

260      Three Boys in the Wild North Land.

large numbers of geese and ducks that were flying over them, and all were going south. The boys would have liked, where they were specially numerous, to have stopped and had a few hours' shooting, but the Indians said :

"Perhaps to-morrow you will see it was best for us to get home."

So "forward" was the word, and on they went and reached home after an exceedingly rapid journey from Oxford Lake.

They met with a right royal welcome at Sagastaweekee. Mr. and Mrs. Ross and the children were all delighted to have them back again with them. The faithful canoemen were well paid and given a capital supper in the kitchen, and then dismissed to their several homes.

Frank, Alec, and Sam had each to give some account of their adventures to the household as they were gathered that evening around the roaring fire, which was much enjoyed. Then prayers were offered, and away the boys went to their rooms. They could not but remark to each other how much warmer were their beds than when they last slept in them. However, they found them none too warm as they cuddled down in their downy depths and were soon fast asleep.

When they awoke the next morning the sleet and snow were beating with fury against the window panes, and all nature was white with snow.

Shortly after the wind went down, and then the ice covered over all the open waters, and they saw that that most delightful summer in the Wild North Land was ended, and the winter, with its cold and brightness and possibilities for other kinds of sports and adventures, had begun.