

rolled over and buried their heads in the snow. Shelter was at length found in a small island of poplars, and we kept body and soul together by huddling round a fire which was kept going for about eighteen hours, when want of food compelled us to continue our journey. The next day we reached an Indian camp, where we were most kindly received and cared for. The last part of the journey was across the open lake, and the direction of travel could only be kept by running in the teeth of the storm, which happened to be as good as a compass-course. Nothing could have made the dogs travel at the last, except their wonderful sagacity in discovering by scent that there was an Indian camp in front of them, although they had still some miles to go before reaching it. Not the least distressing trouble was having one's face stifled by a muffler, which soon became frozen solid to the face and beard by the moisture of breathing. It thus became necessary, after a few hours' travel, to halt and if possible to get into shelter, and make a fire and thaw out one's face, to prevent suffocation. This storm caught all the working parties of the British Commission at different points where they happened to be at the time, but fortunately caused no loss of life. Two of our men who were out at the time, driving a pair of horses in a sleigh and carrying supplies, were caught in the open prairie, and, being unable to proceed or go back, they lay in the bottom of the sleigh for two days and nights, and were at last rescued without having suffered permanent injury. Their horses, which had been let loose, found their way back to the point from which they had started, and thus gave the alarm which caused the despatch of relief to the sufferers. Although the prevailing weather during the winter months was cloudy and stormy, there were occasional days and nights of clear weather and motionless atmosphere; on these occasions the thermometer would show the greatest degree of cold, and in the woods one audible evidence of the intensity of the cold was occasioned by the freezing of the sap in the trunks and branches of the trees, and the consequent bursting of the bark with a report like pistol-shots. This chorus would continue through the night, and the frequency and violence of the reports would afford a good comparative measure of the cold. On these clear nights the auroras were most brilliant, vapour-like and yet perfectly transparent, so that even the small stars could be distinctly seen through the illuminated mist. One of the grandest that I witnessed formed a canopy in the zenith, and shot out on all sides towards the horizon radial flashes of light ever varying in length and breadth, now advancing, now retreating in a dissolving view, and lighting up the heavens with the glow of early dawn.