

public records of the nation; and to them they occasionally have recourse, when any public contest happens with a neighboring tribe.

Their Wars. If we except hunting and fishing, war is the principal employment of the Indian men; almost every other concern, but in particular the little agriculture which they enjoy, is consigned to the women. The most common motive of the Americans for entering into war, when it does not arise from an accidental rencounter or interference, is either to revenge themselves for the death of some lost friend, or to acquire prisoners, who may assist them in their hunting, and whom they adopt into their society. These wars are either undertaken by some private adventurers, or at the instance of the whole community. In the latter case, all the young men who are disposed to go out to battle (for no one is compelled contrary to his inclination), give a bit of wood to the chief, as a token of their design to accompany him; for every thing among these people is transacted with a great deal of ceremony and with many forms.

Ceremonies before setting out. The chief, who is to conduct them, fasts several days, during which time he converses with no one, and is particularly careful to observe his dreams; which the presumption natural to savages generally renders as favorable as he could desire. A variety of other superstitions and ceremonies are observed. One of the most hideous is setting the war kettle on the fire, as an emblem that they are going out to devour their enemies; which among these nations, it is probable, was formerly the case, since they still continue to express it in clear terms, and use an emblem significant of the ancient usage. Then, they dispatch a porcelain, or large shell, to their allies, inviting them to come along, and drink the blood of their enemies. They think that those in their alliance must not only adopt their enmities, but that they must also have their resentments wound up to the same pitch with themselves; and indeed no people carry their friendships or their resentments so far as they do. Having finished all the ceremonies previous to the war, and the day appointed for their setting out on the expedition being arrived, they take leave of their friends, and exchange their clothes, or whatever movables they have, in token of mutual friendship; after which they proceed from the town, their wives and female relations walking before, and attending them to some distance. The warriors march all dressed in their finest apparel, and most showy ornaments, without any order. The chief walks slowly before them, singing the war-song, while the rest observe the most profound silence. When they come up to their women, they deliver them all their finery, and putting on their worst clothes, proceed on their expedition.

Quickness of their senses. The great qualities of an Indian war are vigilance and attention, to give and avoid surprise; and, indeed, in these they are superior to all nations in the world. Accustomed to continual wandering in the forest; having their perceptions sharpened by keen necessity, and living, in every respect, according to nature, their external senses have a degree of acuteness, which, at first view, appears incredible. They can trace out their enemies, at an immense distance, by the smoke of their fires, which they smell, and by the tracks of their feet upon the ground, imperceptible to an European eye, but which they can count, and distinguish, with the utmost facility. It is said, they can even distinguish the different nations with whom they are acquainted, and can determine the precise time when they passed, where an European could not, with all his glasses, distinguish footsteps at all. These circumstances, however, are of less importance, because their savage enemies are equally well acquainted with them.

Vigilance and circumspection. When they go out, therefore, they take care to avoid making use of any thing by which they might run the danger of a discovery. They lighted no fires to warm themselves, or to prepare victuals: they lie close to the ground all day, and travel only in the night; and marching