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A  
VIEW 2/-  
OF THE  
CHARACTER, MANNERS, AND CUSTOMS  
OF THE  
NORTH-AMERICANS,

COMPREHENDING  
AN ACCOUNT OF THE  
*NORTHERN INDIANS; OF THE INHABITANTS OF ALCANTARA  
AND Nootka Sound; OF THE FIVE INDIAN NATIONS  
OF CANADA; OF THE INHABITANTS OF THE  
UNITED STATES, &c.*

IN WHICH ARE DISPLAYED  
ALL THE REMARKABLE CURIOSITIES WHICH ARE  
TO BE FOUND IN THOSE COUNTRIES.

ORNAMENTED WITH PLATES.

BY THE REV. J. GOLDSMITH,  
Vicar of Dunnington, and formerly of Trinity College, Cambridge.

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PHILADELPHIA :

Published by JOHNSON and WARNER, No. 147,  
Market-Street.

.....  
J. Bouvier, Printer.

1810.



At 10

Sir Richard Phillips  
London. W 3A4 (00)

Northampton  
W 3A4 (00)

*Manners & Customs of Nations.*



INSIDE OF A HOUSE IN NOOTKA SOUND.

A  
VIEW

OF  
CHARACTER, MANNERS, AND CUSTOMS  
OF THE

NORTH-AMERICANS,

COMPREHENDING

AN ACCOUNT OF THE

NORTHERN INDIANS; OF THE INHABITANTS OF OONALASHKA AND  
NOOTKA SOUND; OF THE FIVE INDIAN NATIONS OF CANADA;  
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Mary Smith  
to her little niece

Jarvis L. Smith  
1832

DESCRIPTION  
OF THE  
CHARACTER, MANNERS, AND CUSTOMS,  
OF THE  
NORTHERN INDIANS.

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*Of their Dispositions and domestic Habits.*

**T**HE dispositions of the Northern Indians are, in general, morose and covetous, and they seem to be entirely unacquainted even with the name of gratitude. In their visits to the British Factory, they are for ever pleading poverty; and, to excite the compassion of the governor, are seldom at a loss for a plausible story, which they relate as the occasion of their distress, and never fail to interlard their history with sighs, groans, and tears, sometimes affecting to be lame, and even blind. No people seem to have more command of their passions on such occasions; they can even shed tears on one side of their face, while the other, at the same moment, will exhibit a significant smile. False pretences for obtaining charity are so common among these people, that if the governor paid attention to them all, the whole tribe of Northern Indians would make a trade of begging, instead of bringing furs to purchase what they want.

In their trade they never fail to deceive Europeans whenever it is in their power, and take every method to



overreach them. They will disguise their persons, and change their names, in order to defraud them of their lawful debts, which they are sometimes permitted to contract at the Hudson's Bay Company's Factory. Nor is there any way of rendering a Northern Indian either servicable to himself and the Company, but by keeping him at a distance; for the least indulgence, or apparent partiality, renders him indolent and troublesome, and puts him upon contriving methods to tax the generosity of those who have any dealings with him. But with all these bad qualities they are the mildest tribe of Indians that trade at any of the Company's settlements; and as they are never heated with liquor, they are always in their senses, and never proceed to riot, or any violence beyond bad language. And, notwithstanding they are so covetous, and pay no regard to private property, but take every advantage of bodily strength to rob their neighbours, not only of their goods, but of their wives, yet, let their losses or affronts be ever so great, they never seek any other revenge than that of wrestling. Murder is seldom heard of among them. A murderer is shunned and detested by all the tribe, and is obliged, like another Cain, to wander up and down, forlorn and forsaken even by his own relations and former friends.

Among the Northern Indians the men are very jealous of their wives, and the same spirit probably reigns among the women; but they are kept so much in awe of their husbands, that the liberty of thinking is the greatest privilege which they enjoy. The presence of a Northern Indian man strikes a peculiar awe into his wives, as he always assumes the same authority over them that the master of a family in Europe usually does over his domestic servants.

The Northern Indians, living in such an inhospitable part of the globe, are, for want of firing, obliged to eat

their victuals quite raw, particularly in the summer season; custom, however, renders this practice rather pleasant than otherwise to them, for when they make a pretence of dressing it, they seldom warm it through. Their extreme poverty will admit but few of them to purchase brass kettles from the Company, so that they are still under the necessity of continuing their original mode of boiling their victuals, in large upright vessels made of birch-rind. As these will not admit of being exposed to the fire, the Indians, to supply the defect, heat stones red-hot, and put them into the water, which soon occasions it to boil; and, by a succession of hot stones, they continue the process as long as it is necessary to complete the operation. This method of cookery, though expeditious, is attended with a great evil: the victuals which are thus prepared are full of sand; for the stones are not only liable to shiver to pieces, but, being of a gritty nature, fall to a mass of gravel in the kettle, which cannot be prevented from mixing with the victuals which are boiled in it.

The most remarkable dish, among all the tribes of Indians, is blood mixed with the half-digested food which is found in the deer's stomach, and boiled up with a sufficient quantity of water, to make it of the consistence of pease-pottage. Some finely shred fat, and scraps of tender flesh, first chewed by the men and boys, in order to break the globules that contain the fat, are boiled with it. To render this dish more palatable, they have a method of mixing the blood with the contents of the stomach in the paunch itself, and hanging it up in the hear and smoke of the fire for several days, which puts the whole mass into a state of fermentation and gives it such an agreeable acid taste, that it is asserted by Mr. Hearne, was it not for prejudice, it might be eaten by those who have the nicest palates.

Young calves, fawns, beaver, &c. taken out of the

4. *Boats, Sledges, &c. of the Northern Indians.*

bellies of their dams, are greedily devoured by the Northern Indians; and Mr. Hearne, and other Europeans, who have eaten of them, agree, that they are to be reckoned among the choicest delicacies. From dishes of this sort, a kind of proverb is known in the northern settlements, that, "whoever wishes to know what is good, must live with the Indians."

*Of the Boats, Sledges, Tents, and Employments of the Northern Indians.*

The Northern-Indian canoe bears some resemblance to a weaver's shuttle, being flat-bottomed, with straight upright-sides, and sharp at each end, but the stern is by far the widest part, as there the baggage is generally laid, and occasionally a second person, who always lies down at full length in the bottom of the canoe. These vessels are about twelve or thirteen feet in length, two feet broad in the widest part, and are managed with a single paddle.

The sledge is made of different sizes, from eight to twelve feet in length, and from twelve to sixteen inches wide. The boards of which the sledges are composed are not more than a quarter of an inch thick, and seldom exceed five or six inches in width, as broader would be unhandy for Indians to work, who have no other tools than an ordinary knife, turned up a little at the point. The boards are sewed together with thongs of parchment, deer-skin, and several cross bars of wood are sewed on the upper side, which serve both to strengthen the sledge and secure ground-lashing, to which the load is always fastened by other small thongs.

To pitch the tent of an Indian in winter, it is first necessary to find a dry level piece of ground, which is ascertained by thrusting a stick through the snow down to the earth, all over the proposed part. The snow is

then to be cleared away, in a circular form, to the very moss, which is cut up and removed, to prevent any accident by means of fire. Poles are afterwards procured, two of which are tied together near the top, then raised erect, and their lower ends extended as wide as the proposed diameter of the tent; the other poles are then set round at equal distances from each other, and in such order that their lower ends form a complete circle, which gives boundaries to the tent on all sides; the cloth which resembles in shape a fan mount inverted, is then put round the poles in such a manner, that the two edges lap over, and form a door to the leeward. But if the tent is intended for long residence, the door is always made to face the south. A small hole is left at the top, to serve the double purpose of chimney and window. The fire is made on the ground in the centre, and the remainder of the floor is covered all over with small branches of the pine tree, which serve for seats and beds.

The real wants of the Northern Indians are few, and easily supplied; a hatchet, an ice-chisel, a file, and a knife, are all that are required to enable them, with a little industry, to procure a comfortable livelihood; and those who endeavour to possess more are always the most unhappy, and may, in fact, be called the slaves and carriers to the rest:

Such are the charms to barren states assign'd,  
 Their wants but few, their wishes all confin'd;  
 Yet, let them only share the praises due,  
 If few their wants, their pleasures are but few;  
 For every want that stimulates the breast  
 Becomes a source of pleasure when redrest.

GOLDSMITH.

The first employment to which the Northern Indians are accustomed, is that of *angling* for fish under the ice in winter, which requires no other process than cutting

round holes in the ice, about a foot or two in diameter, and letting down a baited hook, which is always kept in motion, not only to prevent the water from freezing, but because it is found the best means of alluring the fish to the hole.

Another method of catching fish is by setting a net under the ice, which is thus performed. Having ascertained the exact length of the net, they cut a number of holes in the ice, at the distance of ten or twelve feet from each other, and as many in number as will be sufficient to stretch the net to its full length. The net is then easily secured, by means of a line and poles, under the ice, till they search it for fish, which they do by opening only the two end holes, the line is veered away by one person, and the net hauled from under the ice by another; and after the fish are taken out, the net is readily hauled back to its former station, and secured as before.

The method which the Indians make use of for catching, or, as it is termed, *pounding* deer, deserves to be noticed. When they design to impound deer, they look out for one of their paths, which if across a lake or wide river, or a barren plain, it is the more adapted for the purpose; and if the path runs through a cluster of woods, capable of affording materials for building the pound, it adds considerably to the commodiousness of the situation.

The pound is built by making a strong fence with bushy trees, without regularity, and continued to any extent, at the pleasure of the builders; some are more than a mile in circumference. The door or entrance is not larger than a common gate, and the inside is so crowded with small counter hedges, as to resemble a maze; in every opening of which is set a snare, made with thongs of deer-skins well twisted together, which are amazingly strong. One end of the snare is made

fast to a pole, of a size and length sufficient to prevent the deer dragging it far before it gets entangled among the other woods, which are all left standing, excepting those that are necessary for making the fence, hedges, &c.

The pound thus prepared, a row of small brushwood is stuck up in the snow on each side of the door or entrance, continued along the open part of the lake, river, or plain, and ranged in such a manner as to form two sides of a long acute angle, growing gradually wider in proportion to the distance they extend from the pound, which sometimes is not less than two or three miles, while the deer's path is exactly along the middle, between the two rows of brushwood. Indians employed on this service pitch their tents on an eminence that affords them a commanding prospect of the path leading to the pound; and when they see any deer going that way, men, women, and children walk along the lake or river side, under cover of the woods, till they get behind them, then step forth to open view, and proceed towards the pound in the form of a crescent. The timorous deer finding themselves pursued, and at the same time taking the two rows of brushy poles to be two ranks of people stationed to prevent their passing on either side, run straight forward in the path till they get into the pound. Thus enclosed, the women and children walk round the pound, to prevent them from breaking or jumping over the fence, while the men are employed in spearing such as are entangled in the snares, and shooting with bows and arrows those which remain loose in the pound. This method of hunting is sometimes so successful, that many families subsist by it, without having occasion to move their tents above once or twice during the course of a whole winter. This easy way of procuring a comfortable

*Treatment of the Women.*

maintenance in the winter months, is wonderfully well adapted to the support of the aged and infirm.

*Of their Treatment of the Women.*

In this, as in most uncivilized countries, the principal part of the labour falls upon the women, who, by being inured to carry and haul heavy loads from their childhood, and to do all manner of drudgery, are well fitted to the most laborious employments; and on this account those men who are capable of maintaining several women, generally find them humble and faithful servants, affectionate wives, fond and indulgent mothers. Custom seems to render this mode of life easy to the generality of women, whose wants are comprised in food and clothing only. These women are the mildest and most virtuous of the females among the tribes of North America. Here the principal motive among the men to marriage is, that they may have a partner in the excessively laborious employments, while the softer endearments of a conjugal life are considered only as secondary objects.

The humiliating state in which the Northern Indian women are kept, cannot be exhibited in any way stronger than by observing the method of treating them at meals, though custom makes it sit light on those whose lot it is to bear it. When the men kill any beast, the women are sent to bring it to the tent, by whom every operation of splitting, drying, pounding, &c. is performed. The women cook the victuals, but, though of the highest rank, they are never permitted to partake of it till all the males, even the servants, have eaten what they think proper; and in times of scarcity it is frequently their lot to be left without a single morsel, and should they be detected in helping themselves during the business of cookery, they would be subject

to a severe beating, and be considered afterwards, through life, as having forfeited their character.

From the most laborious duties the women are not exempted, even in those times when nature calls loudly for rest, and intermission from fatigue. Immediately after child-birth they are forced to the performance of all kinds of services, in the same way as if nothing had happened. "Women," said one of the Indian chiefs, "were made for labour, one of them can carry or haul, as much as two men; they also pitch our tents, make and mend our clothing, keep us warm in the night; and, in fact, there is no such thing as travelling any considerable distance, or for any length of time in this country, without their assistance. They are, besides, maintained at a very trifling expence; for as they always cook, the very licking of their fingers in scarce time is sufficient for their subsistence."

Here all the gentler morals, such as play  
Through life's more cultur'd walks, and charm the way;  
These, far dispers'd, on tim'rous pinions fly,  
To sport and flutter in a kinder sky.

GOLDSMITH.

DESCRIPTION OF THE CHARACTER, MANNERS, AND CUSTOMS OF THE INHABITANTS OF OONALASHKA AND NOOTKA SOUND.

THE native inhabitants of Oonalashka are, to all appearance, a very peaceable, inoffensive race of people: and, it is said, that in regard to honesty they might serve as a pattern to the most civilized nations. They have their own chiefs, and seem to enjoy liberty and property without molestation from the Russians, with whom they live in great harmony, though it is evident that they have been subjected to them, and are now probably their tributaries.

A warlike breed. They the glebe  
Have never turn'd, nor bound the golden sheaf  
With limbs inur'd, to ev'ry manly toil.

GLOVER.



These people, in building their houses, dig in the ground an oblong pit, from thirty to fifty feet long, and fifteen or twenty feet broad; over this they form a roof of wood, which they cover with turf and earth. Near each end is left a square opening, one of which is intended to admit the light, and the other is used to go in and out of the house with the assistance of a ladder, or rather upright post cut into steps. Round the sides and ends of the habitation, the families, several of which dwell together, have their separate apartments, where they sleep, and sit to work, not on benches, but in a sort of concave trench, covered with mats, so that this part of the house is kept clean and decent, but the same cannot be said of the middle of the house, which is common to all the families. Behind and over the trench they place the few effects which they possess, such as their mats, skins, and apparel. Like those of the Greenlanders, their houses are heated and lighted by lamps.

These people produce fire both by collision and attrition. In the former case they strike two stones against each other, on one of which a quantity of brimstone has been previously rubbed. The latter method is performed by means of two pieces of wood, one of which is flat, and the other is a stick of about a foot and a half in length. They press the pointed end of the stick upon the other piece of wood, whirling it nimbly round as a drill, and thus fire is quickly produced.

The natives of this island do not appear to be long-lived; it is a very rare thing to see a person who can be supposed to have arrived to sixty years of age. What their religious opinions are, or whether they have any notions respecting a superintending first cause, and a future state, have not been ascertained. They inter their dead on the tops of hills, and raise over the grave a little hillock; but if the grave be by the side of the road, a heap of stones is raised over it, and every one

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*Manners & Customs of Nations.*



Interior of a House at DONAI, A. S. H. K. A.

who passes by it adds a stone to the heap. This will account for the appearance of several stone mounds, that seem to have been artificially raised, and have the appearance of great antiquity.

The inhabitants of Nootka Sound are quiet and peaceable; they are rather reserved than loquacious; and, in their highest paroxysms of rage, they have neither strength of language, nor significancy of gestures sufficient to express their anger. Their public orations consist of short sentences, or single words, forcibly repeated in one tone of voice, accompanied by a single gesture appropriated to each expression.

From their exhibiting human skulls and bones to sale, there can be little doubt but that they treat their enemies with the most brutal cruelty; nevertheless, to Europeans they appear docile, courteous, and good tempered; quick in resenting injuries, and as quickly forgetting them. They seem to be actuated in no degree by the principle of curiosity, which is so predominant in most other nations. Few of them expressed any inclination to examine things with which they were unacquainted, and which, to persons not entirely devoid of curiosity, would excite considerable astonishment. If they can procure the articles that they know are suited to their wants, they are satisfied; and to obtain these they manifest dispositions to roguery, which their virtue can seldom repress.

The only inhabited parts of the Sound are two villages, which are supposed to contain about two thousand souls. The houses consist of three rows, placed at nearly equal distances behind each other, the front row being the largest; besides these there are a few straggling houses at each end. These buildings, if such they may be called, are made of very long and broad planks, resting upon the edges of each other, tied in different

parts with the withes of the pine bark. On the outside there are slender posts, placed at considerable distances from each other, to which the planks are fastened, and there are some larger poles within placed aslant. These habitations have no regular doors, and can be only entered by a hole made by the unequal length of the planks. In the same way holes are left in the sides of the house, which serve as windows, but they are very irregularly disposed, without attending in the least to the shape or size of them.

From within these habitations a view may be obtained from one end to the other of these ranges of buildings: for, notwithstanding the separations on each side, they are not made with such accuracy as to intercept the sight. On the sides of the houses benches are raised about five or six inches higher than the rest of the floor, covered with mats, on which the family sit and sleep. The fire-place, which has neither hearth nor chimney, is in the middle of the floor.

The men are chiefly employed in fishing and killing animals for the sustenance of their families; but the women occupy themselves in manufacturing their garments, and in curing fish, which consists chiefly of sardines and herrings, which they carry from the canoes to their houses. They also go in their small canoes, which they manage very dexterously, to gather muscles and other shell-fish. In this, as in most other uncivilized nations, there is no respect or attention shown to the women on account of their sex. The men never offer to assist them in, or relieve them from their most laborious employments.

The young men are remarkably indolent, and are found generally sitting about in scattered companies, basking themselves in the sun, or wallowing on the sand upon the beach, like so many hogs, without any covering:

Needy, yet in scorn  
Rejecting labour, wretched by their wants,  
Yet profligate through indolence, with limbs.  
Enervated by sloth, their minds corrupt.

GLOVER.

This disregard to decency is wholly confined to the men, the women being always decently clothed, and behaving with that propriety which is so becoming their sex.

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DESCRIPTION OF THE CHARACTER, MANNERS, AND CUSTOMS OF THE FIVE INDIAN NATIONS OF CANADA.

*Of their general Character and Money.*

**T**HE Five Nations consist of as many tribes, united by a sort of confederacy, and without any superiority of the one over the other. The names by which they are known to our countrymen are, Mohawks, Oneydos, Onondagas, Cayygas, and Sennekas.

Each of these nations is an absolute republic by itself; and every castle in each nation makes an independent state, and is governed in all public affairs by its own Sachems. The authority of these rulers is gained by and consists wholly in the opinion that the rest of the natives have of their wisdom and integrity. Force is never resorted to for the purpose of executing their resolutions. Honour and esteem are their principal rewards; and shame the only punishment.

The natives of these tribes think themselves by nature superior to the rest of mankind, and assume a title which, in their language, denotes their pre-eminence. This opinion of their supposed excellence they carefully infuse into the minds of their children, which inspires them with that courage, which has been so terrible to all the nations of North America, and which renders them the objects of fear among the neighbouring Indian nations, from whom they receive a yearly tribute. Two

of the Sachems go about to receive this tribute, which is paid in wampum, the current money among the Indians. Wampum is of two kinds, white and purple: the white is worked out of the inside of the great shells into the form of a bead, and perforated, to string on leather; the purple is taken out of the inside of the muscle shell; they are woven as broad as one's hand, and about two feet long; these they call belts, and give and receive them at their treaties as the seals of friendship; for lesser matters a single string is given. Every bead is of known value, and a belt of a less number is made to equal one of a greater, by fastening so many as is wanting to the belt by a string.

It is seldom for the sake of tribute that the Indians make war, but from their notions of glory, which they have strongly imprinted on their minds. The Five Nations, in their love of liberty, and their country; in their bravery in battle, and their constancy in enduring torments, equal the fortitude of the most celebrated Romans.

*Of their Conventions, Method of making War, and Treatment of Prisoners.*

Affairs of importance which concern all the Five Nations are transacted in a general meeting of the Sachems, which is held near the centre of their country: but when they treat with the British, the meeting has been commonly held at Albany. They strictly follow the maxim formerly used by the Romans to increase their strength, that is, they encourage the people of other nations to incorporate with them; and when they have subdued any people, after having satiated their revenge by a few examples, they adopt the rest of their captives as subjects and friends, esteeming and treating them in every respect as themselves.

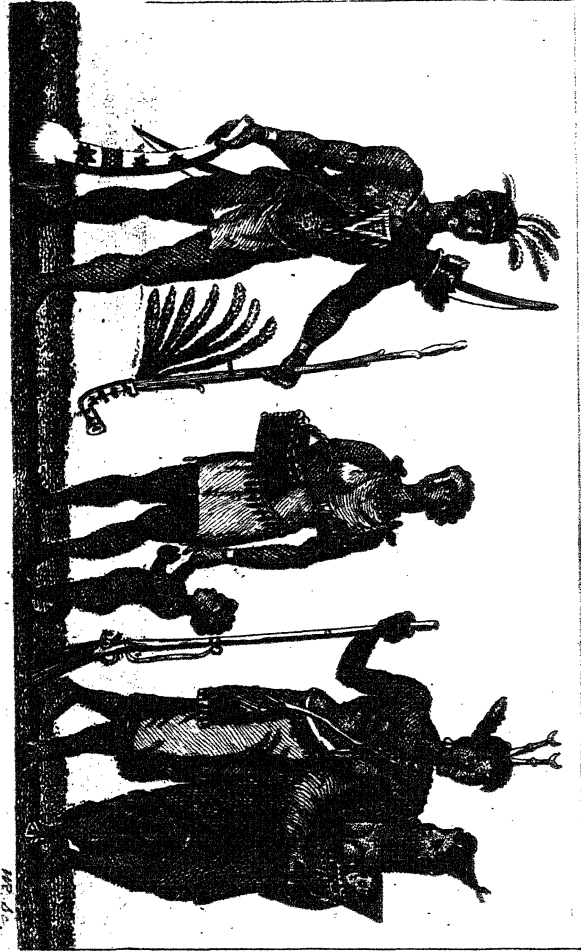
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THE GREAT AMERICAN INDIAN

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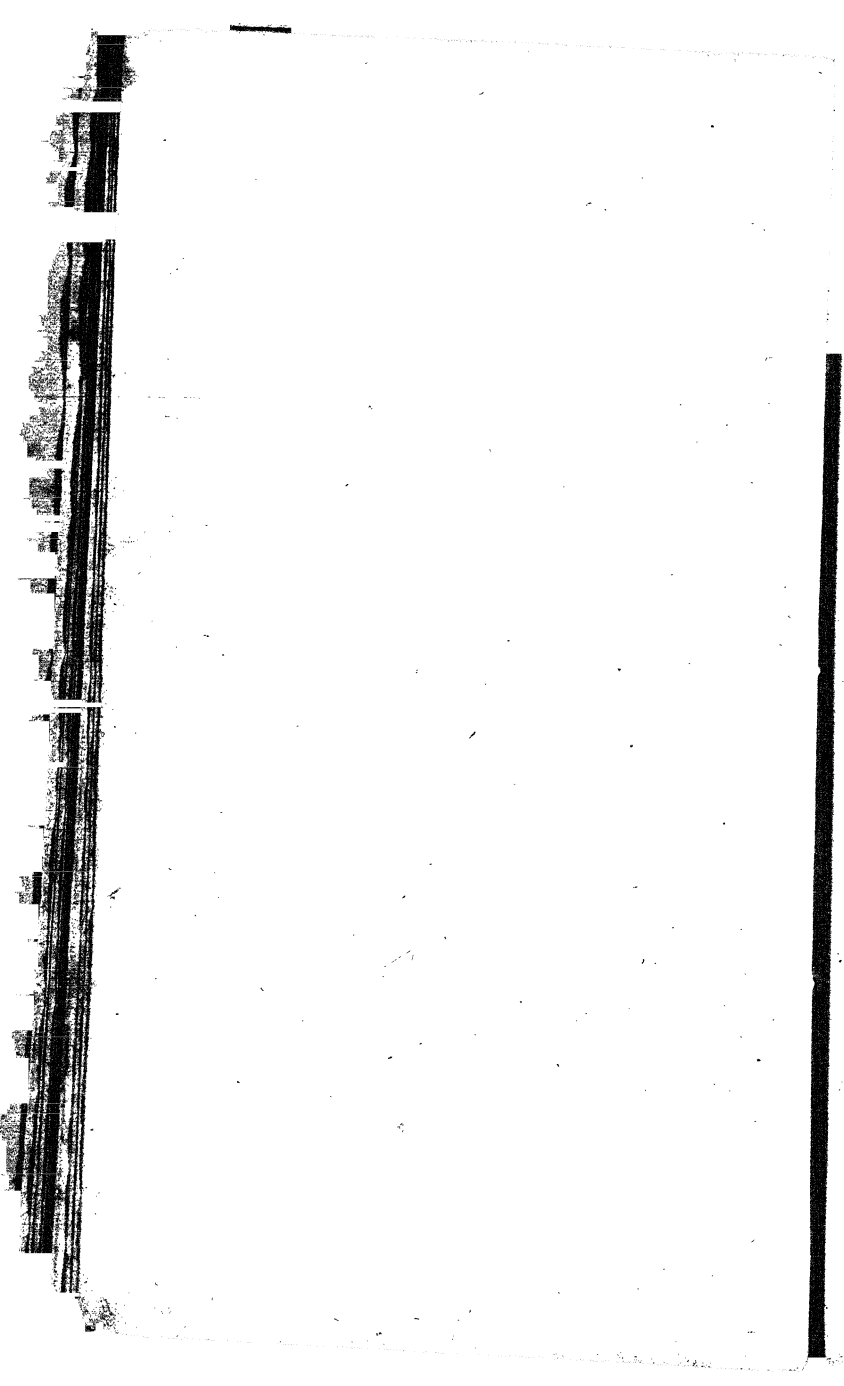
WESTERN AMERICAN INDIANS.



W. D.

*Weapons & Customs of Nations.*





mind to signalize themselves, and to gain a reputation among their countrymen, by some great enterprize against an enemy, they at first communicate their design to two or three of their most intimate friends; and if these fall in with the plan, an invitation is made in their names, to all the young men of the castle, to feast on dog's flesh. When the company are assembled, the promoters of the enterprize set forth the undertaking in the best colours they can: they boast of what they intend to do, and incite others to join, from the glory that is to be obtained; and all who partake of the entertainment are considered as having enlisted in the cause.

The night before they set out, they make a grand feast, to which all the most celebrated warriors of the nation are invited; at this entertainment they have the wardance to the sound of a sort of kettle-drum. The warriors are seated in two rows in the house, and each rises up in his turn, and sings of the great actions which he has himself performed, and the deeds of his ancestors; this is always accompanied with a dance, and the persons present join in a chorus. They exaggerate the injuries they have at any time received from their enemies, extol their own glory, and by these means work up the spirits of the whole party to a high pitch of warlike enthusiasm.

They come to these dances with their faces painted in a frightful manner, which is also the case when they go to war, in order to make themselves terrible to their enemies. On the next day they march out with much formality, dressed in the finest apparel, and in their march observe a profound silence. The women follow them with their old clothes, and by them they send back their finery in which they marched from the castle. Before they leave the place where the clothes are exchanged, they always peel a large piece of the bark of some great tree, upon the smooth side they draw figures

of their canoes, and emblems of the nations against which the expedition is designed.

When the expedition is over, they stop at the same place in their return, and on the same, or an adjoining tree, they figure, in their rude style of painting, the result of the warfare, the number of the enemy slain, and prisoners taken. These trees are the annals or rather the trophies of the Five Nations; and by them and their war songs they preserve the history of their great achievements.

After their prisoners are secured, they never offer them the least ill treatment; but, on the contrary, will rather starve themselves than suffer them to want. They are presented, when they arrive at their journey's end, to those who have lost any relation in that or any former enterprize. If the captives are accepted, there is an end to all their trouble; they are dressed as fine as possible, are made absolutely free, except to return to their own country, and enjoy all the privileges the person had in whose place they are accepted. Those of them who have not the good fortune to insure the affections of the victors are given up to satiate their revenge.

The hospitality of the Indians is no less remarkable than their other virtues: as soon as any stranger comes, they are sure to offer him victuals. If there be several in company, and they come from a considerable distance, one of their best houses is fitted up for their entertainment. Their civility extends to the furnishing the guests with every thing that they suppose will be agreeable to them.

#### *Of their Religion.*

It has been a matter of considerable doubt what religion these tribes of Indians profess: they have no kind of public worship, but do not seem deficient in the be-

belief of a Supreme Being, whom they consider as the preserver, sustainer, and master of the universe. Some of their funeral rites seem to be formed upon the notion of a future state of existence. They make a large round hole, in which the body can be placed upright; it is then covered with timber, to support the earth which they lay over it. They always dress the corpse in all its finery, and put wampum and other things in the grave with it; and the relations do not suffer grass to grow on the tomb, but frequently visit it with lamentations.

They are superstitious in observing omens and dreams; they seem to stand in great awe of the owl, and are highly displeased if any person imitate the hooting of that bird in the night. We are informed by an officer, who was witness of the scene, that a boy of one of the westward nations having died, the parents made a regular pile of split wood, laid the body upon it, and burnt it; while the pile was burning they stood gravely looking on, without any emotions of grief, but when it was consumed, they gathered up the bones with many tears, put them into a box, and carried them away.

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DESCRIPTION OF THE CHARACTER, MANNERS, AND  
CUSTOMS OF THE INHABITANTS OF THE UNITED  
STATES OF NORTH AMERICA.

*Of their Persons and general Character.*

**T**HE great and sudden variation of the weather affects very sensibly the health of the inhabitants of the United States, as they are not sufficiently careful to guard against its vicissitudes. People become old in America sooner than in Europe. Upon females the influence of the climate is still more sensible. When young they are generally beautiful, and more particularly so at Philadelphia: but after twenty years of age they begin to lose

their fresh colour, and at twenty-five some of them might be taken for Europeans of forty. There are some instances, nevertheless, of natives who have lived to a great age, to that of 70, 80, and 90 years, with remarkable health and spirits.

The number of children which die in infancy is proportionably greater than in Europe. Colds, whooping-coughs, and disorders of the throat and bowels take off great multitudes.

The manners and domestic economy of the inhabitants differ only in a few trifling shades from those of Great Britain; for although the population is composed of adventurers from every nation in Europe, the original settlers being principally English, to their customs and manners, as well as laws and language, successive emigrants have conformed in a great degree. The possession and usage of slaves, have introduced the only considerable difference, that commands the attention of a traveller, and this difference is most observable in the southern states.

The traits of character common to all are an ardour for enterprize, courage, an high sense of liberty, and an advantageous opinion of themselves. Habituated to business from their infancy, having for the most part made their fortune by their labour, industry is not become repugnant even to those in the most easy circumstances: while they wish to enjoy the sweets of life, they do not regard them as absolute wants; they know how to dispense with them, and to quit them, whenever their interest requires it; they can forget them whenever a reverse of fortune takes them away; and they know how to run after fortune when she escapes them, for the desire of riches is their ruling passion.

It has been asserted that the New World could not produce genius and talents like the Old, which has been

effectually controverted by a multitude of examples of men, who, without education, have invented and constructed works, particularly in mechanics, worthy of the best workmen in Europe. It is, however, certain that the number of men distinguished for science and literature is proportionably less than in the nations of Europe : the means of instruction are less complete ; and the ways of acquiring wealth, or a competence, more numerous and easy, which will account for their inferiority in literature to the Europeans.

Literature and the Sciences have met with considerable public as well as private encouragement. Grammar schools, academies, colleges, and universities, are founded in several districts of the Union, and many of them are endowed with liberal funds by the State Legislatures. The principal universities are that of Cambridge, in the state of Massachusetts, and those of New-York and Philadelphia.

Education is generally modelled after the system adopted in England. In most of the eminent public seminaries, as well as in many private schools, Latin and Greek, and in some few of them Hebrew, are taught ; together with the more fashionable modern languages of Europe. Mathematical and philosophical studies are also encouraged. The principles of English grammar are taught with a peculiar attention, in the most common English schools. Female Academies and Boarding-Schools meet with extensive patronage in all the principal States ; some of them contain no less than fifty or sixty boarders. Nor is the education of poor children neglected. In some parts of the Union there are public funds appropriated to defray the expence, and in others it is paid by a general tax on the people. There is no part of the world, perhaps, in which more money has been expended in the education of black children. The compensatiog paid to

tutors of virtuous character and adequate talents is very liberal in all the principal cities. Some of them have been enabled thereby to save a comfortable independence, before old age has overtaken them. In the villages, and among the farmers, the remuneration of teachers is rather scanty.

All the classical authors in the English language, and some in the Greek and Latin, have been reprinted in America, and many of them with great elegance and correctness. Some prose-writers of conspicuous merit have arisen in the United States; but poetry has not been cultivated with equal success. Literary societies publish their lucubrations; while Magazines and Newspapers without number, contribute to the diffusion of useful knowledge; though it must be confessed that the latter are too much devoted to the dissemination of factious principles and a party spirit.

The most common vice of the inferior class of the American people is drunkenness. The use which they make of spirituous liquors, in preference to those of beer, cider, and wine, greatly aids this disposition. In other respects there are certainly fewer crimes committed in America than among an equal number of people in Europe; and the cause of it may be found in the easy circumstances of the people, the first source of the morality of nations. Assassinations are not unknown, but they are very rare; and thefts, especially in the country, are not frequent, though public confidence be the only safeguard of property. Forgery is, on account of the great quantity of paper-money, perhaps the most common offence against the well-being of society. But this evil was very inconsiderable, before their establishment of numerous public banks.

Although the Americans are eager in getting money, yet they are by no means avaricious. Without profuseness, or forgetting the interest of their families, they

are very generous to the unfortunate, and hospitable to the stranger.

Every private individual in all the United States of America, has an entire liberty of conscience. There are, however, some States in which the constitution requires every citizen, entering upon the legislative or executive function, to swear, "that he believes in one God, in a future state of rewards and punishment; in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and that he professes the Protestant religion."

The inferior classes of workmen, down to those who labour in the ports, do not appear to be so rustic in America, as they generally are in the Old World: they are much better paid than workmen of the same class in Europe, by which they are enabled to live well. There is hardly a labouring family which does not eat meat twice a day, and drink tea or coffee; the proverbial wish of *having a chicken in the pot* is more than accomplished in America. The shopkeeper and the artisan live much better here than in Europe; and the table of a family, in easy circumstances, living upon their income, is not better served in England and France than the mechanic is in the large towns of America.

Though there be no distinctions acknowledged by the law in the United States, fortune and the nature of professions form different classes. The merchants, lawyers, land-owners, physicians, and clergy, form the *first* class; farmers and artisans may be included in the *second*; and the *third* class is composed of workmen, who let themselves by the day, by the month, &c.

In public amusements these classes do not mix; and yet, except the labourer in the ports, and the common sailor, every one calls himself, and is styled by others a gentleman. The white American is ashamed of the situation of a domestic, so that there are comparatively



very few native Americans in the state of domestic servants. The class of servants is composed of Irish, Germans, negroes, and mulattoes; and as soon as the two first have acquired a little money, they quit that station, and establish themselves upon land or in a small trade. But it is not so uncommon to see young women of good families in the situation of servants during their youth.

In dress the English fashions are as faithfully copied as possible. Their houses, their furniture, their carriages, are all English. The cookery is also English. There are great dinners, numerous tea parties, and some few societies. Tea assemblies are a fund of amusement for the ladies. Balls and plays are much frequented.

The women every where possess, in the highest degree, the domestic virtues; they have more sweetness, more goodness, at least as much courage, but more sensibility than the men. Good wives and good mothers, their husbands and their children engage their whole attention, and their household affairs occupy all their time and cares; destined by the manners of their country to this domestic life, their education is formed to suit their expectations or prospects.

The Americans marry young: the occasion which the young men have for a wife to assist them in their labours conduces to early marriages, and great purity of manners. But the wife who dies is readily replaced by another. She is a necessary friend, and the very soul of the family; she is an indispensable resource for domestic affairs: she is an assiduous companion, and renders home pleasant in those parts of the country where neighbours are very scarce, and where the children soon quit their paternal abode.

The Religion of the United States is the Christian religion, without any peculiar power or privilege annexed to any of its numerous sects. The Federal Constitution is entirely silent on the subject of religion. Every man

is admissible to office in the General Government, that is duly qualified in other respects. No evil hath yet arisen from this universal toleration and equality. On the contrary they have exhibited to the world an incontestable proof that civil government may be supported, without the aid of an established church. Religious rancour, the general consequence of religious disputes, is hardly known in these regions of universal toleration. No man reckons himself bound to extirpate the weeds from his neighbour's garden. All that is noxious of this kind is left to God, the "GOOD HUSBANDMAN," to destroy, when and how to his infinite wisdom it shall seem most meet.—Of the various religious societies, scattered through these extensive territories, the Presbyterians and Congregationalists are perhaps the most numerous. There are many large congregations of Episcopalians, Friends, Baptists; but the Methodists are the most growing sect; because perhaps their preachers are the most zealous labourers.

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DESCRIPTION OF THE CHARACTER, MANNERS, AND CUSTOMS OF SEVERAL TRIBES OF INDIANS ON THE NORTH-WESTERN COAST OF AMERICA.

*Of the Slave and Dog-ribbed, and Beaver Indians.*

**T**HESE people are ugly, meagre, and an ill-formed race, particularly about the legs, which by their habitually almost roasting themselves by the fire, are generally covered with scabs. Many of them appear to be in an unhealthy state, owing probably to their natural filthiness. They are of moderate stature, and of a fairer complexion than the generality of Indians who are natives of warmer climates.

The men have two double lines, either black or blue, tattooed upon each cheek, from the ear to the nose.

The gristle of the latter is perforated to admit a goose quill, or a small piece of wood to be passed through the orifice. Their clothing is made of the dressed skins of rein-deer.

Their lodges are of a very simple structure: a few poles supported by a fork, and forming a semi-circle at the bottom, with branches or bark for a covering, constitute the whole of their native architecture. They build two of these huts facing one another, and make a fire between them. They make their own nets, and weapons for hunting, such as bows, arrows, spears, daggers, &c. Their canoes are small, pointed at both ends, flat-bottomed, and covered in the fore-part. They are made so light that the man whom one of these vessels bears on the water, can, in return, carry it over land without difficulty.

When the father of a family takes a journey, he cuts off a lock of hair, and having divided it into several parts, he fastens one of them to the hair on the upper part of his wife's head, blowing on it three times with all the violence in his power, and uttering certain words. The others he fastens with the same formalities on the heads of his children.

Several tribes of the American Indians conclude every business, however serious and important, by dancing, in which old and young join, till their strength is exhausted: this exercise they accompany with loud imitations of the various noises produced by the rein-deer, the bear, and the wolf.

If they are unwilling to perform any task demanded of them, they will all, at one and the same moment, pretend to be sick. Sir A. Mackenzie, speaking of these people, observes, that he was under the necessity of shooting one of their dogs. When they heard the report of the pistol, they were seized with a general alarm, and the women took their children on their

backs, and ran into the woods. The woman to whom the dog had belonged was very much affected, and declared that the loss of five children, during the preceding winter, had not affected her so much as the death of this animal; but her grief was not of very long duration; a few beads, &c. soon assuaged her sorrow; but as they can without difficulty get rid of affliction, they can with equal ease assume it, and feign sickness if it be necessary with the same versatility.

They are afflicted with but few diseases, and their only remedies consist in binding the temples, procuring perspiration, singing, and blowing on the sick person. When death overtakes them, their property is sacrificed and destroyed; nor is there any want of lamentation and weeping on such occasions; the near relations blacken their faces, and sometimes cut off the hair, and pierce their arms with knives and arrows. The grief of the females is carried to a still greater excess: they not only cut their hair, and cry and howl, but will, sometimes, with the utmost deliberation, employ sharp instruments to separate the nail from the finger, and then force back the flesh beyond the first joint, which they immediately amputate. But this extraordinary mark of affliction is only displayed on the death of a favourite son, an husband, or a father. Many of the old women have so often repeated this ceremony, that they have not a complete finger left on either hand. The women renew their lamentations at the graves of their departed relations for a long succession of years.

Sir A. Mackenzie gives a pleasing picture of the hospitality of some of the American Indians. "My men," says he, "were anxious to stop for the night; indeed, the fatigue they had suffered justified the proposal; but the anxiety of my mind impelled me forward; they continued to follow me, till I found myself at the edge of the woods; and, notwithstanding the remonstrances that

were made, I proceeded, feeling rather than seeing my way, till I arrived at an house, and soon discovered several fires in small huts, with people busily employed in cooking their fish. I walked into one of them without the least ceremony, threw down my burden, and, after shaking hands with some of the people, sat down upon it. They received me with no appearance of surprize, but soon made signs for me to go up to the large house, which was erected on upright posts, at some distance from the ground. A broad piece of timber with steps cut in it led to the scaffolding even with the floor, and, by this kind of ladder I entered the house at one end; and having passed three fires, at equal distances, in the middle of the building, I was received by several people, sitting upon a very wide board. I shook hands with them, and seated myself beside a man, the dignity of whose countenance induced me to give him that preference. I soon discovered one of my guides seated a little above me, with a neat mat spread before him, which I supposed to be the place of honour, and appropriated to strangers. In a short time my people arrived, and placed themselves near me, when the man, by whom I sat, immediately rose, and fetched, from behind a plank of about four feet wide, a quantity of roasted salmon. The same plank served also as a skreen for the beds, to which the women and children were already retired. The signs of our protector seemed to denote, that we might sleep in the house, but as we did not perfectly understand him, I thought it prudent, from the fear of giving offence, to order the men to make a fire without, that we might sleep by it. When he observed our design, he placed boards for us, that we might not take our repose on the bare ground, and ordered a fire to be prepared for us. We had not been long seated round it, when we received a large dish of salmon roes, pounded fine and beat up with water, so as

to have the appearance of cream. Another dish soon followed, the principal article of which was also salmon-roe, with a large proportion of gooseberries, and an herb that appeared like sorrel. Having been regaled with these delicacies, for such they were considered by that hospitable spirit which provided them, we laid ourselves down to rest, with no other canopy than the sky, but I never enjoyed a more sound and refreshing rest, though I had a board for my bed, and a billet for my pillow."

These people indulge an extreme superstition respecting their fish, as it is apparently their only animal food. Flesh they never taste; and one of their dogs having picked and swallowed part of a bone which we had left, was beaten by his master till he had disgorged it. One of Mr. Mackenzie's people having thrown a bone of the deer in the river, a native who had observed the circumstance immediately dived and brought it up, and having consigned it to the fire, instantly proceeded to wash his polluted hands.

*Of their Treatment of the Sick.*

"At an early hour this morning," says Sir A. Mackenzie, "I was visited by the chief, in company with his son. The former complained of a pain in the breast; to relieve his suffering, I gave him a few drops of Turlington's balsam, on a piece of sugar. When he had taken my medicine, he requested me to follow him, and conducted me to a shed, where several people were assembled round a sick man, who was another of his sons. They immediately uncovered him, and shewed me a violent ulcer in the small of his back, in the foulest state that can be imagined. One of his knees was afflicted in the same manner. This unhappy man was reduced to a skeleton, and from his appearance was drawing near to an end of his pains. They requested

that I would touch him, and his father was very urgent with me to administer medicine; but he was in so dangerous a state, that I thought it prudent to yield no farther to the importunities than to give the sick person a few drops of Turlington's balsam in some water. I therefore left them, but was soon called back by the loud lamentations of the women, and was rather apprehensive that some inconvenience might result from my compliance with the chief's request. On my return I found the native physicians busy in practising their skill and art on the patient. They blew on him, and then whistled; at times they pressed their extended fingers with all their strength on his stomach; they also put their fore-fingers doubled into his mouth, and spouted water from their own with great violence into his face. To support these operations the wretched sufferer was held up in a sitting posture; and when they were concluded, he was laid down and covered with a new robe made of the skin of lynx. I had observed that his belly and breast were covered with scars, and I understood that they were caused by a custom prevalent among them of applying pieces of lighted touchwood to their flesh, in order to relieve pain or demonstrate their courage. He was now placed on a broad plank, and carried by six men into the woods, where I was invited to accompany them. I could not conjecture what would be the end of this ceremony, particularly as I saw one man carry fire, another an axe, and a third dry wood. I was, indeed, disposed to suspect that, as it was their custom to burn the dead, they intended to relieve the poor man from his pain, and perform the sad last duty of surviving affection. When they had advanced a short distance into the wood, they laid him upon a clear spot, and kindled a fire against his back, the physician then began to scarify the ulcer with a very blunt instrument, the cruel pain of which

operation the patient bore with incredible resolution; but he survived it a very short time only."

*Of the Knisteneaux Indians.*

These people are spread over a vast extent of country. Their language is the same as that of those who inhabit the coast of British America on the Atlantic, with the exception of the Esquimaux, and continues along the coast of Labrador: and the gulph and banks of St. Laurence to Montreal.

They are of moderate stature well proportioned, and of great activity. Both sexes manifest a disposition to pluck the hair from every part of the body. Their eyes are black, and penetrating; their countenance open and agreeable; and it is a principal object of their vanity to give every possible decoration to their persons. A material article in their toilettes is vermilion, which is contrasted with their native blue, white, and brown earths, to which charcoal is frequently added.

Their dress is simple and commodious. Their head-dresses are composed of the feathers of the swan, the eagle, and other birds. The teeth, horns, and claws of different animals are also the occasional ornaments of the head and neck. The making of every article of dress belongs to the occupation of the females, who, though by no means inattentive to the decoration of their own persons, appear to have a still greater degree of pride in attending to the appearance of the men, whose faces are painted with more care than those of the women.

When a young man marries, he immediately goes to live with the father and mother of the wife, who treat him as a perfect stranger, till after the birth of his first child: he then attaches himself more to them than his own parents, and his wife no longer gives him any other denomination than that of the father of her child.



The funeral rites begin, like all other solemn ceremonies, with smoking, and are concluded with a feast. The body is dressed in the best habiliments possessed by the deceased, or his relations, and is then deposited in a grave lined with branches: some domestic utensils are placed on it, and a kind of canopy erected over it. During this ceremony, great lamentations are made, and if the departed person is very much regretted, the near relations cut off their hair, pierce the fleshy part of their thighs and arms with arrows, knives, &c. and blacken their faces with charcoal. The whole of the property belonging to the departed person is destroyed, and the relations take in exchange for the wearing apparel any rags that will cover their nakedness. The feast given on the occasion, which is repeated annually, is accompanied with eulogia on the deceased, and without any acts of ferocity. On the tomb are carved or painted, the symbols of his tribe, which are taken from the different animals of the country.

If the tribe feel themselves called upon to go to war, the elders convene the people in order to know the general opinion. If this be for war, the chief publishes his intention to smoke in the sacred stem at a certain period, to which solemnity, meditation and fasting are required as preparatory ceremonials. When the people are thus assembled, the chief enlarges on the necessity of the measures proposed, invites those who are willing to follow him to smoke out of the sacred stem, which is considered as a token of enrolment. Every individual who attends these meetings brings something with him as a token of his warlike intention, or as an object of sacrifice, which, when the assembly dissolves, is suspended from poles near the place of council.

They have frequent feasts, and particular circumstances never fail to produce them; such as tedious illness, long fasting, &c. On these occasions it is usual

for the person who means to give the entertainment to announce his design, on a certain day, of opening his medicine bag, and smoking out of his sacred stem. This declaration is considered as a sacred vow that cannot be broken. In the spring and autumn they engage in very long and solemn ceremonies, when dogs are offered as sacrifices, those which are fat and milk-white are preferred. The scene of these ceremonies is in the most conspicuous situation, in order that travellers may be induced to make their offerings at the same time. If, on any of these occasions, a person pass by, and be in real want of any thing that is displayed as an offering, he has a right to take it, provided he replaces it with some article he can spare, though it be of far inferior value; but to take any thing wantonly is considered as a sacrilegious act, and "highly insulting to the great Master of Life," to use their own expression, who is the sacred object of their devotion.

The scene of private sacrifice is the lodge of the person who performs it, which is prepared for that purpose by removing every thing away, and spreading green branches on the floor. A new hearth is made, and a fire lighted. The owner of the dwelling remains alone in it; and he begins the ceremony by spreading a new piece of cloth, on which he opens his medicine bag, and exposes its contents, consisting of various articles. The principal of them is a kind of household god, which is a carved image about eight inches long, the object of the most pious regard. Besides this there is his war-cap, decorated with feathers, and a quill for every enemy whom the owner of it has slain in battle. The remaining contents of the bag are piece of Brazil tobacco, several roots and simples, which are in great estimation for their medicinal qualities, and a pipe. These articles being all exposed, and the stem resting upon two forks, the master of the lodge sends for the

person he most esteems, who sits down opposite to him ; the pipe is then filled and fixed to the stem. The company assemble, and the most religious awe and solemnity pervades the whole. The assistant takes the pipe, which he lights, and presents to the officiating person, who receives it standing, and holds it between both hands. He then turns himself to the East, and draws a few whiffs, which he blows to that point. The same ceremony he observes to the other three quarters, with his eyes directed upwards: he then makes a speech to explain the design of their being called together, and concludes with thanksgivings and prayers to the Master of Life. He then sits down and the whole company declare their approbation and thanks by uttering the word *ho* with an emphatic prolongation of the last letter.

These rites precede every matter of great importance ; if a chief is anxious to know the disposition of his people, he announces his intention of opening his medicine bag, and smoking the sacred stem, and no man who entertains a grudge against any of the party thus assembled can smoke with the sacred stem ; as that ceremony dissipates all difference, and is never violated. If a contract be entered into and solemnized by the ceremony of smoking, it never fails of being faithfully fulfilled. If a person, previously to a journey, leaves the sacred stem as a pledge of his return, no consideration whatever will prevent him from executing his engagement.

The chief, when he proposes to make a feast, sends quills, or small pieces of wood as tokens of invitation to such as he wishes to partake of it. At the appointed time, the guests arrive, each bringing a dish or platter, and a knife, and take their seats on the side of the chief, who receives them sitting according to their respective ages. The pipe is then lighted, and he makes an equal

division of every thing that is provided. While the company are enjoying their meal, the chief sings, and accompanies his song with the tambourin, or shishiquoi, or rattle. The guest who has first eaten his portion is considered as the most distinguished person. If there should be any who cannot finish the whole of their mess, they endeavour to prevail on some of their friends to eat it for them, who are rewarded for their assistance with ammunition and tobacco. At these feasts a small quantity of meat or drink is sacrificed, before they begin to eat, by throwing it into the fire, or on the earth.

These festivals differ according to circumstances; sometimes each man's portion is no more than he can dispatch in a couple of hours, at other times the quantity is sufficient to supply each of them with food for a week, though it must be devoured in a day. It is then very difficult to procure substitutes, and the whole must be eaten, whatever time it may require. Great care is always taken that the bones may be burned, as it would be considered a profanation were the dogs permitted to touch them.

*Of the Chepewyan Indians.*

The notion which these people entertain of the creation, is of a very singular nature. They believe, that at first the globe was one vast and entire ocean inhabited by no living creature, except a mighty bird whose eyes were fire, whose glances were lightning, and the clapping of whose wings were thunder. On his descent to the ocean, touching it, the earth instantly rose, and remained on the surface of the waters. This omnipotent bird then called forth all the variety of animals from the earth, except the Chepewyans, who were produced from a dog, which is the occasion of their aver-

sion to the flesh of that animal, as well as the people who eat it.

This tradition proceeds to relate, that the great bird having finished his work made an arrow which was to be preserved with great care, and to remain untouched; but that the Chepewyans were so devoid of understanding as to carry it away, from which time, the bird has never since appeared.

According to another tradition, they originally came from another country, inhabited by very wicked people; and had traversed a great lake, which was narrow, shallow and full of islands, where they had suffered great misery, it being always winter, with ice and deep snow. They believe, also, that in ancient times their ancestors lived till their feet were worn out with walking and their throats with eating. They describe a deluge; when the waters spread over the whole earth, except the highest mountains, on the tops of which they preserved themselves.

They believe that immediately after death they pass into another world, where they arrive at a large river, on which they embark in a stone canoe, and that a gentle current bears them on to an extensive lake, in the centre of which is a most beautiful island; and that in view of this delightful abode, they receive that judgment for their conduct during life, which terminates their final state and unalterable allotment. If their good actions are declared to predominate, they are landed upon the island, where there is no end to their happiness. But if their bad actions weigh down the balance, the stone canoe sinks at once, and leaves them up to their chin in water, to behold and regret the rewards enjoyed by the good, and eternally struggling, but with unavailing endeavours to reach the blissful island from which they are excluded for ever.

Among many of the Indian tribes, the small-pox is of all diseases, the most fatal and destructive to life. The melancholy picture drawn by Sir A. Mackenzie on this subject must interest the feelings of every reader possessing but the slightest degree of humanity. Speaking of the attempt made by some Indian nations to extirpate from their country the European traders; he says,

—“ Nothing but the greatest calamity that could have befallen the natives, saved the traders from destruction; this was the small-pox, which spread its destructive and desolating power, as fire consumes the dry grass of the field. The fatal infection spread around with a baneful rapidity which no flight could escape, and with a fatal effect that nothing could resist. It destroyed with its pestilential breath whole families and tribes; and the horrid scene, presented, to those who had the melancholy and afflicting opportunity of beholding it, a combination of the dead, the dying, and such, as to avoid the horrid fate of their friends around, seemed prepared to disappoint the plague of its prey, by terminating their own existence.

“ The habits and lives of these devoted people, which provided not to-day for the wants of to-morrow, must have heightened the pains of such an affliction, by leaving them not only without remedy, but even without alleviation. Nought was left them but to submit in agony and despair.

“ To aggravate the picture, if aggravation were possible, may be added the putrid carcasses which the wolves, with a furious voracity, dragged forth from the huts, or which were mangled within them by dogs whose hunger was satisfied with the disfigured remains of their masters. Nor was it uncommon for the father of a family, whom the infection had not reached, to

call them around him, to represent the cruel sufferings and horrid fate of their relations, from the influence of some evil spirit who was preparing to extirpate their race, and to incite them to baffle death, with all its horrors, by their own poignards. At the same time, if their hearts failed them in this necessary act, he was himself ready to perform the deed of mercy with his own hand, as the last act of his affection, and instantly to follow them to the common place of rest, and refuge from human evil."

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## MEXICO.

DESCRIPTION OF THE CHARACTER, MANNERS, AND CUSTOMS OF THE MEXICANS.

**T**HE Mexicans are of a good stature, generally exceeding rather than falling short of the middle-size, and well proportioned in all their limbs, they have good complexions, narrow foreheads, black eyes, clean, firm, regular white teeth; thick, black, and glossy hair. Their skin is of an olive colour. There is scarcely a nation upon earth in which there are fewer persons deformed, and it would be more difficult to find a single hump-backed, lame, or squinting man amongst a thousand Mexicans, than among a hundred of any other nation. Their appearance neither engages nor disgusts; but among the young women of Mexico, there are many very fair and beautiful.

The Mexicans have ever been moderate in eating, but their passion for strong-liquors is carried to the greatest excess. Formerly, they were kept within bounds by the severity of the laws, but now drunkenness is unpunished, one half of the people seem to have lost their senses, and to this may be ascribed the havoc that is made among them by epidemical disorders. Their understandings are fitted for every kind of science, as

facts have abundantly shewn. Of the Mexicans who have had an opportunity of engaging in the pursuits of learning, which is but a small number, as the greatest part of the people are always employed in the public or private works, good mathematicians and architects have been known.

The minds of the Mexicans are affected by the same variety of passions with those of other nations, but not in an equal degree. They seldom exhibit those transports of anger, or those frenzies of love, which are so common in other countries. They are slow but very steady, and exhibit great proofs of perseverance in works which require time and long attention.

Generosity and perfect disinterestedness are the principal features of their character. Gold with the Mexicans has not that value which it enjoys elsewhere. They give without reluctance what has cost them the utmost labour to acquire.

*Of the Marriages and Funeral Rites of the Mexicans.*

When a son arrives at the age capable of bearing the charges of the marriage state, a suitable wife is singled out for him, but before the union can be concluded on, the diviners are consulted, and according to their predictions, the match is abandoned or pursued. If they predict happiness to the couple, the young girl is demanded of her parents by certain women styled solicitors, who are among the most respectable amongst the kindred of the youth. The first time that these women go to the house of the damsel, is at midnight, carrying with them presents, and demanding her in the most humble and respectful terms. The first demand is always refused. The second is made, with various arguments, as to the rank and fortune of the youth, to which the parents of the young woman gives a more favourable answer. The female solicitors return no



more. A favourable answer being at last obtained, and a day appointed for the nuptials, the young woman after a proper exhortation from her parents, is conducted to the house of her father-in-law; if noble she is carried in a litter. The bridegroom and his relations receive her at the gate of the house with four torches borne by four women. As soon as the bride and bridegroom meet, they offer incense to one another. They then enter the hall and sit down on a new and curiously wrought mat spread in the middle of the chamber, and close to the fire; when a priest ties part of the gown of the bride, to the mantle of the bridegroom, and in this ceremony the matrimonial contract chiefly consists. They offer sacrifice to their gods, and exchange presents with one another. A feast follows, of which all their friends partake, and when the guests are exhilarated with wine, they go out and dance in the open air, but the newly married couple retire within the house, in which they shut themselves for four days, spending the time in prayer and fasting. At the end of these days they are considered as man and wife, and having dressed themselves with all the ornaments common upon such occasions, the ceremony is concluded by making presents of dresses to the guests, proportioned to the circumstances of the married pair; and on that same day they carry to the temple the mats, sheets, canes, and eatables, which have been presented to the idols.

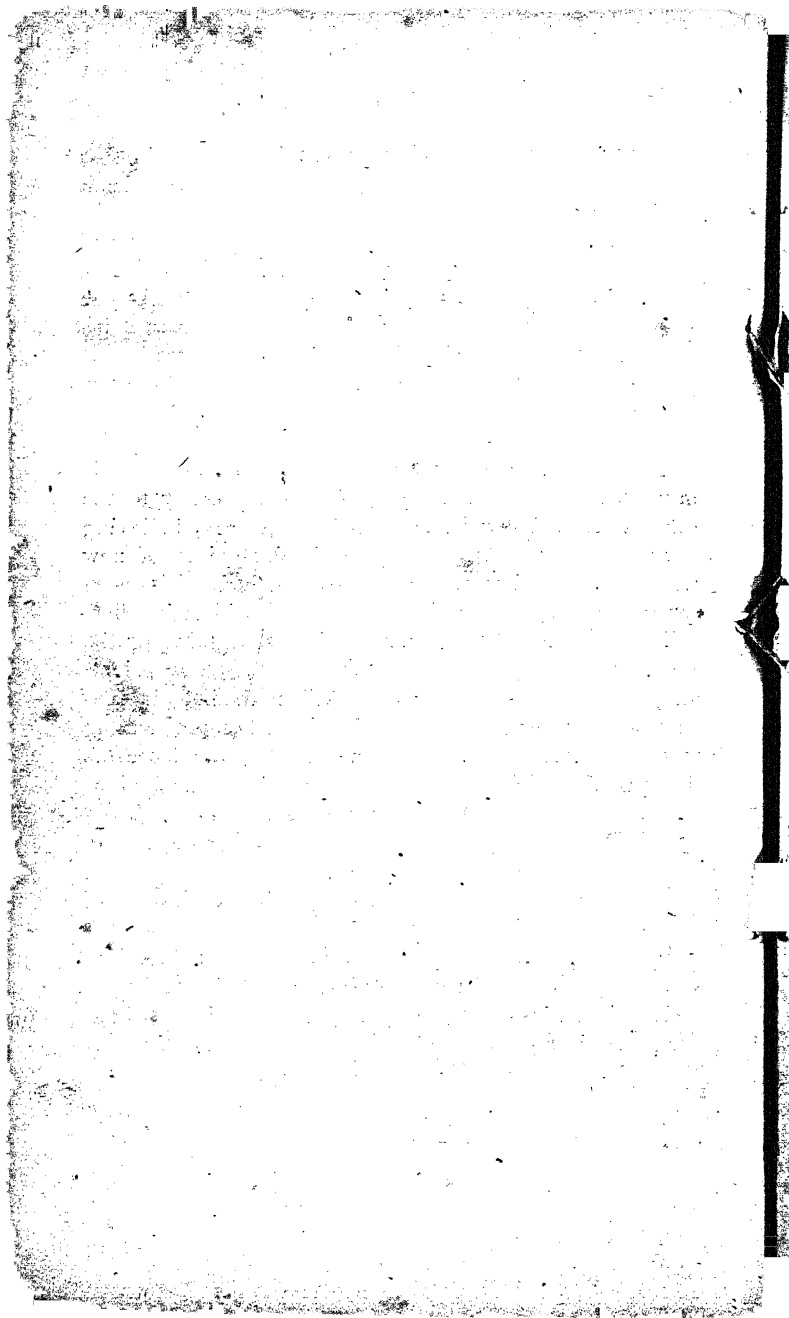
As soon as a person dies, certain masters of the funeral ceremonies are called in, who are generally men advanced in years. They cut a number of pieces of paper, with which they dress the dead body, and sprinkle the head with a glass of water, saying, that this was the water used in the time of life. They then dress the corpse in a habit suitable to the rank, wealth, and circumstances attending the death of the party. If the deceased had been a warrior, they clothe him in one sort

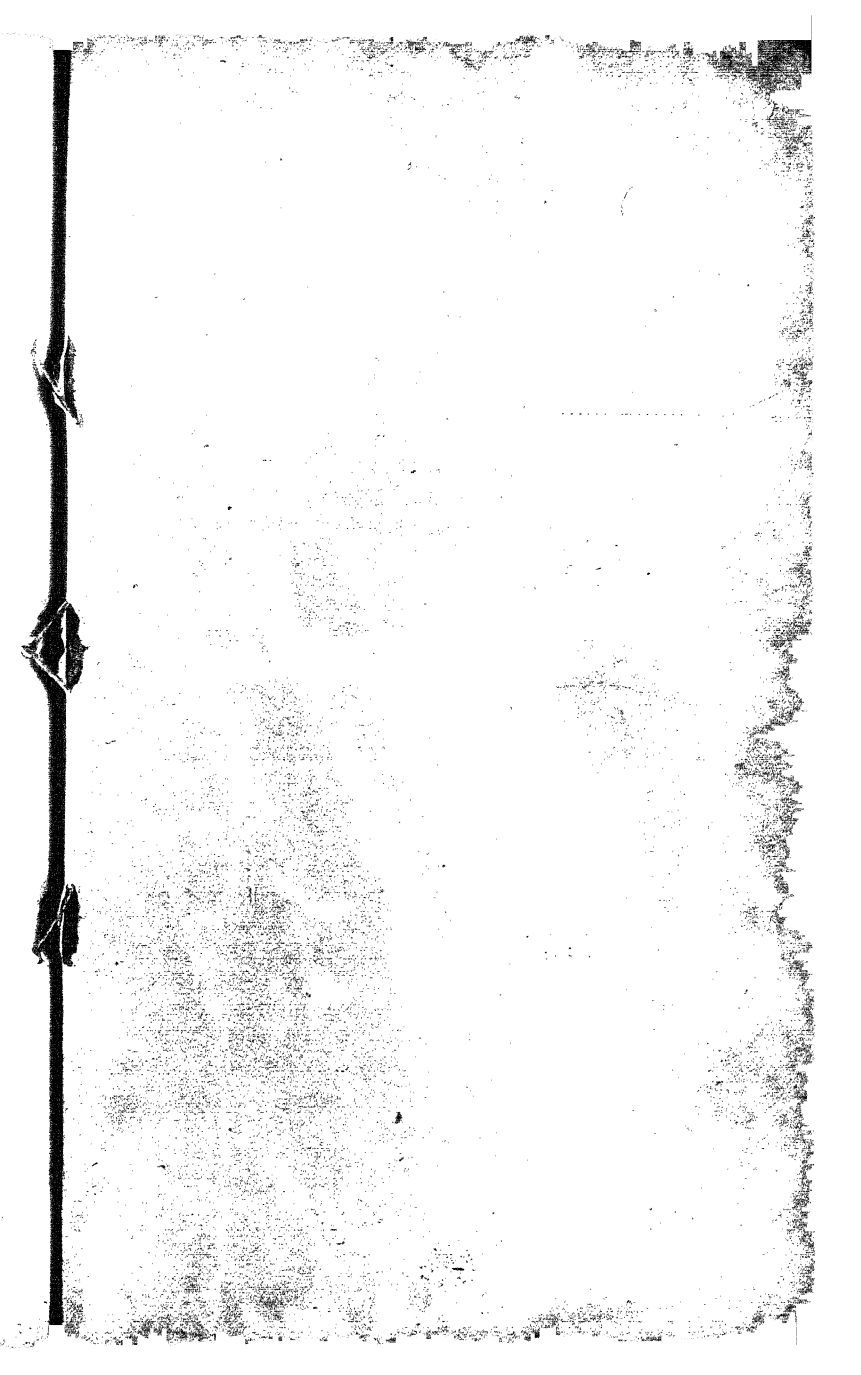
of habit; if a merchant, in another; if an artist, in that of the protecting god of his art; if a drunkard, in the habit of the god of wine.

With the habit they give the dead a jug of water, and different pieces of paper, with directions for the use of each. With the first they say "By means of this you will pass without danger between the two mountains which fight against each other." With the second he is told, "that he will walk without obstruction along the road which is defended by the great serpent;" and so of the rest.

They kill a domestic quadruped, resembling a little dog, to accompany the deceased on his journey to the other world. They fix a string about its neck, believing it necessary to enable it to pass the deep river of new waters. They burn it with or bury the body of its master, according to the kind of death of which he died. While the masters of the ceremonies are lighting up the fire in which the body is to be burned, the other priests sing some melancholy strains. When the body is consumed, they gather the ashes in an earthen pot, among which, according to the circumstances of the deceased, they put a gem of more or less value, which they believe will serve him as a heart in the other world. They bury this earthen pot in a deep ditch, and at the end of fourscore days make oblations of bread and wine.

The funeral of a king is attended with ceremonies of the same kind, only in a style much more magnificent; and to attend him on his journey a multitude of slaves are sacrificed. The number of victims on some of these occasions is not less than two hundred. A festival is held every year in honour of their last king, on which they celebrate his birth; to his death they never allude.





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