

of a few random extracts, as specimens of the spirit in which the Diary is written.

In his introduction, Captain Marryat observes that it is a difficult task to escape misrepresentation, the Americans having become extremely cautious in imparting information respecting themselves—nay, many of them taking delight in hoaxing any individual suspected of an intention to write concerning them. The gallant author learned this trait in their character at an early stage of his travels, and determined to investigate carefully whatever he heard, comparing notes throughout the Union, and judging, in every case, personally, of their correctness. Through this cautious process he has endeavoured to arrive at his conclusions; and though he does not pretend to have been in every case successful, he has been particularly studious to sift the truth of whatever statements appear in his book. The following extract from the introduction will form a clue to his plan:—

“On my first arrival, I perceived little difference between the city of New York and one of our principal provincial towns; and, for its people, not half so much as between the people of Devonshire or Cornwall and these of Middlesex. I had been two or three weeks in that city, and I said there is certainly not much to write about, nor much more than what has already been so continually repeated. No wonder that those who preceded me have indulged in puerilities to swell out their books. But in a short time I altered my opinion: even at New York, the English appearance of the people gradually wore away; my perception of character became more keen; my observance consequently more nice and close, and I found that there was a great deal to reflect upon and investigate, and that America and the American people were indeed an enigma; and I was no longer surprised at the incongruities which were to be detected in those works which had attempted to describe the country. I do not assert that I shall myself succeed, when so many have failed, but, at any rate, this I am certain of, my remarks will be based upon a more sure foundation.—an analysis of human nature.

Passing over New York and the intermediate portions of the Union, which are graphically and humorously described, we give a brief sketch of the capital of Massachusetts, as being more peculiarly English in its characteristics.

“Massachusetts is certainly very English in its scenery, and Boston essentially English as a city. The Bostonians assert that they are more English than we are, that is, that they have strictly adhered to the old English customs and manners, as handed down to them previous to the revolution. That of sitting a very long while at their wine after dinner, is one which they certainly adhere to, and which I think, would be more honoured in the breach than the observance; but their hospitality is unbounded, and you do, as an Englishman, feel at home with them. I agree with the Bostonians so far, that they certainly appear to have made no change in their manners and customs for these last hundred years. You meet here with frequent specimens of the old English gentleman, descendants of the best old English families, who settled here long before the revo-

lution, and are now living on their incomes, with a town house, and a country seat to retire to during the summer season. The society of Boston is very delightful; it wins upon you every day, and that is the greatest compliment that can be paid to it.

“Perhaps of all the Americans, the Bostonians are the most sensitive to any illiberal remarks made upon the country, for they consider themselves, and pride themselves, as being peculiarly English; while, on the contrary, the majority of the Americans deny that they are English. There certainly is less intermixture of foreign blood in this city than in any other in America. It will appear strange, but so wedded are they to old customs, even to John Bullism, that it is not more than seven or eight years that French wines have been put on the Boston tables, and become in general use in this city.”

Captain Marryat seems to have been much pleased with the society of Washington; but expresses disappointment with the “collective wisdom” of the nation. On this head his observations are interesting.

“The Chamber of the House of Representatives is a fine room, and taking the average of the orations delivered there, it possesses this one great merit—you cannot hear in it. Were I to make a comparison between the members of our House of Commons and those of the House of Representatives, I should say that the latter have certainly great advantages. In the first place, the members of the American Senate and House of Representatives are paid, not only their travelling expenses to and fro, but eight dollars a-day during the sitting of the Congress. Out of these allowances many save money, and those who do not, are, at all events, enabled to bring their families up to Washington for a little amusement. In the next place, they are so comfortably accommodated in the house, every man having his own well-stuffed arm-chair, and before him his desk, with his papers and notes! Then they are supplied with everything, even to penknives with their names engraven on them—each knife having two pen-blades, one whittling blade, and a fourth to clean their nails with, showing, on the part of the government, a paternal regard for their cleanliness as well as convenience. Moreover, they never work at night, and do very little during the day.

“It is astonishing how little work they get through in a session at Washington: this is owing to every member thinking himself obliged to make two or three speeches, not for the good of the nation, but for the benefit of his constituents. These speeches are printed and sent to them, to prove that their member makes some noise in the house. The subject upon which he speaks is of little consequence, compared to the sentiments expressed. It must be full of eagles, star-spangled banners, sovereign people, clap-trap, flattery and humbug. I have said that very little business is done in these houses; but this is caused not only by their long-winded speeches about nothing but by the fact that both parties (in this respect laudably following the example of the old country) are chiefly occupied, the one with the paramount and vital consideration of keeping in, and the other with that of getting in—thus allowing the business of the nation (which, after all, is not very important, unless such a trump as the Treasury Bill turns up,) to become a very secondary consideration.

“And yet there are principle and patriotism among the members of the legislature, and the more to be appreciated from their rarity. Like the seeds of beautiful flowers, which, when cast upon a manure-heap,