

formidable this fort may appear to the natives, it is incapable of defence, should it happen to be attacked by an European army.

### SECTION III.

*Of the Persons, Drefs, Manners, and Customs of the different Tribes of Eskimaux, or Eskimaux, chiefly seated on the East Side of Hudson's Bay.*

IT would not be difficult, in treating of the countries which border on Hudson's Bay, to give the names and situation of the number of little islands, harbours, and creeks, but it is impossible to give a good account of any of them, that will either answer the purposes of instruction or entertainment; we shall therefore confine ourselves to the different inhabitants.

The principal inhabitants situated to the north of those just described are the Eskimaux, whose name is derived from an Indian word that signifies eaters of raw flesh; for after thoroughly drying the flesh of the beasts they kill, they eat it without any other preparation; and it is evident that to this Indian term is added a French termination; but to adapt it to the English pronunciation, it should rather have been written by our authors Eskimows.

These people are of several tribes, and we shall begin with those who live on the borders of the straits which enter into Hudson's Bay. They are of a middle size, robust, and incline to be fat. Their heads are large, and their faces round and swarthy; their eyes are black, small, and sparkling; their noses flat, their lips thick, and their hair lank and black; they have broad shoulders, and their limbs are proportionable; but their feet are extraordinary small.

The behaviour of the Eskimows is cheerful and sprightly; but some nations of them are said to be subtle, cunning, and deceitful, great flatterers, and much addicted to pilfer from strangers; easily rendered bold by encouragement, but as easily frightened; and so attached to their own country, that some, who have been taken prisoners by the Southern Indians when they were boys, and brought to the factories, have for several years regretted their absence from their native country, and the enjoyment of what they loved when they were there: thus, one of them, after having been fed on English diet, being present when an Englishman was cutting up a seal, from which the train-oil ran very plentifully, scooped up what he could save with his hands, and swallowing it, cried, "An! commend me to my own dear country, where I could get my belly-full of this."

The men's cloaths are made of seals-skins, and sometimes of the skins of land and sea fowl sewed together; their coats have a hood like a capuchin, are close from the breast before, and reach no lower than the middle of the thigh: the breeches are close before and behind, gathered like a purse, with a string, and tied about their waists: they have several pair of boots and socks, which they wear one over another, to keep them warm and dry. The difference between the drefs of the men and that of the women is, that the latter have a narrow flap behind their jacket, that reaches to their heels. Their hoods are likewise larger and wider at the shoulders, for the sake of carrying their children in them at their backs; and their boots, which are a great deal wider, are commonly stuck out with whalebone, because when they want to put a child out of their arms, they slip it into one of their boots till they can take it up again. A few of them wear shifts of seals bladders sewed together. Their cloaths are in general sewed very neatly: this is performed with an ivory needle, and the sinews of a deer split fine, and used for thread. They discover a good deal of taste in adorning them with stripes of different coloured skins sewed in the manner of borders, cuffs, and robings for their cloths, which altogether appear handsome as well as convenient.

One singular part of their drefs is their snow eyes, as they properly call them. These are bits of wood, or ivory, formed to cover the organs of sight, and tied at the back of the head: in each piece are two slits of the

same length with the eyes, but narrower, through which they see very dimly. This invention prevents snow blindness, a very painful disorder, occasioned by the brightness of the light reflected from the snow, especially in spring. Their use strengthens the sight, and becomes so habitual to them, that when they would observe an object at a great distance, they commonly look through them, as we do through a perspective-glass.

The same spirit of invention is observable in their instruments for fishing and fowling, which, in several respects, resemble those of the Greenlanders. Their darts and harpoons are well made, as are also their bows and arrows. Their boats, which are easy of carriage, and quick in motion, resemble those of the Greenlanders, have their frames made of wood or whalebone, covered all over with seal-skin parchment, except a hole in the middle, which has a ring of wood or whalebone round it, to prevent the water running in from the deck, affording only room for one man to sit in, his feet being stretched forward; and sometimes the skin is laced about his waist at the above-mentioned rim, which effectually thus out the water. They rub the seams with a kind of tize made of seals blubber. In these boats they carry their little conveniences, and their instruments for killing whales, sea-horses, sea-unicorns, seals, and the like. They also carry in their canoes slings and stones, with which they can do execution at a great distance. Their harpoons are headed and pointed with the teeth of the morie, one end of it serving for a spear, and the other for introducing into the body of the fish a barb tipped with iron, which remains there, while the other part of the harpoon readily disengages itself and comes out. To this barb is fastened a thong of the hide of the morie, at the end of which is a seal-skin blown up, which serves as a buoy, to shew them where the whale is when he goes down, and prodigiously fatigues him in swimming. As soon as he expires, they, with their canoes, tow him ashore, and strip him of his fat, which not only serves them for food, but to burn in their lamps during winter.

As the persons who traversed Hudson's Bay, in order to discover a north-west passage, had no leisure to examine the countries by which they passed, and had sometimes opportunities of observing the natives, they were enabled to describe the latter, without having it in their power to give much account of the former. In Mr. Ellis's voyage, which was attempted in order to find out that passage, the ship named the Resolution was driven upon a ridge of stones, when six boats of Eskimows came off with whalebone, which, notwithstanding their danger, they bought of them. These people, so far from taking advantage of their distress, behaved with the utmost civility, and endeavoured to relieve them: for when the tide had floated them off, an old man, who seemed better acquainted with the place than the rest, had the humanity to paddle before them, to point out the shoals, and direct their course, by keeping in deep water: thus, by his assistance, the Resolution escaped being lost, which is a sufficient proof that these people do not deserve to be termed artful and thievish, since they could not avoid being sensible that they would have reaped great advantage by the loss of the ship. Our author therefore justly observes, that whatever others may say to their prejudice, it is but justice to own, that they behaved not only with humanity, but with great kindness and friendship. Nothing can be more admirable than the ingenuity and industry of these people, who, for want of iron, are frequently obliged to make not only the barbs of their harpoons, but also their hatchets and knives, of stones, sea-horse teeth, and sea-unicorn horns; and it is difficult to conceive the dextrous use they make of materials that seem so very improper for the purposes to which they employ them. These seem to be originally one people with those just described; but are more affable and friendly, and likewise more skilful artists. The borders of their habits are generally fringed with cut leather, and are sometimes hung with the teeth of saws. The women do not, like those of the other Eskimows, stick out the sides of their boots with whalebone: they also differ from them in wearing a cap made of the skin of a buffalo's tail,

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