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OBSERVATIONS,

Extracted from the Journals of William Dunbar, esq. and Doctor Hunter.

(CONCLUDED.)

The Red and Arcansa rivers, whose courses are very long, pass through portions of this fine country. They are both navigable to an unknown distance by boats of proper construction; the Arcansa river is, however, understood to have greatly the advantage with respect to the facility of navigation. Some difficult places are met with in the Red river below the Nakitosh, after which it is good for one hundred and fifty leagues (probably computed leagues of the country, about two miles each); there the voyager meets with a very serious obstacle, the commencement of the "raft," as it is called; that is, a natural covering which conceals the whole river for an extent of seventeen leagues, continually augmenting by the drift-wood brought by every considerable fresh. This covering, which, for a considerable time was only drift-wood, now supports a vegetation of every thing abounding in the neighbouring forest, not excepting trees of a considerable size; and the river may be frequently passed without any knowledge of its existence. It is said that the annual inundation is opening for itself a new passage through the low grounds near the hills; but it must be long before nature, unaided, will excavate a passage sufficient for the waters of Red river. About fifty leagues above this natural bridge, is the residence of the Cadeaux or Cadadoquies nation, whose good qualities are already mentioned. The inhabitants estimate the post of Nakitosh to be half way between New-Orleans and the Cadeaux nation. Above this point the navigation of Red river is said to be embarrassed by many rapids, falls and shallows. The Arcansa river is said to present a safe, agreeable and uninterrupted navigation as high as it is known. The lands on each side are of the best quality, and well watered with springs, brooks and rivulets, affording many situations for mill-seats. From description it would seem that along this river there is a regular gradation of hill and dale, presenting their extremities to the river; the hills are gently swelling eminences, and the dales, spacious vallies with living water meandering through them; the forests consist of handsome trees, chiefly what is called open woods. The quality of the land is supposed superior to that on Red river, until it ascends to the prairie country, where the lands on both rivers are probably similar. About two hundred leagues up the Arcansa is an interesting place called the Salt prairie; there is a considerable fork of the river there, and a kind of savanna where the salt water is continually oozing out and spreading over the surface of a plain. During the dry summer season the salt may be raked up in large heaps; a natural crust of a hand breadth in thickness is formed at this season. This place is not often frequented, on account of the danger from the Osage Indians; much less dare the white hunters venture to ascend higher, where it is generally believed that silver is to be found. It is farther said, that high up the Arcansa river salt is found in form of a solid rock, and may be dug out with the crow-bar. The waters of the Arcansa, like those of Red river, are not potable during the dry season, being both charged highly with a reddish earth or mould, and extremely brackish. This inconvenience is not greatly felt upon the Arcansa, where springs and brooks of fresh water are frequent; the Red river is understood not to be so highly favored. Every account seems to prove that immense natural magazines of salt must exist in the great chain of mountains to the westward; as all the rivers in the summer season, which flow from them, are strongly impregnated with that mineral, and are only rendered palatable after receiving the numerous streams of fresh water which join them in their course. The great western prairies, besides the herds of wild cattle, (bison, commonly called Buffaloe) are also stocked with vast numbers of wild goat (not resembling the domestic goat) extremely swift footed. As the description given of this goat is not perfect, it may from its swiftness prove to be the antelope, or it possibly may be a goat which has escaped from the Spanish settlements of New Mexico. A Canadian, who had been much with the Indians to the westward, speaks of a wool-bearing animal larger than a sheep, the wool much mixed with hair, which he had seen in large flocks. He pretends also to have seen a unicorn, the single horn of which, he says, rises out of the forehead and curls back, conveying the idea of the fossil cornu ammonis. This man says he has travelled beyond the great dividing ridge so far as to have seen a large river flowing to the westward. The great dividing mountain is so lofty that it requires two days to ascend from the base to its top; other ranges of inferior mountains lie before and behind it; they are all rocky and sandy. Large lakes and vallies lie between the mountains. Some of the lakes are so large as to contain considerable islands; and rivers flow from some of them. Great numbers of fossil bones of very large dimensions, are seen among the mountains, which the Canadian supposes to be the elephant. He does not pretend to have seen any of the precious metals, but has seen a mineral which he supposes might yield copper. From the top of the high mountain the view is bounded by a curve as upon the ocean, and extends over the most beautiful prairies, which seem to be unbounded, particularly towards the east. The finest of the lands he has seen are on the Missouri; no other can compare in richness and fertility with them. This Canadian, as well as Le Fever, speak of the Osages, of the tribe of Whitehairs, as lawless and unprincipled; and the other Indian tribes hold them in abhorrence as a barbarous and uncivilized race; and the different nations who hunt in their neighborhood, have their concerting plans for their destruction. On the morning of the 11th, the party passed the petit ecore Fabri. The osier which grows on the beaches above, is not seen below upon this river; and here they began to meet with the small tree called 'charnier' which grows only on the water side, and is met with all the way down the Washita. The latitude of 33 degrees 40 minutes, seems the northern boundary of the one, and the southern boundary of the other of those vegetables. Having noticed the limit set to the long moss, (Telandsia) on the ascent of the river, in latitude 33 degrees, Mr. Dunbar made inquiry of Mr. Le Fever, as to its existence on the Arcansa settlement, which is known to lie about the same parallel; he said, that its growth is limited about ten miles south of the settlement, and that as remarkably, as if a line had been drawn east and west for the purpose; as it ceases all at once, and not by degrees. Hence it appears, that nature has marked with a distinguishing feature, the line established by Congress, between the Orleans and Louisiana territories. The cypress is not found on the Washita higher than thirty-four degrees of north latitude.

In ascending the river, they found their rate of going to exceed that of the current about six miles and a half in twenty-four hours; and that on the 13th, they had passed the apex of the tide or wave, occasioned by the fresh, and were descending along an inclined plane; as they encamped at night, they found themselves in deeper water the next morning, and on a more elevated part of the inclined plane than they had been in the preceding evening, from the progress of the apex of the tide during their repose.

At noon, on the 16th, they reached the post of the Washita.

Mr. Dunbar being anxious to reach the Natchez as early as possible, and being unable to procure horses at the post, took a canoe with one soldier and his own domestic, to push down to the Catahoola, from whence to Concord there is a road of thirty miles across the low grounds. He set off early on the morning of the 20th, and at night reached the settlement of an old hunter, with whom he had conversed on his way up the river. This man informed him, that at the place called the mine, on the Little Missouri, there is a smoke which ascends perpetually from a particular place, and that the vapour is sometimes insupportable. The river, or a branch of it, passes over a bed of mineral, which from the description given is, no doubt, martial pyrites. In a creek, or branch of the Fourche a' Luke,* there is found on the beaches and in the cliffs, a great number of globular bodies, some as large, or larger, than a man's head, which, when broken, exhibit the appearance of gold, silver, and precious stones; most probably pyrites and chrystalized spar. And at the Fourche des Glaises a' Paul, (higher up the river than Fourche a' Luke), near the river there is a cliff full of hexagonal prisms, terminated by pyramids, which appear to grow out of the rock: they are from six to eight inches in length, and some of them are an inch in diameter. There are beds of pyrites found in several small creeks communicating with the Washita, but it appears that the mineral indications are greatest on the Little Missouri, because, as before noted, some of the hunters actually worked on them, and sent a parcel of the ore to New-Orleans. It is the belief here, that the mineral contains precious metal, but that the Spanish government did not choose a mine should be opened so near to the British settlements. An express prohibition was issued against working these mines.

At this place, Mr. Dunbar obtained one or two slips of the "bois de arc," (bow wood) or yellow wood, from the Missouri. The fruit which had fallen before maturity, lay upon the ground. Some were of the size of a small orange, with a rind full of tubercles; the color, though it appeared faded, still retained a resemblance to pale gold.

The tree in its native soil, when laden with its golden fruit, (nearly as large as the egg of an ostrich), presents the most splendid appearance; its foliage is of a deep green, resembling the varnished leaf of the orange tree, and, upon the whole, no forest tree can compare with it in ornamental grandeur. The bark of the young tree resembles, in texture, the dog wood bark; the appearance of the wood recommends it for trial as an article which may yield a yellow die. It is deciduous; the branches are numerous, and full of short thorns or prickles, which seem to point it out as proper for hedges or live fences. This tree is known to exist near the Nokitosh (perhaps in latitude 32 deg.) and upon the river Arcansa, high up (perhaps in lat. 36 deg.): it is therefore probable that it may thrive from latitude 38 to 40, and will be a great acquisition to the United States if it possess no other merit than of being ornamental.

* *Three leagues above Ellis's camp*

On descending the river, both Mr. Dunbar, and Dr. Hunter searched for the place said to yield gympsum, or plaister of Paris, but failed. The former gentleman states, that he has no doubt of its existence, having noted two places where it has been found; one of which is the first hill, or high land which touches the river on the west, above the bayau Calumet, and the other is the second high land on the same side. As these are two points of the same continued ridge, it is probable that an immense body of Gympsum will be found in the bowels of the hills where they meet, and perhaps extending far beyond them.

On the evening of the 22d Mr. Dunbar arrived at the Catahoola, where a Frenchman of the name of Hebrard, who keeps the ferry across Black River, is settled. Here the road from the Washita forks, one branch of it leading to the settlement on Red river, and the other up to the post on the Washita. The proprietor of this place has been a hunter and a great traveller up the Washita and into the western country: he confirms generally the accounts received from others. It appears, from what they say, that in the neighborhood of the hot springs, but higher up, among the mountains, and upon the Little Missouri, during the summer season, explosions are very frequently heard, proceeding from under the ground; and not rarely a curious phenomenon is seen which is termed the blowing of the mountains; it is confined elastic gas forcing a passage through the side or top of a hill, driving before it a great quantity of earth and mineral matter. During the winter season the explosions and blowing of the mountains entirely ceases, from whence we may conclude, that the cause is comparatively superficial, being brought into action by the increased heat of the more direct rays of the summer sun.

The confluence of the Washita, Catahoola and Tenza, is an interesting place. The last of these communicates with the Mississippi low lands, by the intervention of other creeks and lakes, and by one in particular, called "Bayau d'Argent," which empties into the Mississippi, about fourteen miles above Natchez. During high water there is a navigation for batteaux of any burthen along the bayau. A large lake, called St. John's lake, occupies a considerable part of the passage between the Mississippi and the Tenza; it is in a horse shoe form, and has, at some former period, been the bed of the Mississippi; the nearest part of it is about one mile removed from the river at the present time. This lake, possessing elevated banks, similar to those of the river, has been lately occupied and improved. The Catahoola bayau is the third navigable stream: during the time of the inundation there is an excellent communication by the lake of that name, and from thence, by large creeks, to the Red river. The country around the point of union of these three rivers is altogether alluvial, but the place of Mr. Hebrard's residence is no longer subject to inundation. There is no doubt, that as the country augments in population and riches, this place will become the scite of a commercial inland town, which will keep pace with the progress and prosperity of the country. One of the Indian mounts here is of a considerable elevation, with a species of rampart surrounding a large space, which was, no doubt, the position of a fortified town.

While here, Mr. Dunbar met with an American who pretended to have been up the Arkansa river 300 leagues. The navigation of this river he says is good to that distance, for boats drawing three or four feet water. Implicit faith, perhaps, ought not to be given to his relation, respecting the quantity of silver he pretends to have collected there. He says he has found silver on the Washita, 30 leagues above the hot springs, so rich, that three pounds of it yielded one pound of silver, and that this was found in a cave. He asserts, also, that the ore of the mine upon the little Missouri, was carried to Kentucky, by a person of the name of Boon, where it was found to yield largely in silver. This man says he has been up the Red river likewise, and that there is a great rapid just below the raft, or natural bridge, and several others above it; that the Caddo nation is about 50 leagues above the raft, and near to their village commences the country of the great prairies, which extend four or five hundred miles to the west of the sand mountains, as they are termed. These great plains reach far beyond the Red river to the south, and northward over the Arkansa river, and among the numerous branches of the Missouri. He confirms the account of the beauty and fertility of the western country.

On the morning of the 25th, Mr. Dunbar set out, on horseback, from the Catahoola to Natchez. The rain which had fallen on the preceding days rendered the roads wet and muddy, and it was two in the afternoon before he reached the Bayau Crocodile, which is considered half way between the Black river and the Mississippi. It is one of the numerous creeks in the low grounds which assist in venting the waters of the inundation. On the margins of the water courses the lands are highest and produce canes; they fall off, in the rear, into cypress swamps and lakes. The waters of the Mississippi were rising, and it was with some difficulty that they reached a house near Concord that evening. This settlement was begun since the cession of Louisiana to the United States, by citizens of the Mississippi territory, who have established their residence altogether upon newly acquired lands, taken up under the authority of the Spanish commandant, & have gone to the expence of improvement either in the names of themselves or others before the 20th of December, 1803 hoping thereby to hold their new possessions under the sanction of the law.

Exclusive of the few actual residents on the banks of the Mississippi, there are two very handsome lakes in the interior, on the banks of which similar settlements have been made. He crossed at the ferry, and at mid day of the 26th reached his own house.

Dr. Hunter and the remainder of the party followed Mr. Dunbar down the Washita, with the boat in which they ascended the river, and, ascending the Mississippi, reached St. Catherine's landing on the morning of the 31st January, 1805.

Common names of some of the trees, shrubs and plants growing in the vicinity of the Washita.

Three kinds of white oak, four kinds of red oak, black oak, three kinds of hickory, one of which has an oblong nut, white and good, chinkapin, three kinds of ash, one of which is the prickly, three kinds of elm, two kinds of maple, two kinds of pine, red cedar, sweet gum, black gum, linden, two kinds of iron wood, growing on high and low lands, sycamore, box, elder, holly, sweet bay, laurel, magnolia accuminata, black walnut, filbert, buckeye, dog-wood, three kinds of locust, the three thorned and honey locust, hazle, beech, wild plumb, the fruit red but not good, bois d'arc, (bow wood) called also bois jaune, (yellow wood) a famous yellow dye, three kinds of hawthorn with berries, red, scarlet and black, lote tree for Indian arrows, bois de carbane, a small growth, and proper for hoops, two kinds of ozier, myrtle, tooth ach tree and magnolia.

A vine, bearing large good black grapes in bunches, black grape, hill grape, yellow grape, muscadine, or fox grape, and a variety of other vines.—The saw briar, single rose briar, and china root briar, wild gooseberry, with a dark red fruit, three kinds of whortle berry, wild pomgranate, passion flower, two sorts of sumach, winter's berry, winter's green, a small red farinaceous berry like a haw, on a plant one inch high, which grows under the snow, and is eaten by the Indians, the silk plant, wild endive, wild olive, pink root, snake root, wild mint of three kinds, coloquintida, (bitter apple) growing along the river side, clover, sheep's clover, life everlasting, wild liquorice, marygold, missletoe, thistle, wild hemp, bulrush, dittany, white and red poppy, yellow jessamine, poke, fern, capillaire, honey suckle, mosses, petu to make ropes with, wormwood, hops, ipecacuanha, persicaria, Indian turnip, wild carrot, wild onion, ginger, wild cabbage, and bastard indigo.

BRITISH NAVY.

According to the statement of the British naval force, there are at present in commission 131 ships of the line, 11 fifties, 160 frigates, 184 sloops, and 259 gun brigs, &c. comprising in the whole 746 ships of war, exclusive of hired armed vessels, &c.

The Board of Agriculture has this year offered various premiums for the promotion of that useful science; among which are the three following:

1. "To the person who shall produce to the board the model of the best and cheapest cottage, on the scale of one inch to a foot; with estimates of the expence of erecting it—from five to ten guineas, according to merit.

2. "It having been represented to the Board, that there are roads in some parts of the kingdom where much carrier's work is regularly done with one horse carts; and as, in such cases, it is conceived that it might be easy for such carrier's to substitute oxen, or spayed heifers, in some of their carts for comparison, the Board will give to the carrier, or other person, who shall make the experiment, in the most satisfactory manner, during one year, and report the result to the bord—fifty guineas. It is required that the oxen be fed in the same manner as the horses, and not to be under five years old.

3. "To the person who shall discover a principle which may lighten the draught of oxen to carriages—twenty guineas; being the amount of a legacy left by the late colonel Goat, of Brent, Elleigh, in Suffolk, for this specific purpose."

London paper.

From the London Chronicle of September 3.

SYNOD OF THE JEWS IN FRANCE.

It is believed that the intention of the emperor Napoleon, in assembling a deputation of the Jews at Paris, is dictated by a deep and provident policy.—In this country we can form no estimate of the influence which the Jewish nation can exert in countries less enlightened and less commercial than our own. In these islands their number does not exceed 15,000, and of these but a very small proportion are distinguished by extraordinary wealth or superior sagacity. Here, like every other religious sect, they enjoy, if not equal privileges, with the king's subjects of the established church, at least full and perfect toleration as well as security. They are distinguished by an indefatigable spirit of industry, to which perhaps their rigorous observance of the ceremonies of their religion essentially contributes. On all the fasts and holidays of their own synagogue they strictly and conscientiously abstain from all traffic; and they are equally prevented from carrying on their customary dealings upon ours. The consequence is, that they have fewer days upon which to work than Christians. More than one third part of the year is shut up against them. This may be considered as one of the causes which whets their alacrity in the pursuit of wealth; but in truth, they are very little distinguished from other religious sectaries in the keenness and avidity with which they pursue their object. It is observed of all the religious sectaries, the Quakers, Methodists, Dissenters, &c. &c. that in proportion as they are strict in the observance of their own rites and worship, they are assiduous, alert and successful in money making. The Jews, therefore, truly say, that this is not the country for them to thrive in. They have here to contend with men as well versed in the principles of exchange as themselves. It is here *diamond cut diamond;* and accordingly here they melt most into the mass of the community, are less scrupulous of forms, and much less subject to observation and prejudice than in any other country in Europe.—All prejudice indeed against them is nearly worn out, and they feel this a national calamity, for every sect is assisted by persecution. Now the distinction between Jew and Christian is scarcely to be perceived, either on the stock exchange or in polite society. At the first place they can boast of no superior sagacity, for to use an almost obsolete term of reproach, every broker and jobber is as much a Jew as themselves. And in society they rival our most illustrious nobles in the taste, liberality and grandeur of their establishments.

In England therefore we can have no idea of the influence of Judaism, because here it is "brother well met." But in countries where the impolicy of the government has made trade infamous, where the pride of family proscribes every profession but that of arms, or where the luxury of a productive soil, and a benignant sky make the natives idle and consequently ignorant, there the genius of the Jew prevails—there he takes root, and there he spreads and flourishes. In such countries the Jews are the medium of all exchange—the chain of all trade and commerce; and therefore the state which can conciliate their friendship, will have in all such countries a most advantageous and powerful host of unseen auxiliaries, who may at the proper moment exercise their influence over the government of the country which they inhabit, by the granting or withholding supplies when called upon so to do.

The emperor Napoleon, with a stretch of thought which overlooks no means of carrying on his great scheme of universal domination, by secret sap as well as by open assault, is perfectly aware of the use which may be made of the Jews in the rich countries to which he has turned his covetous eyes. He is well aware of the influence of the Jews in Poland, in Hungary, at Constantinople, Smyrna, Aleppo, and in all the neighbouring countries where the people are too indolent to act for themselves. In his idea of stimulating commerce and erecting a marine on his newly acquired shores in the Adriatic, &c. he wishes to arouse and to employ all the capital, skill and industry of the