

the skill of one or two individuals, our admiration rose to a still higher pitch when we saw crowds of them together, all equally skilful; till they informed us that the thing was not an amusement, but universally practised for the purpose I have stated.

Besides this, I know of nothing in the customs of this isolated people at all worthy of notice, unless, indeed, it be their method of supplying themselves with lights. Being completely cut off from the rest of the world, it is not in their power, except when once or twice a-year they travel to the nearest towns with their wool, to purchase candles; and as they have no notion how these can be made, they substitute in their room a lamp fed with the turpentine extracted from the fir-trees. The whole process is simple and primitive: to obtain the turpentine they cut a hole in the tree, and fasten a dish in it to catch the sap as it oozes through; and as soon as the dish is filled, they put a wick of cotton into the midst of the liquor, and burn it as we do a lamp. The light is not indeed of the most brilliant nature, but it is at least better than none; and as they have fir-trees in abundance within their reach, there is no danger of their oil being quickly exhausted.

In this manner was an entire week expended, each succeeding day introducing us to a repetition of the same adventures, and a renewal of the same scenery, which had amused us during the day before; nor was it till the morning of the twenty-third that we at last began to emerge from the forests, and to find ourselves once again in a more open country. At first, however, it cannot be said that, with respect to beauty, the change was greatly for the better. Upon the borders of the deserts there is a little village called Le Barp, where we spent the night of the twenty-second; from whence, till you arrive at a place called Belle-Vue, the country is exactly in that state which land assumes when nature has begun to lose ground, and art to gain it—when the wild simplicity of the one is destroyed, and the rich luxuriance of the other has not yet been superinduced. So far, therefore, we proceeded, regretting, rather than rejoicing, that we had quitted the woods; but no sooner had we attained that point, than there burst upon us, all on a sudden, a prospect as gloriously fertile as ever delighted the eyes of a weary traveller.

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