

1844.

The US has not yet fully spread from the Atlantic to the Pacific, so a Native American tribe might well have been one of your neighbours!

In the ancient world, tradition has preserved the memory of barbarous nations of cannibals, who fed on human flesh. But in every part of the New World there were people to whom this custom was familiar. It prevailed in the southern continent, in several of the islands, and in various districts of North America. Even in those parts, where circumstances, with which we are unacquainted, had in a great measure abolished this practice, it seems formerly to have been so well known, that it is incorporated into the idiom of their language. Among the Iroquois, the phrase by which they express their resolution of making war against an enemy is, 'Let us go and eat that nation.' If they solicit the aid of a neighboring tribe, they invite it to 'eat broth made of the flesh of their enemies.' Nor was the practice peculiar to rude unpolished tribes; the principle from which it took rise is so deeply rooted in the minds of the Americans, that it subsisted in Mexico, one of the civilized empires in the New World, and relics of it may be discovered among the more mild inhabitants of Peru. It was not scarcity of food, as some authors imagine, and the importunate cravings of hunger, which forced the Americans to those horrid repasts on their fellow creatures. The rancour [*sic*] of revenge first prompted men to this barbarous action. The fiercest tribes devoured none but prisoners taken in war, or such as they regarded as enemies. Women and children, who were not the objects of enmity, if not cut off in the fury of their first inroad into a hostile country, seldom suffered by the deliberate effects of their revenge.¹