

HISTORY.

CARVER'S TRAVELS.

(Continued.)

A Little to the north-west of the heads of the Messorie and St. Pierre, the Indians further told me, that there was a nation rather smaller and whiter than the neighbouring tribes, who cultivate the ground, and (as far as I could gather from their expressions) in some measure, the arts. To this account they added, that some of the nations, who inhabit those parts that lie to the west of the Shining Mountains, have gold so plenty among them that they make their most common utensils of it. These mountains (which I shall describe more particularly hereafter) divide the waters that fall into the South Sea from those that run into the Atlantic.

The people dwelling near them are supposed to be some of the different tribes that were tributary to the Mexican kings, and who fled from their native country to seek an asylum in these parts, about the time of the conquest of Mexico by the Spaniards, more than two centuries ago.

As some confirmation of this supposition it is remarked, that they have chosen the most interior parts for their retreat, being still prepossessed with a notion that the sea coasts have been infested ever since with monsters vomiting fire, and hurling about thunder and lightning; from whose bowels issued men, who, with unseen instruments, or by the power of magic, killed the harmless Indians at an astonishing distance. From such as these, their fore-fathers, (according to a tradition among them that still remains unimpaired) fled to the retired abodes they now inhabit. For as they found that the floating monsters which had thus terrified them, could not approach the land, and that those who had descended from their sides did not care to make excursions to any considerable distance from them, they formed a resolution to betake themselves to some country that lay far from the sea coasts, where only they could be secure from such diabolical enemies.—They accordingly set out with their fa-

milies, and after a long peregrination, settled themselves near these mountains, where they concluded they had found a place of perfect security.

The Winnebagoes, dwelling on the Fox river (whom I have already treated of) are likewise supposed to be some straggling band from the Mexican countries. But they are able to give only an imperfect account of their original residence. They say they formerly came a great way from the westward, and were driven by wars to take refuge among the Naudowessies; but as they are entirely ignorant of the arts, or of the value of gold, it is rather to be supposed, that they were driven from their ancient settlements by the above mentioned emigrants, as they passed on towards their present habitation.

These suppositions, however, may want confirmation; for the smaller tribes of Indians are subject to such various alterations in their places of abode, from the wars they are continually engaged in, that it is almost impossible to ascertain, after half a century, the original situation of any of them.

That range of mountains, of which the Shining Mountains are a part, begin at Mexico, and continuing northward on the back, or to the east of California, separate the waters of those numerous rivers that fall either into the Gulph of Mexico, or the Gulph of California.—From thence continuing their course still northward, between the sources of the Mississippi and the rivers that run into the South Sea, they appear to end in about forty seven or forty eight degrees of north latitude, where a number of rivers arise, and empty themselves either into the South Sea, into Hudson's Bay, or into the waters that communicate between these two seas.

Among these mountains, those that lie to the west of the river St. Pierre, are called the Shining Mountains, from an infinite number of crystal stones, of an amazing size, with which they are covered, and which, when the sun shines full upon them, sparkle so as to be seen at a very great distance.

This extraordinary range of mountains is calculated to be more than three thousand miles in length, without any

very considerable intervals, which I believe surpasses any thing of the kind in the other quarters of the globe. Probably in future ages they may be found to contain more riches in their bowels, than those of Indostan and Malabar, or that are produced on the Golden Coast of Guinea; nor will I except even the Peruvian mines. To the west of these mountains, when explored by future Columbuses or Raleighs, may be found other lakes, rivers, and countries, full fraught with all the necessaries or luxuries of life; and where future generations may find an asylum, whether driven from their country by the ravages of lawless tyrants, or by religious persecutions, or reluctantly leaving it to remedy the inconveniencies arising from a superabundant increase of inhabitants; whether, I say, impelled by these, or allured by hopes of commercial advantages, there is little doubt but their expectations will be fully gratified in these rich and unexhausted climes.

But to return to the Assinipoils and Killisinoes, whom I left at the Grand Portage, and from whom I received the foregoing account of the lakes that lie to the north-west of this place.

The traders we expected being later this season than usual, and our numbers very considerable, for there were more than three hundred of us, the stock of provisions we had brought with us was nearly exhausted, and we waited with impatience for their arrival.

One day, whilst we were all expressing our wishes for this desirable event, and looking from an eminence in hopes of seeing them come over the lake the chief priest belonging to the band of the Killisinoes told us, that he would endeavour to obtain a conference with the Great Spirit, and know from him when the traders would arrive. I paid little attention to this declaration, supposing that it would be productive of some juggling trick, just sufficiently covered to deceive the ignorant Indians. But the king of that tribe telling me that it was chiefly undertaken by the priest to alleviate my anxiety, and at the same time to convince me how much interest he had with the Great Spirit, I thought it neces-