

discussion has enlightened the ignorant, disarmed superstition of its dreadful powers, and consigned to oblivion many erroneous and fantastic creeds. Religious oppression, and the vindictive feelings it arouses, are hardly known. Catholics and Protestants live together in harmony; and protestants who disagree, employ, in defending their own doctrines, and in assailing those of their antagonists, the weapons only of reason and eloquence.

59. In the New-England states, the independents or congregationalists constitute the most numerous denomination; in the middle states, the presbyterians; and in the southern, the methodists. Baptists, episcopalians, and catholics, are found in all the states; but in Maryland and Louisiana, the catholics are more numerous than elsewhere. Each of these sects has one or more seminaries of learning, in which its peculiar doctrines are taught, and young men are educated for the ministry. Many other sects exist, but reason, less tolerant than the laws, is gradually diminishing the number.

60. CHARACTER AND MANNERS.—Foreigners have asserted that the Americans possess no national character. If at any period this assertion has been true, it was then no reproach. In its youth, a nation can have no established character. The inhabitants of this republic, coming from every quarter of the world, speaking many different languages, dispersed over a vast extent of territory, could not immediately assimilate and exhibit those few prominent traits, which nations as well as individuals, in their maturity, display.

61. But the germ of a national character has always existed. It has grown with our growth, and is gradually throwing into the shade those unfavourable and discordant traits, which have disfigured and partly concealed it from view. Who, that has read the history of these states, has not perceived, in the inhabitants, an energy of purpose capable of surmounting all obstacles; a spirit of enterprise, that leaves nothing useful unattempted; a proud sense of personal dignity and independence; a decided preference of utility before show; and a love of knowledge that has dispelled ignorance from the land? They may have been too much devoted to the pursuit of gain; too much addicted to habits of intemperance; too much inflated with national vanity; bigoted and superstitious: but these traits are now less apparent; they are constantly melting away, and those more noble appearing in bolder relief.

62. They whose wealth or talents place them in the first rank in society, are, in their manners, free from awkwardness, formality, haughtiness, and ostentation; but they do not display the elegance or refinement of the same class in Europe. The more