

# SOME NOTICES OF KENTUCKY,

*Particularly of its chief town, Lexington.*

Kentucky was admitted into the Union in 1792. Its population was 75,675 in 1790, 230,959 in 1800, and 406,571 in 1810; and 564,317 in 1820.

Lexington was founded in April 1779, but made slow progress for some time; as in 1797, it contained but 50 houses. It has, since that period, increased rapidly, and now contains about 1000 houses and 6000 inhabitants. The streets intersect each other at right angles, and the houses, which are generally of brick, are handsome: a large proportion of them may compare with the generality of the houses of Philadelphia. There are fewer mean, shabby houses, than perhaps in any other town of the same size.

In streets of business, the rents average from 6 to 8 per cent. on the cost. Dwelling houses average from 4 to 6 per cent.

Lexington is situated in the centre of the most beautiful part of the state. In salubrity of climate and fertility of soil, it is probably rarely surpassed. The soil is so luxuriant that it produces abundant crops for 15, 18, or 20 years in succession, without the aid of manure. The beauty and variety of the forest foliage, and the richness of verdure in the fields, render it a feast to the eye—and its aptitude for every species of culture, highly recommend it to the agriculturist. There is a great number of elegant country seats around it, among which that of Col. Meade claims a most distinguished place. The venerable proprietor is above eighty five years old, and has been married about 60 years. His faculties do not appear impaired. His wife, nearly as old as he, is still living.

Lexington has a respectable Library, which contains at present 5800 volumes, and is gradually increasing. It is open every afternoon except Sunday.

The town contains nine churches: two Presbyterian, one Episcopalian, one Catholic, two Methodist, one Baptist, one Unitarian, and one African.

In the Transylvania University there are five medical professors and one professor in law. In the preparatory department, there is one tutor. The academy, which is connected with the University, is under the government of a president and two professors.

The number of students in January last, was 200.

The College is an elegant and commodious building. The Library contains a valuable collection of historical, scientific, and miscellaneous works, in various languages. The apparatus is complete and excellent, and was imported from the best manufactories in Europe. The building for the medical department is a handsome brick edifice, well adapted for its purposes. The library of this department, is an excellent collection, of from 2500 to 3000 volumes, selected in Europe by Dr. Caldwell, despatched for that special duty.

The Academical and Classical departments have suffered considerably during the last year, for want of a president and of funds; but the latter have been supplied by the exertions of some public spirited citizens of Lexington, who are determined to sustain the College. And there is reason to believe that under the new president, Mr. Woods, late of Providence, R. I., who commences his career during the present month, these departments will be revived and be placed on as prosperous a foundation as the department of medicine.

There is a literary society in the town, called the Kentucky Institute, founded by the late President Holly, of which the members meet at each other's houses monthly, in alphabetical order.

The trade of Lexington is not quite so flourishing as formerly. This arises chiefly from the superior advantages afforded by steam navigation to Louisville and Cincinnati, which have drawn off a portion of the trade that formerly centered in Lexington. The major part of the citizens of the south-western states, who formerly either sojourned in Lexington or passed through it, during the sickly months, now direct their steps to Cincinnati. This has cut off a source of the prosperity of the former town.

In order to revive the trade and commerce of Lexington, some of its public-spirited citizens contemplate the formation of a society for the promotion of internal improvement, similar to that formed in this city, which gave such acceleration to the canal system in Pennsylvania. The object is to disseminate, as widely as possible, essays calculated to arouse the citizens generally to the necessity of facilitating the communication between the different parts of the state, so as to act upon the Legislature, and impel them to adopt efficient measures for the purpose. The scarcity of water debars Kentucky from the prospect of ever enjoying the advantage of canals, except on a very confined scale.

A rail road is contemplated from Lexington to Louisville or Cincinnati, or perhaps ultimately to both. This measure would be tremendously important to Lexington, and not only prevent any further diminution of her trade, but would generally enhance it, and pay a noble interest to the undertakers.

Lexington, however, enjoys advantages of which she can never be deprived. She has numbers of most important manufactories, unfailing sources of wealth and prosperity.

There are in the town, ten manufactories of cotton bagging and bale rope, in which 500 people are employed, of whom not more than two per cent. are white. There are in other parts of the state as many more. The annual produce is nearly one million of yards of cotton bagging, and 2,000,000 lbs. of bale rope, besides large quantities of twine and yarns.

There are ten cotton manufactories, some of them on a large and respectable scale. The Fayette factory, near the town, spins weekly between 4 and 5000 dozen cotton, and has recently put up looms to make about 50 pieces of muslin, 30 yards each, per week. Mr. James W. W.'s cotton factory works up about 250 bales of cotton per annum. There are three woollen manufactories.

The Lexington white and red lead manufacturing company, manufactures annually from 80 to 100,000 lbs. of white, and about 10,000 lbs. of red lead. The stock is about \$60,000, and the dividends are about 8 per cent per annum.

Besides these manufactories, there is a great number of other establishments, embracing nearly all the varieties of employments that conduce to human comfort or security—grist mills, paper mills, breweries of beer and porter, rope walks, distilleries, founderies, manufactories of nails, &c. &c. &c. In the neighbourhood of Lexington, about 2000 tons of hemp are raised annually. The culture has greatly increased of

late. Besides hemp, the state produces for export, tobacco, Indian corn, wheat, rye, oats, barley, flour, horses, cattle, sheep, hogs, mules, &c. &c.

There are three papers published in Lexington, two political and one religious. In the state there are from 20 to 25.

Kentucky has suffered greatly by the fluctuations of her paper currency, by the bankruptcy of her banks and by her relief laws, &c. &c. She is now recovering from her difficulties, and has one specie paying bank, with a number of branches, of which the paper is in a perfectly sound state. Her broken banks are winding up their concerns. The bank of the United States has two branches in the state, one at Lexington and the other at Louisville.

Louisville is a very thriving town, and is supposed to have about 6000 inhabitants. The important canal at the falls will probably be completed next year. Opinions are much divided as to its effects upon the prosperity of the town—some believing it will prove highly beneficial, and others directly the reverse. The former opinion appears the more natural. It will be very injurious to Shippingport, a town about two miles from Louisville, containing above 2000 inhabitants, the prosperity of which depends in a great measure, upon being the depot for merchandize, which, except when the river is high, cannot be conveyed round the falls, by water.

In Lexington and Louisville, a custom prevails, which adds greatly to the comfort of society, and which is not usual in our great cities.—In nine cases out of ten, where intimacies exist between married men, they extend to the females of the respective families. Whereas it is well known that in Philadelphia and New York, intimacies frequently exist for years between married men, whose wives are unknown to each other.

It now remains to take a rapid sketch of the character of the citizens of Kentucky. That character is on the whole estimable. Its distinguishing features are, a high degree of shrewdness and intelligence—natural politeness untrammelled by the formality, the etiquette, and the distinction of casts, that generally prevail in older stages of society—and genuine hospitality towards strangers. In these three very important items, Kentucky will advantageously compare with any state in the Union. This character is derived from an impartial examination of its citizens, in steam boats, in taverns, in stages, at ordinaries, in private circles, and in large parties. I am well aware that it by no means corresponds with the prejudices of the generality of the citizens of the other states, and shall endeavour to shew whereon those prejudices rest, and the reason why they are so erroneous. Such prejudices are highly pernicious when they prevail among members of the same family of nations, exciting alienation and hostility—and I therefore hope that the attempt to obliterate them will not be regarded with indifference by those whose good opinion is worth cultivating.

There are few sources of error more prolific, than the habit to which mankind are prone, of generalizing without adequate data—and from individual cases inferring the character & qualities of communities and nations. We have heard of travellers, who pronounced dogmatically on the character of a nation from an intercourse with a few persons in a town or city—and one is particularly renowned, who having seen, on the day of his arrival, a number of old and homely women, and none either young or beautiful, is reported to have very judiciously entered among his memorabilia, "N. B. All the women in this

place "old and ugly."

It is not very honourable to human nature that this tendency to generalization is more prevalent as regards deformity of character than the contrary. Fifty upright or virtuous individuals, of any particular profession, community, or nation, will not be so likely to induce us to pourtray the whole mass *couleur de rose*, as ten or a dozen fraudulent or worthless persons to lead us to assume a general worthlessness.

When once a national character is blemished, whether right or wrong, every incident that occurs, tending to afford any sort of support to the blemish, is caught at with avidity, and regarded as "confirmation strong as proofs from holy writ." Whereas ten cases equally strong, occur in nations not lying under such blemish, attach no national disgrace.

It is within the recollection of most of us, that a strong prejudice prevailed against the people of New England, at no very distant day: & every petty trick perpetrated by a New England man was triumphantly adduced in full proof of the correctness of the prejudice. Thus the whole district of country, containing above a million and a half of souls, was made responsible for the misconduct of every individual in it.—The injustice of this procedure is now well known and acknowledged by men of liberal minds—although it still lingers among a few of the low & the vulgar.

To apply this reasoning to Kentucky, among the early settlers in that state were many low, disorderly, and profligate characters, by whom it was regarded as a place of refuge, an asylum for the abandoned and worthless. Though those characters bore but a small proportion to the mass of the population, they served to affix a stigma on the whole. Such a stigma is not easily removed—and it is to be regretted that little or no pains have been taken to remove it, although a total change has taken place—and although the people of the state may fairly vie with their fellow citizens of other states.

One circumstance which tends to perpetuate the prejudice is the conduct of the Kentucky boatmen on the Ohio and the Mississippi, some of whom appear to pride themselves on the roughness and rudeness of their manners—"half horse, half alligator," &c. But it would be quite as just to characterise the inhabitants of New York from the conduct of the boatmen who ply at the ferries on the Hudson or the East River, as the people of Kentucky from the boatmen of the Ohio and Mississippi.

Many people believe that human life is most wantonly sported with in Kentucky—and that there is danger of murder in passing through the state. This is a miserable error. That homicide has increased within a few years in the United States, is a lamentable truth—and that Kentucky has partaken of the crime is beyond doubt. But it is equally true that it is full as prevalent in some, and more prevalent in other states to which no particular censure attaches on this ground.

The writer of this has travelled a considerable distance through the state—sojourned some time in Lexington and Louisville,—and had very extensive intercourse with citizens of various descriptions, and different parties: and during the whole time never met with or saw a single instance of the slightest departure from the strictest rules of propriety and decorum, even in classes among whom such a departure is elsewhere not unfrequent. So far as Lexington is concerned, he believes that in every thing that renders society respectable, it is not inferior to any city or town in the Union. HAMILTON.

Philadelphia, Aug. 23, 1836.