

Travels through the states of North America

TRAVELS THROUGH THE STATES OF NORTH AMERICA, AND THE PROVINCES OF UPPER AND LOWER CANADA, DURING THE YEARS 1795, 1796, AND 1797.

BY ISAAC WELD, JUN.

FOURTH EDITION. ILLUSTRATED AND EMBELLISHED WITH SIXTEEN PLATES.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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LETTER XXVIII.

Leave Quebec.—*Convenience of Travelling between that city and Montreal.*—*Post Houses.*—*Calashes.*—*Drivers.*—*Canadian Horses very serviceable.*—*Salutations on arriving at different Post Houses.*—*Beautiful Prospects from the Road on the Top of the Banks of the St. Lawrence.*—*Female Peasant's.*—*Style of Farming in Canada.*—*Considerably improved of late.*—*Inactivity of Canadians in not clearing more Land.*

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Montreal, August.

HAVING remained in Quebec and the neighbourhood as long as we could, consistently with the plan which we had formed VOL. II. B 2 of visiting the Falls of Niagara, and returning again into the States before the commencement of winter, we set out for Montreal by land.

In no part of North America can a traveller proceed so commodiously as along this road between Quebec and Montreal; a regular line of post-houses, at convenient distances from each other, being established upon it, where calashes or carioles, according to the season, are always kept in readiness. Each post-master is obliged to have four calashes, and the same number of carioles; and besides these, its many more are generally kept at each stage by persons called aides-de-poste, for which the post-master calls when his own happen to be engaged. The post-master has the exclusive privilege of furnishing these carriages at every stage, and, under a penalty, he must have them ready in a quarter of an hour after they are demanded by a traveller, if it be day-light, and in half an hour should it be in the night. The drivers are bound to take you on at the rate of two leagues an hour. The charge for a calash with a single horse is one shilling Halifax* currency per league; no gratuity is expected by the driver.

* According to Halifax currency, which is the established currency of Lower Canada, the dollar passes for 5 shillings.

The silver coins current in Canada are dollars, halves, quarters, eighths, and sixteenths of dollars, pistareens, Spanish coins somewhat less valuable than quarter dollars, and French and English crowns and half crowns. Gold coins pass only as bullion by weight.

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British and Portugal gold coins are deemed the best; next to them those of Spain, then those of France.

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The post calashes are very clumsily built, but upon the whole we found them easy and agreeable carriages; they are certainly far superior to the American stage waggon, in which, if persons wish to travel with comfort, they ought always to set out provided with cushions for their hips and elbows, otherwise they cannot expect but to receive numberless contusions, before they get to the end of their journey.

The horses in Canada are mostly small and heavy, but extremely serviceable, as is evident from those employed for the post carriages being in general fat and very brisk on the road, notwithstanding the poor fare and ill usage they receive. They are seldom rubbed down; but as soon as they have performed their journey are turned into a field, and there left until the next traveller arrives, or still they are wanted to perform the work of the farm. This is contrary to the regulations of the post, according to which the horses should be kept in the stable, in perfect readiness for travellers; however, I do not recollect that we were at B 2 4 any place detained much beyond the quarter of an hour prescribed, notwithstanding that the people had frequently to send for their horses, more than a mile, to the fields where they were employed. When the horses happened to be at a distance, they were always brought home in a full gallop, in order to avoid complaints; they were yoked in an instant, and the driver set off at the rate of nine or ten miles an hour; a little money, indeed, generally induces them to exceed the established rate; this, however, does not always answer, but play upon their vanity and you may make them go on at what rate you please, for they are the vainest people, perhaps, in the world. Commend their great dexterity in driving, and the excellence of the Canadian horses, and it seldom fails to quicken your pace at least two or three miles an hour; but if you wish to go in a gallop, you need only observe to your companion, so as to be overheard by the driver, the Canadian calashes are the vilest carriages on earth, and so heavy that you believe the people are afraid the horses would fall down and break their necks if they attempted to make them

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go as fast as in other countries; above all, praise the carriages and drivers of the United States. A few remarks of this sort at once discompose the 5 tempers of the drivers, and their passion is constantly vented in lashes on their horses.

To hasten the speed of their horses they have three expressions, rising above each other in a regular climax. The first, "Marche," is pronounced in the usual tone of voice:

"Marche-donc," the second, is pronounced more hastily and louder; if the horse is dull enough not to comprehend this, then the

"Marche-donc," accompanied with one of Sterne's magical words, comes out, in the third place, in a shrill piercing key, and a smart lash of the whip follows. From the frequent use made by the drivers of these words, the calashes have received the nickname of "marche-doncs."

The first post-house is nine miles from Quebec, which our drivers, of their own accord, managed to reach in one hour. No sooner were we in sight of it, than the post-master, his wife in her close French cap, and all the family, came running out to receive us. The foremost driver, a thin fellow of about six feet high, with a queue bound with eel skins that reached the whole way down his back, immediately cracked his whip, and having brought his calash to the door, with a great air he leapt out, bowed respectfully at a distance to the hostess, then advancing with his hat off, paid her a few compliments, and 6 kissed both her cheeks in turn, which she presented to him with no small condescension. Some minutes are generally spent thus at every post-house in mutual congratulations on meeting, before the people ever think of getting a fresh carriage ready.

The road between Quebec and Montreal runs, for the most part, close upon the banks of the River St. Lawrence, through those beautiful little towns and villages seen to so much advantage from the water, and as the traveller passes along, he is entertained with prospects, if possible, superior to those which strike the attention in sailing down the river.

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For the first thirty or forty miles in the way from Quebec, the views are in particular extremely grand. The immense River St. Lawrence, more like a lake confined between ranges of mountains than a river, appears at one side rolling under your feet, and as you look down upon it, from the top of the lofty banks, the largest merchant vessels scarcely seem bigger than fishing boats; on the other side steep mountains, skirted with forests, present themselves to the view at a distance, whilst, in the intermediate space, is seen a rich country, beautifully diversified with whitened cottages and glittering spires, with groves of trees, and cultivated fields, watered by innumerable little streams; groups of the peasantry, ⁷ busied as we passed along getting in the harvest, which was not quite over, diffused an air of cheerfulness and gaiety over the scene, and heightened all its charms.

The female French peasants are in general, whilst young, very pretty, and the neat simplicity of their dress in summer, which consists mostly of a blue or scarlet bodice without sleeves, a petticoat of a different colour, and a straw hat, makes them appear extremely interesting: like the Indians however, they close their beauty very prematurely, and it is to be attributed much to the same cause, namely, their laborious life, and being so much exposed to the air, the indolent men suffering them to take a very active part in the management of the farms.

The style of farming amongst the generality of the French Canadians has hitherto been very slovenly; manure has been but rarely used; the earth just lightly turned up with a plough, and without any other preparation the grain sown; more than one half of the fields also have been left without any fences whatsoever, exposed to the ravages of cattle. The people are beginning now, however, to be more industrious and better farmers, owing to the increased demand for grain for exportation, and to the advice and encouragement given to them by the English merchants ⁸ at Quebec and Montreal, who send agents through the country to the farmers to buy up all the corn they can spare. The farmers are bound to have their corn ready by a certain day on the banks of the St. Lawrence, and

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bateaux are then sent by the merchants to receive and convey it to the port where it is to be shipped.

All the settlements in Lower Canada lie contiguous to the River St. Lawrence: in no place perhaps do they extend farther back than twelve miles from it, except along the banks of the River St. Jean, the River des Prairies, and some other navigable streams falling into the St. Lawrence. This is owing to the disposition of the French Canadians, who, like the Germans, are fond of living near each other; nay more, as long as the farm of the father will admit of a division, a share of it is given to the sons when they are grown up, and it is only when the farm is exceedingly small, or the family numerous, that they ever think of taking up a piece of fresh land from the seignior. In this respect a wonderful difference appears between their conduct and that of the young people of the United States, particularly of those of New England, who, as soon as they are grown up, immediately emigrate, and bury themselves in the woods, where, perhaps, they are five or six 9 hundred miles distant from every relation upon earth; yet a spirit of enterprize is not wanting amongst the Canadians; they eagerly come forward, when called upon, to traverse the immense lakes in the western regions; they laugh at the dreadful storms on those prodigious bodies of water; they work with indefatigable perseverance at the oar and pole in stemming the rapid currents of the rivers; nor do they complain, when, on these expeditions, they happen to be exposed to the inclemency of the seasons, or to the severest pangs of hunger. The spirit of the Canadian is excited by vanity: he delights in talking to his friends and relatives of the excursions he has made to those distant regions; and he glories in the perils which he has encountered; his vanity would not be gratified by chopping down trees and tilling the earth: he deems this therefore merely a secondary pursuit, and he sets about it with reluctance: self-interest, on the contrary, it is that rouses the citizen of the states into action, and accordingly he hastily emigrates to a distant part of country, where he thinks land is in the most rising state, and where he hopes to be able the soonest to gratify a passion to which he would readily make a sacrifice of every social tie, and of all that another man would hold dear.

On the second day of our journey from Quebec to Montreal we reached Trois Rivieres, lying nearly midway between the two places. This town is situated on the banks of St. Lawrence, close to the mouth of the River St. Maurice, the largest of upwards of thirty that fall into the St. Lawrence, on the north-west side alone, between Quebec and Montreal. This river, before it unites with the St. Lawrence, is divided into three streams by two large islands, so that to a person sailing past its mouth it appears as if three distinct rivers disembogued at the one spot; from hence it is that the town of Trois Rivieres receives its name.

The St. Maurice is not navigable for large vessels, neither is it for sloops more than a few miles about its mouth. In bateaux and canoes, however, it may be ascended nearly to its source; from whence, if credit is to be given to the accounts of the Indians, the distance is not very great to the head of navigable rivers that fall into Hudson's Bay; at a future day therefore, if ever the dreary and inhospitable waste through which it passes shall put on a different aspect from what it now wears, and become the abode of human beings instead of wild beasts, the St. Maurice may be esteemed a river of the first importance in a commercial point of view; at present there are a few 8 11 scattered settlements on each side of it, from its mouth as far as the iron works, which are about nine miles distant from Trois Rivieres; beyond that, the country is but little known except to Indians.

Trois Rivieres contains about two hundred and fifty or three hundred houses, and ranks as the third town, in point of size, in the Provinces. It is one of the oldest settlements in the country, and its founder, it is said, calculated upon its becoming in a short time a city of great extent It has hitherto, however, increased but very slowly in size, and there is no reason to imagine that it will increase more rapidly in future, at least until the country bordering upon the St. Maurice becomes settled, a period that may be very distant. The bank of iron ore in the neighbourhood, by the manufacture of which it was expected that the town would suddenly become opulent, is now nearly exhausted; nor do we find that

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this bank has ever furnished more ore than was sufficient to keep one small forge and one fur trade also, from which so much benefit was expected, is now almost wholly centered at Quebec and Montreal; it is merely the small quantity of furs brought down the St. Maurice, and some of the northern rivers that fall into the St. Lawrence, nearer to the town 12 of Trois Rivieres than to Quebec or Montreal, that is shipped there. These furs are laden on board the Montreal ships, which stop opposite to the town as they go down the river.

The country in the vicinity of Trois Rivieres has been represented by some French travellers as wonderfully fertile, and as one of the most agreeable parts of Canada; but it is totally the reverse. It is a level barren tract, and so sandy, that in walking along many of the streets of the town, and the roads in the neighbourhood, you sink into the sand at every step above the ankles. The sand is of a whitish colour, and very loose. The air also swarms with musquitoes, a certain proof of the low damp situation of the place. In none of the other inhabited parts of Canada, except in the neighbourhood of Lake St. Charles, were we ever annoyed with these troublesome insects. In Quebec, indeed, and Montreal, they are scarcely ever seen.

The streets in Trois Rivieres are narrow, and the houses in general small and indifferent; many of them are built of wood. There are two churches in the town, the one an English episcopalian, the other a large Roman catholic parish church, formerly served by the Recollets, or Franciscan friars, but the order is now extinct in Trois Rivieres. The old monastery of the order, a large stone building, 15 which she was destined, perhaps, to be a happy and useful member, for an unprofitable life of solitude, and unremitted penance for sins never committed.

The hospital, which lies contiguous to the chapel, consists of two large apartments, wherein are about twelve or fourteen beds. The apartments are airy, and the beds neat and well appointed. Each bed is dedicated to a particular saint, and over the foot of it is an invocation to the tutelary saint, in large characters, as "St. Jaques priez pour moi," "St. Jean priez pour moi," &c. The patients are attended by a certain number of the sisterhood

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appointed for that purpose. An old priest, who appeared to be near his death, was the only person in the hospital when we passed through it; he was seated in an easy chair by the bed-side, and surrounded by a number of the sisters, who paid him the most assiduous attention.

The dress of the Ursulines consists of a black stuff gown; a handkerchief of white linen tied by a running string close round the throat, and hanging down over the breast and shoulders, being rounded at the corners; a head-piece of white linen, which covers half the forehead, the temples, and ears, and is fastened to the handkerchief; a black gauze veil, which conceals half the face only when 16 down, and flows loosely over the shoulders, and a large plain silver cross suspended from the breast. The dress is very unbecoming, the hair being totally concealed, and the shape of the face completely disguised by the close white head-piece.

From the hospital we were conducted through a long passage to an agreeable light parlour, the windows of which opened into the gardens of the convent. This was the apartment of the "Superieure," who soon made her appearance; accompanied by a number of the lay sisters. The conversation of the old lady and her protgées was lively and agreeable; a thousand questions were asked us respecting the former part of our tour, and our future destination; and they seemed by no means displeased as having a few strangers of a different sex from their own within the walls of the convent. Many apologies were made, because they could not take us through the "interieure," as there was an ordinance against admitting any visitors into it without leave from the bishop; they regretted exceedingly, that we had not obtained this leave before we left Quebec. After some time was spent in conversation, a great variety of fancy works, the fabrication of the sisterhood, was brought down for our inspection, some of which it is always expected that strangers 17 will purchase, for the order is but poor. We selected a few of the articles which appeared most curious, and having received them packed up in the neatest manner in little boxes kept for the purpose, and promised to preserve them in memory of the fair

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Ursulines, that handed them to us, we bade adieu to the superieure, and returned to our lodgings.

It is for their very curious bark-work that the sister's of this convent are particularly distinguished. The bark of the birch tree is what they use, and with it they make pocketbooks, work-baskets, dressing-boxes, &c. &c. which they embroider with elk hair, died of the most brilliant colours. They also make models of the Indian canoes, and various war-like implements used by the Indians.

Nearly all the birch bark canoes in use on the St. Lawrence and Utawa Rivers, and on the nearer lakes, are manufactured at Three Rivers, and in the neighbourhood, by Indians. The birch tree is found in great plenty near the town; but it is from the more northern part of the country, where the tree attains a very large size, that the principal part of the bark is procured that canoes are made with. The bark resembles in some degree that of the cork tree, but it is of a closer grain, and also much more pliable, for it admits of being rolled up the same as a piece of cloth. The VOL. II. C 18 Indians of this part of the country always carry large rolls of it in their canoes when they go on a hunting party, for the purpose of making temporary huts. The bark is spread on small poles over their heads, and fastened with strips of elm bark, which is remarkably tough, to stakes, so as to form walls on the sides.

The canoes are made with birch bark, as follows: The ribs, consisting of thick tough rods, are first bound together; then the birch bark is sewed on in as large pieces as possible, and a thick coat of pitch is laid over the seams between the different pieces. To prevent the bark being injured by the cargo, and to make the canoe stronger, its inside is lined with two layers of thin pieces of pine, laid in a contrary direction to each other. A canoe made in this manner is so light, that two men could easily carry one on their shoulders capable of containing six people.

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The birch canoes made at Three Rivers are put together with the utmost neatness, and on the water they appear very beautiful. They are made from a size sufficient to hold one man only, to a size large enough for upwards of twenty. It is wonderful to see with what velocity a few skilful men with paddles, can take on one of these canoes of a size suitable to their number. In a few minutes they would leave the best moulded keel boat, conducted 19 by a similar number of men with oars, far behind. None but experienced persons ought ever to attempt to navigate birch canoes, for they are so light that they are apt to be upset by the least improper movement of the persons in them.

The day after that on which we quitted Trois Rivieres, we reached Montreal once more. The villages between the two places are very numerous, and the face of the country around them is pleasing, so that the eye of the traveller is constantly entertained as he passes on; but there is nothing in this part of the country particularly deserving of mention.

LETTER XXIX.

The Party make the usual Preparations for ascending the St. Lawrence.—Buffalo Skins.—How used by Travellers—Difficulty of proceeding to Lake Ontario otherwise than by Water.—Rapids above Montreal.—Village of La Chine.—King's Stores there.—Indian Village on the opposite Side of the River.—Similitude between French Canadians and Indians in Person and Disposition of Mind.—Owing to this the Power of the French over the Indians.—Summary View of the Indians C 2 20 in Lower Canada.—The Party embark in a Bateau at La Chine.—Mode of conducting Bateaux against a strong Current.—Great Exertion requisite.—Canadians addicted to smoaking.—How they measure Distances.—Description of Lake St. Louis.—Clouds of Insects over Reed Banks.—Party encamps on l'Isle Perot.—Passage of Rapids called Les Cascades—Their tremendous Appearance.—Description of the Village of the Hill of Cedars.—Rapids du Coteau du Lac.—Wonderful Rapidity of the Current.—Party encamps.—Lake St. Francis.—Point au Baudet.—L'Isle aux Raisins.—Islands in the River still the Property Indians.—Not determined yet whether in the British Territory or that of the States.—Party encamps.—Storm Unpleasant situation of the Party.

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—Relieved.—Continue the Voyage.—Account of more Rapids.—Canals and Locks at different Places on the River St. Lawrence.—Immense Flights of Pigeons.—Emigration of Squirrels and Bears.—Oswegatchee River and Fort la Galette described.—Advantageous Position of the latter.—Current above this gentle.—Bateaux sail on all Night.—Songs of the Canadians.—Good Ear for Music.—Lake of a Thousand Isles.—Arrival at Kingston on Lake Ontario.—Observations on the Navigation of the St. Lawrence.—The St. Lawrence compared with the Mississippi.—A view of 21 the different Rivers which open a Water Communication between the Great Lakes and the Atlantic.—Great Superiority of the St. Lawrence over all the rest.—Of the Lake trade.

Kingston, September.

ON arriving at Montreal, our first concern was to provide a large travelling tent, and some camp equipage, buffalo skins,* a store of dried provisions, kegs of brandy and wine, &c. &c. and, in short, to make every usual and necessary preparation for proceeding up the River St. Lawrence. A few days afterwards, we took our passage for Kingston, on board a bateau, which, together with twelve others, the commissary was sending thither for the purpose of bringing down to Quebec the cannon

* In the western parts of Lower Canada, and throughout Upper Canada where it is customary for travellers to carry their own bedding with them, these skins are very generally made use of for the purpose of sleeping upon. For upwards of two months we scarcely ever had any other bed than one of the skins spread on the floor and a blanket to each person. The skins are dressed by the Indians with the hair on, and they are rendered by a certain process as pliable as cloth. When the buffalo is killed in the beginning of the winter, at which time he is fenced against the cold, the hair resembles very much that of a black bear; it is then long, straight, and of a blackish colour; but when the animal is killed in the summer, the hair is short and curly, and of a light brown colour, owing to its being scorched by the rays of the sun.

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22 and the ordnance stores that had been taken from the military post on the lakes, preparatory to their being delivered up to the United States.

On the north-west side of the St. Lawrence, except for about fifty miles or there-about, are roads, and also scattered settlements, at no great distance from each other the whole way between Montreal and Kingston, which is situated at the eastern extremity of Lake Ontario; but no one ever thinks of going thither by land, on account of the numberless inconveniences such a journey would be attended with; indeed, the difficulty of getting horses across the many deep and rapid rivers falling into the St. Lawrence, would in itself be sufficient to deter travellers from proceeding by the land to Kingston, supposing even that there were none other to encounter. A water conveyance is by far the most eligible, and except only between Quebec and Montreal, it is the conveyance is by far the most eligible, and except only between Quebec and Montreal, it is the part of the country, that is, when people wish merely to follow the course of the rivers, in the neighbourhood of which alone there are any settlements.

The rapids in the St. Lawrence are so very strong just above Montreal, that the bateaux are never laden at the town, but suffered to proceed empty as far as the village of La Chine, which stands on the island of Montreal, about nine miles higher up. The goods are sent, from Montreal, thither in carts.

La Chine is built on a fine gravelly beach, at the head of a little bay at the lower end of Lake St. Louis, which is a broad part of the river St. Lawrence. A small current sets down the lake, and owing to it there is generally a considerable curl on the surface of the water, even close to the shore, which, with the appearance of the boats and canoes upon it in motion, gives the place a very lively air. The situation of the village is indeed extremely agreeable, and from some of the store-houses there are most charming views of the lake, and of the country at the opposite side of it. There are very extensive store-houses belonging to the king, and also to the merchants of Montreal. In the former the presents for the Indians are deposited as soon as they arrive from England; and prior to their

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being sent up the country, they are inspected by the commanding officer of the garrison of Montreal and a committee of merchants, who are bound to make a faithful report to government, whether the presents are agreeable to the contract, and as good as could be obtained for the price that is paid for them.

In sight of La Chine, on the opposite side of the St. Lawrence, stands the village of the 24 Cacheonaga Indians, whom I have already had occasion to mention. The village contains about fifty log houses and a Roman catholic church, built in the Canadian style, and ornamented within with pictures, lamps, &c. in such a manner as to attract the eye as forcibly as possible. The outward shew, and numerous ceremonies of the Roman catholic religion, are particularly suited to the capacities of the Indians, and as but very little restraint is imposed upon them by the missionaries, more of them become converts to that religion than to any other. The worship of the Holy Virgin meets in a very peculiar manner with the approbation of the squaws, and they sing her praises with the most profound devotion.

In this and all the other Indian villages situated in the improved parts of Lower Canada, a great mixture of the blood of whites with that of the aborigines is observable in the persons of the inhabitants; there are also considerable numbers of the French Canadians living in these villages, who have married Indian wives, and have been adopted into the different nations with whom they reside. Many of the French Canadians bear such a close resemblance to the Indians, owing to their dark complexions, black eyes, and long black hair, that when attired in the same habits, it is only a person intimately acquainted with the features 25 of the Indians that could distinguish the one race of men from the other. The dispositions of the two people also accord together in a very striking manner; both are averse to a settled life, and to regular habits of industry; both are fond of roving about, and procuring sustenance by hunting rather than by cultivating the earth; nature seems to have implanted in their hearts a reciprocal affection for each other; they associate together, and live on the most amicable terms; and to this one circumstance more than to any other cause is to be attributed that wonderful ascendancy which the French were ever known to

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have over the Indians, whilst they had possession of Canada. It is very remarkable indeed, that in the upper country, notwithstanding that presents to such a very large amount are distributed amongst the Indians through the hands of the English inhabitants, and that their natural rights are as much respected by them as they possibly can be, yet an Indian, even at this day, will always go to the house of a poor French farmer in preference to that of an Englishman.

The numbers of the Cacheonaga nation, in the village near La Chine, are estimated at one hundred and fifty persons. The other Indian villages, in the civilized parts of Lower Canada, are one of the Canasdogas, situated near the mouth of the Utawas River; one of the 26 Little Algonquins, near Trois Rivieres; one of the Aberachies, near Trois Rivieres, at the opposite side of the river; and one of the Hurons, near Quebec; but none of these villages are as large as that of the Cacheonagas. The numbers of the Indians in the lower province have diminished very fast of late years, as they have done in every other part of the continent, where those of the white inhabitants have increased; in the whole lower province, at present, it is thought that there are not more than twelve hundred of them. Many of these Indians are continually loitering about the large towns, in expectation of getting spirits or bread, which they are extremely fond of, from the inhabitants. No less than two hundred, that had come a great distance in canoes, from the lower parts of the River St. Lawrence, were encamped on Point Levi when we visited Quebec. These Indians, squalid and filthy in the extreme, and going about the streets every day in large parties, begging, presented a most melancholy picture of human nature; and indeed, if a traveller never saw any of the North American Indians, but the most decent of those who are in the habit of frequenting the large towns of Lower Canada, he would not be led to entertain an opinion greatly in their favour. The farther you ascend up the country, consequently the nearer you see the 27 Indians to what they were in their original state, before their manners were corrupted by intercourse with the whites, the more do you find in their character and conduct deserving of admiration.

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It was on the 28th day of August that we reached La Chine; the next day the “brigade,” as it was called, of bateaux was ready, and in the afternoon we set out on our voyage. Three men are found sufficient to conduct an empty bateau of about two tons burthen up the St. Lawrence, but if the bateau be laden more are generally allowed. They ascend the stream by means of poles, oars, and sails. Where the current is very strong, they make use of the former, keeping as close as possible to the shore, in order to avoid the current, and to have the advantage of shallow water to pole in. The men set their poles altogether at the same moment, and all work at the same side of the bateau; the steersman, however, shifts his pole occasionally from side to side, in order to keep the vessel in an even direction. The poles commonly used are about eight feet in length, extremely light, and headed with iron. On coming to a deep bay or inlet, the men abandon the poles, take to their oars, and strike if possible directly across the mouth of the bay; but in many places the current proves so strong that it is absolutely impossible to stem it by 28 means of oars, and they are obliged to pole entirely round the bays. Whenever the wind is favourable they set their sail; but it is only at the upper end of the river, beyond the rapids, or on the lakes or broad parts of it, where the current is not swift, that the sail by itself is sufficient to impel them to forward.

The exertion it requires to counteract the force of the stream by means of poles and oars is so great, that the men are obliged to stop very frequently to take breath. The places at which they stop are regularly ascertained; some of them, where the current is very rapid, are not more than half a mile distant one from the other; others one or two, but none of them more than four miles apart. Each of these places the boatmen, who are almost all French Canadians, denominate “une pipe,” because they are allowed to stop at it and fill their pipes. A French Canadian is scarcely ever without a pipe in his mouth, whether working at the oar or plough; whether on foot, or on horseback; indeed, so much addicted are the people to smoking, that by the burning of the tobacco in their pipes, they commonly ascertain the distance from one place to another. Such a place, they say, is three pipes off, that is, it is so far off that you may smoke three pipes full of tobacco whilst you go

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thither. A pipe, in the most general acceptation ²⁹ of the word, seemed to be about three quarters of an English mile.

Lake St. Louis, commencing, or rather terminating, at La Chine, for that village stands at the lower end of it, is about twelve miles in length, and four in breadth. At its uppermost extremity it receives a large branch of the Utawas River, and also south-west branch of the River St. Lawrence, which by some geographers is called the River Cadaraqui, and by others the River Iroquois; but in the country, generally speaking, the whole of that river running from Lake Ontario to the Gulph of St. Lawrence, goes simply under the name of the St. Lawrence.

At the upper end of Lake St. Louis the water is very shallow, owing to the banks of mud and sand washed up by the two rivers. These very extensive banks are entirely covered with reeds, so that when a vessel sails over them she appears at a little distance to be absolutely sailing over dry land. As we passed along this part of the lake we were enveloped with clouds of little insects, different from any I ever saw before or afterwards in the country; but they are common, it is said, on various parts of the River St. Lawrence. Their size was somewhat larger than that of the gnat; their colour a pure white; and so delicately were they formed, that by the slightest touch they were destroyed and reduced to powder. They were particularly attracted by any white object, and having once alighted were not to be driven away but by force. The leaves of a book, which I happened to have in my hand, were in a few seconds so thickly covered by them, that it was impossible to discern a single letter, and no sooner was one swarm of them brushed off, than a fresh one immediately alighted. These insects have very broad wings in proportion to their size, and fly heavily, so that it is only when the air is remarkably calm that they can venture to make their appearance.

About sunset on this, the first evening of our voyage, we reached the island of Perot, situated at the mouth of the Utawas River. This island is about fourteen miles in circumference; its soil is fertile, and it is well cultivated. There are two considerable villages

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near its centre, but towards Point St. Claire, at its lower extremity, the settlements are but very few. We landed at the point, and pitched our tent in a meadow which stood bordering upon the water. Here the bateaux were drawn up, and having been properly secured, the different crews, amounting in all to upwards of fifty men, divided themselves into small parties, and kindled fires along the shore, in order to cook their provisions for the succeeding 31 day, and to keep themselves warm during the night. These men, who are engaged in conducting bateaux in Canada, are, as I have before observed, a very hardy race: when the weather is fair, they sleep on the grass at night, without any other covering than a short blanket, scarcely reaching down to their knees; during wet weather a sail or a blanket to the weather side, spread on poles stuck into the ground in an inclined direction, is all the shelter they deem necessary. On setting out each man is furnished with a certain allowance of salted pork, biscuit, peas, and brandy; the peas and biscuit they boil with some of the pork into porridge, and a large vessel full of it is generally kept at the head of the bateau, for the use of the crew when they stop in the course of the day. This porridge, or else cold fat salted pork, with cucumbers, constitutes the principal part of their food. The cucumber is a fruit that the lower classes of the French Canadians are extremely fond of; they use it however in a very indifferent different state, as they never pull it until it has attained a large size, and is become yellow and seedy. Cucumbers thus mellow, chopped into small pieces without being peeled, and afterwards mixed with sour cream, is one of their favourite dishes.

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At day break on the second morning of our voyage, we quitted the island of Perot, and crossed the Utawas River, in order to gain the mouth of the south-west branch the St. Lawrence. A tremendous scene is here presented to the view; each river comes rushing down into the lake, over immense rocks, with an impetuosity which seemingly nothing can resist. The waves are as high as what are commonly met with in the British Channel during a smart breeze, and the breakers so numerous and dangerous, that one would imagine a bateau could not possibly live in the midst of them; and indeed, unless it were

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navigated by men intimately acquainted with the place, and very expert at the same time, there would be evident danger of its being filled with water. Several times, as we passed through the breakers, the water dashed over the sides of our bateau. Tremendous and dangerous however, as the rapids are at this spot, they are much less so than some of those met with higher up the River St. Lawrence.

The water of the Utawas River is remarkably clear, and of a bright greenish colour; that of the St. Lawrence, on the contrary, is muddy, owing to its passing over deep beds of marl for some miles before it enters into Lake St. Louis. For a considerable way down the 33 lake the water of the two rivers may be plainly distinguished from each other.

The Rapids immediately at the mouth of the south-west branch of the St. Lawrence are called "Les Cascades," or, "Le Saut de "Trou." In laden bateaux it is no arduous task to shoot down them, but it is impossible to mount against the stream even in such as are empty. In order to avoid the laborious task therefore of carrying them along the shore past the rapids, as used formerly to be done, a canal with a double lock has been made here at a great expence. This canal extends but a very little way, not more than fifty yards perhaps. Beyond this there is a succession of other rapids, the first of which, called "Le "Saut de Buisson" on account of the closeness of the woods along the shores on each side, is so strong, that in order to pass it, it is necessary to lighten the bateaux very considerably. If the cargoes are large, they are wholly taken out at once, and sent forward in carts to the distance of a mile and a half, past all the rapids. The men are always obliged here to get out of the bateaux, and haul them along with ropes, it being wholly impracticable to counteract the force of the current by means of poles alone.

The passage of these rapids is so very tedious, that we here quitted the bateaux, took our VOL. II. D 34 guns in hand, and proceeded on foot to "Le Coteau des Cedres," the Hill of Cedars, about nine miles higher up the river. In going thither you soon lose sight of the few straggling houses at the cascades, and enter the recesses of a remarkably thick wood, whose solemn gloom, together with the loud roaring of the waters at a distance, and the

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wild appearance of every object around you, inspire the mind with a sort of pleasing horror. As you approach "Le Coteau des Cedres," the country assumes a softer aspect; cultivated fields and neat cottages once more appear in view, and the river, instead of being agitated by tremendous rapids, is here seen gliding on with an even current between its lofty banks.

The village of the Hill Cedars contains about thirty houses, amongst which we were agreeably surprized to find a remarkably neat and excellent tavern, kept by an English-woman. We remained here until three in the afternoon, when we again set off on foot, partly for the pleasure of beholding, from the top of the steep banks, the many noble and beautiful prospects laid open before us, and partly for the pleasure of stopping occasionally to chat with the lively French girls, that during this delicious season of the year, sat spinning in groups at the doors of the cottages. About five o'clock the bateaux overtook us: 35 but after proceeding in them for about two miles, we again landed to escape the tedious process of ascending fresh rapids. These are called the rapids "du Coteau du Lac St. François;" they are several miles in length, and though not the most dangerous, are yet the most tremendous to appearance of any in the whole river, the white breakers being distinctly visible at the distance of four miles; some travellers have gone so far as to represent them as even more terrible to the beholder than the falls of Niagara, but this is a very exaggerated account. Boats are here carried down with the stream at the rate of fourteen or fifteen miles an hour, according to the best information I could procure on the subject; though the Canadian boatmen and others declare that they are carried down at the rate of twenty miles in the hour. At some of the rapids higher up the river, the current is considerably swifter than at this place.

In descending these rapids they pass through the breakers in the middle of the river, but in going up they keep close in to the shore, on the north-west side, and being here sheltered by a numerous cluster of islands, which break the force of the current, and having the benefit of a short canal and locks, they get past the rapids with less difficulty even than they pass the cascades. One of the islands here, D 2 36 farther removed from the shore than the rest, is called Prisoner's Island, having been allotted for the residence of some

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of the American prisoners during the last war. There were some buildings on the island at the time, but it has been quite deserted since, on account of the great difficulty of getting to it through the strong rapids. During the war, an officer, who had compelled some of the Canadians, notwithstanding their remonstrances, to make an attempt to reach the island at an improper season, perished, with a great number of men, in going thither: of the whole party one alone escaped with his life. The St. Lawrence is here about two miles wide.

This evening, the second of our voyage, the bateaux were drawn up for the night at the bottom of "Le Coteau du Lac," the Hill of the Lake; and we pitched our tent on the margin of a wood, at a little distance from the river. The next morning we proceeded again on foot for about two miles, when we came to a tavern, where we waited the arrival of the bateaux. The people of this house were English. From hence upwards there are but few French to be met with.

We were detained here nearly half the day in endeavouring to procure a fresh man, one of the conductor's crew having been seized with an intermittent fever. At last a man 37 from a neighbouring settlement made his appearance, and we proceeded on our voyage. We now entered Lake St. François, which is about twenty-five miles in length, and five in breadth; but the wind being unfavourable, we were prevented from proceeding farther upon it, than Point au Baudet, at which place the boundary line commences that separates the upper from the lower province. When the wind comes from the south-west, the immense body of water in the lake is impelled directly towards this point, and a surge breaks in upon the beach, as tremendous as is seen on the sea shore. There was one solitary house here which proved to be a tavern, and afforded us a well-drest supper of venison, and decent accommodation for the night.

The next day the wind was not more favourable; but as it was considerably abated, we were enabled to prosecute our voyage, coasting along the shores of the lake. This was a most laborious and tedious business, on account of the numerous bays and inlets, which the wind was not sufficiently abated to suffer us to cross at their mouths: notwithstanding

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all the difficulties, however, we had to contend with we advanced nearly twenty-five miles in the course of the day.

At the head of Lake St. François, we landed on a small island, called "Isle aux Raisins,"³⁸ on account of the number of wild vines growing upon it. The bateaux men gathered great quantities of the grapes, wherewith the trees were loaded, and also an abundance of plums, which they devoured with great avidity. Neither of the fruits, however, were very tempting to persons whose palates had been accustomed to the taste of garden fruits. The grapes were sour, and not larger than peas; and as for the plums, through much larger in size, yet their taste did not differ materially from that of sloes.

Beyond L'Isle aux Raisins, in the narrow part of the river, there are several other islands, the largest of which, called L'Isle St. Regis, is near ten miles in length. All these islands still continue in the possession of the Indians, and many of them, being situated as nearly as possible in the middle of the river, which here divides the British territory from that of the United States, it yet remains to be determined of what territory they form a part. It is sincerely to be desired that this matter may be adjusted amicably in due time. A serious altercation has already taken place about an island similarly situated in Detroit River, that will be more particularly mentioned hereafter. The Indians not only retain possession of these different islands, but likewise of the whole of the south-east shore of the St. 39 Lawrence, situated within the bounds of the United States; they likewise have considerable strips of land on the opposite shore, within the British dominions, bordering upon the river; these they have reserved to themselves for hunting. The Iroquois Indians have a village upon the Isle of St. Regis, and another also upon the main land, on the south-east shore; as we passed it, several of the inhabitants put off in canoes, and exchanged unripe heads* of Indian corn with the men for bread; they also brought with them some very fine wild ducks and fish, which they disposed of to us on very moderate terms.

* The heads of Indian corn, before they become hard, are esteemed a great delicacy; the most approved method of dressing, is to parboil, and afterwards roast them.

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On the fourth night of our voyage we encamped, as usual, on the main land opposite the island of St. Regis; and the excellent viands we had procured from the Indians having been cooked, we set down to supper before a large fire, materials for which are never wanting in this woody country. The night was uncommonly serene, and we were induced to remain until a late hour in front of our tent, talking of the various occurrences in the course of the day; but we had scarcely retired to rest, when the sky became overcast, 40 a dreadful storm arose, and by day-break the next morning, we found ourselves, and every thing belonging to us, drenched with rain. Our situation now was by no means agreeable; torrents still came pouring down; neither our tent nor the woods afforded us any shelter, and the wind being very strong, and as adverse as it could blow, there was no prospect of our being enabled speedily to get into better quarters. In this state we had remained for a considerable time, when one of the party, who had been rambling about in order to discover what sort of a neighbourhood we were in, returned with the pleasing intelligence that there was a house at no great distance, and that the owner had politely invited us to it. It was the house of an old provincial officer, who had received a grant of land in this part of the country for his past services. We gladly proceeded to it, and met with a most cordial welcome from the captain and his fair daughters, who had provided a plenteous breakfast, and spared no pains to make their habitation, during our stay, as pleasing to us as possible. We felt great satisfaction at the idea, that it would be in our power to spend the remainder of the day with these worthy and hospitable people; but alas, we had all formed an erroneous opinion of the weather; the wind suddenly veered about; the sun broke through the thick clouds; the conductor 41 gave the parting order; and in a few minutes we found ourselves once more seated in our bateau.

From hence upwards, for the distance of forty miles, the current of the river is extremely strong, and numberless rapids are to be encountered, which, though not so tremendous to appearance as those at the Cascades, and "Le Coteau du Lac," are yet both more dangerous and more difficult to pass. The great danger, however, consists in going down them; it arises from the shallowness of the water and the great number of sharp rocks,

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in the midst of which the vessels are hurried along with such impetuosity, that if they unfortunately get into a wrong channel, nothing can save them from being dashed to pieces; but so intimately are the people usually employed on this river acquainted with the different channels, that an accident of the sort is scarcely ever heard of. "Le Long Saut," the Long Fall or Rapid, situated about thirty miles above Lake St. Francis, is the most dangerous of any one in the river, and so difficult a matter is it to pass it, that it requires no less than six men on shore to haul a single bateau against the current. There is a third canal with locks at this place, in order to avoid a point, which it would be wholly impracticable to weather in the ordinary way. These different canals and locks 42 have been made at the expence of government, and the profits arising from the tolls paid by every bateau that passess through them, are placed in the public treasury. At these rapids, and at several of the others, there are very extensive flour and saw mills.

On the fifth night we arrived at a small farm house, at the top of the "Long Saut," wet from head to foot, in consequence of our having been obliged to walk past the rapids through woods and bushes still dripping after the heavy rain that had fallen in the morning. The woods in this neighbourhood are far more majestic than on any other part of the St. Lawrence; the pines in particular are uncommonly tall, and seem to wave their tops in the very clouds. In Canada, pines grow on the richest soils; but in the United States they grow mostly on poor ground; a tract of land covered solely with pines is there generally denominated "a pine barren," on account of its great poverty.

During a considerable part of the next day, we also proceeded on foot, in order to escape the tedious passage up the "Rapide Plat," and some of the other dangerous rapids in this part of the river. As we passed along, we had excellent diversion in shooting pigeons, several large flights of which we met with in the woods. The wild pigeons of Canada are not 43 unlike the common English wood pigeons, except that they are of a much smaller size; their flesh is very well flavoured. During particular years, these birds come down from the northern regions in flights that it is marvellous to tell of. A gentleman of the town of Niagara assured me, that once as he was embarking there on board ship

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for Toronto, a flight of them was observed coming from that quarter; that as he sailed over Lake Ontario to Toronto forty miles distant from Niagara, pigeons were seen flying over head the whole way in a contrary direction to that in which the ship proceeded; and that on arriving at the place of his destination, the birds were still observed coming down from the north in as large bodies as had been noticed at any one time during the whole voyage; supposing therefore, that the pigeons moved no faster than the vessel, the flight, according to this gentleman's account, must at least have extended eighty miles. Many persons may think this story surpassing belief; for my own part, however, I do not hesitate to give credit to it, knowing, as I do, the respectability of the gentleman who related it, and the accuracy of his observation. When these birds appear in such great numbers, they often light on the borders of rivers and lakes, and in the neighbourhood of farm houses, at which time they are so unwary, that a man with a short stick might easily knock them down by hundreds. It is not oftener than once in seven or eight years, perhaps, that such large flocks of these birds are seen in the country. The years in which they appear are denominated "pigeon years."

There are also "bear years" and "squirrel years." This was both a bear and a squirrel year. The former, like the pigeons, came down from the northern regions, and were most numerous in the neighbourhood of lakes Ontario and Erie, and along the upper parts of the River St. Lawrence. On arriving at the borders of these lakes, or of the river, if the opposite shore was in sight, they generally took to the water, and endeavoured to reach it by swimming. Prodigious numbers of them were killed in crossing the St. Lawrence by the Indians, who had hunting encampments at short distances from each other, the whole way along the banks of the river, from the island of St. Regis to Lake Ontario. One bear, of a very large size, boldly entered the river in the face of our bateau, and was killed by some of our men whilst swimming from the main land to one of the islands. In the woods it is very rare that bears will venture to attack a man; but several instances that had recently occurred were mentioned to us, where they had attacked a single man in a canoe

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whilst swimming; and so very strong are they in the water, that the men thus set upon, being unarmed, escape narrowly with their lives.

The squirrels this year, contrary to the bears, migrated from the south, from the territory of the United States. Like the bears, they took to the water on arriving at it, but as if conscious of their inability to cross a very wide piece of water, they bent their course towards Niagara River, above the falls, and at its narrowest and most tranquil part crossed over into the British territory. It was calculated, that upwards of fifty thousand of them crossed the river in the course of two or three days, and such great depredations did they commit on arriving at the settlements on the opposite side, that in one part of the country the farmers deemed themselves very fortunate where they got in as much as one third of their crops of corn. These squirrels were all of the black kind, said to be peculiar to the continent of America; they are in shape similar to the common grey squirrel, and weigh from about one to two pounds and a half each. Some writers have asserted, that these animals cannot swim, but that when they come to a river, in migrating, each one provides itself with a piece of wood or bark, upon which, when a favourable wind offers, they embark, spread their bushy tails to catch the wind, and are thus wafted over to the opposite side. Whether these animals do or do not cross in this manner sometimes, I cannot take upon me to say; but I can safely affirm, that they do not always cross so, as I have frequently shot them in the water whilst swimming: no animals swim better, and when pursued, I have seen them eagerly take to the water. Whilst swimming, their tail is useful to them by way of rudder, and they use it with great dexterity; owing to its being so light and bushy, the greater part of it floats upon the water, and thus helps to support the animals. The migration of any of these animals in such large numbers is said to be an infallible sign of a severe winter.*

* In the present instance it certainly was so, for the ensuing winter proved to be the severest that had been known in North America for several years.

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On the sixth evening of our voyage we stopped nearly opposite to Point aux Iroquois, so named from a French family having been cruelly massacred there by the Iroquois Indians in the early ages of the colony. The ground being still extremely wet here, in consequence of the heavy rain of the preceding day, we did not much relish the thoughts of passing the night in our tent; yet there seemed to be no alternative, as the only house in sight was crowded with people, and not capable of affording 47 us any accommodations. Luckily, however, as we were searching about for the driest spot to pitch our tent upon, one of the party espied a barn at a little distance, belonging to the man of the adjoining house, of whom we procured the key; it was well stored with straw, and having mounted to the top of the mow, we laid ourselves down to rest, and slept soundly there till awakened in the morning by the crowing of some cocks, that were perched on the beams above our head.

At an early hour we pursued our voyage, and before noon passed the last rapid, about three miles below the mouth of Oswegatchee River, the most considerable of those within the territory of the United States, which fall into the St. Lawrence. It consists of three branches, that unite together about fifteen miles above its mouth, the most western of which issues from a lake twenty miles in length and eight in breadth. Another of the branches issues from a small lake or pond, only about four miles distant from the western branch of Hudson's River, that flows past New York. Both the Hudson and Oswegatchee are said to be capable of being made navigable for light bateaux as far as this spot, where they approach within so short a distance of each other, except only at a few places, so that the portages will be but very trifling. |

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This however is a mere conjecture, for Oswegatchee River is but very imperfectly known, the country it passes through being quite uninhabited: but should it be found, at a future period, that these rivers are indeed capable of being rendered navigable so far up the country, it will probably be through this channel that the chief part of the trade that there may happen to be between New York and the country bordering upon Lake Ontario

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will be carried on. It is at present carried on between that city and the lake by means of Hudson River, as far as Albany, and from thence by means of the Mohawks River, Wood Creek, Lake Oneida, and Oswego River, which falls into Lake Ontario. The harbour at the mouth of Oswego River is very bad on account of the sand banks; none but flat bottomed vessels can approach with safety nearer to it than two miles; nor is there any good harbour on the south side of Lake Ontario in the neighbourhood of any large rivers. Sharp built vessels, however, of a considerable size, can approach with safety to the mouth of Oswegatchee River. The Seneca, a British vessel of war of twenty-six guns, used formerly to ply constantly between Fort de la Galette, situated at the mouth of that river, and the fort at Niagara: and the British fur ships on the lakes used also, at that time, to discharge the cargoes there, brought down from the upper country. As therefore the harbour at the mouth of Oswegatchee is so much better than that at the mouth of Oswego River, and as they are nearly an equal distance from New York, there is reason to suppose, that if the river navigation should prove equally good, the trade between the lakes and New York will be for the most part, if not wholly, carried on by means of Oswegatchee rather than of Oswego River. With a fair wind, the passage from Oswegatchee River to Niagara is accomplished in two days; a voyage only one day longer than that from Oswego to Niagara with a fair wind.

Fort de la Galette was erected by the French, and though not built till long after Fort Cataraguis or Frontignac, now Kingston, yet they esteemed it by far the most important military post on the St. Lawrence, in the upper country, as it was impossible for any boat or vessel to pass up or down that river without being observed; whereas they might easily escape unseen behind the many islands opposite to Kingston. Since the close of the American war, Fort de la Galette has been dismantled, as it was within the territory of the United States: nor would any advantage have arisen from its retention; for it was never VOL. II. E 50 of any importance to us but as a trading post, and as such Kingston, which is within our own territory, is far more eligibly situated in every point of view: it has a more safe and commodious harbour, and the fur ships coming down from Niagara, by stopping

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there, are saved a voyage of a sixty miles up and down the St. Lawrence, which was oftentimes found to be more tedious than the voyage from Niagara to Kingston.

In the neighbourhood of La Galette, on the Oswegatchee River, there is a village of the Oswegatchee Indians, whose numbers are estimated at one hundred warriors.

The Current of the St. Lawrence, from Oswegatchee upwards, is much more gentle than in any other part between Montreal and Lake Ontario, except only where the river is considerably dilated, as at lakes St. Louis and St. François; however, notwithstanding its being so gentle, we did not advance more than twenty-five miles in the course of the day, owing to the numerous stops that we made, more from motives of pleasure than necessity. The evening was uncommonly fine, and towards sun-set a brisk gale springing up, the conductor judged it advisable to take advantage of it, continue the voyage all night, in order to make up for the time we had lost during the day. We accordingly proceeded, 51 but towards midnight the wind died away; this circumstance, however, did not alter the determination of the conductor. The men were ordered to the oars, and notwithstanding that they had laboured hard during the preceding day, and had had no rest, yet they were kept closely at work until day-break, except for one hour, during which they were allowed to stop to cook their provisions. Where there is a gentle current, as in this part of the river, the Canadians will work at the oar for many hours without intermission; they seemed to think it no hardship to be kept employed in this instance the whole night; on the contrary, they plied as vigorously as if they had but just set out, singing merrily the whole time. The French Canadians have in general a good ear for music, and sing duets with tolerable accuracy. They have one very favourite duet amongst them, called the "rowing duet," which as they sing they mark time to, with each stroke of the oar; indeed when rowing in smooth water, they mark the time of most the airs they sing in the same manner.

About eight o'clock the next, and eight morning of our voyage, we entered the last lake before you come to that of Ontario, called The Lake of a Thousand Islands, on account of the multiplicity of them which it contains. E 2 52 Many of these islands are scarcely

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larger than a bateau, and none of them, except such as are situated at the upper and lower extremities of the lake, appeared to me to contain more than fifteen English acres each. They are all covered with wood, even to the very smallest. The trees on these last are stunted in their growth, but the larger islands produce as fine timber as is to be found on the main shores of the lake. Many of these islands are situated so closely together, that it would be easy to throw a pebble from one to the other, notwithstanding which circumstance, the passage between them is perfectly safe and commodious for bateaux, and between some of them that are even thus close to each other is water sufficient for a frigate. The water is uncommonly clear, as it is in every part of the river, from Lake St. Francis upwards: between that lake and the Utawas River downwards it is discoloured, as I have before observed, by passing over beds of marl. The shores of all these islands under our notice are rocky; most of them rise very boldly, and some exhibit perpendicular masses of rock towards the water upwards of twenty feet high. The scenery presented to view in sailing between these islands is beautiful in the highest degree. Sometimes, after passing through a narrow strait, you find yourself in a bason, land-locked 53 on every side, that appears to have no communication with the lake, except by the passage through which you entered; you are looking about, perhaps, for an outlet to enable you to proceed, thinking at last to see some little channel which will just admit you bateau, when on a sudden an expanded sheet of water opens upon you, whose boundary is the horizon alone; again in a few minutes you find yourself land-locked, and again a spacious passage as suddenly presents itself; at other times, when in the middle of one of these basons, between a cluster of islands, a dozen different channels, like so many noble rivers, meet the eye, perhaps equally unexpectedly, and on each side islands appear regularly retiring till they sink from the sight in the distance. Every minute, during the passage of this lake, the prospect varies. The numerous Indian hunting encampments on the different islands, with the smoke of their fires rising up between the trees, added considerably to the beauty of the scenery as we passed it. The Lake of a Thousand Islands is twenty-five miles in length, and about six in breadth. From its upper end to Kingston, at which place we arrived early in the evening, the distance is fifteen miles.

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The length of time required to ascend the River St. Lawrence, from Montreal to Kingston, 54 is commonly found to be about seven days. If the wind should be strong and very favourable, the passage may be performed in a less time; but should it, on the contrary, be adverse, and blow very strong, the passage will be protracted somewhat longer; an adverse or favourable wind, however, seldom makes a difference of more than three days in the length of the passage upwards, as in each case it is necessary to work the bateaux along by means of poles for the greater part of the way. The passage downwards is performed two or three days according to the wind. The current is so strong, that a contrary wind seldom lengthens the passage in that direction more than a day.

The Mississippi is the only river in North America, which, for grandeur and commodiousness of navigation, comes in competition with the St. Lawrence, or with that river which runs from Lake Ontario to the ocean. If, however, we consider that immense body of water that flows from Lake Winnipeg through the Lake of the Woods, Lake Superior, &c. down to the sea, as one entire stream, and of course as a continuation of the St. Lawrence, it must be allowed to be a very superior river to the Mississippi in every point of view; and we may certainly consider it as one stream, with as much reason as we look 55 upon that as one river which flows from Lake Ontario to the sea: for before it meets the ocean it passes through four large lakes, not indeed to be compared with those of Erie or Superior, in size, but they are independent lakes notwithstanding, as much as any of the others. The Mississippi is principally to be admired for the evenness of its current, and the prodigious length of way it is navigable, without any interruption, for bateaux of a very large burthen; but in many respects it is a very inferior river to the St. Lawrence, properly so called. The Mississippi at its mouth is not twenty miles broad, and the navigation is there so obstructed by banks or bars, that a vessel drawing more than twelve feet water cannot ascend it without very imminent danger. These bars at its mouth or mouths, for it is divided by several islands, are formed by large quantities of trees that come drifting down from the upper country, and when once stopped by any obstacle, are quickly cemented together by the mud, deposited between the branches by the waters of the river, which are

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uncommonly foul and muddy. Fresh bars are formed, or the old bars are enlarged every year, and it is said, that unless some steps are taken to prevent the lodgments of the trees annually brought down at the time of the inundation, the navigation 56 may in a few years be still more obstructed than it is at present. It is notorious, that since the river was first discovered, several islands and points have been formed near its mouth, and the different channels have undergone very material alterations for the worse, as to their courses and depths. The River St. Lawrence, however, on the contrary, is no less than ninety miles wide at its mouth, and it is navigable for ships of the line as far as Quebec, a distance of four hundred miles from the sea. The channel also, instead of having been impaired by time, is found to be considerably better now than when the river was first discovered; and there is reason to imagine that it will improve still more in process of time, as the clear water that flows from Lake Ontario comes down with such impetuosity, during the floods in the spring of the year, as frequently to remove banks of gravel and loose stones in the river, and thus to deepen its bed. The channel on the north side of the island of Orleans, immediately below Quebec, which, according to the account of Le P. de Charlevoix, was not sufficiently deep in the year 1720 to admit a shallop of a small size, except at the time of high tides, is at present found to be deep enough for the largest vessels, and is the channel most generally used.

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The following table shews for what vessels the St. Lawrence is navigable in different places; and also points out the various breadths of the river from its mouths upwards;

Names of Places. Distances in miles ascending. Breadth in miles. At its mouth 90 At Cape Cat 140 30 At Saguenay River 120 18 At the lower extremity of the Isle of Orleans 110 15* At the bason between the Isle of Orleans and Quebec 30 5† From Quebec to Lake St. Pierre 90 Lake St. Pierre 30 14 To Lake Valterie 10 1 To Montreal 30 2 to 4‡ To

* This island is 25 miles in length and 6 in breadth, the river on each side is about 2 miles wide.

† Thus far, 400 miles from its mouth, it is navigable for ships of the line with safety.

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‡ To this place, 560 miles, it is navigable with perfect safety for ships drawing 14 feet water. Vessels of a much larger draught have proceeded many miles above Quebec, but the channel is very intricate and dangerous.

58 Names of Places. Distances in miles ascending. Breadth in miles. To Lake St. Louis 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ Lake St. Louis 12 $\frac{4}{5}$ To Lake St. Francis 25 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 Lake St. Francis 20 $\frac{5}{6}$ To the Lake of a Thousand Isles 90 $\frac{1}{4}$ to 1 Lake of a Thousand Isles 25 $\frac{6}{7}$ To Kingston, on Lake Ontario 15 $\frac{2}{3}$ to 6 $\frac{7}{8}$

During the whole of its course the St. Lawrence is navigable for bateaux of two tons burthen, except merely at the rapids above Montreal, at the Fall of the Thicket, and at the Long Fall, where, as has been already pointed out, it is necessary to lighten the bateaux, if heavily laden. At each of these places, however, it is possible to construct canals so as to prevent the trouble of unlading any part of the cargoes of the bateaux; and at a future day, when the the country becomes rich, such canals no doubt will be made.

Although the lakes are not immediately connected with the Atlantic Ocean by any other river than the St. Lawrence, yet there are several streams that fall into the Atlantic, so nearly connected with others flowing into the lakes, that by their means trade may be carried on between the ocean and the lakes. The principal channels for trade between the ocean and the lakes, are four in number; the first, along the Mississippi and the Ohio, and thence up the Wabash, Miami, Mushingun, or the Alleghany rivers, from the head of which there are portages of from one to eighteen miles to rivers that fall into Lake Erie; secondly, along the Patowmac River, which flows past Washington, and from thence along Cheat River, the Monongahela and Alleghany rivers, and French Creek to Presqu'Isle on Lake Erie; thirdly, along Hudson's River, which falls into the Atlantic at New York, and afterwards along the Mohawk River, Wood Creek, Lake Oneida, and Oswego River, which last falls into Lake Ontario; fourthly, along the St. Lawrence.

The following is a statement of the entire length of each of these channels or routes, and of the lengths of the portages in each, reckoning from the highest seaport on each river

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that will receive vessels of a suitable size for crossing the Atlantic to Lake Erie, which is the most central of the lakes to the four ports: From

60 Length of Way in Miles. Length of the Portages. From Montreal 440 22 From Washington 450 80* From New York 500 30 From New Orleans 1,800 1 to 18†

* When the navigation is opened, this will be reduced, it is said, to 50 miles.

† According to the route followed from the Ohio to the Lake.

From this statement it not only appears evident that the St. Lawrence opens a shorter passage to the lake than any of the other rivers, but also that the portages are shorter than in any of the other routes; the portages are also fewer, and goods may be transported in the same boats the whole way from Montreal to the lakes; whereas in conveying goods thither either from Washington or New York, it is necessary to employ different boats and men on each different river, or else to transport the boats themselves on carriages over the portages from one river to another. It is always an object of importance to avoid a portage, as by every change in the mode of conveyance the expence of carriage is increased, and there is an additional risk of pillage from the goods passing through the hands of a greater 61 number of people. Independent of these considerations, the St. Lawrence will, on another account, be found a more commodious channel than any other for the carrying on of trade between the ocean and the lakes. Constantly supplied from that immense reservoir of water, Lake Ontario, it is never so low, even in the driest season, as not to be sufficiently deep to float laden bateaux. The small streams, on the contrary, which connect Hudson's River, the Patowmac, and the Mississippi, with the lakes, are frequently so dried up in summer time, that it is scarcely possible to pass along them in canoes. For upwards of four months in the summer of 1796, the Mohawk River was so low, that it was totally impracticable to transport merchandize along it during the greater part of its course, and the traders in the back country, after waiting for a length of time for the goods they wanted, were under the necessity at last of having them forwarded by land carriage. The navigation of this river, it is said, becomes worse every year, and

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unless several long canals are cut, there will be an end to the water communication between New York and Lake Ontario by that route. The Alleghany River and French Creek, which connect the Patowmac with Lake Erie, are equally affected by droughts; indeed it is only during floods, occasioned by the melting of the 62 snow, or by heavy falls of rain, that goods can be transported with ease either by the one route or the other.

By far the greater part of the trade to the lakes is at present centered at Montreal; for the British merchants not only can convey their goods from thence to the lakes for one third less than what it costs to convey the same goods thither from New York, but they can likewise afford to sell them, in the first instance, considerably cheaper than the merchants of the United States. The duties, paid on the importation into Canada of refined sugar, spirits, wine, and coffee, are considerably less than those paid on the importation of the same commodities into the United States; and all British hardware, and dry goods in general, are admitted duty free into Canada, whereas in the United States, they are chargeable, on importation from Europe, with a duty of fifteen per cent. on the value. To attempt to levy duties on foreign manufactures sent into the states from Canada would be an idle attempt, as from the great extent of their frontier, and its contiguity to Canada, it would at all times be an easy matter to send the goods clandestinely into them, in order to avoid the duties.

The trade carried on from Montreal to the lakes is at present very considerable, and increasing every year. Already are there extensive 63 settlements on the British side of Lake Ontario, at Niagara, at Toronto, at the Bay of Canti, and at Kingston, which contain nearly twenty thousand inhabitants; and on the opposite shore, the people of the states are pushing forward their settlements with the utmost vigour. On Lake Erie, and along Detroit River also, the settlements are increasing with astonishing rapidity, both on the British and on the opposite side.

The importance of the back country trade, and the trade to the lakes is in fact the back country trade, has already been demonstrated; and it has been shewn, that every seaport

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town in the United States has increased in size in proportion to the quantum it enjoyed of this trade; and that those towns most conveniently situated for carrying it on, were those that had the greatest share of it; as, therefore, the shores of the lake increase in population, and of course as the demand for European manufactures increases amongst the inhabitants, we may expect to see Montreal, which of all the seaports in North America is the most conveniently situated for supplying them with such manufactures, increase proportionably in size; and as the extent of back country it is connected with, by means of water, is as great, and also as fertile, as that with which any of the large towns of the 64 United States are connected, it is not improbable but that Montreal at a future day will rival in wealth and in size the greatest of the cities on the continent of North America.

LETTER XXX.

Description of the Town of Kingston.—Formerly called Fort Cadaraqua.—Extensive Trade carried on here.—Nature of it.—Inhabitants very hospitable.—Harbours on Lake Ontario.—Ships of War on that Lake.—Merchant Vessels.—Naval Officers.—Expence of building and keeping up Vessels very great.—Why.—No Iron Mines yet opened in the Country.—Copper may be more easily procured than Iron.—Found in the great Quantities on the borders of Lake Superior.—Embark in a Trading Vessel on Lake Ontario.—Description of that Lake.—A Septennial Change in the Height of the Waters said to be observable—also a Tide that ebbs and flows every Two Hours.—Observations on these Phenomena.—Voyage across the Lake similar to a Sea Voyage.—Come in Sight of Niagara Fort.—Land at Mississaguis Point.—Mississaguis Indians.—One of the Chiefs killed in 65 an Affray:—How treated by the British Government.—Their revengeful Disposition.—Mississaguis good Hunters.—How they kill Salmon.—Variety of Fish in the Lakes and Rivers of Canada.—Sea Wolves.—Sea Cows.—Description of the Town of Niagara or Newark.—The present Seat of Government.—Scheme of removing it elsewhere.—Unhealthiness of the Town of Niagara and adjacent Country.—Navy Hats.—Fort of Niagara surrendered pursuant to Treaty.—Description of it.—Description of the other Forts surrendered to

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the People of the United States.—Shewn not to be so advantageous to them as was expected.—Superior Position of the new British Posts pointed out.

Niagara, September.

KINGSTON is situated at the mouth of a deep bay, at the north eastern extremity of Lake Ontario. It contains a fort and barracks, an English episcopalian church, and about one hundred houses, the most of which last were built, and are now inhabited by persons who emigrated from the United States at the close of the American war. Some few of the houses are built of stone and brick, but by far the greater part of them are of wood. The fort is of stone, and consists of a square with four bastions. It was erected by M. le VOL. II F 66 Comte de Frontinac, as early as the year 1672, and was for a time called after him; but insensibly it lost his name, and received instead of it that of Cadaraqui, the name of a creek which falls into the bay. This name remained common to the fort and to the town until a few years ago, when it was changed to that of Kingston. From sixty to one hundred men are usually quartered in the barracks.

Kingston is a place of very considerable trade, and it is consequently increasing most rapidly in size. All the goods brought up the St. Lawrence for the supply of the upper country are here deposited in stores, preparatory to their being shipped on board vessels suitable to the navigation of the lake; and the furs from the various posts on the nearer lakes are here likewise collected together, in order to be laden on board bateaux, and sent down the St. Lawrence. Some furs are brought in immediately to the town by the Indians, who hunt in the neighbouring country, and along the upper parts of the St. Lawrence, but the quantity is not large. The principal merchants resident at Kingston are partners of old established houses at Montreal and Quebec. A stranger, especially if a British subject, is sure to meet with a most hospitable and friendly reception from them, as he passes through the place.

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During the autumn the inhabitants of Kingston suffer very much from intermittent fevers, owing to the town being situated on a low spot of ground contiguous to an extensive morass.

The bay adjoining to Kingston affords good anchorage, and is the safest and most commodious harbour on all Lake Ontario. The bay of Great Sodus, on the south side of the lake, and that of Toronto, situated on the north side of the lake, nearly in the same meridian with Niagara, are said to be the next best to that of Kingston; but the entrance into each of them is obstructed by sand banks, which in rough weather cannot be crossed without imminent danger in vessels drawing more than five or six feet water. On the borders of the bay at Kingston there is a King's dock yard, and another which is private property. Most of the British vessels of burthen on Lake Ontario have been built at these yards. Belonging to his Majesty there were on Lake Ontario, when we crossed it, three vessels of about two hundred tons each, carrying from eight to twelve guns, besides several gun boats; the last, however, were not in commission, but laid up in Niagara River; and in consequence of the ratification of the treaty of amity and commerce between the United States and his Britannic Majesty, orders were F 2 68 issued, shortly after we left Kingston, for laying up the other vessels of war, one alone excepted* . For one King's ship there would be ample employment on the lake, in conveying to the upper country the presents for the Indians and the stores for the troops, and in transporting the troops across the lake when they changed quarters. Every military officer at the outposts enjoys the privilege of having a certain bulk, according to his rank, carried for him in the King's vessels, free of all charges. The naval officers, if their vessels be not otherwise engaged, are allowed to carry a cargo of merchandize when they sail from one port to another, the freight of which is their perquisite; they likewise have the liberty, and are constantly in the practice, of carrying passengers across the lake at an established price. The commodore of the King's vessels on Lake Ontario is a French Canadian, and so likewise are most of the officers under him. Their uniform is blue and white, with large yellow buttons, stamped

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with the figure of a beaver, over which is inscribed the word, "Canada." The naval officers area under the controul of the military officer commandant, at every post where

* Subsequent orders, it was said, were issued, during the summer of 1797, to have one or more of these vessels put again in commission.

69 their vessels happen to touch; and they cannot leave their vessels to go up into the country at any time without his permission.

Several decked merchant vessels, schooners, and sloops, of from fifty to two hundred tons each; and also numberless large sailing bateaux, are kept employed on Lake Ontario. No vessels are deemed proper for the navigation of these lakes but complete sea boats, or else flat bottomed vessels, such as canoes and bateaux, that can safely run ashore on an emergency. At present the people of the United States have no other vessels than bateaux on the lake, and whether they will deem it proper to have larger vessels, as their harbours are all so indifferent, remains yet to be determined. The large British vessels ply mostly between Kingston and Niagara, and but very rarely touch at any other place.

The expence of building, and equipping vessels on Lake Ontario, is very considerable; and it is still greater on the more distant lakes, as the larger part of the iron implements, and all the cordage wanted for that purpose, are imported from Great Britain, through the medium of the lower province. There can be no doubt, however, but that when the country is become more populous, an ample supply of these necessary articles will be readily procured on the spot; for the soil of the upper province 70 is well adapted to the growth of hemp, and iron ore has been discovered in many parts of the country. Hemp already begins to be cultivated in small quantities; but it has hitherto been the policy of government to direct the attention of the people to agriculture, rather than to any other pursuit, so that none of the iron mines, which, together with all other mines that are, or that may hereafter be discovered, are the exclusive property of the crown, have yet been opened. The people of the United States, however, alive to every prospect of gain, have already sent persons to look for iron ore in that part of their territory situated conveniently to the lakes. These

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persons have been very successful in their searches; and as works will undoubtedly be established speedily by them in this quarter for the manufacture of iron, and as they will be able to afford it on much better terms than that which is brought all the way from Lower Canada, it is probable that government will encourage the opening of mines in our own dominions, rather than suffer the people of the States to enjoy such a very lucrative branch of trade as they must necessarily have, if the same policy is persisted in which has hitherto been pursued.

Copper, in the more remote parts of Upper Canada, is found in much greater abundance than iron, and as it may be extracted from the earth with considerably less trouble than any of the iron ore that has yet been discovered, there is reason to imagine, that at a future day it will be much more used than iron for every purpose to which it can be applied. On the borders of a river, which falls into the south-west side of Lake Superior, virgin copper is found in the greatest abundance; and on most of the islands on the eastern side it is also found. In the possession of a gentleman at Niagara I saw a lump of virgin copper of several ounces weight, apparently as pure as if it had passed through fire, which I was informed had been struck off with a chisel from a piece equally pure, growing on one of these islands, which must at least have weighed forty pounds. Rich veins of copper are visible in almost all the rocks on these islands towards the shore; and copper ore, resembling copperas, is likewise found in deep beds near the water: in a few hours bateaux might here be filled with ore, and in less than three days conveyed to the Straits of St. Mary, after passing which the ore might be laden on board large vessels, and conveyed by water without any farther interruption as far as Niagara River. The portage at the Straits of St. Mary may be passed in a few hours, and with a fair wind large vessels proper for traversing Lakes Huron and Erie, may come down to the eastern extremity of the latter lake in six days.

Not only the building and fitting out of vessels on the lakes is attended with considerable expence, but the cost of keeping them up is likewise found to be very great, for they wear out much sooner than vessels employed commonly on the ocean; which circumstance,

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according to the opinion of the naval gentlemen on the lakes, is owing to the freshness of the water; added to this, no sailors are to be hired but at very high wages, and it is found necessary to retain them at full pay during the five months of the year that the vessels are laid up on account of the ice, as men cannot be procured at a moment's notice. The sailors, with a few exceptions only, are procured from sea ports; as it is absolutely necessary on these lakes, the navigation of which is more dangerous than that of the ocean, to have able and experienced seamen. Lake Ontario itself is never frozen out of sight of land, but its rivers and harbours are regularly blocked up by the ice.

The day after that on which we reached Kingston, we took our passage for Niagara on board a schooner of one hundred and eighty tons burthen, which was waiting at the merchant's wharf for a fair wind. The established price of the passage across the lake in the cabin is two guineas, and in the steerage one guinea, for each person: this is by no means dear, considering that the captain for the money keeps a table for each respective set of passengers. The cabin table on board this vessel was really well served, and there was abundance of port and sherry wine, and of every sort of spirits, for the use of the cabin passengers. The freight of goods across the lake is dear in proportion, being thirty-six shillings British per ton, which is nearly as much as was paid for the transportation of a ton of goods across the Atlantic previous to the present war; it cannot, however, be deemed exorbitant, when the expence of building and keeping the vessels in repair, and the high wages of the sailors, &c. are taken into consideration.

On the 7th of September, in the afternoon, the wind became favourable for crossing the lake; notice was in consequence immediately sent round to the passengers, who were dispersed in different parts of the town, to get ready; all of them hurried on board; the vessel was unmoored, and in a few minutes she was wafted out into the lake by a light breeze. For the first mile and a half, in going from Kingston, the prospect is much confined, on account of the many large islands on the left hand side; but on weathering a point on one of the islands, at the end of that distance an extensive view of the lake suddenly

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opens, which on a still clear evening, when the sun is sinking behind the lofty woods that adorn the shores, is extremely grand and beautiful.

Lake Ontario is the most easterly of the four large lakes through which the boundary line passes, that separates the United States from the province of Upper Canada. It is two hundred and twenty miles in length, from east to west, and seventy miles wide in the broadest part, and, according to calculation, contains about 2,390,000 acres. This lake is less subject to storms than any of the others, and its waters in general, considering their great expanse, are wonderfully tranquil. During the first evening of our voyage there was not the least curl even on their surface, they were merely agitated by a gentle swell; and during the subsequent part of the voyage, the waves were at no time so high as to occasion the slightest sickness amongst any of the passengers. The depth of the water in the lake is very great; in some parts it is unfathomable. On looking over the side of a vessel, the water, owing to its great depth, appears to be of a blackish colour, but it is nevertheless very clear, and any white substance thrown overboard 75 board may be discerned at the depth of several fathoms from the surface; it is, however, by no means so clear and transparent as the water of some of the other lakes. Mr. Carver speaking of Lake Superior, says, "When it was calm, and the sun shone bright, I could sit in my canoe, where the depth was upwards of six fathoms, and plainly see huge piles of stone at the bottom, of different shapes, some which appeared as if they had been hewn; the water was at this time as pure and transparent as air, and my canoe seemed as if it hung suspended in that element. It was impossible to look attentively through this limpid medium, at the rocks below, without finding, before many minutes were elapsed, your head swim, and your eyes no longer able to behold the dazzling scene."

The water of Lake Ontario is very well tasted, and is that which is constantly used on board the vessels that traverse it.

It is very confidently asserted, not only by the Indians, but also by great numbers of the white people who live on the shores of Lake Ontario, that the waters of this lake rise and

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fall alternately every seventh year; others, on the contrary, deny, that such a fluctuation does take place; and indeed it differs so materially from any that has been observed in large bodies of water in other parts of the globe, that for 76 my own part I am somewhat tempted to believe it is merely an imaginary change; nevertheless, when it is considered, that according to the belief of the oldest inhabitants of the country, such a periodical ebbing and flowing of the waters of the lake takes place, and that it has never been clearly proved to the contrary, we are bound to suspend our opinion on the subject. A gentleman, whose habitation was situated close upon the borders of the lake, not far from Kingston, and who, from the nature of his profession, had more time to attend to such subjects than the generality of the people of the country, told me that he had observed the state of the lake attentively for nearly fourteen years that he had resided on the borders of it, and that he was of opinion the waters did not ebb and flow periodically; yet he acknowledged this very remarkable fact, that several of the oldest white inhabitants in his neighbourhood declared, previously to the rising of the lake, that the year 1795 would be the high year; and that in the summer of that year, the lake actually did rise to a very uncommon height. He said, however, that he had reason to think the rising of the lake on this occasion was wholly owing to fortuitous circumstances, and not to any regular established law of nature; and he conceived, that if the lake had not risen as it had done, yet the 77 people would have fancied, nevertheless, that it was in reality higher than usual, as he supposed they had fancied it to be on former occasions. He was induced to form this opinion, he said, from the following circumstance: When the lake had risen to such an unusual height in the year 1795, he examined several of the oldest people on the subject, and questioned them particularly as to the comparative height of the waters on this and former occasions. They all declared that the waters were not higher than they usually were at the time of their periodical rising; and they affirmed, that they had themselves seen them equally high before. Now a grove of trees, which stood adjoining to this gentleman's garden, and must at least have been of thirty years growth, was entirely destroyed this year by the waters of the lake, that flowed amongst the trees; had the lake, therefore, ever risen so high before, this grove would have been then destroyed. This circumstance certainly militated

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strongly against the evidence which the people gave as to the height of the waters; but it only proved that the waters had risen on this occasion higher than they had done for thirty years preceding; it did not prove that they had not, during that term, risen periodically above their ordinary level.

78

What Mr. Carver relates concerning this subject, rather tend to confirm the opinion that the waters of the lake do rise. "I had "like," he says, "to have omitted a very extraordinary "circumstance relative to these "straits;" the Straits of Michillimakinac, between lakes Michigan and Huron. "According "to observations made by the French, "whilst they were in possession of the fort "there, although there is no diurnal flood or "ebb to be perceived in these waters, yet from "an exact attention to their state, a periodical "alteration in them has been discovered. It "was observed, that they arose by gradual but "almost imperceptible degrees, till they had "reached the height of three feet; this was "accomplished in seven years and a half; and "in the same space of time they as gently decreased, "till they had reached their former "situation; so that in fifteen years they had "completed this inexplicable revolution. At "the time I was there, the truth of these observations "could not be confirmed by the "English, as they had then been only a few "years in possession of the fort; but they all "agreed that some alterations in the limits "of the straits was apparent." It is to be lamented that succeeding years have not thrown more light on the subject; for since the fort has been in our possession, persons competent 79 to determine the truth of observations of such a nature, have never staid a sufficient length of time there to have had it in their power to do so.

A long series of minute observations are necessary to determine positively whether the waters of the lake do or do not rise and fall periodically. It is well known, for instance, that in wet seasons the waters rise much above their ordinary level, and that in very dry seasons they sink considerably below it; a close attention, therefore, ought to be paid to the quantity of rain that falls, and to evaporation; and it ought to be ascertained in what degree the height of the lake is altered thereby; otherwise, if the lake happened

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to be higher or lower than usual on the seventh year, it would be impossible to say with accuracy whether it were owing to the state of the weather, or to certain laws of nature that we are yet unacquainted with. At the same time great attention ought to be paid to the state of the winds, as well in respect to their direction as to their velocity, for the height of the waters of all the lakes is materially affected thereby. At fort Erie, situated at the eastern extremity of the lake of the same name, I once observed the waters to fall full three feet in the course of a few hours, upon a sudden change of the wind from the westward, in which direction 80 it had blown for many days, to the eastward. Moreover, these observations ought not only to be made at one place on the borders of any one of the lakes, but they ought to be made at several different places at the same time; for the waters have encroached, owing to some unknown causes, considerably and gradually upon the shores in some places, and receded in others. Between the stone house, in the fort at Niagara, and the lake, for instance, there is not at present a greater space than ten yards, or thereabouts; though when first built, there was an extensive garden between them. A water battery also, erected since the commencement of the present war, at the bottom of the bank, beyond the walls of the fort, was sapped away by the water in the course of two seasons, and now scarcely any vestige of it remains. At a future day, when the country becomes more populous and more wealthy, persons will no doubt be found who will have leisure for making the observations necessary for determining whether the lakes do or do not undergo a periodical change, but at present the inhabitants on the borders of them are too much engaged in commercial and agricultural pursuits to attend to matters of mere speculation, which, however they might amuse the philosopher, could be productive of no solid advantages to the generality of the inhabitants of the country.

81

It is believed by many persons that the waters of Lake Ontario not only rise and fall periodically every seventh year, but that they are likewise influenced by a tide, which ebbs and flows frequently in the course of twenty-four hours. On board the vessel in which I crossed the lake there were several gentlemen of the country, who confidently

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assured me that a regular tide was observable at the Bay of Canti; that in order to satisfy themselves on the subject, they had stood for several hours together, on more than one occasion, at a mill at the head of the bay, and that they had observed the waters to ebb and flow regularly every four hours, rising to the height of fourteen inches. There can be no doubt, however, but that the frequent ebbing and flowing of the water at this place must be caused by the wind; for no such regular fluctuation is observable at Niagara, at Kingston, or on the open shores of the lake; and owing to the formation of the bay of Canti, the height of the water must necessarily vary there with every slight change of the wind. The Bay of Canti is a long crooked inlet, that grows narrower at the upper end, like a funnel; not only therefore, a change of wind up or down the bay would make a difference in the height of the water at the uppermost extremity of it; but owing to the waters being concentrated there at one point, they VOL. II. G 82 would be seen to rise or fall, if impelled even in the same direction, whether up or down the bay, more or less forcibly at one time of the day than at another. Now it is very seldom that the wind, at any part of the day or night, would be found to blow precisely with the same force, for a given space of two hours, that it had blown for the preceding space of two hours; an appearance like a tide must therefore be seen almost constantly at the head of this bay whenever there was a breeze. I could not learn that the fluctuation had ever been observed during a perfect calm: were the waters, however, influenced by a regular tide, during a calm the tide would be most readily seen.

To return to the voyage. A few hours after we quitted Kingston, on the 7th of September, the wind died away, and during the whole night the vessel made but little way; early on the morning of the 8th, however, a fresh breeze sprang up, and before noon we lost sight of the land. Our voyage now differed in no wise from one across the ocean; the vessel was steered by the compass, the log regularly heaved, the way marked down in the log book, and an exact account kept of the procedures on board. We continued sailing, out of sight of land, until the evening of the 9th, when we had a view of the blue hills in the neighbourhood 83 of Toronto, on the northern side of the lake, but they soon

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disappeared. Except at this place, the shores of the lake are flat and sandy, owing to which circumstance it is, that in traversing the lake you are generally carried out of sight of land in a very few hours.

At day break on the 10th the fort and town of Niagara appeared under the lee bow, and the wind being favourable, we had every prospect before us of getting up to the town in a few hours; but scarcely had we reached the bar, at the mouth of Niagara River, when the wind suddenly shifted, and after endeavouring in vain to cross it by means of tacking, we were under the necessity of casting anchor at the distance of about two miles from the fort. The fort is seen to great advantage from the water; but the town being built parallel to the river, and no part of it visible to a spectator on the lake, except the few shabby houses at the nearest end, it makes but a very poor appearance. Having breakfasted, and exchanged our *habits de voyage*, for such as it was proper to appear in at the capital of Upper Canada, and at the center of the beau monde of the province, the schooner's yawl was launched, and we were landed, together with such of the passengers as were disposed to go on shore, at Mississaguis Point, from whence there is an agreeable walk of one mile, partly through woods, to the town of Niagara. G 2

84

This point takes its name from the Mississaguis Indians, great numbers of whom are generally encamped upon it. The Mississaguis tribe inhabits the shores of Lake Ontario, and it is one of the most numerous of this part of the country. The men are in general very stout, and they are esteemed most excellent fishers and hunters; but less warlike, it is said, than any of the neighbouring nations. They are of a much darker complexion than any other Indians I ever met with; some of them being nearly as black as negroes. They are extremely dirty and slovenly in their appearance, and the women are still more so than the men; such indeed is the odour exhaled in a warm day from the rancid grease and fish oil with which the latter daub their hair, necks, and faces profusely, that it is offensive in the highest degree to approach within some yards of them. On arriving at Niagara, we found great numbers of these Indians dispersed in knots in different parts

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of the town, in great concern for the loss of a favourite and experienced chief. This man, whose name was Wompakanon, had been killed, it appeared, by a white man, in a fray which happened at Toronto, near to which place is the principal village of the Mississaguiss nation. The remaining chiefs immediately assembled their warriors, and marched down to Niagara, to make a formal complaint 85 to the British government. To appease their resentment, the commanding officer of the garrison distributed presents amongst them to a large amount, and amongst other things they were allowed no small portion of rum and provisions, upon which the tribe feasted according to custom, the day before we reached the town; but the rum being all consumed, they seemed to feel severely for the loss of poor Wompakanon. Fear of exciting the anger of the British government would prevent them from taking revenge openly on this occasion; but I was informed by a gentleman in the Indian department, intimately acquainted with the disposition of the Indians, that as nothing but blood is deemed sufficient in their opinion to atone for the death of a favourite chief, they would certainly kill some white man, perhaps one perfectly innocent, when a favourable and secret opportunity offered for so doing, though it should be twenty years afterwards.

The Mississaguiss keep the inhabitants of Kingston, of Niagara, and of the different towns on the lake, well supplied with fish and game, the value of which is estimated by bottles of rum and loaves of bread. A gentleman, with whom we dined at Kingston, entertained us with a most excellent haunch of venison of a very large size, and a salmon weighing at least fifteen pounds, which he had purchased 86 from one of these Indians for a bottle of rum and a loaf of bread* , and upon enquiry I found that the Indian thought himself extremely well paid, and was highly pleased with having made such a good bargain.

* Both together probably not worth more half a dollar.

The Indians catch salmon and other large fish in the following manner. Two men go together in a canoe at night; the one sits in the stern and paddles, and the other stands with a spear over a flambeau placed in the head of the canoe. The fish, attracted by the

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light, come in numbers around the canoe, and the spearsman then takes the opportunity of striking them. They are very expert at this business, seldom missing their aim.

Lake Ontario, and all the rivers which fall into it, abound with excellent salmon, and many different kinds of sea-fish, which come up the River St. Lawrence; it also abounds with such a great variety of fresh water fish, that it is supposed there are many sorts in it which have never yet been named. In almost every part of the River St. Lawrence, fish is found in the greatest abundance; and it is the opinion of many persons, that if the fisheries were properly attended to, particularly the salmon fishery, the country would be even more enriched thereby than by the fur trade. Sea wolves and sea cows, amphibious animals, weighing from one to two thousand pounds each are said to have been found in Lake Ontario: of the truth of this, however, there is some doubt; but certain it is, that in sailing across the lake animals of an immense size are frequently seen playing on the surface of the water. Of the large fishes, the sturgeon is the one most commonly met with, and it is not only found in Lake Ontario, but also in the other lakes that have no immediate communication with the sea. The sturgeon caught in the lakes is valuable for its oil, but it is not a well flavoured fish; indeed, the sturgeon found north of James River in Virginia is in general very indifferent, and seldom or never eaten.

Niagara River runs nearly in a due south direction, and falls into Lake Ontario on the southern shore about thirty miles to the eastward of the western extremity of the lake It is about three hundred yards wide at its mouth, and is by far the largest body of water flowing into Lake Ontario. On the eastern side of the river is situated the fort, now in the possession of the people of the States, and on the opposite or British side of the town, most generally known by the name of Niagara, notwithstanding that it has been named Newark by the legislature.

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The original name of the town was Niagara, afterwards called Lenox, then Nassau, and afterwards Newark. It is to be lamented that the Indian names, so grand and sonorous,

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should ever have been changed for others. Newark, Kingston, York, are poor substitutes for the original names of these respective places, Niagara, Cadaragui, Toronto. The town of Niagara hitherto has been and is still the capital of the province of Upper Canada; orders, however, had been issued, before our arrival there, for the removal of the seat of government from thence to Toronto, which was deemed a more eligible spot for the meeting of the legislative bodies, as being farther removed from the frontiers of the United States. This projected change is by no means relished by the people at large, as Niagara is a much more convenient place of resort to most of them than Toronto; and as the governor who proposed the measure has been removed, it is imagined that it will not be put in execution. The removal of the seat of government from Niagara to Toronto, according to the plan laid down, was only to have been a preparatory step to another alteration: a new city to have been named London, was to have been built on the river formerly called La Trenche, but since called the Thames, a river running into Lake St. Clair; and here the seat of government was ultimately to have been fixed. The spot marked out for the site of the city possesses many local advantages. It is situated in a healthy fertile country, on a fine navigable river, in a central part of the province, from whence the water communication is extensive in every direction. A few settlements have already been made on the banks of the river, and the tide of emigration is setting in strongly towards that quarter; at a future day, therefore, it is by no means improbable but that this spot may be deemed an eligible one for the capital of the country; but to remove the seat of government immediately to a place little better than a wilderness, and so far from the populous parts of the province, would be a measure fraught with numberless inconveniences to the public, and productive apparently of no essential advantages whatsoever.

The town of Niagara contains about seventy houses, a court house, gaol, and a building intended for the accommodation of the legislative bodies. The houses, with a few exceptions, are built of wood; those next the lake are rather poor, but at the upper end of the town there are several very excellent dwellings, inhabited by the principal officers of

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government. Most of the gentlemen in official stations 90 in Upper Canada are Englishmen of education, a circumstance which must render the society of the capital agreeable, let it be fixed where it will. Few places in North America can boast of a more rapid rise than the little town of Niagara, nearly every one of its houses having been built within the last five years: It is still advancing most rapidly in size, owing to the increase of the back country trade along the shores of the upper lakes, which is all carried on through the place, and also owing to the wonderful emigrations, into the neighbourhood, of people from the States. The motives which lead the citizens of the United States to emigrate to the British dominions have already been explained. So sudden and so great has the influx of people, into the town of Niagara and its vicinity, been, that town lots, horses, provisions, and every necessary of life have risen, within the last three years, nearly fifty per cent. in value.

The banks of the river Niagara are steep and lofty, and on the top, at each side of the river, are extensive plains. The town stands on the summit of the western bank, about fifty yards from the water's edge. It commands a fine view of the lake and distant shores, and its situation is in every respect pleasing to the eye. From its standing on a spot of ground so much elevated above the level of the water, one would 91 imagine that it must also be a remarkably healthy place, but it is, in fact, lamentably the reverse. On arriving at the town, we were obliged to call at no less than four different taverns, before we could procure accommodations, the people at the first places we stopped at being so severely afflicted with the argue, that they could not receive us; and on enquiring, it appeared that there was not a single house in the whole town but where one or more of the inhabitants were labouring under this perplexing disorder; in some of the houses entire families were laid up, and at the fort on the opposite side of the river, the whole of the new garrison, except a corporal and nine men, was disqualified for doing duty. Each individual of our party could not but entertain very serious apprehensions for his own health, on arriving at a place where sickness was so general, but we are assured that the danger of catching the disorder was now over; that all those who were ill at present, had been confined for many weeks before; and that for a fortnight past not a single person had been attacked,

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who had not been ill in the preceding part of the season. As a precaution, however, each one of the party took fasting, in the morning, a glass of brandy, in which was infused a teaspoonful of Peruvian bark. This mixture 92 is deemed, in the country, one of the most certain preventatives against the disorder, and few that take it in time, regularly, and avoid the evening dews, suffer from it.

Not only the town of Niagara and its vicinity are unhealthy places, but almost every part of Upper Canada, and of the territory of the States bordering upon the lakes, is likewise unhealthy. The sickly season commences about the middle of July, and terminates about the first week of September, as soon as the nights become cold. Intermittent fevers are the most common disorders; but in some parts of the country the inhabitants suffer from continual fevers, of which there are different kinds, peculiar to certain districts. In the country, for instance, bordering upon the Genesee River, which falls into Lake Ontario on the southern side, a fever is common amongst the inhabitants of a malignant nature, vulgarly called the Genesee fever, of which many die annually: and in that bordering upon the Miami River, which falls into Lake Erie, within the northwestern territory of the United States, a fever of a different kind, again, is common. It does not appear that the exact nature of these different fevers has ever been accurately ascertained. In the back parts of North America, in general, medical men are rarely to be met 93 with, and indeed if they were, the settlements are so far removed from each other, that they could be of little service.

It is very remarkable, that notwithstanding that medical assistance is so rarely to be had in case of sickness in the back country, yet the Americans, when they are about to change their place of abode, seldom or ever consider whether the part of the country to which they are going is healthy or otherwise, at least they are scarcely ever influenced their choice of a place of residence either by its healthiness or unhealthiness. If the lands in one part of the country are superior to those in another in fertility; if they are in the neighbourhood of a navigable river, or situated conveniently to a good market; if they are cheap, and rising in value, thither the American will gladly emigrate, let the climate be ever so unfriendly to the

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human system. Not a year passes over, but what numbers of people leave the beautiful and healthy banks of the Susquehannah River, for the Genesee country, where nine out of every ten of the inhabitants are regularly seized, during the autumn, with malignant fevers; but the lands bordering upon the Susquehannah are in general poor, whereas those in the Genesee country are in many places so rich, that until reduced by successive crops of Indian 94 corn, wheat, to use the common phrase, "will run wholly to straw!" where it has been sown in the first instance, the stalks have frequently been found fourteen or fifteen feet in length, two-thirds of them lying on the ground.

On the margin of Niagara River; about three quarters of a mile from the town, stands a building called Navy Hall, erected for the accommodation of the naval officers on the lake during the winter season, when their vessels are laid up. Opposite to it there is a spacious wharf to protect the vessels from the ice during the winter, and also to facilitate the landing of merchandize when the navigation is open. All cargoes brought up the lake, that are destined for Niagara, are landed here, Adjoining the wharf are very extensive stores belonging to crown, and also to private persons. Navy Hall is now occupied by the troops; the fort on the opposite side of the river where they were formerly stationed, having been delivered were formerly stationed, having been delivered up pursuant to the late treaty between his Majesty and the United States. The troops, however, are only to remain at the hall until a blockhouse is erected on the top of the banks for their accommodation; this building is in a state of forwardness, and the engineer hopes to have it finished in a few months.

The fort of Niagara stands immediately at 95 the mouth of the river, on a point of land, one side of which is washed by the river, and the other by the lake. Towards the water it is stockaded; and behind the stockade, on the river side, a large mound of earth rises up, at the top of which are embrasures for guns; on the land side it is secured by several batteries and redoubts, and by parallel lines of fascines.

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At the gates, and in various different parts, there are strong blockhouses; and facing the lake, within the stockade, stands a large fortified stone house. The fort and outworks occupy about five acres of ground; and a garrison of five hundred men, and at least from thirty to forty pieces of ordnance would be necessary to defend it properly. The federal garrison, however, consists only of fifty men; and the whole of the cannon in the place amounts merely to four small field pieces, planted at the four corners of the fort. This fort was founded by the French, and constituted one link of that extensive chain of posts which they established along the lakes and the western waters. It was begun by the building of the stone house, after a solemn promise had been obtained from the Indians that the artificers should not be interrupted whilst they were going on with the work. The Indians readily made this promise, as, according to their notion, it would have been inhospitable and unfriendly ⁹⁶ in the extreme not to have permitted a few traders to build a house within their territory to protect them against the inclemency of the seasons: but they were greatly astonished when one so totally different from any that they had ever seen before, and from any that they had any idea of, was completed; they began to suspect that the strangers had plans in meditation unfavourable to their interests, and they wished to dispossess them of their new mansion, but it was too late. In the hall of the house a well had been sunk to keep it supplied with water; the house was plentifully stored with provisions in case of a siege; and the doors being once closed, the tenants remained perfectly indifferent about every hostile attack the Indians could make against it. Fortifications to strengthen the house were gradually erected; and by the year 1759 the place was so strong as to resist, for some time, the forces under the command of Sir William Johnston, Great additions were made to the works after the fort fell into the hands of the British. The stone house is a very spacious building, and is now, as it was formerly, appropriated for the accommodation of the principal officers of the garrison, In the rear of the house is a large apartment, commanding a magnificent view of the lake and of the distant hills of Toronto, ⁹⁷ which formerly was the officers' mess room, and a pattern of neatness. The officers of the federal garrison, however, consider it more convenient to mess in one of the kitchens, and, this beautiful room has been suffered to go to ruin;

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indeed every part of the fort now exhibits a picture of slovenliness and neglect; and the appearance of the soldiers is equally devoid of neatness with that of their quarters. Though it was on Sunday morning that we visited the fort, on which day it is usual even for the men of the garrisons in the States to appear better dressed than on other days, yet the greater part of the men were as dirty as if they had been at work in the trenches for a week without intermission their grisly beards demonstrated that a razor had not approached their chins for many days; their hair, to appearance, had not been combed for the same length of time; their linen was filthy, their guns rusty, and their clothes ragged. That the clothes and accoutrements of the men should not be better, is not to be wondered at, considering how very badly the western army of the States is appointed in every respect: but it is strange that the officers should not attend more than they do to the cleanliness of their men. Their garrisons on the frontiers have uniformly suffered more from sickness than those of the British; and it is to be attributed, VOL. II. H 98 I should imagine, in a great measure to their filthiness; for the men are as stout and hardy, apparently as any in the world. The western army of the States has been most shamefully appointed from the very outset. I heard General Wayne, then the commander in chief, declare at Philadelphia, that a short time after they had begun their march, more than one third of his men were attacked in the woods, at the same period, with a dysentery; that the surgeons had not even been furnished with a medicine chest; and that nothing could have saved the greater part of the troops from death, had not one of the young surgeons fortunately discovered, after many different things had been tried in vain, that the bark of the root of a particular sort of yellow poplar tree was a powerful antidote to the disorder. Many times also, he said, his army had been on the point of suffering from famine in their own country, owing to the carelessness of their commissaries. So badly indeed had the army been supplied, even latterly, with provisions, that when notice was sent to the federal general by the British officers, that they had received orders to deliver up their respective posts pursuant to the treaty, and that they were prepared to do so whenever he was ready to take possession of them, an answer was returned, that unless the British officers could supply his army with a considerable quantity of provisions on arriving at the lakes, he could not attempt

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to march for many weeks. The federal army was generously supplied with fifty barrels of pork, as much as the British could possibly spare; notwithstanding which, it did make its appearance till a considerable time after the day appointed for the delivery of the posts. The federal army is composed almost wholly of Irishmen and Germans, that were brought over as redemptioners, and enlisted as soon as they landed, before they had an opportunity of learning what great wages were given to labourers in the States. The natives of the country are too fond of making money to rest satisfied with the pay of a common soldier.

The American prints, until the late treaty of amity was ratified, teemed with the most gross abuse of the British government, for retaining possession of Niagara fort, and the other military posts on the lakes, after the independence of the States had been acknowledged, and peace concluded. It was never taken into consideration, that if the British government had thought proper to have withdrawn its troops from the posts at once immediately after the definitive treaty was signed, the works would in all probability have been destroyed by the Indians, within whose territories H 2 100 they were situated, long before the people of the States could have taken possession of them; for no part of their army was within hundreds of miles of the posts, and the country through which they must have past in getting to them was a mere wilderness; but if the army had gained the posts, the states were in no condition, immediately after the war, to have kept in them such large bodies of the military as would have been absolutely necessary for their defence whilst at enmity with the Indians, and it is by no means improbable, but that the posts might have been soon abandoned. The retention of them, therefore, to the present day, was, in fact, a circumstance highly beneficial to the interests of the States, notwithstanding that such an outcry was raised against the British on that account, inasmuch as the Americans now find themselves possessed of extensive fortifications on the frontiers, in perfect repair, without having been at the expence of building them, or maintaining troops in them for the space of ten years, during which period no equivalent advantages could have been derived from their possession. It is not to be supposed, however, that the British government meant

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to confer a favour on her late colonies by retaining the posts; it was well known that the people of the new States would be eager, sooner or later, to get 101 possession of forts situated within their boundary line, and occupied by strangers: and as there were particular parts of the definitive treaty which some of the States did not seem very ready to comply with, the posts were detained as a security for its due ratification on the part of the States. In the late treaty of amity and commerce, these differences were finally accommodated to the satisfaction of Great Britain, and the posts were consequently delivered up. On the surrender of them very handsome compliments were paid, in the public papers throughout the States, to the British officers, for the polite and friendly manner in which they gave them up. The gardens of the officers were all left in full bearing, and high preservation; and all the little conveniences were spared, which could contribute to the comforts of the federal troops.

The generality of the people of the States were big with the idea, that the possession of these places would be attended with the most important and immediate advantages: and in particular they were fully persuaded, that they would thereby at once become masters of the trade to the lakes, and of three-fourths at least of the fur trade, which, they said, had hitherto been so unjustly monopolized by the British merchants, to their great prejudice. They have now got possession of them, and perceive the futility of all these notions.

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The posts surrendered are four in number; namely, Fort Oswego, at the mouth of Oswego River, which falls into Lake Ontario, on the south side; Fort Niagara, at the mouth of Niagara River; Fort Detroit, on the western bank of Detroit River; and Fort Michillimachinack, at the straits of the same name, between Lake Michigan and Lake Huron, From Oswego, the first of these, we derived no benefit whatever. The neighbouring country, for miles round, was a mere forest; it was inhabited by but few Indians, and these few carried their furs to Cadarugui or Kingston, where they got a better price for them than at Oswego, as there were many traders there, and of course some competition amongst them: at the same time, the river, at the mouth of which this fort stands, was always open

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to the people of the States, and along it a small trade was carried on by them between New York and Lake Ontario, which was in no wise ever interrupted by the troops at the fort. By the surrender of this place, therefore, they have gained nothing but what they enjoyed before, and British government is saved the expence of keeping up a useless garrison of fifty men.

The quantity of furs collected at Niagara s considerable, and the neighbourhood being populous, it is place of no small trade; but 103 the town, in which this trade is carried on, being on the British side of the line, the few merchants that lived within the limits of the fort immediately crossed over to the other side, as soon as it was rumoured that the fort was to be given up. By the possession of a solitary fort, therefore, the people of the States have not gained the smallest portion of this part of the lake trade; nor is it probable that any of them will find it their interest to settle as merchants near the fort; for the British merchants on the opposite side, as has already been shewn, can afford to sell their goods, brought up the St. Lawrence, on much lower terms than what goods brought from New York can be sold at; and as for the collecting of furs, it is not to be imagined that the Indians who bear such a rooted hatred to the people of the States, who are attached to the British, and who are not a people ready to forsake their old friends, will carry their furs over to their enemies, and give up their connexions with the men with whom they have been in the habit of dealing, and who can afford to pay them so much better than the traders on the opposite side of the water.

Detroit, of all the places which have been given up, is the most important; for it is a town, containing at least twelve hundred inhabitants. Since its surrender, however, a 104 new town has been laid out on the opposite bank of the river, eighteen miles lower down, and hither many of the traders have removed. The majority of them stay at Detroit; but few or none have become citizens of the States in consequence, nor is it likely that they will, at least for some time. In the late treaty, a particular provision for them was made; they were to be allowed to remain there for one year, without being called on to declare their sentiments, and if at the end of that period they chose to remain British subjects, they

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were not to be molested * in any manner, but suffered to carry on their trade as formerly in the fullest extent; the portion of the fur trade, which we shall lose by the surrender of this place, will therefore be very inconsiderable.

The fourth post, Michillimachinack, is a

* This part of the late treaty has by no means been strictly observed on the part of the States. The officers of the federal army, without asking permission, and contrary to the desire of several of the remaining British inhabitants, appropriated to their own use several of the houses and stores of those who had removed to the new town, and declared their determination of not becoming citizens of the States; and many of the inhabitants had been called on to serve in the militia, and to perform duties, from which, as British subjects, they were exempted by the articles in the treaty in their favour. When we were at Detroit, the British inhabitants met together, and drew up a memorial on the subject, reciting their grievances, which was committed to our care, and accordingly presented to the British minister at Philadelphia.

105 small stockaded fort, situated on an island. The agents of the North-West Company of merchants at Montreal, and a few independent traders, resided within the limits of the fort, and bartered goods there for furs brought in by different tribes of Indians, who are the sole inhabitants of the neighbouring country. On evacuating this place, another post was immediately established, at no great distance, on the Island of St. Joseph, in the Straits of St. Mary, between lakes Superior and Huron; and a small garrison left there, which has since been augmented to upwards of fifty men. Several traders, citizens of the States, have established themselves at Michillimakinack; but as the British traders have fixed their new post so close to the old one, it is nearly certain that the Indians will continue to trade with their old friends in preference, for the reasons before mentioned.

From this statement it appears evident, that the people of the States can only acquire by their new possession a small part of one branch of the sugar trade, namely, of that which is carried on on one of the nearer lakes. The furs brought down from the distant regions

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in the north-west to the grand portage, and from thence in canoes to Montreal along the Utawa River, are what constitute by far the principal part, both as to quantity and value, 106 of those exported from Montreal; to talk, therefore, of their acquiring possession of three-fourths of the fur trade by the surrender of the posts on the lakes, is absurd in the extreme; neither is it likely that they will acquire any considerable share of the lake trade in general, which, as I have already pointed out, can be carried on by the British merchants from Montreal and Quebec, by means of the St. Lawrence, with such superior advantage.

It is worthy of remark, that as military posts, all those lately established by the British are far superior in point of situation, to those delivered up. The ground on which the new blockhouse is building, on the British side of Niagara River, is nine feet higher than the top of the stone house in the American fort, and it commands every part of the fort. The chief strength of the old fort is on the land side; towards the water works are very weak, and the whole might be battered down by a single twelve-pounder judiciously planted on the British side of the river. At present it is not proposed to erect any other works on the British side of the river than the blockhouse; but should a fort be constructed hereafter, it will be placed on Mississaguis Point, a still more advantageous situation than that on which the blockhouse stands, as it completely commands the entrance into the river.

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The new post on Detroit River commands the channel much more effectually than the old fort in the town of Detroit; vessels cannot go up or down the river without passing within a very few yards of it. It is remarkable indeed, that the French, when they first penetrated into this part of the country, fixed upon the spot chosen for this new fort, in preference to that where Detroit stands, and they had absolutely begun their fort and town, when the whole party was unhappily cut off by the Indians.

The island of St. Joseph, in the third place, is a more eligible situation for a British military post than Michillimakinack, inasmuch as it commands the entrance of Lake Superior,

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whereas Michillimakinack, only commands the entrance into Lake Michigan, which is wholly within the territory of the United States.

It is sincerely to be hoped, however, that Great Britain and the United States may continue friends, and that we never may have occasion to view those posts on the frontiers in any other light than as convenient places for carrying on commerce.

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LETTER XXXI.

Description of the River and Falls of Niagara, and the Country bordering upon the Navigable Part of the River below the Falls.

Fort Chippeway, September.

AT the distance of eighteen miles from the town of Niagara or Newark, are those remarkable Falls in Niagara River, which may justly be ranked amongst the greatest natural curiosities in the known world. The road leading from Lake Ontario to Lake Erie runs within a few hundred yards of them. This road, which is within British dominions, is carried along the top of the lofty steep banks of the river; for a considerable way it runs close to their very edge, and in passing along it the eye of the traveller is entertained with a variety of the most grand and beautiful prospects. The river, instead of growing narrow as you proceed upwards, widens considerably; at the end of nine or ten miles it expands to the breadth of a mile, and here it assumes much the appearance of a lake; it is enclosed, seemingly on all sides, by high hills, and the current, owing to the great depth of the water, is so gentle as to be scarcely perceptible from the top of the banks. It continues thus broad 109 for a mile or two, when on a sudden the waters are contracted between the high hills on each side. From hence up to the falls the current is exceedingly irregular and rapid At the upper end of this broad part of the river, and nearly at the foot of the banks, is situated a small village, that has been called Queenstown, but which, in the adjacent country, is best known by the name of "The Landing." The lake merchant vessels can proceed up to

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this village with perfect safety, and they commonly do so, to deposit, in the stores there, such goods as are intended to be sent higher up the country, and to receive in return the furs, &c. that have been collected at the various posts on lakes Huron and Erie, and sent thither to be conveyed down to Kingston, across Lake Ontario. The portage from this place to the nearest navigable part of Niagara River, above the Falls, is nine miles in length.

About half way up the banks, at the distance of a few hundred yards from Queenstown, there is a very extensive range of wooden barracks, which, when viewed a little way off, appears to great advantage; these barracks are now quite unoccupied, and it is not probable that they will ever be used until the climate improves: the first troops that were lodged in them, sickened in a very few days after their arrival; many of the men died, and had not 110 those that remained alive been removed, pursuant to the advice of the physicians, to other quarters, the whole regiment might possibly have perished.

From the town of Niagara to Queenstown, the country in the neighbourhood of the river is very level; but here it puts on a different aspect; a confused range of hills, covered with oaks of an immense size, suddenly rises up before you, and the road that winds up the side of them is so steep and rugged, that it is absolutely necessary for the traveller to leave his carriage, if he should be in one, and proceed the top on foot. Beyond these hills you again come to an unbroken level country; but the soil here differs materially from that on the opposite side; it consists of a rich dark earth intermixed with clay, and abounding with stones; whereas, on the side next Lake Ontario, the soil is of a yellowish cast in some places inclining to gravel, and in others to sand.

From the brow of one of the hills in this ridge, which overhangs the little village of Queenstown, the eye of the traveller is gratified with one of the finest prospects that can be imagined in nature: you stand amidst a clump of large oaks, a little to the left of the road, and looking downwards perceive, through the branches of the trees with which the hill is 111 clothed from the summit to the base, the tops of the houses of Queenstown, and in front of the village, the ships moored in the river; the ships are at least two hundred

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feet below you, and their masts appear like slender reeds peeping up amidst the thick foliage of the trees. Carrying your eye forward, you may trace the river in all its windings, and finally see it disembogue into Lake Ontario, between the town and the fort: the lake itself terminates your view in this direction, except merely at one part of the horizon, where you just get a glimpse of the blue hills of Toronto. The shore of the river, on the right hand, remains in its natural state, covered with one continued forest; but on the opposite side the country is interspersed with cultivated fields, and neat farm houses down to the water's edge. The country beyond the hills is much less cleared than that which lies towards the town of Niagara, on the navigable part of the river.

From the sudden change of the face of the country in the neighbourhood of Queenstown, and the equally sudden change in the river with respect to its breadth, depth, and current, conjectures have been formed, that the great falls of the river must originally have been situated at the spot where the waters are so abruptly contracted between the hills; and indeed it is highly probable that this was the case, for it is a fact well ascertained, that the falls have receded very considerably since they were first visited by Europeans, and that they are still receding every year; but of this I shall have occasion to speak more particularly presently.

It was at an early hour of the day that we left the town of Niagara or Newark, accompanied by the attorney-general and an officer of the British engineers, in order to visit these stupendous Falls. Every step that we advanced towards them, our expectations rose to a higher pitch; our eyes were continually on the look out for the column of white mist which hovers over them; and an hundred times I believe, did we stop our carriage in hopes of hearing their thundering sound: neither, however, was the mist to be seen, nor the sound to be heard, when we came to the foot of the hills; nor after having crossed over them, were our eyes or ears more gratified. This occasioned no inconsiderable disappointment, and we could not but express our doubts to each other, that the wondrous accounts we had so frequently heard of the Falls were without foundation, and calculated merely to impose on the minds of credulous people that inhabited a distant part of the world. These

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doubts were nearly confirmed, when we found that, after 113 having approached within half a mile of the place, the mist was but just discernible, and that the sound even then was not to be heard; yet it is nevertheless strictly true, that the tremendous noise of the Falls may be distinctly heard, at times, at the distance of forty miles; and the cloud formed from the spray may be even seen still farther off* ; but it is only when the air is very clear, that there is a fine blue sky, which however are very common occurrences in this country, that the cloud can be seen at such a great distance. The hearing of the sound of the falls afar off also depends upon the state of the atmosphere; it is observed, that the sound can be heard at the greatest distance, just before a heavy fall of rain, VOL. II. I

* We ourselves, some time afterwards, beheld the cloud with the naked eye at no less a distance than fifty-four miles, when sailing on Lake Erie, on board one of the king's ships. The day on which we saw it was uncommonly clear and calm, and we were seated on the poop of the vessel, admiring the bold scenery of the southern shore of the lake, when the commander, who had been aloft to make some observations, came to us, and pointing to a small white cloud overhanging Niagara. At first it appeared to us that this must be a mere conjecture, but on minute observation it was evident that the commander's information was just. All the other light clouds in a few minutes, flitted away to another part of the horizon, whereas this one remained steadily fixed in the same spot; and on looking at it through a glass, it was plain to see that the shape of the cloud varied every instant, owing to the continued rising of the mist from the cataract beneath.

114 and when the wind is in a favourable point to convey the sound towards the listener; the day on which we first approached the falls was thick and cloudy.

On that part of the road leading to Lake Erie, which draws nearest to the falls, there is a small village, consisting of about half a dozen straggling houses: here we alighted, and having disposed of our horses, and made a slight repast, in order to prepare us for the fatigue we had to go through, we crossed over some fields towards a deep hollow place surrounded with large trees, from the bottom of which issued thick volumes of whitish mist, that had much the appearance of smoke rising from large heaps of burning weeds.

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Having come to the edge of this hollow place, we descended a steep bank of about fifty yards, and then walking for some distance over a wet marshy piece of ground, covered with thick bushes, at last came to the Table Rock, so called from the remarkable flatness of its surface, and its bearing some similitude to a table. This rock is situated a little to the front of the great fall, above the top of which it is elevated above forty feet. The view from it is truly sublime; but before I attempt to give any idea of the nature of this view, it will be necessary to take a more general survey of the river and falls.

Niagara River issues from the eastern extremity 115 of Lake Erie, and after a course of thirty-six miles discharges itself into Lake Ontario, as has already been mentioned. For the first few miles from Lake Erie, the breadth of the river is about three hundred yards and it is deep enough for vessels drawing nine or ten feet water; but the current is so extremely rapid and irregular, and the channel so intricate, on account of the numberless large rocks in different places, that no other vessels than bateaux ever attempt to pass along it. As you proceed downward the river widens, no rocks are to be seen either along the shores or in the channel, and the waters glide smoothly along, though the current continues very strong. The river runs thus evenly, and is navigable with safety for bateaux as far as Fort Chippeway, which is about three miles above the falls; but here the bed of it again becomes rocky, and the waters are violently agitated by passing down successive rapids; so much so indeed, that were a boat by any chance to be carried but a little way beyond Chippeway, where people usually stop, nothing could save it from being dashed to pieces long before it came to the falls. With such astonishing impetuosity do the waves break on the rocks in these rapids, that the mere sight of them from the top of the banks is sufficient to make you shudder. I must in this place, however, observe, that it is only on each 12 116 side of the river that the waters are so much troubled; in the middle of it, though the current is also there uncommonly swift, yet the breakers are not so dangerous but boats may pass down, if dexterously managed, to an island which divides the river at the very falls. To go down to this island it is necessary to set off at some distance above Chippeway, where the current is even, and to keep exactly in the middle of the river the whole way

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thither; if the boats were suffered to get out of their course ever so little, either to the right or left, it would be impossible to stem the current and bring them again into it; they would be irresistibly carried towards the falls, and destruction must inevitably follow. In returning from the island there is still more difficulty and danger than in going to it. Notwithstanding these circumstances, numbers of persons have the foolhardiness to proceed to this island, merely for the sake of beholding the falls from the opposite side of it, or for the sake of having in their power to say that they had been upon it.

The river forces its way amidst the rocks with redoubled impetuosity, as it approaches towards the falls; at last coming to the brink of the tremendous precipice, it tumbles headlong to the bottom without meeting with any interruption from rocks in its descent. Just at the precipice the river takes a considerable bend to the right, and the line of the falls, instead of extending from bank to bank in the shortest direction, runs obliquely across. The width of the falls is considerably greater than the width of the river, as measured some way below the precipice; but the annexed plan will enable you to form a better idea of their position than any written description whatsoever. For its great accuracy I cannot vouch, as it was done merely from the eye; such as it is, however, I have sent it to you, conceiving it better that you should have a plan somewhat imperfect than no plan at all. On looking it over you will see that the river does not rush down the precipice in one unbroken sheet, but that it is divided by islands into three distinct collateral falls. The most stupendous of these is that on the north western or British side of the river, commonly called the Great, or Horse-shoe Fall, from its bearing some resemblance to the shape of a horse-shoe. The height of this is only one hundred and forty-two feet, whereas the others are each one hundred and sixty feet high; but to its inferior height it is indebted principally for its grandeur; the precipice, and of course the bed of the river above it being so much lower at the one side than at the other, by far the greater part of the water of the river finds its way to the low side, and rushes down with greater velocity, at that side than it does at the other, as the rapids above the precipice are strongest there. It is from the center of the Horse-shoe Fall that arises the prodigious cloud of mist which may be seen so far

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off. The extent of the Horse-shoe Fall can only be ascertained by the eye; the general opinion of those who have most frequently viewed it is, that it is not less than six hundred yards in circumference. The island which separates it from the next fall is supposed to be about three hundred and fifty yards wide; the second fall is about five yards wide; the next island about thirty yards; and the third, commonly called the Fort Schloper Fall, from being situated towards the side of the river on which that fort stands, is judged to admeasure at least as much as the large island. The whole extent of the precipice, therefore, including the islands, is, according to this computation, thirteen hundred and thirty-five yards. This is certainly not an exaggerated statement. Some have supposed, that the line of the falls altogether exceeds an English mile. The quantity of water carried down the falls is prodigious. It will be found to amount to 670,255 tons per minute, though calculated simply from the following data, which ought to be correct, as coming from an experienced commander of one of the King's ships on Lake

VIEW of the HORSE-SHOE FALL of NIAGARA. Published Decr. 5 th 1798 by I. Stockdale Picadilly.

VIEW of the lesser FALL of NIAGARA. Published Dec. 22 1798 by I. Stokdale Picadilly

119 Erie, well acquainted in every respect with that body of water, viz. that where Lake Erie, towards its eastern extremity is two miles and an half wide, the water is six feet deep, and the current runs at the rate of two knots in an hour; but Niagara River, between this part of Lake Erie and the falls receives the waters of several large creeks, the quantity carried down the falls must therefore be greater than the foregoing computation makes it to be; if we say that six hundred and seventy-two thousand tons of water are precipitated down the falls every minute, the quantity will not probably be much over-rated.

To return now to the Table Rock, situated on the British side of the river, and on the verge of the Horse-shoe Fall. Here the spectator has an unobstructed view of the tremendous rapids above the falls, and of the circumjacent shores covered with thick woods; of the Horse-shoe Fall, some yards below him; of Fort Schloper Fall, at a distance to the left;

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and of the frightful gulph beneath, into which, if he has but courage to approach to the exposed edge of the rock, he may look down perpendicularly. The astonishment excited in the mind of the spectator by the vastness of the different objects which he contemplates from hence is great indeed, and few 120 persons, on coming here for the first time, can for some moments collect themselves sufficiently to be able to form any tolerable conception of the stupendous scene before them. It is impossible for the eye to embrace the whole of it at once; it must gradually make itself acquainted, in the first place with the component parts of the scene, each one of which is in itself an object of wonder; and such a length of time does this operation require, that many of those who have had an opportunity of contemplating the scene at their leisure, for years together, have thought that every time they have beheld it, each part has appeared more wonderful and more sublime, and that it has only been at the time of their last visit that they have been able to discover all the grandeur of the cataract.

Having spent a considerable time on the Table Rock, we returned to the fields the same way by which we had descended, pursuant to the direction of the officer of engineers accompanying us, who was intimately acquainted with every part of the cataract, and of the adjoining ground, and was, perhaps, the best guide that could be procured in the whole country. It would be possible to pursue your way along the edge of the cliff, from the Table Rock, a considerable way downwards; but the

VIEW of the FALLS of NIAGARA Published Dec. 22 1798 by I. Stockdale Piccadilly.

121 bushes are so exceedingly thick, and the ground so rugged that the task would be arduous in the extreme.

The next spot from which we surveyed the falls was from the part of the cliff nearly opposite to that end of the Fort Schloper Fall, which lies next to the island. You stand here on the edge of the cliff, behind some bushes, the tops of which have been cut down in order to open the view. From hence you have a better prospect of the whole cataract, and are enabled to form a more correct idea of the position of the precipice, than from any

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one other place The prospect from hence is more beautiful, but I think less grand than from any other spot. The officer who so politely directed our movements on this occasion was so struck with the view from this spot, that he once had a wooden house constructed, and drawn down here by oxen, in which he lived until he had finished several different drawings of the cataract, one of these we were gratified with the sight of, which exhibited a view of the cataract in the depth of winter, when in a most curious and wonderful state. The ice at this season of the year accumulates at the bottom of the cataract in immense mounds, and huge icicles, like the pillars of a massy, building, hang pendent in many places from 122 the top of the precipice reaching nearly to the bottom.

Having left this place, we returned once more through the woods bordering upon the precipice to the open fields, and then directed our course by a circuitous path, about one mile in length, to a part of the cliff where it is possible to descend to the bottom of the cataract. The river, for many miles below the precipice, is bounded on each side by steep, and in most parts perpendicular, cliffs, formed of earth and rocks, and it is impossible to descend to the bottom of them, except at two places, where large masses of earth and rocks have crumbled down, and ladders have been placed from one break to another, for the accommodation of passengers. The first of these places which you come to in walking along the river, from the Horse-shoe Fall downwards, is called the

“Indian Ladder,” the ladders having been constructed there by the Indians. These ladders, as they are called, of which there are several, one below the other, consist simply of pine-trees, with notches cut in their sides, for the passenger to rest his feet on. The trees, even when first placed there, would vibrate as you stepped upon them, owing to their being so long and slender; age has rendered them still less firm, and they now certainly cannot be deemed safe, though many persons are still in 123 the habit of descending by their means. We did not attempt to get to the bottom of the cliff by this route, but proceeded to the other place, which is lower down the river, called Mrs. Simcoe's Ladder, the ladders having been originally placed there for the accommodation of the lady of the late governor. This route is much more frequented than the other; the ladders, properly so called, are strong and

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firmly placed, and none of them, owing to the frequent breaks in the cliff, are required to be of such a great length but what even a lady might pass up or down them without fear of danger. To descend over the rugged rocks, however, the whole way down to the bottom of the cliff, is certainly no trifling undertaking, and few ladies, I believe, could be found of sufficient strength of body to encounter the fatigue of such an expedition.

On arriving at the bottom of the cliff, you find yourself in the midst of huge piles of mishapen rocks, with great masses of earth and rocks projecting from the side of the cliff, and overgrown with pines and cedars hanging over your head, apparently ready to crumble down and crush you to atoms. Many of the large trees grow with their heads downwards, being suspended by their roots, which had taken such a firm hold in the ground at the top of the cliff, that when part of it gave way the 124 trees did not fall altogether. The river before you here is somewhat more than a quarter of a mile wide; and on the opposite side of it a little to the right, the Fort Schloper Fall is seen to great advantage; what you see of the Horse shoe Fall also appears in a very favourable point of view; the projecting cliff conceals nearly one half of it. The Fort Schloper Fall is skirted at the bottom by milk white foam, which ascends in thick volumes from the rocks; but it is not seen to rise above the fall like a cloud of smoke, as is the case with the Horse-shoe Fall; nevertheless the spray is so considerable, that it descends on the opposite side of the river, at the foot of Simcoe's Ladder, like rain.

Having reached the margin of the river, we proceeded towards the Great Fall, along the strand, which for a considerable part of the way thither consists of horizontal beds of limestone rock, covered with gravel, except, indeed, where great piles of stones have fallen from the sides of the cliff. These horizontal beds of rock, in some places, extend very far into the river, forming points which break the force of the current, and occasion strong eddies along particular parts of the shore. Here great numbers of the bodies of fishes, squirrels, foxes, and various other animals, that, unable to stem the current of the river above the falls, have been 125 carried down them, and consequently killed, are washed up. The shore is likewise found strewed with trees, and large pieces of timber, that have

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been swept away from the saw mills above the falls, and carried down the precipice. The timber is generally terribly shattered, and the carcasses of all the large animals, particularly of the large fishes, are found very much bruised. A dreadful stench arises from the quantity of putrid matter lying on the shore, and numberless birds of prey, attracted by it, are always seen hovering about the place.

Amongst the numerous stories current in the country, relating to this wonderful cataract, there is one that records the hapless fate of a poor Indian, which I select, as the truth of it is unquestionable. The unfortunate hero of this tale, intoxicated, it seems, with spirits, had laid himself down to sleep in the bottom of his canoe, which was fastened to the beach at the distance of some miles above the falls. His squaw sat on the shore to watch him. Whilst they were in this situation, a sailor from one of the ships of war on the neighbouring lakes happened to pass by; he was struck with the charms of the squaw, and instantly determined upon enjoying them. The faithful creature, however, unwilling to gratify his desires, hastened to the canoe to arouse her husband; but before she could effect her purpose, the sailor cut the cord by which the canoe was fastened, and set it adrift. It quickly floated away with the stream from the fatal spot, and ere many minutes elapsed, was carried down into the midst of the rapids. Here it was distinctly seen by several persons that were standing on the adjacent shore, whose attention had been caught by the singularity of the appearance of a canoe in such a part of the river. The violent motion of the waves soon awoke the Indian; he started up, looked wildly around, and perceiving his danger, instantly seized his paddle, and made the most surprising exertions to save himself; but finding in a little time that all his efforts would be of no avail in stemming the impetuosity of the current, he with great composure put aside his paddle, wrapped himself up in his blanket, and again laid himself down in the bottom of the canoe. In a few seconds he was hurried down the precipice; but neither he nor his canoe were ever seen more. It is supposed that not more than one third of the different things that happen to be carried down the falls re-appear at bottom.

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From the foot of Simcoe's Ladder you may walk along the strand for some distance without inconvenience; but as you approach the Horse-shoe Fall, the way becomes more and more rugged. In some places, where the cliff 127 has crumbled down, huge mounds of earth, rocks, and trees, reaching to the water's edge, oppose your course; it seems impossible to pass them; and, indeed, without a guide, a stranger would never find his way to the opposite side; for to get there it is necessary to mount nearly to their top, and then to crawl on your hands and knees through long dark holes, where passages are left open between the torn up rocks and trees. After passing these mounds, you have to climb from rock to rock close under the cliff, for there is but little space here between the cliff and the river, and these rocks are so slippery, owing to the continual moisture from the spray, which descends very heavily, that without the utmost precaution it is scarcely possible to escape a fall. At the distance of a quarter of a mile from the Great Fall we were as wet, owing to the spray, as if each of us had been thrown into the river.

There is nothing whatsoever to prevent you from passing to the very foot of the Great Fall; and you might even proceed behind the prodigious sheet of water that comes pouring down from the top of the precipice, for the water falls from the edge of a projecting rock: and, moreover, caverns of a very considerable size have been hollowed out of the rocks at the bottom of the precipice, owing to the violent 128 ebullition of the water, which extended some way underneath the bed of the upper part of the river. I advanced within about six yards of the edge of the sheet of water, just far enough to peep into the caverns behind it; but here my breath was nearly taken away by the violent whirlwind that always rages at the bottom of the cataract, occasioned by the concussion of such a vast body of water against the rocks. I confess I had no inclination at the time to go further; nor, indeed, any of us afterwards attempted to explore the dreary confines of these caverns, where death seemed to await him that should be daring enough to enter their threatening jaws. No words can convey an adequate idea of the awful grandeur of the scene at this place. Your senses are appalled by the sight of the immense body of water that comes pouring down so closely to you from the top of the stupendous precipice, and by the thundering sound

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of the billows dashing against the rocky sides of the caverns below; you tremble with reverential fear, when you consider that a blast of the whirlwind might sweep you from off the slippery rocks on which you stand, and precipitate you into the dreadful gulph beneath, from whence all the power of man could not extricate you; you feel what an insignificant being you are in the creation, and your mind is forcibly impressed with an awful 129 idea of the power of that mighty Being who commanded the waters to flow.

Since the Falls of Niagara were first discovered, they have receded very considerably, owing to the disrapture of the rocks which form the precipice. The rocks at bottom are first loosened by the constant action of the water upon them; they are afterwards carried away; and those at top being thus undermined, are soon broken by the weight of the water rushing over them: even within the memory of many of the present inhabitants of the country, the falls have receded several yards. The commodore of the King's vessels on Lake Erie, who had been employed on that lake for upwards of thirty years, informed me, that when he first came into the country, it was a common practice for young men to go to the island in the middle of the falls; that after dining there, they used frequently to dare each other to walk into the river towards certain large rocks in the midst of the rapids, not far from the edge of the falls; and sometimes to proceed through the water, even beyond these rocks. No such rocks are to be seen at present; and were a man to advance two yards into the river from the island, he would be inevitably swept away by the torrent. It has been conjectured, as I before mentioned, that the Falls of Niagara VOL. II. K 130 were originally situated at Queenstown; and indeed the more pains you take to examine the course of the river from the present falls downward, the more reason is there to imagine that such a conjecture is well founded. From the precipice nearly down to Queenstown, the bed of the river is strewed with large rocks, and the banks are broken and rugged; circumstances which plainly denote that some great disruption has taken place along this part of the river; and we need be at no loss to account for it, as there are evident marks of the action of water upon the sides of the banks, and considerably above their present bases. Now the river has never been known to rise near these marks during the greatest

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floods; it is plain, therefore, that its bed must have been once much more elevated than it is at present. Below Queenstown, however, there are no traces on the banks to lead us to imagine that the level of the water was ever much higher there than it is now. The sudden increase of the depth of the river just below the hills at Queenstown, and its sudden expansion there at the same time, seem to indicate that the waters must for a great length of time have fallen from the top of the hills, and thus have formed that extensive deep basin below the village. In the river, a mile or two above 131 Queenstown, there is a tremendous whirlpool, owing to a deep hole in the bed; this hole was probably also formed by the waters falling for a great length of time on the same spot, in consequence of the rocks which composed the then precipice having remained firmer than those at any other place did. Tradition tells us, that the great fall, instead of having been in the form of a horse shoe, once projected in the middle. For a century past, however, it has remained nearly in the present form; and as the ebullition of the water at the bottom of the cataract is so much greater at the center of this fall than in any other part, and as the water consequently acts with more force there in undermining the precipice than at any other part, it is not unlikely that it may remain nearly in the same form for ages to come.

At the bottom of the Horse-shoe Fall is found a kind of white concrete substance, by the people of the country called Spray. Some persons have supposed that it is formed from the earthy particles of the water, which descending, owing to their great specific gravity, quicker than the other particles, adhere to the rocks, and are there formed into a mass. This concrete substance has precisely the appearance of petrified froth; and it is remarkable, that it is found adhering to those rocks against which the greatest quantities of the K 2 132 froth that floats upon the water, is washed by the eddies.

We did not think of ascending the cliff till the evening was far advanced, and had it been possible to have found our way up in the dark, I verily believe we should have remained at the bottom of it until midnight. Just as we left the foot of the great fall the sun broke through the clouds, and one of the most beautiful and perfect rainbows that ever I beheld was exhibited in the spray that arose from the fall. It is only at evening and morning that

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the rainbow is seen in perfection; for the banks of the river, and the steep precipice, shade the sun from the spray at the bottom of the fall in the middle of the day.

At a great distance from the foot of the ladder we halted, and one of the party was dispatched to fetch a bottle of brandy and a pair of goblets, which had been deposited under some stones on the margin of the river, in our way to the great fall, whither it would have been highly inconvenient to have carried them. Wet from head to foot and greatly fatigued, there certainly was not one amongst us that appeared, at the moment, desirous of getting the brandy, in order to pour out a libation to the tutelary deities of the cataract; nor indeed was there much reason to apprehend that our piety would have shone forth more conspicuously afterwards; 133 however it was not put to the test; for the messenger returned in a few minutes with the woeful intelligence that the brandy and goblets had been stolen. We were at no great loss in guessing who the thieves were. Perched on the rocks, at a little distance from us, sat a pair of the river nymphs, not “nymphs with sedged crowns and ever “harmless looks;” not “temperate nymphs,” but a pair of squat sturdy old wenches, that with close bonnets and tucked up petticoats had crawled down the cliff, and were busied with long rods in angling for fish. Their noisy clack plainly indicated that they had been well pleased with the brandy, and that we ought not to entertain any hopes of recovering the spoil; we e'en slaked our thirst, therefore, with a draught from the wholesome flood, and having done so, boldly pushed forward, and before it was quite dark regained the habitations from whence we had started.

On returning we found a well-spread table laid out for us in the porch of the house, and having gratified the keen appetite which the fatigue we had encountered had excited, our friendly guides, having previously given us instructions for examining the Falls more particularly, set off by moonlight for Niagara, and we repaired to Fort Chippeway, three miles above the Falls, which place we made our 134 head-quarters while we remained in the neighbourhood, because there was a tolerable tavern, and no house in the village near the Falls, where sickness was not prevalent

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The Falls of Niagara are much less difficult of access now, than they were some years ago. Charlevoix, who visited them in the year 1720, tells us, that they were only to be viewed from one spot; and that from thence the spectator had only a side prospect of them. Had he been able to have descended to the bottom, he would have had ocular demonstration of the existence of caverns underneath the precipice, which he supposed to be the case from the hollow sound of the falling of the waters; from the number of carcasses washed up there on different parts of the strand, and would also have been convinced of the truth of a circumstance which he totally disbelieved, namely, that fish were oftentimes unable to stem the rapid current above the Falls, and were consequently carried down the precipice.

The most favourable season for visiting the Falls is about the middle of September, the time when we saw them; for then the woods are seen in all their glory, beautifully variegated with the rich tints of autumn; and the spectator is not then annoyed with vermin. In the summer season you meet with rattlesnakes at every step, and mosquitoes swarm so thickly in the air, that to use a common phrase of the country, "you might cut them with a "knife." The cold nights in the beginning of September effectually banish these noxious animals.

LETTER XXXII.

Description of Fort Chippeway.—Plan in meditation to cut a Canal to avoid the Portage at the Falls of Niagara.—Departure from Chippeway.—Intense heat of the Weather.—Description of the Country bordering on Niagara River above the Falls.—Observations on the Climate of Upper Canada.—Rattlesnakes common in upper Canada.—Fort Erie.—Miserable Accommodation there.—Squirrel hunting.—Seneka Indians.—Their Expertness at the Use of the Blow-gun.—Description of the Blow-gun.—Excursion to the Village of the Senekas.—Whole Nation absent.—Passage of a dangerous Sand Bar at the Mouth of Buffalo Creek.—Sail from Fort Erie.—Driven back by a Storm.—Anchor under Point Abineau.—Description of the Point.—Curious Sand Hills there.—Bear Hunting.—How

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carried on.—Dogs, what sort of, used.—Wind 136 changes.—The Vessel suffers from the Storm whilst at Anchor.—Departure from Point Abineau.—General Description of Lake Erie.—Anecdote.—Reach the Islands at the Western End of the Lake.—Anchor there.—Description of the Islands.—Serpents of various Kinds found there.—Rattlesnakes.—Medicinal Uses made of them.—Fabulous Accounts of Serpents.—Departure from the Islands.—Arrival at Malden.—Detroit River.

Malden, October.

FORT Chippeway, from whence my last letter was dated, is a small stockaded fort, situated on the borders of a creek of the same name, about two hundred yards distant from Niagara River. Had it been built immediately on the latter stream, its situation would have been much more convenient; for the water of the creek is so bad that it cannot be drank, and the garrison is obliged to draw water daily from the river. The fort, which occupies about one rood of ground only, consists of a small block house, inclosed by a stockade of cedar posts about twelve feet high, which is merely sufficient to defend the garrison against musket shot. Adjoining to the fort, there are about seven or eight farm houses, and some large stone houses, where goods are deposited preparatory to their being conveyed up 137 the river in bateaux, or across the portage in carts, to Queenstown. It is said, that it would be practicable to cut a canal from hence to Queenstown, by means of which the troublesome and expensive process of unlading the bateaux, and transporting the goods in carts along the portage, would be avoided. Such a canal will in all probability be undertaken one day or other; but whenever that shall be the case, there is reason to think that it will be cut on the New York side of the river, for two reasons; first, because the ground on that side is much more favourable for such an undertaking; and, secondly, because the state of New York is much more populous, and far better enabled to advance the large sums of money that would be requisite for cutting a canal through such rugged ground as borders upon the river, than the province of Upper Canada either is at present, or appears likely to be.

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About fifteen men, under the command of a lieutenant, are usually quartered at Fort Chippeway, who are mostly employed in conducting, in bateaux from thence to Fort Erie, the stores for the troops in the upper country, and the presents for the Indians.

After we had gratified our curiosity, in regard to the wondrous objects in the neighbourhood, at least as far as our time would permit, we were obligingly furnished with a 138 bateau by the officer at Fort Chippeway, to whom we carried letters, to convey us to Fort Erie. My companions embarked in it with our baggage, when the morning appointed for our departure arrived; but desirous of taking one more look at the Falls, I staid behind, determining to follow them on foot in the course of the day; I accordingly walked down to the Falls from Fort Chippeway after breakfast, spent an hour or two there, returned to the fort, and having stopped a short time to rest myself after the fatigues of climbing the steeps about the Falls, I set out for Fort Erie, fifteen miles distant from Chippeway, accompanied by my faithful servant Edward, who has indeed been a treasure to me since I have been in America. The day was by no means favourable for a pedestrian expedition; it was intensely hot, and we had not proceeded far before we found the necessity of taking off our jackets, waistcoats, and cravats, and carrying them in a bundle on our backs. Several parties of Indians that I met going down the river in canoes, were stark naked.

The banks of Niagara River, between Chippeway and Fort Erie, are very low, and covered, for the most part, with shrubs, under whose shade, upon the gravelly beach of the river, the weary traveller finds an agreeable resting place. For the first few miles from 139 Chippeway there are scarcely any houses to be seen; but about half way between that place and Fort Erie they are thickly scattered along the banks of the river. The houses in the neighbourhood were remarkably well built, and appeared to be kept in a state of great neatness; most of them were sheathed with boards, and painted white. The lands adjoining them are rich, and were well cultivated. The crops of Indian corn were still standing here, which had a most luxuriant aspect; in many of the fields, there did not appear to be a stem less than eight feet in height. Between the rows they sow gourds,

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squashes, and melons, of which last every sort attains to a state of great perfection in the open air throughout the inhabited parts of the two provinces. Peaches in this part of the country likewise come to perfection in the open air, but in Lower Canada, the summers are too short to permit them to ripen sufficiently. The winters here are very severe whilst they last, but it is seldom that the snow lies longer than three months on the ground. The summers are intensely hot, Fahrenheit's thermometer often rising to 96°, and sometimes above 100°.

As I passed along to Fort Erie, I killed a great many large snakes of different sorts that I found basking in the sun. Amongst them 140 I did not find any rattlesnakes: these reptiles, however, are very commonly met with here; and at the distance of twenty or thirty miles from the river, up the country, it is said that they are so numerous as to render the surveying of land a matter of very great danger. It is a circumstance strongly in favour of Lower Canada, that the rattlesnake is not found there; it is seldom found, indeed, to the northward of the forty-fifth parallel of north latitude.

Fort Erie stands at the eastern extremity of Lake Erie; it is a small stockaded fort, somewhat similar to that at Chippeway; and adjoining it, are extensive stores as at Chippeway, and about half a dozen miserable little dwellings. On arriving there, I had no difficulty in discovering my companions; I found them lodged in a small log-house, which contained but the one room, and just sitting down to a supper, they had procured through the assistance of a gentleman in the Indian department, who accompanied them from Chippeway. This habitation was the property of an old woman, who in her younger days had followed the drum, and now gained her livelihood by accommodating, to the best of her power, such travellers as passed by Fort Erie. A sorry habitation it was; the crazy door was ready to drop off the hinges, and in all the 141 three windows of it, not one pane of glass was there, a young gentleman from Detroit having amused himself, whilst detained in the place by contrary winds, some little time before our arrival, with shooting arrows through them. It was not likely that these windows would be speedily repaired, for no glazier was to be met with nearer than Newark, thirty-six miles distant. Here, as we

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lay folded in our skins on the floor, the rain beat in upon us, and the wind whistled about our ears; but this was not the worst. In the morning we found it a difficult matter to get wherewith to satisfy our hunger; dinner was more difficult to be had than breakfast, supper than dinner; there seemed to be a greater scarcity of provisions also the second day than there was on the first. At last, fearing that we should be famished if we remained longer under the care of old mother Palmer, we embarked at once on board the vessel of war in which we intended to cross the lake, where although sometimes tossed about by the raging contrary winds, yet we had comfortable births, and fared plenteously every day.

Ships lie opposite to Fort Erie, at the distance of about one hundred yards from the shore; they are there exposed to all the violence of the westerly winds, but the anchorage is excellent, and they ride in perfect safety. Three vessels 142 of war, of about two hundred tons, and carrying from eight to twelve guns each, besides two or three merchant vessels, lay wind-bound whilst we remained here. The little fort, with the surrounding houses built on the rocky shore, the vessels lying at anchor before it, the rich woods, the distant hills on the opposite side of the lake, and the vast lake itself, extending to the farthest part of the horizon, altogether formed an interesting and beautiful scene.

Whilst we were detained here by contrary winds, we regularly went on shore after breakfast to take a ramble in the woods; oftentimes also we amused ourselves with the diversions of hunting squirrels with dogs, amongst the shrubs and young trees on the borders of the lake, thousands of which animals we found in the neighbourhood of the fort. The squirrels, alarmed by the barking of the dogs, leap from tree to tree with wonderful swiftness; you follow them closely, shaking the trees, and striking against the branches with poles. Sometimes they will lead you a chace of a quarter of a mile and more; but sooner or later, terrified by your attentive pursuit, make a false leap, and come to the ground; the dogs, ever on the watch, then seize the opportunity to lay hold of them; frequently, however, the squirrels will elude their repeated snaps, and 143 mount another tree before you can look round you. I have seldom known them to be hurt by their fall,

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notwithstanding that I have many times seen them tumble from branches of trees upwards of twenty feet from the ground.

In our rambles we used frequently to fall in with parties of the Seneka Indians, from the opposite side of the lake, that were amusing themselves with hunting and shooting these animals. They shot them principally with bows and blow-guns, at the use of which last the Senekas are wonderfully expert. The blow-gun is a narrow tube, commonly about six feet in length, made of a cane reed, or of some pithy wood, through which they drive short slender arrows by the force of the breath. The arrows are not much thicker than the lower string of a violin; they are headed generally with little triangular bits of tin, and round the opposite ends, for the length of two inches, a quantity of the down of thistles, or something very like it, is bound, so as to leave the arrows at this part of such a thickness that they may but barely pass into the tube. The arrows are put in at the end of the tube that is held next to the mouth, the down catches the breath, and with a smart puff they will fly to the distance of fifty yards. I have followed young Seneka Indians, whilst shooting with blow-guns, for hours together; during which 144 time I have never known them once to miss their aim, at the distance of ten or fifteen yards, although they shot at the little red squirrels, which are not half the size of a rat; and with such wonderful force used they to blow forth the arrows, that they frequently drove them up to the very thistle-down through the heads of the largest black squirrels. The effect of these guns appears at first like magic. The tube is put to the mouth, and in the twinkling of an eye you see the squirrel that is aimed at fall lifeless to the ground; no report, not the smallest noise even, is to be heard, nor is it possible to see the arrow, so quickly does it fly, until it appears fastened in the body of the animal.

The Seneka is one of the six nations which formerly bore the general name of the Iroquois Indians. Their principal village is situated on Buffalo Creek, which falls into the eastern extremity of Lake Erie, on the New York shore. We took the ship's boat one morning, and went over to visit it, but all the Indians, men, women, and children, amounting in all to upwards of six hundred persons, had, at an early hour, gone down to

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Fort Niagara, to partake of a feast which was there prepared for them. We walked about in the neighbourhood of the village, dined on the grass on some cold provisions that we had taken with us, and in the evening returned.

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Opposite to the mouth of Buffalo Creek there is a very dangerous sand bar, which at times it is totally impossible to pass in any other vessels than bateaux; we found it no easy matter to get over it in the ship's long boat with four oars on going into the creek; and in returning the passage was really tremendous. The wind, which was westerly, and of course impelled the vast body of water in the lake towards the mouth of the creek, had increased considerably whilst we had been on shore, and the waves had begun to break with such fury over the bar, that it was not without a considerable share of terror that we contemplated the prospect of passing through them: the commodore of the King's ships on the lake, who was at the helm, was determined, however, to cross the bar that night, and accordingly, a strict silence having been enjoined, that the crew might hear his orders, we boldly entered into the midst of the breakers: the boat now rolled about in a most alarming manner; sometimes it mounted into the air on the top of the mighty billows, at other times it came thumping down with prodigious force on the bar; at last it stuck quite fast in the sand; neither oars nor rudder were any longer of use, and for a moment we gave ourselves over for lost; the waves that rolled towards us broke on all sides with a noise like that of VOL. II. L. 146 thunder, and we were expecting that the boat would be overwhelmed by some one or other of them every instant, when luckily a large wave, that rolled on a little farther than the rest without breaking into a foam, set us again afloat and the oarsmen making at that moment the most vigorous exertions, we once more got into deep water; it was not, however, until after many minutes that we were safely out of the tremendous surf. A boat, with a pair of oars only, that attempted to follow us, was overwhelmed in an instant by a wave which broke over her: it was in vain to think of attempting to give any assistance to her crew, and we were obliged for a time to endure the painful thought that they might be struggling with death within a few yards of us; but before we lost sight of the shore we

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had the satisfaction of beholding them all standing in safety on the beach, which they had reached by swimming.

After having been detained about seven day at Fort Erie, the wind veered about in our favour, the signal gun was fired, the passengers repaired on board, and at half an hour before sun-set we launched forth into the lake. It was much such another evening as that on which we left Kingston; the vast lake, bounded only by the horizon, glowed with the rich warm tints that were reflected in its unruffled surface from the western sky; and the top of the tall forest, adorning the shores, appeared fringed with gold, as the sun sunk down behind it. There was but little wind during the first part of the night; but afterwards a fresh breeze sprang up, and by ten o'clock the next morning we found ourselves forty miles distant from the fort: the prosperous gale, however, did not long continue, the sky became overcast, the waves began to roll with fury, and the captain judging it advisable to seek a place of shelter against the impending storm, the ship was put about, and with all possible expedition measured back the way which we had just made with so much pleasure. We did not return, however, the whole way to Fort Erie, but run into a small bay on the same side of the lake, about ten miles distant, sheltered by Point Abineau: by three o'clock in the afternoon the vessel was safely moored, and this business having been accomplished, we proceeded in the long boat to the shore, which was about two miles off.

Point Abineu is a long narrow neck of land, which projects into the lake nearly in a due south direction; on each side of it there is an extensive bay, which affords good anchorage; the extremity of the point is covered with rocks, lying horizontally in beds, and extending a considerable way into the lake, nearly L 2 148 even with the surface of the water, so that it is only in a few places that boats can approach the shore. The rocks are of a slate colour, but spotted and streaked in various directions with a dirty yellow; in many places they are perforated with small holes, as if they had been exposed to the action of fire. The shores of the bays, on the contrary, are covered with sand; on digging to the depth of a few feet, however, I should imagine that in most parts of the shore the same sort of rocks would be found as those seen on the extremity of the point; for where the

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sandy part of the shore commences, it is evident that the rocks have been covered by the sand which has been washed up by the waves of the lake: the northern shore of the lake abounds very generally with rocks of the same description.

On the western side of Point Abineau the strand differs in no wise, to appearance, from that of the ocean: it is strewed with a variety of shells of a large size; quantities of gulls are continually seen hovering over it; and during a gale of wind from the west, a surge breaks in upon it, as tremendous as is to be seen on any part of the coast of England. The mounds of sand accumulated on Point Abineau are truly astonishing; those next to the lake, that have been washed by the storms of late years, are totally devoid of verdure; but others, 149 situated behind them, towards the centre of the point, seemed coeval with the world itself, and are covered with oaks of the largest size from top to bottom. In general these mounds are of an irregular form; but in some places, of the greatest height, they are so even and straight, that it appears as if they had been thrown up by the hand of art, and you may almost fancy them to be the old works of some vast fortification. These regular mounds extend in all directions, but chiefly from north to south, which demonstrates that westerly winds were as prevalent formerly in this part of the country as they are at the present day. I should suppose that some of these mounds are upwards of one hundred feet above the level of the lake.

The ground on the eastern side of the point is neither so much broken nor so sandy as that on the opposite one, and there we found two farm houses, adjoining to each of which were about thirty acres of cleared land. At one of these we procured a couple of sheep, some fowls, and a quantity of potatoes, to add to our store of provisions, as there was reason to apprehend that our voyage would not be speedily terminated: whilst the men were digging for the latter, the old woman of the house spread her little table, and prepared for us the best viands which her habitation afforded, namely, 150 coarse cake bread, roasted potatoes, and bear's flesh salted, which last we found by no means unpalatable. The haunch of a young cub is a dish much esteemed, and we frequently met with it at the table

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in the upper country; it is extremely rich and oily, nevertheless they say it never cloyes the stomach.

Towards evening we returned to the vessel, and the storm being much abated, passed not an uncomfortable night.

At day break the next morning I took the boat, and went on shore to join a party that, as I had been informed the preceding evening, was going a bear-hunting. On landing, I found the men and dogs ready, and having loaded our guns we advanced into the woods. The people here, as in the back parts of the United States, devote a very great part of their time to hunting, and they are well skilled in the pursuit of game of every description. They shoot almost universally with the rifle gun, and are as dexterous at the use of it as any men can be. The guns used by them are all imported from England. Those in most estimation carry balls of the size of thirty to the pound; in the States the hunters very commonly shoot with balls of a much smaller size, sixty of them not weighing more than one pound; but the people in Canada are of opinion that it is better to use the large 151 balls, although more troublesome to carry through the woods, as they inflict much more destructive wounds than the others, and game seldom escapes after being wounded by them. Dogs of a large size are chosen for bear hunting: those most generally preferred seem to be of a breed between the blood hound and mastiff; they will follow the scent of the bear, as indeed most field dogs will, but their chief use is to keep the bear at bay when wounded, or to follow him if he attempt to make off whilst the hunter is reloading his gun. Bears will never attempt to attack a man or a dog while they can make their escape, but once wounded or closely hemmed in they will fight most furiously. The young ones, at sight of a dog, generally take to a tree; but the old ones, as if conscious of their ability to fight a dog, and at the same time that they cannot fail of becoming the prey of the hunter if they ascend a tree, never do so, unless indeed they see a hunter coming towards them on horseback, a sight which terrifies them greatly.

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The Indians generally go in large parties to hunt bears, and on coming to the place where they suppose these animals are lurking, they form themselves into a large circle, and as they advance endeavour to rouse them. It is seldom that the white hunters muster together 152 in sufficient numbers to pursue their game in this manner; but whenever they have men enough to divide themselves so, they always do it. We proceeded in this manner at Point Abineau, where three or four men are amply sufficient to hem in a bear between the water and the main land. The point was a very favourable place for hunting this year, for the bears intent, as I before mentioned, upon emigrating to the south, used, on coming down from the upper country, to advance to the extreme end of the point, as if desirous of getting as near as possible by land to the opposite side of the lake, and scarcely a morning came but what one or two of them were found upon it. An experienced hunter can at once discern the track of a bear, deer, or any other large animal, in the woods, and can tell with no small degree of precision how long a time before, it was, that the animal passed that way. On coming to a long valley, between two of the sand hills on the point, a place through which the bears generally passed in going towards the water, the hunters whom I accompanied at once told how many bears had come down from the upper country the preceding night, and also how many of them were cubs. To the eye of a common observer the track of these animals amongst the leaves is wholly imperceptible; 153 indeed, in many instances, even after the hunters had pointed them out to me, I could but barely perceive the prints of their feet on the closest inspection; yet the hunters, on coming up to the place, saw these marks with a glance of the eye.

After killing a bear, the first care of the hunters is to strip him of his skin. This business is performed by them in a very few minutes, as they always carry knives about them particularly suited for the purpose; afterwards the carcass is cut up, an operation in which the tomahawk, an instrument that they, mostly, carry with them also, is particularly useful. The choicest parts of the animal are then selected and carried home, and the rest left in the woods. The Indians hold the paws of the bear in great estimation; stewed with young puppies, they are served up at all their principal feasts. On killing the animal, the paws

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are gashed with a knife, and, afterwards, hung over a fire, amidst the smoke, to dry. The skins of the bears are applied to numberless uses, in the country, by the farmers, who set no small value upon them. They are commonly cured by being spread upon a wall or between two trees, before the sun, and in that position scraped with a knife, or piece of iron, daily, which brings out the grease or oil, a very considerable quantity of 154 which oozes from them. Racoon and deer skins, &c. are cured in a similar manner. The Indians have a method of dressing these different skins with the hair on, and of rendering them at the same time as pliable as a piece of cloth; this is principally effected by rubbing the skins, with the hand, in the smoke of a wood fire.

Towards the middle of the day, the hunt being over, the party returned to the habitation on the point. On arriving there I found my companions, who had just come on shore, and after having strolled about the woods for a time, we all went on board the ship to dine.

The sky had been very gloomy the whole of this day; it became more and more so as the evening approached, and the seamen foretold that before morning there would be a dreadful storm. At no time a friend to the watery element, I immediately formed the resolution of passing the night on shore; accordingly have got the boat manned after dinner, I took with me my servant, and landed at the head of the bay on the eastern side of the point. Here being left to ourselves, we pitched our tent by moonlight, under the shelter of one of the steep sand hills; and having kindled a large fire in the front of it, laid down, and were soon lulled to repose 155 by the hollow roar of the wind amidst the tall trees of the surrounding forest. Not so my companions, who visited me at an early hour the next morning, and lamented sorely that they had not accompanied me on shore. There had been a tremendous sea running in the lake all night; the wind had shifted somewhat to the southward, and Point Abineau, in consequence, affording but little protection to the vessel, she had rolled about in a most alarming manner: one of the stancheons at her bow started by her violent working; the water came pouring in as from a pump; a scene of confusion ensued, and the sailors were kept busily employed the greater part of the night in stopping the leak. The vessel being old, crazy, and on her last voyage, serious apprehensions were

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entertained lest some worse accident should befall her before morning, and neither the crew nor the passengers felt themselves at all easy until daylight appeared, when the gale abated. We amused ourselves this morning in rambling through the woods, and along the shores of the lake with our fowling pieces. On the strand we found great numbers of gulls, and different birds of prey, such as hawks, kites, &c.; here also we met with large flocks of sand larks, as they are called by the people of the country, in colour somewhat resembling 156 the grey lapwing; their walk and manner also are so very similar, that when on the ground, they might be taken for the same bird were they but of a larger size; they are not much bigger than a sparrow. In the woods we fell in for the first time with a large covey or flock of spruce partridges or pheasants, as the people call them in this neighbourhood. In colour, they are not much unlike the English partridge, but of a larger size, and their flesh differs in flavour little from that of the English pheasant. They are different in many respects both from the partridge and pheasant found in Maryland and in the middle states, but in none more so than in their wonderful tameness, or rather stupidity. Before the flock took to flight, I shot three birds singly from off one tree, and had I but been acquainted with the proper method of proceeding at the time, it is possible I might have shot them all in turn. It seems you must always begin by shooting the bird that sits lowest on the tree, and so proceed upwards, in which case the survivors are not at all alarmed. Ignorant, however, of this secret, I shot at one of the uppermost birds, and the disturbance that he made in falling through the branches on which the others were perched put the flock to flight immediately.

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On returning from our ramble in the woods to the margin of the lake, we were agreeably surprised to find the wind quite favourable for prosecuting our voyage, and in a few minutes afterwards heard the signal gun, and saw the ship's boat coming for the purpose of taking us from shore. We got on board in time for dinner, but did not proceed on our voyage until midnight; so high a sea still continued running in the lake, that the captain thought it imprudent to venture out of the bay before that time. In the morning we found

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ourselves under the rich bold lands on the southern side of the lake; the water was smooth, the sky serene, and every one felt pleased with the voyage. It was on this day that we beheld the cloud over the Falls of Niagara, as I before mentioned, at the great distance of fifty-four miles.

Lake Erie is of an elliptical form; in length about three hundred miles, and in breadth, at the widest part, about ninety. The depth of water in this lake is not more than twenty fathoms, and in calm weather vessels may securely ride at anchor in any part of it; but when stormy, the anchorage in an open part of the lake is not safe, the sands at bottom not being firm, and the anchors apt therefore to lose their hold. Whenever there is a gale of wind, the waters immediately become turbid, 158 owing to the quantity of yellow sand that is washed up from the bottom of the lake; in calm weather the water is clear, and of a deep greenish colour. The northern shore of the lake is very rocky, as likewise are the shores of the islands, of which there are several clusters towards the western extremity of the lake; but along most parts of the southern shore is a fine gravelly beach. The height of the land bordering on the lake is very unequal; in some places long ranges of steep mountains rise from the very edge of the water; in others the shores are so flat and so low, that when the lake is raised a little above its usual level, in consequence of a strong gale of wind setting in towards the shore, the country is deluged for miles.

A young gentleman who was sent in a bateau with dispatches across the lake, not long before we passed through the country, perished, with several of his party, owing to an inundation of this sort that took place on a low part of the shore. I must here observe, that when you navigate the lake in a bateau, it is customary to keep as close as possible to the land; and whenever there is any danger of a storm, you run the vessel on shore, which may be done with safety, as the bottom of it is perfectly flat. I before mentioned the peculiar advantage of a bateau over a keel boat in this respect. The young gentleman alluded 159 to was coasting along in this manner, when a violent storm suddenly arose. The bateau was instantaneously turned towards the shore; unfortunately, however, in running her upon the beach some mismanagement took place, and she overset. The

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waves had already begun to break in on the shore with prodigious impetuosity; each one of them rolled farther in than the preceding one; the party took alarm, and instead of making as strenuous exertions as it was supposed they might have made, to right the bateau, they took a few necessaries out of her, and attempted to save themselves by flight; but so rapidly did the water flow after them, in consequence of the increasing storm, that before they could proceed far enough up the country to gain a place of safety, they were all overwhelmed by it, two alone excepted, who had the presence of mind and ability to climb a lofty tree. To the very great irregularity of the height of the lands on both sides of it, is attributed the frequency of storms on Lake Erie. The shores of Lake Ontario are lower and more uniform than those of any of the other lakes; and that lake is the most tranquil of any, as has already been noticed.

There is a great deficiency of good harbours along the shores of this Lake. On its northern side there are but two places which afford shelter to vessels drawing more than 160 seven feet water, namely, Long Point and Point Abineau; and these only afford a partial shelter. If the wind should shift to the southward whilst vessels happened to be lying under them, they are thereby exposed to all the dangers of a rocky lee shore. On the southern shore, the first harbour you come to in going from Fort Erie, is that of Presqu' Isle. Vessels drawing eight feet water may there ride in perfect safety; but it is a matter of no small difficulty to get into the harbour, owing to a long sand bar, which extends across the mouth of it. Presqu' Isle is situated at the distance of about sixty miles from Fort Erie. Beyond this, nearly midway between the eastern and western extremities of the lake, there is another harbour, capable of containing small vessels at the mouth of Cayhega River, and another at the month of Sandusky River, which falls into the lake within the north-western territory of the States. It is very seldom that any of these harbours are made use of by the British ships; they, indeed, trade almost solely between Fort Erie and Detroit River; and when in prosecuting their voyages they chance to meet with contrary winds, against which they cannot make head, they for the most part return to Fort Erie, if bound to Detroit River; or to some of the bays amidst the clusters of islands situated towards the western extremity of

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the 161 lake, if bound to Fort Erie. In going up the lake, it very often happens that vessels, even after they have got close under these islands, the nearest of which is not less than two hundred and forty miles from Fort Erie, are driven back by storms the whole way to that fort. Just as we were preparing to cast anchor under Middle Island, one of the nearest of them, a squall suddenly arose, and it was not without very great difficulty that we could keep our station; the captain told us afterwards, that he really feared at one time, that we should have been driven back to our old quarters.

It was about two o'clock on the third day from that of our quitting Point Abineau, that we reached Middle Island. We lay at anchor until the next morning, when the wind shifted a few points in our favour, and enabled us to proceed some miles farther on, to a place of greater safety, sheltered by islands on all sides; but beyond this, the wind did not permit us to advance for three days. It is very seldom that vessels bound from Fort Erie to any place on Detroit River accomplish their voyage without stopping amongst these islands; for the same wind favourable for carrying them from the eastern to the western extremity of the lake, will not waft them up the river. The river runs nearly in a south-west direction; its current is very strong; and unless the wind blows VOL. II. M 162 fresh, and nearly in an opposite direction to it, you cannot proceed. The navigation of Lake Erie, in general, is very uncertain; and passengers that cross it in any of the King's, or principal merchant vessels, are not only called upon to pay double the sum for their passage, demanded for that across Lake Ontario, but anchorage money besides, that is, a certain sum per diem, as long as the vessel remains wind-bound at anchor in any harbour. The anchorage money is about three dollars per day for each cabin passenger.

The islands at the western end of the lake, which are of various sizes, lie very close to each other, and the scenery amongst them is very pleasing. The largest of them are not more than fourteen miles in circumference, and many would scarcely be found to admeasure as many yards round. They are all covered with wood of some kind or other, even to the very smallest. The larger islands produce a variety of fine timber, amongst which are found oaks, hiccory trees, and red cedars; the latter grow too a much larger size

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than in any part of the neighbouring country, and they are sent for even from the British settlements on Detroit River, forty miles distant. None of these islands are much elevated above the lake, nor are they diversified with any rising grounds; most of them, indeed, are as flat as if they had 163 been overflowed with water, and in the interior parts of some of the largest of them, there are extensive ponds and marshes. The fine timber, which these islands produce, indicates that the soil must be uncommonly fertile. Here are found in great numbers, amongst the woods, racoons and squirrels; bears are also at times found upon some of the islands during the winter season, when the lake is frozen between the main land and the islands; but they do not remain continually, as the other animals do. All the islands are dreadfully infested with serpents, and on some of them, rattlesnakes are so numerous, that in the height of summer it is really dangerous to land: it was now late in September; yet we had not been three minutes on shore on Bass Island, before several of these noxious reptiles were seen amongst the bushes, and a couple of them, of a large size, were killed by the seamen.

Two kinds of rattlesnakes are found in this part of the country; the one is of a deep brown colour, clouded with yellow, and is seldom met with more than thirty inches in length. It usually frequents marshes and low meadows, where it does great mischief amongst cattle, which it bites mostly in the lips as they are grazing. The other sort is of a greenish yellow colour, clouded with brown, and attains nearly twice the size of the other. It is most commonly M 2 164 found between three and four feet in length, and as thick as the wrist of a large man. The rattlesnake is much thicker in proportion to its length than any other snake, and it is thickest in the middle of the body, which approaches somewhat to a triangular form, the belly being flat, and the back bone rising higher than any other part of the animal. The rattle, with which this serpent is provided, is at the end of the tail; it is usually about half an inch in breadth, one quarter of an inch in thickness, and each joint about half an inch long. The joint consists of a number of little cases of a dry horny substance, inclosed one within another, and not only the outermost of these little cases articulates with the outermost case of the contiguous joint, but each case, even to the

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smallest one of all, at the inside, is connected by a sort of joint with the corresponding case in the next joint of the rattle. The little cases or shells lie very loosely within one another, and the noise proceeds from their dry and hard coats striking one against the other. It is said, that the animal gains a fresh joint to its rattle every year; of this, however, I have great doubts, for the largest snakes are frequently found to have the fewest joints to their rattles. A medical gentleman in the neighbourhood of Newmarket, behind the Blue mountains in Virginia, had a rattle in his 165 possession, which contained no less than thirty-two joints; yet the snake from which it was taken, scarcely admeasured five feet; rattlesnakes, however, of the same kind, and in the same part of the country, have been found of a greater length with not more than ten rattles. One of the snakes, which we saw killed on Bass Island, in Lake Erie, had no more than joints in its rattle, and yet it was nearly four feet long.

The skin of the rattlesnake, when the animal is wounded, or otherwise enraged, exhibits a variety of beautiful tints, never seen at any other time. It is not with the teeth which the rattlesnake uses for ordinary purposes, that it strikes its enemy, but with two long crooked fangs in the upper jaw, which point down the throat. When about to use these fangs, it rears itself up as much as possible, throws back its head, drops its under jaw, and springing forward upon its tail, endeavours to hook itself as it were upon its enemy. In order to raise itself on its tail, it coils itself up previously in a spiral line, with the head in the middle. It cannot spring farther forward than about half its own length.

The flesh of the rattlesnake is as white as the most delicate fish, and is much esteemed by those who are not prevented from tasting it by prejudice. The soup made from it, is said to be delicious and very nourishing.

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In my rambles about the islands under which we lay at anchor, I found many specimens of the exuvizæ of these snakes, which, in the opinion of the country people of Upper Canada, are very efficacious in the cure of the rheumatism, when laid over the part afflicted, and

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fastened with a bandage. The body of the rattlesnake dried to a cinder over the fire, and then finely pulverised, and infused in a certain portion of brandy, is also said to be a never-failing remedy against that disorder. I conversed with many people who had made use of this medicine, and they were firmly persuaded that they were indebted to it for a speedy cure. The liquor is taken inwardly, in the quantity of a wine-glass full at once, about three times a day. No effect, more than from taking plain brandy, is perceived from taking this medicine on the first day; but at the end of the second day, the body of the patient becomes suffused with a cold sweat, every one of his joints grow painful, and his limbs become feeble, and scarcely able to support him; he grows worse and worse for a day or two; but by persevering in the use of the medicine for a few days, he gradually loses his pains, and recovers his wonted strength of body.

Many different kinds of serpents besides rattlesnakes, are found on these islands in Lake Erie. I killed several totally different from 167 any that I had ever met with in any other part of the country; amongst the number, was one which I was informed was venomous in the highest degree: it was somewhat more than three feet in length; its back was perfectly black; its belly a vivid orange. I found it amongst the rocks on Middle Island, and on being wounded in the tail, it turned about to defend itself with inconceivable fury. Mr. Carver tells us of a serpent that is peculiar to these islands, called, the hissing snake: "It is," says he, "of the small speckled kind, and about "eighteen inches long. When any thing approaches "it, it flattens itself in a moment, "and its spots, which are of various, dyes, "become visibly brighter through rage; at the "same time it blows from its mouth with "great force a subtile wind, that is reported to "be of a nauseous smell, and if drawn in with "the breath of the unwary traveller, will infallibly "bring on a decline, that in a few "months must prove mortal, there being no "remedy yet discovered which can counteract "its baneful influence." Mr. Carver does not inform us of his having himself seen this snake; I am tempted, therefore to imagine, that he has been imposed upon, and that the whole account he has given of it is fabulous. I made very particular enquiries respecting the existence of such a snake, from those persons who 168 were in the habit of touching at these islands; and neither they nor

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any other person I met with in the country, had ever seen or heard of such a snake, except in Mr. Carver's Travels. Were a traveller to believe all the stories respecting snakes that are current in the country, he must believe that there is such a snake as the whip-snake, which, as it is said, pursues cattle through the woods and meadows, lashing them with its tail, till overcome with the fatigue of running they drop breathless to the ground, when it preys upon their flesh. He must also believe that there is such a snake as the hoop-snake, which has the power of fixing its tail firmly in a certain cavity inside of its mouth, and then of rolling itself forward like a hoop or wheel with such wonderful velocity, that neither man nor beast can possibly escape from its devouring jaws.

The ponds and marshes in the interior parts of these islands abound with ducks and other wild fowl, and the shores swarm with gulls. A few small birds are found in the woods; but I saw none amongst them that were remarkable either for their song or plumage.

At sun-set on the last day of September, we left the islands, and the next morning entered Detroit River. The river, at its mouth, is about five miles wide, and continues nearly the same breadth for a considerable distance. The 169 shores are of a moderate height, and thickly wooded; but there was nothing particularly interesting in the prospect till we arrived within four or five miles of the new British post. Here the banks appeared diversified with Indian encampments and villages, and beyond them the British settlements were seen to great advantage. The river was crowded with Indian canoes and bateaux, and several pleasure boats belonging to the officers of the garrison, and to the traders, that had come out in expectation of meeting us, were seen cruising about backwards and forwards. The two other vessels of war, which we had left behind us at Fort Erie, as well as the trading vessels, had overtaken us just as we entered the river, and we all sailed up together with every bit of canvass, that we could muster, full spread. The day was uncommonly clear, and the scene altogether was pleasing and interesting.

The other vessels proceeded up the river to the British post; but ours, which was laden with presents for the Indians, cast anchor opposite to the habitation of the gentleman in the

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Indian department, whom I before mentioned, which was situated in the district of Malden. He gave us a most cordial invitation to stay at his house whilst we should remain in this part of the country; we gladly accepted of it, and accordingly went with him on shore.

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LETTER XXXIII

Description of the District of Malden.—Establishment of a new British Post there.—Island of Bois Blanc.—Difference between the British and Americans, respecting the Right of Possession.—Block Houses, how constructed.—Captain E...’s Farm.—Indians.—Description of Detroit River, and the Country bordering upon it.—Town of Detroit.—Head Quarters of the American Army.—Officers of the Western Army.—Unsuccessful Attempt of the Americans to impress upon the Minds of the Indians an Idea of their Consequence.—Of the Country round Detroit.—Doubts concerning our Route back to Philadelphia.—Determine to go by Presqu’ Isle.—Departure from Detroit.

Malden, October.

MALDEN is a district of considerable extent, situated on the eastern side of Detroit River, about eighteen miles below the town of Detroit. At the lower end of the district there are but few houses, and these stand very widely asunder; but at the upper end, bordering upon the river, and adjoining to the new British post that has been established since the evacuation of Detroit, a little town has been laid out, which already contains more than twenty houses, and is rapidly increasing. Hither several of the traders have removed, who formerly resided at Detroit. This little town has as yet received no particular name, neither has the new post; but they merely go under the name of, The new British post and town near the island of Bois-Blanc, and island in the river near two miles in length, and half a mile in breadth, that lies opposite to Malden.

When the evacuation of Detroit was first talked of, the island was looked to as an eligible situation for the new post, and orders were sent to purchase it from the Indians, and

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to take possession of it in the name of his Britannic Majesty. Accordingly, a party of troops went down for that purpose from Detroit; they erected a small blockhouse on the northern extremity of it, and left a serjeant's guard there for its defence. Preparations were afterwards making for building a fort on it; but in the mean time a warm remonstrance against such proceedings came from the government of the United States* , who

* Notwithstanding that the government of the United States has thought it incumbent upon itself to remonstrate against our taking possession of this island, and thus to dispute every inch of ground respecting the right to which there could be the smallest doubt; yet the generality of the people of the States affect to talk of every such step as idle and unnecessary, inasmuch as they are fully persuaded, in their own minds, that all the British dominions in North America must, sooner or later, become a part of their empire. Thus, Mr. Imlay, in his account of the north-western territory: "It is "certain, that as the country has been more opened in America, "and thereby the rays of the sun have acted more "powerfully upon the earth, these benefits have tended "greatly to soften the winter season; so that peopling Canada, "for which we are much obliged to you, is a double "advantage to us. First, it is settling and populating a country, "that must, sooner or later, from the natural order of "things, become a part of our empire; and secondly, it is "immediately meliorating the climate of the northern "states," &c.

The greatest empires that have ever appeared on the face of the globe, have dissolved in the course of time; and no one acquainted with history will, I take it for granted, presume to say, that the extended empire of Britain, all powerful as it is at present, is so much more closely knit together than any other empire ever was before it, that it can never fall asunder: Canada, I therefore suppose, may, with revolving years, be disjointed from the mother country, as well as her other colonies; but whenever that period shall arrive, which I trust is far distant, I am humbly of opinion that it will not form an additional knot in that extensive union of states which at present subsist on the continent of North America; indeed, were the British dominions in North America to be dissevered from the other

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members of the empire the ensuing year, I am still tempted to imagine, that they would not become linked with the present federal American states; and for the following reasons:

First, because the constitution of the federal states, which is the bond that holds them together, is not calculated for such a large territory as that which the present states, together with such an addition, would constitute.

The constitution of the states is that of the people, who, through their respective representatives, assembled together at some one place, must decide upon every measure that is to be taken for the public weal. This place, it is evident, ought in justice to be as central as possible to every state; the necessity, indeed, of having the place so situated, has been manifested in the building of the new federal city. Were it not for this step, many of the most enlightened characters in the states have given it as their opinion, that the union could not have remained many years entire, for the states so far removed from the seat of the legislature, before the new city was founded, had complained grievously of the distance which their delegates had to travel to meet congress, and had begun to talk of the necessity of a separation of the states: and now, on the other hand, that a central spot has been fixed upon, those states to the northward, conveniently situated to Philadelphia, the present seat of the federal government, say that the new city will be so far removed from them, that the sending of delegates thither will be highly inconvenient to them, and so much so, as to call for a separation of the union on their part. In a former letter I stated the various opinions that were entertained by the people of the United States on this subject, and I endeavoured to shew, that the seat of Congress would be removed to the new federal city without endangering a partition of the states; but I am fully persuaded, that were Canada to become an independant state, and a place were to be fixed on central to all the states, supposing her to be one, that neither she, nor the state at the remote opposite end, would long continue, if they ever did submit, to send their delegates to a place so far removed, that it would require more than a fourth part of the year for them

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(the delegates) to travel, even with the utmost possible expedition, backward and forward, between the district which they represented and the seat of congress.

Secondly, I think the two Canadas will never become connected with the present states, because the people of these provinces, and those of the adjoining states, are not formed for a close intimacy with each other.

The bulk of the people of Upper Canada are refugees, who were driven from the States by the persecution of the republican party; and though the thirteen years which have passed over have nearly extinguished every spark of resentment against the Americans, in the breasts of the people of England, yet this is by no means the case in Upper Canada; it is there common to hear, even from the children of the refugees, the most gross invectives poured out against the people of the States; and the people of the frontier states, in their turn, are as violent against the refugees and their posterity; and, indeed, whilst Canada forms a part of the British empire, I am inclined, from what I have seen and heard in travelling through the country, to think that this spirit will not die away. In Lower Canada the same acrimonious temper of mind is not observable amongst the people, excepting indeed in those few parts of the country where the inhabited parts of the States approach closely to those of the province; but here appears to be a general disinclination amongst the inhabitants to have any political connection with the people of the States, and the French Canadians affect to hold them in the greatest contempt. Added to this, the prevalent language of the lower province, which has remained the same for almost forty years, notwithstanding the great pains that have been taken to change it, and which is therefore likely to remain so still, is another obstacle in the way of any close connection between the people of the lower province and those of the States. Even in conducting the affairs of the provincial legislative assembly, notwithstanding that most of the English inhabitants are well acquainted with the French language, yet a considerable degree of difficulty is experienced from the generality of the French delegates being totally ignorant

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of the English language, which, as I have already mentioned, they have an unconquerable aversion against learning.

Thirdly, I think the British dominions in North America will never be annexed to those of the States, because they are by nature formed for constituting a separate independant territory.

At present the boundary line between the British dominions and the States runs along the river St. Croix, thence along the high lands bordering upon New England till it meets the forty-fifth parallel of north latitude, and afterwards along the said parallel until it strikes the River St. Lawrence, or Cataragui or Iroquois. Now the dominions south of the St. Lawrence are evidently not separated from the United States by any bold determinate boundary line; I therefore suppose that they may, in some manner, be connected with them; but the country to the northward, bounded on the north by Hudson's Bay, on the east by the ocean, on the south and west by the St. Lawrence, and that vast chain of lakes which extends to the westward, is separated from the United States by one of the most remarkable boundary lines that is to be found on the face of the globe between any two countries on the same continent; and from being bounded in such a remarkable manner, and thus detached as it were by nature from the other parts of the continent, it appears to me that it is calculated for forming a distinct separate state, or distinct union of states, from the present American federal States; that is, supposing, with the revolutions of time, that this arm of the British empire should be some time or other lopped off. I confess it appears strange to me, that any person should suppose, after looking attentively over a map of North America, that the British dominions, so extensive and so unconnected with them, could ever become joined in a political union with the present federal states on the continent. There is more reason to imagine that the Floridas, and the Spanish possessions to the east of the Mississippi, will be united therewith; for as the rivers which flow through the Spanish dominions are the only channels whereby the people of some of the western states can convey the produce of their own country to the ocean with convenience, it is natural to suppose that the people of these states will be anxious to gain possession of

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these rivers, for which purpose they must possess themselves of the country through which they pass. But there are certain bounds, beyond which a representative government cannot extend, and the ocean on the east and south, the St. Lawrence and the lakes on the north, and the Mississippi on the west, certainly appear to set bounds to the jurisdiction of the government of the United States, if indeed it can extend even so far.

172 insisted upon it that the island was not within the limits of the British dominions. The 173 point, it was found, would admit of some dispute; and as it could not be determined immediately, 174 the plan of building the fort was relinquished for the time. The block-house on 175 the island, however, still remains guarded, and possession will be kept of it, until the matter in 176 dispute be adjudged by the commissioners appointed, pursuant to the late treaty for the purpose of determining the exact boundaries of the British dominions in this part of the continent, which were by no means clearly ascertained by the definitive treaty of peace between the States and Great Britain.

In this particular instance, the dispute arises respecting the true meaning of certain words of the treaty. "The boundary line," it says, "is to run through the middle of Lake Erie "until it arrive at the water communication "between that lake and Lake Huron; thence "along the middle of the said water communication." The people of the States construe the middle of the water communication to be the middle of the most approved and most frequented channel of the river; we, on 177 the contrary, construe it to be the middle of the river, provided there is a tolerable channel on each side. Now the island of Bois Blanc clearly lies between the middle of the river and the British main; but then the deepest and most approved channel for ships of burthen, is between the island and the British shore. In our acceptation of the word, therefore, the island unquestionably belongs to us; in that of the people of the States, to them. It appears to me, that our claim in this instance is certainly the most just; for although the best and most commodious channel be on our side, yet the channel on the opposite side of the island is sufficiently deep to admit through it, with perfect safety, the largest of the vessels at present on the lakes, and indeed as large vessels as are deemed suitable for this navigation.

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Plans for a fort on the main land, and for one on the island of Bois Blanc, have been drawn; but as only the one fort will be erected, the building of it is postponed until it is determined to whom the island belongs: if within the British dominions, the fort will be erected on the island, as there is a still more advantageous position for one there than one the main land; in the mean time, a large block-house, capable of accommodating, in every respect comfortably, one hundred men VOL. II. N 178 and officers, has been erected on the main land, around which about four acres or more of ground have been reserved for his Majesty's use, in case the fort should not be built on the island.

A Block-House, which I have so frequently mentioned, is a building, whose walls are formed of thick square pieces of timber. It is usually built two stories high, in which case the upper story is made to project about two or three feet beyond the walls of the lower one, and loop holes are left in the floor round the edge of it, so that if an attempt were made to storm the house, the garrison could fire directly down upon the heads of the assailants. Loop holes are left also in various parts of the walls, some of which are formed, as is the case at this new block-house at Malden, of a size sufficient to admit a small cannon to be fired through them. The loop holes are furnished with large wooden stoppers or wedges, which in the winter season, when there is no danger of an attack, are put in, and the interstices closely caulked, to guard against the cold; and, indeed, to render the house warm, they are obliged to take no small pains in caulking the seams between the timber in every part. A block-house, built on the most approved plan, is so constructed, that if one half of it were shot away, the other half would stand firm. Each piece of timber 179 in the roof and walls is jointed in such a manner, as to be rendered independent of the next piece to it; one wall is independent of the next wall, and the roof is in a great measure independent of all of them; so that if a piece of artillery were played upon the house, that bit of timber alone against which the ball struck would be displaced, and every other one would remain uninjured. A block-house is proof against the heaviest fire of musquetry. As these houses may be erected in a very short time, and as there is such an abundance of timber in every part of the country, wherewith to build them, they are met with in North

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America at almost every military out-post, and indeed in almost every fortress throughout the country. There are several in the upper town of Quebec.

Amongst the scattered houses at the lower end of the district of Malden, there are several of a respectable appearance, and the farms adjoining to them are very considerable. The farm belonging to our friend, Captain E—, under whose roof we tarry, contains no less than two thousand acres. A very large part of it is cleared, and it is cultivated in a style which would not be thought meanly of even in England. His house, which is the best in the whole district, is agreeably situated, at the distance of about two hundred yards from the N 2 180 river; there is a full view of the river, and of the island of Bois Blanc, from the parlour windows, and the scene is continually enlivened by the number of Indian canoes that pass and repass before it. In front of the house there is a neat little lawn, paled in, and ornamented with clumps of trees, at the bottom of which, not far from the water, stands a large Indian wigwam, called the council-house, in which the Indians are assembled whenever there are any affairs of importance to be transacted between them and the officers in the Indian department. Great numbers of these people come from the island of Bois Blanc, where no less than five hundred families of them are encamped, to visit us daily; and we in our turn go frequently to the island, to have an opportunity of observing their native manners and customs.

Our friend has told them, that we have crossed the big lake, the Atlantic, on purpose to come and see them. The circumstance has given them a very favourable opinion of us; they approve highly of the undertaking, and say, that we have employed our time to a good purpose. No people on earth have a higher opinion of their own consequence; indeed, they esteem themselves superior to every other race of men.

We remained for a short time in Malden, and then set off for Detroit in a neat little 181 pleasure boat, which one of the traders obligingly lent to us. The river between the two places varies in breadth from two miles to half a mile. The banks are mostly very low, and in some places large marshes extend along the shores, and far up into the country. The

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shores are adorned with rich timber of various kinds, and bordering upon the marshes, where the trees have full scope to extend their branches, the woodland scenery is very fine. Amidst the marshes, the river takes some very considerable bends, and it is diversified at the same time with several large islands, which occasion a great diversity of prospect.

Beyond Malden no houses are to be seen on either side of the river, except indeed the few miserable little huts in the Indian villages, until you come within four miles or thereabouts of Detroit. Here the settlements are very numerous on both sides, but particularly on that belonging to the British. The country abounds with peach, apple, and cherry orchards, the richest I ever beheld; in many of them the trees, loaded with large apples of various dyes, appeared bent down into the very water. They have many different sorts of excellent apples in this part of the country, but there is one far superior to all the rest, and which is held in great estimation, called the *pomme caille*. I do not recollect to have seen it in any other part of the world, though doubtless it is not 182 peculiar to this neighbourhood. It is of an extraordinary large size, and deep red colour; not confined merely to the skin, but extending to the very core of the apple; if the skin be taken off delicately, the fruit appears nearly as red as when entire. We could not resist the temptation of stopping at the first of these orchards we came to, and for a few pence we were allowed to lade our boat with as much fruit as we could well carry away. The peaches were nearly out of season now, but from the few I tasted, I should suppose that they were of a good kind, far superior in flavour, size, and juiciness, to those commonly met with in the orchards of the middle states.

The houses in this part of the country are all built in a similar style to those in Lower Canada; the lands are laid out and cultivated also similarly to those in the lower province; the manners and persons of the inhabitants are the same; French is the predominant language, and the traveller may fancy for a moment, if he pleases, that he has been wafted by enchantment back again into the neighbourhood of Montreal, or Three Rivers. All the principal posts throughout the western country, along the lakes, the

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Ohio, the Illinois, &c. were established by the French; but, except at Detroit and in the neighbourhood, and in the Illinois country, the French settlers have become so blended with the greater number 183 who spoke English, that their language has every where died away.

Detroit contains about three hundred houses, and is the largest town in the western country. It stands contiguous to the river, on the top of the banks, which are here about twenty feet high. At the bottom of them there are very extensive wharfs for the accommodation of the shipping, built of wood, similar to those in the Atlantic sea-ports. The town consists of several streets that run parallel to the river, which are intersected by others at right angles. They are all very narrow, and not being paved, dirty in the extreme whenever it happens to rain: for the accommodation of passengers, however, there are footways in most of them, formed of square logs, laid transversely close to each other. The town is surrounded by a strong stockade, through which there are four gates; two of them open to the wharfs, and the two others to the north and south side of the town respectively. The gates are defended by strong block-houses, and on the west side of the town is a small fort in form of a square, with bastions at the angles. At each of the corners of this fort, is planted a small field-piece; and these constitute the whole of the ordnance at present in the place. The British kept a considerable train of artillery here, but the place was never capable of holding out for any length of time against a regular 184 force: the fortifications, indeed, were constructed chiefly as a defence against the Indians.

Detroit is at present the head-quarters of the western army of the States; the garrison consists of three hundred men, who are quartered in barracks. Very little attention is paid by the officers to the minutiae of discipline, so that however well the men may have acquitted themselves in the field, they make but a poor appearance on parade. The belles of the town are quite au desespoir at the late departure of the British troops; though the American officers tell them they have no reason to be so, as they will find them much more sensible agreeable men than the British officers, when they know them; a style of conversation, which, strange as it may appear to us, is yet not at all uncommon amongst

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them. Three months, however, have not altered the first opinion of the ladies. I cannot better give you an idea of the unpolished, coarse, discordant manners of the generality of the officers of the western army of the States, than by telling you, that they cannot agree sufficiently amongst themselves to form a regimental mess; repeated attempts have been made since their arrival at the Detroit to establish one, but their frequent quarrels would never suffer it to remain permanent. A duellist and an officer of the western army were 185 near]y synonymous terms, at one period, in the United States, owing to the very great number of duels that took place amongst them when cantoned at Grenville.

About two-thirds of the inhabitants of Detroit are of French extraction; and the greater part of the inhabitants of the settlements on the river, both above and below the town, are of the same description. The former are mostly engaged in trade, and they all appear to be much on an equality. Detroit is a place of very considerable trade; there are no less than twelve trading vessels belonging to it, brigs, sloops, and schooners, of from fifty to one hundred tons burthen each. The inland navigation in this quarter is indeed very extensive, Lake Erie, three hundred miles in length, being open to vessels belonging to the port, on the one side; and lakes Michigan and Huron, the first upwards of two hundred miles in length, and sixty in breadth, and the second, no less than one thousand miles in circumference, on the opposite; not to speak of Lake St. Clair and Detroit River, which connect these former lakes together, or of the many large rivers which fall into them. The stores and shops in the town are well furnished, and you may buy fine cloth, linen, &c. and every article of wearing apparel, as good in their kind, and nearly on as reasonable terms, 186 as you can purchase them at New York or Philadelphia.

The inhabitants are well supplied with provisions of every description; the fish in particular, caught in the river and neighbouring lakes, are of a very superior quality. The fish held in most estimation is a sort of large trout, called the Michillimakinac white-fish, from its being caught mostly in the straits of that name. The inhabitants of Detroit and the neighbouring country, however, though they have provisions in plenty, are frequently much distressed for one very necessary concomitant, namely, salt. Until within a short time past they had

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no salt but what was brought from, Europe; but salt springs have been discovered in various parts of the country, from which they are now beginning to manufacture that article for themselves. The best and most profitable of the springs are retained in the hands of government, and the profits arising from the sale of the salt, are to be paid into the treasury of the province. Throughout the western country, they procure their salt from springs, some of which throw up sufficient water to yield several hundred bushels in the course of one week.

There is a large Roman catholic church in the town of Detroit, and another on the opposite side, called the Huron church, from its 187 having been devoted to the use of the Huron Indians. The streets of Detroit are generally crowded with Indians of one tribe or other; and amongst them, you see numberless old squaws leading about their daughters, ever ready to dispose of them, pro tempore, to the highest bidder. At night all the Indians, except such as get admittance into private houses, and remain there quietly, are turned out of the town, and the gates shut upon them.

The American officers here have endeavoured to their utmost to impress upon the minds of the Indians, an idea of their own superiority over the British; but as they are very tardy in giving these people any presents, they do not pay much attention to their words. General Wayne, from continually promising them presents, but at the same time always postponing the delivery when they come to ask for them, has significantly been nicknamed by them, General Wabang, that is, General To-morrow.

The country around Detroit is very much cleared, and so likewise is that on the British side of the river for a considerable way above the town. The settlements extend nearly as far as lake Huron; but beyond the River La Trenche, which falls into Lake St. Clair, they are scattered very thinly along the shores. The banks of the River La Trenche, or Thames, 188 as it is now called, are increasing very fast in population, as I before mentioned, owing to the great emigration thither of people from the neighbourhood of Niagara, and of Detroit also since it has been evacuated by the British. We made an excursion, one morning, in

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our little boat, as far as Lake St. Clair, but met with nothing, either amongst the inhabitants or in the face of the country, particularly deserving of mention. The country round Detroit is uncommonly flat, and in none of the rivers is there a fall sufficient to turn even a grist mill. The current of Detroit River itself is stronger than that of any others, and a floating mill was once invented by a Frenchman, which was chained in the middle of that river, where it was thought the stream would be sufficiently swift to turn the water wheel: the building of it was attended with considerable expence to the inhabitants, but after it was finished, it by no means answered their expectations. They grind their corn at present by wind mills, which I do not remember to have seen in any other part of North America.

The soil of the country bordering upon Detroit River is rich though light, and it produces good crops both of Indian corn and wheat. The climate is much more healthy than that of the country in the neighbourhood 189 of Niagara River; intermittent fevers however are by no means uncommon disorders. The summers are intensively hot, Fahrenheit's thermometer often rising above 100; yet a winter seldom passes over but what snow remains on the ground for two or three months.

Whilst we remained at Detroit, we had to determine upon a point of some moment to us travellers, namely, upon the route by which to return back towards the Atlantic. None of us felt much inclined to cross the lake again to Fort Erie, we at once therefore laid aside all thoughts of returning that way. Two other routes then presented themselves for our consideration; the one was to proceed by land from Detroit, through the north western territory of the United States, as far as the head waters of some one of the rivers which fall into the Ohio, having reached which, we might afterwards have proceeded upwards or downwards, as we found most expedient: the other was to cross by water to Presqu'Isle, on the south side of Lake Erie, and thence go down French Creek and the Alleghany River, as far as Pittsburgh on the Ohio, where being arrived we should likewise have had the choice of descending the Ohio and Mississippi, or of going on to Philadelphia, through Pennsylvania, according as we should find circumstances most convenient. The first of these 190 routes was most suited to our inclination, but we soon found that we must give

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over all thoughts of proceeding by it. The way to have proceeded would have been to set out on horseback, taking with us sufficient provisions to last for a journey through a forest of upwards of two hundred miles in length, and trusting our horses to the food which they could pick up for themselves amongst the bushes. There was no possibility of procuring horses, however, for hire at Detroit or in the neighbourhood; and had we purchased them, which could not have been done but at a most exorbitant price, we should have found it a difficult matter perhaps to have got rid of them when we had ended our land journey, unless indeed we chose to turn them adrift in the woods, which would not have been perfectly suitable to our finances. But independent of this consideration, there was another obstacle in our way, and that was the difficulty of procuring guides. The Indians were all preparing to set out on their hunting excursions; and had we even been able to have procured a party of them for an escort, there would have been some risk, we were told, of their deserting us before we reached our journey's end. If they fell in on their journey with a hunting party that had been very successful; if they came to a place where there was great abundance of game; or, in short, if we did not proceed just according to their fancy, impatient of every restraint, and without caring in the least for the hire we had promised them, they would, perhaps, leave us in the whim of moment to shift for ourselves in the woods, a situation we had no desire to see ourselves reduced to: we determined therefore to proceed by Presqu'Isle. But now another difficulty arose, namely, how we were to get there: a small vessel, a very unusual circumstance indeed, was just about to sail, but it was so crowded with passengers, that there was not a single berth vacant, and moreover, if there had been, we did not wish to depart so abruptly from this part of the country. One of the principal traders, however, at Detroit, to whom we had carried letters, soon accommodated matters to our satisfaction, by promising to give orders to the master of one of the lake vessels, of which he was in part owner, to land us at that place. The vessel was to sail in a fortnight; we immediately therefore secured a passage in her; and having settled with the master that he should call for us at Malden, we set off once more for that place in our little boat, and in a few hours, from the time we quitted Detroit, arrived there.

LETTER XXXIV.

Presents delivered to the Indians on the Part of the British Government.—Mode of distributing them.—Reasons why given.—What is the best Method of conciliating the good Will of the Indians.—Little pains taken by the Americans to keep up a good Understanding with the Indians.—Consequences thereof.—War between the Americans and Indians.—A brief Account of it.—Peace concluded by General Wayne.—Not likely to remain permanent.—Why.—Indian Manner of making Peace described.

Malden, October.

ADJOINING to our friend's house at Malden stands an extensive range of store-houses, for the reception of the presents yearly made by Government to the Indians in this part of the country, in which several clerks are kept constantly employed. Before we had been long at Malden, we had an opportunity of seeing some of the presents delivered out. A number of chiefs of different tribes had previously come to our friend, who is at the head of the department in this quarter, and had given to them, each, a bundle of little bits of cedar wood, about the thickness of a small pocket book pencil, to remind him of the exact 193 number of individuals in each tribe that expected to share the bounty of their great father. The sticks in these bundles were of different lengths, the longest denoted the number of warriors in the tribe, the next in size the number of women, and the smallest the number of children. Our friend on receiving them handed them over to his clerks, who made a memorandum in their books of the contents of each bundle, and of the persons that gave them, in order to prepare the presents accordingly. The day fixed upon for the delivery of the presents was bright and fair, and being in every respect favourable for the purpose, the clerks began to make the necessary arrangements accordingly.

A number of large stakes were first fixed down in different parts of the lawn, to each of which was attached a label, with the name of the tribe, and the number of persons in it,

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who, were to be provided for; then were brought out from the stores several bales of thick blankets, of blue, scarlet, and brown cloth, and of coarse figured cottons, together with large rolls of tobacco, guns, flints, powder, balls, shot, case-knives, ivory and horn combs, looking-glasses, pipe-tomahawks, hatchets, scissars, needles, vermilion in bags, copper and iron pots and kettles, the whole valued at about 500 *l.* sterling. The bales of goods VOL. 11. O 194 being opened, the blankets, cloths, and cottons, were cut up into small pieces, each sufficient to make for one person a wrapper, a shirt, a pair of leggings, or whatever else it was intended for; and the portions of the different articles intended for each tribe were thrown together in a heap, at the bottom of the stake which bore its name. This business took up several hours, as there were no less than four hundred and twenty Indians to be served. No liquor, nor any silver ornaments, except to favourite chiefs in private, are ever given on the part of government to the Indians, notwithstanding they are so fond of both; and a trader who attempts to give these articles to them in exchange for the presents they have received from government, or, indeed, who takes from them, on any conditions, their presents, is liable to a very heavy penalty for every such act, by the laws of the province.

The presents having been all prepared, the chiefs were ordered to assemble their warriors, who were loitering about the grounds at the outside of the lawn. In a few minutes they all came, and having been drawn up in a large circle, our friend delivered a speech on the occasion, without which ceremony no business, according to Indian custom, is ever transacted. In this they were told, "That their great and good Father, who lived on the opposite side of 195 the big lake (meaning thereby the king) was ever attentive to the happiness of all his faithful people; and that, with his accustomed bounty, he had sent the presents which now lay before them to his good children the Indians; that he had sent the guns, the hatchets, and the ammunition for the young men, and the clothing for the aged, women, and children; that he hoped the young men would have no occasion to employ their weapons in fighting against enemies, but merely in hunting; and that he recommended it to them to be attentive to the old, and to share bountifully with them what

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they gained by the chace; that he trusted the great spirit would give them bright suns and clear skies, and a favourable season for hunting; and that when another year should pass over, if he still continued to find them good children, he would not fail to renew his bounties, by sending them more presents from across the big lake.”

This speech was delivered in English, but interpreters attended, who repeated it to the different tribes in their respective languages, paragraph by paragraph, at the end of every one of which the indians signified their satisfaction by a loud coarse exclamation of “Hoah! Hoah!” The speech ended, the chiefs were called forward, and their several heaps were shewn to them, and committed to their care O 2 196 They received them with thanks; and beckoning to their warriors, a number of young men quickly started from the crowd, and in less than three minutes the presents were conveyed from the lawn, and laden on board the canoes, in waiting to convey them to the island and adjacent villages. The utmost regularity and propriety was manifested on this occasion in the behaviour of every Indian; there was not the smallest wrangling amongst them about their presents; nor was the least spark of jealousy observable in any one tribe about what the other had received; each one took up the heap allotted to it, and departed without speaking a word.

Besides the presents, such as I have described, others of a different nature again, namely, provisions, were dealt out this year amongst certain tribes of the Indians that were encamped on the island of Bois Blanc. These were some of the tribes that had been at war with the people of the United States, whose villages, fields of corn, and stores of provisions had been totally destroyed during the contest by General Wayne, and who having been thereby bereft of every means of support, had come, as soon as peace was concluded, to beg for subsistence from their good friends the British. “Our enemies,” said they, “have destroyed our villages and stores of provisions; 197 “our women and children are left without “food; do you then, who call yourselves our “friends, shew us now that you really are so, “and give them food to eat till the sun ripens “our corn, and the great spirit gives another “prosperous season for hunting.” Their request was at once complied with; a large store-house was erected on the island, and filled with provisions at the expence of

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government for their use, and regularly twice a week the clerks in the Indian department went over to distribute them. About three barrels of salted pork or beef, as many of flour, beans or peas, Indian corn, and about two carcasses of fresh beef, were generally given out each time. These articles of provision the Indians received, not in the thankful manner in which they did the other presents, but seemingly as if they were due to them of right. One nation they think ought never to hesitate about giving relief to another in distress, provided it was not at enmity with it; and indeed, were their white brethren' the British, to be reduced by any calamity to a similar state of distress, the Indians would with the utmost cheerfulness share with them their provisions to the very last.

The presents delivered to the Indians; together with the salaries of the officers in the Indian department, are computed to cost the crown, as I before mentioned, about 100,000 / 198 sterling, on an average, per annum. When we first gained possession of Canada, the expence of the presents was much greater, as the Indians were then more numerous, and as it was also found necessary to bestow upon them, individually, much larger presents than are now given, in order to overcome the violent prejudices against us which had been instilled into their minds by the French. These prejudices having happily been removed, and the utmost harmony having been established between them and the people on our frontiers, presents of a less value even than what are now distributed amongst them would perhaps be found sufficient to keep up that good understanding which now subsists between us; it could not, however, be deemed a very advisable measure to curtail them, as long as a possibility remained that the loss of their friendship might be incurred thereby; and, indeed, when we consider what a happy and numerous people the Indians were before Europeans intruded themselves into the territories allotted to them by nature; when we consider how many thousands have perished in battle, embroiled in our contests for power and dominion, and how many thousands more have perished by the use of the poisonous beverages which we have introduced amongst them; when we consider how many artificial wants have been raised in 199 the minds of the few nations of them that yet remain, and how sadly the morals of these nations have been corrupted by their

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intercourse with the whites; when we consider, finally, that in the course of fifty years more no vestige even of these once virtuous and amiable people will probably be found in the whole of that extensive territory, which lies between the Mississippi and the Atlantic, and was formerly inhabited solely by them; instead of wishing to lessen the value or the number of the few trifles that we find are acceptable to them in their present state, we ought rather to be desirous of contributing still more largely to their comfort and happiness.

Acceptable presents are generally found very efficacious in conciliating the affections of any uncivilized nation: they have very great influence over the minds of the Indians; but to conciliate their affections to the utmost, presents alone are not sufficient; you must appear to have their interest at heart in every respect; you must associate with them; you must treat them as men that are your equals, and, in some measure, even adopt their native manners. It was by such steps as these that the French, when they had possession of Canada, gained their favour in such a very eminent manner, and acquired so wonderful an ascendancy over them. The old Indians still say, that they 200 never were so happy as when the French had possession of the country; and, indeed, it is a very remarkable fact, which I before mentioned, that the Indians, if they are sick, if they are hungry, if they want shelter from a storm, or the like, will always go to the houses of the old French settlers in preference to those of the British inhabitants. The necessity of treating the Indians with respect and attention is strongly inculcated on the minds of the English settlers, and they endeavour to act accordingly; but still they cannot banish wholly from their minds, as the French do, the idea that the Indians are an inferior race of people to them, to which circumstance is to be attributed the predilection of the Indians for the French rather than them; they all live together, however, on very amicable terms, and many of the English on the frontiers have indeed told me, that if they were but half as honest, and half as well conducted towards one another as the Indians are towards them, the state of society in the country would be truly enviable.

On the frontiers of the United States little pains have hitherto been taken by the government, and no pains by the people, to gain the good will of the Indians; and the

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latter, indeed, instead of respecting the Indians as an independent neighbouring nation, have in too 201 many instances violated their rights as men in the most flagrant manner. The consequence has been, that the people on the frontiers have been involved in all the calamities that they could have suffered from an avengeful and cruel enemy. Nightly murders, robberies, massacres, and conflagrations have been common. They have hardly ventured to stir, at times, beyond the walls of their little habitations; and for whole nights together have they been kept on the watch, in arms, to resist the onset of the Indians. They have never dared to visit their neighbours unarmed, nor to proceed alone, in open day, on a journey of a few miles. The gazettes of the United States have daily teemed with the shocking accounts of the barbarities committed by the Indians, and volumes would scarcely suffice to tell the whole of the dreadful tales.

It has been said by persons of the States, that the Indians were countenanced in committing these enormities by people on the British frontiers, and liberal abuse has been bestowed on the government for having aided, by distributing amongst them guns, tomahawks, and other hostile weapons. That the Indians were incited by presents, and other means, to act against the people of the colonies, during the American war, must be admitted; but that, after peace was concluded, the same line of 202 conduct was pursued towards them, is an aspersion equally false and malicious. To the conduct of the people of the States themselves alone, and to no other cause, is unquestionably to be attributed the continuance of the warfare between them and the Indians, after the definitive treaty of peace was signed. Instead of then taking the opportunity to reconcile the Indians, as they might easily have done by presents, and by treating them with kindness, they still continued hostile towards them; they looked upon them, as indeed they still do, merely as wild beasts, that ought to be banished from the face of the earth; and actuated by that insatiable spirit of avarice, and that restless and dissatisfied turn of mind, which I have so frequently noticed, instead of keeping within their territories, where millions of acres remained unoccupied, but no part, however, of which could be had without being paid for, they crossed their boundary lines, and fixed themselves in the territory of the Indians,

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without ever previously gaining the consent of these people. The Indians, nice about their boundary line beyond any other nations, perhaps, in the world, that have such extensive dominions in proportion to their numbers, made no scruple to attack, to plunder, and even to murder these intruders, when a fit opportunity offered. The whites endeavoured to repel their attacks, and shot them with as much unconcern as they would either a wolf or a bear. In their expeditions against the white settlers the Indians frequently were driven back with loss; but their ill success only urged them to return with redoubled fury, and their well-known revengeful disposition leading them on all occasions to seek blood for blood, they were not merely satisfied with murdering the whole families of the settlers who had wounded or killed their chiefs or warriors, but oftentimes, in order to appease the manes of their comrades, they crossed their boundary line in turn, and committed most dreadful depredations amongst the peaceable white inhabitants in the States, who were in no manner implicated in the ill conduct of the men who had encroached upon the Indian territories. Here also, if they happened to be repulsed, or to lose a friend, they returned to seek fresh revenge; and as it seldom happened that they did escape without loss, their excesses and barbarities, instead of diminishing, were becoming greater every year. The attention of the government was at last directed towards the melancholy situation of the settlers on the frontiers, and the result was, that congress determined that an army should be raised, at the expence of the States, to repel the foe.

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An army was accordingly raised some time about the year 1790, Which was put under the command of General St. Clair. It consisted of about fifteen hundred men; but these were not men that had been accustomed to contend against Indians, nor was the General, although an experienced officer, and well able to conduct an army against a regular force, at all qualified, as many persons had foreseen, and the event proved, to command on an expedition of such a nature as he was now about to be engaged in.

St. Clair advanced with his army into the Indian territory; occasional skirmishes took place, but the Indians still kept retreating before him, as if incapable of making any resistance

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against such a powerful force. Forgetful of the stratagems of the artful enemy he had to contend with, he boldly followed, till at last, having been drawn far into their territory, and to a spot suitable to their purpose, the Indians attacked him on all sides; his men were thrown into confusion; in vain he attempted to rally them. The Indians, emboldened by the disorder they saw in his ranks, came rushing down with their tomahawks and scalping knives. A dreadful havoc ensued. The greater part of the army was left dead on the fatal field; and of those that escaped the knife, the most were taken prisoners. 205 All the cannon, amunition, baggage, and horses of St. Clair's army fell into the hands of the Indians on this occasion.

A great many young Canadians, and in particular many that were born of Indian women, fought on the side of the Indians in this action, a circumstance which confirmed the people of the States in the opinion they had previously formed, that the Indians were encouraged and abetted in their attacks upon them by the British. I can safely affirm, however, from having conversed with many of these young men who fought against St. Clair, that it was with the utmost secrecy they left their homes to join the Indians, fearful lest the government should censure their conduct; and that in espousing the quarrel of the Indians, they were actuated by a desire to assist a people whom they conceived to be injured, more than by an unextinguished spirit of resentment against men, whom they had formerly viewed in the light of rebels.

As the revenge of the Indians was completely glutted by this victory over St. Clair, it is not improbable, but that if pains had been taken immediately to negotiate a peace with them, it might have been obtained on easy terms; and had the boundary line then determinately agreed upon been faithfully observed afterwards by the people of the States, there is 206 great reason to imagine that the peace would have been a permanent one. As this, however, was a questionable measure, and the general opinion was, that a peace could be made on better terms if preceded by a victory on the part of the States, it was

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determined to raise another army. Liberal supplies for that purpose were granted by congress, and three thousand men were soon collected together.

Great pains were taken to enlist for this new army men from Kentucky, and other parts of the frontiers, who had been accustomed to the Indian mode of fighting; and a sufficient number of rifle-men from the frontier were collected, to form a very large regiment. The command of the new army was given to the late General Wayne. Upon being appointed to it, his first care was to introduce strict discipline amongst his troops; he afterwards kept the army in motion on the frontier, but he did not attempt to penetrate far into the Indian country, nor to take any offensive measures against the enemy for some time. This delay the General conceived would be attended with two great advantages; first, it would serve to banish from the minds of his men all recollection of the defeat of the late army; and secondly, it would afford him an opportunity of training perfectly to the Indian mode of fighting such of his men as were ignorant of it; for he saw no hopes of success but in fighting the Indians in their own way.

When the men were sufficiently trained he advanced, but it was with the utmost caution. He seldom proceeded farther than twelve miles in one day; the march was always ended by noon, and the afternoon was regularly employed in throwing up strong intrenchments round the camp, in order to secure the army from any sudden attack; and the spot that had been thus fortified on one day was never totally abandoned until a new encampment had been made on the ensuing one. Moreover, strong posts were established at the distance of forty miles, or thereabouts, from each other, in which guards were left, in order to ensure a safe retreat to the army in case it should not be successful. As he advanced, General Wayne sent detachments of his army to destroy all the Indian villages that were near him, and on these occasions the deepest stratagems were made use of. In some instances his men threw off their clothes, and by painting their bodies, disguised themselves so as to resemble Indians in every respect, then approaching as friends, they committed dreadful havoc. Skirmishes also frequently took place, on the march, with the Indians who hovered round the army. These terminated with various success, but mostly

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in favour of the Americans; as in their 208 conduct, the knowledge and discipline of regular troops were combined with all the cunning and stratagem of the antagonists.

All this time the Indians kept retreating, as they had done formerly before St. Clair; and without being able to bring on a decisive engagement, General Wayne proceeded even to the Miami of the Lakes, so called in contradistinction to another River Miami, which empties itself into the Ohio. Here it was that that curious correspondence in respect to Fort Miami took place, the substance of which was related in most of the English and American prints, and by which General Wayne exposed himself to the censure of many of his countrymen, and General, then Colonel Campbell, who commanded in the fort, gained the public thanks of the traders in London.

The Miami Fort, situated on the river of the same name, was built by the English in the year 1793, at which time there was some reason to imagine that the disputes existing between Great Britain and the United States would not have been quite so amicably settled, perhaps, as they have been; at least that doubtless must have been the opinion of government, otherwise they would not have given orders for the construction of a fort within the boundary line of the United states, a circumstance which could not fail to excite the indignation 209 of the people thereof. General Wayne, it would appear, had received no positive orders from his government to make himself master of it: could he have gained possession of it, however, by a coup-de-main, without incurring any loss, he thought that it could not but have been deemed an acceptable piece of service by the public, from whom he should have received unbounded applause. Vanity was his ruling passion, and actuated by it on this occasion, he resolved to try what he could do to obtain possession of the fort. Colonel Campbell, however, by his spirited and manly answer to the summons that was sent him, to surrender the fort on account of its being situated within the boundary line of the States, soon convinced the American general, that he was not to be shaken by his remonstrances or intimidated by his menaces, and that his two hundred men, who composed the garrison, had sufficient resolution to resist the attacks of his army of three thousand, whenever he thought proper to march against the fort. The main division of the

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American army, at this time, lay at the distance of about four miles from the fort; a small detachment from it, however, was concealed in the woods at a very little distance from the fort, to be ready at the call of General Wayne, who, strange to tell, when he found he was not likely to get possession of VOL. II. P 210 it in consequence of the summons he sent, was so imprudent, and departed so much from the dignity of the general and the character of the soldier, as to ride up to the fort, and to use the most gross and illiberal language to the British soldiers on duty in it. His object in doing so was, I should suppose, to provoke the garrison to fire upon him, in which case he would have had a pretext for storming the fort.

Owing to the great prudence, however, of Colonel Campbell, who had issued the strictest orders to his men and officers to remain silent, notwithstanding any insults that were offered to them, and not to attempt to fire, unless indeed an actual attack were made on the place, Wayne's plan was frustrated, much bloodshed certainly saved, and a second war between Great Britain and America perhaps averted.

General Wayne gained no great personal honour by his conduct on this occasion; but this circumstance of his having appeared before the British fort in the manner he did, operated strongly in his favour in respect to his proceedings against the Indians. These people had been taught to believe by the young Canadians that were amongst them, that if any part of the American army appeared before the fort, it would certainly be fired upon; for they had no idea that the Americans would 211 have come in sight of it without taking offensive measures, in which case resistance would certainly have been made. When therefore, it was heard that General Wayne had not been fired upon, the Indians complained grievously of their having been deceived, and were greatly disheartened on finding that they were to receive no assistance from the British. Their native courage, however, did not altogether forsake them; they resolved speedily to make a stand, and accordingly having chosen their ground, awaited the arrival of General Wayne, who followed them closely.

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Preparatory to the day on which they expected a general engagement, the Indians, contrary to the usages of most nations, observe a strict fast; nor does this abstinence from all sorts of food diminish their exertions in the field, as from their early infancy they accustom themselves to fasting for long periods together. The day before General Wayne was expected, this ceremony was strictly attended to, and afterwards, having placed themselves in ambush in the woods, they waited for his arrival. He did not, however, come to the ground on the day that they had imagined, from the reports given them by their scouts of his motions, he would have done; but having reason to think he would come on a subsequent day, they did not move from their ambush. The second P 2 212 day passed over without his drawing nearer to them; but fully persuaded that he would come up with them on the next, they still lay concealed in the same place. The third day proved to be extremely rainy and tempestuous; and the scouts having brought word, that from the movements General Wayne had made, there was no likelihood of his marching towards them that day, the Indians, now hungry after having fasted for three entire days, determined to rise from their ambush in order to take some refreshment. They accordingly did so, and having no suspicion of an attack, began to eat their food in security.

Before they began to eat, the Indians had divided themselves, I must observe, into three divisions, in order to march to another quarter, where they hoped to surprize the army of the States. In this situation, however, they were themselves surprized by General Wayne. He had received intelligence from his scouts, now equally cunning with those of the Indians, of their proceedings, and having made some motions as if he intended to move to another part of the country, in order to put them off their guard, he suddenly turned, and sent his light horse pouring down on them when they least expected it. The Indians were thrown into confusion, a circumstance which with them never fails to occasion a defeat; they made but 213 a faint resistance, and then fled with precipitancy.

On his arrival at Philadelphia, in the beginning of the year 1796, I was introduced to General Wayne, and I had then an opportunity of seeing the plan of all his Indian

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campaigns. A most pompous account was given of this victory, and the plan of it excited, as indeed it well might, the wonder and admiration of all the old officers who saw it. The Indians were represented as drawn up in three lines, one behind the other, and after receiving with firmness the charge of the American army, as endeavouring with great skill and adroitness to turn its flanks, when, by the sudden appearance of the Kentucky riflemen and the light cavalry, they were put to flight. From the regularity with which the Indians fought on this occasion, it was argued that they must doubtless have been conducted by British officers of skill and experience. How absurd this whole plan was however, was plainly to be deduced from the following circumstance, allowed both by the general and his aids de camp, namely, that during the whole action the American army did not see fifty Indians; and indeed every person who has read an account of the Indians, must know that they never come into the field in such regular array, but always fight under covert, 214 behind trees or bushes, in the most irregular manner. Notwithstanding the great pains that were taken formerly, both by the French and English, they never could be brought to fight in any other manner. It was in this manner, and no other, as I heard from several men who were in the action with them, that they fought against General Wayne; each one, as soon as the American troops were descried, instantly sheltered himself, and in retreating they still kept under covert. It was by fighting them also in their own way, and by sending parties of his light troops and cavalry to rout them from their lurking places, that General Wayne defeated them; had he attempted to have drawn up his army in the regular order described in the plan, he could not but have met with the same fate as St. Clair, and General Braddock did, on a former occasion.

Between thirty and forty Indians, who had been shot or bayoneted as they attempted to run from one tree to another, were found dead on the field by the American army. It is supposed that many more were killed, but the fact of the matter could never be ascertained by them: a profound silence was observed on the subject by the Indians, so that I never could learn accurately how many of them had fallen; that however is an immaterial circumstance; suffice it to say, that the engagement 215 soon induced the

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Indians to sue for a peace. Commissioners were deputed by the government of the United States to meet their chiefs; the preliminaries were soon arranged, and a treaty was concluded, by which the Indians relinquished a very considerable part of their territory, bordering upon that of the United States.

The last and principal ceremony observed by the Indians in concluding a peace, is that of burying the hatchet. When this ceremony came to be performed, one of the chiefs arose, and lamenting that the last peace concluded between them and the people of the States had remained unbroken for so short a time, and expressing his desire that this one should be more lasting, he proposed the tearing up of a large oak that grew before them, and the burying of the hatchet under it, where it would for ever remain at rest. Another chief said, that trees were liable to be levelled by the storms; that at any rate they would decay; and that as they were desirous that a perpetual peace should be established between them and their late enemies, he conceived it would be better to bury the hatchet under the tall mountain which arose behind the wood. A third chief in turn addressed the assembly: "As "for me," said he, "I am but a man, and I "have not the strength of the great spirit to 216 "tear up the trees of the forest by the roots, "or to remove mountains, under which to "bury the hatchet; but I propose that the "hatchet may be thrown into the deep lake, "where no mortal can ever find it, and where "it will remain buried for ever." This proposal was joyfully accepted by the assembly, and the hatchet was in consequence cast with great solemnity into the water. The Indians now tell you, in their figurative language, that there must be peace for ever. "In former "times," say they, "when the hatchet was "buried, it was only slightly covered with a "little earth and a few leaves, and being always "a very troublesome restless creature, it "soon contrived to find its way above ground, "where it never failed to occasion great confusion "between us and our white brethren, "and to knock a great many good people on "the head; but now that it has been thrown "into the deep lake, it can never do any one "mischief amongst us; for it cannot rise of "itself to the surface of the lake, and no one "can go to the bottom to look for it." And that there would be a permanent peace between them I have no doubt, provided that the people of the States would observe the

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articles of the treaty as punctually as the Indians; but it requires little sagacity to predict, that this will not be the case, and that ere long the 217 hatchet will be again resumed. Indeed, a little time before we reached Malden, messengers from the southern Indians had arrived to sound the disposition of those who lived near the lake, and try if they were ready and willing to enter into a fresh war. Nor is this eagerness for war to be wondered at, when from the report of the commissioners, who were sent down by the federal government to the new state of Tennessee, in order to put the treaty into effect, and to mark out the boundaries of that state in particular, it appeared that upwards of five thousand people, contrary to the stipulation of the treaty lately entered into with the Indians, had encroached upon, and settled themselves down in Indian territory, which people, the commissioners said, could not be persuaded to return, and in their opinion, could not be forced back again into the States without very great difficulty.*

* The substance of this report appeared in an extract of a letter from Lexington in Kentucky, which I myself saw, and which was published in many of the newspapers in the United States.

A large portion of the back settlers, living upon the Indian frontiers, are, according to the best of my information, far greater savages than the Indians themselves. It is nothing uncommon, I am told, to see hung up in their chimney corners, or nailed against the door of 218 their habitations, similarly to the ears or brush of a fox, the scalps which they have themselves torn from the heads of the Indians whom they have shot; and in numberless publications in the United States, I have read accounts of their having flayed the Indians, and employed their skins as they would have done those of a wild beast, for whatever purpose they could be applied to. An Indian is considered by them as nothing better than a destructive ravenous wild beast, without reason, without a soul, that ought to be hunted down like a wolf wherever it makes its appearance; and indeed, even amongst the bettermost sort of the inhabitants of the western country, the most illiberal notions are entertained respecting these unfortunate people, and arguments for their banishment, or rather extirpation, are adopted, equally contrary to justice and to humanity. "The Indians,"

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say they, “who has “no idea, or at least is unwilling to apply himself “to agriculture, requires a thousand acres “of land for the support of his family; an hundred “acres will be enough for one of us and “our children; why then should these heathens, “who have no notion of arts and manufactures, “who never have made any improvement “in science, and have never been “the inventors of any thing new or useful to “the human species, be suffered to encumber 219 “the soil?”—“The settlements making in the “upper parts of Georgia, upon the fine lands “of the Oconec and Okemulgee rivers, will,” says Mr. Imlay, speaking of the probable destination of the Indians of the south western territory, “bid defiance to them in that quarter. “The settlements of French Broad, aided “by Holston, have nothing to fear from them: “and the Cumberland is too puissant to apprehend “any danger. The Spaniards are in “possession of the Floridas (how long they “will remain so, must depend upon their moderation “and good manners) and of the settlements “at the Natchez and above, which “will soon extend to the southern boundaries “of Cumberland, so that they (the Indians) “will be completely enveloped in a few “years. Our people (alluding to those of the “United States) will continue to *encroach* upon “them on three sides, and *compel* them to live “more domestic lives, and assimilate them to “our mode of living, or cross to the western “side of the Mississippi.”

O Americans! shall we praise your justice and your love of liberty, when thus you talk of encroachments and compulsion? Shall we commend your moderation, when we see ye eager to gain fresh possessions, whilst ye have yet millions of acres within your own territories unoccupied? Shall we reverence your regard 220 for the rights of human nature, when we see ye bent upon banishing the poor Indian from the land where rest the bones of his ancestors, to him more precious than your cold hearts can imagine; and when we see ye tyrannizing over the hapless African, because nature has stamped upon him a complexion differeni from your own?

The conduct of the people of the States towards the Indians appears the more unreasonable and the more iniquitous, when it is considered that they are dwindling fast away of themselves; and that in the natural order of things, there will not probably be a

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single tribe of them found in existence in the western territory by the time that the numbers of the white inhabitants of the country become so numerous as to render land one half as valuable there as it is at present within ten miles of Philadelphia or New York. Even in Canada, where the Indians are treated with so much kindness, they are disappearing faster, perhaps, than any people were ever known to do before them, and are making room every year for the whites; and it is by no means improbable, but that at the end of fifty years there will not be a single Indian to be met with between Quebec and Detroit, except the few perhaps that may be induced to lead quiet domestic lives, as a small number now does in 223 Shawnese, one of the most warlike tribes, has been lessened nearly one half by sickness. Many other reasons could be adduced for their decrease, but it is needless to enumerate them. That their numbers have gradually lessened, as those of the whites have increased, for two centuries past, is incontrovertible; and they are too much attached to old habits, to leave any room to imagine that they will vary their line of conduct, in any material degree, during years to come; so that they must of consequence still continue to decrease.

In my next letter I intend to communicate to you a few observations that I have made upon the character, manners, customs, and personal and mental qualifications, &c. of the Indians. So much has already been written on these subjects, that I fear I shall have little to offer to your perusal but what you may have read before. I am induced to think, however, that it will not be wholly unpleasing to you to hear the observations of others confirmed by me; and if you should meet with any thing new in what I have to say, it will have the charm of novelty at least to recommend it to your notice. I am not going to give you a regular detail of Indian manners, &c; it would be absurd in me, who have only been with them for a few weeks, to attempt to do so. If you wish to have an account of 224 Indian affairs at large, you must read Le P. Charlevoix, Le P. Hennepin, Le Hontan, Carver, &c. &c. who have each written volumes on the subject.

LETTER XXXV.

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A brief Account of the Persons, Manners, Character, Qualifications, mental and corporeal, of the Indians; interspersed with Anecdotes.

Malden.

What I shall first take notice of in the persons of the Indians, is the colour of their skins, which in fact, constitutes the most striking distinction between their persons and ours. In general their skin is of a copper cast; but a most wonderful difference of colour is observable amongst them: some, in whose veins there is no reason to think that any other than Indian blood flows, not having dark complexions than natives of the south of France or of Spain, whilst others, on the contrary, are nearly as black as negroes. Many persons, and particularly some of the most respectable of the French missionaries, whose long residence amongst the Indians ought to have made them competent judges of the matter, have been of opinion, that their natural colour does not vary from ours; and that the darkness of their complexion arises wholly from their anointing themselves so frequently with unctuous substances, and from their exposing themselves so much to the smoke of wood fires, and to the burning rays of the sun. But although it is certain that they think a dark complexion very becoming; that they take great pains from their earliest age to acquire such an one; and that many of them do, in process of time, contrive to vary their original colour very considerably; although it is certain likewise, that when first born their colour differs but little from ours; yet it appears evident to me, that the greater part of them are indebted for their different hues to nature alone. I have been induced to form this opinion from the following consideration, namely; that those children which are born of parents of a dark colour are almost universally of the same dark cast as those from whom they sprang. Nekig, that is, the Little Otter, an Ottaway chief of great notoriety, whose village is on Detroit River, and with whom we have become intimately acquainted, has a complexion that differs but little from that of an African; and his little boys, who are the very image of the father, are just as black as himself. With regard VOL. II. Q 226 to Indian children being white on their first coming into the world, it ought by no means to

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be concluded from thence, that they would remain so if their mothers did not bedaub them with grease, herbs, &c. as it is well known that negro children are not perfectly black when born, nor indeed for many months afterwards, but that they acquire their jetty hue gradually, on being exposed to the air and sun, just as in the vegetable world the tender blade, on first peeping above ground, turns from white to a pale greenish colour, and afterwards to a deeper green.

Though I remarked to you in a former letter, that the Mississaguis, who live about Lake Ontario, were of a much darker cast than any other tribe of Indians I met with, yet I do not think that the different shades of complexion observed amongst the Indians are so much confined to particular tribes as to particular families; for even amongst the Mississaguis I saw several men that were comparatively of a very light colour. Judging of the Creeks, Cherokees, and other southern Indians, from what I have seen of them at Philadelphia, and at other towns in the States, whither they often come in large parties, led either by business or curiosity, it appears to me that their skin has a redder tinge, and more warmth of colouring in it, if I may use the expression, than that of 227 the Indians in the neighbourhood of the lakes; it appears to me also, that there is less difference of colour amongst them than amongst those last mentioned.

Amongst the female Indians also, in general, there is a much greater sameness of colour than amongst the men. I do not recollect to have seen any of a deeper complexion than what might be termed a dirty copper colour.

The Indians universally have long, straight, black, coarse hair, and black eyes, rather small than full sized; they have, in general, also, high prominent cheek bones, and sharp small noses, rather inclining to an acquiline shape; they have good teeth, and their breath, in general, is as sweet as that of a human being can be. The men are for the most part very well made; it is a most rare circumstance to meet with a deformed person amongst them: they are remarkably straight; have full open chests their walk is firm and erect, and many amongst them have really a dignified deportment. Very few of them are under the middle

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stature, and none of them ever become very fat or corpulent. You may occasionally see amongst them stout robust men, closely put together, but in general they are but slightly made. Their legs, arms and hands, are for the most part extremely well shaped; and very many amongst them Q 2 228 would be deemed handsome men in any country in the world.

The women, on the contrary, are mostly under the middle size; and have higher cheek bones, and rounder faces than the men. They have very ungraceful carriages; walk with their toes turned considerably inwards, and with a shuffling gait; and as they advance in years they grow remarkably fat and coarse. I never saw an Indian woman of the age of thirty, but what her eyes were sunk, her forehead wrinkled, her skin loose and shrivelled, and her whole person, in short, forbidding; yet, when young, their faces and persons are really pleasing, not to say sometimes very captivating. One could hardly imagine, without witnessing it, that a few years could possibly make such an alteration as it does in their persons. This sudden change is chiefly owing to the drudgery imposed on them by the men after a certain age; to their exposing themselves so much to the burning rays of the sun; sitting so continually in the smoke of wood fires; and, above all, to the general custom of prostituting themselves at a very early age.

Though the Indians are profusely furnished with hair on their heads, yet on none of the other parts of the body, usually covered with 229 it amongst us, is the smallest sign of hair visible, except, indeed on the chins of old men, where a few slender straggling hairs are sometimes seen, not different from what may be occasionally seen on women of a certain age in Europe. Many persons have supposed that the Indians have been created without hair on those parts of the body where it appears wanting; others, on the contrary, are of opinion, that nature has not been less bountiful to them than to us; and that this apparent deficiency of hair is wholly owing to their plucking it out themselves by the roots, as soon as it appears above the skin. It is well known, indeed, that the Indians have a great dislike to hair, and that such of the men as are ambitious of appearing gayer than the rest, pluck it not only from their eye-brows and eye-lashes, but also from every part of the head, except

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one spot on the back part of the crown, where they leave a long lock. For my own part, from every thing I have seen and heard, I am fully persuaded, that if an Indian were to lay aside this custom of plucking out the hair, he would not only have a beard, but also hair on the same parts of the body as white people have: I think, however, at the same time, that this hair would be much finer, and not grow as thickly as upon our bodies, notwithstanding that the hair of their 230 heads is so much thicker than ours. The few hairs that are seen on the faces of old men are to be attributed to the carelessness of old people about their external appearance.

To pluck out their hair, all such as have any connection with the traders make use of a pliable worm, formed of flattened brass wire. This instrument is closely applied, in its open state, to the surface of the body where the hair grows; it is then compressed by the finger and thumb; a great number of hairs are caught at once between the spiral evolutions of the wire, and by a sudden twitch they are all drawn out by the roots. An old squaw, with one of these instruments would deprive you of your beard in a very few minutes, and a slight application of the worm two or three times in the year would be sufficient to keep your chin smooth ever afterwards. A very great number of the white people in the neighbourhood of Malden and Detroit, from having submitted to this operation, appear at first sight as little indebted to nature for beards as the Indians. The operation is very painful, but it is soon over, and when one considers how much time and trouble is saved, and ease gained by it in the end, it is only surprising that more people do not summon up resolution, and patiently submit to it.

The long lock of hair on the top of the head, with the skin on which it grows, constitutes the 231 true scalp; and in scalping a person that has a full head of hair, an experienced warrior never thinks of taking off more of the skin than a bit of about the size of a crown-piece, from the part of the head where this lock is usually left. They ornament this solitary lock of hair with beads, silver trinkets, &c. and on grand occasions with feathers. The women do not pluck any of the hair from off their heads, and pride themselves upon having it as long as possible. They commonly wear it neatly platted up behind, and divided

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in front on the middle of the forehead. When they wish to appear finer than usual, they paint the small part of the skin, which appears on the separation of the hair, with a streak of vermilion; when neatly done, it looks extremely well, and forms a pleasing contrast to the jetty black of the hair.

The Indians, who have any dealings with the English or American traders, and all of them have that live in the neighbourhood, and to the east of the Mississippi, and in the neighbourhood of the great lakes to the north-west, have now totally laid aside the use of furs and skins in their dress, except for their shoes or moccasins, and sometimes for their leggings, as they find they can exchange them to advantage for blankets and woollen cloths, &c. which they consider likewise as much more agreeable and commodious materials for wearing apparel. 232 The moccasin is made of the skin of the deer, elk, or buffalo, which is commonly dressed without the hair, and rendered of a deep brown colour by being exposed to the smoke of a wood fire. It is formed of a single piece of leather, with a seam from the toe to the instep, and another behind, similar to that in a common shoe; by means of a thong it is fastened round the instep, just under the ankle-bone, and is thus made to sit very close to the foot. Round that part where the foot is put in, a flap of the depth of an inch or two is left, which hangs loosely down over the string by which the moccasin is fastened; and this flap, as also the seam, are tastefully ornamented with porcupine quills and beads: the flap is edged with tin or copper tags filled with scarlet hair, if the moccasin be intended for a man, and with ribbands if for a woman. An ornamented moccasin of this sort is only worn in dress, as the ornaments are expensive, and the leather soon wears out; one of plain leather answers for ordinary use. Many of the white people on the Indian frontiers wear this kind of shoe; but a person not accustomed to walk in it, or to walk barefoot, cannot wear it abroad, on a rough road, without great inconvenience, as every unevenness of surface is felt through the leather, which is soft and pliable: in a house it is the most agreeable sort of shoe that can be imagined: the Indians wear it universally.

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Above the moccasin all the Indians wear what are called leggings, which reach from the instep to the middle of the thigh. They are commonly made of blue or scarlet cloth, and are formed so as to sit close to the limbs, like the modern pantaloons; but the edges of the cloth annexed to the seam, instead of being turned in, are left on the outside, and are ornamented with beads, ribbands, &c. when the leggings are intended for dress. Many of the young warriors are so desirous that their leggings should fit them neatly, that they make the squaws, who are the tailors, and really very good ones, sew them tight on their limbs, so that they cannot be taken off, and they continue to wear them constantly till they are reduced to rags. The leggings are kept up by means of two strings, one on the outside of each thigh, which are fastened to a third, that is tied round the waist.

They also wear round the waist another string, from which are suspended two little aprons, somewhat more than a foot square, one hanging down before and the other behind, and under these a piece of cloth, drawn close up to the body between the legs, forming a sort of truss. The aprons and this piece of cloth, which are all fastened together, are called the breech cloth. The utmost ingenuity of the squaws is exerted in adorning the little aprons with beads, ribbands, &c.

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The moccasins, leggings, and breech cloth constitute the whole of the dress which they wear when they enter upon a campaign, except indeed it be a girdle, from which hangs their tobacco pouch and scalping knife, &c.; nor do they wear any thing more when the weather is very warm; but when it is cool, or when they dress themselves to visit their friends, they put on a short shirt, loose at the neck and wrists, generally made of coarse figured cotton or calico, of some gaudy pattern, not unlike what would be used for window or bed curtains at a common inn in England. Over the shirt they wear either a blanket, large piece of broad cloth, or else a loose coat made somewhat similarly to a common riding frock; a blanket is more commonly worn than any thing else. They tie one end of it round their waste with a girdle, and then drawing it over their shoulders, either fasten

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it across their breasts with a skewer, or hold the corners of it together, in the left hand. One would imagine that this last mode of wearing it could not but be highly inconvenient to them, as it must deprive them in a great measure of the use of one hand; yet it is the mode in which it is commonly worn, even when they are shooting in the woods; they generally, however, keep the right arm disengaged when they carry a gun, and draw the blanket over the left shoulder.

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The dress of the women differs but very little from that of the men. They wear moccasins, leggings, and loose short shirts, and like them they throw over their shoulders, occasionally, a blanket or piece of broad cloth, but most generally the latter; they do not tie it round their waist, however, but suffer it to hang down so as to hide their legs; instead also of the breech cloth, they wear a piece of cloth folded closely round their middle, which reaches from the waist to the knees. Dark blue or green cloths in general are preferred to those of any other colour; a few of the men are fond of wearing scarlet.

The women in warm weather appear in the villages without any other covering above their waists than these shirts, or shifts if you please so to call them, though they differ, in no respect from the shirts of the men; they usually, however, fasten them with a broach round the neck. In full dress they also appear in these shirts, but then they are covered entirely over with silver broaches, about the size of a sixpenny piece. In full dress they likewise fasten pieces of ribands of various colours to their hair behind, which are suffered to hang down to their very heels. I have seen a young squaw, that has been a favourite with the men, come forth at a dance with upwards of five guineas worth of ribands streaming from her hair.

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On their wrists the women wear silver bracelets when they can procure them; they also wear silver car-rings; the latter are in general of a very small size; but it is not merely one pair which they wear, but several. To admit them, they bore a number of holes in their

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ears, sometimes entirely round the edges. The men wear ear-rings likewise, but of a sort totally different from those worn by the women; they mostly consist of round flat thin pieces of silver, about the size of a dollar, perforated with holes in different patterns; others, however, equally large, are made in a triangular form. Some of the tribes are very select in the choice of the pattern, and will not wear any but the one sort of pendants. Instead of boring their ears, the men slit them along the outward edge from top to bottom, and as soon as the gash is healed, hang heavy weights to them, in order to stretch the rim thus separated as low down as possible. Some of them are so successful in this operation, that they contrive to draw the rims of the ear in form of a bow, down to their very shoulders, and their large ear-rings hang dangling on their breasts. To prevent the rim thus extended from breaking, they bind it with brass wire; however, I observed that there was not one in six that had his ears perfect; the least touch, indeed, is sufficient to break the skin, and it would be most wonderful if they 237 were able to preserve it entire, engaged so often as they are in drunken quarrels, and so often liable to be entangled in thickets whilst pursuing their game.

Some of the men wear pendants in their noses, but these are not so common as earrings. The chiefs and principal warriors wear breast-plates, consisting of large pieces of silver, sea shells, or the like. Silver gorgets, such as are usually worn by officers, please them extremely, and to favourite chiefs they are given out, amongst other presents, on the part of government. Another sort of ornament is likewise worn by the men, consisting of a large silver clasp or bracelet, to which is attached a bunch of hair dyed of a scarlet colour, usually taken from the knee of the buffalo. This is worn on the narrow part of the arm above the elbow, and it is deemed very ornamental, and also a badge of honour, for no person wears it that has not distinguished himself in the field. Silver ornaments are universally preferred to those of any other metal.

The Indians not only paint themselves when they go to war, but likewise when they wish to appear full dressed. Red and black are their favourite colours, and they daub themselves in the most fantastic manner. I have seen some with their faces entirely covered 238 with

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black, except a round spot in the center, which included the upper lip and end of the nose, which was painted red; others again I have seen with their heads entirely black, except a large red round spot on each ear; others with one eye black and the other red, &c.; but the most common style of painting I observed, was to black their faces entirely over with charcoal, and then wetting their nails, to draw parallel undulating lines on their cheeks. They generally carry a little looking glass about them, to enable them to dispose of their colours judiciously. When they go to war they rub in the paint with grease, and are much more particular about their appearance, which they study to render as horrible as possible; they then cover their whole body with red, white, and black paint, and seem more like devils than human beings. Different tribes have different methods of painting themselves.

Though the Indians spend so much of their time in adorning their persons, yet they take no pains to ornament their habitations, which for the most part are wretched indeed. Some of them are formed of logs, in a style somewhat similar to the common houses in the United States; but the greater part of them are of a moveable nature and formed of bark. The bark of the birch tree is deemed preferable to every other sort, and where it is to be had it is always made use of; but in this part of the country not being often met with, the bark of the elm tree is used in its stead. The Indians are very expert in stripping it from a tree; and frequently take the entire bark from off the trunk in one piece. The skeletons of their huts consist of slender poles, and on them the bark is fastened with strips of the tough rind of some young tree: this, if sound, proves a very effectual defence against the weather. The huts are built in various forms: some of them have walls on every side, doors, and also a chimney in the middle of the roof; others are open on one side, and are nothing better than sheds. When built in this last style, four of them are commonly placed together, so as to form a quadrangle, with the open parts towards the inside, and a fire common to them all is kindled in the middle. In fine weather these huts are agreeable dwellings; but in the depth of winter they must be dreadfully uncomfortable. Others of their huts are built in a conical shape. The Nadowessies, Mr. Carver tells us, live entirely in tents formed of skins. A great many of the families that were encamped on the island of Bois Blanc, I

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observed, lived in the canvas tents which they had taken from St. Clair's army. Many of 240 the Indian nations have no permanent place of residence, but move about from one spot to another, and in the hunting season they all have moveable encampments, which last are in general very rude, and insufficient to give them even tolerable shelter from a fall of rain or snow. The hunting season commences on the fall of the leaf, and continues till the snow dissolves.

In the depth of winter, when the snow is frozen on the ground, they form their hunting sheds of the snow itself; a few twigs platted together being simply placed overhead to prevent the snow which forms the roof from falling down. These snowy habitations are much more comfortable, and warmer in wintertime than any others that can be erected, as they effectually screen you from the keen piercing blasts of the wind, and a bed of snow is far from being uncomfortable. To accustom the troops to encamp in this style, in case of a winter campaign, a party of them, headed by some of the young officers, used regularly to be sent from Quebec by the late governor, into the woods, there to shift for themselves during the month of February. Care was always taken, however, to send with them two or three experienced persons, to shew them how to build the huts, otherwise death might have been the consequence to many 241 In these encampments they always sleep with their feet to the fire; and indeed in the Indian encampments in general, during cold weather, they sleep on the ground with their feet to the fire; during mild weather, many of them sleep on benches of bark in their huts, which are raised from two to four feet from the ground.

The utensils in an Indian hut are very few, one or two brass or iron kettles procured from the traders, or, if they live removed from them, pots formed of stone, together with a few wooden spoons and dishes made by themselves, constitute in general the whole of them. A stone of a very soft texture, called the *soap stone*, is very commonly found in the back parts of North America, particularly suited for Indian workmanship. It receives its name from appearing to the touch as soft and smooth as a bit of soap; and indeed it may be cut with a knife almost equally easily. In Virginia they use it powdered for the boxes of their

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wheels instead of grease. Soft, however, as is this stone, it will resist fire equally with iron. The soap stone is of a dove colour: others nearly of the same quality, are found in the country, of a black and red colour, which are still commonly used by the Indians for the bowls of their pipes. VOL. II. R

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The bark canoes, which the Indians use in this part of the country, are by no means so neatly formed as those made in the country upon, and to the north of, the River St. Lawrence: they are commonly formed of one entire piece of elm bark, taken from the trunk of the tree, which is bound on ribs formed of slender rods of tough wood. There are no ribs, however, at the ends of these canoes, but merely at the middle part, where alone it is that passengers ever sit. It is only the center, indeed, which rests upon the water: the ends are generally raised some feet above the surface, the canoes being of a curved form. They bring them into this shape by cutting, nearly midway between the stem and stern, two deep slits one on each side, in the back, and by lapping the disjointed edges one over the other. No pains are taken to make the ends of the canoes water tight, since they never touch the water.

On first inspection you would imagine, from its miserable appearance, that an elm bark canoe, thus constructed, was not calculated to carry even a single person safely across a smooth piece of water; it is nevertheless a remarkably safe sort of boat, and the Indians will resolutely embark in one of them during very rough weather. They are so light that they ride securely over every wave, and the only precaution ²⁴³ necessary in navigating them is to sit steady. I have seen a dozen people go securely in one, which might be easily carried by a single able-bodied man. When an Indian takes his family to any distance in a conoe, the women, the girls, and boys, are furnished each with a paddle, and are kept busily at work; the father of the family gives himself no trouble but in steering the vessel.

The Indians that are connected with the traders have now, very generally, laid aside bows and arrows, and seldom take them into their hands, except it be to amuse themselves

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for a few hours, when they have expended their powder and shot: their boys, however, still some of them universally, and some of them shoot with wonderful dexterity. I saw a young Shawnese chief, apparently not more than ten years old, fix three arrows running in the body of a small black squirrel, on the top of a very tall tree, and during an hour or two that I followed him through the woods, he scarcely missed his mark half a dozen times. It is astonishing to see with what accuracy, and at the same time with what readiness, they mark the spot where their arrows fall. They will shoot away a dozen arrows or more, seemingly quite careless about what becomes of them, and as inattentive to the spot where they fall as if they never expected to find them again, yet R 2 244 afterwards they will run and pick them every one up without hesitation. The southern Indians are much more expert at the use of the bow than those near the lakes, as they make much greater use of it.

With the gun, it seems to be generally allowed, that the Indians are by no means so good marksmen as the white people. I have often taken them out shooting with me, and I always found them very slow in taking aim; and though they generally hit an object that was still, yet they scarcely ever touched a bird on the wing, or a squirrel that was leaping about from tree to tree.

The expertness of the Indians in throwing the tomahawk is well known. At the distance of ten yards they will fix the sharp edge of it in an object nearly to a certainty. I have been told, however, that they are not fond of letting it out of their hands in action, and that they never attempt to throw it but when they are on the point of overtaking a flying foe, or are certain of recovering it. Some of them will fasten a string of the length of a few feet to the handle of the tomahawk, and will launch it forth, and draw it back again into their hand with great dexterity; they will also parry the thrust or cuts of sword with the tomahawk very dexterously.

The common tomahawk is nothing more 245 than a light hatchet, but the most approved sort has on the back part of the hatchet, and connected with it in one piece, the bowl of

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a pipe, so that when the handle is perforated, the tomahawk answers every purpose of a pipe: the Indians, indeed, are fonder of smoking out of a tomahawk than out of any other sort of pipe. That formerly given to the Indians by the French traders, instead of a pipe, had a large spike on the back part of the hatchet; very few of these instruments are now to be found amongst them; I never saw but one. The tomahawk is commonly worn by the left side, stuck in a belt.

For the favourite chief, very elegant pipe tomahawks, inlaid with silver, are manufactured by the armourers in the Indian department. Captain E—has given me one of this kind, which he had made for himself; it is so much admired by the Indians, that when they have seen it with me, they have frequently asked me to lend it to them for an hour or so to smoke out of, just as children would ask for a pretty plaything; they have never failed to return it very punctually.

The armourers here alluded to are persons kept at the expence of government to repair the arms of the Indians when they happen to break, which is very commonly the case.

An Indian child, soon after it is born, is swathed with cloths or skins, and being then laid on its back, is bound down on a piece of thick board, spread over with soft moss. The board is left somewhat longer and broader than the child, and bent pieces of wood, like pieces of hoops, are placed over its face to protect it, so that if the machine were suffered to fall the child would not probably be injured. The women, when they go abroad, carry their children thus tied down on their backs, the board being suspended by a broad band, which they wear round their foreheads. When they have any business to transact at home, they hang the board on a tree, if there be one at hand, and set them a swinging from side to side, like a pendulum, in order to exercise the children; sometimes also, I observed, they unloosened the children from the boards, and putting them each into a little sort of hammock, fastened them between two trees, and there suffered them to swing about. As soon as they are strong enough to crawl about on their hands and feet they are liberated from all confinement, and suffered, like young puppies, to run about

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stark naked, into water, into mud, into snow, and, in short, to go wheresoever their choice leads them; hence they derive that vigour of constitution which enables them to support the greatest fatigue, and that indifference to the changes of the weather which 247 they possess in common with the brute creation. The girls are covered with a loose garment as soon as they have attained four or five years of age, but the boys go naked till they are considerably older.

The Indians, as I have already remarked, are for the most part very slightly made, and from a survey of their persons one would imagine that they were much better qualified for any pursuits that required much agility than great bodily strength. This has been the general opinion of most of those who have written on this subject. I am induced, however, from what I have myself been witness to, and from what I have collected from others, to think that the Indians are much more remarkable for their muscular strength than for their agility. At different military posts on the frontiers, where this subject has been agitated, races, for the sake of experiment, have frequently been made between soldiers and Indians, and provided the distance was not great, the Indians have almost always been beaten; but in a long race, where strength of muscle was required, they have without exception been victorious; in leaping also the Indians have been infallibly beaten by such of the soldiers as possessed common activity: but the strength of the Indians is most conspicuous in the carrying of burthens on their backs; 248 they esteem it nothing to walk thirty miles a day for several days together under a load of eight stone, and they will walk an entire day under a load without taking any refreshment. In carrying burdens they make use of a sort of frame, somewhat similar to what is commonly used by a glazier to carry glass; this is fastened by cords, or strips of tough bark or leather, round their shoulders, and when the load is fixed upon the broad ledge at the bottom of the frame, two bands are thrown round the whole, one of which is brought across the forehead, and the other across the breast, and thus the load is supported. The length of way an Indian will travel in the course of the day when unencumbered with a load, is astonishing. A young Wyandot, who, when peace was about to be made between the Indians and General Wayne, was

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employed to carry a message from his nation to the American officer, travelled but little short of eighty miles on foot in one day; and I was informed by one of the general's aids-de-camp, who saw him when he arrived at the camp, that he did not appear in the least degree fatigued.

Le P. Charlevoix observes, that the Indians seem to him to possess many personal advantages over us; their senses, in particular, he thinks much finer than ours; their sight is, indeed, quick and penetrating, and it does not fail them till they are far advanced in years, notwithstanding that their eyes are exposed so many months each winter to the dazzling whiteness of the snow, and to the sharp irritating smoke of wood fires. Disorders in the eyes are almost wholly unknown to them; nor is the slightest blemish ever seen in their eyes, excepting it be a result from some accident. Their hearing is very acute, and their sense of smelling so nice, that they can tell when they are approaching a fire long before it is in sight.

The Indians have most retentive memories; they will preserve to their deaths a recollection of any place they have once passed through; they never forget a face that they have attentively observed but for a few seconds; at the end of many years they will repeat every sentence of the speeches that have been delivered by different individuals in a public assembly; and has any speech been made in the council house of the nation, particularly deserving of remembrance, it will be handed down with the utmost accuracy from one generation to another, though perfectly ignorant of the use of hieroglyphicks and letters; the only memorials of which they avail themselves are small pieces of wood, such as I told you were brought by them to Captain E—, preparatory to the delivery of the presents, and belts of wampum; the former are only used on trifling occasions, the latter never but on very grand and solemn ones. Whenever a conference, or a talk as they term it, is about to be held with any neighbouring tribe, or whenever any treaty of national compact is about to be made, one of these belts, differing in some respect from every other that has been made before, is immediately constructed; each person in the assembly holds this belt in his hand whilst he delivers his speech, and when he has ended, he presents it to the next

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person that rises, by which ceremony each individual is reminded, that it behoves him to be cautious in his discourse, as all he says will be faithfully recorded by the belt. The talk being over, the belt is deposited in the hands of the principal chief.

On the ratification of a treaty, very broad splendid belts are reciprocally given by the contracting parties, which are deposited amongst the other belts belonging to the nation. At stated intervals they are all produced to the nation, and the occasions upon which they were made are mentioned; if they relate to a talk, one of the chiefs repeats the substance of what was said over them; if to a treaty, the terms of it are recapitulated. Certain of the squaws, also, are entrusted with the belts, whose business it is to relate the history of each one of them to the younger branches of 251 the tribe; this they do with great accuracy, and thus it is that the remembrance of every important transaction is kept up.

The wampum is formed of the inside of the clam shell, a large sea shell bearing some similitude to that of a scallop, which is found on the coasts of New England and Virginia. The shell is sent in its original rough state to England, and there cut into small pieces, exactly similar in shape and size to the modern glass bugles worn by ladies, which little bits of shell constitute wampum. There are two sorts of wampum, the white and the purple; the latter is most esteemed by the Indians, who think a pound weight of it equally valuable with a pound of silver. The wampum is string upon bits of leather, and the belt is composed of ten, twelve, or more strings, according to the importance of the occasion on which it is made; sometimes also the wampum is sowed in different patterns on broad belts of leather.

The use of wampum appears to be very general amongst the Indian nations, but how it became so, is a question that would require discussion, for, it is well known that they are a people obstinately attached to old customs, and that would not therefore be apt to adopt, on the most grand and solemn occasion, the use of an article that they had never seen until brought to them by strangers; at the same 252 time it seems wholly impossible that they should ever have been able to have made wampum from the clam shell for

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themselves; they fashion the bowls of tobacco pipes, indeed, from stone, in a very curious manner, and with astonishing accuracy, considering that they use no other instrument than a common knife, but then the stone which they commonly carve thus is of a very soft kind; the clam shell, however, is exceedingly hard, and to bore and cut it into such small pieces as are necessary to form wampum, very fine tools would be wanting. Probably they made some use of the clam shell, and endeavoured to reduce it to as small bits as they could with their rude instruments before we came amongst them, but on finding that we could cut it so much more neatly than they could, laid aside the wampum before in use for that of our manufacture. Mr. Carver tells us, that he found sea shells very generally worn by the Indians who resided in the most interior parts of the continent, who never could have visited a sea shore themselves, and could only have procured them at the expence of much trouble from other nations.

The Indians are exceedingly sagacious and observant, and by dint of minute attention, acquire many qualifications to which we are wholly strangers. They will traverse a trackless forest, hundreds of miles in extent, without deviating from the straight course, and will reach to a certainty the spot whither they intended to go on setting out: with equal skill they will cross one of the large lakes, and though out of sight of the shores for days, will to a certainty make the land at once, at the very place they desired. Some of the French missionaries have supposed that the Indians are guided by instinct, and have pretended that Indian children can find their way through a forest as easily as a person of maturer years; but this is a most absurd notion. It is unquestionably by a close attention to the growth of the trees, and position of the sun, that they find their way. On the northern side of a tree, there is generally the most moss, and the bark on that side in general differs from that on the opposite one. The branches towards the south are for the most part more luxuriant than those on the other sides of trees, and several other distinctions also subsist between the northern and southern sides, conspicuous to Indians, who are taught from their infancy to attend to them, which a common observer would perhaps never notice. Being accustomed from their childhood, likewise, to pay great attention to the position of

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the sun, they learn to make the most accurate allowance for its apparent motion from one part of the heavens to another, and in any part of the day they will 254 point to the part of the heavens where it is, although the sky be obscured by clouds or mists.

An instance of their dexterity in finding their way through an unknown country came under my observation when I was at Staunton, situated behind the Blue Mountains, Virginia. A number of the Creek nation had arrived at that town in their way to Philadelphia, whither they were going upon some affairs of importance, and had stopped there for the night. In the morning some circumstance or another, what could not be learned, induce one half of the Indians to set off without their companions, who did not follow until some hours afterwards. When these last were ready to pursue their journey, several of the town-people mounted their horses to escort them part of the way. They proceeded along the high road for some miles, but all at once, hastily turning aside into the woods, though there was no path, the Indians advanced confidently forward; the people who accompanied them, surprized at this movement, informed them that they were quitting the road to Philadelphia, and expressed their fears lest they should miss their companions, who had gone on before. They answered, that they knew better; that the way through the woods was the shortest to Philadelphia; and that they knew very well that their companions had entered 255 the woods at the very place they did. Curiosity led some of the horsemen to go on, and to their astonishment, for there was apparently no track, they overtook the other Indians in the thickest part of the wood; but what appeared most singular was, that the route which they took was found, on examining a map, to be as direct for Philadelphia as if they had taken the bearings by a mariner's compass. From others of their nation, who had been at Philadelphia at a former period, they had probably learned the exact direction of that city from their village, and had never lost sight of it, although they had already travelled three hundred miles through woods, and had upwards of four hundred miles more to go before they could reach the place of their destination.

Of the exactness with which they can find out a strange place that they have been once directed to by their own people, a striking example is furnished us, I think, by Mr.

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Jefferson, in his account of the Indian graves in Virginia. These graves are nothing more than large mounds of earth in the woods, which, on being opened, are found to contain skeletons in an erect posture: the Indian mode of sepulture has been too often described to remain unknown to you. But to come to my story. A party of Indians that were passing on to some of the seaports on the Atlantic, 256 just as the Creeks abovementioned were going to Philadelphia, were observed, all on a sudden, to quit the straight road by which they were proceeding, and without asking any questions, to strike through the woods in a direct line to one of these graves, which lay at the distance of some miles from the road. Now very near a century must have passed over since the part of Virginia, in which this grave was situated, had been inhabited by Indians; and these Indian travellers, who went to visit it by themselves, had, unquestionably, never been in that part of the country before; they must have found their way to it simply from the description of its situation that had been handed down to them by tradition.

The Indians, for the most part, are admirably well acquainted with the geography of their own country. Ask them any questions relative to the situation of a particular place in it, and if there be a convenient spot at hand, they will, with the utmost facility, trace upon the ground with a stick a map, by no means inaccurate, of the place in question, and the surrounding country; they will point out the course of the rivers, and by directing your attention to the sun, make you acquainted with the different bearings. I happened once to be sitting in a house at the western extremity of Lake Erie, whilst we were detained there by 257 contrary winds, and was employed in looking over a pocket map of the state of New York; when a young Seneka warrior entered. His attention was attracted by the sight of the map, and he seemed at once to comprehend the meaning of it; but never having before seen a general map of the state of New York, and being wholly ignorant of the use of letters, he could not discover to what part of the country it had a reference; simply, however, by laying my finger upon the spot where we then were, and by shewing to them the line that denoted Buffalo Creek, on which his village was situated, I gave him the clue to the whole, and having done so, he quickly ran over the map, and with the utmost

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accuracy pointed out by name, every lake and river for upwards of two hundred miles distant from his village. All the lakes and rivers in this part of the country still retain the Indian names, so that had he named them wrong I could have at once detected him. His pleasure was so great on beholding such a perfect map of the country, that he could not refrain from calling some of his companions, who were loitering at the door, to come and look at it. They made signs to me to lend it to them; I did so, and having laid it on a table, they sat over it for more than half an hour, during which time I observed they frequently testified their pleasure VOL. II. S 258 to one another on finding particular places accurately laid down, which they had been acquainted with, The older men also seemed to have many stories to tell the others, probably respecting the adventures they had met with at distant parts of the country, and which they were now glad of having an opportunity of elucidating by the map before them.

Whenever a tract of ground is about to be purchased by government from the Indians, for no private individuals can purchase lands from them by the laws of the province, a map of the country is drawn, and the part about to be contracted for, is particularly marked out. If there be any mistakes in these maps, the Indians will at once point them out; and after the bargain is made, they will, from the maps, mark out the boundaries of the lands they have ceded with the greatest accuracy, notching the trees, if there be any, along the boundary line, and if not, placing stakes or stones in the ground to denote where it runs. On these occasions regular deeds of sale are drawn, with accurate maps of the lands which have been purchased attached to them, and these deeds are signed in form by the contracting parties. I saw several of them in possession of our friend Captain E—, which were extremely curious on account of the Indian signatures. The Indians, for the most part, take upon them 259 the name of some animal, as, The Blue Snake; The Little Turkey; The Big Bear; The Mad Dog, &c. and their signatures consist of the outline, drawn with a pen, of the different animals whose names they bear. Some of the signatures at the bottom of these deeds were really well executed, and were lively representations of the animals they were intended for.

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The Indians in general possess no small share of ingenuity. Their domestic wooden utensils, bows and arrows, and other weapons, &c. are made with the utmost neatness; and indeed the workmanship of them is frequently such as to excite astonishment, when it is considered that a knife and a hatchet are the only instruments they make use of. On the handles of their tomahawks, on their powder horns, on the bowls of their pipes, &c. you oftentimes meet with figures extremely well designed, and with specimens of carving far from contemptible. The embroidery upon their moccasins and other garments shews that the females are not less ingenious in their way than the men. Their porcupine quill work would command admiration in any country in Europe. The soft young quills of the porcupine are those which they use, and they dye them of the most beautiful and brilliant colours imaginable. Some of their dyes have been discovered, but many of them yet remain unknown, S 2 260 as do also many of the medicines with which they perform sometimes most miraculous cures. Their dyes and medicines are all procured from the vegetable world.

But though the Indians prove by their performances, that they have some relish for the works of art, yet they are by no means ready to bestow commendations on every thing curious for its workmanship that is shewn to them. Trinkets or ornaments for dress, though ever so gaudy or ever so neatly manufactured, they despise, unless somewhat similar in their kind to what they themselves are accustomed to wear, and fashioned exactly to their own taste, which has remained nearly the same since Europeans first came amongst them; nor will they praise any curious or wonderful piece of mechanism, unless they can see that it is intended to answer some useful purpose. Nothing that I could shew them attracted their attention, I observed, so much as a light double-barrelled gun, which I commonly carried in my hand when walking about their encampments. This was something in their own way; they at once perceived the benefit that must accrue to the sportsman from having two barrels on the one stock, and the contrivance pleased them; well acquainted also with the qualities of good locks, and the advantages attending them,

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they expressed great satisfaction 261 at finding those upon my piece so superior to what they perhaps had before seen.

It is not every new scene either, which to them, one would imagine, could not fail to appear wonderful, that will excite their admiration.

A French writer, I forget who, tells us of some Iroquois Indians that walked through several of the finest streets of Paris, but without expressing the least pleasure at any thing they saw, until they at last came to a cook's shop; this called forth their warmest praise; a shop where a man was always sure of getting something to satisfy his hunger, without the trouble and fatigue of hunting and fishing, was in their opinion one of the most admirable institutions possible; had they been told, however, that they must have paid for what they eat, they would have expressed equal indignation perhaps at what they saw. In their own villages they have no idea of refusing food to any person that enters their habitation in quality of a friend.

The Indians, whom curiosity for business leads to Philadelphia, or to any other of the large towns in the States, find, in general, as little deserving of notice in the streets and houses there as these Iroquois at Paris, and there is not one of them but what would prefer his own wigwam to the most splendred habitations 262 they see in any of these places. The shipping, however, at Philadelphia and the other sea-ports, seldom fails to excite their admiration, because they at once see the utility and advantage of large vessels over canoes, which are the only vessels they have. The young Wyandot, whom I before mentioned, as having made such a wonderful day's journey on foot, happened to be at Philadelphia when I was there, and he appeared highly delighted with the river, and the great number of ships of all sizes upon it; but the tide attracted his attention more than any thing else whatsoever. On coming to the river the first day, he looked up at the sun, and made certain observations upon the course of the stream, and general situation of the place, as the Indians never fail to do on coming to any new or remarkable spot. The second time, however, he went down to the water, the found to his surprise that the river

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was running with equal rapidity in a contrary direction to what he had seen it run the day before. For a moment he imagined that by some mistake he must have got to the opposite side of it; but soon recollecting himself, and being persuaded that he stood on the very same spot from whence he had viewed it the day before, his astonishment became great indeed. To obtain information upon such an interesting point, he immediately sought out 263 an aid-de-camp of General Wayne, who had brought him to town. This gentleman, however, only rendered the appearance still more mysterious to him, by telling him, that the great spirit, for the convenience of the white men, who were his particular favourites, had made the rivers in their country to run two ways; but the poor Wyandot was satisfied with the answer, and replied, "Ah, my friend, if the "great spirit would make the Ohio to run two "ways for us, we should very often pay you "a visit at Pittsburgh* ." During his stay at Philadelphia he never failed to visit the river every day.

* A town situated at the very head of the Ohio.

Amongst the public exhibitions at Philadelphia, the performances of the horse riders and tumblers at the amphitheatre appear to afford them the greatest pleasure; they entertain the highest opinion of these people who are so distinguished for their feats of activity, and rank them amongst the ablest men in the nation. Nothing, indeed, gives more delight to the Indians than to see a man that excels in any bodily exercise; and tell them even of a person that is distinguished for his great strength, for his swiftness in running, for his dexterous management of the bow or the gun, for his cunning in hunting, for his intrepid and 264 firm conduct in war, or the like, they will listen to you with the greatest pleasure, and readily join in praises of the hero.

The Indians appear, on the first view, to be of a very cold and phlegmatic disposition, and you must know them for some time before you can be persuaded to the contrary. If you shew them any artificial production which pleases them, they simply tell you, with seeming indifference, "that it is pretty;" "that they like "to look at it;" "that it is a clever invention:" nor do they testify their satisfaction and pleasure by emotions seemingly much

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warmer in their nature, on beholding any new or surprising spectacle, or on hearing any happy piece of intelligence. The performances at the amphitheatre at Philadelphia, though unquestionably highly interesting to them, never drew forth from them, I observed, more than a smile or gentle laugh, followed by a remark in a low voice to their friend sitting next to them. With equal indifference do they behold any thing terrible, or listen to the accounts of any dreadful catastrophe that has befallen their families or their nation. This apathy, however, is only assumed, and certainly does not proceed from a real want of feeling; no people on earth are more alive to the calls of friendship; no people have a greater affection for their offspring in their tender years; no 265 people are more sensible of an injury: a word in the slightest degree insulting will kindle a flame in their breasts, that can only be extinguished by the blood of the offending party; and they will traverse forests for hundreds of miles, exposed to the inclemency of the severest weather, and to the pangs of hunger, to gratify their revenge; they will not cease for years daily to visit, and silently to mourn over the grave of a departed child; and they will risk their lives, and sacrifice every thing they possess, to assist a friend in distress; but at the same time, in their opinion, no man can be esteemed a good warrior or a dignified character that openly betrays any extravagant emotions of surprise, of joy, of sorrow, or of fear, on any occasion whatsoever. The excellence of appearing thus indifferent to what would excite the strongest emotions in the minds of any other people, is forcibly inculcated on them from their earliest youth; and such an astonishing command do they acquire over themselves, that even at the stake, when suffering the severest tortures that can be inflicted on the human body by the flames and the knife, they appear unmoved, and laugh, as it is well known, at their tormentors.

This affected apathy on the part of the Indians makes them appear uncommonly grave and reserved in the presence of strangers; in 266 their own private circles, however, they frequently keep up gay and sprightly conversations; and they are possessed, it is said, of a lively and ready turn of wit. When at such a place as Philadelphia, notwithstanding their appearing so indifferent to every thing before them whilst strangers are present, yet, after having retired by themselves to an apartment for the night, they will frequently sit

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up for hours together, laughing and talking of what they have seen in the course of the day. I have been told by persons acquainted with their language, that have overheard their discourse on such occasions, that their remarks are most pertinent, and that they sometimes turn what has passed before them into such ludicrous points of view, that it is scarcely possible to refrain from laughter.

But though the Indians, in general, appear so reserved in the presence of strangers, yet the firmness of their dispositions forbids them from ever appearing embarrassed, and they would sit down to table in a place, before the first crowned head on the face of the earth, with as much unconcern as they would sit down to a frugal meal in one of their own cabins. They deem it highly becoming in a warrior, to accommodate his manners to those of the people with whom he may happen to be, and as they are wonderfully observant, 267 you will seldom perceive any thing of awkwardness or vulgarity in their behaviour in the company of strangers. I have seen an Indian, that had lived in the woods from his infancy, enter a drawing room in Philadelphia, full of ladies, with as much ease and as much gentility as if he had always lived in the city, and merely from having been told, preparatory to his entering, the form usually observed on such occasions. But the following anecdote will put this matter in a stronger point of view.

Our friend Nekig, the Little Otter, had been invited to dine with us at the house of a gentleman at Detroit, and he came accordingly, accompanied by his son, a little boy of about nine or ten years of age. After dinner a variety of fruits were served up, and amongst the rest some peaches, a dish of which was handed to the young Indian. He helped himself to one with becoming propriety; but immediately afterwards he put the fruit to his mouth, and bit a piece out of it. The farther eyed him with indignation, and spoke some words to him in a low voice, which I could not understand, but which, on being interpreted by one of the company, proved to be a warm reprimand for his having been so deficient in observation as not to peel his peach, as he saw the gentleman opposite to 268 him had

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done. The little fellow was extremely ashamed of himself; but he quickly retrieved his error, by drawing a plate towards him, and peeling the fruit with the greatest neatness.

Some port wine, which he was afterwards helped to, not being by any means agreeable to his palate, the little fellow made a wry face, as a child might naturally do after drinking it. This called forth another reprimand from the father, who told him, that he despaired of ever seeing him a great man or a good warrior if he appeared then to dislike what his host had kindly helped him to. The boy drank the rest of his wine with seeming pleasure.

The Indians scarcely ever lift their hands against their children; but if they are unmindful of what is said to them, they sometimes throw a little water in their faces, a species of reprimand of which the children have the greatest dread, and which produces an instantaneous good effect. One of the French missionaries tells us of his having seen a girl of an advanced age so vexed at having some water thrown in her face by her mother, as if she was still a child, that she instantly retired, and put an end to her existence. As long as they remain children, the young Indians are attentive in the extreme to the advice of their parents; but arrived at the age of puberty, and able to provide for themselves, they no longer have any respect for them, and they will follow their own will and pleasure in spite of all their remonstrances, unless, indeed, their parents be of an advanced age. Old age never fails to command their most profound veneration.

No people are possessed of a greater share of natural politeness than the Indians: they will never interrupt you whilst you are speaking; nor, if you have told them any thing which they think to be false, will they bluntly contradict you. "We dare say, brother," they will answer, "that you yourself believe what you tell us to be true; but it appears to us so improbable that we cannot give our assent to it."

In their conduct towards one another nought but gentleness and harmony is observable. You are never witness amongst them, to such noisy broils and clamorous contentions as are common amongst the lower classes of people in Europe; nor do you perceive amongst

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them any traces of the coarse vulgar manners of these latter people; they behave on all occasions like gentlemen, and could not so many glaring proofs be adduced to the contrary, you never could imagine that they wore that ferocious savage people in war which they are. 270 said to be. It must be understood, however, that I only speak now of the Indians in their sober state; when intoxicated with spirits, which is but too often the case, a very different picture is presented to our view, and they appear more like devils incarnate than human beings; they roar, they fight, they cut each other, and commit every sort of outrage; indeed so sensible are they of their own infirmities in this state, that when a number of them are about to get drunk, they give up their knives and tomahawks, &c. to one of the party, who is on honour to remain sober, and to prevent mischief, and who generally does behave according to this promise. If they happen to get drunk without having taken this precaution, their squaws take the earliest opportunity to deprive them of their weapons.

The Indians prefer whiskey and rum to all other spirituous liquors; but they do not seem eager to obtain these liquors so much for the pleasure of gratifying their palates as for the sake of intoxication. There is not one in a hundred that can refrain from drinking to excess if he have it in his power; and the generality of them having once got a taste of any intoxicating liquor, will use every means to gain more; and to do so they at once become mean, servile, deceitful, and depraved, in every sense of the word. Nothing can make 271 amends to these unfortunate people for the introduction of spirituous liquors amongst them. Before their acquaintance with them, they were distinguished beyond all other nations for their temperance in eating and drinking; for their temperance in eating indeed, they are still remarkable; they esteem it indecorous in the highest degree even to appear hungry; and on arriving at their villages, after having fasted, perhaps, for several days preceding, they will sit down quietly, and not ask for any food for a considerable time; and having got wherewith to satisfy their appetite, they will eat with moderation, as though the calls of hunger were not more pressing than if they had feasted the hour before. They never eat on any occasion in a hurry.

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The Indians are by nature of a very hospitable generous disposition, where no particular circumstances operate to the contrary; and, indeed, even when revenge would fain persuade them to behave differently, yet having once professed a friendship for a stranger, and pledged themselves for his safety, nothing can induce them to deviate from their word. Of their generosity I had numberless proofs in the presents which they gave me; and though it must be allowed, that when they make presents they generally expect others in return, yet I am convinced, from the manner in which 272 they presented different trifles to me, that it was not with an expectation of gaining more valuable presents in return that they gave them to me, but merely through friendship. It is notorious, that towards one another they are liberal in the extreme, and for ever ready to supply the deficiencies of their neighbours with any superfluities of their own. They have no idea of amassing wealth for themselves individually: and they wonder that persons can be found in any society, so destitute of every generous sentiment, as to enrich themselves at the expence of others, and to live in ease and affluence, regardless of the misery and wretchedness of members of the same community to which they themselves belong. Their dresses domestic utensils, and weapons, are the only articles of property to which they lay an exclusive claim; every thing else is the common property of the tribe, in promoting the general welfare of which every individual feels himself deeply interested. The chiefs are actuated by the same laudable spirit, and instead of being the richest, are, in many instances, the poorest persons in the community; for whilst others have leisure to hunt, &c. it frequently happens that the whole of their time is occupied in settling the public affairs of the nation.

The generality of the Indian nations appear to have two sorts of chiefs; council chiefs, and 273 war chiefs. The former are hereditary, and are employed principally in the management of their civil affairs; but they may be war chiefs at the same time; the latter are chosen from amongst those who have distinguished themselves the most in battle, and are solely employed in leading the warriors in the field. The chiefs have no power of enforcing obedience to their commands, nor do they ever attempt to give their orders in an imperious manner; they simply advise. Each private individual conceives that he

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is born in a state of perfect liberty, and he disdains all controul, but that which his own reason subjects him to. As they all have one interest, however, at heart, which is the general welfare of the nation, and as it is well known that the chiefs are actuated by no other motives, whatever measures they recommend are generally attended to, and at once adopted. Savages as they are, yet in no civilized community, I fear, on earth, shall we find the same public spirit, the same disinterestedness, and the same regard to order, where order is not enforced by the severity of laws, as amongst the Indians.

The Indians have the most sovereign contempt for any set of people that have tamely relinquished their liberty; and they consider such as have lost it even after a hard struggle, VOL. II. T 274 as unworthy any rank in society above that of old women: to this cause, and not the difference that subsists between their persons, is to be attributed, I conceive, the rooted aversion which the Indians universally have for negroes. You could not possibly affront an Indian more readily, than by telling him that you think he bears some resemblance to a negro; or that he has negro blood in his veins: they look upon them as animals inferior to the human species, and will kill them with as much unconcern as a dog or a cat.

An American officer, who, during the war with Great Britain, had been sent to one of the Indian nations resident on the western frontier of the States, to persuade them to remain neuter in the contest, informed me, that whilst he remained amongst them some agents arrived in their village to negotiate, if possible, for the release of some negro slaves whom they had carried off from the American settlements. One of these negroes, a remarkably tall handsome fellow, had been given to an Indian woman of some consequence in the nation, in the manner in which prisoners are usually disposed of amongst them. Application was made to her for his ransom. She listened quietly to what was said; resolved at the same time, however, that the fellow should not have his liberty, she stepped aside into her cabin, 275 and having brought out a large knife, walked up to her slave, and without more ado plunged it into his bowels: "Now," says she, addressing herself coolly to the agents, "now I give you leave to take away your negro." The poor

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creature that had been stabbed fell to the ground, and lay writhing about in the greatest agonies, until one of the warriors took compassion on him, and put an end to his misery by a blow of a tomahawk.

At Detroit, Niagara, and some other places in Upper Canada, a few negroes are still held in bondage. Two of these hapless people contrived, whilst we remained at Malden, to make their escape from Detroit, by stealing a boat, and proceeding in the night down the river. As the wind would not permit them to cross the lake, it was conjectured that they would be induced to coast along the shore until they reached a place of safety; in hopes, therefore, of being able to recover them, the proprietor came down to Malden, and there procured two trusty Indians to go in quest of them. The Indians having received a description of their persons, set out; but had scarcely proceeded a hundred yards, when one of them, who could speak a few words of English, returned, to ask the proprietor if he would give him permission to scalp the negroes if they were at all refractory, or refused coming T 2

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His request was peremptorily refused, for it was well known that, had it been granted, he would have at once killed them to avoid the trouble of bringing them back. "Well," says he, "if you will not let me scalp both, you won't be angry with me, I hope, if I scalp one." He was told in answer, that he must bring them both back alive. This circumstance appeared to mortify him extremely, and he was beginning to hesitate about going, when, sorry am I to say, the proprietor, fearful lest the fellows should escape from him, gave his assent to the Indian's request, but at the same time he begged that he would not destroy them if he could possibly avoid it. What the result was I never learned; but from the apparent satisfaction with which the Indian set out after he had obtained this dreadful permission, there was every reason to imagine that one of the negroes at least would be sacrificed.

This indifference in the mind of the Indians about taking away the life of a fellow creature, makes them appear, it must be confessed, in a very unamiable point of view. I fear also,

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that in the opinion of many people, all the good qualities which they possess, would but ill atone for their revengeful disposition, and for the cruelties which, it is well known, they sometimes inflict upon the prisoners who have fallen into their power in battle. Great pains 277 have been taken, both by the French and English missionaries, to represent to them the infamy of torturing their prisoners; nor have these pains been bestowed in vain; for though in some recent instances it has appeared that they still retain a fondness for this horrid practice, yet I will venture, from what I have heard, to assert, that of late years not one prisoner has been put to the torture, where twenty would have been a hundred years ago. Of the prisoners that fell into their hands on St. Clair's defeat, I could not learn, although I made strict enquiries on the subject, that a single man had been listened to the stake. As soon as the defeat was known, rewards were held out by the British officers, and others that had influence over them, to bring in their prisoners alive, and the greater part of them were delivered up unhurt; but to eradicate wholly from their breasts the spirit of revenge has been found impossible. You will be enabled to form a tolerable idea of the little good effect which education has over their minds in this respect, from the following anecdotes of Captain Joseph Brandt, a war chief of the Mohawk nation.

This Brandt, at a very early age, was sent to a college in New England, where, being possessed of a good capacity, he soon made very considerable progress in the Greek and 278 Latin languages. Uncommon pains were taken to instil into his mind the truths of the gospel. He professed himself to be a warm admirer of the principles of christianity, and in hopes of being able to convert his nation on returning to them, he absolutely translated the gospel of St. Matthew into the Mohawk language; he also translated the established form of prayer of the church of England. Before Brandt, however, had finished his course of studies, the American war broke out, and fired with that spirit of glory which seems to have been implanted by nature in the breast of the Indian, he immediately quitted the college, repaired to his native village, and shortly afterwards, with a considerable body of his nation, joined some British troops under the command of Sir John Johnston. Here he

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distinguished himself by his valour in many different, engagements, and was soon raised, not only to the rank of a war chief, but also to that of a captain in his Majesty's service.

It was not long, however, before Brandt sullied his reputation in the British army. A skirmish took place with a body of American troops; the action was warm, and Brandt was shot by a musket-ball in the heel; but the Americans in the end were defeated, and an officer with about sixty men taken prisoners. The officer, after having delivered up his sword, had entered into conversation with Colonel Johnston, who commanded the British troops, and they were talking together in the most friendly manner, when Brandt, having stolen slyly behind them, laid the American officer lifeless on the ground with a blow of his tomahawk. The indignation of Sir John Johnston, as may readily be supposed, was roused by such an act of treachery, and he resented it in the warmest language. Brandt listened to him unconcernedly, and when he had finished, told him, that he was sorry what he had done had caused his displeasure, but that indeed his heel wa extremely painful at the moment, and he could not help revenging himself on the only chief of the party that he saw taken. Since he had killed the officer, his heel, he added, was much less painful to him than it had been before.

When the war broke out, the Mohawks resided in the Mohawk River, in the state of New York, but on peace being made, they emigrated into Upper Canada, and their principal village is now situated on the Grand River, which falls into Lake Erie on the north side, about sixty miles from the town of Newark or Niagara; there Brandt at present resides. He has built a comfortable habitation for himself, and any stranger that visits him may rest assured of being well received, 280 and of finding a plentiful table well served every day. He has no less than thirty or forty negroes, who attend to his horses, cultivate his grounds, &c. These poor creatures are kept in the greatest subjection, and they dare not attempt to make their escape, for he has assured them, that if they did so he would follow them himself, though it were to the confines of Georgia, and would tomahawk them wherever he

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met them. They know his disposition too well not to think that he would adhere strictly to his word.

Brandt receives from government half pay as a captain, besides annual presents, &c. which in all amount, it is said, to 500 *l.* per annum. We had no small curiosity, as you may well imagine, to see this Brandt, and we procured letters of introduction to him from the governor's secretary, and from different officers and gentlemen of his acquaintance, with an intention of proceeding from Newark to his village, Most unluckily however, on the day before that of our reaching the town of Newark or Niagara, he had embarked on board a vessel for Kingston, at the opposite end of the lake. You may judge of Brandt's consequence, when I tell you, that the a lawyer of Niagara, who crossed Lake Ontario in the same vessel with us, from Kingston, where he had been detained for some time by contrary 281 winds, informed us, the day after our arrival at Niagara, that by his not having reached that place in time to transact some law business for Brandt, and which had consequently been given to another person, he should be a loser of one hundred pounds at least.

Brandt's sagacity led him, early in life, to discover that the Indians had been made the dupe of every foreign power that had got footing in America; and, indeed, could he have had any doubts on the subject, they would have been removed when he saw the British, after having demanded and received the assistance of the Indians in the American war, so ungenerously and unjustly yield up the whole of the Indian territories, east of the Mississippi and south of the lakes, to the people of the United States; to the very enemies, in short, they had made to themselves at the request of the British. He perceived with regret that the Indians, by espousing the quarrels of the whites, and by espousing different interests, were weakening themselves; whereas, if they remained aloof, and were guided by the one policy, they would soon become formidable, and be treated with more respect; he formed the bold scheme, therefore, of uniting the Indians together in one grand confederacy, and for this purpose sent messengers to different chiefs, proposing that a general meeting 282 should be held of the heads of every tribe, to take the subject into

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consideration; but certain of the tribes, suspicious of Brandt's designs, and fearful that he was bent upon acquiring power for himself by this measure, opposed it with all their might. Brandt has in consequence become extremely obnoxious to many of the most warlike, and with such a jealous eye do they now regard him that it would not be perfectly safe for him to venture to the upper country.

He has managed the affairs of his own people with great ability, and leased out their superfluous lands from them, for long terms of years, by which measure a certain annual revenue is ensured to the nation, probably as long as it will remain a nation. He wisely judged, that it was much better to do so than to suffer the Mohawks, as many other tribes had done, to sell their possessions by piecemeal the sums of money they received for which however great, would soon be dissipated if paid to them at once.

Whenever the affairs of his nation shall permit him to do so, Brandt declares it to be his intention to sit down to the further study of the Greek language, of which he professes himself to be a great admirer, and to translate from the original, into the Mohawk language, more of the New Testament; yet this same man, 283 shortly before we arrived at Niagara, killed his only son with his own hand. The son, it seems, was a drunken good for nothing fellow, who had often avowed his intention of destroying his father. One evening he absolutely entered the apartment of his father, and had begun to grapple with him, perhaps with a view to put his unnatural threats into execution, when Brandt drew a short sword, and felled him to the ground. Brandt speaks of this affair with regret, but at the same time without any of that emotion which another person than an Indian might be supposed to feel. He consoles himself for the act, by thinking that he has benefited the nation, by ridding them of a rascal.

Brandt wears his hair in the Indian style, and also the Indian dress; instead of the wrapper or blanket, he wears a short coat, such as I have described, similar to a hunting frock.

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Though infinite pains have been taken by the French Roman Catholics, and other missionaries, to propagate the gospel amongst the Indians, and though many different tribes have been induced thereby to submit to baptism, yet it does not appear, except in very few instances, that any material advantages have resulted from the introduction of the Christian religion amongst them. They have learned to repeat certain forms of prayer; they have 284 learned to attend to certain outward ceremonies; but they still continue to be swayed by the same violent passions as before, and have imbibed nothing of the genuine spirit of christianity.

The Moravian missionaries have wrought a greater change in the minds of the Indians than any others and have succeeded so far as to induce some of them to abandon their savage mode of life, to renounce war, and to cultivate the earth. It is with the Munsies, a small tribe resident on the east side of lake St. Clair, that they have had the most success; but the number that have been so converted is small indeed. The Roman Catholics have the most adherents, as the outward forms and parade of their religion are particularly calculated to strike the attention of the Indians, and as but little restraint is laid on them by the missionaries of that persuasion, in consequence of their profession of the new faith. The Quakers, of all people, have had the least success amongst them; the doctrine of non-resistance, which they set out with preaching, but ill accords with the opinion of the Indian; and amongst some tribes, where they have attempted to inculcate it, particularly amongst the Shawnese, one of the most warlike tribes to the north of the Ohio, they 285 have been exposed to very imminent danger* .

* The great difficulty of converting the Indians to christianity does not rise from their attachment to their own religion, where they have any, so much as from certain habits which they seem to have imbibed with the very milk of their mothers.

A French missionary relates, that he was once endeavouring to convert an Indian, by describing to him the rewards that would attend the good, and the dreadful punishment which must inevitably await the wicked, in a future world, when the Indian, who had some

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time before lost his dearest friend, suddenly interrupted him, by asking him whether he thought his departed friend was gone to heaven or to hell. I sincerely trust, answered the missionary, that he is in heaven. Then I will do as you bid me, added the Indian, and lead a sober life, for I should like to go to the place where my friend is. Had he, on the contrary, been told that his friend was in hell, all that the reverend father could have said to him of fire and brimstone would have been of little avail in persuading him to have led any other than the most dissolute life, in hopes of meeting with his friend to sympathise with him under his sufferings.

The Indians, who yet remain ignorant of divine revelation, seem almost universally to believe in the existence of one supreme, beneficent, all-wise, and all-powerful spirit, and likewise in the existence of subordinate spirits, both good and bad. The former having the good of mankind at heart, they think it needless to pay homage to them, and it is only to the evil ones, of whom they have an innate dread, that they pay their devotions, in order to avert their ill intentions. Some distant tribes, it is said, have priests amongst them, but it does not appear that they have any regular forms of worship. Each individual repeats a prayer, or makes an offering to the evil spirit, when his fears and apprehensions suggest the necessity of his so doing.

The belief of a future state, in which they are to enjoy the same pleasures as they do in this world, but to be exempted from pain, and from the trouble of procuring food, seems to be very general amongst them. Some of the tribes have much less devotion than others; the Shawnese, a warlike daring nation, have but very little fear of evil spirits, and consequently have scarcely any religion amongst them. None of this nation, that I could learn, have ever been converted to Christianity.

It is a very singular and remarkable circumstance, that notwithstanding the striking similarity which we find in the persons, manners, customs, dispositions, and religion of the different tribes of Indians from one end of the continent of North America to the other, a similarity so great as hardly to leave a doubt on the mind but that they must all have had

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the same origin, the languages of the different tribes should yet be so materially different. No two tribes speak exactly the same language; and the languages of many of those, 287 who live at no great distance asunder, vary, so much, that they cannot make themselves at all understood to each other. I was informed that the Chippeway language was by far the most general, and that a person intimately acquainted with it would soon be able to acquire a tolerable knowledge of any other language spoken between the Ohio and Lake Superior. Some persons, who have made the Indian languages their study, assert, that all the different languages spoken by those tribes, with which we have any connection, are but dialects of three primitive tongues, viz. the Huron, the Algonquin, and the Sious; the two former of which, being well understood, will enable a person to converse, at least slightly, with the Indians of any tribe in Canada or the United States. All the nations that speak a language derived from the Sious, have, it is said, a hissing pronunciation; those who speak any one derived from the Huron, have a guttural pronunciation; and such as speak any one derived from the Algonquin, pronounce their words with greater softness and ease than any of the others. Whether this be a just distinction or not I cannot pretend to determine; I shall only observe, that all the Indian men I ever met with, as well those whose language is said to be derived from the Huron, as those whose language is derived from the Algonquin, appear to me to have very few labial sounds in 288 their language, and to pronounce the words from the throat, but not so much from the upper as the lower part of the throat towards the breast. A slight degree of hesitation is observable in their speech, and they articulate seemingly with difficulty, and in a manner somewhat similar to what a person, I should suppose, would be apt to do if he had a great weight laid on his chest, or had received a blow on his breast or back so violent as to affect his breath. The women, on the contrary, speak with the utmost ease, and the language, as pronounced by them, appears as soft as the Italian. They have, without exception, the most delicate harmonious voices I ever heard, and the most pleasing gentle laugh that it is possible to conceive. I have oftentimes sat amongst a group of them for an hour or two together, merely from the pleasure of listening to their conversation, on account of its wonderful softness and delicacy.

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The Indians, both men and women, speak with great deliberation, and never appear to be at a loss for words to express their sentiments.

The native music of the Indians is very rude and indifferent, and equally devoid of melody and variety. Their famous war song is nothing better than an insipid recitative. Singing and dancing with them go hand in hand; and when a large number of them, collected together, join in the one song, the few 289 wild notes of which it consists, mingled with the sound of their pipes and drums, sometimes produce, when heard at a distance, a pleasing effect on the ear; but it is then and then only that their music is tolerable.

The first night of our arrival at Malden, just as we were retiring to rest, near midnight, we were most agreeably entertained in this manner with the sound of their music on the island of Bois Blanc. Eager to hear more of it, and to be witness to their dancing, we procured a boat, and immediately crossed the river to the spot where they were assembled. Three elderly men, seated under a tree, were the principal musicians. One of these beat a small drum, formed of a piece of a hollow tree covered with a skin, and the two others marked time equally with the drum, with kettles formed of dried squashes or gourds filled with pease. At the same time these men sung, indeed they were the leaders of the song, which the dancers joined in. The dancers consisted solely of a party of squaws, to the number of twenty or thereabouts, who, standing in a circle, with their faces inwards and their hands folded round each other's necks, moved, thus linked together, sideways, with close short steps, round a small fire. The men and women never dance together, unless indeed a pretty squaw be introduced by some young VOL. II. U 290 fellow into one of the men's dances, which is considered as a very great mark of favour. This is of a piece with the general conduct of the Indians, who look upon the women in a totally different light from what we do in Europe, and condemn them as slaves to do all the drudgery. I have seen a young chief with no less than three women attendant on him to run after his arrows, when he was amusing himself with shooting squirrels; I have also seen Indians, when moving for a few miles from one place to another, mount their horses and canter away at their ease,

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whilst their women were left not only to walk, but to carry very heavy loads on their backs after them.

After the women had danced for a time, a larger fire was kindled, and the men assembled from different parts of the island, to the number of fifty or sixty, to amuse themselves in their turn. There was little more variety in their dancing than in that of the women. They first walked round the fire in a large circle, closely, one after another, marking time with short steps to the music; the best dancer was put at their head, and gave the step; he was also the principal singer in the circle. After having made one round, the step was altered to a wider one, and they began to stamp with great vehemence upon the ground, and every third or fourth round, 291 making little leaps off the ground with both feet, they turned their faces to the fire and bowed their heads, at the same time going on sideways. At last, having made a dozen or two rounds, towards the end of which each one of them had begun to stamp on the ground with inconceivable fury, but more particularly the principal dancer, they all gave a loud shout at once, and the dance ended.

In two or three minutes another dance was begun, which ended as soon, and nearly in the same way as the other. There was but little difference in the figures of any of them, and the only material difference in the songs was, that in some of them the dancers, instead of singing the whole of the air, came in simply with responses to the airs sung by the old men. They beckoned to us to join them in their dance, which we immediately did, as it was likely to please them, and we remained on the island with them till two or three o'clock in the morning. There is something inconceivably terrible in the sight of a number of Indians dancing thus round a fire in the depths of thick woods, and the loud shrieks at the end of every dance adds greatly to the horror which their first appearance inspires.

Scarcely a night passed over but what there were dances, similar to those I have described, on the island. They never think of dancing U 2 292 till the night is considerably advanced, and they keep it up till day-break. In the day time they lie sleeping in the sun, or sit smoking tobacco, that is, when they have nothing particular to engage them. Though

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the most diligent persevering people in the world when roused into action, yet when at peace with their neighbours, and having got wherewith to satisfy the calls of hunger, they are the most slothful and indolent possible.

The dances mentioned are such as the Indians amuse themselves with in common. On grand occasions they have a variety of others, much more interesting to a spectator. The dances which you see in common amongst the Shawnese, and certain other tribes, are also, it is said, much more entertaining than those I have described. There were several families of the Shawnese encamped on the island of Bois Blanc when we were there; but as there was not a sufficient number to form a dance by themselves, we were never gratified with a sight of their performances.

Of their grand dances the war dance must undoubtedly, from every account I have received of it, for I never had any opportunity of seeing it myself, be the one most worthy the attention of a stranger. It is performed both on setting out and returning from their war parties, and likewise at other times, but never 293 except on some very particular and solemn occasion. The chiefs and warriors who are about to join in this dance, dress and paint themselves as if actually out on a warlike expedition, and they carry in their hands their warlike weapons. Being assembled, they seat themselves down on their hams, in a circle, round a great fire, near to which is placed a large post; after remaining a short time in this position, one of the principal chiefs rises, and placing himself in the centre, begins to rehearse, in a sort of recitative, all the gallant actions which he has ever performed; he dwells particularly on the number of enemies he has killed, and describes the manner in which he scalped them, making gestures all the time, and brandishing his weapons, as if actually engaged in performing the horrid operation. At the end of every remarkable story he strikes his war club on the post with great fury. Every chief and warrior tells of his deeds in turn. The song of one warrior often occupies several hours, and the dance itself sometimes lasts for three or four entire days and nights. During this period no one is allowed to sleep, a person who stands at the outside of the circle being appointed (whose business it is) to rouse any warrior that appears in the least drowsy. A deer, a bear, or

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some other large animal, is put to roast at the fire as soon as the dance begins, 294 and while it lasts, each warrior rises at will to help himself to a piece of it. After each person in the circle has in turn told of his exploits, they all rise, and join in a dance truly terrifying; they throw themselves into a variety of postures, and leaping about in the most frantic manner, brandish their knives and other weapons; at the same time they set up the war hoop, and utter the most dreadful yells imaginable. In this manner the dance terminates.

The Indian flute or pipe is formed of a thick cane, similar to what is found on the banks of the Mississippi, and in the southern parts of the United States. It is about two feet or more in length, and has eight or nine holes in it, in one row. It is held in the same manner as the oboe or clarinet, and the sound is produced by means of a mouth-piece not unlike that of a common whistle. The tones of the instrument are by no means unharmonious, and they would admit of a pleasing modulation, but I never met with an Indian that was able to play a regular air upon it, not even any one of the airs which they commonly sing, although I saw several that were extremely fond of amusing themselves with the instrument, and that would sit for hours together over the embers of their cabin fires, playing over a few wild melancholy notes. Every Indian that can bring a sound 295 out of the instrument, and stop the holes, which any one may do, thinks himself master of it; and the notes which they commonly produce are as unconnected and unmeaning as those which a child would bring forth from a halfpenny whistle.

In addition to what I have said on the subject of the Indians, I shall only observe, that notwithstanding they are such a very friendly hospitable people, yet few persons, who had ever tasted of the pleasures and comforts of civilized life, would feel any inclination to reside amongst them, on becoming acquainted with their manner of living. The filthiness and wretchedness of their smoky habitations, the nauseousness of their common food to a person not even of a delicate palate, and their general uncleanness, would be sufficient, I think, to deter any one from going to live amongst them from choice, supposing even that no other reasons operated against his doing so. For my own part, I had fully determined in my own mind, when I first came to America, not to leave the continent without spending

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a considerable time amongst them, in the interior parts of the country, in order to have an opportunity of observing their native manners and customs in their utmost purity; but the samples I have seen of them during my stay in this part of the country, although it has given me a most 296 favourable opinion of the Indians themselves, has induced me to relinquish my purpose. Content therefore with what I have seen myself, and with what I have heard from others, if chance should not bring me again into their way in prosecuting my journey into the settled parts of the States, I shall take no further pains to cultivate a more intimate acquaintance with them.

LETTER XXXVI.

Departure from Malden.—Storm on Lake Erie.—Driven back amongst the Islands.—Shipwreck narrowly avoided.—Voyage across the Lake.—Land at Fort Erie.—Proceed to Buffalo Creek.—Engage Indians to go through the Woods.—Set out on Foot.—Journey through the Woods.—Description of the Country beyond Buffalo Creek.—Vast Plains.—Grand Appearance of the Trees here.—Indian Dogs.—Arrival at the Settlements on Genesee River.—First Settlers.—Their general Character.—Description of the Country bordering on Genesee River.—Fever common in Autumn.—Proceed on Foot to Bath.

Bath, November.

TOWARDS the latter end of the month of October, the schooner in which we had engaged a passage to Presqu' Isle made 297 her appearance before Malden, where she was obliged to lay at anchor for three days, the wind not being favourable for going farther down the river; at the end of that time, however, it veered about, and we repaired on board, after having taken a long farewell of our friend Captain E—, whose kindness to us had been unbounded, and was doubly grateful, inasmuch as it was totally unexpected by us young strangers, who had not the slightest acquaintance with him previous to our coming into the country, and had not been introduced to him even by letter.

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The wind, though favourable, was very light on the morning of our embarkation, but the current being strong we were soon carried down to the lake. In the afternoon we passed the islands, which had the most beautiful appearance imaginable. The rich woods with which the shores were adorned, now tinged with the hues of autumn, afforded in their decline a still more pleasing variety to the eye than when they were clothed in their fullest verdure; and their gaudy colours, intermingled with the shadows of the rocks, were seen fancifully reflected in the unruffled surface of the surrounding lake. At day-break the next morning we found ourselves entirely clear of the land; but instead of the azure sky and gentle breezes which had favoured us the preceding 298 day, we had thick hazy weather, and every appearance of the heavens indicated that before many hours were over we should have to contend with some of those dangerous storms that are so frequent on Lake Erie. It was not long indeed ere the winds began to blow, and the waves to rise in a tremendous manner, and we soon became spectators of a number of those confused and disgusting scenes which a gale of wind never fails to occasion in a small vessel crowded with passengers. A number of old French ladies, who were going to see their grandchildren in Lower Canada, and who now for the first time in their lives found themselves on the water, occupied the cabin. The hold of the vessel, boarded from end to end, and divided simply by a sail suspended from one of the beams, was filled on one side with steerage passengers, amongst which were several women and children; and on the opposite one with passengers who had paid cabin price, but were unable to get any better accommodation, amongst which number was our party. Not including either the old ladies in the cabin, or the steerage passengers, we sat down to dinner each day, twenty-six in number, which circumstance, when I inform you that the vessel was only seventy tons burden, will best enable you to conceive how much we must have been crowded. The 299 greater part of the passengers, drooping under sea-sickness, begged for heaven's sake that the captain would put back; but bent upon performing his voyage with expedition, which was a matter of the utmost consequence indeed, now that the season was so far advanced, and there was a possibility that he might be blocked up by the ice on his return, he was deaf to their entreaties. What the earnest entreaties, however of the passengers

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could not effect, the storm soon compelled him to. It was found absolutely necessary to seek for a place of shelter to avoid its fury; and accordingly the helm having been ordered up, we made the best of our way back again to the islands, in a bay between two of which we cast anchor. This bay, situated between the Bass Islands, which are among the largest in the cluster, is called, from its being so frequently resorted to by vessels that meet with contrary winds in going down the lake, Putin-Bay, vulgarly termed by the sailors Pudding Bay.

Here we lay securely sheltered by the land until four o'clock the next morning, when the watch upon deck gave the alarm that the vessel was driving from her anchor, and going fast towards the shore. The captain started up, and perceiving that the wind had shifted, and the land no longer afforded any protection to the vessel, he immediately gave orders to slip the cable, and hoist the jib, in order to wear the vessel round, and thus get free, if possible, of the shore. In the hurry and confusion of the moment, however, the mainsail was hoisted at the same time with the jib, the vessel was put aback, and nothing could have saved her from going at once on shore but the letting fall another anchor instantaneously. I can only account for this unfortunate mistake by supposing that the men were not sufficiently roused from their slumbers, on coming upon deck, to hear distinctly the word of command. Only one man had been left to keep the watch, as it was thought that the vessel was riding in perfect safety, and from the time that the alarm was first given until the anchor was dropped, scarcely four minutes elapsed.

The dawn of day only enabled us to see all the danger of our situation. We were within one hundred yards of a rocky lee shore, and depending upon one anchor, which, if the gale increased, the captain feared very much would not hold. The day was wet and squally, and the appearance of the sky gave us every reason to imagine that the weather instead of growing moderate, would become still more tempestuous than it either was or had been; nevertheless, buoyed up by hope, and by a good share of animal spirits, we eat our breakfasts regardless of the impending danger, and afterwards sat down to a game of cards; but scarcely had we played for one hour when the dismal cry was heard

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of, "All hands aloft," as the vessel was again drifting towards the shore. The day being very cold, I had fastened a blanket over my shoulders, and had thrown it round my waist with a girdle, in the Indian fashion; but being incapable of managing it like an Indian, I stopped to disencumber myself of it before I went on deck, so that as it happened, I was the last man below. The readiest way of going up was through the hatchway, and I had just got my foot upon the ladder, in order to ascend, when the vessel struck with great force upon the rocks. The women shrieking now flocked round me, begging for God's sake I would stay by them; at the same time my companions urged me from above to come up with all possible speed. To my latest hour I shall never forget the emotions which I felt at that moment; to have staid below would have been useless; I endeavoured, therefore, to comfort the poor creatures that clung to me, and then disengaging myself from them, forced my way upon deck, where I was no sooner arrived than the hatches were instantly shut down upon the wretched females, whose shrieks resounded 302 through the vessel, notwithstanding all the bustle of the seamen, and the tremendous roaring of the breakers amongst the adjacent rocks.

Before two minutes had passed over, the vessel struck a second time, but with a still greater shock; and at the end of a quarter of an hour, during which period she had gradually approached nearer towards the shore, she began to strike with the fall of every wave.

The general opinion now seemed to be in favour of cutting away the masts, in order to lighten the vessel; and the axes were actually upraised for the purpose, when one of my companions who possessed a considerable share of nautical knowledge from having been in the navy, opposed the measure. It appeared to him, that as the pumps were still free, and as the vessel had not yet made more water than could be easily got under, the cutting away of the masts would only be to deprive ourselves of the means of getting off the rock if the wind should veer about; but he advised the captain to have the yards and topmasts cut away. The masts were spared, and his advice was in every other respect attended to.

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The wind unfortunately, however, still continued to blow from the same point, and the only alteration observable in it was its blowing with still greater force than ever.

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As the storm increased the waves began to roll with greater turbulence than before; and with such impetuousity did they break over the bows of the vessel, that it was with the very utmost difficulty that I, and half a dozen more who had taken our station on the fore-castle, could hold by our hands fast enough to save ourselves from being carried overboard. For upwards of four hours did we remain in this situation, expecting every instant that the vessel would go to pieces, and exposed every three or four minutes to the shock of one of the tremendous breakers which came rolling towards us. Many of the billows appeared to be half as high as the foretop, and sometimes, when they burst over us, our breath was nearly taken away by the violence of the shock. At last, finding ourselves so benumbed with cold that it would be impossible for us to make any exertions in the water to save ourselves if the vessel was wrecked, we determined to go below, there to remain until we should be again forced up by the waves.

Some of the passengers now began to write their wills on scraps of paper, and to inclose them in what they imagined would be most likely to preserve them from the water; others had begun to take from their trunks what they deemed most valuable; and one unfortunate thoughtless man, who was moving with his 304 family from the upper country, we discovered in the very act of loading himself with dollars from head to foot, so that had he fallen into the water in the state we found him, he must inevitably have been carried to the bottom.

Words can convey no idea of the wildness that reigned in the countenance of almost every person as the night approached; and many, terrified with the apprehensions of a nightly shipwreck, began to lament that the cable had not been at once cut, so as to have let the vessel go on shore whilst day-light remained: this indeed had been proposed a few hours after the vessel began to strike; but it was over-ruled by the captain, who very properly

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refused to adopt a measure tending to the immediate and certain destruction of his vessel, whilst a possibility remained that she might escape.

Till nine o'clock at night the vessel kept striking every minute, during which time we were kept in a state of the most dreadful suspense about our fate; but then happily the wind shifted one or two points in our favour, which occasioned the vessel to roll instead of striking. At midnight the gale grew somewhat more moderate; and at three in the morning it was so far abated, that the men were enabled to haul on the anchor, and in a short time to bring the vessel once more into 305 deep water, and out of all danger. Great was the joy, as may well be imagined, which this circumstance diffused amongst the passengers; and well pleased was each one, after the fatigue and anxiety of the preceding day, to think he might securely lay himself down to rest.

The next morning the sun arose in all his majesty from behind one of the distant islands. The azure sky was unobscured by a single cloud, the air felt serenely mild, and the birds, as if equally delighted with man that the storm was over, sweetly warbled forth their songs in the adjacent woods; in short, had it not been for the disordered condition in which we saw our vessel, and every thing belonging to us, the perils we had gone through would have appeared like a dream.

The first object of examination was the rudder. The tiller was broken to atoms; and the sailors who went over the stern reported, that of the four gudgeons or hooks on which the rudder was suspended, only one was left entire, and that one was much bent. On being unshipped, the bottom of it was found to be so much shivered that it actually resembled the end of a broom. The keel, there was every reason to suppose, was in the same shattered condition; nevertheless the vessel, to the great astonishment of every person on board did not VOL. II. X 306 make much water. Had she been half as crazy as the King's vessel in which we went up the lake, nothing could have saved her from destruction.

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A consultation was now held upon what was best to be done. To proceed on the voyage appeared totally out of the question; and it only remained to determine which way was the easiest and readiest to get back to Malden. All was at a stand, when an officer in the American service proposed the beating out of an iron crow bar, and the manufacturing of new gudgeons. This was thought to be impracticable; but necessity, the mother of invention, having set all our heads to work, an anvil was formed of a number of axes laid upon a block of wood; a large fire was kindled, and a party of us acting as smiths in turns, by the end of three hours contrived to hammer out one very respectable gudgeon.

In the mean time others of the passengers were employed in making a new tiller, and others undertook to fish for the cable and anchor that had been slipped, whilst the sailors were kept busily employed at the rigging. By nightfall the vessel was so far refitted that no apprehensions were any longer entertained about our being able to reach Malden in safety, and some began to think there would be no danger in prosecuting the voyage down the 307 lake. The captain said that his conduct must be regulated entirely by the appearance of the weather on the following day.

Early the next morning, whilst we yet remained stretched in our births, our party was much surprized at hearing the sound of strange voices upon deck; but our surprise was still greater, when on a nearer approach we recognized them to be the voices of two young friends of ours, who like ourselves had crossed the Atlantic to make a tour of the continent of North America, and whom, but a few days before we had quitted Philadelphia, we had accompanied some miles from that city on their way towards the south. They had travelled, it seemed, from Philadelphia to Virginia, afterwards to Kentucky, and had found their way from the Ohio to Detroit on horseback, after encountering numberless inconveniences. There they had engaged a passage in a little sloop bound to Fort Erie, the last vessel which was to quit that port during the present season. They had embarked the preceding day, and in the night had run into Put-in-Bay, as the wind was not favourable for going down the lake. The commander of the sloop offered to stay by our vessel, and to

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give her every assistance in his power, if our captain chose to proceed down the lake with him. The offer was gladly accepted, and it X 2 308 was agreed that the two vessels should sail together as soon as the wind was favourable.

After having breakfasted, we proceeded with our young friends, in the ship's boat, to that part of the island at which we had been exposed to much danger. Here we found the shore strewn with the oars, spars, &c. which had been washed overboard, and from the dreadful manner in which they were shattered, no doubt remained on our minds, but that if the vessel had been wrecked, two-thirds of the passengers at least must have perished amidst the rocks and breakers. We spent the day rambling about the woods, and recounting to each other our adventures since the last separation, and in the evening returned to our respective ships. About midnight the wind became fair, and whilst we lay wrapt in sleep the vessels put to sea.

All hopes of being able to get on shore at Presqu'Isle were now over, for the captain, as our vessel was in such a ticklish condition, was fearful of venturing in there, lest he might lose sight of the sloop; we made up our minds, therefore, for being carried once more to our old quarters, Fort Erie; and after a most disagreeable passage of four days, during which we encountered several squalls not a little alarming, landed there in safety.

Our friends immediately set out for Newark, 309 from whence, if the season would admit of it, and a favourable opportunity offered, they proposed to sail to Kingston, and proceed afterwards to Lower Canada; we, on the contrary, desirous of returning by a different route from that by which we had come up the country, crossed over to Buffalo Creek, in hopes of being able to procure horses at the Indian village there, to carry us through the Genesee country. To our disappointment we found, that all the Indians of the village who had horses had already set out with them on their hunting expedition; but the interpreters told us, that if we would consent to walk through the woods, as far as the settlements of the white people, the nearest of which was ninety miles from Buffalo Creek, he did not doubt but that he could find Indians in the village who would undertake to carry our baggage for

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us; and that once arrived at the back settlements, we should find it no difficult matter to hire horses. We readily agreed to his proposals, and he in consequence soon picked out from the Indians five men, amongst which was a war chief, on whom he told us we might place every reliance, as he was a man of an excellent character. The Indians, it was settled, were to have five dollars apiece for their services, and we were to furnish them with provisions and liquor. The interpreter, who was a white man, put us on our guard against giving them too much of the latter; but he advised us always to give them some whenever we took any ourselves, and advised us also to eat with them, and to behave towards them in every respect as if they were our equals. We had already seen enough of the Indians, to know that this advice was good, and indeed to have adopted of ourselves the line of conduct which he recommended, even if he had said nothing on the subject.

Having arranged every thing to our satisfaction, we returned to Fort Erie; there we disposed of all our superfluous baggage, and having made some addition to the stores of dried provisions and biscuits which our kind friend captain E—had furnished us with on leaving his hospitable roof, we embarked, with all belonging to us, in the ship's boat, for the village on Buffalo Creek, where we had settled to pass the night, in order to be ready to start early the next morning.

The Indians were with us according to appointment at day-break; they divided the baggage, fastened their loads each on their carrying frames, and appeared perfectly ready to depart, when their chief requested, through the interpreter, “that we would give them before “they set out a little of that precious water “we possessed, to wash their eyes with, which “would dispel the mists of sleep that still hung 311 “over them, and thus enable them to find out “with certainty the intricate path through “the thick forest we were about to traverse;” in other words, that we would give them some brandy. It is always in figurative language of this kind that the Indians ask for spirits. We dispensed a glass full of the precious liquor, according to their desire, to each of them, as well as to their squaws and children, whom they brought along with them to share our bounty, and then, the Indians

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having taken up their loads, we penetrated into the woods, along a narrow path scarcely discernible, owing to the quantities of withered leaves with which it was strewed.

After proceeding a few miles, we stopped by the side of a little stream of clear water to breakfast; on the banks of another stream we eat our dinner; and at a third we stopped for the night. Having laid down their loads, the Indians immediately began to erect poles, and cover them with pieces of bark, which they found lying on the ground, and which had evidently been left there by some travellers who had taken up their quarters for the night at this same place some time before; but we put a stop to their work, by shaking out from the bag in which it was deposited, our travelling tent. They perceived now that they must employ themselves in a different manner, and 312 knowing perfectly well what was to be done, they at once sat to work with their tomahawks in cutting poles and pegs. In less than five minutes, as we all bore a part, the poles and pegs were cut, and the tent pitched.

One of the Indians now made signs to us to lend him a bag, having received which he ran into the woods, and was soon out of sight. We were at a loss to guess what he was in pursuit of; but in a little time he returned with the bag full of the finest cranberries I ever beheld. In the mean time another of them, of his own accord, busied himself in carrying heaps of dried leaves into the tent, which, with our buffalo skins, afforded luxurious beds to men like us, that had slept on nothing better than a board for upwards of a month past. In the upper country it is so customary for travellers to carry their own bedding, that even at our friend Captain E—'s house we had no other accommodation at night than the floor of an empty room, on which we spread our skins. As for themselves, the Indians thought of no covering whatsoever, but simply stretched themselves on the ground beside the fire, where they lay like dogs or cats till morning. At day-break we started, and stopped as on the preceding day beside streams of water to eat our breakfasts and dinners.

From Buffalo Creek to the place where we 313 encamped on the first night, distant about twenty-five miles, the country being very flat, and the trees growing so closely together that it was impossible to see farther forward in any direction than fifty yards, our journey

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after a short time became very uninteresting. Nothing in its kind, however, could exceed the beauty of the scenery that we met with during our second day's journey. We found the country, as we passed along, interspersed with open plains of great magnitude, some of them not less, I should suppose, than fifteen or twenty miles in circumference. The trees on the borders of these having ample room to spread, were luxuriant beyond description, and shot forth their branches with all the grandeur and variety which characterizes the English timber, particularly the oak. The woods round the plains were indented in every direction with bays and promontories, as Mr. Gilpin terms it, whilst rich clumps of trees, interspersed here and there, appeared like so many clusters of beautiful islands. The varied hues of the woods at this season of the year, in America, can hardly be imagined by those who never have had an opportunity of observing them; and indeed, as others have often remarked before, were a painter to attempt to colour a picture from them, it would be condemned in Europe as totally different from any thing that ever existed in nature.

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These plains are covered with long coarse grass, which, at a future day, will probably afford feeding to numerous herds of cattle; at present they are totally unfrequented. Throughout the north-western territory of the States, and even beyond the head waters of the Mississippi, the country is interspersed with similar plains; and the farther you proceed to the westward, the more extensive in general are they. Amidst those to the westward are found numerous herds of buffaloes, elks, and other wild graminivorous animals; and formerly animals of the same description were found on these plains in the state of New York, but they have all disappeared long since, owing to their having been so constantly pursued both by the Indians and white people.

Very different opinions have been entertained respecting the deficiency of trees on these extensive tracts of land, in the midst of a country that abounds so generally with wood. Some have attributed it to the poverty of the soil; whilst others have maintained, that the

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plains were formerly covered with trees, as well as other parts of the country, but that the trees have either been destroyed by fire, or by buffaloes, beavers, and other animals.

It is well known that buffaloes, in all those parts of the country where they are found wild, commit great depredations amongst the trees, 315 by gnawing off the bark; they are also very fond of feeding upon the young trees that spring up from seed, as well as upon the suckers of the old ones; it may readily be imagined, therefore, that the entire of the trees, on very extended tracts of land, might be thus killed by them; and as the American timber, when left exposed to the weather, soon decays, at the end of a few years no vestige of the woods would be found on these tracts, any more than if they had been consumed by fire.

It appears to me, however, that there is more weight in the opinion of those, who ascribe the deficiency of trees on the plains to the unfriendliness of the soil; for the earth towards the surface is universally very light, and of a deep black colour, and on digging but a few inches downwards you come to a cold stiff clay. On Long island in the state of New York, plains are met with nearly similar to these in the back country, and the Dutch farmers, who have made repeated trials of the soil, find that it will not produce wheat or any other grain, and, in short, nothing that is at all profitable except coarse grass. I make no doubt but that whenever a similar trial comes to be made of the soil of the plain to the westward, it will be found equally incapable of producing any thing but what it does at present.

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After having passed over a great number of these plains of different sizes, we entered once more into the thick woods: but the country here appeared much more diversified with rising grounds than it was in any part we had already traversed. As we were ascending to the top of a small eminence in the thickest part of these woods, towards the close of our second day's journey, our Indian chief, *China-breast-plate*, who received that name in consequence of his having worn in the American war a thick china dish as an ornament on his breast, made a sign to us to follow him to the left of the path. We did so, and having proceeded for a few yards, suddenly found ourselves on the margin of a deep extensive

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pit, not unlike an exhausted quarry, that had lain neglected for many years. The area of it contained about two acres, and it approached to a circular form; the sides were extremely steep, and seemed in no place to be less than forty feet high; in some parts they were considerably higher. Near the center of the place was a large pond, and round the edges of it, as well as round the bottom of the precipice, grew several very lofty pines. The walls of the precipice consisted of a whitish substance not unlike lime-stone half calcined, and round the margin of the pit, at top, lay several heaps of loose matter resembling lime-rubbish, 317 *China-breast-plate* , standing on the brink of the precipice, began to tell us a long story, and pointing to a distant place beyond it, frequently mentioned the word Niagara. Whether, however, the story related to the pit, or whether it related to the Falls of Niagara, the smoke arising from which it is by no means improbable might be seen, at times, from the elevated spot where we stood, or whether the story related to both, we could in no way learn, as we were totally unacquainted with the Seneka language, and he was nearly equally ignorant of the English. I never met with any person afterwards who had seen this place, or who knew any thing relating to it. Though we made repeated signs to *China-breast-plate* , that we did not understand his story, he still went on with it for near a quarter of an hour; the other Indians listened to it with great attention, and seemed to take no small interest in what he said.

I should have mentioned to you before, that both the Indians and the white Americans pronounce the word Niagara differently from what we do. The former lay the accent on the second syllable, and pronounce the word full and broad as if written Nee-awg-ara. The Americans likewise lay the accent on the second syllable; but pronounce it short, and give the same sound to the letters I and A as 318 we do. Niagara, in the language of the neighbouring Indians, signifies a mighty rushing or fall of water.

On the second evening of our expedition we encamped on a small hill, from whose top there was a most pleasing romantic view, along a stream of considerable size, which wound round its base, and as far as our eyes could reach, appeared tumbling in small falls over ledges of rocks. A fire being kindled, and the tent pitched as usual, the Indians

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sat down to cook some squirrels which we had killed on the borders of the plains. These animals the Indians had observed, as we came along, on the top of a large hollow tree; they immediately laid down their loads, and each taking out his tomahawk, and setting to work at a different part of the tree, it was felled down in less than five minutes, and such of the squirrels as escaped their dogs we readily shot for them.

The Indian dogs, in general, have short legs, long backs, large pricked up ears, and long curly tails; they differ from the common English cur dogs in no respect so much as in their barking but very seldom. They are extremely sagacious, and seem to understand even what their masters say to them in a low voice, without making any signs, either with the hand or head.

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Whilst the squirrels were roasting on a forked stick stuck in the ground, and bent over the fire, one of the Indians went into the woods, and brought out several small boughs of a tree, apparently of the willow tribe. Having carefully scraped the bark off from these, he made a sort of frame with the twigs, in shape somewhat like a gridiron, and heaping upon it the scraped bark, placed it over the fire to dry. When it was tolerably crisp he rubbed it between his hands, and put it up in his pouch for the purpose of smoking.

The Indians smoke the bark of many different trees, and a great variety of herbs and leaves besides tobacco. The most agreeable of any of these substances which they smoke are the leaves of the sumach tree, rhus-toxicodendron. This is a graceful shrub, which bears leaves somewhat similar to those of the ash. Towards the latter end of autumn they turn of a bright red colour, and when wanted for smoking are plucked off and dried in the sun. Whilst burning they afford a very agreeable perfume. These leaves are very commonly smoked, mixed with tobacco, by the white people of the country; the smoke of them by themselves alone is said to be prejudicial to the lungs. The sumach tree bears tufted bunches of crimson flowers. One of these bunches dipped lightly, for a few times, into a bowl of 320 punch, gives the liquor a very agreeable acid, and in the southern

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states it is common to use them for that purpose, but it is a dangerous custom, as the acid, though extremely agreeable to the palate, is of a poisonous quality, and never fails to produce a most alarming effect on the bowels if used too freely.

A sharp frost set in this night, and on the following morning, at day-break, we recommenced our journey with crossing the river already mentioned up to our waists in water, no very pleasing task. Both on this and the subsequent day we had to wade through several other considerable streams.

A few squirrels were the only wild animals which we met with in our journey through the woods, and the most solemn silence imaginable reigned throughout, except where a wood-pecker was heard now and then tapping with its bill against a hollow tree. The birds in general flock towards the settlements, and it is a very rare circumstance to meet with them in the depth of the forest.

The third evening we encamped as usual. No sooner had we come to our resting place, than the Indians threw off their cloaths, and rolled themselves on the grass just as horses would do, to refresh themselves, the day having proved very hot, notwithstanding the frost of the preceding night. We were joined this evening by another party of the Seneca Indians, who were going to a village situated on the Genesee River, and in the morning we all set out together. Early in the day we came to several plains similar to those we had before met with, but not so extended, on the borders of one of which we saw, for the first time a bark hut, apparently inhabited. On going up to it, our surprise was not a little to find two men, whose appearance and manners at once bespoke them not to be Americans. After some conversation we discovered them to be two Englishmen, who had formerly lived in London as *valets de chambre*, and having scraped together a little money, had set out for New York, where they expected at once to become great men; however they soon found to their cost, that the expence of living in that city was not suited to their pockets, and they determined to go and settle in the back country. They were at no loss to find persons who had land to dispose of, and happening to fall in with a jobber who

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owned some of these plains, and who painted to them in lively colours the advantage they would derive from settling on good land already cleared to their hand, they immediately purchased a considerable track of this barren ground at a round price, and set out to fix themselves upon it. From the neighbouring settlements, which VOL. II. Y 322 were about ten miles off, they procured the assistance of two men, who after having built for them the bark hut in which we found them, left them with a promise of returning in a short time to erect a log house. They had not, however, been punctual to their word, and unable to wield an axe, or to do any one thing for themselves, these unfortunate wretches sat moping in their hut, supporting themselves on some salt provisions they had brought with them, but which were now nearly exhausted. The people in the settlements, whom, on arriving there, we asked some few questions respecting these poor creatures, turned them into the greatest ridicule imaginable for being so helpless; and indeed they did present a most striking picture of the folly of any man's attempting to settle in America without being well acquainted with the country previously, and competent to do every sort of country work for himself.

It was not without very great vexation that we perceived, shortly after leaving this hut evident symptoms of drunkenness in one of the Indians, and on examining our brandy cask it was but too plain that it had been pillaged. During the preceding part of our journey we had kept a watchful eye upon it, but drawing towards the end of our expedition, and having had every reason to be satisfied with the conduct 323 of the Indians, we had not paid sufficient attention to it this day; and though it could not have been much more than five minutes out of our sight, yet in that short space of time the screw had been forced, and the cask drained to the last drop. The Indian, whom we discovered to be drunk, was advanced a little before the others. He went on for some time staggering about from side to side, but at last, stopping and laying hold of his scalping knife, which they always carry with them by their sides, he began to brandish it with a threatening air. There is but one line of conduct to be pursued when you have to deal with Indians in such a situation, and that is, to act with the most determined resolution. If you betray the smallest symptoms

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of fear, or appear at all wavering in your conduct, it only serves to render them more ungovernable and furious. I accordingly took him by the shoulder, pushed him forward, and presenting my piece, gave him to understand that I would shoot him if he did not behave himself properly. My companions, whilst I was taking care of him, went back to see in what state the other Indians were. Luckily the liquor, though there was reason to apprehend they had all had a share of it, had not made the same impression upon them. One of them, indeed, was beginning to be refractory, and absolutely threw Y 2 324 down his load, and refused to go farther; but a few words from *China-breast-plate* induced him to resume it, and to go on. On coming up to the first Indian, and seeing the sad state he was in, they shook their heads, and crying, "No good Indian," "No good Indian," endeavoured by signs to inform us that it was he who had pillaged the cask, and drank all the brandy; but as it was another Indian who carried the cask, no doubt remained but that they must all have had a share of the plunder; that the first fellow, however, had drank more than the rest was apparent; for in a few minutes he dropped down speechless under his load; the others hastened to take it off from his back, and having divided it amongst themselves, they drew him aside from the path, and threw him under some bushes, where he was left to sleep till he should come again to his senses.

About noon we reached the Genesee River, at the opposite side of which was situated the village where we expected to procure horses. We crossed the river in canoes, and took up our quarters at a house at the uppermost end of the village, where we were very glad to find our Indian friends could get no accommodation, for we knew well that the first use they would make of the money we were going to give them would be to buy liquor, and 325 intoxicate themselves, in which state they would not fail of becoming very troublesome companions; it was scarcely dark indeed when news was brought us from a house near the river, that they went to after we had discharged them, that they were grown quite outrageous with the quantity of spirits they had drank, and were fighting and cutting each other in a most dreadful manner. They never resent the injuries they receive from any

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person that is evidently intoxicated, but attribute their wounds entirely to the liquor, on which they vent their execrations for all the mischief it has committed.

Before I dismiss the subject entirely, I must observe to you, that the Indians did not seem to think the carrying of our baggage was in any manner degrading to them; and after having received their due, they shook hands with us, and parted from us, not as from employers who had hired them, but as from friends whom they had been assisting, and were now sorry to leave.

The village where we stopped consisted of about eight or nine straggling houses; the best built one among them was that in which we lodged. It belonged to a family from New England, who about six years before had penetrated to this spot, then covered with woods, and one hundred and fifty miles distant from any other settlement. Settlements are now scattered over the whole of the country which they had to pass through in coming to it. The house was commodious and well built, and the people decent, civil, and reputable. It is a very rare circumstance to meet with such people amongst the first settlers on the frontiers; in general they are men of a morose and savage disposition, and the very outcasts of society, who bury themselves in the woods, as if desirous to shun the face of their fellow-creatures; there they build a rude habitation, and clear perhaps three or four acres of land, just as much as they find sufficient to provide their families with corn: for the greater part of their food they depend on their rifle guns. These people, as the settlements advance, are succeeded in general by a second set of men, less savage than the first, who clear more land, and do not depend so much upon hunting as upon agriculture for their subsistence. A third set succeed these in turn, who build good houses, and bring the land into a more improved state. The first settlers, as soon as they have disposed of their miserable dwellings to advantage, immediately penetrate farther back into the woods, in order to gain a place of abode suited to their rude mode of life. These are the lawless people who encroach, as I have before mentioned, on the Indian territory, and are the occasion of the bitter animosities between the whites and the Indians. The second settlers, likewise, when displaced, seek for similar places to what those that they have left were

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when they first took them. I found, as I proceeded through this part of the country, that there was scarcely a man who had not changed his place of abode seven or eight different times.

As none but very miserable horses were to be procured at this village on the Genesee River, and as our expedition through the woods had given us a relish for walking, we determined to proceed on foot, and merely to hire horses to carry our baggage; accordingly, having engaged a pair, and a boy to conduct them, we set off early on the second morning from that of our arrival at the village, for the town of Bath.

The country between these two places is most agreeably diversified with hill and dale, and as the traveller passes over the hills which overlook the Genesee River and the flats bordering upon it, he is entertained with a variety of noble and picturesque views. We were particularly struck with the prospect from a large, and indeed very handsome house in its kind belonging to a Major Wadsworth, built on one of these hills. The Genesee River, bordered with the richest woods imaginable, 328 might be seen from it for many miles, meandering through a fertile country, and beyond the flats on each side of the river, appeared several ranges of blue hills rising up one behind another in a most fanciful manner, the whole together forming a most beautiful landscape. Here, however, in the true American taste, the greatest pains were taking to diminish, and, indeed, to shut out all the beauties of the prospect; every tree in the neighbourhood of the house was felled to the ground; instead of a neat lawn, for which the ground seemed to be singularly well disposed, a wheat field was; laid down in front of it; and at the bottom of the slope, at the distance of two hundred yards from the house, a town was building by the major, which, when completed, would effectually screen from the dwelling house every sight of the river and mountains. The Americans, as I before observed, seem to be totally dead to the beauties of nature, and only to admire a spot of ground as it appears to be more or less calculated to enrich the occupier by its produce.

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The Genesee River takes its name from lofty hill in the Indian territory, near to which it passes, called by the Indians Genesee, a word signifying in their language, a grand extensive prospect.

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The flats bordering upon the Genesee River are amongst the richest lands that are to be met with in North America, to the east of the Ohio. Wheat, as I told you in a former letter, will not grow upon them; and it is not found that the soil is impoverished by the successive crops of Indian corn and hemp that are raised upon them year after year. The great fertility of these flats is to be ascribed to the regular annual overflowing of the Genesee River, whose waters are extremely muddy, and leave no small quantity of slime behind them before they return to their natural channel. That river empties itself into Lake Ontario: it is somewhat more than one hundred miles in length, but only navigable for the last forty miles of its course, except at the time of the inundations; and even then the navigation is not uninterrupted the whole way down to the lake, there being three considerable falls in the river about ten miles above its month: the greatest of these falls is said to be ninety feet in perpendicular height. The high lands in the neighbourhood of the Genesee River are stony, and are not distinguished for their fertility, but the valleys are all extremely fruitful, and abound with rich timber.

The summers in this part of the country are by no means so hot as towards the Atlantic, and the winters are moderate: it is seldom, 330 indeed that the snow lies on the ground much longer than six or seven weeks: but notwithstanding this circumstance, and that the face of the country is so much diversified with rising grounds, yet the whole of it is dreadfully unhealthy, scarcely a family escapes the baneful effects of the fevers that rage here during the autumn season. I was informed by the inhabitants, that much fewer persons had been attacked by the fever the last season than during former years, and of these few a very small number died, the fever having proved much less malignant than it was ever known to be before. This circumstance led the inhabitants to hope, that as

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the country became more cleared it would become much more healthy. It is well known, indeed that many parts of the country, which were extremely healthy while they remained covered with wood, and which also proved healthy after they had been generally cleared and settled, were very much otherwise when the trees were first cut down: this has been imputed to the vapours arising from the newly cleared lands on their being first exposed to the burnings rays of the sun, and which, whilst the newly cleared spots remain surrounded by woods, there is not a sufficient circulation of air to dispel. The unhealthiness of the country at present does not deter numbers of people from coming to settle here 331 every year, and few parts of North America can boast of a more rapid improvement than the Genesee country during the last four years.

In our way to Bath we passed through several small towns that had been lately begun, and in these the houses were comfortable and neatly built; but the greater part of those of the farmers were wretched indeed; one at which we stopped for the night, in the course of our journey, had not even a chimney or window to it; a large hole at the end of the roof supplied the deficiency of both; the door was of such a nature, also, as to make up in some measure for the want of a window, as it admitted light on all sides. A heavy fall of snow happened to take place whilst we were at this house, and as we lay stretched on our skins beside the fire, at night, the snow was blown, in no small quantities, through the crevices of the door, under our very ears.

At some of these houses, we got plenty of venison, and good butter, milk, and bread; but at others we could get nothing whatsoever to eat. At one little village, consisting of three or four houses, the people told us that they had not even sufficient bread and milk for themselves; and, indeed, the scantiness of the meal to which we saw them sitting down confirmed the truth of what they said. We were under the necessity of walking on for nine 332 miles beyond this village before we could get any thing to satisfy our appetites.

The fall of snow, which I have mentioned, interrupted our progress through the woods very considerably the subsequent morning; it all disappeared, however, before the next night,

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and in the course of the third day from that on which we left the banks of the Genesee River we reached the place of our destination.

LETTER XXXVII.

Account of Bath.—Of the Neighbourhood.—Singular Method taken to improve it.—Speculators.—Description of one, in a Letter from an American Farmer.—Conhorton Creek.—View of the Navigation from Bath downwards.—Leave Bath for Newton.—Embark in Canoes.—Stranded in the Night—Seek for Shelter in a neighbouring House.—Difficulty of procuring Provisions.—Resumeour Voyage.—Lochartsburgh.—Description of the eastern Branch of the Susquehannah River.—French Town.—French and Americans ill suited to each other.—Wilkesbarré. Mountains in the Neighbourhood.—Country thinly settled towards Philadelphia.—Description 333 of the Wind-Gap in the Blue Mountains.—Summary Account of the Moravian Settlement at Bethlehem—Return to Philadelphia.

Philadelphia, November.

BATH is a post town, and the principal town in the western parts of the state of New York, Though laid out only three years ago, yet it already contains about thirty houses, and is increasing very fast. Amongst the houses are several stores or shops well furnished with goods, and a tavern that would not be thought meanly of in any part of America. This town was founded by a gentleman who formerly bore the rank of captain in his Majesty's service; he has likewise been the founder of Williamsburgh and Falkner's Town; and indeed to his exertions, joined so those of a few other individuals, may be ascribed the improvement of the whole of this part of the country, best known in America by the name of the Genesee Country, or the County of the Lakes, from its being watered by that river, and a great number of small lakes.

The landed property of which this gentleman, who founded Bath, &c. has had the active management, is said to have amounted originally to no less than six millions of acres, the greater part of which belonged to an individual 334 in England. The method he has

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taken to improve this property has been, by granting land in small portions and on long credits to individuals who would immediately improve it, and in larger portions and on a shorter credit to others who purchased on speculation, the lands in both cases being mortgaged for the payment of the purchase money; thus, should the money not be paid at the appointed time, he could not be a loser, as the lands were to be returned to him, and should they happen to be at all improved as was most likely to be the case, he would be a considerable gainer even by having them returned on his hands; moreover, if a poor man, willing to settle on his land, had not money sufficient to build a house and to go on with the necessary improvements, he has at once supplied him, having had a large capital himself, with what money he wanted for that purpose, or sent his own workmen, of whom he keeps a prodigious number employed, to build a house for him, at the same time taking the man's note at three, four, or five years, for the cost of the house, &c. with interest. If the man should be unable to pay at the appointed time, the house, mortgaged like the lands, must revert to the original proprietor, and the money arising from its sale, and that of the farm adjoining, partly improved, will in all probability 335 be found to amount to more than what the poor man had promised to pay for it; but a man taking up land in America in this manner, at a moderate price, cannot fail, if industrious, of making money sufficient to pay for it, as well as for a house, at the appointed time.

The numbers that have been induced by these temptations, not to be met with elsewhere in the States, to settle in the Genesee Country, is astonishing; and numbers are still flocking to it every year, as not one-third of the lands are yet disposed of. It was currently reported in the county, as I passed through it, that this gentleman, of whom I have been speaking, had in the notes of the people to whom he had sold land payable at the end of three, or four, or five years, the immense sum of two millions of dollars. The original cost of the land was not more than a few pence per acre; what therefore must be the profits!

It may readily be imagined, that the granting of land on such very easy terms could not fail to draw crowds of speculators (a sort of gentry with which America abounds in every quarter) to this part of the country; and indeed we found, as we passed along,

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that every little town and village throughout the country abounded with them, and each place, in consequence, exhibited a picture of idleness and 336 dissipation. The following letter, supposed to come from a farmer, though somewhat ludicrous, does not give an inaccurate description of one of these young speculators, and of what is going on in this neighbourhood. It appeared in a newspaper published at Wilkesbarré, on the Susquehannah, and I give it to your verbatim, because, being written by an American, it will perhaps carry more weight with it than any thing I could say on the same subject.

“To the Printers of the Wilkesbarré Gazette.

“Gentlemen.

“It is painful to reflect, that speculation has “raged to such a degree of late, that honest “industry, and all the humble virtues that “walk in her train, are discouraged and rendered “unfashionable.

“It is to be lamented too, that dissipation “is sooner introduced in new settlements than “industry and economy.

“I have been led to these reflections by “conversing with my son, who has just returned “from the Lakes or Genesee, though “he has neither been to the one or the other; “—in short, he has been to Bath, the celebrated “Bath, and has returned both a speculator and a gentleman; having spent his “money, swopped away my horse, caught the 337 “fever and ague, and, what is infinitely worse, “that horrid disorder which some call the “terra-phobia* .

* Our farmer does not seem to have well understood the import of this word, but we may readily guess at his meaning.

“We can hear nothing from the poor creature “now (in his ravings) but of the captain “and Billy—of ranges—townships—numbers “—thousands—hundreds—acres—Bath “—fairs

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—races—heats—bets—purses—silk “stockings—fortunes—fevers—agues, &c. &c. “&c. My son has part of a township for “sale, and it is diverting enough to hear him “narrate his pedigree, qualities, and situation. “In fine, it lies near Bath, and the captain “himself once owned, and for a long time reserved “it. It cost my son but five dollars “per acre; he was offered six in half a minute “after his purchase; but he is positively determined “to have eight, besides some precious “reserves. One thing is very much in my boy's “favour—he has six years credit. Another “thing is still more so—he is not worth a “sous, nor ever will be at this rate. Previous “to his late excursion the lad worked well, “and was contented at home on my farm; “but now work is out of the question with “him. There is no managing my boy at “home; these golden dreams still beckon him VOL. II. Z 338 “back to Bath, where, as he says, no one need “either work or starve; where, though a man “may have the ague nine months in the year, “he may console himself in spending the “other three fashionably at the races.

“ *A Farmer.* ”

“ *Hanover, October 25th, 1796.*”

The town of Bath stands on a plain, surrounded on three sides by hills of a moderate height, The plain is almost wholly divested of its trees; but the hills are still uncleared, and have a very pleasing appearance from the town. At the foot of the hill runs a stream of pure water, over a bed of gravel, which is called Conhocton Creek. There is a very considerable fall in this creek just above the town, which affords one of the finest seats for mills possible. Extensive saw and flour mills have already been erected upon it, the principal saw in the former of which gave, when we visited the mill, one hundred and twenty strokes in a minute, sufficient to cut, in the same space of time, seven square feet, superficial measure, of oak timber; yet the miller informed us, that when the water was high it would cut much faster.

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Conhocton Creek, about twenty miles below Bath, falls into Tyoga River, which after a course about thirty miles, empties itself into the eastern branch of the River Susquehannah. 339 During floods you may go down in light bateaux along the creek, Tyoga and Susquehannah rivers, the whole way from Bath to the Chesapeak Bay, without interruption; and in the fall of the year there is generally water sufficient for canoes from Bath downwards; but owing to the great drought that prevailed through every part of the country this year, the depth of water in the creek was found insufficient to float even a canoe of the smallest size. Had it been practicable, it was our intention to have proceeded from Bath by water; but finding that it was not, we once more set off on foot, and pursued our way along the banks of the river till we came to a small village of eight or ten houses, called Newtown, about thirty miles distant from Bath. Here we found the stream tolerably deep, and the people informed us, that excepting at one or two narrow shoals, they were certain that in every part of it, lower down, there was sufficient water for canoes; accordingly determined to be our own watermen, being five in number including our servants, we purchased a couple of canoes from two farmers, who lived on the banks of the river, and having lashed them together, in order to render them more steady and safe, we put our baggage on board, and boldly embarked.

It was about three o'clock on a remarkably Z 2 340 clear though cold afternoon that we left the village, and the current being strong, we hoped to be able to reach before night a tavern, situated, as we were told, on the banks of the river, about six miles below Newtown. For the first two miles we got on extremely well; but beyond this the river proving to be much shallower than we had been led to believe, we found it a matter of the utmost difficulty to proceed. Our canoes repeatedly struck upon the shoals, and so much time was consumed in setting them again free, that before we had accomplished more than two-thirds of our voyage the day closed. As night advanced a very sensible change was observable in the weather; a heavy shower of hail came pouring down, and, involved in thick darkness, whilst the moon was obscured by a cloud, our canoes were drifted by the current, to which, being unable to see our way, we had consigned them, on

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a bank in the middle of the river. In endeavoring to extricate ourselves we unfortunately, owing to the darkness, took a wrong direction, and at the end of a few minutes found our canoe so firmly wedged in the gravel that it was impossible to move them. Nothing now remained to be done but for every one of us to jump into the water, and to put his shoulder to the canoes. This we accordingly did, and having previously unlashed, 341 in order to render them more manageable, we in a short time contrived to haul one of them into deep water; here, however, the rapidity of the current was so great, that notwithstanding all our endeavours to the contrary, the canoe was forcibly swept away from us, and in the attempt to hold it fast we had the misfortune to see it nearly filled with water.

Deprived thus of one of our canoes, and of a great part of our baggage in it, which, for aught we knew, was irrecoverably lost, we determined to proceed more cautiously with the remaining one; having returned, therefore, to the bank, we carried every thing that was in the canoe on our shoulders to the shore, which was about forty yards distant; no very easy or agreeable task, as the water reached up to our waists, and the current was so strong that it was with the utmost difficulty we could keep our feet. The canoe being emptied, we brought it, as nearly as we could guess, to the spot where the other one had been swept away from us, and one of the party then getting into it with a paddle, we committed it, pursuant to his desire, to the stream, hoping that it would be carried down after the other, and thus we should be able to recover both it and the things which it contained. In a few seconds the stream carried the canoe out of our sight, for the moon shone but faintly 342 through the clouds, and being all of us totally unacquainted with the river, we could not but feel some concern for the personal safety of our companion. Before many minutes, however, were elapsed, we had the satisfaction of hearing his voice at a distance, and having made the best of our way along the shore to the spot from whence the sound proceeded, we had the satisfaction to find that he had been carried in safety close beside the canoe which had been lost; we were not a little pleased also at finding our portmanteaus at the bottom of the canoe, though well soaked in water; but such of our

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clothes as we had taken off preparatory to going into the water, together with several light articles, were all lost.

It froze so very hard now, that in a few minutes our portmanteaus, and such of our garments as had been wetted, were covered with a coat of ice, and our limbs were quite benumbed, in consequence of our having waded so often through the river. Desirous, however, as we were to get to a house, we determined, in the first instance, to dispose of our baggage in a safe place, lest it might be pillaged. A deep hollow that appeared under some fallen trees seemed well adapted for the purpose, and having stowed it there, and covered it with leaves, we advanced forward. There were no traces whatsoever of a path in 343 the woods where we landed, and for upwards of a mile we had to force our way through the bushes along the banks of the river; but at the end of that distance, we hit upon one, which in a short time brought us to a miserable little log-house. At this house no accommodation whatsoever was to be had, but we were told, that if we followed the path through the woods for about a mile farther, we should come to a waggon road, upon which we should find another house, where probably we might gain admittance. We reached this house according to the directions we had received; we readily gained admittance into it, and the blaze of an immense wood fire, piled half way up the chimney, soon made us amends for what we had suffered from the inclemency of the weather. The coldness of the air, together with the fatigue which we had gone through in the course of the day, had by this time given a keen edge to our appetites; no sooner therefore had we warmed ourselves than we began to make enquiries about what we could get to satisfy the calls of hunger; but had we asked for a sheep or an ox for supper at an inn in England, the man of the house could not, I verily believe, have been more amazed than was our American landlord at these enquiries: "The women were in bed"—"He knew not "where to find the keys"—"He did not 344 "believe there was any thing in the pantry"—"Provisions were very scarce in the country"—"If he gave us any there would not "be enough for the family in the morning." Such were his answers to us. However we plied him so closely, and gave him such a pitiable description of our sufferings, that at length he was moved; the keys

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were found, the pantry opened, and to satisfy the hunger of five hungry young men, two little flour cakes, scarcely as big as a man's hand each, and about a pint and a half of milk, were brought forth. He vowed he could give us nothing more; his wife would never pardon him if he did not leave enough for their breakfasts in the morning; obliged therefore to remain satisfied, we eat our little pittance, and then laid ourselves down to rest on our skins, which we had brought with us on our shoulders.

In the morning we found that the man had really made an accurate report of the state of his pantry. There was barely enough in it for the family, and unable to get a single morsel to eat, we set out for the little house where we had first stopped the preceding night, which was the only one within two or three miles, there hoping to find the inhabitants better provided for: not a bit of bread however was to be had here; but the woman of the house told us that she had some Indian corn meal, 345 and that if we could wait for an hour or two she would bake a loaf for us. This was most grateful intelligence: we only begged of her to make it large enough, and then set off to search in the interim for our canoes and baggage. At several other places, in going down the Susquehannah, we afterwards found an equal scarcity of provisions with what we did in this neighbourhood. One morning in particular, after having proceeded for about four or five miles in our canoe, we stopped to breakfast; but nothing eatable was there to be had at the first house we went to, except a few potatoes that were roasting before the fire. The people very cheerfully gave us two or three, and told us at the same time, that if we went to some houses at the opposite side of the river we should most probably find better fare: we did so; but here the inhabitants were still more destitute. On asking them where we should be likely to get any thing to eat, an old woman answered, that if we went to a village about four miles lower down the river, we should find a house, she believed, where “ *they did keep victuals* ,” an expression so remarkable that I could not help noting it down immediately. We reached this house, and finding it well stocked with provisions of every kind, took care to provide ourselves, not only with what we wanted for immediate use, but 346 also with what we might want on

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a future occasion, in case we came to any place equally destitute of provisions as those which we had before stopped at; a precaution that was far from proving unnecessary.

But to return. We found our canoes and baggage just as we had left them, and having embarked once more, we made the best of our way down to the house where we had bespoke breakfast, which stood on the banks of the river. The people here were extremely civil; they assisted us in making fresh paddles in lieu of those which we had lost the night before; and for the trifle which we gave them above what they asked us for our breakfasts they were very thankful, a most unusual circumstance in the United States.

After breakfast we pursued our way for about seven miles down the river, but in the course of this distance we were obliged to get into the water more than a dozen different times, I believe, to drag the canoes over the shoals; in short, by the time we arrived at a house in the afternoon, we were so completely disgusted with our water conveyance, that had we not been able to procure two men, as we did in the neighbourhood, to conduct our canoes to the mouth of Tyoga River, where there was reason to imagine that the water would be found deeper, we should certainly have left them behind us. The men set out at an early hour in the morning, and we proceeded some time afterwards on foot along the banks; but so difficult was the navigation, that we reached Tyoga Point or Lochartzburgh, a small town built at the mouth of the river, several hours before them.

On arriving at this place, we heard to our disappointment, that the Susquehannah, although generally at this season of the year navigable for boats drawing four feet water, was now nearly as low as the Tyoga River, so that in many places, particularly at the rapids, there was scarcely sufficient water to float a canoe over the sharp rocks with which the bed of the river abounds; in fine, we were informed that the channel was now intricate and dangerous, and that no person unacquainted with the river could attempt to proceed down it without great risk; we found no difficulty, however, in hiring from amongst the watermen accustomed to ply on the river, a man that was perfectly well acquainted with it;

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and having exchanged our two canoes, pursuant to his advice, for one of a very large size, capable of holding us all conveniently, we renewed our voyage.

From Lochartzburgh to Wilkesbarré, or Wyoming, situated on the south-east side of the Susquehannah, the distance is about ninety 348 miles, and when the river is full, and the current of course strong, as is usually the case in the fall and spring of the year, you may go down the whole of this distance in one day; but owing to the lowness of the water we were no less than four days performing the voyage, though we made the utmost expedition possible. In many parts of the river, indeed, we found the current very rapid; at the Falls of Wyalusing, for instance, we were carried down three or four miles in about a quarter of an hour; but in other places, where the river was deep, scarcely any current was perceptible in it, and we were obliged to work our way with paddles. The bed of the river abounds with rock and gravel, and the water is so transparent, that in many parts, where it must have been at least twenty feet deep, the smallest pebble was distinguishable at the bottom. The width of the river varies from fifty to three hundred yards, and scarcely any stream in America has a more irregular course; in some places it runs in a direction diametrically opposite to what it does in others. The country through which this (the eastern) branch of the Susquehannah passes, is extremely uneven and rugged; indeed, from Lochartzburgh till within a short distance of Wilkesbarré, it is bounded the entire way by steep mountains either on the one side or the other. The 349 mountains are never to be met with at both sides of the same part of the river, except it be at places where the river takes a very sudden bend; but wherever you perceive a range of mountains on one side, you are sure to find an extensive plain on the opposite one; scarcely in any part do the mountains extend for more than one mile together on the same side of the river, and in many instances, during the course of one mile, you will perceive more than a dozen different changes of the mountains from one side to the other. It may readily be imagined, from this description of the eastern branch of the Susquehannah, that the scenery along it must be very fine; and, indeed, I think there is no river in America that abounds with such a variety and number of picturesque views. At every bend the prospect varies, and there

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is scarcely a spot between Lochartzburg and Wilkesbarré where the painter would not find a subject well worthy of his pencil. The mountains, covered with bold rocks and woods, afford the finest foreground imaginable; the plains, adorned with cultivated fields and patches of Wood, and watered by the noble river, of which you catch a glimpse here and there, fill up the middle part of the landscape; and the blue hills, peeping up at a distance, terminate the view in the most pleasing manner.

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The country bordering upon the Susquehannah abounds with deer, and as we passed down we met with numberless parties of the country people engaged in driving these animals. The deer, on being pursued in the neighbouring country, immediately make for the river, where men being concealed in bushes placed on the strand, at the part to which it is expected they will come down, take the opportunity of shooting them as soon as they enter the water. Should the deer not happen to come near these ambushes, the hunters then follow them in canoes; it seldom happens that they escape after having once taken to the water.

Very fine fish are found in every part of the Susquehannah, and the river is much frequented by wild fowl, particularly by the canvas-back duck.

The whole way between Lochartzburg and Wilkesbarré are settlements on each side of the river, at no great distance from each other; there are also several small towns on the banks of the river. The principal one is French Town, situated within a short distance of the Falls of Wyalusing, on the western side of the river. This town was laid out at the expence of several philanthropic persons in Pennsylvania, who entered into a subscription for the purpose, as a place of retreat for the unfortunate 351 French emigrants who fled to America. The town contains about fifty log houses; and for the use of the inhabitants a considerable tract of land has been purchased adjoining to it, wick has been divided into farms. The French settled here seem, however, to have no great inclination or ability to cultivate the earth, and the greater part of them have let their lands at a small yearly rent to

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Americans, and amuse themselves with driving deer, fishing, and fowling; they live entirely to themselves; they hate the Americans, and the Americans in the neighbourhood hate, and accuse them of being an idle dissipated set. The manners of the two people are so very different, that it is impossible they should ever agree.

Wilkesbarré, formerly Wyoming, is the chief town of Luzerne county. It is situated on a plain, bounded on one side by the Susquehannah, and on the other by a range of mountains, and contains about one hundred and fifty wooden dwelling houses, a church, court-house, and gaol. It was here that the dreadful massacre was committed during the American war, by the Indians under the command of colonel Butler, which is recorded in most of the histories of the war, and which will for ever remain a blot on the English annals. Several of the houses in which the unfortunate 352 victims retired to defend themselves, on being refused all quarter, are still standing, perforated in every part with balls; the remains of others that were set on fire are also still to be seen, and the inhabitants will on no account suffer them to be repaired. The Americans are equally tenacious of the ruins in the neighbourhood of Philadelphia.

It was our intention at first to have proceeded down the river from hence as far as Sunburg, or Harrisburgh; but the weather being now so cold as to render a water conveyance especially a canoe, where you are always obliged to sit very still, extremely disagreeable, we determined to cross the Blue Mountains to Bethlehem in Pennsylvania, situated about sixty-five miles to the south-east of Wilkesbarré; we accordingly hired horses, as we had done on a former occasion, to carry our baggage, and proceeded ourselves on foot. We set out in the afternoon, the day after that on which we terminated our voyage, and before evening crossed the ridge of mountains which bounds the plain of Wilkesbarré. These mountains, which are extremely rugged and stony, abound with iron ore and coal; for the manufacture of the former several forges have been established, but no use is made of the coal, there being plenty of wood as yet in the country, which is esteemed much more agreeable fuel. From the top of them you have a very grand view of the plain below, on which stands the town of Wilkesbarré, and of the river

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Susquehannah, which may be traced above the town, winding amidst the hills for a great number of miles.

The country beyond the mountains is extremely rough, and but very thinly settled, of course still much wooded. The people, at the few houses scattered through it, appeared to live much better than the inhabitants of any other part of the States which I before passed through. At every house where we stopped we found abundance of good bread, butter, tea, coffee, chocolate, and venison; and indeed we fared sumptuously here, in comparison to what we had done for many weeks preceding.

The woods in many parts of this country consisted almost wholly of hemlock trees, which are of the pine species, and grow only on poor ground. Many of them were of an unusually large size, and their tops so closely matted together, that after having entered into the depth of the woods you could see the sky in but very few places. The brush-wood under these trees, different from what I ever saw elsewhere, consisted for the most part of the oleander and of the kalmia laurel, whose deep green served to render the gloom of the woods, still more solemn; indeed they seemed completely VOL. II. A A 354 to answer the description given by the poets of the sacred groves; and it were impossible to enter them without being struck with awe.

About twenty miles before you come to Bethlehem, in going thither from Wilkesbarré cross the ridge of Blue Mountains at what is called the Wind Gap; how it received that name I never could learn. This gap is nearly a mile wide, and it exhibits a tremendously wild and rugged scene. The road does not run at the bottom of the gap, but along the edge of the south mountain, about two-thirds of the way up. Above you on the right, nothing is to be seen but broken rocks and trees, and on the left you look down a steep precipice. The rocks at the bottom of the precipice have every appearance, it is said (for we did not descend into it) of having been washed by water for ages; and from hence it has been conjectured that this must have been the original channel of the River Delaware, which now passes through the ridge, at a place about fifteen miles to the north-west. Whether

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this were the case or not it is impossible to determine at this day; but it is certain, from the appearance of the country on each side of the Delaware, that a great change has taken place in this quarter, in consequence of some vast inundation.

VIEW of BETHLEHEM a Moravian settlement. Published Dec. 22, 1798, by I. Stockdale, Piccadilly.

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On the Atlantic side of the mountains the country is much less rugged than on the opposite one, and it is more cleared and much more thickly settled: the inhabitants are for the most part of German extraction.

Bethlehem is the principal settlement, in North America, of the Moravians, or United Brethren. It is most agreeably situated on a rising ground, bounded on one side by the river Lehigh, which falls into the Delaware, and on the other by a creek, which has a very rapid current, and affords excellent seats for a great number of mills. The town is regularly laid out, and contains about eighty strong built stone dwelling houses and a large church. Three of the dwelling houses are very spacious buildings, and are appropriated respectively to the accommodation of the unmarried young men of the society, of the unmarried females, and of the widows. In these houses different manufactures are carried on, and the inmates of each are subject to a discipline approaching somewhat to that of a monastic institution. They eat together in a refectory, they sleep in dormitories; they attend morning and evening prayers in the chapel of the house; they work for a certain number of hours in the day; and they have stated intervals allotted to them for recreation. They are not subjected by the rules of the society, to perpetual confinement: A A 2 356 but they seldom, notwithstanding, go beyond the bounds of their walks and gardens except it be occasionally to visit their friends in the town.

The Moravians, though they do not enjoin celibacy, yet think it highly meritorious, and the young persons of different sexes have but very little intercourse with each other; they

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never enter each other's houses, and at church they are obliged to sit separate; it is only in consequence of his having seen her at a distance, perhaps, that a bachelor is induced to propose for a young woman in marriage, and he is not permitted to offer his proposals in person to the object of his choice, but merely through the medium of the superintendant of the female house. If from the report of the elders and wardens of the society it appears to the superintendant that he is able to maintain a wife, she then acquaints her protégée with the offer, and should she consent, they are married immediately, but if she do not, the superintendant selects another female from the house, whom she imagines would be suitable to the young man, and on his approval of her they are as quickly married. Hasty as these marriages are, they are never known to be attended with unhappiness; for being taught from thir earliest infancy to keep those passions under controul, which occasion so much mischief amongst the 357 mass of mankind; being inured to regular habits of industry, and to a quiet sober life; and being in their peaceable and retired settlements out of the reach of those temptations which persons are exposed to who launch forth into the busy world, and who mingle with the multitude, the parties meet with nought through life to interrupt their domestic repose.

Attached to the young men's and to the young women's houses there are boarding schools for boys and girls, under the direction of proper teachers, which are also inspected by the elders and wardens of the society. These schools are in great repute, and not only the children of Moravians are sent to them, but also those of many genteel persons of a different persuasion, resident in Philadelphia, New York, and other towns in the neighbouring States. The boys are instructed in the Latin, German, French and English languages: arithmetic, music, drawing, &c.: the girls are likewise instructed in these different languages and sciences, and, in short, in every thing that is usually taught a a female boarding school, except dancing. When of a sufficient age to provide for themselves, the young women of the society are admitted into the house destined for their accommodation, where embroidery, fine needle-work, carding, spinning, knitting, &c. &c. and other works suitable to females, are 358 carried on. A separate room is allotted for

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every different business, and a female, somewhat older than the rest, presides in it, to inspect the work, and preserve regularity. Persons are appointed to dispose of the several articles manufactured in the house, and the money which they produce is distributed amongst the individuals engaged in manufacturing them, who, after paying a certain sum towards the maintenance of the house, and a certain sum besides into the public fund of the society, are allowed to keep the remainder for themselves.

After the boys have finished their school education, they are apprenticed to the business which accords most with their inclination. Should this be a business or trade that is carried on in the young men's house, they at once go there to learn it, but if at the house of an individual in the town, they only board and lodge at the young men's house. If they are inclined to agricultural pursuits, they are then put under the care of one of the farmers of the society. The young men subscribe to the support of their house, and to the public fund, just as the young women do; the widows do the same; and every individual in the town likewise contributes a small sum weekly to the general fund of the society.

Situated upon the creek, which skirts the town, there is a flour mill, a saw mill, an oil 359 mill, a fulling mill, a mill for grinding bark and dye stuff, a tan yard, a currier's yard; and on the Leleigh River an extensive brewery, at which very good malt liquor is manufactured. These mills, &c. belong to the society at large, and the profits arising from them, the persons severally employed in conducting them, being first handsomely rewarded for their services, are paid into the public fund. The lands for some miles round the town, which are highly improved, likewise belong to the society, as does also the tavern, and the profits arising from them are disposed of in the same manner as those arising from the mills, the persons employed in managing the farms, and attending to the tavern, being nothing more than stewards or agents of the society. The fund thus raised is employed in relieving the distressed brethren of the society in other parts of the world, in forming new settlements, and in defraying the expence of the missions for the purpose of propagating the gospel among the heathens.

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The tavern at Bethlehem is very commodious, and it is the neatest and best conducted one, without exception, that I ever met with in any part of America. Having communicated to the landlord, on arriving at it, our wish to see the town and public buildings, he immediately dispatched a messenger for one of the elders, and in less than a quarter of an hour, 360 brother Thomas, a lively fresh coloured little man, of about fifty years of age, entered the room: he was dressed in a plain blue coat and waistcoat, brown corderoy breeches, and a large round hat; there was goodness and innocence in his looks, and his manners were so open and unconstrained, that it was impossible not to become familiar with him at once. When we were ready to sally forth, he placed himself between two of us, and leaning on our arms, and chatting without ceremony, he conducted us first to the young women's house. Here we were shewn into a neat parlour, whilst brother Thomas went to ask permission for us to see the house. In a few minutes the superintendant herself came; brother Thomas introduced her to us, and accompanied by them both we visited the different apartments.

The house is extensive, and the passages and stair-cases are commodious and airy, but the work rooms are small, and to such a pitch were they heated by stoves, that on entering into them at first we could scarcely breathe. The stoves, which they use, are built in the German style. The fire is inclosed in a large box or case formed of glazed tiles, and the warm air is thence conducted, through flues, into similar large cases placed in different parts of the room, by which means every part is rendered equally warm. About a dozen females 361 males or more, nearly of the same age, were seated at work in each apartment. The entrance of strangers did not interrupt them in the least: they went on with their work, and except the inspectress, who never failed politely to rise and speak to us, they did not even seem to take any notice of our being in the room.

The dress of the sisterhood, though not quite uniform, is very nearly so. They wear plain calico, linen, or stuff gowns, with aprons, and close tight linen caps, made with a peak in front, and tied under the chin with a piece of riband. Pink ribands are said to be worn as

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a badge by those who are inclined to marry; however, I observed that all the unmarried women wore them, not excepting those whose age and features seemed to have excluded them from every chance of becoming the votaries of Hymen.

The dormitory of the female house is a very spacious apartment in the upper story, which is aired by a large ventilator in the ceiling. It contains about fifty boarded beds without testers, each calculated to hold one person. They sleep here during winter time in the German style, between two feather beds, to which the sheets and blankets are stitched fast; in summer time the heat is too great here to admit even of single blanket.

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After having gone through the different apartments of the female house, we were conducted by the superintendant into a sort of shop, where different little articles of fancy-work, manufactured by the sisterhood, are laid out to the best advantage. It is always expected that strangers visiting the house will lay out some trifling sum here; and this is the only reward which any member of the society expects for the trouble of conducting a stranger throughout every part of the town.

The house of the sisterhood exhibits a picture of the utmost neatness and regularity, as do likewise the young men's and the widows' houses; and indeed the same may be said of every private house throughout the town. The mills, brewery, &c. which are built on the most approved plans, are also kept in the very neatest order.

Brother Thomas, after having shown us the different public buildings and works, next introduced us into the houses of several of the married men, that were most distinguished for their ingenuity, and in some of them, particularly at the house of a cabinet-maker, we were entertained with very curious pieces of workmanship. This cabinet-maker brought us a book of Indian ink and tinted drawings, his own performances, which would have been a credit to a person in his situation in any part of the world.

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The manufactures in general carried on at Bethlehem consist of wollen and linen cloths, hats, cotton and worsted caps and stockings, gloves, shoes, carpenters, cabinet-makers, and turners work, clocks, and a few other articles of hardware, &c. &c.

The church is a plain building of stone, adorned with pictures from sacred history. It is furnished with a tolerable organ, as likewise are the chapels of the young men's and young women's houses; they accompany their hymns, besides, with violoncelloes, violins, flutes, &c. The whole society attends the church on a Sunday, and when any one of the society dies, all the remaining members attend his funeral, which is conducted with great solemnity, though with little pomp: they never go into mourning for their departed friends.

Every house in the town is supplied with an abundance of excellent water from a spring, which is forced through pipes by means of an hydraulic machine worked by water, and which is situated on the banks of the creek. Some of the houses are supplied with water in every room. The machine is very simple, and would easily raise the water of the spring, if necessary, several hundred feet.

The spring from whence the houses are supplied with water stands nearly in the center of the town, and over it a large stone house with 364 very thick walls, is erected. Houses like this are very common in America; they are called spring houses, and are built for the purpose of preserving meat, milk, butter, &c. during the heats of summer. This spring house in Bethlehem is common to the whole town; a shelf or board in it is allotted to each family, and though there is no watch placed over it, and the door be only secured by a latch, yet every person is certain of finding, when he comes for it, his plate of butter or bowl of milk, &c. exactly in the same state as when he put it in.

The Moravians study to render their conduct strictly conformable to the principles of the Christian religion; but very different notions, notwithstanding, are, and, no doubt, will be entertained respecting some of their tenets. Every unprejudiced person, however, that has visited their settlements must acknowledge, that their moral conduct is truly excellent,

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and is such as would, if generally adopted, make men happy in the extreme. They live together like members of one large family; the most perfect harmony subsists between them, and they seem to have but one wish at heart, the propagation of the gospel, and the good of mankind. They are in general of a grave turn of mind; but nothing of that stiffness, or of that affected singularity, or pride, as I will call 365 it, prevalent amongst the Quakers, is observable in their manners. Wherever their society has extended itself in America, the most happy consequences have resulted from it; good order and regularity have become conspicuous in the behaviour of the people of the neighbourhood, and arts and manufactures have been introduced into the country.

As the whole of the plot of ground, on which Bethlehem stands, belongs to the society, as well as the lands for a considerable way round the town, the Moravians here are not liable to be troubled by intruders, but any person that will conform to their line of conduct will be received into their society with readiness and cordiality. They appeared to take the greatest delight in shewing us their town, and every thing belonging to it, and at parting lamented much that we could not stay longer with them, to see still more of the manners and habits of the society.

They do not seem desirous of adding to the number of houses in Bethlehem; but whenever there is an increase of people, they send them off to another part of the country, there to form a new settlement. Since Bethlehem was founded, they have established two other towns in Pennsylvania, Nazareth and Letitz. The former of these stands at the distance of about ten miles from Bethlehem, and in coming 366 down from the Blue Mountains you pass through it; it is about half the size of Bethlehem, and built much on the same plan. Letitz is situated at the distance of about ten miles from Lancaster.

The country for many miles round Bethlehem is most pleasingly diversified with rising grounds; the soil is rich, and better cultivated than any part of America I before saw. Until within a few years past this neighbourhood has been distinguished for the salubrity of its climate, but fevers, chiefly bilious and intermitten, have increased to a very great degree

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of late, and, indeed, not only here, but in many other parts of Pennsylvania, which have been long settled. During the last autumn, more people suffered from sickness in the well cultivated parts of the country than had ever been remembered. Various reasons have been assigned for this increase of fevers in Pennsylvania, but it appears most probably to be owing to the unequal quantities of rain that have fallen of late years, and to the unprecedented mildness of the winters.

Bethlehem is visited during summer time by great numbers of people from the neighbouring large towns, who are led thither by curiosity or pleasure; and regularly, twice a week throughout the year, a public stage waggon runs between it and Philadelphia. We 367 engaged this carriage to ourselves, and early on the second day from that on which we quitted Bethlehem, reached the capital, after an absence of somewhat more than five months.

LETTER XXXVIII.

Leave Philadelphia.—Arrive at New York.—Visit Long Island.—Dreadful havoc by the Yellow Fever.—Dutch Inhabitants suspicious of Strangers.—Excellent Farmers.—Number Quantities of Grouse and Deer.—Laws to protect them.—Increase of the same.—Decrease of Beavers.—New York agreeable to Strangers.—Conclusion.

MY DEAR SIR, New York, January 1797.

AFTER having remained a few days at Philadelphia, in order to arrange some matters preparatory to my taking a final leave of that city, I set out once more for New York. The month of December had now arrived; considerable quantities of snow had fallen; and the keen winds from the north-west had already spread a thick crust of ice 368 over the Delaware, whose majestic stream is always the last in this part of the country to feel the chilly touch of the hand of winter. The ice, however, was not yet strong enough to sustain the weight of a stage carriage, neither was it very readily to be broken: so that when we reached the falls of the river, where it is usual to cross in going from Philadelphia to New

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York, we had to remain for upwards of two hours shivering before the bitter blasts, until a passage was opened for the boat, which was to convey us and our vehicle to the opposite side. The crossing of the Delaware at this place with a wheel carriage, even when the river is frozen over and the ice sufficiently thick to bear, is generally a matter of considerable inconvenience and trouble to travellers, owing to the large irregular masses of ice formed therein when the frost first sets in, by the impetuosity of the current, which breaking away the slender flakes of ice from the edges of the banks, gradually drifts them up in layers over each other; it is only at this rugged part, that a wheel carriage can safely pass down the banks of the river.

When the ground is covered with snow, a sleigh or sledge is by far the most commodious sort of carriage to travel in, as neither it nor the passengers it contains are liable to receive any injury whatsoever from an overturn, and 369 as, added to this, you may proceed much faster and easier in it than in a carriage on wheels; having said then that there was snow on the ground, it will perhaps be a subject of wonder to you, that we had not one of these safe and agreeable carriages to take us to New York; if so, I must inform you, that no experienced traveller in the middle states sets out on a long journey in a sleigh at the commencement of winter, as unexpected thaws at this period now take place very commonly, and so rapid are they, that in the course of one morning the snow sometimes entirely disappears; a serious object of consideration in this country, where, if you happen to be left in the lurch with your sleigh, other carriages are not to be had at a moment's warning. In the present instance, notwithstanding the intense severity of the cold, and the appearances there were of its long continuance, yet I had not been eight and forty hours at New York when every vestige of frost was gone, and the air became as mild as in the month of September.

This sudden change in the weather afforded me an opportunity of seeing, to much greater advantage than might have been expected at this season of the year, parts of New York and Long Islands, which the shortness of my stay in this neighbourhood had not permitted me to visit in the summer. After leaving the immediate VOL. II B B 370 vicinage of the

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city, which stands at the southern extremity of the former of these two islands, but little is to be met with that deserves attention; the soil, indeed, is fertile, and the face of the country is not unpleasingly diversified with rising grounds; but there is nothing grand in any of the views which it affords, nor did I observe one of the numerous seats with which it is overspread, that was distinguished either for its elegant neatness or the delightfulness of its situation; none of them will bear any comparison with the charming little villas which adorn the banks of the Schuylkill near Philadelphia.

On Long Island much more will be found, in a picturesque point of view, to interest the traveller. On the western side in particular, bordering upon the Narrows, or that contracted channel between the islands through which vessels pass in sailing to New York from the Atlantic, the country is really romantic. The ground here is very much broken, and numberless large masses of wood still remain standing, through the vistas in which you occasionally catch the most delightful prospects of the distant hills on Staten Island and the New Jersey shore, and of the water, which is constantly enlivened by vessels sailing to and fro.

To an inhabitant of one of the large towns 371 on the coast of America, a country house is not merely desirable as a place of retirement from noise and bustle, where the owner may indulge his fancy in the contemplation of rural scenes, at a season when nature is attired in her most pleasing garb, but also as a safe retreat from the dreadful maladies which of late years have never failed to rage with more or less virulence in these places during certain months. When at Philadelphia the yellow fever committed such dreadful havoc, sparing neither the rich nor the poor, the young nor the aged, who had the confidence to remain in the city, or were unable to quit it, scarcely a single instance occurred of any one of those falling a victim to its baneful influence, who lived but one mile removed from town, where was a free circulation of air, and who at the same time studiously avoided all communication with the sick, or with those who had visited them; every person therefore at Philadelphia, New York, Baltimore, &c. who is sufficiently wealthy to afford it, has his country habitation in the neighbourhood of these respective places, to which he may retire

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in the hot unhealthy season of the year; but this delightful part of Long Island, of which I have been speaking, though it affords such a number of charming situations for little villas, is unfortunately too far removed from New York to be a convenient place of retreat to men so deeply engaged in commercial pursuits as are the great number of the inhabitants of that city, and it remains almost destitute of houses; whilst another part of the island, more conveniently situated, is crowded with them, although the face of the country is here flat and sandy, devoid of trees, and wholly uninteresting.

The permanent residents on Long Island are chiefly of Dutch extraction, and they seem to have inherited all the coldness, reserve, and covetousness of their ancestors. It is a common saying in New York, that a Long Island man will conceal himself in his house on the approach of a stranger; and really the numberless instances of shyness I met with in the inhabitants seem to argue, that there was some truth in the remark. If you do but ask any simple question relative to the neighbouring country, they will eye you with suspicion, and evidently strive to disengage themselves from you; widely different from the Anglo-Americans, whose inquisitiveness in similar circumstances would lead them to a thousand impertinent and troublesome enquiries, in order to discover what your business was in that place, and how they could possibly take any advantage of it. These Dutchmen are in general very excellent farmers; and several of them have very extensive tracks of land under cultivation, for the produce of which there is a convenient and ready market at New York. Amongst them are to be found many very wealthy men; but except a few individuals, they live in a mean, penurious, and most uncomfortable manner. The population of the island is estimated at about thirty-seven thousand souls, of which, number near five thousand are slaves. It is, the western part of the island which is the best inhabited; a circumstance to be ascribed, not so much to the fertility of the soil as its contiguity to the city of New York. Here are several considerable towns, as, Flatbush, Jamaica, Brooklynn, Flushing, Utrecht; the three first-mentioned of which contain each upwards of one hundred houses. Brooklynn, the largest of them, is situated just opposite to New York, on the bank of the East River, and forms an agreeable object from the city.

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The soil of Long Island is well adapted to the culture of small grain and Indian corn; and the northern part, which is hilly, is said to be peculiarly favourable to the production of fruit. The celebrated Newtown pippin, though now to be met with in almost every part of the state of New York, and good in its kind, is yet supposed by many persons to attain a higher flavour here than in any other part of America. 374 Of the peculiar soil of the plains that are situated towards the center of this island, I have before had occasion to speak, when describing those in the western parts of the states of New York. One plain here, somewhat different from the rest, is profusely covered with stunted oaks and pines; but no grain will grow upon it, though it has been cleared, and experiments have been made for that purpose in many different places. This one goes under the appellation of Brushy Plain. Immense quantities of grouse and deer are found amidst the brushwood with which it is covered, and which is so well calculated to afford shelter to these animals. Laws have been passed, not long since to prevent the wanton destruction of the deer; in consequence of which they are beginning to increase most rapidly, notwithstanding such great numbers are annually killed, as well for the New York market, as for the support of the inhabitants of the island; indeed it is found that they are now increasing in most of the settled parts of the states of New York, where there is sufficient wood to harbour them; whereas in the Indian territories, the deer, as well as most other wild animals, are becoming scarcer every year, notwithstanding that the number of Indian hunters is also decreasing; but these people pursue the same destructive system of hunting 375 formerly practised on Long Island, killing every animal they meet, whether young or full grown. Notwithstanding the strong injunctions laid upon them by the Canadian traders, to spare some few beavers at each dam, in order to perpetuate the breed, they still continue to kill these animals wherever they find them, so that they are now entirely banished from places which used to abound with, and which are still in a state to harbour them, being far removed from the cultivated parts of the country. An annual deficiency of fifteen thousand has been observed in the number of beaver skins brought down to Montreal, for the last few years.

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From Long Island I returned to this city; which the hospitality and friendly civilities I have experienced, in common with other strangers, from its inhabitants, induce me to rank as the most agreeable place I have visited in the United States: nor am I singular in this opinion, there being scarcely any traveller I have conversed with, but what gives it the same preference. Whilst I continue in America it shall be my place of residence: but my thoughts are solely bent upon returning to my native land, now dearer to me than ever; and provided that the ice, which threatens at present to block up the harbour, does not cut off our communication with the Atlantic, I shall 376 speedily take my departure from this Continent, well pleased at having seen as much of it as I have done; but I shall leave it without a sigh, and without entertaining the slightest wish to revisit it.

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