

issippi, to explore the source of that river, and also those of the Osage, Arkansaw, and La Plate rivers. Having, however, crossed the Spanish boundaries, he was taken prisoner, and carried before the general of the forces in the north-eastern provinces of New Spain, by whom he was sent back under a military escort. The journal of this officer contains much entertaining information respecting the Indian tribes bordering the Upper Mississippi. But the enterprising directors of the North-west Company have lately ordered a Mr. Mackenzie to proceed down Mackenzie's river, and explore the North Sea; and also sent a Mr. McKay to cross the Rocky Mountains, and proceed to the Western Ocean. A Mr. Thompson has likewise been employed for some years by this company, in making a geographical survey of the north-west part of the continent; a task which he entered upon with an astonishing spirit of enterprise. When the discoveries of these gentlemen are published, the geography of these vast regions will be tolerably correct and precise.

WESTERN COAST.

The Russians may be regarded as the first discoverers of the north-western shores of America. To the isles between Asia and this continent they assign different names, as Andrenovian, &c. but in their own most recent maps one general appellation is substituted, that of the Aleutian Isles. The furthest Aleutian Isles, which form a chain from the American promontory of Alaska, are also called the Fox Isles; while the nearest Aleutian Isles of the Russians are those which we term Beering's and Copper Isles. But in the best English maps the name of Aleutian is restricted to the former; and it is to English navigators that we are indebted for the precise geography of these regions, which have been strangely embroiled by the erroneous astronomical observations of the Russian captains. Our excellent Cook, in particular, greatly extended our knowledge; and he was followed by Meares, Dixon, Van-

conver, La Perouse, and other able navigators; and recently by Mackenzie, who has the singular merit of having first visited the Pacific by an inland progress from the east.

This coast, as already mentioned, seems to be chiefly alpine; in which respect, and in its numerous creeks and isles, it bears no small resemblance to Norway. The most remarkable mountain seems to be that called St. Elias by the Russian navigators: and which, it is affirmed has been visible at sea at no less a distance than about sixty leagues. At *Port des Francois*, lat. 58 deg. 37 min. La Perouse observes that the primitive mountains of granite or slate rise from the sea, yet the summits are covered with perpetual snow, and immense glaciers wind through the cavities. The natives he has minutely described; and says that he has always found savages 'barbarous, deceitful, and wicked.' This has been the uniform tenet of experience; but it is only in recent times that profound ignorance has aspired to the name of philosophy. Their most singular practice is the slitting and distending of the under lip, so as to beautify the females with two mouths.—The lofty mountains, which La Perouse computes at more than 10,000 feet in height, terminate at Cross Sound; but the alpine ridges continue, though of smaller elevation, and probably extend with a few interruptions as far as California. Mr. Mackenzie in lat 53 deg. and Vancouver in a more southern latitude, found the same mountainous appearances. What is called the coast of New Albion has been faintly explored; and the Spanish power is always an obstruction to science. The inhabitants of the more northern regions of this coast appear to be Eskimos. In the part through which Mr. Mackenzie passed, he found some of the tribes of a low stature, with round faces, high cheek bones, black eyes and hair; the complexion of a swarthy yellow. Nearer the Pacific the people, as already mentioned, had grey eyes tinged with red; and their manners are minutely illustrated in his narrative.