

Mississippi, I can assert from my own experience, are greatly misplaced; for when I had explored them, and compared their situation with the French Charts, I found them very erroneously represented, and am satisfied that these were only copied from the rude sketches of the Indians.

Even so lately as their evacuation of Canada they continued their schemes to deceive; leaving no traces by which any knowledge might accrue to their conquerors: for though they were well acquainted with all the Lakes, particularly with Lake Superior, having constantly a vessel of considerable burthen thereon, yet their plans of them are very incorrect. I discovered many errors in the descriptions given therein of its islands and bays, during a progress of eleven hundred miles that I coasted it in canoes. They likewise, on giving up the possession of them, took care to leave the places they had occupied in the same uncultivated state they had found them; at the same time destroying all their naval force. I observed myself part of the hulk of a very large vessel, burnt to the water's edge, just at the opening from the Straits of St. Marie's into the Lake.

These difficulties, however, were not sufficient to deter me from the undertaking, and I made preparations for setting out. What I chiefly had in view, after gaining a knowledge of the manners, customs, languages, soil, and natural productions of the different nations that inhabit the back of the Mississippi, was to ascertain the breadth of that vast continent, which extends from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, in its broadest part between 43 and 46 degrees northern latitude. Had I been able to accomplish this, I intended to have proposed to government to establish a post in some of those parts about the Straits of Annian, which having been first discovered by Sir Francis Drake, of course belong to the English. This I am convinced would greatly facilitate the discovery of a Northwest Passage, or a communication between Hudson's Bay and the Pacific Ocean. An event so desirable, and which has been so often sought for, but without success. Besides this important end, a settlement on that extremity of America would answer many good purposes, and repay every expence the establishment of it might occasion. For it would not only disclose new sources of trade, and promote many useful discoveries, but would open a passage for conveying intelligence to China, and the English settlements in the East Indies, with greater expedition than a tedious voyage by the Cape of Good Hope, or the Straits of Magellan will allow of.

How far the advantages arising from such an enterprize may extend, can only be ascertained by the favourable concurrence of future events. But that the completion of the scheme, I have had the honour of first planning and attempting, will some time or other be effected, I make no doubt. From the unhappy divisions that at present subsist between Great Britain and America, it will probably be some years before the attempt is repeated; but whenever it is, and the execution of it carried on with propriety,