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HISTORY.

CARVER'S TRAVELS.

(Continued.)

TWO very large rivers empty themselves into this lake, on the north and north east side; one is called Nipegon river, or, as the French pronounce it, the Allanipegon, which leads to a band of the Chipeways, inhabiting a lake of the same name, and the other is termed the Michipicoot river, the source of which is situated towards James's Bay, from whence there is but a short carriage to another river, which empties itself into that bay, at a fort belonging to the company. It was by this passage that a party of French from Michillimaekinae invaded the settlements of that society in the reign of queen Anne. Having taken and destroyed their forts, they brought the cannon which they found in them to the fortrefs from whence they had issued: these were small brass pieces, and remain there to this present time; having, thro' the usual revolution of fortune, returned to the possession of their former masters.

Not far from the Nipegon is a small river, that, just before it enters the lake, has a perpendicular fall from the top of a mountain, of more than six hundred feet. Being very narrow, it appears at a distance like a white garter suspended in the air.

A few Indians inhabit round the eastern borders of this lake, supposed to be the remains of the Algonkins, who formerly possessed this country, but who have been nearly extirpated by the Iroquois of Canada. Lake Superior has near forty rivers that fall into it, some of which are of a considerable size. On the south side of it is a remarkable point or cape, of about sixty miles in length, called Point Chegomegan. It might as properly be termed a peninsula, as it is nearly separated from the continent, on the east side, by a narrow bay that extends from east to west. Canoes have been a short portage across the isthmus, whereas if they coast it round, the voyage is more than an hundred miles.

About that distance to the west of the cape just described, a considerable river

falls into the lake, the head of which is composed of a great assemblage of small streams. This river is remarkable for the abundance of virgin copper that is found on and near its banks. A metal which is met with also in several other places on this coast. I observed that many of the small islands, particularly those on the eastern shores, were covered with copper ore. They appeared like beds of copperas, of which many tons lay in a small space.

A company of adventurers from England, began, soon after the conquest of Canada, to bring away some of this metal, but the distracted situation of affairs in America has obliged them to relinquish their scheme. It might in future times be made a very advantageous trade, as the metal which costs nothing on the spot, and requires but little expence to get it on board, could be conveyed in boats or canoes through the falls of St. Marie to the isle of St. Joseph, which lies at the bottom of the streights near the entrance into lake Huron; from thence it might be put on board larger vessels, and in them transported across that lake to the falls of Niagara; there being carried by land across the Portage, it might be conveyed without much obstruction to Quebec. The cheapness and ease with which any quantity of it may be procured, will make up for the length of way that it is necessary to transport it before it reaches the sea-coast, and enable the proprietors to send it to foreign markets on as good terms as it can be exported from other countries.

Lake Superior abounds with a variety of fish, the principal and best are the trout and sturgeon, which may caught at almost any season in the greatest abundance. The trouts in general weigh about twelve pounds, but some are caught that exceed fifty. Besides these, a species of white fish is taken in great quantities here, that resemble a shad in their shape, but they are rather thicker, and less bony; they weigh about four pounds each, and are of a delicious taste. There are likewise many sorts of smaller fish in great plenty here, and which may be taken with ease; among these is a sort resembling the herring, that are generally made use of as a bait for the

trout. Very small crabs, not larger than half a crown piece, are found both in this and lake Michigan.

This lake is as much affected by storms as the Atlantic ocean—the waves run as high, and are equally as dangerous to ships. It discharges its waters from the south east corner, through the streights of St. Marie. At the upper end of these streights stands a fort that receives its name from them, commanded by Mons. Cadot, a French Canadian, who being proprietor of the soil, is still permitted to keep possession of it. Near this fort is a very strong rapid, against which, tho' it is impossible for canoes to ascend, yet when conducted by careful pilots, they might pass down without danger.

Though lake Superior, as I have before observed, is supplied by near forty rivers, many of which are considerable ones, yet it does not appear that one-tenth part of the waters which are conveyed into it by these rivers are carried off at this evacuation. How such a superabundance of water can be disposed of, as it must certainly be by some means or other, without which the circumference of the lake would be continually enlarging, I know not; that it does not empty itself as the Mediterranean sea is supposed to do, by an under current, which perpetually counteracts that near the surface, is certain; for the stream which falls over the rock is not more than five or six feet in depth, and the whole of it passes on thro' the streights into the adjacent lake—nor is it probable that so great a quantity can be absorbed by exhalations; consequently they must find a passage through some subterranean cavities, deep, unathomable, and never to be explored.

The falls of St. Marie do not descend perpendicularly as those of Niagara or St. Anthony do, but consist of a rapid which continues near three quarters of a mile, over which canoes well piloted might pass.

At the bottom of these falls, nature has formed a most commodious station for catching the fish which are to be found there in immense quantities. Persons standing on the rocks that lie adjacent to it, may take with dipping nets, about the months of September and October, the white fish before mentioned.