

North-Carolina Chronicle; or, Fayetteville Gazette.

No. 24, of Vol. II. —

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 1791.

— [Total No. 76.]

HISTORY.

CARVER'S TRAVELS.

(Continued.)

MANY writers have asserted, that the Indians, even at the maturest period of their existence, are only furnished with hair on their heads; and that notwithstanding the profusion with which that part is covered, those parts which among the inhabitants of other climates are usually the seat of this excrescence, remain entirely free from it. Even Dr. Robertson, through their misrepresentations has contributed to propagate the error; and supposing the remark justly founded, has drawn several conclusions from it, relative to the habit and temperature of their bodies, which are consequently invalid. But from minute enquiries and a curious inspection, I am able to declare (however respectable I may hold the authority of these historians in other points) that their assertions are erroneous, and proceeding from the want of a thorough knowledge of the customs of the Indians.

After the age of puberty, their bodies, in their natural state, are covered in the same manner as those of the Europeans. The men, indeed, esteem a beard very tubercular, and take great pains to get rid of it, nor is there any to be perceived on their face, except when they grow old, and become inattentive to their appearance. Every crinous effluence on the other parts of the body is held unseemly by them, and both sexes employ much time in their extirpation.

The Naudowessies and the remote nations pluck them out with bent pieces of hard wood, formed into a kind of nippers; whilst those who have communication with Europeans procure from them wire, which they twist into a screw or worm; applying this to the part, they press the rings together, and with a sudden twitch draw out all the hairs that are enclosed between them.

The men of every nation differ in their dress very little from each other, except those who trade with the Europeans; these exchange their furs for blankets, shirts, and other apparel, which they wear as much for ornament as necessity. The latter fasten by a girdle around their waists about half a yard of broadcloth, which covers the middle parts of their bodies. Those who wear shirts never make them fast either at the wrist or collar; this would be a most insufferable confinement to them. They throw their blanket loose upon their shoulders, and holding the upper side of it by the two corners, with a knife in one hand, and a tobacco pouch, pipe, &c. in the other; thus accoutred they walk about their villages or camps, but in their dances they seldom wear this covering.

Those among the men who wish to appear gayer than the rest, pluck from their heads all the hair except from a spot on the top of it about the size of a crown-piece, where it is permitted to grow to a considerable length; on this are fastened plumes of feathers of various colours with silver or ivory quills. The manner of cutting and ornamenting this part of the head distinguishes different nations from each other.

They paint their faces red and black, which they esteem as greatly ornamental. They also paint themselves when they go to war; but the method they make use of on this occasion differs from that wherein they use it merely as a decoration.

The young Indians, who are desirous of excelling their companions in finery, slit the outward rim of both their ears; at the same time they care not to separate them entirely, but leave the flesh thus cut still untouched at both extremities; around this spongy substance, from the upper to the lower part, they twist brass wire, till the weight draws the amputated rim into a bow of five or six inches diameter, and drags it almost down to the shoulders. This decoration is esteemed to be excessively gay and becoming.

It is also a common custom among

them to bore their noses, and wear in their pendants of different kinds. I observed that sea shells were much worn by those of the interior parts, and reckoned very ornamental; but how they procured them I could not learn; probably by their traffic with other nations near the sea.

They go without any covering for the thigh, except that before-mentioned around the middle, which reaches down half way the thighs; but they make for their legs a sort of stocking, either of skin or cloth; these are sewed as near to the shape of the leg as possible, so as to admit of being drawn on and off. The edges of the stuff of which they are composed are fast annexed to the seam, and hang out for about the breadth of a hand; and this part, which is placed on the outside of the leg, is generally ornamented by those who have any communication with Europeans, if of cloth, with ribbons or lace, if of leather, with embroidery or porcupine quills curiously coloured.

Strangers who hunt among the Indians in the parts where is a great deal of snow, find these stockings much more convenient than any others.

Their shoes are made of the skin of the deer, elk or buffalo; these, sometimes dressed according to the European manner, at others with the hair remaining on them, are cut into shoes and fashioned so as to be easy to the feet, and convenient for walking. The edges round the ankle are decorated with pieces of brass or tin fixed around leather strings, about an inch long, which being placed very thick, make a cheerful tinkling noise either when they walk or dance.

The women wear a covering of some kind or other from the neck to the knees. Those who trade with the Europeans wear a linen garment, the same as that used by the men; the flaps of which hang over the petticoat. Such as dress after the ancient manner make a kind of shift with leather, which covers the body but not the arms. Their petticoats are made either of leather or cloth, which reach from the waist to the knee. On their legs