

HISTORY.

CARVER'S TRAVELS.

(Continued.)

I AM happy to find, since I formed the foregoing conclusions, that they correspond with the sentiments of that great and learned historian, doctor Robertson; and though, with him, I acknowledge that the investigation, from its nature, is so obscure and intricate, that the conjectures I have made can only be considered as conjectures, and not indisputable conclusions, yet they carry with them a greater degree of probability than the suppositions of those who assert that this continent was peopled from another quarter.

One of the doctor's quotations from the journals of Behring and Tschirikow who sailed from Kamtschatka about the year 1741 in quest of the new world, appears to carry great weight with it, and to afford our conclusions firm support.

"These countries, which they discovered in their course towards the east, discovered land, which to them appeared to be part of the American continent; and, according to their observations, it seems to be situated within a few degrees of the north-west coast of California. They had there some intercourse with the inhabitants, who seemed to them to resemble the North-Americans; as they presented to the Russians the calumet or pipe of peace, which is a symbol of friendship universal among the people of North-America, and an usage of arbitrary institution peculiar to them."

One of this incomparable writer's own arguments in support of his hypothesis is also urged with great judgment, and appears to be nearly conclusive. He says, "We may lay it down as a certain principle in this enquiry, that America was not peopled by any nation of the ancient continent, which had made considerable progress in civilization. The inhabitants of the new world were in a state of socie-

ty so extremely rude, as to be unacquainted with those arts which are the first essays of human ingenuity in its advance towards improvement. Even the most cultivated nations of America, were strangers to many of those simple inventions, which were almost coeval with society in other parts of the world, and were known in the earliest periods of civil life. From this it is manifest that the tribes which originally migrated to America, came from nations which must have been no less barbarous than their posterity, at the time they were first discovered by the Europeans. If ever the use of iron had been known to the savages of America, or to their progenitors, if ever they had employed a plough, a loom, or a forge, the utility of these inventions would have preserved them, and it is impossible that they should have been abandoned or forgotten."

CHAPTER II.

Of their persons, dress, &c.

FROM CANADA, to the conquest of it by the English in 1760, several of that nation, who had travelled into the interior parts of North-America, either to trade with the Indians, or to endeavour to make converts of them, have published accounts of their customs, manners, &c.

The principal of these are Father Louis Hennipin, Mons. Charlevoix, and the Baron Le Hontan. The first, many years ago, published some very judicious remarks, which he was the better enabled to do by the assistance he received from the maps and diaries of the unfortunate Mons. De La Salle, who was assassinated whilst he was on his travels, by some of his own party. That gentleman's journals falling into Father Hennipin's hands, he was enabled by them to publish many interesting particulars relative to the Indians. But in some respects he fell very short of that knowledge which it was in his power to have attained from his long

residence among them. Nor was he always (as has already been observed) exact in his calculations, or just in the intelligence he has given us.

The accounts published by the other two, particularly those of Charlevoix, are very erroneous in the geographical parts, and many of the stories told by the Baron are mere delusions.

Some of the jesuits, who heretofore travelled into these parts, have also written on this subject; but as few, if any, of their works have been translated into the English language, the generality of readers are not to be benefited by them; and, indeed, had this been done, they would have reaped but few advantages from them, as they have chiefly confined their observations to the religious principles of the savages, and the steps taken for their conversion.

Since the conquest of Canada, some of our own countrymen, who have lived among the Indians, and learned their language, have published their observations; however as their travels have not the nations that border on our settlements, a knowledge of the genuine and uncontaminated customs and manners of the Indians could not have been acquired by them.

The southern tribes, and those that have held a constant intercourse with the French or English, cannot have preserved their manners or their customs in their original purity. They could not avoid acquiring the vices with the language of those they conversed with; and the frequent intoxications they experienced through the baneful juices introduced among them by the Europeans, have completed a total alteration in their characters.

In such as these, a confused medley of principles or usages are only to be observed; their real and unpoluted customs could be seen among those nations alone that have held but little communications with the provinces. These I found in the north-west parts, and therefore flag.