

for the night's rest at ten and, after a hasty meal and a smoke, rolled themselves in blankets and fell asleep. But the leader, gun in hand, sat by the camp fire and kept silent watch over the treacherous Indian guides whose increasing fears might cause them to wriggle into the forest and escape.

In a week they reached Slave Lake only to find it frozen. Their efforts in crossing this lake and finding its outlet are too dreary to relate. On the first day of July Mackenzie's canoe floated down the river that bears his name. The day, so far north, was twenty hours long. They quickly passed from winter to summer for there is no spring in the Northland. The grass springs up through the melting snow and the buds swell to leaves in a day. The wild-fowl settles among the reeds, builds her nest and feeds on the larvae of mosquitoes which swarm on the surface of the marshes.

In five days they reached the mouth of the river which drains Great Bear Lake whose water is sea-green in color. Here they met Indians who coaxed them to return as the country north was haunted by evil spirits. From this tribe they bribed a guide to go with them who bade farewell to his family with the greatest sorrow, as if he expected never to return. He cut off a lock of his hair for each of his children, but in four days, having escaped in a thunder storm, he was back home richer by the presents of the White Man.

Caching provisions by the way for the return journey, the daring leader urged on his unwilling men for, although their food was low and winter would soon be on them, he felt that he was approaching the Northern Ocean. He persuaded his anxious men to continue for seven days longer and should the ocean not rise to view in that time they would return. They were now within the Arctic Circle where they viewed the midnight sun. Traces were seen of the camps of Eskimos. They passed by high banks and saw great mountains to the west. Few rapids barred their way. In one day they made fifty-four miles. On July 12th, with one day to spare, they reached the delta of the Mackenzie, where the tide rose and fell and where in the distance they could see the ice fields of the Arctic. For three days they remained near the ocean and chased the whales that had ventured inland.

The time was too brief to reach the Arctic shore, but the mystery of the outlet of the twin rivers was solved. And now began the hard journey back. Ever hungry they toiled on the tow line. When they again reached the mouth of the Bear River small game and wild berries were found. They passed a burning seam of coal in the river bank, and saw oil oozing from the rocks. On September 12th they reached Fort Chippewyan after a voyage of one hundred and two days, and not a moment too soon, for next day the lake was frozen.