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HISTORY.

CARVER'S TRAVELS.

(Continued.)

IN October, 1768, I arrived at Boston, having been absent from it on this expedition two years and five months, and during that time travelled near seven thousand miles. From thence, as soon as I had properly digested my journal and charts, I set out for England, to communicate the discoveries I had made, and to render them beneficial to the kingdom. But the prosecution of my plans for reaping these advantages have hitherto been obstructed by the unhappy divisions that have been fomented between Great-Britain and the colonies by their mutual enemies.

I cannot conclude the account of my extensive travels, without expressing my gratitude to that beneficent Being who invisibly protected me through those perils which unavoidably attend so long a tour among fierce untutored savages.

At the same time let me not be accused of vanity or presumption, if I declare that the motives alledged in the introduction of this work, were not the only ones that induced me to engage in this arduous undertaking. My views were not solely confined to the advantages that might accrue, either to myself or the community to which I belonged; but nobler purposes contributed principally to urge me on.

The confined state, both with regard to civil and religious improvements, in which so many of my fellow creatures remained, aroused within my bosom an irresistible inclination to explore the almost unknown regions which they inhabited; and as a preparatory step towards the introduction of more polished manners, and more humane sentiments, to gain a knowledge of their language, customs, and principles.

I confess, that the little benefit too many of the Indian nations have hitherto received from their intercourse with those

who denominate themselves christians, did not tend to encourage my charitable purposes; yet, as many, though not the generality, might receive some benefit from the introduction of religion among them.

It is true that the Indians are not without some sense of religion, and such as proves that they worship the Great Creator with a degree of purity unknown to nations who have greater opportunities of improvement; but their religious principles are far from being so faultless as described by a learned writer, or unmixed with opinions and ceremonies that greatly lessen their excellency in this point: so that could the doctrines of genuine and vital christianity be introduced among them, pure and untainted as it flowed from the lips of its divine institutor, it would certainly tend to clear away that superstitious and idolatrous dross by which the rationality of their religious tenets are obscured.

Conclusion of the Journal.

Of the ORIGIN, MANNERS, CUSTOMS, RELIGION and LANGUAGE of the INDIANS.

CHAPTER I.

Of their Origin.

THE means by which America received its first inhabitants, have, since the time of its discovery by the Europeans, been the subject of numberless disquisitions. Was I to endeavour to collect the different opinions and reasonings of the various writers that have taken up the pen in defence of their conjectures, the enumeration would much exceed the bounds I have prescribed myself, and oblige me to be less explicit on points of greater moment.

From the obscurity in which this debate is enveloped, through the total disuse of letters among every nation of Indians on this extensive continent, and the uncertainty of oral tradition at the dis-

tance of so many ages, I fear that even after the most minute investigation, we shall not be able to settle it with any degree of certainty. And this apprehension will receive additional force, when it is considered that the diversity of language which is apparently distinct between most of the Indians, tends to ascertain that this population was not effected from one particular country, but from several neighbouring ones, and completed at different periods.

Most of the historians or travellers that have treated on the American aborigines disagree in their sentiments relative to them. Many of the ancients are supposed to have known that this quarter of the globe not only existed, but also that it was inhabited. Plato in his *Timæus* has asserted, that beyond the island which he calls *Atalantis*, and which according to his description was situated in the western ocean, there were a great number of other islands, and beyond those a vast continent.

Oviedo, a celebrated Spanish author of a much later date, has made no scruple to affirm that the Antilles are the famous *Hesperides* so often mentioned by the poets, which are at length restored to the kings of Spain, descendants of king *Hesperus*, who lived upwards of three thousand years ago, and from whom these islands received their name.

Two other Spaniards, the one *Father Gregorio Garcia*, a Dominican, the other *Father Joseph De Acoffa*, a Jesuit, have written on the origin of the Americans.

The former, who had been employed in the missions of Mexico and Peru, endeavoured to prove from the traditions of the Mexicans, Peruvians, and others, which he received on the spot, and from the variety of characters, customs, languages, and religion observable in the different countries of the new world, that different nations had contributed to the peopling of it.

The latter, *Father De Acoffa*, in his examination of the means by which the first Indians of America might have found a passage to that continent, dis-