

and hurry the crew to pull ashore, to save the cargo from damage. This accident befell us several times in our passage; but a kind Providence protected us, and we arrived in safety.

Almost immediately after reaching York factory, Mr. West made arrangements for visiting the Esquimaux Indians at fort Churchill, the most northern post belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company. Captain Franklin had suggested the expediency of walking from York fort to that factory, as the passage in a canoe might be long delayed by the immense quantities of ice floating in the bay. Our missionary, therefore, resolved, notwithstanding the distance, to adopt this plan; and, having engaged one of the company's servants, with an Indian hunter, they set out on the 11th of July, in company with two Indians, who happened to be returning to Churchill. "It was necessary," says Mr. West, "that we should embark in a boat to cross the North river; and in rowing round the point of Marsh, we perceived a brightness in the northern horizon, like that reflected from ice, usually called the *blink*, and which led us to suppose that vast fields of it were floating along the coast, in the direction that we were going. It happened to be low water when we crossed the mouth of the river; so that the boat could not approach nearer than about a mile from the shore; which obliged us to walk this distance through the mud and water, to the place where we fixed our encampment for the night, and where the mosquitoes inflicted their torments upon us. We were dreadfully annoyed by them, from the swampy country we had to traverse; and I was glad to start, with the dawn of the following morning, from a spot where they literally blackened our small canvass tent, and hovered around us in clouds, so as to render life itself burdensome. The day, however, afforded us very little relief, while walking nearly ankle deep in water, through the marshes; and such was their torture upon the poor animals, that we frequently saw the deer coming out of the woods, apparently almost blinded and distracted with their numbers, to rush into the water for relief. This gave our hunter an opportunity of killing two of them in the afternoon; so that we had plenty of venison, and a good supply of wild fowl, which he had shot for our evening repast."

The next morning, Mr. West and his companions resumed their journey at sunrise, but the former had obtained little refreshment during the night, in consequence of having been wrapped in a blanket almost to suffocation, in order to elude the stings of the mosquitoes. From these troublesome insects, however, he was happily delivered by a change of wind blowing from off the ice, which was now visible from the horizon to the shores of the bay.

After fording Stony river, they came upon the track of a polar bear, with which the Indian hunter appeared extremely anxious to fall in; but the ferocious animal seemed to have taken a survey of the party, and to have retired into the recesses of an adjacent wood. It seems that, at this season of the year, the bears come off the ice on the bay, on which they have passed several months, subsisting on the seals, which lie sleeping by the sides of the holes in the drift ice when it dissolves, or is driven far from shore. During the summer months, they seek their food among the sea-weed that is thrown up along the coast, or go into the woods in quest of berries. These animals, however, are less dreaded by the Indians than the grizzly bear, which is found toward the Rocky mountains, and is so ferocious that it is seldom attacked, except by very expert hunters, with impunity. "A gentleman," says our missionary, "who was travelling to a distance on the plains to the west of the Red river colony, told me of a narrow escape he once had with his servant boy, in meeting a grizzly bear. They were riding slowly along, near the close of the day, when they espied the animal coming from the verge of a wood in the direction towards them. They immediately quickened the pace of their horses; but being jaded with the day's journey, the bear was soon seen to gain upon them. In this emergency, he hit upon an expedient, which was probably the means of saving their lives. He took the boy, who was screaming with terror, behind him, and abandoned the horse that he rode. When the ferocious animal came up to it, the gentleman, who stopped at some distance, expected to see the bear rend it immediately with his claws; but, to his surprise, after having walked round and smelt at the horse, as it stood motionless with fear, the bear returned to the wood, and the horse was afterwards recovered without injury."

On the morning of the 16th, the travellers forded Broad river; and, at a short distance from its banks, perceived the smoke of an Indian tent, to which they directed their steps. The family, who were upon a hunting excursion from Churchill, were clothed in deer-skins, and the man, who appeared to be a half breed, stated, that though he was now leading an Indian life, his father had been formerly a master at one of the company's posts. He also expressed his willingness to accompany Mr. West to the factory; but as his two sons were gone out in pursuit of a deer, he said he must leave some directions for them on their return. Accordingly, having prepared a broad piece of wood, with his axe, he sketched out several figures, to denote the party with whom he had set out, and by a curve line appended to these, intimated that they were to follow. "We then proceeded,"