

INTRODUCTION.

It is profitable to reflect on the marvelous changes that were now taking place; to recall the past, and compare it with the present; but let us beware, lest we glorify ourselves and our achievements too much, at risk of unjustly detracting from the merits of those who came before us.

“Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault,”
“If men mem’ry o’er their graves, no trophies raise,”

for in the active labors of the present, the past has almost been lost in clouds of forgetfulness.

The poverty, the labors and the sufferings of our forefathers form a striking contrast with the easy comforts and luxuries enjoyed by their children, and to which they have become so thoroughly accustomed, that it seems almost impossible that they should exist without them.†

The settlement of a new country in the immediate neighborhood of an old one, is not attended with much difficulty because supplies can be readily obtained from the latter; but the settlement of the country very remote from any cultivated region, is a very different thing, because at the outset, food, raiment, and the implements of husbandry are obtained only in small supplies and with great difficulty. The task on making new establishments in a remote wilderness, in a time of profound peace is sufficiently difficult; but when the addition to all the unavoidable hardships attendant on this business, those resulting from a extensive and furious warfare with savages are superadded, toil, privations and sufferings are then carried to the full extent of the capacity of men to endure them.*

Such was the wretched condition of our forefathers in making their settlements here. To all their difficulties and privations the Indians was a weighty addition. This destructive warfare they were compelled to sustain almost single-handed, because of the lack of easy communication between the West and East.** No aid was sent for lack of knowledge of the state of affairs.‡

The following history of the poverty, labors, suffering, manners and customs of our forefathers will appear like a collection of ‘tales of olden times,’ without any garnish of language to spoil the original portraits by giving them shade of coloring which they did not possess.

We shall speak of things as they were during the period of time subsequent to the Revolution,§ beginning with those rude accommodations with which our first adventurers into this country furnished themselves at the commencement of their establishments. It will be a homely narrative, yet valuable on the ground of its being real history: ||

† Rev. Dr. Joseph Doddridge.

* Dr. Doddridge.

** Wilson.

‡ Olden time.

§ Gordon.

|| Doddridge.