

DECEMBER, 1794.]

*Naturalization Bill.*

[H. OF R.]

ed one clergyman in Virginia. Even Dr. Griffith, after being nominated Bishop of that State, found it difficult to procure from the Convention the certificate required by the English bishops; because, though hundreds of other persons knew his worthy character, a sufficient number of the members of the Convention had not known it, during the term specified in the certificate required.

Mr. DEXTER's motion was now withdrawn.

Mr. GILES then proposed an amendment the object of which was to impede a return to citizenship of those who should expatriate themselves. He proposed that a special law of the State from which such persons should detach themselves, should be requisite in order to their being re-instated.

Mr. TRACY, after observing, that although he was not in favor of a perpetual allegiance as understood by the British Government, yet he was of opinion that the return of persons who should expatriate themselves ought to be clogged with greater impediments than simply a law of a particular State. If the amendment is a proper one, of which he confessed he had his doubts, he would suggest to the gentleman an addition, by making a law of the General Government also necessary in the case.

Mr. GILES observed that the object of his motion was not by any means to lessen the impediments in the way of a return to citizenship, but the reverse; he should therefore agree to the amendment of the gentleman from Connecticut. The motion was afterwards considered in several points of view, as blending State and Continental legislation, as interfering with the Legislative rights of the State by some, and as operating in the same manner in respect to the right reserved by the Constitution to the General Government, which is authorized to pass uniform laws of naturalization by others.

Mr. SEDGWICK having stated that his colleague had prepared a motion with regard to the kind of evidence that an applicant should exhibit of the goodness of his moral character and of his attachment to the Government, he requested Mr. GILES to withdraw his motion for the consideration of the other, which he did, and thereupon, Mr. DEXTER moved that no alien should be admitted to the rights of citizenship, but on the oath of two credible witnesses, that in their opinion he was of good moral character and attached to the welfare of this country, which motion was seconded by Mr. SEDGWICK, who added the following observations:

He said, that the subject under consideration was certainly of great importance, and opened an extensive field of discussion. The present motion, taken in conjunction with that already adopted, had for its object to embarrass the facility, with which aliens may be admitted to the rights of citizenship. He would submit to the consideration of the committee some of the leading ideas, which had occurred to his mind on this subject.

America, he said, if her political institutions should on experience be found to be wisely adjusted, and she shall improve her natural advan-

tages, had opened to her view a more rich and glorious prospect than ever was presented to man. She had chosen for herself a Government which left to the citizen as great a portion of freedom as was consistent with a social compact. All believed the preservation of this Government, in its purity, indispensable to the continuance of our happiness. The foundation on which it rested was general intelligence and public virtue; in other words, wisdom to discern, and patriotism to pursue the general good. He had pride, and he gloried in it, in believing his countrymen more wise and virtuous than any other people on earth; hence he believed them better qualified to administer and support a Republican Government. This character of Americans was the result of early education, aided indeed by the discipline of the Revolution. In that part of the country with which he was best acquainted, the education, manners, habits, and institutions, religious and civil, were Republican. The community was divided into corporations, in many respects resembling independent republics, of which almost every man, the qualifications were so small, was a member. They had many important and interesting concerns to transact. They appointed their executive officers, enacted bye laws, raised money for many purposes of use and ornament. Here, then, the citizens early acquired the habits of temperate discussion, patient reasoning, and a capacity of enduring contradiction. Here the means of education and instruction are instituted and maintained; public libraries are purchased and read; these are (said he) the proper schools for the education of Republican citizens; thus are to be planted the seeds of Republicanism. If you will cultivate the plants which are to be reared from these seeds, you will gather an abundant harvest of long continued prosperity.

Much information (he said) might be obtained by the experience of others, if, in despite of it, we were not determined to be guided only by a visionary theory. The ancient Republics of Greece and Rome (said he) see with what jealousy they guarded the rights of citizenship against adulteration by foreign mixture. The Swiss nation, (he said,) in modern times, had not been less jealous on the same subject. Indeed, no example could be found, in the history of man, to authorize the experiment which had been made by the United States. It seemed to have been adopted by universal practice as a maxim, that the Republican character was no way to be formed but by early education. In some instances, to form this character, those propensities which are generally considered as almost irresistible, were opposed and subdued. And shall we (he asked) alone adopt the rash theory, that the subjects of all Governments, Despotical, Monarchical, and Aristocratical, are, as soon as they set foot on American ground, qualified to participate in administering the sovereignty of our country? Shall we hold the benefits of American citizenship so cheap as to invite, nay, almost bribe, the discontented, the ambitious, and the avaricious of every country to accept them?