

HISTORY.

CARVER'S TRAVELS.

(Continued.)

THE Falls of St. Anthony received their name from Father Louis Hennepin, a French missionary, who travelled into these parts about the year 1680, and was the first European ever seen by the natives. This amazing body of waters, which are above two hundred and fifty yards over, form a most pleasing cataract; and the rapids below, in the space of three hundred yards more, rendered the descent considerably greater; so that when viewed at a distance they appear to be much higher than they really are. The above-mentioned traveller has laid them down at about sixty feet; but he has made a greater error in calculating the height of the falls of Niagara; which he asserts to be six hundred feet; whereas from later observations, accurately made, it is well known that it does not exceed one hundred and forty feet. But the good father I fear too often had no other foundation for his accounts than report, or, at best, a slight inspection.

In the middle of the falls stands a small island, about forty feet broad and somewhat longer, on which grow a few cragged hemlock and spruce trees; and about half way between this island and the Eastern shore, is a rock, lying at the very edge of the fall, in an oblique position, that appeared to be about five or six feet broad, and thirty or forty long. These falls vary much from all the others I have seen, as you may approach close to them without finding the least obstruction from any intervening hill or precipice.

The country around them is extremely beautiful. It is not an uninterrupted plain, where the eye finds no relief, but composed of many gentle ascents, which in summer are covered with the finest verdure, and interspersed with little groves, that give a pleasing variety to the prospect. On the whole, when the falls are included, which may be seen at the distance of four miles, a more pleasing and

picturesque view cannot, I believe, be found throughout the universe. I could have wished that I had happened to enjoy this sight at a more seasonable time of the year, whilst the trees and hillocks were clad in nature's gayest livery, as this must have greatly added to the pleasure I received; however, even then it exceeded my warmest expectations. I have endeavoured to give the reader as just an idea of this enchanting spot as possible, in the plan annexed; but all description, whether of the pencil or the pen, must fall infinitely short of the original.

At a little distance below the falls stands a small island, of about an acre and an half, on which grow a great number of oak trees, every branch of which, able to support the weight, was full of eagle's nests. The reason that this kind of birds resort in such numbers to this spot, is, that they are here secure from the attacks either of man or beast, their retreat being guarded by the rapids, which the Indians never attempt to pass. Another reason is, that they find a constant supply of food for themselves and their young, from the animals and fish which are dashed to pieces by the falls, and driven on the adjacent shore.

Having satisfied my curiosity, as far as the eye of man can be satisfied, I proceeded on still accompanied by my young friend, till I had reached the River St. Francis, near sixty miles above the falls. To this river father Hennepin gave the name of St. Francis, and this was the extent of his travels, as well as mine, towards the North-West. As the season was so advanced, and the weather extremely cold, I was not able to make so many observations on these parts as I otherwise should have done.

It might however, perhaps, be necessary to observe that in a little tour I made about the falls, after travelling fourteen miles, by the side of the Mississippi, I came to a river nearly twenty yards wide, which ran from the North-East, called Rum River. And on the 20th of November came to a other termed Goose River, about twelve yards wide. On the 21st I arrived at the St. Francis, which is about thirty yards wide. Here the Mississippi itself grows

narrow, being not more than nine yards over; and appears to be chiefly composed of small branches. The ice prevented me from noticing the depth of any of these three rivers.

The country in some places is hilly, but without large mountains, and the land is tolerably good. I observed here many deer and caraboes, some elk, with abundance of beavers, otters, and other furs. A little above this, to the north-east, are a number of small lakes, called the Thousand Lakes, the parts about which, though but little frequented, are the best within many miles for hunting, as the hunter never fails of returning loaded beyond his expectations.

The Mississippi has never been explored higher up than the River St. Francis, and only by father Hennepin and myself thus far. So that we are obliged solely to the Indians for all the intelligence we are able to give relative to the more Northern parts. As this river is not navigable from the sea for vessels of any considerable burthen, much higher up than the Forks of the Ohio, and even that is accomplished with great difficulty, owing to the rapidity of the current, and the winding of the river, those settlements that may be made on the interior branches of it, must be indisputably secure from the attacks of any maritime power. But at the same time the settlers will have the advantage of being able to convey their produce to the seaports with great facility; the current of the river, from its source to its entrance into the gulph of Mexico, being extremely favourable for doing this in small craft. This might also in time be facilitated by canals or shorter cuts, and a communication opened by water with New-York, Canada, &c. by way of the lakes. The Forks of the Ohio, are about nine hundred miles above these. From the latter it is about twenty miles to the Illinois River, and from that to the Ouisconsin, which I have given an account of, about eight hundred more.

On the 25th I returned to my canoe, which I had left at the mouth of the River St. Pierre; and here I parted with regret from my young friend, the prince of the Winnebagoes. This river being clear of ice by reason of its south-