

AMERICA DEFENDED;  
Or, English Calumny Rebutted.

FROM THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW.

(CONCLUDED.)

But 'some' it seems, in the words of an American writer, quoted by this reviewer, 'plead the sufficiency of natural religion, and reject revelation as unnecessary and fabulous, and many, we have reason to believe, have yet their religion to choose.' Say you so? And what did Shaftesbury and Lord Herbert plead, and Bolingbroke, and Toland, and Collins, and Tindal, and Woolston, and Mandeville, and Chubb, and Hume, and Gibbon; and what do Godwin, and Sir William Drummond, and Lord Byron, and, if they are not sorely belied, many of the Edinburgh Reviewers, and Edinburgh Philosophers, plead at the present day? The writings of a few perverted geniuses in France, in the fever of the revolution, have given to the leading men of that country, with those who are willing to take up with every hasty impression, the reputation of having been the apostles of infidelity to the world. It is an entirely false impression, for modern infidelity was taught in England. There have been more distinguished writers in that country against Christianity, than in all others together. We do not speak it rashly, nor without having ourselves verified the remark, that there is no cavil of importance, in the French infidel writers of the last century, which cannot be found in earlier English writers. Moreover, it is equally true, that the infidel writings in England, for the very reason that they are less scandalous, are far more dangerous, many of them being, from their nature, such as cannot be excluded from any respectable library, and others composed with a gravity, which secures them access to readers, who would turn away with disgust from the licentiousness of Voltaire. Think but a moment of such books as Bolingbroke's Letters on History, Hume's Essays, and Gibbon's Rome, or of the latter of them alone, a work, which must stand in every English library as long as the language shall last, which must be read by every man of liberal education, and yet which grew out of the idea of accounting for the origin and progress of Christianity by mere human means, and contains the most dangerous attack upon it, that was ever made.

It is the English infidel writers, moreover, who laid the foundation not only for the school of their successors in France, but for the modern German divinity, which in any common acceptation of terms is another form of infidelity. The first lines of that scheme, which was imperfectly shadowed out by Semler, and has been filled up by Eichhorn and his followers, and which, with much variety in details, insists on denying anything supernatural to belong to christianity, may be very clearly traced in the works of Toland and Collins. Will it be said, that if England has brought forth powerful writers 'to plead the sufficiency of natural religion,' it has brought forth powerful refuters of them? It is not so. Every theologian knows, that a very large majority of the professed replies in England to the infidels are miserable; the productions of feeble men, striving to gain preferment by defending a popular cause. Why does not the church of England, 'the national church,' with all her princely endowments, her prelates, her stalls, her colleges, (some of which alone possess a revenue twice as great as that of the state of Massachusetts,) produce some champions of the religion equal to those who have assailed it? Cannot the honors, powers, dignities, and millions of patronage, lavished on this church, raise up a Christian scholar to write the history of Rome or the history of England? Can they produce nothing but Warburton's monstrous paradox, which no man ever believed, and Watson's superficial though judicious pamphlet against Paine, and Paley's compilation from the Unitarian, the Socinian Lardner? In judicious sermons, containing powerful illustrations of single points of the Christian evidences, the modern English church has something to boast, and in the old controversy with the Papists, her earlier divines evinced a world of learning; but she has not a work in any degree entitled to the name of a classical treatise of Christian evidences. Butler's Analogy, indeed, is a work, which, for the grand conception on which it is built, and the power of argument with which it is armed, is alone a monument of modern theology. It is not, however, a work on Christian evidences of which we are now speaking.

Again, 'in the old states of America no kindly associations are connected with the gloomy and heartless performance of religious worship.' What think ye of this, members of the American

Episcopal Church, whose numbers are not much inferior to those of the same church in England; whose bishops derive their consecration in unbroken succession from the national church as there established? 'The village church with its spire steeple, its bells, its clock, the well fenced churchyard with its ancient yew tree, and its numerous monumental records of the dead, are here utterly unknown.' Read this, traveller in New England, among whose thousand villages there is scarcely one without its steeple and spire; (which, by the way, is not frequent in the English country churches, which generally have low towers;) there is not one, in which there is not a graveyard decently enclosed. But we have no 'yew trees' in our graveyards, no 'pensive cypresses.' Now that God of nature, who appointed that the dust of man should return to the dust, from which he was taken, has been pleased to withhold the yew tree from our soil, and if this reviewer really thinks, what he says, that the want of it is a piece of irreligion, he must cast the blame elsewhere. As to the 'pensive cypress,' for which, according to Faux and his Reviewer, it is in vain to look in the graveyards of this country, we have strong doubts whether it be not equally in vain to seek it in England. We have, it is true, two trees called cypresses; and this Reviewer, who will find nothing in the right place, vilifies us for our cypress swamps. But if by 'pensive cypress' the gentlemen mean, as we presume they do, the 'cypessus tristis' of the ancients, which was placed before the houses and planted by the sepulchres of the dead, and is still in many parts of the world, then we plead again that the tree will not grow in the open air, in the greater part of North America, and we much mistake if it will in England. 'An American apologist admitted, that the corpse was no sooner laid in the earth than it appeared to be forgotten; the tear of sorrow and the hand of affection neither bedews nor decorates the sward under which the friend, the parent, or the relative reposes; it is vain to look into the burial grounds of this country for the pensive cypress or the melancholy willow, the virgin weeping over the urn of her departed lover, or the mother hanging over the grave of her departed child.' What sorry pedantry is this; let us fancy to ourselves, as carried into execution, what this wise man desiderates, and would leave us to infer is practised in his own country;—the young women of a sizeable town, who have had the misfortune to lose a lover, out betimes in the churchyard, and a half, or a third of the matrons upon the same errand, weeping over urns and hanging over graves. We can tell this Reviewer that he libels not us, but his own country, in his intimation, that in this way the English think proper to grieve. Of real life or of the human heart, he could have known nothing, or instead of transcribing this trash, he would have seen in it nothing but poor ribaldry. These images are the growth of a pedant's garret, who thinks that the descriptions of the poets are a mirror of life. No man, that ever had or lost a child or a wife, would talk of pensive cypresses, and melancholy willows, and hanging over urns. It is cold monkish nonsense.

And then, it seems, 'the numerous monumental records of the dead are wholly unknown.' For this assertion, vengeance, if our prophetic spirit deceive us not, will sooner or later overtake the critic who fabricated this slander. Offended Nemesis will cause him to fall in with 'the first pentade.' Fall in, did we say? aye, subscribe for it—read it,—and if after this he declares that epitaphs are unknown in America, we know not what will cure him.

The tomb of Washington is 'a dog kennel,' a 'potato grave,' a 'pig sty.' The tomb of Washington is, in our judgment, worthy of him who is laid in it; a simple excavation in God's earth, with bricks enough to form the cavity, and nothing but a green sod and a few native cedar trees above it. It stands a little in front of the plain wooden house where the hero lived, on the bold bank of one of the noblest rivers in the world. What would a rubbish of marble or granite add to a spot like this. Congress once passed a resolution to remove the revered remains to the capital, and deposit them in a national monument. Happy that no such design was carried into execution. The British soldiers would have wasted it with fire; as they did the library of Congress; and the bones of the 'Rebel,' as certain of their poets have called him, would have been trampled under foot by the gallant Coekburn's marines. Or if they had escaped that fate, if they had been allowed to rest undisturbed, if a monumental church were erected over them, and a long line of kindred worthies laid by their side, unless the sacred spot were treated with a

reverence unobserved toward Westminster Abbey, it would impart no pleasure to patriotic mind. If Westminster Abbey be now what it was five years ago, there are few spots in London filthier than the outside of poet's corner; a noisome, exposed thoroughfare. Within,—we trust we are not wanting in tenderness to the spot where are deposited the ashes of some of the great men of the race from which we are sprung, the poets and orators who have immortalized the language we speak,—but we can truly say, that the rabble of lords and ladies of family thrust in among them, the vile taste of most of the monumental architecture, sculpture and poetry, add but too much to the disgust, which the dreary entrance has excited.

We must omit the notice we were prepared to take of some of Mr. Faux's tales and his Reviewer's comments. One only we cannot wholly pass over. These worthy colleagues labor hard to establish the lawlessness of America, and one re- tails and the other swallows various bugbear stories about 'rowdy juries,' 'regulators,' 'Lynch's Law,' and 'violent resistance of civil officers.' Unlucky wights. Know ye the land of the smuggler; the wrecker; the poacher; of the white boy, and the peep of day boy; of the Luddite, and of the frame breaker. We think we can give our readers a sketch from the state of society in England, which will compare tolerably well with that of the westernmost county in the valley of the Mississippi. We quote it from the Annual Register of 1818, which we have opened merely as the volume nearest at hand.

'On Friday night, the 6th Nov. 1818, a most desperate gang of poachers, about twenty in number, known by the name of the Bedfordshire poachers, or Robin Hood's gang, headed by a farmer named Field, of New Inn, near Silsoe, who called himself Robin Hood, attacked the woods and estate of Joseph Latour, Esq. of Hixton near Hitchin. The Gamekeeper, Dalby, and his assistant Godfrey, on finding Field and his companions advancing near them, concealed themselves in a hedge. The gang, however, crossing the hedge near the spot, discovered them; when without any attack or provocation whatever, on the part of the keepers, they formed a line around them, when four or five of the party most cruelly beat them, leaving them for dead. Field held his dog by the ear, while it licked the blood from the head of Godfrey. Much credit is due to Mr. Latour, for his spirited exertion in sending immediately to Bow street for assistance, when an active officer of the name of Holyland was sent down, who soon ascertained that the gang consisted of at least forty men with Field at their head, and—'

And what, think you, gentle reader? Perhaps that the county was up in arms to detect them? No. Perhaps that like our rowdies, regulators, &c. they are confined to remote, thinly settled districts? No. Perhaps that it was a combination of vagabonds and paupers against the rich? Oh, no. The Annual Register completes the sentence, which we have broken off, by saying, that this gang of forty fellows, 'was found to be encouraged by a number of GENTLEMEN and farmers.' But let us see a little more of these gentry; for England, ye must wot, being an exceedingly well governed, well administered kingdom, and having the advantage of a national religion, of yew trees, of pensive cypresses, and monumental records, must needs afford valuable lessons to this land of godless rowdies. Where then did the officers of justice, sent to apprehend Robin Hood's gang of forty, encouraged by Gentlemen and farmers, find him? In the heart of one of the most populous counties in England, of course; that was the field for their exploits; but instead of lurking in the forests under the cover of night, they did the thing genteely. 'Holyland proceeded to apprehend Field, as the ringleader, in doing which he was exposed to great danger, as he found him at a public house, surrounded by twenty of his colleagues, who had pledged themselves to die to a man rather than suffer Field to be taken.' He was finally taken sword in hand. The Annual Register concludes, 'this gang had been for some time a terror to the whole neighborhood, and Field has frequently given notice to the gentleman, whose park he was going to attack. Some idea may be formed of the depredations committed by Field's gang, when it is pretty correctly ascertained, that Field has paid from £60 to £70 a week to his men, and employed a cart to convey away the plunder.' Perhaps when the Quarterly Reviewer writes another article on America, he will not say the 'rowdies' are a description of gentlemen quite new to us.'

But we are weary of these travellers and their critics. This calling of hard names and saying harsh things is not a work we are used to, nor one in which we take pleasure. Every body sees how easy it would be to draw the most frightful picture of English society, and more than retaliate all that even their imaginations can devise against us. We engage, out of authentic English works, to find a parallel for every tale of barbarity, vice and misery, which can be collected from the most faithless and gos-

sipping traveller in this country. As American citizens, we have had provocation enough, and temptation enough to do this. The unprincipled character of most of the English travellers in this country would fully authorise it. The tone of their leading journals calls for it; and it would very naturally, under these circumstances, contribute to the popularity of ours, to maintain the cause of our country. But we have chosen to do that, as far as we can, in other ways; and have left this work to those who like it better. We do not remember having, before now, directly noticed any of these travelling libellers, nor have we formally retorted upon the Quarterly Review, in that strain, which it has thought proper to adopt toward this country. Henceforward we are ready to pursue a somewhat different course, and we invite our worthy colleague beyond the ocean, to reconsider the expediency of forcing us into it. Though we will not use his weapons, and first commend and then quote the wretches like Faux, who from every quarter of Europe infest England, and return to vent their spleen in German and French, yet from English works of standard authority, we will read him such a lesson, as shall teach him either to be silent as to this country, or to change his tone.

For his country, the country of our fathers, we entertain the tenderest sentiments of respect and veneration. The memory of the great and good men, the countrymen of our ancestors, is dear to us in the next degree to that of those, whom we honor and love at home. In the English constitution we see some things, in the state of society and condition of the arts in England, we see much to admire and to emulate. We also see monstrous defects, enormous contrasts, institutions most pernicious, customs and practices corrupt beyond the example of imperial Rome, and an excess of private profligacy, in proportion to the excess of wealth and the vehemence of temptation. There exists in England a maturity of vice as unquestioned as the maturity in wealth and art; and there are enormities of no unfrequent occurrence in that country, as far beyond the measure of vice in America, as the Duke of Bedford's income is beyond that of our richest landed proprietors. From this indubitable state of things, it is plain, that it merits a little hesitation, on the part of our colleague of the Quarterly, whether he will pursue this contest; and provoke the exposition of the abuses in his country by presses, beyond the reach of the 'Bridge Street Association.' It merits consideration whether he will do all, that can be done by a literary journal of commanding influence, to turn into bitterness the last drop of good will toward England, that exists in this country.

He sees in Faux's book itself, that England has too many and too partial friends here. What our political feuds could not do, is rapidly doing, by publications like the Quarterly Review; and it is matter of notoriety, that the feelings entertained in this country toward England are less friendly now, than in the hottest of the late war. This alienation has been mainly effected by this very journal. For the purpose originally of discouraging emigration,—a policy very unsound in itself, for why keep shut up in your empire a crowded, starving, rioting, maddening population—some writers in this journal undertook to vilify America. Next, out of a hatred to the radical emigrants, who flocked hither, and some of them made favorable report of the land, they set themselves still more sternly to defame it. The habit thus formed has gained strength by indulgence till it now amounts, as is seen in this review of Faux, to perfect insanity. Its supposed writer is an aged man bowed with years and with infirmities, and very shortly must appear at a higher tribunal than that even of an indignant nation, to give an account of the use he has made of the talents put into his hands. We despise cant on all occasions; but we protest that we think more solemnly than he appears to do of literary responsibility. Wantonly to defame an individual, or to stimulate neighbors to a quarrel, would be thought a crime of no ordinary baseness; what is it for one, who controls a press at the very centre of intellectual circulation—who utters his voice, and is heard as rapidly as wheels can roll or winds blow, on the Ganges, the Neva, the La Plate, and the Missouri, to defame, not individuals, but countries; and to exasperate into wrath and bitterness not an individual, but a mighty empire, an empire peopled from his own native land, and in the language of a writer in this very number of the Quarterly Review, 'which, of all that history records, has employed the shortest time to rise to the greatest power and freedom.'

To conclude, if our readers should feel surprised that an individual so low,

as we have shown this traveller to be, should have occupied our attention so long, we beg them to consider that this Journal, in the best style of common London typography, fine type, fair paper, and a handsome engraving at the head, is brought before the world to be read, quoted, and believed, like those of the swindler Ashe, the gardener Parkinson, and the stocking weaver Far-ron, and a half dozen others, whose names and trades we forget. By virtue of the scandal propagated of this country, and without one single title to common attention and credit, this writer, like his kindred, has received the sanction of one of the most respectable journals, and will, perhaps, be quoted by lords and gentlemen, and be referred to as a competent eyewitness.

If, again, it should seem incredible, that a person so low as Mr. Faux, should have found admission, on any occasion, in this country, to the houses and tables of private individuals, we beg to suggest, that, as his doing so often depends on his own word, no credit whatever is to be given to it. We have personal knowledge, that he can speak as if familiarly acquainted with an individual, who never heard of his name, till it appeared in the title page of his book. But it must also be remembered, that in all foreign countries, the stranger's reception depends, at first, not a little on the quality of his coat. Mr. Faux, who, among the stock on his farm, appears to have caught a little instinct, understood this, and tells us on landing here, he dressed in the London fashion, thus imposing upon those, who could not know him, by a decent exterior. This is more or less the case in all countries, even those where the avenues of good society are most shut against strangers. Not only a universal hospitality, which prevails in civilized countries, but a willingness to believe others well bred, which prevails nowhere so much as among those, who are so themselves, brings the unknown well dressed stranger into better company abroad, than he could find at home. But it must be confessed, that the fault is in a good measure our own. A foolish admiration for what is foreign is far too common here; and the readiness to extend to strangers the greatest confidence of hospitality has, in other instances than this, exposed the good citizens of our country to shameful impositions. This is happily an evil, however, which corrects itself, and a few more travellers like Mr. Faux will establish the necessary degree of inhospitality; and teach Americans, if they must receive this rabble, to let it be at a side table.

MORAL.

GOODNESS OF THE CREATOR.

Malignant must be the mind of that person; with a distorted eye he must have contemplated creation, who can suspect that it is not the production of infinite benignity and goodness. How many clear marks of benevolent intention appear everywhere around us? What a profusion of beauty and ornament is poured forth on the face of nature?—What a magnificent spectacle presented to the view of man? What supply contrived for his wants? What a variety of objects set before him, to gratify his senses, to employ his understanding, to entertain his imagination, to cheer and gladden his heart? Indeed, the very existence of the universe, is standing memorial of the goodness of the Creator. For nothing except goodness could originally prompt creation. The Supreme Being, self-existent and self-sufficient, had no wants which he could seek to supply. No new accession to felicity or glory was to result to him, from creatures whom he made. It was goodness communicating and pouring itself forth, goodness delighting to impart happiness in all its form, which in the beginning created the heaven and the earth. Hence those innumerable orders of living creatures with which the earth is peopled: from the lowest class of sensitive beings to the highest class of reason and intelligence. Wherever there is life, there is some degree of happiness; there are enjoyments suited to the different powers of feeling; and earth, and air, and water are with magnificent liberality made to teem with life. Let those striking displays of creating goodness call forth, on our part, responsive love, gratitude, and veneration. To this great Father of existence and life, to Him who hath raised us up to behold the light of day and to enjoy all the comforts which this world presents, let our hearts send forth a perpetual hymn of praise. Evening and morning let us celebrate Him, who morneth the morning and the evening to rejoice over our heads; who openeth his hand and satisfieth the desires of every living thing. Let us rejoice that we are brought into a world, which is the production of infinite goodness, over which the supreme intelligence presides; and where nothing happens, that was not planned and arranged from the beginning, in his decree.—Blair.

Slander.—Either say nothing of the man, or speak as a friend.