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The hundred wonders of the world

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Lakes.

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LAKES.

AMERICAN LAKES.

THE northern parts of this division of the globe are distinguished by their numerous and immense lakes, the five principal of which lie either wholly, or chiefly, in the two Canadian provinces: these are the Lakes SUPERIOR, HURON, ONTARIO, ERIE, and MICHIGAN. These vast assemblages of fresh water, which are neither put in motion, nor alternately raised and sunk, by tides, are supposed to contribute very considerably to the greater degree of cold felt in the northern parts of America, than in the same parallels of latitude in Europe. They are situated within about seven degrees of latitude, and fourteen of longitude, or from $41^{\circ} 35'$ to 49° north, and from $75^{\circ} 20'$ to 92° west.

LAKE SUPERIOR.

THIS great North American Lake is justly entitled to the distinguished name it bears, not only because it is the largest expanse of fresh water in the known world, surpassing in magnitude the Asiatic salt-water lake improperly denominated "the Caspian sea," but because it has a much greater elevation than the other lakes of that country, the level of its waters being several hundred feet higher than the river St. Laurence. Its circumference is estimated at about fifteen hundred miles; but it has been observed by an intelligent navigator, Carver, that "if it were coasted round, and the utmost extent of each of the bays taken, it would exceed sixteen hundred!" He coasted nearly twelve hundred miles on the north and eastern shores. "When it was calm," he observes, "and the sun shone bright, I could sit in my canoe, where the depth was upward of six fathoms, and could plainly see huge piles of stones at the bottom. The water at this time was pure and transparent as the air, and my canoe seemed as if it hung suspended in that element. It was impossible to look attentively, through this limpid medium, at the rocks beneath, for even a few minutes, without feeling the head swim,

“ and the eyes no longer able to view the dazzling scene.” This occurred in the month of July; and, although the surface of the water, from the heat of the atmosphere, was warm, still on letting down a cup to the depth of about a fathom, the water drawn thence was so excessively cold, that it had nearly the same effect as ice, when taken into the mouth.

Lake Superior is said to receive nearly forty rivers and streams of water: the two principal rivers are the Alanipegon, from the north, and the Michipicooton, from the west. By the means of the latter a communication is established with the lakes BOURBON, WINNIPEEK, and DU BOIS; and in this river the source of the St. Laurence is said to have been traced. A small river on the west, before it enters the lake, has a perpendicular fall from the top of a mountain, of more than six hundred feet, through a very narrow channel. In this lake, which has one passage only, St. Mary's strait, for the discharge of its waters, there are many islands, two of which are of great extent. The largest of them, ISLE ROYAL, is nearly a hundred miles from east to west, and about forty miles from north to south. MIROPAU ISLE is likewise of considerable extent; and at the entrance of West Bay is a cluster of small islands, called “ The twelve Apostles.” On the south side of the lake is a peninsula, which spreads into the lake sixty miles.

LAKE HURON.

THIS lake is next in magnitude to the one described above, being about a thousand miles in circumference. Its shape is nearly triangular; and on its north side is an island nearly an hundred miles in extent from east to west, and about eight from north to south: it is called by the Indians *Manataulin*, which signifies the abode of spirits. At the west point of the lake are the straits of *Michillimackinac*, which unite with lake Michigan; and about fifty miles to the north-east of these straits are those of St. Mary, by which lake Huron communicates with lake Superior. They are about forty miles in length, and have falls, which are not, however, perpendicular, like those of Niagara, but the waters of which pass along a sloping bottom, and are on that account named **THE RAPIDS**. These are about three

quarters of a mile in length, but not so impetuous as entirely to obstruct the navigation downward. The southern point of lake Huron runs into a strait, which soon after enlarges into a small lake called St. Claire, from which runs another strait named Detroit. The latter discharges itself into lake Erie, the distance between which and lake Huron is eighty miles.

LAKE ERIE extends about three hundred miles from west to north-east, and in its widest part is about seventy miles in breadth from north to south. Its navigation is more dangerous than that of the other lakes, on account of many high lands on its borders projecting into the waters, insomuch that, when sudden storms arise, canoes and boats are frequently lost, there not being any place to afford shelter or retreat. Several islands near its western extremity are so infested by venomous snakes, that it is highly dangerous to land on them. It discharges its waters, at the north-east extremity, into lake Niagara.

LAKE MICHIGAN, to the west of lake Huron, is long and narrow, extending nearly two hundred miles from north-west to south-east, and having a breadth of forty miles from north to south. Between these two lakes a peninsula is formed, which runs to a point at the north-west; and on the same side is a strait about forty miles wide, called the GRAND TRAVERSE, within which are several islands inhabited by Indians. This strait leads to a long and narrow bay, called Green Bay, into which flows the Fox River, rising near the Mississippi, and having its banks inhabited by a powerful tribe of Indians.

LAKE ONTARIO is the smallest of the five great Canadian lakes. Its form is nearly oval, its greatest length being from north-east to south-west, and its circumference about six hundred miles. Near to the south-east part it receives the waters of the Oswego river, and on the north-east discharges itself into the river Cataraqui, communicating with the river St. Lawrence.

To the eastward of these great lakes, are lakes GEORGE and CHAMPLAIN. The most northern lake visited by the traders, is lake BOURBON, extending to 51° north latitude; and to the south of this is lake WINNEPEEK, communicating with the former by a strait. From this lake a river extends to lake Superior.

In the southern part of the American continent, lake Mayacaybo is the only one deserving a particular notice. It communicates with the gulf of Venezuela, by a strait, on the western coast of which the city of Mayacaybo is situated. This lake is eighty leagues in circumference, and contributes equally to the beauty and convenience of the province of Venezuela, with which it is encompassed. The gulf of this lake, which terminates in the Caribbean sea, extends about a hundred and ten miles from south to north.

ASIATIC LAKES.

LAKE ASPHALTITES.

THIS Lake is more usually known by the name of the DEAD SEA. It lies in Palestine, and is about fifty miles in length, and twelve or thirteen in breadth. It is surrounded by lofty mountains, and receives the river Jordan. It covers the ground on which stood the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, buried, according to Strabo's report, by an earthquake, accompanied by frequent eruptions of fire, or, according to the scriptural expression, by a rain of sulphur. This lake is rendered remarkable by the great quantity of the bituminous and inflammable substance, called Asphaltos, floating on its surface. This substance, having been thrown up from its bottom in a melted state, by the agency of subterraneous heat, and having become solid by the coldness of the water, is collected on the margin of the lake.

Doctor Clarke, in his recent travels, has removed the superstitious prejudices so long entertained relative to the Dead Sea, of which he gives the following animated description.

“The Dead Sea below, upon our left, appeared so near to us, that we thought we could ride thither in a very short space of time. Still nearer stood a mountain upon its western shore, resembling, in its form, the cone of Vesuvius, and having also a crater upon its top, which was plainly discernible. The distance, however, is much greater than it appears to be; the magnitude of the objects beheld in this fine prospect, causing them to appear less remote than

they really are. The atmosphere was remarkably clear and serene; but we saw none of those clouds of smoke, which, by some writers, are said to exhale from the surface of Lake Asphaltites, nor from any neighbouring mountain. Every thing about it was, in the highest degree, grand and awful. Its desolate, although majestic, features, are well suited to the tales related concerning it by the inhabitants of the country, who all speak of it with terror, seeming to shrink from the narrative of its deceitful allurements and deadly influence. 'Beautiful fruit,' say they, 'grows upon its shores, which is no sooner touched, than it becomes dust and bitter ashes.' In addition to its physical horrors, the region around is said to be more perilous, owing to the ferocious tribes wandering upon the shores of the lake, than any other part of the Holy Land. A passion for the marvellous has thus affixed, for ages, false characteristics to the sublimest associations of natural scenery in the whole world; for, although it be now known that the waters of this lake, instead of proving destructive of animal life, swarm with myriads of fishes; that, instead of falling victims to its exhalations, certain birds make it their peculiar resort; that shells abound upon its shores; that the pretended 'fruit, containing ashes,' is as natural and as admirable a production of nature, as the rest of the vegetable kingdom; that bodies sink or float in it, according to the proportion of their gravity to the gravity of the water; that its vapours are not more insalubrious than those of any other lake; that innumerable Arabs people the neighbouring district; notwithstanding all these facts are now well established, even the latest authors by whom it is mentioned, and one among the number, from whose writings some of these truths have been derived, continue to fill their descriptions with imaginary horrors and ideal phantoms, which, though less substantial than the 'black perpendicular rocks,' around it, 'cast their lengthened shadows over the waters of the Dead Sea.' The ancients, as it is observed by the traveller now alluded to, were much better acquainted with it than are the moderns; and, it may be added, the time is near at hand, when it will be more philosophically examined. The present age is not that in which countries so situated, can long continue unexplored. The thirst of knowledge, and the love of travel, have at-

tained to such a pitch, that every portion of the globe will be ransacked for their gratification."

THE CASPIAN SEA.

THIS large body of water, improperly called a sea, as it neither ebbs nor flows, nor has any visible connexion with the ocean, is the greatest lake in the eastern hemisphere. It is bounded on the north by the country of the Calmuc Tartars, on the east by Bucharia and a part of Persia, on the south by another part of Persia, and on the west by Persia and Circassia. Its length, from north to south, is about four hundred miles, and its greatest breadth, from east to west, three hundred. Within the last fifty years the water has risen so considerably, that it has made great inroads on the Russian side, both to the east and west of the Volga, and has rendered the adjacent country extremely marshy.

AFRICAN LAKES.

THE only Lake deserving of notice in this arid and sandy quarter of the globe, is that of DAMBIA, in Upper Ethiopia. In describing the Nile, it has already been mentioned that it is considered as the source of that interesting river. This lake contains twenty-one islands, several of which are very fertile, more particularly the largest, called Tzana, the name likewise bestowed by the natives on the lake itself. Its greatest extent, in a north-east and south-west direction, is about ninety miles, and its breadth thirty-six.

EUROPEAN LAKES.

THESE Lakes, although much inferior in size to several of those above described, merit a brief description on account of the phenomena they occasionally present.

LAKE LAGODA, in the western part of the Russian empire, lies between the gulf of Finland and Lake Onega, and is one hundred and fifty miles in length, and ninety in breadth. It is the largest lake in Europe; but is so full of quicksands, which are constantly moved from place to place, by the frequent storms to which it is subject, that very dangerous shelves are formed along its course. This led Peter the Great to cause a canal, nearly seventy English miles in length, seventy feet in breadth, and about eleven feet in

depth, to be cut, at a vast expense, from the south-west extremity of the lake to the sea. The completion of this canal, which has twenty-five sluices, or locks, and into which several rivers flow, was a labour of fourteen years. To keep it in repair is the constant employment of a regiment of soldiers, who for that purpose are stationed on different parts of its banks. LAKE ONEGA is situated between this lake and the White Sea, and communicates with the former by the river SWIR. It is one hundred and twenty miles in length, and in breadth between fifty and sixty. Notwithstanding its waters are fresh, it is frequented by seals.

The other principal Lakes of the north of Eürope are the following. LAKE PEIPUS, in Livonia, nearly seventy miles in length, and forty in breadth, runs into the gulf of Finland by the river Narva, and is celebrated for the abundance of fishes with which it swarms.—In Sweden Proper, which abounds with lakes, the most considerable is LAKE MALER, situated between Upland, Sudermanland, and Westmanland. It is seventy-two miles in length, and is said to contain not less than twelve hundred and ninety islands. It communicates with the sea by the mouths of the north and south rivers, which enter it near Stockholm, and its banks are in every part beautifully diversified.—LAKE WETTER is the most remarkable of the twenty-three lakes to be found in East Gothland. It is ninety miles in length, fifteen in breadth, and has but one outlet, by the river Motala, although it receives upwards of forty small streams. This lake lies a hundred feet higher than either the Baltic or the North Sea, and is deep and clear, but very boisterous in the winter season. On its banks are found agates, cornelians, and other valuable stones.

THE LAKE of CONSTANCE is one of the great boundaries which separate Switzerland from Germany. Its broadest part stretches into Switzerland; while towards Germany it divides itself into two arms, one called THE ZELLERSEE, or Lake of ZELL, and the other the BODMEN, or Lake of UBERLINGEN. In the former is the island of REICHENAU, three miles in length, and one in breadth, abounding with fine vineyards, and all kinds of fruit; and in the latter, the small island of MEINAU. From Bregentz to Zell this lake is likewise distinguished by two appellations, the part

from the former of these places to Constance being called the UPPER LAKE, and that from Constance to Zell the LOWER LAKE.

THE LAKE OF GENEVA resembles the sea, both in the colour of its water, the storms which are raised on it, and the ravages it makes on its banks. It receives different names from the coasts it washes, and has in summer something like the flowing and ebbing of the tide, occasioned by the melting of the snows, which fall more copiously into it at noon than at other times of the day. It is shaped like a half-moon, its convex side looking towards Switzerland; having on that side a length of forty-eight miles, while towards Savoy its length does not exceed thirty-six. It is of such a depth as to be navigable for larger vessels than are commonly seen in rivers. Near Villeneuve, the Rhone discharges itself into it with such rapidity, that for the distance of half a league, the river water, which is very foul, continues unmixed with that of the lake, which is particularly clear.

LAGO MAGGIORE, in the Duchy of Milan, is a most extraordinary lake, sixty miles in length, and six in its general breadth, with a depth of eight fathoms in the centre. It is surrounded on every side with hills covered with vineyards; and along its banks are rows of fine trees, and walks arched with vine branches. This enchanting prospect is heightened by several large natural cascades falling from the mountains. At the part where it widens into a bay, appear the two celebrated islands named ISOLA BELLA, and ISOLA MADRE, which have been compared to two pyramids of confectionary, adorned with green festoons and flowers. At one extremity of the garden of Isola Bella, are ten terraces, the perpendicular height of which, taken collectively, is more than two hundred feet above the level of the water of the lake. These terraces decrease proportionably in their circuit as they rise toward the top of the hill, where an oblong area, paved with fine stone, and surrounded with a ballustrade, affords a most delightful prospect. Isola Madre has seven terraces, which are high, but sloping, and at a considerable distance from each other, on which account it appears to be lower than Isola Bella, although the terraces have been planned of an equal height. Nature was, perhaps, never so successfully aided by the

decorations of art, as in the disposition of the gardens and ornaments with which these islands, so beautiful in themselves, are embellished.

BRITISH LAKES.

ALTHOUGH these Lakes are far inferior in size to those described above, they are not without their sublimities, and present phenomena which deservedly class them among the wonders of nature.

The most interesting of these is **ULSWATER**, a lake of Westmoreland, ten miles north of Ambleside, and fourteen south-west of Penrith. It is nine miles in length, and nearly a mile in breadth. On this lake much amusement arises from the discharge of guns, or small cannon, at different stations. The report is reverberated from rock to rock, promontory, cavern, and hill, with every variety of sound; now dying away on the ear, and again returning like peals of thunder. It is thus re-echoed seven times distinctly. The lake, viewed from an ascent, flows majestically in its calmness, clear and smooth as a blue mirror, with winding shores and low points of land, covered with green inclosures. The water is almost every where bordered with cultivated lands, gently sloping upward from a mile to a quarter of a mile in breadth, till they reach the feet of the mountains, which rise, rudely and awfully, on either hand, displaying their broken summits. Directly in front, at a distance of somewhat more than three miles, **Place-Fell**, one of the loftiest of these mountains, pushes its bold broad breast into the middle of the lake, and forces it to alter its course, forming first a large bay to the left, and then bending to the right. From a south-west direction it flows due west, but is soon interrupted again by the root of **Hevellyn**, a lofty and very rugged mountain; when, once more spreading its waters, it turns off to the south-east, and is lost among the deep recesses of the hills.

WINANDER MERE, the longest and most beautiful lake in England, said to be so called by the Saxons on account of its winding banks, lies, among mountains where eagles build their nests, in the western part of Westmoreland, and on the borders of Lancashire. It is about ten miles in length, from north to south, but its breadth does not any

where exceed a mile. It is in some parts of a vast depth; and its bottom is one continued rock, with which it is in a manner paved.

The Lake of DERWENT WATER, three miles in length, and half a mile in width, lies in the beautiful vale of Keswick. Out of this lake rise five islands, which being covered either with tuif or trees, add greatly to the beauty of its most picturesque appearance. Still more to the north-west, the river Derwent, after running for a short space in a narrow channel, spreads itself into a long and narrow lake, called BASSENTHWAITE, at the termination of which is a remarkable water-fall named LOWDORE.

LOCK LOMOND is the most beautiful of the lakes of Scotland, it is thirty miles in length, and its greatest breadth ten miles. Its greatest depth, which is between Firkin point and Ben Lomond, is a hundred and twenty fathoms. The first view of this charming lake, from an elevated spot named Tarbat, presents an extensive serpentine winding amid lofty hills, which, towards the north, are barren, black, and rocky, darkening with their shade that contracted part of the water. On the west side, the mountains, the summits of which are lofty, naked, and craggy, are clothed beneath with woods of oak quite to the water's edge. Toward the east the mountains are equally high, but their summits form a more even ridge, parallel to the lake, except where Ben Lomond, like Saul amidst his companions, overtops the rest. And, lastly, the eastern boundary is formed of a part of the Grampian hills.

The first scene which presents itself to the view of the admiring spectator, is separated from one totally different, by two headlands covered with trees, the most remote of which is Firkin point. On passing this cape an expanse of water bursts at once on the view, varied with all the softer beauties of nature. Immediately beneath is a flat covered with wood and corn: beyond, the headlands stretch far into the water, and consist of gentle risings; many having their surfaces covered with wood, while others are adorned with trees loosely scattered over a fine verdure, or over the purple bloom of the heath. Numbers of islands are dispersed over the lake; some of the same elevated form as the little capes, and wooded in the same manner; others

just peep above the surface, and are tufted with trees; and several are so disposed as to form magnificent vistles between.

The other remarkable lochs, or lakes, of Scotland, are LOCH-TAY, LOCH-NESS, and LOCH-LEVEN, whence arise rivers bearing the same name; and LOCH-JERN, from which flows the river Jern. Of these the one most deserving of a concise description is Loch-Ness, which is twenty-four miles in length, and in most parts two in breadth. This lake has been sounded in many parts, with upwards of five hundred fathoms of line, without any bottom having been found. Its banks are mountainous, and covered with wood. That its waters never freeze, is ascribed to the many great springs which flow into it. It discharges itself into the river of the same name, six miles in length, which likewise never freezes, but has a condensed evaporation during the frost. Near to this lake is the great mountain Meal-fuor-vouny, of a round shape, on the summit of which is a lake of fresh water, about thirty fathoms in length, and six in breadth, without any course or stream running to or from it. Although of so inconsiderable an extent, it is unfathomable.

IRELAND abounds more in Lakes than perhaps any other country of the same extent, more especially in the provinces of Ulster and Connaught. They are usually classed under two denominations; fresh-water lakes, which have no access of tide, or mixture with the sea; and salt lakes, into which the tide flows, and which may more properly be called inlets of the sea.

The most extraordinary fresh-water lake is LOUGH-LEAN, otherwise called the LAKE OF KILLARNEY, in the county of KERRY. It possesses singular beauties, and is divided into three parts. The northern, or lower lake, is six miles in length, and from three to four in breadth. On the side of one of the mountains is O'Sullivan's cascade, which falls into the lake with a roaring noise which strikes the timid spectator with awe. The view of this sheet of water is uncommonly fine, appearing as if it were descending from an arch of wood, which overhangs it above seventy feet in height from the point of view. The islands are not so numerous in this part as in the Upper Lake; but there is one of uncommon beauty, called Innisfallen,

nearly opposite to O'Sullivan's cascade. It contains eighteen acres; and the coast is formed into a variety of bays and promontories, skirted and crowned with arbutus, holly, and other shrubs and trees. The promontory of Mucruss, which divides the Upper from the Lower Lake, is a perfect land of enchantment; and a road is carried through the centre of this promontory, which unfolds all the interior beauties of the place. Among the distant mountains, the one named Turk, presents itself as an object of magnificence; and the summit of Mangerton, more lofty, though less interesting, soars above the whole.

The passage to the upper lake is round the extremity of Mucruss, which confines it on one side, and the approaching mountains on the other. Here is a celebrated rock, called the Eagle's nest, which produces wonderful echoes: the report of a single cannon is answered by a succession of peals resembling the loudest thunder, which seems to travel along the surrounding scenery, and die away amid the distant mountains. The upper lake is four miles in length, and from two to three in breadth. It is almost surrounded by mountains, from which descend a number of beautiful cascades. The islands in this lake are numerous, and afford an amazing variety of picturesque views.

The centre lake, which communicates with the upper, is small in comparison with the other two, and cannot boast of equal variety; but its shores are, in many places, indented with beautiful bays, surrounded by dark groves of trees. The eastern boundary is formed by the base of Mangerton, down the steep side of which descends a cascade, visible for four hundred and fifty feet. This fall of water is supplied by a circular lake near the summit of the mountain, called the DEVIL'S PUNCH-BOWL, which, on account of its immense depth, and the continual overflow of water, is considered as one of the greatest curiosities in Killarney.

LOUGH-NEAGH is somewhat of a square form, but indented on every side, and is the largest lake in Ireland, being twenty miles long from the north-west point to the south-east, nearly fifteen from the north-east to the south-west, and ten or twelve at a medium breadth. It communicates its benefits to five counties, Armagh, Tyrone,

Londonderry, Antrim, and Down; the latter of which it touches by a small point on the south-east side. It receives six considerable rivers, four of smaller note, and several brooks; notwithstanding which, it has but one outlet for the discharge of this great flux of waters. Among its peculiarities, it has that of petrifying vegetable substances.

LOUGH-ERNE is divided into two branches, the Upper and Lower, which are thus formed by the water being contracted into the compass of a considerable river for several miles, after which, having spread, it forms the lower lake. In both its branches, it takes its source through the whole length of the county of Fermannagh, from the south-east point to the north-west, nearly dividing it into two equal parts. It abounds with a great variety of fishes, among which are pike of a prodigious size.

CATARACTS AND CASCADES.

FALLS OF NIAGARA.

THE river Niagara, in Upper Canada, takes its rise in the eastern extremity of Lake Erie, and, after flowing for twelve leagues, empties itself into Lake Ontario. Its breadth is nine hundred feet, and its depth very considerable; but its current is so exceedingly strong and irregular, and its channel so frequently interspersed with rocks, that it is navigable for small boats only. Proceeding lower, the stream widens, the rocks gradually recede from the view, and the current, though strong, is smooth and regular. At fort Chippeway, however, situated one league above the cataracts, the scene is again changed, and the river so violently agitated, that a boat would be inevitably dashed in pieces, were it permitted to pass Fort Niagara, situated on its bank. So impetuously do the waves break among the rocks, that the mere sight of them, from the adjacent shore, is sufficient to strike terror in the spectator. As it approaches the falls, the stream rushes along, with redoubled fury, until it reaches the edge of the stupendous precipice, when it tumbles suddenly to the bottom, without meeting with any obstruction in its descent. Precisely at this place, the river strikes off to the right, and