

Another consideration presents itself here. The fathers of families, in America, were totally exempt from that anxiety, which in Europe torments them incessantly, concerning the subsistence and future establishment of their offspring. In the new world, the increase of families, however restricted their means, was not deemed a misfortune: on the contrary, it was not only for the father, but for all about him, that the birth of a son was a joyful event. In this immensity of uncultivated lands, the infant, when arrived at the age of labor, was assured of finding a resource for himself, and even the means of aiding his parents; thus, the more numerous were the children, the greater competence and ease were secured to the household.

It is therefore evident, that in America, the climate, the soil, the civil and religious institutions, even the interest of families, all concurred to people it with robust and virtuous fathers, with swarms of vigorous and spirited sons.

Industry, a spirit of enterprise, and an extreme love of gain, are characteristic qualities of those who are separated from other men, and can expect no support but from themselves; and the colonists being descended from a nation distinguished for its boldness and activity in the prosecution of traffic, it is easily conceived that the increase of commerce was in proportion to that of population. Positive facts confirm this assertion. In 1704, the sum total of the commercial exports of Great Britain, inclusive of the merchandise destined for her colonies, had been six millions five hundred and nine thousand pounds sterling; but from this year to 1772, these colonies had so increased in population and prosperity, that at this epoch they of themselves imported from England to the value of six millions twenty-two thousand one hundred and thirty-two pounds sterling; that is to say, that in the year 1772, the colonies alone furnished the mother country with a market for a quantity of merchandise almost equal to that which, sixty-eight years before, sufficed for her commerce with all parts of the world.

Such was the state of the English colonies in America, such the opinions and dispositions of those who inhabited them, about the middle of the eighteenth century. Powerful in numbers and in force, abounding in riches of every kind, already far advanced in the career of useful arts and of liberal studies, engaged in commerce with all parts of the globe, it was impossible that they should have remained ignorant of what they were capable, and that the progressive development of national pride should not have rendered the British yoke more intolerable.

But this tendency towards a new order of things did not as yet menace a general combustion; and, without particular irritation,