

msp Paul Kane

970.1

K16G

"Familiar in their Mouths as HOUSEHOLD WORDS."—SHAKESPEARE.

# HOUSEHOLD WORDS.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL.

CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 470.]

SATURDAY, MARCH 26, 1859.

{PRICE 2d.  
{STAMPED 3d.

## A GROUP OF NOBLE SAVAGES.

MR. PAUL KANE is a Canadian artist. He was born in the City of Toronto when it was no city, but the muddy and dirty village of Little York, with Indians living round about it. After studying his profession for some years in Europe, he resolved to exercise it upon his old friends the red men, and proposed to himself a wild journey with pencil and brush along the great chain of American lakes, by the Red River settlement and the valley of the Saskatchewan, across the Rocky Mountains and down the Columbia, to that region of the Pacific which is now destined to become our great Pacific empire. That journey he made sketching scenery and taking portraits as he went, and often gossiping with Indian chiefs while he was painting them. It was his whole purpose as a traveller to make perfect acquaintance with the Indians. He kept a journal of his pilgrimage in which he set down the most noticeable things he saw and heard.

Some of the pictures, for which he brought sketches home, are now arranged in the library of the Canadian Parliament, and his diary, under the name of Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America, has just been published in this country. The account given in it of the present natives of our future colony of the Pacific in Vancouver's Island, and upon the opposite mainland, is very full and amusing.

Mr. Kane began with a comparatively short tour of about sixteen hundred miles to the Falls of Saint Mary, between Lake Superior and Lake Huron, with a diversion into Lake Michigan, and then round by Lake Erie, home. Among the labyrinth of thirty thousand islands on the north shore of Lake Huron, there was a sketch made of an Indian encampment, corresponding, in its general character, to the encampments of all North American tribes. The wigwams, or lodges, have for their skeleton eight or ten poles tied together at the top and stuck in the ground at distances marking the required circle of the tent. Except at the top where the smoke passes out between the naked poles, the skeleton is wrapped round either with rush mats or with large pieces of birch-bark sewn together in long strips, root-fibres being used

as thread. The birch-bark is in constant use among the tribes of North America. It makes the house-wall, it makes the canoe, it makes the kettle. The canoe, so light that it can be carried by hand up dangerous rapids, except at the Pacific shore, is of birch-bark stretched over a very light frame of split cedar laths. The mohcocks, or kettles of birch-bark, hold water, and the game or fish that has to be cooked. Hot stones are dropped into the water, and in this way an Indian woman can boil fish as fast as English cooks could boil it with a kitchen range and fish-kettle. Birch-bark is also the Indian's paper upon which he draws what he wants when he sends to a post for any articles, signing his order with his to-tem, or family sign, as a fox, or dog, or turtle. The Indian in his smoky lodge is very dirty. Whatever his tribe he carries vermin on his person. He does not carry out his filth or shift his tent-poles for exchange to cleaner ground.

In the great Manetoulin Island, the chief island of the north shore of the Huron, Indians assemble once a year from the surrounding regions to receive the presents with which there is a vessel annually freighted by the provincial government. At this assembly of about two thousand Indians, Mr. Kane was present, and among the great men with whom he made acquaintance there was Shawwanossoway—"one with his face towards the west"—a mighty medicine-man. Once he had been a mighty warrior, but he had stretched out his hand for the flower of the Ojibbeways, Awhmidway—"there is music in her footsteps"—when the flower was already destined for the bosom of Mucktickenow—the Black Eagle. The young beauty's parents, flattered by Shawwanossoway's attentions, sought to break her faith to her betrothed. Her betrothed sought to propitiate them, and, confident of the maid's truth, departed on a distant hunt. While he was away, Shawwanossoway pressed the suit urgently. In self-defence the girl told him her story, trusting in his generosity. He stole away, tracked out her lover in the woods, shot him down secretly, returned and pressed again his suit. If the Black Eagle did not return within a given time, the maid, with music in her footsteps, was to be the bride of