

1849

American Prejudices

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from one of the engraved slabs found by Hammer, and also from Bar. vi. 30. They had no taxes to pay (Diod. i. 28), and received their salaries in provisions, &c. One of their perquisites was the daily offering made to Bel, which consisted of eighty-four bushels of wheat, forty sheep, and three buckets of wine. (Beros. ap. Joseph. Antiq., x. 11.) These offerings, made to the God, went to support the families of the priests.

We shall continue this subject on a future occasion.

AMERICAN PREJUDICES.

WE are a people much given to strong likes and dislikes; and are by no means slow to manifest them, when occasion offers. Both our national and sectional prejudices are alike violent. Separated into independent States, each possessing some distinguishing characteristics, and forming two great divisions *marked by different interests*, sectional prejudices are, consequently, very strong. Any day in the week we may hear the "Sir Oracle" of a village bar-room declaiming, with vehemence, upon the superior advantages his native State possesses and maintains over her neighbors. Frothy political demagogues, anxious to gain the public ear, are ever ready to bestir the feelings, and foment the dissensions, which unfortunately disturb the two great sections of the country. The Northerner is ready to affirm that the march of civilization, the progress of arts and industry, are arrested, at Mason and Dixon's line, by the inertness and apathy of the South; the Southerner, in his turn, is ready to retaliate, with the charge of unwarrantable interference in his domestic institutions, on the part of his stirring neighbors of the North. Were it not for the strenuous exertions of the wise and patriotic men found in all sections of the country, these feelings would find vent in something stronger than words. Fortunately for our peace, there is always a large and influential body of conservatives who ever stand ready to mediate between the adverse parties; to repress, on the one hand, the too busy interference of northern enthusiasts with southern rights, and to allay, on the other hand, the too hasty jealousy of northern encroachment manifested by the South.

But these local and sectional feelings seem all to be merged in one great national sentiment—dislike and jealousy of Great Britain. Indeed, this is but natural, after the wars which England has waged, first upon our freedom, and then upon our maritime rights. But the similarity between the language, manners, and institutions, and the possession of a common literature, would have seemed sufficient to have done away, ere this, with the strong prejudices existing between the two nations.

Yet this very likeness, we think, has greatly aided to keep alive the national ill-will.

Both ridicule and abuse have been heaped, and with no sparing hand, upon our simple republican institutions by the haughty Britons, proud of their ancient monarchical government; and the possession of a common language has only brought these things home to every American with ten-fold force. He can fully appreciate what is thus urged in his mother tongue, and nourishes, then, with greater warmth, the animosity which he previously felt. He deeply resents the unnatural conduct of the mother country, who uses the language native to both as the vehicle of abuse and misrepresentation, instead of praise and encouragement.

British travelers in this country have felt themselves bound, it seems, to repay American hospitality with English abuse; and have returned to entertain their credulous countrymen with fanciful pictures of republican barbarism, or to astound them with cock and bull stories of miserable slaves, sinking beneath stripes and chains.

So much of this trash has been written and circulated, that it is not wonderful that the great mass of our people should cherish a considerable degree of jealousy and resentment toward a nation whose writers have seemed so sedulously bent upon misrepresenting them. But this *Trollopism* has slackened of late years, and promises to die away altogether; the constant intercourse now maintained, will soon introduce better feelings, and sounder views as to the respective character of each people; and we, as a nation of Anglo-Saxons, will be proud to "shake hands, as over a vast," with the countrymen of Shakspeare and Newton; and they, as freemen, will come to regard with fraternal feelings the people who have established liberty on an immovable basis in the New World.

RECOLLECTIONS.

My heart still roves the world-wide sea,
 Whose paths in buoyant youth I trod,
 Communing with sublimity,
 Alone with nature and with God.

O human heart, untrained to feel,
 Wouldst tune the echoes of thy breast?
 Let beauty's self her forms reveal,
 Or naked grandeur stand confest.

There, where the boundless waters roll,
 Where solitude, the hermit, dwells,
 There school the young, ingenuous soul—
 And vast to heaven its stature swells.