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THE NEW WORLD.

No. IV.

An enquiry into the National Characters
of the people of the United States of America.

To these influential foreign emigrants
of the United States mentioned in the last chapter, there remains to be added the great number and variety of persons from the European continent and the West Indies, which have come hither during the two centuries of our existence; from the year 1609 to the current year. The population of the single state of Pennsylvania, which seems to have been nearly quadrupled in thirty-three years, though constantly sending out people, is a very impressive fact, relating to this point. But, if we compare our whole population at two millions at the declaration of independence, it probably is little less than four fold at the present time, including the Louisianians.

We proceed now to a distinct point in the formation of the mass of the North American population; and it will require discriminating faculties and all the frankness of our readers to surmount established and ancient prejudices.

We mean to say, that it is very important to a correct estimate of the American population and character, and of the degree, in which we were actually English colonists, a mere emanation of English customs, that we should consider the other British European states as really distinct and materially different from the English kingdom.

The American provinces were taking a consistency in the year 1703, when the English and Scotch nations agreed to unite or rather to confederate. From 1603 they had been governed by the same king, but in Scotland the predominance of the civil law, of an anti episcopal religion, of military tenures, of a foreign tongue and a different dialect, freedom from Saxon, Danish and Norman laws and institutions, the sheepherd state, the unimproved condition of agriculture, and that actual spirit of baseness, which never was broken down till the time of George the second, all combine to render the Scotch a people of a temper, disposition and character materially different from the English. It is correct therefore to affirm, that the derivations of men, manners, and habits, principles, religion, manners and institutions from Scotland to the North American provinces have contributed to infuse qualities, really not English into the American people, economy and character.

Similar remarks arise upon the subject of the Irish nation and establishments. The Presbyterians, in the North of that kingdom, are a mixed people, with very perceptible Scottish characteristics. The Irish, on the other hand, have strongly reacted upon the Scotch. It is well known that an immense and incessant stream of Hibernian people, Presbyterian and Roman Catholics, has flowed into the middle states. The degree of similarity of the Irish Catholics to the English Episcopalians is no more than that which a conquered people exhibits when compared with their conquerors. They remain in Europe the most discordant and contrasted classes of the population of the united kingdom. These numerous emigrants have not infused into this nation any thing material of the proper English character. The progenitors of the Scotch and Irish Presbyterians made and successfully pressed upon England the political, religious and ecclesiastical "solemn league and covenant" of the 16th century. Its influence was most sensibly felt in the English nation in the middle of the seventeenth century, and little indeed was it deemed congenial with the character of the Anglo Saxon inhabitants of the kingdom of England, at the time of planting America.

During the most vigorous periods of the North American provinces the Irish and Scotch Hibernian families were of very great power and weight and in every stage of the contest with Great Britain, civil and

independent, they formed a strong body of influential opponents, or determined revolutionists. The institutions they aimed to establish were those of their native American compatriots. They did not desire the establishment of a monarchy, nor the standing army by sea and land, nor the established church of England.

It will not be considered as a mere refinement to estimate the Welch emigrants to the U. States as a section of people not entirely of the English stock or character during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in which the American provinces were commenced and matured to separate independence. Without the limits of Scotland and Wales, the Saxons, in England proper, had vanquished the Britons, so far as to become the dominant and characterizing political community. From the time of the Roman conquest of England there has never been a subjection of the Welch to the Italian empire or to any of the successive conquerors of England. The mountains of Wales strengthened the native defence, and, from their poverty perhaps, failed to coact any of the invaders. The Welch, on the contrary, gave England a race of energetic sovereigns in the House of Tudor, which commenced with Henry the seventh and ended with the memorable queen Elizabeth. The distinction between the English and Welch character and institutions was so great that the Legislature of England found it absolutely necessary to abrogate and suppress their institutions and customs by a special law, stronger than the measure of George the second to change the insulations and habits of the Scotch. The ancient Britons have to this day a separate language, and, even in their English, a Welch dialect. The line of Welsh sovereigns of England ending with Elizabeth in 1603; and the troubles of the Scottish kings of England never ceasing till the non-existence of the Stuarts, it cannot be doubted that the numerous and early Welch emigrants to the middle provinces of America brought with them a portion of their inextinguishable national character, with its actual variations from that of the Anglo Saxons or their modern English descendants.

Though no commixture of our Indian tribes with the European settler in this country, or with their descendants, have ever taken place, yet there cannot be a doubt, that many lessons have been drawn from the untutored operations of the human mind, and from the workings of the head and feelings of the rude savages. They exhibit man under the exclusive influence of natural causes. The actual presence of the red tribes, and that of the African people, to the number of a million in the whole, is no inconceivable fact in a nation of less than seven millions of white persons. The Celts and Gauls of Europe are of the same origin, complexion and religion as the Indians. The colored or black labourers of America are of another race and country, of a different color, and the unrequent and uncertain worshippers of an obscure, and unknown deity, whom they endeavor to propitiate by rude and horrible sacrifices, in the graves of their departed relations and through entreaties, by means of those deceased friends. The determined but tractable spirit and other characteristics of the Indian tribes are displayed in their constant wars with the aggressing and insulting whites, and their constant peace with the whites who have been just and conciliating. The blacks, in other countries, have been mingled, or various castes, says Lanjouw, "to the sacraments; to the ecclesiastical orders, and even to the episcopal character; to the duties of pastors and missionaries; to the office of plenary and to the rank of general. The enlightened court of Berlin appointed a negro a counsellor of state, and he proved to be one of the most able of those who have been honored with that title. In short the negroes have distinguished themselves as artists; as professors of the ancient and modern languages, of mathematics and philosophy, and as physicians."

The people of America well know, that the case of the blacks in America has occasioned every where profound disquisitions on the natural history of man, on the rights of human nature, and upon the pure morality and exquisite benevolence of the Christian religion.

It will be remembered, that the people of the North American provinces, before their revolution, had never seen a foreign born

army of more than a few hundred men, nor any considerable foreign navy. The French army of Rochambeau co-operated with that of Washington for several years in many of the most ancient counties of U. States. The mass, rare military talents, and general knowledge of the officers and the disciplined correctness of the soldiers impressed the public mind, as well as the government, the army, the navy and the militia of the U. States with high ideas of their merit and character. When the presence of the French navy is also remembered, and that many foreigners of rank, talents and enterprise served in the American army and navy, and mixed intimately with the circles of society, it will be naturally presumed, that those foreigners, in one of the most influential situations of human life, must have excited very considerable attention. The case of the U. States, in the war of the revolution, electrified this allied Gallic army and Gallic navy in our fields and waters. It is well known how eminent the officers of the army of Rochambeau and of their fleet in America, rendered themselves, as the soldiers of liberty during the first years of the French revolution.

In the plan and extent of this enquiry were to comprise a volume some additional considerations might be adduced to prove that even the American provinces were rather colonies of all Europe, than of the English kingdom alone. We might establish the argument with increased force, in reference to the present time, when the twenty-fourth year of actual separation is rolling over our heads. But the induction of evidence respecting objects in our country derived from continental, Scottish and Hibernian Europe will not here be further pursued. In the following paper it is intended to display a number of revolutions in the ancient English institutions occasioned or adopted in North America, in the time of our confederation with the British kingdom.

COLUMBIANUS.

COBBETT'S LETTER TO THE KING,
On the Maritime War against France.

LETTER I.

SIR,

When every eye in the nation, at the end of 16 years of war, which has given rise to the income tax; which has caused a part of every man's estate to be alienated, under the name of Redemption of Land Tax, which has banished gumes from the Land, and made bank notes a legal tender—which has seen the Habemus Corpus, or Personal Safety Act for many years suspended; which has drained the kingdom of its youth and its vigor, leaving the next generation to be the offspring of decrepititude, deformity and imbecility; which has thus entailed upon the nation ugliness and weakness, and disease; and which, while it has robbed the land of thousands upon thousand of the best of its laborers, in order to convert them into defenders of Sicily, and other foreign countries, has introduced thousands and thousands of foreigners to defend the same land. At such a time, when every eye in the nation, is anxiously fixed upon the great, and, in all probability, the last attempt, about to be made against the enemy, it appears to me, that it may be useful publicly to state certain facts, relating to the mode of carrying on a war of such wearisome length and such desolating consequence; and that this statement may, from its manner, lose none of its intrinsic importance, I for the second time in my life, presume to address myself directly to your Majesty, taking care that, in this instance, no keeper of official papers shall, at a recent one, have it in his power to garnish, or to suppress any part of that which I write.

That your Majesty is not well informed as to the great and interesting matters upon which I am addressing you, I, without the smallest hesitation, conclude; first, because the measures of your servants, to whom your information must come, are in no wise

calculated for the real state of things; and, secondly, because supposing those servants to possess both talents and zeal sufficient for all the purposes of their respective stations, their time has, from the moment they entered the service, been continually employed by endeavors to defend themselves, and to annoy and degrade their own political enemies and your majesty's late servants. As men may be blinded by too much light, so a people may be kept in error, may be deceived and ruined, by the means of the press, which, unperverted, is so well calculated to ensure the constant triumph of truth; and I have for my part, no doubt, that with all our parade of publicity, with all our estimation of unreserve, there is in the whole world, no people who, in proportion to their magnitude, understand so little of their public affairs as is understood by the people of this kingdom.—Were not this the case, Sir, it would be impossible that the enemy should be in his present flourishing state, with respect to his internal and other resources, while England possesses such means of cutting off those resources.

The general opinion in this country is, that France is in a miserable state—that the people are starving—and that as to commerce there is no more of it going on in the dominions of Napoleon than upon any of the islands in the Thames, about Windsor or Hampton Court. This too, I conclude to be the opinion of your majesty; because as I before observed, your information as to such matters, must be derived from your servants, and those servants prove, by their express declarations, as well as by their conduct, that such is their view of the situation of the empire of France. As to whether the subjects of Napoleon like or dislike his government, or whether they be better or worse off now than they were under their former sovereigns; these are questions which we can discuss to no profit, because we possess no facts whereon to reason—but with regard

of commerce which is the only valuable one, I possess from the best possible source, quite a sufficiency of facts to shew, that upon that subject at least, this has been the most deceived of nations, and your majesty the most deceived of sovereigns.

The sort of commerce to which I allude, is what we in England, call the coasting trade; but in the dominions of Napoleon, or countries under his sway, it is to be considered as something much more important than it is with us. There is no doubt that the trade between London and the coal mines is of a million times more value to England than all her foreign commerce put together; but if we cast our eye over the map of Europe, we shall see, that the coasting trade of Napoleon embraces climates; and that a maritime communication between his several countries must be, not only of vast benefit to him, but in many cases, necessary to the existence of the people. Some of these countries must supply the others with corn. Without the oil and the wine, and the silks, and the cotton, these countries might exist; but the southern could not, in many cases possibly exist without the necessities of life from the north; and of carrying on this commerce there are no means other than those of a maritime nature.

The extent of this commerce, in the dominions of Napoleon, is scarcely to be credited by those who are not acquainted with the facts. Along the coast of Naples, Tuscany, Genoa and Piedmont; from the southern provinces of France and Marseilles, through Cete, and the grand canal of Louis XIV. to Bord aux, and thence along the Atlantic coast of France; the whole of the coast of Holland, and into the Elbe; in short, from the Baltic to the southern point of Italy, all the countries are connected by a chain of commercial intercourse as complete, perhaps, as ever existed in the world, and as advantageous as it is extensive. This commerce is, by your majesty's servants, spoken of under the degrading appellation of "a mere coasting trade;" but this is precisely that trade which is really advantageous to a nation. If England were cut off from all communication with foreign nations, she would in point of strength and happiness, suffer nothing at all. But, cut off the communication between London and the Coal Mines, the inhabitants of London must perish or disperse. There are seven branches of our coasting trade, of a degree of importance, not, indeed, approaching nearly to