

For the REVIEW.]

A Geographical Curiosity.

How frequently do we hear the complaint that the provinces are misrepresented abroad! Even the judicial Encyclopædia Britannica has not been entirely satisfactory to all in this respect, but its errors (if any) are, doubtless, unintentional. Very innocent, too, of any intention at misrepresentation, though erroneous notions it did certainly give in England, was that most delightful book—far the best that has yet been written on forest-life in New Brunswick—Lieut. Governor Arthur Gordon's "Wilderness Journeys in New Brunswick."* Then we all know how certain harbors and coast-waters have been misrepresented abroad, their dangers exaggerated and their advantages belittled. In all of these cases we can trace an object or a cause for the deception. But never, it can be safely asserted, has so much geographical error, as to our provinces, been condensed into so small a space as in the little work described below. Fairly good maps must have been at the command of the writer (we know of several published before 1800 which show correctly all that he describes so badly), and we are quite at a loss to explain the cause of his vagaries. But let them speak for themselves.

The book is a little 18mo., printed in brevier type, as the advertisement tells us, containing 288 pages. It is entitled, "A Geographical View of the British Possessions in North America," comprehending Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, New Britain [*i. e.*, Labrador], Lower and Upper Canada, . . . with an appendix containing a concise history of the War in Canada to the date of this volume. By M. Smith, author of the "View of Upper Canada." Baltimore; printed by P. Munro for the author, 1814.

Our author gives in the preface a short biographical sketch, after which he throws some light upon his sources of information. "What relates to Upper and part of Lower Canada, is written from actual observation, but what relates to the other parts of British North America I have principally collected from other writers, viz.: *G. Heriot, Esq., Winterbotham, Carver, Mackenzie and Payne*, as also from some French authors, and old manuscripts taken by the Catholic missionaries among the Indians when the country belonged to the French. Through all these works, and some others, I have waded with considerable labor in order to collect such information that might be correct, beneficial and amusing to my readers, and although I do not pretend to say that this work is entirely void of errors, yet, upon the whole, I think it may be depended upon."

* Published originally in Galton's "Vacation Tourists," Vol. VIII., 1864, London and Cambridge. Reprinted the same year in St. John by J. & A. McMillan.

The chapters on Upper and Lower Canada appear to be fairly accurate. Coming to New Brunswick, the author tells us it is "with propriety reckoned more healthy than Nova Scotia," though he does not tell us by whom it is so reckoned. The Nipisiguit River, he says, sometimes called the Avon or Piguit, heads in two branches and runs a north-east course into the Miramichi Bay.

"The *Kenectoct, Cœmigun, Cœagut* and *Cobeguit*, in the County of Hants, are rivers of less note, falling into the river Avon, which empties into the Miramichi Bay."

"The *Percuid, Canaid, Cornwallis* and *Salmon* Rivers, in the County of Kings, are of some note." He then describes very correctly the numerous rivers flowing into the head of the Bay of Fundy, and he proceeds to tell us "the River *Restigouche* and the *Madawaska* empty into the St. Johns, above the great falls." The real *Restigouche* he calls the "Resconge" and places it correctly. He then gives some real information about the fish and the Indians, and describes Fredericton, which he tells us properly is on the St. John. Immediately afterwards he says, "*Cornwallis* and *Howe*, on the same river, are small villages." The fortifications of the province consist of Cumberland, Howe and barracks, enclosed in a stockade at Cornwallis." One of the occupations of the people of New Brunswick is "catching fur." We are then told, under the head of *Civil Divisions*, that "New Brunswick is divided into four counties, viz.: *Cumberland, Hants, Sunbury* and *Kings*, and eighteen townships." The location of these counties is most absurd. Take this as a sample: "*Hants* is still to the north-west, joining the Chaleur Bay, and contains three townships, viz.: *Windsor, Falmouth* and *Newport*." Sunbury County is described as it really was shortly after New Brunswick was set off as a separate province from Nova Scotia, in 1784. We are not giving all the remarkable statements of this remarkable work but the typical ones. There is a great deal also of really correct information given in it.

Here is a note coming under the heading of "Curiosities," which will interest those of our readers who live by the sea. The shell-fish procured in the month of August from the rivers and from their mouths near the coast, in the vicinity of the Bay of Chaleurs, are so highly impregnated with a poisonous quality as to occasion almost instantaneous death to those who eat them. The cause of this circumstance remains yet to be ascertained. The greater the diminution of these rivers the stronger the poison of the shells." Our students of mollusca find nothing of this kind to-day, according to the latest work on the subject.