

HISTORY.

CARVER'S TRAVELS.

(Continued.)

MR. Adair begins with observing, that though some have supposed the Americans to have descended from the Chinese, yet neither their religion, laws, or customs agree in the least with those of the Chinese; which sufficiently proves that they are not of this line. Besides, as our best ships are now almost half a year in sailing for China (our author does not here recollect that this is from a high northern latitude, across the line, and then back again greatly to the northward of it, and not directly athwart the pacific ocean for only one hundred and eleven degrees) or from thence to Europe, it is very unlikely they should attempt such dangerous discoveries, with their supposed small vessels, against rapid currents, and in dark and sickly months.

He further remarks, that this is more particularly improbable, as there is reason to believe that this nation was unacquainted with the use of the loadstone to direct their course. China, he says, is about eight thousand miles distant from the American continent which is twice as far as the atlantic ocean. And we are not informed by any ancient writer of their maritime skill, or so much as any inclination that way, besides small coasting voyages. The winds blow, likewise, with little variation from east to west within the latitudes thirty and odd, north and south; and therefore these could not drive them on the American coast, it lying directly contrary to such a course.

Neither could persons, according to this writer's account, sail to America from the north by the way of Tartary or ancient Scythia; that from its situation never having been or can be a maritime power; and it is utterly impracticable, he says, for any to come to America by sea from that quarter. Besides, the remaining traces of their religious ceremo-

nies and civil and martial customs are quite opposite to the like vestiges of the old Scythians. Even in the moderate northern climates there is not to be seen the least trace of any ancient stately buildings, or of any thick settlements, as are said to remain in the less healthy regions of Peru Mexico. And several of the Indian nations assure us, that they crossed the Mississippi before they made their present northern settlements; which, connected with the former arguments, he concludes will sufficiently explode that weak opinion of the American Aborigines being lineally descended from the Tartars or ancient Scythians.

Mr. Adair's reasons for supposing that the Americans derive their origin from the Jews are,

First, because they are divided into tribes, and have chiefs over them as the Israelites had.

Secondly, because, as by a strict permanent divine precept, the Hebrew nation were ordered to worship, at Jerusalem, Jehovah the true and living God, so do the Indians, styling him Yeyowah. The ancient heathen, he adds, it is well known worshipped a plurality of Gods, but the Indians pay their religious devours to the Great beneficent supreme holy spirit of fire, who resides, as they think, above the clouds, and on earth also with unpolluted people. They pay no adoration to images, or to dead persons, neither to the celestial luminaries, to evil spirits, nor to any created beings whatever.

Thirdly, because, agreeably to the theocracy or divine government of Israel, the Indians think the deity to be the immediate head of their state.

Fourthly, because, as the Jews believe in the ministrations of angels, the Indians also believe that the higher regions are inhabited by good spirits.

Fifthly, because the Indian language and dialects appear to have the very idiom and genius to the Hebrew. Their words and sentences being expressive, concise, emphatical, sonorous, and bold; and often, both in letters and significati-

on, are synonymous with the Hebrew language.

Sixthly, because they count their time after the manner of the Hebrews.

Seventhly, because in conformity to, or after the manner of the Jews, they have their prophets, high-priests, and other religious orders.

Eighthly, because their festivals, fasts, and religious rites have a great resemblance to those of the Hebrews.

Ninthly, because the Indians, before they go to war, have many preparatory ceremonies of purification and fasting, like what is recorded of the Israelites.

Tenthly, because the same taste for ornaments, and the same kind are made use of by the Indians as by the Hebrews.

These and many other arguments of a similar nature, Mr. Adair brings in support of his favourite system; but I should imagine, that if the Indians are really derived from the Hebrews, among their religious ceremonies, on which he chiefly seems to build his hypothesis, the principal, that of circumcision, would never have been laid aside, and its very remembrance obliterated.

Thus numerous and diverse are the opinions of those who have hitherto written on this subject! I shall not, however, either endeavour to reconcile them, or to point out the errors of each, but proceed to give my own sentiments on the origin of the Americans; which are founded on conclusions drawn from the most rational arguments of the writers I have mentioned, and from my own observations; the consistency of these I shall leave to the judgment of my readers.

The better to introduce my conjectures on this head, it is necessary first to ascertain the distances between America and those parts of the habitable globe that approach nearest to it.

[To be continued.]