

SKETCHES
OF A
TOUR TO THE LAKES,
OF THE CHARACTER AND CUSTOMS OF THE
CHIPPEWAY INDIANS,
AND OF INCIDENTS CONNECTED WITH
THE TREATY OF FOND DU LAC.

BY THOMAS L. MCKENNEY,
OF THE INDIAN DEPARTMENT,
And joint Commissioner with his Excellency Gov. Cass, in negotiating the Treaty.

ALSO,
A Vocabulary
OF THE
ALGIC, OR CHIPPEWAY LANGUAGE,

FORMED IN PART, AND AS FAR AS IT GOES, UPON THE BASIS OF ONE FURNISHED
BY THE HON. ALBERT GALLATIN.

"Thus fare the shivering natives of the north,
And thus the rangers of the western world."..... Cooper.

ORNAMENTED WITH TWENTY-NINE ENGRAVINGS, OF LAKE SUPERIOR, AND OTHER
SCENERY, INDIAN LIKENESSES, COSTUMES, &c.

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grateful to her, and no doubt was so. The interpreter said, "Your father from towards the rising sun is feeding you with his own hand." She ceased chewing the rice, of which the pudding was made, for a moment, and seemed surprised, and presently raising her hand on the opposite direction from where I stood, and rolling her sightless, but perfect eyes, in that direction, asked "is he there?" No; said the interpreter, he is on this side. She asked if I would shake hands with her? I did so; when she said, "*I wish I could see him!*"

I crossed over again this evening a little before sun-down, with the Doctor and interpreter, and took with me some gingerbread and lemon syrup. When I spoke to her, she smiled, drank some syrup, ate some gingerbread, and said she was better. The Doctor has some hope that she may recover the use of her limbs; but doubts whether her sight will ever return. We found her wrapped in her new blanket, and looking better, and in all respects more comfortable. Heaven bless you.

Thermometer, at sun-down, 60°.

Fond du Lac, Aug. 2d, 1826. T. sun-rise, 49°.

MY DEAR ***

I need not tell you that the morning is cold. The thermometer indicates that. I wonder how you all feel in Washington and Georgetown this morning in regard to the temperature? Hot enough, no doubt. Fires here, except now and then when a hot day and night come, which by the way is rare, are very agreeable. Their visits seem only as intimations that summer has not gone by. The middle of every day is warm enough; but the moment the sun loses his power in the evening, and before he gains it in the morning, it is cold. The mosquitoes have but a short season up here. By the middle of this month, their race will have been run. But they make the most of the little time which is allotted to them.

I think every now and then, how easy it would have been in some hundred lines, or in one letter, to have told you all that it might be worth while to have troubled you with. But I recur to your request. You want to know *every thing*. It is difficult for me to travel out of the record. Many a lawyer would give the better part of any thing but his fee, to have the liberty to ramble, that I have, under your grant. There is nothing that comes in with half its consolation to an unfurnished brain; and in the absence of facts, or clear testimony, and a lack of brain, such liberty is beyond all price. It is well that you thought of giving me such enlargement; for without it, I question whether you would have heard from me at all; and this, by the way, would have saved you a world of trouble in following the tracks of my sketches.

The Doctor and myself, accompanied by our interpreter, (Mr. Dingly, the trader, of whom I have spoken) visited the sick girl this morning. The medicine sent over last night, has had a good effect; but she is languid, too much so to express any one sign of pleasure at a present which I took over, of a yard and a half of blue cloth for a petticoat, and some beads. I took with me also some tea and crackers, and some raspberry jelly. It is fortunate I did; for they had nothing to nourish the poor thing with but their fish soup, coarse and unsavoury enough, and which her stomach could not bear. She drank the tea, and ate the crackers that were soaked in it, with much relish, and said, "it is good." She tasted the jelly also, and was told when she wanted any, to ask her mother for it.

The Doctor cupped her on the back of the neck. The blood was coagulated in the cup when it was taken off, indicating how languid the circulation is, and the extreme debility of the patient. But she looks more comfortable. I gave her mother a piece of soap, and she had washed her face and hands; the calico had been made up into a short gown; her arms were covered, and there was about her an exterior of comfort. But her case, after all, is one of ex-

treme doubt. It is distressing to see how unfit these people are to handle a delicate and feeble patient. Her father and mother, it is true, are always with her, and appear fond of her, and doubtless are so. Poor thing! when we go away, there will remain no diet, no refreshing cordial, and no skill, to combat with her malady.

I have mentioned raspberry jelly. It is made here by a Mrs. Coty, a half breed, and wife of a trader, a very sensible and fine woman, who is celebrated for her skill with the needle, and for making and ornamenting moccasins, leggins, &c. She lives in winter in the buildings we occupy; and in summer in a lodge near them, and it is the only really comfortable lodge I have seen. Like all lodges, its door is closed by a piece of bark, or a mat; and it has an opening at top, under which, and on the ground, the fire is made. Generally the Indians put around these lodges the branches of the spruce tree, on which they sit and sleep, but here is a floor of planks, resting on sleepers made of logs, which run from the sides of the lodge towards the passage way, which is in front of the door, and extends two thirds of the way through. This floor is about six inches from the level of the passage way. On this floor they sit on mats, or on their bedding. They have in this lodge little ottomans, which are handed out to strangers to sit on. In this lodge, which is nearly round, and about twelve feet in diameter, live two families, Mr. Coty's and Mr. Morrison's. Mrs. Coty has with her an aged, but fine looking Indian mother. This lodge is very different from that in which Kich-e-wyn E'qua lives!

Raspberries grow wild here in great quantities, and of the finest flavour. All the Indians and whites together, some six hundred persons, have been eating them daily since our arrival, from the hills back of our quarters, and they are yet plenty.

At twelve o'clock to-day our council met. The address by the Governor being delivered and interpreted, the council rose, to meet again when the Indians shall make known

their readiness to make their reply. The sketch of the arbour, by Mr. Lewis, was taken at this first sitting, and it is an excellent representation of it.

Another band of Indians arrived this morning; and this evening we have had another pipe dance, and another variety of it. The Indians all naked as before, except the *auzeum*, and painted, as usual, with all manner of devices, and with all colours. The drummers attended as before, thumping their drums and singing. But in this dance only one would rise at once, and he would step out into the circle with a canister in one hand, and a pipe in the other, and equal in antics any merry andrew who ever attempted to amuse a multitude. It is impossible to imagine the figures into which these dancers throw themselves. Sometimes their bodies will be rounded in front like a bow, with their arms pinioned down to their sides, their elbows projecting just behind their hips, while their arms, making a sharp angle at the elbow, rise up with the hands on a line with their necks, each grasping a pipe and a rattle—then with their knees bent forward, they jump to the time of the drum, or first with one foot, and then the other, stamp round the circle.

I have just seen the sick girl. The cupping this morning, has had the happy effect to relieve, in a great degree, the pain in the back of her head. The same remedy was applied this evening to her right temple. This discharged more freely, and blood of a better quality. We had not left her before the pain was lessened here also. She feels an itching sensation in her palsied leg and arm, which doubtless indicates returning life, and this was confirmed on her moving her hand. But there is no glimpse, yet, of light to her eyes that seek it so earnestly, and the absence of which she so much deplores. I carried over some more tea, and left word for them not to feed her until I returned. Her pulse, too, that guide to the judgment in cases of disease, is slower, and softer, and more regular; and there is a roundness in it which I have not felt before. The attention Doctor Pitcher has paid to this poor child of the woods, does him great credit.

But it was what I expected of him: it is only another development of the many amiable traits which I have had occasion to admire in his character.

Knowing how great a value these people put on jewelry, I took over, on two or three occasions, some silver brooches, and rings, with stones set in them. When it was explained to her what they were, and how they looked, there was a sensible pleasure manifested in her countenance, and she smiled. The disease of the body is no doubt often overcome by the buoyancy of the spirits, and confirmed by their depression. This destitute and friendless girl is no less the subject of God's care than are the ravens—and "he feedeth them when they cry,"—and should not be neglected by us.

The number of Indians to-day is six hundred and twenty-five. Thermometer, sun-down, 61°.

Ever yours.

Fond du Lac, August 3, 1826. T. sun-rise, 59°.

MY DEAR ***

This is a beautiful morning. It is fair and tranquil. The river is smooth and glassy, and the deep green of the surrounding foliage reflects full upon its bosom, so much so that its amber colour is changed. Bark canoes are constantly passing to and from the island, which gives animation to the scene. So adroitly do these Indians use their paddles, and so noiseless is every thing about the stroke they make with them, and so quick do they move, that it looks fairy-like. Some magic seems to be at work beside the regular and slow motion of the paddle, to give these bits of bark such speed. They hardly disturb the surface of the river.

My service in the Indian department, and the experience I have acquired there, served to satisfy me that it is not every body who knows enough of the Indian character to conduct councils with them to a successful and harmonious issue. I came here, expecting, myself, to learn much; and I felt that I was with no ordinary instructor. Few men have

so intimate a knowledge of the Indian character as Governor Cass. He has had much experience, and his mind never fails to profit by whatever subject comes in his way. He seizes and analyzes every thing, and with the rapidity of thought. I wrote him before I left home, that I should attend as a pupil—and, therefore, would expect him to conduct the whole proceedings. I do not, therefore, expect to open my lips on this occasion.

Our council met to-day at the signal—three discharges of musketry—when several speeches were made by the Indians, all which the Secretary to the commission will preserve to accompany the treaty, and which, if these shall be published, you will see. The only incidents of interest which occurred to-day, were those which related to the case of a speaker who had a British medal around his neck; and the appearance in council of the old woman we saw at Montreal river. After he had finished his speech, and when in the act of presenting his pipe to be smoked, the Governor (having previously suggested the propriety of speaking to him about his medal,) remarked, that we had noticed around his neck a British medal; that we supposed he wore it, not as a badge of authority, or power, but as an ornament. If he wore it as a token of authority, we could not smoke with him; but if as an ornament only, we would. He took it from around his neck and laid it on our table, saying, he put no value on it. The pipe was then smoked, and an American medal given him to take the place of the English one.

This may seem fastidious, perhaps. But when you know that one of the chief difficulties with which the government has to contend in this quarter, is that which relates to the exercise of British influence over these people; and that an Indian looks, generally, before he elects his side, to the quantum of power that may be there, and compares it carefully with that which he may be solicited to abandon, you will see that our exception to a badge of this sort is all proper. It is intended, and especially in council, where so many witness it, as a protest against their taking any other side, whilst

they profess to look to us for protection. We gave proof, in the late war, of the *kind* of services we expect of them. Our demand extended then no further than to their *neutrality*—and this is the only situation in which it is hoped we may ever see them in the future, on either side, should war ever again break out between us and the mother country, which, may Heaven, in mercy, forbid. This same Indian had a British flag also, which he afterwards brought, and in full council, laid at our feet. On seeing it there, the Indians set up a shout, and in their remarks, gave proof that they knew the import of a flag, and also what its surrender meant. This flag* was ordered to be replaced with an American flag.

The old woman who was dressed in skins at Montreal river, and who was starving there, having borrowed some decent clothing, took her seat in council, and was the only female in it. She wore her husband's medal, and laid as an offering upon our table, being too poor to provide a belt of wampum, some strands of dried grass, and porcupine's quills. These she brought very carefully wrapped in a piece of bark. On presenting them, she said—"I come in the place of my husband. He is old and blind—but he yet has a mouth, and ears. He can speak and hear. He is very poor. He hopes to receive a present from his fathers." So saying, she turned round and resumed her seat in the midst of the council. I have a faithful likeness of her, and inclose it. The green paint around her eyes was the only ornament with which she pretended to beautify her wrinkled face; and the medal the only adorning of which her shrivelled neck could boast.

Kich-e-wyn Et'qua is better. I took over a suit of flannel to-day, and advised friction, and the Doctor has prepared some *tincture gik*. It is not yet certain whether she will recover. If she dies, her passage to the grave will have been at least smoothed. The Doctor has cupped her in the left temple. She says she is better.

The barges we passed taking shelter under a point near Grand island, with provisions, have just arrived, having had a passage of twenty-five days from the Sault.

* Now with the medal in my office at Washington.

Our council adjourned at one, to meet at three, and at the usual signal. The Governor being too much indisposed, I presided alone. The council rose at sun-down.

I have procured a full dress* of a Chippeway woman; and a drawing of one in two views, front and back. These you will see. Their arms, except the back parts of them, and the upper portion of their breasts are naked. The sleeves meet at the points, or corners of the squares behind, and are fastened with a gorget. Only those who chance to be better off dress thus. A petticoat of strouds, and a blanket, are the most usual dress; and few are in situations to command but a very scant pattern of the one, or to renew, even annually, the other. They all have full heads of hair—this they wear clubbed up behind, and wrapped in cloth or skin, and tied close to their heads.

Thermometer, at sun-down, 66°.

Good night.

*American Fur Company's establishment, Fond du Lac, }
August 4, 1826. T. sun-rise, 63°. }*

MY DEAR ***

I had hoped to have seen one of these anomalies, which are sometimes found among the Chippeways, and I believe amongst other tribes in the west. It is what they call a *man-woman*. I have it from undoubted authority, that such do exist. This singular being, either from a dream, or from an impression derived from some other source, considers that he is bound to impose upon himself, as the only means of appeasing his manito, all the exterior of a woman; and undergo all the drudgery which the men exact from the squaws. So completely do they succeed, and even to the voice, as to make it impossible to distinguish them from the women. They contract even their walk; turn in their toes, perform all the menial offices of the lodge; wear, of course, petticoats, and breast coverings, and even go through the ceremony of marriage! Nothing can induce these men-

*In my office at Washington.

women to put off these imitative garbs, and assume again the pursuits and manly exercises of the chiefs. It is like taking the black veil: Once committed thus far, they are considered as beyond redemption, (unless their vow shall be limited, as is sometimes the case; as for example, until they take an enemy alive) and live, and die, confirmed in the belief that they are acting the part which the dream, or some other impression, pointed out to them as indispensable. Longsdorff, I think it is, in his account of the Russian embassy to Japan, says—"boys in the Aleutian islands are frequently brought up as girls. Their beards are plucked out, and their chins tattooed like women, and they supply their places with the men as concubines. These men are called Schopans. The custom has prevailed since the earliest times." Is there any link between our Indians and the Japanese, which connects this practice of the Aleutian islanders with that among the Chippeways? I leave for those who have more leisure to search for it, should it be thought to exist at all. It would be curious should it be found.

Kich-e-wyn E'qua is certainly much better—but there are no symptoms of returning sight. Her eyes, like Milton's, in search of this great blessing,

"—roll, but roll in vain to find
Its piercing ray."

There is no change in the appearance of her eyes, which, doubtless look, with the exception of their twitching motion, as they did before they ceased to receive the impression of the light.

I have been attracted to-day more than usual by the movement of the canoes, which have been unusually numerous in all directions. The Indian women, and even the little girls, paddle these canoes with great skill. Their dexterity and alight in this business would equally delight and surprise you; and you would admire the grace with which they handle the paddle. They sit in the bottom of the canoe. The woman in the stern strikes her paddle into the water, reaching well

forward, both with her arms and body, and bringing up the handle to a line with her shoulder, turns its edge quick to the current, and inclines its blade, in and out, slow or quick, as the direction of the canoe may require; when, if a wrong direction is given to it, the backward inclination of the paddle is resorted to, and the true course is instantly regained. I know nothing with which to compare the slight with which all this is done, except it be the foot of a water-fowl. You have doubtless seen the duck, for example, swim? If you have, you have seen its foot thrown forward with a quick motion, and then forced backward, and when on a line with the angle of its action, close up and follow in the line of the body; then forward again, and then backward. Just so, and with scarcely less slight, is the paddle handled by these dexterous squaws. Nor does the duck move upon the surface of the water with greater buoyancy, or stillness, than do these birchen canoes. On reaching the shore, which is always approached with great caution, the whole company rise from the bottom of the canoe, where they all sit, the better to steady it, and are out upon the shore, spreading from right to left, and with a celerity not much short of a flock of their native pigeons, when the contents of a gun are discharged amongst them, and they suddenly pitch from the bough on which they had been resting, and scatter in the woods. One of these frail vessels, on being thus unburdened, is so light, that the last one who steps out, takes it by one of the bars that crosses it about midway, and walks out with it upon the shore, as if it were a basket.

I have, on one or two occasions before, referred to the birchen canoe, in the hope of making you conceive clearly all that relates to it, and the manner of paddling it; but have never been satisfied with my attempts. I am now happily relieved from all further necessity of referring, in the way of description, to these singular conveyances, which you will bear in mind are *wholly of Indian invention, and which the white man has never been able to improve*, by having had addressed to me by my friend Mr. Schoolcraft,

the following beautiful description of the one in which we voyaged it to this place; and in which I shall return, taking Mr. Lewis with me to sketch the Pictured rocks, &c.; and Ben to cook, and make our pallets.

THE BIRCHEN CANOE.

In the region of lakes where the blue waters sleep,
Our beautiful fabric was built;
Light cedar supported its weight on the deep,
And its sides with the sun-beams were gilt.

The bright leafy bark of the betula* tree,
A flexible sheathing provides;
And the fir's thready roots draw the parts to agree,
And bound down its high-swelling sides.

No compass or gavel was used on the bark,
No art but the simplest degree;
But the structure was finished, and trim to remark,
And as light as a Sylph's could be.

Its rim was with tender young roots woven round,
Like a pattern of wicker-work rare;
And it press'd on the waves with as lightsome a bound,
As a basket suspended in air.

The heav'ns in their brightness and glory below,
Were reflected quite plain to the view;
And it mov'd like a swan—with as graceful a show,
Our beautiful birchen canoe.

The trees on the shore as we glided along,
Seem'd moving a contrary way;
And our voyageurs lightened their toil with a song,
That caus'd ev'ry heart to be gay.

And still as we floated by rock and by shell,
Our bark rais'd a murmur loud;
And it dan'd on the waves, as they rose, as they fell,
Like a Fey on a bright summer cloud.

We said, as we pass'd o'er the liquid expanse,
With the landscape in smiling array;
How blest we should be, if our lives should advance,
Thus tranquil and sweetly away.

* Betula papyracea.

The skies were sorene—not a cloud was in sight—
Not an angry surge beat on the shore,
And we gazed on the water, and then on the light,
Till our vision could bear it no more.

Oh, long will we think of those silver bright lakes,
And the scenes they exposed to our view;
Our friends—and the wishes we formed for their sakes—
And our bright yellow birchen canoe.

The Governor having determined to return in a canoe, has set two Indians to work to build one. The principal undertaker is one of the sons of the scalped woman—but he has in his service a numerous train of squaws and children, who do the greater part of the work. The women, in fact, are expected to labour at every thing. From the building of a lodge, to the boiling of a kettle; and from the making of their husbands' moccasins, to the construction of their canoes, and to the gumming and sewing them when they require it, is an Indian woman's employment. Every species of drudgery is imposed upon her. They are literally the pack horses too—for, on a journey, these poor creatures have heaped upon them heavy burdens, whilst the man encumbers himself with nothing but his rifle, if he has one, and if not, with his bow and arrows, his pipe, and his pouch.

I have attended the progress of the work in building this canoe. It is curious enough. Stakes are driven in the ground at certain distances, along each side of where the canoe is to be built, and for the entire length of it. Pieces of bark are sewn together with wattap, and placed between, from one end to the other, and made fast to them. When the bark is thus in, it hangs loose, and in folds, and looks, without its regularity, like the covers of a book with its back downwards, its edges up, and the leaves out. Next, the cross pieces are put in, pressing out the rim, and giving to the upper edges the form which the canoe is to bear—then the ribs are pressed in, the thin sheathing, in strips, being laid between them and the bark, and these (the ribs,) press out the bark, and give form and figure to the bottom and sides of the canoe. Weights (large stones,) are put on the

bottom of these ribs, which had been previously soaked, and kept there till they dry. The next process is to remove the stakes, gum the seams, and the fabric is complete. There remains no more to do but to put it in the water, where it floats like a feather. This canoe is thirty-six feet long, and five wide across the middle.

I hope to take home with me some interesting relics from among these people, and some drawings, in addition to those which I am now and then putting aside for you, the better to illustrate my correspondence, and which are intended for the office in Washington, and to be preserved there for the inspection of the curious, and the information of future generations, and long after the Indians themselves will have been no more. I am anxious to accomplish as much of this as my time, and the opportunities afforded me, may allow, for I am pretty certain that, although my time is so limited in these regions, another opportunity will never again occur until the Chippeways shall have lost their character, and their costume, if not their being. This remote point, so in the heart of the interior, and surrounded as it is by solitude and the lakes, feels to me, in more respects than one, as if it were somewhere, in the neighbourhood, at least, of *the end of the world*. You remember that beautiful hymn of Thomson's? I have often, when I had no idea of ever being this near to the "verge," rehearsed, (and with a glow of rapture which the composition of so much sublimity could not fail to produce)—

"Should fate command me to the distant verge
Of the green earth, to distant barbarous climes,
Rivers unknown to song, where first the sun
Gilds Indian mountains, or his setting beam
Flames on the Atlantic isles, 'tis nought to me,
Since God is ever present, ever felt,
In the wide waste, and in the city full,
And where he vital breathes there must be joy."

I have often revolved these lines in my mind since I have been removed so far from the confines of civilized life, and placed amidst the stillness, and the awful grandeur of God's

works.—They are delightful even here, where the “setting beam” of the sun shines long after it has been quenched with you.

The thermometer was, to-day, at two o’clock, at 80°!—This may serve to show you how sharp the angles are, and how sudden is the ascent from cold to heat, and *vice versa*.

No objection having been made in the addresses of the chiefs yesterday, to any part of the opening address, a treaty is prepared, and will, to-morrow, be read to them, section by section; and after the signing, we shall make the demand for the surrender of the murderers. They were told there was another, and a serious subject, to which their attention would be called after the treaty was signed, and I believe they all anticipate what it is.

Kich-e-wyn E’qua is better. The Doctor and myself have just returned from visiting her. Her pulse has a healthful action, and she is able to move her hand, and her foot. Her appetite is good, and she sleeps well.

Ben had his courage tested this evening. It was whispered that some Sioux had been seen on some of the neighbouring hills this morning. He came early to inquire if I had heard it. I told him I supposed it was only rumour. He looked anxious, and was not at all satisfied. Some of our company, it appears, who were desirous of seeing a race, had contrived to send such a rumour in the direction of Ben’s ears—and when it was known he had caught it, they proceeded to engage three young Chippewas to paint and hide themselves in the grass near the spring, and when he should go for water in the evening, to rise, and yell, and make a feint to attack him. Ben went for the water a little before the time. But as he neared the spring, they crawled towards him, and setting the grass in motion, caught his attention. He stepped quick over the fence, dipped his bucket into the spring, and, according to his own confession, was just about to run, when, as they rose and ran towards him, he saw one of them laugh. This induced him to believe it was a trick, and he acquitted himself with great boldness.

He has given out "that it's dangerous to repeat the attempt, for so sure as they're alive, he'll make daylight shine through them." It is easy to see that Ben is anxious, by his earnestness in giving out what he means to do, to avoid the obligation which a sudden fright might impose on him to run; and the laugh which he perceives would be general at his expense. Thermometer, sun-down, 73°.

Good night.

*American Fur Company's establishment, Fond du Lac, }
August 5, 1826. T. sun-rise, 60°. }*

MY DEAR ***

After closing my letter last evening, it was announced that a *wabana* would be danced; and that fire-eaters would exhibit their power over this element. Two of our company went to witness the exhibition, and Ben, of course, who follows me like my shadow. On arriving at the lodge, which was about sixty yards back of the military tents, as shewn in the drawing, we soon saw from the throng of Indians around it, that the ceremonies were to be conducted there. So, without any ceremony, we went in, and crowded down between the Indians that were seated, to the number of thirty, all round the tent. The ceremony was opened by the drum, with its accustomed *thump, thump, thump*, followed by an occasional yell from the Indians. The two fires that had been burning, one at each end of the lodge, were nearly extinguished. Every now and then I threw in little pieces of bark, which made short-lived flames, enough to discover the nakedness of the Indians who were around me, and their eyes shining in all directions, some through cracks in the bark of the lodge, from without, and others from within, who, on seeing the blaze, would be turned instantly towards it. A little girl, at one end of the lodge, and an old woman at the other, commenced the ceremonies as they did at the Sault—then came the dancers in like manner as at the Sault, also, to the number of ten or twelve,

who, with bodies naked, and half bent and constrained, and violently agitated, would go round the tent up one side, and down the other, yelling at intervals, and multiplying the sounds by clapping their hands on their mouths. All at once, and by throwing dirt and ashes on them, the remains of the fires were extinguished, when for a moment every thing was still. Then the drums beat louder and quicker, and the song broke out from a hundred mouths—those without, joining those within, until it was one loud yell of savage confusion! In the midst of this, three or four Indians went round the circle blowing fire from their mouths, emitting thousands of sparks, and lighting up, by means of them, their faces, whilst their distended cheeks looked like lanterns. As one of these approached the place where I was seated, I rose, and looking into his mouth, saw in what the deception consisted. He had a reed, or some other hollow substance between his teeth. This had been filled with powder and combustible materials—the smell of brimstone was strong—and lighted. This being placed between his teeth, he blew out its fiery contents—and this was called *eating* fire. Several of them took up live coals of fire, and from their manner of holding them, I have no doubt but their hands had been rubbed with something that guarded the skin from the action of fire, but was not able to ascertain what it was. The Indian into whose mouth I looked, on discovering me, turned short round and extinguished the fire, which I presume he did by stopping the ends of the reed.

This is the whole of this feat, except that it is repeated many times. I am convinced, that all the accounts we have seen of Indians eating fire, are only exaggerations of attempts at deception like this.

We (the Doctor, myself, and the interpreter,) paid our accustomed morning visit to Kich-e-wyn E'qua, and were gratified to find her much improved. There is every symptom of returning life in her dead limbs. The more healthful action of the other parts of her body appears to be communicated, in part at least, from those members from which

life has been so long excluded. There is now some reason to hope that this child of affliction may once more walk. As to her seeing, this is more uncertain. It is possible, however, that her sight may be restored. There is no knowing what a universally healthful action of the system may produce. But this, to be continued, will need the healthful and invigorating diet of which the poor thing will be deprived, when we shall have left here. I mean, however, to leave a supply, and special directions for its use. But the improvidence and want of skill in these Indians, it is to be feared, will not lead them to make a proper use of it—and yet no people can be more assiduous than are both the father and mother, in their attentions to their sick child. We find them almost stationary, one at her head, and the other at her feet, and with deeply anxious countenances, watching over her helpless frame. Yet we have to feed her—they seem to know nothing of even this simplest part of the nursing art. We had scarcely entered the lodge this morning, when we saw from their countenances that the girl was better. On making the usual inquiry, they both looked up and said, "*she's well*,"—meaning, doubtless, that she had no pain, and was not sick at her stomach, as she had always been before.

Our council met at eleven o'clock, at the usual signal, when the treaty was read, section by section, and interpreted. It was agreed to without a dissenting voice. The signing consumed much time. It is true, even the cross is made for the signer, and he only puts the nib of the pen on it, but it is a short journey to travel over all the length, and the ups and downs which generally enter into the formation of an Indian's name.

The signing and witnessing having been gone through with, the council was adjourned to meet again this afternoon, at the firing of the guns.

The council met; when, according to arrangement, I made the demand for the surrender of the murderers. This being done, and there being one Indian present belonging to

the *Lac de Flambeau* band, and who was of the party who committed the murder, he was called up and formally examined. He is clearly innocent. Indeed his presence here demonstrates that. It was in proof that he dissuaded the murderers from committing the act. We told him if he had been guilty, we would have taken him with us, and tried him by our laws; and if, on proof, he had turned out to have had a hand in the bloody act, he should have been hanged. During his examination, his brother came up to the table greatly agitated. He showed great anxiety, and said he knew the murderers had *upbraided* him because he would not join them. Another Indian declared that he knew he was innocent. The Governor said, will you put your hand on your breast, and say that in the presence of the Great Spirit? The moment the interpreter put this question, he looked him full in the face, and answered, "*am I a dog that I should lie?*" This reply is somewhat remarkable, not only on account of its near resemblance to one made of old, "*Is thy servant a dog,*" &c. but on another account. In the first place, there is hardly any thing on which an Indian sets so high a value as he does upon his dog. This is proverbial. Yet he is constantly referred to as an object of contempt! Indians never swear—I mean until they learn it of their white brothers—and their most degrading epithet is to call their opponents *dogs*. Here is a strange union of respect and contempt. But further. A dog is considered the best offering to their enraged manito, and often in a storm is one thrown overboard to appease him. Yet they kill him and eat him, and consider a feast greatly enriched when this animal, which they so highly respect as never to be without them, makes part of it. You must account for this strange variety in an Indian's notions, and his taste, in regard to the dog. We smoked with the suspected Indian, and told him we were satisfied of his innocence.

To-morrow is appointed to receive the answer to our demand. On the adjournment of the council, to enliven the

young and gratify the old, we threw out, to be scrambled for, various little matters. Some were thrown on the tops of the houses. There is no place too high or too deep for these Indians to go after what will add to their stores. If in the river, they will plunge in; and if on the house top, they feel no less hesitation in going there. Here we had an opportunity of witnessing the activity which characterizes these people. Their unbound limbs, free in their action, give them power over any thing, if it be where it is possible for man to get. They have no fear. They clamber up the sides and ends of these houses and over their eaves, and race and tumble on their roofs with as little unconcern, as if they were on the ground.

The Indian examined by us yesterday, came forward this morning, in company with his brother, and as representatives of the *Lac du Flambeau* band, said they were prepared with their answer; and again his brother came forward and declared their *chief* was innocent. He gave his word further, and said Mr. Schoolcraft knew he was. He made a request that wampum might be sent to him, that they might all walk in the same path. This, he said, would enable them to apprehend the murderers, who did not live near them, but far off. This took place before the council met, and we were induced to believe from it that we should receive a pledge of their purpose to apprehend and deliver the murderers.

At half past ten the council met. We told them we were now prepared to receive their answer to our demand of yesterday. The four principal men of the *Lac du Flambeau* band came forward, shook hands, and told us they had but little to say; that one would speak, and his words would be the words of all, and that they hoped their fathers would listen to them. They said they had with them no young men, and they felt it hard to give an answer. That they would go home first, see their young men, and then give an answer. Their speaker then placed before us two belts of wampum, and said, this is to show, that we two are of one

mind. These belts of wampum were covered over with earth of a bluish cast. I inquired why they were thus covered with earth. They said their wampum was sorry, meaning the occasion was a mournful one.

They were told their answer to our demand was not satisfactory; and that they could not council with their young men, for they were not here. We demanded an answer then. We told them we believed their war chief, *Ke-way-we-nut*,* was innocent; and, in proof of our sincerity, presented a belt of wampum to be given to him—that henceforth he might come and go in safety and at pleasure. But as to the murderers, we must have them—and their answer must be given now.

After a little consultation, they answered—“*we will deliver them at the Sault, or at Green bay, next spring.*”

We expressed our gratification at the answer; and told them it would save their people from great calamity. For their great father would not sit still until his white children's blood should be washed out. These proceedings will appear more at large in the Secretary's report of them.†

The council was then adjourned until the afternoon, when it was re-assembled, and honours were conferred by a presentation of medals to the chiefs, and warriors, and young men of distinction. The Governor referred the address on the occasion to me, and which was also to embrace, as a last one, a review of the past, and some references to the future. This I presume will also appear in the proceedings.‡

To-morrow we shall distribute the goods, and flour, and pork. This being done we shall embark, and look towards the rising sun. Every thing was begun, and has continued, and ended well. The Indians express themselves in terms of thankfulness. They say their great father's hand is full of good things. I have no doubt the impressions made upon

* I have received, since my return, a likeness of this chief, by Mr. McCleary of the garrison at the Sault de St. Marie. It is said to be excellent.

† See Appendix.

‡ Ibid.

young and old will not be easily effaced. Many prejudices against the people of the United States, of whom they knew nothing before, are dissipated; and feelings of friendship are produced. A policy of a certain description I perceive to be necessary. I think I see wherein we have been deficient along this entire frontier. But this is official.

Just at sun-down there arrived fifteen fine looking men from *Sangué*, or Leach lake. Their arrival was followed by a dance, such as I have before described. These men are from the highest point reached by Pike, and further, in that direction, it is believed, than any white man, except a trader, and Governor Cass in his late tour, ever penetrated. They report that another party is expected to-night. These men border the country contiguous to the *Sieux*. Their arrival will delay us, as we esteem it to be of importance to impress upon their minds also all that has been done. And we wish to include them in the arrangement. While I write another party of thirty-six have arrived.

Thermometer, sun-down, 60°.

Ever yours.

*American Fur Company's establishment, Fond du Lac, }
Aug. 7, 1826. T. sun-rise, 57°. }*

MY DEAR ***

Still colder, and the "crackling faggot" in the adjoining room confirms the testimony of the thermometer.

Last night at about nine o'clock we were informed a *jongleur* was about to commence his ceremonies. We went to see how these were conducted. The fixture was of poles, such as I have described, but instead of these being covered with mats, or bark, they were wrapped round with the sails belonging to a couple of barges, and these were made fast to the poles by means of ropes. We found the *jongleur* sitting near this place of his incantations, with about twenty Indians, all silent as the grave. Nobody felt free to disturb, by saying a word, the apparent solemnity. We had not been long at the spot before he rose from his seat on the

ground, climbed to the top of this enclosure, and which, by the way, and as far as it goes, resembles in figure a shot tower, and sitting for a while composedly at the top, began in a low tone to utter sounds which were not intelligible even to the interpreter—these increased louder, and louder, until he reached the utmost pitch of his voice, when it was gradually lowered again to those scarcely audible sounds—when he sat silent.

The interpreter told me so far as he could catch his expressions, that he was engaged in prayer to the Great Spirit, in which he begged him to send him devils; and to give him power over them, to compel them to obey his commands. He then sang an Indian air, without words, and descended to the bottom of the enclosure. After he was there for a few minutes, he spoke, when three Indians following each other, walked round the enclosure several times, with their hands on it. Two of them sat down, and one of them stood to receive and impart the questions and answers. Before any one spoke, however, the place was violently shaken—when presently we heard something fall upon the ground within, with great weight. It shook again, and again, and at the close of each shake, and whilst the *jongleur* was making a strange noise within, with a tremulous crying kind of a voice, the sound was again heard as if something had fallen within, of great weight. We counted fifteen of these sounds. These we were told were the lighting down of the devils sent him by the Great Spirit in answer to his prayers.

It was now announced that he was ready to answer any questions that might be put to him; when he was asked, "what his great father at Washington was doing at that time?" The place was instantly and violently shaken, when we were told a devil had been sent to sea. The answer was presently announced, preceded by another shake. It was this—"He is doing nothing; but is sitting quietly thinking about this treaty: but has people all around him with white papers before them." After a few more questions and answers, I left the poor fellow, but not before I heard it announced that

the devils were thirsty, and wanted something to drink.— This was, of course, a call for whiskey. A little, and that little well diluted, was given to them, and some tobacco.

The only proof I got of any thing by my visit to this place of superstition, was the opinion of the jongleur himself, and which is doubtless the opinion of the rest, that this treaty is the greatest thing that is now going on upon the face of the earth; and that as such, it is that which engrosses the attention of the President to such a degree, as to make it impossible for him to think of any thing else.

Now it is hardly necessary that I should tell you that this Indian shook the poles of the enclosure himself; nor that the lighting down of the devils, was nothing more than the falling from his own hands of a stone which he had within. As to his answers, they are simple, and the whole contrivance but demonstrates how superstitious these people are. The Indians all around believe in the whole affair, and consider the answers as oracular. This faith of theirs is built upon the slight foundation which has been produced by a few answers which have turned out to be true—such as the answer to the question—“when will the storm cease?”—“when will our friends arrive?”—“are our warriors victorious?”—and the like. One answer that shall be true, operates like the prize in a lottery. It is remembered, but the blanks are forgotten.

It is out of such flimsy materials as I have collected at this ceremony, that travellers sometimes manufacture facts. It is all a sham—Indians, although they pretend to divination, and to eat fire, are no more expert in these performances, than other people.

At the signal of three guns, the multitude assembled—men, women, and children, and some dogs. This was the first time we had before us the entire collection of Indians. The women and children, hitherto, remained in their lodges; now they were all assembled; and to the number, it is believed, of nearly seven hundred. Only the chiefs sit in council, or, as in the case of the old woman from Montreal

river, when others sit there by deputation. Never before had I witnessed such a display, nor such an exhibition of nakedness and wretchedness; nor such varieties of both.— From the infant tied to its cradle, and to the back of its mother, to the big Buffalo; from the little fellow with a dress made of raccoon skins, himself not much above the size of that animal, and looking, except his face, for all the world like one of them on its hind feet, to *Wa-em-boesh-kaa*, one of the Sandy lake chiefs, dressed like a king Saul. I have got his likeness in a sitting posture, with his calumet, and pouch, and smoking. His head dress is made of the feathers of the duck's breast, and the wood-peckers' bills, and the red feathers from the head of that bird, between. His wrists are ornamented in like manner; and around his neck he wears an ornament of horse hair.

The invitation for this assemblage was given out yesterday; but the Indians from Lake de Corbeau, and Leach lake, having arrived last evening, and it having been determined to explain every part of the proceedings to them, and fully to impress upon them all that had taken place, it was announced that the chiefs would be expected to take their seats in council, and that the presents would be given out in the afternoon. The reason was, of course, explained. The new comers acquiesced in what had been done, and signed the treaty. Just as the crowd got in motion, two young men were seen to look at one another, step up quick, meet, embrace, kiss, and instantly exchange blankets! They were relations, and had lived apart, and wide off from each other in different parts of the nation, and had not met until now, for some years. They appear to be about twenty years of age. I notice they are much together.

At three o'clock the guns were fired, and the multitude re-assembled, and were arranged in bands by their interpreters, and seated in a great circle on the ground. Thus arranged, the distribution of presents commenced, which continued until near sun-down, when the appearance of a gust made it necessary to postpone it, and what remained to be done was deferred until to-morrow.

The manner of conducting this business was new to me, and it was interesting. By turning to the drawing of our council, you will see a square opposite our table. In this the presents, on being brought from the store house, were deposited. First, about twelve hundred knives—two kegs of tobacco, broken up and the twists separated. We began with these. To every man and woman was given a knife. This was the first present. They were taken round by the interpreters and our agents, to each of whom a band was allotted. The knives holding out, one was given also to every youth. Here were nearly seven hundred savage hands put in possession of a knife, and by a single *whoop*, and the onset of a single chief, we could have been sacrificed in a twinkling. Under an attack so sudden, and every Indian, or every seven Indians, selecting their man, the work might have been accomplished before the military could have cocked their guns, or even themselves warded off the attacks upon their own persons. The capture of Mr. Astor's ship, the *Tonquin*, and the murder of her crew, occurred to me. I believe it happened thus:—This ship had penetrated one hundred and eighty miles above the Columbia river, and as far as Queen Charlotte's sound, when her commander, in a traffic with the natives, and in a fit of excitement, struck one of them across the face with an otter skin. They left the ship, when she proceeded further. The natives were seen on the shore. They gave signs of a desire to trade. The interpreter warned the commander—he recollected the act of his having struck the Indian, and noticed the expression of his countenance, and foresaw their design. His admonitions were disregarded. The Indians came on board—exchanges were effected, and no signs were made of sufficient intelligence to warn the captain to be upon his guard. A Mr. M'Coy, a man well experienced in the Indian character, begged the captain to beware. It had no effect. Nothing indicated hostile intentions; and the Indians were about to go on shore, when the chief turning short about, as if he had forgotten something, told the captain they were well pleased

with the treatment they had received, and with the exchanges that had been made, but added, they were going on shore without a knife, and hoped this important article might be added. The captain, not suspecting the design of these people, ordered a knife a-piece to be given to them. Meanwhile they so arranged themselves as to be near each of the crew, and on receiving the knives, they immediately plunged them into their hearts. Two or three only escaped this sudden massacre, and they were aloft. They instantly, on noticing the catastrophe on deck, descended with the view of getting below, and there arming themselves. They were cut very much to pieces in their descent, but by tumbling into the hatchway, escaped with their lives. They were pursued; but forcing through into the arms-room, they closed the door, and fired among the Indians, and cleared the deck. They were, however, incompetent to manage the ship. In this desperate condition they enticed the natives on board, and when the ship was full of them, one of the survivors, whose name was Lewis, fired the magazine, blew up the ship, and destroyed all the Indians who were on board, and thus revenged the deaths of the crew, and died at the same moment with those upon whom he wreaked this summary vengeance.

Nothing is more difficult, than for a person unacquainted with the Indian character, to comprehend the workings and purposes of the hearts of these people. Their power consists in great part in stratagem. But a thorough knowledge of the Indian character will enable any person to avoid and elude the most of their plans.

Here we too were surrounded by knives, a most important, indeed, indispensable implement with an Indian; but in truth, my dear ***, there was nothing to apprehend. I believe nobody looked any the sharper under this display of knives, except Ben, who has an innate dread of an Indian. My own opinion is, these poor fellows, having felt our bounty, would have, to a man, died for us. We are perfectly safe in having them around us. They look upon us as benefactors and

friends—and although a white man may now and then be found base enough to attack his benefactor, I know no instance in which an Indian ever did so.

Next to the knives, we sent round the tobacco—every man and woman, and *the widow's badge*, got a twist. Then a handkerchief; then calico for a shirt a-piece—then cloth for leggins—then a quarter of a yard of cloth for the *auzeum*—then cloth for petticoats for the women—then blankets, when the prospect of rain put a stop to further issues.

I noticed the effect each gift had on this expecting multitude as it was brought out from the store-house. New joy would sparkle in every eye. The little naked children would run about almost frantic; the squaws would utter their exclamatory "*neau*," which is peculiar to the women; the boys and girls clap their hands and toss themselves about, whilst the old men smoked away like steam engines. And as the dispensers of these gifts would go round, every eye would follow them, and with an imploring look, when every now and then a fear would manifest itself, lest they who indulged it might be passed. Amidst all this, the howling of the dogs on the island testified their loneliness when left by their inmates of the lodges, whilst some few, in spite of the Indian method of keeping them at home, had swam over. That method consists in tying a piece of wattap around their necks, and putting one of the fore feet of the dog through it. Some of these, however, ventured to swim across with three legs, and varied the scene, by furnishing to the little fellows subjects to play with.

Now put all these presents together—a knife—a plug of tobacco—(these held out to go round double,) a handkerchief—cloth for a pair of leggins—some flints—a piece of calico for a shirt—the quarter of a yard of cloth; and to the women, some ribbands, and green and red worsted, and you will see, so far, what each received, except the blankets, and these were only sufficiently numerous for a supply to the chiefs and the old women, and then think how much pleasure such a present would afford to the most ordinary

menial in our part of the world. Yet, my dear ***, to naked, friendless, and in all respects, destitute people, who never before saw such a collection of desirable things together, the present gave more real joy, and will prove a more substantial benefit, than would the arrival of an East India-man to some people who are known to you. Thus it is, we appreciate a good conferred, not according to its cost, but according to its value to ourselves, and our need of it—and if there be any one pleasure on earth more pure than the rest, it is that which is derived from feeding the hungry, and clothing the naked, and in conferring benefits on the destitute, and making the miserable happy.

Among the articles to be given out to-day, will be fish-hooks—an important item in the catalogue of Indian supplies, as without these they would often suffer more than they do for something to eat. After a distribution is made of these, we shall divide our supply of pork and flour among all the bands, and to every family. Fortunately, we have a large supply, which will enable those who are here to make those glad who have remained at their respective lodges in every part of the country. The chiefs say they never knew what it was to live before. They are all delighted, and are loud in their expressions of thankfulness. We give out for each person, big and little, three quarters of a pound of pork, and a pound of flour, a day. How unlike their customary fare! Many weeks pass with this wretched population, in which no day brings with it a full meal; and often, and for days together, they have not a mouthful of any thing except roots, or berries. This has been a feasting jubilee to nearly seven hundred Chippeways, and never will they forget it.

Kich-e-wyn E'qua, I am glad to inform you, has every prospect of getting well, except her blindness. There are no symptoms more favourable in regard to this than when I wrote you last, except that now she is entirely relieved from pain in her head.

How beautifully did this seventh day of August close! Just as the sun went down, and in a clear sky, a beautiful arch spanned the heavens in the east, rich throughout, from its bases, which rested in the mountains, and tinged the trees amidst which they rested, with its glory, and with those same colours which I have so often looked at and admired at home. High up did this arch spring, and full against the sky, and where it will always be seen whilst the sun continues to set in the west. This was the first, and as we hope to leave here the day after to-morrow, it will doubtless be the last bow I shall ever see at the *Fond du Lac* Superior, or perhaps ever again, at a distance of more than two thousand miles from home. I saw it fade away and die!—and could but regret that any thing so lovely should be so evanescent. The Chippeways call it *Ne-gua-gun*, the same name they give to the pole which they bend over, and to which they tie their snare string.

Good night—ever yours.

*American Fur Company's establishment, Fond du Lac, }
August 8, 1826. T. sun-rise, 56°. }*

MY DEAR ***

This is a beautiful morning—and though there is so much to enjoy in its loveliness, and in the fine wholesome air that we breathe here, I cannot but indulge the wish to know how all are at home. The time may arrive, perhaps, when, if the ingenuity of man shall continue to develop itself as it has done for the last twenty years, we may, in twenty years more, be able in a few hours, and through the air, to pass over the extent of space that now separates me from you all. Cowper, I remember, referred to the period, but when, he did not venture to predict, when the air would be the highway of communication from place to place, and the earth deserted by the travelling community. I do not know that this is much more unreasonable than a prediction would have appeared, if made fifty years ago, that

travellers could be able at this time to go with certainty from New York to Albany, in twelve hours; or that our cities would be lighted with gas—or that such cities as Lexington and Cincinnati should take the place of the forests in the time they have, and be what they now are.

There is a patch of wheat in the enclosure back of the buildings, as shewn in the drawing, and I mention this merely to state that it is raised, not to be ground, as we grind wheat, for there are no mills in this country, nor to be eaten by being pounded into flour, but for chickens' victuals, and to mention that it is only just now in full heading. It is spring wheat—indeed all kinds of sowing must be made here after the winter is past. It is true, it was sown a little later than it might have been, on account of a freshet which swept over all this place last spring, and carried away every thing that could be floated. The cattle took to the hills for safety, but found nothing there to subsist upon. They returned to the valley with lowing, and in great distress, but found no relief until the trees budded, when, to save them from perishing, immense quantities were cut down, that they might feed upon the young shoots. This same freshet, I believe I have mentioned, destroyed the wild rice—and this makes our visit with the supplies we have brought with us, so opportune. We are here at a moment of the utmost need of the poor Indians, and being met at such a moment, they put a correspondingly higher value on our presents.

Every thing was put in motion early this morning. The military in their fatigue dress—the voyageurs by the sides of their canoes, with little fires near them at which the gum is melted, send up their smoke into the brightness of the morning. The noise of hammers and saws, and the splitting up of boxes and making others, in which to pack away our supplies, all indicate a speedy embarkment. On the island too, and all over the valley, the lodges have turned out their mahogany coloured population, and even the dogs seem to prick up more fiercely their fox ears, and frisk about with uncommon animation, as if the bustle were understood

by them too. Every canoe is out of the water, and by their sides are seen the squaws and little girls with their coals of fire between split sticks, blowing them into heat, and then applying the fire on the gum along the seams of their canoes to soften it, whilst with the thumb of the other hand, it is pressed into the cracks which an exposure to the sun and air had occasioned. This being done, nothing remained but to receive the flour and pork, unwrap the bark and mats from the poles of their lodges, roll them up, and step lightly into their canoes, and away. The men, amidst all this bustle of preparation, touch nothing—but all over the ground they sit smoking, or stroll idly about, thinking of nothing but of the arrival of the hour when the promised drink of whiskey is to be given, at the close of all.

How true it is, that civilized and polished society may be always traced by the treatment the sex receives. These ministering angels—heaven's best gift to man, in whom all that is delicate, and tender, and lovely, centre; to whom man, in his improved and polished state, turns his imploring and fond eye in all his sorrows, and on whom he loves to lavish his blessings.—But these, among the uncivilized, are the drudges—"the hewers of wood and drawers of water." What though they be nursing mothers, and display all the interest which attaches to the fondness of a mother's love, yet upon them all manner of burdens are imposed, and they are the *slaves*, and not the glory and happiness of man. Give me back, give me back my home—my circle of "few friends, and not wishing more."—O, yes, speed the bark that shall return me soon to the circle that is so dear to me, and the absence from which I have never for a moment ceased to deplore.

The hour for re-assembling the multitude arrived, and the three guns having announced it, they came

"Trooping like chickens to the house-wife's call,"

from every direction—across the river, into which the canoes were lifted in a twinkling; down the mountain sides—

along the picket fences, and some from the buildings, where they had been to watch over the refuse of the tables, and pick up what they could find. One mixed multitude was soon on the ground—and in such confusion as to justify the belief that they never could be arranged in any tolerable order. But on being told that all the children, with their mothers, were desired to be seated together, they soon discovered their readiness to comply, and the men, and those of the women who had no children, inclining one way, left the mothers, with their charges, to take their places as they were directed. Here was a sight worth seeing. At least two hundred naked children, some tied with strings, and others with the tender roots of the cedar, to the fastenings of their mothers' petticoats—about fifty of them at their mothers' breasts, and fifty more crying, whilst their mothers were all busy in their endeavours to hush into some sort of quiet this tumult, which was heightened by the howling of the dogs at the lodges on the island, and whose cries were occasioned from being left there by their owners. A partial quiet having been secured, it was agreed to give to each of these little naked foresters as much calico as would make it a shirt; and to every one of them, accordingly, this present was made, and which was more than nineteen-twentieths of their mothers and fathers had ever had in their lives, or even so much as seen. Then it was, the "*neau*" was heard from fifty mouths at a time; and then anticks were cut by the little fellows who could run at all, or even stand. Some, on receiving the calico, would tie it round their necks, and gallop round their mothers with it, and getting it tangled round their legs, would fall down, and kick, and cry, when their mothers would reach after them, and taking them by their feet, or their arms, pull them in, brush off the dirt, and quiet them, when they would go again, delighted with the appearance of the red and white calico. Some would tie it round their waists, and make a sash out of it, whilst the little ones, attracted by the gaiety of the colours, would let go their sources of nourishment, and turn their eyes

round, and reach out their little hands and pull their present first this way, and then that, but not more ignorant of what the gift was intended for, than were their mothers. If the interpreters had not explained the use of the calico, it is very certain it would not have been understood. Every face was gladdened into a smile, and every eye sparkled, and this made no little show; for there is something in an Indian's eye that glistens always, but on being lit up with any new or joyful feelings, it grows brilliant.

And now, too, the jewelry was distributed. Every woman got a ring with a stone set in it, and a cross of glass, and almost every child; whilst to the chiefs and young men were distributed gorgets and silver brooches. It was our object, if possible, to make every heart glad by a present of something, and to pass none by.

Next came the powder, and lead, and shot, and these were nearly the last things that were given out, and this was the language of this present, "We have given you such things as we have for present use. We have fed you daily. You will, as you have been told, have provisions distributed to take home with you. This present is to enable you to supply your wants after we shall have left you." Perhaps they so understood it.

It is not possible, my dear ***, to give you any adequate description of the joy that has been imparted to hundreds of weatherbeaten, friendless, starving, naked human beings. Yes, *Ataman* beings; for, after all, they are just like ourselves, and had it pleased God that you and I should have been born and brought up as these poor ignorant savages have been, we should have been in all respects such as they are, even to the dirt, (the least excusable exception which I take to them, as there is plenty of water) which in any quantity attaches to them. Yes, they are human beings; and there is not an Indian here who might not say, and truly,

"I was born of woman, and drew milk
As sweet as charity from human breasts.

I think, articulate, I laugh and weep,
And exercise all functions of a man.

Pierce my vein,

Take of the crimson stream meand'ring there,
And catechise it well;—apply the glass,
Search it, and prove now if it be not blood
Congenial with thine own; and if it be,
What edge of subtlety canst thou suppose
Keen enough, wise and skilful as thou art,
To cut the link of brotherhood, by which
One common Maker bound me to the kind."

It will not do, my dear ***, and in your heart I know I have a full response, to think of these hapless beings in any light except that which discovers *our obligations to them*. These are deep and lasting as their own native hills, and whilst the name of this blessed land of liberty remains, this obligation will continue to be binding. Say of it what we may, refine upon our rights as we choose, talk of the inadequacy of the aboriginal owner to turn his vast dominions to profitable account, still I will repeat, in the language of the eloquent author of the *British Spy*, "*This country was once theirs.*" I will say nothing of our having *bought* it; all that is pretty well understood.

Wherefore is it then that we pause over the adoption of a just and generous policy, as if there were associated with it some fell disaster? And that, too, at the expense of such wretchedness, and so many lives; for every winter hurries away before its blasts into eternity, and gives them its "snows for their winding sheets," hundreds of this very tribe, whose misery I have witnessed and deplored. Is there no responsibility here? One spirited and just act, followed up by vigorous measures, would, in a few years, discharge our debt to the fragments of tribes that yet survive. Yes, it is possible to place them in a condition in which they may be prosperous and happy. And what more noble act, I will ask, could this government perform? In what could the representatives of this free and generous people honour themselves more? The question is asked to this day, and in Europe, "Why does not America save the

remnant of its Indian population?" I know, too, this question has been answered by another, "Why does not England reform and civilize her Gipsies?" But I see no reason why our Indians should be neglected, because England has a "hard-faring race" in the heart of her population. "I see," says Cowper, in reference to these Gipsies,

"I see a column of slow rising smoke
O'ertop the lofty wood, that skirts the wild.
A vagabond and useless tribe there eat
Their miserable meal. A kettle, slung
Between two poles upon a stick transverse,
Receives the morsel—flesh obscene of dog,
Or vermin, or at best of cock purlein'd
From his accustom'd perch. Hard-faring race!
They pick their fuel out of ev'ry hedge,
Which, kindled with dry leaves, just saves unquench'd
The spark of life. The sportive wind blows wide
Their flutt'ring rags, and shows a tawny skin,
The vellum of the pedigree they claim.
Great skill have they in palmistry, and more
To conjure clean away the gold they touch,
Conveying worthless dross into its place;
Loud when they beg; dumb only when they steal.
Strange! That a creature rational, and cast
In human mould, should brutalize by choice
His nature; and though capable of arts,
By which the world might profit, and himself,
Self-banish'd from society, prefer
Such squalid sloth to honorable toil!"

I think our Indians superior in moral qualities to this self-secluded, wandering class of the population of England; to these

"Houseless rovers of the sylvan wild."

These appear to me to have less claim upon the sympathies of our nature, since they are voluntary, whilst our Indians are involuntary sufferers. The one has language, and example, and facilities for improving their comforts; the other has neither.

The hand of the government has never been either felt or seen before in this quarter; and I rejoice to think that the

first array of bayonets that was ever reflected in these streams, will be returned unstained with blood; and that so many hearts have been made glad by the kindness which our government put it in our power to shew to these poor sufferers.

In the afternoon the bands were directed to send for their pork and flour. The flour is in bags, and the pork in half barrels. Every one was told he should have as much as he could carry; and the promise was literally fulfilled. They assembled at the door of the store-house, with straps of deer-skin in their hands. These they would fasten round a barrel of pork, or a bag of flour, and lifting it upon their backs, pass them round their foreheads, and walk off to their canoes with it; and having stowed it away, come for more. Even the old woman who sat in council, came by me laden in this way, bent forward with inverted toes, and smiling as she passed, feeling the burthen of her years and her pork to be both light, though both were in reality heavier than they had ever been before. This great store was not quite disposed of this evening, the residue is to be given out in the morning, when the drink of whiskey is to be distributed. This is to be the last gift—and never before was a gift so long coming. It is that upon which they have been resting their hopes so long; and it has been so long deferred that their very hearts are sick.

This is my last night at the Fond du Lac. Thermometer, sun-down, 66°.

Heaven preserve you.

*American Fur Company's establishment, Fond du Lac, }
Aug. 9, A. M. T. sun-rise, 48°.*

MY DEAR ***

By eight o'clock we shall be off. There is something of loneliness visible all round me already. Nothing remains now of the Indian lodges but their frames; families of Indians are all over the river in their deep laden canoes; numerous dogs are galloping along the shores howling