

and having very few articles of furniture.

We cannot suppose that the family concerns of the Indians could be well regulated, when we consider that polygamy was prevalent among them ; but there were other circumstances connected with them which increased the bad effects of this unnatural arrangement. The husband, instead of extending protection to his wives uniformly made them the slaves of his slothfulness and caprice; and instead of employing his superior strength for the support of his family, prostituted it to the vile purpose of maintaining a cruel dominion over those whom he ought to have viewed with sentiments of kindness and endearment. In this state of things, the education of the young was an object which was almost entirely neglected.

All the Indian tribes acknowledged the authority of a chief, whom they called Sachem, or Sagamore, and to whom they were accustomed to render blind obedience. They viewed him as the legal proprietor of the whole territory, over which his authority extended; and, when inclined to raise crops, they solicited his permission to cultivate the lands.

The government of the Sachems was cruel in the extreme. They ordered their Paniese, or counsellors, who were generally the wisest, strongest, and most courageous men who could be found in their dominions, to be early subjected to a severe discipline, and to perform many cruel exercises, with the view of being qualified for their office, and rendered capable of enduring the greatest hardships. Though they pretended to be guided by the principles of justice, in the distribution of punishment, they made no proper distinction between the degrees of guilt. From the cus-

tom which prevailed, of executing their own sentences, they not unfrequently took delight in the agonies of those whose lives & fortunes they conceived to be entirely at their disposal ; and, from the humble submission which was generally rendered to them by the offenders, they found little difficulty in gratifying their evil inclinations, to any extent which they might desire. The only restraint, indeed, which they experienced, arose from the apprehension which they might entertain, lest their people should forsake them, and place themselves under the protection and government of other Sachems. While, however, they entertained all this disregard to human feeling, they practised the rights of hospitality, and took particular care of the widow, the fatherless, the aged, and those who had no friends who were able to provide for them.

The language of the North American Indians was exceedingly barbarous. Dr. Cotton Mather remarks, that "one would think that its words had been growing ever since Babel," and gives the following examples of the length of some of them : "Nummatchekodtantamcongannunnonash, *our lusts*; -Noowomantammoonkanunonnash, *our loves*; Kummogokdonattoottammooctiteaongannunnonash, *our questions*."

The religion of these tribes, like that of all others who are sunk in heathenism, formed a dreadful example of the mental degradation and debasement of those who have not retained the knowledge of the true God in their minds; and its principles afford a striking illustration of the perversity of the human heart. While they believed in a plurality of gods, who had made the different nations of the world; and