

THE INLAND SEAS OF NORTH AMERICA.

THE size, and multitude, of its lakes are the peculiar features of North America. Other continents have higher mountains, and even rivers discharging a much greater volume of water; but North America is emphatically the region of lakes. They are most frequent in the north of the continent, in the northern part of the United States, in Canada, and in the Hudson's Bay Territory, where they are almost literally innumerable, and in some measure supply the want of a great northern sea, and temper the climate to a very considerable extent, in the same latitudes, in which, in Siberia, which is comparatively destitute of lakes, the cold is far more intense, than in North America. But, among these lakes, there are five, distinguished at once by their great size, their mutual connection, and vicinity to one another, and their more important position, Lakes Superior, Huron, Michigan, Erie and Ontario, which claim our special notice; and are, at the same time, most interesting to us, forming as they do the greater part of the boundary of Canada West, and the means of its communication with the ocean through the St. Lawrence, of which they may be viewed as the expansions. These lakes, traversed as they are by large vessels, and with their rolling waves, and distant horizon, may well be termed "inland seas," have an area of nearly 100,000 square miles, and contain upwards of 11,000 cubic miles of water, or much more than half the fresh water in all the lakes of the world. Lake Superior alone is by far the largest fresh water lake on our globe, and,