

LIFE ON THE MACKENZIE RIVER.

THE immense territory stretching from Hudson's Bay to the Pacific Ocean, and from the northern boundaries of Canada to the coasts of the Arctic basin—but little inferior to Europe in extent—is a region of vast lakes comparable to inland seas, of rivers, torrents, swamps, and forests, with a similar proportion of naked plains intersected by as naked hills, often arranged in a wave-like form, as if an ocean had been suddenly petrified while heaving its huge billows under the influence of a strong and stormy gale. The dense forests occur in the southern part of this district. They contain various species of timber-trees, but are principally of pines, which have often a withered, scorched, and blackened aspect. The spark from an Indian's pipe, or the unextinguished fire of a bivouac, has ignited the dry moss and grass beneath them in summer, and the winds have kindled a conflagration, which has blazed till quenched by the winter's snows. Further north, a few stunted spruce firs line the banks of the streams, or are spread in patches over sheltered spots, till, on gaining a higher latitude, the zone of the woods is left completely, and only low willow scrub appears in hollows on the borders of the icy sea. Throughout this region, the signs of winter are unmistakable in October, and continue till May; but they commence even earlier and last longer on the coasts than in the interior. The cold is so intense, that the thermometer falls to 50° and even 70° below zero. Lakes and streams, ten to twelve feet deep, are masses of hard ice to the bottom. Brandy freezes, mercury solidifies, flannel may be snapped like a biscuit, and ice is occasionally formed in the nostrils. The breath, congealing as it passes from the mouth, becomes audible in a sharp whirr, like a small es-

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