



ESQUIMAUX BUILDING AN IGLOO, NEAR CHURCHILL

work was descriptive, and general, his was detailed and exact, so that wherever he went others could follow him. They described small portions of the country, he learned of the physical features of all the vast country through which he travelled, and grouped these features together on a map in one harmonious whole, so that not only could any individual course or route of his be followed, but the relations of these courses to each other, their distances from each other and from any other place on the surface of the earth was known for all time to come.

Dr. J. J. Bigsby, the naturalist of the International Boundary Commission, thus speaks of his first meeting with David Thompson in Mr. McGillivray's home in Montreal about the year 1817. A singular-looking person of about fifty. He was plainly dressed, quiet, and observant. His figure was short and compact, and his black hair was worn long all around, and cut square, as if by one stroke of the shears, just above the eyebrows. His complexion was of the gardener's ruddy brown, while the expression of deeply furrowed features was friendly and intelligent, but his cut, short nose gave him an odd look. His speech betrayed the Welshman.

"No living person possesses a title of his information respecting the Hudson Bay countries, which from 1793 to 1820 he was constantly traversing. Never mind his Bunyan-like face and cropped hair; he has a very powerful mind, and a singular faculty of picture-making. He can create a wilderness and people it with warring savages, or climb the Rocky Mountains with you in a snowstorm, so clearly and palpably, that only shut your eyes and you hear the crack of the rifle, or feel the snow-flakes on your cheeks as he talks.

"Mr. Thompson was a firm Churchman, while most of our men were Roman Catholics. Many a time have I seen these uneducated Canadians most attentively and thankfully listen, as they sat upon some bank of shingle, to Mr. Thompson, while he read to them in most extraordinary pronounced French, three chapters out of the Old Testament, and as many out of the New, adding such explanations as seemed to him suitable."

He never used alcoholic liquors, and during the time that he was in control of the fur trade west of the Rocky Mountains, and while most of the posts kept by