

From the north side of the Churchill river, a short distance below Ile à la Crosse Lake, we struck northward into the unexplored country, ascending a small rapid stream that had been called by the Indians Mudjatick (bad deer) river. A sandy plain, forming the height of land, was crossed at the head of this river, and Cree Lake, a beautiful sheet of clear water, 45 miles long, was entered, lying, like so many of the great Canadian lakes, along the line of contact of the Archæan and overlying Palæozoic rocks. The surrounding country was now almost sterile sandy plains, thinly wooded with Jack-pine. Between the scattered tree-trunks one could see long distances in any direction. Saying nothing of innumerable swarms of black flies and mosquitoes, porcupines were about the only living things to be seen on these sandy plains, and where these animals are plentiful you may be sure that human beings rarely come, for they are very easily killed, and the Indians are very fond of a nice roasted porcupine.

Cree river, a wild torrential stream, flowing in a shallow channel, was descended to Stone river, and this river was descended to Fond du Lac on Lake Athabasca, where Mr. Dowling and I arrived within a few hours of each other, more than six weeks after we had separated at Regina on the C.P.R. 650 miles further south.

The united party then turned eastward, and carried an instrumental survey to the west end of Athabasca Lake, up Stone river to its source in Wollaston Lake, from which lake Mr. Dowling continued the survey to Reindeer Lake, down Reindeer river and up Churchill river to the Frog Portage where it was connected with the instrumental survey made by Mr. Fawcett down Churchill river. An instrumental survey had thus been carried entirely round this extensive area, forming an excellent basis for further explorations either in the interior or further north.

At Wollaston Lake I left Mr. Dowling, and, accompanied by three Indians who, however, knew nothing of the country, ascended Geikie river to the height of land, and descended Foster river to Churchill river, thus carrying a second line of exploration, almost parallel to Mudjatick and Cree rivers,