

trade not exceeding fifty-five, representing a population of about 250 souls. But as this Fort is situated at the southern extremity of the Bay, all the surrounding posts send their furs to it, and a vessel sailing every year from England, freighted with ammunition and provisions for the several posts, returns laden with rich and valuable furs. The chief of the establishment welcomed me in the most cordial manner, and paid great attention to my comfort while I staid with him. I have also the same report to make of all the other employees of the Hon. Company. All of them treated me very kindly; in fact one would think they had been old friends of mine or the most devoted Catholics. I had just been three weeks at Fort Moose, when a schooner arrived from Fort Albany, and this gave me an opportunity of visiting that post, 140 miles farther north, towards which my heart much more than my compass unceasingly turned; for I had been previously informed that I should there find a great number of Indians, who had come from adjacent posts together with those belonging to the locality, which, I believe is one of the most populous of the Bay. I embarked on the 5th July, on that tempestuous and icy sea. Hardly had we issued from Moose River when we were stopped by a contrary wind which detained us in the same spot for three days. To make the most of this disappointment we landed. In all directions, it appeared to be a low marshy country, periodically covered by the tide which there rises very high. There was nothing to banish the melancholy which crept over us while wandering through those desolate plains. Not a single bird in the air nor deer on land was visible; a few sea wolves were the only animals we met during the voyage. I will not attempt, My Lord, to describe the feelings of a missionary in exploring, for the first time, such dreary latitudes. Everything that comes in his way merely tends to increase his sorrow; it is no wonder therefore, that his letters should at times, partake of the melancholy with which his whole soul is troubled. This mission, I believe, is one of the most difficult in the world. The missions of the Levant, of Constantinople, of the Islands of the Archipelago, of Lylia, of Egypt, &c., still preserve a few remains of their ancient renown. And all those countries, however degraded they may be, exhibit nevertheless to the missionary some relics of the riches, industry and magnificence of their first inhabitants. Notwithstanding the barbarous condition of the Islands of Oceanica and Japan, they also offer some encouragement and hopes of success to the perseverance and energy of the missionary. There numerous tribes, a fertile soil and a temperate climate are to be found. But in the mission of the Bay, it is altogether different. Forests of stunted wood, a sterile and marshy soil, a dark and cloudy sky, a frozen sea, a multitude of aboriginal families, whose disgusting aspect denotes the most profound degradation and misery, are so many difficulties which the poor missionary has to encounter in this most inhospitable of countries. The silence of death which prevails over vast wastes, is never broken, save by the howling of bears and wolves with which the Indians waged relentless war, or by the plaintive cries of birds of passage. Pardon me, My Lord, for this long digression wherein I merely give the outline of a