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PROPOSAL

FOR

FORMING A SOCIETY

**FOR CIVILIZING AND IMPROVING THE
NORTH-AMERICAN INDIANS,**

WITHIN THE

British Boundary.

Printed by J. BRETTELL, Marshall Street, Golden Square.

P R O P O S A L

FOR FORMING

A S O C I E T Y

FOR PROMOTING THE

CIVILIZATION AND IMPROVEMENT

OF THE

NORTH-AMERICAN INDIANS,

WITHIN

The British Boundary.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. HATCHARD, Bookseller to Her Majesty, opposite
Albany, Piccadilly; and Messrs. PHILLIPS and FARDON,
George Yard, Lombard-street.

1806.

AT a Meeting of some Persons of respectability, to consider the best Means of promoting the Civilization and Improvement of the North-American Indians, within the British Boundary, it was resolved that the following Address upon that interesting Subject, be printed and distributed.

N. B. *Persons disposed to favour the Undertaking which it recommends, are requested to send their Names and Address to either of the following Gentlemen :*

W. WILBERFORCE, Esq. *Old Palace-yard.*

H. THORNTON, Esq. *Coleman-street.*

H. HOARE, Esq. *Fleet-street.*

R. BARCLAY, Esq. *Clapham Terrace.*

W. SHARP, Esq. *Fulham.*

G. SHARP, Esq. *Temple Court.*

T. MACAULAY, Esq. *Birchin-lane.*

The Rev. J. OWEN, *Fulham.*

Or to either of the following Booksellers:

HATCHARD, *Piccadilly;* or PHILLIPS and FARDON, *George Yard, Lombard-street.*

PROPOSAL

FOR FORMING

*“ A SOCIETY for promoting the Civilization
and Improvement of the NORTH-AMERICAN
INDIANS, within the British Boundary.”*



AMONG the many valuable Institutions which have been formed by British liberality, for meliorating the condition of mankind in distant parts of the world, it cannot but be regarded as matter of surprise and regret, that no one has yet

been projected for extending a similar advantage to the numerous native Indians of North America. This will appear the more extraordinary, when it is considered, how zealously many of their tribes have espoused the British interests in that portion of the Western Continent, and in how great a degree they have suffered by persevering in their fidelity and attachment. Much, it is true, has been done towards imparting to this people the means of Religious Instruction: but a comprehensive system of Improvement, adapted to their wants and claimed by their merits, is yet a desideratum in the numerous provisions of British munificence.

The time, it is presumed, is now arrived, in which an Association for carrying such a system into effect, may be most advantageously proposed. An example* has been set by the Society of Friends, called Quakers, in the United States, which offers at once the strongest motive, and furnishes the purest model for such an undertaking: and the Authors of this Address are persuaded that they cannot better explain their own views, nor solicit the public countenance to their plan, than by

* Very interesting particulars in the Proceedings of this Society may be seen in a pamphlet, called "Accounts of Two Attempts towards the Civilization of some Indian Natives." Sold by Hatchard, Piccadilly; and Phillips and Fardon, Lombard-street.

briefly describing the measures pursued by these truly humane and disinterested men.

By accounts received from Philadelphia and Baltimore, it appears, that, about the year 1796, Committees for meliorating the condition of the Indians, were appointed by the Quakers inhabiting those provinces, of which the places above-mentioned are respectively the centres. These Committees chose their sphere of operation independently of each other, among such tribes as were situated most nearly in their several vicinities. The Philadelphian Committee commenced their experiments in places distant about 250

or 300 miles to the N. W. of Philadelphia; the Baltimore Committee, theirs in the unceded parts of what is called the N. W. territory, situated between the Mississippi and the Ohio, and bounded to the N. by the Lakes Superior, Huron, and Erie. The object of both was the same;—"to promote the Improvement and Civilization of the Indian Natives."

It was ascertained, by personal observation, that, partly from their attachment to hunting, and chiefly from the habits of intoxication, introduced and encouraged by the White Traders,* the condition of their

* The following speech, delivered by one of their chiefs, to the Committee at Baltimore,

Red Brethren was become such as to excite in their minds the most

will sufficiently explain what is here alluded to:

“ Brothers and Friends ;

“ When our forefathers first met on this island, your Red Brethren were very numerous. But since the introduction amongst us, of what *you* call *spirituous liquors*, and what *we* think may justly be called *poison*, our numbers are greatly diminished. It has destroyed a great part of your Red Brethren.

“ My Brothers and Friends ;

“ We plainly perceive, that you see the very evil which destroys your Red Brethren. It is not an evil of our own making ; we have not placed it amongst ourselves : it is an evil placed amongst us by the White people. We look to them to remove it out of our country. We tell them, ‘ Brethren, fetch us useful things ; bring goods that will clothe us, our women, and our children, and not this evil liquor that destroys our reason, that destroys our health, that destroys our lives.’—But all we can say on this subject, is of no service, nor gives relief to your Red Brethren.

tender compassion, and to claim at their hands every exertion of Chris-

“ My Brothers and Friends ;

“ I rejoice to find that you agree in opinion with us, and express an anxiety to be, if possible, of service to us in removing this great evil out of our country :—an evil which has had so much room in it, and has destroyed so many of our lives, that it causes our countrymen to say, ‘ We had better be at war with the White people.’— This liquor which they introduce into our country, is more to be feared than the gun and the tomahawk. There are more of us dead since the treaty of Greeneville, than we lost by the six years’ war before. It is all owing to the introduction of this liquor among us.

“ Brothers ;

“ When our young men have been out hunting, and are returning home loaded with skins and furs ; on their way, if it happens that they come where some of this whiskey is deposited, the White man who sells it, tells them to take a little drink. Some of them will say, ‘ No, I do not want it.’ They go on till they come to another house, where they find more of the same kind of drink.

tian benevolence. "Often (says the Baltimore Report) exposed to the inclemency of the season, with a very precarious and often a very scanty supply of food and clothing, they suffered all the miseries of ex-

It is there offered again ; they refuse ; and again, the third time : but, finally, the fourth or fifth time, one accepts of it and takes a drink ; and, getting one, he wants another ; and then a third and fourth, till his senses have left him. After his reason comes back again to him, when he gets up and finds where he is, he asks for his peltry. The answer is, ' You have drunk them.'—' Where is my gun ?' ' It is gone.'—' Where is my blanket ?' ' It is gone.'—' Where is my shirt ?' ' You have sold it for whiskey !'—Now, brothers, figure to yourselves what condition this man must be in. He has a family at home ; a wife and children, who stand in need of the profits of his hunting. What must be *their* wants when he himself is even without a shirt ?"

treme poverty ; in a country which, from its extreme fertility, would, with but little cultivation, abundantly supply them with all the necessaries of life.”

The Committees then proceeded to open a friendly communication with the chiefs of those nations, upon which they wished to try their civilizing experiments, and “endeavoured to impress on their minds, the advantages they would derive from permitting a knowledge of Agriculture and some of the most useful Mechanic Arts to be introduced among their people.” They reminded them, “that the time was come, in which they ought to begin

to cultivate their lands; that they ought to raise corn and other grain; also horses, cows, sheep, hogs, and other animals." In this endeavour, the Committees so far succeeded as to obtain the cheerful concurrence of the Indian Natives in the measures proposed for their improvement. The Committee then "sent, to the care of the Agent for Indian Affairs, some ploughs, harness for horses, axes, hoes, and other implements of husbandry; together with proper persons to instruct the natives in the use of them."

The consequence has been, that the object of these useful Associations has been in a great degree ac-

complished. The women and girls have been reclaimed from the labours of the field, and trained to domestic services; the men and boys have been drawn off from hunting, and instructed to pursue agricultural and mechanical employments; habits of drunkenness have been discredited and in a great measure extirpated; and, in a word, such an universal improvement has been introduced into their whole system of life, as promises to lay a foundation for their permanent and increasing prosperity.

Such is the example after which it is now proposed to form a Society of British Christians, "for promoting the Improvement and Civilization

of the North-American Indians." The influence of intoxication already adverted to, has thrown so many obstacles in the way of improvement, among the tribes at large; by encouraging idleness and vagrancy; exciting dissensions among individuals, and lasting feuds between the different tribes; and by counteracting the influence of moral considerations upon their minds and their habits; that no effectual or general melioration of these deluded natives can be expected by any measure short of such an Association as it is the object of this Address to recommend. A considerable proportion of the five nations is now settled within the British

province of Upper Canada* ; and this settlement, there is reason to

* The following account and character of the Mohawks, one of the Five Nations, and situated in the S. W. parts of Upper Canada, are given in the preface to " the Book of Common Prayer, Gospel of St. Mark, &c." printed in 1787, for the Mohawks, by the order, and at the expence of the British Government :—

“ The Mohawks are a respectable nation. They entered into an alliance with the English immediately after the latter became possessed of the province of New York, in the last century, (viz. the 17th). To that alliance they have *faithfully* and *uniformly* adhered, without any deviation, from that time to the present day. Their decided adherence to the British interest, during the late revolt in America, made it expedient for them to abandon their ancient settlements in New York, and remove to Canada, when the independency of the Thirteen United Colonies was acknowledged by this Country. Such was their attachment to our common Sovereign, whom they consider as their *Father*, and such their predilection in favour of our Nation, that they cheer-

believe, would afford a very pleasing and useful field for the labours of such a Society. The information imparted by an enlightened chief of that confederacy, whose recent visit to this country excited considerable interest, will materially direct the Society in the formation of its plans; and his actual residence among his tribes will greatly facilitate their execution. Should the experiments proposed to be made among the nations residing within the Lakes Erie, Huron, and Ontario, be crowned with success;

fully submitted to this inconvenience, rather than remain in their native country, when under a foreign jurisdiction."

it would then be in the power of the Society to extend them, by means of these cultivated tribes, among those more distant nations, who are utter strangers to the comforts and useful improvements of a domestic and civilized life.

“ When we reflect (say the Baltimore Committee) on the gradual, but continual decrease of these people, from the time the Europeans first visited this Continent, until the present; and the many whole tribes of which not any trace now remains, except *their names*; there is every reason to believe, that, should the Indians continue to pursue their former mode of life a few centuries

more, many other whole nations of them will become entirely extinct.

“ Impressed (they continue) with this melancholy consideration, it must be a prospect truly gladdening to the enlightened Christian mind, to survey the hastening of that day, when this part of the human family, weaned from savage habits and allured by the superior advantages of civil life, shall exchange the tomahawk and scalping-knife for the plough and the hoe ; and instead of ranging the forests in seeming affinity to the wild beasts of the desert, shall peacefully and rationally enjoy the productions of the fruitful field.”

Entering most cordially into these views of their Transatlantic Brethren, and anxious to co-operate with them in the truly Christian design of improving the civil and moral condition of the numerous native tribes of North America, the Authors of this Address feel it their duty to make this appeal, on behalf of such an undertaking, to those liberal and enlightened principles, which so eminently distinguish and adorn the British character.

When it is considered, how few exertions have been made to benefit and improve the aboriginal natives of that vast Continent, compared with those which have been made to

plunder and corrupt them; when it is further considered, how often attempts to propagate the abstract truths of Christianity among them have failed of producing any permanent effects, for want of a suitable basis in the bonds and habits of civilization; when the concurrence of circumstances is reflected upon, which favour, at *this time*, a system of improvement—in the disposition of the natives to renounce spirituous liquors, their perception of the advantages to be derived from Agriculture, and the actual progress which European arts have made among them*; when to these is added,

* A letter was received in the Summer of 1803, from the agent for Indian affairs at Fort

the gratitude which is due to those simple, generous, and loyal tribes,

Wayne, in which he says:—" Since there have been no spirituous liquors in the Indian country, they appear very industrious, and are fond of raising stock." He also expressed, as his opinion, " that the suppression of spirituous liquors in that country, is the most beneficial thing which has ever been done for them by the United States; that there had not been one Indian killed in that neighbourhood for a year; and that in no preceding year, since the treaty of Greeneville, had there been less than ten, and in some years as many as thirty, killed." The agent further added, " that the Indians appeared to be very desirous of procuring for themselves, the necessaries of life, *in our way*; but say, they do not know how to begin. Some of their old men say, the White people want for nothing;—we wish them to show us how to provide the many good things we see amongst them. If it is their wish to instruct us in their way of living, as they tell us it is, we wish them to make haste and do it, for we are old and must die soon; but we wish to see our women and children in that path that will lead them to happiness before we die."—
Account of Baltimore Comm. p. 22.

who have submitted to so many sacrifices of blood and territory, in order to maintain the relations of alliance and amity with the British Government, no doubt can be entertained, that a Society which proposes to improve their habits, and meliorate their condition, need only be announced, in order to be warmly embraced, and extensively supported.

THE END.