

ularity, till the blocks of snow meet at the top, and constitute a graceful dome. Captain Parry says their huts are numerous in many parts of Melville Islands, in latitude 74° N., and that he saw many of the natives in the islands of the Archipelago of Barrow's Straits, though their timidity prevented any intercourse. These polar men are little, squat, and feeble; their complexion partakes less of a copper hue, than of a reddish and dirty yellow.

There is established in each society a certain species of govern- Form of Government.
ment, which prevails over the whole continent of America, with exceeding little variation; because over the whole of this continent the manners and way of life are nearly similar and uniform. Without arts, riches, or luxury, the great instruments of subjection in polished societies, an American has no method by which he can render himself considerable among his companions, but by superiority in personal qualities of body or mind. But, as nature has not been very lavish in her personal distinctions, where all enjoy the same education, all are pretty much on an equality, and will desire to remain so. Liberty, therefore, is the prevailing passion of the Americans; and their government, under the influence of this sentiment, is, perhaps, better secured than by the wisest political regulations. They are very far, however, from despising all sort of authority: they are attentive to the voice of wisdom, which experience has conferred on the aged, and they enlist under the banners of the chief in whose valor and military address they have learned to repose a just and merited confidence. In every society, therefore, there is to be considered the power of the chiefs and of the elders. Among these tribes most engaged in war, the power of the chief is, naturally, predominant; because the idea of having a military leader was the first source of his superiority, and the continual exigencies of the state requiring such a leader, will continue to support and even to enhance it. His power, however, is rather persuasive than coercive; he is revered as a father, rather than feared as a monarch. He has no guards, no prisons, no officers of justice, and one act of ill-judged violence would pull him from his humble throne. The elders in the other form of government, which may be considered as a *mild* and *nominal* aristocracy, have no more power. In most countries, therefore, age alone is sufficient for acquiring respect, influence, and authority. It is age which teaches experience, and experience is the only source of knowledge among a savage people.

Among the different tribes, business is conducted with the utmost Public Assemblies.
simplicity, and which may recall, to those who are acquainted with antiquity, a picture of the most early ages. The heads of families meet together in a house or cabin appointed for the purpose. Here the business is discussed; and here those of the nation, distinguished for their eloquence or wisdom, have an opportunity of displaying those talents. Their orators, like those of Homer, express themselves in a bold figurative style, stronger than refined, or rather softened, nations can well bear, and with gestures equally violent, but often extremely natural and expressive. When the business is over, and they happen to be well provided with food, they appoint a feast upon the occasion, of which almost the whole nation partakes. The feast is accompanied with a song, in which the real or fabulous exploits of their forefathers are celebrated. They have dances likewise, though, like those of the Greeks and Romans, they are chiefly of the military kind; and their music and dancing accompany every feast.

To assist their memory, they have belts of small shells, or beads Wampum, or belts.
of different colors, each representing a different object, which is marked by their color and arrangement. At the conclusion of every subject on which they discourse, when they treat with a foreign state, they deliver one of those belts; for if this ceremony should be omitted, all that they have said passes for nothing. These belts are carefully deposited in each town, as the