

ART. III.—Documents and Proceedings relating to the Formation and Progress of a Board in the City of New York, for the Emigration, Preservation, and Improvement of the Aborigines of America. July 22, 1829.

The destiny of the Indians, who inhabit the cultivated portions of the territory of the United States, or who occupy positions immediately upon their borders, has long been a subject of deep solicitude to the American government and people. Time, while it adds to the embarrassments and distress of this part of our population, adds also to the interest which their condition excites, and to the difficulties attending a satisfactory solution of the question of their eventual disposal, which must soon pass *sub judice*. That the Indians have diminished, and are diminishing, is known to all who have directed their attention to the subject. For any purpose we have in view, it is not necessary to go back to the remote periods of aboriginal history, and investigate the extent of the population, and their means of subsistence, and to calculate the declension of the one, and the reduction of the other, as the white man advanced in his progress from the seat covered by a buffalo robe,* first given to him on the shore of the ocean, to the dominion he now enjoys. Such an inquiry would be vain and useless. The materials for any comparative estimate of Indian population at different periods, are scanty and unsatisfactory, collected without care, and combined without judgment. They are in fact but vague estimates, received and given in a spirit of exaggeration, and serving little more than to exhibit the probable relative strength of the various tribes.

But although precision be unattainable, and, we may add, unimportant, yet the principal facts are indisputable. The Indians have gradually decreased since they became first known to the Europeans. The ratio of this diminution may have been greater or less, depending on the operation of causes we shall presently investigate; but there is no just reason to believe, that any of the tribes, within the whole extent of our boundary, has been increasing in numbers at any period since they have been known to us. This opinion is expressed by

*The Indian tradition respecting the quantity of land first given to the white men.

the Superintendents of Indian affairs, in the report submitted to Congress at its last session, by the war department; and from the favorable opportunities possessed by those officers, of acquiring correct information upon this subject, their opinion must carry with it considerable authority.* The whole amount of Indian population, within the United States, east of the Mississippi, is estimated in this report at 105,060, and is divided as follows.

Within the states of Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and Virginia	2,573
The state of New York	4,820
Pennsylvania	500
North Carolina	3,100
South Carolina	300
Georgia	5,000
Tennessee	1,000
Ohio	1,777
Mississippi	23,400
Alabama	19,300
Indiana	4,050
Illinois	5,300
Territory of Michigan	20,150
Florida	4,000
	105,060

It will be seen, that in the original states the probably has been reduced to 16,093 individuals, and that three fourths of the number now surviving, in the whole of the vast country east of the river Mississippi, are found in the states of Alabama and Mississippi, and in the Territory of Michigan, where the pressure upon them is now beginning to be felt, and will bring with it the usual process of deduction.

In the same report, the number of Indians west of the Mississippi is thus estimated,

Between the Mississippi and the Rocky Mountains	10,070
Within the ranges of the Rocky Mountains	20,000
West of the Rocky Mountains	70,000
Making a general aggregate of 313,130, within the United States.	

*We are aware of the statements which have been made concerning the increase of population among the Cherokees, but we have seen no satisfactory evidence of it.

the natives, no doubt, have become pious, and have gone, or will go, to a better country in the heavens, where their condition will be governed by principles, very different from those which have governed the conduct of men towards them while upon earth. A few have acquired some knowledge of letters and of labor; so far, this is well. But let none imagine, that these tribes and many others are, as tribes, improving their condition generally. I repeat without fear of contradiction, that their condition is becoming more and more miserable every year. I repeat it,—*they are positively perishing.*

It is a lamentable truth, that the evil [the use of ardent spirits] increases annually, and occasions a fearful waste of human life. As a specimen, take the following. In the fall and winter of 1825-6, in the neighborhood of the Carey Missionary Station, near Lake Michigan, twenty-five Indians were either directly murdered, by the hands of their own people, or otherwise *lost their lives in drunkenness.*

I took the liberty, not long since, of suggesting, that the condition of those small bands, who are on little reservations in New England, New York, and Ohio, surrounded by white population, is worse than that of those who have more latitude on our frontier. It is probable they may be more plentifully supplied with food and raiment, but I have no hesitation in repeating, that their numbers decrease faster than those of the other tribes; and that they are more debased in principle, and positively more worthless, than those with whom I am comparing them. This sentiment is the result of my own personal observation, as well as of the concurrent testimony of the most authentic information.

But we say, that their depravity and sufferings have been increased by our proximity to them, and their hopes cut off by our policy. They are too deeply sunk in the mire, to be able to extricate themselves. It therefore rests with us to say, whether they shall be left to perish, or whether they can be or shall be taken out of the horrible pit and miry clay, and set upon a rock, and their goings established,—or rather, they established in a home which they can call *their own.*

But let the policy of our government, in relation to them, continue as it has been and as it now is, and with the exception of the Cherokee,* and their immediate neighbors, I know of no tribe, nor part of a tribe, no, not one, within, or near to all the frontier of Arkansas, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, or

* Mr McCoy is ignorant of the actual state of things among the Cherokee, and of the utter poverty and misery, and we may add, oppression, of the great body of these people.

Ohio, not one of those bands, or small reservations in New York or New England, of whom we can indulge any better hope than that of their total extermination. Even over those, whom we have excepted above, a gloomy cloud is gathering, of which we shall speak hereafter.

I fear the public are not fully aware of this fact, especially the Christian public, who would more especially shudder at the thought, and who have been hoping for better things. I fear too, that missionaries are sometimes afraid to tell the worst part of the story, lest the benevolent societies and individuals, who patronize the missions, should become discouraged, and decline the undertaking. I know that there cannot exist with them any sinister motive to such a foreboding, because their labors, the labors of their whole lives, are gratuitously devoted to this enterprise. But they have been eye-witnesses of Indian wickedness and sufferings. They have heard fathers begging them to have mercy on them and their offspring, and entreating them not to forsake them; they have seen the mother digging roots for her children, and have beheld the emaciated frames of those who, in winter, had lived weeks upon acorns only, or who, in summer, had fed for days upon boiled weeds alone. They have heard the cries of children suffering with hunger, and seen the frozen limb of the half-naked sufferer.

Although we do not coincide with Mr McCoy in all the opinions advanced by him, particularly in his views of some of the more prominent obstacles which have impeded, or rather prevented, the progress of the Indians in civilization and improvement, yet in his general statement of their condition, and the utter failure of our hopes and efforts, we unite our testimony with his; as we do also, when he urges the necessity of removal, of speedy and entire removal, if a remnant of this race is to be saved. Mr McCoy, from personal observation, describes the country west of Missouri and Arkansas, as suitable for the colonization and permanent residence of the Indians. 'This country,' he says, 'is generally high, healthy, rich, its extent adequate to the purposes under consideration, and the climate desirable.' He approves the general plan originally submitted by Mr Monroe and Mr Calhoun, and recommended anew by the present Executive and the Secretary of War, of removing, with their own consent, the various tribes to that region, and establishing over them such a government as will protect, and restrain, and improve them. The details of such a plan he considers at length, obviating the objections which may be urged against it, and stating and explaining the

swer? Is the general government to interpose the arm of power between the state of Georgia or Alabama, and the assertion of rights essential to their attributes of sovereignty? A President of the United States would assume a fearful responsibility, who should thus employ the force of the Union. It would be presumptuous to say, that such a case can never occur. But we may safely predict, that when it does come, it will shake the confederacy to its centre, and that a foreign war would be light in the balance, compared with such a fearful calamity. And who does not see, that in this contest for sovereignty, the uncivilized tribes must yield? Do not truth and humanity equally require the declaration of this fact? There is no mercy in suffering these Indians to believe, that their pretensions can be established, and their independent government supported. In the actual state of the world, none but an enthusiast can expect or hope for the success of such a scheme. We have long passed the period of abstract rights. Political questions are complicated in their relations, involving considerations of expediency and authority, as well as of natural justice. If the laws of the various states, founded essentially upon the English common law, modified by our peculiar circumstances, and administered in a spirit of fidelity and impartiality, which even in this land of violent political feuds, has left the judiciary without suspicion, excite the apprehensions of the Indians, and if they are anxious to escape from their operation and establish governments for themselves, ample provision has been made for their gratification. A region is open to them, where they and their descendants can be secured in the enjoyment of every privilege which they may be capable of estimating and enjoying. If they choose to remain where they now are, they will be protected in the possession of their land and other property, and be subject, as our citizens are, to the operation of just and wholesome laws.

We cannot enter into a full examination of the effect of planting colonies of Indians in the Western regions. From the retrospective view furnished by their history, it is evidently the only means in our power or in theirs, which offers any probability of preserving them from utter extinction. As a *dernier resort* therefore, apart from the intrinsic merits of the scheme itself, it has every claim to a fair experiment. But when viewed in connexion with the peculiar notions and mode of life of the Indians, the prospect it offers is consolatory to every

reflecting person. Upon this subject we shall adduce the opinion of an able and dispassionate laborer in the great field of aboriginal improvement. The reverend Mr. McCoy has for many years devoted himself with an industry, equalled only by his zeal and disinterestedness, to the life and labor of a missionary. Ten years since, he commenced a school for the instruction of youth, at Fort Wayne in Indiana, but the progress of the settlements soon compelled him to retire, and he removed his establishment to the St. Joseph of Lake Michigan. He here founded an institution for the benefit of the Indians, and adopted a course of procedure well calculated to be permanently beneficial to them. The youths were taught reading, writing, and arithmetic, and also agriculture, the mechanical arts, and domestic duties. Their mental discipline, moral advancement, and progress in the business and occupations of life, went on together. The principal and his coadjutors were indefatigable in their application, and sanguine in their expectations, and for a time everything promised success. And we ourselves, from a personal examination of the establishment, argued favorably of its permanence and utility. We have never seen a similar institution managed with more purity or judgment. But the novelty soon wore off, the Indians became dissatisfied, the institution has declined, and Mr. McCoy is convinced, that nothing but removal, and speedy and entire removal, can save from utter ruin those who have been taught, or those who are untaught. During the year 1828, he repaired to the country west of the Mississippi, to examine its adaptation to the purposes of the Indians, and has returned, satisfied with the prospect it offers. He is now directing his efforts to procure their emigration. Such a man is a fit subject to speak upon this subject, and we shall quote some passages from an interesting pamphlet he has published, "Remarks upon Indian Reform."

"You have your missionaries at Gayhead, Stockfield's, Brother-town, Oneida, among the Tuckaroras, Tomnewanta's, Senecas, Wyandots, Ottawas, Potawatamies, Miamies, &c.; but the most they can do in the present posture of affairs, is to cotton, as it were, the pillow of the dying. They have been instrumental in benefiting a few; nevertheless, in a national point of view, all these tribes, as well as others near at hand, west of Lake Michigan and west of the Mississippi river, continue to dwindle,—they are positively perishing, and perishing rapidly.

"Through the instrumentality of your missionaries, some of