

is no reason that they should much vary, unless by the operation of external causes. However, I have no intention of attempting such an estimate here. We have evidence in the great Earthen Works of Ohio, requiring an immense number of hands for their erection, that at some period a considerable population occupied the fertile vallies of that region. We know that Agricultural pursuits prevailed among many tribes, which have since almost completely abandoned them; but with all this, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion, based on the desolating habits of Indian warfare, on the severity of the climate, and on the degraded position of the female sex, that upon the whole, the population of the middle and northern portion of the continent must, at all times, have been small in proportion to its area, and never on a par with the simplest of all natural resources, the animal life of the region. The materials for a specific estimate of their numbers at any one early period, are exceedingly scanty. The early travellers dealt in round numbers to an alarming extent. "*Qui dit un Canton d'Iroquois*" says de la Hontan, "*dit un douzaine milliers, d'ames. Il s'en est trouve jusqua quatorze mille et l'on calculait ce nombre par deux mille Vieillards quatre mille Femmes, deux mille Filles, et quatre mille Enfants.*" And as there were then five such cantons or Nations, this people, if the Baron or his authorities can be trusted, counted considerably less than two centuries ago, from sixty to seventy thousand souls. Yet he gives as informants persons who had lived twenty years among them. Little reliance can be placed on the estimate—the ancient *Coureurs des Bois* were addicted to romancing, and the habit of perverting facts in reference to the more remote tribes they visited, by way of discouraging rivalry in their lucrative trade, must have clung to them when discussing those nearer home. Equally apochryphal, I cannot but suspect, must be the 20,000 warriors whom King Oppeccanough somewhat earlier, is related to have led against the settlers in Virginia. Yet these and other similar estimates, which it would be easy to multiply, if they fail to furnish a numerical basis for comparison, convey a general idea of populousness which, as compared with what is known to our times, would justify anything that can be said as to the decline of the race. "There are abundant proofs," says Catlin, "in the History of the country, to which I need not at this time more particularly refer, to show that the very numerous and respectable part of the human family, which occupied the different parts of North America, at the time of its first settlement by Anglo Americans, contained more than *fourteen millions*, who have been reduced since that time, and undoubtedly in consequence of, that settlement, to *something less than two millions.*" (Catlin II.