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FLOWER'S LETTERS FROM LEXINGTON (JUNE 25, 1819)  
AND THE ILLINOIS (AUGUST 16, 1819)

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Reprint of the original edition: London, 1819



# LETTERS

FROM

*LEXINGTON and the ILLINOIS,*

CONTAINING A

BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE ENGLISH SETTLEMENT

*IN THE LATTER TERRITORY,*

AND A

REFUTATION OF THE MISREPRESENTATIONS

OF MR. COBBETT.

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BY RICHARD FLOWER.

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## PREFACE

VARIOUS have been the reports respecting the *Illinois* Settlement, as they relate to the health of the climate, and the state of agriculture. The following Letters contain a simple narration of facts, the result of real observation, and an accurate survey; and will appear time enough to counteract the evil impression of false information by persons who have not been on the spot, or who appear to be interested in writing down the settlement.

As to the various reports about the state of health, they may be easily accounted for by comparing dates. On the arrival of emigrants in the summer of 1818, there were no cabins to shelter them from the heat of the sun by day, or from the dew, by night; neither a cow or pig for food, and scarcely a sufficiency for human subsistence to be procured: sickness to a considerable degree prevailed; but not more than three or four cases of death ensued. Since these inconveniences have [iv] been overcome, few places, I believe I may say in the world, have been healthier than the English settlement in the Illinois.

I trust my friends and acquaintance in England, who interest themselves in our concerns, retain that good opinion of me, as to believe me incapable, from *any* motive, of laying before them inducements to emigrate to a station, where their existence or comfort would be likely to be threatened by diseases not prevalent in the same degree, at least, as in their own country.

A difference of opinion as to eastern or western settlements may prevail, as differences of opinion in England

respecting Essex or Hertfordshire, which may be most healthy or profitable. I have only to request the attention of the reader to the facts I have stated.

The miscellaneous matter relative to the state of *Kentucky*, &c. will not, I hope, be found to be entirely destitute of interest to my old acquaintance in my native country.

## LETTERS, &c.

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### LETTER I

*Lexington, June 25, 1819.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

It is natural you should have made those enquiries of me which you did in your last, and which it shall be my business to answer in their respective order.

1st.—How I like America in general, and Lexington in particular?

2nd.—Whether I have been disgusted with the American character and habits, as many have been? or whether I dare invite others to follow the course I have taken? but above all, how I, whose notions of liberty run so high, can endure to reside in a state where personal slavery exists.

[6] Your first enquiry I am yet incompetent to answer to the extent you make it; for, although I have travelled from New York to Pittsburgh,—down the Ohio to this place,—I have only had a sample of this extensive country; and as you, my dear Sir, are in the habit of purchasing your goods by sample, and to my knowledge are often disappointed in the bulk, so you may not, perhaps, have a fair sample of entire America by the information I send you.

As to the great cities, they have no charms for me. You know, great cities in England, as places of residence, were the objects of my aversion; and if there is any thing in those of New York and Philadelphia which I dislike,

it is because they approximate so much to similar cities of England, without those rare shows which please both infants and children of larger growth, in London.

Here are few public buildings worthy of notice. No kings going to open Parliament with gilded coaches and cream-coloured horses, with a train of dragoons at their heels.—No Lord Mayor's show.—No Towers filled with royal tigers and lions.—No old castles which beautify the rural scenes of the country, whose melancholy history informs the curious traveller, that their foundation was bedded in [7]tyranny, and their superstructure the retainers of weeping prisoners, often of rank, as well as oppressed plebeians. No cathedrals or old churches to ornament the cities as well as the counties of England,—monuments of superstition when erected, and of injustice and oppression even to this day, having for their support tithe-proctors, and surveyors, continually obstructing the progress of agriculture, and exciting contentions and law suits to an extent for which all the preaching of the clergy of England cannot present an equivalent, or balance the evil produced by a worldly and avaricious priesthood.

America has none of these costly ornaments or beautiful monuments of oppression. I thank God she has not; and hope she may be exempt from them, although strange to tell, I have found amongst both clergy and laity some few who wish for these degradations, and am even informed there are those who sigh after a religious establishment, and revenues besides those collected by the voluntary donations which flow from affectionate and religious hearers.

The episcopalian clergy in this country, have an enjoyment seldom known in England, that is, being chosen by the people, and supported [8] according to their respective

merits; and it is my duty to add that episcopalians, as well as the ministers of most other sects, are in general "labourers worthy of their hire," virtuous in their conduct, exemplary in their deportment, exhibiting christianity in their every day conduct and intercourse with mankind, and enjoying the esteem of their congregations. There are none of those divines in the busy hive of America, which you know by the name of *dignified clergy*, partaking of the largest revenues, and doing the least possible service,—conduct which one would think must make their hearts shudder at the thoughts of a judgment day!

As to the travelling in America, you are already informed of its conveniences and inconveniences; you dine at a fixed hour, as at our ordinaries in England; and you have abundance of provision of every kind the country affords. Poultry in every shape, with the standing dish, ham or bacon: but you must be aware, that in a country so extensive as I have already traversed, there must be as much difference in accommodations, as there is between the best inns on the great roads of England, and those in the remote villages. The beds generally cleanly; but although I have [9] not suffered the inconveniences so magnified in England from musquitoes, the often-brought charge of being infested with that ugly and sleep-destroying insect the bug, is indeed too true. Also, the many-bedded rooms found in most taverns, as you travel westward, is more than an inconvenience, as often being the sleeping-place of those who fall sick, as of those who are in health; and, in this respect, the Americans are criminal, and instrumental in spreading infection, which might be avoided by a little expense in the division of sleeping-rooms; but there are many happy exceptions; and, as civilization advances, this evil will be cured.

As to the general character of the Americans, it is sober, industrious, and hospitable; although drunkenness, idleness, and gambling, are vices in existence, they are kept in the back ground, and are by no means so conspicuous as amongst what are called the lower class in England.

It is remarkable, that in the houses of the wealthy, as well as in store or shop-keepers back-rooms, it is the common practice to ask you to take a glass of water, cool fresh water, as a refreshment; at which offer no one is offended; and when wine or liquors are on the [10] salver, water is often preferred; but our countrymen would think it a sad insult to be invited to so simple a refreshment.

I have, my dear sir, met with no instances of a rude ruffian-like character, that will apply to Americans generally; and, I believe, much less than I should have met with in England, had I travelled her roads and rivers to the extent I have done in this country.

The American notion of liberty and equality is highly gratifying to me. The master or employer is kept within the bounds of reason and decency towards his labourer. No curses or oaths towards their servants, or HELPS as they choose to call themselves; (for every one who takes money or wages, is, after all, a servant;) he obeys all reasonable orders for his remuneration; and when this obedience ceases, the contract of service is at an end. I have often been surprised at the highmindedness of American labourers, who are offended at the name of *servant*.

With respect to this place, I have, in former letters, stated it to be a phenomenon in the history of the world; twenty-five years since it was trodden only by the foot of the savage; now it contains about three thousand inhabitants. A college, at which are already one [11] hundred and forty

students; its professors, chosen purely for their talents, without any requirement of unanimity of religious opinions, as in the colleges with you: professors so chosen, not being confined to any particular sect, are likely to fill their stations with ability; and, as far as I am capable of judging, are eminently calculated for their respective situations to which they are chosen. This institution promises to be in the moral world, what the sun is in the natural world, and is calculated to illuminate, civilize, and bless mankind.

To the inhabitants of Lexington, wherever I may reside in future, I shall ever feel grateful: their hospitality, their kindness to me, as a stranger, and their sympathy in the hour of affliction, are never to be effaced from my memory.

Their politeness and liberality are perhaps, unequalled. Balls, at which the fair sex are never allowed to share any expence,—an Atheneum and a considerable museum, the benefits of which the stranger is invited to partake *gratis*,—may be mentioned as not being very customary in England. Tea-parties are a continual festival from the time you enter to the time of your departure, which however, are too much like our routs in England; and in time, I should fear would, as they have in England, become [12] a substitute for hospitality. I have known collected at these parties from one to two hundred persons. Thus, my dear Sir, you see, instead of being in continual broils, and exposed to the affronts and insults of rude Americans, I have received nothing but civility and hospitality. It will hardly be credited when I assure you I have not yet met with a single annoyance in the whole of my journey from New York to Pittsburgh by land; nor from thence down the Ohio to Louisville,—a distance of six hundred



miles by water, and five hundred miles by land: thus you see, my dear friend, I am in no danger at present, of being disgusted by American rudeness, irreligion, or fanaticism.

To your last question,—How can you reside in a state where personal slavery is in existence? I, with regret, reply, this is the spot which clouds the American sun of liberty; and I confess I know not which are most excited in me, the risible or the sorrowful feelings, when I hear a *Kentuckyan* boasting, in lofty terms, of the liberty of his country, when that country is divided into two classes, and two classes only—the master and the slave! The term of *master* implies the willing servitude of *free men*: the term *slave*, includes in it the admission [13] of tyrants or tyranny; and a *Kentuckyan* has no more right to talk of freedom than the *legitimates*, whose determined purpose it is to blot liberty and happiness from the face of the earth. The one talks of liberty and social order, and it appears that by it is meant the increasing trappings of monarchy; the other does the same of liberty, and the rights of men.

The *legitimates*, who have high notions of regal authority, attempting to subjugate the minds of men, is perfectly consistent with their notions of power, their education and habits; but to hear the republicans of slave states point to the *Declaration of Rights*, who inform the coming traveller that they are now blazoned forth on satin and velvet;—an American republican pointing to the *Rights of Men* with his left hand, while his right is obliged to hold the whip, and with watchful eye to subjugate the minds and bodies of a large share of the population of his state:—this, indeed is worthy the taunts and derision of kings. It is this that keeps the wealth of Europe from pouring its treasures into the fertile region of Kentucky, and the in-



dustry of thousands from approaching the state. It would be painful to relate all the horrors I have beheld in slavery under [14] its mildest form. Whites full of whiskey, flogging their slaves for drinking even a single glass! Women, heavy with young, smarting under the angry blow, or the lash, and with babes at the breast, which one of our writers calls "*Nature's passport* through the world," lacking food in the midst of abundance, and cloathing insufficient to satisfy the demands even of common decency. Avarice, which our Poet *Young* calls "Earth's greatest blunder—Hell's loudest laugh;"—avarice, which seems to be the source of all this mischief, now comes to the relief of the ragged lingering wretch. If they are miserable, they must not die, for a mother and infant are worth from six hundred to a thousand dollars: but in a slave state, avarice has preserved life, clothed the wretched, and fed the hungry; it has fattened and made fine, the slave that he or she may fetch at the hammer, one or two hundred dollars more. "Lord, what is man!" Was it for this that your heroes fought, bled, and died? Was it for this, that the brave and virtuous Washington, to whom so many memorials in the way of oration and praise are delivered on each succeeding anniversary of his birth, spent his long and glorious course? Oh! youth of Kentucky, when you speak of his [15] fame with the enthusiasm of a republican, speak of his humanity, read his will; see his ardent desire to let the captive go free: imitate his virtues, and fall not into the errors of tyrants, who suppose military glory to be the glory of a christian.

It is worthy of enquiry, whether it is likely that Americans will escape the judgments with which God has afflicted other nations, while their land is infected with personal slavery, and whether the liberties of America are not en-

dangered by the increase of its black population. Perhaps some ambitious military chief may take the work from the hands of republicans, and "proclaim liberty to the captives," and make them the instruments of political slavery: let it be the work of crowned despots to subjugate the minds and bodies of men, but let not republicans assist in such a work.

Whenever you take Freedom's sacred name into your lips—whenever you unfurl the standard of partial liberty—you stand self-condemned. Despots keep men's minds in ignorance, that the voice of slavery and abject dependence may not be heard even in its defence. Do ye not the same: both your efforts will be in vain; the minds of men are in progressive march, and your united efforts will not stop their destination.

[16] "No, bless'd with freedom, unconfin'd,  
Dungeons can ne'er contain the soul;  
No one can chain th' immortal mind,  
No one but Him who spans the pole."

I remain, yours, sincerely,  
R. F.

## LETTER II

*Illinois, near Albion, Aug. 16.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

AFTER many interruptions I removed from Lexington to this place, at which we arrived on the 2nd of July, spending in our way a week at *Harmony*, that wonder of the west.

You have heard this settlement mentioned, and it is worth visiting to see, and observe the effect of united industry, regulated by sound wisdom and discretion: here

perfect equality prevails, and there are no servants; but plenty of persons who serve. Every man has his station appointed him according to his ability, and every one has his wants supplied according to his wishes. He applies to the mill for his supply of flour; to the apothecary for medicine; [17] to the store for cloaths, and so on for every thing necessary for human subsistence. They do not forbid marriage, as some have represented; but it is one of their tenets that the incumbrance created by families is an hindrance to the spirituality of christians, and it is this opinion which discourages marriage amongst them. They have also an aversion to bear arms; this would not allow them to remain in Germany, and they emigrated to live in the manner they have adopted, and have certainly the outside appearance of contentment and happiness.

After travelling through the woods of Indiana, the hills divide to the right and left, and a fine valley opens to your view in which the town stands. The hills assume a conical form, and are embellished with fine cultivated vineyards; and the valleys stand thick with corn. Every log-house is surrounded by a well cultivated garden, abundantly supplied with vegetables, and ornamented with flowers. It was the beginning of wheat harvest when I arrived, and the entire company of reapers retired from the fields in a body, preceded by a band of music: their dress is like the Norman peasants, and as all are of the same form and colour, may properly be designated their [18] costume. The men marched first, the women next, and the rear rank composed of young women, with each a neat ornament of striped cedar wood on their head, formed one of the prettiest processions I ever witnessed. The sound of French horns awakened them in the morn-

ing to their daily labour, which is moderate, and performed with cheerfulness; the return of evening appears to bring with it no fatigue or symptoms of weariness.

Besides the gardens of individuals, there is a public garden of five acres, the outside square planted with fruit trees and vegetables, the inside with herbs medicinal and botanical. In the centre is a rotunda of the rustic kind, standing in the midst of a labyrinth, which exhibits more taste than I supposed to be found amongst the Harmonites. It is from this hive of industry that Albion and its vicinity have drawn their supplies, and its contiguity to such neighbours has been of great advantage.

Having given you this account, I arrive at the point at which, my dear friend, I know you feel most interest, and proceed to give you an account of the state in which I found my friends, and the English settlement in general. I have great satisfaction in being able to inform you that almost every individual I [19] knew in England, was much improved in appearance, all enjoying excellent health. The same blessing is also our lot, and if I can form a proper estimate from six weeks residence, I must pronounce this to be as healthy a situation as any America affords, and much preferable, in this respect, to the eastern states. What travellers have recorded, that the thermometer does not rise so high as in the east, is true, and we are never many hours without a fine breeze. The nights are cool, the thermometer dropping 10 degrees, and you can obtain refreshing sleep. In the eastern states the thermometer being at 98 in the day, remained at 96 at night, a suffocating heat. The average of our days are from 80 to 86, but we have had a day or two at 90, which produces a thunder gust and a cooler atmosphere.

Now, my dear sir, as to the questions which agitate the

minds of thousands in your country. The advantages of emigration to America, and the comparative advantages of eastern and western climates. I am, most decidedly, for settling in the west, on account of the prairies, and the facility with which they are cultivated.

The cultivation of new land, incumbered with heavy timber, presents a formidable feature; [20] labour incessant and unremitting, before a small tract of land can be tolerably cleared; but here I can enter either as a farmer or a grazier immediately; fine wide spreading fields of grass, inviting the flocks and herds to come and partake of the bounty with which they are loaded. In answer to the enquiry as to the proper mode of farming, I sit, and from the place I am now writing, see a beautiful herd of cattle of nearly two hundred in number. I have one hundred tons of fine hay collected for spring provision. Every head of cattle, the expence of herdsmen deducted, on a moderate calculation, promises a fair profit of at least five dollars per head; and yet Mr. Cobbett, in his weekly letters, very *modestly* asserts, "There is no farming for profit in the west!"—I state these facts for the information of those who may wish to join us, and in direct contradiction to the ill-founded assertions of this writer on the subject.

It is also stated by Mr. Cobbett, that "the obstruction by bush and briar are such as to prevent early or easy cultivation."—In contradiction to this assertion, I affirm, that I can put the plough into thousands of acres where there is no such obstruction. One [21] gentleman in our settlement has grown eighty acres of fine corn, although he only arrived last year; this alone is a sufficient contradiction to all Mr. C. has said on this subject. There is also a sufficiency of corn and grain grown this first har-

vest to supply the wants of the settlement: next year there will be a surplus for brewing and distilling.

If a person enters heavy timbered land, it is by great exertion he clears ten acres the first year; but he has only here to enclose and take his choice of farming and grazing, or enclose enough for corn and pasture, his cattle feeding on the unoccupied range of grass which the neighbouring cultivator cannot stock himself, and which is much improved by the feeding of cattle.

Now, my dear Sir, as to the persons who come here or to any other part of America, I would have them consider for what purpose and intent they emigrate. It is certain as regards farming, that there are only two ways in which it can be performed: the one, labouring by his own hands; the other, by his capital, stocking his farm, and hiring his labourers. It is thoughtlessness and folly to tell any person, if he bring with him one hundred pounds, he can place himself in comfort; but, it is certain, that a [22] hundred pounds here will go as far as five hundred pounds in England; and that the person who has that sum in possession, is certainly five times better off than in that country. The person who has this sum may enter his quarter section of land, build his cabin, enclose his garden, keep his cows and pigs; but then he must be a man of that description who has been in the habit of milking his cows and tending his pigs: all such persons will find vast advantage in emigrating to this place. Every farmer in England (of which there are thousands) who holds the plough, or his sons for him, will find an easy life, and the abundant supply of every good thing. As to the reward of his industry, every farmer who can stock a farm in England, may here become the proprietor of his own soil with that capital which affords him only a tenant's station, a pre-

carious subsistence in his own country; an inducement, I should think, sufficient to make thousands follow our steps, and taste the blessings of independence and the sweets of liberty. Let all who are bending under the weight of taxation, and trembling at the approach of every quarter-day, come here and partake of ease and abundance. If the affluent, also, are tired of the system of the British government, [23] and feel the effect it has upon their fluctuating property, here they will find the wide domain, the natural park, whose hills and boundaries are beautifully capped with woods, inviting them to build their dwellings and sit down in ease and content. These parks are already stocked with deer, all which they may purchase, where previous entry has not taken place, at the land office price, two dollars per acre. These prairies appear as if that eminent improver of parks and grounds—*Repton*, had been consulted in laying them out to their taste.<sup>1</sup>

It has been reported that we can get no servants: this is true in a degree, because the price of service is such, as soon to elevate the servant to a state of independence: but I have found no want of persons to work for hire, even in domestic stations; those that are most wanted are farming labourers; good ploughmen are in request, and can obtain twelve dollars per month and their board. Female servants from eight to ten dollars, according to their respective merits; these are in great request; and what perhaps is to them still more pleasing, their industry is the certain road to marriage. Our young females are almost all engaged in this way, and we certainly lose good servants, [24] but have the pleasure of seeing them well settled.

<sup>1</sup> Humphrey Repton (1752-1818) was a well-known English landscape gardener.—ED.



Now, my dear Sir, as to the state of the settlement and the progress it has already made.

On a tract of land from the little Wabash to the Bonpar<sup>2</sup> on the Great Wabash, about seventeen miles in width, and four to six from north to south, there were but a few hunters' cabins, a year and a half since, and now there are about sixty English families, containing nearly four hundred souls; and one hundred and fifty American, containing about seven hundred souls, who like the English for their neighbours, and many of whom are good neighbours to us. We have nothing here like loneliness. In our circle of English acquaintance, as well as in that of American settlers, we find companions who are often found interesting and intelligent. In good deed and in truth, here is, to the industrious, a source of wealth more certain and productive than the mines of Golconda and Peru. Industry of every kind has its ample reward: but for the idle, the drunkard, and the vicious, there is no chance; spirits are cheap, and a short existence is their certain portion. All persons feeling anxieties that attend agricultural pursuits may be released [25] from those anxieties by emigrating to the Illinois.

Your newspapers, the *Farmer's Journal* in particular, relate the particulars of the distress of the farmers, and the ruin in which many of them are involved. It is in vain that you petition for relief. By your own account your ruin is inevitable, and your destruction sure. Escape then to a land where the efforts of your industry will be rewarded, and the produce of your labour will be your own. You will escape, not only from the tax-gatherer and

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<sup>2</sup> A misprint for Bonpas. This stream flows almost directly south and forms the present eastern boundary of Edwards County. It joins the Wabash about forty-five miles below Vincennes.—ED.



tithe-collector, but from the expence attending the frightful system of pauperism, which is constantly making demands, not only on your pecuniary resources, but calling you to the most painful personal exertions.

In the extensive region from New York to this place, I have had but one application for relief, and that was from an Englishman. In this country peace and plenty reign.

I have mentioned a scarcity of servants: this arises much from emigrants bringing out with them a better sort, or confidential servants: the only sort wanting are females who can work in the kitchen, milk the cow and attend to the dairy. All above this class can earn too high wages by their needle. A good sempstress, [26] earning a dollar per day, will soon quit servitude, and put on the airs of American independance, with an addition of some little insolence; but a cure is not unfrequently wrought, and that by various easy methods.

A gentleman hired a female servant of this sort, who would insist, as a condition, on sitting down at the dinner table, with the family; her christian name was *Biddy*; the condition was consented to, and a project for cure at the same time engaged in:—A party was invited to dinner, and Biddy took her place at the table, being above waiting, or being in any degree more than a HELP. When anything was wanting, a gentleman arose from table and offered it to Miss Biddy. Miss Biddy was asked to drink a glass of wine, first by one gentleman and then by another. Miss Biddy was desired not to trouble herself about any thing, and was ceremoniously treated, till she felt the awkwardness of her situation, and said, the next day to her mistress,—“Madam, I had rather give up dining at your table,”—which she did, continuing in their service for some time. I have had to do with people of the same

cast, though not quite so foolish as Miss Biddy:—I have hired persons to certain employments, and they have been discontented [27] and spoiled by their notions of equality: “Very good,” said I; “we, then, are equal; I like the idea much; it pleases me greatly: you, of course, mean to take no money of me for what you please to do for me; and, if that is the case, I shall be as perfectly satisfied with your notion of things, as you appear to be; but, if you take my money, you must perform the service I have pointed out to you.”—This perfect notion of equality does not suit, although it is too reasonable to be much objected to.

It is generally supposed, that this high notion is of republican origin; but it is the contrary, and originates in the insolence of those who keep and domineer over slaves. Any thing that a black is made to perform, is pronounced unfit for whites; and, although many who have held slaves as their property, are far inferior in understanding to the slaves they hold, and are sometimes reduced to poverty, they deem it degrading to perform any work that a slave can perform; and those persons who, like myself, are far from thinking all men equal in character, are little disposed to engage with such persons in any service. With our superiority in our consistent love of freedom, and our having escaped from political [28] slavery, we shall never fail to oppose the extension, and even the continuance of personal slavery.

The arguments for a state of slavery, urged by Americans, are just such as might be urged by Algerines for taking the ships of America, and making slaves of her seamen. Both consist in the right of force, and not of reason or justice; and when a person hears members of congress pleading the cause of slavery,—personal slavery,—with the pretence *they are my property*, one cannot help

blushing for human nature. Those who appear to love freedom, both personal and political, making use of such a pretence, forces the tear of sorrow from the eye of humanity. One human being the property of another. No! the whole race of mankind is the sole property of their great universal parent; and he who enslaves another, whether his skin be black, white, or intermediate, insults the right of his God, and blasphemes the name of his Creator.

I rejoice, my dear friend, in the choice the English have made of a free state; and am certain we shall be able to cultivate from the services of free men, cheaper than those who cultivate them by slaves.

But to return to our settlement and its infant [29] capital *Albion*. Log houses, those cabins unpleasant to the cleanly habits of Englishmen, the receptacles of the insect tribe, are no longer erected. I have had the pleasure of laying the first brick foundation in *Albion*; it is for an inn where travellers I hope may find rest without disturbance from insects. We have also nearly completed our market house which is sixty feet by thirty. A place of worship is began. Religion, I mean the outward form, has not been unattended to: a selection from the Church of England service, and a sermon has been read on the sabbath to a few persons assembled in a log room: our psalmody is excellent, having some good musicians, and singers amongst us. The Americans here think all who take money for preaching, *hireling* ministers, and several well-intentioned farmers preach to small assemblies in the neighbourhood. The worship of God, and the keeping his commands is the thing which I believe all will agree in, as being the end to be produced by public worship. As we have not, and I trust never shall have, that grand

corruption of christianity, an establishment formed and supported by statesmen and politicians, I hope christianity in its original purity, will for ever flourish in the Illinois. We intend also our place of worship for a library, [30] and to open it on a sunday afternoon; a day when all persons have leisure to read, and are clean in their dress and persons. The strict sabbatarians will doubt the propriety of this proceeding; but any thing which will have a tendency to promote moral and intellectual improvement, and keep men from the vices of idleness and drinking, is justified by him who put the question,—“Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath?”

But to return from spiritual to temporal things. I spoke of our market house being finished. The price of provisions in this place is as follows.

A fine turkey, a quarter of a dollar.—Fowls, twelve cents each.—Beef four to five cents per pound.—Mutton none yet at market.—Eggs twelve and a half cents per dozen.—Cheese thirty cents per pound.—Butter scarce, owing to the heat of the climate, sixteen cents per pound.—Bacon at this time fifteen cents per pound, half the price in winter.—Flour nine dollars per barrel.—Deer, a fine fat buck from one dollar to one dollar and a half including skin.—Melons, such as cannot be procured in England, twelve and a half cents each in great abundance.—Honey of the finest flavour, one dollar per gallon.—Whiskey one dollar per gallon [31] retail.—Fine Hyson tea two dollars per pound. Moist sugar thirty one cents.—Coffee sixty-two cents per pound: wholesale from New Orleans much cheaper. Fine fish three cents per pound.

We leave it to the public to judge of our danger of starving, as some writers have hinted.

Here then you have the situation of our rising settlement; progressing with rapidity in the eye of Americans, though

to Englishmen, setting and watching for fresh intelligence, but slowly.

You ask me, dear Sir, whether there is any sale for books here? We have no bookseller yet, and the writings of your favourite authors, in defence of civil and religious liberty, would not sell here: the love of civil and religious liberty is unbounded in every Illinois heart; there are none to dispute the truth of the principles of complete and perfect freedom; and when controversy ceases, controversial writings must of course lose their interest.

I would not for the world invite persons, no! not a single individual, if I did not think that his happiness would be increased: it may be said that I am an interested person, and so are those who take such pains to prevent persons from coming westward. Emigration [32] from the eastern states, has already reduced the price of lands there.

When I passed New York, I heard a popular writer say, "I'll be d——d if I don't write down Birkbeck and the settlement:" those who are familiar with this writer's usual phraseology in conversation, cannot, I think, be in any great danger of mistake as to the person alluded to:<sup>2</sup> how far he has succeeded, the public will be a proper judge when they carefully peruse the facts I have stated, and compare the evidence they receive from time to time through the various channels from the Illinois. We have here plenty of scribes, and the truth—the whole truth will appear before both an American and British public.

I remain,

Your sincere friend,

RICHARD FLOWER.

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<sup>2</sup> This statement was made by Cobbett; see Flower's note, *post*, p. 164.— Ed.



...R'S LETTERS FROM THE ILLINOIS—JANUARY 18,  
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