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The cloaths of the women differ from those of the men only in their generally wearing a petticoat, that in winter comes a little lower than their knees. Their ordinary apparel is made of the skins of deer, otters, or beaver, with the hair or fur on them. The sleeves of their upper habit are generally tied on with strings at the shoulders, so that their arm-pits, even in the depth of winter, are exposed to the cold, which they imagine contributes to their health: their diseases indeed are but few, and those chiefly arise from colds caught after drinking spirituous liquors, which they buy of the English; and it is a melancholy truth, that those who live near the settlements of the Hudson's-bay Company, are, by drunkenness, become meagre, small, indolent, and hardly able to encounter the hardships of the country; while those who live at a distance are hardy, vigorous, and active.

They dwell in tents covered with moose and deer-skins sewed together. These are of a circular form, probably on account of its being most capacious and convenient for their sitting round the fire, which is in the middle. They are formed of poles, which are extended at the bottom, and at the top lean to the center, where an opening is left to admit the light and let out the smoke. They strew the bottom with the top of pine-needles, and lie with their feet to the fire, and their heads to the sides of the tent. The entrance is generally on the south-west side, and they go in by lifting up one of the skins, to which is fastened a piece of stick, to make it flap close.

They have no dependence for subsistence on the fruits of the earth, but live entirely on the animals they take in hunting or catch in traps. They every season make a prodigious slaughter among the deer, from the absurd opinion that the more they destroy, the greater plenty will succeed; hence they sometimes leave three or four hundred dead on the plains, taking out only their tongues, and leaving their carcasses either to rot or to be devoured by the wild beasts. At other times they attack them in the water, and bring great numbers on floats to the factories. They also live upon birds, and even feed on eagles, hawks, crows, and owls, as well as on partridges, wild-geese, and ducks. They generally boil their flesh, and eat it by itself, drinking the water it is boiled in, which they esteem very wholesome; and in the same manner they dress their fish.

These ignorant people have many amiable qualities: they are influenced in their behaviour by a natural love of rectitude, that restrains them from all acts of violence and injustice, as effectually as the most rigorous laws. The chiefs of every family, or tribe, who are generally chosen from among the most ancient of the people, usually for their skill in hunting, their experience in trade, and their valour in the wars, in which they frequently engage, direct those who reside with them in their different employments; but their advice is rather followed through deference and respect than any compulsive obligation.

They have, however, some customs which must appear very whimsical, and others that are extremely cruel. It is esteemed a great offence for a woman to stride over the legs of a man when he sits on the ground, and they even think it beneath them to drink out of the same vessel with their wives. They have another custom that must appear shocking to every humane mind, and in which they are in some measure imitated by the Hottentots. The latter, as hath been mentioned in treating of California, expose their parents, when labouring under the infirmities of old age, to perish with hunger, or to be devoured by wild beasts, and these wretches strangle theirs; for when their parents grow so old as to be unable to support themselves by their own labour, they require their children to strangle them, and their performing it is esteemed an act of duty. This is done in the following manner: the old person's grave being dug, he goes into it, and after having converted and smoked a pipe, or perhaps drank a dram or two with his children, he informs them that he is ready; upon which two of them put a string about his neck, then one standing on one side, and the other opposite to him, pull violently till he has expired;

they then cover him with earth, and over that erect a kind of rough monument of stones. Such old people as have no children, require this office of their friends; but in this case it is not always complied with.

They have also a very strange maxim of policy, which is obliging their women to procure frequent abortions, by the use of a certain herb, common in that country, in order to ease themselves of the heavy burthen of an helpless family. Savage as this custom is, it is less barbarous than that anciently practised by the polite and civilized Greeks and Romans, as it is still by the Chinese and Hottentots, of exposing their children, and leaving them to perish with hunger or be devoured by wild beasts.

They acknowledge a Being of infinite goodness, whom they stile Uckewma, or the Great Chief, whom they consider as the author of all the blessings they enjoy, and sing a kind of hymns to his praise; in a grave and solemn tone, that is not altogether disagreeable; but their religious sentiments are very inconsistent and confused. They likewise acknowledge another being, whom they call Witticca, and represent as the author of all evil; of him they are much afraid; but it is not said that they use any methods to appease him.

Though these people spend the best part of their lives in procuring necessaries, and might easily lay up a store of provisions to secure them against want; yet they take little care of futurity. From their natural generosity they are very free of their provisions when they have plenty, and, except drying a little venison and fish, take no care to have a supply against winter. The Indians who come in the summer to trade at the factories, sometimes not obtaining the succours they expected, have been obliged to singe off the fur from thousands of beaver-skins, in order to feed upon the leather: but when they are thus reduced to the greatest extremity, they behave with a patience that is easier to admire than to imitate. They frequently travel two or three hundred miles, even in the depth of winter, through a wide open country, without meeting with any house to receive them, or carrying any tent for their protection. At the approach of night they raise a kind of fence with brushwood, by the side of which they kindle a fire, and having cleared away the snow, they lie down upon the ground, and sleep between the fire and the fence: but when they happen to be benighted where no wood can be obtained, they are obliged to lie down under the snow, as is practised in Siberia and some other countries; and by this means they are in a great measure sheltered from the sharpness of the piercing air.

As York-fort is situated on the west coast of Hudson's-bay, in the country, the manners of whose inhabitants we have just described, and is considered as the most valuable of the Hudson's-bay Company's settlement, we shall here give a description of it. It is seated on the southern branch of Port Nelson-river, called Hays's-river, within five miles of its fall into the sea, in the latitude of fifty-seven degrees twenty minutes, and in the ninety-third degree fifty-eight minutes west longitude.

This fort and factory is in a clear space, surrounded on three sides by the woods, with an open front to the water. The fort is a square building, flanked with four small bastions, all of them covered, and at present converted either into lodging or store-rooms. There are three small patteringoes placed on each of the curtains; the whole is palisaded: a battery of pretty large guns commands the river, and a small breast-work of earth, thrown up by way of defence of the battery; but even in time of war the number of people who reside there amount to no more than between thirty and forty. On the south-east of the fort is a dock for rebuilding or repairing sloops or boats, between which and the battery is a piece of land called The Plantation, where the Indians who come to the factory pitch their tents; and there are generally one or two tents of old infirm Indians, both men and women, who are maintained by the factory, from which this place is separated by two rows of high palisades: between these are store-houses, the kitchen, and some work-shops well built; and within the inner palisades are small spots sowed with turnips, colworts, fallads, and other garden stuff. But however

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