

“ these slender vessels, which when complete weigh only about
“ five hundred weight each. On being prepared for the voyage,
“ they receive their lading, that for the convenience of carrying
“ across the portages is made up in packages of about three
“ quarters of a hundred weight each, and amounts altogether to
“ five tons or a little more, including provisions and other neces-
“ saries for the men, of whom from eight to ten are employed to
“ each canoe ; they usually set out in brigades like the batteaux,
“ and in the course of a summer upwards of fifty of these vessels
“ are thus dispatched. They proceed up the Grand or Ottawa
“ River as far as the south-west branch, by which, and a chain
“ of small lakes, they reach Lake Nipissing ; through it and
“ down the French River into Lake Huron ; along its northern
“ coast up the narrows of St. Mary into Lake Superior, and then
“ by its northern side to the Grand Portage, a distance of about
“ 1100 miles from the place of departure. The difficulties en-
“ countered in this voyage are not easily conceived ; the great
“ number of rapids in the rivers, the different portages from
“ lake to lake, which vary from a few yards to three miles or
“ more in length, where the canoes must be unladen, and with
“ their contents carried to the next water, occasion a succession
“ of labours and fatigues of which but a poor estimation can be
“ formed by judging it from the ordinary occupations of other
“ labouring classes. From the Grand Portage, that is nine miles
“ across, a continuation of the same toils takes place in bark
“ canoes of an inferior size, through the chain of lakes and streams
“ that run from the height of land westward to the Lake of the
“ Woods, Lake Winnipeg, and onwards to more distant esta-
“ blishments of the Company in the remote regions of the north-
“ west country. The men employed in this service are called
“ *voyageurs* ; they are robust, hardy, and resolute, capable of
“ enduring great extremes of fatigue and privation for a long
“ time with a patience almost inexhaustible. In the large lakes
“ they are frequently daring enough to cross the deep bays, often
“ a distance of several leagues in their canoes, to avoid lengthen-
“ ing the route by coasting them ; yet notwithstanding all the
“ risks and hardships attending their employment, they prefer it
“ to every other, and are very seldom induced to relinquish it in
“ favour of any more settled occupation. The few dollars they
“ receive as the compensation for so many privations and dan-