

"AMERICA AND THE AMERICANS."

While rummaging about a second-hand book store at Nebraska City, THE CONSERVATIVE came across a dilapidated looking volume, entitled "America and the Americans." It was a collection of notes written by Prince Achille Murat, at one time colonel in the Belgium guard. Upon leaving the service of King Leopold, Prince Murat came to America and found a new home in Florida. The notes were his impressions of the American people after a residence of nine years among them. They were probably written about 1830.

The historian contributes to the welfare of society and aids to intelligent political action, not by telling us at length about the personality of rulers or giving us the details of battles, but by imparting to us the history of society, picturing to us people, that we may comprehend the progress and development of a nation. The letters of Prince Murat are of genuine historical merit. He tells us about the people, their prejudices, local characteristics, industrial and political life. He faithfully portrays American life as it was nearly three quarters of a century ago. In speaking about the wonderful possibilities of the great West his words were more than prophetic. The notes are valuable too in that they give us the opinion of an intelligent foreigner of our country and its institutions.

The following is reproduced from the work and is peculiarly interesting as descriptive of the United States as they were then:

Slaveholding States.

"All the states south of the Potomac, and Maryland to the north, all which we call "Slaveholding States," are altogether agricultural. What little commerce exists is in the hands of people from the North, and it is only of late years that Maryland has begun to apply herself to manufactures. Throughout this whole extent of country, Baltimore is the only eastern town, and to the west New Orleans, which employ their capital therein. At Charleston, Savannah, etc., capital is in the hands of the New York merchants, while the commercial part is performed there by their agents. To the northwest of that line, the country is altogether agricultural. This is the case in Pennsylvania, with the exception of Philadelphia. To the northeast the interests are at least equally divided.

"This first division has a sensible influence on our policy. The northern states look upon our slaves and prosperity with a jealous eye, while we envy them nothing, all which they produce we consume, and if they have more capital than we have, our revenue is larger. So long as they confine themselves to denouncing slavery, and in the construction of establishments on the coast of Africa, we will not take um-

brage, but should their spirit of proselytism lead them to attempt the emancipation of the slaves, the legislatures of our states would be compelled to interfere, and should congress wish to make laws in reference thereto, as was attempted on the admission of Missouri into the Union, the noblest structure ever raised by man—that of the great Confederation of America—would be destroyed. The southern states would be compelled to separate from the northern. Such an event, however, I hope, is but imaginary. The hypocritical interest a certain class of men affect in behalf of our slaves will not advance them one day towards emancipation, but only tends to render their position in some respects less supportable. This emancipation (which every enlightened man desires to be accomplished) can only really be effected by time and the private interests of the proprietors. Any attempt to precipitate this measure would be to throw open the southern states to internal convulsions, and to dissolution of the Union, without any advantage whatever, accruing to the states of the North.

"Another grand division is observable in the character of the people, between those of the south, northeast, the west, and centre. This is so strong, as to change altogether the aspect of the country.

New England.

The six states of New England, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine, and Rhode Island, form of themselves a very remarkable constellation among the states of the Union. Their interests, prejudices, laws, even to their peculiarities and accent, are the same. They are what the rest of the Union call "Yankees," a term which the English very erroneously, and more from ignorance, apply to all Americans without distinction. These six republics fraternize together. Their industry and capitals are immense.

"Their flag extends over the ocean. They man both our naval and mercantile marine; and have given birth to many of our greatest men. The character of their people in general is remarkable, and distinct from every other on earth. The most gigantic enterprises daunt them not; argument as to the consequence disheartens them not, while they are characterized by a spirit truly *sui-generis*. These men appear born for calculation from the uttermost cent and rising progressively up to millions, without losing one particle of exactitude and ordinary insight.

"This spirit of calculation is marvelously connected with a rigid observation of Sunday which they call "Sabbath," and of all the puritanical practices of the Presbyterian religion which they have generally adopted. Upon this point they are so scrupulous, that a brewer

was censured in the church for having brewed on a Saturday, which circumstance caused the beer to work on Sunday! This is certainly a specimen of religious hypocrisy. They glory in designating their country as "the land of steady habits," not that they are more virtuously disposed, but that they put on a penitential air once a week, and on Saturdays eat salt fish and apple pies.

"Boston, their capital, abounds however in men eminent in letters. It is the Athens of the Union; it was the cradle of liberty, and produced several of her most zealous defenders in her councils as on her battle fields. Instruction is there on a more extended scale than in any other part of the world. They have extensive views, and possess within themselves all that leads to great results without, however, abandoning the sordid principles of gain. In point of politics, these six states are united and vote as one individual. Within them is the seat of commercial interest, although, for some years, they have turned their attention toward manufactures, with the success which attends all they undertake. The country is very populous—extremely well cultivated, and the capital there employed in agriculture is even as considerable as that absorbed by commerce.

New York.

"The Middle States are far from being so united in interest, or possessing so marked a characteristic. The state of New York forms a nation of more than a million souls.

"Nothing in the world can be compared to the spirit of enterprise, activity and industry of the people. There are no contracted views here—they talk of dollars by the million; matters of interest are conducted with a remarkable rapidity, and without risking any very serious reaction. All goes forward with regular but giant strides. This state of things received a great impulse from the active genius of the Governor, M. De Witt Clinton, in whom originated the first idea of forming the great canal which unites Lake Erie to the sea. The activity of the state is so powerful, that it is entirely absorbed in itself, and has no time to trouble itself with the affairs of the Union. In general her influence therein is hardly felt; for, being absorbed in herself, as it were, she centralizes in her own deputation the interest of agriculture, commerce, and manufacture. Commercial interest is, however, therein paramount. It is somewhat remarkable that this state has furnished but few men of superior genius to the national councils. Their talents seem absorbed and, in a measure, annihilated in internal policy, which is of an extremely complicated character, and is looked upon as being full of strange intrigues and developments. A stranger would comprehend nothing further than he would observe personal