

space of half a century, in everything else,—their banks studded with rising cities and towns, each with an ever increasing population of thousands of busy inhabitants, and their surface traversed in every direction by steamers of the largest size, furnished with almost every thing that commerce and elegance seem to require, and by the stately ship, laden with the burden of a commerce which grows with a rapidity unexampled in the history of the world. A change so great, and astonishing, in so short an interval, may well awaken our interest, but the very briefness of the period during which it has taken place renders the attempt at an accurate description of the lakes, and the consideration in a satisfactory manner of the subjects connected with them, or which they suggest, the more difficult. It is well known, that, in the various geographical notices of the lake region, some of them published but a few years ago, we often meet with statements which are glaringly incorrect; and it is only lately, that even the heights of the several lakes above the level of the sea, and above each other, have been determined with much exactness, that either the annual temperatures, or the different magnetic means and variations, and other meteorological characteristics of any points on their shores, or the geological structure of the surrounding country, have been ascertained with any degree of precision; and no work on the lakes has yet appeared, presenting in one view even those authentic results which have already been obtained, to lessen the labour of research. On many points, also, such as the changes in the level of the lakes, their depth, the zoology of their waters and of the adjoining land, the botany of their different regions, and the statistics of their commerce, although much has been done to supply such deficiencies by various Provincial Reports,