

William Cobbett, *The Emigrant's Guide; in Ten Letters, Addressed to the Tax-Payers of England; Containing Information of Every Kind, Necessary to Persons who Are about to Emigrate; Including Several Authentic and Most Interesting Letters from English Emigrants, now in America, to their Relations in England.* London: Mills, Jowett, and Mills, 1829.

Initially a loyalist and defender of all things English, Cobbett (1763–1835) spoke out increasingly against government corruption, the privileges of wealth, unfair taxation and industrialization. Known as a radical pamphleteer and the publisher of the Political Register (1802–1835), Cobbett's complex and varied political positions resist assimilation to such labels as "radical," "liberal," "conservative" and so on.

As to tradesmen and farmers, those amongst them who are willing to continue to be underlings all their life long; those who are too timid to venture beyond the smoke of their chimneys; those who cannot endure the thought of encountering things which they call inconveniences; and especially those who cannot be happy unless they have slaves¹ to serve them, will do exceedingly well to remain where they are. There is a description of persons who are quite willing to be slaves themselves, provided they are able to play the tyrant over others. This character is now become a great deal too general; and all persons of this character ought to remain where they are; for, never will they find a slave, not even a black one, to crawl to them in AMERICA.

25. Provided a man be of the right stamp; provided he be ready to encounter some little inconvenience in the removal; provided he be a man of sense, and prepared to overcome the little troubles which the removal must necessarily give rise to; and, especially, provided that he be of that character which will make him happy without seeing wretched creatures crawling to him, his age is of little consequence; and the age and number of his children are of little consequence also. I have known men of sixty years of age go to America, take a family with them, settle that family well, and, after living many years surrounded by them, leaving them with a certainty that they would never know want. There are thousands of tradesmen and farmers at this moment in England, that know not what to do; know not which way to turn themselves; know not, whether

¹ servants

to keep on business or to leave off, fearing, do what they will, that they shall lose the earnings of their lives. They look wildly about them, in anxious search of hope, and every where they behold the grounds of despair. They think of emigration: they hesitate: there are the fears of their wives: there are their own fears and doubts; and, while they are hesitating, doubting, and fearing, their money goes away; and, at last, they must land in America as mere labourers or journeymen, or they must remain to pine away their lives in penury, and, perhaps, to die with the moral certainty that their bodies will be consigned to those who will mangle them to pieces for the improvement of science.

26. Why, if such people were, even after they had spent their money, to land in America with nothing but their clothes on their backs, their emigration would be an improvement of their condition: they would, with one half of the industry which they have been accustomed to practise here, possess more of money and of estate than they ever possessed here; and this, bold as the assertion may appear, I pledge myself to prove in the next letter. But these things are demanded in order to ensure success: first, health of body with tolerable strength; second, a willingness to labour, and a character sufficient to enforce obedience in the family; third, an absence of that base pride which will not suffer a man to be happy without having somebody under him.

27, There is one other quality, without the possession of which, all the rest are of no use; namely, that quality which enables a man to overcome the scruples, the remonstrances, and the wailings of his wife. Women, and especially English women, transplant very badly, which is indeed a fact greatly in their praise. It is amiable in all persons to *love their homes*, their parents, their brethren, their friends, and their neighbours; and, in proportion as they have this love in their hearts, they will be reluctant to quit their home, and especially to quit their country. English women have an extraordinary portion of this affection; and, therefore, they are to be treated with all possible indulgence in the case here contemplated, provided that indulgence do not extend so far as to produce injury to their families and themselves. Some of them, by no means destitute of these amiable feelings, have the resolution voluntarily to tear themselves from ruin and slavery for the sake of their children. Others have not this sort of resolution; and there are some who are obstinately perverse. It is a misfortune when this happens to be the case; but it is a poor creature of a man who will suffer this obstinacy to make him and his children beggars for the remainder of their lives. Nothing harsh ought to be done or attempted in the overcoming of this difficulty;

but, harshness and firmness are very different things: this is one of the great concerns of a family, with regard to which the decision must be left to the head of that family. ...

86. I SHALL speak first of the farmer; but before I do that, let me suppose the case of a farmer, who is able to work and who has little money; and let me suppose the same of a tailor, shoemaker, carpenter, or other handicraft business. If such a man have little money, not enough to purchase a farm worthy of the name; and at the same time somewhat approaching towards a sufficiency, his best way is to purchase, or rent, a suitable place to live in with his family, and to go to work himself for some other man. We see that John Watson, after recovering from illness, set to work, and that his wife, though with a growing family, took in sewing, and that presently they had two cows, two calves, and nine pigs. We find him, at a later period, with a farm, which he had earned in a year and six months, besides keeping his family. His farm was not great, to be sure; but he had earned it, and kept his family too. The daughters, if eleven or twelve years of age, and strong, should go out to help, as it is called, and the best of employers would be happy to have them. The same with regard to the boys. The expense of living becomes next to nothing; and, if a man land with only two or three hundred pounds, the addition to the sum soon enables him to purchase a farm. In the meanwhile he may *farm on shares*. ... There his industry and skill have their full reward: he is a farmer at once; and nothing but want of health (which will depend in a great measure upon himself) can prevent him from being in that happy state. ...

90. The price of the produce of a farm, is not all that is to be taken into consideration here; there is the price of the articles which are to be purchased by the family, and which generally come from cities and towns situated on the edge of the sea; or from manufacturing places which are almost all near the sea. Tea, sugar, coffee, all articles of great consumption, hardware, crockery ware, and numerous other things, together with all the articles of clothing, except the making of them; all these are of much lower price when brought to a farm at about 20 or 30 miles from New York, than they can be when carried to a distance like that of Utica. These things ought to be considered; and the farmer, before he purchases, will do well to make inquiries respecting them. When he has got the prices of farm produce at any two given places; and the price of the articles wanted to be purchased, he will find that he has the means of deciding with precision on which of the two spots is most advantageous to lay out his money. He will also take into view the relative facility of procuring stock for his farm; the relative price of waggons, carts, and other implements, not leaving wholly out of his view the convenience or inconvenience of mills, roads,

and water carriage; the nature of the soil and situation as to health; and, lastly, he will set a due value on the nature of the neighbourhood; and well consider whether it be such as is likely to afford an agreeable intercourse between his family and himself, and those by whom he is surrounded. Having determined upon the spot, and taken up his residence, the sooner he gets acquainted with his neighbours the better for him; and he will do well to bear in mind, that they know the country better than he, and that he ought not to deviate hastily from their mode of cultivation, management, purchasing and selling.