivers. So closely do these waters lie, that by crossing on the south the Portage de Traite, a distance of only 380 yards, the waters of the Grass River can be reached, which ultimately flow into the Saskatchewan, while in the North, the distance by the Methly Portage is only twelve miles between Methly Lake and the Clear River, which flows into the Athabasca. Numerous rapids interrupt the course of the Churchill, commencing immediately above tidal waters, which prevent navigation except by canoe. Frobisher's house was about 190 miles from Cumberland House, and 750 from Hudson's Bay.

The name is said by Father Lacombe to signify "place of hay and reeds."