

## CHAP. VI.

*Of the disposition of the natives of America in New England, with the conjectures about their passage hither.*

WHEN God first made man, he gave him a command, with a secret promise, to increase and multiply, and replenish the earth ; of which it is no question but America was intended as a part, although probably it was long before any of his posterity found the way thither, which in the shortest cut they can be supposed to take from Eden or Armenia, could not be less than a journey of eight or ten thousand miles. But in what age or by what means, or by whose conduct they found their passage over hither, is not easy, if possible, in this age, to find : unless the astrologers can find it in the stars, or that it can be gathered from the motion [of] the celestial bodies, that lighted them hither ; none of the inhabitants being ever known to have kept any annals or records of things done in fore past times. Nor is it less to be wondered at, that any of the posterity of Adam should lie hid so long from the knowledge of the rest of the world. It will be impertinent to trouble ourselves with [the] uncertain guesses of all those that have busied themselves to make enquiry into this matter. Mr. Mede's opinion about the passage of the natives into this remote region carries the greatest probability of truth with it ; of whose conjecture it may be said, in a sense as sometimes of Achitophell's<sup>a</sup> counsel in those days, that it was as the oracle of God.<sup>b</sup> His conceit is, that when the devil was put out of his throne in the other parts of the world, and that the mouth of all his oracles was stopped in Europe, Asia, and Africa, he seduced a company of silly wretches to follow his conduct into this unknown part of the world, where he might lie hid and not be disturbed in the idolatrous and abominable, or rather diabolical service he expected from those his followers ; for here are no footsteps of any religion before the English came, but merely diabolical. Stories were delivered by the people of Mexico, the seat of

Montezuma's Empire, when the Spaniards first seized it, which seem to intimate the passage of their ancestors from some other remote place about nine hundred years before it was possessed by them, Anno 1498 or 1500. But which way those people should come is hard to say, for the streights of Magellan, we may think, are too near one of the frigid zones to give opportunity of such a passage; although it be certain that on the south continent, called Nova Guinea, there are people inhabiting, as Sir Francis Drake relates in his voyage through the Pacific Sea, towards China and the East Indies: others therefore more probably conceive, that they might find some passage out of Tartaria by the streights of Anian beyond California. And that which gives not a little countenance to this opinion is, that the natives upon this continent do in their manners more resemble the Savage Tartar, than any other people whatsoever; though positively to affirm any thing in a matter so uncertain is not convenient.

If any observation be made of their manners and dispositions, it is easier to say from what nations they did not, than from whom they did derive their original. Doubtless their conjecture who fancy them to be descended from the ten tribes of the Israelites, carried captive by Salamaneser and Esarhaddon, hath the least shew of reason of any other, there being no footsteps to be observed of their propinquity to them more than to any other of the tribes of the earth, either as to their language or manners. No instance can be given of any nation in the world that hath so far degenerated from the purity of their original tongue in 1500 or 2000 years, but that there may be observed some rudiments of the ancient language, as may be seen in the Greek and Latin tongues, though they are now utterly lost as to the purity of them; yet it is easy to trace either of them amongst the nations since descended from those that naturally spoke the language; but here can no such thing be observed among the natives of America. Besides, here are found no footsteps of the idolatry or rites of any religious worship the people had

degenerated into, nor are any other customs here to be observed, that bespeak any relation to that stock, more than to any other people, unless it be polygamy, which yet was no more peculiar to the Jews than to all other nations of the East. It is certainly known also, that within two hundred miles compass their language is nothing akin; so as one nation of the natives can no more understand the language of them that live a hundred miles from them, unless a little upon the sea coast, than if they spake Greek or Welch; as is evident to them that have been amongst the Mohawks, who live not above a hundred miles westwards <sup>1</sup>from the sea coast: yet their language is different one from the other, as the English is from the Welch. In general their disposition and temper, or inclination, is much what the same all over New England, being neither so sottish as those amongst the negroes, nor yet so fierce and warlike as some of the northern Tartars and Scythians. They are indifferently affable and courteous, yet subtle and strangely revengeful, and malicious. A small kindness will oblige them for a whole generation; and as little an injury, or suspicion thereof, will work in them a deadly hatred and opposition; in whom, if once a spirit of jealousy arise against any person or people, it is scarce possible to allay it. They are very treacherous, deceitful, and cruel withal, when they get any of their enemies into their hands; in being their usual course to torture them with cutting and mangling their flesh, whom they intend to sacrifice to their malicious genius, and burning the wounded parts with coals and hot embers, as it were carbonading their flesh while they are alive; yet so obdurate are they that they never use to express any sense of pain, while the most exquisite torments of that nature are inflicted upon them. But for eating of man's flesh, it was never of use amongst any of them since the English had any interest here. Many of them are very active and quick of apprehension in any mechanical science, which, with a little observation they attain, working in iron, brass, [and] pewter, as well as in timber; but have been accustomed to such a lazy, idle kind of life, leaving

<sup>1</sup> First written, *from the north parts*.—H.

all their drudgery and laborious work to their women, that it is rare to find any of them that care to be held to any constant employment or bodily labor a whole day together. As for our religion, some, yet a few of them, have seemed seriously to embrace it; but until they be reduced to more civility some judicious persons have conceived no great harvest is to be expected of real converts, which, for the future, must be left to the observation of them that come after, there being little progress made that way for the present, notwithstanding that many endeavors have been made in that kind; of which more afterwards.

#### CHAP. VII.

*Of the several nations of the Indians found in New England upon the first discovery thereof; with a touch upon their laws, government, and successions.*

THE northern parts of America were never observed, by any of the first discoverers, to be alike populous with the southern, the land there being less fruitful, and the winters more tedious and severe, so as such multitudes could not herd together as was found about Mexico and Peru, where little care need be taken either for meat or clothing, and not only the soil, being far more rich, but the season, being always summer in those parts, and affording more crops in a year than one, greater numbers might more easily be maintained together. But for those parts that lie more northward, they were, when the English first discovered them, never observed to be any thing so populous, nor were any great numbers ever known to be reduced under any one general head, their government being rather patriarchal than monarchical; that is, some family is commonly found ||to be predominate|| above others, of which the eldest heir hath the sole and absolute government and rule over the rest, whom they use to call sagamore or sachem. The Indians of every noted place, so combined, make a kind of a petty lordship, and are commonly united ||\*in|| one chief person, who hath the rule over all those lesser fraternities or companies. In the places

|| to predominate ||

|| \* under ||