

EXCURSION TO THE OREGON.

Missouri, Mr Townsend and his friend set off to amuse themselves by walking and hunting leisurely through that distance, which is composed chiefly of wide flat prairies, with few and remotely situated habitations of the frontier settlers.

One of the first indications of their approach to a wild country was the spectacle of a band of Indians of the Saque tribe, who were removing to new settlements. The men were fantastically painted, and the chief was distinguished by a profuse display of trinkets, and a huge necklace made of the claws of the grizzly bear. The decorations of one of the women amused the two travellers. She was an old squaw, to whom was presented a broken umbrella. The only use she made of this prize was to wrench the plated ends from the whalebones, string them on a piece of wire, take her knife from her belt, with which she deliberately cut a slit of an inch in length along the upper rim of her ear, and insert them in it. The sight was as shocking to the feelings as it was grotesque; for the cheeks of the vain being were covered with blood as she stood with fancied dignity in the midst of twenty others, who evidently envied her the possession of the worthless baubles.

While pushing forward on the borders of the wilderness, the travellers one day arrived at the house of a kind of gentleman-settler, who, with his three daughters, vied in showing kindness to their visitors. "The girls," says Mr Townsend, "were very superior to most that I had seen in Missouri, although somewhat touched with the awkward bashfulness and prudery which generally characterise the prairie maidens. They had lost their mother when young, and having no companions out of the domestic circle, and consequently no opportunity of aping the manners of the world, were perfect children of nature. Their father, however, had given them a good plain education, and they had made some proficiency in needlework, as was evinced by numerous neatly-worked samplers hanging in wooden frames round the room." Some little curiosity and astonishment was excited in the minds of the unsophisticated girls when they were informed that their two guests were undertaking a long and difficult journey across the prairies—one of them for the purpose of shooting and stuffing birds, the other for the purpose of obtaining plants to preserve between leaves of paper; but at last they began to perceive that probably there was some hidden utility in these seemingly idle pursuits; and the last words of the eldest Miss P—— to our ornithologist at parting were, "Do come again, and come in May or June, for then there are plenty of prairie-hens, and you can shoot as many as you want, and you must stay a long while with us, and we'll have nice times. Good-by; I'm so sorry you're going." Miss P——, in promising an abundance of prairie-hens, evidently did not perceive in what respect an ornithologist differed from a sportsman; but her invitation was kindly meant; and Mr