

PUBLIC LEGER.

"FRIENDLY TO THE BEST PURSUITS OF MAN,
FRIENDLY TO THOUGHT, TO FREEDOM, AND TO PEACE."—*Cowper.*

RICHMOND, WAYNE COUNTY, INDIANA, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 1826.

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THE BACK COUNTRY.
Following description of the manner that settle-
ments are made in the "Backwoods," cannot, we
trust, be read without interest:—it is contained
in a letter to the Editors of the National Intelli-
gencer, dated "Camp White River, Randolph
Co., Indiana, July 18, 1826."

SIR—For the first time since the
opening operations of the season have
commenced, I happen to have suffi-
cient leisure to resume a correspondence,
and from the peculiarly interesting sec-
tion of the country in which we are now
located, may afford me an opportunity of
expressing more satisfaction, than you
under any state of feelings towards
either, have derived from the commu-
nications of the last summer.

You will take the trouble to refer to
this, you will find that we are locat-
ed in the heart of that part of Indiana
called a civilized community. We
are encamped upon the line which a
few years ago marked the boundaries of
Indian lands, and where still exists the
best evidences of a frontier country.
The treaty of St. Mary's (in 1818)
secured to the government of the
United States most of the Indian Territory
of the Wabash, the population
of this section have pro-
ceeded at an astonishing rate. Most of
the acquired country has been di-
vided into counties. About twenty seats
of government have been established within the
last year, and contain now, after so
short a period, a population of upwards
of 200 individuals!

The reflecting mind there is abun-
dantly for wonder and admiration in
passing through this literally new country.
Not long ago, as it were, the aborigines
lords of the soil where now those as-
tonishing improvements are so rapidly ad-
vancing. They then but little dreamed
they were ever to be disturbed in
their pursuits of hunting, much
as they would be annoyed by the
intrusion of the white man convert-
ing their delightful wilds into open fields
and pastures, and destroying the haunts
of Deer and the Buffalo. Where now
roam the savage inhabitants? Removed up
the river—a thousand miles from their
homes—and a treaty which is now to
be during the present season will al-
ready procure for the remaining
tribes north of the Wabash, in this
the same fate. They are, it is said,
possessing some of the best lands in
the state, perfectly disposed to sell, as they
are naturally averse to being near the set-
tlers.

It is very remarkable how certainly the
advancement of the civilized settler has a
tendency to remove, nay even annihilate
the Indian. It would really seem as
if they were destined by a wise Provi-
dence to become an extinct race of people,
but the whites, with their improve-
ments, continually crowding upon their
lands, were the intended means of obliter-
ating these unfortunate sons of the forest.
It is, that, in proportion as settle-
ments increase upon their borders, they
lose their habits of dissipation, become enfeebled
in their energies, gradually submit to
the encroachments of these around them,
and finally withdraw themselves be-
hind a safe and peaceful influence which
thus permitted, no doubt for some
purpose to be held over their hopes
and fortunes. It is a prevalent impression
with these most intimately acquaint-
ed with the Indian character, that the pro-
gress of improvement by civilized man, is
to them. I was struck with a com-
mon remark by one of the frontier
men on this subject. Inquiring of him
the condition of the Indians in some
of the adjoining reserves, he replied,

"They are not doing as well now as they
used to; for the Whites have poisoned them
out a good deal lately by settling around the
reserves."

The new counties of this state, to which
I before alluded, are peopling with an as-
tonishing rapidity. Settlers from every
part of our country are daily crowding in,
and commencing the work of improvement.
With a soil of the richest possible kind, the
lands afford, upon a very little labor, abun-
dant means for supporting the immediate
wants of nature, (beyond which, indeed,
the early settler rarely calculates,) but I
assure you it is a Herculean task to subdue
the immense forests, and to reduce the
lands into farms, of any thing like a beau-
tiful appearance. A considerable length
of time is requisite in any country for the
beautifying part of agricultural improve-
ments—here it would seem that half an
age must elapse before any thing can be
accomplished in that way. Indeed the
genius of the people must alter first; few
of them study any thing further, and in-
deed there is no reason why they at present
should, than their immediate wants
require.

It is pleasing to study the character of
the settler in a new country, and to under-
stand and compare all his habits and fash-
ions, his mode of living and getting along in
the world, with those of the inhabitant of
older districts. The first thing which he
attends to upon his arrival at the township,
within which the quarter section of land,
which he had previously provided for a
time, is to be home, is to seek it out and
determine upon a spot to build. Having
found a good spring, the location is soon
made, and he next proceeds with his little
all to the spot not to build a castle in the
air, but to put up a rough substantial cab-
in. His moveable means consists, per-
haps, of a two horse wagon laden with a
few implements of husbandry, and some
trifles of household furniture, all of the
commonest kind, and selected with a view
to absolute necessity alone. He rarely in-
dulges himself, even if he had the means
when he left his former home, (perhaps a sit-
uation near one of the cities,) in any of the
ornaments or luxuries of domestic com-
forts. Probably his helpmate has indulg-
ed herself a little in this way, and out of
her savings, from sales of chickens, eggs,
and butter, while near the city, has pur-
chased a set of Liverpool cups and saucers,
a half a dozen flowered plates, a lustrous tea-
pot and sugar bowl, a japanned waiter or
two, a brass candlestick, and as a matter of
some moment, she has perhaps ventured
so far as to procure a German looking-glass,
with a gaudy frame, and picture over the
top as large as the mirror, and esteemed,
too, as much the most valuable part of the
article. Whenever this happens to be the
case, these emblems of female pride are
soon detected after the cabin is raised.
The China, &c. is found dashing arrayed
on the three cornered shelf, (always
found in a cabin,) and the mirror suspended
against the wall, over a yard and a half of
gaudy flowered wall paper.

With this outfit he arrives at the spot
upon which his future home is to be erect-
ed, builds him a camp of bushes or bark to
screen his family from the weather for a
few days, and turns out leaving his wife
and children at the camp, to solicit the aid
of his neighbors, (none of whom, perhaps,
reside within ten miles of his lands,) in the
erection of his cabin.

One of the most pleasing traits in the
character of the inhabitants of a new
country, which though it arises in some
measure from necessity, originates in the
kindest feelings of our nature, is the alac-
rity and cheerfulness with which, on such
occasions, every necessary aid is contribu-
ted. No matter how urgent may be the
business of the older inhabitant at the time,
it is of but little account how far he may
be compelled to go, or how inclement the
weather may be—actuated by a feeling
which perhaps none ever know but the
enterprising settler of a new country, he
needs but an intimation of the wants of
the new comer, and all other matters are
suspended to assist in supplying them.

A cabin-house, such as suffices for a first
home, is erected in a day—a week is suffi-
cient to finish it; and after a lapse of
eight or ten days, the new inhabitant be-
gins to deaden the tremendous trees that
surround and overshadow his domicile. In
a week or two he has put in his crop of
corn, and commences preparations for ex-
tending his clearing. Thus he progresses
by rapid steps, and in a little while it is re-

garded as an independent farmer, and adds
another to the sterling yeomanry of the
state.

I should be pleased if I could make you
sensible of the character of this part of
our happy republic, especially as respects
its soil, productions, &c. Having as yet
seen so little, I cannot presume to attempt
that which, although a longer sojourn
here may better enable me to do it, must
always be difficult.

We have just had the honor of a visit, at
our encampment, of the Executive Officer
of the State, J. B. RAY, Esq., a gentleman
of very affable and pleasing manners. He
has risen to his present distinguished sta-
tion from merit alone—is, as I have under-
stood, a self taught man, and holds his sit-
uation with the general good feeling to-
wards him, of the people over whom he
presides. In company with him, were
General Tipton and Major Forsyth, who
had been on a visit to the metropolis of the
State, to settle the preliminaries in rela-
tion to the pending treaty with the Indians.
They left this place this morning for Fort
Wayne.

We are just about to depart for that
place also, to execute some surveys in that
quarter. A rainy day has put it in my
power to trouble you with this letter. A
similar occurrence may possibly produce a
like result. In much haste, I remain, dear
sirs, yours, &c.

From the North American Review.

It is a mistaken but popular notion, arising
doubtless from the cruel and sanguinary
nature of the punishments which
have prevailed in the governments estab-
lished on the ruins of the Roman Empire,
that penal denunciations are the principal
sanction of the laws, and the great moral
machinery for the preservation of the
rights of individuals and of the public, in
political communities. This degrading
view of the purposes of human action is,
thank heaven, as false in theory as it is
pernicious in effect. The very fact, in-
deed, that crimes are punished at all af-
fords an unanswerable proof of our posi-
tion; for if, amid all the bad passions of so-
cial man, a redeeming spirit were not ab-
road in society—if the principal of virtue
in mankind did not overmaster the prin-
ciple of vice—if the fear of punishment were
the sole or main motive which deterred
them from the commission of crime—it is
most clear that penal laws would never be
made or executed, because the necessary
physical power would be wanting to ac-
complish that purpose. But the number
of men in a community is small, and the
situations in almost every man's life are
few, where it is only the apprehension of
the laws, which deter from the perpetu-
ation of crime. No, the great body of the
community do not abstain from murder,
rapine, and other high-handed offences,
because they have the terror of an indict-
ment before their eyes. Men must already
be far gone in guilt before they can be
fit subjects for the operation of such influ-
ences. Their natural abhorrence of
crime generally preserves them from its
contamination. And the inference deduc-
ed from this fact is confirmed by the cir-
cumstance that the hope of reward is the
most active stimulant that ever animates
the human breast. For if hope be not
stronger to impel than fear to deter, what
is it that ever prompts men to the commis-
sion of crime? Surely they do not violate
the sanctity of private property *de pure per-
te*, and without the expectation of some
benefit to be attained; nor do they imbrue
their hands in a brother's blood, under the
influence of a mere spirit of mischief, or of
any inexplicable and mysterious fatality
overruling their destiny. Men act from
more simple motives. They perpetrate
crimes on precisely the same principle of
conduct for which we contend as the stron-
gest, and of which many legislators make
so little account—the preponderance of
the hope of some good to be gained by the
deed, over the fear of the evil which may
pursue the doer of it. So true it is that
this fear of punishment, which some would
have to be the grand moral arcanum for
purifying society of all its noxious propen-
sities, yields, in every case where we can
discern the working of these propensities,
to the more potent counteracting influence
of the hope of reward. In innumerable
cases that could be imagined, where the
respective influences of the hope of good
and fear of evil are placed in conflict, the
whole history of human life and conduct
evinces, that the stimulating and honorable

principal of the hope of reward is far more
powerful than the depressing and ignoble
principle of the apprehension of punish-
ment. All our springs of enterprise are
set in action by hope; and as it is certain
that the race of man goes on constantly im-
proving—that his soul has that in it which
enables it to rise superior to the afflictions
and vexations which ally us to earth—that
under the inspiring auspices of hope, he
nerves himself to manly achievement—in
the same degree is it certain that fear is
less powerful than hope. If our laws had
no better sanction than the punishments
detailed in the statutes, the poor expedi-
ents of the scaffold or the prison-house,
slippery indeed would be the foundation,
and frail the fabric of civil order. Fortu-
nately it rests on a firmer basis. The rock
of ages, on which it is indestructibly estab-
lished, is the integrity and sanctity of pub-
lic sentiment, the dignity of our nature,
the innate and inextinguishable love of ex-
cellence of which man's breast is the sanc-
tuary, the desire of deserving and acquir-
ing the love and esteem of our fellows, and,
above all, the certainty that virtue is its
only reward in this life and the pledge of
eternal happiness when we shall have
"shuffled off this mortal coil."

these are the sources from which our laws
derive their surest and strongest sanction.

The false notions which we have en-
deavored to expose, were, as we said,
partly the offspring of that cruel system of
penal law, which grew up in a barbarous
age, and still endures in too many countries,
a monument alike of the ignorance of the
fathers and the prejudice of the sons. But
there has been a reaction also, and if these
laws were originally the rude invention
of a ruder people, they have since been
perpetuated by misconceptions to which
they gave rise. For those misconceptions
have induced legislators to repose undue
reliance upon a mode of internal adminis-
tration, consisting only of the summary
process of severe penal denunciations.
Such a theory is radically inconsistent with
all sound principles of government; be-
cause it evidently tends to debase the moral
sentiment of the people,—to substi-
tute in their minds a set of degrading
motives in the place of more worthy
ones,—to counteract its own operation
by leading to executions so numer-
ous as to engender a savage and hardened
national character, or so rare as to reduce
the chances of punishment, and thus occa-
sion the laws to be defined with impunity.
More than all, and in one word, the theory
is pernicious because it produces a waste
of power. We hold it to be a fundamen-
tal axiom in political science, that no more
power is to be applied to any object than is
necessary to effect the desired end. Now
those laws which proceed upon the hypoth-
esis, that holding up the fear of punishment
is the great secret of governing men,—
those laws which are lavish in the number
or excessive in the degree of the penal in-
flictions denounced by them against crimes,
—those laws which pronounce the punish-
ment of death in any case,—do as we con-
tend, lie open to this unanswerable objec-
tion of a prodigal expenditure of power.
We charge all governments, which enact
such laws, with violating a maxim as true
in politics as in poetry:

Nec Deus interit, nisi dignus vindice nodus.
We say to them: You are false to your
duty as lawgivers bound to consult the
best interests of your constituents, since
regardless of the value of life, you are cul-
pably lavish of it where its destruction is
not needed. You are wasting the means
of government, which social union imparts
to you to be husbanded with care and cau-
tiously applied. You descend to the
ultima ratio,—the last desperate rem-
edy of the laws,—the final exercise of the
highest act of human authority,—and you
ought to be exerting the skill of a refined
and lettered christian in preventing the
crime, instead of wreaking upon the culprit
the mere brute force of an uncivilized sa-
vage. You, wielding all the power of a
mighty people, have levelled it against the
devoted head of a solitary citizen, as if
there were no means within your reach to
secure the nation against the aggressions
of individuals but by urging upon them
singly a war of extermination.

BOOKS, PAMPHLETS, BLANKS,
HORSE BILLS, CARDS,
LABELS, &c. &c.

Neatly executed at this office on reasonable
terms, and on the shortest notice.