

## Flint's Letters from America, 1818–1820

Early Western Travels 1748–1846 Volume IX

Early Western Travels 1748–1846

A Series of Annotated Reprints of some of the best and rarest contemporary volumes of travel, descriptive of the Aborigines and Social and Economic Conditions in the Middle and Far West, during the Period of Early American Settlement

Edited with Notes, Introductions, Index, etc., by Reuben Gold Thwaites, LL.D.

Editor of "The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents," "Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition," "Hennepin's New Discovery," etc.

Volume IX

Flint's Letters from America 1818–1820

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## PREFACE TO VOLUME IX

Had all the travellers from Great Britain who visited America during the early decades of the nineteenth century been of so discriminating a temperament as the Scotchman whose work we republish as volume ix of our series, Americans might have lacked that sensitiveness that arose from unjust and flippant portrayal and criticism of American manners.

James Flint was of a good family, had been carefully educated, and possessed a sound and just judgment, with capacity for philosophic insight. Coming to the United States to observe conditions, he depicts them with candor and good will. While confessing favorable preconceptions, due to a personal liking for democratic institutions, our author does not omit the shadows in his pictures; but he presents them with such dispassionate fairness that the sting of criticism is removed.

Flint was particularly interested in the Middle West. Therefore, after a brief sojourn in New York and Philadelphia, where he commented judiciously on all that made for the higher life of these two young cities, he followed the great Western thoroughfare which crossed Pennsylvania to Pittsburg, then the gateway of trans-Allegheny America. Here he purchased a skiff and floated down the Ohio, occasionally landing to make visits and observations; from Portsmouth he proceeded on a circuit through Ohio and Kentucky, settling at length at the falls of Ohio, in the Indiana town of Jeffersonville.

A resident at this place for several months, his investigation of Western conditions assumed a new phase. No longer the passing traveller, noting the novelties and peculiarities of the people, Flint began a systematic observation of American institutions in general, and particularly the political, social, and economic life of the Middle West. In his succinct but comprehensive study of the national constitution and local state governments, he anticipates De Tocqueville and Bryce. His comments upon the judicial system show an appreciation of the stern necessities of primitive justice, coupled with the law-abiding

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spirit characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon race. His notes upon the power of public opinion as a restraining force in political life, and upon the universal veneration for the constitution, show that he discovered the fundamental principles underlying American political life. His comprehension of the historical development of the West is remarkable for keen insight and prophetic vision. He realized what the acquisition of Louisiana had meant in dispelling the dangers of a Western secession from the republic; and showed that the true interests of the West allied her with Eastern markets.

ooming large on the horizon, Flint discerned the second factor which was to rend American life. The discussion of the Missouri Compromise had scarce begun, but already he saw that the nation could not always exist half-slave and half-free. He saw also that the long border line forming a kind of moral boundary, was the crucial difficulty, and that the acute stage in the controversy would be reached over the question of fugitive slaves. To the present generation these seem self-evident truths; but few Americans and fewer foreigners had the keenness to perceive this before 1820. Flint, however, unlike many Englishmen of his day, was no radical condemner of slavery; 11 he appreciated its patriarchal features and its real benefits for the negroes. He also saw that the masters suffered more deterioration by the system than the slaves; that the responsibility for the system rested not upon present, but historic conditions; and that wholesale denunciation was not only unjust, but useless.

In addition to his comments on this great social question, Flint throws much light on general conditions in the young West. He studies the spectacular drama of the camp-meeting revival not only from the point of picturesqueness, but of educational and religious development. He realizes the need of the people for education, but appreciates the provisions made therefor in public lands. Throughout the West he finds the saving remnant — people of culture and refinement, who welcome strangers with hospitality, and are laboring to erect a worthy civilization in this newest community. The social equality everywhere evident among whites pleases him, and he remarks not unkindly upon the general dislike for personal service that characterizes the ambitious West. His satire on

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the excess of the honorary titles of “major,” “colonel,” and “judge,” as well as upon the readiness with which the “land of liberty” is vociferously proclaimed, is gentle and kindly.

But all these features of Flint's work are secondary to his economic study. Not only did he prove himself a wise and trained observer, but he was a scientific economist, and had come to the United States for research material. At each stage of his travels he sets forth the ratio between prices and wages, explains the industrial aspects, and the prospects for emigrants. Already, he tells us, nearly all the best land of Kentucky and Ohio is taken up. Settlement is flooding Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri, 12 where cheap lands are yet available. He shows the sanitary disadvantages of this newer, more reeking soil, as against the possibilities it offers to the emigrant to secure the profits of his own industry. With keen indignation he condemns the unsound banking system of the West, deprecates the booming of town sites, and the “log-rolling” in state legislatures. But in the face of criticism, and as though eager to forestall unfavorable judgments, he contrasts American conditions with those of Great Britain, with no undue favor for the latter, reminding his English readers that here are no boroughs to monopolize business interests, no clergymen to control education, no nobility to exact special privileges. “I have never heard of any parson who acts as Justice of the Peace, or who intermixes his addresses to *the Great Object of Religious Worship*, with the eulogy of the Holy Alliance The farming interest has no monopoly against manufacturing: nor has the manufacturing any positive prohibition against the farmer.” Free industry is the dominating factor of American life, the keystone of its prosperity.

In short, we have in Flint's *Letters* a remarkable study of American life in the beginning of its new era, at the close of the second war with England. Charitable, comprehending, thoughtful, he does not slur over national faults nor unduly praise local virtues. Dangers, both financial and political, are pointed out; but the basic principles of American society are distinctly and clearly laid bare, and the progress and possibilities of the New West revealed.

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In the present reprint, the original edition, published in Edinburgh in 1822, has been followed; save that the Addenda given in the latter (pp. 303–330), have been 13 omitted, as being composed of material of small present importance:

1. Two letters from a Jeffersonville (Indiana) lawyer dated Dec. 20, 1820, and Aug. 1, 1821, commenting satirically upon the wildcat currency of that day.
2. Three other letters, by various persons, giving an account of material progress in Indiana.
3. “The American Tariff, with alterations and addiions.”

In the preparation of this volume for the press, the Editor has had the assistance of Louise Phelps Kellogg, Ph.D., Edith Kathryn Lyle, Ph.D., and Mr. Archer Butler Hulbert.

R. G. T.

Madison, Wis., October, 1904.

### **FLINT'S LETTER FROM AMERICA — 1818–1820**

Reprint of the original edition: Edinburgh, 1822

LETTERS FROM AMERICA, CONTAINING OBSERVATIONS ON THE CLIMATE AND AGRICULTURE OF THE WESTERN STATES, THE MANNERS OF THE PEOPLE, THE PROSPECTS OF EMIGRANTS, &c. &c.

BY JAMES FLINT.

“From the disorders that disfigure the annals of the Republics of Greece and Italy, the advocates of despotism, have drawn arguments, not only against the forms of republican government, but against the very principles of civil liberty. They have decried all free

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governments as inconsistent with the order of society, and have indulged themselves in malicious exultation over its friends and partizans. Happily for mankind, stupendous fabrics reared on the basis of liberty, which have flourished for ages, have, in a few glorious instances, refuted their gloomy sophisms. And, I trust, America will be the broad and solid foundation of other edificies not less magnificent, which will be equally permanent monuments of their error"— *General Alexander Hamilton*.

EDINBURGH: PRINTED FOR W. & C. TAIT, PRINCE'S STREET; AND LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN, LONDON.

1822.

TO JAMES STUART, Esquire YOUNGER OF DUNEARN THE FOLLOWING SHEETS ARE RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED BY THE AUTHOR

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### LETTERS FROM AMERICA LETTER I

Voyage from Greenock to New York—Circumstances of Passengers—Arrival, &c.

*New York, July 10, 1818.*

As I have already informed you, I sailed from Greenock on the 24th of May last, in the American ship *Glenthorn*, Stillman Master, bound for this place.

I observed that my fellow emigrants were much affected when about to take a final leave of their native land: some regretting the separation from their native soil, while others, mute and thoughtful, seemed to suffer under feelings of a more tender kind.

To some it may appear inconsistent in people to regret leaving their homes and their friends, while the emigration is voluntarily undertaken; but on this occasion, the paradox will be explained, when their circumstances and views are taken into consideration.

Of our party were three farmers, with their families, whose leases were expired; all of them having declined engaging for a new term of years, [2] under the apprehension of seeing their paternal stock, and the savings of many years' industry, divided between the landholder and the collector of taxes. A native of Scotland, who had resided several years in America, returned with the intention of resuming business in the town where he was born, but the thick ranks of a necessitous and half employed population, had closed on the place he had left. There was a widow, 26 with two children, on her way to put herself under the protection of a brother in America. With us also were several of the labouring class, whose utmost exertions could only procure the bare support of existence; and ploughmen, who prudently refrained from marrying with fourteen pounds a-year. In short, there was

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scarcely one of our number whose condition might not perhaps be bettered, or whose prospects could be rendered worse, by the change of country.

In a voyage from Europe to America, most passengers may expect to be sea-sick. Nearly all of them on board the *Glenthorn*, on this occasion, suffered more or less. For my own part, I never was entirely free from it for more than three-fourths of the passage. This disease is dispiriting while it continues, but as it is believed to produce no permanent injury, but, on the contrary, is thought conducive to future health, the attack is not at all dreaded. People unaccustomed to the seafaring life ought to carry with them those kinds of provisions to which they have been previously accustomed, as the stores of the ship soon become loathsome to the sick. Potatoes will be found acceptable, when the caprice of taste rejects almost every other food; and walking on deck is of service, as the air is better, and the pitching of the ship is considerably less felt, than below.

[3] It is very improper to go to sea in crowded vessels; as epidemic diseases are engendered, and the most dreadful mortality is the consequence. That law of Britain which allows only one passenger for every five tons of burden in American ships (including seamen) is a most beneficial regulation; and while, in American bottoms, the cabin passenger pays L.21, and the steerage passenger L.12, the expense cannot be complained of, while health and comfort are taken into consideration. It is much to be regretted that the government of England does not extend its humane restriction to its own Canadian settlers, and to emigrants who sail for the United States in British ships.

The 4th of July is celebrated by Americans as the anniversary of their independence, declared in 1776. The captain and seamen were disposed to be joyful in commemoration of this great event. The striped flag was displayed, guns and pistols were fired, accompanied with loud cheers. The passengers, no less enthusiastic, joined in the strongest expressions of their devotedness to the democratic form of government. They indulged in such sentiments as, a sincere wish that the United States may long continue exempt from that excessive corruption, as they thought, which has so long and so much

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degraded a large portion of the human race;—and their avowed satisfaction at the near prospect of becoming people of the Republic.

On the 8th we came in sight of Long Island, and the high lands of New Jersey; a welcome occurrence to people who had been so long at sea. In the afternoon a pilot came on board. He informed us that the city was in great bustle, as the inhabitants were assembled to deposit the bones of General Montgomery, who fell at Quebec, on the 31st of December, 1775.<sup>1</sup> The remains of the patriotic

<sup>1</sup> General Richard Montgomery (1737–1775) was a native of Ireland, and served with Wolfe at Quebec in 1759. At the outbreak of the Revolutionary War he was appointed commander of the American forces in the Northern Department, being killed in his heroic assault on Quebec, December 31, 1775. Through the courtesy of the British general his body was buried with the honors of war within the unconquered walls of Quebec. Forty-three years later the remains were disinterred, in compliance with a special act of the New York legislature, brought to New York City and deposited with great solemnity beneath a monument in front of St. Paul's church (July 8, 1818). A full account of the ceremony is contained in the New York *Daily Advertiser* of that date.— Ed.

28 [4] leader were buried by the ministerialists without the fort, and were to-day interred by his grateful countrymen under the portico of St. Paul's church, New York. We were sorry that it was not in our power to witness the solemnity.

In the evening we were off the point Sandyhook. The smell of the new hay on the adjacent fields regaled us very agreeably. All seemed elated with joy. A bagpipe and two violins played by turns, and our young people danced on deck till a late hour. During this season of mirth, we were entertained by a sight, perhaps unequalled in the phenomena of an European climate. Some dense black clouds which hung over Long Island, were frequently illuminated by flashes of lightning. It is in vain to attempt a description. About midnight we passed through the Narrows, and soon afterwards anchored on the quarantine ground, about seven miles from New York.

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On the morning of the 9th of July, the inspecting surgeon visited us, and allowed the anchor to be weighed. In this situation we had a full view of the shores of Staten and Long Islands. The wooden houses are neat, and the orchards and natural woods have a thriving appearance. It would seem that the people here have a partiality to the Lombardy poplar, which grows to a great height, shooting up its branches nearly perpendicularly; assuming something of the appearance of a spire. The straight rows of these trees, so common here, have an insipid regularity and sameness, more like a file of armed soldiery than an ornamental grove.

Some of the frame houses are painted red, those of the finer sort, white; ornamental railings are also painted white. To an European eye, these colours appear too glaring. The lands seen from the bay are sandy and poor.

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[5] The first glimpse of the city of New York is by no means a distinct one. The buildings are much obscured by the forest of masts in front of them; and as the site of the town rises but gently inland, the houses in front conceal, in a great measure, those in the rear, so that the shipping and the numerous spires are the objects most distinctly seen.

Before entering the port we were twice boarded by agents from the Newspaper offices. They inquired for British newspapers, and generally for the news of Europe; they noted down the names of several of our passengers, which they intended to publish in the papers of the afternoon. There are no less than seven newspapers printed in New York daily; the competition of these Journalists is keen, and their industry seems to be great.

We have experienced much good treatment from Captain Stillman. Every passenger is so sensible of this, that a committee of their number was requested to make public testimony of their esteem for him.

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We landed yesterday about noon, all in good health and spirits. During the voyage, passengers have experienced no kind of sickness, except that peculiarly incident to the sea.

This letter cannot come immediately into the hands of all my friends; most of them, I hope, will hear that I am arrived in this place in good health. Should you adopt any way of making this and any subsequent communications generally known to them, it will be very gratifying to me, and, besides, will relieve me of the labour of writing many letters; a labour, dictated by the strongest ties of gratitude and affection, but one which it is doubtful if I can accomplish to the satisfaction of my own mind.

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### [6] LETTER II

Observations on New York—Removal to Long Island— Miscellaneous Remarks—Return to New York—Farther Observations on the City.

*New York, August 4, 1818.*

On entering New York, I was struck with its appearance. Streets lined with lofty trees, most of them the Lombardy popular, which affords a very agreeable shade in hot weather; indeed, they are so numerous, that the new comer, when he looks before him, is apt to suppose himself in the midst of a wood. The streets, with a few exceptions, are too narrow, and are deficient in sewers. Many parts of the town prevent me from thinking that it deserves the character of extreme cleanliness bestowed upon it. The greater part of the houses are of brick, neatly built; but, to eyes accustomed to towns of hewn stone, New York has, on the whole, what (for want of a more descriptive word) may be called a gingerbread appearance.

The markets here are amply supplied with fine vegetables, and an immense variety of excellent fish, a great proportion of which are sold alive. Beef and pork are good, but the

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mutton and veal that I have seen are of inferior quality. Marketing is carried on more after the manner in some English country towns. No servants, but masters, attend and carry home the provisions.

Beggars do not abound here as in some countries of Europe. I am told that every man who is [7] able to work can earn a dollar per day, and that his board costs two or three dollars per week; thus it is in his power to banish every appearance of poverty, and to save some money, provided he is disposed to economy. Mechanics have good 31 encouragement. Joiners one and three-quarters, and masons two dollars a-day. They usually pay three dollars, or upwards, a-week for their board.

Many of the necessaries of life are here purchased at high prices. Woollen cloths and most articles of wearing apparel imported, pay duties, varying, in different cases, from 25 to 33 per cent. In transacting with the merchant and the tailor, farther American enhancements may be calculated upon. Washing and dressing of shirts, neck-cloths, &c. costs a dollar and a half per dozen. Every thing that an American does, must be liberally paid for. This tends to render living dear, even where provisions are cheap.

Some imported articles, as silks, wines, foreign spirituous liquors, teas, sugar, and coffee, are much cheaper than in Britain. The difference of custom-house duties is the cause of this.

The condition of animals bespeak the great plenty of food that falls to their share. The horses employed in removing goods to and from the wharfs, and in stage coaches, are fat, and in high spirits. They are not so rough-legged, so broad, or so strong-limbed, as the draught horses of Britain; but they are better adapted for speed. Hogs, running in the streets, are numerous, but they are not starvelings. I have seen several of them that would yield upwards of 300 lbs. of pork without special feeding. Speaking of hogs, I would mention by the way, that they are allowed to run at large for the purpose of cleaning

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the streets. An economical way of procuring scavengers, [8] but one that leads to a commutation of nuisance rather than a final removal of it.

*July 12.* Last night the heat was excessive, and not accompanied with a breath of wind. It was in vain that I thrust my head out at an open window to be cooled. The effluvia arising from the streets is, in a great measure, occasioned by a high temperature. I imagine that a copious evolution of phosphorized hydrogen gas goes on in such weather. I could not sleep till three or four o'clock. This morning I heard that some people who had suffered from the heat and stillness of the air, had stretched themselves on carpets, or sat by open room doors, or in passages. Nights so very oppressive are said to occur rarely. In high and inland parts of the country they do not occur at all.

This is not the most proper season of the year for Europeans arriving here. Yesterday and to-day the heat has been excessive, the thermometer in the shade stood at  $97\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ . In such a degree of heat it is imprudent to take much exercise. The temperature of the human body being lower than that of the air, the former is deprived of the cooling process usually produced by evaporation. Should the heat of the blood be increased in such a case, fever commences. We had an example of this, in a young man, one of the emigrants on board the *Glenthorn*, who exerted himself too much in getting baggage ashore. He was this day removed to Brooklyn, a high-lying village on Long Island, about a mile from New York. Transitions from heat to cold are, perhaps, still more dangerous; of late, eleven persons have died in the city by drinking cold water. Several of them were strangers newly landed. Water should not be drunk immediately from the [9] well, but should be allowed previously to stand for a few minutes in the air, It should be taken in small mouthfuls, and these heated in the mouth for two or three seconds before swallowing. Precautions of this kind ought to be strictly attended to, while heated by exercise or the sun's rays. Spirits are often mixed with water, to prevent the injurious effects of the latter. This corrective, however much extolled, ought to be taken in very small quantities. Here, as in Britain,

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there are many who resort to spirituous liquors as the sovereign medicine, both in hot and in cold weather.

Strangers lodge in boarding houses, and are charged from three dollars to twenty a-week. I have got lodgings in a good one, where I find interesting company. Previous to our meals a servant rings a small hand-bell, summoning every lodger to the public room, where we all eat together. A polite, well-dressed, hostess presides.

Servants are not here so attentive to their duty as elsewhere; many of them are free blacks, slow in their motions, and often treating the most reasonable commands with neglect. *Master* is not a word in the vocabulary of hired people. *Bos*, a Dutch one of similar import, is substituted.<sup>2</sup> The former is used by Negroes, and is by free people considered as synonymous with slave-keeper.

<sup>2</sup> From the Dutch *Baas*, meaning master.— Ed.

This afternoon much thunder was heard. After twilight the lightning flashed incessantly, so that the illumination was almost permanent. Thunder storms in America are more frequent, more severe, and often accompanied with greater rains than in Europe. A respectable gentleman of Delaware county, in this State, told me, that during a thunder storm there, he laid his watch on the table, and found that an hour and forty-eight minutes elapsed [10] without one cessation of sound. He thinks it probable that the peal lasted about two hours, as a few minutes must have passed before the idea of noting the time suggested itself.

*July 13.* This evening, after dark, I was surprised to see a large object standing in the centre of one of the principal 34 streets; on approaching it, I discovered that it was a frame-house, with a wheel affixed to each comer. Its length was about twenty-two feet, breadth about sixteen feet, and two stories high. I am just told that much larger buildings than this are often dragged off by horses, with their roofs, floors, plaster, doors, and

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windows, entire; furniture sometimes included. This sort of removal happens at the expiry of leases of small lots, where the occupier is not bound to leave the buildings.

*July 16.* For two days past, the skin of my face has been spotted, accompanied with blotches, and with partial swelling. This is called the prickly heat, from the pungent feeling that attends it. A medical gentleman has told me, that this has been occasioned by a sudden cooling, which has put a stop to perspiration. He congratulated me on having escaped a fever, prescribed a hot bath, and subsequent sea-bathing. I am about to set out for Long Island, in obedience to the latter part of the Doctor's prescription.

*Afternoon.* Arrived at New-Utrecht, a village near the south-western extremity of Long Island.<sup>3</sup> On leaving New York, I crossed the ferry to Brooklyn, by a steam-boat of singular construction: this vessel is composed of two hulls, at a little distance from, and parallel to, one another; they are connected by a deck common to both. The waterwheel, turned by a steam-engine, is placed between [34] the keels of the boats. There is a rudder at each end, so that she can cross and re-cross, without putting about.

<sup>3</sup> New Utrecht was in Kings County, New York, seven miles from New York City.— Ed.

A stage coach runs from Brooklyn to New Utrecht. The distance is nine miles; and the fare for one person, half a dollar. This coach, like the other public ones of the country, has no glass windows in the front or the sides of it, <sup>35</sup> these parts are furnished with curtains, which are let down in bad weather. The coach is long, containing four seats that run across; and travellers sit with their faces forward, as in the pews of a church.

I have agreed to stop a few days at New Utrecht. My host is an intelligent man, obliging, but not fawning; he and his wife take the principal drudgery of the house upon themselves, as the slaves are extremely slow in the execution of their work. Sometimes the landlord presides at the head of the table, and at other times he acts as servant. At dinner we were joined by the coach-driver who brought us from Brooklyn; he is very unlike the drivers of some other coaches, is well dressed, active, and attentive to his business, by no means

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obsequious, answers every question with propriety, and without embarrassment. He does not depend on the gratuities of travellers for his wages. That system, which so universally prevails in Britain, is unknown here.

At the inn there were three boarders, all Scotsmen. One of them, a young gentleman from Edinburgh, who was confined to bed by a broken thigh bone, occasioned by a horse running away with a gig, from which he fell while attempting to disengage himself; he was occasionally attended by a young lady, whose visits were frequent, although she lived at the distance of ten miles. The people of the neighbourhood were also very attentive to this [12] person, often calling for him; and several of the young men sat with him all night by rotation. It was pleasing to see so creditable a display of the benevolent affections.

The good people here are the descendants of the original Dutch settlers. They are placed in comfortable circumstances, their style of living somewhat resembling that of farmers in the more fertile and improved parts of Scotland. 36 If the situations of farmers in the two countries were compared, it would appear that the advantage of the Long Islanders consists in a climate highly conducive to vegetation, their freedom from rent, being owners of the soil, and the total absence of any heavy taxes; and that their comparative disadvantage is, the want of such active domestic and agricultural servants as the farmer of the other country employs.

Mr. Cobbet<sup>4</sup> is now farming about nine miles from this place. His people (it is said) could not bear the opprobrious name *servant*, and, with the exception of one person, left him.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> William Cobbett, a publicist known both in America and England, was born on a farm in Surrey, March, 1762. After serving for several years in the English army, he resigned and (1792) came to Philadelphia. Here, under the name of "Peter Porcupine," he advocated the cause of the Federalists. Returning to London in 1800, he founded the *Weekly Political Register*. His influence with the workingmen was so great that the English government became alarmed, and he found it prudent to spend two more years in America (1817–

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19). He published his experiences as a Long Island farmer (1817–19), under the title *A Year's Residence in the United States of America*. Vigorously opposing the plans of Morris Birkbeck and others to bring over colonies of British emigrants to the United States, his attacks and the replies that followed brought on a journalistic controversy which lasted until about 1825.— (See volumes x, xi, and xii of our series.) Upon his return to England, he was elected to parliament as a Liberal in 1832, and served until his death (1835).— Ed.

5 This person was English.— Flint.

The fishermen here drag ashore many fishes in their seines. Without other evidence than the vast quantities of smaller ones left on the shore, the abundant supply of the New York market might be inferred. I bathe twice a-day, on the spot where General Howe first effected the landing of his army.<sup>6</sup> A farmer very obligingly gives me the key of his fishing house on the beach, that I may dress

<sup>6</sup> Admiral Lord Richard Howe, British general in the Revolutionary War, left Halifax with his fleet June 11, 1776, to effect a union with General Clinton at New York. He arrived at Sandy Hook June 29, and July 2 took possession of Staten Island.— Ed.

37 and undress in it. The farmers here catch great quantities of fish, with which they manure their land.

There are still a considerable number of slaves in Long Island; they are treated with a degree of [13] humanity that slaves in some other parts of the world never experience; they are well fed, and the whip is very seldom resorted to. Notwithstanding their comparative advantages, they detest the unnatural yoke, and frequently run off. It often happens that the master neither pursues nor inquires after the fugitive. What becomes of the self-emancipated is not here well understood. I have heard that many of them get to Boston, or some other of the northern ports, from whence they are carried to the Southern States, sold, and placed under a harsher treatment.

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A great part of the slaves of the State of New York are to be emancipated in the year 1827.<sup>7</sup> It is difficult to predict the consequences of this liberation. It is to be feared that people who have been compelled to work, will, of their own choice, become banditti, rather than adopt industrious habits. Arrangements must necessarily be made before the arrival of this revolution; but many satisfy themselves by saying, that the legislature will devise some plan that will enable them to get over the difficulty. Some suggest that the Negroes shall be returned to Africa. On this measure, the African Association, so much talked of in America, proceeds.<sup>8</sup> The expense of transporting,

<sup>7</sup> By act of legislation, 31st March, 1817, "Every Negro, Mulatto, or Mustee, within this State, born before the 4th day of July, 1799, shall, from and after the 4th day of July, 1827, be free."— Flint.

<sup>8</sup> The American Society for the Colonization of the Free People of Color of the United States, was organized at Washington, December, 1816. It rapidly gained favor, both North and South, and by February, 1820, sufficient money had been subscribed to send the first colony to Liberia. But the free negroes disliked it; the colonists suffered great hardships in Liberia; and the abolitionists soon opposed the project. William Lloyd Garrison began to denounce the Society in 1829, and thereafter it declined steadily in importance.— Ed.

<sup>38</sup> settling, supporting, and governing a new colony, must be immense. The design is as benevolent as the difficulties to be encountered are great. The support it meets with in slave-keeping states, looks like a pledge of sincerity, and an omen that forebodes success to the undertaking.

[14] The project of removing blacks to the backwoods of America seems to be altogether objectionable. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to prevent their return from exile; their previous habits and disposition render them ill-calculated to the work of subduing the forests. Besides, they would commit depredations on the neighboring settlers, and on the Indian people.

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Long Island being composed of alluvial soil, surrounded by a high beach, its surface is necessarily what is called a table land: for the most part the surface is somewhat flat, the soil is dry, and at this season, without streams of water. Near the surface I have observed a substratum that is intermixed with clay. If a part of this was raised above the ground, it would be made to approach to a loam, more productive, and less liable to be injured by drought, than the present sandy coating that covers the surface. A trenching, performed by the spade or by the plough, would no doubt produce the good effect.

A labourer in Long Island receives half a dollar a-day, with his board, and a dollar in harvest.

The weather, which is said to be hotter at present than it has been for several years, begins to scorch the surface of the ground. The stubble from which the hay has recently been removed, retains the appearance of a newly mown field; pasture grass is withering. In some fields a rank crop of weeds continues green; amongst these the cattle are straying nearly two feet deep, but are in reality almost starving; water is drawn from deep wells, and 39 served out to them in rather too small quantities. The cows are small, as may be expected. Good crops of wheat, rye, and Indian corn, are raised. These require manure. Indian corn is considered a good crop, when at the rate [15] of 40 bushels per acre. Oats do not ripen well from the excessive heat, and are used only for the feed of horses. Potatoes are small; their tops grow high and slender, as when shaded by trees in your country; their leaves are small and shrivelled. The greatest luxuriance to be met with in Long Island is in the orchards, the branches of apple and pear trees are bent down, and not unfrequently broken by the weight of the fruit. Peach trees were lately productive, but are now falling into decay. I have met with no one able to assign the cause. The woods are thriving, but few of the trees are large; they are evidently a new growth, and not contemporary with the thick trunks that opposed the first settlers. The owners frequently spare their own timber, and purchase from other parts of the State, or from New Jersey. In

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consequence of paying for timber and carriage, building in Long Island is rendered more expensive than in more late settlements.

It is not easy to state the price of land in Long Island, as much of it has descended from father to son, from the first settlement; and sales have been rare. A farm within ten miles of New York would perhaps sell at 140 or 150 dollars (from L.31, 10s. to L.33, 15s.) per acre. The practice of renting land is by shares, the occupier paying to the proprietor one half of the actual price of the produce, the former bearing the risk and trouble of collecting the money.

The fences are of wood. The figure is a representation of the railing commonly adopted here.

[16] A fence of this sort, costs about a dollar for every 40 ten yards in length. Where the posts are of cedar, and the rails of chesnut, the erection, it is said, may stand about fifty years. I examined one reported to be thirty years old, and found it to be so strong, that it may be expected still to last for years to come. There are neither hedges nor stone fences to be seen in this neighbourhood.

The crops, as in most parts of America, are cut down by what is called the Cradle-scythe. I went into a field where a Negro was reaping wheat with this sort of implement, and observed that about an English acre was cut down. On making inquiry, it appeared that he had been engaged about six hours in the work. The following dialogue ensued:

“You work very hard?”

“No Sir, I can do much more in the time, but that of no use.”

“You are not free then?”

“No Sir, I a slave, I longs to Jacob Van, there,” (pointing to the farm house.)

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“But you black people are very well treated here?” “Oh yes, Sir, master very good to me, give me every thing to eat he eat self, *but no Sunday clothes.*”

“You may live happier than some poor free people?”

“That may be true, Sir, but put bird in cage, give him plenty to eat, still he fly away.”

I delay giving a description of the cradle-scythe, as I doubt if the one that I have just seen is of the best construction.

After the crop is cut, the swath is collected by the hand, and tied into sheaves; a small quantity of stalks still remain scattered over the surface, [17] these are commonly collected by the hand-rake. To facilitate the latter part of the process, a horse rake has been recently invented; of which the following figure is a representation.

AB is a beam about six inches square, and about twelve feet long. CD is an upright rail that prevents the stalks accumulated by the machine from falling over the beam AB, and so left behind. EF, *ef*, are two supports to the rail, which also serve as handles for steering, and occasionally upsetting the machine. ABHG is a tire of wooden teeth, one and a half inches diameter, and about six inches distant from one another. These teeth are sharpened at their extremities, and skim along the ground with their points forward; raising up and collecting the stalks. 42 IK are trees to which the horses are yoked. The trees are attached to the beam AB, by the rope BLA.

[18] The field in which I saw the horse rake used is flat and not ridged; consequently the straight beam operated very well. To adapt a beam to ridges, it would only be necessary to construct it with two joints or hinges; one at each side of the handles, and to connect the central part of the beam by a rope with the point of attachment L. Otherwise, the implement may be moved across the ridges.

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Four wheeled waggons are the vehicles used in carrying home the crops, carrying manure into the fields, and produce to market. They are drawn by two horses, which trot, whether loaded or not. Small one-horse waggons are also used, they are neat, and are furnished with a seat for conveying families to church, and elsewhere. Many of the farmers who own but small properties, keep one horse gigs. Ladies drive dexterously.

The practice of housing the crops, and the ancient one of treading them out by the feet of horses, shew that the Long Islanders have yet something to learn in the way of dispatching their agricultural business.

The high price of land prevents emigrants from settling here. The near neighbourhood of a market, and the salubrity derived from dry land, together with sea breezes, might, notwithstanding, form sufficient inducements to many, who would pursue their immediate advantage; but those who look forward to the future prospects of a family, commonly prefer some part of the back country.

*July 24.* Saw the works in progress at Fort Diamond.<sup>9</sup> This is a large battery raised on a shoal in the narrows,

<sup>9</sup> Fort Diamond, later renamed Fort Lafayette, was the largest of the forts planned in 1812 for the defense of New York harbor. It became famous as a political state prison during the War of Secession, and was then protected by seventy-five heavy mounted guns.— Ed.

43 about 200 yards off the western point of Long Island; *most of the workmen are British.*

[19] Crossed the Narrows to Staten Island. The fortifications are extensive and commanding. The garrison consists of *one man* !

25. Left New Utrecht, where a residence of nine days has completely cured my blotched face. The climate is delightful, and I have entertained a very favourable opinion of the people.

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The emigrant who was removed sick to Brooklyn, is dead; thus by far the finest young man of our party, has fallen the first victim to the climate: twenty-two years of age, of a mild and cheerful disposition, and of a manly figure, and who had gained our universal esteem. Of a family consisting of six persons, he was the only one who was able to endure the fatigues of clearing away the forests. The feelings of the survivors are deeply wounded, and the tender attachment that pledged his early return to Scotland is blasted.

I returned to New York, and shall make some more remarks on the city. The population, at the census of 1816, was 100,619, of which 6985 were aliens, 9774 free people of colour, and 617 slaves. It is expected that the enumeration of 1820 will disclose a vast increase.

Literature does not stand on such a broad basis here as in Europe. Printing, particularly of newspapers, is carried on to a considerable extent: but the style of many communications and advertisements which appear in them, shews that the *public* are not far advanced in taste. Particular pieces are elegant. Many English publications are reprinted, frequently with the addition of some introduction, notes, or an appendix. For the additional matter a patent is procured, which I suppose has generally the practical effect of securing an exclusive privilege for the whole work. Some of Lord Byron's latest productions, the *Memoirs of [20] the Fudge Family*,<sup>10</sup> and the *Brownie of Bodsbeck*,<sup>11</sup> are exhibited in the windows of the principal book-sellers. When I left Edinburgh the last mentioned book was not published.

10 A series of metrical epistles purporting to be written in Paris by Thomas Moore.— Ed.

11 "The Brownie of Blednoch," a folk-lore ballad, is the best known of William Nicholson's poems. He was a Galloway peddler (1782–1849), who composed verses as he travelled from town to town.— Ed.

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The Kaleidoscope of Dr. Brewster is here fabricated in a rude style, and in quantities so great, that it is given as a plaything to children.<sup>12</sup> An artist informed me that a journeyman of his proposes to take a patent for an improvement he had made on it.

<sup>12</sup> Sir David Brewster (1781–1868), experimental philosopher and editor of the *Edinburgh Encyclopedia*, invented the kaleidoscope about 1816. Throughout these letters, Flint portrays large acquaintance with the writings of the more noted of his fellow-countrymen.  
— Ed.

The public museum in this city is a recent collection. An Indian mummy from the great saltpetre cave in Kentucky, a bear from Warwick mountains, about sixty miles north of this place, which weighed 700 pounds, and an immensely large turtle, are as yet the most interesting objects.

The town hall is a splendid building. Lightness, and an apparent want of solidity in its parts, deprive it in some measure of the august effect essential to sublime grandeur. The front and columns are made of white marble of a foliated texture. The interior staircase is both large and magnificent. It is circular, and furnished with two elegant flights of steps that wind in contrary directions, so that the one crosses the other alternately. Upon the whole, it displays that elegance which becomes an edifice devoted to the administration of justice.

45

When I visited the Court of Sessions, the judge on the bench appeared a plain active-looking gentleman, not distinguished by any robes of office. The business on hand was the taking of evidence in the case of a man who had left a vault open during the night. A person passing in the street happened to fall into the chasm, and raised an action of damages, on the ground that he had received bodily hurt. The questions put were numerous [21] and minute, the witnesses, notwithstanding, went on in giving lengthened details, embracing particulars not asked, and foreign to the subject. They seemed in no

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respect embarrassed by the dignity of the court. The whole of the witnesses were present, and each heard the examinations which preceded his own.

The Washington, a new ship of war, mounting 96 guns, is much visited at present.<sup>13</sup> The seamen are a party of stout healthy looking men, dressed in striped cottons, very suitable to the present hot weather, and cleanly in the extreme. The decoration, cleanliness of the ship, and the order that prevailed aboard, can scarcely be surpassed. Diffident, however, as I am in forming an opinion on any naval affair, I cannot avoid the impression that a vessel of such strength, and with such a crew of freemen, must be an overmatch for any other vessel constructed and manned as European ships of war were wont to be.

<sup>13</sup> The “Washington” was built at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, in 1814, being the second ship of seventy-four guns (not ninety-six, as Flint states) launched for the United States navy. She was the flagship of Commodore Chauncey in the Mediterranean, from 1816 to 1818. In 1843 she was broken up in New York harbor.— Ed.

The steam-frigate is a novelty in naval architecture. The vessel is bomb-proof, impelled by a powerful steam-engine; is said to be furnished with apparatus for heating ball, for throwing hot water, for moving a sort of arms to 46 prevent boarding, and to carry submarine guns of one hundred pounds shot.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> This was the “Fulton,” the first steamship in the American navy. Robert Fulton directed her construction, and she made her trial trip June 1, 1815, a few months after his death. Her naval service was unimportant. While employed as a receiving-ship at the Brooklyn docks she blew up, June, 1829.— Ed.

The steam-boat, Chancellor Livingstone, is the largest and finest vessel of the kind perhaps ever built; she is 526 tons burden, length 165 feet, and breadth 50 feet. The power of the engine is estimated as being equal to that of eighty horses. The boiler is of copper, and weighs twenty tons. The cabin unites something like the horizontal

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dimensions of a church, and a degree of elegance not exceeded by any floating apartment. The Chancellor sails between New York and Albany.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> The “Chancellor Livingstone,” built under Fulton's direction, and named in honor of his friend and patron, was completed in 1816. She was one hundred and twenty-five tons larger than any boat then on the Hudson. Her average speed was eight and a half miles an hour. In 1832 she was put on the route between Boston and Portland, being broken up at Portland two years later.— Ed.

[22] *August* 3. The theatre has some degree of resemblance in its plan to that at Edinburgh, and is attended by a genteelly-dressed audience. To-night the celebrated Mr. Incledon completed his engagement.<sup>16</sup> He was highly applauded. The song, “Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled,” was alike cheered by Scots and Americans.

<sup>16</sup> Benjamin Charles Incledon (1764–1826), a famous English vocalist.— Ed.

During this season of the year, most people wear light cotton clothes; the jacket is in many cases striped, and the pantaloons of Indian nankin. A broad-brimmed straw-hat is commonly used, to prevent the face from being scorched by the rays of the sun. Draymen, and other labouring people, wear a sort of frock or hunting shirt of tow-cloth, that hangs down to the knees. A tall, thin, swarthy-countenanced man, with a frock, surmounted <sup>47</sup> by a broad straw hat, is a figure somewhat new to the Briton.

One of the greatest inconsistencies among a people professing liberty and equality, is the degradation imposed on people of colour. In the church of the most popular preacher of New York, I looked in vain for a black face. There is a congregation of blacks in town, who have a preacher of the same colour, where (it is said) a white man would be equally singular. Blacks are not admitted into the public baths; and, at some places of amusement the hand-bills have a note of this kind, N.B. “A place is provided for people of colour.” I do not recollect of having seen or heard of a black person who is in any degree eminent in society, or who has acquired reputation in any mechanical or mercantile business. This

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depression appears to be produced partly by the aversion with which the white face looks on the black one, and partly by bad education and habits. Something more than mere emancipation is required, a moral change, [23] affecting both the black and the white, must take place, before the condition of the negro can be completely ameliorated.

The churches of New York are fifty-three in number, and are occupied by seventeen religious sectaries. None of these are peculiarly privileged by law, and none denied the common protection of citizens.

*August 4.* Now when about to leave New York, I feel a pleasure in stating my conviction of the civilization and moral honesty of the people. In the former respect, they may exult in any comparison with the mass of many European cities. And in regard to the latter, I have heard of no recent instance of house-breaking or riot. In hot weather, people leave their windows open during the night, and street doors are seldom closed during the whole of the 48 evening; the inhabitants not thinking their hats and umbrellas in much danger. Such traits are perfectly unequivocal.

### LETTER III

Journey from New York to Philadelphia—Remarks on the country passed through—  
Notices of companions— Their conversation by the way—Observations on Philadelphia —  
Institutions—Manufactures—People.

*Philadelphia, December 19, 1818.*

This letter will give you the details of my journey from New York to Philadelphia, and some particulars with regard to the latter city.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> The author's route from New York to Philadelphia was by boat to New Brunswick, thence by stage to Trenton on the Delaware, where boat was taken for Philadelphia.

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Stages, by this time, had practically ceased running between New York and Philadelphia.  
— Ed.

[24] *August 5.* Got aboard of the Olive-Branch steamboat for New Brunswick. This is a large vessel, wrought by an engine of forty-five horses' power. She may at once be pronounced elegant and commodious. The passengers dine on board.

In a company so large, the traveller has it in his power to select the person with whom he would enter into conversation. The individual I fell in with; on this occasion, was a mercantile gentleman from England. He seemed to me a man of a good disposition, and one who possessed considerable knowledge of the principal towns, and of the different ways of transacting business in the United States. The American character, according to his report, is by no means a good one. He expressed himself as completely tired of the country, and proposed returning to England. He told me that he had met with considerable losses by villanous insolvencies. His account, instead of convincing me that the Americans were sinners above all others, just shewed me that he was a good-natured, credulous man, and that he had fallen into the hands of several artful rogues; a class, it would seem, not wanting in America.

The land on both sides of the strait, between Staten Island and the main land, is light and sandy, in some spots almost sterile. People in boats axe busy with long wooden tongs, resembling forceps, taking up clams from the bottom, in six or seven feet of water.

The land on both margins of the Raritan is very low and flat, covered with a rank growth of reeds. These are cut for the cattle, and form a coarse but a very bulky crop. The swamps, being liable to inundation, are not made to yield any other herbage than their spontaneous produce.

[25] About four miles below New Brunswick, the red sandstone is met with. It is the first rock toward the coast, the interval being high alluvial land, containing vegetables and the

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bones of marine animals of tribes still existing; facts that establish without a doubt that the ocean has receded.

From New Brunswick to Trenton, travellers are conveyed by four-horse coaches. Six of these wait the arrival of the steam-boat. In one of these I took my seat, and found that only two gentlemen were to be along with me; one of them an American who had travelled in Britain, and the other an Englishman, who had just been out on an extensive tour in the United States. Both appear men of talent and education; the one a Virginian lawyer, and the other a person well acquainted with the state of science and manufacture in his own country; they are equally devoted to the representative form of government. Their only difference of opinion arose from drawing a comparison between the national characters of the two countries. The American 50 claimed the superiority, *in toto*, while the Englishman asserted the higher excellence of the literary, the scientific, and the mechanical attainments of Britain; but, at the same time admitted, with apparent candour, the superior dexterity of Americans in traffic, and that, taken in a body, they are without some of the ruder qualities of John Bull. Thus, in one day, I have heard two intelligent Englishmen discuss the character of the American people, and each draw opposite conclusions: a fact, which proves how cautious we ought to be in forming an estimate of a community; as we are in continual danger of judging of the great stock from the small, and it may happen that an unfair sample may come within the narrow limits of a single person's observation.

[26] The land between New Brunswick and Princeton is chiefly of a poor sand. The road is composed of the same material, with plank bridges over ravines, where most of the streams are now dried up. The woods, to a Briton, seem more remarkable for their height, than for the diameter of the trees. The stems, even by the road side, where many are felled, stand closely together, and their tops form a continued canopy, that sheds a gloom over the surface of the ground. When proximity to the two greatest cities in the Union is considered, it seems surprising that the arm of man has effected so little. The farms by the road side are neither numerous, nor are the cleared patches large. The passenger

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has no way of knowing how the country is peopled or improved beyond the first clearing; and where no opening occurs, he cannot see the light more than about 200 yards into the woods. Rail fences, however, and cattle amongst the trees, indicate that the whole is appropriated.

The cows are small, and of little value; and the few 51 sheep which I have seen, are long-legged and thin, perhaps the worst breed in existence.

Princeton College is a large brick house, situated in a grass field. The edifice has a retired, if not a gloomy appearance. It was here that Dr. Witherspoon,<sup>18</sup> the author of the "Characteristics of Scottish Clergy," found an asylum, and the means of prosecuting useful labours. By the way side stands a row of very large weeping willows, that are highly ornamental to this small town. Their long slender twigs hang down almost perpendicularly, and wave with every wind, displaying, as it were, a sort of vegetable drapery.

<sup>18</sup> James Witherspoon, born in Haddingtonshire, Scotland, in 1722, was a descendant of John Knox. Graduating from Edinburgh University, and receiving ordination as a Presbyterian minister, in 1768 he accepted an invitation to become president of Princeton College, and brought with him a considerable addition to the college library. From the first he took an active part in the Revolutionary War; as member of the provincial assembly, he assisted in overthrowing the royal governor; as member of the continental congress he signed the Declaration of Independence, and aided in initiating several important legislative measures. After the close of the war, he retired to his farm near Princeton, dying there in September, 1794.— Ed.

From Princeton onward, the land is much better than that observed to the north, and the [27] surface is finely diversified, but dusk prevented me from seeing a part of the country next to Trenton.

The arrival of six four-horse coaches produced considerable stir in the Inn at Trenton. No sooner had the passengers entered, than a pile of trunks and portmanteaus was reared in

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the bar-room, that would make a good figure in the warehouse of a wholesale merchant. The party at supper was very large. There being three lines of conveyance between New York and Philadelphia, the aggregate of the intercourse must be great. Betwixt New Brunswick and this place, a distance of twenty-five miles, 52 we have not seen a single pedestrian. The heat of the weather may in some measure account for this.

Trenton is beautifully situated at the head of the tide water of the river Delaware. The orchards are luxuriant, and the pasture grounds richer than any that I have hitherto seen in the country.

*August 6.* Trenton is celebrated by one of the most dexterous feats of generalship on record. I shall take the liberty of stating some particulars of the affair. On the 1st of January, 1777, the term of enlistment amongst the American troops expired, and that day brought on a dissolution of the best part of the army. General Howe, aware of the occurrence, pressed forward on the 2d, with an army vastly superior. The head of their column arrived at Trenton about four o'clock, and attempted to cross Sanpink creek, which runs through the town, but finding the fords guarded, halted and kindled their fires. The American army was drawn up on the other side of the creek. In this situation the latter remained till dark, cannonading the enemy, and receiving the fire of their field pieces.

[28] Washington having discovered that the enemy designed to surround his little army, ordered the baggage to be removed after dark. At twelve o'clock, having renewed his fires, he decamped with his army, unperceived by the enemy, and marched against Princeton by a circuitous route, where he arrived by the rising of the sun, defeated the troops there, and captured their stores.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Washington's Letters, vol. ii, page 4, Lond.1795.— Flint.

The Delaware is a delightful river, with many magnificent windings. The convex shore of one extensive curve, is so imposing, that it is called Point-no-Point, an apparent cape being always in sight, but which recedes as 53 the observer advances. The grounds

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adjacent to the river are flat, and covered with a rich verdure; but the beach is of a height sufficient to prevent a person from seeing far inland from the river. Many large farm houses are to be seen, with extensive orchards, and beautiful weeping willows adjoining. The last, form large spreading masses without any erect or principal top, the main or leading branches rear themselves upwards, after acquiring a considerable degree of strength; and the shoots immediately younger, are elegantly bent, as if in the act of getting erect; while the youngest of all are completely pendulous. The whole is singularly picturesque.

On approaching Philadelphia, I felt disappointed in seeing the shipping so very inferior to that at New York; and the houses fronting the river are old and irregularly placed, so that the idea of a port declining in trade immediately occurred.

Philadelphia is situated between the rivers Delaware [29] and Schuylkill. The streets are laid off agreeably to the cardinal points, and cross one another at right angles, the principal ones running in the east and west direction, crossing the neck of land between the two rivers.

The streets, as at New York, are lined with trees; they are cleaner kept, and are wider, and more regular, so that gaseous exhalations are much less felt in them than in the other city. Most of the houses are of brick, and many of them have the doors and windows surrounded by white marble. Several public edifices are built of that material.

*August 7.* The general aspect of the city is more pleasant, and a freer circulation of air is felt than in New York; of course the natural inference is, that Philadelphia must be the more salubrious of the two. Dr. Mease, of the American Philosophical Society, has deduced the same conclusion from the bills of mortality.<sup>20</sup> The daily average of deaths being 5# in this place, and 6# at New York. At the time this computation was made, the population of Philadelphia was the greater of the two, consequently something more is to be allowed in favour of the relative healthfulness of Philadelphia.

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20 John Mease, a wealthy and philanthropic Philadelphian, was born in 1771. Although a graduate of the Medical College of the University of Pennsylvania, he did not practice regularly, but devoted himself to literary and scientific pursuits. In association with David Rittenhouse and other members of the Philosophical Society, he was engaged in numerous undertakings for the betterment of the city. His *Picture of Philadelphia*, published in 1811, was for many years the best travellers' guide thereof.— Ed.

The doctor has also compared the mortalities of Philadelphia and Liverpool, and it appears that the deaths in the former city are, to those in the latter, as 33 to 50. The comparison was made between the number of deaths in 1810 for Philadelphia, and on another year for Liverpool. This must have been occasioned from a want of data applying to the same year in both places. My very short acquaintance with the doctor gives me the utmost confidence in his candour, and in the accuracy of his calculations.

[30] It is not to be kept out of view, that the mortality in Philadelphia is considerably greater in summer than in winter, the deaths in August, for example, may be fairly stated at twice the number in December. This fact, not to mention the epidemical diseases with which Philadelphia is sometimes visited, must give a decided preference to Liverpool.

The religious sects of Philadelphia are eighteen in number; they have thirty-four places of worship. The whole may be exhibited thus: Swedish, three churches; Quakers, three; Free Quakers, one; Episcopal, three; Baptist, 55 one; Presbyterian, two; Catholic, four; German Lutheran, two; German Calvinist, two; Associate Reformed Church, one; Moravians, one; Associate Church, (Antiburghers,) one; Presbyterian Covenanters, one; Methodists, four, (two for whites and two for blacks;) Universalists, one; Unitarians, one; Independents, one; Jewish Synagogues, two.

There are four state law courts in the city; four Banks, and eleven Insurance offices.

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The other institutions would be too tedious to enumerate separately, probably the following includes most of them. Thirteen charitable institutions, eight free school societies, three patriotic societies, about twenty mutual benefit societies, five associations for the relief of foreigners and their descendants, seven literary institutions, three libraries, the American Philosophical Society,<sup>21</sup> the Society of Artists, the Pennsylvanian Academy of Fine Arts, and a museum of natural history.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> The American Philosophical Society, the oldest scientific association in America, was organized by Franklin in 1743, In 1769 it was combined with the American Society for Promoting Useful Knowledge, and from that date (except for a few years during the Revolutionary War) has never failed to meet regularly. Among its presidents may be noted Franklin, Jefferson, Rittenhouse, and Caspar Wistar.

The Society of Artists, formed in 1810, to establish a school of drawing and hold an annual exhibition of foreign and American paintings, was dissolved soon after Flint's visit to Philadelphia.

The Academy of Fine Arts was organized in 1805, largely through the efforts of Charles Wilson Peale. The following year a building was occupied, and the first exhibition opened in 1811, in conjunction with the Society of Artists. The Academy has ceased to hold exhibitions, but maintains a good permanent collection.

The Museum, opened by Peale at his residence in 1784, contained for the most part portraits of Revolutionary heroes painted by himself. When transferred to Independence Hall (1802), it included a large collection of birds, insects, and the implements of primitive men. The Philadelphia Museum Company acquired it in 1821; but later the collection was sold and dispersed.— Ed.

<sup>22</sup> Dr. Mease's Picture of Philadelphia.— Flint.

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The American Philosophical Society meets frequently, and is well attended. When I visited the institution, three of the foreign ministers were [31] present. Professor Cooper<sup>23</sup> read very interesting papers on the bilious fever, on a new mordant to be used in dyeing, and on a new test for detecting arsenic where administered as a poison. There is still zeal and talent in the association once distinguished by a Franklin and a Rittenhouse.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Thomas Cooper, born in London in 1759, was eminent both as a lawyer and a scientist. Educated at Oxford, he practiced law, first in England, and after 1795 in Northumberland, Pennsylvania. Upon a visit to France (about 1792), he studied chemistry, and continued his researches in that science after coming to America. Upon being removed, for arbitrary conduct, from a judgeship (1811), he was appointed professor of chemistry at Dickinson College, later at the University of Pennsylvania, and in 1820 became president of the college of South Carolina. At the time of his death (1840) he was engaged in revising the statutes of the latter state, and in writing pamphlets in favor of state rights.— Ed.

<sup>24</sup> For a brief biography of David Rittenhouse, see A. Michaux's *Travels*, volume iii of our series, note 75.— Ed.

The Franklean library contains about 24,000 volumes; almost every scientific work of merit may be seen. Strangers are allowed to read and even to write in the great hall. On leaving a small deposit they may carry books out of the library. The building belongs to the institution, and has a herculean bust of the founder over the entrance; and the following lines, by Alexander Wilson <sup>25</sup> the ornithologist, hang in a frame in the great room.

<sup>25</sup> Alexander Wilson was for many years a weaver and poet in Paisley, Scotland. Trouble breaking out between the weavers and masters, he emigrated to Philadelphia in 1794, becoming in turn weaver, school-teacher, and peddler. In 1802 the scientist John Bartram became interested in Wilson's talents, and gave systematic direction to his natural taste for ornithology, to which he devoted the remainder of his life. He published his first volume of

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*American Ornithology* in 1808, and had nearly completed nine volumes before his death, in 1813.— Ed.

57

“Ye who delight through learning's paths to roam, Who deign to enter this devoted dome; By silent awe and contemplation led, Survey these wonders of the illustrious dead! The lights of every age — of every clime, The fruits of science, and the spoils of time, Stand here arranged, obedient to your nod; Here feast with sages, and give thanks to God. Next thanks to him; that venerable sage, His country's boast,— the glory of the age! Immortal Franklin, whose unwearied mind, Still sought out every good for all mankind; Search'd every science, studious still to know, To make men virtuous, and to keep them so.— Living, he reared with generous friends this scene; And dead, still stands without to welcome in.”

The Atheneum is another excellent institution.<sup>26</sup> Here a great number of American and foreign newspapers are read, and there is also a collection of the reviews, periodical publications, and scientific journals, of Britain and America. Strangers are introduced by the subscribers.

<sup>26</sup> A public reading-room called the Atheneum was established by private subscription in 1814. Ten years later it contained 3,300 volumes, including prominent foreign and American reviews. Rooms were rented from the American Philosophical Society until 1847, when the Atheneum building was erected.— Ed.

The United British Emigrant Society meets frequently, and its business is conducted with zeal [32] and ability. A book is kept open, in which are inserted notices of labourers, &c. &c. wanted, with the names and residences of the persons to whom they are to apply. On looking over this record, I observed that many of the situations offered were in the western country. Although the members of this society merit the utmost credit for their benevolent exertions, the most cautious strangers will always hesitate to undertake long journies,

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incurring a great expense, the risk of meeting only with a trifling employment, and that of cheapening their labour by the sacrifices which 58 they make. Artifices of this kind are not to be imputed to the society.

The museum contains a considerable collection of objects; and among the rest a skeleton of an entire mammoth. Around the upper part of the wall are arranged the portraits of several hundreds of the personages who have distinguished themselves in the revolution, or in the legislature of America. The design is praiseworthy, but the execution of the pictures is bad.

The state prison does honour to the jurisprudence of the country. The culprit is not made a burden on the community, but is put to work, and the first of his earnings applied to his support, a part of the remainder is given to him at his dismissal; by this means he is not under the necessity of resorting immediately to robbery or theft. Habits of industry are acquired, and trades learned, by persons who previously were pests to society. The strict order, and even silence, that is maintained in the establishment, is conceived to be the peculiarity that has produced the effects that distinguish it above every institution of the kind. The provisions given to the inmates are said to be plentiful and good, though furnished at the low rate of [33] fourteen cents, or about seven-pence-half-penny English, per day.

Philadelphia does not abound in manufacturing establishments. The predominance of British goods has shut up many workshops that were employed during the late war. Paper is manufactured in great quantities in Pennsylvania. Foundries for coarse cast iron articles are numerous. In town there are two manufactories of lead shot. Printing is carried on to a considerable extent, and executed in a superb style. It is said that one of the late Edinburgh novels was here set up in types in one 59 day. The quarto edition of Joel Barlow's Columbiad is an unrivalled specimen of printing. The types were cast by Messrs. Binnie and Ronaldsons, who, by their skill and individual exertions, have saved the United States from importing these essential literary implements. Mr. Melish's 27 geographical

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establishment, is another prominent concern. He is continually embodying the most recent government surveys of the interior, into the general maps of the country. At Lehigh Falls, on the Schuylkill, there is a mill for cutting brads, which produces no less than two hundred in a minute. Philadelphia is in various respects well adapted to manufacture; if the facilities which it presents for its advancement are neglected, the city must decline, as the trade of New York and Baltimore is making rapid progress. The new road from the latter city to the Ohio,<sup>28</sup> and the extension of carriage, by steam boats, through the Mississippi and the Ohio, are all circumstances which tend to supersede Philadelphia as a market and as a thoroughfare.

27 For a sketch of John Melish, see Bradbury's *Travels*, volume v of our series, note 129.— Ed.

28 For a brief description of the National Road, see Harris's *Journal*, volume iii of our series, note 45.— Ed.

At present, vast quantities of English goods are selling by auction in the ports of the United States. New York is the chief mart in this way. Merchants from the country, attend sometimes these [34] sales for many days, and even for weeks together. Public sales, and the present low prices, are very injurious to the merchants and manufacturers of England.

Probably the market of Philadelphia displays the greatest quantity of fruits and vegetables in the world. Boat loads are brought by the Delaware, and numerous waggons come loaded from the interior. Peaches, apples, 60 pears, melons, cucumbers, pine apples, sweet potatoes, onions, &c. are plentiful beyond example.

The cleanliness and the civil address of persons who vend provisions in the market, are truly gratifying: if a speck is to be seen on the white apron of the butcher, it may be inferred that it came there on the same morning. Girls arrive on horseback, or driving light waggons, to sell vegetables, or the produce of the dairy. Many of these females, I am told, are the daughters of farmers who are in good circumstances. Here are none of the

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lazzaroni hucksters of fruit and sweet-meats, that form such a deplorable spectacle in the finest cities of Britain; nor of the miserables who rise earlier than the sun, to pick from amongst the ashes, the charred offal of their neighbour's fire.

*September 3.* To-day I have seen a man sprawling on the ground in a state of intoxication; he is a native of Ireland. This is the first instance of the kind which I have seen in America. From this incident, I do not mean to represent that the people here do not drink spirituous liquors. The truth is, that many drink of them almost the moment after they get out of bed, and also at frequent intervals during the day; but though this fact has been noticed, the first conclusion is nevertheless true, that excessive drinking is rare.

[37] The saw for cross-cutting timber for fuel, is a tool which, for superior expedition, recommends itself to joiners and others. The following figure is a representation of it.

AB is the blade, about thirty inches long, and about two inches broad. It is very thin, and its teeth are very slightly bent to the right and left, so that it makes a narrow cut, through which the slender blade moves with little friction,—hence its facilities. The crooked stick ECA is the handle, FDB is another crooked stick, into which the blade is fixed at B. The wooden bar CD serves for fulcra, over which the blade is stretched by twisting the small rope EF, by means of the peg GH.

The sawing of fire-wood, and many other sorts of hard labour, are chiefly performed by black people. Happily, very few of these are now slaves in Pennsylvania. Free blacks, it is understood, have no difficulty in earning the means of subsistence, but the circumstance of their being despised and degraded, has had bad effects on their character. Even the Quakers, who have so honourably promoted negro emancipation, allot a separate part of the church to people of colour. In the state prison, too, they are separated from whites. These odious distinctions should be abolished in a free country.

Negroes are stigmatized as an inferior race; indolent, dishonest, and vindictive in the extreme. [38] There can be no doubt that, in many instances, these characteristics are too

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just, but it cannot be otherwise, while moral culture is, in a great measure, withheld from them, while they are excluded from the society of the wise and the good, and while the hope of applause gives no stimulus to the coloured man. Moral or immoral, he is a negro. This, 62 of itself, is enough to keep him down. If Africans were placed on a similar footing, and with the same opportunities, as their white neighbours, and if they still kept behind, we might then begin to suspect a radical defect in their nature. But, as they are, it cannot be pretended that the experiment has been made.

For some time past, the democratic party have been nominating candidates for their general support in the ensuing election. No doubt is entertained of a democratic preponderance in the next session of Congress. The Federalist cabal is now disconcerted in this part of the Union. The mercenary avarice that would barter the independence of America for English goods, was never less formidable than now.

Here, as at New York, boarding houses are to be found, varying from the simplest accommodations, to elegance and luxury. The person who lives in a house where a high price is paid for board, is separated from the poorer class, and his acquaintances and associates are people in affluent circumstances and polished education; he is as free in the choice of his society as he possibly can be. Without doors, however, persons of lesser note are not treated with *hauteur*, and in transacting business the utmost affability prevails.

The dress worn in temperate weather is the same as in Britain, with this difference only, that pantaloons [39] are almost universal: the shorter small-clothes are used only by Quakers. On Sundays it would be difficult to discriminate betwixt the hired girl and the daughter in a genteel family, were drapery the sole criterion. Attentive observation of the people on the streets, would convince any one of the general diffusion of comfort and competence.

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The symptoms of republican equality are visible in all 63 the members of the community. I have seen several curious instances of this, which would surprise those accustomed only to the manners of the old world. For example, the Mayor is a respectable-looking, plainly dressed gentleman, and apparently a penetrating and efficient police magistrate. On a late occasion the court was crowded, and the weather hot; he desired a person in attendance to bring cold water. It was brought in a brown jug, not accompanied with a glass. A person within the railing (probably a lawyer or clerk, more thirsty than his honour) intercepted the vessel, drank, and then handed it to the Judge.

On the Sabbath, we do not witness all the stillness and solemnity that usually characterize a presbyterian town. On the *morning* of that day, I have seen loaded waggons start in the market street, for the westward. A grocer, opposite to the house where I board, has two shops, one of them he keeps open for the sale of liquor, segars, &c. In a late newspaper, a complaint appeared against bringing cattle into the street for sale on Sunday *afternoon*. If this complaint was founded on truth, it is at least evident that it was addressed to citizens who, it was believed, would suppress the evil. I am inclined to think that a very great proportion of the people spend the day in the duties of [40] religion; but some here, as in other places, employ it purely as a day of rest; some as a day of amusement; and others in visiting friends, or other convivial meetings. On a Sunday afternoon I have heard many reports of guns, in the neighbouring woods or swamps. You will consider all this as a foul blot on the fair character of the City of Brethren; but I trust that your liberality will not impute to the jurisprudence of America, pre-existing customs, that, at every stage of the settlement, must have been imported 64 from England; even from a country which pays tithes, for the support of a priesthood.

Every day numbers of European emigrants are to be seen in the streets. The ingress is greater than at any former time. I have never heard of another feeling than good wishes to them. For my own part, I have met with several receptions kinder than I ever could have

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anticipated; and have become acquainted with a number of excellent citizens, whose approbation will always be sufficient to convey a high gratification to my mind.

### [41] LETTER IV 29

29 For notes on the following places mentioned in this chapter, see Post's *JourNals*, volume i of our series: Harrisburg, note 73; Carlisle, note 75; Shippensburg, note 76; Loudon, note 78; Bedford, note 81. F. A. Michaux's *Travels*, volume iii of our series: Greensburg, note 16. Cuming's *Tour*, volume iv of our series: Elizabethtown, note 7; Middletown, note 9; Chambersburg, note 16; Bloody Run, note 18.— Ed.

Journey from Philadelphia to Pittsburg—Lancaster— Elizabeth Town—The River Susquehana—Harrisburg —Carlisle—Chambersburg—Cove Mountain—Macconnell's Town—Sidelong-hill—The river Juniata— Bedford—The Allegany Ridge—Stoystown —Laurelhill —Lauchlinstown—Chesnut Ridge—Greensburg— Adamsburg—Pittsburg —Interspersed remarks on the Country, Taverns, &c.—Notices of Emigrants, and occurrences by the way.

*Pittsburg, 28th September.*

The contents of this will be composed of notes taken on my journey from Philadelphia to Pittsburg.<sup>30</sup>

30 Flint's route to Pittsburg was by way of the new Lancaster pike—the first macadamized American road—and onward over the central Pennsylvania route through Bedford, Ligonier, and Greensburg. Much ado was made over the opening of the Cumberland Road across the Alleghenies; but until the building of the Baltimore and Ohio Railway to Cumberland, Maryland, in 1845, the central Pennsylvania route seems to have been the popular one from Washington and Philadelphia to Pittsburg. John Melish's map in Morris Birkbeck, *Letters from Illinois* (Philadelphia, 1818), does not give the Cumberland Road, although it outlines the old Northwestern turnpike from Cumberland to Parkersburg, West

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Virginia. Almost all English travelers passed westward over the Pennsylvania Road, which was two hundred and ninety-four miles in length, according to Melish, *Traveller's Directory*, p. 69.— Ed.

65

On the morning of the 20th of September, I went to the Coach-Office in Philadelphia to take my seat. Such is the number of travellers that I found it necessary to take out a ticket two days previously.

The mail-coach is a large clumsy vehicle, carrying twelve passengers. It is greatly encumbered by large bags, which are enormously swollen by the bulk of newspapers. As a substitute for glass windows, a large roll of leather is let down on each side in bad weather.

During the greater part of the day our route was through a part of the country of a clayey soil, moderately fertile, and of a flat insipid surface. Late in the afternoon, we passed some land of a finer mould, and more elegant structure, with fruit trees bending under their load. The Indian [42] corn is nearly ripe, and is a great crop this year. The stalks are generally about eight feet high. The people have been picking the leaves off this sort of crop, and setting them up between the rows in conical bunches, to be preserved as winter food for the cattle.

We passed several family waggons moving westward. The young and the strong walking, the aged and infants riding. Waggons for removing families, and those for carrying goods to Pittsburg, have a canvass cover, stretched over hoops that pass from one side of the waggon to the other, in the form of an arch. The front is left open, to give the passengers within the vehicle the benefit of a free circulation of cool air.

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Lancaster is a large town, well known for the manufacture 66 of rifle-guns. We were too late in the evening for having a distinct sight of the place, or of the country towards Elizabeth Town, which is much commended.

*September 21.* The coach stopped at Elizabeth Town, last night, for three hours, and started again before three o'clock. We were near Middletown (eight miles on our way) before the light disclosed to our eyes a pleasant and fertile country.

It was near Middletown that we got the first peep of the river Susquehana, which is here about a mile in breadth. The trees on the east bank, confining the view to the right and left, produced an illusory effect, almost imposing on the mind a lake instead of the river. The highly transparent state of the air, and the placid surface of the water, united in producing a most distinct reflexion of the bold banks on the opposite side. Cliffs, partially concealed by a luxuriant growth of trees, sprung from the detritus below, and by smaller [43] ones rooted in the rifted rocks. Over these a rising back ground is laid out in cultivated fields. The eye is not soon tired of looking on a scene so richly furnished, and so gay.

Harrisburg, the seat of legislature of Pennsylvania, is a small town which stands on a low bottom by the river; a pleasant, but apparently an unhealthy situation. Opposite to the town is a small island in the river, connected with the eastern and western shores by very long wooden bridges. The waters of the Susquehana are limpid, but shallow at this place, and ill adapted to navigation, except in times of flood.

The country immediately west of the Susquehana is truly delightful. The soil, whether occupied by the natural woods, orchards, or crops, is covered with a profuse vegetation; and the superficial aspect altogether agreeable. 67 The best sort of houses are of limestone; they shew nothing of fine taste or neat workmanship, but are far superior in durability and appearance to the wooden erections so common here. Barns are much larger, and frequently neater than the adjoining dwellings.

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Towards Carlisle, the road passes through lands inferior to the lower country, seen in the forenoon. The surface of limestone rocks, and large detached blocks of the same mineral, interrupt the plough in the field, and the wheeled carriage on the road.

Carlisle, though in a newly settled country, has an appearance somewhat antiquated. With so much grass growing in the streets, a suspicion arises that there is not much traffic here.

Shippingsburg is a place more recently founded than the last, but has, notwithstanding, contracted something like the rust of time. Wooden [44] erections soon acquire a weather-beaten appearance. The subsidence of log houses discloses chinks, shewing that they are well ventilated in summer, but not the most comfortable lodgments for the winter.

At Chambersburg the coach halted during the night. The rough roads already surmounted, and the report of worse still before us, determined two of the passengers, besides myself, to walk, as an easier mode of travelling over the mountains. Chambersburg is 143 miles from Philadelphia, and 155 from Pittsburg; and lies in the intersection of the roads from York, Baltimore, and Philadelphia. Several branches of what has been very properly called the current of emigration, being here united, strangers from the eastern country, and from Europe, are passing in an unceasing train. An intelligent gentleman, at this place, informed me, that this stream of emigration 68 has flowed more copiously this year, than at any former period; and that the people now moving westward, are ten times more numerous than they were, ten years ago. His computation is founded on the comparative amount of the stage-coach business, and on careful observation. This astonishing statement is, in some degree, countenanced by a late notice in a New York newspaper, that stated the number of emigrants which arrived in that port during the week, ending the 31st of August last, to be 2050. The gentleman alluded to, says, that shades of character, sensibly different from one another, are forming in the western States. He represents the Kentuckians to be a high-toned people, who frequently announce their country, as if afraid of being mistaken for inhabitants of Ohio State; and the Ohians, as having less pride of country, being less assuming in their [45] demeanour, but not less agreeable in

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conversation, nor less punctual in business transactions. Were it not for the intelligence of my penetrating informant, and for his great intercourse with travellers, I would certainly not have remarked the supposed distinction of these provincial characters. If the difference really exists, it will be difficult to assign any moral cause that is adequate; unless it be the keeping slaves in Kentucky, a species of stock not permitted by the constitution of Ohio.

*September 22.* We found a waggoner who agreed to carry our travelling necessaries to Pittsburg. For my portmanteau, weighing about fourteen pounds, he charged three dollars, alleging the trouble that attends putting small articles within doors every night. This is an instance of one man measuring his demand by the urgent situation of another. The jolting that waggons undergo in this rugged country, render it indispensable that baggage be packed with the utmost care.

69

The two young gentlemen with whom I started, are Americans, good walkers, and cheerful companions.

One mile to the north of Chambersburg the road ascends a steep hill of slate clay, the first stratified substance that I have seen overlaying the limestone. The soil on the summit is so excessively poor, that I am surprised to see such ground cultivated in this country.

Several taverns by the road are log-houses constructed by laying squared trees horizontally, in a quadrangular position, in a way similar to that in which house-joiners pile up boards to be dried. As the erection advances, the last laid or uppermost log is notched on the upper side, near both ends, for the reception of the next cross pieces. [46] The interstices are filled up with lime or clay, and the roofs are of shingles, or thin boards. Frame houses consist of erect posts, set in sills or horizontal foundation beams. Over the tops of the posts other horizontal pieces are laid, forming the summit of the wall. The outside of the posts are covered over with thin boards, ranged horizontally, the upper one

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uniformly overlaying the edge of that immediately under it. The inside is most commonly lined with lathing and plaster, but the last piece of finery is frequently dispensed with.

Near Baker's tavern, six miles from Chambersburg, the waggon wheels have uncovered a fine slate clay, fit to be used as slate pencils. The same kind of substance is to be seen in the adjoining stream.

Around Campbell's Town, seven miles from Chambersburg, the land is bleak, and apparently poor; to the northwest an extended high ridge exposes to view a large tract of romantic wood scenery.

At thirteen miles from Chambersburg is Loudon, a few houses only, two of them taverns, situated at the foot of the ridge just mentioned, which is called the Cove Mountain. 70 A new road is formed over it. The ascent is winding and gradual, so that seven miles are occupied in surmounting the formidable barrier. The darkness of the night, and the great quantity of timber on both sides, rendered this part of our journey very gloomy. Not a sound was to be heard but that of the Catadid, a large green insect, whose note resembles its name, as nearly as it can any articulate sound. Near the top of the hill stands a miserable log tavern filled with *movers*, a name for settlers removing to the western country. At the summit, we were accosted in the Irish accent. The individual [47] told us that he was so much exhausted, that he could not proceed farther, and that he had laid himself down among the trees.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>31</sup> The evening was warm, and, (not to exaggerate the difficulty of removing him to the next town,) we judged that he was in no danger.— Flint.

At Macconnel's Town, we knocked at the door of a tavern, heard a noise within, which convinced us that the people were astir, but not willing to hear us. On making louder applications, the landlord saluted us, "*Who's there?*" With some reluctance he let us in, grumbling at the lateness of our arrival, it being ten minutes past ten o'clock. He affected

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to be unwilling to let us have supper; but while he was refusing, a female commenced cooking for us.

*September 23.* From beds which we last night saw on the floor of the bar-room, a numerous group of Swiss emigrants had arisen. One of them, an old man with a long beard, has a truly patriarchal appearance. The females wear hats, and are of a hardy and masculine form.

About a mile from Macconnel's Town, is the foot of another steep ridge; a new road over it is nearly finished. Here we met with a foot traveller, who told us that he had 71 settled in Illinois, by the Wabash, about fifty miles above Vincennes. The ground, he said, "is as good as ever man set foot on."<sup>32</sup> He had not heard of Mr. Birkbeck's settlement: this, together with his appearance, convinced us that he is a hunter of the woods. He was on his way to remove his family from New York state, a journey of 1400 miles.

<sup>32</sup> This was the well-known settlement established in 1818 by the English philanthropists Morris Birkbeck and George Flower, at Wanborough and Albion, in southeastern Illinois, within the present Edwards County. For a full account of these settlements, see volume x of our series.— Ed.

Called at Noble's tavern for breakfast. The hostess could not accommodate us with it. She was in great bustle, having thirty highway labourers [48] at board, had no bread baked, and politely expressed her regret at being so circumstanced, but assured us, that, by going half a mile forward to the next tavern, we would be attended to. Mr. Noble is a member of the Pennsylvania Senate; the frank and obliging disposition of his wife demands my acknowledgment.

At the next tavern the prediction of a breakfast was verified: it was largely furnished, but not with the greatest dispatch.

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The forenoon was hot, something like the greatest heat I have felt in Scotland. The mornings and evenings were agreeably cool, the air usually still, and the sky highly serene.

Sidelong-hill is a steep ascent. The waggon path is worn into a deep rut or ravine, so that carriages cannot pass one another in some parts of it. The first waggoner that gets into the track, blows a horn, to warn others against meeting him in the narrow pass. The waggoners are understood to be as friendly toward one another as seamen are, and that cases are not wanting, where 72 one has waited several days, assisting another to refit his carriage.

On Sidelong-hill we came up with a singular party of travellers,—a man with his wife and ten children. The eldest of the progeny had the youngest tied on his back; and the father pushed a wheelbarrow, containing the moveables of the family. They were removing from New Jersey to the State of Ohio, a land journey of 340 miles to Pittsburg. Abrupt edges of rocks, higher than the wheel, occasionally interrupt the passage. Their humble carriage must be lifted over these. A little farther onward we passed a young woman, carrying a sucking child in her arms, and leading a very little one by the hand. It is impossible to take particular notice [49] of all the travellers on the way. We could scarcely look before or behind, without seeing some of them. The Canterbury pilgrims were not so diversified nor so interesting as these.

Crossed the river Juniata by a wooden bridge, supported by two strong chains, hung in the manner of a slack rope, over the tops of posts, (one at each end,) about twenty feet higher than the road. The curve formed by the chain passes low enough to come under, and support several of the cross beams under the middle of the bridge. Other parts of the bridge are supported by perpendicular ties, that pass, from the roadway upward, to the chains. The Juniata runs here in a deep chasm, between cliffs of slate clay; the bridge

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has consequently a magical effect. The river is shallow, but at other seasons of the year is navigable. The land is poor and parched, and is formed of steep, irregular knolls.

Passed Bloody Run, a town of a very few houses, but with two taverns. A romantic site in a low valley of the Juniata. The declining light of the evening had softened the outline of the timber on the hills beyond the river, so that the scene brought to my recollection the heaths of a well known land.

Stopped for the night in a tolerably good tavern, two miles from Bloody Run. The bar-room is nearly filled with people. On our being shewn to a more retired apartment, I could see one person make a wry face, and then smile to his acquaintance. It would seem that our being separated from the large party, was not attended by the most pleasant sensations.

*September 24.* Last night we slept in a large room containing five beds. It was proposed that one of these should hold two of us. My companions went together, and I congratulated myself on [50] monopolizing one of the beds,—but here I reckoned without mine host. About midnight a man entered the room, groped all the beds, and finding that I was alone, tumbled in beside me. Such is a common occurrence, I am told, in this country, but it is the first time that I have met with it. In the morning I discovered that my neighbour was a person of good address, and respectable appearance.

After resuming our journey, we came up to a family rising from their beds by the embers of a fire in the wood. The father fired off a rifle, which it would seem he had kept in readiness for defence. There can be no great objection to sleeping in the woods, in such fine weather. From several heaps of ashes that we have seen by the sides of the road, it is evident that the practice is common, even where taverns are numerous. Emigrants carry their moveables in one horse carts, or two or four horse waggons, as the quantity of goods may require. They carry much of their provisions from Philadelphia, and other towns, and many of them sleep in their own bed clothes, on the floors of bar-rooms in the taverns. For this kind of lodging they usually pay twenty-five cents a family.

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The dollar is the integer of money in the United States, as universal as the pound is in Britain. In the former country, cents or hundredth parts of a dollar are the lowest fractional parts in use. Rating the dollar at four shillings and sixpence sterling, the cent of America is eight per cent. more than the halfpenny of Britain. The fractional divisions of the dollar, are  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{1}{4}$ , #, and  $\frac{1}{16}$ , or 50 cents, 25 cents, 12  $\frac{1}{2}$  cents, and 6  $\frac{1}{4}$  cents. Silver coins representing all these quantities are in circulation. The peculiarity in the convenience of quantities [15] derived from continual bisection, is known to all who are acquainted with the theory of numbers.

It is impossible to say whether it is cheaper to travel with a family, by purchasing a waggon and horses at Philadelphia, or by hiring one of the waggons that pass regularly to Pittsburg. This depends on the price paid for carriage at the particular time, and also on that to be paid for waggon and horses at Philadelphia. In the one case, the waggoner is paid for the weight of the goods, and for that of the persons who ride; and in the other case, the waggon and horses may be expected to sell at, or under, half the price paid for them at the sea-port. The great number of family waggons now on the road, amounts to a presumption that this mode of travelling is now thought to be the cheaper.

Crossed the Juniata once more. The bridge is a new stone erection of bad workmanship. We are told that it fell down repeatedly. To insure its standing, a step is left on the head of each abutment, on these the wooden centres rest. They are not withdrawn, so that the beams must give way, before it can be ascertained whether the effective 75 arch is of wood or of stone!!! The parapets have been coped with boards, but the wind has uncovered one of the sides!!!

The steep banks are covered with trees. Oak, ash, hickory, chesnut, and walnut, are the most prevalent species.

Bedford, the head town of the county of that name, is a considerable place, with some neat brick and stone houses.

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In our progress this forenoon we have seen much poor scorched land. Indian corn is short and shrivelled; pasture bad, and the woods without the strength they attain in a richer soil. Orchards [52] bear well; the traveller may knock down the apples that overhang the road, and may probably pass without complaint. Pear trees are scarce, if at all to be seen. Probably they are subject to canker on this light dry soil. Peaches are small. A farmer by the road side, offered us a few of the latter sort of fruit, unasked. Ironstone is abundant, in one place the new road is formed of it. In another, we saw prismatic pieces of nine or ten inches square, and about four feet long. The prevailing strata are of day schist; the surface is hilly and broken.

In the afternoon, we found ourselves climbing a steep, without being aware that it was the side of the Allegany ridge, not having previously seen any eminence through the woods. The mountain is itself so much enveloped in foliage, that we can only with the utmost difficulty have a single peep of the lower country behind. The lower country, where seen, has nearly all the sameness of the surface of the ocean. The farthest visible ridge appears blue, and its outline looks as smooth as if it were not covered by timber. We could not recognise a trace of our way hither.

76

Met several waggons descending; they are obliged to move along in a narrow track, on the very brink of a precipice. The road winds round a point of the hill, and slants along the side of a tremendous ravine, that, as it were, cleaves the eastern side of the ridge in two parts. The trees render it almost impossible to see across the chasm. The scenery is naturally romantic, but not yet exposed to the eye of the admiring traveller.

The large timber on the summit indicates a degree of fertility not usual on hill tops; and far surpassing that of the country near the south east foot of the mountain. The cleared ground by a [53] tavern on the height is good. The top of this range of mountains is a table land, swelled with irregularities, and in some parts strewn with large detached blocks of sandstone; the same kind of mineral of which the horizontal strata of the mountain is

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composed. Were it not for the recollection of the steep ascended, we should never have surmised that we were here on the “spine of the United States.”

Met with two young men going eastward. One of my companions saluted them, “ *You are going the wrong way.*” “No ,” replied one of the others, “ *You are going the wrong way. I have been at Pittsburg, and in the State of Ohio , and I declare it is the most detestable country in the world.*”

Stotler's tavern was full of people; we had no sooner entered the door than we were in a crowd. We could not remain for the night.

We set out for the next tavern, and at dusk came into a track so wet and miry, that it would be considered impassable in some parts of the world. We groped our way along the side of it, over logs, and occasionally through 77 the wood, to avoid the horrid bog. Two young men of the neighbourhood came forward, told us that we had just entered upon the worst part of the road, and, as they were going in the same direction, offered to conduct us.

The next tavern was one where whisky is sold, but the occupiers of it could not be troubled with lodging travellers. They told us that there is another tavern a mile forward. The road still bad; but as our conductors were going farther, we accompanied them.

The other tavern was so completely thronged with movers, that a multitude of them had taken up their lodgings in a barn. We were permitted [54] to stop, on condition of all three sleeping in one bed, which was said to be a large and a good one. Two-thirds of the bar-room floor was covered by the beds of weary travellers, lying closely side by side, and the remaining part occupied by people engaged in drinking, and noisy conversation. The room in which supper was taken, was too small to admit any large proportion of the company at once, of consequence we had to wait the alternation of a supper party and a cooking, before we got to the table.

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This accumulation of travellers is chiefly occasioned by people in the eastern States having reaped and disposed of their crops at this season, and on that account finding it a convenient time for removing to the western country.

*September 25.* At half past five all were in bustle, preparing for the road: Some settling bill with the hostess, others waiting to settle: Some round a long wooden trough at the pump, washing, or drying themselves with their pocket-handkerchiefs: Some Americans drinking their morning's bitters, (spirits with rue, wormwood, or other vegetable infusion:) Some women catching children who had escaped naked from bed, others packing up bed clothes, or putting them into waggons: Waggoners harnessing their horses, &c.

The little piece of ground cleared here is very rich, the best pasture I have seen in America; but the winter in this high region must be severe.

Two miles onward there are fine fields and orchards. The interval land is meadow. No Indian corn is to be seen. By the road side, what miners call the vise of a bed of coal is perceptible.

Stoystown is delightfully situated on the north bank of a deep vale.<sup>33</sup> The neighbouring grounds are but recently cleared. If we may judge from [55] the appearance of the houses, tavern-keepers are the principal men of the place; one of these is dubbed Major.

<sup>33</sup> Colonel Bouquet constructed a fort at the present site of Stoystown in 1758, and a small force was stationed there until Pontiac's War. The name Stoystown came from the patronymic of a Revolutionary soldier who laid out the town. It is situated on Stony Creek, ten miles from Somerset.— Ed.

The land on this side of the Allegany ridge is much better than immediately on the eastern side of it. At present travellers and horses consume a great part of the produce, but as cultivation proceeds, the distance from market must become more sensibly felt.

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The ridge, Laurel Hill, is about seven miles broad from one side of the base to the other. We observed a rattlesnake that had been recently killed on the road; it was about three and a half feet long, and about an inch and a half in diameter. The people say, that only two species of serpents are poisonous here; but there are probably more, as no less than thirty species have been enumerated in the United States.

Laurel Hill being broad, and considerably steep, must be of prominent height. Of its elevation relatively to the 79 Allegany ridge, I could not even venture an opinion. To be continually enveloped in woods, without seeing to any great distance, must be a condition disagreeable to the inquisitive traveller, and to the geologist.

We lodged at Lauchlin's Town;<sup>34</sup> near this place is a small furnace. Malleable iron is sold at ten cents a-pound.

<sup>34</sup> Laughlin Town is about five miles southeast of Loudon.— Ed.

*September 26.* On this day there was a heavy shower of rain, the first since our leaving Philadelphia. Passed Chesnut ridge, near Somerset.<sup>35</sup> At a tavern here, some men were drinking and swearing most hideously. It is much to be regretted that this vice is so prevalent in a country where so many other things are to be commended.

<sup>35</sup> Somerset, situated near the centre of Somerset County, was first settled by a party of frontiersmen about 1765. Laid out by a settler named Bruner about twenty years later, it was for some time called Brunerstown.— Ed.

Greensburg, the county town of Westmoreland, is a considerable place, built on rising ground. [56] Here, and westward of this place, the land is fine, but hilly. Stopped at Adamsburg, six miles from Greensburg.

*September 28.* Yesterday my companions set out for Pittsburg. These young gentlemen have conducted themselves in the style which distinguishes the well-bred from the

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uncultivated and obtrusive man. They put no such questions as, "Where are you going? —What are you to do there?" &c. so common in this land of liberty. Of my companions I only knew their names, the States they came from, and that they are going to the western country.

Yesterday morning the hoar-frost was faintly visible on the newly mown grass, the first that has been observed this season. No danger is now to be apprehended from the cold, as Indian corn, (the latest of the crops,) is ripe. The woods and orchards have their young shoots well matured, and will soon be coloured with their autumnal tinge.

80

A majority of the people in the neighbourhood of Adamsburg are Germans, or their descendants. Although most of them can speak in English, their conversation with one another is in German, and a clergyman in the neighbourhood preaches in that language.

Resumed my journey; called at L—r's tavern, eleven miles from Greensburg. The hostess, after promising to give me breakfast, shewed me into a front room. After waiting about twenty-five minutes, two ladies on horseback, apparently turned of forty, alighted before the window; the hostess ran forward, embraced and kissed them. Her salute was the loudest articulation of the kind that I have heard. She came into the room, and told [57] me, she had got so much engaged, that she could not be troubled with my breakfast, and that there is a tavern only half a mile forward where I would be attended to. The good lady will be freed from every imputation of unkindness, since I have related how cordially she welcomed her female friends who engrossed all her attention.

Met with a man who asked me if I knew of "any traveller who would rest himself and thrash for a few days?" To-day I begin to find the estimate formed of foot travellers in this country of equality. It is an undoubted truth that the rider is two steps higher than the footman.

Saw a drove of large cattle on their way from the State of Ohio for Philadelphia. Their condition is good, the length of the journey taken into consideration. In size and even fat,

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they are much superior to the Pennsylvanian stock by the sides of the road. Indeed, it is somewhat surprising to see such bad cattle on the rich lands of this State. The causes merit the strictest inquiry.

Every where the wheat stubble is so much overgrown with annual weeds, that the verdure at a distance is apt to be mistaken for pasture. This growth is occasioned by the long course of hot weather, which succeeds an early harvest. It would be advantageous if clover, or some other useful herbage, were sown amongst the crops, that the farmer might not only avail himself of the propensity to vegetation, but check the dissemination of weeds so hurtful to adjoining fields, and to the succeeding pasture.

The potato crops are better than those I have seen on the coast, the plants are more vigorous, and the tubers much larger.

Land partly cleared, and with some rude buildings [58] thereon, sells at from twenty to forty dollars an acre.

The new road from Philadelphia to Pittsburg is now in an advanced stage of progress.<sup>36</sup> Much of it is finished, and corresponding parts of the old track abandoned. Probably, by two years hence, the traveller will have a turnpike from the one city to the other. The improvement is important, but it is not one that deserves unqualified praise. In multitudes of cases, it passes through hollows, and over eminences, without regard to that minimum of declivity, which in a great measure constitutes the value of a road. In some cases, the vertical curve, formed by passing over rising grounds, is so long, that, applied laterally, the eminence surmounted, would have been altogether avoided. The road from Baltimore to Wheeling, now constructing at the expense of the government, is understood to be more judiciously laid off. Its competition must, ere long, give the proprietors of the Philadelphia line, an instructive lesson on the economical application of labour.

<sup>36</sup> This route was locally known as the Chambersburg and Pittsburg turnpike, at either end being called by its opposite terminus. It was built in general alignment with Forbes's Road,

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cut along the old trading-path through the forests in 1758. See Post's *Journals*, volume i of our series, p. 242.— Ed.

82

Produce, in the higher parts of Pennsylvania, may be stated at the rates of from twenty to twenty-five bushels of wheat, and from twenty-five to thirty bushels of Indian corn, per acre. These quantities are raised under slovenly management, and without much labour. A farmer expressed his contentment under existing circumstances; a dollar a bushel for wheat (he said) is a fair price, where the farmer pays neither rent nor taxes to the government. His farm, for example, pays four or five dollars a-year, for the support of the state and county officers.

Labourers receive a dollar per day, and can find board for two dollars a-week. Mechanics, in [59] most cases, earn more. Where health is enjoyed, in this place, poverty bespeaks indolence, or want of economy.

Arrived at Pittsburg, after a pleasant journey, with almost uninterrupted good weather. Some observations on this place will be the subject of my next letter.

### LETTER V

Pittsburg—Situation—Manufactures—Occurrences— People

In this letter I shall not confine myself to a description of the city of Pittsburg. Occurrences and remarks, with, or without dates, will be promiscuously introduced. This method may not be after the manner of regular epistolary writing; but to me it is the easiest way, and it may have the advantage of shewing you how a great part of my time is occupied.

Pittsburg stands on the point of land formed by the confluence of the rivers Allegany and Monongahela. The flat ground on which the greater part of the buildings stand, 83 is upwards of thirty feet above the level of the rivers at low water. Part of the land adjoining

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to the Allegany is only about twenty feet high, and liable to occasional inundations. The Allegany here runs south-west by west, and the Monongahela nearly due west, as does the Ohio in continuation. This, together [60] with the Monongahela being broader than the Allegany, gives to the former the appearance of being the principal river, and to the latter the character of a tributary stream. The Monongahela is muddy and sluggish opposite to the town; and though about 400 yards broad there, probably furnishes much less water to the Ohio than does the Allegany, which is only about half the width, but has a brisk current. The Allegany and the Monongahela have been described as being each about the size of the Tay; but the latter river is much inferior to either in magnitude; and the comparison must have been influenced by the Tay's being the fittest river with which to compare it in Britain, and not by its actual parity with either.

Between the rivers, there is a ridge of about 300 feet high, which terminates with a gentle slope in the most inland part of the town. This is the hill that a florid exaggerator has described as a solid mass of coal. The description was unnecessary, as the coal field in which the hills of Pittsburg lie, may be considered as the most extensive that are known, although the only bed here is no more than four and a half feet thick. The strata being horizontal, and the out-burst of the coal about the middle-steep of the hill, it is not necessary to make shafts, as it is level free, and may be quarried and carried out in wheel barrows, like road-metal.

The hill on the west side of the Monongahela, is a 84 craggy steep, almost close to the river. It is covered with trees to the summit, and tends, more than any other object, to give to Pittsburg a picturesque appearance.

On the north-west side of the Allegany lies a beautiful plain, the site of the new town Allegany.<sup>37</sup> Beyond the plain lies another ridge corresponding [61] in elevation, and having a continuation of the same strata that compose the two heights formerly noticed. Thus Pittsburg is almost surrounded by high wooded grounds.

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37 The Pennsylvania legislature, having purchased from the Indians the land north and west of the Allegheny River, in 1789 ordered a tract opposite Pittsburg to be laid off in lots and sold to satisfy the claims of the state troops. Allegheny City, thus established, by its proximity to Pittsburg shared in the rapid growth of the latter, becoming a borough in 1828 and a city in 1840.— Ed.

The heavy showers of rain that occasionally fall in this country, form a great objection to the cultivation of steep lands. The torrents sweep away much of the loose soil, cut deep ruts, and carry down slate-clay, and spread it on the foot slopes, and on the flat grounds below.

The following enumeration of the manufacturing people of Pittsburg was made last year. It gives some view of the nature and extent of the business carried on.

### Employers Hands Employed

1 Augur Maker 6

1 Bellows Maker 3

18 Blacksmiths 74

3 Brewers 17

3 Brush Makers 7

11 Button Maker 6

2 Cotton Spinners 36

7 Cabinet-Makers 43

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11 Copper and Tin Smiths 100

1 Currier 4

2 Cutlers 6

4 Iron Founders 87

85

3 Gun Smiths 14

2 Flint Glass Manufactories 82

3 Green ditto ditto 92

2 Hardware Manufactories 17

7 Hatter 49

1 Locksmith 7

1 Linen Manufactory 20

1 Nail ditto 47

1 Paper Maker 40

[62] 1 Pattern Maker 2

3 Plane Makers 6

1 Potter (fine ware) 5

1 Rope Maker 8

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1 Spinning Machine Maker 6  
1 Spanish Brown Manufactory 2  
1 Silver Plater 40  
2 Steam-Engine Makers 70  
2 Steam Grist Mills 10  
6 Saddlers 60  
5 Silversmiths and Watch Repairers 17  
14 Shoe and Boot Makers 109  
7 Tanners and Curriers 47  
4 Tallow Chandlers 7  
4 Tobacconists 23  
2 Weavers 9  
3 Windsor Chair Makers 23  
2 Woolen Manufactories 30  
1 Wire Drawer 12  
1 White Lead Factory 6  
Total 1280

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Besides the above, it is surmised that there are three hundred and fifty-seven manufacturing people, of which no estimate has been furnished by the conductors. There is, besides, a chemical manufactory, in which ammonia, 86 copperas, lamp black, ivory black, and various acids, are prepared.

Formerly large ships were built at Pittsburg, which sailed down the river during floods: large keel boats, capable of either ascending or descending the river.<sup>38</sup> Square arks, family boats, and small skiffs, are built in great numbers. A steamboat of 330 tons burden, for the navigation of the Mississippi and Ohio, is nearly completed.

<sup>38</sup> The building of keel-boats, barges, and later brigs and schooners, had been one of the foremost occupations of Pittsburg since 1790. Seaworthy ships were here launched and floated to New Orleans, whence they sailed to foreign as well as domestic ports. See Harris's *Journal*, volume iii of our series, pp. 349, 353. Steamboat building was begun here by agents of Fulton, seven years previous to Flint's arrival.— Ed.

The conveyance of goods from Philadelphia [63] and Baltimore, together with their warehousing and boating, produces much business here. In the year 1813, no less than 4055 waggons, engaged in this trade, were calculated to have passed the road. The number employed now must be considerably increased.

Pittsburg also derives much advantage from its being the thoroughfare of settlers for the western country. Here they sell their horses and waggons; here they often remain waiting for a rise of water. Here also they purchase boats, and lay in a stock of provisions for their passage down the river.

The waters of the Ohio are now lower than they have been for many years past. Merchants with their goods, and families with their baggage, find it impossible to get downward. Some whose moveables are light, are making the attempt. Many emigrants are proceeding with their waggons by land. Where the distance does not exceed three or four

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hundred miles, this will, at present, be found the more economical and expeditious mode of travelling.

87

*September 30.* Emigrants continue to flock westward. To-day the numerous inmates and followers of three large waggons arrived in a body. It is truly interesting to see people of different countries, and of different costumes, coming forward in the mail-coach, on horseback, and on foot. At first view, this great migration leads to the conclusion, that oppression, and the fear of want, are in extensive operation somewhere to the eastward.

*October 4. ( Sunday. )* This afternoon three fights have taken place in Bayardstown, a small appendage of Pittsburg.<sup>39</sup> These originated from private quarrels in taverns. The combatants sallied from [64] them to the street, where the battles were fought in the presence of the passengers. There are five taverns in this place; of course only two of them have escaped being scenes of action. This is not in perfect agreement with the character of sobriety, absence of dissipation and gross vices, that a late describer of Pittsburg has given of its people.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Stephen Bayard, a colonel in the Revolutionary army, later a merchant in Pittsburg, bought from the Penns, when the town was laid out (1784), thirty-two lots on the present Penn and Liberty streets; a district known for many years as Bayardstown.— Ed.

<sup>40</sup> An American writer.— Flint.

*October 9.* The people are in great ferment about the ensuing election. Newspapers teem with the most virulent abuse; and one of the candidates for Congress has fought with a lawyer in town. It would be useless to inquire after particulars, as facts are always differently represented by opposite parties.

A farmer, who lives at the distance of a few miles from this place, told me that he is a native of Ireland, and that he had not fifty dollars in the world, fifteen years ago; now, he

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would not take 4000 dollars for his property. He commenced alone, and has not followed any other occupation 88 than the cultivation of his farm, and the sale of its produce. However strange this may appear in Europe, an individual farming in the new settlements of America, is an occurrence too common to excite wonder.

*October 13.* To-day the inhabitants of Pennsylvania elect their Representatives in Congress, Members of the State Assembly, and County Officers. I have gone repeatedly to the court-house of Pittsburg, to see the popular proceedings. The citizens wrap up the names of the candidates they recommend in a small slip of paper, which they hand through the open pane of a window to the inspector, an officer previously appointed for [65] counting the tickets. This way of balloting, places the poor man beyond the control of his superior or creditor. I have seen no riot or confusion. Populous cities, in America, are divided into wards, where separate elections are held at the same time; a salutary precaution, that prevents the assembling of great crowds.

The shortness of my stay, and my limited acquaintance with the people, do not allow me to say much of their character. A considerable degree of industry is manifested by the bustle that pervades the town. This virtue, however, does not prevail to the extinction of dissipation. Swearing is certainly the most conspicuous vice. Some affirm that a class of people, whom they denominate low Irish, are the most immoral of the population. It gives no pleasure, to hear such a reflection on the peasantry of a country, distinguished by the hospitality, generosity, and bravery, of its people. In justice to humanity, it is necessary to bear in mind, that they have not enjoyed the means of a good education in their native country; and it is proper to mention, that there are natives of Ireland here, who have risen to opulence, and deserved eminence in society. 89 The recollection of several of these, and other worthy citizens of Pittsburg, will always be accompanied with sentiments of my esteem.

The weather continuing clear, and without the least prospect of a flood, I have procured a skiff, and determined on proceeding down the river. The skiff is 15 ½ feet long, 3 ½

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wide across the gunwale, and 14 inches deep. This is supposed to be sufficiently large for carrying myself and baggage, (about 800 lbs.) The sides are composed of two boards of pine, three quarters of an inch thick; the bottom flat, and of the same material. It is a light, [66] and certainly not a strong bark. My other equipments are, a copy of the *Pittsburg Navigator*, (a book recommended as useful, in pointing out the proper course for avoiding bars, and the points where rapids are to be entered;)<sup>41</sup> small quantities of bread, cheese, and dried deer; a small flask with spirits; and a tinned cup, to be used both in drinking water from the river, and in casting out bilge water. Over the after part of the skiff three hoops are fixed, in the form of an arch. A sheet stretched over these, will form a canopy under which I may sleep, by the margin of the river.

41 For the *Pittsburg Navigator*, see Cuming's *Tour*, volume iv of our series, note 43.— Ed.

### LETTER VI

Descend the Ohio from Pittsburg to Beaver—Occurrences and remarks there *Atkinson's Tavern, by Beaver, 28th October, 1818.*

As a great part of my notes since I last wrote, relate to rapids, bars, islands, &c. I shall omit the description of many of them, as being altogether uninteresting.

90

On the 14th of October, I embarked on the *Monongahela*, about half a mile above its junction with the *Allegany*. A gentleman to whom I had been introduced, very kindly assisted me in arranging my lading, and rowed me down to the lower point of the town.

The *Allegany* being a clear, and the *Monongahela* [67] a turbid river, their compound, the *Ohio*, as might be expected, is of the intermediate character. The mud, that covers the gravel at the height of three or four feet above the present level of the water, shows, that a very slight rising of the river carries much soil along with it. One Of the earliest writers who gives a detail of the beauties of this river, states, that the bottom, and even fishes,

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may be seen in several fathoms of water. During the present dry season, the bottom is indistinctly visible at the depth of five or six feet. The water, when taken up in a bright tinned vessel, appears to be perfectly limpid; but after standing in it for an hour, a very small sediment is deposited. From the experience of boatmen, and others who drink this water, it is understood to be healthful.

To me this was a novel method of travelling. Steep ridges of hills on both sides of the river, about 300 feet above the surface of the water, and these covered with a profusion of timber, now clothed in all the variegated hues of autumn, form an avenue of the most magnificent description. For nearly the length of six miles, the surface of the water has all the smoothness of a mill-pond, which gave an additional effect to the scenery, but which imposed on me the labour of rowing incessantly. My boat, besides being without rudder, or even that short piece of keel in the after-part which is so essential in moving forward in a straight line, went on in a zig-zag direction, occasioning 91 much trouble, and promising no great degree of safety on my coming into quick running water.

At a rapid, six miles from Pittsburg, a boat has recently been stove. I saw the people on shore drying their goods. In this same rapid, my ill sailing bark put about broadside to the current. On reaching the lower extremity of the declivity, [68] my situation was rather alarming. Here the violence of the current being opposed by deeper and more placid water, produces a sort of heaving motion. The sidelong motion over this swelling surface, was much aggravated by a top-heavy load. Travellers are fortunate when they arrive early in the season, as the stream at that period propels a boat much quicker than the most laborious rowing can do now.

After having passed several rapids, which are commonly called ripples in this country, I attempted to land for the night, on the head of Dead Man's Island, a low bar covered with small willows, but found the water to be so shallow that I could not approach the dry ground, and that with a short rope, I could not effect a mooring to any log, bush, or fixed object. The possibility of an unforeseen rise of water in such a long river caused me

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to determine not to sleep aground, without being securely fastened. It was now nearly dark, and I judged it impossible to cross to the opposite shore to find a mooring, as the roaring of the Dead Man's Ripple, (a furious rapid, between the island and the right hand shore,) convinced me that I was already almost within its draught. The only alternative which remained, was to push into the principal stream. I adopted it, and was soon carried through an impetuous winding channel, where I could perceive large dark-coloured masses, supposed to be rocks, above water, at small distances on each side.

92

*October 15.* Last night I put ashore about half a mile below the Dead Man's Ripple. The margin was of a convenient depth, admitting my lying aground, to avoid the danger of my leaky bark's sinking in the night. Having made it fast to a log, and piled up my boxes toward the prow, and spread three pieces of board over the seats behind for a [69] bed, I covered the three hoops with a sheet for a canopy, laid down my portmanteau for a pillow, and wrapping myself in a blanket, I went to rest.

As I neither saw any light, nor heard the voice of a human being, I imagined that I was far from the neighbourhood of any house. The only sounds that saluted my ear, arose from bells attached to cows in the woods, and from the breakers produced by the Ripple. The sheet which served me for a roof, was not long enough to reach the sides of the boat, a cold wind that blew down the river, passed in a constant current through my lodgment, and for a considerable time prevented me from sleeping. About midnight I heard the noise of footsteps approaching me on the gravel, and looked out to see what my visitor might be: a faint glimmering of moon-light enabled me to discover the white face of a young cow that had come down to drink.

It would be imprudent to sleep ashore and leave goods in a boat on the river, boatmen being much blamed for stealing.

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I put off about seven o'clock in the morning. A continuation of the same ridges of hills, and the same woods, bounded the view on both sides of the river. The bottom land is narrow, and the parts which have been cleared are chiefly covered with crops of Indian corn. Bottom land is of two sorts; the lower by the margin of the river; and 93 the higher by the foot of the ridge. The lower bottoms are about twenty feet higher than the surface of low water; but as the trees on the beach are peeled by ice and drifted wood, to the height of four or five feet above the level of the ground, occasioned by floods; it follows that the lower bottoms are subject to inundation, and that their height must be increased [70] by the earth deposited from every high rising of the waters. Nothing, in the present state of things, seems to offer a solution of the formation of the higher bottoms, which are here about twenty feet higher than the lower ones, and appear to be equally flat, and forming plains parallel to them. I shall hereafter be very attentive to facts with regard to this anomaly.

About six hundred yards above the mouth of Big Beaver Creek, my skiff ran upon the top of a large mass of stone under water, which the riplings occasioned by a slight breeze of wind, prevented me from seeing. In attempting to push her off, she upset, so as to admit a gush of water all along the lower side. The hoops over her after part, not allowing me to leap directly upon the stone, I plunged into the water and mounted the stone just in time to catch the bark by the after part, and prevent it from being carried down by the stream. By a considerable exertion, I succeeded in keeping the after end close to the stone, while the fore part sunk obliquely to a great depth in the water. Here the cargo must unavoidably have slipped into the bottom of the river, except for a large box, that wedged itself into the narrow forepart of the boat, and the others, resting on it, were kept in their places. Two black men came in a skiff to my relief. They took me in, and rowed toward the shore, while I still retained my hold of the wreck, and succeeded in getting it safely moored. This 94 interruption happened exactly before the door of a tavern, where I was accommodated with board, and the means of having my baggage dried.

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*Afternoon.* While exposing my books to the wind, a respectable looking man, apparently a farmer, entered into conversation with me. His inquiries [71] respecting the scientific and literary personages of Edinburgh, and his acquaintance with the poetry and provincial dialect of Scotland, were more minute than I could have expected in this part of the world.

*October 16.* I have discovered that my skiff is too weak for carrying any considerable weight. It is so much strained, that many of the nails have their heads drawn half an inch out of the timber, and others much more. The misfortune of the 15th, has probably saved me from a worse one. The system of boat building at Pittsburg cannot be too strongly reprobated. Defects in caulking, in the number, and in the strength of the nails, were in the case of my boat, disgraceful.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Had Flint read his *Navigator* carefully, he would have found specific warnings on the subject of defective boats; these were on every occasion palmed off on the uninitiated by Pittsburg sharpers.— Ed.

*October 19.* A farmer, in removing Indian corn from an island to his residence, had his flat sunk, and much of the cargo lost, within a few yards of the point where I stopped short. I am resolved on procuring a better skiff, and waiting a few days in hopes of a rise of water. Floods at or before this season of the year, are considered annual occurrences. The oldest residents recollect of only one year in which there was no autumnal rise of the Ohio.

*October 20.* The mornings and evenings are now cool, usually about 34° of Fahrenheit's scale. To-day, at two o'clock P.M. the temperature of the sun's rays was 90°. <sup>95</sup> Thick fogs continue over the river in the mornings, till eight or nine o'clock. These are no doubt occasioned by the water being hotter than the air. The radiant heat passing upward, necessarily carries humidity with it, which is immediately condensed, and rendered visible by the colder air. Whenever the heat of the air is of a temperature equal to that of the water, the phenomenon disappears. The same principle may be [72] very plausibly applied, in explaining the autumnal risings of the Ohio. The great and long continued

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heats of summer in this country, render the air capable of accumulating a great quantity of moisture. It is not till the sun recedes considerably to the southward, and till a great portion of the atmosphere is cooled, that rains are precipitated over any great extent of the country. The Allegany mountains, and other high parts, are soonest cooled, and first produce a deposition of rain. Hence autumnal floods occur, which proceed from the higher country alone, without corresponding risings in the lower tributaries of the Ohio. In seasons when the heat continues long, the flood occurs late. With such hot days as we now enjoy, a rising in the river is not to be expected.

*26th.* Went up Beaver Creek.<sup>43</sup> This is a large stream, with a rapid descent over a sandstone bottom. Within three miles of its mouth there are three saw-mills, a gristmill, an iron furnace and forge, a fulling-mill, a cardingmill, and a mill for bruising flax-seed. At the iron furnace, cast goods are fabricated, the coarsest that I have ever seen. Coal is abundant, but not used in reducing the ores.

<sup>43</sup> For the early history of Beaver Creek, see Croghan's *Journals*, volume i of our series, note 93.— Ed.

It has been suggested, that a navigation connecting Cayahogo, 96 on Lake Erie, with Alexandria on the Potomak, should pass through Big Beaver Creek;<sup>44</sup> but it appears altogether improper that such a communication should descend so low as the mouth of this creek, thereby incurring the ascent of the Ohio to Pittsburg, and the Monongahela to the bases of the Allegany ridge. The longer route to New York seems to be vastly preferable, and, as it is now in progress, it must supersede the Pennsylvanian line.

<sup>44</sup> It was Washington's favorite plan to unite the waters of the Potomac and Ohio, and in turn, those of the Ohio and Lake Erie, by means of canals. The Beaver River was always one of the possible links in this chain of inland communication between the Great Lakes and tidewater. As Flint observes, the Erie Canal (completed in 1825) was the most

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feasible, and eventually the only successful, undertaking to join the sea and the lakes.—  
Ed.

I saw some people thrashing buck wheat: they had dug a hollow in the field, about twenty feet in [73] diameter, and six or eight inches in depth. In this the grain was thrashed by the flail, and the straw thrown aside to rot in the field. The wheat is cleared of the chaff by two persons fanning it with a sheet, while a third lets it fall before the wind.

Indian corn is separated from the husks or leaves that cover the ear, by the hands. In the evenings neighbours convene for this purpose. Apples are also pared for preservation in a similar way. These are commonly convivial meetings, and are well attended by young people of both sexes.

A respectable English family put ashore with a leaky boat, almost in the act of sinking. They had run foul of a log in a ripple. The craft, called family boats, are square arks, nine or ten feet wide, and varying in length as occasion may require. They are roofed all over, except a small portion of the fore part, where two persons row. At the back end, a person steers with an oar, protruded 97 through a hole, and a small fire-place is built of brick. Such boats are so formed as to carry all the necessaries of new settlers. The plough, and the body of the waggon, are frequently to be seen lying on the roof; and the wheels hung over the sides. The bottom is made of strong plank, not liable to be stove in, except where the water is in rapid motion; and the whole fabric is exempt from the danger of upsetting, except in violent gales of wind. Family boats cost from thirty to fifty dollars at Pittsburg. A great proportion of the families to be seen, are from the northern parts of New York, and Pennsylvania, also from the state Vermont, and other parts. They have descended the Allegany, a river that I have not hitherto mentioned as a thoroughfare of travellers.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>45</sup> The Allegheny route was the common one for New England emigrants who had journeyed through New York on the old Genesee Road; it became of more importance

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after the Erie Canal was in operation. See Buttrick's *Voyages*, volume viii of our series.— Ed.

The gentleman mentioned in a former paragraph, is Brigadier General L—k,<sup>46</sup> who [74] is at present a member of the Senate of the United States. I have had several accidental interviews with him, and find that he is acquainted with the late works of imagination and taste published in Edinburgh, down to the Second Series of the *Tales of My Landlord*.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>46</sup> For a brief biography of General Lcock, see Cuming's *Tour*, volume iv of our series, note 57.— Ed.

<sup>47</sup> “*Tales of My Landlord*,” by Sir Walter Scott, include *The Black Dwarf*, *Old Mortality*, *The Heart Midlothian*, etc. The two former were published in 1816 and the latter in 1818.— Ed.

*October 28.* Settlers continue to be much retarded in getting down the river. Head winds oblige them to put ashore sometimes for a whole day. Families for the eastern parts of Ohio State, are proceeding by the road. The father may be seen driving the waggon; and the women <sup>98</sup> and children bringing up two or three cows in the rear. They carry their provisions along with them, and wrap themselves in blankets, and sleep on the floors of taverns. The hostess here does not charge any thing for this sort of entertainment.

Travelling by land at this season is, for various reasons, economical. Families by this means avoid delay and expense at Pittsburg; they are not obliged to sell their waggons and horses at an under value there; but take them along, as a necessary stock for their farms; and they are not put to the expense of a boat, which would be ultimately sold for a mere trifle, or left to rot by the water side. Besides, their rate of travelling is now more speedy than by water. Those who go below Wheeling will have a farther advantage, as the distance from Pittsburg to that place is 38 miles shorter than by the river. The waggons and horses must also be of immediate use to those, who settle at a distance from navigable waters. It is impossible to state the distance to which horses and waggons should be carried from Pittsburg; this wholly depends on the state of the river, the quantity

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of goods to be transported, the price of freight, (if paying passage instead of purchasing a boat is contemplated,) the [75] price of a boat, and the certain loss on selling horses and waggons at Pittsburg. Strangers will do well to make strict inquiries, and the most careful calculations, of the expense of both modes of travelling, previous to the adoption of either of them.

After examining the advantage of the different ways of travelling, it will be but an ordinary exercise of candour to state wherein I have erred myself.—I purchased a skiff, too small and too weak for my purpose, and I ought not to have undertaken the passage without taking some person along with me, who would have been continually on 99 the outlook for stones or logs under water, and who occasionally would have steered my bark. Being obliged to sit on a low seat with my back forward, I was most unfavourably placed for observing obstacles in the way, and, on approaching rapids, I was usually in the very draught of them, before I could discern the proper channel.

The weather has of late been cold during the night, and the season is so far advanced that I cannot calculate on sleeping hereafter in an open boat. To enable me to put my baggage ashore every night, I have procured smaller boxes, to supersede the use of larger ones. Travellers in this country ought not to adopt large boxes, which are the most liable to injury, from the jolting of waggons, and are comparatively unmanageable on every occasion. Eighty or a hundred pounds, are enough for each parcel.

There is not the least appearance of a rise on the river. I have exchanged my pine skill for a larger and a stronger oak one, and have determined on getting once more upon the water.

During my stay here, I have had the satisfaction of living with a polite and respectable family, which has treated me with the utmost civility; [76] their integrity is beyond suspicion.—If I had entertained any doubt on that head, the very repacking of my baggage would at once have removed it.—My inventory is complete, not a single article is wanting.

**LETTER VII48**

Descend the Ohio from Beaver—Georgetown—Steubenville —Wellsburgh—Warren—Wheeling—Marietta —Muskingum river—Guyandot river—Letarts rapids —Kanaway river—Point Pleasant—Galliopolis —Big Sandy river—Portsmouth—Occurrences and Remarks interspersed.

*Portsmouth, Ohio, 18th Nov. 1818.*

On the 29th of October I again got afloat.—The weather clear and fine, but the current of the river in most parts so slow that the eye could scarcely discover its motion.— Passed the mouth of Big Beaver Creek, 29 ½ miles from Pittsburg.

Stopped for the night at a tavern 42 ½ miles from Pittsburg. Opposite, on the Virginia shore of the river, stands Georgetown, a neat village, with a public ferry.—On little Beaver Creek are several grist and saw mills, a paper-mill, and several other machines. In the mouth of a creek, I observed that the surface of the water was tinged with the oil of naphtha.

A young gentleman, from Virginia, had stopped in the tavern sick; the hostess and neighbours [77] were very attentive to the unfortunate stranger.

*October 30.* At the distance of half a mile below Little Beaver Creek, the meridional line crosses the river, which separates Pennsylvania from Virginia on the south side of the river, and from the State of Ohio on the north side.

48 For notes on the following persons and places mentioned in this chapter, see Croghan's *Journals*, volume i of our series: Yellow Creek, note 93; Kanawha River, note 101. A. Michaux's *Travels*, volume iii of our series: Wheeling, note 15; Marietta, note 16. F. A. Michaux's *Travels*, volume iii of our series: Pennsylvania-Virginia boundary line, note

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31; Gallipolis, note 34. Harris's *Journal*, volume iii of our series: Putnam, note 1. Cuming's *Tour*, volume iv of our series: Georgetown, note 59; Steubenville, note 67; Wellsburg, note 67; Grave Creek, note 78.— Ed.

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Big Yellow Creek falls into the Ohio on the north side. A few miles up this creek there is a settlement of Scotch Highlanders. The soil occupied by them is said to be thin and poor.

After pulling all day against contrary winds, which, in some straight parts of the river, raised waves that beat upon my boat with considerable force, I lodged at the Black Horse Tavern, on the Virginia side of the river, 63 miles from Pittsburg. The landlord told me that his charges were, in some measure, regulated by the appearance of his guests.—Where a family seem to be poor and clever, he does not charge any thing for their sleeping on the floor. (By clever, he meant honest, or of a good disposition.)

The hills that bound the narrow valley of the river are of sandstone and clay schist, with a bed of coal four or five feet thick. People acquainted with the country, say that the hills by the river, and by the creeks, are of a poorer soil than those inland, which are less steep. The process of inundation is probably the cause of the difference.

There is a wider interval between the river hills here than in the neighbourhood of Pittsburg, and the bottoms are of course wider; the greater part of them being on the north side of the river. On the south side negroes are numerous.

On the forenoon of the 31st a heavy rain fell, accompanied with loud peals of thunder.—Reverberation [78] amongst the rocky hills and woods greatly augmented the sound.

The margin of the river is lined with masses of sandstone of enormous size. Others lie in the middle, with their rounded and scratched tops exposed above water. All these must have been detached from the river hills.

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Arrived at Steubenville, on the right bank of the Ohio. 102 This town stands on a second or higher bottom, exempt from the inundations so unpleasant on the first or lower plains. There are several hundred acres of this dry ground adjacent to the town, the largest tract of the kind that I have seen between the river and the hills.

This place is named Steubenville, from Baron Steuben, in consideration of his philanthropic services rendered to America, during the revolutionary war. It contains upwards of 2000 people; and it is regularly laid out, and the houses built of brick, wood, and a few are of stone, all covered with shingles. A newspaper is printed in the town; it contains also a woollen manufactory, a paper-mill, a grist-mill, and a small cotton-mill. These machines are wrought by steam. There are also two earthenware manufactories, and a brewery in the town, four preachers, six lawyers, five surgeons, twenty-seven shops, sixteen taverns, two banks, and a considerable number of artisans, necessary to the existence and increase of the place.

The aspect of the river hills, by Steubenville, convey the idea that they are better land, and not so apt to be washed down by rains, as those in the neighbourhood of Pittsburg. —I have had no opportunity of inquiring into the cause.

If I am not mistaken, Steubenville contains a greater proportion of orderly and religious people, [79] than some other American towns which I have seen. I entertain a very favourable opinion of several citizens, to whom I was introduced.

*November 3.* After having left the town, and proceeded about a mile down the river, Mr. Hamilton the tavern-keeper, with whom I had lodged, came along the bank, on horseback, calling after me. I landed, and he delivered to me an article, that I had neglected to pack up.

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Passed a young man in a small skiff; he had not ballast 103 enough for keeping head against the wind, which twirled his vessel round, and occasionally drifted him up the stream. He put ashore, as did also a family boat, that could not get onward.

The wind having increased, I found it expedient to land at Wellsburgh, and wait till the gale abated. The waves were too large for such a small bark, and, in making the crossings necessary to keep in the proper channel, I was in danger of exposing the broadside too much to the weather.

Wellsburgh, (formerly Charlestown,) stands on the Virginia side of the river. It is a small town; I observed in it a court-house, a jail, a large store-house, and several taverns. The margin of the river is so shallow, that I could not push my skiff within twelve feet of the dry ground. There is no wharf or artificial landing place here, or at any of the towns that I have seen by the river. The floods sweep off almost every thing that is erected within the banks; even the roads that are scooped out of the beach are at times destroyed. Taverns (out of town) have only a rude foot-path cut in the bank, and many of them have not a trace formed by the hands of man.

*Afternoon.* The wind calmed, and I proceeded downward. I came up with two young men in a [80] small skiff; one of them put off his coat to row, and the other paddled with an oar. Their intention was evidently to keep before me, but they were soon disappointed. When one small boat comes up with another, a sort of race is almost invariably the consequence. I have already acted a part in several of them, and have uniformly got foremost. On one occasion I was opposed by three men in a smaller skiff than my own. I impute my success to the superior construction of my vessel, and to the extraordinary 104 breadth of my oars. It has occurred to me, that the oars in general use are much too narrow, and that by adopting broader ones, we would avail ourselves more of the vis inertiae of the water, that of course is the sole cause of locomotion in a vessel propelled by rowing.

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On a dry bar, or island of gravel, I observed that none of the weeds were close by the present margin of the water, and that they were all on ground at least two feet higher than that line, an evident proof that the surface of the water must have been about two feet higher during the summer months. At that time it must have been a much easier task to descend the river.

I landed in the evening at Warren,<sup>49</sup> a small town on the north bank. At this place there was a pedlar's boat, a small ark, which is removed from one town to another. Internally it is a shop, with counter, balances, &c. around the sides are shelves, with goods, in the usual form.

<sup>49</sup> As early as 1786 a few pioneers had established themselves at the mouth of Indian Short Creek; but in 1805 the town was surveyed, a public sale of lots held, and the name Warren given to it.— Ed.

*4th.* Last night the tavern had been in an uproar with a large party of gamblers.—Their room had no door, and that in which I slept had none, so that I heard much swearing and loud vociferation. About four o'clock one of the gentlemen retired from play, and laid himself down beside me. [81] A short time afterwards another entered the room, when the bar-keeper advised him to become a third of our party; this he declined. The bar-keeper next advised that he should take a part of the clothes from our bed, and an adjoining one, and with them make a bed for himself on the floor.—This he also declined; probably judging that the attempt would be opposed.

This morning a contrary wind blew hard. Immediately <sup>105</sup> below the town there is a rapid current, not much ruffled by the breeze, but a long stretch of deeper water beyond it is rolling with waves.<sup>50</sup> Where the waves and the stream meet, white breakers are formed. Wishing to avoid these as much as possible, I took a young man of the neighbourhood with me, and availed myself of his local knowledge.

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50 It is interesting to note that, according to the Moravian missionary John Heckewelder, the Ohio River received its name from the white caps which often made canoe-travelling temporarily impossible. When it was covered with white caps the Indians would say “Kitschi ohio-peekhaune,” which means “verily this is a deep white river.” See “Names which the Lenni Lenape or Delaware Indians . . . had given to Rivers, Streams, etc.,” in *American Philosophical Society Transactions*, new series, iv, pp.369, 370. The commonly accepted derivation, that given by La Salle and the early French explorers, is that “Ohio” is an Iroquois word, meaning “beautiful river.”— Ed.

Wheeling is a considerable town on the left bank of the river, ninety-six miles from Pittsburg. It is expected that the new road from Baltimore to this place will be completed in the course of a year.<sup>51</sup> This being a national highway, on which no tolls are to be levied, and the shortest connection between a sea-port and the Ohio, a great increase of trade is consequently anticipated.<sup>52</sup> Hereafter, Baltimore will be the most proper landing place for Europeans who would settle in western America. At present the carriage of goods from Baltimore to Wheeling is cheaper than from Philadelphia to Pittsburg. From this it is evident, that the new route is already the shortest and the cheapest.

51 The Cumberland National Road was completed to the Ohio (Wheeling, West Virginia) in this year (1818).— Ed.

52 Being a national highway no tolls were originally levied on the Cumberland Road; this being, however, a most logical method of raising money for the necessary repairs, the road was ceded to the states through which it ran (1830–35), and the latter erected toll-gates and levied tolls.— Ed

About four and a half miles below Wheeling, I was surprised <sup>106</sup> at hearing the river making a great noise, The Pittsburg navigator not giving any notice of a rapid, and as a thick fog prevented me from seeing the cause, I went on shore to reconnoitre. Before reaching the place from whence [82] the noise proceeded, a boy informed me that a great

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fresh (flood) in M'Mahon's Creek, happened last summer, at a time when the Ohio was low, and that it had carried earth and trees from the bottom land, together with a house and a family, into the river. The devastation produced by this torrent is truly astonishing. It has cut a great chasm through the bottom land, which is about twenty-five feet high, and scooped it out many feet lower than the surface of the Ohio. A large bar, that in some measure dams the river, has large trees intermixed with it; their roots and branches standing above the water. This is the obstacle and cause that occasion the noisy ripple.

The last tavern that we passed here, had no sign-board. In consequence of which I supposed it to be a private house, and, after sailing several miles down the river, was obliged to put ashore, when nearly dusk, at a farm-house about nine miles below Wheeling.

*November 5.* The family with whom I lodged last night, seem to be industrious and well disposed. Two daughters were busily engaged in tailor work for the males. This, they said, is a common practice in the country. They also told me of a young lady of the neighbourhood, who had just gone to the house of her bridegroom, to make his marriage suit. As this occurrence was told with some degree of disapprobation, it is not to be viewed as in unison with the manners of the people.

Twelve miles and a half below Wheeling, and a quarter of a mile from the river, on the left-hand side, there is a 107 remarkable mound of earth, called the Big Grave. This hill is about sixty-seven feet high, a hundred and eighty feet broad at the base, and about twenty-two feet broad at the top, which is a little hollow. Some have supposed that the earth [83] has been brought from a distance; but, as something similar to a ditch is to be seen on one side of it, and as the neighbouring surface is uneven, there can be no strong reason to warrant the conclusion. Several fallen trees on the sides, (for it is covered with a strong growth of timber,) have exposed the component earth, which is a fine vegetable soil. It is not known that the present Indian people perform such works, nor is it believed

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that their traditions inculcate veneration towards these monuments; hence their origin is perfectly obscure.

On the right-hand side of the river, and about four miles below Grave Creek, a bed of coal is wrought. It lies in a horizontal position, and under high-water mark. Boats take in lading close by the mouth of the mine.

Lodged at a tavern thirty-four miles from Wheeling, after rowing against head-winds, which rendered the work somewhat fatiguing. In the evening a number of young men came in from a husking of Indian corn in the neighbourhood; they commenced drinking and swearing, all bawling out and talking at once. Such noisy gabbling I never before heard.

*November 6.* To-day I got into a long stretch of the river, where it is straight for seventeen miles. This part is called the Long Reach.<sup>53</sup> The wind blew upward, and opposed a rolling surface to my progress. The labour was hard, but the headway very small; family boats have been obliged to land. I saw some young men in a canoe

<sup>53</sup> See list of Americanisms, *post*, pp. 289–290; also Croghan's *Journals*, volume i of our series, note 96.— Ed.

108 who had just killed a deer in the act of crossing the river.

Lodged at a tavern about half way down the long Reach. Two old women, (sisters,) were there, one was in quest of her husband, and the other of her daughter. The uncle is forty-five years of age, and the niece sixteen. Affinity and disparity of [84] age united, have not been sufficient to prevent the elopement.

From Wheeling to near this place, coal, limestone, and sandstone are abundant.

In my passage, I have seen twenty-five islands. Some of them are of considerable size; the second below Pittsburg is six miles long. Islands being covered with timber, varying in size from the shortest willows by the water's edge, to tall trees in the centre, have a

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beautiful appearance when viewed from the river either above or below them. I have descended twenty-two ripples. In a few of these, the stranger is apt to feel a considerable anxiety from being swept hastily along amongst logs, with their tops above water, and over stones and logs sunk beneath its surface.

*November 7.* The inconvenience and expense that attend putting my baggage ashore every night, and on board every morning, are great. Tavern-keepers' servants are usually of their own families. Freemen in early life, they, in many cases, disregard the parental command, however reasonable. If I mistake not, the assistance which I paid dearly for, was sometimes procured by my own address rather than a sense of duty on their part. Although I am now a good waterman, and outsail every vessel I see, I resolved to adopt a more convenient, though less expeditious way of travelling.

I applied to the master of a large keel boat, on its way 109 for Portsmouth, at the mouth of great Sciota river, to be taken on board. He refused to take me as a passenger, but was willing to accept of me on condition that I would row in the place of a man who was about to leave him. I agreed to work; for in my skiff I wrought very hard. I changed my place, but did not improve my condition.

[85] Keel boats are large shallow vessels, varying from thirty to seventy tons burden. They are built on a keel with ribs, and covered with plank, as ships are. They are very flat below, and draw only about two feet of water. The gunwales are about a foot above water. Something like a large box is raised over the boat, which serves for a cover, leaving a narrow footpath on the outside all around. Four or six men row near the prow, and a steersman behind plies a long oar, which serves for a rudder.

*November 8. ( Sunday. )* The provisions of this and another boat in company were nearly exhausted, and a supply was expected at Marietta. Sailing appeared to be a work of necessity; but, independent of the exigency, the boats would probably have moved on. Sailing on the Sabbath is as common here as at sea. A boatman commenced a song, and

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was interrupted by a Scots rustic. The American alleged that he was in a “land of liberty” and that no one had a right to interfere. The other affirmed that it was against law, and threatened to prevent the violation in the most summary way. The boatman, perceiving that he was to be assailed by a stronger man than himself, gave up the contest. Every one present seemed well pleased with this termination of the affair.

*November 9.* Marietta is beautifully situated on a fine green bottom, immediately above the mouth of the Great Muskingum river. There are many good brick and frame houses in the town; a church, and an academy, which are 110 both called fine buildings. The ferry-boat that crosses the Muskingum is attached by wheels to a strong rope stretched across the river, to which the boat is moored obliquely, so that it is forced across by the [86] action of the stream. Marietta is subject to inundations. I observed high water mark on the plaster of a room in the tavern, about four and a half feet above the floor.

The first settlement formed by the United States in the territory north-west of the Ohio, was effected by General Putnam, and forty-six other persons, on the 7th of April, 1788, on the ground where Marietta now stands.

10. This day we met a family boat sailing up the river. We convinced them of their mistake, which happened in the following way. The people went under the roof to avoid a shower, and during their stay, the vessel turned round. They came out, and rowed till they had retrograded about two miles.

Our way of passing the night was simple. We put ashore, and tied the boat to a log or stake; took in firewood, which was plentiful all along the banks; made a fire for cooking, in a large box filled with earth, placed on the roof, and slept under the cover in our clothes, wrapped in a blanket. In the morning we lost no time in dressing, having only to loosen our cable, and get under weigh. In times of high water, sailing by night is considered safe and agreeable, very little rowing being necessary.

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On the 11th we went down Letart's rapids, a very violent run.<sup>54</sup> The boat rushed through with great velocity. There is a floating grist and saw mill here, which I visited. The whole is buoyant on a large flat shallow

<sup>54</sup> Letart's Rapids, at a bend in the Ohio about twenty-five miles above Gallipolis, are but a slight hindrance to navigation. See Thwaites, *On the Storied Ohio*, pp. 113–117, for a recent description.— Ed.

<sup>111</sup> vessel, moored in the current. The effective head of water is about twenty inches high. The water-wheel is twelve feet in diameter, and eighteen feet broad. The millstone is about thirty-eight inches in diameter, and [87] makes a hundred and twenty revolutions in the minute.

We came up with a family boat, the people in which had killed a deer. These animals often cross the river of their own accord; and frequently to elude the pursuit of dogs.

The days are warm, reminding me of the month of August in Scotland; the mornings and evenings are cool.

The ranges of hills that bound the view on both sides of the river are composed of horizontal strata of the coal field formation; a bed of this mineral lies at the height of fifty or sixty feet above the level of the water. A large mass of sandstone is above the coal. This may be observed for many miles along the banks. The ragged, and dented edges of the strata, have led some to suppose that the river never acted on them; but the very contrary must have been the case; for had the cliffs now to be seen been exposed to the weather ever since the commencement of the present order, their asperities, and sharp edges had been rounded off, and smoothed, as in the case of rocks on hill tops. The true explanation seems to be, that the river has undermined the rocks, brought them down, and ground them to sand, by its powerful attrition. The undermining process has no doubt been facilitated by the softer subjacent strata, as clay-schist, and coal. The powerful operation of the grinding process is strongly attested by the grooved surfaces, and the figure of the

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large blocks in the bed of the stream. These are uniformly rounded away on the end that lies farthest up the river; 112 whereas, the end facing down the river is comparatively flat, and usually bounded by sharp edges.

[88] November 13. Passed the mouth of Kanhaway river. Here stands a small town called Point Pleasant. The name is appropriate, and descriptive of the site.

From the springs of Kanhaway river, a great supply of salt is procured for the western country.

We landed at Galliopolis in Ohio State. The town stands on a high bank above the reach of the river. The name was given by a colony of a hundred French families, which settled here twenty-five years ago. They purchased from a Company, whose original charter stipulated, that the tract should be inhabited by a certain number of settlers, within a specified period of time. The condition was not fulfilled; the land reverted to the government, and the colony was dispossessed of its new establishment.

14. The wind was violent, obliging us to remain on shore for three hours. We moved again, and stopped after dark, about a mile above the mouth of Big Guyandat river, where some ripples commence.

15. ( *Sunday.* ) A strong contrary wind blew. No boat could move downward. But we saw several keel boats carrying sail, that enabled them to stem the ripples without manual labour. It is the wind, and not the day, that is revered here.

On the morning of the 16th, we moved downward. We saw a man fire a shot at a flock of wild turkeys. These fowl were so far from being coy, that they flew only a little way, and alighted again, on the trees.

Passed Big Sandy river, which comes in on the left hand side, and forms part of the boundary line between Virginia and Kentucky. In the evening we stopped below

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Fergusson's Bar, having sailed [89] thirty-one miles in the 113 course of the day,—a great space, considering the lowness of the water.

On the 17th, we arrived at Portsmouth, a well built town. It has a county court house, a newspaper office, a woollen manufactory, a number of stores, (shops,) and several good taverns. Having resolved on travelling a little way inland from the river, I immediately put my baggage on board a boat for Limestone, in Kentucky, addressed to a commission merchant there. Limestone is fifty-one miles from this place, and four hundred and forty-one miles from Pittsburg, by the river.

It gives me much pleasure to be relieved from the company of boatmen. I have seen nothing in human form so profligate as they are. Accomplished in depravity, their habits and education seem to comprehend every vice. They make few pretensions to moral character; and their swearing is excessive, and perfectly disgusting. Although earning good wages, they are in the most abject poverty; many of them being without any thing like clean or comfortable clothing. I have seen several whose trousers formed the whole of their wardrobe, and whose bodies were scorched to a brown colour by the rays of the sun. They are extremely addicted to drinking. Indeed I have frequently seen them borrowing of one another a few cents to quench their insatiable thirst, and in several instances refusing to repay them. The Scotsman recently alluded to missed a knife. On his accusing them of the theft, a degraded wretch offered to buy the fork.

My next letter will contain the particulars of a journey in the States of Ohio and Kentucky.

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### **[90] LETTER VIII**

Leave Portsmouth—Digression on economical Travelling —Salt—springs—Piketon—Chillicothe—Progress of a Scotch Family—Game—Forest Trees and Shrubs—Rolled pieces of Primitive Rocks dispersed over a Country of the Secondary Formation—Agricultural Implements—Antiquities—Bainbridge—Middletown —Organic Remains—

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Town of Limestone— Washington—Mayé Lick—Licking River—Millersburg —Paris—  
Notice of the Missouri and Illinois Countries—Paper Currency—Cut Coin—Remarks  
interspersed.

*Lexington, Kentucky, Nov. 29, 1818.*

On the 18th current I left Portsmouth, on the north bank of the Ohio, for Chillicothe, which is situated on the Great Scioto river, forty-five miles from Portsmouth by land, and about seventy by following the meanders of the Scioto.

The Scotsman twice alluded to in my last letter, was also bound for Chillicothe, and we set out together. He gave me the following account of his economy in travelling. The owner of the boat which we had just left, engaged him to work his passage from Pittsburg to Portsmouth without wages, except having his trunk carried to the latter place, artfully telling, that the passage would be completed in nine days. It turned out that twenty-one days elapsed, before the boat reached her destination. Had he, in the first place, hired himself as a boatman, he might have got seventy-five cents per day, and might have had his trunk carried for a dollar; and thus a profit of fourteen dollars and [91] seventy-five cents would have been made. On his journey from Philadelphia to Pittsburg, he managed better. He travelled along with the waggon that carried his trunk; the waggon also carrying his provisions. In this way he was never obliged to enter a tavern except at 115 night, when he slept in his own bed-clothes. His bed was a low one, but he had always the satisfaction of knowing that it was clean, and that he was exempted from having a bed-fellow intruded upon him. It is true that by travelling alone, he might have reached Pittsburg about a week sooner; but he would have arrived there without clean clothes, and incurred the payment of a week's board, while waiting the arrival of his trunk.

Having made a digression on economical travelling, I am led to make some further remarks on it. The subject is highly interesting to emigrants whose funds are scanty, as every dollar parted with may be, in effect, giving up half an acre of uncultivated land. A

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steerage passenger pays only about half the freight that is charged for a passage in the cabin of a ship; and, when he lays in his own provisions, he has it in his power to be nearly as comfortable as a sea voyage can permit. In the American port, the cabin passenger is sometimes subjected to delay in entering his baggage at the custom-house, and getting the taxable part valued, whereas the steerage passenger has his goods entered by the captain, and is allowed to proceed on his journey without loss of time. Baltimore being the most convenient landing place for Europeans who intend to settle in the western country, those who arrive at New York, Boston, or other northern ports, will have a saving by re-shipping for the Chesapeake. Strangers ought to be careful in ascertaining what sloop is to sail first. By putting goods aboard of a wrong vessel, a delay for a [92]week or so may be occasioned. Having sent my own baggage round the Capes, from New York to Philadelphia, I had an opportunity of observing that several skippers, at the same time, affirmed, that his own vessel would sail first. Liverpool is the principal resort, 116 in Britain, of ships for Baltimore. I conceive that it is unimportant to the emigrant, whether he reaches the latter place in an American coasting vessel, or by sailing an equal distance to Liverpool, along the coast of Britain.

We stopped at a tavern, four miles from Portsmouth, and had breakfast. The landlord told us, that bears and wolves are still numerous in the uncleared hills; that they devour many hogs and sheep; and that he heard wolves howling within a few yards of his house, on the preceding night. His sheep had run off, and he did not know in which direction to search for them.

About nine miles from Portsmouth, the saline nature of a spring is indicated by the ground being much trodden by the feet of cattle. The water is slightly brackish, and is not worth the expense of evaporation. Salt is manufactured, in considerable quantity, a few miles to the eastward.

Salt springs are called *licks* , from cattle and deer resorting to them to drink of the water, or to lick the concrete salt deposited on the rocks or stones, by the evaporation of the

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atmosphere. Riflemen also resort to the licks, in the night, to shoot the deer, which are so numerous in this neighbourhood, that they are sold at a dollar each.

The lower and richer lands are all entered, (appropriated by individuals,) but the higher and poorer, a considerable portion of which is too steep for the plough, remains as public property in the market. The time for cultivating them is not yet come. I must remark that the hilly, or what is here called [93] broken land, has many fertile spots, and that the comparative salubrity of such parts of the country forms a very strong recommendation to them. Coal and limestone are not known within eight or nine miles of this part of Scioto river.

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We lodged at Piketon,<sup>55</sup> the head town of the new county Pike, so called in memory of General Pike, who, to the character of the enterprising explorer of Mexico, added that of the brave soldier. Three years ago there were five houses here, now there are about a hundred.

<sup>55</sup> Piketown, first settled about 1796 by pioneers from Pennsylvania and Virginia, and laid out about 1814, is on the Scioto River sixty-four miles south of Columbus, and about thirty miles from the Ohio.— Ed.

*November 19.* We could not procure a breakfast at a tavern where we called, because the family had a sick child.

At the next tavern, breakfast was prepared for some labourers on the farm; but there was not enough of bread baked, to admit of our taking breakfast along with them. We were told that if we chose to wait for two hours, we might eat.—We went onward.

After travelling several miles, we arrived at a third tavern; here, too, the bread was not prepared; but the people were obliging, and made it ready for us in a short time. The landlord was a farmer. He told us that Indian corn sells at twenty-five cents (1s. 1 ½d.

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English) per bushel, and that he could procure twenty thousand bushels of it within three miles of his house. This appeared to be somewhat surprising, on considering that the cleared grounds form only small detached parcels, when compared with the intervening woods.—Wheat sells at seventy-five cents (3s. 4 ½d. English) per bushel. This sort of crop is, at present, more profitable than Indian corn, as in most cases it yields more than a third part by measure; it does not require to be cleared of weeds; and is more easily carried to market. The predominance of crops of [94] Indian corn is occasioned by the ease with which it is disposed of in feeding hogs and other stock, 118 and, perhaps, in some degree, by prejudice. The bottoms are wide, and their soil rich. They are often inundated by the Scioto and its numerous branches, the water leaving great quantities of logs, and other vegetable matter, to be decomposed on the surface of the ground. These facts convince us that the situation is not healthy, notwithstanding the affirmations we heard to the contrary; and we were the more fully persuaded of this, as we saw a young man pale and meagre, in consequence of an attack of the ague.

We came to a saw-mill near Paint Creek.<sup>56</sup> A woman asked us how we proposed to get across the run. She told us that there was neither bridge nor boat; and that the water would reach up to our middle. She told us further, that travellers commonly hire a creature (a horse) at her house. We ordered one, and her husband followed us with it. At the Creek, we discovered that the water was shallow. Some of our party, (now increased to five,) indignant at the hoax, waded the stream. The water did not reach to the knee.

<sup>56</sup> Paint Creek, a stream about sixty miles long, empties into the Scioto from the west, five miles below. Chillicothe.— Ed.

Chillicothe,<sup>57</sup> (formerly the seat of government, in the State of Ohio, now transferred to Columbus,) is situated on an extensive high plain, in a great bend of the Scioto, which here varies from one hundred to one hundred and fifty yards in breadth. The town has a court-house, an academy, two places of worship, two printing offices, that publish a weekly newspaper each, a woollen manufactory, a cotton manufactory, a grist-mill wrought by

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steam, a brewery, a tannery, a variety of merchants' shops, several taverns, and three banks. One of the last establishments

57 For a brief description of Chillicothe, see F. A. Michaux's *Travels*, volume iii of our series, note 35.— Ed.

119 has its door [95] shut. There is a good wooden bridge, across the river, near the town.

*November 20.* I crossed Paint Creek, by the road toward Limestone.<sup>58</sup> The bottoms are rich, but the greater part of them uncleared. The cattle of this neighbourhood are better than those I have seen by the river Ohio, and in the western parts of Pennsylvania. It is not here, however, that the fine droves formerly noticed are reared. These must have come from the more northerly part of the State, where the grass on the prairies (lands without timber) is said to be abundant. All accounts that I have heard of these prairies, say, that they are wet, and unfavourable to health. The ease with which settlements are formed on them, and the facility for rearing cattle, are, however, attracting many settlers.

58 Flint travelled from Chillicothe to Limestone over Zane's Trace. For an account of this road, see Cuming's *Tour*, volume iv of our series, note 135.— Ed.

Visited a Scotch family about thirteen miles from Chillicothe. They settled here twelve years ago. Their farm consists of three hundred acres of first and second rate land; of which seventy acres are cleared and fenced. They have met with two misfortunes; either of which, they think, would have finally arrested their progress in Scotland. They bought a bad title to their land; it being part of an old military grant,<sup>59</sup> and omitted to see it traced back to the government. In addition to this, their house, with

59 The Virginia Military District, reserved by that state when she ceded her possessions north of the Ohio River to the United States Government, was a triangular tract, with the Ohio River shore between Little Miami and Scioto rivers as its base, and the apex at the sources of the Huron River. Large portions were given as bounty lands to Virginia soldiers of the Revolution; the remainder was ceded to the Federal Government in 1852. In 1871

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the government retroceded this district to the state of Ohio, which, in turn, donated it to Ohio State University. See Hinsdale, *Old Northwest* (New York, 1888), p. 292.— Ed.

most of their moveables, was burnt. They have now surmounted these losses; and are in better circumstances than at any former period. It is astonishing to see how much this family have adopted the manners and customs of the Americans. The father, who is seventy-five years of age, has almost entirely laid aside the peculiarities of his native provincial dialect. Nothing but the broad pronunciation of the vowel A remains. The son [96] has acquired the dialect of the country perfectly; and has adopted the American modes of farming; is a good axeman, and is in every respect identified with the people. During the late war, he was out on a campaign, on the frontier of Canada. This absence must have been extremely painful to the father, who lost an amiable son in the fight with the Indians, at Tippacanoë, in 1811.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>60</sup> For a brief account of the battle of Tippecanoë, see Evans's *Tour*, volume viii of our series, note 131.— Ed.

Religious and patriotic views seem to have supported this worthy old man under every discouragement.

*November* 21. I made an excursion into the woods. A few deer and wild turkeys remain. Squirrels are very numerous. They are of the grey and black varieties: also of the striped or ground species. The two former are much larger than the English squirrel, and are ate in America. Some people esteem them as equal to chickens. Quails are abundant: they are smaller than partridges, and are so tame that the report of a gun, and the destruction of a part of the covey, do not always make them take flight. It is a common practice to drive whole families of them into nets. Rabbits are not plentiful; they lodge in the hollows of fallen trees; and are not understood to burrow in the ground. The only fox that I have seen, was of a small size, and of a light grey colour. It does not 121 require a thick population to exterminate bears, deer, and turkeys. The beaver is destroyed by the first hunters who

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invade the forests; and the buffalo retreats into more remote solitudes, almost on the first approach of white men.

The woods are principally composed of *Quercus* , (Alba,) *White Oak*; (Tinctoria,) *Black Oak*; (Coccinea,) *Red Oak*; (Primus acuminate,) *Chesnut Oak*; *Platanus* , (Occidentalis,) *Sycamore*; *Fagus* , (Ferruginea,) *Beech*; *Acer* , (Saccharinum,) [97] *Maple* , (sugar tree); *Fraxinus* , (Americana,) *Ash*; *Juglans* , (Nigra,) *Walnut* , (black;) (Alba ovata,) *Hickory*; *Laurus* , (Sassafras,) *Sassafras*; *Cornus* (Florida,) *Dogwood*; *Fagus* , (Castanea,) *Chesnut*; *Liriodendron* , (Tulipefera,) *Poplar*; *Ulmus* , (Americana,) *Slippery Elm*; (Mollifolia,) *White Elm*; *Vitus* , (Labrusea,) *Fall Grape*; (Serotina,) *Winter Grape*.

Amongst the shrubs, or underwood, the following may be noticed as prevalent:

*Rhus* , (Glabrum,) *Sumach*; *Laurus* , (Benzoin,) *Spicewood*; *Rubus* , (Fruticosus,) *Blackberry*; (Hispidus,) *Running do.*; *Annona* , (Glabra,) *Papaw*.

The prevalent strata are of slate clay, bituminous shale, and sandstone. Coal is not known, and probably has not been sought after. Rolled pieces of the latter mineral, and of granite, gneiss, quartz, and flint slate, are mixed with the sandy gravel of the streams. Dr. Drake<sup>61</sup> has pointed out a situation in this State, where large detached

<sup>61</sup> Dr. Daniel Drake, a native of Plainfield, New Jersey, whose boyhood was spent in Kentucky, came to Cincinnati in 1800 to study medicine. Graduating from the University of Pennsylvania in 1816, he interested himself in establishing the Ohio Medical College, at Cincinnati, and became its first president. From that time until his death in 1852, he was connected with some medical college, either in Ohio or Kentucky. In addition to his writings on medical subjects, he published (1815) the book several times mentioned by Flint, *Pictures of Cincinnati and the Miami Country*.— Ed.

122 masses of granite lie over strata of secondary limestone; and has conjectured that they have been brought from the primitive country north of the lakes, by the agency of water passing from north to south. This hypothesis is countenanced by the vast quantities

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of alluvial soil which lie far above the level of the present river, and by the almost total absence of primitive rocks, between the eastern side of the Alleghany ridge, and the sources of the Missouri. The only exception known is the tract between Lakes Ontario and Champlain,—a field so narrow that we cannot view it as the probable source of fragments profusely scattered over the States of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Kentucky.

In this part of Ohio State, first and second rate lands sell at four or five dollars per acre. The richest ground is in bottoms: the hilly has many [98] parts not accessible to the plough. Buildings are most commonly erected on rising grounds. Such situations are believed to be most salubrious, and abound most in good springs.

Farming establishments are small. Most cultivators do every thing for themselves, even to the fabrication of their agricultural implements. Few hire others permanently, it being difficult and expensive to keep labourers for any great length of time. They are not *servants*, all are *hired hands*: Females are averse to dairy, or menial employments. The daughters of the most numerous families continue with their parents. There is only one way of removing them. This disposition is said to prevail over almost the whole of the United States. A manufacturer at Philadelphia told me, that he had no difficulty in finding females to be employed in his work-shop; but a girl for house-work he could not procure for less than twice the manufacturing wages. Some of the children of 123 the more necessitous families are bound out to labour for other people. The Scotch family, recently mentioned, have a boy and a girl living with them in this way. The indenture of the boy expires when he is twenty-one years of age; that of the girl at eighteen. They are clothed and educated at the expense of the employer. The boy, at the expiry of his contract, is to have a horse and saddle, of value at least 100 dollars; and the girl at the end of her engagement, is to have a bedding of clothes. It is said, that a law of the State of Ohio, forbids females to live in the houses of unmarried men.

The utensils used in agriculture are not numerous. The plough is short, clumsy, and not calculated to make either deep or neat furrows. The harrow is triangular; and is yoked with

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one of its angles forward, that it may be less apt to take hold [99] of the stumps of trees in the way. Light articles are carried on horseback, heavy ones by a coarse sledge, by a cart, or by a waggon. The smaller implements are the axe, the pick-axe, and the cradle-scythe; by far the most commendable of back wood apparatus.

The figure [page 125] is descriptive of the cradle scythe. AEGB is the shaft. In working, it is held by the left hand with the thumb upward, near A; while the right hand holds the cross handle at H. BD is a post, making an angle of about 78 degrees with the straight line AB. Into this post the five wooden ribs, or fingers, MN, OP, QR, ST, and UV, are fixed. These are round pieces of tough wood, of a curvature resembling that of the back of the blade, as nearly as possible. They are upwards of half an inch in diameter; and are pointed at the extremities MOQSU. FG is another post, fixed in the shaft, parallel to BD, and about seven inches distant from it. ED is a thin piece of wood, let into the shaft at E, for retaining the posts BD, FG, in their positions. IK is a small round post that passes through the fingers at the distance of ten inches from the post BD. This small post passes through broad parts of the fingers, which are left so for the sake of strength, and its lower ends stands on the blade at K. The blade is such as is used in cutting hay; but the point is allowed to stand about nine inches farther out from the handle than the grass scythe. At L is a small iron bolt, rivetted into the blade, near its back; the top of this bolt passes through the lower finger, and is furnished with a hand-screw, which holds the finger down, so that its point shall remain within about half an inch of the blade. The points of the fingers MOQSU are in a straight line, but recline backward, so that the upper finger is about five inches shorter than the under one. Between [100] the posts IK, and FG, are five small connecting stays of iron. Figure 2 is a separate plan of one of the iron stays, shewing the manner in which it is fixed to the upright bars or posts. AB is a part of the finger; C the hole through which the small post (IK of the former figure) passes; and D is the post FG of the former figure. EF is the iron stay; it is about one-sixth of an inch in diameter; and it is thin and crooked near the end E, where it is fastened to the finger by two small nails. From G to F the stay is a small screw. At K, is a female hand-screw that bears against D. At H,

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is a nut, also bearing against the post D. By this screw the finger is firmly kept in its proper place. The fingers are five inches apart, measuring from the centre of the one to that of the other. The shaft of the scythe is five feet long, and the whole of the parts are as light as is consistent with strength.

[101] *November 22.* About a mile distant from the 125 house where I lodged, the woods were on fire. It was supposed that the conflagration had been begun by some mischievous person, who had kindled the dry leaves, now strewed over the ground. In the evening, the glare of light extending along a ridge for a mile and a half, was astonishingly grand. Large decayed trees were converted into luminous columns of fire; when these fell the crashing noise was heard within doors. Fires in the woods usually excite alarm in their neighbourhood. People watch them by night, their rail fences and wooden habitations being in danger.

Some parts of this neighbourhood were purchased twelve or fourteen years ago. Then proximity to Chillicothe was little regarded. The increased population and trade of the town has now made it the market of almost every disposable 126 product. The lands near that place are consequently much increased in value, and town lots sell at high prices.

*November 23.* I again resumed my way for Limestone. By the road side are many conical mounds of earth, called Indian graves. About a mile east of Bainbridge is a large camp.<sup>62</sup> The ditch is in every part visible. One side is inclosed by a bend of Paint Creek, where the opposite bank forms high and strong ground. I conjectured that the fort contained nearly one hundred acres. It is not understood that the aborigines have constructed any such works since Europeans became acquainted with them. It is therefore a natural inference, that the country must have been antecedently inhabited by a more civilized and more powerful people.

From Bainbridge to Middletown the land is hilly; a small portion of it is cleared, and it is much less [102] fertile than the grounds by the river Scioto, and Paint Creek.

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*November 24.* The ground west of Middletown is of clay, with a mixture of siliceous particles, and the oxide of iron. Wheat is the most prevalent crop. The health enjoyed on these high lands, is an ample compensation for the lack of a few bushels. Wheat sells at a dollar per bushel; Indian corn at thirty-three one-third cents; beef and pork at four cents a pound; labourer's wages, fifty cents; joiners, a dollar, with provisions.

*25 th.* At ten miles from Limestone, the soil is good, but broken with irregularities of surface. There was a little frost in the morning, but the forenoon was warm. I observed several insects of the genus *Vanessa*, (painted

62 The remains of the mound-building Indians on Paint Creek, near Bainbridge, are among "the largest works in the Scioto valley." See Fowke, *Archæological History of Ohio* (Columbus, 1902), p. 206; see also Cuming's *Tour*, volume iv of our series, note 76.— Ed.

127 butterflies,) flying about in full vigour. The autumn is said to be fine, almost beyond former example.

Near the river Ohio the soil is light, but much broken on the surface by funnel-shaped hollows, not unlike those where the sides of coal-pits have fallen in. These inverted cones are evidently excavated by the infiltration of water, and indicate that the strata abounds with large fissures or caverns.

In travelling over the last forty miles, limestone is the only stratified mineral that I have seen. It lies in a position nearly horizontal, and is literally conglomerated with organic remains. Amongst these, the most remarkable is a species of terebratula, which is very abundant, and varies from the size of a walnut to that of a pin's head. In addition to the concentric striated character, so frequent amongst bivalve shells, it has large radiated grooves; the grooves on one valve opposite to ridges on the other. The superior margin is, of course, a zig-zag line, resembling the base of [103] polyhedral crystals, where the sides of one pyramid are set on the angles of another.

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For some days past I have found the expense of travelling to be uniformly three shillings and elevenpence farthing per day.

Limestone, sometimes called Maysville,<sup>63</sup> is a considerable landing place on the Kentucky side of the river Ohio. The houses stand above the level of the highest floods. There is a rope-walk, a glass-house, several stores and taverns, and a bank, in the town.

<sup>63</sup> For notes on the following places, see A. Michaux's *Travels*, volume iii of our series: Limestone, note 23; Paris, note 29. F. A. Michaux's *Travels*, volume iii of our series: Washington, note 37; May's Lick, note 38; Millersburg, note 38. Cuming's *Tour*, volume iv of our series: Blue Licks, note 117.— Ed.

On the 26th, I left Limestone by the road for Lexington, which is sixty-four miles distant. The roads, hitherto scorched by drought, were in a few minutes rendered wet and muddy by a heavy shower of rain. The roads in this western country are of the natural soil.

The high grounds every where seen from the river, are called the river hills; they are in reality banks, the ground inland of them being high. To the south of Limestone it is a rich table land, diversified by gentle slopes and moderate eminences.

At four miles from Limestone is Washington, the seat of justice in Mason County. The town is laid out on a large plan, but is not thriving.

May's Lick is a small village, twelve miles from Limestone. A rich soil, and a fine undulated surface, unite in forming a neighbourhood truly delightful. The most florid descriptions of Kentucky have never conveyed to my mind an idea of a country naturally finer than this.

I lodged at a tavern twenty miles from Limestone. Before reaching that place the night became dark and the rain heavy. As the tops of the trees overhung the road, I had no other indication than the miry feel of the track, to prevent me from wandering into the woods.

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[104] *November 27*. Crossed the river Licking in a boat, at a small town called Blue Licks, from the springs in its neighbourhood, from which great quantities of salt were formerly procured. The adjoining timber is exhausted, and the salt-works are abandoned.

After coming to a flooded creek, where there was neither bridge nor boat, I waited a few minutes for the mail coach. The road is in several parts no other than the rocky bed of the stream. It also crosses the same creek four or five times. After riding a few miles, I left the coach. There is no great degree of comfort in travelling by this vehicle; stowed full of people, baggage, and letter 129 bags; the jolting over stones, and through miry holes, is excessively disagreeable: and the traveller's head is sometimes knocked against the roof with much violence. A large piece of leather is let down over each side, to keep out the mud thrown up by the wheels. The front was the only opening, but as the driver and two other persons occupied it, those behind them were almost in total darkness. A peep at the country was not to be obtained.

Millersburg is a very small town, with several large grist-mills and a bank.

To-day I have seen a number of young women on horseback, with packages of wool, going to, or returning from, the carding machine. At some of the houses the loom stands under a small porch by the door. Although Miss does not wear the produce of her own hands, it is pleasant to see such abundant evidence of family manufacture.

I lodged at Paris, the head town of Bourbon county. A cotton-mill, and some grist-mills, are the manufactories of the place. The population is considerable. Several of the taverns are large, and, like many of the others in the western country, [105] have bells on the house-tops, which are rung at meals.

A traveller has just returned from attending the sales of public lands in the Missouri country.— They are exposed by auction, in quarter sections of 160 acres each. A considerable part of them sold at from three to six dollars per acre. Lots, not sold at

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auction, may be subsequently bought at the land-office for two dollars per acre, on paying half a dollar in ready money, and the remainder within five years. Land dealers are very vigilant in securing for themselves great quantities of the best land. It is not uncommon for reconnoitring parties 130 of them to lodge in the woods for a whole week. By such means much of the best land, mill-seats, and other local advantages, are withdrawn from the market at the first public sales. This gentleman describes the Missouri country as one possessing a fine climate, and containing many extensive prairies of a rich soil, but destitute of timber and stone. The most advantageous purchases are considered to be those on the edges of prairies, with a part of the open land, and a part of the woods. Many of the settlers that I have seen by the river, and elsewhere, were on their way for the Missouri territory. The Illinois country, according to the account given by this traveller, is a very unhealthy one. He travelled twenty days in that State, and on his return home, found that many of the people were afflicted with bilious fevers and agues. He affirmed that he had seen more sick people during these twenty days than during the whole of his preceding life in Kentucky. Other reports corroborate his statement, so that there can be no doubt that the autumn has been a sickly one in that low country.

[106] The best taverns in town charge higher than those in the country, where accommodation is inferior. At Paris I paid 62 ½ cents (2s. 9 ¾d. English) for supper and lodgings.

In this western country there is a great diversity of paper money.<sup>64</sup> Small bills are in circulation of a half, a fourth, an eighth, and even a sixteenth part of a dollar. These small rags are not current at a great distance from

<sup>64</sup> The supply of specie in the Western country had always been inadequate. Until the numerous state banks began to flood the country with paper money, about the second decade of the century, barter was regularly employed. Flint was in the West when the financial stringency that followed the War of 1812–15 was beginning to be felt in that

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region, and the reaction against the worthless state banks had set in. See *post*; also McMaster, *History of the United States*, iv, pp. 484–487.— Ed.

131 the places of their nativity. A considerable proportion of the little specie to be seen is of what is called cut money. — Dollars cut into two, four, eight, or sixteen pieces. This practice prevents such money from being received in banks, or sent out of the country in the character of coin, and would be highly commendable were it not for the frauds committed by those who clip the pieces in reserving a part of the metal for themselves.

*November 28.* To-day I have crossed several flooded creeks: one by a tree which has accidentally fallen across it, and one has a tree that has been felled intentionally for a bridge; one I crossed on an accumulated heap of driftwood; and *once* by a horse, where a farmer allows a Negro boy to derive a perquisite from carrying over travellers.— Goods are now carried from Limestone to Lexington for a dollar per hundred pounds weight.— This is somewhat lower than the usual rate. Waggoners are occasionally interrupted by flooded streams.

Between the river Ohio and Lexington, limestone is the only rock which I have observed. Like that noticed in Ohio State, it is crowded with organic remains. The variety of the surface, in this part of the country, is pleasant. The eminences are gentle swells rather than hills, and the intervals between them are smooth, rich, and dry [107] ground. Marshy land is scarcely to be seen.— These are convincing marks of the excellence of the subsoil.

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### LETTER IX

Lexington — Depreciated Paper Currency, and Fraudulent Bankers — Excess of Paper Money destructive to American Manufactures — Aversion to Menial Service — Atheneum — Dirking, Gouging, Kicking, and Biting — Prices of Live-stock — Provisions, &c. — Slavery — Effects of Slave-keeping on the White Population — Illiberal Reflections of

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British Tories against the Americans and against Free Government — Leave Lexington — Descend the Ohio to Cincinnati — Occurrences and Reflections intermixed.

*Cincinnati, Ohio, 30th Dec. 1818.*

Lexington, the county town of Fayette, was the capital of the state of Kentucky, before the government was transferred to Frankfort. 65 It is situated in north latitude, 38° 8', and in west longitude 80° 8'. The town is surrounded by a fertile and pleasant neighbourhood, and is regularly built of brick and frame houses. It has a university, seven places of worship, (three Presbyterian, one Episcopalian, one Baptist, one Methodist, and one Roman Catholic.) Three printing offices, where three weekly newspapers are published; a branch of the United States Bank, and two other banking houses; [108] seven small cotton factories; two paper-mills, two woollen factories, five rope-walks, three grist-mills, many mercantile houses, and some good taverns. The population is supposed to be about seven thousand; but the increase has been slow for several years past.

65 For a brief account of the origin of Lexington, see A. Michaux's *Travels*, volume iii of our series, note 28.— Ed.

There is here much trouble with paper money. The notes current in one part, are either refused, or taken at a large discount, in another. Banks that were creditable 133 a few days ago, have refused to redeem their paper in specie, or in notes of the United States' Bank. In Kentucky, there are two branches of the United States' Bank; thirteen of the Kentucky bank, and a list of fifty independent banks, some of which are not in operation. In the state of Ohio, there are thirty chartered banks, and a few others which have not obtained that pernicious distinction. In Tennessee, the number of banks, including branches, is fourteen. The total number of these establishments in the United States, could not, perhaps, be accurately stated on any given day. The enumeration, like the census of population, might be affected by births and deaths. The creation of this vast host of fabricators, and venders of base money, must form a memorable epoch in the history

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of the country.— These craftsmen have greatly increased the money capital of the nation; and have, in a corresponding degree, enhanced the *nominal* value of property and labour. By lending, and otherwise emitting, their engravings, they have contrived to mortgage and buy much of the property of their neighbours, and to appropriate to themselves the labour of less moneyed citizens. Proceeding in this manner, they cannot retain specie enough to redeem their bills, admitting the gratuitous assumption that they were once possessed of it. They [109] seem to have calculated that the whole of their paper would not return on them in one day. Small quantities, however, of it have, on various occasions, been sufficient to cause them to suspend specie payments.

So long as a credulous public entertained full confidence in the banks, bankers gave in exchange for their paper, that of *other banks, equally good with their own*. The same kind of exchanges are still offered now, when the 134 people are very suspicious of the circumstances and intentions of money manufacturers; and bankers console their creditors by professing to be *as solvent as their neighbouring institutions*. The holder of the paper may comply in the barter, or keep the notes, such as they are; but he finds it too late to be delivered from the snare. The people committed the lapsus, when they accepted of the gew-gaws clean from the press. It is altogether surprising that the people of this country have shut their eyes against the strongest light of experience. If they had kept sufficiently in recollection the vast issues, and the ultimate depreciation of continental money during their revolutionary war, they might have effectually resisted the late influx of paper. But the farmer, the mechanic, and the labourer, have been, for a short time, pleased with what was, in name, a greater price, or a greater hire. As every necessary of life has been proportionally raised in nominal value, they do not find that their comforts or savings are substantially enlarged. They are in reality diminished to the amount of the gains that have arisen to the paper mint, and of the brokers who deal in depreciated money. The immutable maxim, that productive labour is the true source of wealth, has been lost sight of. Designing men [110] have availed themselves of that apathy, and the deluded multitude have been basely duped.

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The baneful consequence of the paper system are not confined to internal derangements here, but are extended to every department of foreign intercourse. The merchants and manufacturers of other countries are enabled to sell their goods, and the produce of their labour, nominally cheaper than the Americans. Imports are increased, and a large balance of trade arises. This must be paid in 135 specie. Foreign capitalists, who engage their funds in American speculations, must also have the dividends, or profits on their stock, paid in the precious metals. The grain raised by the American farmer is sent abroad, but the price is greatly reduced by expense and risk incurred by a voyage, also by the profits of merchants on both sides of the Atlantic. The cotton and the wool are sent to Europe under similar disadvantages, and a repetition of them in reconveying the manufactured goods to America. A few facts will set this impolicy in a strong light. Cotton, which now sells in the United States for a few cents per pound, is, in certain cases, sent to England, and returned to the wearer at nearly as many dollars. A gentleman from Mount Sterling, about thirty miles east of this place, told me that a good coat of English manufacture, costs there thirty-six dollars. Indian corn sells at twenty-five cents per bushel. The farmer, then, who wears such a coat, must pay a hundred and forty-four bushels for it,— a quantity sufficient to be bread for twelve men for a whole year. One pound of good tea costs twelve bushels,— bread for one man for a year. A chemical manufacturer, at Pittsburg, buys saltpetre imported from India, cheaper than he can procure the spontaneous product from the [111] caverns of Kentucky. Although most of the metallic and earthy substances, useful in manufacture, are abundant in America, she imports jewellery, cutlery, glass, crystal, earthen and porcelain wares. By this means the republic discourages her own artizans, and pays the taxes of foreign monarchies. Under the present money system it is in vain that nature has diffused her mineral resources over the New World. In vain will the government impose the highest restrictive duties on imported goods, while every 136 crop of flax augments the imaginary money capital to a greater extent, and while there is the smallest residuum of specie left in the country. It would be an interesting inquiry to find the number and the names of legislators in the different states assemblies, who are interested

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in banking concerns. The people would then see how the power that grants chartered privileges to banks is constituted.

Although the convulsion which agitates bankers in the western country, is but of recent date, their money is in various instances thirty per cent. under par in the eastern states. Tavern keepers, grocers, and others, receive the money of the banks nearest to them, although they know that these banks will not pay specie for them. They see that, without the rags now in circulation, they could have very little money. Every one is afraid of bursting the bubble. How the country is to be delivered from this dilemma, bankers have not yet shewn. They are still strongly inclined to continue the traffic; but they cannot be expected to support organized establishments of directors, presidents, cashiers, clerks, offices, and empty coffers, without committing farther spoliations on the people. When the sick system dies, the public will see the full amount of the penance they have to suffer [112] for their credulity. A smaller, but a more substantial capital, will be resorted to, one better calculated to “place the manufacturer beside the farmer.”

*December 5.* To-day a shower of rain fell, and was followed by snow. The part that lies unmelted is about an inch thick.

Among the succession of people at the tavern, many are polite and obliging in their behaviour. Some are interesting in their conversation, and some talk of horses 137 and horse-racing. The latter kind of discourse is mixed with swearing.

Lexington is still considered the capital of fashion in Kentucky. There are here many genteel families, a few of which keep coaches. The town, on a whole, exhibits a well-dressed population. The menials are nearly all slaves. Free blacks detest every thing that they think resembling their former condition. White people are still more averse to live as hired people in families. Females, however idle, and however great their difficulties may be, remain with their parents, till removed by that great change that all hope for. In many

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cases, it is said that their repugnance to support themselves, by the earnings of hired labour, induces them here, as in other places, to lead a life of profligacy and ruin.

*December 9.* For several days past the temperature has remained steadily a few degrees below the freezing point. This morning the snow disappeared, and through the day, the heat seemed to be much greater than ever I felt at this season of the year.

12. The Atheneum, or reading-room, is much frequented. It is well furnished with newspapers, and with the most distinguished periodical publications; scientific journals, army and navy lists of [113] Britain; Rees' Cyclopædia, and some other books. Attached to the institution is a small collection of objects in Natural History; and some articles of the dress, arms, and tools of the Indian people. I cannot omit mentioning some particulars: — A bowl of unglazed earthen ware found along with a mummy in a cave in Tennessee. In shape it resembles a modern cast iron pot; and is a specimen of manufacture superior to that executed in some of the coarser works of the kind amongst civilized people: an Indian register from the west of the Mississippi, which is cut on a small piece of white marble. The subject of it is a record of their wars. Those of long duration, or of great extent, are represented by larger holes bored in the stone. Seven great, and fourteen inferior wars, are indicated. When the nation migrates, or when the tablet is filled with spots, they enter the register on a black stone, and part with the white one. The tribe has now five black stones in keeping. The solidity and wax colour of the specimen rank it equal with the famous Parian marble.

To-day I saw a young man buy a dirk. The number of these weapons exhibited in the jewellers' shops show that a great sale of them must be expected. The dirk has a pointed blade, four or five inches long, with a small handle. It is worn within the vest, by which it is completely concealed. The advocates for private arms openly declare that they are for defence, but the dissipated, the passionate, and the freebooter, urge a similar pretext for carrying the stilleto. Quarrels must be conducted in a dangerous form; and murder must be made a prelude to robbery, amongst a people who use concealed arms. Spain exemplifies

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this truth — and it is from her colonists probably that the southern and western Americans have learned this practice.

[114] Fights are characterized by the most savage ferocity. Gouging, or putting out the antagonist's eyes, by thrusting the thumbs into the sockets, is a part of the *modus operandi*. An extension of the optic nerve occasions great pain to the sufferer. Kicking and biting are also ordinary means used in combat; I have seen several fingers that had been deformed, also several noses and ears, which have been mutilated, by this canine mode of fighting.

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*December* 13. To-day a crowd of people were out witnessing the immersion of seven Baptists in a pool near the town. Many of them have a genteel and gay appearance; a slight shade of the ruddy complexion makes me suppose that the climate of this place is the best that I have known on this side of the Atlantic.

*Dec.* 15. Last night a man took the Sheriff of Fayette county aside, on pretence of business, and immediately commenced an attack on him. The officer of the law drew a dirk, and wounded the assailant.

I note down the prices of live stock, labour, some of the necessaries of life, &c.

### *Dollars Cents*

Price of a young male negro, arrived at puberty, 800

Hire of ditto per annum, with provisions and clothes, 100 to 150

Price of a young female ditto, 600

Hire of ditto, per annum, with provisions and clothes, 120

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Price of a work-horse, from 100 to 120

Price of a fine saddle horse, 200 to 300

Hire of a four horse team and driver, without provisions, 4

Hire of a saddle horse per day, 1

Mechanics per day, with board,  $\frac{3}{4}$  to 1

Labourers per day, with board,  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 75

Wheat per bushel, 1 to 75

Rye, 50

Corn, (Maize)  $37\frac{1}{2}$

[115] Oats, 33#

Potatoes, 33#

Flour per 100 lbs. 3

Beef, per pound, from 5 to 6

Pork, ditto, from 4 to 5

Mutton, ditto, from 3 to 4

Turkeys, from 50 cents to 1

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Hens and Ducks,  $12\frac{1}{2}$

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Eggs per dozen, 12½

Butter per lb. 25

Cheese, ditto, 18

Whisky per gallon, 40

Tobacco, per 100 lbs. 5

Hemp, 8

Wool, per lb 33#

The indolence and disorderly conduct of slaves, together with their frequent elopements, occasion much uneasiness to their holders. It is not uncommon to hear the master, in ill humour, say that he wishes there was not a slave in the country; but the man who is tenacious of this sort of stock, or who purchases it at a high price, will always find it difficult to convince other people, that his pretensions to humanity towards slaves are in earnest. Some say that the fault is with the British, who first introduced them. Others reprobate the practice; but affirm that, while the laws of the country permit it, and while slaves must be somewhere, *we may have them as well as our neighbours*; and there are a few who vindicate both principle and practice, by declaring, that the negro is a being of an inferior species formed for servitude: and allege that slave-keeping has the divine sanction, as in the case of the Jews.

Negroes, even in America, are said to be more prolific than the white variety of the species. They do not delay marriage because they are not in possession of lands, slaves, horses, and the other essentials of their masters: nor does the support of [116] their progeny give them much concern; the coloured children being held as the property of

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the owner of the mother. By him they are reared with more or less tenderness, or sold to another, as he thinks fit.

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The treatment of slaves is understood to be much milder in Kentucky than in the south-easterly part of the Union, where provisions are dearer, and blacks sell at a lower price. At Lexington slaves are well fed, and have a healthy appearance, and the greater part of them are well clothed. Some of the abettors of the system assert, that negroes are happier here than the free poor of other countries; but there are several circumstances which may be opposed to this position. The happy Kentuckian slave lives under the danger of being cow-hided, (a term signifying a whipping, with a stripe of half tanned leather, which is twisted into the form of a tapered switch of a very rigid texture,) for the slightest real or imaginary offence. His evidence is not received in court when he is opposed to a white man. Thus he has not the protection of the law, and less hope of bettering his condition. The practice disregards the strongest ties of kindred and of nature. The husband is torn from the wife, and the child from the parent, to be sold into an unhealthy region, where a more galling yoke is imposed. He must not eat nor even converse in the room where white men are. Every degrading mark is set upon him. While white men ransack the Christian volume, that they may find fit names to their children, heathenish appellations, such as Pompey, Nero, &c. usually given to dogs, are bestowed on the coloured infant. The ordinary names of dogs and horses, the days of the week, and the months of the year, seem now exhausted in the negro nomenclature.

[117] It does not require a high degree of philanthropic feeling to regret the numerous obstacles which oppose their amelioration. The governments of new territories are allowing vast tracts of country to become markets; and the older slave-keeping states are converted into 142 nurseries, from which multitudes of slaves are procured. If this course of policy is persisted in, the humane exertions of individuals, and the benevolent associations in Britain, and elsewhere, cannot counteract the growing abuse. Emancipation can scarcely be contemplated, where its objects are multiplied with such

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rapidity. Amalgamation with the whites, extermination, or ultimate preponderance, present themselves to the penetrating mind.

The baneful effects of slave-keeping are not confined to negroes, but are widely diffused amongst white people. The necessity of personal labour being removed from the master, he either indulges in idleness, or spends his time in amusements that are incompatible with industrious habits. His progeny, seeing that every sort of useful labour is performed by the slaves, whom they are taught to regard as an inferior class of beings, naturally conceive that the cultivation of the earth is a pursuit too degrading for white men. Where such early impressions are entertained, we need not be surprised with the multitudes of idlers, hunters, horse-racers, gamesters and dissipated persons, that are here so prevalent. Were it not for the immaculate purity of the female constitution, the most invaluable half of the human character would be rendered susceptible of receiving a tinge. Fortunately for white Miss, she is able to turn to her own advantage the apparently adverse circumstances under which she is placed. The sable domestics with whom she is constantly surrounded, and [118] who obey her every nod, serve as a foil, or back ground, which, by drawing a contrast, greatly enhances her charms. The female slaves performing every menial and almost every household service, she has on this account much leisure for the decoration of her person. She is also at her ease, and acquires all the tenderness 143 of frame which forms the delicate lady. Here also, as in some other places, the society of the two sexes is strictly regulated. Private interviews are guarded against with the most jealous care. The suitor must announce the object of his first visit, and the courtship must proceed under the eye of a parent, or of some other confidential person. In this happy seclusion from the scandalous affairs of the world, it is only through the medium of a female negro secretary that evasions can be conveniently practised when sentiment prevails over prudence. Married ladies also are relieved from the drudgery of giving suck to their own children. It sometimes happens that the infant boy entertains a stronger affection for his black nurse than for his white mother; and that his affection for the sooty hue may not be altogether effaced in maturer life. If the feeling is not directly

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conducive to the happiness of slaves, it has, at least, a tendency to abate prejudices arising from their colour.

How far parental prerogative applies to intercourse between young people of different colours, I am not prepared to say; but the great numbers of mulattoes to be seen furnish sufficient evidence to preclude all indiscreet inquiry on this very delicate point. One striking fact is not to be omitted. An instance of a semi-coloured person whose origin is derived from a white mother, is exceedingly rare.

[119] You have frequently heard the adherents of an illiberal faction pouring out a copious torrent of invective against the American people, and their democratic form of government, on account of slave-keeping. Such declamation must proceed from ignorance of the history of this country, or from a degree of malignity, ill calculated to promote the national character of Britain, or the reputation 144 of the system they adore. It is for these people to be told a few facts, or to keep them in recollection, if they knew them previously. Thirteen North American provinces were once British colonies, principally settled by a British people. These colonies, like others subject to the same parent country, were, at an early period, the resort of English slave traders, who introduced a large proportion of African captives amongst the white population. The colonists soon became sensible of the moral evil, or of the future consequences to be derived from the cupidity of the inhuman sellers, and the indolence of unprincipled buyers amongst themselves. So early as the year 1703,66 the colony of Massachusetts (only seventy-four years after its first settlement, and probably a much shorter time after the first introduction of slaves) imposed a tax to prevent further importations. This same settlement made attempts to prevent the import altogether in 1767 and 1774. Previous to the year 1772, no less than twenty-three acts were passed by the legislature of Virginia, for applying taxes to the trade, with a view to its restriction. In 1772, Virginia petitioned the throne on the same subject; but obtained no redress. Several other colonies made remonstrances at different times; but were repressed by the opposition of British Governors. In these days the grand discovery that taxation and representation ought to [120] be inseparable, was first discussed between governors and

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the governed. A doctrine so appalling to privileged orders was not to be adopted merely because it was sanctioned by reason. War, the last reasoning of Tory ministrations was resorted to,— a war which terminated in the best soldiers of the old world throwing down their arms before the husbandmen of the new. The Americans, no

66 The date of this law was December 5, 1705.— Ed.

145 longer the vassals of England, were at liberty to pursue an independent course of policy. The subject of negro slavery engaged their attention at an early period; but, unhappily for the new government, their territory was overspread with an unfortunate race, who, by education, habits, and resentment of former injuries, were the enemies rather than the members of the social compact. In this state of affairs, an immediate emancipation would have tolerated a free communication of hostile feelings amongst a people whose antipathies were as universal as their colour. In 1780, the State of Pennsylvania, although then occupied in the struggle for independence, passed an act for gradual manumission. Subsequently the whole country, north of Virginia, consisting of eight States, has either effected the total extinction of slavery, or obtained the very near prospect of it. In 1787, a law was passed, prohibiting slave-keeping in the vast tract of country north of the Ohio, and east of the Mississippi.<sup>67</sup> By these means the United States have, in thirty-eight years, almost produced a total liberation of negroes, over half their jurisdiction,— a progress vastly more rapid than England made in the introduction of a similar system of release, in her dependencies. It is unnecessary to enter here on the spirit and tendency of British domination in every quarter of the globe. If the contrast between the policy of the governments of the United [121] States and England is not sufficient to restrain antijacobin tongues within the bounds of decorum, the common interest of their faction may, perhaps, be a stronger inducement to silence, as the subject affords a most striking example of popular representation operating as a most admirable corrective of

67 Flint here refers to the Northwest Ordinance, passed by the Congress of the Confederation, July 13, 1787.— Ed.

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146 an abuse that has grown up under the fostering care of aristocracy.

*December 19.* The inauguration of the professors of the university of Lexington occasioned much stir to-day.<sup>68</sup> They paraded the streets accompanied by music, the students, and a numerous assemblage of the people. I witnessed a similar procession at New York; and am told that this practice is usual at the commencement of college sessions in America.

Another musical practice gained ground here some time ago. A newly married couple procured a band of instrumental musicians to play before their house on the evening of their marriage day. In a late instance a great number of boys procured small conical tubes of tinned iron, and joined in the concert, by blowing vehemently. The disconcerted performers were overpowered by a more intense sound, and desisted. No fair bride of Lexington has been since greeted by a serenade. This is one of the few instances where the manners of this country are not to be traced to British origin; but seem to be formed on the model of the true Castilian.

*December 24.* Left Lexington. On this occasion I was the only passenger in the mail coach. Clear frosty weather allowed the sides of the carriage to be kept open, so that I enjoyed a view of the country. The expedition in travelling is great, considering the badness of the roads. The land that was beautifully verdant a short time ago, is [122] now withered by the cold. No green herbage is to be seen.

A part of the country by Licking River is hilly, poor, and almost covered over with detached pieces of limestone.

<sup>68</sup> For a brief sketch of Transylvania University, see Cuming's *Tour*, volume iv of our series, note 126.— Ed.

<sup>147</sup> The clearing of this land waits for a more dense population than the present. In the spots where the woods are cut down, crops of Indian corn are repeated without

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intermission. Economical agriculture has no place here. The rude implements are left to rot in the field; and the scythe allowed to hang on a tree from one season to another.

*December 25.* The coach stopped at Washington, from seven o'clock, last night, till three this morning. It overset on my way hither, and though I received no injury, I resolved upon going no further with that vehicle in the dark, and over such bad roads. About five o'clock I was awakened by the firing of guns and pistols, in celebration of Christmas day. I heard no one speak of the nature of the event that they were commemorating. So universal was the mirth and conviviality of the people, that I could not procure a person to carry my portmanteau to Limestone. It remained for me to stop all day at Washington, or sling my baggage over my own shoulders. I preferred the latter alternative, and proceeded on my way.

At Limestone, negroes and boys continued their firing till late in the afternoon.— Every sort of labour without doors was suspended.

A watermark on the beach showed that the Ohio had lately risen to the height of fourteen or fifteen feet. It had now subsided to half that quantity, and had more than a third part of its surface covered with ice, in brisk motion downwards.

*December 26.* Two large family boats (tied end to end) were about to leave Limestone for Cincinnati. [123] I agreed to go with them, and moved off in the afternoon. Sailing amongst moving ice is not attended with much danger, except at the commencement of the flood, when 148 the accumulation is sometimes very great. In other cases the boat acquires nearly the same velocity with the ice.

The two boats contained upwards of forty New Englanders. Their activity in this (to them) new way of travelling, shewed a considerable degree of enterprise and ingenuity.

In the evening we moored by the margin of the river. In this situation the craft were exposed to collision with the moving ice. The men were sagacious enough to know, that

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lying ashore was more unsafe than keeping in motion, but generously yielded to the mistaken timidity of the females, who were much averse to sailing in the night.

*December 27.* The ice continued to float downward, and surrounded us so much, that we could derive but little facility from rowing. Passed Augusta, a neat village on the Kentucky side of the river.<sup>69</sup> Its court house denotes that it is a county town.

<sup>69</sup> Augusta, at that time the seat of Bracken County, is eighteen and a half miles below Maysville.— Ed.

*December 29.* This morning the frost was intense. A wild duck, frozen to a large mass of ice floated past our mooring. A young man, who accompanied me in a canoe in pursuit of it, had one of his hands wet; the part was slightly frostbit.

New Richmond is a thriving town, on the north bank of the river.<sup>70</sup> It consists of about a hundred houses. Four years ago there was not a house.

<sup>70</sup> New Richmond, twenty miles above Cincinnati, was platted in 1814 by a former resident of Richmond, Virginia, hence its name. It was incorporated in 1828.— Ed.

We have seen some farming on the sides of the hills, near the river, that is performed in a most slovenly manner. Indian corn is the only crop, and is repeated continually. <sup>149</sup> No part of the manure [124] is returned to the fields. The houses are rude log cabins, built as near the river as is consistent with security from the floods. Their children are dirty and ragged in the extreme. The comforts of these people must consist chiefly in having enough to eat and drink, and in having no fear of the exactions of the landholder, the tytheholder, or the collector of taxes.

## LETTER X

Cincinnati — Situation — Manufactures — Settlement and Progress — Weather — Credulity and Want of Education — Descend the Ohio — Islands — Jeffersonville —

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Louisville — Falls of the Ohio — Taverns and Accommodations — Expedition for Exploring the Missouri Country and Forming a Military Post there — Miscellaneous Observations interspersed.

*Jeffersonville , ( Indiana ,) May 19, 1819.*

I concluded my last letter, dated Cincinnati, 30th December last, without taking any notice of the town; I shall therefore begin the present one with some particulars respecting that place.

Cincinnati is no sooner seen than the importance of the town is perceived. A large steam grist mill, three large steam boats on the stocks, and two more on the Kentucky side of the river, and a large ferry boat, wrought by horses, were the first objects which attracted my attention. The [125] beach is lined with keel boats, large arks for carrying produce, family boats, and rafts of timber. On shore the utmost bustle prevails, with drays carrying imported goods, salt, iron, and timber, up to the town, and in bringing down pork, flour, &c. to be put aboard of boats for New Orleans.

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The town is situated in north latitude 39° 5' 54#, and in west longitude 85° 44', according to the determination of Mr. Ellicott.<sup>71</sup> The distance from Pittsburg is 305 miles by land, and 513¼ miles by the windings of the river. The streets are laid out in a rectangular form, and are enlivened by drays, waggons, and an active people. The houses are nearly all of brick and timber: about two hundred new ones have been built in the course of the year. Merchants' shops are numerous, and well frequented. The noise of wheel carriages in the streets, and of the carpenter, the blacksmith, and the cooper, make a busy din. Such an active scene I never expected to see amongst the back woods of America.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>71</sup> For a biographical sketch of Andrew Ellicott, see Cuming's *Tour*, volume iv of our series, note 213.— Ed.

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72 For the early history of Cincinnati, see Cumings's *Tour*, volume iv of our series, note 166.— Ed.

The manufactories of this new place are more diversified than extensive. An iron foundery, two breweries, several distilleries, a woollen manufactory, a cotton-mill, an oil-mill, a grist-mill, a nail-cutting machine, a tanwork, a glass-house, and a white-lead factory, seem to be the principal ones. But the more numerous part of the artizans are joiners, bricklayers, blacksmiths, plasterers, shoe-makers, tailors, hatters, bakers, tobacconists, cabinet-makers, saddlers, &c. &c. Journeymen mechanics earn from one and three-fourths to two dollars per day. Their board costs about three dollars per week. Most of them dress well on the days they are not at work, and some of them keep horses.

In the end of December, 1788, or beginning of January, 1789, Cincinnati was first founded by about [126] twenty persons. For some time the place was occupied more in the manner of a fort than of a town, the neighbouring country being in the possession of hostile Indians, who, on different occasions, killed several of the settlers. In 1790, a governor, and the judges of a supreme court, for the territory, arrived. In 1792, the first school and the first church were built. In 1799 the legislative authority of the governor was succeeded by that of an assembly. In 1803, the State government of Ohio was instituted. In 1806, the government was removed from Cincinnati to Chillicothe. In 1800, the town contained seven hundred and fifty people, and in 1805, only nine hundred and sixty. It was subsequently to the last date that Cincinnati showed indications of outgrowing a village and becoming a town. Within three-and-a-half years past, the population is supposed to have been doubled, and the amount is now believed to be nearly ten thousand.

*January 1, 1819.* To-day the boys of the town made a great noise by firing guns and pistols. They commenced last night about dusk. During the night I heard much noise of fighting and swearing amongst adult persons.

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*January 3. ( Sunday. )* Works of necessity form a numerous class here. To-day boats were loading pork, and drays carrying it down to the river.

*January 8.* To-day the river was almost covered with ice floating downward. Many large pieces adhering together form boards of one or two acres in extent. The pieces of hemlock tree intermixed make it plain that these masses of ice are from the Allegany river.

*January 10. ( Sunday. )* Dealers in pork were (in one instance) busy cutting up and salting. I [127] saw some young men in a small boat examining the driftwood on the river; when pine logs came within their reach they 152 dragged them ashore. Others were intercepting timber of every description, for fuel.

*January 11.* The weather frequently changes from frosty to humid. Yesterday at two P.M. the thermometer stood at 76° in sunshine. The hottest day since the ninth of December. To-day the temperature was 54° in the shade.

*Jan. 13.* At seven o'clock in the morning, the thermometer indicated 21°. By mid-day, the sun's rays softened the mud in the streets. The people say that the winter has hitherto been milder than usual, and some infer that we will have no severe cold during the season. Last winter the thermometer was once observed to stand so low as 10° below zero. The greatest cold from 1787 to 1806 was minus 18°. The most intense frosts of this country have the effect of congealing the moisture in forest trees, and splitting them with a loud noise. Notwithstanding the moderation of the present season, the grasses and weeds on the ground are withered to whiteness. In the woods no evergreen plants are to be seen, except the tufts of mistletoe, which are perched on the branches of the tallest trees.

Examples of credulity are not rare. Yesterday a woman was deriving liberal emolument in town from fortune-telling, and from her supposed sagacity in knowing every thing respecting stolen goods. She also pretended to have the faculty of discovering springs of water and metallic ores, by means of the divining rod. Her speaking in the German

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language led me to suppose that she is descended from that part of Europe, where *Rhabdomancy* 73 [128] is prevalent. Almanack predictions of

73 i. e. Divination by the wand. This science may be fashionable, but unquestionably it must be a novelty, as the occult sciences, particularly that of divination, can only exist with the vulgar.— Flint.

153 the weather are works of reference. I have seen several family registers of marriages, and the births of children, in which the sign of the zodiac in which the sun was, at the time of the particular events, is recorded. The positions are believed to have propitious or baneful influence on the fate of the individual. In some parts of the Union, what are called snake-stones are relied on as certain cures for the bite of the reptile, and of mad dogs, in opposition to the remonstrances of medical men. Such articles of belief having gained ground, a suspicion arises that the culture of the mind is much neglected, but unfortunately the position is established by more direct evidence. During my very short stay in this place, I have seen persons applying to others to read the addresses on packages of goods, or letters, and the sign-boards of merchants. A newspaper, in bewailing the want of schools, feelingly observed, that “the Ohian is in many cases growing up to manhood, with scarcely any other intelligence than that derived from the feeble light of nature.”<sup>74</sup> Books are scarce. I have seen a biography of General Washington; some notices of the military and naval characters of America; a history of the war; the Pittsburg Navigator; and some small almanacks more frequently than any others. The advertisements of booksellers indicate that they deal in romance. Many of the people are not in possession of a copy of the *Apocrypha* ; of course such Jewish stories as the Idol Bel, or Susanna and the elders, are not often made the topics of conversation.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Portsmouth Gazetteer, No. 4.— Flint.

<sup>75</sup> These stories are found in the apocryphal chapters of the book of Daniel in the Old Testament; for Idol Bel, see chapter 14; for Susanna, see chapter 13.— Ed.

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[129] *January* 14. To-day I met with one of the passengers 154 who came over with me in the ship *Glenthorn*. He has settled with his family about twenty-five miles from this place, having bought an hundred and seventy acres of land, fifty acres of which are cleared and fenced. There is a house, two barns, and a young orchard on the property. For the whole he paid seventeen hundred and twenty-five dollars, and can rent it out at twelve and a half per cent. on the price. He said that he meditates making another purchase, and that he does not regret having left his native country.

Since my arrival, I have seen an old acquaintance, who emigrated upwards of two years ago. He bought an excellent farm, which was well cultivated, in the State of Ohio, and paid two-thirds of the price in ready money. The money with which he ought to have paid the remaining part of the price, he imprudently lent to some neighbours, who never repaid him. The ultimate instalment was soon demanded, which, being unable to pay, he was obliged to sell the land. At this stage of the business, he found that he had originally agreed to pay for the farm twice its value, and was forced to leave it, after having lost nearly all his money.

Two large steam-boats from Pittsburg, put in here on their way for New Orleans.<sup>76</sup> One of them had been forty-eight hours, and the other forty-six hours and fifty

<sup>76</sup> The "New Orleans," built for Fulton and Livingston at Pittsburg in 1811, was the first steamboat on the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. Having made a triumphant journey down to New Orleans, an object of wonder at every town on the way, she did not attempt to return, but ran between that city and Natchez until her destruction in 1814. The "Enterprise," the fourth steamboat on Western waters, after serving Jackson in his defense of New Orleans, made the first attempt to steam up the river, reaching Louisville in twenty-five days. But the water was high and she frequently found an easy course over inundated fields, so that it was reserved for the "Washington," which made a like journey in 1817, to demonstrate the value of the steamboat for Western commerce.— Ed.

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155 minutes, in descending the river. The distance, as formerly stated, is 513  $\frac{1}{4}$  miles.

The launching of a large steam-boat attracted a great assemblage of spectators. A careful observation of their countenances convinced me, that the complexion is more pale here than at Lexington. The difference is sufficiently striking to induce the belief, that there is a considerable disparity in the climate of the two places.

[130] Last week the weather was partly wet, and partly clear, the temperature was usually about 50°.

*Jan.* 28. This has been a warm day, the temperature 52° in the shade, the thermometer, exposed to sunshine, stood at 88°. The sky was clear, without a single cloud. I have never seen in this country figured icicles on the insides of windows during frosty weather. This is a clear proof of the dryness of the climate.

31. I have some pleasure in stating my conviction, that honesty, benevolence, and some other Christian virtues, are not singularities in this town. Several congregations that I have attended, behave with the attention and gravity which becomes the worship. It was easy to recognise many persons, who go to church three times on the same day. A preacher here of the Cameronian sect, is a man of talent and information. His diligence is no less conspicuous than his abilities. In addition to preaching three times on Sundays, he gives sermons in private houses on other evenings of the week.

*February* 4. This evening there were several heavy showers of rain, accompanied with more thunder than the residents have ever heard at the same season of the year. For a week past, we have had no bright sunshine; but westerly winds, and a temperature of 60° has been almost uniform.

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With candour towards the American name, I must state, that much of the credulity recently hinted at, appears to be chargeable on people from Germany and Ireland, and their

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descendants. Methodists are also said to be true believers. It is at least certain, that the journal of their great apostle, Lorenzo Dow, is replete with paragraphs not dictated by the strictest accuracy.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>77</sup> Lorenzo Dow, a native of Coventry, Connecticut, began his work as a Methodist preacher in New York in 1779. He spent some years in Ireland, endeavoring to convert the Irish to Methodism; also in England, where he introduced camp-meetings, not without opposition from a large part of the English Methodists. Upon his return to America, he travelled from place to place, holding revivals. During his later life he was almost fanatical in his bitterness towards the Jesuits, and, as Flint implies, his zeal led him to make extravagant statements.— Ed.

[131] *February 7.* To-day I left Cincinnati, on my way for Jeffersonville, at the falls of the Ohio. The boat in which I proceeded is a flat ark, loaded with flour and pork, for New Orleans. There are five such boats in company, all belonging to the same owner, who accompanies them. The wind has been south-westerly, and the thermometer, exposed to the sunshine, (which is but dim) stood at 60°. The warm weather, of late, has been uniformly attended by wind blowing up the river, importing, as it were, the air of a more southern latitude.

The flower buds of the water-maple, the elm, and the leaves of the weeping willow, are burst out, and the grass has become green. Dr. Drake, the describer of this western country, has stated the usual time of the flowering of the water-maple at a month later. It is to be feared that this early vegetation will be checked by subsequent frosts. Fruit trees, in that event, may be rendered unproductive for the ensuing season.

We put ashore, at night, twenty-three miles from Cincinnati. Gusts of wind, and a dark, clouded atmosphere, dissuaded us against sailing during the night. Much rain and loud thunder ensued.

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8. The boatmen are not obliged to row in the present moderately high stage of the water. It is sufficient to make a few pulls occasionally to keep off the shore. Two boats are tied alongside of each other, and put about with the broadside to the stream. They float at the rate of nearly four miles per hour.

9. Last night at dusk, we passed the Swiss settlement Vevay, which lies on the Indiana side of the river.<sup>78</sup> These people are said to be industrious cultivators of the ground. Wine is their staple [132] product. It is procured from a round black grape, nearly the size of a musket ball. The liquor is often of an acid taste, and apt to undergo the acetous fermentation in keeping. We continued our course all night. The owner and I slept in the boat by a fire, where we had scarcely room enough to stretch ourselves. In all other respects this is a pleasant way of travelling. The river, in most parts which we have lately seen, appears to be from five hundred to six hundred yards broad, environed with rich bottoms, and beyond these high limestone ridges. From the tops of these to the water's edge, the surface is covered with stupendous woods, with cleared farms at intervals. A few of the houses seem to be externally neat, but the majority of them are log cabins. The north side of the river is more thickly settled than the south side, where a negro population is to be seen along the banks.

<sup>78</sup> For the Swiss settlement at Vevay, see Bradbury's *Travels*, volume v of our series, note 164.— Ed.

In the afternoon we heard a remarkable sound issuing from a swamp near the river. I was told that it was the croaking of frogs. There must have been myriads of 158 them in the place, as the noise was incessant, like that of wind amongst trees, or the fall of water over a distant cascade.

A contrary wind forced us to run ashore at a part where the limestone ridge is within thirty yards of the beach. The rock is of the siliceous kind, and the narrow bottom is strewn with

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large blocks that have tumbled from the steep. In the evening there was much rain and thunder, the wind continuing contrary and violent.

10. Early in the morning we heard the howling of wolves in the woods. Scarcely a single patch of cleared ground is to be seen for several miles.

Louisville is situated at the south-western extremity [133] of a stretch of the river that passes in a straight line for six miles, so that the town terminates a beautiful water prospect.<sup>79</sup> The river is here half a mile in breadth.

<sup>79</sup> For a brief account of Louisville, see Croghan's *Journals*, volume i of our series, note 106.— Ed.

The towns passed on the Kentucky side of the river, are, Port-William, and West-Port. Those on the Indiana side, are, Laurenceburg, the Rising Sun, Vevay, and Madison, all places of recent erection and thriving.

The Pittsburg Navigator enumerates sixty islands in Ohio above the falls. They are so uniform in their character, that a description of one of them will give a general idea of all the rest. The upper end is broad, and intercepts part of the gravel that is moved downward during floods, forming a wide bar which acts as a partial dam that divides the stream into two parts, deflecting each of them toward the shores of the mainland, as represented by the figure.

The two currents are then deflected from the shores <sup>159</sup> toward the island, which is thereby curtailed in its lower parts, and at its extremity contracted almost to a point. The two currents unite below, and form a deep channel. At the head of the island the water is shallow. The largest and oldest timber stands on the lower end, and [134] younger plants of willow, sycamore, &c. on the upper end of the island. It is farther to be noticed, that the trees on islands, although of rapid growth, are by no means so large as those on the adjoining banks and bottom lands. The alluvial process deposits gravel at the

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head. Over this, sand is precipitated; and lastly, a superstratum of mud and driftwood is deposited, forming a rich soil for the growth of timber. These facts, taken in connection, show that additions are continually making at the head, and that the converging streams are simultaneously carrying off the lower end of the island.

In most instances, these are not the islands discovered by the first white men who explored the Ohio. Nor are they those that will be known by the same names, thirty, forty, or fifty years hence. Their being gradually exchanged for others farther upward, produces an effect similar to what would be occasioned by the same islands moving against the stream, in their progress forcing the 160 current against the shores, and thereby preserving a capacious bed for the river.

From Cincinnati downward, the ridges which bound the valley of the river on both sides are more broken, and divided into distinct hills, and are, of course, more diversified and pleasant than the unvaried ledges farther up. The traveller, notwithstanding, is apt to feel tired of the insipidity of the scenery. The same woods obstruct his view, or the same rude style of improvement meets his eye everywhere.

I landed at Jeffersonville, a small town on the Indiana side of the river.<sup>80</sup> It stands on a high bank, and has the most pleasant situation of any town that I have seen on the banks of the river.

<sup>80</sup> Jeffersonville, on the site of old Fort Steuben at the falls of the Ohio, was laid out in 1802 in accordance with a plan proposed by President Jefferson. It soon superseded the older neighboring town of Clarksville, upon the same tract of land.— Ed.

[135] *February* 12. Visited Louisville, the town, next to Lexington, the largest in Kentucky. The population probably amounts to about 3000 persons. The falls immediately below the town being navigable for large craft only during times of high water, Louisville derives great advantage from the carrying trade.

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13. Went over the rapids. The fall is said to be twenty-two feet and a half in less than two miles. Nearly the whole of the declivity is distributed into three shoots or rapids, where the stream is very swift, occasioning breakers amongst the rocks. Except in times of very high water, boats are conducted downward by pilots who are well acquainted with the falls. The temperature of this morning was 26 ½°.

17. Last night a gentleman from Carolina lodged in the tavern here. After a hired man had given him slippers, 161 and asked him for his boots to be blacked, he exclaimed, "As I wish to see my Maker, I would not live in a free state, where one white man cleans the boots of another."

A small degree of aversion to frivolous detail does not prevent me from describing a back-woods tavern. Like its owner, it commonly makes a conspicuous figure in its neighbourhood. It is a log, a frame, or a brick house, frequently with a wooden piazza in front. From the top of a tall post, the sign-board is suspended. On it, a Washington, a Montgomery, a Wayne, a Pike, or a Jackson, is usually portrayed, in a style that might not be easily deciphered except for the name attached. On the top of the house is a small bell, which is twice rung before meals. Immediately after the second peal, travellers and boarders assemble around the table, where they commence eating *without preface*. In such promiscuous [136] parties, the governor of a state, or a general of the militia, may be seen side by side with the waggoner. The larger towns having taverns of different qualities, and different rates of charges, a distinction of company is the natural consequence. We breakfast and sup on coffee or tea, accompanied with plenty of beef, bacon, chickens, and eggs. The hostess (or host if he is unmarried) takes her seat at the head of the table, and dispenses the tea. One or two *hired people* (or slaves, in slave-keeping parts of the country) wait at table. At dinner, wheaten and Indian corn breads, beef, pork, venison, wild turkey, geese, and poultry, are staple articles; with a profusion of vegetables, such as cucumbers, onions, cabbages, beans, and preserved fruits. Lodging in taverns has not generally all the convenience that could be wished for. It is common to see several

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beds in the same room, and these 162 are simple bedsteads without hangings. There are no bells in the bed-rooms, and other apartments; nor are menials accustomed to move at the signal of the stranger. Water is rarely to be met with in bed-rooms; washing is, of course, performed under a shed behind the house, or at the pump. A full house is always the apology for causing two strangers to sleep in the same bed; the propriety of the custom will always be admitted by the person who arrives latest. It has been my lot to sleep with a diversity of personages; I do believe, from the driver of the stage coach, to men of considerable name. The noted cutaneous disease is certainly not prevalent; if it was, the beds of taverns, which, like burying grounds, lay all on a level, would soon make the disease as prevalent in this country, as in some others in the old world.

[137] If Europeans and others, who indulge in censorious remarks on western taverns and tavern-keepers, would make reasonable allowances for the thinly-settled state of the country, the high price of labour, and the great numbers of travellers, their criticisms might be somewhat softened. The man who cannot enjoy a placid temper under privation of a part of the comforts of a more advanced state of society, is surely to be pitied for having business in the back woods of America.

A very inferior breed of cows and horses are to be seen almost every where by the river. This may be partly imputed to the want of proper fodder, and of shelter in the winter. Cattle are not housed in the season, when every plant is withered to whiteness. Grass is not sown to succeed the crops. A growth of tall weeds takes immediate possession of the soil. Hay, therefore, is a scarce article. Indian corn is resorted to as a substitute, but it 163 appears to be too hard for mastication. Butter and cheese sell at 25 cents (13 ½d. sterling) per pound.

*February 17.* This morning was clear and frosty. Temperature 32° in the morning. Snow fell to the thickness of an inch in the forenoon. In the afternoon it disappeared.

18. The morning was clear; temperature 20°. In the afternoon the ice melted.

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19. Temperature 29° in the morning. In the forenoon, snow fell to the thickness of an inch and a half. In the evening it became liquid.

There is much wet ground in the vicinity of the falls. Intermittent fevers afflict the inhabitants toward the end of summer and in autumn. Last season an unusual degree of sickness was experienced.

New settlers continue to descend the river. Family boats are almost continually in sight. In a [138] boat lying ashore to-day, a man was busy in making shingles. He has brought with him pine timber from Allegany river. Shingles give a good price here, where pine trees do not grow, and they furnish him with employment at intervals. This is a good specimen of the provident habits and the industry of New Englanders, a people admirably adapted for taking possession of the woods.

*March 1.* To-day the people of Jeffersonville elected a Squire, (Justice of the Peace.) Two young men disagreed, and fought a furious battle. In justice to the election, it is admitted that the fight was in consequence of an old quarrel.

I have met with no less than eight Scotsmen to-day. We are said to be the most national of all Europeans in America, and the most loyal to old monarchy.

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The weather is mild and clear, with the aspect of spring. Birds begin to chirp in the woods; their plumage is fine, but they are not songsters.

Jeffersonville contains about sixty-five houses, thirteen stores (shops,) and two taverns; the land office for a large district of Indiana, and a printing office that publishes a weekly newspaper, and where the American copy of the most celebrated of all reviews is sold. A steam-boat is on the stocks, measuring 180 feet long, and forty broad; estimated to carry

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700 tons. There are now thirty-one steam-boats on the Mississippi and Ohio. Twenty-nine more are building, and in a forward state.

At present, a passage from New Orleans to the falls of Ohio costs 100 dollars, including provisions. Goods are carried at 6 ¼ cents per pound weight. This high rate, with the danger of passing through a most unhealthy climate, in case of arriving after the beginning of July, [139] or before the end of October, gives Baltimore, Philadelphia, or New York, a decided preference to Europeans who would settle in the lower parts of the Ohio country, or on the Missouri. It is, indeed, conjectured, that the increase of steam-boats will soon occasion a competition, and a great fall in the freight; but, it is only after a great deduction taking place, that New Orleans need be compared with Baltimore, as the port for landing emigrants.

*May 19.* The steam-boat, *Western Engineer* and a number of keel-boats, descended the falls to-day, with a considerable body of troops, accompanied by a mineralogist, a botanist, a geographer, and a painter.<sup>81</sup> Their

<sup>81</sup> This was the expedition of Major Stephen H. Long. The object stated by Flint was abandoned, due to bad management of the military branch of the undertaking. While the party was wintering near the mouth of the Platte River, Long, returning to Washington, received new instructions from President Monroe, namely, to seek a pass through the Rocky Mountains south of the route of Lewis and Clark, and on the return journey to examine the source of Red River. Abandoning their steamer, "Western Engineer," the party mounted horses, followed the south fork of the Platte to the base of the mountains, saw and named Long's Peak, crossed over to the Arkansas, and ascended it to the Royal Gorge. There, despairing of success, they gave up the attempt and started home. The Union Pacific Railway now follows, in large measure, the route travelled by Long. In returning, he followed a stream which he supposed was the Red, but which proved to be a tributary of the Arkansas. For the journal of this expedition, see volumes xiv–xvii of our series.— Ed.

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165 object is to explore the Missouri country, and to form a garrison at the mouth of Yellow Stone river, about 1800 miles up the Missouri river. Five other steam-boats, besides other craft, are expected to join the expedition. The Western Engineer has on the bow, a large sculpture of the head of a snake, through which the waste steam escapes; a device, independently of the general aspect of the equipment, that might be enough to strike terror amongst the savage tribes.

I shall conclude this, with mentioning two singular occurrences. The passage of a steam-boat from Pittsburg to Louisville, seven hundred miles in fifty hours; and the marriage of a girl in this place, at the age of eleven years and three months.

### [140] LETTER XI

Morals and Manners of the People — Defects in Education — Generosity—The President of the United States.

*Jeffersonville , ( Indiana ,) June 28, 1819.*

My residence at this place for some time past, prevents me from noting down such occurrences as travellers usually meet with. This letter must therefore be composed of other materials. Some remarks therefore on the people will form the subject; premising that it is not the American 166 can character in general that I treat of. My opinions and assertions are founded on my own limited observation, and on what I conceive to be authentic facts.

The European, on his first arrival in the United States, may perhaps expect to find sound republican principles, and good morals, pervading nearly the whole population. He has probably heard that capital punishments are rare, and from that circumstance, may have inferred that there are few crimes to punish. For some time this ideal character may be entertained. Newspapers will naturally be looked to, as the current records of delinquency; in these, multitudes of cases regarding the proceedings against criminals are entirely

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omitted. After some correspondence with the people, and after some observation of incidents, a sojourner from the old world will be apt to modify his original opinion.

[141] Last winter, a committee of inquiry into the state of the prison at Baltimore, stated in strong terms the inadequacy of the present modes of punishment, and the deplorable increase of offenders, who by their numbers threaten to overwhelm every lenient corrective. The confinement not being solitary, and the young being mixed with older and more experienced desperadoes, the institution intended for reformation is literally converted into a school of vice, where plans for future depredations are regularly concerted. The speech of Governor Clinton,<sup>82</sup>

<sup>82</sup> De Witt Clinton (1769–1828) was from early manhood engaged in New York politics. Beginning as secretary to his uncle, Governor George Clinton, he was state senator from 1798–1802; mayor of New York from 1802–1815; and, with the exception of four years, governor from 1817 until his death. His interest in the Erie Canal is well known. In 1812 he urged its construction upon Congress; failing in that he drew up an elaborate memorial to the state legislature, which had great weight in inducing that body to undertake the enterprise. When the canal was opened (1825), he was carried on a canal barge in triumphal procession from New York to Lake Erie.— Ed.

167 at the opening of the last session of the legislature of New York State, is another authority on this subject. That gentleman feelingly deplored the growth of depravity, and affirmed that magistrates are unable to inflict deserved punishments on all, and that, from the numbers committed, there is a necessity for extending pardon to an undue extent, or of granting absolute impunity. He stated farther, that the prisoner released is sometimes re-committed for a new crime on the same day.

The river Ohio is considered the greatest thoroughfare of banditti in the Union. Here the thief, in addition to the cause of his flight, has only to steal a skiff, and sail down the river in the night. Horse stealing is notorious in the western country, as are also escapes from prison. Jails are constructed of thin brick walls or of logs, fit only to detain the prisoner

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while he is satisfied with the treatment he receives, or while he is not apprehensive of ultimate danger. Runaway apprentices, slaves, and wives, are frequently advertised. I have heard several tavern-keepers complain of young men going off without paying for their board. This is not to be wondered at, where so many are continually moving in this extensive country, without property, without acquaintances, [142] without introductory letters, and without the necessity of supporting moral character.

Swearing, as I have repeatedly mentioned, is a most lamentable vice. If I am not mistaken, I have already heard more of it in America than twice the aggregate heard during the whole of my former life.

A high degree of nationality is frequently to be observed, and encomiums on American bravery and intelligence poured forth by men who are not remarkable for the latter quality, and who, by their ostentation, raise a doubt 168 as to their possessing the former. Their conduct seems to be more disgusting to cultivated Americans, than to Europeans.

Here are multitudes of persons who have no accurate notions of decorous behaviour. This, no doubt, may arise partly from their ideas of the equality of men, without making due allowances for morals, manners, intellect, and education. Accustomed to mix with a diversity of company at taverns, elections, and other places of public resort, they do not well brook to be excluded from private conversation. On such occasions, they exclaim, “*This is a free country*” or a “*land of liberty*,” adding a profane oath. They do not keep in view that one man has a natural right to hear, *only* what another is willing to tell him. Of late I have several times found, that when I had business to transact, a third party drew near to overhear it. Hired people, mixing with families and their visitors, have ample means of gaining a knowledge of other people's affairs. I shall relate a story which I have on good authority. A gentleman, in a State where slaves are kept, engaged some carpenters from a neighbouring free State to erect a barn. On the day of their first arrival they eat [143] along with himself. On the second day the family took breakfast a little earlier than usual, and caused the table to be covered anew for the mechanics, previous to their coming in. They

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were so highly offended with this imaginary insult, that they went off without finishing their work. This little affair became so well known in the vicinity, that the gentleman could not procure other workmen for some time. This extension of liberty and equality is injurious, inasmuch as it prevents the virtuous part of society from separating from the vicious; and so far as it removes from the unprincipled and untutored part, the salutary incitement to rest character on good behaviour and intelligence, instead of citizenship, or an allusion to the *land of liberty*, or the favourite maxim that one man is as good as another. I have frequently been asked such questions as, “Where are you come from? Where are you going? What are you to do there? What have you got in these here boxes? Are you a merchant? I guess, then, you are a mechanic.”— Dr. Franklin did well in wearing labels on his person, announcing his name, his residence, the place he was travelling for, and his business there.

The abolition of titles and hereditary distinctions in America has not been productive of all the simplicity of address that might have been expected, or was perhaps intended by the illustrious founders. Squire, the appellation designating a Justice of the Peace, or Magistrate, is commonly retained for life, although out of office, or even when dismissed for misconduct. It is so also amongst officers in the militia. Men who are appointed Captains, or Majors, and may have been present at trainings for a short time, are called Captains or Majors ever afterwards. Of *ex officio* corporals or serjeants I have heard no mention made. The persons who [144] take charge of keelboats are also Captains. Except in cases where such names as those just alluded to are applied, Mr. is the epithet of every man, and is applied on every occasion. All are gentlemen. The wife is, of course, Mrs.; the daughter and maid servant are indiscriminately saluted Miss, or Madam. All are ladies. Thus the Christian name has fallen into disuse. I do not wish to be understood as approving of giving an appellation to one man and withholding it from another, but would only observe, that where all are Mr. Mrs. and Miss, these terms do not imply a distinctive mark, and that the simple Christian names would be more discriminately useful in the affairs of life, if not almost as respectable.

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A passion for money has been said to be a great characteristic of Americans. To admit this would perhaps be conceding too much. It is certain that security of property and high profits on capital, tend to promote this disposition, and it therefore cannot be wonderful that America has a full proportion of enterprising citizens, and such as are essential to the progress of a new country.

Polite behaviour, talents, education, and property, have influence in society, here, as elsewhere. It is true that many who occupy the back ground are obtrusive, and wish to act on the principle of equality, and that violations of decorum are not repulsed with the same contempt as in Britain; but it is only those who are agreeable in their manner and conversation, that can be received as interesting companions amongst accomplished men. The finer sympathies of human nature are not to be taken possession of by force. Those who have believed in the equality of society in America, have adopted a position physically and morally impossible.

[145] Most of the defects noticed may be traced to the education of youth, reared in families where the parents have not had the advantage of early culture, and where the son becomes a mere transcript of the father, the model after which he is formed. If he is sent to school, in most cases he knows that the teacher is not allowed to whip him. The teacher is thus rendered any thing but that object of reverence which becomes his office, and it can scarcely be expected that the young freeman will be much inclined either to follow the precepts or to imitate the example of his tutor. He is practically taught to look down on the learned man as an inferior, and to despise the most useful attainments. The most efficient means of instruction, then, are those of the family, where, in too many instances, the children are the unrestrained offspring of nature. It gives no pleasing sensations to hear them swearing, at an age when they ought to be learning to know one letter from another, or to see them throwing off submission to parents, and assuming all the confidence of manhood before they arrive at half the stature.

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There is one trait of character sufficiently generous to give a lustre to the American name. The stranger is not insulted on account of his country. I have not seen or heard of a single instance where a native of Britain has met with a disagreeable reflection for having paid taxes to the government so long inimical to the Republic, and that has repeatedly leagued with savages in carrying bloodshed amongst her people.

In almost every part where I have travelled, I have met with intelligent and interesting individuals. In every town where my stay was for any considerable length of time, I have become acquainted [146] with citizens whom I should be happy to meet again. A few introductory letters which I brought with me to this country, have not only procured for me the most polite and friendly receptions, but other introductions to respectable and eminent persons before me on my route; letters not weakened by the distance of my friends, whose good wishes dictated the first, but if possible stronger than the originals.

To give a summary character of the American people, or even of any considerable portion of them, is beyond the reach of my observation and intellect. It may be safe to state, that they are much diversified by education, local circumstances, and the sources from which the population has been derived. The manners of Britain seem to predominate. The want of schools is a great desideratum in new settlements. Hence it is, that in travelling from the coast into the interior, the proportion of uneducated persons appears to be the greater the farther to the westward: a fact that has been noticed by many, and one showing that civilization follows in the rear of population.

His Excellency James Munro, President of the United States, is now on a tour through the southern and western parts of the country.<sup>83</sup> On the 24th current, three of our citizens, deputed by the inhabitants of the town, went to congratulate him, on his arrival in the neighbourhood, and to invite him to visit Jeffersonville. On accidentally meeting with them returning, I felt myself at a loss for a trite phrase in congratulating them, and could only tell them bluntly, that in Europe we should say, You are very *loyal*. One of them was polite enough to set me right, by informing me, that the object of their mission was to make an

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expression [147] of *public respect*. Should you consider the loyalty of Europe, and the public respect of America as convertible terms, you will also have occasion to be set right, and this may perhaps be best done by telling you, that the President does not engage in dubbing knights or granting sinecures: — That public officers are not appointed by his fiat, nor with the concurrence of a privy council of his choice; but in conjunction with the Senate, whose members are elected by the people. These officers are not only few, but their salaries are merely remunerations for the services which they perform. In

83 For Monroe's tour, see Buttrick's *Voyages*, volume viii of our series, note 28.— Ed.

173 short, the President is not regarded as a dispenser of public money. On his part he has to regard public greetings as the spontaneous sentiments of disinterested and independent men, without repulsing any one in the language of James the First of Scotland, “What does the cunning loon want?”

On the 26th the President arrived. A tall pole with the striped flag was displayed on the bank of the river. A salute was fired, and a large body of citizens waited his coming on shore. To be introduced to the President was a wish almost universal, and he was subjected to a laborious shaking of hands with the multitude. A public dinner was given. This, too, was an object of ambition. Grocers left their goods, and mechanics their workshops, to be present at the gratifying repast. The first magistrate appears to be about sixty years of age. His deportment is dignified, and at the same time affable. His countenance is placid and cheerful. His chariot is not of iron, nor is he attended by horse-guards or drawn swords. His protection is the affection of a free and a represented people.

### [148] LETTER XII

On Emigration — The Prospects of Emigrants — Inconveniences — The method of laying out and disposing of public lands.

*Jeffersonville*, ( *Indiana* ,) *August 2*, 1819.

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This letter will be devoted to such remarks on emigration so far as my little experience and short residence in America enable me to have made. Before entering upon the subject, I think it proper to state, that I disown every intention of advising any one to leave his native country; and that I disapprove of exaggerating the prospects held out here, and underrating those of Britain, as uncandid and deceptive, as appealing to the passions to decide in a matter which ought to be determined by the sober exercise of reason.

In exchanging Britain for the United States, the emigrant may reasonably expect to have it in his power to purchase good unimproved land, and to bring it into a rude state of cultivation, with less capital unquestionably, than that employed in renting an equal proportion of good ground at home. He will not be burdened by an excessive taxation, nor with tithes, nor poor's rates; for there are no internal taxes paid to the government, no privileged clergy, and few people who live by the charity of others. His labour and his capital will be more productive, and his accumulation of property more rapid, (good health, industry, and economy, presupposed,) [149] and a stronger hope may be entertained, that extreme poverty or want may be kept at a distance. After residing five years in the country, he may become an elector of those who have the power of making laws and imposing taxes.

The inconveniences or difficulties which attend removing; are upon no account to be overlooked. The man who undervalues these is only holding disappointments in reserve for himself. He must part with friends, and every acquaintance to whom he is attached, a case that he may, perhaps, not fully understand, till he acts his part in it. A voyage and a long journey must be submitted to. He must breathe a new air, and bear transitions and extremes of climate, unknown to him before. His European tinge of complexion must soon vanish from his face, to return no more. A search for the new home will require his serious attention, a diversity of situations may soon be heard of, but it is not easy to visit or compare many of them. Nor is the emigrant, on his first arrival, an adequate judge of the soil of America. In a dilemma of this kind advice is necessary. This is easily procured

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every where; but it deserves attention to know, whether the informant is interested in the advice he gives. Land dealers, and others, naturally commend tracts of land which they are desirous to sell. The people of the neighbourhood have also an interest in the settling of neighbouring lands, knowing, that by every augmentation of population, the value of their own property is increased. On several occasions I have met with men who attempted to conceal local disadvantages, and defects in point of salubrity, that were self-evident. I do not recollect of having heard more than two persons acknowledge, that they lived in an unhealthy situation. [150] In the high country of Pennsylvania, I was told that Pittsburg is an unhealthy place. At Pittsburg, I heard that Marietta and Steubenville are very subject to sickness. At these places, the people contrast their healthy situation with Chillicothe, which, I was told, is very unhealthy. At Chillicothe, the climate of Cincinnati is deprecated; and at Cincinnati, many people seem willing to transfer the evil to the falls of the Ohio. At this place the truth is partially admitted; but it is affirmed that the Illinois country, and down the Mississippi are very unhealthy. The cautious will always look to the views and character of the man who would direct them, and will occasionally rely on their own judgments.

In the public land-offices, maps of the new lands are kept. Sections of a square mile, and quarter sections of 176 160 acres, are laid down. The squares entered are marked A. P. meaning advance paid. This advance is half a dollar per acre, or one-fourth of the price. Lands, when first put to sale, are offered by public auction, and are set up at two dollars per acre. If no one offers that price, they are exhibited on the land-office map, and may be sold at that rate at any subsequent time. New settlers, who are sufficiently skilled in the quality of the soil, are in no danger from land-office transactions. Besides the land-offices for the sale of national property, there are agents who sell on account of individuals. I can mention Mr. Embree, of Cincinnati, as a gentleman who does much business in this way, and with much reputation to himself.

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The land office maps are divided into townships [151] of six miles square.<sup>84</sup> The figure represents a portion of the country laid out in this way.

<sup>84</sup> The township system of survey was adopted in the first ordinance for the sale of public lands, passed May 20, 1785. The authorship of the plan has been a subject of controversy. It is usually attributed to Thomas Hutchins, first geographer of the United States, who had earlier embodied the idea in a plan for establishing military colonies north of the Ohio. See Hindsale, *Old Northwest* (New York, 1888), p. 262.— Ed.

The positions of the townships relatively to the base line, are expressed by the numerals I, II, III, &c. and their positions relatively to the meridian are numbered on both sides of it east and west, as marked on the top and bottom. The parallels marked I, I — II, II — III, III, and so on, are called townships, Nos. I, II, III, &c. north or south according as they lie on the north or south side of the base line. Positions in regard of the meridian are indicated by the numbers 1, 2, 3, &c. at top and bottom, east or west, as they lie on the [152] east or west side of the meridian line, and are called ranges, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 177 &c. For an explanatory example, suppose the designation of the township at the bottom of the right hand column is required. The square in question, is in the parallel numbered V south of the base line, and IV east of the principal meridian. It is therefore called town five south, range four east.

The townships are divided into sections of a square mile each, as in town No. 4 north, range No. 3 east.

The figure [page 178] is a larger representation of a township, showing how it is divided and numbered.

The faint lines represent the divisions of sections into quarters of 160 acres each. At the auctions [153] of public lands, and at subsequent sales, lots of this extent 178 are

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frequently entered. The sixteenth section of each township is reserved for the support of a school.

Lands entered at the public sales, or at the Register's office, are payable, one fourth part of the price at the time of purchase; one fourth at the expiry of two years; one fourth at three years, and the remaining fourth at four years. By law, lands not fully paid at the end of five years, are forfeited to the government, but examples are not wanting of States petitioning Congress for indulgence on this point, and obtaining it. For money paid in advance at the land office a discount of eight per cent. per annum is allowed, till instalments to the amount of the payment become due. For failures in the payment of instalments, interest at six per cent is taken till paid. The most skilful speculators usually pay only a fourth part of the price at entry, conceiving that they can derive 179 a much greater profit than eight per cent. per annum from the increasing value of property, and occasionally from renting it out to others. Where judicious selections are made, they calculate rightly.

The land system now adopted in the United States is admirable in regard of ingenuity, simplicity, and liberality. A slight attention to the map of a district, will enable any one to know at once the relative situation of any section that he may afterwards hear mentioned, and its direct distance in measured miles. There can be no necessity for giving names to farms or estates, as the designation of the particular township, and the number of the section is sufficient, and has, besides, the singular convenience of conveying accurate information as to where it is situated. By the new arrangement the boundaries of possessions are most securely fixed, [154] and freed alike from the inconvenience of rivers changing their course, and complexity of curved lines. Litigation amongst neighbours as to their landmarks, is in a great measure excluded. The title deed is printed on a piece of parchment of the quarto size. The date, the locality of the purchase, and the purchaser's name, are inserted in writing, and the instrument is subscribed by the President of the United States, and the agent of the general land office.<sup>85</sup> It is delivered to the buyer free of all expense, and may be transferred by him to another person without using stamped

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paper, and without the intervention of a law practitioner. The business of the land office proceeds on the most moderate principles, and with the strictest regard to justice. The proceeds are applied in defraying

85 At every land office, a register of the weather is kept. Three daily observations of the thermometer, the direction of the wind, the aspect of the sky, whether clear or clouded, fair or rainy days; and some other occasional phenomena, are noted down.— Flint.

180 the expense of government, and form a resource against taxation. The public lands are in reality the property of the people.

The stranger who would go into the woods to make a selection of lands, ought to take with him an extract from the land office map applying to the part of the country he intends to visit. Without this, he cannot well distinguish entered from unentered grounds. He should also procure the names of the resident people, with the numbers and quarters of the sections they live on, not neglecting to carry with him a pocket-compass, to enable him to follow the blazed lines marked out by the surveyor. Blaze is a word signifying a mark cut by a hatchet on the bark of a tree. It is the more necessary for the explorer to be furnished thus, as he may [155] expect to meet with settlers who will not be willing to direct him, but, on the contrary, tell him with the greatest effrontery, that every neighbouring quarter section is already taken up. Squatters, a class of men who take possession without purchasing, are afraid of being turned out, or of having their pastures abridged by new comers. Others, perhaps meditating an enlargement of their property, so soon as funds will permit, wish to hold the adjoining lands in reserve for themselves, and not a few are jealous of the land-dealer, who is not an actual settler, whose grounds lie waste, waiting for that advance on the value of property, which arises from an increasing population. The non-resident proprietor is injurious to a neighbourhood, in respect of his not bearing any part of the expense of making roads, while other people are frequently under the necessity of making them through his lands for their own convenience. On excursions of this kind, the prudent will always be cautious of explaining their views, 181 particularly as to the spot

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chosen for purchase, and without loss of time they should return to the land-office and make entry.

The new abode being fixed, the settler may be surrounded by strangers. Polite and obliging behaviour with circumspection in every transaction, become him in this new situation.

### [156] LETTER XIII

Comparative Advantages of several Parts of the United States — Temperature of the Climate at Philadelphia and at Cincinnati — Pennsylvania — Ohio — Kentucky, and the Western Part of Virginia — Indiana — Illinois — Missouri — Reflections on Slave-Keeping.

*Jeffersonville , ( Indiana ,) October , 16, 1819.*

To determine the most proper parts of America for new settlers, is a proposition interesting in its nature, but one that cannot be solved with precision. This general fact is to be kept in view, that, in the old populous settlements, land is already too dear to admit of that spontaneous increase in value so profitable in back-wood districts. The sea-board then is to be rejected by those who would go in search of the most profitable investment of their capital, and some part of the interior country is to be selected. The vast migration from the eastern States to the western, is satisfactory evidence of this state of the land market; and, besides, countenances the opinion, that the country first peopled by Europeans is not destined to such population and wealth as that rationally anticipated in the more fertile western States.

In the most inland parts of the old States, there are still abundance of good wood-lands reserved for future cultivation, embracing an extensive range of climate, and a great diversity of vegetable products; but the natives of the temperate climes [157] of Europe will, for the most part, be averse to live under the scorching sun of Georgia, or the intense frosts of the province of Maine. Somewhere between the extremes, probably between

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Hudson River and Chesapeake Bay, affords the best approximation. At Philadelphia, for example, the mean temperature of the year may be stated at  $53.66^{\circ}$ , that quantity being a mean of the results obtained by the observations of Dr. Rush, Dr. Cox,<sup>86</sup> and Mr. Legoux; — a determination nearly coinciding with that of Mr. Playfair,<sup>87</sup> ( $53.58^{\circ}$ ) for the mean temperature of the vegetative season, from the 20th of March to the 20th of October, at Edinburgh, and only  $5.86^{\circ}$  higher than the mean temperature of the latter place for the whole year. It is true that the extreme variations are much greater at Philadelphia than at Edinburgh, but it will be in vain to search for a situation in the United States, possessing that equability of heat, that characterizes the British islands.

<sup>86</sup> Benjamin Rush (1745–1813), a signer of the Declaration of Independence and member of the state convention of 1787, was the most eminent American physician of his day, and by his theories regarding the nature of yellow fever won recognition abroad. Serving as physician-general in the Revolutionary army, for twenty-nine years surgeon in the Pennsylvania Hospital, and throughout his life a practicing physician, he nevertheless found time to become identified with many public measures, notably the abolition of slavery, and the extension of public schools, and was a member of nearly every important literary and philanthropic society in Philadelphia.

John Redman Cox (1773–1864) was, like Rush, a Philadelphia physician, being trained at the University of Edinburgh. He was for many years professor of chemistry at the University of Pennsylvania, and edited several medical journals; but is best known as an early and pronounced advocate of vaccination.— Ed.

<sup>87</sup> John Playfair (1748–1819), an eminent Scottish mathematician and astronomer.— Ed.

From the tract of country under consideration, Maryland 183 land and Delaware will be deducted, as ineligible to the man who does not wish to live amongst slaves. He may, indeed, live in either of these parts without employing the involuntary labourer, but the man of acute sensibility will usually be unwilling to injure the feelings of his neighbours,

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who may conceive that his abstaining from the detested practice implies a practical censure on their conduct. Slaves being addicted to theft and other immoralities, form a strong objection against settling amongst them. The whole stretch of country on the coast, including Maryland, Delaware, part of Pennsylvania, and New Jersey, may be rejected, on account of the high price of land. The inland parts of Pennsylvania and New York States remain free from the objections just mentioned, and [158] are believed to possess comparative advantages in respect of climate and soil.

The winter of New York State is the more severe of the two, and seems to point out Pennsylvania as preferable. With the single defect of distance from market, Western Pennsylvania possesses great advantages. The most prominent are, a healthy climate, a good soil, abundance of coal, iron-ores, limestone, sandstone, and salt springs, circumstances that render this country susceptible of a dense population, and a very high state of improvement.

It being assumed that Pennsylvania lies between parallels of latitude, the most temperate of any on the eastern coast, the inference is natural, that the States Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and part of Kentucky, must have a climate of similar warmth, slightly modified, no doubt, by the elevation and prevalent winds of particular parts. Accordingly, observations made at Cincinnati, (which lies fifty minutes south of Philadelphia) show, that its 184 annual mean temperature is only six-tenths of a degree higher than that of the latter place.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>88</sup> Dr. Drake's Picture of Cincinnati, page 116.— Flint.

The lands of the State of Ohio are understood to be more fertile than those of Pennsylvania.— With good culture, from sixty to a hundred bushels of maize per acre, are produced. On an acre of land, near the mouth of the Little Miami, one of the first settlers raised the extraordinary quantity of one hundred and fourteen bushels. The advanced state of population, in the southern part of the State, has withdrawn the most choice tracts of ground from the land-office; good lots, however, may still be bought from private

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individuals at a moderate price. The higher country, lying nearly [159] equidistant from the river Ohio and lake Erie, is understood to be healthy, fertile, abounding in springs of water, and possessing a good navigation downward, in wet seasons of the year, by means of the rivers Muskingum, Scioto, and Miamis. The northern part of the State is described as having many large prairies, of a rich quality, but unhealthy.

Kentucky, and the western part of Virginia, have much land of the first rate quality; but the influx of new settlers is greatly prevented by the insecurity of titles. Surveyed at an early period, when the country was in the possession of the hostile aborigines, and before the new method of laying out public lands was adopted, much confusion as to boundaries prevails.<sup>89</sup> Many conflicting

<sup>89</sup> In Virginia and Kentucky the state made no surveys before disposing of its lands. The settlers or speculators sought out a tract, made a survey, generally marking it by "blazing" the trees, and had it recorded in the state land-office. Areas of all shapes and sizes were patented, and unpatented strips of irregular shape lay between. Moreover, there was no limit to the number of patents that could be taken out on the same piece of land, the land-office concerning itself not at all with controversies over titles, merely guaranteeing an entry if no previous title was valid. The original claim to hundreds of thousands of acres in Kentucky was never settled, the land being eventually held under possession titles.— Ed.

185 claims are frequently made on the same tract, and a degree of litigation has ensued that appears to be almost interminable. There is another cause tending to retard the ingress of new comers which it would be invidious to repeat.

Indiana is a State more recently settled than any of the foregoing. The part where the Indian title was extinguished, was, till lately, comparatively small. Non-resident purchasers have shut up a large proportion of it from immediate cultivation; some judicious entries may still be made in the land-office, particularly by White River, and in some other parts at a considerable distance from the Ohio. The land office map for Jeffersonville district has many more vacancies in it than that at Cincinnati, showing that it contains much

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more land not yet appropriated by individuals. Here, as in Ohio State, the high lands are considered the most healthy. A recent purchase from the Indian tribes will make a valuable addition to the State of Indiana.<sup>90</sup> The tract is supposed to contain about six [160] millions of acres, and is to be soon abandoned by the natives. Already upwards of a hundred families have entered it, for the purpose of rearing cattle and hogs. These will have excellent opportunities for selling their stock when purchasers take possession of the newly acquired territory, and will have the advantage of becoming acquainted with the most valuable lands previous to the sales. The surveyors, and other persons, who have visited the new purchase, represent it

<sup>90</sup> This refers to the Miami cession made at St. Mary's, Ohio, October 6, 1818. By this treaty the Delaware and Miami Indians ceded all central Indiana between the Wabash and White rivers.— Ed.

186 to be rich, diversified in surface, with the advantage of navigable waters in spring and autumn; and that it is much better adapted to pasturage than the country adjoining to the Ohio.

In the State of Illinois there are vast quantities of land to be disposed of by the Government, besides the residuary of former sales, standing open in the land-office maps at Shawneetown<sup>91</sup> and Edwardsville.<sup>92</sup> The recent surveys bring about 3,730,000 acres into the market. A great portion of this land lies on the Sangamon, a southern branch of Illinois river; and I am informed by a gentleman who has lately been there, that the country is the best that he is acquainted with. At a period not far distant, a communication between Lake Erie and Illinois river may be opened through the river Plein, which empties itself into the lake.<sup>93</sup> Craft are said to have already passed out of the one river into the other. A large portion of Illinois, lying between Illinois river and

<sup>91</sup> For the early history of Shawneetown, see Croghan's *Journals*, volume i of our series, note 108.— Ed.

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92 Edwardsville, on Cahokia Creek, twenty miles northeast of St. Louis, was founded in 1816, and named in honor of Ninian Edwards, first governor of Illinois Territory.— Ed.

93 A canal connecting Illinois River with Lake Michigan was first suggested by Jolliet in 1673, when he and Marquette returned by that route from their exploration of the Mississippi River. Such a canal was included in Gallatin's system of internal improvements, proposed in 1808. President Madison laid the matter before Congress in 1814; Calhoun, as secretary of war, again called attention to it, in 1819; and for twenty years it found a place in the governor's annual message. Finally (1836), its construction was undertaken by the state, aided by large congressional land grants. The Illinois-Michigan Canal, extending from La Salle, on the Illinois, to Lake Michigan, at the mouth of Chicago River, one hundred miles in all, was completed in 1848, and opened with much ceremony. In 1882 the state ceded the property to the United States, in the hope that the latter would enlarge it for a ship canal. But the next step was taken by the Chicago Sanitary District, which at a cost of about \$35,000,000 has completed the Chicago Drainage Canal for the better disposal of the sewage of Chicago. This canal was opened January 2, 1900, after seven years spent in its construction. Flint's reference is to the Des Plaines (Plein) River.— Ed.

187 the Mississippi, is a military grant given to the troops who fought in the late war, and divided amongst them at the rate of a hundred and sixty acres to each man.<sup>94</sup> Shares of this land have been sold since its partition at a dollar, and even so low as half a dollar per acre. The military grant is chiefly low and flat. The soil is rich, and interspersed with [161] prairies<sup>95</sup> but subject to agues: this, with a great proportion of non-resident owners, must greatly retard the improvement of the district. The northern parts of Illinois are understood to possess a healthy climate.

94 The Illinois military grant was the peninsula between the Mississippi and Illinois rivers, as far north as a line drawn west from the confluence of the Illinois and Vermilion rivers.

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The value of the land began to appreciate soon after Flint's journey, and ten counties were erected within it in 1824–25.— Ed.

95 Van Zandt's description of the military grant.— Flint.

Comment by Ed. Nicholas Biddle Van Zandt, A full description of the soil, water, timber, and prairies . . . of the military lands between the Mississippi and Illinois rivers (Washington, 1818). The author, the title-page shows, was “Late, a clerk in the General Land Office of the United States, Washington City.”

In the Missouri Territory, large surveys are just completed, these consist of about a million of acres near Osage river, and about two millions toward the Mississippi, including the old settlements. The reports of the Missouri country which I have heard, convince me, that it contains a large quantity of good lands, and that it is favoured with a fine climate. A gentleman who wintered at St. Louis, near the mouth of the river Missouri, assured me that the cold is more severe there than in the Ohio country. Although his opinion was formed from his sense of feeling, without reference to the thermometer, it is probably just, as the situation of St. Louis is relatively high, and as much of the neighbouring country is without wood, admitting a free circulation of winds, from higher and more northerly parts.

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In the countries adjoining to Arkansas and Red rivers, about two millions of acres are laid out for sale. The former of these rivers is understood to be larger than the Ohio, and passes through a fertile country. The post of Arkansas is situated a little northward of latitude 34°.96 A parallel that must be felt uncomfortably hot by most Europeans. Cotton is the most profitable product; a vegetable that has hitherto been almost exclusively cultivated by involuntary labourers.

96 For the Arkansas Post, see Cuming's *Tour*, volume iv of our series, note 195.— Ed.

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Michigan and north-west territories are understood to be fertile, and well adapted to rearing cattle. Detroit is the capital of Michigan.<sup>97</sup> In [162] the north-west territory there are two settlements; one at Fort Howard, and the other Prairie du Chiens.<sup>98</sup> A military post is to be formed at the mouth of St. Peter's river, below the Falls of St. Anthony.<sup>99</sup> These extensive regions lie in a latitude corresponding with that of the New England States; and will probably be peopled by a hardy race of freemen,

<sup>97</sup> For the early history of Detroit, see Croghan's *Journals*, volume i of our series, note 18.— Ed.

<sup>98</sup> For Fort Howard, see Evans's *Tour*, volume viii of our series, note 82.

The mouth of the Wisconsin had been the site of temporary trading-posts during the French regime, but the first permanent settlement was begun in 1781 by Indian traders. For the expedition thither the following year, see J. Long's *Voyages*, volume ii of our series, pp. 186–191. During the War of 1812§15 Prairie du Chien was alternately in possession of the Americans and British; see Wisconsin Historical Collections, xiii, pp. 1–164. Upon the return of peace, the Americans built Fort Crawford (1816) which was for many years a military post and Indian agency.— Ed.

<sup>99</sup> Lieutenant Pike obtained the site for this fort from the Indians in 1805, but no use was made of it until 1819, when Fort St. Anthony was begun at the mouth of Minnesota (St. Peter's) River. Upon the recommendation of General Scott, who inspected it in 1824, the name was changed to Fort Snelling, in honor of the military officer who directed its construction. It was sold by the government at private sale in 1857; but a congressional inquiry ensuing, a new arrangement was made in 1871, whereby the fort was retained and the remainder of the military reservation transferred to the purchaser.— Ed.

<sup>189</sup> when the lands of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, can be no longer procured at a low rate.

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Those who would go in search of healthy situations may keep in view, that their object can only be attained, at a distance from swamps, and rivers which overflow their banks; it being well known, when the former are dried up, and when the latter recede within their low-water boundaries, vast quantities of mud and vegetable matters are exposed to the heat of the sun, and a rapid decomposition immediately commences. The gaseous constituents evolved give a perceptible taint to the air, and are understood to form the miasmata that occasion agues, bilious fevers, and liver complaints. The best navigable waters, and the most healthy parts of the country, are, in some measure, incompatible, and seldom admitting of immediate proximity to one another. Happily, a moderate height of land is usually sufficient to prevent the accumulation of stagnant waters, and to promote a motion in rivers, that lessens the scope of their inundations, or retains them altogether within their banks. A degree of elevation conducive to a comparatively healthy climate, may be usually found within two or three miles of the river; but as the contaminated air is liable to be transported by winds, and probably not sufficiently diluted with the atmosphere in passing over such small spaces; a greater distance from the source of contagion [163] is no doubt preferable. I have, on various occasions, seen persons from the higher country, about forty miles north of this place, whose complexions are apparently more healthy than those of the people who live on the banks of the Ohio; and several of late who profess to have a reluctance to come down to the river on business, at the present season of the year.

In the preceding part of this letter I mentioned the 190 high country lying near the heads of the northern tributaries of the Ohio, as having a good climate. That part of it watered by the Muskingum, the two Sciotas, and the two Miamis, possesses a downward navigation in spring, and in the latter end of autumn, but as these rivers enter the Ohio above the falls at Louisville, the upward navigation is interrupted there during the summer months. This single circumstance amounts to a weighty objection against the eastern part of the country under consideration.

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The western part has two great navigable streams, the Wabash, and the Illinois. The Wabash is navigable for boats drawing three feet of water, to the distance of about 400 miles from its mouth, and in floods about 200 miles farther. Its largest tributary is White River, which is navigable to a great distance upward. It waters a fertile and delightful country, and joins the Wabash below all its rapids except one run, which forms no great obstruction to the navigation. The new seat of government is to be erected on the bank of one of the streams of White River.<sup>100</sup> The Illinois is esteemed one of the best navigations in western America. So early as 1773, a Mr. Kennedy sailed upward to the distance of 268 miles from its confluence with the Mississippi.<sup>101</sup> Sangamon river,

<sup>100</sup> In the Indiana enabling act passed in 1816, Congress granted to that state for a seat of government, any four sections of land thereafter to be acquired from the Indians. Commissioners appointed by the legislature selected the present site of Indianapolis in 1820. However, it was then a wilderness over sixty miles from any store, and the government was not actually transferred thither until 1825.— Ed.

<sup>101</sup> Patrick Kennedy was a trader at Kaskaskia, in the Illinois country, during British ascendancy. The expedition referred to was undertaken in search of copper mines, and extended as far as the mouth of Kankakee River. His journal of this tour is published in Hutchins, *A Topographical Description of Virginia* (London, 1778).— Ed.

<sup>191</sup> one [164] of its principal streams, is said to be navigable for 180 miles by small craft.

From the best information that I can procure, this western division of the country, north of the Ohio, appears to be highly eligible to new settlers. It unites the advantages of having high lands and navigable waters in immediate contact, and a shorter and a better communication with the ocean than any part of western America, that is to be exclusively cultivated by freemen.

The country on Missouri river, has been already noticed as possessing advantages in soil and climate, but the difficulty of the navigation upward, amounts to a considerable

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objection against adopting that territory. A convention of the people formed a constitution, and laid before Congress their claim for being admitted as a State in the Federal Union. The new constitution asserts the right of the people to hold slaves, and of admitting more negroes from other parts of the United States. Towards the conclusion of last Session of the legislature, this question of right was warmly discussed, most of the members from the Southern States maintained, that Congress have no right to dictate to the people of any new State on this subject, viewing it as a matter of internal policy, and one that does not come under the jurisdiction of the general government,— and the treaty of Session stipulated, that the Spanish colonists remaining in the country, should retain their former rights and privileges. In opposition to these doctrines, the members from Northern States argued, that Congress has a constitutional right to interfere, and urged as a precedent, the act prohibiting the introduction of slavery into the country north-west of Ohio river, with other arguments too numerous to be recapitulated here. It is painful [165] to learn that the representatives 192 of the nation are so much divided on this interesting question, and, in the present instance, to reflect, that in most cases their proceedings are expressions of the will of their constituents. The affair waits the decision of next Session, and, in the meantime, much solicitude prevails with regard to it. The most intelligent citizens are at a loss to anticipate the result, and the members of the Legislature are probably equally uncertain, whether the new State shall become a receptacle of slaves, and its representatives the future advocates of a Slave keeping interest. The slave keeping States, and those which have prescribed the practice, commonly called free States, seem to be struggling for predominance. There are now eleven Slave keeping, and eleven free States, so that Missouri must give a sort of numerical preponderance to one of the parties. The number of representatives for free States, are apportioned according to the number of free persons in each, and in Slave keeping States, they are regulated by the number of free persons added to three-fifths of the slaves, a method that has the effect of strengthening the influence of the Southern party.

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When the Missouri question is set at rest,<sup>102</sup> the people of the United States will no doubt reflect on the singular line of demarkation which they have drawn. Supposing that the *internal frontier* was produced to the Stony Mountains, or to the Pacific Ocean, every speculative mind must contemplate it, not merely as a topographical division, but also as a sort of moral boundary, separating a great nation into two parts, very dissimilar in the habits and jurisprudence of their people, and will seriously meditate

102 The historic Missouri question was settled by the Missouri Compromise, passed by Congress February 27, 1821, admitting Missouri as a slave state, but decreeing that slavery should be excluded from all other territory north of latitude 36° 30' N. (the south boundary of Missouri).— Ed.

193 on the possible consequences of the unhappy difference. I do not [166] wish to make any disagreeable reflection on the patriots who have already done so much in circumscribing the boundaries of human misery; but regret, that such a wide field still remains for their benevolent labours, and that their opponents are pursuing a course imminently dangerous to themselves, and ill calculated to promote the future tranquillity of the republic. Many disagreeable incidents have already been occasioned by the collision of principle and interest. Negroes frequently desert from their masters, and fly into neighbouring free States. It may be, that the people amongst whom they seek refuge, do not always show much anxiety that the owners shall recover their property; and it is perhaps partly on account of this indifference, that the pursuers of slaves adopt forcible means instead of the legal redress prescribed by free States. Peaceful communities are thus invaded by small parties of armed men, who carry off blacks without certifying their right to them. In two late instances, two free blacks in Indiana were kidnapped by people from Kentucky, and the remonstrances made on the part of the former State, were not followed by any satisfactory concession on the part of the latter. The laws of free States, on this subject, are in disagreement with the usages of slave-holders; a source of contention that may not be easily removed. Hitherto no popular rupture has been occasioned by affairs of this kind; but, it may be asked, where is there any guarantee that

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similar discordances may not become more frequent when a more numerous population of both colours shall be crowded along the neighbourhood of the slave-line? And may not the heart-burnings and provincial pride, now manifest, be wrought up to a higher pitch at a period, 194 perhaps not far distant, when the United States will become confident of a degree of strength that cannot require such a [167] complete co-operation as heretofore in repelling the attacks of foreign force?

If the slave-holding party persist in the extension of the abuse, it would well become them to give up their constitutional claims for calling forth the militia of northern states “to suppress insurrections,” and for protecting them “against domestic violence,” so far as slaves may be the future disturbers of the peace. Whether they make such a fair concession or not, it is for them to reflect whether their northern neighbours, who have so uniformly and so wisely opposed the evil, and who have so humanely laboured to eradicate it from amongst themselves, will be willing to imbrue their hands in the blood of the injured people who have never excited any of their feelings except pity.

So long as the Missouri question remains unsettled, a hope may be entertained that liberal sentiments may prevail. The northern people seem to be almost universally in favour of the restriction, and a part of the finest feelings, and the brightest talents in the Southern States, are ranged on the side of humanity.

### LETTER XIV

Lawyers — Doctors — Clergy — Mechanics — Justices of the Peace — Anecdotes — Punishments — Reflections.

*Jeffersonville , ( Indiana ,) March 10, 1819.*

The greater part of my letters from America have hitherto been addressed to our late brother John. Since 195 we have now to deplore that he is removed [168] from all correspondence with us, I shall direct this to you.

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There are many particulars in the condition of this country, that must appear surprising to any one who has not seen a community in its infantine state. We have here lawyers who have not been regularly educated in the knowledge of their profession. Blackstone's Commentaries are considered the great medium of instruction.

The young man who has carefully read these, and who has for a short time wrote for a practising attorney, is admitted to the bar. It is said that even the latter part of this preparatory course has, in many instances, been dispensed with. The occupation of barrister and attorney is usually performed by the same practitioner.<sup>103</sup> He transacts with clients, writes and pleads before courts of justice, or before a squire, as occasion requires. If we may judge from grammatical and orthographic inaccuracies, we must be apt to believe that, although some of them may be esteemed as lawyers, they are not good English scholars. Lawyers here, as elsewhere, take their stand as being of the first class in society, and a great proportion of our back-wood legislators, in State assemblies, and in the general government, are elected from among this body of gentlemen. Such are many of the counsellors who grow up in Transmontane-America; but it would be unfair to omit noticing that men of a very different character arise here.— I shall only mention one example in Henry Clay, a Kentuckian lawyer, who has for eight years made a distinguished figure in the conspicuous situation of speaker of the House of Representatives at

<sup>103</sup> In Great Britain attorneys are not permitted to plead in court on behalf of their clients; that is the work of the barrister, who must previously have belonged to one of the inns of court. Attorneys (or solicitors) institute actions, advise clients, draw up legal papers, and act as assistants to barristers.— Ed.

<sup>196</sup> the capital. Mr. Clay was commissioner on the part of the United States, at the treaty of Ghent, in 1814, and plenipotentiary for commercial arrangements with Great Britain in 1815. The profession [<sup>169</sup>] also owes much of its respectability to the ingress of young gentlemen of liberal education from the Atlantic States, who make diligent research in the

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history of cases, and whose libraries are usually stored with law authorities, and the best models of forensic eloquence in the English language.

The medical men here are all *doctors*, nor is the inferior degree, surgeon, at all recognised. In new settlements, many practise on life and limb who have not obtained the diploma of any medical school. The smallness of their laboratories renders it probable, that the universal medicine is included. Here, too, there are honoured exceptions; and the medical colleges instituted at Cincinnati and Lexington may soon furnish more accomplished practitioners.

The clergy would perhaps excuse my not giving their order the precedence, if they were told that men hold forth here, who can have no pretensions to qualifications derived from human tuition. Many of their harangues are composed of medley, declamation, and the most disgusting tautology. I have chiefly in view itinerant preachers of the methodist sect, who perhaps cry as loud as ever did the priests of Baal. Their hearers frequently join in loud vociferations, fall down, shake, and jerk in a style, that it would be in vain to attempt to describe.

Incapacity is not confined to those situations that ought to be filled with men of learning, but extends to the rudest branches of the mechanical arts. It is not thought wonderful to see a blacksmith without a screw plate; and I have known of several very plain pieces of joiner work that were stolen for patterns by unqualified workmen. Almost every well-finished article is imported, and [170] so long as this impolicy is continued, handicraft must remain in a low state.

We have here justices of the peace who would not be promoted to the office of constable in some older communities. They are mere petty-foggers, who are occasionally employed in collecting debts, and raising suits to be brought before their own tribunals. In these cases, they act in the double capacity of agent for one party, and judge, and have no repugnance against collecting their fees in the hour of cause. I shall relate two anecdotes.

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One of these *gentlemen* , who lives at no great distance from the spot where I write, was hearing the representations of two opponents in open court. They disagreed, and commenced a fight. The squire, not adverse to this sort of decision, joined with the constable and some other people in forming a ring for the combat. A negro man and a white woman came before the squire of a neighbouring township, for the purpose of being married. The squire objected to the union as contrary to a law of the State, that prohibits all sexual intercourse between white and coloured people, under a penalty for each offence, but suggested, that if the woman could be qualified to swear that there was black blood in her, the law would not apply. The hint was taken, and the lancet was immediately applied to the Negro's arm. The loving bride drank the blood, made the necessary oath, and his honour joined their hands, to the great satisfaction of all parties.<sup>104</sup> The last of these squires [17] was not elected

<sup>104</sup> Equivocations of this sort have been so often noticed in the United States, that they must be looked on as notorious. The practice of naturalizing foreign seamen by the solemn farce of an old woman's first cradling bearded men, and then swearing that she rocked them; and that of procuring pre-emption rights to land in new territories, by sowing only a few grains of corn, and subsequently swearing that a crop has been cultivated on the tract claimed, have been so frequent, that it would be invidious to particularize. In England, affidavits are often managed in a simpler way. *Swallowing* a customhouse oath is there a well known expression. Mercantile houses of London have kept persons, called swearing clerks, to vouch for transactions, on being paid at the rate of sixpence for each oath. If it is not true that men stand at Westminster Hall with straws in their shoes, indicating their willingness to undertake any dirty job, it is time that the foul imputation were washed from that *pure* fountain of justice. Before prosecutions for conspiracies had become so fashionable in England as they are now, a witness on behalf of the crown was convicted of ten separate perjuries. It would appear that a false oath is a morsel so hard, that it requires cooking before it can be masticated by the immoral in America, and that a less delicate class in England can gulp it down in the raw state. Without making any comment on regulations that protect revenue at the expense of morality; those laws that set the

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interests, and the very personal liberties of men at variance with their consciences, and without inquiring how far evasive subterfuges may palliate the conduct of the *ignorant* in their own eyes, or in the sight of the *great being* invoked; it is suggested, in explanation, that popular institutions have the innate property of impressing an external reverence for the law, on the worst of men.— Flint.

198 by the people, but appointed under the late territorial government of Indiana. He is a naturalized citizen of the United States, but a native of England.

The election of a magistrate, is an affair that usually occasions a considerable sensation in a little town. The most respectable citizens naturally support the candidate that has the real interests of society at heart; and the more licentious are as naturally averse to promote the man who, they believe, would punish themselves. It is, therefore, the relative numerical strength of the two parties, that frequently determines the character of a town judge. It is understood, that in new towns by the Ohio, the unruly part most commonly prevail, and that as they advance in population and wealth, the more orderly people take the sway. A case has come under my notice, where the conduct of [172] a squire was at variance with the practices of a large proportion of his constituents. 199 He had resolved on exerting his power to suppress fighting, swearing, and breach of the Sabbath, and to exact the statutory penalties against the two last of these offences. On a Sabbath soon after his election, a man carrying a gun and a wild duck passed his door. He intimated his resolution of having the offender brought to justice; but the culprit gave him much abusive language, with profane swearing, and threatened to beat him for the interruption. The squire soon perceived that he was losing his popularity, and that his opposition to the will of the sovereign people was injuring his business, and for that reason resigned his commission. In cases where the squire is supposed to be remiss in the execution of his duty, the people sometimes interfere extrajudicially. At this place, a tailor's shop was lately broke into by night, and a quantity of goods carried away. On the following day, a stranger and the lost property were discovered in an empty house adjoining. He was instantly carried before one of our magistrates. On being interrogated, he confessed being

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found in the house, but denied having any concern with the booty. The squire dismissed him. But the young men of the town who had assembled to hear the examination, were too sensible of the strength of the presumptive circumstances of the case, and of the admitted act of housebreaking, in entering the uninhabited apartment, to allow him to escape with impunity. They caught him at the door, led him out behind the town, where they tied him to a tree, and put the cowhide into the hand of a furious young man, who happened to be half intoxicated. The whipping was performed with such vigour, that the blood sprung in every direction. A gentleman of [173] Cincinnati told me, that, a few years ago, the citizens of that place had found it expedient to punish in the most summary way; and that he had several times acted as presiding judge, in what was called a court of uncommon pleas. Whipping uniformly followed conviction. Cincinnati has now outgrown that stage of population, that admits of this sort of jurisprudence, and is better regulated than certain large European cities.

Sanguinary punishments are almost universally deprecated. The best of citizens are opposed to them from philanthropic motives; and the worst view them as subversive of liberties. A considerable proportion of the humane, and perhaps most of the vicious, concur in arguing, that man has no right to take away the life of man in the punishment of any offence. A doctrine purporting, in plain terms, that the right or power in the individual to commit crime, is stronger than that in society to punish or to protect. Although this extremely lenient principle has a vast multitude of supporters, it has not been introduced into the criminal code of any state in the Union. Treason, murder, arson, and piracy committed on the high seas, remain on the list of capital crimes. The first of these offences is defined by the constitution of the United States, as consisting "only in levying war against them; or in adhering to their enemies, giving them aid and comfort." No infliction, on this ground, has been found necessary since the epoch of the Federal Union. Other offences, as forgery, burglary, robbery, larceny, &c. being treated as inferior misdemeanours, the machinery of the executioner is seldom put into operation; and a benevolent penitentiary system is adopted in parts of the country where the population

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is sufficiently great to bear the expense. New [174] settlements cannot afford the large establishments combining the accommodation for solitary confinement and labour. Whipping is therefore resorted to, as a matter 201 of necessity rather than of choice. It is chiefly to be lamented, that chastisement does not produce immediate evidence of reformation, as the sufferer usually removes to another part of the country; and may resume the character of gentleman, even while his back is raw from the recent correction.

It is with painful sensations that I recollect of the illiberal and ungenerous reflections, uttered by the minions of a faction in your country, against supposed barbarism in this. Their favourite topics, as to officers in the Militia becoming tavern-keepers, and tavern-keepers acting as Justices of the Peace; the derided punishment of whipping, and the equality of a sovereign people, might at least be mixed with some allowances for local circumstances; or, if they please, in making a contrast with the boasted condition of Great Britain, it is obviously uncandid to draw the subjects of their animadversions from the fag end of the United States, in the very act of being peopled by a heterogeneous mixture, uniting in it a considerable proportion of the most uncultivated of Americans and Europeans; not excluding fugitives, who have fled before their creditors, and the public prosecutors of England. Waving this consideration altogether, a very striking comparison may be made out in detail. The officers of the United States' Militia are not professional soldiers, but citizens. They are not disposable tools, to be employed in foreign aggressions, or removed in time of peace from Maine to Georgia, and *vice versa*, to intimidate into submission fellow citizens who are not their personal acquaintances or immediate [175] kindred; but remain at home, where they attend trainings, voluntarily and gratuitously. They are at liberty to follow tavern-keeping, or any other kind of honest industry, and do not burden their country 202 with a half pay list. Justices of the Peace, however unqualified they may be, and whatever disgrace the conduct of individuals brings upon themselves, are not appointed by the influence of a faction. They are not the "thorough paced" ministerialists who "have been recruiting officers for the war, instead of Justices of the Peace;"<sup>105</sup> nor are they the hirelings who promote the revenue from which

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their own pensions are drawn, by levying ruinous fines *upon an unrepresented people*, for the slightest infractions on excise laws, or game laws. The punishment of whipping has been already mentioned, with the causes of its being adopted in the back-woods. Perhaps it might be difficult to assign reasons equally satisfactory for resorting to it in the populous city of Dublin. The practice is comparatively humane in America, as it is applied in cases that would be punished with death in Great Britain. The States of Kentucky and Ohio have erected penitentiaries, not for the purpose of punishment alone, but also for the reformation of offenders. The horrible prison scenes witnessed by Howard, Neild, Bennet, Buxton, Fry, and other philanthropists in Britain, have no counterpart in America.<sup>106</sup> We know of no examples here of imprisonment for a debt of a shilling,<sup>107</sup> or for a supposed fraud of

<sup>105</sup> Walker's Review of Political Events, p. 125. London, 1794.— Flint.

<sup>106</sup> This succession of philanthropists, whose labors extended over the century from 1750–1850, worked tirelessly to stir up English public sentiment against their criminal code, which contained over two hundred and nineteen offenses punishable by death, and their deplorable system of prison management. Consequently early English travellers were particularly interested in the American system. In 1831 a Parliamentary Commission was sent to investigate the prisons of Pennsylvania and New York, and upon its return certain American methods were adopted.— Ed.

<sup>107</sup> Evidence of Mr. Law, keeper of the Borough Compter, before the Police Committee, 1814.— Flint.

<sup>203</sup> one penny.<sup>108</sup> Nor have I ever heard of the verdict of an American [176] coroner's inquest, announcing in their verdict the death of a prisoner for want of food.<sup>109</sup> Debtors are not obliged here, to sleep edgeways, for want of the breadth of their backs on a prison floor.<sup>110</sup> Nor has any poor boy been imprisoned for a month in Bridewell for selling religious tracts without a hawker's license.<sup>111</sup> The equality that consists in universal suffrage; the absence of privileged orders, and unrestrained industry, is the enviable

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felicity of the American nation. The people are, themselves, the lords of the soil, and acknowledge no superiors who can dictate to them in the election of other representatives than those of the community. There are no boroughs where the members monopolize the business of the place, or who chase away the stranger as if he were an enemy; or who can exact town taxes contrary to the will of their fellow citizens. Public accounts are not kept from public inspection. There is no separate borough representation to be hired over, or owned by the partisans of a ministry. The clergy are here exalted to the dignity of citizens, whose interests are identified with those of the people. Their condition, relatively to that of their adherents

108 Inquiry into Prison Discipline, by Thomas Fowell Buxton, Esq., M. P.— Flint.

109 The case of J. Burdon in Tothilfields prison in 1817.— Flint.

110 In February, 1818, twenty persons confined in the Borough Compter, slept in a space twenty feet long and six wide. The fact was confirmed by the governor.— Flint.

111 G. M. a boy of about fourteen years of age; he was confined along with twenty men and four boys. He was employed by one of them to pick pockets, and steal from the other prisoners. Caught a fever in jail, which was communicated to his father, mother, and three brothers, one of whom died. From being a sober, orderly boy, he was changed into a confirmed thief, and stole his mother's Bible and his brother's clothes.— Buxton's Inquiry. — Flint.

204 is in every respect similar to the situation of dissenting clergymen in Britain. America elevates [177] no spiritual Lords, on wool-sacks, in her senate, to oppose the introduction of parochial schools. Nor is there any political body, which courts an alliance with the clergy. I have never heard of any parson who acts as a Justice of the Peace, or who intermixes his addresses to *the Great Object of religious worship*, with the eulogy of the Holy Alliance. The free scope given to industry is highly conducive to national prosperity. Every man is allowed to exert his talents, in the pursuit of any honest scheme, and in

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any part of the country, without being prevented by intolerant restrictions or internal taxes. His profits are his own; and he has no dread of their being wrested from him by the idle drones that infest other countries. Hence it is, that the United States abound in enterprising people, who remove, without hesitation, to any part where they can suppose any advantage may arise, and adopt projects that would neither be tolerated nor thought of by people fettered by the trammels of impolicy. The first failure of a scheme is not here contemplated as finally ruinous, as a backward step is much more easily retrieved than in countries more thickly peopled, and where the avenues of commerce are narrowed by artificial obstructions. There are no branches of manufactures or professions of any kind, restricted to those who pay licenses to the government. The farming interest has no monopoly against the manufacturing: nor has the manufacturing any positive prohibition against the farmer. Local attachments are much weakened by the open prospects of an extensive country, by the abolition of primogenitureship, and by the introduction of laws that promote family justice. The citizen is not bound to a particular spot for the preservation 205 of his privileges; for he can enjoy [178] the same rights all over the Union. The mechanic and the labourer do not remain unemployed in their native township, to establish their right to the poor's rates; for industry is not taxed in paying bounties to idleness. The landholders of England may quietly enjoy the obeisances of their pauper dependents, and pay in return their poor's rates. They may be assured, that the more equalized citizens of America are not ambitious of this interchange of benefits; and that the excess of public burdens has not yet rendered it customary for Americans to desert their own country, and to resort to France, on account of the cheapness of provisions.

The present state of North America affords the most conclusive testimony of the sound policy of a free and unrestricted trade. The United States allow commerce to regulate itself, according to its own interests, except in cases where the conduct of other nations imposes the necessity of following another course. Under legislative forbearance on this subject, the country has made unexampled progress in improvements and population. Under the jealous and illiberal government of Spain, Florida remains a contemptible

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province, that has scarcely a name amongst colonies. Under the fostering care and restrictions of England, Canada continues to be but a mere remnant of this great continent.

### [179] LETTER XV

Outline of the American Constitution — From the frequency of Revolutions in Europe, the instability of the American Republic is not to be inferred.

*Jeffersonville , ( Indiana ,) Feb. 27, 1820.*

The constitution of the United States is not that ephemeral erection, which the enemies of free government would represent it to be. Its fundamental principles may be partially traced through the modern theoretical maxims, and the ancient usages of England. This consideration, however, does not derogate from the wisdom of the founders of the Republic, who have so successfully availed themselves of the experience of other countries and other ages, in organizing the system; and maturing it by the most unremitting diligence through peace and war. A review of the progress of American politics, and of the reasonings which guided the patriotic legislators, would be a work of much interest. It would lay before us a large portion of the best abilities, and the most tried virtue of the country, engaged in inquiries conducive to the general interests of the nation. It would disclose at every important crisis a venerable assembly, which neither announced their proceedings as the greatest efforts of human ingenuity, nor assumed the lofty tone of an “omnipotent” legislature, but recurred to the will of their constituents for ratification, and, keeping a view to the future as well as to the present circumstances, provided the [180] means of revising and amending their decisions. It was in consequence of this philosophical mode of proceeding, that the present admirable fabric was gradually erected. It was thus that the declaration of independence of 1776, a temperate, but energetic manifesto, intimating the determination of the colonies to throw off the foreign yoke, was succeeded by the articles of confederation in 1778. This compact, although efficient in time of public danger, was, during the succeeding peace, found to be defective in not admitting

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the dignity and promptitude necessary to the general government, and not furnishing a sufficient guarantee for the permanence of the Union. Under the articles of confederation, each State retained the right of voting 207 its own supplies for the common benefit, and to lay taxes on such articles as were found most convenient; also, to impose such imposts and duties on foreign trade as they thought proper. The amount of supplies furnished by each State was apportioned to the value of the lands,— a criterion that could never be applied with accuracy. In this state of things, the acts of Congress could in various cases be only complied with, through the intervention of thirteen separate State Assemblies. The power given to Congress to adjust the affairs of foreign relations, was rendered almost nugatory by the diversity of commercial regulations of separate States. It became possible, that a separate State might be at variance with a foreign nation, on affairs not at all interesting to the other members of the Union, and that internal discord might arise from opposite interests, rivalry in commerce, the distribution of territory, and a variety of other latent causes.<sup>112</sup> To avoid [181] these inconveniences and dangers, the constitution was framed by a convention of delegates from the States, whose session ended on the 17th of September, 1787. A Congress was elected on the new establishment, and General Washington was unanimously appointed President in the succeeding year.<sup>113</sup>

112 Those who would wish to have a collected view of the principles of this subject, may consult the *Federalist*, a collection of interesting essays on the new constitution, written in 1788, by Messrs. Hamilton, Jay, and Madison.— Flint.

113 Some pious observers of the occurrences of Providence, have remarked that the Spanish Armada, equipped for the invasion of Britain, was destroyed in the year 1588; that the Revolution in that country happened in 1688; and, in seeking for an event to mark the commencement of another century, it has been observed by the loyal in Britain, that his Majesty, George the Third, recovered from a most deplorable visitation in 1788. If there be any American descendants of Britain, who are pleased with a system of chronology that contemplates the great events of Providence as revolving in a centenarian orbit, they

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may also notice a corresponding occurrence in the consummation of their liberties in the otherwise memorable year 1788.— Flint.

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The constitution vests the legislative power in a Congress, consisting of a House of Representatives, and a Senate, and the executive power in the President. The members of the House of Representatives are elected biennially by the people. Each State has at least one representative, and not more than one for every thirty thousand persons in it, and two Senators, who are elected by the State legislature, at intervals of six years, and are distributed into three classes, so that the seats of a third part of them are vacated biennially. The President, and Vice-President are elected for four years by the ballot of electors appointed by the legislatures of the States; the number of electors in each State being equal to that of the representatives and senators, whom the same state has a right to send to Congress.

Bills for raising revenue originate in the House of Representatives; and every bill that passes both [182] houses, must be presented to the President for his approbation. In the event of his disapproving of a bill, it must be returned to the house where it was originated, and if two-thirds of the members of both houses agree, on re-consideration, to pass it, then the bill becomes a law. The President is commander-in-chief of the army, navy, and militia, and may in certain cases, grant reprieves and pardons for offences against the United States. With the concurrence of two-thirds of the Senate, he appoints ambassadors, and other public ministers, consuls, judges of the supreme court, and all other officers of the United States, whose appointments are not provided for by the constitution; but the Congress has the power of making future laws for vesting appointments in the President alone, in the courts of law, or in the heads of departments. The President may fill up vacancies in the Senate during recess, by granting 209 commissions terminating at the end of next session. Whenever two-thirds of both houses deem it necessary, they

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shall propose amendments of the constitution; or shall call a convention for that, on the application of two-thirds of the state legislatures.

The duties and powers of the general government are concisely defined by the constitution, and may be expressed summarily, as embracing the subjects of commerce, finance, negotiation, and war. All other objects are reserved, as falling under the jurisdiction of the separate state assemblies. These include local legislation, administration of justice between persons in the same states, and the supervision of agriculture.

Although it appears, that much care has been bestowed in drawing the line that separates the prerogatives of the general government, from those [183] of its individual members, still duties or powers derived from implication, are occasionally assumed by both departments. We have two recent examples in view. In 1819, the legislatures of several states imposed a heavy tax on the branches of the United States Bank, situated in the respective states. The United States Bank, it must be noticed, is chartered by Congress, and is the organ through which the national government transacts its pecuniary affairs. The bank refused payment, and obtained a judgment in its favour by the supreme or federal court.<sup>114</sup> Again, the admission of the territory of Missouri as a State in the Union, has lately been discussed in Congress. One of the principal points of the debate was the question, Whether the preexisting States have a right to dictate to States about to

<sup>114</sup> The power of a state to tax the United States Bank was settled in the celebrated case of *McCulloch versus Maryland*, handed down March 6, 1819 (4 Wheaton, 316). Ohio refused to be bound by this decision, and her case was decided in 1824 (9 Wheaton, 738). — Ed.

<sup>210</sup> be admitted into the Union, any restriction against slavekeeping? And it is understood that scruples on this question of right have induced several members to vote against the restriction, whose sentiments are opposed to slavery.

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The distribution of business, of which a brief outline has just been given, is admirably adapted to an extensive sphere of action. The national councils are thus devoted to national concerns, and not to such petty affairs as framing public acts for demolishing the fences of private property to make room for highways, nor in borough politics, nor in deciding in the disputes of private individuals. Local affairs are regulated by local authorities, who are best able to judge of them; and this prevents any ground of complaint to arise against the national government on account of these. The State legislatures are, besides, filled annually by a free vote of the people, who have frequent opportunities of allaying their own discontents by a change of men, and a change of measures.

Those who predict an early dissolution of the [184] American Union, and who affirm that the country is naturally divided into two nations by the Allegany ridge, might with equal propriety say, that the Thames and the Severn are destined to water the territories of two distinct governments. And the remark that, in the event of the navigation of the Mississippi being interrupted by an enemy, the western country would be subjugated, is another position that may be applied to other rivers, and to other countries. It is not to be forgotten that, previously to the cession of Louisiana in 1801, the Spanish government claimed the exclusive benefit of that river, and that the privilege of navigation was the principal object that induced the government of the United States to purchase the territory, in 211 1803. Louisiana being acquired at the general expense, and not by the inhabitants of the western country alone, makes it evident that the transaction was viewed as an important national affair. Perhaps it was with the intention of producing a dismemberment, that the ministry of England made the attack on New Orleans. The defence was conducted in a national form, and not exclusively by the people of the western country; and the British government was not gratified by any overture of the inhabitants for becoming tributary. The supposed conspiracy of Aaron Burr, for detaching the transmontane country from the Eastern States, was not found to amount to levying war against the Union.<sup>115</sup> The evidence that could be obtained from his small party of associates and others, was not sufficient to convict him. The demagogue is not looked on as a personage dangerous to public tranquillity;

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— a decisive proof that the American people are confident in the strength of the ties by which they are knit together. The western settlements have the strongest incitements to remain in close conjunction, with their eastern neighbours. [185] A separation from them in times of war would cut off all communication by land with the eastern coast; an inconvenience that would greatly aggravate any attempt to blockade the mouth of the Mississippi. A separation would retard the ingress of population; it would injure internal trade; it would occasion an additional expense in supporting a separate government, and it would deprive them of the protection of the United States' Navy. It will scarcely be alleged, that the Eastern States have an interest in dissolving the compact with the Western; as by that

115 A recent contribution to the history of the Aaron Burr conspiracy, drawn largely from material in the Mexican archives, is McCaleb's *Aaron Burr Conspiracy* (New York, 1903). Isaac Jenkinson's *Aaron Burr* (Richmond, Indiana, 1902), throws new light on Burr's relations to Hamilton and Jefferson.— Ed.

212 step they would not only forego a rapid accumulation of strength, but would incur the danger of converting fellow citizens into the most powerful enemies. They would lose that important branch of revenue, which arises from the sale of public lands, and they would no longer participate in the fur trade.

To infer the instability of the American republic from the frequency of revolutions in Europe, is altogether preposterous. A different state of society, and the difference of the political institutions to be compared, remove that parity of condition essential to analogical deduction. The executive power in America, does not extend to declaring war at pleasure; nor to dissolving the legislature. The president, whose term of service is only four years, has not the means nor the motives for family aggrandizement which prevail under hereditary succession. The members of the House of Representatives have their seats from the universal suffrage of the people; and the senators get their dignity and seats from the representatives in State Assemblies, who are themselves popularly elected, and who cannot promote obnoxious men without incurring public odium and future

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exclusion. The representation is equally distributed. Placemen and pensioners [186] are effectually debarred from being members of either house; under these conditions the few have it not in their power to dictate to the many. Ambitious projects, such as disfigure the histories of other countries, are precluded. Accessions of territory are not obtained by conquest, but by purchase. The object sought in these treaties is the right of soil; and not the power of taxing or enslaving men. No yoke is imposed but that upon the labouring steer. The domestic policy of the United States exhibits twenty-four republics, each having its own constitution, without 213 any other restriction than conformity to that of the nation. In regard of foreign relations and general interests, all the States are cemented into one nation. If one or more States are invaded, the citizens have a right to the protection of the Union; and in the case of controversies or disputes between States, the judicial power provided under the general constitution is the umpire between them. Had the individual members of the United States placed a hereditary sovereign at the head of each, and put the reins of government in the hands of a few, we might have heard, before this time, of American courtiers making treaties to last forever; and violating them so soon as the strong found it convenient to attack the weak; of wars furnishing pretexts for raising vast sums to support the views of a party or a faction, perhaps for depriving the people of their liberties, and subjugating their neighbours; and of winding up the whole with holy leagues, admitting of no subsequent arbitrator but the sword.

The organization, of which a brief outline has just been given, is, in theory, well adapted to insure internal tranquillity, and protection against invasion. In practice, it has hitherto been conducive [187] to both these objects; and to a degree of national prosperity, that is unparalleled in the present age. The people govern for themselves, and are too sensible of the value of their rights to allow them to pass into other hands. Power is delegated only for a short period; and the representatives are closely watched by their constituents. Should a congress propose to disfranchise a part of the people; or to engraft a borough system on the present equal representation; or to establish septennial elections; every member voting for the obnoxious motion might expect to be marked out and expelled

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for ever. A case somewhat in point occurred in 214 1817.<sup>116</sup> Congress then passed a law for increasing the very moderate compensation for the services of members. The act was conceived to be unconstitutional: an alarm was sounded all over the country; the supporters of increased compensation were left out in the election of 1818; and the offensive law was repealed in the ensuing session. A veneration for the constitution is probably the most universal characteristic of American citizens: but they act, as if their united exertions were necessary to keep it in force; and are sensible, that neglect on their part might soon render the important document a dead letter. Every timely check given to the progress of corruption, is removing the necessity of convulsion to a later date. The people having the means of correction in their own hands, the political institutions of this country are to be esteemed as less mutable than the systems that consist entirely of the unmixed ingredients of disease and death. It would be too sanguine to suppose that the American people shall preserve their liberties for ever; but it may be safe to affirm, that nothing decisive in the fate of this country [188] is to be augured from the histories of republics without representation, or of monarchies without popular control. Before Americans relinquish free government, they must be ignorant of their present knowledge; they must cease to teach their children to prize their privileges; and no longer inculcate esteem for the memory of their dauntless ancestors, who fought for the inheritance. Washington, Franklin, and an host of other patriots, must be forgotten

<sup>116</sup> This law was passed in March, 1816, and its effect was felt in the elections of that same year. From Ohio, Delaware, and Vermont not one congressman was re-elected; in Kentucky, but three out of ten; in South Carolina, three out of nine; in Maryland, four out of nine; and in Pennsylvania, thirteen out of twenty-three. Jefferson wrote to Gallatin: "There has never been an instance before of so unanimous an opinion of the people, and that through every state of the Union."— Ed.

<sup>215</sup> The avarice of foreign governments, and the sufferings of foreign people, must pass into oblivion, and cease to be monitors. In short, a dark age must arrive before the throne of despotism can be erected here.

### LETTER XVI

State Legislatures — A predilection for dividing Counties, laying out New Towns and Roads — The influence of Slavery on the habits of People who live in the neighbourhood of Slave-Keeping States — Elopements from Kentucky — Banking.

*Jeffersonville , ( Indiana ,) March 20, 1820.*

The legislatures of new States consist only of a few members. The consequence is, that public acts for the exclusive advantage of private individuals are occasionally passed through influence or intrigue; and the commendations which I have bestowed on the general government of America must not be held to apply indiscriminately to the administration of the *local* governments, at least in newly established [189] states. Much of the business (it is said) is privately arranged, before the questions are discussed in the house. Combinations are formed for effecting particular purposes. These are called *log rolling* ; a very significant metaphor, borrowed from the practice of several farmers uniting in rolling together large timber to be burnt. A number of bills are frequently conjoined by their movers, so that a member who takes a deep interest in one must vote for all of them, to obtain the suffrage of the separate partizans. The member who deserts from the cabal might be leaving his own motion without any other supporter but himself. An enlightened gentleman told me, that he was induced to vote for the ridiculous law of this State regarding intercourse between white 216 and coloured people, in consequence of its being previously conjoined with other bills.

The laying out of new counties, county towns, and lines of road, seems to be a gratifying duty to back-wood legislators. Where a county includes a considerable tract of country, it must be divided into two. Where it is not large enough to admit of bisection, the county wanted must be made up from the extremities of four or five which are contiguous. A large population is not a prerequisite: yet the convenience of the people is the pretext. A few neighbours who propose that their settlement should be made the nucleus of the new

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establishment, petition the Assembly for a subdivision. If this is granted, commissioners are appointed to fix the new seat of justice. An eager contest for private advantage ensues, and although the ostensible object is public convenience, the new city is perhaps placed near the outline of its jurisdiction.

You will be much surprised to hear of the avidity which prevails in this country for towns consisting of a very few log cabins. For a convenient [190] distribution of seats of justice, and for roads that are at best openings cut through the woods, with the stumps remaining, without side ditches, and without any other bridges through marshes or streams, than a few pieces of timber laid down side by side across the way. But an explanation is made, when you are told that pettifoggers by this means create situations for themselves, and a few of their constituents who are in the employment of squires, county commissioners, prosecuting attorneys, supervisors of roads, and constables. With numbers the design is to increase the value of their contiguous lands at the public expense, instead of improving them by their own industry. By such means, they frequently succeed in selling at an advance 217 of fifty, or even a hundred per cent. per annum; and remove to more recent settlements, where they are able to purchase a larger extent of land, and where they can continue their favourite trade of making counties, towns, and roads.

Towns are laid out by persons who sell lots of about a fourth or a fifth part of an acre: these sometimes sell at from a hundred to three hundred dollars, even in situations where scarcely a single spot of the neighbouring woods is cleared. After a town has made some progress in point of improvement and population, lots usually rise in price, from three hundred to a thousand dollars; and, in the larger towns, to a much higher value. At present the mania of purchasing town lots is rather declining. Holders are unwilling to see the prices reduced. They continue to talk of former rates, and to keep them up; on exchanging one lot for two, say, that for the better one, one thousand dollars is paid in two lots worth five hundred each. Their conduct very much resembles that of a person who said, that he sold a dog at forty guineas, and explained the transaction by stating, [191] "that he was paid in two dogs, each worth half that sum." I lately saw a town lot sold for state or

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county taxes, at a fourth part of the price paid for it two years ago. The rents of the worst kind of houses amount to upwards of fifty per cent. per annum, on the price of erection. A miserable cabin, that could scarcely be let at all in your country, or would not rent at £1 10s. a-year, gives here as much per month. The people are of consequence closely crowded together; several families frequently inhabiting a house of one apartment, without any inner door, so that when the street door is open, passengers may see the inmates at table, and the other particulars of the house. The beds 218 are ranged round the walls, like so many looms in a weaver's work-shop. In various instances I have seen families living in temporary huts, built of small pieces of decayed timber collected in the woods, laid upon one another in the manner in which sawyers erect piles of timber to be dried. The roofs were covered with bark, and the interstices of the walls left open, so that at a distance I could count the persons within, as if they had been birds in a cage. Near to this place a family lately lived, for several weeks, under an old waggon that was turned upside down. In towns along the banks of the Ohio, a class of people are to be seen, who depend on traffic with travellers, and with the scanty population in the rear of them. Without extravagant profits on the trifling capital employed, they could not subsist. Many of them seem to be immoral, dissipated, and without rural or domestic industry. Few of their lots are cultivated as gardens; and the spinning-wheel, (so far as I have observed,) is not to be seen in their houses.

The evils of slave-keeping are not confined to the parts of the country where involuntary labour [192] exists, but the neighbourhood is infected. Certain kinds of labour are despised as being the work of slaves. Shoe-blackening, and, in some instances, family manufactures, are of this class of labours; and it is thus, that in some of the small towns on the *north side* of the Ohio, the mechanic and the labourer are to be seen drawing water at the wells; their wives and daughters not condescending to services that are looked upon to be opprobrious. It was for the same reason, that on one occasion, some paupers in a poor's house at Cincinnati refused to carry water for their own use.

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Elopedments from Kentucky into Indiana are frequent. 219 Since my arrival in this very town, I have witnessed two examples. I do not now allude to slave-keepers losing their negroes, but their white daughters, who escape to get married. In a former letter I mentioned the watchfulness of parents over young ladies in Kentucky, and would only add, that there, as elsewhere, restraint does not seem to be conducive to contentment. Those who are acquainted with the state of society in Turkey, are perhaps the most able to give a decided opinion on this very interesting subject.

Of upwards of a hundred banks that lately figured in Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee, the money of two is now only received in the land-office, in payment for public lands. Many have perished, and the remainder are struggling for existence. Still giving for their rags "bills as *good as their own* ;" but, except two, none pay in specie, or bills of the United States Bank. Discount varies from thirty to one hundred per cent.

The recent history of banking in these western States, is probably unrivalled. Such a system of knavery could only be developed in a country where avarice and credulity are prominent features [193] of character. About four years ago, the passion for acquiring unearned gains rose to a great height; banking institutions were created in abundance. The designing amongst lawyers, doctors, tavern-keepers, farmers, grocers, shoemakers, tailors, &c. entered into the project, and subscribed for stock. Small moieties must actually have been advanced to defray the expenses of engraving, and other incidents necessary to putting their schemes in operation. To deposit much capital was out of their power; nor was it any part of their plan. Their main object was to extract it from the community. A common provision in charters, stipulated, 220 that the property of each partner was not liable, in security, to a greater amount than the sum he had subscribed. This exempted the banks from the natural inconveniences that might be occasioned by the insolvencies and elopements of members. Money was accumulated in great abundance, as they bought property; lent on security; and became rich. But their credit was of short duration. When it was found, that a few of them could not redeem their bills, the faith of the people was

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shaken. A run on the paper shops commenced; and a suspension of specie payments soon became general. Had the people been at liberty to recover a composition, as in the bankrupt concerns of Britain, the evil might have, in some measure, been remedied before this time; but chartered privileges granted by legislators concerned in the fraud, prevented legal recourse. Even these could not have been sufficient protection, but for the co-operation of subsequent laws dictated by the same interest. The state of Indiana, for example, passed in 1818, what was called "the replevy law," liberating the debtor for a year from the claim of the creditor, who refuses to accept depreciated money. This [194] law, though sufficiently injurious to creditors, could give no stability to swindling banks. It was, therefore, succeeded by an act during last session, prohibiting landed property to be sold by execution, under two-thirds of the appraised value, and that to be ascertained by five freeholders. The debtor is by the same act allowed to set apart any portion of his property he chooses, to discharge execution. Freeholders, it may be observed, are a class of men naturally adverse to depreciating their own land, by setting a low value on that of their neighbours. This disposition is the more dangerous at present, especially when lands are falling considerably in price, in consequence 221 of the depreciation of the money which lately stamped such a high value on property. In Kentucky, a total suspension of law process for sixty days, was followed by a "replevy law." In the State of Ohio, enactments similar to those of Indiana were passed. Here is a combination of laws for the protection of knaves, who have swindled the people.<sup>117</sup> Those who have either bought property on credit, or borrowed money, while *rags* passed at a high price, have got debts of a great amount to pay, while property can no longer be sold at former prices. Debtors of this description have united with bankers, in getting the infamous laws passed just noticed. While the property law was pending in the Assembly of Indiana, debtors were in full activity sending forward petitions in favour of the impolicy, and persuading the ignorant of the propriety of the measure. In the small town of Jeffersonville, two petitions were made. These unnatural expedients, however, cannot long serve the purpose intended. Land continues to fall. The debtor may, for a short time, be kept out of jail, and the peculator

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from being stripped of his ill-gotten gains; but the public is [195] receiving dearly bought instructions, and must set a watch over future elections.

117 This practically stopped execution sales, as the freeholders appraised property so high that no bidder would offer two-thirds of the appraised value. Flint regards the replevin laws as a protection to knaves; as a matter of fact, they were a protection to the majority of the people of the Western States, who had bought their lands on credit, and in the depreciated state of paper money found themselves helpless to pay, and their land about to be sold at a great sacrifice. See McMaster, *History of the United States*, iv, pp. 506-510. — Ed.

Although the relations of debtor and creditor are equal in the amount of property involved in their transactions; and although the obligations imposed by contracts naturally render creditors the more powerful class in civilized 222 society, the recent proceedings of legislatures in this western country, would lead us to believe, that a majority in numbers or artifice, or perhaps in both, stands on the debtor side of the ledger. Republicans are not to be whipped like slaves, nor openly and directly taxed to such extent as Europeans are, but they may be deluded. Men of their own electing have practised upon them with success, and the emoluments to be gained in this way, are apparently the great stimulus that prompts men to intrude themselves into State governments. No rational mind can discover profit enough in two dollars per day; or patriotism enough in cheating their constituents; or popularity enough in eloquence that few can hear, and none can ever see in print, to collect talent and integrity in council.

At first sight, it would appear to be a paradox, that any individual State can be allowed to grant charters to banks, or to frame laws that protect pecuniary fraud, while a section of the constitution of the United States prohibits such procedure by the following words: —“No state shall coin money; emit bills of credit; make any thing but gold and silver coin a tender in paying of debts; pass any ex-post facto law; or law impairing the obligation of contracts.” The western States cannot avoid being brought to issue with the above very

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distinct clauses, as every charter granted by them, is an act tolerating the substitution of paper, instead of gold and silver; and their replevy laws, and property [196] laws, are in reality, making paper a legal tender. Besides, several establishments are chartered under the appellations of State Banks; and that in Kentucky, for example, consists partly of stock owned by the State. The conduct of Congress is not marked by any known act of partiality towards the makers of unconstitutional money. On the contrary, the collectors of the United States' revenue are not allowed to accept of depreciated 223 bills. Their receiving the money of inferior banks while at par, though apparently countenancing them, has been, in effect, the best means hitherto adopted for effecting their ruin. The receivers of revenue lodge the money received in the United States' Bank, whose officers almost immediately present the money to the Banks that issued it, and demand payment in specie, or bills of the United States' Bank. It has been in this way that many of the paper manufacturers were obliged to suspend specie payments; and it was partly on account of this mode of operating on local banks, that several State Assemblies voted an enormous tax to be levied on the branches of the United States' Bank situated in the respective States.— That tax was mentioned in a former letter, with a notice that the supreme court had given judgment in favour of the National Bank; and the reasonings on which the decision was founded, were published in a most luminous style. The supreme court being the arbitrator in all questions rising out of the constitution, Congress have the power of making the United States a party in defending against encroachments in the prerogative of the general government. In the present banking concern, they prudently decline interference, seeing that experience will soon open the eyes of a people who can, at any time, counteract the [197] abuse by excluding bankers, and their adherents, from State legislatures. On this occasion, there can be no necessity for forcing the interests of the people down their throats, nor can there be any danger that this infraction of the constitution will be perpetuated. That the present disorders in banking are not extended over the whole of the United States is manifested by the tables of exchange periodically published at New York. These show that the depressions of money are chiefly confined

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to the western country, where the substantial capital 224 is small, and where, (there is reason to believe,) a large proportion of the people are less acute.

The error committed in the Western States, is not in consequence of any defect exclusively inherent in the democratic system of government; as the fraud is neither matured nor confirmed in the older States, and as England suffers under an evil of the same kind, and apparently in a more dangerous form. Her restriction act of 1797, is not understood to be opposed by any recognized constitutional principle. It emanated from the highest authority in the land. It is not yet repealed, and twenty-four bank-directors still have it in their power to regulate the *money* value of all the property in the empire.<sup>118</sup>

118 Essay on the Justice and Expediency of Reducing the Interest of the National Debt. By Mr. J. R. McCulloch. Edinburgh, 1816.— Flint.

Amidst all the pecuniary inconveniences of this country, the personal liberty of men is not in danger of being assailed by the hand of constituted authority. May the time soon come, when the people shall have understanding enough to take care of their property.

### [198] LETTER XVII

Depreciated Paper Money — Stagnation in Trade — Produce cheap — Labourers and Mechanics in want of Employment — The Poor and Poor's Rates — Appropriations for the Expenses of the State of Indiana, for the year 1820 — Objects and Rates of Taxation — County Taxes — A rude style of Improvement — The progress of New Settlements — Lands about to be Forfeited to the Government for non-payment of the price.

*Jeffersonville*, ( *Indiana* ,) *May* 4, 1820.

The accounts given in my last letter of the depredations committed by bankers, will make you suppose that affairs 225 are much deranged here. Bankruptcy is now a sin prohibited by law. In the Eastern States, and in Europe, our condition must be viewed as universal

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insolvency. Who, it may be asked, would give credit to a people whose laws tolerate the violation of contracts? Mutual credit and confidence are almost torn up by the roots. It is said that in China, knaves are openly commended in courts of law for the adroitness of their management. In the interior of the United States, law has removed the necessity of being either acute or honest.

The money in circulation is puzzling to traders, and more particularly to strangers; for besides the multiplicity of banks, and the diversity in supposed value, fluctuations are so frequent, and so great, that no man who holds it in his possession can be safe [199] for a day. The merchant, when asked the price of an article, instead of making a direct answer, usually puts the question, "What sort of money have you got?" Supposing that a number of bills are shown, and one or more are accepted of, it is not till then, that the price of the goods is declared; and an additional price is uniformly laid on, to compensate for the supposed defect in the quality of the money. Trade is stagnated — produce cheap — and merchants find it difficult to lay in assortments of foreign manufactures. I have lately heard, that if a lady purchases a dress in the city of Cincinnati, she has to call at almost all the shops in town, before she can procure trimmings of the suitable colours. It is only about three years ago, that an English traveller<sup>119</sup> asserted, that in Cincinnati " *English goods* 119 Fearon.— Flint.

*Comment by Ed.* Henry Bradshaw Fearon, a London surgeon born about 1770, was sent to the United States by an association of English families to investigate suitable sites for their residence. He found little that pleased him, as appears from his account, *Sketches in America* (London, 1818).

226 *abound in as great profusion as in Cheapside.* " — Merchants in Cincinnati, as elsewhere, have got into debt, by buying property, or by building houses, but are now secure in the possession. Such people, notwithstanding complain of the badness of the times, finding that the trade of buying without paying cannot be continued. Those who have not already secured an independence for life, may soon be willing to have trade and

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fair dealing as formerly. Property laws deprive creditors of the debts now due to them; but they cannot force them to give credit as they were wont to do.

Agriculture languishes — farmers cannot find profit in hiring labourers. The increase of produce in the United States is greater than any increase of consumpt that may be pointed out elsewhere. To increase the quantity of provisions, then, without enlarging the numbers of those who eat them, will be only diminishing the price farther. [200] Land in these circumstances can be of no value to the capitalist who would employ his funds in farming. The spare capital of farmers is here chiefly laid out in the purchase of lands.

Labourers and mechanics are in want of employment. I think that I have seen upwards of 1500 men in quest of work within eleven months past, and many of these declared, that they had no money. Newspapers and private letters agree in stating, that wages are so low as eighteen and three-fourth cents (about ten-pence) per day, with board, at Philadelphia, and some other places. Great numbers of strangers lately camped in the open field near Baltimore, depending on the contributions of the charitable for subsistence. You have no doubt heard of emigrants returning to Europe without finding the prospect of a livelihood in America. Some who have come out to this 227 part of the country do not succeed well. Labourers' wages are at present a dollar and an eighth part per day. Board costs them two three-fourths or three dollars per week, and washing three-fourths of a dollar for a dozen of pieces. On these terms, it is plain that they cannot live two days by the labour of one, with the other deductions which are to be taken from their wages. Clothing, for example, will cost about three times its price in Britain: and the poor labourer is almost certain of being paid in depreciated money; perhaps from thirty to fifty per cent. under par. I have seen several men turned out of boarding houses, where their money would not be taken. They had no other resource left but to lodge in the woods, without any covering except their clothes. They set fire to a decayed log, spread some boards alongside of it for a bed, laid a block of timber across for a pillow, and pursued their labour by day as [201] usual. A still greater misfortune than being paid with bad money is to be guarded against, namely, that of not being paid at all. Public improvements

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are frequently executed by subscription, and subscribers do not in every case consider themselves dishonoured by non-payment of the sum they engage for. I could point out an interesting work, where a tenth part of the amount on the subscription book cannot now be realized. The treasurer of a company so circumstanced, has only to tell undertakers or labourers, that he cannot pay them. I have heard of a treasurer who applied the funds entrusted to him to his own use, and who refused to give any satisfaction for his conduct. It is understood that persons who are agents for others, frequently exchange the money put into their hands for worse bills, and reserve the premium obtained for themselves. Employers are also in the habit of deceiving their workmen, by telling them that it is not convenient to pay wages in money, and that they run accounts with the storekeeper, the tailor, and the shoemaker, and that from them they may have all the necessaries they want very cheap. The workman who consents to this mode of payment, procures orders from the employer, on one or more of these citizens, and is charged a higher price for the goods than the employer actually pays for them. This is called *paying in trade*.

You have often heard that extreme poverty does not exist in the United States. For some time after my arrival in the country supposed to be exempt from abject misery, I never heard the term poor, (a word, by the by, not often used,) without imagining that it applied to a class in moderate circumstances, who had it not in their power to live in [202] fine houses, indulge in foreign luxuries, and wear expensive clothing; and on seeing a person whose external appearance would have denoted a beggar in Britain, I concluded that the unfortunate must have been improvident or dissipated, or perhaps possessed of both of these qualities. My conjectures may have on two or three occasions been just, as people of a depressed appearance are very rarely to be seen, but I now see the propriety of divesting myself of such a hasty and ungenerous opinion. Last winter a Cincinnati newspaper advertised a place where old clothes were received for the poor, and another where cast shoes were collected for children who could not, for want of them, attend Sunday schools. The charitable measure of supplying the poor with public meals, has lately been resorted to at Baltimore; but there is reason to believe, that most of the

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people who are relieved in this way, are Europeans recently come into America. In the western country, poor rates 229 are raised in the form of a county tax. They are, however, so moderate as to be scarcely felt. Contracts for boarding the permanently poor are advertised, and let to the lowest bidder, who has a right to employ the pauper in any light work suited to the age or ability of the object of charity. They are said to be well treated. This sort of public exposure must create a repugnance against becoming a pauper. In the Eastern States, work houses are established. It is to be wished that those who follow this plan will not lose sight of the example of England. The operations of bankers, and the recent decline in trade, have been effective causes of poverty; and it seems probable that the introduction of manufacturing industry, and a reduction of base paper, would soon give effectual relief.

[203] It is not from the number of benevolent institutions, nor from the low condition of some families, nor from the insolvency of individuals, that I draw the conclusion that poverty prevails to a greater extent than I at first imagined. The appropriations for defraying the expenses of the State, together with the ways and means, and the deficiencies in payments, are highly illustrative. I shall transcribe two documents.

*An act for making appropriations for the year one thousand eight hundred and twenty.*

Approved January 22, 1820.

Sec. I. *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Indiana* , That the following sums be, and they are hereby appropriated for the following purposes; to wit, for defraying the expenses of the present General Assembly, including pay to the members thereof, secretaries, clerks, door-keepers, sergeants at arms, stationary, ink, ink-stands, fuel, printing, binding, and distributing the laws and journals, making marginal notes and indices to the same, together with all other just and necessary expenses, the sum of eight thousand five hundred dollars.

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### *Dollars*

For the executive department, 2200

For the judiciary department, 4900

For the interest on the public debt, 3000

For defraying the contingent expenses of the government, for the year 1820, 800

For the military department, including the salary of the adjutant-general, 400

For defraying the premiums on wolf scalps unsatisfied, 500

For defraying warrants not yet presented in the judiciary department, 875

12675

To make up the deficiency between the above expenses and the sum appropriated, a separate act authorizes the governor to borrow four thousand [204] dollars on the credit of the State. The following extract from an act, shows the sources of revenue.

*Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Indiana.* That there shall be levied a tax for State purposes, on the following objects of taxation, and after the following rates, to wit, For every hundred acres of first rate land subject to taxation, the sum of one dollar. On every hundred acres of second rate land, the sum of eighty-seven and a half cents. On every hundred acres of third rate land, the sum of sixty-two and a half cents; and in that proportion for a greater or less quantity. And on all Bank Stock actually paid in at the rate, twenty-five cents for every hundred dollars.

The expenses of the government of the State for last year was 11,701 90½/100 dollars. Receipts of bad money prevented payment of the interest of the debt. On the 4th day of

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December, 1819, there were arrears of taxes due for the years 1817 and 1818, amounting to 4991 34/100 dollars.

It is worthy of notice, that among the objects of taxation quoted, that on bank stock is by the act limited to 231 “ *stock actually paid in.* ” A most decided proof of the preponderance of the banking interest, in exempting the villanous associations from an equal share of taxation; and, at the same time, countenancing an evasion of the security pledged by bankers to the people. The receipts of bad money, noticed in last paragraph, disclose a wickedness or a weakness on the part of the Assembly which is altogether contemptible.

The following are the rates of taxes to be paid for county purposes: For every horse, mule, or ass, *not exceeding* 37 ½ cents. For every horse kept for covering; once the rate at which he stands for the season. Every tavern, not less than ten, nor more than twenty-five dollars. For every ferry, not less than five, nor more than twenty dollars. [205] Town lots in proportion to their value, (exclusive of improvements thereon,) not exceeding fifty cents on every hundred dollars. A tax of fifty cents to the clerks of the several circuit courts, at the issuing of each writ of *capias ad respondendum*. A tax of fifty cents on each certificate of magistracy, with the county seal attached thereto. A tax on every pleasure carriage with two wheels, of one dollar. A tax on every pleasure carriage with four wheels, of one dollar and twenty-five cents. A tax on every silver watch, twenty-five cents. And a tax on each gold watch, of fifty cents.

Town taxes for defraying the expense of digging wells, forming streets, &c. are regulated by a committee of the inhabitants. The objects of taxation in a town in this State were published last year. Among these, a very moderate impost on bachelors and male dogs was mentioned.

Rich country signifies fertility of soil, and not the opulence of its inhabitants.—It would be vain to search for a 232 rich district, according to the European acceptation of the term. Almost every object bespeaks a want of capital. Fine houses are brick ones of

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two stories high, covered with shingles, and frequently unfinished within; and where the work is completed, it is usually in a bad style; the windows often broken; and the adjoining grounds perhaps studded with the stumps of trees, overgrown with rank weeds, or rutted by hogs. The inferior buildings, as stables, barns, (and negro huts in slave States,) are unseemly log cabins, frequently standing in front of the mansion; the whole having more the appearance of a ruin than the abodes of a people having taste for elegant improvements. Gardening is performed in the most slovenly manner imaginable; the plough [206] being in more general use than the spade. Labouring utensils are constructed without the application of the joiner's plane. Iron is either sparingly used in their formation, or altogether dispensed with.

All who have paid attention to the progress of new settlements, agree in stating, that the first possession of the woods in America, was taken by a class of hunters, commonly called backwoodsmen. These, in some instances, purchased the soil from the government, and in others, placed themselves on the public lands without permission. Many of them, indeed, settled new, territories before the ground was surveyed, and before public sales commenced. Formerly pre-emption rights were given to these squatters; but the irregularities and complicity that the practice introduced into the business of the land-office, have caused its being given up, and squatters are now obliged to make way for regular purchasers. The improvements of a backwoodsman are usually confined to building a rude log cabin, clearing and fencing a small 233 piece of ground for raising Indian corn. A horse, a cow, a few hogs, and some poultry, comprise his live-stock; and his farther operations are performed with his rifle. The formation of a settlement in his neighbourhood is hurtful to the success of his favourite pursuit, and is the signal for his removing into more remote parts of the wilderness. In the case of his owning the land on which he has settled, he is contented to sell it at a low price, and his establishment, though trifling, adds much to the comfort of his successor. The next class of settlers differ from the former in having considerably less dependence on the killing of game, in remaining in the midst of a growing population, and in devoting themselves more to agriculture. A

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man [207] of this class proceeds on a small capital; he either enlarges the clearings begun in the woods by his backwoodsmen predecessor, or establishes himself on a new site. On his arrival in a settlement, the neighbours unite in assisting him to erect a cabin for the reception of his family. Some of them cut down the trees, others drag them to the spot with oxen, and the rest build up the logs. In this way a house is commonly reared in one day. For this well-timed assistance no immediate payment is made, and he acquits himself by working to his neighbours. It is not in his power to hire labourers, and must depend therefore on his own exertions. If his family is numerous and industrious, his progress is greatly accelerated. He does not clear away the forests by dint of labour, but girdles the trees.<sup>120</sup> By the second summer after this operation is performed, the foliage is completely destroyed, and his crops are not injured by the shade. He plants an orchard, which thrives and bears abundantly

<sup>120</sup> The process of cutting the bark round trees, to destroy their growth, is called girdling, or deadening.— Flint.

<sup>234</sup> under every sort of neglect. His live-stock soon becomes much more numerous than that of his backwood predecessor; but, as his cattle have to shift for themselves in the woods, where grass is scanty, they are small and lean. He does not sow grass seeds to succeed his crops, so that his land, which ought to be pasturage, is overgrown with weeds. The neglect of sowing grass-seeds deprives him of hay; and he has no fodder laid up for the winter except the blades of Indian corn, which are much withered, and do not appear to be nutritious food. The poor animals are forced to range the forests in winter, where they can scarcely procure any thing which is green, except [208] the buds of underwood on which they browse. —Trees are sometimes cut down that the cattle may eat the buds. Want of shelter in the winter completes the sum of misery. Hogs suffer famine during the droughts of summer, and the frosts and snows of winter; but they become fat by feeding on the acorns and beech nuts which strow the ground in autumn. Horses are not exempted from their share in these common sufferings, with the addition of labour, which most of them are not very able to undergo. This second rate class of farmers are to be

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seen in the markets of towns, retailing vegetables, fruits, poultry, and dairy produce. One of them came lately into this place on horseback, with ten pounds of butter to sell; but as he could not obtain a price to his mind, he crossed the river to Louisville market. In going and returning he must have paid twenty-five cents to the ferry-man—a considerable expense, when it is considered that he had travelled twelve miles with his little cargo. Another, who lives at the distance of eight miles from this place, brought a barrel of whisky, containing about thirty-three gallons. He employed neither horse nor 235 vehicle in the transportation, but rolled the cask along the road, which, by the by, is none of the smoothest. Incidents of this kind may, perhaps, cause you to suppose that the condition of the second rate settler is similar to that of subtenants in the north of Scotland, or in Ireland; but the high price of labour in America explains the apparent parity. Men perform offices for themselves that, in Britain, would be done by hiring others. The American farmer, it must be observed, is commonly the proprietor of the land he occupies; and, in the hauteur of independence, is not surpassed by the proudest freeholders of Britain. The settler of the grade under consideration, is only able to bring a [209] small portion of his land into cultivation, his success, therefore, does not so much depend on the quantity of produce which he raises, as on the gradual increase in the value of his property. When the neighbourhood becomes more populous, he in general has it in his power to sell his property at a high price, and to remove to a new settlement, where he can purchase a more extensive tract of land, or commence farming on a larger scale than formerly. The next occupier is a capitalist, who immediately builds a larger barn than the former, and then a brick or a frame house. He either pulls down the dwelling of his predecessor, or converts it into a stable. He erects better fences, and enlarges the quantity of cultivated land; sows down pasture fields, introduces an improved stock of horses, cattle, sheep, and these probably of the Merino breed. He fattens cattle for the market, and perhaps erects a flourmill, or a saw-mill, or a distillery. Farmers of this description are frequently partners in the banks; members of the State assembly, or of Congress, or Justices of the Peace. The condition of the people has necessarily some 236 relation to the age and prosperity of the settlements in which they live. In Pennsylvania, for instance the most extensive farmers

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are prevalent. In the earliest settled parts of Ohio and Kentucky, the first and second rate farmers are most numerous, and are mixed together. In Indiana, backwoodsmen and second rate settlers predominate. The three conditions of settlers described, are not to be understood as uniformly distinct; for there are intermediate stages, from which individuals of one class pass, as it were, into another. The first invaders of the forest frequently become farmers of the second order; and there are examples of individuals acting their parts in all the three gradations.

[210] In the district of Jeffersonville, there has been an apparent interruption of the prosperity of the settlers. Upwards of two hundred quarter sections of land are by law forfeited to the government, for non-payment of part of the purchase money due more than a year ago. A year's indulgence was granted by Congress, but unless farther accommodation is immediately allowed, the lands will soon be offered a second time for sale. Settlers seeing the danger of losing their possessions, are now offering to transfer their rights for less sums than have already been paid; it being still in the power of purchasers to retain the lands on paying up the arrears due in the land office. This marks the difficulty that individuals at present have, in procuring small sums of money, in this particular district.

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### LETTER XVIII

Passage to Cincinnati—Depression of Trade—Population —Manufactures—Institutions —Banks—Climate —Temperature—Springs—Quantity of Rain —Thunder—Lightning—Aurora—Borealis—Tornadoes —Earthquakes—The Ohio unusually low in 1819—Meeting of the Citizens of Cincinnati— Notice of three Indian Chiefs on their way for Washington City—Remarks on the Pacific Disposition of Indians, and their motives for wars.

*Cincinnati* , ( *Ohio* , ) *June 26, 1820.*

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I Have come from the Falls of the Ohio to this place, by a steam-boat in twenty-nine hours, the average rate of sailing being about  $6 \frac{1}{4}$  miles per [211] hour. The downward passage is performed by the same vessel in about fifteen hours, (nearly at the rate of twelve miles an hour.) From this it appears that the current moves at the rate of about  $2 \frac{7}{8}$  miles each hour. The late M. Volney<sup>121</sup> estimated the hourly velocity of this river in very low stages of water, at two miles. His result is probably a little more than the mean rate along the whole length of the river. The steam-boat is one built exclusively for the accommodation of passengers. She measures one hundred feet on the keel, twenty-five feet on the beam, and draws only three feet and three inches of water. The cabin is an elegant apartment, forty feet long, and eighteen feet wide. Adjoining to it are eight very neat state rooms. The water wheel is situated in an aperture

121 Constantin Franqois Chassebœuf Volney, *View of the Climate and Soil of the United States of America*, translated from the French (London, 1804). Volney (1759–1820) was a journalist, scholar, and statesman, who wrote on a great variety of subjects. He spent four years in America (1795–1799), and intended to publish a criticism of American institutions, but was dissuaded, it is said, by his friendship for Franklin. After his return to France, he was made a member of the Academy in 1813, and a peer by Louis XVIII in 1814.— Ed.

238 astern, where it is protected from coming in contact with logs, which are numerous in the river.

Cincinnati suffers much from the decline in business. The town does not now present any thing like the stir that animated it about a year and a half ago. Building is in a great measure suspended, and the city which was lately over crowded with people, has now a considerable number of empty houses. Rents are lowered, and the price of provisions considerably reduced. Many mechanics and labourers find it impossible to procure employment. The same changes have taken place in the other towns of the western country. Numbers of people have deserted them, and commenced farming in the woods. They will there have it in their power to raise produce enough for their families, but, with

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the present low markets, and the probability of a still greater reduction, they can have no inducement but necessity for cultivating a surplus produce.

[212] In 1819, the Cincinnati Directory, a small book containing a list of the citizens, and many historical particulars, was published. Some extracts from that work will give a condensed view of the present magnitude and business of the place.

The enumeration of houses, made in March, 1819, was as follows:

Of brick and stone, two stories and upwards, 387

Do. Do. of one story, 45

Of wood, two stories and upwards, 615

Do. one story, 843

1890

Occupied as separate dwelling houses, 1003

Mercantile stores, 95

239

Groceries, 102

Druggists' stores, 11

Confectionaries, 4

Auction and commission stores, 5

Printing offices, 5

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Book and stationery stores, 4

Places of public worship, 10

Banks, 5

Mechanics' shops, factories, and mills, 214

Taverns, 17

College, court house, and jail, 3

Warehouses and other buildings, 412

Total 1890

*Population, as taken in July, 1819*

White males, 5402

White females, 4471

9873

Male persons of colour, 215

Females of colour, 195

410

10283

[213] Manufactures

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Work shops Workmen Two iron and brass founderies, 132 Blacksmiths, 80 or 90 Tin ware manufactories, 6 32 Copper, Do. 4 14 Nail factories, 2 13 Silver smiths, (watch repairers included,) 9 22 White smiths, 3 Gunsmiths, 2 Fire engine maker, 1 1 Copperplate engraver, 1 1 Gilder, 1 1 Maker of sieves and lattice-work, from wire, 1 1 Cabinet work, 15 84 240 Coopers, 16 50 Coach and waggon makers, 9 33 Chair makers, 4 31 House carpenters and joiners, and employing about from 80 to 100 400 Boat builders, employing 60 or 70 Ivory and wood clock factory, 14 Saddle tree makers, 9 A plough maker; pump and block maker; a spinning wheel factory; a window maker; two turners of fancy wood-work; and one fanning mill maker. Shoemakers, 26 116 Tailors, 23 83 Saddlers, 11 32 Tan-yards, 6 25 Tobacconists, 6 70 Bakers, 15 38 Hatters, 5 37 Soap boilers, and tallow chandlers, 7 19 Distilleries, 9 20 Rope-walks, 3 10 Breweries, 2 20 Potteries, 3 14 Stone cutters, 2 15 Brick-yards, 25 200

There are some other manufacturers, mechanics, &c. such as the following, viz. Five book-binders; five painters and glaziers; two brush-makers; one [214] combmaker; two upholsterers; one bellows-maker; two lastmakers; one whip-maker; one hundred brick-layers; thirty plasterers; fifteen stone masons; eighteen milliners; one dyer; ten barbers and hair-dressers; ten street pavers; one burr millstone factory.

Cincinnati has a city court, occasional sittings of the Supreme and Federal Courts, and a court of common 241 pleas; a museum of natural history; a library; a reading room; a theatre; three newspapers; five banks; an insurance company; three fire engines; a humane society for the resuscitation of persons submersed in water; an agricultural society; two Bible societies; two tract societies, (one of them for distributing Bibles and tracts amongst boatmen on the river;) four Sunday school societies; and three charitable societies. There are twenty-five lawyers and twenty-two doctors in town.

Of four provincial banks in town, the paper of three is reduced to about one-third part of the specie sums on the face of their notes, and the people are making a brisk run on the fourth. This paper shop is not paying in specie, but merely giving *money like its own*. When the barter can be no longer continued, the house must be shut, and the holders of the *pictures* find them of no value.

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The laws of the country, as formerly explained to you, give no redress.

The balance of trade in favour of England and India, together with the exorbitant premiums to be paid in exchanging bad money for specie, or bills of the United States Bank, are quite unfavourable to commerce with foreign countries. The debts due to the merchants of England, and to those in the Eastern States, might give little [215] annoyance, if creditors were indulgent as to the past, and as liberal as usual in future transactions. Property laws give full security in the meantime, and the bankrupt laws of some States form a complete protection against foreign claims. It is only to be feared, that foreign merchants will not be sufficiently accommodating hereafter. The increasing numbers of their agents in the seaports of America, augur no good to enterprising traders in this part.

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The climate of this country, like that of other parts of North America, is subject to extremes of heat and cold. We experience something like the summer of tropical regions; the winter of Russia; the spring of England; and the autumn of Egypt. The range of the thermometer is well exemplified by a compilation from the register kept by Colonel Mansfield, near Cincinnati, for eight years; 1806 and 1813 included.

Lowest Highest Range 1806, 9° 94 85° 1807, 11° below zero, 95 106 1808, 4 do. 98 102 1809, 2 do. 94 96 1810, 7 do. 91 98 1811, 8 do. 96 104 1812, 5 do. 96 101 1813, 10 do. 97 107 Mean range nearly 100°.

The greatest range known at Cincinnati is 116°. At Salem, in Massachusetts, a range of 100° was long ago deducted from observations.

At Jeffersonville, in Indiana, a range of 96  $\frac{1}{4}$ ° appears on the register for six months past. The third column in the following table shows the greatest change of temperature that occurred in each month, between eight o'clock A.M. and two P.M.; a period of six hours.

[216] Maximum Minimum Range January, 50° 2° above zero, 30° February, 78 4 do. 38 March, 70 23 do. 35 April, 92 20 do. 24 May, 79 50 do. 27 June, 98  $\frac{1}{4}$  50 do. 36

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As the above observations extend only to a space of six 243 months, no accurate determination can be derived from them. The most prominent occurrence is a transition of 38° in six hours. Dr. Ramsay has observed elsewhere a change of 50°, in the space of fifteen hours. These sudden alterations are disagreeable to the sense of feeling, and injurious to the health.

It is the popular belief that the greatest cold usually occurs about sunrise, and the greatest heat about 3 P.M. The most sudden changes are from cold to heat, the transition from heat to cold not being so instantaneous. Except for the gradual progress of this change, it would be more sensibly felt, and more dangerous.

The absence of figured icicles from the insides of windows was mentioned in a former letter. Up to the present time, I have never seen any of these incrustations in America, —a certain proof of the dryness of the atmosphere during frost. In summer, rains are not frequent, but when they do happen, they generally fall in torrents. They are often attended by easterly winds, and are partially distributed, drenching small tracts of country, and leaving adjoining parts dry. During the summer of 1819, some parts of the country suffered under a severe and long continued drought. The blades of the crops of maize became shrivelled, the grass, and afterwards the weeds withered. Latterly, part of the foliage of the woods was very much dried. [217] Travellers were subjected to some inconvenience for want of water to their horses, as were many families who lived in dry situations. Scarcity of water is a calamity that is much aggravated by a hot climate. In taverns, a bucket filled with this indispensable liquid, stands open to every person who chooses to take up the ladle that floats in it, and drink. In schools, churches, and courts of justice, water is provided.

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The older settlers of this country affirm, that the quantity of water issuing from springs is greatly augmented, by clearing away the timber from the adjoining lands. From the number and the respectability of the persons agreeing in this particular, the fact seems to be established. This is not, however, to be explained simply by evaporation from the earth,

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as that evaporation would be promoted by clearing away the woods, which exposes the surface of the ground to the rays of the sun. In this way the soil would absorb a less supply for springs than if it were shaded by trees. It would seem probable, that the moisture intercepted by trees in the shape of rain, dew, snow, and hoar-frost, which is evaporated before reaching the ground, and the water withdrawn from the earth by the organs of trees, are together greater than the additional evaporation from the surface that is induced by removing the trees.

In January last, the rain at Jeffersonville measured  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches; in February  $5\frac{3}{4}$ ; in March  $3\frac{1}{4}$ ; in April  $2\frac{1}{2}$ ; and in May, three inches; making an aggregate of eighteen inches in five months, a quantity that is probably a little greater than the mean for any long series of years. Thunder occurs frequently; sometimes the peals are tremendous, and almost incessant. They are generally accompanied with showers of rain, so copious [218] as to cover flat ground with a sheet of water, and the declivities with a broad stream. Many of the best houses are furnished with rods for conducting the lightning. Judging from notices of accidents from the electric fluid in the newspapers, I am not led to believe that they are much more numerous than in Britain. Although trees are bad conductors of electricity, they are frequently struck, and it seems probable that the great abundance of lofty trees 245 lessens considerably the danger to buildings. An old gentleman, a man of observation, told me that he never knew of a decayed tree that had been struck with lightning. This information is the more worthy of observation, as great quantities of withered trees are found amongst the woods, and as the greater part of the lands of the western country are cleared by deadening the timber, and allowing it to stand till it is easily burnt, or falls by decay. Another person, who is well acquainted with the habits of the Indians, informed me, that during thunder storms, these people take shelter under beech trees, in preference to other kinds of timber. Some comparative experiments on the conducting properties of leaves, bark, and timber, are necessary before the propriety of this practice can be established.

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It would be difficult to form a conception of any thing in meteorology, more sublime than the aerial lightning of this climate. In dark nights the phenomenon is highly entertaining to every spectator to whom the appearance is new. The vivid flashes seem to emanate from a point, and diverge from thence in every possible direction. The eye has scarcely time to trace the progress of these coruscations, which seem to sweep round half the expanse of the heavens almost in an instant, and to irradiate [219]the margins of the blackest clouds with a transitory blaze.

I have never seen the aurora borealis in America. Two instances of its appearing in 1814 are mentioned in the *Picture of Cincinnati*, which are supposed to be the only unequivocal ones observed since the settlement of the western country. This meteor is more frequently seen by the people of the northern States.

The most prominent characteristics of the climate of this country are, the superior transparency of the air in 246 clear weather; the frequency of a light yellow, but translucent tinge that is strongest at the horizon, and fainter upwards, where it is blended with a sky of a fine light blue, at the height of a few degrees. The number of foggy days is small, 122 and the appearance of clouds, previous to rain, sudden. Indeed, on several occasions, I have observed a clear atmosphere transformed, into one abounding with dark clouds and rain, in the space of an hour. Changes of this kind are no doubt produced by sudden transitions of temperature.

122 Dr. Drake has shown that the mean number of cloudy days in the year, was 104–33 for a space of six years; and that the mean term of variable days for the same period, was 82.16 days. Consequently, nearly half the time must have been clear weather.— *Picture of Cincinnati*, p. 103.— Flint.

Severe gales of wind do not appear prevalent in western America, if the two last winters can be admitted as sufficient examples, as these seasons were much less stormy than those of Scotland. But it is necessary to make an exception of the tornadoes, which

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occasionally blow down houses, lay waste fields, and open avenues through the woods. One of these tempests destroyed some [220] buildings at Cincinnati, on the 16th of May, 1809. It was preceded by a wind from the south, and a higher current blowing from the west, and was understood to commence in the State of Tennessee. It crossed the Alleghany mountains "and made its exit from the continent" on the same day.<sup>123</sup>

<sup>123</sup> See Dr. Drake's Picture of Cincinnati.— Flint.

Although earthquakes have been frequently felt in the United States, the injury done by them has either been local, or of little consequence. On the 16th of December, 1811, a concussion at Cincinnati threw down some chimney tops, opened room doors that were shut by a falling latch, and caused the furniture to shake. During the year 1812, two considerable shocks, and many lesser vibrations were observed.<sup>124</sup> It appeared that the centre from which the convulsions proceeded, was in the neighbourhood of New Madrid, which lies on the bank of the Mississippi, about seventy miles below the mouth of the Ohio.<sup>125</sup> At that place a dreadful commotion prevailed in December, 1812. The trees beat upon one another, and were either twisted or broken. The site of the town subsided about eight feet. Many acres of land sunk, and were overflowed by the river, and the water rushed in torrents from crevices opened in the land. Boats were sunk, and, (as if the order of nature had been inverted) sunk logs of timber were raised from the bottom in such quantities that almost covered the surface of the river. Slight vibrations, at intervals of a few days, continue to the present time. Many of the people deserted their possessions, and retired to the Missouri, where lands were granted to them by Congress. The inhabitants who remained, and others who have since joined the [221] settlement, are now so accustomed to the tremor, that they talk of it with little or no concern.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.— Flint.

<sup>125</sup> For the early history of New Madrid, see Cuming's Tour, volume iv of our series, note 185.— Ed.

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Last summer (1819) was unusually dry. The Ohio was not navigable for steam-boats, subsequent to the middle of April, and there was no flood till February last. West India produce, viz. coffee and sugar, became scarce, and sold at more than twice the common price. Many of the people in this land of plenty, seemed to look forward to a privation of these articles, as to an approaching famine—Apropos of coffee, as I have heard that the grocers of your country are not allowed to sell burnt beans 248 as a substitute, it is fortunate for the revenue, that the Atlantic is always *navigable*.

Since coming here, a numerous meeting of citizens was held, to take into consideration the case of a Judge who occupied another public situation at the time of his being placed on the bench. Appointments of this kind are contrary to the constitution.

Three Indians, the chief, the counsellor, and the warrior of the Osage nation, 126 on their way for the city of Washington, halted here for a day. At the request of an hospitable gentleman in town, they dined at his house. I had there an opportunity of having some conversation with them, through the medium of their interpreter. Two of them are men of large stature, and possess an unaffected dignity of deportment, which, perhaps, might not be improved by any thing like the adulation of European courtiers. They are cleanly in their persons, and their skin is of a light copper colour. At table they acquitted themselves with much case and propriety. After dinner they severally sat to an artist, who drew their portraits. During [222] this process, they kept themselves immovable as statues, and were highly pleased with the imitative art. The terrestrial globe was exhibited to them, and briefly explained; as was also the hypothesis of a hollow sphere, lately suggested by Captain Symmes of this place. 127 After a short deliberation, the chief replied: "We are willing to believe all that you have told us, but white men know these things best." Their answers to

126 For the Osage Indians, see Bradbury's *Travels*, volume v of our series note 22.— Ed.

127 John Cleves Symmes (1780–1829), soldier and scientific speculator, was a nephew of the pioneer promoter of the same name. His much-ridiculed theory of the earth as a hollow

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sphere, was elaborated in his volume, *Theory of Concentric Spheres, demonstrating that the Earth is Hollow* (Cincinnati, 1826).— Ed.

249 questions were always direct, concise, and calculated to avoid giving offence. The principal peculiarity of their conduct was an eagerness to examine the interior of the house. In this they were even indulged without attendance. Their business at the seat of government, is to effect an arrangement for obtaining the means of improvement in the arts of civilized life; and to represent a grievance occasioned by the government of the United States, having purchased the lands of a neighbouring tribe, which now encroach on the hunting grounds of the Osage nation. The chiefs say, that they have 1800 warriors, and are able to destroy the tribes which have come into their country; but that they are unwilling to go to war.

Despotic governments, wherever they are, might stand reprov'd by the humanity of the aboriginal chiefs of America; and every people who are oppressed by the rapacity of privileged orders, may derive valuable instruction from the independent men of the forests, whose high spirit does not submit to be enslaved or taxed. Wars against people of this character present few allurements to the ambitious, and still fewer to avaricious men. The pacific policy of the Indians may, perhaps, be discredited, on account of the sanguinary wars that have thinned the ranks of numerous tribes, and annihilated many others. But it must be admitted, that this depopulation [233] has been accelerated, if not entirely produced, by Europeans, who took possession of the country by force, driving tribes into the territories of other nations. A migration cannot be tolerated to any great extent, where the people depend on hunting and fishing for their subsistence. Hence, the object of Indian warfare has been extirpation. The practice of leagu'ing with one tribe in fighting against another, has been a powerful cause of mutual destruction. The 250 presents given by Europeans in these cases, and the promises made, could never have been inducements to wars purely Indian. Add to this, the havock introduced by the small-pox, and the use of spiritous liquors. We are almost totally unacquainted with the remote history of the American tribes. The great magnitude of their remaining works, prove that the population

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has once been comparatively numerous. This fact is in some measure corroborated by the great number of nations existing at the time of the first invasion of white people. It follows, that the wars that occurred during the accumulation of these people, have probably been less frequent, or less destructive than those which have latterly exterminated a large portion of the race.

### [224] LETTER XIX

Descend the Ohio from Cincinnati to Madison—Notices of a Scotch Settlement—Excess of Male Population Roads—Harvest—Crops—Orchards—Timber —Elections—Methodist Camp Meeting.

*Jeffersonville , ( Indiana ,) August 8, 1820.*

On the day succeeding the date of my last, I descended the river to Madison, a new, town on the Indiana side of the river.128

128 Madison, Jefferson County, was to Indiana what Maysville was to Kentucky and Shawneetown to Illinois, an important entrepôt and place of debarkation for pioneers moving to the interior. The early railways built to Madison and Maysville, emphasize this.—Ed.

About twelve miles north-east of Madison, and extending from thence eastward, is a new settlement, consisting chiefly of Scots, who amount to thirty-three families. The land which they have fixed on seems to be of the 251 second rate quality. It is uneven, and intermixed with many deep ravines; in most of which the water is now dried up. The greatest natural disadvantage of this situation is, the difficulty of having roads over ground so much broken; but the industry displayed by the settlers may remedy this before the present generation passeth away. In the above enumeration of Scots, I used the term families for want of a better; but it deserves notice, that two of these establishments consist of two young men each, and one of them of three. Amongst the bachelor cultivators I

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recognised one of the passengers who came over with me in the ship *Glenethorn*. Another of them was lately a journeyman tailor in Edinburgh. He has thrown aside the tools of his former business, and taken up, in their stead, a more formidable [225] weapon. I had an opportunity of conversing with five of these people. The supposed horrors of a backwoods life, aggravated by a state of celibacy, has by no means shed a gloom over their countenances. Whatever their privations may be in the mean time, they have at least a reasonable prospect of having them speedily removed. The lands which they improve are their own. Whether they continue to cultivate or to sell them, their capital will increase: and even in the event of their taking wives, the probability of their children becoming paupers must be greatly lessened, in consequence of their emigrating to America. The excessive emigration of the men occasions a considerable paucity of females in all new settlements. While at Pittsburg, I saw a young widower with two infant children on his way for the military lands, in the State of Illinois. Some one hinted to him, that to marry again would be a prudential step on his part. He gave his assent to the truth of the remark, but expressed some doubts of his 252 finding a wife where he was going. "I have lately been in that country," continued he, "and I believe that the girls there are *all married up*." During the early stages of the settlement of the colonies, the excess of male population must have been thought a great inconvenience. It is on record that the settlers of Virginia procured ladies from England in exchange for tobacco. The necessity of importations of this kind has been long ago removed, in that State; and the two sexes are now nearly equal in point of numbers, although not quite equally distributed over the country. Before dropping this digression on celibacy, I must mention my conviction that a very great proportion of Scotsmen remain bachelors in America. This is not asserted as a fact that applies to every part of the country, but in [226] so far as my observation has gone, I state it with much confidence. Whether we are less ardent in the pursuit than other people, or whether we are more under the influence of the prudential principle,—or whether our imputed loyalty, or some other national peculiarities, make the fair daughters of this land repulsive to us, I am not prepared to say. To return to the Scots settlement; J. M. lately a blacksmith in the county of Edinburgh, has settled here. He arrived with his wife, seven sons, two daughters,

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and a son-in-law, about ten months before I met him. He has purchased 480 acres of land, built two log-houses and a small stable; cleared and inclosed about 22 acres, which is nearly all under crop; deadened the timber of about 80 acres more; and planted an orchard. In addition to these improvements, his sons have wrought for a neighbour to the amount of a hundred days' work. He has a horse, a cow, a few hogs, and some poultry. I inquired if he felt himself happy in a strange land; he replied, that he would not return to Scotland though the property, of which he formerly rented a part, were given to him for nothing.

Madison is a county town, consisting of about 100 houses. It is situated on a northerly bend of the river Ohio; and is, therefore, a place well adapted for intercourse with the interior of Indiana, and, on that account, it may soon become a considerable town. While I was there, the circuit court of the State was sitting. Two respectable personages were on the bench, and several lawyers of polite address were attending to the business on hand. The number of litigants is extremely great when the thinness of the population is considered.

The roads are merely narrow avenues through [227] the woods; felling and rolling away the timber being, in most cases, all the labour which is bestowed upon them. Withered trees, and others blown down by the wind, lie across, forming obstructions in many parts. The few bridges which we do see are made of wood. In Indiana, the roads are opened and occasionally repaired by an assessment from every man who has lived thirty days in any particular county. In the present year this statute labour has been increased from two days' to six days' work; and the alteration is unpopular, because the poorest men in the State are obliged to pay as much as the wealthiest landholders, and non-resident landholders are exempted. I have seen several labourers who left the State to avoid this obnoxious tax. I am not informed whether the increase mentioned has been exacted in every part of the State. An act of the legislature fixes six days' labour, or a money commutation of the same, as a maximum, leaving the actual increase in the option of county commissioners. It

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does not appear probable that the 254 road law can exist long without being modified, as popular opinion regulates every thing of the kind here.

On the 29th of June, wheat harvest was commenced on several farms to the west of Madison. Oats, at that time, were headed out and luxuriant; but the heat of the climate is uniformly unfavourable to the ripening of this kind of crop. Its weight, relative to measure, is usually about half of that of good grain in the better parts of Britain. The growth of Indian corn is this season luxuriant. The only injury it has suffered arises from squirrels that gathered a considerable quantity of the seed in many fields. Squirrels are not so excessively numerous in the uninhabited woods as in the vicinity of cultivated fields. Potatoes are small and of a bad [228] quality. At Jeffersonville, so early as the 29th of May last, new potatoes were in the market. Turnips (so far as I have observed) do not grow to a large size, nor are they raised in large quantities. Flax, in every field that I have seen, was a short crop, with strong stems, and tops too much forked. Probably thicker sowing would improve its quality. Hemp grows with great luxuriance. The orchards are abundantly productive, and yield apples of the largest size; but little care is taken in selecting or ingrafting from varieties of the best flavour. Small crab apples are the most acid, and produce the finest cider. Pears are scarcely to be seen. Peaches of the best and worst qualities are to be met with. The trees bear on the third summer after the seed is sown, and although no attention is paid to the rearing them, the fruit is excessively plentiful, and is sometimes sold at twenty-five cents (1s. 1 ½ d. English) per bushel. Last year I weighed a peach, and found its weight to be eleven ounces, and I observed in a newspaper about the same time, an account of one of 255 the extraordinary weight of fourteen ounces. A rancid sort of spirit is distilled from them, known here by the name of peach brandy. Cherries are small. The earliest this season at Cincinnati, were ripe on the 22d of May. Wild cherry trees grow to a great height in the woods; the timber is of a red colour, and is used in making tables, bureaus, &c. and forms a tolerable substitute for mahogany.

Ornamental gardening is a pursuit little attended to, and perhaps will not soon be generally exhibited. The soil of the best land being soft, the torrents of rain which almost

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instantaneously deluge the surface convert it into a paste of a very unsightly appearance. Where the ground has even a slight declivity, it is liable to have deep ruts washed in it. Low walks and other hollows, are [229] often filled with the soil carried down from higher parts of the ground. The severity of the winter is another obstacle; it being difficult to preserve some perennial and biennial plants, or to procure culinary vegetables in the spring. The stock of cultivated flower roots is very small, and these not well selected. Gooseberries and currants are scarce and small. Cucumbers, melons, and a variety of products that require artificial heat in Britain, grow here vigorously in the open air.

Several species of forest trees furnish excellent timber. The white oak is at once tough, dense, flexible, and easily split. The black locust is strong, heavy, not much subject to warping, and resists the effects of the weather for a long period of time. This sort of timber resembles laburnum more than any that you are acquainted with. White hickory is tough and elastic in a high degree, and is the wood in general use for handles to axes, and other tools. Black walnut grows to a great size, and is considered a 256 mark of the excellence of the soil on which it grows. It is lighter, less curled in its texture, and probably weaker than that of England. The sugar-maple is curled in its fibre, and is used in making stocks for rifles. White or water maple is also curled, of a fine straw-colour, and is sometimes introduced in cabinet-work with much effect. White and blue ash trees are easily split, pliant, and readily smoothed, but less fit to bear exposure to the weather than the ash of Europe. Poplar grows to a great size, and is easily converted into boards or scantling. Red cedar is exceedingly durable as posts of rail-fences, and grows in great abundance by Kentucky river. White and yellow pines, similar to those of Canada, are brought from Allegany river, and are now sold here, in boards, at a cent per square foot.

[230] A few days ago I witnessed the election of a member of Congress for the State of Indiana.—Members for the State assembly and county officers, and the votes for the township of Jeffersonville, were taken by ballot in one day. No quarrels or disorder occurred. At Louisville, in Kentucky, the poll was kept open for three days. The votes were given *viva voce*. I saw three fights in the course of an hour. This method appears

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to be productive of as much discord here as in England. The States Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and all north of the latter, vote by ballot, and the southern proceed verbally.<sup>129</sup>

129 Flint's generalization regarding the Southern states is too sweeping. Virginia and Kentucky were the only commonwealths in which the people voted *viva-voce*. North Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, and Louisiana, authorized the written ballot in their constitutions, and in South Carolina it was established by statute. The use of the ballot was a custom of long standing in New England, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey, dating from the middle of the seventeenth century. In New York it was introduced as an experiment in 1778, and permanently adopted ten years later. Virginia changed to the written ballot for all popular elections, in her constitution of 1864, and Kentucky in hers of 1891; so that at present it is universal in the United States.— Ed.

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The sales of land in the late Indian purchase in Indiana have commenced at Jeffersonville. —They are now exposed by auction in lots of half quarter sections, (80 acres.) Only a very small part of the quantity offered has been sold. The price obtained is almost uniformly a dollar and a quarter per acre, the minimum rate now established by act of Congress. A few lots which present superior local advantages have sold higher. I know of one, with an excellent mill-seat, that gave three dollars per acre. The lands offered, but not sold at the present auction, may afterwards be privately purchased at the land-office for a dollar and a quarter per acre. No credit is given to those who buy public lands. The purchasers, whose lands were by law forfeited for non-payment, have got another year's indulgence, but this act of lenity does not extend to those who are not actual settlers. Quarter sections are divided into half quarters, by south and north lines. A considerable number of back-woodsmen, who had previously taken possession of lands in the new purchase, attended the public sales for about a week. During the night they lodged in a joiner's shed, which

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[231] is a mere temporary roof, composed of loose boards, for the purpose of sheltering workmen from the direct rays of the sun.

I lately returned from visiting the camp meeting of Wesleyan methodists, where I remained about twenty-four hours. On approaching the scene of action, the number of horses tied to fences and trees, and the travelling waggons standing in the environs, convinced me of the great magnitude of the assemblage. Immediately round the meeting a considerable number of tents were irregularly disposed. Some of them were log cabins that seemed to have served several campaigns, but most of them constructed by poles, covered over with coarse tow cloth.

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These tents are for the accommodation of the people who attend the worship for several days, or for a week together. I had no sooner got a sight of the area within, than I was struck with surprise, my feet were for a moment involuntarily arrested, while I gazed on a preacher vociferating from a high rostrum, raised between two trees, and an agitated crowd immediately before him, that were making a loud noise, and the most singular gesticulations which can be imagined. On advancing a few paces, I discovered that the turmoil was chiefly confined within a small inclosure of about thirty feet square, in front of the orator, and that the ground occupied by the congregation was laid with felled trees for seats. A rail fence divided it into two parts, one for females, and the other for males. It was my misfortune to enter by the wrong side, and I was politely informed of the mistake by a Colonel P——, of my acquaintance, who, it appeared, had undertaken the duty of keeping the males apart from the females. The inclosure already mentioned was for the reception of those who undergo religious awakenings, and was [232] filled by both sexes, who were exercising violently. Shouting, screaming, clapping of hands, leaping, jerking, falling, and swooning. The preacher could not be distinctly heard, great as his exertions were; certainly had it not been for his elevated position, his voice would have been entirely blended with the clamours below. I took my stand close by the fence, for the purpose of noting down exclamations uttered by the exercised, but found myself unable to pick up any

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thing like a distinct paragraph.—Borrowing an idea from the Greek mythology, to have a distinct perception of sounds, poured from such a multitude of bellowing mouths, would require the ear of *Jove*. —I had to content myself with such vociferations as *glory, glory, 259 power, Jesus Christ*, —with “groans and woes unutterable.”

In the afternoon a short cessation was allowed for dinner, and those deeply affected were removed to tents and laid on the ground. This new arrangement made a striking change in the camp, the bustle being removed from the centre and distributed along the outskirts of the preaching ground. Separate tents, in which one or more persons were laid, were surrounded by females who sung melodiously. It is truly delightful to hear these sweet singing people. Some of their tunes, it is true, did not convey, through my prejudiced ears, the solemn impressions that become religious worship, for I recognised several of the airs associated with the sentimental songs of my native land. In one instance a tent was dismantled of its tow cloth covering, which discovered a female almost motionless. After a choir of girls around her, had sung for a few minutes, two men stood over her, and simultaneously joined in prayer. One of them, [233] gifted with a loud and clear voice, drowned the other totally, and actually prayed him down.

After dinner another orator took his place. The inclosure was again filled with the penitent, or with others wishing to become so, and a vast congregation arranged themselves on their seats in the rear. A most pathetic prayer was poured forth, and a profound silence reigned over all the camp, except the fenced inclosure, from whence a low hollow murmuring sound issued. Now and then, *Amen* was articulated in a pitiful and indistinct tone of voice. You have seen a menagerie of wild animals on a journey, and have perhaps heard the king of beasts, and other powerful quadrupeds, excited to grumbling by the jolting of the waggon. Probably you will call this a rude 260 simile; but it is the most accurate that I can think of. Sermon commenced. The preacher announced his determination of discontinuing his labours in this part of the world, and leaving his dear brethren for ever. He addressed the old men present, telling them that they and he must soon be removed from this mortal state of existence, and that the melancholy reflection

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arose in his mind,—“ *What will become of the church when we are dead and gone?*”—A loud response of groaning and howling was sounded by the aged in the inclosure, and throughout the congregation. He next noticed that he saw a multitude of young men before him, and, addressing himself to them, said, “I trust in *God*, that many of you will be *now* converted, and will become the *preachers* and the pious Christians of after days.”—The clamour now thickened, for young and old shouted together. Turning his eyes toward the female side of the fence, he continued, “And you, my [234] dear sisters.”—What he had farther to say to the future “nursing mothers of the church,” could not be heard, for the burst of acclamation, on their part, completely prevented his voice from being heard, on which account he withdrew; and a tune was struck up and sung with grand enthusiasm. The worship now proceeded with a new energy; the prompter in the pulpit had succeeded in giving it an impulse, and the music was sufficient to preserve emotion. The inclosure was so much crowded that its inmates had not the liberty of lateral motion, but were literally hobbling *en masse*. My attention was particularly directed to a girl of about twelve years of age, who while standing could not be seen over her taller neighbours; but at every leap she was conspicuous above them. The velocity of every plunge made her long loose hair flirt up as if a handkerchief were held by one of its corners 261 and twitched violently. Another female, who had arrived at womanhood, was so much overcome that she was held up to the breeze by two persons who went to her relief. I never before saw such exhaustion. The vertebral column was completely pliant, her body, her neck, and her extended arms, bent in every direction successively. It would be impossible to describe the diversity of cases; they were not now confined within the fence, but were numerous among the people without. Only a small proportion of them could fall within the observation of any one bystander. The scene was to me equally novel and curious.

About dusk I retired several hundred yards into the woods to enjoy the distant effect of the meeting. Female voices were mournfully predominant, and my imagination figured to me a multitude of mothers, widows, and sisters, giving the [235] first vent to their

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grief, in bewailing the loss of a male population, by war, shipwreck, or some other great catastrophe.

It had been thought proper to place sentinels without the camp. Females were not allowed to pass out into the woods after dark. Spirituous liquors were not permitted to be sold in the neighbourhood.

Large fires of timber were kindled, which cast a new lustre on every object. The white tents gleamed in the glare. Over them the dusky woods formed a most romantic gloom, only the tall trunks of the front rank were distinctly visible, and these seemed so many members of a lofty colonnade. The illuminated camp lay on a declivity, and exposed a scene that suggested to my mind the moonlight gambols of beings known to us only through the fictions of credulous ages. The greatest turmoil prevailed within the fence, where the inmates were leaping and hobbling together with upward looks and extended arms. Around this busy mass, the crowd formed a thicker ring than the famous Macedonian phalanx; and among them, a mixture of the exercised were interspersed. Most faces were turned inward to gaze on the grand exhibition, the rear ranks on tip-toe, to see over those in front of them, and not a few mounted on the log-seats, to have a more commanding view of the show. People were constantly passing out and into the ring in brisk motion, so that the white drapery of females, and the darker apparel of the men were alternately vanishing and reappearing in the most elegant confusion. The sublimity of the music served to give an enchanting effect to the whole. My mind involuntarily reverted to the leading feature of the tale of Alloway Kirk: [236]

“Warlocks and witches in a dance;

Where Tam o'Shanter

—Stood like ane bewitch'd, And thought his very een enrich'd.”

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Late in the evening a man detached himself from the crowd, walking rapidly backward and forward, and crying aloud. His vociferations were of this kind: "I have been a great sinner, and was on the way to be damned; but am converted now, thank God—glory, glory!" He turned round on his heel occasionally, giving a loud whoop. A gentleman with whom I am well acquainted, told me that he had a conversation with a female who had just recovered from the debility of the day. She could give no other account of her sensations than that she felt so good, that she could press her very enemy to her bosom.

At half past two A.M. I got into a tent, stretched myself on the ground, and was soon lulled asleep by the music. About five I was awakened by the unceasing 263 melody. At seven, preaching was resumed; and a lawyer residing in the neighbourhood gave a sermon of a legal character.

At nine the meeting adjourned to breakfast. A multitude of small fires being previously struck up, an extensive cooking process commenced, and the smell of bacon tainted the air. I took this opportunity of reconnoitring the evacuated field. The little inclosure, so often mentioned, is by the religious called *Altar*, and some scoffers are wicked enough to call it *Pen*, from its similarity to the structures in which hogs are confined. Its area was covered over with straw, in some parts more wetted than the litter of a stable. If it could be ascertained that all this moisture was from the tears of the penitent, the fact would be a surprising one. Waving all inquiry into this phenomenon, [237] however, the incident now recorded may be held forth as a very suitable counterpart to a wonderful story recorded by the Methodistic oracle Lorenzo Dow, of a heavy shower drenching a neighbourhood, while a small speck including a camp meeting was passed over and left entirely dry. In Lorenzo's case, the rain fell all round the camp, but in that noticed by me, the moisture was in the very centre.

You can form no adequate idea of a camp meeting from any description which can be given of it. Any one who would have a complete view of enthusiasm can only obtain it by visiting such a meeting and seeing it himself. I should be sorry to abuse the Methodist

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sect by the illiberal application of such terms as fanaticism, superstition, or illusion. I have known many of them who are valuable members of society, and several who have rendered important services to their country, but have not seen any one prostrated, or even visibly affected, at the camp meeting 264 or elsewhere, whom I knew to be men of strong minds or of much intelligence. Females seem to be more susceptible of the impressions than men are. A quality perhaps that is to be imputed to the greater sensibility of their feelings.

The awakenings in Kentucky that were some years ago hailed by the religious magazines of your country as the workings of the *Divine Spirit* , [238] must have been those that occurred at camp meetings of Methodists. These assemblages are now said to be on the decline in Kentucky; and when meetings were held on a grand scale there, many disorders were committed by immoral persons, tending to the great scandal of religion, and occasioning the precautionary measures already noticed in this detail.

### LETTER XX

Circumstances that retard Manufacturing Industry, and Causes of its prosperity

*Jeffersonville , ( Indiana ,) Aug. 15, 1820.*

In my letter of the th of June last, I mentioned that mechanics were leaving the towns of the western country, becoming cultivators in the back woods. In many cases, their former habits are such as are not well calculated to reconcile them with their new situations. It appears evident that such people, placed in the forests, cannot for some time raise a quantity of produce sufficient to procure in exchange such foreign luxuries as they formerly consumed, 265 and such articles of imported dress as they have been accustomed to wear. The former may be easily dispensed with, but for the latter a substitute must be provided. Family manufacture is the obvious resource; but it must proceed slowly in cases where the females are not acquainted with this branch of industry, and [239] in the uncleared woods, which are not suitable pastures for sheep. It is to be

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regretted that manufacturing establishments are not erected, as these would not only furnish employment more congenial to the habits of artizans, and preserve to them their wonted accommodations, but would be of vast national importance under the present circumstances of America.

I trust that a brief exposition of a few of the principal causes which retard manufacturing industry, and of the means of promoting it, in this country, will not be unacceptable to you; especially as the policy of America, on that subject, affects at once the interests of both countries.

The primary obstacle that has hitherto prevented Americans from fabricating their own necessaries, from the products of their own country, is universally acknowledged to be an extensive intercourse with Great Britain, in exporting produce, and importing manufactured goods in return; —a correspondence that subjects American artisans to a competition with a country in which wages are low, labour subdivided, and in which the most stupendous mechanical apparatus is employed.

The indecision which has heretofore characterized the conduct of the United States, with regard to manufactures, seems to have originated in the diversity of interests represented in the government. The people of the southern States are, for several reasons, averse to making 266 concessions for procuring home-made goods. They are comparatively little devoted to mechanical pursuits, and still less acquainted with the diversified operations of workshops. Their negroes are seldom trained to any thing but agricultural and menial services, and the [240] condition of these labourers is otherwise unfavourable to the acquisition of skill in new employments. This part of the country, besides, exports large quantities of cotton, tobacco, and rice, articles that do not excite the jealousy of the landed interest in Britain; but, on the contrary, almost enjoy a monopoly of the British market. It is plain that the people who possess advantages of this kind, have it more in their power to continue traffic with England than their northern neighbours, whose produce is excluded by the corn laws of that country, which have been wisely enacted.

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Traders who have capital vested in ships, and in the importation of manufactured goods, form a class that is more interested in opposing an independent system than any other. Though their influence in Congress appears to be declining, some time must elapse before their funds can be directed to other pursuits.

The import duties on foreign manufactures, high as in most cases they appear to be, have not the effect of protecting American artizans from competition with those of other countries, who work cheaper. This disadvantage has been produced by the profuse issues of a paper currency. Money of this sort not taking the market abroad, it remains in the country, where it operates against industry, by augmenting the nominal price of labour. Hence people are complaining of want of employment, while they depend on the labour of foreigners for almost every artificial modification of the materials raised on their own soil, or 267 that lie unheeded under their feet. Import duties are not to be considered merely as enactments for promoting American manufactures, for they constitute the principal source of national revenue. It might be difficult to form a conception of a revenue [241] that could be collected at less expense, or of taxation raised in a more voluntary manner on the part of the people. But as moderating these duties must unquestionably, on every occasion, be injurious to home industry, and as augmenting them to the extent of the total prohibition of foreign goods would introduce smuggling, the two objects of the system are in some degree incompatible in the present state of money affairs.

The capital vested in uncultivated lands, is a mere dormant stock which cannot be applied to such active employments as the erection of workshops, machinery, and other outlays necessary for the establishment of manufactories, unless it is replaced by other funds. Neither is it so easy to procure money as formerly by mortgaging cultivated lands, now when the prices of produce are so low.

The expedients resorted to, in keeping base money in circulation, are, with respect to manufacturing interests, as impolitic as they are, in fact, unjust. Bankers, who are virtually insolvent, are to be ranked amongst the opposers of manufacturers, as it must

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be impossible for such men to contemplate the reduction of the quantity of money so essential to industry, without dreading the retribution that awaits them.

The present condition of the United States is well suited to convince the people of the expediency of making exertions for supplying their own wants. Europe is no longer to be relied on as a market for their produce, and Great Britain in particular has in effect excluded the grain and 268 the timber of the United States from her markets, and prohibits Americans from trading with her West India colonies. Since these restrictions have taken place, great quantities of British manufactures have been imported into America, and the course [242] of exchange has shown, that a large money balance has arisen in favour of Britain. Some persons interested in the traffic, infer the prosperity of the United States from their being able to pay a balance of trade. Though general doctrines of this kind are sanctioned by several great economists, on the broad principle that an exportation of money indicates a corresponding importation of property, or in other words, an accumulation of wealth; before adopting an assumption of this kind in any particular case, it may be safe to inquire whether the import consist of articles, which are permanently beneficial, or of luxuries either of the more perishable kinds, or of those more conducive to ornament than utility. With regard to the late imports of the United States, it is thought sufficient to notice that they have not furnished the ability to continue them in their usual amount.

Farther, nothing can be more plain than the necessity of abridging the quantity of paper money in circulation; and when this is done to a sufficient extent, foreigners will find it impossible to procure dollars here on terms so easy as formerly. Were money rendered so scarce, that it would command three or four times the quantity of the necessaries of life that it does now, foreign labour would be excluded, and the American labourer, with a third or a fourth part of his present nominal wages, would find the only changes in his condition to be a greater demand for his work, and an immediate enlargement of his resources. The farmer would eventually find the means of increasing 269 his produce, and the advantage of a home market; and capitalists now engaged in foreign commerce, would

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find employment for their funds in manufactures. Fortunately the impolitic course latterly [243] pursued is leading to its own correction. Specie is seldom to be seen in the ordinary transactions of business, except in small worn pieces of inferior denominations, and cut money, from which a portion of the metal has been fraudulently abstracted. The deficiency in weight prevents this part of the currency from being exported in direct payments, and nothing but the recent depreciation of paper seems to prevent these remnants of silver from being disposed of as bullion.

In former times, when Europe furnished a market for almost every kind of produce, the strongest inducements to agricultural industry prevailed. The fertility and the vast extent of the United States enabled cultivators to increase in numbers, in a manner that would have produced a disagreeable competition, in a more thickly peopled country; but the recent state of commercial affairs shows that America is not wide enough to prevent the inconveniences of competition in a narrow market. The necessity of a new distribution of pursuits becomes every day more apparent, as without it the people cannot enjoy the articles of comfort and luxury hitherto imported. Some of the most popular newspapers now advocate the cause of manufactures, and several public societies take a deep interest in promoting the internal prosperity of the country. The society at Philadelphia for promoting American manufactures,<sup>130</sup> have in some of their papers

<sup>130</sup> The Philadelphia Society for Promoting Domestic Manufactures, organized in 1803, with Stephen Girard as president, was incorporated in 1805. A central warehouse was established, where articles of American manufacture could be concentrated and sold, thus doing away with the expense of middlemen. The society was active in advocating a protective tariff.

The Cincinnati Society for the Promotion of Agriculture, Manufactures, and Domestic Economy was organized in 1819. Quarterly meetings were held, and prizes offered for the best essays on subjects relating to agriculture and domestic manufactures.— Ed.

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270 reasoned in such a manner as to prove that they possess a comprehensive knowledge of the subject, both of its effects on national wealth, and of manufacturing business. The resolutions of the society lately instituted at Cincinnati for the promotion of agriculture, manufactures, and domestic economy, are subjoined, [244] as a mark of the patriotic spirit that now prevails.<sup>131</sup> The committee of this society consists of people of the greatest wealth and influence in the city and neighbourhood.

Of the essays in favour of manufactures which have been published, it may be observed generally, that they

131 “1 *st.* We will not purchase, or suffer to be used in our families, any imported liquors, fruits, nuts, or preserves of any kind, unless they shall be required in cases of sickness.

“2 *d.* Being convinced, that the practice which generally prevails of wearing suits of black as testimonials of respect for the memory of deceased friends, is altogether useless, if not improper, while it is attended with a heavy expense; we will not sanction it hereafter in our families, or encourage it in others.

“3 *d.* We will not purchase, for ourselves or our families, such articles of dress as are expensive, and are generally considered as ornamental rather than useful.

“4 *th.* We will abstain from the use of imported goods of every description, as far as may be practicable, and we will give a preference to articles that are of the growth and manufacture of our own country, when the latter can be procured.

“5 *th.* We will not purchase any articles, either of food or dress, at prices that are considered extravagant, or that the citizens generally cannot afford to pay; but will rather abstain from the use of such articles until they can be obtained at reasonable prices.

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“6 *th*. We will observe a rigid economy in every branch of our expenditures, and will, in all our purchases, be influenced by necessity rather than convenience, and by utility rather than ornament.

“7 *th*. We believe that the prosperity of the country depends in a great degree on a general and faithful observance of the foregoing declaration; we therefore promise that we will adhere to it ourselves, and that we will recommend it to others.”— *Farnsworth's Cincinnati Directory*.— Flint.

271 recommend the adoption of higher import duties. That these have not been resorted to, need excite no surprise, as the secretary of the treasury has shown that an increase of duties must be followed by a decrease of national revenue, [245] and as the ultimate substitute, internal taxation, would probably be unpopular, although imposed with the most sparing hand. The spontaneous decrease in the amount of money capital now going on, does not seem to be duly appreciated;—an occurrence that is evidently well calculated to give an impulse to American industry.

When the United States shall abandon the spurious money now in circulation, and proceed on a smaller but more substantial capital, a new era of national prosperity will commence. The government will be freed from the danger, or rather the certainty, of losing the revenue by a smuggled trade, and will feel less necessity for resorting to restrictive regulations. A less sum of money will be sufficient to defray the public expenses. The consequent cheapness of labour will give the agriculturist new advantages in foreign markets, and develop in a new degree the natural resources of the country. The home market, occasioned by a manufacturing population, will be secure, as being beyond the reach of foreign governments, whose caprice is hostile to the security of American trade. Whenever the country shall be able to manufacture the whole, or the greater part of its necessaries, the exports of produce must be attended with an importation of specie. The ingress of foreign capitalists may also be calculated on as one of the effects to be produced by the change of system.

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The introduction of manufactures must promote internal improvements, as the making of roads and the construction of works, for facilitating inland navigation. The 272 country will be rendered capable of supporting a greater population than it can under the present system, thereby removing much of the inconvenience that attends their present settlements; [246] better opportunities for mental improvement, and the means of more prompt national defence, will be acquired; foreign commerce and foreign relations will be abridged, so that the hazard of hostilities with other countries may be greatly lessened. A small shipping trade evidently requires less naval protection than an extensive foreign commerce, and the retrenchment may perhaps admit of some relaxation in the present construction of ships of war. The reverses so frequently injurious to the manufacturers of Britain are less to be dreaded in the United States. While their manufactures do not exceed their own wants, it will always be practicable to prevent the home market from being overstocked, and while the vacant back woods are held in reserve, a manufacturing population need not be reduced to pauperism by the want of a foreign market for their fabrics.

The erection of manufacturing establishments was recommended some time ago by intelligent citizens, who foresaw that the money capital of the country could not long supply the great efflux of specie. Now, a change of policy becomes a matter of necessity. It is chiefly to be regretted several State legislatures are too active in forcing the circulation of degraded money;—a procedure which, in the meantime, retards the natural subsidence of the convulsion, and keeps property out of the hands of its real owners. However far they may succeed in procuring indemnity for past peculations, their efforts must be impotent in opposition to the future interests of mankind. The paper currency that they strive to support falls in spite of their utmost exertions. I now find that my expense of living or 273 of travelling is nominally the same that it was in the autumn of 1818. At that time I paid in specie, or in money, which [247] was considered as nearly equivalent to it, but of late I have on various occasions found that paper is accepted which is 50 per cent. worse than silver. A person who collected a salary to the amount of about eight hundred dollars, told

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me that he had received only five dollars of that sum in specie. You can easily perceive that, under this state of things, very few will give specie to the tavern-keeper, grocer, or others, while he can previously procure for it one and a half times, or twice its nominal amount, in what is called current paper. Most of the small towns have a person who follows the business of money changing; and merchants and other persons transact in that way, so that specie is almost entirely withdrawn from retail business, and applied to the purchase of public lands, or other objects, for which depreciated paper would not be accepted of in payment. Under this condition, an unsettled or precarious sort of internal trade is carried on, but it is impossible to import foreign goods as formerly.

The want of employment is another strong inducement to adopt an independent system of economy, but a cumbrous load of paper money presses industry to the earth. It is found by experience that the farmer cannot pay 125 cents per day to the labourer, and sell his corn for 25 cents per bushel, nor can the labourer work for a small hire while he pays two and a half, or three dollars a-week for his board, and an extravagant price for his clothing. Similar obstacles occur in almost every branch of industry that furnishes anything for exportation, or comes into competition with the labour of foreign artizans, so that the operations of this country now consist chiefly of works 274 of first necessity. A gentleman who has opportunities of being well acquainted with the [248] business of Philadelphia, has computed that in that county alone, there are at least 15,000 persons who are either entirely idle or are engaged in unproductive labour. He stated that he has had more than twenty applications for employment, when he could give work only to one, and that several other manufacturers say, that they cannot employ a tenth part of the applicants they meet with. The same gentleman estimates that there are about 150,000 unemployed persons along the Atlantic coast, and that there are 350,000 persons of the same description in other parts of the country.<sup>132</sup> It is not pretended that these enumerations are derived from accurate data, or that they are even very close approximations to the real numbers; but, taken in connection with other well known facts, they may be received as satisfactory evidence that the evil exists to a very considerable extent.<sup>133</sup>

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132 Letter to the President of the United States, by John Melish, Esq. Phil. 1818— Flint.

133 From the paucity of the circumstances attended to in statistical inquiries, the most superficial observer might infer that national pride is sufficiently gratified by the number of human beings, without regard to that of useful or efficient citizens, and that governments are satisfied with knowing little more of their people than that they die, and that they were born. It were to be wished that enumerations were made annually, instead of at the usual long intervals of time; and in addition to the particulars ordinarily ascertained, such were embraced as, the number of those who can show that they procure their subsistence by lawful means; those who have fixed residences; those who have received a moral education; the nature of employments; the duration and immediate causes of their avocations; bankruptcies; convictions for specified crimes; the known or proximate causes of deaths; cases of lunacy; *felo de se*; epidemy and meteorological registers made in every department of the country. The collection of information of this kind might be conducted in a manner that would operate as a beneficial supervision of society. It would furnish the police department with a new insight into the sources of delinquency. Taken in connection with coexistent laws which effect trade and revenue, and criminal laws, and the state of markets, political economy would be furnished with new instruments for investigation. The approach of misery might frequently be anticipated and arrested without being exhibited on the poor's list, in the workhouse, or in the shape of inability to pay taxes. Crimes might be prevented, and better criteria obtained for discriminating between offences committed *against* law, and those perpetrated *by* law. A new light would be thrown on several branches of physical science, and particularly on agriculture, climate, and the healing art. It is but too easy to discover that the desideratum is not in unison with the affairs of the age, but it is probable that another Alfred, or a Lycurgus must arise before it can be remedied.— Flint.

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[249] Want of employment is here viewed as a want of organization. With you it is represented to be an indication of an overpeopled country. The government of the United States does not attempt to get rid of its people, but, on the contrary, it welcomes the stranger who arrives on their shores. Your government pay for transporting their subjects, or encourage their removal by giving them lands gratis. Canada is wide enough to receive them, but its connection with England does not admit of a free trade. Multitudes of emigrants find their comforts as narrow as before, and remove into the United States. If facts of this sort indicate any thing, it is that no extent of country can compensate for mismanagement, or, in other words, a nation is more easily overstocked from impolicy than from want of soil.

The habits and institutions of the American people are peculiarly favourable to the adoption of manufacturing pursuits. They have no corporations with exclusive privileges, and no laws which enact any specific period of apprenticeship. Their well known spirit of enterprise, and the circumstance [250] of almost every man's being acquainted with handling the axe, the hammer, the saw, and the joiner's plane, must give a facility to the acquisition of mechanical labour. Besides, it is understood that a few weeks, or at farthest a few months, are enough to communicate the knowledge of most of those employments, 276 and that the work can soon be reduced to practice by subsequent application. The progress already made in several branches of manufacture tend to inspire a strong hope as to future attainments. The fabrication of coarse cotton cloths, called *domestics*, which now undersell British goods of similar quality; the making of iron articles, of leatherhats, paper, types, engravings, the construction of steamboats, and the building of ships, are mentioned as flattering examples.

As the disposition to promote American manufactures is progressive, and as popular opinion dictates the measures of the government, it may be safe to infer that commerce with England is now in a deep decline, and that the erection of workshops (though it

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should be on a moderate scale) may be hailed as the liberation of the United States from foreign monopoly.

### [251] LETTER XXI

Circuit Court of Indiana—Lawyers—Presiding Judge —Trial and Whipping of a Thief—Lands—Crops— Fourteen-Mile-Creek—Salt Springs—Town of Corydon —Drought—Barrens—Caves—Effects of a Tornado —Formation of the Higher Alluvial Bottom Lands of the Ohio—More Barrens—Salt River—Large Trees—Wild Vines—Steam-Boats—The Falls of the Ohio—Prevalence of Bilious and Intermittent Fevers —Taciturnity—Americanisms.

*Jeffersonville , ( Indiana ,) Sept. 8, 1820.*

Since writing my last letter to you, I have made several short excursions into the country.— I was at Charlestown, the seat of justice in Clark county, 134 while the circuit

134 Charlestown, first settled in 1808, is near the centre of Clark County, twelve miles north of Jeffersonville, and has always been the county seat.— Ed.

277 court sat there, and had opportunities of hearing the oratory of several barristers, which was delivered in language at once strong, elegant, and polite. A spirit of emulation prevails at the bar, and a gentleman of good taste informed me, that some young practitioners have made vast progress within two or three years past. The United States certainly open an extensive school for eloquence. The number of cases of litigation before the various courts of justice is very great; and there are numerous opportunities for exerting popular talent, as at elections, where the harangues are called stump-speeches, from the practice of candidates mounting the stumps of trees, and there addressing themselves to the people, and in State Assemblies.

[252] The circuit court consists of a presiding judge, who makes a progress over the whole State, and who meets with two associate judges at the several seats of justice. Associate

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judges are local, and only act in their respective counties. One of these gentlemen opened the court at Charlestown last year in the absence of the presiding judge.—A large jug, for holding cold water, that stood on the bench, had a caricature portrait of a judge painted on it, and several lawyers, on coming forward to open their cases, bowed to the figure, and directed their eyes to it during their speeches, occasioning much laughter in the house. It was not till the arrival of the presiding judge that the contempt was checked. Freedoms on the part of lawyers seem to be promoted in the back-country, in consequence of the bench being occasionally filled with men who are much inferior to those at the bar. The salary of the presiding judge (I have been told) is only seven hundred dollars a-year. As he is engaged in public business and in travelling nearly the whole of his time, that sum can only defray his expenses, even under the most economical 278 management, so that there can be no great error in supposing that he acts gratuitously. The present presiding judge is a man who has distinguished himself in Indian warfare.<sup>135</sup> Whatever opinion you may form of the bench here, you may be assured that it is occupied as a post of honour.

<sup>135</sup> This was Benjamin Parke, a leading man in Indiana under both territorial and state governments. Emigrating from his native state, New Jersey, in 1797, he came first to Lexington, where he studied law, then removed to Vincennes in 1801. He was chosen the first territorial delegate to Congress, but resigned (1808) to become a territorial judge. Upon the admission of Indiana to the Union, he was appointed by President Madison United States district judge with circuit court powers, a position held until his death in 1835. He took part in the battle of Tippecanoe, and was for several years an Indian agent.— Ed.

Amongst the business of the court, the trial of a man who had stolen two horses excited much interest. On his being sentenced to suffer thirty stripes, he was immediately led from the bar to the whipping-post. Every twitch of the cow-hide,(a weapon formerly described,) drew a red line across his back. This was the second infliction of the kind that had been sanctioned by [253] court in the State, since my coming into it. I do not notice the infrequency of punishments as wishing to occasion a belief that misdemeanours are seldom committed. Indeed, were it not for the absolute impunity obtained in most cases,

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we might soon see the partial development of a new system of physiognomy, one not founded on the features of the face, but on the striped lineaments of the back. Never, till now, did I so much value the usage of Scotland, where the inhabitant, on removing from one parish to another, carries with him the testimonial of the church.

The surface of the land in the neighbourhood of Charlestown is beautifully diversified, varying between gently undulated and steep of broken ground. The soil 279 is of the first rate quality, and covered with luxuriant crops of Indian corn. The crops of wheat are what you would call a second rate crop, and several fields of oats, which I saw, were headed out, and were as bulky as any that I have seen in Mid-Lothian; but, for a reason formerly stated, the grain cannot be expected to arrive at fine quality. The banks of Fourteen-Mile-Creek, (which joins the Ohio at the distance of fourteen miles above the falls,) are cliffs of limestone that are overtopped by tall woods, and form, by their windings, many romantic scenes, of which I can convey no adequate idea. The stream is at present almost entirely dried up, but the extent of its bed, and the marks of inundation by its margin, convince me that its floods are nearly equal to those of the Clyde at Glasgow. Some salt springs that percolate through the rocks in the bottom, have been discovered during the present dry season: the existence of these were first surmised by an ingenious gentleman, with whom I am well acquainted. He proceeded by introducing a small tube into a [254] deep and still part of the river, and drew water from the bottom that was perceptibly saline. He has now some people engaged in boring, by which means the discharge of water has been considerably augmented, and has commenced evaporating on a small scale. This process is usually performed by filling a number of iron kettles, of about three feet in diameter, and six inches deep, with the water, and placing them on loose stones, or over a trench that is dug in the ground for receiving the fuel. Boring for salt water is a work that is occasionally accompanied with a considerable degree of difficulty. Where the bore communicates with a fresh water spring, on a higher level than the saline one, a tube of tinned iron is let down to exclude the former. At 280 the salt-works by Kanhaway River, perforations have been made in the lime-stone rocks to the depth of two hundred feet. There a hundred gallons of

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water are said to yield a bushel of salt; but there are waters evaporated in other parts of the country that do not yield more than a fourth, or even a sixth part of that quantity.

Corydon,<sup>136</sup> the capital of the State of Indiana, is a small village, situated in an obscure valley of Indian Creek, and is surrounded by high and broken wooded lands. The weeds which cover the clear parts of the town plot are withered to whiteness by the drought, as is most of the ground in this part of the country, swamps and lands under crop excepted. The site of a new capital for the State is determined to be on the east branch of White River, where the lands are still in the hands of the government. Future convenience, and the prospect of promoting the sale of land in the late Indian purchase, seem to have, on this occasion, triumphed [255] over private interest.—No name has yet been assigned to this inland metropolis.

<sup>136</sup> The capital of Indiana Territory was moved from Vincennes to Corydon in 1813, and remained there until 1825 (see *ante*, note 100). Corydon is near the center of Harrison County, twenty-five miles west of Louisville.— Ed.

Between Corydon and the river Ohio, (about twenty-five miles,) the surface is of a rolling structure, and the soil good. Grass, at all times scanty on account of the small quantity of cleared ground, is now withered. The surface, where closely shaded by large trees, scarcely exhibits any thing that is green; rotten logs, and the leaves of last autumn, are strowed over the ground, presenting the most gloomy picture of desolation. Where large trees are thin, a growth of underwood prevails. Grounds called barrens are interspersed with the woods in this part of Indiana.—These are covered over with small copsewood, 281 as hazel and briars, also with grasses, and an immense variety of deciduous plants.—The name *barrens* must have arisen from the lands so denominated not producing such a large growth of vegetable matter as the forests, rather than from sterility. They are, in reality, much better pasturages than the woodlands, and, when cultivated, produce the best crops of wheat. I found travelling through the barrens to be somewhat uncomfortable, on account of exposure to the rays of the sun, and the dust of the road, which was

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continually raised, in a little cloud, by the motion of the horse's feet. This sort of ground is dry, and without the vast quantity of decaying vegetable matters to be seen in the woods, and for these reasons it is probably more conducive to health.

A great portion of the soil of western America lies immediately over immense strata of horizontal limestone, in which are numerous fissures. I have often seen the presence of these indicated in Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana, by hollows in the [256] ground in the form of inverted cones, which are here called sink holes. Some of these fissures have openings to the surface. A stupendous one in Kentucky,<sup>137</sup> known by the name of the great cave, has been explored to the distance of nine miles from its entrance.<sup>138</sup> The nitrate of potash has been found in

<sup>137</sup> Mammoth Cave, about ninety-five miles southwest of Louisville, was accidentally discovered by a hunter in 1809. At the present time two hundred and twenty-three of its avenues have been explored, making a total length of one hundred and fifty miles. During the War of 1812–15, salt was manufactured from the nitrous earth in its caverns, and transported across the mountains to Philadelphia and Baltimore. The close of the war rendering this industry unprofitable, the cave has since been used only for exhibition.—Ed.

<sup>138</sup> A description of this cave was written by John H. Farnham, Esq., and by him transmitted to the American Antiquarian Society, instituted by the legislature of Massachusetts.— Flint.

*Comment by Ed.* “Extract of a letter . . . describing the Mammoth Cave, in Kentucky,” in American Antiquarian Society *Transactions*, i, p. 355.

<sup>282</sup> some of these caves, and the sulphate of magnesia in others. Many of them abound in stalactites of calc sinter; and copious streams of water pass through some of them. One of these in Kentucky turns a subterraneous mill, to which access is obtained by a

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sink-hole; and a Colonel C—— of Indiana told me that a settler in his neighbourhood, on digging a well, penetrated into a stream of water, and found blind fishes in it.139

139 Since the above was written, a notice of blind fishes has appeared (if I mistake not) in the memoirs of the Wernerian Society of Edinburgh.— Flint.

*Comment by Ed.* This was a Scottish Society composed of the followers of the German geologist, Abraham Gottlob Werner (1750–1817), who promulgated the doctrine of the aqueous origin of rocks. His followers were known also as Neptunists.

During the last and the present summer, this country has suffered droughts, which the inhabitants consider extraordinary. Between Corydon and the Ohio the water was very muddy. Some people in that part are obliged to carry water from a distance of two miles. It is not uncommon now to see mill streams entirely dried up. I have seen several peach trees, with the fruit nearly ripened, almost dried up by the scorching heat; and, in some instances, the woods assuming the appearance of autumn prematurely, from the same cause. The disadvantage of the want of water will be thought less appalling, when it is recollected that the clearing of the ground has a tendency to increase springs; and when it is considered that [257] the dryness of rivers is not occasioned by the total want of springs, but by the evaporation from the bottoms of water-courses; and farther, that water in most situations may be procured by digging wells.

Immediately on the north bank of the Ohio, and about thirty miles below the falls, I crossed an avenue in the woods, 600 or 700 yards wide, which had been devastated 283 by a tornado that had passed from west to east, and in its way cleared the ground almost entirely. The largest trees were either torn up by the roots or broken. In the part that I observed, nothing but underwood and the shattered fragments of trees remained. On making inquiries as to the hurricane, I was informed that it swept over the country to the length of several hundred miles; and that, on the Kentucky side of the river, it totally obstructed a road with timber which has not yet been removed.

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It is also about thirty miles below the falls that the range of high land, called the knobs, intersects the river. This is the ridge that crosses the lower part of Indiana, and part of Kentucky, which the late M. Volney noticed under the name of the Silver Creek hills; and by him supposed to have once formed a dam, that retained a lake in the valley of the Ohio, extending from the ridge just mentioned, to the place where Pittsburg now stands. That philosopher attempted to show that the higher bottom lands, which are above the level of the present inundations, were deposited in the bottom of the lake; and that, on the water's making a gap in the barrier, the lake was drained, and the Ohio withdrawn into its present lower and less capacious bed. That the knobs once formed a dam I am forced to admit, from having seen marks on a high level on the limestone rocks in the gap, which [258] clearly indicate the action of a cataract: but I am, notwithstanding, led to agree with Dr. Drake's hypothesis, which explains the formation of the higher bottom land, as being the alluvion of the Ohio at a time when that river was much larger than at present. The facts relating to this subject that have come within the reach of my own observation, may perhaps be inserted in 284 a well-known scientific journal. In the meantime, it may be sufficient to say, it is now ascertained, that the waters of Erie, and other great lakes, formerly flowed southward into the valley of the Ohio; and that a cataract, more tremendous than the falls of Niagara, raged among the rocks of Silver Creek hills.

In the neighbourhood of Salt River and Green River, in Kentucky, there are extensive tracks of barren wastes. Small hazel bushes from two to three feet in height abound in these; and the quantity of nuts produced exceeds any thing of the kind which I have ever seen. The soil of these wastes seems to be very similar to that of the adjoining woods; and on account of the trees diminishing gradually in size, from the forest toward the waste, it is sometimes impossible to discover a line where the one stops and the other begins. This, together with the fact told by an old settler, that some small saplings which stood on his farm twenty years ago, are now become tall trees, leads me to adopt the opinion entertained by some, that the wastes or barrens owe their characteristic form to the

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Indians, who set fire to dried grass and other vegetables with the design of facilitating their hunting.

Salt River is between 100 and 150 yards wide where it unites with the Ohio, and is navigable for about sixty miles. The name is derived from salt springs in its vicinity that are now wrought. Opposite to the mouth of this river, on the north [259] bank of the Ohio, stands a sycamore tree of stupendous size, which is hollow within. I measured the cavity, and found one diameter to be twenty-one feet, and the other twenty feet. In one side of it, a hole is cut sufficiently large to admit a man on horseback. It was probably a sycamore considerably less than this that is noticed in the *Pittsburg Navigator*, 285 (edition printed in 1818, p. 29,) in the following words:— “There is one of these huge trees in Sciota county, Ohio, on the land of a Mr. Abraham Miller, into whose hollow thirteen men rode on horseback, June 6, 1808; the fourteenth did not enter, his horse being skittish, and too fearful to advance into so curious an apartment, but there was room enough for two more.”<sup>140</sup>

<sup>140</sup> It was common for early Western travellers to mention large trees as indicative of the richness of the soil. Among others, the following mention the great trees of the West: Washington, Harmer, William Brown, Cutler, Harris, Baily, Hildreth, and Birkbeck. Most of these trees were sycamores, such as that monster which Washington measured on his tour in 1770. Some very large apple-trees are also mentioned.— Ed.

There is perhaps no vegetable in this country that strikes the mind with greater surprise than the wild vine. I have seen one with a stem nine inches in diameter, and heard of others measuring eleven inches. Some detached trees have their tops closely wreathed with the vines in a manner that forms an elegant and umbrageous canopy, into which the eye cannot penetrate. In the woods they overtop the tallest trees, and from thence hang their pendulous twigs almost to the ground, or pass their ramifications from the branches of one tree to others, overshadowing a considerable space. In many instances their roots are at the distance of several feet from any tree, and their tops attached to branches at the

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height of sixty or eighty feet, without coming into contact with the trunks of trees, or any other intermediate support. To make the case plain, I have only to say, that the positions of some of these vines have a near resemblance to the stays, and some other ropes of a ship. The question, how they have erected themselves in this manner? is frequently put. Boats that descend the [260] Ohio are often moored without any other cable than a small vine. 286 If a notch is cut in the stem of a vine in the spring season, clear and tasteless water runs out, not in drops, but in a continued stream. I have several times quenched my thirst from sources of this kind.

For upwards of two months, the Ohio has been low; steam-boats cannot now pass from the falls at this place to the Mississippi, nor can boats, descending with produce, get down the same rapids without unloading the greater part of their cargoes. The trade of the country is of consequence much interrupted. In spring, 1818, there were thirty-one steam-boats on the Mississippi and Ohio; at present there are sixty on these waters. This increase of craft, together with the decreasing quantity of goods imported, has lowered the freight from New Orleans to the falls of the Ohio, from six cents to two cents per pound. The rates paid by passengers, however, are not reduced in the same proportion.

The falls of the Ohio are occasioned by a bed of horizontal limestone that stretches across the river, which is upwards of a mile in breadth. At the head of the falls, the river is about a mile broad, including a small island, but in dry seasons of the year the waters are much contracted in breadth, leaving a great portion of the rocky bottom entirely dry. The interruption to the navigation is not a precipitous cascade, as the name would imply, but a rapid, which is extremely shallow at the head in dry weather, and runs over an uneven bottom, at the rate of about fourteen miles an hour. After passing the upper, or principal shoot, nearly the whole of the waters are collected into a deep but narrow channel, close by the Indiana shore, leaving some small islands toward the opposite side; [261] the second, or lower shoot, is less violent, having deeper water, and is always navigable for 287 loaded boats passing downward. The lives of a number of strangers have lately been lost, by venturing down without pilots. The whole fall, at the lowest known stage

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of water, is nearly twenty-four feet; but in floods the declivity is distributed over a large portion of the river, and is imperceptible to the eye. The rocks contain vast quantities of organic remains, as madrepores, millepores, favocites, alcyonites, corals, several species of terebratulæ, trilobites, trochites, &c. &c. These remains being harder than the water-worn rocks, appear prominent, as if in relief, and many of them almost entirely detached. They are so numerous, that the surface is literally studded with them. Volney, who visited this place, has represented the rocks to be destitute of such subjects. It must have been at a time when they were covered by water.

The inhabitants in the neighbourhood of the Falls have been visited by attacks of bilious fever and ague. A considerable number of persons have been carried off by the former of these complaints, and the convalescent of both are much debilitated. A surmise lately appeared in a Louisville newspaper, that many poor people had suffered from the want of medical assistance, and hazarded the opinion, that a number had died in cases where seasonable applications might have been efficacious. Accounts from Vincennes<sup>141</sup> say, that about a third part of the people there are confined to bed by sickness, and that much of the Wabash country, both in Indiana and Illinois, are now subject to the same evil. Reports from the settlements on the lower parts of White river represent that sickness prevails there and along other water courses. There are many [262] people who act as if they were not

141 For the early history of Vincennes, see Croghan's *Journals*, volume i of our series, note 113.— Ed.

288 sufficiently sensible of the disadvantages resulting from settling in unhealthy situations. Fertility of soil and commercial advantages are the great attractions, but men who look to these as primary considerations, obviously undervalue some of the strongest checks to population and public prosperity. The endemical distempers of this country, so far from being chiefly confined to the weak and the aged, seem to commit their greatest devastations amongst the young and the strong. Surviving sufferers are frequently rendered unfit for labour for a third or fourth part of the year, and receive an irreparable

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injury to their constitutions; regimen and medicine become almost as indispensable as food; productive labour is thus diminished, and an additional cost imposed on life.

Tavern-keepers observe that travellers are not nearly so numerous as they were last year. The change is to be imputed solely to the decline in trade, and to depression in the price of lands. The fact shows that a proportion of the populace remains at home through necessity or economical motives. Happy it is for them, that the pressure of the times does not, as in certain other countries, turn out a numerous class in the condition of houseless poor. Travellers, however, are still so numerous, that a stranger, not fully aware of the rapidity with which new settlements are forming, and of the great populace of eastern States, might be apt to imagine that Americans are a singularly volatile people.

In the whole of my correspondence with the unlettered part of the people of the western country, I have observed a brevity of language, that seems to be occasioned by their not being acquainted with [263] an extensive vocabulary. Their manner of speech is grave, apparently earnest, and adapted to business more than to intellectual enjoyment. 289 It is seldom that any thing jocular, or any play of words, or circumlocution, or repartee, is uttered by them. If a question is put, it is usually answered in the shortest manner possible. Sometimes abridgments are made that render expressions inconclusive, and give them the form of the inuendo, even where ambiguity is not intended, and by people who, if they were accosted in ironical terms, would make no other reply than an astonished gaze. Technical language is, for obvious reasons, much limited. I have had opportunities of seeing a number of Americans and Irish, who were engaged in the same sort of employment, and could not omit noticing the contrast formed. Where work was let by the piece, the Irish (although previously strangers to one another) uniformly joined in working together in large groupes, and amused themselves by conversation, occasionally introducing the song, the pun, and the bull; while Americans, under similar conditions, preferred working alone, or in parties not exceeding three, and attended to their business in silence. The conversation of those whom *you* would call the lower orders, shows that they have a very considerable knowledge of the institutions of their country, and that they

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set a high value on them. Their discourse is usually intermixed with the provincialisms of England and Ireland, and a few Scotticisms. This might be expected, since America has been partly peopled by the natives of these countries. They also use some expressions the original applications of which I have not been able to discover. These I must call Americanisms, and will subjoin some examples.

[264] *Movers for People in the act of removing from one place to another.*

Fresh — *Flood in a river.*

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Bos — *Master.*

Hired Girl — *Servant Girl.*

Hired Man — *Servant Man.*

Reach — *A part of a river that continues for a considerable distance nearly in a straight line.*

Raised — *Bred or reared, the participle passive of to breed, (frequently applied to the human species.)*

Tot — *Carry. This is said to be of negro origin.*

Carry the horse to water — *To take or lead the horse to the water.*

Chores — *Probably derived from chars; little, odd, detached or miscellaneous pieces of business.*

Rowdy — *Blackguard.*

Truck — *Culinary vegetables; sometimes applied to baggage.*

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A Machinery — *A Machine.*

Floy — *Dirty or foul.*

Clever — *Honest, or of good disposition.*

Creature — *Horse.*

Rooster, or he-bird — *Cock, the male of the hen.*

### LETTER XXII

Miscellaneous Remarks on the Manners and Habits of the People

*Jeffersonville, (Indiana,) Sep. 11, 1820.*

In your letter of the 15th of May last, you mention your apprehension that I am living amongst a half civilized people. Perhaps this is partly occasioned by my having, in former letters, mentioned a considerable number of disagreeable incidents. [265] Matters of public notoriety always attract attention, while the more gratifying affairs of private life, as the most pleasant family scenes, the strictest integrity, and even acts of the most disinterested generosity, are, from their more frequent occurrence, omitted as less interesting. Hence it is, that the stories of travellers, however authentic they may be, and however amusing to their readers, are often more calculated to promote prejudices than to convey accurate information regarding society and morals. It is the energy and the tendency of public institutions that form the best index to national character.

I have at different times called your attention to the disadvantages here in respect of opportunities of education, and the influx of immoral strangers. In these respects the backwoods are mere colonies in comparison with the better state of society in the eastern country. Had I lived in Connecticut or Massachusetts, instead of Indiana, I might have met with fewer irregularities to relate. My acquaintance with many persons from the older

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communities of the Union, causes me to entertain the highest opinion of the attainments there, and convinces me that it would be nearly as unfair to collect the ingredients for forming the character of the British people in their foreign possessions, as it is to infer the state of American society from the habits and manners of people in new settlements. Adopting this view of the matter, it may be asked, in which of the British colonies is a thirty-sixth part of the soil set apart for the support of schools? which of them make their own laws, and appoint their own governors? or which has produced such an example of availing themselves of the lights of the age, as has the new State of Alabama, in rejecting usury laws.

[266] There is no course of conduct that would belie my feelings more than attempting to misrepresent the character of the American people. From the time of my 292 first landing in the country till the present, I have enjoyed intercourse with people of eminence in society, and have uniformly met with the most polite receptions, and, on many occasions, with such marks of kindness that I can never have sufficient opportunities to requite. Names would be altogether uninteresting to you, but there are many here that I cannot recal to recollection without associating them with those of the personages whom I most admire, and of the friends whom I most esteem.

The American community is not, like that of Britain, divided or formed into classes by the distinctions of title and rank, neither does political party seem to form such a complete separation amongst men, and the unequal distribution of property operates much less. The effects of these conditions are, that the individuals who compose our society are less mutually repellent to one another than with you, and the distinctions formed here are of a more natural kind, such as those founded on public services and talents, and the more uninterrupted associations that proceed from the sympathies of human nature. I am almost of opinion that the more extended bonds of American society are much strengthened by universal suffrage, and the frequent recurrence of elections, for this reason, that the candidates having no boroughs to be treated with in the wholesale way, and the constituents being too numerous, and coming too often in the way, to admit of

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their being bought over, expectants are obliged to depend on their popularity, and do not find it their interest to repulse any one. It is only from these causes that I could attempt [267] to account for the affability of manners which are almost universal. The inhabitants of American towns are not, like some of the people of your cities, ignorant of the names of the persons who live in 293 the nearest adjoining houses, or who perhaps enter by the same outer door, and the new settler in the woods is soon so well known, among a wide circle of neighbours, that almost any person, within ten miles of him, can direct the stranger to his residence. The civilities exchanged by people who meet on the roads, or in taverns, and the readiness amongst strangers to converse together, are matters of surprise to natives of Britain.

A short time ago I went on business to the residence of a gentleman of high military rank, who has made a distinguished figure in Indian warfare, in the late war on the Canadian frontier, and by his eloquence in Congress. His hospitality and the urbanity of his manners are not less conspicuous than his other great qualities. His house, from the numbers of his visitors, has a great resemblance to a tavern. He has on his property a great number of people who rent land *on shares*, (a term formerly explained to you.) When one of these tenants, or when almost any other stranger of respectable appearance, happens to come to his house about the time of dinner, he usually invites him to table. Amongst his party at dinner I observed an old man, who joined in conversation for about half an hour after the cloth was removed. On his rising to depart the host politely accompanied him to his horse. It was not till after mounting that the stranger intimated the object of his call.—“I have,” (said he,) “for a long time wished to see General—, and now I am satisfied.” In the afternoon he walked over his farm, and gave directions to some people making hay, [268] and to others employed in a distillery, in which he uses the corn paid to him as rents. That article now sells at twenty-five cents per bushel, but when converted into spirits, it yields him at the rate of a dollar per bushel. In the evening 294 two itinerants, a presbyterian preacher and his wife, arrived with an introduction from an acquaintance. After some conversation, the preacher performed worship in the family In the morning, after breakfast,

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the General contributed a few dollars to the support of religion, and held the horses while the two travellers mounted. It would be of little use to multiply facts showing that people of the first consequence, in the free States of this country, do not keep numerous hordes of menials, and that they know how to help themselves, as the high price of labour might alone lead you to infer this as a consequence. I shall only relate an example in point. The gentleman with whom I board keeps a tavern; he is an officer who fought for the liberties of his country, during the revolutionary war, and is now adjutant-general of the militia of this State.<sup>142</sup> One morning I found him engaged in cleaning his own shoes, in the absence of a boy who usually does work of this kind for him.

The laws and the usages of America in respect of foreigners, reflect the highest honour on the country. The stranger is not only protected in his person and property on his first arrival, but it is in his power to become an elector, and eligible to situations of honour and trust. He may depend on being here esteemed according to his behaviour and usefulness, without regard to his former condition or his former country. I have in various instances seen men enjoying the benefits of the free institutions of the United States, and the respect of their neighbours, who, a few years ago, invaded [269] the country

<sup>142</sup> Henry P. Coburn was adjutant-general of Indiana from December, 1819, to December, 1822. A native of Massachusetts and graduate of Harvard College (1812), he came to Indiana in 1816 and practised law in the southern part of the state until 1820. In that year he was made clerk of the supreme court, holding the position until his death in 1852.— Ed.

<sup>295</sup> with British arms in their hands. You may contrast this liberality with the Alien laws, and with the spirit of the corporations and privileged orders of your country, and ask yourself, Who are the semi-barbarians? Who are the “half-civilized people?”

The comforts that I enjoy here are perhaps somewhat greater than you suppose. I board with a respectable family, the members of which do every thing in their power to render my situation agreeable. In our small town and neighbourhood, there is a considerable number of accomplished people, amongst whom I have much of that sort of enjoyment

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which consists in hearing elegant conversation, and the reciprocation of those little civilities and services that give a relish to social life. The situation of this place at an important point on the river, and on the line of an extensive communication by land, renders it a very considerable thoroughfare. This of itself, has been the means of making me extensively acquainted amongst the public characters of the State, and many interesting individuals from other parts. We have abundance of newspapers, some of which are judiciously conducted, and in which many excellent original articles are to be found; and all of them devote a part of their columns to the public occurrences of Britain. I occasionally read some of the latest publications from your country, and have frequent opportunities of seeing the Reviews, and Literary and Scientific Magazines. At short intervals, I have commonly letters from Scotland, and frequently communications from friends in different parts of this country. In short, were I discontented with the society amongst which I live, I might occasion a suspicion that I am unworthy of mixing in it.

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### [270] LETTER XXIII

Passage from the Falls of the Ohio to Cincinnati — Drought — Banks — Militia — Journey to Lake Erie — Reading — Shakertown — Lebanon — Little Miami — Wood Pigeons — Insects — Clarkville and Leesburg — Greenfield and Oldtown — Large quantities of Grain raised by Individuals — The Great Sciota — Pickaway Plains — Wet Prairies — New Lancaster — Lebanon — Newark — Mount Vernon — Owl Creek — Clear Fork — Roads — Mansfield — Trucksville — Summit of the Country between the Ohio and Lake Erie — Munro — Sickness — The Great Prairie — The former Beach of Lake Erie — Bloomingtown — Bank — Mineral Strata — Portland — Venice — Sickness — — Indians — Tavern Keepers — People.

*Portland , ( Ohio , ) Oct. 13, 1820.*

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I left the Falls of the Ohio on the 12th ult. and took my passage in a steam-boat which plies between that place and Cincinnati.—There was no other passing on the Ohio at that time, on account of the lowness of the water.

From the difference of time occupied in ascending and descending the river, it appeared that the mean velocity of the stream was reduced to one mile per hour. In several ripples, the deepest part of the channel measured only three feet. The vessel repeatedly ran aground, so that an anchor was put out, and it became necessary that every man on board should work at the capstane. The boat was the same in which I ascended the river in June last, and of which I noted down the dimensions in my letter of the 26th of that month. [271] She is here considered to be a small vessel, and the best for navigating the river in dry seasons. On computing the velocity of the water wheel, I found that the boat would move at the rate of  $8\frac{1}{2}$  miles per hour, supposing that it proceeded in 297 the manner of wheel carriages, and that the actual velocity through still water was seven miles per hour. This gives a very good measure of the *vis inertiae* of the fluid.

We did not arrive at Cincinnati till the 15th, being obliged to stop during the night, as it was impossible to keep in the proper channel in the dark, at the present low stage of the river. The vessel returned downward nearly empty, to be laid up till the next rise of water.

The hills in the neighbourhood of Cincinnati, which were beautifully verdant in June last, are now withered to whiteness, by the scorching drought.<sup>143</sup>

The trade of Cincinnati continues to be dull. Two of the banks have given up business altogether, and two others are struggling for existence. Their money is  $33\frac{1}{2}$  and 60 per cent under par. One of these establishments has been in the habit of giving in exchange for its own notes, those of another paper shop at a considerable distance; when the paper so obtained is presented at the second, it is taken in exchange for the money of a third bank still farther off. At the third, the bills are exchanged for the money of the first. This is in reality making banks “*equally solvent with their neighbouring institutions.*” Some of

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the stockholders, [272] *who are themselves the debtors of the banks*, procure a part of the money, which is either much depreciated, or entirely sunk to satisfy for the same debts.

Females of a certain description are not to be seen in the streets of Cincinnati after dusk. This is attributed, not so much to police regulations, as to the boys, whose practice it is to chase them.

143 Dr. Drake, who is a native of the western country, after noticing the effects of a dry summer, adds, "But, fortunately, such extraordinary droughts occur too seldom, and are too limited in their extent, to be regarded as any great calamity."— *Picture of Cincinnati*, p. 105.— Flint.

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On the 23d, a regiment of Militia was reviewed. The state of discipline is so bad that every movement is accompanied with disorder. The time occupied in training is short, and the practice of privates electing their own officers is not considered conducive to subordination, especially in time of peace. They are, however, armed with good rifles, and are formidable troops in the woods.

The last number of the Edinburgh Review, Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk,<sup>144</sup> Blackwood's Magazine, and the Monastery,<sup>145</sup> are the current works of the day. When lately at Louisville, I found an acquaintance reading Ivanhoe; during my stay with him, which was only about an hour, two persons applied for a loan of the book. He told me that there were seven or eight copies of it in that town, and that they are no sooner read by one than they are lent to another. Two copies of the Monastery had just then arrived in town, and were, if possible, more in request than the former. The natives of Britain, in America, have the satisfaction of mixing with a people who are descended from the same ancestors, who speak the same language, who are instructed by the same standard books, who are amused by the same novels, and who sing the same songs.

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144 A series of lively sketches of Edinburgh society by John Gibson Lockhart (1794–1854), published in *Blackwood's Magazine* during 1819.— Ed.

145 Scott's novel, *The Monastery*, was published in 1820.— Ed.

In giving you details of my journey from the Ohio to Lake Erie, I shall confine myself almost [273] entirely to a transcript of notes taken by the way.146

146 In order to view the country, Flint pursued a singular route from Cincinnati to Lake Erie. His course was through Warren, Clinton, Highland, Ross, Pickaway, Fairfield, Licking, Knox, Richland, Huron, and Erie counties. The principal points touched were Lebanon in Warren, Lancaster in Fairfield, Newark in Licking, and Mansfield in Richland. He reached Lake Erie at the present Huron, at the mouth of Huron River. His roundabout tour brought him through some of the very best portions of the state.— Ed.

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On the 26th of September I left Cincinnati. My travelling equipment consisted of a light waggon, drawn by a Yankee mare. The animal was spirited, but at the same time docile, and obedient to the rein; and the roads, though rough in some parts, and covered with dust, were such as are in this country called good. The atmosphere was clear, without a single speck of cloud, and the temperature of the air agreeable. I got forward with a degree of ease and good spirit, that might well become a ride undertaken for pleasure.

Reading is a small town with a good tavern, twelve miles north-east of Cincinnati.147

147 Reading was first settled in 1794 by Abraham Voorhees, who laid out the town four years later. It was for some time called Voorheestown, but rechristened out of compliment to some of the early settlers who came from Reading, Pennsylvania.— Ed.

I lodged for the night with a tavern-keeper, who has, within these four years past, cleared a good farm on which he lives. He is a penetrating and intelligent old man. Without being

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told, he was able to discover my native country, and attempted to make himself agreeable by dilating on the histories of Wallace and Bruce. His son, who is arrived at manhood, asked if Wallace was an American? The father is a native of the eastern country, and has had better opportunities of being educated than the son seems to have met with in this newly settled country. Closely adjoining to this place is Union or Shakertown,<sup>148</sup> the settlement of a remarkable society called Shakers, I suppose from dancing forming a principal part of their

<sup>148</sup> The Kentucky religious awakening of 1800, spreading into southern Ohio, caused such a state of religious excitement that the Shakers of New Lebanon, New York, thinking it a profitable field in which to plant their doctrines, sent three missionaries to Warren County in 1805. They found many converts among the excited people, and Union Village, or Shakerstown, soon sprang up. They were called Shakers not so much from the dancing, as from the handshaking, head shaking, and other bodily contortions in their religious exercises.— Ed

300 worship. They have established a community of goods, and prohibited marriage and the propagation of the species. Although this restriction is in general religiously observed, it is said that several of their daughters have been carried off from the settlement by young men of the neighbourhood. In the Session of 1810–1811, the legislature found it proper to interfere, in causing the society to provide for some families [274] that were deserted by their husbands. The people in the vicinity admit that the Shakers are characterized by sobriety, a peaceable disposition, (and, what appears to be surprising,) industry, frugality, and cleanliness.

*Sept. 27.* Passed through Lebanon,<sup>149</sup> a small town composed partly of brick houses. It is, however, the seat of justice for a county, and has a newspaper printing-office, and a bank. The number of two and four horse waggons which pass along the road would indicate much business; but a deduction is to be made for the smallness of the loads. Farmers were engaged in carrying home their crops of maize, or in piling them up in the

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fields, and some in preparing the ground for sowing their wheat. The orchards were nearly cleared of their fruit. Cyder is here made in considerable quantities.

149 The four proprietors, who were also the only settlers on the site of Lebanon, laid out the town in 1802. Becoming the county seat of Warren County, it thereafter grew rapidly, and in 1809 was chosen as the site for Miami University.— Ed.

The country between the two rivers Miamis is said to be one of the most fertile in America, but the part of it that I have seen is not the best watered. Many of the people have to draw water from wells for themselves and their cattle, happy at the present time, if the springs do not fail altogether.

Crossed the little Miami, a name that is now perfectly descriptive of the river.<sup>150</sup> The bottom land is rich, and the banks on both sides steep. On the top of the east bank the remains of an ancient fortification stand. The wall, which is about fourteen feet high, is overgrown with large timber, and incloses a considerable space of land.

150 The road crossed the Little Miami near the border line between Warren and Green counties.— Ed.

Much of the road in the east side of the little Miami is over wet clay land. Logs are split, and laid side by side across the road, as a way for carriages. The jolting over these is disagreeable, and the progress slow. At this dry season, the soil would serve the purpose better, but would be impassable in wet weather.

[275] The woods abound in pigeons, a small species of fowls which migrates to the southward in winter, and return to the north in spring. Their numbers are so immense that they sometimes move in clouds, upwards of a mile in length. At the time when they are passing, the people have good sport in shooting them, as one flock frequently succeeds another before the gun can be reloaded. The parts of the woods where they roost, are

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distinguished by the trees having their branches broken off, and many of them deadened by the pressure of the myriads that alight upon them.

The number of grasshoppers is amazingly great. A swarm of them rises from amongst the grass or weeds, at every footstep of the pedestrian. Some large species are winged, and can fly to the distance of twelve, and even twenty yards. This remark applies to every part of America which I have seen. The country abounds with a multitude of insects, much diversified in species, colours, and habits. Wasps and hornets are extremely numerous. 302 I have not suffered from mosquitoes in the degree that I had been taught to expect.

*Sept. 28.* Clarkville and Leesburg are two very small towns. Passed a young man who was lame, I believe, from a rheumatic affection, a complaint that is pretty frequent in this country, from the quick transitions in the temperature of the climate. This traveller told me that he was on his return from New Orleans, having gone down the river in the capacity of boatman, and that he had travelled most of the way homeward on foot. On my suggesting that he should remain with a farmer for a few days, where he might work at the harvest, a kind of labour which does not require much locomotion, he told me that he had applied to several, but they refused to give him employment.

[276] The road between Leesburg and Munro is over high ridges and deep ravines. The country here (Highland County) is allowed to be healthy, but a dense population must be accumulated before the natural obstacles to communication can be surmounted. The bridges here, as in other new settlements, are nothing more than two long trees thrown over the stream, about eight feet apart, with split or round pieces of timber laid across these, side by side. In the case of a deep ravine, the road is directly down the bank to the end of the bridge.

*Sept. 29.* Greenfield and Oldtown are two small towns. The former has made considerable progress of late. The woods were assuming the colours of autumn. This change was

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accelerated by slight frosts which occurred on two mornings, about the time of the equinox. The sugar-maple, the dogwood, and the beech, were the most forward.

I remained for the night with an old tavern-keeper, who 303 had been a soldier in the revolutionary service. He is proprietor of a good farm, which is occupied by his son-in-law, who, last year, raised nine hundred bushels, including corn and wheat, by his individual exertions. I had previously heard of a negro from Kentucky, who, in the same year, settled on a prairie near Vincennes, and there raised a thousand bushels of corn. The last of these quantities may be assumed as a full maximum of the produce that may be raised by one man, even where great fertility of soil, industry, and health, conspire together. But as this quantity of grain would now sell for only two hundred and fifty dollars, without deducting the expense of carrying it to market, or allowing any thing for the provender of a horse, while the wages of a labourer may be [277] now fairly stated at three hundred and fifty dollars for a year, it is evident that farmers, from such a small return, cannot hire the labour of other people.

On the 30th I crossed the Great Sciota, a river that is great indeed in times of wet weather; but the ford, which is at the head of a stream, was not then more than eight or nine inches deep. The river, notwithstanding, retains a grandeur that is not unbecoming its name. The stream is broad, covering nearly the whole of its capacious bed. The water is limpid, and the banks are covered with a growth of stupendous sycamores and other large trees.

Pickaway Plains consist of flat land.<sup>151</sup> The clear part is a prairie, entirely destitute of trees, and is about seven miles long and five broad. To a European, who has been upwards of two years immersed in the woods, such a clear space is truly exhilarating. It was while proceeding along a fine smooth road, at a brisk trot, that I suddenly discovered

<sup>151</sup> For the Pickaway Plains, see Cuming's Tour, volume iv of our series, note 143.— Ed.

<sup>304</sup> I was making my *entrée* into the plain.—The air was still, clear, and admitted of the most distinct vision, so that I could see a distant blue ridge of high land, which I supposed

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to be in Kentucky. After having advanced about half a mile into the open space, I observed a long cloud of dust over the road. The fore part of this train seemed at my horse's feet, and under my vehicle, and the other end of it was in that part of the wood from whence I emerged. Possibly a native of the American woods might be more surprised on his first entering a prairie than I was, but I have a doubt whether his sensations would be as pleasant as mine *were*.

The soil is of a dark coloured earth, apparently mixed with a large portion of vegetable matter, and [278] lies on a gravelly subsoil. When extremely rich lands are spoken of in this part of the country, they are apt to be compared with Pickaway. The inhabitants of the plain are occasionally visited by agues.

I believe that I have not heretofore mentioned any particulars respecting the dust of the roads of this country. The clothes of travellers are frequently covered with it, and it passes through the smallest crevices, into trunks and packing boxes. This may probably arise from the heat of the climate, which dries the mud very much, or from the fine division of the earthy particles, and perhaps from the abundance of vegetable matters intermixed.

I lodged at a tavern about two miles west of New Lancaster. The landlord removed from Pennsylvania to this neighbourhood about twenty years ago. The site of the house in which he now lives, is the third that he has cleared of the timber with his own hands, since his arrival. His buildings and farm, by their neatness, bespeak his industry, and he seems to enjoy the comforts of affluence as 305 the reward of his labours. In the neighbourhood of this place are some high ridges of a coarse-grained sand-stone, with some small pine trees on their summits. The lower lands are rich. The landlord showed me a pumpkin that weighed a hundred and sixty pounds.

*Monday, Oct. 2.* On the morning of this day, and on the afternoon of the 30th ultimo, I passed through several low prairies of small size; the soil is of a black vegetable matter, that is somewhat bituminous, and appears to be imperfectly decomposed. Some chinks of

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two or three inches wide, that are to be seen in the surface, show, that at other seasons of the year, this ground is wet. Except for the heat of the climate, it is probable that [279] these prairies would have been mosses similar to the peat earth of Europe.

New Lancaster is a county town,<sup>152</sup> with a court-house and a bank. The situation is pleasant, and the town contains some good brick houses. Neatness and comfort are apparent there.

<sup>152</sup> For the early history of Lancaster, see Cuming's *Tour*, volume iv of our series, note 145.— Ed.

Lebanon is a small place, situated on high ground. It is entirely built of wood. Several persons affirmed to me, that the ague is not prevalent in this place.

Newark<sup>153</sup> is a county town of a pleasant aspect. Some parts of the lands adjoining are moist, and naturally fitted for being converted into meadows. Good iron is made in the neighbourhood, and sold at four cents per pound. There was a young man in the tavern there, who said, that he had come directly from Philadelphia, and that he had seen a considerable number of families on

<sup>153</sup> Newark was settled and laid out in 1802 by William Schenck, of Newark, New Jersey. In the fall of that year a considerable colony came from Pennsylvania. It was incorporated in 1826.— Ed.

<sup>306</sup> their journey to the eastward, after finding themselves dissatisfied with their prospects in the western country.

On the evening of the 2d and on the 3d, much rain fell. On the 4th, I resumed my journey.—I observed much land well adapted for meadow, and a few small patches actually occupied in that way; and noticed that the ground in general yields more grass, and has preserved its verdure better than that in the lower parts of the State. I halted for the night

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at Mount Vernon, 154 which is another county town, and the place of the Owl Creek Bank, well known among the paper manufactories of this country.

Owl Creek is one of the head waters of Muskingum River, and is a copious stream of clear water. It is crossed by a large wooden bridge, and turns an extensive mill, which is in sight of the road.

[280] On the 5th, I travelled over some high, rugged land, where chesnut trees are numerous and of a large size. The presence of this kind of timber, is understood to be an indication of the poverty of the soil on which it grows; but it is valued principally on account of its resisting the effects of the weather for a great length of time. In the afternoon a heavy shower of rain fell, which obliged me to stop at a tavern at the Clear Fork, which is only fifteen miles from Mount Vernon.

The Clear Fork is another head branch of Muskingum River, and has a plentiful run of water. It seems that the river Ohio derives the greater part of its waters, in dry seasons, from the springs which rise in the high lands at a considerable distance from it. I have, at various times, observed that most of the streams that originate

154 Mt. Vernon, the seat of Knox County, was laid out in 1805, and named after Washington's home on the Potomac, its early settlers having come from Virginia and Maryland.— Ed.

307 in the lower country are either entirely dried up, or are very small runs in summer, while the tributaries in the higher parts of the country run copiously. This fact is corroborated by the present superior verdure of the high country, in showing, that the quantity of rain is greater than in the lower parts. A lower temperature, and the intermixture of breezes from the valleys of the Mississippi and the Ohio, with those from the lakes and the river St. Lawrence, are to be inferred as the most probable causes.

*Oct. 6.* Between the Clear Fork and Mansfield (9 ½ miles) the ground is hilly, and part of it, like that travelled over on the 5th, abounding with chesnut trees. Except for the strength

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and spirit of my horse, I had not succeeded in carrying my baggage over this rugged part of the country. The roads are not laid out under proper supervision, but pass over steep land, or round the fences of inclosed fields, at the will of interested persons. [281] They calculate badly, however, who disregard utility.

Mansfield is another county town,<sup>155</sup> and is favoured as the seat of a bank. I lodged at Trucksville, a new town, consisting of about half a dozen of frame-houses. The lands of the neighbourhood appeared excellent.

<sup>155</sup> James Hedges, a government surveyor, laid out the town of Mansfield in 1808, naming it in honor of Colonel Jared Mansfield, surveyor-general of the United States. In 1820 it contained about 250 inhabitants.— Ed.

On the 7th, I passed through a part of the country with a surface which is gently undulated. The little intervalles seem to be nearly horizontal in their bottoms. This, with the woods that obstruct the view everywhere, imposes the aspect of a low flat country, an illusion that I could only dispel by recollecting that throughout my journey I had travelled in a direction contrary to the motion of the rivers, and by observing that the waters <sup>308</sup> run in different directions, part towards the Ohio, and part towards Lake Erie.

It might be difficult to form a conception of any topographical inquiry more interesting to the State of Ohio, and some other parts, than the structure and conditions of the high grounds which separate between the waters of the river Ohio and Lake Erie. It remains to be ascertained, whether a sufficient quantity of water can be found for supplying the summit level of the contemplated canal between the river and the lake, and through what point in the ridge the lowest, or otherwise most eligible line may be drawn. When the first of these questions is solved, it will be easy to say whether New Orleans or New York will be the future emporium of this part of the country. I believe the only specific information on the subject, that has been published, is in a paper by Governor Brown,<sup>156</sup> of the State of Ohio, who has repeatedly recommended that the legislature should pass an act for

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causing the necessary surveys to be made, [282] but without effect. It is curious that it was the legislature of the same State (Ohio) that, a few years ago, made an overture to the Congress, for ascertaining whether it is practicable to make a canal between the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific Ocean.

156 Ethan Allen Brown was elected governor of Ohio in 1818. He resigned his office to accept a seat in the United States senate.— Ed.

The country between New Lancaster and the heads of the waters that fall into Lake Erie (about a hundred miles) is high, fertile, well watered, and comparatively exempt from the endemical sicknesses which annoy the inhabitants of lower lands.

The country over which I travelled on the 8th, is intermixed with flat lands. The great holes and ruts in the roads showed that they are occasionally drenched with 309 water. If my olfactory organs did not deceive me, the air was somewhat tainted.

At Munro, a small branch of Huron River, I had some difficulty in procuring breakfast. All the family in the tavern were either sick, or so much emaciated by recent disease, that they were scarcely able to do any thing. Every person in the town, old and young, had been attacked, two individuals being only excepted. For two years past, the place has been more unhealthy than formerly; and the people believe that the change has been occasioned by the erection of a mill-dam in the creek. The surmise is probably just, as the dam is now dry, and both the mud and vegetable matters are exposed to the heat and consequent decomposition, evolving hydrogen gas, which is understood to be deleterious.

At the distance of about fourteen miles from Portland, the road enters the great prairie that stretches along the south side of the lake. It is covered with coarse grass, of a luxuriant growth, and an immense variety of weeds. Some slight eminences are wooded, and resemble islands or [283] peninsulas in the plain. In passing along, I perceived openings which seemed to extend to the distance of twelve or fourteen miles.

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For several miles the road is over a ridge, sixty or eighty feet in breadth, about eight feet higher than the plain, and five or six feet higher than the flat ground immediately to the southward. This ridge or step runs in a winding line, forming a convexity towards the lake, where it crosses the higher parts of the prairie, and recedes to the southward, forming a concave curve round hollows in the ground, thus preserving a horizontal position. A doubt of this having been once the margin of the lake can scarcely be entertained.

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The ridge just mentioned is dry and of a gravelly soil. It is preferred by the settlers for the sites of their houses. Some patches of the prairie are inclosed by worm fences, and produce large crops of maize. Cattle range in the prairies, and are larger and fatter than those reared by the Ohio River. A few stacks of coarse natural hay stand on the ground that produced them.

Bloomington is a town consisting of about ten houses, and is situated on a sandy eminence in the edge of the prairie:—a small place, but deserving of notice from its abortive Bank. A company was formed, plates engraved, and the bank notes brought to the spot. At the time when this happened, the people had just become jealous of unchartered banks. The company applied to the Legislature of the State for a charter, which was refused. The bankers not venturing to sign the pictures, but unwilling to lose the expense of manufacturing them, sold them by auction. They were afterwards subscribed by a fictitious president and cashier, and fraudulently put into circulation.

[284] Near the lake the shell limestone appears. This seems to be the base on which the strata of the higher country rests. The higher country, near Pittsburg, the Muskingum, and Sciota rivers, the Silver-Creek hills, and the high land, over which I have recently come, has strata of sandstone, slate-clay, bituminous shale, and, in various places, coal.

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Portland is a town situated on the shore of the indenture in the south-western extremity of Lake Erie, called Sandusky Bay.<sup>157</sup> It is only three years since it was founded, and contains thirty dwelling houses, four warehouses,

157 For the early history of Portland, see Buttrick's *Voyages*, volume viii of our series, note 34.— Ed.

311 houses, and has four temporary wharfs. At present the trade is in salt, brought from Onondago in New York State, and in imported goods. There is a boat at one of the wharfs, which carries ten and a half tons; it was built in Connecticut, and was carried by land over several portages in the way; and I have been told that there is a vessel of fifty feet keel on the lake, that was carried over the same obstructions, which lie between Hudson River and Lake Erie. A steam-boat which sails between Detroit and Buffalo touches at this place.

Portland has had a share of the sickness of the season, a number of persons being now confined to bed, and many meagre convalescents are to be seen walking about the street. In addition to the fevers and the ague, so prevalent, some have been afflicted by an influenza, and are wearing shades over their faces on account of sore eyes.

Venice is another new town, which stands about three miles farther west the bay. It has more houses than Portland, but has now only one family in it, a mortal sickness having carried off a considerable part of the population, which caused the survivors to desert the place. The bay no doubt contributes [285] to disease, as the water is shallow, and out of the course of the principal current of the lake, and produces grasses and confervæ that are washed ashore in times of wind, and emit a disagreeable effluvia.

Although I have been in the country possessed by the Indians during the two last days of my journey, I did not happen to see any of these people by the way. Since coming to Portland, I have seen a few of them in town. One party had brought for sale a few pots of honey, which they had taken out of hollow trees, and some mats, fabricated from dyed rushes, which were beautifully divided 312 into compartments of different colours.

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Most of them were clothed with a piece of blanket wrapped round them, and with leather moccasins, or shoes, on their feet, and the habiliments of others approached very near to the form of clothing worn by civilized people. Some of the men are sprightly and well formed in their persons, displaying an energy and frankness in their countenances which indicate the absence of suspicion and fear.

My journey has been, on the whole, more pleasant than I could have anticipated. The principal obstructions in the way were the stumps and roots of trees, which obliged me to drive with much caution, and often restricted my horse to a walk. At taverns I sometimes found that the landlord was from home, and that no hostler was kept, and found it necessary to feed and water my horse, and to yoke or unyoke as occasion required; but every landlord that I met with acted in an obliging manner, and of some of them I conceived the most favourable opinion.

In the last hundred and fifty miles which I travelled, I met with few travellers, but several [286] of these few were well dressed and polite men. I have also seen some elegant ladies by the way. Indeed, I have often seen among the inhabitants of the log-houses of America, females with dresses composed of the muslins of Britain, the silks of India, and the crapes of China. During the journey just detailed, I must confess that I never saw a people more exclusively devoted to agriculture, and proportionally fewer idle men lounging in taverns, than I did in the more populous parts of the country. The most disagreeable quality that I discovered, was the inquisitive dispositions of some of them.—“What are you loaded with?” was reiterated almost every day; and, “Where are you going? Where are you come from? Are you pedling? Is it goods 313 or plunder that you have got?”<sup>158</sup> were also questions asked. In justice to them, I must say, that they do not seem to be sensible of the indecorum of such conduct; and I believe that when similar interrogations are put to them, they answer without hesitation.

<sup>158</sup> Plunder is a cant term used in the western country, signifying travelling baggage.—  
Flint.

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159 For notes on the following persons and places mentioned in this chapter, see Croghan's *Journals*, volume i of our series: Presque Isle, note 62. J. Long's *Travels*, volume ii of our series: Fort Niagara, note 19; Ogdensburg, note 15; Cedars, note 27; La Chine, note 34; Caughnawaga, note 9; Trois Rivières, note 8; Lorette, note 92.— Ed.

Passage on Lake Erie — Presque Isle — Buffalo — The Falls of Niagara — Kingston — Youngstown — Newark — Passage on Lake Ontario — Scotch Settlement in Upper Canada — Descend the River St. Lawrence — Thousand Islands — Brokeville — Prescott — Ogdensburgh — Rapids — St. Regis — Lake St. Francis — Falls — Cotu-du-Lac — The Cedar Falls and Village — Lake St. Louis — La Chine — Cachnewaga — Montreal — Passage down the St. Lawrence — Sorel — Lake St. Peter's — Trois Rivieres — Settlements in Lower Canada — The Falls of Richelieu — Quebec — Heights of Abraham — Lorete — Indians — Remarks on the People — Lumber Trade — Government — Climate.

*Quebec, Nov. 9, 1820.*

Since writing my last letter to you I have removed from the head of Lake Erie to this place — a very considerable distance; but as I proceeded most of the way by water, I had very little communication with the shore, and very scanty means of making myself acquainted with the country.<sup>160</sup>

<sup>160</sup> Flint's route from Ohio to Quebec was by way of Buffalo, Niagara Falls, Kingston, and Montreal.— Ed.

314

On the 14th I went on board the American steam-boat *Walk-in-the-Water*, a fine vessel of 330 tons burden, with two masts, and rigged, for taking advantage of the winds in the manner of sea-craft.<sup>161</sup> The interior of this vessel is elegant, and the entertainment is

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luxurious. There were twelve cabin passengers of genteel appearance and polite manners, and about an equal number of persons in the steerage; the whole indicating a degree [288] of intercourse and refinement which I did not expect to see on Lake Erie. The southern bank only was in sight. It is low, and many cleared patches were to be seen at intervals amongst the woods. Probably the time is not far distant when the anticipation of Campbell will be realized,

161 This first steamboat on Lake Erie was launched at Black Rock (now Buffalo), May 28, 1818. It was named from a Wyandot chieftain, and in 1821 was lost in a storm.— Ed.

“There shall the flocks on thymy pasture stray, And shepherds dance at summer's op'ning day; Each wand'ring genius of the lonely glen Shall start to view the glittering haunts of men.”

There are numerous islands in the lake, which are all covered with a growth of timber, and were then beautifully variegated with the tints of the season. These are the islands in which rattle-snakes and other reptiles are said to be so numerous that it is dangerous to land on them.

During the afternoon, and a part of the night, we experienced the most severe gale that our mariners had felt on the lake. The swell rose to a great height, and occasionally immersed one of the wheels deeply, while the other was almost entirely out of the water, causing the vessel to heave and flounce very disagreeably. Most of the passengers were affected by the same kind of sickness, similar to that which prevails at sea.

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*Nov. 15.* We continued in sight of the United States side of the lake, but without enjoying a single peep of the Canadian shore. The summit of the country between the lake and the Ohio was in sight. It is high land, but what may be called a flat ridge of the most evenly contour, without any pointed hills or conspicuous prominences. Land birds perched on the rigging. The water appeared to be green, showing that its depth is considerable. In some

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parts it has been sounded and found to be thirty-five fathoms deep. Altogether, [289] the lake presents much of the phenomena of the ocean.

Erie, formerly called Presque Isle, is a small town. Before this place, the British squadron captured during the late war, is sunk for preservation. Some of our people who went ashore here, were told that a schooner with eight men was lost in the storm of the preceding night.

The numbers of water-fowl seen in the lake is truly astonishing. These migrate to the southward in the winter.

Late on the evening of the 16th, we anchored off Buffalo, and on the morning of the 17th dropped two miles down the river, to Black Rock.

Buffalo is a thriving town in the State of New York. Coaches pass from thence to Albany, which is on the route to the city of New York. When the great canal between Hudson River and New York is completed, Buffalo must become a place of considerable importance.<sup>162</sup>

<sup>162</sup> The Erie Canal was begun at Rome, New York, July 4, 1817, being completed in eight years.— Ed.

The New York canal is a work not only interesting to a large portion of the United States, but also to Upper Canada. Already ninety miles of the line is completed and in operation, and the continuance of the present exertions <sup>316</sup> must in a short time finish the whole. Should the government of Britain continue to neglect the improvement of the inland navigation of Canada, and persist in excluding the colonies from the advantages of a free trade, and give their grain a nominal preference in the British market, while that market is in reality shut against it, a new interest must arise in the upper province. England may still give Canadian lands gratis, and garrison the frontier posts with an idle soldiery, but she cannot shut the eyes of her subjects against the facilities to be derived [290] from an

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uninterrupted navigation to the port of New York, which is free to the flags of all nations, and open to the sea at every season of the year.

Opposite to Buffalo is Port Erie, on the Canadian side of the river,—pleasant situation, but apparently without any thing like the bustle that animates the southern shore.

At Black Rock, the river Niagara is about a mile in breadth, and runs at the rate of eight knots per minute, and its greatest depth is said to be about ten fathoms.<sup>163</sup> The lake, forming an extensive reservoir, greatly equalizes the discharge of water, particularly as this river is without the floods that characterize most other streams.

<sup>163</sup> Morse has stated the average depth at this place (the ferry) to be twenty-five feet. According to him, its average rapidity from thence to Chipeway is six miles an hour, and that at the ferry it is much greater.— Flint.

Comment by Ed. Jedidiah Morse, *American Gazetteer* (Boston, 1797).

One of the passengers on board the steam-boat, a Captain of the United States army, on his way to Fort Niagara, agreed to travel along with me. We hired a two-horse waggon to carry ourselves and baggage. The actual portage to the falls of Niagara is only seven miles; but as we found that there was no boat in readiness to sail from Black Rock, we resolved to proceed the whole way by land, which is thirty-four miles. The gentleman with whom I <sup>317</sup> travelled was on his return from Green Bay, an inlet of Lake Michigan, where he had gone with some soldiers who were banished to that place. Green Bay is a place of exile, so far removed from the other settlements of the United States, that culprits have it not in their power to escape from thence.

Our journey down the southern bank of the river was extremely pleasant. The banks are low [291] and verdant to the water's edge, and the margin, in most parts, forming fine curves, smooth as if finished by art. The islands are also low and covered with luxuriant timber. It is the extent of water-prospect, bounded in every direction by woods, that

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constitutes the grandeur of this part. At the lower extremity of Grand Island, the sheet of water seems to be about three miles broad. The soil is good, and yields better pasturage and hay than the lands of the more southern parts of the continent. A happy compensation for the severity of the northern winter.

On approaching within two or three miles of the falls, a cloud of spray is to be seen rising 600 or 700 feet into the air. At that distance, the noise of the waters has something like the effect of a strong wind among the trees of a forest.

Immediately above the precipice, there is an island beautifully wooded, with a mixture of white cedars and other ever-green trees, which divides the river into two unequal parts, leaving the principal channel toward the Canadian shore. The head of this island, and the beach of the United States side of the river, are connected by a rude wooden bridge, which must have been constructed with great difficulty, as the bottom is of rock, and the water runs with great velocity. On both sides of the island the declivity is great, and the furious stream is broken at 318 intervals by falling over shelving rocks. The division of the rapids toward the Canadian side, would have been remarked as highly interesting, had it been situated somewhere else than immediately adjoining to the great falls of Niagara.

The stranger, on arriving at the point of land close at the head of the cataract, and that juts over [292] the tremendous abyss, is in a moment arrested by the awful grandeur of the scene, or if he is at all inclined to motion, it is to recede from the precipice. The sight of an immense volume of water poured over a perpendicular cliff, situated almost under his feet, 164 into the chasm below, and the thundering noise, are calculated to excite a degree of astonishment that borders on dismay.

164 The height of the division of the falls that lies between the island and the south-east shore has been formerly estimated at 160 feet. I have been told that a measurement made last summer has determined it to be 162 feet.— Flint.

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The part of the river which passes between the island and the south-easterly shore, falls over the abrupt edge of a precipice that has a few small gaps in it; the water discharged is necessarily deep in these, and forms green columns, which descend twenty or thirty feet before they assume the whiteness that is uniform over other parts of the sheet that here spends its fury on a heap of large blocks which have been undermined and detached from the rocks above. A vast body of dense spray deflected from those large masses of stone, flies off horizontally, and in every other direction, and completely obscures the bottom of the fall, and a considerable portion of the chasm adjoining.

The chasm, from the falls downward, is bounded on both sides by perpendicular cliffs. After descending seventy or eighty feet by a wooden stair, the way to the water's edge is down a steep footslope, amongst large 319 blocks of stone, and small trees of white cedar which line the banks, and add much to the beauty of this grand ravine.

A small skiff is kept for the convenience of those who would have a view of the falls from below. Sailing here sometimes exposes the traveller to [293] have his clothes wet from the falling vapours, the waters being so much agitated; but as the commotion is nothing more than the heavings of an eddy that comes into contact with the stream, no danger whatever is to be apprehended, and I am apt to believe that few visitors will forego the pleasure of crossing at this place.

It was not till I got afloat on the river that I obtained a comprehensive view of the whole cataract. The part between the island and the north-western shore, forms a hollow curve that is called the Horse-shoe Bend. It is in the inmost recess of this bay that the greatest quantity of water is precipitated, and from this part the most deeptoned sounds seemed to proceed. The great body of water which dashes from the summit of the Horse-shoe Bend, is evidenced by the majestic curve that the liquid forms, where it rolls over the top of the rock, and by the green colour that it retains till the vast column is concealed by the waters

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which rise in revulsion from the vortex below. It is also over the Horse-shoe Bend, that the vapour ascends in the thickest cloud, and to the greatest height.

On the margin of the river, I observed some logs of timber, that had been put ashore by the eddy. They were large round trees, which appeared to have been cut across at the lengths of twelve and sixteen feet, such as are cut into boards at saw-mills. Several of them were split asunder throughout their whole length. Others of them had some of the annular layers of the timber peeled off, and the remaining surfaces bruised and marked, as if they had been beat all over with a weighty hammer or a blunt axe. The ends of the logs were round, somewhat resembling a parabolic figure.

[294] The ascent of the northern bank, is performed by climbing the steep foot-slope by a rugged path that winds amongst large stones, and ultimately surmounting the cliff by a wooden stair;—a fatiguing task, but one which is amply repaid by the commanding situation of the high ground on the Canadian side. As the cascade runs obliquely across the river, and exposes the concavity to the northward, the spectator is here, as it were, placed a little beyond the focus of the grandest amphitheatre. It is also in his power to approach close to the extremity of the pitch, and overlook the smoking Horse-shoe Bend, and peer down on the awful but indescribable convulsions that agitate the foaming bay.

The falls of Niagara are much visited by strangers, as during our short stay there we met with several persons who were examining them. There is a large tavern on each side of the river, and in the *album* kept at one of these, I observed that upwards of a hundred folio pages had been written with names within five months.

Immediately before reaching Kingston, we descended a steep ridge or step in the country. Opposite to this place is Queenstown, on the Canadian side of the river. Both these towns are at the lower end of the portage of Niagara. The chasm through which the river runs from the falls to this place, renders it highly probable that the cataract once poured itself over the ridge just noticed, and that it has subsequently made its progress upward to its

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present place. It would be interesting to ascertain the relative levels of the ridge above Kingston, and the old 321 beach of Lake Erie, that has been observed in the great prairie.

Late in the evening we stopped at Youngstown, a small village near the confluence of the river [295] Niagara with Lake Ontario. At this place I heard the noise of the falls, which were eighteen miles distant.

On the 18th, I crossed the river to the town of Niagara, now called Newark. On the United States side of the mouth of the river stands the old fort Niagara; on the Canadian side is Fort George, of later erection. The 18th was a day of much parade there; the governor of the upper province being engaged in reviewing the troops of the garrison.

The banks of the river Niagara are, at its mouth, about sixty feet high, and the ground in the neighbourhood forms a delightful plain, but the people are said to be much afflicted with ague, a complaint common to both sides of the river.

In the afternoon I went on board a large steam-boat, called Fronteniac, which then sailed for Kingston. Toward evening we saw the spray over the falls of Niagara. It did not then appear to be a blue smoky-coloured, and almost transparent vapour, as when I was near it on the 18th, but a dark-coloured dense cloud. This fact agrees well with the opinion that asserts the vesicular formation of clouds, and with the observation familiar to every one, that clouds appear to be dark-coloured and opaque at a distance, and that when they actually approach and fall in the form of rain, their dark colour and opacity disappear.

The waters of Lake Ontario indicate great depth by their dark green colour. It is reported that a line of 350 fathoms has been let down in various parts without finding 322 a bottom.<sup>165</sup> The islands are low, and covered with small timber, and the shores rocky. Salmon abound in the lake, and in some of its tributary streams.

<sup>165</sup> Lake Ontario averages six hundred feet in depth.— Ed.

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[296] 19th. Arrived at Kingston, which is situated at the north-eastern extremity of Lake Ontario. This place contains about 3000 people, and is the largest town in Upper Canada. It was here that the warships which navigated the lake during the late war were built, and several vessels of a larger size than any on the ocean, are still on the stocks. An island before Kingston, appears to be strongly fortified.

To the north of Kingston, and towards the Utawas [Ottawa] or Grand River, is the new town of Perth, and the settlement of a considerable body of Scots who emigrated in 1815. One of these people, who was on board the steam-boat, told me that the settlers had succeeded well; and a gentleman who lives in their neighbourhood assured me, that they have already attained to a more comfortable style of living than the French in the older settlements of the lower province.

On the 20th I sailed in a steam-boat for Prescott, which is seventy miles down the river. In immediate continuation with the eastern extremity is an expansion of the river St. Lawrence, which is called the lake of the thousand islands, from the great number of small islands it contains. These are rocky, and covered over with small pine trees, forming a romantic labyrinth, in which it is not always easy to discriminate between islands and the main land. Markings on the rocks show, that the waters rise occasionally to the height of four feet, but these slight floods must be occasioned by winds, rather than the immediate effect of rainy weather.

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Brokeville is a new town on the north side of the river. The name is in honour of the British General Broke who fell in the late war.<sup>166</sup> The houses [297] are chiefly of stone, and have a neat appearance. In consequence of the settlements forming to the northward, Brokeville is of some importance as a landing place, and in its trade.

<sup>166</sup> For an account of General Isaac Brock, see Buttrick's *Voyages*, volume viii of our series, note 6.— Ed.

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Prescott is a considerable town, with a small fort on the Canadian side of the river. It is a curious fact, that the thriving town of Ogdensburg, on the United States shore, is directly opposite, and though within the range of British cannon, is without defensive works, and without a garrison.

There being a number of rapids in the river between Prescott and Montreal, the intermediate navigation is performed by small flat-bottomed vessels, called Durham boats, which carry about three hundred barrels of flour each. These boats have no other decks than narrow footways round the gunwales, leaving the middle space open, where the cargo is piled up.

On the 21st I left Prescott in a Durham boat, 167 in which there were three passengers besides myself. Two of these were Americans from Arkansas river, on their way for Quebec, a journey of 2100 miles, and the other an Englishman, who had gone out to see the lands in Upper Canada, and was on his return to England, where he intends to give up a small farm that he holds in lease, and remove his family to the back woods near Kingston. From hearing

167 Durham boats were heavy freight craft built along the lines of an Indian canoe. Their designer (about 1750) was Robert Durham, manager and engineer of the Durham furnace, Bucks County, Pennsylvania. The ordinary Durham boat was sixty feet long, eight feet wide, and two feet deep. When laden with fifteen tons, it drew twenty inches of water.—  
Ed.

324 the swearing and rude conversation of the boat's crew, I concluded that they were persons of the lowest character.

The waters of the St. Lawrence appear green, on account of the great depth of the river, but when taken up in a vessel, they seem perfectly transparent. The islands below Prescott are of a rich soil, and, like the banks on both sides of the river, are low, and covered with grass almost to the margin of the water. We passed over four rapids on [298]

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the 21st, viz. the Rifts *le Galette* , the Flat Rifts, the Long Falls, and the *Maligne Rifts*. All these run with great velocity; and at the lower end of each, where the stream rushes into waters that run on a lesser declivity, a great swell or heaving motion is produced. We stopped for the night at Cornwall, a considerable village on the Canadian shore. I was there told the river opposite to that place is so deep, that when the people attempted to drag it in search of the body of a man who had been drowned, the bottom was not felt.

On the 22d we passed St. Regis, an Indian town, which is built with stone. Below this place, the boundary line which separates the United States from Canada leaves the river. Lake St. Francis is an expansion of the river that is about thirty miles long, and from four to six miles broad. The banks are low, and the declivity of the neighbouring lands is very moderate. To the south-east, a number of high mountains in New York State are to be seen. Their distance from the river seems to be about thirty miles, and they are covered with trees to their summits.

On the northern bank of Lake St. Francis, is a settlement of Canadian French. It extends to the length of seven or eight miles, and is only about one mile broad. 325 The farms are said to consist of one hundred acres each, and as they extend from the lake back to the woods, they are long narrow stripes of land, each having the dwelling-house, barn, &c. almost close to the bank. The houses are white-washed, and externally very neat. Their being almost completely uniform in size and appearance, might cause any stranger to believe that their owners are nearly on a parity in wealth.

At the east end of the lake are the falls of St. Francis. These are furious rapids, and a canal [299] for avoiding them has been cut at the village *Cotu du Lac* , but as the cut is not deep enough, the work is of very little use. Of the falls of St. Lawrence river, it may be remarked generally, that as there are no high floods, and as the banks are low, there can be no great difficulty in improving the navigation. There is a very small Fort at the *Cotu du Lac* , which is garrisoned by about half a dozen of soldiers.

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On the 23d we took in a pilot, who conducted us over the Cedar Rifts, the Thicket Falls, and Le Trou Falls. The former of these rapids runs with tremendous fury. The two latter canals are cut, but, like that at the Cotu du Lac, they are too shallow to admit loaded boats. The Cedar village is most delightfully situated on the north side of the river.

The Utawas, or Grand river, forms the division line between Upper and Lower Canada, and falls into the St. Lawrence by two mouths, one above and the other below the island of Montreal. The great magnitude of the former river is manifested by the dark colour of its waters, which are sufficient to give a tinge to the Lake St. Louis, in which the two rivers meet. On this lake a new steam-boat has lately begun to ply.

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La Chine is a small town on the Island Montreal, and at the head of the falls of St. Louis. In consequence of this interruption to the navigation, La Chine is at the head of a portage over which a great portion of the produce and goods that pass upward of Montreal are carried. The inhabitants of this place are Canadian French, many of whom are employed as carters between the landing place and the city, which is about seven miles distant. Cachnewaga, on the opposite side of [300] the river, is an Indian town, built of stone, and of a neat appearance.

On the 24th I proceeded by land to Montreal. The soil in that part is good, and well adapted to pasturage. I observed some farms that are occupied by Scotsmen, and cultivated in a neater style than any thing of the kind that I have ever seen in America. Several iron ploughs which were made at Uddingstone, on the Clyde, were lying by the side of the road. The horses are small, but elegantly formed and hardy.

The language in most common use here is the French. People of every possible shade of colour, between the French complexion and the copper colour of the Indian, are to be heard conversing in that tongue.

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The suburbs of Montreal are composed of narrow dirty streets. The houses are of stone, plastered over with lime. A few private houses, and the court-house and jail, are built of hewed stone. The roofs of many of the houses are covered with small plates of tinned iron, which preserves its metallic lustre well, and produces a disagreeable glare during sunshine. In the end of the market place, is a monument in memory of Lord Nelson. It is a Doric column, with a plaster bust of the hero on the top, and some naval figures in relief upon the pedestal. 327 This compound substance is already yielding to the weather, and probably will not long resist the effects of this rigorous climate. To the north of the town, there is a hill covered with timber, which contributes much toward giving the place a picturesque appearance. In the neighbourhood there are a few neat villas, and many luxuriant orchards. In the streets people are to be seen driving small carts drawn by dogs; [301] they are usually loaded with sticks, ashes, and other light articles. Montreal has a great trade, being the emporium of the upper country, and the residence of the principal agents of the North West Company. The port is accessible to large ships from the ocean, but is not a tenable harbour in the winter, on account of its being exposed to the breaking up of the ice. Montreal is the seat of justice for the upper district of Lower Canada. The court is composed of a chief justice, and three puisne judges. There is in the city, a barrack occupied by a small body of troops. A square in the form of a terrace, called the *Place d'Arms*, for the exercising of soldiers; a college, and a convent, where a considerable number of nuns are kept. The clergy of the Roman Catholic religion retain the tithes of the island.

Early on the morning of the 25th I sailed in a steam-boat for Quebec. There are now twelve large vessels of this kind which ply between Montreal and that place, and one that crosses between La Prairie and Montreal.

The steam-boats, on their passage between Montreal and Quebec, touch at the town of Sorel, at the mouth of Sorel river. Sorel is a small town, and its principal business is ship-building. It was formerly called Fort William Henry, known as the place of the earliest

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settlement of Europeans in North America, and as the scene of the 328 cruel massacre committed by the Indians under the French General Montcalm, in 1757.168

168 Flint seems here to have obtained his facts from a typical guide-book. Fort William Henry, the scene of the massacre, stood at the head of Lake George; Montcalm captured it in 1757, and spread terror to Albany, and even as far as New York. Many of the prisoners of war were massacred by Indians, over whom the French claimed to have had little or no control.— Ed.

The Lake St. Peter's is another expansion of the river, about twenty miles long and fifteen broad. The great lakes in the upper country, and the smaller ones in the course of the St. Lawrence, have the effect of equalizing the stream, and prevent [302] inundations, which are very injurious to the neighbourhood of most large rivers.

In the afternoon, the vessel was anchored in consequence of a contrary wind, which was accompanied with a fall of snow, the first that had occurred during the season. The town *Trois Rivières*, (Three Rivers,) then in our sight, is a large place, and is the seat of justice for one of the three districts of Lower Canada. Most of the inhabitants here, as in the other parts of the lower province, are Canadian French. The houses are covered with tinned iron.

On both sides of the river, a row of farm houses, placed at very short intervals, stretches along almost without interruption. These houses are white-washed, and have throughout a degree of similarity in size and appearance which I have not observed in any other part except the banks of the St. Lawrence. These houses are white-washed, and have each a barn and other inferior houses attached. As the grain is housed, and the barns seem to be of no great dimensions, it is a proof that the crops are certainly small. In viewing these ranges of farming establishments obliquely, the whole has the aspect of a continued village on both sides, with churches at very 329 short distances from one another. Were it not for seeing the uncleared woods, which are in most parts only about a mile from the

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river, and for recollecting that the number of white people in Lower Canada was, a few years ago, estimated at only 200,000, I should have been induced to believe that this is a populous country.

On the 26th we proceeded downwards with a fair wind. The tide reaches to the distance of about sixty miles above Quebec. We descended the Falls of Richlieu, by the joint action of wind, tide, steam, and the stream, at the rate of fifteen [303] miles an hour. These falls are furious rapids at low stages of the tide, but in times of high water they are covered up and smooth. The banks are of a dark coloured schistous substance, very steep, and about a hundred feet high, and the soil inferior to that farther up the river.

On approaching Quebec, I was shown the steep recess of the rock through which General Wolf conducted his army on the night previous to his memorable victory.—This narrow defile retains the name of Wolfe's Cove.

The first sight of Quebec that is obtained in descending the river, is imposing; the shipping viewed in the direction of the line that it forms along the wharfs, has something like the appearance of a thick forest of deadened pine-trees, and the dark-coloured rock, which rises almost from the water's edge, towers high in air. An angle of the fort that stands on the edge of the precipice, and a stone tower and a signal-post that occupy a still higher summit in the rear, are the most prominent objects. On advancing farther, it is discovered that the low ground below widens to the westward, and is occupied by a part of the lower town, and a considerable extent of the circumvallation that occupies the top of the cleft, and incloses the 330 castle of St. Louis, and some other high buildings. The situation and aspect of the castle of St. Louis, (the residence of the governor,) reminds me of the barracks on the west side of the castle of Edinburgh. Indeed the whole of the northern front of Quebec has a general resemblance to the ancient Scottish fortress.

Quebec stands on a point of land formed by the junction of the rivers St. Lawrence, and is divided by the cliffs into two parts, the Lower and the Upper town. The Lower town,

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adjoining to the wharfs, is narrow and dirty, and the wharfs are [304] disconnected from one another by the intervention of houses. The Upper town is inclosed within the fort, and is much better built and more clean than the lower division of the city. The whole of the works occupy ground of the most commanding description, and are well furnished with the apparatus necessary for defence.

On the Heights of Abraham, the place is shown where Wolfe fell, and, till lately, the granite block remained on which the hero expired. There are some fragments still to be found, lying at a small wooden house adjoining, which will probably be soon broken into smaller pieces and carried off by strangers.

To the west of Quebec is Lorete, an Indian town, which is built of stone; and the neighbouring fields seem to be well cultivated. At Point Levi, on the opposite bank of the St. Lawrence, a tribe of Indians encamp occasionally for the purpose of trading. It is curious that the aborigines remain so long amongst the thickest settlements in Lower Canada, while in other parts of the continent they disappear before a very thin population of whites. This must have been occasioned by the French, who have at all times ingratiated themselves with the natives, and 331 even intermarried with them, and by the Indians becoming proselytes to the Roman Catholic religion.

The Canadian French are universally acknowledged to be true Roman Catholics, strict in their observance of holidays, submissive to the exactions of their priesthood, and the loyal subjects of Britain. They seem to retain the depressed characters of a conquered people. Their bow is low, and apparently obsequious, and they are usually ready to make out of the way of any one who walks rapidly along the streets. Many of [305] them are dirty and coarsely clothed, and instead of buttoning their coats, they tie them with a sort of sash that is wrapped round their middle. At meals each produces his pocket knife, the same, perhaps, with which he cuts his tobacco, and spits on the blade, and then rubs it on his clothes previous to eating. They are slovenly agriculturists, and use the most wretched implements, and yoke their oxen by the horns. A gentleman told me that he lately asked

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one of them, why they did not yoke these animals by the shoulders as other people do? The other replied — because the strength of the head would be lost. It is not uncommon to see the Canadian coming into market with only one or two bushels of wheat. Here, as at Montreal, the cruel practice of causing dogs to draw carts, prevails. On seeing a young man riding in one of these little vehicles, and whipping the docile creature till it lay down and turned up its feet, I was much shocked at the conduct of the wretch; and, though you may not altogether approve of the principle, I felt considerable satisfaction from the circumstance, that the profane imprecations which he with great fluency uttered, were not pronounced in the English language.

Timber is the principal article exported here. The 332 period for which Canadian timber is exempted from paying duty in Britain, is about to expire, and a fear is entertained that a tax may be imposed by parliament at their next session. The subject excites much interest at present, and in the event of a timber tax being enacted, it may operate as a test for Canadian loyalty.

The government of the Canadas consists of a governor, a legislative council, and a house of assembly in each province. This organization is vested with the power of making such laws as are not [306] contrary to the acts of the British Parliament. The legislative council is summoned by the governor, under the authority of the king, and its members are appointed for life. The assembly is elected by freeholders, whose qualification is possessing landed property to the yearly value of forty shillings or upwards; or possessing a dwelling house and lot of ground in towns to the yearly value of five pounds, or paying for one year, at least a rent of ten pounds. These assemblies continue for four years at most, but can be dissolved before the termination of the full period. Quebec is the seat of justice for the lower district of the lower province. The court consists of a chief justice and three puisne judges, and public business is conducted by a solicitor-general and an attorney-general. The criminal laws are the same as those of England, but in civil cases the old *coutume de Paris* is retained. The existence of French laws in the lower province

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is said to be repulsive to people from Britain, and is probably one of the causes that determines many of them on settling in Upper Canada.

The climate of Canada varies between extremes of heat and cold. A temperature of 96° of Fahrenheit's scale has been observed at this place in summer, and it is 333 believed that mercury has been frozen by the cold in winter. I am not able to judge of the inconvenience which attends wintering here, but the inhabitants look forward to that season as the gayest of the year. Most of the labours without doors at this season are suspended, and the people sally forth in their sledges on excursions of pleasure, or in visiting their friends. The deep and long continued snows in this country protect the crops of wheat from being injured by the frosts, and enable the Canadians to drag the [307] largest trees to the rivers, a work that would otherwise be difficult in the woods, where there are no good roads. Just now the ground is covered with snow, and the cold, which increases daily, shows that winter is about to commence in earnest. At least three-fourths of the ships that were here a week ago have sailed down the river, and the seamen who remain in port are all in a bustle, preparing for going to sea. Probably by a few days hence there will not be a ship left.

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