

frequently before they have spoken to each other. When the contract is not made by the parents, the Indian youth, having fixed his affections on some young woman, will make his wish known to his mother, or some particular friend, to whose care he commits the presents he has prepared for the occasion; these generally consist of a fine blanket, gown, and leggings for the object of his love; and a kettle, sack of corn, or some other article for her parents. If these presents are received, it is at once understood that the offer is accepted.— Since the introduction of the *fire-waters* they have found a sad substitute for the kettle, and other useful articles, as presents to the parents of the bride.

There is great reserve and decency observed by the young females, and not to maintain it would be to lose the spotlessness of their character, and bring on themselves the reproach of the old people. The period of their courtship is not generally protracted beyond a few months; when it is terminated by the young man's taking his chosen companion a *wedding trip*. For several days, wherever night overtakes them, there they pitch the wigwam, and spend the days in shooting or fishing, the *bride steering the canoe*. When this excursion is ended, they return with the product of the chase, which they present to the parents of the bride, laying it at the mother's feet; and with them they continue to reside, as the parents consider they have a claim on their industry and support until they have a family of their own to maintain.— On this account the parents are always anxious that their daughters should marry good hunters. Although no public vows are made, nor ceremonies performed, at the marriages of the Indians, it is surprizing how seldom their mutual engagements are violated, they generally consider them as binding as those whose obligations, in a Christian country, have been more solemnly recognized.

TREATMENT OF THE WOMEN BY THE MEN.

As is the case with all Pagan nations, the

Indian men look upon their women as an inferior race of beings, who they consider were created only for the use of the men. With this idea they treat them as menials, and impose on them all the drudgeries of a savage life, such as making the wigwam, providing fuel for the fire, planting and hoeing the Indian corn or maize, fetching the venison and bear's meat from the woods where the man shot it; in short, all the hard work falls upon the women, and it may be truly said of them that they are the slaves of their husbands. In the wigwam the men occupy the best places, leaving such parts as are most exposed to the inclemency of the weather for the poor women; and in regard to their food, the women eat the coarsest parts of the meat, or what the men leave. When travelling, the men always walk on before, it would be considered great presumption for the wife to walk by her husband's side, she therefore keeps at a respectful distance. I have often seen the husband start with nothing but his gun or bow and arrows, and the poor wife at some distance behind would be seen trudging and bending under the weight of all their goods, with a child often packed in the midst of materials for building the wigwam; this they carry about with them in all their journeyings, which soon makes them decrepit. The men have an idea that it is unmanly and disgraceful for them to be seen doing any thing which they consider belongs to the women's department.

I have scarcely ever seen any thing like social intercourse between husband and wife, and it is remarkable that the women say very little in the presence of the men.

Since the introduction of the *fire-waters*, the miseries of the Indian women have been increased ten-fold by the cruelties and ill-treatment of their drunken husbands;—several instances have occurred, within my own recollection, of the women dying from the injuries they have received. Paganism and intemperance cause the sorrow, degradation, and ruin of Indian females!