

are drawn
reign, and
with success.
also in use,
of priestcraft
ers into their
ely the good
imperance of
ents their hav-
for the skill of

Sandwich is-
ght: for the
narrow slip of
ins, and is no-
at modesty re-
women is more
ds below the
ver the upper
ith a piece of
of a mantalet,
eads and necks
flowers. The
costume is be-
a pleasing ef-
they had a prac-
puncturing dif-
eir bodies with
astical figures,
, but this prac-
hout of vogue.
is soft, abund-
us; it abounds
render it very
d compositions,
re very fond:
etuated by tra-
t their music is
o be pleasing.
are long quad-
, very neatly
eir interior is
arnished with
pon. The men
eparate houses,
enter the eat-
e other. All
was obliged to
g my residence
eir government

is a strange mixture of despotism, aristocracy, and liberty. There is a regular graduated body of nobility: the present sovereign is not of the highest class in that hierarchy; and though he is as absolute a prince as any on earth, he has subjects to whom he pays the compliment of sitting down when they pass, as an honour due to chiefs of a higher grade than himself. The nobility are, generally speaking, the sole proprietors of the lands, and are masters of the lives and fortunes of their vassals, but not of their liberty. The people are not attached to the *glebe*; their masters may knock their brains out, for the most trivial fault, with impunity; but they cannot force them to work against their wills, nor detain them an instant in their service contrary to their inclinations. This balance of rights has a salutary effect, by restraining the landlords in the exercise of their power, and stimulating the peasants to industry by their dependence on their chiefs. These haughty nobles, in their turn, live in the same dependence on the sovereign, who disposes of their lives and fortunes at pleasure. The political distribution of their territory implies a very considerable degree of perfection in the science of government. Owhyhee is divided into six provinces or principalities, whose limits are very accurately defined, and they are again subdivided into a vast number of districts, every one of which has its limits and name. The political divisions of the territory of all the islands are equally well defined.

These people have no regular body of laws; but private property, the basis of all civil government, is clearly defined and acknowledged.

VOL. III.

ed; therefore, the customs arising from that principle are sufficiently correct for the government of a simple people. Theft, by custom, is punished by death, and other crimes generally by the *lex talionis*, which, as with most barbarous nations, is established among these islanders. The body of priests may be considered as their legislators. From the inviolable veneration in which their taboos are held, the king's mandates, sanctioned by them, acquire all the force and efficacy necessary. The present sovereign is well aware of the importance of this superstition to his authority, and takes great care to cherish it by every means in his power. The body of chiefs of these islands has all the vices naturally to be expected from a privileged class of unenlightened barbarians, who, as far as regards their conduct towards their inferiors, are under the control of no law. They are avaricious, cruel, and inhuman in the extreme. I have been informed that there have been instances of their killing their own servants for shark bait: such instances of barbarity are, however, very rare, and universally reprobated. With foreigners these noble personages are very troublesome: they are beggars and thieves, and have no sense of decency or decorum. Indeed, the king is so well aware of their villany, that he always cautions foreigners against letting any come on board, except those attached to his suite.

The history of these islands is necessarily very obscure, from their having no way of perpetuating remarkable events but by songs; and my ignorance of their language made it very difficult to understand their meaning, which

Y