

CHAPTER XVIII.

DRESSES AND DECORATIONS OF ESQUIMAUX LADIES.—AN INGENUOUS SIGNAL, OR A BEAU-CATCHING CONTRIVANCE.—ADMIRABLE CONSTRUCTION OF THE ESQUIMAUX BOATS.—REINDEER HUNTING BY WATER.—WE PROCEED IN A DANISH SHIP TO DISCO ISLAND.—OUR HOSPITABLE RECEPTION.—ARRIVAL OF CAPTAIN HARTSTEIN'S EXPEDITION IN SEARCH OF DR. KANE.—WE EMBARK FOR THE UNITED STATES.—ARRIVAL AT NEW YORK.—CONCLUSION OF THE NARRATIVE.

THE women of this settlement aim at some elegance in their style of dressing. Their boots are made of tanned seal skin of various colors, white, red, yellow or violet, and profusely embroidered. They wear pantaloons of tanned seal skins, ornamented with colored strips of the same kind of leather. Their jackets or jumpers, are composed, sometimes, of printed cotton cloth or calico, and sometimes of woolen cloth embroidered with silk tape or colored galoons. Their garments exhibit as much variegation of color, if not as much richness of material, as the dresses of the ladies who promenade Chestnut street and Broadway. All of them wear an unsightly knot of hair on the tops of their heads, which counteracts all their efforts to look pretty. Around this top-knot the married ladies wind a narrow blue ribbon; the unmarried ones use a red ribbon for the same purpose; and this ornament answers the purpose of a sign or signal to advise male spectators that the wearer is still in the matrimonial market; and I dare say some of the young ladies of other countries would be glad to avail themselves of a similar mode of advertising. The head-dress is completed by tying a colored silk-handkerchief, neatly folded, around the brow, like the ancient tiara or diadem. These ladies are fond of *bijouterie*; few of them being seen without rings in their ears and on their fingers.

Near the tents are low stands or racks made of wood, on which the sledges and kaiacks are placed when they are not required for use. The kaiack, or Esquimaux boat, deserves a particular description. It consists of a light wooden frame, covered with tanned seal skins: the length is about eighteen feet; their greatest breadth on deck, is from eighteen to twenty-one inches, and their greatest depth about ten inches. The wooden strips of which the framework is composed, when