

Tribes & Nations 1802

Modern geography : a description of the empires, kingdoms, states, and colonies ; with the oceans, seas, and isles ; in all parts of the world : including the most recent discoveries, and political alterations, digested on a new plan

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Native Tribes, and Unconquered Countries.

THE arrangement of this division shall chiefly pursue the order of the discoveries from the east towards the west. On this plan Greenland shall be followed by Labrador, and the territory belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company. Some account may be then given of the central parts and tribes ; which shall be followed by the discoveries of the western coast and islands by the Russians, Cook, Vancouver, La Perouse, and other navigators, and by the late enterprising traveller Mackenzie.

GREEN LAND.

The discovery of this extensive region, which, whether continental or insular, must ever continue to be regarded as belonging to North America, has been already mentioned as having been effected by the people of Iceland in the tenth century ; the distance, according to the best maps, being about eight degrees of longitude in lat. 66°, or nearly 200 g. miles ; but some maps reduce it to five degrees, or not more than 130g. miles. [1] The intercourse between this colony and Denmark was maintained till the beginning of the fifteenth century, the last of seventeen bishops being named in 1406 : and in that century, by the gradual increase of the arctic ice, the colony appears to have been completely imprisoned by the frozen ocean ; while on the west a range of impassable mountains and plains, covered with perpetual ice, precluded all access. The ancient settlement contained several churches and monasteries, the names and positions of which may be traced in the map by Torsaeus ; from which it would seem that the colony extended over about 200 miles in the S. E. extremity. On the west some ruins of churches have also been discovered. In more recent times the western coast was chiefly explored by Davis, and other English navigators ; but there was no attempt to settle any colony. A pious Norwegian clergyman, named Egede, having probably read the book of Torsaeus published in 1715, was deeply impressed with the melancholy situation of this colony, if it should be found to exist ; and in 1721 proceeded to the western shore, where he continued till 1735, preaching the gospel to the natives, his benevolent example having been since followed by several missionaries. The sect called Moravians began their settlements about thirty years after, being chiefly those of New Hernhuth and Lichtenfels. It is said that the country is inhabited as far as 76° ; but the Danish and Moravian settlements are chiefly in the S. W., though at one time there appear to have been a factory as far north as 73° . The natives have no conception of what we call Baffin's Bay : but say that in the north of their country there is a narrow strait which divides it from the continent of America. [2]

This dreary country may be said to consist of rocks, ice, and snow ; but in the southern parts there are some small junipers, willows, and birch. There are reindeer, and some dogs resembling wolves, with arctic foxes, and polar bears. Hares are common ; and the walrus, and five kinds of seals, frequent the shores. The birds, particularly sea and water fowl, are tolerably numerous ; as are the fish ; and the insects exceed ninety.

What is called the *ice blink* is an amazing congeries of ice, at the mouth of an inlet, the splendor of which is discerned at the distance of many leagues. It is said to extend in magnificent arches for about twenty-four miles. The short summer is very warm, but foggy ; and the northern lights diversify the gloom of winter. What is called the frost smoke bursts from cracks in the frozen ocean. The natives are short, with long black hair, small eyes, and flat faces, being a branch of the Iskimos, or American Samoieds : it is supposed that they do not now exceed ten thousand, the number having been greatly reduced by the small-pox. Their canoes, in which one man proceeds to kill seals, are of a singular construction, and have sometimes been wasted as far as the Orkneys. The highest mountains are on the west side ; and the three pinacles of what is called the Stag's Horn are visible from sea at the distance of forty or sixty leagues. Crantz observes that the rocks are very full of clefts, commonly perpendicular, and seldom wider than half a yard, filled with spar, quartz, talc, and garnets. The rocks are generally rather vertical or little inclined, consisting of granite, with some sand stone and lapis olaris. Our author's imperfect mineralogy also indicates micacious schistus, coarse marble, and serpentine ; with asbestos and amianthus, crystals, and black schorl. It is said that sluate of argill, a new substance, has been recently found in Greenland ; perhaps this is the soft transparent stone of Crantz. The lapis olaris is of singular utility in Greenland, and the north of America, being used for lamps and culinary utensils. The soil consists of unfertile clay or sand. The winter is very severe ; and the rocks often burst by the intensity of the frost. Above 66° the sun does not set in the longest days, and at 64° is not four hours beneath the horizon.

LABRADOR.

THIS large extent of coast was so named by the Portuguese navigator who made the first discovery. In the inland parts there were American savages, and on the coasts Iskimos ; but the former have mostly retired to the south, and even the latter seem gradually to withdraw : neither people had the ingenuity of the Laplanders. There were here only a few factories, till the Moravian clergy formed little settlements, particularly at Nain, about 1764. To these missionaries we are indebted for the discovery of that elegant iridescent felspar, called the Labrador stone. It is said to have been first discovered in sailing through some lakes, [3] where its bright hues were reflected from the water. The mod rare colour is the scarlet. Mr. Cartwright, who resided at intervals nearly sixteen years in this desolate country, has published a minute and prolix journal, which how-ever gives a curious picture of its state, and appearances along the coast, for the inland parts have never been explored. [4] His Indians seem to be Iskimos, and their manners are very filthy. He remarks that the grouse not only change their colour in the winter, but that they then gain a large addition of white feathers. The porcupines resemble the beaver in size and shape; and he observed wolvereens. [5] He who wishes to study the manners of bears may here find ample satisfaction. At a cataract, surrounded with elders, spruces, firs, larches, birch, and aspin, many salmon ascend, and the bears assemble in numbers to catch their favourite prey. Some dive after the fish, and do not appear till at the distance of seventy or eighty yards. Others seem to be loungers, who only come to see what is going forwards, and to enjoy the promenade and the spectacle. Our author counted thirty-two white bears, and three black ones. [6] Rein deer also abound, and their venison is excellent. Mr. Cartwright contradicts the received accounts of the beaver, asserting that he never eats fish nor any animal food ; but lives on the leaves and bark of such trees and shrubs as have not a resinous juice, and the roots of the water lily. [7] Their sagacity is not so great as is generally supposed ; but there is something so singular in their erect movements, that an illiterate observer pronounced them to be "enchanted Christians." Even the peaceable Iskimos are liable to contests ; and, about 1736, in a quarrel concerning a young woman, a furious slaughter arose, in which neither sex nor age were spared. At the close of his third volume Mr. Cartwright gives a general idea of the country, and a thermo-metrical journal. So far as discovered, Labrador is generally hilly, and even mountainous ; but the

southern parts might be improved, though it would be difficult to guard against the white bears and wolves ; and cattle must be housed for nine months in the year. The eastern coast exhibits a most barren and iron-bound appearance, the rocky mountains rising suddenly from the sea, with spots of black peat earth, producing stunted plants. Rivers, brooks, lakes, pools, and ponds, are abundant, rich in fish, and frequented by innumerable birds. Though springs be rare, the waters being mostly dissolved snow, yet swelled throats are unknown, though frequent in the alpine countries of Europe and Asia. The eastern coast also presents thousands of islands, covered with flocks of sea fowl, particularly eider ducks ; and in the larger isles there are deer, foxes, and hares. The fish are salmon, trout, pike, barbel, eels, and others. Inland the air is milder ; there are many trees, and some symptoms of fertility. The plants are wild celery, scurvy-grass, reddocks, and Indian sallad. There are some appearances of iron ; and the Iskimos now collect the Labrador spar on the shores of the sea and lakes, for the rocks have not been discovered. Perhaps this spar was the shining stone brought from Labrador by one of our early navigators, as a specimen of gold ore. The birds are common to arctic regions, and the animals are mostly of the fur kind, in which trade our author was engaged. The natives are mountaineers and Iskimos ; the former resembling gipsies, with somewhat of French features from a mixture of Canadian blood. They chiefly live on reindeer, and also kill foxes, martins, and beavers. They live in wigwams, a kind of tents covered with deer skin and birch rind ; and are a sort of Roman Catholics, being anxious to visit the priests at Quebec. The Iskimos are the same people with the Greenlanders, whose manners are minutely described by Crantz. They use sledges drawn by dogs, as in Asia. Remains of seals and oily substances have a remarkable effect on the ground, so as to produce rich crops of grass on spots formerly only sprinkled with heath.

HUDSON'S BAY.

THE inland sea commonly called Hudson's Bay was explored in 1610 ; and a charter for planting and improving the country, and carrying on trade, was granted to a company in 1670. The Hudson's Bay Company has since retained a claim to most extensive territories, on the west, south, and east, of that inland sea, supposed to extend from 70° to 115°, and allowing the degree only thirty miles, the length will be 1350g. miles, and the medial breadth about 350. This vast extent of ice and snow is however of little consequence considered in itself ; and it is not understood that the company gain great wealth. An able writer has also defended them against the invidious charge of obstructing geographical knowledge for the sake of commercial monopoly. [8] The journey of Mr. Hearne is indeed a manifest though tardy proof of the contrary. The annual exports are about 16,000l.; and the returns, which yield a considerable revenue to government, perhaps amount to 30,000l. The North-west Company, lately established at Montreal, has also considerably reduced the profits ; but an enquiry into the state of this company, and of their territories, might be an object of some importance, and might perhaps lead to great improvements in the mode of conducting the commerce, and deriving every possible advantage from these extensive territories and seas. The establishment of factories, here called forts, and which sometimes contain small garrisons, and other peculiar circumstances, seem more adapted to the powers of a commercial company, than of private traders ; and even the example and success of the North-west Company seem to authorize that of Hudson's Bay. But they ought strictly to attend to the character of their servants, who, as Mr. Cartwright observes, will sometimes kill an Indian in preference to a deer.

The regions around Hudson's Bay, and that of Labrador, have, by a miserable compliment to the parent country, been sometimes called New Britain, a name not admitted in French or English maps. The parts on the west of Hudson's Bay have also been called New North and South Wales ; while that on the east is styled East Main. In the south, James's Bay stretches inland about 300 miles by about 150 in breadth ; and the most valuable settlements are in that vicinity, as Albany fort, Moose fort, and East Main factory. Further to the south, and on the

confines of Upper Canada, are Brunswick house, Frederick house ; and some others, which, perhaps, belong to the North-west Company. In the north, Severn house is at the mouth of a large river, which seems to flow from the lake of Winnipic. York fort stands on Nelson river ; and still further to the North is Churchill fort, which seems the furthest settlement in that direction. [9] To the west the Hudson's Bay Company had extended little further than Hudson's house ; while the superior spirit of the North-west company has nearly approached the Pacific. [10] The most important rivers are the Nelson or Saskashawin, and the Severn ; the comparative course of the latter scarcely exceeding 400 B. miles, but of great breadth and depth. In the south the Albany, Moose, Abitib, and Harricana, are the most considerable ; but all the rivers are impeded with falls and shoals. Near that singular inlet called Chesterfield there are many lakes, but the barbarous names would neither edify nor entertain the reader ; nor is it likely that they should ever become memorable in natural or civil history. The sea of Hudson commonly presents bold rocky shores ; but at intervals there are marines and large beaches. There are several high islands, the largest of which in the north has been little explored ; and in what is called Baffin's Bay (if such a sea exist), some maps and charts admit a very large central island called James Island, which others entirely reject.

Even in lat. 57° the winters are extremely severe ; the ice on the rivers is eight feet thick, and brandy coagulates. The rocks burst with a horrible noise, equal to that of heavy artillery, and the splinters are thrown to an amazing distance. [11] Mock suns, and haloes, are not unfrequent ; and the sun rises and sets with a large cone of yellowish light. The aurora borealis diffuses a variegated splendour, which equals that of the full moon ; and the stars sparkle with fiery redness. The fish in Hudson sea are far from numerous ; and the whale fishery has been attempted without success. There are few shell fish ; and the quadrupeds and birds correspond with those of Labrador and Canada. The northern indigenes are Iskimos ; but there are other savages in the south : and the factories are visited by several tribes. [12]

CENTRAL PARTS.

Till the journey of Mr. Hearne, an officer of the Hudson's Bay Company, in 1771, and the more difficult and laborious enterprizes of Mr. Mackenzie in 1789 and 1793; little was known concerning the interior parts of North America. In 1746 D'Anville lays down, with considerable accuracy, the Sea of Canada, or the three great conjunct lakes. He closes with the Lake of the Woods ; and a river (now called Winnipic) runs to the N., while from the same lake a large river proceeds to the W. " discovered by a savage called Ochagac," but which does not exist. Not far to the S. of the Lake of the Woods he places the Mississippi, but says that the sources are unknown ; they are now marked on that very spot. After a few other positions in that vicinity, he declares his ignorance of the country further to the west. Thus the great lakes of Winnipic, of the Hills, and the Slave lake, with the immense ranges of mountains, and other important features, were unknown to this able geographer, who was master of all the knowledge of his time. The lake of Winnipic appears to have been disclosed to European notice about 1760, by furriers from Canada ; and much was said of an imaginary large river called the Bourbon ; which may however have Central been the Saskashawin.

Mr. Hearne performed his journies in the years 1769—1772 ; but his book did not appear till 1795. He proceeded from fort Prince of Wales, or Churchill, and explored a group of lakes, called Doobant and other names, near Chesterfield inlet ; and, further to the west, a lake of great extent, which he calls Atbapuscow, the centre being in long. 125° , lat. 62° ; being evidently the Slave lake of Mr. Mackenzie, in the same latitude, but long. 115°. The Copper Mine river, which Mr. Hearne lays down in long. 120° , is by Mr. Arrowsmith assigned to long. 113°. This river flowing into the Arctic ocean was the most curious discovery of Mr. Hearne, whose journies seemed sufficiently to demonstrate that no north-west passage was to be expected. In his preface he expresses his opinion that the Copper river

probably flows into an inland lea like that of Hudson ; [13] which may also be the case with Mackenzie's river. Mr. Hearne's adventures on his new route are amusing and interesting. He met with many herds of musk cattle, a curious species described and engraved by Mr. Pennant in his Arctic Zoology. On the 14th of July 1771 he at length arrived at the Copper river, where the savages who attended him murdered, in a shocking manner, some Iskimo families ; and on the 17th he was within sight of the sea. " I therefore set instantly about commencing my survey, and pursued it to the mouth of the river ; which I found all the way so full of shoals and falls, that it was not navigable even for a boat, and that it emptied itself into the sea over a ridge or bar. The tide was then out ; but I judged from the marks which I saw on the edge of the ice, that it flowed about twelve or fourteen feet, which will only reach a little way within the river's mouth. The tide being out, the water in the river was perfectly fresh ; but I am certain of its being the sea, or some branch of it, by the quantity of whalebone and seal-skins which the Iskimos had at their tents, and also by the number of seals which I saw on the ice. At the mouth of the river the sea is full of islands and shoals, as far as I could see with the assistance of a good pocket telescope. The ice was not then broke up, but was melted away for about three quarters of a mile from the main shore, and to a little distance round the islands and shoals." [14] He found the Iskimcs here of a dirty copper colour, and rather shorter in stature than those to the south. Even here the kettles are made of lapis ollaris, of a mixed brown and white ; and their hatchets and knives are of copper. The dogs have sharp erect ears, sharp noses, and bushy tails, being a fine breed of that sort. Many kinds of sea-fowl were observed ; and in the ponds and marshes swans, geese, curlews, and plovers. The quadrupeds are musk cattle, reindeer, bears, wolves, wolvereens, foxes, alpine hares, squirrels, ermines, mice. Mr. Hearne afterwards visited one of the copper mines, about thirty miles S. E. from the mouth of the river, being merely a hill which seems to have been rent by an earthquake, or perhaps by subterranean water. The copper is found in lump ;, and is beaten out by the help of fire and two stones. Upon his return Mr. Hearne passed further to the west ; and on the 24th of December 1771 he arrived at the north side of the great lake of Athapuscow, [15] where our traveller observed a rustling noise to proceed from the northern lights, and he confutes several popular tales concerning the beaver. The lake of Athapuscow is very lull of islands, filled with tall trees like masts, as appears from his curious view of a part of it. The natives reported it to be 120 leagues in length, from east to west ; and 20 wide. It is stored with quantities of fish, pike, trout, perch, barbel, and two forts called by the natives tittameg and methy. The northern shore consists of confused rocks and hills, but the southern is level and beautiful ; and there are many wild cattle and moose deer, the former, particularly the bulls, being larger than the English black cattle. The hunch on the back is an elongation of the wither bones, according to Mr. Hearne. Proceeding southward he arrived at the great Athapuscow river, which he found about two miles in breadth, being evidently the Slave river of Mr. Mackenzie. Our traveller then passed eastward without any remarkable discovery, and arrived at Fort Prince of Wales 30th June 1772.

Mr. Mackenzie's journies were of yet more consequence. In June 1789 he embarked in a canoe at fort Chepiwian, on the south of the Lake of the Hills, and proceeded along the Slave river to the Slave lake, Journeys. whence he entered a river now called after his own name, till he reached the Arctic ocean. The Slave river he describes as very considerable, and says it received its name from an Indian tribe, called slaves merely from their extreme ferocity. [16] The Slave lake he found covered with ice in the month of June, and the chief fish were carp, white fish, trout, and pike. He justly remarked it as extraordinary that land, covered with spruce, pine, and white birch, when wasted by fire produces nothing but poplars, where none before appeared. The river called after his name is sometimes fifty fathoms in depth, though not above three hundred yards in breadth. On the 11th of July the sun remained all night considerably above the horizon; and soon after he seems to have reached the sea ; but our traveller's account is here not a little perplexed. It appears however that his river has a wide estuary, with many

islands, one of which Mr. Mackenzie called Whale Island, as he here saw some whales as large as his canoe, and larger than the largest porpoise. [17] Such fish are however never observed in lakes ; and there seems to be sufficient indications that he had reached the sea. Though so far to the north, there seem to be other savages besides Iskimos ; and it would appear from their report that there is another large river on the western side of the Rocky Mountains, which also joins the Arctic Ocean. [18] On his return Mr. Mackenzie observed petroleum, or rather maltha, and a large bed of coal on fire ; and on the 12th September 1789 our author finished his first voyage, which had occupied one hundred and two days. A complete confirmation thence arises that there is no northern communication between the Atlantic and the Pacific ; except at so high a latitude that it must be impeded by perpetual ice.

Equally important and interesting was Mr. Mackenzie's second voyage, for, though inland, the term is proper, as both were conducted on large rivers, by means of canoes. Our enterprising traveller left fort Chepiwian on the 10th October 1792, and proceeded up the Peace river, or Unjiga, in a S. W. direction, till he reached a high land beyond the Stoney or Rocky Mountains, the height of which he computes at 817 yards. After transporting their canoe, with some difficulty, they embarked on a small river on the other side, which soon brought them into the river Oregon, Columbia, or the Great River of the West, the origin and course of which were before totally misunderstood. It is to be regretted that he did not pursue this river to its mouth : but after proceeding a considerable way he returned against the stream, and afterwards travelled to the Pacific ocean by land ; and reached one of the numerous inlets lat. $52^{\circ} 20'$, by Mr. Arrowsmith's map of the expedition. His adventures and difficulties, on this new route, are striking and singular, and will amply reward the reader's curiosity. On the west of the Unjiga beautiful scenery was observed, interspersed with hill and lawn, with groves of poplars, and enlivened with vast herds of elks on the uplands, and of buffaloes on the plains. The last so much abound, that in some places the country resembles a stall-yard. That fierce species called the grizzly bear was also seen. The Unjiga is sometimes from 4 to 800 yards wide ; and the cold was often extreme, rather from the height of the general level than that of the mountains, which does not exceed 1500 feet. Among the birds observed were blue jays, yellow birds, and beautiful humming birds. Beavers are common, and tracks of moose deer were remarked. Where they reached the Oregon, it was about 200 yards wide. Towards the Pacific the natives are fairer than in the other parts of North America ; and one man was at least six feet four inches in height. Their eyes are not dark, like those of the other Indians, but grey, with a tinge of red. The men wear only a robe made of the bark of the cedar tree, rendered as fine as hemp, sometimes with borders of red and yellow threads ; and the women add a short apron. Some of their canoes are forty-five feet in length, the gun-wale being inlaid with the teeth of the sea otter, not with human teeth, as Captain Cook supposed. On the 20th of July 1793 Mr. Mackenzie reached an arm of the sea where the tide was abated, and had left a large space covered with sea weed. [19] In September 1793 He returned to fort Chepivian, after an absence of eleven months.

These voyages having considerably improved the geography of North America, it was thought proper to narrate them at some length. It is to be regretted that some obscurity arises from the want of a distinct nomenclature, and the equivocal use or abuse of some of the appellations. Thus the Athapusco lake of Hearne is undoubtedly the Slave lake of Pond, who is said to have been the first discoverer, and of Mackenzie ; while the last seems to avoid that name, which is indeed banished from his maps, or confined to a small pool at the west end of the Lake of the Hills, which last some suppose to be the genuine Athapusco. In like manner there are three lakes, called by the same name of Winnipeg. Does this strange confusion, unknown to the geography of any other country, arise from the natives, from the inattention of the relators, or from commercial jealousy, which would obscure or restrict the discoveries of other traders ? [20] However this be, from these and other discoveries communicated by

officers of the Hudson's Bay Company, the geography of North America begins to open with more clearness, as may be judged from Mr. Arrowsmith's last map, 1802. The large northern lakes are now laid down with superior accuracy. The great River Unjiga, after penetrating the western range of mountains, flows N. E. towards the Lake of the Hills, whence it receives a short but large stream ; and being afterwards absurdly enough stiled the Slave river, it bends N. W. to the great Slave lake, whence it issues by the name of Mackenzie's river. Such at least is Mr. Mackenzie's idea ; [21] and, if accepted, the name of Unjiga should be retained to its egress into the arctic ocean, after a comparative course of about 1700 British miles.

Next in consequence is the Saskashawin, rising on the eastern side of the great range, and passing E. to the great lake of Winnipic, whence it again issues under the name of Nelson river, and falls into Hudson's Bay, after a comparative course of more than 1000 B. miles [22].

A third great river now tolerably ascertained is the Oregon, or Columbia, also called by the natives, Tacoutche Tesse, whose course is now described as being to the S. instead of the W. and about 700 B. miles in length. There are doubtless other important rivers towards the west : and a considerable one, as before mentioned, seems to join the arctic ocean.

The genuine sources of the Missouri, erroneously by the savages called the Mississippi, from the least important stream, seem also to be clearly evidenced, from a journey of Mr. Fidler in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company ; a discovery which, as already explained, adds greatly to the length of that grand and interesting river. The real direction and uniform extent of the great western range of mountains, seem also to be clearly delineated.

These observations were demanded by the present progressive state of the geography of North America. In a more immediate view of the central parts, of this division of the new continent, it must not be forgotten, that they are the seats of many native and unconquered tribes, whose manners have been so frequently described by a host of travellers, that little needs be said in a work of this limited nature. Their modes of hunting and warfare, their extreme cruelty towards their prisoners, the Angularities of scalping, and the use of the calumet are sufficiently known [23]. A more difficult topic would be an enumeration of the various tribes ; and a classification according to their languages.

By a strange abuse of terms we speak familiarly of the savage *nations* of North America, while few of these pretended *nations* can aspire to the name of a tribe, and the term clan, or even family, would ! e more appropriated [24]. The enumeration of these clans would be tedious ; and a list of four hundred barbarous names would little interest the reader, except they could be classed according to languages. But a few remarks on the most noted tribes must not be omitted. The five Nations, of the English writers are the Iroquois of the French, being the Mohawks, Oneydoes, Onondagas, Cayugas, and Sennekas ; five clans joined in an old confederacy of offence and defence [25]. The Mohawks were on the south of the river so called, in the province of New York ; while the others extended towards the lake Ontario. The Hurons were on the east of the lake of that name [26]. But, after the Mexicans, the chief tribe in North America was that of the Natchez, near the mouth of the Mississippi, whose worship of the sun, and other peculiarities, have been illustrated by Pratz, Charlevoix, and other writers [27]. In a work of more extent it might be proper to describe the manners of this people, of the Five Nations, of the Central tribes, of the Iskimos, and of the Western Races on the Pacific. In a brief view of the native languages, it is unnecessary to repeat, that the Iskimos and Greenlanders are the same people with the Samoieds of Asia [28]. The Algonkin was the most celebrated of the native languages, beginning at the gulf of St. Lawrence, and including a circuit of about 3000 miles. The Huron language, which was also that of the Five Nations, was of smaller extent, on the west of the Algonkin. Yet further to the west was the language of the Sioux, which was also that of the Knistineaux corruptly called Christinaux,

but properly Killistinons, originally seated on the north of Lake Superior [29]. But, according to Mr. Mackenzie the Killistinons were originally the same people with the Algonkins, or inhabitants of the Atlantic coast ; while the Chepiwians, or Chepawas, and the numerous tribes who speak their language, occupy the whole space between the country of the Killistinons, and that of the Iskimos, extending to the river Columbia, lat. 52°. By their own traditions they came from Siberia ; while intelligent travellers, on the contrary, consider the Techuks as proceeding from America : but such interchanges of nations are not unfrequent in barbarous periods. The tribes near the source of the Missouri are said to be from the south, and their progress N. W. probably retiring from the Spanish power [30]. The language of the Natchez, and other nations in the Spanish territory, has not been sufficiently illustrated ; and in the isthmus the dialects are said to be various, and radically distinct, yet probably, on a nearer and more skilful examination, would be found to approach the Mexican : but no Pallas has arisen to class or arrange the languages of America.

WESTERN COAST.

The Russians may be regarded as the first discoverers of the north-western shores of America. To the isles between Asia and this continent they assign different names, as Andrenovian, &c. but in their own most recent maps one general appellation is substituted, that of the Aleutian Isles. The furthest Aleutian Isles, which form a chain from the American promontory of Alaska, are also called the Fox isles ; while the nearest Aleutian isles of the Ruffians are those which we term Beering's and Copper. But in the best English maps the name of Aleutian is restricted to the former [31] ; and it is to English navigators that we are indebted for the precise geography of these regions, which have been strangely embroiled by the erroneous astronomical observations of the Russian captains. Our excellent Cook, in particular, greatly extended our knowledge ; and he was followed by Meares, Dixon, Vancouver, La Perouse, and other able navigators ; and recently by Mackenzie, who has the singular merit of having first visited the Pacific by an inland progress from the east.

This coast, as already mentioned, seems to be chiefly alpine ; in which respect, and in its numerous creeks and isles, it bears no small resemblance to Norway. The most remarkable mountain seems to be that called St. Elias by the Russian navigators : and which, it is affirmed, has been visible at sea at no less a distance than about sixty leagues. At *Port des François* lat. 58° , 37', La Perouse observes that the primitive mountains of granite or slate rise from the sea, yet the summits are covered with perpetual snow, and immense glaciers wind through the cavities [32]. The natives he has minutely described ; and says that he has always found savages “ barbarous, deceitful, and wicked.” This has been the uniform tenet of experience ; but it is only in recent times that profound ignorance has aspired to the name of philosophy. [33] Their most singular practice is the slitting and distending of the under lip, so as to beautify the females with two mouths [34]. The lofty mountains, which La Perouse computes at more than ten thousand feet in height, terminate at Cross Sound ; but the alpine ridges continue, though of smaller elevation, and probably extend with few interruptions as far as California, Mr. Mackenzie in lat. 53°, and Vancouver in a more southern latitude, found the same mountainous appearances. What is called the coast of New Albion has been faintly explored ; and the Spanish power is always an obstruction to science. The inhabitants of the more northern regions of this coast appear to be Iskimos. In the part through which Mr. Mackenzie passed, he found some of the tribes of a low stature, with round faces, high cheek-bones, black eyes and hair ; the complexion of a swarthy yellow. Nearer the Pacific the people, as already mentioned, had grey eyes tinged with red ; and their manners are minutely illustrated in his narrative.

Botany of Canada and the North.

The indigenous plants of the regions north of the river St. Lawrence form a singular mixture of the Floras of Lapland and the United States. From the intensely cold winters and hot summers of this extensive appendage to the British empire, it might, indeed, be *à priori* expected that the annual plants, and such as are capable of being sheltered in winter under the snow, should be, for the most part, the same as those of more southern countries ; while the trees and shrubs, having to brave the utmost rigour of the climate unprotected, should be characteristic of the Arctic regions. A regard to this circumstance will enable us to explain the seeming contradictions in the agriculture of Canada, which are scarcely credible by the mere uninformed English farmer such as that gourds and water melons should be a common field crop, while the hardiest winter corn is almost always destroyed by the cold.

The forests are numerous, but the trees never attain that bulk and luxuriance of growth which distinguishes them in the southern states. The family of firs and evergreens compose perhaps the largest proportion ; and of these the principal are, the Silver leaved fir, the Weymouth pine, the Canadian pine, the hemlock spruce fir, and the white cedar of Canada (*thuya occidentalis*), which must not be confounded with the white cedar of the United States (*cupressus disticha*). Next to these in importance are the sugar maple, the red maple, the birch, the American lime and elm, the iron wood and *cercis Canadensis*. The numerous species of oaks are either wholly unknown, or are contracted into despicable shrubs, all the ship timber of Canada being brought from the New England provinces. The saffrafras, laurel, and red mulberry, are also met with in the islands of the St. Lawrence, but in a similar state of depression, the whole of the summer's growth being generally destroyed by the next winter. The ash, the yew, and mountain ash are found in the northern tracts both of the old and new world ; but the light festoons of wild vine, with its pendant clutters, and the fragrant blossoms of the Syrian asclepias, form a characteristic feature of the forest scenery of Canada.

The *lilium Canadense*, similar to the Sarrane lily of Kamtschatka, and the ginseng (*panax quinquesolium*), common to America and Tartary, point out a similarity between the northern Floras of Asia and America.

The juniper, the cranberry, the bearberry (*arbutus uva ursi*), the black and red currant, the raspberry, and wild cherry, which have already been mentioned as natives of Lapland and the whole North of Europe, are found in great plenty in similar situations on the opposite shores of the Atlantic.

Of the other Canadian plants little is known, and a meagre catalogue of Linnæan names would contribute equally little to the amusement as to the instruction of the general reader. One, however, the *zizania aquatica*, deserves to be mentioned : this graminaceous vegetable is nearly allied to the rice ; it grows abundantly in all the shallow streams, and its mild farinaceous seeds contribute essentially to the support of the wandering tribes of Indians, and to the immense flights of swans, geese, and other aquatic fowls, which resort hither for the purpose of breeding. Productive as it is, and habituated to the climate, inhabiting also situations which refuse all other culture, it is surprising that the European settlers have as yet taken no pains to improve a plant which seems intended by nature to become at some future period the bread corn of the North.

[1] The industrious Torsæus, in his *Groenlandia Antiqua*, has collected every memorial that could be found concerning ancient Greenland, and has illustrated the Danish settlements with a map in which the nearest coast is supposed to be at least 200 miles from Iceland, and distinguished by the lofty mountains called Hvitserk and Blafserk. It was reported in the old accounts that the mountain Snoefell in Iceland, and Hvitserk in Greenland, could be

- seen from the middle of this channel ; but this is a doubtful tradition. See the valuable voyages by order of the French king in 1771 and 1772, for the illustration of various provinces in navigation and geography ; Paris, (778, 4to. i. 264. ii. 244. Some mountains of Greenland may however be seen at the distance of forty or sixty leagues. Crantz, vol. i. p. 8.
- [2] Mr. Pennant, A. Z. cexcii. observes that the Yarmouth whale fishers, who proceed as far as Disko Bay, give no intelligence concerning Baffin's Bay.
- [3] A large inland sea, or lake, is laid down by D'Anville, which has recently been copied under the appellation of a New Sea.
- [4] Newark, 1792, 3 vols. 4to.
- [5] Ib. i. 278. ii 58.
- [6] Ib. 346.
- [7] iii. 24.
- [8] Introduction to Cook's last Voyage
- [9] Churchill fort was built in 1715. It is also called Fort Prince of Wales.
- [10] The boundary between the Hudson's Bay Company and Canada is understood to follow the ridge that gives source to the rivers flowing N. and S. as far as 3 Lake Annipeg ; whence lat. 49° is said to form the limit.
- [11] Pennant, A. Z. ccxcvi.
- [12] The tenth chapter of Mr. Hearne's journey may be consulted for an account of the animals and vegetables. A dwarf larch is here called the juniper. The wisha-capucca is called American tea, being drank in infusion. Mr. Hearne observes, p. 51, that the American savages always enjoy, and even laugh at, the fight of distress or pain. Ulloa marks it as characteristic of those in S. America, that they inflict the greatest cruelties with perfect indifference. On any dangerous illness, p. 203, the patient is left to perish alone. It is a favourite pastime of the women to kill a captive woman or child, p. 266.
- [13] Page vii.
- [14] Ib. 162. Why not taste the water ? It might have been a large fresh water lake. Seals are common in the sea of Baikal ; and the whalebone may have been procured in barter. The supposed tide is not unknown in high winds upon the southern lakes.
- [15] Rather *Athabasca*.
- [16] The appellation and its source are alike ridiculous ; and new nomenclature is wanted.
- [17] Mackenzie's Voyages, London, 1801, 4to. p. 64.
- [18] P. 83.
- [19] P. 341.
- [20] According to Mr. Mackenzie, p. 122, the word *athabasca*, in the language of the Knistineaux, implies a flat low swampy country, subject to inundations ; but he has not explained the original name of the Slave lake. The native words are however of such a prodigious length, that it is often proper to drop them, but they ought to be shortened or exchanged for names that are proper and expressive, while the new appellations are often mean or ridiculous, and such as never occur in Africa or Spanish America. Such are those of the Indian tribes *Fall, Blackfoot, Blood, Inland, Beaver, Copper, Strong-bow, Mountain, Hare, Dog-ribbed, &c. &c.* : other unmeaning denominations are Rocky or Stoney Mountains, as if there were any mountains without rocks or stones ; Slave lake, Lake of the Hills, &c. These beautiful terms pass from the French furriers of Canada into the page of geography ! What would Milton say, who has often melodized his poetry with sonorous geographical appellations ? Can any poet, or classical author, use the poor and distorted nomenclature of the Pacific, or of North America ?
- [21] P. 216. 387.
- [22] The river Severn also seems to flow from the large lake of Winnipic ; but the Saskashawin, in the course above mentioned, would appear to have been the river Bourbon of the French ; and it is said that the Severn flows into the lake of Winnipic, from a small lake which also sends a stream to the sea

- [23] The feast of the dead has been described by Charlevoix and Lasitau. At this shocking solemnity the putrifying bodies are uncovered and exposed. The same practice prevails in Patagonia ; and seems peculiar to Africa and America.
- [24] Mr. Adair's History of the American Indians, London, 1775, 4to. is composed on the wretched system that the Indians descended from the Israelites ; and a few curious facts are rendered doubtful by the author's propensity to hypothesis.
- [25] Colden, p. 1.
- [26] The pretended Doegg Indians, at first said to have been discovered in Carolina, were afterwards removed towards the western coast, where they were inserted, with a superstitious lake, from an imaginary journey of a Mr. Lawrence in 1790. It is now admitted that they do not exist ; and the fable seems to have arisen from some of the Bretons, who settled in Acadia, having taught their language to some savages.
- [27] The Natchez are now extinct, Imlay, p. 425.
- [28] The word Iskimo is said to imply an eater of raw flesh, Charlevoix I. 273. The Sioux is a French corruption of Naduessis, Ib. 280.
- [29] Charlevoix, I. 283. 276. 406.
- [30] Mr. Mackenzie, p. cvii, has published a vocabulary of the Killistinon and Algonkin, which sufficiently shews their identity. The Killistinons extend to the lake of the Hills and N. to the Iskimos. Their manners are described by Mackenzie, p. xcii. For the Chepawas, see p.cxvi, where their chief residence is said to be between lat. 60° and 65°, and long. 100° and 110°, but they reach to lat.52° and long. 123° , where they join a distinct people on the shores of the Pacific. From the traditions, p. cxviii. it does not appear that the Chepawas came from Siberia ; for how could they land at the Copper Mine river ? The vocabulary of their language, p. exxix, might be easily compared with that of the Asiatic tribes.
- [31] In the Russian form *Alcoutskoie*. The Ruffian Skoie is a possessive adjective, as an in the Latin, &c. thus *Harley, Harleian* library, &c. which in Ruffian would be *Harleyskoie*.
- [32] II. p. 129.
- [33] It was a watchmaker's apprentice, having seen no book but a French Plutarch, (See Rousseau's Confessions) who first praised savages, and decried civilized life. The practical consequences of this abominable doctrine may be observed in the actions of its disciples, *sans culottes*, or savages of Paris, the most ignorant wretches of a great and civilized city.
- [34] The Mexican monarchs appear in paintings with ornaments fixed to the under lip.

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