XXII. *Observations on the Indian method of Picture-Writing by William Bray, Esq. In a Letter to the Secretary.*

Read March 1, 1781.

S I R,

IN a memoir lately communicated to the Society by governor Pownall on the origin and nature of picture and elementary writing he observes that he has heard of painting on trees by the Indians in North America, but that he never saw any of them.

RECOLLECTING

RECOLLECTING that a gentleman of my acquaintance had shewed me in his journal a copy of an historical painting in figures which he had taken from a tree in North America, I wrote to him, and have been favored with the annexed sketch and interpretation of it.

HE says that he found the marks on a tree on the banks of the Muskingham river; that he does not certainly recollect of what species the tree was, but thinks it was a sugar maple; that the bark was peeled off on one side of the tree, about a foot square, and these characters painted on that part with charcoal and bear's oil; that black is the color which signifies anger or war; that there is nothing very elegant in their paintings, the end of the finger, or the point of a burnt stick, being the only pencil they use; that this was the performance of Wingenund, an Indian warrior of the Delaware nation, when going out to war, and that it was interpreted to him by captain White-eyes, a Delaware chief, as follows:

THE figure number 1. is the imitation of a river turtle, which is the emblem or badge by which his tribe is distinguished.

N^o 2. is his personal mark or character. The Indians choose some one in their youth, and retain it without alteration to their death.

N^o 3. is meant for the sun.

THE ten horizontal strokes under it shew the number of times he had been at war, that is, the number of expeditions he had been upon. They do not reckon by campaigns like the Europeans.

THE figures under the turtle shew the number of scalps and prisoners he had taken at different times, of which those marked N^o 4. are men's scalps.

N^o 5. women's scalps.

N^o 6. men prisoners.

N^o 7. women prisoners.

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THE number of scalps or prisoners taken in each expedition are set opposite to it, viz. The first time he went to war he was unsuccessful, taking none; the second time he took one man's scalp; the third time he took a woman's scalp, a man's scalp, and a woman prisoner.

THE figure under the turtle, N° 8. is intended for a fort which he was at the taking of; he believes it was one of the small forts on lake Erie which was surprised by the Indians about 1762.

THE fort N° 9. is intended for Fort Detroit, which was besieged by the Indians in 1762 under the command of the famous Pontiac, but bravely defended by major Gladwin. The other, N° 10. is Fort Pitt, with the town, N° 11. and the Monongahely and Allegheny rivers; which was besieged by the Indians about the same time.

THE space between the sixth and seventh horizontal strokes, shews that he did not go to war for some time.

THE twenty-three strokes at bottom shew the number of warriors he had with him at the time he made the war-marks; their inclining to the left, with their backs to the sun, shews that they were going to the northward.

HE says that the marks they make on their return are generally done with vermillion, which is a peaceable color, and shews that their anger is no more. At those times they put the scalps and prisoners in the rear of their men, in this manner $\backslash \backslash \backslash \bar{x} \hat{x}$, and if they had been out two moons and an half they would put two round black or red spots on the right of the prisoners, and a semicircular one for half a moon. Their loss they would express by making horizontal strokes between the prisoners and the moons in this manner $\backslash \backslash \backslash \bar{x} \hat{x} \equiv \bullet \bullet \text{C}$

THE Delawares are divided into three tribes, the turtle, the wolf and the eagle tribes. Each makes use of their respective badge,

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badge, and it would be looked upon as an unpardonable crime for one tribe to forge or make use of the badge of another. Every nation differs something in the manner of describing their war-atchievements.

If the above will be worthy the attention of the Society, I beg you to lay it before them, and am, Sir,

Your most obedient

humble fervant,

WILLIAM BRAY.

XXIII. *Observations*