

**LETTERS FROM  
THE SOUTH, VOL. I**

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Letters from the South, Vol. I by James Kirke Paulding (A Northern Man)

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**JAMES KIRKE PAULDING (A NORTHERN MAN)**

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LETTERS FROM THE SOUTH

BY

A NORTHERN MAN.

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## LETTERS FROM THE SOUTH.

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### LETTER I.

DEAR FRANK,

IN order to lay a solid foundation for my travels, I ought first to tell how this new world was made ; and, secondly, how it was peopled ; since, if it had never been made or peopled, it would not be worth writing about. There are two ways of making a world, lately invented by the geologists—one by fire, the other by water. I mention these to show you it is no difficult matter ; and you may take your choice of either, as people choose whether they will have their mutton roasted or boiled.

But, though it was easy enough for the philosophers to tell how America was made, the peopling of it was not quite so trifling a job, and cost them more labour than all the rest of the earth put together. The old world, it seems, was hugely surprised, at finding this thumping bantling, as it were, thus laid at its door ; and the philosophers, like faithful parish officers, set to work to ferret out the father. In this pilgrimage, they fared pretty much like the lad in the French novel, who, in a

similar pious research, discovered no less than thirty-six fathers, one after the other.

The honest aboriginals of America, not being philosophers, did not much care to what country their ancestors appertained; but the learned were good enough to oblige them, by enlightening their comprehension in this particular. For this purpose each one set out on a different track, and, what is very remarkable, each found what he was looking for, in his own opinion; although, to say the truth, some of them, assuredly, were not governed by a family likeness. One found out they were descended from Joktan, the son of Eber, son to—the Lord knows who; a second, from the Spaniards, who fled on the first invasion of Spain by the Moors; a third, from the Atlantides; a fourth, from the Scandinavians; a fifth, from the Hunns; a sixth, from the Canaanites; a seventh, from the Japanese; an eighth, from the Romans; a ninth, from the Gauls; a tenth, from the Friezlanders; an eleventh, from the Celts; a twelfth, from the Egyptians; a thirteenth, from the Phœnicians; a fifteenth—I beg pardon—a fourteenth, from the Chinese; a fifteenth, from the Norwegians; a sixteenth, from the Ethiopians; and a seventeenth, from the Anthropophagi! Here is an ancestor for every state in the union, which is enough, in all conscience, to content a reasonable man. But there are at least twenty more papas putting in for little America, which shows how anxious every body was to claim this noble offspring. Each of these supported his theory with



a pertinacity proportioned to its enormity; and, perhaps, there never was such a mass of absurdity as has been generated by this subject, useless in itself, and now beyond the reach of human research to determine. \*

It was to be hoped that the subject had been laid at rest in the learned lumber of the times, never to be revived. But a philosopher of our own country, whose name may be found in all the newspapers, has lately revived it; and did, what was thought utterly impossible—produced new absurdities. The flat-nosed Tartars, and Samoiedes, and all the nonsense of old Thomas Brerewood, are again conjured up, to play at foot-ball with, and tickle our learned societies. Since, however, the subject has been thus raised from the dead, I see no reason why I may not advance my theory, which, I have little doubt, will overturn and utterly demolish all others, if it ever fairly comes before the world. I have actually discovered, by the infallible aid of analogy, that America is the oldest quarter of the world, and the true hive from whence the earth was peopled after the deluge. "First recover that—and then thou shalt hear further."

America is the largest quarter of the globe, and must therefore be the eldest born; for, taking the analogy of all nature, the largest must be the oldest, because it has had the largest time to grow; and this analogy is peculiarly applicable to the earth, which, according to the geologists, is growing lustily every day. Another proof of the superior antiquity

of America is, that, at the time of the first discovery, she had forgot her own name ; in consequence of which, the monarchs of Europe kindly christened her over again—with blood. Nothing can be a greater proof of old age, than the loss of memory ; and to forget one's name, is an infallible indication of extreme longevity. One of the weak arguments brought forward by the ignorant philosophers of Europe against the antiquity of the new world, as they choose to call it, merely because it was new to them, is, that the aborigines of America are far below the natives of Asia and Europe in learning, science, and all those arts which conduce to the delights of existence. Now this, so far from establishing their theory, is, in my mind, almost a conclusive argument in favour of mine. Do not all nations relapse into a sort of second childhood, and, in the course of ages, forget what, in the course of ages, they had learned ? What has become of the glories of Egypt, and Greece, and Italy—the most renowned nations of the ancient world ? Egypt and Greece have relapsed into barbarity, and Italy is become a nation of—fiddlers. Their glory exists only in the remembrance of what they once were ; in their arts, their warlike renown, and their ancient literature—as the science of our aborigines does in the remains of those astonishing works, whose creation is far beyond either tradition or history, and which, as they meet the eye of the stranger, as he glides down the gentle Ohio, fill him with a vague and indefinite wonder. A people may be so old as

to have forgotten every thing but the arts necessary to existence ; and this is, doubtless, the case with our aborigines. Besides, there is a wonderful difference between a people who tell their own achievements, and those who are ignorant of the noble art of writing. The former, always make the man striding over the lion, while the latter, having nobody to take care of their posthumous fame, leave, generally, but an indifferent reputation behind them. I will venture to say, that the early inhabitants of this new world performed as many impossible achievements as the Greeks, Romans, and English ! only there were, unluckily, no Herodotuses, Livys, and Venerable Bedes, to record them.

Having given such special reasons, for believing that Noah was an American, it would seem unnecessary to offer any proof, that the people of Europe, at least, are descended from the aborigines of this quarter of the world. With regard to those of Africa, there is much *colour* for the belief, that they must look for their parentage somewhere else ; and, whenever they find it, much good may it do them. It may be worth while, however, to notice a few characteristic resemblances between the Indians of America and the polished nations of Europe, that, beyond doubt, prove the paternity of the former.

The Indians are much given to high play ; so are the fashionable people abroad. The Indians neglect their wives ; so do the fashionable people abroad. The Indians are mightily given to long, pompous harangues ; so are the fashionable orators