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# THE SCRIBBLER.

MONTREAL. THURSDAY, 13th DECEMBER, 1821. No. XXV.

*Genus hominum potentibus insidum, sperantibus fallax, quod in civitate nostra et vetabitur semper, et retinebitur.*—TACITUS.

A set of men, insidious to the powerful, full of deceitful promises, who have been often execrated in our city, and who yet infest it.

*Luna quæ lucet aliena* LUCE——CICERO.

With borrow'd light,  
The moon shines bright,  
On Lucy's night.

The following work, although printed and published in the neighbouring State of Vermont, must, both from its subject and its author, be considered as belonging to Canada, and is therefore entitled to be reviewed in a miscellany professing to bestow its attention upon all literary subjects connected with this province.

*Journal of Voyages and travels in the interior of North America, between the 47th and 58th degrees of North latitude, including an account of the principal occurrences during a residence of nineteen years in different parts of the country; illustrated by a map; by Daniel Williams Harmon, a partner of the North West Company, pp. 432. Andover (Vermont) 1820, price 12s. 6d. to be had of Albert Ware, St. Paul Street.*

The progress of discovery, by which is understood the knowledge which civilized nations obtain of the geography, inhabitants, and productions, of those parts of the globe which are remote from the seat of the arts and sciences, was in early ages almost solely indebted to the desire of

conquest, to extended warfare, or to predatory enterprise. Religious enthusiasm next contributed a large share towards the exploration of distant, and infidel, lands; whilst in later times it is chiefly to the spirit of trade, to the extension of commerce, that we must look, as the motive, the cause as well as the consequence, of the widely expanded investigations which bring the polar regions, the mountains of Thibet, and the innumerable islands of the Australasian seas, home to our fire-sides and our studies. But, although commercial enterprise is the friendly and fostering parent of the exploration of new countries, it is a narrowminded, an invidious, and a sordid step-mother to every species of information, and views with a jaundiced and vindictive eye every effort to disclose to the rest of mankind those avenues to wealth, to which it conceives it has an exclusive right by prescription, and pre-occupation. When therefore any one of the herd of commercial explorers, endowed with a greater spirit of enquiry, or a more liberal-minded desire of communication, bursts those grovelling bands, and imparts to the world the result of his observations, the fruit of his travels, it is to be welcomed and fostered as an orphan or a discarded child, thrown by its parent upon the protection of that world, to which the mother acknowledges no other ties than those which self interest and the love of lucre create. In the very instance before me the vile and narrow feeling that ever accompanies monopoly has been exemplified in the treatment Mr. Harmon has, it is reported, met with. Though, after nineteen years of hard and meritorious service, he was admitted a partner of the now defunct association called the North West Company, the publication of this book gave great offence to those who arrogated to themselves the direction of the con-

cerns of that company, and after all his toils and troubles he has, as I have been told, been deprived of a participation in that gainful trade which he partly, and indeed not a little, assisted in raising into prosperity. His book it has been said discloses too much, yet what arcana of the trade are communicated by it, I have not been able to discover, and in fact it ought to be considered as extremely defective in that respect. His pusillanimity in not publishing such details of the trade as he was enabled to give, has met with such reward, as all who depend on the liberality or consideration of a set of commercial monopolists, may expect. Of the new arrangements that have taken place in consequence of the treacherous and unauthorised sale which has been made to the Hudson's Bay Company of the interests and welfare of all those who tugged at the oar, and toiled in the heat of the day, for the benefit of the ci-devant North West Company; as well as of the act of the imperial parliament respecting the fur-trade which was smuggled through the house at the close of last session, I shall, however, have occasion to say more before I close my review of this book, and shall now proceed to give an abstract of its contents.

The first 250 pages are occupied by a journal, or rather extracts from the journals, of nineteen years, passed in the Indian Countries, commencing the 29th of April 1800 and closing the 18th of August 1819; an average of less than half a page per month. Though this meagre journal is in many places a mere dry narrative of events, there is much matter of fact and general information to be gathered from the whole, more particularly with regard to the topography of a part of the world so little known, though so much frequented as the interior of this North West continent.

It is to be lamented, however, that even the meagreness of this journal is made more sapless by the mixture of methodistical rhapsody that at times obtrudes itself. Whether this is to be attributed wholly to the writer, or partly to the editor, can not be ascertained, for in the preface, the latter, (one Mr. Haskell, who announces himself as a "gospel minister," equivalent probably to our "evangelicals") tells us that "the style is not properly his own, nor that of Mr. Harmon, but something between both," and between both he has made "neither fish nor flesh" of it. Be that as it may, the strange, incoherent, and inconsistent, fanatical matter that is occasionally introduced, however much I might be inclined to respect it, from its motives, in its proper place, a conventicle, or a sectarian tract, I can not but stigmatise as cant and nonsense, when forced in where it has no business, nor any possible beneficial purpose. Nearly half of these nineteen years were spent on the other side of the Rocky mountains in a region entirely new to European knowledge, the terra incognita of botanists and naturalists, a blank space or rather a blot in the map of the world, which has received from the Indian traders, to whom alone it is known, the name of New Caledonia. A glaring instance of the deceitful disingenuousness, and shameful want of common honesty, which characterise the commercial association under whose wing these countries have been explored, exists in the circumstance of their giving the commissioner for Indian affairs appointed by government in 1816, a map of the interior of North America, pretended to be one including their latest discoveries, in which no part of the geography of the extensive region of New Caledonia is to be discovered, whilst ten years before that they had forts and establishments all over that

part of the country. The map that accompanies Mr. Harmon's journal, though on a very small scale, will be considered as a real acquisition by geographers, and fills up a considerable vacancy in the northern part of the American hemisphere. A far greater benefit will be bestowed upon geography when the truly valuable maps drawn by Mr. David Thompson of the whole of these regions come to be published; *if ever they are permitted to be published*, for I firmly believe that the ingenious and scientific astronomer and geographer, who, with unwearied labour, and unconquerable assiduity, has constructed them, will suffer himself to be cajoled by the Goths and Vandals with whom he has do, by fair but treacherous promises, by pretences of patronage, which he will find are nothing but the subterfuges of insidious monopoly, to suffer the welllearned meed of fame which his labours deserve, to be wasted, lost, and consigned to oblivion, along with his maps, in damp vaults and musty recesses, in company with invoices of outfits out of date, and mouldering catalogues of fur-sales.

That part of Mr. Harmon's journal which relates to this new country, when divested of its methodistical absurdities, is certainly interesting; as is the account which follows, extending to about 30 pages, of the Indian inhabitants of the east side of the Rocky mountains. That of the Indians who dwell on this side of that range, about 70 pages, though not possessing equal novelty, will nevertheless be an acceptable addition to the history of savage life; and the fancy of linguists may derive some amusement from the vocabularies which follow of the native tongues; but the *account of animals*, as it is called, comprised in 16 pages, a space scarcely sufficient for the description of one genus, is the most bar-

ren and superficial that can be conceived. It has no reference to any class but that of the mammalia and of those only such whose skins are objects of traffic, whilst even the interesting animal that has been one of so much research both for the curiosity of naturalists and the cupidity of œconomists, the argalia, or wild sheep of the interior of this continent, is entirely passed over. It is only incidentally mentioned once in the journal, where a blanket is stated to have been given to the author "manufactured by the Atenás of the wool of a kind of sheep or goat, said to be very numerous in the mountains in this country." Of botanical and mineralogical details the book is wholly barren; but, when we consider the circumstances under which the author both wrote and published, we ought to be grateful for what is given; and, though we may regret, we ought not to repine, that we have no more of natural history than a very small portion of zoology, whilst ornithology, ichthyology, and entomology are totally neglected, for, sooth to say, all these "ologies" have nothing to do with the fur-trade. In a succeeding number I will, in continuing the review of this work, give some extracts from it, as specimens of its matter and execution.

*(To be continued.)*

This being the festival of St. Lucia, before paying my bounden tribute to the ladies of that name, I will give some account of their patroness.

St. Lucia was born at Syracuse, where she was educated in the principles of christianity. Although affianced to a young nobleman, it seems that she had previously made a solemn vow of perpetual celibacy, and distributed her wealth among the poor. Her lover, who was only half converted to the faith, exasperated by this con-

duct, accused her to Paschasius, the governor of the island, as being a Christian; and in the persecution that followed, as she refused to adore the gods of the heathen; she was sentenced to be sent to the stews, a beastly punishment not uncommon in those times; but, to take the words of her legend, "God rendered her immoveable," so that the guards were not able to force her thither, and she was "blessed by dying in prison." This is stated by some to have happened in the year 304, and by others in 258 during the persecution of Valerian. St. Lucy is usually painted with her eye-balls lying in a dish, an emblem, as some consider, of her having been deprived of her eyes whilst in prison, of which, however, not any trace is to be found in her legend. Profane protestants are apt to conclude it to be emblematical of her blindness in refusing a noble husband, who, being but half a convert, might have been brought into the bosom of the church, and her own too, by a different conduct. Her intercession is, however, from this circumstance, implored by persons afflicted with complaints in the organs of vision, though it almost seems as if she were called *LUCE*, *a non lucendo*. However, as my motto points out, the moon being just past the full, her festival night, is fine and brilliant, and the ground being covered with snow, carrioling has commenced, and suggested the following lines;

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Boy, hie to the stable away,  
 From the door shovel off all the snow,  
 And harness my bright bonny bay,  
 He will go like a shaft from the bow.

Brush the sleigh well, and all the gay gear,  
 Lay thick the rich fur-ropes around,  
 Wolf, buff'loe, raccoon, and black bear,  
 While bells tingling merrily sound.



Now Lucy, dear Luce, jump in, quick;  
 Close wrapp'd in these furs by my side,  
 O'er hill and dale where the snow's thick,  
 As swift as a meteor we'll glide.

On thy cheek the bright mantling rose;  
 In thine eye the moist rolling jet,  
 That rose, with the cold, deeper glows,  
 Shines that jet, with the frost, brighter yet.

We'll carriole all the day long  
 O'er this wide spreading ocean of snow,  
 And at night we will join the gay throng  
 That trip on the light bounding toe.

Now homeward my bonny bright bay,  
 'Tis a beautiful starry moon light—  
 Speed on—on the road we don't stay—  
 Now, Lucy dear, kiss me good night.

L. L. M.

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In the press, and speedily will be published,  
*The Emigrant's Assistant, part II. by A. J. Christie, A. M. printed by N. Mower.*

Just published, and for sale at H. H. Cunningham's, *The debate on the civil list, and parliamentary privileges of Lower Canada, February 1811, with an appendix, by W. S. Simpson, price 6s. 3d.*

*Mr. Simpson intends to publish regular reports of the debates of the provincial legislature, if he receives sufficient encouragement.*

For sale at James Lane's, St. Paul street, *Edits et Ordonnances Royaux concernant le Canada, 2 vols. 4to. half bd. price 60s.*

*Mrs. West, from the Opera-house, London, Dancing-school, at No. 22, St. François Xavier street, three times a week. Terms may be known by application to Mrs. West. Practising ball, 17th December.*