

## DESCRIPTION OF THE ABORIGINES OF AMERICA.

**T**HE aborigines of America, throughout the whole extent of the two vast continents which they inhabit, and amongst the infinite number of nations and tribes into which they are divided, differ very little from each other in their manners and customs; and they all form a very striking picture of the most distant antiquity. By taking a general view of the whole, the peculiarities that distinguish the most important tribes will be more easily perceived and understood.

The people of America are tall, and strait in their limbs beyond the proportion of most nations: their bodies are strong; but of a species of strength rather fitted to endure much hardship, than to continue long at any servile work, by which they are quickly consumed; it is the strength of a beast of prey, rather than that of a beast of burthen. Their bodies and heads are flattish, the effect of art; their features are regular, but their countenances fierce; their hair long, black, lank, and as strong as that of a horse. The colour of their skin a reddish brown, admired amongst them, and improved by the constant use of bear's fat and paint.

When the Europeans first came into America, they found the people quite naked, except those parts which it is common for the most uncultivated people to conceal. Since that time they have generally a coarse blanket to cover them, which they buy from us. The whole fashion of their lives is of a piece; hardy, poor, and squalid; and their education from their infancy is solely directed to fit their bodies for this mode of life, and to form their minds to inflict and to endure the greatest evils.

Their only occupations are hunting and war. Agriculture is left to the women. Merchandise they contemn. When their hunting season is past, which they go through with much patience, and in which they exert great ingenuity, they pass the rest of their time in an entire indolence. They sleep half the day in their huts, they loiter and jest among their friends, and they observe no bounds or decency in their eat-

ing and drinking. Before we discovered them, they had no spirituous liquors; but now, the acquirement of these is what gives a spur to their industry, and enjoyment to their repose. This is the principal end they pursue in their treaties; and from this they suffer inexpressible calamities; for, having once begun to drink, they can preserve no measures, but continue a succession of drunkenness as long as their means of procuring liquor lasts. In this condition they lie exposed on the earth to all the inclemency of the seasons, which wastes them by a train of the most fatal disorders; they perish in rivers and marshes; they tumble into the fire; they quarrel, and very frequently murder each other; and, in short, excess in drinking, which with us is rather immoral than destructive, amongst this uncivilized people, who have not art enough to guard against the consequence of their vices, is a public calamity. The few amongst them, who live free from this evil, enjoy the reward of their temperance in a robust and healthy old age.

The character of the Indians is striking.—They are grave even to sadness in their deportment upon any serious occasion; observant of those in company; respectful to the old; of a temper cool and deliberate; by which they are never in haste to speak before they have thought well upon the matter, and are sure the person who spoke before them has finished all he had to say. They have therefore the greatest contempt for the vivacity of the Europeans, who interrupt each other, and frequently speak all together. Nothing is more edifying than their behaviour in their public councils and assemblies. Every man there is heard in his turn, according as his years, his wisdom, or his services to his country, have ranked him. Not a word, not a whisper, not a murmur, is heard from the rest while he speaks. No indecent condemnation, no ill-timed applause. The younger sort attend for their instruction. Here they learn the history of their nation; here they are inflamed with the songs of those who celebrate the warlike actions of their ancestors;

and here  
of their co

There  
of hospita  
more gen  
their prov  
not enoug  
own natio  
beneficent  
or to the  
American  
timents,  
treachery  
executing  
time is  
distance  
object:  
pierces t  
verses t  
veral hu  
of the se  
extreme  
and che  
enemy,  
ing barl  
To such  
friendsh  
general  
tivated

Notw  
their a  
more t  
fancy t  
taunts,  
or at le  
is one  
They  
sense a  
prone  
so far  
rarely  
cated  
quarre  
man  
propel  
all so  
grow  
conse  
and s  
when  
being  
a nar  
are d