

Concerning Emigration 1787

Comparative reflections on the past and present political, commercial, and civil state of Great Britain : with some thoughts concerning emigration

Richard Champion Esq.

1787

I have been long desirous of paying a visit to America. During the year 1783, I had the fullest expectation of accomplishing my purpose, and of appearing there in a station which, affording me the powerful means of exerting very zealous endeavours for the restoration of the lost affections of that country, would have gratified my highest wishes. I perceived, with grateful feelings, the wishes of the citizens of the United States to cast the veil of oblivion over the violently impolitic and exasperating scenes which had passed, and to renew the friendly attachment of ancient times.

I therefore, at an early period after the peace, (Immediately on the administration of the Duke of Portland being declared) solicited the honourable station of Consul to the United States. I had, by an assiduous attention to the affairs of America for above twenty years, obtained a very considerable knowledge of the resources of that country. Conceiving, therefore, my abilities not to be ill adapted to this station, I had the confidence to believe that I should not in any shape have discredited the appointment,

I considered myself, in another view, not to be an improper (I might, perhaps, have proved an useful) person in such an employment. My conduct during every stage of the late unhappy disputes had been decided and confident. I always acted with the strictest regard to the true interests of both nations, in supporting, by all possible means within my powers and abilities, those measures which tended either to preserve the affairs of America upon its ancient system, to prevent the late unnatural war, to impede its monstrous and destructive growth, or to promote the return of peace. I had reason, therefore, to expect the most friendly reception.

When a negotiation for a treaty of commerce (if it merit the name, since it miscarried so early as to leave almost a doubt of its conception) was first mentioned, and I had been made acquainted with the intention of Administration to appoint me Consul to the United States, the Minister, did me the honour, to put some papers relative to the American trade into my hands, with a desire to have my sentiments upon them. I collected my own papers on that subject, which I arranged during the summer of 1783, and drew up considerations on the commercial connections of the two countries, with a view of throwing every possible light upon the subject, for the information of Government. These I presented to the Minister. But as the Administration was soon after changed, I thought it proper, expecting that it would shortly become the object of parliamentary deliberation, to offer them to the public. I have since added a proposed act of parliament, which, I am justified in saying, from the opinion of men, of the first abilities, knowledge, and integrity, is adapted to the true interests of both countries, and to which no reasonable objections can be made.

I have met with the fate of many others who have trodden the same path. The consciousness of having done my duty has been the only reward of my labours. It has not, however, been the only return ; for I have had the end of these very labours, founded upon principles in which the prosperity of Great Britain was most essentially concerned, either grossly misunderstood, or grossly perverted. They have been mentioned by men, now in high stations, as the objections (it was civilly added, the only ones that could be made) to my filling the appointment which had been designed for me. I do not know whether the censures which

have been thrown upon me, for the sentiments contained in that work, merit my attention, or render the few observations which I shall make upon them at all necessary: but I can confidently say, trusting to the rectitude of my intentions, and to innocency of design, either to do injury myself, or to be the cause of it to any person whatever, that I hear these censures unmoved.

By some I have been called an American agent. By one writer I am stiled, “ the Apologist of Congress.” If being an advocate for the rights of mankind—an advocate for peace—an advocate for the return of those good offices which formerly distinguished Great Britain and her Colonies—an advocate for the re-establishment of those measures which had raised the glory of England to an height unknown since that of the Romans was extinguished, is being a professed apologist for Congress, I acknowledge that I am one, and I glory in the title. If it be a crime to have lamented over the measures which marked out for destruction those beautiful and rising colonies, which the fostering hand of Britain had raised for her grandeur and happiness, I am a criminal indeed. I would be an apologist if I could ; but it should be for those measures which disgrace the annals of my native country ; and which (perhaps this may be deemed a crime) I wish to see, buried for ever in a cordial reconciliation.

Is it possible for any one, who, with the manly Gown, received those strong impressions of glory, which the victories of Englishmen fixed upon his youthful mind, and which have since been defaced in the dust—is it possible, I say, for such a person to part from England without the deepest regret ?—The peace of 1763 had left her in possession of a name which was a passport through the globe. The peace of 1783 has left that name sunk, debased, and treated with contempt by every petty nation in Europe. Must I not, therefore, leave my country with the most bitter reflections, who have been the melancholy spectator of this gloomy reverse of fortune ?

It was a mortification to me to be obliged to leave England before the winter. I was deprived by it of the satisfaction of taking leave of many valuable friends, whom the recess of Parliament had dispersed in their several counties. But such was the disgusting and ungentleman-like behaviour of my successor in office, (a strong proof from the obliging, though fruitless, interposition of his principal, of the wretched system of controlling every man of rank in Administration) that I could not stay till the spring without very considerable trouble and expence. I was obliged, therefore, to deny myself this gratification.

The last sight of the British shore sunk deep into my heart, and left an impression which will not easily be erased. The evening we parted from it was serene, and the sun dipped his beams to the westward in a calm and unruffled ocean. The Lizard Point was in view.

Nos manet oceanus circumvagus.

For earth—surrounding sea our flight awaits,

Francis’s Horace.

Peace and tranquillity sat upon the bosom of the vast Atlantic, and pointed out the way we were to go ; whilst the gathering distant clouds, which hung over the land, seemed to tell us, that it was time to leave infatuated Britain. I tremble for you and for the excellent friends whom I have left behind me ; and from whom, had I been a single individual, I could not without difficulty have torne myself : and I offer my most fervent prayers to that Almighty Being who holds the scale of empires, that your woes may be light ; and that when our country comes in the approaching crisis to be weighed in the balance, she may be so thoroughly purged from her dross, as to appear again with brighter lustre.

I owe to you, and to my friends, the opinions which I have formed upon the present situation of affairs in England, and upon which my conduct in leaving it was founded. I mean

to offer to your consideration the present state of its government, of its trade, and of its manners ; and, drawing a comparison between their present and former state, I shall endeavour to prove to you—that the government of Great Britain is deranged in such a manner, as to afford, in its present condition, little or no hope of remedy—that our commerce, which, like a candle going out, has just emitted a strong and fervid light, is groaning under such foreign and domestic burdens, as must inevitably reduce it to a very low state—and that the present stile of living in England is attended with such an enormous expence, without an adequate means of support, as to make the first national calamity a sure and certain sign of a great and general destruction of property amongst all ranks and distinctions of men.

From these considerations I shall shew the probability of a great emigration of its people, whom necessity will drive from home ; and I shall then draw such useful inferences, as will, by a timely exertion of their present abilities, preserve them against the worst consequences of the storm.

I shall confine myself as closely as I can to plain matters of fact ; forming such conclusions only as those facts will justify to the most common understanding. In this spirit, therefore, of plainness and simplicity, the most confident with the manners of a republic, of which I hope soon to become a citizen ; and taking my leave of all other titles and distinctions than those which arise from the honourable functions of magistracy, I content myself with offering you my most fervent wishes for your health and happiness, and bidding you heartily farewell.

From on board the Britannia, at sea,
Oct. 20, 1784

.

Cælum non animum mutant, qui trans mare currunt

HOR.

To————

In the words of the same affecting ode which I mentioned in my last letter, and which the prophetic poet addressed to his countrymen, I admonish mine of their danger. I would tell those who desire information, the way to escape the dreadful evils which await them.

*Forte quod expediat, communiter, aut melior
pars.*

Multis carere quæritis laboribus [1].

The remedy is emigration. The road,
America.

Nulla sic hac potior sententia [2].

In the same language I ask them, Is this a satisfactory remedy ; or, Hath any one a better to propose ? Delay not, then, to embrace the prosperous gale. But,

Sic placet ? An melius quis habet suadere ?

Secunda

Ratam occupare quid moramur alite ?

———— *eamus omnis civltas,*

Aut pars indocile mellor grege : mollis ef
expes
Inominata perprimat cubilia.
Vos quibus est virtus muliebrem tollite luctum
Etrusca præter et volate litora [3].

I design to throw together some reflections upon the subject, which, in those parts that relate to the soil and climate of America, will be founded on the knowledge which I have obtained from others. When I arrive there, I shall be able to make myself practically acquainted with every necessary information. I would leave this letter till that period, were there not many people in England, who, being now very uneasy in their situation, and foreseeing great distress, are desirous of making preparations for quitting it. To these, the information which I can now give may be useful. I shall make no assertion that has not the most solid grounds to support it.

We have been lately favoured with an excellent little treatise upon the subject of emigration, from the pen of the venerable Dr. Franklin. He treats this subject with a simplicity which must make it clearly understood by the meanest reader. His intentions were to put an end to the popular delusion, that America is a land flowing with milk and honey ; in which the indulgencies of life are profusely distributed to every idle person who will be at the pains to settle there. America is really a land flowing with milk and honey ; but it can only be gathered by the hand of the industrious. Emigrants must either have money of their own, or they must labour for others till they have obtained a sufficiency to settle a farm for themselves. In many parts of America the necessaries of life cost very little ; and industry (hard labour is not necessary) will soon procure the comforts.

The man who brings with him sufficient money to settle a farm, does this with less pains, because he employs the poor emigrant to labour for him. The providence of God has proportioned our wants to our abilities. The voluptuousness with which the rich man has indulged himself in Europe renders him less able personally to encounter the difficulties of a new settlement. The mind of the poor man being fitted to his station, bears patiently the labours which are allotted him, and works hard in the settlement, in the hope of earning money to set up for himself.

Both interest and humanity make it the universal practice of the farmers in America to treat their hired servants with kindness : they live nearly in the same manner as their masters ; and there are few instances (when they happen, it is wholly owing to the idleness of the servant) in which they do not become masters themselves.

There are three principal points in view to which the attention of those who are desirous of emigrating to America ought to be directed. These are, the situation of the state best adapted to this purpose—the occupation to be followed in it—and the adoption of some regular plan of emigration ; in which the intentions, dispositions, and abilities of the persons proposing to form it are consulted, connected, and well combined. I shall consider these points distinctly.

It requires an examination of the several situations in America, to be correct in pointing out the most advantageous one for a settlement. The war has produced great alterations in that country. There are, however, general principles, which will answer the purposes that I have in view. These will afford sufficient information to those persons in Great Britain who are desirous of emigrating to America ; at least, such as will enable them to adopt some plan of association ; providing in this manner, by a wise and timely precaution, for the proper season when it may be necessary for them to put their plan in execution.

The end and design of emigration to America can only be the improvement of their condition. Those who will chiefly emigrate will be men of impaired or broken fortunes : amongst these there will be men of various descriptions. Those of merely useful handicraft trades may find employment in the towns. These, increasing continually in inhabitants, will be always in want of them. Those who have been merchants and traders, and who have preserved some wrecks of their fortune sufficient to induce them to make another attempt, will probably do it to advantage in the sea ports, which have grown rich and populous by the commercial spirit of their inhabitants. Others, on the contrary, will be more disposed to make settlements in the country, in some state where there is great plenty of vacant lands, where the soil is fertile, and the climate good.

I premise that I am not writing to men who have a sufficient fortune to live upon the income which it produces. These require no advice, as they may spend this income satisfactorily in almost any settled country. They may do it in London, Newcastle, Glasgow, Liverpool, or Bristol : they may do it in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, or Charles Town, the great sea ports of America ; and with more advantage, as these towns being in a state of increase, money may be disposed of with greater security and profit by employing it in ground rents and similar securities.

The persons in Great Britain desirous of forming a plan of emigration, to whom I desire chiefly to address myself, are those who are either masters of property sufficient to settle a tolerable estate in a new country, or such who, having no property of their own, must labour for the others in some shape or other. The latter may be divided into two classes : the one of those, who, having been labourers in their own country, must continue in that station ; the other, of men of education, who must supply the want of money by industry and abilities,

I have taken notice already of the employments which emigrants will find in the great towns. I have confined them merely to commerce, and useful handicraft trades. The luxury which now prevails in these towns occasioning a greater expence in living than is proper for them, will probably be made use of as an objection to this opinion. But, independently of such men receiving wages in proportion, this luxury is merely temporary, being occasioned by accidental circumstances produced by the war. The inhabitants of these places will naturally return to then- primitive manners whenever these causes cease. This a short time must accomplish.

War, which is one principal cause of the present luxurious and expensive stile of living in America, is a great enemy to regularity of manners. The vicissitudes to which every country is subject in civil disputes are sudden and frequent. Scarcity and plenty are alternately produced. The government of a country in such a situation must be unequal. Whenever a temporary distress prevails, there is a necessity to make the administration rigid and severe. When these difficulties are surmounted, it becomes loose and relaxed.

When the danger is wholly at an end, a general relaxation of government and corruption of manners almost constantly take place. The first families, who act upon principle, are either ruined, or their estates greatly injured in the contest ; and new men, acquiring fortune by sudden and unexpected events, rise upon their ruin. These people, who, in this manner, rise to affluence, are always profuse of money which they have gained with ease. The old families which remain (such is our natural propensity to imitate vicious manners, and even to carry them to excess, where our pride is attacked) follow their example. One cause is common to all. The distress and scarcity occasioned by the war gave place to ease and plenty at the return of peace. Mankind usually go from one extreme to another. The Americans have suffered unparalleled distress. They now plunge into (I am to be understood both locally and comparatively) unparalleled luxury.

They are indebted to the French for many parts of their luxuries. Simplicity of manners in the American republics neither suited the disposition of that nation, nor afforded them the probability of preserving so powerful an influence over these new states. The French carried their views still farther. By means of dress, equipage, and the pleasures of the table, temptations which are sure to captivate young men, they endeavoured to attach the rising generation to the interests of France. There was great policy in this conduct.

The manners of an absolute government, and those of a republic, where the system of each is strictly preserved, are very opposite to each other. The honours of a Court form the manners of a kingdom ; the severity of virtue, those of a republic. Luxury, therefore, may be permitted in an absolute monarchy, without injury, whilst the introduction of it into a commonwealth will terminate in its destruction. The effect which it produces in a free state is to alienate the people from the love of their country, directing their views solely to their own particular interests and pleasures, The Americans were under the highest obligations to France for her interposition in their favour ; but they are not under the necessity of shewing their sense of this obligation by following the manners and customs of a kingdom unfruitful to their dispositions, and destructive to their interests.

It is very fortunate for the American republics that they have not sufficient resources within themselves to support the expence of European luxuries. There is not only a very heavy national debt due from the United States, but a considerable one from the separate governments. The private debts of individuals, contracted both before and since the war, are also of magnitude. A very long space of time, and the most unremitting industry, are requisite even to reduce these burdens. To discharge them wholly, is not within the power of some of the states. Long credit in trade is an evil which will work its own cure as soon as the ill effects of it are found in the deficiencies of payment. Luxury will then, in a great measure, cease with it. There will be no money to purchase superfluities, and they will not be obtained without it.

At present, neither trade nor manners have found their proper standard. A spirit of adventure has been prevalent since the peace, which cannot fail of being ruinous. The importation of goods has been immense, and is attended with very heavy losses. It is true that these losses will only affect individuals, and that the state will be benefited ; for the supplies having been, for many years, hazardous and uncertain, the country was in great want of goods. The introduction, therefore, of such quantities into all parts of the vast continent of America, cannot fail of advantageous effects to the people at large. But though this event will be productive of good in the end, yet the sufferings of the mercantile interest, and the blow which credit will sustain, must make it severely felt in the operation.

The effects, however, will be much less severe in these states than in the settled governments in Europe. Such rising commercial republics as the United States will recover with ease from the shock.

It may be objected to me, that I have digressed too much in the consideration of this subject ; but the luxuries of the great towns in America have been represented in such a manner in Europe as to alarm those who are desirous of emigrating to the United States. Many have supposed themselves in greater danger of having their reduced fortunes wholly sunk in expences, than in receiving sufficient advantages to enable them, by industry, to repair them. I, therefore, thought this explanation necessary.—My next letter will treat of those countries which are most advantageous for a settlement.—Farewel.

From on board the *Britannia*, at sea,
Nov. 20, 1784.

The Subject of Emigration Continued Particularly with Respect to Situation.

*Tibur Argæo positum colona.
Sit meæ sedes utinam senectæ.
Sit modus lasso maris et viarum,
Militiæque———
Ille terrarum mihi præter omnes,
Angulus ridet ;———
Ille te mecum locus, et beatæ
postulant arces———*

HOR.

THE following general principle may be laid down with respect to the fixing upon a situation in America for new settlements : that the farther they are removed from the sea coasts, the more profitable will be the establishment, from the superiority both of soil and climate. The coasts were first settled on account of their easy communication with Europe ; but they are (those of New England alone excepted) the worst lands and the most unhealthy climate in all the states.

The interior parts of America afford the fairest prospect of advantage to settlers. These, which were increasing in a wonderful degree before the war, received a severe shock from its calamities ; yet a few years of peace will (it is astonishing how soon a country recovers the ravage of war) restore these ruined settlements, and fill them with a new people.

The states of New York and Pennsylvania have large tracts of fertile land, extending to the lakes, proper for the forming settlements, and very capital ones have already been made. The climate, though severely cold in winter, is very healthy ; and as the inhabitants increase in number, it will in course become, by degrees, more temperate. This country will, in future, prove one of the most advantageous commercial situations in America, having, in a manner, the key of Canada, and of all the northern Indian trade. It has a direct communication with the Atlantic by the Hudson and other considerable rivers. This navigation, extending from the western sea to the lakes, has no other obstruction than by small portages, which, in time, will be converted into canals. The valuable trade of furs will chiefly center in this country.

The severity of the climate in the winter, the vicinity of many tribes of Indians, who have an easy approach to this part of the country, and the certainty of its being made the principal seat of war, (should any dispute arise between the United States and Great Britain) will be the means of forming the people to habits of diligence and activity. The British, at such times, would in all probability annoy them from Canada in the same manner as the French formerly did before the war of 1756.

As nothing conduces more to the force and vigour of a nation than putting it upon its guard, and keeping it in a constant state of alarm, the inhabitants will probably be a hardy, brave, and industrious race. The country will be full of large towns and settlements, and they must be in possession of a considerable naval force upon the lakes to facilitate and support their great and extensive commerce.

This part, therefore, of the interior countries of these states has all the appearance of becoming the most warlike and powerful, whilst the interior parts of Virginia and the Carolinas will possess the domestic satisfactions which arise from continual peace.

These parts of Virginia and the Carolinas are the paradise of America. The climate is temperate and serene, subject neither to the excess of the summer heats nor to the severity of the winter cold. The soil fertile, full of rich and pleasant vallies, finely wooded, and watered by continual springs. The meadows produce grass for the maintenance of cattle during the winter, and the lands even bring forth, without culture, several species of grain and fruits. The different kind of game and poultry are abundant. Wine, oil, and fruits, the products of the finest countries of Europe and Asia, may be cultivated with equal facility in these happy regions. Producing an exuberance of food, they afford the equal comforts of raiment, by possessing materials from which garments of silk, cotton, and linen may, in time, as the country settles, with ease be procured.

These beautiful, extensive, and fruitful countries have, therefore, every advantage that can be derived from goodness of climate and fertility of soil. If they have not those rougher properties which form the hardy and warlike soldier, they have those infinitely-preferable qualities which constitute the quiet and peaceful citizen. Agriculture is an employment which produces the most salubrious effects both of mind and body ; but there are yet objects for the most active mind. The country is finely situated for navigation. Immense bodies of water flow through it from the mountains to the western ocean ; and there being (as I have observed in another place) no other obstructions than small portages, canals will be cut, and commerce and navigation become a considerable object.

In the inland country of Virginia and North Carolina the settlements, in many parts, extend to the mountains. In the eastern part of Virginia, settlements have been made in the mountains themselves, where some industrious Germans, who found the lands in the vallies taken up, have established considerable plantations ; there is, therefore, no room for new settlers. But in the interior parts of South Carolina, which made a very rapid increase of inhabitants from the peace of 1762 to the late war, are yet vast tracts of fertile lands unsettled ; and it has this peculiar advantage, that although the whole of these countries (the more northern part in course approaches nearest to that of the back country of Pennsylvania) has a fine climate, yet the Carolinas being more to the south, a still higher degree of delightful temperature is to be found there.

The state of Virginia possessing lands on the other side of the mountains, and having the more immediate communication with the country on the river Ohio, many thousands have passed over them and settled themselves in that tract which lies between the mountains and the river. It is said that some emigrants have even crossed that river, and settled in the country bordering upon the lakes.

By a late settlement, the country to the southward of the Ohio is included in the state of Virginia. All the country to the northward of this great river, extending from Pennsylvania on the east, the lakes on the north, and the Mississippi on the west, are intended to be divided by Congress into ten new states—Washington, Chersonesus, Metropotamia, Saratoga, Pesilipa, Sylvania, Michigania, Assenipi, Illinoia, and Polypotamla.

These ten states, spreading over an immense tract of land, are traversed by the great river Ohio in a course of twelve hundred miles, receiving into its waters the innumerable rivers which are scattered over the whole country. On the north they are bounded by the five great lakes, Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie, and Ontario, which empty themselves into the river St. Lawrence, On the east they have the states of New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, whose navigation, as well as the St. Lawrence, afford them a direct communication with the Atlantic Ocean. On the south they are partly bounded by the mountains ; and on the west by the vast river Mississippi, whose source is unknown, and which, after flowing through the

great continent of America, admitting into its swelling waves the tributes of a thousand waters, falls into the gulph of Mexico.

All the parts of this great country, whether by rivers which fall into the lakes on the one side, or on the other into the Ohio and Mississippi, or by those which join by small portages with the rivers of Virginia and the neighbouring states, finally connecting the Atlantic with the whole body of the western waters by means of the St. Lawrence, the Hudson, the bays of Delaware and Chesapeak, and the rivers of the Carolinas, afford a water communication unknown to any other part of the globe.

The countries which I have described, first those on this side of the mountains within the present settled states, and as these become well peopled, the lands on the Ohio were the regions which I had in view when I quoted the ode of the philosophic poet in the beginning of this letter. Referring the remaining part of this subject of emigration to my next letters, I shall now conclude by following the path which is there so beautifully pointed out to us, and, in his animated spirit, call out to my countrymen, “ These are the fortunate plains, where the untilld land produces corn, and the unpruned vine yields its nefarious juice ; where the fertile olive blossoms, and the purple fig adorns its native tree. Honey distils from the oaks, and the high mountains pour forth their waters with a murmuring rill. The friendly flocks present, unsought, their full udders, and wander through the luxuriant meadows unmolested by ravenous beasts : and many more things shall we, happy Englishmen, view with admiration, the rainy winds neither injuring the grain with too much moisture, nor a dry soil burning it up, a temperate climate moderating both extremes. No contagious distempers hurt either the inhabitants or their flocks, the scorching sun or freezing cold being alike unknown to these benign lands. Providence has assigned to us these fortunate plains for a place of refuge from the vices which have polluted our native shores ; from whence there shall be a happy escape for every good and virtuous man.”

Farewel.

From on board the Britannia, at sea,
Nov. 23, 1784.

Offering its blessful isles and happy seats,
Where annual Ceres crowns th' uncultur'd field,
And vines, unprun'd, their blushing clusters yield ;
Where olives, faithful to their season, grow.
And figs with nature's deepest purple glow.
From hollow oaks, where honey'd streams distil,
And bounds with noisy foot the pebbl'd rill ;
Where goats, unsaught, forsake the flow'ry vale,
And bring their swelling udders to the pail.
Nor evening bears the sheepfold growl around.
Nor mining vipers leave the tainted ground,
Nor wat'ry Eurus deluges the plain,
Nor heats excessive burn the springing grain.

O'er the glad flocks no foul contagion spreads.
Nor summer sun his burning influence sheds.
Pure and unmix'd the world's first ages roll'd ;
But soon as brass had stain'd the flowing gold.
To iron harden'd by succeeding crimes,

Jove for the just preserv'd these happy climes ;
To which the gods their pious race invite,
And bid me, raptur'd bard, direct their flight.

Francis's Horace.

The Subject of Emigration Continues ; The Employments of Emigrants in America.

My last letter was confined to an inquiry after a situation in the United States best adapted to the purposes of those who are desirous of emigrating to America, and of forming settlements in that country. The most advantageous occupations to be followed there will be my present subject.

Agriculture will be the general employment of those who emigrate to America. Industrious, sober, and attentive farmers, of knowledge in husbandry, with a little money to begin a settlement, are sure of acquiring, in a short time, large and profitable farms. The fertility of the lands gives them assurances of plentiful crops, and the temperature of the climate gives them assurances of health to enjoy the fruits of them.

In my general introduction to the subject of emigration I have spoken cursorily of those people, who, having been merchants, traders, or useful handicraftsmen, may prefer settling in the great towns. America is not in a condition to give encouragement to manufacturers in general. The following are those who have alone a prospect of success.

All manufacturers of the coarser parts of iron, which, from the expence and inconvenience of carriage, cannot be brought from a distance without great disadvantage—all those who have a mechanical turn in the greater or more useful manufactures of that metal, and which bear a relation to husbandry and other tools, and to the construction of mills of various kinds—builders, carpenters, joiners, masons, bricklayers, plasterers, smiths, glaziers, plumbers, and similar useful trades.—handicraftsmen, such as shoemakers, taylors, and such kind of people—manufacturers of linen from Scotland or Ireland, also of coarse cotton, may, in general, if they are sober, ingenious men, practically and well versed in their occupations, depend upon encouragement.

On the contrary, clothiers, silk and other weavers, Birmingham and Sheffield toy manufacturers, jewellers, coach-makers, and every other species of manufacturers which depends upon luxury, will find no employment. The present rage for luxury in the great towns may hold out a delusive encouragement ; but this will be for the reason which I have already given, merely temporary. When this evil (which I have already observed will cure itself, for the want of money to purchase European luxuries) is at an end, the emigrants of this species, who have found employment, must become labourers. This, however, will be an advantage, as labourers in America are well clothed, and their labour abundantly paid.

But although the first species of manufacturers which I have described will, in general, find advantageous employments to themselves, and may be rendered very useful during their residence in the towns, yet much are the peculiar advantages attending agriculture, not only in the acquisition of a stock of money, but in the acquisition of a stock of health, that there are very few who have procured money sufficient to make a settlement that will not prefer this mode of life to any other employment. This will, therefore, produce beneficial effects. It will be a perpetual fund of advantage both to the American States and to persons of those occupations who are desirous of emigrating to them. New settlements in the country will be

continually forming by those, who, having acquired knowledge by their residence in the States, may be assured of immediate success, leaving their occupations to similar manufacturers and tradesmen who emigrate to America. By these means the country will receive a constant increase of new inhabitants, and a profitable succession of people be kept up in the towns.

Men of useful, rather than critical, literature, of found, rather than subtile, understandings, and of sincere, rather than refined, manners, to superintend the education of children, will find ample encouragement. America, especially the interior parts, is in great want of such characters. She has several seminaries of education, though by no means equal to the extent of the country. In these are many professors of extensive learning, and of comprehensive minds. Men of clear and found understanding, and of acute and solid judgement, are, in general, much more frequently to be met with in America than in almost any other nation. Their writings do honour to the most finished stile.

Agriculture must then be considered by those who emigrate, as the first, all others as only secondary employments. But it is indispensably requisite to success, that the emigrant be active and industrious. He must work in some shape or other, either by his head or his hands. The necessaries, the comforts, and the indulgences of life, may be procured by labour ; but even the necessaries are not to be procured without it. America supports very fully the propriety of the proverb, “ Idleness is the parent of want, and of pain.” No people are more ready to assist the stranger than the back settlers ; but they expect to find in others the same activity and industry with which their own endeavours are exerted.

It would be an infringement of the rules of social Industry, a quality absolutely necessary to the existence of new settlements, were not this to be considered as an inviolable law. In such countries, indolence is an evil which effects its own punishment, and must work out its own cure. The cup is within the reach of every man, full to the brim ; but the exertion to take it must arise from himself. So long as he has the capacity, he cannot, and he ought not, to receive it from any other hand.

I have frequently made use of the term, indulgencies of life. I think an explanation necessary, lest I should be understood to mean its delicacies. No fanciful ornaments are here to be met with to adorn the person, or the high-flavoured sauces of a French cook to pamper the body. It would be a wise conduct in those who have been accustomed to this kind of life, and who are under the necessity of emigrating to America, to endeavour to find out some spot in Scotland or Ireland, where the manners of our forefathers are yet preserved, and where all that is consumed in the family is produced within its domain. In this manner will both food and raiment be procured in the part of America which I have been describing.

The climate of Great Britain bestows upon its inhabitants few of the indulgencies, and is often parsimonious of the necessaries of life. The climate of these parts of America not only grants to the people necessaries, but even indulgencies in abundance. Wine, beer, cyder, oil, will be produced in great plenty. Butcher’s meat of all kinds, and every species of poultry and game, in excess. The mildness of the winter, the richness of the pasture, and the fertility of the corn lands, cause this great exuberance of provisions. Food is, therefore, obtained with great ease. Our next care is raiment.

This, or the chief part of it, must be manufactured in the family. The country supplies sufficient materials. I once saw in a family of distinction in Scotland, both woollen and linen cloth manufactured within the house, which were of a perfectly good quality. A great number of the emigrants to America are Irish and Scotch manufacturers. These have been usefully employed already, in manufacturing linen in America. But America, like the East, supplies an

equally, if not more pleasant manufacture, that of cotton. Of this there is plenty, which has been long in use, not only in the back countries, but in some of the settled parts on the coast. South Carolina, many years ago, when she was disappointed of her usual supply of woollen cloth from England, on account of the war, manufactured a sufficient quantity of cotton for her negroes.

The fashion is as immaterial as the texture ; the less complex, the more pleasant to the wearer. The Roman form of dress had a much greater simplicity than those of the present inhabitants of Europe, whose customs originally sprung from our savage ancestors, the barbarous nations of the north. All the clothes, which were worn by many eminent Romans, were the produce of their own families. The Emperor Augustus never made use of any other. Such examples, given at a time when the Romans had attained to the height of their power, proves that they were not singular. The luxury after this period, indeed, had no bounds set to it, but ended in the common ruin which spread through Rome and Italy. But the proof that this practice did exist amongst the first people, is sufficient to shew the facility of its execution, and, I am sure, with much greater comfort ; for we have the luxury of linen, to which the Romans were strangers.

The furniture of our houses becomes our next consideration. The simplicity of our lives in these sequestered spots will make the fine linens, the rich silks, and the costly furniture of Europe, unnecessary and useless. Instead of admiring the works of art, we must content ourselves with admiring the works of nature. Some of the vegetable productions produce both food and raiment, whilst others present themselves to the joiner, to be formed into plain and useful furniture for our habitations. In many parts, the earth yields iron for the harder purposes of providing food. In others, clays, which may be moulded into sweet and wholesome vessels, made upon the spot, in useful shapes. We have only to study convenience and neatness ; the comforts of life will follow, and amply supply the want of elegance and splendour.

The picture which some late writers have drawn of the miserable state of the emigrants, is truly ridiculous.

Those who are desirous of emigrating to America, and have no money to pay for their passage, endeavour to make an agreement with a master of a ship bound to that country. The master must be satisfied for the passage ; the emigrants have no money to pay him : they, therefore, agree to indent themselves servants for a term, generally for four years, which is to make satisfaction to the master for the passage. Upon their arrival in America, it is necessary to find some method to exchange this indenture for money, or the master of the ship will receive no benefit. This can only be done by the emigrants engaging with some of the inhabitants of the country, to serve them as labourers during the term of years for which they have been indented ; and this in consideration of certain sums of money, which they have agreed shall be paid to the master of the vessel as a compensation for the passage that he has given them.

Great numbers of indentured servants have emigrated this year from Ireland, whose servitude is thus disposed of :—They are treated with humanity and tenderness, have the same food as their masters, and are plentifully supplied with the necessaries and comforts of life. If they have industry, and give satisfaction to their masters, they cannot fall of procuring a settlement for themselves.

There is also another species of emigrants who go from Ireland. These are substantial farmers and householders, who, with their families, have, this year, to the amount of several thousands, already sailed from Londonderry, Newry, and Belfast. They have not only

sufficient property to pay for their passage, but are able to raise a considerable sum in money amongst themselves, which they carry with them. This they generally dispose of in forming settlements in the interior parts of America. Instances may be given where a whole parish in Ireland has emigrated in this manner, possessed of considerable property.

In a country where the inhabitants have a temperate climate, and preserve regularity of manners, they are in possession, as a natural consequence, of health and cheerfulness. The family retire early to rest, and awake early to labour. The diligence of the master is attended with success, which softens fatigue, and excites emulation. It is by such means that the wilds of America have been turned into beautiful pastures, and filled with inhabitants.

In such happy climes, the natural distribution of time, and distinction of employments, have each their just and proper functions assigned them. The irregular customs of England are unknown here. Night is not turned into day, nor day into night. The morning will not be devoured by sleep, nor shall we lounge at breakfast till one o'clock, dine at five or six, or amuse ourselves at Ranelagh till two or three in the morning. These are the enjoyments which we leave behind us in Europe. Instead of carrying with us such wretched habits, let ours be more rational pursuits, and let us say with Fabius Maximus, *Deos iratos Tarentinis relinqueamus*—We will leave to the Tarentines their angry gods.—I shall continue this subject in my next letter.—Farewel.

[1] But some, perhaps, to shun the rising shame,
(Which heaven approve) would by some happier
scheme—— *Francis's Horace.*

[2] There is no plan preferable to this. *Trans.*

[3]——Thus let the brave and wise,
Whose souls above th' indocile vulgar rise ;
Then let the crowd, who dare not hope success.
Inglorious, these ill-omen'd feats possess :
But ye, whom virtue warns, indulge no more
These female complaints, but quit this fated shore.

Francis's Horace

Comparative reflections on the past and present political, commercial, and civil state of Great Britain : with some thoughts concerning emigration (1787)

Author : Champion, Richard, 1743-1791 ; John Adams Library (Boston Public Library) MB (BRL) ; Adams, John, 1735-1826, former owner

Subject : Great Britain — Politics and government 1760-1789 ; Great Britain — Social life and customs 18th century ; Great Britain — Commerce History 18th century ; United States Emigration and immigration ; Great Britain — Emigration and immigration ; United States — Description and travel

Publisher : London : Printed for J. Debrett ...

Year : 1787

Language : English

Digitizing sponsor : Sloan Foundation

Book contributor : John Adams Library at the Boston Public Library

Collection : johnadamsBPL ; bostonpubliclibrary ; americana

Source : Internet Archive

<http://archive.org/details/comparativerefle00cham>

Edited and uploaded to www.augty.org

April 2 2013