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May.

place of retreat into an open sea, and oblige us in the middle of the night to assemble at the top of an adjacent hill, where the violence of the wind would not permit us to pitch a tent; so that the only shelter we could obtain was to take the tent-cloth about our shoulders, and sit with our backs to the wind; and in this situation we were obliged to remain without the least refreshment, till the morning of the third of June: in the course of which time the wind shifted all round the compass, but the bad weather still continued, so that we were constantly obliged to shift our position as the wind changed.

June
3d.

The weather now became more moderate, though there was still a fresh gale from the North West, with hard frost and frequent showers of snow. Early in the morning, however, we proceeded on our journey, but the wet and cold I had experienced the two preceding days so benumbed my lower extremities, as to render walking for some time very troublesome. In the course of 'this day's journey we saw great numbers of geese flying to the Southward, a few of which we killed; but these were very disproportionate to the number of mouths we had to feed, and to make up for our long fasting.

8th.

From that time to the eighth we killed every day as many geese as were sufficient to preserve life; but on that day we perceived plenty of deer, five of which the Indians killed, which put us all into good spirits, and the
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number of deer we then saw afforded great hopes of more plentiful times during the remainder of our journey. It is almost needless to add, that people in our distressed situation expended a little time in eating, and slicing some of the flesh ready for drying; but the drying it occasioned no delay, as we fastened it on the tops of the women's bundles, and dried it by the sun and wind while we were walking; and, strange as it may appear, meat thus prepared is not only very substantial food, but pleasant to the taste, and generally much esteemed by the natives. For my own part I must acknowledge, that it was not only agreeable to my palate, but after eating a meal of it, I have always found that I could travel longer without victuals, than after any other kind of food. All the dried meat prepared by the Southern Indians is performed by exposing it to the heat of a large fire, which soon exhausts all the fine juices from it, and when sufficiently dry to prevent putrefaction, is no more to be compared with that cured by the Northern Indians in the Sun, or by the heat of a very slow fire, than meat that has been boiled down for the sake of the soup, is to that which is only sufficiently boiled for eating: the latter has all the juices remaining, which, being easily dissolved by the heat and moisture of the stomach, proves a strong and nourishing food; whereas the former being entirely deprived of those qualities, can by no means have an equal claim to that character. Most of the Europeans, however, are fonder of it than they are of that cured by the North-

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ern Indians. The same may be said of the lean parts of the beast, which are first dried, and then reduced into a kind of powder. That done by the Northern Indians is entirely free from smoke, and quite soft and mellow in the mouth; whereas that which is prepared by the Southern tribes is generally as bitter as foot with smoke, and is as hard as the scraps of horn, &c. which are burnt to make hardening for the cutlers. I never knew, that any European was so fond of this as they are of that made by the Northern Indians.

9th.

On the ninth, as we were continuing our course to the Factory, which then lay in the South East quarter, we saw several smokes to the North East, and the same day spoke with many Northern Indians, who were going to Knapp's Bay to meet the Churchill sloop. Several of those Indians had furs with them, but having some time before taken up goods on trust at Prince of Wales's Fort, were taking that method to delay the payment of them. Defrauds of this kind have been practised by many of those people with great success, ever since the furr-trade has been established with the Northern Indians at Knapp's Bay; by which means debts to a considerable amount are annually lost to the Company, as well as their Governor in the Bay.

Being desirous of improving every opportunity that the fine weather afforded, we did not lose much time in conversation with those Indians, but proceeded on our course

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to the South East, while they continued theirs to the North East.

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For many days after leaving those people, we had the good fortune to meet with plenty of provisions; and as the weather was for a long time remarkably fine and pleasant, our circumstances were altered so much for the better, that every thing seemed to contribute to our happiness, as if desirous to make some amends for the severe hunger, cold, and excessive hardships that we had suffered long before, and which had reduced us to the greatest misery and want.

Deer was so plentiful great part of the way, that the Indians killed as many as were wanted, without going out of their road; and every lake and river to which we came seemed willing to give us a change of diet, by affording us plenty of the finest fish, which we caught either with hooks or nets. Geese, partridges, gulls, and many other fowls, which are excellent eating, were also in such plenty, that it only required ammunition, in skilful hands, to have procured as many of them as we could desire.

The only inconvenience we now felt was from frequent showers of heavy rain; but the intervals between these showers being very warm, and the Sun shining bright, that difficulty was easily overcome, especially as the belly was plentifully supplied with excellent victuals. Indeed the

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very thoughts of being once more arrived so near home, made me capable of encountering every difficulty, even if it had been hunger itself in the most formidable shape.

18th.

On the eighteenth, we arrived at Egg River, from which place, at the solicitation of my guide Matonabee, I sent a letter post-haste to the Chief at Prince of Wales's Fort, advising him of my being so far advanced on my return. The weather at this time was very bad and rainy, which caused us to lose near a whole day; but upon the fine weather returning, we again proceeded at our usual rate of eighteen or twenty miles a day, sometimes more or less, according as the road, the weather, and other circumstances, would admit.

Deer now began to be not quite so plentiful as they had been, though we met with enough for present use, which was all we wanted, each person having as much dried meat as he could conveniently carry, besides his furs and other necessary baggage.

26th.

Early in the morning of the twenty-sixth we arrived at Seal River but the wind blowing right up it, made so

Mr. Jeremie is very incorrect in his account of the situation of this River, and its course. It is not easy to guess, whether the Copper or Dog-ribbed Indians be the nation he calls *Platscotex de Chiens*: if it be the former, he is much mistaken; for they have abundance of beaver, and other animals of the furr kind, in their country: and if the latter, he is equally wrong to assert

so great a sea, that we were obliged to wait near ten hours before we could venture to cross it in our little canoes.

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assert that they have copper-mines in their country; for neither copper nor any other kind of metal is in use among them.

Mr. Jeremie was not too modest when he said, (see Dobbs's Account of Hudson's Bay, p. 19.) "he could not say any thing positively in going farther "North;" for in my opinion he never was so far North or West as he pretends, otherwise he would have been more correct in his description of those parts.

The Strait he mentions is undoubtedly no other than what is now called Chesterfield's Inlet, which, in some late and cold seasons, is not clear of ice the whole Summer: for I will affirm, that no Indian, either Northern or Southern, ever saw either Wager Water or Repulse Bay, except the two men who accompanied Captain Middleton; and though those men were selected from some hundreds for their universal knowledge of those parts, yet they knew nothing of the coast so far North as Marble Island.

As a farther proof, that no Indians, except the Esquimaux, ever frequent such high latitudes, unless at a great distance from the sea, I must here mention, that so late as the year 1763, when Captain Christopher went to survey Chesterfield's Inlet, though he was furnished with the most intelligent and experienced Northern Indians that could be found, they did not know an inch of the land to the North of Whale Cove.

Mr. Jeremie is also as much mistaken in what he says concerning Churchill River, as he was in the direction of Seal River; for he says that no woods were found but in some islands which lie about ten or twelve miles up the river. At the time he wrote, which was long before a settlement was made there, wood was in great plenty on both sides the river; and that within five miles of where Prince of Wales's Fort now stands. But as to the islands of which he speaks, if they ever existed, they have of late years most assuredly disappeared; for since the Company have had a settlement on that river, no one ever saw an island in it that produced timber, or wood of any description, within forty miles

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In the afternoon the weather grew more moderate, so that we were enabled to ferry over the river; after which we resumed our journey, and at night pitched our tents in some tufts of willows in sight of the woods of Po-co-thee-kis-co River, at which we arrived early in the morning of the twenty-eighth; but the wind again blowing very hard in the North East quarter, it was the afternoon of the twenty-ninth before we could attempt to cross it.

Just at the time we were crossing the South branch of Po-co-thee-kis-co River, the Indians that were sent from Egg River with a letter to the Chief at Churchill, joined us on their return, and brought a little tobacco and some other articles which I had desired. Though it was late in the afternoon before we had all crossed the river, yet we walked that evening till after ten o'clock, and then put up on one of the Goose-hunting Islands, as they are generally called, about ten miles from the Factory. The next morning I arrived in good health at Prince of Wales's Fort, after having been absent eighteen months and twenty-

miles of the Fort. But the great number of stumps now remaining, from which, in all probability, the trees have been cut for firing, are sufficient to prove that when Churchill River was first settled, wood was then in great plenty; but in the course of seventy-six years residence in one place, it is natural to suppose it was much thinned near the Settlement. Indeed for some years past common fuel is so scarce near that Factory, that it is the chief employment of most of the servants for upward of seven months in the year, to procure as much wood as will supply the fires for a Winter, and a little timber for necessary repairs.

three days on this last expedition ; but from my first setting out with Captain Chawchinaha, it was two years seven months and twenty-four days.

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Though my discoveries are not likely to prove of any material advantage to the Nation at large, or indeed to the Hudson's Bay Company, yet I have the pleasure to think that I have fully complied with the orders of my Masters, and that it has put a final end to all disputes concerning a North West Passage through Hudson's Bay. It will also wipe off, in some measure, the ill-grounded and unjust aspersions of Dobbs, Ellis, Robson, and the American Traveller ; who have all taken much pains to condemn the conduct of the Hudson's Bay Company, as being averse from discoveries, and from enlarging their trade.

C H A P. IX.

A short Description of the Northern Indians, also a farther Account of their Country, Manufactures, Customs, &c.

An account of the persons and tempers of the Northern Indians.—They possess a great deal of art and cunning.—Are very guilty of fraud when in their power, and generally exact more for their furs than any other tribe of Indians.—Always dissatisfied, yet have their good qualities.—The men in general jealous of their wives.—Their marriages.—Girls always betrothed when children, and their reasons for it.—Great care and confinement of young girls from the age of eight or nine years old.—Divorces common among those people.—The women are less prolific than in warmer countries.—Remarkable piece of superstition observed by the women at particular periods.—Their art in making it an excuse for a temporary separation from their husbands on any little quarrel.—Reckoned very unclean on those occasions.—The Northern Indians frequently, for the want of firing, are obliged to eat their meat raw.—Some through necessity obliged to boil it in vessels made of the rind of the birch-tree.—A remarkable dish among those people.—The young animals always cut out of their dams eaten, and accounted a great delicacy.—The parts of generation of all animals eat by the men and boys.—Manner of passing their time, and method of killing deer in Summer with bows and arrows.—Their tents, dogs, sledges, &c.—Snow-shoes.—Their partiality to domestic vermin.—Utmost extent of the Northern Indian country.—Face of the country.—Species of fish.—A peculiar kind of moss useful for the support of man.—Northern Indian method of catching fish, either with hooks or nets.—Ceremony observed when two parties of those people meet.—Diversions in common use.—A singular disorder which attacks some of those people.—Their Super-

Superstition with respect to the death of their friends.—Ceremony observed on those occasions.—Their ideas of the first inhabitants of the world.—No form of religion among them.—Remarks on that circumstance.—The extreme misery to which old age is exposed.—Their opinion of the Aurora Borealis, &c.—Some Account of Matonabbee, and his services to his country, as well as to the Hudson's Bay Company.

AS to the persons of the Northern Indians, they are in general above the middle size; well-proportioned, strong, and robust, but not corpulent. They do not possess that activity of body, and liveliness of disposition, which are so commonly met with among the other tribes of Indians who inhabit the West coast of Hudson's Bay.

Their complexion is somewhat of the copper cast, inclining rather toward a dingy brown; and their hair, like all the other tribes in India, is black, strong, and straight*. Few of the men have any beard; this seldom makes its appearance till they are arrived at middle-age, and then is by no means equal in quantity to what is observed on the faces of the generality of Europeans; the little they have, however, is exceedingly strong and bristly. Some of them take but little pains to eradicate their beards, though it is considered as very unbecoming; and those

* I have seen several of the Southern Indian men who were near six feet high, preserve a single lock of their hair, that, when let down, would trail on the ground as they walked. This, however, is but seldom seen; and some have suspected it to be false: but I have examined the hair of several of them, and found it to be real.

who do, have no other method than that of pulling it out by the roots between their fingers and the edge of a blunt knife. Neither sex have any hair under their armpits, and very little on any other part of the body, particularly the women; but on the place where Nature plants the hair, I never knew them attempt to eradicate it.

Their features are peculiar, and different from any other tribe in those parts; for they have very low foreheads, small eyes, high cheek-bones, Roman noses, full cheeks, and in general long broad chins. Though few of either sex are exempt from this national set of features, yet Nature seems to be more strict in her observance of it among the females, as they seldom vary so much as the men. Their skins are soft, smooth, and polished; and when they are dressed in clean clothing, they are as free from an offensive smell as any of the human race.

Every tribe of Northern Indians, as well as the Copper and Dog-ribbed Indians, have three or four parallel black strokes marked on each cheek; which is performed by entering an awl or needle under the skin, and, on drawing it out again, immediately rubbing powdered charcoal into the wound.

Their dispositions are in general morose and covetous, and they seem to be entirely unacquainted even with the name of gratitude. They are for ever pleading poverty,
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even among themselves ; and when they visit the Factory, there is not one of them who has not a thousand wants.

When any real distressed objects present themselves at the Company's Factory, they are always relieved with victuals, clothes, medicines, and every other necessary, *gratis* ; and in return, they instruct every one of their countrymen how to behave, in order to obtain the same charity. Thus it is very common to see both men and women come to the Fort half-naked, when either the severe cold in Winter, or the extreme troublesomeness of the flies in Summer, make it necessary for every part to be covered. On those occasions they are seldom at a loss for a plausible story, which they relate as the occasion of their distress, (whether real or pretended,) and never fail to interlard their history with plenty of sighs, groans, and tears, sometimes affecting to be lame, and even blind, in order to excite pity. Indeed, I know of no people that have more command of their passions on such occasions ; and in this respect the women exceed the men, as I can affirm with truth I have seen some of them with one side of the face bathed in tears, while the other has exhibited a significant smile. False pretences for obtaining charity are so common among those people, and so often detected, that the Governor is frequently obliged to turn a deaf ear to many who apply for relief ; for if he did not, he might give away the whole of the Company's goods, and by degrees all the Northern

tribe would make a trade of begging, instead of bringing furs, to purchase what they want. It may truly be said, that they possess a considerable degree of deceit, and are very complete adepts in the art of flattery, which they never spare as long as they find that it conduces to their interest, but not a moment longer. They take care always to seem attached to a new Governor, and flatter his pride, by telling him that they look up to him as the father of their tribe, on whom they can safely place their dependence; and they never fail to depreciate the generosity of his predecessor, however extensive that might have been, however humane or disinterested his conduct; and if aspersing the old, and flattering the new Governor, has not the desired effect in a reasonable time, they represent him as the worst of characters, and tell him to his face that he is one of the most cruel of men; that he has no feeling for the distresses of their tribe, and that many have perished for want of proper assistance, (which, if it be true, is only owing to want of humanity among themselves,) and then they boast of having received ten times the favours and presents from his predecessor. It is remarkable that those are most lavish in their praises, who have never either deserved or received any favours from him. In time, however, this language also ceases, and they are perfectly reconciled to the man whom they would willingly have made a fool, and say, "he is no child, and not to be deceived by
" them."

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They differ so much from the rest of mankind, that harsh uncourteous usage seems to agree better with the generality of them, particularly the lower class, than mild treatment; for if the least respect be shewn them, it makes them intolerably insolent; and though some of their leaders may be exempt from this imputation, yet there are but few even of them who have sense enough to set a proper value on the favours and indulgences which are granted to them while they remain at the Company's Factories, or elsewhere within their territories. Experience has convinced me, that by keeping a Northern Indian at a distance, he may be made serviceable both to himself and the Company; but by giving him the least indulgence at the Factory, he will grow indolent, inactive, and troublesome, and only contrive methods to tax the generosity of an European.

The greatest part of these people never fail to defraud Europeans whenever it is in their power, and take every method to over-reach them in the way of trade. 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 Company's Factory; and all debts that are outstanding at the succession of a new Governor are entirely lost, as they always declare, and bring plenty of witnesses to prove, that they were paid long before, but that their names had been forgotten to be struck out of the book.

Notwithstanding all those bad qualities, they are the mildest tribe of Indians that trade at any of the Company's settlements; and as the greatest part of them are never heated with liquor, are always in their senses, and never proceed to riot, or any violence beyond bad language.

The men are in general very jealous of their wives, and I make no doubt but the same spirit reigns among the women; but they are kept so much in awe of their husbands, that the liberty of thinking is the greatest privilege 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.

Their marriages are not attended with any ceremony; all matches are made by the parents, or next of kin. On those occasions the women seem to have no choice, but implicitly obey the will of their parents, who always endeavour to marry their daughters to those that seem most likely to be capable of maintaining them, let their age, person, or disposition be ever so despicable.

The girls are always betrothed when children, but never to those of equal age, which is doubtless sound policy with people in their situation, where the existence of a family depends

depends entirely on the abilities and industry of a single man. Children, as they justly observe, are so liable to alter in their manners and disposition, that it is impossible to judge from the actions of early youth what abilities they may possess when they arrive at puberty. For this reason the girls are often so disproportionably matched for age, that it is very common to see men of thirty-five or forty years old have young girls of no more than ten or twelve, and sometimes much younger. From the early age of eight or nine years, they are prohibited by custom from joining in the most innocent amusements with children of the opposite sex; so that when sitting in their tents, or even when travelling, they are watched and guarded with such an unremitting attention as cannot be exceeded by the most rigid discipline of an English boarding-school. Custom, however, and constant example, make such uncommon restraint and confinement sit light and easy, even on children, whose tender ages seem better adapted to innocent and cheerful amusements, than to be cooped up by the side of old women, and constantly employed in scraping skins, mending shoes, and learning other domestic duties necessary in the care of a family.

Notwithstanding those uncommon restraints on the young girls, the conduct of their parents is by no means uniform or consistent with this plan; as they set no bounds to their conversation, but talk before them, and even to them, on the most indelicate subjects. As their ears are accustomed

to such language from their earliest youth, this has by no means the same effect on them, it would have on girls born and educated in a civilized country, where every care is taken to prevent their morals from being contaminated by obscene conversation. The Southern Indians are still less delicate in conversation, in the presence of their children.

The women among the Northern Indians are in general more backward than the Southern Indian women; and though it is well known that neither tribe lose any time, those early connections are seldom productive of children for some years.

Divorces are pretty common among the Northern Indians; sometimes for incontinency, but more frequently for want of what they deem necessary accomplishments, or for bad behaviour. This ceremony, in either case, consists of neither more nor less than a good drubbing, and turning the woman out of doors; telling her to go to her paramour, or relations, according to the nature of her crime.

Providence is very kind in causing these people to be less prolific than the inhabitants of civilized nations; it is very uncommon to see one woman have more than five or six children; and these are always born at such a distance from one another, that the youngest is generally two or
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three years old before another is brought into the world. Their easy births, and the ceremonies which take place on those occasions, have already been mentioned; I shall therefore only observe here, that they make no use of cradles, like the Southern Indians, but only tie a lump of moss between their legs; and always carry their children at their backs, next the skin, till they are able to walk. Though their method of treating young children is in this respect the most uncouth and awkward I ever saw, there are few among them that can be called deformed, and not one in fifty who is not bow-legged.

There are certain periods at which they never permit the women to abide in the same tent with their husbands. At such times they are obliged to make a small hovel for themselves at some distance from the other tents. As this is an universal custom among all the tribes, it is also a piece of policy with the women, upon any difference with their husbands, to make that an excuse for a temporary separation, when, without any ceremony, they creep out (as is their usual custom on those occasions) under the eaves of that side of the tent at which they happen to be sitting; for at those times they are not permitted to go in or out through the door. This custom is so generally prevalent among the women, that I have frequently known some of the sulky dames leave their husbands and tent for four or five days at a time, and repeat the farce twice or thrice in a month, while the poor men have never suspected the deceit; or if they have,

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have, delicacy on their part has not permitted them to enquire into the matter. I have known Matonabee's handsome wife, who eloped from him in May one thousand seven hundred and seventy-one, live thun-nardy, as they call it, (that is, alone,) for several weeks together, under this pretence; but as a proof he had some suspicion, she was always carefully watched, to prevent her from giving her company to any other man. The Southern Indians are also very delicate in this point; for though they do not force their wives to build a separate tent, they never lie under the same clothes during this period. It is, however, equally true, that the young girls, when those symptoms make their first appearance, generally go a little distance from the other tents for four or five days, and at their return wear a kind of veil or curtain, made of beads, for some time after, as a mark of modesty; as they are then considered marriageable, and of course are called women, though some at those periods are not more than thirteen, while others at the age of fifteen or sixteen have been reckoned as children, though apparently arrived at nearly their full growth.

On those occasions, a remarkable piece of superstition prevails among them; women in this situation are never permitted to walk on the ice of rivers or lakes, or near the part where the men are hunting beaver, or where a fishing-net is set, for fear of averting their success. They are also prohibited at those times from partaking of the
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head of any animal, and even from walking in, or crossing the track where the head of a deer, moose, beaver, and many other animals, have lately been carried, either on a sledge or on the back. To be guilty of a violation of this custom is considered as of the greatest importance; because they firmly believe that it would be a means of preventing the hunter from having an equal success in his future excursions.

Those poor people live in such an inhospitable part of the globe, that for want of firing they are frequently obliged to eat their victuals quite raw, particularly in the Summer season, while on the barren ground; but early custom and frequent necessity make this practice so familiar to them, that so far from finding any inconvenience arise from it, or having the least dislike to it, they frequently do it by choice, and particularly in the article of fish; for when they do make a pretence of dressing it, they seldom warm it through. I have frequently made one of a party who has sat round a fresh-killed deer, and assisted in picking the bones quite clean, when I thought that the raw brains and many other parts were exceedingly good; and, however strange it may appear, I must bestow the same epithet on half-raw fish: even to this day I give the preference to trout, salmon, and the brown titemeg, when they are not warm at the bone.

The extreme poverty of those Indians in general will not permit one half 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 those vessels 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 having a constant succession of hot stones, they may continue the process as long as it is necessary. This method of cooking, though very expeditious, is attended with one great evil: the victuals which are thus prepared are full of sand; for the stones thus heated, and then immersed in the water, are not only liable to shiver to pieces, but many of them being of a coarse 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. Besides this, they have several other methods of preparing their food, such as roasting it by a string, broiling it, &c.; but these need no farther description.

The most remarkable dish among them, as well as all the other tribes of Indians in those parts, both Northern and Southern, is blood mixed with the half-digested food which is found in the deer's stomach or paunch, and boiled up with a sufficient quantity of water, to make it of the consistence of pease-pottage. Some fat and scraps
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of tender flesh are also shred small and 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 heat 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 were it not for prejudice, it might be eaten by those who have the nicest palates. It is true, some people with delicate stomachs would not be easily persuaded to partake of this dish, especially if they saw it dressed; for most of the fat which is boiled in it is first chewed by the men and boys, in order to break the globules that contain the fat; by which means it all boils out, and mixes with the broth: whereas, if it were permitted to remain as it came from the knife, it would still be in lumps, like suet. To do justice, however, to their cleanliness in this particular, I must observe, that they are very careful that neither old people with bad teeth, nor young children, have any hand in preparing this dish. At first, I must acknowledge that I was rather shy in partaking of this mess, but when I was sufficiently convinced of the truth of the above remark, I no longer made any scruple, but always thought it exceedingly good.

The stomach of no other large animal beside the deer is eaten by any of the Indians that border on Hudson's Bay. In Winter, when the deer feed on fine white moss, the contents of the stomach is so much esteemed by them, that

that I have often seen them sit round a deer where it was killed, and eat it warm out of the paunch. In Summer the deer feed more coarsely, and therefore this dish, if it deserve that appellation, is then not so much in favour.

The young calves, fawns, beaver, &c. taken out of the bellies of their mothers, are reckoned most delicate food; and I am not the only European who heartily joins in pronouncing them the greatest dainties that can be eaten. Many gentlemen who have served with me at Churchill, as well as at York Fort, and the inland settlements, will readily agree with me in asserting, that no one who ever got the better of prejudice so far as to taste of those young animals, but has immediately become excessively fond of them; and the same may be said of young geese, ducks, &c. in the shell. In fact, it is almost become a proverb in the Northern settlements, that whoever wishes to know what is good, must live with the Indians.

The parts of generation belonging to any beast they kill, both male and female, are always eaten by the men and boys; and though those parts, particularly in the males, are generally very tough; they are not, on any account, to be cut with an edge-tool, but torn to pieces with the teeth; and when any part of them proves too tough to be masticated, it is thrown into the fire and burnt. For the Indians believe firmly, that if a dog should eat any part of them, it would have the same effect on their
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success in hunting, that a woman crossing their hunting-track at an improper period would have. The same ill-success is supposed also to attend them if a woman eat any of those parts.

They are also remarkably fond of the womb of the buffalo, elk, deer, &c. which they eagerly devour without washing, or any other process but barely stroking out the contents. This, in some of the larger animals, and especially when they are some time gone with young, needs no description to make it sufficiently disgusting; and yet I have known some in the Company's service remarkably fond of the dish, though I am not one of the number. The womb of the beaver and deer is well enough, but that of the moose and buffalo is very ~~rank~~ and truly disgusting.

Our

* The Indian method of preparing this unaccountable dish is by throwing the filthy bag across a pole directly over the fire, the smoke of which, they say, much improves it, by taking off the original flavour; and when any of it is to be cooked, a large flake, like as much tripe, is cut off and boiled for a few minutes; but the many large nodes with which the inside of the womb is studded, make it abominable. These nodes are as incapable of being divested of moisture as the skin of a live eel; but when boiled, much resemble, both in shape and colour, the yolk of an egg, and are so called by the natives, and as eagerly devoured by them.

The tripe of the buffalo is exceedingly good, and the Indian method of cooking it infinitely superior to that practised in Europe. When opportunity will permit, they wash it tolerably clean in cold water, strip off all the honey-comb, and only boil it about half, or three-quarters of an hour: in that time

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Our Northern Indians who trade at the Factory, as well as all the Copper tribe, pass their whole Summer on the barren ground, where they generally find plenty of deer; and in some of the rivers and lakes, a great abundance of fine fish.

Their bows and arrows, though their original weapons, are, since the introduction of fire-arms among them, become of little use, except in killing deer as they walk or run through a narrow pass prepared for their reception, where several Indians lie concealed for that purpose. This method of hunting is only practicable in Summer, and on the barren ground, where they have an extensive prospect, and can see the herds of deer at a great distance, as well as discover the nature of the country, and make every ne-

it is sufficiently done for eating; and though rather tougher than what is prepared in England, yet is exceedingly pleasant to the taste, and must be much more nourishing than tripe that has been soaked and scrubbed in many hot waters, and then boiled for ten or twelve hours.

The lesser stomach, or, as some call it, the many-folds, either of buffalo, moose, or deer, are usually eat raw, and are very good; but that of the moose, unless great care be taken in washing it, is rather bitter, owing to the nature of their food.

The kidneys of both moose and buffalo are usually eat raw by the Southern Indians; for no sooner is one of those beasts killed, than the hunter rips up its belly, thrusts in his arm, snatches out the kidneys, and eats them warm, before the animal is quite dead. They also at times put their mouths to the wound the beast has made, and suck the blood; which they say quenches thirst, and is very nourishing.

cessary

cessary arrangement for driving them through the narrow defiles. This method of hunting is performed in the following manner :

When the Indians see a herd of deer, and intend to hunt them with bows and arrows, they observe which way the wind blows, and always get to leeward, for fear of being smelled by the deer. The next thing to which they attend, is to search for a convenient place to conceal those who are appointed to shoot. This being done, a large bundle of sticks, like large ramrods, (which they carry with them the whole Summer for the purpose,) are ranged in two ranks, so as to form the two sides of a very acute angle, and the sticks placed at the distance of fifteen or twenty yards from each other. When those necessary arrangements are completed, the women and boys separate into two parties, and go round on both sides, till they form a crescent at the back of the deer, which are drove right forward; and as each of the sticks has a small flag, or more properly a pendant, fastened to it, which is easily waved to and fro by the wind, and a lump of moss stuck on each of their tops, the poor timorous deer, probably taking them for ranks of people, generally run straight forward between the two ranges of sticks, till they get among the Indians, who lie concealed in small circular fences, made with loose stones, moss, &c. When the deer approach very near, the Indians who are thus concealed start up and shoot; but as the deer generally pass along at

A JOURNEY TO THE

full speed, few Indians have time to shoot more than one or two arrows, unless the herd be very large.

This method of hunting is not always attended with equal success; for sometimes after the Indians have been at the trouble of making places of shelter, and arranging the flag-sticks, &c. the deer will make off another way, before the women and children can surround them. At other times I have seen eleven or twelve of them killed with one volley of arrows; and if any gun-men attend on those occasions, they are always placed behind the other Indians, in order to pick up the deer that escape the bowmen. By these means I have seen upwards of twenty fine deer killed at one broadside, as it may be termed.

Though the Northern Indians may be said to kill a great number of deer in this manner during the Summer, yet they have so far lost the art of shooting with bows and arrows, that I never knew any of them who could take those weapons only, and kill either deer, moose, or buffalo, in the common, wandering, and promiscuous method of hunting. The Southern Indians, though they have been much longer used to fire-arms, are far more expert with the bow and arrow, their original weapons.

The tents made use of by those Indians, both in Summer and Winter, are generally composed of deer-skins in the hair; and for convenience of carriage, are always made

made in small pieces, seldom exceeding five buck-skins in one piece. These tents, as also their kettles, and some other lumber, are always carried by dogs, which are trained to that service, and are very docile and tractable. Those animals are of various sizes and colours, but all of the fox and wolf breed, with sharp noses, full bushy tails, and sharp ears standing erect. They are of great courage when attacked, and bite so sharp, that the smallest cur among them will keep several of our largest English dogs at bay, if he can get up in a corner. These dogs are equally willing to haul in a sledge, but as few of the men will be at the trouble of making sledges for them, the poor women are obliged to content themselves with lessening the bulk of their load, more than the weight, by making the dogs carry these articles only, which are always lashed on their backs, much after the same manner as packs are, or used formerly to be, on pack-horses.

In the fall of the year, and as the Winter advances, those people sew the skins of the deers legs together in the shape of long portmanteaus, which, when hauled on the snow as the hair lies, are as slippery as an otter, and serve them as temporary sledges while on the barren ground; but when they arrive at any woods, they then make proper sledges, with thin boards of the larch-tree, generally known in Hudson's Bay by the name of Juniper.

Those sledges are of various sizes, according to the strength of the persons who are to haul them: some I have seen were not less than twelve or fourteen feet long, and fifteen or sixteen inches wide, but in general they do not exceed eight or nine feet in length, and twelve or fourteen inches in breadth.

The boards of which those 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 very unhandy for the Indians to work, who have no other tools than an ordinary knife, turned up a little at the point, from which it acquires the name of *Base-hoth* among the Northern Indians, but among the Southern tribes it is called *Mo-co-toggan*. The boards are sewed together with thongs of parchment deer-skin, and several cross bars of wood are sewed on the upper side, which serves both to strengthen the sledge and secure the ground-lashing, to which the load is always fastened by other smaller thongs, or stripes of leather. The head or fore-part of the sledge is turned up so as to form a semi-circle, of at least fifteen or twenty inches diameter. This prevents the carriage from diving into light snow, and enables it to slide over the inequalities and hard drifts of snow which are constantly met with on the open plains and barren grounds. The trace or draught-line to those sledges is a double string, or slip of leather, made fast to the head; and the bight is put across the shoulders of the person who hauls

hauls the sledge, so as to rest against the breast. This contrivance, though so simple, cannot be improved by the most ingenious collar-maker in the world.

Their snow-shoes differ from all others made use of in those parts; for though they are of the galley kind, that is, sharp-pointed before, yet they are always to be worn on one foot, and cannot be shifted from side to side, like other snow-shoes; for this reason the inner-side of the frames are almost straight, and the outer-side has a very large sweep. The frames are generally made of birch-wood, and the netting is composed of thongs of deer-skin; but their mode of filling that compartment where the foot rests, is quite different from that used among the Southern Indians.

Their clothing, which chiefly consists of deer skins in the hair, makes them very subject to be lousy; but that is so far from being thought a disgrace, that the best among them amuse themselves with catching and eating these vermin; of which they are so fond, that the produce of a lousy head or garment affords them not only pleasing amusement, but a delicious repast. My old guide, Matonabee, was so remarkably fond of those little vermin, that he frequently set five or six of his strapping wives to work to louse their hairy deer-skin shifts, the produce of which being always very considerable, he eagerly received with both hands, and licked them in as fast, and with as good a grace, as
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any European epicure would the mites ~~in a~~ cheese. He often assured me that such amusement was not only very pleasing, but that the objects of the search were very good; for which I gave him credit, telling him at the same time, that though I endeavoured to habituate myself to every other part of their diet, yet as I was but a sojourner among them, I had no inclination to accustom myself to such dainties as I could not procure in that part of the world where I was most inclined to reside.

The Southern Indians and Esquimaux are equally fond of those vermin, which are so detestable in the eyes of an European; nay, the latter have many other dainties of a similar kind; for beside making use of train-oil as a cordial and as sauce to their meat, I have frequently seen them eat a whole handful of maggots that were produced in meat by fly-blows. It is their constant custom to eat the filth that comes from the nose; and when their noses bleed by accident, they always lick the blood into their mouths, and swallow it.

The track of land inhabited by the Northern Indians is very extensive, reaching from the fifty-ninth to the sixty-eighth degree of North latitude; and from East to West is upward of five hundred miles wide. It is bounded by Churchill River on the South; the Athapuskow Indians' Country on the West; the Dog-ribbed and Copper Indians' Country on the North; and by Hudson's Bay on the East.

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The land throughout that whole track of country is scarcely any thing but one solid mass of rocks and stones, and in most parts very hilly, particularly to the Westward, among the woods. The surface, it is very true, is in most places covered with a thin sod of moss, intermixed with the roots of the Wee-sa-ca-pucca, cranberries, and a few other insignificant shrubs and herbage; but under it there is in general a total want of soil, capable of producing any thing except what is peculiar to the climate. Some of the marshes, indeed, produce several kinds of grass, the growth of which is amazingly rapid; but this is dealt out with so sparing a hand as to be barely sufficient to serve the geese, swans, and other birds of passage, during their migrations in the Spring and Fall, while they remain in a moulting state.

The many lakes and rivers with which this part of the country abounds, though they do not furnish the natives with water-carriage, are yet of infinite advantage to them; as they afford great numbers of fish, both in Summer and Winter. The only species caught in those parts are trout, tittameg, (or tickomeg,) tench, two sorts of barble, (called by the Southern Indians Na-may-pith,) burbot, pike, and a few perch. The four former are caught in all parts of this country, as well the woody as the barren; but the three latter are only caught to the Westward, in such lakes and rivers as are situated among the woods; and though some of those rivers lead to the barren ground, yet the
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three last mentioned species of fish are seldom caught beyond the edge of the woods, not even in the Summer season.

There is a black, hard, crumply moss, that grows on the rocks and large stones in those parts, which is of infinite service to the natives, as it sometimes furnishes them with a temporary subsistence, when no animal food can be procured. This moss, when boiled, turns to a gummy consistence, and is more clammy in the mouth than sago; it may, by adding either moss or water, be made to almost any consistence. It is so palatable, that all who taste it generally grow fond of it. It is remarkably good and pleasing when used to thicken any kind of broth, but it is generally most esteemed when boiled in fish-liquor.

The only method practised by those people to catch fish either in Winter or Summer, is by angling and setting nets; both of which methods is attended with much superstition, ceremony, and unnecessary trouble; but I will endeavour to describe them in as plain and brief a manner as possible.

When they make a new fishing-net, which is always composed of small thongs cut from raw deer-skins, they take a number of birds bills and feet, and tie them, a little apart from each other, to the head and foot rope of the net, and at the four corners generally fasten some of the toes and jaws of the otters and jackasses. The birds feet
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and bills made choice of on such occasions are generally those of the laughing goose, wavey, (or white goose,) gulls, loons, and black-heads; and unless some or all of these be fastened to the net, they will not attempt to put it into the water, as they firmly believe it would not catch a single fish.

A net thus accoutred is fit for setting whenever occasion requires, and opportunity offers; but the first fish of whatever species caught in it, are not to be foddin in the water, but broiled whole on the fire, and the flesh carefully taken from the bones without dislocating one joint; after which the bones are laid on the fire at full length and burnt. A strict observance of these rules is supposed to be of the utmost importance in promoting the future success of the new net; and a neglect of them would render it not worth a farthing

When they fish in rivers, or narrow channels that join two lakes together, they could frequently, by tying two, three, or more nets together, spread over the whole breadth of the channel, and intercept every fizable fish that passed; but instead of that, they scatter the nets at a considerable distance from each other, from a supersti-

They frequently sell new nets, which have not been wet more than once or twice, because they have not been successful. Those nets, when foked in water, are easily opened, and then make most excellent heel and toe netting for snow-shoes. In general it is far superior to the netting cut by the Southern Indian women, and is not larger than common net-twine.

tious notion, that were they kept close together, one net would be jealous of its neighbour, and by that means not one of them would catch a single fish.

The methods used, and strictly observed, when angling, are equally absurd as those I have mentioned; for when they bait a hook, a composition of four, five, or six articles, by way of charm, is concealed under the bait, which is always sewed round the hook. In fact, the only bait used by those people is in their opinion a composition of charms, inclosed within a bit of fish-skin, so as in some measure to resemble a small fish. The things used by way of charm, are bits of beavers tails and fat, otter's vents and teeth, musk-rat's guts and tails, loon's vents, squirrel's testicles, the cruddled milk taken out of the stomach of sucking fawns and calves, human hair, and numberless other articles equally absurd.

Every master of a family, and indeed almost every other person, particularly the men, have a small bundle of such trash, which they always carry with them, both in Summer and Winter; and without some of those articles to put under their bait, few of them could be prevailed upon to put a hook into the water, being fully persuaded that they may as well sit in the tent, as attempt to angle without such assistance. They have also a notion that fish of the same species inhabiting different parts of the country, are fond of different things; so that almost every lake

lake and river they arrive at, obliges them to alter the composition of the charm. The same rule is observed on broiling the first fruits of a new hook that is used for a new net; an old hook that has already been successful in catching large fish is esteemed of more value, than a handful of new ones which have never been tried.

Deer also, as well as fish, are very numerous in many parts of this country; particularly to the North of the sixtieth degree of latitude. Alpine hares are in some parts of the barren ground pretty plentiful, where also some herds of musk-oxen are to be met with; and to the Westward, among the woods, there are some rabbits and partridges. With all those seeming sources of plenty, however, one half of the inhabitants, and perhaps the other half also, are frequently in danger of being starved to death, owing partly to their want of œconomy; and most of these scenes of distress happen during their journeys to and from Prince of Wales's Fort, the only place at which they trade.

When Northern Indians are at the Factory, they are very liable to steal any thing they think will be serviceable; particularly iron hoops, small bolts, spikes, carpenters tools, and, in short, all small pieces of iron-work which they can turn to advantage, either for their own use, or for the purpose of trading with such of their countrymen as seldom visit the Company's Settlement:
among

among themselves, however, the crime of theft is seldom heard of.

When two parties of those Indians meet, the ceremonies which pass between them are quite different from those made use of in Europe on similar occasions; for when they advance within twenty or thirty yards of each other, they make a full halt, and in general sit or lie down on the ground, and do not speak for some minutes. At length one of them, generally an elderly man, if any be in company, breaks silence, by acquainting the other party with every misfortune that has befallen him and his companions from the last time they had seen or heard of each other; and also of all deaths and other calamities that have befallen any other Indians during the same period, at least as many particulars as have come to his knowledge.

When the first has finished his oration, another aged orator (if there be any) belonging to the other party relates, in like manner, all the bad news that has come to his knowledge; and both parties never fail to plead poverty and famine on all occasions. If those orations contain any news that in the least affect the other party, it is not long before some of them begin to sigh and sob, and soon after break out into a loud cry, which is generally accompanied by most of the grown persons of both sexes; and sometimes it is common to see them all, men, women, and children, in one universal howl. The young girls, in particular,

particular, are often very obliging on those occasions ; for I never remember to have seen a crying match (as I called it) but the greatest part of the company assisted, although some of them had no other reason for it, but that of seeing their companions do the same. When the first transports of grief subside, they advance by degrees, and both parties mix with each other, the men always associating with the men, and the women with the women. If they have any tobacco among them, the pipes are passed round pretty freely, and the conversation soon becomes general. As they are on their first meeting acquainted with all the bad news, they have by this time nothing left but good, which in general has so far the predominance over the former, that in less than half an hour nothing but smiles and cheerfulness are to be seen in every face ; and if they be not really in want, small presents of provisions, ammunition, and other articles, often take place ; sometimes merely as a gift, but more frequently by way of trying whether they cannot get a greater present.

They have but few diversions ; the chief is shooting at a mark with bow and arrows ; and another out-door game, called *Holl*, which in some measure resembles playing with quoits ; only it is done with short clubs, sharp at one end. They also amuse themselves at times with dancing, which is always performed in the night. It is remarkable that those people, though a distinct nation, have never adopted any mode of dancing of their own, or any songs to which they

they can dance; so that when any thing of this kind is attempted, which is but seldom, they always endeavour to imitate either the Dog-ribbed or Southern Indians, but more commonly the former, as few of them are sufficiently acquainted either with the Southern Indian language, or their manner of dancing. The Dog-ribbed method is not very difficult to learn, as it only consists in lifting the feet alternately from the ground in a very quick succession, and as high as possible, without moving the body, which should be kept quite still and motionless; the hands at the same time being closed, and held close to the breast, and the head inclining forward. This diversion is always performed quite naked, except the breech-cloth, and at times that is also thrown off; and the dancers, who seldom exceed three or four at a time, always stand close to the music. The music may, by straining a point, be called both vocal and instrumental, though both are sufficiently humble. The former is no more than a frequent repetition of the words hee, hee, hee, ho, ho, ho, &c. which, by a more or less frequent repetition, dwelling longer on one word and shorter on another, and raising and lowering the voice, produce something like a tune, and has the desired effect. This is always accompanied by a drum or tabor; and sometimes a kind of rattle is added, made with a piece of dried buffalo skin, in shape exactly like an oil-flask, into which they put a few shot or pebbles, which, when shook about, produces music little inferior to the drum, though not so loud.

This mode of dancing naked is performed only by the men ; for when the women are ordered to dance, they always exhibit without the tent, to music which is played within it ; and though their method of dancing is perfectly decent, yet it has still less meaning and action than that of the men : for a whole heap of them crowd together in a straight line, and just shuffle themselves a little from right to left, and back again in the same line, without lifting their feet from the ground ; and when the music stops, they all give a little bend of the body and knee, somewhat like an awkward curtsy, and pronounce, in a little shrill tone, h-e-e, h-o-o-o-e.

Beside these diversions, they have another simple indoor game, which is that of taking a bit of wood, a button, or any other small thing, and after shifting it from hand to hand several times, asking their antagonist, which hand it is in ? When playing at this game, which only admits of two persons, each of them have ten, fifteen, or twenty small chips of wood, like matches ; and when one of the players guesses right, he takes one of his antagonist's sticks, and lays it to his own ; and he that first gets all the sticks from the other in that manner, is said to win the game, which is generally for a single load of powder and shot, an arrow, or some other thing of inconsiderable value.

The women never mix in any of their diversions, not even in dancing ; for when that is required of them, they
always

always exhibit without the tent, as has been already observed; nor are they allowed to be present at a feast. Indeed, the whole course of their lives is one continued scene of drudgery, *viz.* carrying and hauling heavy loads, dressing skins for clothing, curing their provisions, and practising other necessary domestic duties which are required in a family, without enjoying the least diversion of any kind, or relaxation, on any occasion whatever; and except in the execution of those homely duties, in which they are always instructed from their infancy, their senses seem almost as dull and frigid as the zone they inhabit. There are indeed some exceptions to be met with among them, and I suppose it only requires indulgence and precept to make some of them as lofty and insolent as any women in the world. Though they wear their hair at full length, and never tie it up, like the Southern Indians; and though not one in fifty of them is ever possessed of a comb, yet by a wonderful dexterity of the fingers, and a good deal of patience, they make shift to stroke it out so as not to leave two hairs entangled; but when their heads are infested with vermin, from which very few of either sex are free, they mutually assist each other in keeping them under.

A scorbutic disorder, resembling the worst stage of the itch, consumptions, and fluxes, are their chief disorders. The first of these, though very troublesome, is never known to prove fatal, unless it be accompanied with some inward complaint; but the two latter, with a few accidents,

dents, carries off great numbers of both sexes and all ages : indeed few of them live to any great age, probably owing to the great fatigue they undergo from their youth up, in procuring a subsistence for themselves and their offspring.

Though the scorbutic disorder above mentioned does appear to be infectious, it is rare to see one have it without the whole tent's crew being more or less affected with it; but this is by no means a proof of its being contagious; I rather attribute it to the effects of some bad water, or the unwholesomeness of some fish they may catch in particular places, in the course of their wandering manner of life. Were it otherwise, a single family would in a short time communicate it to the whole tribe; but, on the contrary, the disease is never known to spread. In the younger sort it always attacks the hands and feet, not even sparing the palms and soles. Those of riper years generally have it about the wrists, insteps, and posteriors; and in the latter particularly, the blotches, or boils as they may justly be called, are often as large as the top of a man's thumb. This disorder most frequently makes its appearance in the Summer, while the Indians are out on the barren ground; and though it is by no means reckoned dangerous, yet it is so obstinate, as not to yield to any medicine that has ever been applied to it while at the Company's Factory. And as the natives themselves never make use of any medicines of their own preparing, Nature alone works the cure, which is never performed in less

less than twelve or eighteen months; and some of them are troubled with this disagreeable and loathsome disorder for years before they are perfectly cured, and then a dark livid mark remains on those parts of the skin which have been affected, for many years afterwards, and in some during life.

When any of the principal Northern Indians die, it is generally believed that they are conjured to death, either by some of their own countrymen, by some of the Southern Indians, or by some of the Esquimaux: too frequently the suspicion falls on the latter tribe, which is the grand reason of their never being at peace with those poor and distressed people. For some time past, however, those Esquimaux who trade with our sloops at Knapp's Bay, Navel's Bay, and Whale Cove, are in perfect peace and friendship with the Northern Indians; which is entirely owing to the protection they have for several years past received from the Chiefs at the Company's Fort at Churchill River*. But those of that tribe who live so far to the North,

* In the Summer of 1756, a party of Northern Indians lay in wait at Knapp's Bay till the sloop had sailed out of the harbour, when they fell on the poor Esquimaux, and killed every soul. Mr. John Bean, then Master of the sloop, and since Master of the Trinity yacht, with all his crew, heard the guns very plain; but did not know the meaning or reason of it till the Summer following, when he found the shocking remains of more than forty Esquimaux, who had been murdered in that cowardly manner; and for no other reason but because two principal Northern Indians had died in the preceding Winter.

North, as not to have any intercourse with our vessels, very often fall a sacrifice to the fury and superstition of the
Northern

No Esquimaux were seen at Knapp's Bay for several years after; and those who trade there at present have undoubtedly been drawn from the Northward, since the above unhappy transaction; for the convenience of being nearer the woods, as well as being in the way of trading with the sloop that calls there annually. It is to be hoped that the measures taken by the Governors at Prince of Wales's Fort of late years, will effectually prevent any such calamities happening in future, and by degrees be the means of bringing about a lasting, friendly, and reciprocal interest between the two nations.

Notwithstanding the pacific and friendly terms which begin to dawn between those two tribes at Knapp's Bay, Navel's Bay, and Whale Cove, farther North hostilities continue, and most barbarous murders are perpetrated: and the only protection the Esquimaux have from the fury of their enemies, is their remote situation in the Winter, and their residing chiefly on islands and peninsulas in Summer, which renders them less liable to be surprised during that season. But even this secluded life does not prevent the Northern Indians from harassing them greatly, and at times they are so closely pursued as to be obliged to leave most of their goods and utensils to be destroyed by their enemy; which must be a great loss, as these cannot be replaced but at the expence of much time and labour; and the want of them in the mean time must create much distress both to themselves and their families, as they can seldom procure any part of their livelihood without the assistance of a considerable apparatus.

In 1756, the Esquimaux at Knapp's Bay sent two of their youths to Prince of Wales's Fort in the sloop, and the Summer following they were carried back to their friends, loaded with presents, and much pleased with the treatment they received while at the Fort. In 1767, they again sent one from Knapp's Bay and one from Whale Cove; and though during their stay at the Fort they made a considerable progress both in the Southern Indian and the English languages, yet those intercourses have not been any ways advantageous to the Company, by increasing the trade from that quarter. In fact, the only

Northern Indians ; who are by no means a bold or warlike people ; nor can I think from experience, that they are particularly guilty of committing acts of wanton cruelty on any other part of the human race, beside the Esquimaux. Their hearts, however, are in general so unsusceptible of tenderness, that they can view the deepest distress in those who are not immediately related to them, without the least emotion ; not even half so much as the generality of mankind feel for the sufferings of the meanest of the brute creation. I have been present when one of them, imitating the groans, distorted features, and contracted position, of a

satisfaction they have found for the great expence they have from time to time incurred, by introducing those strangers, is, that through the good conduct of their upper servants at Churchill River, they have at length so far humanized the hearts of those two tribes, that at present they can meet each other in a friendly manner ; whereas, a few years since, whenever they met, each party premeditated the destruction of the other ; and what made their war more shocking was, they never gave quarter : so that the strongest party always killed the weakest, without sparing either man, woman, or child.

It is but a few years ago that the sloop's crew who annually carried them all their wants, durst not venture on shore among the Esquimaux unarmed, for fear of being murdered ; but latterly they are so civilized, that the Company's servants visit their tents with the greatest freedom and safety, are always welcome, and desired to partake of such provisions as they have : and knowing now our aversion from train-oil, they take every means in their power to convince our people that the victuals prepared for them is entirely free from it. But the smell of their tents, cooking-utensils, and other furniture, is scarcely less offensive than Greenland Dock. However, I have eaten both fish and venison cooked by them in so cleanly a manner, that I have relished them very much, and partaken of them with a good appetite.

man

man who had died in the most excruciating pain, put the whole company, except myself, into the most violent fit of laughter

The Northern Indians never bury their dead, but always leave the bodies where they die, so that they are supposed to be devoured by beasts and birds of prey; for which reason they will not eat foxes, wolves, ravens, &c. unless it be through mere necessity

The death of a near relation affects them so sensibly, that they rend all their cloths from their backs, and go naked, till some persons less afflicted relieve them. After the death of a father, mother, husband, wife, son, or brother, they mourn, as it may be called, for a whole year, which they measure by the moons and seasons. Those mournful periods are not distinguished by any particular dress, except that of cutting off the hair; and the ceremony consists in almost perpetually crying. Even when walking, as well as at all other intervals from sleep, eating, and conversation, they make an odd howling noise, often repeating the relationship of the deceased. But as this is in a great measure mere form and custom, some of them have a method of softening the harshness of the notes, and bringing them out in a more musical tone than that in which they sing their songs. When they reflect seriously on the loss of a good friend, however, it has such an effect on them for the present, that they give an
uncommon

uncommon loose to their grief. At those times they seem to sympathise (through custom) with each other's afflictions so much, that I have often seen several scores of them crying in concert, when at the same time not above half a dozen of them had any more reason for so doing than I had, unless it was to preserve the old custom, and keep the others in countenance. The women are remarkably obliging on such occasions; and as no restriction is laid on them, they may with truth be said to cry with all their might and main; but in common conversation they are obliged to be very moderate.

They have a tradition among them, that the first person upon earth was a woman, who, after having been some time alone, in her researches for berries, which was then her only food, found an animal like a dog, which followed her to the cave where she lived, and soon grew fond and domestic. This dog, they say, had the art of transforming itself into the shape of a handsome young man, which it frequently did at night, but as the day approached, always resumed its former shape; so that the woman looked on all that passed on those occasions as dreams and delusions. These transformations were soon productive of the consequences which at present generally follow such intimate connexions between the two sexes, and the mother of the world began to advance in her pregnancy.

Not long after this happened, a man of such a surprising height that his head reached up to the clouds, came to level the land, which at that time was a very rude mass; and after he had done this, by the help of his walking-stick he marked out all the lakes, ponds, and rivers, and immediately caused them to be filled with water. He then took the dog, and tore it to pieces; the guts he threw into the lakes and rivers, commanding them to become the different kinds of fish; the flesh he dispersed over the land, commanding it to become different kinds of beasts and land-animals; the skin he also tore in small pieces, and threw it into the air, commanding it to become all kinds of birds; after which he gave the woman and her offspring full power to kill, eat, and never spare, for that he had commanded them to multiply for her use in abundance. After this injunction, he returned to the place whence he came, and has not been heard of since.

RELIGION has not as yet begun to dawn among the Northern Indians; for though their conjurors do indeed sing songs, and make long speeches, to some beasts and birds of prey, as also to imaginary beings, which they say assist them in performing cures on the sick, yet they, as well as their credulous neighbours, are utterly destitute of every idea of practical religion. It is true, some of them will reprimand their youth for talking
discre-

disrespectfully of particular beasts and birds; but it is done with so little energy, as to be often retorted back in derision. Neither is this, nor their custom of not killing wolves and quiquehatches, universally observed, and those who do it can only be viewed with more pity and contempt than the others; for I always found it arose merely from the greater degree of confidence which they had in the supernatural power of their conjurors, which induced them to believe, that talking lightly or disrespectfully of any thing they seemed to approve, would materially affect their health and happiness in this world: and I never found any of them that had the least idea of futurity. Matonabbee, without one exception, was a man of as clear ideas in other matters as any that I ever saw: he was not only a perfect master of the Southern Indian language, and their belief, but could tell a better story of our Saviour's birth and life, than one half of those who call themselves Christians; yet he always declared to me, that neither he, nor any of his countrymen, had an idea of a future state. Though he had been taught to look on things of this kind as useless, his own good sense had taught him to be an advocate for universal toleration; and I have seen him several times assist at some of the most sacred rites performed by the Southern Indians, apparently with as much zeal, as if he had given as much credit to them as they did: and with the same liberality of sentiment he would, I am persuaded, have assisted at the altar
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of a Christian church, or in a Jewish synagogue; not with a view to reap any advantage himself, but merely, as he observed, to assist others who believed in such ceremonies.

Being thus destitute of all religious control, these people have, to use Matonabee's own words, "nothing to do but
"consult their own interest, inclinations, and passions; and
"to pass through this world with as much ease and contentment as possible, without any hopes of reward, or
"painful fear of punishment, in the next." In this state of mind they are, when in prosperity, the happiest of mortals; for nothing but personal or family calamities can disturb their tranquillity, while misfortunes of the lesser kind sit light on them. Like most other uncivilized people, they bear bodily pain with great fortitude, though in that respect I cannot think them equal to the Southern Indians.

Old age is the greatest calamity that can befall a Northern Indian; for when he is past labour, he is neglected, and treated with great disrespect, even by his own children. They not only serve him last at meals, but generally give him the coarsest and worst of the victuals: and such of the skins as they do not chuse to wear, are made up in the clumsiest manner into clothing for their aged parents; who, as they had, in all probability, treated their fathers and mothers with the same neglect, in their
their

their turns, submitted patiently to their lot, even without a murmur, knowing it to be the common misfortune attendant on old age; so that they may be said to wait patiently for the melancholy hour when, being no longer capable of walking, they are to be left alone, to starve, and perish for want. This, however shocking and unnatural it may appear, is nevertheless so common, that, among those people, one half at least of the aged persons of both sexes absolutely die in this miserable condition.

The Northern Indians call the *Aurora Borealis*, Ed-thin; that is, Deer*: and when that meteor is very bright, they say that deer is plentiful in that part of the atmosphere; but they have never yet extended their ideas so far as to entertain hopes of tasting those celestial animals.

Beside this silly notion, they are very superstitious with respect to the existence of several kinds of fairies, called by them Nant-e-na, whom they frequently say they see, and who are supposed by them to inhabit the different elements

Their ideas in this respect are founded on a principle one would not imagine. Experience has shewn them, that when a hairy deer-skin is briskly stroked with the hand in a dark night, it will emit many sparks of electrical fire, as the back of a cat will. The idea which the Southern Indians have of this meteor is equally romantic, though more pleasing, as they believe it to be the spirits of their departed friends dancing in the clouds; and when the *Aurora Borealis* is remarkably bright, at which time they vary most in colour, form, and situation, they say, their deceased friends are very merry.

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of earth, sea, and air, according to their several qualities. To one or other of those fairies they usually attribute any change in their circumstances, either for the better or worse; and as they are led into this way of thinking entirely by the art of the conjurors, there is no such thing as any general mode of belief; for those jugglers differ so much from each other in their accounts of these beings, that those who believe any thing they say, have little to do but change their opinions according to the will and caprice of the conjuror, who is almost daily relating some new whim, or extraordinary event, which, he says, has been revealed to him in a dream, or by some of his favourite fairies, when on a hunting excursion.

Some Account of MATONABBE, and of the eminent Services which he rendered to his Country, as well as to the Hudson's Bay Company.

MATONABBE was the son of a Northern Indian by a slave woman, who was formerly bought from some Southern Indians who came to Prince of Wales's Fort with furs, &c. This match was made by Mr. Richard Norton, then Governor, who detained them at and near the Fort, for the same purpose as he did those Indians called Home-guard. As to Matonabee's real age, it is impossible to be particular; for the natives of those parts being utterly unacquainted with letters, or the use of hieroglyphics, though their memories are not less retentive than those of other nations, cannot preserve and transmit to posterity the exact time when any particular event happens. Indeed, the utmost extent of their chronology reaches no farther, than to say, My son, or my daughter, was born in such a Governor's time, and such an event happened during such a person's life-time (though, perhaps, he or she has been dead many years). However, according to appearance, and some corroborating circumstances, Matonabee was born about the year one thousand seven hundred and thirty-six, or one thousand seven hundred and thirty-seven; and his father dying while he was young, the Governor took the boy,

boy, and, according to the Indian custom, adopted him as his son.

Soon after the death of Matonabee's father, Mr. Norton went to England, and as the boy did not experience from his successor the same regard and attention which he had been accustomed to receive from Mr. Norton, he was soon taken from the Factory by some of his father's relations, and continued with the Northern Indians till Mr. Ferdinand Jacobs succeeded to the command of Prince of Wales's Fort, in the year one thousand seven hundred and fifty-two; when out of regard to old Mr. Norton, (who was then dead,) Mr. Jacobs took the first opportunity that offered to detain Matonabee at the Factory, where he was for several years employed in the hunting-service with some of the Company's servants, particularly with the late Mr. Moses Norton *, (son of the late Governor,) and Mr. Magnus Johnston†.

In the course of his long stay at and near the Fort, it is no wonder that he should have become perfect master of the Southern Indian language, and made some progress in the English. It was during this period, that he gained a knowledge of the Christian faith; and he always declared, that it was too deep and intricate for his comprehension. Though he was a perfect bigot with respect to

Afterwards Governor.

† Master of the Churchill sloop.

the arts and tricks of Indian jugglers, yet he could by no means be impressed with a belief of any part of our religion, nor of the religion of the Southern Indians, who have as firm a belief in a future state as any people under the Sun. He had so much natural good sense and liberality of sentiment, however, as not to think that he had a right to ridicule any particular sect on account of their religious opinions. On the contrary, he declared, that he held them all equally in esteem, but was determined, as he came into the world, so he would go out of it, without professing any religion at all. Notwithstanding his aversion from religion, I have met with few Christians who possessed more good moral qualities, or fewer bad ones.

It is impossible for any man to have been more punctual in the performance of a promise than he was; his scrupulous adherence to truth and honesty would have done honour to the most enlightened and devout Christian, while his benevolence and universal humanity to all the human race *, according to his abilities and manner of life, could
not

* I must here observe, that when we went to war with the Esquimaux at the Copper River in July 1771, it was by no means his proposal: on the contrary, he was forced into it by his countrymen. For I have heard him say, that when he first visited that river, in company with I-dot-le-aza, they met with several Esquimaux; and so far from killing them, were very friendly to them, and made them small presents of such articles as they could best spare, and that would be of most use to them. It is more than probable that the two bits of iron found among the plunder while I was there, were part of those presents. There were also a few long beads found among those people,